

5 things you didn't know about Oman

2 April 2015 by Jack Carter , [Be the First to Comment](#)

C&IT reveals five facts that make the Sultanate of Oman a C&I destination on the rise, including new multi-million pound developments and a range of exciting incentive options.



Muscat, Oman

One million square metre tourism complex planned

As part of wider plans to develop Oman's tourism sector, [the 'Omage' Project](#) in capital Muscat will see the development of a number of four- and five-star hotels, an open theatre, a small marina and a series of restaurants across an area of one million square metres.

Minister of Tourism Ahmed bin Nasser al Mahrzi stated that the project is just one of the major tourism developments in the pipeline for the Sultanate.

New convention & exhibition centre in 2016

The Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) is scheduled to open early 2016 with the aim of turning the country into a serious contender for hosting large-scale conventions and exhibitions. Initially, the venue will include 22,000sqm of event space and a further ten meeting rooms, which altogether can host up to 10,000 delegates.

The second phase of the venue is scheduled to be complete in 2017, which will introduce a 3,200-seat auditorium, a 456-seat theatre and two ballrooms that will add another 5,000 people to the OCEC's total capacity.

The development plans also include four hotels that will add 1,000 rooms to the area, a shopping mall and business park.

Target of 10,500 hotel rooms in Muscat by 2018

With two luxury Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts properties, a five-star InterContinental Hotel & Golf Clubhouse and three Millennium & Copthorne properties all in the pipeline, the Sultanate of Oman is targeting a total of 10,500 hotel rooms for Muscat by 2018.

The InterContinental Hotel & Golf Clubhouse, which will be located near to Muscat International Airport, is expected to offer 270 rooms, whilst the three new Millennium & Copthorne hotels that are due to open next year will contribute more than 400 rooms to the city. In the first quarter of 2014, four- and five-star hotels in Oman saw a 20.7% increase in the number of guests, with a total of 368,764.

Oman is the oldest independent Arab state

Oman is the oldest independent state in the Arab world and it has been ruled by the Al-Said family since 1744. In 1970, Sultan Qaboos Bin Said opened the borders of the country after years of international isolation. Tourism has been one of the main sources of revenue for Oman ever since, yet its mountains, ancient cities, and deserts remain largely untouched.

There's more to Oman than just Muscat

Muscat's growing infrastructure, ancient culture, and its combination of coastline and mountains instantly makes the capital city a clear favourite among groups. However, the Sultanate has plenty more to offer, from stunning secluded beaches to mountainous peaks where settlements and communities still reside.

A drive down the coast of the Arabian Sea from Muscat is Sur, a quiet coastal town, which is the alleged home of the legendary Sinbad the sailor. The ancient, winding cobbled streets lead down to the Dhow Shipyards, where the boats that famously trawled the Red Sea are still built today. Inland from Muscat are the Western Hajar Mountains, which stand at 3,010 metres high. Groups can take a safari along the roads and up towards the peak where 400-year-old mud houses that are still occupied today can be found. Hidden in the mountainside's crevasse is Misfah al Abreen, a quiet garden farmed by local herders.

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