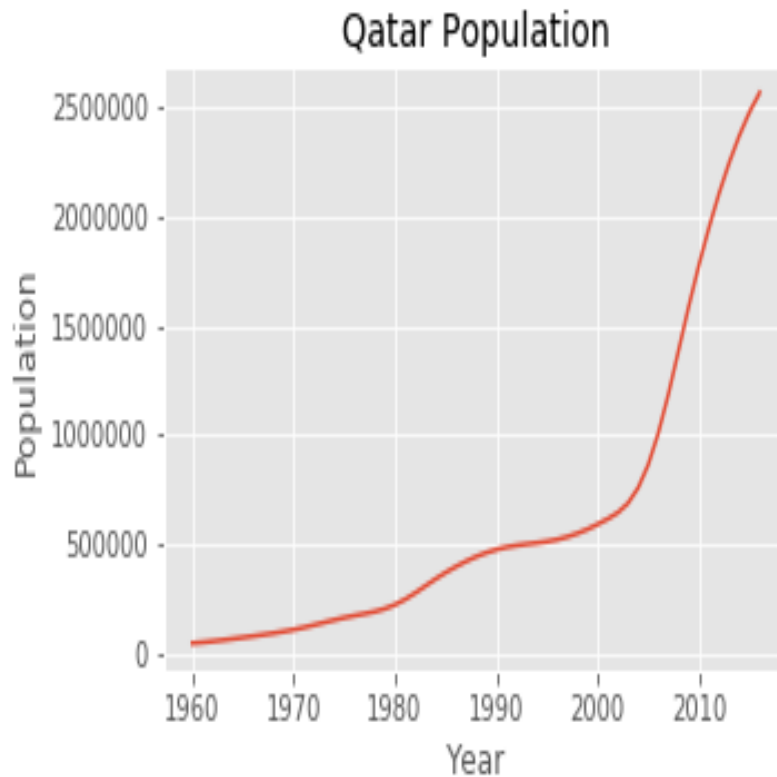


# Qatar



Coordinates: 25°30′N 51°15′E﻿ / ﻿25.500°N 51.250°E﻿ / 25.500; 51.250Qatar (/ˈkæt/, /ˈkʌt/ (listen), /ˈkʌt/ or /kʌt/ (listen)); Arabic: قطر Qatar [ˈqɑtˤɑr]; local vernacular pronunciation: [ˈkɑtˤɑr]), officially the State of Qatar (Arabic: دولة قطر Dawlat Qatar), is a sovereign country located in Western Asia, occupying the small Qatar Peninsula on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Its sole land border is with Saudi Arabia to the south, with the rest of its territory surrounded by the Persian Gulf. An arm of the Persian Gulf separates Qatar from the nearby island country of Bahrain. Following Ottoman rule, Qatar became a British protectorate in the early 20th century until gaining independence in 1971. Qatar has been ruled by the House of Thani since the early 19th century. Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani was the founder of the State of Qatar. Qatar is a hereditary monarchy and its head of state is Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Whether it should be regarded as a constitutional or an absolute monarchy is disputed. In 2003, the constitution was overwhelmingly approved in a referendum, with almost 98% in favour. In early 2017, Qatar's total population was 2.6 million: 313,000 Qatari citizens and 2.3 million expatriates.