

# **Oman**

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## **Location and area**

Oman is an independent state in the Middle East, extending about 1,600 km along the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered on the north by the Gulf of Oman, on the east and south by the Arabian Sea, on the southwest by the Republic of Yemen, on the west by the Rub' al Khali ("Empty Quarter") of Saudi Arabia, and on the north-east by the United Arab Emirates. The country's territory also includes the northern tip of Ra's (Cape) Musandam, which juts between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman; this portion is separated from the rest of the country by territory of the United Arab Emirates. Oman has an area of about 309,500 km<sup>2</sup>.

## **Topography**

Oman consists of a narrow coastal plain, ranges of mountains and hills, and an interior plateau. The coastal plain along the Gulf of Oman is known as al-Batinah and is the country's principal agricultural region. Inland from the plain lie the Akhdar Mountains (Green Mountains) with some peaks over 3,000 m. The coastal plain extending south along the Arabian Sea is largely barren.

## **Climate**

The climate of Oman is generally hot and arid; however, the humidity along the coast is high. The average annual temperature is about 28° C. The average annual rainfall is generally less than 100 mm.

## **Land use**

Agriculture is dominated by the cultivation of export crops. Over-pumping of ground water is a continuing problem (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Wetlands**

No data are available of the status of wetlands in Oman (Spiers 1999)

## **Peatlands**

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols nor gley soils exist in Oman.