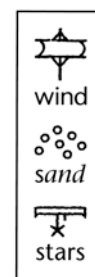


# Wind Sand & Stars

*Specialists in the Sinai & Desert Environments*



## Sinai Discovery – A Desert Adventure 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2012

This Easter journey offers the perfect introduction to the beauty of the South Sinai desert and its Bedouin people, it is a delightful week of adventure and discovery that combine to create a truly memorable experience. Members of the *Muzeina* Bedouin tribe will be your hosts and guides as you travel through their desert land, sharing stories around the camp fire and sleeping each night under the stars. As you journey on foot and by camel, you will travel in the footsteps of pilgrims, traders, armies and adventurers, who have passed through South Sinai over the centuries. Amongst the stunning desert *wadis* and granite mountains you will encounter ancient and spectacular sites, including the famous St Catherine's Monastery which lies at the foot of Mount Sinai.

The itinerary will involve riding on camels under the expert guidance of the local Bedouin, as well as gentle trekking on foot with daypacks, supported throughout by an experienced Wind Sand & Stars leader. Your final night in a hotel on the coast offers the chance to relax by the Red Sea.



### Feedback from previous journeys:

*"The trip was absolutely phenomenal, it is completely different to anything I've ever seen or experienced before, the landscape was extraordinary and the people were amazingly hospitable and friendly."*

Isabel, 17 years old, February 2011

*"My son came back with such special memories of a wonderful trip ... he will hopefully treasure thoughts of a different way of life and the hospitality of Egyptian people. I believe many of us parents would love to experience such an adventurous trip sharing a less frantic life with the Bedouin!"*

Ali, parent, April 2011

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive in the desert

We are met on arrival at Sharm el Sheikh airport by our local English-speaking Egyptian guide. We drive north to the eastern sandstone desert where our Bedouin hosts will welcome us to our first night's camp. Depending on the time of arrival we can enjoy supper or tea and biscuits around a camp fire under a desert night sky. *O/n under the stars*

## Day 2: Acclimatisation

A gentle start to the day, with time to acclimatise and explore your new desert surroundings. We can drink tea with local Bedouin families who are old friends of Wind Sand & Stars. There is an optional walk through the beautiful White Canyon towards the oasis of Ayun Khudra. The oasis lies on the old pilgrim route from Jerusalem to St Catherine and many inscriptions carved by these early pilgrims are still visible on the rocks. *O/n under the stars*

## Days 3-5: Camel trek

Late evening and early morning, members of the local Bedouin tribe and their camels arrive at our camp for the start of the camel trek. This is a unique opportunity to travel with the Bedouin through their desert lands, experiencing at first hand the slow pace of traditional desert travel, the ever-changing desert scenery and their warm hospitality. You trek past golden sandstone cliffs eroded by the wind, through long sandy valleys dotted with acacia trees, near scattered Bedouin encampments and oases and in the footsteps of people who have travelled across Sinai through the centuries. The route is flexible and there will be long breaks for lunch with plenty of shade from the sun. In the evenings we relax around the fire, enjoying the remarkable night skies and cups of hot, sweet tea with the Bedouin. *O/n each night under the stars*

**Note:** You will each have your own trekking camel. Saddles are well padded and comfortable. During the trek, there are frequent stops for tea, places of interest and rest breaks.

## Costs

<b>Land arrangements</b>	£925
<b>Flight</b>	£450 - £550 per person *
<b>Minimum number</b>	10

### Cost Includes

- All local transport and accommodation
- Full board (two cooked meals & picnic lunch in the desert, including bottled drinking water)
- Qualified leader and local guides
- Comprehensive travel insurance

### Cost Excludes

- Egyptian Visa (£20 in advance or US\$15 on arrival, if needed, please see separate note on requirements)
- Gratuities £50 (invoiced)
- Single Supplement £20 per person (invoiced)
- Camel up Mt Sinai £10 (optional, payable on site)
- Soft drinks and any other personal expenses
- Additional transport and accommodation for separate arrival or onward travel outside the main itinerary

### \* International flights

Flight costs depend upon the route and time of booking.

## Day 6: Mount Sinai

It is a short drive to Sinai's high mountain area. These towering pink granite peaks have valleys lined with small, lush Bedouin fruit gardens watered by winter snow and spring rains. For many centuries the area has attracted pilgrims of different faiths due to the traditional association with Moses and the Ten Commandments. It was a focal point of early Christianity, and from the 4th century onwards many monks and hermits came to live amongst the mountains.

We can climb the mountain following the old camel path which winds its way up the mountain side for two thirds of the way (camels may be ridden this far), then climb the ancient pilgrim steps to the summit, marked by a small chapel and mosque. The total ascent takes approximately 2-3 hours. There are magnificent panoramic views of the surrounding desert and mountains. We can return to the monastery at its base following the same route or down the pilgrim steps. *O/n St Catherine's Monastery Guesthouse (small dormitory accommodation)*

## Day 7: St Catherine's Monastery

In the morning we can visit the Monastery, founded in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian. The original great towering monastery walls, built to protect the monks from marauding tribes, still stand. Inside we can see the magnificent Basilica church, and view some of the many rare and beautiful icons in the museum which form part of the Monastery's world famous collection of early Christian art. In the afternoon we will transfer to the Red Sea coast for some relaxation on our final evening in Sinai. The hotel is quiet and comfortable with its own pool and private beach. *O/n 3-4\* Hotel on the Red Sea coast*

## Day 8 Depart

A final morning by the Red Sea, if time allows, before heading back to the airport for your flight home.

### Visa

Please note a visa is NOT required for this itinerary, unless you are planning onward travelling elsewhere in Egypt, or you do not hold a British or EU passport (please refer to the Egyptian Consulate [www.egyptianconsulate.co.uk/Visas.php](http://www.egyptianconsulate.co.uk/Visas.php) or call the office for guidance).

### ATOL protection

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL Protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is 5474. For further information, visit the ATOL website at [www.atol.org.uk](http://www.atol.org.uk).



### BS 8848 compliance

The operating procedures and controls that govern overseas ventures provided by Wind Sand & Stars Limited conform to BS8848 (*Specification for the provision of visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom*). ENDORSED BY THE YOUNG EXPLORERS TRUST (declared).

**Please note all desert itineraries are subject to change.**