Oman, Oh Man!

Overview
Oman’s location – Notice the countries and seas around it.
Omanis were a trading people, who traveled by dhow throughout the Indian Ocean.
A factor which helped trade:
winter monsoon currents made it easy to go south/west.
So during the winter, Omani ships sailed:

• down to East Africa to trade with the civilizations along the Swahili coast
  » OR

• home to Oman from trading expeditions to India or China
Summer monsoon currents made it easy to go north/east.
So during the summer, Omani ships sailed:

• over to India or China to trade with those civilizations
  » OR
• home from trading expeditions along the Swahili coast of East Africa
Oman, historically, has a close relationship with Zanzibar. They were even one country for several centuries!
Facts about Oman, Part I

• Language: Arabic

• Religion: Ibadi Muslim (with a minority of Sunni Muslims)

• Long history of trade – openness to other cultures/ideas
Facts about Oman, Part 2

• Government: Sultanate
  – Sultan Qaboos has ruled since 1970.
  – He is a modernizing ruler, who has used oil revenues to develop the country.
  – Omani councils have a concept of “shura” or consensus – rather than competition - in rule.

• Today: Oman strives to maintain good relations with (and even mediate between): the rest of the Arab world, Iran, and the U.S.
Traditional Omani men’s clothes
(professional dress)
Traditional Omani women’s clothes
Oman is traditional but modern

• Oil money (more limited than in some surrounding countries) was put into developing a modern infrastructure: roads, plumbing, air-conditioning, etc.

• But Oman celebrates its traditional dress and architecture.

• Oman is also “cosmopolitan” – with a long tradition of interaction with other cultures.
Omanis tend to be religious but tolerant of other beliefs.

- Omanis dress in a conservative Islamic style, don’t eat pork or drink alcohol, and fast during the month of Ramadan.
- Oman allows non-Muslims to practice their own religions freely.
- Omanis expect non-Muslims to dress modestly and respect Muslim traditions, BUT they don’t require or expect them to dress or behave like Muslims.
Americans are welcome there.