



## 5 Days Dhofar – Two nights in the Empty Quarter and two night Wadi Exil

Enjoy the luxury of a comfortable four-night expedition with 2 nights deep in the heart of the breath-taking Empty Quarter, the largest sand desert in the world and 2 nights in your private wadi camp below Jabal Samhan. Our route takes us via much of Dhofar's most impressive scenery including impressive mountain chains, the fabled Frankincense route, the magnificent dunes of the Rub Al Khali, through Jabal Samhan and along the stunning Dhofari coast line.

Sleeping tents vary according to the location but are always appointed with proper mattresses, crisp cotton linen, feather pillows and traditional furnishings. Each sleeping tent has its own private bathroom tent, open to the skies and furnished with soft towels, basin, shower and a selection of soaps and lotions.

Each camp will offer a large, evocative majlis, decorated in a style in keeping with the ambiance of the environment, with cushions and rugs, topical books, boules, board games and yoga mats. At the desert camp we will offer sandboarding. Dining is at a properly laid table under the stars beside a crackling fire. Food is, as far as possible, locally sourced, freshly prepared by our camp chef and always delicious. We use limited electric light, and the emphasis is on preserving the atmosphere through natural lighting provided by candles, oil lamps and camp fires.

### Day 1

After a short flight from Muscat to the historic southern town of Salalah, you will be met by one of our experienced guides. We take the road up and through the Qara Mountains, making stops on the way to absorb the beautiful views of the mountains and wadis on our way through the rocky desert.

We stop at Wadi Dawkah, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site “Land of Frankincense”. Wadi Dawkah is a major place where the frankincense tree (*boswellia sacra*) can be found in large numbers and frankincense is harvested to this day. The incense comes from its gum, and it has been harvested and traded by Omanis for millennia.

After a delicious lunch at Thumrayt, we make a stop at another site of the Land of Frankincense UNESCO site, the caravan oasis of Shisr, where we visit the remains of what is believed to be the lost city of Ubar.



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We then turn into an extremely remote and isolated area, where traffic is almost nonexistent. We leave the main track and weave our way through the grandeur of the russet red sand dunes of the Rub al Khali, the Empty Quarter. Our camp is set deep in the dunes and we arrive in time for you to explore your surroundings and take in the exquisite sunset.

Upon arrival at the private camp you will be greeted by the Hud Hud team with cold flannels and a refreshing drink and given some time to settle in. Relax from the comfort of your tent, or in the majlis, and soak up your surroundings before enjoying a spectacular sunset view from the camp.

Enjoy some nibbles and drinks while our chef prepares a tasty freshly cooked dinner.

Following dinner take a walk among the dunes to marvel at the night sky or relax by the campfire.

Overnight at a Private Hud Hud Desert Camp in the Empty Quarter

## Day 2

Watch the sunrise over the imposing dunes from camp or, for the more energetic, make your way to the top of one! After a relaxing breakfast, there will be ample opportunity to explore this unique and hauntingly beautiful environment. A walk through the windswept dunes reveals the diversity of the region as well as the incredible plant life.

We pack a delicious picnic lunch and set out to explore the beautiful desert area, stopping to search for geodes that are often hidden in the sand.

In the evening, if possible, we visit a local Bedu from the Al Rashidi tribe to see his black camels and fascinate you with a wealth of detail about the disappearing way of life of those who still depend on them.

Another delicious dinner will be served at camp.

Overnight at a Private Hud Hud Desert Camp in the Empty Quarter

## Day 3

Today, we will leave our desert camp behind and retrace our steps to Thumrait and carry on south then turn east onto a rugged Bedouin trail that takes us deeper into the terrain. Wadi Exil is set deep in an almost African landscape, with low Acacias spreading their familiar canopies to provide shade from the sun when it is at its zenith.

Our campsite is within the wadi itself on raised ground, with polished white stones along the edge, where water has eroded and smoothed down the rocks. We are now in the homeland of porcupines and wolves, cave doves, black beetles and sand partridges. Although rare to see



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with the naked eye arabian leopards have been spotted here too. A great place to spend two nights exploring the area..

After freshening up in your private open air shower, dinner will be prepared and served by your personal camp chef, as you watch the sun sink over the horizon from your intimate wadi retreat.

Overnight at a Private Hud Hud Wadi Camp in Wadi Exil

## Day 4

Today is your day to relax and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the camp, or after breakfast partake in some exploration of the local surrounding area. This area is our Dhofari guides backyard. Until the mid 90's some of their family still lived in the surrounding caves, leading a nomadic life that had existed for generations. Tending to their goats and camels was an important investment in their future. It is possible to do a trek towards a secret spring at the top of the wadi, where crystal clear water appears magically from the foot of an imposing cliff face. There will be time enough in the day to really immerse ourselves in this hidden landscape. These wadis and mountains have been home to a number of Bedouin tribes for as long as anyone can remember.

Tonight if you let us know in advance we can speak to our guide's family and have them prepare a typical Dhofari feast, a BBQ on the rocks with a collaboration with our chef to add some delicious sides to this typical meat feast.

Overnight at a Private Hud Hud Wadi Camp in Wadi Exil

## Day 5

Today we leave our rocky camp and ancient world behind, heading south through the spectacular Dhofari Mountains, a range that reaches from here into Yemen. Camel tracks criss-cross the rugged mountain slopes that surround us, as we ascend the escarpment, passing a lone military outpost before entering the highlands of Salalah.

For the first time we see cattle, trees with a thicker foliage, signs of rich agriculture. This area turns bright green during the summer monsoon—also known locally as the Khareef.

From the high plains we look down at the sea. Zigzagging down the mountain road there is a Baobab wadi which we have the option to stop in briefly or even walk around and have our picnic lunch here. Once out of the mountains, we drive a short distance along the motorway towards Mirbat Castle, the scene of a 'secret battle' in the early 1970's between Dhofari tribesmen and a small unit of SAS soldiers. A fascinating tale of bravery, under extreme conditions. We continue along the coastal road with an option to visit the ruins of Sumhuram or the verdant Wadi Darbat where you can take a tranquil walk beside water pools and observe the abundant bird life. Finally following the main road to our final destination of



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Salalah. Traditionally the capital of Dhofar, this trading town reached the peak of prosperity in the 13th century thanks to the incense trade.

There are a variety of trips to the surrounding area, including Salalah's fruit gardens and exotic souq, where Frankincense is sold. The old part of the town still boasts some of Dhofar's unique architecture and a stroll through the streets and alleyways, leading to the seafront, taking you back in time.

Relaxed we arrive to the airport or if you are extending your hotel in Salalah