



ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
OF AMERICA TOURS

# OMAN & THE UAE

CROSSROADS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN & ARABIAN GULF



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**February 6-24, 2025 (19 days | 16 guests)**  
with anthropologist & architectural historian Trevor Marchand  
Optional, Pre-Tour Extension to Qatar, February 4-7, 2025



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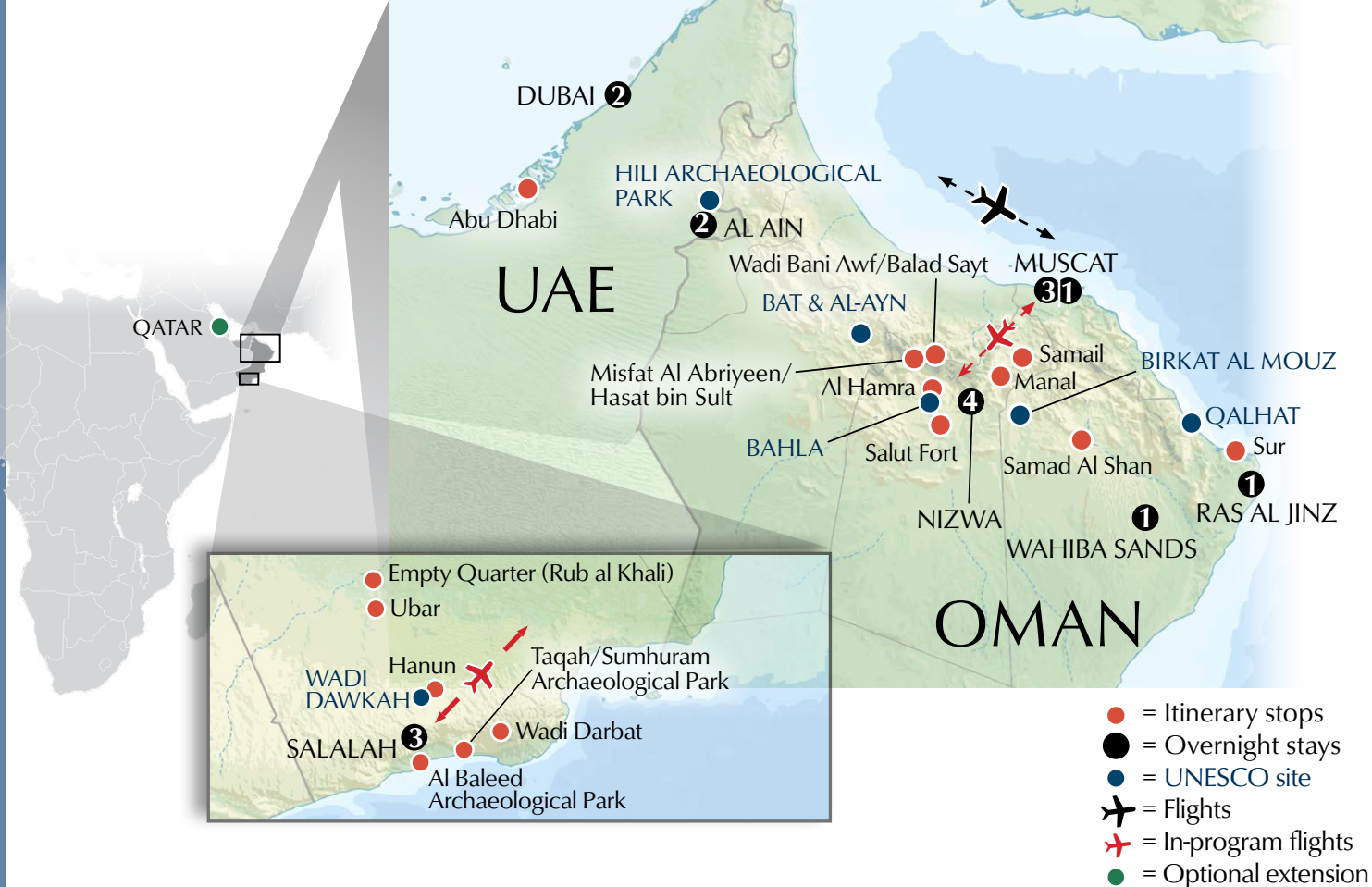


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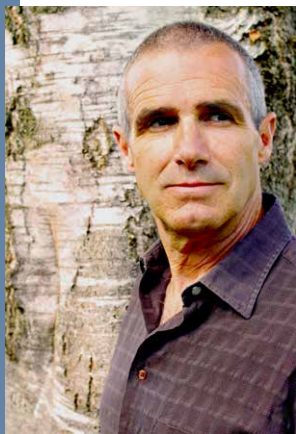


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*Archaeology-focused tours for the curious to the connoisseur.*



## Archaeological Institute of America Lecturer & Host



**Trevor Marchand** is Scientific Director of the Monumenta Orientalia project *Recovery & Conservation of Islamic Monuments in Sanaa, Yemen* (in collaboration with the Social Fund for Development and funded by Aliph Foundation). He is also Research Fellow of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (Université Clermont Auvergne), Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, London), and recipient of the Royal Anthropological Institute's Rivers Memorial Medal (2014). Marchand studied architecture (McGill), received a Ph.D. in anthropology (SOAS), and qualified as a fine woodworker at London's Building Crafts College. He has published extensively, produced and directed documentary films on architecture and craftwork, and curated exhibitions for the Brunei Gallery in London, Museum of Oriental Art in Turin, Pergamon Museum in Berlin, Royal Institute of British Architects, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Marchand is an independent advisor

on World Heritage for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and an advisor on the international experts panel for Oxford Brookes University's Endangered Wooden Architecture Programme.

During the past three decades, Marchand has conducted fieldwork with craftspeople in Northern Nigeria, Yemen, Mali, and the UK, and he has lectured on the art, architecture, and archaeology of Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and West and North Africa. He first travelled to Oman in 2000 and has led lecture tours to this historically-rich destination ever since. In 2020, Marchand incorporated the UAE and Qatar into his expanding regional expertise. This will be his fourth tour to the region for the AIA. With extensive knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean trade, Marchand's lectures explore the great antiquity of contact and connections between the Arabian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the coast of East Africa; and reveal the might of the tribes, kingdoms, merchant-princes, and naval fleets that once ruled the seas. Marchand elucidates the rich archaeological legacies of eastern Arabia, its distinct architectural traditions and renowned craft heritages (including boat building), as well as the aspirations of the people and rulers for modern, progressive identities that honor the past.

Cover: (Clockwise from top) Al-Ayn Archaeological Site, Muscat, The Wahiba Sands, Wadi Dabat, Dubai

**D**elve into the cultural and geographical diversity of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the company of seasoned study leader Trevor Marchand. Our custom-designed itinerary highlights ancient sites and historical monuments, and helps illustrate how influential geography has been on the region's history and how the region's maritime history has linked it to elsewhere in Arabia and as far as Africa and southern Asia.

Begin with three full days in the UAE. Still a little fishing village as of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Dubai was a center of pearl exports until the 1930s. Similarly, Abu Dhabi was founded as a simple pearl and fishing village. After the discovery of oil in the Arabian Gulf, Dubai became one of the wealthiest cities in the world, and Abu Dhabi was transformed into a luxurious modern metropolis and the capital of the UAE. But this region was settled many centuries earlier, and we will observe how the old and the new co-exist in intriguing ways.

Spend the balance of our time exploring Oman, which dominated for centuries the maritime trade routes from Moorish Spain to Canton (modern-day Guangzhou, China). Here seafaring merchants traded in such commodities of civilization as frankincense, myrrh, silk, gold, spices, and coffee. Today, Oman takes pride in sharing its rich history with visitors, as demonstrated in its world-class museums.

Altogether we will learn about these countries' histories, cultures, art, and architecture while witnessing their great geographical diversity, from spectacular deserts and wadis to pristine coastlines, including a reserve for the endangered green sea turtle.

## Highlights:

- **Six UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Oman's *aflaj* irrigation systems, the protohistoric archaeological complex of **Bat and Al-Ayn**, the immense fort at the oasis of **Bahla**, the medieval trade city of **Qalhat** (pending re-opening), and the **Land of Frankincense**; plus the UAE's **Hili Archaeological Park**, part of the "Cultural Sites of Al Ain" listing
- Two full days exploring archaeological sites around **Dubai**, including the 4,000-year-old site of **Al Sufouh**; and **Abu Dhabi**, including the incredible new **Louvre Abu Dhabi** and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century **Qasr Al Hosn**, the city's oldest fort
- **Hasat bin Sult** (a.k.a. Coleman's Rock), site of Oman's most significant rock art
- **Nizwa's** lively **Friday Market**, whose animal souk is an opportunity to witness the country's traditional manner of selling livestock
- A **visit with a Bedouin family** and a night at a lovely desert camp in **Wahiba Sands**, a 6,000-square-mile desert
- **Sur**, where many of the trading fleets of Omani ships were built
- **Muscat**, with its recently-opened **National Museum of Oman**
- A **maximum of just 16 travelers**, plus a dedicated local guide/tour manager and Professor Marchand
- An optional, **two-night, pre-tour extension in Doha, Qatar**

*"Trevor is a real find. His enthusiasm is contagious, and when he talks you can see his (knowledgeable, insightful) mind at work."*

- Stanley, California



Photos (from top): The Tomb of Mohamed bin Ali in Mirbat, the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve, Misfat Al Abriyeen

# ITINERARY

**B= Breakfast • L= Lunch • D= Dinner**

## Thursday, February 6, 2025: Depart home

Depart home on overnight flights to Dubai.

## Friday, February 7: Arrive Dubai, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

Arrive today at Dubai International Airport (DXB), clear customs and immigration, and meet your driver to transfer to our hotel. Dinner is on your own tonight—a chance to sample some of Dubai’s culinary sensations. *Overnight at the 4-star [Al Seef Heritage Hotel Dubai](#), [Curio by Hilton](#) for two nights.*

## Saturday, February 8: Abu Dhabi: Louvre Abu Dhabi, Qasr Al Hosn, Heritage Village | Dubai | Welcome dinner

Take a day trip to explore nearby Abu Dhabi. The capital of the United Arab Emirates, the city of Abu Dhabi juts off from the mainland on an island in the Arabian Gulf. Founded as a simple pearl and fishing village, the city was transformed into a luxurious modern metropolis over the last several decades, fueled by massive wealth from oil exports and investments. But underneath the decadent façade, Abu Dhabi still maintains traces of its past, particularly evident at the old dhow harbors where fishing ships still deliver the daily catch, and in its people, who remain firmly rooted in Bedouin traditions of hospitality.

We explore the Louvre Abu Dhabi, which opened to high acclaim in 2017 and features a world-class collection of art and historical artifacts from around the globe, displaying not only local finds but also pieces on loan from the Musée d’Orsay, the Centre Pompidou, and Paris’ own cultural centerpiece, the Louvre Museum. The museum’s spacious and geometric building, designed by Pritzker-prize winning architect Jean Nouvel, is a work of art in and of itself. Continue on to Qasr Al Hosn, which means “Palace Fort” in Arabic. The structure was built in 1761, making it the oldest in Abu Dhabi. It was originally built to watch over the only freshwater well on the island and was later adopted by the ruler of Abu Dhabi as his personal residence. The fort is now open to the public and houses a small museum. Also visit Heritage Village, an immersive time capsule with an old world *souq* (market), mosque, and camp exhibiting life in pre-modern UAE. Located on the Marina Mall Island, close to the city center, the traditional oasis village offers a glimpse at Abu Dhabi’s past. Guests can shop and watch artisans make pottery, blow glass, and weave fabric on a loom. The village is also home to the Emirates Heritage Club, which hosts workshops for making traditional crafts. Gather this evening for a festive welcome dinner hosted by your study leader. (B,L,D)

## Sunday, February 9: Dubai: Al Sufouh, Saruq al Hadid Museum | Al Ain

We start our day visiting Al Sufouh, located within view of the massive skyscrapers that make up modern Dubai’s skyline. This ancient site was a settlement approximately 4,000 years ago, when the Bronze Age Umm al Nar culture inhabited this area. They left behind a circular tomb, pottery shards, shells, and other remnants. We then explore the Saruq al Hadid Museum. The site of Saruq al Hadid was discovered in 2002 amidst the dunes of the UAE by the ruler of Dubai, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, as he flew his helicopter overhead. He spotted dark material covering the ground in an area that had not been inundated by the nearby dunes. Those dark fragments turned out to be waste material from ancient metallurgical processes. The Museum houses large quantities of Bronze Age ceramics, beads, metal wares, animal bones, and jewelry that were subsequently uncovered here. Depart Dubai and head across the desert to Al Ain, the UAE’s picturesque and historic “Garden City,” an oasis in the far east of the country near the Omani border. Check-in to our hotel and then gather for dinner. *Overnight at the 5-star [Al Ain Rotana Hotel](#) for two nights.* (B,L,D)



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*“The lectures and commentary  
by Trevor were excellent.  
He is a wonderful resource.”*

- Jeffrey, Tennessee

**Monday, February 10: Al Ain: Rumailah Fort, Al Jahili Fort | Hili Archaeological Park**

Spend today exploring Al Ain, where historic and cultural sites abound, including several on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Begin at Rumailah, home to both an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century fort and a mound bearing testament to millennia of civilization. Many finds from the mound are similar to those found at the site of Saruq al Hadid, whose museum we visited yesterday. Also visit Al Jahili Fort, where a permanent exhibition is devoted to the 1940s journey from Salalah to Abu Dhabi taken by explorer, writer, and photographer Sir Wilfred Thesiger. After lunch at a local restaurant, we continue on to the UNESCO-listed Hili Archaeological Park, well-known for Neolithic tombs and other structures. Gardens have been built up around the ruins, and the remnants of a sophisticated *falaj* irrigation system dating from the Iron Age can also be seen. Return to our hotel and gather later this evening for dinner. (B,L,D)

**Tuesday, February 11: Bat & Al-Ayn Archaeological Sites, OMAN | Nizwa**

This morning we set out for Oman in 4WD vehicles. Our first site visit in Oman is to the protohistoric archaeological complex of Bat and Al-Ayn, which represents one of the world's most complete and well-preserved ensembles of settlements and necropolises from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. They were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988. After lunch at a local restaurant we continue on to Nizwa, an ancient oasis town that was once the medieval capital of Oman, where we check-in to our hotel and then gather for dinner. *Overnight at the 4-star [Golden Tulip](#) for four nights.* (B,L,D)

**Wednesday, February 12: Hasat bin Sult | Al Hamra | Misfat Al Abriyeen | Al Hamra: Bait Al Safah Museum | Nizwa**

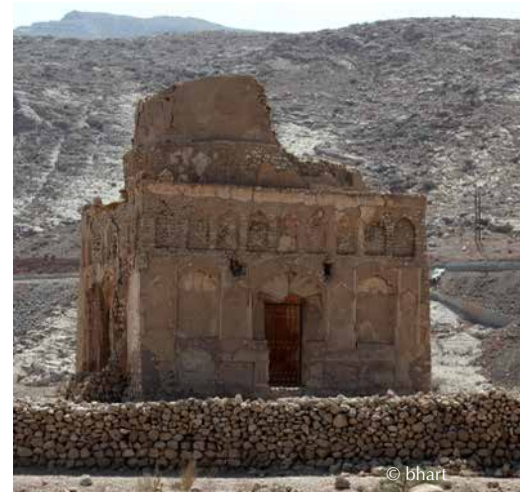
Today we will explore Nizwa's surrounding area by 4WD vehicles. Begin at Hasat bin Sult, also known as Coleman's Rock, a large rock that is one of the most important sites of ancient art in Oman. Its sides are covered in inscriptions and depictions of humans, some of which may date back 5,000 years. Also visit nearby Al Hamra, a small mountainside town on the slopes of Jebel Shams, notable for the traditional architecture found both in the town and in surrounding villages. We continue on to the tiny village of Misfat Al Abriyeen, considered among the most beautiful villages in Oman, nestled in a wadi not far from Al Hamra. Its ancient *falaj* irrigation system and green terraces provide ample fruit and produce for the local inhabitants, the Al Abri tribe for which the village is named. After lunch at a local restaurant we visit Bait Al Safah, a living history museum in a restored mudbrick house, where old Omani traditions such as weaving are demonstrated. Return to our hotel in Nizwa and then gather for dinner. (B,L,D)

**Thursday, February 13: Bahla: Bahla Fort, Friday Mosque (exterior only), Castle of Jabrin | Salut Fort | Nizwa**

We head out again today by 4WD vehicles to the oasis of Bahla, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and an immense fort that was recently restored and opened to visitors. Its oldest parts were built as early as 500 B.C. Also view the exterior of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Bahla Friday Mosque, one of the most important sites in the town. After lunch at a local restaurant we visit the nearby 17<sup>th</sup>-century Castle of Jabrin. The Omani have done an excellent job of restoring this site, and it provides a good sense of medieval Oman, with displays inside of various household items and furnishings, plus spectacular, hand-painted ceilings and beautifully-executed woodcarvings. Drive to Salut Fort, considered one of Oman's oldest forts. Since 2004, archaeological excavations have identified key Bronze and Iron Age sites in the area surrounding Salut. Schedule permitting, also visit the new Salut Museum. Return to our hotel in Nizwa and then gather for dinner. (B,L,D)

**Friday, February 14: Nizwa walking tour: Friday Market, Nizwa Fort, Al Aqr | Samail | Manal | Nizwa**

This morning we rise early to experience the Nizwa Friday market, whose animal souk is an opportunity to witness Oman's traditional manner of selling livestock. From here we visit Nizwa's souk, which specializes in finely-crafted metalwork, and then visit the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Nizwa Fort, which for 300 years was the primary seat of the Imamate, serving



Photos from top: The Mausoleum of Bibi Maryam at Qalhat, Nizwa Fort, Salut Fort



© FAnzola



© Trevor Marchand



© Trevor Marchand

Photos from top: Birkat Al Mouz, Frankincense tree, Samail Hosn

as a combination palace, seat of government, and prison. Take a 15-minute walk to Nizwa's atmospheric old town, Al Aqr, where we will spend some time exploring the alleyways and shops and see (from the outside only) the Shawadhna Grand Mosque, dating back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century—one of the oldest mosques in Oman (and the world). After lunch at a local restaurant, we drive to Samail village, which was home to Mazin bin Ghaduba, companion of the Prophet Muhammad and the first Omani to embrace Islam. He built the town's first mosque in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and, as a result, there are now around 300 mosques in the valley. Located on a hill just next to the main road is the massive Samail Hosn (Castle of Samail), with high walls; heavy, dark, wooden doors; and inner buildings made from traditional mud bricks. Visit the nearby Tomb of Mazin bin Ghaduba, an open-air tomb with mosaic tiles in traditional Islamic colors, and then drive to Nizwa by way of the village of Manal, where we stop to view the exterior of the Ibadī Mosque. Dinner is at our hotel this evening. (B,L,D)

**Saturday, February 15: Birkat Al Mouz | Ibra | Wahiba Sands | Bedouin family visit**

Depart Nizwa this morning in 4WD vehicles and drive to the lovely village of Birkat Al Mouz, which provides a superb example of the *falaj* traditional irrigation system (part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site "*Aflaj* Irrigation Systems of Oman"). Walk through date and banana plantations and admire the mud-brick homes, many of which are being abandoned as people move into concrete structures outside of the village. Continue on to Ibra, one of the oldest cities in Oman and once a center of trade, religion, education, and art. After lunch we drive to Wahiba Sands, a 6,000-square-mile desert where the ever-changing patterns of the dunes are a photographer's delight. We experience Bedouin life by visiting with a family of Omani Bedouins and learning a bit about their lives and livelihoods. Traditionally nomadic herders, the Bedouins of Oman take great pride in passing on their cultural traditions and expertise in the harshest of deserts to new generations and visitors alike. Check-in to our accommodations at Oman's only luxury desert camp, spectacularly situated on ten acres amidst the dunes of the Wahiba Sands, and then gather for dinner. Our resort offers comfortable accommodation in air-conditioned deluxe rooms. *Overnight at the remote, 5-star [Desert Nights Camp](#) in Deluxe Rooms.* (B,L,D)

**Sunday, February 16: Sur | Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve**

Depart camp this morning for Sur, where we learn about the town's shipbuilding traditions. Many of the trading fleets of Omani ships were built at Sur, whose boatyards are still active today. We will have the opportunity to see them at work, using traditional methods: without plans and with only simple tools (adze, bow drill, saw, and hammer). Also visit the bustling fish market and see the catch of the day, and view from the outside the historic wooden fishing vessel (*dhow*) *Fatah Al Khair*. Built in 1951, the vessel has been carefully restored and is part of a dry land open-air museum, together with other, smaller, traditional vessels.

This afternoon we continue driving to Ras Al Jinz, a fishing village on the eastern shore of the Arabian Peninsula. Ras Al Jinz Beach is world renowned as a nesting place for the endangered green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and this is the only official place where the public can watch the nesting process of these amazing sea giants. The Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve, an eco-tourism project, was established in 2008 to help conserve the fascinating and amazing nesting processes of these giants of the marine turtle world. In 2017 a renovated museum was opened, and its displays document some of the surrounding archaeological sites that date back 6,000 years. Excavations have uncovered the remains of some of Oman's ancient wooden boats and, in 1982, the discovery of a Bronze Age potsherd from northwestern India. After dinner, a guide will take us to try to see female turtles return to their beach to lay eggs. (Please note that the main nesting season is June through August and, at other times of the year, there may not be turtles every night.) *Overnight at the 3-star [Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve](#) (Eco Tents).* (B,L,D)

**Monday, February 17: Qalhat | Muscat**

This morning we set out for Qalhat (pending its reopening), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, whose ruins are the remnants of what was once a major trading port on the Gulf of Oman. The city's heyday was from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and

the Bibi Maryam Mausoleum is the largest standing structure still remaining on the site but there are also ancient tombstones, the outline of a mosque, a cistern, and other ruins to explore. *(Please note that at the time of writing the site of Qalhat was closed for restoration and preservation work.)* We continue on to Muscat, where we check-in to our hotel and then gather for dinner. *Overnight at the 4-star [Hormuz Garden by Radisson](#) hotel for three nights.* (B,L,D)

**Tuesday, February 18: Muscat: Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Royal Opera House, Bait Al Zubair Museum, National Museum of Oman, Mutrah Souq**

Spend a full day exploring Muscat, Oman's capital and largest city with a population of over 1.5 million. Meaning "safe anchorage" in the local dialect of Arabic, Muscat was for centuries a crucial port for sea trade between the East and West, conquered in turn by the Persians, the Portuguese, and the Ottoman Empire. The combination of historic souqs, traditional whitewashed architecture, and old-school hospitality give it arguably the most charm and character of any capital on the Arabian Peninsula. Begin today's explorations at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, whose construction was completed in 2001 and features a central dome and a towering central minaret flanked by four smaller minarets. Travelers are welcome to enter the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, but are advised to wear loose-fitting long sleeves and pants, and a headscarf for women. Next we visit the Royal Opera House, the country's premier venue for the musical and cultural arts, which officially opened in 2011. Enjoy a short tour of the opera house and view its very fine collection of rare instruments. Also explore the Bait Al Zubair Museum, which houses a formerly private archaeological collection including ancient Omani weaponry, household items, tools, traditional clothing and jewelry, artwork, and more.

After an independent lunch we tour the National Museum of Oman, whose 14 galleries focus on ethnography, maritime history, the traditional Omani *falaj* irrigation system, Islam, prehistory, and weapons. End the day on the picturesque corniche of Mutrah, which has long been a center of commerce in Oman, and whose nearby *souq* is one of the oldest and largest historical marketplaces in Oman. Today it is a great place to observe a bustling local marketplace and also find souvenirs such as traditional Omani daggers and textiles. Dinner is on your own. (B)

**Wednesday, February 19: Al Hazm Fort | Wadi Bani Awf | Balad Sayt | Muscat**

Take a day trip into the mountains southwest of Muscat via 4WD vehicles, stopping along the way at the impressive, 18<sup>th</sup>-century Al Hazm Fort. A unique feature of this structure is that its ceilings are supported by columns instead of traditional wooden beams. Continue on to Wadi Bani Awf, a spectacularly scenic area located in the Al Hajar Mountains just below Oman's highest peak, Jebel Shams. Expansive views, craggy mountains, and deep canyons are the highlights here. After lunch at a local restaurant we drive to the small mountain village of Balad Sayt, where the terrain allows for the formation of rain clouds which in turn allow for a bit more greenery and agriculture than elsewhere in the country. Return to Muscat, where dinner is on your own. (B,L)

**Thursday, February 20: Fly to Salalah | Salalah: Al Husn Palace (exterior only), Haffah Souq | Al Baleed Archaeological Park | Museum of the Frankincense Land | Mughsail Beach | Salalah**

Check-out of our hotel and take a short, morning flight to Salalah. Greenery is much more abundant in Salalah than elsewhere in Oman, and the air feels tropical for much of the year. Begin our exploration of the city at Al Husn Palace, which we may view from the exterior only. One of the most recognizable symbols of Salalah, the palace is closed to the public but one can stop for a photo of the exterior with its iconic gate and clock tower view. Explore the Haffah Souq, one of the city's best fruit and vegetable markets, where vendors sell very locally grown tropical produce including bananas, coconuts, papayas, mangos, and more. Continue on to Al Baleed Archaeological Park, the Dhofar region's main settlement from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This region is also part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Land of Frankincense." After a visit to the Al Baleed Museum we visit the Museum of the Frankincense Land, which



© John Crane

Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve

*"Trevor Marchand was/ is a deeply learned and passionate guide. He worked tremendously hard for us."*

- Ruth, Ontario

## THE AIA & AIA TOURS

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) is the oldest and largest archaeological organization in North America. The AIA seeks to educate people of all ages about the significance of archaeological discovery. For more than a century the AIA has been dedicated to the encouragement and support of archaeological research and publication, and to the protection of the world's archaeological resources and cultural heritage. By traveling on an AIA Tour you directly support the AIA while personally gaining the benefit of the AIA's network of scholars and worldwide contacts.



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© Trevor Marchand

*“Trevor gave an awesome tour...[he] answered each and every question from everyone in the group. He is NOT a ‘dry academician’; his passions and enthusiasms were evident throughout the tour. He is also extremely kind and deferential.”*

- Colleen, California

chronicles human settlement in the area since 2000 B.C. with an emphasis on maritime trade and traditions. Continue on to Mughsail Beach, 30 miles west of Salalah. Its cliffs and rocks, which are beautiful year-round, trap fog during the *khareef* (monsoon season, June to September) and create a verdant scene wildly different from the rest of Oman. Noteworthy are the blowholes along the beach, which are powered by waves but set far enough back from the water that they almost seem to be geysers. Return to Salalah where we freshen up at our hotel before gathering for dinner. *Overnight at the 5-star [Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah](#) for three nights.* (B,D)

**Friday, February 21: Taqah | Sumhuram Archaeological Park | Muhammad bin Ali’s Tomb | Wadi Darbat | Salalah**

Today we explore sites to the east of Salalah, along the coast, traveling by 4WD vehicles. We tour the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Taqah Castle, located on the beach in the village of Taqah. The castle was converted into a museum in 1994 and features exhibits on both local history and ethnography. Continue on to Sumhuram Archaeological Park, site of what was once one of the major ports of southern Arabia and an important conduit for the international frankincense trade network. Also visit the nearby museum. After lunch at a local restaurant we visit the twin-domed, 12<sup>th</sup>-century Tomb of Mohamed bin Ali (a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad), a fine example of medieval Omani architecture. We end our day with the idyllic scenery of Wadi Darbat, which turns a lush green after the annual *khareef* rains and fogs. Water courses down the channels, tumbling over small waterfalls into beautiful blue pools. Camels often frequent the area, with the juxtaposition of a desert animal amidst lush vegetation and water making for an odd (but very photogenic) sight. Return to Salalah, where dinner is on your own. (B,L)

**Saturday, February 22: Tomb of Job | Wadi Dawkah | Hanun | Ubar | Rub al Khali | Salalah | Farewell dinner**

Our touring today will focus on areas inland from Salalah, beginning with the Tomb of Job. It is not particularly remarkable in terms of architecture or beauty, however it is among the most important religious and pilgrimage sites in the Dhofar Governorate, making it a great place to learn more about local religious practices and to see (and meet) pilgrims. Continue on to Wadi Dawkah, which is part of the “Land of Frankincense” UNESCO World Heritage Site. Frankincense trees still grow here, as they have for millennia. The specific tree that yields frankincense is *Boswellia sacra*, and several varieties are grown in the area. Frankincense is obtained by tapping the trees for the sap, which dries into frankincense. Nearby is Hanun, a depot along the frankincense routes, and 5<sup>th</sup>-century B.C. triliths (groups of three stones perched together to form a steep pyramid). After lunch at a local restaurant we explore the ruins of Ubar, in the modern-day Omani village of Shisr. Arabic tradition says that Ubar disappeared into the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, and excavations have shown that there once was a fort there that partially collapsed into a sinkhole, and a tunnel has been built to the underground section. Our last visit of the day is to Rub al Khali (the “Empty Quarter”), a large sand desert that takes up most of the southern third of the Arabian Peninsula. The entire desert is about a million square miles (about 40,000 square miles larger than France), thought to be the largest uninterrupted desert on Earth, and is one of the driest and most sparsely populated places on Earth. Return to Salalah, and gather this evening for our farewell dinner. (B,L,D)

**Sunday, February 23: Fly to Muscat | Fly home OR Overnight in Muscat**

Transfer to the Salalah airport this morning for our group flight to Muscat International Airport (MCT), where you will connect with independent flights homeward. Those whose flights do not depart until tomorrow may check-in to our hotel in Muscat, with the balance of today at leisure. *Overnight at the 4-star [Hormuz Garden by Radisson](#).* (B)

**Monday, February 24: Fly home**

Transfer to Muscat International Airport (MCT) in time for your flights homeward. (B)

Photos from top: Ubar, Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque (Muscat)



## Optional, Pre-Tour Extension

# QATAR

February 4-7, 2025



## ITINERARY

B= Breakfast • L= Lunch • D= Dinner

### Tuesday, February 4, 2025: Depart home

Depart home on overnight flights to Doha.

### Wednesday, February 5: Arrive Doha, QATAR

Upon arrival at Hamad International Airport (DOH), you will clear customs and immigration, meet your driver, and be transferred to our hotel. Depending on your arrival time, gather for dinner this evening. *Overnight at the 5-star [Al Najada Doha Hotel by Tivoli](#) for two nights.* (D)

### Thursday, February 6: Doha: Doha Corniche, National Museum of Qatar, Museum of Islamic Art, Katara Cultural Village, Souq Waqif

Set out this morning for a full day, in-depth exploration of Doha. Begin at the Doha Corniche, a beautiful walkway and road that stretches over four miles along the city's curved waterfront. Here we explore the National Museum of Qatar, housed in a spectacular, desert rose-shaped building that was designed by architect Jean Nouvel. The museum's collections focus on three primary themes: Qatar's natural history, the cultural history of the local Bedouins and tribes, and the modern nation-state's history and oil and gas industries. Continue on to the iconic Museum of Islamic Art, built on an artificial island near the traditional dhow harbor. The museum's stunning architecture is influenced by ancient Islamic styles, featuring a uniquely modern design highlighting geometric patterns. At 91 years of age the esteemed architect I. M. Pei was coaxed out of retirement to design the museum. Its collections consist of 1,400 years of Islamic art, rare manuscripts, textiles, ceramics, and artifacts originating in Spain, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, India, the Arab world, and Central Asia.

This afternoon we explore the Katara Cultural Village, a large architectural complex that opened in 2010. While modern, the complex's buildings celebrate traditional Qatari architecture and decor. A beautiful turquoise-and indigo-tiled mosque is also located on site, as are the offices of many Qatari cultural and professional organizations. End the day at the Souq Waqif, a sprawling market in central Doha, which is the city's premier destination for shopping. One can find textiles, traditional clothing, spices, handicrafts, souvenirs, and more. Dinner is on your own. (B)

### Friday, February 7: Fly to Dubai, UAE

Transfer to Hamad International Airport (DOH) for your independent flight to Dubai (suggested flight time TBD) to begin the main tour. (B)



## Extension Prices

per person, double occupancy

9-16 participants ..... \$1,545

6-8 participants ..... \$1,945

Single Supplement..... \$225

*Single room supplement will be charged when requested or required (limited availability). With fewer than 6 participants a small group surcharge may be applied.*

## Extension Prices Include:

- **AIA lecturer/host Trevor Marchand**
- Two nights in 5-star accommodations
- Group **airport transfers** for arrival and departure
- Breakfast daily and one dinner
- Ground transportation in **air-conditioned vehicles**
- All **entrance fees** for sightseeing as indicated in itinerary
- **Tour manager** and **local guide** for full day in Doha
- **All gratuities** to local guide, drivers, staff for included meals, and tour manager

# ACCOMMODATIONS



**Dubai**  
*Two nights at the 4-star*  
[Al Seef Heritage Hotel Dubai,](#)  
[Curio by Hilton](#)



**Al Ain**  
*Two nights at the 5-star*  
[Al Ain Rotana Hotel](#)



**Nizwa**  
*Four nights at the 4-star*  
[Golden Tulip](#)



**Wahiba Sands**  
*One night at the 5-star*  
[Desert Nights Camp](#)



**Ras Al Jinz**  
*One night at the 3-star*  
[Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve](#)



**Muscat**  
*Four nights total at the 4-star*  
[Hormuz Garden by Radisson](#)



**Salalah**  
*Three nights at the 5-star*  
[Crowne Plaza Resort Salalah](#)



**MODERATE:** Must be able to walk one to three miles per day on mostly flat, but often uneven, terrain.

## What to Expect

This program involves extensive walking, often on uneven terrain or up and down stairs that may be steep, uneven, and without handrails. Some sites require strenuous and/or brisk walking or climbing, sometimes with difficult footing. Participants who are not able to walk unassisted and/or stand on their feet for extended periods are kindly advised not to join this tour. All participants are expected to be physically active and not be an impediment to others on excursions, to enjoy traveling as part of a group, and to be ready to experience cultural differences. All participants will be required to follow safety/sanitization protocols set forth by Sponsors/Operator, local staff, and host country laws. Any participant showing signs of illness will be asked to wear a mask when in close proximity to others. If the tour manager decides that a participant cannot visit a site safely or in a timely manner, their judgment will be final. Where possible, an alternate activity may be suggested; additional costs may apply. If you have any questions about your ability to participate, we suggest that you visit your personal physician with this brochure in hand and discuss whether or not this program is appropriate for you.

At the time of year that we visit this region the weather is warm, sunny, and dry, with average daytime temperatures ranging from the mid-70s to high 80s F and nighttime temperatures in the low- to mid-60s F. There may be long drives on some days, transport by 4x4 vehicles, and some very early morning departures from the hotels to make the most of the cooler morning air during site visits and to avoid excess time exposed to mid-day heat. Appropriate dress is key, especially in the more rural areas. Women should have their arms and shoulders covered, wear below-the-knee-length skirts or pants, and carry a scarf to cover their hair when visiting religious sites. In general, non-Muslims are not allowed to enter mosques. *Complete pre-departure details will be sent to participants.*



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Nizwa



## Main Tour Prices Per Person (17 Nights)

Double Occupancy (12-16 participants) .....	\$14,395
Double Occupancy (8-11 participants) .....	\$15,395
Single Supplement.....	\$1,995

*Single room supplement will be charged when requested or required (limited availability).  
With fewer than 8 participants a small group surcharge may be applied.*

## Main Tour Prices Include:

- **AIA lecturer/host Trevor Marchand**
- Services of a professional **local guide and tour manager** throughout
- **17 nights' accommodations** in comfortable and ideally-located four- and five-star hotels, and **unique lodgings** such as the *Desert Nights Camp* and the *Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve*
- **Delicious meals:** breakfasts daily, 13 lunches, and 12 dinners including welcome and farewell dinners with beer or wine
- Surface transportation by **modern, air-conditioned motorcoach** and 4WD vehicles including **bottled water**, parking fees, highway tolls, and local taxes
- **Two in-program flights:** Muscat to Salalah and Salalah to Muscat
- **All sightseeing and excursions** as indicated in the itinerary
- **All gratuities** to local guide, tour manager, drivers, hotel staff, porters, and restaurant staff at included meals
- **Group airport transfers** on program arrival and departure dates
- **Baggage handling** (one bag per person)
- Complete **pre-departure information**, including a suggested reading/ media guide and packing suggestions

## Flights and Transfers

Airfare from/to home is not included in the tour price. In-program flights on the main program, Muscat to Salalah and back to Muscat, are estimated at \$250 per person (subject to change) and are included in the price of this program. If there is an increase in the cost of the in-program flights it will be noted on your final invoice. Group transfers (times TBD) for the main program are provided upon arrival at Dubai International Airport (DXB) on February 7<sup>th</sup> and for departure on February 24<sup>th</sup> from Muscat International Airport (MCT). Participants on the pre-tour extension will be transferred as a group (time TBD) from the Hamad International Airport (DOH) to our Doha hotel upon arrival. To join the main tour at the end of the extension, participants will book their flight from Doha, Qatar, to Dubai, UAE (suggested flight time TBD) as part of their international flight itinerary. Once you have received your final payment invoice, you should book your flights. If you are considering booking your flights before this time, please contact AIA Tours first. Your flight itinerary must be provided to our office prior to departure. We do not accept liability for cancellation penalties related to domestic or international airline tickets.

## Main Tour & Extension Prices Do Not Include:

Airfare from/to home for the main program and airfare from home and from Doha to Dubai for the extension; passport and visa fees; private transfers; all airport fees and departure taxes; cost of personal, trip cancellation, and baggage insurance; transportation of excess baggage; items of a personal nature, such as medical expenses, laundry, taxi, telephone, fax, and internet charges; meals and alcoholic or other beverages except as noted; optional excursions or deviations from scheduled tour.

**Payments:** A deposit of \$2,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour and is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or check made payable to "Eos AIA-Oman2/25." Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure and must be by check, ACH transfer, or wire transfer only; credit cards are not accepted for final payment. By submitting your deposit you are bound by the terms and conditions delineated throughout this brochure or elsewhere published.

**Participant Cancellation Fees:** All requests by participants for cancellations must be received in writing by AIA Tours. Cancellations received at least 180 days (August 10, 2024) prior to departure are fully refunded. Cancellations received from 179 through 90 days (November 8, 2024) prior to departure are refunded less a cancellation fee of \$250 per person. Cancellations received from 89 through 61 days prior to departure are subject to a cancellation fee equal to 50% of the tour cost. Cancellations received 60 days or less prior to departure are subject to a cancellation fee of 100% of the tour cost. *For this and other reasons, participants are strongly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance. Information will be provided with confirmation of receipt of your deposit.*

**Note:** Prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of publication and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates, and the price of fuel, services, and labor may increase the cost of arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices.

Prices, itinerary, accommodations, and leader are subject to change. Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate. It is understood that refunds cannot be made to participants who do not complete the tour for whatever reason.

Due to space limitations, this is abbreviated information. Complete terms and conditions will be sent upon confirmation or upon request, and can be viewed online at [www.aiatours.org](http://www.aiatours.org).



**For questions, and to reserve your space, please contact AIA Tours at:**

**800-748-6262 | Toll: 603-756-2884 | Fax: 603-756-2922 | [aia@studytours.org](mailto:aia@studytours.org) | [www.aiatours.org](http://www.aiatours.org)**

P.O. Box 938, 47 Main Street, Suite One, Walpole, NH 03608



Archaeological Institute of America Tours  
P.O. Box 938, 47 Main Street, Suite 1, Walpole, NH 03608-0938

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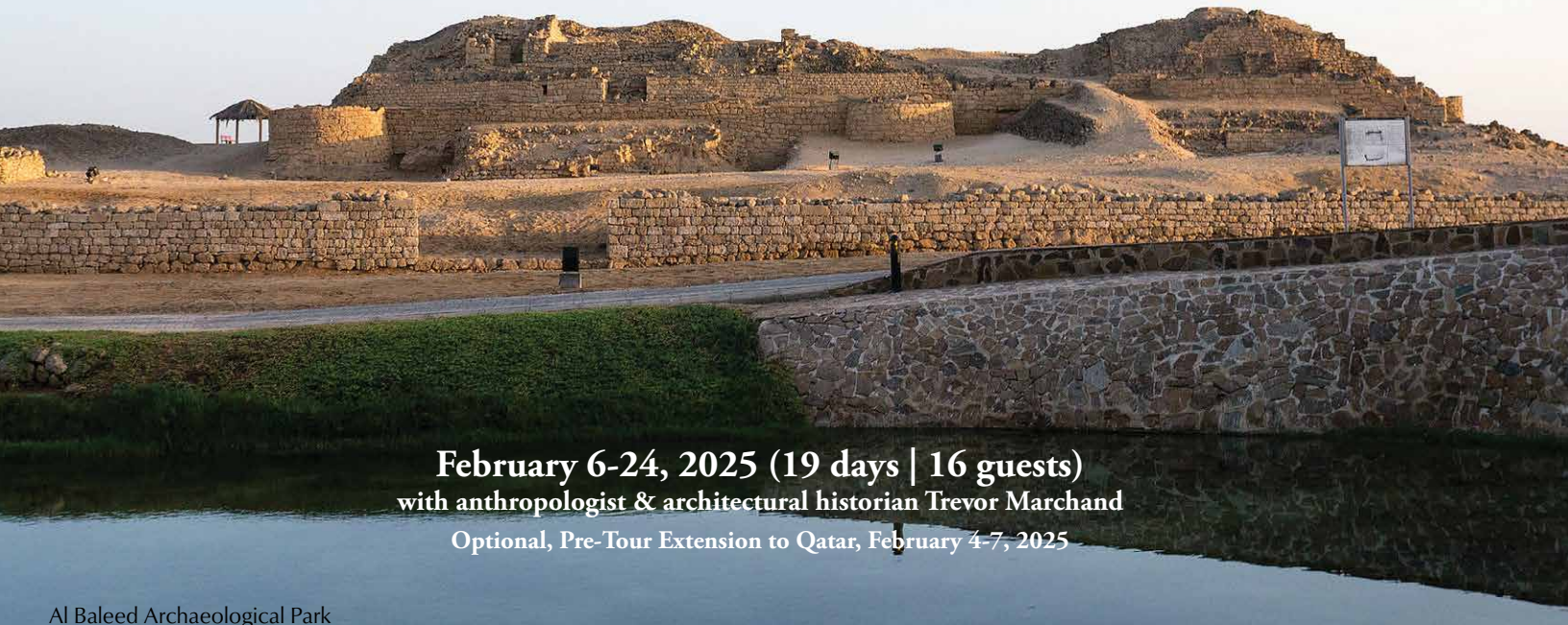
# OMAN & THE UAE

CROSSROADS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN & ARABIAN GULF

**February 6-24, 2025 (19 days | 16 guests)**  
with anthropologist & architectural historian Trevor Marchand  
Optional, Pre-Tour Extension to Qatar, February 4-7, 2025

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*Archaeology-focused tours for the curious to the connoisseur*

To fill out an online reservation form, [click here](#). Or, print and mail or fax this form to the address below.



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OF AMERICA TOURS

RESERVATION FORM  
**OMAN & THE UAE**

Crossroads of the Indian Ocean & Arabian Gulf

February 6-24, 2025 (19 days | 16 guests)

with anthropologist & architectural historian Trevor Marchand

To hold your reservation for seven days while this form and your deposit are in the mail, please contact us at 800-748-6262 or [aia@studytours.org](mailto:aia@studytours.org).

Name 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
(as it appears on passport)

Name 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
(as it appears on passport)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s) \_\_\_\_\_

I/We have read the 'What to Expect' section and am/are physically able to participate fully on the program.

Are you traveling with any other parties on this program? Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign me/us up for the Qatar pre-tour extension (additional fee).

How did you hear about this tour?  eNewsletter  mailing  website  friends/family  other \_\_\_\_\_

**ACCOMMODATIONS:**

(Accommodation preferences are not guaranteed.)

Double (one bed)  Twin (two beds)  Single

I will be sharing with: \_\_\_\_\_  Share - please assign a roommate (not guaranteed).  
 Please share my contact information with potential roommate(s).

**RESERVATIONS & PAYMENT:**

A deposit of \$2,000 per person is required to confirm a reservation. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.  
Please note that credit cards are not accepted for final payment. All prices and payments are in US dollars.

**DEPOSIT TYPE (PLEASE CHECK ONE):**

Check payable to: Eos AIA-Oman2/25  Visa  Master Card  American Express  Already paid by phone

CC# \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ 3- or 4-Digit Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this reservation form, choose/enclose your method of deposit, and sign the release statement below.  
Submit via email, mail, or fax to:

**AIA Tours - P.O. Box 938, Walpole, NH 03608-0938**

**Fax: 603-756-2922 • Email: [aia@studytours.org](mailto:aia@studytours.org)**

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to all Terms & Conditions delineated throughout.

Signature (participant #1) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (participant #2) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS, RELEASE OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION AGREEMENT

**RESPONSIBILITY:** The Archaeological Institute of America and its agent, Eos Study Tours, and its and their employees, shareholders, subsidiaries, affiliates, officers, directors or trustees, successors, and assigns (hereinafter "Sponsors"), and the tour operator and/or its agents (collectively "Sponsors/Operator") do not own or operate any entity which is to or does provide goods or services for your trip including, for example, lodging facilities; airline, vessel, or other transportation companies; guides or guide services; local ground operators; providers or organizers of optional excursions; food service or entertainment providers; etc. All such persons and entities are independent contractors. As a result, Sponsors/Operator are not liable for any negligent or willful act or failure to act of any such person or of any other third party. In addition and without limitation, Sponsors/Operator are not responsible for any injury, loss, death, inconvenience, delay, or damage to person or property in connection with the provision of any goods or services whether resulting from, but not limited to, acts of force majeure; acts of God; acts of government; acts of war or civil unrest, insurrection, or revolt; bites from or attacks by animals, insects, or pests; strikes or other labor activities; criminal or terrorist activities of any kind or the threat thereof; sickness, illness, epidemics, pandemics, or the threat thereof; the lack of availability of or access to medical attention or the quality thereof; overbooking or downgrading of accommodations; mechanical or other failure of airplanes, vessels, or other means of transportation; or for any failure of any transportation mechanism to arrive or depart timely or safely. In addition, Sponsors/Operator are not liable for their own negligence, and participant assumes all risk thereof. **CHANGES IN ITINERARY OR FEATURES:** Sponsors/Operator reserve the right to change the itinerary or trip features at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and Sponsors/Operator shall not be liable for any loss of any kind as a result of any such changes. Sponsors/Operator are not required to cancel any trip for any reason including, without limitation, United States Department of State, World Health Organization, or other Warnings or Advisories of any kind. Sponsors/Operator are not responsible for penalties assessed by air carriers resulting from operational and/or itinerary changes, even if Sponsors/Operator make the flight arrangements or cancel the trip. Sponsors/Operator reserve the right to substitute hotels or attractions of a similar category for those listed in this brochure. **LUGGAGE:** Luggage allowance policies are set by the airlines and may change without prior notice. **PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY:** All programs require physical independence and mobility. Any physical or mental condition that may require special medical attention or physical assistance must be reported in writing when you make your reservation. Participants must be able to embark or disembark transportation vehicles, stand for extended periods, climb stairs, and step over raised thresholds all without assistance. All participants will be required to follow safety/sanitization protocols set forth by Sponsors/Operator, local staff, and host country laws, and any participant who refuses to follow protocols may be asked to leave the program with no refunds provided. **REFUNDS:** Prices quoted are based on group participation. No refunds will be made for any part of the program in which a participant chooses not to participate. Refunds cannot be made to participants who do not complete the tour for any reason, nor to participants whose entry into any country or aboard any transportation vehicle, including airplanes and cruise ships, is delayed or denied. **TOUR CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS:** Sponsors/Operator reserve the right to cancel this tour prior to departure, in which case payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part unless trip cancellation, itinerary changes, and/or delays are mandated by causes beyond our control, in which case the participant shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by Sponsors/Operator, or else receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as Sponsors/Operator are able to recover on the participant's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc. Sponsors/Operator, however, shall not have any obligation or liability to the participant beyond the foregoing. **TRIP INSURANCE:** Sponsors/Operator strongly recommend that participants purchase trip cancellation insurance. In the event that you must cancel your participation, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of

reimbursement. Trip cancellation insurance is available through Sponsors/Operator and others and covers certain expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident and damaged or lost luggage. Sponsors/Operator will send participants an application upon receipt of their reservation. **PRICES:** Prices quoted are based on fares in effect at the time of publication and are subject to changes at any time. On all programs, even after full payment, Sponsors/Operator reserve the right to increase the tour price in the event of cost increases due to changes in supplier costs, tax increases, currency fluctuations, or fuel and energy surcharges, and all such increases are to be paid to Sponsors/Operator upon notice to the participant. **FORUM AND METHODOLOGY FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION:** Any dispute or claim which refers or relates to this contract, any literature related to the trip, or the trip itself shall be litigated solely and exclusively in and for courts in Keene, New Hampshire, subject to substantive and procedural New Hampshire law, and for this limited purpose, the parties agree to exclusive venue and personal jurisdiction therein. At the participant's option, however, in lieu of litigation, Sponsors/Operator will agree to binding arbitration in Keene, New Hampshire, subject to substantive, but not procedural, New Hampshire law, pursuant to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. In any such arbitration, the arbitrator, and not any federal, state, or local court or agency, shall have exclusive authority to resolve any dispute relating to the interpretation, applicability, enforceability, conscionability, or formation of this contract, including but not limited to any claim that all or any part of this contract is void or voidable. **U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT & CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL:** Both the Centers for Disease Control and U.S. State Department publish and update important country-specific information for travelers. We strongly recommend that you review them. They can presently be found at: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices> and <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>. **ASSUMPTION OF RISK:** Participants agree to fully accept all known and unknown risks, including the potential risk of exposure to respiratory illnesses or other illnesses, viruses, diseases, or conditions. Participants understand and agree to hold Sponsors/Operator, their officers, vendors and suppliers harmless and not liable for any real or perceived symptoms of any disease, virus, illness, or condition, nor for exacerbating any existing symptoms of any illness, virus, disease or condition, quarantine requirements, disability, and other short-term and long-term health effects, including death. **MISCELLANEOUS:** Participants should not purchase airline tickets prior to receiving their final payment invoice so as to avoid airline cancellation penalties if a tour is canceled or otherwise modified subsequent to the participant's purchase of those tickets. Baggage and personal effects are at all times the sole responsibility of the participant. If, due to weather, flight schedules, or other uncontrollable factors, you are required to spend (an) additional night(s), you will be responsible for your own hotel, transfers, and meal costs. Baggage is entirely at owner's risk. Sponsors/Operator reserve the right to decline to accept or retain any participant at any time. The right is reserved to decline to accept as a participant, or remove from a trip, without refund, any person it judges to be incapable of meeting the rigors and requirements of participating in the activities, or who is abusive to other trip participants, leaders, or third parties, or who is determined to detract from the enjoyment of the trip by others. Specific room assignments are within the sole discretion of the hotel. **APPEARING IN PHOTOS:** Photos from AIA Tours' trips may be posted on photo-sharing web sites or on social networking sites. Your likeness may appear in some photos or videos, posted either by other travelers or tour lecturers/guides, and the circulation of the materials could be worldwide. Trip photos may also be selected to appear in future AIA Tours promotions; no compensation is available for appearing in a trip photo used for promotional purposes. **ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT:** By forwarding of deposit, the participant certifies that he/she agrees with these terms and conditions, and accepts the terms contained in these Terms and Conditions, Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Dispute Resolution Agreement. The participant affirms that he/she has not received or relied upon any oral representation of Sponsors/Operator as a basis for executing this Release.