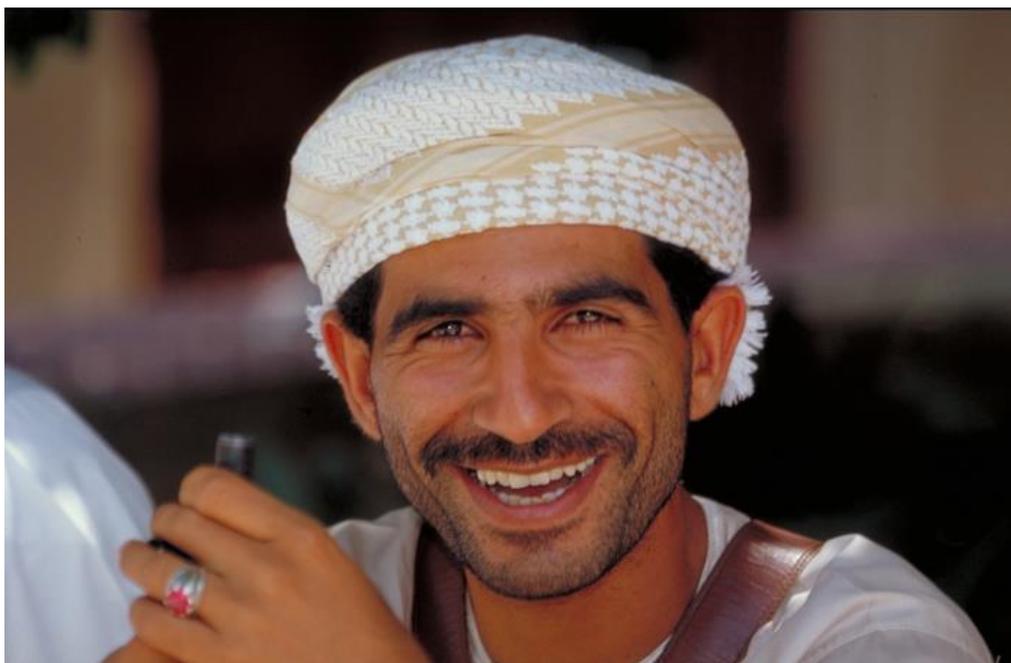


Mountains and Deserts of Oman

Open Group Departure – 23rd April to 30th April, 2017



This comprehensive guided tour of Oman visits the grand capital of Muscat, the remote mountain village of Misfah, historic Nizwa, coastal Sur, and the vast Wahiba Sands, where you spend two nights camping under the stars.

23 Apr **Arrive Muscat – Ruwi Hotel, Muscat** **B**

On arrival in **Muscat** you will be met and transferred to Ruwi Hotel, where you stay for one night (with breakfast). The Ruwi is located only a short distance from the corniche, so you can enjoy an evening walk along the seafront to the main bazaar.

Muscat can be easily explored independently. However, Gane and Marshall can also organise a guided city tour for you if preferred. Time allowing, we recommend visiting the Jalali and Mirani forts, Zubair Museum, and the Sultan's Palace. Late afternoon, perhaps enjoy a walk along the old corniche to the Mutrah 'souk', or market, before returning to your hotel.

24 Apr **Nakhl Fort, Bilad Sayt and Wadi Bani Awf – Omani House** **B, L, D**

You will be collected from your hotel after breakfast by your trekking guide and driver and travel by 4x4 to **Nakhl** (about 90 minutes from Muscat), an historic town situated in the southern **Batinah** region. Former capital of the semi-autonomous Wilayah of Nakhl, Nakhl's most outstanding archeological feature is its pre-Islamic fort, which perches dramatically on a high craggy hill about 200ft above the town, backdropped by the barbed peaks of the Western Hajar

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

Mountains and Jebel Nakhal. Spend the morning exploring the fort and old Nakhl village, before continuing into the mountains.



From Nakhl, your journey takes you around the impressive Jebel Akhdar, a beautiful mountain in the Al Hajar range, and then on to **Wadi Bani Awf**, where you stop to enjoy a walk in the wadi (a canyon or valley) followed by picnic lunch in a shady spot. This is an exceptionally beautiful wadi and it is worth stepping away from the main picnic spot for a stroll along the canyon floor (do be prepared for temperatures over 35c, and carry sun protection!)

NB Your trekking guide will plan the coming days' treks according to the abilities of your party. Feel free to discuss with them your preferences – longer walks are possible.

This evening continue by car to **Misfah Village**, proceeding on foot from the village entrance to Misfah Old House. You needn't carry all your luggage with you to the house. Carry only what you need for the evening in a small pack that you can carry through the ancient cobbled streets of the village. Dinner will be served this evening after you've had a chance to rest. NB Misfah Old House does not serve alcohol.



25 Apr Bilad Sayt – Walking to the mountain villages – Omani House B, L, D

After an early breakfast, drive to **Bilad Sayt**.

Bilad Sayt is an idyllic oasis hamlet situated in the **Wilayat al Hamra**. Believed to date back over 3,000 years, its earthen homes, terraced gardens, and falaj irrigation system comprise a stunning example of a traditional Omani oasis settlement.



The rest of the day unfolds with walking tours in and around the Misfah region, such as the classic ‘three villages’ walk. Picnic lunch will be provided. If you’re not a keen walker, much of the region can be explored by 4x4, stopping at viewing points and villages of note along the way.

Return to Misfah Old House late this afternoon for dinner and overnight. If you’ve time before dinner, there is an interesting walk out of the village along the ancient falaj system, which follows a valley up into the higher mountains.

26 Apr Jebel Shams Canyon Walk, Nizwa, Falaj Daris B, L

After breakfast, proceed by 4WD to the base of **Jebel Shams**, Oman’s highest mountain, via the yawning expanse of Wadi Ghul, a vast canyon often referred to as the Grand Canyon of Arabia.



Today’s trek will take you along the canyon trail and the famous cliff-face balcony walk to the ruined village of As Sab: a huddle of abandoned homes, backed by the vast slopes of Jebel Shams. Near As Sab is a small spring pool, where you can cool off after the walk (don’t forget your swim wear!) Allow 3-5 hours to complete the trek, which is on mostly level terrain. NB Those not

wishing to complete the full trek to the deserted village may undertake a shorter walk to a viewpoint a short way into the canyon.

In the afternoon transfer to Nizwa and the Falaj Daris Hotel for dinner (to your own account) and overnight. The facilities at this comfortable hotel include a bar and swimming pool.

27 Apr Nizwa to Wahiba Sands – Safari Desert Camp or wild camp* B, L, D



After breakfast embark on a guided tour of **Nizwa**, before proceeding to the Wahiba Sands in the afternoon for two nights in the desert.

A former capital, Nizwa is one of Oman's oldest cities. At its centre is Nizwa Fort, among the country's most spectacular standing fortresses, and Nizwa souk, the largest market in the country besides that of Muscat.

Also of note is the Daris Falaj, the largest falaj (traditional water irrigation system) in Oman, and a recognised World Heritage Site.

From Nizwa, it's a 2 hour drive to the **Wahiba Sands**,

You camp tonight and tomorrow in the desert, staying at the Safari Desert Camp. We can also organise private wild camping at additional cost. Please contact us for details.

28 Apr Explore the Wahiba Sands by 4WD and on foot B, L, D

Today will be spent exploring the Wahiba Sands on foot and by 4x4 with your guide. There's no fixed route to be followed – how much time you'd like to spend on foot and the time at which you leave camp will determine how far you venture. We aim to trek in the early morning and late afternoon when the weather is best, returning to camp for rest and lunch around midday.



Desert boots, light-weight mountain boots, or just trekking sandals will be fine for the terrain covered. Excellent protection against the sun is essential. If preferred, you can take a picnic lunch

with you during the walk rather than returning to camp for lunch. (If wild camping, you will have the opportunity to venture further into the desert).

29 Apr Wahiba Sands – Turtle Beach B

After breakfast, depart the Wahiba Sands for the coastal town of **Sur**, where you check into the Turtle Beach Resort for one night. Lunch en route to your own account.

Sur is famous for two things: dhow boats and turtles. After an early dinner, you will have time to visit the old dhow yard and corniche, before continuing to the turtle sanctuary at **Ras Al Jinz**, a vital nesting site for the endangered green turtle.

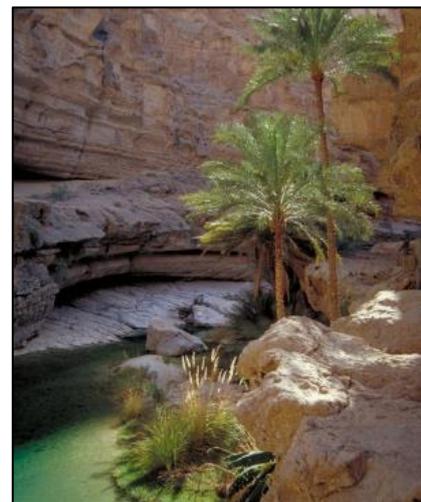
30 Apr Wadi Shab & Wadi Tiwi – Muscat B

Return to **Muscat** via **Wadi Shab & Wadi Tiwi**, beautiful wadis and oases well known for their date and lemon plantations.

Late morning, make a stop at the limestone sinkhole at **Bimah**, where you can take a dip in the emerald-green waters (do let your guide know in advance if you hope to swim and they will allow for extra time at Bimah).

On arrival in Muscat you will be transferred to the Ruwi hotel for one night (B&B basis) before your airport transfer and flight home the next day.

If leaving on the evening flight we will instead arrange for a day room.



Price Guide:

This is a small group open departure, meaning you will travel with other guests. The cost to join is £1,485 per person, in shared twin accommodation (single supplement: £340).

Includes:

- English-speaking driver-cum-guide
- Private 4WD transportation throughout
- All entrance fees
- Activities mentioned in itinerary
- Accommodation as described
- Meals as outlined
- All transfers as described

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Meals not included in the itinerary