

# Ultimate Red Sea

## 10 nights - Egypt itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Marriott Resort Marina, Hurghada at 18:00
- **Disembarkation:** Marriott Resort Marina, Hurghada between 09:00 - 10:00

Transfers from and to Hurghada Airport (HRG) on embarkation and disembarkation days are included in the cruise price.

Transfer between Hurghada airport and the marina takes approximately 15 minutes.

Transfers to hotels and resorts outside of the local area can be arranged for an additional charge.

### Marine & Port Fees:

Governmental Reef Tax is 160 USD per person. These fees will be added to your invoice to be paid in advance.

### Minimum dive certification and experience:

Due to the exposed nature and possible strong currents, some elements of this itinerary are not suitable for inexperienced divers.

The minimum requirement for divers wishing to join this itinerary is **PADI Open Water certification**, or equivalent, with **at least 30 logged dives**.

*Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience recommendations, or who the crew feel have insufficient experience in certain conditions, may be denied participation in some or all dives.*

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: <https://masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions/>

## Itinerary details

### Number of scheduled dives: Up to 28

Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, this is only indicative, and not guaranteed. Various factors can hinder the vessel's ability to reach, or remain at a specific area and may therefore affect the number of dives possible.

**Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or fully understand English, please let us know before you arrive.**

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

**Day 1:** Embarkation at 18:00 followed by dinner and briefings. The boat will remain in the marina overnight enabling guests to relax, get to know each other, and set up equipment in preparation for diving the following day.

**Day 2:** For your first full day on board, we schedule 3 dives (a check dive, practice zodiac dive and night dive), close to the embarkation port.

**Day 3-9:** We will explore the reefs and wrecks around Abu Nuhas and the Strait of Tiran, including the world-famous SS Thistlegorm, plus the Safaga area and the Salem Express. We also spend a day each at the Brothers, Daedalus and Elphinstone areas, where we hope to see shark species such as oceanic whitetip or hammerheads, before heading to your disembarkation port.

A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Briefing & Dive 1
- Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 3
- Afternoon Snack, relaxation period\*
- Dinner

\*Where an evening or night dive can be scheduled:

- Afternoon Snack, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 4
- Dinner

**Day 10:** Enjoy two relaxed morning dives\* local to your disembarkation port allowing you to spend the afternoon relaxing on board as we cruise into the harbour. Take advantage of an evening onshore to purchase souvenirs and enjoy Egypt's famous hospitality before your journey home the next day.

**Day 11:** Following breakfast on board, disembarkation is between 09:00 and 10:00.

*\*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 18 hours (ideally 24 hours) between their final dive and their flight home.*

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, a number of factors determine which route the yacht takes and which dive sites we are able to visit. Weather, tides, currents and how many other dive vessels are at a particular site, influence the Cruise Director's and Captain's decision of which route the boat takes and which sites are selected for diving.

The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit those sites listed below.

Following is a sample of dive sites which we may visit during your time aboard.

Guests are welcome to suggest preferred dive sites to the Cruise Director. He/she will be happy to accommodate guests' wishes, providing it is possible and the schedule allows for

### **Sha'ab El Erg**

Famous for its dolphin sightings (therefore also known as Dolphin House), this shallow, horseshoe-shaped reef features stunning hard corals and a huge variety of moray eels, blue spotted stingrays, crocodile fish and napoleon wrasse.

Also located at Shaab El Erg is Poseidon Garden. The reef and pinnacles are covered with an abundance of large corals and clams of all sizes and colours. Masked pufferfish, large shoals of bannerfish and butterfly fish, and trevally are just a few of the many types of fish which can be found here.

### **Abu Nuhas**

Also known as the 'Ship's Graveyard', this reef is positioned dangerously close to the busy shipping lanes of the Gulf of Suez. Abu Nuhas has claimed more ships than any other in the area. On the north side, four wrecks lay on a sandy sea floor on the bottom of a steep sloping reef layered with table corals. Wrecks here include the Ghiannis D, Carnatic (Wine Wreck), Chrisoula K (Tile Wreck) and Kimon M (Lentil Wreck). On the south side, there is a safe anchorage for liveaboards and two ergs, known as Yellow Fish Reef.

### **Ras Mohamed - Shark & Yolanda Reefs**

This is a world-renowned dive site, situated at the tip of the Sinai. Two small ergs are joined by a vertical wall dropping into the abyss. At Shark Reef, the current allows you to drift along the wall, rich with colourful corals. Moving towards Yolanda Reef you reach a plateau scattered with small ergs and coral outcrops. Continuing around the reef you will come upon the scattered remains of the wreck 'Yolanda' complete with its cargo of toilets and baths. The whole of this area is big fish territory so keep an eye on the blue!

### **SS Thistlegorm**

Probably the most famous of the Red Sea wrecks. The 129m English freighter was bombed by German aviation on 6 October 1941.

Today, she makes for an artificial reef on a sandy bottom at 32m maximum depth. She is home to an enormous variety of marine life and is especially popular with large schooling fish.

**Please note: Due to local legislation, you must have a minimum of 20 logged dives to dive on the Thistlegorm.**

### **Strait of Tiran**

Only accessible by boat, this dive area is situated at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba and is made up of four main reefs that form the top of an underwater bridge. These reefs, named after British cartographers (Jackson, Woodhouse, Thomas and Gordon), are world-famous for their extraordinary diversity of corals and strong southwesterly currents make them home to many large pelagic fish.

## Jackson Reef

The most northerly reef and on its northern edge lays the wreck of a freighter serving as a stark warning to ships in the narrow straights. Diving is usually conducted from the moorings on the south side, which is sheltered from the main swell and currents.

Moving northwards you will come across a forest of spectacular gorgonian fan coral at about 20 to 30 metres as well as many different kinds of reef fish. This site can also be done as a drift dive heading from the mooring towards the East with the reef on the left where it is mostly wall diving with excellent corals. Diving at the back of Jackson in late summer can give you the chance to see the resident hammerhead sharks.

## Woodhouse Reef

This is the longest reef of the four in the Strait of Tiran. Home to reef sharks and eagle rays, it is dived as a drift dive usually from south to north. Jumping at the southern part of the reef is a wall to about 30m covered with coral from the surface all the way down. There is a canyon going along the reef at about 25m which spreads out into a coral garden with sand alleys.

## Thomas Reef

The smallest reef in the strait and diving here is governed by conditions as there are potentially strong currents. The ends are vertical walls with a large plateau at about 25m on the southeastern side. This plateau is covered in colourful coral and has a fence of gorgonian fans where you can find the longnose hawkfish.

## Gordon Reef

The most southerly reef of the four and has a different topography from the others offering both a shallow plateau area and drop-offs. There is a huge variety of reef fish and the chance to see sleeping whitetip reef sharks on sand patches. At 4 to 5 metres there is an eel garden area along with coral-encrusted drums. The top of the reef, with its lighthouse, is also home to the wreck Louilla, which sits almost parallel to the wreck on Jackson Reef.

## Brother Islands

The northernmost part of Egypt's offshore marine park is made up of two islands 60 km away from the coast and 140 km south of Hurghada. Big Brother, the larger island (complete with a lighthouse from 1883) is 400 m long with a spectacular plateau on the southeast corner which is dotted with coral mountains and famous for thresher and grey reef shark sightings. The western side of the island has two impressive wrecks which both lie almost vertical on the side of the reef.

The most spectacular wreck is the Numidia, a large cargo steamer which sank in 1901 and now lies on the tip of the island between 10 and 80 m covered in soft corals and frequented by large pelagic predators. The smaller wreck of the Aida (sitting between 30 and 65 metres) was a lighthouse authority supply vessel which sank in bad weather in 1957.

Small Brother Island is only a little over 200 metres long but hosts an incredible concentration and variety of marine life. There is a pristine fan coral forest, a massive collection of hard and soft corals and compelling overhangs to explore. The main attraction is the abundant pelagic life; with regular seasonal sightings of hammerhead, thresher, grey reef and oceanic whitetip sharks.

## Daedalus Reef

This huge tear-drop-shaped reef rises from the sea bed in the middle of the Red Sea, 80km offshore and more than 300km south of Hurghada. Easily recognised by its zebra-striped lighthouse, this reef offers some of the most amazing dive sites in the Red Sea. The sheer walls are covered in overgrown hard coral formations and a variety of reef fish. Napoleon wrasses and turtles are often cruising by, but make sure to keep your eyes open on the blue! Daedalus is one of those places where anything can happen... Oceanic whitetips, grey reef sharks and thresher sharks are often sighted, but Daedalus is most famous for its scalloped hammerhead sharks. They can often be seen in large schools out in the blue during the summer months. The sheer size of this reef means that you can do several dives here and never get bored!

## Elphinstone

A Red Sea legend, this finger-shaped reef, with north and south plateaus covered in hard and soft corals is both unpredictable and exciting. This is truly an awesome reef where grey reef sharks and Napoleon wrasses are regularly spotted in the summer and oceanic whitetip sharks often congregate in vast numbers during late autumn.

## Safaga

Filled with a variety of stunning drop-offs, shallow coral gardens and interesting wrecks, Safaga offers something for everyone. The most famous wreck is 'Salem Express'; a large ferry, which sank in 1991 with massive loss of life. There are also the large ferry wrecks of El Arish El Tor and Al Kafain, which both sank without any lives lost. The famous finger-shaped reefs of Abu Kafan and Panorama offer stunning drop-offs with plentiful fan corals and incredible plateaus encrusted with soft and hard corals. Shallower reefs (such as Torbia Arbaa) are full of critters and make a perfect afternoon or night dive.

## Abu Kafan

Safaga's most famous reef dive combines two stunning plateaus (North and South) with spectacular wall dives on the east and west. With some of the best coral to be found anywhere in the Red Sea, and a cacophony of wildlife (including massive schools of fish and the occasional pelagic visitor), this reef is a treat for any diver.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team [dive@masterliveaboards.com](mailto:dive@masterliveaboards.com) who will be pleased to assist and advise you.