

QATAR

Business Travel Guide

Compiled by:

Swiss Business Hub Middle East - Qatar

Doha, August 2025

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Swiss nationals holding valid passports with a minimum validity of three months (Not Provisional) can get a visa-free entry at the airport upon arrival at immigration booth. The visa is valid for 30 days start from the date of issuance. Other nationalities than Swiss can apply for a visa-free entry online through Hayya Platform or Application www.hayya.qa. For more information about nationalities eligible for visa, the traveler can check on <https://visitqatar.com/intl-en/plan-your-trip/visas>.

For more information e.g., concerning work visas please visit <https://www.mol.gov.qa/En/Services/Pages/ServiceDetails.aspx?itemid=93>

Transfer from the airport to the city center:

- Swiss visitors can opt for public taxi (karwa) located at the exit of Hamad International Airport. Taxis are all equipped with meter and payment is whether cash or credit card.
- Transferring from Hamad International Airport to the city center can be done using the metro or taxis. Taxis are available outside the terminals and provide direct transportation to destinations in the city.

The starting price from the airport for Karwa taxis in Doha is 25 QAR, and you will be charged 1.6 QAR per kilometer between 4am and 11pm, and 1.9 QAR per kilometer between 11pm and 4am

Taxi: 20-25min for 56 QAR (13 CHF)

- Metro is also available at the airport. Swiss visitors can buy a ticket online through Qatar Rail App (Android and IOS) or at metro station.

Cost of metro ticket

Type of Travel Pass	Class of Travel	Single Journey Fare	Day Pass Fare
Limited Use (Paper)	Standard, Family* or goldclub	Standard: 3 QR goldclub: 15 QR	Standard: 9 QR goldclub: 45 QR
Standard (Plastic)	Standard or Family*	2 QR	6 QR
goldclub (Plastic)	goldclub	10 QR	30 QR

For more information about metro operational hours and lines map: <https://youtu.be/pDjFXtyzgj8>

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory and recommended vaccinations: No

Mandatory medical insurance: Yes, prior to travel to Qatar

Other mandatory health requirements: No

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) has implemented in February 2023 the mandatory Health Insurance Scheme in Qatar. All travelers visiting Qatar will be required to have a valid visitor's health insurance from an insurance company, which is registered in MOPH. We strongly recommend the visitors to secure their health insurance online before travelling. Here is the list of private insurance approved by MOPH:

<https://www.moph.gov.qa/arabic/departments/policyaffairs/hfid/hirs/insurancecompanies/Pages/default.aspx>

PUBLIC SECURITY / RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

Qatar is a stable and generally safe country.

Legislation is based on a strict Islamic interpretation of the law and rigid moral concepts. Offences are systematically prosecuted and punished much more severely than in Switzerland. The following offences, among others, are punishable:

- Drinking and Driving (Alcohol level > 0 per mille).
- Eating, drinking or smoking in public before sunset during Ramadan (including in the own car).
- Offending and criticizing the political and religious leadership of Qatar, as well as national institutions and symbols. Generally, avoid political and religious discussions and critical statements - especially on social media.
- Indecent behavior in public.
- Exmarital relationships and homosexuality.
- Taking photographs of government and military buildings and facilities, industrial plants (e.g. oil fields and refineries) and generally installations of strategic importance such as airports, etc. There is some confusion as to what falls under these categories. If in doubt, ask the local security forces for permission or refrain from taking pictures.

Offences against the Narcotics Act are punishable by long prison sentences even for the smallest quantities and for any type of drug. Even the death penalty can be imposed.

Violations of traffic rules can result in high fines or even imprisonment.

Qatar is an Arab-Muslim country. Adapt your clothing and behavior to local customs and religious and national sensitivities. Inform yourself with travel guides, your travel agency or locally about the rules of behavior and other regulations. Remember that during Ramadan, special rules and regulations must be observed.

For more information about specific topics, please visit

- ## TIME ZONE

Doha Central European Time +2 (+1 during summer time)

	Weekdays	Friday and Saturday	National Holidays
Government Offices	Sunday to Thursday	Week-end	Government will define the working hours
Banks	Sunday to Thursday (Head offices only)	7.00 am to 2.00 pm	Central Bank will define the working hours
Shops	Sunday to Saturday	9.00 am to 12.00 am	Government will define the working hours

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Qatar National Sport Day	11 February 2025
Eid Al Fitr*	30 March – 2 April 2025
Eid Al Idha*	5 – 7 June 2025
National Day	18 December 2025

Ramadan is the holiest month of the Islamic Calendar. Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan. Most restaurants and cafes are closed during daylight hours, but major hotels will normally keep one restaurant discretely open for non-Muslim guests. During Ramadan, government offices and most businesses have shortened hours, though many shopping malls and restaurants operate well past midnight.

NATIONAL TRADE FAIR CALENDAR

The dates of the main trade fairs can be obtained from: Doha Exhibition and Convention Center <https://www.decc.qa/whats-on/> and Qatar National Convention Center <https://www.qncc.qa/event-calendar>

COMMUNICATION: TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

Qatar's country code is: +974

Local SIM card can be bought at: Ooredoo or Vodafone stores located in malls, and airport

Important phone numbers:

Police	999
Fire department	999
Medical emergency	16060
Hamad International Airport	+974 4010 6666
Immigration and Passport Control	+974 4465 6490

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Electricity plugs and socket: In Qatar power plugs is of type G.



The voltage in Qatar is 240 V with a frequency of 50 Hz.

A power plug adapter that fits multiple sockets is available in supermarkets and Tech stores

METHODS OF PAYMENT

National currency in Qatar is the Qatari Rial (QAR).

Exchange rate as of August 28, 2024: CHF 1 = QAR 4.331.

When entering or leaving the country with QAR 50'000 or more in cash or other monetary instruments, or precious metals, the money must be declared in writing to the General Customs Authority office [General Customs Authority](#).

Tipping is not necessary but generally customary. The average tipping is around 10 %.

Acceptance of methods of payment:

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (national currency)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Cash (CHF, USD, other currencies)	☐	☐	☐	☒
MasterCard	☒	☐	☐	☐
Visa	☒	☐	☐	☐
American Express	☐	☐	☒	☐
Diner	☐	☐	☒	☐
Apple Pay	☐	☒	☐	☐
Google/Samsung Pay	☐	☒	☐	☐

DOMESTIC TRAVEL, LOCAL TRANSPORT

The most commonly used kind of public transport is metro. The quality of the services is excellent. If the area is not connected to metro, we usually recommend to use Uber or Kawra taxi.

Taxi fare for a 15 minutes journey: 7 CHF. The price with Karwa starts at 1.62 CHF with additional charges during the daytime and during nighttime. Also, UBER is available in Qatar.

Main ride hailing apps: Karwa App, Uber App, and Metro App

Main method of payment for taxi and metro: credit card or cash

Car rental with/without a driver can be arranged at numerous companies:

- o [Sixt](#), a driver can be hired
- o [Mowasalat](#), a driver can be hired
- o [Prestige cars](#), a driver can be hired

Reservation can be booked online.

ACCOMMODATION, TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE

Several international 5 stars hotel chains are present in Qatar, along with numerous 4- and 3-stars hotels. Room rates are comparable to those in major global cities. Hotel apartments are popular among foreign visitors for both short and long stays. There is the option to rent a temporary office space equipped with all necessary facilities, making it convenient for business travelers.

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

Arabic and English

Arabic is the official language while English is very widely used as a second language, especially in the business community. Swiss businesspersons visiting Qatar are well advised to bring along English-language catalogues or any other printed promotion material. Many commercial institutions and road signs are bilingual, displaying both English and Arabic

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Tips for initiating business contacts

Knowing some Arabic words can show respect and help in building business relationships. Networking is very important in Qatar, and attending conferences and exhibitions helps to meet local business people even if they are in different business industries.

Scheduling Meetings:

In Qatar, you have to expect last minute changes or even cancellation on short notice. Meetings often take time to schedule, and it is important to remain patient and ensuring a regular follow up.

Business attire:

Business visitors to Qatar should wear business attire. Men should wear a suit and tie, and women should wear trousers, dresses (below knee length), and half or long sleeves.

Introducing yourself:

When you arrive at a business meeting, you should talk a little about yourself. Qatari businessmen often express their admiration for Switzerland. They always start the conversation by sharing their visit(s) to Switzerland. If the meeting is interrupted whether by picking up the phone or colleagues entering to the meeting room, you should not be offended as it is part of their business culture.

Building trust and personal relationships:

Building relationships is key if doing business in Qatar. It is highly recommended to stay in contact with your interlocutor after the first meeting whether by email or by WhatsApp (the common communication channel in the country) to build a trust. And avoid pushing for business from the first meeting. Qataris prefer to consult with other departments or even partners before engaging with any foreign company. Swiss businesspeople should show long-term commitment and keep in contact with them.

Offering and accepting gifts and invitations:

Swiss chocolates are the most common gifts that Swiss businesspeople can offer at the meeting. Also, it is very common that a Qatari may invite you to his majlis (The majlis is the seating room which is a central feature of Qatari life where individuals meet to discuss) where you can meet more people.

Sensitive topics:

Qatar is a very hospitable country, but it is conservative at the same time. It is mandatory that foreigners respect the tradition and the culture of the country without offending the citizens. Insulting may cause you troubles with the justice. The official religion is Islam and as in most of the Muslim countries, foreigners must show respect. During Ramadan, eating or drinking in public area is prohibited. Drinks are not offered if a meeting takes place during the day. However, as part of Arab hospitality, an invitation for iftar (breaking the fast) or suhour (early breakfast) is very common during Ramadan. Alcohol is only available in restaurants or bars in hotels. In case, you want to buy, you have to get a license from the ministry.

BUSINESS RISKS

The establishment of the [Administrative Control and Transparency Authority](#) in 2015 has enhanced the fight against corruption in Qatar by taking various measures. It has contributed to place Qatar among the best scoring countries together with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a score of 59 out of 100, Qatar is ranked 38 out of 180 countries in Global Corruption Index [Transparency International](#).

The value of QAR is directly tied to the USD and the peg provides stability for Qatar's economy. However, the government relies on hydrocarbons as a primary source of revenue. A decline in hydrocarbons prices may negatively affect the government revenues, causing economic challenges (inflation, deficit, delays in payments, etc.). the stability provided by the USD peg helps mitigate some of these risks <https://www.serv-ch.com/en/services/for-swiss-exporters/>

Swiss Export Risk Insurance SERV insures political and *del credere* risks involved in exporting goods and services.

[Products for exporters](#)

[Product for service providers](#)

[Products for financial institutions](#)

The full range of services and products offered by SERV can be obtained at www.serv-ch.com.

IMPORT OF SAMPLES AND CATALOGUES

Temporary import: importing cargo in Qatar on temporary basis for the purpose of exhibition, specific job and demonstration may be allowed based on certain conditions since the implementation of ATA Carnet system on August 2018.

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Business news	Gulf Times, Ministry of Commerce and Industry Qatar News Agency		
Customs hotline	https://www.customs.gov.qa/	+974 4445 7457 (136 inside Country)	info.pr@customs.gov.qa
Qatar Financial Center	https://www.qfc.qa/en	+974 4496 7777	info@qfc.qa
Qatar Chamber	https://www.qatarchamber.com/	+974 4455 9111	info@qcci.org

ADDRESSES OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Switzerland

Villa 60, Wadi al Humra
Street 807 Area 66, Al Dafna
Doha-Qatar
P.O. Box: 23745
Tel: +974 4020 3400
Fax: +974 4020 3402
E-Mail: doha@eda.admin.ch

Website: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/doha>

Opening times:

Sunday to Thursday 08:00 – 16:00

ADDRESSES BILATERAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Swiss Business Council Qatar (SwissBCQ)

Tel: 3321 6810
P.O.Box: 23475
Email: info@swissbcq.org
Website: www.swissbcq.org

The Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Chemin des Mines, 21202 Geneva
Tel : +41 (0)22 506 42 21
Email : arabswisscham@caschi.ch

ADDRESSES OF THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF THE STATE OF QATAR IN SWITZERLAND

Embassy of the State of Qatar

Thunstrasse 67
3006 Bern
Switzerland
Tel: +41 313 26 06 62
Fax: +41 313 26 06 60
E-Mail: bern@mofa.gov.qa

Website: <https://bern.embassy.qa/en/>

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 09:00 – 16:00

Permanent Mission in Geneva

27 - 29 avenue du Bouchet
1209 Genève
Genève
Switzerland
Tel : +41 227 98 85 00
Email : geneva@mofa.gov.qa

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 09:00 – 16:00

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