

TOURISTS EXPLORE ARAB CULTURE IN OMAN



Oman is a little different from other Arab countries in the region. However, even though there are no skyscrapers in the capital, the city is still worth visiting. Tourists can admire the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque there or go diving and explore amazing coral reefs.

Muscat, the capital of Oman, has a very specific atmosphere since **there are no skyscrapers** as in many other Arab metropolises. Local buildings are not very high and the city is also situated in a unique place - bounded by beaches on one side and by basalt rocks on the other.

According to the media, the city center is the right place to go since tourists can experience the true Arab culture there. In the numerous narrow streets, local people try to sell visitors anything from golden and silver jewels to the traditional Omani dagger khanjar.

The biggest attraction of the city is the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, which was finished in 2001. The mosque is quite sumptuous and that is why it is appealing to both locals and foreign tourists. It is surrounded with flowers and hedges and incredible 6,500 worshipers can gather there. **The largest hand made carpet in the world**, which weighs 21 tons, **is on display in the mosque** too. However, the general public can see it only between 8 and 11 am when the mosque is open to visitors.

Thanks to the sultan's innovation, Muscat does not only remind of the nation's history but is also a thriving modern tourism destination with comfortable hotels. Moreover, **Muscat is popular among divers** too since the sea around the capital is full of beautiful coral reefs and offers plentiful sea life.

There are other interesting places around Muscat as well. In the town of Nizwa tourists can admire a 17th-century fort or have a meal in a traditional restaurant Bin Antique. Forty kilometers far from Nizwa, there is another fortress, Bahla Fort, which is actually a world heritage site. Another place worth visiting is the village of Nakhal, where there is a pink mosque built only for women.

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