

Nizwa, Oman

Nizwa (Arabic: F2HI) Al Dakhliya - from Forts to rock climbing

Mountains, handicrafts, wadis and places of historical interest are the main features of Al Dakhliya, which is famous as a trading region between the coast and the interiors and for Nizwa, its administrative capital, which is a verdant oasis.

Fort Nizwa Castle - opened in January 2007 - is a powerful reminder of the town of Nizwa's invincibility through turbulent periods in Oman's long history.

The town of Nizwa has a strategic location at the crossroads of vital caravan routes linking interior, Muscat and Dhofar regions. The most striking feature of the castle is the central tower - a colossal 150-foot diameter circular tower soaring 115 feet above the rest of the fortification, complete with battlements, turrets, secret shafts, false doors and wells...

Nizwa fort

Nizwa Fort, which was completed in the 1650s, is among Oman's largest and oldest forts as well as one of the most visited national monuments. This historical edifice is an example of the ingenuity of Omani architecture. Set amid plantations of date palms, was built by Imam Sultan bin Saif Al Yaarubi. It took 12 years to build and to prevent marauders from looting Nizwa's abundant natural wealth, as well as to protect its strategic location on the crossroads of vital caravan routes. Nizwa Fort is characterised by its height, solid fortification and unique location in the middle of Nizwa town. Its walls are rounded and robust to withstand barrages of mortar fire and feature a maze of rooms, high-ceiling walls, doorways, terraces, narrow staircases and corridors.

The most striking feature of the ramparts is the central tower, soaring 35 metres above the rest of the fortification, which allows stunning views of Nizwa and the surrounding areas.

Nizwa mosque

Given its pivotal place in Nizwa's history, this majestic edifice was among the first to be renovated by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture as part of its far-reaching drive to preserve the Sultanate's rich heritage. Used as a seat of government in its time, it is still used for meetings between the people and the Ruler's representative each month. The Nizwa Fort has undergone new site interpretation programme.

Another landmark nearby is the recently refurbished Nizwa souk. Browse shops and stalls to appreciate Nizwa's well-known silver jewellery or watch expert craftsmen in action as they fashion khanjars and a range of other artifacts.

Nizwa souk - khanjars

The weekly (Friday) markets with goat and cattle auctions are much like traditional auctions that take place elsewhere in Oman, especially on the eve of Eid festivities.

Nizwa souk - goats for sale