

<http://www.emiratesweek.net/2010/11/3845>

Oman gears up for 40th National Day celebrations

November 18, 2010

The Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Tourism marked the country's 40th National Day and birthday of Sultan Qaboos bin Said, with elaborate arrangements and a variety of activities on November 18th. As in the past, this year too the occasion was marked by street fairs, military band exhibitions, traditional dances, singing, firework displays and camel races among other activities.

The Oman Ministry of Tourism expects to see a significant surge in tourists visiting Oman around National Day, as the country reaffirms its position as a prime travel destination in the Middle East. The World Travel and Tourism Council has predicted a 7.8 per cent tourism growth rate for Oman over the next decade, with the Council also expecting the country to emerge as the region's top tourism growth market and third globally in 2010.

Salem Al Mamari, Director General of Tourism Promotions, Oman Ministry of Tourism, said: "Celebrations to mark Oman's 40th National Day and His Majesty's birthday this year will certainly be the biggest to date. With preparations underway, we are expecting a huge influx of tourists from all over the world to take part in these festivities that celebrate our rich history, culture and heritage. The festival reflects the remarkable progress and development of the Sultanate over the years, and will be another opportunity for the people of Oman to express their admiration and love for His Majesty."

Oman's rapid tourism growth can be credited to its various tourist attractions ranging from impressive forts, museums, caves and mountains to exciting activities like camel racing, dune bashing, trekking, paragliding, diving, catamaran cruising, kite boarding, dolphin watching and game fishing. The Sultanate's numerous restored tribal forts and castles – such as Nizwa, Al Jalali, Mirani, Barka, Jabrin – showcase its rich culture, the pre-Islamic architectural structures have grown in popularity with regional and international visitors alike. Further, several ongoing tourism initiatives in Oman are nearing completion and are expected to attract even more visitors and events. These include the Salalah Beach, Jabal Akhdar, Jabal Al-Seifa, and Hayut Resorts, the Muscat Golf Course, Alia Harf Resort Khasab, Fort Hotel, Duqm Hotel, Commercial & Rour Center – Salalah, the Wave Tourism Project, the Wakan mountain village development, Jabreen fort, the Ain Al Kasfah development project, the agricultural track at Misfat Al Abriyeen – Welayat Al Hamra, the tourism services centre project and the development of ponds in Wadi Bani Khalid. Airports in key cities are also being expanded to accommodate greater numbers of tourists and visitors to the Sultanate.

The Ministry of Tourism is also supporting various upcoming tourism projects such as the Ras Al Hadd Tourism Village, Al Sauda Boutique Hotel, Majles Al Jen Cave, AlMuntarab fort, Welayat Bedeyah, **Omagine** (City of Lights), Blue City, the Al Madinah Al Zarqa, Shinas, Yiti, Mirbat, Kalboo, Bandar Khiran, and Aint Resorts, Sport City; Nassem Al-Saba, the Al-Inshirah Tourism Centre, Al Aqer Resort Shinas, Telegraph Island and The Cave Restaurant.