

A CULTURAL TOUR OF OMAN

Hosted by Mike Taverner
8 - 19 January 2020

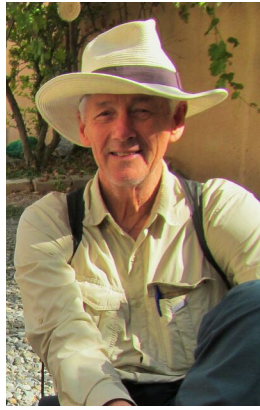


active
TRAVEL



Your tour leader

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 adventures in Japan, Malaysia, West Timor, Peru, Ethiopia and India - Sikkim, Nagaland and Punjab. In developing this itinerary, Mike has visited Oman and with local guides, researched the local conditions and is full of enthusiasm for the amazing environment and its cultural and natural history.



Highlights

- Spend an evening with an Omani family
- Short trek in Muscat with great views
- Walks in the mountains, Wadis, plantations
- Explore traditional souqs
- Visit to Bedouins in the desert
- With camels, camp in the desert



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.

Visit traditional markets (souqs), 'feel' the vast sandy deserts and the picturesque wadis, explore ancient forts and castles.

Oman welcomes you! Ahlan wa Sahlan!



Wed 8 Jan'20 | Arrive Muscat | D

Welcome to Muscat, the capital city of Oman which is a unique blend of ancient and modern. It is a beautiful, clean city, which lies in the middle of a maze of brown pleated mountains on the shores of the Arabian Sea. In the afternoon, we visit the Bait Al Zubair Museum. With the variety of exhibits, the museum serves as a real window on Oman's rich heritage and culture. We then take a guided walk along the delightful corniche past quaint merchants' houses fronted by carved wooden balconies and through Muttrah Souq, and learn of its fascinating history. This evening you are invited to a welcome dinner.

Thu 9 Jan'20 | Muscat | BD

Today you experience the best of Muscat on a half-day tour that takes you through this fascinating capital city of Oman. 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. Your tour also includes a visit 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 old mule track between Riyam and Muttrah. Along the way we are treated to some great views of the harbour and Muttrah – it is a great introduction to the varied landscape of Oman. This evening we enjoy dinner with an Omani family, savour authentic dishes while it's also the unique opportunity to learn a lot about Omani culture and etiquettes.

Fri 10 Jan'20 | Muscat to Al Shab | BLD

Today we depart Muscat and make our way through rocky mountains to visit our first wadi and catch the Bamah Sinkhole, a spectacular limestone crater with blue green water at the bottom. Our drive along the Arabian Coastline takes us to the coastal village of Tiwi where we can explore a picturesque wadi as it snakes its deep way through the mountains. We have our first view of the ancient irrigation systems that support the production of dates along the wadis.

Sat 11 Jan'20 | Al Shab to Sur | BLD

We start in Wadi Ash Shab which is one of Oman's most scenic wadis with its canyon-type valley, flowing water and deep, clear pools. After our walk we continue towards the coastal town of Sur where dhows builders still operate. Near to Sur is the charming village of Al Ayjah with its small lighthouse and quaint houses lining narrow alleys. We overnight on Oman's far eastern point at Ras Al Hadd where the sandy beaches play host to nesting turtles.

Sun 12 Jan'20 | Ras Al Hadd to Desert Camp | BLD

Today we travel through some of Oman's diverse Oman – starting on the beaches and through verdant wadis, rocky deserts and into the vast dunes of Wahiba. We pass Jalaan Bani Bu Hasan with its forts, old houses and castles whose towers offer views of endless stretches of surrounding sands. A relaxing swim is possible as we pass Wadi Bani Khalid before continuing our journey to the desert camp in the sandy wilderness of Wahiba. Tonight is spent in a fixed desert camp.



Mon 13 Jan'20 | Desert Camp | BLD

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

Tue 14 Jan'20 | Desert camp to Nizwa | BLD

Getting up early provides you a fantastic opportunity to explore the dunes by foot or to just watch the shifting colours. We then depart our camp to make our way to Sinaw where we can explore the souq which is amongst one of the oldest preserved souqs in Oman.

Wed 15 Jan'20 | Nizwa to Jabal Akhdar | BLD

It is estimated that there are over 500 forts, castles and towers in Oman. Today we'll get to appreciate their remarkable history, architecture and style. We visit the renown Nizwa souq and fort before taking a scenic drive up to Jabal Akhdar stopping at Birkat Al Mauz to walk through a palm plantation and the old village. At Jabal Akhdar we take a 2 hour 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 handmade doors in different colours.

Thu 16 Jan'20 | Jabal Al Akhdar to Misfat Al Abriyyin | BLD

Travelling via Nizwa we continue on to Bahla, its world heritage listed fort and Jabreen Castle, considered one of the finest in Oman. 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 nicely with the brown bare rocks of the mountain and the ruins of the village on the other side. In Bahla we have a short walk to a traditional pottery before heading back through Al Hamra and on to Misfat Al Abriyyin where 400 years old mud houses are still standing and occupied. Opportunities for afternoon walks along village tracks.

Fri 17 Jan'20 | 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.

Sat 18 Jan'20 | 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 and of course enjoy great views. 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 18th century towards the end of the reign of the Al Yarubi tribe over 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!

Sun 19 Jan'20 | Depart Muscat B

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

\$7674pp twin share
Single supplement \$1283



Inclusions

Accommodation for (11) nights on twin share basis
Return airport transfers, City, Tour & Muscat Visit in air conditioning tourist vehicle
English speaking local spot guide for sightseeing places
4WD will be used from Day 3 -Day 11 (4 Pax + driver in each vehicle, maximum)
Camel rides in Wahiba sands on Day 6
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

International flight tickets
Sightseeing not included in the itinerary
Any pre- or post-tour arrangements
Travel insurance
Items of personal nature
Any other items not mentioned in Inclusions

Booking information

Booking 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 payment:	\$1,000.00 per person due within one week of the tour becoming a confirmed departure
Final payment:	Balance due 60 days prior to departure

*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.

For all enquiries, please contact your local travel agent: