

DNHG Trip to Damaniyat Islands in Oman
13th to 15th March, 2014

The DNHG is organizing a weekend trip to Oman, As Suwaidi area (380 km from Dubai), with the boat trip to the natural reserve of Damaniyat islands for a full-day of snorkeling and exploration of the rich marine and bird life.

The trip plan is as follows:

Thursday 13th March

Evening: arrival at the location

Friday 14th March

Full-day boat trip to Damaniyat Islands with at least two stops for snorkeling. **15 people max, 350 AED per person.** The cost includes boat and the crew, all necessary permits, water, fruit and cookies. You need to bring your own picnic lunch. Children count as adults.

We will return back to As Sawadi before the sunset.

(In case that due to the bad weather/rough sea the boat trip to Damaniyat will be cancelled, the payment will be fully refunded. We will then make a full-day trip visiting the 5 forts (Barka, Nakhal, Ar Rustaq, etc) in the hinterland of As Sawadi.)

Saturday 15th March

Visit to the As Sawadi beach, shelling, snorkeling, optional trip to the rocks & small islands at Sawadi beach. One of the islands is reachable on foot at low tide.
Return to Dubai.

Details:

Damaniyat Islands are a nature reserve and only open to visitors during winter months to protect the wild life during the breeding summer months.

Please see the attached for further details on the islands and our trip.

We will NOT drive in convoy to As Sawadi as people might leave at different times and drive at different speeds. We will meet in As Sawadi either the evening before or on the morning of the boat trip.

Directions to As Sawadi:

<http://www.distancesfrom.com/ae/directions-from-Dubai--United-Arab-Emirates-to-Sawadi-Oman-via-Sohar-Port/DirectionHistory/9005743.aspx>

Distance of As Sawadi from Dubai is 380 km and the boat trip will start relatively early on Friday morning (7.30 am gathering for 8 am departure). It is therefore recommended that you reach the destination already on Thursday evening.

Sleeping options are as follows:

- Gulf Sand Motel, 250 AED per room per night, approx. 30 min drive from the meeting point (<http://www.agoda.com/gulf-sand-motel/hotel/barka-om.html?asq=Fe%2fRaw6cszss4vA7U4Wazw%3d%3d>)
- As Sawadi Beach Resort (<http://www.alsawadibeach.info/about-us>), approx. 800 AED per room per night
- Camping on Al Sawadi Beach (with your own equipment), 250 AED per person, including breakfast and dinner
- Free camping (you will have to find your own location)
- You can check other hotel options

here: <http://www.agoda.com/pages/agoda/default/destinationsearchresult.aspx?asq=kksCe%2bVriBnvqhV2xsnWyAnF8qBqUQFcNuDy4jTQRoRkigyhVPtullqvUiYnBzmfbpM8hK0O7Oscro7jvGqIGc9lL4aw5C31jTpN39b2DsFBI0BVbcQdRJcLVyEwP%2fY%2fllldl%2fRFbpXecugrYZScLNra2ZQkVEy6qUGYxZWInnHcMSyVGfiFo%2f4JION2GYkelKcziO3ODmPkizwYkspy55yvDJWhEW8AkIOHPpxF%2bWK4FuBgdkpiqbuESEzi%2f4ODCwsc5OtzR39ZLA78VUfpNg%2f%2f6UPiBWAsgUaTjLTcSE%3d&tick=635278395969>

- If staying from Thursday evening till Saturday morning (13th to 15th March) you obviously need to book 2 nights.

Estimated cost:

- Damaniyat Island trip on Friday: 350 AED per person
- Boat trip to As Sawadi islands on Saturday morning (optional): 100 AED per boat for 4 people (fishing boats)
- Omani visa: 50 AED per person (regardless of the type of residence visa)
- Sleeping: 2 nights - as per above options
- Food & drinks: bring your own picnic lunch for the Damaniyat trip; other meals available in hotels or your own if camping
- Petrol

IMPORTANT!

- **Passports and Omani car insurance are mandatory for this trip. 4WD is not required.**
- **Full prepayment for the Damaniyat boat has to be collected by 2nd March at the latest.**
- **The space will be assigned on first paid basis. Only participants with fully prepaid Damaniyat boat trip will be considered as signed up; no waiting list.**
- **Children count as adults.**
- **Prepayments are not refundable in case of cancellations, no shows or late arrival to the port.**
- **The trip will be fully refunded if cancelled due to bad weather.**
- **If less than 13 payments are collected by 2nd March, the boat trip will be cancelled.**

If interested, please contact Sonja at lavson@gmail.com

Damaniyat Islands

(Friday, March 14, full day)



2.Hycoon, 3.Al Qafsiyah, 4.Al Jabal Kabeer, 5.Al Qurfah, 6.Wlad Al Quarfah, 7.Qesmah

The nine, tiny, uninhabited islands lie about 11 miles off the Batinah Coast and are the jewel in the crown for diving or snorkeling in the Gulf of Oman. Coral reefs cover up to 70% of the dive sites with more than a hundred different species of soft and hard coral. Marine life is abundant with prolific numbers of colorful reef fish, stingrays, occasional turtles, Leopard Sharks and on rare occasions a Whale Shark. With the vast variety of sea life and coral close to the surface, snorkeling is a particularly rewarding experience.

The islands have been protected as a **nature reserve** since 1996 and provide an important nesting site for hawksbill and green turtles, as well as a wide range of migratory birds including the increasingly rare sooty falcon (which can also be found in the Sawadi Islands), one of the few migratory raptors which actually nests and breeds in the region.

Given their protected status, access to the Daymaniyats is restricted, and you're not allowed to land on the islands from the beginning of May until the end of October; the rest of the year a permit is required, which will be arranged through the boat operator.



Our boat will be an open boat (without a cabin or other facilities) with shaded sitting area (pls see below photos). It has space for max 15 people.

The plan is to start from As Sawadi beach at 8 am prompt. It will take us less than 1 hour (depending on weather) to reach the archipelago. First we will visit is the sandy beach of island Junn, where we will drop our anchor and snorkel. We will then cruise across to the next major island in the chain, Police Island, named because of the small Police station there set up to protect the Islands and check on our permits. Depending on time we can then make other stop(s) or just drive around the islands and observe the rest of the coast and the bays from the boat. We have to return to As Sawadi port before the sunset. **This is an exclusively snorkeling trip, we will only stop at the beaches & depths suitable for snorkeling (no diving).**



Sawadi islands

(Saturday, March 15, half day - morning)

The rocky and windswept **Sawadi Islands** lie just offshore from Sawadi Beach. The largest of the seven islands lies almost within spitting distance of the beach, a large rocky hump topped by a string of watchtowers, while the other smaller islands lie further out to sea.

It's possible to walk across the sand to the main island at low tide, though take care you don't get stranded when the tide comes back in.

Boat trips can be arranged by bargaining with the local fishermen on the beach for around 10 OR/100 AED per boat (for 4 people). The trip includes a snorkeling/shelling stop on one of the islands and a tour around Sawadi Islands. Sawadi **beach** is littered with exotic-looking seashells, perfect for a stroll and a spot of beachcombing.