

# OMAN

## A Middle Eastern Odyssey



March 23 - April 1, 2020

# OMAN

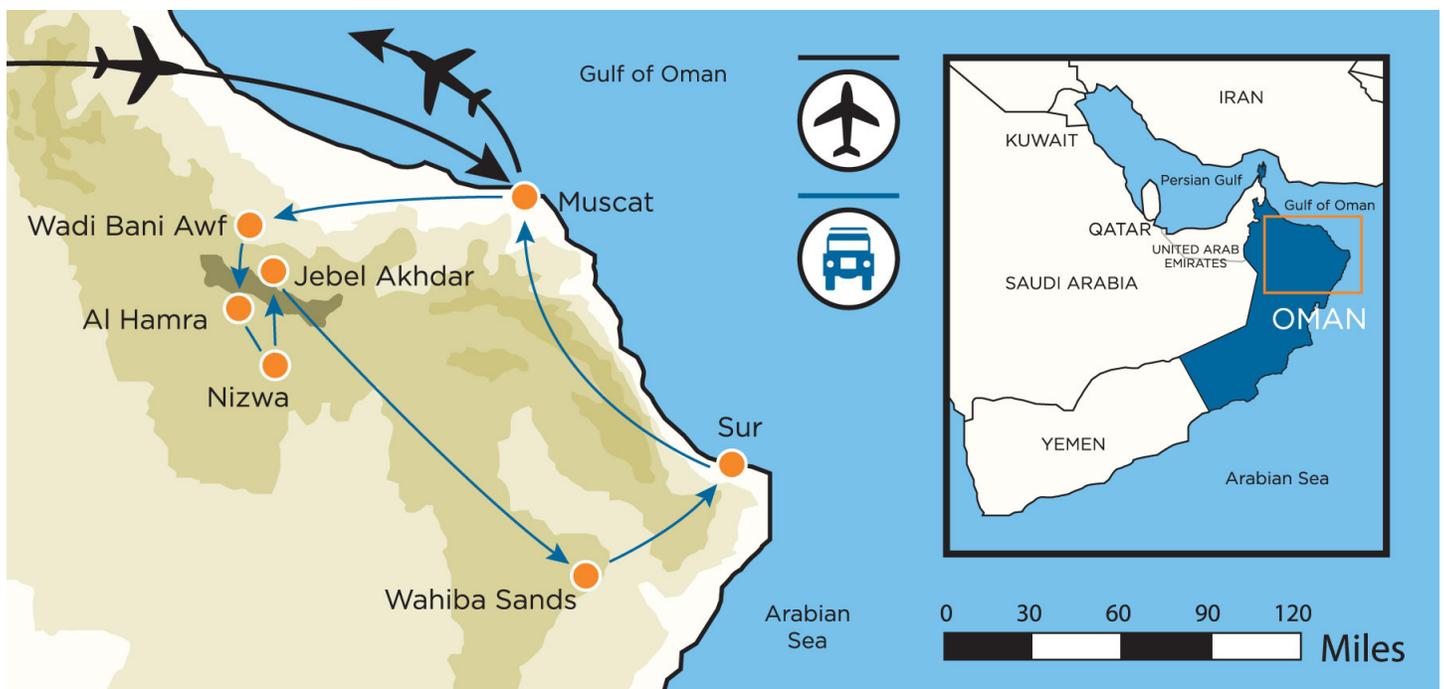
## A Middle Eastern Odyssey

March 23 - April 1, 2020

### TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Visit mosques, meet women entrepreneurs, and enjoy Omani cuisine as you learn about Oman's colorful Middle Eastern culture
- ▶ Travel through diverse landscapes from date plantations to desert sands, mountains to wadis, meeting local people along the way
- ▶ Learn about Oman's history, lifestyles, and traditions while visiting UNESCO World Heritage sites and iconic landmarks

### TRIP ROUTE



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### QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1: arrive in Muscat, welcome dinner
- Day 2: visit the Grand Mosque and Omani Heritage Gallery, sunset dhow cruise
- Day 3: visit a local couture boutique and a perfume factory, cooking class, explore a souq
- Day 4: explore Bilad Sayt, learn about traditional homes at the Bait al Safah Museum
- Day 5: experience the Nizwa cattle market and souq, take in the views from Jebel Shams
- Day 6: walk through two mountain villages in Jabal Akhdar, relax at your beautiful hotel
- Day 7: explore an oasis and date plantation, visit a Bedouin family, enjoy sunset in the dunes
- Day 8: explore Wadi Bani Khalid, visit Ras Al Junaiyz to watch endangered turtles
- Day 9: hike into Wadi Shab where you can swim in natural pools, farewell dinner
- Day 10: depart Oman

### TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$5,390

Optional Single Accommodations: \$1,000

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### your adventure in depth

#### DAY 1

Monday  
3/23/20

### Arrive in Muscat

Oman is a friendly country in the Middle East filled with emerald oases, bustling local markets, and an ancient history that rivals its neighbors! Oman remains authentic and off-the-beaten path; it's the perfect adventure destination. Flourishing for over 1,000 years, Oman is modernizing, but at a pace that is mindful of heritage preservation.

#### Pick-up and Transfer

You will be picked up at the Muscat airport by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

#### Welcome Dinner

Enjoy a lively welcome dinner as you get to know your fellow travelers this evening. Share stories and learn about why each woman on your trip is excited to explore Oman!

#### Accommodations

Park Inn

#### Meals Included

dinner

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your adventure  
in depth

### DAY 2

Tuesday  
3/24/20

Accommodations  
Park Inn  
Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch, dinner

### Muscat

Muscat offers a unique opportunity to witness a modern commercial center existing in harmony with its traditional culture. With its natural harbor, Muscat means “Anchorage” and lies in a natural volcanic bowl.

#### Grand Mosque

Explore the Grand Mosque in Muscat. Completed in 2001, the Grand Mosque is a beautiful building which shows that modern craftsmen have retained the skills necessary to create a wonderful traditional environment. The carpet in the mosque is one of the largest carpets in the world, and was hand-crafted by women. Women visiting the mosque are required to wear head scarves. You need to wear pants and cover your shoulders.

#### Sidab Women's Association

Have an Omani coffee at the Sidab Women's Association. You'll get a chance to meet the local women and learn about their work and their lives. They are a sewing association, creating mostly handcrafted bags, as well as a few other items, which you are welcome to purchase.

#### Omani Heritage Gallery

Visit the Omani Heritage Gallery, the first non-profit in the area which was founded to help Omani artisans who create local handicrafts and preserve local heritage. The Gallery focuses on social responsibility and fair trade, and you can learn about the handicrafts made here.

#### Lunch

Enjoy lunch at a traditional local restaurant. Head back to your hotel for a little bit of free time.

#### Sunset Cruise

Embark on a private sunset cruise on a dhow in the harbor to take in this unique setting.

#### Private Museum Visit and Dinner

Head to the Bait Adam Museum this evening for a private visit. See the unique collection of Omani artifacts and become better acquainted with Oman's heritage by seeing this private collection of old maps, photographs, paintings, jewelry, and ancient coins.

After your museum visit, have a traditional dinner with a local family.

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### DAY 3

Wednesday  
3/25/20

### Muscat

As early as the first century, Muscat was known as a major trading port between the west and the east. It was ruled by various indigenous tribes as well as foreign powers such as the Persians, the Portuguese Empire, the Iberian Union, and the Ottoman Empire at various points in its history. In the 18th century, Muscat's influence even extended as far as East Africa and Zanzibar; the sultan of Oman moved his capital to Zanzibar in the mid 1800s.

#### Nawal Al Hooti Boutique

Visit the Nawal Al Hooti Boutique, a local design shop that creates Omani couture clothing. This extremely successful business is run by a local woman. Learn from her about her business and her life in Muscat.

#### Amouage Factory

The House of Amouage creates some of the most famous perfumes in the world. Visit the Amouage headquarters, where you will learn about the blending of local ingredients, including frankincense and myrrh which are found in Oman and Yemen, rose from Saudi Arabia, and local amber.

#### Cooking Class

Go to the National Hospitality Institute for a cooking demonstration and class. You'll get to meet (and be!) the students, try cooking some local dishes, and enjoy lunch at the restaurant in the school.

#### National Museum

Visit the National Museum, the Sultanate's flagship cultural institution, which showcases the nation's heritage from the earliest human settlement in the Oman Peninsula some two million years ago through to the present day. The museum is dedicated to ensuring that Oman's cultural heritage is understood and appreciated, and to provide opportunities for cultural expression, innovation, and the transfer of traditional skills and knowledge between generations.

#### Muttrah Souq

Walk through the traditional narrow pathways of Muttrah Souq. See where the locals shop. Maybe you'll take some time to do some shopping of your own!

#### Dinner

Have dinner at a local restaurant with your group.

### Accommodations

Park Inn

### Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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#### DAY 4

Thursday  
3/26/20

### Muscat to Al Hamra

You'll head into the interior of Oman today, to Al Hamra. Some of the oldest preserved houses in Oman can be found in Al Hamra, a town built on a tilted rock slab. Many of the houses are two, three, and even four stories, and feature ceilings made of palm beams and fronds topped with mud and straw.

#### Visit Bilad Sayt

Depart Muscat for the interior of Oman in smaller four wheel drive vehicles. You'll stop for photos at Nakhal Fort, and then turn towards Wadi Bani Auf. The next stretch of road is steep, twisty, and can be bumpy, but the reward is worth it. You'll have some time to explore the charming mountain village of Bilad Sayt. The landscape and view are stunning.

#### Bait al Safah Museum

The Bait al Safah Museum is an excellent way to explore a traditional Omani house. You'll see how families traditionally lived.

#### Settle In at Your Hotel

You'll arrive at your hotel late this afternoon in time to enjoy the view and settle in before dinner.

### Accommodations

The View Oman

### Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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#### DAY 5

Friday  
3/27/20

### Al Hamra

Nizwa is one of the oldest cities in Oman and it was once a center of trade, religion, education, and art. Its Jama, or grand mosque, was formerly a center for Islamic learning. Set amid a verdant spread of date palms, it is strategically located at the crossroads of routes linking the interior with Muscat and the lower reaches of Dhofar.

#### Nizwa Cattle Market

Start early today and head to Nizwa's renowned cattle market. Only on Fridays, this market is where locals buy and trade the best livestock, including goats, cattle, and even camels! If you buy a camel, it gets delivered to your home; you have to take other livestock home with you after buying it! Immerse yourself in the dealings and trading that takes place at this weekly event.

#### Nizwak Souq

Explore the local souq, one of the few in Oman featuring exclusively Omani goods, including pottery, hand-carved khanjars (traditional daggers), ornamental silver jewelry, spices, and local delicacies.

#### Nizwa Fort

Visit the Nizwa Fort and learn about its history and architecture. Its design reflects the Omani architectural ingenuity in the Ya'rubi era that witnessed considerable advancement in military fortifications and the introduction of mortar-based warfare. The main part of the fort is its enormous drum-like tower that rises almost 100 feet above the ground and has a diameter of almost 120 feet.

#### Misfat Al Abriyeen

Wander through the small village of Misfat Al Abriyeen, passing the ruins of an old fort along the way. Meander through narrow alleyways between old stone houses, and learn about the ancient irrigation system known as Aflaj.

#### Jebel Shams

Enjoy lunch and then head to Jebel Shams, the highest peak in Oman. You'll drive close to the top where you can take in the spectacular views.

#### Afternoon and Evening

Take the late afternoon to relax at your hotel. Enjoy dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodations  
The View Oman

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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#### DAY 6

Saturday  
3/28/20

### Al Hamra to Jabal Akhdar

The mostly limestone mountain of Jabal Akhdar is one of the highest points in Oman and eastern Arabia. It forms the central section of Hajar range, which is mostly desert, but at higher altitudes receives around 12 inches of precipitation annually. At those elevations, it is moist enough to allow the growth of shrubs and trees, as well as to support agriculture.

#### Walk in Jabal Akhdar

Head out to explore the village in Jabal Akhdar. You'll enjoy wonderful views and green surroundings as you walk through two mountain villages on small, old trails. The paths can have stairs, be steep, or run along irrigation channels. Learn about traditional village life.

#### Afternoon to Relax

Have lunch at a local restaurant, and then head to your resort where you can relax, swim in the pool, or enjoy some of the activities offered in this beautiful location.

Accommodations  
Alila

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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**DAY 7**  
Sunday  
3/29/20

### Jabal Akdhar to the Wahiba Desert

The Wahiba Sands was named for the Bani Wahiba tribe. The desert has been of scientific interest since a 1986 expedition by the Royal Geographical Society documented the diversity of the terrain, the flora and fauna, noting 16,000 invertebrates as well as 200 species of other wildlife, including avifauna. They also documented 150 species of native flora. The area is occupied by Bedouins who congregate at Al-Huyawah, an oasis near the border of the desert, between June and September to gather dates.

#### Morning at Your Lodge

Enjoy one last relaxing morning at your beautiful resort. Take advantage of sunrise yoga on the raised platform in the mountains, book a massage, or channel your inner AdventureWoman and book an exhilarating via ferrata experience!

#### Birkat Al Mouz

Spend some time exploring Birkat Al Mouz. Walk through its oasis and date plantations.

#### Visit a Bedouin Family

Visit a local Bedouin family. Learn about their lives, homes, and traditions. Spend some time with the family so you can learn about how and if their traditions are modernizing.

#### Sunset in the Dunes

Head out into the dunes to enjoy the desert sunset this evening.

Accommodations  
Desert Nights Camp

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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### your adventure in depth

#### DAY 8

Monday  
3/30/20

### The Wahiba Desert to Ras Al Jinz

Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve has a unique natural landscape, unspoiled shorelines, golden deserts, luxuriant green oases, and rugged mountains. It is known as the site of the nesting of the endangered green turtle (*Cheloniemydas*), and is likely the most important nesting location.

**Sunrise** If you're awake, hike into the dunes behind camp to see the sunrise. Make sure to ask your guide the best spot to see it.

**Wadi Bani Khalid** Spend some time at Wadi Bani Khalid, a beautiful oasis in the middle of barren mountains. You'll enjoy a stop here to dip your toes in the beautiful turquoise pools (you can only swim with a very modest swimsuit). Enjoy a picnic lunch today.

**Afternoon and Evening** Enjoy the afternoon and evening at the turtle reserve. Join your group for dinner at your hotel.

**Turtle Watching** Gather after dinner and set out for Ras Al Junaiyz, a sanctuary for the Green Turtles. When you arrive, you'll have a thirty minute walk to the beach in the dark over uneven ground. You can use a red headlamp, but not white light. Search the beach for nests, and when you find a turtle, stay and observe it for a while. If you're lucky, you might see it laying eggs! You can take photos with no flash. This experience will be about two hours long.

As with all wildlife, sightings cannot be guaranteed. Sometimes there are only a few turtles, and sometimes there are many - it varies daily.

Accommodations  
Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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#### DAY 9

Tuesday  
3/31/20

### Ras Al Jinz to Muscat

Known as one of the most beautiful places in Oman, Wadi Shab is a spectacular range of narrow mountains, dotted with turquoise pools and waterfalls, which are surrounded by sandstone walls and lined with date plantations and banana palms.

#### Explore Wadi Shab

Hike in to Wadi Shab. The hike in is about three miles up and over uneven terrain. Wear your bathing suits this morning, as there isn't anywhere to change once you're there - the natural pools are all outdoors and completely wild. It takes some effort to get to Wadi Shab, but you'll be rewarded with one of the most beautiful swimming spots you can imagine.

#### Bimah Sinkhole

On your way to Muscat, stop at the Bimah Sinkhole, a spectacular limestone crater with blue-green water at the bottom.

#### Farewell Dinner

Have a farewell dinner with your new AdventureWomen friends. Reminisce over all of the memories you have made and celebrate the end of an amazing journey through this truly spectacular country.

Accommodations  
Park Inn

Meals Included  
breakfast, lunch, dinner

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#### DAY 10

Wednesday  
4/1/20

### Muscat and Depart

Enjoy one last morning in Muscat.

#### Transfer to the Airport

Say goodbye to your new AdventureWomen friends as you transfer to the airport for your flights home.

Meals Included  
breakfast

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

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### Accommodation Details

**Park Inn** The Park Inn is located in downtown Muscat, near shopping areas, ministries, embassies and historic buildings. After a day of exploring, relax and enjoy the rooftop swimming pool or its restaurants and bars.

**The View Oman** This eco-resort is tucked away in a scenic valley and requires a four wheel drive vehicle to cover the last stretch of winding mountainous paths leading up to the resort. You'll be greeted with stunning panoramas of the surrounding valley that are sure to take your breath away. Enjoy comfortable outdoor seating areas, bonfires, and the swimming pool, which arguably has the best views of anywhere in the hotel.

**Alila** Alila was built entirely out of local stones gathered from the nearby mountains. It combines traditional Omani construction techniques with contemporary architecture to create a uniquely relaxing environment, from the pool to the spacious suites that look out to mesmerising views of the cliff and mountains. The signature features of this hotel include fort-like doors crafted from solid wood, the iconic rose pattern that adorns the lobby, inspired by the damask roses that grow in this region, and a large fireplace in the lobby that warms guests in the chillier months after an invigorating day out in the mountains.

**Desert Nights Camp** After a long day of exploring the golden red sands of the Wahiba, relax in the fully air conditioned rooms and pamper yourself in the en suite bathrooms of the Desert Nights Camp. Drift into magical nights and feast on traditional Omani fare in the flickering glow of the campfire.

**Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve** This hotel is situated right on the turtle reserve, giving you the easiest access to go watch turtles at night. All rooms have air conditioning and en suite bathrooms.

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### Included/Not Included

#### Included:

- ▶ All hotel accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary, including water
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ Fully-guided sightseeing as indicated in the itinerary
- ▶ English-speaking guides throughout the trip
- ▶ Two bottles of drinking water during tours/drives
- ▶ Gratuities for hotel staff, wait staff, and baggage handlers
- ▶ One AdventureWomen Ambassador

#### Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare to and from Oman
- ▶ Optional activities as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages
- ▶ Fees for passports, visas, or immunizations
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Gratuities for head guide(s) and head driver

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### Activity Level:

**Moderate**

Active

High Energy

Challenging

We rate this trip as Moderate. Our Moderate adventures exercise your mind more than your body and are designed for women who prefer a leisurely, less rigorous experience. For example, you could walk up to 2 miles per day through cities and villages, stand in museums for a few hours, relax on a boat, or view wildlife from a vehicle. Please note that this is a general description of what you might encounter; for specific details about your trip, please consult the itinerary.

We recommend training before your trip (with your doctor's permission!) to make the most of your adventure. We have a partnership with FitForTrips, a company that will design an individualized fitness plan for you with this itinerary in mind. Best of all, AdventureWomen guests get a 25% discount with the code FITWOMEN. Learn more at: <https://fitfortrips.com/partners/adventure-women/>

You should come with a flexible, adventurous, and enthusiastic spirit, and a wonderful sense of humor that adventure travel requires.

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The deposit for this trip is \$800, and is nonrefundable and nontransferable. Once you book, you will need to fill out and return to AdventureWomen:

- Information Form
- Booking Conditions Form
- Copy of Flight Information
- Copy of Issuing Page of Passport (Photo Page)

**Final payment is due to AdventureWomen in a cash form (check, money order, or wire transfer) on or before December 24, 2019.** A maximum of \$1,500 per person can be put on a credit card, which includes your deposit.

### Passports and Visas:

Citizens of the United States must have a passport valid for six months beyond your travel dates with at least two blank facing pages. If you do not have a passport, please apply now!

You must purchase a visa in advance to enter Oman. **Do not apply until the end of February, as you must enter Oman within 30 days of getting your visa.** You can do so online here: <https://evisa.rop.gov.om/visa-eligibility>

We recommend the 26B Tourist Visa, which is good for 30 days. Technically your trip is only ten days, but if you decide you'd like to come early or stay late, it would be easier if you have a longer visa. The price is roughly US\$50 depending on the exchange rate.

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### Health Considerations:

Make an appointment with a travel clinic. There are no immunization requirements for travel to Oman, however your local travel clinic may have recommendations for you based on your age, health, and past vaccination history.

For more health information, go to [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) and navigate to the page about Oman.

### Money:

US Dollars and credit cards are accepted in many places in Oman, but we recommend exchanging money for Omani currency, especially if you'd like to shop at souqs or women's associations. You can use an ATM in Muscat to withdraw cash, or exchange US Dollars.

### Suggested Gratuities:

- ▶ Gratuity suggestions will be advised closer to departure.

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**Arrive:** Arrive in Muscat, Oman (MCT) on March 23, 2020 before 3:00pm. One group transfer will be provided, and the time will be advised closer to departure. Private transfers will be available at an additional cost.

**Depart:** Depart Muscat, Oman (MCT) on April 1, 2020. One group transfer will be provided, and the time will be advised closer to departure. Private transfers will be available at an additional cost.

We are happy to help you make your flight and travel arrangements. Please contact us at:

**(800) 804-8686 or (617) 544-9393**  
**email: [info@adventurewomen.com](mailto:info@adventurewomen.com)**

If you'd like to do anything prior to or following the AdventureWomen trip, we'd be delighted to help you arrange any trip extensions you're interested in.

**Note:** The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible booking last-minute registrants, we must release hotel rooms two to three months prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

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As you get ready to pack for your adventure, have a look at The AdventureWomen Store at [www.theadventurewomenstore.com](http://www.theadventurewomenstore.com) - we have picked out our favorite travel clothes and outdoor gear to help make packing easy for you. You can also see our recommendations for this trip on the [AdventureWomen Pinterest](#) page.

Oman generally has a warm climate. In March, you can expect daytime low temperatures to be 70, and highs to be in the low 90s. The temperature can dip into the high 50s and low 60s overnight. In the mountains, daytime temperatures can be in the 50s and 60s - it gets chilly, so bring layers!

Oman is a Muslim country and it is important that as guests of the country, you respect local customs. Please plan to cover your knees and shoulders when dressing. You can wear a bathing suit at the pool in your hotels, but you should plan on dressing modestly when visiting local sites. When visiting mosques or old town areas, you must wear modest, loose-fitting clothing with long sleeves and long pants. Do not plan to wear leggings on their own in mosques; they work well if you wear them with a dress! Don't forget to bring a scarf to cover your head!

### Clothing and Gear:

- Duffel bag or small suitcase
- Daypack
- 2-3 short sleeve shirts (quick dry recommended)
- 1-2 long sleeve shirts (quick dry recommended)
- 1 medium weight fleece sweater/jacket for cool evenings
- 1-2 pairs of pants
- 1 pair of shorts (must cover knees) or capris
- 1-2 sets of nicer clothes for dinner (skirts should be knee-length or longer)
- 1 bathing suit
- Waterproof jacket
- Hat for sun protection
- Underwear

- Socks
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals
- Scarf that can double as a head scarf
- Sleepwear

### AdventureWomen Essentials:

- Travel documents (passport, airline tickets, money)
- 2-3 spare passport photos (in case of lost passport)
- Write down/print out travel insurance number
- Locks for your suitcase/duffel bag
- Travel alarm clock with spare batteries or phone
- Headlamp or small flashlight with spare batteries

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### Essentials Continued:

- Binoculars (optional; 8x40/42 models are excellent choices; center focus models are easiest)
- Digital camera, memory cards, battery charger
- Power adapters/power bank
- Sunglasses, case, and strap
- Spare glasses, contact lenses, cleaner, saline, etc.
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Your AdventureWomen water bottle
- Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF
- Hand wipes/hand sanitizer
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Soap, shampoo, and conditioner
- Small packet of tissues
- Tampons and panty liners (avoid plastic applicators)
- Earplugs: We recommend Mack's Pillow Soft White Moldable Silicone Snore Proof Earplugs. Available at most drugstores or at [www.earplugstore.com](http://www.earplugstore.com)
- Assortment of stuff sacks and Ziploc bags
- 1-2 bandanas/Buff
- Reading material/journal and pens

### Personal First Aid Kit:

- Prescription medicine you usually take (in original containers)
- Personal epi pen (if you need one, don't forget to pack it!)
- Bandages, Gauze, Ace bandage, blister prevention
- Antiseptic wipes/spray
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cotton-tipped applicators
- Oral rehydration tablets/packets
- Antidiarrheal medication
- Mild laxative
- Antacid
- Cold remedies
- Ibuprofen/acetaminophen
- Eye drops
- Tweezers, scissors (travel size), safety pins

If you prefer to buy a complete kit, we recommend the Smart Travel first aid kit.

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### Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

### Switching Trips

Our deposits are nonrefundable and nontransferable. If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you, but switching is not guaranteed.

### No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

### Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

### Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one **actively participates**, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to **experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends**. Most of all, we want our trips to be **fun!**

**good-natured realist and have a sense of humor!** Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. **Being on time** is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a