

MAP OF OMAN



AL WUSTA

Some of the longest and most beautiful beaches in Oman can be found in Al Wusta Governorate, which is located in the middle of the Sultanate. The governorate stretches from Oman's east coast right to the edge of the famous Empty Quarter, one of the largest sand deserts in the world. The governorate's wilayats are Haima, Mahut, Ad Duqm and Al Jazir. Al Wusta is known for its varied terrain, with high mountains, golden sand dunes and valleys of Prosopis trees where many unique wild plants grow. Al Wusta is a great destination for people who love to explore nature, with opportunities to see endangered Arabian Oryx, the rare Nubian Ibex, as well as hundreds of migratory bird species that travel through the region en route to Africa or Asia.

For accommodation, you can either camp at any one of a number of scenic spots, or base yourself at a hotel in Haima or Duqm and make day-trips. Distances between villages can be quite long so make sure you have plenty of food and water with you at all times.

HOW DO YOU REACH AL WUSTA?

If you're driving it's best to have a 4WD as there are many locations in Al Wusta that are not accessible in a saloon car. From Muscat you can reach Al Wusta Governorate by road via the desert road that connects the wilayat of Adam and Thumrait. Alternatively, there is a coastal road from Sur which is slower, but offers spectacular scenery and a gentle sea breeze. The quickest way is to fly from Muscat International Airport to Ad Duqm Airport which is located in the heart of Al Wusta.

DISCOVER AL WUSTA



DAY 1

Start your first day by exploring the picturesque coastline, where you will find beautiful beaches, local fishermen, huge numbers of seabirds and idyllic coastal villages. A great place to start is Ad Duqm beach, which stretches for more than 5 kilometers over soft sands and blue waters. From here travel south down the coast until you get to the turn-off for Al Markaz beach, where you will find a secluded 1km stretch of white sand, bordered by sheer cliffs that drop straight into the ocean.

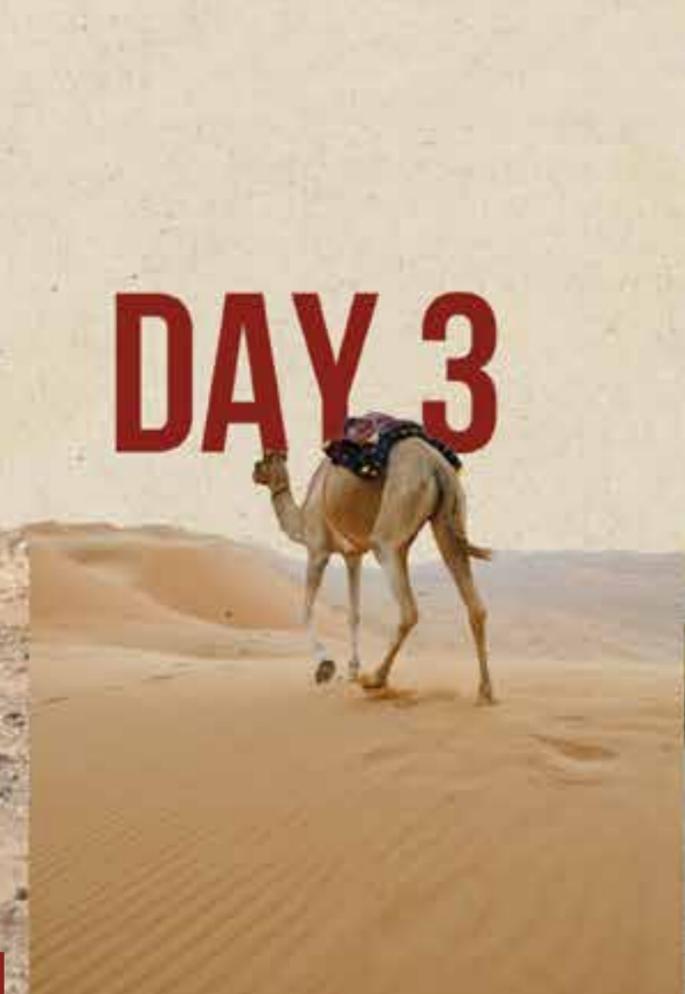
From Markaz beach, rejoin the main road heading south and follow the directions to Ras Madrakah, which is another spectacular beach, offering opportunities to camp, or simply enjoy the sun set before heading back to your hotel.



DAY 2

Start your journey along the Haima-Duqm, road looking for a sign that will lead you to the Al Wusta Wildlife Reserve where you can see and learn about the Arabian Oryx in Wadi Jaa'luni, the headquarters for the resettlement project of this endangered animal. You will definitely need a 4WD here due to the roughness of the terrain. The Office for Conservation of the Environment, which directly oversees the project, can provide more information.

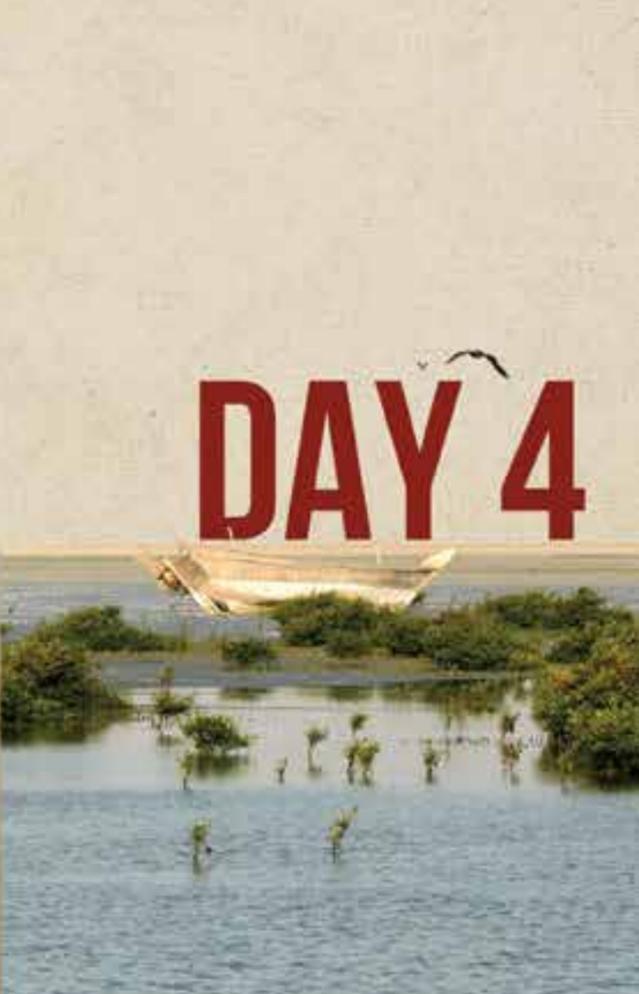
After the Wildlife Reserve, return to Ad Duqm and visit the famous Rock Gardens. Here you will find a spectacular array of limestone that has been shaped by the wind for thousands of years, resulting in some truly bizarre shapes and positions. This is the closest you will get to feeling like you are on another planet and there are some truly incredible photo opportunities as the sun begins to set.



DAY 3

On day 3 we recommend spending some time in the wilayat of Haima where if you time it right you can experience one of the famous camel races. This cultural celebration brings together large numbers of breeders and regular fans and should not be missed. For more information on timings, visit the website of the Oman Camel Racing Federation.

In the afternoon, take your 4WD and explore the desert dunes around the fringes of the empty quarter. Exploring this part of the world is an adventure in itself, and we recommend always travelling in groups of at least 2 vehicles. If you are on your own, remember to drive safely and always stay within sight of the road.



DAY 4

This is your chance to head to the Northern coastline of the Al Wusta Governorate, where you will find a number of spectacular bays, as well as Mahut Island. This spot is one of the most popular for nature lovers due to the enormous flocks of birds and rich marine life such as fish, crabs, dolphins and more who all congregate around the extensive mangrove swamps. There are a lot of different areas to explore here, and friendly locals will happily take tourists out in their boats for a closer look at the island itself for a small fee.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

- Please observe Omani customs and dress modestly.
- Use an appropriate SUV on mountain routes and ensure proper operation of the vehicle's 4WD systems before undertaking any such trips.
- Ensure you have adequate water, food and fuel.
- Always inform a family member, friend, or acquaintance of your destination and expected date of your return.
- Do not camp in wadi beds; flash floods are a common occurrence.
- When entering private property, please ask for permission before taking any photographs or eating fruits from any nearby farms.
- Keep your environment clean by disposing of litter in the designated dustbins.

This itinerary can be shortened or extended depending on the time you have to explore the governorate.