



SPECIALITY

ASIA & MIDDLE EAST · RECOMMENDED 12 DAYS

★ Wadi Shab

Oman

Wadis, dunes and mountain villages: Oman by 4x4, at the wheel yourself or with an Omani driver-guide

RECOMMENDED LENGTH

12 days

DEPARTURE

Any day

you pick the dates

TRANSPORT

Self-drive

or private driver

ESTIMATED FROM, EXCL. FLIGHT

€1,240 p.p.

My recommended 4x4 route, arranged in full for you as a 12-day private trip: swimming in the turquoise pools of Wadi Shab and Wadi Tiwi, a night among the red dunes of Wahiba Sands and walks through terraced villages on Jebel Akhdar and Jebel Shams. You stay in small heritage houses and mountain lodges, visit the forts of Nizwa, Jabreen and Bahla, and end with a full day in Muscat. You drive a rental 4x4 yourself or travel with an Omani driver-guide, and you start whenever you like.

✓ Put together personally

✓ No group travel

✓ At your own pace

✓ Leave out or add what you like

✓ Dates completely free

✓ Eat wherever you like

Highlights

- ★ Swimming in the turquoise pools and cave waterfall of Wadi Shab
- ★ A walk through the palm gardens of Wadi Tiwi to the Mibam waterfall
- ★ A night in a desert camp among the Wahiba Sands dunes, with camels and sunset
- ★ Diana's Viewpoint and the terraced-villages walk on Jebel Akhdar
- ★ Two nights on the 'Grand Canyon' of Arabia: the Balcony Walk on Jebel Shams
- ★ The forts of Nizwa, Jabreen and Bahla and the Al Ayn beehive tombs (UNESCO)
- ★ The mountain villages of Misfat al Abriyeen, Balad Sayt and Wakan
- ★ A full day in Muscat: Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Royal Opera House and Mutrah souq

Best time to travel



best time to travel: advice only, you travel when you like

TRAVELLERS

Private: only your own party, from 1 traveller. No group travel, no fellow travellers you don't know.

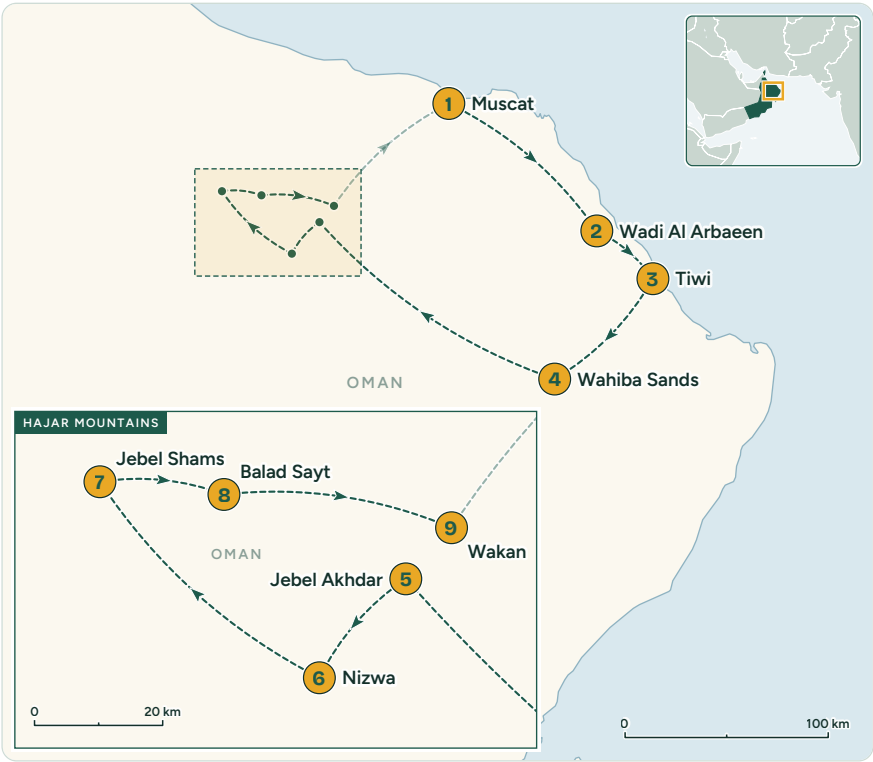
LENGTH

Recommended: 12 days · shorter or longer is always possible

DATES

Completely flexible: you leave on the day that suits you.

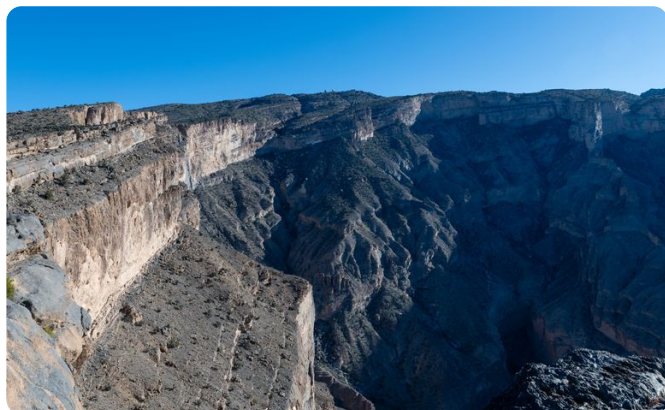
Your route on the map



Map: Natural Earth (public domain) · the arcs show the order of the route, not the exact road

- 1 Muscat
1 night · day 1, 11
- 2 Wadi Al Arbreen
1 night · day 2
- 3 Tiwi
1 night · day 3
- 4 Wahiba Sands (desert camp)
1 night · day 4
- 5 Jebel Akhdar (Al Aqr)
1 night · day 5
- 6 Nizwa
1 night · day 6
- 7 Jebel Shams
2 nights · day 7–8
- 8 Balad Sayt
1 night · day 9
- 9 Wakan
1 night · day 10

overland, arrow = direction of travel



DAY 8 The deep gorge of Wadi Ghul below Jebel Shams



DAY 9 Misfat al Abriyeen above its palm oasis

My recommended route

This is the route as I put it together for you. It is a starting point, not a fixed programme: leave out what doesn't appeal to you, add what you would like to do and travel at your own pace. Everything below is arranged for you in advance. Prefer a guide? I can add a local guide to any activity.

DAY 1 **Arrival in Muscat** MUSCAT (LUCHTHAVENHOTEL)

Flight from Brussels to Muscat with one connection (e.g. Istanbul or Doha; approx. 9–11h travel time). A private driver waits in the arrivals hall with a name sign and takes you in ten minutes to your hotel near the airport. Time to rest before the adventure begins.

DAY 2 **Wadi Dayqah and Wadi Al Arbaeen** WADI AL ARBAEEN • BREAKFAST • DINNER

After breakfast the round trip begins: your rental 4x4 is delivered to the hotel and the supplier goes through the vehicle with you, or your Omani driver-guide is ready. After approx. 1h30 you reach the Wadi Dayqah reservoir between steep rock walls; optional hour of kayaking. Light lunch in a village coffee shop, then an unpaved track through the wadi to Wadi Al Arbaeen (approx. 1h; self-drivers find the GPS points and a paved alternative in the roadbook). Short walk to the green pools of As Suwayh. At Comfort and Premium level you stay at the small valley resort (dinner included); at Budget level you continue to a guesthouse in Tiwi.

DAY 3 **Wadi Tiwi and the Mibam waterfall** TIWI • BREAKFAST

A narrow mountain road leads to Wadi Tiwi (approx. 1h20), a green valley of date palms and banana trees irrigated by centuries-old falaj channels. You walk past the upper villages to the Mibam waterfall (approx. 2–3h return, partly over rocks; the route is in your roadbook). Overnight in Tiwi; for dinner I suggest a fish restaurant by the sea.

DAY 4 **Wadi Shab, Qalhat and Wahiba Sands** WAHIBA SANDS (WOESTIJKAMP) • BREAKFAST • DINNER

Early start (8:30) to enjoy Wadi Shab before the crowds: a small boat takes you across, then you walk approx. 45 minutes between high rock walls to the turquoise pools. Those who wish can swim to the cave with its hidden waterfall. Short stop at the Bibi Maryam mausoleum in Qalhat (UNESCO), then approx. 1h45 to Bidiyah for lunch. In the afternoon you deflate the tyres and drive into the dunes of Wahiba Sands: self-drivers are met at the agreed point by the camp, which leads the way to the tents. Short camel ride, sunset on a dune crest and dinner under the stars.



Golden dunes of the Wahiba Sands

DAY 5

To Jebel Akhdar, the Green Mountain JEBEL AKHDAR (AL AQR) • BREAKFAST • DINNER

Sunrise in the dunes, re-inflate the tyres in Bidiyah and then almost 3h to Birkat al Mouz, where a police checkpoint lets only 4x4s up the mountain. The road climbs to the Saiq plateau (approx. 2,000 m). My tip for lunch: the terrace with a view at Diana's Viewpoint, named after Princess Diana who visited in 1986. In the afternoon a 4x4 descent through Wadi Al Ayn to the village of Masirat Al Rawajih (approx. 50 min return). Overnight on the plateau, at Premium level in a heritage inn in the old terraced village of Al Aqr. Dinner included.

DAY 6

Three-villages walk, Birkat al Mouz and Nizwa NIZWA • BREAKFAST

Morning walk of approx. 3h along the terraces and falaj channels of Al Aqr, Al Ayn and Ash Shirayjah; the path is waymarked and in your roadbook. In late March and April the roses bloom here for the famous rosewater. Then descend to Birkat al Mouz: lunch and a walk through the ruins of the old mud-brick village among the palms. Late afternoon arrival in Nizwa, within walking distance of the fort and souq. Free evening in the old town.

DAY 7

Nizwa, Jabreen, Bahla and the Al Ayn tombs JEBEL SHAMS • BREAKFAST • DINNER

Early visit to Nizwa's souq and round fort (on Friday mornings there is the goat market). Then the beautifully painted Jabreen castle and Bahla fort (UNESCO), Oman's largest. In the afternoon the 5,000-year-old beehive tombs of Al Ayn (UNESCO) against the backdrop of Jebel Misht, and a short walk to the pools of Wadi Damm. Finally the road climbs to Jebel Shams (approx. 3h30 driving spread over the day; make sure you are up before dark). Dinner included.

DAY 8

Jebel Shams: the Balcony Walk JEBEL SHAMS • BREAKFAST • DINNER

Oman's finest walk: the Balcony Walk (W6) runs like a ledge along the wall of Wadi Ghul, hundreds of metres above the gorge, to the abandoned village of As Sab (approx. 8 km return, 3–4h, little elevation change but not for those with a fear of heights). The path is well waymarked; you walk it at your own pace. Free afternoon to rest or take photos; sunset on the rim of the 'Grand Canyon of Arabia'. Nights can be chilly. Dinner included.

DAY 9

Al Hamra, Misfat al Abriyeen and Balad Sayt BALAD SAYT • BREAKFAST • DINNER

Descent to Al Hamra, one of Oman's best-preserved mud-brick villages. Walk through Misfat al Abriyeen, a mountain village of alleys, date palms and falaj channels. Then one of the country's finest 4x4 routes: over the Sharafat al Alamayn pass and down Wadi Bani Awf to Balad Sayt, a green terraced village in a rock bowl (approx. 3h driving). It is a steep gravel track that calls for experience and a dry day; I will give you honest advice. If you prefer tarmac, detour via Rustaq or take the driver-guide for this day. Walk around the village in the late light. Dinner included.

DAY 10

Nakhal and the mountain village of Wakan WAKAN • BREAKFAST • DINNER

Through Wadi Bani Awf (view of Snake Canyon) to the Batinah plain. Visit Nakhal fort on its rocky outcrop and the Ain Al Thowarah hot spring among the palms. In the afternoon you climb the steep final kilometres to Wakan, a terraced village high in Wadi Mistal (apricot blossom in February–March). Walk up steps and paths through the village. Overnight in or just below the village, with a view. Dinner included.

DAY 11

Muscat: Grand Mosque, opera and Mutrah NACHTVLUCHT • BREAKFAST

Early departure to Muscat (approx. 1h45). The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque is open to non-Muslims only Saturday to Thursday, approx. 8:30–11:00 (modest dress required; women cover their hair); I plan your trip so that this day does not fall on a Friday. Then the Royal Opera House, whose interior you can only visit on the opera house's own guided tour. After lunch the Bait Al Zubair museum or free time, and at sunset a walk along the Corniche and through Mutrah souq. Your day room is ready for freshening up. In the evening your driver-guide drops you at the airport, or you return your rental car there, for the night flight.



Dusk on the Mutrah Corniche

DAY 12

Arrival in Brussels

After a connection you arrive in Brussels in the morning. A few days later I call you to hear how it was.

What I arrange for you

1 Airport pickup

On arrival at Muscat airport a private driver waits with a name sign and takes you to your nearby hotel. On day 11 you are dropped at departures in the evening (or return your rental 4x4 there).

2 Hotels

Every night is booked and confirmed in advance, at the level you choose: Budget, Comfort or Premium. Prefer another hotel? I change it.

3 Transport

You choose: self-drive with a rental car waiting for you, or a private driver and private transfers. Domestic flights, trains and boats where they make sense, all booked in advance.

4 Activities, at your pace

The activities and entrance tickets on the route. No guide or group travels with you: you set the pace, and anything you would rather skip, you simply leave out.

5 Eat wherever you like

Breakfast is included, as are the meals at remote camps and lodges where there is no alternative. For the rest I give you my restaurant tips, but you are completely free to choose where you eat. I never send you somewhere because it earns me something.

Estimated prices per person

PER PERSON, BASED ON 2 TRAVELLERS, EXCL. INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

ACCOMMODATION LEVEL	Self-drive	Private driver
	rental car, everything pre-booked	private transfers and driver
Budget simple, clean and well located	€1,240 p.p.	€2,320 p.p.
Comfort characterful mid-range	€1,500 p.p.	€2,580 p.p.
Premium the best addresses on the ground	€1,900 p.p.	€2,980 p.p.

WITH 4 TRAVELLERS	approx. 14% off per person: you share the car and driver. E.g. Comfort, private driver: approx. €2,220 p.p.
TRAVELLING SOLO	supplement of approx. 65%: you carry the room and transport alone. E.g. Comfort, private driver: approx. €4,255 p.p.
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT	I book your flight as part of your trip; the flight price for your dates is in your personal quote. Return flight Brussels–Muscat not included: allow about € 430–700 p.p. depending on the month (December is the most expensive in the travel season). I find you the best flight with your quote.

SELF-DRIVE

Oman is one of the best countries in the world for it: excellent roads, little traffic, safe, cheap fuel, and you drive on the right. A real 4x4 is mandatory (police checkpoint at Jebel Akhdar, the Wahiba dunes, tracks to Balad Sayt and Wakan). Your vehicle (full insurance with zero excess) is delivered to your hotel on day 2 and returned at the airport on day 11. Fuel is paid locally (indicative ± €100 per car for the whole route; there are no toll roads and parking is free almost everywhere). Your roadbook has GPS points, a paved alternative for every track and the golden rule: never enter a wadi when rain is forecast and never drive a mountain track after dark. In Wahiba the camp escorts you into the dunes.

WITH A PRIVATE DRIVER

A licensed English-speaking Omani driver-guide takes you from day 2 to the airport in a spacious 4x4 (Toyota Land Cruiser or similar). He is both driver and guide: he knows the tracks, villages and wadis, tells you about the country as you go, walks with you where you wish and decides whether a wadi is safe after rain. Fuel, his meals and accommodation are included. This is the most expensive option, because a 4x4 with guide in Oman is charged per day, but also the most relaxed.

ESTIMATED PRICES Estimated prices: per person, based on 2 travellers sharing a room, excl. international flight, estimated from desk research (2027 price level). The binding price is the one in your personal proposal and booking confirmation.

Estimated price. In high season the price can be higher, in low season lower; your exact price is in your personal quote.

Three accommodation levels

Budget

Simple, clean hotels and guesthouses (approx. €50–70 per room with breakfast), a basic desert camp and sometimes a night in the valley rather than up top (Al Hamra for Jebel Shams, two nights in Tiwi instead of the wadi resort).

Comfort

Well-reviewed hotels, heritage houses and mountain lodges in the best spots, such as at the start of the Balcony Walk (approx. €85–110 per room), and a comfortable desert camp with en-suite facilities.

Premium

The best places in my selection: boutique inns such as Nomad Inn in Tiwi and The Suwgra on Jebel Akhdar, a stylish desert camp such as Ayla (approx. €120–200 per room). Five-star resorts (Anantara, Alila) on request.

Possible guided moments

Prefer a guide? I can add a local guide to any activity.

- ✦ Day 3: a village guide for the walk to the Mibam waterfall in Wadi Tiwi
- ✦ Day 6: a local guide for the three-villages walk on Jebel Akhdar
- ✦ Day 7: a guide at the forts of Nizwa, Jabreen and Bahla
- ✦ Day 8: a mountain guide for the Balcony Walk
- ✦ With the driver-guide option a licensed Omani guide travels the whole route with you
- ✦ Prefer a guide? I can add a local guide to any activity.

Ideas to adapt the route

- ➔ Shorter (8 days): Muscat – Wadi Shab – Wahiba Sands – Nizwa – Jebel Shams – Muscat
- ➔ Gentler: two nights on Jebel Akhdar or in Nizwa
- ➔ Longer: turtles at Ras al Jinz and the Sur dhow yard, or 2–3 beach nights near Muscat
- ➔ Tarmac only: replace Balad Sayt and Wakan with Misfat al Abriyeen and Nakhal
- ➔ Add a night in Muscat at the end instead of the night flight
- ➔ Combination: self-drive, with a driver-guide for the two toughest off-road days

Included

- ✓ 10 nights at the level you choose (Budget, Comfort or Premium): hotel near the airport, guesthouses and small resorts, desert camp, heritage houses and mountain lodges; plus a day room in Muscat on day 11
- ✓ Daily breakfast and 7 dinners in remote places with no alternative (Wadi Al Arbaeen, Wahiba Sands, Jebel Akhdar, 2x Jebel Shams, Balad Sayt, Wakan)
- ✓ Private airport transfer on arrival in Muscat; on day 11 you are dropped at the airport in the evening
- ✓ Your choice: rental 4x4 (days 2–11, full insurance with zero excess, delivered to your hotel; fuel is paid locally) or a licensed English-speaking Omani driver-guide with 4x4 (Toyota Land Cruiser or similar; fuel and his board and lodging included)
- ✓ Boat in Wadi Shab, camel ride in Wahiba Sands and, for self-drivers, an escort from the camp into the dunes
- ✓ Entrance fees for the forts of Nizwa, Jabreen, Bahla and Nakhal, Bait Al Zubair and the Royal Opera House tour (the interior can only be visited on the opera house's own tour)
- ✓ Detailed roadbook with GPS points, tracks, driving times and the best places to stop

Not included

- International flight (I am happy to book it for you; allow approx. €430–700 pp, depending on the month)
- Travel and cancellation insurance (travel assistance insurance is mandatory)
- Lunches, dinners in Tiwi, Nizwa and Muscat, and drinks (allow approx. €20–30 pp per day)
- Tips for drivers (and guides, if you take one)
- Kayaking in Wadi Dayqah and other optional activities
- When self-driving: fuel, tolls and parking (indicative ± €100 per car for the whole route; paid locally)
- When self-driving: credit-card deposit for the rental car and any traffic fines (speed cameras!)

Practical information

VISA (BELGIAN CITIZENS)

No visa needed for stays up to 14 days (this trip: 11 days in Oman). Passport valid for at least 6 months on arrival; temporary passports are not accepted. Keep your return ticket and hotel details handy. Longer stays (e.g. extension nights) require an e-visa.

HEALTH

No mandatory vaccinations and no malaria. Recommended: routine vaccines up to date and hepatitis A; discuss hepatitis B and rabies with your doctor (wanda.be). Extreme heat outside the season; flash floods in wadis after rain. Good medical care in Muscat and Nizwa, limited in the mountains and desert.

CURRENCY & PAYMENT

Omani rial (OMR), pegged to the US dollar; 1 OMR ≈ €2.20–2.40. Cards accepted in hotels and towns, ATMs in Muscat, Nizwa and larger villages; cash needed in the wadis, mountain villages and for tips.

FLIGHT TIME FROM BRUSSELS

No direct flight. Approx. 9–12h with one connection via Istanbul (Turkish Airlines), Doha (Qatar Airways) or Dubai (Emirates); Gulf-region schedules may change due to regional tensions.

TIME DIFFERENCE

Oman is on UTC+4 all year: 3 hours ahead of Belgium in winter, 2 hours in summer.

LANGUAGE

Arabic; English is widely spoken in tourism and by the driver-guides.

MEALS

Breakfast is included every day, as is dinner in the remote places where there is no alternative: Wadi Al Arbaeen, the Wahiba Sands desert camp, Jebel Akhdar, Jebel Shams, Balad Sayt and Wakan. For the other meals you get my restaurant recommendations, but you are completely free to choose where and when you eat: I never steer you to expensive restaurants in return for a commission.

GUIDES

By default you travel without a guide. Prefer a guide? I can add a local guide to any activity.

As of September 2026 — check diplomatie.belgium.be (travel advice) and wanda.be (health) before you travel.

Travelling responsibly

You mostly stay in small, locally run heritage houses and guesthouses (Nizwa, Al Aqr, Tiwi, Wakan) rather than large resorts, and if you choose a driver, you travel with an Omani driver-guide. In Wahiba I choose a camp that saves water and removes its waste. With two or four travellers in one vehicle you remain a guest in the mountain villages without disturbing their calm; I ask you to keep sunscreen out of the falaj channels, respect village dress codes and use a large water dispenser in the car instead of plastic bottles.



Steennot Travels

Contact & booking

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Put together personally by Yari, down to the last detail. — Yari Steennot

No group travel and no fixed dates: you travel privately, at your own pace. Leave out what doesn't appeal to you, add what you like. I give you my restaurant tips, but you choose freely where you eat: nobody sends you to expensive restaurants for a commission.

MY CONTACT ON THE GROUND: [contact name]

ESTIMATED PRICES

Estimated prices: per person, based on 2 travellers sharing a room, excl. international flight, estimated from desk research (2027 price level). The binding price is the one in your personal proposal and booking confirmation. Ask for a no-obligation personal intake call or a proposal. Other dates, more or fewer days, something left out or added? Everything can be adapted.

This trip is a package under the Belgian Act of 21 November 2017 on the sale of package travel, linked travel arrangements and travel services. Before you sign, you receive the standard information form and our travel conditions. Steennot Travels is insured against insolvency with [insurer, address, policy number — to be completed]: in case of insolvency, payments are refunded and, where transport is included, repatriation is guaranteed. All prices are indicative estimates; the binding price is the one in your booking confirmation.

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COVER

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DAY 4

Golden dunes of the Wahiba Sands — Photo: Andries Oudshoorn · CC BY-SA 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0) · [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wahiba_Sands_\(10\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wahiba_Sands_(10).jpg) · *resized*



DAY 8

The deep gorge of Wadi Ghul below Jebel Shams — Photo: Christoph Strässler · CC BY-SA 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jebel_Shams,_Oman.jpg · *cropped, resized*



DAY 9

Misfat al Abriyeen above its palm oasis — Photo: dconvertini · CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Misfat_al_Abriyyin,_Oman_-_2024_26.jpg · *cropped, resized*



DAY 11

Dusk on the Muttrah Corniche — Photo: Andrew Moore · CC BY-SA 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Desert_Dusk_I._Muttrah_Corniche.jpg · *cropped, resized*