
Initial programming announced for Qatar-Mexico 2026 Year of Culture



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Year-long partnership spotlights Mexico and Qatar's cultural heritage

29 January 2026 – Mexico City, Mexico and Doha, Qatar: Qatar has announced an initial programme for its 2026 Years of Culture with Mexico, positioning cultural exchange as a long-term driver of international partnership. During the year-long initiative, Qatar will welcome a

distinguished cohort of Mexico's most influential chefs, designers, and artists and introduce Qatari culture to audiences across Mexico. The programmes seek to establish Mexico as a central partner in a sustained cultural collaboration that places creativity, knowledge exchange, and people-to-people connection at its core.

His Excellency Mohammed Al Kuwari, Years of Culture Advisor on Latin America and Qatar's former Ambassador to Mexico, described the programme as a long-term cultural investment.

"Years of Culture is about building relationships that endure," said H.E. Al Kuwari. "In 2026, Qatar will welcome an exceptional group of Mexican cultural voices to Doha, including chefs, artists, and designers who will collaborate, exchange knowledge, and form partnerships that extend well beyond the year itself. At the same time, we are proud to share Qatar's culture and values with the people of Mexico, deepening mutual understanding between our societies."

Landmark activations in both countries will continue to be announced throughout the year and will extend into film, sport, education, and social development. Collaborations with film institutions will amplify emerging voices in both countries, while educational exchange will be strengthened through participation in Mexico's IFE Conference, volunteer initiatives, and community-based knowledge transfer programmes.

Gastronomy

Gastronomy is one of the first anchors of the cultural year beginning with the Qatar International Food Festival (QIFF) 2026 in January in Doha. Mexican chefs participated in QIFF, and shared practices rooted in regional knowledge, research and community-led food traditions.

Chef Lupita Vidal, an acclaimed ambassador of cuisine from Mexico's Tabasco region, reflected on the significance of the cultural exchange offered through Years of Culture. "For me, cooking is an act of memory and respect for the ingredients and the people behind them," said Vidal.

"Participating in Qatar's International Food Festival allowed me to share Mexico's culinary heritage with new audiences, while learning from Qatar's traditions of hospitality and storytelling through food. It was a true exchange, rooted in generosity and curiosity."

Creative industries and exhibitions

Creative industries are another pillar of the 2026 programme. A series of exhibitions across Qatar will spotlight Mexican artists and designers, including a newly commissioned exhibition by Fernando Laposse at the Museum of Islamic Art.

Speaking about unexpected connections he found between the two countries in working on the exhibition, Laposse said: "For me, design always begins with the land, with seeds, with people, and with time. At the Design Doha Biennial this year, I am not bringing finished objects. I am bringing a process of listening, learning, and growing across cultures. This exhibition is about what happens when we treat nature not as a resource to extract from, but as a partner to cultivate

with. Between Mexico and Qatar, between different desert landscapes and knowledge systems, I am interested in exploring how design can restore dignity to materials, communities, and traditions that are often overlooked. Here, I am looking for exchange rather than display, for collaboration rather than consumption, and for futures that are rooted in care, resilience, and shared responsibility. If something grows from this work, I hope it is not only furniture or objects, but stronger relationships between people, land, and culture.”

The programme will also include a special edition of *Mal Lawal* at the National Museum of Qatar, bringing together Qatari and Mexican private collections to examine clothing and textiles as living cultural archives. In parallel, a traveling photography exhibition *Under One Sky* will celebrate the spirit of togetherness experienced during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. Presented by Qatar Museums’ Tasweer Photography initiative in collaboration with the Art in Embassies programme, the exhibition will tour cities across Canada, Mexico, and the United States, extending the World Cup’s legacy of friendship and cross-cultural exchange.

Public space and design

Public art collaborations are central to the initiative, with new commissions by Mexican artists planned for key sites in Qatar, and the continuation of Qatar Museums’ JEDARIART mural programme. These large-scale, site-specific works aim to activate public space while strengthening shared urban narratives between the two countries.

Design projects will also bridge tradition and innovation through *Design in Dialogue*, a Qatar-Mexico residency that will culminate in a public exhibition at G56 during Mexico Design Week, before travelling to the Design Doha Biennial. The initiative brings together designers, artisans, and materials to explore craft heritage through contemporary practice.

“Our work with Mexico demonstrates the power of Years of Culture as a sustained platform for engagement,” said Fahad Al Obaidly, Acting Director of the Design Doha Biennial. “Collaboration does not begin or end within a single calendar year. We have been building partnerships in Mexico for several years, and we are excited to see these relationships take shape during Mexico Design Week, a pivotal moment in Mexico’s cultural calendar, with projects that will continue to resonate in Qatar and beyond.”