

The Gulf Experience—United Arab Emirates and Oman
A World Peace Tour sponsored by the International Institute for Peace through Tourism.
January 31-February 10, 2012



Join Donald & Lynne King, Ambassadors at Large for IIPT, for a fully-escorted tour of two vibrant Arabian Gulf nations—UAE and Oman, each home to some of the most dynamic modern cities and also to sleepy villages where time seems to have come to a standstill. Arabian Gulf hospitality is legendary and you will have the opportunity to experience it yourself as an official Tour Delegate of the International Institute for Peace through tourism, all the while experiencing some of the most dramatic landscapes imaginable—undulating deserts, jagged mountains, deep wadis and a long pristine coast.

This is the essential itinerary for anyone visiting this fascinating region of the world. Please join us as we make the effort to “make every traveler a potential ambassador of peace”.

January 31—Departure. Depart your gateway city for Dubai.



February 1—Arrival in Dubai. When you arrive at Dubai International Airport you will be met by your hosts and transferred to the Radisson Blu Deira Dubai Creek, your home for the next four nights.

February 2—Dubai. After breakfast at the hotel, our tour starts with a photo stop at Burj Al Arab, the world's tallest hotel and the iconic symbol of the city of Dubai. Jumeira Mosque is our next stop before moving on to the old historic district of Dubai, home to ancient wind-tower houses. The Dubai Museum, housed in the

old Al Fahidi Fort, provides the essential history of Dubai. Nearby is the Spice Souq, whose maze-like alleys are infused with the magical aromas of the shops. Also nearby is the dazzling Gold Souq, a seemingly endless series of small shops filled with sparkling jewelry.

Lunch is on your own and the options in the souqs is plentiful and afterwards we will move to the core of the modern city of Dubai and visit the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa and gain a view from the observatory on the 124th floor, where we will see the city below—almost a half mile below! Later we will visit a few of the luxury shopping malls for which the city is famous.



After a brief rest at the hotel, we will be picked up and driven to the boarding jetty for a dhow cruise dinner. We will enjoy a two-hour cruise on Dubai Creek with the best view in town—Dubai's famous skyline under the open stars...while enjoying authentic Arabic food.

February 3—East Coast Tour. After breakfast at the hotel we will drive to Fujairah Museum for a brief visit and to view artifacts going back to the Bronze Age, over 4,500 years ago. We will have a photo stop at Fujairah For and then move along to Heritage Village, where we can gain an appreciation of the lifestyle of previous generations in the Arabian Gulf.. The Fujairah Market is a bustling site full of bargains, and the Bidya Mosque sits nearby and we will have lunch at a nearby restaurant. A scenic drive back to Dubai takes us along the Khor Fakkan, a natural deep-water port. Dinner and free time on your own is available this evening.

February 4—Abu Dhabi. The capital city of the United Arab Emirates does not gain as much international attention as its sister city, but nonetheless it is a special destination. The Grand Mosque, our first stop, is one of the most spectacular mosques in the world. We will make a photo stop at the Emirates Palace (formerly a palace, now one of the most expensive hotels in the world) before moving to Heritage Village overlooking the corniche running along the Gulf. We will also stroll along Marina Mall before returning to Dubai.

February 5—Muscat. We will take the short flight to Muscat this morning and transfer to the Ibis Hotel. Lunch is on your own and then after a brief rest, we will be picked for a city tour of the capital of Oman. The Old Souq of Muscat will take you back to a bygone era, with its jumble of shops and the pervasive fragrances which permeate the place. Bait Al Zubair, the nearby museum, offers a view into the significant history of this important port city. We will make photos stops in several places along the corniche, including the ancient Portuguese forts of Al-Jalali and Al-Mirani.



A short drive will take us to Qurum Beach, site of the Muscat Festival, the month-long celebration of Omani history and culture. The festival is the highlight of the Omani calendar and you will have the opportunity to make an Omani friend as you serve as an official Tour Delegate for the International Institute for Peace through Tourism.

February 6—Oman's coast. After breakfast we will take our 4x4s along the coastal road where the Gulf of Oman will offer a vista along the left hand side. Our first stop will be Bimmah Sinkhole, an interesting geological site just a few hundred yards from the ocean. Fins Beach, formed of pure white sand warrants a stop to wade in the water and then to Wadi Shab, an incredible canyon full of secluded streams. A picnic lunch and then to Sur, where we will visit the dhow yards, where these ancient seafaring vessels are still made in the time-honored hand-made way. After dinner on your own, we will visit Ras Al Jinz Research Center to observe the nesting habits of the protected green turtles that lay their eggs on the nearby beaches. Sur Beach Hotel is our home for the evening.

February 7—Edge of the Empty Quarter. After breakfast we will drive to Wadi Bani Khalid, nestled in the mountains and one of the most picturesque wadis in Oman, with water cascading down into blue-green pools. After a picnic lunch we will proceed into the interior toward the undulating sands of the Wahiba Desert. We will check into the camp and afterward drive to the top of the dunes to see the sun set and the stars begin to fill up the vast desert sky. A barbecue dinner is provided and we will sit near the open campfire and try the impossible task of counting the stars.





February 8—Oman's Interior. After breakfast at the camp, we will drive through Sinaw and make a brief visit to its famous market. Afterwards we will make our way to Nizwa where we will visit its famous fort, completed more than 350 years ago and Oman's most visited national monument. Lunch will be at a local restaurant and then there will be ample time to wander through the souq—famous for brassware, leather goods, silver objects and antiques. We will spend the night at the Falaj Daris Hotel.



February 9—Forts and Mountains. Jabrin Fort, one of the most impressive Omani forts, will be our first destination after breakfast. Painted ceilings, labyrinth-like passageways and dungeons make this a distinctive site. Bahla Fort, nearby, is the site of the oldest recorded civilization in Oman. It is a UNESCO world heritage monument and efforts are underway to restore its crumbling walls. A local restaurant will provide our lunch and then proceed to Misfat Al Abrein, a picturesque village perched on the side of a mountain—a place where time seems to have come to a standstill. Before returning to Muscat we will pass by the old village of Tanuf, famous for its clear spring waters. This evening we will have one additional opportunity to visit the Muscat Festival and stroll among the acres of exhibits of this cultural festival. We will return to the Ibis Hotel for the evening.



February 10—Muscat. The Grand Mosque in Oman is often considered the most beautiful modern mosque in the world and it will be our destination for the morning. The rest of the day will be at leisure before you are transferred to the Muscat International Airport for your return flight. Have a safe journey home. Your heart and your spirit will be full...and the people you met and the places you visited will be with you always.



\$2,880 per person double occupancy. Single supplement \$252. Includes: Airport transfers, 9 nights accommodations, 16 meals, entrance fees, drivers and English-speaking guides. Also includes airfare from Dubai to Muscat on February 5. Does not include: international airfare (call Crossbridge Tours 888.836.5464 for assistance with air arrangements), airport taxes, visa fees, tips or personal expenses.

Call Crossbridge Tours 888.836.5464 for more information, including how to register for the tour.