

Red Sea – Grand Sea Explorer Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable. If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures Liveboard Fleet. Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at www.explorerventures.com

THE VESSEL

At 43.3 meters (142 feet) length, the MV Grand Sea Explorer is the epitome of luxury, intended for pampering and a level of service found nowhere else in the Red Sea. She is stable, spacious, and offers smooth cruising. Accommodating up to 22 divers, this opulent vessel has 14 staterooms split into two [very large] suites (upper and main deck), 4 staterooms with queen or twin beds (upper deck), 2 double and 6 twin cabins (lower deck). All rooms feature air conditioning, personal fridges, and en-suite bathrooms with jet showers in the two suites. There is plenty of space onboard, both on the dive deck and in the extensive and welcoming main deck salon with separate dining area. On surface intervals, divers can unwind on the covered sun decks, watch movies or listen to music on the entertainment systems, or use the free WIFI to share their Instagram-worthy day.

The MV Grand Sea Explorer is specifically designed for divers looking for luxury and a well-built vessel for cruising between dive sites. The huge waterline-level dive deck can accommodate all 22 divers with individual seating stations, and 3 professional guides will be in the water on each dive. It is customized for effortless diving. Rest assured, the MV Grand Sea Explorer is fully licensed to cruise the entire Egyptian Red Sea. The MV Grand Sea Explorer is equipped with essential safety equipment including life jackets, life rafts and fire extinguishers in the cabins, salon and engine room. The vessel uses 2 pin European style power plugs and 220 volts. No charging is allowed in the cabins. A charging station is available on the Dive Deck.

DIVING CONDITIONS

Scuba diving the Red Sea's Brothers Islands, Daedalus Reef, and Elphinstone Reef, is simply unequalled. Part of the Marine Park, these dive locales show you the best of the best. Explore breathtaking underwater scenery, walls boasting huge pristine hard coral formations, sheer drop-offs covered with soft corals, and experience a frequent rush hour of pelagics. Sightings of thresher sharks, whale sharks, schooling tuna, mantas, grey reef sharks, oceanic whitetips, and schooling hammerheads are common.

In the Northern part of the Red Sea, the Ras Mohammed National Park is situated at the confluence of waters from the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. This mix results in a wide range of diversity in terms of coral and fish life. Its best-known dive sites include Shark Reef and Yolanda Reef, 2 big pinnacles rising up from the depths and home to grey reef sharks, tunas, barracudas, snappers and even hammerhead sharks.

You'll also see many sting rays, moray eels and scorpionfish, as well as dozens of toilets which were the cargo of the Yolanda wreck.

The SS Thistlegorm wreck is certainly the most famous wreck in Egypt, with its WWII motorcycles and jeeps still in the same position they were when this ship was bombed by German airplanes. This beautiful wreck can be dived several times, to discover all its compartments and cargo.

Abu Nuhas is a shallow reef that has caused the sinking of more boats than anywhere else in the Red Sea. There are currently several wrecks beneath the surface: the Giannis D, the Chrisoula K, the Kimon K and some leftovers of the Carnatic which sank in September 1869. All of them are now part of the marine world and covered by soft corals, sponges and hydroids.

In the Red Sea, temperatures peak at 82-90°F (28-32°C) between July and September. After these months the temperatures drop a little to 80-82°F (27-28°C) in October and November. They continue to fall through February to 73-79°F (23-26°C). Temperatures then begin to warm up again to 75-80°F (24-27°C) between March and June. Water temperatures vary from a low of 73°F (23°C) during the winter to a high of 86°F (30°C) during the summer. A 3 mm – 5 mm wet suit should be comfortable for most divers.

DIVING LOGISTICS

Open Water certification with 30 logged dives is accepted but due to depths of 100 ft./30M or more on some dives, Advanced Open Water certification with 50+ logged dives is strongly recommended. Guests without AOW certification may choose to take the course aboard or may find that some dives are unsuitable for their experience level. Divers are required to bring a medical form not older than one year and if needed a current physician certification of fitness to dive. Dives are typically done from one of two tenders. However occasional dives may be done from the mother ship. The tenders can accommodate up to 10 divers each but the diver to guide ratio is 8:1 and the maximum load on a tender at any time is 7. Not all divers will be on the same site at the same time (depending on site's configuration).

To maximize the time guests will be able to explore these mesmerizing regions, up to 5 dives will be offered daily (depending on season). From October through April, 4 dives a day are offered due to shorter days and less daylight. Night dives are not allowed in the marine parks. Knives and gloves are not allowed.



MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most SCUBA certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-old to a maximum depth of 40 feet (12 meters). Children 12-14 years old are restricted to 70 feet (21 meters). Explorer Ventures Fleet therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

- All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor. Minors must be accompanied onboard by a guardian at all times.
- This itinerary offers no diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet; **diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-old are not available on this itinerary, and 12-14-year-old will not be able to dive all sites.** For this reason, a minimum age of 15 for divers is strongly suggested.
- A parent/legal guardian will be required to sign the liability release on behalf of a child under the age of 18.
- There are special requirements for minors traveling aboard any of the vessels. Please contact us for full details.

SAFETY STANDARDS

To ensure your safety, we require the following of all divers:

1. We recommend that divers are certified as Advanced Open Water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization with at least 50 logged dives.
2. We recommend that divers log at least one dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)
3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. A dive computer and SMB and are required (deployment will be required during the check dive).
6. Dive lights are required for night & wreck dives.
7. By local regulations, decompression and solo diving are not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 130 feet (40 meters).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, rebreathers, diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) and multi-cylinder configurations (except for a small pony bottle) may not be used aboard Explorer Ventures Fleet vessels.
10. Dive accident insurance (DAN, DiveAssure or equivalent) is required.

DIVE EQUIPEMENT LIST

The vessel provides tanks and hard weights (please bring your own weight belt or integrated weight jacket) for your use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your application form what equipment (and size) you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Any hand-signed PDF forms (only if not completed online)
- Medical form and physician clearance, if required.
- Certification cards
- Proof of DAN (or similar) dive accident insurance
- Diving log book (strongly encouraged)
- Mask and Snorkel *
- Fins *
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Dive computer (required) *
- Buoyancy Control Device *
- Regulator w/alternate air source *
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)*
- Underwater time piece (required)
- Dive light (required for night and wreck dives)*
- Tank Marker Lights (suggested for night dives)
- Shorty/ Full Wetsuit – 3 mm to 5 mm *
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety sausage/SMB (required – Deployment will be required during the check dive)

* Available for rent on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)

NITROX

Nitrox is included in your package price, as long as the diver is Nitrox certified. Please read our [Nitrox](#) page for more information.

WHAT TO BRING

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits, though at sea the winds can be cold, particularly in the winter months and fleece or jackets are often necessary. Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. You may consider slacks, dress shorts or sundresses (we suggest that women cover their shoulders and knees) if you wish to shop outside in Hurghada or Port Ghaleb. There are no hairdryers, shower gel or shampoo available on Grand Sea Explorer. If you plan to extend your stay in Cairo, then consider bringing good walking shoes.



Please remember that Egypt can be very hot during the summer months, and the sun can be very strong at times. For this reason, please make sure you have sufficient strength environmentally friendly sunscreen. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency towards seasickness, come prepared with motion sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. If you have favorite CD's or DVD's, feel free to bring them. All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels, and wash cloths) are provided on board.

Make sure you remember your Application/Liability Release, medical forms and certification card(s). If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, swimsuit, change of clothes, medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these few items with you will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

MEALS

Meals are mostly served Buffet style, in the main dining lounge, and 1 or 2 barbecue dinners might be served outside (weather permitting). The 2 Chefs prepare delicious food, with European and Oriental influences. Aboard the *Grand Sea Explorer*, meals usually consist of lots of fresh vegetables, several mixed salads, rice, pasta, chicken, beef, lamb, fish, fruits and pastries. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, chicken, pancakes, cereals, salads, French toast, bread, pastries, yoghurts and fresh fruits. One snack is served every day. If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate so on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and foods are often unavailable in Egypt, and that it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat, gluten free goods or soy products and other items common elsewhere. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk.

COMMUNICATIONS & WI-FI

Internet access is available aboard (Complimentary 3G signal WIFI, as long as coverage is given – Please check our [FAQs](#)). Vital messages may be passed to guest by calling the operations office at 1.800.322.3577, ext 2 (US & Canada) or +1.307.235.0683 (Outside US & Canada). Outgoing calls may also be made. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls. If delayed, call our operations office (see above) or our local operator: +20.121.111.0243(office) or +20.111.711.1746(mobile).

WHAT IS THE CURRENCY?

The local currency is the Egyptian pound (EGP) which is approximately EGP 30 = 1 USD. US Dollars and Euros are widely accepted in local stores. Many shops do not give change for USD and EUR. We recommend having smaller bills EGP for tips.

ONBOARD CHARGES

Retail items, incoming & outgoing telephone calls, route supplement/port/marine park/visa fees will be charged to your onboard bill. The bill may be paid at the end of the trip with cash (US dollar, Euro, British Pound, Swiss Francs and Egyptian Pound) or credit card (3% service charge will be added). Personal or traveler's checks are not accepted. In Hurghada and Port Ghalib, most major credit cards are accepted as well as the US dollar and Euro are widely accepted.

CREW GRATUITY

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and many weeks at a stretch to provide the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course, you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the regular package price per passenger. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! Gratuities paid in CASH would be very appreciated by the crew.

ARRIVAL

A passport with at least 6 months validity is required to enter Egypt. If your first point of entry into Egypt is Hurghada, the crew will purchase your Egypt tourist visa and have it waiting for you upon arrival. The \$30 (25 Euro) will be added to your onboard bill at the end of the trip. If your first point of entry into Egypt is Cairo or another city other than Hurghada, you will need to purchase your visa at the airport, and you will not be charged onboard. Please ensure that you have at least one blank page to receive the entry stamp. The tourist visa is valid for 30 days.

Like all other Countries Egypt applies strict customs rules concerning items coming into the country, such as alcohol and cigarettes, so to avoid any misunderstandings consider buying these at the airport. Under no circumstances attempt to leave the country with antiquities. Caution: drug handling is severely punished in Egypt.

You'll be met at the airport (or your hotel in Hurghada) by our local representative and transferred to the New Marina, where the *Grand Sea Explorer* aka *Grand Sea Serpent* is docked. The boat is available for boarding after 5 pm. Should you be arriving earlier, you may leave your luggage aboard and enjoy the multiple restaurants, bars and shops inside and outside the Marina.

Same day transfers are included from the airport or your hotel. If you are staying overnight in Hurghada prior to boarding, please make sure that your application form has included your hotel information. Two transfers are included in your package. If you need additional transfers, please let us know in advance and our crew can make the arrangements. Transfers inside Hurghada are approximately \$30 USD/way for up to 3 people and transfers from Marsa Alam Airport to Port Ghalib are approximately \$92 USD/way for up to 5 people.

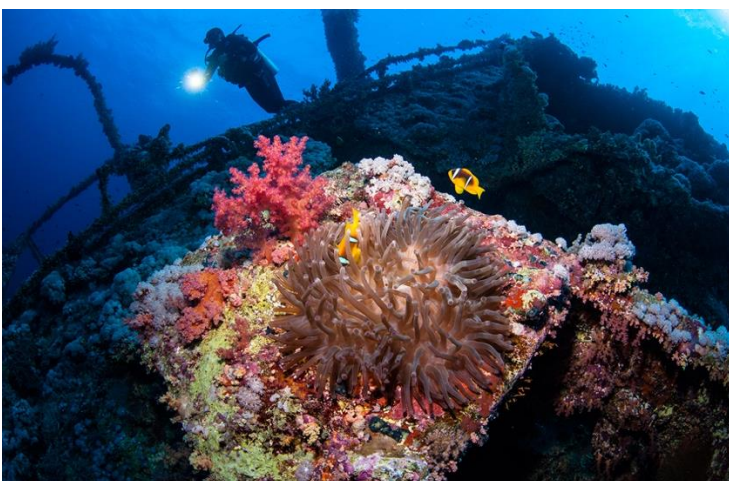


FLIGHT DELAY

If you miss your flight and are not able to make it to the Grand Sea Explorer or have any other delays, please call the USA booking office at 1.800.322.3577, ext 2 (US & Canada) or +1.307.235.0683 (Outside US & Canada) or our local operator: +20.121.111.0243 (office) or +20.111.711.1746 (mobile).

DEPARTURE FLIGHT

The Grand Sea Explorer arrives back in Hurghada midday the day before departure. Dinner is served on board on your last night unless the boat has to relocate in which case your last night will be in a local 4-star hotel. You will be able to schedule to flight home for any time on your day of departure. Please remember if you book an early morning flight you may have to miss diving the previous morning.



RECOMMENDED HOTELS

As a resort town, Hurghada has a large variety of very good hotel/resort values. Here are some recommended resorts:

- [Hurghada Marriott Beach Resort](#)
- [Steigenberger Aldau Beach Hotel](#)
- [Desert Rose](#)
- [Hilton Hurghada Resort](#)

MORE INFOS ON TRAVELING TO RED SEA

PlanetWare website: <https://www.planetware.com/red-sea/hurghada-el-ghardaka-egy-red-hurg.htm>

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Sea

U.S. Department of State: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus afternoon dive snack with pastries available all day
- Up to 4-5 dives daily (depending on the season)
- Use of tanks, weights, and belts
- Air fills and Nitrox for Nitrox certified divers
- Local beer and wine and non-alcoholic beverages
- Same day airport/hotel transfers in Hurghada

PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Hotel accommodations
- Flights to/from Hurghada
- Rental, instruction and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Dive accident insurance (required)
- Trip insurance (recommended)
- Route supplement fee
- [Current onboard charges](#)

**Have a wonderful trip onboard
Grand Sea Explorer!**

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