



**2010 470 Junior World Championships
16-22 December 2010, Doha, Qatar**

Information on Qatar

Welcome to Qatar

The country is justly proud of its heritage, with fine examples of traditional buildings, and crafts and a magnificent Museum of Islamic Art. Demonstrations of many old craft can be seen in Souq Waqif with the chance to purchasing an interesting memento of your stay.

You can also admire the falcons in the Souq, as Qatar's local sports of falconry and camel racing are still very popular.

Discover camels in their native habitat a trip to the desert and explore the sandy beaches and clear blue waters of the Gulf surrounding the peninsula. We hope this brief Guide you will show you how diverse our country is and help you discover its rewards.

Doha

(Arabic: الدوحة, *ad-Dawḥa* or *ad-Dōḥa*, literally: "the big tree" or "the sticky tree") is the capital city of the state of Qatar. Located on the Persian Gulf, Doha is Qatar's largest city, with over 80% of the nation's population residing in Doha or its surrounding suburbs, and it is also the economic centre of the country.

The State of Qatar

The state of Qatar is a continuation monarchy ruled by The Emir, His Highness Skeikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. The Heir Apparent is his son HH Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani.

Geography

Qatar is peninsula 11.437 square kilometers in size, located halfway down the west coast of the Gulf.

Demography

The total population is presently estimate more than one and half million and has been increasing at a rate of 9% annually in recent years.

Climate

The county has a moderate desert climate with pleasant mild winters and hot summer. In December daytime temperatures will range from a low of 15°C (59°F) to 24.1°C (75°F). Winter nights can be cool, but the temperature rarely drops below 7°C (45°F).

Local Time

GMT plus 3 hours throughout the year.



Electricity

The main electricity is 220-240 volts.

Common Courtesies

Qatar is an Islamic state and visitors should dress modestly. Normal swim wear, including bikinis, is acceptable on private beaches or by the pool, but T- shirt and covering of the legs is desirable away from these areas.

Please respect local customs and do not display of affection between men and women when in a public place.

Communication

Telephone - Qatar Telecom (Qtel) and Vodafone provides International Direct Dialing (IDD) to most countries: you dial '00' or '+' call out. Local calls from private house and businesses are free, but hotels charge a normal rate for local calls made from the room.

Internet - Most hotels offer internet connection and there are a number of internet cafes in Doha.

Shopping

Qatar is a fabulous destination for shopping, thanks to the exciting blend of modern and traditional shopping Facility. In direct contrast, Qatar's local markets or Souq offer visitors a glimpse of the country's cultural heritage. Souq Waqif exudes an old world charm and is a must-see for any visitor to Doha.

For lovers of all things gold, a visit to the Gold Souq is a must. Small jewellery stores line the block, their windows crammed full of glittering gold bangles, rings, necklaces, and Qatari bridal jewellery – most 22-carat gold; as well as pearls and precious stones.



Good-natured bargaining is a way of life in the Middle East, and it can be quite enjoyable if you have the patience to see it through; try, and you'll see that vendors enjoy the banter that the whole process involves.

When visiting souqs, you are generally not expected to pay the initial asking price. However, bargaining does not apply to all retails in Qatar, as many as the more modern shops, especially food outlets, have firm prices. Generally, the more you buy, the better the discount you are likely to get.

Sightseeing

The following are just a few ideas of sightseeing opportunities:

Walk the Corniche - No trip to Doha would be complete without pounding the pavement around the corniche, the wide, palm-tree-lined footpath hugging the bay. The Museum Of



Islamic Art sits on one end, so after your visit, you can walk right to the other end near the Sheraton. There are endless amounts of photo opportunities of the Doha skyline, the dhow wharfage and the iconic pearl in the oyster monument.

Museum of Islamic Art - The IM Pei designed building may look impressive from afar, but it's even more spectacular up close and the wow factor continues inside with a treasure trove of Islamic art that spans centuries. There are too many pieces to name, but Time Out Doha loves the collection of astrolabes – ancient astronomical and timekeeping devices used to schedule prayer times and locate Mecca. Everything is displayed over two floors and it's easy to navigate alone (allow around two hours), but you might hear more interesting tidbits about some of the pieces on one of the guided tours. The best part about it? It's absolutely free.

Souq Waqif - With its winding lanes and tiny stalls crammed with everything from spices and antique jewellery to colourful textiles, Souk Waqif is one of the most atmospheric places in Doha – if not the Middle East. It's best to arrive early in the morning or after 1700 hours because most of the stalls are closed between 1300-1600 hours. Get lost in the alleyways, and snare yourself a bargain.



Dhow cruise - You can hop on board one of the public dhows just next to the Balhambar building. While the dhow chugs around the bay, all you have to do is kick back, pull up a cushion, and enjoy the view.

Dune bashing - with so much desert surrounding Doha, an abundance of tour companies offer the adventurous rollercoaster ride pastime known as dune bashing. The best spot to do it is at the Inland Sea, or Khor al-Udaid as it's known locally – a desert meeting the channel of water between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. All the swerving and jolting in this 4x4 adventure means this is an activity reserved before lunch. Most tours conclude with an Arabian feast at a desert camp.

Arabian tradition - the nation is mad about horses but, unknown to many, you can actually take a closer look at some Arabian beauties at the ornate stables belonging to the Emir, which are right next to Souk Waqif opposite the Emiri Diwan palace. Visitors are free to walk around the stable and pet horses. Then, for a real taste of old Arabia, head down a lane to the entrance of the falcon souk – where Qatar's traditional birds of prey (and all the hunting accessories) are sold. On your left-hand side, a set of stairs lead up to a roof terrace, shaded by a few trees. In the late afternoon, it's the hang out for old Qatari men who squat on benches, nattering among themselves and drinking tea.

Third Line Gallery - Dubai's Third Line Gallery only opened in the Waqif Art Centre last year but the lust for art is so great, the gallery is planning to expand downstairs already. Featuring some of the most intriguing artists from the region, the gallery also organises non-profit, alternative programmes like free film screenings and Pecha Kucha – a multimedia forum for creatives and designers.

Doha Zoo - located near the Sports City complex, the Doha Zoo features a variety of animals, including the Oryx, Qatar's national animal.

Singing Sand Dunes - In the desert 40 km southwest of Doha are the so-called Singing Sand Dunes. This is one of the few places on Earth that has "singing" sand. When the humidity is low and the wind blows along the sand an eerie hum sound can be heard. This sound can be amplified by running across the sand, or by sledding down it. The coordinates are N25 02.446' E51 24.540'.

Health and Safety

Doha is one of the safest cities in the Middle East. The only danger worth commenting on is the speed and volume of traffic, which doesn't always obey the rules.

Clothing

Men and women should dress modestly as a courtesy to both Qataris and Muslims. Swimsuits and beachwear is acceptable at the hotel beaches (don't forget sunscreen), but it is not appropriate to expose the body in other public areas. Tops should cover the shoulders and upper arms, and skirts or shorts should fall to or below the knee. Women are not obliged to cover their hair. Visitors should be thoughtful of their clothing particularly in the Holy Month of Ramadan, or when in traditional areas.

Language

Arabic is the official and main language, but English is widely spoken in every part of the country. Despite most Qatari people speak fluently English, they feel honoured to see their guests speaking a few words in Arabic.

History

With more than half of the population of Qatar residing in the capital, one would expect Doha to have an ancient and powerful history. On the contrary, the city was a small and inconsequential fishing and pearling village up until the mid-19th century, when the first Al-Thani emir, Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani, established his capital at Al-Bida, now the port area of town. From a notorious safe haven for Gulf pirates, it became the British administrative centre in 1916.

After the discovery of oil, and the export of related products from Umm Sa'id (modern-day Mesaieed) in 1949, the city grew rapidly but haphazardly. New administrative centres sprang up to manage the vast revenues, and an artificial, deepwater port was excavated in 1969 to handle shipments of cargo from other Gulf States. Shrimp processing became one of the city's major industries, remaining so to this day.

In 1971 Doha became the capital of the independent state of Qatar. The University of Qatar (1973) and Qatar National Museum (1975) brought education and culture to the city, and the shape of Doha changed, not just on account of its spread westwards, but also through the ambitious re-landscaping of Doha Bay, carved from reclaimed land. Since then, Doha has seen the most extraordinary expansion in international banking, sporting and tourism activities, as evidenced by the many modern towers, malls, hotels and seats of power scattered throughout the city, and through huge developments like Pearl Qatar, a whole commercial, residential, tourist and leisure complex beyond the West Bay area.

Useful Resources:

Qatar Tourism - www.qatartourism.gov.qa