Abercrombie & Kent



ARABIAN ODYSSEY

Wild wadis, an untouched coastline, spectacular deserts, 16th century forts and castles and dramatic mountain scenery – Oman is the best kept secret in the Middle East.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

North Africa & Middle East, Oman

8 days from AU$10,570 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Wild wadis, an untouched coastline, spectacular deserts, 16th century forts and castles and dramatic mountain scenery – Oman is the best kept secret in the Middle East. It is also one of the oldest civilisations in the Arabian Peninsula. Combining a fascinating ancient heritage with all the trappings of modernity, stunning accommodation and year-round sunshine, Oman is a surprising and unspoiled destination.

Journey Highlights

- Uncover the friendly and vibrant city of Muscat
- Stay at exquisite eco-hotel and experience its unique mountain location
- Explore Wahiba Sands, a vast mass of undulating red and white sea of sand
- Enjoy traditional Bedouin hospitality in a desert camp set beneath the stars
- Marvel at the soaring walls and towers of Nizwa Fort



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Muscat

A warm welcome to the Omani capital where you are met by A&K and transferred to your luxury accommodation. Located on the Arabian Peninsula, Muscat has a rich and vibrant culture and is a remarkably laid-back capital city with a friendly atmosphere. The rest of the day is yours to explore – wander through one of the city's many souks and the fascinating port area or take a simple stroll along the beachfront in front of your hotel.

The Chedi Muscat

Day 2: Muscat

Explore the enchanting port city of Muscat with your private guide. Tour the lavish Royal Opera House, built in 2011 which combines world class acoustics with Middle Eastern elegance. Stroll around the magnificent Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, a stunning example of contemporary Islamic architecture containing the second largest hand loomed Iranian carpet in the world. It is the only mosque in Oman open to non-Muslims. From its minarets, large golden dome, arches, engraved walls, decorated interior, unique lamps and central crystal chandelier, the mosque is an architectural wonder. Drive along the corniche, visit the fish market and the colourful Muttrah Souq.

Discover the rich treasures inside the museum and cultural complex known as Bait Al Zubair Museum. Formerly a private home, it is now a showcase for traditional Omani crafts and culture from across the country. The treasure trove of exhibits includes black and white photographs of desert tribes, ornate and ancient khanjars (Omani swords), and headdresses and necklaces laden with pearls, lapis lazuli and turquoise. Be sure to see the permanent exhibition of local dress, which explains the purpose of each item of traditional clothing, from the waqaya (women's head scarf) to the wazar (the wrap that men wear under their full-length dishdasha).

After lunch, visit the National Museum of Oman, showcasing the nation's heritage from the earliest human settlement in the Oman Peninsula some two million years ago through to the present day.

The Chedi Muscat | Meals: BL

Day 3: Muscat – Jabal Akhdar

Drive to the unassuming Bait Al Ghasham Museum, formerly a royal residence and today, a trove of archaeological and architectural treasures. Later, travel through the old village of Nakhl to visit palm-fringed hot springs, in which you can dip your feet.

Next, tackle the steep mountain road through spectacular Wadi Bani Auf. This stretch is only for the physically fit as it is full of sharp bends and bumps. At the charming village of Al Hamra, dotted with mud houses and date palms, be awestruck by the beauty of the landscape. Your final destination today is a serene eco-resort at Jabal Akhdar, built to blend seamlessly into its rugged surroundings.

Alila Jabal Akhdar | Meals: BLD

Day 4: Jabal Akhdar – Nizwa – Jabal Akhdar

Proceed to the legendary Nizwa Fort at the foot of the Western Hajar mountains. In the ninth century, a stronghold was built to protect the town from marauding forces, and Nizwa Fort with its imposing sandstone structure has been added to and adapted ever since. Search out the metal spikes, booby traps and ‘murder holes’ (through which boiling hot date syrup was poured on to intruders) that made Nizwa so impenetrable. Make your way to the rooftop, where dozens of cannons would have once stood, for excellent views of the city.

The Nizwa souk is one of the oldest in the country and you’ll have time to wander through it, taking in the fresh produce and livestock (Friday mornings only) with excellent photographic opportunities. Continue to Jabrin, the finest of Oman’s castles, built in the late 17th century which became a seat of Omani learning. The castle displays the highest achievement in Omani ceiling painting and beautifully executed woodcarvings. Stop at the terrace farming village of Wadi Ghul before continuing to Wadi Nakheer located in the depth of Oman’s deepest canyon. At Wadi Nakheer get a chance to meet locals and weavers before returning to your hotel.

Alila Jabal Akhdar | Meals: BLD

Day 5: Jabal Akhdar

After a leisurely breakfast, proceed to Al Jabal Al Akhdar, renowned for its picturesque fruit orchards typically laid out in terraces hugging the steep sides of mountains. Visit traditional villages overlooking a spectacular landscape of dramatic peaks, gorges and wadis. This is a region famous for roses, and around March/April, the air is filled with their fragrance.

This afternoon is yours to enjoy your hotel's facilities.

Alila Jabal Akhdar | Meals: BD

Day 6: Jabal Akhdar – Wahiba Sands

Today's destination is Wahiba Sands, a vast mass of undulating dunes, some as high as 200-metres, whose ever-changing patterns are a photographer's delight. Travel through Wadi Bani Khalid, a mountain area of small villages and waterfalls. The wadi (valley) is in the Al Sharqiyah Region and has several water pools as well as a spring that keeps water flowing inside the wadi all year long. Arrive at your luxury eco-resort tucked away amongst the dunes on the Al Shariqah Sandsin time to see the changing colours of the desert during a golden sunset before dinner.

Arabian Night Resort | Meals: BLD

Day 7: Wahiba Sands – Muscat

Experience the thrills of dune driving and observe the surprisingly wide array of flora and fauna found in the desert sands. Head out of camp to Sur, one of the few places that still produces traditional wooden dhows. Watch the craftsmen as they go about their highly skilled work. Journey to Fins beach for a swim and then drive onto the Bimah Sinkhole, a spectacular limestone crater filled with blue green water. Continue along the coast back to Muscat and on a clear day you may see sharks in the deep blue water or fleet footed gazelle sprint across the landscape.

Shangri-La's Al Husn Resort & Spa | Meals: BL

Day 8: Depart Muscat

Farewell Oman as you transfer privately to the airport for your onward journey.

Meals: B

Map


GULF OF OMAN
Muscat
Jabal Akhdar
Sur
Nizwa
Wahiba Sands
SAUDI ARABIA
OMAN
ARABIAN SEA
ARRIVE/DEPART
ROAD

Accommodation

The Chedi Muscat



The Chedi Muscat is one of Oman's finest resorts. A short drive from the international airport, this luxury hotel offers 156 rooms and suites, three swimming pools, a water garden and stunning stretch of private beach. Choose to stay in a Serai Room, Deluxe Room, Deluxe Club Room or Chedi Club Suite; each beautifully appointed room features high ceilings and a refined Asian style décor. We particularly love the Chedi Club Suites with their sumptuous sunken bath tub, separate living area and private terrace looking out over tranquil ponds and landscaped grounds and some with sea views.

The iconic palm-fringed Long Pool and beachfront Chedi Pool are both adult only while the pool near the hotel's bar is available to all. Those looking to keep in shape can work out in the hotel's well-equipped fitness centre or on one of the two tennis courts. As evening falls, retreat to the lobby lounge for pre-dinner cocktails and canapés before watching the talented chefs at work in the one of The Restaurant's open plan kitchens. Food at the Chedi is exquisite, and those looking for a more intimate dinner can enjoy one of the eight private dining rooms, perfect for special occasions. Complement your meal with a vintage bottle from their award-winning wine list. Experience dining with a view at The Beach Restaurant, which serves innovative seafood dishes. The Beach Restaurant now offers authentic Omani cooking classes.

Why we like it

- The Chedi is set along a beautiful beach overlooking the unbroken blue waters of the Gulf of Oman
- Most of the rooms have views looking out across the gulf and the resorts landscaped gardens
- Dining options include Arabic, Mediterranean, Asian and Indian cuisine
- The Spa has seven elegant treatment rooms, including four suites with sunken baths
- The hotel has three swimming pools

Alila Jabal Akhdar



Nestled high in the majestic Al Hajar Mountain range on the A'roos plateau, Alila Jabal Akhdar's location is second to none. Situated in the cusp of a gorge some 2000m above sea level, each room provides a perfect vantage point to experience one of the World's lesser known tourist attractions. The resort itself is just 150km or a 2 and a half hour drive from the Oman capital Muscat, and is an ideal stopover when travelling to the ancient city of Nizwa or onwards to Wahiba Sands.

Built using traditional Omani techniques, the hotel is a unique fusion of Arabia's old and new architectural styles, and harmoniously blends into the natural surroundings preserving the areas beauty and wild environment. Accommodation comprises of 78 Suites, 6 Loft Suites and 2 Jabal Villas with private pools. The interiors are minimalist yet rustic in design reflecting the countries interesting culture and heritage.

At the Arabian restaurant, Juniper, you can enjoy all day dining next to panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows looking out to the mountainous landscape. As evening calls, retreat to the cosy comforts of Rose Lounge to enjoy a soothing sundowner.

We love the superb hospitality of the Leisure Concierge. With a philosophy following 5 distinct themes, they will help you to explore the region through outdoor sports, arts & crafts, culinary classes and cultural learning. The canyon walks are an experienced not to be missed.

Why we like it

- Residing high in the rugged Al Hajar Mountain range, the newly opened Alila Jabal Akhdar Resort is perfectly positioned to explore the surrounding landscape
- Promoting conscious living, the resort is dedicated to an eco-friendly philosophy in order to preserve the regions natural beauty
- 84 Suites and 2 Villas are designed with traditional Omani style
- Facilities include indoor and outdoor pools, a modern fitness centre and renowned Alila Spa
- Ideal for adventure travellers and nature lovers

Arabian Night Resort



A 4WD-only track leads to the Arabian Nights Resort & Spa, a luxurious oasis set on a dune in Oman's arid Sharqiya Sands region. Over 25 kilometres from the nearest town and 2.5 hours from the clamour of Muscat, rooms at this resort are well-appointed with modern amenities and offer sweeping views of the shifting desert sands beyond.

Activities at this property are many; quad biking, fat biking, sandboarding, camel rides and 4WD desert tours are all available during your stay. International cuisine is served by the outdoor pool and in the air-conditioned onsite restaurant, while exclusive dining experiences can be arranged for special occasions.

Shangri-La's Al Husn Resort & Spa, Muscat



The Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa redefines Omani elegance and offers fine Asian hospitality. Guests at the Al Husn hotel enjoy exclusive dining and beach areas and available butler service, as well as exclusive access to Mahhara Beach Bar, on the private, 100-metre beach.

Set around a central courtyard with palms and fountains, its 170 rooms and suites are among the largest and most luxurious in Oman, with a warm décor inspired by royal Arabian palaces and accented by authentic Omani artworks. All offer direct views of the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Oman, with some enjoying a panorama of the resort and the surrounding coastline.

The resort has three expansive, cooled swimming pools and a lazy river. Other facilities include a health club, tennis courts and a water sports centre.

Why we like it

- The Al Husn is at the heart of the Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa
- All rooms and suites have direct views of the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Oman
- Al Husn does not cater for children under the age of 16 years
- Dining options include Sultanah, a stylish restaurant with a luxury cruise theme, and Shahrazad, the only authentic Moroccan restaurant in Muscat
- CHI, The Spa, is the largest and most luxuriously appointed spa in the Sultanate of Oman

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