

Cultural Dos and Don'ts for Qatar



Qatar is a country that is undergoing rapid social change. Despite taking giant steps towards modernization, it is a traditional country where Qatari culture and heritage is preserved and honored. Here are some of the Do's and Don'ts, which you should consider during your stay in Qatar:

Dress: dress appropriately and according to the Islamic culture at all times. Men should wear long trousers and a shirt, women should wear attire that covers the shoulders, upper arms and knees. Women may wear bikinis and swimsuits at hotels beaches and swimming pools and at out-of-town beaches (but not at Katara beach). Topless sunbathing is strictly forbidden.

Photography: be careful about taking photographs in public and ask permission before photographing people. Do not photograph government buildings, military and industrial sites, airports and shopping malls.

Alcohol: alcohol is served in some four and five star hotel bars and restaurants. Drunken behavior in public and driving under influence are heavily punishable offences. Do not bring alcohol into the country.

Pork: pork is strictly prohibited; do not bring any pork products into the country.

Courtesy: take care while shaking hands with women. Qatari woman generally does not shake hands with men. Wait for a woman to extend her hand first. If she pulls back her hand and holds it against the heart, this is a sign of greeting in preference over hand-shaking. If you are a woman meeting a Qatari man, wait and see if he extends his hand; Qatari men often do not think it is appropriate to shake hands with women. Don't ask a Qatari woman for information in public. Respect the fact that some Arab ladies are private people in public places. They are more than willing to help other women, so if you are in a mixed group, let the women do the talking!

Bargaining: be cautious while bargaining with shopkeepers. Bargaining is a common practice in Qatar, especially in souqs, however, insisting on too much discount beyond the best price might be deemed insulting.

Have a happy and exciting stay in Qatar!

