

Sultanate of Oman

Welcome to the August issue of the Oman Tourism, e-newsletter.



As the Arabian Gulf basks in hot day-time temperatures, Oman enjoys a much cooler climate as the summer monsoon blankets the southern half of the country with clouds, mist and refreshing rains. This year's Salalah Tourism Festival has again proved very popular with visitors from around the region, as they come to marvel at the beautiful green countryside.

Summer in Oman offers visitors a unique opportunity to explore the diverse terrain of the Sultanates' vast mountains,

deserts and countryside. Backed by the awesome Hajar & Dhofar Mountains and with more than 1,700kms of coastline, Oman offers an array of activities which will keep visitors cool this summer. Guests can experience high altitude trekking some 3,000 metres above sea level, visit unique underground caves, enjoy amazing scuba diving off Muscat's coast and August is also one of the best time to see the giant green turtles nesting at Ras Al Hadd.

August also sees the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan, when Muslims world-wide, fast during daylight hours. Just before sunrise, families gather to share a meal, referred to as 'Suhour'. After this, nothing must be consumed until sunset when the fast is traditionally broken with a date and water. Prayers are then said before consuming a full meal, known as 'Iftar'.

This issue of the Oman e-newsletter provides visitors to

the Sultanate with information on activities centred around this special Ramadan season. The image above shows friends enjoying an evening in one of the Ramadan Tents at Shangri-la's Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and fasting lasts during daylight hours throughout the whole month.

Ramadan is about self-sacrifice. It's a time for purifying the soul and re-focusing attention on





giving thanks to Allah for everything he has given each family. It is a time for Muslims to strengthen family ties and a period of worship and contemplation.

The Holy Month of Ramadan is a wonderful time to be in the Sultanate of Oman. The Omani people are always warm and welcoming and during this special period, you will be made very welcome as families & friends come together in public places to celebrate this special time together. Oman's hospitality

industry welcomes the local community as well as international visitors, to enjoy sumptuous Iftar Buffets as well as providing beautifully decorated Ramadan Tents and other venues to enjoy the evening's activities with friends and family.

At the end of Ramadan and the subsequent strict period of fasting, Muslims throughout the World enjoy a three-day celebration called EID Al Fitr, also known as the Festival of Fast Breaking.

Al Hoota Cave is sure to be the highlight of anyone's visit to the Sultanate of Oman. The cave is a natural marvel and unique in the Gulf region. The cave took three years to develop as a major visitor attraction and today it is one of the most popular in Oman. During its development, care was taken to protect and preserve the underground wonders.

slopes of Jebel Akhdar, at the foot of Jebel Shams, the Sun Peak. The cave is more like an underground canyon with two accessible entrances. The first is located in the vicinity of Al Hoota village at 1040 meters above sea level and the lower one named Al Fallah is located in the vicinity of Tanuf Valley and Al Hamra town at 810 meters above sea level.

Al Hoota Cave is located on the Al Hoota plateau on the southern

The main cave is partially occupied by an underground





lake with natural air ventilation and cool air temperatures. A rare phenomenon is the presence of blind transparent fish nourished on organic materials brought by floods inside the cave. This type of fish is only known in this area (*garra bareimiae*). Visitors can enjoy the lake from an esplanade and they can experience the underwater activities thanks to digital cameras and LCD monitors projecting close-up images of the abundant marine life.