

Georgetown Students Host National Day Celebrations

Arabian horses, museum exhibits and traditional cuisine were just some of the attractions on offer for visitors at a recent student-run National Day event at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q). Held to celebrate Qatari culture and heritage, the event brought members of the Georgetown community and greater public together to learn more about the country's history and customs.

As the main National Day celebrations in Qatar take place over the University's winter break, students at GU-Q organize their festivities earlier so that they can contribute. This year's event followed the national theme 'We are tamers of difficulties', which was inspired by the poems of Qatar's founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al Thani. The annual celebrations, which are held at GU-Q's Education City campus, are one of the largest projects of the Al Liwan Qatari Student Association Club.

"The National Day events around the country usually celebrate Qatari culture, heritage and history and try to introduce it to the public, specifically non-Qataris," explained Al Liwan President Haya AlKuwari (SFS '17). "Al Liwan tries to play a role in this. Its goal is to promote and increase awareness on the GU-Q campus about the language, culture and social heritage of Qatar through creative mediums."

This year's event featured horse riding and an Arabian horse show from Al Shaqab Academy and a few exhibits from the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum. Other attractions included traditional handcrafts, henna, traditional food, musical performances, Arabic calligraphy, traditional dance, and poetry.

"I see this event as an opportunity for all the international community at GU-Q to experience Qatari culture and to learn more about it," said AlKuwari. "Many people who I've interacted with do not know a lot about Qatari society and culture and see it as a closed, conservative society. I aim, through this event, to change this perspective of the Qatari society and to introduce the culture through an educational and entertaining platform."

In addition to the student-run event, GU-Q is also involved in National Day festivities held annually at the Darb Al Saai fairgrounds. Visitors to GU-Q's booth in Qatar Foundation's tent can play educational games or learn more about the degree and programs on offer at the University.