



Oman: Arabia's Ancient Emporium

11 OCT – 26 OCT 2018

Code: 21836

Tour Leaders **Assoc. Prof. Alex McKay**

Physical Ratings 

A cultural tour of Oman incl. the Musandam Peninsula combining dramatic landscapes with visits to fascinating museums, mosques, crenellated forts, medieval ports, Bronze Age sites & turtle-watching.

Overview

This tour is limited to 18 participants

Tour Highlights

Assoc. Prof. Alex McKay leads this 16-day tour of little known, extraordinarily diverse Oman. The Sultanate of Oman is one of Arabia's best kept secrets, an idyllic land where majestic mountains dramatically descend towards deserts and large oases surround medieval fortified towns and castles. The colourful and immaculately dressed people are immensely courteous in welcoming visitors to their seafaring nation, the legendary home of Sinbad. Tour highlights include:

- Journey through Musandam Peninsula, dubbed the 'Norway of Arabia' for its beautiful *khors* (rocky inlets), small villages and majestic mountains that plunge into spectacular fjords.
- Enjoy a diverse range of dramatic landscapes including the deep-green *wadis* and 'Grand Canyon' of the Western Hajar Mountains, the pristine white sandy beaches of Dhofar, and the monumental desert dunes at Wahiba Sands, where we camp under the stars.
- Explore Muscat, with its lively Muttrah Souq, ground-breaking Botanic Garden showcasing Oman's rich native flora, and the new, state-of-the-art National Museum displaying an extensive collection of cultural treasures.
- View the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, with seven minarets, presenting the best of Islamic art, and attend a performance at Oman's new Royal Opera House.
- Wonder at the impressive crenellated medieval forts of Nizwa, Bahla and Jabrin – featuring magnificent plasterwork, wood carvings and elaborate painted ceilings.
- Wander through Nizwa's Friday souq, famous for silver jewellery, Salalah's frankincense and gold souqs, and Bahla's famous pottery workshops.
- Visit the extraordinary tombs of Bat, a UNESCO heritage site, the best preserved Bronze Age settlement in the Middle East.
- Investigate the medieval port of Sur with its shipbuilding yard, where skilled craftsmen continue to build the traditional *dhow*s and fishing boats.
- Study Salalah with its little-visited archaeological sites of Al Balid (ancient Zafar) and Sumharam – the 'frankincense port', on the southern coast of Oman.
- Enjoy turtle-watching at the Green Turtle Sanctuary, located at Ras al Jinz, the easternmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula.
- Luxuriate with 2 nights in the 5-star Anantara Resort where you will enjoy the breathtaking views of Jebel Al Akhdar mountains at sunrise or sunset; and 4 nights in the 5-star Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara, a luxury villa resort with a beach front location along the south coast of Dhofar.

16-day Cultural Tour of Oman

Overnight Khasab (2 nights) • Muscat (3 nights) • Ras al Jinz (1 night) • Wahiba Sands Safari Desert Camp (1 night) • Nizwa (2 nights) • Jebel Akhdar (2 nights) • Salalah (4 nights)

Overview

Join Alex McKay to explore the bountiful heritage that created Oman's distinct culture. Its world harks back to 5000 BC, when this region influenced the development of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Luxuriant oases, Bedouin camps, sumptuous palaces, pre-Islamic, Islamic and Portuguese forts, tribal fortified houses and villages with colourful souqs, all grace this seldom-visited land. We journey to walled desert towns, ancient and medieval cities, the extraordinary tombs at Bat – a UNESCO World Heritage Site and possibly

the best preserved Bronze Age urban settlement in the Middle East – and Nizwa, famed for its silver jewellery souq. Oman's medieval ports are orientated towards India, South-East Asia and East Africa, including the atmospheric medieval city of Sur where we view skilled craftsmen who still produce dhows and fishing boats using traditional techniques. Holy shrines and mosques are set against a diverse environment of rugged mountains, vast sandy deserts, palm groves, and stunning white beaches on the Gulf of Oman. Desert landscapes are relieved by brilliantly green *wadis*, plantations of dates and bananas, and frankincense trees, still harvested at Salalah and Sumharam, a frankincense trading entrepôt on Oman's southern coast. We'll spend an evening watching nesting turtles at the Green Turtle Sanctuary at Ras al Jinz, where the Gulf of Oman meets the Indian Ocean at the easternmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula. We also visit wonderful museums and mosques, including the remarkable Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat showcasing the best of Omani arts and crafts and the new, state-of-the-art National Museum in Muscat which opened in 2016. While based at Al Khasab on the Strait of Hormuz we make an excursion by 4WD to Jebel Harim (2087 metres), the highest mountain in the region, then cruise through the spectacular fjords of the Musandam Peninsula. The Sultanate of Oman is one of the Middle East's best-kept secrets: an idyllic land where majestic mountains and deserts frame cities populated by colourfully dressed and immensely courteous people, eagerly welcoming visitors to their seafaring nation, homeland of the legendary Sinbad.

Leaders



Assoc. Prof. Alex McKay

Seasoned traveller & well-published scholar from London's School of Oriental & African Studies, Alex enriches ASA Bhutan, Silk Road, Oman & Moroccan tours with profound experience & insights.

Dr Alex McKay has been interested in the Arab world since the early 1970s when he travelled overland across North Africa and later down to the Arabian Gulf to teach English in Kuwait. He has visited Morocco at least a dozen times and the other Arab states (except Libya) at least once. He has also travelled or worked in most of the Islamic countries of Central, South, and Southeast Asia.

After funding his travels working on North Sea oil rigs and as a private investigator in Sydney, Alex studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London University), where he obtained a BA (Hons.) in Religious Studies and History and a PhD in South Asian History (1995). His academic interests in the Arab world focussed on Islamic history, pilgrimage and trading patterns as well as on the European colonial encounter with the Arab world. While his academic career came to focus on Tibet and the Himalayan regions, he continued to holiday in the Arab lands after becoming a Lecturer in South Asian history and a research fellow at both the University of London (SOAS & UCL), and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden (The Netherlands).

In 2006 he took early retirement to return to Australia, where he lives in the Manning valley (NSW) with his artist wife, who herself spent several years travelling in Africa, particularly in the desert regions.

Alex's specific interests are broad but centre on the frontiers between different regional cultures and their adaptations to the environment and their use of space. They span the entirety of human history, from the early tribes and migrations to modern sports and pastimes – his most recent book is a light-hearted social history of the 1967 All Blacks! But his many publications have mostly concerned the colonial encounter between East and West, particularly in the political, personal, and medical spheres as well as in religious culture – especially with regard to pilgrimage and asceticism.

His interests have always been in the actual world of the people, rather than in Western academic theories. He most enjoys the fact that his works are widely read by the peoples themselves and his friendships with people from all ranges of society. Alex has led and lectured on ASA tours to Bhutan (2009, 2011 & 2014), Tibet (2010), the Silk Road (2011, 2013) and Morocco (2014, 2016).



Itinerary

The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight and ferry schedules. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. Meals included in the tour price and are indicated in the itinerary where: **B**=breakfast, **L**=lunch (several will be picnics) and **D**=evening meal.

Khasab, Musandam - 2 nights

Day 1: Thursday 11 October, Dubai – Khasab

- Arrive Dubai Airport and transfer to the Musandam Peninsula
- Khasab Fort
- Qayadh Prehistoric Rock Art, Wadi Tawi
- Welcome Evening Meal

Participants travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight are scheduled to arrive at Dubai Airport in the early morning. After clearing Passport Control and Customs we make the four-hour journey to the northern tip of the Arabian Peninsula to Khasab on the Strait of Hormuz, just opposite Iran, and surrounded by the United Arab Emirates. Our journey takes us along the coast past Sharjah, Ajman and Ras Al Khaimah. Should you have arranged your own air travel, you are asked to meet the group at a designated area at Dubai airport.

Following hotel check-in and a light lunch at the hotel, our program commences with an excursion by 4WD to the Khasab Fort, built by the Portuguese in the 16th century. We end the day with a visit to the prehistoric rock engravings at Wadi Tawi depicting, amongst other animals, several fine camels. This evening we dine together at our hotel. (Overnight Khasab) LD

Day 2: Friday 12 October, Musandam Peninsula

- 4WD drive to Khor Najid, Birkhat Khalididya Park & Jebel Harim
- Dhow cruise to Shamm Fjord, Musandam

This morning we travel by 4WD to Khor Najid with its stunning sea views and then to Birkhat Khalididya Park, a natural park with a multitude of acacia trees and an ancient water catchment system that is still in use. Next, we drive to Jebel Harim, the highest mountain in Musandam (2087m) which presents an unsurpassed panorama of the surrounding landscape. Note: the upper area of this mountain is a Military Camp and not accessible to visitors.

In the afternoon we transfer to Khasab harbour where we board a dhow for a cruise through the western inlet, Khaw ash Shamm, to view the spectacular fjords of Musandam, with its villages clinging to the sides of the majestic Hajar Mountains, and the famous telegraphic island. Until recently the Musandam Peninsula was largely cut off from the rest of Arabia; apart from the remains of a small Sasanian settlement on an island just to its north and of a Portuguese fort at Khasab, few traces of foreign contact remain from earlier times. It wasn't until the British explorer Bertram Thomas described Musandam after a brief visit in the 1920s that it became known to the outside world. During the cruise there will be an option to swim and snorkel (snorkelling equipment will be provided). Lunch will be provided on board. (Overnight Khasab) BLD

Muscat - 3 nights

Day 3: Saturday 13 October, Khasab – Muscat

- Fly Khasab – Muscat (WY 932 | KHS 09:05am – MCT 10:10am)
- Performance at the Royal Opera House Muscat – 'La Bayadère'

The morning we fly from Khasab to Muscat. On arrival we transfer to the Grand Hyatt, our base for the next three nights. After lunch there will be time to shower, change and relax before attending a performance of 'La Bayadère' at the Royal Opera House Muscat which opened in 2011. Set in ancient royal India, the tale of La Bayadère pits fate against vengeance and love. The ballet is choreographed by Natalia Kakarova and performed by the Tokyo Ballet with music by Ludwig Minkus. (Overnight Muscat) BLD

Day 4: Sunday 14 October, Muscat

- The National Museum of Oman
- Al Alam Palace and Forts of Mirani and Jalali (exterior only)
- Time at leisure

We spend the morning visiting the National Museum of Oman, housed in a magnificent new building and dedicated to preserving and displaying the treasures of Oman's Cultural Heritage. Opened in July 2016, the museum includes 15 display halls – The Land and the People Gallery, Maritime History Gallery, Arms and Armour Gallery, Civilisation in the Making Gallery, A Falaj Gallery, Currency Gallery, Splendours of Islam Gallery, Oman and the World Gallery, Renaissance Gallery, and the Intangible Heritage Gallery among others.

After lunch we take a short tour of Muscat by coach. Although Muscat was used as an anchorage from at least the 1st century AD, the city did not become an important trading port until the medieval period and by the 15th century had emerged as one of the busiest harbours in the East, an entrepôt that traded with Asia and East Africa. Its natural harbour is enclosed within a bowl of igneous rock hills and is framed by the

great forts of Mirani and Jalali that were constructed by the Portuguese during the 16th century to guard the entrance; by this time it had become Portugal's main naval base in the region. Until recently, these forts served as prisons, whose shackled inmates could be seen climbing their steep stairs! We shall also view (exterior only) the magnificent Al Alam Palace, the official residence of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, the ruler of Oman. The palace, constructed in 1972, is an architectural masterpiece and sits in a historic location, framed by the aforementioned forts. We then return to our hotel for some time to relax and enjoy the hotel's excellent facilities. (Overnight Muscat) BLD

Day 5: Monday 15 October, Muscat

- Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque
- Oman Botanic Garden
- Muscat Sea trip & visit to Muttrah Souq
- Dinner inc. Omani Women Swing Group

Our first visit will be to the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque the major place of worship in the Sultanate that is distinguished by lavish and opulent architecture reflecting the rich artistic heritage of Islam. This extraordinarily beautiful modern mosque, with five minarets, was gifted by Sultan Qaboos to the Omani people. (Men: shorts and sleeveless shirts should not be worn in the mosque. Ladies must cover their bodies so that only face, hands and feet are visible – please bring a headscarf; *abayas* (robes) can be provided).

This afternoon we visit the new Oman Botanic Garden, a groundbreaking project developed by the Diwan of the Royal Court in Oman. Situated on 425 hectares, the garden is designed to cultivate, study and conserve Oman's rich native flora. It includes large-scale (indoor and outdoor) native habitat displays ranging from dry desert to rich monsoon cloud forests. Currently still under development, the garden will also showcase the traditionally cultivated crops and the many ways that people use plants in Oman. When completed, this ambitious project will be the largest botanic garden in the Gulf region.

In the late afternoon we transfer from the hotel to the Marina Bander Al Rowdha pier to embark on a relaxed sea trip. We see Muscat through the eyes of ancient seafarers who plied this route for centuries.

Next we visit the Muttrah souq, one of the most popular souqs in the Middle East. We shall walk through its labyrinthine alleyways which display a bewildering array of merchandise, from imported fabrics to exotic Oriental spices, perfumes, wood carvings and richly handcrafted jewellery. In this regard it is worth recalling that the Omanis were considered amongst the finest silversmiths within the Arab world. A visit to this frenetic, pulsating hub of Muscat's old quarter is a must, giving a vivid sense of the vitality of trade that has always sustained Oman's economy. (Overnight Muscat) BLD

Ras al Jinz - 1 night

Day 6: Tuesday 16 October, Muscat – Wadi Tiwi – Sur – Ras Al Jinz

- Bimmah Sinkhole
- Wadi Tiwi
- *Dhow* Building Yard & the Maritime Museum's historic *Fath al Khair*, Sur
- Evening visit to the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve

This morning we rise early and board our 4WD vehicles to drive along the rugged and scenic coastal route to Ras Al Jinz. The journey along the coastline offers breathtaking glimpses of the blue waters of the Gulf of

Oman offset by pristine beaches. You may also see elegant gazelles sprinting across the landscape. As we continue south the road hugs the coast, passing many gravel beaches and tidal pools.

Our first stop will be at the picturesque Bimmah Sinkhole, set on the first of several 'wave-cut terraces', created by changes in sea level at the base of a mountain. If you wish you may take a dip in the vibrant emerald-tinted waters of its 20-metre-deep pool. The ground beneath sinkholes normally consists of easily dissolved rocks such as limestone, carbonates and salt beds. When groundwater flows through these rocks, it eats them away, leaving behind subterranean holes and caverns. When the roof of one of these caverns collapses, the land above it falls in too, leaving giant holes such as this impressive example.

We continue our journey along the coastal highway to Wadi Tiwi, a spectacularly deep and narrow gorge carved out of the mountains, running between towering cliffs right down to the sea. The traditional villages within it are surrounded by lush plantations of date and banana, criss-crossed with a network of gurgling *flaj*. We shall walk through the date trees and dense banana plantations and enjoy a picnic lunch.

Next, we continue along the Omani coast to the port of Sur where we shall visit its boatyards, whose ships sailed to distant ports in Asia and East Africa and where skilled craftsmen still make these craft. Sur was one of the greatest medieval ports in the Middle East. After the decline of Qalhat (one of the key ports in Arabia) in the 16th century, Sur became the regional marine trading town of the region. Its strategic location enabled ships to make use of the north-east monsoon to reach East Africa. Ships would leave Sur and other Omani ports in November and reach Zanzibar, the main port-of-call around mid-February. The return voyage, before the south-west monsoon, would see them back in Oman by early May. Until the 19th century, Sur remained an extremely important shipyard, responsible for the construction of the great wooden *ghanjahs* and *baghalas* that plied the oceans from Arabia to India and back. The Belitung ship (carrying porcelain from China, on the sea-route to Arabia) – now on display at Sentosa island, Singapore – is thought to have been built at Sur.

In the shipyards we watch skilled craftsmen building traditional *dhow*s and fishing boats as they have done for centuries. After this practical demonstration we view displays of traditional *dhow*s, and at the nearby yard of the Maritime Museum, we view the historic *Fath al Khair*, a solid and beautiful timber ship that embodies the glorious past of the Wilayat of Sur, both craftsmen and sailors. In its voyages, *Fath al Khair* carried cargoes to and from Oman, including dates, salted and dried fish, dry lemon and salt. It also imported Iraqi and Iranian dates, saffron, Yemeni coffee, and timber and spices from the East Africa.

In the late afternoon we continue our journey to the Ras Al Jinz Reserve, an important nesting site for the endangered Green Turtle. Every year thousands of female turtles arrive at Oman's coastline to lay their eggs. As female turtles only come ashore to nest after dark, there are two tours conducted each day – at dawn and at dusk. After an early evening dinner, we make an excursion to the reserve to watch the Green Turtles as they come ashore to nest. (Overnight Ras Al Jinz) BLD

Safari Dunes Private Camp, Wahiba Sands - 1 night

Day 7: Wednesday 17 October, Ras Al Jinz – Jalan Bani Bu Ali – Al Kamil – Wahiba Sands

- Optional dawn turtle-watching, Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve
- Ras al Jinz Visitor Center
- Triliths, Dhofar's Standing Stones
- Ruined Fort & Mosque of Rashid bin Hamouda, Jalan Bani Bu Ali
- Private Fort of Al Kamil

This morning there will be an optional dawn excursion to view the turtles as they push themselves back down to the sea as the day breaks.

After breakfast we visit the small museum that provides information on the Green Turtles and their relationship with early human settlement. Ras Al Jinz is the easternmost point on the Arabian Peninsula. Here, excavations by the British Museum uncovered sherds with Harappan writing and jewellery beads, along with bitumen from Mesopotamia, linking Oman with the Indus Valley in Pakistan and Akkad in Iraq, giving clear evidence of contacts with Asia more than five millennia ago. Museum exhibits include stone and seashell jewellery, early fishing equipment, examples of copper smelting and metal working, and the earliest dated Omani frankincense burner (2200 BC).

From Ras Al Jinz we travel by 4WD through the Jalan region. En route we stop briefly to view an example of Dhofar's standing stones, known as *triliths*, due to their construction from three stones. Standing in groups of three to fifteen, each one consists of three stone slabs approximately 2 feet high, standing on end and leaning against each other with their base forming a triangle. Dated to between 400 BC and 300 AD, these archaeological structures are widespread across the southern and eastern areas of Arabia; their purpose is still unclear.

Our next stop is to view the ruins of the huge mud-brick Fort and Mosque of Rashid bin Hamouda located in the town of Jalan Bani Bu Ali. During the early 19th century, following repeated Saudi incursions into Oman, the local Bani Bu Ali tribe converted to the Wahhabi form of Islam practised in Saudi Arabia. It was the only tribe in the country ever to do so, and subsequently repudiated the rule of the sultan – who responded by dispatching a large armed force to crush the fledgling rebellion. Today the town retains a decidedly old-fashioned atmosphere and comprises a conglomeration of watchtowers, old fortified houses, forts and ancient plantation walls, all of which lie crumbling in various states of dereliction. Elaborately painted metal doors and traditional carved wooden gates sported by the town's residences are a feature of the region.

Next we continue to Al Kamil, one of the few towns in the country surrounded by trees. The low-lying acacia and *ghaf* woodland is a special feature of the area, much prized by the Bedouin who use the wood for shade, as props for their tents and firewood. Their camels nibble the nutritious new shoots and livestock lick the moisture from the small leaves in the early morning. Here we visit the family fort of the Hashami Sheikhs of Al Kamil where we shall have lunch and view a private collection of ceramics, coins and various documents.

Continuing north from Al Kamil for about 60 kilometres we arrive at our Bedouin style camp located in the remote, quiet desert landscape of the Wahiba Sands. Traversed by the great British explorer Wilfred Thesiger in 1949, the Sands are a vast sea of undulating red and white sand with dunes rising up to two hundred metres. They support a wide variety of flora and fauna. The ever-changing patterns of the dunes are a photographer's delight. The Wahiba Sands are also home to the powerful Wahiba Bedu tribe (regarded by Thesiger as 'aristocratic') who are known for their hospitality and their knowledge of the desert. (Overnight Safari Dunes Private Camp, Wahiba Sands) BLD

Nizwa - 2 nights

Day 8: Thursday 18 October, Wahiba Sands – Lizq – Manah – Birkat al Mawz – Nizwa

- Early Iron Age Settlement, Lizq
- Manah & Fortress of Fiqain
- Mud Settlement & Date Gardens of Birkat al Mawz

After breakfast we continue our journey by 4WD to the oasis town of Lizq where an impressive Early Iron Age stone staircase (the only one of its kind yet found in Oman), leads to a citadel on the summit of an escarpment. Rising some 80 metres above the surrounding plain, the mountain fort at Lizq is one of Oman's most impressive prehistoric sites anywhere.

While in Lizq we also learn about the traditional *falaj* system. A *falaj* in Oman refers to an underground channel that carry water. The plural of the word '*falaj*' used in Oman is '*aflaj*', which denotes a system of irrigation. This unique water system gave boosted agriculture in Oman, which represents, alongside fishing, enabled Omanis to establish a sustainable civilisation throughout centuries providing sustenance for generations who survived in harsh climatic and environmental conditions.

Aflaj rise within mountains, flowing down in channels like waterfalls and passing through hills and plains to bring abundant life to land. They date back more than 2000 years, during which Omanis developed special tools and techniques that enabled them to maintain these *aflaj* and create new ones to meet the burgeoning development of agriculture. In 2006 the World Heritage Committee, under UNESCO, adopted the inscription of five Omani *aflaj* in the World Heritage List.

From Lizq we continue to the ancient, abandoned mud-brick village of Manah, dominated by the Fiqain fortress with its massive defensive walls. Manah's history dates to the 6th century when it was controlled by the Sasanians of Persia. With the introduction of the *falaj*, the village, which produced mainly sugar cane thrive until the second half of the 20th century when inhabitants moved to more modern residences.

Just outside of Manah is the oasis town of Birkat al Mawz ('Pool of Bananas'). Here we view the old mud brick settlement, a UNESCO-listed *falaj* system built between 1624 and 1741, and a well kept date oasis that extends for just under 2 kilometres.

In the late afternoon we continue to Nizwa, the chief town of the interior and Oman's capital for many centuries. (Overnight Nizwa) BLD

Day 9: Friday 19 October, Nizwa – Jebel Shams – Al Hamra – Al Hoota Caves – Nizwa

- Nizwa Fort & Friday Souq incl. Goat Market
- The Grand Canyon of Oman: Balcony Walk, Jebel Shams
- Village of Al Hamra
- Al Hoota Caves

Today we continue our exploration of the Al-Dakhiliyah Region. This dramatic, mountainous area has spectacular scenery, including Jebel Shams (Oman's highest mountain). We begin with a visit to Nizwa's great 17th-century fort, one of the most impressive in all of Oman. Constructed on a solid base of rock, the huge crenellated tower was designed to withstand the vibrations of its 24 cannons; it remained Oman's seat of government for some 300 years. Nizwa Fort was designed with various ingenious devices used to repel invaders. Among these were 'murder holes', slots through which defenders could pour boiling date syrup on the heads of attackers as they climbed its stairs. From the top of the tower there is a superb panoramic view of the city and the surrounding plains with their extensive stands of deep green palm date trees. Nizwa is still an important centre for Omani date farming – some 40 varieties of dates are cultivated.

We also spend time exploring the Nizwa's souq, which is renowned for its intricately hand-carved *khanjars* (Omani silver daggers) and ornately designed silver jewellery. The souk is also well-known for its goat market which operates on Friday mornings.

Next, we ascend Jebel Shams for a one-kilometre walk along the 'The Balcony'; a trail offering spectacular views down into the great chasm of Wadi Nakhr, popularly known as the 'Grand Canyon' of Oman. The scenery here is some of the most dramatic anywhere in Oman: a huge natural amphitheatre, with kilometre-high cliffs, looking down on the tiny village of Nakhr way below in the canyon's shadowy depths. Birds of prey – such as the Egyptian vulture, with its distinctive black-and-white-striped wings – hover silently on the thermals overhead. In Jebel Jams you may purchase hand-woven carpets and rugs directly from the weavers. These stunning creations, dyed in shades of black, bright red and brown, represent the best of traditional textiles.

After lunch at the Jebel Shams Resort we visit the mud town of Al Hamra, set below Jebel Shams and overlooking an extensive date oasis. It is interesting for its wonderfully well-preserved row of two- and three-storey mud-brick houses built in the Yemeni style. There are many abandoned houses in the upper parts of the village but it's easy to gain an idea of traditional life that has only altered in the past three decades.

At the foot of Jebel Shams lies the Al Hoota Cave. Estimated to be over 2 million years old, this cave is approximately 4.5 kilometres long (only 500m publicly accessible) and contains a rich ecosystem that includes four lakes. The central lake, which we visit, is estimated to hold 30,000 cubic metres of water and is 800 metres long and 10 metres wide. It is here that we may see the rare blind fish *Garra Barreimiae*, commonly known as Bu Naseh. Following a period of extensive renovations the caves reopened to the public in August 2016. (Overnight Nizwa) BLD

Jebel Akhdar - 2 nights

Day 10: Saturday 20 October, Nizwa – Bahla – Jabrin – Bat – Jebel Akhdar

- Bahla Fort, souq and pottery workshop
- Jabrin Fort
- Beehive tombs of Bat, Al Ayn

This morning we drive to Bahla village, which is surrounded by a 12-kilometre adobe wall, originally punctured by seven grand gates. Bahla was once known as a centre for magic and sorcerers; today it is well known for its skilled potters. Just to the south of the village and rising above the vast sea of palm groves is the Bahla Fort, a World Heritage site. *Qalat Bahla* (Bahla Citadel) is one of four historic fortresses situated at the foot of the Jebel Akhdar highlands. Dated back to the pre-Islamic era, it was rebuilt in the 13th and 14th centuries, when the oasis of Bahla prospered under the control of the Banu Nebhan tribe, and largely rebuilt in the 17th century. The fort's ruined adobe walls and towers rise some 165 feet above its sandstone foundations. Closed for many years, the fort underwent extensive restoration and was re-opened in 2012. While in Bahla we also visit the recently restored souq which sells homemade ropes, *fadl* (large metal platters for feeding a whole family), daggers, copper artefacts, pottery and Omani sweets (*Halwa*).

Nearby we visit Jabrin Fort. Rising from the surrounding plain, Oman's most impressive fort has been sensitively restored and features magnificent plasterwork, wood carvings and elaborate painted ceilings with original floral motifs. Built in 1675, Jabrin Fort was an important centre of learning for astrology, medicine and Islamic Law.

Our next stop is the village of Al Ayn; in the distance rises Jebel Misht ('Comb Mountain') one of Oman's most majestic landmarks with its south-west wall rising over 1000 metres. On a ridge with Jebel Misht as its dramatic backdrop, are a series of beautifully preserved stone 'beehive' tombs which are now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The settlement and necropolises of Bat form the most complete and best-known site of the 3rd millennium BC. They reflect the increasing sophistication of settled life during the Bronze Age

when copper mining in Magan (the ancient name for Oman) was an important source of revenue.

From Al Ayn we continue to the 5-star Anantara Jabal Akhdar Resort which will be our base for the next two nights. Here we may enjoy spectacular views of the canyon at sunset. (Overnight Jebel Akhdar) BLD

Day 11: Sunday 21 October, Jebel Akhdar – Al Ayn – Wadi Bani Habib – Jebel Akhdar

- Village of Al Ayn (including 1km walk)
- Wadi Bani Habib
- Time at leisure

This morning we drive up the Wadi Muaydin to spectacular Jebel Akhdar. This region is dominated by the great Saiq Plateau, 2000 metres above sea level. It is corroded by a labyrinth of wadis and terraces where the cooler mountain air and greater rainfall supports the region's famed market gardens and orchards of pomegranates, apricots and other fruit.

We take an extended walk through the terraces and villages from Al Aqr, which is famous for its roses, to Al Ayn and Al Shurayjah perched on cliffs that afford spectacular views of the wadi below. As we walk we will see the *falaj* that bring water to these luxuriantly fertile fields.

Following lunch at the home of our local guide, we visit the secluded valley of Wadi Bani Habib (the children of Habib's valley). Two abandoned villages here overlook walnut trees and pomegranate bushes.

From Wani Bani Habib we return to our hotel for some time at leisure and to enjoy the facilities of our 5-star resort. (Overnight Jebel Akhdar) BLD

Salalah, Dhofar - 4 nights

Day 12: Monday 22 October, Jebel Akhdar – Muscat – Salalah

- Wadi Bani Awf
- Wadi Al Sahtan: traditional beekeepers
- Evening flight from Muscat to Salalah (WY 913 MCT 2025 – SAL 2210)

Today we return to Muscat, travelling via two of the most beautiful valleys of the Western Hajar. Our first visit is to one of the most impressive *wadis*, Wadi Bani Awf, flanked by mountains, has waterfalls, crop terraces, date palm oases and houses built into a steep hill. Our route through a narrow winding canyon of limestone culminates at Bilad Sayt, probably Oman's most picturesque mountain village. From Wadi Bani Awf we continue through the vast natural Sahtan Bowl, where many of the villages are known for their traditional beekeepers who use date-log hives and produce dark-brown Acacia honey.

On arrival at Muscat International Airport we take an evening flight to Salalah, a tropical paradise, justifiably considered the 'garden city' of the south. (Overnight Salalah) BLD

Day 13: Tuesday 23 October, Salalah – Al Mughsayl Beach – Al Qamar Mountains – Salalah

- Mughsayl Blowholes
- Frankincense Plantations & Sea-Cliff walk
- Time at leisure

This morning we drive southwest from Salalah along the coastline towards Mughsayl and the Yemeni border. En route we shall enjoy spectacular views of plains, mountain landscape and green pastureland. As we progress further west, the views towards the border become more and more breathtaking. The stark shapes of leafless frankincense trees (*Boswellia Sacra*) dot the landscape. Once traded as a commodity more precious than gold, and purchased in prodigious quantities by the Romans and Egyptians for their rituals, frankincense harvested in Dhofar is rated the best in the world. We continue to the 100-metre-high sea cliffs, where a gentle walk takes us through wooded countryside.

In the afternoon we return to our hotel for some time at leisure. (Overnight Salalah) BLD

Day 14: Wednesday 24 October, Salalah – Taqah – Mirbat – Sumhuram – Wadi Darbat – Salalah

- Taqah Fort & Fishing Village
- Mirbat, ancient capital of Dhofar & Tomb of Mohammad Bin Ali
- Ruined city of Sumhuram
- Wadi Darbat

This morning we begin by visiting Taqah, an old fishing village with a white-washed 19th-century castle surrounded by watchtowers and stone houses. It is well known as the source of much of the stone utilised in buildings in Salalah and even Muscat.

We then drive to the coastal town of Mirbat. The ancient capital of Dhofar and of the Minjawi (a community of Persian merchants), Mirbat was an important town as early as the 9th century. It was known for its trade in frankincense, horses and slaves. We shall see some of its old houses, famous for their beautifully carved wooden doors and windows. If we are fortunate we shall also witness boatloads of fish arriving into the harbour. We shall also visit Dhofar's best-known historic monuments, the tomb of Mohammad bin Ali al Alawi, who died in 1135 AD. This twin-domed mosque and tomb complex is a fine example of the region's medieval architecture and recalls similar tombs in the great Wadi Hadramat, further south in Yemen.

After lunch we visit the ruins at Khor Rawri. Known as Sumhuram, it was one of the great entrepôts of the trade in frankincense, spices, textiles, and other precious items, which flourished between India, Arabia Felix and the Mediterranean some 2000 years ago. Excavations, most recently by an Italian team, have produced evidence of an ancient city with trade links as far afield as India and further east and Iberia in the west

We return to Salalah along the coastal highway, making a detour to Wadi Darbat. Some 7 kilometres beyond Taqah we view the dramatic cliffs which are covered by a spectacular waterfall during the *khareef* (June-August southeastern monsoon), spouting cascades of water amid a tangle of lush greenery. This cliff marks the entrance to Wadi Darbat, whose waters feed Khor Rawri below. Wadi Darbat is a national park with majestic views of waterfalls, lakes, mountains, caves (once used to shelter shepherds), wildlife and lush green vegetation. (Overnight Salalah) BLD

Day 15: Thursday 25 October, Salalah – Al Balid – Salalah

- Frankincense Land Museum & Al Balid Archaeological Park, Dhofar UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Prophet Job Memorial
- Time at leisure
- Al Balid Haffah Souq
- Farewell Dinner at the Samak Seafood Restaurant

Al Balid is the site of ancient Salalah, known as Zafar, from which the province of Dhofar gets its name. The

city was visited by Ibn Battuta (the Arab geographer) and Marco Polo, who described it as “a great and noble and fine city”. The ruins, which date from the 10th to the 15th centuries when the city was settled as a port for exporting frankincense and Arab horses, include the remains of the ruler’s citadel, Great Mosque, madrasa, cemetery and a large enclosing wall with towers.

Within the site we visit the Frankincense Land Museum which contains two main halls. The History Hall traces the historical geography of the ancient Frankincense trail and the historical background of the Sultanate through a number of archaeological discoveries. The Marine Hall features an extensive history of Oman’s maritime trade and shipbuilding industry. Meticulously crafted replicas of the ancient boats and ships of the Omani maritime trade are displayed.

We also visit to the memorial of the Biblical Prophet Job (‘Nabi Ayoub’), perched high up in the mountains. The story of Job is recounted in both the Bible and Qu’ran.

In the afternoon there will be some time at leisure to enjoy the facilities of your resort hotel. In the early evening we visit the Haffah Souq, Salalah’s traditional market famous for the sale of high quality frankincense and numerous other Dhofari traditional items. We also enjoy a Farewell Dinner at the Samak Seafood Restaurant. (Overnight Salalah) BLD

Day 16: Friday 26 October, Salalah – Dubai (Tour ends in Dubai)

- Day at leisure
- Light lunch at the hotel
- Check-out at 1400hrs
- Evening departure for Dubai

Today is at leisure in Salalah, affording well-deserved opportunities to relax and rest by the splendid beach. Alternatively, one might indulge in some ‘last-minute’ shopping in Salalah or simply spend time in one of the hotel’s sumptuous lounges.

In the early evening, participants departing on the ASA ‘designated’ flight with Emirates will be transferred to the airport for their flight back to Australia (via Dubai). The official check-out time is 2.00pm. BL

Accommodation

16-Day Cultural Tour of Oman

Accommodation will be provided in twin-share rooms with en suite bathroom in locally rated 4-5 star hotels. At Ras Al Jinz we spend 1 night in the Reserve's lodge which offers air-conditioned eco-tents. In the Wahiba Sands we spend one night at the 1000 Nights Camp offering chalets with attached bathrooms. Single rooms may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the Single Supplement. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

- Al Khasab, Musandam (2 nights): 4-star Atana Khasab Hotel – a resort hotel perched on a rock face overlooking the Musandam Peninsula. The hotel offers air-conditioned deluxe sea view rooms. www.atanahotels.com
- Muscat (3 nights): 5-star Grand Hyatt Muscat Hotel – a luxury resort located on Al Qurm Beach, overlooking the Sea of Oman. <https://muscat.grand.hyatt.com>
- Ras al Jinz (1 night): Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve – providing accommodation in air-conditioned Eco-Tents. <http://rasaljinz-turtlereserve.com>
- Wahiba Sands (1 night): Safari Dunes Private Camp – this private camp, consisting of 5 tents, is located on top of the dunes, 4kms from the main camp. Tents include an attached toilet and shower. safari-desert.com
- Nizwa (2 nights): 4-star Golden Tulip Hotel – a comfortable, recently renovated, modern hotel built in the traditional Omani style; located 19kms from the town of Nizwa. www.goldentulipnizwa.com
- Jebel Akhdar (2 nights): 5-star Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort – situated on the Saiq plateau 2000 metres above sea level, offering breathtaking views of the Jebel Al Akhdar mountains at sunrise and sunset. Premier rooms with canyon views have been reserved. <https://jabal-akhdar.anantara.com>
- Salalah (4 nights): 5-star Al Baleed Resort Salalah by Anantara – a luxury villa resort with a beach front location along the south coast of Dhofar. Premier rooms with sea views have been reserved. <https://salalah.anantara.com>

Note: *hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$12,480.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 31 December 2017

AUD \$12,680.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$2990.00 Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with en suite bathroom in locally rated 4-5 star hotels. At Ras Al Jinz we spend 1 night in the Reserve's eco-tents. In the Wahiba Sands we spend one night at the Safari Dunes Private camp offering tents with their own attached bathrooms.
- Meals indicated in the itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach and 4WD vehicles (either Land Cruiser or Ford Expedition) – seating either 3 in Landcruiser or 5 in Expedition (all participants will have window seats)
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports, ferry terminals or at the 1000 Nights Desert Camp)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour Reference Book ('Oman', *Bradt Travel Guide*)
- Entrance fees to forts, museums & archaeological sites
- *Dhow* cruise to the fjords of Musandam (Day 1); Boat cruise Muscat harbour (Day 5)
- Domestic flight from Khasab to Muscat (Day 3)
- Domestic flight from Muscat to Salalah (Day 12)
- International flight from Salalah to Dubai (Day 16)
- Bottled water during all excursions
- Tips for the coach & 4WD drivers, Omani guide and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include

- Airfare: Australia-Dubai, Dubai-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visa for Oman or UAE



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, seven to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless, all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 16-day Cultural Tour of Oman involves:

- Visiting sites where you will encounter steps (eg. at forts), cobbled streets (mountain villages), rocky and uneven ground, slopes and steep walks.
- Excursions undertaken in a convoy of 4WD vehicles (Land Cruiser or Ford Expeditions). They include a number of long-distance journeys along winding coastal and mountain roads. Participants will be divided into vehicles taking between 3-5 passengers, in seating configurations that ensure that everyone enjoys a window seat.
- Meals include a number of picnic lunches.

Other considerations:

- 1 night is spent at the Safari Dunes private camp, which offers accommodation in tents with their own bathrooms; 1 night at the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve in Eco-Tents.
- 6 accommodation changes.
- *Dhow* cruise to the fjords of Musandam (Day 2) and boat tour of Muscat Harbour (Day 5)
- Domestic flight from Khasab to Muscat; and from Muscat to Salalah.
- Visitors are only allowed to drink alcohol in licensed restaurants and hotels. Alcohol is strictly prohibited at the 1000 Nights Camp and the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve.

- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage.
- Hotel portorage includes 1 piece of luggage per person. Porterage is not available at the 1000 Nights Camp.

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the Terms and Conditions section.

Practical Information

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Visa Requirements

A visa is required for most foreign nationals. ASA will assist tour participants in obtaining their visa. The current charge is approx \$30.00 US, which is not included in the price of the tour as charges are subject to change at short notice. Note: passports must be valid for at least six months after departure from Oman. To process your visa application ASA will require a photocopy of the front page of your passport together with your completed visa forms no later than 60 days prior to your departure.

Clothing

It is important that women dress modestly, for example long skirts or dresses (below the knee) with long sleeves. Tight-fitting clothes must be avoided and although this is not strictly followed by Westerners, it is far better to adopt this practice and avoid causing offence. Shorts should never be worn in public and beachwear is prohibited for anywhere except the beach and hotel facilities (note: please do remember to bring your swimsuit as there will be a number of occasions where you will have the opportunity to swim). During visits to mosques women will also be required to wear a headscarf.

Luggage

This tour requires that you take a minimum of luggage and that your suitcase is suitable for rough conditions. Please consider:

- The majority of excursions are undertaken using 4WD vehicles where your luggage will be carried either in the trunk of the vehicles or in a luggage trailer.
- Strict luggage allowance applies to the domestic flight between Khasab - Muscat, and Muscat - Salalah.

Alcohol

Visitors are only allowed to drink alcohol in licensed restaurants and hotels. Note: not all hotels included in this program are permitted to serve alcohol. The consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited during our stay at the 1000 Nights Camp and at the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$500.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.

Passport Details

All participants must provide no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the program a photocopy of the front page of their current passport.

Single Supplement

Payment of the Single Supplement will ensure accommodation in a single room throughout the tour. The number of single rooms available is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth / / _____ GENDER Male Female

Passport Number _____ Expiry date / / _____ Nationality _____
 Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed I'm renewing my passport ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Travel Plans

I wish ASA to book my airfare, please contact me to discuss my options. Business Class Economy Class
 I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date / / _____
 I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.
Frequent Flyer _____ Name of Airline _____ Airline Seat preference _____
Membership # _____ (please note request only)

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products
 eggs pork nuts
 Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____
Address _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Do you have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything?
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen?

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs?
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine?

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic?

Are you insulin dependent?

4. Do you suffer from travel sickness?
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept that there are inherent dangers and risks that may occur during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services provided for the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of travelling to, on and from any tour.

I understand and acknowledge that this Release and Indemnity applies with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally.
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of my continued participation on a tour for whatever reason (refund conditions in ASA's Booking Conditions excepted).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products or services. If a service provider does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (eg. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any such service provider however caused (contingencies). You must take out adequate travel insurance against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour will be limited to the refund of amounts received from you less all non-refundable costs and charges and the costs of any substituted event or alternate services provided. The terms and conditions of the relevant service provider from time to time comprise the sole agreement between you and that service provider.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A deposit of \$500.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you decide to cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: \$500*
75-46 days prior 25% of total amount due
45-31 days prior 50% of total amount due
30-15 days prior 75% of total amount due
14-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

This amount may be **credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.*

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. If an ASA tour is forced to cancel you will get a full refund of all tour monies paid. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to daily itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

I accept the conditions on this booking form I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- Intention to Travel Tour Deposit
 Balance of Payment Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
 Travel Insurance Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard & Visa 2%
 American Express 2%

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

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