



BOARDING PASS

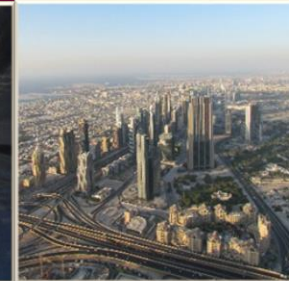
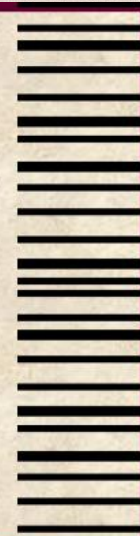
HOST - Tourism Development Strategies Master Program

Destination

Dubai DXB & Oman MCT

Departure

Winter Semester 2020/21





Jatin



Diana



Franziska



Marius



Isabelle



Max



Hanna



Nane



Evelin



Steffen



Lena



Maximilian



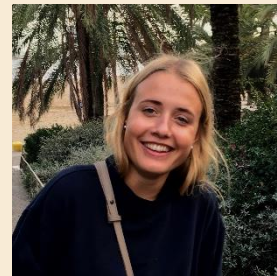
Frieda



Melissa



Carl



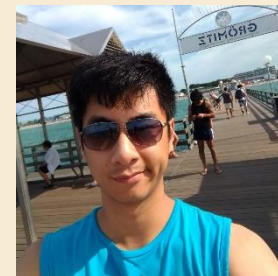
Friederike



Henk



Hannah



Bo-Hsiang



Amelie



Benedict



Carolin



Annekathrin



Leon



Antonia



Martin



Charlotte



Sahin



Prof. Klage



Mrs. Schnierer

TDS

Tourism Development Strategies



HOST

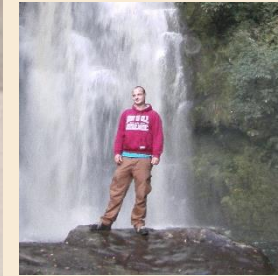
Hochschule Stralsund



Louisa



Theresa



Felix



Julia



Tessa



Lasse



Inga

Sara



When looking back to one of our first lectures in October, when it was still possible to meet face-to-face, Mrs. Schnierer and Prof. Klage told us about our field trip to Dubai and Oman. We had some hope left that we would be able to escape the cold Germany as well as the pandemic and that we could dive into a new world to get to know the culture, traditions and the beautiful landscapes of these 2 countries. With Arabic music in our head, we have already imagined ourselves sitting on the airplane on the way to the Middle East. However, this hope was shattered right away, when our professors told us that this field trip would take place virtually. We were all quite sad, but also curious about how this would be implemented online.

Recipe - Shuwa

Ingredients (4 Servings)

1	leg of lamb
10 cloves	garlic chopped
$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp	ground black pepper
$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp	ground cumin
1 tsp	ground coriander seeds
$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp	ground turmeric
$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp	ground cloves
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	red chili powder
2 tsp	salt
45 ml	vinegar
1 pc	lemon
3 tsp	oil
Dry banana leaves or palm leaves	

Info

The main dish in Omani's culinary heritage, the *Shuwa*, is the symbol of the country's togetherness. This favourite dish in Oman is often prepared for special occasions, especially during the celebration of *Eid* (the festival of breaking the fast), where families come together.

Shuwa means grilled meat in Arabic. The process of cooking the dish takes a long time. In fact, Omanis usually prepare the meat on the first day of *Eid* and eat it on the second or third day. The *Shuwa* is marinated in Omani spices, then wrapped in banana leaves or palm leaves, and put in an underground sand oven, where it gets cooked for 1 - 2 days.

How to make it

Mix all the ingredients to a paste, except the lamb leg and the banana leaves. Rub the lamb in this spice paste.

Then, wrap the meat in the banana leaves as a bundle. Marinate it in the refrigerator overnight.

Take out the marinated lamb of the fridge and leave it on the countertop for 30 - 60min before cooking, to bring it to room temperature.

Place the marinated meat wrapped up in the banana leafs in a roasting pan and cover. Roast in a 130°C pre-heated oven for 3 - 4h or until the leg is well cooked. Don't forget to pour over the pan juices every 30 min and flip the meat once or twice.





Comparison Dubai - Oman



GMT +4 hours



- Persian Gulf region (northeast of the UAE & 2nd largest Emirate)
- Coastline of Dubai = 70km (not counting man-made islands, such as *Palm Jumeriah*)

- Warm and subtropical conditions (>300 sunny days p.a.)
- Summer: May - Sep → up to 40°C (July & August even raise up to 50°C due to high humidity)
- Winter: Oct - Apr → 20°C - 35°C
- Only around 5 days of rainfall p.a.

- Population: 3.33 mil inhabitants ($\frac{3}{4}$ is male)
- 12% locals → 88% immigrated guest workers (expatriates)
- Most expatriates come from Asian countries & further neighbouring Arabic countries
- >200 different nations living in Dubai
- Most workers in tourism sector & construction sites come from: Philippines, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran & India



GMT +4 hours

- South eastern end of the Arabian Peninsula
- Coastline = 2,092km
- Landmass covered by 82% of desert

- Hot desert climate (low annual rainfall)
- Dhofar region (southwest) is an exception: strong monsoon climate & warm winds
- Summer: Apr - Oct → >40°C
- Winter: Nov - Mar → short but heavy cloudbursts & thunderstorms

- Population: ~5 mil
- ~50% of the population lives in Muscat
- 40% of the total population are expatriates
- 85.8% of expatriates work in the governmental, private & domestic sectors
- Many different nations living in Oman
- Most workers come from: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Jordan & the Philippines





- Official language: Arabic
- Additional languages: English, Hindi
- Expatriates from >200 countries → most languages of the world are spoken

- Traditional cuisine: fish or meat, rice & vegetables (common to serve dates with the meals)
- Traditional meals: *Samak Mashwi*, *Lamb Ouzi*



- Official language: Arabic
- Additional languages: English, several native dialects, Iranian (Baluchi and Persian) & Indo-Aryan (Urdu), Indian languages like Hindi, Swahili dialect

- Traditional cuisine: chicken, lamb, fish & rice
- Traditional meals influenced by Arab, Iranian, Indian, Asian, Eastern Mediterranean & African cuisine





- Federal constitutional monarchy
- Federal National Council of the UAE has 40 members
- Ruler: Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (also Vice President and Prime Minister in the UAE)
- Human rights based on *Sharia law*
- Active women's suffrage: 2006



- Dirham (AED)
- Exchange rate: 1 AED = 0.23 EUR
- GDP: \$31,974.92 per capita (\$103.67 bil in total)
- In the 1990s, oil generated 50% of GDP
- Today, tourism is very important sector (2019: 16.73 mil tourists)
- Other important sectors: trading, construction & real estate
- Unemployment rate: 2.45%

- Depends on nationality, purpose & duration of the stay
- German tourists require a valid passport and will obtain a temporary visa on arrival (in case they want to stay longer than 90 days within a period of 180 days)



- Absolute monarchy
- Ruler: Haitham ibn Tariq (also Head of State & Head of Government)
- Human rights based on *Sharia law*
- Active women's suffrage: 2003



- Omani Rial (OMR)
- Exchange rate: 1 OMR = 2.16 EUR
- GDP: \$13,423.37 per capita (\$62.31 bil in total)
- Economic boom through oil production (1960s) built basis for infrastructure development (incl. roads, electricity network, hospitals)
- Unemployment rate: 14%

- German tourists require a (temporary) passport & an electronic visa
- Simple tourist visa of 50€ allows single entry & limited stay of 30 days (vacation purposes only)
- Multiple-entry visa is required in case neighbouring countries want to be visited (valid for 1 year & allows stay of up to 30 days)





Traditional clothing for women

- *Abaya* (a black cloak covering most of the body, except the face, hands & feet)
- *Burqa* (covering the whole body)

Traditional clothing for men

- *Kaffiyeh*, also known as *Ghutrah* or *Shemagh* (a headscarf, originally invented to protect the wearer from the sun in the desert, also shows power & authority)
- *Kandura* (a cloak covering most of the body to protect from the climate conditions)

Dresscode

- More relaxed than in other Arabic countries
- Tourists should still dress appropriately & cover most of their bodies



Traditional clothing for women

- *Abaya* (a black cloak covering most of the body, except the face, hands & feet)
- *Sirwal* (a dress worn over trousers)
- Combined with a *lihaf* (a headdress)
- Very colourful fabrics

Accessoires for women

- *Dinar* (a silver coin decorating forehead)
- *Mafrah* (a large head ornament with heart-shaped centre)
- *Halq* (semi-circular hoop earrings)
- *Manthura* (bracelets, bangles, silver chain necklaces)
- Henna tattoos on special occasions

Traditional clothing for men

- *Dishdashas* (ankle-length, incl. decorative tassel called *tarbousha* or *furakha* at neckline)
- Collarless gowns in black, blue, green, or brown - white worn on formal occasions
- Combined with *mussar* (a turban typically worn at work)

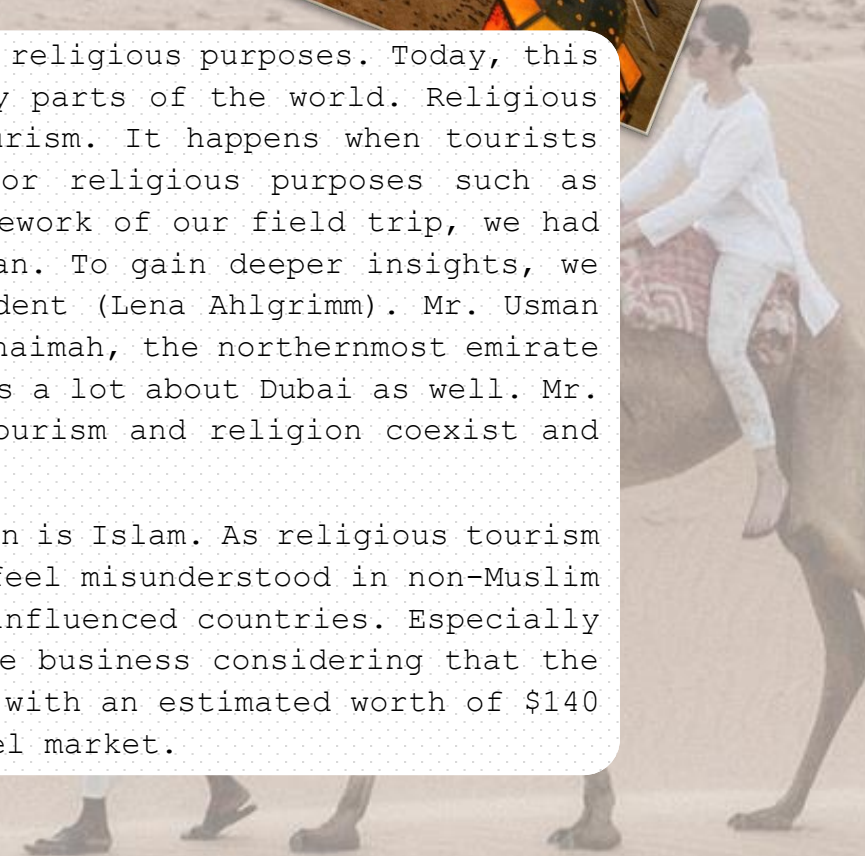


Tourism & Religion in Dubai & Oman



Since ancient times, people have been travelling for religious purposes. Today, this niche form of tourism is still very present in many parts of the world. Religious tourism is known as spiritual, faith or sacred tourism. It happens when tourists travel individually or in groups for missionary or religious purposes such as pilgrimage or to visit religious sites. In the framework of our field trip, we had a closer look at religious tourism in Dubai and Oman. To gain deeper insights, we interviewed Rahmat Usman, a friend of a fellow student (Lena Ahlgrimm). Mr. Usman is originally from Pakistan, but grew up in Ras Al Khaimah, the northernmost emirate of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). He therefore knows a lot about Dubai as well. Mr. Usman told us some interesting stories about how tourism and religion coexist and how tourism affects the religion in the UAE.

The most commonly practiced religion in Dubai and Oman is Islam. As religious tourism is driven by authenticity, Muslim tourists tend to feel misunderstood in non-Muslim countries and thus prefer to travel to other Islam-influenced countries. Especially in the Middle East faith tourism is a very lucrative business considering that the Muslim travel market is the biggest market globally with an estimated worth of \$140 bil. That constitutes almost 13% of the global travel market.



To attract more tourists, destinations can further adapt their services to fulfil the needs of religious travellers. For Muslims it would be the offering of Halal food, the availability of prayer rooms and water-friendly washrooms as well as Ramadan services. It is no surprise that the UAE ranked second place out of 130 destinations on the *Global Muslim Travel Index* (GMTI) by Crescent Rating ('The World's Leading Authority on Halal Travel') in 2018. Dubai specifically was named as one of the top 25 places to visit by the Traveller Choice Awards 2014 which are presented by TripAdvisor. Oman also scored well on the GMTI with rank 9 in 2018.

*Sultan Qaboos Grand
Mosque in Muscat*



*Sheikh Zayed
Mosque in Abu Dhabi*



Dubai for religious reasons, while non-Muslim visitors might admire the unique architectural qualities and features of the mosques. Unfortunately, the touristic traffic can demote the sanctity of such religious places. The *Grand Mosque* of Abu Dhabi suffered such a fate and is used as a tourist attraction rather than in its religious purpose. The mosque loses its authenticity to worshippers who need to relocate or risk becoming part of the attraction.

The influence of tourists from western countries on local communities and customs became more apparent in recent years as the locals started to wear western fashion rather than the traditional religious attire. These changes of customs are polarizing among local communities. Some Emiratis view them as a positive development, but there are also locals who are afraid of losing the traditional and religious values. The UAE government tries to balance tourism and religion to avoid backlash from local communities. Visitors are expected to respect Islam and the Arabic culture and laws. When entering mosques for example, the shoes must be taken off, long sleeves should be worn and women should cover their hair. Photos should not be taken during prayer. Mr. Usman recommends visiting rather larger mosques as they are more open towards tourists than smaller ones. He points out that the rules change very quickly and one should pay attention to the latest announcements. One example of an important law is the Dubai Code of Conduct which was first published in 2009 by the Executive Council of the Government of Dubai, mentioning that showing love and affection in public places is an act of sexual harassment. Also, homosexuality is illegal and severely punished in both countries.

Jumeirah Mosque
in Dubai



Nonetheless, the law isn't strictly enforced. Public displays of affection are mostly tolerated, but frowned upon. Unless there is a report to the police there won't be any consequences. However, according to Mr. Usman an Emirati 'sponsor' can protect non-Muslims who offend the Code of Conduct from being reported to the police with their presence only. Per Islamic law, living together as an unmarried couple is forbidden and the same rule also applies for sharing hotel rooms, although hotel staff usually doesn't ask questions about the marital status of their guests. To be safe, it is recommended for couples to refer to each other as 'husband' and 'wife'. Additionally, women should choose 'modest clothing', which excludes low-cut tops or short skirts. So called *cross-dressing*, for example, wearing clothing not commonly connected to one's gender, should be avoided as well.



Non-Muslim tourists and expatriate workers can drink alcohol at licensed premises such as hotel bars or restaurants and at home, if they obtain an alcohol license. Drinking in all other areas is an offence and can result in a fine or even a prison sentence. For interactions with the police, Rahmat Usman recommends to not raise your voice and pay attention to potential scams that are targeting tourists. Similar rules apply in Oman where tourists should also refrain from offensive behaviour, public displays of affection and drinking in public.

During Ramadan, tourists have to pay special attention to follow the rules and restrictions. Eating, drinking and smoking in public should be refrained from. Lots of cafés and restaurants are closed during the day and closer attention should be paid to an appropriate dress code and behaviour.

All these rules show that the connection of tourism and religion is very strong in both areas Dubai and Oman. Tourists, especially non-Muslim visitors, have certainly affected the outlook on the local customs. Two extremes take centre stage when looking at religious tourism: the outstanding hospitality and openness of the locals towards foreigners in contrast to the strict rules that apply to tourists. We recommend visiting the religious sites in Oman and Dubai while always keeping up with the local laws and customs to ensure an enjoyable outcome for both tourists and locals.





In the first video conference for a virtual field trip to Dubai and Oman, we had the opportunity to virtually meet Mr. Leube. The topic of this interactive talk was 'Living and working in Dubai'.

Mr. Leube, who has been living and working in Dubai for over 5 years now, opened the day with an impressive view out of his apartment near the *Dubai Marina*. In the beginning he explained that a job offering brought him to Dubai and that this made it easy for him to apply for a visa.



In Dubai, foreigners are just able to apply for a visa if they contribute a large amount of money to the country or if they have an employer with a Dubai citizenship vouching for them. Many people from all over the world move to Dubai for work. Thus, the city became a young and fascinating diverse place. People from the emirates tend to distance themselves from foreign workers. They mostly just have a business relation to them. A lack of data protection laws leads to an easy and quick implementation of new technologies. That is one of many reasons why most people think that Dubai is more modern and ahead of our time. This image is not always true. Dubai has many PR projects to generate attention. A perfect example is the *Hyperloop*, whereby its construction is still uncertain. Projects or business deals are mostly made if everyone can benefit therefrom. That's why many construction projects have been realized in the past, for example the *Palm Island* directly at the coast of Dubai.

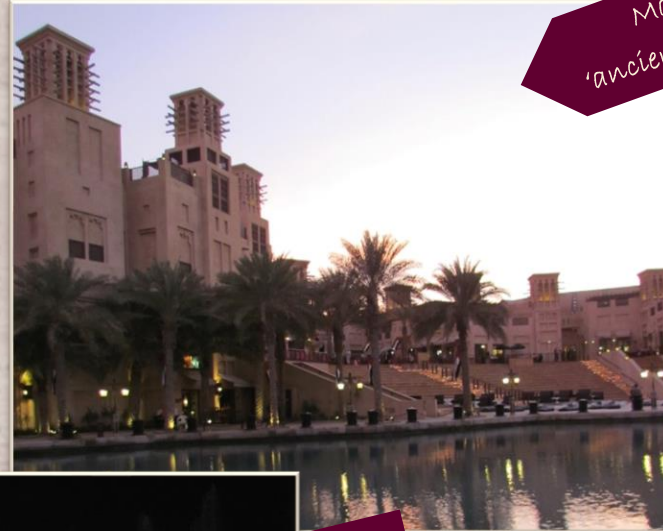
After the inside of a foreigner's life in Dubai, we had many questions, which ranged from personal relationships, the crime rate, the economic development, to the culture, and, of course, Dubai's way to deal with Covid-19. At the end, Mr. Leube gave us some travel insights for future trips to Dubai as soon as the pandemic is over. A must-see is the old town of Dubai and the whole sale market, where you will be able to see its rich history in contrast to the extravagant and modern picture of the city.

Jan Leube

Get to know Dubai



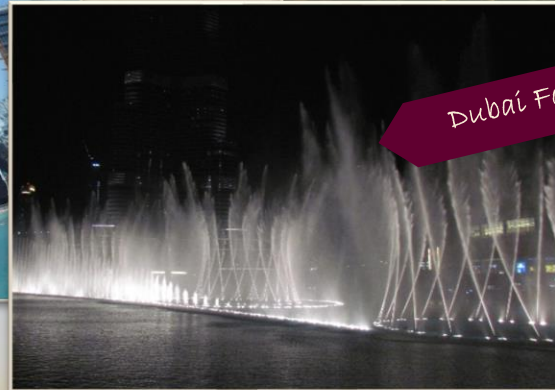
Burj Khalifa 828m
highest building



Madinat Jumeirah
'ancient' Emirati settlement



Burj al Arab
5* luxury hotel



Dubai Fountain



Sahara Tour



Dubai Creek
inlet of 14km

10 NOV 2020



Zahara Tours



Zahara Tours is the first and largest travel and transport management company in Oman, which provides different hospitality sectors (incl. the In-/Outbound Sessions, American Express, DHL Express, Aerotel, Bike and Hike Oman, and many more). The Inbound Sessions include a brochure program for FIT and deals with student holidays, adventure holidays and special segments. Furthermore, they offer a newly developed conference segment to business customers. The biggest, most popular segment of *Zahara Tours* is the Cruise Segment.

The company offers good pricing, German and English-speaking representatives in the hotels, and local tour guides, which helps to control the quality and strengthen the intercultural communication.



Oman has to offer a cultural and traditional variety, as well as heritage, and therefore, the sultan is keen to maintain and preserve those. Additionally, this strategy helps to protect archaeology, natural resources and other conservation programmes such as turtle sanctuaries and dolphin reservoirs, and thus, ensures sustainability.

Another segment are tours which imply visits of different wadis in the desert or the Bedouin families and learning about their traditions. When it comes to meetings and events, Oman has a wide range of facilities to offer. They benefit from newly built congress centres, conference, and exhibition halls.

Due to Covid-19, both internal and external tourist trips cannot take place. Nevertheless, *Zahara Tours* is keen to become the most trusted provider for meetings, vacations, and activities in Oman by attracting more than 10 mil locals and internationals.

Mr. Raj was so kind to provide us with valuable insights into the company's philosophy; their company culture, but also shared information on Oman's national tourism strategy with us.

Zahara Tours is still eager to fulfil customers' requirements, maintain flexibility, achieve the optimum of returns and simultaneously maintain their values of courage, integrity, reliability.

Zahara Tours
1971
Arun Raj (Manager of
Inbound Sessions)



17 Nov 2020



Grand Hyatt Muscat
Sneden Lobo (Associate
Director of Events)



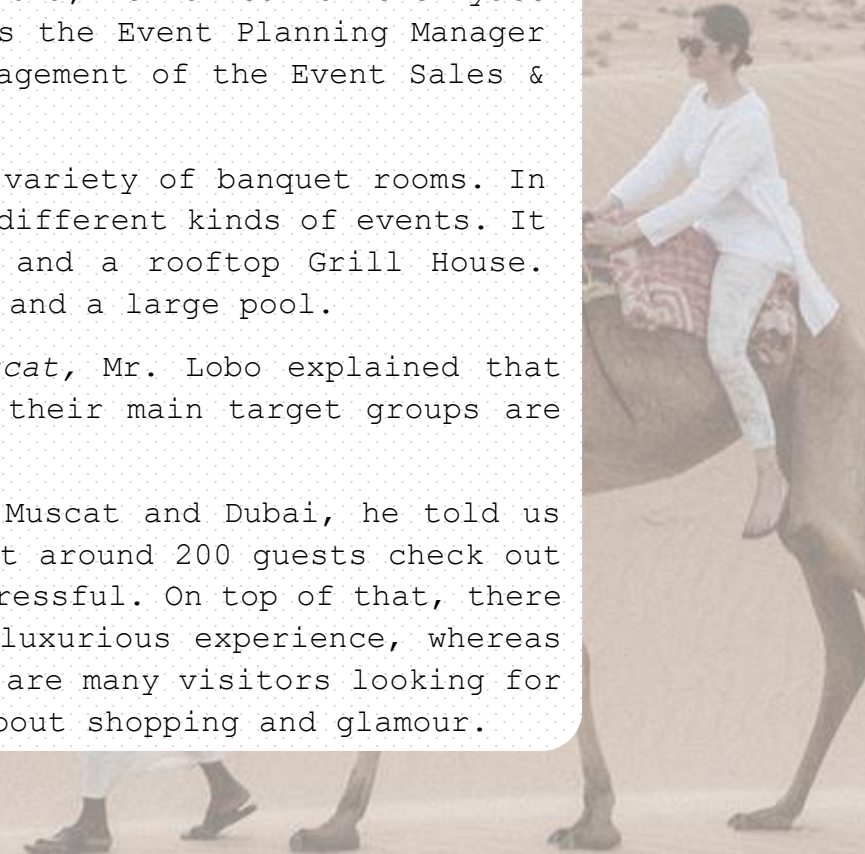
Grand Hyatt

Mr. Lobo did his bachelor's degree in Hotel Administration/Management at Manipal University in India and graduated in 2014. From 2016 to 2019, he worked for the *Hyatt Hotel Group*, as an Event Planning Executive and later as the Event Planning Manager for *Hyatt Regency*. Today, he is responsible for the management of the Event Sales & Event Planning departments.

The *Grand Hyatt Muscat* has 280 rooms incl. suites and a variety of banquet rooms. In total, the convention area has 1000m² space to offer for different kinds of events. It also has 2 restaurants, 1 café, 1 pub, a sports bar, and a rooftop Grill House. Moreover, the hotel offers a spacious gym, tennis courts and a large pool.

Regarding the main target group of the *Grand Hyatt Muscat*, Mr. Lobo explained that although the hotel would be perfect for leisure trips, their main target groups are business and government guests.

Referring to the differences in the daily work life in Muscat and Dubai, he told us that especially in Dubai's hotels it is quite common that around 200 guests check out while 200 new guests will check in - which can be very stressful. On top of that, there are many internationals coming to Dubai, seeking for a luxurious experience, whereas Oman attracts lots of different kinds of tourists. There are many visitors looking for a more cultural and natural experience, and it is less about shopping and glamour.



The next topic was Covid-19 and how the *Grand Hyatt* is dealing with the consequences. As Oman is not open for international guests at the moment, the occupancy rate is very low and most employees are working from home (if possible). With regard to financial aspects for the hotel employees, *Grand Hyatt* offers loans, which they can pay back in the future.

Furthermore, we wanted to know what the hotel is doing for sustainability. In Oman, there is a regulation that 50% of the workforce in a company need to be Omanis. Also, *Grand Hyatt* is organising several events to clean up the beach, and in order to keep its employees satisfied, Mr. Lobo is always empowering his team members.



Meeting Rooms Grand Hyatt Muscat



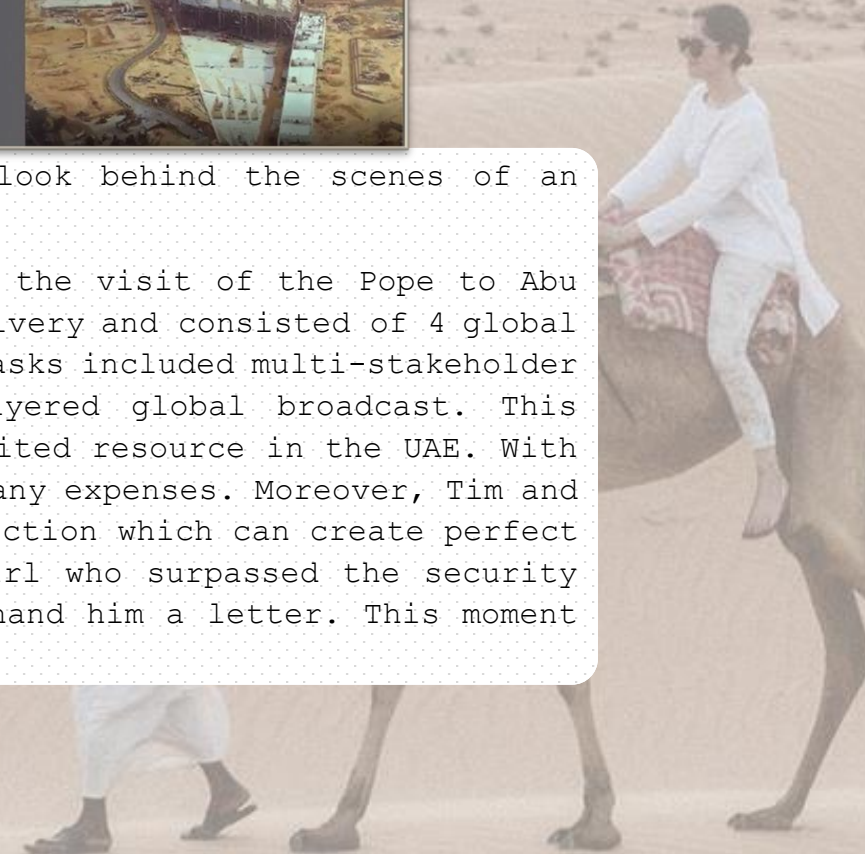


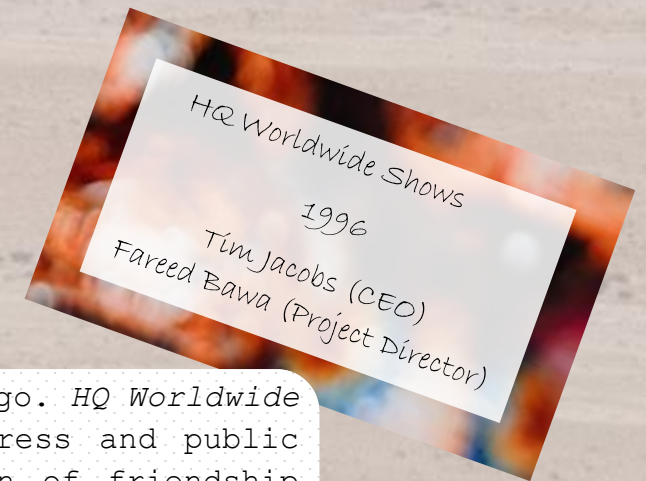
HQVS



Tim Jacobs and Fareed Bawa invited us to take a look behind the scenes of an internationally operating event management company.

In 2019, *HQ Worldwide Shows* was entrusted to manage the visit of the Pope to Abu Dhabi. The whole event took only 71h from brief to delivery and consisted of 4 global events and 1 venue in just 14 days. Some of the main tasks included multi-stakeholder handling, complex protocol management and multi-layered global broadcast. This already shows that, unlike money, time is a very limited resource in the UAE. With a budget of around €15 mil, this event did not spare any expenses. Moreover, Tim and Fareed also taught us about the importance of imperfection which can create perfect moments. As an example, the 2 mentioned a little girl who surpassed the security guards during the event and approached the Pope to hand him a letter. This moment went viral all around the world.





Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II also visited Dubai several years ago. *HQ Worldwide Shows* oversaw the design, production, and management of all press and public events surrounding the state visit and to create an affirmation of friendship between the 2 nations. The bigger strategic aspect behind events like this is to boost local tourism development by presenting the UAE in a positive way.

The event business in general is very stressful and working models differ to a large extent from those in Europe and the western world. However, Tim mentioned that a benefit of the autocracy are the less complex hierarchical structures that grant event management companies like *HQ Worldwide Shows* quick access to many resources.

HQ Worldwide Shows has a very high success rate to get a contract they pitched for. Their secret to this is that they extensively research their potential client and budget in detail. Surprisingly, minor events tend to be the most challenging ones, because every mistake is visible to the much smaller audience.

Ultimately, Tim and Fareed said that everyone who wants to work in the event management will know if they either love or hate it after 6 months of working. This was followed by an offer to apply to *HQ Worldwide Shows* to get a deeper insight into the industry. And who knows? Maybe you will find one of us working there in the future.

24 NOV 2020



The Palm Jumeirah



Nakheel Properties

On this day, our course attended a virtual meeting alongside our lecturers Mrs. Schnierer and Prof. Klage with Mrs. Abdel Rahman from *Nakheel Properties* in Dubai.

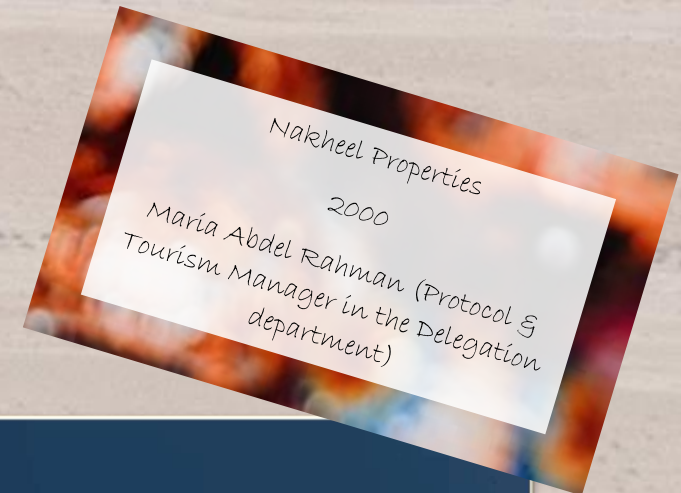
Nakheel is a governmental project development and real estate firm. The term *Nakheel* in Arabic means *palm tree* and is a symbol of Dubai City. The company states on its [website](#): „*Nakheel* is a world leading property developer. Our portfolio includes some of the world's most recognizable lifestyle, leisure, and retail landmarks. Our developments are now a distinct part of Dubai's landscape".

Back in 2001, the government of Dubai ordered a project to reshape the city's coastline and create a new landscape map of Dubai. The city had a vision to be a worldwide leader in tourism and a tourism hub, and therefore needed to expand its business. Dubai faced the limitation of a 70km coastline and struggled with the expansion due to a lack of space to build. After 20 years and completing several successful construction projects, such as the *Palm Jumeirah*, *Deira Islands* or *World Islands*, *Nakheel Properties* was able to add 400km of coastline and completely reshaped the face of the city.

We were introduced to the first project of man-made islands, the *Palm Jumeirah*. Announced in June 2001, it adds another 87km of coastline to the city. The island covers 560ha of land and contains luxury residences, retail and leisure facilities.



Another big project our course was introduced to were the *World Islands*, which lie 4km off the Dubai coast. These islands are built to reassemble the world map and consist of 30 individual islands of different sizes and shapes. They are reachable by boat only and create an exclusive high-end and luxury tourism product. What's very special to both projects is the actual construction process, called *Rainbow Process*, which uses GPS and satellite to navigate.

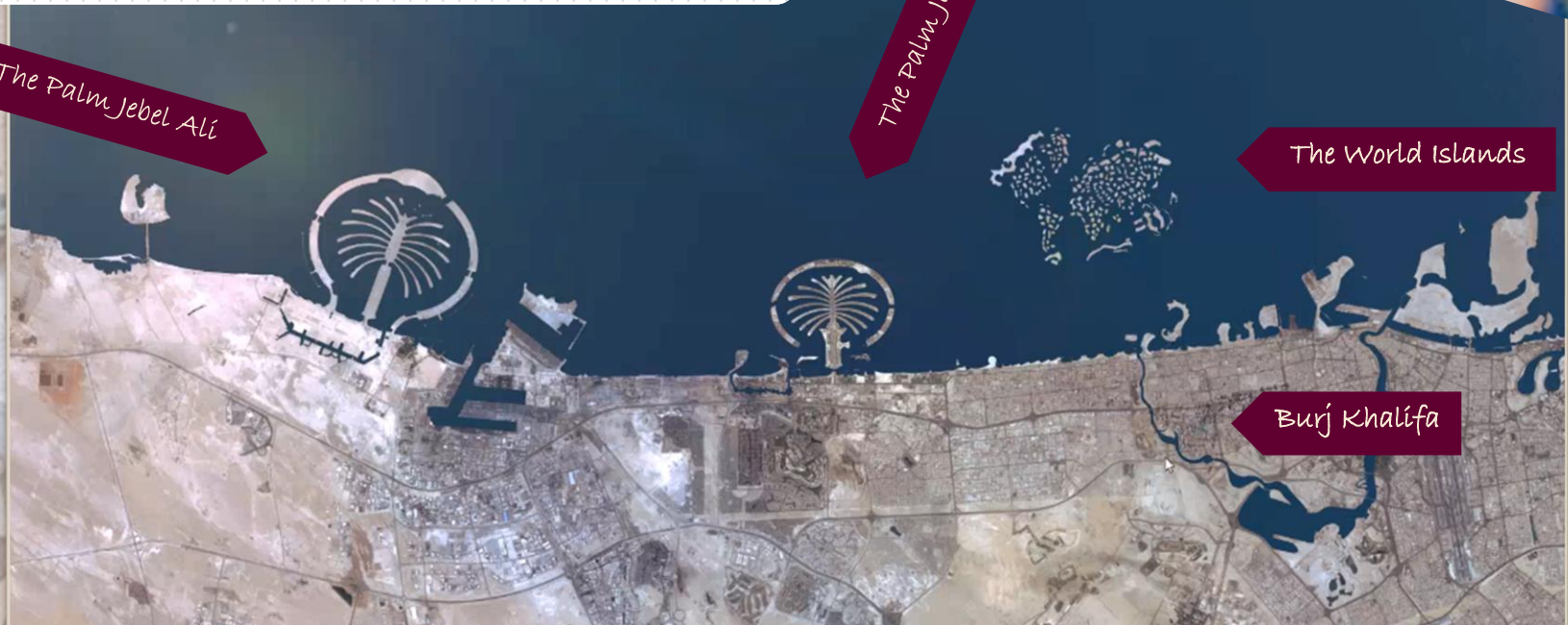


The Palm Jebel Ali

The Palm Jumeirah

The World Islands

Burj Khalifa



After a very interesting presentation we had the chance to ask questions. Negative criticism was a topic. Fortunately, the company has the support and trust of the locals. Lastly, we asked about any sustainable approaches Nakheel implements. The company stated that all electricity is brought from the mainland due to a strong relationship with the local energy provider, but on *Palm Jumeirah*, there are some solar panels on the rooftops that produce renewable energy.

08 Dec 2020

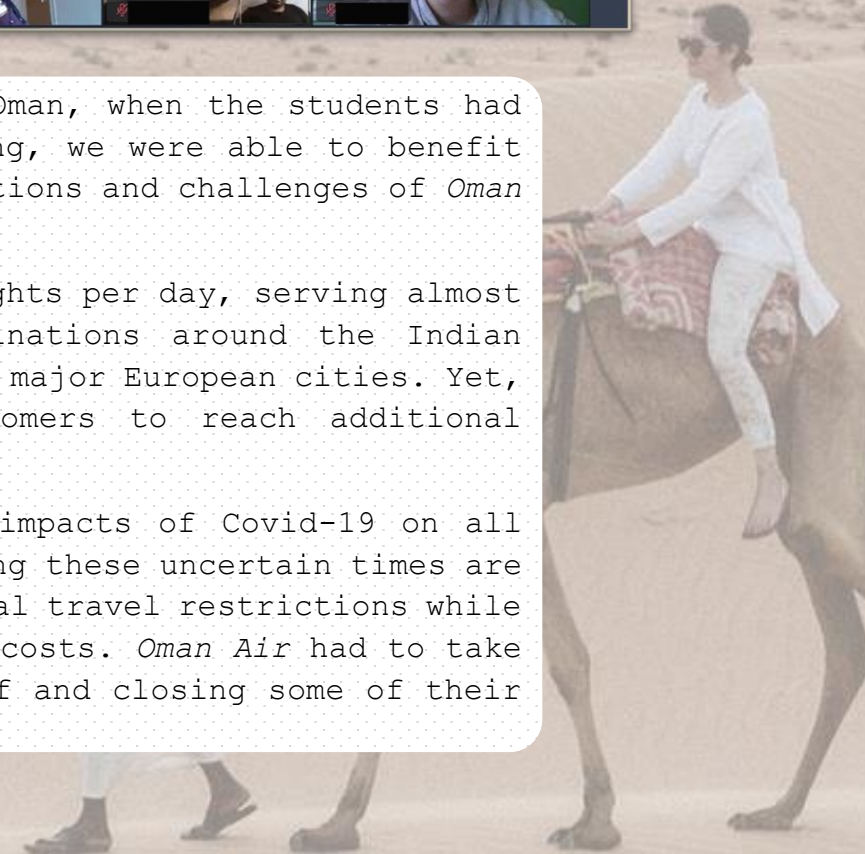


Oman Air

The virtual field trip continued in the Sultanate of Oman, when the students had the pleasure to meet Dr. Al Balushi. During the meeting, we were able to benefit from his experiences and gained insights into the operations and challenges of Oman Air.

Oman Air was quite successful as they had about 180 flights per day, serving almost 35,000 passengers. The flights mainly approach destinations around the Indian subcontinent, Far East, North and East Africa as well as major European cities. Yet, codeshare agreements with other airlines allow customers to reach additional destinations.

Nevertheless, Dr. Al Balushi emphasised the negative impacts of Covid-19 on all aviation businesses worldwide. The main challenges during these uncertain times are the loss of revenue due to flight cancellations and global travel restrictions while at the same time covering the airline's high operating costs. Oman Air had to take measures to keep the company alive, by laying off staff and closing some of their offices around the world.



Oman Air

1993

Dr. Khalid Abdulwahab Ahmed
Al Balushi (Senior Manager for
Government Affairs)



For Oman Air, surviving was possible due to governmental or corporate charter flights as well as revenue from their cargo business, where the demand even increased during the pandemic. Another interesting topic mentioned by Dr. Al Balushi is the increase in domestic tourism. While foreign tourists were not allowed to visit the country, or at least affected by restrictions like a mandatory quarantine, the Omanis started exploring their own country which contributed to the survival of many local SMEs.

Despite the current challenges of the tourism and transportation industry, Dr. Al Balushi made a very promising forecast for the beginning of the next year. Tourism is a very important sector not only for the aviation industry but for the economic well-being of Oman in general. Calling the tourism industry the Sultanate's 'survival boat', Dr. Al Balushi emphasised the need for an improved tourism strategy for the country, mentioning loosened visa regulations as a possible facilitator for tourism in Oman.

After his presentation, we were able to ask questions and discuss topics like partnerships with other airlines, the safety of the Boeing 737, why or why not to sponsor a football team and even touched cultural topics such as traditional clothing in Oman.



Dr. Gutberlet

Our course and Mrs. Schnierer as well as Prof. Klage had the chance to meet Dr. Gutberlet to get a deeper insight into one of Omans major tourist attractions, called *Souq Muttrah*, the oldest market in Oman. Dr. Gutberlet is an Oman expert not only because of her long-standing experience in the tourism industry of Oman, but also because she did some major research and wrote her dissertation about the *Souq Muttrah*.

Before Oman discovered vast quantities of crude oil and the resulting economic upswing began, the district of *Muttrah* was the centre of commerce. As a reason for the strategically perfect location on the way to India and China, the *Souq Muttrah* grew rapidly, and the awareness increased too. Tourists and locals visit the market to shop local products like textiles, fruits, vegetables, spices but also foreign imported products such as perfume or jewellery.



Dr. Manuela Gutberlet
Dissertation: Socio-cultural impacts
of large-scale cruise tourism in Souq
Muttrah, Sultanate of Oman
Publishing Year: 2016

The today's *Souq Muttrah* is not the same as 40 years ago, when the country started to open up under the guidance of sultan Qabus ibn Said. During this time, mainly locals bought their food and products there.

In the last 15 years the numbers of arrivals have more than tripled. Last year, 3.5 mil visitors travelled to Oman. Due to the increasing numbers of tourists (especially cruise passengers), the market gets flooded with tourists every day. The small aisles of aren't made for big crowds of people. Due to the limited capacity, locals avoid the market and their products. Unfortunately, cruise passengers don't buy a lot, or mostly low-cost products, such as souvenirs. Consequently, there is a collapse in revenue that influences the shops. Typical Arabian stores that are often used by the locals have to adjust or change their concept to meet the needs of the tourists, which is a loss of culture.

To stop over tourism and the decline of typical Arabian shops, Dr. Gutberlet came up with some solutions. It would be necessary to limit the numbers of tourists at one place to protect Omani heritage. A management of tourist flow as well as guided tours in smaller groups would be advisable. Beyond that, a fee for visitors is needed to build a more sustainable tourism. This includes shorter, regional, and local supply chains as well as a focus on quality instead of quantity.



© Dr. Manuela Gutberlet



Get to know Oman



Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque



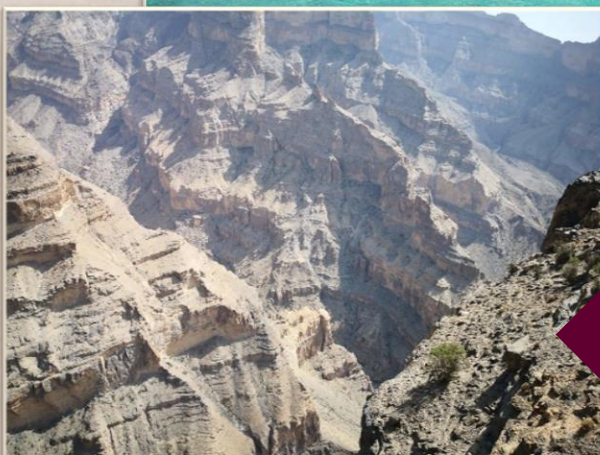
Jebel Akhdar
'The green Mountain'



Wadi Shab
'George between Cliffs'



Daymaniyat Islands
18km off the coast



Omans 'Grand Canyon'
3070m mountain
1000m deep canyon



The Royal Opera House



Recipe - Majboos



Ingredients (4 servings)

1 medium white onion chopped
2 medium carrots peeled & grated
2 tomatoes chopped
6 cloves garlic chopped
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup tomato paste
3 whole cloves
2 cardamom pods
1 large cinnamon stick
3 vegetable broth
1 1/2 cup uncooked basmati rice

Garnish

1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup pistachios or almonds

Info

Even though it is originally from Saudi Arabia, *Majboos* is a famous dish and widely known as the national dish of most Arabian countries. But pay attention when visiting different countries: the name of the dish varies depending on the area. Some call it *Majboos*, but in most countries it's named *Kabsa*. The recipes vary from region to region. Therefore, when visiting one of the destinations, you should try out the different ways of cooking and decide which one you personally prefer. This is the recipe for the vegetarian version, but it is also common to add chicken, lamb or fish.

How to make it

Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat, then add onion and garlic. Sauté until it's tender. Stir it in tomato sauce and cook it over low heat for 1min.

Add carrots, tomatoes, cardamom pods, cloves, and the cinnamon stick. Cook it for 1 - 2min, add the broth afterwards and boil it. Reduce the heat and cover it up. Cook it for 30min.

In the meantime, soak the raisins in warm water for 15min. Then drain and cook them together with the pistachios in a saucepan with a dash of olive oil over low heat for about 5 - 10min. Careful: always stir them, so the pistachios don't burn.

Stir in rice. Cook for another 10 - 15min, stir periodically and watch the rice so it doesn't overcook or stick to the bottom of the pot.

Now you can pull out the cinnamon stick, cardamom pods, and cloves. Add the garnish on top.

05 Jan 2021



GUtech Muscat



GUtech from the inside



We had the opportunity to meet online with students from our partner university GUtech (German University of Technology) in Muscat. The meeting began by introducing the students from Oman. One of them, Maya, had already been in Stralsund as an exchange student during Germany's first lockdown. She was allowed to be part of the exchange program as she was already in her 3rd year of studies.

We continued the meeting with a game, that served as an icebreaker with general questions about Germany and Oman. Afterwards, we moved on to breakout sessions, where we talked about local and global tourism challenges. Omanis started to promote Oman by themselves. This was a success story for both prospective tourists and locals, as it allowed Omanis to show each other the beautiful sides of their home country. Thus, domestic tourism has developed since the pandemic.



Oman has a huge cultural diversity. GÜtech alone has about 40 diverse cultures. They welcome them as if they were family and integrate them easily to their culture. Even though GÜtech is modern, many universities are still very strict when it comes to a traditional way of living which is why mixed classes between female and male students are uncommon.

Some recommendations given by the students were to visit Oman between November and February, whilst during that time is their best weather. All activities can be done all year long and it's best to hire a tour guide. Another important fact about Oman is that there is a 'girls only' beach in Muscat.

After interesting conversations, we went back to the main platform to meet with everyone. During this time, it was explained that there has been an increase in students starting their own business.

Mrs. Al Hinai highlighted that this is promoted especially by the government with interest-free loans as a strategy to fight student unemployment after graduation.



GÜtech ecohouse



GÜtech history of Islamic science museum

12 Jan 2021



Passengers more than tripled from 2010 – 2019
All Airport managed by Oman Airports



Our next stop during our virtual trip was *Muscat International Airport*. Mr. Abu Zeid who has been working for *Oman Airports*, the company responsible for the airport's management, invited us to take a look behind the scenes. He has not only worked for *Oman Airports* since 2014, but also contributed to the successful reopening of 3 airports within just 3 years.

Besides managing *Muscat International Airport*, *Oman Airports* is in charge of 6 additional airports located in Oman. The main hub in Muscat is aiming at expanding Oman's global connectivity, as well as attracting direct connections to key markets. Regional airports in Salalah, Sohar and Duqm are promoted as tourist and trade centres, and attract national as well as international travellers. Furthermore, there are 3 oil and gas airports in the interior Oman, which are crucial for regional oilfields.

The presentation focused on *Muscat International Airport* which reopened in 2018. Especially during the past decade, steady investments were needed to support the airport's tourism development and competitiveness. Overall, passenger numbers have tripled from 2010 to 2019, wherefore \$6 bil were invested in 2014 to provide a high-quality logistics infrastructure. Besides, the reopened *Muscat International Airport* was designed 3 times bigger in size than its predecessor. International rankings show that the investments paid off as increased quality of service, safety and efficiency lead to the airport being ranked at place 73 among top airports worldwide in 2017 to being ranked at place 6 in 2019.

Oman Airports

Nonetheless, the airport was severely hit by Covid-19. In April 2020, passenger numbers were close to zero. Even after several months, in October 2020, passenger numbers at *Muscat International Airport* represented only 14% of passengers compared to the previous year. Furthermore, the pandemic doesn't only affect the airport and its employees, but also around 15,000 people in the hotel, taxi, or other dependent industries. Besides these short-term effects, Covid-19 will also affect *Muscat International Airport* in the long-term by shifting the focus from technological to health-related issues. Nevertheless, Mr. Abu Zeid was very optimistic that *Muscat International Airport* is able to handle these challenges well and that passenger demand will be high again in the future.



Oman Airports
2002
Nagy Abu Zeid (Vice President
Corporate Planning)

Mr. Abu Zeid explained that the general structure of the airport consists of 1 terminal with 3 docks that feature different themes. These are water in the north, sand in the south, and oasis in the west. This makes *Muscat International Airport* an attractive layover destination when traveling from Europe to Asia or Australia and thus, helps the airport to remain competitive compared to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Doha. Another issue that was being discussed were ultra long-haul flights. Mr. Abu Zeid didn't see those as a big issue the airport will have to deal with in the future. He thinks that most people would rather prefer a short layover than sitting on a plane for 19h.

Lastly, Mr. Abu Zeid shared his opinion about the most important abilities from his studies. These are mainly empathy, being open-minded and other social skills as they cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence and therefore, will persist even after digitalisation takes out standard jobs.

19 Jan 2021



Tourism Office

Dubai Tourism Representative
Office in Germany

André Guenther (Managing Director
of the Marketing Department)



An interesting presentation with some general information about Dubai, the business world, peoples' life, tourism, the hotel industry, as well as gastronomy and art was held by Mr. Guenther.

He enabled us an exclusive insight into the *Dubai Tourism Office* in Frankfurt and their areas of activity. Dubai is a popular destination and by plane only 6h away from Germany. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it's still possible to make use of the city's offerings. In order to do so as a tourist, a PCR test is required, which must not be older than 96h at the time of entry.

Everyone knows the most famous and expensive hotels like the *Atlantis* or the *Burj Khalifa*. A good alternative in an equally up-and-coming neighbourhood is the *Al Seef* district. There, you can find posh 3* hotels at a price range of 60 - 80€ per night. A part of Dubai's unique art and culture scene is also located there and therefore offers additional tourism attractions next to the main sites in the city centre. Due to the neighbouring desert location, tourists can discover unique spices, salts, and smells that make a culinary trip special.



Just a few minutes walk away is the *Al Seef* area, which combines cultural roots with the vision of a modern metropolis. Here, Emirati tradition is combined with modern design. Special highlights are the *Al-Fhadi* quarter and the adjoining marina, the restaurant mile and the *Plaza of Al Seef* cross the way.

An insider tip for every visit to Dubai is the inconspicuous neighbourhood of *Al Quoz* and *Al Serkal Avenue*, where galleries and great meeting places of an up-and-coming art and culture scene are gathered. In addition to that, this lively quarter also offers a large stage for exciting performances and trendy cafés.

Discovering the individual districts also makes the culinary heart beat faster. The culinary Emirati cuisine is characterised by its diversity. In the trendy neighbourhoods, there are a multitude of food trucks that attract visitors.



As stated on the previous pages, we already had the pleasure of meeting many people of various companies, as well as Omani students, and we have learned a lot about their traditions and the working style in both countries. Thanks to these encounters we got first-hand information from locals and a detailed insight to their daily life and habits. We highly appreciated catching a slight, yet very personal impression, which made us feel as if we were right on-site in Dubai and Oman. Our individual experiences were intensified through various presentations, videos and shared personal stories.

Learning Outcome

LIFE



- Traditional & cultural history
- Omanis love their nature & protect it
- Open-minded locals
- Cheaper than Dubai
- Oman isn't for luxury & shopping

LIFE



- Many different cultures
- Young population – young mindset
- Life is simplified but strictly regulated
- Friends are mainly made at work
- It's hard to become a citizen

WORK



- More local & cultural, smaller businesses
- Slow decision-making processes
- Hard to find jobs after graduating
 - Trainee programmes & governmental support help to start own business

WORK



- Working hours like in Germany
- Not very clear & transparent
- Lack of communication due to too many different people with different languages
- Hard to get on Dubai's market

TOURISM



- One of the most important industries
- Nature focused
- Mostly native tourist guides
- Omanis take care of their visitors
- 2nd most travelled destination in the Middle East

TOURISM



- Shaikh wants Dubai to become a leader in this sector
- Vision: become a family-oriented & affordable destination
- Structure changed extremely in the last 20 years
- Urban tourism





In 5 minutes to Oman

25/26 Jan 2021



To have an authentic experience, we received a virtual ticket to Oman and an itinerary to get a glimpse of what will await us. Before we started our trip, we were provided with VR glasses and small treats, such as Omani dates and Arabic tea, as well as extravagant perfume made from roses. Then, the real journey began. We visited the Souk in Muscat, where we learned how to tie the *Shemagh*, tried out the perfume and ate the dates. We walked through the Grand Mosque in Muscat, which is usually visited by many tourists, but due to the pandemic it was deserted. The last venue was an old traditional Omani village, with mud-walled houses. It was a unique experience to see those touristic places that empty.

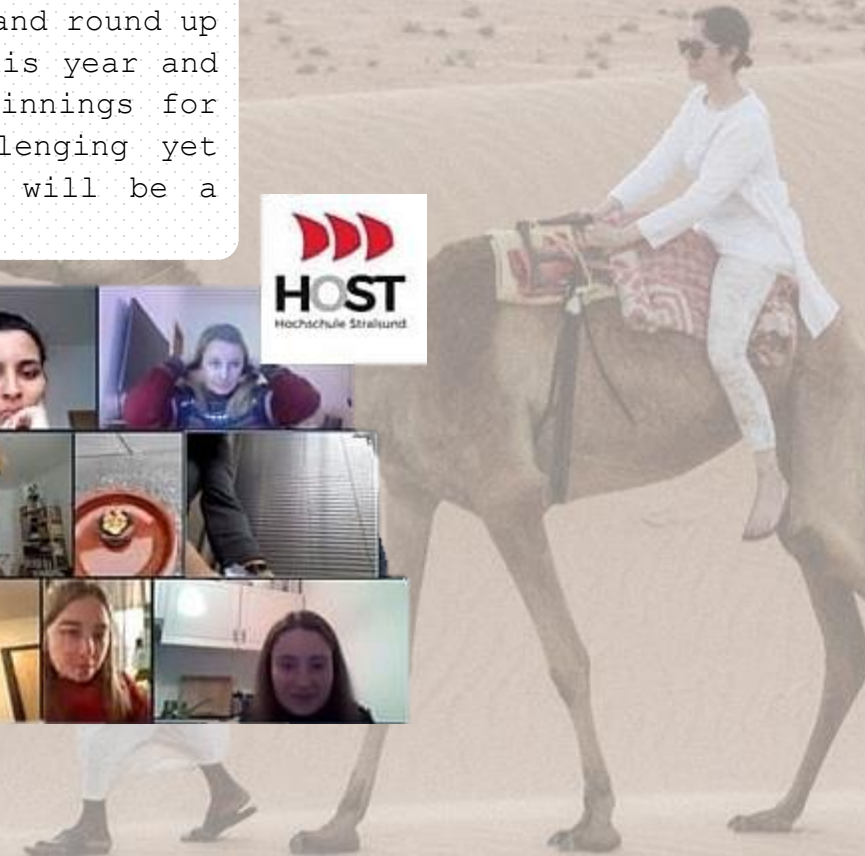


The overall experience of the field trip has a lasting impression on us students. Even though we were a bit disappointed when we found out the trip to Dubai and Oman would take place virtually, in hindsight, we were all genuinely surprised. We all enjoyed being able to escape our daily routines, the grey weather of Germany's winter and immersing into an oriental environment. This reminded us of why we chose this Master's degree in the first place and reconfirmed that it was the right decision, although the current situation is not the perfect condition for traveling. We are still highly motivated to strive for our dreams and work in the tourism industry.

Most of us have never come into contact with virtual reality (VR) before. Especially the use of this technology for a 'travel' to a distant country has brought us new insights. It gave us the opportunity to visit a place thousands of kilometres away, within the blink of an eye. We got a brief, yet authentic glimpse of the destinations, which awoke our wanderlust for those places, most of us never thought to visit anytime soon. Especially for a destination's marketing, VR can be very promotional, arousing emotions and bringing back memories of former travellers. We deeply consider VR as a future benefit in tourism along the customer journey.



Did you know that frankincense is one of the top export products of Oman? The group get-together meeting at the end of the first semester brought us all virtually together. Mrs. Schnierer prepared small packages of frankincense for the students to experience and round up our virtual field trip to Dubai and Oman this year and also as a sign of good wishes and new beginnings for everyone. The online semester was a challenging yet interesting semester to take part in, it will be a valuable experience for the future.



Name**Company**

Jan Leube	Protect the baby
Arun Raj	Zahara Tours
Fareed Bawa & Tim Jacobs	HQ Worldwide Shows
Sneden Lobo	Hyatt Hotel Muscat
Maria Abdel Rahman	Nakheel Properties
Dr. Al Balushi	Oman Air
Dr. M. Gutberlet	Oman Expert
Amjaad Al Hinai & students	GUtech Muscat
Nagy Abu Zeid	Oman Airports
André Günther	Dubai Tourism
Philip Eichkorn	Take Memories

Thank You

On this occasion we, the students of the TDS Master, would like to express our gratitude towards all experts who accompanied us on our virtual journey through Dubai and Oman.

It was a special and very captivating journey through 2 related, yet very different places. That was mostly due to fascinating presentations and experienced hosts that guided us around the regions. The broad variety of insights from various segments of tourism and the destinations' economies were astonishing.

It was a pleasure to talk to all the people from different countries and hold lively discussions. They told us about the glamorous city of Dubai and its many attractions. We have been taken through Muscat and the adjoining desert region, as well as the nearby cliffs and the ocean. A large range of companies from both destinations introduced themselves to us: airports, tour operators, event agencies, landscaping projects, and many more.

In these unpredictable times, hearing and seeing a faraway destination awakened our wanderlust and desire to travel these countries ourselves. We have been left with an overwhelming number of impressions.

A big **Thank You** from our side to everyone who made this virtual trip possible, especially Mrs. Schnierer and Prof. Klage.

Hochschule Stralsund

University of Applied Sciences



Website TDS:

www.hochschule-stralsund.de/tds/

Instagram:

www.instagram.com/tourismmaster_stralsund/