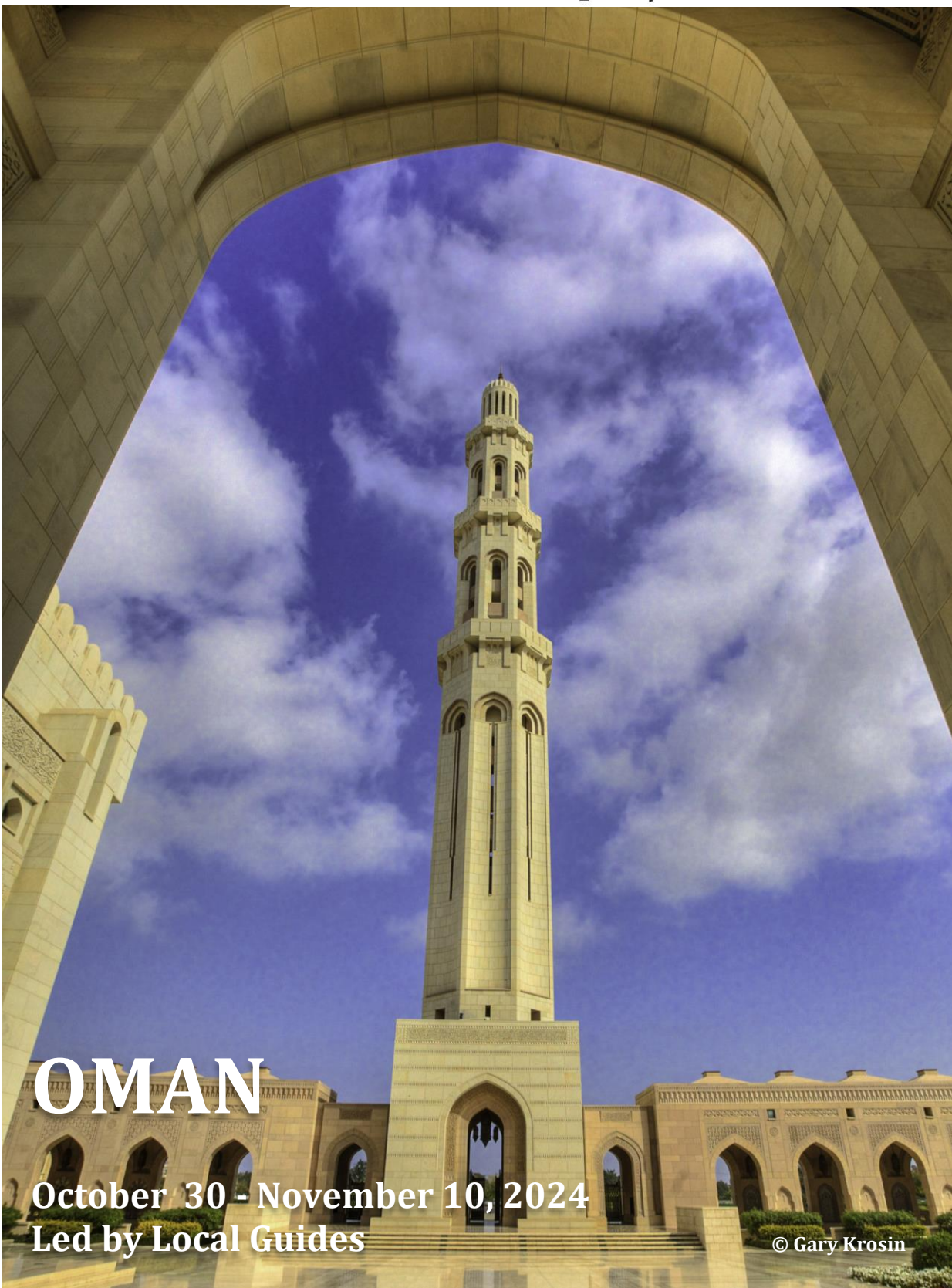


DISCOVER THE WONDERS

SPIEKERMANN

TRAVEL SERVICE



OMAN

October 30 - November 10, 2024
Led by Local Guides

© Gary Krosin

Can be combined with the Arabian Gulf tour (October 23 - October 30, 2024)

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 mountains and deserts of the Bedu. We will take in the breathless landscapes of the Hajar Mountains, It is a journey of incredible contrasts, following in the footsteps of the pioneering explorers of old and discovering some of the richest natural and cultural highlights that Arabia has to offer. Visiting Musandam city that dominates the Strait of Hormuz and have a wonderful adventure exploring its mountains and terraces. In addition, Exploring Salalah, the land of Frankincense and UNESCO world heritage site and be introduced to the famous city of Sumharam (Khor Rohri). This UNESCO World Heritage Site was the easternmost outpost of the Hadramawt Kingdom. Oman is also steeped in myths and legends as it is believed to be the home of Sinbad the Sailor and the site of the ruins of the palace are reputed to be that of the Queen of Sheba.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Wednesday, October 30

Arrive in Dubai



Upon arrival in **Dubai**, meet and transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in and overnight.

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** built in 1675 in Bahla, one of the finest castles in Oman. Enjoy taking some photos of **Bahla Fort**, a UNESCO Site, 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 **Bimah 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)**

PS: The bus cannot drive to the village in Wadi Sur, there will be an easy walk for 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 - Musandam



After breakfast, transfer to Muscat airport for our flight to **Khasab**, a port city on Oman's **Musandam Peninsula**. Upon arrival, meet the representative and begin the city tour of Khasab, including a visit to the **Khasab Fort**, a picturesque stronghold built in the 17th century by the Portuguese seeking dominion over the maritime trade in the Strait of Hormuz and to prevent attacks from the sea. The structure results from extensive restoration work in the late 20th century. Stroll around town, then transfer to *Atana Khasab Hotel* or similar for check-in. In the afternoon, board 4WD vehicles and drive to **Jabel Harim** (Mountain of Women). The Mountain takes its name from when local women would retreat to the caves here to avoid being kidnapped by pirates or rival tribes while their husbands were away on fishing or trading expeditions. Enjoy spectacular panoramic views from the road during the mountain safari and see terraced mountain villages, lush acacia forests, and wadis. Many of the rocks on the Mountain contain well-preserved fossils of sea creatures, such as mollusks, fish, clams, and trilobites. There is also an excellent collection of **petroglyphs** carved into the borders, including human stick-figures, animal figures, and one even thought to be a man on an elephant. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, November 05

Musandam (Dhow Cruise)



After breakfast, transfer to the **pier**, board a traditional **Omani dhow** (shared), & cruise towards Musandam's longest and most spectacular **Fjord**, often called "Norway of Arabia." Enjoy a traditional lunch while cruising, then anchor at the vicinity off Telegraph Island, where we can enjoy a swim or sit back and relax or, be more adventurous and climb up the stairs to visit the **crumbling ruins** of the repeater station and operator's quarters (depending on the tide). Enjoy a cup of tea/coffee while on board. Return to the *Hotel*, free rest of the day at leisure and overnight. **(B,L)**

Wednesday, November 06

Musandam - Muscat - Salalah



After breakfast, transfer to the Khasab airport for our flight to Salalah, connecting in **Muscat**. Upon arrival,

transfer to *Crowne Plaza Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B,L)**

Thursday, November 07

Salalah (City Highlights)



Salalah is the capital and largest city of the southern Omani Governorate of Dhofar and the birthplace of the current sultan, Qaboos bin Said. The city tour begins with a visit to the "**Museum of the Frankincense Land**," a UNESCO World Heritage Site that opened in July 2007 at Al Balid Archaeological Park. This museum is the latest addition to Oman's heritage and cultural scene. A complete history of Oman's Maritime trade and shipbuilding industry can be experienced here, including meticulously carved replicas of the ancient boats and ships that date back to the Omani Maritime trade.

Drive through lush green fruit and vegetable plantations and make a brief stop to sample a fresh coconut water drink at one of the fruit stalls (cost on own) that line the streets within the periphery of the old Salalah town (Haffah). Also, stop for a photo opportunity at the impressive **Sultan Qaboos Mosque**, the largest mosque in Salalah, and view the official palace of his majesty the Sultan (**Al Husn Palace**). Stroll through the old **Haffah Souk**, famous for selling high-quality Frankincense and numerous other traditional Dhofari souvenirs. This attractive souk is full of small shops lined up with straight piles of incense boxes, clay incense burners colorfully decorated with traditional patterns, and bags of incense crystals. Have an opportunity to shop, then head for lunch at a local restaurant. Return to the *Hotel*, free rest of the day at leisure & overnight. **(B,L)**

Friday, November 08

Salalah (Historical Highlights)



After breakfast, head to visit the old **fishing village of Taqah**, famous for the manufacturing of dried sardines and old "**Dhofari Houses**". Then, visit the 19th century **Taqah Castle**, the former official residence of the 'Wali' (Governor) of the region and obtain a glimpse into the rich history of the region. Continue to the ancient ruins of the once famous city of **Sumharam** (Khor Rohri). This UNESCO world heritage site was the easternmost base of the **Hadramawt Kingdom** on the ancient incense route between the Mediterranean Sea, Persian Gulf, and India. A picturesque drive leads us to **Mirbat**, the ancient capital of Dhofar and the beginning of the "Frankincense Trail". Take a stroll through the streets lined with old Omani houses and head to the twin-domed Bin Ali's Tomb - a classic example of medieval architecture for some photos. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant then explore the natural

spring of **Ayn Razat**, beautifully laid out amidst the tranquil lush mountains, and nourished every day of the year by natural underground spring water. Drive back to the hotel, rest of the evening will be free at leisure where you can explore the city on own and overnight. **(B,L)**

Saturday, November 09

Salalah - Muscat



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to Muscat. Upon arrival, meet the representative and transfer to *Park Inn by Radisson Hotel or similar* for check-in, free rest of the day at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, November 10

Muscat - USA

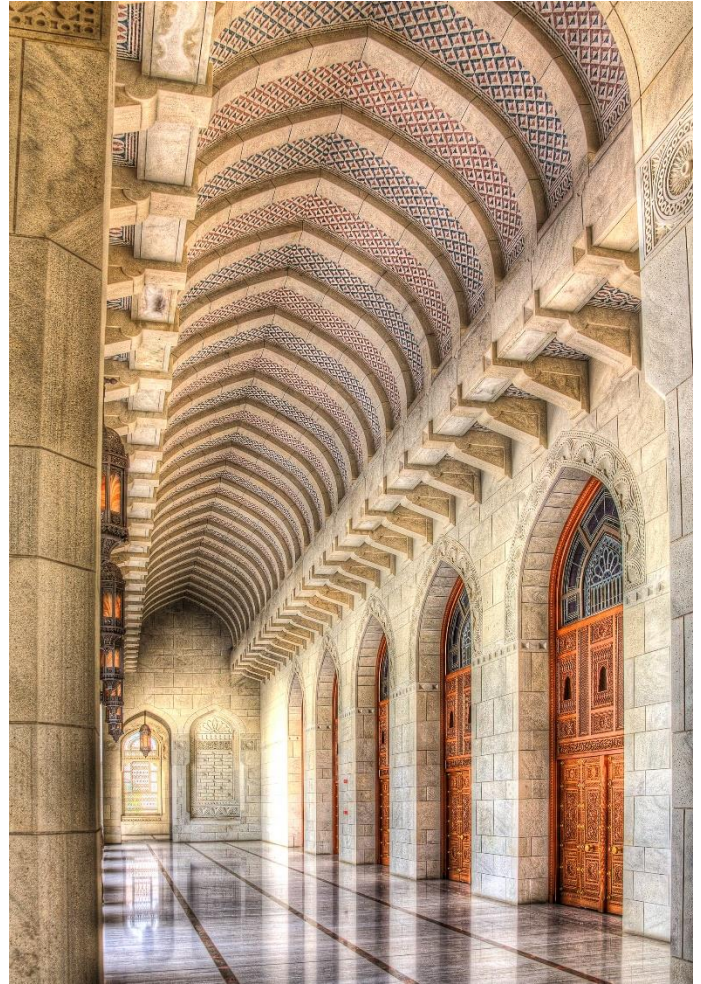


After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

“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 Remarks:

Touring - You will be covering a lot during this journey. The roads are good, and the bus is very comfortable. Some driving days are long, but there will be several restrooms stops along the way. It is important to recognize the exhausting nature of some of the long sightseeing days, as well as some of the site visits where you may have to climb over uneven terrain, steps, rocks, and sand, as well as up inclines and stairs. Be prepared to travel with comfortable shoes. You do have the option of staying in the vehicle if some sites seem difficult to you.



Tour Cost (Land Only):

1 traveler: \$7,195.00

2-4 travelers: \$5,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$1,395.00

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



Tour Includes:

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- Accommodations in Superior (4*) in centrally located hotels.
- Domestic flight Muscat - Musandam - Muscat and Muscat - Salalah - Muscat.
- Travel by modern, air-conditioned van or minibus (depending on the number of group).
- 4WD excursion to **Jabel Harim**
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Entrance fees to all mentioned sites and museums.
- English Speaking local guides.
- All activities described in the tour.

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:

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

Tour does not include:

- International airfare into-out of Oman.
- Oman visa (currently free obtainable on arrival - subject to change).
- 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.
- Gratuity to your guides, drivers, restaurant staff, etc.
- Travel protection insurance (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

