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Sightseeing



With a history dating right back to 3,000 BC, Oman's unspoilt land could tell a thousand tales. It was the birthplace of queen of sheba, the last resting place of prophet job and the home and port of the famous adventurer, Sindbad the sailor. So it is no wonder that the sultanate has such an abundance of hidden treasures. From the grand forts, exquisite palaces and mystical souqs of the capital Muscat, to the undulating dunes, fresh water wadis and miles upon miles of unspoilt sandy beaches, Oman is just waiting to be discovered.

Mystical Muscat



Muscat offers the visitor a unique opportunity to witness a modern commercial center existing in harmony with its traditional culture. With its natural harbor, Muscat means 'Anchorage' and lies in natural volcanic bowl. Our tour of the Grand mosque*(except Friday) and Bait Al Zubair Museum (except Friday) is a brief introduction that traces Oman's history and development. Drive along the waterfront cornice visiting the Fish market and the colorful mattrah souq. We proceed for photo stop to magnificent Al Alam Palace, official palace of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos, flanked by the 16th century Portuguese forts mirani & jalali.

Fascinating Forts



Nizwa, capital of interior, is the birthplace of islam in the Sultanate of Oman. Nizwa boast of the famous Round Tower Fort, built in the 17th century, and its Souq renowned for its Friday cattle auction, intricately hand-curved "khanjars"(daggers) and ornamental silver jewellery. Jabrin, the finest of Oman's castles build in the last 17th century, become a seat of Omani learning. The castle displays the highest achievement in Omani ceiling painting & beautifully executed woodcarvings. Enroute to Muscat visit the pretty village of Birkat Al Mauz situated at the

foothills of Jebel Akhdar (Green Mountain). Enjoy a walk through its oasis and dense date plantations.

Twilight Dhow Cruise



Transfer from the hotel to marina to embark on a relaxed dhow (fishermen's boat)cruise. See Muscat coast through the eyes of ancient seafarers who plied this route for centuries. Have a brief stop at a natural cove. Photograph the spectacular Al Bustan Palace Hotel before we return back to the marina for the transfer to the hotel.

Amazing Dolphins



Transfer from the Muscat hotel to marina to embark on a boat as we search the seas for dolphins and whales. Watching wild dolphins is a thrilling way to start the day and lucky may even come across one of the many species of whales that can be found just a few kilometers from Muscat's rugged coast. Not every trip guarantees a sighting, but you are sure to enjoy a trip out to sea and enhance your knowledge of nature's most fascinating marine mammals.

Batinah Bash



A full day tour along the Batinah coast. Our first stop is the seeb fish souq by the seaside. Drive through the date palms to the sparkling springs and at nakhl. Visit the beautiful wakan village famous for its terrace farming. Our next stop is wadi abhyad which has large patches of white sedimentation and when translated means white wadi. The drive wind through the mountains with small pools water dotting the wadi bed.

Majestic Mountains



Nearing Bait Na'aman, the 300-year-old fort, you will be struck by it's beauty. Now a fully restored and refurnished country house, this fort will show you how the imam and his family traditionally lived in the shadow of Oman's majestic mountains. The castle has reinstated all of its time-honored artifacts so typical of Oman namely; khanjars, artillery, jewellery, and traditional chinaware. Proceeding to Al Awabi we take a turn off to Wadi Bani Auf. This picturesque drive takes you back thousands of years clearly shown in the stunning sedimentary mountains. For those with an adventurous spirit there is a wonderful canyon to explore on foot. The route through the mountains is dramatic while in contrast Bilad Sayt is one of Oman's most quaint villages with an antique old world appeal. Exploring this tranquil village on foot uncovers its patchwork of terrace farming and traditional houses laid out against the rocky slopes. Here a picnic can be enjoyed in perfect surroundings. After this we proceed to snake gorge where you

can experience a short walk (weather permitting) along this canyon floor renowned for its natural beauty. A short distance brings us to wadi sahtan where you will meet the traditional Omani beekeepers of the area. Finally you will get to examine the beautifully curved door at the al hazm fort before returning to Muscat.

Wadi Arbayeen



This tour provides us with many interesting contrasts. We proceed towards the fishing town of Quriyat through the stark mountain terrain. Drive through this fishing village visiting the 400 year old Quriyat fort before heading for the fish souk where a variety of fish is traded for local consumption as well as export. Drive along the picturesque waterfront. There is good chance of spotting flamingos and eagles at an inland stream. From here we proceed towards the coast and visit the spectacular bimah sinhole which is limestone crater with blue green water at the bottom. We then start on an adventurous route cutting through the mountains. At the end of the drive, wadi arbayeen awaits with its deep pools of water set among the date palms. Enjoy a picnic lunch here and drive back via wadi mazara.

Wahiba Wilderness



The Wahiba Sands, a vast mass of undulating red and white sea of sand and dunes rising up to 200 meters, are also host a variety of flora and fauna. The ever-changing patterns of the dunes are a photographer's delight. Visit a Bedouin house in this wilderness. In stark contrast to this is wadi bani khalid. It comprises of small pretty villages embedded in the mountains. The wadi has clear deep blue water.

Oman's Grand Canyon



Drive to the foothills of the Jabal Shams mountain range. Our first stop is at the Nizwa Souq famed for its antiques and silver jewellery. A brief photo stop at the 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 with stone dwelling still in existence. While heading for jebel shams, stop at the terrace farming village of Wadi ghul. In the Jebel Akhdar range, Jebel Shams has the highest peak and offers a spectacular view.

Jabel Al Akhdar Trail



We depart from Muscat and proceed to visit the nizwa round tower fort and the nizwa souk. Drive to pretty village of Birkat Al Mauz. Enjoy a walk through the lush green date plantations. We proceed to Wadi Al Madeen. From here a 36 km stretch of winding road leads us to jebel

Akhdar (2000m above sea level) the green jewel of the Al Hajjar mountain ranges, a truly unique spot in the Arabian Peninsula. Enjoy the cool climate up in the mountains. A Jebel Al Akhdar is famed for its fruit orchards, laid out terrace style along the slopes of mountains, which are endowed with natural springs and aflaj. A large variety of fresh fruits such as peaches, apricot, fig, grapes, apple, pears, plums, almonds, walnuts are grown here. The region is well known for the pomegranate fruit which is of a very superior quality. The villages of saiq, wadi bani habib (the village of the old houses) & Al Ain dot the landscape. The villages overlook a spectacular landscape of dramatic peak, gorges and wadis. The roses of Jabal Al Akhdar fill the air with fragrance when in full bloom(March/April). Rose water is distilled in the homes of the villagers. Lunch at the Jebel Akhdar hotel.

Bird Watching Trip



Drive through the eastern hajar mountains. Turn off the main quriyat road down the dramatic wadi Mijlas with its towering cliffs and boulder-strewn dry river bed. Birds to be looked out for are Egyptian vulture, sand partridge, Indian roller, desert lark, yellow-vented bulbul, Hume's wheatear, house bunting. Proceed to quriyat. Drive through a mixture of small farm and mature native trees to rubbish dump. This is not very salubrious places but serves as a magnet for birds! Birds that can be viewed (depending on the time of year) are: grey francolin, Indian roller, little green bee-eater, tawny pipit, black redstart, desert wheatear, red-tailed wheatear, desert lesser whitethroat, purple sunbird, Arabian babbler, isabelline (Red-tailed) shrike, southern grey shrike and Indian silverbill. At the sewage farm we have a good chance of viewing the greater spotted eagle, imperial eagle, steppe eagle and bonelli's eagle as well as Egyptian and lappet-faced vultures. We will then head to the seashore dotted with number of creeks and lagoons. We would hope to view grey heron, squacco heron, spoonbill, greater flamingo, osprey, lesser sand plover, greater sand plover, sanderling, redshank, greenshank, common kingfisher. Picnic lunch can be had enroute. The return route is over the escarpment with dramatic views over the plain and the hajar mountains and then to Muscat.

Serene Salalah



Salalah , the "garden city" of the south, is a tropical paradise. Visit a garden farm, which has groves of coconut, banana, papaya and vegetables. View the old ruined houses still in existence today. Photo stop of the beautiful shanfari mosque with its exquisite artwork and stained tiles. Visit the site of prophet saleh's scared camel footprint. See the clear camel footprint on the rock. Visit Al Husn Souq where frankincense crystals of Dhofar and typical Dhofari frankincense burners are sold. Witness the sale of cattle and guns in the market. Walk along the city's promenade (waterfront cornice) where single storey houses are dwarfed by tall, swaying palm. Al Husn Palace, summer residence of his Majesty Sultan Qaboos, stands at one end of the promenade. Visit the balid museum located in the archeological site (SAT - WED ONLY).

Fabled Castles



Visit the fishing village of taqa, an old town with an interesting castle surrounded by watchtowers and taqa stone houses. Proceed onward to khor rori creek, the site of the ruined city of samhuram and capital of ancient Arabia's frankincense trade. Excavation has produced evidence of an ancient city with trade links by sea to far eastern destinations and with even distant Greece. Mirbat, the ancient capital of Dhofar, was an important town as early as the 9th century for its trade in frankincense, horses and slaves. See some of the old houses famous for their woodcarvings. If you are lucky you will see boatloads of fish arriving into the harbor. One of Dhofar's best-known historic sites is Bin Ali's tomb. The twin domed structure; tomb of Mohamed Bin Ali who died in 1135 AD is a fine example of medieval architecture.

Return via Ayn Razat

(THU - FRI only), manicured

Gardens fed by springs.

Frankincense Trail



Visit the biblical "nabi Ayoub" Prophet Job's Tomb, perched high up in the "jebels"(mountains). Enroute are spectacular views of the plains, mountain landscape and emerald green pastureland. Proceed to Mughsayl beach where "blow-holes"-(perforations in the limestone rock) through which sea water gushes during high tide. Experience the hairpin bend roads for approximately 15/20 kilo meters, which will take you to wadi. The views are breathtaking due to heights involved. This is the road that takes you to the Yemen border. At the nearby bird sanctuary, one may see seasonal birds. Enroute, the stark shape of leafless frankincense trees dot the landscape. Once traded as a commodity more precious than gold, frankincense harvested in Dhofar is rated the best in the world.

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