

Oman and Saudi Arabia

Departs
16th October 2026

Blue Dot Travel



\$17,990 pp

Twin-share, excludes
international flights

Single supp \$5,900



OMAN AND SAUDI ARABIA

Travel to the birthplace of Islam on our fascinating small group tour to Oman and Saudi Arabia.

Oman is an independent sultanate on the Arabian peninsula. Covering a strategic location on the Arabian Sea, Oman was coveted by the great powers which came and went. In the late 1400's, the Portuguese occupied much of the territory, including the capital, Muscat. Almost 100 years later, The Ottomans drove them out and occupied the region for some 100 years. The Persians also came and went briefly. Since 1741, it has been self-governing. The country occupies just over 300,000 square km and has a population of over 4 million, with the overwhelming majority being of the Islamic faith. Oman is famous for breeding its Arabian horses. Muscat, Oman's port capital, sits on the Gulf of Oman, which is surrounded by mountains and desert. With a history dating back to antiquity, it mixes high-rises and upscale shopping malls with cliff-top landmarks such as the 16th-century Portuguese forts, Al Jalali and Mirani, looming over Muscat Harbour. Its modern, marble-clad Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, with 50m dome and prodigious Persian carpet, can accommodate 20,000 people.

Saudi Arabia is a culturally rich destination but remains completely off the tourist trail. It encompasses a vast expanse of arid desert and mountains. The second largest country in the Arab world (after Algeria), it is an enormous 2,150,000 square kilometres and the only nation with coastlines on the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Home to Mecca and Medina, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the spiritual caretaker of the two holiest shrines in the Islamic world, a role it takes seriously. Staunchly traditional, the country's citizens are required by law to be Muslims. It is one of the few places on earth that has a 'religious' police force. Saudi Arabia is also a land with a vibrant cultural pedigree. Away from the glitz and glamour of its oil-rich, ostentatiously wealthy modern cities, the country is laden with World Heritage sites and remote mountain villages. Amongst the rock-hewn splendours of Madain Saleh, you can find Nabatean treasures on par with those at Petra. At the same time, the mud-brick ruins of Diriyah provide a fascinating insight into the origins of the Saud Dynasty. The mountains of the southwest are home to a surprising collection of traditional villages that still evoke echoes of the past, whilst the haunting ruins of Al Ula provide a chance to explore one of the most impressive ghost towns anywhere in the Middle East.



Departure, Friday 16th October

Depart Australia for Muscat.

Day 1, Saturday 17th October

Arrive Muscat

Once through customs at Muscat International Airport, proceed to the arrivals area where the group will be met and escorted to the hotel, where you'll enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. Your accommodation is at Radisson Panorama Muscat (or similar), where our group will stay for two nights. **D**

Day 2, Sunday 18th October

Muscat City Tour

A tour of the capital of Oman offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience firsthand the multifaceted nature of the country. We will begin with a tour of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. Built over six years, the mosque blends various architectural styles, and is beautifully decorated with spectacular crystal chandeliers and handmade Persian rugs. From here we proceed to the Amouage Perfumery and then visit the Royal Opera House, the Bait Al Zubair Museum, where we can trace the fascinating history and development of Oman and then the colourful Matrah Souq, driving along the waterfront corniche looking out at the Gulf of Oman. Later, we will visit Al Alam Palace, which is flanked by the Al Jalali and Al Mirani

forts on two sides, and while the palace itself is not open to the public, tourists can walk around the yard and gardens. Later, we'll visit the National Museum of Oman before we experience a two-hour sunset Dhow cruise. **B/D**

Day 3, Monday 19th October

Bimah Sinkhole, Wadi Tiwi, Sur Dhow Factory

After breakfast, we'll check out of the hotel and drive to Sur. En-route make a brief stop at Bimah Sinkhole and Wadi Tiwi. The sinkhole was formed by the collapse of the earth's surface, creating a large, bowl-shaped depression filled with emerald-green and turquoise waters. Wadi Tiwi winds through a dramatic gorge, passing through small, traditional Omani villages, terraced plantations, and palm groves. Drive to Sur and make a short stop at the Sur dhow factory, where traditional Omani dhows - wooden sailing vessels - are still crafted by hand using time-honoured techniques passed down through generations. Visiting the dhow factory provides a deep insight into Oman's seafaring history



and its enduring connection to the sea. Stay at The Sur Plaza Hotel for one night. **B/D**



Day 4, Tuesday 20th October
Wadi Bani Khalid

After breakfast the group will proceed to Wadi Bani Khalid, one of the most famous and scenic wadis in Oman, renowned for its stunning natural beauty, lush landscape, and year-round flowing water. After the wadi we'll drive to the Sharqiya desert (also known as Wahiba Sands Desert). The Wahiba Sands desert is famed for its remoteness and features some of the most stunning dunes in Oman. The sun-kissed amber tones of the sands exude a mystical allure. Both stark and beautiful, this arid landscape's vast, silent emptiness captivates anyone who sets foot in it. Arrive at Sama Al Wasil desert camp and watch the sunset over the dunes. Dinner under the stars (noting that alcohol is not available here). **B/D**



Day 5, Wednesday
21st October
Ibra Women's Market, Munsifah, Zukait Beehive Tombs, Birkat Al Mouz

After breakfast, we'll proceed to Ibra, a historic village in Oman celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and traditional architecture. Its streets are lined with beautiful mud-brick buildings that reflect the essence of Omani design. A highlight of Ibra is the Women's Souq, a vibrant market run entirely by local women. The Women's Souq in Ibra only takes place on Wednesdays. Visitors can find an array of traditional Omani crafts, textiles, and handmade items, showcasing the skills and creativity of the artisans. Exploring Ibra is a journey through time, highlighting the enduring traditions of Oman. We'll then proceed to Zukait to see the old beehive tombs. Like those of Bat, the tombs of Zukait bear witness to the expansion of an ancient civilisation present on Omani territory as early as 3000 BC. Overlooking the village, the site has several cylindrical towers of tightly packed stones without mortar. The archaeological missions in the immediate vicinity testify to the ancient existence of a vast Hafit-style necropolis composed of hundreds of burials. Then, on to Birkat al Mouz. The village features ancient ruins, including a historic falaj system and abandoned mud-brick houses, providing a glimpse into the region's past. Overnight at Intercity Nizwa for two nights (noting that alcohol is not available here). **B/D**



Day 6, Thursday 22nd October
Jabreen Castle, Bahla Fort (UNESCO Site), Oman Across Ages Museum

After breakfast, visit one of Oman's finest castles. Jabreen Castle, located a short drive from Nizwa is a

beautifully preserved example of Omani architecture and history. Built in the late 17th century by Sultan Bil'arab bin Sultan, the castle served as a royal residence and educational centre.



Its intricate design features multiple levels, ornate wooden ceilings, and decorative plasterwork, showcasing the period's architectural style. Then, the group will visit Bahla Fort a UNESCO World Heritage site. Located near Nizwa, Bahla is a must-visit landmark in Oman. Dating to the 13th century, this impressive structure showcases traditional Omani architecture and defensive strategies from the medieval period. **B/D**



Day 7, Friday 23rd October
Muscat – Nizwa Friday Market, Nizwa Souq, Nizwa Fort, Al Hamra, Bait Safa Museum – Muscat

Today we proceed to the Nizwa Souq early in the morning to witness the Friday auction. It is a traditional souq and comes alive Friday morning for the weekly livestock auction. Goats and calves are led in a ring around a central dais, with buyers shouting out prices until a sale is agreed. It's a wonderful place to watch the locals – grey-bearded men haggle alongside local women, their colourful shawls offset by the distinctive black face masks of the region. It's as genuine a slice of traditional Omani life as you'll find anywhere. Explore other interesting sections of the souq on foot before heading to Nizwa Fort, built in the 17th century it is a striking symbol of Oman's military history and architectural brilliance. From Nizwa we drive to Al Hamra, a historic village, celebrated for its rich cultural heritage and traditional architecture. Featuring ancient mud-brick houses crafted to remain cool in the arid climate, the village offers a glimpse into Omani craftsmanship. It is also home to the Bait Al Safah Museum, which highlights local traditions in agriculture, weaving, and pottery. We'll drive back to Muscat and check in at the Radisson Panorama for our final night in Oman and farewell dinner. **B/D**

Day 8, Saturday 24th October
Muscat to Riyadh

After breakfast (time TBC), Transfer to Muscat International Airport for the flight to the Saudi capital Riyadh. After being welcomed at Riyadh Airport, our dedicated transfer will escort the group to the Narcisse Riyadh Hotel for check-in and a three-night stay. **B/L/D**



 **Day 9, Sunday 25th October Riyadh City Tour**
After breakfast at the hotel, experience a day tour of Riyadh City. The National

Museum opened in 1999 to celebrate the centenary of Saudi unification. It comprises eight galleries telling the complete story of Arabian History from the creation of the universe to the modern era. Then, visit the Al Murabba Historical Palace and the magnificent Al Masmak Palace constructed in the Hijri 14th century during the reign of Imam Abdullah bin Faisal as his residence and the centre of power and money. Souk Al-Zal is found in the Al-Dirah neighbourhood in the heart of Riyadh. It is one of Riyadh's oldest traditional markets with much history within its alleyways. Known for its traditional mud-brick architecture, Ad Diriyah is home to the revitalised Al Bujairi, a pedestrianised maze of winding alleyways with cafes and craft shops. Cultural sites include Diriyah Museum, a former palace with exhibits on Saudi history, and the restored Al-Zawihra Mosque. A river lined with date palms runs through Wadi Hanifah valley, a popular spot for the locals. Dinner tonight is at MAIZ, a unique fine dining concept that brings authentic Saudi cuisine in a thematic Saudi Arabian cultural setting. *B/L/D*


 **Day 10, Monday 26th October Riyadh City Tour**

The King Abdullah Financial District (KAFD) is a mixed-use financial district near King Fahad Road in the Al Aqeeq area of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The district is the largest LEED* Platinum certified mixed-use business centre in the world. (*LEED being the most widely used green building rating system). The KAFD Grand Mosque in Riyadh, boasts a striking design inspired by the desert rose, offering 1,500 prayer spaces over two levels in a column-free space. Then, we'll view Riyadh's beauty from 300 metres up, through secure glass panels



of the Sky Bridge. The group will lunch with a local family – a great way to experience the warmth of Saudi hospitality. You'll indulge in traditional homemade dishes bursting with flavour. After lunch there'll be some time to relax at the hotel before taking a sensation 4 x 4 journey called "Edge of the World" – a high mountainous destination that has been created over time. This breathtaking place is where the golden sun reflects on the mountains

during the day, making them look shiny, while at night, you can enjoy the serenity of stargazing from the cliffs. *B/L/D*

 **Day 11, Tuesday 27th October Riyadh – Al Ula**

After breakfast, we'll depart from Riyadh Airport to Al Ula Airport (flight TBA).



Maraya is an architectural wonder that has quickly reached icon status. This magnificent mirrored structure in Al Ula's Ashar Valley will make you feel that your eyes are deceiving you as Maraya seems to disappear into the surrounding sandstone cliffs before swiftly reappearing. A multi-purpose venue for concerts, events and conferences, Maraya — meaning 'mirror' in Arabic — is the largest mirrored building in the world and is a piece of art in itself. The group will have a dinner here which will be an amazing experience! Stay at the Habitas Hotel for three nights. *B/L/D*

 **Day 12, Wednesday 28th October Al Ula**

Formerly known as Al-Hijr or Hegra in Greek, (UNESCO-listed), Madain Saleh was a pivotal city in the Nabatean Kingdom, flourishing from the 2nd century BCE until the Roman conquest in 106 CE due to its strategic location along the caravan trade route. Our guided tour will delve into the mysteries of its

tombs, ancient inscriptions, stone structures, and more. Experience the beauty and history of Al Ula's Heritage Oasis Trail on this 3km walking tour. Guided by experts, you'll enjoy AlUla's



warm hospitality with dates, dried fruits, and coffee before embarking on a scenic journey. Discover lush farmlands, picturesque views, and iconic palm swings. Al Ula is the largest ancient city after Makkah. Its ancient houses, alleys and unique design impress everyone who visits it, as its people built it in a maze-like village. The adjoining mud buildings constituted a means of protection from enemy attacks. Moussa Ben Noussair Castle forms an amazing view of the town's details. Many Islamic monuments characterise the site of the old town (now abandoned), the most important one is Masjid Al-Izam in the southeast of the town. Its foundation is attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) when he stopped there to perform prayer while he was on the way to the Battle of Tabuk. It was called Al-Izam (bones) because its place was marked with bones. *B/L/D*



 **Day 13,
Thursday
29th October
Al Ula**

Dating back to the 1st century BC, Dadan was the capital of the Dadan and Lihyan

kingdoms and features inscriptions and several tombs. Jabal Ikmah features many various rock art inscriptions – like an open-air library of multiple languages from Aramaic, Minaic, Nabataean, Thamudic to Dadanitic. Then we will visit Elephant Rock. Unlike the ornate, hand-carved facades of nearby Hegra's Nabataean tombs, this monolithic red sandstone beast's "trunk" and "body" were shaped by natural forces — millions of years of wind and water erosion. For dinner tonight, we'll immerse ourselves in an unforgettable dining experience at a secluded venue tucked amidst ancient rocks, where every moment is touched by magic. As you savour each exquisite dish, let the rhythm of the music and the enchanting ambience make this special dinner an unforgettable journey for all your senses. **B/L/D**

 **Day 14, Friday 30th October
Al Ula – Khaybar – Al Madinah**

After breakfast at the hotel, we will depart from Al Ula and head to Khaybar, where you'll embark on a journey through time in the oasis, a cradle of ancient civilisation. Before the arrival of Islam in the 7th century, the area had been inhabited by Arabian Jewish tribes until it fell to Muslim conquerors under Muhammad during the Battle of Khaybar in 628 CE. Dinner tonight is at Takya Restaurant, a wonderfully contemporary and colourful twist on traditional Saudi cooking. Accompanying this special dining experience are fabulous views over the Khaybar landscape while you eat. Your hotel for just one night is the Sofitel Shahid Al Madina. **B/L/D**



 **Day 15,
Saturday
31st October
Al Madinah**

After breakfast, the group will visit The Museum of the Prophet Muhammad Mosque, a

significant cultural and historical site commemorating the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, the central figure of Islam. This museum showcases artifacts, manuscripts, and exhibits depicting various aspects of the Prophet's life, including his birth, childhood, prophethood, teachings, and legacy. Then we will see The Prophet's Mosque - the second mosque built by the Islamic prophet Muhammad in

Medina; after that, we'll visit Quba, the second largest mosque and the holiest site in Islam, after the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, in the Saudi region of the Hejaz. Quba Mosque, is one of the oldest mosques in Islam and holds great significance as the first mosque built by the Prophet Muhammad after his migration from Mecca to Medina. Explore the historical and spiritual significance of Mount Uhud near Medina, site of the pivotal Battle of Uhud in 625 AD. Then, we will Discover Madinah's bustling local markets, filled with colours, scents, and cultural wonders. Explore authentic treasures and immerse yourself in the city's vibrant heritage. Transfer to the train station for our trip to Jeddah, where we'll stay at The Shangri-La Hotel two-night stay. Dinner at the hotel. **B/L/D**

 **Day 16,
Sunday 1st
November
Al Madinah –
Jeddah**

For a fascinating look into Jeddah's long and cosmopolitan past,



we'll take a trip to the Tayebat Museum for a well-curated representation of the city's 2,500-year history. Then the group will visit the amazing Jeddah Yacht Club to admire its highlight: a 20-meter-high glass-and-steel structure resembling a ship's mast, reflecting the sun and sea. Across the water stands the renowned "floating mosque," elevated on pillars just above sea level, our next stop. Enhanced by advanced sound and lighting technologies, it showcases a blend of Islamic and traditional architecture, radiating serenity and beauty, particularly when illuminated by the sun. The next stop is Old Town Jeddah, which boasts old buildings, a traditional souk and many restaurants. Visitors get to walk amid the old streets and experience the traditional landscape of the old town – an era of old Saudi Arabia. Dinner tonight is at one of Jeddah's top fine dining spots, Nafoura. Enjoy international and Middle Eastern cuisines, fresh produce, and stunning Red Sea views. **B/L/D**

**Day 17, Monday 2nd November
Jeddah – Next Destination**

After breakfast, have a little free time until your flight home or to your next destination. Flight schedule to be advised. **B**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.