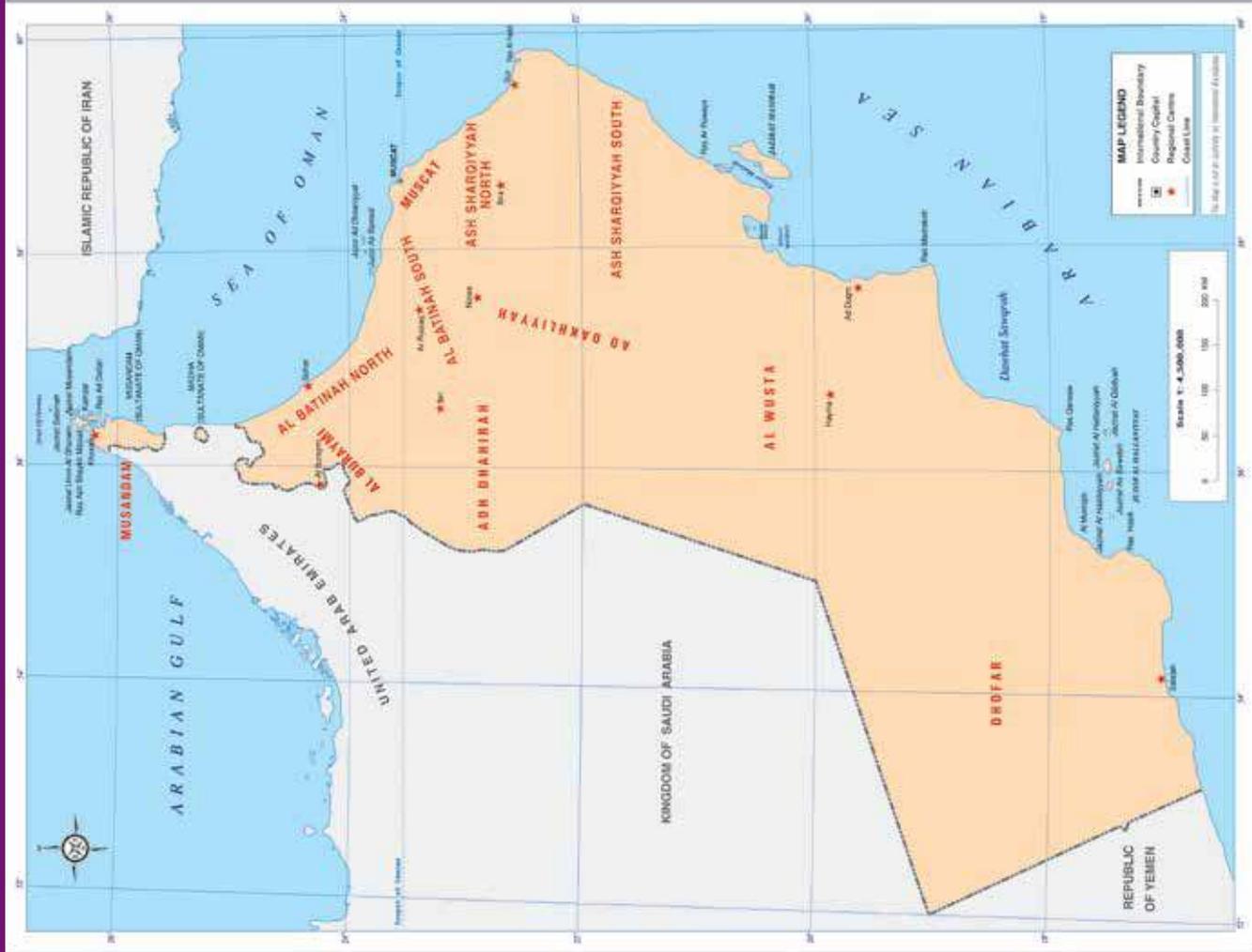


Outdoor Adventure

Sultanate of Oman



SULTANATE OF
oman
Ministry of Tourism



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

ARABIAN GULF

SEA OF OMAN

ARABIAN SEA

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

MUSABDAM

AL BATAINAH NORTH

AL BATAINAH SOUTH

ADH DHARIYAH

ADH QANLIYYAH

ASH SHARQIYYAH NORTH

ASH SHARQIYYAH SOUTH

DHOFAH

AL WUSTA

RAJAHMUN
SULTANATE OF OMAN

MUSCAT

MUSCAT

MUSCAT

MUSCAT

AL BATAINAH



©Oman Adventure



HIKING

Whether you are in the mountains, in the desert or by the coast, there is nothing like hiking in the Sultanate of Oman. All of the specialist walking and hiking tour operator's organise trips **all year round**. The Hajar mountains are the backbone of the country. They form a majestic landscape of towering peaks and contain more than 100 kilometres of marked paths. Between **Jabal Akhdar** (the "Green Mountain") and **Jabal Shams** (the "Mountain of Sun", which at 3,075 metres is the highest peak in the region), the terraced farmland and green palm groves blend with the rocks of the mountains. Refreshing breaks in the emerald green water of the *wadis* can be enjoyed wherever you go. **Camel rides** in the Sharqiya Sands (Wahiba Sands) and the Rub'al-Khali desert will take you back in time as you discover Bedouin traditions.

MOUNTAIN ACTIVITIES

4x4 trips and *wadis*

Mountain villages, palm groves nestled in the hollows of rocky amphitheatres, canyons and gorges (*wadis*) of varying depths and widths. The mountains of Oman stretch from one end of the country to the other and offer countless itineraries for visitors. In addition to travelling along the excellent trails and roads, 4x4s can power up slopes and explore *wadis*. From Muscat it is easy to get to the **Hajar** mountains and take in the breathtaking views from the plateaus on high and its “Grand Canyon” (Wadi an Nakhar). The sea and the mountains come together in the **Musandam** region, which is known for its “Arabian fjords”. The luxuriant vegetation that grows in the **Dhofar** heights after the monsoons is like nothing else in this part of the world.



Mountain Biking

With its vast protected areas and tall peaks, the Sultanate of Oman is the perfect place for cycle tours and mountain biking in the winter. There are some renowned mountain biking excursions from [Al Hamra](#), with professional instructors who lead the participants on a journey of discovery through the Hajar massif and its traditional villages. There are three levels, ranging from flat routes through the palm groves to challenging tracks at an altitude of 2,000 metres around Jabal Shams. Bikes are provided on site, but it is also possible for riders to bring their own equipment.

Canyoning

The Hajar mountains are full of *wadis*, some of which are ideal for canyoning. In the more easily accessible gorges such as Wadi Dayqah and Wadi Bani Khalid, the activities on offer are more like



canyon hiking than genuine canyoning. In Wadi Bani Awf, the narrow [gorge of Snake Canyon](#) (Wadi Bimmah) contains a very tricky canyoning route lasting three or four hours, with supervision for beginners. The *wadis* are subject to flash flooding, so it is always necessary to be prudent.



Climbing

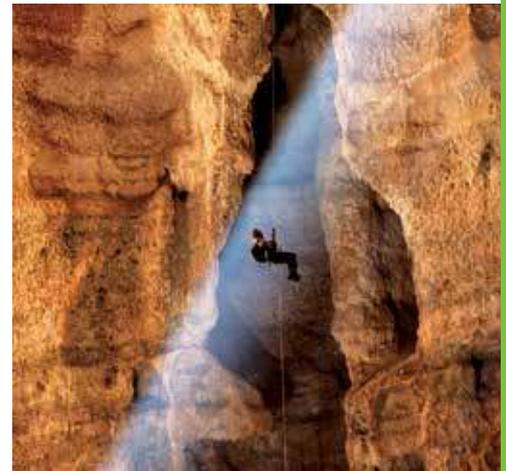
Oman has more than 160 registered climbing sites, with something to suit people of all levels. The often extremely steep cliff faces of Hajar are well known among climbing enthusiasts. At 300 metres, the rock face of **Wadi Ghul** is one of the most famous spots. Strictly for experienced climbers only, **Jabal Misht** is one of the top sites in the Arabian Peninsula. It has a rock face that extends for 6 kilometres and stands at 850 metres tall, offering a number of access routes of varying levels of difficulty. There are also several hills near Muscat that are ideal locations for climbing.

Caving

There are huge networks of underground areas in the Hajar mountains, including **Majlis Al Jinn**, the second largest cave chamber in the world. Some easily accessible caves (such as the **Muqal cave**) can be explored as part of a canyoning



route. However, most of the caves in the **Selma Plateau** require solid training and professional supervision. At the foot of **Jabal Akhdar**, the **Al Hoota cave** is equipped for public access. Visitors can go on a 40-minute guided tour to see stalactites, stalagmites and karst crystals covering the walls.



HIGHLIGHTS

A two-hour drive from Muscat, [Wadi Shab](#) (for hiking and swimming) and its neighbour [Wadi Tiwi](#) (for 4x4 trips and exploration of villages) offer a marvellous glimpse of the wild beauty of Oman.

Nestled at the bottom of [Wadi Bani Awf](#) at the foot of the mountains, Saiq is one of the most picturesque settlements in Oman. A road zigzags its way up the mountain from the town to the southern side of the Hajar massif and the village of [Misfat al Abriyyin](#).

Opposite the top of Jabal Shams (3,075 m), [Wadi Nakhar](#) is nicknamed the “Grand Canyon” of Oman. The site known as “The Plateau” is an excellent place for climbing and camping in the wild.

[Wadi Bani Khalid](#) has natural pools with naturally warm water and a three-day hiking trail that leads to Wadi Tiwi.

[Wadi Darbat](#) (Dhofar) has magnificent, luxuriant vegetation during and after the monsoon rains (July to September).



SEA ACTIVITIES

Scuba diving and snorkelling

The large number of fish and unspoilt depths make Oman a popular destination for divers. It is easy to fill a varied, enjoyable week in the capital city [Muscat](#), where there are around 20 diving spots. Bandar Al Khayran bay is also perfect for snorkelling. Nearby, the [Dimaniyat archipelago](#) nature reserve boasts a matchless array of stony coral and offers opportunities for astonishing encounters with manta rays (in the summer), lemon sharks, blacktip reef sharks and whales (from February to September). The sites in the [Musandam](#) region contain significant rock formations covered with soft corals and stunning expanses of acropora. The largely unexplored depths of [Dhofar](#) are also spellbinding, but it is only possible to dive in the area from October to April due to the summer monsoons.



©Euro Divers

Boat trips

A boat trip from [Muscat](#) is a real must, whether it only lasts a few hours or involves a night in a 'bivouac' on a deserted beach. All sorts of excursions are organised by local travel agencies, including [dolphin watching](#) (the stars of the show can nearly always be found!), tours of Muscat from the sea (with views of Mutrah, the old town, the Sultan's palace and the small fishing villages in the surrounding area), snorkelling in [Bandar Al Khayran](#) bay, and dinner cruises. There is a wide range of vessels, including the traditional wooden boats known as *dhows*, catamarans, yachts with cabins and speed boats. There is no better way than a boat trip to discover the Musandam region,



where the mountains plunge into the sea. Travelling in from the waves and wandering around the isolated villages at the bottom of towering cliffs is an unmissable experience.

Sea kayaking

With their series of coves and beaches that are only accessible from the sea, the

[fjords of Musandam](#) form an enchanting backdrop for sea kayaking. Every winter, numerous tour operators organise combined sea kayaking and hiking trips, with bivouacking on wild beaches, swimming and opportunities to see green sea turtles and dolphins. The bays to the South of Muscat are just as suited to exploration from the sea in kayaks, especially for visitors using hotels as bases.



Kitesurfing

From May to September, the wind statistics are truly remarkable on the island of [Masirah](#), where there are a variety of spots for everyone. Consequently, it is a leading kite surfing destination. The island is a five-hour drive from Muscat and it has a kite surfing centre that is part of the VDWS Water Sport Association. Training is available at the centre and equipment can be hired by experienced kite surfers. Another branch of the school is open year round on [Sawadi beach](#), which is an hour north of Muscat.

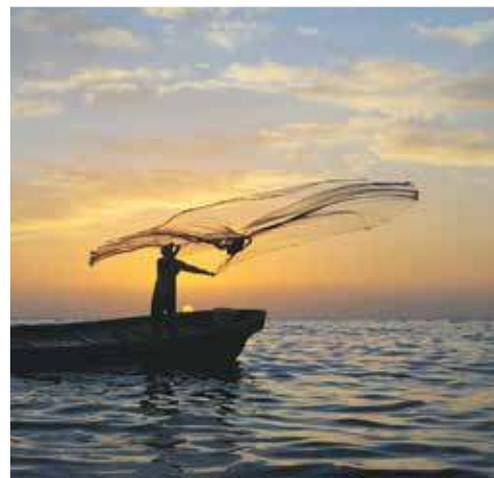


© B. Dubosq

Fishing

There is a rich array of sea life in the waters of Oman. All of the big predators and game fish can be found near the coast, while there are large pelagic fish further out. The sea of Oman is generally calm and a number of fishing techniques can be used, including casting, fly fishing and trolling

on a small or large scale. [Fishing takes place year round](#) in Musandam and off the coast of Muscat, with some periods that are particularly favourable for yellowfin tuna (January to April and October to November) and giant trevally (September to November and April to July). In Dhofar, it is possible to fish outside the summer monsoon season. A number of specialist fishing tour operators organise trips to Oman.





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Sailing and pleasure boating

Oman Sail is an official sailing organisation in the Sultanate of Oman that runs three sailing schools: two in Muscat (in Marina Bandar Al Rowdha and The Wave complex) and one in [Mussanah](#), where a hotel provides accommodation for people taking lessons on sailing holidays. All of the centres have a number of teaching options and hire out equipment. Water sports are organised by some four- and five-star hotels by the coast.

Several companies offer [cruises with skippers in sailing boats and catamarans](#), starting in Muscat and the surrounding area. The coast between the Mussanah marina to the North (85 kilometres from Muscat) and the Jebel Sifah marina to the South (45 kilometres from Muscat) is a marvellous place for sailing, with the Sawadi islets, the Dimaniyat archipelago nature reserve and the sheltered bays of Bandar Al Khayran. Between the two locations, the new Almuuj marina at The Wave complex is an ideal place to stop off and explore Muscat from.

HIGHLIGHTS

The bay of [Bandar Al Khayran](#) near Muscat is a haven for diving, snorkelling and pleasure boating.

Visitors come from all over the world to see green sea turtles lay their eggs on the beaches in the [Ras Al Jinz nature reserve](#).

[Khor Ash Sham](#) (Musandam): tourists can spend four days kayaking between coves and villages in the crystal clear water of this spectacular fjord, alongside turtles and rays at the feet of tall cliffs.

The open beaches of the [Arabian Sea](#) are perfect for camping in the wild. Driving along the scenic coastal road from Muscat to Salalah provides travellers with the opportunity to see a wide range of migratory birds.

DESERT ACTIVITIES

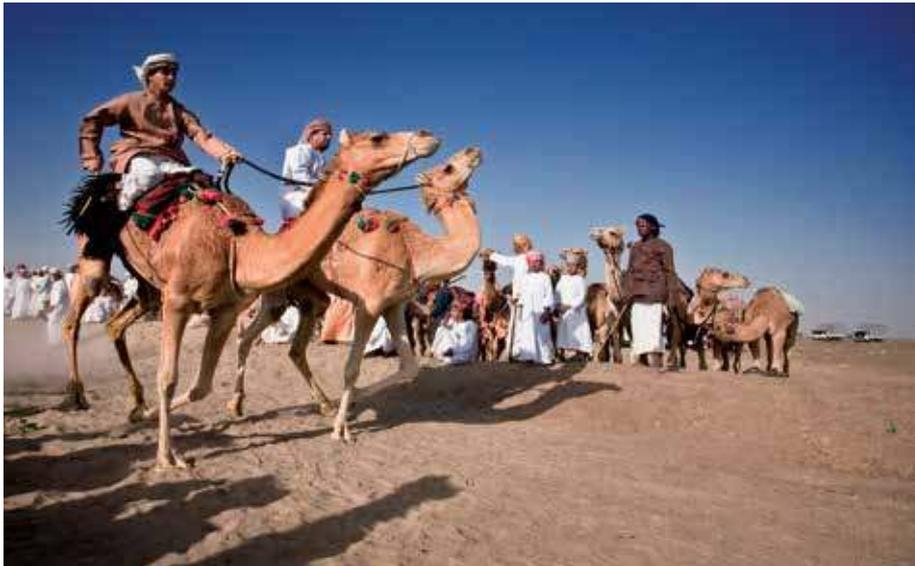
Adventures in 4x4s and desert camps

Welcome to the realm of silence. Three hours by car from Muscat, the **Sharqiya Sands (Wahiba Sands)** can welcome visitors for a day or more, either in the comfort of the ten or so camps, or simply under the stars. Throughout the length of the desert (180 kilometres), there are genuine sand “trails” that are accessible to 4x4s. It is also possible to go on an unforgettable journey across its waves of dunes to the Arabian Sea. In the far South of Oman, the immense **Rub’al-Khali** desert remains largely unexplored and free of tourist facilities. Excursions into the area depart from Salalah and some tour operators include it in their hiking trips.



Arabian camel rides

The Bedouins in the Omani desert continue to engage in the traditional activity of Arabian camel raising. Each winter, big **races** are organised in the villages around the Sharqiya Sands. All of the desert camps offer rides on Arabian camels.



Other activities

The camps in the Sharqiya Sands offer activities such as climbing dunes on foot or on quads, or sand skiing.

GOLF

There are three 18-hole golf courses in Muscat.

Almouj Golf: This challenging golf course was designed by Greg Norman. It follows the outline of the dunes along the Sea of Oman. www.almoujgolf.com

Ghala Valley Golf Course: This was originally a Wentworth sand course and it is found in the unique setting of a wadi. www.ghalavalley.com

Muscat Hills Golf & Country Club: This course is in craggy terrain criss-crossed by a number of wadis, with the Hajar Mountains in the background. www.muscathillsgolf.com



TRAVEL WITH A TOUR OPERATOR

ADVENTURE		
Exodus	Tel: +44 (0) 8452 877 533	www.exdos.co.uk
Explore	Tel: +44 (0) 8452 914 541	www.explore.co.uk
Wild Frontiers	Tel: +44 (0) 2077 363 968	www.wildfrontiers.com
KE Adventure	Tel: +44 (0) 1768 773 966	www.keadventure.com
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Leisure Link Golf	Tel: +44 (0) 1708 339 300	www.leisurelinkgolf.com
Premier Iberian Golf Holidays	Tel: +44 (0) 8456 003 391	www.premieriberian.com

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

www.omantourism.gov.om

Time difference: 4 hours ahead of GMT

Climate: There is a hot Mediterranean climate in the North and the East, while it is tropical with continual monsoons from June to September in the Dhofar region. The best time for outdoor sporting activities is from October to April.

Formalities: UK and Irish citizens can buy a 10 day visa on arrival for 5 Rials (approximately £8) or one month visa for 20 Rials (approximately £40) at the time of going to print.

It is necessary to have a visa (EU nationals can ask for one on arrival) and to have a passport that is valid for at least six months after your departure date from Oman. It is also possible to ask for a visa to be delivered by the consular service of the Embassy of Oman in London before you travel to the country.

Tel. +44 (0) 207 225 0001 (9.00 am – 15.30 pm).

Land area and population: 309,500 km² and 2,773,000 inhabitants.

Official language: Arabic. English is widely spoken.

Airlines: Travel from London Heathrow to Muscat with Oman Air (www.omanair.com) daily direct non stop flights taking 7 hours, direct flights with British Airways or connecting flights with all regional airlines.

Information: Oman Ministry of Tourism in London
Tel. +44 (0) 208 877 4524 Email: oman@representationplus.co.uk

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