



# Oman

**Oman Cultural Tour**

**Hosted by Mike Taverner**

**18 January - 29 January 2019 | 12 days**





## Your tour host

Your expert tour leader, Mike Taverner, is an experienced group leader and enthusiastic walker having completed many recreational and wilderness walks. He is not a frantic 'must get there quickly' walker but one who enjoys absorbing the sights, sounds and experiences of the surrounds.

Mike leads Active Travel groups on walking adventures in West Timor, Nagaland, Peru, Japan and Ethiopia and always ensures that he is well informed of the local conditions and is careful to choose destinations based on amazing cultural diversity, delicious cuisine and areas of natural history.



## What to expect

Combining breath-taking natural beauty with an expertly maintained cultural heritage, the Sultanate of Oman is one of the least-known, yet most exciting destinations in the Middle East. The country also provides many wonderful opportunities for walking and trekking. Especially the mountains of North Oman with their rugged scenery, calming solitude- where people live much as they have lived for centuries. There are breath-taking views, dramatic canyons and gorges and high altitude plateaus.

The treks range from easy walks to longer treks over difficult terrain. Many of the trails follow centuries-old routes through the mountains and are still in use by mountain villagers as the only means of access to some of the most isolated settlements.



## Highlights

- Explore traditional souqs
- Walks in the mountains, wadis and amongst the date palms
- Short trek to view Muscat from the other side
- Experience Omani hospitality at home
- A camel trek and desert camp
- Meet Omanis in their villages, Bedouins in the desert



# Your experience begins here...

Friday 18 January 2019 | Arrive Muscat | D

Welcome to Muscat, the capital city of Oman which is a unique blend of ancient and modern lies in the middle of a maze of brown pleated mountains on the shores of the Arabian Sea. The city has undergone dramatic development in the past two or three decades, however it has never lost its pride in its heritage and culture. In the afternoon, you are invited for a walk with Mike along the delightful corniche past quaint merchants' houses fronted by carved wooden balconies and through Muttrah souq. This evening you enjoy a welcome dinner in one of the small restaurants in the corniche or on Qurum Beach.

Saturday 19 January 2019 | Muscat | BD

Experience the best of Muscat on a half-day tour that takes you through this fascinating city. Our first stop will be the Grand Mosque which is an architectural marvel and a must-see for any visitor to Muscat. We then delve into the waterside fish market where you will be treated to the buzzing noise of the price haggling, and feel the salt in the air. Your tour also includes a visit the Bait Al Zubair Museum, a photo stop at the magnificent Al Aalam Palace (the official residence of Sultan Qaboos) flanked by the twin Portuguese forts of Mirani & Jalali before continuing to Muttrah souq with its labyrinth of narrow covered alleys where the exotic smells of mounds of spices, coffee, ancient remedies and enticing perfumes fill the air. In the afternoon, walk the Riyam-Muttrah mountain trail. This two hour walk takes us along an old mule track, passing an abandoned village and involving a fairly steep climb and then down into the wadi. At the top of the climb, we will be treated to some great views of the harbour and Muttrah. This short walk should be a good introduction to the varied landscape of Oman. This evening we enjoy dinner with an Omani family – a unique opportunity to learn a lot about Omani culture and etiquettes.

Sunday 20 January 2019 | Muscat to Al Shab | BLD

Today we depart Muscat and make our way through rocky mountains to Wadi Silil and Bimah Sinkhole, a spectacular limestone crater with blue green water at the bottom. Continue our drive along the Arabian Coastline to Tiwi where we can enjoy a short walk. The wadi snakes its way through the jagged mountains with flowing water that opens out into several crystal-clear pools along the way. The lush little village has lots of palm trees, lemons and other crops.

Monday 21 January 2019 | Al Shab to Sur and Ras Al Hadd | BLD

This morning we start with a walk in Wadi Shab which is one of Oman's most scenic wadis. It is a canyon type valley with flowing water throughout the year. After our walk we continue towards the coastal town of Sur where we can see many seaside mansions. A few kilometres away are the ruins at of Qalhat, one of the oldest towns and seaports in Oman. However, only the remnants of the city walls remain here today. We also visit the village of Ayja, a small town on the other side of Sur, lulled by the sea and quite charming with a small light-house, quaint houses on both sides of narrow alleys, with goats and sheep wandering the narrow streets. This evening we are taken to Ras Al Hadd which is one of the largest nesting areas for Green Turtles in the Indian Ocean.

Tuesday 22 January 2019 | Ras Al Hadd to Desert Camp | BLD

Today we travel through some fascinating diversity of Oman's landscape; from verdant wadis to the dunes of Wahiba and to the mountains and some pretty oasis towns too. The drive takes you through a cross section of Oman's geography through arid lands, wadis, and oasis villages. We begin at Jalaan Bani Bu Ali where we may be lucky enough to get a glimpse of the castle before travelling on to Wadi Bani Khalid where we will have some time for a relaxing swim. Our journey to the desert camp then continues through Bidiya and Al Ghabbi and enter the sandy wilderness of Wahiba. Tonight is spent in a fixed desert camp.

Wednesday 23 January 2019 | Desert Camp | BLD

Our day will be spent exploring the desert environment as we set out with for camel trek for a night camping in the desert.

Thursday 24 January 2019 | Desert camp to Nizwa | BL

Getting up early in the morning provides you a fantastic opportunity to explore the dunes by foot or to just watch the shifting colours of the dunes. We then depart our camp to make our way through Ibra, Al Mundaybi to Sinaw where we can explore the souq and Birkat al Mawz before taking a walk with through a palm plantation and the old village.

Friday 25 January 2019 | Nizwa to Jabal Akhdar | BLD

It is estimated that there are over 500 forts, castles and towers in Oman. Our visit today would include a few of them, which are remarkable in their architecture and style. This morning we visit Nizwa souq and fort before taking a scenic drive to Jabal Akhdar where we take a 2 hours walk through Al Aqr, Al Ayn and Ash Shirayjah which are all part of a culturally inspiring hike, walking past mosques, old abandoned homes with wooden and iron handmade doors in different colours. We will have some wonderful views to the old village of Wadi Bani Habib where we walk down the winding stone steps into a narrow gorge filled with walnut and apricot trees. The greenery contrasts with the brown bare rocks of the mountain and the ruins of the village on the other side.

Saturday 26 January 2019 | Jabal Al Akhdar to Misfat Al Abriyyin | BLD

Travelling via Nizwa we continue on Bahla Fort, a world heritage site and Jabreen Castle, considered one of the finest in Oman. Today we also have the opportunity for a short walk to a traditional pottery in Bahla then back through Al Hamra and on to Misfat Al Abriyyin where 400 year old mud houses are still standing and occupied. Later we take our second walk towards Hayl al Jawari.

Sunday 27 January 2019 | Al Hamra and Wadi Nakhur | BLD

Tour Al Hamra, a quaint little village at the foot of the Hajjar mountains houses. Here we visit Bait al Safah Museum and Wadi Guhl before walking through an abandoned village and then along the canyon floor towards Wadi Nakhur where we stop for a picnic lunch before returning to Misfat.

Monday 28 January 2018 | Misfat Al Abriyyin to Muscat | BLD

Today is a great day to be amazed at the breathtaking journey in your 4WD across the mountains. terraced farming and beautiful mountain villages await you. We travel through Birkat Al Sharaf and Sharaf Alamein where we will have panoramic views of over 1000 square kilometres of the whole Jabal Akhdar area. We also visit the Al Hazm castle, built around the beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century towards the end of the reign of Al Yarubi tribe over Oman. This tribe is most famously known for removing the Portuguese from Oman. A good part of the remaining drive is along the picturesque Wadi Bani Awf which again gives you opportunity to see how people live in such difficult terrain that you would need a 4WD to go anywhere! Upon reaching the main road, you would continue to Muscat.

Tuesday 29 January 2019 | Depart Muscat | B

Bid farewell to your fellow travellers as our tour finishes after breakfast.

**\$7792pp twin share**

**Single room supplement: \$1310\* (subject to availability)**

## Inclusions

Accommodation for (11) nights on double share basis

All transfer and sightseeing will be using  
air-conditioned tourist vehicles

English speaking local spot guide for sightseeing places

One-time entrances at the monument places as  
per program

Services of a local tour escort

Services of Mike Taverner

Meals as per itinerary

All taxes including current Government taxes, which are  
subject to change without any notice



## Exclusions

All flights

Travel Insurance

Personal expenses

Beverages for all meals

Other meals not stated in the itinerary

Gratuities for tour guides & drivers

## Booking information

Securing your place A minimum number of tour guests is required to confirm and guarantee this tour's departure. Spaces are limited; book early to avoid disappointment.

All deposits and interim payments are non-refundable and no exemptions can be made for any tour guest who has paid a deposit and can no longer attend the tour. Progressive payments will be required for this tour.

Deposit \$500.00 per person upon booking your place on the tour

Interim and Final payment: Balance due 60 days prior to departure

TravelPay allows you to pay for your holiday by interest-free monthly instalments on your own credit/debit card.

You choose: you can pay over 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 10 months. Ask us for more details today.

\*The tour price may change, subject to confirmation of all services. As the tour cost is based on the US dollar, a currency surcharge may be applicable if the US dollar exchange rate falls prior to final payment.

Travel insurance Travel insurance is required for all tour guests. We suggest taking out a comprehensive insurance policy on payment of your deposit to protect your non-refundable payments in the unlikely event of an unforeseen cancellation.

Disinclination to travel is not covered by travel insurance. It is the responsibility of each tour guest to ensure that their travel insurance covers their personal requirements and any pre-existing medical conditions.



MEMBER

ACCREDITED

For bookings please contact our experienced travel advisors

**1300 783 188**

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