




**Taste
of Qatar**
BY QATAR TOURISM

PROGRAM MANUAL

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Program	3
Vision & Mission.....	3
Program Overview	3
The Significance of the Program	4
Methodology & Framework	5
Methodology Overview.....	5
Areas Covered.....	6
Classification of Establishments	6
Assessment framework	7
Scoring Scheme.....	10
Points Calculation	10
Criteria Weight	11
Arriving at the Annual Rating	12
Establishments' Engagement	12
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)	13
Contact Information	15

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

VISION

To establish Qatar as a globally recognized culinary hub where every dining experience reflects the highest standards of quality, creativity, and cultural richness, making it an unparalleled gastronomic destination that delights visitors, supports local businesses, and contributes to the nation's tourism and economic goals.

MISSION

To elevate Qatar's culinary landscape by fostering excellence in dining experiences, promoting exceptional service standards, and showcasing the country's rich and diverse gastronomic offerings, while supporting the growth of the local food and beverage industry and enhancing Qatar's position as a world-class tourist destination.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Taste of Qatar program is a multifaceted initiative designed to transform the country's culinary landscape. At its core, the program aims to elevate the overall dining experience of both residents and visitors across all types of establishments.

This commitment to excellence extends to promoting exceptional service standards through training, resources, and recognition of outstanding performers in the hospitality industry. Simultaneously, the program celebrates and showcases Qatar's diverse culinary scene, from traditional local dishes to international cuisines.

To ensure consistent quality and drive continuous improvement, food & beverage establishments are assessed through a comprehensive assessment scheme based on global best practices and is carried out objectively through mystery shopping, particularly in touristic areas.

This rigorous evaluation process not only guarantees high-quality dining experiences for visitors but also provides valuable feedback to participating establishments, enabling them to continuously enhance their offerings and promotes excellence as an ongoing journey. Through this holistic approach, the program creates a dynamic ecosystem of culinary excellence that benefits local businesses, residents, and tourists alike.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROGRAM

The Taste of Qatar program and its associated restaurant rating system play a crucial role in shaping Qatar's culinary landscape and tourism industry. This initiative goes beyond evaluation and serves as a catalyst for continuous improvement and excellence in the food and beverage sector.

Role in Improving Standards

- **Benchmark for Excellence:** The program establishes clear, objective criteria for assessing restaurants, creating a benchmark for culinary and service excellence in Qatar. This standardization encourages establishments to strive for higher quality and better experiences.
- **Continuous Improvement Mechanism:** Through regular assessments and feedback, the program provides restaurants with valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement. This ongoing evaluation process motivates establishments to continually enhance their offerings, leading to a dynamic and ever-improving culinary scene.
- **Industry-wide Elevation:** As more restaurants participate and improve their standards to achieve higher ratings, it creates a ripple effect across the industry. This collective elevation of standards contributes to Qatar's overall reputation as a high-quality dining destination.
- **Professional Development:** The program indirectly promotes professional development within the hospitality industry. Restaurants aiming for better ratings often invest in staff training, leading to improved skills and career opportunities for workers in the sector.

Benefits to Residents

- **Enhanced Dining Options:** Residents benefit from a wider array of high-quality dining establishments, enriching their day-to-day culinary experiences.
- **Cultural Pride:** As the program showcases and elevates local cuisine, it instills a sense of pride in Qatar's culinary heritage among residents.
- **Economic Opportunities:** The growth and improvement of the restaurant industry create job opportunities and support local businesses, contributing to the overall economic well-being of residents.
- **Quality Assurance:** The rating system serves as a reliable guide for residents, helping them make informed choices about where to dine and what to expect in terms of quality and service.

Benefits to Visitors

- **Memorable Culinary Experiences:** Visitors can expect consistently high-quality dining experiences, enhancing their overall trip satisfaction.
- **Cultural Immersion:** Through the program's emphasis on local and diverse cuisines, tourists can explore Qatar's culture and heritage through its food.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** The rating system helps visitors navigate Qatar's dining scene with confidence, especially those unfamiliar with the local culinary landscape.

- **Diverse Options:** By encouraging a variety of high-quality establishments, from local eateries to international cuisines, the program ensures that visitors with different tastes and preferences can find suitable dining options.
- **Trust and Reliability:** The objective rating system provides a trustworthy guide for visitors, assuring them of the quality and standards they can expect.

METHODOLOGY & FRAMEWORK

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The Taste of Qatar program utilizes a sophisticated mystery dining approach to conduct impartial assessments of food and beverage establishments throughout the country.

Skilled evaluators, posing as ordinary customers, visit a wide array of dining venues to capture genuine experiences.

This comprehensive approach encompasses the full spectrum of Qatar's culinary offerings, from fine dining and upscale restaurants to casual eateries, cafes and quick-service restaurants and food trucks.

At the heart of the evaluation process are bespoke assessment criteria, tailored to the different establishment categories considered for this program. These criteria cover crucial aspects such as culinary quality, customer service, ambiance, and overall value. Following each visit, evaluators objectively provide quantitative and qualitative insights by filling out a meticulously designed assessment framework.

A robust scoring system ensures consistency across evaluations and enables meaningful comparisons. To account for potential variability, multiple anonymous visits will be conducted throughout the year to arrive at an annual rating for each establishment.

AREAS COVERED

The Taste of Qatar program encompasses a wide range of dining establishments across various areas in Qatar. This comprehensive coverage ensures that visitors and residents alike can experience culinary excellence throughout their explorations of the country.

CLASSIFICATION OF ESTABLISHMENTS

The Taste of Qatar program recognizes the diversity of dining experiences available in the country and establishes a comprehensive classification system to ensure fair and appropriate evaluation of each establishment. This system is based on a set of criteria as defined in this document.

Seven distinct categories have been established to encompass the wide range of food and beverage establishments in Qatar.



Any new establishment wishing to enroll in the program will be classified into the category that best fits its characteristics.






The following table outlines the different types of establishments, and the base criteria used for classification:

Type of Establishment	Fine Dining	Upscale Casual	Casual	Quick Service Casual	Premium Café	Quick Service Café	Food Truck/ Kiosk
Brief Overview	Sophisticated ambiance with highly trained staff offering formal, personalized service and a set menu	Comfortable and smart casual ambiance where staff provides semi formal and professional service	Casual ambiance where staff provides informal and efficient service	Functional and efficient ambiance, with focus on speed, convenience and offering quick service	Comfortable and smart casual ambiance where staff provides semi formal and professional service	Simple and functional ambiance, emphasizing on offering fast and efficient service	Casual and mobile setup, often focusing on take away or street dining, with quick and informal service
Service Type	Table service	Table service	Table service	Self Service <i>(At the Counter)</i>	Table service	Self Service <i>(At the Counter)</i>	Self Service <i>(At the Counter)</i>
Reservation	Required	Required	Not Required	Not Required	Not Required	Not Required	Not Required
Set Menu	Yes <i>(also offers a la carte menu)</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No
Staff Interaction	Sequential <i>(host, waiter)</i>	Sequential <i>(host, waiter)</i>	Sequential <i>(host, waiter)</i>	Limited <i>(waiter)</i>	Limited <i>(waiter)</i>	Limited <i>(waiter)</i>	Limited <i>(waiter)</i>

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The Taste of Qatar program employs a comprehensive evaluation system to ensure a thorough and fair assessment of each participating establishment. Below is a brief description of the assessment framework criteria that evaluators will use to complete their reports following visits to the establishments. These criteria have been carefully developed to cover all aspects of the dining experience, from initial contact to the conclusion of the visit, ensuring that every touchpoint of customer interaction is considered.













By using this standardized set of criteria, the program aims to provide consistent, objective evaluations across diverse dining establishments, ultimately driving improvements in Qatar's culinary landscape and enhancing the overall dining experience for both residents and visitors.

Criteria	Brief Description
 Online Exploration & Reservation	Evaluates the establishment's digital presence, including website or app functionality, ease of finding information, and online booking process if applicable.
 Accessibility	Assesses how easily customers can reach and enter the establishment, including parking availability, wheelchair access, and clear signage.
 Exterior Premises/ Condition of the Food Truck	Examines the cleanliness, maintenance, and visual appeal of the establishment's exterior or the food truck's overall condition.
 Host/ Welcoming Staff	Evaluates the initial greeting, friendliness, and efficiency of staff members who first interact with customers.
 Interior Premises & Seating	Assesses the cleanliness, comfort, ambiance, and overall condition of the dining area and seating arrangements.
 Initial Interaction & Menu Exploration	Examines how well staff introduce the menu, their knowledge of offerings, and their ability to make recommendations.
 Placing the Order	Evaluates the ease and efficiency of the ordering process, including staff attentiveness and accuracy in taking orders.
 Dining/ Café/ Food Experience	Assesses the quality, presentation, and taste of food and beverages, as well as the overall dining experience.
 Payment & Visit Conclusion	Examines the efficiency and courtesy of the payment process and how well staff conclude the dining experience.
 Overall Experience	A holistic assessment of the entire visit, considering all aspects of the dining experience.
 Sustainability	Evaluates the establishment's eco-friendly practices, use of local ingredients, and commitment to reducing environmental impact such as reduction in single-use plastics.
 Feedback Mechanism & Online Review	Assesses how the establishment collects and responds to customer feedback, both in-person and online.

The Taste of Qatar program recognizes that different types of dining establishments have unique characteristics and operational models. To ensure a fair and relevant assessment, the program has tailored the application of assessment criteria to suit various establishment categories.

The following table illustrates how each assessment criterion is applied across different types of establishments, which will include multiple detailed question under each criterion.

This mapping ensures that evaluators focus on the most relevant aspects for each category, providing a more accurate and meaningful assessment.

Criteria		Fine Dining	Upscale Casual	Casual	Quick Service Casual	Premium Café	Quick Service Café	Food Truck/ Kiosk
	Online Exploration & Reservation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Accessibility	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Exterior Premises/ Condition of the Food Truck	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Host/ Welcoming Staff	Y	Y	Y		Y		
	Interior Premises & Seating	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
	Initial Interaction & Menu Exploration	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Placing the Order	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Dining/ Café/ Food Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Payment & Visit Conclusion	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Overall Experience	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Sustainability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Feedback Mechanism & Online Review	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Total Number of Questions		138	138	81	52	69	49	46

SCORING SCHEME

Calculating the overall score follows a multi-level calculation scheme, applicable for the individual assessment (Score).

POINTS CALCULATION

Points calculation is based on the points allocated to the attributes within a section.

The section score is then calculated based on points scored divided by maximum points possible as per the example provided

The questions that do not apply to a particular establishment will be marked as not applicable and the associated points allocated for the question(s) will be nullified and redistributed in the appropriate criteria section.

Attributes	Answer Options	Maximum Points Possible	Answer	Point Scored/ Achieved	Attribute Score
Attribute 1	1. Yes (1 point) 2. No (0 points)	1	Yes	1	100%
Attribute 2	1. Yes (1 point) 2. No (0 points)	1	No	0	0%
Attribute 3	1. Yes (1 point) 2. No (0 points)	1	No	0	0%
Attribute 4	1. Yes (1 point) 2. No (0 points)	1	Yes	1	100%

Total Points Scored / Achieved	2	Score
Maximum Points Possible	4	50%

CRITERIA WEIGHT

Calculating the overall score is an outcome of the scores achieved across the criteria evaluated.

A weighting scheme is applied across the evaluation criteria to reflect aspects that potentially have the highest impact on the overall customer experience hence the overall assessment score.

Below is an example on weighting (Weights are for illustration purposes)

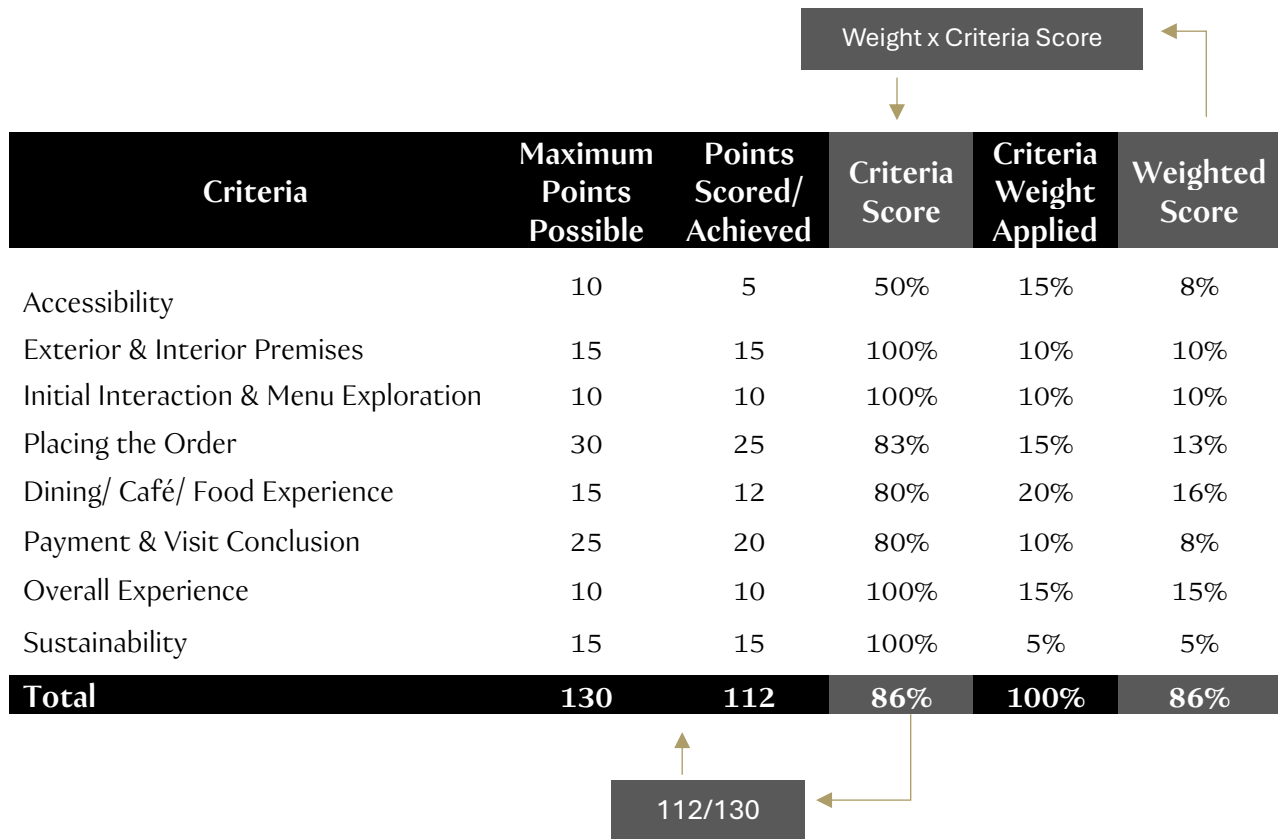
Overall score of the establishment (survey):

This score is the calculated outcome of the weighted score as indicated below (example 86%)

Criteria	Maximum Points Possible	Points Scored/Achieved	Criteria Score	Criteria Weight Applied	Weighted Score
Accessibility	10	5	50%	15%	8%
Exterior & Interior Premises	15	15	100%	10%	10%
Initial Interaction & Menu Exploration	10	10	100%	10%	10%
Placing the Order	30	25	83%	15%	13%
Dining/ Café/ Food Experience	15	12	80%	20%	16%
Payment & Visit Conclusion	25	20	80%	10%	8%
Overall Experience	10	10	100%	15%	15%
Sustainability	15	15	100%	5%	5%
Total	130	112	86%	100%	86%

Weight x Criteria Score

112/130



ARRIVING AT THE ANNUAL RATING

The Taste of Qatar program employs a certification system based on comprehensive annual assessments of each participating establishment.

These certifications are not awards, but rather objective recognitions of an establishment's performance across various criteria throughout the year. The annual certification level will be determined based on the cumulative results of assessments conducted throughout the year for each establishment, as presented in the table below:

1 STAR RATING

2 STAR RATING

3 STAR RATING



Score Bracket	60% - 79%	80%-89%	90% +
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ESTABLISHMENTS' ENGAGEMENT

The Taste of Qatar program offers establishments the opportunity to take an active role in their own improvement and benchmarking process.

Establishments have the option to enroll themselves as active members within the program, unlocking a range of benefits and interactive features.

Enrolled establishments receive detailed onboarding information and training materials to support them in their active engagement with the program.

Key features of active membership include:

- **Access To Results & Insights:** Active members gain access to a dedicated online portal where they can view their assessment results upon the completion of mystery shopping visits. This immediate feedback allows establishments to quickly identify areas of excellence and opportunities for improvement.
- **Benchmarking Capabilities:** The portal provides more than just individual results. It offers valuable benchmarking data, allowing establishments to compare their performance against

the broader food and beverage sector in Qatar. This feature enables businesses to understand their standing in the market and set competitive improvement goals.

- **Engagement and Appeals Process:** Active membership fosters a two-way communication channel between the program and the establishments. Members can:
 - Engage through enquiries, seeking clarification or additional information about their assessments.
 - Raise appeals if they believe certain aspects of their evaluation require review.
 - Challenge results they believe should be reconsidered, providing an opportunity for dialogue and ensuring fairness in the assessment process.

This active participation model not only provides establishments with valuable insights and data but also empowers them to take an engaged role in the continuous improvement of Qatar's culinary landscape. It reinforces the Taste of Qatar program's commitment to transparency, fairness, and collaborative growth within the food and beverage industry.

Below is the link wherein establishments can enroll themselves into the program.

TasteofQatarRegistration.ipsosinteractive.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

What is the Taste of Qatar program?

The Taste of Qatar program is an initiative designed to elevate Qatar's culinary landscape by assessing and improving dining experiences across the country.

What is the purpose of the program?

The program aims to enhance dining experiences, promote service excellence, showcase Qatar's diverse culinary scene, and support the country's tourism goals.

How are establishments evaluated?

Evaluations are conducted through mystery shopping visits by trained professionals who assess various aspects of the dining experience based on specific criteria.

What types of establishments are included in the program?

The program covers a wide range of food and beverage establishments, including fine dining restaurants, casual eateries, cafes, food trucks, and more.

How are establishments classified within the program?	Establishments are classified into seven categories based on criteria such as service type, reservation process, menu offerings, and staff interaction.
What are the main assessment criteria?	The assessment criteria include factors such as online presence, accessibility, food quality, service, ambiance, sustainability practices, and overall experience.
Can establishments see their evaluation results?	Yes, establishments that enroll as active members can access their results through an online portal.
Is there a way for establishments to compare their performance with others?	Active members can benchmark their performance against others in their category and the broader food and beverage sector in Qatar through the online portal.
What if an establishment disagrees with its evaluation?	Active members can raise enquiries, appeals, or challenges if they believe certain aspects of their evaluation require review.
How does the program benefit visitors to Qatar?	The program ensures high-quality dining experiences for visitors, helps them make informed choices, and allows them to explore Qatar's culinary diversity.
How does the Taste of Qatar program support local businesses?	It provides valuable feedback for improvement, promotes local establishments, and contributes to the overall growth of Qatar's hospitality sector.
Is the evaluation process transparent?	Yes, the program maintains transparency about its methodology and assessment criteria to ensure fairness for all participating establishments.
How often are establishments evaluated?	The frequency of evaluations may vary, but establishments may receive multiple visits to ensure a comprehensive assessment.
How does the program contribute to Qatar's tourism goals?	By elevating the dining experience, the program enhances Qatar's appeal as a tourist destination and supports the country's vision for tourism growth.

Can new establishments join the program?

Yes, new establishments can enroll in the program and will be classified into the appropriate category based on their characteristics through the following link:

TasteofQatarRegistration.ipsosinteractive.com

Contact Information

For any inquiries related to the Taste of Qatar program, we welcome your questions and feedback.

Whether you're an establishment interested in participating, a visitor seeking more information, or a stakeholder with general queries, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

You can contact our dedicated support team at the following email address:

TasteOfQatar@visitqatar.qa