


experience

TRAVEL GROUP

THE
CURIOUS
TRAVELLER'S
GUIDE TO
OMAN





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TRAVEL GROUP

SALAM ALAYKUM!

From dramatic gorges to crystal clear sinkholes and beautiful luxury resorts, Oman is extraordinary and surprising in equal measure. Sitting quietly on the edge of the Arabian Peninsula, the Sultanate feels worlds away from its flashier neighbours: instead of the gleaming skyscrapers of Dubai, you'll find a staggering wealth of natural beauty, tradition and charm. Whether you'd like to visit the remarkable Grand Mosque and lose yourself in frankincense-infused souqs, marvel at the variety of awe-inspiring landscapes or simply try delicious local food and soak up the Arabian sunshine, you'll be sure to have an unforgettable experience.

This guide is designed to help you delve beneath the surface of Oman. Our specialists know the country inside out and have shared the tried-and-tested experiences that make Oman so wonderful.

At Experience Travel Group (ETG), we craft privately-guided holidays to Oman that still allow space for discovery. We have curated experiences

that you won't find anywhere else, taking you an inch off the map and into the heart of the country. And, of course, our expertise is second to none.

Plus, at only 7 hours from the UK, Oman is a much shorter trip than other ETG destinations which means you can easily swing it for a shorter break. It can also be used as a fantastic stop-off en route to India, The Maldives or other more far-flung destinations in Asia.

Curious about a holiday? Don't hesitate to get in touch - we'd be more than happy to help you discover your Oman.

CURIOUS ABOUT OMAN? TALK TO AN EXPERT ON 020 3993 8980

OUR FIVE FAVOURITE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

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1. BEDOUIN LIFE IN THE DUNES

Glimpse another world as you spend a day in the Omani desert with a traditional Bedouin family, whose way of life is sadly dwindling in the face of modernity. Adrenaline-seekers might like to try ‘dune-bashing’ in the vast sands; or you may prefer to snack on dates and coffee and admire the local craftwork with your hosts.

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2. A DAY IN THE EMPTY QUARTER

Discover the spectacular Rub Al Khali desert or ‘Empty Quarter’, Dhofar’s most remarkable sight and the world’s largest expanse of uninterrupted desert. Here you will encounter a fascinating World Heritage Site known as the Lost City of Ubar, an ancient kingdom that was swallowed whole by the desert sands before being excavated in 1992.

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3. A TREK TO WAKAN VILLAGE

As you head into the mountains on this guided trek up to the Wakan village, you’ll find the landscape changes from barren rock to thriving farmland. In the village itself, you’ll spot pomegranates, olives, figs, apricots and grapes growing in beautifully terraced gardens on the vertiginous slopes.

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4. CRUISE THROUGH THE FJORDS

The Musandam Peninsula is renowned for its magnificent fjords. On a traditional Dhow boat cruise you can sail to Khor Sham (fjord), alongside schools of playful dolphins if you’re lucky! Anchor near the historical Telegraph Island and Seebi Island and jump into the sparkling blue waters for some snorkelling and swimming.

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5. COASTAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM MUSCAT TO SUR

Spend a day taking in the wonders of the spectacular coastline from Muscat to Sur. Visit the Bimmah Sinkhole, filled with a mix of fresh and saltwater, in hues of turquoise and emerald green. In keeping with the beautiful swimming-spot theme, you’ll also have time to relax on one of Oman’s best beaches.



THE ETG OMAN HOTEL COLLECTION

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At Experience Travel Group, we typically look for boutique accommodation that's bursting with character. In Oman, however, the hotel offering is slightly different: larger resorts are the norm, and there are fewer independently-owned and quirky properties. That said, there are still plenty of options that are not only breathtakingly beautiful but provide extraordinary experiences for curious guests. Here are a few of our favourites.

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ALILA JABEL AKHDAR

The most luxurious hotel in the Hajar Mountains with fantastic views and a host of experiences on offer, such as geology walks, visits to nearby forts and castles and a butterfly trail, as well as abseiling and treks in the spectacular mountains.

BARR AL JISSAH

A great family option, this resort is more like three hotels in one complex, each offering a range of different age-appropriate facilities. It is located right on a lovely stretch of beach and, at only 45 minutes from the airport, it is the perfect to unwind after your inbound flight or before the trip home.

SIX SENSES ZIGHY BAY

Providing the ultimate in rustic-luxury in Oman, this extraordinary Six Senses property is set in the Musandam Peninsula on a glorious bay. Perfect for privacy in beautiful surroundings, the hotel offers pool villas, a range of dining options and incredible experiences which start the moment you arrive: the resort is accessed by a speedboat ride or paragliding flight!

ANTIQUE INN

Antique Inn is a small heritage property that has been sympathetically restored to give guests a true taste of staying in an Omani home hundreds of years ago. Set in the old quarter of Nizwa, this simply-furnished hotel is the ideal base for exploring the souqs, fort, and local restaurants.

ANANTARA AL BALEED

A beautiful resort set on a stretch of white-sand beach, Anantara Al Baleed is found in a lesser-visited southern region of Oman. With private villas suitable for couples and families alike, the accommodation is as special as the excursions: think desert adventures, nature hikes into the Dhofar mountains, swimming in gorgeous wadis and cruising on a Dhow boat.

WEATHER & WHEN TO GO

Throughout Oman, the climate is typically tropical desert: rainfall is infrequent, temperatures are hot, and the sea is warm enough for swimming year-round. In Muscat and around the north, it is sunny throughout the year. Intense heat and humidity in the UK's summer months (average highs of 38 degrees) make this a less desirable time to visit for many travellers.

Generally, the best time of year to go is between October and April. Late November to January sees warm and pleasant climes (think spring clothes by day and an extra layer by night), while it heats up to the late twenties from February to March. The southern region of Salalah bucks the trend and is perfect from late June to September, as light rains fall to reveal its lushness, while still remaining balmy and warm.



OUR FAVOURITE BEACHES



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With over 3000km of coastline skimming the Arabian sea to the southwest and the Gulf of Oman to the north, Oman makes great use of its ample beaches. Here are three of our favourite beach destinations for dazzling beauty and fantastic accommodation.

Ziggy Bay, Musandam Peninsula

Ziggy Bay consists of a mile of sandy beach shared only with one small village, which gives it a glorious sense of peace and privacy. Backed by rugged mountains and smattered with stunning inlets and fjords, the scenery here is uniquely beautiful. There is also fantastic coral, making this a great place for snorkelling and diving, and boat trips are available to explore the wider coastline.

Muscat Beach

The beaches around Muscat are not only brilliantly convenient bases for sightseeing in the capital (where the Grand Mosque, Muttrah souq and corniche await), but they're perfectly placed for dolphin watching too. Here there are many lovely resorts to choose from - our favourites are found between the Sea of Oman and the Al Hajar mountains due to the dramatic setting!

Al Baleed, Salalah

A white-sand sweep in the lesser-visited southern region of Salalah, this is the ideal spot for those seeking picture-perfect beaches with few tourists. With the summer monsoon blowing in from India, it is greener and less humid than the rest of the country, making it the ideal summer break if you want to avoid the baking heat.

WHY OMAN IS GREAT FOR FAMILIES

With its extraordinary range of landscapes and activities, Oman feels like an adventure playground for curious families. Whether dune-bashing in the desert, swimming in waterfalls or spotting dolphins, whales and hatching turtles, a holiday here is sure to create a lot of special family memories for you to take home and treasure.

What's brilliant about Oman is that it feels worlds away from the everyday, at just a 7-hour direct flight from the UK, making it realistic for a tropical half term break. It's also spotlessly clean (without feeling sterile) and home to an immaculately well-kept road system, so getting around feels safe and remarkably easy.

It's a great choice for kids of all ages. With very little ones, choosing a base such as Muscat or Salalah, from which you can gently explore the nearby beaches, scenery and culture, can make for a relaxing yet intriguing break. Those with older kids and teenagers may prefer to take advantage of the more adventurous activities, from wild camping to ziplining or magical encounters with wildlife.



CULTURE

All of our Oman experts at ETG cite the people as their favourite aspect of the country. There is a warmth and openness to the Omani culture that is palpable as soon as you land: most locals are warm, welcoming and keen to share their culture. Expect many friendly, impromptu conversations throughout your journey - and don't be surprised if your guide invites you for coffee at their home!

Despite some superficially Westernised areas, Oman remains a traditional country, and we advise that visitors are mindful of this on their travels. Visitors, and especially women, should dress conservatively to avoid offence - long sleeves and loose trousers or skirts below the knee are recommended.





FOOD AND DRINK

Omani cuisine features an interesting blend of influences from the Middle East, North Africa and India. Spices like cardamom, pepper and saffron from India are often used in soups and stews, while the bountiful grilled meats and dried fruits are characteristic of the Arabian peninsula. Dates are abundant here, and an absolute must-try!

A typical meal might consist of a mezze platter, shawarma or biryani, followed by delicious dates and cardamom coffee. As it is a Muslim country, you won't find alcohol in local restaurants, but most hotels will serve alcoholic drinks in their restaurants and bars.

GUIDES

At ETG, our holidays are privately-guided by the best in the business and Oman is no exception. Our guides are not only experts in the local history, but can add a new dimension to the region by sharing their own stories and anecdotes. As mentioned, Omanis tend to be warm and welcoming, with a sense of humour that puts travellers at ease. Plus, they can give you the inside scoop on where the locals like to eat, shop and explore.

Equally, our guides know that sometimes you might prefer to have some space to discover the destination on your own. Having a guide does not mean you need to be rigid and inflexible: on the contrary, a private tour with ETG means you have scope to adapt your schedule exactly as you see fit.

Interestingly too, tipping is not customary in Oman, so you need not worry about potential awkwardness there!



A DAY IN AND AROUND MUSCAT WITH ETG

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What better way to get a feel for ETG holidays than by giving you a taste of a typical day?

Here is an example of a classic ETG day in and around Muscat - though, do remember, all of our holidays and experiences can be fully adapted to suit your needs and travel style.

PRIVATE WALKING TOUR

9am - After breakfast, your guide collects you from your hotel in Muscat and drives you to Barka, a small seaside town, where you can take in the buzzing atmosphere of the Fish Souq.

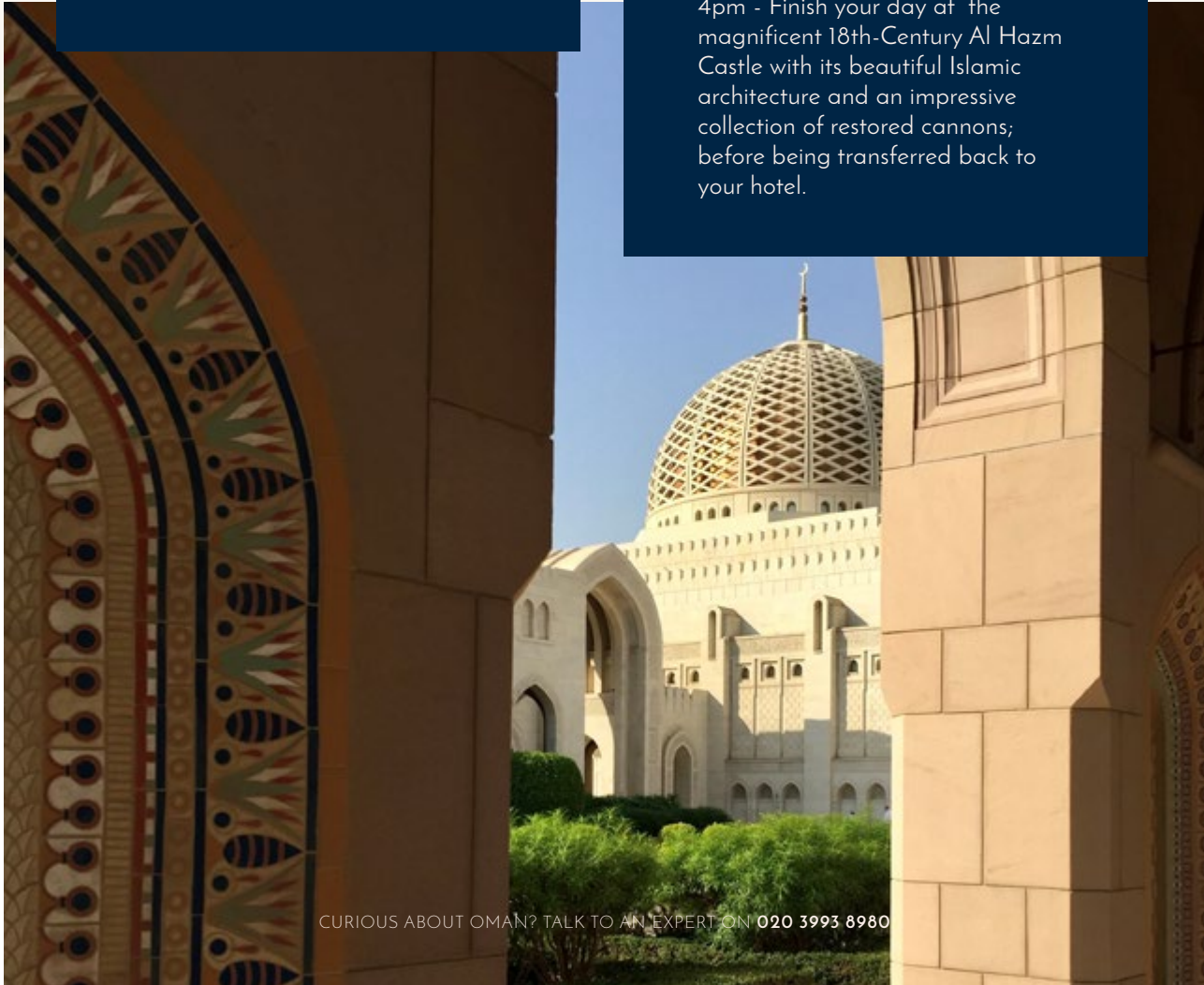
Then travel inland, past flourishing date and palm plantations, to Nakhl. Take a dip in the warm Thowra Spring waters and visit Bahla Fort, the highest in Oman. This impressive World Heritage Site dates back to the medieval Islamic period - your guide will reveal the fascinating stories held within the labyrinth of mudbrick walls.

PICNIC LUNCH AND HOT SPRINGS

2 pm - After a picnic lunch, drive along the mountain roads to Rustaq, with its ancient fort that is rich in history. Next, soak and relax in the Al Kisfr Hot Springs, where thousands of visitors come each year to bathe in the medicinal waters.

PRIVATE CULTURAL TOUR

4pm - Finish your day at the magnificent 18th-Century Al Hazm Castle with its beautiful Islamic architecture and an impressive collection of restored cannons; before being transferred back to your hotel.



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TRAVEL GROUP

BOUTIQUE EXPERIENCE-BASED HOLIDAYS MADE FOR YOU

Experience Travel Group offers boutique travel for modern explorers. With ETG, you get an entirely bespoke holiday that enables you to get under a country's skin, see the highlights in a unique way and have experiences you didn't think possible. Our guides and signature local experiences will bring the region to life and our expert consultants will ensure you find the very best hotels so that you can relax and enjoy that much-needed break.

Ultimately, we really listen to what you want in a holiday and we are there to help every step of the way. No two travellers are the same, so no two ETG holidays are the same.

Curious to find out more? Give us a call for a complimentary consultation with an Oman specialist. We're always happy to talk travel.

CALL US ON **020 3993 8980**
to arrange a consultation

or

START YOUR JOURNEY
Get in touch via our website

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Experience Travel Group is a UK specialist
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Email: info@experiencetravelgroup.com
Telephone: 020 3993 8980
www.experiencetravelgroup.com

