

## **SUDAN trips FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)**

### ***Q) Description of Sudan trips out from Egypt & back***

A) The Sudan trips out of Port Ghaleb – Egypt to Sudan and back is a new itinerary & product in the market which has been launched 4 years ago, and are the first trips to be done officially between Egypt & Sudan with permissions from the Egyptian & the Sudanese authorities. So it's considered as a short international voyage according to the maritime international rules (taking passengers from country to another).

### ***Q) How is the local authorities deal with this kind of trips? Two countries on one trip - any hassle with bureaucracy?***

A) The authorities of each country are getting used to this kind of trips, at the beginning (first two trips) the authorities in both countries were very strict as they were not used to this kind of trips & getting confused to treat the permission as diving trip or passenger ship doing a short international voyage between two countries with passengers. Then things are getting smoother & became more flexible, on each trip now we feel that the permissions procedures & time are getting shorter than before.

### ***Q) Where is the embarkation & dis-embarkation port for the Sudan trips?***

A) Port Ghaleb jetty (10 minutes from Marsa Alam airport) or (220Km south of Hurghada).

### ***Q) How many entries Visa do I need for Egypt?***

A) Two Egyptian entries Visa, one upon your arrival at the Airport, the other one upon your arrival back from the Sudan trip at Port Ghaleb.

### ***Q) Do I have to arrange & pay my own Egyptian Visa by myself?***

A) The first entry visa at the airport will be issue for you according to your agreement with your travel agent if it's included or not in your holiday package. The second one will be arranged & paid by the boat at Port Ghaleb as it's included in your tour package.

### ***Q) What about the Sudan entry Visa? Do I have to arrange my own Visa for Sudan?***

A) We organize & pay for you the Sudan entry Visa (it's included in your trip package). You will need only one entry Visa for Sudan, we or your travel agent will send you the Visa application form (in Word format) which have to be filled by you & send it back to us or travel agent with a scanned passport copy two weeks before the departure day, accordingly we'll send them to our agent in Sudan who arrange in advanced the Sudan entry Visa for you before our arrival to Port Sudan and will be issue & stamped on your passport upon our arrival to Port Sudan.

### ***Q) Is there any restriction to obtain the Sudan entry Visa?***

A) Sudan authorities will not issue the Visa for any passport has an Israeli stamp on it, so please check your passport before booking regarding this matter. Our dive guides onboard will check the passports as soon as you embark in Egypt & if they found any Israeli stamped we'll be unable to honor you onboard the Sudan trips.

### ***Q) How many empty pages are required on my passport for Egypt & Sudan Visa?***

A) We'll need 4 empty pages on your passport, since you'll receive 2 entry Visa for Egypt and the Sudan entry Visa will need 2 empty pages.

### ***Q) What about the passport expiration date ?***

A) According to Sudan regulations the passport should have minimum 6 months passport validity to issue the Sudan visa.

### ***Q) At what time the boat start sailing from Port Ghaleb?***

A) The Royal Evolution starts sailing at night, as soon as the last guest embarks & finish all the immigration procedures.

**Embarkation time must be before 9:00pm.**

***Q) How long the immigration procedures are taking time in Egypt?***

A) As soon as the last guest embarks, we send all the passports with our representative to Marsa Alam airport to get them stamped out of the country, on his way back to Port Ghaleb jetty we'll ask all the guests to move to the international transit hall which is situated 20 meters from the boat, then the Royal Evolution move to the international area in front of the transit hall. The guests embark again to the boat & start sailing.

The duration from the time the guests move to the transit hall to embark again is approx 30 - 60 minutes.

***Q) What about Sudan?***

A) We arrive Port Sudan port at approx 9:00AM (depending on weather condition) on the third day of the trip, as soon as the boat is moored our agent in Port Sudan arrive to the boat with all the authorities representatives (Passports, Customs, Health, etc...). In approx 2 to 3 hours we have all the passports stamped with the Sudan visa, having our diving permissions with us & the boat leave the port to start the amazing diving in Sudan.

***Q) Why we have to pay 395 Euro for Egypt & Sudan entry visa, local taxes, etc... isn't this cost very high ? And what does that fees include ?***

A) The fact that this kind of trips include 2 countries and considered as short international voyage, we have to deal with several local authorities in both countries to receive our permissions. This fees include the following:

- Two entry visa to Egypt
- One entry visa to Sudan
- Local taxes in Egypt
- Local taxes & marine park fees in Sudan
- Port charges in Egypt & Sudan
- Passport control fees in Egypt & Sudan
- Customs control fees in Egypt & Sudan
- Health control fees in Sudan
- State security fees in Egypt & Sudan
- Port security fees in Egypt & Sudan
- Port Sudan agent commission

***Q) Are we go off the boat in Port Sudan?***

A) No one is going out of the boat in Port Sudan, we're staying onboard this couple of hours as all the authorities are visiting us onboard to finish the immigration procedures so no need to go out of the boat.

***Q) So, we cannot touch any land in Sudan?***

A) You'll touch Sudan land if you decide to visit the lighthouse of Sanganeb reef which we advise to visit, it's really a remarkable visit that you don't have to miss.

***Q) And what about the immigration when coming back to Egypt?***

A) We normally arrive back to Port Ghaleb jetty at 7:00AM on the last day of the trip (depending on weather condition), on our return your passports disappear again to Marsa Alam airport. You remain on the boat until the passports are delivered back. This could take a couple of hours while you'll be having breakfast, packing your luggage and settling bills. When they come back you walk through the immigration area with all your luggage. This takes just a few minutes. You then are transferred to the hotel or airport.

***Q) How long is the Sudan trip?***

A) The distance from Port Ghaleb to Port Sudan is approximately 450 Nautical Miles.

***Q) It is a long way!! Are we going to miss any day diving?***

A) The Royal Evolution is always sailing at night, only the second day of the trip we'll have only one morning dive at Shalalat reef (55 Nautical Miles south of St. John reef). Also it has to be noted that on the fourth day of the trip (Arriving day to Port Sudan) we could miss the 1<sup>st</sup> and second day dives depending on the time we have the green light from the port state to go out of the port.

***Q) Sailing at night!! Should we be able to sleep?***

A) Yes of course, a lot of care has been taken into consideration before & during building the Royal Evolution regarding the sound insulation in the engine room & the cabins. The most advanced marine technology has been used to reduce the sound to the maximum, even our main powerful propulsion engines are set on shock absorber mounts with a flexible coupling to reduce the noise to the maximum.

The Royal Evolution is very stable & nearly 40m long and made of steel so she is heavy and takes bad weather in her stride which is remarkable, appreciated & noted by all our previous guests.

***Q) What about the rest of the dives during the trip? And how many dives we can expect to do during the whole trip?***

A) We are doing approx 39 dives including night dives during the 13 nights Sudan trip. Three day dives & one night dive everyday except the second day of the trip we do only one morning dive & the third day of the trip (arrival day to Port Sudan) we are doing two or one day dives & one or two night dives.

***Q) How many days diving in Sudan & Egypt?***

A) We are doing 9 full days of diving in Sudan waters & two full days of diving & one morning day dive in Egypt waters.  
7 dives in the Egyptian water & 31 dives in Sudan water.

***Q) Do you have any diving experience recommendation to join any Sudan trip?***

A) On many dive sites in Sudan we are expecting variable current, so it's strongly recommended to have at least 50 dives logged to join any of the Sudan trips.

***Q) Do you have spare diving equipments for rent?***

A) We always have 7 full set of diving equipments available onboard for rent, also we have a stock of spare parts for sell such as mouth piece, Mask & Fins Strap, LP & HP Hose, Power Inflator hose, etc...

***Q) Is Nitrox fills available onboard?***

A) Yes, we have different range of Nitrox fills with our membrane system, from 32% up to 40%, should you require more than 40% O2 we can run our booster pump connected to our O2 bank system (Certification required). Indeed we strongly recommend diving on Nitrox for the whole trip, we've made a special offer for the Nitrox trip package booked in advance.

***Q) Why Nitrox is not free since many other live aboard operators are offering the Nitrox for free ?***

A) With all the respect to all our colleagues & partners which own or operate diving live aboard, it has to be clear that no one is offering the Nitrox for free, they are just adding the price of the Nitrox to the cruise price since the Nitrox membrane system is very expensive & very costly to be properly maintain . We can easily add the Nitrox cost to the cruise price & advertise that Nitrox is free but we believe that this is unfair since many of our valuable guests are still diving on normal air and definitely we see it's not fair to charge guests who are not using this service .

***Q) I have my own Buddy Inspiration, can you fill 100% O2? And can we rent the Buddy tanks from you?***

A) Yes, we can supply 100% O2 up to 200Bar, and we can also rent for you the Buddy tanks if you do not want to carry them from home, just we need to be advised two weeks before the trip.

***Q) Can we make any speciality courses while we are onboard?***

A) Our permanent instructors will be pleased to offer you any courses you would like to take during your dive holiday.

***Q) Will there be lots of sharks?***

A) Definitely - The amount and variety will vary from trip to trip.

***Q) What species of sharks do we see?***

A) Always lots of grey reef sharks - and unlike the grey in Egypt, they don't mind people around them so they hang around. White tip reef sharks are also common but rarely get a mention because of the Hammerheads, the Silkies, the Silvertips, the Tiger, the Lemon Shark and the Whale Shark (in decreasing likelihood of sightings). However, it has to be noted that recently and due to the world change climate on some trips we found the water temperature very warm which affect seeing the big actions we're looking for.

Our dive guides are doing their best in order to show you what you are looking for and to meet your expectation from such itinerary & we always cross our fingers at the beginning of the trip to have the most enjoyable encounter but you have to be realistic & to believe that we are searching for wild animals in the blue and that we do not hide them in cages.

***Q) Have you really seen all those Sharks?***

A) Yes. On one trip we had the whole set.

***Q) Will I see big schools of Hammerheads?***

A) The biggest we've seen was about 26. We have seen schools of around 20 on several occasions and schools of 8 - 12 on a number of dives. Its more common to see 2, 3 or 4 together or a solitary Hammerhead. Often a solitary one will break away from a group and come in for a closer look at you. Check out the Royal Evolution video clips for some recent Hammerhead shots.

***Q) Will there be Mantas?***

A) Occasional sighting happen throughout the year. On our first 7 (out of season) trips we have had 3 sightings. Peak Season is a 6 week period centered around October. This coincides with high water temperature and plankton blooms. Sadly the higher water temperature drives the Hammerhead deep so you can't have lots of both on one trip.

***Q) What else will I see?***

A) All your typical Red Sea stuff that you are used to seeing in Egypt. Plus the possibility of Schools of Bumphead Parrotfish. That is "schools" not "a school".

***Q) Any Wrecks?***

A) Yes, Two wrecks

-The Umbria is the big crowd pleaser. World War 2 wreck with lots of munitions still onboard and 3 cars. We typically do one to two day dives and one or 2 night dives on her

-The other wreck is the Blue Belt. Remains of her cargo of Toyota vehicles lay scattered on the reef. 2 day dives are possible.

***Q) Do we get to do a night dive on the Umbria?***

A) Yes, with the possibility for a second one after dinner as well.

***Q) Is there any other advantages to dive in Sudan?***

A) One of the big advantage to dive the Sudan is the few divers you're seeing on the dive sites, since there is only 6 boats operating from Port Sudan you are almost alone on most dive sites & it's very rare to see other divers or other boats on the same dive sites, which give you a very special feeling to be alone instead of finding dive sites crowded with divers & bubbles.

***Q) How far is the Sudan itinerary published is respected?***

A) We always do our best to respect the itinerary published as far as the weather conditions permitted, however there are some factors who force the captain to change some dive sites, as well it has to be understandable that we try on each trip to find a nice new dive site which take maximum one or half day at the end of the trip.

***Q) Will my mobile phone work in Sudan?***

A) Not often. If you have roaming and can link with Vodaphone networks then your phone will work around the Port Sudan area. And not much further. Just around the border we pick up a network for about an hour.

***Q) So no way for family / business to get in touch with me while I'm away?***

A) Yes we have a satellite phone. Only 2 euros a minute which is almost the cost & probably cheaper than your mobile, it works everywhere all the time.

***Q) E-mail?***

A) Not yet.

***Q) How many dive guides are onboard?***

A) We run all the Sudan trips with our permanent Three dive guides, Simon Gardener (British) who is PADI IDC Staff Instructor & photo-pro, Ahmed Daood (Egyptian, German & English speaking) PADI IDC Staff Instructor and Ayman (Egyptian, German & English speaking) PADI Dive Master.

***Q) What is the common language spoken on board?***

A) The English & German.

***Q) Is the credit cards are acceptable onboard?***

A) Yes, VISA & Master Cards are acceptable onboard, but sorry we do not accept traveller checks.

**Finally...**

**A word from the Royal Evolution Crew,**

**We have worked hard to build our reputation as professional in luxury liveaboard diving.**

**In recent times, we have been reminded how important a good, strong work ethic is, of how important our guests are to us. We'd like to say "thank you" to those of you who will travel with us for the first time and welcome back home for those who came before.**

**Our commitment to everyone who travels with us is:**

- We shall always do our best to ensure that your dive vacation is the best you've ever had.**
- That each trip you take on the Royal Evolution surpasses the one before.**
- We shall continue to stress safety, comfort and the high level of service we have become known for.**
- You will arrive as a guest & leave as a friend!**

**Pretty simple, but from the heart.**

**Welcome aboard and be ocean-minded**

**Sincerely Yours,**

***Royal Evolution Crew.***

**Ten Important Guidelines for travellers**

You may have seen these humorous guidelines or a version of them over the years. The original author is unknown, but the point they make is a valuable one. If you're planning a trip, you might want to distribute a copy of these to the divers who will be on that trip. It's a light-hearted way to remind them to "keep cool" when the inevitable glitches and unexpected problem arise during a trip.

1. Do not expect to find things to be like at home. You left home to find things different.
2. Do not take anything too seriously. A carefree mind is a vital to a good vacation.

3. Do not let other travellers get on your nerves. You paid good money to enjoy yourself.
4. Do not forget: you are a representative of your country at all times.
5. Try not to worry because he or she who worries will have no fun. Remember that few things in life are fatal.
6. Know where your passport is at all times because a traveller without a passport is a traveller without a country.
7. As a stranger in a strange land, be prepared to do as its people do.
8. Do not judge all people of a country by the one person who has given you trouble.
9. Learn how to say thank you in the language of the country you're visiting. A sincere thank you, along with a smile, doubles the value of any tip you may give.
10. Remember that you are a guest and those travellers who treat their hosts with respect will be treated likewise.