

Useful Information

Visum

A visa is required for entry into the country; application to the Yemeni consulate can be made at the earliest two months, at the latest one month before the start of your journey. Details of necessary documents can be found at:

- UK: <http://www.yemenembassy.org.uk/>
- USA: <http://www.yemenembassy.org>
- Canada: <http://yemenembassy.ca/>

Travel

A number of airlines fly to Sana'a International or Aden airports, mostly with a stopover, sometimes in combination with an overnight stay.

The following airlines fly to Sana'a:

Yemenia from Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome
Lufthansa from Frankfurt
Royal Jordanian via Amman
Turkish Airlines via Istanbul
Egypt Air via Cairo
Emirates via Dubai
Gulf Air via Bahrain & Abu Dhabi

You will find the best connections through the internet.

Currently, only Yemenia (from Sana'a) and Royal Jordanian fly to Aden airport, which is undergoing extension. Both airports are close to the towns. We will collect you from the airport and take you back there for departure. Almost all European flights arrive and depart at night or very early in the morning. Please let us know the exact details of your flights, with the flight numbers.

Health

Vaccinations are not compulsory, but prophylactic measures against malaria, hepatitis and tetanus are recommended. The altitudes of over 2,000 metres in Sana'a and up to 3,000 metres in the mountains, together with the extreme temperature variations of up to 20°C, require a healthy constitution. Besides your personal medication, sanitary products and the standard sticking-plaster, bandages and disinfectant, your first-aid kit should include the following medication: antibiotics, eye drops, drops or tablets in case of diarrhoea, constipation or influenza, antiseptic ointment, sun cream (at least factor 12), insect repellent and electrolytes. There are well-equipped hospitals in Sana'a and elsewhere.

Climate

The climate is as varied as the geology. In the mountains (altitudes of 2,000-2,600 m) the climate is temperate all year round, with average daytime temperatures of around 20°C, though during the winter months it can go down as low as 1°C at night. Nights in the desert are cold, so you will need warm clothes and a sleeping-bag. In April/May and July to September, it often rains every day in the highlands, though generally only briefly. In the coastal regions on the Red Sea (Tihama) and the Arabian Sea, the climate is hot and humid, with temperatures of 28°C in winter and 36-38°C in summer. The best time to travel is between October and March, when the daytime temperatures in the highlands are around 25°C, and 5-10°C at night. Travel in the highlands can also be recommended in the summer months. Occasionally, strong winds may fill the air with sand, but mostly the colours are bright and the views wonderfully clear. Between June and October, you can experience the "green Yemen" in the north and west of the country.

Safety

Abductions of tourists were due to problems of domestic policy, and always ended after a few days with no danger to the captives. Basically, Yemen is a safe country to travel in. In Islamic countries, theft is a serious crime and is



severely punished. Tourists are very welcome, and the Yemeni people are hospitable to foreigners and eager to enter into conversation – though this is confined mainly to sign language, since a common language is hard to find. We assume that you wish to find out more about Yemen and its people, and we will provide you with opportunities to make personal contact. Alkhadher Mhosen Ali Alsharafi has over fifteen years' experience in the Yemeni tourist business, and the safety of our guests is his highest priority. Please understand if we occasionally have to change the itinerary as a precautionary measure; in every case we will do our very best to ensure that our guests will enjoy the promised route.



Yemen - Islam - Arabien

Yemen has its roots in Islam and in the Bedouin traditions. This is precisely what makes us regard it with a mixture of fascination and reserve. Nowhere else can we see the traditions of the Arabian desert-dwellers and Islam practised as a religion of the people so authentically as in Arabia Felix. Islam shapes not only the religious rites and the holidays, but also largely the everyday life of the close-knit families, their eating habits, hygiene, dress codes and interpersonal contacts.

Holydays

Id al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)
International Workers' Day: 1 May
Id al-Hadj (Kabir)
New Year
Birthday of the Prophet
Revolution day: 26 September
National holiday: 14 November

Working Hours

Government offices are open daily 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Friday is a holiday. Private institutions and offices are open daily except Friday 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Shops and markets stay open until late evening.

Food

Pork, alcohol and drugs (except qat and cigarettes) are considered "haram" – forbidden by religion, and are therefore unobtainable. The cuisine is simple – meat soup, rice, vegetables, boiled and fried meat, and fresh fish, always with delicious newly-baked pita bread. The national dish of the Yemeni is "salta", highly-spiced stew, containing chicken or lamb with lentils, chickpeas, beans and coriander. This is served on a bed of rice. Egyptian dishes such as "foul" (fava bean stew). Drinks available are spring water (in plastic bottles), juice, lemonade, Pepsi, Cola and non-alcoholic beer. Spiced and sweetened black tea (usually with "nana" - mint) and qishr (an infusion of coffee husks and ground ginger) are on offer everywhere at any time. During the month's fast of Ramadan, when eating and drinking are not allowed between sunrise and sunset, no food is served in restaurants (except in international hotels). One either joins in the fast or buys provisions for the day. Copious feasting goes on after sunset.

Dress

There are no specific dress requirements for visitors, but certain norms should be respected. Transparent or tight-fitting clothing is regarded as offensive and should be avoided. For women and girls, long-sleeved, neck-to-ankle garments are recommended – ideally, wide cotton trousers and shirts. In Islam, women's hair must be covered, and it is a good idea to observe this in non-tourist regions. Men have a wider choice, though knees and elbows should be covered. On bathing beaches it is best to avoid bikinis. Non-Muslims are permitted to enter some mosques, for a small charge; here, of course, the dress requirements must be strictly observed. For walking tours in the mountains and the wadis, you will need stout shoes and head-covering. Since it is cold at night in the mountains and in the desert, especially in winter, you should bring warm clothing.

Currency

Local currency is the Yemeni rial. At present, you can buy rials at an exchange rate of approximately: 1GBP = 365 YER; 1 USD = 195.8 YER; 1 CAD = 173 YER. The best place to buy in Sana'a is with professional money-changers (in the souq); in banks and hotels, the rate is less good, and itinerant traders should be avoided. Currency should be exchanged in the country itself; it is acceptable to take cash, preferably euros or dollars. A better rate will be given for notes of larger denominations; smaller notes are recommended for tips in hotels. Credit cards will be accepted only in the large international hotels. In bigger towns there are cash machines which will accept credit cards.

Accommodation

A funduq is any traditional lodging-house with shared rooms, mattress dormitories and simple sanitation. Some places have hotels with twin rooms and bathroom, but European standards cannot be applied here, except in the international luxury hotels in Sana'a. The hotels in the old quarter of Sana'a have a wonderful atmosphere and clean twin rooms, but not always with en suite bathroom. On walking tours or beaches where neither funduq nor hotel is available, we will sleep in single tents. We supply tents,

mattresses and blankets; you should bring a light sleeping-bag and possibly a sheet.

Tipping and presents

It is customary to tip the driver/guide (about 10% of the charge for the round trip per person). It is not a good idea to give money to children in the villages, since this encourages them to beg. Sweets or ball-point pens (qalam) are welcome, and sometimes the children will be happy to pose for photos (sura). Girls will occasionally be unwilling, since it is not generally permitted to photograph women. Almost all the children are eager for contact, and will try out their rudimentary knowledge of English.

Voltage

In Yemen there is generally 220V AC, but fluctuations and power failures are possible. You will need a set of adapters, since outside Sana'a there is a wide variety of electrical sockets.

Time Zone

GMT + 3 hours

Photographs

You can download your digital photos and check your e-mails in internet cafés in the larger towns. This will give you the opportunity of entering into conversation with computer-literate Yemenis. If you wish to photograph people, always ask their permission first. Boys and men are usually keen to be photographed (sura! sura!); girls sometimes run away, and women often refuse, for traditional reasons. It is forbidden to photograph military institutions and airports.

Telephone

The country dialling code is **+967**. European standard tri-band mobile phones work perfectly in Yemen. Yemeni standard is GSM 900. Please remember, however, that large areas of Yemen (deserts, mountains, and other areas such as the Wadi Massilah) do not have the necessary masts, and you may be out of reach for days on end. In the larger towns there are private telephone offices from which you can call abroad fairly cheaply.

Souvenirs and presents

Yemen has an unbroken tradition of arts and crafts, and the range of high-quality goods and souvenirs is correspondingly large. Especially fine craft products are jewellery (coral, silver), metalwork (curved daggers with belts), woven and leather goods, ceramics and objects made of palm-leaves. These products are for sale in souqs, at weekly markets and sometimes in the street. Other popular gifts are spices (the souq in Sana'a offers a vast range), beauty products such as henna, oriental perfumes and subtle pomades, and incense and myrrh with containers. In places with a lot of tourists, articles imported from India or China are on sale; these may be of good quality, but are not authentic.

