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## GEEO ITINERARY

Oman 1/12/2025

### **Day 1: Muscat Arrive in Muscat at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.**

Arrive in Muscat at any time. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you plan to arrive in the Middle East at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jetlag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Muscat before and/or after the trip. Please note that check-in at the hotel is usually around 2:00-3:00 p.m. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another.

### **Day 2: Muscat (B) Explore some of the highlights of the city including the Grand Mosque, the Bait Al Zubair Museum, and the historic souk in Muttrah, before heading to Old Muscat and the 16th century Al-Mirani & Al-Jelani forts.**

We will spend the day exploring some of the highlights of Muscat. We start with a visit to one of Muscat's finest architectural sites, the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. Covering an area of 416,000 square meters, this mosque can accommodate 20,000 worshipers and offers visitors a labyrinth of grounds to explore. Modesty is mandatory for everyone when visiting the Grand Mosque. Men must wear long pants and shirts must cover their shoulders (if you have tattoos, they must be fully covered by your clothing). Women must be fully covered including heads, full arms, and full legs. We recommend not wearing jewelry unless your clothing fully covers it. Proper Omani outfits for men and women can be rented should you wish, and your tour leader will be happy to answer any questions or assist in preparing the correct outfits to visit the mosque. Next, we visit the Bait Al Zubair Museum. Boasting one of the largest heritage art collections in Oman, it is a must-see for those eager to learn more about Omani culture and history. Then we go to the Muttrah Souq to take in the colorful sights, and perfumed scents of this winding marketplace. Opt to hunt for authentic Omani artifacts and handicrafts (you won't have to go far), or sip on an aromatic Omani coffee and gaze out at the local hustle and bustle. In the afternoon we travel to Old Muscat and take in the sights and sounds of this sleepy coastal area. Visit the forts of Al-Mirani and Al-Jelani to get some perspective on Omani history.

### **Day 3: Muscat/Ras al-Jinz (B) Leave Muscat behind and drive along the coast towards the picturesque Bimmah Sinkhole. Continue to Sur, renowned in the past for its dhow shipyards, before reaching Ras al-Jinz on the coast. After an early dinner, visit the turtle sanctuary, where green turtles come from thousands of kilometres away to lay eggs at night.**

We leave Muscat behind and drive along the coast to the picturesque Bimmah Sinkhole. Feast your eyes on one of the world's most breathtaking sinkholes. Surrounded by the sea and towering mountains, this sinkhole measures 40 meters wide and 20 meters deep. With its glittering turquoise waters, it isn't hard to believe the local folklore that maintains that the sinkhole was created by a falling star. Jump in and cool off. The Bimma Sinkhole in Oman is quite touristy and you can wear a normal bathing suit as you would in the United States. There will be a bathroom where you can change into your bathing suit and back into your regular clothing prior to departing to your next destination. Please be prepared to change in a bathroom that may in poor sanitary conditions. Floors will also be quite slippery so please be careful. We then drive to Sur, home of the last remaining factory that builds Oman's traditional dhows. The production of these wooden boats has a 6000-year-old history, which has established ancient Oman as a prosperous trading port in the region. Visit the shipyard and learn how these ships are made. The

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unspoiled shoreline of the Ras al-Jinz turtle sanctuary is a nesting home of the endangered green turtle (*Cheloniemydas*). After dinner, follow a guide out to the beach and witness the nesting process of these creatures from a safe distance. Observe the turtles digging and covering their nests in the sand. Learn all about the center's conservation efforts in the area. Estimated travel time: 3 hrs by 4x4

**Day 4: Ras al-Jinz/Wahiba Sands (B, D) Drive towards Wādī Banī Khālid, a rocky oasis nestled in the East Hajar mountains filled with natural pools. Later, begin your desert adventure through the dunes towards your desert camp, just in time for a sunset. In the evening, enjoy some traditional music over dinner, around an open fire.**

Today we drive through red rock formations and vibrant green plantations and take in the natural beauty of this oasis-like region of Wādī Banī Khālid. Running through this area are the natural blue-tinted springs that receive a constant water flow throughout the year, making it a lifeline for villages of this area. Enjoy lunch before taking free time to explore the area. Opt to take an easy hike to the surrounding waterfalls, or swim in the wadis (natural springs). We will arrive at the desert camp just in time to enjoy the sunset. Enjoy a traditional meal and learn more about the ancient Bedouin culture. Spend the evening sitting under the stars, around a fire, listening to stories and music from the Bedouin hosts. We will stay at a desert lodge with a restaurant and cafe. We will overnight in comfortable tents with beds and private bathrooms. Please note that at night the desert can be quite cold. While your Bedouin hosts will provide you with all you need for a comfortable evening, we would like to remind you to be prepared with some additional clothing to sleep in such as a sweatshirt/long pajamas. Estimated travel time: 3 hrs by 4x4

**Day 5: Wahiba Sands/Nizwá (B) Leaving the desert behind, we head towards Ibra and visit the impressive Jabrin castle. Continue towards Nizwá, stopping at the historic fortress of Bahla along the way.**

Leaving the desert behind, we head towards Ibra and visit the impressive Jabrin castle. Jabrin Castle is one of the best-preserved castles in Oman. Built in 1675 by Imam Bil-arab bin Sultan, this fort was a center for astrology, law, and medicine. Continue towards Nizwá, stopping at the historic fortress of Bahla along the way. This impressive walled city had some of its oldest parts built as early as 500 BC. Gaining UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 1987, this complex is a grand example of ancient Omani architecture. Estimated travel time: 3 hrs by 4x4

**Day 6: Nizwá (B) Visit the town of Al Hamra and visit the renowned stone houses of Misfat Al Abriyeen and learn about the Falaj network, Oman's ancient water supply system. Return to Nizwa via Jebel Shams and take in view of Wadi Nakhr known as the Grand Canyon of Oman.**

Today we drive to the town of Al Hamra and visit the renowned mud houses of Misfat Al Abriyeen. Built into the mountainside of the Al Hamra region, this authentic Omani village is known for its unique residential architecture. The homes are constructed using rocks excavated from the mountain and plastered together with mud, making the structures look as though they are part of the mountain. Some houses are still being lived in. Learn about this building method that has allowed this community to stand the test of time. Please note that this site is located in a very conservative village where residents still live. There are multiple signs upon entry requesting that you ensure you are properly and conservatively dressed – knees and shoulders must be covered. They will also ask that you remain quiet and respectful and not take any photos of residents. We are sure that your tour guide will notify you of this, but this is just an early reminder. We also learn about the Aflaj irrigation systems. This water network is made up of ancient channels that used gravity to carry the water from the source to farms and mosques, since 500 AD. This complex system is representative of a system that is still in use in Oman today. Return to Nizwa via Jebel Shams and take in view of Wadi Nakhr known as the Grand Canyon of Oman. Estimated travel time: 2 hrs by 4x4

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**Day 7: Nizwá/Muscat (B) Wake early to take part in the Nizwá cattle market. Watch locals buy and trade the best livestock, from goats to cattle directly from the herders. Drive through Wadi Bani Awf and take in the beauty of the steep mountain cliffs before reaching the end point ("Snake Point") of the gorge. Continue to Muscat for the evening.**

Wake early to take part in the Nizwá cattle market. Watch locals buy and trade the best livestock, from goats to cattle directly from the herders. Drive through Wadi Bani Awf and take in the beauty of the steep mountain cliffs before reaching the end point ("Snake Point") of the gorge. Continue to Muscat for the evening. Estimated travel time: 6 hrs by 4x4

**Day 8: Muscat (B) Depart Muscat at any time.**

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Muscat at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Muscat, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEE0 program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.