



QATAR
NOW

MODERN
VISION

Shadows Travelling on the Sea of the Day by Olafur Eliasson, located near Al Zubarah





Welcome to *Qatar Now*, your ultimate travel guide to the abundance of leisure and hospitality offerings that can only be found in Qatar.

Home to world-class beach resorts, exclusive shopping destinations and streets brimming with culinary delights, Qatar extends a holiday itinerary that is unrivalled and suited to every kind of traveller. Qatar has recently been named the Arab Tourism Capital for 2023, making now the perfect time for visitors from all over the world to experience this unique country.

This new edition explores two worlds that come together in Qatar. On this side of the book, we explore Qatar's Modern Vision. We speak with the artists, innovators and athletes who are shaping Qatar's contemporary culture.

Alongside this, you will find inspiration from Qatar's youth on the most fun-filled way to spend the day — from sliding down snow dunes to meeting with Qatar's very own pandas.

A curated experience awaits you, with adventures across Qatar's natural wonders and wellness escapes at our world-leading spas.

With its pristine shores, architectural wonders and cultural retreats, we invite you to discover all that Qatar has to offer and wish you a wonderful stay.

His Excellency

Akbar Al Baker

Chairman of Qatar Tourism and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive

مرحباً بكم في "قطر الآن"، دليلكم الإرشادي الأشمل للاستمتاع بمجموعة مدهشة من عروض الضيافة والترفيه التي لا مثيل لها.

تختر قطر بأفضل المنتجعات الشاطئية عالمية المستوى وبأشهر وجهات التسوق العصرية والشوارع المليئة بأشهى المأكولات، مما يجعلها تقدم لزوارها تجارب سياحية فريدة تلي تطلعات جميع المسافرين من شتى القارات.

لقد توجت العاصمة القطرية الدوحة مؤخراً بلقب عاصمة السياحة العربية 2023، مما يعني أن الآن هو الوقت المثالي للزوار من جميع أنحاء العالم لزيارة قطر والاستمتاع بأجوائها المبهجة.

تستعرض هذه النسخة الجديدة من "قطر الآن" عالمين اثنين يمتزجان كأفضل ما يكون في قطر. وفي هذا الجانب من الدليل، نستكشف رؤية قطر العصرية، حيث نتحدث مع كوكبة من الفنانين والمبدعين والرياضيين الذين يصنعون معاً ثقافة قطر الحديثة.

وإلى جانب ذلك، سوف نستلهمون كيفية قضاء أمتع الأوقات خلال عطلاتكم في قطر، بداية من التزلج في الحدائق الثلجية وصولاً إلى زيارة حديقة بيت الباندا.

ولذلك ننظركم دائماً في قطر تجارب سياحية فريدة تستمتعون خلالها بشواطئها البكر وتستكشفون معالمها المعمارية ذات النصاميم الأيقونية ومناظرها الطبيعية الرائعة بالجمال الطبيعي ونواحيها الصحية ومراكز الاستشفاء العالمية.

ويسعدنا أن نضع بين أيديكم هذه النسخة الخاصة من الدليل، وندعوكم للتعرف على جميع العروض والمزايا التي توفرها قطر لزوارها ونتمنى لكم عطلة هائلة وإقامة سعيدة.

سعادة السيد

أكبر الباكر

رئيس قطر للسياحة والرئيس التنفيذي لمجموعة الخطوط الجوية القطرية

MODERN VISION

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ART & CULTURE



Artists Yousef Ahmad (above) and Maryam Al-Homaid share a creative vision for Qatar 🇶🇦



Generation next

He sparked a movement. She stretches its boundaries. For this father and daughter, modern art is more than a family legacy.



"You can see art by Koons, KAWS and Virgil Abloh in Doha's contemporary museums and galleries," says multidisciplinary artist Maryam Al-Homaid. The 35 year old's own works of digital imagination are making waves in art spots around the city, too. "But local Arabic modern art is a booming scene—and my dad is the original"

Al-Homaid's father, Yousef Ahmad, is a pioneer of contemporary art in Qatar. His repertoire, which spans oil on canvas, abstracted calligraphy and gently nostalgic landscapes, is not only famous around the region—his exhibitions have put a spotlight on progressive Arabic art in spaces from the British Museum to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. As father and daughter stroll together through **Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art** (mathaf.org.qa) in Doha's Education City, museum officials and fans rush over to say hello to the affable, often funny, Ahmad. The artists take the attention in their stride. Ahmad has been famous all of Al-Homaid's life.

It is well known that he helped to bring Mathaf, and the world's largest specialised collection of Arabic modern art, into being.

"It's a good story," Ahmad says. "It was the beginning of the 1980s, I was a teaching professor at Qatar University and one of my students was His Excellency Dr. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al-Thani." The two bonded over a passion for art as the young royal commissioned Ahmad on a painting of the Al Zubarah heritage site. "I started to put in his ear that we have to put a collection of the Arabic world's artists' work here in Qatar." The professor was soon travelling around the region, sourcing works to begin His Excellency's collection—and the first institution of its kind.

Mathaf (the word for 'museum' in Arabic) now houses more than 9,000 artworks.

Standing before one of his own pieces, a giant triptych of textured abstraction titled *The Birth of Innovation*, Ahmad has a career of firsts to reflect upon. The artist began drawing on walls of the old Al Jasra neighbourhood where he grew up, using charcoal from his mother's cooking fire. "I held my first exhibition for the boys and girls of the *fereej* in the entry of our house when I was about eight years old," he remembers. "I cut out and glued together bits



of old calendars and my father helped me hang them with black nails used for [making] shoes.

"It was the beginning of the 1960s and I was inspired by the children's program *Baba Hattab* that I saw on television."

The movements of technology and science have influenced Ahmad ever since. New typefaces and mediums sparked ideas for 'visual solutions' that rethink traditional script. "Arabic letters have flexibility—you can make them tall, short, thin and play with it," he says. He's a fan of how calligraphy has evolved in public art sprayed around Doha: "I love the graffiti!" Long before sustainability was a trend, Ahmad began upcycling old palm leaves into homemade paper, which he uses as a canvas for much of his work. He also invented a colour made from the dust of Qatar.

"I experiment as if I am in a lab; I consider technology an expressive tool," he enthuses.

Equal parts proud dad and artist, Ahmad lights up when looking at the pixelated prototypes on Al-Homaid's laptop. "I love her active creativity."

Now herself an Assistant Professor in graphic design at Doha's Virginia Commonwealth University, Al-Homaid grew up sketching her dad

*"I experiment
as if I'm in a
lab; I consider
technology an
expressive tool."*

– Artist Yousef Ahmad



as he mixed, painted and created in his home studio. She has, she says, always been impressed by his aversion to being boxed in: "I don't know how to define myself either. I call myself a 'confused artist/designer' all the time."

Mixing augmented and virtual reality with digital and physical mediums, Al-Homaid explores transformations of context. "As a Millennial, I feel very excited by the rapid change in Qatar—in our architecture, lifestyle and even our language. But I also feel I need to use my creativity to document those changes."

Her recent works are purposefully tactile: graphic pixels stamp the coordinates and images of city landmarks, which might change without much warning, onto textiles that are made to last.

Inside The Ned Doha, one carpet hangs on a wall as a homage to the Modernist government

office that preceded the hotel. Other rugs and blankets (look for them at the Studio 7 design concept store in Msheireb) record the original location of Al Wakrah's iconic 'pearl roundabout' and scenes from a souq. "I use computer software to design the images and then the textiles are handwoven by special craftspeople."

The process is a nod to the traditional Al Sadu weavers (read more on page 20 of the Vibrant Tradition side of this book) who recorded nomadic desert journeys on textiles. "Weaving is one of the crafts that risks getting lost with the transformation that's happening at the moment," Al-Homaid says. "I love to play with building bridges between the old crafts and technology."

If there's one thing her dad taught her it's that art without experimentation is not art at all.

The new guard

Creative places to see contemporary art.



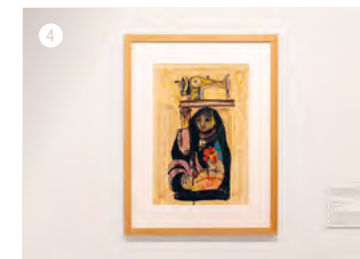
1. Inside a former school building in Education City, Mathaf's permanent collection was assembled over three decades by His Excellency Dr. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al-Thani

2. A gallery of colourful Arabic inspiration inside Mathaf

3. *The Birth of Innovation* by Qatari pioneer Yousef Ahmad

4. "Woman and Sewing Machine is a treasure," Yousef Ahmad says. The piece by influential Iraqi painter and sculptor Jewad Selim was saved from shelling in Baghdad. Ahmad brought it to Mathaf in 1993

5. *Discovery* by Jassim al-Zaini. "Al-Zaini has had a strong influence on Qatari contemporary and modern art, presenting features that touched life in Qatar in the 1940s and 1950s," Ahmad explains. "This piece pictures a child pulling a thread on a mask and seeing the mother's face."



MATHAF:
ARAB MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART
EDUCATION CITY
mathaf.org.qa

Explore the region's largest collection of contemporary works by pivotal artists from Arabic-speaking cultures across the Arabian Gulf and Middle East, parts of Africa and Asia. An insightful audio guide, available in multiple languages, can take you on an 11-stop tour of highlights or you can find a family-geared talk running at intervals (check dates and register online).

But don't rush: you could easily roam around Mathaf for an entire day. Major themes address the politics of change and the movement of human civilisation through rapidly changing landscapes into the digital age. Paintings and sculptures by Mahmoud Mokhtar, Hafidh al-Droubi and Jewad Selim spin ancient civilisations into new visual forms. Works by Qatari luminary Yousef Ahmad (who you met on page 9) use natural materials and local language to express statements on economic and social shifts in Qatar. Gallery 8 explores the theme of women as an allegory of freedom in young societies. Until 5 August, see *Beirut and the Golden Sixties*, a mixed media exhibition examining the heady period of artistic and political ferment following Lebanon's independence from French-mandated colonial rule in 1943.



CLICK HERE

FIRE STATION

📍 DOHA

firestation.org.qa

Culture-hunters will get a kick out of Fire Station from the street. The exterior of the reworked firehouse building is a concrete canvas for street art. Venture behind its canary-coloured doors and you'll find one of Doha's most celebrated contemporary art spaces, Garage Gallery, which hosts rotating exhibitions of painting, sculpture, fashion and digital works from local artists, as well as international powerhouses such as Virgil Abloh, KAWS and Ai Weiwei.

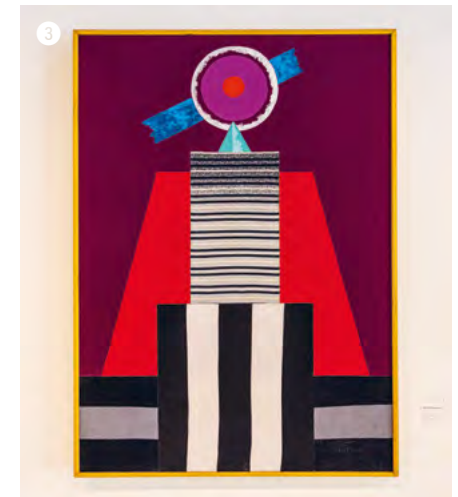
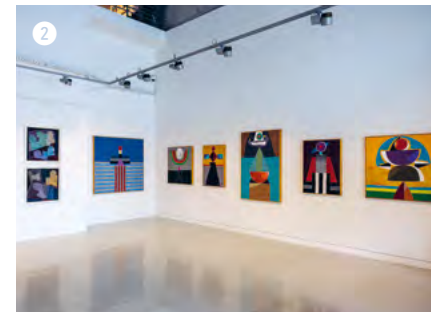
Fire Station also runs an Artist in Residence mentorship and development program, where now-notable Qatari names Aisha Al-Sowaidi, Fahad Al-Obaidly and Maryam Al-Homaid (read more on page 9) got their start. Drop in on studios and you might see experimentalists at work. On your way out, don't miss Café #999 and the excellent on site art supplies retailer, Cass Art. If you're in the market for a Jeff Koons skateboard, this is just the place to pick one up.



Above and left:
At Fire Station, the experience begins outside

"The original fire station was for putting fires out; now the concept is the opposite—people come to see new ideas catch on."

– Artist Yousef Ahmad



1 & 2.
Vibrant exhibitions at Al Markhiya Gallery

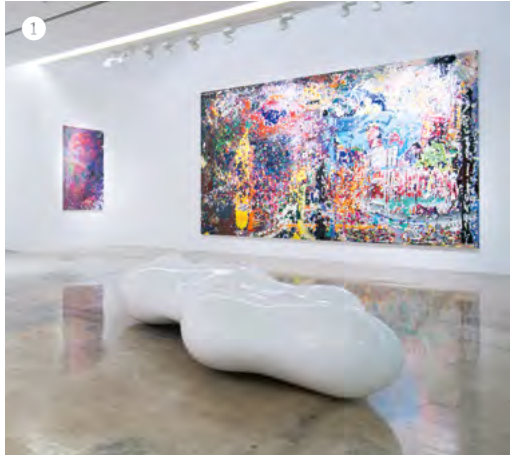
3.
Untitled by Egyptian artist Mostafa Abdel Moity as shown at Al Markhiya

AL MARKHIYA

📍 FIRE STATION PLAZA

almarkhiyagallery.com

Curious minds will love this privately owned gallery in the Fire Station complex. Exhibitions change every six-to-eight weeks from September through to May, while in summer, you'll see its excellent permanent collection of pieces by Arabic legends and newcomers. Regular shows include *40 Minus*, which focuses on artists aged under 40, and *50 x 50*, featuring works of these dimensions, which can be bought by budding collectors.



1. Anima Gallery
2. Liwan's refreshed exterior
3. Qatar National Library

ART 29

W DOHA

marriott.com



CLICK HERE

After jump-starting your curiosity with rainbow-coloured coffees and house-baked pastries at W Café, ride the elevator up to the 29th floor of the W Doha hotel to investigate a rotating line up of installations from multidisciplinary artists. Many were born elsewhere around the world and all have unexpected stories to tell. You might leave with a fresh appetite to taste something new at Spice Market, Jean-Georges Vongerichten's temple of south-eastern flavours on the hotel's first floor.

"Incredible galleries are hidden everywhere across Doha—inside hotels, at pop-ups, everywhere."

– Artist Maryam Al-Homaid

ANIMA

WEST BAY

animagallery.com

Representing emerging, mid-career and established artists working in a broad range of styles and mediums, this future-focused show space isn't open all the time (check website), but when it is, prepare to be lost in a riot of colour, movement and wild thought.

EIWAN AL GASSAR

ST. REGIS DOHA

eiwanalgassar.com

Billed as a melting pot for art, design and performance, this three-gallery artspace says anything goes. Past exhibitions have shown the wildly gorgeous aerial images of local nature photographer Azzam Al Mannai, the hanging rocks and bricks of Qatari sculptor Shua'a Ali and the latest Rolls Royce. Visit the website to see what's on this summer.

QATAR NATIONAL LIBRARY

EDUCATION CITY

qnl.qa

This is not just a giant library that gives the people of Qatar access to more than one million books. This is a bright, white portal into the future. Inside the building designed by Rem Koolhaas, robots sweep along seemingly endless rows, returning books to their proper places. Innovation stations cater to interests in videography, photography, design, sound editing, STEM and 3D printing. There's even a music studio. The Heritage Library houses rare Arabic manuscripts, maps and historical photographs.

Workshops

LIWAN DESIGN STUDIOS AND LABS

MSHEIREB

[@liwan.qa](http://liwan.qa)

Qatar Museums has restored a mid-century girls school into a creative lab. Regular workshops in crafts such as dressmaking and ceramics aim to develop Doha's fresh generation of makers. Come to explore showcases of youthful obsessions such as sneaker culture and digital typography.

M7

MSHEIREB

m7.org.qa

The upper levels of this cool incubator for design, fashion and tech are home to co-working spaces and resource libraries. The ground floor is more of a hangout, where fashion exhibitions and pop-ups are staged. Whatever else is on, the Studio 7 concept design store is always worth a peep (see shopping on page 69).

KATARA ART CENTER

KATARA CULTURAL VILLAGE, BUILDING 5

dohakac.com

Inside this vibrant playspace for local artists, you might see an illustrator's messages scrawled across a mirror. You might get to flick through racks of garments by free-thinking designers. Or you might see big ideas splashed onto canvas in paint.



Inside out

Spray cans. Vintage cars. No tickets. This graffiti artist is taking fine art to the streets.

"My parents noticed that I had a talent for art when I was young, so I did classes in drawing, ceramics, sculpture and Arabic calligraphy," Mubarak Al-Malik says. By his early 20s, he had started making a name for himself as a colourful abstract and realist-inspired painter.

"The thing is, I started to find it a little boring to only have exhibitions in galleries— a canvas on the wall and more canvas on the wall—with only 'art people' seeing it," he explains. Excited by the street art he saw while travelling in Europe, in 2010, the fine artist picked up a spray can—and found his new niche. "I want to inspire all types of people, to make them think, every day."

Now 36, Al-Malik is a leader of the grassroots movement taking Qatari art into the wild. Eyes open, up and down as you explore Doha, you'll spot graphic murals splashed across the side of metro stations, public art along the curve of the Corniche and calligraffiti scrawled around corners. "There's always something new to see."

Al-Malik's own street art is distinct, focusing on representations of the *batoola*, the metallic face covering traditionally worn by older Arabic women. It's a bold move to give such an honoured image public expression. "But as soon as I started, people liked what I was doing on social media, then brands started asking

"I want to inspire all types of people, to make them think, every day."

me to paint their buildings." One of his most well-known works, a black and white mural of a batoola-wearing woman burning *bakhoor*, stretches across the exterior of Qatar Museums' Fire Station.

Jedariart, the street-art program spearheaded by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, took Al-Malik and his motif to the Art Basel art fair in Miami in 2021. "I was a bit nervous to display a strongly Islamic symbol in the USA—would they like it?" the artist admits. "But the feedback was beautiful. People came with positive energy and asked, 'What is this shape? What is this symbol?'"

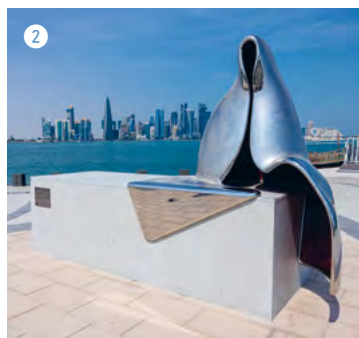
Al-Malik's intention is always to provoke questions—because answers can challenge stereotypes. "For me, the batoola means customs, traditions and national heritage," he says. "I grew up with my grandmother wearing this and she was strong—I consider the older generation of Qatari women to be strong figures."

Back home in Qatar, Al-Malik has begun pushing beyond the city. Revving up his vintage Mustang Shelby GT500, he drives off the beaten path to find crumbling walls in old villages along the coast or in the desert. "I like to take something that is damaged or unused and make people see it as beautiful again."

See more outdoor art on the next page.

MUBARAK
ALMALIK

Art in the wild



1. *Shadows Travelling on the Sea of the Day* by Olafur Eliasson, near Al Zubarah
2. *Toub Toub Ya Bahar* by Salman Al-Malik, on the Corniche
3. *Kan Ya Ma Kaan* by Bouthayna Al Muftah, at the National Museum of Qatar
4. *East-West/West-East* by Richard Serra, at Brouq Nature Reserve

Feel the beat

Scratch what you think you know about Arabic music. Doha's dancefloors have a new groove.

Doha is a city that sings at night. In the cool that follows dusk, technicolour light beams pulse and sway across the West Bay skyline and neighbourhood souqs start to hum. As melodies spill through open doors of restaurants and drift from rooftop bars, Doha's dance music scene sparks to life.

On a sultry summer evening, beach clubs set around resort pools are the place to be. The new **Makani Beach Club** (+974 4494 8888) at Four Seasons Hotel Doha on the Corniche serves chic beverages and chill beats. International fusion restaurant **SUSHISAMBA** (+974 4456 5774) has set up its first beach club at Waldorf Astoria Lusail.

Want to dance later into the night? "Electronic music is growing in Qatar and a bunch of new clubs have recently opened up," says DJ and producer Khalid Al Ibrahim, who spins decks around Doha as Deus Deserto (check @deus.deserto for gigs). "You can find live music or a dancefloor any night of the week," he says.

The 28-year-old Al Wakrah native grew up on old-school West Coast (American) rap before getting into trance with Faithless, David Guetta and Daft Punk. He's the first Qatari DJ to push local clubbers beyond melodic dance music, playing the 'in-your-face, Berlin-style techno' that thrilled crowds at festivals held around the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.

He's also the first to remix traditional Qatari music with this infectious, rapid-fire sound. "The done thing has always been to sample European lyrics in dance music—but local people don't even know what they mean," Al Ibrahim explains. "So, for my track *Amsy*, I featured the oud and the *darbuka*, which is an Arabic drum, and I asked a friend who is a poet to write something in Arabic, which I recorded in his voice."

It's cool finding new inspiration in what's old, the DJ says. "I love how the oud can be all mellow but then it can go really fast and intense... I'm all about that energy."

Here's where to dance

IRIS

📍 DOHA
+974 5515 1339

On the rooftop at The Ritz-Carlton, Sharq Village, settle into a lounge for easy sunset sessions.

HIDE

📍 DOHA
+974 6003 0909

Doha's first megaclub, at the InterContinental Doha, is open until 03:00 and entry is free.

MONKEY TALE

📍 DOHA
+974 5077 7533

A beachside club for Boho-style climate-controlled cabanas, deep house and pop tunes.

ACOUSTIC MUSIC PENTHOUSE

📍 DOHA
+974 4030 7100

Serves beverages named after The Beatles and live jazz on the 36th and 37th floors of Raffles Doha.

Back to the future

Modernist landmarks are a magnet for architecture fans. But there's more to design-forward Doha than first meets the eye.

Through the window of a plane, Doha first appears as a futuristic forest of skyscrapers with its back to the sand and its face staring out beyond the Arabian Gulf. On the ground, state-of-the-art infrastructure knits together Brutalist monuments and monoliths designed by Jean Nouvel, I.M. Pei and Zaha Hadid. There's no mistaking that you're in a city built for progress.

"But look closer," says local architect Ibrahim Jaidah. "Doha's buildings have another story to tell. What makes Qatar unique is that through incredible growth and globalisation, we have retained our own architectural identity."

The mastermind behind projects as diverse as Al Thumama Stadium, the renovation of the Fire Station art space and glamorous seafloor resorts, Jaidah is also the Chief Architect of the Arab Engineering Bureau and champions the fusion of Islamic and Qatari vernacular with contemporary concepts.

Jaidah's own Barzan Tower in West Bay is considered the textbook example—above its base of concrete arches and domes rises a vision of glass. Nearby, Nouvel's Burj Doha stands 238 m tall, boldly reflecting Qatar's Islamic heart on its mashrabiya-patterned facade.

But Qatari design goes deeper than decoration. "Our ancestors managed to live

in this harsh climate without electricity by using architecture that is friendly with the environment," Jaidah explains. The organic, twisting layout and water features of the *Al Jasra fereej* (neighbourhood) where the architect grew up not only afford the privacy that is key to Qatari home life but is incredibly smart. "We did a study with Harvard in which they rebuilt the old town and did a thermal analysis. They realised that within the courtyards of these narrow pedestrian spaces, the temperature was up to 10 degrees less than in surroundings."

In the Msheireb district of Downtown Doha, the M7 building, the country's epicentre of fashion and tech innovation, winds this old technology into its sleek profile. On other buildings, 'basket-weave' walls imitate the cooling towers that were once used to amplify coastal winds. "As you walk through this area, you'll notice not only the orientation and shading but old-style landscaping with native trees that take most of their water from the air."

You'll also find a set of faithfully restored heritage houses, which now form the four Msheireb Museums, sitting comfortably close to the cafes and restaurants of cosmopolitan Barahat Square. Jaidah smiles: "Our tradition is so minimalist it looks modern."



1. Doha's skyline is electrifying at night

2. The Ceremonial Court at **Education City** gives grandeur fine details. Traditionally, mashrabiya, latticework and carved motifs provided privacy and ventilation

3. Ibrahim Jaidah's famous Barzan Tower. "In a desert environment, the sky and the patterns in our beautiful architecture are our garden."



CLICK HERE
to learn more



FAMILIES

The kids' top 20

Children from Qatar show you the best places to play, explore and eat on an epic day of adventure.

MEET THE YOUNG CURATORS



HAMAD AL-RAYAH, 10, loves video games, sports, ice cream and being in the 5th grade at school. "You can't get bored in Doha—there's always so much to do, even when it's warm outside."



AMINA AHMED, 16, was born in the USA and moved to Doha 11 years ago. "I love how busy you can be in Doha, but then go out into nature and feel far away."

1.

COOL OFF ON EPIC WATER SLIDES

📍 SALWA BEACH RESORT, SALWA
salwabeachresort.qa

"**Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park** is a lot of fun," says Hamad. At one of the Middle East's best big family attractions, you can splash around 56 rides, slides and pools for all ages. "My favourite is the King Cobra—two people get inside a tube and slide into the mouth of a snake!"



2.

SEE SNOW IN THE DESERT

📍 DOHA FESTIVAL CITY MALL, DOHA
snowdunes.qa

"**Snow Dunes Theme Park** is a cool surprise," says Amina. "There is actual snow and an ice skating rink—it gets as cold as -4 degrees Celsius. Everyone hires snow suits." On the 50 m Dune Dash slide, you can clock speeds up to 50 km an hour. Want more chill? **Subzero** (+974 5595 1101) at The Pearl-Qatar serves cups of hot chocolate while you sit on frozen chairs in an igloo cafe carved completely out of ice.



3.

BE A PILOT FOR A DAY

♥ ASPIRE ZONE
doha.kidzania.com

What do you want to be when you grow up? **KidZania** is a pint-sized city where children are in charge, role-playing at more than 60 fun jobs and earning special KidZos currency. Join the Aviation Academy to learn to fly a plane, jump in a fire truck to put out an inferno and see what it's like to be a doctor, bank teller or television host.



4.

PLAY ON THE PEARL

♥ THE PEARL-QATAR
megapolisqatar.com,
@yippylandentertainmentqatar

Megapolis Entertainment Center in Medina Centrale goes Hamad's speed. You can play arcade games or go in a car racing simulator while parents have fun bowling or finding their way out of the escape room. In Porto Arabia, **Yippyland Entertainment City** has gentle rides and plush toy prizes for children aged from two years. At Qanat Quartier, find the piano stairs—they play music out loud as you run up and down between the colourful buildings.

5.

SLIDE DOWN AN ICON

♥ AL MASRAH PARK, DOHA

The new **Modern Doha Playground** designed by artist Shezad Dawood shrinks iconic buildings from around Doha into play equipment. Swing on a miniature replica of the Sheraton, the city's first modern hotel, then slip down the side of the Qatar Post Office and climb all over Qatar University. The little buildings light up so you can keep playing after dark.



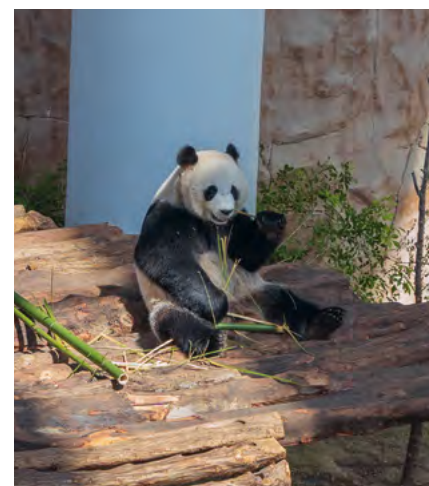
6.

GO BIG ON YOUR GRID

♥ THE CORNICHE

"There's so much cool public art to see around Doha—I like that it shows how young people feel about the world," Amina says. The most Instagrammable? "The huge dugong sculpture by Jeff Koons at the Corniche looks like a big metallic balloon." Fun fact: The world's second-largest population of dugongs lives in Qatar.

CLICK HERE



7.

VISIT THE GIANT PANDAS

♥ AL KHOR PANDA HOUSE, AL KHOR
visitqatar.com

Last year, fluffy pandas, four-year-old male Suhail and three-year-old female Thuraya, moved into the Middle East's first **Panda House**, complete with precisely controlled humidity and air conditioning, 464 trees and 2814 bamboo plants. The pair are here from China to promote conservation, but seem to spend a lot of their time lazing around, reports Hamad. "You watch them through big windows—I saw Thuraya swinging in a tree and eating bamboo; Suhail was sleeping." Download the Oun app to buy tickets (Apple Store and Google Play).

CLICK HERE

8.

CONQUER THE WORLD'S HIGHEST INDOOR RIDES

♥ DOHA QUEST, MSHEIREB
dohaquest.com

The great indoors are greatest at the **Doha Quest** theme park. There are more than 30 wild, adrenalin-spiking rides, simulators and virtual reality challenges under one roof in this hi-tech 32,000 sq m experience park. "The EpiQ Coaster holds the Guinness World Record for tallest indoor roller coaster," says Amina. The Magma Blast, the highest indoor shot-and-drop tower on the planet, is another challenge. "You can't miss it!"





9.

REV YOUR ENGINES

📍 VILLAGGIO MALL, DOHA
gondolania.com

“**Gondolania Theme Park** is one of the best places in Doha for one reason: you can go Go-Karting inside!” Hamad exclaims. Younger kids like the cruisy gondola ride and the train that chugs through a land of dinosaurs, but this 5th grader goes for the thrills. “The roller coaster flashes cool lights and sounds.” Does action make you hungry? Hamad recommends the tomahawk steak from **Outback Steakhouse** then dollops of vanilla ice cream with M&Ms from **Cold Stone Creamery**, both also inside Villaggio.

10.

CHASE THE ANGRY BIRDS

📍 DOHA FESTIVAL CITY
angrybirdsworld.qa

You don’t need to love the video game to love **Angry Birds World**, but if you do, keep your eyes peeled to meet characters Angry Red, Chuck or Stella after the daily live shows. Indoor rides include the tummy-twisting drop tower or gently swooping Bouncing Blues ride for little ones. Outside, prepare to get soaked on the Raft Battle boats or scream your heart out as the Super Slingshot flings you 60 m into the air.



11.

TAKE ON A ROBOT GOALIE

📍 KHALIFA INTERNATIONAL STADIUM, DOHA
321qosm.org.qa

“The **3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum** is the best,” says Hamad. “I love sports, especially boxing, and I learned a lot about Muhammad Ali.” Galleries cover the greatest events and athletes in sporting history—see Ali’s glove, Sachin Tendulkar’s ‘master blaster’ cricket bat and a Tony Hawk skateboard—and you can have a go at *el-gaiss*, a traditional Qatari game similar to hopscotch. “There’s a football game where you try to shoot the ball past a robot goalkeeper,” says Hamad. “Unfortunately, I haven’t beaten him yet—he’s too quick!”



12.

UPGRADE YOUR TECH

📍 THE GATE MALL, WEST BAY
store974.com

“Doha gets the best new video games and I enjoy going to the mall with my friends to spend my pocket money on them,” Hamad says. At The Gate Mall, teen tech-heads will find the consoles, new releases and classic arcade games of their dreams on **Geek Street**, a neon-lit Tokyo-meets-Doha ‘road’ attached to a gamer’s paradise called **Store 974**. You’ll also find pop figures, Pokemon and an arena space where local gamers go to train for esports games. Another Store 974 is set to open in **Place Vendôme** in summer—it will be the biggest gaming shop in the Middle East!



13.

HIT A FAMILY-FRIENDLY BEACH CLUB

📍 WEST BAY
+974 5999 6122

Open daily at 10:00 until sunset, the easygoing new **B12 Beach Club** is an upbeat escape for the whole family. Parents can try SUP Yoga and Breakfast sessions then sink into a beach cushion to sip through the fruity drinks list. All-day dining will keep kids (entry to the club is free for under 18s) bouncing around the inflatable water park, the largest floating park in Doha, and fuelled up for games of volleyball, ping pong and Teqball.

👉 [CLICK HERE](#)

14.

UNCOVER MAGIC ILLUSIONS

📍 THE GATE MALL, WEST BAY
museumofillusions.qa

Part magical playroom, part brain teaser, the **Museum of Illusions** challenges you to figure out which way is up in a bright blue, rotating Vortex Tunnel, an Infinity Tunnel and frankly flabbergasting spaces where holograms rule. Take a photo ‘walking’ up a wall to confuse your friends back home.

15.



CLICK HERE

HIT THE PARKS

♥ VARIOUS LOCATIONS

MIA Park on the Corniche waterfront is a relaxed family hangout, especially on Friday afternoons. Three playgrounds are set up for various age groups (two–five, five–12, and 12–16) and you can also go for a spin on the scenic carousel, bounce on bungee trampolines or pick up kayak or SUP tours on Dhow Harbour. Taco, burger and ice cream trucks pull up for snack times.

The giant **Al Bidda Park** splits into three zones, each filled with public art and attractions. Sprawl out for a picnic among natural

landscaping in Al Bidda, look for insects and birds at the Wadi Al Sail Historical Site or find manicured gardens and lawns in the Al Rumailah area.

“Doha’s parks have great bike paths,” says Amina. “My favourite is in **Aspire Park**—you can ride around Doha’s only lake, where there are ducks and swans.” You could also head for a swim at nearby Hamad Aquatic Center. Hire bikes or shaded four-wheelers for families from **Berg Arabia** (bergarabia.com) at Al Bidda or hire an electric scooter via the Fenix app.



16.



CLICK HERE

SHOOT FOR THE STARS

♥ KATARA CULTURAL VILLAGE

althuraya.katara.net

Al Thuraya Planetarium is one of the best ways to while away the heat of a day in Katara—and entry is completely free. Find out how much you weigh on Mars and other planets, watch mini films and play at interactive screens to explore the mysteries of space.

17.

CATCH A WAVE

♥ BANANA ISLAND RESORT DOHA
BY ANANTARA
anantara.com

First-time surfers can have a blast in the safe, supervised Surf Pool at Banana Island’s family resort. The instructors here can customise things to suit your size and skill level as they show you how to carve up the swell on body boards or surfboards.



18.



CLICK HERE

WATCH THE WORLD GO BY

♥ AL MAHA ISLAND

almahaisland.com

One of Doha’s newest attraction zones, Al Maha Island entertains with amazing views across Doha and Lusail and an upbeat atmosphere. A set of restaurants keeps kids of all ages happy. Pizzas at **Rossopomodoro** are authentically Neapolitan-style and the beautiful all-day cafe **Pura Vida Miami** serves delicious, healthy bowls. Everyone gets a thrill out of watching the world go by on Al Maha Drive, a street reserved only for luxury classics and supercars.



19.

HAVE A FARM DAY

♥ AL KHOR

baladnapark.com

Local yoghurt, cheese and custard-maker Baladna is so popular it has its own fun park. There are lots of ways to get your hands dirty at farm-themed **Baladna Park**: unearth fossils, gems and shells on a Mining Experience, plant a flower in the greenhouse, ride a (mechanical) rodeo bull and try out the ‘milking’ a cow statue. Ziplines, archery, a ninja warrior course and speedway-style karting stray from the theme, but who’s arguing?

20.

EAT AROUND LUSAIL

♥ MARINA FOOD ARENA AND LUSAIL
BOULEVARD, LUSAIL

“You can find any food you can imagine in Doha,” Amina says. “Food trucks at Marina Food Arena are a favourite.” **June Cafe** serves chocolate waffles with a retro diner vibe. **Owl Specialty Coffee** is the sweet spot to try soft-serves and smoothies in every colour. Nearby Lusail Boulevard has an array of indoor eateries, from **Salt Burger** (try the Cheetos fries) to **Chuck E. Cheese**—and you can hit the climbing wall at **WOW Entertainment Park** after filling up.

Eye spy

How many activities on this map can you tick off on your holiday in Qatar?

- ☐ Walk around the Imam Abdul Wahhab Mosque
- ☐ See the pandas at Panda House
- ☐ Ride the world's highest roller coaster at Doha Quest
- ☐ Explore the desert rose at National Museum of Qatar
- ☐ Ride a bike to the Museum of Islamic Art
- ☐ Take a photo of Katara Towers
- ☐ Jump aboard a dhow at the Corniche
- ☐ Spot the giant falcon at the airport
- ☐ See an oryx walk through a wall at Katara Cultural Village
- ☐ Ride a camel at Souq Waqif
- ☐ Find the Pigeon Towers at Katara Cultural Village
- ☐ Slip and slide at Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park
- ☐ Pose with Jeff Koons' dugong on the Corniche
- ☐ Sail on a gondola at Villaggio Mall
- ☐ Cruise with whale sharks off Al Ruwais
- ☐ Kayak at Purple Island
- ☐ Take a selfie at Olafur Eliasson's *Shadows Travelling on the Sea of the Day* art installation
- ☐ Go karting at Lusail Circuit Sports Club



CLICK HERE
to learn more



FOOD & DINING

Feed *your* curiosity

Take a spin around Doha's vibrant international food scene with Chef Edgar Hurtado.



It can be hard to keep up with Edgar Hurtado. Born in Peru and trained in kitchens around the world, the chef, known for plating up Latin carnivals of flavour and colour, came to Qatar to flex his imagination. "Doha is the city of possibilities," he says. "And I want to taste them all."

Big enough to attract Michelin-starred names, but young and hungry for new ideas, Doha's international food scene is exciting and creative. Luminaries Alain Ducasse from France, Dani García from Spain and Pino Lavarra from Italy each have a few restaurants around the city and Nobuyuki Matsuhisa has put the biggest Nobu in the world at the end of a jetty reaching into the Arabian Gulf.

At the end of 2022, Hurtado became the Executive Chef at the Four Seasons Hotel's new **Curiosa by Jean-Georges** restaurant (fourseasons.com, +974 4494 8888) under Jean-Georges Vongerichten. "He's a hero for me and he's also a nice guy," says Hurtado. "There's a small community of chefs in Doha, the famous

ones, executive chefs from around the world and local guys, and we are all passionate about taking global dishes and giving them a local connection."

This chef sees delicious parallels between his Latin cuisine and local food. "Like Qatar, Peru is a very multicultural place and very rich in traditions. My food is similar to Qatari cuisine in that we have a lot of influences from other places—from Africa, from Asia, Europe—and from history.

"What people here love is the mix of spices, chilli, sweetness... the mix of cultures in one cuisine. I'm very excited for people to taste dishes from the Latin world mixed with local produce."

Curiosa's kitchen is open to the dining room—Hurtado wants you to peek in. He'll certainly come out. "Eating at Curiosa starts with the senses—you have the charcoal and wood aromas from the grill and the lively sizzling sounds from the kitchen—and I love to talk to my guests about ingredients and how we cook. I'm creating an experience."

On the restaurant's plant-dotted terrace, a 150-year-old olive tree takes centre stage. "It's the heart of Curiosa," says Hurtado. "What we want to do is bring nature to the city."

The sustainable farm-to-fork movement is gathering speed in Qatar. A go-to for many of the city's chefs, **Heenat Salma Farm** (heenatsalma.earth) sits a 40-minute drive northwest of Doha. Here, forests of date palms frame rows of plump cabbages, zucchini, eggplant and watermelon. Tomatoes grow red and ripe in greenhouses. Birds chirp and bees make wild honey from Sidr trees. "The farmers are so passionate and help you pull your own produce straight out of the soil," says Hurtado. Heenat Salma's glamping accommodation is closed during summer, but the breezy, rustic-chic restaurant is open and serving organic

feasts year-round. "You can really taste the earth and sunshine in everything."

Back in Doha, Hurtado buys octopus and sweet local hamour fish at the Al Mina Fish Market, the catch ending up as ceviche or cooked on skewers with potato and sharp shots of lime at Curiosa. "If you're hungry while you're here, **Chabrat Al Mina** (+974 4449 2323) next to the market fries up prawns, octopus and fish and it's incredible."

The spice stalls at Souq Waqif are Hurtado's other happy place. "I could stand here, just smelling things, for 30 minutes," he says, breathing in hits of earthy mace and piquant chilli. As a Peruvian, he knows his spice, but there's always a new resin, rock or powder to experiment with. "I'm always asking 'What is this? What can I do with it?'"

Opposite page:
Hurtado picking
vegetables at Heenat
Salma Farm

Right:
Charred octopus
with smoked paprika,
crème fraiche and
guajillo vinaigrette
at Curiosa by
Jean-Georges



*"What we
want to do is
bring nature
to the city."*

"I always have so many questions for the vendors, they call me 'The Question Guy.'"

When not on sourcing missions, the chef leads his family on food adventures. "I have two kids and when we have time off, we eat!" The food trucks at the Marina Food Arena at Lusail and Tasty Street in Katara (read more on page 48) are a cultural education. "You find mini versions of local restaurants and great street food from all around the world," he says.

Winding between Ibn Mahmoud Street and adjacent Al Jazeera Street in the Fereej Bin Mahmoud neighbourhood, the hungry chef darts between Korean, Russian and Thai joints, chatting to the cooks. He doesn't know restaurant names and it doesn't matter. "We never pick

a place before coming here—we just wander. It's so exciting to have all these amazing food cultures in one place.

"My wife is from Ukraine and when I met her a few years ago, her knowledge about food was really poor. But after living in Doha, she says she could be a food blogger."

Like many hungry travellers in Doha, Hurtado says a good day often ends with a hot Turkish shawarma, with the juice dripping down his chin. "There are so many great places in Al Sadd. **Chtoura** (+974 4436 9777), is my favourite, but I have a friend who argues with me that the sandwiches at **Shawarma El Khebbez** (@shawarmaelkhebbez) in Al Mina are better. It's a joke between us, but I don't mind if neither of us has found Doha's best shawarma yet—the joy is to keep looking."



Top tables

Eat Italian classics with a 360-degree view, new-school Spanish or a Michelin chef's camel rissole. These restaurants take dining to the next level.

THREE SIXTY

📍 THE TORCH DOHA
+974 4446 5600

Take a spin in the sky at Doha's only revolving restaurant, 47 floors up inside landmark building The Torch Doha. In a relaxed dining space that makes children welcome, the menu elegantly mixes classic Mediterranean pasta, risotto, seafood and grilled meats with Qatari specialities such as umm ali, the sweetly spicy pudding made from pastry, milk and dried fruit. The changing views of the Arabian Gulf and city are incredible at different times. You might need to go twice.

CURIOSA BY JEAN-GEORGES

📍 FOUR SEASONS HOTEL DOHA
+974 4494 8888

At this vibrant new space in Four Seasons Hotel Doha, Executive Chef Edgar Hurtado elevates Latin staples with creative flair. Smoked mozzarella empanadas, guacamole, shrimp ceviche, charred octopus and churros dance in your mouth. "Our sea bass crudo, which is a ceviche, highlights freshness with acidity and spiciness in a way that surprises people," says the chef. "Our arroz con pollo sounds simple but it's very complex, with lots of jalapeno, gravy, mushroom and chicken cooked three ways for the right texture."

BIBO DOHA

📍 THE ST. REGIS DOHA
+974 4424 4870

Andalusian chef Dani García's West Bay brasserie was voted Best European Restaurant in Qatar in 2022. It's also one of Hurtado's favourites. "It's a beautiful Art Deco-inspired space and the tapas is something else." Take a seat around the central bar and snack on spicy patatas bravas, squid ink croquettes and BiBo's famous oxtail broche. Settling in for dessert? Hurtado would order the tarta de queso manchego, a sweet-salty cheesecake served with strawberry sorbet.

Shrimp ceviche with almond, banana and coriander at Curiosa by Jean-Georges





Needle fish with potato
and tarragon at Jiwan

NOBU

📍 FOUR SEASONS HOTEL
DOHA
+974 4494 8500

The Doha outpost of Nobu serves Nobuyuki Matsuhisa's iconic Japanese fare with expected elegance. Inside the huge modernist shell on a private pier, waitstaff glide between three floors and a spectacular terrace, carrying plates of black cod in miso and glistening slabs of sashimi. "I'm good friends with Head Chef Andrew Bozoki," Hurtado says. "He's really passionate about the freshest local ingredients from top suppliers."

PARISA SOUQ WAQIF

📍 SOUQ WAQIF, DOHA
+974 4441 1494

"You'll find some of the best food in Doha inside Souq Waqif," says Hurtado. "You can taste the best kunafa in town or fantastic Turkish at little holes in the wall, but if you want real Persian food and an unforgettable setting, you go to Parisa." Here, under ornate chandeliers, every imaginable surface is painted with scenes from Persian myths and legends, mosaicked or inlaid with tiny mirrors imported from Iran. The food keeps pace with the palatial surroundings—think elevated kebabs, stews rich with nuts, fruit and spices and platters of coloured rice. To drink, choose from an array of freshly squeezed fruit juices.

JIWAN

📍 NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF QATAR
+974 4452 5725

Nestled at the top of the National Museum of Qatar's desert rose, Jiwan is Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse's ode to the desert. Interiors curve and flow like dunes while four million Swarovski glass beads sway in curtains suspended from the ceiling in a tribute to Qatar's pearling legacy. The cuisine follows the rhythms of nature to refine dishes rooted in local history: succulent camel rissoles are brightened with sweet dashes of bell pepper, local needle fish is a tangy surprise and desserts swing from a light take on mahalabiya pudding to pear spiked with tangy local lough. Set menus are extraordinarily good value and match each course with a creative mocktail. The panoramic view of the water and the city skyline from the restaurant's terrace is glorious.

Cutting edge

Lusail's Katara Towers is designed to represent the scimitars of Qatar's national seal. Dress sharp and indulge at the city's most opulent hotel dining destinations.

FAIRMONT DOHA

fairmont.com

Inside **Fairmont Doha**, **Cyra Botanical Shisha** is a relaxed terrace space where Arabic mezze, rosewater-infused zero cocktails and shisha help ease you into the evening. The **Dôme Fairmont Lounge** is an elegant spot for Parisian-style afternoon tea—choose your chocolate parfait or luqaimat-topped mille-feuille from a walk-in dessert cooler that looks like a giant glass cloche. Dinner at **Masala Library by Jiggs Kalra** will take you on an odyssey through the cuisines of India, while **Vaya! Latin Mercado** restaurant's Argentinian barbecue sizzles to a live salsa beat. The Sky Terrace at **Provok Asian Project**, a glamorous glass temple of Japanese and Korean fusion spread across levels 33 and 34, masters an epic view of Lusail and The Pearl-Qatar.



Right:

Katara Towers is home to both Fairmont and Raffles hotels

Opposite page:

Fairmont's selection of sweet and savoury creations is accompanied by rare tea blends and botanical fruit tisanes

Bottom:

The afternoon tea at Raffles is served with the sweetest of delicacies



RAFFLES DOHA

raffles.com

Ultra-luxe suites at **Raffles Doha** come with personal butlers and the hotel's restaurants keep up the sense of grandeur. Michelin-starred chef Enrico Crippa's Italian diner, **Alba by Enrico Crippa**, revolves dishes around seasonal produce and the rare white truffle found in Piedmont. At **L'Artisan**, plates are wheeled out on Gueridon trolleys and finished by your table with theatrical flourish. The palatial **Malaki** lounge takes traditional Arabian tea service to extravagant places. By night, slip behind a hidden door to sample smoky drinks under blue velvet curtains and chandeliers in the **Blue Cigar**. This bar-meets-library also has shelves of first-edition and rare books, the oldest being a copy of Homer's *Odyssey* from 1709. Slip on a set of special gloves to take a look. Upstairs, the **Acoustic Music Penthouse** is the city's slickest space to hear live music played until late.



Eat streets

You could spend a whole day cruising from drive-up taco trucks to cool spots for ice cream and shawarma. Why not?

1. Watermelon ice cream at Tasty Street
2. SNAN Food Hall upgrades a picnic experience
3. Shawarma Al Zaeem at Marina Food Arena in Lusail

TASTY STREET

📍 KATARA, DOHA
@tasty.street.qa

Doha does food markets differently. In summer, locals stay in climate-controlled comfort to drive from one stall to the next at this fun hangout near Katara Cultural Village. Of course, you can stroll on foot to collect orders of smoky shawarma, beef burgers and smoothies from across the 40-ish little huts—just be sure to finish up with watermelon soft serve ice cream inside a frozen fruit ‘cone’ from **Icy Melon**, or the mango version from **Origami**. Open from 15:00 to 12:00 every day.



MARINA FOOD ARENA

📍 LUSAIL, DOHA
@marina_food_arena

There are street food trucks and cabins galore (about 70 at last count) at this late-night hotspot on Marina Promenade. The first to catch your eye will probably be the canary-coloured double decker bus called **Abocado**, which sizzles up Mexican fajitas, quesadillas and creamy guacamole. You could go on a shawarma tour, comparing the deconstructed meat and rice bowls at **Simply Shawarma** with the spicy lamb wrap from **Shawarma Palace** next door. **Shawarma Al Zaeem** is another popular spot. The flaming sweetcorn and chicken ‘toast burgers’ from **Last Order** and wholewheat noodles stacked with shrimp from **XFire** have also gained a cult following. Trucks open around 14:00 and many are open until the early hours of the morning.



DOWNTOWN DOHA

📍 DOWNTOWN, DOHA

If hopping around Msheireb’s museums, galleries and boutiques fires up your appetite, never fear—sushi and Korean barbecue at **Yee Hwa Doha**’s downtown branch is filling and affordable (reserve a table for all-you-can-eat sessions on Fridays and Saturdays, +974 6662-9898). Wandering on to Souq Waqif, take a seat at one of the many juice bars and sip fresh mango or guava juice or try ragag (Arabian crepes), which street vendors cook over hotplates and fill with cheese, nutella or honey. **Asherg Coffee** is a no-frills hang-out popular for its rooftop terrace, where you can smoke apple shisha and people watch over simple plates of hummus, baba ganoush, kofta and chicken shish tawook.

AL MIRQAB AL JADEED STREET

📍 AL NASR, DOHA

This busy strip, winding around the **Al Mirqab Mall**, is a delicious microcosm of multicultural Doha. For a taste of Tunisia, **Sidi Bou Said** eatery plates up meaty couscous dishes and fried brik pastries with cheesy fillings. Shawarma institutions **Jabal Lebanon** (tip: ask them to toast it and make it spicy), **Mashawi Al Arabi** and **Turkey Central** are open late for delicious, budget Turkish fare. To dial up the spice, **Bombay Cutting Chai** restaurant is a favourite for Parsi specialties, such as soft, doughy bun maska to dip into a cup of steaming spiced chai. If your tastebuds lean toward Asian comfort food, **Delizia Pinoy Cuisine** is where local Filipinos go for lomi, mami, goto and chicken sisig that taste like home. Find yourself craving a cleansing dose of antioxidants? Find them in fresh, cold juices at **Vitamin King**, right across the road from **Wooden Bakery**, where hot manoush (Lebanese pizza) comes with crunchy side salads.

SNAN FOOD HALL

📍 KATARA, DOHA
21highst.net

Need picnic supplies? This Parisian-style food pavilion at the **21 High Street** shopping mall is where chefs shop for takeaway charcuterie, baguettes, croissants, imported camembert, salads... almost any gastronomic deli delight you could ask for. If you fancy a latte and a quick bite on the spot, there’s a Juan Valdez coffee counter and bakery with indoor seating.



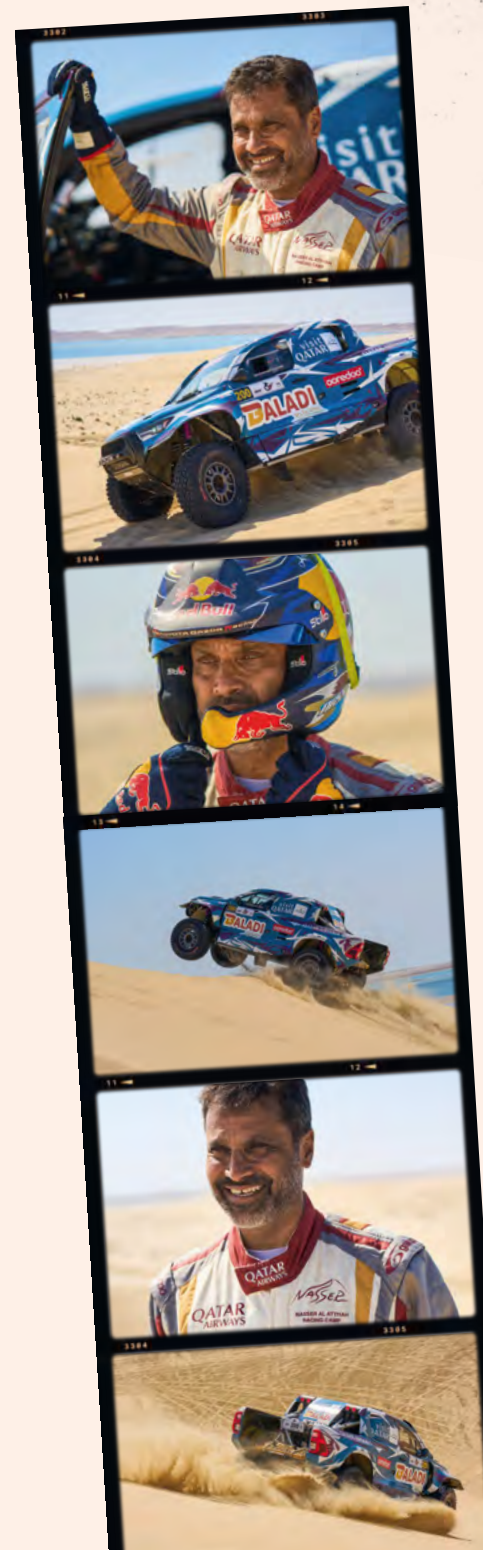
NATURAL WONDERS



Fuwairit Kite Beach (FKB)



CLICK HERE
to see him
in action



Meet the dune master

Rally champion Nasser Al-Attiyah does not have a second gear...

The Qatari-born racing legend has taken out the Middle East Rally Championship a record 19 times and, in January 2023, triumphed over the most gruelling contest in motorsport to seize the Dakar Rally trophy for the fifth time, winning the race by the widest margin seen 20 years. He claimed another victory at the Qatar International Baja in March.

The 52 year old is also an Olympic skeet shooter—having taken the bronze, becoming the first ever Qatari-born Olympic medallist, at the London Games in 2012—and an accomplished show jumper. Then there was, of course, that time his friend (and then-president of the Qatar Marine Sports Federation, Sheikh Hassan Bin Jabor Al-Thani) mentioned that it might be easier to drive on land than on water, so Al-Attiyah took up the challenge and won Florida's Key West World Championship. But he plays that one down as a bit of fun.

When *Qatar Now* meets the man nicknamed 'The Prince of the Dunes' on his home turf south of Doha, it's technically the driver's day off. Charming and humble, he says he loves being an ambassador for his country and dune bashing for casual weekend sport. But when the helmet's on, The Prince goes to work, exploding over the top of sand mountains like a thunderclap, destroying turns and near-vertical drops with brutal agility. Full throttle is all this guy has got.

Read on for a chat with Al-Attiyah.

Fast talk: Five minutes with the quickest man on the sand...

I'M A BORN COMPETITOR.

It was my dream to be a world champion from a very young age. Even in education at school, I wanted to be the best. I have a love for speed. My cousins all trained as pilots, but I was watching motorsports and knew I wanted to drive.

I BUILT MY OWN RALLY CAR AT 18 YEARS OLD.

My father first taught me to drive in the desert and bought me my first car, a Nissan Patrol. It was a regular car and I converted it. Rallying with my friends was a great joy to me.

BUT ONE OF THE MOST MEANINGFUL WINS IN MY CAREER WASN'T IN A CAR.

The medal at the London Olympics is what I consider to be the most beautiful victory in my life because it was a childhood dream to be one of the first Qatari Olympic medallists. My father was the first person to guide me to shooting—we used to go hunting together and he saw I loved it and suggested I could achieve my dream in this sport.

RALLYING IS PHYSICAL, BUT IT IS MENTALLY DEMANDING, TOO.

The Dakar Rally is 12,000 km and 15 days long. We can drive in temperatures from 50–60 degrees Celsius. Drivers are athletes and need very high levels of fitness—it takes two-to-four hours of training every day. Also, we can reach speeds of up to 220 km per hour in the desert. When I started shooting, which is the concentration game, it helped me a lot with focus in the car.

IT'S EASIER TO GET TO THE TOP THAN TO STAY THERE.

Even with the experience and expertise I have, I always have a sense of pressure. I am very lucky that today, Qatar has become the capital of sport, with all resources available. Courage and confidence also comes from my family and friends—that positive energy makes me give more.

I HOPE THE HISTORY BOOKS SAY...

More than that people call me 'Superman' or 'Prince of the Dunes'. I am grateful to the fans, but you can't do this for the titles. I work or travel for 300 days a year and I can do it because I love it. I have never thought of retiring. Sport has taught me to be committed in life and that is something I am proud of.

Nasser Al-Attiyah tears up the soft dunes at Khor Al Udaid

Desert adventure

Slide on singing dunes, fly high or rev up for 4WD thrills on a day trip from Doha.

SURF GOLDEN WAVES

📍 MESAIEED AND INLAND SEA
goldenadventuresqatar.com
365adventures.me

What could be more fun than sand boarding down the smooth crescents that rise and fall around Khor Al Udaid? Going so fast you make the sand sing. In the desert about 40 km southwest of Doha, there's a spot where the dunes naturally make a musical sound as the mountains of sand shift in the wind. On a family-friendly safari tour with **Golden Adventures Qatar** or **365 Adventures**, you might just make the desert hum in a similar way as you cause sand particles to vibrate as you slide down the dunes.

GO DUNE BASHING

📍 SEALINE AREA
goldenadventuresqatar.com

Buckle up. Skidding sideways down giant desert peaks is a highlight that sends adrenaline off the charts. Things stay comfortable inside your air-conditioned 4WD, but it's a wild ride as you drift down the dunes with sand blasting the windscreen (expert drivers can tailor the speed to suit families, too). Many operators offer half-day or full-day experiences from Doha. Tours with **Golden Adventures Qatar** head to a waterside camp at Khor Al Udaid, where you can cool off with a swim and barbecue lunch. You can also add a camel ride or sand boarding to the adventure or snap a photo with a falcon.

SOAR ON AN AIR SAFARI

📍 SEALINE AREA
skymasters.qa

On a morning or afternoon paratrike tour with **Sky Masters Qatar**, strap into the back seat of an open-air three-wheel aircraft before your experienced pilot fires up the motor and gently lifts you up above the desert. For 20 minutes, you'll coast slow, low and free as a bird with unbeatable views of the dunes and Sealine Beach. Great for children over eight years old.

RIDE A QUAD BIKE

📍 MESAIEED
goldenadventuresqatar.com

Take off-roading to the next level, driving your own quad bike in a convoy through the desert. You will handle the steering and speed but a trusty guide shows you the ropes, leading you through a challenging course. Tip: you'll be dusting sand off, so wear loose and comfortable clothes. Closed shoes are a must. Book a quad bike safari with **Golden Adventures Qatar**.

Wild luxury

The good life awaits at these resorts tucked into the sand.



The Outpost Al Barari

FOR QUIET: A SAFARI IN THE SAND

📍 INLAND SEA

theoutpostalbarari.com

Secreted among the dunes of the Inland Sea nature reserve, chic and newly-opened **The Outpost Al Barari** wants you to feel all the way off the grid. Its one, two or three-bedroom villas grant privacy with uninterrupted views and as much solitude as you fancy. Grand expeditions into the desert include hot air balloon rides, camel safaris and nature walks to track wildlife with a guide, but you might just want to stay put. The big idea here is to leave healthier than when you checked in—yoga sessions are customised to each guest, as are fitness plans and the spa's 'earth-connecting' massage, which uses desert sand. This retreat is high on romance, too, with an outdoor cinema screening classics, swing seats for watching the sunset from your deck and a stargazing space where you can relax into the silence of night.

FOR FAMILY FUN: A TENT BY THE SEA

📍 SEALINE BEACH

regencysealinecamp.com

Regency Sealine Camp's glamping suites and family-sized rooms stretch along the gentle shores of Sealine Beach. By day, you're free to claim a waterfront cabana and do as little as you like, or explore the desert beyond on guided, kid-friendly camel rides or paragliding and 4WD adventures. In the evenings, bonfires set the scene for conversation and cool drinks. "It's all designed to give guests a chance to experience the unique desert culture and timeless landscape of Qatar in a luxurious way," says the camp's Operations Manager, Mohammed Al Wardani.




Out of

the blue

Qatar's warm waters host one of the largest whale shark congregations in the world. Doha-based writer Shereen D'Souza gets close to the giants.

 [CLICK HERE](#)

I am not usually an early morning person, but standing on the northern edge of Qatar, seeing first light fall over the open Gulf, the 04:30 pickup from the city feels totally worth it. I can already tell that this will be one of the most memorable days in the 11 years I've called this country home.

From here at the port of Al Ruwais, where I meet the small group of other adventurers on this **Discover the Whale Sharks of Qatar tour**  (discoverqatar.com, +974 4023 0458), the ride out to the protected patch of sea known as Al Shaheen is another two hours. But it's not exactly hard going aboard the luxurious catamaran, grazing on good strong coffee, mini sandwiches and pastries for breakfast.

Our guide, Dominika, keeps the energy high. "The most fascinating thing about whale sharks is how little even researchers know about them," she says. Though the world's biggest fish can give birth to up to 300 live pups at a time, the animals mostly live solitary lives far out at sea. Very few people even get to see one.

"Despite being endangered, whale sharks are only protected in around 13 countries," Dominika adds. And Qatar is particularly special. In this safe haven, the water is an ideal 27–33 degrees Celsius and abundant with plankton—the sharks' primary source of food. From May to September, the sharks gather here in droves every year.

Today, they are being elusive, even though two known regulars have been tagged by researchers and our captain can track the group. Dominika is passing binoculars around the boat, each of us taking a turn as lookout, when, out of nowhere, the first giant breaks the water's surface, its jaws four-feet-wide open, to feed.

It's hard to fathom the enormity of a whale shark until one is right in front of you. These magnificent creatures grow to an average of 20 feet—that's about the height of a male giraffe, to put things into perspective.

I'm holding my breath, the first shark gliding so close that I can count its spots, when the rest emerge. Sounds of awe echo around the boat as the on-board photographer takes photos of us all with the sharks from every imaginable angle, but I'm silent and laser-focused on this moment. Each creature is so unique in its patterns of imperfect circles, scattered dots and broken lines, their silvery bodies so graceful as they fade in and out of the blue. I'm surprised to realise I can barely hear a splash.

Congregations at Al Shaheen are gargantuan. In other places around the world, you might spot a few whale sharks together if you're lucky. But here, sightings of up to 200 sharks at a time have been recorded and today I lose count at around 100. This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience—the stuff bucket lists are made of.

Dive in

How much saltwater action can you handle?



WING IT

VARIOUS LOCATIONS
flokiteschool.com

A reliable wind and the diversity of its beaches makes Qatar a magnet for kite surfers. Enthusiasts from around the world head for Zekreet on the west coast and Fuwairit Kite Beach in the north (read more on page 62), which will host the GKA Freestyle Kite World Cup finals in December 2023. L-platers can pick up lessons with **Flo Kite School** at Fuwairit, Zekreet or closer to the city at Al Wakrah Beach.



CATCH A TROPHY FISH

VARIOUS LOCATIONS
anantara.com,
Shraoh: +974 5066 0111

Doha is a fishing town at heart and you'll often spot locals throwing lines out along the Corniche. If you're staying at the **Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara**, you can sail off on a sunrise or sunset fishing mission and a chef will serve your catch to your restaurant table for dinner. But if you want to chase the really big hamour, diamond trevally and tuna that hang around gorgeous offshore islands, **Shraoh Charters** can hook you up with a speedboat, captain and crew.

GET UP, STAND UP

THE PEARL-QATAR
bluepearlexperience.com

Why not get off the tourist trail and paddle along the smooth waterways of The Pearl-Qatar? **Blue Pearl Experience** offers sunset SUP tours around the city's colourful, European-inspired island as well as day trips that venture to beaches up and down the coast.



FEEL THE SPRAY

WEST BAY
qatarwatersport.com

Book a tour with **Qatar Water Sport** to speed along Doha's coastal edges on a Sea Doo WAKE PRO SuperCharge 230cc jet ski. Churn, turn and rev it up on the open water but don't forget to slow down for a moment to take it all in—the view back across the city from the water is a showstopper.

DIVE DEEP

VARIOUS LOCATIONS
poseidondivecenter.pdcqatar.com

Surprise! The desert is a magnet for marine life enthusiasts. The waters that edge the Qatari peninsula are teeming with Arabian blue angel fish, Gulf parrot fish, sea turtles and dolphins. Diving or snorkelling at the Inland Sea, spotting bright nudibranchs and stingrays while surrounded by crescent dunes is pure magic. Coastal shipwrecks such as the Pericles are popular big fish hangouts. On guided dives with PADI-aligned **Poseidon Dive Center**, an underwater photographer comes along to snap you in action. The centre also runs learn-to-dive AquaMissions in hotel pools for juniors aged eight years and up.



Make a splash

*Slip from a daybed into the sea.
Escape to a secret island. These beach
getaways are so close, yet feel so far...*

An overwater villa at
Banana Island Resort
Doha by Anantara



FUWAIRIT KITE BEACH (FKB)

📍 FUWAIRIT
fkb.qa

The secret's out about one of kitesurfing's hidden hotspots now that FKB has opened on Qatar's northern coast. Consistent wind and a shallow lagoon make conditions at Fuwairit Beach, about an hour's drive from Doha, ideal year-round. Built 'by kitesurfers for kitesurfers', the new resort has a kitesurfing school and rental gear but also plenty of land activities. Take time out by the pool, do a yoga class or play volleyball on sand courts. Rooms have a breezy Californian vibe and from twin and king options you can see the water from your bed. Day passes are available if you're staying elsewhere.

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL DOHA

📍 THE CORNICHE, DOHA
fourseasons.com

With its understated Moorish design and cool white interiors, Doha's Four Seasons is a glimmering oasis on the Corniche. After a day exploring Qatar's sites, retreat to a serviced sun lounge at the private beach or the bar at Makani Beach Club. There are five indoor and outdoor pools catering to all ages dotted throughout the grounds. On site Après Spa Café does poached eggs and quinoa bowls for breakfast on a menu designed to support the many wellness treatments you can have in the spa.

RITZ-CARLTON SHARQ VILLAGE & SPA

📍 DOHA
ritzcarlton.com

Relax into the ultimate five-star beach holiday within easy reach of the National Museum of Qatar and Souq Waqif. Lavishly styled in the manner of a sheikh's palace, this resort's villas and suites are designed with opulent flourishes and glowing lanterns and are connected by a maze of courtyards and lush gardens. Afternoons at the private beach are best followed by evenings at the casually elegant El Cedro Lounge bar.

HILTON SALWA BEACH RESORT & VILLAS

📍 ABU SAMRA
salwabeachresort.qa

Fusing a Mediterranean feel with an Arabian aesthetic, the Hilton Salwa sprawls along 3.5 km of private beachfront in Qatar's sunny south-west. Inside this paradise of canopied cabanas, beaches, pools, bars and restaurants, you'll also find one of the Middle East's largest children's attractions, Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park.

MARSA MALAZ KEMPINSKI

📍 THE PEARL-QATAR
kempinski.com

You don't have to be a guest to soak up the high life at this resort on The Pearl-Qatar island. With a day pass, you can breeze through the majestic lobby, past the oversized aquarium and swaying palm trees, to claim your spot in the sun. Fanning out from the Arabian/Venetian-style hotel is a collection of crystal blue swimming pools and a private beachfront lined with thatched umbrellas. Roll out your towel and simply soak up some vitamin D or burn off energy on kayaks and hydrobikes.

BANANA ISLAND RESORT DOHA BY ANANTARA

📍 BANANA ISLAND
anantara.com

Surrounded entirely by sea, yet only a 25-minute ferry ride from Doha, Banana Island is the perfect tropical-themed escape for couples and families. At this resort and spa, wake up in an overwater villa, then decide whether to splash in the lagoon pool, surf pool, dive pool or on the golden sand beach. Kids will find their thrills at the water park, bowling alley, cinema or in cooking and camping sessions. Adults can try out watersports and golf or laze in a shady hammock before romantic dinners on a floating deck.

Urban oasis

With lush parks and one of the world's most eco-smart districts in downtown Doha, Qatar's future is brightly green. Dr. Gonzalo Castro de la Mata is planting the seeds of sustainability.



Verdant, sprawling **Oxygen Park** in Doha's Education City precinct is a gorgeous place to catch your breath in the afternoon. Its subterranean waterfall plaza is a hushed hideout. Umbrella thorns and other medicinal, desert-proof trees offer picnickers shade on the grass below. Curving paths and undulating hills were carefully designed to maximise the breeze.

"This park is a visionary experiment, producing clean air as well as a space for exercise and connecting with nature," says Dr. Gonzalo Castro de la Mata, Executive Director of Earthna, Center for a Sustainable Future, and a member of Qatar Foundation. "It is one of my favourite places to escape."

Eight universities, three research centres and Qatar's futuristic National Library surround the park in Doha's educational hub. "A lot of the information generated by the researchers, the professors and students in Education City focuses on sustainability," he says. Earthna's purpose, at least in part, is to translate this research into policy actions that will help Qatar

hit the targets of its 2030 vision, the growing state's blueprint for a greener future.

"Education City works as a huge test bed, a living laboratory, where we implement solutions for improving air quality, biodiversity, energy efficient building design and water conservation to see if they can be applied to Qatar as a whole."

About 15 minutes across town by metro, the slick new Msheireb district shows Doha's sustainable vision in motion. This update of the old Doha neighbourhood has been billed as one of the world's most environmentally friendly city redevelopments.

"The way the district is designed is such that you always have shade when you walk, streets enhance airflow and many of the buildings have built-in renewable energy sources," says Castro de la Mata. More than 5,200 rooftop solar panels generate most of the neighbourhood's energy and hot water. An eco-tram slides between LEED-certified towers to the restaurants, cafes and boutiques of Barahat Square, the largest shaded open-air courtyard in the Middle East.

The elegant white-stone Msheireb Mosque is the very first LEED Gold-certified standalone mosque in the world.

"This is a typical example of what is called a 15-minute city," says Dr Castro de la Mata. "You don't need a car to go out to eat, to get coffee, to shop and get groceries, to go to a museum or to go between your office and apartment."

The Doha Metro, a 100 per cent electric network that runs largely underground, is a huge part of reducing the city's fuel footprint. "Here, sustainability is not about protecting the rainforest and conserving natural water sources, because we don't have these things.

"Instead, Qatar is very rich in natural gas, so what we need to do is turn this into human capital, into infrastructure and into savings and investments in sustainability. That's what we help to do at Earthna and Qatar Foundation."

Lusail, the 'future city' north of Doha, is next. "It's designed from scratch to be very sustainable: the shoreline has been developed to conserve natural habitat while providing

a recreational space and buildings are constructed to reduce CO2 emissions," Castro de la Mata says.

"Growth and all that is happening to make Doha a global city of the future is very exciting, but it is also important to pause and think about what the future looks like for our children."

INTO ECO?

Shop locally made, organic skincare, food and handcrafts at the plastic-free **Torba Farmers Market** (@farmersmarketqa), held regularly in Education City. During **Qatar Sustainability Week** (qatarsustainabilityweek.com) in October, you can plant a tree or get hands-on at hundreds of community events. Check websites for dates.



SHOPPING

Style scene

Precious metals meet cultural gems in these works of wearable art.



Nada bint Khamis Al-Sulaiti is inspired by the world around her. Signature collections from her jewellery brand, **Hairaat** (hairaat.com), reference the petroglyphs found in the desert at Al Jassasiya and the famous Al Zubarah ruins. The glittering Doha skyline is also fair game when it comes to ideas for setting bright topaz, sapphires and rubies into silver and gold.

“I see things and I imagine them in metal,” says Al-Sulaiti. “I’m so immersed in my world that I think I can bejewel everything around me.”

Storytelling is important to Al-Sulaiti, who, though a first generation jeweller, feels a strong connection to her craft. Her great grandfather was a pearl merchant who lost his trade to the introduction of cultured pearls. “I wanted to create this brand to give homage to him,” she explains.

The designer’s contemporary pearl

necklaces, bangles and engraved earrings are hits with Qatar’s style set and have drawn attention from the biggest international names. Hairaat was invited to appear on the Qatar Fashion United by CR Runway in 2022, a monumental style and culture event curated by the French fashion editor and icon Carine Roitfeld. “We were chosen by fashion designers to create their jewellery pieces,” she says. Collaborators included local labels **1309** (1309studios.com), **Drizzle** (drizzle.qa) and **TRZI** (trziofficial.com).

Al-Sulaiti says local fashion designers are not only crafting new silhouettes but contemporising *abayas* and modest wear for the modern market. “It’s about time for designers from this region to export their culture to the world. I think the world is waiting.”



Local names to know



WADHA

📍 NMOQ 📍

wadha.co

Designer Wadha Al Hajri reworks geometric Qatari patterns and Islamic-inspired latticework into tailored, minimalist pieces for women. Also find bags and fragrances at her boutique at the National Museum of Qatar.



MARYAM AL DARWISH

@maryam.aldarwish

Think hooded maxi dresses and embroidered kaftans—modest, but creatively cool and crafted from all-natural textiles, this is perfect resortwear.



STUDIO 7

📍 MSHEIREB

@studio7.qa

The M7 design hub’s concept store sells one-of-a-kind finds from local makers. Find ceramic coasters, board games, rugs by artist Maryam Al-Homaid, RSPR loungewear made from recycled plastic, *qahwa* (coffee) capsule-cups and handmade garments by Arabology and Gigeez.

The high end

Float between palatial galleries on a gondola or take high tea in a piazza with outdoor air conditioning. Doha's malls are an experience not to be missed—even if you're only window shopping.

21 HIGH STREET

♥ KATARA
21highst.net

Luxury-lovers from around the world will be awestruck by streets inspired by the Palace of Versailles and kept cool all year round by a first-of-its-kind outdoor climate control system. Wander around **Galleries Lafayette**, **Cartier** and **Elie Saab**, then toast golden hour at Doha's world-famous **Novikov Restaurant and Lounge**.

AL HAZM

♥ AL MARKHIYA
alhazm.com

Imagine soaring galleries carved from Tuscan marble and indoor gardens where 600-year-old olive trees grow and patterned floors absorb heat. In this fantasy land of indulgence, you could buy a McLaren as effortlessly as you can a custom embroidered *abaya*, *jalabiya* or kaftan. Soak up pure opulence over Arabic coffee at **Hawn Café** or try a creamy mozzarella balloon under the pink floral canopy of **Rosemary Café**.

VILLAGGIO MALL

♥ ASPIRE ZONE
villaggioqatar.com

You'll be transported to Venice as you glide between wings of this elegant shopping centre aboard a gondola on a real canal, hopping off at the Via Domo shopping 'street' to browse **Gucci**, **Dolce & Gabbana** and **Fendi**. On a sneakers and street style budget? Hit **Kendall + Kylie**, **Superdry** and **GAP**. Villaggio is also home to an **IMAX** cinema and the rides, bowling alley and games of **Gondolania Theme Park**, Doha's largest indoor family entertainment centre.

1.
Ride on a real canal at Villaggio

2.
Lagoona Mall is near West Bay's hotels



LAGOONA MALL

♥ WEST BAY
lagoonamall.com

Located between the iconic Zig-Zag Towers, this is a popular family hangout. Shopping ranges from ready-to-wear **Chanel** to **Mango**, with the big draw being **Fifty One East**, one of the largest department stores in the Middle East. Teens, head for Y-3 Yohji Yamamoto hoodies. Fragrance-philes will love Frederic Malle colognes and hair mists by Casamorati. The **Jungaloona** fun zone (open until 02:30 on Fridays) entertains toddlers with a mini zipline while bigger kids can test their skills on the Valomotion augmented-reality climbing wall.

PRINTEMPS DOHA

♥ MSHEIREB
doha.printemps.com

The first Printemps department store to open outside of France is 40,000 sq m of sheer glamour. Here, the hardest-to-find pieces from Dior, Valentino and Bottega Veneta meet exclusives from local designers. Then there's the 137 brands on Qatar's biggest beauty floor. So much temptation, too little time? The VIP Concierge can make personalised selections (and book restaurant reservations for when your shopping spree is complete).

PLACE VENDÔME

♥ LUSAIL
placevendomeqatar.com

Epic in every way, this gleaming mall boasts more than 580 high-street and high-end shops, including the **Zara** villa, where smart fitting rooms have integrator sensors to find your perfect fit and colour, a giant **Sephora**, the biggest **Louis Vuitton** store in the Middle East, dancing fountains and a family entertainment centre called **Trocadéro**.

CLICK HERE
to learn more



WELLNESS

Ghanim Al-Sulaiti is helping to make Qatar a leading wellness destination



Green game changer

This vegan guru and eco entrepreneur is setting the healthy, holistic pace.

Ghanim Al-Sulaiti is a morning person. Out of bed by 05:30, he's in his office half an hour later and, as might be expected of the face behind **Botany** (bo-ta-ny.shop), Qatar's trend-sparking organic, vegan skincare brand, he makes getting in early look good.

Since opening Qatar's first 100 per cent plant-based eatery, **Evergreen Organics** (evergreenorganics.qa), at The Pearl-Qatar in 2016, Al-Sulaiti's vegan vision has exploded into an empire. He's added cafes at The Gate Mall and **Hamad International Airport** and runs **Green and Go** counters, serving berry chia puddings and lentil salads in Metro stations around Doha. Botany's age-defying facial remedies stand next to luxurious French serums in Doha department stores and you can have a glow-up in the brand's own spa (read more on page 76). The turmeric-loaded face oil is particularly popular. "People say they see the results in three days," Al-Sulaiti says. "It's all I ever use on my own skin."

The entrepreneur has managed a mini revolution, making plant-focused wellness cool in a food culture traditionally built on fish or on meat and dairy from the desert. You could chalk some of it up to the global trend, but, really, his success comes down to street cred.

Al-Sulaiti, who switched to an electric car years ago, has been known as Qatar's 'Vegan Guru' since 2013. "I'd started eating a plant-based diet and felt amazing going through the journey, so I started sharing on social media. It got popular, which led to me giving talks at schools and universities."

But he says it's Evergreen's recipes that have really won Qataris over. "Beetroot ravioli lashed with pistachio pesto has been a bestseller since day one and the cheesy toast with seasonal figs and pomegranate is delicious in summer," he says. "Cashew cheese is *really* good."

When he launched dessert bar **Mylk** (analternativedestination.com) in 2020, Al-Sulaiti didn't even tell anyone it was vegan. "We didn't say in any way what the ingredients were or let anyone know I was behind it for a year." Mylk's small-batch handmade chocolates and creamy 'ice creams' quickly picked up a cult following. And after the big reveal—surprise, there's no dairy!—fans stayed loyal.

Al-Sulaiti's newest restaurant, **Thalatheen** (thalatheen.com), which is set into the National Museum of Qatar, is also quietly conscious. "Thalatheen means '30', in reference to Qatar's 2030 vision for a healthier society," he says.

"We don't really talk about being vegan—it's just a showcase of what Qatari food can be in the future: a cultural mix of local, Italian, Thai and Arabic dishes, all full of spice and nutrition." He bets burger lovers don't even realise their food is meat-free.

As the clean, green lifestyle gains popularity around the world, Al-Sulaiti says Qatar is raising the bar. "My local competition is starting to take off," he laughs. "We've got amazing wellness retreats and spas, organic produce in supermarkets and local brands focusing on self-care—I think that's a great thing."

Big city bliss

Doha's luxurious day spas take global wellness trends and turn them up a notch.

THE RAINFOREST EXPERIENCE

📍 BANYAN TREE SPA
banyantree.com

A rainforest in the the desert? Yes! The Banyan Tree Hotel's signature Rainforest Experience "combines the best of European spa and hydrothermal therapy with the essence of Asian wellness philosophy to create a haven of serenity," says Khaled Jarrah from the Doha spa. Included with any other booked treatment, this wellness journey takes you through a rain walk, brine steam room and herbal sauna to heated beds and a vitality pool complete with jacuzzi.

THE FACE WORKOUT

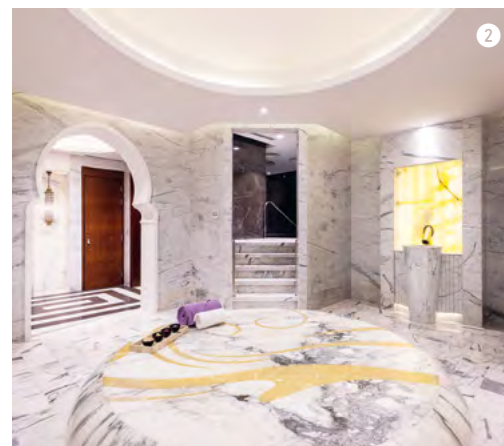
📍 BOTANY LAB
lab.bo-ta-ny.shop

Get your skin into glowing shape with a unique facial at the boutique Botany Lab spa. Vegan and organic ingredients—think ripened apricots hand-picked on a farm in Nepal or clove buds sourced from Indonesia—are applied with reflexology techniques and LED technologies. "Just like a body workout, the facial includes a warm-up, exercise and a cool down," says Manager Eman Meftah. For 'cardio', a therapist gives your facial muscles an invigorating massage. "This reduces tension and encourages natural toning and contour."



1.
The Four Seasons Spa uses colour as a relaxation tool

2.
Inside the Oriental spa 'world' at Al Messila Spa



CLICK HERE
to learn more

A LADIES' SANCTUARY

📍 AL MESSILA SPA
almessilaspa.com

Built on the site of a natural oasis, Al Messila is the largest spa escape in the region and offers a women-only retreat with exclusive spa treatments, gyms and fitness studios. Choose to immerse yourself in one of four 'worlds'—Mineral, Mystic, Oriental or Floral—each themed with specific types of sensory and tactile sorcery. Undecided? Simply float through the universe of pampering, chasing Balinese body work with Shirodhara or a Turkish Bath Ceremony. Why not trade up to a massage with 24-carat gold stones? (A gents spa does men's treatments.)

FAMILY RETREATS

📍 RAFFLES SPA
rafflesdoha.com/spa-wellness

At this serene hideaway, personalised treatments, based on clinical assessments of your skin, hair and nutrient levels, are administered in private cocoons. Facial therapies fuse active ingredients from nature with tech from Swiss laboratories. Parents, go alone for the pure escapism or, for a bonding session with your teen, Mum or Dad and Me rituals, designed to introduce youngsters to wellness, include quality time spent in the hydrotherapy area.

COLOUR THERAPY

📍 FOUR SEASONS SPA
fourseasons.com/doha/spa

"Colour therapy is rooted in Ayurvedic medicine," explains Ori Evapudan, Director of Spa at Doha's Four Seasons Hotel. "It is believed that colours are linked to chakra or energy points in the body, so if you are feeling tired, stressed or low in energy, relaxing under coloured lights can help." Which hue is for you? "Red increases energy by stimulating the lymphatic system, yellow makes people feel safe and happy, while green, a natural colour, helps you feel calmer." Evapudan adds that colour therapy can also help improve sleep and is more potent when combined with hot stone massage.

Qatar, a nation where many perspectives meet
moving forward with **modern vision**.

Where desert sands meet towers of glass
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Yet, turn over this book to discover its **vibrant tradition**...