



→ "Our food is done by hand – we chop, we don't use a blender. And that takes time." – Executive Chef Ashraf Raad.

## Al Mourjan, Doha

Words by Lindy Polmeer



**PART OF THE SCENIC OUTLOOK, AND LOCATED ON ITS OWN ISLAND JUST OFF DOHA'S CORNICHE,**

is I.M. Pei's imposing Museum of Islamic Art, which strikes a dramatic chord of shadows and shades against the desert sun. Opened in December 2008, it houses one of the finest collections of Islamic Art in the world. Masterpieces spanning three continents from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century showcase Persian carpets and Egyptian glassware alongside magnificent examples of Arabic calligraphy and scientific manuscripts.

Visitors can also explore the past in the Education Wing, connected across a central courtyard to the main museum. Here there is access to the main library where a collection of traditional and e-media resources are available.

Admission is free.  
For opening times call +974 4422 4444 or visit [www.mia.org.qa](http://www.mia.org.qa)

### CONTACT

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Reservations are advised.



**SINCE THE AL MOURJAN RESTAURANT OPENED ITS DOORS IN LATE 2008** a steady stream of celebrities, deal-makers, and international dignitaries have visited the award-winning restaurant to sample some of the finest Levantine cuisine in the region.

Nestled in front of Al Bida Park on the Corniche, Al Mourjan enjoys unrivalled views overlooking the calm waters of Doha Bay. Whether diners are seated at a waterside table or in the cool elegant Mediterranean interior, no expense has been spared to enhance their dining experience.

Mohamed Al Sadek, the mastermind behind this gastronomic delight, is passionate in his belief that good service, beautiful surroundings, and diners' comfort go a long way to creating an enjoyable experience. "Guests leave their worries at the door and melt into a relaxed dimension," says Al Sadek. "They are never in a hurry to leave, the delicious food keeps them coming back, and the ambience keeps them from leaving too soon."

Tradition and authenticity are high on the list. Despite the extensive range of hot and cold appetisers or *mezzes*, there is not a food processor in sight. Each dish is painstakingly prepared, chopped, and garnished by hand, as Executive Chef Ashraf Raad explains. "We carefully create the same genuine flavours celebrated at our mothers' tables for generations. Only the finest and freshest ingredients are employed."

There are over 100 appetisers to choose from, including the sensational *fattoush*: a traditional Levantine salad made from toasted pita bread, mixed greens, and pomegranate seeds. One would have to make several visits to enjoy them all. Main dishes are not overly complicated, relying instead on quality of produce and freshness. From succulent *Kastaleta Riyash* (grilled lamb chops) to simple barbeque meats – delicious accompanied with *muhammara*, a dip made with almonds, pine nuts, walnuts, and roasted red peppers – not forgetting the fresh range of seafood, you are spoiled for choice.

All desserts are home-made by the in-house Patisserie Chef. Choose from international delights such as cheesecake, or opt for the more traditional *muhallabia*, made with ground rice, milk, and orange blossom. To round off your repast why not indulge in a 'peppermint digestive' of white coffee, orange blossom, and honey water?

With big plans on the horizon, Al Mourjan looks set to continue its success and level of excellence by expanding over the next five years. First regionally in 2011 with restaurants in Abu Dhabi and Beirut, then internationally with restaurants planned in Paris, London, and New York. 🌍