



Socotra and Oman

with Rich Pagen and Kristin Wornson of Inside Expeditions

Brochure Updated September 2023

Book Socotra, Oman, or the Combo Trip

Socotra | 10 DAYS | FEBRUARY 10 – 19, 2025

Oman | 13 DAYS | FEBRUARY 18 – MARCH 2, 2025

Socotra & Oman | 21 DAYS | FEBRUARY 10 – MARCH 2, 2025 *with \$1,500 combo savings*

TRAVEL@MIRUADVENTURES.COM

Go with Rich and Kristin

of Inside Expeditions



Kristin Wornson

MARINE BIOLOGIST | ARTIST | NATURALIST

Kristin's love of beauty and wild things has taken her from skimming the surface of mudflats on a surfboard while researching nudibranch foraging behavior, to building a successful jewelry business that incorporates tiny plants and wildflowers.

"Exotic landscapes combined with ancient architecture, mosques, castles, and some of the oldest markets in the Arab world is sure to offer even the most seasoned traveller something to marvel at! I'm so excited to be leading curious adventurers through these lesser-explored destinations!"

ORNITHOLOGIST | MARINE BIOLOGIST | NATURALIST

Rich's career as a biologist has involved an array of fascinating wildlife fieldwork, both on land and at sea. Through it all, exploration and sharing nature with others has been his central passion.

"One of the most isolated continental landforms on the planet, Socotra is a one-of-a-kind naturalist's paradise. We'll follow that with Oman—one of the last undiscovered parts of the Middle East, where a rich history melds seamlessly with modern life. I can't wait to lead these two fascinating trips!"



Rich Pagen

Adventure highlights

- Spend a full week exploring far-flung Socotra, a beautiful and unspoiled island that is home to numerous rare and endemic species.
- Discover Socotra's dramatic landscapes, including imposing mountains, magical valleys, mysterious caves, and towering sand dunes.
- Attend the bustling livestock market in Nizwa, Oman and tour the imposing 17th-century fort.
- Gaze over amazing vistas from the balcony walk at the edge of Wadi Nakr – the Grand Canyon of Arabia.
- Visit the ruins of Al-Baleed and Sumhuram, these ancient port cities have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites in the Land of Frankincense.
- Tour the lovely seaside city of Salalah and cosmopolitan Muscat, Oman's capital.

Socotra and Oman

SOCOTRA & OMAN | FEBRUARY 2025

This unique itinerary combines two fascinating lesser-visited destinations: isolated Socotra Island and the Sultanate of Oman. Begin in Socotra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is renowned for its biodiversity and wealth of endemic species. In fact, over one third of its plant life is unique to the island – and its landscapes are equally noteworthy. Hike along majestic valleys dotted with groves of dragon blood, cucumber, bottle, and frankincense trees. Explore extensive cave systems with fantastical rock formations. Climb towering sand dunes, and swim or snorkel from gorgeous white-sand beaches bathed in warm turquoise waters. The second leg of this adventure visits the Sultanate of Oman, the oldest independent state in the Arab world. Oman boasts ancient archaeological sites, soaring mountain ranges, wind-blown deserts, bustling markets, charming cities, and terraced gardens lush with fruit trees, roses, and fragrant frankincense.



Socotra itinerary

An active level of fitness will be required for this departure as many of the walks and hikes are steep and nearly always over uneven terrain. A good amount walking/hiking fitness is important as we will be exploring on foot for periods of 2+ hours at a time, and in the heat as there is very little shade.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 10, 2025

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Arrive in Abu Dhabi and transfer to our group hotel to meet with Rich, Kristin, and your fellow travelers for dinner and overnight.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Abu Dhabi / Hadibo, Socotra

After breakfast, board our short flight to Socotra. Our first stop is Ayhaft Canyon National Park, famous for its abundance of endemic trees, plants, and birds. We'll find several large, freshwater pools in the canyon, known as the wadi, where we have the opportunity to swim or soak. The wadi is filled with interesting flora, including tamarind trees, cucumber trees, and a wide variety of birds such as Socotra sparrow, Socotra sunbird, and both Socotra and Somali starlings. Check in to our first camp.

WEDNESDAY – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – 16

During our time in Socotra, our days will be expeditionary as we explore the island together. We'll be staying in tents for all but one night of this itinerary (the final night), and moving camps one – or maybe two – times for different views, scenery, and experiences.

Following are areas and places we hope to explore on the spectacular island of Socotra:

Diksam Plateau - Where the limestone gorge drops nearly 2,300 feet to the valley floor, walk along the edge of the gorge and see numerous groves of endemic dragon's blood trees.

Derhur Canyon - Lying along a dramatic chasm, slicing through solid granite, this lush canyon floor has been planted with palm trees and here we hope to find Bruce's green pigeons and laughing doves. Weather permitting, go for a hike amongst the many unusual and striking rock formations.

Firhmin Forest – Here we can find world's densest concentration of dragon's blood trees. Meet with locals to learn how they collect the precious red resin of these valuable trees.

Detwah Lagoon - This marine protected area is renowned for its magical landscapes and the tongue of white sand is surrounded by shallow, turquoise waters where stingrays are known to congregate along with a wide array of sea birds. Here we can swim in the warm waters and, with luck, spot spinner dolphins and cormorants.

Dihamri Bay - Dihamri Marine Protected Area is home to one of the richest coral reefs on the archipelago. Relax in palm leaf huts and swim or snorkel in Dihamri Bay. The spectacular snorkeling in this area can include sightings of parrotfish, moray eels, rays, sea urchins, and with luck, sea turtles.

Homhil Protected Area - Keep your camera ready for the fabulous vista of deep ravines and vast plains on our drive to Homhil Protected Area. Stop at Qaria Lagoon, the largest on the island, to see flamingos, herons, greenshanks, and other waterfowl. Once at Homhil, choose to take a variety of nature walks, one of which will take you to a viewpoint with a natural pool and nice view of the village below, backdropped by the ocean. Here, find a great number of frankincense and bottle trees.

Hoq Cave - The limestone plateau and mountains create extensive cave systems on Socotra, the largest being Hoq Cave, home to amazing rock formations and archaeological finds that suggest the cave played a crucial role in the history of the island. Inside the caves, admire huge stalagmites, stalactites, and a freshwater pool.

Arher Beach - At Arher, the westerly winds have produced immense sand dunes along the sheer rock faces standing nearly 500 feet high. Here we can climb the massive dune for some exciting exercise, or go for a relaxing swim in the beautiful surroundings.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Hadibo

After another of expeditionary exploration on the island of Socotra, drive to Hadibo and check in to the Summerland Hotel for dinner and overnight.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Hadibo / Abu Dhabi, UAE

After a morning at leisure and lunch, board our flight to Abu Dhabi. Transfer to our group hotel and check in for dinner and overnight.

SOCOTRA TRAVELERS

Departing guests on Socotra may book flights home at any time on Wednesday, February 19, following your included overnight in Abu Dhabi on February 18.

OMAN TRAVELERS

Incoming guests for Oman may arrive at any time on February 18. You'll be transferred to our group hotel in Abu Dhabi for dinner and overnight with Rich, Kirstin, and your fellow travelers.

COMBO TRIP TRAVELERS

After transferring to our group hotel in Abu Dhabi on February 18, enjoy dinner and an overnight with your trip leaders and fellow travelers before departing for Oman on February 19.

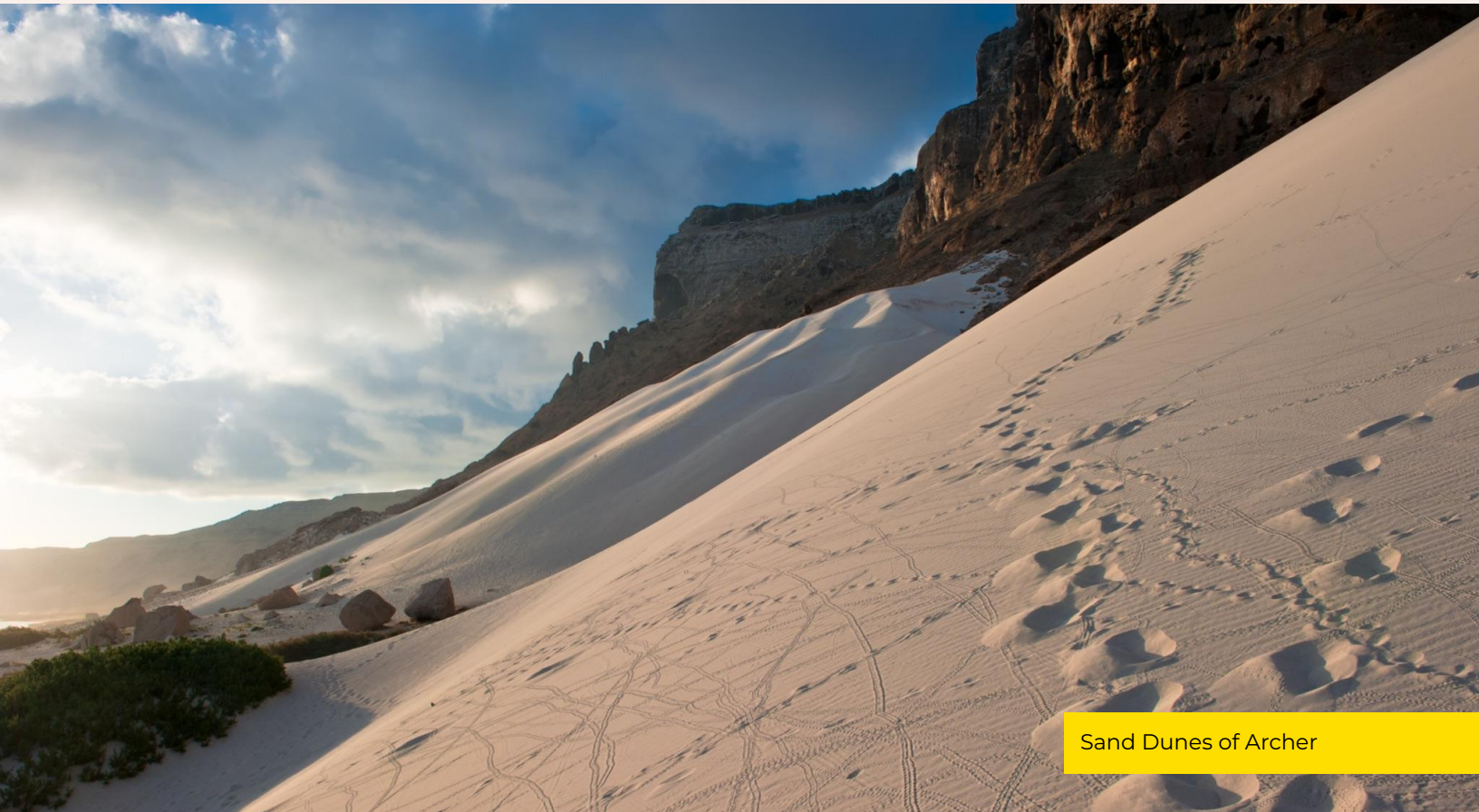




White Sand Beach



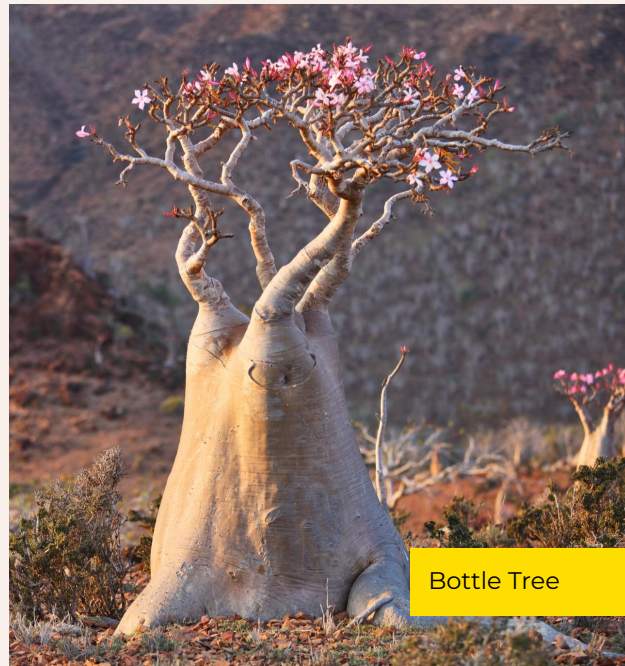
Native Dragon Blood Tree



Sand Dunes of Archer



Hoq Cave



Bottle Tree



Oman Itinerary

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Incoming Oman travelers arrive in Abu Dhabi. Transfer to our group hotel and meet with Rich, Kristin, and your fellow travelers for dinner and overnight.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Abu Dhabi / Salalah, Oman

Today, board our flight to Salalah. Check in to Al Baleed Salalah by Anantara and, time permitting, go on a short introductory tour of this lovely seaside city.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Salalah

Our day begins with a visit to the impressive Grand Mosque, then join a local archaeologist for a visit to the Al Baleed Archaeological Site, to view the remains of a city dating back nearly 4,000 years. The adjacent *Land of Frankincense Museum* chronicles human settlement in the area. Then head to Mughsail Beach to view seawater gushing through limestone “blow-holes” during high tide. After lunch at a restaurant along the coast, visit Taqa, a fishing village with an interesting 19th-century castle that is now a museum. Continue to Sumhuram, the ruins of an ancient port city dating back to the 4th-century BC. Then, learn about Salalah's most fragrant commodity with a walk along the ancient Frankincense Trail.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Salalah

Gear up for a full-day safari on 4x4 vehicles for a drive into the Dhofar Mountains. Make a stop at

the ‘evergreen Wadi Darbat’ for a relaxing stroll along the wadi bed, and be surrounded by herds of camels, goats, and cattle. Next, visit one of the world’s largest sinkholes, known as the “Well of Birds,” due to the great number of birds that frequent this location. Continue into the mountain range of Jebel Samhan, with views of the east coast to one side and the vast Qara mountain range to the other. Enjoy a picnic lunch and continue to the Qara mountain range, driving through scenic villages and landscapes, making numerous stops for photos. Return to Salalah for dinner and overnight.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

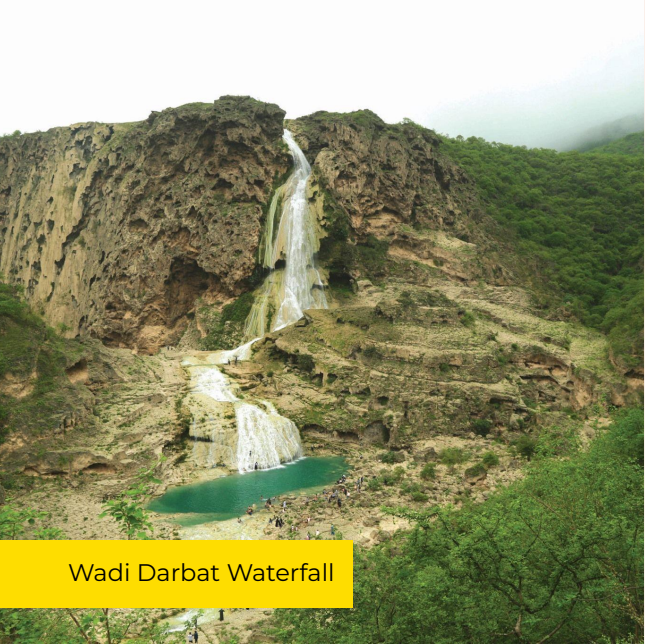
Salalah / Muscat

This morning, board our flight to Muscat. Browse the National Museum of Oman, the largest museum in the Sultanate, housing tens of thousands of artifacts that comprehensively tell the nation’s story. The state-of-the-art building is situated across from the Sultan’s palace in Old Muscat, where some of the city’s most historical architecture can be found. This includes a number of landmarks that played an integral role in the Sultanate’s history, such as the Portuguese-built Jilali and Mirani forts, the old gates of Muscat, and several museums. Check in to the Chedi Muscat for dinner and overnight.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Muscat

Today, if conditions allow, board a local boat for a leisurely one-hour cruise to the Damaniyat Islands, a nature reserve. Upon arrival, spend time swimming, snorkeling, and exploring the island. After a full day, enjoy a sunset cruise back along the scenic coastline. The rest of the evening is at leisure, with dinner and overnight at the hotel.



Wadi Darbat Waterfall



Goat Market Auction



Grand Mosque



Nizwa 17th Century Fort



Sumhuram
Archaeological Site

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24**Muscat / Wahiba Sands**

Depart Muscat to Wahiba Sands, a vast region of massive undulating red and white sand dunes. The ever-changing patterns of the desert are a photographer's delight. Sunsets here are especially stunning. Check in to the Desert Nights Camp and settle in to your well-appointed tent, complete with en suite bathroom.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**Wahiba Sands / Jebel Akhdar**

After breakfast, visit Wadi Bani Khalid, a very interesting wadi, punctuated with caves and large pools that have a constant flow of water throughout the year. Continue along Wadi Al Madeen, a dry riverbed to Jebel Akhdar, the green jewel of the Al Hajjar mountain range, and a truly unique spot on the Arabian Peninsula. Jebel Akhdar is famed for its terraced fruit orchards and numerous natural springs. After lunch at an Iranian restaurant, check in to Alila Jabel Akhdar and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**Jebel Akhdar**

This morning, embark on a culinary adventure, beginning with a visit to the souk to select fresh vegetables, fruits, and meat, for a hands-on cooking demonstration. Return to the hotel and learn how to prepare your own Omani meal with guidance from the hotel's Arabic chef. After lunch, hike through several villages along valleys lined with terraces of pomegranate trees and rose bushes. At the end of the hike, meet local farmers to learn about life in this remote area.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27**Jebel Akhdar**

This morning, visit Jebel Shams, or Mountain of the Sun, the highest point in Oman. From here, enjoy the spectacular view into Wadi Nakhr, the Grand Canyon of Arabia. Stroll along the famous "balcony walk" where the canyon walls drop 3,000 feet to the valley below. In the afternoon, proceed to the village of Al Hamra, famous for its traditional clay houses and Misfah, considered to be one of the most beautiful villages in Oman.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28**Jebel Akhdar / Muscat**

After breakfast, depart overland for Nizwa to watch the festival-life Friday livestock auction. Then, visit the famous Nizwa Fort and Jabrin, the finest of Oman's castles, both built in the late 17th century. Jabrin was the seat of Omani learning and features some of Oman's finest ceiling paintings and beautifully executed woodcarvings. Enjoy lunch in Nizwa before returning to Muscat. En route, visit the village of Birkat Al Mauz for a walk through the lush green date plantations. Check in to the Chedi Muscat.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1**Muscat**

Today we visit the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, the largest mosque in Oman which can accommodate an impressive 20,000 worshippers. Featuring a blend of various architectural styles the mosque is highlighted with elaborate decorations, spectacular crystal chandeliers, and some of the largest handmade Persian rugs in the world. Then, visit the Royal Opera House and the natural history museum offering a comprehensive display of Oman's diverse terrain, geology, plants, insects, wild animals, and marine life. After lunch at a local restaurant, enjoy the rest of the day to explore on your own, or simply relax at the hotel. This evening, join your fellow travelers for a festive farewell dinner.

SUNDAY, MARCH 2**Muscat / Homeward**

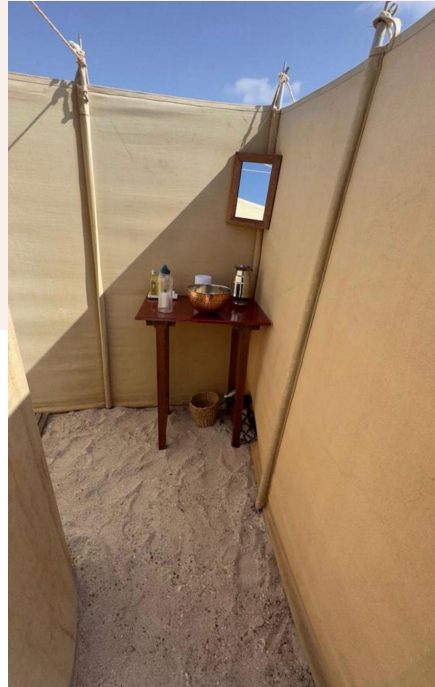
Transfer to the airport for your independent homeward flight.



Accommodations in Socotra

Socotra is a destination for adventurers and nature lovers. It is worth noting that the facilities are not like more modern and developed destinations due to limited infrastructure. During our time in Socotra, we will have six nights of simple tented camping. While we find this a unique opportunity to sleep with stunning views and under the stars, it may not be for everyone. The tents are quite nice, however basic. We will move camps once or twice, allowing us to experience a beach setting and an inland setting amongst the dragon's blood trees. Toilets are a hole in the ground and without plumbing. Showers are as shown. Beds are proper mattresses, however placed on the ground. *Additionally, the use of camps greatly reduces the time spent in vehicles traveling over bumpy roads.*

The Summerland Hotel, where we spend one night is basic but does provide air-conditioning and en suite bathrooms.



Accommodations in Oman

Rich in heritage and home to pristine coastline, craggy mountains, and miles of desert, much of Oman offers elegant opulence. Accommodation in Oman is impressive, with everything from deluxe tented hideaways in the desert to extravagant beach resorts featuring world-class spas. Our set of accommodations were carefully chosen for their services, location, uniqueness, and style.



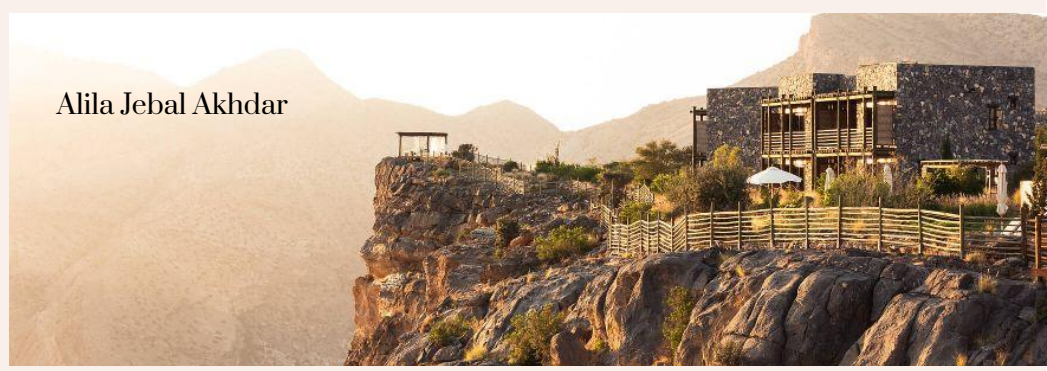
Chedi Muscat



Al Baleed Resort
Salalah by Anantara



Desert Nights Camp



Alila Jebal Akhdar

Why we love this trip



“This trip is a wonderful combination of vibrant cultural heritage & biological splendor! In Oman, I look forward to the mix of tradition & modernity - blending some of the oldest markets & mosques, with contemporary architecture, charming museums & cafe-lined avenues. And few places in the world boast the type of endemic diversity found on Socotra, with 37% of its plant species alone found nowhere else on earth! The geographic isolation & harsh climate have led to some of the more unique species in the world & standing under the canopy of the ancient & iconic Dragon’s blood tree is something I’m very much looking forward to!”

-Kristin

“What a fascinating contrast each section of this trip will be: Socotra an isolated, rustic and rarely-visited jewel of biodiversity; while Oman a desert haven awash in history, spectacular landscapes, and a rich culture. Join us on our adventure to Socotra, or Oman, or better yet... both!

-Rich

PRICE

Socotra

\$12,590 per person

(add \$2,490 for a single room)

Oman

\$11,490 per person

(add \$4,490 for a single room)

*Book Socotra & Oman
\$1,500 combo savings*

INCLUSIONS

- 9 nights accommodation on Socotra
- 12 nights accommodation on Oman
- 20 nights accommodation on the combo trip
- All meals, non-alcoholic beverages, and beer
- All excursions, transportation, and local guides
- Park fees and taxes
- Gratuities
- Internal air between Abu Dhabi/Socotra and Dubai/Salalah/Muscat.
- Arrival and departure transfers

Group size: 14 travelers



BOOK NOW

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