

panorama

An aerial photograph of a wide, sandy beach meeting turquoise water. Two people are surfing near the shore. In the foreground, the black and orange sail of a kite surfer is visible, with its lines extending down the page. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

OMRAN

July | 2019

omran.om

COME TO MASIRA

**FOR THE PERFECT
BEACH GETAWAY
& KITE-SURFING
DESTINATION**

Art & culture

**OMANI HOSPITALITY
REFLECTED IN DESIGN
AT ATANA MUSANDAM RESORT**

Inside Story

**ESCAPE TO ALILA JABAL AKHDAR
WITH ABDULLAH AL SABAH**



History in Focus

**NIZWA: EXPERIENCE THE HISTORY
OF OMANI LIFE**




CROWNE PLAZA®
AN **IHG®** HOTEL
MUSCAT OMAN
CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE

**WAKE UP TO A NEW
DEFINITION OF GREATNESS.**

 /@CrownePlazaMuscatOCEC
 /@CrownePlazaMuscatOCEC

Conveniently located 10 minutes from the new Muscat International Airport, and adjacent to the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, an iconic landmark for Muscat.

So wake up to a new definition of greatness. Stay close with nature. We are simply, naturally connected with community values.

**For room reservations and event bookings,
Call us on +968 2425 2000 or email cpmuscatocec@ihg.com
crowneplaza.com/muscatocec**



HAYYAKUM

”
OUR AIM IS TO
TAKE YOU ON
AN INCREDIBLE
JOURNEY THAT
WILL GIVE YOU
A VARIED VIEW
OF ALL THAT OUR
COUNTRY HAS
TO OFFER

DEAR READER,

Welcome to Panorama, our seasonal supplement designed to give a deep insight into Omani tourism, local communities, heritage, culture, and natural landscape. The launch of Panorama is in line with our objective to play an important role in paving the way for the tourism sector to support the government's economic diversification plans and showcase our commitment as a responsible developer of tourism in Oman.

As the name of this issue suggests, Panorama will capture a wide view of the Sultanate. Our aim is to take you on an incredible journey that will give you a varied taste of all that our country has to offer and the diverse projects and tourism attractions in OMRAN's portfolio. From the mountains, wadis and beaches which have made Oman the jewel of the Arabian peninsula, to the hidden treasures, unique viewpoints and our age-old heritage which makes a trip to the Sultanate a true one-of-a-kind experience.

When we envisioned Panorama, we were adamant that our stories would attract not just the thousands of visitors that we welcome to Oman each year, but also the residents who have the privilege of experiencing this incredible country each and every day. Panorama will give them the insights

and information about new places, people and experiences with each exciting issue.

In our inaugural edition, we take our readers on incredible journeys across the Sultanate; we explore Masirah which was named Serepsis by Alexander The Great, we also go windsurfing, hike up Jabal Akhdar with Abdullah al Sabaah, and zip-line in Al Musannah. In this issue, we take our readers on an adventure through the wandering tunnels of Nizwa Fort, take the challenge of our local Via Ferrata in Alila, and go bird watching in the Al Ansab Wetland, and so much more!

You will also get to know one of our development partners, we will visit Muscat Bay, one of the largest integrated tourism projects in the Sultanate, and Chef Malik Al Jahdhami will give us a true taste of Oman by sharing his special recipe for one of the most popular traditional dishes. We also cover upcoming events in Oman, share the impressive success stories of entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, and introduce you to one of the hidden soldiers in the world of Tourism.

We hope you enjoy reading Panorama as much as we have enjoyed creating it for you!

CONTENTS

July | 2019

- 04 Family Fun
- 06 Adrenaline
- 08 Come to Masira
- 12 Inside Story
- 16 History in Focus
- 20 Art & Culture
- 22 Get with Nature
- 24 Bright Beginnings
- 26 What's Cooking
- 30 OCEC
- 32 Partner
- 34 Icons of OMRAN
- 38 High Flyers
- 40 OMRAN Map



OMRAN Corporate Affairs Dept.
Sheikh Qais Zahir Al Hosni
Sulaiman Ali Al Maqbali
Badriya Abdul Rahman Al Siyabi
Dalida Deeb Abdulnour

The intellectual property rights of all published material is owned by OMRAN and it is therefore strictly prohibited for any content from this edition to be published or re-published for any and all purposes, be it in print or digital, without referring to the company and obtaining prior written consent for the same.

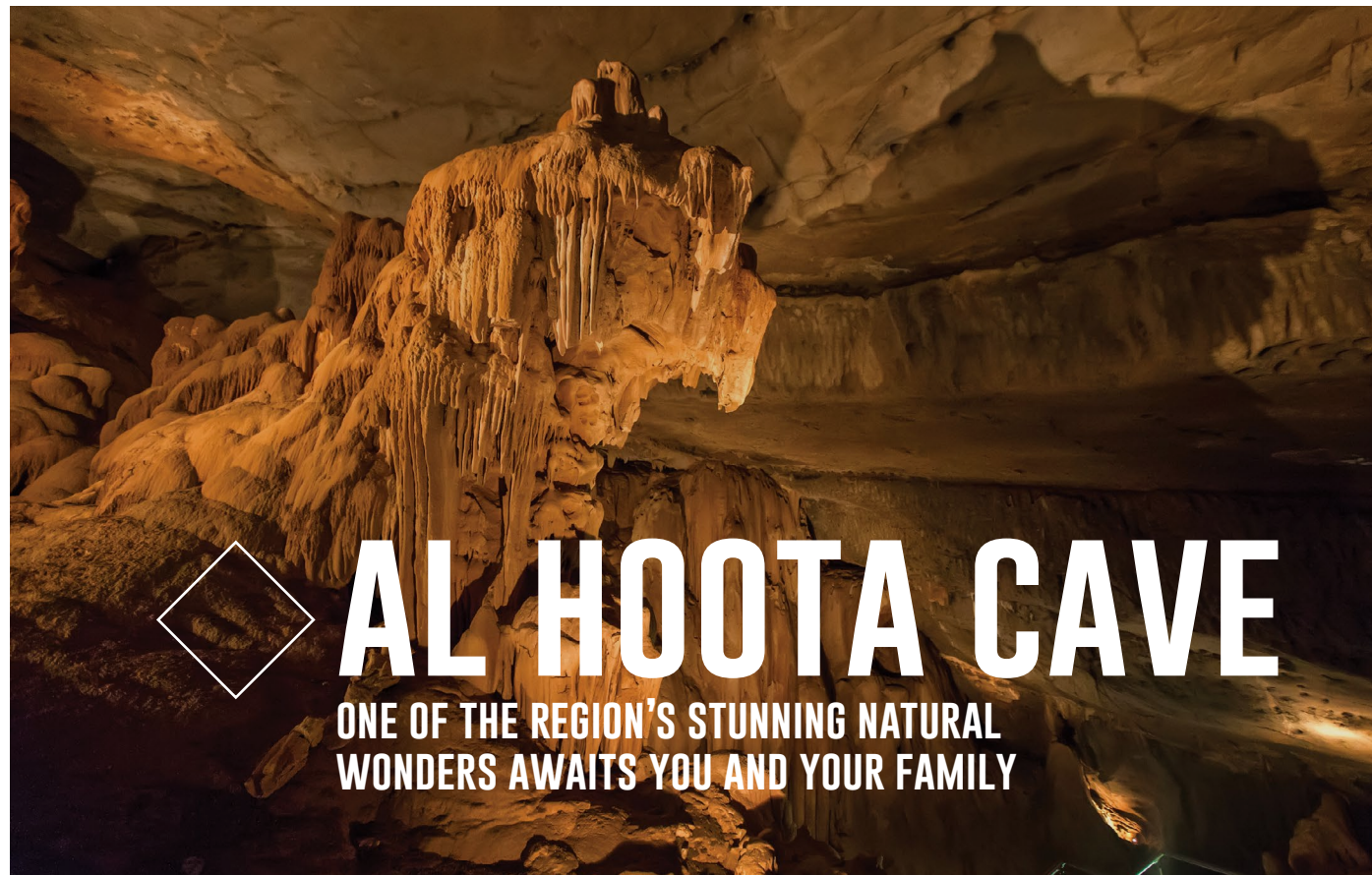
CONTACT US : PANORAMA@OMRAN.OM

OMAN  DAILY
Observer

HoD Business Development Dept.
Fatima Mohammed Al Gheilani

Business Development Department
Prem Varghese
Abdulaziz bin Shihab Al Shukaili
Karen Jane Stephen
Ali Jawish





AL HOOTA CAVE

ONE OF THE REGION'S STUNNING NATURAL WONDERS AWAITS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

ESTIMATED TO BE OVER TWO MILLION YEARS OLD AND LOCATED AT THE FOOT OF JABAL SHAMS, THE STUNNING AL HOOTA CAVE WOULD HAVE STAYED HIDDEN WERE IT NOT ACCIDENTALLY STUMBLED UPON BY A SHEPHERD HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO. TODAY THE CAVE IS THE FIRST AND ONLY ONE IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA THAT HAS BEEN EQUIPPED TO FACILITATE TOURIST VISITS. WITH JUST OVER 500M OF THE CAVE MADE EASILY ACCESSIBLE, A VISIT TO THIS NATURAL JEWEL IS A TRULY UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE.

Your visit to the Al Hoota Cave begins through the vast mountainside, steep valley, and long tunnel leading to its entrance. Despite being just a few minutes long, this breath-taking ride is only a taste of what is to come.

Once through the fortified door, you will be guided down a fixed path into the depths of the cave passing by countless stalactites and stalagmites along the way. As explained in detail by your guides along the way, these stunning features, including gorgeous formations such as the magnificent lion of Al Hoota Cave, are formed by dissolution of limestone and mineral deposits over millions of years as water drips into or moves through the cave system. Your guided tour will last approximately 45 minutes and is available in both Arabic and English. In addition to the beautiful rock formations, visitors will also be treated to the unique and rich ecosystem that includes four lakes; three of which are small and located in the north of the cave, while the fourth is the large central lake which is accessible to the public. It is estimated that the lake holds about 30,000 m³ of water, is 800 metres long and 10 metres in width, with a maximum depth of 15 metres. It is here that you will find the famous rare blind fish of the cave – Garra Barreimiae. Living alongside them in the cave are several other animal species including

bats, arthropods, molluscs, spiders, snails and water beetles.

As one of the projects that lie under its direct supervision, this once in a lifetime experience at the Al Hoota Cave is carefully curated by the Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN). The experience was itself designed to provide visitors with a perfect blend of entertainment and learning; resulting in a fun yet knowledgeable experience that is perfectly suited for families and visitors of all ages.

With special focus being given to its younger demographic, children will get to know and meet a group of fun cartoon characters inspired by the natural wonders of the cave. The first of these characters is Laith, the undisputed King of the Cave, standing tall and powerful, inspired by the aforementioned famous roaring lion rock formation. Then we have Bu Naseh, inspired by the rare species of blind fish that inhabit the underground lakes. And finally, Laila, inspired by the bats that call the caves their home.

Overseeing the operations at the cave is Seelem Al Shaqsi, the Operations Manager of Al Hoota Cave. According to him, visits are in high demand due to its stunning beauty and the fact that it is the only cave of its kind in the region that has been developed to handle visitors of all ages. "I believe that every person in Oman



should visit this cave at least once. It is an experience of a lifetime, one that must be seen first-hand. The sheer detail and astonishing delicacy with which Mother Nature has carved out these caves is a true sight to behold. It is also enjoyable to see visitors' surprised expressions, and sometimes that of fear, when we tell them that we are standing under millions of tons of rocks," says Seelem. However, in order to protect and maintain the unique ecosystem of the cave for future generations, only 750 visitors are allowed to visit the cave per day. This is why it is vital that all visitors pre-book their tickets. Given its unique beauty and easy accessibility for the entire family, this is one location you most definitely wouldn't want to miss on your visit to Oman.



SCIENTIFICALLY

Al Hoota Cave was created, like many other caves in Oman, by the chemical dissolution of limestone by acidic water. It all starts when rainwater dissolves carbon dioxide from the atmosphere or soil, producing a dilute carbonic acid that dissolves the limestone as it runs over it, thus forming the cave. Scientist estimated the time it takes for water to dissolve 10mm of rock is about 100 years. So, one can only imagine how long it took to create a cave formation as spectacular as Al Hoota. Fascinating features such as stalagmites, stalactites and of course the magnificent lion of Al Hoota Cave are formed by mineral deposits as water drips into or moves through the cave system.

There are also many other animal species living in the cave including bats such as the Rhinopoma Muscatellum, together with several other arthropods, molluscs, spiders, snails, and water beetles.

FACILITIES:

- Geological exhibition
- Gift shop
- Restaurant
- Mosque
- Rest-rooms
- Free Wi-Fi
- Parking
- Kids play area

FOR MORE INFO PLEASE VISIT :

www.alhootacave.com

HAWANA AQUA PARK

SWIMMING, GAMES & ENDLESS FUN

Oman has a wide range of luxurious hotels and spas, restaurants, malls with the very latest technology and brands, and fun parks for the entire family. Situated just a 20-minute drive away from Salalah International Airport, the Hawana Aqua Park is a prime example of the latter.

Encompassing over 65,600 sqm of space, the aqua park welcomes up to 1,500 guests on a daily basis; providing them with the complete fun-filled aquatic experience encompassing 12 slides, a wave and family pool, a toddlers' aqua play area, and pool-front seating areas.

With wacky rides such as the 'Walhalla Wave', 'Space Bowl', and the 'Body Blaster' for adults; and the 'Clown Shower', 'Octopus' and 'Frog' slides for its more younger visitors, the park ensures there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Visiting families can also rest assured that everyone is in safe hands. Every facility and ride is maintained to the highest standards and is operated under the constant supervision of qualified staff.

The Hawana Aqua Park also introduced a 'Ladies Night', with extended opening hours and entrance permitted only for women every Thursday; however, boys under the age of five are also permitted. During this time all mobile phones, photography, and videography are prohibited for extra privacy and all on-duty staff are women.

The Hawana Aqua Park is a true one-of-a-kind destination in Salalah and a must visit. It is destinations like these that play an integral role in transforming Oman into a diverse tourism destination, one the entire family can enjoy.

ENTRANCE FEES DURING KHAREEF SEASON:

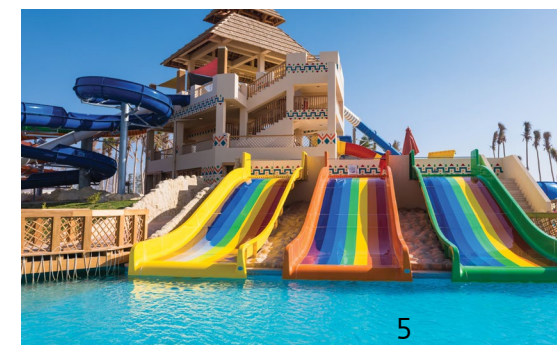
- Adults and children above 1.1m: OMR 7
- Under 1.1m: OMR 4
- Children under the age of 3: Free
- Special rates: corporate and groups

DAILY OPENING HOURS

FRI - WED: 10.00AM - 7.00PM

THURSDAY: 10.00AM - 5.00PM

LADIES NIGHT: THU 5.00PM - 10.00PM



”
AN INCREDIBLE
ADVENTURE FOR
THE WHOLE FAMILY,
ESPECIALLY CURATED
TO ENGAGE AND
EDUCATE CHILDREN



Sliding from a five storey height towards the ocean on nothing but a rope and harness can be an exhilarating ride, albeit a little scary for the uninitiated. This is exactly what the Millennium Resort Mussanah offers guests with its incredible zip-line experience.

Starting from a 16-metre high tower, the ride takes you to the edge of your seat; treating you to stunning panoramic views of the Al Mussanah beach as you slide your way down the 175m line towards the resort's sea front.

You can rest assured that this first of its kind experience in the Sultanate, adheres to the highest safety standards. The service is managed by a team from the resort who have been trained and certified to the highest international standards by Arrampica, one of the world's leading providers of support services for synthetic adventure activities.

Best of all, this is one adventure that the entire family can enjoy as the ride is accessible to anyone above the age of six.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESERVATION:
MILLENNIUM RESORT MUSSANAH +968 26871555**

Prices:

- OMR 10 per person (unlimited attempts per day)
- 10% discount for groups between 5 -10 persons
- 20% discount for groups above 10 persons



Photo credit to:
Millennium Resort Mussanah



OUR VIA FERRATA TAKES YOU FROM THE HEART OF THE VALLEY TO THE MOUNTAIN TOP

An extraordinary experience awaits visitors at Alila Jabal Akhdar. If you are planning a hike up to the mountaintop or down to the heart of the valley, or you are simply a fan of exploring caves and deep rock chambers, then the Via Ferrata or the "iron path" is for you. We have three challenging mountain routes, pre-equipped with fixed cables and metal levers. Those daring enough to tackle any one of them will experience anywhere from a 90-minute to a 4-hour adventure, depending on their level of fitness and their appetite for adrenalin.

The first route takes participants down into the Wadi to visit the abandoned village of AlKhutaymi and enjoy a refreshing dip in a stunning natural pool down the deep valley.

The second route explores the geographical secrets and unique rock formations in an adventure that packs a punch when it comes to adrenalin and courage. This challenging route will

have you traversing down the largest cave mouth of the mountain, which at 20 meters long is no small feat. To increase the fun factor, this cave mouth overlooks the resort where friends and family can witness as you undertake this exhilarating task.

The third route starts at the resort and has you hike up towards Alila Jabal Akhdar's majestic rocky peaks. Higher than 2000 meters above sea, the spectacular views that await you extend beyond the imagination and promise to be a delight for the senses.

All Via Ferrata adventures are conducted under the direct supervision of an experienced team that specializes in these types of adventures and are carried out within the highest standards of safety and security. Every phase of the route reveals spectacular scenery of one the best destinations in the Sultanate, creating moments that can be captured and last a lifetime.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESERVATION: + 968 25344200/ ABALAKHDAR@ALILAHOTELS.COM



Photo credit to:
Alila Jabal Akhdar

- **ROUTE 1:** Duration 4h and omr 50 per a person
- **ROUTE2:** Duration 3hrs and omr 60 per a person
- **ROUTE 3:** Duration 90m and omr 30 per a person
- **EQUIPMENT:** Provided by the resort
- **REQUIREMENTS:** A degree of fitness and no health conditions related to the heart or high blood pressure that will limit the ability of the person



WELCOME TO SEREPSIS JEWEL OF THE ARABIAN SEA

SOFT SAND DUNES, STUNNING BEACHES, AND RARE MONSOON WINDS COME TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS QUAIN T ISLAND THE PERFECT GETAWAY FOR FAMILIES, NATURE LOVERS, AND WATER SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS ALIKE. LOCATED JUST OFF THE SULTANATE, MASIRAH IS THE LARGEST ISLAND IN THE COUNTRY.

It is also one of Oman's most unique places in terms of geography, climate, and culture. Its location and distinctive climate make it an ideal destination for relaxation, camping, and water sports. This is particularly true for kitesurfing; during the warm summer months, there is usually a constant strong wind, making it an ideal place for the sport.

While the island is more commonly known as Masirah today, it has been given several different names in the past, each with its own unique story. Amongst the most famous of these names is 'Serepsis', given to the island by none other than Alexander the Great.

The name 'Masirah' itself also has its own history with a great many tales tied to it. However, the word itself can be traced back to the original name 'Sirah' which is an Arabic term for a tall landmark one can see from far away, or 'Assary' which is the Arabic term for the mast of a sailing vessel, signifying Masirah as their first stop in the region.

WHITE SAND... BLUE WAVES... ENDLESS OCEAN

Simply camping on one of the beaches of the Island is in itself an amazing experience that will satisfy many. With miles upon miles of practically endless white sandy beaches, you could spend hours just walking alongside the ocean and enjoying the calm breeze and beautiful views. You could also pitch up your tent, and enjoy one of the most beautiful sunsets and sunrises you will ever see. Better still, if you visit during nesting season and if you are lucky, you may even catch a glimpse of nesting Loggerhead Turtles.

Masirah is also a haven for bird lovers; with over 330 species of birds visiting the island, several of which pass the island on their annual migrations. What makes the island even more special is the fact that several of these bird species, such as endangered Egyptian vulture, are amongst the rarest in the world; making this one of the few places in the world you could catch a glimpse of them in the wild.

Fishing is yet another must-try experience in Masirah. The sea surrounding the island is rich in marine life, offering visitors great fishing opportunities. Alternatively, if fishing isn't your forte, you could sample the countless seafood options freshly caught by locals at the local fish market. Of particular interest, should the opportunity arise, is to try the rare but



TRAVEL ADVICE

UNLESS YOU ARE VISITING MASIRAH FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF TRYING OUT ONE PARTICULAR ACTIVITY, A SHORT TRIP MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO SEE EVERYTHING THIS SPECTACULAR ISLAND HAS TO OFFER. FROM CAMPING ON THE MAGICAL BEACHES, FISHING, KITESURFING, TURTLE AND BIRD WATCHING, MOUNTAIN CAMPING, SNORKELLING AND DIVING, AND MUCH MORE; THE ISLAND SIMPLY HAS TOO MUCH TO EXPERIENCE OVER A SINGLE VISIT. A WELL-PLANNED GUIDED VISIT COULD MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME THERE AND IS ADVISED. HOWEVER, THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER OPTION – VISIT THE ISLAND AGAIN. IT'S A TRIP YOU WILL NEVER REGRET, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU UNDERTAKE IT.



delicious local crawfish, commonly known as 'Alsharkhah'. This rarity is attributed specifically to its seasonal nature as fishermen are only permitted to fish them from the rocky beaches of the island. The use of diving equipment is forbidden in order to preserve the breeding rate of these unique creatures.

Another local delicacy is 'Alterbah', a small octopus that is also caught on the rocky beaches of the island when the tides recede. This dish, in particular, makes for a great social media opportunity, don't miss it!



ONE OF THE MORE UNIQUE SOUVENIRS IS THE TRADITIONAL ARABIC KOHL

MEMORABLE DETAILS!

Visiting Masirah isn't complete as an experience unless you take something back with you, something that will not only stay with you as a lasting memory but also has a personal touch to it that one can only find in Masirah. Which is why we sought the help of Santa Al Owaisy, member of the Municipal Council, Al Sharqiyah South. According to her, one of the more unique souvenirs one can get is the traditional Arabic Kohl.

The tradition of making the Kohl has been handed down from mothers to their daughters, generation after generation. Originally, the Kohl used to be made out of shark's liver mixed with local butter. However, the process has been refined over time and has undergone some changes with Kohl paste being made readily available locally for being used in the mixture.

Amongst the Kohl makers in Masirah, Khashirah Al Wahaibi is considered to be one of the most famous. Should you be lucky enough to get the opportunity to witness her making Kohl in her yard, it is a unique experience worth capturing on video. Other souvenirs worth getting are the famous Masirah Burqa (face mask), which are unique to the island and far different from any found elsewhere in Oman. In the past, they used to be made using large black fabrics with a narrow opening for the eyes. However, recently these Burkas have undergone some drastic changes in design, becoming smaller with wider openings for the eyes. They also use newer, more modern fabrics and colours. These Burkas have several names locally, such as Muthqab or Musair among others.

Women of Masirah are also known for their weaving handicrafts, locally known as the 'Sadu';



which are textiles of different sizes and shapes made of dyed sheep's wool. Ghomama bint Hamed Al Wahibi, a well-known weaver says, "Most women on the island are actively involved in weaving the Sadu. The products they make range from small bags, used for storing Kohl tubes and containers, to full-sized handbags, bed sheets, and large carpets. The women also weave special covers for camels such as the 'Husrah', which is placed on the camel's hump, and the 'Mahwa', which is made out of palm leaves and wool, and is used to secure the rider and decorations on the camel for a race, known locally as 'Alardah'. In the past, these products used to be made using only three colour dyes - white, red, and black. These colours were achieved using special herbs called - 'Shabaa', 'Fowa', and 'Lumi'. Furthermore, they were all made from sheep's wool, which was spun, carded, and then woven into shape. However, the industry has undergone significant development in recent years with the addition of a number of new materials and colours. Also, these products can take months to achieve their final form depending on the size of the 'Almagetah', the local loom used in the



YOUR NEXT DESTINATION

You can enjoy the best kite-surfing experience in Masirah from May to September. We recommend putting Masirah Island at the top of your destinations list and we promise you will enjoy it.

Omani Women Association-Masira
PHONE: 99011810, EMAIL: H.750.H@HOTMAIL.COM

weaving process."

HAVE YOU TRIED KITESURFING?

Compared to most other water sports, kitesurfing is a relatively new sport, only emerging as a recognised sport in the latter half of the 20th century. It has, however, since taken the world by storm spawning a new generation of both casual and professional enthusiasts of the sport who are constantly on the lookout for new challenges.

Masirah is one place that has that in spades. The island, specifically from May to September, is one of the most sought-after destinations for enthusiasts of the sport thanks to the near constant 20-knot monsoon winds. In fact, the island is considered one of the top kitesurfing destinations in the world and also plays host to several championships such as the International Kite Speed World Championship (IKA), organized by Oman Sail last year and saw the participation of a 13 male and two female kitesurfers. The competition was won by American kitesurfer Rob Douglas, who also managed to hit a top speed of 50 knots, the fastest port tack ever recorded in competition.

That being said, the sport is not relegated solely to professionals and enthusiasts. Visitors who wish to just experience the sport are welcome to contact Mansoor Mohammed Al Majali, Founder of Masirah Tourism Beach Camp. His team of trainers are always on hand to train amateurs in this sport. Each of these trainers are professionals certified by Kiteboarding Oman, an internationally accredited entity that grants licenses to trainers of the sport in accordance with international standards.

According to Mansoor, you need about a week of continuous training to properly stand on the board and control the kite in order to enter and exit the water. The sport, however, does not require any special physical characteristics. There are boards of various sizes available for users of all ages and the same is true for the kites as well with sizes ranging from 4 to 12 metres.

Mansoor also mentioned that the Island enjoys temperate weather throughout the year, with temperatures ranging from 20 to 30 degrees Celsius, which is ideal for visitors. This is why fans of the sport come from all around the world to Masirah. This is especially true for visitors from France, Germany, United Kingdom, Sweden, and New Zealand among others. Anyone who has visited has named Masirah as one of the most challenging destinations in the world for the sport and is a strong indication of benefits the sport can provide to the Sultanate's tourism sector.

So, even if you had no intention of succeeding as a professional Kitesurfer, give the sport a try; it will definitely be an experience you won't soon forget.



WHERE TO STAY

WWW.MASIRAISLANDRESORT.COM

E-mail: RESERVATIONS@MASIRAISLANDRESORT.COM

Tel: +(968) 25504274

For more information, please contact:

WWW.KITEBOARDING-OMAN.COM

The world-famous site for kitesurfing

WWW.GLOBALKITESPOTS.COM



ONE OF ALILA JABAL AKHDAR'S MOST UNIQUE ASPECTS IS THAT IT WAS BUILT IN A WAY AS TO BLEND IN SEAMLESSLY INTO THE GEOGRAPHICAL LANDSCAPE



— By Abdullah Al Sabah —

JABAL AKHDAR IS A MAGICAL SYMPHONY AND ALILA ITS BEST MELODY

Standing in awe at the foot of the mountain, gazing upwards, you will know immediately that you are on the verge of a very special journey. With every corner of the switchbacks heading up the mountain, you are left breathless with ever more beautiful views of the valley below. As you take the final turn onto the mountain top, you are treated to a unique symphony of nature and history. From the pomegranates and roses to the apricots and black berries, from the green terraces to the abandoned old Cliffside houses, every corner of Jebel Akhdar has a story to tell. Only from exploring the wondrous surroundings of the mountain can one unravel them all. Right at the end of the road that leads you through the scenic mountain top you will find Alila - the perfect hideaway for an extraordinary journey.

OVER 2,900M INTO THE SKY

Situated 2900 meters above sea level, close to the peak of the mountain, Alila is a one-of-a-kind five star Hotel that was developed by Oman Tourism Development Company OMRAN. One of its most unique aspects is that it was built in a way as to blend in seamlessly into the geographical landscape. In order to achieve this, its walls were covered with local rocks taken from the mountain and its outer areas are populated with Juniper, pomegranate, and apricot trees, together with several other plants that are native to Jebel Akhdar. Moreover, it was built in line with the highest international green buildings standards, taking into consideration the direction of the sun and wind as well as the careful selection of its interior materials in order to ensure operational efficiency and sustainability. In fact, Alila International Hotels & Resorts is famous for its unconventional hotels and resorts, each offering extraordinary, one-of-a-kind experiences, as they have done with Alila Jebel Akhdar.

LUXURIOUS STAY

While at the hotel I stayed at one of the resort's private villas. Perched on the edge of a cliff, the villa had a view so stunning, that even the simple act of drinking tea on the terrace was transformed into an unforgettable experience. Beautifully built, all interior décor, designs, and materials can be traced back to Oman and Jebel Akhdar; right from the wood, stones, plants, doors, and carpets, to the pottery, silverware, paintings, and colours, the latter of which take their inspiration directly from the mountain's unique environment. The interior lighting has also been uniquely engineered to give you exactly the lighting you

”
ALILA JABAL AKHDAR OFFERS AN EXTRAORDINARY, ONE-OF-A-KIND EXPERIENCE





need, nothing more and nothing less. Even the interior fittings seemed to far exceed the usual 5-star hotel standards I was used to. Lastly, the hotel has private sauna and steam rooms, private pool and Jacuzzi, and much more.

REAL HOSPITALITY

The hospitality at Alila Jebel Akhdar is entirely based on building a lasting personal relationship with visitors, which in itself is an integral part of Omani culture. I felt a sense of familiarity and friendliness from the very first moment I entered, with everyone addressing me by my name. The staff was also keen to help with anything I needed even before I had to ask for it, whilst at the same time ensuring they were never intrusive or invading my personal space. Best of all however, was the fact that everyone always had a smile on their face. It is this level of professionalism that just might be the resorts most unique feature.

FOOD IS ANOTHER STORY!

The food at Alila is yet another interesting experience worth sharing. Each dish is presented in a unique way, and the inspiration from traditional Omani culture is evident. The food is even decorated using the mountain's special pomegranates. The care that goes into each dish is clearly visible in the little details. Food is also almost always served with tea or special coffee to give it that extra touch of personality. Further adding to the atmosphere was the impeccable service by the staff, whose experience and training is clearly visible with each dish they serve and the professionalism with which they deal with customers. One of the most amazing things you can witness first hand in Jebel Akhdar is the close relationship OMRAN shares with

the local community. This is made clear by their 'Farming for Hospitality' initiative. This initiative was launched to help farmers grow fresh produce using greenhouses, for use by the local community and for supply to the hotel. Incidentally, it is the freshness of this produce that gives the Hotel's food its hallmark taste.

”
YOU CAN REQUEST TO HAVE YOUR SPECIAL CARE SESSION TAKE PLACE ON ONE OF THE EXTERNAL PLATFORMS, GIVING YOU STUNNING VIEWS OF THE VALLEY 2,900M BELOW



YOUR PERFECT ESCAPE

Have you ever tried leaving everything behind and just taking a break from it all? If not, then I advise you to book a special care session at Alila Jabal Akhdar; a session so relaxing, your daily life will be a distant memory. Better still, you can request to have your session take place on one of the external platforms, giving you stunning views of the valley 2,900M below. Even the oils used are all natural and are extracted from local lemons, thyme, Juniper, and herbs, making you feel truly one with the mountain. Yoga is yet another experience at Alila Jabal Akhdar, with meditation sessions beginning early as the very first rays of the sun crest over the horizon and with you sitting on a wooden bench overlooking the Wadi.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Hiking on Jebel Akhdar is yet another great remedy for the stresses of modern life, one that puts you in a state of total harmony with nature. If you truly want to take it to the next level, you should try the Via Ferrata. It will test your abilities to the max as you move up mountain trails, crossing straits and caves in a one of a kind experience that cannot be described in words. If I were to describe my experience in just a few words I would say that you haven't really seen Oman if you have not visited Jebel Akhdar at least once. Alila Jabal Akhdar on the other hand, is a place that embodies the spirit of the mountain and is considered a precious touristic treasures. I would like to thank Alila for this amazing experience, and the team that showered me with kindness during my stay at the resort. Lastly, I would like to thank OMRAN who built and established this iconic hotel; one that truly put Oman on the global tourism stage.

ABDULLAH AL SABAH



Hawana Salalah, where life is exceptional every day.

Spread along seven kilometres of white sandy beaches, with coconut trees overlooking the dramatic Indian Ocean, Oman's largest tourism destination is brimming with life.

With 1100 hotel rooms, Hawana Salalah is home to the exquisite Salalah Rotana Resort, Fanar Hotel & Residences, the Juweira Boutique Hotel and the exclusive beachfront Souly Lodge. Relish in the diversity of its premium facilities which include a world-class Marina, Oman's first aqua park, vibrant restaurants and cafés, and a range of water and land activities for an active lifestyle. Make a home in one of its signature freehold villas or lagoon and sea front apartments that are available to own or rent.



Luxury Freehold Properties



Hawana Aqua Park



4 and 5-star Hotels

MASTER DEVELOPER

MURIYA
موريا

A SUBSIDIARY OF

ORASCUM
DEVELOPMENT

OMRAN

THE CROWNING CITADEL OF NIZWA

WHERE DO YOU START?

In a place whose history dates back literally thousands of years, Nizwa is an ancient trading hub made most famous by the imposing Niwa Fort and wonderfully colourful 'Souq'. But there is so much more to see and experience when one visits this historic city. One of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Oman, intermittently serving as the capital for a succession of imams from the mid-8th to mid-12th centuries. While the capital moved elsewhere with the imamate over time, Nizwa maintained its position as the country's centre of trade, religion, education, and art.



As a hub for trade, commerce and religion, Nizwa sits at the crossroads linking the rugged interior geography with Muscat and the lower reaches of Dhofar and is the largest city in the Wilayat of Ad Dakhiliyah.

Standing at a commanding site at the centre of town is the Nizwa Fort. It overlooks a lush oasis of date palms, fed by the Falaj Daris, for which it was designed to guard.

THE FIRST CREDIBLE ESTIMATE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE STRUCTURE IS SAID TO BE THE 9TH CENTURY WHEN AL SALT BIN MALIK HELD THE IMAMATE; AND WAS RENEWED BY IMAM NASIR BIN MURSHID AL YA'RUBI IN THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY

It provided a safe haven for the city's famous craft industries. In fact, in the early days, the city was actually surrounded by a protective wall that formed the first line of defence, remnants of which can still be seen in parts today.

Today the Nizwa Fort is one of several heritage sites under OMRAN, the management of this attraction was transferred over to the company by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture. OMRAN assigned Bawader International, an Omani company based in Nizwa, to handle the daily operations of the Fort. The company has, with time, continued to enhance visitors' and tourists' experiences through a number of cultural activities organised within the confines of the Fort; thereby helping promote the rich cultural heritage and history of the Wilayat of Nizwa.

The structure consists of both a castle (hishn) and a fort (Q'ala) standing adjacent to each other; the former for administration and the latter for defence. Utilising a traditional Arabian design, the imposing fort and adjacent castle complex are a testament

to the skill and craftsmanship of some of the finest architects and engineers of the times. Standing tall over the city, and by far the most recognisable part of the structure, is the towering citadel which was initially constructed between 1649 and 1661 by Imam Sultan bin Saif Al Ya'rubi, and later expanded upon to form the immense round structure that was the first stop on our tour of the castle.

The intimidating structure is 36 meters in diameter and 30 meters high and filled with earth and stones to a level of 15 metres. It is capped with a circular gunnery platform, interior wells, storage facilities, and ports from which 23 cannons could be fired in a 360-degree arc. The walls of the tower itself continue a further 15 metres higher to form a curtain around the internal rim; complete with a sentry walk from which defenders could fire from safety.

The entire structure sports incredibly thick walls, which together with the weaponry, ammunition, and personnel the structure would be home to, added substantial weight to the fort. In order to support this structural weight, the fort's foundation was dug nearly as deep as it is high.



THE IMPOSING FORT AND CASTLE STAND ADJACENT TO ONE ANOTHER.



Photo credit to:
Bawader International



State-of-the-art for its time, the fort was laced with some truly ingenious traps to catch invaders off-guard. Reaching the gunnery platform required invaders to make their way up seven dark and narrow zigzagging staircases, each interrupted by sturdy doors and several pitfalls and shafts, through which boiling oil or date syrup could be poured onto attackers.

Next stop on the tour will see you visit the adjacent castle, which is understood to predate the tower by several centuries. Impressively, nearly all rooms, date stores, wells, and baths have been kept to their original condition, providing visitors with a taste of the more gracious aspects of the period's culture, learning, and family life.

TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCES ARE ALWAYS A CROWD PLEASER



HERE YOU WILL FIND SEVERAL LOCAL ARTISANS AND CRAFTSMEN IN TRADITIONAL CLOTHING SHOWCASING THEIR TRADITIONAL CRAFT MAKING SKILLS.



The castle section of the structure is also home to two exhibitions. The first is on an upper floor of the castle and encompasses several rooms. On display are some stunning historical artefacts from the region and abroad, dating back several thousand years. These include weaponry, coins, stamps, documents, manuscripts, and much more. We also tried our hand at some traditional calligraphy using an authentic quill with the guidance of a local expert.

The former prison area of the castle, has been transformed into an exhibition with a collection of more than 20 galleries, each interpreting a specific theme related to Nizwa's history and heritage as well as a look at the renovation process of the castle. One room however has been reserved to illustrate the old prison, complete with leg irons to give visitors a taste of the atmosphere under which prisoners would have served out their sentences. The final room, just before the exit, is a small shop selling souvenirs, showpieces and local crafts.

The door at the end near the gift shop leads into the inner courtyard. Here you will find several local artisans and craftsmen

in traditional clothing showcasing their traditional craft making skills. These range from pottery, traditional make up and fragrances, cotton spinning, and more. We had the opportunity to witness traditional music and dance performed by local bands as well as sample sumptuous traditional dishes such as Rakhal (a type of traditional bread served with egg and honey) and more.

Before leaving Nizwa we of course had to visit the famous Nizwa Souq located right next to the fort. Here we found scores of shops selling traditional dates, halwa, crafts, jewellery, and clothing. Should you be visiting on a Friday, you will even get an opportunity to witness the trade and auction of livestock, which when we visited was crowded to the brim with goats!

We left Nizwa with a renewed appreciation for the long history of Omani architecture, history, and culture, together with fond memories of a town fabled as the centre of trade, religion, education, and art.

OPENING HOURS:

Saturday - Thursday (8.00am - 8.00pm)
Friday (8.00am - 11.30am | 1.30pm - 8.00pm)

CONTACT:

Visitor Assistance - 25411844 / 90939090
Email - management@nizwafort.om
Website - www.nizwafort.om
Twitter/Instagram - @nizwafortoman

THE FORT FEATURED INGENIOUS TRAPS TO CATCH INVADERS OFF-GUARD





ATANA MUSANDAM RESORT

A PERFECT BLEND OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN DESIGN

Located in close proximity to the Strait of Hormuz, about sixty kilometres from Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE and dominated by the magnificent Hajar mountain range is the quaint Wilayat of Khasab. While the town's roots can be traced back to the 17th century, at the height of the Portuguese naval presence in the region, it has only recently begun to be developed as a tourist destination. With stunning marine life, the waters around Musandam are quickly earning a reputation for its fishing, snorkelling and scuba diving opportunities. Visitors can even view seabirds on the cliffs of Khawr Ghubb Ali and dolphins near Jebel Harim, or simply head out on a Dhow cruise in the fjord from the Harbour located at the northern tip of Khasab.

Should you be looking for a perfect place to stay while in Khasab, look no further than the Atana Musandam Resort, perfectly located just adjacent to the harbour. This stylish and luxurious resort is a perfect representation of the unique local architecture combined with modern building techniques, resulting in a design that is traditional in essence but with a modern touch.

This is especially true for the interior, which was designed by

Fareeda Design. Established in 1994 by the Omani innovative interior designer Fareeda Al Battashy, this Architectural and Interiors Design Consultancy earned itself a strong reputation for producing class leading designs that perfectly encapsulates its client's visions whilst meeting demanding time and budget constraints.

With the Atana Musandam Resort, and in keeping with OMRAN's vision, Fareeda Design has once again created a masterpiece of interior design; one that successfully combines the originality of traditional Omani architecture with modern practicality.

“ THIS RESORT IS A WORK OF ART IN ITSELF – A PERFECT BLEND OF TRADITION WITH MODERN CONVENIENCE

The primary objective of the interior was to create a stylish, luxurious, user-friendly internal environment that clearly represents the values of Omani hospitality and generosity. To this end, Fareeda Design succeeded in style, creating an interior that isn't just derived from the traditional Omani architecture and interiors, but one that harmoniously blends with the surrounding environment and the Wilayat of Khasab.

In order to achieve this, Fareeda Design sourced nearly all its materials locally, using very specific materials in key locations with designs that feature slim and ornate shapes akin to what can be found in traditional homes and buildings. For instance, timber has been used extensively throughout the interior for stairs, railings, false ceilings, doors, windows, furniture, and fittings. It is even finished with a rough, heavy, and unfinished look that is similar to what can be found in traditional Omani buildings. Similarly, a rough plaster finish has been used on block walls to maintain the rustic look, while the ceilings are a combination of timber and palm stems tied together to form a singular panel.

Other elements, such as the flooring have also been similarly treated using natural stone pavers, flagstones and more. Even the furniture, doors, and windows, which are made of timber as mentioned earlier, use heavy traditional hand-made iron fittings akin to what can be found in forts across the country. Further adding to the atmosphere and completing the look are stunning works of art and handicraft adorning the walls, all of which have been sourced from local artists and artisans.

As a whole, the Resort is a work of art in itself – a perfect blend of tradition with modern convenience; one that will ensure your stay in Khasab is as relaxing as possible whilst maintaining an air of class and luxury that you do will not find elsewhere in the Wilayat.

WITH THE ATANA MUSANDAM RESORT FAREEDA DESIGN HAS ONCE AGAIN CREATED A MASTERPIECE OF INTERIOR DESIGN



FAREEDA AL BATTASHY

Fareeda Al Battashy, the Managing Director of Fareeda Design, has more than 25 years of experience in every aspect of interior design. She established her design firm after a rewarding career as a decorated public servant. Established in 1994, Fareeda Design has discovered a niche for interior and architectural consultancy in Oman.

She combines her innovative fresh design, extensive experience in problem-solving and conflict resolution, sense of environmental responsibility, and expertise in collaborating with highly skilled craftspeople, to ensure a smooth design process. Fareeda's approach to design incorporates graceful lines and traditional influences from the past with a contemporary edge.

Fareeda Design has in its portfolio clients including most of Oman's leading banks, prominent national and international companies. Apart from corporate interiors, hotels, and banks which Fareeda Design specialize in, the list of completed projects includes ministry projects, prestigious commercial client's luxury private villas (both architectural and interiors), shopping centres, retail projects, office buildings, and a wide variety of showroom interiors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESERVATION:

E-mail: stay@atanahotels.com
Tel: +968 26730888



HAVEN FOR NATURE

THE AL ANSAB WETLANDS ARE TODAY HOME TO OVER 290 SPECIES, COMPRISING BOTH LOCAL WILDLIFE AND MIGRATORY BIRDS



When driving down the Muscat Expressway, heading through the heart of the Muscat Governorate, one usually passes by the Haya Water Treatment facility. While at first glance, it may not seem to be the most enticing of locations, it is home to a little known gem that most people are unaware of – a hidden location that accommodates a sanctuary teeming with biodiversity – the Al Ansab Wetlands.

As part of a new joint initiative, OMRAN and Haya Water have signed an MoU to enhance the attraction by introducing a number of facilities; in turn, creating a unique experience for visitors.

This project aims to create a unique experience and seeks to attract locals, tourists, thus creating a synergy between both the Madinat Al Irfan Development by OMRAN and Haya Water's Wetlands in Wadi Al Irfan.

The Wetlands are a semi-natural wonderland discreetly located in the Wilayat of Bausher, and spanning over 40 hectares (about 18 square kilometres), providing visitors a breath-taking showcase for the country's impressive biodiversity. Visitors to the wetlands will find themselves amidst several species of plants, butterflies, and other species of wild life, especially birds.

The wetlands receive treated water from Al Ansab STP, which is Haya Water's key contribution towards environment preservation. This is what creates the unique habitat found at the wetlands. It also helps facilitate the government's conservation efforts towards protecting the migratory birds, as well as the local flora and fauna, and their respective surroundings.

This biological wonder consists of four natural habitats, the most predominant being the open ponds, which are the primary reason for several avian species flocking to the destination. Five large ponds have been dug for the collection of filtered water, with between 3,000 to 5,000 cubic meters pumped out every day. The depth of the main pond is approximately 3.5 metres deep and is primarily used for the breeding of Wadi and Tilapia fish. These marine creatures would then feed on mosquito larvae, substituting as a more eco-friendly method of keeping the in check compared to the use of chemicals, the latter which would have adverse effects on the surrounding environment.

The breeding of the fish has also led to the rise of bird species as well as other animals. One such example is that of the Wadi Racer, a fast-moving snake with a narrow head and long, tapering tail that is rather shy of human interaction.

As a popular destination for wildlife enthusiasts, one cannot help but marvel at the multitude of diverse birds in the area. The vast emptiness that was once considered as unusable terrain, is today home to over 290 species, comprising both local wildlife and migratory birds. Most of which fly in from Europe, Africa, Asia, Iraq, and Iran; usually arriving in the months of November through April.



ONE CANNOT HELP BUT MARVEL AT THE MULTITUDE OF DIVERSE BIRDS IN THE AREA

These artificial habitats are managed and maintained by a team of Haya Water professionals who regulated the habitat primarily through a valve system that controls the water levels. The depth is maintained depending on the season and types of birds, with a few being kept at a shallow depth to host birds that have long legs, such as the renowned flamingos and the black-winged stilts, which are the wetland's primary all-year residents. During the winter season however, the majority of the birds that arrive prefer deep water levels. As a result some lagoons are maintained at a depth of 3.5 metres, perfect for diving bird.

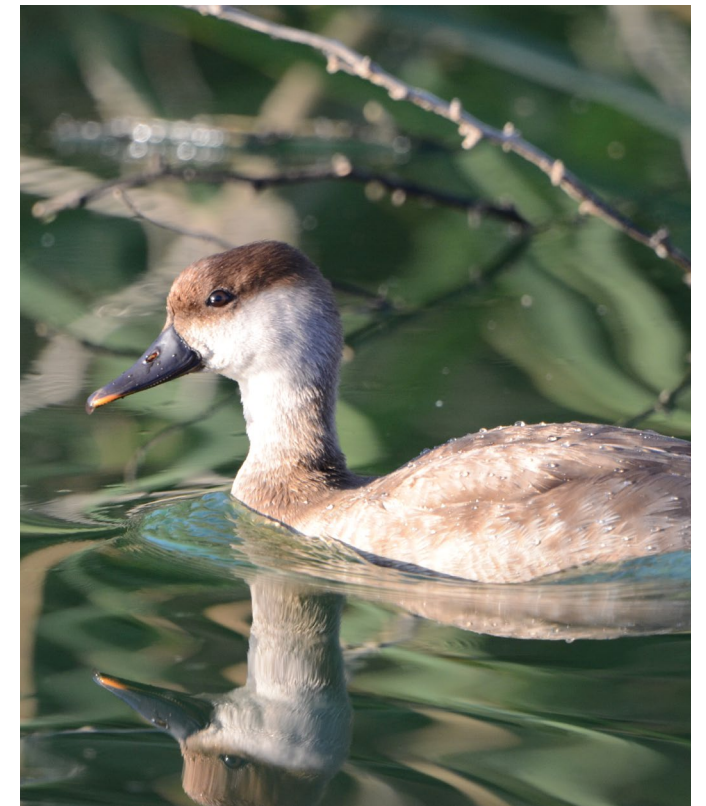
If one seeks to capture glimpses of these birds, early mornings are usually the best time. Around the first lagoon, there is a bird hide that allows you to get up close. The flamingos are the main attraction here, leisurely standing around with their magnificent plumage and bright colours, making them the perfect photography subjects.

Depending on when one chooses to visit, they may also have the opportunity to catch a glimpse of some other rarer species such as the elegant White-Tailed Lapwing, Grey Francolin, Red-Wattled Lapwing, sparrows, and doves, among the commonly found Myna. Magnificent Eagles also arrive during November and may spend the entirety of winter at the wetlands.

With the treated water flowing into the area everything naturally followed; the indigenous plants began to grow and thrive. There are currently around 400 types of indigenous species of plants and trees, including Boswellia Sacra and Delonix Elata. Most of these have been brought in from the Governorate of Dhofar and Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, and are all collectively planted and housed at the wetland, creating a magnificent plant nursery.

With the water facilitating the growth of the area-wide greenery, several afforestation initiatives were also taken place to inculcate the culture of environment conservation and protection. Furthermore, dry wood and leaves are generally left as is, allowing the budding ecosystem to grow and evolve at its own pace and truly form a sanctuary that is designed to take every visitor's breath away.

Photo credit to:
Haya Water



BOOK YOUR VISIT

Al Ansab wetland is open for public and can be accessed from the road leading to the Haya Water head office building.

OPENING: SUN-THU, 6:30AM - 2:00PM

Best time to visit is early morning 6:30am - 9:00am

Contact number: **80077111**

Safety: visitors are advised to wear comfortable shoes and bring water

[HTTPS://HAYA.OM/EN/PAGES/WETLAND](https://haya.om/en/pages/wetland)

ZAHRA AMBUSAIIDI

IT PAYS TO ADOPT AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET



UNEMPLOYMENT DID NOT STOP THIS PHOTOGRAPHY SUPERSTAR FROM ACHIEVING HER DREAMS AND BECOMING THE GO-TO PROFESSIONAL WHEN IT COMES TO CAPTURING MOMENTS IN THEIR BEST LIGHT

Zahra Mohammed Saif Ambusaidi was unemployed for many months. In this time, she came to the realisation that if she could not find opportunity in the workplace, she will have to create it herself – and so Shiyaka Photography was born. Her journey of entrepreneurship was sparked by a single idea, and her drive and determination enabled her to take the first steps towards a successful career with confidence. She is not only making waves in the world of photography, but also in Oman's tourism industry, and she wants to inspire Omani youth with her success story to inspire entrepreneurship throughout the Sultanate.

Zahra obtained her bachelors degree in multimedia technologies from Middle East College in 2011 and spent the next two years



unemployed and looking for a job. Today, she owns and operates a successful photography business, and has recently won a contract to run several OMRAN tourist sites in both Nizwa and in A'Dakhiliyah. How did she do it?

"After graduation, I spent my time job hunting in my chosen industry. Unfortunately, the only job offers I received were far removed from the field that I had chosen, and I was adamant to carve out my own career path that suited my qualifications. The waiting was endless, and in the end I accepted a temporary job in the customer service department of one of the telecommunication companies. While it was completely out of what I had wanted to do, I decided to take on the challenge and learn as much as possible in this position – in the year that I had worked there, I acquired many new skills, especially in communications and marketing."

Following her stint in customer service, and her marriage, Zahra became more invigorated to start her own business. Her passion was actually sparked by her husband, and during a time when many women tend to leave their jobs for family matters, the opposite was true for Zahra.

"After our wedding, I noticed that my husband has a passion for capturing beautiful moments using an ordinary camera or his smartphone. I was inspired to gift him a professional camera to see the photographs that he would produce given the right equipment. His passion for the art ignited a fire in me, I wanted to take his love for

SUCCESS WILL NOT HAPPEN WITH YOUR FIRST ATTEMPT, AND FAILURE DOESN'T MEAN GIVING UP AND STOPPING

photography and merge it with my own academic knowledge – and this is how I began to incorporate photography and design. At this time, I had garnered the confidence to start my own business and look to entrepreneurship as a viable career. This is what led me to establish Shiyaka Photography, and it was the first turning point in my career."

While wedding photography is generally the bread and butter of the business for most professionals, Zahra wanted to focus on doing exceptional work in other areas of the craft. She was soon awarded an opportunity to photograph a grand ceremony held by OMRAN in Nizwa Fort. She took this as her big break, and worked hard to capture the event in an innovative way that attracted all the right kinds of attention from everyone who came into contact with her work. She also curated high-end albums depicting the event for dignitaries, which was highly praised by OMRAN's Management. Her incredible efforts and their positive results gave Zahra the confidence to expand her business beyond its horizons.

She says, "That event was definitely a turning point for me, and I was determined to continue developing my business and Alhamdulillah I started running the photography studio at Al Hoota Cave. My career decisions have all resulted in successful outcome, and Shiyaka Photography recently won a competitive tender to invest in OMRAN's souvenir store at Al Hoota Cave. After working on my own for so long, I have been able to scale my business and create jobs for other individuals in Oman; I am incredibly proud of this fact."

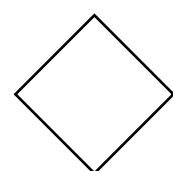
In addition to running a flourishing business, she is able to promote tourism in Oman by helping visitors to the Sultanate create beautiful memories of their experiences with hidden touristic, natural, and historical treasures.

Zahra comments, "I have created my own path, and will work ardently toward achieving my greatest goal; to lead my industry in promoting tourism through excellence and creativity today and in the future. My only hope is that the public and private sectors in Oman would create more robust opportunities for small businesses like mine to thrive. I was lucky that OMRAN was very serious about supporting small enterprises – without their support, I would not have reached the levels of success that I have."

On her advice for young entrepreneurs she says, "From my point of view, having a clear idea, patience and dedication are the most important elements in the success of any new project. That is why I advise those who are starting small projects to realise that success is not granted from first attempts, failure doesn't mean giving up and stopping. Learn from your mistakes, dust yourself on and make another attempt to achieve your goals and dreams – only when you make a commitment to yourself, will you receive the greatest rewards."

INSTAGRAM: @shiyakaphotography





ENGINEERING OMANI CUISINE WITH CHEF MALIK AL JAHDHAMI

**GIVING UP A
PROMISING CAREER
TO FOLLOW YOUR
PASSION IS A
DAUNTING PROSPECT,
BUT IF YOU ARE
COMMITTED TO
TAKING THE PLUNGE
AND GIVING IT YOUR
ALL, IT HAS THE
MOST REWARDING
OUTCOMES**

Chef Malik Al Jahdhami, former Executive Sous Chef at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre considers himself an engineer of Omani cuisine, his journey started in the classroom and not the kitchen. Despite a deep passion for cooking from a young age, Chef Malik chose to study mechanical engineering after graduating from high school and obtained a degree from Sohar University. However, his passion did not extend to his chosen field of study, and while he attempted to start a career in mechanical engineering, Chef Malik was always drawn back into the kitchen, where he engineers fantastic Omani dishes.

Al Jahdhami recounts those early years when he was grappling with the idea of undertaking the culinary arts, "I knew that mechanical engineering wasn't for me, even before I started studying it. When you're young, it's a difficult decision to quit a promising field such as engineering. It took me some time before I could actually take the plunge and invest my time in doing something I was wholly passionate about. However, when I eventually made up my mind to leave university and follow my passion for cooking, I felt an incredible inner peace, which signified that this was indeed the right course of action for me."

Once he had decided to abandon his

engineering degree, the pieces started to fall into place, and soon Al Jahdhami was on his way to Pune in India to attend a hotel management course. Thereafter, he joined the Grand Hyatt Muscat team in the position of demi-chef de partie. He worked in this position for two years, before becoming the Head Chef at Oman Air – a stint that lasted four years. After his time with the airline, Al Jahdhami, was one of the key members who led the opening of 'Bait Al Luban', a fine dining restaurant featuring Omani cuisine in Muttrah.

In his previous role as an Executive Sous Chef at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, which is one of the largest tourism projects in the Sultanate overseen by OMRAN, Al Jahdhami delivered a taste of Oman to the visitors and residents of the Sultanate.

His greatest ambition, to this end, is to become an ambassador for the cuisines native to the Sultanate of Oman, which blends together Arabian, Asian and African dishes. He has already made headway in a number of ways – he catered Omani cuisine to the Crown Prince of the Sultanate of Brunei as well as sponsored an Omani food festival in one of the biggest hotels in Brunei. He also catered the annual Iftar for the Omani Embassy in Washington DC.



”
I WANT TO TAKE
OMANI CUISINE TO
THE WORLD.



NOTHING SAYS ‘LET’S CELEBRATE’ LIKE A TRADITIONAL OMANI SHUWA



CHEF MALIK’S RECIPE FOR THIS CLASSIC DISH

A traditional dish that signifies celebration, the Omani Shuwa is a local delicacy that will tantalize your taste buds and leave you with the lasting memory of delicately spiced melt-in-your-mouth meat. Every family has its own secret Shuwa spice recipe – known as ‘bizar’ in the local dialect. In fact, spend just a few hours in the company of Omanis and the subject of the best bizar will definitely make an appearance. The method of preparing the dish is elaborate, the lamb is slathered in a mixture of spices and oil, wrapped in banana leaves and slow-cooked for many hours in deep holes in the ground that are filled with embers.

Chef Malik shares with us the most famous traditional recipe of Omani Shuwa which you can easily prepare at home.

MEAT:

- ◆ 2 ½ - 3kg lamb shank or other small bone-in lamb cut, about 8 pieces
- ◆ Salt to taste
- ◆ Palm or bananas leaves (thawed if frozen)

HOW TO PREPARE:

1. To prepare the spice paste, toast the cumin and coriander seeds in a skillet over medium-low heat until fragrant, for about two minutes. Then place in a blender or small food processor with the garlic

INGREDIENTS OF SHUWA SPICE PASTE:

- ¼ CUP OF CUMIN SEEDS
- 3 LARGE TABLESPOONS OF CORIANDER SEEDS
- 8-10 GARLIC CLOVES
- 1 ½ RED PEPPER FLAKES
- 1 TABLESPOON OF COARSE SALT (KOSHER SALT)
- 1 ½ TEASPOONS OF GROUND CINNAMON
- 1 ½ TEASPOONS OF GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 1 ¼ TEASPOONS OF CARDAMOM
- ¼ TEASPOONS OF GROUND CLOVES
- 1/8 TEASPOONS OF GROUND NUTMEG (PINCH)
- 3 TABLESPOONS OF DISTILLED WHITE VINEGAR
- 6 TABLESPOONS OF VEGETABLE OIL

- cloves, red pepper flakes, salt, cinnamon, black pepper, cardamom, cloves, vinegar, oil and 2tbsp of pulse or purée until relatively smooth (there can still be some texture from the seeds). Then transfer the mixture to a bowl or jar and cover it with a plastic wrap and let it sit overnight at room temperature.
2. The next day, take the meat out of the refrigerator and allow it to rest for an hour at room temperature. Then preheat the oven at 168 ° C. Generously season the lamb with salt; massage each piece with the spice paste, being sure to completely coat every surface but not slathering it on too thick (you’ll want it to harden and dry a bit as it cooks). There should be little to no paste left over.
3. Wrap each piece of seasoned lamb separately in a banana leaf, each piece should be folded and covered completely. Line a roasting pan or baking dish with a large whole banana leaf, letting it hang over both sides of the pan. Place the wrapped lamb parcels, seam side down, in the pan and tightly enclose with the overhanging banana leaf.
4. Roast the lamb in the oven for about 2.5 -3.5 hours until it’s fully cooked, and started to fall off the bone. The spice paste should caramelize and form a bit of a crust.
5. It is best to let the lamb rest for about 10 minutes before starting to remove the banana leaves, so to avoid adhesion.
6. Serve the dish with white rice.



CHANGING THE WAY YOU DRINK YOUR COFFEE.

SPECIALTY COFFEE
SOCIAL & FRIENDLY
GRAB & GO

BREWING NOW

INTERCONTINENTAL® MUSCAT
P.O. Box 398
POSTAL CODE 114, MUTTRAH
SULTANATE OF OMAN
T:2468 0060 | 99872055

© TR.EATCAFE f TREATCAFEMUSCAT





SPEARHEADING THE GROWTH OF OMAN'S BUSINESS EVENTS SECTOR

WE ARE WITNESSING A POSITIVE TRAJECTORY WHEN IT COMES TO BUSINESS TOURISM THROUGHOUT THE SULTANATE.

There has been fierce competition in the business events sector brewing across the region in recent years, due to the significant growth in event venues. The key to success is creating flexibility, in terms of both facilities and services, to meet new demands.

Meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) represents a sector of tourism that includes business events and activities. The GCC's MICE industry, valued at 1.3 billion USD, is set to experience robust growth in the coming years, with the UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia being the forerunners in driving its expansion.

In 2017, Oman has seen a 3.5% increase in visitor figures, which is expected to grow at a CAGR of 13% from 2018 to 2021. Conference attendees are ranked amongst the highest on the list of visitors that Oman wishes to attract, as they generally bring in twice or thrice the amount of economic value as compared to leisure travellers.

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) has been developed by OMRAN in its own fully integrated precinct and is ideally located near the Muscat International Airport. The venue hosts nearby hotel accommodation, and offers easy access to

the business centres of the capital. The development has already seen the opening of Crowne Plaza Hotel (4 Star) and is nearing completion of JW Marriot (5 star), which will be also connected directly to the state-of-the-art Convention Centre to completed end of the year. Its unique and iconic building, equipped with fully functioning facilities, has a dedicated conference centre, comprising of 55 spaces to choose from, including a 3,200 person capacity multi-function theatre. OCEC recently welcomed a number of international shows including the World Heavy Oil Congress and Exhibition from DMG Events, which is a leading global exhibition organiser with a portfolio of over 80 exhibitions worldwide.

Working closely with OMRAN, the Ministry of Tourism and the Oman Convention Bureau, OCEC implements a range of collaborative initiatives that are specifically aimed at regional and global conventions, exhibitions, and the meetings industry.

OCEC makes regular face-to-face sales visits to targeted local, regional (GCC), and international entities, listed in a qualified database. Additionally it attends Business

Events Trade Shows around the world such as, IMEX Frankfurt and IBTM World, and undertake industry partnership activities with key international bodies such as the ICCA, AIPC, PCMA and UFI. As a result, it has been successful in securing 23 international and regional conferences with a total economic value of OMR 22.5 million, alongside many more bids in the pipeline.

International conferences and exhibitions provide the opportunity to showcase Oman as a country with a rich natural heritage, culture, and history. It also leads to exchange of knowledge, future investment potential, creation of business-to-business opportunities, job creation, and SME development.

OCEC believes in encouraging and supporting young Omanis for a career in

DUE TO ITS GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION, OMAN IS PERFECTLY PLACED FOR BUSINESS EVENTS TOURISM

the hospitality and business events sector, providing them with an increasing number of career opportunities over the years.

As part of dynamic industry with several upcoming mega events, alongside Government initiatives to boost tourism, OCEC seeks to tie-in with the economic diversification plans of the Sultanate, ensuring a positive outlook on the sector as well.



UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT: WWW.OMANCONVENTION.COM

MUSCAT BAY

THE LUXURY LIFESTYLE OFFERINGS WITHIN THE CONFINES OF A GATED COMMUNITY

We'd spent the morning exploring the charming Muttrah Souq in Muscat, picking up unique souvenirs and Omani frankincense, some small gifts for friends and family. After enjoying a relaxing lunch on the Corniche we drove only a few minutes for an exclusive peek at one of the most dramatic developments currently underway in Oman – Muscat Bay.

This luxury community, jointly developed by the Oman tourism development company, OMRAN and Eagle Hills Oman, is one of few places in Muscat which is close to the capital, yet offers an escape from the hassles and worries of fast-paced city life, all in a luxury gated community environment.

As we drove through the broad entrance I was struck by the sheer scale of this new destination, quite literally a new township formed in a tranquil bay, secluded from all the hustle and bustle of modern day city living. We also spotted the historic fort, perched prominently on a hill overlooking the bay, eternally keeping lookout through the centuries. We later learned that the fort is estimated to be some 600 years old, and is part of the comprehensive archaeological effort to preserve and maintain the historic links to Oman's deep and rich history at Muscat Bay.

Muscat Bay is known in Oman as an Integrated Tourism Complex or ITC. This designation means that it contains not only residences that can be purchased by non-Omanis

– giving owners and their families perpetual residency status in the Sultanate – but that is also should include hospitality destinations, in this case two luxurious 5-Star hotels, each with their own unique personality.

Passing the luxurious lagoon villas and residences, our view opened up to take in the beautiful secluded bay area, with turquoise waters rippling at our feet and the dramatic Hajar mountain range to our back. This moment of quiet and peace gave us a sense of what makes this destination so special, a tranquillity that can be found only minutes from the city centre.

Our visit also included tours to the different residences currently being handed over to new owners. These award winning properties are offered in four unique styles – spacious hilltop palaces (palatial is an understatement), as well as stylish villas and duplexes which are split over three distinct zones – Zaha, Nameer, and Wajd.

Located at the heart of the development, Zaha offers the widest choice of homes with residences, villas, or duplexes, with a choice of Parkland or Waterfront properties. Zaha is also the zone closest to the Village Square, where you feel part of a community, where you can shop and can relax with friends over a coffee.

Meanwhile, Nameer is an island sanctuary set apart from the rest of the development. Offering a range of luxurious waterfront villas an arm's length from the beachfront.

Lastly, the Grand Hilltop Villas are the most premium properties at Muscat Bay and are built on private plots with landscaped gardens and indigenous mountain plants. These villas are unique to the exclusive Wajd zone, located at the highest point in Muscat Bay overlooking the sea.

From what we saw, all of the new homes are impeccably constructed and beautifully finished, testament to the years of planning and construction put in by the developers. The homes are modern, spacious, and feature large windows, giving each home a feeling of being surrounded by nature and serenity, and of living in harmony with the surrounding mountains and ocean. Indeed, all the homes we visited offer stunning waterfront and mountainside views

and are within easy walk to the Village Square, which provides easy access to community pools, restaurants cafés, and a state-of-the-art gym.

For visitors, Muscat Bay has two stunning 5-Star Jumeirah beach-front hotels – the Resort Hotel and Boutique Hotel, both of which are nearing completion. Both properties are set to provide a luxurious and relaxing stay with a stunning view of the vast Gulf of Oman, set against the natural backdrop of the Al Hajar Mountains.

The resort hotel, Jumeirah, will host a wide array of facilities including a fitness and leisure centre, tennis courts, and Jumeirah's signature Talise Spa. There is even a kids' club to entertain the resort's younger residents. It was here that we connected with Oman's rich heritage as we walked through a ballroom bedecked with cultural artefacts and archaeological treasures.

On the other hand, the boutique hotel offers a different and more intimate experience.

Three levels of accommodation are available, comprising 112 rooms. With designs inspired by local village architecture, each level reflects a different type of lifestyle with unique features well known to the Omani people – 'Jebel' (mountain-living) found at the highest level, 'Bustan' (oasis-living) in the middle, and Shate'e (beach-living) at the lowest level and closest to the sea.

The 'Jebel' level combines stone walls, earthy tones and mountain vegetation while 'Bustan' showcases Oman's cultivation with patchwork terraces with lush greenery. The Shate'e settlement offers a complete beach atmosphere, including a lagoon.

There really is no destination in Oman quite like Muscat Bay, from affordable to luxury living, to the 5-Star hotel, the development is breath taking in its scope. Although our favourite memory will always be dipping our toes in those tranquil blue waters of the Gulf of Oman.

THE LUXURY LIFESTYLE COMMUNITY IS LOCATED JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY CENTRE

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

+968 2485 7070
www.muscatbay.com

THE DESIGN IS PERFECTLY
BALANCED BETWEEN TRADITION
AND MODERNITY



Photo credit to:
Muscat Bay

CROWNE PLAZA DUQM

THE PERFECT BEACHFRONT GETAWAY

Situated midway between Salalah and Muscat, on the beautiful east coast of Oman, lies Duqm. A vital component of the country's future vision, Duqm is undergoing a drastic transformation and is fast-developing into a commercial and industrial hub. At the heart of this vision is the 2,000 square kilometre Special Economic Zone (SEZAD), highlighted by a 60km long beach front. Of this total, about 800 square kilometres is under development with the remainder left for future expansion.

The stunning Crowne Plaza Duqm is located less than 10 km from the main commercial and industrial district, by Duqm Beach and in close proximity to Duqm Port. The hotel stands amid pristine sand, ancient rock formations, and lush oases, providing its guests first-class business services with all the attractions of a beach resort.

Warm colours and Omani-inspired designs add a welcoming touch to each of the 213 rooms and suites; available to guests in one of three flavours – Standard, Executive, or Suite. Regardless of which you choose, you will be treated to beautiful and authentic Omani-inspired decor combined with modern style and comfort. Furthermore, every single room has windows and balconies overlooking the infinity pool and the emerald blue of the Arabian Sea beyond.

As the Sultanate continues to develop into a major tourist destination, the Al Wusta coast is fast becoming famous for its fine sand and surf. As a result, the hotel's unique location by the beach makes it perfect for both business and leisure visitors in Oman.

Business travellers can host meetings in one of four available high-tech conference rooms, the prestigious executive boardroom, or in either of the two magnificent ballrooms with the support of a Crowne Meetings Director, who will ensure the success of your event. To relax, guests can join their colleagues for a round of tennis at the superb Fitness Centre, or for a night of karaoke

”
THE HOTEL
STANDS AMID
PRISTINE SAND,
ANCIENT ROCK
FORMATIONS,
AND LUSH
OASES,
PROVIDING ITS
GUESTS FIRST-
CLASS BUSINESS
SERVICES
WITH ALL THE
ATTRactions OF
A BEACH RESORT

at The Frontier Restaurant and Sports Pub. Wi-Fi and parking is complimentary for all hotel guests.

Couples and families can enjoy blissful holidays in Duqm, playing beach volleyball, swimming in the infinity pool, or taking walks along the white sandy beaches.

Secluded yet sociable, the hotel is also an ideal base for its more adventurous guests looking to explore the surrounding Wilayat. In fact, the area surrounding Duqm is an unspoiled wilderness of caves and wadis. Here, one can follow in the footsteps of the Bedouin tribes and explore the natural wonders of the ancient Omani landscape.



”
EVERY
SINGLE ROOM
OVERLOOKS
THE HOTEL'S
STUNNING POOL
OR THE CALMING
ARABIAN SEA
BEYOND



Of particular interest is the Rock Garden of Duqm. Standing in stark contrast to the modern development of Al Duqm Port, this three square kilometre area is full of strange, yet beautiful formations of prehistoric stones that have been shaped and weathered over millions of years.

As one of the fastest growing tourist destination in the country, the Al Wusta coast has become famous for its fine sand and surf. The wind and water conditions are particularly suited to kite-surfing and other water sports, a majority of which can be arranged at the hotel. However, among the many golden beaches that line the coast, there is one that stands out – Ras Madrakah. Also known as «the shipwreck beach», Ras Madrakah is home to the wreck of the Amstelveen, a Dutch ship that ran aground here in the fog in 1763.

Should all the exploring and water sports work up an appetite, the Hotel has you covered. A delicious international buffet is on offer during breakfast, lunch and dinner at Souq Restaurant, while the ocean air brings out the flavour of fresh fish on seafood nights at the Al Safi Restaurant garden. Barbecue nights on the pool deck are another special treat. There is also the Lobby Lounge, offering guests an elegant space for informal meetings or an indulgent afternoon tea.

Regardless of what you prefer, Duqm is a fast developing city that has something for everyone; and the Crowne Plaza Duqm will ensure your stay, be it for business or leisure, will be as relaxing and memorable as possible.

FOR RESERVATIONS:
(+968) 25214444
reservations.cpduqm@ihg.com
www.crowneplaza.com



The World's New Hub For Business Events

The OCEC is a world-class purpose built Convention & Exhibition Centre with flexible space and the very latest in communications and audio visual technology.

Located in its own integrated precinct supported by the JW Marriott and Crowne Plaza OCEC, this world-class facility is perfectly suited to host conferences, exhibitions, meetings, weddings, gala dinners and live events. Among its features are a tiered theatre seating 3,200 people and 22,396 square metres of column-free exhibition space and 55 different meeting spaces to choose from.

We look forward to hosting your next event.
Contact us on +968 2423 3800 or sales@omanconvention.com

/OmanConvention



OCEC is owned and developed by OMRAN and is part of Madinat Al Irfan. OCEC is proudly managed by AEG Ogden.
www.omanconvention.com

OMAN CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE
مركز عُمان للمؤتمرات والمعارض



ONE OMANI WOMAN'S JOURNEY FROM BANKING TO TOURISM

Hajar Hassan Al Raisi thought that she was going to work in the banking industry forever, that is until a scholarship opportunity changed her career perspective, and subsequently her life. For several years, Al Raisi worked for a leading local bank, until one day she was offered a special scholarship to study at the Oman Tourism College. This was the turning point in her career that empowered her to switch from banking to tourism.

The decision to study tourism was not an easy one for her to make. Initially, Al Raisi tells us that her family did not approve of her giving up a secure career in banking to work in tourism. She says, "Despite the challenges I faced, primarily with the role of women in tourism, it was by the grace of Allah, as well as the encouragement and support I received from my mother, that I was inspired to undertake this new journey."

During her time at Oman Tourism College, she claims that her training courses were memorable, and she gained valuable experience through training that was given at one of the hotels. Taking her studies beyond the walls of the classroom not only enriched her

knowledge, but also helped prepare her for the real world.

"This was the initial stepping stone that kicked-off my flourishing career," Al Raisi recounts. "After I graduated from Oman Tourism College with a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management in 2015, I was very lucky to join the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) team as a hospitality assistant, in the food and beverage department. Finding such a good position at the beginning reinforced my faith in my decision to start a new career."

Having worked for OCEC for over two years, Al Raisi has proven herself an active member of the team. As a result, she has taken on more responsibilities as a business development executive for the Centre. In this position she is responsible for the coordination of the communications team, updating visits and shows, managing the centre's participation in local and international exhibitions, conferences and meetings. On the business development side, Al Raisi assists in tasks such as preparing client quotations, general presentations and agreements, and documenting the promotional materials for the business development team.

events and meetings, and also places the Sultanate on the map as an important regional and global MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) destination."

Commenting on her ambitions, Al Raisi states, "I always aspire for the best, and I am currently trying to accumulate both the knowledge and proficiency in the field of business development. My aim is to have a tangible impact on the tourism sector in Oman, and I know that I will have to work hard to upskill myself and inspire others in my industry to do the same."

Based on her experiences, Hajar Al Raisi shares some personal guidance to the young men and women in Oman, who share her ambitions of success in this field. "My advice to everyone is not to miss any opportunity, including those in the tourism sector, which is currently undergoing a major transformation. This sector continues to grow as a contributor to the economic diversification of the country. The prospects in this field are vast and include several sectors such as development, aviation, the conference industry, business, hospitality, tourism management, operations management, and many more. Therefore, I encourage

the Omani youth to work towards taking the first steps in this sector, which despite its many challenges will prove quite adventurous and fruitful in the long run. For those unsure of how to begin their journey, the Oman Tourism College is the best place to start their career and aid in building a brighter future."

"THE WORK IN ITSELF IS VERY DIVERSE, AND EVERY DAY SPENT AT THE CENTRE ADDS A NEW LAYER TO MY EXPERIENCE"

INTERESTED TO BECOME A TOURISM PROFESSIONAL?

Join Oman Tourism College (OTC)
For more information:
Tel: (968) 24512345
office@otc.edu.om

"CHANGING PROFESSIONS IS ALWAYS A RISK, BUT FOR ME IT WAS A GREAT RISK - ONE THAT REALLY PAID OFF"

”

TOURISM IS A VIBRANT AND WONDERFUL SECTOR THAT OPENS THE DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SULTANATE

"The work in itself is very diverse, and every day spent at the Centre adds a new layer to my experience. I am extremely delighted to be working on a pioneering project, which is currently being developed by OMRAN as part of the Madinat Al Irfan Urban Development, at the heart of the capital," she says. "We cater to business tourism, which aims to provide integrated international destination options for

