

Doha named GCC Tourism Capital for 2026, taking over from Al Ain

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Dhaka: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has selected Doha as the Tourism Capital for 2026, recognizing the Qatari capital's progress in tourism, culture, and hospitality development. The announcement was made by the GCC, with Doha set to assume the title from the UAE's Al Ain, the GCC Tourism Capital for 2025.

According to the council, Doha stood out among candidate cities due to its diversified tourism offerings and its ability to combine cultural heritage with modern urban development and large-scale infrastructure.

In its official submission, Qatar Tourism highlighted Doha's transport and mobility ecosystem, including the award-winning Hamad International Airport and the Doha Metro and Tram network. These assets were cited as key enablers of seamless visitor movement and

enhanced travel experience.

Qatar Tourism Chairman Saad bin Ali Al-Kharji said the selection reflects the country's long-term development strategy. He noted that tourism has become a central pillar of the National Development Strategy and the Qatar National Vision 2030.

He added that the designation underscores the progress made in building an integrated and sustainable tourism ecosystem that is competitive at both regional and global levels, supported by strong connectivity, modern infrastructure, and a high-quality visitor experience.

A dedicated GCC Tourism Capital 2026 program for Doha will be announced at a later date. The program is expected to include cultural festivals, tourism initiatives, and regional events aimed at highlighting the city's attractions throughout the year.

Even ahead of the official program, Doha already offers a broad range of cultural and leisure destinations. Katara Cultural Village continues to attract art and culture enthusiasts, while the National Museum of Qatar provides insight into the country's history and heritage.

Souq Waqif remains one of the city's most popular attractions, offering traditional shopping, dining, and cultural experiences. Sports and motorsports fans are drawn to venues such as the Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum and the Lusail International Circuit.

Doha's event calendar for 2026 is already taking shape. Art Basel Qatar is scheduled to take place from February 5 to February 7, 2026. The Doha Film Festival is expected around November 2026, followed by the Qatar Balloon Festival in December 2026.

In recent years, Qatar has been accelerating efforts to diversify its economy, with tourism identified as a key growth sector. Initiatives have increasingly focused on eco-friendly accommodation, sustainable transport, and responsible tourism practices.

Doha's appointment as the GCC Tourism Capital for 2026 is expected to further reinforce these efforts and enhance the city's profile as a leading tourism destination in the Gulf region.

