



# YEMEN

## THE LAND OF FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH

November 12 - November 20, 2024

Led by Anthropologist and Ethnographer Elena Dak

*Arabia Felix was the name bestowed on the region by the Romans. It merited its name due to its fertile lands, distinguishing it from the barren north, the so-called Arabia Deserta. This enabled the people to prosper and grow into a dominant force controlling trade between the east and west. Yemen has been at the Middle East, Asia, and Africa crossroads for thousands of years thanks to its position on the spice routes. Living at the height of the area's dominance were the Sabaeans, subjects of the Kingdom of Sheba. Little remains of this ancient civilization, but traces of these enterprising people and their culture can be seen in the descendants who populate this rich historical land. We cannot visit everything in Yemen those days due to unrest in many parts, but we are lucky to be able to explore the two safest parts: in/around Sana'a and the island of Socotra, a UNESCO World Heritage Natural site. Untouched and unique in its beauty, it is also home to an ancient culture of intact and hospitable people.*

**Ihab Zaki**  
Managing Director

**Tuesday, November 12**

**Arrive in Cairo (EGYPT)**



Upon arrival in Cairo (depending on your arrival time), meet and transfer to *Hotel* for check-in, a free day at leisure, and overnight at the Hotel.

*Note: Standard check in time is 3:00 pm. if you arrive on November 11 or early morning of November 12; an extra hotel night needs to be booked.*

**Wednesday, November 13**

**Cairo**



Begin the day with a visit to the **National Museum of Egyptian Civilization**, the first museum in the Arab world that focuses on the ancient Egyptian civilization across the times from pre-historical to Ancient Egyptian periods, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, and Contemporary modern times. Enjoy lunch, and in the afternoon, head for a walk in the medieval labyrinth alleyways of **Khan El Khalili Bazaar** and visit **El Muizz Street** displays the most excellent density of significant Islamic monuments anywhere in the world to this day. It is a living symbol of the city's medieval glory and has become the heart of Egypt's culture. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L)**

**Thursday, November 14**

**Cairo - Seiyun (YEMEN)**

Transfer in the early morning to the airport for our flight to **Seiyun**, the town at the edge of the magnificent table mountains. Upon arrival, meet and transfer to *Hawta Palace Hotel* for check-in, free afternoon at leisure, and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,D)**

**Friday, November 15**

**Hawta (Hood, Tarim & Aynat)**



Enjoy breakfast at the Hotel, and then begin the morning with a visit to **the Sultan Palace museum**, built of clay and brick and decorated with gypsum. Initially, it was a fort, and then after many changes, it became the official

residence of Sultan Al Kathiri. The palace dates back in its present state to the late 20s of this century. Part of it is now used as an archeological museum of traditions and customs and a public library. Drive and visit **Tarim town**, a historical Sufi town built from Mud and home to many noble families, including Al Kaf and Bin Yahya. The town of Tarim is widely recognized as a hub of religion, culture, and science, particularly an important center for theological and juridical studies. You can visit the **Tarim tiny market** and **Al-Mihdar mosque** and take some photos. The mosque is the centerpiece of the historic town and its prominent white minaret, the narrow, pointed tower from which Muslims are called to prayer, rises to a height of over 150 feet, making it the tallest building throughout Tarim and the tallest minaret in all of Yemen.

Enjoy lunch in the city, then continue the drive to **Hood Prophet Shrine** for a visit and take some photos. The shrine is believed to be the burial place of the Prophet Hud, an ancient Arab prophet said to be a descendant of Prophet Noah. The Holy Quran tells the story of the Prophet Hud, who traveled to Yemen to preach to the famously large and strong Aad tribe about the one true God. Worshippers of pre-Islamic idols, the tribe ridiculed the Prophet Hud, accusing him of madness.

According to the story, in punishment for their ridicule, God sent a prolonged drought followed by eight days and seven nights of terrible winds that all but exterminated the entire tribe, sparing only the lives of the faithful few who had followed the preaching of the Prophet.

Then on our way back to **Hawta**, we will stop at one of the most beautiful Historical Sufi Shrines in the Aynat area for a visit, then head back to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, November 16

Hawta - Shibam - Wadi Doa'n



Enjoy breakfast and then begin the day with a drive to visit the most beautiful town, the Manhattan of Arabia Shibam **Hadramout**, an awe-inspiring town of ancient skyscrapers soaring out of the desert landscape and has been declared a protected world monument by UNESCO. Then, drive towards **Wadi Doa'n** and top at one of the picturesque villages in the valley, **Al-Hajjrain**, Sif towns, then continue to **Haid Al-Jizil**, perched on a giant rock, and overlooks a long, primarily deserted valley in the Yemeni district of Dawan in Hadhramaut province. After the visit, transfer to *Haid Al-Jizil Hotel* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, November 17

Wadi Do'an



After breakfast, drive for some time, and then we will start an easy, wonderful trek (one hour) from the top of the mountain down to **Hawfah village** in Wadi Do'an. Enjoy a beautiful panorama view of the Wadi, then drive to visit **Buqshan village** (Colored Palaces), where we can see the palaces and get a glimpse into what aristocratic life among wealthy Hadhrami families was like. The palaces feature colorful outer walls, and some rooms have colorful and intricate ceiling paintings. Drive to another beautiful area in Wadi Doa'n, **the Budha area**. En route, stop at **Qarn Majed village** & other villages for some photos. Continue the drive to the **Budha area**, and head to **Al-Khuraiba town** stop to take some photos of the Palace of O.B.L, his father's house, before driving back to **Haid Al-Jizil** to enjoy the Sunset. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, November 18

Wadi Doa'n - Shibam - Seiyun



Begin the day with a drive back to **Seiyun**, stopping en route at some of the villages in Wadi Do'an for some photos and onward to Shibam. Upon arrival in **Hawta town**, transfer to *Hawta Palace Hotel* for check-in and rest. In the late afternoon, drive to Shibam Hadramout to enjoy the sunset and take photos. In the evening, head to do the PCR test and then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, November 19

Seiyun - Cairo



In the morning, transfer to the airport for our flight to Cairo, and upon arrival, meet and transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in; the rest of the day is free at leisure and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B)**

Wednesday, November 20

Cairo - USA



Transfer to the airport in the early morning for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

*"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".*

**Trip Remark:**

Due to the unique nature of this tour, and as we want to keep our exploratory tour to Yemen intimate and personalized, we will only operate with a maximum of 8 participants. Given that very few companies nowadays promote Yemen, we must advise you that it is on the State Department's list of countries with warnings for tourists.

Travelers should be prepared for high altitudes (sometimes over 7,000 feet), some long though spectacular drives, and early morning starts. The day-by-day itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions. The sequential order of the day-by-day itineraries may also change to avoid traffic congestion.

Visa processing takes between 15 - 21 business days. Therefore, we must start around one month before arrival to process all Visas. Once Visa is issued, we will send you a scanned copy of the Visa to use for the airport and boarding your flights. ***No Israeli Stamp is allowed on your passport in order to obtain the Visa.***



## Tour Cost (Land Only - Cairo / Seiyun / Cairo): \$7,495.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

## Single Supplement: \$895.00

Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 8 participants

**Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: \*\***

**About your Lecturer, Elena Dak,** was born in Venice in 1970 and has been working for more than 20 years for Italian tour companies leading trips in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Elena is one of the most passionate tour leaders and loves her work, loves the subject matter, and thrives when she feels in charge of educating a group and inspiring them about the destinations they visit. She is deeply interested in nomadic peoples. She is a graduate of the University of Ca' Foscari in Venice in Conservation of Cultural Heritage with Ethnographic Orientation and she had a three year M.A. from Bicocca University in Milan in Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. She has written five books: "La Carovana del Sale"

(The Salt Caravan)(Corbaccio editor, 2007), "Io Cammino con i Nomadi" (I walk with Nomads) (Corbaccio editor 2016), "Ancora in Cammino" (Still Walking) (Crowdbooks editor 2020) and her first novel Brina e il Buio ( Mazzanti publisher, 2023). Two of her books have been chosen for a course in Modern and Contemporary Studies at Cà Foscari University. She has given lectures in various Italian Universities, and she currently contributes articles to Africa Magazine and Erodoto108 Magazine. She held a Ted Talk in Milan in October 2018, and her performance was very well received by her audience. Our first tour using Elena's expertise was our Chad program in November 2018 and our travelers were very happy to have her on board and loved her and her contagious charisma and enthusiasm, as well as her excellent abilities as a tour manager and overseer of the operation.



### Tour Includes:

- Airport/hotel/airport transfers in Cairo.
- One-day tour in Cairo with an overnight at 4\* Hotel on bed and breakfast basis.
- Arrival/departure transfers & AC 4x4 vehicles throughout the tour in Yemen.
- 2 nights' accommodation in Cairo based on 4\* hotel (pre and post Yemen).
- Cairo / Seiyun / Cairo flights.
- 5 nights' accommodation at best available hotels in Yemen.
- English-speaking guide throughout the tour.
- All meals as per itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- All activities described in the tour and entrance fees to all sites mentioned unless listed as optional.
- Visa approval letter and visa for Yemen.
- Unlimited bottled water per person in Yemen.
- Escort of lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

### Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA / Cairo / USA.
- Cairo Visa (obtainable upon arrival for \$30.00 per entry).
- Activities and sites not described in the itinerary.
- Drinks during meals (soft or with alcohol) or meals not listed in the itinerary.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Items of a personal nature (laundry, emails, excess luggage charges, etc.)
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or early arrival.
- Travel protection insurance (Highly recommended).

### Trip Grade:

**II Active** – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides.

### Lodging Level:

**\*\* Delightful:** Comfortable yet on the Spartan side, usually small but generally with private facilities. Some such lodges and motel-style need repairs, added cleaning, and improvements but they are suitable for one-night stays even if they lack western style amenities. (2 or 3 stars)

