

The Cliff Guest House: Stay in an Ancient Village in Oman

While eating Omani-style fish and rice mixed with cumin and other Arabic spices for dinner, one can't help but look around to appreciate the quiet while the soft light comes from the hanging Turkish lamps in blue, pink, and red color. And at the same time, sitting on traditional red and black striped pillows waiting to watch a movie about life in an Omani village, including how they built their mud homes. Views of the mountains, a chance for stargazing, and a fire to keep warm at night are more reasons to stay in an ancient village at The Cliff Guest House in Al Suwjara Village in Jabal Akhdar, the Sultanate of Oman.

Getting There is Part of the Adventure

The Al Sheriqi family opened this guesthouse in 2016 to preserve the village and its homes. The families from the area operate the guesthouse. The drive along the winding and narrow gravel road, once passing the Jabal Akhdar checkpoint, is worth it.

After parking the car, a staff member will lead guests to the accommodation across the mountain. The village looks like it could take an hour to get to; however, it is four hundred and fifty meters away, and it takes about fifteen minutes to walk around rocks. There is also a small wooden bridge to cross over. Luggage will be taken across on a zipline and placed outside the rooms. Once passing through a traditional wooden door, walk up the cobblestone stairs and stop by the reception area for some Omani coffee and dates. You can also sit on red and black cushion seats to relax. It is easy to take pictures of the traditional decorations, including hanging clay water pitchers and wooden doors. Even the pink marble sinks perched on top of tree trunks bring character to this guesthouse.

Explore the Area with a Guided Tour

There are a few options to explore while staying here. A guided tour with Mukhtar will take you to a farm with an abandoned village. This medium-level hike requires walking around loose rocks and a few boulders. While on the trail, look across at the mountains and the wadi below. A wadi is like a valley surrounded by rocks, trees, and mountains. When it rains, they form pools of water. The rock formations and their uneven layers make for good pictures. Once reaching the end, take a break and have some snacks. In this area, there are remains of stones once a part of various rooms in a house. Sometimes they use these rooms to store things, such as dates. The walk takes around three hours.

Opportunities for Wadi Views and Abseiling

There is also a chance to walk inside a cave, but it requires some abseiling for adventurous people. A harness is clipped to a rope, and you use the rope to repel down for abseiling. Another option is to walk around the guesthouse and look at the other rooms. One of the deluxe rooms includes a private sitting area with wicker chairs and cushions. Another room has a two-person swing outside, perfect for relaxing and reading a book. Mohammed, Mukhtar's cousin, can also show you a short walking path along the cliff to get views of the wadi below.

Traditional Omani Meals

When making the reservation, it is best to place your dinner order. Dinner can occur in the common sitting area near the fire or outside the room. One of the staff, Hilal, another cousin, will show two movies, one of which talks about life in the village in the past. Watch this sitting on a wicker ottoman with cushions on a projector right before the fire. There is more to learn about this village, and Hilal or other family members are happy to explain anything. Breakfast includes eggs, toast, jam, and Omani bread, a very thin and crispy flatbread.

While walking around the guesthouse, Mohammed said they plan to add more attractions to this area. They want to add abseiling and via Ferrata. Via Ferrata usually has a rope or wire placed around rocks. Once harnessed in, two clips go on the rope to help ascend on the rock. There are also plans to build a VIP suite with a private pool. Currently, there are eight rooms, with plans to create more. After Ramadan, the villa will be available for guests.

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Whether staying for the night or visiting the ancient village for a few hours, The Cliff Guest House is worth visiting. The traditional clay houses and decorations make this a great spot to enjoy and appreciate Omani culture. It is also great to see the family preserve their village and turn their homes into accommodation. There is something about staying on a mountain surrounded by nature. The family also makes guests feel at home. It will be cold from November to February, so bring warm clothes. The fire at night will keep you warm, and there are extra blankets. The showers also have water heaters.

The family suite holds six people and costs 180 rials per night. Deluxe rooms are 150 rials and can fit two people. A four-wheel is required, but transport is available for a fee. The guided cave tour costs 30 rials for two people and 8 rials for additional people. The abandoned village tour costs 25 rials for two people and 8 rials per person for extra people. (Costs are those at the time of my stay. Costs subject to change, of course.)

Jabal Akhdar: Get to Know Traditional Omani Culture

Jabal Akhdar is about two and a half hours from Muscat. Wear closed-toed shoes with a good grip when walking to the guest house since climbing around rocks is required. For more information, check out the [Cliff Guest House](#).

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