

EXPLORE!



BEST SELLER

DISCOUNTED

Arabian Sands

OMAN - TRIP CODE OM

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Oman is a land of contrasts waiting to be explored, from the soaring sand dunes to the rugged mountains all the way down to the turtle-nesting beaches. Eat with an Omani family and sleep under canvas on remote coastline.

- **Muscat** - Explore impressive Forts, Royal Palace and Corniche of the capital
- **Wahiba Sands** - 4WD exploration and camp among spectacular sand dunes
- **Nizwa** - Visit the impressive Jebel Shams 'Grand Canyon'.



INCLUDED MEALS
 Breakfast: 7
 Lunch: 4
 Dinner: 3



TRIP STAFF
 Explore Tour Leader
 Boat Crew
 Camp Crew
 Cook
 Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
 Bus
 4WD
 Boat



ACCOMMODATION
 2 nights simple camping
 5 nights standard hotel



TRIP PACE:
 Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
 12 - 18

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour in Muscat; afternoon sightseeing tour

Arrive in Muscat and join the tour at the hotel. Muscat is an old walled town, arguably the Gulf's most attractive city, surrounded by a horseshoe ring of mountains that naturally restricts its growth. The seaward face of Muscat is dominated by the Portuguese fortresses of Merani and Jalali (built in 1587) with their crenelated parapets. The city displays intermingling ancient cultural heritage and modern style; you will see houses, gates, old markets, small shops and winding roads redolent of authentic history, side by side with modern markets, shops, buildings and streets stamped with modern architecture. This allows Oman to preserve its historic character and at the same time enjoy its contemporary spirit. In the afternoon we will take a guided tour of the city including visiting the Bait Baranda Museum. We will also have the chance to take a stroll along the waterfront of Mutrah, Muscat's oldest quarter and onto the bustling souk.



ACCOMMODATION:
 Ramee Guestline Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Drive to Finns Beach via Wadi Tiwi

Before leaving Muscat we will visit the Grand Mosque. We then follow the coast down to Wadi Shab and Wadi Tiwi. A beautiful oasis of freshwater pools, Wadi Shab is an ideal place for a photo opportunity. We will then visit Wadi Tiwi where there is the option to walk in the wadi, following the pools up through a haven of lush vegetation and palms, before heading to our wild camp at Finns Beach.

Tonight's wild camping experience is supported by the crew who will have the tents ready for the group's arrival and will take the camp down when we depart, as well as a camp chef. The sitting area will be traditional Omani style with cushions on the floor and toilets are al-fresco! There will hopefully be time for a swim in the Arabian Sea before we settle down for a night away from reality under a star-filled sky.



ACCOMMODATION:

Igloo Mobile Tents (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 3 - Visit dhow shipyard in Sur; Evening turtle walk

Continuing along the rugged coastline we head for Ras Al Hadd, pausing en-route to visit the Port of Sur. Once a major trading port with East Africa, Sur represents the seafaring origins of Oman. We will visit the dhow shipbuilding yard where traditional dhow boats, used throughout the 19th century, are still built today. We also visit the nearby small fishing village at Ayega, now a quiet community of old merchant houses but once a stronghold of rebellious sheikhs, where we will visit the lighthouse for a photo opportunity.

This evening we'll be staying by the water's edge, in a perfect position to visit the turtle reserve at Ras Al Jinz. This coastline is an important nesting site for some 20,000 endangered Green Turtles annually and we will visit after dark this evening with a local guide. The Olive Ridley Turtle, Loggerhead Turtle and, the endangered, Hawksbill Turtle have also been spotted here.

Please note: Although Explore's departures do not operate within the main nesting season during Oman's hottest summer months, it's estimated that at least one turtle comes ashore every night of the year and there is opportunity to enjoy this wonderful natural experience year-round but due to the wild nature of this activity we cannot guarantee a sighting.



ACCOMMODATION:
Turtle Beach Resort (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 4 - Drive into Wahiba Sands via Bedouin villages

After breakfast this morning we will begin the journey to our next wild camping spot in the desert. The coast of Oman is wild, rugged and beautiful; a place where deserted white beaches are interspersed with small, traditional villages. As we journey along here, the Wahiba Sands begin to rise before us, a vast sea of sand covering about 15,000 square kilometres. Laid out like a great ocean of sand the endless dunes are generally rusty red at the base and honey coloured on the top - an alluring landscape of changing contours and colours. The sands are home to the Bedu, nomadic tribesmen who roam the land with goats and camels, or live in small fishing villages. An exhilarating drive across the dunes brings us to our nightstop somewhere in the Wahiba Sands. Sunset promises stunning photo opportunities amidst the spectacular dunes, before we settle down for another night under the desert sky.



ACCOMMODATION:
Igloo Mobile Tents (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 5 - Drive across Wahiba Sands and onto Nizwa

Early mornings in the desert are a time of activity . Mists are a curious phenomena of the sands, spreading across the dunes and wadis at night, to disappear in the early mornings. The remarkable dew drinking

beetle, living just below the surface of the normally scorching sands, utilizes this time to gain valuable sustenance. We continue through the desert this morning. In spite of its barren feel the sands contain a phenomenal amount of life. As well as the Bedu they are home to an exotic diversity of fauna including dragonflies, wolf, two species of Ruppell's fox, wild cats and white-tailed mongooses. Some 115 species of birds have also been recorded here and it is one of the few remaining refuges for the elusive Arabian and Sand Gazelles. Once out of the sands we continue through a market town that is a meeting point for Bedouin for miles around. From here it is a fairly easy drive along tarmac roads to Nizwa, the capital of Oman from 751 to 1154 AD and still regarded as the cultural capital.



ACCOMMODATION:
Al Diyar Hotel (or similar)



Grade: **Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Nizwa Fort and Jebel Shams viewpoint; Lunch with local family

Today we spend a full day exploring some of the many highlights of the surrounding area. We begin in Nizwa itself, visiting the traditional Friday goat auction and the contrasting modern souks. We continue onto the 17th century fort, built to guard the Sumail Gap during the struggle between the Sultan and the radical Imams. Nizwa was the centre of Imam Resistance right up until the 1950s when the Sultan had to call upon the help of the British to quell the rebels.

Once we've explored the town, we will head north through the Jebel Akhdar ('Green Mountain') mountain range, passing the dramatic craggy peaks. Despite its desolate and barren nature, small settlements cling to the plateau areas, nestling in the lunar like landscape. For thousands of years self-sufficient oases have flourished in the folds of rocks, using an ancient irrigation system known as falaj. These are water channels that never dry up, often contoured round wadis or tunnelled through the cliffs in order to tap the water table. Upkeep of the life-giving falaj is a community responsibility and contributes to maintaining harmony within a village.

We will reach at 3,000m Jebel Shams (Mountain of the Sun), the highest peak in Oman. En-route to the summit of Jebel Shams, we encounter an astonishing view down a sheer drop of 1000m to the bottom of the 'Grand Canyon', Oman's very own (and equally spectacular) version of its American counterpart. At the bottom of this vast void, a wadi winds peacefully through the landscape. According to one theory, the canyon was once a huge cave and evidence of fossils and shells suggests that the canyon base was at one

time covered by a shallow sea.

Descending back towards Nizwa we will visit the mud village of Al Hamra, where we will enjoy a traditional lunch with a local family, before making our way back to Nizwa late in the afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:
Al Diyar Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

DAY 7 - Drive via Wadi Bani Awf to Muscat; optional Dhow trip

Our route back to Muscat is through the stunning Wadi Bani Awf. We once again leave the smooth roads behind, and head into a narrow canyon with steep sided cliffs. The palm trees, scattered dwellings and interrupted streams create a peaceful atmosphere.

Upon return to the capital city this afternoon, we have the opportunity to take an optional trip on a timeless dhow vessel. This optional sailing departs from the marina in Old Muscat and sails past the skyline in time for sunset. Dolphins can often be spotted in abundance in the waters just off Muscat's shores year-round.



ACCOMMODATION:
Ramee Guestline Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Tour ends Muscat

The trip ends today in Muscat.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Oman

Climate

The annual rainfall in most parts of Oman does not usually exceed 125mm, although in the north (the Jebel Akhdar mountain area), it can exceed 20-25mm per month in the December to February period. The coastal areas have a hot and humid season from May to September (up to 38 degrees C), although temperatures remain high throughout the year. Inland the humidity is lower, and nights are cooler in winter when there can be frost in the desert. There is perpetual sunshine throughout the year.

Time difference to GMT

+4

Plugs

3 Square Pin (as in the UK)

Religion

Badi Islam, Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam, Hindu.

Language

Arabic, English, Farsi, Baluchi, Urdu.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities

are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Dhow sunset cruise in Muscat - 26 Rials per person (approx US\$70)

Clothing

You will need lightweight clothing for sunny days, with a sunhat and neck protection. You will also need some warmer clothing for the evenings. Nights camping in the desert and along the Arabian coast can be cold in winter, so please bring a warm jacket or fleece. Bare shoulders and legs cause offence outside main cities and hotels. Therefore women should cover up when visiting villages. At our wild camping spots shorts are fine. Women are advised not to wear shorts or dresses that are too revealing as this can attract unwelcome attention in the streets of Muslim towns - loose fitting trousers are ideal. Women should also cover their head and shoulders when entering a mosque and men should wear long trousers.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or boots, trainers (that you don't mind getting wet) and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a daypack. Dust-proof bags will be needed for luggage whilst travelling through the desert.

Equipment

Camping equipment is provided locally including a sleeping matt, bed sheet, sleeping bag and pillow. However if you prefer you can bring your own sleeping bag (we suggest a 2-3 season). A personal water bottle is useful and a small torch essential. Please note during the camping nights there are no showers or toilets.

Please note that flying drones or remote controlled flying devices without a valid licence is against the law. Further information can be found at www.paca.gov.om

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £25.00 per person for group tipping

Oman

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£4.5	£10	£3.5	£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Omani Riyal.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Sterling and US\$ are widely accepted. It is worth taking some money in cash. You can get local currency from exchange offices at home.

Where To Exchange

Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities

ATM Availability

ATMs are widely available in major towns/cities.

Credit Card Acceptance

In hotels and some larger shops/restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be cashed in Oman, but banks and exchange offices do tend to charge a high exchange rate.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, 4WD, Boat

Accommodation notes

During this trip you will experience wild camping at Wahiba Sands. This camping is simple with no shower or bathroom facilities. Toilet arrangements are 'al fresco'. Bedding and tents are all provided and

set up on your behalf but for added comfort you may wish to bring an additional roll matt and/or sleeping bag. There is a 'kitchen truck' where you can get hot water for drinking and freshening up. The sunset and night sky will outweigh any worries you may have about the lack of everyday amenities.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Oman: Citizens from the UK, New Zealand, Australia, US and Canada require a visa; this must be arranged prior to arrival. You can apply online via: <https://evisa.rop.gov.om/en/home> for a 10 day unsponsored visa, which currently costs 5 Omani Rials per person (approximately £11.00, US\$13.00 - subject to exchange rates). New Zealand citizens can apply for a free unsponsored visa valid for 3 months. You will need a digital photograph of each applicant and a copy of the photo/data page of each passport to apply.

Once approved all unsponsored visas must be used within 1 month from the approval date for entry into Oman or it will expire. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

Please note your passport must have a minimum of 6 months validity from your entry date into Oman.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Oman

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria. Please note that all travellers aged over 9 months old will be required to supply a yellow fever certificate if you have travelled from or have transited via a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**