

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

NOMAD'S ROAD: Overlanders for Life

Episode 3: Oman, the Camping Paradise

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In Oman, we chose to visit the north only from the UAE border to the Indian Ocean and just drive south up to Masirah Island then go back to UAE. We've got for this a one month visa and it has been enough to visit Oman properly. As usual we took time to really appreciate the nature and the beauty offered by the Sultanate of Oman. We somehow had found the way we used to travel in Australia, setup our camp in peaceful nature and observe the Milky Way while eating around the campfire.



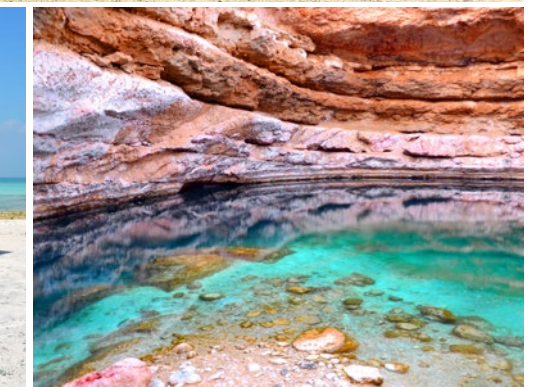
We have crossed the border at Al Ain and drove straight to our first target - Jebel Shams, the highest point of Oman. To go there, we have followed the advice from a friend of ours, driving off-road through magnificent landscapes, the tracks was not bad at all but the last climb to reach the top of the Al Hajar Mountain range was really hard; as we discovered our vehicle has gotten an overheating problem. After hours, we discovered this breathtaking view of the valley and the surrounding mountains and the impressive canyon located right on side of the road.

We continued our journey to Muscat through Nizwa by one of the most touristic routes and discovered some historical and traditional places. We have done a refreshing stop at the Oasis of Misfat - one of the must dos in Oman where you can walk through a typical Omani's village and continue by a small walk in the oasis along the irrigation canals that irrigate date palms' plantations. On the same day we got enough time to visit a few other places like the well-restored Bahla Fort and the nearby Nizwa Fort in middle of the city which



houses a large number of handicraft stalls and shops.

After a week of visiting the highlights point at north of Jebel Akhdar, we reached Muscat, the capital of Oman. Although the city is quite airy and it has a lot of green space, it is difficult for us to find a place where we can deploy our equipment for the night. We spent our day exploring the interesting points of the city and then we departed to the beaches to camp. It was on one of these beaches where we met Omani guides who gave us a few places not to miss during our stay. This complemented



the waves become fluorescent green due to a high concentration of micro planktons.

We spent a few days in the wadis to enjoy their peace and their grandiose environment, swimming in their water holes and taking advantage of the abundance of water to do our laundry. Wadi Arbeieen was majestic as the Wadi Tiwi was spectacular with its huge rocks piled in the valley flow leaving them beautifully clear water. We also did a tour of the popular Wadi Shaam where it is impossible to install a bivouac, hence our preference for wadis accessible by car.

After the second week to do 200km and a few stops, we reach Sur - a small town where we have seen a dhow factory and where we have done a refill of food and fuel for the rest of our stay on the East Coast. Our next destination, after a stop for few days on Ras Al Hadd and Ras Al Jinz known as beaches where green turtles come to lay, was Masirah Island.

This island is not really known and few tourists who go to this place know there is not much to see and do, except birds and beaches. But that's exactly what attracted us to this place. We love these places where there is nothing and especially not invaded because it means that nature is still intact and preserved. And indeed, spectacular nature was outstanding.

After leaving the capital we followed the coast up to the city of Sur on alternating days between wadis and beaches, not to mention a few places like the Sink Hole, the largest ones on the Arabian Peninsula and worth a visit because the water is translucent. If we have some advice for future travellers and adventurers, don't go camping Thursday and Friday night on the beach if you want have a quiet night. We experienced it twice — it's nice for meeting people but not for sleep. We really appreciated White Beach especially at night when

After crossing a beautiful network of dunes that stretches for kilometres we arrived at the jetty where we took the daily ferry to the island. We found a heavenly place on a white, sandy beach, separated from the road by large dunes. We were able to enjoy this beautiful, emerald coloured lagoon, and had the impression of having made a leap in time and be back on Poe Beach in New Caledonia. We spent our time on Masirah Island sunbathing and swimming in the reefs enjoying all the colourful fishes and corals. However I was a little disappointed by the lack of birds, especially because I came there for it. I've been able to observe



more birds at the jetty on the mainland before departure.

After these two wonderful days on Masirah Island, we drove back to Muscat then we spent our last three days in one of the best wadis we have visited during our tour of Oman. We have set up our camp in a meander of the river. We were completely alone in the middle of this nature in the depths of this wadi. Few vehicles came up here because of the fords and gravelly riverbed. We took advantage of the natural pools formed by the river to refresh us when the sun warmed the walls of the cliffs at the foot of which we were installed.

This stage in Oman during our world tour was one of the most relaxing we did, we found our way to travel during our tour of Australia in 2006. Although in most countries we never had any problems to deploy our roof tents at night, Oman will remain a country in which it was easier to camp, as well as being in enchanting places.

The Trastours is a family that has been overlanding the planet for as long as they can remember! Made up of Greg and Magali as well as their daughters Natasha and Anastasia, The Trastours is a family filled to the brim with an unstoppable sense of adventure for the ultimate goal - to explore the world. You can check out their next stop at www.nomadsroad.com or look for Nomads Road on Facebook and Twitter.

