

Title:

Sharm-el-sheikh - for Sun, Sand, Sea and Mountains

Word Count:

741

Summary:

Sharm El Sheikh is heady mix of sun, sand and mountains located on a promontory at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula along the Red Sea in Egypt at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Owing to the many peace conferences held there it is also called "The City of Peace"

Keywords:

Red Sea, Egypt, beach resort, Sinai Peninsula, hotels, restaurants, diving, snorkeling, tourism

Article Body:

Sharm El Sheikh is heady mix of sun, sand and mountains located on a promontory at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula along the Red Sea in Egypt at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba.

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Being located at a strategic location sharm as it is popularly known was used by the Egyptian navy as a port and naval base until it was captured by Israeli forces in 1956 but restored to Egypt subsequently in 1967.

In the past it was a small fishing village until it became a naval base and today it is a commercial hub and a stunning and magnificent landscaped beach resort. It is also home to a number of sulphur springs, which have therapeutic value.

The virgin fossilized coral reefs in the red sea put the small fishing village and naval base of Sharm El Sheikh on the world map. Sharm El Sheikh has three protected areas- the Ras Muhammad Natural Protected Park, St. Katherine National Park and Nabq Protected area. To gain access to these areas you have to take permission from the tourism department and respective authorities.

If you are interested in taking a diving course while in sharm el sheikh, there

are a number of private companies offering the course along with a PADI-Professional Diving Instructors Certificate at a very cheap price!

Like Nuweiba, sharm is also roughly divided into three parts- Na'ama Bay, Ras Um Sid Cliff and Sharm al Maya.

Na'ama Bay

This is long sandy bay home to one of the first hotels of the area built in the eighties. Today it is fully developed bay with a beautiful paved walkway lined with bougainvillea and oleander along the entire stretch of the bay.

Ras Um Sid Cliff

The cliff links the Na'ama Bay and Sharm El Maya centrally located from both the bay and Sharm El Maya. It has magnificent view from atop overlooking the sea. A lot of hotels, restaurants and resorts dot the cliff.

Sharm El Maya

This is the bay area of the old town of Sharm El Sheikh, developed recently for tourism. The magnificent bay is a natural harbor and home to many boats local and tourist. Palm trees line the lovely endearing sandy beaches making it a perfect place to laze around and sun bathe!

Go scuba diving and snorkeling:

There are a number of reliable diving and snorkeling operators in the area. The Tiran strait and the Red Sea have a diverse marine life, and its turquoise clear waters make it even more enchanting for diving.

Some famous dive centers are Anemone Diving Center at Na'ama Bay, African Divers at Sharm el Maya; Aqua active Dive center at Nabq Bay, Aquamarine and Aquanaute are other dive centers. Some virgin untouched diving sites are the Ras Mamla and Ras Abu Gallum; to go there you have to take permission from the Tourist Police and Protect the Reefs Office because these sites are under the Ras Muhammad National Park.

Colored canyon excursion:

This is in the middle of the desert. It is a gorge formed by water passing through the mountain for hundreds of years revealing the different colored layers of rock. The sheer size of the canyon leaves awed.

There are no facilities at all here. You have to take all that you need with you and as for natures call you will have to make do with going behind the rocks! Tour operators arrange tours in four-wheel drives to the canyon.

Go back into the past:

You can also visit the famous St. Catherine monastery between Nuweiba and Taba. The route via Nuweiba is a picturesque one along the flat plains. St. Catherine's monastery was built around the 4th century, which is believed to be the site of the burning bush. The fortress that surrounds it was built around the 6th century and is still an operating monastery.

Have a Bedouin dinner:

If you are a foodie and love to try different cuisine you can go for a special Bedouin dinner at one of the Bedouin villages.

The Night Life:

Being a beach resort Sharm El Sheikh has an active nightlife. Most hotels have a pub, disco, and arrange beach parties. As for drinks, you can opt for the local brand-Stella, which is cheaper, or an imported one such as Heineken obviously more expensive.