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Traditional costume of Dhofar Governorate

With Salalah and Dhofar Governorate being the destination of choice for many families and travellers from around Oman and the GCC right now – due to the wonderfully cool Khareef season – the National Museum takes a look at some of the traditional and historical dress items from the region, and which continue to be worn today...

Dress (*thawb*)

Origin: Dhofar Governorate

Materials: Indigo-dyed cotton with embroidery and silver

Period: 14th century AH/late 20th century CE

The definitive article of clothing for Dhofari women is the *thawb*, a loose-fitting robe which is short at the front, reaching to just below the knee, and has a long train at the back. According to local legend, the purpose of the train is to erase the footprints of the wearer as she walks. Long after the woman has passed, however, the scent of incense (*bukhār*) will linger, the *thawb* being permeated with the perfumed smoke prior to being worn.





Kohl containers (*makhalah*)

Origin: Dhofar Governorate
Materials: Silver and beaded decoration
Period: 14th century AH/mid 20th century CE

Dhofari kohl is traditionally made from the resinous soot of frankincense and other native plant materials, including the burnt roots of various herbs, most importantly *Aerva javanica*, and of wood ash from *Lycium shawii*. Along the coast, the soot of burnt shark's liver is another traditional source of kohl. Kohl substances are also mixed with other ingredients, such as powdered mother of pearl from abalone and oyster shells, which gives the kohl an alluring glitter.



Headdress (*khalqah*) detail

Origin: Dhofar Governorate
Materials: Embroidered cotton, gilded silver, coral and glass
Period: 14th century AH/late 20th century CE

Women silversmiths and embroiderers of Dhofar work together to produce exquisite articles of adornment which are unique to the region, such as this wedding headdress (*khalqah*). Characterised by two parallel padded ridges of cloth running from front to back, the *khalqah* is adorned with gilded discs, small hemispherical studs and lengths of handmade chain. The *khalqah* headdress is usually worn together with a forehead band, side chains and additional hair ornaments.



Visitor Info!

The National Museum is open daily from 10:00am – 5:00pm (Friday timings 2:00pm – 6:00pm). The ticket desk closes half an hour before the Museum's closing times.

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