



Special Report: 2022 Soccer/Football Tournament Qatar



Qatar will be hosting one of the biggest and most anticipated tournaments across the world from 20 November – 18 December 2022. This is the first for this competition to be played in the Arab world. The finals are expected to take place in Lusail at the Lusail Iconic Stadium, the tournament will be played in 8 venues across 5 host cities in Qatar.

This report provides intelligence on the overall healthcare environment and security concerns in Qatar along with hospital referrals in each of the host cities, and logistical information on the various higher-level-of-care medical destinations considered by UnitedHealthcare Global during a medical evacuation.

Host Cities and Venues:

- Lusail
 - Lusail Iconic Stadium
- Al Khor
 - Al Bayt Stadium
- Al Wakrah
 - Al Janoub Stadium
- Al Rayyan
 - Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium
 - Khalifa International Stadium
 - Education City Stadium
- Doha
 - Stadium 974
 - Al Thumama Stadium

Health Intelligence

Quality of Care Summary

A high level of medical care compatible with international standards is available in Qatar, particularly around Doha, where more than 80 percent of the population lives. Health care is managed by the Ministry of Public Health and medical services are mainly provided through two organizations:

- Primary Health Care Corporations (PHCC) - runs more than 25 regional centers across the country
- Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) - non-profit organization that runs facilities including public hospitals, community clinics and the national ambulance service

The Department of Healthcare Professions (DHP), that operates under the Ministry of Public Health, is the sole authority that oversees the registration, regulation, and accreditation of all public and private medical providers within Qatar.

Medical Risk Rating

Overall Medical Risk	3
Disease Risk	2
Quality of Care Risk	2
Remoteness Risk	3
Cultural Challenge Risk	3

Language Proficiency

Arabic and English are widely spoken; English is frequently used in private hospitals, where many staff and patients are foreign.

Diseases and Health Risks

Travel to Qatar carries minor health risks for foreign visitors, including diseases related to unsafe food and water consumption. All water sources outside major hotels should be considered potentially contaminated. Food served in large hotels and well-known restaurants should be safe, but travelers are advised to follow all precautions related to consuming food and water.

Immunizations and Preventative Treatments

For recommended and required vaccinations as well as preventative treatment for travel to Qatar, visit the [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Hospital Care

Hospitals and major clinics in Qatar operate on a first-come, first-serve basis. Most facilities offer comfortable accommodations for patients and their families.

The Hamad Medical Corporation operates most of the public hospitals in Qatar, including the Hamad General Hospital in Doha. This large facility offers a wide range of clinical specialties and provides the most comprehensive tertiary care in Qatar. The hospital's highly trained physician staff is made up of expatriates and homegrown doctors; its nurses are generally recruited from India and the Philippines. Arabic and English are widely spoken among the staff.

The privately-operated American Hospital and the Doha Clinic provide high-quality care and have 24-hour emergency departments that are adequate for minor medical problems.

UnitedHealthcare Global may recommend evacuation in cases requiring complex care.

Non-Urgent Care

Travelers can find high-quality outpatient care in both public and private facilities. The Hamad Medical Corporation runs a number of primary health clinics that can provide good quality care for minor medical problems. Travelers may also seek walk-in service at the privately-run American Hospital and the Doha Clinic, or other private clinics located in Doha. In outlying areas, travelers can opt to use the primary health clinics run by the Ministry of Public Health, but quality is well below the standard offered by the providers in Doha.

No referral is necessary to seek care from a specialist.

Qatar is home to a large number of well-trained expatriate dentists operating in private practice in Doha. Similarly, optometrists and ophthalmologists are widely available should eye care needs arise.

UnitedHealthcare Global recommends that travelers and foreign visitors defer most elective surgery or the management of complex problems until they return home, if possible.



Local Medical Emergency Services

Ambulance and Medical emergency services, Fire and Police: 999

Ground Ambulance and Emergency Rescue Services

The Hamad Medical Corporation Ambulance Service (HMCAS) is the emergency medical service that provides prehospital emergency care (including both ground ambulance and air ambulance) and interfacility transfer services within Qatar. Its headquarters is located in Doha, but efficient ambulance service is also available outside the capital city. Dispatchers generally speak English.

For the duration of the competition, Hamad Medical Corporation will operate an Urgent Consultation Service that provides telephone consultation and medical support for urgent but non-life-threatening conditions. To access this service, call 16000, select the language, then press 3. The service operates daily from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Medications

Pharmacies are widely available, in the form of 24-hour hospital-based pharmacies, the pharmacies of the primary health care centers and some private operations. Many medications have been imported from Europe, and some drugs are available without a prescription. However, the Ministry of Public Health, which tightly monitors the pharmaceutical trade, prohibits certain medications, such as anti-depressants, tranquilizers and some sleep medications. Travelers who require these medications are strongly advised to bring a sufficient supply, a copy of the prescription and a note from their doctor.

Medical Evacuation/ Repatriation

Although many medical conditions can be efficiently treated in Qatar, medical evacuation may still be required for some very complex invasive procedures and surgical interventions, or when prolonged inpatient hospital stays are necessary. The destination is normally Dubai and Istanbul, or Europe.

Air Ambulance

Air Ambulance transfers are coordinated using fixed wing aircraft with a medical team of 2 qualified air medical transport specialists and a crew of 2 pilots, among several other selection criteria. The medical equipment and drugs available during the flight, the medical protocols and staff, as well as the airplane, the flight crew and the plane maintenance must meet adequate international standards.

Sample Flight Times by Air Ambulance to Dubai, United Arab Emirates from:

- Doha, Qatar (DOH): 1 hour - nonstop using Cessna C560 XLS
- Doha, Qatar (DIA): 1 hour - nonstop using Cessna C560 XLS

Sample Flight Times by Air Ambulance to Istanbul, Turkey from:

- Doha, Qatar (DOH): 4 hours, 10 minutes - nonstop using Bombardier Challenger 605
- Doha, Qatar (DIA): 4 hours, 9 minutes - one technical stop using Learjet 45 or Bombardier Challenger 605

Commercial Evacuation or Repatriation:

Commercial flights are readily available from Doha, the country's main commercial flight hub, to United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Europe, and the United States.

As preparation for the tournament, Qatar has reopened the old Doha International Airport where direct flights from 13 airlines (including Etihad Airways) will commence operations from September 2022 until December 2022.

Wheelchair assistance is available for patients with mobility problems. UnitedHealthcare Global can coordinate all flight arrangements and pre-payments, if applicable. UnitedHealthcare Global can also arrange for the traveler to be seen on an outpatient basis at a UnitedHealthcare Global recommended facility, as well as providing convenient hotel accommodations.

Sample Flight Times by commercial airline from Doha, Qatar (DOH) to:

- New York, United States (JFK): 14 hours, 5 minutes - nonstop operated by American Airlines, Qatar Airways
- Los Angeles, United States (LAX): 16 hours - nonstop operated by Qatar Airways
- Toronto, Canada (YYZ): 14 hours, 25 minutes - nonstop operated by Air Canada, Qatar Airways
- Frankfurt, Germany (FRA): 6 hours, 3 minutes - nonstop operated by Qatar Airways
- London, United Kingdom (LHR): 7 hours, 15 minutes - nonstop operated British Airways, Qatar Airways

Designated Medical Facilities

<https://sportandhealth.moph.gov.qa/EN/faninfo/Pages/HealthcareServicesInQatar.aspx>

Aside from the designated clinics that will be stationed on site at the stadiums, official fan zones and festivals, and fan accommodation, the Government of Qatar has also designated the following medical facilities below to provide emergency and urgent care services within proximity to the host cities:

Private Hospital or Medical Clinic

Doha (City center)

Al Ahli Hospital (إي لاهلي مستشفى)

Ahmed Bin Ali Street

P.O. Box 6401

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4489 8888

Local Phone: 4489 8888

Alternate Phone: +974 4489 8000

Website: www.ahlihospital.com

Geo-coordinates: 25.307764, 51.500194

Facility Description: This 250-bed multi-specialty private hospital that provides a wide range of medical services in very comfortable and modern surroundings. There is a 24-hour Emergency Department supported by advanced diagnostics and English-speaking staff.

Doha Clinic Hospital (مركز دoha عيادة طبية)

New Al-Mirqab Street

Fereej Al Nasr District

P.O.Box 9958

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4438 4333

Local Phone: 4438 4333

Website: www.dohaclinicohospital.com

Geo-coordinates: 25.274138, 51.503176

Facility Description: This multi-specialty private facility is well-known by the expatriate community in Doha. It is located near Mirqab Mall. An ER, equipped with ground ambulance, advanced diagnostics and English-speaking staff, is available 24/7.

Aster Hospital Qatar > Aster Medical Center

Al Salah Street

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4444 0499 (switchboard for all Aster clinics)

Local Phone: 4444 0499

Website: www.aster.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.259002, 51.556485

Facility Description: This is a private multi-specialty that offers primary and some secondary care. It has a 24/7 emergency room.

Al Emadi Hospital (إي دام عادي مستشفى)

Al-Hilal West

P.O. Box 5804

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4477 6444

Local Phone: 4477 6444

Website: www.alemadihospital.com.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.255757, 51.534215

Facility Description: This is a private multi-specialty hospital located in the city center of Doha. It has a 24/7 Emergency Room supported by advanced diagnostic equipment.

Turkish Hospital (تركيا مستشفى)

C Ring Road

New Slata

P.O. Box 21377

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4499 2444

Local Phone: 4499 2444

Website: www.turkishhospitals.com

Geo-coordinates: 25.266992, 51.514797

Facility Description: This secondary private hospital offers different specializations in most medical areas. There is a 24/7 emergency room supported by advanced diagnostics.

Queen Hospital (ملكة مستشفى)

Villaggio Mall, Gate 5

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4419 0888

Local Phone: 4419 0888

Website: www.queenhospital.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.258943, 51.440877

Facility Description: This private facility offers multiple specialties in different specializations like critical care, neurosurgery, trauma, and orthopedic surgery among others. Advanced diagnostics are also available.

Aman Hospital
F Ring Road
Zone 47, Building 412
P.O. Box 8199
Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar
International Phone: +974 4400 4400
Local Phone: 4400 4400
Website: www.amanhospital.org
Geo-coordinates: 25.231901, 51.574564

Facility Description: This 100-bed private facility offers multiple specialties including a 24/7 emergency room equipped with advanced diagnostics.

Rayhan Medical Complex
32 Al Makhiya Street
Madinath Khalifa (Opposite of Khalifa Town Petrol Station)
P.O. Box 218014
International Phone: +974 4433 5400
Local Phone: 4433 5400
Alternate Phone: +974 5524 0414
Website: www.rayhanmedical.qa
Geo-coordinates: 25.334618, 51.476632

Facility Description: This is a private surgery facility with recovery and inpatient rooms. Other specialties are also available for outpatient care supported by advanced diagnostics. The clinic is open daily from 7am to 10pm.

West Bay Medicare
The Gate Mall Level 3
Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar
International Phone: +974 4020 6336
Local Phone: 4020 6336
Website: www.westbaymedicare.com
Geo-coordinates: 25.323229, 51.526771

Facility Description: This is a private day surgery hospital that has more than 15 clinical departments. Clinic operating hours are from Sat-Thu: 7am to 9pm / Fri: 8am to 4pm. Appointments must be booked in advance. There is NO emergency room available in this facility.

Naseem Medical Centre - C Ring Road > Naseem Medical Centre
C Ring Road
Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar
International Phone: + 974 4456 7167
Local Phone: 4456 7167
Alternate Phone: +974 4465 2121 / +974 4465 5151
Website: www.naseemalrabeeh.com
Geo-coordinates: 25.264120, 51.543047

Facility Description: This is the one of the two Doha clinic branches of Naseem Medical Centre that offers general private care. There is no emergency room in this facility. Clinic hours are from Sat-Thu: 7am to 12am (midnight) / Fri: 8am to 11pm only.

Naseem Medical Centre - D Ring Road > Naseem Medical Centre
Al Nuaija - Hilal
D Ring Road
Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar
International Phone: +974 4431 6633
Local Phone: 4431 6633
Alternate Phone: +974 3314 3735
Website: www.naseemalrabeeh.com
Geo-coordinates: 25.254730, 51.530296

Facility Description: This is the one of the two Doha clinic branches of Naseem Medical Centre that offers a more limited general private care. The clinic in C Ring Road offers wider range of specializations. There is no emergency room in this facility. Clinic hours are from Sat-Thu: 9am to 9pm only.

Al Wakrah

Naseem Medical Centre - Wakrah > Naseem Medical Centre
Al Jabal Street
Zone 90
Street No. 670
Al Wakrah, Qatar
International Phone: +974 4497 0777
Local Phone: 4497 0777
Website: www.naseemalrabeeh.com
Geo-coordinates: 25.161683, 51.603189

Facility Description: This is the Al Wakrah branch of Naseem Medical Centre that offers general private care. There is no emergency room in this facility. Clinic is open daily from 8am to 10pm.

Al Wakra Clinics & Urgent Care Unit > Al Ahli Hospital
Street 823, Zone 90
Building 14

Al Wakrah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4402 0202

Local Phone: 4402 0202

Alternate Phone: +974 4402 0203 to 10

Geo-coordinates: 25.191192, 51.596715

Facility Description: This is a private urgent care clinic that is open from Sat-Thu: 9am to 9pm and is closed on Friday. It offers most general care and specialties.

Al Rayyan

Al Emadi Hospital Clinics – North > Al Emadi Hospital
Beside North Gate Mall

Al Rayyan, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4477 6444

Local Phone: 4477 6444

Website: www.alemadihospital.com.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.358433, 51.449025

Facility Description: This is the other branch of Al Emadi Hospital and is located about 20kms away from Doha city center. It offers primary and some secondary care specialties. It also has a 24/7 emergency room supported by advanced diagnostics.

Sidra Medicine

Al Gharrafa Street

Al Rayyan, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4003 3333

Local Phone: 4003 3333

Website: www.sidra.org

Geo-coordinates: 25.322855, 51.444772

Facility Description: This private offers a wide range of medical specialties and surgical capabilities including a 24/7 ER supported by advanced diagnostics and a helipad.

Naseem Medical Centre - Al Rayyan > Naseem
Medical Centre

Street No. 405, Ermaila Street

Behind Ansar Gallery

P.O. Box: 92932

Al Rayyan, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4417 1234

Local Phone: 4417 1234

Alternate Phone: +974 4444 0725 / +974 4444 0726

Website: www.naseemalrabeeh.com

Geo-coordinates: 25.300310, 51.417932

Facility Description: This is the Al Rayyan branch of Naseem Medical Centre that offers general private care. There is no emergency room in this facility. Clinic hours are from Sat-Thu: 8am to 10pm / Fri: 3pm to 10pm only.

Aster Medical Centre - Al Rayyan > Aster Medical Center

Off Al-Shafi Street

Near Shafi Masjid

Al Rayyan, Qatar

International Phone: + 974 4444 0499 (switchboard for all Aster clinics)

Local Phone: 4444 0499

Website: www.aster.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.294077, 51.422429

Facility Description: This is the Al Rayyan clinic of Aster Healthcare. This private facility offers most general specializations. Clinic hours are from Sat-Thu: 7am to 11pm / Fri: 4pm to 9pm only.

Al Khor

Aster Medical Centre - Al Khor > Aster Medical Center

Al Ghazal Street

Behind Oreedoo Building

Al Khor, Qatar

International Phone: + 974 4444 0499 (switchboard for all Aster clinics)

Local Phone: 4444 0499

Website: www.aster.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.684284, 51.498417

Facility Description: This is the Al Khor clinic of Aster Healthcare. This private facility offers most general specializations. Clinic hours are from Sat-Thu: 7:30am to 9pm / Fri: 4pm to 9pm only.

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) - Urgent Care Unit

Visiting fans can access emergency and urgent medical services at HMC facilities free of charge throughout the tournament. To receive these services free of charge, patients must present their Hayya Card to the healthcare facility.

Doha (City center)

Hamad General Hospital (مركز الإسعافات الأولية) > Hamad Medical Corporation

Hamad Medical City District

P.O. Box 3050

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4439 4444

Local Phone: 4439 4444

Website: www.hamad.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.293852, 51.503629

Facility Description: Hamad General Hospital is one of several specialized hospitals operated by the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), a non-profit public health care provider. It is a 600+ bed JCI-accredited facility that offers a wide range of medical and surgical specialties supported by advanced diagnostics and a helipad. Outpatient and 24/7 ER services are available. English speaking staff is available.

Al Wakra Hospital (مركز الإسعافات الأولية) > Hamad Medical Corporation

Al Wakra Hospital

Al Wukair Street

Near Wukair Mobile Petrol Station

Doha, Ad Dawhah, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4011 4444

Local Phone: 4011 4444

Website: www.hamad.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.167088, 51.587885

Facility Description: The hospital is part of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). The facility has capacity for 325 beds; 248 of which are for general and acute patients and 77 are reserved for critical care, high dependency and burn patients. There is a 24/7 emergency department supported by advanced diagnostics and a helipad.

Al Rayyan

Hazm Mebaireek General Hospital (مركز الإسعافات الأولية) > Hamad Medical Corporation

Industrial Area

Al Rayyan, Qatar

International Phone: +974 4439 5777

Local Phone: 4439 5777

Website: www.hamad.qa

Geo-coordinates: 25.18128, 51.430511

Facility Description: This secondary care hospital is part of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). It offers a wide range of medical specialties and surgical capabilities including a 24/7 emergency room that is supported by advanced diagnostics equipment and a helipad.

Security Issues

Entry Requirements: All foreign travelers seeking entry into Qatar must show proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test that is no more than 48 hours old at the time of arrival or a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) that is no more than 24 hours old at the time of arrival, regardless of their vaccination status. Travelers must also register on the Ehteraz website and upload all pertinent documents before arrival. Travelers are required to download and activate the Ehteraz app (separate from the website) on arrival. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 while in Qatar will be required to self-isolate for seven days and take a RAT at an authorized location on day seven. If the test is negative, the traveler may leave quarantine. If positive, the traveler must quarantine until day 10, after which they may cease quarantining with no further restrictions or tests. Face masks are required on public transportation and in medical facilities. Violators may be fined or imprisoned. Additional information regarding entry restrictions is available [here](#).

Effective from 1 November-23 December, all travelers to Qatar must obtain a digital Hayya Card, whether they attend the soccer matches or not. Exceptions will only be made for residents, Qatari citizens and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) citizens with Qatari IDs. The Hayya Card will serve a dual purpose as a multiple entry permit to the country and a stadium access pass. Hayya Card holders will also have free access to public transportation from 10 November-23 December. Hayya Card holders will be able to enter and leave Qatar freely or remain in the country until 23 January 2023. Tournament ticket holders may also link their Hayya Card to allow up to three non-ticketed travelers to enter Qatar with them. Children under the age of 12 may be added for free. All other individuals traveling via linked invitation to another's Hayya Card must pay a fee of 500 Qatari riyals (137 U.S. dollars). International travelers are required to validate their accommodations through the Hayya portal to receive their Hayya Card. While all visitors to Qatar during this period are required to possess a card whether they attend matches or not, at this time international travelers must produce a match ticket to be approved for a digital Hayya Card. Qatari authorities note that closer to the tournament it may be possible to obtain a Hayya Card without a match ticket.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure problems – particularly those related to traffic, food, and accommodation issues – are likely to affect travelers to Qatar during the soccer tournament. Approximately 1.2 million people, equivalent to roughly half of the country's population, are expected to visit the city of Doha during the 29-day tournament. On any given day, at least 400,000 additional visitors may be in Doha. The

Qatar Accommodation Agency (QAA) – the official group responsible for accommodations for the tournament – aims to provide 100,000-130,000 beds per night during the time period, a number far short of the expected requirement for the 400,000 individuals who may be in the city at any given time. The QAA is attempting to secure apartments, shipping containers and cruise ship cabins, and to construct desert camps for travelers. Many such accommodations may be sub-par; the shipping containers and desert camps in particular may not even offer the most basic of amenities, including indoor plumbing. Additionally, while authorities are likely attempting to construct infrastructure to feed those attending the games, any such infrastructure may be makeshift. Food quantity and quality are likely to be issues as well.

Crime: Petty, opportunistic crime is the security concern that is most likely to affect short-term travelers to Doha. Such incidents are particularly likely at the city's souqs (markets). While more serious crimes occasionally affect foreigners in Doha, such criminal incidents generally take place in areas of the city where foreign labor camps are located. Sexual harassment and assault are also concerns in Qatar. The large number of expected travelers is likely to increase the incidence of sexual harassment as well as that of petty crime during the tournament, which takes place from 20 November to 18 December.

Demonstrations: Demonstrations occur infrequently in Qatar as a whole, including in Doha. When such actions do take place, they are usually inspired by regional developments, are typically small and conclude peacefully. Qatari authorities require prior authorization for rallies, and security officers usually closely monitor demonstrations to prevent disturbances and/or disruptions. Demonstrations have occurred as a result of preparations for the upcoming matches. The protests were largely conducted by workers and security guards to demand their wages be paid. Protesters blocked roads and entrances to their labor camps. However, the government of Qatar swiftly paid the wages and promised to hold contractors accountable for their legal obligations. Though the government has acted quickly to deal with such protests, the possibility of further, small-scale demonstrations cannot be ruled out in the lead-up to the tournament.

Terrorism: While there has not been a terrorist attack in Qatar since 2005, the country – including the city of Doha – remains a potential terrorist target due to its large U.S. military presence, along with large numbers of Western nationals. The large number of expected travelers, the serving of alcohol and the popular nature of the event generally increase the likelihood of an attack. However, UnitedHealthcare Global is aware of no information indicating that such an attack is planned or imminent.

Airports

Hamad International Airport (OTHH/DOH)

Hamad International Airport, which opened in 2014, is Qatar's newest airport. The airport's longest hard surface runway is constructed of asphalt, designated 16L/34R and measures 4,849 x 60 m (15,910 x 197 ft). Both the airport and control towers are operational 24 hours a day. The facility can accommodate 3,700 arriving travelers and 4,200 departing travelers every hour.

The local police force provides security at this facility. Police personnel guard the entry points, and airport ID cards are necessary to gain access. The one-terminal facility serves as the country's primary commercial airport. In anticipation of the upcoming soccer tournament, a passenger terminal expansion project is due to be completed later in October 2022.

Doha International Airport (OTBD/DIA)

The Qatari Civil Aviation Authority recently reopened Doha International Airport – which had been closed to commercial traffic since 2014 – to commercial flights to accommodate increased air traffic for the tournament. As of 15 September, at least 13 airlines shifted operations to Doha International Airport. The changes are effective until 30 December. Doha International Airport has been recently refurbished and can accommodate 2,000 arriving travelers and 2,000 departing travelers each hour.

There are three terminals at Doha International Airport, including a VIP terminal and a ministerial terminal used by government personnel. Corporate aircraft can use the VIP terminal as long as arrangements are made in advance of arrival; at this terminal, passengers are transported via private vehicles from the aircraft to the building while crew members are usually transported via coach. Once at the terminal, crew members and passengers clear passport and customs control. All baggage is X-rayed upon arrival

and is subject to inspection to intercept contraband items, such as alcohol, drugs and pornographic material. The local police force provides security at this facility. Police personnel guard the entry points, and airport ID cards are necessary to gain access. Aircraft are parked according to availability of positions on the parking apron.

Transport

Hamad International Airport is located approximately 15 km (9 mi) southwest of central Doha, a drive of about 15 minutes depending upon traffic conditions. Doha International Airport is located about 10 km southeast of the city center; the drive between this airport and the city center is approximately 20 minutes depending on traffic conditions.

Doha has a robust public transportation system, which includes taxis and buses. Taxis are blue (usually two-toned shades of blue). Although taxis are metered, travelers should note that drivers do not turn on the meter when traveling from and to the airport and instead charge a fixed fare.

In response to accommodation issues, many groups are opting to stay in hotels or other accommodations in Dubai or Saudi Arabia and travel to and from Qatar on a daily basis. Qatari authorities are preparing for this eventuality; nonetheless, those transiting the border during the games should be aware of the likelihood of high levels of traffic congestion and long waits in both directions. Travelers should also note that in an attempt to reduce traffic congestion within Doha during the tournament, authorities will close roads in specific locations across the city from 1 November-31 December; however, this will likely significantly increase congestion in other areas across the city.

Recommendations

- Travelers should be circumspect in their topics of conversation: criticism of the Qatari government is illegal and may be prosecuted.
- Some medications are banned in Qatar. Please see the list [here](#) for reference. Travelers carrying any kind of medication into the country are strongly advised to also carry a copy of their prescription with them.
- Travelers should avoid the vicinity of foreign labor camps in Doha due to a higher likelihood of crime near those camps.
- Travelers should avoid wearing clothing that bears Western or corporate affiliations or other badges of nationality.
- Dust and sandstorms occur frequently in Qatar. Visitors should always be mindful of weather conditions and should always carry a covering/handkerchief to protect themselves in the event of a storm.
- Alcoholic beverages can only be consumed in approved locations in Qatar. Openly carrying alcoholic beverages and public drunkenness can result in severe penalties, including incarceration.
- On stadium grounds, alcohol purchase and consumption will only occur at approved times and locations. Times are likely to be shortly before and after matches, and only between the stadium ticketing area and seating itself; however, these arrangements have not been finalized yet. Travelers should keep informed of local rules as the event approaches.
- Western travelers should be circumspect in behavior and should avoid making statements that may have political implications.
- Tap water is generally safe for consumption in Qatar, including in Doha.
- It is impolite to refuse coffee and/or food offered by hosts. It is also impolite to walk in front of someone who is praying.
- Travelers should remove their shoes before entering a mosque.
- It is an insult to show the sole of the foot or to point it at a person, even inadvertently (e.g., while crossing legs).
- Always receive and pass items with both hands or with the right hand, not with the left one alone.
- Some public areas have dress codes that require men and women to cover knees, shoulders, and stomachs. In such areas, leggings may be required to be covered by a long shirt or dress.
- Female visitors should dress conservatively and turn down offers to sit in the front seats of taxis. Women should avoid using taxis alone at night. Such behaviors will diminish, but not eliminate, the risk of sexual harassment.
- Physical contact (even a handshake) between members of the opposite sex is considered inappropriate in Qatar. When greeting someone of the opposite sex, the protocol is to place one's right hand over one's heart as a sign of respect.
- Foreign women have reported isolated cases of harassment by locals. While conservative dress will not prevent unwanted advances, it is recommended in deference to local norms. In general, women should avoid wearing tight or revealing clothing. Although female visitors are not required to wear the abaya – the traditional full-length coat worn by conservative Muslim women – many visitors wear the abaya and cover their head in deference to local norms.

Cultural Tips

- Arabic is the official language. English is commonly used as a second language.
- Authorities rigidly enforce prohibitions against pork, liquor, licentious reading material and many types of social behavior including public displays of affection. Travelers should show sensitivity to these laws, otherwise they risk arrest.
- It is legal to practice religions other than Islam in Qatar; however, it is illegal to proselytize.
- Homosexuality is illegal in Qatar and punishable by sentences of up to seven years in prison. LGBTQ+ travelers should maintain as low a profile as possible and avoid disclosing their status to authorities.



Contact UnitedHealthcare Global

call **+ 1.713.430.7300** and ask to speak to an Intelligence Department representative.
email intelligence@uhcglobal.com

**United
Healthcare
Global**