

Spring update



Sinai journeys ran incredibly smoothly throughout spring, with everyone returning home full of memories of new experiences and friends. Highlights included Bedouin hospitality, stunning desert scenery and some spectacular spring weather - from blustery camel rides and scorching sunshine to snow showers on Mount Sinai!

The essence of any desert journey with Wind Sand & Stars is the very close and personal experience of this beautiful yet harsh environment, shared with our hosts and travelling companions the Bedouin.

This, combined with Sinai's unique history, inspires many of our schools to return and we were delighted to welcome groups from Marlborough College, Gordonstoun School and Kingston Grammar School, amongst others.



Although only a week long, close friendships are forged within groups and also with our Bedouin companions. A parent of a pupil from



Latymer Upper School explains, "our son had the most fantastic time, he came home full of stories and with a deep respect for the Bedouin culture".

Such returning enthusiasm is also the motivation behind the annual Friends of Godolphin & Latymer School journey, comprising parents, families and friends of the school. "My daughter had such a wonderful trip last year!" explained a parent who went this year, while another adds "Speaking for my husband and myself, we had a marvellous experience and will look back on the trip with happy memories and a great sense of achievement".



We are extremely grateful to our ground handlers in Sinai, for their dedicated and professional team who looked after us all so well, in partnership with our outstanding Wind Sand & Stars leaders.



We were thrilled also to introduce a number of new schools to Sinai, including Westminster Under School. On his return teacher Iain Hepburn wrote "I cannot tell you how much the boys enjoyed our Sinai trip - they have been absolutely buzzing all week! It was the most amazing experience for them and one I am certain they will never forget."



wind



sand



stars

news

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Forthcoming journeys in 2011 & 2012

In addition to our schools groups, individuals can travel with Wind Sand & Stars on an organised journey. We have wonderful mix of experiences lined up from gentle retreats to a gruelling desert half marathon.



Adventure into Silence

6-13 October 2011

The lure of the desert, its vast space and stillness, offers a welcome antidote to our busy and often noisy urban lives. By popular demand Sara Maitland, author of the highly acclaimed *A Book of Silence*, will return to the desert to

guide and inspire us in exploring the desert silence. Only a few places left.

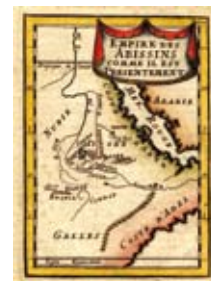


Return to Ethiopia!

In response to growing interest from our clients in this fascinating and diverse destination, Wind Sand & Stars is planning to return to Ethiopia during 2012. A big part of Ethiopia's appeal lies in its magnificent scenery and enthralling history. The north is a treasure of ancient and medieval monuments, home of towering obelisks, the Ark of The Covenant and an incredible series of rock-hewn early churches in Lalibela.

A journey with Wind Sand & Stars is also about the people whose land we are travelling through. We have linked up with a local community-based guiding organisation in the Ethiopian Highlands. This network of locally-run run tourism will take us across remarkable landscapes, getting closer to the real culture and at the same time bringing precious income to local families.

Journeys start from 8 days. Details are being finalised and itineraries will be available soon.



Desert Half Marathon

31 October - 7 November 2011

An original and challenging way to raise funds for the Bedouin communities that have looked after Wind Sand & Stars groups for so many years. This mixed terrain half marathon race takes place within the beautiful UNESCO Ras Mohammed National Park on the Red Sea coast. There will be time to acclimatise ahead of the race, based in a 4* hotel in Sharm el Sheikh, with an overnight desert excursion afterwards, offering a chance to find out more about how your support has assisted the local Bedouin. Non-runners welcome.



Historical Odyssey

19-26 April 2012

Cambridge scholar Professor Janet Soskice, author of *Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospels*, will inspire us with her remarkable stories and insights as we travel on this gentle adventure following

ancient pilgrim routes through the desert and mountains of Sinai, exploring historical sites including St Catherine's Monastery, a treasure house of early Christian manuscripts and art.

It has been a turbulent time throughout the Middle East over the past few months. This has required careful planning and assessment, in close consultation with departing groups, to ensure that each journey is safe. We are kept fully informed of the situation on the ground in Sinai through our network of contacts, in particular our outstanding in-country agent Dr Rabia Tawfik from Abanoub Travel. Safety is always our top priority. For each group we carefully assess the security situation before and during the journey, maintaining a highly professional and cautious approach, always following the Foreign Office Travel Advice.

Wind Sand & Stars' main area of operation is in the heart of South Sinai. Whilst close to the amenities of the Red Sea resorts and just two hours from Sharm el Sheikh International Airport, this beautiful area of the eastern sandstone desert is sparsely populated feels remote. South Sinai is home to many Bedouin tribes, including the Muzeina and Jebeliya, with whom we have been working with for over twenty years and who always give a warm welcome to Wind Sand & Stars groups.

For further information on these or other journeys, please visit our website

www.windsandstars.co.uk or contact Fay or Jo.

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Wind Sand & Stars

PO Box 4322

Bath BA1 2BU

Tel 01225 320839

Fax 01225 320880

Email office@windsandstars.co.uk

Skype [wind_sand_stars](https://www.skype.com/user/wind_sand_stars)

