TRIP OVERVIEW

Unleash your inner adventurer on this stunning swimming holiday in Oman. Taking in the awe-inspiring fjords of the spectacular Musandam Peninsula, this trip gives you the chance to discover some truly breathtaking locations, many of which had never been swum in prior to SwimTrek's arrival in the area.

Often described as the 'Norway of Arabia', the Musandam Peninsula is one of the Persian Gulf's great wildernesses. Separated from the rest of Oman by the UAE, the peninsula lies at the extreme north-eastern tip of Arabia, where the steep red rocks of the Hajar Mountains plunge into the blue waters of the Arabian Gulf, creating a labyrinth of massive fjords (khors).

Our traditional local dhow is the perfect vessel from which to explore this area, and our swimmers are often accompanied by the friendly dolphins who frequently visit these waters. From the towering cliffs and incredible views, to the local culture and delicious cuisine, this trip allows you to experience this fascinating corner of the world from a truly unique perspective.

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is ideal for swimmers who are looking for an adventurous swimming experience in one of SwimTrek's most unique destinations.

Swimmers should also have a basic understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of around 3 km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 6km (split over a minimum of two swims).

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Musandam

Geographically, the Musandam Peninsula juts out into the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow entry into the Persian Gulf, from the Arabian Peninsula.

Khasab

Our base for the trip is in the sleepy town of Khasab. Lying on a plain nestled between the mountains and the sea, this is the starting point for our trip to the Khor Ash Sham fjord. With Iranian traders loading up goods in the Old Souk to take back across the Strait of Hormuz, it feels like a real frontier town.

Khor Ash Sham Fjord

Khor Ash Sham is the longest and most dramatic of the many fjords in Musandam. All the fjords (khors) are actually flooded valleys, formed as a result of Musandam's progressive decline beneath the Eurasian continental plate. Craggy cliffs litter the landscape along with small island communities which are accessible only by boat.

Telegraph Island

Telegraph Island was once a crucial hub in Britain's link with its empire. At the centre of the telegraph line between London and Bombay, it was originally known as Jazirat al Maqlab and it offered a refuge from the potentially hostile local tribes of the mainland.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Atana Khasab Hotel, Khasab, Oman.
Start Time	16:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Atana Khasab Hotel, Khasab, Oman
Finish Time	09:00 on Day 7

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during the course of your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

Day 1

After checking into the hotel, you will have some time to settle in and explore before we meet later in the evening for our welcome meeting. Here we'll discuss the week's swims that lie ahead, followed by a safety briefing. We then take an acclimatisation swim at the nearby Beach, which is the perfect opportunity to get used to the local waters in preparation for tomorrow's first day of swimming.

Day 2

We depart from our hotel and travel to Khor Ash Sham, the largest of the fjords in the Musandam Peninsula. As we set off towards the fishing village of Nadifi, the first thing you notice is the sheer size of what you are entering. We swim a section of the northern coastline of the khor towards Sham village. In this isolated location, the local dialect, Kumzari, is generally spoken, which sounds distinctly more like Farsi than Arabic, and is another reminder of the wide range of influences which have helped to shape the culture in this part of the world.

After a lunch of delicious local food on board our dhow, we attempt our first crossing of the khor by swimming across Nadifi Bay. It's a stunning crossing of Khor Ash Sham. In the middle of the crossing, you can see down the entire length of the khor for the first time. On arrival back at our hotel overlooking the sea, we carry out a technique advice session and stroke recording in the hotel pool, complete with stunning views of the surrounding landscapes, to be reviewed with video playback.

Day 3

We begin the day swimming a full circumnavigation of Jazirat Maqlab, an island which enjoys plenty of marine life in its surrounding waters. We then make the short crossing to Telegraph Island, the home of an old British repeater station. Upon reaching the island, we disembark and have the chance to explore this old symbol of the Empire. We take lunch on the island and here we enjoy unrivalled views along

the khor.
We then finish the day with an east Shamm Island coastal swim. This part of the khor is one of the most likely areas to spot the humpback dolphin, which is local to these fjords.

Day 4

This morning we head even further into the khor, crossing to its northern edge between peninsulas before reaching Seebi Island, famous for its golden white sands, rocky islets and outcrops. You can see the seabed on our entire morning circumnavigation of the island. Large colonies of seabirds, including cormorants, terns and gulls can be spotted here. It's a real highlight swim.

Following this circumnavigation, we head back to Khasab, where the afternoon day is yours to do with what you wish. There are a wide range of activities that you can choose from. In Khasab itself you could visit the local *souq* and Khasab Fort which sits proudly overlooking the maritime approaches to Khasab. Out of town, there is an opportunity to visit Khor Najd, a stunning yet isolated fjord which faces towards the Gulf of Oman. Other options ae diving/snorkeling excursions in the Kumzar region of Mussandam, overlooking the Straits of Hormuz.

Day 5

We have an early start this morning as we journey down the entire length of Khor Ash Sham, a distance of around 20 kilometers. We travel to the most remote village in the Khor, where the water is generally at its clearest.

From here we swim along the coastline, where the cliffs plunge down into the sea and we swim under the imposing cliff face of Mount Seebi. We head down to where both khors meet, to the mountain pass of Maksar. After lunch taken on board the dhow, there is an opportunity to walk up the side of the narrow isthmus which separates the Persian Gulf (Khor Ash Sham) from the Gulf of Oman (Khor Najd). It is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular views in the whole of the Middle East.

Day 6

Today we head back to Telegraph Island which we swam to earlier in the week, but this time we will circumnavigate around it. It's possible to see the bottom the whole way round and it is home to a variety of fish species. Spinner Dolphins have also been spotted previously in this area. After finishing this last swim, we jump back onto the boat and enjoy a cruise for the final time along this magnificent land and seascape.

Day 7

After the exertions of the week, it's time for a relaxing swim directly in front of our hotel. We head towards Bassa Beach, a popular spot with local swimmers. We'll swim a loop of the reef before returning back to the hotel, bringing to an end our unique swimming trip in the fjords of Musandam.

TRIP GRADING

We have given this trip a 'Moderate' grading. Most swimmers comfortable in the open water will be able to take part and enjoy one of these trips.

Swimming Distances

Swim	Distance	Swim	Distance
Nadifi - Sham	4km	Nadifi Bay Crossing	2km
Shamm - Telegraph Island	4km	East Shamm Coastal	2km
Seebi Island Circumnavigation	4km	Khor's End	2km
Telegraph Island Circumnavigation	2½ km	North/South Coastal	2½ km
Maqleb Coastal	3km	Seebi Village Crossing	1½km

Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience, however you should be aware that certain marine life such as sea lice, jellyfish, sea urchins and coral could be present during the swims. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures, however if you suffer from anaphylaxis, please consult the office prior to booking.

Walking Distances

Walk	Distance
Khor Ash Sham – Khor Najd	1km

Due to the inaccessibility of the fjords, the walking is limited. The one walk is a steep walk up the side of the isthmus separating Khor Ash Sham from Khor Najd. Good trainers or walking sandals would be required, and it is essential that they are closed toe shoes. There is always the option of not going on the walks should you so wish.

Walking Conditions

There are small walks on this trip which are mainly to get us to and from the start and finish of a swim. Most walks take place on recognised paths and tracks, however there may be cases where we walk along trails or other unsealed surfaces and care should be taken in these areas.

Temperatures

Month	Water Temperature*	Air Temperature*
February	22-24˚C / 72-75˚F	22-24˚C / 72-75˚F
November	26-30˚C / 79-86˚F	26-30˚C / 79-86˚F

* Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. As a consequence, open water swimming holidays require a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip

and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.

TRIP INFORMATION

Group Size

This trip has a maximum group size of 15. The group will be split into a maximum of three groups, based on speed, with each group being accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort.

Boat Support

Boat support on this trip includes one main boat (a traditional local dhow) and two support boats to be piloted by your SwimTrek guides and a local boat pilot. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

Extra Activities

If you wish to explore the beautiful surroundings of Musandam further, our partners in Khasab offer a range of tours including cultural tours, fishing trips and mountain safaris. For further information, please visit www.dolphintour.net or contact dolphint@omantel.net.om.

Essential Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:

✓	Item	✓	Item
❑	Swimming Costume x 2	❑	Small Daypack/ Dry Bag
❑	Swimming Goggles x 2*	❑	Waterproof Jacket
❑	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	❑	Sweater
❑	Waterproof Sun Cream (High SPF)	❑	Walking Shoes/ Aqua Shoes/Sandals
❑	Towel	❑	Lightweight conservative outfit***
❑	Additional layers for the evening**	❑	Personal Drink Bottle (x2)

For more information, please visit our Packing List page on the website.

*Try to bring one clear lens and one tinted lens for different light conditions.

**It can often be quite cool on the dhow and in the evenings, so we also recommend bringing a few extra layers to put on after your swims and during evening meals.

***Please also bring an outfit that covers from your shoulders down to your knees.

Your normal swimwear will be perfectly suitable for the swims, but a long-sleeved rash vest is advisable for additional UV protection.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water, and electrolyte drinks. The guides will no longer distribute shared drinks bottles but will fill your personal drink bottles. Please ensure these are clearly marked to help our coaches identify yours. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel, or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

GETTING THERE

While there are various options for travelling to Khasab at the start of your trip, we recommend flying into Dubai and catching the SwimTrek transfer which departs from Dubai International Airport, Terminal 1, at 10:30 on Day 1 of your trip.

As SwimTrekkers come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out our SwimTrek flight tips page on the website.

Designated SwimTrek Transfer - Dubai International Airport to Khasab

SwimTrek offers a transfer from Dubai International Airport in front of Starbucks at Terminal 1 to your accommodation in Oman which leaves at 10:30 on Day 1 of the trip. The transfer takes approximately 3-4 hours, however, please be aware that this journey time can vary considerably due to possible delays at the UAE/Oman border. Please note, a free shuttle service runs between Dubai airport terminals. Due to the length of travel, please ensure you have plenty of food and water to last the transfer.

If you would like to join this transfer, please contact the SwimTrek office with your flight details prior to your trip. Please note that the cost of the transfer varies depending on the number of travellers and can be paid using the local currency, Omani Rial. Other currencies such as US Dollars, British Pound Sterling and UAE Dirham may be accepted but rates cannot be guaranteed. Please note that the prices below are for a one-way transfer from Dubai International Airport to Atana Khasab Hotel, Oman.

Number of Passengers	Cost
4 Passengers (minimum required)	OMR30 per person
5-7 Passengers	OMR24 per person
8-10 Passengers	OMR22 per person
11 + Passengers	OMR18 per person

Private Transfer - Dubai International Airport to Khasab

If your travel plans do not coincide with the designated SwimTrek transfer, it is possible to arrange a private transfer through our partners in Oman. To book a private transfer, please email the team at Dolphin Travel via dolphint@omantel.net.om.

Return Transfers - Khasab to Dubai International Airport

A return transfer from Khasab to Dubai International Airport is available on the final day of your trip and can be arranged with your fellow guests once you are in Oman. Please note that this transfer generally arrives at Dubai International Airport at approximately 12:00, however, it is subject to delays at the UAE/Oman border and your arrival time cannot be guaranteed.

Please note that you will need to allow enough time to check out of the hotel with enough time to catch this transfer back to Dubai and it may be best to arrange this with the hotel reception the night before

your departure.

Travel Via Muscat, Oman

It is possible to travel to Khasab by flying into Muscat and then catch a connecting flight or ferry to Khasab. Please note that this option is often longer and more expensive than travelling via Dubai.

From Muscat, you can also catch a domestic flight to Khasab with Oman Air, which has a journey time of approximately one hour. This flight does not normally operate on a Friday.

Muscat to Khasab - Bus and Ferry

It is also possible to book a bus and ferry from Muscat to Khasab which takes approximately 7-8 hours. Please note that this bus/ferry service does **not** run every day. For schedules, departures and other timetable information, please visit www.nfc.om.

ACCOMMODATION

Perched on a rock face, the Atana Khasab Hotel is a resort hotel offering panoramic views of the Strait of Hormuz and the spectacular Musandam shoreline. All rooms are equipped with air conditioning and en suite bathrooms and are sold on a twin-share basis. There are a limited number of single supplement rooms which can be reserved during the booking process, subject to availability. The Atana Khasab runs a return shuttle bus into downtown Khasab town (Souq area), available on request and free of charge.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you would like to book additional nights' accommodation at the start or end of your trip, please contact the hotel directly via email stay@atanahotels.com.

Food and Drink

All breakfasts and lunches are included in the price of your trip, however, please note that evening meals are at your own expense. This gives you a fantastic opportunity to either eat at the hotel restaurant or explore and experience the local cafes and restaurants of your choice over the course of your trip. The price for eating out in Khasab varies depending on the restaurant. The average price of a two-course dinner in Khasab town is around 10 OMR (£20) while at the hotel, the price is closer to 20 OMR (£41).

For more information, please visit our food and drink page on the website.

TRAVEL ADVICE

For more information on any of the following sections please visit the Travel Advice page of our website.

Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover items such as dinners, drinks, entertainment, souvenirs, etc. The local currency is the Omani Rial. In some countries, tipping (gratuities) is not part of the culture - in others it has become an expected norm. We believe that tipping is done entirely at your own discretion. If you have been provided with excellent it may be something you wish to do. Your SwimTrek

Guides can advise on local norms for service providers like boat crew, waiters or taxis. Nothing is expected for your SwimTrek Guides but many groups like to present something to the Guides at the end of the trip.

Responsible Travel

SwimTrek is conscious of the importance of protecting the world's natural wonders. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to not only take care of the natural environments which we are lucky enough to explore, but also to educate our guests about the importance of conservation efforts and responsible tourism. It's for this reason that we have worked so closely with our partners to ensure that our trips are conducted in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, working tirelessly to minimise the impact of our presence on local marine life and the natural habitat.

For more information, please visit our Responsible Travel page on the website.

Passports and Visas

The Musandam Peninsula, including Khasab, is part of Oman. Non-Omani citizens require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. All visitors require an Omani visa to enter the country. Whilst Omani visas are available on arrival to citizens of all E.U. member states, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, we **strongly advise** applying online in advance via evisa.rop.gov.om/. This will help avoid any unexpected delays to your journey.

Guests travelling via Dubai, or any other airport in the UAE, will need to obtain a UAE visa. Citizens of the United Kingdom, all E.U. member states, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand can apply for a free visa upon arrival at Dubai airport. This visa allows visitors to stay in the UAE for up to 30 days. The visa terminates automatically on departure and a new visa is issued on arrival each time the visitor returns to the UAE. For further information about UAE visas, please visit Visit Dubai.

If travelling on the SwimTrek designated transfer from Dubai to Khasab, you will drive to the Oman/UAE border, where you will pass through the immigration offices of the UAE. There is a 35 AED exit fee which will initially be paid by the transfer driver but will be requested from each guest once you have arrived at the hotel. As above, although it may be possible to obtain your Omani visa at the border, we **strongly advise** applying online in advance to help avoid any delays via evisa.rop.gov.om/.

Please note, visa regulations are always subject to change and it is important that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

Travel Insurance

We consider comprehensive travel insurance to be essential, and we strongly recommend that you purchase insurance which includes, but is not limited to, cover for illness, accident, emergency repatriation, ambulance, air ambulance, helicopter rescue services, cancellation, lost luggage and delays. Your travel insurance should also cover you for open water swimming and any other activity listed in your trip itinerary (including races and competitions, where applicable). Please read your policy details carefully and remember to take them with you on your trip for your own reference. For further information, please visit our Travel Insurance page on the website.

Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations

Here at SwimTrek we pride ourselves on our focus on safety and the well-being of all our guests. As we operate in some beautiful and remote locations medical facilities are not always easily accessible. SwimTrek Guides, and many staff working for our local partners, are first aid trained. However we ask that you read our Travel Health page to ensure that you are informed about general Travel and Swim Health precautions.

Internet Access, Electricity and Travel Plugs

There is complimentary Wi-Fi internet access in the hotel bedrooms but service could be limited.

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit worldstandards.eu