



THE ARABIAN GULF
QATAR, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND OMAN

October 23 - November 04, 2024
Led by Tour Manager Nancy Weber

Can be combined with Kuwait and Bahrain tour (October 18 - October 23, 2024) **AND**
Oman tour (November 04 - November 10, 2024)

Best known for their wealth and abundance of oil, the Gulf States also house some remarkable museums that display magnificent ancient Islamic art, calligraphy, pottery, embroideries, and jewelry. In Qatar, you will saunter around the Old Souq (market) and down to the nearby Dhow Harbor to see some of the Gulf's traditional and distinctive trading vessels. In the UAE, you will marvel at Abu Dhabi's unique architecture as one of the most futuristic cities in the world. When in Dubai, an emirate that has transformed itself in the last few decades from an obscure pearl-fishing village into one of the world's most important trading hubs and a land of luxuries, you will visit its Old town. Oman is one of Arabia's true gems - a land of rugged coastlines and vast deserts where tradition and progress go hand in hand. This wonderful adventure takes us from the heart of its picturesque capital, deep into its desert.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Wednesday, October 23

Arrive in Doha (QATAR)



Upon arrival in **Doha**, meet the guide and transfer to *Souq Waqif Boutique Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight.

Note: Standard check-in time is 3:00 pm. If you arrive on October 22 or the early morning of October 23, an extra hotel night needs to be booked.

Thursday, October 24

Doha



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Katara Cultural Village**, an excellent place to experience Qatar's true heritage, from the enormous Greco Roman amphitheater to its maze of cobblestone alleyways occupied by young artists practicing their art. Visit the **Equestrian Club** to see some of the most beautiful Arabic horses in the world. After lunch, head to visit the **Museum of Islamic Art**, one of the Gulf region's newest and most fabulous museums. Continue with a tour around **Souq Waqif**, the most traditional souk that began as a weekend market for local Bedouins selling meat, wool, milk, and other staples. Today, this maze of alleyways covers a large area with separate sections selling traditional clothing, perfumes, spices, incense, and dried fruit. Also, visit the intriguing falcon shop. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. (B,L)

Friday, October 25

Doha



After breakfast, head to visit **Al-Shahaniya**, a camel-racing track, and the **Sheikh Faisal Museum**, a private museum built to preserve and promote Qatar's cultural history. There are over 15,000 artifacts on display. Enjoy lunch, then visit the **Qatar National Library**, which has one million books and 500,000 e-books, around 700 volumes. The collection is one of the largest of its kind in the region. The earliest manuscripts date to the **16th century**; most were produced in the 19th and 20th centuries—head to visit the **Education City Stadium**

from outside and get the opportunity to take some photos. The Stadium is one of the World Cups Stadiums whose architecture is inspired by geometric shapes. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. (B,L)

Saturday, October 26

Doha - UAE (Abu Dhabi)



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to **Abu Dhabi (UAE)** and upon arrival, meet, assist, and start the city tour with a visit to **Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque** of architectural styles from different Muslim civilizations, and it is a place of worship and cultural diversity. Initiated by the late president H.E. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan AL Nahyan, the founder of the UAE, the Mosque features 82 domes, more than 1000 columns, 24-carat gold gilded chandeliers, and the world's hand-knotted carpet. Continue to **Al Hosn Palace**, previously the home of the ruling family. It is a national archive and a memorial to Abu Dhabi's history. It was built as a commanding structure overlooking coastal trade routes, and today is a beautiful museum housed in a picturesque building for all visitors to enjoy.

Stop at **Abu Dhabi Corniche & Breakwater** for fresh air and to take some photos at the Corniche & the Breakwater of Abu Dhabi. Later, visit **Qasr Al Watan**, "Palace of the Nations," or Qasr Al Watan as it is called in Arabic. It is a working Presidential Palace and a majestic cultural landmark. Part of the Palace is open to the public. It offers a look into the history of the nation, its traditions, and its ties with other countries. The visit includes the **Great Hall**, the **Spirit of Collaboration Room**, the **library**, and the **House of knowledge**. Transfer to *Courtyard by Marriott World Trade Center Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. (B,D)

Sunday, October 27

Abu Dhabi

After breakfast, head to visit **Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital**, a deep insight into the tradition of falconry with

a display of special tools and equipment. The tour will also include visiting the examination room to see the precious falcons undergoing feather repair, manicures, and pedicures. Continue to **Emirates Palace** to enjoy a delightful lunch at the Iconic Emirates Palace Hotel, then continue to **Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum**, which features many exhibits covering 24000 square meters. It features stunning architecture with modern-shaped domes and water all around. Later, visit the **Date Market** to savor the wonderful wide varieties of dates from the region, then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L)**

Monday, October 28

Abu Dhabi - Dubai



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Dubai**, and upon arrival, transfer to *Al Seef Heritage Hotel by Hilton* or similar for check-in. In the afternoon, head out on a desert experience, "**Dubai Falconry Safari**," where we will enjoy desert wildlife. Board a 4x4 jeep, roam the Dubai Desert, conserve, and observe animals, including the rare **Arabian Oryx**, **hares**, and many more. Enjoy a thrilling, interactive bird-of-prey experience, learn how to fly a falcon while wearing a glove, and see some birds and training techniques. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Tuesday, October 29

Dubai



After breakfast, begin the day with a visit to the **Bastakia Area** to view the traditional **Wind Towers** and the old **Fahidi Fort**, the oldest existing structure in Dubai. Continue through the **cloth markets** to the **Abras** - local water taxis that takes us across the Creek to the **spice** and **gold souks**. Walk through the bustling alleys of these souks and allow the mystical aromas of numerous spices to entice our senses while the astonishing amount of brilliant gold dazzles our eyes.

Drive to the iconic **Burj Al Arab**, built on an artificial island and considered an architectural wonder worldwide & take some photos. Continue to **Palm Jumeirah**, an architectural accomplishment and a main landmark of Dubai, and drive along the trunk and onto the final branch, overlooking the Arabian Gulf and the iconic Atlantis Hotel. Visit **Burj Khalifa**, an outstanding experience; no building in modern history has aroused so much curiosity and intrigue as Burj Khalifa. Throughout the journey to the top, we are entertained by the multi-media presentation of the exotic history of Dubai and the marvel of Burj Khalifa. Enjoy the sunset moment and the view of Dubai from our vantage point on level 124 of the world's tallest building and have a chance to watch the world's

largest musical and dancing fountain. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Wednesday, October 30

Dubai



After breakfast, head to visit the **Miracle Garden**, a flower exhibition and artwork spanning over 72000 sqm of space. It boasts various shapes, larger-than-life statues, and wonderful cafes and outlets. Continue to see **Ski Dubai** and the Mall of the Emirates and have some time to discover this unique place. Then, visit the **Lost Chambers** at Atlantis The Palm to uncover mysteries of the deep and learn fascinating facts about marine life while we watch 65,000 marine animals swimming in the Ambassador Lagoon.

Visit the **Museum Of The Future**, an iconic Museum that opened in 2022 in the heart of Dubai and consists of several exhibits portraying life as it could be in 2071, focusing on technology, natural habitats, and humankind as part of a wider galaxy. Enjoy a **Dhow Dinner Cruise - Marina** to see the modern skyline of Dubai. Dhows have been the traditional ships of the UAE for many centuries, and tonight we will have the chance to board one of these ships and enjoy a splendid view while quietly cruising by the landmarks of Dubai Marina. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,D)**

Thursday, October 31

Dubai - Al Ain - Nizwa (OMAN)



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Al Ain**, the "Garden City" of the UAE and one of the oldest settlements. This green city oases features tree-lined avenues and contains an incredible number of public parks. Continue the drive to the border crossing into the Sultanate of Oman. After formalities and crossing, head to **Ibri** to visit the **Beehive Tombs** and the **Necropolis** at Bat, a prototype historic site from the 3rd millennium BCE. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, then tour the magnificent **Jabreen Castle** (1675) in Bahla, one of the finest castles in Oman. Stop at **Bahla Fort** (UNESCO Site) for some photos, then continue to **Nizwa**, and upon arrival, transfer to *Golden Tulip Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, November 01

Nizwa - Muscat



After breakfast, head to visit **Nizwa Souq**. The main highlight of the Souq is the Cattle Auction that takes place every Friday. The Auction is a traditional way of selling

animals like sheep, goats, cows, and camels that are brought by their owners from the nearby villages. Explore the impressive **New Souq complex**, which has been sensitively designed using Omani fort architecture and elegant Islamic arches. The air-conditioned halls of this Souq are full of fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, vast stacks of dates, and freshly caught fish. It is still the best place to buy traditional silver “Khanjars” (hand-carved Omani daggers) and Bedouin jewelry, where silver is still sold by weight.

Visit **Nizwa Fort** with its massive Circular Cannon Tower, making it one of the most impressive forts in Oman. The tower was built on a solid rock base and designed to withstand the vibrations of 24 cannons. From the top, a superb panoramic view gives a bird’s eye view of Nizwa and the surrounding plains – a sure delight for all avid photographers. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, then drive to **Muscat**. Upon arrival, transfer to *Hilton Garden Inn Hotel* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, November 02

Muscat (Bimah Sink hole, Wadi Tiwi & Sur) 

After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to visit the **Bima Sinkhole**, a spectacular limestone crater with blue-green water at the bottom. Drive to **Wadi Tiwi** and walk through an old traditional village full of lush banana and papaya plantations. Continue the drive to **Sur**, the capital city of the Ash Sharqiyah region and was once an important center for trade with East Africa and India. Visit the **lighthouse** and the **old merchant houses** to admire the details of the intricately carved wooden doors, then stop at the **Dhow Yard** (granting permission) to see the dhows, trading vessels primarily used to transport heavy items. Drive back to **Muscat** and return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: The bus cannot drive to the village in Wadi Sur. There will be an easy walk of half a mile.

Sunday, November 03

Muscat 

After breakfast, head to visit the **Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque**, a scientific and intellectual resource of knowledge across the Islamic world. Visit the **Royal Opera House** and explore the **Muttrah Souq**, a vibrant collection of colorful stalls filled with textiles, spices, and antiques. Later, discover the Sultanate’s rich history and heritage with a visit to the **National Museum of Oman**. Visit the ceremonial **Al Alam Palace** and the adjacent former 16th century Portuguese defense forts

of **Al Jalali and Mirani** from outside and get the opportunity to take some photos. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, November 04

Muscat - USA 

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

“We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients”.



Tour Cost (Land Only):

6-10 Travelers: \$6,995.00

11-14 travelers: \$6,495.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$995.00

Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 14 participants

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: ***-****

track places the most, especially those countries that see very few tourists/travelers. She is thrilled to lead our groups to these beautiful parts of the world and is excited to introduce their fascinating culture, people, and unmatched hospitality. She has been rated so highly by our travelers as a kind and efficient coordinator and does a superb job ensuring the smoothness of these programs.

About your Tour Manager, Nancy Weber... Nancy loves to travel, learn languages, people, and sparkling wines! Nancy worked in the chemical industry in the US and Canada, and she lived in Jordan and Iraq for eight years, working as a training consultant and as Iraq's Country Director for an NGO. She speaks Arabic and a few other languages. Moreover, she loves the Middle East and genuinely appreciates the people and culture in that part of the world. Nancy also lived and worked in Russia for four years as a business training consultant. She speaks Russian, is passionate about Russia, and adores the people living there. She traveled on our first STS North Caucasus adventure in 2017 - she was so happy to see and experience Chechnya and Dagestan finally! Nancy has been managing a few of our tours, and she enjoys visiting off-the-beaten-

Tour Includes:

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- Accommodation at mentioned *Hotels* or similar in Superior (3*- 4*) in centrally located area.
- Travel by modern, air-conditioned van or minibus.
- Flight Doha - Abu Dhabi.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Entrance fees to all sites & museums mentioned.
- English Speaking local guides in each country for all your mentioned tours and visits.
- Escort of lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- All Tours as per itinerary & entrance fees to the sites and museums mentioned.

Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA -Doha /Muscat - USA .
- All visas are currently obtainable on arrival and UAE (free),
- Qatar (free), and Oman (free) - All subject to change.
- Beverages and any drinks with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Gratuity to your tour manager (optional).
- Travel protection insurance. (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).

Trip Grade:

II Active – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides and extensive drives.

Lodging Level:

*** **Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars)

**** **Luxury:** Regular style- usually large- hotels, typical western standard with ample venues, and full amenities. (4 or 5 stars).

