



# Sultanate of Oman

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Day 01 – Arrive at airport, transfer to Hotel.

Day 02 – Muscat

Day 03 – Wadi Bani Awf and Balad Sayt

Day 04 – Jabal Shams

Day 05 – Jabal Shams and Nizwa

Day 06 – Nizwa

Day 07 – Sayq plateau

Day 08 – Wahiba sands

Day 09 – Wahiba sands

Day 10 – Muscat

Day 11 – Airport transfer and journey home

This Itinerary is to be taken as a guide and can be altered to suit the groups' wishes.

## Day 1

Most flights arrive late at night or early in the morning so your first day will be spent recovering.

On arrival at Muscat, you will immediately become aware of the clean streets, good yet busy road systems, white buildings with a diverse architecture and how linear the city stretches itself. Muscat relies on its roads as it is stretched so far, with such hot temperatures that walking is not an easy option.

The Portuguese occupied Muscat for 140 years, then it was controlled by the Ottoman empire (until 1741) they themselves were driven out by an army made up of tribes from the south who began the current line of sultans. The ruling of Sultans dominant this part of the Middle East and the UAE (United Arab Emirates) which formally belonged to Oman, and have thus been self governing ever since. Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id has been the absolute ruler of Oman since he overthrew his father in the mid-seventies.

As we drive to the Hotel, passing the Grand Mosque, you will get a taste of the urban part of this visit.

## Day 2

We will spend day two in and around Muscat visiting the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque and the local souq's and fish markets. The Grand Mosque is a fantastic piece of Islamic architecture, completed in 2001 after just six years of building. It displays work from across the world that has influenced its design and reflects the materials used to complete it, the grandest of these are the largest single piece of carpet and the largest chandelier in the world.



## Fish Souq in Muttrah

The Grand Mosque

### Day 3

Oman's mountains are grouped mainly into a large mountain range called the Al Hajar or 'Stone Mountains', which runs from the north of the country in an arch to the south western corner. Included in this, is Jabel Shams or 'Mountain of the Sun', considered the highest mountain in Oman and Jabel Akhdar or 'Green Mountain', both of which we will visit.

On day three we start our off road driving as we leave Muscat and travel into the Al Hajar mountains, with the aim of skirting around below Jabel Shams through Wadi Bani Auf to the beautiful village of Bilad Sayt. Here we will set up camp for our first night camping under the stars at a place we call the Terraces, appropriately named as it is old farming terraces. From the Terraces it is a short 10 minute walk through a small canyon to Bilad Sayt a beautiful old village surrounded by traditional water systems, dramatic mountain tops and is glowing green with the farming it sustains itself with.



Bilad Sayt

### Day 4

From the Terraces we head to the higher parts of Jabel Shams which means driving up, down and around the dramatic landscape. To reach the summit of Jabel Shams one has a 12 hour

hike there and back so unfortunately that is not on the programme, we will be going as high as we can with vehicles and making camp at that point, our second nights camping. The stunning 360 degree views are extremely rewarding even at our final height and hopefully as you explore to collect firewood you will have time to reflect on what you are seeing.

## Day 5

This morning we start early, as we embark on the Balcony walk, a stunning walk along the top of the 'Grand Canyon' of Oman to an abandoned village called As Sab. Although only 2 hours each way we want to have plenty of time to stop and enjoy the views.



Looking back along the Balcony Walk..

The afternoon is to be spent at the bottom of the canyon where you will have the ability to look back up at the walk you have completed and as the canyon narrows in part see its splendour and grandness:



Tonight we will return to hotel accommodation in Nizwa, once the capitol of Oman.

### Days 6 and 7

These two days will be spent on day tours from our base in Nizwa. There is so much to see and do, in the city, the surrounding towns and villages, forts and souqs, also up in Jabel Akhdar.

Nizwa is a bustling trading city due to its central location at the base of the surrounding the mountains. Massive cattle markets can be witnessed here on certain days of the week however modest cattle markets take place most days. Nizwa also has its own fort that supports a permanent souk within its walls, offering a massive variety of merchandise from fruit to trinkets.



### Days 8 and 9

Today we travel from Nizwa to the Wahiba Desert.

Camping at the 1000 nights campsite in the desert, where we will stay for two nights allowing plenty of time to experience and enjoy the wonders of the desert.

### **Day 10**

Return to Muscat along the coastal route, passing by some wonderful Wadi's and Ocean views.

### **Day 11**

Transfer to airport

### **Off-road Driving**

Please note that the off road driving is an adventure in itself, although the roads are sturdy they are generally single tracked and have to cover some very rugged terrain, in places there is steep climbing and equally steep descents and similarly there are places where the side of the road is a very significant edge.