

Oman Adventure Trekking

Trip Code: OAT

Version: OAT Oman Adventure Trekking



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP





HIGHLIGHTS

- Take in the rugged and remote landscapes of Jebel Shams and Jebel Akhdar
- Tackle the Balcony Walk, following the contours of Oman's own 'Grand Canyon'
- Cool off in the emerald waters of natural pools in Wadi Shab
- Explore the atmospheric souks of the ancient fortified capital of Nizwa
- Relax at our beach camp, overlooking the Arabian Sea

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days trekking
- Max altitude 2997m
- Join at Muscat

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 3 nights Hotel
- 6 nights Camping

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

This exceptional trekking holiday in Oman, explores the most dramatic sections of the Al Hajar range of mountains which run the length of Oman's northern coastline, rising above the blue waters of the Gulf to a height of 3000 metres. Starting out amongst the Western Hajar Mountains, we follow rugged trails between picturesque mountain villages, each with its groves of date palms and intricately terraced fields. Camping out on the high Sharaf al Alamayn Plateau and on the Sayq Plateau, we visit the high point of Oman at Jebel Shams and enjoy far-reaching views across a landscape of jagged ridge-lines and intervening canyons. A night in a comfortable hotel at the former capital of Nizwa, with time to explore the towns forts and souks provides a welcome break, before we complete a 2-day trek across the Eastern Hajar Mountains - which ends conveniently at a camp on the beach. With its superb trekking, year-round sunshine and welcoming people, Oman is the Middle East's best kept secret.

Is this holiday for you?

This is not a sustained trekking holiday, but a combination of shorter and relatively easy walks combined with two challenging classic 2-day routes, that are amongst the best treks in Oman. We will be following mountain tracks across sand, scree and bare rock, with sections of stepped pathway leading to ancient and sometimes abandoned villages. Walking for between 4 and 10 hours on 5 of the days, our route will take us into deep wadis and across airy ridges. We will usually be following routes that have been used for generations by the local people - villagers, hunters and shepherds. Some of the pathways are exposed and there is some easy scrambling on day 4 and day 5. The longer walk is on day 7 with a continuous but gentle ascent for the majority of the day. The altitudes attained during this holiday are unlikely to cause problems in respect of acclimatisation. Oman is prohibitively hot for much of the year and we choose to visit when it is at its coolest. However, we are still likely to find day-time temperatures of between 25°C and 32°C or even a little higher and sun protection and adequate hydration are important considerations. 4 wheel drive support vehicles carry all our equipment from camp to camp but, as we only have a small local crew, we will be expected to help put up and take down tents at campsites. We have graded the holiday at the bottom end of our demanding scale because there are some long trekking days and also on account of the prevailing temperatures.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Muscat. A single transfer from Muscat Airport is provided.

Meet at the group hotel in Muscat. A single group transfer will be provided from Muscat Airport to the group hotel in the city. This transfer is normally around breakfast time and a representative of our local agent will accompany the group on the 20 minute journey to the hotel. After a few hours of rest and the chance to relax by the pool, or to walk to the nearby palm tree-lined beach (there are many coffee shops to visit overlooking the sea), we will be ready to do some exploring. At around 2.30 we will have a briefing and then take a tour (by vehicle) of Muscat city. We pass the embassies area and the Sultan's Palace, and ending at the giant incense burner in Ryam Park to enjoy the great views over the corniche. We finish the day with a look around the souk's before having dinner at a local restaurant and returning to the hotel.

Meals: LD



Accommodation

Hote

DAY 2

Visit the Muscat Grand Mosque, drive to Western Hajar Mountains. Village walk and off road drive.

After an early breakfast, we have an early morning tour of the very impressive Muscat Grand Mosque with its Swarovkis chandelier. We then leave Muscat and set off in our 4-wheel-drive vehicles to the Western Hajar Mountains and enter Wadi Bani Awf. Leaving the tarmac road we quickly engage 4-wheel-drive as we journey through this picturesque wadi, lined with date farms pools of water (the number of which depends on the volume of recent rain). This is a steep and fun offroading experience and after one hour we reach a narrow gorge that is the entrance to the pretty village of Bilad Sait. Here we will have lunch and then a short walk through the gorge and around the village where there will be plenty of opportunities for photos. We then continue our on and off road drive, winding up Jabal Shams. The south summit of Jebel Shams is 2997m and this is the accessible one, the actual true highest point in Oman is the North Summit just a few meters higher at 3006m but the military base on this summit prohibits tourism here. Tonight we set the first of our wild camps within view of Jabal Shams summit on the Sharaf al Alamayan Plateau.

Meals: BLD



Accommodation Camping



Ascent 20M



Descent 90M



Time1 hr walking



Distance 2KM

DAY 3

Hike Oman's famous 'Balcony Trail' followed by 4x4 drive to Quiyut village and camp (2400m).

After breakfast and a short 20 mins drive we enjoy breathtaking views of Oman's Grand Canyon and Nakhr Village which is more than a kilometre below us. We should be able to spot the route of today's classic walk along the edge of the canyon. Setting off from Al Kateen Village, we follow the 'balcony trail' along the mountain's edge to an abandoned village, which clings to the rocks and is completely hidden from view, both from above and from below. Just beyond the village, we can see the traditional farm terracing where locals used to produce their food and a short walk further takes us to the small lake that feeds the terracing. We stop and enjoy a few snacks before the walk back along the balcony trail offers more breathtaking views of the canyon. We then set off in our 4WD vehicles down the mountain to Wadi Ghul and Nakhr Village where we will take lunch. This allows us to view the canyon in reverse - from the bottom up, which is equally as dramatic and stunning, as this journey takes us through more than half a billion years of geological time. We then drive to Quiyut, in Jabal Akhdar, and enjoy the second of our wild camps.

Meals: BLD



Accommodation Camping



Ascent 850M



Descent 850M



Time4 hrs trekking



Distance 11KM

DAY 4

A day of challenging walking and scrambling across Jabal Akhdar to A'Roos camp.

After an early start and a hearty breakfast, we embark on the first of our 2-day challenging treks. we walk straight from camp and begin our 7-8-hour trek across Jabal Akhdar, up the Al Hamra Valley and onto the canyon rim. The trek follows an old path which is undulating and rocky underfoot and was once the main route to the village of Ar'Roos and has terrific views down into Wadi Bani Awf, Wadi Mistal and Wadi Bani Kharus. During the walk there is some prolonged sections of scrambling as we pick our way through the challenging terrain of Oman finest trekking region. Taking a picturesque lunch on the cliff tops, we have panoramic views across the settlement of Al Hijir and to our objective for the day, Ar'Roos village. With a final wadi scramble to reach Ar'Roos, we may be lucky enough to meet some of the village elders before transferring by vehicle (approximately 20 mins) to our beautiful wild camp on the fertile lands of the Sayq plateau, where we hope to spot desert wildlife amongst the rich covering of juniper trees.

Meals: BLD



Accommodation Camping



Ascent 430M



Descent 760M



Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking



Distance 10KM

DAY 5

Panoramic descent into Wadi Muyadeen. Trek onwards for a vehicle transfer to Nizwa.

Another early start, as we break camp from the Sayq Plateau, driving just over 30 minutes to the start of today's walk. This day is said to be the loveliest walks of week. With a well-paced start, we reach the Al Jarir region of the plateau and begin our descent into the fabulous Wadi Muaydeen. With 3 - 4 hours of trekking, it is one of the most spectacular wadi walks in Oman. At times we are on some exposed paths as we head down into hidden gardens and between photo worthy rock formations. As we take a steep descent onto the wadi floor, we can encounter local Omani men tending to their gardens. With a rocky ascent, we follow the rim of the wadi to meet our vehicles and take a short drive to the oasis town of Nizwa (approx 45mins) to our hotel, which has stunning views of low, chocolate-coloured hills behind and jagged white hills in front. This is a perfect place to relax at the end of a long day's walk with a welcome shower and soft bed. In the evening we try some good local food before collapsing in our beds.

Meals: BLD



Accommodation Hotel



Ascent 220M



Descent 640M



Time3 hrs trekking



Distance 7KM

DAY 6

Morning exploration of the ancient city of Nizwa. Afternoon drive to our desert camp.

Situated alongside two wadis, Nizwa, the former capital city of Oman, is a fertile sea of green with an oasis of date plantations stretching out 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the town. Today, Nizwa is still the largest and most important town in the interior of Oman and is noted for its 17th century fort and atmospheric souks, full of the silversmiths' art, especially ornately engraved khanjars (curved daggers worn on ceremonial occasions by all Omani men). We have a tour of the souks and time to explore the fort. After lunch in a local restaurant, we make the three and a half hour drive into the Eastern Hajar Mountains and set up our camp in Thamer, near to Wadi Bani Khalid, famous for its natural beauty.

Meals: **BLD**



Accommodation Camping

DAY 7

Trek out across the Selma Plateau (2157m) in the breathtaking Eastern Hajar to our wild camp.

This morning we start our second classic 2-day trek that takes us on ancient trading routes up and over the Selma Plateau and down to the sea at the Gulf of Oman. This is not a technical trek, but it is a long traverse and we will start our trek at very first light. Starting at around 650 metres, we walk through the lush coolness of this popular and breathtaking wadi, ascending gradually to a high point at 2157 metres. The rugged landscape of the Selma Plateau provides a stark contrast to the greenness of the wadi and offers panoramic views out over the stunning Ash Shariqiyah Mountains. We trek for 9 to 10 hours on rocky terrain, gradually ascending to the Selma Plateau. On arrival we meet the vehicles and transfer for the 20 minutes to our camp site (around 1500m) for dinner and another night of stargazing.

Meals: **BLD**



Accommodation Camping



Ascent 1650M



Descent 275M



Time 9 - 10 hrs trekking



Distance 17KM

DAY 8

Continue trekking across the Selma Plateau to Wadi Tiwi and our coastal camp.

Another early start, as we set off across the rugged plateau landscape for 4 hours. This is mainly a day of descent that starts off gradually with only losing 400m over the first 7km. The views are spectacular with the rocky mountains descending to the sparkly blue sea. We have lunch in the shade before we start the much steeper descent into the lush coolness of Wadi Tiwi with its dramatic rock faces and palms. We finish the route at the small village of Sooee, where there are some excellent swimming pools, a great place to wash off the trail dust, before walking the final easy stretch to our awaiting vehicles. It is then just a 20 minute drive to our camp at a stunning coastal spot. We line our tents on the beach so that we can witness the sunrise in the morning.

Meals: **BLD**



Accommodation Camping



Ascent 150M



Descent 1550M



Time 7 - 8 hrs trekking



Distance 14KM

DAY 9

Morning stroll to the emerald swimming pools of Wadi Shab. Drive onto Muscat hotel.

We wake with the sunrise into our tents and breakfast on the beach. We pack up camp for the final time and head to the nearby Wadi Shab, just 15 minutes away by car. A gentle 1-hour stroll up this beautiful

wadi brings us to more fresh water swimming pools. Here we can relax and swim in the pools. There is a hidden cave which involves some actual swimming which we can explore if we wish to and feel comfortable with the swim. When we are ready we return to the vehicles and take the road back to Muscat, stopping off for picnic lunch en route. We should be back at the group hotel in Muscat by 3.00 pm which will give us time to rest and pack before going out for a celebratory meal at a local restaurant. We will return to the hotel for a final drink in the bar.

Meals: BLD



Accommodation



Ascent 440M



Descent 220M



Time1 hr trekking



Distance 3KM

DAY 10

Depart from Muscat. A single transfer to Muscat Airport is provided.

The holiday ends after breakfast. There is a single group transfer to Muscat Airport. If you have time to spare before your flight you can go for a snorkel or maybe even join a dolphin watching boat tour to round off your fabulous week walking in the beautiful country of Oman.

Meals: B

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Support staff for camping and drivers
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival & departure
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- All land transport required by the itinerary (4-wheel-drive vehicles)
- All camping equipment excluding personal sleeping bags

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Oman Visa fee
- Any addtional activities/excursions indicated as optional
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Muscat.

A single transfer from Muscat Airport to the group hotel is provided on Day 1.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single transfer back to Muscat Airport timed to meet the check-in for the afternoon Oman Air return flight to London.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included in the holiday price.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a <u>Water-To-Go bottle</u>) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Breakfasts on trek typically consist of bread, cheese, honey, jams, yoghurt, eggs, fruit, tea and coffee. For lunch there will be a variety of salads, spicy hummus, breads and other dishes from which we can select. Dinner will usually be barbeque or pan-fried meat and vegetables with plenty of bread, yoghurt, and hummus followed by fresh fruit and tea or coffee. Alcohol will only be available in Muscat and in Nizwa, although upon arrival at Muscat there is a Duty Free shop and you are allowed to take 2-litres of alcohol into the country.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

We will spend 2 nights in Muscat at a comfortable 3 star hotel with a swimming pool. We will also have a night in similar standard of hotel in Nizwa.

Whilst on trek there are 6 nights wild camping. The camping is participatory, so you will be required to assist in putting up your tent and help out with camp chores.

A mess tent will be provided if the weather is bad, but on warm clear days we will gather and eat in the open. Mattresses are provided to sit on during meal times in a Bedouin style.

Accommodation is twin share. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired with another single client of the same sex. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning to extend your holiday, additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. The leader will be assisted by a small camp crew and one or more 4-wheel-drive support vehicles and drivers.

Altitude

This holiday involves going to moderately high altitude. During the course of your trip you will reach altitudes in excess of 2500 metres. Most people will have no difficulty with this level of altitude but before coming on the holiday, we recommend you read the advice on trekking at high altitude. You can also talk to one of our trekking experts if you have any concerns about altitude.

Spending Money

Approximately £150 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for visa, tips, soft drinks, snacks and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs and optional activities are additional so you may wish to budget for these.

You can choose to take your money in pounds sterling, dollars or euros. There will be the opportunity to change money into local currency on arrival at the airport and in Muscat. Additionally, you will be able to get currency from bank ATMs in Muscat and Nizwa. Credit cards are useful and it is a good idea to carry one in case of emergency.

Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your trek crews we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of $\mathfrak{L}35$ (or equivalent in euros/dollars) for tipping your crew.

Beat the Jet Lag

Our holidays are normally designed with minimal 'down time' at the start of the trip, but having a day or two at the beginning will have the additional benefit of allowing you time to get over the stress of a long journey or travelling across time zones, leaving you refreshed and ready for your holiday. We can easily arrange for you to have additional nights and airport transfers.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Your baggage will travel in the 4WD vehicle. You should bring a soft bag, such as the KE kit bag, as these are more suitable to pack in the vehicle. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the <u>UK Government website</u>.

Visa Oman

UK passport holders do not require a visa for stays shorter than 14 days.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is <u>Travel Health Pro</u>.

Currency

The unit of currency in Oman is the Oman Rial.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 4 to 6 hours for consecutive days, and possibly up to 10 hrs on the one longer day. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training, and we would suggest that you try to fit in a number of long weekend walks before you depart. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardio vascular fitness and stamina.

Climate

The best period for trekking in the Al Hajar Mountains is in the winter season from October through to mid April. Outside of this period it can be very hot, with temperatures rising to 40 degrees centigrade. At the time of any of our departures, the maximum daytime temperature is likely to be around 30°C but can be more in exceptional circumstances, and falling as low as 5°C at night at our highest camps. At Christmas, the weather is usually settled, clear and sunny, although the days are shorter and the nights can be particularly cool, possibly as low as 0°C.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Adventure Trekking in Oman Dale and Hadwin.
- Travels with a Tangerine Tim Mackintosh-Smith
- Arabian Sands Wilfred Thesiger

Maps

Oman and the United Arab Emirates Map. ITMB (Travel Reference Map S.)

Oman and the UAE - International Travel Map. 1:1,400,000

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our <u>Travel Insurance</u> page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

You should bring the following items:

- Lightweight hiking boots which are suitable for scrambling
- Sandals for water crossings in the Wadi's, such as tevas
- Trainers for sightseeing and camp use
- Socks
- Walking socks
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Shorts
- At least 1 long sleeve shirt with collar (for sun protection)

- Casual shirts and/or T-shirts
- Warm jacket* (eg. Fleece)
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat (for chilly evenings in the desert)
- Headscarf (for the ladies when visiting the mosques)
- Sunglasses
- Daypack of approx 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Water bottles 1 litre (x3) or, 3 litre / quart Camelbak hydration system (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated -5°C)*
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash

Basic First Aid Kit including antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium),

• painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

US (toll-free): 1-888-630-4415

The following items are optional:

- Trekking poles
- Travel clothes

- Swimwear
- Small towel
- Sleeping bag liner
- Camera
- Pen-knife (note: always pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes:

*For December departures when night-time temperatures can fall below freezing in the desert, we recommend a season sleeping bag comfort rated -10°C and a warmer jacket such as a down-filled jacket. At all times of the year you should take a jacket for the evenings.

As Oman is an Islamic country, modest dress is preferable in the towns and cities. Shoulders should be kept covered, and full length trousers/skirts are recommended. When visiting the Grand Mosque ladies should have long sleeves, long trousers and a headscarf. Men should wear long trousers but can wear short sleeved tops/t-shirts. It is acceptable to wear sandals for ladies and men.

The camping on this trip is mostly wild camping with few facilities. Water for bathing will not always be available and we suggest you bring a supply of wet-wipes. Sleeping mattresses are provided.

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from <u>Cotswold Outdoor</u> - our 'Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. >> Find out more

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for joining in Muscat. Single timed transfers to/from Muscat Airport to the group hotel are provided at the start/end of the holiday.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Muscat with Oman Air. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning of the following day. Return flights will depart Muscat in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Authentic Arabia! KE are one of the few operators to run a real mountain trek in Oman, travel with us to discover the forgotten Middle East. If you want to chat about the trip and trekking please call us and ask to speak to Gemma - she has recently returned, and loved it.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 18/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change