

# Oman

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A VISITOR'S GUIDE







Ranked as one of the world’s safest and most peaceful countries, Oman is a paradise of natural wonders boasting picturesque wadis, deserts, beaches and rocky mountains.

BEAUTY HAS AN ADDRESS

The Sultanate of Oman is a country of breathtaking natural beauty and thought-provoking history dating back well over 5000 years. The country’s fascinating sights, sounds and culture are greatly influenced by stories of heroism, courage, wisdom, patriotism, love and devotion, as well as the people’s strong Islamic faith.

Ranked as one of the safest and most peaceful countries in the world, its natural features boast picturesque wadis, deserts, beaches and rocky mountains.

Oman’s historic architecture is characterised by relics of several forts and watchtowers, some of which have

been beautifully restored to their former glory and are open for visitors to explore.

With a warm, welcoming and hospitable environment, Oman has indeed become a sought-after destination for nature and adventure activities, relaxing family holidays and productive business trips.

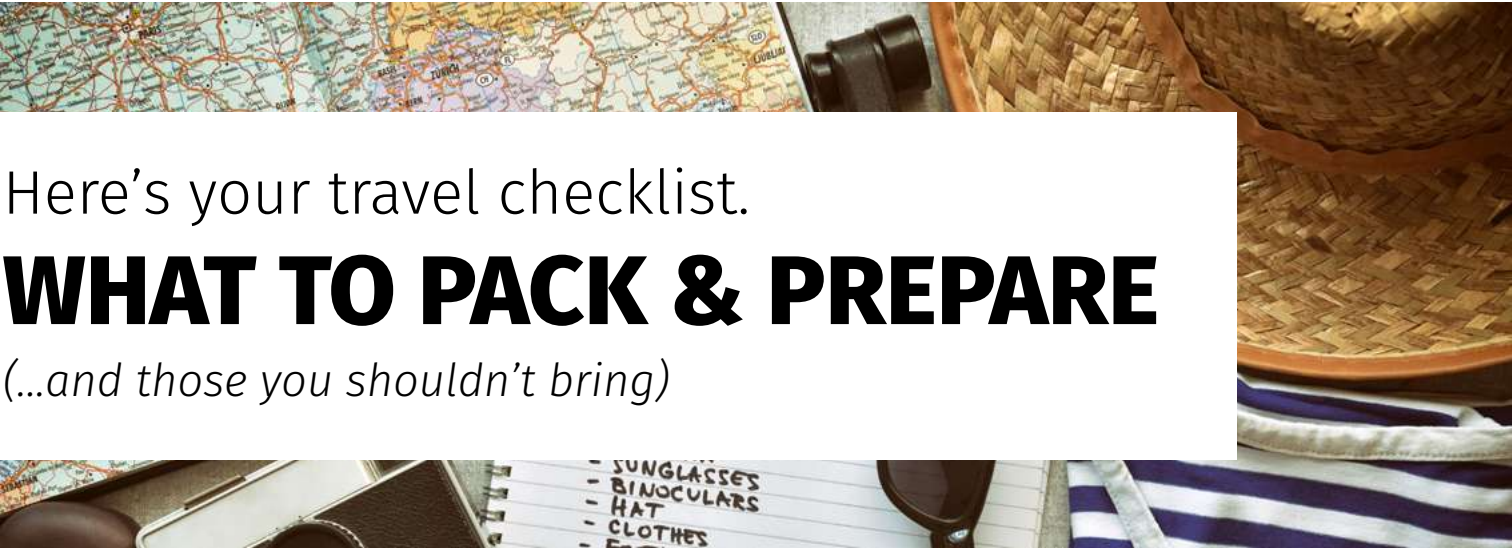
Click on the icons to read more information.

How the world flies to Oman

Do you need a visa?

Landmarks you shouldn’t miss!





Here’s your travel checklist.

# WHAT TO PACK & PREPARE

(...and those you shouldn’t bring)

☐ Travel documents & confirmation vouchers

Passports, tickets, visas (if required)–guests must ensure to have them all. Check bookings and confirmation vouchers. Muscat Desert Adventures organises these vouchers in one welcome kit, which will be handed to guests upon arrival at the airport.

Purchase of suitable travel insurance coverage is highly recommended, such as medical, repatriation, etc.

When it comes to medical records, there are no mandatory vaccination requirements unless you have recently transited from a cholera-infected area. Please check for vaccination requirements at the time of booking.

☐ Cash & credit cards

The monetary unit of the Sultanate of Oman is the Omani Real (OMR). Exchange rate is pegged to the **US\$ (1 OMR = US\$ 2.60)**. Money changers and offsite branches of local banks can be found at the airport, shopping malls and commercial areas.

For credit cards, Mastercard & Visa are widely accepted. American Express and Diners Club have a limited acceptance.

☐ Power plug adapters

We use British style square, three-pin sockets across the country. The standard voltage is 220/240 volts at 50 Hz.

☐ Decent clothing

Oman is an Islamic country and clothing should be modest:

- Casual and comfortable lightweight clothing that covers the shoulders and knees is recommended when in public.
- Hair coverings are not required unless visiting religious sites such as mosques.
- It is recommended that women travel with a light pashmina or scarf to cover shoulders and hair when visiting local villages. Because it can get cold in many parts of Oman, a pashmina also comes in handy for warmth.
- Beachwear and swimwear are acceptable only at beach clubs, hotels and private beaches. Modesty is required when swimming in public places like swimming holes, public beaches, lakes and wadis. Board/swim shorts and a rash-top are suitable for public swimming.
- Exclusive restaurants and clubs may expect guests to dress more formally during the evening.

When visiting the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque: Long-sleeve tops covered to the wrist and long pants to the ankle are required for both men and women. Women are advised to wear T-shirts (or similar) with a long-sleeve cardigan. A scarf or pashmina is required to cover the hair. No visible tattoos are permitted. This dress code is enforced when visiting the Grand Mosque and other religious sites around Oman.

Keep shirts or any type of clothing with offensive pictures or slogans in your closet.

The people of Oman are friendly & kind.

# PAY IT FORWARD

AND BE RESPECTFUL AT ALL COSTS.

Omanis are some of the friendliest, warmest people you will know. They love having people around and they take pride in their rich heritage.

Getting around the country is a breeze because locals and residents are helpful and kind. It pays to remember, however, that Oman is governed by the Sharia law; thus, guests are expected to be modest and respectful at all costs. Customs, traditions and cultural sensibilities are highly valued.

Be in the know and observe proper decorum. Here are some important notes to remember:

**1. Public display of affection is frowned upon, and may get you in trouble.**

In all public places, holding hands may be tolerated but kissing and petting are not permitted.

**2. Swearing and making indecent gestures are not OK.**

Be mindful of your language and actions in expressing yourself. Offensive behavior may get one fined or imprisoned.

**3. Think before you click: Don’t take pictures of others without permission.**

The sights of the Sultanate of Oman are picture-perfect; but there are people who are sensitive towards having their photographs taken. Do not take and share on social media photos of people without their consent. Taking photos of aircraft and restricted areas is not permitted.

**4. Dress modestly.**

Shorts and skirts need to be of appropriate length so as not to indecently expose parts of the body. Ladies, watch your necklines. Cross-dressing is not allowed as well as wearing shirts with obscene graphics or slogans.

**5. Respect religion of every kind.**

Religious practices are highly respected in Oman. Blasphemy and sacrilege of any form is considered deeply offensive.

**THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN**

With Islam being the official religion of the country, the month of Ramadan is deemed the holiest. This is a period when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Eating, drinking and smoking in public areas during daylight hours is strictly prohibited. Exceptions are granted only to small children and expecting mothers.

Ramadan commences as per the moon sighting by Islamic scholars. While the month and date of its observance may vary each year, its duration is for a maximum of 30 days.

When you’ve been invited to a local’s home ...

Omanis love inviting guests to their homes. This is the perfect opportunity for you to experience everyday life in the Sultanate. If you have been invited to a meal in a local’s home, here are some reminders:

- Take your shoes off before entering the house.
- Enjoy your share of the food and drinks that will be served. A traditional welcome typically includes Omani coffee (Qahwa) and dates.
- Be gracious in accepting gifts from the hosts. These may be dates, delicacies or frankincense. Your mere acceptance of the tokens assures them that you have enjoyed your stay.



**IMPORTING GOODS**

Importing pork products and pornographic materials into the Sultanate of Oman is strictly prohibited and illegal. Videos, books, and magazines may be subject to scrutiny and may be censored.

**MEDICATION**

Some prescribed and over-the-counter medicines may be considered controlled substances in Oman. Bringing in of controlled substances without prior permission and documentation from the Ministry of Health may result in prosecution under Omani law. Hence, it is strongly recommended to check with Oman representative offices (Embassies and Consulates) or booking agents whether your medication is on the controlled list.

**ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES**

E-cigarettes & electronic shisha (hookah) are illegal in Oman and are likely to be confiscated..

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



### How do I say this ...

Arabic is the national and official language of Oman. English is widely spoken and understood. Majority of the information signs are in both languages.

Here are some Arabic phrases you'll hear in the country and may be useful to you.

**Shukran!** (Thank you)  
**Marhaba** (Hello)  
**As-Salaam-Alaikum**  
(Peace be upon you)

In response to 'As-Salaam-Alaikum', you may say, **Wa-Alaikum-Salaam** (and unto you).



### You've found your ray of sunshine.

Summer in most of Oman can be hot, but it is a dry-heat without the mugginess of more humid climates. Year-round, temperatures in the Hajar mountains are some 20 degrees cooler than the surrounding lowlands – making them the perfect summer destination. The Khareef (monsoon) around Salalah in the south also offers cooling respite.

Outside of summer, Oman's weather is very fine with winter (November to March) being absolutely lovely across the country.

In the high mountains during the winter season, one might experience a frost or even a dusting of snow, so pack appropriately!



### Every second counts.

Local Time: +4 GMT  
Weekend: Friday & Saturday

#### Fixed public holidays:

New Year's Day (Jan 1)  
Renaissance Day (July 23)  
National Day & Sultan Qaboos Birthday (Nov 18)

#### Public holidays based on moon sighting:

Islamic New Year, Prophet Mohammed's Birthday, Accession Day, Eid Al-Fitr & Eid Al-Adha

### NUMBERS TO CALL, JUST IN CASE

#### Emergency Number

(Police, Fire Department, Ambulance):

**9999**

#### Airports

Muscat International Airport (MCT):

**+968 2451 9223**

Salalah International Airport (SLL):

**+968 2336 7462**

Khasab Airport (KHS):

**+968 9660 8258**



### Stay connected.

We have four mobile networks offering good mobile internet networks and phone coverage: Omantel, Ooredoo, Renna and Friendi. Visitors may purchase a local SIM from outlets at the airports and at retail stores. A starter pack costs

approximately **OMR2 = US\$5.2**. A passport is required when purchasing.

Free Wi-Fi is available at Omani airports and at a growing number of hotels, resorts, banks and urban cafes.



### Eat and be merry!

Omani cuisine reflects the country's rich ethnic and tribal mix. Local chefs blend flavours from the Arabian and Indian subcontinents.

Many hotels serve international cuisine, but for something more authentically Omani, look out for qabooli (a hearty dish of rice, nuts, raisins and mutton or beef), harees (meat stew) and shuwa (lightly spiced, slow-roasted meat).

#### ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Although Oman is an Islamic country, independent restaurants are permitted to apply for a license to serve alcohol. International hotels and luxury resorts typically serve alcohol. Drinking in public is not permitted, and being intoxicated in public is socially unacceptable.

During local religious feast days the serving of alcohol can be restricted.



### Keep calm and wander.

Oman can be explored through a wide range of transport methods including metered taxis, rental car, 4WD with driver/guide, long distance buses and ferry services as well as domestic air services operated by Oman Air.

Tourists with an international driver's license valid for more than six months at the time of visit may drive their way around. Muscat Desert Adventures can also provide transfers or car rentals.



### Checking in.

It is normal practice for hotels in Oman to take a photocopy of guests' passport or valid ID. Anyone under the age of 18 years and not accompanied by an adult is not permitted to stay in any hotel.

### Tipping.

While tipping is not expected and mandatory, it is common practice to do so. Gratuities may be given to hotel staff upon the discretion of guests. Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped.

CELEBRATING  
**20**years  
of unforgettable adventures