

# Walking in Northern Oman

**Tour Style:** Worldwide walking holidays

**Destination:** Oman

**Trip code:** MMWHW

**Trip Walking Grade:** 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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Oman enchants with its richness of landscapes and culture-rich cities. From hidden valleys and oases, dizzyingly deep canyons, and cloud-piercing mountains to desert dunes, there's so much to discover. Venture across northern Oman by 4x4, stopping to discover standout sights and experiences. Take a walk around the rim of a canyon in Jebel Shams, explore centuries of history and culture in Muscat, Nizwa, and Sur, and watch the sunset and sunrise from the top of the dunes in Wahiba Sands.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Return flights from London Heathrow including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- Guided walks and sightseeing with a local leader
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 9 nights' touring accommodation across Northern Oman
- 1 night in a traditional Bedouin desert camp
- 11 breakfasts, 8 lunches & 8 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- Two-hour Dhow cruise along the Muscat coast

- All in-destination transport and 4x4 tours

## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Exploring the souqs in Muscat
- Soaking up the views on a dhow cruise along the Muscat coast
- Walking through Wadi Shab and swimming in natural pools
- Visiting the boatyards in Sur, famous for traditional dhow building
- Stargazing and dune bashing in Wahiba Sands
- Spectacular views walking the rim of Oman's 'Grand Canyon'

## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: OVERNIGHT FLIGHT

Depart the UK on an overnight flight to Muscat.

### Day 2: ARRIVE MUSCAT

Once you arrive into Muscat we'll transfer to the hotel where you can have breakfast and check in.

In the afternoon we'll make our way to the pier for a two-hour cruise along the coastline, after which we can take in the sights and shops of Muttrah Souq in the evening.

### Day 3: MUSCAT SIGHTS AND AL RIYAM PARK WALK

**Distance:** 1.5 miles (2.5km)

**Ascent/Descent:** 660 feet (200m)

We'll start the day with a city tour of Muscat, visiting the Grand Mosque (note there's a dress code to enter) and stopping for a photo at the Sultan's Palace. We'll make our way to the old city of Muscat and the Bait Al Zubair museum.

In the afternoon we'll drive out to Al Riyam Park in Muttrah where we can set off on a walk up into the hills. The first part is steep (you'll need to have a moderately good fitness level), but we'll eventually reach the wadi (valley) where we can stop for a rest. You'll have time to visit Muttrah Fort, too.

### Day 4: WADI SHAB & WADI TIWI

**Distance:** 2 miles (3km)

**Ascent:** negligible

We'll set off on a coastal drive via Quriyat, stopping at the Bimmah Sinkhole in Najam Park to take in its turquoise blue waters. Once we reach Wadi Shab (meaning 'ravine between cliffs'), we'll set off on a three-hour walk to take in the spectacular deep and narrow gorge that cuts through the mountains. We'll see emerald pools, date and banana plantations, and gurgling *falaj* (springs).

After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll drive through the Wadi Tiwi canyon before heading to Sur where we'll spend the night.

### Day 5: SUR & WAHIBA SANDS

Famous for building traditional dhow boats, Sur provides a fascinating insight into Oman's history. As we

explore the ancient city and its boatyards, you might be able to glimpse dhows being built by hand. Then we'll set off towards Wadi Bani Khalid, a natural green pool where we'll enjoy a 30-minute walk and a swim.

Next, we'll venture to Wahiba Sands, an area of vast dunes. We'll visit one of the Bedouin houses dotted along the tracks where we'll have a home-cooked lunch followed by coffee and dates.

We'll go on an exhilarating drive over the sand dunes and make our way to a desert camp where we'll watch the sun set and settle in for the night.

## Day 6: DRIVE TO JEBEL AKHDAR

Wake up to sunrise in the desert, which you can watch from the top of the dunes. Afterwards, we'll head to Jebel Akhdar, known as the 'green mountain', stopping en-route at Birkat Al-Mawz – a village surrounded by plantations and the perfect setting for our picnic lunch. After a short walk here, we'll make our way to Wadi Al Madeen where a scenic, winding road leads us to Jebel Akhdar (2,000m above sea level), famed for its fruit orchards and roses, which are in bloom during March and April. Then we'll check in to our hotel.

## Day 7: THREE-VILLAGE WALK

**Distance:** 2.5 miles (4km)

**Ascent:** 330 feet (100m)

Set off on an easy walk through villages and gardens, admiring the different crops that come with each season. We'll have lunch at a local restaurant before driving to Nizwa – the once-upon-a-time capital of Oman. We'll visit the fort and souq and check out the views from the top of the citadel. Enjoy dinner and a night in a heritage hotel in Nizwa.

## Day 8: NIZWA TO JEBEL SHAMS

After breakfast, our destination will be Jebel Shams, visiting Jabrin castle and the 17th century fort on the way. We'll also have a photo stop at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bahla Fort and visit Bait Al Safah, an open house museum that displays juniper oil production, Omani breadmaking, and coffee bean grinding. We'll have lunch here before heading into the mountains and the highpoint, Jebel Shams (Mountain of the Sun), Oman's highest mountain and often called the 'Grand Canyon' of Oman, filled with hidden valleys and oases.

## Day 9: BALCONY 'GRAND CANYON' WALK

**Distance:** 2.5 miles (4 km)

**Ascent:** 330 feet (100m)

We'll soak up the spectacular mountain landscapes of Jebel Shams, walking along the inner rim of a steep canyon to an abandoned village, Ghul. After taking in the views, we return the same way and have time this afternoon to enjoy the facilities at our unique hotel.

## Day 10: MISFAT AL ABRIYEEN OASIS WALK

**Distance:** 2.5 miles (4 km)

**Ascent/Descent:** negligible

We'll drive to Misfat Al Abriyeen for a two-hour walk to the oasis and old village where there's a chance to see date cultivation using the falaj system of irrigation. Afterwards we'll continue driving to Wakan through the dramatic Hajar Mountains along one of the most scenic off-road routes in the country. Then we'll check in to Sama Wakan Heritage Homes, restored traditional homes, for the night.

## Day 11: WAKAN TO MUSCAT

This morning we'll enjoy a short walk that explores Wakan village before we drive out to Nakhl. Close to Nakhl Fort at the end of a palm tree-lined road lies the Ain Al Thowarah hot springs, still used by locals today. Next, we'll enjoy a snapshot of 19th century life at Bait Al Ghasham museum and have lunch here. We then return to Muscat and enjoy a final dinner together this evening at a local restaurant.

## Day 12: DEPARTURE DAY

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel before your transfer to the airport.

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair, Muscat - Oman

With two outdoor rooftop pools to enjoy, the Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair focuses on comfort. Clean, modern, and air-conditioned rooms all have private bathrooms, TV, and free Wi-Fi, while mountain vistas surround the hotel.

### Best Western Sur (Formerly Sur Plaza), Sur - Oman

This 3-star hotel in Sur prides itself on welcoming Omani hospitality. There's an outdoor pool, plus rooms are all air-conditioned and come with an en-suite bathroom and free Wi-Fi.

### Bedouin Tents: Thousand Night Camp

There's nothing quite like a stay in a traditional Bedouin camp. The experience is designed to be as comfortable as possible without taking away from the exhilarating feel of staying out in the wilderness like a real desert nomad. More glamping than camping, low-slung tents come kitted out with comfortable beds, plush rugs, power sockets, air-con and hot showers. Expect plenty of welcoming Arabic hospitality and after enjoying a delicious meal, you can sit around the campfire and relax under a ceiling of stars.

### Sama Wakan Heritage Home, Wakan Village - Oman

Sitting 2,000m above sea level, Sama Wakan Heritage Home is not just a place to stay but also an experience. You'll stay in one of nine restored traditional homes that have the addition of new washrooms and air conditioning. A 4x4 is needed to reach the village where mountain views come as standard.

### Heritage Inn, Nizwa - Oman

Located just a five-minute walk into the centre of Nizwa, the 2-star Heritage Inn is an ideal base for staying in the city. What was once a traditional family home has been lovingly converted into a characterful retreat. Expect long low sofas, covered in plush cushions, and simple yet tastefully decorated rooms furnished in typical Omani style. All rooms have air conditioning, private bathrooms, and Wi-Fi.

### The View, Jebel Shams - Oman

This luxury eco resort makes the most of the landscape it sits in. You need a 4x4 to reach it, but the journey rewards with wow-worthy views over the valley from 1,400m above sea level. The swimming pool and outdoor terrace provide the ultimate space to take it all in from. Rooms also come with views, plus sit-out area or balcony, fridge, tea/coffee maker, TV, and air conditioning.

## Sama Hotel, Jebel Akhdar - Oman

There's an outdoor pool at the Sama Hotel – ideal for after a long day's sightseeing and walking. Rooms at this 3-star hotel are clean and comfortable, with air conditioning, TV, Wi-Fi, and private en-suite bathrooms.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports\* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk)

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

### Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements you will still be able to make use of the return group transfers between the airport and hotel, which are included in the cost of your holiday. You must contact us on [+44 \(0\)20 3974 8865](tel:+44(0)2039748865) or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk) at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date to provide your flight details if you wish to join the transfers. If you do not contact us, we will assume you are making independent travel arrangements.

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

## Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

### Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

## Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

## Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

## Useful Information

### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

### Modest Dress

When visiting Oman, it is important to adhere to the country's modest and conservative dress code.

Both men and women should ensure their clothing covers the shoulders and knees. Loose-fitting attire is preferred to maintain respect for local customs.

Women must also bring a scarf to cover their hair when visiting religious sites such as mosques. By dressing respectfully, you show appreciation for Omani culture and ensure a more welcoming experience during your trip.

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

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These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we

will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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