



WINDSTAR'S MIDDLE EAST ITINERARIES VISIT CITIES

that have been welcoming Western visitors for many years. You can expect gracious hospitality and cheerful greetings. English is spoken everywhere and most signage is bi-lingual. Almost every place you go, your normal dress and manners will be readily accepted. When you visit mosques, you will need to dress more conservatively, but the experience will be well worth the respectful effort.

A little advance preparation and awareness can enhance your travel enjoyment without taking up luggage space. These destinations have never been more accessible to visitors, but a little extra awareness adds to authentic excursion experiences, bestowing rich, unforgettable memories for you and your companions.

Everyday public life will be more familiar than you may imagine. There are ample resources to help you feel confident about your trip. Each country has slightly different rules, customs, and regulations. Website information from US and UK governments provides excellent and updated facts for safe travel.



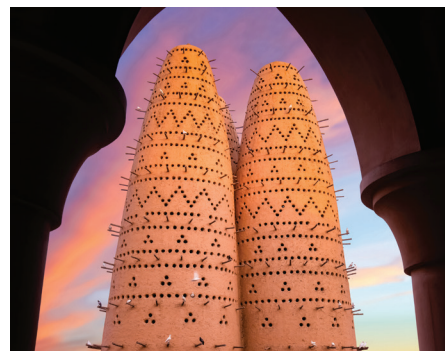
THESE ARE THE MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM GUESTS:

Do I need to apply for visas in advance?

Egypt and Saudi Arabia require advance online applications for tourist visas. For Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, and UAE, no advanced visa arrangements are required. Please use our **CIBT Entry Guide** for the most up-to-date requirements.

What attire is appropriate to wear?

These destinations enjoy hot and sunny conditions and have specific dress codes based on centuries of tradition. Your best practical approach is to wear modest, light clothing—nothing form-fitting—that covers elbows and knees without loud graphics or slogans. Depending on specific customs, men may need to avoid shorts, sleeveless shirts, skinny jeans, and any jewelry beyond a wristwatch and wedding ring. Women should consider flowing or loose-fitting clothes made from fabrics that are non-transparent.



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What can I anticipate when I visit a mosque?

The best way to visit a mosque is on a guided tour where the tour guide can assist you. The mosques open to non-Muslim visitors are the major attractions with specific visiting hours. If you are allowed to enter the prayer halls, you must remove your shoes, which you will stow in shoe shelves by the entrance. Women must wear scarves to cover their heads, hair, and necks, and clothes that cover all but hands and feet. Any jewelry or accessories symbolizing faiths beyond Islam should be tucked away. When inside a prayer hall, it is customary to speak quietly and follow the designated walkways.

Can I drink alcoholic beverages?

Onboard your Windstar ship, liquor service will be available as usual. While visiting the ports of your cruise, you may order and consume alcoholic beverages in licensed venues, (generally hotels and some restaurants), except in Saudi Arabia where it is illegal.

What social norms are appropriate behavior?

Your guides will help you respect local customs, but keep these general guidelines in mind:

- Public displays of affection between sexes are discouraged and may be considered illegal in some countries. You will see very few people holding hands.
- Whenever seated, it's customary to avoid exposing the soles of your feet or shoes to others.
- If you are eating “finger food” on excursions—especially traditional meals or street food—only eat with your right hand. Your right hand is considered your clean hand.
- Consider commonsense courtesies around hosts. For example, before taking pictures, ask your guide or your intended photo subject(s) for permission. A souk vendor will likely allow you to photograph his displays or merchandise after you have purchased an item from him.
- Men often greet by shaking hands and these introductions may last longer than you might be accustomed to at home. In some circumstances men do not shake hands with women unless the woman offers her hand first.



For more social behavior tips, browse the US and UK government websites. Pay particular attention to the “Local Laws and Special Circumstances” section on the US website, and the “Local Laws and Customs” section of the UK website.

Here are a few helpful blog posts from travelers discussing their experiences:

- <https://visitabudhabi.ae/en/plan-your-trip/essential-info/climate-and-what-to-wear>
- <https://www.saudiarabiavisa.co.uk/dress-code-foreigners.html>
- <https://againstthecompass.com/en/travel-to-saudi-arabia/>
- <https://theplanetd.com/etiquette-in-the-middle-east-need-to-know-travel-tips-for-men-and-women/>
- <https://bit.ly/AlcoholandSaudiArabia>.



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