

Relocation guide:

Qatar

Our guide working and living overseas



Welcome to Qatar

Jutting out into the Persian Gulf with Saudi Arabia as its only land border, the State of Qatar packs a lot of economic punch in view of its relatively small size.



THE KEY FACTS:

Capital: Doha

Population: 1,560,000 of which 85% are expat workers

Official Language: Arabic

Currency: Qatari riyal



A former British protectorate, which became an independent sovereign state in 1971, Qatar is an Arabic-speaking country with English as the second language.

LIFE IN QATAR

Country Overview

An Islamic state with the majority of Qataris following the orthodox Wahhabi branch of Islam, the country is home to the Al-Jazeera TV station, which broadcasts worldwide. The currency is the Qatari Riyal (QAR), the international dialling code is +974 and the time zone is GMT + three hours.

Rich in oil and natural gas, the country's economic centre is its fast-growing capital, Doha, situated on the coast, its skyline dominated by skyscrapers.

- "With the 2022 Football World Cup being awarded to Qatar, it is now seen as one of the fastest growing countries in the world."

One of the fastest growing economies in the region, Qatar offers numerous opportunities for engineers with ambition. Many projects have been planned under the auspices of the Qatar National Vision for the year 2030, including many economic and environmental initiatives.

A major exporter of oil and the world's leading exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas, Qatar is currently embarking on a programme of major expenditure in infrastructure, health and education. Further engineering projects are



planned ahead of the 2022 World Cup, including the construction of 10 new stadiums, a new port, road systems and other projects relating to infrastructure.

Climate

SUMMER 30°C to 40°C

Qatar has a very hot and dry and, some periods humid, climate. The summer temperatures range from 30°C to 40°C (86°F to 104°F) during the months of May to October. The hottest month is in August.

WINTER 7°C to 20°C

The winter months are much milder, with temperatures ranging from 7°C to 20°C (45°F to 68°F). There are times scanting rainfall, averaging 60.2 mm per annum, can be experienced in the winter period. The wettest months are November to February.

Health Matters

Before relocating, it is recommended that a routine checkup covering medical and dental be organized for yourself and your family, if necessary.

Once this is performed, bring along the following documentations to the host country:

- Medical health records for self and family, if any
- Prescribed medications – must have the doctor's prescription accompanying
- Any inoculations that are necessary for the host country – e.g.: flu vaccination

Housing in Doha

There are many housing options in Doha from high rise apartments to compound/stand-alone villas. You will be required to provide your residency permit in order to sign a tenancy, so during your first few months, the company will arrange accommodation for you, please note if you are eligible to receive a housing allowance, this will not be paid to you for the duration that you are living in company provided housing. As soon as you secure your residency permit and have found suitable accommodation, you must inform HR in advance of moving out, so your housing allowance (if applicable) can be paid to you. Your accommodation allowance (if applicable) will be paid to you pro-rated depending on when you move out of company provided housing.

The following websites and real estate agencies can assist you with available housing options in Doha.

- Qatar Living
- Dubizzle Qatar
- Better Homes Qatar
- My Coreo
- Apollo Properties

The local newspapers are also a good source for housing options and letting agents.

Schooling

Schooling is expensive in Doha, but there are many International schools and colleges offering both the UK and US curriculum. Some of the most respected schools are:

- Doha College
- Park House
- ACS Doha
- American School Doha
- Compass International
- Texas A&M
- Sherborne Qatar
- Carnegie Melon University

Please refer to schools/colleges websites for specific entrance requirements and fees.

Schools in Doha are oversubscribed, so if you are planning to bring your family to live with you in Qatar, please ensure you have enlisted your children in a few schools. Most schools operate on a first come first served basis and have waiting lists, so plan ahead.



Transport

When arriving in Qatar from the UK you'll likely come into Hamad International airport where you'll be charged a small fee of £20 on entry. Your new employer will arrange your working visa before your arrival and will make sure you are prepared for arrival in plenty of time.

Qatar is a large country and they are currently developing a subway system to get around the capital Doha, which should be finished by 2019. If you choose the roads then be warned as drivers are often reluctant to follow any rules and it can be dangerous, so it is sensible to familiarise yourself with layouts before driving.

To drive in Qatar you'll require a licence, but many people choose to use taxis as they are so cheap in the capital. Taxis can be flagged down or found at taxi ranks in all the business and shopping districts and should only cost between £2-10, but make sure you ask for the meter to be turned on before the journey begins.

The majority of expat positions in Qatar come with private medical insurance coverage provided by your future employer, so there is no need to worry about costs.

LIFE IN QATAR

Sport

To unwind after work, you can visit the world class 18 and 9-hole golf courses at the impressive Doha Golf Club. If you enjoy playing football or other team sports then Qsports is an organisation with over 10,000 people that hosts sporting events for expats in Qatar.

For those that are avid football supporters, Premier League teams often train in Qatar and the presence of big teams here will only increase in the build up to the 2022 World Cup. Qatar has also been host to the ATP tennis tour, namely the Qatar Masters and the Exxon/Mobil Open.

LIFE IN QATAR

What to Expect in Qatar

Physically Qatar may be a long way from home but if you love McDonald's, Burger King, Nando's or even Subway, then you'll be relieved to know you can indulge in these familiar franchises while in Qatar.

The country also boasts a number of luxury hotels such as the Hilton, Regis, W Hotel, Four Seasons, the Hyatt and the Ritz Carlton. These high end hotels house world class restaurants with the likes of Gordon Ramsay heading up the kitchen.

Throughout Qatar there are many market souqs where you'll need to negotiate on the price. However, Doha is

In any emergency situation, the number to call is always 999. The ambulance service from Hamad Medical Corporation is efficient and the drivers typically speak English, but any instructions should be given clearly.

On 'National Sports Day' people have a day off work to participate in the various sporting opportunities that Qatar has to offer. With state of the art leisure centres, a number of water parks and activity centres littered across Doha, there is something to suit everyone.



LIFE IN QATAR

Amenities in Doha

QATAR ELECTRICITY



Voltage and Frequency is AC 50 Hz, and 240 volts. Plug adaptors will be required for most Western-based expats.

FOOD AND WATER PRECAUTION



It is highly recommended that you use bottled water for drinking. Street food vendors should be avoided; however, most cafes and restaurants are safe to eat at.

Essential Cultural Tips

BUSINESS CULTURAL TIPS:

- In business circles, a personal introduction is helpful.
- During business meetings, do not be surprised if your host accepts calls or if people enter and leave the room.
- Before beginning a business meeting, small talk is customary.
- After introductions, business cards are distributed. Business cards may be in English but should have an Arabic translation on the reverse side.
- Make business appointments in advance and confirm more than once.
- Men should wear a suit for business meetings and women should wear modest clothing that covers the legs and arms.
- English is the language of business, but knowledge of a few Arabic words is appreciated.
- If beverages (coffee/tea) are offered in a meeting, it is polite to accept but only hold the cup in your right hand.

BUSINESS HOURS:

- **Sunday to Thursday:** 0700 to 1200 and 1600 to 1900
- **Friday:** 1600 to 1900
- **Saturday:** 1600 to 1900

GENERAL CULTURAL TIPS:

- Dressing is conservative for both men and women, who should cover the arms and legs.
- Shaking hands between parties is common before and after the meeting but males do not shake hands with members of the opposite sex.
- The left hand is considered unclean and it is not used for eating or greetings.
- During the month of Ramadan, it is an offence to be eating, drinking and smoking in public. If necessary, do this behind closed doors.

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- Ask permission from people before you take their photographs and avoid sensitive sites or pictures which include members of the police and armed
- Remember to drink plenty of water – especially during the summer period.
- Recognise that visitors are expected to conform to the local customs.
- Be prepared to bargain with shopkeepers, particularly in the souqs, as asking for a discount is the norm.

-

Healthcare

GOVERNMENT CLINICS – OUTPATIENT AND DENTAL CARE

In order to receive medical treatment from Government Clinics and/or hospitals, it is necessary for foreign residents to obtain a medical health card issued by the Government. However, one must have a relevant residence permit before a medical health card is issued. And this card must be presented to any of the Government Clinics and/or hospitals visited. A nominal fee will be charged for consultations.

GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS

Hamad General Hospital offers one of the highest quality of medical services and infrastructure facilities in Doha. It has 1,200 beds, covers 64 clinical specialties. It has the only emergency department in Doha that handles serious emergency cases. Most of the medical staff speaks English.

PAYING FOR HEALTHCARE:

Unless the Company provides medical insurance coverage, patients should have a medical health card to visit the Government and/or Clinic to receive treatment for a nominal fee. Most companies provide medical treatment as part of your contract.

In the absence of a medical health card, a patient can also visit the Government and/or Clinics for consultation, however, the treatment fee would be higher.

Alternatively, the patient can visit the private hospitals and/or clinics for consultations and payment via credit cards is acceptable.

AMBULANCE SERVICE:

The Hamad Medical Corporation provides efficient ambulance services. Ambulance operators speak English, however, instructions have to be given slowly and clearly.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

One standard number is used for the following emergency situations:

These establishments offer general medical consultation as well as dental care to the patients.

In the event of dental emergencies where surgery is necessary, Hamad General Hospital and private hospitals offer a range of treatments and services.

PRIVATE HOSPITALS AND CLINICS AND DENTAL CLINICS

There are also private hospitals and clinics in Doha. These private hospitals and clinics offer a good standard of care for less complex conditions. Some have 24-hours emergency department and can be used for less serious cases.

MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE:

If one has medical insurance coverage – be it Company sponsored or personal – both establishments (private or government) will accept the insurance schemes.

PHARMACY:

Like most hospitals and clinics, there are in-house pharmacies and there are many private pharmacies in Doha as well.

All pharmacists must be licensed and the importation and sale of drugs is regulated by the Government. Many of the drugs are imported from Europe and it is recommended that one should be aware of the generic (chemical) names of his/her medications.



TELEPHONE COMPANIES:

Qtel and Vodafone operate in Qatar and offer a wide range of services.

DON'T

- ... sit in a way that shows the soles of your feet or shoes to your Qatari hosts. It is considered impolite. Equally don't sit with your back towards other guests.
- ... eat, drink, chew gum, smoke and snack during the month of Ramadan. If necessary, these must be done behind closed doors.
- ... be afraid to go out at night. Qatar is one of the safest places in the Middle East.
- wear traditional Qatari men's clothing. It is considered impolite and disrespectful to their custom.

Despite the cultural differences that Westerners may experience on arrival, Qatar is a thriving and welcoming country with a lot to offer, including excellent salaries and a good working environment.

QATARI ATTIRE

Men

The men wear the traditional thobe, qahafiyyah, gutrah with igal.

- Thobe is like a long European shirt style but it is much longer and reaches to the ankles. It is worn in four colors – dark blue, off-white and brown in Winter; and white only in Summer.
- Qahafiyyah is a cloth cap worn on the head before the Gutrah is put on.
- Gutrah is the head scarf. It is a white or with white and red square check colored square piece of cotton cloth that is folded into triangle and placed on the head.
- Igal is the black woven rope that keeps the scarf in place and it is placed on top of the Gutrah.

Legend has it that the igal was traditionally used to keep the owner's camel tied up, so that it wouldn't run away when left alone. The gutrah has an important function of keeping the sun off when the men are working outside.

This simple technique of clothing has served the Arabs well as it keeps them cool during the summer heat.



QATARI ATTIRE

Women

Generally long and flowing, the women's traditional clothes are widely diversified and divided into several classes. They are made of luxurious textiles mostly made of natural silk and usually in black color. However, the designs of the clothing come in lively, plain and

attractive colors with great deal of embroidery and genuine gold and silver threads. The clothing is also sewn with silk and cotton threads of different colors and are quite often inlaid with "bedazzled" stones, beads, metal flakes and coins.

This long flowing clothing is called the abiyah. To complement the abiyah, women wear the headscarf, known as "hijab".

The abiyah is worn as an outside cloak. It covers the woman from her shoulder to the feet, while the hijab, covers the head with overlapping over the shoulders. Inside the abiyah, women typically wear normal clothing.

Inner City Travel

TAKING A TAXI

Mowasalat's (a government owned taxi and limousine company) smart turquoise and grey-coloured taxis, called "Karwa" for short, can be hailed from the side of the road, or booked in advance by calling **458-8888**.

GETTING TO YOUR DESTINATION

Because the State of Qatar does not have street names in most of the places, many people as well as the taxi drivers still navigate by landmarks. Therefore always remember the closest landmarks of the destinations that you are heading to. If you are going to a particular place for meeting, etc, always ask the businesses to describe their locations and identify some of the landmarks to help the driver find your destination.

DRIVING LICENCES

International Driver's licenses can be used by those who are visiting Doha for less than 30 days. However, for those who already have their Residence Permit, the home country license must be converted to Qatar Driving License. While your RP is in process you can apply for a temporary driving license.

Some countries' driving licenses are automatically converted to a Qatari license without the need to take a driving test. You will need a valid home country's driving license, a letter of no objection (NOC) from your employer (in Arabic), a passport size photograph, and completed application forms. Once these documents are ready, you need to go to the Traffic Department to apply for a Qatar Driving License. An eye test is required before the license is issued. Please check the traffic department website to confirm if your country's license will be automatically converted.

Please ensure you read this carefully as this will affect your vehicle insurance in Qatar, if you do not understand any part please ask HR for an explanation. The full Terms and Conditions and the laws of Qatar take precedence over anything you may be advised of verbally.

TAKING A BUS

There are a number of bus services. From QR3 for inner city rides and to the QR9 for long-distance journeys to towns outside Doha, the buses provide a comfortable, air-conditioned ride to those who do not own a car. Please refer to the mowasalat website for detailed information like schedule and destinations.

The laws in Qatar are subject to change so please ensure that you and your authorised drivers hold a valid 'Qatari Driving Permit' at all times. **Non-compliance may result in cancellation of your vehicle insurance, which may affect your rental or purchased car status.**



QATAR DRIVING LICENSE

If you are holding both a valid 'Full Qatar Driving License' with a valid 'Qatari Resident Permit' you can drive.
(If either is not valid you will not be able to drive)

If you are holding a valid 'Temporary Qatar Driving License' with a Qatar resident permit, Qatar Visit Visa, Qatar Business Visa. As long as both the 'Visa' and 'Temporary Driving License' are valid you can drive.

HOME DRIVING LICENSE

If you are holding a valid 'Home Driving License' (from your country) you can only drive for up to 15 days from the date of entry into Qatar.

INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT

If you are holding a valid 'International Driving Permit' which you have obtained outside of Qatar, along with your 'Home Driving License' (from your country) you can drive for up to 6 months providing you are entering Qatar on a Visit or Business visa.

GCC DRIVING LICENSE

If you are entering Qatar with a 'GCC Driving License' with a valid 'GCC Resident Permit' or are a 'GCC National' you can drive for up to 3 months from the date of entry in to Qatar.
(If either is not valid you will not be able to drive)

Some reputable rent-a-car agencies are:

<http://www.oasiscars.net/>

<https://www.hertz.com/rentacar/location/DOHT50>

<http://www.rentacardoha.com/>

ENTERTAINMENT

There are 5 star hotels and malls in and around Doha. It is illegal to consume alcohol in public in Doha.

Tipping

It is not customary to tip in Doha. Service charges are usually built-in to the bill.

PROHIBITED

Prohibited imports are Israeli currency, Pork and alcoholic beverages. A reasonable amount of tobacco and perfume for personal use may be imported without incurring customs duty.

(Let's say your entry date is the 1st of a month then you can only drive until the 15th of that same month)

If you are entering Qatar with the intention to get a resident permit or have applied for a resident permit the 'International Driving Permit' will not be considered valid. You should apply for a 'Temporary Qatar Driving License' before applying for your Qatar residency.

If you are a non resident and are 'Coming and Going' to and from Qatar on a regular basis the above rules are refreshed each time so please ensure you check the driving license rules which pertain to your specific country/type of license.

HR can provide you with any assistance/paperwork required to help you obtain a driving license.



EMBASSIES

The State of Qatar has most embassies / consulates. Please check online to see if your country has an embassy in Qatar.

USEFUL DAILY PHRASES AND

G =

R =

COURTESIE

G	Good morning	Sabah an Khair
R	May your morning	Sabah an noor
G	Good afternoon / evening	Misaa al khair
R	May your afternoon / evening be bright	Missa an noor
G	How are you?	Keif haalak?
R	Well, by Allah's / God's grace	Zein, al hamdu lillah
G	And you?	Wa inta?
R	By Allah's / God's grace	Al hamdu lillah
G	Thank you!	Shukaran
R	Not at all / You're welcome	Afwan
G	Go in safety (farewell) / good-bye	Maá salaamah
R	May Allah save you	Allah yesalmik

OTHER COMMON

	Please	Min fadlak
	Please (as in "please sit down")	Tafaddal
	Yes	Naám or Alwa
	No	La
	Sorry	Muta'assef
	Congratulations	Mabrook
	Ramadan blessings	Ramadan Kareem
	Eid blessings	Eid Mubarak
	Welcome	Marhaba

NUMBERS

	1	Wahad
	2	Itahnain
	3	Thalatha
	4	Arba'a
	5	Hamsa
	6	Sitta
	7	Saba'a
	8	Thamanya
	9	Tiss'a
	10	Ashara
	11	Ihda ashar

12	Ithna ashar
20	Ashareen
100	Mi'a
1000	Elf

DIRECTION

Where is?	Wain?
On your left	Ala shamalak
On your right	Al yameenak
Straight on	Alatool
When?	Mata? Or Emta?
Go!	Imshi!
Come!	Ta'ala!
Stop!	Waqif!
Look!	Shuf!
Let's go / come on	Yalla!
Tell me	Qulli
Bring me / give	Jib
This	Hatha
That	Hathak
Wait	Entather

TIME

What time is it?	As-sa'a kam?
It is one o'clock, two, three	As-sa' wahda, thintain, thalatha
On your right	Al-waqt mut'akhar
It is early	Badri
Tomorrow	Bukra
The day after	Ba'ad bukra

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Sunday	Yum al-ahad
Monday	Yum al-ithnain
Tuesday	Yum al-thalatha
Wednesday	Yum al-arba'a
Thursday	Yum al-khamees
Friday	Yum al-jum'a
Saturday	Yum al-sabt

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