

July, 2017

*United Arab Emirates  
& Oman*



WHAT to DO – WHERE to STAY – WHERE to EAT  
fun & luxury trips with your kids

## **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

The United Arab Emirates, most people think of Dubai when mentioning the emirates. But Dubai is just one emirate. There are six more emirates to discover and explore when visiting this fascinating country.

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates has the best and highest of everything. And is not afraid to break other records. In Dubai you can find anything, with its huge shopping malls. The other emirates are much lesser known, but just as beautiful. We visited 3 of the 7 emirates. One longer than the other. But you always have to leave something in a country to come back for.

We loved the difference and uniqueness of the emirates. It is a very easy country to travel to with your children. Everything is well organized and everything can be found or bought.

### **PLACES**

Abu Dhabi  
Dubai  
Ras Al Khaimah



### **ABU DHABI**

Abu Dhabi is the capital of the United Arab Emirates. It is not the largest city that's Dubai. We didn't have lot of time in Abu Dhabi as we decided to only visit for one day and stay in neighboring emirate Dubai. However, if we had more time, we would have spent here a day or two. There is plenty to see and do in the largest of the Emirates. One thing my boys would have loved was go to Ferrari world. Unfortunately for them we had to skip that.

The reason we came here was to visit and admire the Sheikh Zayed Mosque. It is the largest mosque in the United Arab Emirates. The building complex covers an area of more than 12 hectares, exclusive of the garden and parking lot. Children can visit the mosque with their parents. Somewhat older

girls (our daughter was 11) as well as women in general are asked to wear an Abaya. Abaya's can be borrowed at the women's entrance. There is a separate women and men's entrance. The mosque is really incredibly beautiful. It holds one of the largest carpets in the world. Children and adults, for that matter, are not allowed, to touch, hug or kiss each other inside the premises of the mosque. Even if your young children will grab your hand you will be told not to touch inside the mosque.



### **ABU DHABI BUCKET LIST**

- Visit the Sheik Zayed Grand Mosque.



### **DUBAI**

Dubai is the largest and most populous city of the United Arab Emirates. With year-round sunshine, beautiful beaches, and luxury hotels. And let's not forget out-of-this world shopping malls. Dubai is a place to visit any time of year. And if you are looking for anything, you will find it in Dubai. English is widely spoken. It is a tolerant and cosmopolitan emirate and all visitors are welcome. Even more so children.

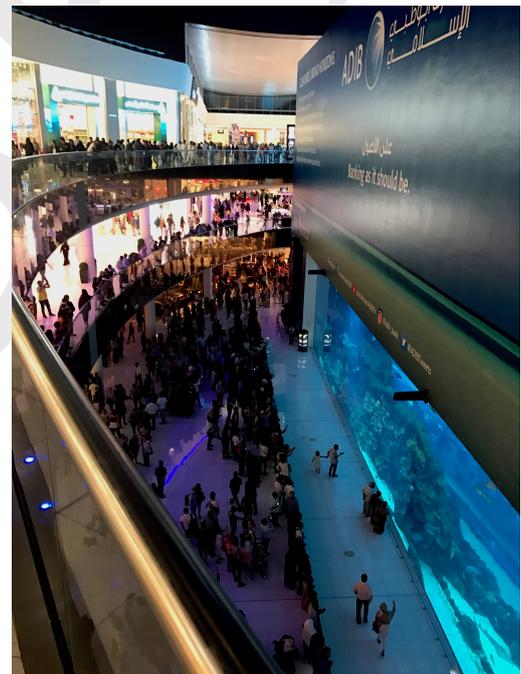
There are plenty of things to see and do in Dubai for children of all ages. All luxury hotels have pools and most of them have kids club as well. Outside of the hotels, you can go indoor skiing, skating or go-karting just to name a few activities. There are several wild water parks inside of the city and many amusement parks just outside the city. But just going to one of the malls is an

attraction in itself for most of the kids. The Dubai Mall is one of the world's largest shopping malls, it has Kidzania with tons of activities to do, the Dubai Aquarium & Underwater zoo, they'll be able to see the Dubai Dino inside of the Souk Dome and watch the Dubai fountain right next to the Burj Khalifa.

If you plan on going to the Atlantis Water park we have a few advises, try to go as early as possible. It gets very crowded during the day. When arriving early you can do most slides without having to wait very long in queue. Second, you don't have to bring towels. Towels can be rented at the Atlantis and saves you a lot of carrying around wet stuff. Thirdly book your tickets online in advance and skip the lines when arriving at the park. Atlantis is really great fun for the kids. We stayed there for half a day. And that was more than enough. After doing all the slides, it got way to busy to enjoy the water.

### DUBAI BUCKET LIST

- Visit the Dubai Mall;
- See the Dubai fountains;
- Pay a visit to the Burj Khalifa;
- Visit the Dubai Mall Dinosaur;
- Visit the Dubai mall Aquarium;
- Go to Atlantis Water Park;
- Go skiing at Ski Dubai;
- Take a walk at Dubai Miracle Garden;
- Go to Kite Beach;
- Watch camels racing;
- Visit the Dubai Marina.



### STAY

#### **The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina** **- Awarded with the Travel in Style with Kids label**

Address: Dubai Marina - Dubai –  
 United Arab Emirates  
 + (971) 4 399 4141  
<http://www.westinminaseyahi.com>

Price range: \$\$\$\$  
 Location: Settled on Jumeirah Beach, close to the Dubai Marina.



**Accommodation:** Rooms are spacious and modern. They have connecting rooms, but not so many unfortunately. The rooms feature all modern amenities and sleep 3 persons.

**Dining:** The hotel has nine restaurants and bars. And offers an incredible Friday brunch. Unfortunately we didn't have the opportunity to eat in all the restaurants, but we tried Bussola, the Italian Pizzeria where they serve the best pizzas in all of Dubai. We also had breakfast and dinner at Blue orange, an international buffet offering a very good and wide choice of flavors. We are usually not such huge fans of buffet restaurants but our children love it, and this Blue orange has one of the better buffets I've seen. Fish, a truly WONDERFUL restaurant on the beach serving the best Aegean sea fish and dishes. This was by far our favorite. And China Grill a trendsetting Asian inspired cuisine.

**Facilities for kids:** Check the "Travel in Style with Kids" website.

**Extra info:** When we arrived in Dubai we checked into the Westin Habtoor City first. They said they had special family rooms with a Playstation and bunk beds installed, but apparently they changed their mind when completing the hotel (it had just opened). They probably decided that the hotel was more a business hotel than a family hotel and therefore changed the rooms. So we decided to switch to the other Westin. Extremely glad took this decision. The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi is indeed far more a hotel to stay with your children. It's right on the beach, has several pools and restaurants. Spacious interconnecting rooms for families and there is also a kids club on the premises (at the Meridien). Of course there are many other more beautiful hotels in Dubai. But the Westin does provide a good price/quality ratio. Would stay there again!



## **EAT**

### **Bussola Pizzeria**

**Address:** The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marin

Reservations: + (971) 4 511 7373  
Website: <http://www.bussoladubai.com>  
Cuisine: Italian food  
Kidsmenu: yes, they serve kid size pizza's  
Experience: Bussola has two sections, a fancy Italian restaurant downstairs with a wonderful terrace serving fine Italian dishes. Upstairs there is a pizzeria where they serve the best pizzas in Dubai. We only had dinner in the pizzeria and it was very good. Even if you were not staying in the Westin I would recommend coming here for a nice pizza.

### **Fish**

Address: Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina - Dubai  
Reservations: online or phone + (971) 45117373  
Website: <http://www.fish-dubai.com>  
Cuisine: Aegan food  
Kidsmenu: -  
Experience: We loved this restaurant on the beach between Le Meridien and the Westin. They serve fresh fish and the ambiance is just wonderful. The entire decoration is blue and white. It feels you are sitting in a restaurant in the Mediterranean. The fish was delicious and the staff so friendly. All people working there are from Turkey and they serve Turkish seafood dishes.



### **RAS AL KAIMAH**

Ras Al Khaimah is one of the 7 Emirates of the United Arab Emirates. It has over 7000 years of history and culture. The emirate is believed to be the most authentic destination of the Middle East. The emirate offers magnificent landscapes, a breathtaking coastline and terracotta desert planes. And it is only 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport.

Ras Al Khaimah has both beach as desert resorts. Whether you are staying at the beach or in the desert at both locations there are numerous activities to do. Choose from things like watersports, hiking, desert safaris, sight seeing like the Dhayah Fort and Al Jazirah Al Hamra. Latter one is the last authentic and traditional town still standing in the UAE.

### RAK AL KAIMAH BUCKET LIST

- Visit the desert;
- Visit the beach;
- Visit Al Jazirah Al Hamra;
- Visit Dhayah Fort.



### STAY

#### **Ritz Carlton Al Wadi Desert resort** **- TRAVEL in STYLE with Kids label**

Address: Al Mazraa - Ras al Khaimah  
United Arab Emirates  
+ (971) 7 206 7777  
[www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com)

Price range: \$\$\$\$

Location: Located in the desert of Ras Al Khaimah.

Accommodation: Rooms, or better said, villas of the resort are all beautiful. With large bathrooms, a nice sitting area with flat screen TV's and every villa has its own private plunge pool with a view on the desert. For families travelling with children 2 Al Rimal villas are the best choice as they can be connecting.

Dining: The hotel has 2 restaurants and also offers 2 private dining options. One private dining option is the Al Wadi tower, the other is dining on the dunes. Breakfast is served in the Al Waha restaurant. We tried both restaurants and especially



enjoyed the Samar Lounge with its Indian cuisine. Food is served on the terrace overlooking the desert and giving you the opportunity to enjoy dinner under a sky full of stars.

Facilities for kids:  
Extra info:

Check the "Travel in Style with Kids" website. There is actually enough to do inside the resort not to leave the premises for at least 2 days. As we started our road trip through the UAE and Oman in this resort we were also quite tired and decided to relax and enjoy the resort to the max. The hotel offers bicycles (some with baby seats) free of charge to bike around the resort. The children loved the Ritz Kids program where they could interact with feathered friends, go pony and/or camel riding, learn archery, do the regular kids club activities such as gaming, coloring and playing. The resort has a wildlife rehabilitation center that provides a unique opportunity for kids to care for injured wildlife before they're released back into nature. We went camel riding with the entire family, something I also wanted to do for quite some time. I am happy to say I checked it off the bucket list and I can also honestly say I'll never do it again. It's actually just like a horseback ride only you are way up there and the camels move a lot slower than horses in general. The staff in the hotel was very friendly although a bit slow.



## OMAN

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab country on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. It is a country of breathtaking natural beauty, history and adventures.

The rich history and culture of Oman dates back well over 5.000 years. The country is still very authentic, because its ancient culture has been so beautifully preserved.

The Omani people are very hospitable, kind and they welcome tourists of all places into their country with much pride. Oman is in the top 10 of the worlds safest tourist destinations.

The country offers beaches, mountains, deserts, historical sites, nature and both beautiful hotels. Yet, it is still unspoiled. Unfortunately we have only been able to see Muscat, one of the wadi's and the Hajar mountains. But there is much more to see and do.

## PLACES

Al Jabal Al Akhdar  
Muscat  
Wadi Bani Khalid



## **AL JABAL AL AKHDAR**

Al Jabal Al Akhdar, Arabic for the Green Mountain, is part of the Al Hajar Mountains range. It is said that this is one of Oman's most spectacular areas. The highest point, Jebel Shams, Arabic for Mountain of the Sun, is around 3km high. It is also the highest point of eastern Arabia. The range is mostly desert, but at higher altitudes the earth is moist enough to allow the growth of trees and roses, where the area is very famous for.

The range is perfect for hiking and swimming in secret lakes. Visiting small deserted villages and also for cycling. Since 2011 the mountain climb is part of the Tour of Oman.

The gorge in the Al Hajar mountain range is said to be the Grand Canyon of the Middle East. And indeed it is breathtaking. A must do when travelling through Oman.



## **AL HAJAR BUCKET LIST**

- Go hiking;
- Visit Nizwa;
- Just relax and enjoy the breathtaking views.



**Alila Jabal Akhdar**  
**- Travel in Style with Kids label**



- Address: Al Roose, Jabal Al Akhdar, 621  
 Oman  
 +(968) 25 344200  
[www.alilahotels.com](http://www.alilahotels.com)
- Price range: \$\$\$\$\$
- Location: Perched 2,000 meters above sea level in the Al Hajar Mountains.
- Accommodation: There are of course several rooms to choose from. As we always like to have rooms close to each other we booked two times the Jabal Terrace rooms. When you like to be close to your children request to have two first floor rooms next to each other as the doors of the lower rooms are not very close together. The rooms are very spacious and the bathroom incredible, with a bath that has a view on one of the gorges. The terrace outside of the room is fantastic. Definitely the best for sunsets and stargazing.
- Dining: The hotel has only one restaurant. And it is such an amazing restaurant. The food is incredibly good. You can either select the Omani menu or a la carte western cuisine.
- Facilities for kids: Check the "Travel in Style with Kids" website.
- Extra info: The Alila Jabal Akhdar in Oman was called, the most stunning new hotel in the Middle East by Forbes, in 2016. And rightly so! It is a long way to reach, but worth the travel. For children the resort is just wonderful. My kids thought the hotel had the best kids club they'd ever been. And believe me they've been in quite a few. At check-in each child gets an Alila passport. During their stay they can collect stamps by doing several activities in and around the hotel. With each 4<sup>th</sup> stamp they get a little gift. Making it fun to do as many activities as possible. They get a stamp for arrival (easy one), breakfast, lunch, dinner, activities such as hiking, walking, playing a video game and so on. The hotel's activities list has some tracks especially for the younger ones. We did one leading us to a secret lake and a deserted mountain village. The children found it quite exciting.
- If you don't feel like doing anything, the children can enjoy the cliffside pool with you. During our stay (early January) it was only pleasant from noon – 3pm as high in the mountains it does get a bit cold early morning and late afternoon. But there is a heated indoor pool with Jacuzzi. No punishment either, to sit there and enjoy the sunset. In the morning there is yoga in this incredible spot, right on the verge of a massive gorge. The spa with Balinese

therapists is out of this world. And the good thing is, you can leave the children in the kids club without having to worry about them and enjoy your therapy in the meantime.





## **MUSCAT**

Muscat, the capital of the Sultanate of Oman, is a very authentic Middle East city. It still has beautiful and untouched beaches. While sitting at the beach there is no view on high-rise buildings or any speedboats going around with “bananas” or anything of that kind. It is almost totally unspoiled.

Actually Oman, and Muscat, is a perfect destination with children. It is a very safe country and there are tons of things to do for families. From adventurous hikes and desert safaris, to just relaxing at the beach or going on a cultural excursion once in a while. You can rent a Dhow to go sailing and encounter wild dolphins, visit the turtle reserve or one of the many wadi's Oman has to offer. Even if you don't want to drive around the Sultanate there are plenty of day trips to make from the capital.

Muscat itself is also not over developed. Of course there are numerous hotels and resorts. But it's not very touristy. And not many restaurants can be found outside the grounds of the international resorts. Oman is kid friendly because the Omani people pay real attention to children. They are welcome everywhere. But Oman is not a country with typical child attractions.

Oman is absolutely not a cheap destination. But you get value for your money as an Oman holiday with kids offers you luxury, adventure, relaxation and immense beauty.

## ***MUSCAT BUCKET LIST***

- Visit the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque;
- Visit Mutrah Souq;
- Visit Al Alam Palace;
- Visit the Amouage Perfumery (the most expensive perfume in the world);
- Visit the Sultans Armed Forces Museum;
- Enjoy one of the many beaches Muscat has to offer.



### **Ritz Carlton Al Bustan Palace**

#### **- Travel in Style with Kids label**

Address: Al Bustan Street, Qurun Beach, Muscat 114  
Oman  
+(968) 24 799666

<http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/oman/al-bustan>

Price range: \$\$\$\$\$

Location: A bit outside the city of Oman, next to the palace of the Sultan of Oman.

Accommodation: At the time we stayed there the guest rooms were a bit dated, but still provided all the necessary modern amenities. From what I understood all rooms are currently being enhanced and updated, as well as the indoor and outdoor facilities (until February 2018). We had several rooms while staying there. First we stayed in Deluxe interconnecting rooms, sleeping 3 persons per room. We also slept in the tent on the beach, an AMAZING experience and for the last 2 nights we were in an executive suite (disadvantage of the suite, it only sleeps 4 people and doesn't have any connecting room).

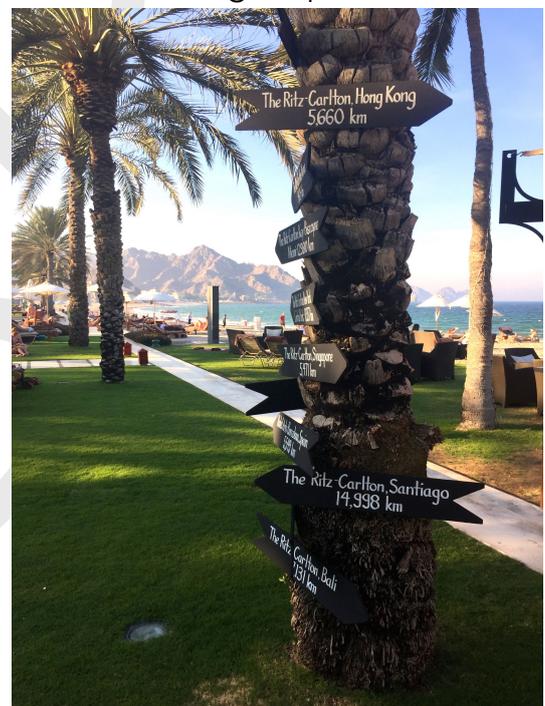
Dining: The hotel has three restaurants and a pool bar where you can have some light lunch and snacks. We tried all but one restaurant (China Mood). The buffet restaurant was quite good and served a different buffet theme every night. Breakfast was fantastic. We enjoyed sitting outside on the terrace overlooking the pool more than inside the restaurant.

Facilities for kids: Check the "Travel in Style with Kids" website.

Extra info: We stayed here for 5 nights over New Years and loved the hotel. The atmosphere is very relaxing despite the fact that the hotel is really large, it actually doesn't feel that way. The property is set up spaciouly and has an expansive 1 km private beach. The Spa is an absolute must. The Six Senses Spa is next to the hotel in a replica of an ancient Arabian fort. Apart from the regular treatments the spa also features a steam room, saunas, a fitness area, yoga studio, a healthy juice bar and a relaxation area.

The most special nights of our stay were the nights we stayed in the tent on the beach. As we couldn't all fit in, we split up the family and took turns sleeping there with 2 kids. At first the children were a bit scared and were nervous using the outdoor bathroom at night. But waking up with the first morning light and opening your tent to view the calm Sea of Oman is an experience you will never forget. Breakfast is served right on the beach next to your tent. What else could you wish for?

A second memorable experience at the Al Bustan Palace was the celebration of New Years Eve. We decided not to join the gala dinner with the children but have our dinner on the beach. The staff had informed us that we were welcome to join the party after dinner to light up the wish lanterns on the beach. At first the children were a bit disappointed that there was no firework. But this was soon forgotten when they saw the hundreds of lanterns, including their own, fly up to the sky. It was one of the most beautiful NYE spectacles we have ever seen! After the lighting of the lanterns we partied the night away with the band dancing on the beach with the other hotel guests, making it a wonderful start of the New Year.



## EAT

### **Muscat Hills beach club**

- Address: Al Jassah, Muscat 199, Oman  
 Reservations: Online or via telephone +(968) 24 853000  
 Website: <http://www.muscathillsresort.com>  
 Cuisine: Mediterranean food  
 Kidsmenu: -  
 Experience: A hip and happening Ibiza like beach restaurant and bar. According to the Times of Oman, Muscat Hills Resort is here to redefine beach entertainment in Oman. The beach club also hosts several parties. The food was good and it was nice to get a totally new experience in the still very authentic Oman.



### **WADI BANI KHALID**

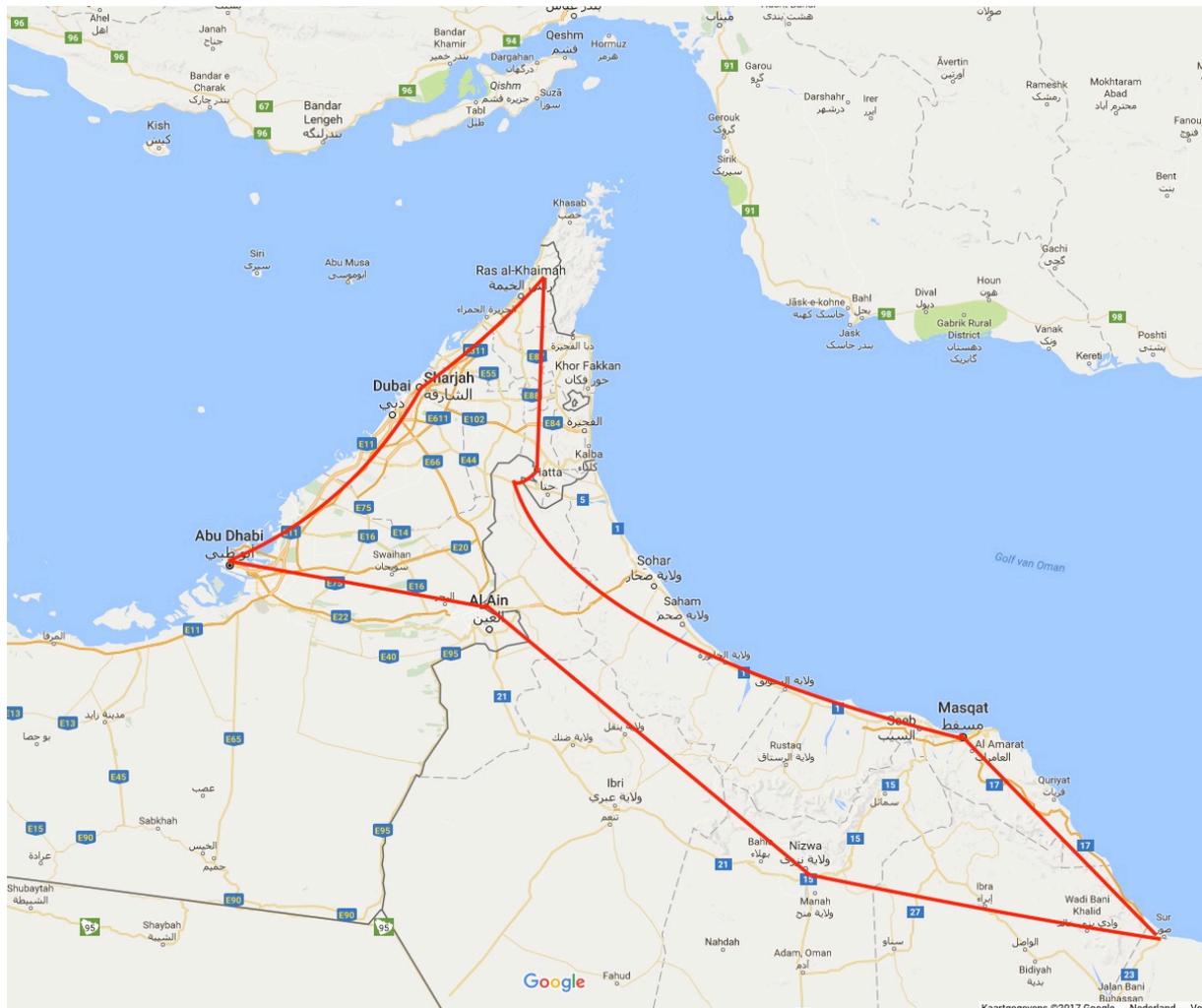
Located around 200km from Muscat, on the road to Sur is Wadi Bani Khalid. It's one of the many wadi's Oman has, but certainly one of the most beautiful. The wadi is a welcome stop for a refreshing dive while traveling through the Sultanate of Oman. When approaching the wadi, you'll pass through a small village and eventually arrive at a small parking lot where you'll have to walk another 5-10 minutes to reach the wadi.

The spot is spectacularly surrounded by colorful rock formations. All year round, water flows from a natural spring (an ayn) in the upper reaches of the wadi, supporting the abundant vegetation that makes this a beautiful spot.

The water is clear and has a nice temperature. There are not many places to change clothes, so take my advice and have your bathing suit or shorts on underneath your clothes. That way you'll only have to change once. Furthermore take your own towels and if you have water shoes, it makes it more pleasant to enter the water. The tiny fish pick at you while you take a swim, at first it feels a bit strange, but they are harmless and you'll get used to it. It's perfectly safe for children to swim in. My children loved the adventure and even jumped from the rocks like the local children did. Something I was not very happy with to say the least.



## ITINERARY



We rented a car in Dubai to drive around in the UAE and Oman. Both countries have excellent roads with good signage. The only thing we experienced is that the GPS is not working at all. So be aware and take a roadmap with you or print out your route on Google maps.

Something else you have to be keen on is getting the necessary papers from the rental agency to take the car out of UAE and entering Oman. Not all borders are open for rental cars and tourists. At the time we made this trip we were sent away at one border even though we had all the necessary papers. Later we learned that the only possibility to cross the border with a rental car was the Hatta border. So check it out before you plan your route! It saves you a lot of time not having to drive from one border to another border crossing.

Take care when driving because when causing, or getting in, an accident, things can get ugly.

From Dubai International Airport to Ras Al Khaimah is 45 minutes.

From Ras Al Khaimah to Muscat is about 5 hours.

From Muscat to Wadi Bani Khalid will take you 3 hours.

From Wadi Bani Khalid to Al Jabar Al Akhdar about 2 hours.

From Al Jabar Al Akhdar to Abu Dhabi 5 hours.

From Abu Dhabi to Dubai 1 hour.



Of course you can always make more stops on your round trip. Some stops we weren't able to make but we wanted to make were if we'd had more time are:

1. See the turtles at Raz Al Jinz Turtle reserve near Sur. When we were visiting it was not turtle season in Oman. The best time to go turtle watching is July-October as approximately 20.000 turtles or more lay thousands of eggs on the beach.
2. Deserts nights camp near Al Wasil on the road from Wadi Bani Khalid to Al Jabal Al Akhdar.  
<http://www.omanhotels.com/desertnightscamp/>  
Unfortunately they were full when we booked our trip.
3. Another stop we wanted to make, but had to skip because of time constraints, was a night or two in one of the wonderful hotels of Abu Dhabi.

## **TIPS**

- Even though both the UAE and the Sultanate of Oman are both very tolerant countries and welcome visitors, please dress appropriately when visiting mosques, restaurants, on the beach and when swimming in wadi's.
- There are restaurants outside the resorts in both countries, but they do not serve any alcohol. Only hotels and resorts are able to get an alcohol license. That's the reason why most good restaurants can be found in the hotels.
- Bring (hamman) towels with you when traveling to Oman. When stopping at the wadi's you'll have something to dry yourself, as most of the wadi's are in the middle of nowhere and only supply basic necessities.
- Arrange all the necessary papers with your car rental agency if you want to take your rental car from the UAE to Oman and back. If you don't have the permission papers they will not let you cross the Omani border.
- Be sure to get gasoline in time. Distances are long and gasoline stations are not readily available everywhere.
- Rent a 4x4 or you will not be able to enter the Al Hajar mountain range and go to the Alila Al Hajar hotel or any other hotel for that matter. The authorities will not let you enter without a 4x4.
- Try not to drive long distances at night. The park authorities will not let you enter the Al Hajar mountain range when the sun has set.

## **WHEN TO GO**

Avoid the summer months. It gets extremely hot. Best time to visit is October – April. We were there around Christmas & NY. A perfect escape from the cold Northern winters.



**Important notice!** Before planning your trip, ALWAYS check out the latest information on up to date websites. Hotels and restaurants may change name, close down, policies may be adjusted. The guide is to be used as a reference for helping you plan your trip. No rights or claims can be made based on information provided to you in this guide or on the [travelinstylewithkids.com](http://travelinstylewithkids.com) website.

“TAKE THE KIDS, GO PLACES, MAKE MEMORIES”

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