

# ECO



# EGYPT

Egypt's Ecotourism Experiences



ECO EGYPT Experiences is a campaign that aims to reconnect adventurous travellers with Egypt's countless ecological sites and protected areas. With the goal of prompting natural rediscovery and boosting the importance of ecological conservation, the ECO EGYPT Experiences campaign sheds light on all the wildlife, plant diversity, and natural landscapes on offer throughout Egypt. The campaign encourages sustainable, responsible tourism for travellers seeking unique, out-of-the-box experiences. By centering the voices, experiences, and customs of local tribespeople, from Nubians to Bedouins, ECO EGYPT advocates support for local livelihoods by giving a platform for the unique practices, traditions, and crafts of local communities. From camping to diving, stargazing to birdwatching, Egypt's ecological sites promise unparalleled experiences for the curious, young and old. Get a taste of everything Egypt's ecology has to offer and start planning your environmentally conscious, once-in-a-lifetime trip now!

The Ministry of Environment  
25.10.2020



1 WADI  
EL GEMAL

2 ABU  
GALUM

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5 ST-  
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With one of the best 25 beaches in the world, turquoise tranquility meets ancient heritage at Wadi El Gemal National Park.

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Abu Galum is a divers' and snorkelers ultimate paradise, that also provides beachside camping, various watersports, hiking, and stargazing; every kind of explorer will find something to love about Abu Galum.

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History, wildlife, and underwater exploration – Nabq has it all!

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One of the most serene spots on Egypt's Red Sea, Ras Muhammad brims with coral reefs!

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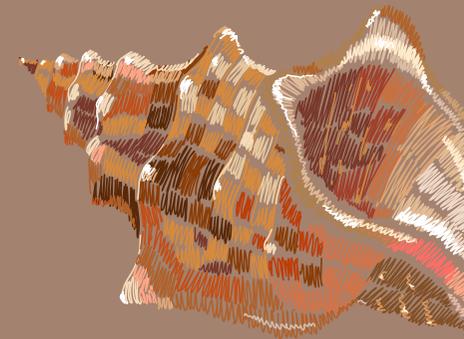
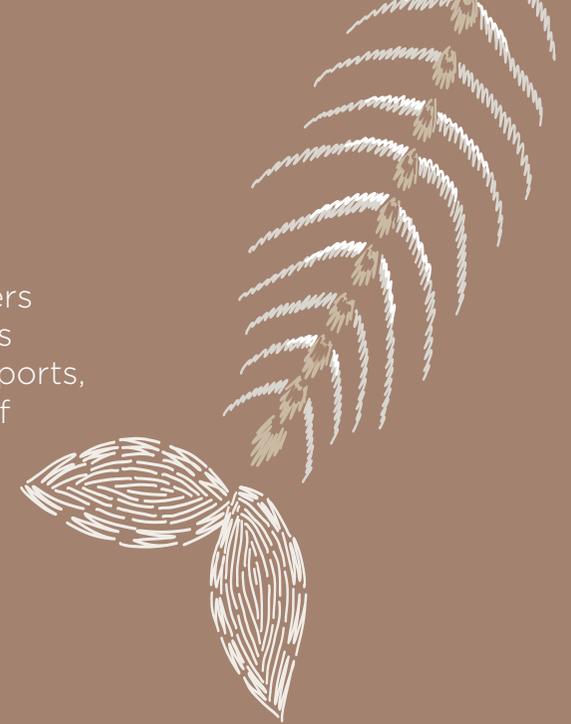
Discover rich Bedouin heritage, a strong legacy in ecotourism, and some of Egypt's highest mountaintops.

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Particularly renowned for its spectacular limestone terrain, which includes deep, winding canyons.

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A vital wintering destination for migrating water birds and every birdwatcher's dream come true!

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Featuring whale fossils over a million years old, Wadi El Rayan Protectorate features a notable UNESCO World Heritage Site.

# 13 TABA

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One of the most well-preserved regions in Southern Sinai.



# 1

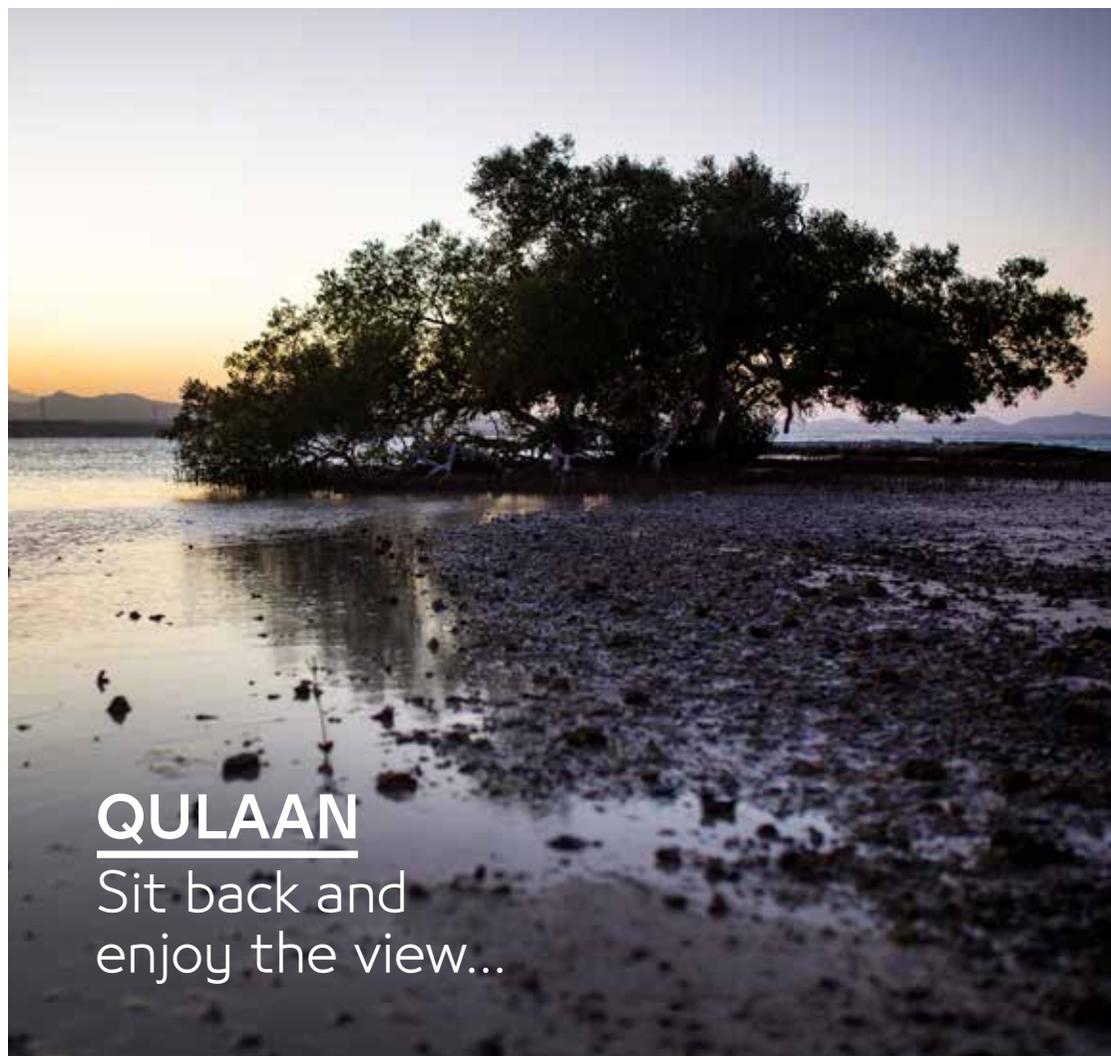
## WADI EL GEMAL

Declared as a protectorate in 2003, and perhaps one of Egypt's best-kept secrets. Wadi El Gemal National Park covers an area of approximately 7,450 km<sup>2</sup> of stunning views all year round along with pristine marine life and a dense mangrove forest. With Hankorab Beach's crystal-clear waters and Qulaan's beautiful scenery, there are several relaxation spots all over. For a deep dive into local culture, don't forget to visit the Ababda House cultural museum and explore the ancient ruins at Sakit. Round off your trip with a visit to Abou Ghosoun and Hamata, where you can witness local tribeswomen produce unique handicrafts, perfect for gifts!

# E

With one of the best 25 beaches in the world, turquoise tranquility meets ancient heritage at Wadi El Gemal National Park.

# WADI GEMAL



## QULAAN

Sit back and  
enjoy the view...



## SATAYEH

Dolphins galore!



## SAKIT

Discover this  
ancient Roman  
emerald mining  
settlement.



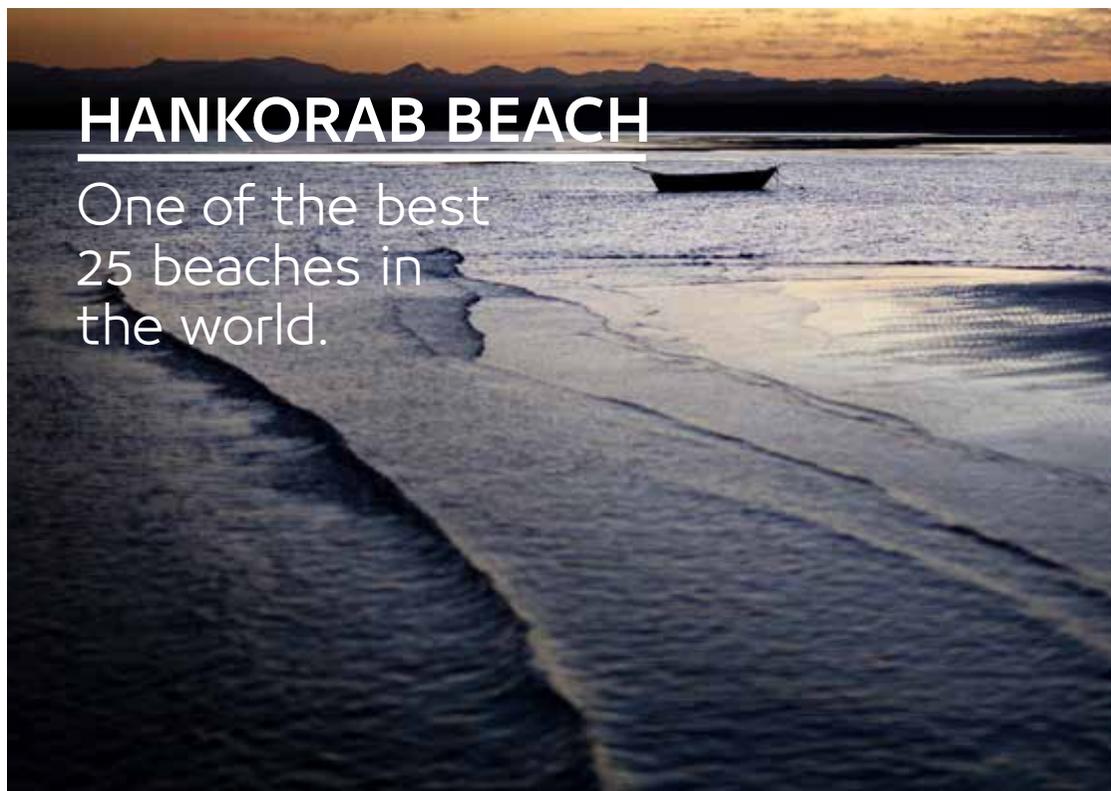
## WADI EL GEMAL DESERT TRIP

Countless camels line this  
spectacular mountain landscape!



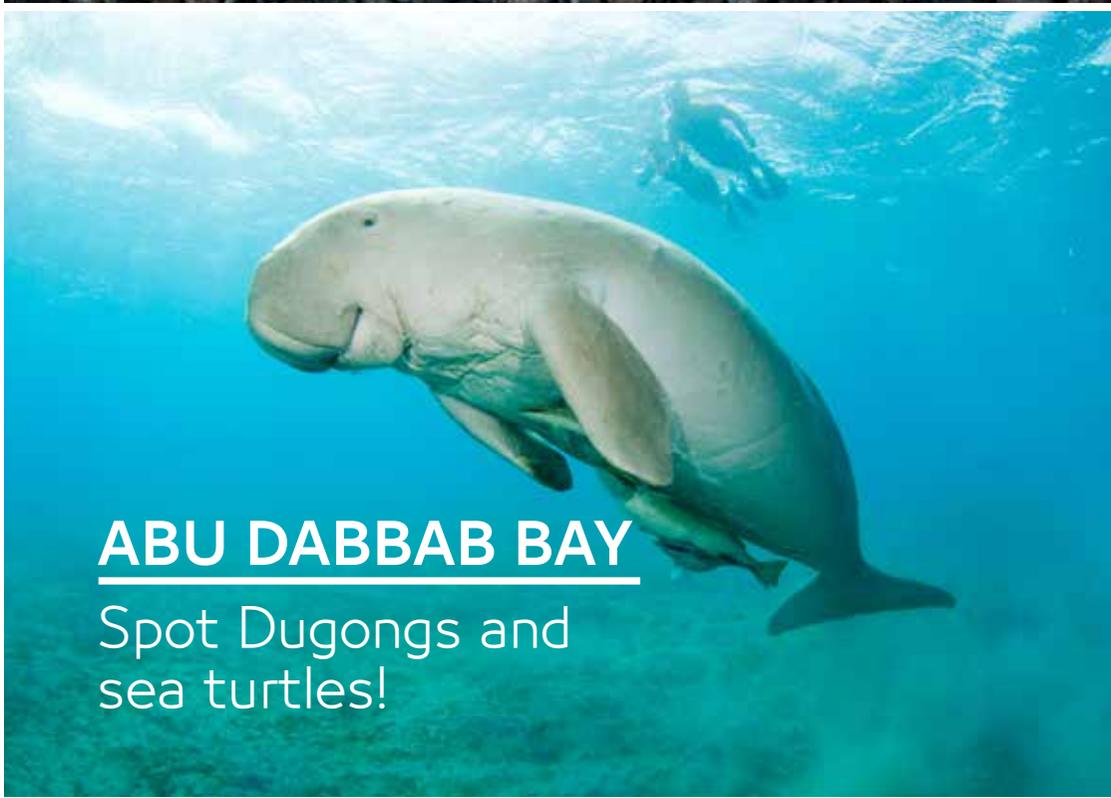
## ABOU GHOSOUN & HAMATA

Buy local, gift global!



## HANKORAB BEACH

One of the best  
25 beaches in  
the world.



## ABU DABBAB BAY

Spot Dugongs and  
sea turtles!



## ABABDA HOUSE & TENT

Ababda cultural heritage site.



# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Feast your eyes on the expansive Wadi El Gemal National Park, a vast 7,450 km<sup>2</sup> watershed that stretches from jagged mountains and deep valleys to the depths of the Red Sea coastline. Home to a uniquely diverse ecosystem, Wadi El Gemal is an untouched wilderness inhabited by several endangered species.



Wadi El Gemal houses Egyptian Acacia trees, famous for the gum extracted from them. See if you can also spot the nutrient-packed *Balanites Aegyptiaca* tree, which yields desert dates and a unique oil, both of which help treat ailments from headaches to diabetes. Tip! Keep an eye out for Wadi El Gemal's distinct mangrove swamps, among the most pristine and productive ecosystems in the world!

With flourishing grass beds lining its seafloor and a teeming coral ecosystem, marine enthusiasts flock to Wadi El Gemal for the area's special collection of endangered Green Sea Turtles, Dugongs, sharks and dolphins. Above ground, an intriguing set of wildlife roams the area, like the Nubian Ibex, the only species of ibex adapted to life in hot, arid regions of the world. More wildlife highlights include Burton's Carpet Viper and the Sinai Agama. The beautiful Sharm El Luli beach is a favorite spot for camels too!

Named one of the world's top 25 beaches, Hankorab Beach provides crystal-clear waters and relaxing, scenic views.





# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Wadi El Gemal is the ideal location for underwater explorers. Whether you prefer diving or snorkeling, you'll mingle underwater with enchanting dolphins, sea turtles, and Oceanic White-tip Sharks, all while enjoying the stunning sight of bright coral reefs. If you'd rather enjoy the sea from a distance, why not take a leisurely boat ride for some birdwatching?

Wadi El Gemal is home to a variety of migrating seabirds and the rare Levant Sparrow Hawk.

On the ground, this mountainous terrain makes for exciting safaris and you can also hike and bike throughout the national park. See if you can spot yourself a Slender-horned Gazelle. The palest of their species, these unique animals absorb their water needs from surrounding plant moisture. Tired of adventuring all day? Park your 4x4, set up camp underneath the moonlight at the end of a long day of exploring, and enjoy a serene pause. You'll quickly realise that there are few better spots to stargaze.



# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

Wadi El Gemal is inhabited by the Ababda Tribe, a nomadic people renowned for their ability to track animals throughout the desert. Unlike most Bedouins who navigate the desert using the stars, the Ababda use wind direction and the sun to find their way.

If you eat with the locals, be sure to ask for El Aseeda, the tribe's staple food, made from flour, water, salt, and natural sweeteners. Finish off your meal with the local specialty, Jebena coffee. Made with ingredients carried on camel's backs from Sudan, Jebena coffee draws its unique taste from ginger. The Ababda people carry much of their cultural heritage through music and dance, but also through their unique

and impressive craftsmanship skills. Their main instrument is the tamboura, a five-stringed lute. For percussion, the Ababda use camel skin to produce the daf drum.





# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Wadi El Gemal has plenty of environmentally friendly hotels, camps, and ecolodges, providing sustainable accommodation options to match this pristine ecological area.



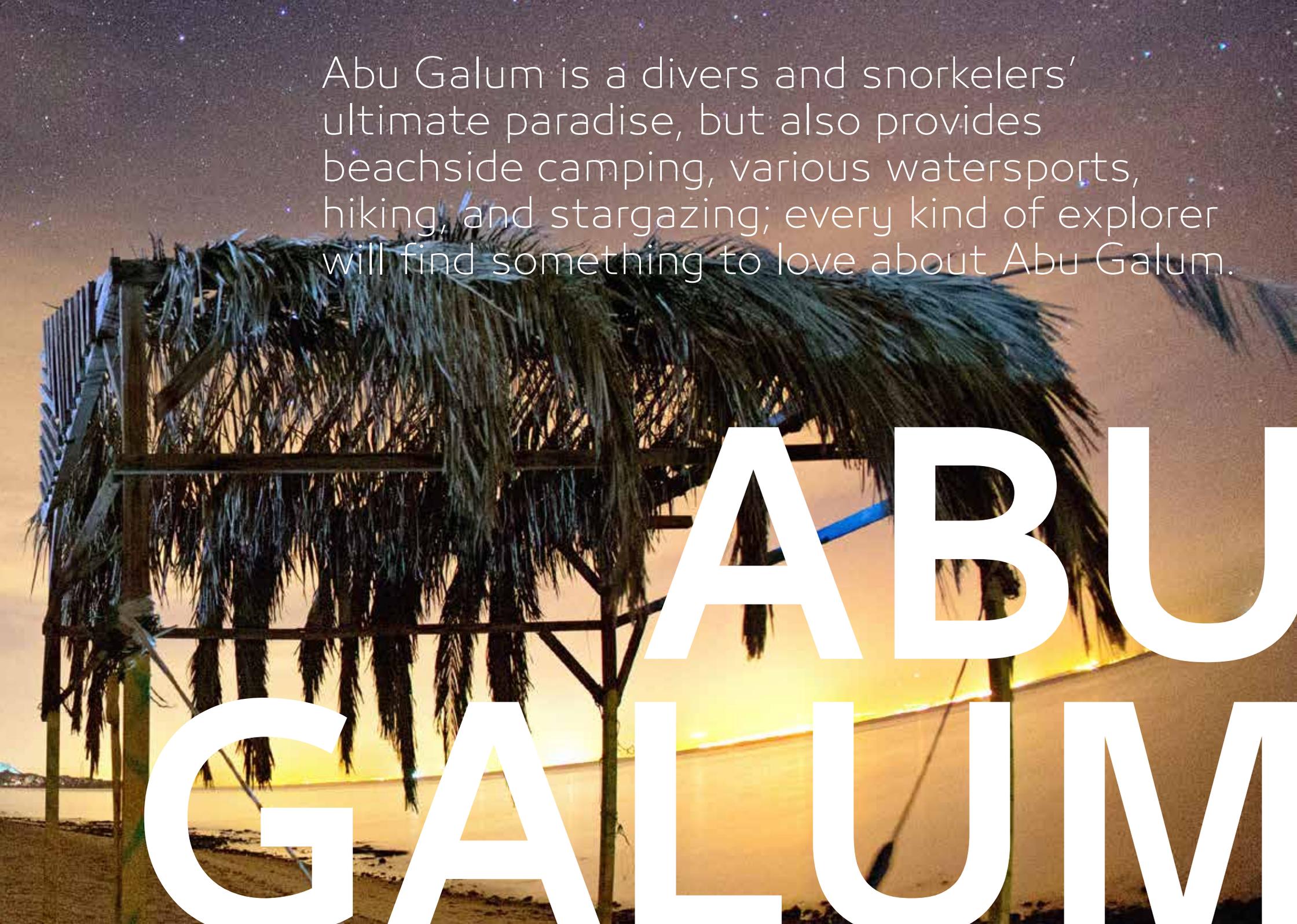
## ABU GALUM

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Home to the globally renowned Blue Hole and Three Pools dive sites, Abu Galum is a tourist favourite, especially because of its proximity to the city of Dahab. Abu Galum covers an area of 500 km<sup>2</sup>, and was declared as a protectorate in 1992. This region boasts a collection of coral reefs unlike anywhere else in the world, also housing the infamous Blue Lagoon, a stunning natural saltwater pool surrounded by climbable mountaintops. With foxes, vultures, and ibexes, Abu Galum's rugged terrain provides the ideal environment for a lively collection of wildlife. The surrounding mountains are also home to various other reptile, bird, and fish species such as the Sinai Agama, Grey Heron and the Giant Moray Eel.

Abu Galum is a divers and snorkelers' ultimate paradise, but also provides beachside camping, various watersports, hiking, and stargazing; every kind of explorer will find something to love about Abu Galum.

# ABU GALUM

A photograph of a thatched-roof hut on a beach at sunset. The hut is made of wooden poles and palm fronds. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The water is calm and reflects the colors of the sky. The foreground shows a sandy beach.



## BLUE HOLE

Dare to dive  
this legendary  
sinkhole!



## **BLUE LAGOON**

Breathtaking mountaintop sunrises overlooking the lagoon.



## **THREE POOLS**

Pristine diving site, one of the best in the world.



## SEE

### Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Located north of Nabq, Abu Galum Protectorate is the third of five protected areas in Southern Sinai. Spanning 500 km<sup>2</sup>, Abu Galum's special topography hosts a number of plant species distinct to this area, including countless palm trees.



Abu Galum's Blue Hole is a world-class dive site, sought after by international divers far and wide. With diverse fish and coral clusters, the marine life on offer at Abu Galum provides memorable experiences for underwater explorers. Whale and Hammerhead Sharks along with the famous Giant Moray Eel can be found here, surrounded by one of the best-preserved coral reef ecosystems in the world decorating the seafloor.

If you're more of the hiking type, keep an eye out for the Egyptian Vulture, which can be spotted careening Abu Galum's mountaintops. Long an iconic symbol of Egypt, this endangered bird was endowed with sacred qualities in ancient Egyptian culture. Red Foxes are indigenous to Abu Galum and can be identified by their distinct black-tipped ears and white-tipped tail. Fun fact: Red Foxes are famously fond of watermelons!



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Camping, diving, and hiking are among some of the most popular activities in Abu Galum. Several camps line Abu Galum's beaches, allowing you to disconnect from the bustle of nearby Dahab in total tranquility. Spend your days getting acquainted with the area's marine life through diving and snorkeling excursions, or set off on hiking



trails and rock-climbing activities to explore the area's distinct topography. With kitesurfing and windsurfing both popular activities in Abu Galum as well, you'll never experience a dull moment at this precious coastal location. In the evenings, bask underneath clear skies decorated with bright stars as Abu Galum's remote location provides stunning stargazing opportunities.



# MEET

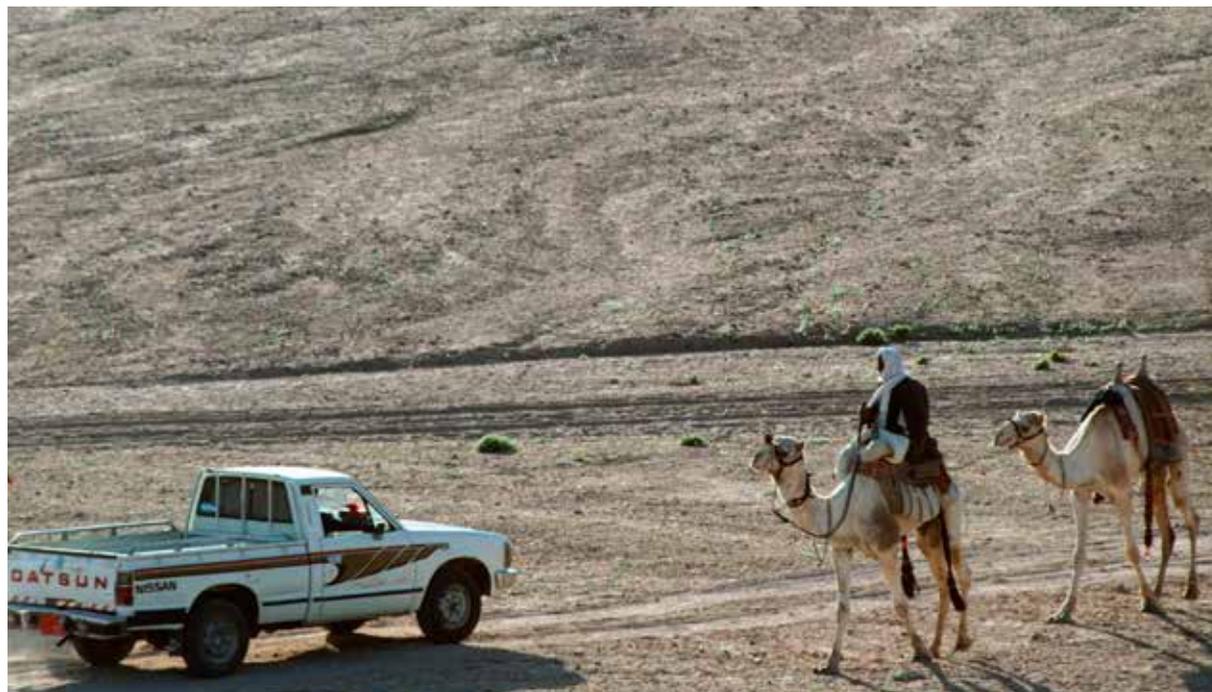
## Local People, Tribes

You will meet two distinct sets of tribespeople while visiting Nuweiba, each with their own unique cultural heritage.

Considered one of the largest Bedouin tribes in the Sinai Peninsula, the Tarabin Tribe is particularly famous for their rich culture and genuine hospitality. While touring Abu Galum, don't forget to break for a meal alongside the Tarabin people, whose local fettah dish Qorsa is cooked with unripe watermelon and eaten with chili peppers – not for the faint hearted!

Abu Galum is also inhabited by the Mazayna, a large tribe with Saudi Arabian origins. As with all Bedouins in Sinai, the Mazayna are known for their hospitality and will likely offer you some of their signature Marmaria tea, made with sage. The Mazayna people are also particularly fond of the Habaq herb, which they use to make another peppermint-like tea – a Bedouin favourite.

Clothing and crafts-making is a pillar of Bedouin cultural heritage. Women among both the Tarabin and the Mazayna tribes produce traditional craft items with striking decorative embroidery and beadwork in distinctly stylized motifs reflecting the local area's flora and fauna. This is a wonderful opportunity to find gifts for friends or source authentic personal souvenirs, all while benefiting the local community.





# STAY

## Place To Lodge

The nearby city of Dahab is a thriving tourist center, with countless hotels and comfortable accommodations lining its beaches. If you prefer to stay in Blue Lagoon itself for a few days, locals have set up a number of basic camping facilities along the beach, which provide a more minimalist experience.

# 3

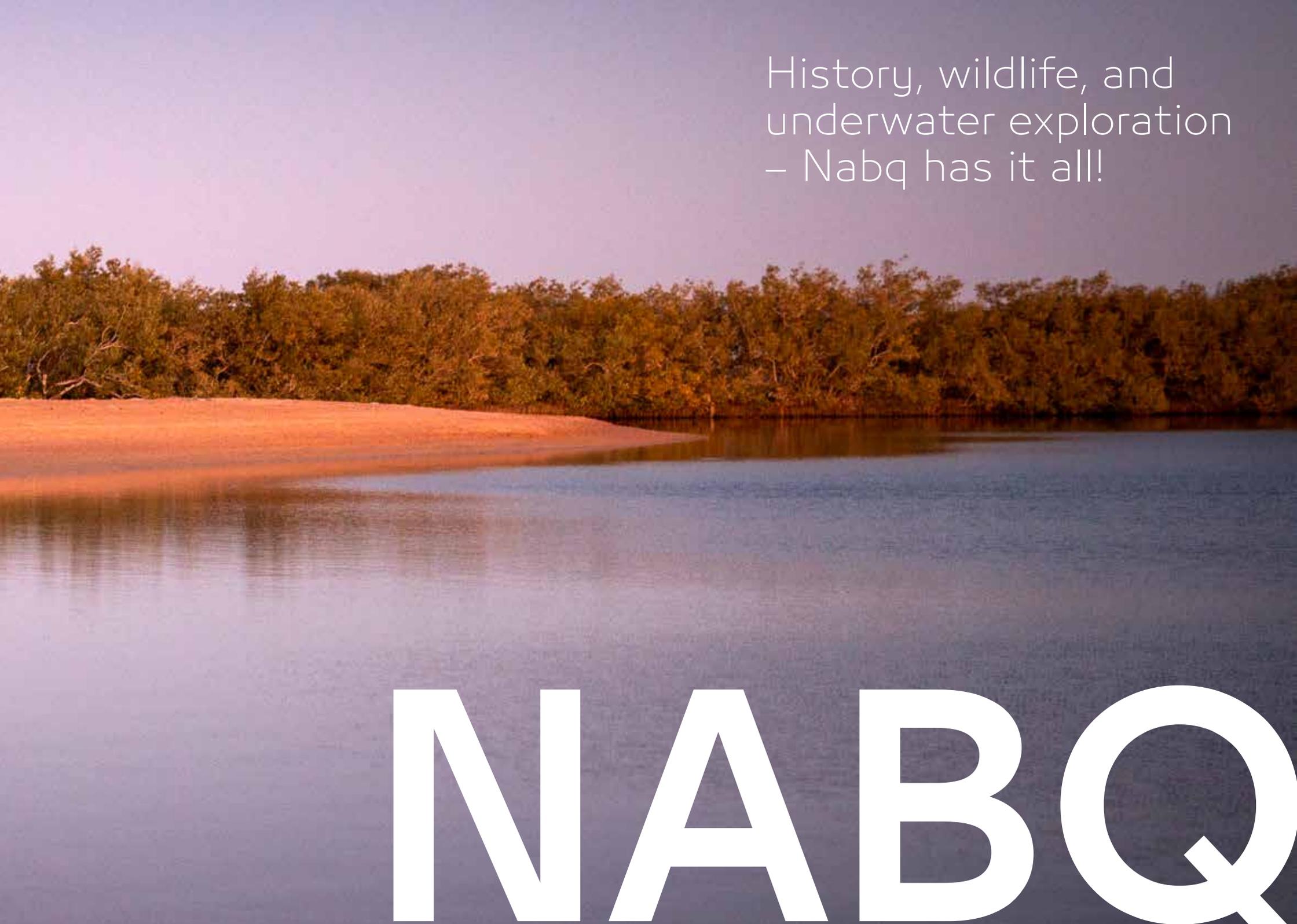
## NABQ

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Covering 600km<sup>2</sup>, Nabq Protectorate offers access to the Red Sea, with plenty of stunning coral reefs and an exciting array of marine life. Announced as a protectorate in 1992, this area's desert topography features dense mangrove forests, hosting a diverse selection of rare birds and other animals. Nabq is home to the Grey Heron, the Steppe Eagle, and the Dugong. For history buffs, the 1956 Maria Schröder cargo shipwreck is an intriguing excursion.



History, wildlife, and  
underwater exploration  
– Nabq has it all!



**NABQ**

A photograph of a mangrove forest at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the scene. The mangrove trees are silhouetted against the bright sky, and their roots are visible in the shallow water. In the background, there are mountains under the sunset sky.

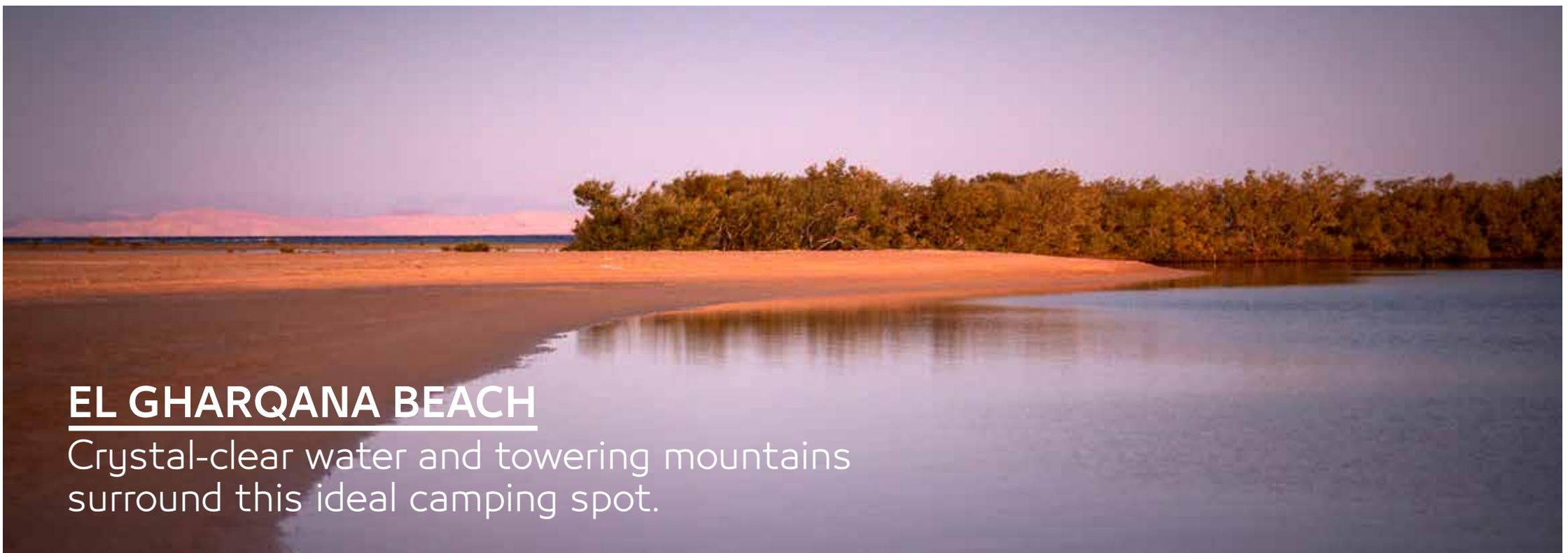
## MANGROVE AL MUNQATEA

Dive site with plenty of mangroves!

A photograph of a shipwreck in a bay. The ship is partially submerged in the blue water, with its masts and hull visible. The bay is surrounded by lush green mangrove forests. In the background, there are mountains under a clear blue sky.

## ROWAYSEYA

Immerse yourself in the story of a 1956 shipwreck.



## EL GHARQANA BEACH

Crystal-clear water and towering mountains surround this ideal camping spot.



## NAKHLET EL TAL

Relaxing, sun-soaked site for divers and snorkelers.



## SEE

### Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Keep an eye out for the mangroves that spread across the Mungatea area in Nabq, where you'll find the most northerly stands of mangrove in the world.

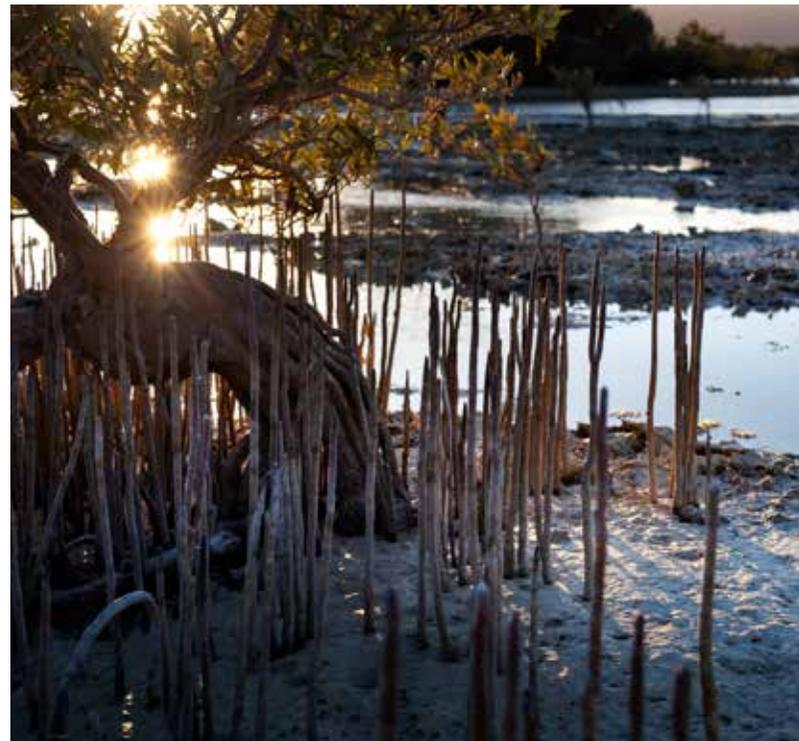
Nabq is also awash with plenty of palm trees, which yield delicious, nutrient-packed dates.

See if you can spot a few Toothbrush Bushes (Arak), too! Egyptians have used the branches of this unique plant as a natural toothbrush for centuries.



As with most Egyptian desert locations, Nabq hosts many camels, which provide a convenient mode of transport and navigation throughout the desert. The Spoonbill Bird, which has a distinctive bill resembling the shape of a spoon, is unique to this part of the country and therefore exciting to try and spot among Nabq's wildlife.

Be sure to check out the Maria Schröder cargo shipwreck here. Originally named the Ralph Jarl, this ship ran aground on a coral reef in 1956 and its debris has since remained in Nabq.



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Dive and snorkel your way through Nabq's Red Sea waters to bask in the beauty of the protectorate's coral reefs and diverse marine life, which includes Dugongs, Hawksbill Turtles, Giant Moray Eels, and Clownfish (i.e. "the Nemo fish"!).

The presence of rare birds makes Nabq a great spot to birdwatch and a visit to the Maria Schröder cargo shipwreck is sure to impress all history buffs!



# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

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# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Several campsites line the Gharqana and Mungatea beaches in Nabq.



# 4

## RAS MUHAMMAD

The southernmost tip of the Sinai Peninsula, Ras Muhammad is an 850 km<sup>2</sup> fossilized coral headland that lies between the rich coral reefs of the Red Sea and the inland desert that was declared as a protectorate in 1983. Home to an abundance of wildlife such as the Sea Turtle, Clownfish, Giant Moray Eel, and the Sooty Falcon. Ras Muhammad enjoys a unique set of ecological and geological features, along with a thriving mangrove forest that have made it a popular destination for decades.

# MUHAMMAD

One of the most serene spots on  
Egypt's Red Sea, Ras Muhammad  
brims with coral reefs!

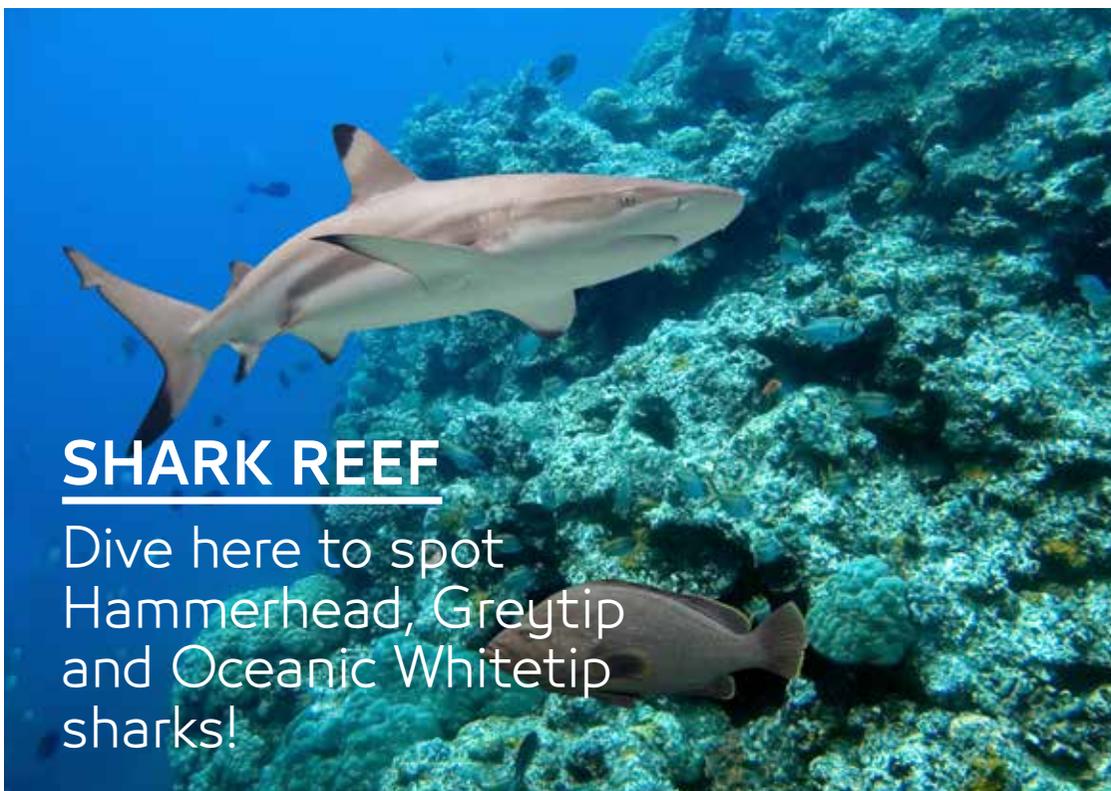
# RAS HAMMAD





## CAMP SITE

Pack your sleeping bags and set up camp underneath the stars.



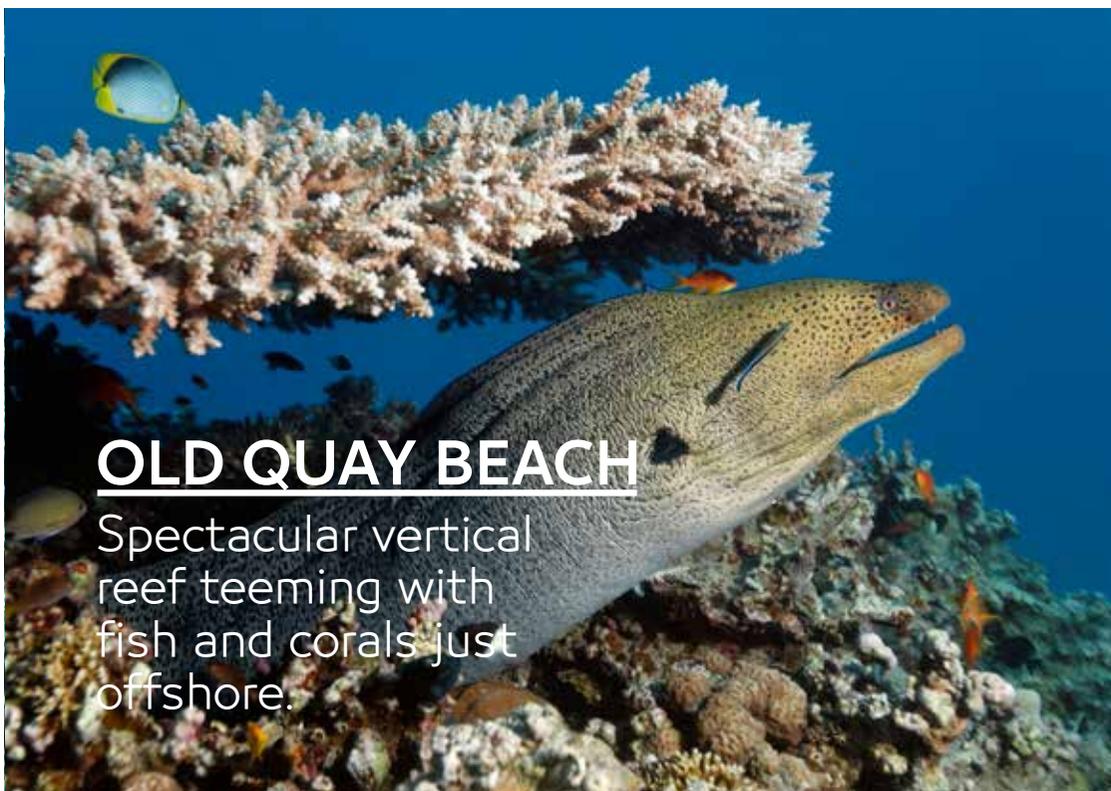
## SHARK REEF

Dive here to spot Hammerhead, Greytip and Oceanic Whitetip sharks!



## BIRD OBSERVATORY

Spot some of the 240+ bird species found in Ras Muhammad.



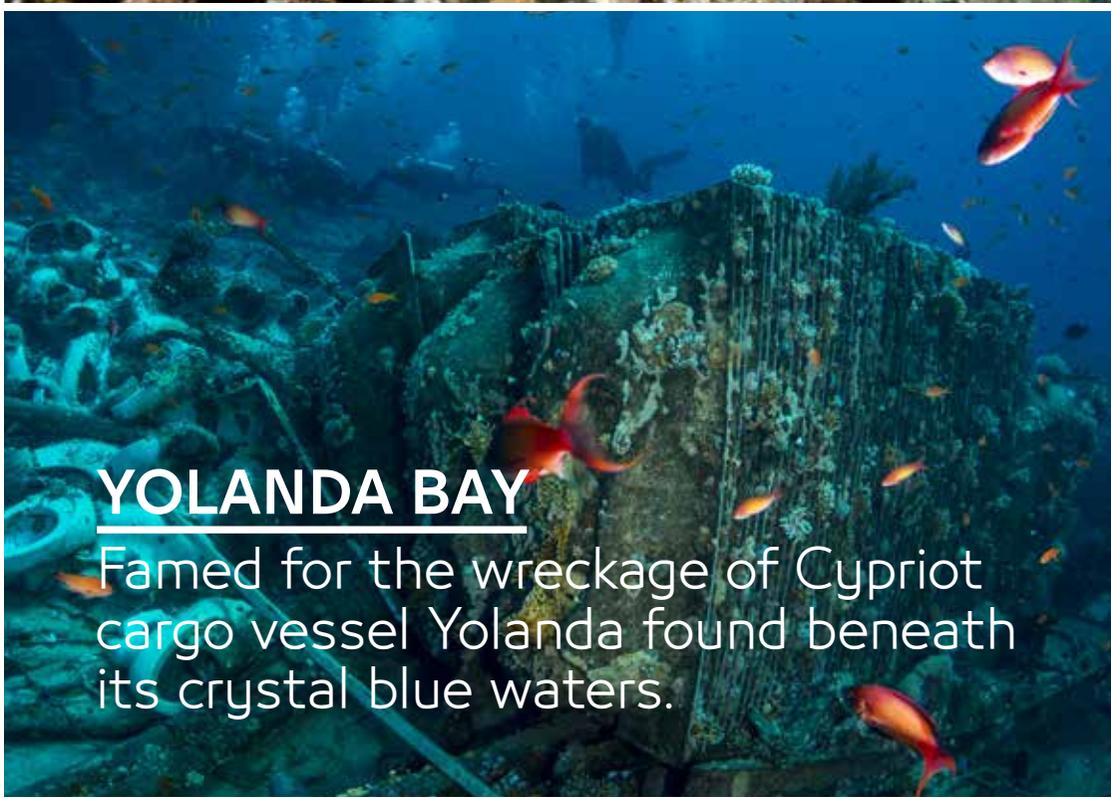
## OLD QUAY BEACH

Spectacular vertical reef teeming with fish and corals just offshore.



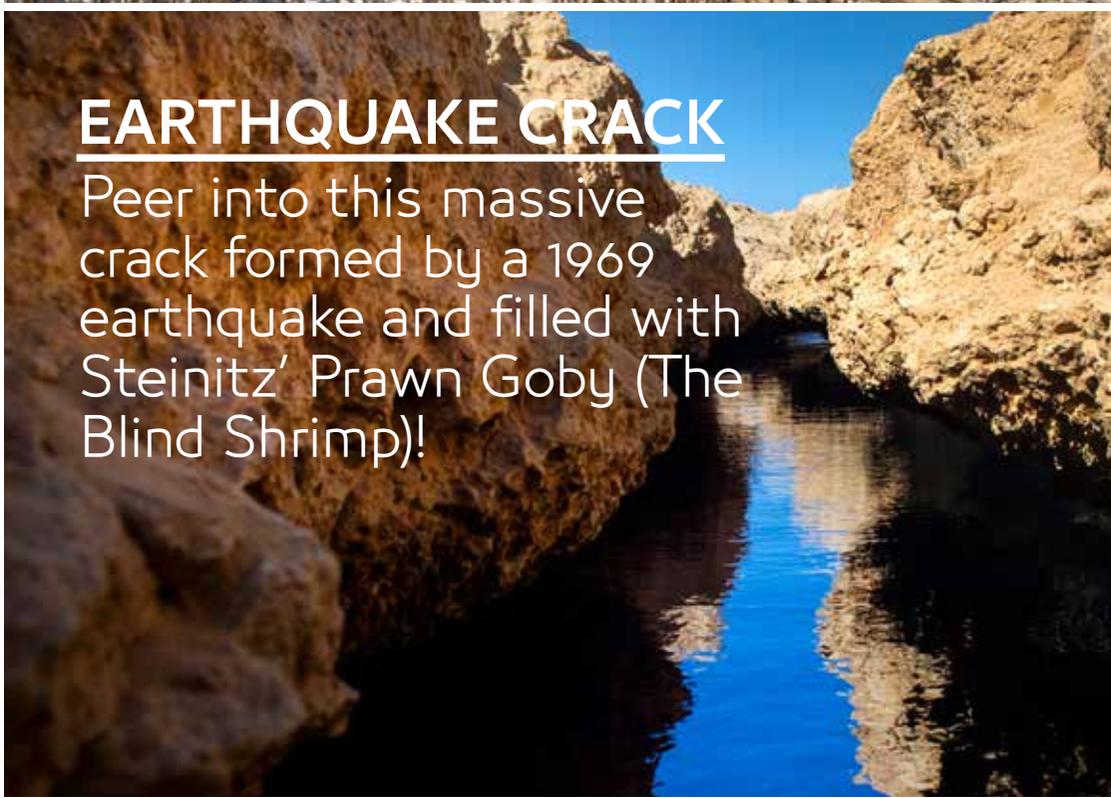
## MANGROVE CHANNEL AND HIDDEN BAY

An enchanting mangrove forest lines either side of this winding channel.



## YOLANDA BAY

Famed for the wreckage of Cypriot cargo vessel Yolanda found beneath its crystal blue waters.



## EARTHQUAKE CRACK

Peer into this massive crack formed by a 1969 earthquake and filled with Steinitz' Prawn Goby (The Blind Shrimp)!



# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Although renowned mainly for its marine life, Ras Muhammad is also the home of several mangroves.

The coral reefs found around Ras Muhammad make the area ideal for diving and snorkeling enthusiasts.

Several other marine species can be found further offshore, including Green Sea Turtles, Dolphins and Reef Sharks.

Tip! Don't miss out on discovering the treasures aboard the Yolanda shipwreck, found underwater near the Yolanda Bay.



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Apart from being a prime diving, snorkelling, and camping destination, this area is also known for being a birdwatching haven, hosting large numbers of White Storks during their annual migration.



# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

Ras Muhammad has no distinct local community, but locals who manage camping sites in the area belong to either the Mazayna or the Tarabin tribespeople.



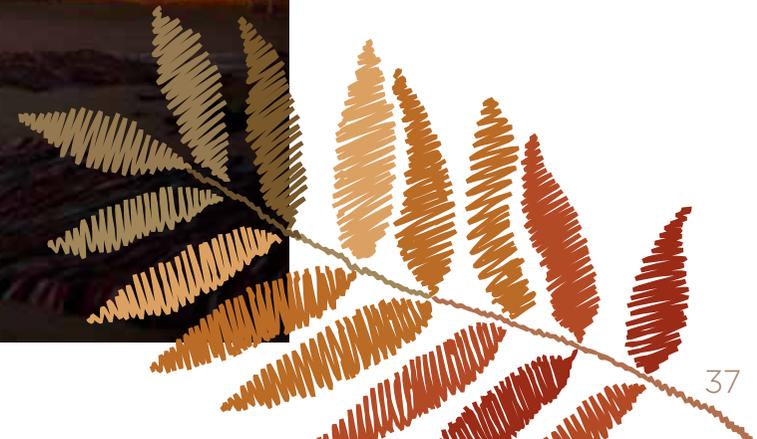


© Gio D

# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Camping is a popular accommodation option for visitors to Ras Muhammad, which has a number of locally-operated campsites.



# 5

## **ST. KATHERINE**

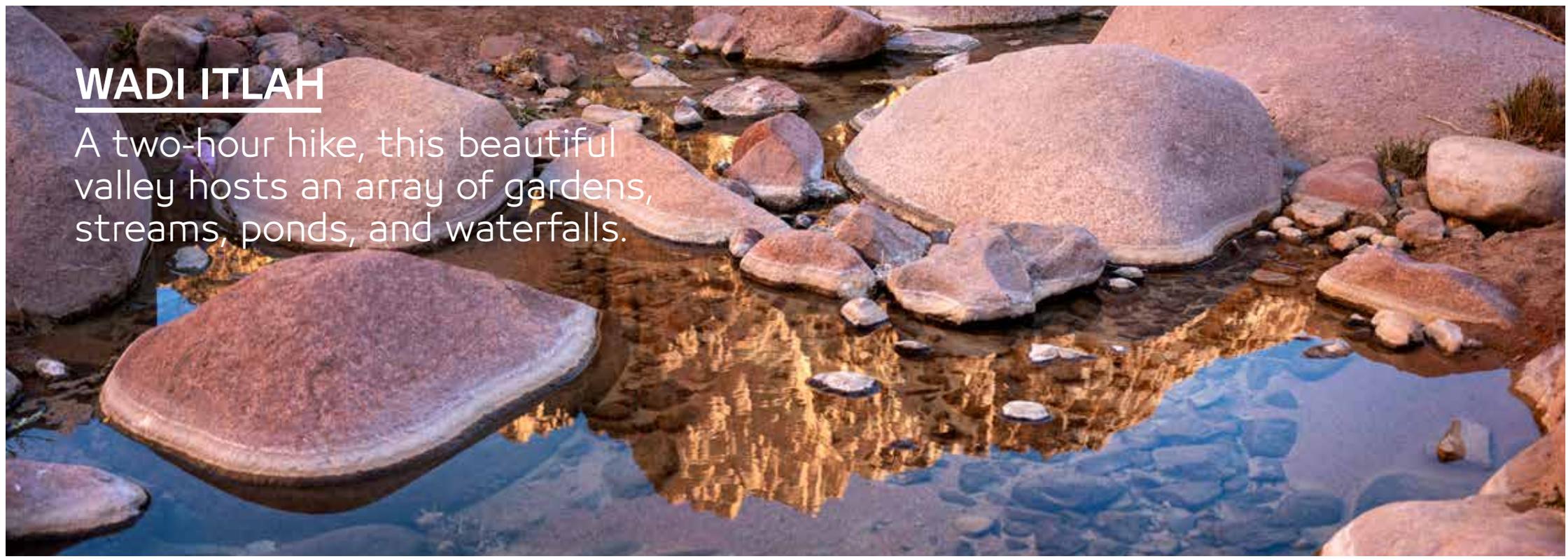
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**Religious and cultural history of the St. Katherine Protectorate is revered across all Abrahamic traditions. Inhabited by Greek Orthodox monks, St. Katherine Monastery is the oldest continuously occupied monastery in the world. The peak of Mount Moussa, long a site of pilgrimage for many, remains a popular destination for visitors today for its strong cultural and religious significance. The level of biodiversity covering almost 4,300 km<sup>2</sup> in St. Katherine is quite simply incredible as the Sinai Wild Rose and Acacia tree flourish there. Also, the Sinai Blue Baton Butterfly, the world's smallest butterfly, the Caracal and Striped Hyena can be spotted roaming freely around the region. The St. Katherine area was declared as a protectorate in 1988.**

# KAT

Discover rich Bedouin heritage,  
a strong legacy in ecotourism,  
and some of Egypt's highest  
mountaintops.

# SAINIT THERINE



## WADI ITLAH

A two-hour hike, this beautiful valley hosts an array of gardens, streams, ponds, and waterfalls.



## MOUNT KATHERINE

The highest mountain peak in Egypt!



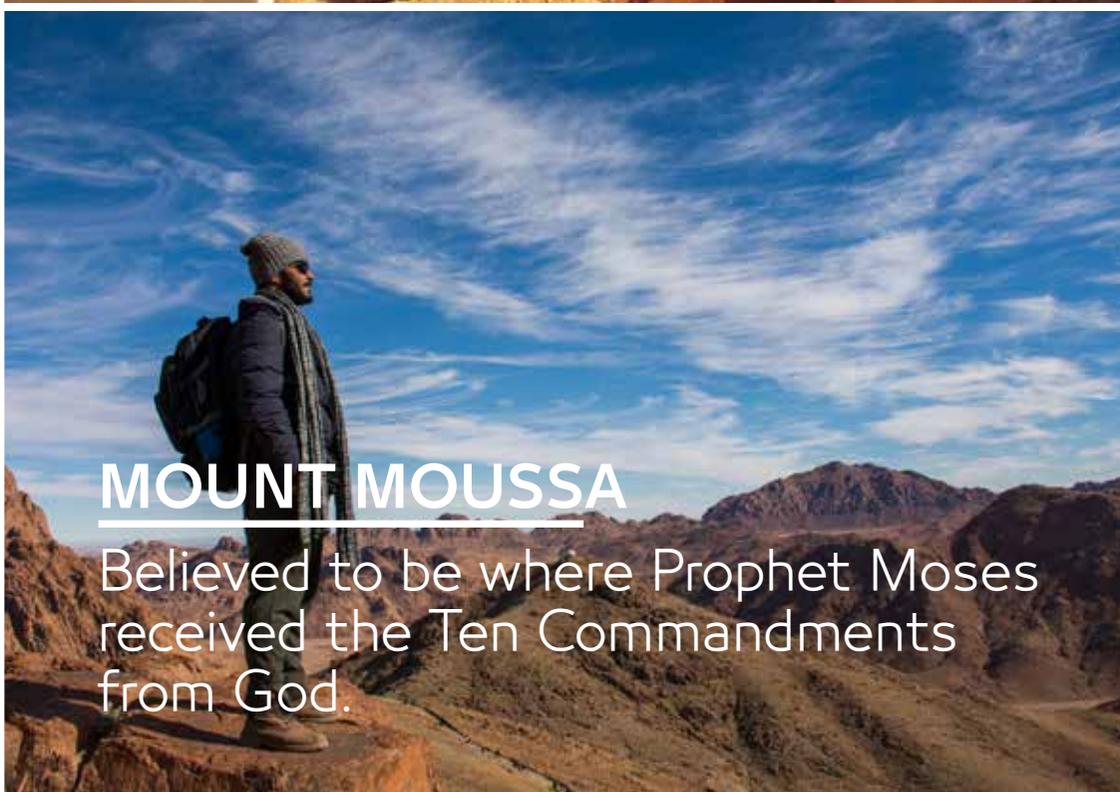
## ST. KATHERINE MONASTERY

A UNESCO World Heritage site, this is the oldest continuously inhabited monastery in the world.



## WADI JEBAL

This three-hour hike promises scenic water springs surrounded by grand trees.



## MOUNT MOUSSA

Believed to be where Prophet Moses received the Ten Commandments from God.



## AL KARM

The first ecolodge in Sinai.



## SEE

### Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

St. Katherine Protectorate lies in the heart of the Sinai Peninsula and boasts 4,300 km<sup>2</sup> of impressive mountainous terrain.

The area includes a few of Egypt's highest peaks, including Mt. Katherine (2,641 m) and Mt. Moussa (2,285 m). Coupled with the area's rich flora and fauna, St. Katherine's many archeological sites and interesting geological features make it the ideal getaway destination for an array of travellers.

St. Katherine is one of Egypt's biggest biodiversity hubs. From Olive trees, to medicinal herbs, to the Egyptian Henbane plant – much of St. Katherine's flora is put to both medicinal and nutritional use. Holy bramble, the plant commonly thought to be Moses' burning bush, can also be spotted in St. Katherine, as with the Sinai Wild Rose. With only 90 left, the Sinai Wild Rose is one of the rarest plants on earth and grows only in St. Katherine protectorate.

An unmissable feature of St. Katherine's fauna, however, is the Sinai Baton Blue Butterfly. One of the smallest butterflies in the world, this rare species is unique to this area, living on mountainside thyme bushes in the St. Katherine Protectorate. St. Katherine also hosts the highly endangered Egyptian Wolf species and Fennec Foxes (also the smallest of their kind!).





# DO

## Activities, Excursions

There are plenty of opportunities to camp, hike, and safari in St. Katherine, with Bedouin-led trails up and down the area's mountaintops taking place on a regular basis. Birdwatchers and stargazers are sure to enjoy this national park as well, which offers expansive, serene plains to reflect, spot your favourite species, or lose yourself gazing at the stars.



# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

St. Katherine is inhabited by the Jebeliya Bedouins, who have lived in the region for over 1,400 years, which explains why they are the only tribe able to withstand living in the harsh, cold weather found atop the Sinai mountains. The Jebeliya are descendants of Eastern European soldiers who were stationed in the area to protect the St. Katherine monastery, which locals still do today.

Similar to other Bedouin tribes, Jebeliya women are skilled at making crafts using striking embroidery and beadwork. The Jebeliya people are also known for producing honey derived from the nectar of Sidr flowers.

Renowned for their unique cultural customs

and traditions, especially during weddings, the Jebeliya Bedouins share the spirit of generosity and hospitality with other Bedouin people all over Sinai. There are 472 types of medicinal plants in St. Katherine, 19 of which cannot be found anywhere else in the world. So, if you have a question about any of them, be sure to ask a member of the Jebeliya Tribe, who tend to be quite

knowledgeable about the medicinal qualities of local flora.



Catch up with Amria at the stunning Wadi Jebel.



Tip! Meet Dr. Ahmed Mansour at Wadi Itlah and hear his fascinating story!



## STAY

Places To Lodge

El Karm Ecolodge is a popular destination for visitors to St. Katherine, where you'll also find a number of locally owned and operated campsites.

## SIWA

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Siwa was declared as a protectorate in 2002, a well-preserved natural ecosystem and expansive landscapes, this region is every explorer's dream come true spanning almost 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> of pristine desert landscape. Particular points of interest in Siwa Oasis include the elevated Shali Fortress, which provides stunning views over the surrounding areas and carries key historical and cultural significance. Inside the protected area, Shyata Lake is also not to be missed, a salt lake in the middle of this grand oasis and an occasional pitstop for migratory Flamingo Birds. In the surrounding areas, the Dorcas Gazelle can be seen leaping across the desert landscape.



A young man with a joyful expression is the central focus. He is dressed in traditional white attire, including a turban and a long-sleeved shirt. He holds a long, thin wooden staff in his right hand. The background features a rustic brick wall and a wooden structure, possibly part of a well or a traditional building. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting in a sunny environment.

Teeming with mineral springs,  
this idyllic oasis disrupts the  
barren Western Desert.

# SIWA

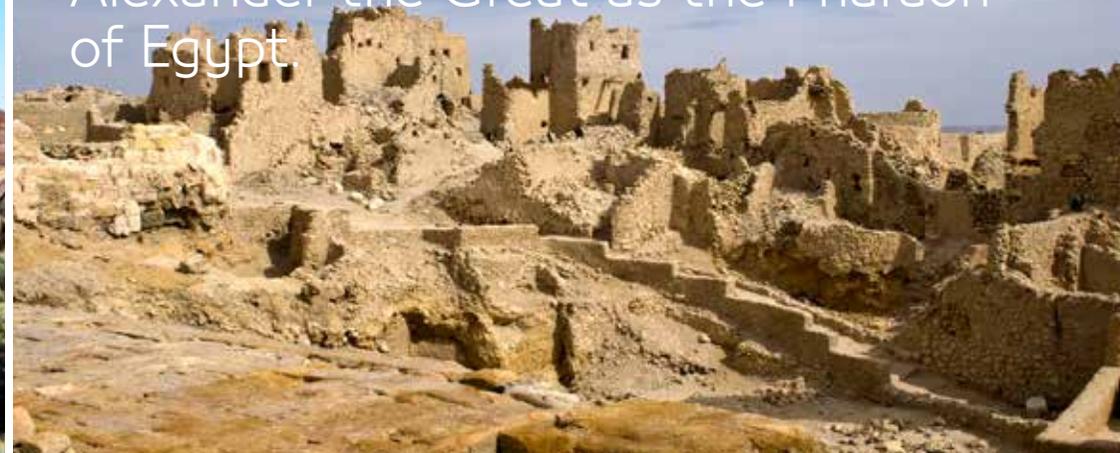
## JABAL EL DAKRUR

Where the Siwan Eid El-Solh, or "the reconciliation festival," takes place for 3 days each year.



## AMUN TEMPLE

Commonly believed to be where the Oracle of Amun recognized Alexander the Great as the Pharaoh of Egypt.



## SHYATA LAKE

See if you can spot a Flamingo at this salt lake!



## JABAL EL MAWTA

Roman-era necropolis with countless tombs dug along its structure.



## FATNAS ISLAND

Stunning sunset scenes overlooking Lake Siwa.



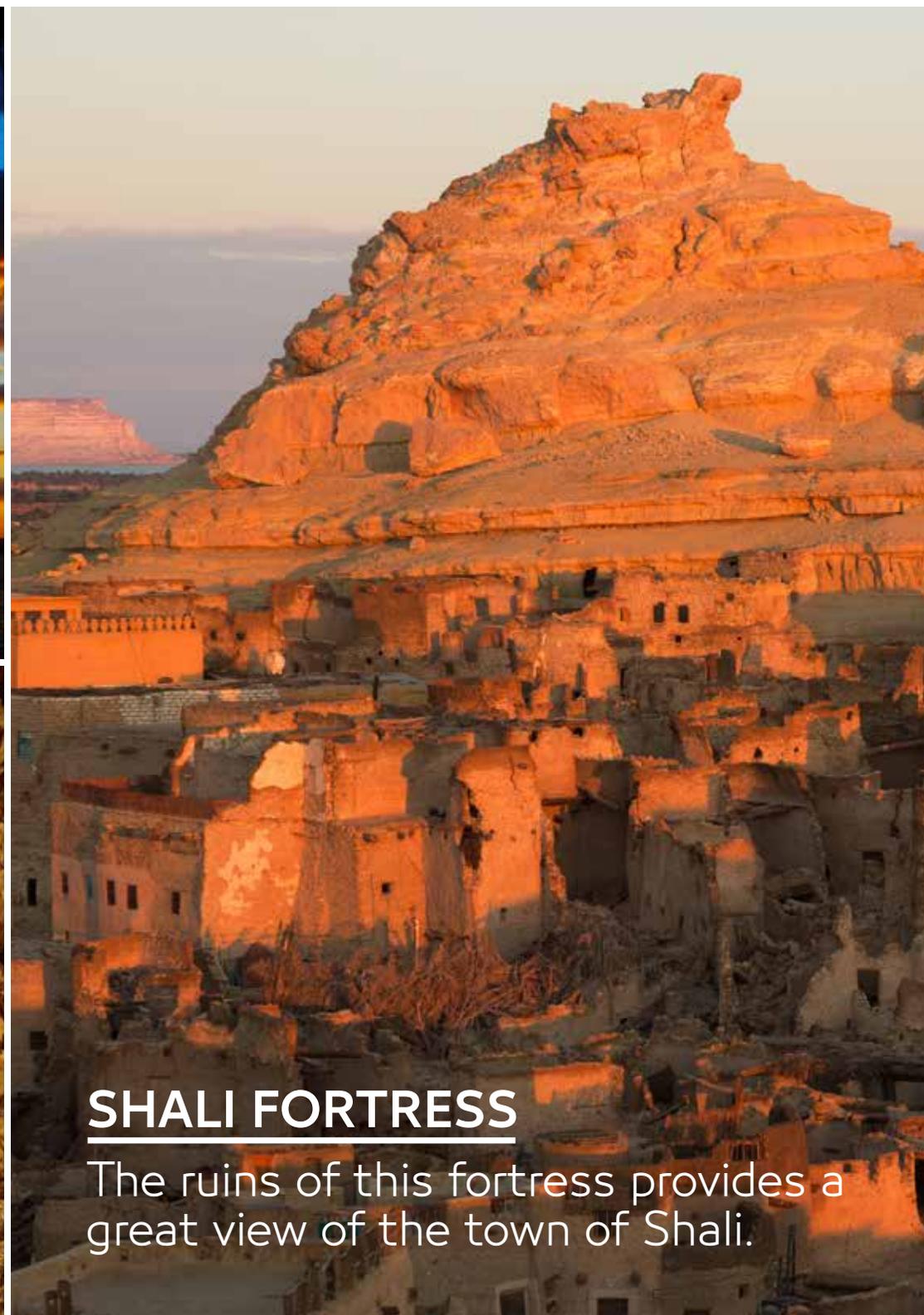
## BIR WAHID

Two neighbouring fresh water springs.



## SHALI FORTRESS

The ruins of this fortress provides a great view of the town of Shali.





# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Widely recognized for its local date and olive cultivation processes, palm and olive trees line Siwa's incredible landscape, which encompasses almost 8,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

You'll also find Egyptian Acacia trees and the highly fire-resistant Tamarix Flowering Plant species at Siwa.

With a thriving natural ecosystem, Siwa houses a selection of enchanting bird species, joined by rare animal breeds like the Dorcas Gazelle, Slender-horned Gazelle and the Striped Hyena. This desert location is also home to fox species like the small Fennec breed and the distinct Red Fox. Saharan Horned Vipers, which usually coalesce around oases, can be found in Siwa, distinguishable by the unique horns located above their eyes.





## DO

### Activities, Excursions

Embark on an exciting safari expedition throughout Siwa's striking desert landscapes and set up camp underneath the vast sky for an enthralling night of stargazing. Birdwatchers will particularly enjoy Siwa; a popular spot for migratory birds traversing through North Africa. History buffs, too, will find that the many archeological sites scattered all over Siwa provide a wonderful opportunity to immerse oneself in the local cultural heritage. The ancient ruins at Amun Temple have an enchanting Pharaonic story behind them, visit and explore for yourself!

# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

Local Amazigh tribespeople are considered the easternmost practitioners of indigenous North African Berber culture. Descendants from the Hamudat Tribe, Amazigh people claim a mixture of Arab, Berber, and Sudanese origins.

Crafts from this region include pottery, embroidered fabrics, wicker products, and the Amazigh's renowned salt lamps and candles.

Tip! Don't miss out on trying the locally produced date jam, a regional specialty. Taste some while you're there and bring a jar or two home for loved ones to try out for themselves!

While at Siwa, you'll likely be offered a delicious Amazigh dish

consisting of couscous and vegetables, followed up by popular regional beverages like lemongrass, green tea, or beebrush.

Interacting with Amazigh people and learning about their rich culture is one of Siwa's unique perks. A particularly exciting time to visit Siwa is during Eid El-Solh (The Reconciliation Festival), an ancient tradition that lasts for three days and involves a series of communal celebrations, complete with the traditional dish of camel meat, rice, and bread.

Did you know that the Amazigh tribespeople have their own, unwritten, dialect of the Berber language? Learn about this, and more, during your once-in-lifetime trip to the magnificent Siwa.





# STAY

Places To Lodge

Siwa has plenty of ecolodges, which have been built exclusively from a unique mixture of salt, mud, and palm trees. Stay here for striking scenic views and unparalleled tranquility.



## WHITE DESERT

Roam around the pristine Crystal Mountain and explore the White Desert landscape's uninhabited oases and mini-depressions. Spanning over 3,000 km<sup>2</sup>, this area is a surefire hit for geologists, ecologists, naturalists, artists, or simply curious adventurers looking to be wowed by the White Desert's unusual landscape formations and distinct cultural heritage. Announced as a protectorate in 2002, this arid landscape is home to several unique animal, reptile and bird species such as the Fennec Fox, the Saharan Horned Viper and the Sooty Falcon.



Quartz crystal mountains  
provide once-in-a-lifetime  
views in the White Desert.

# WHITE DESERT



**CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN**  
Quartz crystal rock ridge.



**AQABAT**

Where the White Desert's white cliffs  
and the Sahara's sandy dunes meet.

## **MUSHROOM AND CHICKEN ROCKS**

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Exquisite rock formations constitute the White Desert's legendary landscape.



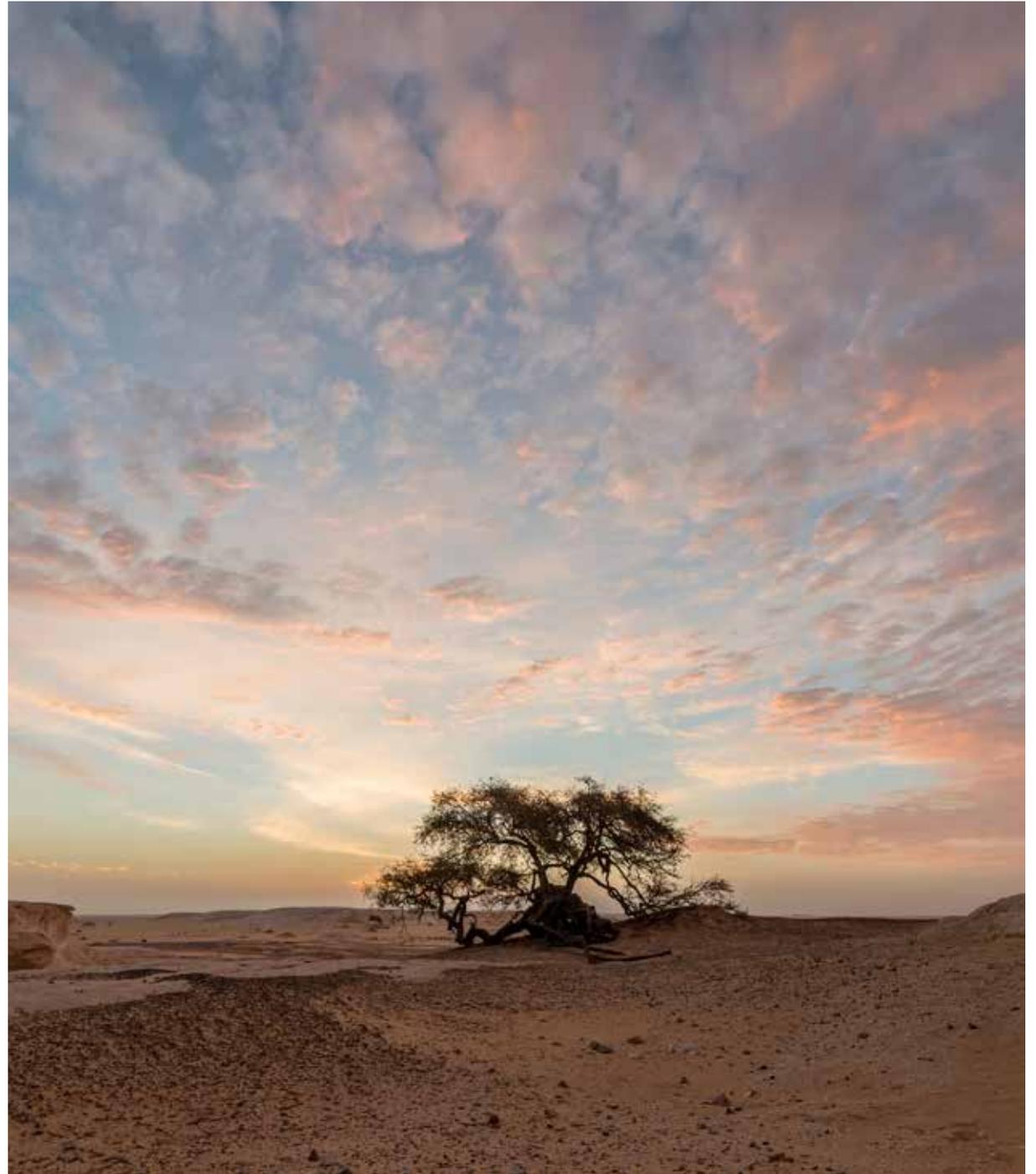
# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

With a terrain slightly similar to Siwa's, the White Desert is host to a congruent collection of flora, which includes Olive Trees, Flowering Tamarix Plant species, and the famed Egyptian Acacia tree.

Plenty of Camels and Fennec Foxes roam the White Desert plains, joined by the unique Sooty Falcon. Unlike most other falcons, these elegant raptor birds sometimes nest in colonies and therefore provide a wonderful sight to birdwatch.

The White Desert is a landmark in its own right. An area of unparalleled natural beauty, the White Chalk Inselbergs that dominate the desert landscape of this natural park contain fossilized marine shells and animals - guaranteed to amaze visitors.

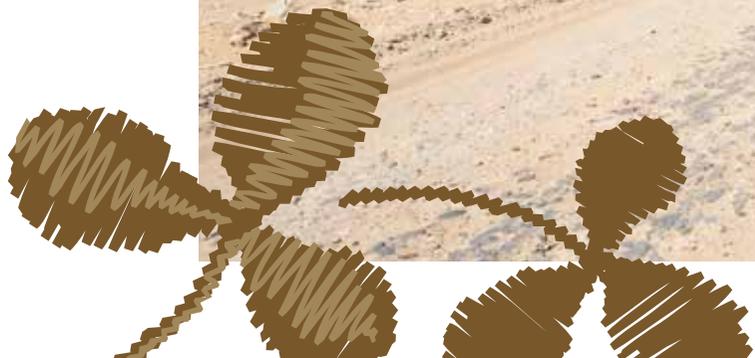


# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Because of the White Desert's geological formations, safari expeditions here will be unlike anywhere else in the country. You'll also have the chance to hike and stargaze at this secluded location. Craving a taste of adrenaline? The White Desert's special dunes make sandboarding every adventure junkie's favorite activity!

With favourite plenty of archeological sites, including prehistoric artefacts, relics and tombs, the White Desert also offers the opportunity for alternative historic excursions.





# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

Residents are called the Wahati people, meaning “people of the oasis.” Some of the Wahati people are descendants of Bedouin tribes from Libya and the North Coast, Wahati people also originate from resettled communities in the Nile Valley who relocated to this spectacular oasis.

Despite sharing a few cultural traditions with Bedouin tribes elsewhere in the country, Wahati communities still enjoy a distinct cuisine and their culture reflects years of adaptation to this region’s unique and remote landscape. They are known for certain dishes such as white okra, sunny bread, and red rice, which can only be found in this area.

# STAY

## Places To Lodge

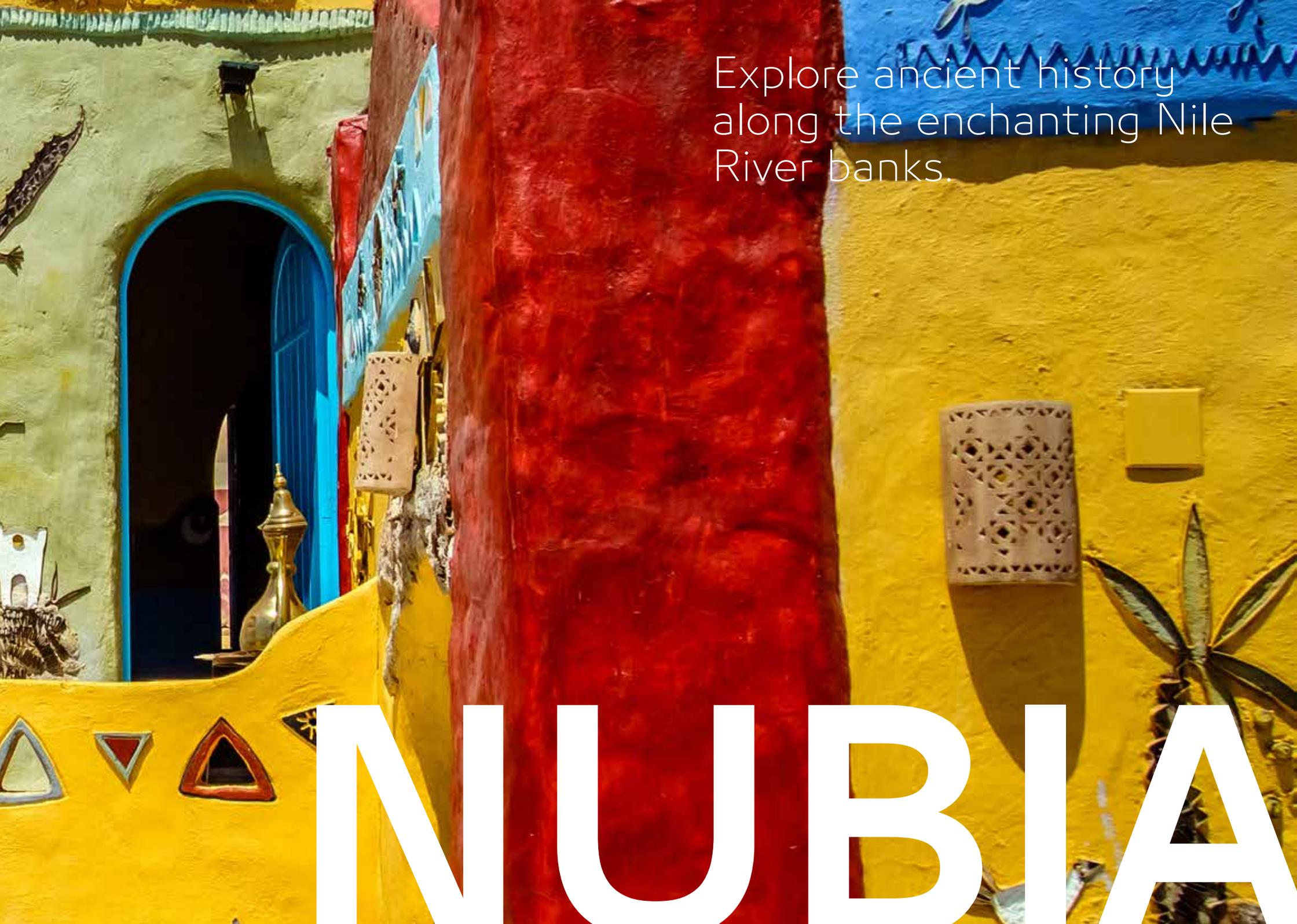
Wahati tribespeople run several campsites in the White Desert, perfect for curious explorers!



## NUBIA

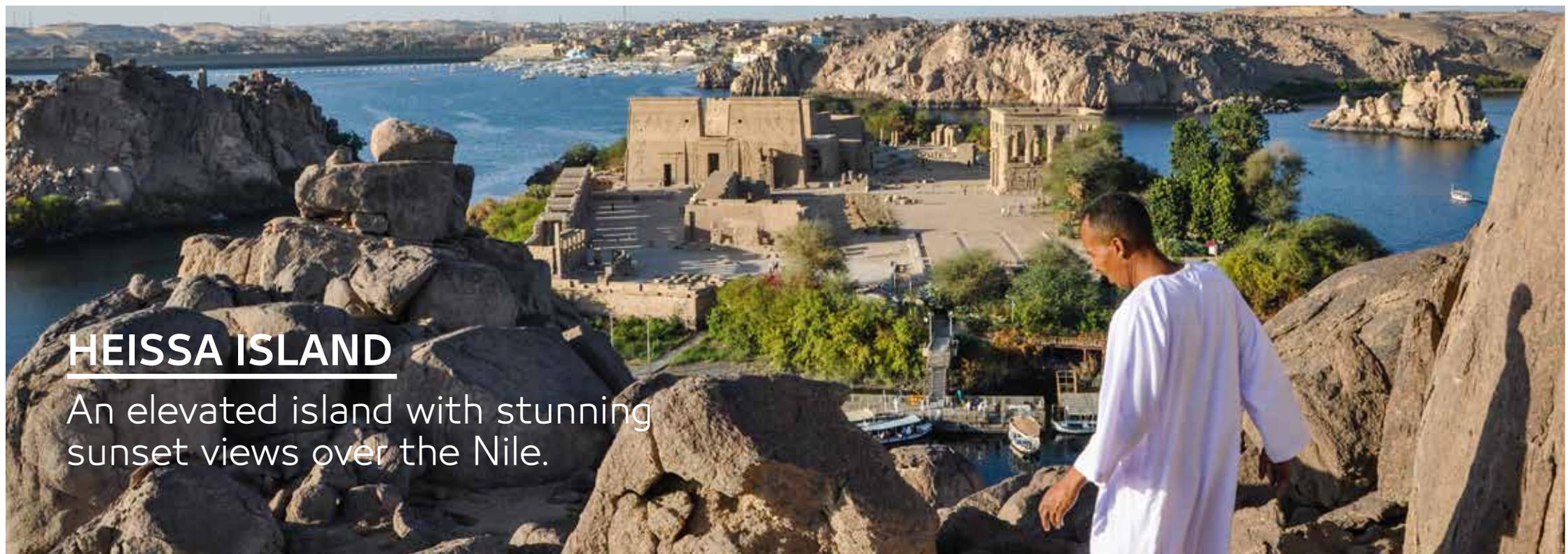
Experience beautiful Nile views from the area's many elevated islands and immerse yourself in Nubian culture while you discover local architecture and grow acquainted with the community's distinct artistic style. For fans of Egyptology, Nubia hosts countless ancient sites.



A vibrant, colorful scene of a Nubian village. A prominent red pillar stands in the center, flanked by yellow walls. To the left, a blue arched doorway is visible, with a golden vase on a table in front of it. The walls are decorated with intricate patterns and a white bird sculpture. The overall atmosphere is bright and traditional.

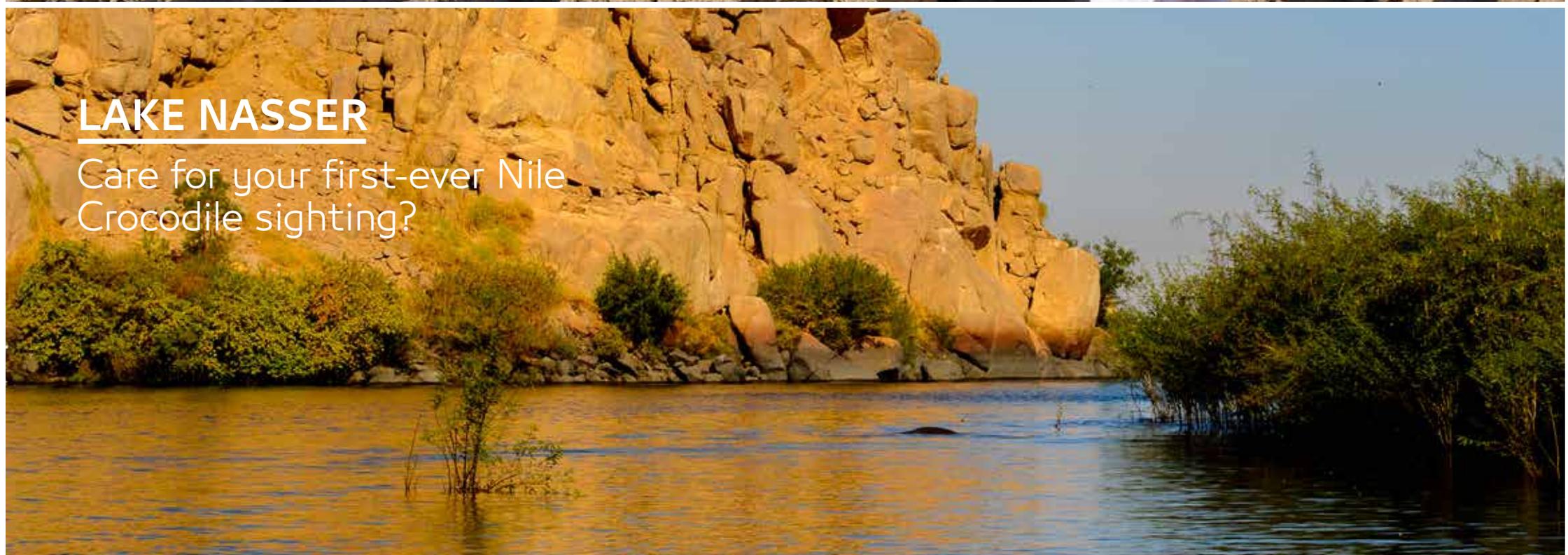
Explore ancient history  
along the enchanting Nile  
River banks.

# NUBIA



## HEISSA ISLAND

An elevated island with stunning sunset views over the Nile.

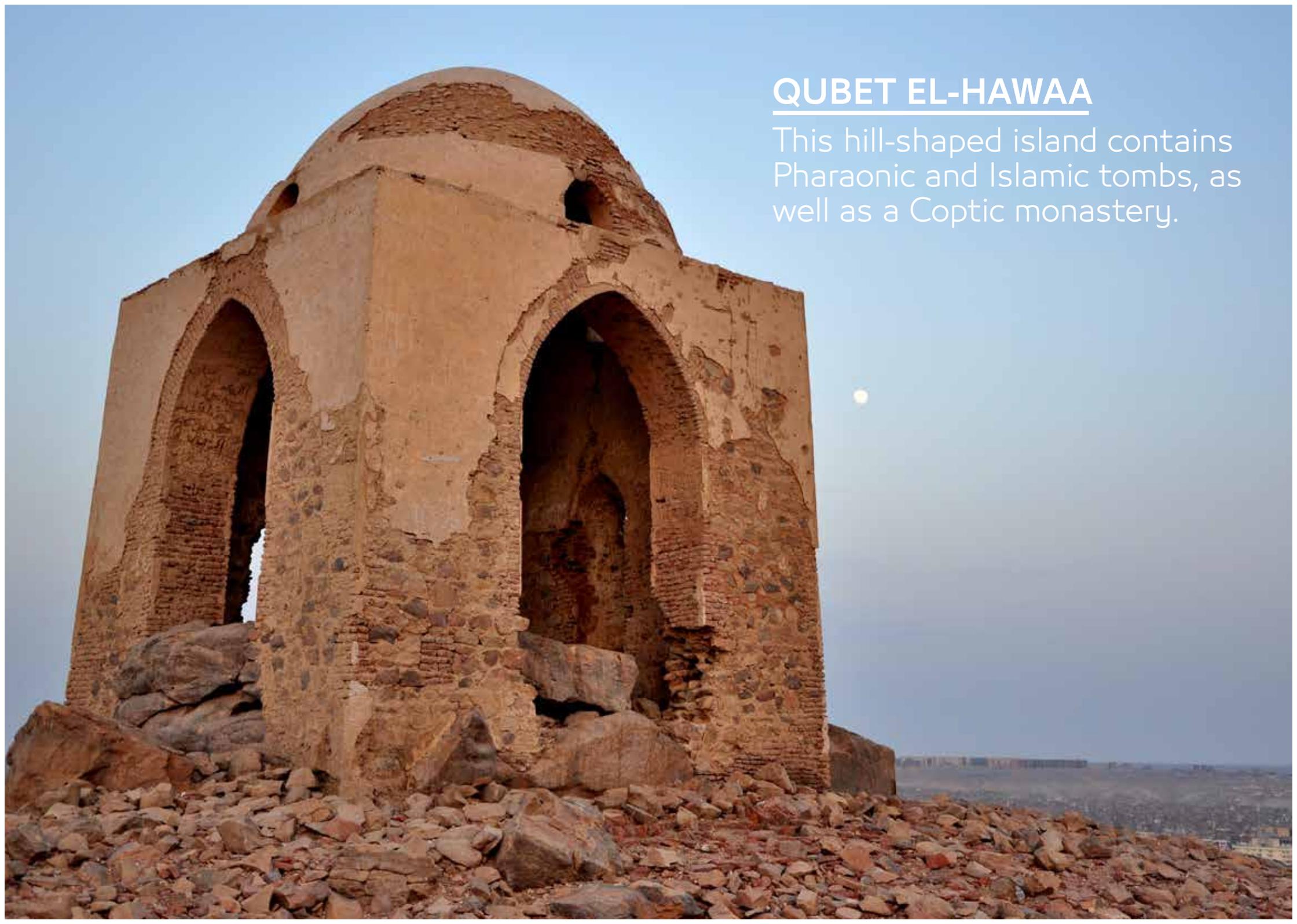


## LAKE NASSER

Care for your first-ever Nile Crocodile sighting?

## QUBET EL-HAWAA

This hill-shaped island contains Pharaonic and Islamic tombs, as well as a Coptic monastery.





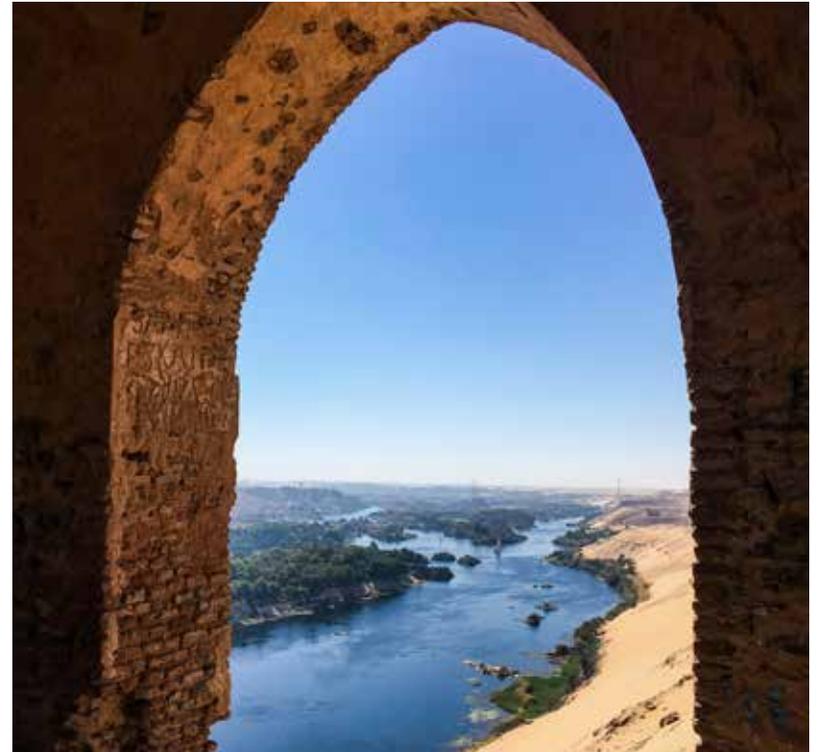
# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

A key highlight of Nubia's fauna is the critically endangered Argun palm tree, which is exclusive to the Nubian Desert. This rare species of palm is distinguishable by its unique fan-shaped leaves.

With a natural ecosystem steeped in Nile River grandeur, Nubia is home to a selection of wildlife unavailable elsewhere in Egypt, including the world's second-largest reptile, the Nile Crocodile. While these crocodiles are the Nile's largest reptiles, they are quickly followed in size by the Nile Monitor, commonly believed to be far more dangerous than its similarly sized crocodile cousin.

Nubia is awash with key archeological sites from Pharaonic, Islamic, and Coptic eras. Fans of ancient Egyptian history will thoroughly enjoy a visit to Nubia, which offers countless sightseeing and learning experiences such as the nearby Philae Temple.

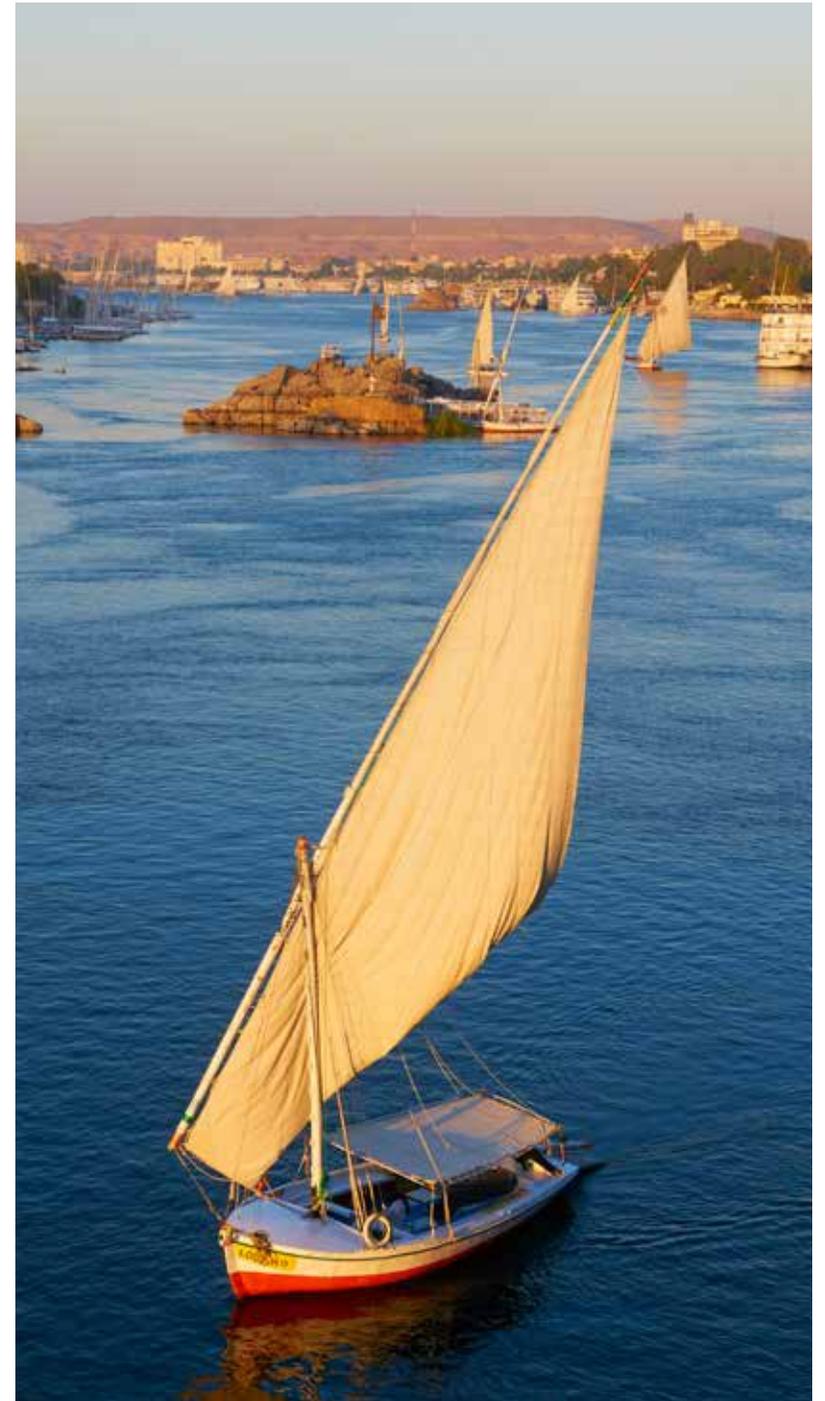




# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Nubian people typically rely on small sailboats or motor boats for transportation as the landscape consists primarily of small islands dispersed along the Nile River. Boating is thus a very popular activity among visitors to Nubia, who enjoy spectacular sunset views along the banks of the Nile. If a relaxing boat ride doesn't sound thrilling enough to you, consider sandboarding in the Nubian Desert!



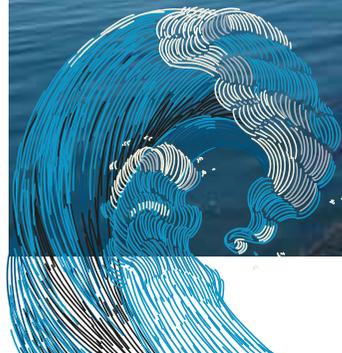
# MEET

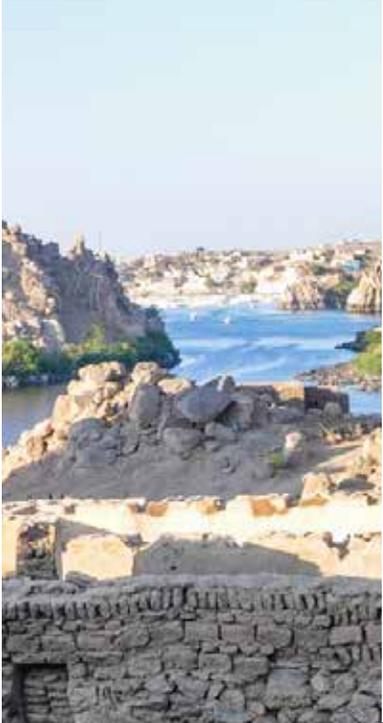
## Local People, Tribes

Nubian people are indigenous to the region of Nubia and have long been represented as Egypt's most hospitable and well-spirited community in national popular culture. While roaming Nubia, you will see landscapes lined with traditional Nubian houses, painted with recurring artistic motifs in striking, vibrant colours. Arts, crafts, and embroidery constitute the heart of Nubian cultural expression.

Nubian communities are famed for their masterful handicrafts, which include beadwork, wickerwork, and threading. Recurrent motifs are interwoven throughout all of these products, each with its own set of specific cultural significance.

No Nubian visit would be complete without a meal shared with locals. Highlights include Al Etr, a dish similar to typical Egyptian Molokheyya, but made with okra and eaten with rice or fried eggs, and Al Kashad, a liver-based dish eaten either during breakfast or dinner.





# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Local community lodges are a popular accommodation choice for Nubia visitors. If you'd prefer a more authentic Nubian experience, why not consider staying on the Bigha or Heissa Islands, both of which have several locally operated Nubian guesthouses.

# 9

## EL WAHAT EL BAHARIYA

Endowed protected status just in 2010, El Wahat El Bahariya acts as a bridge between Siwa in the North and the White Desert in the South and spans an area of approximately 2000 km<sup>2</sup>. Here a number of flora and fauna can be found, among which is the Olive Tree. Considered a key site for scientific research, El Wahat El Bahariya contains an abundance of marine, animal, and dinosaur fossils. It was here that scientists discovered fossils from the world's second largest dinosaur, which are still there today!

# EL BAHARIYA



From Gazelles to Kingfisher birds, El Wahat El Bahariya enjoys an exciting diversity of wildlife.

# EL WAHAT EL BAHARIYA



## VALLEY OF GOLDEN MUMMIES

A vast Greco-Roman necropolis.

A wide-angle photograph of the Black Desert in Jordan. Three prominent, dark, conical volcanic hills are visible against a pale, overcast sky. The foreground is a vast, flat, yellowish-brown desert plain. The lighting is soft, suggesting dawn or dusk.

## BLACK DESERT

Find black volcanic rocks here, created by ancient volcanic activity.

A photograph of the ruins of a British army outlook post on a mountaintop. The ruins consist of several low, rectangular stone walls and towers, some of which are partially collapsed. A person is standing near the ruins for scale. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a clear sky.

## GEBEL AL INGLEEZ

This mountaintop contains the ruins of a British army outlook post from WWI!

# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

El Wahat El Bahariya is one of the few places where you'll be able to find the endangered Argun Palm Tree, as well as the Acacia Nilotica, also known as the gum Arabic tree. Typically used in traditional medicine remedies, the Cocculus Pendulus plant can also be located at El Wahat El Bahariya. From

Ruppell's Sand Foxes, Dorcas Gazelles, and Egyptian Wolves – it doesn't really get any more interesting than the wildlife at El Wahat El Bahariya!

Birdwatchers love the area for its distinct collection of feathered species: Egyptian Barn Swallows, Black and Morning Wheatears, Little Egrets, Little Stints, and the strikingly colourful White-throated Kingfisher birds.



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Stargaze among the area's remote landscape, hike up Gebel Al Ingleez (literally, "The English Mountain!"), or set up camp anywhere throughout this expansive, interesting geological landscape. History aficionados will enjoy a visit to the open-air museum found at the Valley of the Golden Mummies.



© Akram Reda

# MEET

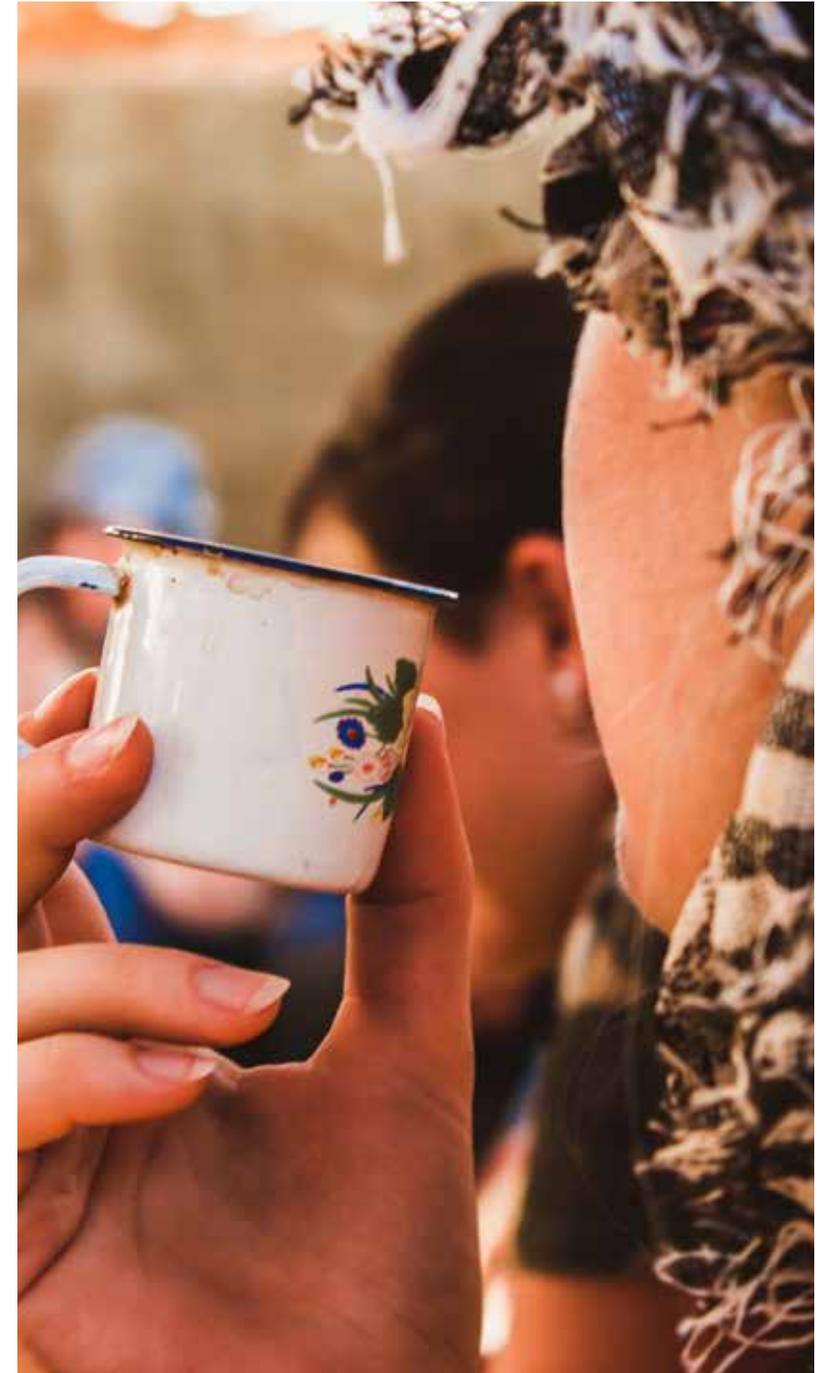
## Local People, Tribes

Residents of El Wahat El Bahariya share many of the same cultural elements as their neighbours elsewhere throughout this region, especially the Wahati people in the White Desert.

Cultural customs draw heavily on Islamic traditions, which dictate social interactions among people indigenous to this area. In general, traditional music plays an important role in Wahati culture.

Flutes, drums, and the *simsimeyya* (a five-stringed harp-like instrument) are played regularly at social gatherings, especially weddings. Traditional songs sung in the local dialect and style are passed down orally from generation to generation, with new songs introduced into their cultural repertoire from time to time. The remoteness of this region means tribes like the Farafra are able to preserve, maintain and practice this unique culture until present day. The Farafra tribe is also known for their distinct architecture, which is often described as simple, smooth, undecorated, all in mud colour.

Tip! Don't forget to taste the unique Wahati cuisine, which reflects years of adaptation to the area's harsh climate and includes dishes such as white okra, sunny bread, and red rice.





# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Consider staying at one of the lodges and camps run by local communities in the surrounding area.

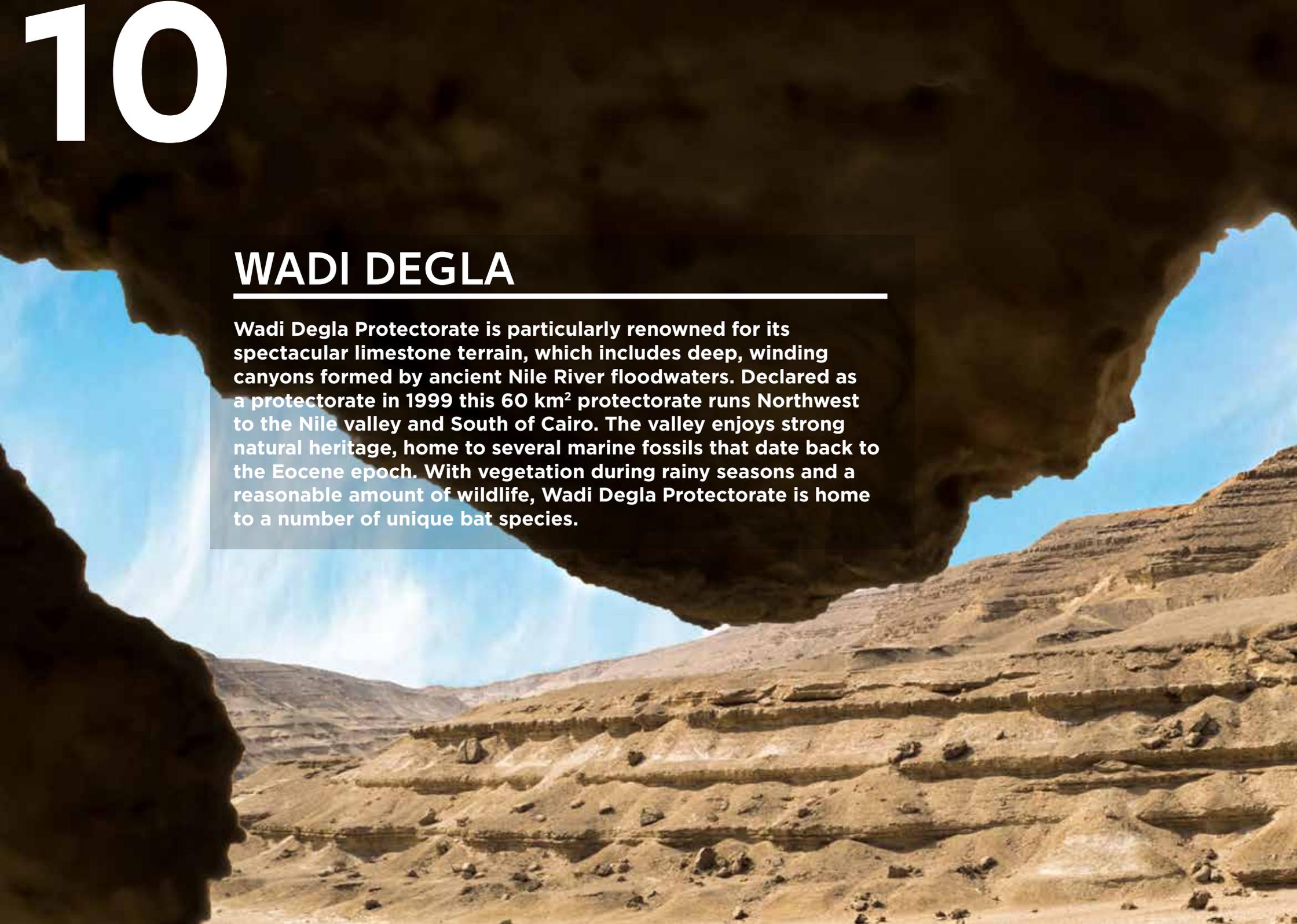


# 10

## WADI DEGLA

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Wadi Degla Protectorate is particularly renowned for its spectacular limestone terrain, which includes deep, winding canyons formed by ancient Nile River floodwaters. Declared as a protectorate in 1999 this 60 km<sup>2</sup> protectorate runs Northwest to the Nile valley and South of Cairo. The valley enjoys strong natural heritage, home to several marine fossils that date back to the Eocene epoch. With vegetation during rainy seasons and a reasonable amount of wildlife, Wadi Degla Protectorate is home to a number of unique bat species.



Particularly renowned for its spectacular limestone terrain, which includes deep, winding canyons.

# WADI DEGLA

# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

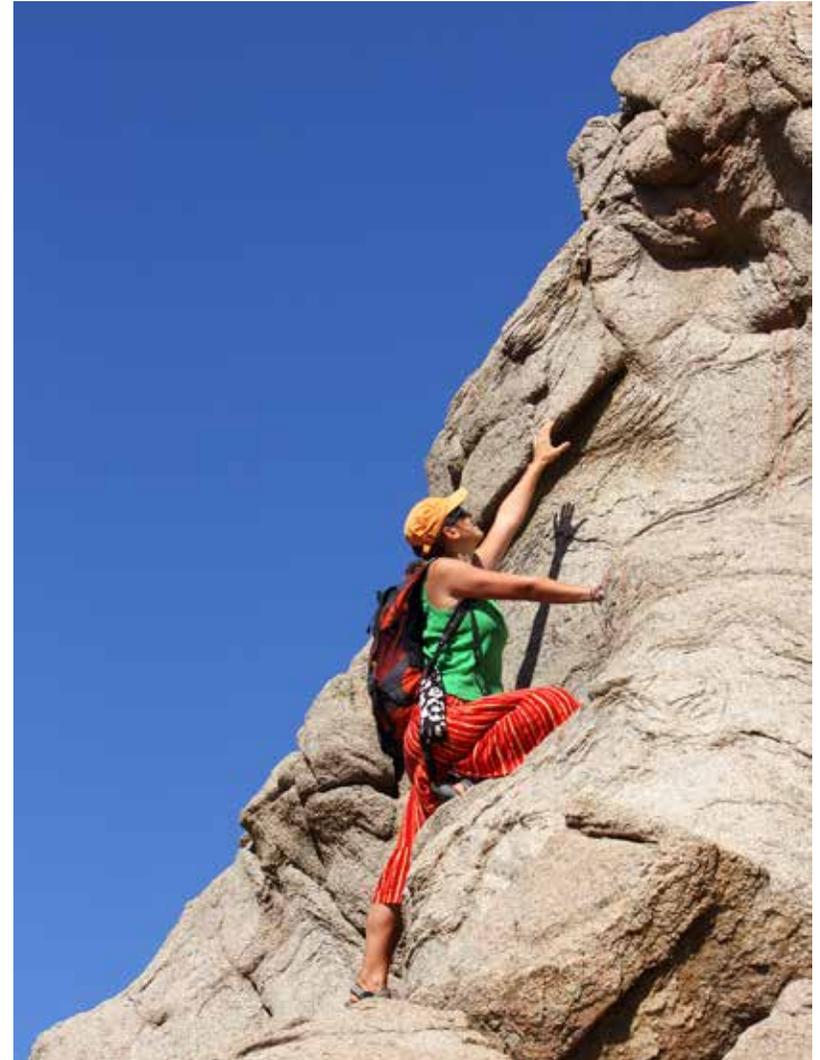
Wadi Degla Protectorate hosts an impressive geological landscape that is a sight to behold. Here you can find winding desert canyons, and an awe-inspiring limestone landscape that boasts a strong natural heritage. Marine fossils dating back centuries can also be found in this area, along with a variety of wildlife. The area is known for having caves that are home to a number of unique bat species.



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Hiking, biking, camping, and meditation are some of the most popular activities in Wadi Degla. During the day, you can hike down the trails leading through this majestic limestone terrain or you can choose to meditate on the cliffs overlooking the deep valleys below.



# MEET

## Local people

Here you can meet locals from all over Cairo who will introduce you to a flourishing city culture and its vibrant traditions.



# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Most visitors to Wadi Degla don't stay overnight, due to its proximity to the capital, Cairo. However, camping is permissible and is regarded as the main type of accommodation available in the area.



## LAKE QARUN

Almost half of Egypt's 431 bird species have been sighted and recorded at one point or another at Lake Qarun, a vital wintering destination for migrating water birds and every birdwatcher's dream come true! Here you can catch a glimpse of the Flamingo and the White Pelican. Known for both its natural and cultural heritage, Lake Qarun Protectorate spans 1,385 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to a number of Pharaonic, Roman, and Coptic archeological sites. Then don't miss out on a visit to the Jebel Qatrani Open Air Museum, located at the Qatrani Mountain! This area was announced as a protectorate in 1989.

A vital wintering destination for  
migrating water birds and every  
birdwatcher's dream come true!

LAKE

QARUN

## QATRANI MOUNTAIN

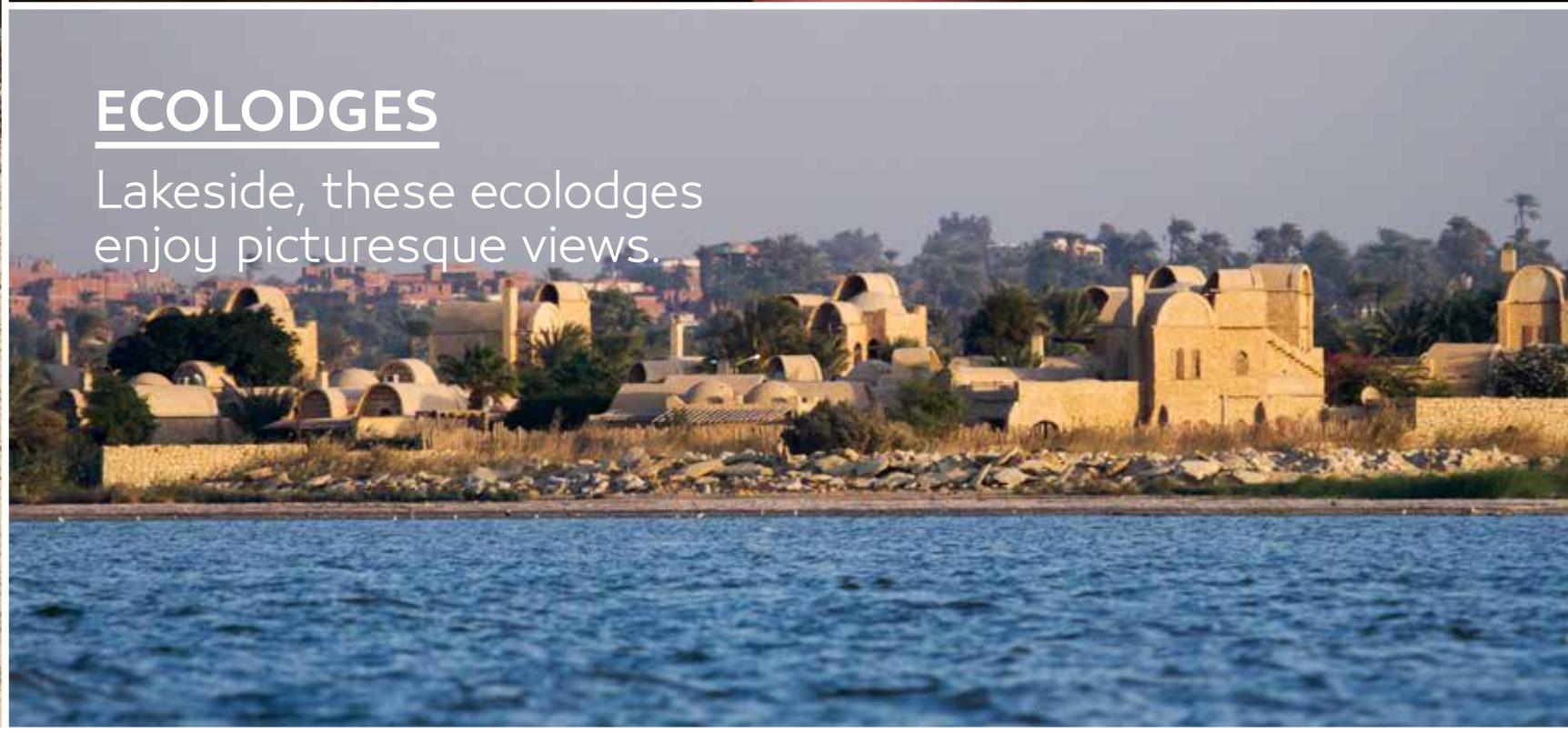
Discover ancient fossils and the oldest paved road in the world!





## TUNIS VILLAGE

Famed for producing beautiful pottery arts.



## ECOLOGES

Lakeside, these ecolodges enjoy picturesque views.

# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Lake Qarun is famous for being a birdwatcher's paradise, here you can experience one of Egypt's most pristine birding destinations surrounded by a serene desert landscape. This area is home to a wide variety of bird species, the most notable being the Flamingo and the White Pelican.

Qatrani Mountain offers a spectacular opportunity to witness one of the world's ancient fossils destinations atop this 350m peak. While here, don't forget to visit the Jebel Qatrani Open Air Museum which showcases fossils of both marine and terrestrial life.

Although Lake Qarun is renowned for its natural heritage, there is an

abundance of historical and cultural sites to explore. Here you can explore a wide number of Pharaonic, Roman, and Coptic archeological sites.





# DO

## Activities, Excursions

There's a plenty of activities that are popular around Lake Qarun, ranging from birdwatching, hiking, sandboarding to camping and boating. You can relax on the lake and spot many of Egypt's rare and fascinating birdlife, or you could choose to hike through this vast desert landscape truly experiencing this region's unique topography.



# MEET

## Local people

Lake Qarun does not have a distinct local community; however, the area is steeped in tradition and culture. In Tunis Village, you can find some of the most beautiful pottery. The locals here are famed for their incredible talent in the art of pottery making.





## STAY

### Places To Lodge

Lakeside, there are many camps and ecolodges which are often the preferred type of accommodation for visitors to Lake Qarun.

# 12

## WADI EL RAYAN

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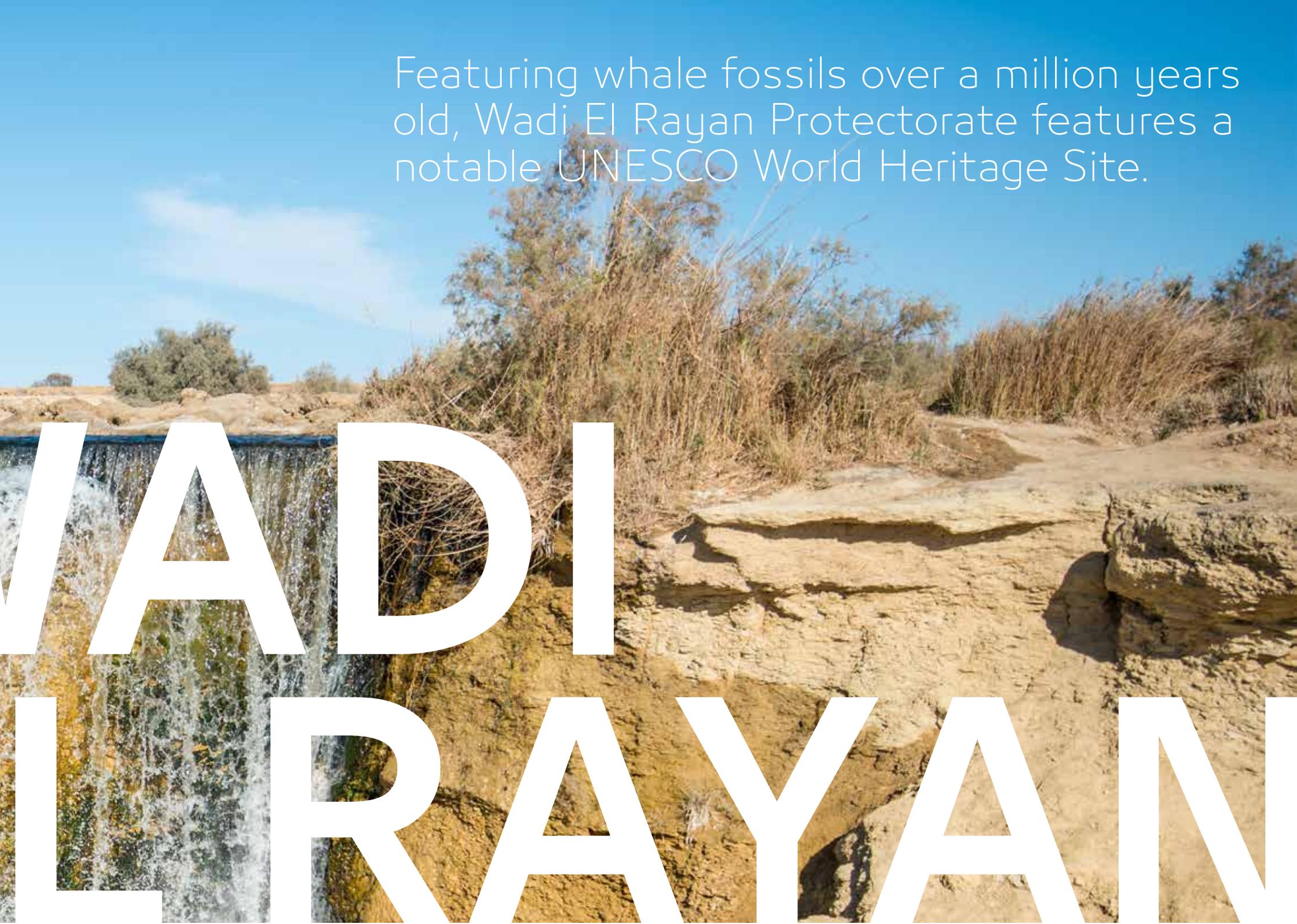
Featuring whale fossils over a million years old, Wadi El Rayan Protectorate features a notable UNESCO World Heritage Site. Announced as a protectorate in 1989 and spanning over 1,700 km<sup>2</sup>, mountains in this area make for great hikes, and clear, expansive skies perfect for birdwatching as well as stargazing. This area features an array of wildlife, ranging from Ruppell's Sand Fox to the rare Sandgrouse. Surrounded by cascading sand dunes, the Magic Lake here is peacefully picturesque and a stay at any one of the nearby ecolodges provides welcome escape from the bustle of neighbouring Cairo.

# WADI EL RAYAN



Featuring whale fossils over a million years old, Wadi El Rayan Protectorate features a notable UNESCO World Heritage Site.

# WADI EL RAYAN





## MAGIC LAKE

Striking desert landscapes surround this beautiful lake.



## WADI EL HITAN

UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for million-year-old whale fossils.



## ECOLOGDGES

Ecolodges here neighbour Egypt's biggest waterfall.



## MODAWARA MOUNTAIN

This hiking and camping site boasts views over the Magic Lake.

# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

Located in the Fayoum Governorate, Wadi El Rayan Protectorate hosts a unique natural and ecological identity. Here you can find Wadi El Hitan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famed for having million-year-old whale and other marine fossils. Nestled between the expansive desert landscape is Magic Lake, a beautiful natural lake surrounded by a series of cascading sand dunes. If you are looking to relax or enjoy a well-deserved hike during your day in Wadi El Rayan, Magic Lake is the perfect place to unwind. Overlooking this spectacular lake is Modawara Mountain, a known hiking and camping site that boasts impressive natural views.

Wadi El Rayan is home to an eclectic variety of bird and animal species, keep an eye out for the rare Sandgrouse and Ruppell's Sand Fox.



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Wadi El Rayan's proximity to Cairo makes it the perfect destination for both local city wonderers and international explorers alike. Here, there is a wide array of different activities that cater for all ages and interests, ranging from birdwatching, hiking, sandboarding, camping and stargazing. You can enjoy hiking and birdwatching around the serene desert landscape, exploring the region's unique biodiversity, or you can sandboard around the sand dunes surrounding Magic Lake. During the evening, you can take the opportunity of the clear nighttime skies to stargaze.





# MEET

## Local people

Wadi El Rayan does not have a distinct local community, however, the area is steeped in tradition and culture. Many of the residents and locals in the area have originated from resettled Egyptian communities in the Nile Valley who have relocated to this area. Some locals are also known to have Arab or Bedouin roots and backgrounds.



# STAY

## Places To Lodge

Camps and ecolodges are the preferred type of accommodation for visitors to Wadi El Rayan. These establishments are run by local communities, known for their hospitality, and are a great source of knowledge regarding the ecology, tradition and culture found in the region. Interestingly, some of these ecolodges are located near Egypt's biggest waterfall!



# 13

## TABA

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The northernmost protected area in the Sinai Peninsula, Taba Protectorate covers 3,595 km<sup>2</sup> and is characterized by steep-walled valleys and particularly high mountaintops. Long considered by experts to be one of the most well-preserved regions in Southern Sinai, Taba is home to the infamous Nubian Ibex. Declared a protected area in 1998, Taba also boasts an incredible selection of wildlife, including 24 reptilian species and up to 480 different kinds of plants. Visit Taba for an unmissable experience of traditional Bedouin heritage and the opportunity to roam around a number of cultural and archeological sites. Nawamis, one of the world's oldest stone-roofed buildings, can be found there - just a taste of what Taba has to offer!



One of the most well-preserved  
regions in Southern Sinai.

**TABA**





## PHARAOH'S ISLAND

The Salah El Din Citadel sits on this coral island.



## NUWEIBA ECOLODGES

Sunrise camel rides, midnight stargazing.



## THE FJORD

Coral-lined glistening blue waters, surrounded by a beautiful bay!



## WADI EL WESHWASHY

Unique natural water spring.

# SEE

## Natural Phenomena, Animals, Plants

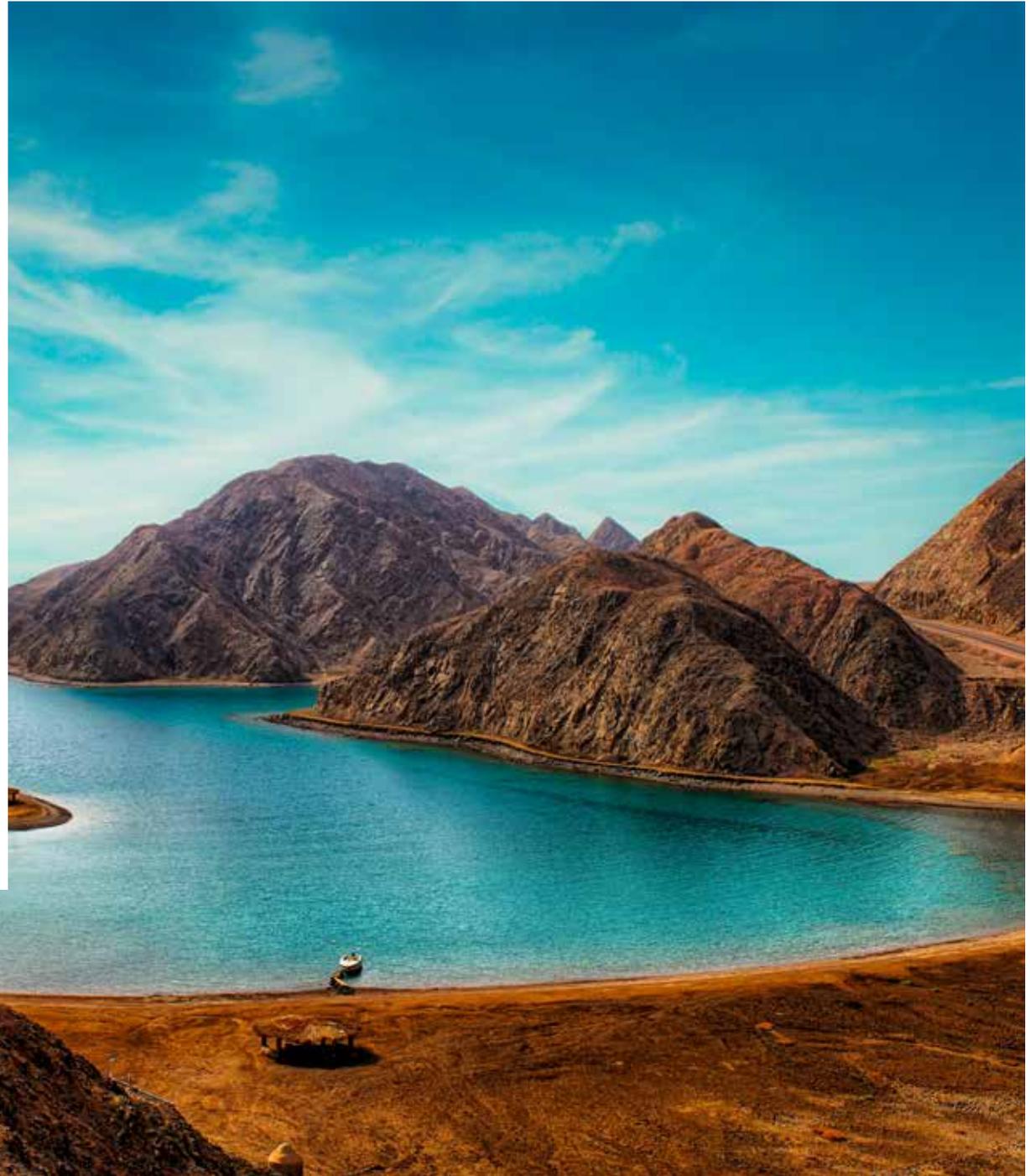
Untouched nature, beauty and serenity is just some of what Taba has to offer. You can find in the steep valleys and across the jagged mountain range of this region an abundant amount of flora and fauna. Taba is known to have a wide variety of plant and bird species, such as the Acacia tree and the rare Tristram Starling. The Egyptian Vulture can also be seen soaring the skies above Taba, and the Nubian Ibex grazing around the cliffs and mountaintops.

While in Taba be sure to check out Pharaoh's Island, a popular attraction, atop this unique island sits Salah El Din Citadel surrounded by crystal blue waters and pristine coral reefs. A refreshing

blend of culture, history and a spectacular marine landscape.

Taba's Fjord Bay is a must visit; combining stunning mountain views and enchanting seascape. These shimmering blue waters not only offer beautiful views but is also known for being a tranquil spot perfect for relaxation.

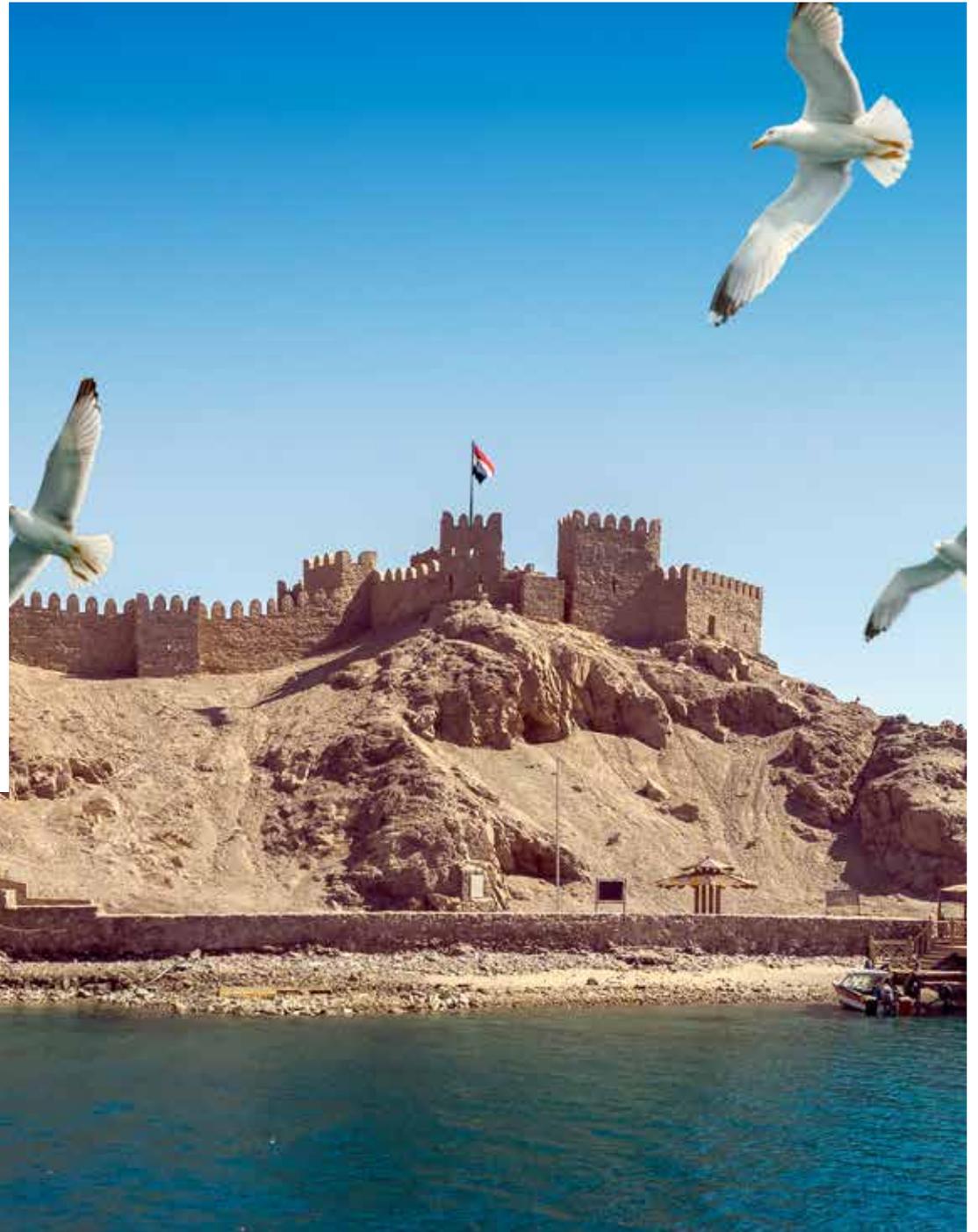
The valleys lining Taba's coast is home to a number of unique natural water springs forming after centuries of rainfall. Hosting three water springs, Wadi El Weshwashy is a hidden gem buried deep in the mountains of South Sinai.



# DO

## Activities, Excursions

Diving, hiking and camping are some of the most sought-after activities around Taba. You can explore some of this region's rich marine life through numerous diving and snorkeling trips, or you can spend your day hiking and trekking through the deep mountain ranges of Southern Sinai. Along the coast there is plenty of camping sites giving you the opportunity to relax and enjoy the breathtaking scenery and landscape. During the evening, the clear bright skies over Taba offer an incredible opportunity to stargaze.



# MEET

## Local People, Tribes

One of the largest and most established Bedouin tribes resides in the area around Taba, the Tarabin. This Bedouin tribe is famous for their exquisite hospitality and endearing nature. While exploring or hiking around this region be sure to break for a meal alongside the Tarabin people, their delicious cuisine is a must. Qorsa, a known dish by the Tarabin, is cooked with unripe watermelon and eaten with chili peppers. Be sure to discover their amazing traditional clothing and crafts items adorned with striking embroidery and beadwork meant to reflect the ecology of the region. Don't forget to bring some of these crafts back home as authentic souvenirs from your time with the Tarabin tribespeople, all the while supporting these local communities.





# STAY

## Places To Lodge

The city of Taba offers a wide choice of accommodations. Camps and ecolodges around the area are operated by local communities, dotted along the coast they offer a more intimate experience with a spectacular backdrop of the turquoise blue waters and striking Sinai mountain range.

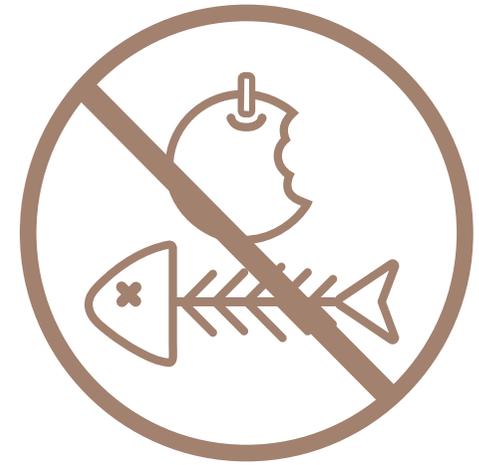
## Help Preserve Our Natural Heritage



To take or capture nothing,  
but photographs



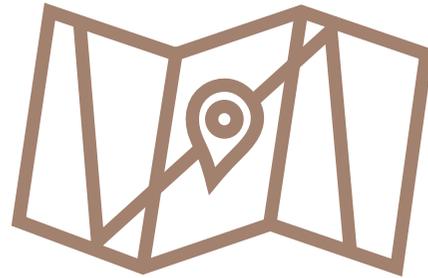
To eliminate or kill nothing,  
but time



To leave or discard nothing,  
but memories

## For your safety remember that:

- A permit from military or governmental authorities is required to access a number of protected areas, so make sure you have it before starting your adventure.
- Before starting your adventure, hire a knowledgeable and experienced guide as it is highly recommended for visiting desert areas.
- In remote areas, make sure to travel in convoys of at least two 4x4 vehicles.
- Make sure you are fully equipped and prepared with enough food and water supplies, as travelling time through the desert can often be deceptively long.
- Before setting out on your journey, alert someone to your whereabouts and when you expect to be back.
- Make sure to bring appropriate clothing and an insect repellent.



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# MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN EGYPT'S TOURISM

