

# Gulf States

Osher Course, February 2024  
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# Outline

- Focus on Qatar
- Other Gulf States
  - UAE
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Yemen



# Where is Qatar?



# Topographic Map of Qatar



# Photo Album



Doha Corniche

# Photo Album



Part of Doha skyline

# Photo Album

Grand  
Mosque,  
Doha





# Photo Album



Souq Waqif, Doha

# Photo Album



Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani  
Emir of Qatar until June 2013  
(left, with former P.M. Singh  
of India)



Sheikha Mozah  
bint Nasser al Missned  
2<sup>nd</sup> wife of Hamad al Thani  
and co-founder of Qatar  
Foundation

# Photo Album



HH Tamin bin Hamad al Thani  
Emir of Qatar since June 2013

# Photo Album

Falconry is a popular sport

Typical landscape in background



# Photo Album

Only a small  
part of the  
country looks  
like this.



People don't  
ride camels.  
They eat them.



# Photo Album

Camel  
Market,  
Doha



# Photo Album

Inside  
Museum  
of Islamic  
Art, Doha



# Photo Album

Men  
wearing  
thobes  
with  
Qatari  
collar





# Photo Album



Women wearing  
*abayas*, veil (*niqāb*)



# Photo Album

Doha  
Sheraton,  
venue for  
2001 WTO  
Ministerial  
Conference

Hotel switch  
is an example  
of *wasta*



# Photo Album

Restaurant at Al Sharq Hotel Village and Spa



# Photo Album

CMU Qatar  
new building  
opening  
ceremony,  
2009



# Demographics

- Population – 2.5 million (2023)
- Ethnic breakdown
  - Indian 22%
  - Nepalese 13%
  - Bangladeshi 13%
  - **Qatari 11%**
  - Egyptian 9%
  - Filipino 7%
  - Pakistani 4.7%
  - Sri Lankan 4.4%
  - Sudanese 1.9%
  - Syrian 1.8%
  - Jordanian 1.6%
  - Lebanese 1.3%
  - U.S. 1.2%
  - Kenyan 1.0%
  - Iranian 1.0%



# Economy

- Qataris are very proud of *Al Jazeera* studios.



# Arabic Language

- Several versions
  - Classical Arabic, language of the Qur'an.
  - Modern Standard Arabic
    - Studied in school, used in news broadcasts.
    - No one's native dialect.
  - Colloqial Arabic
    - Some dialects mutually unintelligible
      - Egypt & Sudan
      - Arabian peninsula (Gulf Arabic)
      - Syria, Lebanon, Palestine
      - Iraq
      - Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, western Libya



## Different forms of Arabic letters

There is no standard transliteration into Roman letters, so spellings vary

Phonetic value	Final form	Medial form	Initial form	Indep. form
dh	ض	ض	ض	ض
t	ط	ط	ط	ط
thaa	ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ
،	ع	ع	ع	ع
gh	غ	غ	غ	غ
f	ف	ف	ف	ف
q	ق	ق	ق	ق
k	ك	ك	ك	ك
l	ل	ل	ل	ل
m	م	م	م	م
n	ن	ن	ن	ن
h	ه	ه	ه	ه
w	و			و
y	ي	ي	ي	ي

Phonetic value	Final form	Medial form	Initial form	Indep. form
a	ا			ا
b	ب	ب	ب	ب
t	ت	ت	ت	ت
tha	ث	ث	ث	ث
j	ج	ج	ج	ج
haa	ح	ح	ح	ح
kh	خ	خ	خ	خ
r	ر			ر
z	ز			ز
d	د			د
the	ذ			ذ
s	س	س	س	س
sh	ش	ش	ش	ش
sa	ص	ص	ص	ص



# Cultures around the Gulf

- Many cultural similarities between Gulf states
  - Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait
- Qatar is more liberal than Saudi, quieter than UAE.
  - Qataris are comfortable with expats in the country.
  - No animosity towards Westerners.
  - Politically moderate.



# Cultural Traits

- Polychronic
  - But punctual when Westerners are involved.
- High context
  - But tries to accommodate rule-based expats.
  - Natives seem elusive.
- High power distance
  - Construction workers, right of way, Filipino maids



# Cultural Traits

- Collectivist
  - Loyalty to family
- Relationship-based
  - Friendship extremely important.
  - Relationships built very slowly.
  - Parallel with Texas good-ole-boy culture.
- Masculine
  - Similar to *machismo* (its historical source).



# Cultural Traits

- Conservative
  - Expats should dress modestly.
    - Although most locals tolerate some indiscretion, seeing it as a moral weakness of Westerners.



# Cultural Traits

- The West has its dress code, too.
  - In the U.S., violators of dress code are *arrested*.
  - In France, Muslim women required to *remove* clothing on beach, 2016 (“burkini ban”).



U.S.



France

# Cultural Traits

- Conservative
  - Web sites are filtered



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أو الاتصال بنا على خط المساعدة رقم : 125 .

مع أطيب التمنيات  
إنترنت قطر

*Regards,*  
**Internet Qatar**

# Cultural Traits

Restaurants  
sometimes  
have a family  
section



# Cultural Traits



Shopping malls  
may have a  
family day



# Gulf States

- Friday – Mosque day
  - Morning – Sleep in. Streets deserted.
  - Noon – Attend service at mosque.
  - Afternoon – Family meal prepared by live-in Filipino maids.
  - Evening – Shop until you drop.  
Traffic jams.

Mosque, Qatar  
Islamic Cultural Centre



# Cultural Traits

- Liquor is legal for Westerners if consumed at home or in certain areas of certain hotels.



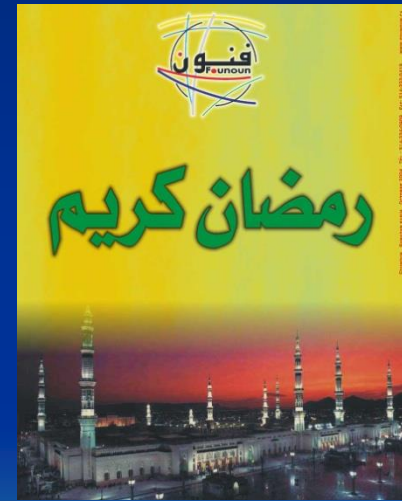
# Gulf States

Mall traffic



# Ramadan

- 9<sup>th</sup> month of lunar calendar
- Daytime fast is required by law.
  - All restaurants closed.
  - A few groceries are open, mainly for Western shoppers.
  - 2024: 10 March (sunset) through 9 April



# Ramadan

- Westerns may eat, drink privately at home (or in certain areas of certain hotels).
- Time of *iftar* (breaking of fast) is published in newspapers, on web.



*Iftar* meal

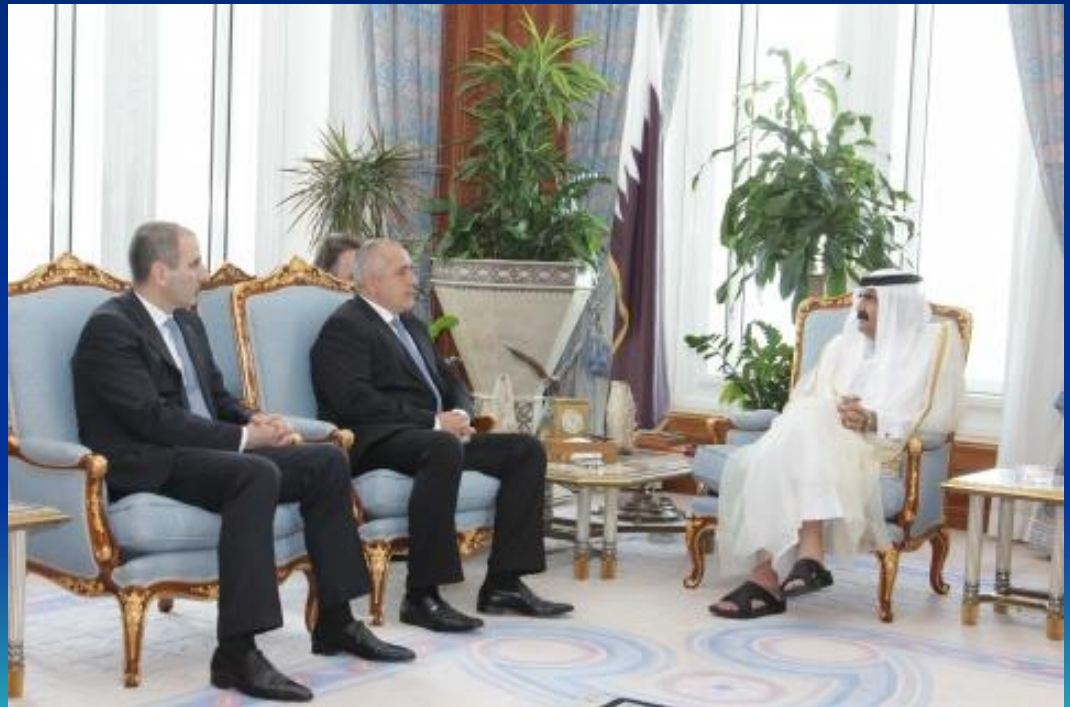
# Ramadan

- Locals tend to sleep most of the day, stay up all night.
  - Lavish parties, interesting events at night.
- *Eid al Fitr* after Ramadan



# Etiquette

- Body language is important
  - Avoid slouching in chair.
  - Better not to cross legs.



# Etiquette

- A little obsequiousness, flattery of high-ranking officials is a good idea.





# Negotiation

- Souks are rather tame.
  - Polite south Asian proprietors.



# Arab Dinner Party

- You are invited to a private home.
  - Men enter by front entrance, women by rear.
  - Men and women do not associate during the entire evening.
- Men gather in large parlor, sit on sofas arranged around the walls.
  - On entering, move counterclockwise around the room, greeting & shaking hands.



# Arab Dinner Party

- For men only...
- Have a seat.
  - Servant will bring bitter herb tea.
  - Drink it quickly.
  - Shake the empty cup to indicate you are ready for the servant to take it.
  - Don't discuss politics or religion.



# Arab Dinner Party

- When it's time for dinner, you will line up at wash basin.
- Men go outside to tent (*majlis*) for meal.
  - In summer, tent will be air conditioned.



# Arab Dinner Party

- Sit on cushions around food.
  - Tray may contain roast lamb, surrounded by rice, hard-boiled eggs, etc.
  - There are no utensils; use fingers to take meat, etc.
  - Scoop up rice with fingers and push into your mouth with thumb.



# Arab Dinner Party

- After meal, return to wash basin in the house.
- Move into parlor for dessert and after-dinner conversation.
- At close of evening, make the rounds counter-clockwise to say *massalama*.

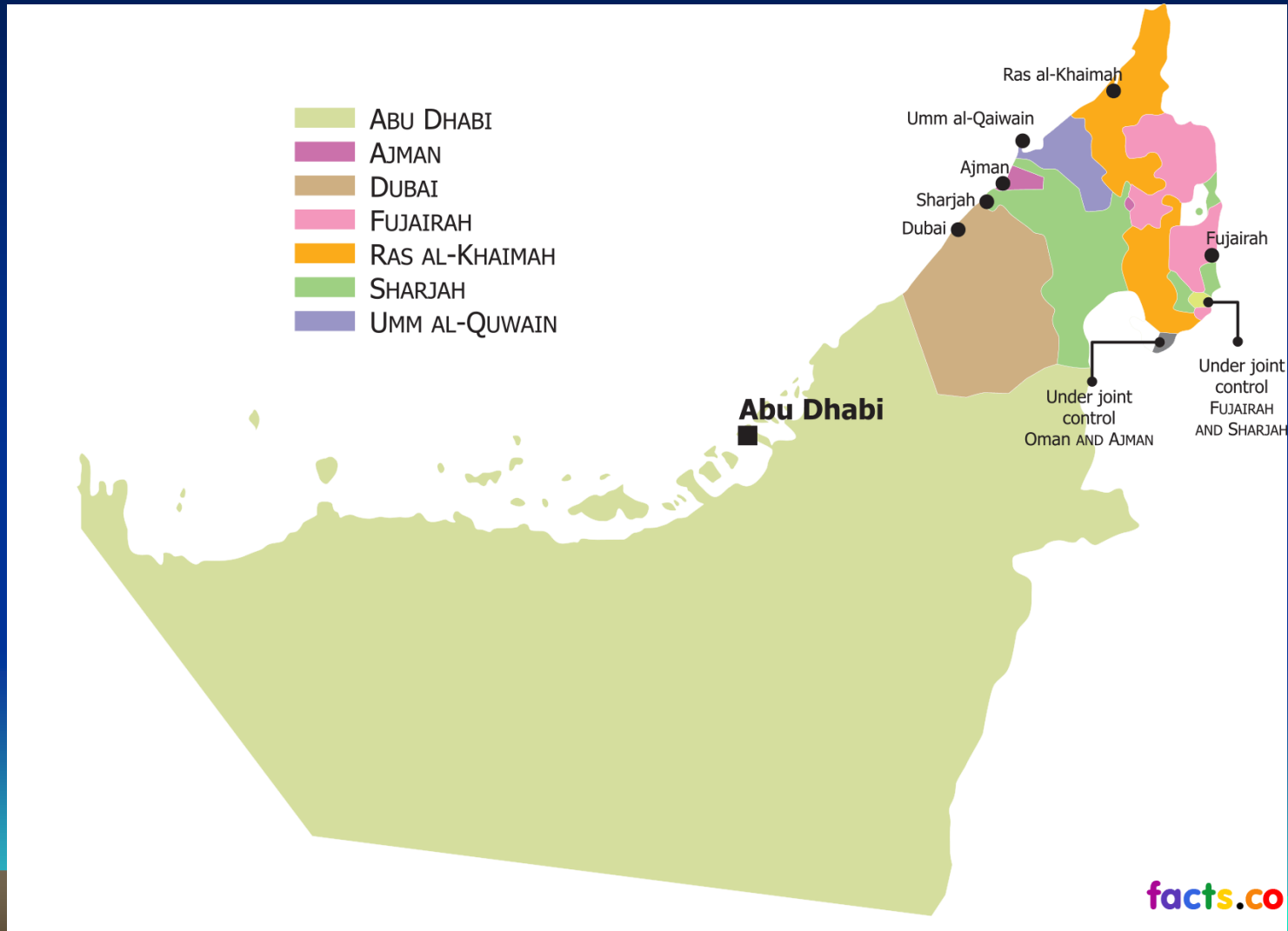


# UAE

- United Arab Emirates.



# UAE





# UAE

- Dubai
  - Playground of the wealthy

Burj Khalifa

World's tallest building



# UAE

- Abu Dhabi
  - A bit more traditional
  - Emphasis on sustainability

Sheikh  
Zayed  
Grand  
Mosque



# Saudi Arabia



# Saudi Arabia

- Strict observance
  - Men & women segregated.
  - Women not allowed to drive until June 2018
  - However, patronizing Western critics are not appreciated.
  - Dinner party.



Al Munirah Mosque  
Dharan, Saudi Arabia

# Saudi Arabia

- Strict observance
  - Shops close for prayers.
  - Home of Wahhabi faith.



Mall of Dharan

# Saudi Arabia

- Strict observance
  - Shops close for prayers.
  - Home of Wahhabi faith.

Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab  
“Muslim Oliver Cromwell”



Mall of Dharan

# Saudi Arabia

- Strict observance
  - No coed universities.
  - Prayer rugs in university hallways.
  - Male comradeship.
  - Royal family.

King Fahd University of  
Petroleum and Minerals  
Dhahran



# Saudi Arabia

- Predominately Sunni
  - Dhahran is heavily Shia.
  - Causeway connects to Bahrain, scene of Shia/Sunni conflict



Causeway from Dhahran to Bahrain



# Saudi Arabia

Grand Mosque  
(Al-Masjid Al-Haram) &  
Abraj Al-Bait Towers  
(4th tallest in world),  
Mecca



# Bahrain



# Bahrain

- Financial center of the region
  - Leader in “Fintech” (financial technology)

Bahrain  
Stock  
Exchange



# Oman



# Oman

- Sultanate
  - Ruled by Haitham bin Tariq Al Said
  - Ibadi sect of Islam



Muscat

# Kuwait



# Kuwait

- Oil-rich state
  - Emirate controlled by Al-Sabah family
  - Mostly Sunni Muslims
  - Life complicated by wars in Iraq, invasion



Kuwait towers



# Yemen



shutterstock

IMAGE ID: 125108411  
www.shutterstock.com



# Yemen

- A land racked by political unrest and humanitarian catastrophe
  - Historically wealthy
  - Home of “Queen of Sheba” (Saba)
  - Houthi rebellion 2015
    - “Houthis” are not an ethnic group.
    - Faction started by Hussein al-Houthi of the Houthi tribe.
  - Highly complex situation



Hussein al-Houthi, 1959-2004

# Yemen

- Houthi rebellion
  - The group is primarily Zaidi Shia, but with some Sunni supporters.
    - Opposed autocratic President Ali Abdullah Saleh.
    - Saleh ordered arrest of Hussein al-Houthi, who resisted.
    - Army killed Hussein in 2004, sparking revolt.



Ali Abdullah Saleh

# Yemen

- Houthi rebellion
  - Arab Spring inspired rebellion against Saleh.
    - Saleh resigned 2011 (2012).
    - Successor was Saudi-backed Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, who could not deal with the chaos.
    - Houthis took advantage of situation by starting latest rebellion, forcing out Hadi.
    - Saudis entered conflict in 2015 against Houthis, whom they saw as supported by arch-enemy Iran.



Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi  
with John Kerry, 2013

# Yemen

- Civil war
  - Actually a proxy war between Saudis and Iran.
    - US continued historical military support for Saudis despite atrocities in Yemen.
    - Saudi blockade created humanitarian disaster. 
    - Hunger and disease rampant.

Bombed Doctors without Borders hospital, 2016



# Yemen

- Recent events

- 2021: Biden ended support for Saudis in Yemen
- April 2022: Saudis and Houthis entered truce.
- Nov 2023: Houthis begin to attack shipping after Israeli response to Oct 7 massacre.
  - Why? Ostensibly to support Palestinian cause.
  - Main objective: to gather international support for Houthis

