



OMAN

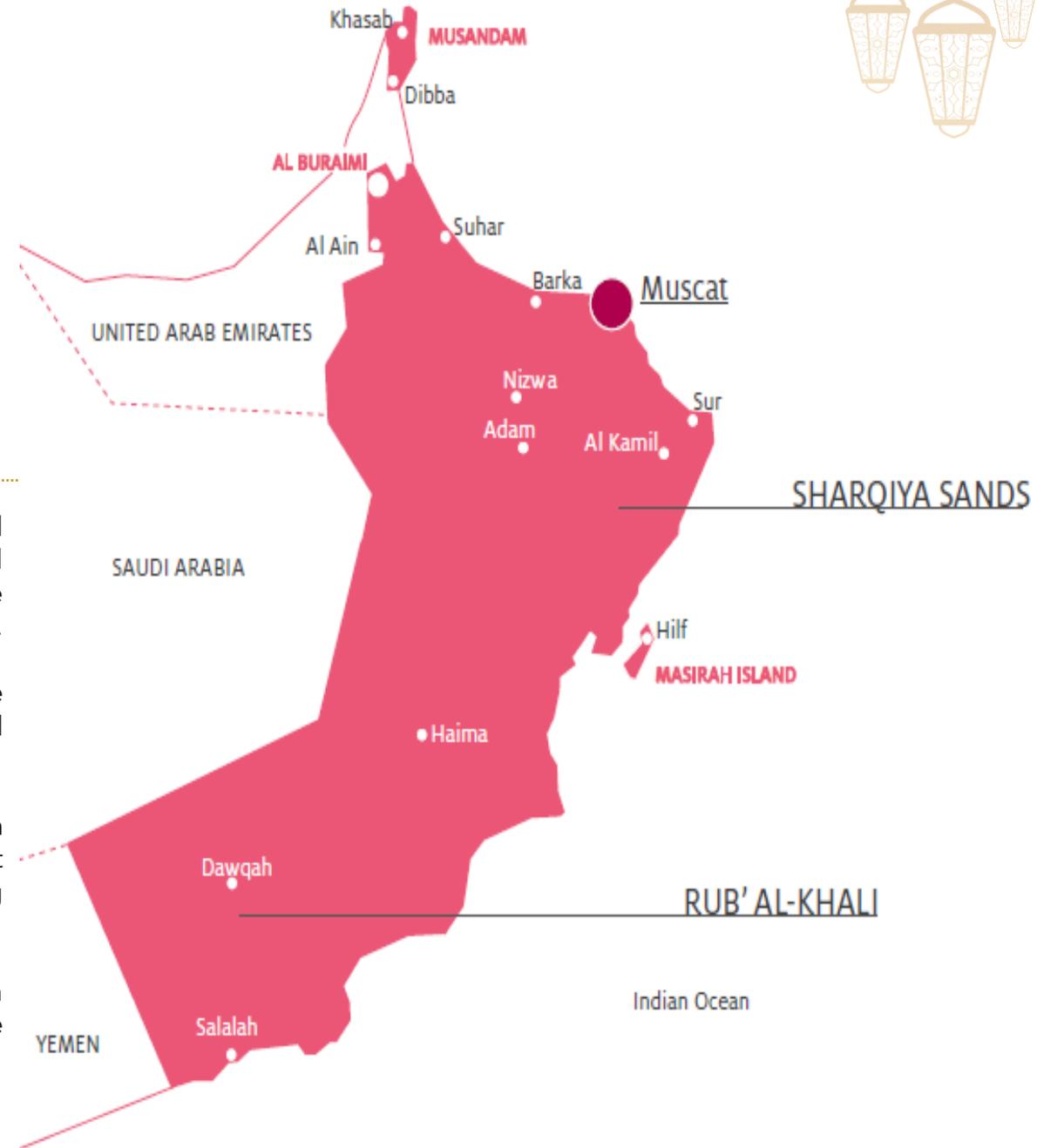
Ahlan Wa Sahlan

Welcome to the enchanting Sultanate of Oman. A Safe heaven and inviting, Oman will hypnotize you with its fragrant ancient souks, mesmerize with dramatic landscapes and leave you spellbound with its stories. Home to numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Oman is steeped in history and has inspired some of literature's most famous tales.

Muscat, the vibrant capital, is full of memorable sites and experiences. Head out of the city, and Oman becomes even more captivating. Explore the small towns nestled between the mountains. Visit the Bedouin villages. Drive the incense route.

Stop by the date farms and witness the harvesting of the roses, that cover the hills with delicate hues of pink and fill the air with an enchanting fragrance. Spend the night under the stars in a desert camp then swim in the wadis, stunning natural pools offering respite from the heat.

A journey of discovery awaits you in this welcoming land at the crossroads between Asia, Africa and Western civilization. Enjoy all of the marvels of this unique setting, the ideal gateway to Southern Arabia.



OMAN VISA

Citizens from the following countries are allowed to enter Oman without visa*

European Countries

Portugal Sweden Norway Andorra Italy Bulgaria San Marino Switzerland Croatia Liechtenstein Macedonia Hungary Serbia Georgia Estonia Denmark Germany Greece Iceland Belgium Romania Slovenia Finland Luxembourg Malta Monaco Cyprus Ukraine Spain Czech Republic Vatican Austria Ireland Britain Poland Slovakia France Latvia Lithuania Moldova Netherlands

South American Countries

Ecuador Bolivia Venezuela Colombia Uruguay Paraguay Surinam Argentina Brazil Chile

Other Countries Regions

Japan Thailand South Africa Lebanon Hong Kong Federal Republic of Russia People's Republic of China Seychelles America Brunei Darussalam Turkey South Korea New Zealand Iran French Ghana Australia Indonesia Taiwan Canada Malaysia Macau Island Singapore Azerbaijan Uzbekistan Belarus Tajikistan Kyrgyzstan Costa Rica Nicaragua Morocco India Armenia Panama Bosnia and Herzegovina Turkmenistan Honduras Guatemala Kazakhstan Laos Albania Bhutan Peru Maldives Salvador Vietnam Cuba Mexico

List Of Arab Countries

Jordan Egypt Tunisia Algeria Mauritana

*Important:

Travelers from countries like India, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Costa Rica, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Armenia, Panama, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkmenistan, Honduras, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Laos, Albania, Bhutan, Peru, Salvador, Mexico, Vietnam, Cuba, and Maldives, also need one of the visas of the United States of America, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, the countries of the Schengen agreement, and Japan to get visa exemption.





Climate & Best Time To Visit

Oman has subtropical dry and warm desert atmosphere. Summers are hot. Ideal opportunity to explore Oman is from October to March.



Language

The primary language is Arabic, but English is widely understood by the majority of the population.



Dressing

Women should preferably wear loose clothing. It is recommended to have arms and shoulders covered at all times.



Time Zone

The time zone in Oman is GMT+4.



Currency

The unit of currency is Omani Rial (RO 1 = US\$ 2.63), which is divided into 1000 Baizas.



Electricity

The normal voltage is 220 V and the normal frequency is 50Hz. Plug & sockets form is G.



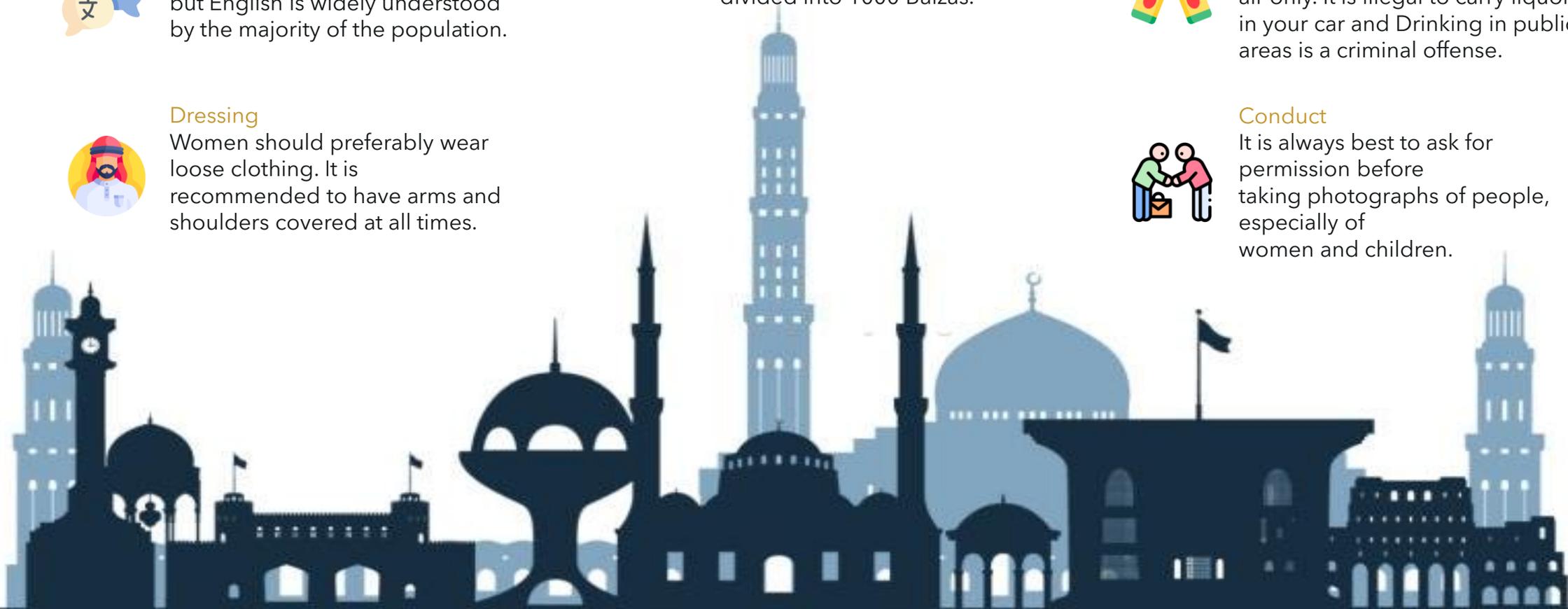
Alcohol

Non-Muslims are permitted to bring in two liters of alcohol by air only. It is illegal to carry liquor in your car and Drinking in public areas is a criminal offense.



Conduct

It is always best to ask for permission before taking photographs of people, especially of women and children.



WHERE TO STAY IN OMAN



The Sultanate of Oman offers a wide range of hotels - from three-star to luxury five-star - to suit all budgets and tastes, and visitors can expect exceptional service. In 2021, there are more than 500 branded and non-branded properties in Oman. Five-star hotels are dominating the hospitality market in Oman but there are plenty of midscale and four-star category hotels as well. Also, there are locally managed, unclassified properties that offer an authentic traditional experience of Omani hospitality.

The recent development of tourism in the country has encouraged expansion into natural areas with fewer visitors, such as the regions around the mountains of Nizwa and the coast along Sur where striking, unique desert and mountain camps are available. Moreover, even today it is possible to camp freely anywhere in Oman, including in the mountains and on the beaches under a canopy of stars.





HISTORY & CULTURE OF OMAN



Oman offers a rich and fascinating culture. Traces of the country's extraordinary heritage can be found in its archaeological sites, historical buildings, craftsmanship, clothing, and cuisine.

The Land Of Frankincense: Oman has always been one of the largest exporters of the resin that comes from the local *Boswellia sacra* tree. The Dhofar region is the starting point for the famous incense route that first connected the Arabian Peninsula with the Mediterranean in Roman times.

Unesco World Heritage Sites: Land of Frankincense, The traditional irrigation systems known as aflaj. Then there are the historic sites of Bat, Al-Khutm and Al Ain, which form the largest and best-preserved collection of settlements and necropolises from the 3rd millennium BC in the world. Finally, there is the immense fort in Bahla, capital of the Banu Nebhan tribe from the 12th to the end of the 15th century.



The Forts: Enormous castles, magnificent, immense forts can be found on high ground and rocky outcrops throughout the Sultanate. Muscat, the capital city, is dominated by the awe-inspiring Mirani and Jalali Forts. The Bait Naman is also an unmissable sight. Jabrin Castle is also spellbinding, with its secret passages, painted ceilings and courtyards enclosed by delicately carved wooden panels. From the highest point of the building the views of the Hajar Mountains are breathtaking. Dhofar's Taqah Castle, the birthplace of Oman's current ruler, Sultan Qaboos, has been fully restored.

The Bedouin: There are many nomadic tribes in Oman who live not only in the deserts but also in the mountainous areas and along the coast. Bedouins are very hospitable people who are faithful to their traditions but also show a cautious openness to the modern world.





WHAT'S THERE IN OMAN?

The Charming Capital, Muscat: The capital of the country - where traditional architecture sits beside stunning beaches and bustling *souks* - reflects Oman's past and its present.



The Desert of Oman: Seventy per cent of Oman is desert and there are many ways to explore it. A journey into the desert allows visitors to witness the daily lives of the exceptionally hospitable Bedouins who still live on its outskirts.



The Wadis and The Mountains: Scenic villages with fertile, lush orchards bearing almonds, apricots and pomegranates can be found in Oman's mountain ranges. The lower Jabal Akhdar and the higher Jabal Shams. With spectacular oases and natural jade green pools scattered along their lengths, the wadis are valleys formed by flowing streams.



The Musandam Peninsula: Separated from the rest of Oman by the UAE. 2000m high mountains meet the sea with stunning fjords and crystal-clear waters making this area one of the best diving and snorkeling spots in the world.



The Omani Coast: From the Sandy coast in Muscat to the tropical beaches with turquoise water in Salalah. Oman is the ideal destination for anyone who loves to spend time by the shore.



Salalah and Dhofar: A completely different side to Oman can be found in the far south of the country. Apart from its Khareef season (July/August), Salalah offers tropical fruit plantations and stalls loaded with coconuts, bananas and mangos. It is the perfect place to sit back and relax.

THE CHARMING CAPITAL – MUSCAT



Located at the foot of the Hajar Mountains, Muscat faces the Arabian Sea. Architecturally, the city is characterized by a typical oriental Arabesque style with its low-standing white and sand-colored houses. The skyline is dotted with the minarets and domes of the city's mosques.

There is plenty in Muscat to captivate the visitor. Start with a stroll along the **Muttrah Corniche** (seafront). The same area is also home to the **best-stocked souk** in the Arabian Peninsula. One can easily find traditional clothes, jewelry, spices, antiques, hand-woven Bedouin carpets, and craft workshops.

The breathtaking **Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque**, opened in 2001, is a must for anyone visiting the country. Its elegantly carved arches lead to the courtyard from there you can enter the huge main prayer hall, entirely decorated in white, blue, and gold.

You may not be able to venture inside the **Al Alam Royal Palace** in the Old Muscat area, but it is still worth a visit. Opposite the Palace, the imposing forms of the **Jalali and Mirani Forts** stand on the high ground around the city and are among its most distinguishing features. The beautiful home of **Bait al Zubair** is a complex of private buildings transformed into an ethnographic museum.

Nature lovers will take great pleasure in discovering the flora and fauna of the Sultanate – including some in fossilized form – at the fantastic **Natural History Museum** in the Ministry of Heritage and Culture Building in the Al Khuwair area.



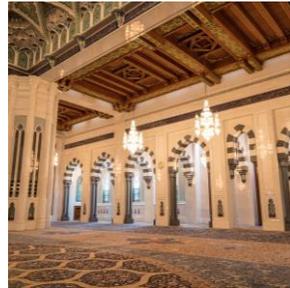
JEWELS OF MUSCAT CITY



Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque



Oman's most fascinating mosque.



The Royal Opera House



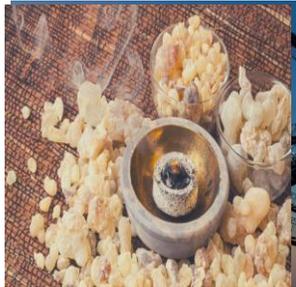
The Royal Opera House Muscat is Oman's premier venue for musical arts and culture.



The National Museum



Sultanate's flagship cultural institution, showcasing the nation's heritage of Oman.



Mutrah Souq



Long-running, old-fashioned bazaar.



Natural History Museum



See environment diversity, geology, plants, insects, wild animals and marine life.



The Al Alam Palace



The ceremonial palace of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

OTHER EXCURSIONS FROM MUSCAT



Muscat By Night

Drive along the waterfront corniche and take our first stop at the bustling Muttrah Souq. The colorful souq will take you at least a century back. Then enjoy a short walk along the corniche with lots and lots of photo opportunities. Then proceed for a photo stop to the magnificent Al Alam Palace, the official palace of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos flanked by the 16th-century Portuguese forts Mirani & Jalali.



Wadi Walk

An ideal choice for those wanting to experience Oman's scenic beauty. The tour starts with a drive along with the quaint fishing village of Quriyat. Stop at imah sinkhole. Proceed to the pretty Wadi Shab. For those inclined, it is possible to walk right up to the source of the Wadi through lush green plantations of lemon, banana, and dates.



Jabal Akhdar Trail

Visit the Nizwa Round tower Fort & the Nizwa Souk. Drive to the pretty village of Birkat Al Al Jebel Al Akhdar is famed for its fruit orchards typically laid out terrace style along the slopes of mountains, which are endowed with natural springs and aflaj system. The villages of Saiq, Wadi Bani Habib (the village of the old houses) & Al Ain dot the landscape



Oman's Grand Canyon

Visit Nizwa Round Tower Fort before proceeding ahead. Our next stop takes us to Wadi Nakher located in the depth of our deepest canyon. Visit Misfah a pretty mountain village followed by Al Hamra Continue for a visit to Wadi Nakheer, while heading for Jebel Shams stop at the terrace farming village of Wadi Ghul.

NIZWA – THE OLD CAPITAL OF OMAN



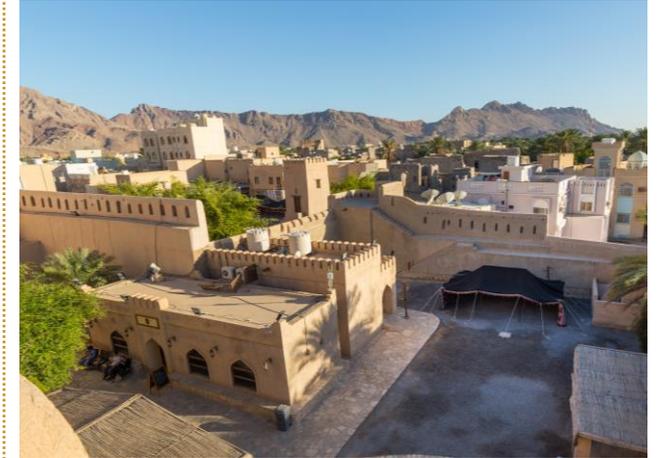
The enchanting city of Nizwa lies in the middle of a breathtaking mountainous region and is an excellent starting point for trips into Oman's deserts from the north of the country. During the 6th and 7th centuries, it was the capital and has managed to preserve the flavor and richness of its quintessential Omani-styled buildings.

Nizwa's outstanding *souk*, one of the most beautiful and bountiful in the country, showcasing a selection of items made from wood, clay, and precious metals, as well as meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, and spices. Fridays, there is the unmissable sight of a *large cattle market*. Bedouins from a number of different tribes flock here to buy and sell camels and other animals.

Nizwa is also renowned for its beautiful architecture and the *mighty fort* that stands tall over the city. Famous for its round guard tower – it has a diameter of 45 meters and is 34 meters taller than any of the other fortifications – the fort is now home to an interesting museum.

Nizwa is a great base for side trips, including to old villages like Tanuf and *Birkat Al Mawz*. *Al Hamra* is considered the most authentic and unspoiled village in Oman, with picturesque buildings reminiscent of the beautiful ochre houses of bygone days. *Bahla* is a well-known ancient town famous for Bahla Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the exceptional craftsmanship of its potters.

A short drive away is *Jabrin Castle*, built-in 1670 as the summer palace of the ruling Imam. The castle has been fully restored and now houses a museum, as well as a special Sun and Moon Chamber, said to be blessed with magical powers.





THE WADIS OF OMAN

Wadi Bani Khalid: Located between the desert and the coast, is impeccably beautiful, and lined with green plots planted with leaning date trees. Have a leisurely swim in a huge natural swimming pool surrounded by a rugged ravine and vibrant date palms.



Wadi Ash Shab : Wadi Shab, where the fresh waters that flow from the mountains merge with the saltwater of the sea, you must, after crossing a body of water by boat, walk along limestone ravines, following the course of the dried river.



Wadi Al Arbeieen: The wadi is formed by a huge ravine on the eastern side of Mount Hajar. Around 90 minutes outside of Muscat, It is a pretty enjoyable wadi, featuring lots of rock-crawling and water crossing with the car.



Wadi Hawer: This impressive rawwadi is less commercialized. Its runningwaterfalls, vast and vibrant blue freshwater pools, stunning rock features are some amazing features of this place.



THE DESERT OF OMAN



Sharqiya Sands: The vast Sharqiya desert - also known as the Wahiba Sands, since this is the name of the local tribe - lies at the heart of Oman. Throughout the day, its dunes change color from white to yellow to red. Just a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Muscat or Sur, it is the most easily accessible desert area in the country. Using either of these two cities as a base means you can experience the desert on a day trip. For an unforgettable experience, visitors can spend up to two days crossing the entire Sharqiya desert from north to south, ending the journey with the sight of golden dunes descending into the Arabian Sea.

Rub' Al-khali: A vast area of Oman is covered by the Rub' al Khali, the largest expanse of sand in the world. This Arabic phrase means "the Empty Quarter", and this desert stretches over a quarter of the entire Arabian Peninsula. Its enormous surface area (twice the size of Victoria) lies partly in the Sultanate and partly in neighboring Saudi Arabia and Yemen. One of the few areas on Earth not to have been fully explored, it was nicknamed the Desert of the Deserts by the explorer Wilfred Thesiger. As it covers the northern region of Dhofar, the southern part of the Sultanate, it is accessible from the city of Salalah. A number of tour operators organize trips lasting several days in the area.





THE MOUNTAINS OF OMAN

Al Jabal Al Akhdar (green Mountain): This rises to a height of 2,980 meters and is famous for its wide plateau close to the summit. The journey from Muscat to Al Jabal Al Akhdar takes about two hours. Jabal Akhdar is known for its Mediterranean climate and spread across the mountain are many Omani villages.



Jabal Shams (Sun Mountain): This is the highest peak in the Arabian Peninsula, rising to an altitude of 3,004 meters above sea level. Close to the peak lies a deep chasm called the "An Nakhr Balcony". Jabal Shams is so-called because it is the first place to greet sunlight at dawn and the last to say farewell at dusk.



Samhan Mountain (Dhofar): Samhan Mountain is one of the most important mountain ranges in the Governorate of Dhofar, with a maximum height of 2,100 meters. Besides the Arabian leopard (considered a rare animal), these mountains are home to a number of other mammals such as the Arabian gazelle, foxes, and the Nubian ibex.



Arabian fjords at Musandam: The Musandam Peninsula is an enclave of Oman separated from the rest of the country by the United Arab Emirates. It is known for its Arabian fjords – tall cliffs plunging into the sea and creating marvelous views.



THE OMANI COAST



Oman is the ideal destination for anyone who loves to spend time by the shore.

Enjoying the coast in Muscat

Muscat has a busy port that offers plenty of opportunities to explore the coastline from the sea. Visitors can hire a boat, or go snorkeling, diving, game fishing, kayaking, sailing, or kitesurfing. Boat trips to Bandar Khayran and Dimaniyat Islands are a must-do experience, particularly for diving & snorkeling enthusiasts. Finally, southeast of Muscat is the beautiful Fins Beach, famous for its beckoning turquoise waters.

Sur and Ras Al Hadd

Even today Sur is one of the most important hubs for the construction and preservation of dhows, the distinctive boats from the Sultanate. While Ras Al Hadd, east of Sur is the meeting point of the Oman Sea and the Arabian Sea. Its beach and the nearby one at Ras Al Jinz are famous for the thousands of green turtles who lay their eggs here each year, with the nesting season stretching from June to September.

Salalah and Dhofar

Dhofar's coastal landscape also features a large number of freshwater springs and striking lagoons known as khawrs, home to a huge range of birds, including flamingos. Take to the water on a boat trip - some combine dolphin watching, diving, and fishing and stops for inland walks - and admire the coastal scenery from the sea.

The Musandam Peninsula

The best way to appreciate the rugged, fjord-like terrain of the Musandam Peninsula is to view it from the sea. In Khasab, half or full-day trips that include dolphin watching, snorkeling and kayaking can be organized on a traditional Omani dhow.





DESERT ACTIVITIES IN OMAN

Quad Biking: As you recline on custom-made seating and enjoy your timeless moment, gaze at the inky blue, star-studded sky and lose yourself in the magical tranquility of the Al Sharqiya desert..



Camel Ride: Camel rides will take you on an unforgettable journey across the Al Sharqiya Sands, providing you with breathtaking views and refreshments. Enjoy our different offerings ranging from sunrise, sunset, trekking, and desert exploration rides.



Private BBQ Dinner : As you recline on custom-made seating and enjoy your timeless moment, gaze at the inky blue, star-studded sky and lose yourself in the magical tranquility of the Al Sharqiya desert.



Glamping: Experience a small desert adventure with a magnificent overnight stay in a Bedouin tent in the middle of one of the most beautiful sand deserts in the world.



SEA ACTIVITIES IN OMAN

Scuba Diving And Snorkeling:

Oman is a popular destination for divers. The bay at Bandar Al Khayran, the Daymaniyat Islands Nature Reserve, the sites in the Musandam region, and the largely unexplored depths of Dhofar are spellbinding and offer opportunities for astonishing encounters with gentle sea dwellers.



Boat Trips: A boat trip from Muscat is a must whenever you get time while staying in this charming city. A variety of sea excursions are organized by Zahara tours: dolphin-watching cruises, half-day or full-day beach day out, and boat trips to discover the Musandam Peninsula. Cruises take place in a wide range of vessels, including the traditional dhows, catamarans, yachts, and speedboats.



Fishing: A rich array of sea life exists in the waters of Oman, attracting fishermen from across the globe. All the big predators and game fish can be found near the coast, while large pelagics can be targeted further out. Zahara Tours organizes fishing trips in Oman.



Kite Surfing: From May to September, the wind on the island of Masirah is strong and constant, making it a leading kite surfing destination. It's a five-hour drive south from Muscat to Shanna'a followed by a 90-minute ferry ride to the island.



ADVENTURE IN OMAN

4wd Tours: In addition to traveling along the excellent tracks and roads, 4WDs can power up slopes and into wadis. With 4WD you can experience breathtaking views from Wadi an Nakhar and Wadi Ghul. Mountain drives through Wadi Arbyaean and in the Musandam region offers an unforgettable experience.



Mountain Biking: The Sultanate of Oman is the perfect place for bicycle touring and mountain biking in the winter. Professional guides lead a journey of discovery through the Hajar Mountains and its traditional villages. Routes range from flat through the palm groves to challenging tracks at an altitude of 2000 meters.



Climbing: Oman has different climbing sites, with something to suit adventurers of all levels. At 300 meters, the rock face of Wadi Ghul is one of the most famous spots. There are also several hills near Muscat that are ideal locations for climbing.



Caving: Huge networks of underground areas exist in the Hajar Mountains, including Majlis Al Jinn, the second largest cave chamber in the world. At the foot of Jebel Akhdar, the Al Hoota cave is equipped for public access. *Caving required training and professional supervision.*



BIRD WATCHING IN OMAN

Oman witnesses huge swarms of migratory birds during their seasonal journey between their nesting habitats and the places where they spend winters, especially those birds migrating from Europe and East Asia. Many birds, especially waterfowl, migrate from faraway regions like northern Siberia and travel about five thousand kilometers. Visitors can see many species of birds in each of Oman's different regions. Al Hickman Peninsula, Masirah Island, Al Wusta Governorate, beaches, the Lagoons, the beaches and springs in Dhofar are ideal places for bird observation. A variety of exotic species also lives in Dimaniyat Islands and in Musandam.

Top sites for bird watching include: Masirah Island | Sawadi, Fahl and Daymaniyah | Jabal Akhdar | Barr al Hikman | Mirbat | Muntasar | Qatbit | Tawi Attair, Dhofar region and many more.



GOLFING IN OMAN



Currently, there are three different golf courses in Oman:

Almouj course (www.almoujgolf.com) was designed by Greg Norman and follows the outlines of the dunes alongside the Sea of Oman. Almouj Golf adds to the Sultanate's attractions and positions the country as a growing destination for worldwide golfers.

Ghala Valley (www.ghalagolf.com) is found in the unique setting of a wadi. This iconic course was designed by renowned British golfer, Bill Langmuir.

Jebel Sifa Golf course (<https://www.jebelsifah.com/en/golf>) The nine-hole golf course at Jebel Sifah is something truly special and unique in Oman. Designed by Harradine, it is the only course with a seaside location, and is also protected by the mountains.





USEFUL VOCABULARY



The most formal greeting is:
as-salaamu alaykum
(peace be with you), to which the response is *wa alaykum assalaam* (and with you).



Welcome: *ahlan wa sahan.*



Goodbye: *maasalama.*



A more informal greeting is:
sabah al khayr (good day), to which the response is *sabah annur* (which literally means "day of light").



Thank you: *shukran*
You're welcome: *afuan.*



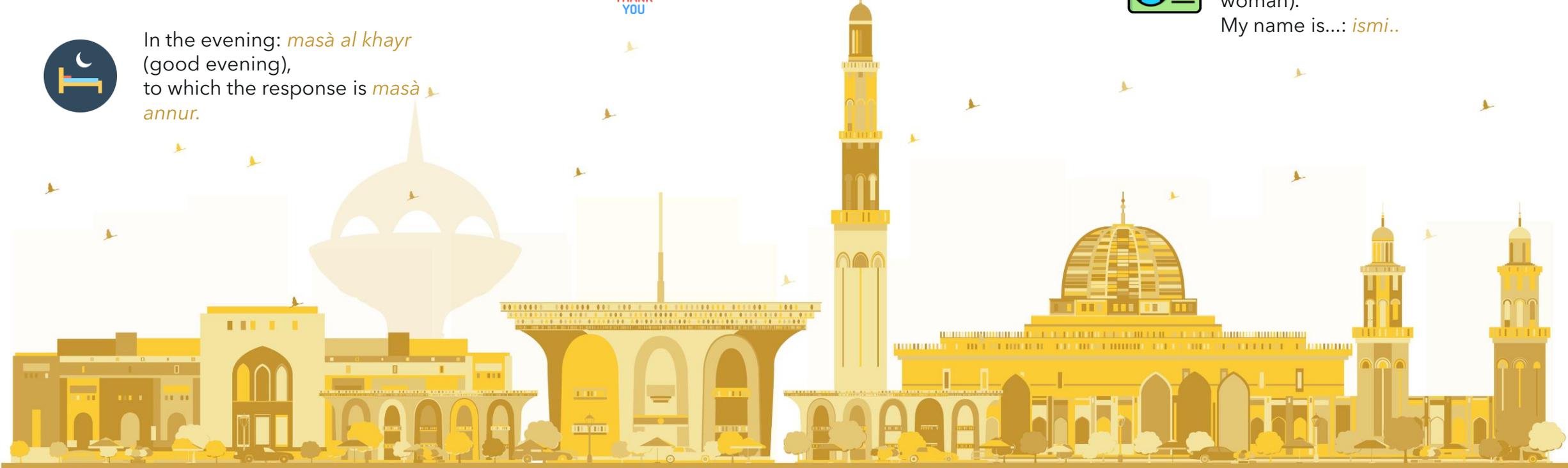
In the evening: *masà al khayr* (good evening), to which the response is *masà annur.*



How are you?: *kef halak?* (if you are asking a man) or *Kef halik?* (if you are asking a woman).
I am Well: *ana mabsout* (man), *ani mabsouta* (woman).



What's your name?: *Aysh ismak?* (if you are asking a man) or *aysh ismik?* (if you are asking a woman).
My name is...: *ismi..*





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