

NOMAD'S ROAD: Overlanders for Life

Episode 2: First Step into the Arabic Peninsula

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After visiting Iran for a month, we have crossed the Strait of Hormuz from Bandar Abbas to Sharjah. As every tourist and traveller visiting the United Arab Emirates, we focused on huge malls, extravagant buildings and nice cars but after a few weeks of visiting the city centres of Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, we have decided to follow the advices of locals and expatriates and go deeper into the country to discover some quiet and amazing places made by humans and nature.

After landing in Sharjah, we spotted some nice places on the beach not far from the cities to allow us to visit them; not many are remaining, so every traveller like us meet together in these rare places like Palace Beach in Dubai in front of the Palm Jumeirah, Kitesurf Beach on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi and Al Khan Beach in Sharjah which was still public at the time we were there. We have been really amazed by the architecture of the buildings and the

luxuries all around the emirates. We have spent a few days to explore these cities and their huge malls and fantastic towers like the Burj Khalifa and Burj Al-Arab as well as dozens of other buildings with eccentric shapes that sometimes defy the laws of gravity. We have also visited the magnificent Emirates Palace, beautifully decorated for the Christmas time as well as the sumptuous and unforgettable Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

These visits were nice but not really usual for us as we normally live in nature, so we decide to explore the wild parts of UAE

following the knowledge of the Emirati people and other adventurous expatriates.

We have started this nature tour of the UAE by the east coast from north to south. We followed the E99 road and seen a lot of beaches where local people love to picnic and camp; like the Al Fiquet Family Beach in Dibba or Al Aqah Beach. There was not many to see except the coastline, but we have done a few stops to see an old and interesting mosque, the Al Badiyah Mosque built around the 15th century. We spent a few days around Fujairah to bivouac and enjoy the beaches before going not far from

the border of Oman to discover the more interesting landscape of Hatta located in the middle of the rugged landscape of Hajar Mountains.

On way back to the west coast, we joined a family to go wild with them and discovered Dalma Island which is located offshore not far from Saudi Arabian border. After taking the ferry, we have found a nice place to stay a few days and enjoy nature and camping. There was not so much to do except relaxing, swimming and fishing - exactly what you need when you travel for a long time like us, a nice break on a quiet island. One night we were able to observe stars and see the bright halo from Doha in Qatar.

On our way back to Abu Dhabi, we made a stop to an amazing place where the elements has carved the sand and created beautiful sculptures on a huge area, the colours and shapes are stunning. A really nice spot and a must do in the UAE. We have also been to another interesting spot named Al Qudra Lakes, a place made and organized by humans where everybody can enjoy camping and picnic and where we were able to do some bird watching to observe some nice species like flamingoes, ducks and avocets. At dusk we had the

chance to see few Arabian gazelles coming to drink and on the way back to Dubai we were really surprised to see three giraffes along the highway!

One of the best moments we have spent in the UAE was the big meeting of travellers on Palace Beach in Dubai to celebrate the New Year's Eve, enjoy and observe with hundreds of local peoples the most spectacular fireworks we have ever seen in our life.

All along this journey in the UAE, we have been welcomed by a lot of Emiratis and expatriates with whom we have shared a few meals and tested different specialties of Arabic's countries.

Unfortunately, because of some problems on our old Toyota Land Cruiser we have not been able to go for a ride in the huge and beautiful dunes of Liwa. This place will be on our programme for the next visit to the UAE if we come back to the Arabian Peninsula.

Our next destination on our 12 years trip by road around the world will be the Sultanate of Oman to discover a totally different landscape as well as wadis and forts. You can follow our everyday adventure on our Nomads Road Facebook page as we update on the way as often as we can.

The Trastours is a family that has been overlanding the planet for as long as they can remember! Made up of Greg and Magali as well as their daughters Natasha and Anastasia, The Trastours is a family filled to the brim with an unstoppable sense of adventure for the ultimate goal - to explore the world. You can check out their next stop at www.nomadsroad.com or look for Nomads Road on Facebook and Twitter.

