

Safaga, Brothers & Elphinstone

(from Hurghada to Marsa Ghalib or Marsa Ghalib to Hurghada)

Panorama Reef - Middle Reef - Abu Kafan - Salem Express - Brother Islands - Abu Dabab - Elphinstone

Emperor recommend that you have 30 logged dives to join this trip. Some dives will involve going to depth and drift diving in unpredictable and occasionally strong currents, therefore this itinerary is not for inexperienced divers. If you are an Open Water Diver, many dives on this itinerary are below 18m therefore we recommend taking your PADI Advanced Open Water course or Deep Diver training on board to maximise your enjoyment from the trip. Divers may find some dives challenging and may be asked by the Cruise Director to skip dives that are not suitable for their diving experience. All diving is made from zodiacs to give precise entry and exit points. No night dives are allowed in the Marine Parks.

Please note: Due to weather and diving conditions, it's not always possible to visit each dive site. Your Cruise Director and Captain will decide the best ones to visit at the time of diving.



 - Dive area with one or more sites  - Wreck(s)
Click each dive site for more information.

The area around Safaga has some great diving, the best being the offshore reefs of Panorama Reef, Middle Reef and Abu Kafan. Some divers say this area equals the great sites of Ras Mohamed. The diving offers a combination of shallow reef dives and drop-offs, as well as the famous wreck of the Salem Express.

The **Salem Express** is a dramatic dive. Around 500 people perished in one of the worst marine tragedies of all times. The 100-metre ferryboat was on its way back from Mecca to Safaga after the annual Muslim pilgrimage in December 1991 when it hit the reef during a stormy night and sunk rapidly without giving the crew and passengers the chance to board the lifeboats. It is now home to a thriving underwater life, including a famous resident frogfish, blue-spotted stingrays, angel and butterfly fish. The ship itself is covered in a large quantity of hard and soft corals. It is one of the largest wrecks in the Egyptian Red Sea, roughly the same size as the Thistlegorm.

There is superb wall diving at **Panorama**, on the south-east of the plateau is a gorgonian and glassfish corner with the whole plateau covered in soft corals and on the south side is an anemone city.

Hal Hal (Middle Reef) is a rarely chosen dive site due to its distance from the coast, which makes it a virgin spot. The north side is a drop off going down to 80 metres and is a perfect location to spot tunas, barracudas, turtles and sharks. The southern side has colourful coral gardens along with some caves and canyons.

Abu Kafan is a 300-metre long, narrow reef offering a plateau at both north and south tips. We normally jump in the water on the north plateau and glide with the frequent strong current southwards along the impressive walls covered with soft and black coral, giant fans and gorgonians.

The Brother Islands are the pinnacles of two undersea mountains rising from the depths of the abyss and are located about 60 miles offshore. Part of the Marine Park Islands National Park, these islands offer stunning wall diving, with the walls being covered in soft corals and forests of gorgonians, creating a kaleidoscope of ever-changing colours. They attract a diverse array of marine species and large pelagics. Large tuna, jacks and snappers cruise in the blue, accompanied by occasional hammerheads, silvertips, silky and oceanic white tip sharks and mantas. Even the rare thresher shark can be found here. Sightings of the grey reef shark are almost guaranteed on the North and South Plateaux of Small Brother.

Abu Dabab is six reefs commonly known as "Fathers Steps" or "Fathers Stepping Stones" and as the name suggests a set of fairly shallow reefs ranging from depths of 25 metres to the seafloor. In between Abu Dabab II and III at approximately 15 metres is the wreckage of a small ship sunk after a fire in 2004. The reefs themselves offer colourful coral gardens and an underwater cave system to explore. Pods of dolphins have

been known to frequent the area as well as blue spotted rays, Napoleons, giant puffers, box fish, sweetlips, batfish, nudibranchs and more.

Elphinstone is approximately 30km from Port Ghalib; Elphinstone reef is 300 metres long with sheer walls richly covered in colourful pink and red soft corals and elegant red gorgonians descending to around 40 metres. Other areas of the reef have near vertical cliffs, overhangs, small caves and drop offs of up to 100 metres. Elphinstone is known to experience some strong currents attracting many diverse species such as barracuda, angel fish, groupers, Napoleons, morays, reef sharks and great shoals of dogtooth tuna and jacks. Occasional sightings include dolphins, turtles, oceanic white tip and hammerheads sharks.

Liveboard Trips - What's included and what's not

- **Prices** are per person
- **Included:** Shared cabin, 7 nights on board (last night either on board or in a hotel). 6 days diving (see route for number of dives), local transfers, guide, 12 litre tanks, weights, full board & soft drinks, red wine with dinner, environmental tax, Marine Park fees and port departure fees. Free Nitrox on all boats, subject to availability.
- **Not included:** Flight/visa, diving equipment, tanks other than 12 litres and alcohol.
- **Check in** usually starts after 18:00 on arrival day until late. Check out is at 10:00 on the last day.
- **Please note:** Diverse Travel require that you have a minimum of 30 logged dives to dive the four offshore Marine Parks of The Brothers, Zarbagad, Deadalus and Rocky and you are expected to be able to complete each dive with your buddy or following the guide. The guides may not enter the water and remain onboard as surface support for some dives. No night dives are allowed in the Marine Parks. [Click here for more info on recommended standards for each trip.](#)
- **Liveboard Dive Courses:** SAVE when you pre-book and pay in advance for courses and extras onboard any of our Red Sea liveboards.