

# TRAVEL LUST

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## Memorable Flight 56 from Toronto to Dubai







It was a time of sadness. We were departing from my son, daughter in law, grandson and grand daughter after much enjoyment and family closeness. As we boarded our car to travel to the airport, I spied the stunning sunset over the house opposite ours. I stopped my son, got down and clicked a couple of pictures.

We drove along the highway towards the airport and the awesome sunset came into view. I clicked quite a few photos as we drove along and as we entered the airport the glow on the horizon became more pronounced. I rushed to a vantage point to capture these last minute shots as my son unloaded the car, while my wife shouted for me to return as we were getting late!



Our goodbyes over, we sadly proceeded to the ticket counter, got our boarding cards and after final goodbyes, entered the security area. Once we boarded the 19 hour flight to Dubai, it was pitch dark and almost 60% of our flight was in darkness. I tried to take a nap but was unable to, and kept a watch out of the window. After a couple of hours, I could see the moon shining and a fabulous pink-purple glow appeared on the horizon. We were passing over clouds and even the clouds were bathed in this magical light.

Almost all the time this sort of surreal atmosphere prevailed till we saw the sun for a while but soon, it was sunset again as we were eastwards towards the UAE. It was indeed a memorable flight 56 from Toronto to Dubai.

The pictures tell the story more dramatically, so I'll leave you to view the images.

















When I was planning my itinerary for my proposed trip to Vietnam, I chanced a blog titled Fairy Stream in South Vietnam. I did some more research and found this was situated in a small fishing village named Mui Ne. I was enamoured by the images of the stream I googled and decided to put it on my itinerary though it was a little off the main Ho Chi Minh trail from Hanoi to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh city).

So driving from Hoi An we came across some pearly white sand dunes as we approached Mui Ne. Dazzled by these, we made a short halt there and on climbing the dunes, we found they were just next to the stunning blue sea, an amazing sight.

A little further we were amazed as we passed sand dunes of bright red and soon we saw a huge patch of red sand with small rivulets snaking towards the sparkling azure sea, a truly magnificent sight.











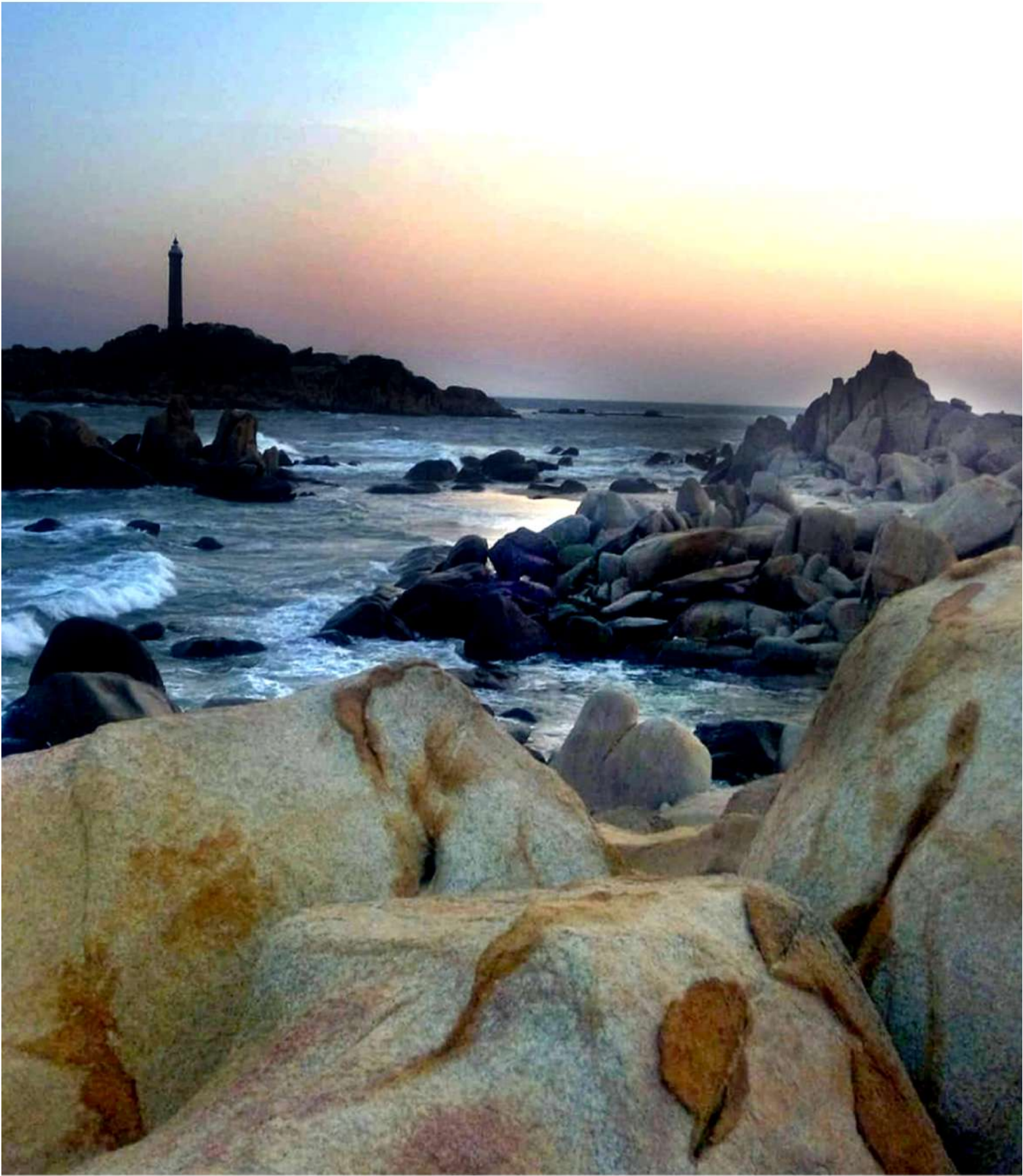
Taking in these superlative sights, we proceeded to Muomu Ne which we reached around sunset After a quick stroll on the beach where our hotel was sited, I told the driver to take me a few kms out of the town where I had read there were red boulders reaching out into the sea. It was a superb sight as the setting sun made the rocks blazing red. I took in this amazing sight and returned to our hotel where my wife and others in our group were waiting.

After a good night sleep, we drove a short distance to the major attraction, the Fairy Stream, which we found, was in the heart of the town!!! Stopping at the bridge, overlooking the stream, our eyes almost popped out as we saw hills of red rising over the small stream that wound its way through them. My cousin and I took off our shoes and walked down to the stream and waded through the quite shallow water for almost half a km, admiring the red, sandy ambience and peculiar rock formations carved by the stream. Indeed it was a fairy stream that any visitor to Vietnam should admire.

There are also some Cham temples around, built by Hindu kings from India over a thousand years ago which we just passed as we had to rush to our next destination, Dalat.



















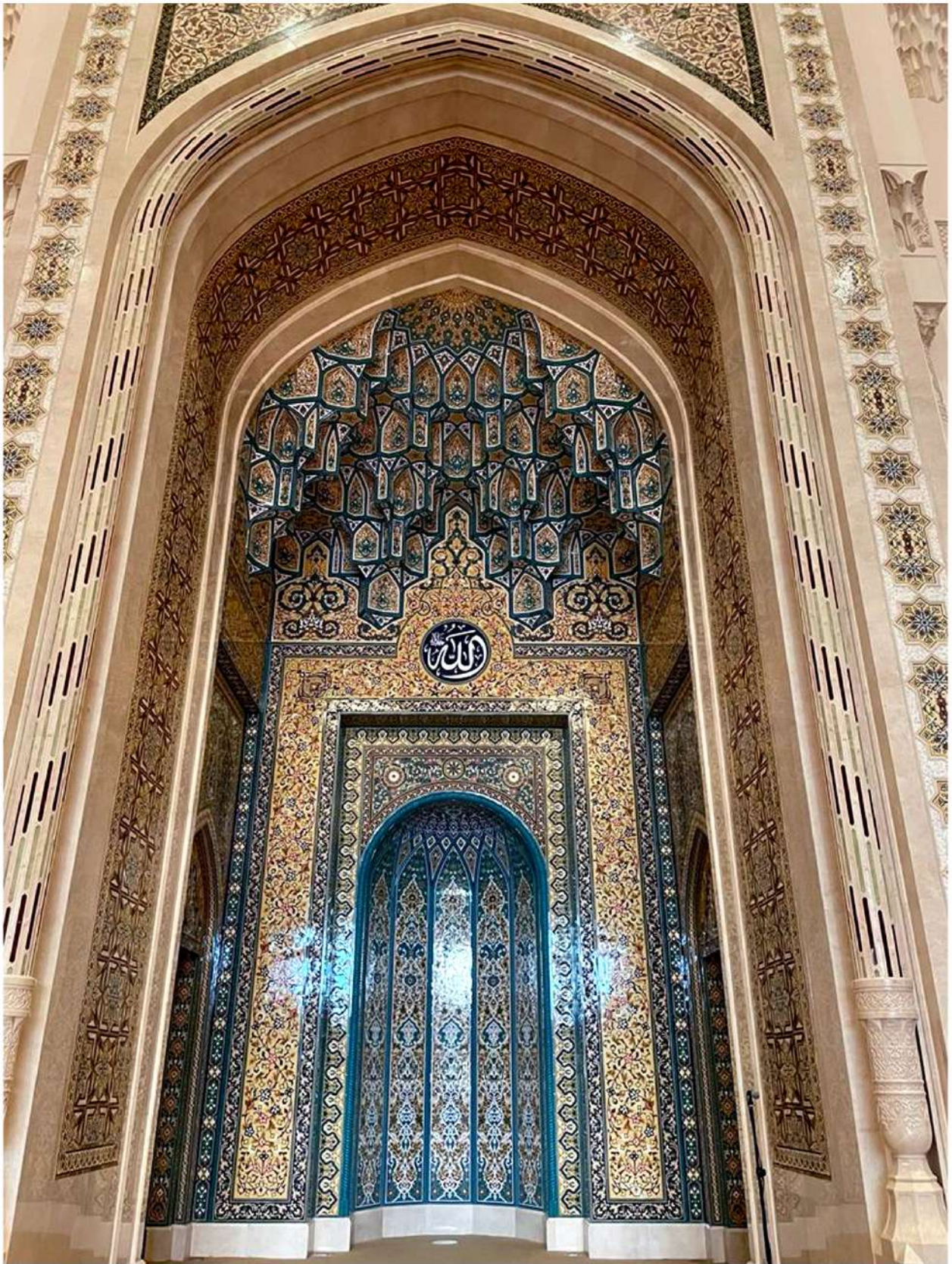






# OMAN: PEARL OF THE GULF

Text and some pics by Raffat Nayyar







**Oman is a country located in the southeastern region of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by the United Arab Emirates to the northwest, Saudi Arabia to the west, and Yemen to the southwest. It has a population of approximately 5 million people and covers an area of 309,500 square kilometers.**

Oman is known for its rich history and culture that is reflected in its architectural landmarks, stunning beaches, historic sites, breathtaking mountains, and desert landscapes.

One of the most notable landmarks in Oman is the Al Alam Palace, which serves as the official residence of the Sultan of Oman. Located in the heart of Muscat, the palace is surrounded by beautiful gardens and fountains. Its striking architectural design blends traditional Islamic elements with modern elements, making it a magnificent sight to behold. The palace has three main gates, each adorned with intricate carvings and designs, and is flanked by two Portuguese forts on either side. Although the palace is not open to the public, visitors can still admire its beauty from the outside.

Oman is also known for its stunning beaches that span over 3,000 kilometers of coastline. The country's beaches feature crystal-clear waters, white sands, and picturesque natural landscapes. Al Bustan Beach and Qurum Beach are two of the most popular beaches in Oman. Al Bustan Beach is located near the Al Bustan

Palace Hotel and is known for its turquoise waters, white sand, and palm trees, making it the perfect spot for relaxation and water activities. Qurum Beach, on the other hand, is located in the heart of Muscat and is a popular spot for locals and tourists alike. Visitors can enjoy swimming, snorkeling, and other water activities, as well as indulge in dining at the various restaurants and cafes along the beach.



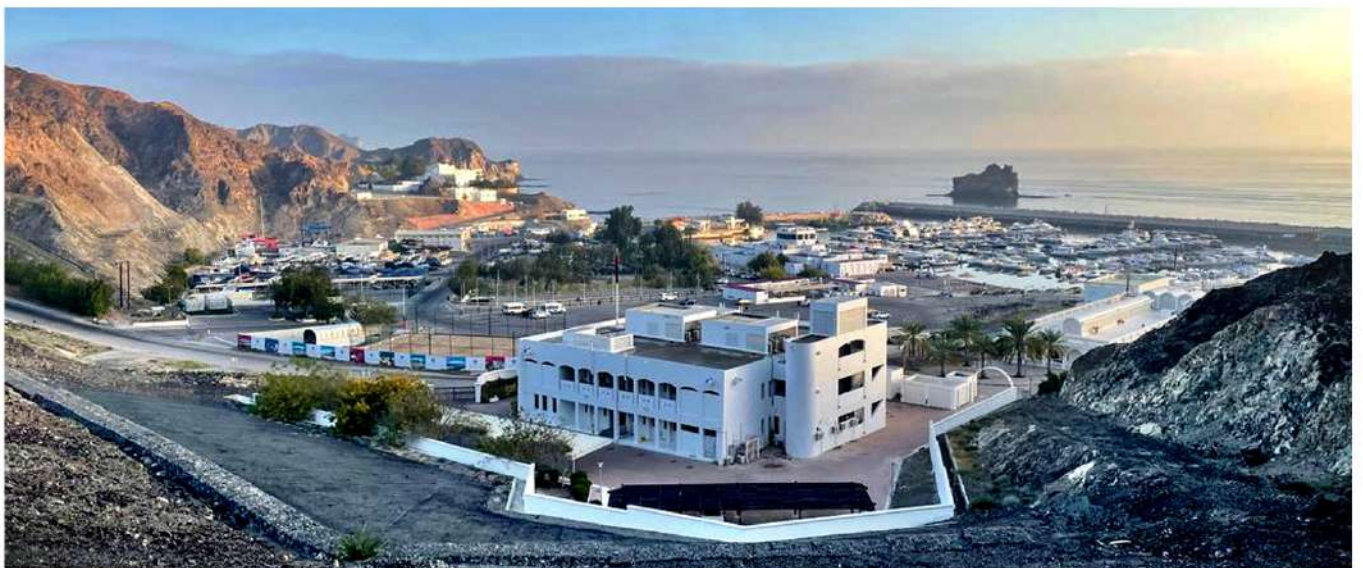




Oman also boasts of breathtaking mountain ranges. The Al Hajar Mountains is one of the most prominent mountain ranges, running parallel to the eastern coastline. It is home to the highest mountain in Oman, Jebel Shams, which stands at an impressive height of 3,004 meters. Visitors can hike the mountain trails and enjoy the stunning views of the surrounding landscape.

The mountains are also home to several ancient villages, such as Misfat Al Abriyyin, that are known for their traditional architecture and cultural significance.

Oman's old Muscat is another must-visit destination. The walled city dates back to the 16th century and is home to numerous historical landmarks and monuments, such as the Muscat Gate, Al Mirani Fort, and Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. The Muscat Gate is a beautiful example of Islamic architecture and served as the entrance to the city. Al Mirani Fort, located on a hill overlooking the city, was used as a defensive structure to protect the city from invaders. It is now open to the public for exploration and learning about its history.







The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque is one of the largest mosques in the world and features intricate designs and carvings that reflect Islamic architecture. Visitors can take a tour of the mosque and learn about its history and significance. Oman also has several beautiful wadis, or dry riverbeds, that are popular among tourists for their natural beauty and adventure activities.

Wadi Shab is one of the most popular wadis and is known for its emerald green pools, waterfalls, and scenic hiking trails. Visitors can swim in the pools, jump off the cliffs into the water, and explore the hidden caves along the way.

Wadi Bani Khalid is another popular wadi and is known for its crystal-clear waters, palm trees, and picturesque landscape. The Wahiba Sands is a vast desert that spans over 12,500 square kilometers in the central region of Oman. It is home to some of the world's tallest sand dunes, reaching heights of up to 100 meters. The desert is also home to several Bedouin communities that have lived there for centuries, preserving their traditional way of life. Visitors can take a camel ride or a 4x4 tour to explore the desert and experience the Bedouin lifestyle, including enjoying traditional meals and music around a campfire under the starry night sky.



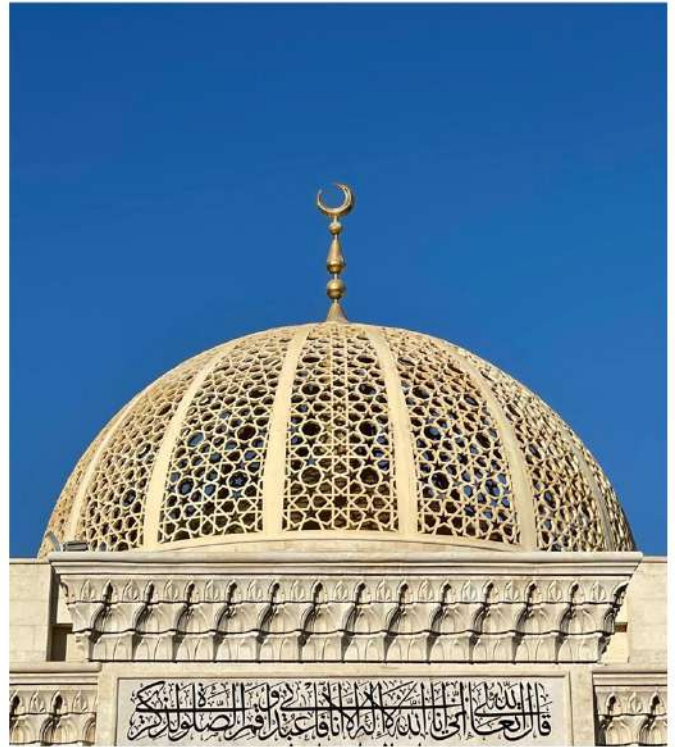






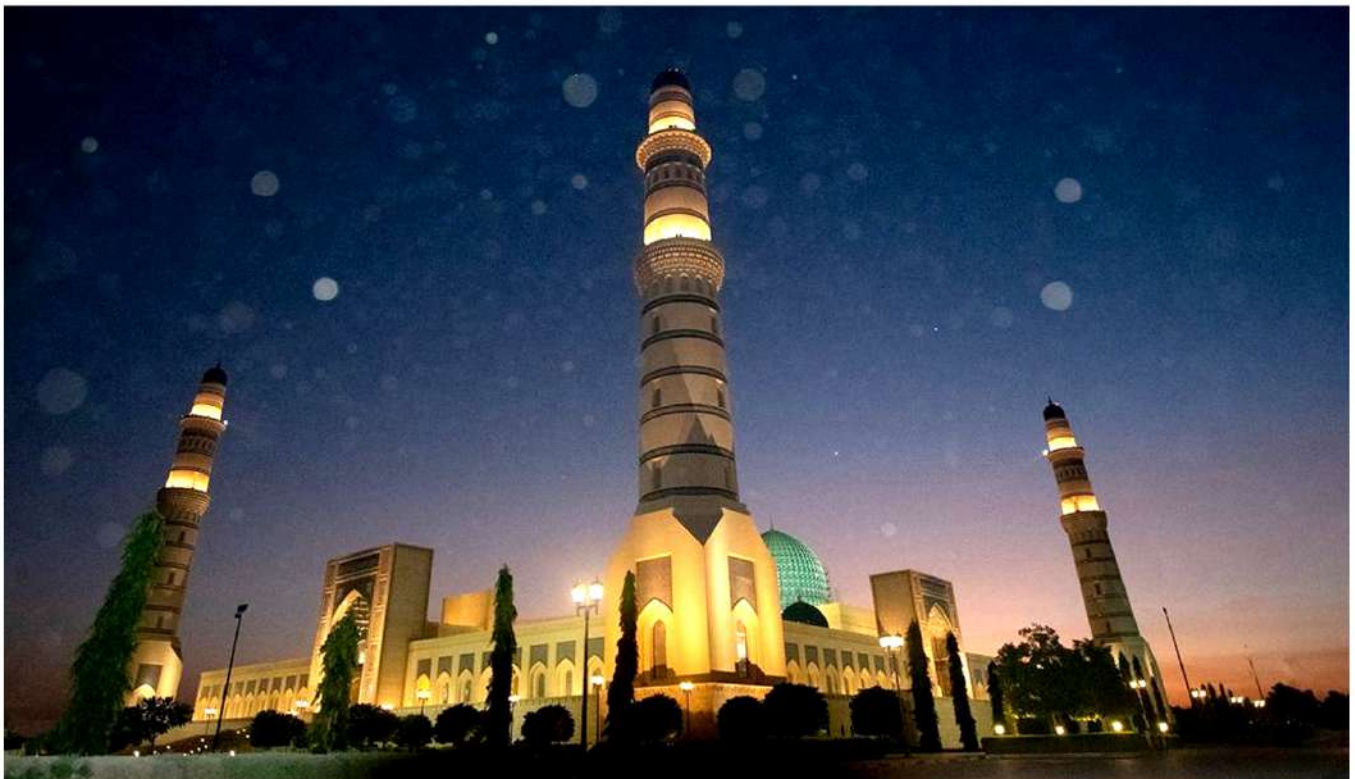






Oman's rich history and culture are also reflected in its museums, such as the National Museum of Oman and the Bait Al Zubair Museum. The National Museum of Oman showcases the country's history and culture through a collection of artifacts and exhibits, including archaeological finds, traditional Omani clothing, and weapons. The Bait Al Zubair Museum, on the other hand, showcases traditional Omani architecture and houses a collection of Omani artifacts and handicrafts, including silver jewelry, pottery, and textiles.

Oman is also known for its vibrant souqs, or traditional markets, where visitors can buy traditional Omani handicrafts, such as silver jewelry, pottery, and textiles. The Muttrah Souq in Muscat is one of the most popular souqs and is known for its bustling atmosphere, narrow alleys, and variety of goods for sale. Visitors can also explore the Nizwa Souq, located in the historic city of Nizwa, and the Rustaq Souq, known for its fragrant spices and perfumes.







In conclusion, Oman is a country that offers a rich and diverse cultural and natural experience for visitors. From stunning beaches and mountains to historic landmarks and museums, Oman has something for everyone. Its unique blend of traditional Islamic architecture and modern elements make it a must-visit destination for those interested in history, culture, and architecture. With its warm hospitality and friendly locals, Oman is a destination that is sure to leave a lasting impression on any traveler.































Earth is amazing. It's full of incredible places and creatures. The Painted Dunes (near the Cinder Cone) of the Lassen Volcanic National Park is one of those unbelievable and unique spots that look like they belong in a fairytale or on an Avatar-like planet. Lassen Volcanic National Park is a United States National Park that can be found in northeastern California. Lassen's volcanic domes began to erupt about 825,000 years ago and currently, the area sleeps. That doesn't mean that the volcanoes are not active though - steam vents, boiling springs, and bubbling mudpots are proof that the volcanic center still smolders

Lassen Volcanic National Park is unique in a way that all four types of volcanoes found in the world (shield, composite, cinder cone, and plug dome) are found at Lassen Volcanic. The Painted Dunes are multi-colored fields formed by oxidation of volcanic ash. Take a look at some of the incredible images of The Painted Dunes below.









# ABOUT THE EDITOR

Abbas A. Tyabji is a Hyderabad, India, based photo journalist, who left Tata Motors, one of the largest auto makers in India after heading the Publications Division of the Company over a career spanning nearly 3 decades.

During his tenure he travelled all over India and to neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Mauritius and the Middle East on photo journalistic assignments. His articles, pictures and photo features appeared not only in the Company publications but in national and international magazines.

He was invited by the then People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (S Yemen) to photograph the natural and man made wonders of that ancient land and prepare publicity material for their govt. The effort was appreciated by Govt officials and even India's Ambassador to S Yemen wrote an appreciation letter to Tatas on his efforts.

He is the recipient of over 50 national and international awards including:

The President of India's Award for Excellence in Designing and Printing on TWO OCCASIONS

Best Feature Writer Award from the Association of Business Communicators of India 4 times

Best Photo Feature Award from the Association of Business Communicators of India 5 times

The internationally circulated magazine "Bus Ride" from the US found his pictures so exceptional that they selected 2 for the First Place Award in their 1989 Worldwide photo competition, the only time in their history that two pictures were given this honour.

Almost half a dozen of his pictures appeared in Japanese calendars and dozens have graced Indian calendars.

He has also published a book on Hyderabad, for which the text, photography and design was done by him.

For his photo journalistic achievements he has found mention in "Who's Who of India", and "Reference Asia".

He also operates guided, customised tours from Hyderabad and is listed in LONELY PLANET as a Tour Guide.

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Abbas Tyabji receiving the President of India Award for Excellence in Designing and Printing from then President of India Dr. N. Sanjeeva Reddy