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25 amazing places to visit in Oman

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29th December 2014

Stunning deserts, ancient forts and a pristine coastline: João Leitao lists the places you must visit in this intriguing desert kingdom



1. Musandam Fjords

Musandam peninsula is separated from the rest of the country – it's an enclave in the UAE. It is famous for its breathtaking fjords, desert mountains and waters of a beautiful shade of blue.



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2. Khasab Fortress

The capital of the Musandam region is the city of Khasab. To get there you can also take the 'fastest ferry boat in the world', connecting to the capital Muscat. This fortress was rebuilt and is very beautiful.



3. Muscat

Muscat, the capital of Oman, has a beautiful historic district. Buildings with East African-style wooden balconies, and several seafront fortresses make Muscat a picturesque and relaxing destination. It's worth spending a couple of days there, and visiting the markets, museums, forts, mosques and areas near the sea.



4. Masirah Island

Masirah Island is a desolate and deserted destination. If you like the feeling of being in the middle of nowhere, and in a place where hardly anyone goes, then you'll love this island off Oman's coast in the Indian Ocean. There are several deserted beaches where you can see turtles laying eggs.



5. Jebel Akhdar Mountain

Crossing the Jebel Akhdar was one of the best moments of my Oman trip. I drove up, departing from Al Hamra until Ar Rustaq, on the far side of the mountain. I drove a normal city car, but a 4WD is recommended. The landscape is amazing.



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6. Tomb of Job

Job is a biblical character, from the Book of Job in the Old Testament. You can visit his tomb, and, in the outer zone, you'll find a small box which protects his footprint (it's a huge foot mark, but that's what people say). The whole area is a site of Muslim pilgrimage.



7. Taqah Castle, Mirbat

Taqah Castle dates back from the 19th century and is situated at the entrance of Mirbat. It was built to be the permanent residence of Sheikh Ali bin Al Ma'shani Timman. It is very well preserved, and houses a very interesting ethnographic museum, showing various aspects of life and culture from the region.



8. Shisr – Ruins of the Lost City of Ubar

Shisr archaeological ruins are not exactly the most spectacular I've ever visited, because there is not much to see. But the adventure of getting there, on a desert track road, and arriving at an isolated village, with camels, goats and walls written with 'the Lost City of Ubar' is exotic enough for me! At the end of the village there is a small farm with lots of animals, including several camels you can befriend.



9. Sukhram Ruins

9. Sumnurah Ruins

The ancient port of Sumnuran dates from the third century BC to the fifth century AD. This is one of the most important places of the region's pre-Islamic time. This was one of the great centers of Frankincense production of south Arabia. The ruins are spectacular, with amazing surrounding scenery.



10. Al-Baleed Ruins

Al-Baleed ruins are a huge archaeological complex on the coast, near the city of Salalah. Ibn Battuta visited this site in 1329 and commented on its beauty. Most of the buildings of the citadel would be built in a typical architectural style of the region of Dhofar, mixing wood and stone.



11. Samail Castle

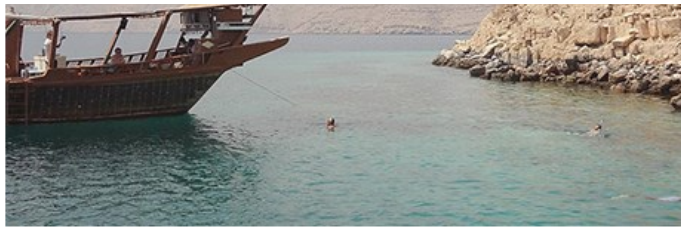
Samail Castle was undoubtedly the most beautiful castle I visited in Oman. The Samail Hosn, or Samail Castle, is surrounded with mountains and huge palm trees. A true oasis in the desert mountains. A few kilometres before Samail there is another small fort known for its watchtowers which overlook the entire valley.



12. Incense Market in Salalah

Salalah is a city of great importance in the trade of frankincense. Here, there are two modern markets where there are many shops with much incense and good quality products made from frankincense. I bought 4kg of frankincense and sent it home by mail. It still burns and smells great. Salalah also has a beach area that you can visit and the huge mosque of Sultan Qaboos.





13. Telegraph Island

Telegraph Island is a small piece of land in the middle of the water surrounding the Musandam Peninsula. In the nineteenth century there was a station here that was used to boost the British telegraph messages along the Persian Gulf cable line, which was part of the London–Karachi telegraph cable. Nowadays, only a few ruins remain, but the snorkelling is great.



14. Nizwa

Nizwa is one of my favourite cities in Oman. It has many interesting places to visit such as the animal and vegetable market, the castle with old Portuguese cannons, the potteries and the old town. The view from the top of the castle is fantastic. In Nizwa you can also visit the famous *falaj* canal system and supply of water to the oasis, listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.



15. Haat

Haat is a village in the Jebel Akhdar Mountains. Here, several stone houses are protected by palm trees. There is a small river, falaj irrigation system and a water tank with a member of the village always present and protecting it with an AK-47. There is also a small pool of natural water coming from a mountain spring.



16. Jabrin Castle

Jabrin Castle is an excellent example of military architecture in the region. It was

built by Imam Sultan bin Saif Al Ya'arubi in 1670. It is fantastic to explore the interior of this huge castle, enjoy the views from the top of the tower and also discover the fabulous ceilings of many rooms and halls inside.



17. Bahla Fortress

Bahla Fortress is one of the historical forts near Jebel Akhdar. The castle dates from the 13th century and is well-preserved after being closed for renovation for several years. This building is surrounded by an oasis with some amazing views. This place is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.



18. Al Hazm

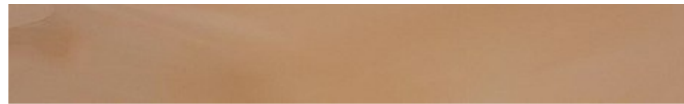
Al Hazm is a place with lots of history – a big fortress and various ruins of an old village and even an ancient tomb at the top of the hill. The scenery is very beautiful, mixing green palm trees and desert mountains.



19. Sadah Coast

Driving to the Sadah Coast is fantastic. The landscapes are amazing and unique. The village of Sadah itself sits by the sea, surrounded by mountains made of black rock and 'invaded' by sand from the beach.





20. Dunes of Ramlat As Sahmah

The Dunes of Ramlat the Sahmah are basically the end of the Great Desert of Rub Al Khali in Saudi Arabia. Here, orange dunes of fine sand delight desert lovers like me. You can climb to the top and enjoy the fantastic views.



21. Oil wells in Fahud

Fahud is a major oil center of Oman. Here, in the desert, there are immense infrastructures to extract oil and gas. The combination of towers and pipelines make this environment a bit surreal. To get here you need to drive into the desert on a dirt road. At one point I found out that it was forbidden to be there, so I ended up with military escort for 30 kilometres.



22. Omani family homestay

To be received by an Omani family is a unique experience. I was offered a lot of food and, to my big surprise, they gave me a set of traditional clothes and a turban. When someone invites you home to drink tea, coffee or eat... accept the invitation.



23. Rima

The landscape in Rima is dry, with desert mountains and a large valley of huge cliffs. Here, there is a large oil field with machines that operate 24 hours a day to get the 'black gold' from the earth. The sound of these machines is strangely soothing.





24. Abandoned boats in Ras-Hilf

Ras-Hilf is the capital of Masirah island. Although the city itself does not have many attractions, its beaches with many ship wrecks are always interesting to see and take pictures of. You can also go up the abandoned boats.



25. Ras Madrasah beach

The beach landscapes in Ras Madrasah are quite beautiful. Here, thousands of crabs make the wild beach their territory, and it's very funny running after them towards the water. However, they do not let themselves get caught... It's wonderful to hear the symphony of waves, running back and forth with nature.



Nomad Revelations – João Leitão

I'm a travel addict, photo freak and world wanderer. I love to make other people inspired and motivated to travel, discover new things and live great experiences.

If travelling has given me so amazing and magnificent moments why shouldn't I share some travel advice with you? Life is made of moments and the world is out there full of precious and unique adventures waiting for us. [Visit João's blog](#)

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