WHICH MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRY SHOULD YOU VISIT?

The history of the Middle East stretches back into the mists of time. Nowadays it offers zones of untouched beauty, centres of modern, cosmopolitan luxury and unparalleled hospitality.

UAE

FOR THE BIG SPENDER

Currency: United Arab Emirates dirham
Population: 9.3M
Must See: Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Shop up a storm! With over 1200 stores, the Dubai Mall holds the record for the largest shopping centre in the world.

Fit fun? Even the rollercoasters are Ferrari! The Ferrari World Abu Dhabi rollercoaster in the Ferrari Indoor Dreamspace is the fastest in the world – hitting 150mph in five seconds.

Need a break from the heat? The indoor ski slope is 22,500 square metres and cost over $400 million to build.

Get away from it all! You could stay your own island in the Dubai Palm Islands for between $7 million and $13 million.

In 1991 Dubai was in the edge of the desert and long way off the beaten track. Today it boasts over 400 high rises.

OMAN

FOR THE SIMPLICITY SEARCHER

Currency: Omani rial
Population: 3.2M
Must See: Muscat, Sohar, Nizwa

OMAN

MUSCAT

The mighty Jebel Akhdar Range with Nizwa – but Oman boasts the Musandam Fjords where rugged mountains rise 2000 metres above sea level.

There are only 200 individual Arabian leopards left in the wild – mostly found in Oman.

Greeting line by French – that ancient traditional greeting of Omani coffee and fresh dates.

Jebel Shams – the Mountain of the Sun – is the highest peak in the Al Hajar Mountains. You can drive to the top, and 500 metres vertically below you is the Grand Canyon of Oman.

If you're driving in Oman – keep a clean tea cloth ready for tuning a dirty car.

There are over 500 forts, castles and watch towers in Oman.

JORDAN

FOR THE CULTURAL PURIST

Currency: Jordanian dinar
Population: 6.8M
Must See: Amman, Jerash, Jerash

JORDAN

Jordan is around 85% desert.

The native Jordanians form two groups, those descended from former desert dwellers (Bedouins) or from a settled farming tradition (fellahin).

The national dish is Mansaf – lamb cooked in yoghurt and served with seasoned rice and flatbread.

You can swimmer in the Dead Sea or go diving in the Red Sea waters of Aqaba – some of the lowest points on earth.

People have lived in Jordan for at least 90,000 years.

Discover the stone temple Petra – it was a secret to all but the desert dwelling Bedouin until 1812 AD.

IRAN

FOR THE EXPLORER

Currency: Iranian Rial
Population: 75M million
Must See: Tehran, Mashhad, Kish

IRAN

The Karun river is 450 miles long and is the only navigable river in Iran.

The temperature in Iran ranges from the subtropical to the subpolar. Winter temperatures vary between -32°C in the North and 23°C in the South.

Iranian rug weavers have been weaving beautiful rugs for over 2500 years. Mistakes in the weaving are often intentionally to demonstrate that only God is perfect.

Visit Ilam Iran's Bisoon e Sorkouan – one of the oldest rocking carvings in Iran – it stretches for over 120km.

Excavation of the ruins of Persepolis started in the 1930's. Your only glimpse of the palace built in 520 BC.

EGYPT

FOR THE ADVENTURE SEEKER

Currency: Egyptian pound
Population: 90.6M million
Must See: Sharm el-Sheikh, Cairo, Luxor

EGYPT

Egyptian history can be traced back to 3,200BC when King Menes united the Upper and Lower Kingdoms.

If you go during hunting you might get more than you bargained for: Ancient Egyptians reportedly ate, dogs, badgers and even crocodiles.

The Nile is the world's longest river, stretch across the size of the United States.

Visit the Pyramids built in the Giza, it has 1.34 million stones and is still the largest work of any religious building in the whole world.

Crocs live in the Tiran Island, where strong currents bring in barracuda, jackfish, sharks and Tuna – and reefs full of crocs fit than.

Take a cruise down one of the legendary 6,853km long Nile river.