Khareef Festival
Take a Monsoon break

- Chennai - A slice of India
- Misfah al Abriyeen - Spectacular cliff-side village
- Jabrin castle: Reflecting a royal heritage
- Aesthetic dentistry
Dear Passenger,

Welcome aboard on one of the most modern fleet of aircraft. As a high flying airline, we will be augmenting the Oman Air fleet further. We will be adding two more modern 737-800 aircraft with one of them replacing an existing 737-700 aircraft.

In order to provide high operational dependability, another B737NG will be added to the fleet. Besides, the Oman Air network is poised to expand further and new routes will commence during the year 2007.

Oman Air has also gone global with its newly launched website www.omanair.aero. At a click of a mouse, it offers information right from flight schedules to Oman Air Holidays right at your fingertips. Very soon, you will be able to conveniently book your own air travel online.

As Salalah gears up to celebrate the Khareef Festival, we take a look at the cooler climes of this region. While most of the Gulf sizzles in the hot temperatures, the monsoon turns the Dhofar region into a carpet of lush greenery where gushing springs and spectacular waterfalls abound. The three month festivities up to September with several musical, cultural and shopping experiences, attract thousands of tourists from the Gulf, Europe, Asia and other regions.

In keeping with the influx of tourists, Oman Air has increased its summer schedules of flights and is one of the main sponsors of the Khareef Festival.

This issue, as always, is packed with interesting articles. Oman is known for its historic forts and castles. In this issue, we take a look at the Jabrin Castle, restored to its former glory and the ancient aflaj system of irrigation which is prevalent to this day.

We also focus on the latest trend of e-books and aesthetic dentistry which enhances one’s personality, bringing about total facial harmony, sparkling white teeth and a gorgeous smile.

Keep smiling. Have a pleasurable flight with friends.

Sincerely,

Ziad Karim Al Haremi
Acting Chief Executive Officer
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Oman Air launches its own unique frequent flyer programme: Sindbad

Based on the Oman Air commitment to make available high quality service to satisfy the requirements of its valued passengers, the company has recently launched the unique frequent flyer programme SINDBAD. This name is inspired by the name of the famous Omani sailor recognized with his legendary voyages in the past history.

“Sindbad” offers more than just the typical benefits of a frequent flyer programme. There are many mileage earning opportunities. Oman Air operated flights, Oman Air code-share flights, Class of travel bonus miles, tier bonus miles are just a few of those opportunities. A very generous Family Nomination Promotion is one of the attractions of the programme. It allows nominated adult family members of the cardholder to earn 100% miles on behalf of cardholders every time they travel on Oman Air. Children below 12 years of age too earn 50% of the eligible miles as a child family member for the cardholder.

And that’s not all. As well as earning miles when you fly, you can also earn miles when you use the services of the carefully selected ever-growing range of Sindbad partners. Gulf Air, Golden Tulip Hotels, Taj group of hotels, Budget Rent-a-car, IAPA and Travelplan are the partners with whom you can clock up a great deal of miles and bring the rewards you want a whole lot closer.

Each Oman Air flight gives additional Status miles to Sindbad members bringing them closer to Silver Status. Silver-tier entitles one to a better and wider range of privileges such as priority waiting list, automatic seat reconfirmation, airport lounge access (on Oman Air and Gulf Air flights), priority baggage, selected magazine subscription and additional bonus miles. The next highest level for an upgrade is the Gold card level. At this grade, members will experience Oman Air hospitality at its finest - from the moment they book their flight to the very end of their journey, with maximum privileges and exclusive services.

Application for the membership can either be made on-line or by completing an application form. The application form has an in-built temporary membership card allowing applicants to earn miles from the date of application and without any requirement of making retro claims for the flights taken in-between.

With these and many more unmatched features, this state-of-the art frequent flyer programme, Sindbad is definitely redefining the loyalty programmes structures.
Oman Air Launches Its New Global Website

Oman Air has recently launched its new global website www.omanair.aero. Since 8th May 2006, visitors to the country’s national airline website have speedy access to all features of the website.

The website assists Oman Air’s customers to a great extent, since most of its popular functions, can be accessed right on the home page. This initiative offers information on flight schedules, destinations, agents, special offers, frequent flyer programmes. It also enables visitors to read news and events, Oman Air’s special offers, Oman Air Holidays and other relevant information at one glance. And in the future, they will be able to conveniently book their own air travel.

You can stay informed with our website, where a variety of programmes are offered to help you stay informed before, during, and after your trip here. The user will find all the information needed, right from beginning of the trip, to on board experience, to customer relations.

Apart from having Oman Air Corporate information, a section also features other Oman Air Services such as Engineering, Services and Delivery and press releases. The site also features common contact us, site map and careers section and other useful information.

It is worth mentioning that Oman Air’s website has achieved the golden award, in the Oman Web Award (Transportation).

Oman Web Awards is an encouragement for all sectors to showcase their websites and be more involved in it. It is a platform for creative people to showcase their works and attain market recognition. This event has already been recognized by the industry as one of the top award programmes.

Additional Jet Aircraft for Oman Air Fleet

The Oman Air Board of Directors at its 5th session for 2006 approved the recommendations of the Executive Management to add the 7th Boeing 737-800 to the Oman Air fleet and the replacement of one 700 model with 800. With this new aircraft, the Oman Air fleet will comprise of 5 Boeing 737-800 and 2 Boeing 737-700.

Mr. Ziad bin Karim Al Haemmi, Acting Chief Executive Officer said that the B737NG aircraft proved high operational dependability, enabling our valued passengers to enjoy superior class reliability, on time performance and excellent on-board facilities. This enriched travel experiences and encouraged elite businessmen and tourists to opt for Oman Air as their preferred airline. As a result, the Management decided to add another B737NG to its fleet.

He added that, this is a step forward in line with the company’s ambitious plan to expand the Oman Air network and operate new routes which are expected to commence during the year 2007.

The year 2007 will witness a remarkable progress in Oman Air activities such as operating new frequencies, additional services on the existing routes and an increase in convenient flight connections. This will enhance services to more important destinations in the Middle East and stimulate the commercial, industrial and tourist activities in the region.

He gratefully acknowledged the approval granted by the Board of Directors thereby ensuring that the Management achieves its goal to develop and continuously expand the National Carrier to reach out to more destinations throughout the world. He concluded by extending his thanks and appreciation, on behalf of the Management, to the Board of Directors for their continued support.
Khareef Festival
Take a Monsoon break

Brace yourself and get ready to soak in the splendour of the monsoons in this refreshing expanse of green hideaway. Khareef Festival, from June until August, offers rejuvenating milieu of the right mood. Salalah transforms into a smear of green on a rugged canvas.
The Gulf summers are intense, known for extreme, baking heat. Yet there is a place in the Sultanate of Oman that magically transforms into a foggy paradise sheathed in greenery. From June through September, Dhofar is teeming with tourists from every corner of the Gulf who come to this oasis-like governorate in southern Oman for cool weather, intermittent drizzle, misty mornings, gushing springs and spectacular waterfalls hemmed by verdant carpeted hills.

Taking advantage of this natural splendour, Salalah, the capital of Dhofar, hosts the Khareef Festival, celebrating the monsoon season and the cultural heritage of Oman. The Dhofar municipality schedules a number of cultural events to enthrall the tourists who converge on Salalah during the festival.

A visit to the Salalah Museum is a must for a peek into the past of the land of frankincense; the exhibits offer an interesting insight into Dhofar's rich antiquity.

About 1,040 kilometers from Muscat, Salalah is well connected to the rest of the country and also to the neighbouring United Arab Emirates and Yemen by good tarmac roads.

When not taking in the performances, you can visit the local capital's three main souqs - Al Haffa Souq, Gold Souq and New Souq - offering an array of items like fruits, vegetables, incense burners, frankincense and traditional crafts. For those with an eye on archaeology, Salalah has many interesting sites to explore, including Al Balid, Lost City of Ubar (Shisr) and Khor Rori Samhuran.

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A jaunt through the rest of the Dhofar region is a treat for the body and soul. The cool drizzle and the amazing greenery will drive away your fatigue and you are left in awe of the natural beauty of the place. With the horizon as your companion, you can stand and gaze at the haze around the captivating landscape.
Picturesque mist-shrouded villages dot the region, with plenty of teashops that serve piping hot tea for the weary traveller. A major agricultural area, Dhofar is replete with tropical fruit shops. The village of Dahariz, home to bountiful fruit farms, is the place to be if you are in the mood to gorge on papaya, banana, coconut, guava, custard apple, lemon, breadfruit, grapefruit and the like.

Dhofar’s natural wonders beckon tourists year after year. The town of Mughsayl boasts over four kilometers of idyllic beach outlined by sculpted cliffs with blowholes formed in the limestone rock, where plumes of seawater can reach a height of 30 meters or more.

Lively springs punctuate the landscape, including the popular Arzat, Jarzeez, Sahnout, Alhoum and Hamran springs. Tawi Attair (well of birds) is a natural sinkhole over 100 meters wide and 211 meters deep, possibly one of the largest in the world. The name comes from the many species of birds which have made this place their habitat. They are often seen swooping in and out of the sinkhole during the Khareef season.

Wadi Darbat is a natural park with breathtaking views of cataracts, lakes, mountains and caves, all amid a dramatic landscape in full bloom. Here, adventure seekers can explore cave chambers with old stalactites and stalagmites. Saadh is another spot ideal for camping and boating.

The magical monsoon charm of Dhofar is accentuated by the region’s diverse religious and historic heritage.
The magical monsoon charm of Dhofar is accentuated by the region’s diverse religious and historic heritage. Not to be skipped is the Prophet Ayub mausoleum on one of the many summits in the Jabal Qara mountain range.

Rakhyut, Taqah and Mirbat are all very rustic towns with picturesque, green countryside. A thirty minute drive from Salalah on the way to Mirbat brings you to Gravity Point, where your vehicle will roll uphill even if you switch off its engine. This phenomenon can be experienced over a stretch of 200 meters.

It is a sublime experience to savour the beauty of the monsoon in the green vistas of Dhofar. The mild showers bring a multitude of visitors. You can clamber atop the ridges to watch a green blanket coming into focus when the clouds part momentarily ... Enjoy yourself.
Chennai
A slice of India

A thriving metropolis, Chennai seeks to retain its grip on the traditional even as it reaches out to grasp at the ultra-modern. And in this very dichotomy lies its main attraction - for you never know what fresh paradox awaits you a street corner away. And it is in this sense that Chennai typifies - perhaps even symbolises - the India of today.

Chennai was a fishing village which later became one of the earliest outposts of British colonialism with Fort St. George, as its hub. Little wonder then Fort St. George is the heart of Chennai.

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu in India, and is the country’s fourth-largest city. It is located on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. With an estimated population of 7.45 million (2005), the city is the 41st largest metropolitan area in the world.

Madras was one of the first outposts of British East India Company. The city was founded in 1639 when the company was granted land to build a trading settlement by the local Indian administrators.

What is striking about Chennai is its allegiance to ancient traditions, no matter how modernised it has become, and its willingness to spread out further rather than develop into a multi-storey concrete jungle like Mumbai. The result is a widespread city still open to the skies; a green, airy city with several vestiges of its rural past; and a city that still retains the charm, values and courtesies of former days.

The city is a blend of old and new. A profusion of heritage edifices and plush buildings live side by side. Chennai offers a wide spectrum of sights to explore. Among the important landmark is the Fort St. George built in 1640 A.D. The first bastion of British power of India, the fort has undergone much alteration. The fort is now used by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and the Secretariat office. The 46m high flagstaff at the front is actually a mast salvaged from a 17th century shipwreck.
The commercial heart of the city, the area around throbs with life from dawn to dusk, and it's difficult to find even a toe space in the streets packed with traders, buyers and their employees. It still is the last outpost of the imperial city. Rajaji Salai (North Beach Road) separates George Town from the Harbour and along one side of it, imperial architecture flourishes. Beginning with the earliest British commercial house, Pary's, you can savour much of the major commercial institutions in Madras.

The city was founded in 1639 when the company was granted land to build a trading settlement by the local Indian administrators.

Bentinck's Building, the collectorate, was once the home of the city's first Supreme Court. George Town is bounded in the north by Old Jail Road and Clive Battery. Of all the sights, Marina beach stands out. Marina beach, the pride of Chennai, is the second largest beach in the world and has a wide sandy foreshore.

Situated on the beach, the Anna and MGR samadhis which are the memorials of the most popular former Chief Ministers of the State attract a good crowd everyday. The beach is teeming with people in the evenings. The road down south from Marina leads to the charming Elliot's beach.

Some of the most beautiful buildings in Chennai such as the University of Madras, Senate-House, Chepauk Palace, Presidency College, P.W.D. office and Ice House are located on the beach drive.

The Government Museum on Pantheon Road was established in 1857 and is one of the country's finest museums which takes you to a journey into the past.

Here one can witness authentic relics from the 2nd century A.D. Buddhist site of Amaravati and the prehistoric antiques of South India. Exquisite carvings of the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain faiths are displayed in the sculpture gallery. You can also see an interesting collection of wood carvings from processional temple chariots and a fine collection of South Indian musical instruments and jewellery.

Immerse yourself in some of the finest collection of old paintings at the National Art gallery. Delight in the 10th and 13th century bronzes, 16th-18th century Rajasthani and Mughal paintings, 17th century Deccani paintings and 11th and 12th century Indian handicrafts.

Visit a plethora of temples and soak up thousands of years of tradition. Among the finest and the biggest is the Kapaleeswara temple. A masterpiece of Dravidian style, it displays the architectural elements - gopurams, mandapams and a tank. There are some fragmentary inscriptions dating back to 1250 A.D.

Although not a great place for parks, some parks, like Nageswara Park in Luz Corner and Dr Natesam Park in T. Nagar, can be visited for a relaxing stroll.
Other interesting sights include the Snake Park, aquarium, the botanical garden, Chennai harbour, Guindy National Park, Anna Zoological Park, Birla Planetarium and the V.G.P. Golden Beach Resort.

Chennai offers a wide spectrum of sights to explore. Among the important landmark is the Fort St. George built in 1640 A.D.

Food mirrors a culture. And Tamil cuisine is second to none. The cuisine employs such distinctive ingredients as peppery-tasting curry leaves, tamarind and coconut milk. Sublime fresh coconut chutneys accompany almost every meal. Although for vegetarian buffs Chennai is a paradise, non-veg eaters can also savour the delectable food available at a slew of restaurants scattered all over the city.

Shopping can be an experience in itself in Chennai as modern malls have sprung up offering haute couture items. The Spencer’s Mall is the best address for a one-stop shopping experience.

Chennai has all the ingredients which can combine sightseeing with shopping.
SOOTHING: Children perform ablution (wudhu) at the falaj.
Heritage

Aflaj is the lifeline of Oman. Ancient aflaj (singular: falaj) still course like arteries beneath the hills and plains of Oman, twisting along precipitous cliffs and threading villages and date-palm groves, bringing to the parched land, water and coolness and life itself. Today, about 90 per cent of irrigation is still dependent on aflaj system. Though cities are well connected with water pipes, rural Oman still depends on them.

A pre-Islamic poet sang long ago of verdant Oman as "a goodly land, a land abounding in fields and groves, with pastures and unfailing springs." But in the region at the desert's margin, where no natural rivers flow and where farming is impossible without irrigation, it is the splendidly-engineered aflaj, the system of underground and surface canals that have watered the country's agriculture for millennia.

The aflaj have helped to shape the history and settlement patterns of Oman, and they continue even now to tie together each community that draws upon the falaj's flow.

There are normally three types of aflaj in Oman:

1) DAWOODI falaj, an open canal usually dug up to 10 meters is several kilometers long. It flows all the year and represents 45% of the total number of aflaj.

2) AINY falaj, originates from hot springs and flows in open canals such as ALHAMAM falaj in Muscat. This type of falaj is limited in numbers.

3) GHAILY falaj, which is usually dug not deeper than four meters is normally an open canal. It is usually 100 meters to two kms long. The water of this kind of aflaj comes from the wadis where rainwater accumulates after the rainfall. This type represents 48 per cent of the total number of aflaj in Oman. Ghaily aflaj dry out after long periods of drought with low rainfall since it depends on shallow underground water table.
The word aflaj itself denotes not only the water canals but also the irrigation network that relies on them and the social system that apportions water to the owners of water-shares. The aflaj have helped to shape the history and settlement patterns of Oman, and they continue even now to tie together each community that draws upon the falaj's flow. As part of traditional greetings, an Omani will invariably ask about the condition of the aflaj, which evokes the reply, "Insha'allah, they are full." As concern expands over the best use of Oman's precious water resources, the state of the aflaj will undoubtedly continue to affect Omani life in the oil age and beyond.

The aflaj constitute an elegant and relatively efficient system for tapping underground water in the wetter mountain areas and delivering it to flatter areas where agriculture is possible. Since water flows in the canals by gravity, no outside energy is needed for transport. Beyond the initial investments of capital and efforts to build the network, the aflaj require comparatively little labour to maintain.

A further advantage - though a two-edged one - is that, unlike wells, the self-regulating aflaj system does not exhaust the aquifer, or underground water-bearing layers, that it taps. In times of drought, for example, all farmers receive proportionately less water.

Oman's rugged topography tested the ingenuity of ancient planners, who produced engineering solutions that are part of Oman's architectural heritage. Some aflaj run along the contour lines, tracing the curves of wadis or valleys, like the falaj near Tanouf in Jabal Akhdar that hugs the cliff wall high above the wadi floor. Parallel abandoned channels, cut into the wadi wall some distance above the flowing falaj, probably testify to past changes in water level or flow.

In modern Ruwi in the capital area, the historic falaj in the museum-fort of Bay al-falaj has been put to new use watering graceful gardens in the fort's precincts. But to best see aflaj in their traditional setting, one must travel inland to Oman's heartland, which is far less touched by modern development. Here, distant smudges of green against the feet of the mountains resolve upon approach into date-palm groves and villages. Mounds of earth typically surround the oases, left after excavating garden basins to the proper level to receive the falaj's gravity-propelled flow.

This ancient water system serves as a unique heritage of Oman.
A fairy tale charm envelopes Misfah al Abriyeen, tucked away deep within Al Hamra’s rugged countryside. The cliff-side village offers some of the scenic vistas to feast on.

With work pressure getting the better of the city-dwellers, the urge to escape from the monotony is growing. Misfah al Abriyeen is ideal for a quick and laidback trip. Misfat al Abriyeen, is a secluded spot which has a scenic setting. Nestling in the foothills of the Hajar mountains, Misfah al Abriyeen is luring tourists with its breathtaking views.

The village of Misfah al Abriyeen is one of the few places built into the side of a mountain and is accessible by car. Hamra by itself is an interesting destination with Jabal Shams, Oman’s highest mountain, looming large in the vicinity.
Until recently Misfah al Abriyeen could be reached by adventure off-roaders, but now a new road has made the place easily accessible. The five kilometers long blacktop careens roller coaster style along the meandering landscape and brings you right on to Misfah al Abriyeen’s doorstep.

**Clinging precipitously to the edge of a gorge is a maze of stone-and-mud houses with terraced date palm gardens extending all the way down to the bottom**

A spectacular sight beckons the visitor. Clinging precipitously to the edge of a gorge is a maze of stone and mud houses with terraced date palm gardens extending all the way down to the bottom. Without doubt, this cliff-side settlement, in the midst of the harsh magnificence of the surrounding mountains, has all the ingredients of a picture postcard setting.

The other side of the gorge offers panoramic views. It’s a popular viewpoint for those who wish to simply laze and feast on the splendid views the place has to offer. Trekkers can explore the surrounding countryside by using a wellcharted ‘walking trail’ along the rim of the gorge.

A boulder strewn hillside has been transformed by Misfah al Abriyeen’s resilient community into a quaint mountain village. A unique feature is multi-storey structures built in a tight huddle and hugging the sheer rock face.

The cynosure of all eyes, besides the exotic setting, is the bountiful spring that offers solace to the otherwise inhospitable pocket in the Hajar Mountains.

The spring emanates from somewhere near the summit of Misfah al Abriyeen’s hilltop abode, and is channelled by an ingenious system of conduits that nourishes date palm trees growing on terraced gardens hewn along the edge of the mountain. The water in the falaj courses through hundreds of these terraces, each barely a few square meters in size. The result is a verdant cascade of vegetation along this otherwise barren mountain slope. Banana and lemon trees flourish amid lush foliage.

The remnants of an ancient watchtower, believed to be of preIslamic vintage, can be seen on a hilltop overlooking the hamlet — evidence of the defensive measures taken by the mountain residents to ward off invaders from entering their place.

Narrow alleys maze through the settlement, once guarded by fortified gateways. There is history in the air.

So, skip the regular getaways and head for Misfah al Abriyeen to unwind your tired nerves.
A fort or castle is a repository of a country's history. A nation's past is enshrined in every material used in the construction of a fortification. Jabrin castle is known for its remarkable blend of defensive architecture and sophisticated artistry.

Much of Oman's history is echoed in the mud brick, stucco and stone of its defensive architecture. Oman's strikingly beautiful landscape is punctuated with over thousand impressive forts, castles and watchtowers. These extant citadels whisper gently the history of Oman under different influences and bring alive the Oman of yore before our minds' eyes.

Jabrin castle
Reflecting a royal heritage

A fort or castle is a repository of a country's history. A nation's past is enshrined in every material used in the construction of a fortification. Jabrin castle is known for its remarkable blend of defensive architecture and sophisticated artistry.

Much of Oman's history is echoed in the mud brick, stucco and stone of its defensive architecture. Oman's strikingly beautiful landscape is punctuated with over thousand impressive forts, castles and watchtowers. These extant citadels whisper gently the history of Oman under different influences and bring alive the Oman of yore before our minds' eyes.

Usually perched on rocky outcrops overlooking ancient harbours they cling to cliffs. Some rise above from the plains of towns and villages while others in a state of ruins, their outlines silhouetted against the setting sun.

Forts in Oman can be best divided into three categories, namely, military forts, castles and watch towers. The military forts were meant to protect seaports and served as guardians of trade routes and populated areas. In addition, Castle forts, like military forts, are grand in design but the purpose was to house powerful men reflecting their status in society and wealth. Watchtowers, on the other hand, were outposts to protect inland trade routes and to guard
water supplies. They also served as reconnaissance towers from where, upon sighting the invading enemy, warning shots would alert the garrison at a nearby fort. In other words, they usually served as a secondary defence.

We take a look at the Jabrin castle. The grand interior says it all. The Jabrin castle not only served as a military stronghold but was a living accommodation for Bil’arub bin Sultan who built this handsome fort around 1675 A.D. Standing in the middle of an oasis in the Jabrin town in the wilayat of Bahla, this castle is a symbol of ascendancy. Bil’arub bin Sultan moved the capital of Oman from Nizwa to Jabrin when he became Imam in 1688.

The Falaj Jabrin runs through the castle which crosses it from the western south to the eastern north.

Twenty kms from Bahla the Jabrin castle is an epitome of fine Omani architecture. It is a big rectangular building and consists of three floors and fifty-five rooms. It is 43 meters high, 22 meters wide and its eastern wall is 72 meters long.

Its latticed and stone mullioned windows peer over a flat plain and the sharp outline of Jebel Akhdar. Turrets and trellised balconies give the appearance of a Renaissance palace. The wooden ceiling beams in the Hall of the Sun and Moon are adorned with Islamic and floral designs. Plastered walls have high arched recesses, some around windows, that diffuse light and aid in ventilation. Old utensils are displayed in one of the rooms of the fort.
Restored by the government in 1983, the castle was a palace of the Imam Bil'arub bin Sultan. The northern area of the fortified courtyard houses the palace. At diagonally opposite corners of the building are two great jutting towers with walls two meters thick. They provided a wide firing range, defending all four sides of the fortified palace from attack. The southwest corner tower contains two gun battery levels. A machicolation over the palace gate provided a protected platform, a place to drop stones or hot oil on enemies trying to enter the fort from the main entrance. Each room presents itself as a work of art with vaulted niches curving to an arch at the top, fine decorated plaster, subtle colours, the blending of light and shade. The plasterwork of some passageway arches is delicately patterned with Quranic inscriptions and geometrical designs in black and red.

The castle housed a madrasa established by Imam Bil’arub bin Sultan.

The tomb of Bil’arub bin Sultan who died at Jabrin in 1692 is in the fort. After his death his brother Saif bin Sultan (I) moved the capital to Rustaq. Saif’s death saw the capital again moved back to Jabrin under Imam Mohammed bin Nasir. After his death in 1728, Jabrin castle remained dormant until restoration. The Jabrin castle is now one of the most visited forts of Oman. The Government is now engaged in further developing this fort.
Advances in cosmetic dentistry can change a person’s life dramatically. The result is possible facial harmony, sparkling teeth and a gorgeous smile.

Shuffling through a book titled Beauty Through the Ages, it was bemusing to see that the concept of beauty has changed so radically. While well-oiled hair, kohl-darkened eyes and a buxom figure were the rage of yesteryear, today, beauty wears a bold look laced with abandon. Now beauty deals with such intangibles like Attitude and Style. Yes, a lot has changed except for one thing.

From Marilyn Monroe to Madhuri Dixit, Robert Redford to Rajesh Khanna, the value of the quintessential smile is unchanged. These famous smiles have fired the imagination of the masses and launched a thousand stories. Yes, a beautiful smile lights up the face, helps you on your route to success, makes you feel good and look better. A beautiful smile is not just for the rich and the famous. It is for all of us. We all want to look good and feel confident.

Cosmetic or Aesthetic dentistry took off in the 1990s and has evolved into a multi-disciplinary component of total facial harmony. Facial harmony applies to all the facial muscles around the mouth, the gums and the teeth. All of these together create an optimal smile and are part of the complete look.

Dentistry has met this challenge with a huge array of new materials and innovative techniques. These can change your smile and your life, forever. As people get older, smiles also start ageing. Worn out teeth alter the appearance of the face and discolourations also lend to the ageing effect.

Advances in cosmetic dentistry now offer new opportunities that have the potential to reverse the signs of dental ageing, thereby giving a more youthful appearance. The advent of new materials and technology in dentistry during the last 10 years has brought with it great promise. Here is a brief overview of what is possible.

**Bleaching:** The most popular aesthetic treatment to lighten yellowing teeth. It is used by itself or along with other cosmetic procedures. It needs to be performed at the dental office under professional supervision.

**Cosmetic contouring:** Simple procedure to reshape the natural teeth to achieve an illusion of straightness. Painless, simple, fast and dramatic.

**Bonding:** Done with composite resins to close gaps to fix chipped teeth, to cover discolourations and to replace the traditional silver fillings in the back teeth.

**Crowns:** The teeth are shaped to receive full coverage with ceramics to hide fractured/discoloured teeth.

**Inlays/Onlays:** Tooth coloured fillings in ceramics/composites.

**Porcelain veneers:** A sliver of porcelain bonded on to the surface of the tooth to close gaps, discolourations and minor irregularities. Many models and actresses rely on them for their gorgeous smile.

**Orthognathics:** When there is a skeleton mismatch in the shape and relationship of the jaws, surgery is performed to attain facial harmony and an aesthetic result.

**Orthodontics:** Aesthetic solutions with ceramic brackets to make them almost invisible are popular in this field of dentistry where crooked teeth are aligned.

**Periodontics:** Modern cosmetic dentistry focuses on solving the problems of the gummy smile by guiding gums and re-contouring them for a better appearance.

**Implant aesthetics:** Permanently implanted anchors for missing teeth also have results which are very natural. The science of dentistry now holds hands with aesthetics, beauty and harmony. Solutions now exist which can make your smile look stunning.
E-Books have arrived

An e-Book is an electronic (or digital) version of a book. In the era of emerging and rapidly changing technology, everything is going digital.

And reading books digitally is catching up with the new generation.

Youngsters now have another reason to stay glued to their e-Books, including full-length novels. Though the market is in its infancy, publishers are responding quickly to a growing interest in entire works of fiction and non-fiction that can be offered as e-Books.

Hundreds of titles are on offer, with new releases appearing every month. Barely a genre has failed to make it from the bookshop shelf on to the digital screen: classic novels, new fiction, essays, dictionaries, academic and self-improvement texts, anything to satisfy a growing demand among digitally-conscious readers.

Traditionalist bookworms may be appalled, not to mention a little dizzy, at the thought of reading a classic novel on a screen, but devotees of the new medium say it is a habit that is easily acquired.

The origins of the electronic book can be traced as far back as 1946 when ENIAC (electronic numerical integrator and computer), the first computer, came online. Developed by J. Presper Eckert and John Mauchly, ENIAC stored information and ran programmes using 19,000 vacuum tubes, 1,500 relays, and hundreds of thousands of resistors, capacitors, and inductors. Over the next thirty years, the computer continued to advance in execution rate, memory capacity, and processing power, all while becoming smaller in size and easier in use. By 1971 powerful new microprocessors were introduced that could do nearly all the basic computations of modern computers. The new processors were able to facilitate Project Gutenberg that entailed the conversion of many classical texts, including The Oedipus Trilogy, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, and Treasure Island, into electronic form. About 25 years later, over 250 different titles had been transcribed and made available on the newly accessible Internet. The Internet, much like the computer, would aid in the proliferation and mass availability of data, as well as revolutionize the idea of the electronic book in the last decade of the 20th century.

The e-Book community has many options when it comes to choosing a format for production. While the average end-user might arguably simply want to read books, every format has its exponents and champions, and debates over “which format is best” can become intense. The myriad of e-Book formats is sometimes referred to as the “Tower of e-Babel”. For the average end user to read a book, every format has its advantages and disadvantages.
The e-Book also holds many advantages for the reader as well. E-Books allow faster availability of novels since they do not have to be printed or shipped. In fact, with the necessary technology, books can be downloaded from anywhere at anytime. The wireless networks that already allow the service of cellular telephones could easily be used by readers to access databases of electronic books. There would no longer be a concern that certain books would go out of print, since maintaining book files online or over a wireless service would be very inexpensive for publishers.

Perhaps most importantly, electronic books contain many unique features that regular books do not have. They offer a variety of fonts, text searching, as well as back-lit screens designed for reading in the dark. Yet the most distinguishable feature of the electronic book is its multimedia capabilities. From hand-held ERDs to desk-top computers, the interface of electronic books allows stories to come alive with animated graphics and video, in addition to regular static pictures. Written text and vivid illustrations can be used in any combination, giving the author additional means of artistic expression, and readers a more lively reading experience. These features will not be useful for every novel, and some readers prefer to have text only. However, for other readers, especially children, multimedia graphics provide visual and audio feedback, increasing the interactivity and enjoyment of books.

Libraries may also benefit from the advent of the electronic book. Fully digital libraries do not have to concern themselves with packing and unpacking, shelving, physical circulation, or overdue books. In fact, electronic libraries would require fewer employees; perhaps only one individual to maintain and update the collection. There would be little need for a large physical space, as the shelving of books would no longer be necessary. Librarians of the future would be similar to today’s technical support, teaching library patrons how to utilise the new layout and informational interfaces. Eliminating clerical positions and large physical spaces, as well as not having to deal with the import and export of physical books, would be an attractive proposition for library administrators running low on funds.

Over the next few decades, the success of the electronic book will depend largely upon its practicality and advantages over the printed book. It is questionable whether these advantages are significant enough to overcome the familiarity of the printed book, as well as the technical difficulties that still plague electronic reading devices.
Humour

Stranger: Good morning, doctor. I just dropped in to tell you how much I benefited from your treatment.

Doctor: But you're not one of my patients.

Stranger: I know. But my uncle John was and I am his heir.

Doctor, will I be able to read with these new glasses?"
"Yes, of course."
"Good! I never could read before."

Fascinating facts

- Canada has more lakes than the rest of the world combined.
- As a child grows, the body part that grows least is the eye. While the rest of an adult body is 20 times bigger than it was at birth, the eye is only three and a quarter times bigger.

- Pigeons are the only birds that can drink water without having to raise their heads to swallow.
- Tennis is the sport with highest ratio of officials to participants: a singles match should have 10 to 13 linesmen, one net official, one foot fault official and an umpire.

- Hippocrates noted the medicinal properties of lettuce in 430 B.C.
- A rabbit is incapable of vomiting.

Quiz Time

Name three birds which cannot walk.
The hummingbird, the kingfisher and the grebe

What is the common name for the thyroid cartilage?
Adam's apple

Who is the only lady to win the Nobel Prize twice?
Marie Curie

What is Magnesium Silicate commonly called?
Talcum

Which was the first speech recorded on Thomas Edison's phonograph in 1877?
The nursery rhyme 'Mary Had A Little Lamb'
Why do we yawn?

The truth is that we don’t completely understand why people, or animals for that matter, yawn.

It’s widely assumed that yawning occurs because we are tired or bored or because we see someone else doing it, but there isn’t any hard evidence to support these beliefs.

Scientists do not purport to know all of the biological mechanisms of the yawn, but tend to agree that a yawn is an involuntary respiratory reflex, which regulates the carbon dioxide and oxygen levels in the blood.

Technically, a yawn is the reflex opening of the mouth followed by the deep inhalation and slow exhalation of oxygen.

Scientists speculate that the onset of a yawn is triggered either by fatigue, or by sheer boredom as, at those times, breathing is shallow, and little oxygen is carried to the lungs by the oxygen-toting cardiovascular system.

When one yawns, his or her alertness is heightened, as the sudden intake of oxygen increases the heart rate, rids the lungs and the bloodstream of the carbon dioxide buildup, and forces oxygen through blood vessels in the brain, while restoring normal breathing and ventilating the lungs.
A fox observing a fish cart coming lay down and pretended to be dead.

The cart man, tempted by the idea of making some money by selling the fox's fur, picked up the animal by its tail and flung it into the back of the cart among the fish. Then he resumed his journey.

The fox ate his fill of the fish and jumped out of the cart.

A wolf saw him jumping out and asked him what he had been doing in it.

The fox told him and also how he had got into it in the first place.

The wolf ran ahead of the cart and lay down in its path, pretending to be dead. The cart man was delighted to find another animal to sell, but he found the animal too heavy to lift. So he pushed it into a sack, tied the sack to his cart and dragged it away.

Moral: What works for one may not work for another.
Welcome aboard

Oman Air’s constant endeavour is to make your journey safe, comfortable and enjoyable. We provide below the details of the amenities that are provided on board for your convenience. Should you require anything not listed here, or have any queries, please contact our cabin crew. They will be delighted to be of assistance. If you have any suggestions to improve our service, please convey them to our cabin crew.

Safety Regulations

HAND BAGGAGE: To ensure comfort to all the passengers, hand baggage in the cabin is limited to bags smaller than 24 cm x 41 cm x 51 cm. These must be stored either in the overhead baggage lockers or under the seat in front of you. Please do not leave any baggage in the aisle, galley or in a way that obstructs the emergency exits. Doing so could cause inconvenience and impede evacuation in an emergency.

SAFETY ON BOARD: Your safety is our prime concern. You can find a safety card in the seat pocket in front of you. This card gives you the details of the safety features of the aircraft. Kindly study it carefully, note the emergency exits and pay close attention to the crew’s demonstration of the emergency drill. When the captain turns on the “Fasten seatbelts” sign due to any emergency or bad weather, please return to your seat immediately and fasten your seatbelt. For your own safety, we also recommend keeping your seatbelt loosely fastened when seated during the flight.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT: Portable electronic items such as personal computers and handheld games may not be used during take-off and landings as they could interfere with the aircraft’s equipment. Pocket calculators, hearing aids and heart pacemakers are exempt. Use of radios and mobile phones are prohibited on board at all times.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE ON BOARD

IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT: For your enjoyment we are pleased to provide programmes in Arabic, English and Hindi; we also show Tamil and Malayalam films in certain sectors. To listen to the programme you wish to enjoy, just plug in the headset and press the channel of your choice on the control unit.

READING AND WRITING MATERIAL: A wide selection of newspapers and magazines in English and Arabic, both national and international, are available on board. Should you require aerogrammes or stationery, our crew will make them available to you.

TO FRESHEN UP: A selection of deodorants, perfumes, soaps, tissues and towels are available in the lavatories; also available are electric sockets for electric shavers. Toothbrushes, toothpaste and combs are available on request.

FIRST AID: Should you require any medical attention due to any pain or discomfort, please contact the cabin crew immediately. They are trained in first aid procedures and emergency care. A first aid kit is available on board.

DUTY FREE SHOPPING: A wide range of products are available on board in the Duty Free Shopping facility; and you can find the details of these in the accompanying literature. Please contact the cabin crew if you wish to make any purchase.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS: If your child aged between 7 and 12 is flying unaccompanied, please inform us while making the reservation. Our staff will be assigned to take care of your child’s requirements, safeguarding their passport, immigration and medical cards.

DISABLED PASSENGERS: Our ground and cabin crew will be happy to assist disabled or injured passengers in every way possible. Kindly inform us of the nature of the disability in advance while making the flight reservation to help us make the necessary arrangements.

INFANTS ON BOARD: We have a limited selection of baby food on board, plus bottles, teats, talcum powder and diapers. Should you have special requirements for your child, please inform us while making your flight reservation and we will endeavour to make arrangements. Our cabin staff will be happy to warm your baby feeding bottles for you. Our aircraft are fitted with baby bassinets which should be requested while making your reservation. If you are carrying a child on your lap, please ask the cabin crew for a child’s seat belt before take off.
Oman Air flies three NG B737-800 aircraft on international routes and to Salalah. This aircraft carries 154 passengers (12 in Business Class and 142 in Economy) and is operated by two pilots and six cabin attendants. Maximum range of this aircraft is 5,940 km, with an average cruising speed of 818 kilometres per hour.

Oman Air flies three NG B737-700 aircraft on international routes and to Salalah. This aircraft carries 114 passengers (12 in Business Class and 102 in Economy) and is operated by two pilots and six cabin attendants. Maximum range of this aircraft is 4,190 km, with an average cruising speed of 818 kilometres per hour.

Oman Air flies four ATR 42-500 aircraft. They carry 46 passengers and are operated by two Pratt & Whitney Canada PW 127 turboprop engines. Maximum range is 774 km, and normal cruising speed is 525 kilometres per hour.