



OMAN

Capital: Muscat
Population: 4 million
Currency: Rial (OMR)

Language: Omani Arabic
Time Zone: EST plus 8 hours
Electricity: 220V. 50Hz

Fun Facts



- Oman opened to tourists in the early years of 1990
- The central desert of Oman is a site for scientific research of meteorites
- The official name of Oman is “The Sultanate of Oman”
- The coast of Oman is known as the “home of shipbuilding” and Muscat’s seaport is the commercial powerhouse of the Arab world.

Oman is a graceful, portal-like gem, transporting its visitors back in time with its traditions, vibrancy, and Arabian mystery. This exoticism lingers in the air, along with the smells of frankincense from the city’s enormous incense burner that permeates the skyline with spice. Situated on the peaceful Musandam Peninsula, Oman manages to embrace modern development and innovation, while still adhering to the traditional architecture and lifestyle that epitomizes its charm. But perhaps the most inspiring part of experiencing Oman is its people. Their laidback pace of life and openness to social freedoms make them some of the warmest people you’ll encounter.

When picturing Oman, some may just envisage a lot of sand. While it has plenty of that, what astounds most visitors is the geological diversity. Brilliant and endless ocean views of pristine waters and pockets of lush vegetation meet deep canyons and sinkholes filled with crystalline waters – perfect for a refreshing swim. And then, there is the desert. Instead of miles of desolate hot sands, Oman offers a land rich in color and tranquility in its golden knolls of Wahiba Sands. Spend a night in the desert where the atmosphere is romantic and magical as the sun descends into rich hues of red and the vastness of it envelops you. The scenery changes yet again as you travel into the Al Hajar Mountains of Oman. Imposing cliff sides and deep canyons are freckled with ancient villages. A drive through the mountains is a unique wilderness experience, impossibly steep cliffs punctuated with tiny villages – villages which have not changed in centuries, still using ingenious techniques for water collection and irrigation for fresh fruit and flower cultivation. Spend the night in the ancient city of Nizwa, where its fort, built in the 1600’s, is Oman’s largest attraction. It demonstrates the ingenuity of the people and its structure is uncompromised to this day.

Aside from the many souks you will encounter, there are a handful of unmissable sights in the city. In Muscat, the esplanade at night is excellent for a romantic or lively stroll. And most impressive, the mosque is a must-see. With room for 20,000 worshipers, its vastness is incomparable. It also houses one of the world’s largest carpets – which took 600 women four years to weave, and contains over 700 million knots. Graceful, golden sands, hidden wadis of tropical seclusion and warm, pristine waters... and where tradition meets innovation, Oman is bursting with unexpected beauty and friendly people. You’re sure to capture the “essence of Arabia” in your travels through this amazing country.



VISAS, PASSPORTS, AND OTHER ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A visa for your visit to Oman is **necessary** for US citizens. If you hold a passport from another country, check with your local consulate about requirements for travel to Oman.

In general going through a visa service is more expensive but offers convenience and peace of mind. If you choose to go this route, we recommend contacting Generations Visa Services (GenVisa), our preferred partner for visa and passport services, at least 90 days prior to departure. GenVisa has a special website and toll-free number. Call (800) 845-8968, email info@genvisa.com, or visit their below websites for additional information. Our travelers receive discounted prices and other special services:

- For Cosmos, visit genvisa.com/cosmos

All passengers traveling internationally are required to have a passport. Most countries require that the passport be valid for at least six (6) months beyond the conclusion of your trip, so please check the expiration date carefully. It is also recommended you have a minimum of three blank pages in your passport when traveling, as many countries require blank pages. Please carry proper identification (your passport) on you and do not leave in your suitcase or hotel room. Most countries have laws that require you to carry your passport with you at all times.

Although it is possible to obtain an entry visa upon arrival at Muscat Airport, we recommend contacting Generations Visa Services (GenVisa), our preferred partner for visa and passport services, at least 90 days prior to departure. GenVisa has a special Web site and toll-free number. You can call (800) 845-8968, or email at info@genvisa.com. Our travelers receive discounted prices and other special services: visit: <http://www.genvisa.com/globus>



COUNTRY CODES

The country code for Oman is 968. When calling to Oman from overseas, dial your international access code (011 from the US/Canada) followed by the country code, area code, and phone number. Phone numbers in Oman are 8 digits in length. Dialing from the US/Canada: 011 968 ##### #####.



CURRENCY

The official currency of Oman is the Omani Rial (OMR).

1 OMAN RIAL (OMR) = 100 Baisa

- Banknote denominations: 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200
- Coin denominations: Baisa - 5, 10, 25, 50

For the most current exchange rates, please go to our website at globusfamily.com/currency.

There are ATMs at the airport and in every main town, but not all of them take foreign cards. You can change foreign currency at the counters inside the airport and at money exchanges throughout Oman.

Using credit cards in shops is hit or miss. It is better to get cash at an ATM. Small denomination notes are hard to come by but necessary for bargaining. Unless you are in a supermarket, restaurant or mall bargaining is recommended, and this should be conducted politely.



BUDGETING AND SHOPPING

The following budget guidelines are just approximate values or starting values for meals and are per person. Actual prices will vary widely by restaurant and city within a country but below are some averages as provided by our experienced personnel.

The approximate cost of a soft drink/mineral water is 10-25 Baisa; coffee is 2-3 OMR.

An average lunch consisting of a salad or sandwich and a soda or water costs approximately 2-5 OMR.

A standard dinner at a mid-range restaurant with dessert and a non-alcoholic beverage costs approximately 10-20 OMR.



TIPPING

Tipping is not a common practice in Oman. In the better restaurants, a service charge is applied and you can always round up the bill, as a courtesy.

Taxi drivers do not expect tips but if they provide an extra service like carrying your bag, a small gratuity of a few Rial is appreciated.

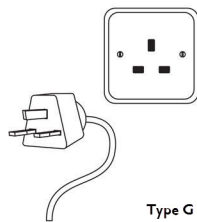
Tip hotel staff 1-2 Rial.



ELECTRICITY AND ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Outlets

Voltage for outlets is 220V. North American voltage is generally 110V. Therefore, you will need a converter for your travels. Adapters will be necessary to adapt your plug into the outlet but may not convert the voltage, so both devices are necessary.



Type G



TEMPERATURES

To help you plan, below are average low and high temperatures for Oman.

Month	Muscat	Wahiba Sands	Nizwa
January	62/77°F	62/77°F	41/59°F
February	63/80°F	63/80°F	45/64°F
March	68/85°F	68/85°F	50/68°F
April	75/94°F	75/94°F	57/75°F
May	83/103°F	83/103°F	64/83°F
June	86/104°F	86/104°F	68/87°F
July	85/100°F	85/100°F	70/87°F
August	82/96°F	82/96°F	68/85°F
September	79/96°F	79/96°F	64/81°F
October	75/94°F	75/94°F	56/75°F
November	69/86°F	69/86°F	48/67°F
December	64/80°F	64/80°F	43/62°F

To convert to Celsius, subtract 30, then divide by 2. While not exact, this simple formula will give a close estimation.



FOOD SPECIALTIES

Omani cuisine tends to be a little less spicy than most Arabic cuisine, but not the in least bit dull. Expect flavorful and succulent dishes like tender chicken, lamb and fish, accentuated with marinades and chutneys. Rice is another staple ingredient in the diet and you'll be surprised at how versatile Omanis are with this simple ingredient. You'll also find a wide variety of cultural foods – Arabic, Indian, Asian, and European//

Last Updated 6/13/17

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