

Yemen – Ancient Land of Sheba

Tour Code YM

A rich and varied insight into the culture, history and scenic beauty of Yemen. Known to the Romans as Arabia Felix (Fortunate Arabia), Yemen is the most fertile region of the Arabian Peninsula and this ancient land of the Queen of Sheba lay on the great trade routes from the East and grew wealthy trading frankincense and myrrh. Yemen today remains one of the world's most mysterious places and the tour concentrates on its varying architectural, cultural and scenic wonders. From the unique stone-tower houses of Sana'a, the hilltop mountain villages of the Haraz range, the mud brick architecture of the Hadhramaut and the colour of the Red Sea fishing ports, Yemen never fails to awe inspire even the most seasoned traveller, past and present



Mud Skyscrapers, Shibam
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ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Sana'a

Morning flight with Turkish Airlines via Istanbul to Sana'a, arriving early the next morning. Three nights at the Mercure hotel (B,D)

Day 2 In Sana'a

Early morning arrival and transfer to our hotel. In the afternoon we have an orientation tour by foot through the capital's enchanting old city medina. The medieval stone tower-houses are an architectural gem, and the smells and sounds of the old souk recount a biblical scene. Welcome dinner in a traditional restaurant (B,D)

Day 3 In Sana'a old city and Dar Al Hajjar

We start the morning at the National Museum housing a wealth of Yemen's treasures before walking the short distance into the capital's walled old city. A walking tour reveals the fabulous architectural treasures found within it from tower houses and mosques to khans, caravanserais and hidden gardens. This afternoon we visit the wonderful Dar Al Hajjar at Wadi Dahr; the towering old palace of Imam Yahya, built on an isolated rock, with spectacular views across the plateau. Dinner at a traditional restaurant (B,D)

Day 4 Visit Thulla and Kawkaban. Drive to Al Mahweet

We continue to the village of ancient Thulla, an excellent example of Yemeni architecture in rock and stone. We have a sumptuous home-cooked lunch in a typical Yemeni *funduq* in Shibam and then drive up a spectacular approach to the dramatic cliff-top town of Kawkaban with far-reaching views across the plains. We continue to the mountain village of Al Mahweet for an overnight stay (B,L,D)

Day 5 In Al Mahweet. Drive to Sana'a

An early start on foot allows us to enjoy a wonderful walk following the terraced hillsides with dramatic views across the Haraz mountains. We will stop at one of the villages to get a better insight into the villagers way of life in this isolated but beautiful region of Yemen. In the afternoon we return to Sana'a for an overnight stay (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Manahka. Drive to Hodeidah

We leave the capital and drive south winding steeply through the hills and valleys until we reach the hilltop town of Manahka. The whole Haraz area is a beautiful example of rural Yemeni terrace culture. We walk to the nearby-fortified village of Al Hajjarah, its tightly packed houses literally clinging to the rock. Later we descend through the winding valley of the Harz down to the Red Sea coast at Hodeidah, Yemen's main fish port and capital of the coastal Tihama region. Overnight at the Taj Awsan hotel with dinner (B,D)

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Day 7 Visit Zabid and Mokka. Drive to Taiz

We pause at the colourful fish market at Hodeidah port this morning, before visiting Zabid, an important centre for Islamic teaching. We visit some of its remarkably preserved old houses. We also stop at Mokka, an old coffee port that grew in importance during the 17th century. Since Aden became the main port and other countries began to grow coffee, Mokka fell into decline and is now a bleak reminder of its former glory. Climbing inland to the mountain province of Taiz, an important trade centre in medieval times. Two nights at the Sofitel hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 8 Taiz old city tour. Visit Jibla and Al Janad

This morning we visit the old walled quarter of Taiz, including the 13th century Al Ashrafiya mosque and the former Palace of Imam Ahmed, now housing an impressive museum crammed with memorabilia. In the afternoon we visit Al Janad, the site of Yemen's oldest mosque and the mountain village of Jibla with its narrow streets and busy souk. We return to Taiz in the late afternoon (B,D)

Day 9 Drive to Aden

We drive to Aden this morning, an important trading port for many centuries, linking Europe with the East. This afternoon we visit the Aldarus Mosque, originally built in the 14th century, and the Cisterns of Tawila. Overnight at the Mercure hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 10 Fly to Al Mukulla

We fly east to the coast port on the Indian ocean, Al Mukulla, and visit its old town with its mixed architectural styles of Yemeni, Arab and Indian. Overnight at the Holiday Inn with dinner (B,D)

Day 11 Drive via Wadi Do'an to the Hadhramaut Valley. Visit Shibam

Today's drive is one of Yemen's most scenic, through valleys lined with date palms and villages of centuries-old mud brick adobe architecture that was the original trading route from the coast to the Hadhramaut. We visit the UNESCO World Heritage listed city of Shibam and visit the famous 300 year old mud skyscrapers known as the 'Manhattan of the Desert'. Two nights stay at the Al Howta Hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 12 Visit Seiyun and Tarim

Seiyun is a fascinating place with stunning mud brick architecture, old mosques and a thriving souk area. We visit the former Sultan's Palace with its excellent museum. In the afternoon we visit Tarim, the spiritual centre of the south. Over three hundred mosques and many libraries of great importance were here. Surrounding the Muhdar Mosque are the great houses of wealthy traders of the last century who made their fortunes in Indonesia (B,D)

Day 13 Fly Sana'a

This morning we fly to Sana'a and transfer to the Mercure hotel. The afternoon is left free perhaps to re-visit the old city souks for some final souvenir shopping. Farewell dinner of traditional Yemeni cuisine (B,D)

Day 14 Fly London

Early hours transfer to Sana'a international airport for the Turkish Airlines flight via Istanbul, arriving at Heathrow Terminal 3 in the mid morning.

EXTENSION OPTION – Four nights on **Socotra Island** (Further details on request)

Cost £2195.00 per person in twin room (excludes international flight) Single supplement £250.00



Yemeni girl wearing traditional shawl
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Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ Specialist Yemeni guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ All transportation - private a/c minibus in Sana'a and Toyota Land Cruisers outside Sana'a
- ▶ Two internal Yemenia Airways flights
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Quality four star hotels on half board basis (best available in Hodeidah and Mahweet)
- ▶ All airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities
- ▶ Bottled water daily

Not included – travel insurance, visa fees, drinks, lunches guide and driver gratuities, Turkish Airlines international flight

For flight options & prices please check Opodo →

