
**BEYOND
BORDERS:**

**YOUR ROADMAP
TO TEACHING IN
THE MIDDLE
EAST-*KUWAIT &
QATAR EDITION***

The only guide you need to start your
teaching abroad journey in the GCC

BY: SHANICE WHITNEY



TRAVEL OR TEACH? WHY NOT BOTH?!

If you're anything like me you have a strong desire to see the world and all that it has to offer. Spoiler alert: you can do that and more by teaching abroad. In this ebook, I will break down all the things you need to know about moving abroad to teach in Kuwait and Qatar.



SHANICE WHITNEY

YOUR TEACH ABROAD BESTIE

After four transformative years teaching in Kuwait, and five back in America, I made the decision to open up the next chapter of my teaching journey in Doha, Qatar. My time in Kuwait was filled with life-changing experiences that helped me understand the complexities of teaching in a new environment and navigating cultural differences. Now, as I transition to Qatar, I bring all that knowledge and more and I am eager to share it with others.

My background as an international teacher for 5 years positions me as a trustworthy resource for educators considering a move to the GCC. I've walked the path of adjusting to a new educational landscape and I'm passionate about using my experience to support others on their journey. With dedication to teaching and a deep understanding of the Gulf region's educational landscape, I aim to provide practical and insightful guidance for those contemplating a similar life transition.

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CHAPTER 1

TEACH IN THE
GCC? GIRL,
WHAT?!

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Ever get those puzzled looks when you mention teaching in the Middle East? Yeah, been there. But let me tell you, it's been one of the best decisions I have ever made. About ten years ago, I was pondering doing my master's in London, but then I thought, "What if I get my master's, get in the classroom, and then hate teaching?" Even though I had been accepted into a school, I declined. I still wanted the international experience, so instead, I took a leap and landed a teaching gig in Kuwait-a country in the Middle East more specifically the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council).

Honestly, I had no clue what I was doing. Like, zero. But hey, one thing about me- I'm going to make an impulsive decision! HA! So there I was, nervously hopping on a 4 AM Skype call (yep, SKYPE) with eager eyes ready to secure my first full-time teaching job. Three days later, I had a job offer!

Fast forward through four rollercoaster years in Kuwait - and my life has never the same. Adventures, heartbreaks, and unbreakable friendships - you name it, I experienced it. I cracked the code for my life. I discovered a newfound passion for teaching and a love for exploring the unknown.



Kanss City, MO



Hawally, Kuwait

Life brought me back to the States for a while, but something was missing. Sure, I told myself it was time to explore other passions, but deep down, I knew I was still craving that overseas adventure. It's *addicting*. That's when destiny led me back to Doha in 2023, and let me tell you, it feels like coming home.

And this ebook? It's my way of sharing all the nitty-gritty details about living and teaching in Kuwait and Qatar. From navigating the job hunt to settling into a new culture, consider it your ultimate guidebook to making your own teach-abroad dreams a reality.

Whether you're already packing your bags or just toying with the idea, let's make it happen together.

“Find your American Dream Abroad.”



1. What excites you the most about living and teaching abroad?

2. What are your biggest fears about living and teaching abroad?



CHAPTER 2

BRIEF HISTORY OF KUWAIT & QATAR

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First off, let's learn a little bit about the histories of Kuwait and Qatar, two Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries that share some similarities but also boast their own unique identities. Back in the day, Kuwait was a bustling trading hub known for its pearl diving industry, while Qatar was also making waves in maritime trade and pearl diving.

Kuwait's Al-Sabah family has been holding it down since the 18th century, navigating through various external influences like the Ottomans and later, the Brits. In 1961, Kuwait said *Ma' a Salama* (goodbye) to Britain and embarked on a journey of modernization and development.

Meanwhile, Qatar, ruled by the Al Thani dynasty since the mid-19th century, has been facing its own set of challenges and transformations. With its strategic location along trade routes, Qatar also attracted attention from the Ottomans and the British. In 1971, Qatar declared independence and hasn't looked back since, experiencing super charged economic growth thanks to all that natural gas.

Now, let's talk about where things got intense. Kuwait dealt with the Iraqi invasion in 1990 and the aftermath of the Gulf War but they managed to bounce back.

Qatar was also smack dab in the middle of heavy GCC/Middle East drama when Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and, Bahrain held an almost four- year blockade against the country. I am talking land, air, and water. Things got intense but they were able to resolve the issue and restore relationships.

Despite their shared history in trade and pearl diving, Kuwait and Qatar have distinct cultural and political identities. Kuwait has stayed steady combining a parliamentary system with a constitutional monarchy, while Qatar operates under a constitutional monarchy led by Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani.

Both countries are hustling to boost their economies, investing in education, healthcare, and infrastructure to secure their positions as influential players in the 21st century. So, if you're considering moving to either of these Gulf nations, just know that you'll be ahead of the curve. There is no shortage of growth in either place and you could potentially be a part of it.





THIS COULD BE YOUR VIEW!

The Doha Skyline is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. From the skyscrapers to the way the sun drapes over the water- you won't believe the beauty.



CHAPTER 3

CULTURE

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Now let's move on to the cultures of Kuwait and Qatar. These countries may be close geographically, but they each have their own unique vibe shaped by history, traditions, and societal norms.

First up, family and hospitality are huge in both Kuwait and Qatar. Picture this: extended families living together in big, bustling homes, where everyone plays a part in social life. Hospitality is like a way of life here - guests are greeted with warmth and open arms, and sharing meals and sipping traditional coffee or tea are everyday customs.

Oh, and don't forget about those Friday family feasts! They never miss a Friday gathering, fellowship, and bonding over delicious food. One of my favorite parts of the week is hearing my students talk about all the fun they had at their grandma's house.

Now, let's talk religion. Islam is the main religion in both Kuwait and Qatar, shaping everything from daily routines to social norms. Mosques are the heart of the community, and you'll see folks celebrating big occasions like **Ramadan** and **Eid** with BIG ENERGY.

But hey, if you're not Muslim, no worries! Both countries are cool with people of all faiths. You'll find Christian churches around, and you're free to worship however you like. It's all about respect and embracing diversity.

Although you can worship how you please on your time, be mindful of school policies on sharing personal ideologies with students. As international teachers, one of our number one goals is to be mindful of our interactions and respecting the local culture.

As far as the arts go Kuwait definitely creates space for it with poetry readings, music jams, and theater nights adding some spice to life- (some of which I participated in while living there).

And Qatar? You'll have plenty to do with jaw-dropping architecture and cultural hotspots like the Museum of Islamic Art and the Katara Cultural Village. I promise you'll never be bored. Seriously, these places are Instagram gold! Regardless of where you end up, understanding and embracing the cultural similarities and differences makes either of these places feel closer to home. Community, empathy, and finding your space in the local scene can make any place feel like it's meant for you.

5. Do you think you will feel comfortable with the culture of these countries?

6. Would you be comfortable living and working in a country whose primary religion is Islam? Do you feel like it will conflict with your own personal beliefs?



CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE

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“Do I have to speak the language to teach there?”

This is a common question I hear from prospective teachers and the short answer is no. Arabic is number one here - it's the official language and you'll hear it all around, from government offices to daily chats at the souq. But no worries if your Arabic skills are a bit rusty (or non-existent). There's a bit of a language barrier between locals and expats, but taking Arabic lessons can really help you bridge that gap.

Now, don't stress about learning Arabic before you even set foot in your new home. Platforms like Duolingo, Pimsleur, or iTalki offer great options for getting started before you arrive. And once you're there, you can easily find free or low-cost lessons to continue your language journey. Trust me, with a little research, you'll find the perfect opportunity for you.

English is also widely spoken and understood, especially in urban areas and among expats. It's the go-to language in many international schools, universities, and businesses, so having a strong command of English is key for teachers. Plus, you'll find lots of signs, ads, and official stuff available in both Arabic and English, making life a bit easier for us non-Arabic speakers.

So even if you don't speak the language, both countries have the foundation to set you up for success. The language barrier can be pretty thin sometimes.

Now, get ready for some language diversity! Alongside Arabic and English, you'll come across a whole range of languages in Kuwait and Qatar. With communities from all over the world, it's a melting pot of cultures and tongues. From Hindi to Urdu, Tagalog to Malayalam, you'll be surrounded by a vibrant mix of languages, reflecting the diverse workforce in both countries.

So, as you embark on your teaching adventure in Kuwait or Qatar, remember the power of language learning and cultural understanding. Embracing Arabic and trying your hand with some basic phrases can really enhance your connections with students, colleagues, and the community. Building bridges and fostering mutual appreciation for our backgrounds is what makes this experience so unique.

Arabic, although tricky, is a beautiful language. One of my favorite things while learning the language, has been sharing my knowledge and progress with my students. They are my biggest cheerleaders! It also helps foster relationships when you take a genuine interest in parts of their culture. They love sharing it with their teachers. You of course are teaching them but, let them teach you too.

Below I have included some common Arabic words/phrases to help jumpstart your Arabic learning!

1. **Marhaban (مرحباً)** - Hello
- Pronunciation: mar-ha-ban
2. **Shukran (شكراً)** - Thank you
- Pronunciation: shook-rahn
3. **Min fadlak (من فضلك)** - Please
- Pronunciation: meen fad-lak
4. **Kam howa thamanuha? (كم هو ثمنها؟)** - How much is it?
- Pronunciation: kam ho-wa thaa-ma-noo-ha
5. **Ayna alhamam? (أين الحمام؟)** - Where is the bathroom?
- Pronunciation: ay-na al-ha-mam
6. **Maa as-salaama (مع السلامة)** - Goodbye
- Pronunciation: ma'a as-sa-la-ma
7. **In shaa Allah (إن شاء الله)** - God willing
- Pronunciation: een sha-a al-laah
8. **Sabah al-khayr (صباح الخير)** - Good morning
- Pronunciation: sa-baah al-khayr
9. **Masaa' al-khayr (مساء الخير)** - Good evening
- Pronunciation: ma-saa' al-khayr
10. **La afham (لا أفهم)** - I don't understand
- Pronunciation: laa af-ham

7. Do you speak any other languages? Would you like to actively learn Arabic upon moving abroad?

8. Are you comfortable navigating through a country where the native language is different from your own?



CHAPTER 5

FOOD

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Where my foodies at? Food in Kuwait and Qatar - is a flavor-packed adventure waiting to happen! Influenced by their Bedouin roots, Gulf location, and historical trade ties, Kuwaiti and Qatari cuisines are a delicious blend of tradition and innovation.

So, what's on the menu? Well, rice-based dishes are a big deal in both countries. Think mouthwatering plates of machboos (spiced rice with meat- FIRE!) all cooked up with fragrant spices like saffron, cardamom, and cloves. Trust me, the smell alone will have your taste buds dancing!

And let's not forget the seafood! The location along the Arabian Gulf gives you easy access to fresh seafood! Whether grilled to perfection or simmered in hearty stews, seafood is a must-try for any foodie exploring Kuwait and Qatar.

But wait, there's more! Dessert time is where the real magic happens. Picture yourself indulging in Muhallabia (a creamy milk pudding), Luqaimat (*sweet dumplings - my absolute fave!*), and Qatayef (*stuffed pancakes*). And of course, no meal is complete without a cup of traditional Arabic coffee (*Qahwa*) or in Qatar a cup of Karak Tea (**which is addicting by the way**) paired with sweet dates - it's the ultimate hospitality gesture!

So, when you teach in Kuwait or Qatar, you're not just getting a taste of one culture - you're getting a whole world of flavors on your plate!

9. Are you open to trying new foods and cuisines from other cultures?

10. How important is it to you to have food that you are familiar with in a new setting?



CHAPTER

6

SAFETY

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“How safe is it really?” Safety in Kuwait and Qatar - is a priority for these countries, and trust me, you'll feel it from the moment you arrive. Picture this: low crime rates, stable political vibes, and law enforcement that's on top of their game. Yep, it's all true. I know you have seen those TikTok videos of people leaving their bags at coffee shops! Totally legit, and everything comes back untouched.

So, what's the deal with safety? Both countries-as well as the other countries in the GCC, take it seriously. You'll spot security guards everywhere, and bag checks are pretty standard when you're entering places like hotels. It's not just about having a bunch of rules and regulations. It's about feeling safe and secure in your daily life, whether you're at work, chilling at home, or out and about in public spaces.

From well-established police forces to tight security measures, your safety will never be an issue. So when you're making the move, you can kick back knowing that you're in good hands. It is still always a good idea to brush up on local laws and customs, stick to safety guidelines, and use your common sense to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience. Safety first, always!



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CHAPTER

QUALIFICATIONS

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“ Am I qualified to teach abroad?” Well, that depends. To kick things off, ***you'll need a bachelor's degree in education or a related field.*** Many schools prefer if your degree aligns with the subject you'll be teaching, so having that specialization can be a plus. Oh, and don't forget your **teaching license or certification from your home country – IT'S A MUST HAVE.** Most schools also prefer teachers that are native English speakers or can prove their proficiency with a test like the IELTS.

Now, when it comes to experience, having a few years under your belt can definitely give you a leg up. Schools often appreciate diverse teaching experiences, especially if you've worked with a variety of student populations. But don't sweat it if you're fresh out of the gate – some schools are totally cool with hiring Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). Plus, if you've got experience with international or IB programs, you're already ahead of the game.

Now, let's talk about languages. If you're teaching English as a second language, having a **TEFL or TESOL certification** can be super beneficial. It shows you're equipped to help students navigate the English language like a pro. But remember, requirements can vary from school to school, so make sure to do your homework and check out what each place is looking for.

So, whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting out, there are opportunities waiting for you in Kuwait and Qatar. Just make sure you've got the right qualifications, a passion for teaching, and a sense of adventure – you'll fit right in!

12. Are you a native English speaker? If not what would be the process of taking the IELTS to prove proficiency?

13. Are you currently qualified to teach in your home country?



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CHAPTER

TYPES OF SCHOOLS

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Let's talk about the types of schools you can teach in when you move abroad to Kuwait or Qatar. Both countries offer a range of educational opportunities, catering to different needs and preferences.

In Kuwait, you'll find a mix of public and private schools. Public schools are government-funded and follow the Kuwaiti curriculum, with Arabic as the primary language of instruction. On the other hand, private schools in Kuwait offer a variety of curricula, including American, British, and International Baccalaureate (IB). These schools often cater to expat communities and will typically use English as the main mode of instruction.

Qatar boasts a diverse educational landscape as well, with both public and private schools available. Public schools in Qatar follow the Qatari curriculum, emphasizing Arabic language and Islamic studies. Private schools in Qatar offer a range of curricula, including British, American, International Baccalaureate (IB), and others. Again, these schools cater to a multinational student body and often prioritize English language instruction.

You should also note that some schools are separated based on gender. Be sure to clarify if your school is setup this way because it does change the dynamic of your classroom and teaching. I have had experience teaching the traditional way and with students separated and both challenged me in different ways.

One key similarity between Kuwait and Qatar is the fact that while a lot of private schools cater to expat communities, there are just as many that cater to the local population. Core subjects are still taught in English but Arabic and Islamic studies are still prioritized. The schedules are usually divided to give equal time across the subjects.

The biggest difference between the two is the framework governing private schools. In Kuwait, private schools operate under strict government regulations, with oversight from the Ministry of Education. In Qatar, private schools also adhere to regulations but may have more flexibility in terms of curriculum and operations. Understanding the nuances of each country's educational system is essential for success.

During my time in Kuwait, I taught at two different schools. The first was an all-boys private school which followed an American curriculum. The boys took Arabic and Islam classes as well. The majority of the boys were Kuwaiti with a small handful of students from other countries in the region. I wasn't quite sure what to expect teaching just all boys but overall I did enjoy the experience. I taught second grade so the boys were still quite young. I had some behavior problems but nothing compared to my colleagues in the upper grades.

So beware if you want to teach just boys, the older they are the trickier it can be especially if your school doesn't have proper consequences for students who misbehave and systems in place to support those consequences. Supporting teachers is a priority and if your school can't adhere to that one simple rule:

RUN! It also helps to have you classroom management on POINT. The easiest teaching starts with great classroom management.

The second school I taught at was a private American school, which of course followed an American curriculum. I had a much more diverse population of students during my time there. I had boys and girls and students from literally all over the world, from Korea to Lebanon. It was such a fulfilling experience.

I enjoyed my time there so much, I stayed for three years. I had colleagues I really adored and I truly had the best students and parents I could have asked for. All of these things really make a difference when you move abroad so pay close attention to how you are feeling and where you feel the most supported.

Finding the right school can make or break your teaching abroad experience. When searching for schools- do extensive research. A lot of schools can slip through the cracks. Be vigilant!

15. What type of school would you prefer to teach in?

16. Do you have any experience teaching in any of these types of environments?



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CHAPTER

SALARY

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All about the Benjamin's baby! Let's talk about the green stuff – no, not the kind you find in your salad, but the moolah you'll be making teaching in Kuwait or Qatar. Both countries offer some pretty sweet deals, making them prime spots for teachers looking to spread their wings internationally.

First off, let's talk numbers. You can expect to make some serious tax-free cash, with salaries ranging from **\$2000 to \$4000 USD** per month. Of course, your actual pay will depend on factors like your qualifications, experience, and where you're teaching, so this range can vary!

And on top of your tax-free salary, international schools throw in extra perks like free housing (or a housing allowance), health insurance, and even flights home each year. Plus, if you're in Kuwait, the value of the Kuwaiti Dinar is no joke – your paycheck will stretch further than you ever thought possible.

I would also encourage you to negotiate your salary. If you are an experienced teacher, have multiple degrees and/or certificates, have done extensive learning/work in a particular discipline, etc., make sure your school pays you what you deserve. Always know your worth, even when it comes to a job. There is no shortage of teach abroad jobs, so make sure the school you choose understands your value, and if they don't, go back to the drawing board.

Now, about that cost of living. While both Kuwait and Qatar offer tax-free salaries and cushy homes, Qatar – especially Doha – tends to be a bit pricier.

Blame it on the fancy brunches, concerts, and nightlife that'll tempt you to spend your hard-earned cash. But shoutout to my budget-savvy babes! With a little discipline, you can still live your best teacher life without blowing your budget.

A lot of people say the region is expensive but I say it's as expensive as you make it-just like giving anywhere else. Since you don't have any of the major costs you would incur in America (or your home country), you can potentially save thousands by living in either of these places. If Daddy Joe didn't forgive your student loans, you could also get to work on paying those back. If you are one of the blessed who did get them paid, then by all means brunch it up. Champagne for everybody!

Teaching in Kuwait or Qatar means having a salary that'll allow leftover money at the end of the month and amazing benefits (*America could never*) that'll set you up for success. Just remember to crunch those numbers, weigh your options, and make sure the package fits your lifestyle before taking the plunge. Trust me, it's worth it! I am living a life I didn't think was possible and its all because I decided to take a chance. Don't waste anymore time- live your dream life now.

19. Does the potential salary align with your current and future financial goals?

20. What qualifications do you have or can you attain to potentially raise your salary and negotiate your contract for higher pay?



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CHAPTER

HOUSING

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“What about housing?” The schools in these countries typically provide accommodation for you and your family (if they are tagging along), ensuring a smooth transition to your new environment. Let’s explore what you can expect regarding housing in both Kuwait and Qatar.

Most schools in Kuwait and Qatar have established agreements with apartment complexes, ensuring that all staff members reside in the same building or nearby buildings. This can be a great way to foster a sense of community among colleagues, although it may also mean seeing your coworkers outside of work hours more often than you might prefer.

Whether this is a pro or a con depends on your personal preferences and social needs. For me it was a combination of both- I am quite social but I also need time to myself. One big positive is living among fellow teachers can create a supportive community where you can share experiences and advice.

Be sure to confirm that your housing is for one teacher. Some schools house teachers together in larger villas. In this setup, you would have a private room and a private/shared bathroom along with common public spaces like the living room and kitchen. I do not prefer this. I like my own space. I do know teachers who have lived this way and they didn’t mind it too much. Whatever you decide, be honest with yourself and about what you can handle when considering this option.

Your apartment will come with all the essentials you're accustomed to, such as a fully functioning kitchen, comfortable living areas, and modern bathrooms- with BIDEETS! However, you might miss your dryer. In Kuwait and Qatar, it is common to use drying racks for clothes or to have a 2-in-1 washer/dryer unit. While the 2-in-1 unit can be convenient, it may not match the energy of a separate dryer. Some teachers, myself included, have purchased a dryer for added convenience – yes, I bought a dryer in Kuwait!

In your first year, housing is typically covered entirely by the school. After the first year, many schools offer a housing stipend, which is an additional allowance on top of your salary. This stipend gives you the flexibility to find alternative housing if you want to switch up the vibes.

Some schools don't have housing set up, so you will need to find your own before arriving. This isn't ideal, but it's possible. The school should have some connections on site or put you in contact with current staff who can help.

It is crucial not to compromise on the quality of your housing. Before accepting any housing arrangement, ask for pictures of the accommodation, inquire about its location, and speak with current staff members who live there. Their experiences can provide you with a much needed heads up into what you can expect.

Your home should be a place of peace and comfort, and if the provided accommodation doesn't meet your standards, it might be worth negotiating with the school or exploring other options.

While living in school-provided housing has its pros and cons, most teachers find it a convenient and easy option. If you ever feel that the accommodation isn't giving what it needs to give, remember that after your first year, you have the option to move elsewhere using the housing stipend.

Finding the right balance between work and personal life is essential, and your living situation plays a significant role in achieving that balance.

Housing in Kuwait and Qatar is generally well-organized and included in your teaching package, which significantly reduces the stress of moving abroad. Communicate your needs and preferences clearly with your school, and don't hesitate to ask for detailed information about your potential home.

With the right preparation, your housing can be a comfortable and welcoming space that enhances your overall experience teaching abroad.

Your home should be your sanctuary, a place where you can unwind and recharge. If it's not bringing you peace, then peace out. Your comfort and well-being are a top priority while teaching abroad.

21. Would you be comfortable living with a roommate (s)?

22. What is your ideal home while teaching abroad? What are your non-negotiables?



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CHAPTER

HEALTH INSURANCE

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Health insurance and the healthcare system in Kuwait and Qatar are important aspects of expat life, ensuring access to quality medical care for teachers and their families. Access to affordable healthcare was one of the main reasons why I wanted to move back abroad. The healthcare system in America needs a lot of work in order to support its citizens without breaking their pockets.

In Kuwait, healthcare is provided through a combination of public and private facilities. The Ministry of Health oversees the public healthcare system, which offers services to Kuwaiti citizens and residents at small fees. Expats in Kuwait typically have access to public healthcare facilities, although they may prefer private healthcare providers for a more personalized experience and shorter wait times. Employers in Kuwait are required to provide health insurance coverage for their employees, including expat teachers, as part of their benefits package. This health insurance often covers basic medical services, consultations, diagnostic tests, and hospitalization.

I was super sick and found out that I was severely dehydrated while teaching in Kuwait. I went to the hospital had to have an IV, get some fluids pumped into me and needed a short stay. I didn't pay a dime and I was honestly so shocked. I have also heard "heavenly stories" from my friends who have given birth there. They felt safe, they were listened to, and the births didn't cost them \$50,000 USD. If that doesn't convince you I don't know what else will.

Qatar also has a well-developed healthcare system that includes both public and private healthcare facilities. The Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) oversees the public healthcare system in Qatar, providing a wide range of medical services to residents, including expats. Private healthcare providers also operate in Qatar, offering specialized care and amenities to those who prefer private healthcare settings.

Like Kuwait, employers in Qatar are responsible for providing health insurance coverage for their employees. Qatar's health insurance system covers basic medical services, consultations, hospitalization, and emergency care.

If I am sick in Qatar, and can't get to a facility in our network, I just head somewhere else, pay a small fee and I am seen relatively quickly. The process isn't overwhelming and the lines aren't hanging out of the door. Service is timely and professional.

Eager teachers moving to Kuwait or Qatar can expect access to high-quality healthcare services through a combination of public and private facilities. Health insurance provided by employers ensures that teachers and their families have comprehensive coverage for medical expenses, promoting peace of mind and well-being while living and working abroad.

23. Do you have any current health issues that you think would be a concern moving abroad?

24. Do you need any medications that you think would be difficult to get if you moved abroad?



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CHAPTER

DOCUMENT ATTESTATION (USA)

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Getting your documents attested is one of the most important parts of the process and uncoincidentally, the most tedious. The steps I am going to outline apply to ***American citizens***. So if you are reading this and you are not from the US (thanks for the support!), please do thorough research on how to get your documents attested. I don't want you to waste time!

1. Notarization in the United States:

Start by notarizing your documents in the United States. This involves getting your original documents, such as your degree certificates, transcripts, and teaching credentials, notarized by a licensed notary public. This step verifies your documents at the local level.

2. Authentication by the Secretary of State:

After notarization, you need to have your documents authenticated by the Secretary of State in the state where the notary is licensed. This step confirms that the notary public's signature and seal are genuine.

3. U.S. Department of State Authentication:

Once your documents are authenticated at the state level, you'll need to send them to the U.S. Department of State for further authentication. This step verifies the Secretary of State's seal. The U.S. Department of State provides an authentication service for federal documents.

4. Kuwait/Qatar Embassy Attestation:

After all of that you will then submit your documents to the Kuwait or Qatar Embassy in the U.S. for final legalization, which will include a fee and a sticker placed on the document.

5. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Attestation Kuwait/Qatar:

Upon arrival in Kuwait/Qatar, you will need to have your documents attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in either country. This final step completes the attestation process within the country and is typically required for documents to be officially recognized. Your school will take care of this step, all you need to do is hand over your attested documents.

It's essential to check with the specific school or employer in Qatar regarding their attestation requirements, as these may vary. As I stated earlier, this can be very tedious, especially on the US side. I highly suggest starting this process as early as possible. If you feel uncomfortable doing it yourself, there are agencies that will do the entire process for a fee. I was nervous about losing my documents or things not being done correctly so I didn't choose this route.

Check out the [Travel.State.Gov](https://www.Travel.State.Gov) website for any other questions you have. I had this website pulled up at every step of the way during the process. Make sure you are in constant communication with your school about your timeline. They can't help if you don't reach out. Ask questions early and often during this process. It takes a lot of time but it puts you one step closer to your dream life!



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CHAPTER

VISA PROCESS

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When moving to Kuwait/Qatar as a teacher, the school you are joining will handle the visa process. As long as you have all of your documents, you can sit back and let them take the lead.

1. Offer of Employment:

Upon accepting a job offer from a school, you will typically receive an employment contract. This document outlines the terms of your employment, including details about your salary, benefits, and responsibilities. **It is essential to thoroughly review and understand this contract before proceeding.**

Ask questions often and early. If you don't understand something ask for clarification.

2. Submission of Required Documents:

The school will provide you with a list of documents required for the visa application. This usually includes your **educational certificates, professional qualifications, passport copy, passport-sized photos, and, if they are coming with you, documents related to your spouse and children.**

3. Document Attestation:

As part of the visa process, your educational and professional documents may need to be attested. The school's HR department or an agency may assist you in this attestation process.

4. Application Submission:

Once all required documents are ready, the school will initiate the visa application process with the appropriate entities in Kuwait/Qatar. This includes submitting the necessary paperwork and obtaining the necessary approvals.

5. Entry Visa:

After the initial stages of the visa process are completed, the school will obtain an entry visa for you. This visa allows you to enter and begin the residency process. You may need to travel to Kuwait/Qatar within a specific timeframe once the entry visa is issued.

6. Medical Checkup:

Upon arrival in Qatar, you will likely be required to undergo a medical checkup to obtain a residency permit. The school will schedule this appointment and inform you of the process.

7. Residency Permit:

Once the medical checkup is completed, and everything is clear, the school will move forward with your residency permit. This permit is a necessary document that allows you to live and work in Kuwait/Qatar legally. The school's HR department will take care of this process.

Throughout the entire visa process, communication with the school's HR department or the designated point of contact is key. They will keep you informed of the progress, guide you on the necessary steps, and address any questions/concerns you may have. Keeping open lines of communication and following the instructions provided by the school will ensure a smooth and successful transition to teaching in Qatar.



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CHAPTER

COMING WITH SPOUSE AND KIDS

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Bringing a spouse and/or children when relocating to Kuwait/Qatar as a teacher, involves careful planning and of course lots of paperwork. As with all things that involve the visa and residency process your HR department will be your best friend. I have outlined the steps and considerations to help navigate the process:

1. Employment Contract and Sponsorship:

Ensure that your employment contract explicitly mentions the inclusion of family members in your sponsorship. Your employer will serve as your sponsor in Kuwait/ Qatar, and this sponsorship is crucial for your family's legal residence in the country. **Double and triple-check this!**

2. Dependent Visas:

Once you have secured your teaching position and received your residency permit, you can begin the process of obtaining dependent visas for your spouse and children. This typically involves submitting the required documents, such as marriage certificates and birth certificates, to the HR department.

3. Document Attestation:

Similar to the attestation process for your own documents, you may need to get the documents of your spouse and children attested. Check Chapter 11 for more details on the attestation process.

4. Medical Checkup:

Kuwait/Qatar often require individuals applying for residency, including dependents, to undergo a medical checkup. Ensure that your spouse and children complete the necessary health examinations and all of the required medical certificates.

5. School Enrollment:

If you have school-age children, research schools in the area you will be living in and enroll them. Both countries have a variety of international schools offering diverse curricula to cater to the expat community. Just like everything else in this journey, start the enrollment process well in advance to secure spots and help create a smooth transition for your children.

Most schools also offer spots for the children of their employees for free. I have seen schools offer a range from 1-3 kids, so be sure to ask if and how many kids would be covered. If they don't offer any free spots (which is a red flag btw), inquire about a discount because schools out here can be pricey!

6. Accommodation:

Consider the housing needs of your family when relocating. Ask detailed questions about accommodation that is suitable for family living, and inquire about the available amenities and facilities for families.

7. Adjusting to the Culture:

Familiarize your spouse and children with the culture and practices of Kuwait/Qatar will help them positively adapt to the local community. This understanding will contribute to a smoother adjustment and a more enriching experience for your family. Be honest and open with them and yourself. The number one reason why most people turn away or go back home is because they weren't honest about their expectations and what they could handle.

8. Networking and Community Engagement:

Encourage your spouse and children to participate in local expat and community activities. Networking with other expat families can provide valuable support and help ease the transition to life in Qatar. There are so many expat families in both countries so you will definitely be able to find your community. Both countries are also extremely kid-friendly so there is always something new to try.

By following these steps, getting your documents in order, and keeping open communication with your HR department, you can successfully bring your spouse and children to join you abroad as you embark on your teaching journey. I came abroad alone both times and I know the experience has been invaluable for me. I can only assume that the experience with a family will be even more incredible. To learn, grow, and travel abroad together, will create memories to last a lifetime.

26. Will you becoming alone or with a spouse, and children?

27. How can you prepare your family for the adjustments that will come with moving? If you are coming alone how you can you prepare your family for your departure?



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CHAPTER

SOCIAL LIFE

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“Are there clubs?” Let's talk nightlife in Kuwait and Qatar – because after a day of shaping young minds, sometimes you just want to let loose and have some fun- at least I know I do. Now, here's the deal: while both countries offer their own unique nightlife scenes, there's a little twist when it comes to alcohol.

Let's start with Kuwait. Now, if you're thinking wild nights at bars and clubs, you might need to adjust your expectations a bit. See, alcohol is a no-go here. But don't worry! Kuwait still knows how to throw a party. You'll find plenty of lively cafes, cozy shisha lounges, and beachside vibes where you can kick back with friends and soak in the good energy – minus the tequila, of course.

Now, Qatar's nightlife is a bit livelier, especially in the capital, Doha. Here, you've got the best of both worlds! You can enjoy a cocktail or two at busy bars and rooftop lounges, all while taking in stunning city views. Plus, there are plenty of nightclubs where you can dance the night away to your favorite songs. Just remember to drink responsibly and respect local customs.

Despite the difference in alcohol regulations, both Kuwait and Qatar prioritize safety and security, so you can hit the town with peace of mind. If you decide to live in Kuwait just remember that the other Gulf countries are just a hop, skip, and a jump away if you need a mimosa.

Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE have all legalized alcohol so if you are really feining you can head over to one of the places. When I lived in Kuwait we were in Bahrain practically every other weekend. That is until I discovered my love for Qatar. HA!

Whether you're sipping mocktails by the beach in Kuwait or dancing under the stars in Qatar, one thing's for certain you will be having the time of your life. So grab your new squad (because you will find your people), and get ready to make some unforgettable memories in the Middle East (sounds crazy right?!)



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CHAPTER

ALCOHOL & PORK

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Navigating the regulations around alcohol and pork in Kuwait and Qatar is essential for expats. Built on Islamic principles, both countries have strict laws governing their consumption and sale, and it's crucial to understand what you can and cannot do.

Let's start with alcohol. In Kuwait, as we previously discussed, is a hard no. Sale and consumption are strictly prohibited, and getting caught with a little bit of whiskey can lead to serious consequences like fines, jail time, or even deportation. Please don't play around with this! Remember that we are guests in the region and we must adhere to the local customs and regulations.

In Qatar, you'll only find alcohol in licensed places like hotels and clubs, and you'll need a permit from the **Qatar Distribution Company (QDC)** to buy it for personal use. Your school will be able to help you out with this as there are certain requirements to be eligible to purchase alcohol.

Once you meet the requirements, and get all of your paperwork in order, the process is super easy and they always have plenty of alcohol to get you through those long teaching days (if you need it). But here's a little reminder - no getting belligerent in public areas. That's a one-way ticket to legal trouble, my friends.

Now, onto pork. There is no pork available for citizens in Kuwait so say goodbye to your double bacon cheeseburger unless it's beef or turkey bacon. In Qatar, Non-Muslim residents can again purchase pork products with a license from the QDC.

While there are some differences between the two countries - like Qatar loosening up on alcohol in certain spots - the bottom line is the same. Islamic principles and cultural norms shape the rules around alcohol and pork, reminding us to be mindful, respectful, and law-abiding while living and teaching abroad in Kuwait or Qatar. You can have your pork and it too (in Qatar), just always remember that respect is our number one priority.



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CHAPTER

THINGS TO DO

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Now this book wouldn't be complete without me giving you some guidance and tips on what to do if you choose to move to either of these wonderful countries. In the next few pages, I'll be outlining 10 things you can do in each country. Let's start with Kuwait.

Things to Do in Kuwait:

1. Visit Kuwait Towers:

Explore the iconic Kuwait Towers, which offer panoramic views of the city skyline and the Arabian Gulf. Don't miss the observation deck, revolving restaurant, and water towers adorned with incredible tile work.

2. Discover Kuwait's History at Kuwait National Museum:

Learn about Kuwait's rich cultural heritage and history at the Kuwait National Museum. Explore exhibits showcasing traditional Bedouin life, archaeological finds, and artifacts from Kuwait's past.

3. Stroll Along the Arabian Gulf Corniche:

Enjoy a leisurely walk or bike ride along the Arabian Gulf Corniche, a picture-perfect waterfront boardwalk lined with parks, cafes, and sculptures. Take in stunning views of the sea and Kuwait City's modern skyline.

4. Explore Souq Al-Mubarakiya:

Immerse yourself in Kuwait's traditional market, Souq Al-Mubarakiya. Wander through narrow alleyways filled with stalls selling spices, textiles, antiques, and local crafts. Don't forget to sample authentic Kuwaiti cuisine at the market's food stalls.

5. Visit the Grand Mosque:

Admire the architecture and beauty of the Grand Mosque, one of Kuwait's largest and most significant mosques. I would recommend taking a guided tour to deepen your knowledge about the mosque and Islam.

6. Take a Desert Safari:

Experience the thrill of a desert safari in Kuwait's vast desert landscapes. Grab a few friends and take on a guided tour to explore the desert dunes, ride camels, and enjoy traditional Bedouin hospitality in a desert camp.

7. Relax at Kuwait's Beaches:

Spend a day soaking up the sun and enjoying water sports at Kuwait's pristine beaches. Popular beach destinations include Al-Khiran, Al-Maarid, and Messila Beach.

8. Visit Al Shaheed Park:

Escape the hustle and bustle of the city and unwind at Al Shaheed Park, a lively green oasis in the heart of Kuwait City. Explore landscaped gardens, walking trails, and outdoor art installations.

9. Shop at The Avenues Mall:

Spoil yourself with a little retail therapy at The Avenues Mall, one of the largest shopping malls (*it's literally massive*) in Kuwait. Shop for international brands, treat yourself to a fabulous meal at one of the many delicious restaurants and catch a movie at the mall's movie theater.

10. Attend Cultural Events:

Immerse yourself in Kuwait's cultural scene by attending art exhibitions, live performances, and cultural festivals. Keep an eye out for events hosted by the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters.

Other teachers I have met said they found Kuwait to be boring but I can honestly say I was never bored. If you are intentional about how you spend your time and seek out new opportunities, your social calendar will always be full. That, coupled with finding your people makes the days short and the weekends long.

Now let's talk about all the things you can do in Qatar.

1. Explore the Iconic Souq Waqif:

Step into the bustling Souq Waqif and get lost in its colorful maze of stalls. From spices to souvenirs and everything in between, this traditional market is a feast for the senses. Oh, and don't forget to sip on some traditional Qatari tea while you're at it!

2. Visit the Museum of Islamic Art:

Get ready to be wowed by the stunning Museum of Islamic Art. Designed by the legendary architect I. M. Pei, this place is a treasure trove of Islamic art spanning centuries. Plus, the views of the Doha skyline are seriously Instagram-worthy!

3. Take a Desert Safari:

Let's get adventurous with a desert safari! Buckle up for some adrenaline-pumping dune bashing and soak in the breathtaking desert sunset. And hey, why not wrap up the day with a feast under the starlit sky at a traditional Bedouin-style camp?(literally the most fun you will ever have!)

4. Enjoy the Corniche:

Lace up those sneakers and head to the Doha Corniche for a scenic stroll along the waterfront. With views of the city skyline and the Arabian Gulf, it's the perfect spot for a leisurely jog or a chill picnic in the park. (I take my runs here!)

5. Visit Katara Cultural Village:

Dive into Qatar's rich cultural scene at Katara Cultural Village. From art galleries to live performances and mouthwatering food, there's something for everyone here. Plus, keep an eye out for cool events and festivals happening throughout the year!

6. Discover the Aspire Zone:

Calling all sports fans! The Aspire Zone is your go-to spot for all things sports-related. Check out the Khalifa International Stadium and soak up some sun at Aspire Park while you're at it.

7. Cruise the Corniche on a Dhow Boat:

Ready to set sail? Hop aboard a traditional Qatari dhow boat and cruise along the Doha Corniche. Whether it's a romantic dinner cruise or a daytime adventure, you'll get to see the city in a whole new light! The skyline is a must see!

8. Relax at The Pearl-Qatar:

Treat yourself to some luxury at The Pearl-Qatar. From high-end shopping to waterfront dining, the Pearl is the epitome of glam. Plus, the marinas and Miami vibes make for the perfect backdrop. (I take piano lessons here and the sunset views are to DIE FOR!)

9. Visit the National Museum of Qatar:

Get your history fix at this fascinating museum. Learn all about the history of Qatar through the lens of its people. From pearl diving to the timeline of traditional clothes, you'll be a Qatar history pro.

10. Attend a Traditional Qatari Festival:

Get ready to party Qatari-style at one of the country's awesome festivals. From food festivals to National Day celebrations, you'll get a taste of local culture firsthand. Believe me when I say the Qataris know how to throw a festival.

And boom- your ultimate guide to soaking up the best of Kuwait and Qatar! Get out there and see the town because you won't want to miss a thing.



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CHAPTER

WHERE TO FIND JOBS

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Now let's get down to the practical stuff. Now that you know everything about Kuwait and Qatar- let's get you there. I am going to outline 10 places to get you started on your dream job abroad. Take a look at these websites, make a profile and start applying today. You could be in your dream job in months!

1. International Schools Services (ISS)

ISS offers a comprehensive job board for international school positions worldwide, providing opportunities for teachers across various subjects and grade levels.

(free and paid account options)

2. Search Associates

Search Associates specializes in connecting educators with international teaching positions, offering a wide range of opportunities in prestigious international schools.

(\$225 USD fee for three years)

3. TES

TES provides a platform for educators to explore job openings in accredited international schools, along with resources for professional development and networking.

4. Teach Away

Teach Away offers a variety of teaching positions in international schools, including subject-specific roles in locations around the globe.

5. TeachAnywhere

TeachAnywhere features job listings for international teaching positions, including vacancies in K-12 schools and opportunities for educators to connect with recruiters and schools worldwide.

6. Teacher Horizons

Teacher Horizons provides opportunities for teachers k-12 as well as ratings for schools by current/recent employees.

7. Dave's ESL Cafe

Check out Dave's website. As a teacher who taught and worked abroad, Dave created a resource for teachers who are looking to take the same journey.

8. ASQ International

ASQ International matches high-quality candidates with high-quality schools.

9. Edvectus

Edvectus was the first company I used to land my job in Kuwait. They are still offering quality services and can support teachers from a variety of countries who are ready to take the leap.

10. Teaching Abroad Direct

Focuses on getting teachers abroad either in the classroom or to teach English. They have job listings in various countries ranging from K-12. Check out their listings!

Applying to jobs is the first big step to moving abroad. I suggest making profiles on at least two platforms and applying to 2-3 jobs a week. You want to keep your options open and start to learn the process of what schools are looking for and how the interviews function.

When I was undergoing my most recent journey abroad, I had about two interviews a week and that was the perfect amount to keep my interview skills sharp and really weed out what I desired in a school.

It can still be tricky to find the right school because you aren't physically there and admittedly some schools can be shady. This is why it is so important to vet the schools you are considering during the interview process. Ask as many questions as possible, check their website, check their social media and speak to a current employee if possible. It is important that you do all the research you can because a bad school can make or break your experience.

31. Make a list of 3 of the companies you are going to create a profile on. After you make your profile-apply to a few jobs on each!



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CHAPTER

READY TO MAKE THE
MOVE?

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As we come to the end of this guide, I want to leave you with some final thoughts and encouragement. Moving abroad to teach is an incredible journey filled with new experiences, challenges, and opportunities for growth. While it may not always be easy, I can assure you that it is worth it.

Reflecting on my own experiences, I've had the privilege of exploring countries like Malaysia, the Czech Republic, and Spain, each offering its own unique charm and beauty. These experiences have enriched my life in ways I never could have imagined, and I'm grateful for every moment.

Life abroad can be beautiful, free, and exciting, but it's also okay to acknowledge that it comes with its share of challenges. However, I believe that facing those challenges head-on is what makes the journey so rewarding. If at any point you find yourself questioning whether it's worth it, just remember that you have the power to shape your own destiny.

Ultimately, the decision to move abroad is yours to make. But I want to leave you with one question: ***Do you want to live your life full of regrets, wondering what could have been? Or do you want to seize the opportunity to explore new horizons, knowing that you gave it your all?*** The choice is yours, and I hope you'll choose the path that leads to fulfillment, growth, and adventure. Safe travels, and I hope you to see you around the GCC!

Check out my blog!

For more information,
travel itineraries, and
resources for teachers,
check out my blog

[TeachTravelThrive.com](https://www.teachtravelthrive.com)

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YOUR DREAM LIFE IS JUST A PLANE RIDE AWAY

Thank you for reading this ebook! I hope it was helpful and gave you an inside look at what teaching abroad entails and how you can make it a reality for yourself. You can live your best life and travel too! I will see you in the GCC!

L E A R N M O R E

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