

# Oman



<b>Capital:</b>	Muscat
<b>Population:</b>	3.1 million (approx)
<b>Religion:</b>	Islam. 75% of the population is Ibadhi Muslim. A mixture of Sunni Muslims, Shi'ite Muslims and Hindus comprise the remaining 25%.
<b>Government:</b>	The sultan is head of state with absolute powers. He rules by decree. He is advised by a cabinet, which he appoints, and by a consultative assembly. There are no political parties.
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b>	Predominantly Arab with small Baluchi, Zanzibari Iranian, Indian, Pakistani, and West European minorities.
<b>Language:</b>	Arabic is the official language, but English, Baluchi, Urdu, and a variety of Indian dialects are also spoken.
<b>Currency:</b>	The Omani rial (OMR), divided into 1,000 baiza

- Located on the south-eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, Oman covers an area which includes the tip of the Musandam Peninsula and the islands of Masirah, Kuria Maria and Daymaruyat.
- A desert climate, hot and arid, with very high temperatures and humidity along the coastal areas.
- The two factors that propelled Oman into the modern world were oil, first produced for sale in 1968, and the British-educated sultan – Sultan Qaboos bin Sa'id – who wrested power from his father in 1970. He abolished slavery, ended many hatred restrictions, squelched an armed rebellion in Dhofar, and used oil revenues to build new schools, roads and hospitals.
- Oman's economy is currently dominated by the oil industry. Main industries are crude oil production and refining, natural gas production, construction, cement, and copper. Agriculture is based on subsistence farming: fruits, dates, cereals, cattle, camels. Main crops are dates, limes, bananas, coconuts, mangoes, alfalfa.

## **Business and Social Etiquette**

- Similar to other Islamic countries, but not as conservative.
- As a sign of respect, endeavour to be prompt to all business meetings.
- Friday is the Muslim holy day; business may be interrupted or not conducted at all on this day.
- A handshake is generally viewed as an appropriate initial form of greeting.
- Business cards should be printed in English on one side, and if possible, in Arabic on the other.
- Conservative dress – business suit and tie is appropriate.
- Business meetings may proceed slowly with inquiries into one's health and journey.
- Decisions may take some time to be made.
- Coffee is often served toward the end of a business meeting. This is a signal that the meeting will soon conclude.
- Saving face and the avoidance of shame are vital to Muslim people in Oman. You may have to compromise on some issue to protect someone's dignity even if there is no substantive reason to do so.
- Hosting visitors is considered a virtue among people in Oman, so they will take care of all of the entertaining within their country. However, you are not expected to bring any gifts when invited into a local home.
- Be prepared to remove your shoes before entering a building. Follow the lead of your host. As a general rule, keep both feet on the ground. Arabs do not cross their legs when sitting. Never show the bottom of your foot to an Arab; this is considered offensive.
- Eating is done with the right hand only. The left hand is considered unclean in the Arab world.

## Language

English	Arabic	Phonetics
Hello	a-ssalāma alaykum	See notes
Good Morning	sabaH al-kheir	
Good Morning (response)	sabaH al-nuir	
Goodnight (to a man)	tisbaH ala-kheir	
Goodnight (to a woman)	tisbaHin ala-kheir	
Goodnight response(man)	wa inta min alil-kheir	
Goodnight reponse (wom)	wa inti min alil-kheir	
Goodbye	ma'al salamā	
Yes	aiwa/na'am	
No	lā	
Please (to a man)	min fadhilk	
Please (to a woman)	min fadhilich	
Thankyou (to a man)	mashkur	
Thankyou (to a woman)	mashkura	
You're welcome	afwan/al afu	
I don't understand	ana afHām	

### Notes:

,ā as in the 'a' in father

s as in 'so'

ay as in the 'y' in by

kh as in 'ch' in Scottish 'loch'

H a strongly whispered H as in a sigh of relief

sh as in 'ship'

r a rolled 'r'

*For further information, please contact:*

*Tom Verghese*

*Cultural Synergies Pty Ltd*

*Level 5, Causeway House*

*306 Little Collins Street*

*Melbourne VIC 3000*

*Australia*

*Tel: +61 3 9654 6161*

*Mob: +61 419 999 292*

*Fax: +61 3 9650 7350*

[www.culturalsynergies.com](http://www.culturalsynergies.com)