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Oman - A Rising Destination Oman's Political Stability Makes Tourism Possible

Date: 4 Oct 2009

Oman appears to face an absolutely promising future. Usama bin Karim Al Haremi of Oman Air's Corporate **Communications** and Media said that with its natural beauty and glorious history Oman seems destined to become a top tourist destination. The sultanate has embarked on a progressive programme to diversify its economy away from oil and gas by focusing on the diversification of the economy, omanisation of the workforce and internationalisation of business.



The government recognizes that shrewd investment in tourism and real estate will leave an enduring legacy, and tourism in particular forms a major pillar of its Vision 2020 program.

Al Haremi added: Tourism in the Sultanate has been ever increasing at a steady rate, as visitor numbers and international interest keeps growing. "Oman wants to target mainly high-quality tourism to preserve its culture and reputation as a quality destination. Likewise, real estate is on the verge of exploding, as carefully planned new developments make the Sultanate growingly desirable to foreign visitors and investors alike. Indeed, significant steps have been taken to attract investment and foreign companies to the sector," Al Haremi affirmed.

Al Haremi further brought to notice that Claire Bryant, a luxury holiday expert and experienced travel consultant, had recently visited the Sultanate and went back from Oman enchanted by her Arabian holiday. She writes:

"Oman has the most up-and-coming tourism industry in the Gulf, and more and more people are booking Oman holidays. It is in a prime location to develop its already budding tourism industry, and it is in an economic position to do so. With new facilities and resorts being developed, it is a perfect time to book an Oman luxury holiday.

The title "Oman - A Rising Destination: Oman's Political Stability Makes Tourism Possible" by Claire, has been most widely circulated on the Internet, consolidating Oman's image as a destination of choice.

Oman is the prime tourist destination of the Gulf, and Oman luxury holidays are becoming increasingly popular. With warm weather, sparkling ocean waters and luxury accommodation, an Oman holiday is sure to be a good one. There are a number of reasons why Oman's tourism industry is destined to do better than its neighbours.

Expansion of the Tourism Industry

Up until 1970, Oman was a region that was closed to the outside world, and Oman holidays were by no means at the forefront of tourists' minds. But tourists are beginning to flock to the region, and the tourism industry forms an integral part of the region's economic plans for the future. Resorts, hotels, and new travel companies are popping up all over the region, and Oman luxury holidays are becoming increasingly popular.

Oman's Prime Location

Oman is in a prime location, with beautiful scenery and many tourist sites, which makes Oman holidays the most popular for tourism in the Gulf. Its wildlife and ecological features are exceptional, making it popular amongst holidaymakers and tourists. It also has a number of cultural and historic sites, making for interesting activities when on an Oman holiday.

Oman is Economically Ready for Tourism Development

Oman is currently in an economically desirable position because one of its primary exports, hydrocarbon, is being sold at a high price. This means that the sultanate has begun developing its economy away from oil and gas production, into newer areas. Sultan Qaboos Bin Said wants to incorporate the growing tourism industry into the Sultanate's economic plans, and promote Oman luxury holidays. Because it is the most popular tourist destination in the Gulf, the tourism industry could well develop into a central part of Oman's economy. Perhaps now is a good time to visit Oman, because its scenery and historical sites are superior, and it would be good to go on an Oman holiday before the region becomes a major tourist destination.

Oman's Political Stability Makes Tourism Possible



Sep 04, 2009

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Oman's Political Stability Makes Tourism Possible

The sultanate has been, and continues to be, politically stable and safe for tourists. This is perhaps one of the biggest selling points for Oman holidays, as opposed to holidays in other regions of the Gulf. Sultan Qaboos Bin Said has ruled over the sultanate since his accession in 1970. Under his leadership, Oman has been modernised, united and opened.

This puts Oman at a significant advantage as far as tourism is concerned, as it is the most stable and safe region in the Gulf, which is largely responsible for the rise in Oman holiday bookings.

Oman Maintains International Relationships

Oman has been clever in its approach to international relations, remaining in relatively neutral ground. This is excellent in terms of tourism, because people from all over the world will be willing to go on Oman holidays. Oman manages to maintain good relations with the west and with Iran, and even has cordial relations with Israel. It also has a good relationship with the US, unlike many of its neighbours. All in all, it has maintained good international relationships, making Oman Luxury holidays a perfect choice.

Tourist arrivals rise in Sultanate

Usama bin Karim Al Haremi of Oman Air's Corporate Communications and Media also notified that according to a recent Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) study, Tourism in the Sultanate has been increasing at a steady rate as visitor numbers and international interest continue to grow. The Sultanate's tourism industry, the study reported has shown resilience in the wake of the global slowdown and the flu scare. The Bank has a world class Global Research team, with economists, analysts, and strategists based in thirteen countries.

The report says the number of tourist arrivals over the first five months rose 17.5 per cent as compared to last year. The study also reports a 3.9 per cent rise in revenue.

With its economy diversifying, the Sultanate is increasingly banking on its tourism sector. "The diversification strategy of tourism is paying off. Despite the crisis, early indicators are encouraging," said Philippe Dauba-Pantanacce, Senior Economist, Middle East & North Africa, Standard Chartered

Bank.

Promising future

The push from the government, especially the Tourism Ministry, has given the sector a boost. The government has plans to spend \$17 billion, a 10 per cent increase in public spending, this year. Close to \$6 billion, including the \$1.17 billion modernisation and expansion plan of Muscat Airport, had been disbursed by May, said the SCB report.

Oman Air, the national carrier, has plans to start flights to new destinations across Europe and Asia, including Paris, Frankfurt, Munich, Maldives, and Colombo, this year.

While flights to Frankfurt and Munich have already started, the airline will add Paris, Maldives and Colombo to its global network during October.

Some 1.1 million tourists visited Oman in the first six months of this year, up from 980,000 over the same period in 2008. As predicted, Oman will see an increase of about 11 percent in tourists this year - reaching a record total of some two million visitors due to Gulf residents looking for cheaper holidays in the region, tourism officials and operators said. "The global crisis has forced Gulf nationals to travel closer to home and Oman is hugely benefitting from it," they said. About 1.8 million tourists visited Oman in 2008.

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