

Trip Report

The following trip report was published on SCUBABOARD by one of my guests. The original URL is <http://www.scubaboard.com/forums/red-sea/297250-trip-report-sharm-el-sheikh.html>

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Trip Report - Sharm el Sheikh

First I would like to note that we were looking for a private charter and e-mails to a half-dozen or so of the major dive operations went unanswered. So I posted a request on this forum for help and the Red Sea Shadow (Asser) offered a very favorable arrangement that culminated in our best dive trip yet.

Due to family obligations, we flew to Sharm from Manchester on Thomson Airways. Eight abreast in a 767 makes it a bit tight but the fares are low and you avoid the chaos in Cairo. Again for family obligations, we stayed at a resort about 10 miles North of the airport. Accommodations were fine but it meant a 20 mile trip to the boat which tied up on the South side of Sharm.

The 66 ft boat Asser arranged was perfect in about every way. We had a Capt. and three crew plus Asser the DM. Set up as a liveaboard, it had six cabins. While I only checked two, they both had single bunk beds. Two small heads with showers served the six cabins.

For this visit we were day trippers but hope to make it back and sleep on the boat for a couple of nights. The boat does not have the luxury of an Aggressor or Peter Hughes boat. It would be more like camping out and that would suit me fine, especially sleeping on the open third deck and looking at the stars.

At 65 and 67, my wife and I really appreciated to dive platform which was only about 6 inches above the water. Sitting on the platform with our fins in the water, the crew would bring our BC's. After buckling in and doing a final check we would do a front roll in. Reboarding was easy as well. With our back to the platform, a crew member would grab the BC, we would unbuckle, slip out and head for the ladder. Also appreciated the ladder. Easy to use and no pinch points.

I think Asser and the crew think they cheated us since we only wanted two dives per day. The boat had two compressors to re-fill the tanks, four or five dives per day may be possible.

What brought us to Sharm was the chance to dive with my wife's British, 11 yr old newly junior certified diver. His diving skills were fine and initially enjoyed the search for critters in the reefs. But what he liked best was extending his arms and flying thru the water just like children running in the park with their arms extended pretending to fly. Only in his case, he was doing it in 3-dimensions complete with loops and rolls and takeoffs and landings. All I can say is Asser was a patient DM.

For five days we dove sites south in Ras Mohammed and north to Tiran Island. While there was frequently a slight current, only once near Tiran Island was there sufficient current for a pleasant drift dive. Visibility was easily 100 ft plus, never seen a cloud all week (early July). Not much big stuff, one shark, a couple of morays, a turtle. High winds precluded our diving the north side of Jackson Reef where hammerheads patrol. We stayed on the south side of the reef.

All of the sites we visited were well suited for snorkeling as were the coves we would tie up in for the surface interval.

The boat has a great chef. He did wonders in his small galley and it was always our call, do you want lunch after the first dive or second dive? I was expecting to spend quiet afternoons in the hotel but it was kick back and relax on the boat. Dive when you want, where you want and eat when you want. Had the feeling the Capt and crew just enjoyed being on the water as well

On shore the temps were 100+ F. On the boat the temp was perfect, warm/hot with low humidity.

Because of our ages and diving with the 11 yr old the private charter worked best for us. But if you are going as a group of 4 or 6, check with the Red Sea Shadow on what he can arrange. Right now, tourism is off and prices can be very competitive. The other thing I would suggest is to consider is 2-3 days diving at Sharm off the liveaboard and then move to Dahab for a couple of days of shore diving with Asser. When you factor in not needing hotel rooms and meals in Sharm vs. the liveaboard, you might find this a better arrangement then dealing with the cattle car dive boats.

Lastly I should mention that on the last day, Asser arranged a videographer. This guy was/is good and belongs in Hollywood. He got the shots. My recollection of my grandparents is my grandfather sitting on his porch in a rocking chair on his very rural Kentucky tobacco farm swatting flies while mamaw sweated over a wood fired cookstove fixin Sunday dinner. Thanks to the permanence of the DVD, I know one 11 year old British boy who 50 years from now can show his grandkids what it was like to dive with his American grandmother 40 ft below the surface in that magic place called the Red Sea. Thank you Asser.



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