

## **Secrets of Arabia**

Film by: Nadja Frenz, Sabine Howe  
Produced by: Vincent TV, RBB, NDR, arte  
Produced for:  
Length: 5 x 52', 5 x 45'  
Year: 2017  
Language Versions: German, English, French  
Format: HD  
Genre: People. Places

### **Short Synopsis**

Three things are known about the seven countries of the Arabian Peninsula: they are rich, they profess to Islam and there are miles of deserts everywhere. But apart from these, the countries are very diverse and worth detailed and introspective exploration. The black gold bubbling from the sands catapulted most of the seven countries into modern times. Due to the influx of petro-dollars, low-income Bedouin companies have become very rich social states. A fascinating juxtaposition of progress and tradition!

#### **Episodes:**

- 1 & 2:** The Conservative Kingdom of Saudi
- 3:** The Paradise Oman
- 4:** The United Arab Emirate
- 5:** Football Country Qatar

### **Synopsis**

Three things are known about the seven countries of the Arabian Peninsula: they are rich, they profess to Islam and everywhere range miles of deserts. But apart from these similarities, the countries are quite diverse and it is worthwhile taking a detailed look into the individual regions. In fact, the black gold bubbling out of the sand catapulted most of the seven countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain, almost overnight into modern times. Within a generation of petro-dollars, low-income Bedouin companies became very rich social states. The seven countries of the Arabian Peninsula are still changing rapidly. The Emirates on the Gulf, especially Dubai, Qatar and Oman are opening their borders to foreigners. Those fortunate to visit are often awe-struck by the lavishness of the natural surroundings, the unique cultural monuments and the fascinating juxtaposition of progress and tradition.

The Arabian Peninsula, the birthplace of Islam, though only a few hours away from Europe is rarely a destination spot for European travelers. While in the 1970s polygamous Sheikhs and the squandering of billions of dollars were written about polemically in articles, nowadays, the consensus of western media seems to be to suspect the entire populous of supporting terrorism. Up to now, there are no cinematic documentary series that for example, report on life and its challenges in the conservative Saudi Arabia or one mapping the transformation of the Emirates on the Gulf from exotic oases to

welfare states. In addition to the amenities provided by the wealth gained, the residents of the Arabian Peninsula attach great importance to the preservation of their traditions. Often this is not visible to the "normal" tourists, but the innumerable folk festivals, the promotion of ancient craftsmanship and the maintenance of the ancient sites testify to the great historical consciousness among the Arabs.

It is time to ask: What are the challenges facing the small Emirate of Qatar, which will be hosting the World Cup in 2022? Why are women in Saudi Arabia still not allowed to drive? How did a 12-year-old from the United Arab Emirates become a prime advocate for environmental protection? And who are the women in Dubai who willingly join the armed forces? Life on the Arabic Peninsula consists of more than just the petroleum business. It is a symbiosis of SMS and sandals, capitalism and Quran, Ferrari and falcon hunting and much more - and this is what this 5-part discovery series is all about.