

**Small Ship Adventure Co.**

Specialising in Small Ship Cruising Worldwide



# Sands of Time

**United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar & Oman**

**November 7 – 17, 2012**

**Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey***

## **ITINERARY**

**Wednesday, November 7**

**Arrive Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

Arrive in Dubai late this evening, transfer to our hotel for overnight.

**Thursday, November 8**

**Dubai / Embark Clipper Odyssey**

Dubai rises from the desert like a mirage. A gleaming 40-year-old, modern city steeped in 5,000 years' worth of tribal heritage, Dubai is a veritable crossroads of past and future. After breakfast at our hotel we set out mid morning for the Palm Island complex and a cruise through the surrounding waters. Considered by some as the eighth wonder of the world, it is one of only a few man-made structures that can be seen from space. We continue with stops at the Mall of the Emirates and its indoor ski slope before arriving at the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, where we take in panoramic views from the 124th floor. We enjoy lunch at a local restaurant followed by a visit to the Dubai Museum. Embark the Clipper Odyssey later this afternoon and be on deck for magnificent views of the illuminated skyline as the sun sets behind the city.

**Friday, November 9**

**Abu Dhabi**

Oil revenues make Abu Dhabi, the capital of the seven sheikdoms comprising the UAE, the richest of them all. Our full-day visit includes a drive through this "Manhattan of the Gulf," to visit the bustling fish market and a falcon rehabilitation center. We return to the Clipper Odyssey for lunch via the picturesque Corniche Road. This afternoon we have the opportunity to visit the Grand Mosque, then enjoy High Tea at the elegant Emirates Palace Hotel. This evening you have the option to dine on board the ship, or on your own at one of Abu Dhabi's fine restaurants.

**Saturday, November 10****Sir Bani Yas Island**

A wonderful example of proactive conservation and re-forestation, this once-barren and desolate island has been transformed into a lush landscape populated by gazelles, Arabian oryx (once on the brink of extinction), and more than 80 species of birds, including greater flamingos. After breakfast onboard, we go ashore (permission pending) by Zodiac to take nature walks and appreciate the visionary largesse of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who made this transformation a reality. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon of lectures on the region's culture and history as we set sail for Bahrain.

**Sunday, November 11****Manama, Bahrain**

The Kingdom of Bahrain is the only Arabian island-nation in the world. This morning we visit the Grand Mosque and National Museum for an introduction to Bahrain's historic and cultural legacies. We then tour the former palace of Sheikh Isa Bin Ali, whose lengthy rule extended from 1869 to 1932. After lunch on board we visit a 14th-century Portuguese fort later used by the Omanis to invade Bahrain in 1800, and prehistoric royal burial mounds. From the causeway leading to the mainland, we are treated to a panoramic view of the island.

**Monday, November 12****Doha, Qatar**

Qatar is the world's smallest Arab community by population; only 400,000 Qataris inhabit this angular peninsula. We visit the National Stables to learn about the famed Arabian horses, the oldest known breed of riding horse. The busy camel and sheep markets present exceptional photographic opportunities, while the produce markets and main souks offer a mélange of goods from dates to spices to gold. The Museum of Islamic Art houses a magnificent collection dating from the 7th to 19th century. Alternately, set off in 4x4 vehicles to travel inland for an adventurous off-road safari into the desert's golden sand dunes.

**Tuesday, November 13****Sharjah, UAE**

Enjoy a morning at sea as our lecture series continues. Later we arrive in Sharjah, the UAE's major heritage center known for its meticulous preservation of a unique Arabian lifestyle and Islamic culture. This is showcased at the Museum of Islamic Civilizations where Islamic art and artifacts are housed in what was once the Souk al-Majarrah. The Al Naboodah House illustrates the life of a well-to-do pearl-trading family. We also browse in the Al Markazi souk to view the UAE's largest selection of carpets and handicrafts.

**Wednesday, November 14****Al Khasab / Musandam Peninsula, Oman**

We anchor in the busy port town of Al Khasab to visit the 16th-century Portuguese fort and Old Town. We then board local dhows adorned with colorful Oriental carpets and cushions to explore the rugged fjords of the Musandam Peninsula. These winding waterways reveal towering limestone cliffs which drop vertically into the turquoise sea. We sail past Telegraph Island, the site of the Gulf's first telegraphic station installed by the British in 1864, where we have the opportunity to swim off the side of the dhow. Keep an eye out for schools of leaping dolphins as we make our way back to the Clipper Odyssey.

**Thursday, November 15****Fujairah, UAE**

Fujairah separates two sections of Oman and is the only emirate located outside the Persian Gulf. After a photo stop at the dramatic fortress that presides majestically over the town, we continue inland to Bithna Oasis, with its impressive fort guarding the Hajar Mountains, and Bidiya Mosque, the oldest mosque in the UAE, before descending to the coastal town of Dibba, a charming Mediterranean-flavored fishing village where life slows to a leisurely pace. We also visit the town of Masafi, where fresh water springs provide the UAE with an abundant supply of drinking water, and peruse the colorful roadside market filled with an array of souvenirs, clay pots, and artifacts.

**Friday, November 16****Muscat, Oman / Nizwa**

Today, we disembark in Muscat, Oman's capital, and depart overland for Nizwa. In the ancient capital, a historic seat of Islamic learning, we explore the 17th-century round Tower Fort, highlighted by a climb up the impregnable tower for panoramic views. We visit the beautiful oasis of Bahla and its sprawling fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose walls and towers were constructed of unbaked brick. Nearby is Jabrin Castle, an exquisite example of 17th-century Omani architecture, its ceilings adorned in Islamic inscriptions and astrological designs. After lunch we stop at the lush green oasis of Birkat-Al-Mauz to view its two-tiered falaj—a traditional irrigation system. We return to the Clipper Odyssey in time for dinner, or you may choose to dine in town on your own.

**Saturday, November 17****Muscat / Disembark**

Today we explore Muscat, a fascinating blend of traditional architecture, elegant 18th-century colonial mansions, and modern, aesthetically-pleasing buildings. Drive past elegant villas to photograph Sultan Qaboos Mosque, an exquisite example of Islamic architecture. Browse through traditional handicrafts at the bustling souk before we explore Bait al Zubair, a private museum housing traditional Omani items—weaponry, jewelry, and paintings. After lunch at a local restaurant we view the magnificent Al Alam Palace of Sultan Qaboos, which is set between the twin 400-year-old turreted Portuguese forts of Jalalai and Mirani. Enjoy our last meal on board the Clipper Odyssey, before late evening transfers to the airport for your homeward flight.