

LOCAL INFORMATION

49th IMIA Conference
Doha, Qatar
Saturday 1st October to 5th October 2016

CONFERENCE & ACCOMMODATION VENUE

Hotel Marsa Malaz Kempinski, The Pearl
Doha, Qatar
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<https://www.kempinski.com/en/doha/marsa-malaz-kempinski-the-pearl-doha/>

WELCOME TO DOHA, QATAR

Doha is the capital city and most populous city of the State of Qatar. The city is located on the coast of the Persian Gulf in the east of the country. It is Qatar's fastest growing city, with over 60% of the nation's population living in Doha or its surrounding suburbs, and it is also the economic center of the country. It comprises one of the municipalities of Qatar.

Doha was founded in the 1820s as an offshoot of Al Bidda. It was officially declared as the country's capital in 1971, when Qatar gained independence. As the commercial capital of Qatar and one of the emergent financial centers in the Middle East, Doha is considered a world city by the Globalisation and World Cities Research Network. Doha accommodates Education City, an area devoted to research and education.

The city was host to the first ministerial-level meeting of the Doha Development Round of World Trade Organization negotiations. It was also selected as host city of a number of sporting events, including the 2006 Asian Games, the 2011 Pan Arab Games and most of the games at the 2011 AFC Asian Cup. In December 2011, the World Petroleum Council held the 20th World Petroleum Conference in Doha. Additionally, the city hosted the 2012 UNFCCC Climate Negotiations and is set to host 2022 FIFA World Cup.

In May 2015, Doha was officially recognized as one of the New7Wonders Cities together with Vigan, La Paz, Durban, Havana, Beirut, and Kuala Lumpur.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES:

Area : 11,586 km²

Altitude : 10 m above the sea level.

Population : 2,423,175 (2016)

Average Temperature: 37-49°C (max) usually between May and September.

: 14-18°C (min) usually between October and May.

Best time to visit : October-March

Languages : Arabic-English

VISA INFORMATION

Qatar adopts a visa-exemption policy for more than 33 countries, as well as the GCC members, to boost tourism. The current regulations are applicable to GCC residence permit holders.

Business Visas are issued to businessmen who have applied in advance through a host company to obtain a tourist visa, the individual should be a national of the 33 listed countries or can pre apply through a local hotel or airline.

The visas are renewable monthly. A tourist can get a visa on arrival at the entry points in the country or from Qatar's embassies abroad.

The nationals from the following countries are eligible for tourist visa on arrival : USA, Turkey, Cyprus, Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Finland, Spain, Monaco, Vatican, Iceland, Andorra, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

TRANSPORT AND GENERAL HINTS FOR USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT:

By Car

Saudi Arabia is the only country that borders Qatar.

There are plans to build bridges linking Qatar with both Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates in the future.

Bus

In late 2005, a public bus service, with two different routes, was introduced as the city's first mode of public transport. By March 2006, there were six routes running and nowadays there is a wide network of bus routes covering the whole city as well as other cities. The main bus station is a large open lot adjacent to the Gold Souq. Buses are air conditioned as well as some bus stands.

Taxi

The only other way to get around without your own vehicle is by taxi. The air-conditioned green taxis are operated by the Mowasalat transport company known as "Karwa" taxis. The starting meter fare is 4 riyals. Minimum fare for each trip is 10 riyals.

Car Hire

Tourists can hire a car at one of the several car-rental agencies located at the Doha International Airport. It is recommended that you have a vehicle reserved before touching down at the airport, otherwise tourists may not be able to obtain the best price and/or encounter waits while cars are brought into the temporary parking area from outside lots. All rental agencies will require that you have an international drivers' license.

WEATHER AND WHAT TO WEAR:

Winter is the rainy season in Qatar, so bring a waterproof jacket. Nights can get as cold as 15 degrees Celsius during spring and fall and even colder in winter; bring a light jacket or a long-sleeve shirt to keep you warm.

In summer, if you're going to spend a lot of time outside, it's actually better to wear long sleeves. Long-sleeved cotton shirts allow good air circulation but will protect your skin from

sunburn and actually keep you cooler. Because you won't sweat much in Qatar's dry desert air, you don't have to worry about buying only synthetic materials. Instead, focus on breathable fabrics such as linen, silk and hemp.

CURRENCY:

In Doha the currency is Qatari Riyals. All major credit cards are accepted throughout and cash machines are readily accessible.

1 Riyal is equivalent to 100 Dirhams. Bank notes are available in denominations of QR500, 100, 10, 50, 5 and 1. Coins are found in denominations of 25, 50, 10, 5 and 1 dirhams, although only 25 and 50 dirham coins are widely circulated.

Exchange rate: 1 USD Equal 3.65 QR.

WORKING HOURS AND SHOPPING:

The government offices work between 6am and 2pm, while commercial offices work in two shifts – the first from 7.30am to 12noon, and next from 3.30am to 7.30pm.

Major shopping malls open from 10am to 10pm, while majority of them close on Friday mornings. The timings for independent shops vary, but are generally from 8am to 12.30pm, and then from 4pm to 9pm. Several shops are closed on Fridays. During Ramadan, the commercial shops shut down during breaking of the fast, just after sunset, and open late in the evening.

ELECTRICITY:

Voltage is 240 AC at 50 cycles (As for electrical sockets, British Style Plug with one grounding blade and two flat blades are used. Even Indian/South African style plugs with two circular metal pins above a large circular grounding pin can be used).

TIME ZONE:

Qatar is +3 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +3) from the End of October until End of March, and will be +2 (GMT +2) from the End of March until End of October.

EMERGENCY AND FIRST AID:

If in the hotel please contact the reception in any case of emergency or first aid. If outside of the hotel: Emergency assistance (999). **PLACES AND RESTAURANTS:** The Pearl is the most amazing place to visit, it's like a small city in the middle of the sea, and it includes shopping malls, hotels, bay, restaurants, cafes and many more.

Reincarnated in the last decade as the social heart of Doha, Souq Waqif is a wonderful place to explore and an undoubted highlight of the city. There has been a souq on this site for centuries; the Bedu would bring their sheep, goats and wool here to trade for essentials, and the entire market area has been cleverly redeveloped to look like a 19th-century souq, with mud-rendered shops, exposed timber beams and some beautifully restored original Qatari buildings.

Katara Cultural Village, this extensive collection of new Qatari-style buildings, with the superb modern coliseum at the hub, provides a fantastic venue for art exhibitions, opera,

concerts and other live entertainment. There is no charge for admission to the grounds which are home to varied restaurants and a beach.

Museum of Islamic Art is rising from its own purpose-built island, and set in an extensive landscape of lawns and ornamental trees off the corniche, this is a fabulous museum. It's shaped like a postmodern fortress with minimal windows (to reduce energy use) and a 'virtual' moat, and the views across the water are splendid. With the largest collection of Islamic art in the world, collected from three continents, the museum is so rich in treasure that it rewards short, intense visits. The museum was designed by IM Pei (architect of the Louvre pyramid), and you know that something special awaits from the minute you lay eyes on the grand palm-lined entrance. Inside, the building is a masterpiece of light and space, drawing your eyes up to the dome, a clever modern take on the dome so prevalent in Islamic architecture.

One of the main malls includes Villaggio, in this Venetian-themed mall, you can shop under a diorama of fluffy white clouds, eat pizza at Paul's and take a ride on a gondola along the grand canal. It includes lots of entertainment opportunities, including a cinema.

The best cinemas are located in City Center-Doha, the Mall and the Landmark, Villaggio Shopping Mall shopping complexes and a state of the art cinema at the Pearl. They show the latest Hollywood blockbusters.

BANANA ISLAND RESORT DOHA is a 20 minutes from the heart of Qatar's vibrant capital, a luxury yacht ferry crosses crystal clear water to reach a breathtaking island that feels a world away, while a private helicopter pad offers an exclusive arrival with a bird's eye coastal view. Banana Island Resort Doha - a paradise sanctuary which offers a world class facilities and limitless activities providing relaxation and adventure, wellness and pure indulgence. Hideaway in true Arabian luxury with 141 rooms, suites, pool villas and over water villas setting the mood for romance and unforgettable holidays with family and friends.

There are many **restaurants** that meets all tastes and these are the recommended ones:

- Toro Toro Restaurant at Kempinski Hotel
- Nozomi Japanese Restaurant at Kempinski Hotel
- Antica Pesa at Kempinski Hotel
- El Faro Spanish Restaurant at Kempinski Hotel
- Hakkasan at St Regis Hotel
- Gordon Ramsay at St Regis Hotel
- La Spiga at W Hotel
- Market by Jean Georges at W Hotel
- Nobu at Four Seasons Hotel
- The Anvil Rooms at Tornado Tower
- La Varenne at Tornado Tower
- Riva Restaurant at Banana Island
- Prince Of Persia at The Pearl
- Elements Asian Restaurant at Four Seasons Hotel
- Harry Ramsdens British Restaurant at The Pearl
- Nozomi Japanese Restaurant at Kempinski Hotel
- The French Olive Doha at Barwa Complex
- Rodizio Brazilian Restaurant at Crowne Plaza Doha, The Business Park
- Sukar Basha Arabic Restaurant at Katara

LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

By registering for the IMIA Conference 2016, participants accept that neither the Organizing Committee nor the Conference Organizer assume any liability whatsoever. Participants are advised to make their own arrangements regarding for instance health and travel insurance.