

OMAN ODYSSEY



ITINERARY:

Meet on arrival at Muscat Airport.

Day 1

After a morning arrival in Muscat, transfer onto a domestic flight to Salalah, the subtropical 'capital' of southern Oman (This domestic flight is included in Trip Price; Anthony will have the tickets).

PM After lunch in town drive to the Al Baleed archaeological site, the ancient port city of Zofar. Frankincense was shipped from here all over Africa, Asia and Europe. Visit the excellent Baleed Park Frankincense Museum on site. We then drive north along the coast to our hotel, The Juweira, for 2 nights. Time for a swim or a stroll on the endless private beach. Dinner at hotel.

Day 2

AM A short drive along the coast takes us to Sumharum, a fortified trading post built in C10th BC by the Queen of Sheba to supply Frankincense to Salomon's Great Temple in Jerusalem. Excavations are being carried out by the University of Florence. We visit the site, the excellent small museum, and walk along the enclosed estuary looking for birds. We then drive inland following the river into the lush Wadi Darbat.

PM Picnic lunch under a huge tamarind tree and then stroll along the wadi, past grazing camels. Return to hotel for a mid-afternoon swim. Early evening stroll in Salalah's Frankincense bazaar and then dinner at a Yemeni street restaurant.

Day 3

AM We check out (Store luggage at hotel) and drive in 4x4 vehicles (A/C Toyota Landcruisers) across the coastal plain and up the escarpment into increasingly arid landscape. Lunch on the way.

PM Continue to the Ubar archaeological site on the edge of the desert. Sir Ranulph Fiennes led the expedition that rediscovered this 'lost' city. Arrive in Rub Al Khali (The 'Empty Quarter', the largest expanse of sand in the world) and climb among its huge dunes to watch the sunset. Overnight at the simple but comfortable Hashman camp (1 night), to experience the desert's bright stars; unforgettable!

Day 4

AM Watch sunrise over the dunes. After breakfast we explore the desert in our 4x4 vehicles.

PM Lunch back in Salalah town and a further night at The Juweira Hotel. Opportunity to swim in the Indian Ocean in the late afternoon. Dinner at the hotel's speciality fish restaurant.

Day 5

Mid morning flight to Muscat, on arrival lunch and drive (2h) to Jabal Akhdar (Oman's tallest mountain), visiting the village of Birkat Al Mouz en route to the lovely Alila Hotel (2 nights; canyon view rooms). Located at 2,000m above sea level, this luxury boutique hotel boasts stunning views over Oman's mountains. Dinner at hotel.



Day 6

AM Morning walk (2h) along stepped paths and irrigation channels through the terraced fruit orchards of three villages on Jabal Akhdar. Here the dog rose is still cultivated for the making of rose water and scent.

PM Lunch at a local house hosted by the charming owner and his family. Afternoon at leisure enjoying the hotel's facilities.

Day 7

AM Morning drive to Nizwa (1h), Oman's largest inland town, to visit the extensive fort and the bustling spice bazaar.

PM After lunch we continue to the spectacularly sited and very comfortable The View Hotel (2 nights).
Dinner at hotel.

Day 8

AM Drive to Jabal Shams (1.5h) and walk on narrow paths, contouring at an altitude of 1,800m along Oman's deepest canyon, the views are stunning!

PM Visit the walled village of Al Hamra. We Stroll through palm groves, producing more than 40 varieties of dates, to visit a typical trader's mansion now a small private museum.

Day 9

AM We explore the local surroundings, strolling through a village famed for its irrigation channels that water groves of tropical fruit trees.

PM In the afternoon drive (2h) to Muscat, Oman's capital, stopping on the way to visit the Bimah Sinkhole. Check in at The Chedi Hotel (3 nights), a member of The Leading Hotels of the World. The hotel is renowned for its superb food. The extensive, palm-shaded grounds are strewn with many pools, and there is a private beach.
Dinner at the hotel.

Day 10

AM Morning spent visiting Muscat town: the bustling fish market; the stunning, modern Grand Mosque; a stroll along Qurum Beach (Tide permitting).

PM Lunch at Kargeen Restaurant. Afternoon at leisure at hotel. Early evening visit of the labyrinthine Muttrah

Souk followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant specialising in Omani cuisine.

Day 11

AM Early morning departure (07:00h) for a 4h private charter boat trip dolphin watching, exploring the 'Omani fjords', and swimming and snorkelling on coral reefs.

(The very comfortable speedboat has shade awnings, comfortable seating, and easy access in and out of the water).

PM Lunch at a restaurant, in Muscat, before returning to our hotel. Late afternoon at leisure at hotel. Our last trip meal together is at The Chedi at speciality fish restaurant on the beach.

Day 12

Transfers to Muscat's Airport for our flights back home.

