



Hud Hud Travels



Wahiba Sands, Khalouf Beach & Hajar Mountains

A stylish comfortable mobile safari, encompassing six nights and seven days in beautiful northern Oman taking in much of Oman's impressive scenery and covering desert, coast, mountains, traditional towns, forts and souks.

Sleeping tents vary according to the location but are always appointed with proper mattresses, crisp cotton linen, feather pillows and traditional furnishings. Each sleeping tent has it's own private bathroom tent, open to the skies and furnished with soft towels, basin, shower and a selection of soaps and lotions.

Each camp will offer a large, evocative majlis, decorated in a style in keeping with the ambiance of the environment, with cushions and rugs, topical books, boules and board games. Dining is at a properly laid table under the stars beside a crackling fire. Food is, as far as possible, locally sourced and is freshly prepared by our camp chef and always delicious. We use no electric light, other than solar, and the emphasis is on preserving the atmosphere through natural lighting provided by candles, oil lamps and camp fires.

Day 1

Leaving Muscat after breakfast we make our way through Wadi Mayh before joining the coastal road that runs between Muscat and Sur. Before long we turn away from the sea and head up the northern face of the eastern Hajar Mountains. Following a steep gravel track that, in a short time, takes us to the peak of the impressive Selmah Plateau over 2,000m above sea level. Views to the north are of the Arabian Sea and, to the south in the hazy distance, the Wahiba Desert.

This track passes ancient villages that were, until a couple of years ago, only accessible on foot or by donkey. This long, west facing ridge is spectacularly lined with numerous beehive tombs built by the Umm Naa people in around 2500BC. Here we will stop for a delicious and freshly prepared picnic lunch.



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By mid afternoon we leave the mountains behind us and head through Wadi Tayeen. Passing the 18th Century fort at Mudayrib and with the sun beginning to drop, we enter the desert and drive the final stretch on sandy tracks before reaching our camp, set-up with the russet red dunes.

Day 2

The desert provides a great place not only from which to learn more about the Bedouin who still rely on it for their camels and goats but also as a base from which to explore the surrounding area.

After a relaxed breakfast, we drive out of the desert to Wadi Bani Khalid, one of the greatest, most dramatic wadis in Oman, a green oasis spectacularly set against a mountain back drop. The village still farms in a traditional manner growing dates, bananas, mangos and papaya. A walk through this remote and little visited community provides an insight into the lives of Omanis now and in many ways as they have always been. The wadi flows out of the village and into a dramatic and steep sided canyon, which winds up from its entrance, occasioned by rock pools ideal for a quick dip. We will serve a delicious Hud Hud picnic lunch in the shade of the cliffs. The route is a combination of bouldering, hiking and swimming that is great fun.

On our way back to the camp you could try your hand at a little off road driving in the sands when we put you behind the wheel of a 4x4. Under the expert tutelage of our seasoned Omani drivers, you will be given little tips and tricks about how to rescue even the most deeply embedded vehicle. Sand boarding can be organised in the late afternoon or, alternatively, you can just relax and soak up the views before enjoying a fantastic dinner served beside a crackling log fire.

Day 3

Today we will make our way towards the coast but not before stopping to have coffee and a chat with a local Bedouin family. This brief meeting provides a means of better understanding how the people work and live, in what can be perceived as an extremely harsh environment.



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We then jump into our 4x4s for a 100km crossing of the Wahiba sands and another opportunity for you to hone your sand driving skills. We will stop for a delicious lunch and a quick dip where the dunes meet the sea at the fishing village of Qihayd. After lunch we continue south along the coastal road to Khalouf and our final camp, set on a sand spit between a lagoon, where we often see flamingo, and the Indian Ocean.

Day 4

We will enjoy a leisurely day on the beach with fishing, beach driving, snorkelling or perhaps we can visit the local towns and buy fresh fish which our chef can prepare for dinner. Alternatively, we can take a trip to Barr al Hickman, a large salt pan that is home to a vast community of sea birds as well as a host of migratory birds.

Day 5

After an early breakfast we leave the ocean behind us and make our way back towards the mountains, via the small town of Sinaw. This is where the Bedouins come to do business and the souq, particularly on a Thursday, can be a thriving and fascinating affair with all the hustle and bustle of a Middle Eastern market at its finest. Sinaw souq is amongst one of the oldest preserved souqs in Oman and one of the few places you can find traditional silver Bedouin jewellery.

From here, we continue our journey towards Nizwa, broken by a lunch stop in a restored fort close to the old village of Manah or perhaps within the date plantations of Birkat al Mauz.

Nizwa is Oman's former capital and is rich in culture and heritage. Once a crossroads of caravan routes linking the Interior with Muscat and Dhofar, the souk here can be a thriving and fascinating affair. Its imposing fort is a powerful reminder of Nizwa's importance in Oman's history.

From here we will gradually make our way up to our camp above the town of Tanuf, nestled in the mountains 1,000m above sea level, in time for sundowners.

Day 6

This morning we will explore the mountains further and head to Wadi Ghul, where we can walk through the old ruins of its abandoned village. This area is home to perhaps the highest



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concentration of traditional carpet weavers in Oman, and as we venture further up Jebel Shams we will see their works on display.

The track takes us into Wadi an Nakhur and winds up the gorge to the summit. It is possible to hike up to the top where the views are extremely rewarding, or alternatively we can drive up to the edge of Oman's 'Grand Canyon' and take a leisurely 'balcony walk', broken up with a tasty picnic lunch.

Day 7

After breakfast, and perhaps a vigorous hike up the jebel if you are feeling energetic, we visit the UNESCO listed town of Bahla, famous for its fort, souk and local pottery.

Before we start making our way back to Muscat, we spend some time exploring local mountain villages to gain an insight into the local way of life. Al Hamra, a 400 year old town, is home to some of the oldest preserved houses that can be found in Oman.

Winding up the rocky hillside, is the small ancient village of Misfat al Abriyyin with its picturesque collection of ochre-coloured stone buildings, giving it a somewhat medieval feel. A walk through this pretty village of twisting lanes and covered passages brings you to the falaj (irrigation system), which runs below the village, surrounded by lush bougainvillea, banana palms and other greenery.

From here, we start our descent of the Western Hajar through some very dramatic terrain and down along the exposed and impressive Wadi Bani Auf, one of the greatest and most memorable off-road drives of Oman. We pass through some very rugged and extraordinary mountain scenery, through small jebel villages and often through plenty of water on the track. We stop at the beautiful mountain village of Balad Sayt for lunch and a walk before continuing on past Snake Canyon and out of the wadi into Rustaq.

The imposing fort at Rustaq dates back to four centuries prior to the dawn of Islam in Oman. One of the main occupations here is beekeeping; pure Omani honey is a most sought-after commodity and is of the highest quality.

Invigorated, we arrive back in Muscat in the late afternoon.