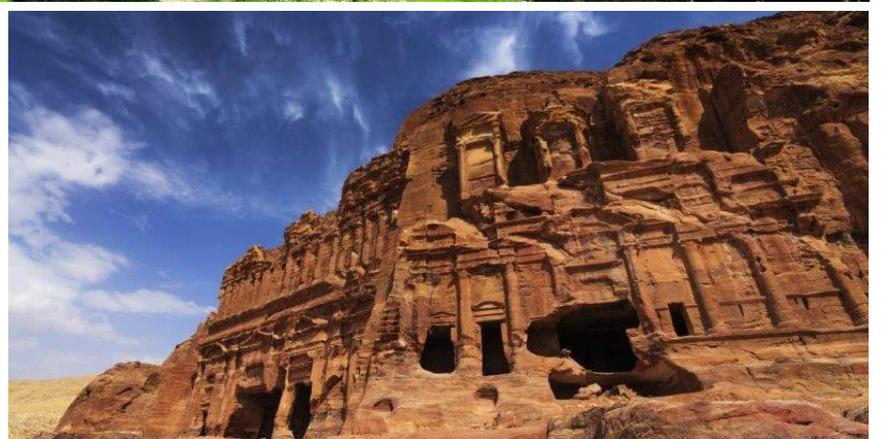




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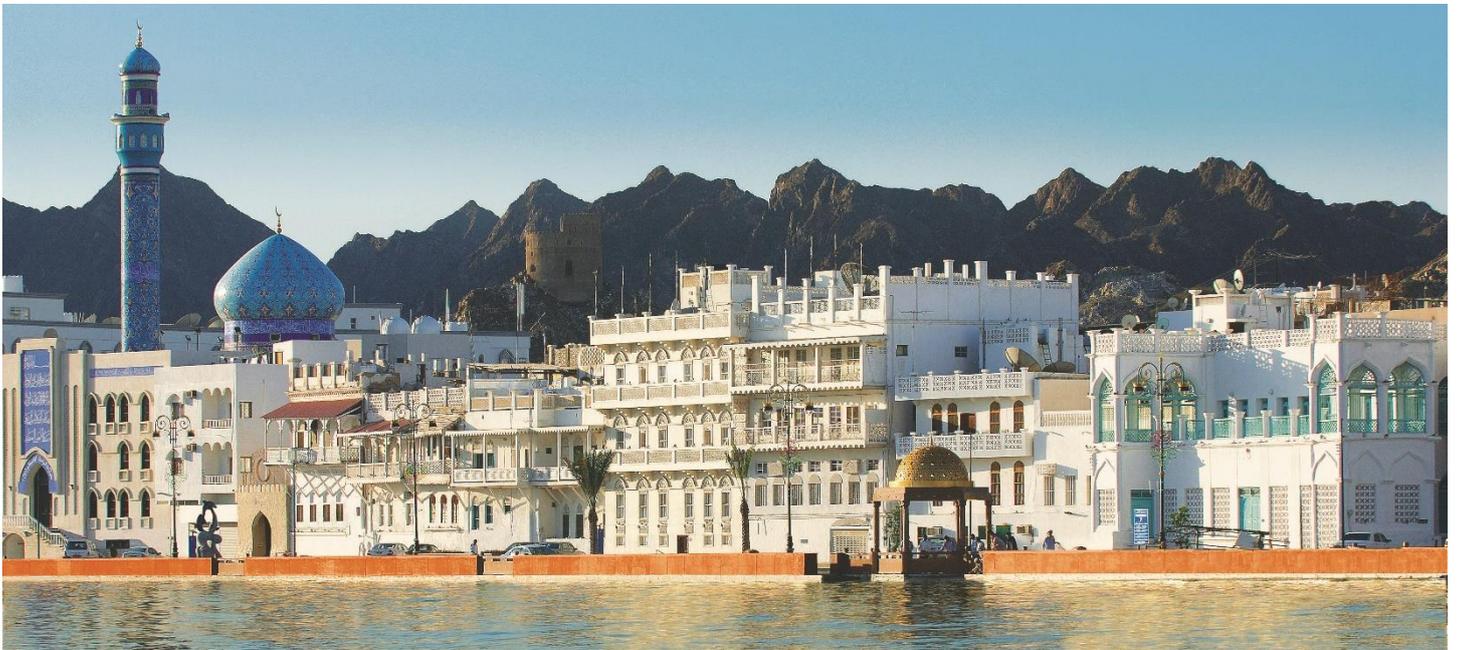
ALONG THE FRANKINCENSE ROUTE OMAN & JORDAN

With Dr John Tidmarsh | 06 – 29 March 2020



ALUMNI TRAVEL

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OMAN AND JORDAN with Dr John Tidmarsh | TOUR OVERVIEW

YOUR TOUR LEADER: Dr. John Tidmarsh was previously Tutor and then Part-Time Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sydney and is a member of the Council of the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation of that University. He is a Co-Director of the University of Sydney's excavations at Pella in Jordan and is also Co-Director of the ANU/University of Melbourne excavations at Jebel Khalid in Syria. He has previously excavated in Greece and Cyprus. His main areas of interest are the archaeology of Alexander the Great's conquests, as well as the Hellenistic and Islamic Periods in the Near East and Asia. He has led numerous tours to Iran, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Oman and other countries in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

OMAN

Far to the east of Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem and the other great cities of the Levant exists a completely different world, namely that of the Arabian peninsula. The peninsula, of course, is dominated geographically by Saudi Arabia whilst to the east we have Oman and Yemen, the land of Sheba.

Oman may lack ancient cities comparable in wealth or splendour to Palmyra, Petra or Jerash but it possesses some of the most stunning natural scenery to be seen in the Middle East. At its northern tip is the Musandam Peninsula ('the Fiords of Arabia'), without doubt one of the most dramatic landscapes in the whole of Arabia, still gloriously unspoilt and remote. To cruise these waters by *dhow* (which we do—the sea is also perfect for swimming) is to enter a world of striated mountains spectacularly thrust and twisted upwards, whose sheer cliff faces plunge dramatically into the clear (and dolphin-filled) waters of the Gulf.

In contrast central Oman, with its spectacular mountain ranges and desert vistas, its vast palm groves, its hidden oases whose waters remain absolutely translucent, and its traditional mudbrick villages with their imposing tribal forts and cool *sugs*, retains much of the flavour of Old Arabia which has long since vanished elsewhere.



Further to the south, we enter the tropical world of Salalah the capital of Dhofar, Oman's southern province. During the months of June to September Dhofar attracts the south-west monsoon and, as a result, its coastal strip (fringed by superb white sandy beaches) is remarkably fertile with abundant cultivation of tropical fruits (coconut, papaya, bananas) and exotic plants (bougainvillea, hibiscus).



OMAN AND JORDAN with Dr John Tidmarsh | TOUR OVERVIEW

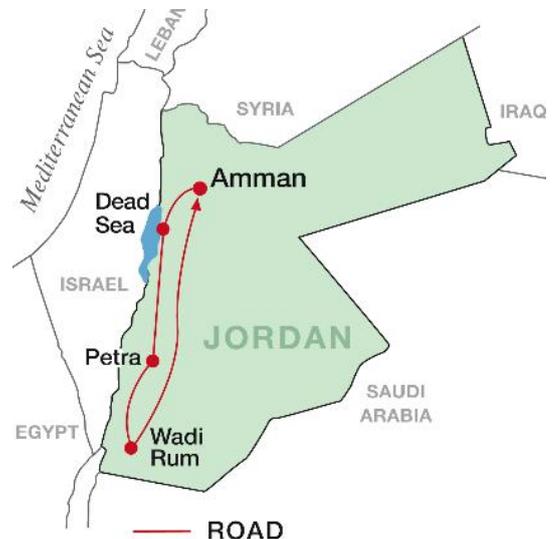
Behind the coastal strip, and separating it from the vast Rub' al-Khali (Empty Quarter) are the Dhofari highlands. It is on the slopes of these mountains that the finest frankincense in Antiquity was grown—as it still is today. Of the numerous frankincense ports that dotted the coast of Arabia Felix during Roman times, one of the most important (and one that we will explore) was Sumhuram whose great wall and gate, projecting towers, storehouses (formerly filled with incense), houses and temples have recently been uncovered by a joint Omani-Italian team of archaeologists. Although the great days of the frankincense trade have long since passed, its aroma still permeates Omani *suqs* and houses where it is still valued for its fragrance.

As well as its stunning landscapes Oman boasts some of the most hospitable and friendly people in the Middle East. Despite the numerous trips I have made to Oman (both travelling privately and leading tour groups) it remains one of my favourite destinations and I am delighted to be sharing it with you.

JORDAN

Lying within the 'cradle of civilisation' Jordan has frequently played an important role in the history of the Levant due to its strategic location on the crossroads of the ancient world. For such a small country Jordan has a wonderful diversity of landscapes from the green and wooded hillsides of the north Jordan Valley (covered in wildflowers in springtime), the spectacular Wadi Musa ("Grand Canyon of Jordan"), the dramatic red deserts and high peaks of the Wadi Rum and the extraordinary Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, in which we can swim (or more accurately float) without any effort!

Jordan is also home to a remarkable array of spectacular monuments and sites. Many of these we shall visit including the 10,000 year old village of Beidha, one of the earliest settlements in the Middle East, the sprawling and superbly



preserved Graeco-Roman cities of Gadara (modern Umm Qais) and Jerash, Crusader castles, Mount Nebo (from where Moses viewed the Promised Land) and, of course, the incomparable Nabatean city of Petra, "rose-red and half as old as time", that became so wealthy due to its key position at the head of the frankincense route. We also visit the University of Sydney's excavations at Pella, arguably "the most historically significant site in the whole of Jordan", where I started my archaeological career some 40 years ago and now, as Co-Director, am still involved in the ongoing excavations there.

In many ways Jordan lies closer to my heart than any other in the Middle East, as a result of my long and close association with it and its people who have always been incredibly generous and welcoming towards us as archaeologists and guests in their country.

It is therefore a real pleasure for me to welcome you on this tour and to be able to guide you through both these truly wonderful countries.



OMAN AND JORDAN with Dr John Tidmarsh | TOUR ITINERARY

FRIDAY 06 MARCH

ARRIVE DUBAI

Arrive in Dubai and transfer to your hotel. Afternoon at leisure. Welcome Dinner. Overnight Dubai. (Meals in flight, D)

SATURDAY 07 MARCH

DUBAI - KHASAB

Morning transfer for the drive up the Emirates coast to the Musandam Peninsula. Border formalities into Oman to arrive at the hotel in time for lunch. This afternoon visit the Portuguese Khasab Fort, the well-preserved prehistoric rock engravings of Wadi Tawi and travel to Jebel Harim by 4-Wheel Drive, the highest mountains of the peninsula (2087m). Overnight Khasab (B,L,D)

SUNDAY 08 MARCH

KHASAB

Full Day Dhow Cruise of the Fjords of the Musandam Peninsula to visit tiny villages many accessible only by boat. Overnight Khasab. (B,L,D)

MONDAY 09 MARCH

KHASAB – MUSCAT

Check out of the hotel in time for your flight to Muscat. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight Muscat. (B,D)

TUESDAY 10 MARCH

MUSCAT

Full day orientation tour of Muscat. Start the day early with a visit to Seeb and its bustling early morning fish market. Visit Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque one of the most impressive in the world. Proceed to the Omani National Museum, displaying a wonderful collection of objects recalling Muscat's glorious past. Then visit Muscat Harbour to view Al Alam Palace home to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, the ruler of Oman. In the afternoon visit the Port of Muttrah. Overnight Muscat. (B,L)

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH

MUSCAT - NIZWA

Travel into Nizwa with its superbly restored 17th century fort and its old village packed tightly around the fortress walls and its souq famous for superb silver work. We visit Al Hoota Caves, one of the greatest underground cave complexes in Arabia. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight Nizwa (B,D)

THURSDAY 12 MARCH

NIZWA

Full Day visiting the surrounds of Nizwa. Visit the mud brick villages of Tanuf and Misfah, a lovely village with stone houses clinging precariously to a huge mountain cliff. Jabrin Castle with its superb wood carving, stucco and painted decoration betraying Moghul influence. To end the day explore the villages Al Ain and Bat renowned for their well-preserved 4000 year old beehive tombs. Overnight Nizwa (B,L)

FRIDAY 13 MARCH

NIZWA – JEBEL AKHDAR

Morning visit to the largely abandoned but very picturesque villages of Birkat al Mauz. Continuing on through the Jebel Akhdar Mountains. Overnight Jebel Akhdar. (B,L,D)

SATURDAY 14 MARCH

JEBEL AKHDAR - NIZWA - WAHIBA SANDS

Descend from Jebel Akhdar through the Wadi Bani Habib. Travel into the Wahiba Sands, some 10,000 sq. km of desert. Overnight Wahiba Sands (B,D)

SUNDAY 15 MARCH

WAHIBA SANDS – RAS AL JINZ

Morning walk at Wahiba Sands. Travel inland to the beautiful Wadi Bani Khalid whose translucent blue waters are fringed with date palms and ideal for a swim. Overnight Ras Al Jinz. (B,L)

MONDAY 16 MARCH

RAS AL JINZ – SUR – MUSCAT - SALALAH

Travel along the spectacular rugged coast to Sur one of the most important Arabian ports of the Middle Ages. Next visit the port of Qalhat, visited often by Marco Polo and merchant ships from India. Among the scattered ruins is the Mausoleum of Bibi Miriam, with its beautifully proportioned exterior and fine interior stucco work much admired by the 14th century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta. We take a flight from Muscat to Salalah. Overnight Salalah. (B,L,D)

TUESDAY 17 MARCH

SALALAH

Morning visit the newly excavated ruins of Khor Rawri, formerly known as Sumhuram and one of the main centres for the trade in frankincense, spices and precious stones. Visit the quaint fishing village of Taqa; the old fort at Taqa is impressive with authentic decorations and appointments and then Ain Razat, at the foot of the Qara Mountains, a picnic spot with gardens, streams and hills. To the west of Salalah are many stretches of beautiful beaches and Mughsail is one of the most popular of these because of the "Blow Holes" in the rocky shelf close to the shore. (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH

SALALAH – UBAR - SALALAH

Travel through mountain ranges west towards the Yemeni border to the Dhofari Frankincense plantations. Overnight Salalah. (B,L,D)

THURSDAY 19 MARCH

SALALAH

With its lush tropical vegetation and pristine beaches Salalah provides a strong contrast to the desert landscapes. Explore Al Husn souq and the historic port of Al Balid with its superb Museum of the Frankincense Land. Afternoon free at leisure. Farewell Dinner. Overnight Salalah. (B,L,D)

FRIDAY 20 MARCH

DEPART SALALAH - DUBAI

Transfer to airport for flight from Salalah to Dubai. (B, Meals in flight)



OMAN AND JORDAN with Dr John Tidmarsh | TOUR ITINERARY

FRIDAY 20 MARCH ARRIVE AMMAN

Transfer to your hotel on arrival. Afternoon at leisure. Welcome dinner. (Meals in flight, D)

SATURDAY 21 MARCH AMMAN

Full day tour of Amman, capital of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, including the Roman theatre, the citadel and its archaeological museum, and the nearby site of Iraq el-Emir. (B,L)

SUNDAY 22 MARCH AMMAN – DEAD SEA

Drive to the Dead Sea via the River Jordan valley. Visit the Roman ruins of Gadara (Umm Qais), in lush hill country overlooking the Sea of Galilee and famous for the biblical story of the Gadarene swine. After lunch at the Pella House restaurant visit the extensive Australian archaeological excavations at Pella where Dr John Tidmarsh has overseen extensive excavations. Overnight Dead Sea. (B,L,D)

MONDAY 23 MARCH DEAD SEA

Morning visit to the Hellenistic/Roman site of Jerash, with its elegant colonnaded streets, temples and theatres. After lunch we visit Madaba best known for its Byzantine and Ummayyad mosaics. The Greek Orthodox church of St George is home to the sixth century mosaic map of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Nearby is Mt Nebo, the site of a small church built to commemorate the place of Moses death. Overnight Dead Sea. (B,L,D)

TUESDAY 24 MARCH DEAD SEA - PETRA

Travelling south down the King's Highway, see the walled settlement of Umm Rassas originally a Nabatean city which features a 15 metre high Byzantine tower used by early Christian monks seeking solitude. Heading towards Petra we visit Shobak, constructed in the 12th-century and one of the largest crusader castles in the Levant. Overnight Petra. (B,D)

WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH PETRA

The full day is spent at the unique site of Petra, capital of the ancient Nabateans who grew rich on the frankincense trade. The splendour of the rock-hewn architecture is enhanced by the beautiful colours of the local sandstone. Access to the city, hidden in the mountains, is through a narrow ravine, the Siq. Visit the Treasury, the theatre, and the Royal Tombs. After lunch on site climb to the 'Great High Place'. Overnight Petra. (B,L,D)

THURSDAY 26 MARCH PETRA

Spend the morning exploring more of Petra. After visiting Petra church climb to the 'Deir', Petra's largest rock-carved façade, and enjoy magnificent views. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight Petra. (B,L,D)

FRIDAY 27 MARCH PETRA – WADI RUM

This morning visit the Neolithic site of Beidha and 'Little Petra' a suburb of the ancient city. After lunch, head south for a sunset visit to the iconic landscape of Wadi Rum, a desert valley frequented by Lawrence of Arabia and later made famous by David Lean's film. Jeeps will take you to explore the Rum valleys where you will also have time to walk before sharing a memorable outdoor dinner in the desert. Overnight Wadi Rum. (B,L,D)

SATURDAY 28 MARCH WADI RUM – AMMAN

After a leisurely breakfast, depart Wadi Rum for Amman (325 km). This evening, celebrate the conclusion of the tour with a special farewell dinner. (B,D)

SUNDAY 29 MARCH DEPART AMMAN

Transfer to the airport for onward flights. (B, Meals in flight)



OMAN AND JORDAN with Dr John Tidmarsh | GENERAL INFORMATION

TOUR PRICE – OMAN & JORDAN

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Land Only per person, twin share | \$13,380.00 |
| Single supplement | \$3,550.00 |

TOUR PRICE – OMAN ONLY

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Land Only per person, twin share | \$9,555.00 |
| Single supplement | \$1,995.00 |

TOUR PRICE – JORDAN ONLY

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Land Only per person, twin share | \$7,650.00 |
| Single supplement | \$1,945.00 |

LAND ONLY PRICE INCLUDES:

- Economy class airfare from Khasab to Muscat
- Economy class airfare from Muscat to Salalah to Dubai
- Twin-share accommodation in comfortable hotels with private facilities
- Transport in comfortable air conditioned coaches
- Transfers, touring and entry fees as indicated
- Breakfast daily and other meals as indicated
- Service of a Tour Leader
- English speaking local guides
- Tipping for group arrangements
- Tour booklet

LAND ONLY PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- International air travel from Australia
- Air travel from Dubai to Amman if doing both tours
- Applicable passenger airport taxes
- Meals not listed in itinerary
- Beverages with meals
- Airport to hotel transfers if not travelling on suggested flights
- Visa requirements of the tour member
- Travel Insurance
- Items of personal nature (phone, laundry)

AIRFARES:

Emirates offer the best connections for this tour. Please contact Tony O'Halloran (tony@outandabouttravel.com.au) for the best fares available at the time of booking.

I'M INTERESTED...HOW DO I BOOK?

Complete, sign and return the attached Alumni Travel Booking Form along with your deposit of \$450.00 per person to Alumni Travel. Upon receipt of your Booking Form and deposit, you will receive a confirmation of your place in writing.

DEPOSIT AND FINAL PAYMENT:

The deposit is accepted as a first installment of the tour cost and will be fully refunded if the arrangements can not be confirmed or the tour is cancelled by Alumni Travel. Final payment for the tour needs to be received at least 60 days prior to tour departure. An invoice will be sent to you about a fortnight before the final payment becomes due.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS:

Any cancellation from the tour needs to be done in writing. The cancellation date will be taken from the day your written cancellation is received by Alumni Travel. Because of the tour cancellation charges imposed by our various suppliers, the following cancellation charges apply, per person:

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Over 60 days | \$100.00 - Administration Fee |
| 59 - 40 days | 25% of tour cost |
| 39 - 10 days | 50% of tour cost |
| Within 10 days | 100% of tour cost |

If a difference occurs between these cancellation conditions and those imposed by our suppliers, then the conditions of the supplier shall apply. There is no refund before or after travel has commenced or for any unused portion of the tour, either in regard to the standard group arrangements or separate independent arrangements.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:

Any payments by credit card will be subject to a 2% non-refundable Merchant Administration Fee.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

It is now standard policy with our company that all our international travellers have some type of international travel insurance, so that you are covered for any unforeseen circumstances that may arise. A comprehensive QBE Insurance brochure is available from Alumni Travel.

The insurance brochure contains the terms and conditions under which insurance cover will be offered to you.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:

If you would like Alumni Travel to assist you with any additional arrangements pre or post tour, please contact our office for assistance at time of booking. All arrangements need to be finalised at least 30 days prior to your departure.

AMENDMENTS:

An administration fee of \$30.00 per amendment will be charged for any changes made to any reservation within 30 days prior to your departure. Any additional charges imposed by our suppliers will also be payable.

PASSPORT AND VISAS:

It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure that they possess the necessary travel documentation for the tour, such as a valid passport and any required visas. Your passport should be valid at least 6 months beyond the end of your journey and have two clear pages for each country to be visited in your journey.

FORCED CANCELLATION:

In the event that passenger numbers do not reach the minimum number of tour participants (approximately 15, excluding the tour leader) required for the tour, it may be necessary to either surcharge or cancel the tour. If such an event does occur, you will be notified at least 60 days prior to the tour departure.

TOUR PRICES:

This tour price has been calculated on the basis of exchange rates and tariffs at the time of print and is subject to change up until final payment has been received. At the time of final invoicing (approximately two months prior to the tour departure date), Alumni Travel reserves the right to re-cost the tour based on actual exchange rates. This could mean an increase or decrease to the above listed prices. Should you decide to cancel your arrangements on the basis of a change in the tour price, normal cancellation charges will apply.

ALUMNI TRAVEL

PO BOX Q597, Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230 Australia

Phone: (02) 9290 3856 / 1300 799 887 | Email: robl@alumnitavel.com.au

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