



## Oman, Land Of Legend

Bait Al Zubair Museum is located in Muscat, capital city of the Sultanate of Oman. Oman is an enchanting country that was one of the major civilisations of the ancient world, and has a diverse and magical landscape shrouded in legend and antiquity. Northern Oman is commonly thought to be part of the copper-rich civilisation of Magan, which was mentioned in the Mesopotamian cuneiform texts of the 3rd millennium BC, while southern Oman's history is closely connected with frankincense, an aromatic resin that was highly prized throughout the ancient world.

Oman lies at the crossroads of three continents and four seas. Its strategic location at the tip of the Arabian Gulf led to its fantastic seafaring history, which includes the legendary Sindbad the Sailor. It was one of the first countries to harness the monsoon winds to reach far destinations, interlinking its history, religion and culture with many Indian Ocean cultures along the way. For over 5,000 years the people of Oman have built settlements and harnessed natural resources. Mud-brick communities, forts and castles that encapsulate history and human endeavour within their very walls are strewn across the country, symbolising the true essence of Arabia.

Today Oman extends over 320,000 square kilometres, and is ruled by one of the oldest dynasties in the region. Discover the treasures of Oman's cultural heritage at Bait Al Zubair Museum and witness the friendliness of a forward-looking nation that is proud of its traditions and legendary hospitality.

### TRADITIONAL CRAFT INDUSTRIES

Bait Al Zubair Museum is dedicated to showcasing important ethnographic artefacts reflecting the highly specialised inherited skills that define Oman's society, both past and present. Traditional craft industries, once a vital part of the nation's economy, are now amongst the most important aspects of Oman's cultural heritage. Age-old skills are customarily passed down from father to son, mother to daughter, but as a result of modernisation Omani artisans are now producing fewer traditional products. Yet it is the traditional goods, produced by individuals or in small family workshops, that are most representative of Oman, its people, their identity and the country's past.

From time immemorial Omanis have utilised local and imported resources to construct boats, domestic and defensive buildings, manufacture a variety of silver, copper, clay and leather products, or weave textiles and baskets.



Falaj (water irrigation system).

Oman's long history as maritime traders is reflected in design motifs and manufacturing techniques, which display cross-cultural fusions particularly with India, China, Persia and Yemen, as well as the ancient Roman, Greek and Sabaean Empires.

The antique collection housed at Bait Al Zubair Museum, and the contemporary range of items showcased in the museum gift shop, reflect the products generated by traditional craft industries that are so definitive of Oman's history and cultural heritage.

### BAIT AL ZUBAIR - THE HOUSE THAT BECAME A MUSEUM

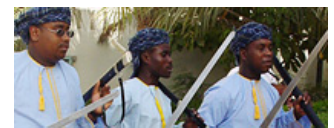
Bait Al Zubair (House of Al Zubair) is a private museum that opened its carved wooden doors to the public in 1998. It is totally funded by its founders, the Zubair family. The museum displays the family's collection of Omani artefacts, which is considered to be the finest that is privately owned. With the variety of exhibits, modern display methods and information provided, the museum serves as a real window on Oman's rich heritage and culture. Since it opened the museum has expanded into a cultural complex that continues to evolve and is internationally recognised.

Bait Al Zubair is proud to exhibit two magnificent old canons presented by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said to the museum on the occasion of its opening. The museum is one of country's architectural icons and in 1999 was the proud recipient of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos' Award for Architectural Excellence, the first time it was awarded in Oman.

The museum complex now consists of three separate buildings with a fourth

- Introduction
- The Architecture
- The Founding Family
- Management
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- BAZ Publishing
- Gift Shop
- Coffee Shop

#### EXCLUSIVE EVENTS



#### WORK EXPERIENCE





*Main gallery area.*

currently under development, as well as a garden with a number of traditional features.

The main museum building, Bait Al Bagh (house of gardens), was originally founded as a family home in 1914 by Sheikh Al Zubair bin Ali, who served three former Sultans as minister and advisor. Located in old Muscat, Oman's historic capital city, it was a gathering place for the elite, while today it was rebuilt to suit its function as a museum, though still reflecting traditional elements of Oman's architectural heritage and the original house.

Exhibits include information regarding the Al Busaidi dynasty, with portraits of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said and various other rulers. There are also four galleries on the ground floor that exhibit excellent examples of khanjar (Omani dagger), male and female attire, traditional swords and firearms, antique jewellery and household articles.

On the first floor there is an area for temporary exhibitions and a library. The garden features a barasti (palm frond) hut, a falaj (ancient water distribution system), a souq area, a boat display and stone houses.

Bait Dalaleel is an adjacent house that has been carefully restored and renovated and symbolises the true essence of vernacular architecture in Oman. This attraction allows visitors to step back in time and experience how Omanis lived over 100 years ago. It has a majlis (guest lounge), bedroom and domestic date store to discover.

The third building of the Bait Al Zubair complex is called Bait Al Oud (grand house), which opened at the beginning of 2008 as part of the museum's 10th anniversary celebrations. This three-storey building contains a large temporary exhibition hall and reception area on the ground floor. The first floor includes early European maps of the Arabian Peninsula and typical Muscati furniture. The second floor includes early prints of the Arabian Peninsula and photographs of Muscat with an exhibit of historic cameras. The building was designed to reflect the family's former three-storey residence, which was situated within Muscat's city walls and was where Sheikh Ali bin Juma (Sheikh Al Zubair bin Ali's father) and his family lived in the 19th and 20th centuries, until the house was demolished in the 1940s to provide more space for vehicle access to the palace