




Oman: Arabia's Ancient Emporium 2026

19 OCT – 3 NOV 2026

Code: 22651

Tour Leaders **Dr Lucy Wadeson**

Fitness Level 

Level 3 - Challenging

Among our most physically demanding

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

Archaeologist, [Dr Lucy Wadeson](#), leads this tour of extraordinarily diverse Oman, taking us back in time to the source of the wealth that gave rise to some of the greatest kingdoms and civilisations of the classical world. 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. During this trip we will come face to face with cultural traditions that have survived for centuries.

- 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, new ground-breaking [Botanic Garden](#) showcasing Oman's rich native flora, and the National Museum's extensive collection of cultural treasures.
- By private yacht, cruise the coastline of Muscat to view the ancient fortifications through the eyes of ancient seafarers who plied this route for centuries.
- View the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, with seven minarets, presenting the best of Islamic art; attend a performance at [Oman's Royal Opera House](#) and visit the new exhibition of Musical Arts.
- Wander through Nizwa's renowned goat market and souq, famous for silver jewellery; Salalah's frankincense and gold souqs; and Bahla's famous pottery workshops.
- View Oman's new [Oman Across Ages Museum](#), designed by Cox Architecture in 2023, whose hi-tech displays explore the country's geology, rich history and cultural heritage.
- Explore Salut, an archaeological site whose fortified ruins provide an insight into the development of civilisations in the Arabian Peninsula during the Bronze and Iron Age.
- Investigate the medieval port of Sur with its shipbuilding yard, where skilled craftsmen continue to build the traditional *dhow*s and fishing boats.
- Stay at the [Ras al Jinz Turtle Reserve](#) and enjoy turtle watching at the tip of the Arabian Peninsula.
- Explore Oman's spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Listed sites including:
 - Bahla Fort: a medieval crenellated mudbrick fort. We also view the impressive forts of Khasab, Nizwa and Jabrin.
 - Qalhat: an ancient city trading in dates, Arabian horses, pearls and incense.
 - Bat and Al Ayn, representing a cluster of extraordinary Bronze Age beehive tombs.
 - Falaj al-Khatmeen, part of the Aflaj Irrigation Systems of Oman which date to 500 CE.
 - The Land of Frankincense in Dhofar: including Wadi Dawkah where frankincense was collected and the ancient fortified trading ports of Khor Rori and Al Balid (ancient Zafar).

Group size: limited to 17 participants. A significant portion of this tour is undertaken by 4WD. The tour price and group size provides for only 3 travellers per vehicle to ensure that everyone enjoys a window seat.

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

Lecture Program

Dr Wadeson will provide regular lectures at the hotels, in addition to supplementary site commentary. These lectures will explore the unique role Oman played in the history of the Arabian Peninsula and the formation of the great civilisations of the ancient world. Specifically, we will learn about the history of

frankincense and the rise of the so-called 'Incense Road', how trade contributed to the development of cultural identities and complex societies - conveying not just goods but also ideas. Dr Wadeson will share her expertise on ancient funerary architecture, with detailed discussion on the meaning and function of Oman's Bronze and Iron Age monumental tombs. Lectures will make a deep dive into the formation of Islamic art and architecture, examining the role of Greek and Roman art in this process, as well as the fascinating relationship between the environment and religion throughout the centuries.

Overview

Join Dr Lucy Wadeson to explore the bountiful heritage that created Oman's distinct culture. Its world harks back to 5000 BCE, 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. On the edge of Arabia, 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 Khor Rori, a frankincense trading entrepôt on Oman's southern coast. This is one of the few areas in the world where frankincense trees grow, and we will learn about the famed incense routes that gave rise to some of the greatest civilisations of the ancient world. We'll spend an evening watching nesting turtles at the Ras al Jinz Turtle Reserve, 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 new 'Oman Across the Ages' museum in Nizwa, the remarkable Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat showcasing the best of Omani arts and crafts and the state-of-the-art National Museum. Here we will discover how the ancient art of this region played an important role in the development of Islamic art. While based at Al Khasab on the Strait of Hormuz we 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. A centre of culture, where people and their traditions have thrived for millennia, Oman offers a profound insight into the history of humankind.

Leaders



Dr Lucy Wadeson

With a DPhil in Classical Archaeology from the University of Oxford, Lucy specialises in the art and architecture of the Graeco-Roman Near East. She is an expert on the Nabataeans and directs excavations of tombs in Petra. An experienced lecturer, Lucy is passionate about the cultures of the ancient and modern Near East.

Lucy Wadeson is a classical archaeologist specialised in the material culture of the Graeco-Roman Near East. In particular, she is an expert on the Nabataean kingdom and its principal city of Petra where she directs her own excavation of tombs in the royal necropolis. Her academic career began at the University of Canterbury in her hometown of Christchurch, New Zealand, where she completed a BA (Hons) in Classics, much inspired by the Department's Logie Collection of Antiquities. She then earned an MPhil (specialised in Roman Archaeology) and DPhil (PhD) in Classical Archaeology at the University of Oxford in 2010.

Based on months of fieldwork in Petra, her dissertation made the first ever study of the insides of Petra's renowned rock-cut façade tombs, elucidating their chronology and Nabataean funerary practices for the first time. Lucy has held numerous research and teaching positions in Jordan (Council for British Research in the Levant), Belgium (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and the United Kingdom (University of Oxford, University of Nottingham, University of Edinburgh).

While living in Jordan for four years, she was able to establish two excavation projects in and around Petra. Lucy has also excavated in the Forum in Rome and lived in Siena (Italy) where she studied Italian. She has undertaken fieldwork on rock-cut tombs in Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

Since a young age, Lucy has been fascinated with the Mediterranean and Middle East and her travels and international academic positions have allowed her to immerse herself in local languages and cultures. With time, her research has led her further east, into the heart of Arabia, where she has been exploring how the classical 'western' world interacted with Arabia and the 'east', particularly via the ancient incense routes. She is fascinated with the themes of cultural identity in the ancient Near East and Arabia and how cultural traditions from antiquity have survived into the present day, as well as how the natural environment affected social and cultural practices.

Lucy is enthusiastic about sharing her knowledge and passion for the ancient world and inspiring interest through teaching and public lectures. She has taught a variety of subjects in Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology from the early classical period to the onset of Islam. She has always played an active role in outreach, promoting study of the ancient world through public lectures, radio interviews and school visits. She has over 40 publications, not only covering Petra and the Nabataeans, but also art in the Late Antique Levant and sculpture in Palmyra. Most recently, Lucy has been working for the Royal Commission for AlUla as an archaeological research consultant focused on the Nabataean city of Hegra in the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



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: Monday 19 October, Dubai – Khasab

- Arrive Dubai Airport and transfer to the Musandam Peninsula
- Qayadh Prehistoric Rock Art, Wadi Tawi
- Time at leisure
- Introductory Lecture
- Welcome Evening Meal

Meeting Point: The tour will commence at 7.00am at the Dubai Airport in the Arrivals Hall. Further details to be confirmed.

Following a welcome breakfast at the arrival lounge we travel 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.

On arrival in Khasab we make a short visit to the prehistoric rock engravings at the picturesque Wadi Tawi depicting, amongst other animals, several fine camels. These will provide our first glimpse into Oman's ancient past and we will discover the important role the camel played in the Arabian peninsula.

Following hotel check-in and a light lunch at the hotel, the remainder of the afternoon will be at leisure. In the early evening Lucy will give an introductory lecture which will be followed by a dinner at the hotel.

(Overnight Khasab) BLD

Day 2: Tuesday 20 October, Musandam Peninsula

- Khasab Fort
- Dhow cruise to the Strait of Hormuz & Kor Sham Fjord

Our day begins with a visit to the crenelated Khasab Fort, built by the Portuguese in the 17th century. Situated near the Khasab port, the fort has been repurposed as a museum and includes an open-air display of traditional boats. Inside the museum there is an interesting display of handicrafts and regional archaeological finds.

Next, we transfer to Khasab harbour where we board a *dhow* for a cruise through the western inlet, Khor Sham Fjord, 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. This isolation means that the local tribes have retained unique cultural traits, especially in their language. During the cruise there will be an option to swim and snorkel (snorkelling equipment will be provided). Lunch will be provided onboard. (Overnight Khasab) BLD

Muscat - 3 nights

Day 3: Wednesday 21 October, Khasab – Muscat

- Morning flight Khasab – Muscat
- Music Library and exhibition 'Oman and the World: A Musical Journey' (ROHM)
- Time at leisure
- Performance at the Royal Opera House Muscat (details to be confirmed in 2026)

The morning we fly from Khasab to Muscat. On arrival we visit 'Oman and the World: A Musical Journey', a permanent exhibition for the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) which opened in 2022. The display which incorporates cutting edge interactive technology, charts the story of Oman's rich musical traditions. The music library allows visitors to browse music scores from across the globe.

Following lunch at a local restaurant we return to the hotel for some time at leisure. This evening we enjoy dinner at the Opera Galleria and attend a performance at the Royal Opera House Muscat. (Overnight Muscat) BLD

Day 4: Thursday 22 October, Muscat

- Orientation tour of Muscat
- Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque
- Oman Botanic Garden
- Alia Art Gallery

Following a short orientation tour of Muscat we visit 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. This will be the perfect setting for us to learn about how the form of the

mosque developed and the rituals associated with it.

We continue to 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 afternoon we visit the Alia Gallery, Oman's largest private gallery that showcases the work of one of the Sultanate's most established artists, Alia Al-Farsi. We return to the hotel for some time at leisure before attending an early evening lecture. (Overnight Muscat) BL

Day 5: Friday 23 October, Muscat

- The Coast of Muscat by Private Yacht
- The National Museum of Oman
- Exteriors of Al Alam Palace & the 17-century Portuguese Forts of Miran and Jalali
- Muttrah Souq

This morning we embark a private yacht to explore the coast of Muscat and to view the ancient fortifications through the eyes of ancient seafarers who plied this route for centuries. There is also the option to explore the marine life and snorkel with green turtles.

Following lunch at a local restaurant we visit the National Museum of Oman which is dedicated to preserving and displaying the treasures of Oman's Cultural Heritage. 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. Here we will trace the formation of an Omani cultural identity.

Although Muscat was used as an anchorage from at least the 1st century CE, according to Greek and Roman historians, the city did not become an important trading port until the medieval period. By the 15th century the city 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 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.

In the late afternoon we visit the Muttrah souq, one of the most popular souqs in the Middle East. We shall take a timeless 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) BL

Ras al Jinz - 1 night

Day 6: Saturday 24 October, Muscat – Wadi Tiwi – Sur – Ras Al Jinz

- Wadi Tiwi
- Mausoleum of Bibi Miriam, Qalhat UNESCO World Heritage Site
- 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 travel by 4WD along the rugged and scenic coastal route to Ras Al Jinz. The journey 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 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.

Our next stop, Qalhat, was described by Marco Polo as possessing "a very good port, much visited by merchant ships from India." Although it has lost its former glory, the remains of its houses, streets, and cisterns as well as an abundance of pottery sherds, are scattered over a wide area. Still standing, but in marked disrepair, is the enigmatic mausoleum of Bibi Miriam; the extant traces of its elaborate stucco decoration explain why it was much admired by the 14th century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta.

Next, we continue along the Omani coast to the port of Sur where we 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 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

Wahiba Sands Camp – 1 night

Day 7: Sunday 25 October, Ras Al Jinz – Jalan Bani Bu Ali – Wahiba Sands

- Optional Dawn excursion
- Ras al Jinz Visitor Center & Archaeological Site
- Triliths, Dhofar's Standing Stones
- Ruined Fort & Mosque of Rashid bin Hamouda, Jalan Bani Bu Ali
- Exploration of Desert: Bedouin Family & Sunset on top of the Dunes
- Optional evening Stargazing

Today begins with 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 of the Arabian Peninsula and thus the nearest site to the Indian sub-continent. French-Italian excavations here discovered an important Bronze Age settlement and harbour, where fishing and trade were the main activities and source of livelihood. Remains of bitumen have shed light on ancient boat construction, and large ceramic jars point to the trade that took place via the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, there is evidence for copper smelting and metal workshops, as well as the production of shell ornaments. Notably, pottery from the Indus Valley was found with Harappan writing, providing clear evidence of trade contacts with Asia more than five millennia ago. These important findings offer a profound insight into Oman's coastal communities and how complex societies developed during this episode of early human history.

From Ras Al Jinz we travel by 4WD through the Jalan region. En route we stop briefly to view an example of Dhofar's enigmatic 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 200 BCE and 400 CE, these archaeological structures are widespread across the southern and eastern areas of Arabia and are sometimes referred to as the 'Arabian Stonehenge'; their purpose is still unclear but it is likely they were used for ritualistic purposes. They offer us a glimpse into the spiritual lives of the ancient people who constructed them.

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.

Continuing north 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.

Following lunch at our camp we spend the afternoon exploring the desert and visiting a local Bedouin

family. Witnessing the Bedouin lifestyle, with its close connection to nature and the environment, will provide us with an exceptional insight into past peoples who inhabited this landscape. We also enjoy views of the sunset atop the dunes.

In the evening there will be the option to view, through a telescope, the amazing panorama of the night sky. (Overnight Panorama Luxury Private Camp, Wahiba Sands) BLD

Nizwa - 4 nights

Day 8: Monday 26 October, Wahiba Sands – Manah – Nizwa

- Traditional Weaving
- Oman Across Ages Museum
- Manah abandoned mudbrick vilage

In Oman durable goods such as saddles, clothes, bags and blankets were produced. In the desert these products are produced by women, whereas in the mountains the men assume this role. Coarse goat hair which was coloured with natural dyes were primarily used (nowadays most products are coloured chemically). This morning we visit a Bedouin weaver who produces the traditional turban (called *masser*) for the Royal family on a wooden loom, using natural colours.

Following this visit we resume our 4WD journey north to the Wilayat of Manah to visit the spectacular Oman Across Ages Museum. Designed by COX architecture in 2023, this new museum is inspired by the extraordinary landscape and geometric profiles of the Al Hajar Mountains and its canyons. Using hi-tech displays, the museum explores the country's geology, rich history and cultural heritage.

This afternoon we continue to the ancient, abandoned mudbrick 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, thrived until the second half of the 20th century when inhabitants moved to more modern residences. The old town gives us the chance to step back in time and imagine traditional life here.

In the late afternoon we continue to Nizwa, the chief town of the interior and Oman's capital for many centuries. As one of Oman's oldest cities, Nizwa was once a centre of trade, religion, education and art. (Overnight Nizwa) BL

Day 9: Tuesday 27 October, Nizwa – Salut – Hajar Mountains – Al Ayn & Bat – Nizwa

- Salut archaeological site: tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Picnic lunch overlooking the Hajar Mountains
- Jabrin Fort
- Bronze Age Tombs of Al Ayn & Bat: UNESCO World Heritage Site

This morning we depart for the archaeological site of Salut located where legend intertwines with history. It is said that King Solomon visited the plain of Salut and ordered the local spirits to build the *aflaj* – the sophisticated water system that allowed societies to thrive here throughout the centuries. The rich and varied archaeological landscape consists of Bronze Age towers and Iron Age structures, one of which is a settlement atop the prominent tell. Distinctive Bronze Age Beehive tombs also characterise the plain, defining sacred space and ancient territories. One of these tombs is topped by a notable columned shrine, constructed in the Early Iron Age and a unique discovery for southeast Arabia. The Italian Mission to Oman

has undertaken extensive excavations at Salut, discovering finds of great cultural value, such as bronze snakes and pottery with depictions of snakes. This creature was clearly of considerable importance to the ancient inhabitants, likely linked to sacred rituals. Many centuries later, Salut was the site for the famous Battle of Salut, in which Arabian tribes won a great victory over the Persians, marking the dawn of Islam.

Following a picnic lunch overlooking the dramatic Hajar Mountains 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 Jebal Misht ('Comb Mountain') one of Oman's most majestic landmarks with its south-west wall rising over 1000 metres. On a ridge, with Jebal 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 BCE. 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. We will explore the meaning of these tombs and the possible funerary rituals associated with them.

Overnight Nizwa) BL

Day 10: Wednesday 28 October, Nizwa – Jebel Akhdar – Nizwa

- Nizwa's Round Tower Fort & traditional souq
- Falaj Al Khatmain, Birkat Al Mawz: UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Jebel Akhdar: Walk through terraces and villages from Al Aqr, to Al Ayn and Al Shurayjah (1km)

This morning 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 lush 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 Nizwa's souq, which is renowned for its intricately hand-carved *khanjars* (Omani silver daggers) and ornately designed silver jewellery.

Departing Nizwa we journey to Jebel Akhdar via the oasis village of Birkat al Mawz ('Pool of Bananas'). Here we view the old mudbrick settlement and the Falaj Al Khatmain, a UNESCO-listed *falaj* system built between 1624 and 1741, whose length is about 2450m. Our tour will be led by the manager of the UNESCO Chair on Aflaj Studies established by the University of Nizwa in 2021.

A *falaj* in Oman refers to an underground channel that carries water. The plural of the word '*falaj*' used in Oman is '*aflaj*', which denotes a system of irrigation. This unique water system boosted agriculture in Oman, which 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 time 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 Birkat al Mawz 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.

Following a picnic lunch in the mountains, 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 and we will see firsthand the harmonious relationship between the natural and built environment.

Traditional beekeeping in Oman has been part of the Omani culture for centuries. There are two types of honey bees in the Sultanate — Omani domesticated bees: *Apis mellifera* and Omani Dwarf bees (Abu Twaig): *Apis florea*. The domesticated bees are considered the predominant type in the Sultanate and are believed to have been introduced by Imam Saif bin Sultan, a well known apiarist, in the 17th century. During this afternoon's program we visit some traditional beekeepers who use date-log hives and produce dark-brown Acacia honey. (Overnight Nizwa) BLD

Day 11: Thursday 29 October, Nizwa – Bahla – Jebel Shams – Misfat Al Abriyyen Village – Tanuf – Nizwa

- Bahla souq and pottery workshop
- Bahla Fort: UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Al Hoota Cave
- The Grand Canyon of Oman: Balcony Walk, Jebel Shams (1.5kms)
- Agricultural tour of Misfat al Abriyyin village
- Tanuf ruined castle, Wadi Tanuf

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 Bahla village, which is surrounded by a 12-kilometre adobe wall, originally punctured by seven grand gates. With a history dating back to 3,000 BCE, Bahla was once known as a centre for magic and sorcerers; today it is well known for its skilled potters who have carried on the tradition for over 4,000 years.

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. Dating 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. While in Bahla we also visit the souq which sells homemade ropes, *fadl* (large metal platters for feeding a whole family), daggers, copper artefacts, pottery and Omani sweets (*Halwa*).

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.

Next, we ascend Jebel Shams for a one and half-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.

Following a picnic lunch in the canyon we take an agricultural tour of the village of Misfat Al Abriyyen (Misfah). Located in an oasis at 900m altitude in the Western Hajar mountains, the charming 300-year-old village of Misfah is teeming with date palms and offers stunning views of the surrounding plains. The village's houses, made from mud, stone and *sarooj*, hang precariously clinging to the side of the mountain cliff. Its extensive *falaj* system, which dates back more than 2000 years, is used to irrigate the terraced fields where crops such as mangoes, pomegranates, figs and olives are grown.

Located at the foot of Jabal Akhdar lies the Tanuf Ruins, a tiny mudbrick village that was a casualty of the conflict between the Sultan of Oman, backed by British forces, and the local Imam during the 1950s. Set against the backdrop of the Al Hajar Mountains, these ruins offer an evocative glimpse into the past, chronicling episodes of conflict, resilience, and change in the country. The remnants of old houses, a mosque, and a water system tell stories of the people who once inhabited them. (Overnight Nizwa) BL

Salalah, Dhofar - 4 nights

Day 12: Friday 30 October, Nizwa – Muscat – Salalah

- Friday Nizwa Goat Market
- Flight from Muscat to Salalah (1435-1615)

We rise early this morning to enjoy the lively atmosphere of Nizwa's well-known goat market which operates on Friday mornings. Here, locals flock to the market to buy and sell goats, sheep and other animals. The market also sells a variety of items including spices and Oman's best delicacies including *halwa* – a sweet dessert made from dates.

From Nizwa we return to Muscat. On arrival at Muscat airport we take an early afternoon flight to Salalah, the historic centre of Dhofar thanks to the frankincense trade which flourished in this region for centuries. (Overnight Salalah) BL

Day 13: Saturday 31 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
- Dinner at Blue Ocean Seaside Table

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 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. Here we will see how frankincense is used in ritual at this sacred site.

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 dinner at a local restaurant. (Overnight Salalah) BD

Day 14: Sunday 1 November, Salalah – Khor Rori – Wadi Darbat – Mirbat – Salalah

- Khor Rori UNESCO World Heritage Listed archaeological site & museum
- Wadi Darbat
- Mirbat, ancient capital of Dhofar
- Tomb of Mohammad Bin Ali

This morning we begin by visiting the important ruins at Khor Rori. Formerly known as Sumhuram, it was one of the greatest ports in Arabia for the trade in frankincense, spices, textiles, and other precious items, which flourished between India, Arabia Felix and the Mediterranean some 2000 years ago. It is probably the location known as 'Moscha Limen' mentioned by Graeco-Roman historical sources and founded in the 3rd century BCE as an outpost for the Kingdom of Hadramawt. 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. Our program includes a visit to the onsite museum which provides an excellent video/presentation on the history and trade of Khor Rori.

We continue along the coastal highway to the town of Mirbat, making a detour to Wadi Darbat where we enjoy majestic views of waterfalls, lakes, mountains, caves (once used to shelter shepherds), wildlife and lush green vegetation.

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. We also visit the recently restored Mirbat Castle. This 17th-century fortress, built to protect the town from Portuguese occupation, now serves as a museum showcasing the history of Mirbat and the surrounding region.

We end the day with a visit to Dhofar's best-known historic monuments, the tomb of Mohammad bin Ali al Alawi, who died in 1135 CE. 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. (Overnight Salalah) BL

Day 15: Monday 2 November, Salalah: Frankincense Plantations & Wadi Dawkah

- The Land of Frankincense UNESCO World Heritage site: Wadi Dawkah & tour of frankincense plantation
- Tropical Fruit Farm
- Farewell Dinner: Mediterranean at Al Miana Anantara

This morning we drive 40kms north of Salalah to Wadi Dawkah, a reserve protecting a grove of frankincense trees which has been listed by UNESCO as part of the frankincense related heritage sites. The wadi is a stony, semi desert valley where more than 1200 trees are spread across 5kms. Here, the stark shapes of frankincense trees (*Boswellia sacra*) dot the landscape. Once traded via the famous 'incense routes', it was a commodity more precious than gold and purchased in prodigious quantities by the Romans and Egyptians for their rituals. Its value was increased by its rarity and difficulty to obtain, with a very limited geographical spread in southern Arabia and particularly Oman. Frankincense from Dhofar is rated the best in the world, and its cultivation and harvesting remain an important aspect of cultural identity in this region. With a local expert we shall tour one of the local plantations to learn how frankincense (*luban*) is harvested.

Salalah, is a tropical paradise, justifiably considered the 'garden city' of the south. The seasonal climatic conditions that characterise the Dhofar Governorate and the Salalah Plain in particular, result in a bounty of diverse crops year-round. The governorate is particularly renowned for its coconut, bananas and papayas. Following a picnic lunch at the reserve we visit a local fruit farm. During a tour led by the owner we learn more about the 700 fruit varieties grown in the region and their mist irrigation system. We also enjoy sampling some of their fruit!

This evening we enjoy a farewell dinner. (Overnight Salalah) BLD

Day 16: Tuesday 3 November, Salalah – Dubai (Tour ends in Dubai)

- Morning at leisure
- Midday transfer for Salalah Airport ETA 1300hrs

This morning 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.

Your hotel is located approximately 22kms from the Salalah airport. A midday transfer to the airport will be arranged, with an estimated arrival time of 1300hrs. Alternatively please contact ASA if you require assistance in arranging an independent transfer. Note: Check-out time of the hotel is 1400hrs. B

Accommodation

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 en suite rooms or eco-tents. In the Wahiba Sands we spend one night at a desert camp.

- 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.
- Muscat (3 nights): 5-star [Movenpick Hotel Ghala Muscat](#) – a modern hotel located 5.3km from the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque.
- Ras al Jinz (1 night): [Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve](#) – providing accommodation in air-conditioned Eco-Tents.
- Wahiba Sands (1 night): luxury camp – offering 20 tents equipped with en suite bathroom.
- Nizwa (2 nights): 4-star [Golden Tulip Hotel](#) – a modern hotel built in the traditional Omani style; located 19kms from the town of Nizwa.
- Salalah (4 nights): 5-star [Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah](#) – a luxury resort with a beach front location along the south coast of Dhofar.

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

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double room for single occupancy throughout the tour. This includes a cabin for sole use for the 6 nights aboard the gulet. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$14,490.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2025

AUD \$14,890.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$2490.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with en suite bathroom in locally rated 4- to 5-star hotels. At Ras Al Jinz we spend 1 night in the Reserve's lodge which offers en suite rooms or eco-tents. In the Wahiba Sands we spend one night at a desert camp.
- Meals indicated in the itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach and 4WD vehicles seating 3 passengers per vehicle (all participants will have window seats)
- Airport-hotel transfers for the times as outlined in the tour itinerary
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at most hotels (not at airports or the desert camp)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees to forts, museums & archaeological sites
- *Dhow* cruise to the fjords of Musandam (Day 2); private yacht cruise Muscat harbour (Day 5)
- Domestic flights, economy class: Khasab to Muscat & Muscat to Salalah
- A high-quality reusable water bottle together with supplies of chilled water will be provided for all excursions.
- Wireless guiding system during site visits
- Tips for the coach & 4WD drivers, Omani guide and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include

- Airfare: Australia-Dubai, Salalah-Australia
- Evening meals & lunches not indicated in the tour itinerary
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA designated arrival & departure times
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visa for Oman or UAE



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 3 - Challenging

Among our most physically demanding

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to seven hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace; some days for at least 5-7km, over terrain which may include rocky and uneven paths (eg mountain villages), sometimes with steep steps or inclines.
- negotiate challenging historic and archaeological sites many of which are large and unsheltered and include several flights of steps (eg at forts).
- cope with a demanding tour schedule which may involve longer days, regular early morning starts, long distance coach or 4WD travel over variable road conditions that include winding coastal and mountainous roads.
- tolerate cuisine which may be significantly different from your usual diet, and where catering for special dietary requirements may be limited.
- withstand varying climatic conditions such as humidity and heat.
- board/alight coaches, 4WD vehicles and boats with steep steps unassisted.
- cope with accommodation at Ras Al Jinz where we spend 1 night in the reserve's lodge which offers en suite rooms or eco-tents, and 1 night in the Wahiba Sands at a desert camp.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels and at the desert camp.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and

good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

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. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Visa Requirements

Australian citizens will require an E-visa for stays in Oman exceeding 14 days. An online eVisa may be obtained via the [Omani government website](#).

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. During visits to mosques women will also be required to wear a headscarf. Shorts should never be worn in public (applicable for both men and women) 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).

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

The cost of a glass of wine or beer is approximately \$15.00 USD. You may wish to consider purchasing your own duty-free alcohol prior to joining the tour. Visitors are only allowed to drink alcohol in licensed restaurants and hotels. Alcohol is not available at Ras al Jinz. However we suggest you buy your own alcohol from Muscat airport which may be saved in the car fridges.

Reusable water bottle

Participants will receive a high-quality reusable water bottle which may be refilled from the chilled water in the coach fridge, 4WD fridges, hotels at breakfast, airports & tourist sites. You will also receive a collapsible silicone cup that you can save in your pocket or backpack and use for coffee, tea & fresh juices during the tour.

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 \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



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

Covid Certificate ☐ A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

☐ 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.

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. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** 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. You do NOT 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 the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or 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 only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with 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 booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, 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 preparing for, 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; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

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, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

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

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) 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 or services 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. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to 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 & 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 _____