



Marhaba to the Governorate of North Ash Sharqiyah

Beauty has an address-Oman



The Brand Oman image is one which incorporates elements of the nature of Oman into a unique symbol that represents the country. The initial design incorporated representations of a dhow (top right), turtle (bottom), frankincense smoke (top left) and mountains (centre). These images were then developed into the calligraphic Arabic word “Oman”. Choosing a palette of colours enabled the emphasis of the everyday scenes that make Oman unique. Here our range of colours highlight the leisure that can be enjoyed in Oman; Salalah's khareef, Oman's seas and the purple that envelops the sky before dawn breaks over the desert.

We are proud of our Brand Oman and hope you will recognise it as you travel through our beautiful and hospitable country.

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The Governorate of North Ash Sharqiyah

The genuine welcome you will receive from the people of the Governorate of North Ash Sharqiyah is matched by the extraordinary scenery of this region. Mountains of 2,000 meters gaze down onto a sea of golden sinuous sand dunes of the Rimal Ash Sharqiyah. Scattered date oasis surround ancient mud brick settlements, which invite leisurely exploration. Dark night skies allow you to enjoy the stars as they have been from time immemorial. Come to our region and give your senses an experience to remember.

Forts and Castles



Al Minterib Castle

Just on the edge of the Ramlat As Sharqiyah is Al Minterib Castle, less than 3 kilometers south of the Shell Petrol Station on the main Sur-Bidbid road. The builders of this small fort were economical with the use of wood, saving its expense and problems with the decay; the woodless solution was to create corridors with barrel-vaulted ceilings made from Sarooj, the local lime plaster. Make a stop here before you enter the Ramlat As Sharqiyah.



Al Yahmadi Castle

Al Yahmadi Castle was built during the 19th century by Sheikh Hafiz bin Saeed Maskari on the edge of Al Yahmadi village, just 400 meters east of the main Sur-Bidbid Road.

This is a fortified 2-story house with a prominent tower to enable a view over the close by date palms. The upper story has many musket portals protection to the nearby falaj.

Beyond the castle, the date oasis is well tended and adds interest to a visit here.

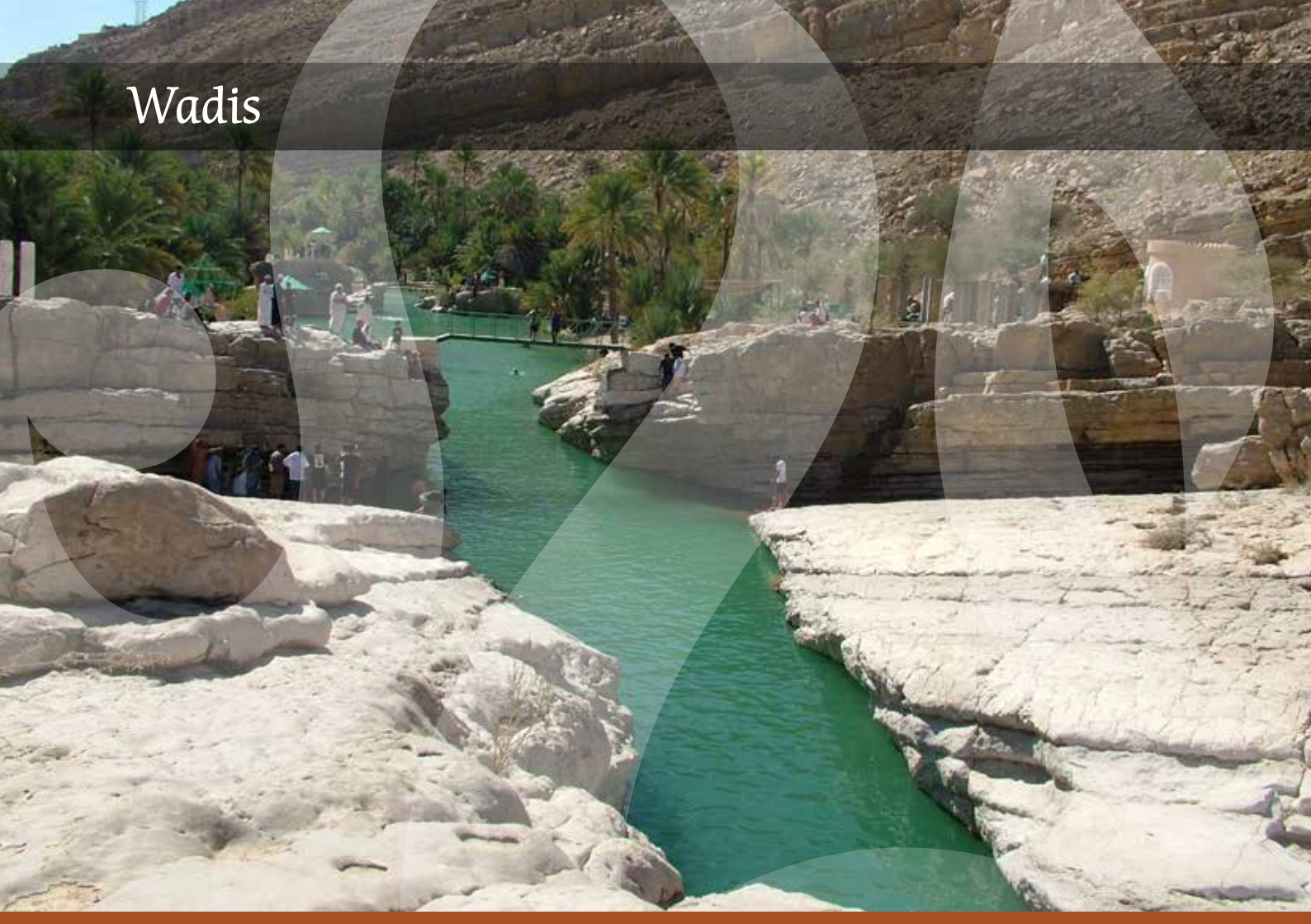


Al Rawdhah Castle

About 6 kilometers south-west of the Mudhaibi junction on the Bidbid-Sur Road, Al Rawdhah Castle is one of Oman's most charming small castles. Believed to have been built during the later part of the 17th century, the castle sits on a small hill overlooking the extensive date oasis of Al Rawdhah. The castle's two main floors each, have several small rooms; a climb up a narrow staircase with a barrel vault ceiling will bring you to the roof where the views over the date palms make it worth the climb.



Wadis





Wadi bani Khalid

Cascading through narrow channels in Wadi bani Khalid, the perennial water flow from the southern eastern Hajar Mountains has been dammed to create the reservoirs needed to irrigate the date palms in the valley below at Muqil. These clear pools of water, populated by freshwater fish, also provide a backdrop for picnics. Around the pools, charming vistas and short walks through small valleys and abandoned houses encourage visitors to enjoy the beauty of this location.

Wadi At Tayyin

Wadi At Tayyin runs northwest from the Sur-Bidbid road some 15 kilometers northwest of its junction to Mudhaybi. The excellent new road through the heart of the wadi encourages exploration towards the widely scattered town of Mehlah, which is the principal settlement. Here the wadi spreads out, creating wide vistas as it cuts through the limestone to its north, which rise to 1,800 meters, and ophiolite to its south. Taking the tarmac road south of Mehlah will lead you to Wadi Dima. Northwest from Mehlah deep valleys cut into the limestone, this route is mainly on a rough road which meanders eventually into the town of Ibra, a journey over just 100 kilometers.



Wadi Dima

One of Oman's most dramatic areas, and still perhaps its least explored is Wadi Dima.

Set in the great mass of mountains northwest of Ibra, this is an area of small villages and beautiful date oasis wrapped in the chocolate colored ophiolite mountains of northern Oman.

The roads here are new and from the junction at Hayma on the Sur-Bidbid Road the journey of exploration northwards takes place.

The route alternately follows wadis which invariably have pools of water and then climbs over the mountains, to descend into the next wadi.

The collection of villages and oasis centered on Al Hail village is an ideal area to explore in more depth.





Ain Waghla

Deep in the heart of the Wiliyat Dima and Tayyin is one of Oman's water springs Ain Waghla, which seeps out from the ophiolite mountains. A drive of some 30 kilometers will take you from the Dima and Tayyin junction on the Bidbid-Ibra road near the turn to Samad As Shan, to the small village of Miss. A small turn south in the heart of the village will take you across a small Falaj, and just after that a turn left, will bring you to a rough track which, by taking the right fork, will lead you to a small area to park your car. Here, a walk along the wadi through the dark chocolate mountains meanders past a series of pools, including startlingly blue clear water with a precipitate of white calcite, to the area where small springs of water create the flow downstream. The walk can be less than 2 kilometres, though it does require some fitness and a supply of drinking water; but the stark beauty and overwhelming silence is ample reward.

Khabat Bani Saad

A drive of some 30 kilometers will take you from the Dima and Tayyin junction on the Bidbid-Ibra road near the turn to Samad As Shan to the administrative center of Mehlah . The highway west goes past some dramatic scenery and on for some 35kilometers to the charming village of Khabat bani Saad. The oasis of the village spreads either side of the wadi with a mixture of Date Palms and animal fodder, the village is one of the areas more fertile places.



Muqal Cave

Muqal Cave in the upper reaches of the water pools of Wadi bani Khalid is a small fissure in above the water, which is just accessible. A walk of about 20minutes from the parking area in at the far western part of Wadi bani Khalid with take you to the mouth of the cave, above a flight of stairs on the eastern side of the wadi. In the darkness the sound of flowing water can be heard. The interior has a small colony of bats who venture out at night to hunt amongst the date palms in the wadi below.

Sands and Dunes



Rimal Ash Sharqiyyah

Stretching North to South for some 170 kilometers, the Rimal Ash Sharqiyyah is Oman's classic coastal desert. This is a sea of sand, formed by the prevailing south-north wind direction; that in the north has created vast linear sand dunes over a length of 55 kilometers. The northern dunes are primarily silica in origin with a multi-hued golden sheen from a surface oxidization, while the southern Dunes are quartz-rich and carbonate sand, pale in colour. Throughout the winter months, a sharp night-time drop in temperature may cause mist whose moisture can sustain both animals and plants. In the south, just below the more mobile dune surface is an older, fossil desert made up of aeolian dunes. The local population of Bedouin is now largely permanently settled, though retaining the characteristics of hospitality and friendliness so prized in the Arab world.



Huwayia village

The dark green of the date palm leaves in Huwayia village contrast splendidly with the golden sand dunes of the desert, which almost completely surrounds this village. Just under 9 kilometers by road south-west of Minterib Castle, this village relies on a small falaj to provide water to irrigate the farms. The mix of crops here has undergone a rapid change, as a reduction of water from the falaj has caused a reduction in the number of date palms and an increase in fodder crops.



Al Ghabbi village

Less than a kilometer south-west of the Shell Petrol Station on the main Sur-Bidbid road is the large village of Al Ghabbi. The small square just west of the date palms is the start of the over ground section of Al Ghabbi Falaj. Flowing below the canopy, a walk of less than a kilometer will take you through a surprisingly cool, verdant oasis with private fields of banana, lime and papaya, jostling for space under the arched leaves of the date palms.

Old Buildings





Mudharib town

Just under 1,500 meters northeast from the Al Maha Petrol Station at Mudharib is the core of the old town, overlooked to the east by a small conical hill surmounted by the ruin of a fortification, and to the west by a number of mud brick mansions and meeting halls. This impressive collection of buildings gives a taste of the interesting sights in Mudharib. A small museum just off the old market square gives an insight into the town's culture and history. The falaj running off to the south of the square has a sluice gate to control the water flow. The oasis is varied with a dense canopy of date palms interspersed with fields of fodder for livestock.



Al Minzifah village

On the western side of the shallow Wadi Ibra, which runs through the town of Ibra, is the abandoned town of mud brick mansions, Al Minzifah.

Though only 1,300meters south-west of Ibra's Souq, the area of Al Minzifah is rural in character.

The fields, which are clearly suffering from drought, surround these old houses and originally provided one of Oman's key crops, dates. The houses, many of which date from the period of prosperity in the early 19th century, are of 2 or occasionally 3 stories built from local stone cemented and plastered with local juss plaster. Care should be taken not to move the material of these fragile buildings.

Al Qiblatain Mosque

Al Qiblatain Mosque lies on the western side of the shallow Wadi Ibra which runs through the town Ibra. Along the rough wadi, the mosque is set on a small hill just 1,600 meters north from Al Minzifah. The name Qiblatain (two Qiblas – the prayer direction) derives from local accounts of the mosque having been built during the lifetime of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) during a period when the direction of prayer was Jerusalem. After the Al Qiblatain mosque was built, the direction of prayer was changed to Mecca and therefore this mosque's qibla also underwent the change. This mosque is considered to be amongst the world's oldest Mosques.





Shanah Tombs

Taking the route to Wadi Naam and Bateen from the Bidbid-Sur road in Ibra's centre, a drive of some 60 kilometers will bring you to the collection of small villages at Shanah. Here, on the low hills, are a wide scattering of Oman's 'Beehive' tombs dated to the centuries around 3,000BC. Associated with the tombs, a number of excavated items included copper arrow heads and soft stone bowls.

Bidiya Museum

Opposite Minterib Castle is the stone faced building which houses the small private Bidiya museum. Step inside to see exhibits in handmade glass cases which provide a glimpse of the world that has almost disappeared from this region of Oman.



Souqs

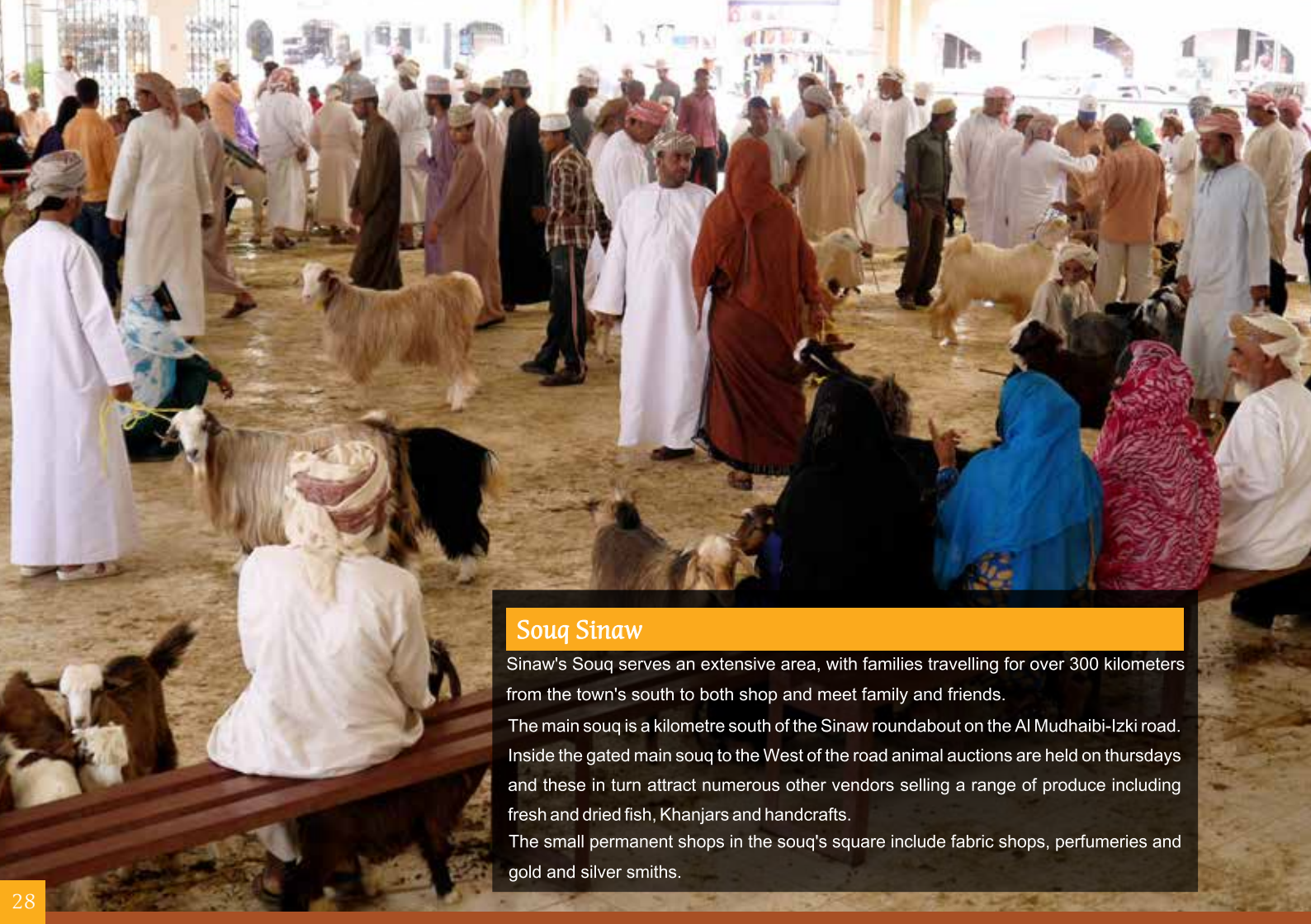




Souq Ibra

Each Wednesday the souq in Ibra becomes a magnet for shoppers from throughout the region, especially ladies, for a section of the souq is dedicated exclusively to ladies and their needs.

Less than half a kilometer south of the Shell Petrol Station on the road towards Sur, the souq is spread along both sides of the road before the Ibra Polyclinic. On the west side is a covered fruit and vegetable market, with all manner of other interesting products for sale, including gold and silver shops and ironmongery. The east side has the ladies souq, with clothing fabric, readymade garments, perfumes and general accessories. Arrive early and you are sure to get what you want.



Souq Sinaw

Sinaw's Souq serves an extensive area, with families travelling for over 300 kilometers from the town's south to both shop and meet family and friends.

The main souq is a kilometre south of the Sinaw roundabout on the Al Mudhaibi-Izki road. Inside the gated main souq to the West of the road animal auctions are held on thursdays and these in turn attract numerous other vendors selling a range of produce including fresh and dried fish, Khanjars and handcrafts.

The small permanent shops in the souq's square include fabric shops, perfumeries and gold and silver smiths.

Folk Dances

Celebrations in Oman are frequently held in public, for everyone to enjoy. Each village and town has a traditional location for these, be it a large or small area. Look for these events during public holidays, most especially Eids, or if a major event such as a camel or horse race is held.



Camel Racing

Displays of skill on camels are held throughout Oman during the days at the end of the week.

These are often informal events, all the more interesting because of this. Al Ardha involves two men mounting their camels simultaneously and travel beside each other at full speed along a course. To control a Camel under these conditions is a much admired skill.





Equestrian Events

Horsemanship is very much an Arab sport and no more so than on pure bred Arab horses. Oman, which was once a major horse supplier to India, still takes pride in ownership and riding ability.

At events in rural areas during the days at the end of the week, each horse is usually decorated, perhaps with silver that jangles as the horse moves or with bright woven trappings. With more than 30 horses at an event, the sight is impressive. The finale is a high speed ride-by, where the more adventurous riders will stand on the horse as it gallops along.



Activities (Camping)

The dark velvet arc of the star-studded sky over the Rimal Ash Sharqiyyah envelopes the golden sand dunes after the sun sinks on the western horizon. Here is one of the world's most memorable areas of Dark Sky, those precious regions with minimal light pollution and with the Rimal Ash Sharqiyyah a magical setting. Your tent snuggled in between the dunes allows the mesmerizing sight of the Milky Way overhead, occasional shooting stars and, if your companions allow, a silence so absolute that it seems physical. Perhaps, if you are fortunate, your alarm call in the morning will be the gentle rumble as a mother camel calls her calf.





Accommodation (Hotels)

Stay in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate for more time to explore the local attractions. Small comfortable hotels located in the center of the city encourage you to walk and explore.

If you wish to relax, then larger hotels either in the city or in rural surroundings will give you a chance to enjoy their landscaped gardens.

North Ash Sharquiyah Contacts Info

Royal Oman Police (ROP)

North Ash Sharuiyah	Al Mudhaibi	Al Mudhaibi Police Station	+968	25578099
North Ash Sharuiyah	Bidiya	Bidiya Police Station	+968	25583099
North Ash Sharuiyah	Ibra	Ibra Police Station	+968	25570099, 25570120

Hospitals and Medical Centres

North Ash Sharuiyah	Al Mudhaibi	Al Mudhaibi Health Centre	+968	25578991
North Ash Sharuiyah	Al Qabil	Al Qabil Health Centre	+968	25581167
North Ash Sharuiyah	Bidiya	Bidya Hospital	+968	25583998
North Ash Sharuiyah	Dima wa Taiyeen	Dima wa Taiyeen Hospital	+968	25560046
North Ash Sharuiyah	Ibra	Muscat Pharmacy	+968	25570473
North Ash Sharuiyah	Samad Al Shan	Samad Al Shan Hospital	+968	25526344
North Ash Sharuiyah	Sinaw	Muscat Pharmacy	+968	25524810
North Ash Sharuiyah	Sinaw	Sinaw Hospital	+968	25524338
North Ash Sharuiyah	Wadi Bani Khalid	Wadi Bani Khalid Hospital	+968	25556222
North Ash Sharuiyah	Wadi Bani Khalid	Wadi Bani Khalid Hospital	+968	25505005

North Ash Sharquiyah Contacts Info

Hotels and Tour Operators

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North Ash Sharquiyah	Al Qabil	Al Qabil Guest House	+968 25581243
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	1000 Nights Camp	+968 99387654
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Al Bar Camp	+968 99332264
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Al Raha Camp	+968 25583130
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Al Rahala Camp	+968 99336273
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Arabian Oryx Camp	+968 99311338
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Bidiya Camp	+968 99332914
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Desert Nights Camp	+968 92818388
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Desert Safari Camp	+968 92000538
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Golden Sands hotel & resort	+968 99445092
North Ash Sharquiyah	Bidiya	Orient Nights Guest House	+968 25584233
North Ash Sharquiyah	Ibra	Al Sharqiya Sands Hotel	+968 25587099
North Ash Sharquiyah	Ibra	Ibra Guest House	+968 25571666
North Ash Sharquiyah	Ibra	Ibra Hotel	+968 25571873
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Dear Visitor:

In order to make your visit to Oman a perfect and unforgettable experience, we kindly ask that you observe the following guidelines closely.

General Guidelines

- Please observe the social customs of the Omani society and dress decently.
- Do not make any noise and keep music volume to a minimum when passing through the popular neighborhoods or residential areas.
- Do not photograph people when entering private properties without obtaining prior permission.
- Keep your environment clean. Dispose of litter or garbage in the designated dustbins.
- Make sure that your tour guide holds a valid license from the Ministry of Tourism.

When you visit any village, please:

- Protect the flora and fauna. Don't pick any fruits or vegetables as they are private property and a source of income for the locals.
- The Falaj system is the main source for drinking and irrigation water. Do not pollute it in any way.
- Stick to the specified trails at any tourist destination that you visit.
- Don't park or stop your vehicle in any place other than the designated parking space.

Cruises:

- Deal only with tourist boats licensed to do so, as they are equipped with the safety equipments prescribed by the law.

Visiting the Desert:

- Use a specialized tour guide. It's preferable to make the journey in more than one vehicle and to have GPS devices, along with the necessary safety means and equipments.
- Visiting hours for forts are subject to change.

Off-Road Travel:

- Use only 4WD vehicles and make sure you have adequate water, food, fuel and spare tyres. Check your 4WD system for proper functioning. Inform a close friend of your destination and the expected date of your return.
- Don't camp in the Wadi beds. Flash floods can occur occasionally.

Trekking:

- When trekking in the mountain trails, choose suitable shoes and make sure you have enough food and water. Don't trek alone, and make sure you know about the roughness and length of such tracks beforehand.

General Instructions to visitors of handicrafts showrooms:

- 1- Don't touch or move any of the artifacts on display to avoid any damage.
- 2- Photography is allowed but without touching the exhibited items.
- 3- Don't leave children unattended and make sure they don't touch or move the displayed potteries so as not to be broken.
- 4- Do not dispose of litter or garbage inside the exhibited items.
- 5- The site is equipped with surveillance system to ensure the safety of the collection and to prevent theft.
- 6- Don't write, draw or put any stickers on the exhibited items.
- 7- While roaming, be careful not to hit any of the artifacts on display.
- 8- Use the proper shoes when you visit any archeological sites and avoid any wooden or tapered heel shoes that may cause erosion or damage to such sites.
- 9- Don't touch or take away any stones from the archeological sites.

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