

Muscat, Oman (2014- Present) Esther Mustamu-Daniels: Married - one child

Muscat is a gem of a city located in the peaceful, safe, and friendly country of Oman. As a city, it is relatively small but has some of the most beautiful scenery, including mountains, beaches, and desserts. If you enjoy the outdoors, then this is the perfect destination and place to live. It is however a very hot country, with Summer temperatures reaching a scorching 50 degrees celsius. Winter (October to March) is a lovely time of year when temperatures fall to between 25 to 30 degrees celsius - perfect for exploring the amazing wadis and local scenery.

The people in Oman are the kindest, most friendly, and hospitable people I have ever met. A simple request for directions often results in an invitation for coffee or dinner. As a woman, I feel safe and the gentle pace, people and environment make it a perfect place to raise a family. The main language spoken is Arabic with some of the population speaking Swahili, however, most people speak English. The country is very safe and crime is very low; Muscat is a place where you can leave your bag or phone unattended and it will stay safe (I can personally attest to this).

Local food is typical of other Arabic countries, with falafel, shawarma, hummus, and tabouleh being commonplace. A specialty is Shuwa where meat is marinated in delicious seasoning and cooked in a pit for hours until it falls off the bone. Dates and honey are also a specialty of Oman. Oman is influenced by many cultures including those of Tanzania and India and this has also impacted the dishes, ingredients, and flavours of some of the food you'll find here.

When commuting around the city, most people use cars, although there are very effective taxi services and a minimal bus service. Walking is often a challenge in the heat and pavements are not always very accommodating.

Dotted around Muscat are various malls which have enough brands for all of your needs. The supermarkets are well stocked and delivery companies have improved significantly in the past few years, meaning you can order pretty much anything and have it delivered directly to your door. Food is imported from all over the world, meaning it is possible to find comfort treats from many expats countries, but obviously, local food is much cheaper in comparison.

In terms of activities, indoor ones are quite limited. There are a few museums and art galleries, but nothing like the number you might find in a city like London. Nightlife isn't a main feature of the town, but with Dubai just a five hour drive away, one can find numerous venues to satisfy their entertainment needs. With some of the biggest malls in the world, one can also find a wider range of brands to shop for. Weekend getaways to Dubai are common for both expats and locals. Another option is to travel south via plane or road to Salalah which boasts even more amazing scenery, especially during Kareef, or the rainy season.

As Oman is a Muslim country, if you want to consume alcohol, you can go to any of the hotels or bars for a drink. To purchase alcohol for consumption at home, you will need to apply for a licence which is easy and straightforward via an online app. During Ramadan, eating outdoors is forbidden before iftar.

Part of an employment contract includes health insurance which covers most needs, however you may need to pay extra for dental work or for specific medicines.

Moving to Muscat is one of the best decisions I have ever made. My husband, daughter, and I lived in London prior to moving here and, after the welcomed adjustment to a quieter life, completely love the country. Raising our daughter in a safe and friendly environment is priceless. The currency in Oman is currently the third strongest in the world, so travelling abroad and transferring funds means your pay can go very far.

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