Oman

Location

Oman is located in the Middle East in the southeastern quarter of the Arabian Peninsula at 21 00 N and 57 00 E. The country borders the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. Oman covers 212,460 sq km with 1,374 km land boundary and 2,092 km cost line.

Geography

The Country is 82% valleys and desert including fertile Batinah plain that inclines south-east towards Musac. An interior system of jagged mountains called al-Hajar or the Rock, dominate 15% of the country. The remaining 3% is consisting of coastal plain. About fifteen kilometers offshore is the island of Masirah which is located in a strategic location near the entry point to the Gulf of Oman from the Arabian Sea. Natural character of the land divides the country into many distinct areas such as Ruus al Jibal, including the northern Musandam Peninsula; the Al Batinah coastal plain; the Muscat-Matrah coastal area; the Oman interior, comprising Al Jabal al Akhdar, its foothills, and desert fringes; the barren coastline south to Dhofar and Dhofar region in the south.

Climate

With the exception of Dhofar region, which receives cool winds from the Indian Ocean, the climate of Oman is extremely hot and dry in the country, and extremely hot
and humid along the cost line. Summer temperature can rise up to 50° C, and the humidity can rise as high as 90 percent.

**History**

The coast of Oman was controlled by Portugal from 1508 to 1659 before the Ottoman Empire took possession. Oman began its close relationship with Great Britain in the late 18th century. The United Nations called for the elimination of British influence in Oman in 1965 and in 1970, Qabus bin Said removed his father, Sultan Said ibn Timer from power and promised to use oil revenues for modernization. Oman subsequently joined the United Nations and the Arab League in 1971. In 1991 Oman opened its bases to international coalition forces against Iraq in Persian Gulf War.

**Important Dates**


**Population**

Records from 2005 show a population of 3,001,583 which includes 577,293 non-nationals. The population is divided into 42.6% 0-14 years, 54.9% 15-64 years, and 2.5% 65 years and over. The sex ratio is reported as 1.26 males per 1 female. With a birth rate of 36.73 births/1,000 population, and death rate of 3.86 deaths/1,000
The population growth is reported to be 3.32% in 2005. Reports indicate that only 14 percent of Oman is live in cities and towns.

**Currency**

The official currency of Oman is Omani Rial (OMR) which is divided into 1,000 baiza. According to the current exchange rates, 1 OMR = 2.59 USD.

**Education**

Literacy rate as reported in 2003 is 75.8% in Oman. Literacy rate among men is hither with 83.1% of men literate as oppose to 67.2% of women who are literate.

**Language**

The official language of Oman is Arabic. English and some Asian languages such as Urdu, Baluchi and Hindi and are also widely spoken.

**Religion**

The Official religion of Oman is Islam. However, other religions are tolerated under the Oman’s Law. Muslims account for 88 percent of the population.

**Agriculture**

The most heavily cultivated region of the country is the coastal Batinah plain extending north-westwards from just north of Muscat to the border with the UAE, and to the east of the Hajjar range. Agriculture is dependent on rains that fall over the adjacent mountains and is drawn from wells. Reports indicate that 35,000 hectares of land are
planted with date palms, and 28,000 hectares with other crops. Dates are the major product of the Batinah plain while limes are grown in quantity. Bananas, mangoes, and other fruits, and also tomatoes, onions, aubergines and tobacco are also grown.

**Trade**

With 6.1 billion bbl in oil reserve, Oman exports 721,000 bbl a day and with 829.7 billion 7 in natural gas reserve, Oman exports 43 billion cu m of gas as reported in 2001. Oman’s total exports account to $19.01 billion a year with China, South Korea, Japan, Thailand and UAE as export partners. Oman spends $8.709 billion in imports from UAE, Japan, UK, Italy, Germany, and US.

**Food**

International restaurants and fast food chains are easy to find in Oman. Oman’s cuisines are however still very popular in the country. The country’s dishes are very simple, usually made up of marinated and grilled meat, fish or chicken. Laban, salty buttermilk and flavored yogurt drinks are very popular in Oman.

**Landmarks**

There are a number of well-preserved ancient cities and archeological cites in Oman. Several museums such as the Omani Museum are also among the famous places in Oman.