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## First Yemeni female tourist guide

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[Reports](#)  
[Variety](#)

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[Links](#)  
[Exchange rate](#)  
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**D** Doa'a is a young female Yemeni tourist guide, from old Sana'a city, who is trying to find her own business in tourism. She understands the importance of her abilities in touring other females. Her future dream is to start her own project which is the "Yemeni house". I dream to have my own project and to get a house to practice all the Yemeni traditional lifestyles with the tourists who visit Yemen in general and the old Sana'a city in particular, Doa'a expressed.



On top of Bab Al-Yemen (Yemen Gate) in old city of Sana'a.

In talking about tourism, normally talking about the main places that tourists might have an interest. However what might make the tour more interesting is that there is a special tour only for female tourists. They get the chance to practice the Yemeni women traditions and certain private aspects, such as a Turkish Bath.

"Many female tourists ask me why there is no female tourist guides and they wonder where is the female tourist guides. Thus, I decided to be the first female guide in my city regardless of the difficulties that I might face especially from my society or family. I wear the vial but I am open-minded and like to show our heritage to others and what I am doing is a beginning of something successful.

Actually she started her job while distributing her name and numbers to most of the tourists' agencies and hotels. She believes that working in tourism is not shameful or wrong as many Yemenis believe. "Our religious beliefs encourage us to know others' cultures and integrate with other cultures and people regardless of their religious beliefs or colors so from this point I believe strongly that presenting my country's heritage is a service.

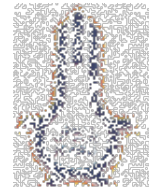
The difficulties that female tourists' guides face from their society make such a job difficult for them to be employed in tourism. In addition, recently the Ministry of Tourism established the national institute for hostelry. "Now there are 17 female tourists' guides as the first branch will graduate from the National Institute. However, Doa'a is considered the first female guide in Yemen", Fatima al-Horibi, the chief manager for tourism in the Ministry of Tourism explained.



In a jewelry shop with a tourist wearing a Yemeni vial.

In a tour with Doa'a around the old Sana'a, she let the tourists and especially the female ones practice traditional customs.

In the early morning about eight a.m, Doa'a and the female tourists go to take the Turkish stream bath in Al-Abar Turkish bath. There, the tourists for the first time practice the Yemeni women's traditions. Actually women use small soft textile for



cleaning the body which is called Al-Kais and Al-Lifah. Then the women put some traditional creams and materials in their body such as Hanaa , Gasil ,Trabah to soften their skin. “The Turkish bath is an important step in my program in which the female tourists be immersed in Yemeni women’s traditions and it will be and impossible with the male tourist guide, Doa’a expressed.

Taking the breakfast in a public restaurant or in traditional house in the old city is the second step in the program. After the break fast, the group spends the afternoon shopping and visiting the different traditional and heritage places in the old city such as the old souqs.

Doa’a plans for the tour according to the number of the group. Actually there are two specific programs: one is for the fifteen numbers or less which the tourists enjoy a Yemeni day in the old city and practice most the daily traditional Yemeni lifestyle while the other program is for 20 people or more which called “the wedding program”.

This program gives a chance for tourists to imagine themselves as Yemeni grooms and brides while ddressing in the Yemeni traditional wedding clothes and practice certain heritage rites such as putting Hana and Nagish for the brides and wearing the Jambia and chewing qat in the after noon period for the male tourists.



Old markets in old city of Sana’a, trying out Yemeni food.

Lunch time is a special step in the program. Actually Doa’a has a very good network. She has friends and people who are professional in specific traditional things; some are specialized in cooking Yemeni traditional food, while some are talented in making Hana and Nagesh. “ I prepare for the tour three days before. I contact all the people who are participating in the tour to be ready. Then when the tour starts, I visit each traditional place with every thing is ready starting from the traditional Turkish steam bath till the last moment of the gathering.” Doa’a mentioned. During the evening, the program is concluded with the distribution of gifts for the tourists. “I do this with all the groups because I want the tourists to remember this exciting event”, she concluded.

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