

Yemen is located in the south western part of Asia and in the south of Arabian peninsula.



It is bounded on the north by Saudi Arabia, on the south by the Arab Sea and Aden Gulf, on the east by the Oman and on the west by the Red Sea.



The country is covered in ancient skyscrapers - eight-storey buildings made from stone and mud - where people live above their animals, and the views are spectacular. You'll also see mind-blowing mosques, sultans' palaces and villages perched on top of remote mountains.

As one travels through the regions of Yemen, it is noticeable for the diversity of its landscape, architecture and vegetation. It is like moving from one country to another country to another



Practices specific to culture

Qat chewing

Qat leaves contain cathinone, an active brain stimulant that is similar in structure and pharmacological activity to amphetamine. Indeed some countries have it under their controlled substances list, others like the UK have not yet attempted to control the use of Qat, and its use is quite common amongst those from the Somalian and Yemeni communities. Within the Yemeni community in Sandwell Qat chewing tends to be practised by men during cultural and social gatherings—sometimes each weekend!



Smoking the hookah

In a hookah pipe (also known as a sheesha or water pipe), the tobacco is heated by coals and the resulting smoke passes through tubes and water so that it cools down by the time the person inhales. The tobacco mixture used in the pipes is usually 30 percent tobacco and 70 percent fruit flavourings. Smoking a hookah pipe is also deemed a social and cultural activity that tends to be practised by men within the Yemeni community in Sandwell.



The Yemeni Community Association in Sandwell Ltd



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Insight into the Yemeni community in Sandwell





The settlement of families in the UK

The Yemeni community in Britain, although less well-known than the other ethnic groups, is one of the longest established of the Black and Asian communities, with some of the first immigrants arriving before the First World War. The links with the UK were established through the use of Aden as a port by the British Merchant Navy and through which many Yemenis joined the Navy, giving them a gateway to the UK.

After the Second World War, large-scale migration resulted from the influx of Yemenis to assist the labour shortage needed to rebuild the country, and in particular they were attracted to the metal industries in the Black Country and towns and cities such as Birmingham, Sheffield and Cardiff. The Yemeni community in Sandwell established itself during the late 1950s and early 1960s, part of the large influx of immigrants that arrived in the UK for work purposes.

Initially, the community was composed of largely single males working in factories or similar occupations, and living in the UK without their families. Over the next two decades, the community faced a natural expansion as families joined their men folk.

Where you will find the Yemeni community concentrated in Sandwell

There are around 200 Yemeni families within the borough of Sandwell, most of whom are members of the YCA. The majority of Yemeni families will be found in **West Bromwich** (mainly Greets Green NDfC area), this is closely followed by **Rowley Regis** (Whiteheath, Blackheath and Cradley Heath) and finally **Smethwick**.

Religious practices

The majority (if not all) of Yemenis in Sandwell follow the teachings of Islam. Islam is an Arabic word, which is derived from the word salam, meaning peace.

Muslims forms two distinctive groups, Sunni and Shi'a, with Yemeni Muslims in Sandwell classing themselves as belonging to the Sunni group.

The Principals of Islamic faith includes:

- The Five Pillars of Islam (five obligatory practices), which are:
 - 1) The Testimony of Faith, 2) Prayer 3) Giving Zakat (support of the needy) 4) Fasting the month of Ramadan 5) The pilgrimage to Makkah
- The Six Pillars of Faith, which are:
 - 1) Belief in God 2) Belief in the Angels 3) Belief in God's Revealed Books 4) Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of God 5) Belief in the Day of Judgment 6) Belief in Divine Predestination

Main Festivals

Muslims measure their months by the cycle of the moon (lunar month), so each year the timing of each festival varies accordingly. There are three main festivals celebrated by the Yemeni community in Sandwell:

Ramadan

Month long fast where able adults abstain from food, drink and smoking from dawn until dusk .

Eid-UI-Fitr

Marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan

Eid-UI-Adha

Language

The language spoken by the Yemeni community in Sandwell is Arabic. However there are various dialects of spoken Arabic, with the majority in Sandwell speaking the dialect of the south Yemen.

Relationships

In the Yemeni culture boyfriend and girlfriend relationships are not permitted.

Marriages occur via introductions, when the couple meet to get to know each other with a chaperone. In Islam marriage will not take place without the mutual consent of the couple.

Social etiquette

As Muslims, Yemenis do not consume any pork products or alcohol.

When entering a Yemeni household it is deemed good manners to take your shoes off in the hallway.

The burning of incense is a common practice in most Yemeni households

Physical contact with the opposite sex (unless permissible family members) is discourage. his may also include handshaking with some individuals.

