

**OFFICIAL NAME:** State of Qatar

**CAPITAL:** Doha

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Absolute Monarchy

**AREA:** 11,437 Sq Km (4,416 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION:** 578,600

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Qatar is located on the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula. The territory includes the mainland and a number of small islands. It is bound by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the south and the Persian Gulf to the north, east and west. The country's terrain is flat, barren, rocky and sandy. The low central plateau which contains a number of shallow wadis rises from the east and north. In the south, belts of Sabkha or salt flats surround most of the coast. Major Cities (pop. est.); Doha 236,100, ar-Rayyan 99,900, al-Wakrah 25,700 (1987). Land Use; pastures 5%, agricultural-cultivated 0.5%, desert and other 94.5% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Qatar has a desert climate that is characterized by hot dry conditions, although it is a little milder in winter. Humidity along the coast often reaches 90% during summer and average annual precipitation is below 75 mm (3 inches) with most of the rainfall occurring during the winter months. Average temperature ranges are from 23 degrees Celsius (73 degrees Fahrenheit) in winter to 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) in summer.

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**PEOPLE:** Native Qataris are of northern Arab origin while Arabs as a whole constitute the ethnic majority accounting for 40% of the population. Other ethnic minorities include Pakistanis who account for 18%, Indians for 18% and Iranians for 16% of the population.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 40 persons per sq km (103 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 89.5% urban, 10.5% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 67.2% male, 32.8% female (1986). Life Expectancy at Birth; 65.2 years male, 67.6 years female (1986). Age Breakdown; 28% under 15, 29% 15 to 29, 32% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 2% 60 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 19.4 per 1,000 (1991). Death Rate; 1.8 per 1,000 (1991). Increase Rate; 17.6 per 1,000 (1991). Infant Mortality Rate; 31.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

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**RELIGIONS:** The official religion is Islam with the majority of the population Wahhabi Muslims. The remainder are Sunni Muslims and there is also a smaller Shiite community.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Arabic which is spoken by the majority of the population. English is also widely understood.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 53.3%, primary 9.8%, lower secondary 10.1%, upper secondary 13.3%, higher 13.5% (1986). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 201,733 or 75.7% (1986).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** Since the 1950's oil has rapidly transformed Qatar into a developing country. In 1971 Qatar gained complete independence from Britain and in the same year became a member of the Arab League and the UN. In 1972 Sheik Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, the deputy ruler, became Emir after peacefully ousting his cousin, Emir Ahmad bin Ali al-Thani. In 1981 Qatar and other eastern Arab states formed the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) to work together on defense and economic projects. In 1986 a continuing dispute with Bahrain over the nearby Hawar Islands resulted in Qatari troops briefly occupying a coral reef which was being reclaimed from the sea. It was later destroyed after negotiations between the two countries. In 1990 the Emir agreed to the deployment of Arab and Western forces on his territory after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. In Sept. 1990 the Emir ordered the expulsion of a number of prominent Palestinians after the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) announced its support for Iraq. During 1991 there were two standoffs between Bahraini and Qatari gunboats in the disputed waters around the Hawar Islands while the International Court of Justice (ICJ) gave Qatar until Feb. 1992 to present its sovereignty claims over the potentially oil and gas rich islands. In Sept. 1991 Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal visited Qatar and Bahrain in an attempt to end the dispute. In the same month the US \$1.3 billion first stage of the North Field gas project, believed to be the world's largest natural gas reserve, was inaugurated by the Emir. Also in 1991 Qatari troops participated in the liberation of the Saudi border town of Ra's al-Khafji that had been occupied by Iraqi forces and the Emir offered air base facilities to the allies in the Gulf War operations. In June 1992 Qatar signed a defense pact with the US. On Sept. 30, 1992 a surprise attack by Saudi troops on a border post at Khofous resulted in the death of two soldiers and the government's unilateral suspension of a 1965 border agreement with Saudi Arabia. On Oct. 28, 1992 the government in breach of a GCC boycott reinstated its ambassador in Iraq. On Dec. 20, 1992 Qatar and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement over their border dispute. On Jan. 31, 1993 Mobil purchased a 10% stake in the Qatar Liquefied Gas Co. that further bolstered Qatar's North Field gas project. In May 1993 the Emir held talks in Doha with the Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan ibn Adb al-Aziz as-Saud regarding their border agreement. Also in 1993 the dispute with Bahrain over the Hawar Islands in the ICJ was scheduled for a hearing on Feb. 28, 1994.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Riyal (QR) divided into 100 Dirhams.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$7,871,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,500,000,000 (1993). Imports; QR 6,882,000,000 (1993). Exports; QR 11,813,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; QR 4,931,000,000 (1993). Economically Active Population; 292,568 or 53.7% of total population (1988). Unemployed; 0.5% (1986).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are the UK, Japan, the USA and West European countries.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Fish, Fodder, Fruit, Livestock, Oil and Natural Gas, Vegetables.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Cement, Chemicals, Fishing, Iron and Steel, Oil and Natural Gas Production and Refining.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Chemicals, Dates, Frozen Shrimps, Oil and Natural Gas, Steel.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; nil. Roads; length 1,080 km (671 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 88,000 (1989), trucks and buses 39,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 67 (1990), deadweight tonnage 555,507 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,549,000,000 (963,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 44,300,000 (30,341,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 4 with a total circulation of 70,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 201,000 (1992). Television; receivers 205,000 (1992). Telephones; units 111,200 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 11,100 (1995) total active duty personnel with 76.6% army, 16.2% navy and 7.2% air force while military expenditure accounts for 4.2% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).