

## Discover Oman

# Reading List

### **A History of modern Oman**

by Jeremy Jones, Nicholas Ridout

The ideal introduction to the history of modern Oman from the eighteenth century to the present, this book combines the most recent scholarship on Omani history with insights drawn from a close analysis of the politics and international relations of contemporary Oman. Jeremy Jones and Nicholas Ridout offer a distinctive new approach to Omani history, building on postcolonial thought and integrating the study of politics and culture. The book addresses key topics including Oman's historical cosmopolitanism, the distinctive role of Omani Islam in the country's social and political life, Oman's role in the global economy of the nineteenth century, insurrection and revolution in the twentieth century, the role of Sultan Qaboos in the era of oil and Oman's unique regional and diplomatic perspective on contemporary issues.

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### **Arabian Sands**

by Wilfred Thesiger

*Arabian Sands* is Wilfred Thesiger's record of his extraordinary journey through the parched "Empty Quarter" of Arabia. Educated at Eton and Oxford, Thesiger was repulsed by the softness and rigidity of Western life—"the machines, the calling cards, the meticulously aligned streets." In the spirit of T. E. Lawrence, he set out to explore the deserts of Arabia, traveling among peoples who had never seen a European and considered it their duty to kill Christian infidels. His now-classic account is invaluable to understanding the modern Middle East.

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### **In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town**

by Mandana Limbert

Before the discovery of oil in the late 1960s, Oman was one of the poorest countries in the world, with only six kilometers of paved roads and one hospital. By the late 1970s, all that had changed as Oman used its new oil wealth to build a modern infrastructure. *In the Time of Oil* describes how people in Bahla, an oasis town in the interior of Oman, experienced this dramatic transformation

following the discovery of oil, and how they now grapple with the prospect of this resource's future depletion. Focusing on shifting structures of governance and new forms of sociality as well as on the changes brought by mass schooling, piped water, and the fracturing of close ties with East Africa, Mandana Limbert shows how personal memories and local histories produce divergent notions about proper social conduct, piety, and gendered religiosity. With close attention to the subtleties of everyday life and the details of archival documents, poetry, and local histories, Limbert provides a rich historical ethnography of oil development, piety, and social life on the Arabian Peninsula.

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### **Oman: Under Arabian Skies**

by Rory Patrick Allen and Alan Pelz-Sharpe

The Sultanate of Oman is a land of oases, deserts, rolling sands, shifting dunes, and mountains upon which ancient cities have been carved from stone. A land that boasts the Queen of Sheba, Sindbad the Sailor, and The Lost City of Ubar buried for millennia under the Arabian Sands. A country that was heralded for its wealth in frankincense, and it is from here that ancient frankincense caravans began carrying their precious cargoes to the classical world.

Oman is a country where the Bedouin still wander the deserts as they have since time immemorial. A mystical land where eagles soar over the mountain that is home to the prophet Job, a prophet in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

In the mountains nearby live an ancient people whose language predates Aramaic. The age of the language remains a mystery. It is a spoken language with no written form. In these mountains one finds caves that are decorated with prehistoric art. Mines and distinctive cone-like tombs dating from the Bronze Age feature all over the country. It is a land that has tales of wizardry, magic, jinns, and exorcisms. Embark on a magical and mystical Arabian Odyssey with one man and his traveler's tales through this land that time has all but forgotten.

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### **Oman: The True-Life Drama and Intrigue of an Arab State**

by John Beasant

Oman is one of the world's most secretive countries, ruled with absolute authority by the Sultan. All information is strictly controlled by the State: British Prime Minister Edward Heath once said that the story of the 1970 Palace Coup and the events that followed would 'not be told in our lifetime'.

Following ten years' residency in the country a senior member of Sultan Qaboos's Family suggested that John Beasant write a political history of Oman that would to some extent rehabilitate the maligned name of former Sultan Said, who was deposed in the 1970 Coup.

In 'Oman' Beasant catalogues a nature of exploitation woven through all manner of political and commercial interests and casts light on the dark practices so often involved in the sale of arms to Middle Eastern states and illustrates the political use to which the sale of 'black gold' - oil - can be put.

*Oman* is a parable of our times, detailing rivalry and intrigue between people in high places. It is one of the most dramatic tales in Arab history: a chronicle of personal price, rapacious greed and undiluted lust for power.

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### **Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires**

by Tim Mackintosh-Smith

This kaleidoscopic book covers almost 3,000 years of Arab history and shines a light on the footloose Arab peoples and tribes who conquered lands and disseminated their language and culture over vast distances. Tracing this process to the origins of the Arabic language, rather than the advent of Islam, Tim Mackintosh-Smith begins his narrative more than a thousand years before Muhammad and focuses on how Arabic, both spoken and written, has functioned as a vital source of shared cultural identity over the millennia.

Mackintosh-Smith reveals how linguistic developments—from pre-Islamic poetry to the growth of script, Muhammad's use of writing, and the later problems of printing Arabic—have helped and hindered the progress of Arab history, and investigates how, even in today's politically fractured post-Arab Spring environment, Arabic itself is still a source of unity and disunity.

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## **History of Oman: Government, Politics, Economy, Society, Religion, Tourism**

by Bonna Walter

Oman History. As a regional commercial power in the nineteenth century, Oman held territories on the island of Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa, in Mombasa along the coast of East Africa, and until 1958 in Gwadar (in present-day Pakistan) on the coast of the Arabian Sea. When its East African possessions were lost, Oman withdrew into isolationism in the southeast corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Another of the gulf states with long-standing ties to the British, Oman became important in the British-French rivalry at the end of the eighteenth century, when Napoleonic France challenged the British Empire for control of the trade routes to the East. Although nominally a fully independent sultanate

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## **Our Women on the Ground: Arab Women Reporting from the Arab World**

by Zahra Hankir

### **Nineteen Arab women journalists speak out about what it's like to report on their changing homelands in this first-of-its-kind essay collection.**

A growing number of intrepid Arab and Middle Eastern *sahafiyat* - female journalists - are working tirelessly to shape nuanced narratives about their changing homelands, often risking their lives on the front lines of war.

Here, nineteen of these women tell us, in their own words, about what it's like to report on conflicts that (quite literally) hit close to home. Their daring and heartfelt stories, told here for the first time, shatter stereotypes about the region's women and provide an urgently needed perspective on a part of the world that is frequently misunderstood.

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