

## OMAN CUSTOMS

### Greetings:

Omanis greet with the phrase *As-salaam aleikum* (Peace be upon you) and reply *Wa'aleikum as-salaam* (And on you be peace). This is accompanied by a handshake. Men from certain regions may also kiss on both cheeks and rub noses.

Initial greetings may continue with *Kayf halak?* (How are you?), to which one replies *Al-hamdu lillah, zein* (Praise to Allah, well). People then exchange inquiries about each other's health and family.

### Gestures:

Omanis use the right hand for greeting, eating, and passing items. They often use both hands to emphasize speech.

Public displays of affection between members of the opposite sex are not appropriate.

It is impolite to allow the bottom of one's foot to show toward another's face.

A person sits and kneels in such a way as to not expose the feet, but this is not always possible during prayer times.

Conservative Muslim men avoid eye contact with women during conversation, as this would suggest a lack of respect.

### Holidays:

Secular events are set according to the Western calendar, but religious holidays follow the Islamic (lunar) calendar.

National Day (18 Nov.) celebrates both Sultan Qaboos's birthday and his taking control of the government. The festivities include parades, tea parties, camel races, and other events.

The main religious holiday is *Eid Al Fitr*, a feast held at the end of *Ramadhan*. Families exchange gifts and buy new clothing. Friends and relatives give children sweets or money. Children may also go door-to-door to collect 200 *baiza* banknotes (1,000 *baiza* equal one *Rial Omani*).