

Oman introduces several changes to its immigration policies

October 2017

In brief

In line with the country's initiatives for Vision 2040, the government of Oman has permitted Chinese, Indian and Russian passport holders to avail a tourist visa upon arriving at Oman. Accompanying dependants, including spouses and children, can also avail this facility. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has also lowered the minimum salary requirement for sponsoring dependants to OMR 300 per month.

In detail

Changes to the visa exemption list

Currently, a total of 67 countries are eligible for a tourist visa-on-arrival for Oman. The length of stay permitted by the visa may vary (depending on the applicant's nationality and the terms of stay), but in most instances such visas are valid for 30 days, with an in-country option to extend for an additional 30 days.

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In order for applicants to be eligible they must hold valid passports with valid entry visas for the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, or any Schengen state. Applicants may also be required to present their travel itinerary, including a return ticket. Government processing fees are expected to be the standard OMR 20, which does not include the cost of any subsequent in-country extensions.

Changes to dependant sponsorship requirements

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has also lowered the minimum salary requirement for sponsoring dependants to OMR 300 per month (previously OMR 600). Although foreign national residents still have to meet other eligibility criteria, including the need for suitable accommodation, this development should serve to benefit those already in the country as well as those looking to relocate.

The takeaway

Although visas issued upon arrival in Oman do not, from a strict immigration compliance perspective, permit holders to engage in "business type" activities, in practice, we do anticipate the above to have a bearing on regional travel and mobility for local entities. This decision should also prove to greatly aid tourism in Oman.

Oman's decision to ease its visa requirements is in line with a broader trend across the GCC where, more recently, the UAE has also granted Chinese and Russian passport holders full visa-on-arrival privileges, while Indian nationals (with valid EU member state visas and US visas) are permitted to obtain a visa-on-arrival for a shorter time period.

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