

Pre departure Information: Qatar

Climate and Weather

In Doha the average daily temperature for November ranges between 80-90F. The weather will be hot but not typically humid with a gentle breeze. All public buildings (particularly hotels and restaurants) will have air conditioning so you will feel quite comfortable.

General Packing Considerations

Qatar is a Muslim country, where religious tradition and customs are strongly observed in public and private life. Those visiting the state for business and tourism are expected to be considerate of this culture.

Visitors to Doha are expected to dress in a style appropriate and respectful to the Islamic culture. Women don't need to wear the Abaya (a long black robe which covers the clothes worn underneath) or Hijab (head scarf).

The general rule for foreigners is that when in public a woman's clothing should cover the shoulders, upper arms and knees. The dress code in hotels or private clubs is more relaxed but travelers should still err on the side of more conservative clothing. For female travelers it is recommended that a head scarf be packed and carried at all times- this will protect you from the sun but also provide culturally appropriate coverage when needed.

For men, long trousers and a shirt are acceptable and appropriate when not in a very formal business environment or when outside of a hotel. For conferences business wear should be worn with more "comfortable" outfits for personal time in the hotel and travel to and from the US.

In a professional setting male and female foreign travelers are able to meet, dine and talk with each other freely. Women can travel alone quite safely throughout the city but should remain cautious at all times as with any large city.

Electricity

In Qatar the standard voltage is 240 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. You will need to buy a plug adaptor to fit sockets type D or G. Amazon has multi region adaptors for each region.

Note: You cannot use your electric appliances in Qatar without a voltage converter, because the standard voltage in Qatar (240 V) is higher than in the United States of America (120 V).. Because you also need a power plug adapter, you should consider a combined plug adapter/voltage converter.

Currency

You will be able to use your bank cards in stores, restaurants and ATMs in Qatar. You MUST notify your bank in advance of travel that you will be visiting the region and that the transactions are to be authorized. When you use your card for a purchase you will be given the option to pay in Qatar Riyal or your local currency (for example US\$, Euro) - it is best to use Qatari Riyal as the exchange rate is much lower. At Doha airport you will be able to use the ATM to take out local currency- this is useful to have for small purchases such as water and snacks.

As of October 5, 2017 the exchange rate of 1 Qatari Riyal = 0.25 US Dollar.

Greetings and Customs

The general formal address is “Sayyed” (‘Sir’) for a man or “Sayeeda” for a woman, followed by the person’s full name. Arab women can be addressed as ‘Madame’.

When it comes to greeting, not all Arab men and women will shake hands with those of the opposite sex; so wait to see if they extend their hand first. A hand on the chest is another form of greeting. You may see Gulf men rubbing their noses when they see each other, which is a traditional greeting.

Simple greetings

Greeting	Meaning	Reply
Ahlan wa sahlan	Hello	Ahlan bik
Sabah al-khayr	Good morning/afternoon	Sabah an-nur
Masa al-khayr	Good evening	Masa an-nur
Min Fadlika	Please	
Shukran	Thank you	

Tipping is not customary in Qatar but is certainly appreciated by service industry workers. Leave whatever amount you feel comfortable with.

Alcohol

Alcohol is not banned in Qatar. It is available in licensed restaurants and hotels, which may sell alcohol to adult, non-Muslim customers in restricted areas. The following laws apply to alcohol and its consumption:

- It is illegal to import alcohol into the country. All luggage is scanned at the arrivals hall of Doha International Airport. **Do not purchase duty free alcohol at your transfer and bring in to Doha**
- It is an offence to drink alcohol or to be drunk in a public place. Those who are caught breaking this law can be deported, fined or receive prison sentences.

