



MARCO POLO JOURNEYS

## Oman & the Emirates: The Sands of Time 2020

11 days from \$9,995

Limited to 18 guests

Celebrate the rich tapestry of history, culture and innovation that lie at the cornerstones of Oman and the UAE, two nations boasting both ultra-modern metropolises and timeless traditions.

### A&K Advantages

Discover Oman's rich history as you explore its forts, castles and *souks* on a journey spanning Muscat's coast, Wahiba Sands' dunes and Jabal Al Akhdar's towering peaks

Traverse the desert landscape by camel back and enjoy traditional Bedouin hospitality in an overnight camp set beneath the stars

Marvel at the soaring walls and towers of Nizwa Fort and Jabrin Castle, imposing testaments to Oman's enduring legacy of trade

Take in the majesty of Abu Dhabi's crowning architectural jewel, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Gain insight into an integral part of the Emirati's heritage at Abu Dhabi's Falcon Hospital and Museum

Enjoy 360-degree views of Dubai's skyline from the observation deck of the world's tallest skyscraper, Burj Khalifa

# Itinerary

## DAY 1 ARRIVE MUSCAT, OMAN

Arrive in Muscat, where you are met and transferred to your hotel. Standing majestically on a cliff top overlooking the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Oman, the resort's Moorish and Omani architectural elements reflect the rich heritage of the Sultanate.

Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa

## DAY 2 MUSCAT | FUSION OF OLD & NEW

Begin your exploration of Muscat at the National Museum. Housed in the heart of Old Muscat, it features artifacts depicting Oman's cultural and historical heritage. After a brief stop across from the museum at the Al Alam Palace, continue your exploration of Muscat's fascinating fusion of old and new at the Royal Opera House Muscat. Constructed by the same team responsible for the Grand Mosque, it embodies a similar synergy of contemporary construction and time-honored tradition. After lunch at a local restaurant, continue to your hotel for an afternoon at leisure, followed by a welcome dinner.

Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 3 MUSCAT | HISTORIC PORT CITY

Today, continue your exploration of Muscat in the historic port city's Grand Mosque, a contemporary architectural marvel showcasing an enduring tradition of regional artistry and craftsmanship. Explore the basic tenets of Islam with a local expert in the mosque's main prayer room, a vast space adorned with intricate chandeliers and handwoven carpets. Next, head to the local market with a chef who will assist you in selecting ingredients for your interactive cooking class. Learn about Omani dishes and share your lunch with local students. After leisure time at your hotel, embark on a *dhow* (traditional fishing boat) cruise exploring the city's port and coast beyond, taking in an iconic seascape traversed by sailors for centuries. Pause in a scenic cove for a photo opportunity set against a spectacular backdrop. Disembark and make your way to Muttrah Souk, a traditional Omani market filled with frankincense, silver handicrafts and gold jewelry.

Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 4 WAHIBA SANDS | UNDER THE DESERT STARS

Follow the coast to Sur, passing through the village of Quriyat and seeing Bimah Sinkhole — a limestone crater — en route. Continue to Wadi Tiwi, with its deep, narrow gorges carved from towering seaside cliffs. Stop at a *dhow* factory and pause for lunch in Sur. Then, proceed to the undulating red and white dunes of Wahiba Sands, taking note of pretty villages that cling to the slopes of the rugged mountainside en route. Upon reaching camp, set out to discover the boundless dunes by 4x4 vehicle, continuing into the desert sunset by camel back. Your overnight camp is a romantic tented oasis set beneath the desert stars.

Desert Nights Camp | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5 JABAL AL AKHDAR | ENDLESS MOUNTAIN VISTAS

This morning, travel back in time at Birkat Al Mouz, a former settlement of clay ruins and cleverly irrigated date plantations. Continue on to explore Jabal Al Akhdar (the Green Mountain), a scenic vista nestled within Oman's spectacular Al Hajar Mountain Range. Perched some 6,600 feet above sea level, your vantage on a ridge of Jabal Al Akhdar affords commanding views of the rugged canyons below. Check in to your luxurious resort overlooking the mountains. Melding traditional Omani construction techniques, local stones and contemporary architecture, your resort affords a uniquely relaxing environment.

Alila Jabal Akhdar | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6 NIZWA | IMPOSING FORTS & TOWERING PEAKS

Visit the 17th-century trading enclave of Nizwa, passing through the city's arched gateway to explore its iconic fort, bustling *souk*, weekly livestock market, fascinating silversmith shops and deeply rooted Islamic traditions. After lunch, enjoy the option to continue to a nearby *wadi* for grand views of the canyon or return to your resort for an afternoon at leisure.

Alila Jabal Akhdar | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7 ABU DHABI, UAE | TIME TO UNWIND

Continue exploring the Ad Dakhiliyah region with a visit to Jabrin Castle, the finest surviving example of Oman's 17th-century fortresses. This former bastion of astrology, medicine and Islamic law showcases elegantly painted ceilings, intricate woodcarvings and other period details. After lunch, travel overland to Muscat and fly to Abu Dhabi, where you check in to your luxury accommodations on Saadiyat Island.

St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 8 ABU DHABI | MODERN MARVELS

One of the wealthiest and most modern city-states in the world, Abu Dhabi is renowned for its lush greenery, planned development and beautiful Corniche. Begin your exploration of the city at the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital and Museum, gaining insight into this fascinating bird of prey and its integral role in the Emirati's heritage. Return to your hotel for lunch at leisure. This afternoon, visit the Louvre Abu Dhabi for a privately guided tour of this cultural beacon of the city.

St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort | Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 9 DUBAI | SHEIKH ZAYED GRAND MOSQUE

After breakfast, visit the magnificent Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, widely renowned as Abu Dhabi's crowning jewel. The mosque accommodates the world's largest Persian carpet, seven crystal chandeliers and some 41,000 worshippers. Take in the majesty of this vast architectural marvel, gaining a deeper understanding of the mosque's vital role in the local religious community. Next, drive to Dubai, taking in sights of this stunning city along the way. Pause to enjoy lunch and interact



with an interesting local resident, providing you further insight into Emirati culture. Then, continue exploring Old Dubai, strolling the aromatic spice market and making your way to the modern Deira Gold Souk, a market specializing in some of the world's purest gold. Check in to your hotel where the evening is at leisure.

Palace Downtown | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

#### DAY 10 DUBAI | CITY IN THE SKY

Today, explore New Dubai and its iconic skyscrapers. Begin at Burj al Arab, a striking architectural marvel evoking the sail of a *dhow*. Next, visit the world's tallest skyscraper, Burj Khalifa, an engineering masterwork measuring a staggering 2,716 feet high (2,722 feet if you count the antennae). Topping out in late 2008, this neofuturistic wonder bested both the Willis (formerly Sears) Tower and Taipei 101 by considerable margins. Soaring over the cityscape, your vantage point affords one of the world's most breathtaking views. Return to your hotel for an afternoon at leisure. Later this evening, gather to bid farewell to your fellow travellers at dinner.

Palace Downtown | Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

#### DAY 11 DEPART DUBAI

Transfer to the airport and board your homebound flight.

## Dates & Prices

Prices are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy.

Dates	Prices	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
Feb 02 - Feb 12, 2020	\$9,995	\$3,995	\$380	Call for Availability
Mar 08 - Mar 18, 2020	\$9,995	\$3,995	\$380	Available
Nov 01 - Nov 11, 2020	\$9,995	\$3,995	\$380	Available
Dec 06 - Dec 16, 2020	\$9,995	\$3,995	\$380	Available

### Journey Details

Internal Air: Economy class from \$380  
Muscat/Abu Dhabi

This journey contains some active elements.

Minimum age is 10 years.

First group event: welcome briefing at 8:30 a.m. on Day 2.

Last group event: farewell dinner at 7:30 p.m. on Day 10.

Departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 2 guests.

**Program Note:** This journey entails widely varying temperatures; visiting sites with limited accessibility for those with mobility challenges; and active elements such as extended walks over sand and steep, uneven terrain.

Prices are per person based on double occupancy. Internal and international air not included. See complete terms and conditions [here](#).