

Taba (Arabic: طابا Ṭāba, IPA: [ˈtʰɑːba]) is an Egyptian town near the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. Taba is the location of Egypt's busiest border crossing with neighboring Eilat, Israel. Taba was originally developed as a tourist destination by the Israelis with the first hotel opening there in the 1960s, and today it is a frequent vacation spot for Egyptians and other tourists, especially those from Israel on their way to other destinations in Egypt or as a weekend getaway. It is the northernmost resort of Egypt's Red Sea Riviera.[1]

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History[edit]

The Taba Crisis of 1906 started when Sultan Abdul Hamid II of the Ottoman Empire decided to build a post at Taba. The British sent an Egyptian Coast Guard steamer to re-occupy Naqb el Aqaba and Taba. When encountered by a Turkish officer who refused them permission to land, the Egyptian force landed on the nearby Pharaoh's Island instead. The British Navy sent warships into the eastern Mediterranean and threatened to seize certain islands under the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan agreed to evacuate Taba and on 13 May 1906. Both Britain and the Ottoman Empire agreed to demarcate a formal border that would run approximately straight from Rafah in a south-easterly direction to a point on the Gulf of Aqaba not less than 5 kilometres (3 mi) from Aqaba.[2][3] The border was initially marked with telegraph poles and these were later replaced by boundary pillars.[2]

Taba was located on the Egyptian side of the armistice line agreed to in 1949. During the Suez Crisis in 1956 it was briefly occupied by Israel but returned to Egypt when the country withdrew in 1957. Israel reoccupied the Sinai Peninsula after the Six-Day War in 1967, and subsequently, a 400-room hotel was built in Taba. Following the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, Egypt and Israel were negotiating the exact position of the border, Israel claimed that Taba had been on the Ottoman side of a border agreed between the Ottomans and British Egypt in 1906 and had, therefore, been in error in its two previous agreements. After a long dispute, the issue was submitted to an international commission composed of one Israeli, one Egyptian, and three outsiders.[2]

Both parties agreed that all maps since 1915, except for one 1916 Turkish-German map, show Taba on the Egyptian side and that no dispute had previously been raised on the issue in the intervening years.[2] However, Israel contended that errors had been made when the telegraph poles were replaced by boundary pillars in 1906–1907 and that the written 1906 agreement rather than its demarcation with boundary pillars was the legal border.[2] The commission did not accept that the boundary pillars were in error but in any case held that a demarcated boundary accepted by all parties for such a long time had achieved legal status.[2] Based on the wording of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, the commission ruled that

the accepted border during the Mandate period was the one that counted, though it did not accept that that border was different from the earlier border.[2] Of special concern was the final boundary pillar near the Gulf of Aqaba, which had disappeared.[2] There are early photographs of a pillar north-east of Taba, but Israel contended that it had been placed in error.[2] The commission did not accept Israel's case and positioned the pillar close to its historical location.[2]

Therefore, Israel and Egypt resumed negotiations which ended in February 1989 and as a result, Taba was partitioned, most of it was given to Egypt (Israel kept a 250 meters long stretch of beach).

As part of this subsequent agreement, travelers are permitted to cross from Israel at the Eilat–Taba border checkpoint, and visit the "Aqaba Coast Area of Sinai", (stretching from Taba down to Sharm el Sheikh, and including Nuweiba, Saint Catherine's Monastery, and Dahab), visa-free for up to 14 days, making Taba a popular tourist destination. The resort community of Taba Heights is located some 20 km (12 mi) south of Taba. It features several large hotels, including the Hyatt Regency, Marriott, Sofitel, and Intercontinental. It is also a significant diving area where many people come to either free dive, scuba dive, or learn to dive via the many PADI courses available. Other recreation facilities include a new desert-style golf course.

On 24 September 1995 the Taba Agreement was signed by Israel and the PLO in Taba.

On October 7, 2004, the Hilton Taba was hit by a bomb that killed 34 people including several Israelis.[4] Twenty-four days later, an inquiry by the Egyptian Interior Ministry into the bombings concluded that the perpetrators received no external help but were aided by Bedouins on the peninsula.[5]

In February 2014, a coach taking tourists to Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai exploded in Taba shortly before crossing the border to Israel. At least two South Koreans were killed and 14 injured. The blast was blamed on terrorists.[6][7]

Despite warnings, tourism from Israel to Taba was up in 2016 with many traveling to enjoy the northernmost Red Sea resort.[8]

Climate[edit]

Köppen-Geiger climate classification system classifies its climate as hot desert (BWh),[9] as the rest of Egypt.

show

Climate data for Taba

Taba heights' temperatures are slightly cooler and it has slightly more rainy days. It receives slightly less sunshine.[12]

show

Climate data for Taba heights

Taba mean sea temperature[11]

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

22 °C (72 °F) 21 °C (70 °F) 21 °C (70 °F) 23 °C (73 °F) 25 °C (77 °F) 26 °C (79 °F) 28 °C (82 °F) 28 °C (82 °F) 28 °C (82 °F) 27 °C (81 °F) 25 °C (77 °F) 23 °C (73 °F)

Taba Protected Area[edit]

Located just southwest of Taba is a 3,590 km² (1,386 sq mi) protected area, including geological formations such as caves, a string of valleys, and mountainous passages. There are also some natural springs in the area. The area has 25 species of mammals, 50 species of rare birds, and 24 species of reptiles.[13]

Transportation[edit]

Since Taba existed only as a small Bedouin village, there was never any real transportation infrastructure. More recently, Al Nakb Airport, located on the Sinai plateau some 35 km (22 mi) from Taba, was upgraded and renamed Taba International Airport (IATA: TCP, ICAO: HETB), and now handles half a dozen charter flights a week from the UK as well as weekly charter flights from Belgium, Russia, Denmark, and The Netherlands. Many tourists enter via the Taba Border Crossing from Eilat, Israel and a marina has been built in the new Taba Heights development, some 20 km (12 mi) south of Taba, and which has frequent ferry sailings to Aqaba in Jordan, although these are restricted to tourists on organised tours.

[Gallery](#)[\[edit\]](#)

[Taba Border Crossing](#)

[Taba Border Crossing \(December 2010\)](#)

[Taba from Space](#)

[Saladin's Citadel](#)

[Taba Sinai Bay](#)

[Taba Aerial photo](#)

[Hilton Hotel, Taba](#)

[Club Méditerranée Taba](#)

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[Ras Muhammad National Park](#)

[Taba Summit](#)

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[Cultural tourism in Egypt](#)