



# Hud Hud Travels



## Two Nights on Jebel Shams

A relaxed and comfortable two night, three day expedition taking in much of Oman's breathtaking landscape including old towns, forts, mountains ranges and wadis.

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

We will head out of Muscat after breakfast travelling along the Al Batinah coast before turning inland towards Nakhl, home to a restored fort surrounded by date palms and close to Ain a'Thawwarah hot springs.

From here we continue in direction of Rustaq and into the entrance of the exposed and impressive Wadi Bani Auf. This route takes us over the Hajar Mountains, a climb of over 2,000 m and is considered by many 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 a delicious and freshly prepared picnic lunch.

We continue on the breathtaking track up and over the spine of the Hajar, where the views are magnificent. From here we continue to the foot of Jabal shams to Wadi Ghul, where we can explore 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 to the edge of the Omani Grand Canyon. Your camp will be set up nearby, offering magnificent views over the jebel.

## Day 2

We spend today exploring Jebel Shams – the highest point in Oman. It is possible to hike up to the very top where the views are extremely rewarding, or down into Wadi Ghul below (both these options would require a specialised guide, which can be provided upon request at an additional charge). Alternatively, we can take a leisurely ‘balcony walk’ along the edge of the ‘Grand Canyon’. We then continue to a viewpoint further towards the summit to have our picnic lunch, from where, on a clear day, you can see all the way towards the coast and into some of the wadis such as wadi Mistal.

Another option is to 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. We will visit Bait Al Safah, a renovated house turned into a museum with displays on the Omani Culture as well as life demonstrations by Omani women and men on how to bake traditional bread, grind flour, roast coffee etc.

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.

## Day 3

Following an early breakfast, watching the sun rise above the plateau, we head for Nizwa and the renowned market which, especially on a Friday, can be a thriving and fascinating affair.

On the way to Nizwa we will stop at the UNESCO listed town of Bahla, famous for its fabulous renovated fort, souk and handmade pottery. The town of Jabrin is not much further and is home to what is considered to be Oman’s most impressive fort, built during the Yaruba dynasty in 1688 and a marvel of castle engineering.

After some time exploring Nizwa’s imposing fort and souk, we continue to Birkat al Mauz, at the foothills of Jebel Akhdar. Shaded date plantations are overlooked by the ruins of the original village of Birkat, which was evacuated during the Jebel wars. Here we can take a short walk along the afalaj, which is incorporated into the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Afalaj Irrigation Systems of Oman, which consists of five afalaj systems representatives of some 3000 systems still in use in Oman and which are believed to have been used in agriculture and farming for many centuries.



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We will have a tasty picnic lunch enroute.

From here, we start our journey back to Muscat, passing interesting villages such as Bid Bid or Fanja, which provide a unique perspective on how life has been for many centuries. Invigorated, we arrive back in Muscat in the afternoon.