

Oman Feature 2010



Oman — A World Of Its Own



Welcome to Oman, a country of breathtaking beauty interwoven with rich cultural history. From the moment you arrive to the time you leave, Oman will captivate and inspire you like no other destination.

Recently voted one of Conde Nast Traveller's Top Ten 'It Destinations', Oman boasts an intoxicating mix of modern opulence and traditional culture, vast barren deserts and rocky deepwater fjords, ancient castles and five-star hotels. Combined with a reputation for timeless hospitality and exquisite cuisine, Oman delivers such diversity that it will delight even the most seasoned traveller.

Discovery

Oman possesses a wealth of natural, cultural, and historic wonders awaiting your discovery.

Natural Wonders

Start with the Musandam region in the country's northwest, and discover the Fjords of Arabia. Here you'll witness the majesty of rocky slopes descending almost 2000 vertical metres sheer into the turquoise sea, where they are met with dazzling coral reefs teeming with marine life. Spend several hours or several days absorbing the tranquility of this spectacular location.

Journey south over the vast Hajjar Mountains to the interior region and discover the Al-Hoota Cave – an enormous 2.7km long tunnel complete with subterranean lake, fed by the oases of the surrounding region. The cave itself displays magnificent rock formations in a palette of delicate colours, while the lake is home to an array of exotic species which thrive in the unique environment. Perhaps surprisingly, this amazing underground spectacle is accessible to visitors of all



fitness levels.

After sampling the desert heart of the country, you'll be amazed at the contrast to be found in the lush southern region of Dhofar. The birthplace of the frankincense trade, this is the only place in all of Arabia to possess a monsoon climate, and for several months of the year the landscape is converted into a patchwork of iridescent green. Dhofar is also home to Salalah, the Oman's

bustling 'capital of the south'.

Of course, every traveller's itinerary should include a visit to the incomparable vastness of the Wahiba Sands. Boasting sand dunes soaring up to 150m high, the country's largest desert is also the perfect playground for four-wheel driving and offers a taste of the barrenness found across much of the Arabian Peninsula.

Historic Wonders

Few places can boast the depth and flavour of Oman's history. Guarded by over one thousand forts and castles, Oman's civilisation dates back more than twelve thousand years. From ancient times to its part in the Haimarite kingdom, through to the Portuguese influence of the 17th century, a journey through Oman will bring a distant past to life with stories of the frankincense trade, sultans of bygone eras, and visits to architectural relics. Amongst spectacular surroundings, discover ancient castles, towering mosques, and guarded forts – all part of an architectural landscape several thousand years in the making.



Without a doubt, one of Oman's most stunning national monuments is Nizwa Fort. Dating back to the mid-1600s, this majestic stronghold was built as a key defense site to guard the lucrative caravan routes which dissected the region. Also well worth a visit is the nearby Bahla Fort. Recently listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, its imposing form is comprised of 15 gates and 132 watchtowers.

In the southern Dhofar region you'll find Samharam, a lost city dating back to the third millennium BC. Only discovered some sixty years ago, its fortified stone walls contain ancient carvings testifying to its title as one of the oldest ports in the region. Hear enchanting tales of the early frankincense trade and discover the legendary story of Balqis, the Queen of Sheba, who is thought to have had her famed perfume jars loaded at Samharam before they continued their journey to Solomon's temple.

Further establishing Oman's place in ancient history is the city of Sohar, famed home of the legendary Sinbad the Sailor. Once a powerful trading hub, Sohar was known as the Gate to China due to its role in the Asian shipping trade. Take a tour of the impressive Sohar Fort, built around two thousand years ago and noted for its unique whitewashed exterior and five prominent watchtowers.



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JOURNEYS



Luxury

The advent of tourism has only been relatively recent in Oman, and as a result, the majority of the country's hotels and tour operations are incredibly modern. With a focus on quality, luxury, and sustainability, visitors will benefit from the government's holistic plan for establishing Oman as a premiere tourism destination. Of course, consideration is also given to those who want to experience all that the country has to offer whilst traveling with more modest means.

Accommodation

Boasting some of the world's most exclusive hotels, Oman offers a selection of opulent accommodation to meet the needs of the most discerning travellers. Whether your idea of luxury is a private apartment on a secluded stretch of windswept beach, or a suite in a glamorous city hotel, you'll be sure to find an option to exceed your expectations. However, budget-conscious travellers are also well catered-for with a myriad of excellent venues at affordable prices.

The Omani passion for experiencing everything in complete opulence

extends even to their wilderness safaris. Here, you can enjoy the beauty of the rugged landscape by day while blissfully retreating into your deluxe permanent desert camp at night. For those seeking additional luxury, mobile accommodation units are available with air-conditioning, running hot and cold water, separate bathroom, and luxury Tempur mattresses.

Cuisine

Renowned for their hospitality, Omanis will welcome the opportunity to share their unique cuisine with you. Whether that's the simple tradition of offering qahwa (local coffee) and dates to all visitors as a welcome gesture (or even the sticky-sweet local delight known as halwa, made from eggs, honey, sugar and spices), you're sure to embrace the unique tastes and aromas of this ancient country.

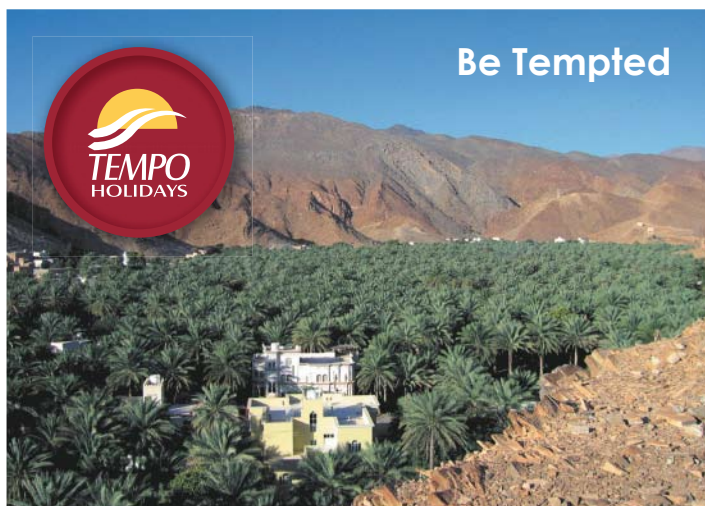
Of course, Oman also has much to offer the selective palates of fine-dining travellers. Throughout the country's network of luxury five- and six-star hotels, you'll find restaurants featuring local and international chefs serving up the flavours of the region together with more exotic dishes. From a la carte to full degustation, your dining experience in Oman will be something to savour.

Snorkelling and Scuba

One of Oman's true treasures is its beautiful coastline, which presents an abundance of diving and snorkeling opportunities. With azure waters and a wealth of colourful marine species – including spectacular coral reefs – it won't take long for you to understand why Oman was recently voted one of the top ten dive destinations in the world.

Adventure

For those with an adventurous spirit, Oman's landscape provides plenty of opportunities to interact with nature in a somewhat more intrepid fashion.



Be Tempted

An Arabian adventure...

Oman is a culturally rich country that feels as though it has been trapped in time. As a destination specialist to the region, Tempo Holidays has a range of packages that showcase the country's highlights and can tailor packages to suit your needs.

For the perfect introduction to Oman try our Taste of Muscat package - the best way to see the beautiful city of Muscat on the glistening gulf of Oman. Tempted?

Taste of Muscat

4 days / 3 nights

Price from **\$958** per person (twin-share)

Inclusions

- Return airport transfer
- 3 nights Muscat accommodation
- Breakfast daily
- Half day Muscat city tour
- Full day tour to Nizwa and Jabrin
- All sightseeing by private vehicle with English speaking chauffeur
- Oman Handling Fee



For enquiries please contact your licensed travel agent or Tempo Holidays

www.tempoholidays.co.nz

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All Terms and Conditions: Prices are per person and based on twin share accommodation. Taste of Muscat is valid for sale and travel until 31 Oct 10. The advertised price is valid for travel 01 Jun – 31 Aug 10, based on accommodation at Radisson SAS. Price includes Oman Compulsory Handling Fee of \$24 per person. Prices quoted are accurate as at 11 Feb 10. Seasonal surcharges and blackout dates may apply depending on date of travel. Single supplements are extra and applicable to travellers in single rooms. All international airfares are excluded. Domestic airfares are subject to change. Deals and offers are subject to availability and may change without notice prior to reservation confirmation and due to currency fluctuations. Payments made by credit card will incur a surcharge. For full Terms and Conditions and up to date prices or for more inspiration visit our website.

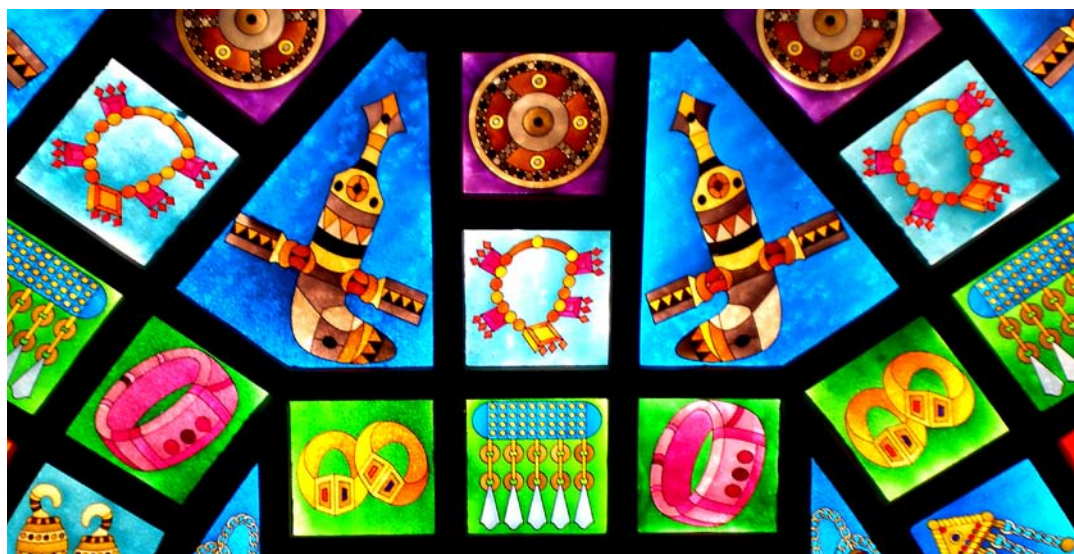
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Cultural Wonder

One of the highlights of your journey will be discovering the richness of the beautiful Omani people, whether they be traditional Bedouin desert tribes or citizens of modern Muscat. Wherever you travel, you'll be greeted by the same gracious and hospitable smiles of people proud to share their unique culture with you.

Perhaps the most comprehensive snapshot of Oman culture can be found in Muscat's network of museums, including the Omani-French Museum and Bait Al Zubair. Here, you'll find collections of ancient artifacts including costumes, weaponry, and tools from the country's millennia of history. Of most interest will be items from Wattayah, reported to be the oldest area of permanent human settlement with history dating back ten thousand years.

However, for a truly immersive cultural experience, visit one of the country's many souks (traditional markets). Located from Muscat to Nizwa, entering a souk will provide you with an encounter of an entirely



different way of life: get lost in the maze of alleys; surround yourself with the sounds, scents, and colours of an Arabian marketplace; go searching for everything from gold and fine jewellery to antiques and spices. It's a cultural adventure that will leave you overwhelmed with sensory delight. Oman's favourite is Mutrah

Souk, a covered maze of lanes and alleyways found in Muscat, the nation's capital.

spectacular surroundings imaginable, including the world's second largest cave: the magical 'Home of the Genie'.



Four-wheel driving

A favourite visitor activity, you'll be spoilt for choice when it comes to participating in four-wheel driving adventures. Take a deep breath as you roar up a hundred-metre tall sand dune before cresting the peak for the ride down the other side; make sure the windows are up as you splash through one of the many wahdis found in the Omani desert; or simply enjoy the sights as you travel through the barren wilderness of the interior in your air-conditioned vehicle.

Whether you seek the ultimate in luxury escapes or the pinnacle of adventure travel, Oman offers a tantalisingly diverse destination which promises to both surprise and delight travellers of all styles. Your Personal Travel Manager will assist you in selecting the best Oman package to suit your needs.

Discover Oman, and experience a breathtaking journey beyond your greatest expectations.

Climbing and caving

Feeling a little more adventurous? Welcome to one of the hottest climbing and caving spots on the world map. An almost infinite number of climbs and descents await you in some of the most



Fast Facts

Official Name: The Sultanate of Oman.

Capital city: Muscat.

Area: 309,500 sq km.

Population (2008): 3,311,640, including 577,293 non-nationals.

Official Language: Arabic with English widely spoken.

Official Religion: Islam. Other religions are widely accepted and places of worship for Catholics, Hindu, Buddhists are located throughout the city.

National Day: Birthday of H.M. Sultan Qaboos, 18 November.

Local Time: GMT +4 (no daylight saving).

Currency: Omani Rial (OMR) All major credit cards accepted. ATMs, banks and money exchange bureaus readily accessible.

Business Week: Sunday - Thursday.

Climate: Oman's climate is varied on account of its topography but the weather is sunny and warm all year round. The best time to visit Oman is winter from October to April when temperatures average between 25-30°C during the day and around 18°C at night. Summers are hot and humid with temperatures in June-July peaking up to 48°C during the day and greatly cooler at night.

Salalah in the south is characterized by its verdant greenery making it very different in this predominantly desert region. Salalah is the only

region in The Gulf to be affected by the Monsoon during June to October which is the best time to visit.

Visas: New Zealanders are permitted to enter the Sultanate of Oman without a pre-obtained Single Entry Visa. A Single Entry Visa will be granted by the Royal Omani Police upon arrival at any Omani Port (air, land and sea). Visa is valid for 30 days at a charge of OMR6.

Clothing: Oman is one of the most liberal Arab countries for foreign women to travel without hassle. Extremely revealing or inappropriate clothing may be considered offensive, though, so dress for comfort. Loose-fitting clothing is best with pullovers or sweaters recommended during the evening, in particular the winter months.

Omani's are renowned for their hospitality and relaxed demeanor, so invariably for a lone female traveller the Omani men are always respectful, very easy-going and good-humored and will be very respectful company.

For visiting Mosques: long-sleeved shirts and pants are essential for both male and female visitors. Women must ensure their hair is covered (shawls are essential for this).

Alcohol: Alcohol is served in hotels, restaurants & bars. Drinking in public is not permitted. Alcohol can be purchased on arrival into Muscat International Airport (2Litres) and selected supermarkets.

This Incredible Country

By Laura Barker,
Product Executive – GO Adventure

The first thing that struck GO Adventure's Laura Barker when she arrived in Oman, was how remarkably low-key and low-rise the country appeared, which was something as a welcome surprise after the glamour, glitz and bustle of the metropolises of its near neighbours, Dubai and the other Emirates. Below are her further impressions of a country she says has been overshadowed by its wealthier cousins for too long. It is, she says, simply a 'must do' on any traveller's list.

Muscat, the capital, is a stunning city, surrounded by towering rocky mountains and adorned with ornate mosques and surprisingly, themed roundabouts! Although over the years many have been sadly demolished to make way for new road systems, several remain, ranging from enormous ornamental fish and incense burners to giant golden Arabic coffee pots. Bizarre, but somehow beautiful.

The Omani's as a race are wonderfully warm people – and you find them everywhere – from driving the airport taxi, to running your hotel! "Of course!" you might think, but in neighbouring gulf countries where often the 'locals' do not even work, meeting Omanis in everyday life is a refreshing change! They are always willing to offer assistance and



Laura Barker Trekking In Oman (right)

a friendly smile and if you learn even just a few words of Arabic, it is always appreciated.

The souk area of Muttrah in Muscat overflows with knick knacks and traditional artefacts. Here you can buy everything from Omani chests and Khanjar knives to silverware and bakhoor – a potent local incense. It

is a fabulous place to wile away a few hours.

The size and sheer quantity of the marine life in the ocean just off Muscat makes for incredible diving and dolphin watching experiences, almost without equal and divers here are rarely disappointed. Dolphins are spotted on around 95% of trips – and when venturing further up into the Musandam, it is not unusual to see whale sharks and other huge cetaceans. You can explore the Musandam peninsula – often referred to as the 'Fjords of Arabia' – on a traditional Dhow live-aboard (diving boat). Fully restored and kitted out to include all modern amenities the dhows offer comfortable sleeping and eating arrangements. The huge decks are great for sunbathing on whilst you cruise to the next diving or snorkelling spot or even to sleep on beneath the stars on warm evenings. You are completely at one with nature here – no artificial light to be seen for

miles and just the slow, rhythmic thud of the waves against the hull. It is a perfect way in which to explore this amazing area.

Treks into local wadis and the mountains that can only be described as stunning, are also a great way to explore Oman. Clamber up through the old falaj (waterway) systems and jump off the rocks into cool, fresh water pools in the warm winter sunshine. The only people you'll see for days are weather-beaten Omanis with their herds of faithful goats following them high up on the craggy mountainside. These are simply amazing places in which to escape and indulge in the tranquillity of this astonishing country.

GO Holidays offer many options in Oman – please contact a member of our Adventure Team for more details. It is an excellent add-on to any Dubai holiday or as a standalone holiday. Access is best on Emirates Airlines via Dubai.



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Top Tips for Agents

by Laura Barker

- For standalone Oman trips, allow at least a week and if possible up to 10-14 days to really see the country in depth
- Book a tour with a reputable company – don't try to travel Oman by yourself – it is not really set up at the moment for backpackers or independent travellers
- Aim at the mid-high end client who enjoys cultural and nature holidays – perhaps those that have exhausted their options in Asia/Latin America and are looking for something different
- Aim at travellers generally who are 25+
- Allow for some relaxation/recreational time in Oman – the beaches are lovely and uncrowded and the dolphin and turtle watching trips are just incredible!
- Sell it as a 'untouched' destination where you feel like you are off the beaten track – Oman is still discovering tourism so it feels very 'new' and untouched
- Consider the best times to travel – Oct through May is ideal. The (European) summer months can be extremely hot and it is not recommended to travel then. The only exception is the area of Salalah which is located in the South of Oman and has a much more temperate, monsoon climate in the European summer (our winter).

Easy Access with WY

There is easy access to Oman for Kiwis because of Oman Air's increased flight frequency and capacity between Muscat and Bangkok. From Mar the carrier increased services to seven a week ex BKK and from May replaced A310 and B737 types on the route with a new Airbus A330 wide-body aircraft. The A330 is one of five the carrier will take delivery of throughout 2009. New Zealanders will have even more access to the Sultanate in 2010 when WY starts services from Kuala Lumpur to Muscat. Oman Air's chief executive officer, Peter Hill, said the Airbus aircraft, operating non-stop flights from Muscat to Frankfurt and Paris in the west and eastbound to Colombo and Male, provide a 'massive' increase in capacity from Europe to Oman and will boost the country's rapidly growing appeal to the discerning traveller.



DXB-MCT USD50 Fare

Emirates has reintroduced a one-way fare between Dubai and Oman's capital Muscat from just USD50 in conjunction with the re-release of its Arabian Airpass. The initiative has further opened up the door to New Zealanders looking to visit the destination, says Sultanate of Oman Tourism Director Australia/New



Easy EY Access

Etihad is code-sharing with Qantas across the Tasman on the Auckland-Sydney route, but the fare structure allows the use of either the EY code-share flight or the QF/JQ flight number from Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch.

In addition EY fares are "common rated" from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to Muscat – and allow travel via Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane, whatever point offers the better connection.

'Year round' fare prices from New Zealand start from \$2540 return in Coral Economy class, \$7040 in Pearl Business Class (pictured) and \$9910 in Diamond First Class (all excluding surcharges and taxes).

Both Adventure World and Innovative Travel are working with Etihad to offer stopover hotel rates and city tours etc for people wishing to stopover in Abu Dhabi for a night or two.

Zealand Mona Tannous. "Its sheer affordability and the fact that Dubai-Muscat flights and vice-versa align perfectly with Emirates services ex-New Zealand makes connecting to the Sultanate easier than ever before. It also allows much more flexibility for those travellers looking to include a short visit to the Sultanate as part of their north-bound journey as well as the longer stay market." She said the Arabian Airpass had traditionally proven a big drawcard for New Zealanders visiting the Gulf. "It's great to have it available as a catalyst for Oman tourism as we step up our activity to encourage even more New Zealanders to visit the destination."

Go With Thai

Thai Airways offers the only one-stop service from New Zealand to Oman, with three-weekly flights between Bangkok and Muscat. While the schedules don't allow a same-day connection northbound, it does suit a Thailand/Oman combination itinerary providing the perfect opportunity to take in the variety of experiences that these two destinations offer.

أهلاً وسهلاً

Ahlan wa sahlán (welcome to Oman)

DISCOVER OMAN WITH ADVENTURE WORLD

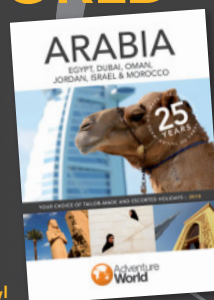
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For the perfect Arabian holiday, tour cosmopolitan Dubai before heading overland to Musandam, Oman's spectacular fjord land, then on to Muscat, the capital city for some culture and sightseeing. **Highlights** include a traditional dhow cruise in the Musandam fjords; turtle sanctuary visit; 4WD mountain safari and the sights and sounds of ancient souks.



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TERMS & CONDITIONS: *Price correct as at 19 February 2010 and subject to change without notice. Price shown is based on low season per person share twin and does not include international flights from New Zealand.

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Oman Focuses On Kiwis

New Zealanders are renowned for always looking for something different, says Oman Ministry of Tourism's Director of International Offices, Razan Darwish and so the Sultanate intends to position the destination as a new, unique, exciting and easily accessed travel choice that matches that requirement. She told

New Zealand travel personnel at AIME in Feb that short break Oman travel programmes for Kiwi travellers en route to the UK/Europe via the Middle East offered a good mix of leisure, heritage, culture, nature and adventure-oriented packages - and were the perfect alternative to an Asian stopover.

"The same applies to the MICE market - our world-class hotels and resorts offer huge potential to this market segment," Darwish said. She added that the recent increases in regional air services by the major Gulf carriers, including EK and EY meant access to the Sultanate had never been easier. "All of the Gulf carriers servicing this region offer quick, direct connections from their home ports to Muscat. So we feel the time is right to beef up Oman's profile in the New Zealand marketplace."

existing runway will be upgraded to handle A380s. To be completed within the next five years are ten integrated resort-style developments in various parts of the country and a 6000-seat Convention Centre on a 1.6 million hectare site close to Muscat International Airport. Work is nearly finished on the venue for 2010 Asian Beach Games, which will take place at Wudum Al Sahil near Muscat in Dec 2010. After the event the complex will be used as a resort. New regional airports and facilities in Nizwa, Duqm and Salalah, are also being built.

MICE Opportunity

Oman offers big opportunities for the New Zealand MICE market with world-class hotels and resorts that offer delegates and visitors a multi-faceted experience catering to all requirements, says Sultanate of Oman Tourism Director Australia/New Zealand Mona Tannous. In particular there is a new convention centre on a 1.6 million hectare site close to Muscat International Airport. When complete the Convention Centre will be one of the largest facilities of its type in the Gulf and position Oman as an ideal place to attract a major share of the region's steadily growing and highly lucrative international MICE business, says Tannous. As well

as seating for 6000 delegates, the development will also include one five-star hotel, two-four-star properties, a three-star hotel, a 250-room apartment-hotel and a 150,000 m2 shopping mall.



Ramadan

Visitors to Muslim countries may find some of their schedules affected by the holy month of Ramadan when pious Muslims are expected to pray more regularly and pay closer attention to their religious observances. This means shops and other services may be unexpectedly closed while the proprietor attends to their prayers.

Ramadan takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and celebrates the occasion of the Qur'an being revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Held around August, by Western timekeeping, it is also a lunar observance, so dates vary each year within the month. Muslims abstain from food, drink, sex, smoking and anything that is deemed good or indulgent from dawn to dusk. This is to teach patience, modesty and spirituality. Even children, who are not expected to observe, often fast. At the end there are great celebrations, new clothes are worn to Mosque and presents are given, especially to children. During this time international hotels and resorts still serve food and liquor to guests within their walls.



Tourism Plant Boost

The most important of USD10billion worth of tourism projects currently underway across Oman is a major upgrade and expansion of the Sultanate's principal air gateway, Muscat International Airport. Plans include a new terminal building, 32 air bridges and another runway. The



BOOK YOUR CLIENTS OMAN TRIP WITH US!



Oman is a must do on any travelers list. This diverse country offers so much - gigantic sand dunes, kilometres of empty coastline, beautiful sandy beaches, turtle nesting sites & mountain ranges with incredible exploring possibilities.



Call our expert Adventure consultants for the lowdown on Oman. We can advise on hotel, sightseeing and extended touring options.

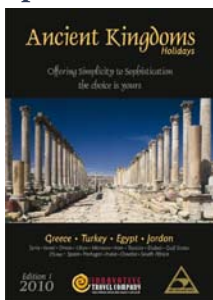
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Sun-baked Landscapes

Innovative Travel provides a comprehensive range of travel options in its specialist programme, Ancient Kingdoms Holidays, for clients interested in Oman. This destination has managed to retain its rich traditions and charms of the past and is an exciting mix of sun-baked desert landscapes, dramatic mountainous regions, stunning unspoiled beaches and coastlines, and towns and villages steeped in tradition, culture and history, says Carol Wisker, national sales & marketing manager. Wisker says Innovative Travel's local operator ensures clients experience the majestic contrasts of this fascinating country. A full range of accommodation is offered, with some 'magnificent' properties for top end clients, such as the Chedi Hotel and Six Senses. Innovative Travel's four-day Muscat Ministay is priced from approx \$645pp twin; highly recommended is the 4 Day Essential Oman itinerary, taking in Muscat, Jabtrin, Jebel Shams, Nizwa, Wadi Bani Khalid, Wahiba Sands, Sur, Ras Al Had and Wadi Shaab. This itinerary is packed full of experiences from the Oasis city of Nizwa, forts, castles, canyons, Jebel Shams - the highest mountain in the Arabian Peninsula, local villages, waterfalls, fishing villages, stunning dunes, overnight desert camp, Dhow building, pristine beaches, and visit to the Turtle Beach where turtles nest and lay their eggs and more. Priced from approx \$1499pp twin. Self drive itineraries are available and featured is a seven-day option ex Muscat priced from \$1349pp twin. Contact Innovative Travel for further information, 0508 100111 or email info@innovative-travel.com



Daggers and Dunes

GO Adventure has four Muscat hotel options ranging from the Muscat Holiday Hotel from \$126 per person per night to The Shangri La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa from \$325 per person per night. In between are the Radisson SAS Hotel from \$177 pp p/n and the Chedi Muscat from \$260 pp p/n. Four Muscat sightseeing tours depart daily. The Muscat City Tour costs from \$114 pp, the Desert Experience from \$657 pp, the Arabian Discovery from \$253 and the Dolphin Watch from \$146 pp. Cultural Oman and the Nature Trail are two three day/two night packages from \$1179 and \$1018 pp share twin respectively. Both depart daily at 0800 and include 4WD transportation, accommodation with meals as specified and a visit to a Bedouin family. The first includes Nizwa, Wahiba Sands and Sur and the second Ras Al Jinz and Wahiba Sands. Tropical Salalah is a four day/three night programme that takes in the gold souq and the site of the ruined city of Samhuram the capital of ancient Arabia's frankincense trade. Cost is from \$1064 pp twin share. Magical Musandam is a three day/two night programme and includes a 4WD mountain safari and a full day cruise through the 'Fjords of Arabia'. Cost is from \$897 pp twin. Classical Oman takes in Muscat, Sur, Wahiba Sands, Nizwa and Salalah in eight days and seven nights and costs from \$3256 pp share twin. The fort and date plantation of Nakhi and the castle at Jabin is included in Essence of Oman as well as the locally famous Barka Fish Market, the village of Mudaybi, overnighting in a desert camp and a visit to an oasis. Cost is from \$2154 pp twin share. Dubai & Oman Delight is a nine day/eight night programme taking in Dubai and Al Ain before heading for the Omani destinations of Nizwa, Sur and Muscat. Included are visits to forts, souks, a pottery studio, a camel ride, sand dune drive, turtle watching and a visit to a Bedouin family. Cost is from \$4089 pp twin share. Contact GO Adventure on 09 9174902 or e-mail adventure@goholidays.co.nz. www.gogogo.co.nz



Ancient cities, forts and souks

House of Travel has an independent travel programme with a choice of six hotels and two escorted tours in Oman. Accommodation includes the three-star Ruwi Hotel in the CBD, the four-star Radisson SAS in the CBD and Crowne Plaza on the beach 11kms from the city. The five-star InterContinental Muscat, The Chedi and Shangri la Barr Al Jissah Resort and Spa are also beachside, 15, 20 and five kilometres from Muscat respectively. A four day/three night Mountain and Desert Adventure costs from \$1782 pp twin share and includes the ancient city of Nizwa, its forts and souks; Wahiba Sands; overnighting in a desert camp; turtles; Sur; and the fishing village of Quriyat. The seven day/six night Oman Experience includes a tour of Muscat (Natural History Museum, Grand Mosque, Al Alam Palace, forts and souks); Nizwa; Jabel Shams; overnight in the desert; wadis; turtles; and the dhow-building town of Sur. All tours are private, depart daily, include an English-speaking guide, accommodation, meals as specified, permits and entrance fees. www.houseoftravel.co.nz



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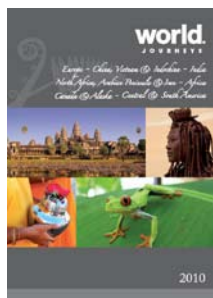
Tea With The Bedouin

World Journey's Oman Highlights is a seven day/six night independent tour with an English-speaking guide. A round trip from Muscat it includes tea with a Bedouin family, a sunset dune ride, turtle nesting sites, wadi bashing, forts, mosques and the Bait Al Afreet sinkhole, an enormous gash rumoured to have been caused by a meteorite. Cost is from \$2859 pp twin share.

Five days and four nights amongst the wadis and the spectacular Wahiba sand dunes costs from \$1995 pp twin share and includes Muttrah sea port, the Market of Shades – said to be the oldest in Oman, the mountain village of Misfah Al Abreen, souks, beaches, turtles and forts.

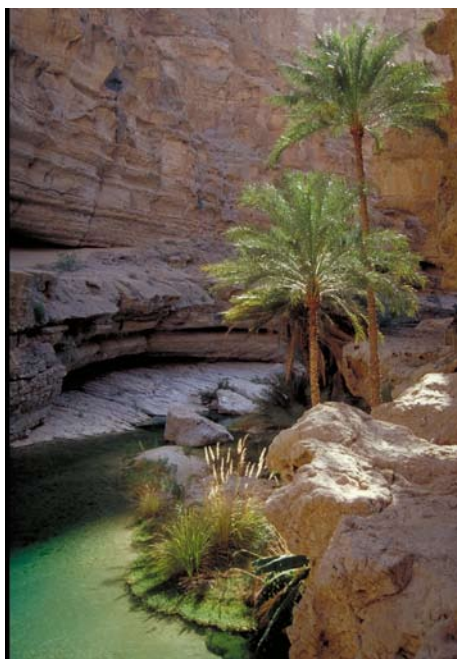
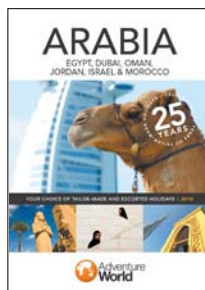
In the Footsteps of Bedouins is a six day/five night excursion that includes two days in a Bedouin camp, a camel trek, Nizwa fort and souk, Bibi Miriam Tomb – the remains of an old city thought to be matriarchal, the waterfall and swimming hole of Wadi Bani Khalid and the oasis of Wadi Shab. Cost is from \$2255 pp twin share.

All tours depart daily between 01 Jan-31 Oct and include an English-speaking guide, air-conditioned car with driver, accommodation and meals as indicated. www.worldjourneys.co.nz



Cruising The Fjords By Dhow

Adventure World has a range of Oman product, from two to nine days that makes it easy to fit in a visit to the Sultanate. Turtles By Night costs from \$821 pp share twin and includes turtles, the Bimah sinkhole, joining a Bedouin family for tea and the date palms of Wadi Arbeyeen in two days and one night. Fjords of Musandam is three days/two nights, costs from \$1024 and takes in the Musandam Peninsula, a dhow cruise among the Musandam fjords, evergreen Birkhat Khalidiya Park and Jebel Harim, the highest mountain in Oman. Three days and two nights is all it takes to make a special visit to Salalah and see sights off the beaten track. Cost is from \$928 pp share twin and includes the ruined city of Samhuram, the ancient city of Dhofar, historic Bin Ali's Tomb, Mughisail Beach blowholes, wadis, frankincense, horses and slaves. A Journey Through Arabia and Arabian Nights also take three days and two nights and cost from \$1409 pp share twin and \$908 pp share twin respectively. The former takes in Muscat, Nizwa, Sur, a walk through an oasis and date plantations, a wadi, a souk, Jabrin castle and the mountain village of Misfah and the latter Wahiba Sands, a visit to a Bedouin family and the villages of Wadi Bani Khalid. The nine day/eight night Arabian Explorer costs from \$3686 pp share twin and takes in everything the other packages do including Dubai across the border in the UAE. A range of hotel options and local Muscat sightseeing is also available. www.adventureworld.co.nz



Tempo Holidays

Tempo Holidays offers six properties in and around Muscat for visitors to base themselves while exploring the rest of the country. Prices range from \$249 pp share twin at the three-star Ramada to \$275 pp share twin at the five-star The Chedi Muscat. Accommodation can also be booked in

conjunction with the A Taste of Muscat package, which includes a half-day Muscat city tour, full-day Nizwa and Jabrin tour and leisure time. Cultural Oman is a seven day/six night programme that includes some of the most important sites in the country such as Nizwa Fort, Jabrin Castle, Birkat Al Mauz and the fishing village of Qurayat. The Al Hoota Cave is also included, one of the largest cave systems in the world and only opened to the public three years ago. Cost is from \$2532 pp. Desert Night 1001 Nights Package is a two day/one night excursion that includes driving over sand dunes up to 200m high, a night in a luxurious desert camp and a visit to a Bedouin family in their home. Cost is from \$1130 pp.

Nature's Bounty is a three day/two night package that takes in turtles, Bimah sinkhole, sand dunes, a palace, date plantations, a souk and Jebel Shams, the highest mountain in Oman. Cost is from \$1476.

All tours are ex Muscat Airport, depart daily year round, include private air-conditioned vehicle and English-speaking driver, entrance fees, services charges and taxes. www.tempoholidays.co.nz



Cox and Kings

Cox and Kings feature regular departures on their 8 Day/7 night fully escorted tour of Oman from \$2,365.

Overnights are in Muscat, Nizwa and Sur.

For further details contact info@coxandkings.co.nz or visit the website www.coxandkings.co.nz

