

Sultanate Oman Among 2008 Hottest Destinations



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In this regard, Usama Bin Karim Al Haremi Head of Corporate Communications And Media Department of Oman Aviation Services (Oman Air) said that Oman, is blessed with the most tempting natural locations in the Gulf, and has started to take advantage of these possessions in developing its tourism industry. Widely known as Arabia's best kept secret, Oman is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination, also has lastly emerged into the travel world enlightening a land of friendly people and spectacular landscapes. The Sultanate of Oman is a conservative country that is concerned in developing tourism in a way that sits at ease with these principles. He affirmed that as Oman encourages more tourism, it is trying to preserve its ethnicities, like its environment, national dress, markets, the turtles, and dolphins, while using them as its major draw. He added that Oman is a broadminded and tolerant nation and it will not take much effort to experience the famous hospitality and generosity of spirit of the Omani people. He highlighted few of many specialized outlets recounting Oman's tourism potentials.

In 2007, Sky News of UK recognized the Sultanate of Oman as one of The Hottest New Travel Destination. Under the heading Deserts, Caves, Diving...Visit Oman, they asked over in their program "Are you adventurous, love the outdoors and looking for a new experience? Then head for one of the hottest destinations on the holiday list - The Sultanate of Oman. Oman is a breathtaking country with a diverse landscape of fjords, deserts, pristine reefs, and rugged mountains - a perfect playground for outward-bound types".

Sarah Modlock, whom articles have been, published in nearly every national newspaper in UK as well as specialist publications and websites worldwide, listed Oman as one of the top 10 places to visit during 2007. She said, "Oman is an up and coming new destination for the New Year and has much more culture on offer than current Middle East favourite, Dubai". The Musandam Peninsula is dubbed 'Norway of the Middle East' and has its own sandy beaches. The Evason Hideaway & Six Senses Spa at Zighy Bay is scheduled to open at the end of May.

Also, The Columbus World Travel Guide of UK that is known as 'the Bible of the Travel Industry' which was first published 26 years ago and sold in over 90 countries worldwide, listed Oman among its hot destinations for 2007 " Travellers to the Middle East seeking an alternative to Dubai, are increasingly heading for Oman, which offers stunning unspoilt scenery (think deserts, tranquil oases, rugged mountains and peaceful beaches) and rich cultural heritage, with friendly locals and year-round sunshine thrown in for good measure".

Ohmy News, the South Korean online newspaper that attracts up to 800,000 unique visitors and up to 2 million page views a day in its article "Oman Tourism on Growth Trajectory - Numerous projects in the works to boost infrastructure" The long article highlighted in details the government's initiatives to boost tourism. The interdiction read, "Tourism has become a major focus in the development policy of the Sultanate of Oman since the mid-1990s, when the government embarked on the diversification of the national economy from oil to non-oil revenue sources. The tourism sector has been one of the important components of "Oman 2020", a visionary plan for Oman's economic growth that was launched and adopted as the long-term development strategy for the country".

Erika Wang of The China Post in his article "Oman: a politically stable and open-minded country" said that since the 1970 accession of current leader Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Oman's economy has been radically transformed to encourage market-oriented policies and private sector development. Oman Tourism potentials had been highlighted too.



Currently, hottest destinations for 2008 have been identified, and Oman remains to be a hot spot destination. Britain's tour operators have identified the Middle East as the must-visit destination for next year, according to the Guardian. Tom Robbins in his article titled "What will be the hottest destination for 2008" - The Observer, Sunday December 9, 2007 - quoted Tom Barber, founding director of Original Travel, whose most popular destination is now Oman saying 'Ironically, all the recent problems in the Middle East have actually made people more aware of the region, and rather than putting them off, they have become fascinated,' he said. 'We see it kind of spreading out - people started in Dubai, then they looked over and got interested in Oman.' Demand is also being driven by the swathe of luxury hotels opening in the region for the first time. In February, for example, the latest property in the Six Senses Hideaway portfolio opens at Zighy Bay in northern Oman's remote Musandam Peninsula. Guests will choose whether to arrive by speedboat, a 4x4 trip through the Hajar Mountains, or as a passenger in a paraglider. Original Travel predicts Musandam Peninsula, will be 'enormous' in 2008. Al Haremi notified that in 2003, 2005, and 2006, Original Travel won awards at the Guardian and Observer Travel Awards and also the Marketing Magazine Awards. He acknowledged that the renowned writer Tom Robbins traveled recently to Oman for a weekend in the Empty Quarter and wrote his article "Space, the final frontier" published in The Observer - Travel - Sunday October 21, 2007.

The hot topic

What will be the hottest destination for 2008?

Founded in 1950, The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) the regulatory body for British Travel Agents, the largest trade body for tour operators and travel agents outlined 2008 holiday destination trends where Oman was included. According to ABTA Oman is Arabia's fastest growing, greenest destination and has added more luxury resorts, also has two of the world's best hotels in the

capital Muscat – the Chedi and the newly refurbished palatial Al Bustan. Over 85% of package holidays in the United Kingdom are sold through ABTA members.

Matthew Brace, an award-winning 37-year-old travel writer / journalist, has been a reporter and foreign correspondent for the British national press for over a decade and now runs an international copywriting agency and media consultancy, mattbracemedia. He writes travel regularly for the Sunday Telegraph and The Australian and in the UK for The Times, CNN Traveller, and Wanderlust. In his Hot List 2008: Experience A World Of Exotic Difference - in which was vastly circulated by Australian Media outlets and specialized websites - he said “OUR appetite for exotic, adventurous, and historical travel is growing rapidly, according to both the travel industry insiders and travellers themselves. As far as destinations go, my travel thermometer tells me the following are seriously hot: Oman was listed where he said, “OMAN has had its first year of real tourism growth and will remain a travel hotspot. Plunge headfirst into the Mutrah Souk in Muscat to shop for fizzing bowls of frankincense and myrrh. Stroll along the Corniche in the warm evening, in the footsteps of centuries of merchants from Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Take a dhow cruise through the secret fjords of the Musandam Peninsula and camp under the stars. Hike high in the Western Hajar Mountains or explore beneath them in vast cave systems. Or head south to Salalah and follow the frankincense trail.

Al Haremi gave notice that earlier this year; Euromonitor International's Travel And Tourism in Oman report identifies Oman as a new luxury hotspot that is experiencing robust growth in tourism. Oman's natural landscape includes a long coastline, majestic deserts, several mountain ranges, and a lush southern region. Increasing awareness of Oman, new hotels and resort facilities and the development of more destination activities will help drive tourist arrivals. A mention in Condé Nast Traveller the report pointed out is the kind of endorsement and publicity money cannot buy and will go a long way in raising Oman's profile among its target market. A development boom is underway in Oman, the Sultanate has announced several mega projects. Oman's development boom is concurrent with the government's push to increase tourism. All these investments, directly or indirectly, will give a boost to the Omani tourism industry. The Government in the Lead the report stated, and that Oman's government is one of the most pro-active bodies in the region in terms of promoting tourism development. The government is active in encouraging private and foreign participation in the market, and is a co-investor in many tourism projects. According to Euromonitor International's new report, “Travel and Tourism in Oman” this boom will create opportunities for all tourism sectors, from travel agents and tour operators to accommodation and transportation providers. Al Haremi enlightened that Euromonitor International is the world's leading independent provider of business intelligence on industries, countries, and consumers. Founded in 1972, Euromonitor International is a privately owned company with offices in London, Chicago, Singapore, Shanghai, and Vilnius, with a team of over 600 in-country analysts worldwide, giving them a unique capability to deliver high quality and reliable business information. Their Global Market Information Database (GMID) has been named “Best Business Information Product” by the international information industry.

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