



TRAVEL
DINING
WELLNESS
CULTURE

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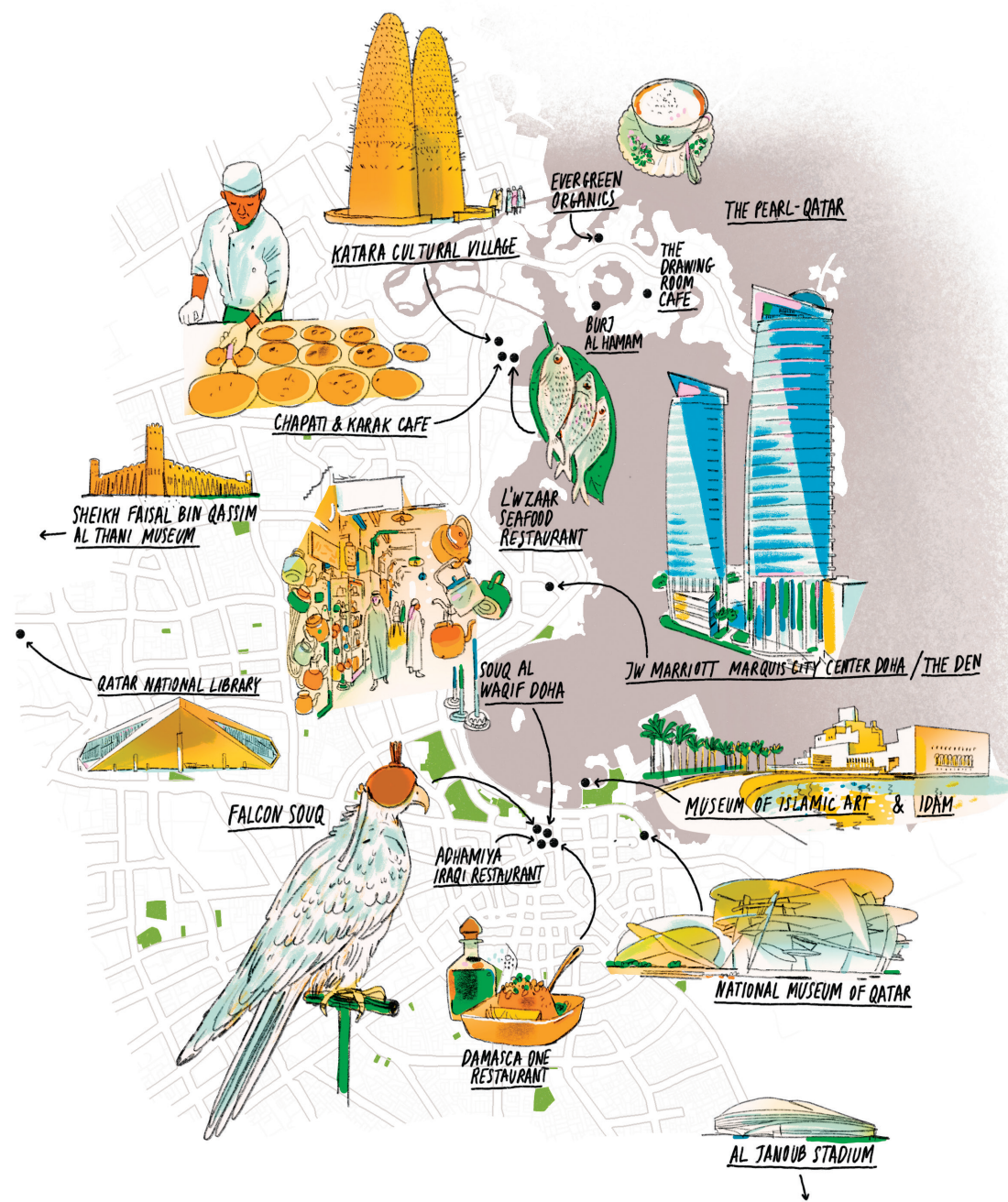
THE JW MARRIOTT MAGAZINE

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IN VENICE

DISCOVER DOHA

WANDER



Quintessential Doha

Rising from the sea like a shimmering pearl, Qatar’s capital is ready for the spotlight.

BY SARAH KHAN

Strolling along-side Doha’s seaside Corniche promenade, in the shadow of some of the world’s most ambitious architectural endeavors, it’s hard to fathom that the city that surrounds you traces its origins to a humble pearl-diving settlement. But for all its cutting-edge glamour, Qataris are rightly proud of their roots, and you’ll find their cultural heritage reflected in every corner of the country — from a dazzling stadium built for the 2022 FIFA World Cup that’s inspired by a traditional dhow boat to an atmospheric outdoor market where both locals and tourists converge, constructed where a century-old souk once stood. Here’s how to spend a few days exploring the Pearl of the Persian Gulf.

CULTURE

For more than a decade, Doha’s premier destination has been the I.M. Pei-designed Museum of Islamic Art, set in a striking geometric silhouette that presides over the Corniche. It houses a one-of-a-kind collection of carpets, manuscripts and ceramics spanning 1,400 years and three continents. In 2017, the Qatar National Library opened its doors in a Rem Koolhaas-designed

building that resembles a shard of glass. Just this past March, the long-awaited National Museum of Qatar was finally unveiled in an ethereal white structure by Jean Nouvel.

If you’re eager to get a taste of Qatar’s vibrant performing arts scene, take a peek at the events calendar at Katara Cultural Village. The sprawling complex, designed with traditional Qatari architectural elements that strike a charming contrast to the futuristic skyline flanking it, boasts an opera house, amphitheater, galleries

and event spaces. And a few days in Qatar is likely to spark your curiosity about the beloved local tradition of falconry. To learn more, visit Doha’s Falcon Souq — you can watch falconers exercising their birds and observe shopkeepers and customers bargaining over everything from leather falcon helmets to the falcons themselves. There are plenty of reasons to head beyond Doha’s city limits, too. This past spring saw the inauguration of the first of eight stadiums being constructed or renovated across the country for the 2022 FIFA World Cup; Al Janoub Stadium is a work of art in its own right, as one of legendary architect Zaha Hadid’s final projects. The Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, half an hour outside the city, houses the eclectic private collection of the wealthy Qatari for whom it’s named, from dinosaur bones to 18th-century Ottoman pistols to a Formula One car. And if you drive deep into the desert an hour west of Doha, you might come upon a set of four 50-foot-tall steel columns — a conceptual public art installation by celebrated American artist Richard Serra called *East-West/West-East*. Serra also erected an 80-foot sculpture called 7 outside the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.

FOOD & DRINK

The cuisines of the world converge in the Qatari capital. At the labyrinthine Souq Waqif, an atmospheric reimagining of a traditional Bedouin marketplace, you’ll feast on authentic Yemeni fahsa, ogdat and motapabak at Bandar Aden, sit down for an Iraqi spread at Al Adhamiyah or kibbe and kebabs in an old-world Syrian setting at Damasca One.

Katara Cultural Village also has a host of options for refueling between performances. Graze on sushi and scallops at L’Wzaar Seafood Market or head to the terrace of Mamig to try Armenian and Lebanese dishes with a sweeping view of Doha. If all you need is a quick caffeine fix, drop by Chapati & Karak for a cardamom-laced karak tea.

Another buzzy dining district is The Pearl, a faux isle that’s home to some of Doha’s toniest residences and boutiques. Among these glittering addresses you’ll find healthy vegan bites at Evergreen Organics, elegant Lebanese plates at Burj Al Hamam and an eclectic global menu at the Drawing Room Café.



Clockwise from top: The Museum of Islamic Art, the Souq Waqif and Katara Cultural Village.

A stay at the JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha, towering high above the city, places guests within striking distance of Doha old and new.

You’ll also find one of Doha’s best restaurants at The Museum of Islamic Art: celebrated chef Alain Ducasse’s first Middle Eastern offering, IDAM. In a soaring Philippe Starck-designed dining room, the chef serves French fare with Arab flair — think camel with foie gras and black truffle, and sea bass with date and fennel. For a nightcap, head back to the JW Marriott Marquis City Center Doha; The Den is a cozy jazz bar where live music sets a soothing soundtrack to end your night.

SHOPPING

You could spend days navigating the maze that is Souq Waqif. As you meander the narrow lanes, you’ll probably find yourself amassing carry-ons full of frankincense, coffee pots, embroidered scarves, perfumes and lanterns. The neighboring Gold Souk beckons for those who are up for a splurge. Browse for everything from dazzling bridal jewelry to simple bangles.

In the glitzy streets of The Pearl, you’ll find luxury emporiums like Versace and Ferrari. Contemplating a new rug for your living room back home? Riyaz Bhat, the “Rug Man” of Doha, will help you out. You’ll be tempted to while away hours with him at his Kashmir Handicrafts Emporium perusing his vast array of tribal carpets from Afghanistan to Iran and beyond. And even if you don’t consider yourself an antiques aficionado, you’ll enjoy taking a spin through Shanzelize Palace, marveling at weathered knickknacks like old watches and battered gramophones. □