

Happy Yemen

Generous hospitality and beautiful places

>Sana'a - Khalid Adhababi

Tourism in Yemen is a promising sector. This country profits from a wide range of original tourist products, meeting the needs for all kinds of tourists - Arabs and foreigners – who visit this country throughout the year. They are found walking in the cities, deserts and mountains and are received with a smile by the Yemenis, who are generous, pleasant people and make them feel at home.

Indeed, Yemen is the cradle of civilization and has many tourist attractions, historical sites, cultural heritage and beautiful nature. It has the potential to become a focal point

for Arab and international tourism. God endowed this country with diverse geographical features, offering visitors a combination of plains, mountains, fertile

valleys, beaches and deserts. The climate is varied and differs in each region. This country is also proud of its people and their unique cultural heritage and authentic



New building, old style

مباني حديثة وأسلوب عريق



Distinct Yemeni architecture

معمار يمني متميز



A castle

قلعة



Shibam



Sana'a

صنعاء

ancient civilization. It is easily accessible by land, sea and air.

The Yemeni Minister of Tourism, Mr. Nabil Al-Fakih, is always optimistic, affirming that tourism in Yemen will grow and prosper in future. This is a realistic assessment. Although the Ministry of Tourism does not have a long history it is implementing policies and plans which have developed the sector in a short time. Industry professionals share his optimism and are confident that investment in tourism will grow.

The third five-year plan makes provision for the development of coastal areas, the preparation of marketing plans intended for the export market and activating a number of festivals in many cities. The major tourist festivals include the Sana'a summer festival which began two years ago and festivals in Ibb, Mukalla, Assad Al-Kamel and Dhamar. All these festivals take place during August and July. The plan also includes the development of internal tourism, Pan-Arab tourism, and the publication and distribution of booklets to promote different aspects of Yemeni tourism, especially historical and cultural tourism.

Yemen has an ancient civilization dating back 3000 years. It has played an important part in the commercial and economic development of antiquity, being at the cross roads of exchanges between East and West. The archaeological discoveries revealed that



Al-Qahira Castle

قلعة القاهرة

many old trade routes, including incense and spice routes traversed important historical areas of Yemen: Al Mohrah; Hadramaout, Shabwa, and Mareb. The routes continued on to Nejd, Hedjaz and Sham, then into Europe. There is evidence of the development of economic exchanges between East and West through a country named "Happy Yemen".

Consequently, a diversified craft industry flourished in Yemen producing daggers, swords, gold and silver articles, fabrics, and pottery. Yemen was the principal exporter of

these products to neighbouring countries and abroad.

Between Shabwa and Al-Jawf, the visitor discovers different aspects of tourism. The inhabitants of these cities are very kind and generous, in particular when you mix with them and talk to them. When visiting these places you will be enchanted by their traditions, traditional costumes and wedding ceremonies. The locals welcome the tourists and make them feel part of the family.

One can then move towards the east of the ▶

happy country, towards Mareb, the land of Sheba. Who has not heard or read about the civilization of Sheba, referred to in the Koran and Mareb, the land of two paradises and of Belquess. This historical city has many relics from ancient times including the Belquess throne. The remains of the ancient Mareb Dam are also visible. If you are interested in cultural tourism, you

will find that Yemen has plenty to offer. It is an open air museum, with a rich folklore and varied dances. Architecture also varies from one city to another, combining authenticity and modernity. One discovers more than 400 architectural styles and decorations using wood, gypsum, stones and pottery. Yemeni constructions were built by imitating the surrounding nature.

The building industry uses clay, stones and straw to adapt to the environment.

Visit Sana'a the capital to discover the wonders of a unique, local authentic architecture with beautiful colours, the creation of skilful masons. The town of Ibb, is another 'must see' where the splendour of nature is entangled with the beauty of the buildings. In Hodidah city the local inhabitants built their houses with straw. In Zabid, the city of religious science and scholars, the houses were built with pure clay. Shibam, in Hadramaout, also has clay houses and is famous for its mud brick architecture. This harmony and diversity delights visitors travelling between the villages and towns of the beautiful country. There are many souks (markets) some named after the day on which they are held like Souk As-Sabt (Saturday), Souk Al Ahad (Sunday) and Souk Al Khamiss (Thursday). There is a permanent souk in the old part of the city, behind the famous Gate of Yemen, which is always frequented by foreigners. This souk is divided into various sections for different products: dry grapes with their exquisite taste; pistachio, dates and confectioneries. There is also a section for fabrics and clothes, belts, daggers, silver articles, Yemeni agate (aqiq) famous since ancient times and ironwork and other metals.

Yemen is also characterized by gigantic mountains, in particular the Mount of the Prophet Shouaib, Mount Sabr, the mountains of Hejja, Atamah, Rimah, Mahwit, Shehara, and Aryan; some reaching 3600m and waiting for climbers. For those who are interested in desert tourism Yemen has a vast desert extending between Mareb, Shabwa and Hadramaout, known locally as "Ramlat Al-Sabatain". The local bedu (nomads) are hospitable and friendly and will invite tourists to spend time with them in their tents.

There are also plenty of beaches and a coast extending 2500 km on the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, rich in rare species of fish, shells and sea weed.

There are more than 150 islands for tourism, especially the island of Socotra, one of world's greatest nature reserves with more than 750 varieties of plants including ▶



Shehara

شهارا



Yemeni architecture well rooted in history

المعمار اليمني عريق الجذور

the tree known locally as the “Dam Al Akhawayn” (Blood of the Two Brothers). More than 113 varieties of birds are found on the island. The unique maritime environment is also home to tortoises. The island is renowned for its corals and pearls. Similarly, medical tourism started to develop and thrive during the last few years because Yemen has several hot thermal springs. The main areas for medical tourism are the town of Damat in the province of Adhalea, Hammam Ali and Hammam As-Sakhna. For religious tourism Yemen is the land of mosques, holy mausoleums and places of worship. The most well known are Sana’a’s grand mosque, the mosque of Mouad Ben Jabal in Alganad, Zabid mosque and Tarim mosque. Smaller mosques and religious schools are found throughout the country.

The government and tourist sector is ensuring the development of quality tourism and focusing on the hotel and service sectors. Tourism training is another priority. There are departments of tourism and hotel



Dar Al-Hajjar

دار الحجر

management in the universities of Taiz and Ibb, the National Institute of Hotel and Tourism in Sana’a and the Hotel Institute in Aden. Similar institutes will be opened in other cities. Yemen can cater to tourists with differing

tastes and requirements. It has a wealth of cultural richness and the refrain extended to guests wherever and whenever they travel is always welcome, welcome, and welcome – and it is from the heart. ■



Aden

عدن