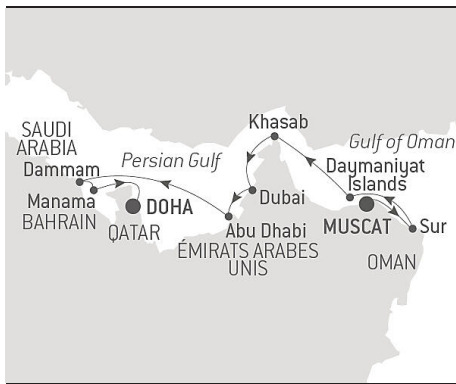


Oriental wonders & civilisations

From **18/11/2023**
to **28/11/2023**

Ship: **LE BOUGAINVILLE**

From **Muscat**
to **Doha**



With featured guest Hubert Védérine, senior French civil servant and politician.

“Travelling - it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller” said the famous Berber explorer Ibn Battûta. Almost seven centuries later, while humans have partly tamed the arid landscapes of the immense Arabian Desert, the Oriental charm remains and its history is written in the present tense. Bathed by the **Persian Gulf**, crossed by a **desert** dotted with oases whose mere mention is enough to captivate us, the **Eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula** welcomes you for an **all-new 11-day cruise** aboard *Le Bougainville*.

The **Sultanate of Oman** is as discreet as its Emirati neighbours are bold. The sea maintains a special place in the kingdom of the legendary Sinbad the Sailor. The fishermen here perpetuate millennial traditions while the shipyards are still in operation. Between the sea and the desert, you will sail through the **carved fjords of Musandam** from **Khasab** and, leaving from **Sur**, you will experience the enchantment procured by the shade and cool of a **wadi** - lush oases planted with palm trees. On the **Daymaniyat Islands**, you can snorkel in an exceptional natural sanctuary where turtles come to nest. In the capital, **Muscat**, the fragrances of the Orient and of incense will intoxicate you, the sparkling colours of the markets will captivate you, and the vibrant bustle of the souk will enchant you. The Near East exudes its incredible poetry.

In this region of the world, ancient cities rub shoulders with the futuristic towns designed and shaped by the greatest contemporary architects. **Dubai** and its skyscrapers that are among the tallest in the world; **Abu Dhabi**, with its Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and its new Louvre Museum; **Doha** and its bay offering a panorama of its fascinating skyline: they all offer a singular and breath-taking experience. You will discover the capital of **Bahrain, Manama**, which may be less famous but is no less exciting. As a crossroads for trade routes since ancient times, today it is also more avant-garde than its Emirate sisters. The colourful souk and the Bahrain National Museum are among its must-see sites.

For the first time, you will have the opportunity to discover the Saudi city of **Dammam**. This modern metropolis is renowned for its pleasant waterfront and white sandy beaches; above all, though, it is the gateway

to the **Al Hasa** oasis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the endless desert, imagine the largest oasis in the world, its fragrant gardens crossed by canals, springs and palm trees... palm trees as far as the eye can see. This hydraulic installation system, the historic buildings and the archaeological sites provide evidence of a sedentary human presence in the territory since the Neolithic period.



The information in this document is valid as of 25/04/2024

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

MUSCAT

Embarkation 18/11/2023 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 18/11/2023 at 18:00

Unlike neighbouring metropolises, the capital of the **Sultanate of Oman** has chosen to ban towers and skyscrapers and to cultivate the peninsula's traditional and refined architectural style: low houses, domes, moucharaby windows, and wooden balconies. This authenticity adds to the charm of this small former maritime city protected by mountains and the forts constructed by the Portuguese in the 16th century. There is no doubt that you will fall under the charm of the treasures of Omani craftsmanship: the souk in the old district of **Mutrah** is a perfect example of this, as is the **Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque**.

SUR

Arrival 19/11/2023 early morning

Departure 19/11/2023 early evening

Built on either side of a lagoon, **Sur** is a city and seaport in the **north-east of the Sultanate of Oman**, on the coast of the **Gulf of Oman**. Connected to the sea by a channel, the port was very active for a long time, having regular dealings with Africa and India since the 6th century. Sur is renowned for being the only Omani city to have retained its **traditional boatyards**, where **dhow**s (wooden sailing ships) are hand-crafted. The city's charm stems from its immaculate white houses dotting the seafront and from its fort erected on a hill along the **road to Muscat**.

DAYMANIYAT ISLANDS

Arrival 20/11/2023 early morning

Departure 20/11/2023 late afternoon

Set atop the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Oman, the **Daymaniyat Islands** have been a **nature reserve** since the 1980s. Some forty kilometres (25 miles) off the coast from Muscat, the Omani capital, their craggy coastlines form natural pools home to an **incredible biodiversity**. The different types of coral reefs that dot this ecosystem, the turtles that nest there, and the numerous species of fish make this an ideal destination for snorkelling. This rocky landscape is also the favourite spot of many birds, both endemic and migratory.

KHASAB

Arrival 21/11/2023 midday

Departure 21/11/2023 evening

Located in the country's north, on the **Musandam Peninsula**, **Khasab** is a city in the **Sultanate of Oman**. In the **Strait of Hormuz**, which connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman, this small port built by the Portuguese in the 16th

century and surrounded by a chain of rocky mountains was established at the mouth of **Wadi Khasab**. You will love its authentic scenery and particularly its **fjords**, which cut through the landscapes in a spectacular fashion and have earned it the moniker “Norway of Arabia”. In the city, **Khasab Castle** and its atypical architecture are well worth a visit to discover the history and culture of Oman.

DUBAI

Arrival 22/11/2023 early morning

Departure 22/11/2023 late evening

Vertiginous, excessive, immoderate... **Dubai**, the largest city in the United Arab Emirates, stands out for its architectural follies. Home to the world's tallest skyscraper, the **Burj Khalifa**, with a total height of 828 metres, almost three times that of the Eiffel Tower, the city is also famous for the gigantic scale of the Palm Islands, its artificial islands in the form of a palm tree. You can explore more traditional districts not far away, with visits of the souks of **Deira** or the Gold Souk. Or perhaps you would prefer to discover Dubai Museum: located in an 18th-century fort, it tells the city's history from Antiquity to the present day.

ABU DHABI

Arrival 23/11/2023 early morning

Departure 24/11/2023 late evening

The political capital of the United Arab Emirates, **Abu Dhabi** stands out thanks to its exceptional cultural offering. In the Saadiyat Island district, **the Louvre Abu Dhabi**, designed by **Jean Nouvel** as a museum town inspired by traditional Arab architecture, creates a dialogue between objects and works from civilisations from all over the world around the great universal questions. A little further, the **Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque** boasts a sumptuous decor of marble, gold and glass. Abu Dhabi is also the gateway to the **Al Ain oasis** and its 150,000 date palms, a remarkable testimony to the settling of nomads in the region since Neolithic times, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

AT SEA

Arrival 25/11/2023

Departure 25/11/2023

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

DAMMAM

Arrival 26/11/2023 early morning

Departure 26/11/2023 late evening

On the Saudi shores of the **Persian Gulf**, **Dammam** reveals its winding coastline, home to fine-sand beaches and pleasant seafront. The capital of the **Eastern Province of Ash-Sharqiyah** boasts a prime position along the calm waters of the Arabian Gulf. Edged with rows of palm trees facing the sea, this modern city is also the gateway to the beautiful **Al-Ahsa Oasis**. Take an optional excursion into the world's largest oasis to see verdant gardens planted with countless palm trees, a sophisticated irrigation system, and archaeological sites attesting to human presence since the Neolithic period. The extraordinary landscape is listed as World Heritage by **UNESCO**.

MANAMA

Arrival 27/11/2023 early morning

Departure 27/11/2023 evening

At the crossroads of trade routes since ancient times, **Manama, the capital of Bahrain**, still bears traces of what were, for centuries, the pillars of the economy in the Persian Gulf: pearl harvesting, and the construction of traditional sailing vessels called *dhows*. But the major draw of this small **island in Bahrain** is undeniably the vestiges of human presence dating back nearly 5,000 years. The ancient harbour and capital of Dilmun, **Qal'at al-Bahrain**, is, along with the Dilmun Burial Mounds scattered across the island, an essential relic of this Mesopotamian civilisation. Both are listed as **UNESCO World Heritage**. Ancient colonisations would come later, by the Assyrians, the Achaemenids, the Macedonians, then the Arabs in the Middle Ages, before the more contemporary invasions by the Portuguese, the Persians and the Ottomans. This tumultuous history now gives this small territory rich influences.

DOHA

Arrival 28/11/2023 early morning

Disembarkation 28/11/2023 at 07:00

On the banks of the **Persian Gulf**, discover **Doha**, the capital of **Qatar**. Rising out of the desert, the city has managed to maintain its traditions in spite of a frantic race for modernity. The cliff bordering Doha Bay has magnificent views over the city centre's enormous constructions. The silhouette of the **Museum of Islamic Art** rises up near the quays, where the region's typical sailboats, known as *dhows*, are docked. This "fortress", designed by **Ming Pei**, the architect of the Louvre pyramid, is home to the finest collections of Islamic art in the world. Not far, the lively district of **Souq Waqif** and its colourful stalls are also an unmissable visit.