

# Qatar

<b>Capital:</b>	Doha
<b>Religion:</b>	Islam is the principal religion of Qatar: 77.5% of the population are Sunni Muslim, while 4% are Shi'a Muslim. Christians represent 8.5% of the society and 10% of the Qatari citizens belong to other Churches.
<b>Government:</b>	Constitutional monarchy. Qatar is an absolute monarchy and is ruled by the Al Thani family. The dynasty has been ruling the country since 1825. The supreme executive authority in Qatar belongs to the Council of Ministers. Appointing and removing the prime minister and the cabinet ministers is in the power of the supreme chancellor. A Consultative Assembly (Majlis Al-Shura) has limited legislative authority.
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b>	Qatari (Arab) – 20%, other Arab – 20%, Indian – 20%, Filipino – 10%, Nepali – 13%, Pakistani – 7%, Sri Lankan – 5%, other – 5%.
<b>Language:</b>	Arabic
<b>Currency:</b>	The unit of currency is Riyal (QUAR).

- Qatar, officially- the State of Qatar, is an independent Arabic state occupying the small Qatar Peninsula in Western Asia. Its only neighbour country is Saudi Arabia to the south, while the rest of the country is surrounded by the Persian Gulf.
- The country was a British Protectorate until 1971. After gaining independence, Qatar has established itself as one of the richest countries in the Gulf region due to enormous reserves of natural gas and oil.
- The country is a hereditary emirate ruled by Al Thani family, which hold the most important positions within the state.
- Qatar is among the richest countries in the world. It has the highest GDP per capita and the fastest growing economy globally.
- Qatar has a small native population of less than 250,000 people. Foreign workers from India, Asia and other countries outnumber native Qataris.



- Qatar is an Islamic state where traditional Shari's laws apply. Although Sharia courts were ended in 2003, Shari'a principles are still in force. This means women testimonies are not treated equally to those given by men, and sometimes women statements could be completely disregarded.
- The consumption of alcohol is banned in Qatar. Foreign visitors may obtain a permit to buy alcohol for their personal use. It is only sold in selected luxury hotels.

## Business and Social Etiquette

- Businesses in Qatar have hierarchical structure. Top-level executives are the decisions-makers. Very little or no consultations are taken with more junior members.
- Do not be surprised if your Qatari business partners arrive late for a meeting, even if it has been scheduled a long time ahead. This is because the local approach to time is quite relaxed and a lack of punctuality must not be read as a lack of respect.
- Although Arabic is the official language of Qatar, many business people speak fluent English. It is advisable to make enquiries of what language will be spoken at the meeting. If taking part in complicated negotiations it may be worth to bring an interpreter along with you.
- When arranging a business meeting you should always inform your Qatari business partners whether any women will be attending. Also – remember that prayers take place five times a day.
- Qatari's often refer to their compatriots as brothers, sisters or cousins, even if there is no family in a strict sense.
- The local working days are Sunday–Thursday; Fridays and Saturdays are free. The business operational hours are: 8.00-8.30am to 5.30-6.00pm.
- Men should wear a suit and a tie, while women trousers and a conservative top. It is not necessary for women to cover their hair (it is only required when visiting a mosque).
- The common greeting for men is a handshake. Male business associates will shake the hand of a female business associate if she extends her hand first. If an Arab person pulls back their hand and holds it against the heart this is a sign of greeting in preference over handshaking.
- Meetings often get interrupted by phone calls or other queries. This must not be read as a sign of disrespect.
- Titles, such as: *Haji* and *Sheikh* are very important, which is typical for the Middle East region. It is a good idea to make enquiries before the meeting as to what titles should be used for each person.
- Choose your words carefully as Qatari's take extremely seriously spoken language. If you make any spoken commitments they will rely on you to deliver on your promises.
- When discussing, keep your voice calm.



- Do not discuss sex, religion, or regional politics.
- If you are a man, do not start a conversation with a woman when she is on her own.
- Business cards are usually exchanged and these should be in English on one side and in Arabic on the reverse.
- It is a customary to exchange gifts on a first meeting. High quality perfume is a popular choice. Do not offer alcohol or any items made of pigskin.
- Do not offer your Qatari partners to go out for a drink, as drinking alcohol is prohibited in Islam.

## Language

- When addressing a person, use first names along with personal titles (such as Haji and Sheikh) or professional ones.

English	Arabic	Phonetics
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Hello	مرحبا	Al-salaam alaykum
Good morning	الخير صباح	Sa-bah-elk-hayr
Good night	سعيدة ليلة	Ley-la-sai-da
Good bye	وداعا	Ma-al-sa-la-ama
Yes	نعم	Na-am
No	لا	lah
Please	فضلك من	Man-ft-dala-khy
Thank you	شكرا	She-ke-ra
You're welcome	ترحيب موضع كنت	Marhaba
I don't understand	الخاص	Del-ha-mes

