

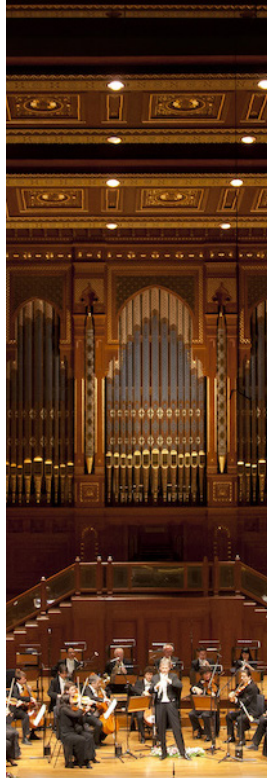
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**oman**

**Things to do  
In Oman**

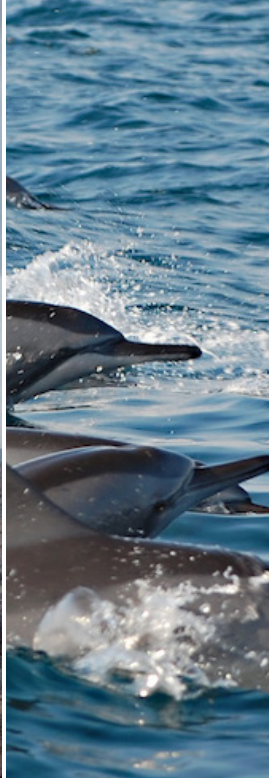






## CONTENTS:

- The many experiences of Oman
- Cultural, heritage and entertainment events
- Sports activities and adventures
- Birdlife and dolphin watching



- Shopping
- Tour operators
- Important to know
- Map of Oman



# THE MANY EXPERIENCES OF OMAN

Oman is a country well known as much for its rich history, natural wealth, and unique culture, as it is for its diverse geography and varied climatic conditions. This is further complimented by numerous archaeological and historical sites, some of which date back to the third millennium B.C., and regular festivals that celebrate the country's culture and heritage. A popular sight at such events are compelling performance arts such as Al Razha Dance, Liwa and A'zi, each of which provide tourists with the best opportunity to experience Oman's traditions up close.

For the more adventurous, Oman offers an extraordinary variety of experiences and activities. These range from mountaineering on the Al Hajar Mountain ranges and tackling one of the many climbs and treks in and around Jabal Al Akhdar and Jabal Shams, sand skiing in one of Oman's deserts, to windsurfing, snorkelling, and scuba diving off Oman's spectacular coastline.

Spelunking (exploring caves) is also growing in popularity in Oman, especially so with the large number of unique cave systems in the country; one of which is the Majlis Al Jinn which is amongst the largest in the world. While cycling enthusiasts can enjoy Oman's seemingly limitless number of tracks and trails, as one of the best countries in the region for mountain biking.



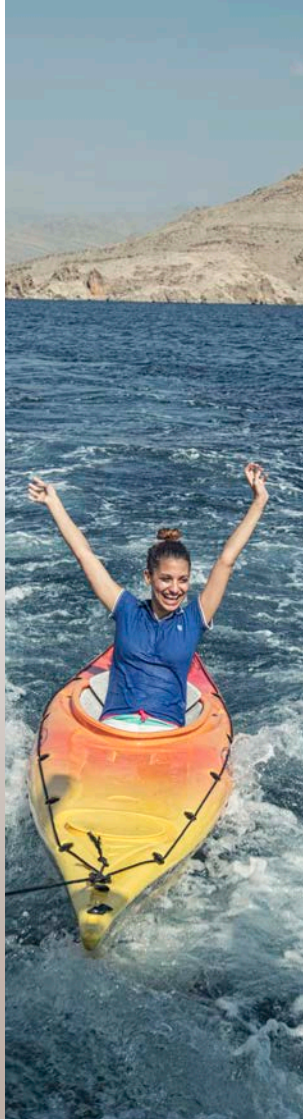
Equally interesting is the wildlife of Oman, with more than 500 species of birds that can be found on throughout the country, and the sea turtles nesting along the Omani coastline from Ras al Hadd to Ras Al Ruwais, to name a few. There are also 20 different species of dolphin and whales from Salalah to Khasab.

Trading activities create an atmosphere that is uniquely Omani, where the age old custom of buying and selling quickly turn into social occasions where friends exchange news over a cup of Omani coffee. This is the quintessentially Omani atmosphere experienced in the traditional souqs.

At one of Oman's traditional souqs everyone has the chance to immerse themselves into the local culture, offering a shopping atmosphere that is uniquely Omani. A perfect example of such markets are the Bahla souq, Friday souq in Muscat, Rustaq souq, and Tuesday souq in Bidiyah. Nizwa also becomes a bustling hub of activity as its weekly Friday souq starts early in the morning with a weekly animal auction where goats and cattle are paraded for potential buyers and visitors. These are in addition to the women-only souq in Ibra and Thursday souq in Sinaw among many others. Visitors to any of these souqs can join in traditional performances, sample local food, or buy delightful handicrafts.

Visitors can also try traditional Omani food at any of the authentic restaurants and hotels that offer unique dining experiences and local as well as world class cuisine. These include restaurants at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel or Al Angham restaurant at the Opera Galleria as well as traditional Omani restaurants. Visitors can also spoil themselves by indulging in the services offered at any of the luxurious hotels and spas around the country, such as Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa.

In the end regardless of what your choices may be, an unforgettable experience awaits you in Oman. The variety and impressive scenery make Oman a place that can be returned to time and time again, while enjoying a different experience each time, a truly year-round tourist destination. To learn more visit [www.experienceoman.om](http://www.experienceoman.om)









# CULTURAL, HERITAGE & ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS



# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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A night at the Royal Opera House Muscat, a morning at a gallery, new works of acclaimed Omani artists displayed in any one of the modern art galleries in town, or the polished performance of one of the world's great musical artists; the breadth of cultural activities in Oman continues to grow. Check out Oman's artistic offerings, in both Arabic and English, to make your plans during the week ahead.





# HERITAGE & CULTURE ATTRACTIONS

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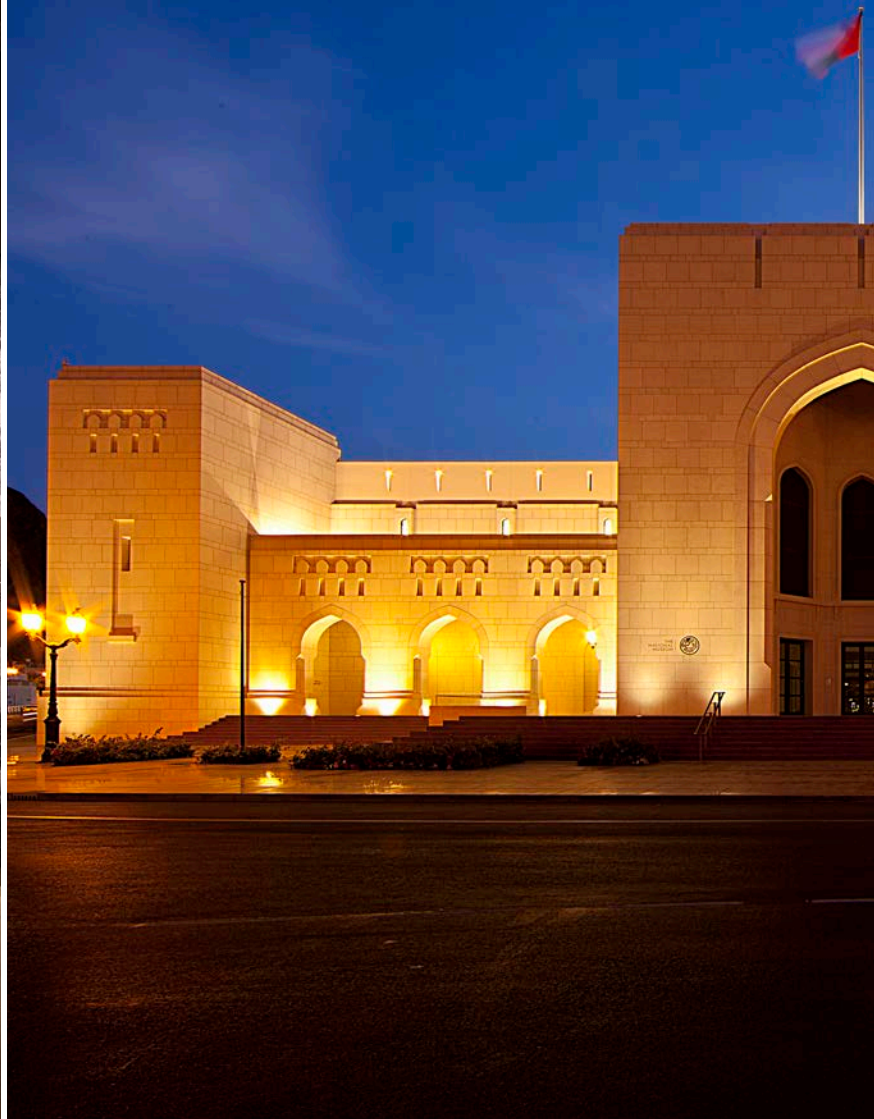
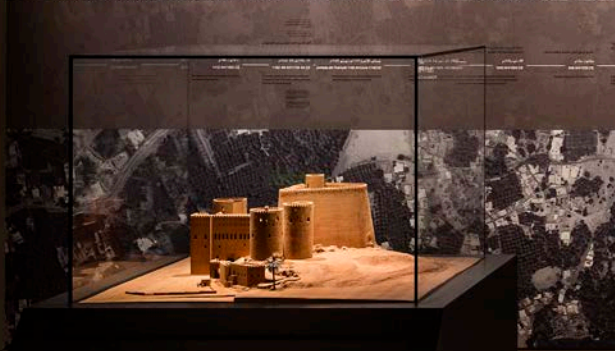
Whichever place you may visit in Oman, the country's heritage is always proudly on display. Most permanent settlements in the Sultanate were based around a fortification of some sort and today the active restoration of these unique buildings offers everyone the chance to immerse themselves into Oman's past. Complementing these are a number of private properties, open to visitors, whose owners take pride in providing demonstrations of the unique culture of Oman.

Oman's culture is constantly developing and currently encompasses theatrical performances by local actors in theatres in every major town within each of Oman's governorates. Amphitheatres have been constructed to accommodate larger crowds for popular musical performances, while the superlative Royal Opera House Muscat stages Arabic musical evenings and Western classical and jazz performances. When in Oman, exploring Oman's dynamic culture and fascinating heritage is a highly recommended experience.



# MUSEUMS

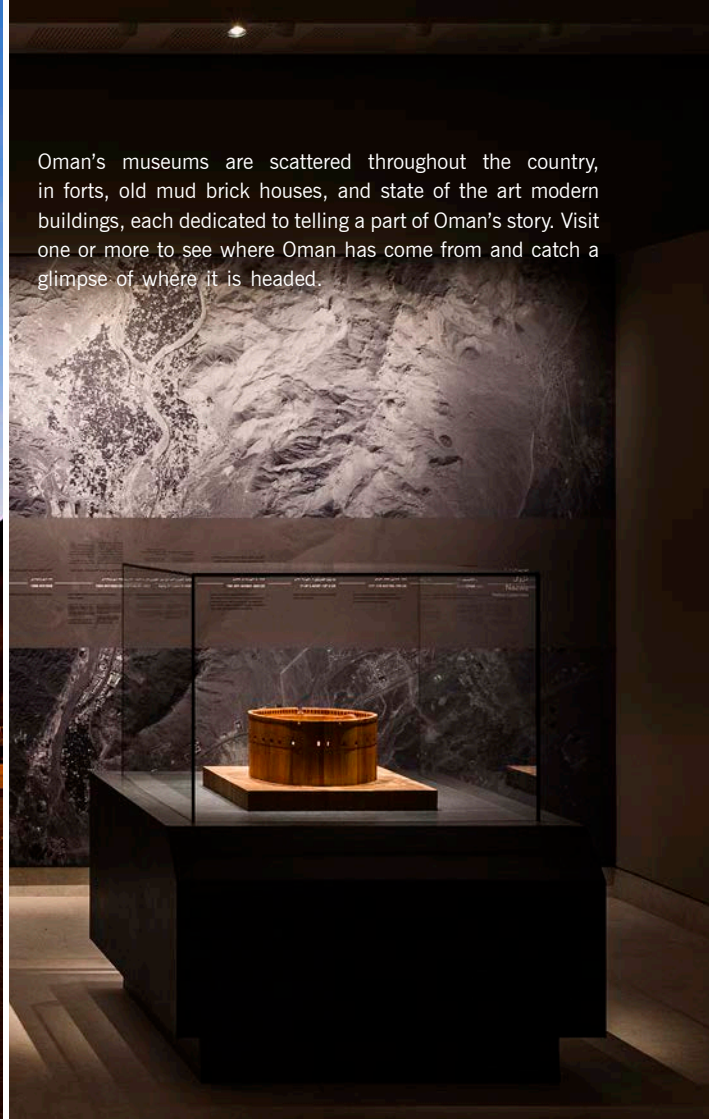
Omani dresses lovingly displayed, or the story of Frankincense and an explanation of Oil's role in modern Oman, specialised Museums tell the story of the Sultanate.







Oman's museums are scattered throughout the country, in forts, old mud brick houses, and state of the art modern buildings, each dedicated to telling a part of Oman's story. Visit one or more to see where Oman has come from and catch a glimpse of where it is headed.









# SPORTS ACTIVITIES & ADVENTURES

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## SAILING

With three tropical seas and a vast coastline, the seas of Oman offer sailors a lot of variety. From the forested mountain slopes of southern Oman's coastline, to the extraordinary 'fjords' in the Musandam Peninsula, each creates a stunning backdrop to sail along or anchor beside. Under the waters, corals harbour brilliant tropical fish, while sightings of dolphin and whales are common and at night your boat may be encircled by glowing phosphorescence caused by the organisms in the rich seawaters. Muscat, with its major leisure oriented port of Mina Sultan Qaboos as well as several commercial marinas make an ideal base from where to venture north towards Khasab or south towards Salalah.

## SAILING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Open ocean waters, moderate seasonal winds and stunning coastal scenery form the backdrop of Oman's increasingly successful yacht racing program. Join other spectators in Oman during the Khasab to Muscat race and cheer on the all-conquering Oman catamarans during the Extreme Sailing Series in Oman, and throughout the world.





## DIVING

Tropical seas and rocky coastlines alongside several deserted islands give Oman a range of Scuba Diving locations to suit every one. Dive along Kelp and Coral (at the same dive spot); cruise along with Whale Sharks or even experience great drop offs of up to 40m in depth in an uncrowded sea. Professional dive operators can supply all your gear for you.





## FISHING

Rich tropical waters often offer fishing opportunities but few can offer the breadth and size of the game fish in Oman. Haul up giant Sailfish, enormous Marlin, or huge Yellowfin Tuna for a battle that you will remember. Off the beach or cliffs the fish may be small, but skill and patience might be rewarded with Hamour (Grouper) or Mullet. Drop a line in Oman and see what comes up.



# KAYAKING

The marine straits and extensive coastline offer up the perfect choice of locations to enjoy kayaking; with beautiful coastal scenery throughout the year. You can take advantage of the easily predictable weather, near year-round sun shine, and mostly gentle sea breezes. Offshore islands and cliffs are also home to various species of nesting birds, while the waters themselves are home to dolphins and turtles. If getting out on the ocean interest you, kayaking off the shore of Oman is definitely a must when you next visit.



# CAMPING

Take a break from traditional accommodation and escape to Oman's vast, uninhabited interior. Your venue might be the sands of one of Oman's deserts, up the Al Hajar Mountains, or even the coast of one of Oman's three seas. Wherever you choose to pitch your tent, an unforgettable experience awaits.







## HIKING

Oman offers a trekking experience to suit all skill levels, ranging from simple quick treks that can take about an hour or two, to more gruelling ones that can take upwards of a few days. And the scenery on each of these treks is just as diverse. In southern Oman, the undulating hills of Jabal Qara contrast the deep Wadis that cut through Jabal Samhan. Many paths have been created here by livestock as they graze during the day. Oman's mountains, which run in a great arc north from Sur include several trans mountain treks that can take up to several days, taking you from the sea to the desert with ancient routes rising from the plains up to the high plateaus. In the mountains around Muscat, shorter mountain treks can be taken which provide superb views of the land and sea.



# HORSE RACING

The finest purebred Arabian horses and the western hybrid race horses compete in races throughout the winter months, primarily at race tracks located in the Wilayat of Seeb and Barka. As part of the activities, separate races may be held for purebred Arabian horses and for hybrid horses. Elsewhere, events may include traditional races where horses are decorated with Omani silver, which adds a beautiful sound when the horse runs. Joining the crowds at these stunning events make for truly amazing photo opportunities.







## CAMEL RIDING

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The Arabian-Omani camel is characterised by its gentle swaying walk, adding to the unique look of the desert dunes where they reside. A simple camel ride, regardless of how short or long it may be, will allow you to experience the life of

famous British traveler 'Wilfred Thesiger' in the Arabian Desert. Hold tight when the camel starts to stand up, pushing you backwards, then forwards, and then back again before it starts to walk slowly. And don't forget to take a selfie from above the back of the camel!

## CAVING

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It's a hidden world well worth exploring and an adventure that must be made if you ever have an opportunity to visit one of Oman's limestone caves. Spelunking (exploring caves) is growing in popularity and, with some stunning caves full of stalactites, stalagmites, flow stones and more, it's easy to understand why. In the Eastern Hajar, the Salmah Plateau cave system is the longest in Oman with around 11.5 kilometres of passages and several upper entrances requiring you to rappel down more than

100 meters. Majlis Al Jinn is a vast cavern accessed through its roof by a rappel of over 150 meters into a world where the small roof top entrances give the effect of spotlights as the sun tracks over the sky. Note that for safety reasons, Majlis Al Jinn requires special permission to enter. In the same mountain range the Muqal Cave in Wadi Bani Khalid is nestled in an under hang on the valley wall, this is readily accessible and with torches the cave forms can be explored. Perhaps the most famous in Oman, the Hoota Caves boast a spectacular range of stalactites, stalagmites, flowstones, and soda straws. Visitors can also discover the caves own vast underground lake, which is home to blind cave fish.



## CYCLING RACE

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Each February Oman hosts the teams and riders of the Tour of Oman race. Based in Muscat, some of the world's finest cyclists take on the gruelling challenge of the five-day race. Run against impressive scenery and alongside some of Oman's most famous historical monuments, this is a race that has to be seen first-hand; cheering your favourite team as they speed past on their way to victory.





## MOUNTAIN BIKING

You can follow the tracks of the winners of the Tour de France and Tour of Oman, surrounded by the country's dramatic scenery. Choose a short route around Muscat and other towns or a more adventurous climb over some of the country's -2,000meter high mountain tracks. Regardless of what you choose, you are sure to find something captivating at every turn.



## VIA FERRATA

Ascending the almost kilometre high sheer southern cliff face of Jebel Misht is one of Arabia's most spectacular mountain climbs. Oman, with its limestone mountain ranges cut through with deep narrow canyons offers an extraordinary variety of mountaineering experiences. Canyoneering through valleys like Snake Canyon; take a Via ferrata across a gorge, or visit some of the vast rocks which have crashed down into a valley floor. Experienced mountaineering tour companies in Oman will safely ensure your thrills.



## SAND BOARDING

Deep in the heart of the desert, sand boarding is quite possible and is a truly unique experience. Snap on a mono sand board and launch yourself down one of Oman's golden dune slopes. Feel an adrenaline rush as you pick up speed sliding down the

slopes of sand dunes while trying out various stunts that are sure to impress and with soft sand to cushion any mishaps. This is a sport that should not be missed when you are in Oman.





## GOLF



Championship golf courses demand a spectacular setting and Oman offers some of the region's best. Each of Oman's three 18-hole golf courses enjoy a unique setting within Muscat.

Tee-off on a PGA standard course, with PGA professionals available to improve your stroke while in Muscat. Each course welcomes visitors, with prior booking, and club membership is open to all.







# BIRDLIFE & DOLPHIN WATCHING DESTINATIONS

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# WHALE WATCHING

Oman's seas are home to 20 different species of whales and dolphins, making it an important area for roughly 25% of the world's population of these mammals. From bottle nosed and spinner dolphins, killer whales and on to blue whales, the majestic mammals are drawn close to Oman's coast by the richness of the feeding grounds. Take an organised trip to the sea from Khasab, Muscat or Salalah and a sighting is often made within moments. Perhaps the dolphins are watching you as they frolic alongside the boat, or you may sight a humpback whale coming up for air on the horizon. Dolphin and whale watching is really a 'must do' activity when in Oman. Who knows, perhaps you'll get close to some of the biggest animals on the planet.







## WILDLIFE SPOTTING

Just before dawn, the nesting green turtles at Ras al Jinz slowly drag themselves back to the safety of the sea after a night spent laying eggs in the sandy beach. These turtles are a protected species as one of the five types of sea turtle that can be found nesting in Oman. Moving inland, you can arrange to view the Arabian oryx who are found in a wildlife reserve set within a vast plain. The more dedicated wildlife spotter may be lucky to the Arabian gazelle in the low hills throughout Oman or the Nubian ibex in the southern region. Sighting the more elusive animals, such as the Arabian wolf or tahr is possible when accompanied by an expert guide.



## BIRD WATCHING

From the endemic Omani owl (*Strix omanensis*) to the widespread peregrine falcon, Oman is home to an extraordinary variety of birds. If you stay long enough, around 500 species of birds await your discovery. Some, like the crab plover, can only be found along the shores of Oman's more remote coastlines; while others, like sunbirds, can be found glittering throughout the entire country. A day or a few weeks, whatever your time, Oman offers some truly exceptional bird watching opportunities.





**SHOPPING**





Simple traditional markets, such as Muttrah's famous covered souq create an atmosphere that is uniquely Omani. For major brand names choose to shop in the larger malls, who also offer food courts and cinemas. Many of the medium size malls include shops and businesses, which are new to the region and offer the chance to choose a fresh style. However for quintessentially Omani products, search out the often overlooked small shops in traditional souqs. Here you often can learn first-hand about their history and perhaps meet the creator of the product at work.

# TOUR OPERATORS

Company's Name	Kind of Activities	Location	Contact Number
Bidiya Desert Adventures	Desert Activities	Bidiya	99767494
Bahwan Tours	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24704455
Eihab	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24796387
Elite	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24485020
Mark Tours	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24782727
National Travel and Tourism	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24660300
Tour Oman	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24760800
Zahara	General Tour Operator	Muscat	24400844
Al- Marsa	Scuba	Daba	26836550
Al-Shasi Beach	Scuba	Daba	26836551
Al-Shuali Marine	Scuba	Muscat	24740991
Blue Planet	Scuba	Daba	26836118
Dimaniyat Center	Scuba	Muscat	99311950
Extra Divers	Scuba	Dhofar	95410213
Company's Name	Kind of Activities	Location	Contact Number



Extra Divers	Scuba	Khasab	26 730501
Global	Scuba	Muscat	24692346
Marasi Al-Jissah	Scuba	Muscat	24740032
Moon Light	Scuba	Muscat	99317700
Nomad Diving Daba	Scuba	Daba	26836069
Scuba Oman	Scuba	Muscat	24737545
Wave Action	Scuba	Muscat	99410710
Dolphin Travel and Tourism	Sea based activities	Khasab	26730659
Jassa Beach Sea Tourism	Sea based activities	Muscat	95599660
Khasab Tours	Sea based activities	Khasab	26730464
Kite Boarding Oman	Sea based activities	Masirah	96323524
Sidab Sea Tour	Sea based activities	Muscat	99461834
Al Maalam Tours	Trekking Tours	Muscat	97362812

## IMPORTANT TO KNOW

- Please observe Omani customs and dress modestly.
- Please avoid making loud noises or raising the volume of music when passing through neighbourhoods or residential areas.
- Don't photograph people when entering private properties without obtaining their prior permission.
- Please keep the environment clean and tidy by disposing of litter in the designated rubbish bins.
- Make sure that your tour guide holds a valid license from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.
- Please drive carefully during Khareef season due to the dense fog and the crossing of animals.
- Check your vehicle, your tyre condition and make sure you have adequate fuel.
- When driving in mountain areas keep your lights on as they are often affected by fog.
- Please take extra care while driving in rainy conditions.
- Be a role model for others and leave the place better than you found it.

## WHEN YOU VISIT ANY VILLAGE, PLEASE OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING:

- Protect the flora and fauna and don't pick any fruits or vegetables as they are on private property and a source of income for the locals.
- The Falaj system is the main source for drinking and irrigation water, please don't pollute it in any way.
- Stick to the specified trails at any tourist destination you visit.
- Don't park your vehicle in any place other than the designated parking spaces.

## WHEN YOU ARE ON A CRUISE:

- Deal only with licensed tourist operators, as they will be properly equipped with the required safety training and equipment.

## WHEN YOU VISIT THE DESERT:

- Deal with a specialised tour guide. For back-up it's recommended to make the journey with more than one vehicle and to have GPS devices, along with the necessary safety equipment.



## WHEN YOU ARE TRAVELING OFF-ROAD:

- Choose a capable SUV and ensure proper operation of the vehicle's 4WD systems before undertaking any such trips.
- Ensure you have adequate water, food, fuel and spare tyres.
- Always inform a family member, friend, or acquaintance of your destination and expected date of your return.
- Do not camp in Wadi beds; flash floods are a common occurrence.
- Carry a first aid kit with you.

## WHEN TREKKING IN MOUNTAIN ROUTES:

- Choose suitable shoes and make sure you have enough food and water.
- Don't trek alone, and make sure you know about the roughness and length of such tracks beforehand.

## WHEN VISITING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

- Please use proper shoes when visiting any archaeological sites and avoid any wooden or tapered heel shoes that may cause erosion or damage to such sites.
- Please don't touch or take any stones or meteorites from the archaeological sites.
- Visiting hours for forts are subject to change.

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO VISITORS OF HANDICRAFTS' SHOWROOMS:

- Please don't touch or move any of the displayed handicrafts to avoid any damage.
- Photography is allowed but without touching the exhibited items.
- Pay attention to children and don't allow them to touch or move displayed potteries so as not to be broken.
- Please don't throw litter inside the exhibited items.
- Site are generally equipped with camera surveillance to ensure the safety of the collection and to prevent theft.
- Don't write, draw or put any stickers on the exhibited items.
- Please be careful not to damage any of the displayed handicrafts.

# MAP OF OMAN



سلطنة عمان  
Sultanate of Oman



- Arts and Entertainment
- Bird-watching
- Boat racing
- Boats
- Camel racing
- Camel riding
- Camping
- Car rallies
- Cooking classes
- Cycling
- Diving
- Exhibitions
- Festivals
- Fishing
- Football
- Golf
- Heritage and culture attractions
- Hiking
- Horse racing
- Horse riding
- Mountain biking
- Mountaineering
- Museums
- Parks and playgrounds
- Resorts
- Rowing
- Shopping
- Ski desert sand
- Spelunking
- SUV activities
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Whale watching
- Wildlife Watching
- Windsurfing







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