

Snapshot

DOHA, QATAR

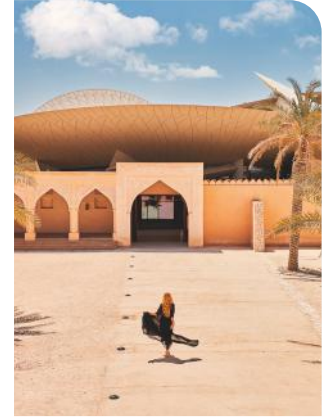
As the Qatari capital gets a new cruise port, Jane Archer picks the best excursions

star attraction...



National Museum

Opened in 2019, this history lover's dream looks stunning from the outside and guides visitors through the culture of Qatar from the first traces of life to the discovery of oil in 1939. There are huge LED screens, interactive displays, quizzes and a rug – the Pearl Carpet of Baroda – embroidered with about 1.5 million pearls. Oceania Cruises' excursions pair it with the Museum of Islamic Art.



we love...



Cruising on Doha Bay

The best way to view the striking skyline is from Doha Bay. Cue an MSC Cruises excursion on a *dhow* (traditional wooden boat). There's time to soak up some sun, take a dip and refuel on food and drink (no alcohol though, Qatar is dry, aside from a select few luxury hotels). Or opt for a dinner cruise, accompanied by a sunset to light up the skyline.



culinary delights...



Persian cuisine at Parisa

Head back to the souk after dark, when restaurants serving everything from pizzas and pasta to Turkish kebabs come alive. Silversea has an evening out at Parisa – a dazzling Persian restaurant decorated floor-to-ceiling in mosaics and mirrors – which serves mezzes of bread, dips and grilled meats. To dine with a view and alcohol, pick Japanese Sora on the 21st floor of the Park Hyatt in Msheireb.

don't miss...



Dune-bashing in a 4x4

Buckle up because we're off on a 4x4 dune-bashing trip in the desert with Silversea. There's a brief pit stop for the drivers to deflate the tyres (to avoid sinking) and then they are off, revving up and down the shifting sand, driving on the edge of high dunes at angles you really don't want to think about. It's rough, bumpy and not for the faint-of-stomach, but terrific fun.



make time for...



Hamad Port

The new cruise terminal. It's not just that it's huge – able to handle 14,000 passengers at once – or has all those arches, but right in the middle of it all is the biggest aquarium in the Middle East.



PICTURES: Qatar Tourism

local life...



Souk Waqif

Explore a maze of narrow passages lined with shops selling pots, pans, spices, birds, perfume and more. It's great to wander the 100-year-old market, which has recently been rebuilt in the image of the original. Visit alone after disembarking the Azamara ship or go with a guide, but be sure to visit Al Souq Street, where local ladies cook fresh, authentic curries and cheesy pancakes.

