



February 13 - 22, 2022

Oman - Deserts and Mountains

Hiking and Sightseeing in an Arab Paradise

Leaders: Joe Thomas & Cindy Martell Trip #2206

From the desert-scape of the Empty Quarter to the lush green south with its fruit plantations and wildlife such as oryx and gazelles, Oman glories in a uniquely diverse topography for nature lovers. It has the highest mountain on the peninsula as well as enchanting cities, sparkling sea, canyons and fjords. A limitless destination full of culture, excitement, natural richness and incredible landscapes. Oman's diverse, unique and unspoiled landscapes are coupled with a huge range of activities and distinct national culture.



Our 10-day trip to this far away land will include time in Muscat, capital of the country, along with visits to pre-Islamic Forts, ancient settlements with stunning mountain landscapes, oasis hamlets, views of their highest mountains and the Grand Canyon of Arabia. Tired yet? There's more. How about several days in the Wahiba Sands including two nights in Bedouin tents, desert treks with camel support and a desert expedition in 4X4's. Still more - this amazing adventure will end with date and lemon plantations, a turtle sanctuary and close with a spectacular seaside resort stay.



This trip has been rated 3.5 (out of 6) for difficulty. It is an easy to moderate hiking adventure with shorter distances and only small elevation gains. The trip is appropriate for beginner hikers and higher.

For more info, see 45 <https://www.outdoors-activities/difficulty-ratings>

OUR ITINERARY

(Subject to Change)

(This itinerary is what the leaders have planned at the time of this writing; various factors may require changes for reasons of safety, weather, transportation or lodging availability and other unforeseeable circumstances. The leaders reserve the right to make such changes as necessary both before and during the trip.

Day 1 February 13 (Sunday): Arrive Muscat

(you may have to leave the US on February 12 to arrive on the 13th)

On arrival in **Muscat**, you will be met and transferred to the Tulip Inn, or similar, where you stay for one night (standard room with breakfast). Depending on your arrival, you may have to time to self explore the area. Overnight at the Tulip Inn hotel.

Day 2 February 14 (Monday): Nakhl and Wadi Bani Awf – Misfa Old House B, L, D

You will be collected from your hotel after breakfast by your trekking guide and driver and set off for **Nakhl** (*approx. 90 minutes from Muscat*), an historic small town situated in the southern **Batinah** region.



Nakhl's most outstanding archeological feature is its pre-Islamic fort, which perches on the top of a craggy, 200ft high hill, surveying the village below and the surrounding mountains.

Spend an hour or so exploring the fort and old Nakhl village, before continuing to the walk point.

From Nakhl, your journey takes you to Jebel Akhdar, the “green mountain”, and then to **Wadi Bani Awf**. Enjoy a short hike in the wadi, before stopping for a picnic lunch in a shady spot.

This is an exceptionally beautiful wadi and it is worth stepping away from the main picnic spots to walk along the canyon floor.

After the trek, rejoin the vehicle and continue to **Misfah Al Abreen**, arriving late afternoon. Misfah is a picturesque and ancient settlement, surrounded by stunning mountain landscapes and set among terraced plantations and date palms. It is most famous for its intricate falaj irrigation system, the workings of which your guide will be able to explain to you.

From the car park area on the outskirts of Misfah you have to proceed on foot to Misfah Old House, where you stay tonight. We recommend taking only light hand luggage for the walk across the old town, with essentials for your night at the Old House. Main bags can be left securely in the vehicles.

Dinner will be served on the roof terrace this evening after you've had a chance to rest and explore the village. Please note that alcohol is not served at Misfah Old House.

Day 3 February 15 (Tuesday): Bilad Sayt; Three Villages Walk–Misfah Old House B, L, D

After breakfast at the guest house proceed to **Bilad Sayt**. Much like Misfah, only older, Bilad Sayt is an idyllic oasis hamlet situated in the **Wilayat al Hamra**. Believed to date back over 3,000 years, its earthen homes, terraced gardens, and 'aflaj' irrigation system make it a stunning example of a traditional Omani oasis settlement.

In the afternoon, enjoy a leisurely hike along the well-known Three Villages Walk. This is a moderate trek through mountain villages and on ancient connecting paths. You will see the terraced smallholdings and the traditional irrigation systems, and enjoy excellent views over Wadi Muhaydin.

Return to Misfah Old House for dinner and overnight.

**Day 4 February 16 (Wednesday): Jebel Shams Canyon Walk –
Falaj Daris Hotel B, L, D**

Depart Misfah after breakfast and continue to the base of **Jebel Shams**, Oman's highest mountain, via the yawning expanse of Wadi Ghul, a vast canyon often referred to as the Grand Canyon of Arabia. Today's trek will take you along the canyon trail and the famous cliff-face balcony walk to the ruined village of As Sab: a huddle of abandoned homes, backed by the vast slopes of Jebel Shams.

Close to As Sab is a small spring pool, where you can cool off after the walk (take bathing clothes). Allow 3-4 hours to complete the trek, which is on mostly level terrain.

This afternoon, transfer to Nizwa and the Falaj Daris Hotel for dinner and overnight. Facilities at the Falaj Daris include bar and swimming pool.

Day 5 February 17 (Thursday): Ibra, Wadi Bani Khalid, Wahiba Sands Safari Desert Camp B, L, D



Depart Nizwa early morning and travel to **Ibra**, gateway to the Sharqiya region. Ibra was once one of the wealthiest towns in Oman, famed for its merchant traders, many of whom became rich from the Zanzibari spice trade, building with their wealth elaborate villas and plantations. Few of these residences remain, though the plantations do. Enjoy a pleasant stroll through Ibra's old town, with its crumbling homes and double archway, before continuing on to Wadi Bani Khalid, an oasis in the middle of the barren and dry mountains, stopping for lunch.



In the afternoon, drive to the **Wahiba Sands**, where you stay at the Safari Desert Camp for two nights in a standard tent.

This is a simple camp, but the Bedouin style walk-in tents are large with good furnishings and each tent has an en-suite bathroom extension.

Day 6 February 18 (Friday): Explore the Wahiba Sands on foot – Safari Desert Camp B, L, D

Today will be spent exploring the desert on foot with Bedouin guides and camels for support.

You'll trek in the early morning and late afternoon when the weather is best, resting during the midday heat. The route is flexible, and how far you walk will depend on the strength of the group. Desert boots, or even lightweight mountain boots, will be fine for the terrain covered. Excellent protection against the sun is essential.

Return to Safari Desert Camp in the evening for dinner and overnight.

Day 7 February 19 (Saturday): Wahiba Sands, Sur – Turtle Beach Resort B, L, D

After breakfast at camp, depart the Wahiba Sands by 4x4 and drive to the coastal town of **Sur**, stopping for lunch at a restaurant en route.

Once an important trading post, Sur is famed for its old shipyard, which was once used to construct dhow boats, the traditional wooden Omani boats that can still be seen on the waters around town.

After an early dinner, you will have time to visit the old dhow yard and corniche, before continuing to the turtle



sanctuary at **Ras Al Jinz**, a vital nesting site for the endangered green turtle. Overnight at Turtle Beach Resort.

Day 8 February 20 (Sunday): Wadi Tiwi to Muscat – Intercontinental Hotel B, L

Return to Muscat, stopping en route at **Wadi Tiwi**, known for its lemon and date plantations, and its canyon rock pools. Enjoy a leisurely hike in Wadi Tiwi with a picnic lunch, before continuing to Muscat.

On arrival in Muscat, check-in at the Intercontinental Hotel for one night (Mountain View Room, B&B basis). Outdoor and indoor bars serve alcohol. There is a great beach and pool area at the Intercontinental.



The rest of the day is at leisure. Time-allowing, you might like to enjoy a stroll along the corniche to Mutrah souk, Muscat's lively central market, before returning to your hotel.

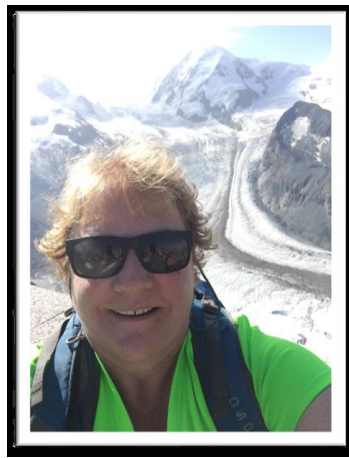
Day 9 February 21 (Monday): Full Day in Muscat B

Enjoy an extra day of relaxation in Muscat before we end our trip. You can schedule a tour of Muscat, go to the nearby beach or choose to just relax by the pool in our resort. Your call.

Day 10 February 22 (Tuesday): International Departure B

At leisure until your scheduled group transfer to the airport for your homeward flight.





Leaders:

Joe Thomas has an avid interest in health and fitness which has paved the way to adventure travel. He has participated in bike trips through the Po Valley of Italy and the Camino de Santiago in Spain. For the past 5 years, he has co-led trips to Machu Picchu/ Easter Island, Puglia, Italy, Patagonia, Dolomites, Tanzania, India/Bhutan, Vietnam/Cambodia, Morocco and Spain/Portugal.

Cindy has been a member of AMC since 1998 and she currently works for Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child in Cambridge. Cindy is a three-season hiking/backpacking leader for AMC's Worcester Chapter, Leadership/Training Co-Chair for AMC's Adventure Travel program, an AMC Information Volunteer, and a volunteer fill-in crew member at AMC's high huts. She has received AMC's Volunteer Leadership Award and numerous Stewardship Society Awards. Cindy has led trips to Ireland (twice), Iceland, Wales, Olympic National Park, Scotland's Isle of Skye, Luxembourg, Swiss/ French Alps, and Scotland's Shetland Islands. She has also lived in Australia and is excited about traveling to this new type of environment.

Both are training in Wilderness First Aid and CPR.

TRIP COST:

Total Trip Cost \$3875:(\$3975 non-members)
 \$1500 due with application;
 \$1200 due Dec 1 , 2020
 and \$1175 or \$1275 (non-members) due
 July 1, 2021.

If you are not a member of the AMC, there is a guest fee of \$100. You may prefer to join the AMC. Membership is \$50 for an individual, \$75 for a family, and \$25 for juniors (under 30) and seniors (over 69). You can join on line at the AMC site

<http://www.outdoors.org/get-involved>

TRIP INCLUDES:

10 nights lodging; all breakfasts, 7 lunches and 6 dinners;
 all internal flights; English speaking guide during the trip and Bedouin walking guides during Wahiba Sands; all entry fees to all sites; Med/Evac Travel insurance (not trip cancellation insurance)

(The trip fee that you pay to us includes coverage for emergency medical evacuation and assistance through Travel Insurance Services. This is not standard medical insurance or trip cancellation insurance. It will cover up to \$5,000 for accident expenses (and sickness expenses only for international trips) and up to \$200,000 for emergency evacuation and repatriation. Coverage only includes the dates of travel of the official AMC trip, so coverage for early arrival or trip extension is not included. This coverage includes access to a "Worldwide Assistance Center" that provides the support you or your family may need in a crisis, beyond what the AMC and/or the volunteer leaders may be able to provide. It will also document the incident should a claim need to be filed.)

TRIP DOES NOT INCLUDE: International Airfare (approximately \$1000).;

(While participant airfare is not included in the trip price, leaders may assist participants in making suitable reservations. At a minimum, participants will be told when and where they must join the group for the official start of the trip's planned activities. Once your air tickets are purchased they are your responsibility – do not make any non-refundable travel plans until told to do so by the leaders.)

The leaders build a trip based on an approximate 10% higher rate of exchange of the current rate. Foreign currencies such as the euro can fluctuate and we want to advise you that if the exchange rate moves higher than expected, we may have to come to you with a modest price increase. We try to avoid this by budgeting wisely; however, there is always the possibility of rate changes. Anyone who does not want to accept the price increase may withdraw from the trip with a full refund.

OUR GOALS

As leaders, our goals for the group are to have fun, utilize your skills, and savor a foreign culture at reasonable cost and in the company of other adventurers with similar interests. We encourage your individual contributions, cooperation and good humor to enrich the group's experience. We anticipate each participant's engagement as part of a group, and expect each to abide by the leaders' decisions and work towards the group having a good time. Be prepared to help your fellow walkers and spend time with other participants on the trip. In doing so, you will help ensure each participant's maximum experience and enjoyment of the trip.

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a nonprofit basis. Leaders are not compensated except for their travel and administrative costs associated with the trip. A program fee is assessed toward AMC Adventure Travel Excursion program and administrative expenses.



CANCELLATION POLICY

The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the fact that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. Once you are notified the trip is declared to run as scheduled, the minimum cancellation fee is \$100.00. If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead, unless they can be applied toward another acceptable participant. Should the leaders be able to replace you, you may be charged a reduced penalty. This will generally not be determined until after the trip. Failure to make trip payment(s) in a timely manner will be considered a cancellation.

On rare occasions AMC Adventure Travel may need to cancel all or a portion of a trip due to force majeure [e.g. terrorism, local health conditions, natural disaster, changes in local regulatory environment, etc.] In the event of such a cancellation, your trip fee will be refunded less any trip expenses already incurred plus any non-cancellable future trip expenditures. AMC Adventure Travel is not responsible for additional expenses incurred by you in preparing for the trip (including non-refundable air tickets, visa fees, gear or medical expenses, etc).

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with volunteer leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips and camps, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, by boat, or on a bike. When you apply for acceptance onto a trip, please carefully read and sign the Adventure Travel Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement and call if you have any questions.

When you participate in this activity, you should be in proper condition for the challenges outlined in this prospectus and equipped with the appropriate gear as stated. You should always be aware of the risks involved and conduct yourself accordingly. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety. Prior to your acceptance as a participant in this trip, you may be asked to discuss your capabilities and experience with us. We may also request references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating in trip activities.

This trip is designed so that everyone may experience our adventure in Oman through shared participation in activities and tasks in an organized group environment. AMC travelers are known for their cooperative efforts, and expectations are that all participants will be considerate of others sharing this AMC Adventure Travel experience.

It may happen on any trip that a trip member is or becomes unable to participate in one or more of the planned activities. Leaders in their sole judgment have the right and obligation to refuse participation in any activity to any group member for reasons of safety, whether it be of the group or of the individual. Illness, injury or lack of proper gear or fitness for a particular activity are examples of some conditions that might result in a participant's being unable to perform one or more activity. Leaders may try to find a substitute activity for the trip member, but this may not always be possible.

For additional information, contact Cindy at cbmartell@verizon.net or Joe at 203-755-5141 or thomasj73@sbcglobal.net.

