

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS

www.pioneerexpeditions.com



FULL MOON TREK • OMAN

OCTOBER • 9 DAYS • 8 NIGHTS

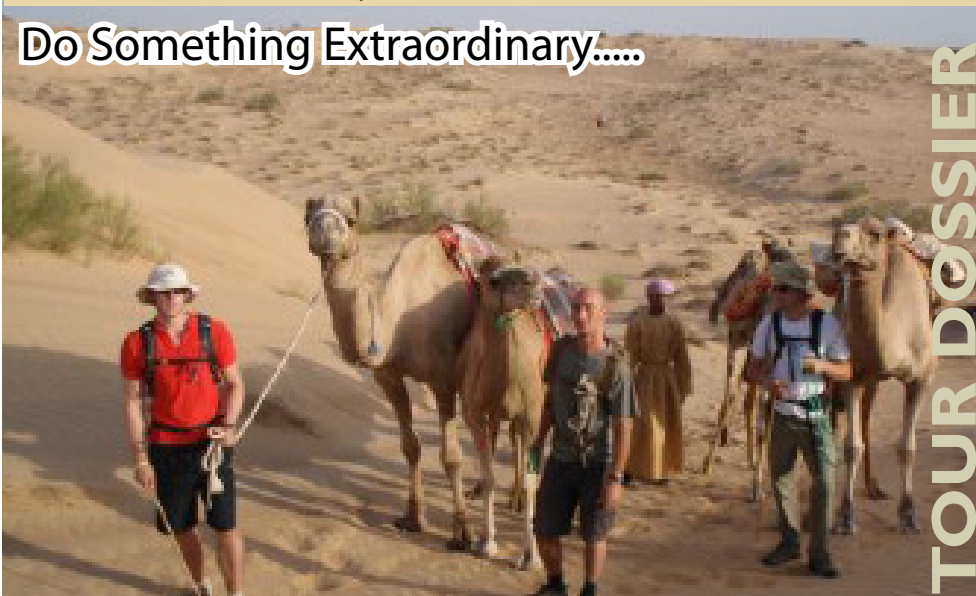
The Full Moon desert expedition will be a unique opportunity to trek with the local Bedu, experience the traditional Omani way of life and enjoy the grandeur of the desert environment. Due to the unique nature of this trip, we only schedule it once a year in October. The expedition meets in Muscat, where we have time to explore one of the oldest cities in the Middle East, before setting off to Sharqiyah Sands where the desert trek starts.

Our expedition will be led by a member of the Al Wahibi tribe; one of the true families of the desert. We will travel in the traditional Bedu way, trekking through the desert on camels, travelling by moonlight and setting up wild desert camps under the stars. With the help and guidance of the tribe there will be plenty of opportunity to learn how to look after and tend camels; seek out nature and wildlife such as desert fox, scorpions, goats and birds of prey and learn how the Bedu use the stars to guide them.

At the end of the desert trek we will head for the stunning coastline between Al Ashkarah and Ras al Haddon. Here we will have the opportunity to see turtles laying their eggs at a local turtle reserve and swim in the beautiful pools of Wadi Shab.



Do Something Extraordinary.....



TOUR DOSSIER

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Unique moonlight expedition, huge starry night skies and torrid desert scenery
- Insight into Bedu travel, tribesman, culture and camels
- Beautiful Oman beaches, wild beach camping and the chance to see turtles laying their eggs

»Muscat to Muscat

To reserve your place on this trip (without obligation for up to 2 weeks) please telephone us on 0845 0047 801 to check availability. Then complete a booking form and return it to us. You should include a cheque for your deposit of £300/\$600 with your booking form. On receipt of your booking form, we will send you a booking acknowledgement, along with your equipment list and all other information relevant to this trip. If you have any further questions regarding this trip please contact us. Your expedition leader will contact you regarding all aspects of the trip pre-departure. Clients booked on this land only itinerary should make their way to the joining point in Muscat, Oman. We are more than happy to assist you with finding flights.

Do you?

- ✓ Want to explore the wild Oman desert
- ✓ Want to experience travel on camels by moonlight
- ✓ Enjoy a physical and cultural expedition

Oman is located in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, and most of its territory is covered by the Arabian Desert, which in turn is part of the Saharo-Arabian Desert, the most extensive arid region in the world.

Many people imagine sand dunes when they think of the Arabian Desert., which there are in the western part of the country. Much of Oman's desert consists of rugged mountains and hills, deep valleys (or wadis), flood plains and alluviums, coastal scrub, salt flats, and salt marshes. In contrast with a coastline of 1700km, Oman offers some of the cleanest, most stunning beaches in the world.

difficulty
comfort
exclusivity



LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Day 1 Muscat

On arrival at Muscat International airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. You will have time to relax at your leisure before meeting the group for an expedition briefing before exploring Muscat city.

Described as "Arabia's jewel", this city is a perfect blend of the old and the new. Muscat is surprisingly green being in a desert country. The roads are lined with well-manicured lawns and trees. The city has retained its old-world character with its many forts, castles, mosques and towers dotting the landscape.

Highlights of this afternoon include visiting the Merani and Jelali Forts which are on the hills either side of the Sultan's Qaboos Palace. We also have the opportunity to walk along the Corniche, with its promenade and fascinating old Muttrah souk.

We finish with a meal back at the hotel.

Lunch, dinner, overnight hotel

Day 2 Sharqiyah Sands

After an early breakfast we set off by 4WD to Sharqiyah Sands (Wahiba Sands).

Following lunch in a local restaurant, we have a short drive - off road - to meet Amour, from the Al Wahibi tribe, one of the true families of the desert, and our local camel leader for the next few days. Here we are introduced to our camels and learn about them as we saddle up with luggage and provisions for the journey.

We take the opportunity for a rest before our moonlight trek.



Sharqiyah Sands

Around 7pm, as the moon starts to rise, we begin our trek.

At about 11 pm we stop, prepare food and make camp under the stars.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, wild desert camping

beauty of these dunes whilst trekking by camel. Sometimes we will pass a Bedouin camp in this isolated desert. A surprisingly wide array of flora and fauna call the sands home, and our guide will always be on hand to spot and identify any of the birds of prey, insects or foxes we encounter along the way.

Our days trekking start at around 9am when we rise for breakfast and break up our camp. We then set off for approximately 4 hours walk aiming to finish around 2pm.

Day 3-5 Desert Trekking

The Sharqiyah Sands are dunes 200 km long and 100 km wide running south to the Arabian Sea. The dunes reach 100-150 metres high in shades of colour from orange to hues of amber. You get a real appreciation of the scale and

After tending to the camels, we put up shade and take lunch before resting through the afternoon heat. Once the sun has set and the moon rises we set off for a 4 hour trek.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, wild desert camp



Relax about style



Getting ready for the day

TO BOOK:

t: +44 (0)845 0047 801

e: info@pioneerexpeditions.com

Day 6 Bani Bu Ali wadi

We will see trees as we come over the last of the dunes to the Bani Bu Ali wadi where our transport will be waiting.

Where the sands meet the ocean, outcrops of aolianite (sand compressed into rock) can be found displaying unusual and attractive abstract shapes. Here the beaches mellow into soft shades of yellows and whites.

Tonight we will camp on the beach by the Arabian Sea.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, wild beach camp



Day 7 Turtles and Beach

We wake up to the sound of the sea and spend the morning relaxing and enjoying the beach.

Later in the afternoon we will drive up the coast and overnight at a hotel near the turtle reserve. The green turtles visit all year round to lay during the night and they leave just before the rising of the sun. In the early morning you can see baby turtles scrambling to reach the sea.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, hotel

Day 8 Wadi Shab

After a good breakfast we head to the fishing port of Sur. This placid sea coast town has striking traditional dwellings and the labyrinth of streets reveals many fine old houses with carved doors and arabesque windows. From the corniche, the dhows in the harbour can be seen against the scenic backdrop of the Gulf of

Oman.

From here we head onto Wadi Shab, where a gentle stroll up this beautiful wadi brings us to the swimming pools. Here we can relax, swim and explore the hidden caves.

After lunch we walk back to the cars before our journey back to Muscat.

Breakfast, lunch, Hotel

Day 9 Muscat

A morning to spend however you wish: at the pool or beach, or last minute haggling in the souks. This is also your last opportunity to visit Muscat's Grand Mosque before transferring to the airport for the homeward journey.

Breakfast, transfer

Note:

While our intention is to adhere to the day to day route as printed overleaf, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary.

We cannot guarantee that the expedition will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. A variety of factors, including adverse weather conditions and difficulties with transportation, can lead to enforced changes. The expedition leader will make any changes where necessary.



Pioneer Expeditions Worldwide Ltd.



**The Well House
Chydyok Road
East Chaldon
Dorset DT2 8DN**

**tel: +44 (0)845 0047 801
info@pioneerexpeditions.com**



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Tourist Visas are required on arrival. These can either be OmR6 (single-entry, one month); OMR10 (multiple-entry, one year). All nationalities require a full passport valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay.

FLIGHTS

International flights are not included. If you require information regarding airlines and routes please contact us. Airport Transfers in Muscat are included so it is important that we have all your flight details.

VACCINATION AND PROTECTION

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A & B and Polio. You should consult your travel clinic or doctor for up to date advice.

INSURANCE

Adequate travel insurance is mandatory for everyone who participates in a Pioneer expedition. Please bring a copy of your insurance policy and contact numbers to give to your expedition leader in case of illness.

ACCOMMODATION

Based on twin occupancy we use a variety of 3-4* accommodation. Single occupancy is available at some locations at an extra cost. Whilst on the trek we will be wild camping under the stars, with no tents therefore a bivvy bag is recommended to keep out any damp.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION

If you require additional accommodation either

before or after the trip, we can book this for you (subject to availability) provided you notify us at the time of booking. Payment for this must be made to us, for up-to-date prices please contact our office.

PERSONAL EXPENSES

This is a fully inclusive expedition (apart from dinner on day 8). All entrance fees, guiding, logistics, hotel, water and soft drinks are included. Alcohol is not included. Visa, tips, optional excursions and personal expenses are not included. The currency is the Omani Rial and there is a network of ATM's across Oman. Credit or debit cards can be used in most outlets. Hotels will exchange currency but you will get a better rate at the Oman Exchange or Lulu's hypermarket in Muscat.

MEAL PLAN

This is fully inclusive and all meals & soft drinks (apart from dinner on day 8) are included:

EXPEDITION TEAM

Maximum group size is 12 plus expedition leader, English speaking local guides and local expedition crew

BAGGAGE

Baggage should be kept to a minimum and a limit of 15kg is recommended.

EXPERIENCE AND FITNESS

We have estimated a distance of 20km per day based on 2 treks of around 4 hours each. This is flexible and we can adjust according to group fitness levels. There is one camel between 2 clients so they can take it in turns. We find

people get quite sore if they're on a camel for too long so it works well. Good walking boots that are well worn and comfortable will help limit blisters. If you have any questions regarding your fitness or experience please contact us.

ETIQUETTE & DRESS CODE

It is common for Omani people to greet with a handshake to men and women. However, please avoid initiating a handshake particularly with women. Omanis will only eat with their right hand therefore try to avoid giving/receiving with your left hand as it is considered unclean and impolite. Avoid showing signs of affection in public. Women and men should ensure knees and shoulders are covered when in public. Avoid giving money and/or sweets to local children (and adults) during your stay.

Consuming alcohol outside of licensed premises is illegal in Oman. If you have brought in duty free please consume discreetly and do not offer to any Omanis.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

As with all Pioneer expeditions, we are committed to maximising the benefits of our trips to the local community and minimising the negative impact associated with tourism. We employ local agents and staff, not just to benefit the local economy, but also to give you a real sense of Oman's culture. To greatly reduce our impact on the environment there will be a maximum of 12 team members - this helps to minimise the damage associated with large scale tourism.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

While equipment and provisions are provided they are quite basic and minimal as the team and camels will be carrying everything they need. A support vehicle will shadow the group, yet will remain as 'invisible' as possible, ideally only being used to replenish water and food.

Clothing

- Personal clothing
- Strong well broken in walking boots with ankle support.
- Comfortable walking socks and liner socks
- Sports sandals/lightweight shoes for use in town and around camp
- Lightweight breathable long sleeved tops and trousers for trekking
- Warm top/fleece
- Sunhat
- Swimming costume/shorts/lightweight towel

Equipment

- Sleeping bag 2-3 season
- Roll mat/thermarest
- Bivvy bag
- Personal first aid kit including blister kit
- Rucksack/day pack
- Torch and spare batteries
- Water bottle/s plus iodine tablets
- Insect repellent
- Sun block and sun glasses
- Biodegradable soap
- Binoculars
- Trekking poles if preferred