

## **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving: The Best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab**



### **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving Trip**

Group Leader: Tarek El-Kolalli (PADI OWSI)

#### **Package 1 (10 Days) (Platinum Package): The best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab: Blue Hole/ Thistlegorm/ Ras Muhammad/ Dahab/ Camel Dive/ Gabr el Bint Extravaganza (Up to 22 dives total) (8 diving days) (September 9<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Price: \$1,495.00**

Includes:

- Up to 12 dives in Ras Muhammad/Tiran/Sharm El Sheikh sites (Daily site selection depends on conditions) (Free Nitrox for certified Nitrox divers)
- Up to 3 dives Thistlegorm trip (2 Thistlegorm/1 Ras Muhammad or Sharm local depending on weather conditions) (Free Nitrox for certified Nitrox divers)
  - Breakfast/Lunch included on Thistlegorm trip
- Up to 5 guided shore dives in Dahab and Ras Abu Galum (Free Nitrox for certified Nitrox divers)
  - Dahab dives include the Blue Hole
  - Ras Abu Galum pristine remote site 1.5 hours north of the Blue Hole (hiking/camel ride)
    - Camel transport/hiking to Ras Abu Galum
    - Lunch in Ras Abu Galum
- Up to 2 boat dives (1 trip) in pristine and remote Gabr el Bint (Free Nitrox for certified Nitrox divers)

## **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving: The Best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab**

- 7 days/6 nights accommodations at Renaissance by Marriott Golden Beach Resort Sharm El Sheikh (Sept 9-15th)
  - Breakfast included
- 4 nights accommodations at Le Meridien Dahab Resort (Sept 15-19th)
  - Breakfast included
- Tanks/Weights
- Transport to/from Sharm El Sheikh airport (SSH)
- Transport to/from hotel to all daily dive sites
- Transport to/from hotel in Dahab
- Transport to/from Sharm El Sheikh to Dahab

### **Not Included:**

- Meals excluding breakfast in Sharm el Sheikh and Dahab
- Ras Muhammad National Park fees /Hyperbaric Chamber Fees of \$9 per day (Only on days going to Ras Muhammad) (Paid on date of boat trip)
- Gratuities (Group Leader/Boat Crews) (Recommended tips: 10-20% of trip price)
- Flights (US based may book flights to Cairo and continue to Sharm El Sheikh via Egypt Air (~ 6 direct flights daily from Cairo to SSH))
- Gear rental (Inquire directly for gear rental costs)
- PADI Continuing Education courses available: (Courses are provided by Group Leader and must be arranged at least 3 weeks prior to trip to ensure receipt of course materials) (Inquire directly for prices)
  - Enriched Air Nitrox Course
  - Advanced Open Water Course
    - Navigation
    - Deep
    - Wreck (Possible only if attending Platinum or Gold packages)
    - Drift
    - Peak Performance Buoyancy/Underwater Naturalist/ Night (Instructor choice dependent on schedule and class interest/availability)

# **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving: The Best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab**

## **Sample Itinerary**

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>: Arrival into Sharm el Sheikh Airport (SSH); Transport from the airport to Renaissance by Marriott Sharm El Sheikh

Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast at Renaissance; (May have hotel provide breakfast bags dependent on boat pick-up departure)

Dive 1: Checkout dive

Dives 2-3: Local dives

Sept 11<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast (same as above)

Dives 1-3: Ras Muhammad/Tiran/Sharm Local (Dependent on conditions)

Sept 12<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast (same as above)

Dives 1-3: Ras Muhammad/Tiran/Sharm Local (Dependent on conditions)

Sept 13<sup>th</sup>: Packed Breakfast: 4am departure

Dives 1-2: Thistlegorm Wreck

Dive 3: Ras Muhammad/Sharm Local (Dependent on conditions)

Sept 14<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast (same as above)

Dives 1-3: Ras Muhammad/Tiran/Sharm Local (Dependent on conditions)

Sept 15<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast

Departure from Sharm El- Sheikh between 12p-3pm (Dependent on last dive time on the 14<sup>th</sup>)

Group transport to Dahab, Le Meridien Hotel (~1.5-2 hour trip)

Sept 16<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast

Dives 1-2: Possible sites: The Islands, Canyon, Lighthouse, etc.

Sept 17<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast

Dive 1: The Blue Hole Bells

Camel transport from The Blue Hole to Ras Abu Galum (hike/ride 1.5 hours North)

Dives 2-3: Ras Abu Galum

Lunch

Camel ride/hike back to the Blue Hole

Transport back to Le Meridien Hotel

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Sept 18<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast

Dives 1-2: Boat dives at Gabr el Bint

Sept 19<sup>th</sup>: Breakfast

Checkout/ mid-day transport to Sharm El Sheikh Airport (SSH) (Flights should be booked for after 2pm to allow for proper time between last dive and flight)

**Note:** Itinerary above is a sample schedule. Actual dates for specific sites will vary based on dive and weather conditions of the day. Group Leader will coordinate schedule to minimize repeating the same sites and will prioritize the best sites in Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab.

### **Package 2 (8 Days) (Gold Package): The best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab: Blue Hole/ Thistlegorm/ Ras Muhammad/ Dahab/ Camel Dive (Up to 17 dives total) (6 diving days) (September 10<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>)**

**Price: \$1,250.00**

Sample Itinerary:

Same as above but 1 less day at Sharm and 1 less day at Dahab (Excludes boat dive at Gabr el Bint and 1 day of Sharm El Sheikh diving)

### **Package 3 (8 Days) (Silver Package): The best of Dahab and Sharm El Sheikh: Blue Hole/ Ras Muhammad/ Dahab/ Camel Dive (Up to 14 dives total) (5 diving days) (September 10<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>)**

**Price: \$1,099.00**

Sample Itinerary:

Same as Gold Package, but excludes Thistlegorm Wreck (Provides 1 day free from diving on day Thistlegorm Wreck is scheduled)

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## **FAQs:**

### **Is Dive Insurance required?**

- Yes, all attendees must have DAN insurance or an equivalent diving industry provider insurance policy. Sites such as Ras Abu Galum are remote so the support of DAN or an internationally recognized provider is critical in cases of emergency.

### **Are there any discounts available?**

- Group rates are available for groups of 6-9 and 10+ (Inquire directly if you have a group interested in attending)

### **What's the payment schedule?**

- 30% down payment required by June 1<sup>st</sup>
- 40% second payment required by July 1<sup>st</sup>
- Final payment required by July 8<sup>th</sup>
- Payments for PADI continuing education courses are due by August 1<sup>st</sup>

### **Is gratuity included in these rates?**

- No, gratuity is not included. The recommended gratuity is 10-20% based on your experience. Many within the dive industry rely on tips as a large part of their income. Please provide feedback during the trip if any portion does not meet your expectation to allow time to resolve your concern.
- You may pay the full gratuity to the Group Leader and request that it be dispersed to the various individuals (You should mention this at the beginning of your trip since we'll close-out tips with each location as we move from Sharm to Dahab)
- Typical recipients of gratuity include: Dive guides, Group Leader, Boat/shop personnel, Transport drivers
- Additional gratuity not mentioned or included above may be paid to hotel personnel based on your service (Eating, carrying bags, etc.)

### **I'm only Open Water certified. Can I join this trip?**

- Open Water certified divers should select the Silver package which excludes the Thistlegorm wreck; Thistlegorm wreck requires Advanced Open Water certification
- If you are not Nitrox certified, you may sign-up for the Enriched Air Nitrox course and take advantage of Free Nitrox throughout the trip and extend your bottom time (Inquire directly for price rate/schedule); Otherwise, you'll be required to use only air during the trip
- Platinum and Gold packages may be selected if the PADI Advanced Open Water course is selected during the trip

## **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving: The Best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab**

### **I haven't dived in over 6 months? Can I join this trip?**

- Yes, but you will be required to take the PADI Reactivate/Scuba Review course prior to the first dive or in conjunction with the checkout dive. (Cost: Scuba Skills portion: \$60 US; Online Scuba Reactivate knowledge review payable to PADI directly \$59.95)
- If you've signed up for the Advanced Open Water course, a scuba skills review will be provided for free during the checkout dive prior to beginning the Advanced Open Water course.

### **I have a child between 10-12 years old that I'd like to attend with me. Is this trip suitable for him/her?**

- Child must be certified as a PADI Jr. Open Water Diver or equivalent
- Must select the Silver package for the child
- Requires private guide for all dives due to depth limitations of 40 ft. (Cost \$50 per dive day)

### **Can I rent dive gear?**

- Yes, please advise in advance of your gear requirements and sizes. Please be aware that Egypt utilizes the European standards, so pressure gauges will be provided in Bar instead of the US standard of psi. Computers may be modified to either metric or imperial (Gear prices will be provided based upon request)

### **What is the water temperature and what wet suit do you recommend?**

- Water temperature ranges between 78 F to 82 F dependent on site
- Recommend 3mm or 5mm if you get easily cold

### **Is there any gear that is prohibited?**

- Gloves and dive knives are prohibited in the Red Sea; These are prohibited due to Natural park requirements and the desire to preserve the reefs and environment. Strict compliance to these guidelines will be enforced.

### **What things should I bring with me?**

- Dive gear (Everything with the exception of tanks, weights, gloves, and knives)
- Certification Card
- Passport
- Logbooks (These will be checked prior to diving to ensure you're diving within your experience and training)
- Required medication/necessities:
  - Sunscreen (Please select environmentally safe brands that do not impact the reefs)
  - Dramamine or motion sickness medication for boat trips
  - Toothpaste/toothbrush and toiletries
- A great attitude ready for fun!

## **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving: The Best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab**

**I am a technical diver and would like to enjoy the technical aspects of the Blue Hole such as the Arch. Is this a possibility on this trip?**

- Tech divers can join the group and enjoy all sites. An additional fee will be required to dive the Arch due to additional gear requirements and the requirement of a technical dive guide. (Rate will be provided based on inquiry)
- The rates above are based on recreational dive limits only with a maximum depth of 130' or Egyptian law, whichever is more conservative. Divers are expected to dive based on their training (Open Water should only go to 60', AOW 100', Deep Specialty can go to the 130' or Egyptian limits whichever is more conservative)

**Will there be an opportunity to enjoy the other sites available in Egypt during this trip?**

- Yes, add-ons for the following activities may be added to your trip at either the back-end or in lieu of any dive day. Prices are dependent on interest
  - Trips to the Pyramids/Sphinx in Cairo
  - Trips to the Citadel in Cairo
  - Trips to the Khan el Khalili Bazaar in Cairo
  - Bedouin dinner in the desert in Sharm or Dahab (Includes dinner, belly dancing/Nubian dancer show) (This can be added during an evening of a dive day)
  - Dune buggies in the desert
  - Visit to St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai (Sharm/Dahab)

**Do I need any adapters for my electronic equipment?**

- Egypt uses 220V for electrical equipment compared to the US standard of 110
- Many electronic devices may be able to be used on either frequency (Read your manual prior to plugging in)
- Sockets are Type C and F (round), so adapters are required for US based electronics (See picture below) (Adapters can be purchased at major US department stores such as Target and WalMart)



## **Return to Sharm- The Oasis of Red Sea Diving: The Best of Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab**

**I know Egypt is predominantly an Islamic country. Are there any dress code restrictions or cultural things I should be aware of?**

- While the predominant religion in Egypt is Islam (~90%), there is a large Coptic Christian population (~10%)
- Dress code is liberal in the Red Sea areas (You'll find the area very accommodating to US and European standards with large populations of European and multicultural visitors and expatriates)
- Cairo is the largest city in Africa and very multicultural. However, visitors are encouraged to dress modestly when attending certain areas such as the Citadel in Cairo (pants/long sleeves) since this includes a religious site

**What is the local language, currency and exchange rate?**

- Local language is Arabic; English, French, German, and Italian are widely spoken especially in the tourist areas
- The local currency is Egyptian Pound (EGP). Trip costs and gratuity are payable only in US \$. However local currency is encouraged for the purchase of minor items. (Vendors will gladly accept US \$ but you may receive a better price paying in the local currency)
- Exchange rate as of today's date (4/12/17) is ~\$1 US to 18 EGP. Exchange rates fluctuate daily, so you can monitor this online prior to departure for the latest rate.

**What are the passport or visa requirements?**

- Passports must be valid for travel at least 6 months prior to travel date (They cannot expire after that date)
- Visas may be purchased directly at Cairo International airport at any bank kiosk for a cost of ~\$25 US for US nationals. Visa costs may vary based on nationality. An electronic visa system is being implemented soon (May want to inquire prior to trip departure date on this availability)

**I'm a solo traveler. Can I join this group?**

- Yes, we'll partner you with another solo traveler of the same gender
- If you'd like single accommodations in your hotel room, then the single supplement to this trip is \$325 on the 10-day package and \$275 on the 8-day package

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