Howdy and Marhaba!

Welcome to Texas A&M University at Qatar! This is a unique opportunity to experience a new culture, and the global reach of the Aggie community. Take this chance to meet Aggies from all over the world, and to experience the rich culture of Qatar. From shopping, to eating out, to history and museums, Qatar has a lot to offer. The following list is just a sample of things to do here in Qatar. Yallah, go explore!
Museum of Islamic Art

Designed by I.M. Pei, the Museum of Islamic Art is arguably the most iconic building in Doha. It showcases art from across the Muslim world. Pieces range from pottery, tessellation, to calligraphy. There are also temporary exhibits on display. Some recent exhibits have been a showcase of Orientalist art, the Terracotta Warriors from China, and a Persian rug exhibit. It is located on the Doha corniche, and you will have fantastic views of the Doha skyline from the café located inside. Also experience the grounds around the museum. In the winter months, there is a handicraft market set up where you will be able to purchase food and handicrafts from artists in Qatar.
The Qatar National Museum is Doha's most recent addition to the Qatar museum scene. The museum opened on March 28, 2019, and was designed by Jean Nouvel. Inspired by the desert rose, a geological feature found in Qatar, the museum showcases artifacts that Qatari national identity. Containing geological specimens, wildlife dioramas, the famous envelope that announced Qatar's successful FIFA World Cup bid, textiles, and jewelry, the Qatar National Museum highlights the history, culture, and impact that Qatar has had on the region and the world.
Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art

This museum is dedicated to showcasing the modern art movement from the Arab world. This museum is located within Education City, and is easily accessible from campus.

Be sure to check out the Mathaf bookshop when visiting.

Fire Station

The Fire Station is a museum that houses artists in residence in Qatar. The Fire Station is aptly named; it used to be the centralized fire station in Doha. Now, the iconic building, houses artists in Qatar and provides them with space, and resources to produce and refine their work. There are also temporary exhibits and showcases on display. A recent exhibit showcased the works of Pablo Picasso.
Souq Waqif

Arguably the most famous attraction in Qatar, Souq Waqif is a must! Souq means market in Arabic. Before the discovery of fossil fuels in Qatar, the Qatari economy was keenly focused around pearl diving. Qatari peal divers would sell their finds and catches from the day’s dive at the souq. Souq Waqif is a contemporary reconstruction of a traditional Arab market. Take in the sounds and smells of this unique place! Haggling is expected, so be sure to try and get the best prices for souvenirs, trinkets, and wears. This is a great place to get gifts! Be sure to try kanafeh, a popular dessert across the Arab world. (Note: do not haggle at restaurants)

Doha Corniche

The Doha corniche is iconic Doha. A long stretch of paved walkway along the Doha bay, you will be able to see the skyline of the city, enjoy some green space in Doha, or stop into a café. Be sure to bring some sunscreen and a water bottle during the day. At night, the skyline is lit up and a site to see.
The Pearl

The Pearl is a massive development project that has really put Qatar on the map. The entire area is reclaimed land from the sea. It now houses high end accommodation, hotels, dining, and shopping. Looking to purchase a Ferrari? You can find it at the Pearl!

Katara Cultural Village

The Katara cultural village is an interesting place in Doha. Katara is a home to many cultural societies and organizations here in Qatar. Here, you will find the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, the opera house, the Doha Film Institute, the Qatar Photographic Society, and many more. Along with the societies, there are lots of fantastic restaurants, a great view of the Arabian Gulf and West Bay, Katara beach, and exhibitions. Be sure to check out the Katara amphitheater, the blue mosque, and gold mosque! When visiting mosques, be sure to maintain respect and cultural sensitivity. Be mindful of people worshiping, and monitor your behavior in front of mosques.
Sheikh Faisal Museum

Sheikh Faisal is a Qatari sheikh, or head of a tribe. An avid collector, Sheikh Faisal has his own personal museum. The museum can only really be described as a collection of collections! He has everything from a massive collection of classic American cars, antique weaponry, art, traditional national costumes from various cultures, fossils, and geological specimens. Tales are that he saw a house in Syria he liked, so he purchased it, dismantled it, shipped it to Doha, and reassembled it in his museum!
Just like in the United States, malls are an important component to society in Qatar. You can find anything you need at malls here in Doha, and popular brands, outlets, and establishments are available in Qatar. Word of advice, be sure to take a sweatshirt! Even though it might be incredibly hot outside, malls can be a little too cool!
Some of the more popular malls are:

**Mall of Qatar**
Largest mall in Qatar
Has a Carrefour, a French equivalent to Wal-Mart
Cinema complex

**Festival City**
Has a Monoprix, a French grocery store
Angry Birds theme park
Snow dunes
Cinema complex
IKEA

**Villagio**
Styled after an Italian village
Has a river inside the mall
Has a Carrefour
Cinema complex
Ice skating rink
Has an amusement park inside

**City Center Mall**
Has a Carrefour
Cinema complex
Ice skating rink
Large arcade
Right next to Doha Exhibition and Convention Center

**Gulf Mall**
Has an Al Meera, a grocery store
Cinema complex
Large arcade

**Tawar Mall**
Cinema complex
Musical water fountain display
BOUNCE inc, a bounce facility
Has an old souq wing, a mesh between contemporary and traditional design

**The Gate Mall**
Has a MegaMart, a grocery store focused on imported products form the United States and United Kingdom

**Ezdan Mall**
Has a Carrefour
Transportation

There are taxis available in Doha. However, sometimes they can be difficult to find, especially within Education City. You will need to call or order ahead of time to book a ride. Mowasalat is the main taxi company in Doha. They can be reached at +974 4458 8888. Uber, Careem, and other ride-share apps are readily available here in Doha. By downloading the app, it is easy to secure a car and book a ride.

The Doha Metro is now functioning. Consisting of three lines, it can take you around Doha, and the fare is 2 QAR a trip. The Green line connects Education City with popular malls and locales, and tourist attractions. The metro will be connected to the Education City tram system, but for now, there is a shuttle that makes a loop around the facility. You will need to book the shuttle in the summers. Check https://www.qr.com.qa/home for Metro hours.
Health Care

As students, you will have access to the health clinic at the Multaqa Student Center. You will need to bring your student ID, and Qatar ID. Because you are a student, you will be given priority to see a healthcare provider. Services they provide range from seeing a general practitioner, a dentist, a dermatologist, and other specialists. Hours of the clinic are 7:30 AM- 6:00 PM Sunday to Thursday. There is also a pharmacy located within the health clinic in the Multaqa Student Center. There is a Kholood pharmacy located inside the Multaqa Student Center.

There are several hospitals, both private and public, in Doha. The largest public hospital is Hamad Hospital. You will be able to use services there with your Qatar ID. There are also several private hospitals in Doha. Al Ahli hospital is accessible depending on your insurance plan.
Food and Dining

There are many American restaurant chains here in Doha, but try new places! Doha is a very globally diverse place in terms of demographics and food. From Arabic to Indian to Thai to Italian, Doha has you covered.

Although water is safe to drink out of the tap in Doha, it is a general custom that people drink bottled water. When ordering water at a restaurant, you will be given bottled water, and be charged. It is not customary to ask for tap water at a restaurant.

Tipping is customary in Doha. Generally, people tend to leave ten percent of their bill as a tip.

It is customary to not bus your own table at fast food outlets.

Many food outlets in Doha will deliver! Talabat and Carriage are popular apps that people use to order food online and have their food delivered.
Telecommunications

International phone plans can be pricey, especially when traveling for an entire semester or summer. If you do not have an international plan that will last for the entire semester or summer, it is recommended to set up a phone in Qatar. Phones from the US that have been unlocked, and that can take a SIM card should work in Qatar. You will need to purchase a Qatari SIM card from a local telecom provider. The two options are Ooredoo, the national carrier of Qatar, or Vodafone. Plans can run as low as 70 QAR a month, and you can purchase recharge cards at most major grocery or convenience stores.

Unlike the United States, the app GroupMe is rarely used. In Qatar, WhatsApp is the most common way of communicating. Furthermore, the availability of free public WiFi is not as widespread as it is in the United States. In the Texas A&M at Qatar building, the Multaqa Student Center, and the residence hall will have access to WiFi.

Groceries

There are several different grocery options in Qatar. The four major grocery chains are Carrefour, Monoprix, Al Meera, and MegaMart, and they all have their own identity. Carrefour is closest to being a French Wal-Mart. Monoprix is another French grocery chain. Al Meera is a typical grocery store. MegaMart is a chain that has many imported brands from the US and UK, and prices will reflect that. If there are certain comfort items or foods that you can't live without, it is recommended to bring enough to last!
Cultural Sensitivity

Qatar is a conservative society, but quite open and progressive in relation to regional neighbors. Even though Qatar is progressive, it is always important to be respectful of local customs, culture, and mores. Be very mindful of your behavior as how you act in public is a reflection of not only yourself, but Texas A&M at Qatar, Texas A&M, and your country. You are ambassadors of all of those entities!

You are a guest in another country, so be sure to be polite and courteous in your interactions here. One way that you can do that is through dress. Be sure to cover your knees and shoulders at all times. You must wear pants in a government building; shorts are not allowed. You will be able to wear swimwear at private pools, and beaches. However, at public beaches (i.e. Katara beach), you must abide by modesty expectations and wear the appropriate swimwear.

Below is a publication put out by the Reflect Your Respect campaign, a campaign designed to highlight the modesty dos and don'ts in Qatar.
Ramadan

The month of Ramadan is a very holy time for Muslims. Practicing Muslims will fast during daylight hours. Fasting Muslims will refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and other vices during the day. The pace of life slows down during the day; shops and restaurants will have altered hours. Restaurants will be completely closed until Iftar (the evening meal), but during Ramadan, Doha comes alive at night! There will be plenty of hustle and bustle at the souq, in the malls, and at restaurants. There is a large cannon at the souq that goes off to indicate when it is officially sundown.

It is very important to be respectful during Ramadan. Laws stipulate that you may not eat, drink, or smoke in public. At TAMUQ, there will be designated eating areas. The residence halls will have food available in the eatery, and the cafe at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar will be open. Be sure to be considerate when out in public.

Ramadan in 2020 is predicted be between 23 April- 23 May.
**Other Information**

**Currency**: The Qatari riyal is pegged to the US dollar. The exchange rate is fixed and stays at 3.65 QAR to 1 US$.

**Voltage**: The voltage in Qatar is 220v. American electronics will generally be 110v. Before plugging something in, make sure that it can go up to 240v. Phones, laptops, and tablets will usually be ok, but be sure to check before you plug it in! You can purchase voltage converters at grocery stores that will convert voltage to 110v.

**Time**: The interpretation of time is fluid in Qatar. When making plans with people, expect some discrepancy between what time was agreed on, and what time people actually arrive. However, it is important to note that this does not apply to classes. an 8:00 am class means 8:00 am!