

EXPLORE!

Arabian Sands Eclipse

OMAN - TRIP CODE OME

ECLIPSE

Why book this trip?

Witness a spectacular annular eclipse in the Wahiba Sands on this adventure through the diverse landscapes of this fascinating country. Discover the contrasts of modern day and ancient Omani life by visiting colourful souks, meeting date farmers and exploring the contemporary Grand Mosque in Muscat. Stay on the highest mountain in the country and peer down echoing fissures at Oman's grand canyon. Sleep out under a bed of stars in a true wilderness camp in the desert and swim in turquoise waters at Wadi Arbayeen.



**INCLUDED MEALS**

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 3
Dinner: 5

TRIP STAFF

Explore Tour
Leader
Astronomer
Camp Crew
Driver(s)

TRANSPORT

4WD

ACCOMMODATION

2 nights simple
camping
5 nights
comfortable hotel

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 15

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Explore Muscat

Arrive in Muscat and join the tour at the hotel. Muscat is an old walled town, surrounded by a horseshoe ring of mountains that naturally restricts its growth. This afternoon we will take an orientation tour of the city. Muscat displays intermingling ancient cultural heritage and modern style; we will see houses, gates, old markets, small shops and winding roads evocative of authentic history, side by side with busy markets, shops, buildings and streets stamped with modern architecture. On our tour we will visit Bait Baranda Museum, which provides a good introduction to Oman's history and current political and cultural climate. We will also have the chance to take a stroll along the waterfront of Mutrah, Muscat's oldest quarter and onto the souk.

**ACCOMMODATION:**

Ramee Guestline Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Visit the Grand Mosque and drive along the coast to Wadi Arbayeen by 4WD

This morning we visit the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque; the largest mosque in the country with space for up to 20,000 worshippers. This sandstone-made building features a huge Iranian made prayer map which took 600 women 4 years to make! After exploring the mosque we will head out of Muscat in our 4WD and follow the coastal road till we reach Qurayat, a fishing town known for its basket making. We will have a walk around the town, and we will see how the fishermen live their lives. From here we proceed towards the coast and visit the spectacular Bimah sinkhole, a huge limestone crater with blue green water at the bottom. We then start on an adventurous route cutting through the mountains to Wadi Arbayeen, our campsite set amongst date palms by a deep pool of water. This is a wild campsite. There are no showers or toilet blocks. These basic facilities ensure a true wilderness experience. Camping equipment is provided locally including a mattress, bed sheet, sleeping bag and pillow. Your tents will be erected by our camp crew on arrival to camp and our camp chef will provide all meals.



ACCOMMODATION:
Basic Desert Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 3 - Explore a dhow shipbuilding yard and travel to Ras Al Hadd on the Arabian Sea

After breakfast in the camp we continue along the rugged coastline we head for 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 have quite a lot of driving today so will have a packed lunch (prepared by our chef!) and our leader will find a scenic spot to stop and eat on the journey. Leaving Sur we make our way to Ras Al Hadd and check in to our hotel. After dinner we take a short drive down to Ras Al Hadd beach which features a turtle conservation reserve. A local naturalist will lead us down to the beach where we will hopefully see turtles nesting. We are not in the high season for turtle sighting but there is generally nesting here year round.



ACCOMMODATION:
Holiday Hotel - Ras Al Hadd (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 4 - Cross the desert to Wahiba Sands

We leave the coast behind and drive deep into the heart of the shifting sands of Wahiba. 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 the Wahiba Sands, our campsite for the night. We aim to arrive in to our wild camp mid-afternoon and there will be time to explore the huge dunes before we settle down to a dinner. This is a wild campsite in the desert. There are no showers or toilet blocks. These basic facilities ensure a true wilderness experience. Camping equipment is provided locally including a mattress, bed sheet, sleeping bag and pillow. Your tents will be erected by our camp crew on arrival to camp and our camp chef will provide all meals.



ACCOMMODATION:
Basic Desert Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Camping



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 5 - Witness the annular solar eclipse in the desert

An annular eclipse occurs this morning, 26th December 2019; this phenomenon occurs when the moon and sun are directly in line, but it appears that the size of moon is smaller than that of the Sun, this then creates a bright ring, surrounding the dark circle of the moon. Weather conditions cannot be guaranteed, but the chance of clear, mostly clear or partly cloudy skies is around 82%.

Eclipse glasses will be provided to allow you to view this natural wonder safely and we will be accompanied by an expert astronomer to provide more information and answer any questions you may have.

After we have witnessed the eclipse we will break camp and rejoin the tarmac road travelling north to Nizwa. This afternoon we will have time to visit the 17th century Nizwa fort, which is worth visiting to climb the 40 metre tower and look out over the forest of date palms that circle the city.



ACCOMMODATION:
Al Diyar Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 6 - Discover Nizwa's famous Friday market and visit Bahla Fort

We are up early this morning to explore Nizwa's Friday market, this lively throng of sellers, buyers and onlookers gather weekly to barter, gossip and inspect animals, mainly cows and goats. The animals are walked around a circular stall as their price is haggled over; this generally involves some good natured shouting and a rather strong smell of animal excrement. We will wonder through the rest of souk, which sells traditionally made handicrafts, a huge fruit and veg section and even an antique gun area. We get back into our 4WD and head to Bahla to see its imposing fort, one of the oldest in Oman and a UNESCO World Heritage site. The fort is made from mud bricks with rounded turrets and has battlements and walls that stretch for 7km around the town. Aside from the impressive fort, Bahla is also known for its pottery and we will make a quick stop at a potter to learn about their craft and a chance to buy some gifts. Our destination is Jebel Shams, the highest mountain in Oman with a summit of just over 3000 metres, though we will be sleeping below that altitude. After check-in, we will take a short walk to the viewpoint of Wadi Ghul, also known as the Grand Canyon of Arabia. At some parts of the ridge there are vertigo-inducing views of 1000 metre deep fissures; we will be here late afternoon as the last light of the day disappears down the canyon.



ACCOMMODATION:
Jebel Shams Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

DAY 7 - Explore Al Hamra village, meet beekeepers head back to Muscat

We begin with a visit to Misfat Al Abriyin. The village has verdant agricultural terraces, old houses built on top of solid rocks and surrounded by a forest of date palms. Further on we visit Al Hamra village famous for its date plantation and Omani honey. Beekeeping has been practiced since ancient times in Oman. The country's varied landscape of deserts, rivers, hills and grassy plains ensure that a diverse range of palms, fruit trees and sugarcane can flourish, all of which are favoured by the honey bee.

We continue our adventure by leaving the tarmac and crossing the Western Hajar Mountains via Wadi Bani Awf, a deep canyon with towering limestone cliffs. As we drive through we will see small plantations of dates, lemons and mangos which provide a livelihood for the brave residents of this desolate area. From deserted isolation we re-enter civilisation and make our way into the Muscat. We will check into our hotel late afternoon for our last night of the trip.



ACCOMMODATION:
Ramee Guestline Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Muscat

Trip ends this morning after breakfast.





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

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 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

A personal water bottle is useful and a small torch essential. A sleeping bag is provided, but if you would like to bring your own then we recommend a 2/3 season.

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

4WD

Accommodation notes

The campsites on this trip are wild camps in the desert. There are no showers or toilet blocks. These basic facilities ensure a true wilderness experience in the desert. Camping equipment is provided locally including a mattress, bed sheet, sleeping bag and pillow. Your tents will be erected by our camp crew on arrival to camp and our camp chef will provide all meals.

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 be able to apply 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.

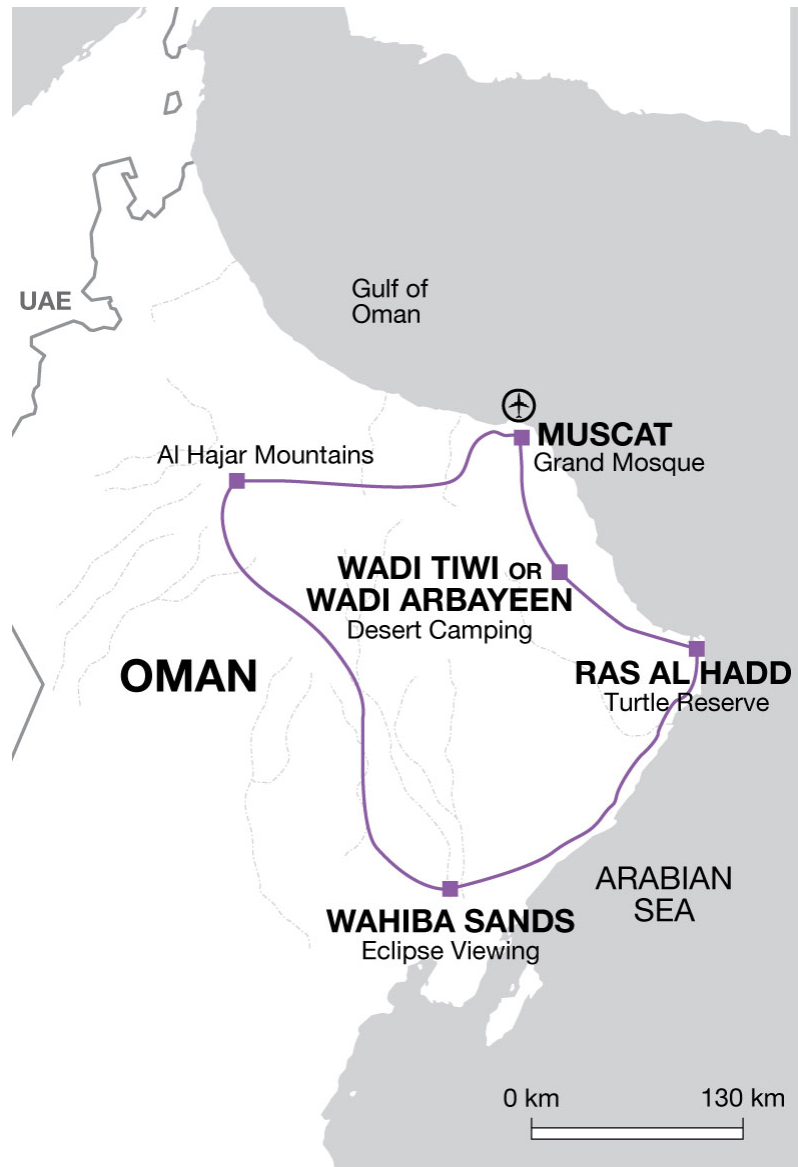
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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.

Viewing the eclipse



Although subject to change depending on weather and viewing conditions, all three Explore groups will come together for the eclipse viewing on 26th December 2019, and the location coordinates are Lat : 21.2281 N, Lon : 58.2776 E.

Why book this trip

Imagine spending the night in the desert, sleeping under the most incredible starlit sky and then waking up and seeing a solar eclipse whilst having your morning coffee. That is why Oman has to be the best place to view the annular eclipse in 2019.

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**