



# ECOTOURISM IN QATAR

**AHMED H. AL MUTAWE**

**2021**



**HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH  
TAMIM BIN HAMAD AL THANI**

**THE AMIR OF STATE OF QATAR**



**HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH  
HAMAD BIN KHALIFA AL THANI**

**THE FATHER AMIR**

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## MESSAGE



**T**ourism in Qatar is undergoing significant and rapid development under the wise leadership of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir. The country has identified tourism as one of five priority sectors through which it can build a diversified economy and in which efforts can be made to enhance the private sector's contribution to economic growth.

The United Nations defines ecotourism as 'sustainable tourism that preserves natural and cultural heritage'. With this in mind, the state has launched many projects to preserve the environment and to ensure the sustainability of its natural resources and biodiversity.

Ecotourism plays a key role in preserving ecology and natural ecosystems, especially in light of the global environmental challenges and risks that exist today. As natural resources continue to be depleted, many international organizations and others have called for the preservation and sustainment of nature through several means, the most vital of which is the promotion of ecotourism. By adopting ecotourism, countries can mitigate the pressure on ecosystems by protecting essential resources, which also helps sustain a more stable economic base.

Qatar is home to many eco-tourism sites and attractions. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has taken it upon itself to establish natural reserves such as the Al-Reem Reserve in the northwest of the country, which was classified by the United Nations as a Biosphere Reserve in its 'Man and the Biosphere' program in 2007, and which is the first wilderness reserve of its kind in Qatar and the second in the Arabian Gulf region. This is in addition to the Al Janoub Reserve, which is a favorite for wild adventure enthusiasts, and the many beaches, islands and other sites that are eco-tourism magnets.

On this occasion, we appreciate the efforts of the Authoring, Translation and Publishing Committee in attracting a host of researchers and specialists within the Ministry to contribute to such books and scientific references that will benefit everyone, God willing.

**HE Dr. Sheikh Faleh Bin Nasser Bin Ahmad Al Thani**

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change





## مرايع الأجداد... أمانة

مرّت في العيرت عدّ ومنازل ورسم لنا ما غيّرت الهباب  
ديار لنا نعتلاها كل موسم مرايعنا لا زخرقها العشاب  
المؤسس







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# Introduction

**T**ourism is a key revenue-generating resource and a driving force for development in many sectors of Qatar's economy. The time has come to focus our efforts on tourism and seize the opportunity for its development. Qatar's environment possesses many features, some of them with global appeal, especially its flora and fauna.

Qatar as a lot of tourist attractions and it is also a global financial, trading and business centre, making it a promising regional and international destination. A modern nation with high income and economic growth, Qatar has more than 560 kms of coastline and upwards of 200 kms of virgin beaches.

The government is working diligently to diversify its revenue resources, alongside its massive investments in the oil and gas sector, by focusing on tourism development. The contribution of tourism to the national economy in 2006 stood at 10.4% of total investment. Projections indicated a 4.1% growth in the tourism sector between 2007 and 2018, a year when travel and tourism constituted some 40% of the state's service industries.

Tourism in Qatar has developed rapidly, and with tangible results. The number of foreign tourists has increased manifold, thanks to improved air connectivity. National carrier Qatar Airways, which is increasingly promoting the country as a tourist haven, currently flies to more than 160 international destinations on five continents, and Doha's Hamad International Airport (HIA) attracts more than 10 million passengers a year. The HIA is upgrading its capacity to handle more than 50 million passengers annually by 2022.

Qatar has developed a USD 15 billion Qatar National Tourism Sector Strategy 2030 (QNTSS) to enhance the industry's infrastructure. This includes constructing a large number of hotels, resorts and entertainment centres, keeping pace with the country's comprehensive economic renaissance and emphasising its transformation into a major international destination for recreation, business, education,

nature reserve tours and sports.

This publication highlights the importance of ecotourism as Qatar prepares to welcome millions of football fans and tourists for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. It discusses the sustainable development of ecotourism and its significance in Qatar, a model for facility-free natural sites, marine, coastal and land resource

conservation, and features environmental, archaeological, recreational and cultural ecotourism sites.

The book also focuses on sports tourism and preparations to host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, including the construction of eight magnificent stadiums.

On November 4, 2018, the Qatari

leadership adopted a new organisational structure for tourism, creating the Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC). This was done as part of the government's endeavour to meet the country's future goals and objectives, underscoring civilizational, cultural, environmental and artistic attributes related to tourism.

This book seeks to help intertwine

ecotourism with mass tourism in Qatar, which has succeeded in diversifying its revenue resources while at the same time achieving investment goals in the oil and gas industry.

**Ahmed H. Al Mutawe**  
18 December 2021





A wide-angle, high-angle photograph of a vast, flat, rocky landscape. The ground is composed of light-colored, textured rock with numerous small, dark, circular indentations or footprints scattered across it. A distinct path of larger, more regular footprints leads from the bottom center towards the middle ground. The horizon is flat and extends to the top of the frame under a clear, pale blue sky. The overall scene suggests an ancient or historical site in a desert environment.

**HISTORICAL  
OVERVIEW**





**H**uman habitation of the Qatar Peninsula dates nearly as far back as the 4th century BC, as proven by archaeological evidence, excavations, inscriptions and rare items of pottery discovered in several places.

According to the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 484-c. 425 BC), the first dwellers of Qatar were Canaanite tribes known for their navigation skills and maritime trade.

Another Greek, geographer Ptolemy, included in his Map of Arabia what he called "Qatra", which is thought to be a reference to Zubara city, a





key ancient settlement, which has played a vital role in later history – Arab-Muslim historical sources note that Qatari dwellers were involved in preparing the first naval fleet to transport armies during the Muslim conquests.

Under Abbasid rule during the eighth Hijri century (14th century AD), Qatar experienced a period of economic prosperity, according to records found in the remains of Murwab Fort near the northwest coast.

Archaeological findings by a French expedition team indicate that the earliest human settlement in Qatar came during the 10th millennium BC. The Neolithic era (8000-4000 BC) represented a peak of prosperity, particularly in the 5th millennium BC. More than 200 excavated sites have uncovered seasonal nomadic settlements and flint works.

The people who lived in Qatar depended mainly on fishing and hunting. Discoveries made at a

fishermen's village in Ras Abrouq show that its economy relied on trading dried fish. Murwab, including its fort and houses, is the only sizeable mediaeval Islamic settlement in Qatar not located directly on the coast. Harvesting pearls also thrived during the Modern Middle Ages.





An aerial photograph of a coastal wetland. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, contrasting with the sandy and brownish banks. A prominent strip of dark green mangrove vegetation runs through the water. The background shows a vast, flat, arid landscape under a clear blue sky.

# GEOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



**S**tate of Qatar is a peninsula located between latitudes 24° 27' and 26° 10' north and longitudes 50° 45' and 51° 40' east. Covering an area of 11,571 square kms, the country is 185 kms long and 85 kms wide. The topography in general is a deflation surface shaped by wind weathering, with low-lying rocky plains and elevated limestone formations and hills in the Dukhan area (103 metres above sea level). Rocky and sandy hills can be found in the south.

## CLIMATE

Qatar has a desert climate with long summers, short winters and low rainfall. The weather is relatively pleasant from late October until mid-April.

## TEMPERATURE

Mean annual temperatures range from 17.5°C in January to 35°C in July, a warm subtropical climate with mild winters and hot summers.

## RAIN

Precipitation is generally low in Qatar, amounting to 80 mm a year on average, because the country is in an arid tropical region.

## WIND

The prevailing winds are north easterly and north westerly, with a mostly gentle breeze of less than 20 km/h. However, strong winds of between 40 km/h and 60 km/h from the north and northwest are not uncommon.

The basic types of habitat found in Qatar include mangroves, sabkha (mudflats or sandflats), sand dunes, hamada desert (rocks and gravel), rocky ecosystems, valleys and runnels, and depressions that collect fine sand. Sand dunes cover 18% of the land area. In order to conserve and develop wildlife, the necessary measures have been taken to stop habitat destruction and rehabilitate the ecosystem. Legal and administrative regulations on conservation and environment control form the main foundation for wildlife conservation programmes.



# DEFINITIONS

## Tourism

Tourism is defined as travel carried out voluntarily or willingly with the aim of enjoying and entertainment as well as mental and physical recreation. It is also a set of relationships and services associated with a temporary change of location for purposes unrelated to business or work.

## Tourist

A traveller residing outside his or her usual environment for more than 24 hours and fewer than 12 months, for any purpose (visiting a festival, seeking therapy, etc).

## Tourist nights

The nights a tourist actually spends (sleeping or staying) in tourist accom-

modation outside his or her homeland.

## Tourism marketing

Administrative and technical activities carried out by tourism organisations and establishments operating in or outside a country to explore and influence potential tourism markets with the aim of attracting international tourists and developing their own country's international tourism.

## Tourism demand

Travel trends relating to a specific destination.

## Tourism supply

Attractions offered to tourists and the means to develop international tourism in a country.

## Tourist attraction

A place of interest tourists can visit because of its appeal, facilities and accessibility; tourist motivation and trends in tourist demand.

## Tourism development

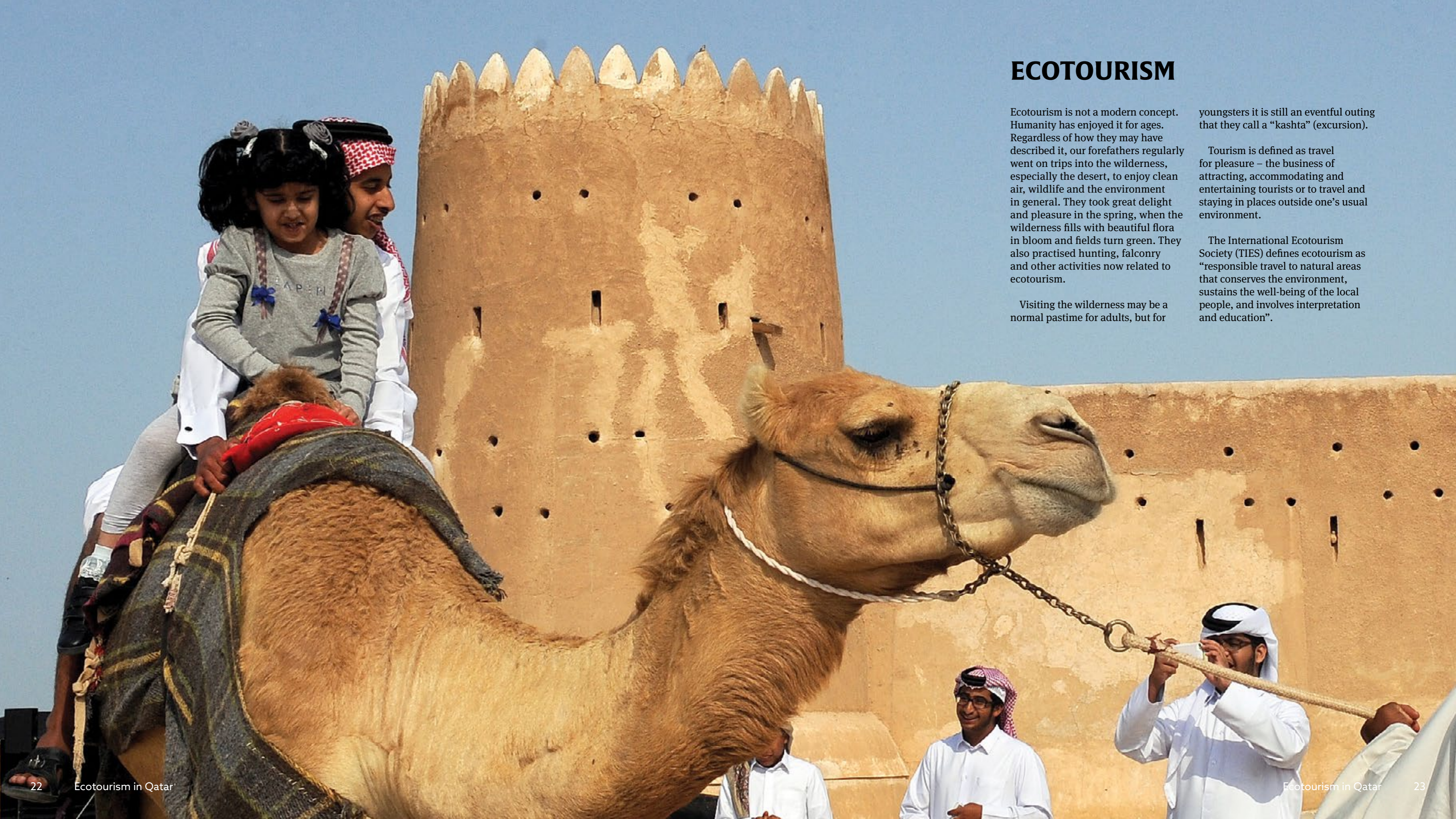
The growth and maintenance of natural and cultural tourism resources within a country's other industries.

## Sports tourism

Travel to witness or participate in tournaments or championships in or outside a country. Tourism and sport are interrelated and complementary. A relatively new concept, sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the industry.







## ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism is not a modern concept. Humanity has enjoyed it for ages. Regardless of how they may have described it, our forefathers regularly went on trips into the wilderness, especially the desert, to enjoy clean air, wildlife and the environment in general. They took great delight and pleasure in the spring, when the wilderness fills with beautiful flora in bloom and fields turn green. They also practised hunting, falconry and other activities now related to ecotourism.

Visiting the wilderness may be a normal pastime for adults, but for

youngsters it is still an eventful outing that they call a “kashta” (excursion).

Tourism is defined as travel for pleasure – the business of attracting, accommodating and entertaining tourists or to travel and staying in places outside one’s usual environment.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”.





## OBJECTIVES

Ecotourism can contribute considerably to a region's development, for example, by attracting visitors to archaeological sites, especially in remote areas. It can promote economic development by providing job opportunities in various service segments like catering, transportation and souvenir marketing. It also encourages sustainable management of tourist areas, even while supporting wildlife and biodiversity conservation and development, as well as increasing public awareness of sustainable development.

### SIGNIFICANCE

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors. In 2000, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations' specialised agency entrusted with the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, estimated that tourism contributed

20% of global income.

Ecotourism has become a major income resource for many countries. It constitutes 15%-20% of mass tourism. It is estimated that between 40% and 60% of all world travel is ecotourism-related, with a 10%-30% annual growth rate. In 2004, around 50 million ecotourists travelled

worldwide, and that figure is expected to cross 90 million by 2022.

Tourism plays an important role in encouraging authorities to protect wildlife and preserve archaeological and historical sites. Such projects are of environmental and economic significance in improving the quality of life.





# TOURISM IN QATAR





The government under the leadership of the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, has devoted great attention to the tourism industry with the aim of attracting visitors from around the world.

**Q**atar welcomed 2.136 million visitors in 2019, representing an increase of 17% compared to 2018. The number of visitors from all regions of the world grew significantly. The increase in visitors from the US has been consistent throughout the year, except in January, and were most significant in Q4.

In December 2019, when Qatar successfully hosted the FIFA Club World Cup and Doha Forum (a global policy event), the country welcomed a record number of 15,189 visitors from the US. Meanwhile, there was an increase in the visitors from the UK too due to many travelers choosing Doha as a stopover destination while using Qatar Airways' long-haul flights to crisscross continents.

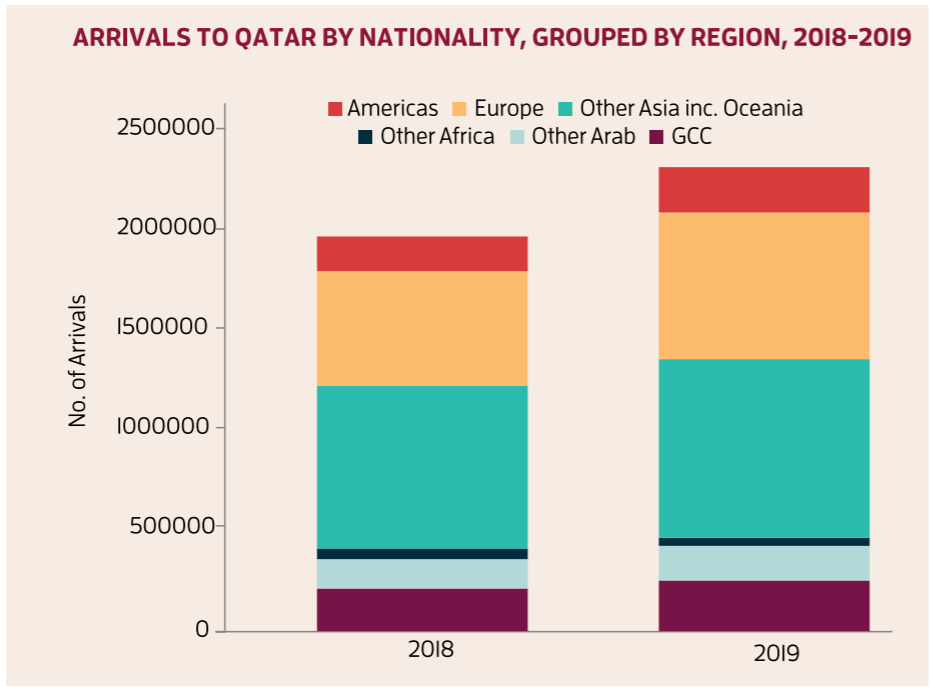
The final quarter of 2019 also marked the beginning of the fourth cruise season in Qatar and the first to welcome turnaround passengers – those whose cruise itineraries began





and ended in Qatar. In 2019, Qatar welcomed 127,582 cruise passengers (up by 98% from 2018) and 57 cruise ships, five of which carried turn-around passengers. In preparation for Qatar's busiest cruise season yet, QNTC and Doha Port inaugurated a new 6000 m<sup>2</sup> temporary passenger terminal, further enhancing passenger experiences and offering premium services similar to those at the Hamad International Airport.

The year 2019 was also successful for the business events sector in Qatar, with the country winning bids to host 10 largescale events between 2019-2023, including the 2020 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Forum and the World Symposium of Choral Music 2023.



Source: Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council



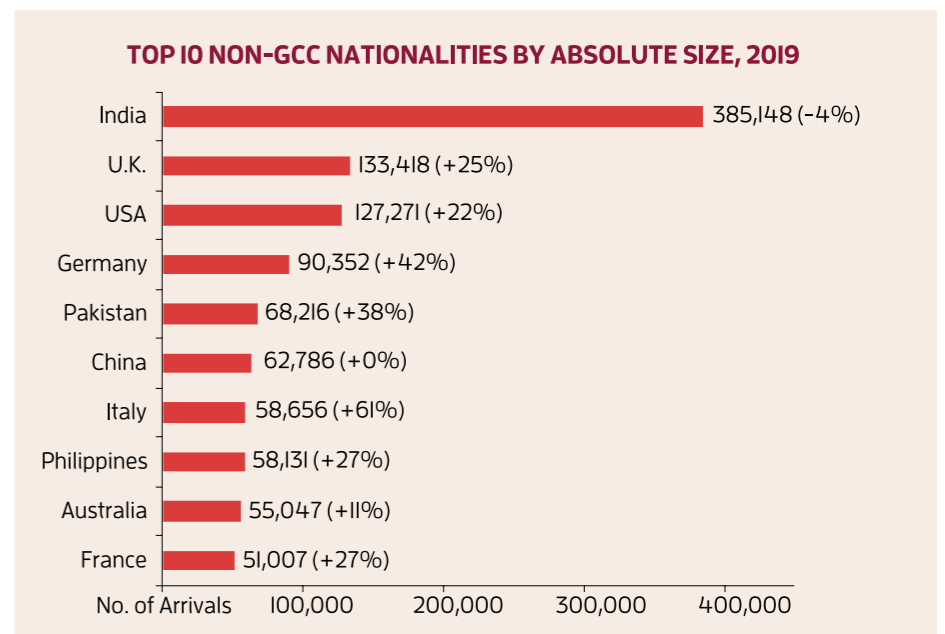
**TOP 10 NON-GCC NATIONALITIES**

Indian nationals continued to be the largest among the non-GCC visitors, with more than 385,000 of them coming to Qatar in 2019.

Similar to previous years, nationals of the United Kingdom and the United States represented the second and third largest segment of arrivals, both showing significant growth compared to 2018 (up 25% and 22% respectively).

Among the UK nationals, the most significant increase was seen in the stopover segment (+59%), while the rise among the US visitors in the stopover segment was relatively small (+17%).

As in 2018, Germany was the next largest source market, with



Source: Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council

over 90,000 visitors. Pakistan and China were the next two, but in 2019 the number of Pakistani visitors surpassed that of China.

Across the top 10 nationalities visiting Qatar, Italian visitors moved up in ranking most significantly to 7th place after a 61% increase in 2019.



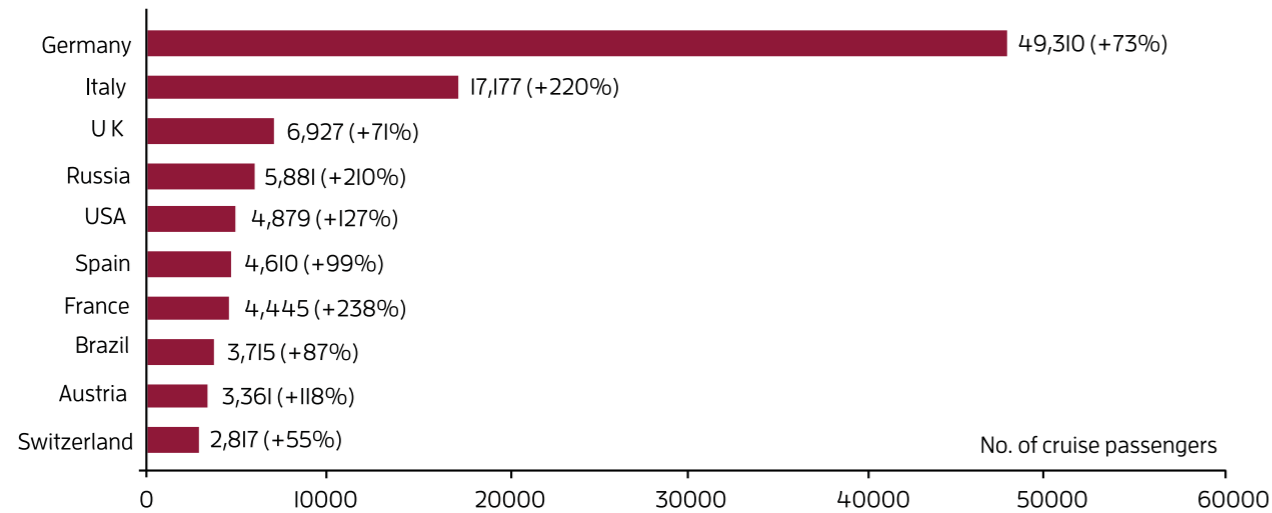
## CRUISE SEGMENT

Qatar continues to achieve significant growth in the cruise passenger segment. Fifty seven cruise ships made port calls in Doha during 2019, two of which docked in Doha overnight and five of which made turnaround port

calls, with passengers beginning and ending their journeys in Qatar. The fourth quarter of 2019 marked the first cruise season to welcome turnaround passengers, which was a major step in the growth and development of the cruise visitor segment.

Overall, Qatar's cruise tourism grew by 98% in 2019, with approximately 127,500 visitors arriving (compared to approximately 64,400 in 2018). The majority of cruise visitors were European – German and Italian nationals making up the largest segments.

TOP 10 CRUISE PASSENGER VISITOR ARRIVALS BY NATIONALITY, 2019



Source: Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council

## POSITIVE GROWTH

Visitor arrivals from nationals of all regions showed positive growth in the period 2014 to 2019. Since 2014, the

most significant growth in visitor arrivals has been amongst nationals of Europe (up 56%, with an average annual growth rate of 9%) and the Americas (up 41%, with an average

annual growth rate of 7%). There has been significant growth in visitors from Africa (up 36%) and other Asia countries, including Oceania (up 4%).

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	CAGR*, 2014-19	Cumulative growth, 2014-19
Total	2,839,373	2,941,130	2,938,096	2,256,490	1,819,344	2,136,504	-6%	-25%
GCC	1,124,333	1,300,221	1,410,657	752,876	200,115	233,268	-27%	-79%
Other Arab	313,491	267,349	221,894	165,318	128,562	155,086	-13%	-51%
Other Africa	35,742	36,558	32,390	46,460	48,011	48,593	6%	36%
Other Asia inc. Oceania	782,794	732,964	660,364	652,102	753,161	813,379	1%	4%
Europe	437,842	457,940	455,076	483,834	528,333	680,951	9%	56%
Americas	145,171	146,098	157,715	155,900	161,162	205,227	7%	41%

\*CAGR: Compound Annual Growth Rate

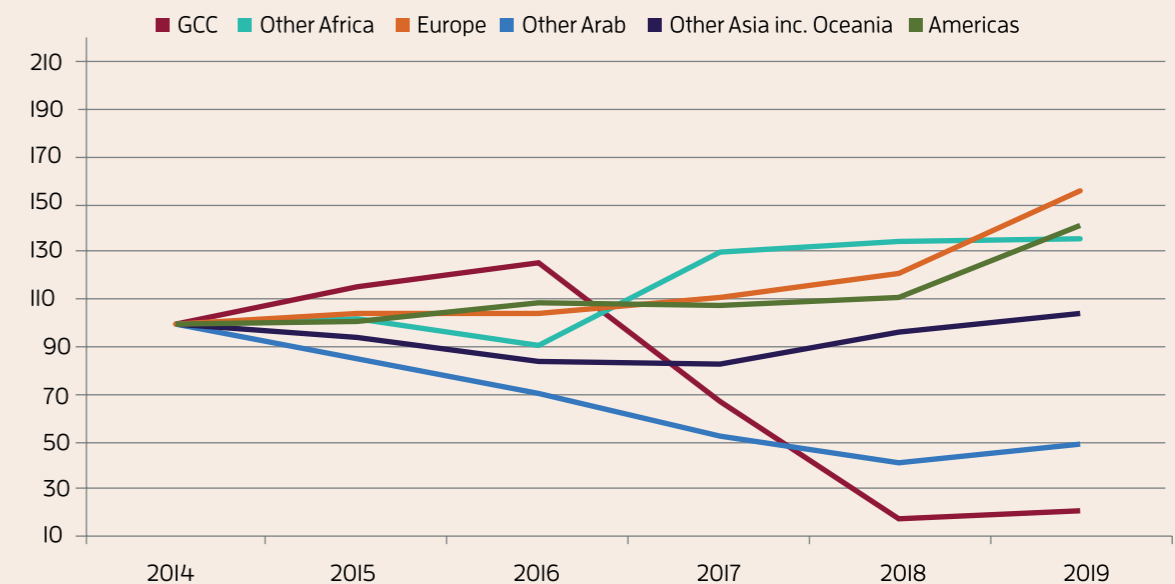


EUROPE  
**+56%**



THE AMERICAS  
**+41%**

INDEXED ARRIVALS TO QATAR BY NATIONALITY, GROUPED BY REGION (2014 = 100)



Source: Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council



## HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The hospitality industry performed strongly in 2019, with a total occupancy rate of 66% across all hotels and hotel apartments, up by 9% compared to 2018. Overall, the number of rooms sold (demand) in hotels and hotel apartments increased by 15% in 2019 compared to 2018. All hotel and hotel apartments witnessed increases in occupancy in 2019, except for deluxe apartments.

One and two-star hotels showed the largest increase in occupancy at +23%, while three-star hotels showed a growth of 11%. Both four-star hotels and standard hotel apartments showed a growth of 10% and five-star hotels saw a growth of 9%. Deluxe hotel apartments witnessed a slight

decline of 1% in occupancy.

The Average Room Rate (ARR) across all segments decreased slightly by 2%. Declines in ARR were seen in standard hotel apartments (down 9%) and in four-star and five-star hotels (both down 4%) in 2019 compared to 2018. However, ARR increased across one and two-star hotels (up 3%) and deluxe hotel apartments (up 1%) while it remained unchanged in the three-star hotel category.

The Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) was up by 7% across all segments in 2019. In a similar pattern to occupancy rate, RevPAR was up in all segments in 2019 compared to 2018, except for the deluxe hotel apartments segment, which showed a

very minor decline (-1%).

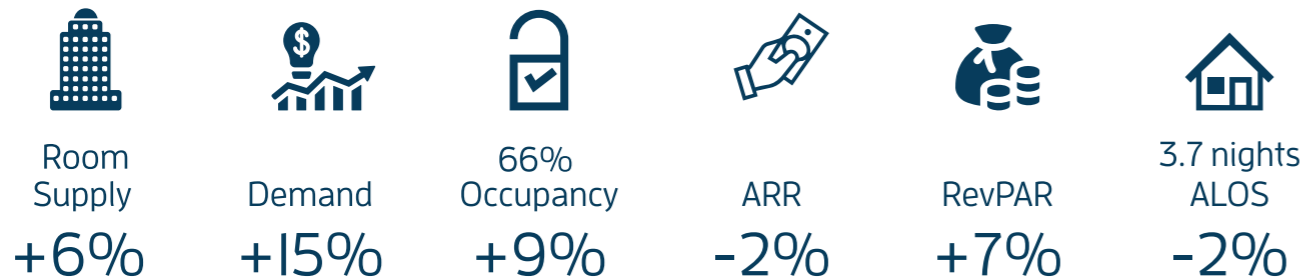
Most notable increases in RevPAR were witnessed in one and two-star hotels (up 26%), followed by three-star hotels (up 11%). Both the four-star and five-star segments saw a 5% increase in RevPAR.

There was a slight drop of 2% in the average length of stay (ALOS) across all hotels and hotel apartments in 2019 (3.7 nights per trip), compared to the same period last year (3.8 nights per trip). However, ALOS showed increases in two segments – by 29% in three-star hotels and 7% in five-star hotels. The highest drops were seen in deluxe hotel apartments (-58%), one and two-star hotels (-33%), as well as in 4-star hotels (-12%).

### ACCOMMODATION SECTOR SUMMARY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS, 2018 VS 2019

	2018 YTD				2019 YTD				% Change 2018-19			
	Occ	ARR	RevPAR	ALOS	Occ	ARR	RevPAR	ALOS	Occ	ARR	RevPAR	ALOS
All	61%	380	232	3.79	66%	374	248	3.73	9%	-2%	7%	-2%
All Hotels	60%	388	232	3.46	66%	380	249	3.54	10%	-2%	8%	2%
All Hotel Apartments	72%	327	235	12.96	72%	325	234	6.56	1%	-1%	0%	-49%
5 Star	57%	563	322	2.90	63%	542	339	3.10	9%	-4%	5%	7%
4 Star	61%	239	146	5.63	67%	229	154	4.93	10%	-4%	5%	-12%
3 Star	69%	178	123	2.03	77%	177	136	2.63	11%	0%	11%	29%
1 & 2 Star	63%	145	91	4.47	77%	149	115	2.99	23%	3%	26%	-33%
Deluxe Hotel Apartments	73%	350	254	15.49	72%	352	252	6.45	-1%	1%	-1%	-58%
Standard Hotel Apartments	68%	217	148	7.28	75%	197	148	7.13	10%	-9%	0%	-2%

Source: STR



## GROWTH IN SUPPLY

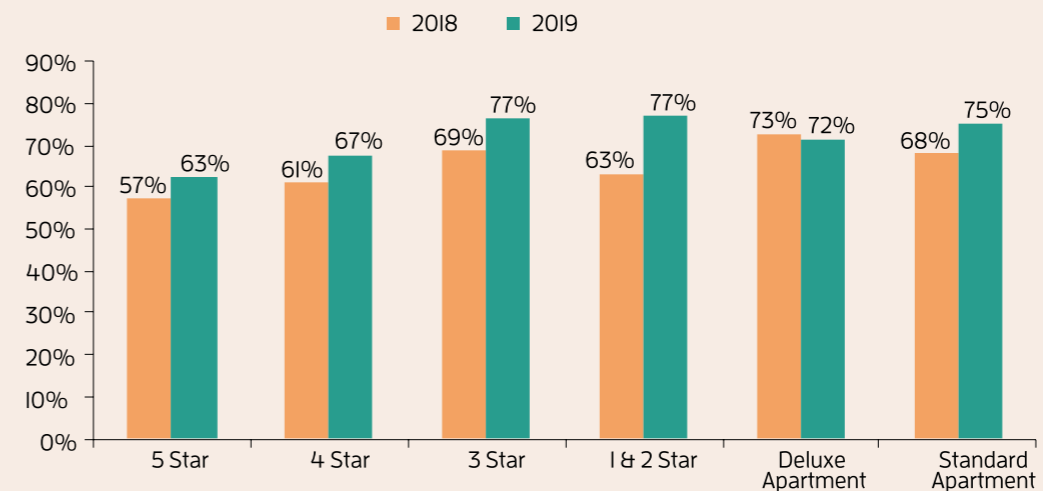
Since the start of 2019, ten new properties have opened their doors, adding 1,899 hotel rooms to the market. The room supply across Qatar's hospitality accommodation market grew by 6% in 2019 compared to 2018. Qatar now has a total

accommodation offering of 27,261 rooms across 130 properties, 24,562 of which are hotel rooms and 2,699 of which are hotel apartments. Despite the temporary closure of two five star hotels for renovation in Q3 of 2019, the five-star hotel segment remains the largest, with approximately 12,900 rooms across

49 properties at the close of 2019.

Room supply from properties under development is set to increase significantly in the coming years, with 107 projects (comprising an estimated 21,500 rooms) under various stages of development, as well as other project proposals under consideration.

### QATAR ACCOMMODATION OCCUPANCY RATES, 2018 VS 2019



Source: STR

CURRENT OFFERING

**27,261**  
Rooms

UNDER DEVELOPMENT

**21,577**  
Rooms



## VISITOR ARRIVALS 2018-19

In 2019, 2.136 million visitors arrived in Qatar, an increase of 17% compared to 2018. Visitor arrivals from across all regions showed significant growth – European visitors were up 29%; nationals from the Americas were up 27%; other Arab nationals were up 21%; GCC nationals were up 17%; nationals from other

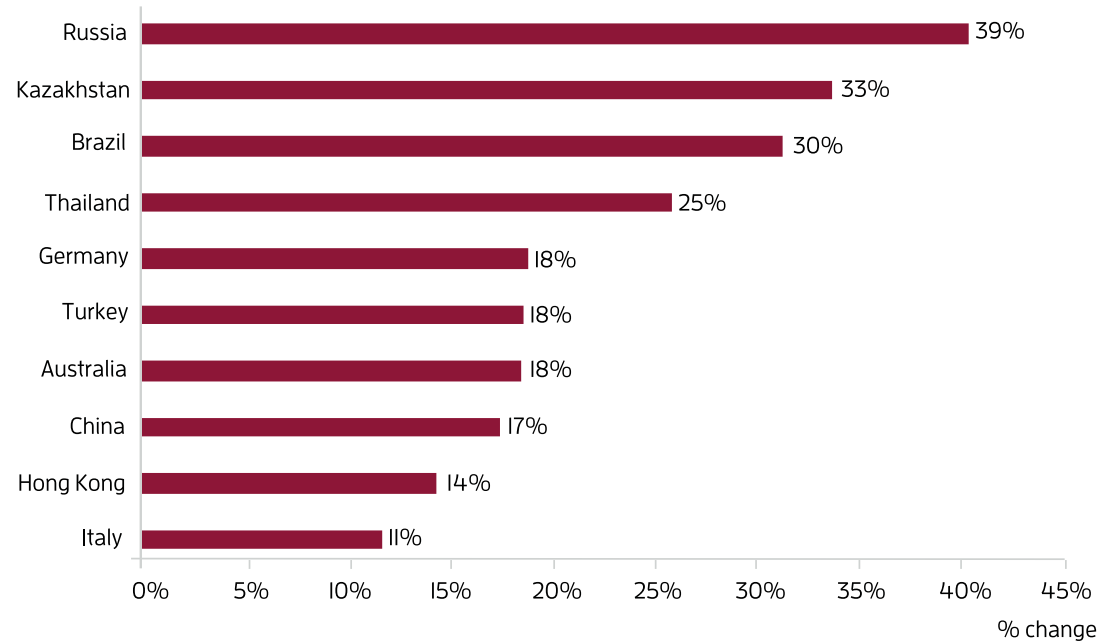
Asian countries, except India, China and Pakistan, but including Oceania, were up 8%.

The number of visitors to Qatar in each month of 2019 was more than that of 2018. Visitor arrivals in December 2019 (275,084) were higher than any month since the beginning of 2018.

Qatar welcomed  
**2.136m**  
visitors in the 2019

**17%**  
increase  
compared to 2018

### TOP 10 NATIONALITIES IN TERMS OF FASTEST GROWTH RATES, CAGR, 2014-19



Source: Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council



As compared with same period 2018



### ARRIVALS TO QATAR BY NATIONALITY, GROUPED BY REGION, 2018-2019



Source: Source: Ministry of Interior, National Tourism Council





## QNTC OBJECTIVES

QNTC aims to “achieve the best conditions for the implementation of the Qatar National Tourism Sector Strategy (QNTSS) and its subsidiary programmes, in order to promote comprehensive development plans for the tourism sector and organise and promote them internally and externally”. It also aims to improve the tourism experience in the country and showcase Qatar’s civilisation and cultural, artistic and touristic features.

### QNTC exercises all necessary powers to achieve its objectives, particularly the following:

1. Adopt Qatar’s general policy on tourism and supervise all aspects of tourism activity.
2. Create a favourable environment for national tourism development and stimulate investment in

tourism projects in collaboration with the private sector, promote Qatar as a tourism destination, increase the number of tourists, improve the tourism experience in the country, and supervise all regulatory and legal aspects of the process.

3. Specify frameworks for coordination, standardisation, support and promotion of events, exhibitions, conferences, and any other tourism-related activities.
4. Issue guidelines, supervise the implementation of directives on developing the tourism experience, and carry out and evaluate QNTSS plans and projects.
5. Approve QNTSS projects that are directly implemented by QNTC and its affiliated entities, and specify and supervise the implementation of projects carried out by ministries

and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

6. Coordinate with ministries and other governmental and non-governmental bodies in all areas related to tourism activities and improving the tourism experience in the country, ensuring integration of QNTSS with the strategies, plans, and decisions of these entities.
7. Propose legislation on tourism activities and experiences in the country, and evaluate draft laws that affect tourism.
8. In coordination with the competent authorities, license and classify hotels, tourist facilities and tourism activities, as well as tour guides, exhibitions, conferences, festivals, tourism services, conference organisers, venues and entertainment activities.



9. In coordination with the competent authorities, supervise and control tourist sites, hotels, tourism establishments and tourist facilities, the process of organising/hosting exhibitions and conferences, as well as tourist and entertainment activities held by commercial centres.
10. Supervise services offered by tour guides, the organisers of exhibitions and conferences and other workers in the tourism sector, and develop and implement programmes for their training and development.
11. Hold training courses and seminars on tourism activities, and

organise, sponsor and participate in festivals and tourism events, as well as local, regional and international exhibitions.

12. Adopt the state’s annual plan on festivals, events, exhibitions, conferences and other tourism-related events, and oversee its implementation.
13. In coordination with the competent authorities, collect and disseminate tourism statistical data and other research information to formulate policies and plans for the tourism sector, promote the state as a tourist destination, enhance the tourism experience, increase the number

of tourists and develop any other programmes under QNTSS.

14. Establish enterprises and investment projects, including partnerships with existing companies or projects, in the country or abroad.
15. Conclude agreements, memoranda of understanding and contracts, taking any necessary legal measures to exercise relevant powers.
16. Represent the state in local, regional and international tourism assemblies, organisations, conferences, conventions and corporations.





**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
OF ECOTOURISM**



# Sustainable tourism development means human dependence on nature but without overexploiting its resources and components.

## STATUS QUO

Ecotourism includes consumptive and non-consumptive exploitation and use of natural resources such as mountains, valleys, beaches and the sea. As a concept, ecotourism emerged in 1980 and is defined by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as “environmentally responsible travel and visits to relatively undisturbed natural areas... that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations”.

## DOMESTIC TOURISM

Qatari citizens and visitors from abroad appreciate spending quality time in the physical world where they can enjoy the scenery, maybe while dining al fresco (in open air) or camping. However, conservation is urgently needed to prevent natural resources from deteriorating. The Qatar National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan aims to accelerate the process of domestic tourism development and meet the needs of both Qataris and tourists.

Ecotourism can contribute to the development of nature while at the same time attracting visitors to coastal areas.

Ecotourism is one of the best ways of achieving economic development in remote regions, creating job opportunities and boosting trade/commerce as well as transport. But it is necessary to consider and examine the negative impact this type of tourism can have on the environment, flora and fauna, and on water resources. Limiting its impact is a must.

## INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

Tourism to natural and heritage sites in Qatar is still somewhat limited, despite the fact that many international visitors come to the country.

## VISITOR CENTRES

It is important to build visitor centres in cities and villages adjacent to nature reserves, instead of setting them up in the protected areas themselves. Visitor centres can help improve the economies of local communities and provide income for citizens.

## ECOTOURISM SITE SELECTION

Ecotourism-based rural development depends on factors that highlight the heritage and aesthetic value of sites, such as:

1. Native flora (palm trees, Avicennia species of mangrove, etc.);
2. Native fauna such as Arabian oryx, Reem gazelle, dolphins, Chlamydotis bustards, ostriches and sea turtles;
3. Water resources (springs, the inland sea, etc);
4. Vegetation offering shade, other plants and seasonal flowers;
5. Sand dunes.
6. Coral reefs.





## CARRYING CAPACITY

This concept emerged as a result of the social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism. Tourism development in any destination must be limited in terms of the number of facilities and visitor volume. The concept varies from one destination

to another. In nature reserves, at beaches and on archaeological sites, carrying capacity is linked to crowding and the number of visitors at a specific period.

The carrying capacity can be identified as “the maximum number of tourists allowed by environmental

conditions and management capacity without affecting tourist demand in tourism activities”.

## PROGRAMME PLANNING

A tourism programme offers integrated services to visitors at tourist attractions, including transportation

The components of an ecotourism programme differ from those related to mass tourism. Ecotourism programme planning includes the following steps:

1. Identifying/specifying the components that make a destination attractive, as well as its services and facilities;
2. Conducting exploratory research into demand from tourism markets;
3. Developing programmes;
4. Contracting with service providers in tourist destinations;
5. Calculating total costs, identifying profit margins, and pricing products;
6. Creating marketing strategies for ecotourism products;
7. Specifying/identifying quality control means/systems.



to and from these destinations. Programmes offer different types of partial and full services, depending on contracts signed between tourists and tour agents/operators. Comprehensive programmes cover:

- Transportation to, from and within destinations and attractions;
- Accommodation;
- Guide services;
- Food and beverages;
- Leisure tours within destinations;
- Tickets to tourist sites, museums

and exhibitions;

Entry and departure fees as well as health, life, and travel insurance costs.

The prices of tourism programmes change depending on the number and quality of services provided. The main cost influences on these programmes relate to transport and accommodation services, particularly in long-haul tourism.

### PLANNING STEPS

Attracting tourists to ecotourism programmes is a complex process because of fierce competition in

demand markets as well as advances in telecommunications and social media. These tools make potential visitors far more aware of the programmes offered by tourist markets around the world, no matter how far away a destination may be.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR

QNTC prioritises the following objectives:

- Assessing tourism development projects in state-owned properties that include natural areas such as beaches, islands and sand dunes, for example;





- Surveying and mapping the boundaries of natural areas for development planning purposes;
- Examining urban/architectural heritage sites, and studying renovation potential;
- Studying the infrastructure needs of tourism projects, and setting down their required standards;
- Encouraging private sector investment in ecotourism;
- Emphasising the impact of tourism on natural resources.

TOP ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS/ACTIVITIES IN QATAR	TIME FRAME
Nature reserves	Year-round
Beaches	Year-round
Sand dunes	Year-round
Coral reef diving	Summer
Winter camping	Winter and spring
Weekly trips	Year-round
Hunting	Hunting seasons
Fishing	Year-round

## DEMAND IN QATAR

Though the stereotypical image of Qatar is that of an arid desert environment, the country is a destination full of ecotourism components and potential, including sand dunes and beautiful beaches. Many such sites attract domestic tourists who otherwise wish to spend their holidays at home.

Among the most prominent examples of ecotourism sites in Qatar are natural areas such as beaches, sand dunes, coral reefs and nature reserves, including Al Masshabiya reserve for the Arabian oryx and Reem gazelle. This reserve attracts domestic and international visitors, including those who go there for overnight stay including camping.

Desert areas are popular with campers seeking to embrace the beauty of nature. Among the most prominent sites are beach camps such as Khor Al Adaid reserve, Fuwairit, and Al Hamla. Attractions include sandboarding/sand skiing and organised desert rallies, as well as camel and horseracing.

## ECOTOURISM PROGRAMME PLANNING STEPS



Source: Ecotourism, Dr Ziad Eid Al Rawadia, 2013, page 193



## **KHOR AL ADAID: MODEL FOR FACILITY-FREE NATURAL SITE**

**K**hor Al Adaid, also known as the 'inland sea', is located in the southernmost part of Qatar. It is a unique desert attraction and popular for camping and trips during the cooler season. Khor Al Adaid is a natural habitat abundant with wildlife including birds, gerbils, desert hedgehogs, snakes, scorpions, foxes, lizards and water falcons.

Khor Al Adaid faces a serious threat because of the impact of high visitor numbers, vehicles and landfills. But its appeal for recreational activities because of its scenery and wildlife means it could still be an example of what nature conservation can achieve.

Qatar's 'inland sea' could be a catalyst to motivate and encourage educational institutions and non-governmental organisations to take part in development projects, and offer opportunities to study ecosystems. This would promote Qatar internationally as a state that works to raise awareness of the environment and sustainable development, and would encourage ecotourism.







**MARINE AND COASTAL  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION**





**Qatar's maritime and ecological diversity made it possible for citizens, tourists and adventurers to choose among many locations and attraction sites and turned the country into a key tourist destination.**

**FISHING**

In the past, pearls were Qatar's main marine resource or wealth, but the focus later shifted to fishing for domestic consumption. Fisheries sector statistics from 2020 show: The total fish imports to the State of Qatar amounted to 27,838.7 tons, of which 7532 tons were fresh and 20,306.7 tons frozen and processed,

while the total available for consumption in the local market reached 42,925.2 tons of all fish products (fresh, frozen and processed) in 2020.

The self-sufficiency rate of total fish products reached 35.5% and 64.7% of fresh fish in 2020.

The following table shows available quantities and percentages:



	Quantities (tonne)	Percentage %
Available for consumption	42,925.2	100.00 %
Domestic production	15,087	35.1 %
Imports (fresh and frozen)	27,838.7	64.7 %

Shrimp and prawn harvesting has been banned in Qatari waters for conservation and preservation purposes.



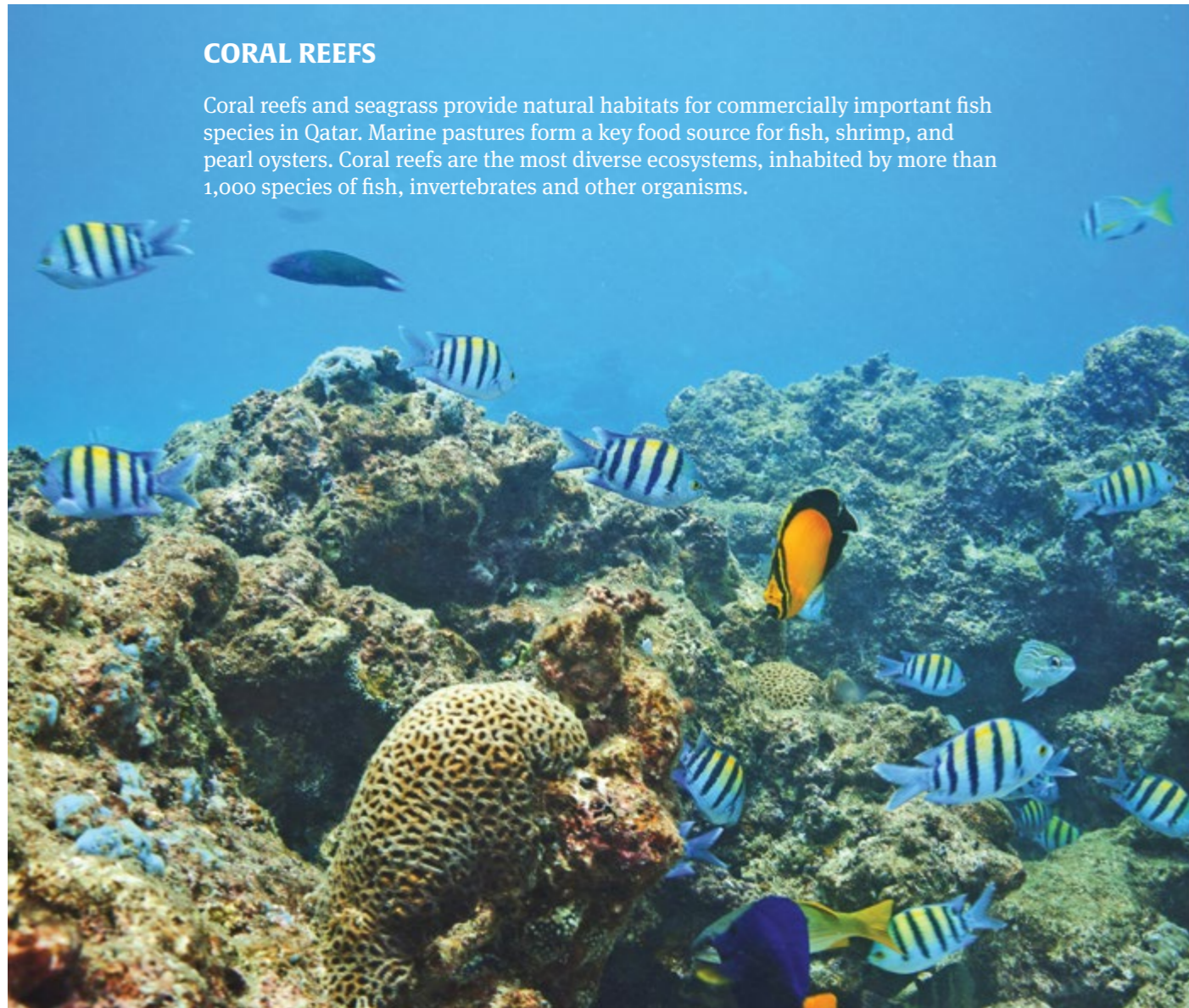
## PEARL DIVING

This is one of the oldest occupations in the Gulf region and can be traced back hundreds of years. Considered a key part of Gulf heritage, pearl diving was the main source of income for many people. The National Museum of Qatar houses a rare and nearly complete collection of pearls that are cultivated in or harvested from Qatari waters. The main pearl diving season is from June to September. Key pearl fisheries are in deep waters to the east and south.



## CORAL REEFS

Coral reefs and seagrass provide natural habitats for commercially important fish species in Qatar. Marine pastures form a key food source for fish, shrimp, and pearl oysters. Coral reefs are the most diverse ecosystems, inhabited by more than 1,000 species of fish, invertebrates and other organisms.



## MANGROVE RESERVE AREAS

Located mainly on Qatar's East coast, but also elsewhere, these mangroves are a haven for birds, fish and mammals. Rising up to three meters tall, they have the ability to adapt to the varying weather along the coastline as well as to the muddy soil. The mangroves are a firm favourite with people who like to go on a picnic at weekends.





## **SAND DUNES**

Sand dunes stretch across the southern region of the Qatar Peninsula, particularly in its eastern part, some 75 kms from Doha. The eastern sand dunes are unique because of their formation, size and type.

The dunes overlooking Khor Al Adaid are spectacular and popular among visitors who come to the desert beaches and also for sandboarding and sand skiing. Qatar's most impres-

sive sand dunes, up to 40 meters in height, are at Khor Al Adaid.

## **MIGRATING DUNES (AL NIGYAN)**

These sand dunes are formed by winds that blow from northeast, changing and controlling their direction. Bare of vegetation, the dunes are popular recreation spots for people wanting to enjoy the landscape or picnic in a unique environment.







**PROTECTION AND  
CONSERVATION**





**U**nder its visionary leaders, Qatar turned special attention to the Arabian oryx, making its protection and conservation a priority. Arabian oryx is a wildlife tourism attraction that Qatar is constantly developing.

Qatar was one of the first countries in the region to protect the Arabian oryx, which was on the verge of extinction. The country has been making relevant efforts since the early sixties.

With their curved horns, large

hooves for treading across the desert, and their short, sparse fur, these white antelopes are so elegant and look amazing in nature.

Qatar worked with scientists and international organizations to save the Arabian oryx from extinction.



### EXPANSION OF NATURE CONSERVATION AREAS

Nature reserves occupy 2,743.74 square kms, forming around 23% of Qatar's overall landmass. In the past, no reserve exceeded 5 square kms in area.

### PASTURE IMPROVEMENT

Some 18% of the land area in Qatar is covered with dunes and sand, and desertification is expanding. One of the most important measures the authorities have taken to address

this challenge was issuing a guide containing maps of territories facing the threat of desertification. The government has also taken the following measures:

- Monitoring the expansion of desert-

### FLOWER EACH SPRING PROGRAMME

The Flower Each Spring programme was created in 1999 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned to educate children on how to identify and enjoy plants in Qatar. Through the project, field trips help transform knowledge into real-life experiences. Every year, the programme selects a native plant and organises activities for students and their families, including competitions, visits, exhibitions and seminars.





ification, drylands and water salinity levels;

- Limiting the number of illegal farms and constructions in rural areas;
- Enhancing and implementing

vegetation retention programmes;

- Issuing and enforcing regulations on grazing to curb desertification.

These measures seek to preserve biodiversity and limit land degrada-

tion. The Qatar Peninsula was once rich in vegetation and home to many mammals. The region was a natural habitat for wildlife until 1950, when hunting and overgrazing started, causing some species to become extinct.

## RELEASING GAZELLES

In line with Qatar's wildlife strategy on the reintroduction of endangered animals back to their natural habitats, the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves in November 2002 released the first batch of 100 'Reem' gazelles into various areas across the country. Ongoing monitoring of the gazelles shows that they have adapted to the environment, with reproduction rates increasing.

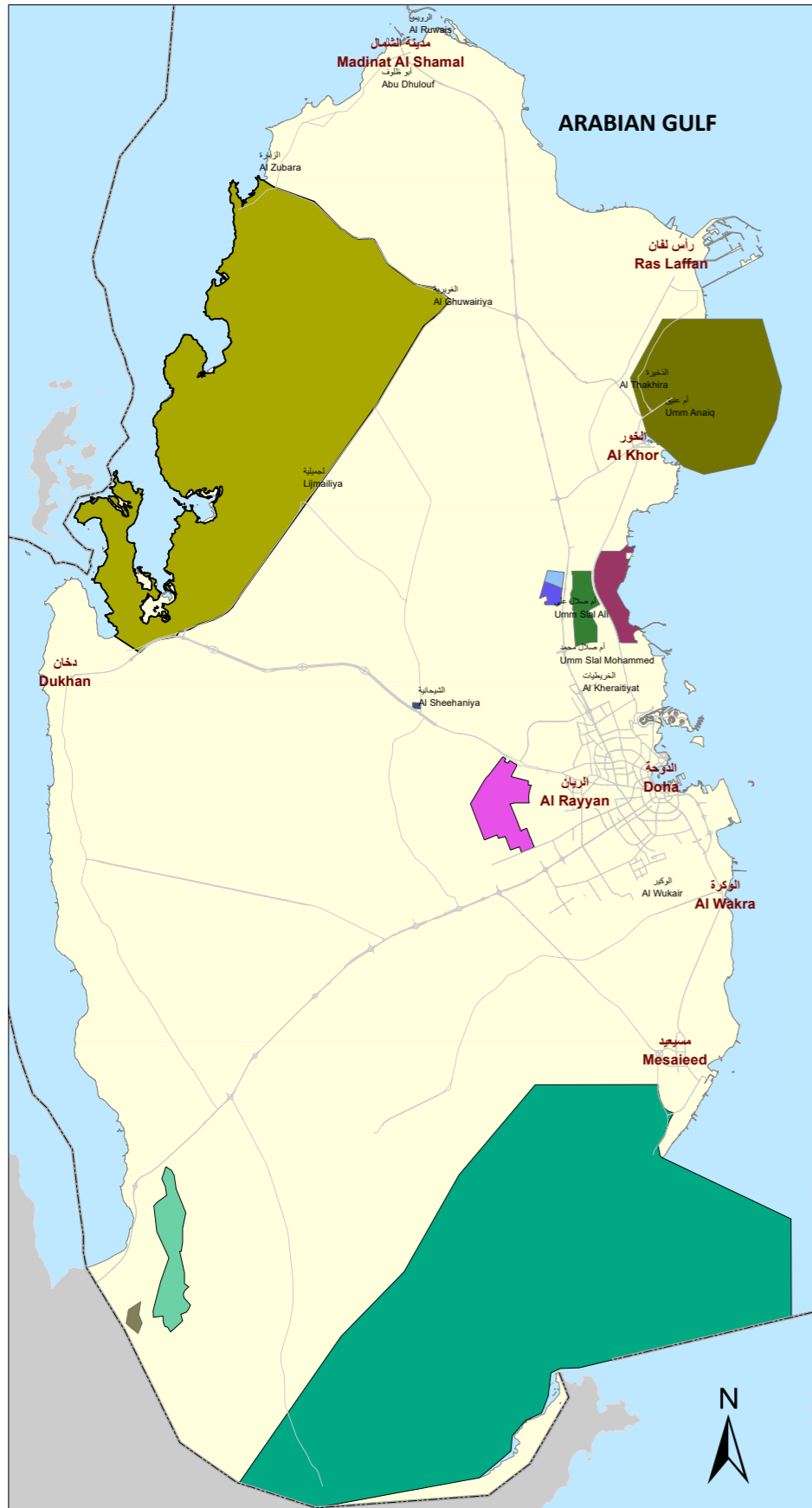






ECOTOURISM SITES





  
**Ministry of  
Municipality and Environment**

**PROTECTED AREAS  
IN QATAR**

- Al Eraq
- Al Rafa
- Al Reem
- Al Sheehaniya
- Al Thakhira
- Al Wusail
- Khor Al Adaid
- New Al Mashabiya
- Sunai
- Um Alamad
- Um Qarn

**Qatar made huge efforts to shield and develop wildlife, establishing many natural reserves and sanctuaries to protect the ecological systems and their components.**

**AL SHAHANIYA PARK**

**T**his protected park, located 40 kms from Doha and covering one square km, is one of the first nature reserves established in Qatar. It was designated as a sanctuary for the endangered Arabian Oryx, before becoming a tourist resort and welcoming visitors who like to enjoy wildlife.





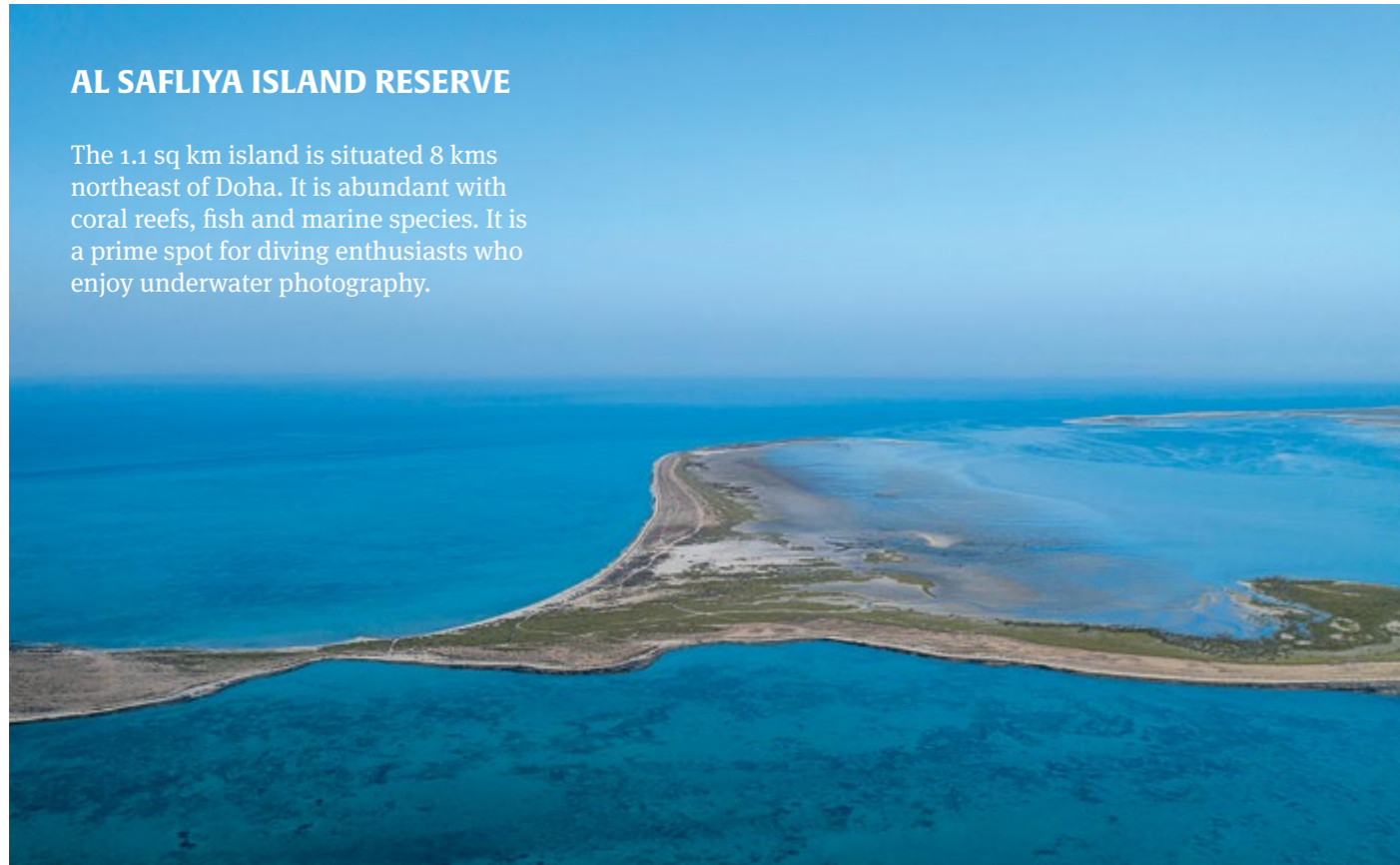
### MANGROVE RESERVE (AL THAKHIRA RESERVE)

Situated in northeast Qatar, 64 kms from Doha, this vast expanse of greenery includes natural mangroves and has rich marine biodiversity. Its large area of vegetation attracts different types of birds and turtles, while its marine section is teeming with fish, shrimps and prawns. The semi-circular mangrove forest covers an area 1 km across.



### AL SAFLIYA ISLAND RESERVE

The 1.1 sq km island is situated 8 kms northeast of Doha. It is abundant with coral reefs, fish and marine species. It is a prime spot for diving enthusiasts who enjoy underwater photography.

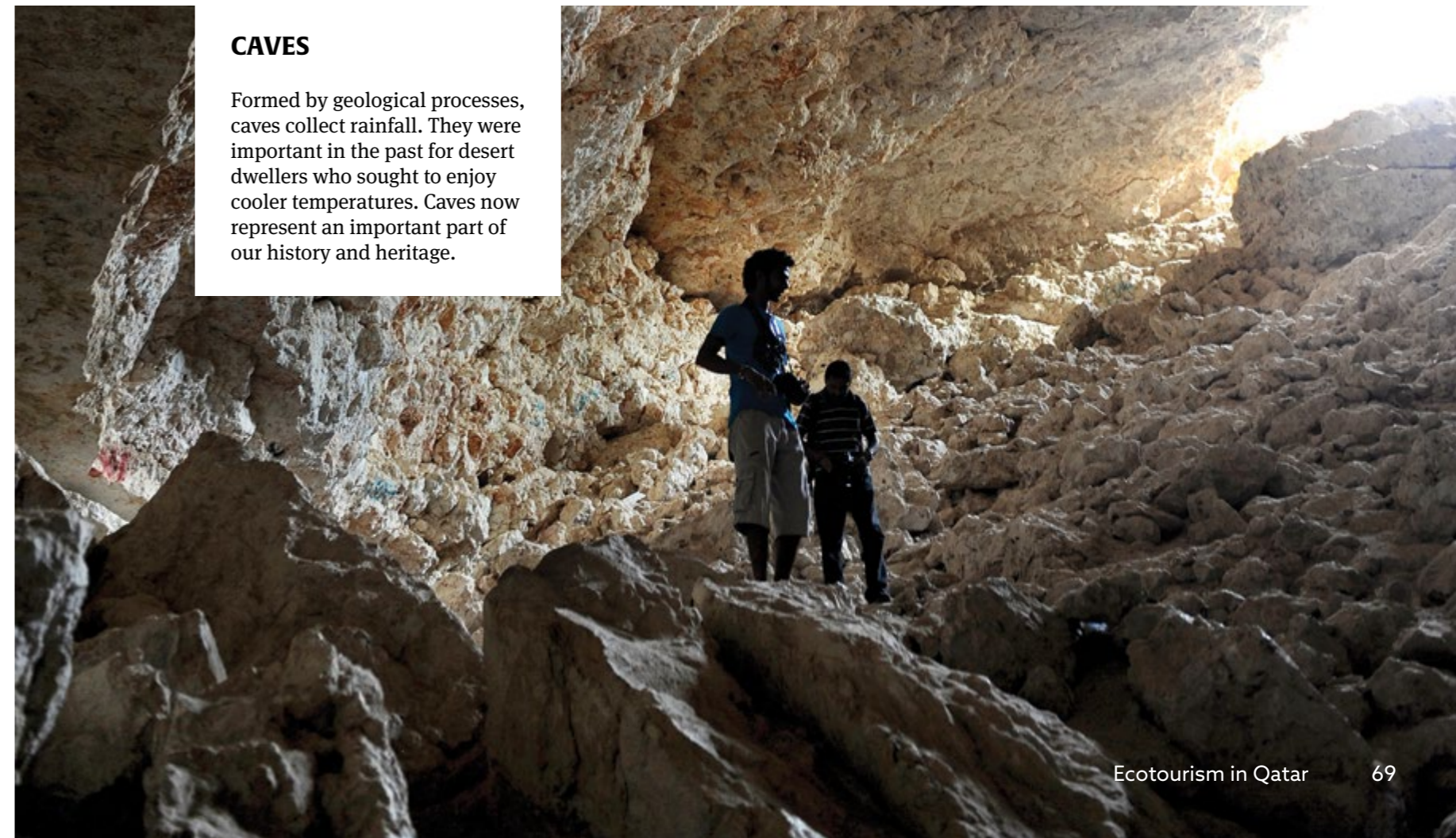


### KHOR AL ADAID RESERVE

Situated around 72 kms from Doha in Qatar's southeast corner, Khor Al Adaid, or the 'inland sea', is one of the country's most important areas, with a unique blend of geological terrain and environmental factors. It is a natural habitat for many flora and fauna species as well as coral reefs. The 'inland sea' is a large tidal embayment with a convoluted shoreline. Described as one of Qatar's most impressive natural wonders, the reserve is ideal for viewing wildlife and bird watching.

### CAVES

Formed by geological processes, caves collect rainfall. They were important in the past for desert dwellers who sought to enjoy cooler temperatures. Caves now represent an important part of our history and heritage.







**AL MASHABIYA RESERVE**

Covering around 54 square kms, Al Mashabiya is in southwest Qatar, 120 kms from Doha. The reserve was created to resettle Arabian Oryx, gazelles and other endangered animals. It comprises hills, natural grasses, seasonal herbs and wild trees.

**RAS ASHAIRIJ RESERVE**

This 9 sq km reserve is home to Arabian Oryx and gazelles. It is in the northwest, around 110 kms from Doha.





## AL REEM BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The reserve lies in northwest Qatar, 65 kms from Doha, on the western coast. It was established pursuant to Law No. 7 of 2005, and covers around 10% of Qatar's total land area (11,581 square kms), with distinctive limestone formations along the coast. The area is considered one of the best regions in which to resettle wild species such as gazelles and ostriches. Among its dense vegetation, the reserve features *Prosopis cineraria* (Ghaf) trees. Al Reem, Qatar's first biosphere reserve, aims to preserve wildlife and ecosystems. In 2007, UNESCO recognised the reserve under the Man and the Biosphere Programme.



## AL LUSIL RESERVE

The 36 sq kms nature reserve was founded pursuant to Law No. 7 of 2005 in northeast Doha. It was chosen in line with biodiversity strategic objectives and to limit the rapid urbanisation on Qatar's eastern coast. Al Lusil, which takes its name from a local plant, has distinctive geological aspects. It is of historical significance as the founder of Qatar, Sheikh Jasim bin Mohammad Al Thani, lived in Al Wusil in the 19th century, and was buried there. The landscape is dominated by desert and rocks, with some dense vegetation in parts. Fauna species in Al Wusil include the red fox, jerboa and hare, as well as some snakes, lizards, and birds.

## BROUQ RESERVE

This is part of Al Reem Biosphere Reserve in the southwest. Brouq is known for its lunar-like landscape of limestone and calcareous rock formations. It has some plant species and a

beach, popular with tourists in different seasons. Brouq is home to Arabian Oryx gazelles and ostriches, and houses the Film City, a deserted Arabian village film set. American artist Richard Serra completed his East-West/West-East sculpture in Brouq.





## AL JANOUB RESERVE

Located in southern Qatar, this reserve is known for its sandy and rocky terrain, as well as diverse desert vegetation. It offers services to hunting and falconry enthusiasts to stalk antelopes, chlamydotis, curlews and hares, in the protected area. Prices per night range from between QAR 2,500 to 3,500, and includes services such as off-road cars and environment-friendly equipment.



## AL DOSARI RESERVE

This is a privately owned reserve in western Qatar, 7 kms from Al Shahaniya city and 38 kms from Doha. Opened in 1984, the reserve welcomes around 70,000 visitors annually free of charge during weekdays from 7.00 am to 11.00 am and 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm. Children can enjoy taking part in competitions and also ride horses, ponies and camels. The reserve also has a gym. Animals and birds at the reserve include ostriches, gazelles, goats, ibex, hyenas, pigeons, ducks, wild turtles, birds, foxes and wolves. Al Dosari also has sections on Qatari heritage and on native plants, native animals (stuffed), birds (stuffed) and marine mammals (stuffed).





A photograph of an archaeological site. In the foreground, a large, dark, arched stone structure frames the view. To the left, a light-colored, textured stone wall with a rectangular opening is visible. In the center, a tall, cylindrical stone tower with a small square window and a pointed top stands on a raised platform. A set of stone steps leads up to the tower. In the background, a blue body of water and a clear blue sky are visible. A white rectangular box with a thin border is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text "ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES".

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**



**T**he history of every nation and civilisation in the world is formed in part by its antiquities. The Qatar Museums Authority ensures that the country's heritage, which is an integral part of the entire culture of the Gulf region, is well-preserved.

Tourism plays an important role in encouraging the state to protect and preserve historical and archaeological sites that are visited by tourists from around the globe.

The state has paid particular attention to forts in Qatar, turning them into tourist attractions that also help to improve the living standards of the population, envi-

ronmentally and economically.

### **AL ZUBARAH FORT**

One of the country's most famous forts, Al Zubarah was built by Sheikh Abdullah bin Jasim Al Thani in 1938 to protect and defend the northwestern coast. It is located around 95 kms northwest of Doha. Renovated in 1987 and transformed into a regional museum, the fort now houses a permanent exhibition chronicling the history of Al Zubarah town.

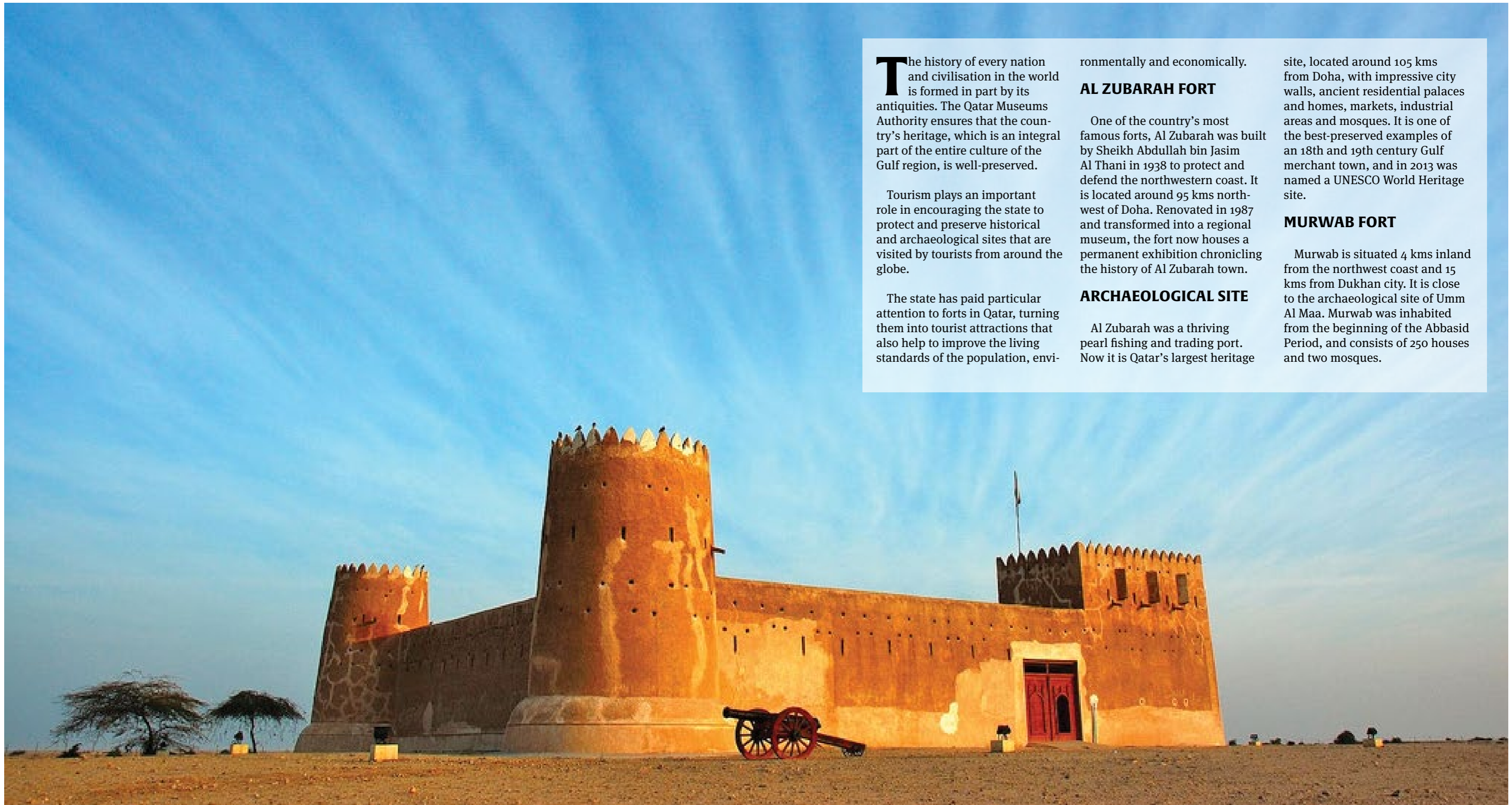
### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE**

Al Zubarah was a thriving pearl fishing and trading port. Now it is Qatar's largest heritage

site, located around 105 kms from Doha, with impressive city walls, ancient residential palaces and homes, markets, industrial areas and mosques. It is one of the best-preserved examples of an 18th and 19th century Gulf merchant town, and in 2013 was named a UNESCO World Heritage site.

### **MURWAB FORT**

Murwab is situated 4 kms inland from the northwest coast and 15 kms from Dukhan city. It is close to the archaeological site of Umm Al Maa. Murwab was inhabited from the beginning of the Abbasid Period, and consists of 250 houses and two mosques.

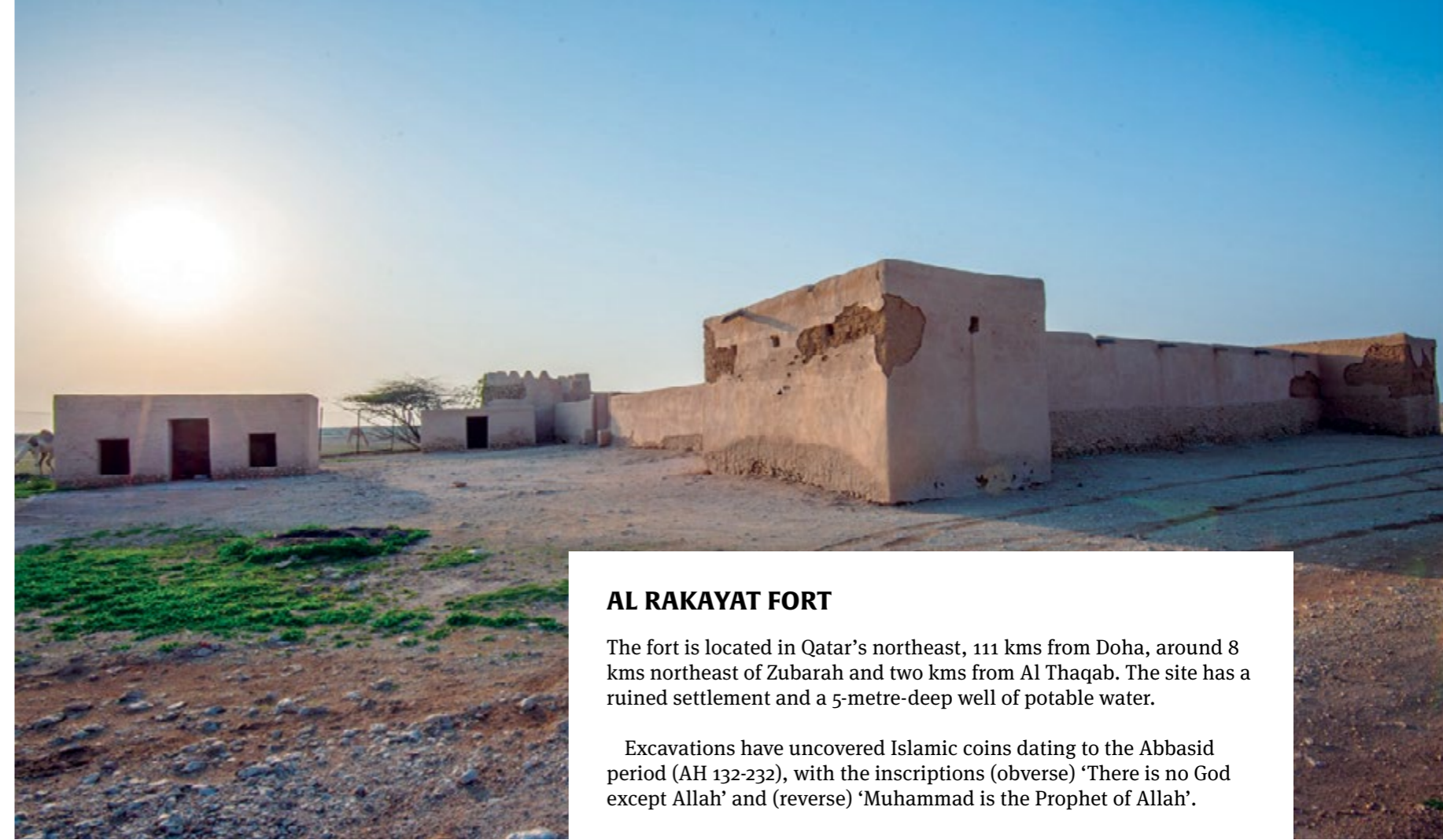






### AL WAJBA FORT

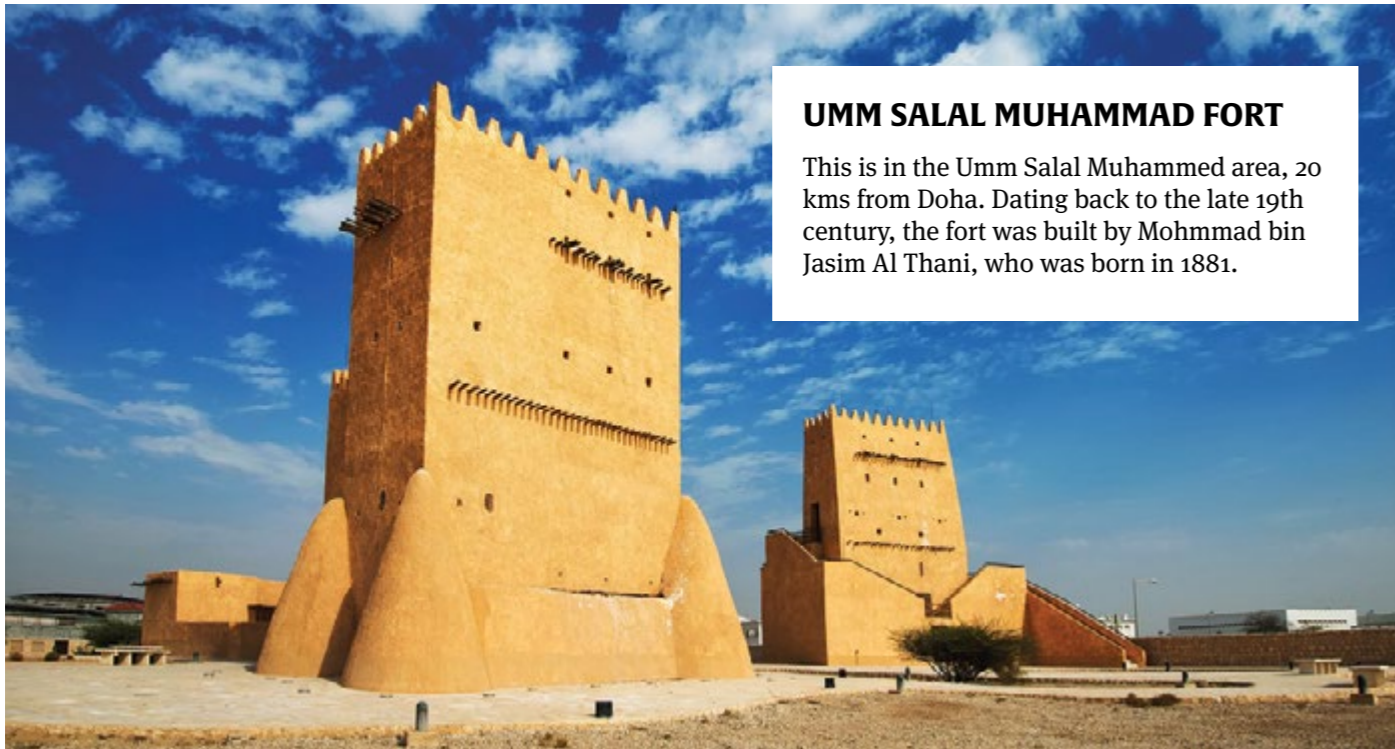
Fifteen kms west of Doha, Al Wajba fort was built in the late 18th or early 19th century and is one of the oldest forts in the country. Its historical importance derives from being the site of a famous battle in 1893 when Qatari forces led by Sheikh Jasim bin Mohammad Al Thani defeated the Ottomans. The site has three water wells and is covered with desert trees and grass.



### AL RAKAYAT FORT

The fort is located in Qatar's northeast, 111 kms from Doha, around 8 kms northeast of Zubarah and two kms from Al Thaqab. The site has a ruined settlement and a 5-metre-deep well of potable water.

Excavations have uncovered Islamic coins dating to the Abbasid period (AH 132-232), with the inscriptions (obverse) 'There is no God except Allah' and (reverse) 'Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah'.

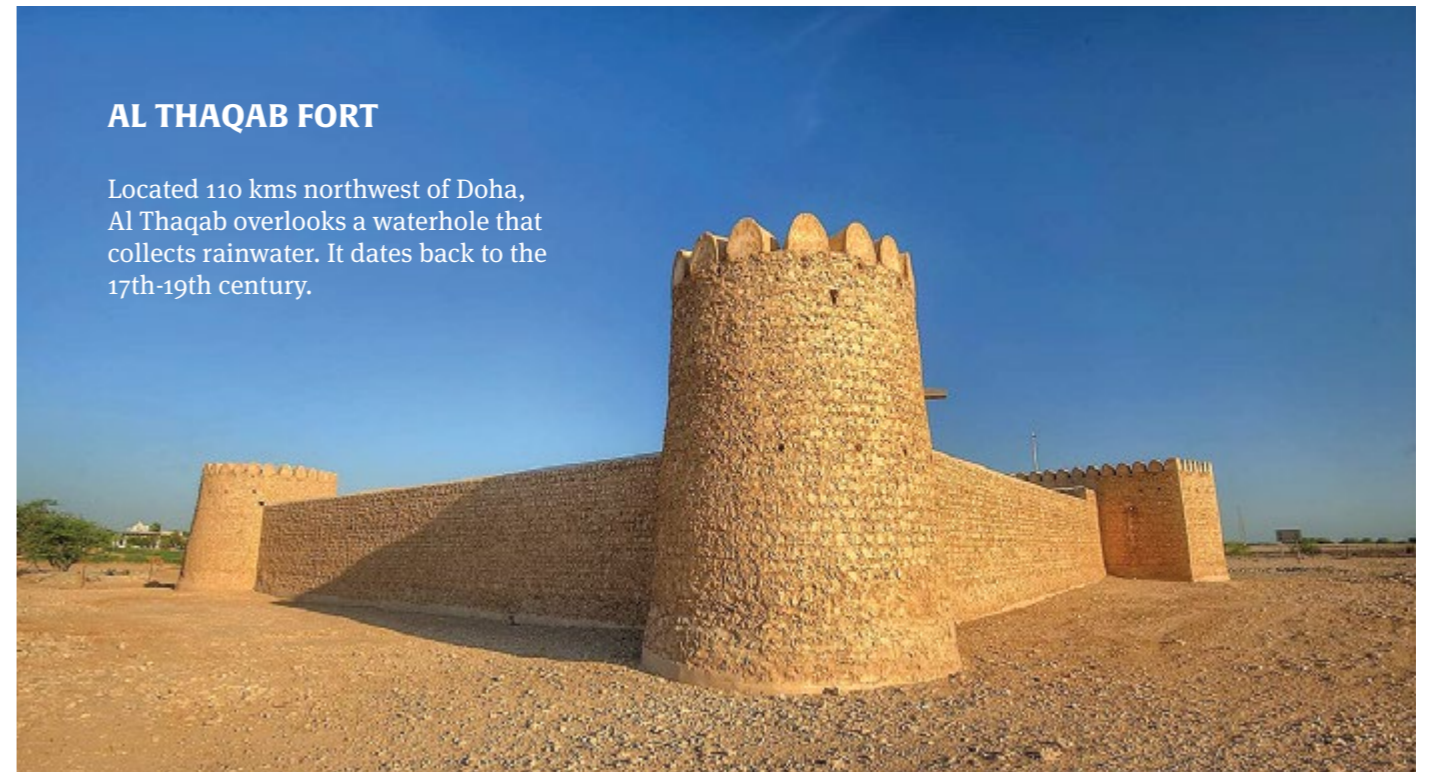


### UMM SALAL MUHAMMAD FORT

This is in the Umm Salal Muhammed area, 20 kms from Doha. Dating back to the late 19th century, the fort was built by Mohmmad bin Jasim Al Thani, who was born in 1881.

### AL KOOT FORT

One of the few military fortresses in Doha, Al Koot was built on a hill in 1917 by Sheikh Abdullah bin Jasim Al Thani.



### AL THAQAB FORT

Located 110 kms northwest of Doha, Al Thaqab overlooks a waterhole that collects rainwater. It dates back to the 17th-19th century.





RECREATIONAL  
SITES



**Entertainment is also a very important factor in tourism. It involves highlighting the aesthetic features of the environment and showcasing the pleasures of nature and its picturesque views. It is also associated with shopping malls, water sports and visiting public parks.**

### **SEALINE BEACH**

This beach, where the waves meet the dunes, is a very popular spot among domestic and international tourists who like to swim. It offers a wide variety of activities, including desert experiences, diving and fishing.



### **THE ISLANDS**

The exploration of Doha should not be limited to the streets and commercial centres of the capital. Visitors can also sail and discover nearby islands. Although most of these islands are flat, sandy and uninhabited, every one of them has its own distinctive characteristics.





## MANGROVE FORESTS

Located in Al Thakira region, these protected areas of vegetation attract varied bird life, including flamingos and herons. Al Thakira mangroves can be found just north of the seaside city of Al Khor, and present a large expanse of natural greenery in sharp contrast to the surrounding desert landscape. This area has its own ecosystem and is notable for attracting resident and migrating bird life. One way to explore the mangroves is by kayak: these are available for hire from tour operators and specialist companies.



## KAYAKING

The Al Thakira mangroves, on the north of the seaside city of Al Khor, is a favourite spot for kayaking enthusiasts. The area has its own ecosystem and is notable for attracting resident and migrating bird life. Kayaks are available for hire from tour operators and specialist companies.







### WINTER CAMPING

In recent years, the Ministry of Municipality and Environment has been successfully organising winter camping in several offshore and onshore locations. Considered a part of Qatari heritage, winter camping from October to April is very popular with citizens seeking relaxation and leisure. In organising winter camping activities, the ministry aims to preserve Qatari traditions and heritage.

### SHOPPING FESTIVAL

Citizens and expatriates in Qatar in search of tax-free bargains, including the latest international fashion trends, head for one of the many commercial centres and malls. The Shop Qatar festival, held every January, is hugely popular both inside the country and beyond.

Contributing to state revenues, the festival was launched by the QNTC in a bid to promote tourism and attract more visitors. Shopping centres, which have extended business hours, are ideal places for gatherings of friends and families. They also host international events, tourism festi-



vals, carnivals and cultural shows, with raffles offering fabulous prizes such as luxury cars, travel tickets and cash.

Doha is home to several top malls including Mall of Qatar, which has more than 500 shops welcoming over 25,000 visitors every day. It has nearly 100 food outlets and also houses a 5-star hotel.

Other malls include City Centre Doha, Landmark, Villaggio, Gulf, Alhazm, Ezdan, Katara Plaza, Doha Festival City and Tawar.

Doha's Souq Waqif, which was renovated and restored according to the traditional Qatari architectural design in 2004, is also a major tourist attraction.

### ASPIRE ZONE

This dedicated sports complex is an ideal venue for large-scale health and sports-oriented events. Aspire Zone has two premium hotels, world-class sports facilities for many sports disciplines, a FIFA and IAAF-accredited hospital as well as parkland and an adjacent shopping mall (Villaggio).

The environment-friendly Zone is also home to the prestigious Aspire Academy, dedicated to develop young sporting talents and also to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle among the people of Qatar.

### ASPIRE PARK

The largest park in Qatar at 880,000 square metres, Aspire Park offers residents and visitors many facilities, including running and walking tracks, large green spaces, playgrounds, a café overlooking a large lake where visitors can also enjoy rowing.





**CULTURAL  
ECOTOURISM SITES**



**Qatar has several attractions that cater to tourists' desire to know the country's culture, arts, history, civilization and archaeology, and to enjoy its local and artistic heritage. The tourists can visit museums and archaeological sites and attend cultural events and folklore shows.**

### **Katara Cultural Village**

**A**n innovative interpretation of the region's architectural heritage, the village includes impressive theatres, galleries and performance venues where it stages a lively year-round programme of concerts, shows and exhibitions.

Visitors can also enjoy other recreational attractions, including top class restaurants offering a variety of cuisines, and a spacious, well-maintained public beach with water sports facilities.

The gems of the cultural village include the Katara Amphitheatre, a crafted balance between the classical Greek theatre concept and everlasting Islamic features, as well as the Grand Mosque, an architectural masterpiece, and Shakespeare Street.

### **KATARA TRADITIONAL BEARINGS FESTIVAL**

The Katara Festival of Traditional Bearings is held annually between November 20 and November 24. Nine countries, in addition to Qatar, took part in the 8th edition of the maritime

festival, during which heritage and folklore shows, cultural events, and competitions were held.

On Katara beach, the festival displayed sailing vessels, traditional bearings, and a maritime crafts market which included traditional industries such as shipbuilding, weaving, pearl extraction, and traditional floor mat making.

With facilities including restaurants, cafés and restrooms, the festival also holds other activities and events, including workshops for children,



games, and fireworks displays.

At the cultural café, researchers and specialists hold discussions on maritime heritage.

Katara International Hunting and Falcons Exhibition (S'hail) Organised annually in September, this exhibition showcases hunting and falconry tools

as well as camping equipment. It includes activities and events, namely a falcon auction and handicrafts related to this ancient hobby.

A globally recognised platform, S'hail aims to preserve and create awareness about Qatar's rich cultural legacy and support educational and environmental initiatives at national

and global levels.

Some 150 international exhibitors from 20 various countries took part in the most recent exhibition.

### **MARMI FESTIVAL**

Organised at Sabkha Sealine in January each year, the festival has many competitions, including for shaheen falcons and homing and carrier pigeons.

The festival, in which many Qatari, Gulf, and international falconers take part, seeks to promote and preserve Qatari heritage, folklore, culture, and identity.

### **CAMEL RACING**

Camel racing has been a part of Qatar's tradition, history and folklore for decades. Qataris also used camels as a means of transport because of how these so-called 'ships of the desert' adapt to the environment. Camels are agile, fast, and flexible. Their ability can be seen in the track, where







racing takes place in the mornings and evenings. Camel racing is held at Al Shahaniya Camel Racing Track, around 39 kilometres west of Doha.

### MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART

An authentic cultural and tourist monument attracting tourists from different countries, the Museum of Islamic Art is a top tourist destination in the country and region because of the invaluable exhibits on display and its architectural design.

This museum reflects the composition and diversity of Islamic art, displaying rare artefacts dating back many centuries from three continents.

It showcases an enormous collection of the finest Islamic manuscripts and artefacts from several Muslim countries.

The collection includes 7th-19th century masterpieces of Islamic art such as metalwork, ceramics, jewellery, woodwork, textiles, coins, glass, ivory and gemstones.

The museum building, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect I.M. Pei, rapidly became an iconic feature.

### National Museum of Qatar

One of the most important modern museums in the region, the National

Museum of Qatar is located on the Doha Corniche. It embraces Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani's original palace (1880-1975) – his family home and the seat of the government for 25 years. He was the son of the founder of modern Qatar.

The museum extends over an area of 40,000 square meters and includes innovative artworks designed by Qatari and international artists as well as rare collections, immersive documentaries and interactive learning tools.

The complex form of the desert rose crystal, found in Qatar's arid desert regions, inspired the striking design of the new museum building, conceived

by French architect Jean Nouvel.

The story of Qatar unfolds across 11 striking galleries, all employing innovative storytelling approaches, sending visitors on a chronological journey that takes them through 2.7 km of experiences. The museum is organised in three sections: beginnings, life in Qatar and building the nation.

One of the highlights of the collection on display is the 19th century Pearl Carpet of Baroda, embroidered with more than 1.5 million of the highest quality Gulf pearls, emeralds, diamonds and sapphires.





# TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





**T**ourism is key to achieving economic development, providing a society with many advantages and benefits, including investment.

Some countries rely on tourism as an important source of national income, creating a strong connection between the industry and economic development. With tourism becoming a main economic activity in many countries, the World Bank, UNESCO and other major international organisations see the sector as a basic element in bringing the world's cultures together.

Airlines pay around USD 9.5 billion a year in airport landing fees, and USD 5.2 billion in overflight fees, providing recipient countries with revenue.

Tourism offers a good tax base,

enabling countries to increase their general revenue by collecting service taxes and fees (visas, landing, docking and mooring charges, travel tickets, public facilities, shops, hotel accommodation, restaurants, etc.)

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 1.6 billion arrivals were expected globally in 2020. The figure stood at 650 million in 2000, with tourism revenue estimated at USD 495 billion.

### TOURIST ATTRACTION

Climate and a country's natural conditions are important to specific types of tourism:

**Cultural tourism:** Travel to historical and archaeological sites, museums, and other ancient or modern cultural locations.

**Nature tourism:** Multi-purpose travel to natural areas. In this type of tourism, climate influences the decisions of more than 90% of visitors.

**Social tourism:** Multi-faceted travel related to social activities and leisure.

### CLIMATE ELEMENTS

Climate and the weather are key factors in developing domestic and international tourism. They influence the decision-making of both tourists and the tourism industry itself. Climate elements include:

- **Ideal temperatures**
- **Ideal humidity conditions**
- **Stable weather**
- **Sunny weather**
- **Gentle winds**



## FACTORS AFFECTING TOURISM

### NATURAL FACTORS

Several factors influence development plans in a target area, including:

**Climate:** A key factor in tourism development.

**Topography:** The shape and features of land surfaces: mountains, hills, valleys, beaches, waterfalls, caves, etc.

**Mazars:** Mausoleums or shrines attracting tourists. Their number in a specific destination influences the

number of tourists visiting that area.

**Infrastructure:** The availability of roads, airports, drinking water supply, electricity, telecommunications, wastewater networks etc. is vital to tourism development.

**The environment:** Natural, biological, historical and other elements relating to the civilisation.

### SOCIAL FACTORS

Culture, religion, language, and

tradition all influence tourism activities and visitor motivation.

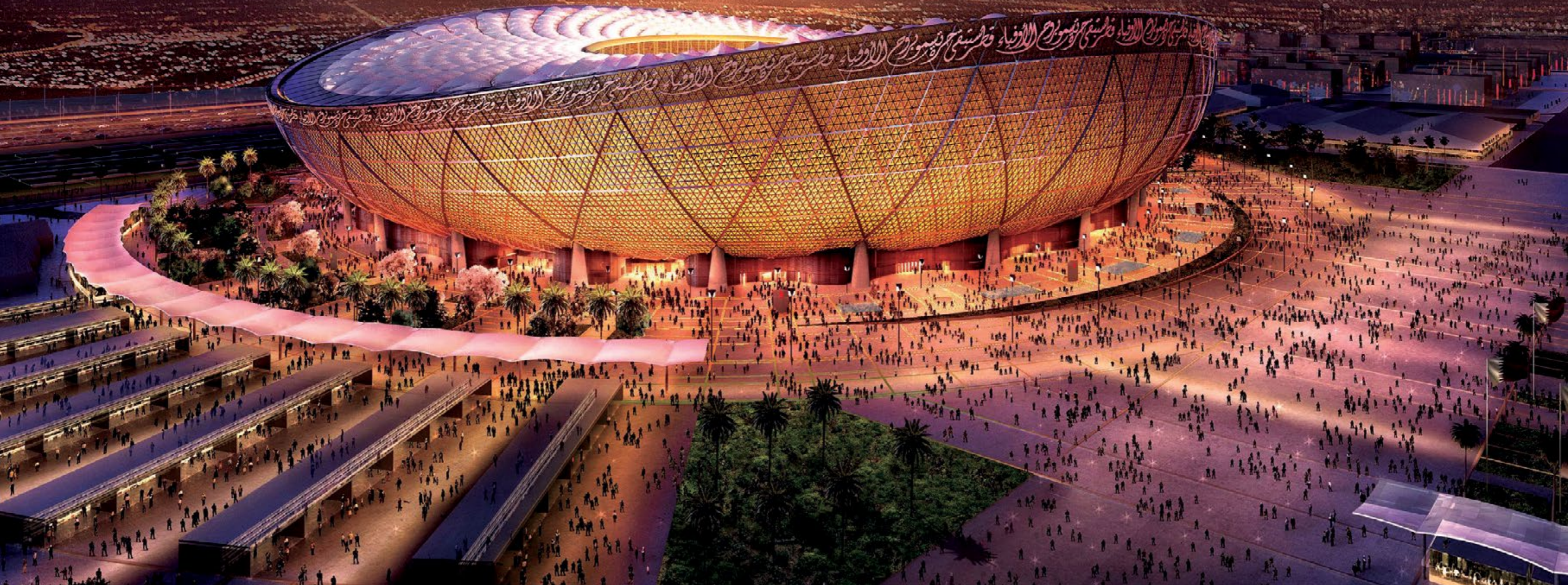
### Economic factors

Average personal income can determine how people decide on their own tourism and holiday plans. Many people have to save up in order to be able to travel.

The state, meanwhile, allocates funds to establish tourist facilities and implement tourism development plans.



# SPORTS TOURISM







**Sports tourism is one of the most important pillars of the Qatari football system. It provides Qatar with major advantages, particularly for Doha, the sports capital of the Middle East, which has hosted many important and international tournaments and championships.**

**T**he country has been developing sports tourism for many years, encouraging and promoting this sector in the Middle East, including the Gulf region. For example, a 2009 international football friendly between England and Brazil at Khalifa International Stadium attracted 45,000 spectators from the Gulf,

Middle East and Europe. Doha hotels recorded high occupancy levels during this event.

As part of its strategy, the sports establishment makes sure that Qatar holds a tournament or championship annually. In recent years, Doha has hosted international football matches

(Brazil vs Egypt and Brazil vs Argentina) that attracted more than 40,000 fans.

When Qatar hosted the 2011 AFC Asian Cup, the goal was to promote and encourage football tourism, particularly from the participating nations. The tournament drew

large crowds, and the event was marked by 100% hotel occupancy rate. The tournament also benefited restaurants, commercial centres, transport companies and telecommunications firms.

In the sports tourism investment sector, Qatar staged a model event when it hosted the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, which was rated as the best edition since the first one in New Delhi in 1951.

Qatar has been developing the sports sector to become a major player in the tourism industry. Infrastructure as well as facilities and systems have been established as a means to achieve that goal. Aspire Zone (Sports City), which also houses the prestigious Aspire Academy, Losail Motorcycling Grand Prix Circuit, Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club, Duhail



Indoor stadium, besides the eight magnificent football stadiums being built for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, are notable among them.

Specialist teams and bodies have been created to supervise and organise sports activities and help boost tourism.

Hosting the 2006 Asian Games created an economic boom, pumping billions of Qatari riyals into the economy. The event boosted trade and commerce, creating thousands of jobs for citizens and expatriates alike. It also enhanced the telecommunications, transportation and tourism sectors, and upgraded the level of





services. Qatar took centre stage, attracting additional international investments. The advantages, benefits and gains of such events extend to future generations as both public and private sectors achieve unprecedented surge and thereby help Qatari economy grow rapidly.

More than 13,000 athletes from 45 Asian countries took part in the 2006 Asian Games, which made a significant contribution to Qatar's economy, with more than half of the global population viewing the event.

The 300-metre Aspire Tower, inside the Aspire Zone complex, houses a 5-star hotel (The Torch Doha) as well







as premium restaurants, with terraces overlooking the entire sports city. The 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum inside the Khalifa International Stadium the world how sport and Qatar and strongly linked. With its interactive exhibits, inspiring objects and unique activity areas, the museum offers a lot of information about local and international sports history.

#### **FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022**

In 2022, between November 21 and December 18, Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup, featuring 32 teams from Asia, Europe, Africa, Americas and Oceania.

Qatar has been preparing relentlessly to host an amazing World Cup and welcome an estimated 1.5 million fans.

Almost all the stadiums being built for the World Cup represent a model for recreation, sports and tourism, as they also offer domestic and international visitors parks, cafes, covered walkways and wellness resorts.

Areas surrounding the stadiums will become focal points for neighbourhood residents as well as tourists, offering top sports and tourism facilities, public parks, skating rinks, transportation services

and shopping centres. These facilities will play a major role in achieving the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030, making the country's people and the entire region proud.

#### **Magnificent stadiums**

Since the countdown to 2022 FIFA World Cup started, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy has spared no effort in constructing seven new top flight stadiums and renovating one. Each one tells a different story, reflecting architectural styles and characteristics inspired by Qatar's Arab heritage, environment and culture.





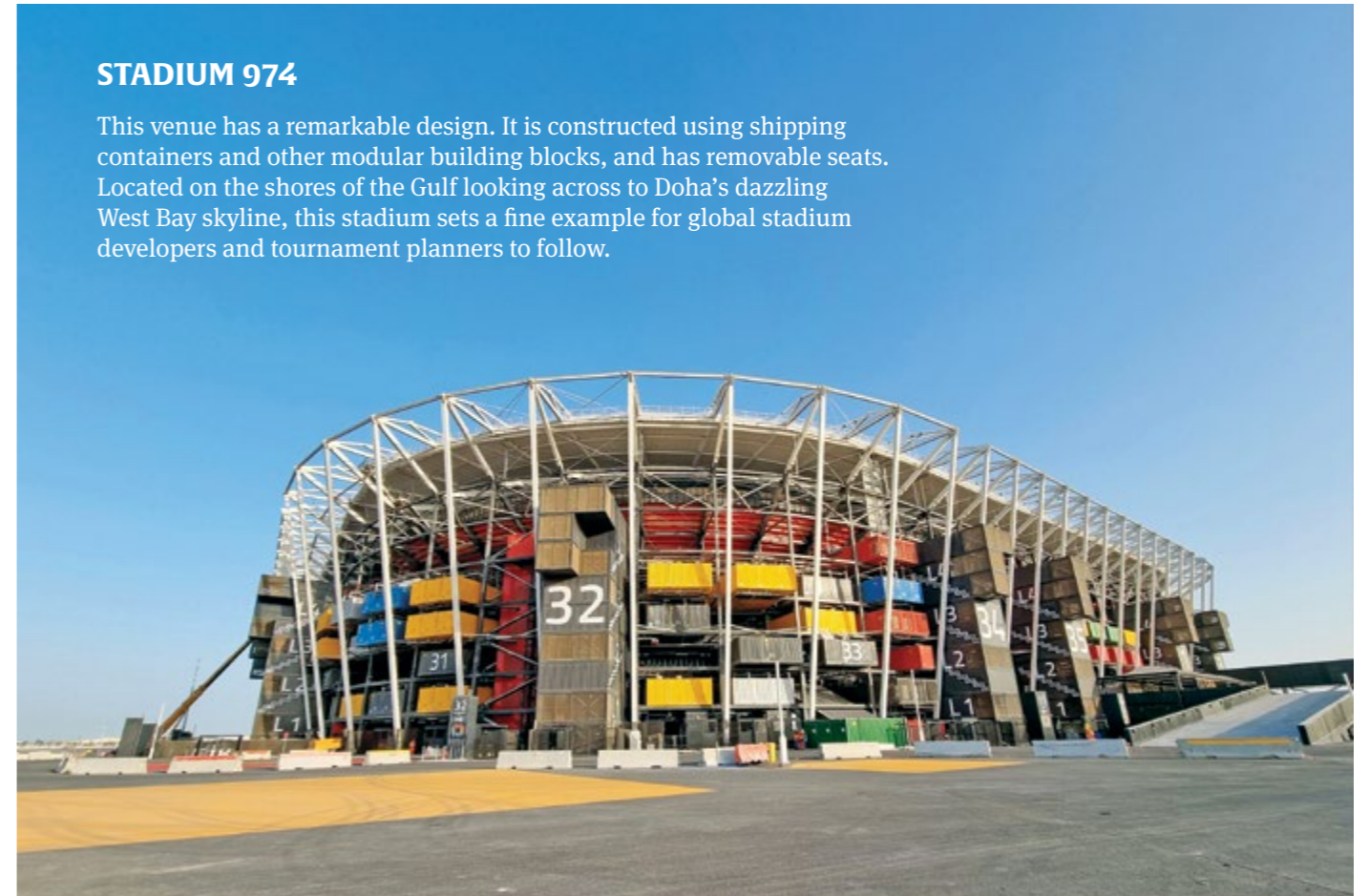
### **KHALIFA INTERNATIONAL STADIUM**

In May 2017, Qatar celebrated the reopening of the stadium after it was renovated and modernised. Originally built in 1976 in Al Rayyan, Khalifa International Stadium has long been the cornerstone of the country’s sporting tradition. It has hosted Arabian Gulf Cup and FIFA Club World Cup matches, as well as the IAAF World Athletics Championships. The Opening and Closing ceremonies of the 2006 Asian Games were also held here.



### **EDUCATION CITY STADIUM**

The landscape around Education City Stadium is dotted with leading universities, where cutting-edge research and innovation take place. Spectators can reach the stadium easily by either road or metro, with Doha’s city centre just seven kms away. As with all FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 stadiums, advanced cooling technologies ensure comfortable temperatures year-round for players and fans, and access for fans with disabilities is excellent. Those looking for even more comfort can enjoy the game from hospitality and VIP areas.



### **STADIUM 974**

This venue has a remarkable design. It is constructed using shipping containers and other modular building blocks, and has removable seats. Located on the shores of the Gulf looking across to Doha’s dazzling West Bay skyline, this stadium sets a fine example for global stadium developers and tournament planners to follow.



### **AL BAYT STADIUM**

Located in the northern city of Al Khor, the stadium is in the shape of a giant tent, inspired by ‘bayt al sha’ar’ – tents historically used by nomadic peoples in Qatar and the Gulf. The stadium’s design reflects Qatar’s past and present, and will be a model of green development. Situated 60 kms north of Doha, Al Khor is a city famous for its pearl diving and fishing; in the past, its charms tempted traditionally desert-dwelling people to the coast. Al Khor’s ability to bring cultures together made it a natural choice to be a venue for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and it will host the opening match on November 21, 2022.



### AHMAD BIN ALI STADIUM

Ahmad bin Ali Stadium in Al Rayyan is located on the edge of the desert in a resilient region where preserving nature and its gifts has long been a priority.



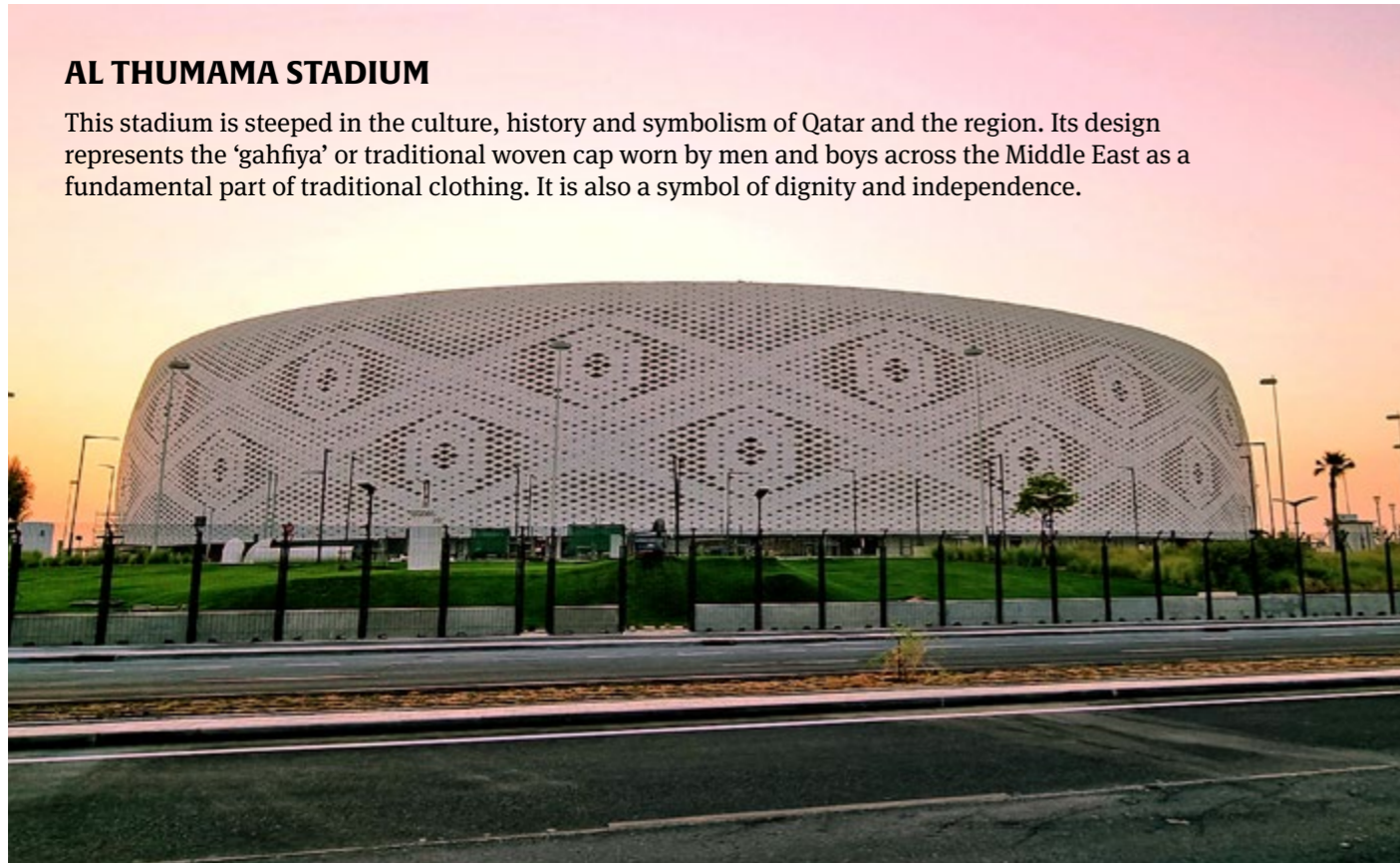
### LUSAIL STADIUM

Located north of central Doha, Lusail Stadium is the centrepiece of Lusail City, which was once the home of the founder of modern Qatar, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohamed bin Thani Al Thani. The design of this stadium is inspired by the interplay of light and shadow characterising the 'fanar' lantern. The stadium's shape and facade echo the intricate decorative motifs found on bowls, vessels and other works of art found across the Arab and Islamic world. This stadium will host the final match of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.



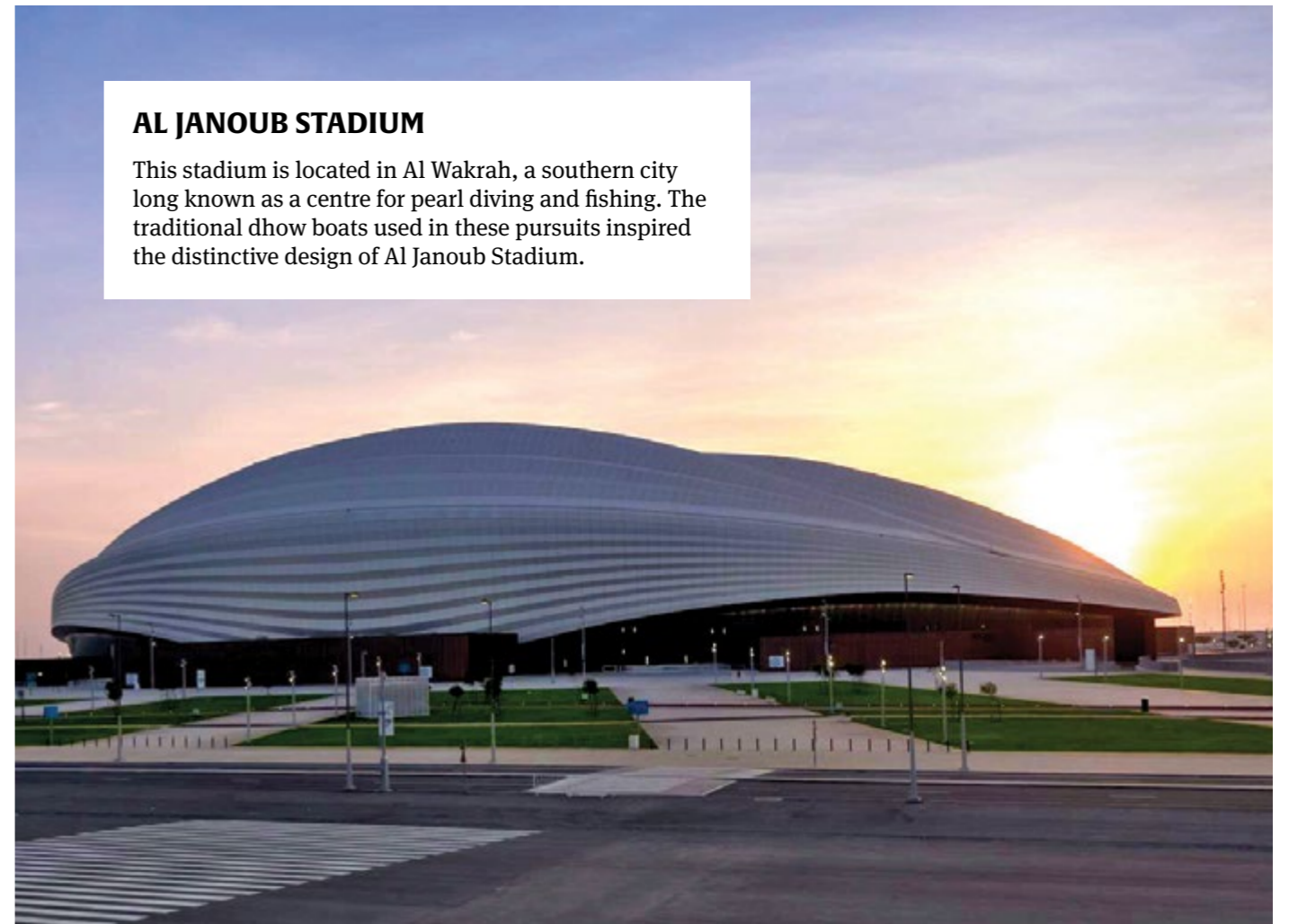
### AL THUMAMA STADIUM

This stadium is steeped in the culture, history and symbolism of Qatar and the region. Its design represents the 'gahfiya' or traditional woven cap worn by men and boys across the Middle East as a fundamental part of traditional clothing. It is also a symbol of dignity and independence.



### AL JANOUB STADIUM

This stadium is located in Al Wakrah, a southern city long known as a centre for pearl diving and fishing. The traditional dhow boats used in these pursuits inspired the distinctive design of Al Janoub Stadium.







**NATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEGISLATION**



**QATAR HAS ISSUED MANY LAWS/DRAFT LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.**

<b>MAIN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LEGISLATION</b>	
<b>Law of the Environment Protection</b>	Regulation of environmental indicators, emergency plans, public awareness campaigns, hazardous materials, waste, and pollution (air and land, as well as water, groundwater and seawater); and granting executive powers to inspectors to impose penalties on violators.
<b>Draft Law on Regulation of Trade in Endangered Wildlife Fauna and Flora and their Products in the State of Qatar</b>	Importance of controlling endangered flora and fauna as well as their products, in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); requiring cooperation between governments; licensing export, import, and re-export processes; and penalising illegal trade activities.
<b>Draft Law on the Control of Ozone-Depleting Substances</b>	Control of ozone-depleting substances, in accordance with the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol, specifying these substances and limiting their use to signatory countries.
<b>Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Law</b>	Environmental impact assessment of government projects and national development plans; requiring approval of the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves, (currently The Minister of Environment and Climate Change). Granting permits requires government (the ministry) approval.
<b>Law No. 32 of 1995 on the Prevention of Damage to Plant Ecology and Ecosystems</b>	Protection of plant ecology; granting employees of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture (currently the Ministry of Municipality and Environment) effective monitoring powers; and regulation of grazing, agriculture, fires, driving four-wheel-drive cars in green areas/spaces, waste, and cutting off trees and shrubs/bushes/hedges.

<b>Draft Law No. 11 of 2000 on the Establishment of the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves</b>	Granting the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves (currently The Minister of Environment and Climate Change) powers to take all necessary measures to protect the environment and preserve endangered species in their natural habitats.
<b>Amendments to Law No. 4 of 1983 pursuant to Decree-Law No. 24 of 2001 on the Exploitation and Protection of Live Aquatic Resources in Qatar</b>	Regulation of hunting of wild animals, birds and reptiles, as well as prohibition of hunting in nature reserves, islands, cities and villages. The Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves (currently The Minister of Environment and Climate Change) mandates hunting and hunting season regulation as well as hunting methods. The law prohibits hunters from harming sea turtles, birds, their eggs, their nests and their hatchlings, as well as damaging pastures and wild plants. The council is granted the powers to conduct investigations and order forfeiture/confiscation for committed violations.
<b>Amendments to Law No. 4 of 1983 pursuant to Decree-Law No. 19 of 2003 on the Exploitation and Protection of Live Aquatic Resources in Qatar</b>	Role of employees of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture and the Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves (currently The Minister of Environment and Climate Change) in supervising and controlling the exploitation and protection of live aquatic resources.
<b>Constitution of Qatar</b>	The Constitution of Qatar gives high priority to environmental protection and the balance of nature, which is an advanced principle compared to the constitutions of other countries. According to Article 33 of the Constitution: "The state conserves the environment and the balance of nature in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development for all generations."
<b>Qatar National Vision 2030</b>	Qatar seeks to protect and preserve its environment, ensuring that development strategies balance socioeconomic requirements/needs and environmental conservation.



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