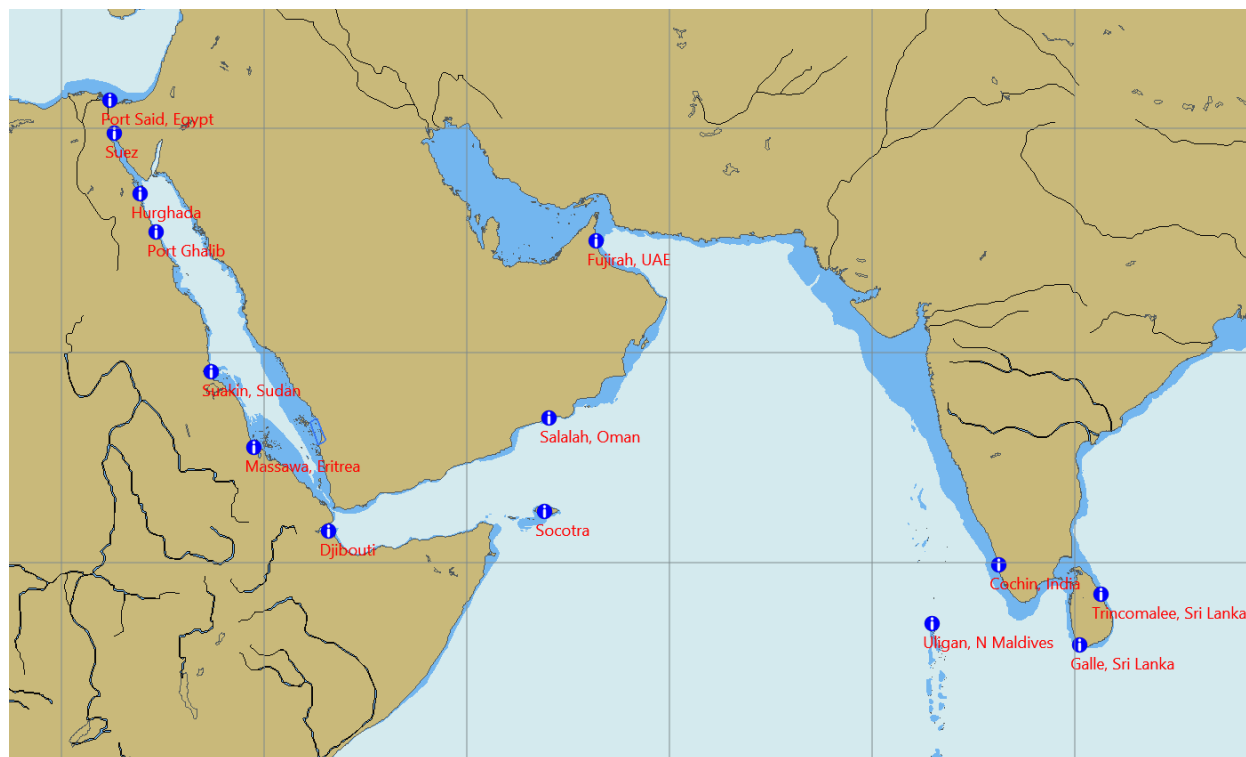


The Red Sea Route Compendium

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports

Covering the route from Cochin, India up through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal



IMPORTANT: USE ALL INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT AT YOUR OWN RISK!!

Rev 2024.1 – 17-Jan-2024

We welcome updates to this guide!
(especially for places we have no cruiser information on)

Email Soggy Paws at sherry –at– svsgogypaws –dot– com.
You can also contact us on Sailmail at **WDI5677**

The current home of the official copy of this document is

<https://svsgogypaws.com/files/#indian-ocean>

If you found it posted elsewhere, there might be an updated copy at svsgogypaws.com.

Some of the early stops on the route to the Red Sea are covered
in the **Indian Ocean Compendium**, so be sure to download it too.

Revision Log

Many thanks to all who have contributed over the years!!

Rev	Date	Notes
2024.1	17-Jan-2024	Updates on Hawana Marina in Oman
2023.7	14-Nov-2023	Update to permitted anchorages in Egypt
2023.6	06-Nov-2023	Kurukulla's info for their 2023 transit S to N.
2023.5	04-Oct-2023	Update on the new Ismalia Marina
2023.4	14-Sep-2023	Updates on permitted and not permitted anchorages while in transit in Egypt. Updates on ATMs in the Red Sea. Updates on Ramadan and holiday dates for 2024.
2023.3	11-May-2023	More on Saudi Arabia, some reorganization of Egypt section, a little bit on Jordan. Details on Egypt anchorages. A few more anchorages in Sudan courtesy of s/v Tuvalu.
2023.1	01-Feb-2023	More on Saudi Arabia and Egypt Anchorages
2022.3	27-Oct-2022	Updates on Saudia Arabia, and anchoring in Egypt.
2022.2	22-June-2022	Some cost of transiting through the Red Sea added.
2022.1	19-Mar-2022	Some Post Covid updates, Oman check-in info. Port Ghalib update and Egypt in general. A bit more info about Eritrea. Updates from a boat that checked into Saudi in December 2021. Some formerly good anchoring places in Egypt are now prohibited. A number of updates from Red Sea-ers in 2022.
2021.3	23-Oct-2021	Contact info for Socotra marina.
2021.2	14-Apr-2021	More updates. Info on the marina at Salalah, Oman
2021.1	02-Feb-2021	Passage reports north from late boats. Updates on Djibouti. Latest Covid regulations from Egypt. Update on Port Ghalib. Old stuff from a blog about Oman in 2004. A few more details on stops from Joana's blog. More info on Socotra.
2020.2	03-Aug-2020	s/v Joana's recap of the trip from SE Asia to Med
2020.1	10-May-2020	Updates from cruisers stopping in Uligan, Maldives. Update on quarantine in Cochin. Update from Joanna on Djibouti. Update from Bird of Passage on Socotra. Updates on possible Winlink stations for weather.
2020.0	08-Feb-2020	Initial version, still very rough at this point!!

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1 Introduction

The original Compendium for the Tuamotus in French Polynesia started out as a way for s/v Soggy Paws and a few friends to organize notes and various internet sources on the Tuamotus, prior to our cruise there in Spring of 2010. Later, it became a way for us to pass on what we've learned while cruising the Tuamotus in 2010 and 2011.

Now the idea has migrated with Soggy Paws, from the Tuamotus, to the Marquesas, to the Societies, Hawaii, the Cooks and Samoas, Tonga, Fiji, the islands between Fiji and the Marshall Islands, the Micronesia area, and most of SE Asia, and now the voyage up the Red Sea and through the Suez Canal from India..

If you haven't yet found our other 'Compendiums' from French Polynesia to SE Asia, they're available online at <http://svsoggypaws.com/files/>

This is not intended to replace the guidebooks or charts, but to supplement out-of-date guides with recent cruiser first-hand reports, and fill in new places that the guides don't cover.

To compile this 'compendium', we have used all sources at our disposal, including websites, blogs, emails, and our own experience. We always try to indicate the source of our information, and the approximate time frame.

If your information is included in this guide, and you object to its inclusion, please just email us, and we'll remove it. I try hard to attribute everything that gets placed in here, and place references to cruiser's blogs where there is usually more information and pictures.

On the other hand, if you'd rather I not mention your name, I'd be happy to anonymize your information. Most info these days originating in Facebook Groups are now normally attributed "Red Sea FB Group" for example.

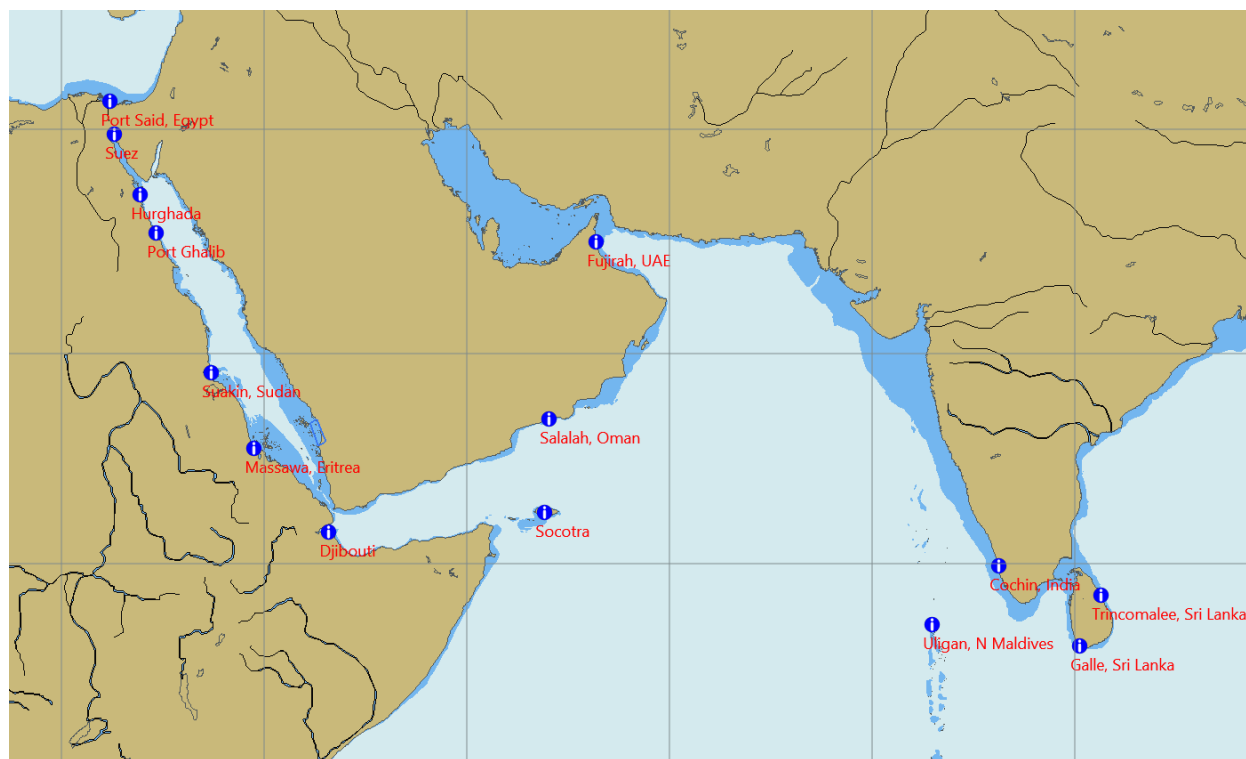
This is a non-commercial venture mainly to help cruisers from all of our collective experiences.

1.1 Organization of the Guide

This guide is loosely organized from East to West from Cochin, India to the southern entrance of the Red Sea, and up to the Suez Canal. I am still learning my Red Sea geography, so I may have made a few mistakes in this early edition of the guide.

Coverage of the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and India (including Cochin) are included in the Indian Ocean Crossing Compendium, also available at <https://svsoggypaws.com/files/#indian-ocean>

1.2 Overview of the Area



Temptress of Down – July 2020: We were one of the boats just 2 weeks behind Wade. All the ports closed while we were at sea. Whilst this is an exception this year I recommend having enough food and fuel to do this trip completely on your own.

We spent several weeks at anchor behind exposed reefs waiting for more moderate N winds. Our standard sailing configuration was a deeply furled jib and 2 reefs in the main with wind on the nose. Often we had 3 reefs and twice storm sails.

Don't underestimate the stress and strain of beating to windward for 1500 miles. The reefs in the Red Sea are not where ANY of the charts claim them to be. (we had 3 different sets of charts). The Indian Ocean passage on the other hand was one of our most pleasant Ocean passages...Mostly downwind in 10-12 knots, relatively calm sea and lots of fish.

A note on water. Our water maker started breaking and eventually failed altogether. We had enough water in the tanks to get us to Suez where we rook on more. Checking the log we had ZERO rainfall since Malaysia in December until we reached Crete in May.....6 months without any rain.

Our blog is here <http://www.gbr195.com> with details.

Joana – July 2020: From my perspective, the best season for making a passage though the Red Sea (either Northbound or Southbound) is from December to May. There are some cruisers who attempt to do this route outside of that timeframe, but those that do may encounter uncomfortably high temperatures and extremely strong winds. From my experience, although everyone knows about the pirate risk – there is far greater risk from lack of preparation.

Preparation is vital

Like any ocean passage and foreign coastline, this route requires extensive boat mechanical preparation (bring all conceivable spares with you, because repair facilities are rare), good charts and lots of food, water and diesel. Good communications are essential, and I found WINLINK connectivity to be difficult therefore relying entirely on my IridiumGo device.

There is an obvious need to coordinate your passage with UKMTO and MSHOA, and they in turn will keep the Multi-National Coalition Forces apprised of your whereabouts. In my opinion, pirate activity is well under control, as long as you keep your AIS on, display nighttime navigation lights and talk with commercial ships and the multitude of Coalition Forces in the area.

Areas to avoid

The coastal waters of Yemen should be entirely avoided. One yacht had a skiff race by obviously under remote control during an attempted act of terrorism on a Saudi oil tanker. These acts are not directed at cruisers, but you may end up suffering collateral damage if you stray too close to Yemen. Also, do not pass between Socotra and mainland Somalia.

We chose to break up our passage from Thailand to the Med in two seasons, passing from Phuket to Cochin India in the February-March 2019 timeframe, and then the second season from Cochin to the Med in the January-June 2020 timeframe.

Ed Note: Phuket to Cochin (and the Maldives) info is in a companion guide, the Indian Ocean Compendium.

Cochin, India to Suez

Just from Cochin to Suez, we consumed 1500L of diesel (32T, 53 foot sailboat). We carried 850L in tanks, and 300L on deck in jerry cans. We bought fuel in Djibouti, Suakin Sudan, Port Ghalib and Port Suez Egypt. We suffered some fuel line blockage near Djibouti and had to clean lines and one tank in Djibouti (requiring the rental of a fuel pump, lots of rags, and many empty jerry cans) on anchor.

Although we sailed a lot, entirely downwind from Cochin to Djibouti – on the leg from Massawa to Suez, you are forced to wait for days, sometimes weeks, not just for favourable winds – but for low North winds (we motored against 15 knots at times). For the first leg from Cochin to Djibouti, we were mostly on a dead downwind run, with the jib and mainsail wing-on-wing.

Check-in to Eritrea

We checked in to Eritrea, and despite the lack of Internet, found the people to be very friendly and hospitable. We would not hesitate to go there again.

There are mishaps

Navigation charts

I found that the commonly used OpenCPN CM93 charts were poor near mainland, but good in offshore/international waters. **I also found that our iPad Navionics charts looked good, but were actually incredibly bad – a complete work of fiction.** Again, they seemed OK in deep water but were not trustworthy near shore or reefs.

For this passage, all cruisers are strongly recommended to augment their existing chart inventory with satellite images, daytime reef entry and eyeball navigation. James Cole

made an incredibly detailed set of Google Earth KAP files (100GB +) that have been passed around through the South-East Asia cruising community.

Soggy Paws also has downloadable mbtiles here:

<http://svsoggypaws.com/GECharts/index.htm>

There is also a copy held with the Marina Manager at Cochin India. These KAP files are indispensable with OpenCPN. I also used an iPad and the free app called Ovitalmap. *(For Android users, the best similar app is called [All-in-One Offline Maps](#)).* This app allows you to browse many areas in advance of your passage, and you can revisit them weeks or even months later. The data is held in the cache and is not reliant on an Internet connection.

Lots of fish

During most of the passages, we caught a lot of fish, primarily at dawn and at dusk, just by trailing a line or two with a colourful squid lure. We caught mahi-mahi, lots of tuna, and barracuda (in the north part of the Red Sea). We released the barracuda.

Piracy, security and COVID-19

To the best of my knowledge, there was not a single incident of piracy or thievery, although since the pandemic COVID-19 struck in the March-June 2020 timeframe, there were not unexpected examples of opportunistic thievery in Djibouti, Sudan and of course – Egypt.

There were some cases of people being charged very high “agent” and commodity prices – simply because you had no options, the borders were closed. Based on fear and xenophobia, many boats were ordered to leave anchorages, a common tactic applied in many other areas of the world.

Unfortunately, there were at least 20 yachts that became caught up in this, moving from Djibouti to Egypt, and with no ports that would take them. They continued moving slowly to the Suez Canal (which remained open) and then waited for an extended period of time mid-way, at Ismailia – until some Med ports finally opened.

On the other hand, I am aware of many yachts being assisted by the Egyptian, Saudi Arabian, and French Navies – with food, fuel and water. Also, although many yachts were “turned away” there was also emergency resupply going on in Djibouti, Port Sudan, Port Ghalib and Port Suez.

There has been a confusing report of a Turkish catamaran that was detained by government forces in Eritrea while trying to enter the port at Massawa. I’m uncomfortable with providing any details, primarily because the boat is now in Djibouti and the Captain has not yet provided a first-hand account of what happened. It is known that the boat and crew were detained, for several weeks, and not afforded the opportunity to contact their families, even though they had an Iridium Go aboard.

People who have been to Eritrea know that Internet is not available, and communications outside the country is next to impossible. Nonetheless, this serves as another example of the difficulty that at least one yacht encountered while passing through this area during a world-wide pandemic.

Suez canal traffic

There was a considerable amount of shipping traffic getting close to and inside the Suez Canal, but in my experience it was much less than in the Singapore Straits.

Our agent at Port Suez was Capt Heebie (Prince of the Red Sea). He treated us very well, and was very attentive to our needs, providing us with diesel, water and a shopping list of fresh fruit and vegetables. I can highly recommend Capt Heebie.

We arrived at Alanya Marina in Eastern Turkey on 29 June 2020. The staff are warm and welcoming. The marina is in very good condition, and the prices are quite good. We are actually paying less than we were in India, for first-world facilities and excellent repair shops.

Should anyone wish to read my blog, and see what our experiences were in much more detail, our blog can be found here: <http://www.joana.ca/>

Joana – March 2020: I would like to add words of caution to all considering undertaking this passage. You should adequately prepare your boat, yourself, and your crew for a long ocean passage and potentially difficult port and anchorage conditions in the Red Sea area.

I have been doing international travel for more than 40 years, and for the first time in my life, I was requested to show proof of Yellow Fever vaccination at Djibouti and Egypt (and I have been in Egypt many times before).

Between Phuket and Egypt, you will find that the only ATMs that issue USD are in Djibouti, unless you fly out to a neighboring country like Cambodia. Definitely, in Socatra, Eritrea and Sudan it is a cash only economy - no bank cards, no credit cards accepted.

Nobody can reliably predict that they will be able to bypass these countries. In the account described in this post (arriving cruiser with expired visa and some urgent needs, to Cochin), Nissam (the eldest son of Nazer, the well respected cruisers friend in Cochin) went out by dinghy to offer with assistance to buy diesel, water and groceries - but was turned down because no cash was on hand. This, I'm sorry to say - is inexcusable.

Consider the tables turned, if an Indian sailor arrived in the USA under similar circumstances. I suspect that the Coast Guard would "extract" the Indian from his boat and send him back to his country with a one way air ticket. I have no doubt about it.

For this passage, every boat needs to carry at least \$2,000 USD cash, and this has been stated on our FB Group many times - and preferably more, in case of repairs or emergency. You must be able to motor at least 1200nm. To my knowledge there have been 3 sailboats lost on the reefs in Sudan and Egypt just over the last 12 months.

It has been 9 years since pirates attacked a yacht, but every year several unprepared sailors run out of fuel, food, and money. Some end up begging for diesel from the Coalition Forces while sailing slowly in the High Risk Area (HRA). This ends up being a distraction to the hard working Coalition Forces, one that Somali pirates may use to their advantage.

Bottom line - Prepare your boat. Get cash. Get the best charts and KAP files available. Single handers also face higher risks, so get crew. Then select your passage window based on predictable seasonal weather patterns.

1.3 Time Zones

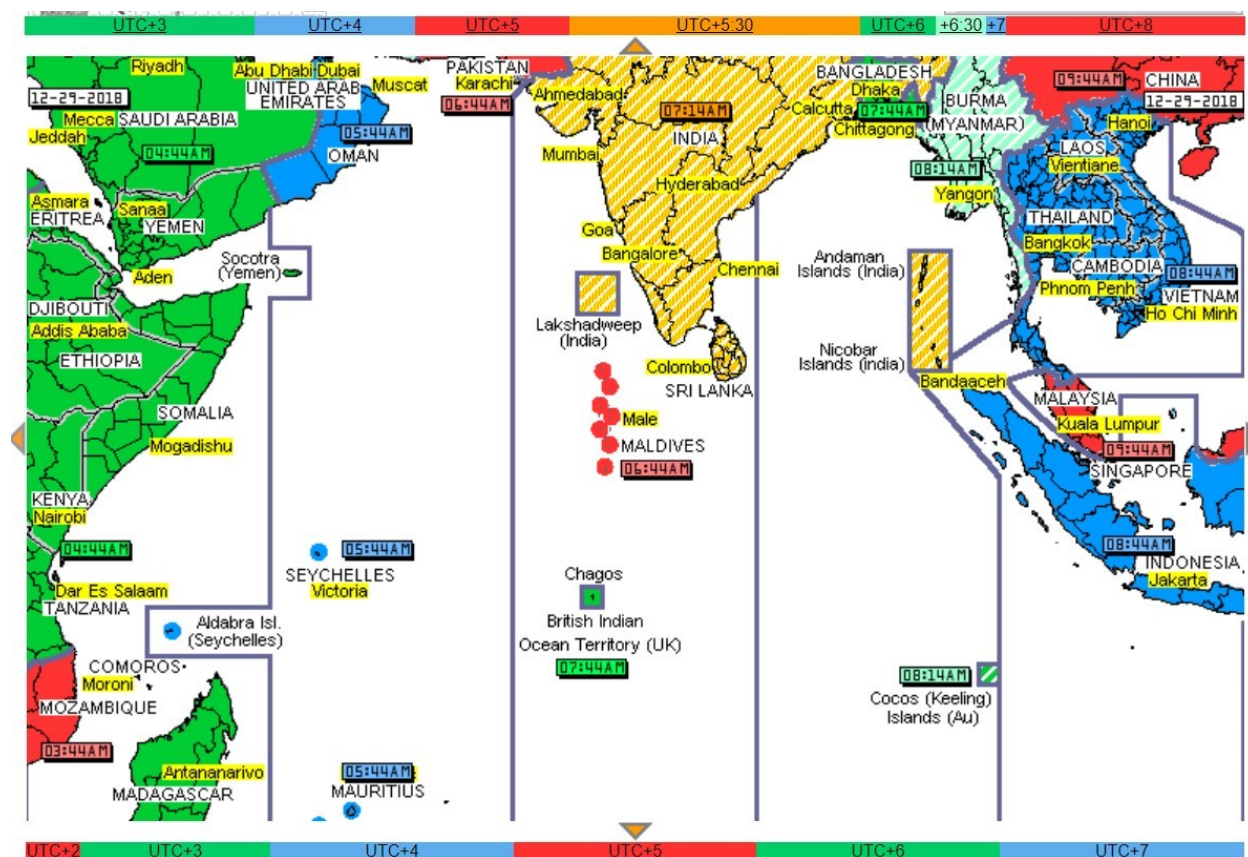
India is UTC +5:30

Maldives is UTC +5

Oman is UTC +4

The lower and eastern Red Sea, including Socotra is UTC +3

Egypt and Sudan are UTC +2



Source & interactive version: <https://www.worldtimezone.com/wtz014.php>

1.4 Navigational Hazards

Joana – 2020 – Charts in the Red Sea: I found that the commonly used OpenCPN CM93 charts were poor near mainland, but good in offshore/international waters. I also found that our iPad Navionics charts looked good, but were actually incredibly bad – a complete work of fiction. Again, they seemed OK in deep water but were not trustworthy near shore or reefs. For this passage, all cruisers are strongly recommended to augment their existing chart inventory with satellite images, daytime reef entry and eyeball navigation.

James Cole made an incredibly detailed set of Google Earth KAP files (100GB +) that have been passed around through the South-East Asia cruising community.

There is also a copy held with the Marina Manager at Cochin India. These KAP files are indispensable with OpenCPN. I also used an iPad and the free app called Ovitalmap. This app

allows you to browse many areas in advance of your passage, and you can revisit them weeks or even months later. The data is held in the cache and is not reliant on an Internet connection.

Soggy Paws – November 2020: I also have a smaller (but I think comprehensive) chart set downloadable at

<http://svsoggypaws.com/SatCharts/>

These charts are in mbtiles format (ie must use OpenCPN 5.0 or higher), and I took quite a bit of time to find and clear charts of reefs that are not visible on all satellite views. Every anchorage waypoint that has been passed around, and the routes others have taken going up the coast, have all been charted.

This includes waypoint files in GPX format and some track files.

Joana – July 2020 – Boats Lost on Red Sea Reefs: In November 2019, one yacht ran aground on the shore of Egypt mid-way between Port Ghalib and Port Hurghada. This was a single-hander, and was either a navigation error, or some kind of personal misfortune. The Captain was never found, and the yacht remains on the shoreline, ready to be pulled off. The sails were not up, and it appears that the boat simply stayed on course and ran up on shore with the engine running.

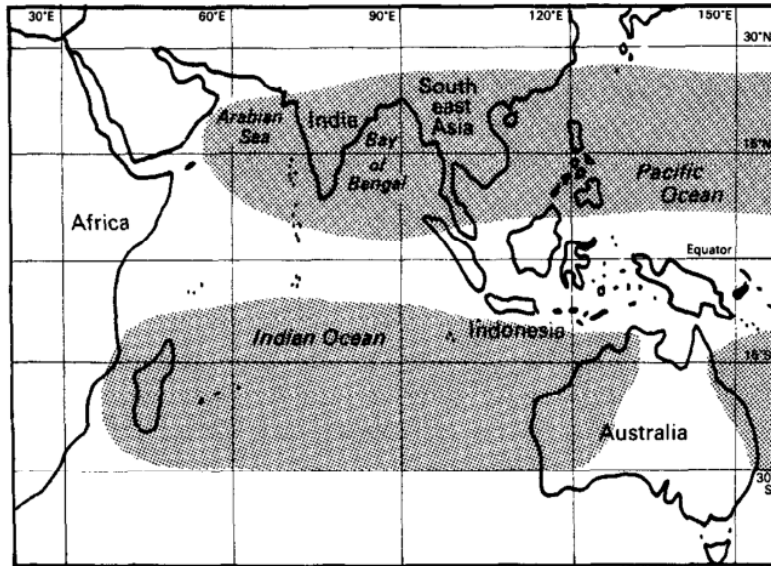
In January 2020, another boat hit a reef and was lost near Suakin Sudan. In this case, the boat had had numerous previous persistent problems with fuel and engine reliability, and this incident was likely a navigational error. There was no loss of life.

Update – Soggy Paws – January 2021: A French boat was also lost on a reef in January 2021... from Wade: I have been in touch with Nathalie and I understand that this is near the entrance to Khor Shinab, North of Suakin Sudan. This occurred near the end of the day, with calm weather and a setting sun. The water was opaque and they ran aground on a reef. They were using Navionics charts, and had satellite imagery but it was not in use. They placed a VHF call but it remained unanswered. They tried to kedge off with the dinghy and anchor until 10:30 p.m. At 11 pm their dinghy was blown off by the wind, so they launched an SOS using their Garmin. In the morning, they left the boat and went ashore - because it was heeled over. The water was low because of the tide and the Sudanese Navy brought them back to their camp. They were moved to Suakin where Mohamed Ahmed joined them and then assisted with the formalities of clearing in to the country of Sudan. Their boat remains on the reef but scavengers have already been picking away at it. We can all learn something of this tragedy.

DO NOT TRY TO DO THIS TRIP WITH ONLY NAVIONICS FOR NAVIGATION!!!

1.5 Weather In This Area

1.5.1 General Weather Conditions



DESTRUCTIVE WIND ZONES

The two shaded areas indicate the limits of destructive winds in the northern and southern hemispheres. Each experiences its 'cyclone' or 'typhoon' season in summer only.

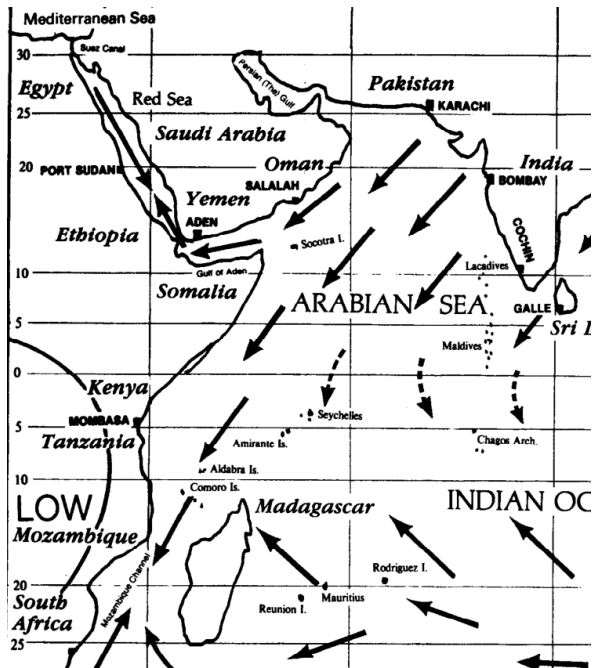


Figure 1-1 Winds in January

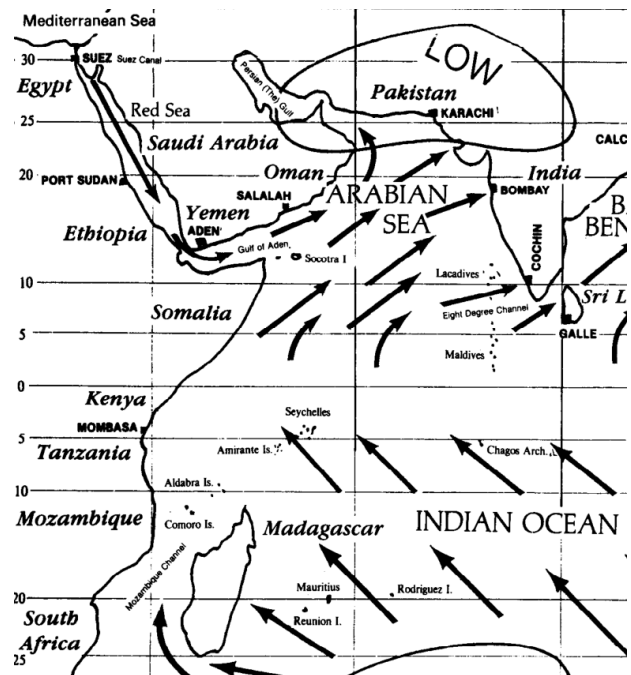


Figure 1-2 Winds in August

Source: Red Sea and Indian Ocean Cruising Guide – Alan Lucas – 1985

1.5.2 Weather Sources – With Onboard Email

Because of the real need for accurate weather for this passage, many people nowadays are carrying an Iridium Go and using PredictWind for their comms and weather. Most doing this passage recommend buying the Go from PredictWind and using their “unlimited” plan (approx \$150/mo). The unlimited plan allows you to receive the large GRIB files that a PredictWind subscription provides. PredictWind is about the only source for an ECMWF GRIB file.

Here are some comments from Red Sea passagemakers about the availability of Winlink (SSB Pactor 3) stations to collect weather:

Paul – March 2020: For the lucky Ham radio who plan to go through the Red Sea, here are a few ham stations that allowed us to get the weather forecast from Cochin to Suez:

- From Cochin VK6KPS in Australia gave us GRIBs for the 3 first days, it was very slow.
- After LZ3CB replaced the Australian station. Actually most of our GRIBs came from this ham station. Pick the right time to connect, then you won't be disappointed. This station beat my record download speed while we were offshore Djibouti: 12000 bpm with Pactor 3!
- By order of preference, here are few other ham stations that worked very well - not too bad : HB9AK, HB9AW and HB9MM

Bird of Passage – March 2020: You can also try 3B8DU (Mauritius) and EA8URF (Egypt).

Saudi Arabia also sends 24 hour weather forecasts for the Red Sea on NAVTEX several times/day. Use station HE.

1.5.3 Weather Sources – Voice

1.5.4 Weather Sources – Internet

1.6 Customs & Immigration

See individual sections for details of each port.

1.6.1 Agents

There is a list maintained by the admin of the Red Sea Passage FB group. For most recent info, check that list.

1. Alexandria, Egypt

Asmaa Khaled, NASCO Tours, headoffice@nasco-yachts.com (also throughout Egypt)

2. Port Said, Egypt

Ehab Soukar At Sea (Prince of the Red Sea, also known as Capt Heebie),

WhatsApp +20 100 552 2988 Email princeoftheredsea@gmail.com and princers@princeoftheredsea.com

NASCO also has an office.

Felix Maritime has a branch in Port Said. Marwan Hekal (Felix Shipping Agency), located at the main office, is the contact for this location.

WhatsApp +20 01281514902 marwanfelix70@gmail.com

3. Port Suez, Egypt

Ehab Soukar At Sea (Prince of the Red Sea, also known as Capt Heebie),

WhatsApp +20 100 552 2988 Email princeoftheredsea@gmail.com

Also NASCO Tours offers services in the Suez Canal

Felix Maritime has a branch in Port Suez. Marwan Hekal (Felix Shipping Agency), located at the head office is the contact point for this location.

WhatsApp +20 01281514902 marwanfelix70@gmail.com

4. Hurghada, Egypt

Asmaa Khaled (NASCO) offers services in Hurghada

Felix Maritime has a branch in Port Hurghada. Marwan Hekal (Felix Shipping Agency), located at the head office is the contact point for this location.

WhatsApp +20 01281514902 marwanfelix70@gmail.com

5. Port Ghalib, Egypt

NASCO Tours offers agent service: portghalib@nascotours.com

yachting@nascotours.com

Felix Maritime has a branch in Port Ghalib. Mohamed Gouda (Felix Shipping Agency), located at Port Ghalib, is the point of contact.

WhatsApp +201207199314 portghalib@felix-eg.com and mottagoda@gmail.com

6. Port Sudan, Sudan

Mohamed Ahmed, WhatsApp +249 91 214 2678,

mohamedabubaker945@gmail.com

Khalid Saaden (Mohammed Saaden), WhatsApp +249 91 232 1348, shamkhatour@gmail.com

7. Suakin, Sudan

Mohamed Ahmed, WhatsApp +249 91 214 2678, mohamedabubaker945@gmail.com

8. Djibouti

Ahssan Phoenix Mohamed, ahssan2017@gmail.com WhatsApp +253 7762 7015

9. Maldives

Asadhulla Mohamed, WhatsApp +(960)7934946, assad@realseahawksmaldives.com

10. Cochin, India. Nisam. WhatsApp +91 97464 62686 (son of Nazer)

Varghese Joseph, WhatsApp +91 85477 64525 sfcvarghese@gmail.com

Cochin International Marina has a Facebook page: Marina Kochi Bolgatty KTDC

11. Galle, Sri Lanka. Tango Shipping, tangochatura@gmail.com

12. Ayla Marina in Aqaba Jordan. <https://www.ayla.com.jo>

Adel Maani, Telephone: +962 3 209 4000 Email: amaani@ayla.com.jo

13. Jeddah Yacht Club, Saudi Arabia. Colin Ralph - Marina Director

c.ralph@jeddahyc.com +966 55 128 0165

For anyone wishing to visit the Marina they can contact

berthing@jeddahyc.com for booking.

(THIS NEEDS TO BE DONE PRIOR TO ENTERING SAUDI WATERS IF POSSIBLE)

Recommended Yachting agents in Saudi Arabia

1. Faisal Higgi, <http://www.faisalhiggi.com/>

yachts@faisal-higgi.com +966 14 322 2046 Ext: 149

mohd.hassan@faisal-higgi.com +966 58 312 2255

2. Hill Robinson, www.hillrobinson.com

rayan.bukhari@hillrobinson.com +966 55 333 0516

3. HASCO, www.hasco.com.sa

diba@hasco.com.sa +966 50 006 1354

4. GAC, <https://www.gac.com/saudi-arabia/>

mustufa.mohammed@gac.com +966 55 0952451

saad.alamshan@gac.com +966 53 331 5648

Note: All paper work, permissions and visas can be applied via EBHAR

platform [https://ebhar.naql.sa/Ebhar Portal/](https://ebhar.naql.sa/Ebhar_Portal/)

We would ask for everyone to create an account, and set up boat, people on board, select appointed agent and apply for visas (visit or transient).

Nearly every nationality is now accepted.

(Please do not attempt to arrive in Saudi Arabia without applying for these documents in advance)

Paseafique – June 2019: All the **agents** (Socotra, Sudan, Port Ghalib and Port Tawfiq) were very friendly and helpful. We had contacted them all for quotes beforehand and there were no unexpected fees anywhere. We did not pay any dinghy fees anywhere and paid twice for people to help dock the boat (both in Egypt). Total fees (inc visas for two people but excluding marina/yacht club fees) were around USD2000.

Red Sea FB Group – 2019: Make sure when they stamp the visas they stamp it vertically only and it doesn't slip. The next guy charges you because it isn't clear. (Egypt?)

1.7 Local Information and Customs

See also individual sections

William Pardo (crew on sv/ Trim in 2016) – May 2018: Gift Giving: Arab generosity and welcome to travellers originates in their desert heritage, where they would rely on hospitality just to survive a journey. In return, the host hears news of whats happening outside his territory, and can expect such hospitality on his own journeys.

For us to be aware of, the giving of gifts is also held highly (generosity is considered the most noble quality, but not with money - that could be offensive, belittling). If you admire something of theirs, they may offer it to you, but you should probably refuse it graciously! If they truly insist, you can consider it a genuine offer, and if possible return with a gift of your own (but that is not expected, as it would not be generosity if expected!). Returning hospitality with a gift is certainly good manners, as it is in the West. Obviously not alcohol or pork, but the Bedouins prize sugar (they use a lot of it in their coffee), flour is useful (but probably like getting socks at Christmas!), and if you can get it, frankincense or Oud would be a great thank you. Buy some when you arrive in the Middle East, or find it in India. It's musky and woody, not the classically spicy incense of India - have a Google to know what to look for.

The article about our unlikely experience in the Gulf of Aden was one of a four part series about our journey from Thailand to Egypt. What I want to put across here is that the journey is well worth undertaking - to meet an incredible land and people that most people will never see or even consider.

Additionally, that it would be a serious waste of an opportunity, and an unnecessarily arduous journey, to transit the Red Sea without stopping in Sudan. Unfortunately, Egypt doesn't come close, and the people were quite underwhelming in comparison (you'll hear 'Baksheesh', which means gift, but to them it means money. Play them at their game and give them a bag of frankincense!). That said, the history is absolutely spectacular.

William's "blogs" are posted as PDF files on scribd:

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/297718697/Across-Arabian-Seas-Pt-1>

Tamarask - January 2015: There is some more info. on our blog about our crazy experiences with the miserable authorities in Yemen, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia (www.tamariskrtw.com).... the risks they posed to us compared with the piracy risks, so please don't under-estimate their idiocy and paranoia. They seem to have no understanding of what a cruising sailboat is, and assume the absolute worst because of the troubles in this part of the world. In the most extreme case of stupidity, the Saudi coast guard forced us to run aground at gunpoint, not understanding that sailboats have deep keels, and forcing us into a 1.5 meter deep harbor. None of them seem to use VHF, preferring a system of yelling (normally in Arabic), weapons brandishing, and incomprehensible hand signals.

Our biggest mistake was that we had an Israeli on board and this made our lives a nightmare because all the Arab countries hate Israelis and refuse them entry, which forced us to do all kinds of crazy things. Definitely do not take any Israelis up the Red Sea.

1.7.1 *Ramadan, the Muslim Holy Month*

Ramadan 2024 starts March 10 and goes for 30 days. Ramadan will end on Tuesday 09 April, with the celebratory days of Eid al-Fitr starting Tuesday 09 April to Thursday 11 April. During Ramadan in Muslim countries, eating establishments will be closed during the day, and open just after sunset. Eid-al-Fitr is normally a major holiday, and may extend more days than 09-11 April, depending on the country.

The below information copied from: <https://passportandplates.com/learnings-musings/tips-for-traveling-during-ramadan/>

What is Ramadan?

Every year on the 9th month of the lunar calendar, millions of Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset for 30 days. Yes, this means no food or water, even if you're really, really thirsty (seriously, people ask me that). To us, it's not just about fasting from food and water, but about spiritual reflection as well. It's a month of increased prayer, charity and hospitality. It's also a time to refrain from bad behavior and thoughts – think cursing, gossiping, and all the other habits that you promised yourself you'd break on January 1st ;). Ramadan starts on June 5th this year (like Easter, the actual date changes every year).

There are Muslim communities pretty much everywhere, but the only places where Ramadan may affect your travels are in Muslim-majority countries. The Middle-East and North Africa, parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and a couple of countries in Southeast Asia more or less cover it. Note that intensity of practice varies widely depending on the country you're in. This list offers some good country-specific tips, so read about the specific country you're visiting if you'll be traveling during Ramadan.

Useful Terms to Know

Ramadan: The Muslim holy month when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset for 30 days.

Iftar: This translates directly to break fast, and refers to sunset when people break their fast.

Suhoor: This refers to the meal that people oftentimes eat before the sun rises to try to keep the morning hunger at bay. Many hotels and restaurants open for suhoor.

Eid-al-Fitr: Translating directly to “breakfast celebration”, this refers to the holiday that marks the end of Ramadan and fasting.

Tips for Traveling During Ramadan:

1. Don't eat or drink publicly during the day

While nobody will chide you for eating, and it certainly isn't against the law, it's a tad disrespectful when everyone you know is starving. Some countries are stricter than others, but as a general rule, try to be discreet and bring lots of snacks and water. Also, note that many restaurants will be closed to the public during the day in preparation for breakfast at sundown and it may be harder to find local food in general. Prepare accordingly!

2. Avoid alcohol

Alcohol is forbidden for Muslims, although this a rule that many people and countries follow quite loosely except during Ramadan. Many countries actually go dry for Ramadan: the sale of alcohol is forbidden for the entire month.

If you're staying at a beach resort or upscale hotel somewhere, you should still have access to drinks, but either way, Ramadan certainly isn't the best time for a boozy holiday. As Aretha Franklin once sang, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T!"

3. Dress appropriately

In all honesty, I've found that it's important to dress modestly in many Muslim countries year-round, but it's especially important if you're traveling during Ramadan. Locals can spot the tourists, so just try not to be too skimpy or revealing. Also, no "public displays of affection". This can get you in trouble on a normal day in some places, so better safe than sorry.

4. Plan ahead

Normally, bustling cities tend to slow down during Ramadan and many office and store hours are shortened. While many places come alive at night and can stay open until the wee hours of the morning, don't expect shops to be opening bright and early. If you're one of those people who travels on a tight schedule, be sure to do extra research for opening times of attractions, tours, and restaurants.

5. Become a night owl

The nightclubs and bars don't turn around and open after sunset, but the streets come alive after everyone has broken their fast. Many shops sell special Ramadan treats, and cafes and public spaces are open late to accommodate socializing, family time, and suhoor. Don't hesitate to join in on the local festivities! If you can join a family for iftar or walk by the local mosque at sunset, do it. You get to observe the local culture in action and really get a taste for the special time that is Ramadan – a time for hospitality and generosity.

Final thoughts:

At the end of the day, Ramadan isn't just about not eating or drinking. It's a month when millions of people join their family and friends to eat, celebrate, and reflect. It's a time of charity and appreciation and despite the hanger pains, a time that the whole community really comes together. While it certainly isn't the most convenient time to travel, it is by far one of the most interesting. If you can get past the pain points and the occasional hungry person like me, you'll gain a little more insight on a religion that the whole world should certainly learn more about. Happy travels – and to my fellow Muslims out there, Ramadan Kareem!

1.7.2 Holidays

Most or all of the countries you are passing through on this trip are predominantly Muslim. As an example of the holidays you may encounter, here is the holiday list for [Egypt](#) for 2024:

Date	Day	Name	Type
7 Jan	Sunday	Coptic Christmas Day	National holiday
25 Jan	Thursday	Revolution Day January 25	National holiday
12 Mar	Tuesday	Ramadan Start (Tentative Date)	Observance
20 Mar	Wednesday	March Equinox	Season
10 Apr	Wednesday	Eid el Fitr (Tentative Date)	National holiday

11 Apr	Thursday	Eid el Fitr Holiday (Tentative Date)	National holiday
12 Apr	Friday	Eid el Fitr Holiday (Tentative Date)	National holiday
25 Apr	Thursday	Sinai Liberation Day	National holiday
1 May	Wednesday	Labor Day	National holiday
3 May	Friday	Coptic Good Friday	Observance
4 May	Saturday	Coptic Holy Saturday	Observance
5 May	Sunday	Coptic Easter Sunday	Observance
6 May	Monday	Spring Festival	National holiday
16 Jun	Sunday	Arafat Day (Tentative Date)	National holiday
17 Jun	Monday	Eid al-Adha (Tentative Date)	National holiday
18 Jun	Tuesday	Eid al-Adha Holiday (Tentative Date)	National holiday
19 Jun	Wednesday	Eid al-Adha Holiday (Tentative Date)	National holiday
20 Jun	Thursday	June Solstice	Season
30 Jun	Sunday	June 30 Revolution	National holiday
4 Jul	Thursday	Day off for June 30 Revolution	National holiday
8 Jul	Monday	Muharram (Tentative Date)	National holiday
17 Jul	Wednesday	Ashura (Tentative Date)	Observance
23 Jul	Tuesday	Revolution Day July 23	National holiday
25 Jul	Thursday	Day off for Revolution Day July 23	National holiday
15 Aug	Thursday	Flooding of the Nile	Observance
11 Sep	Wednesday	Nayrouz	Observance
16 Sep	Monday	Prophet Mohamed's Birthday (Tentative Date)	National holiday
22 Sep	Sunday	September Equinox	Season
6 Oct	Sunday	Armed Forces Day	National holiday
10 Oct	Thursday	Day off for Armed Forces Day	National holiday
21 Dec	Saturday	December Solstice	Season

Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon, and the dates given above are only for 2024. Therefore, the dates of the holidays are subject to change, and we cannot guarantee their complete accuracy.

A link to check for Holiday Schedule by country and year:

Egypt: <https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/egypt/2024>

On this page, you can select country and year and it will list them all.

1.8 Yachtsmen's Services – Overview

1.8.1 Money / Costs of Transiting

Ed note: Some cruisers have reckoned they needed about \$5000 USD in cash if making stops along the way. But of course it depends a lot on your fuel usage and how much you can carry, as fuel is the biggest component of this estimate.

Red Sea Group – Sep 2023: Here are known possibilities for where cash may be extracted for paying for fees and supplies:

1. ATM in the Port Control building in Port Ghalib, Egypt gives Egyptian pounds which they will accept.
2. ATM in Djibouti, bank in front Casino hyper market gives US \$ with Visa card.
3. There are two ATM machines in the local Bawadi Mall close by the port in Djibouti. It's a 5 minute walk. (11.5913775, 43.1327326 on Google maps) (Mar 2023)
4. ATM close to club building in Port Suez (2020)
5. There is no ATM in Suakin and Socotra (2019)

SV Kaerou – June 2022: I publish here the detail of the budget of the passage of SV Kaerou in the red sea.

I hope these prices will help you better prepare for your visit. And if I had one piece of advice, come with enough US dollars in cash.

Djibouti

-agent and administration : 440 \$
-diesel : 300 \$ / 200 L
-shopping & simcard : 210 \$

Suakin

-agent and administration : 250 \$
-diesel : 500 \$ / 330 L
-shopping & simcard : 105 \$
-restaurant : 30 \$

Port Ghalib

-agent and administration : 500 \$
-diesel : 320 \$ / 265 L
-shopping & data : 115 \$
-restaurant : 280 \$
-yacht club : 165 \$ / 4 d

Suez

-agent and administration : 200 \$
-Suez Canal : 180 \$
-Suez Port Control : 300 \$
-shopping & data : 90 \$
-yacht Club : 20 \$ / 1 d

Ismailia

- diesel : 25 \$ / 50 L
- yacht club : 20 \$ / 1 d
- restaurant : 15 \$

Totals: 3965 \$

- agent and administration : 1290 \$
- Suez Canal & Port Control: 480 \$
- diesel : 1145 \$ / 845 L
- shopping & data : 520 \$
- yacht club : 205 \$ / 6 d
- restaurant : 325 \$.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: You'll need USD for the passage as there is no ATM in Suakin and Socotra, maybe Massawa and USD are preferred in Egypt.

1.8.2 Diesel and Gasoline

Diesel can be obtained at almost every major port:

Kochi, India
Uligan, Maldives
Salalah, Oman
Djibouti
Suakin
Port Ghalib
Suez
Ismalia

See individual port sections below for details.

1.8.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)

We tried to fill in Djibouti, Sudan, and Port Ghalib, and could not get our tank filled.

1.8.4 Groceries

1.8.5 Water

A note on water. Our water maker started breaking and eventually failed altogether. We had enough water in the tanks to get us to Suez where we took on more. Checking the log we had ZERO rainfall since Malaysia in December until we reached Crete in May.....6 months without any rain.

Bird of Passage – 2020: In Socotra, we had 800 liters of water delivered by truck directly to the boat=23\$

1.8.6 Boat Parts & Repairs

1.8.7 Medical

1.8.8 Laundry

1.9 Embassies and Consulates

1.10 Getting Visitors In and Out

1.11 Communications

1.11.1 VHF

General VHF Advice that applies to all areas: Be aware that on high power, a good VHF will transmit 25 miles line of sight, if your antenna is on your mast head. So if you are only doing within-anchorage communications, switch to low power. On the flip side, if you are trying to call across island, or to the next island, use high power, and turn your squelch down. Make sure you are aware which channels are automatic low power (ie 17, 67 on some radios), and stay away from the low-power channels for long distance conversations.

Though widely spaced in channel number, channels 16, 68, and 18 are very close to each other in frequency. Most VHF antennas are 'tuned' for channel 16, so long distance communications will work best on 16, 18 or 68. Conversely, in a crowded anchorage, transmission on high power on channel 18 or 68 may 'bleed' over to channel 16 (and almost any other channel, if you're close enough). You don't need high power to talk to the boat next to you, so turn your radio to Low Power!!

Also be aware that some channels that Americans use frequently are 'duplex' channels in International mode. So, for example, if you are American, you may have trouble communicating with a European boat, or an American boat whose radio is in International mode, on Channel 18. (see any VHF guide for the full list of international and US channels and frequencies, but any US channel designated 'a', like 18a, 22a, etc will cause trouble with VHF's in international mode).

Make sure you ask in each port what the local channels are--both so you know how to reach someone ashore and so you know not to use those channels for your off-channel conversations.

1.11.2 SSB Radio Frequencies and Nets

The Indian Ocean is a big place, and no one frequency / time will work for all boats at all times. So SSB nets form and die as waves of boats leave key spots.

Here are some comments from Red Sea passagemakers about the availability of Winlink stations to collect weather:

Paul – March 2020: For the lucky Ham radio operator with Winlink who plan to go through the Red Sea, here are a few ham stations that allowed us to get the weather forecast from Cochin to Suez:

- From Cochin VK6KPS in Australia gave us GRIBs for the 3 first days, it was very slow.

- After LZ3CB replaced the Australian station. Actually most of our GRIBs came from this ham station. Pick the right time to connect, and you won't be disappointed. This station beat my record download speed while we were offshore Djibouti: 12000 bpm with Pactor 3!
- By order of preference, here are few other ham stations that worked very well - not too bad : HB9AK, HB9AW and HB9MM

Bird of Passage – March 2020: You can also try 3B8DU (Mauritius) and EA8URF (Egypt).

Saudi Arabia also sends 24 hour weather forecasts for the Red Sea on NAVTEX several times/day. Use station HE.

1.11.3 Telephones, Cell Phones and Internet Access

Internet access is possible in most major ports via cell phone sim cards. Socotra's sim cards are voice only (date?).

1.11.4 Mail

1.11.5 News

1.12 Diving

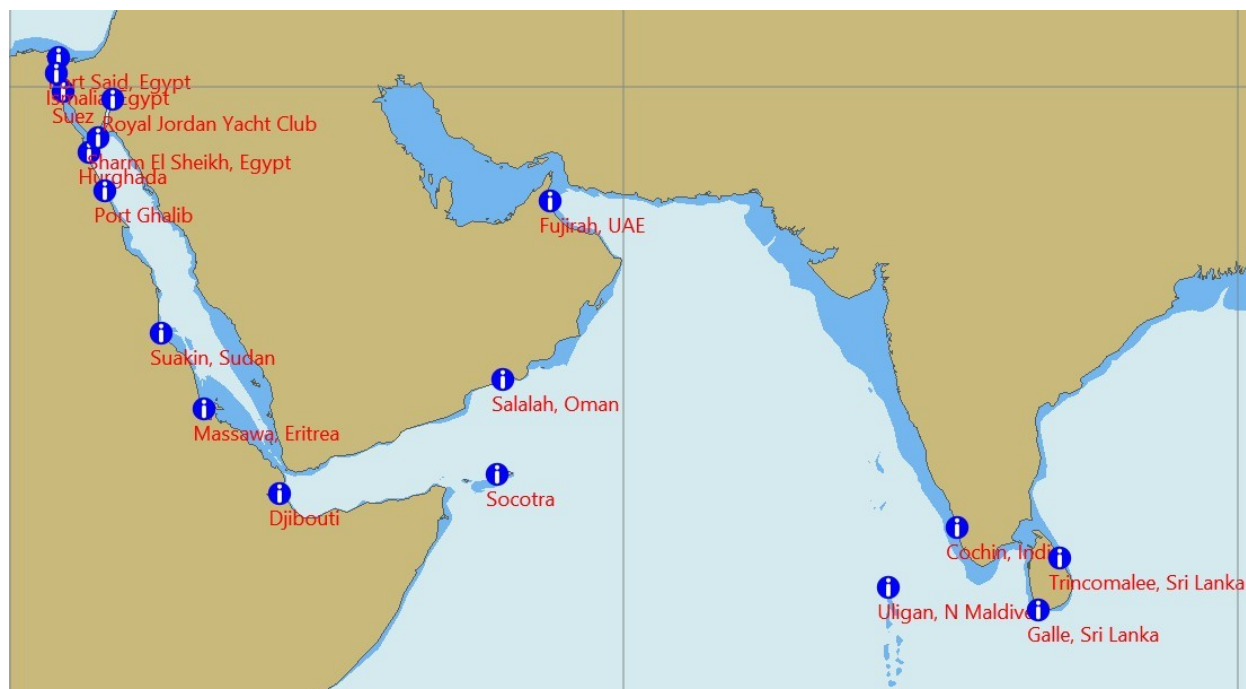
The diving in the Red Sea is world class. However, because of the expense and hassle of clearing in and out, in order to legitimately cruise and dive in the Red Sea countries, most cruisers opt to hurry through, and revisit for diving by flying in and taking a (very reasonably priced) live-aboard dive boat.

1.13 Haulout, Storage, and Repair Facilities

Some people have left their boat on anchor in Djibouti, under someone's watchful eyes.

There are marinas in Egypt where people have either left their boat, or stayed for extended periods. At least one location has a haulout option (El Gouna in Egypt). Jump to [Egypt Marinas](#)

1.14 Routing and Timing Advice



1.14.1 Route Choices

FB Group – 2019: Don't miss Socotra...stop there--don't go to Djibouti. Keep your course on the south side of the ships lane. Pass the Bab el Mandeb at sunrise and you are in the Red Sea. If you time it right, you may sail with the southerlies. Don't go to Assab. A good anchorage is Ras Derma in south wind. Second alternate anchorage is Mersa Dudo. Then through south Mitsiva Channel go to Massawa harbor.

Then Suakin meet agent Muhammed. Do your checkin for Egypt in port Ghalib - Marsa Mubarek. Hurgada marina is better than Abu Tig. Then you are in Suez Yacht Club.

I made this crossing in 2017 single handed, from Langkawi to Turkey Finike 5500 nm.

1.14.2 Timing

Red Sea Group – April 2021 – Passage in August: The reason for the lack of cyclones in this part of the world in July and August is because of extreme wind shear at elevations. This same wind shear causes accelerated winds around Socotra, often exceeding 35 knots according to the pilot charts.

Comment: We had 55 kts true blowing from Guardafui with gusts up to 70 kts , stressing to say the least, we stayed in Socotra for a week waiting for the window

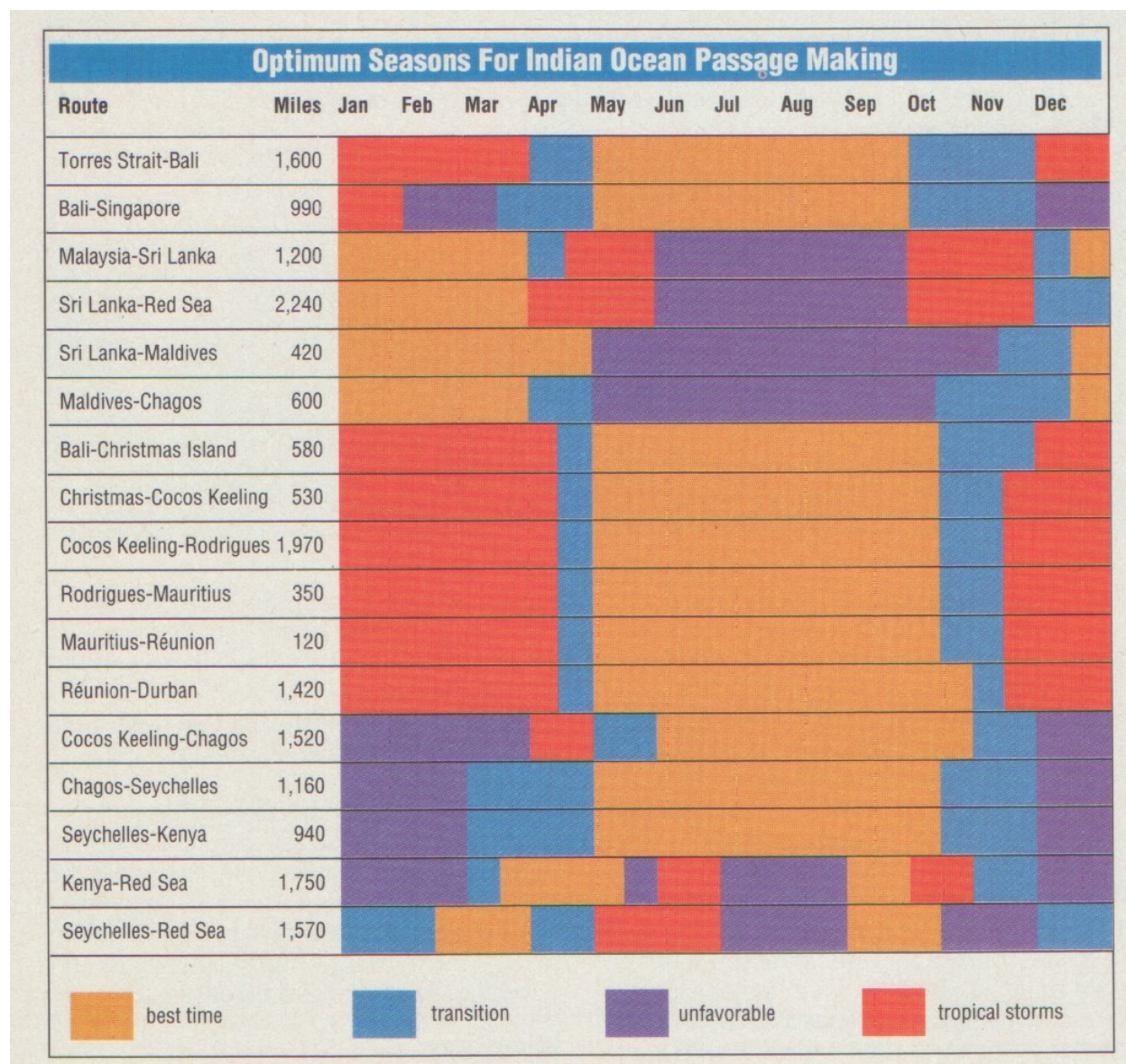
Comment: We sailed from SA to Red Sea a year or three ago. Agree with all comments. The wind around Socotra can be fierce. Very limited bolt holes. Plan carefully. Spend some time sailing in Djibouti.

Joana – November 2020: From my perspective, the best season for making a passage though the Red Sea (either Northbound or Southbound) is from December to May. There are some

cruisers who attempt to do this route outside of that timeframe, but those that do may encounter uncomfortably high temperatures and extremely strong winds. From my experience, although everyone knows about the pirate risk – there is far greater risk from lack of preparation.

Soggy Paws – January 2020: See Jimmy Cornell Graphic below. This graphic was in a 1992 Cruising World Article by Jimmy Cornell. Jimmy Cornell’s publications, including World Cruising Routes, will have much more detail about timing the Red Sea run. This route mostly addresses the run from SE Asia to the Red Sea and South Africa. Doesn’t cover southbound Red Sea, however Cornell’s book [World Cruising Routes](#) certainly would.

Also to plan your own route, have a look at OpenCPN’s Climatology plug-in and Weather Routing plug-in. Climatology is easy to use—it lets you pull up fairly recent historical weather information for any month (any date) in the year, including cyclone tracks. Weather Routing is more difficult to learn, but it will let you do a routing using your polars, and the Climatology data, to start on any date you choose.



Source: Jimmy Cornell Article in *Cruising World* 1992

1.15 Managing the Piracy Risk – UKMTO, MSCHOA & the High Risk Area

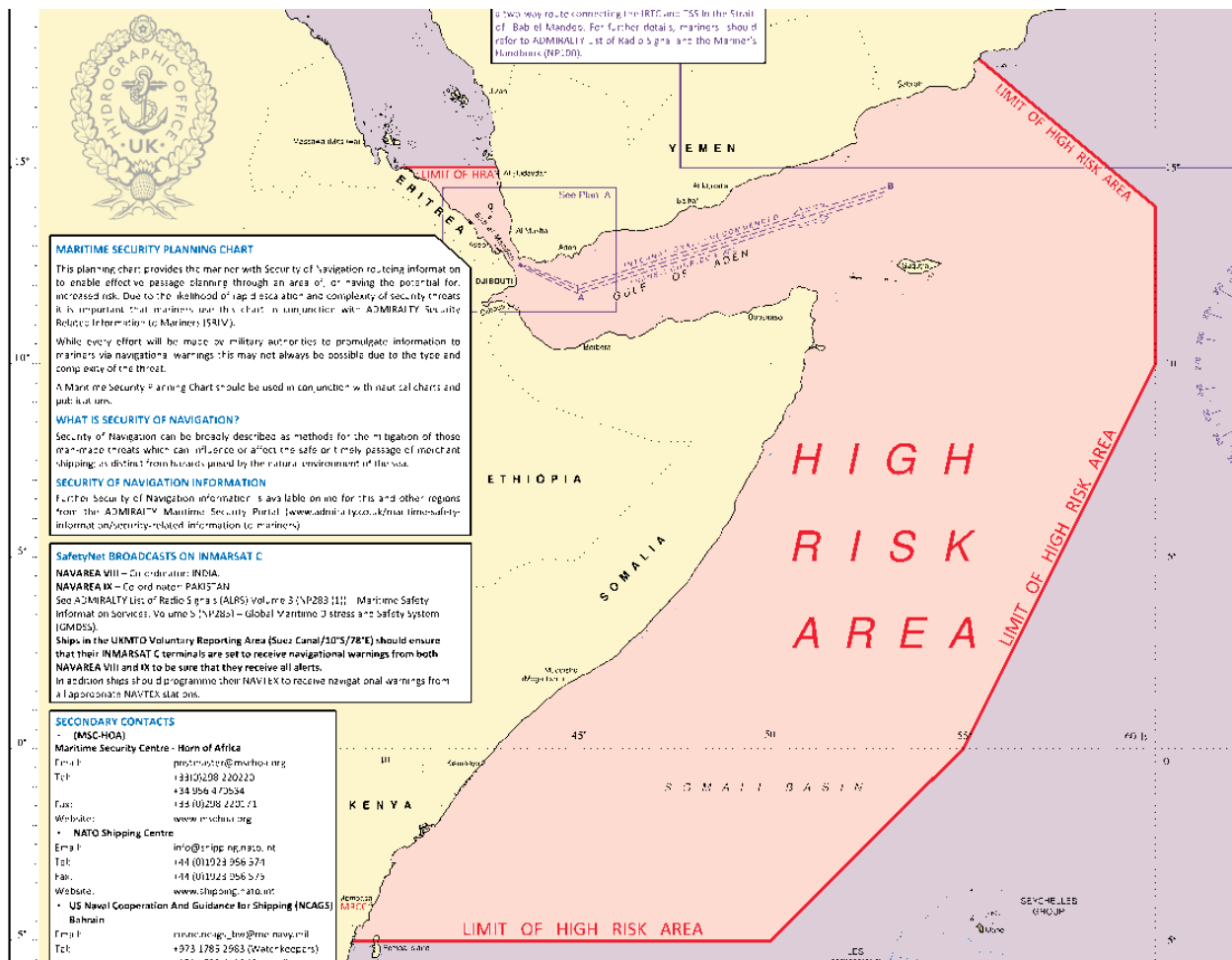
Cruisers planning to do the Red Sea run, should spend some time on the UKMTO website and the MSCHOA website (see links below) to understand best how to register with these organizations prior to transit, and how best to manage your transit through the area.

The “corridor” that is monitored is in this area:

For the EAST point (POINT B): 14°28N 53°00E

For the WEST point (POINT A): 11°50N 045°00E

The high risk area is denoted in the chart snip below, in pink. The traffic corridor is the dotted line running east to west above Djibouti.



1.15.1 Reductions in Threats

In late 2022, the shipping industry published this announcement:

Shipping industry to remove the Indian Ocean High Risk Area

- At 0001 UTC on 1 January 2023 the Indian Ocean High Risk Area (HRA) for piracy will be removed.

- The removal of the HRA reflects a significantly improved piracy situation in the region, but voyage preparation, threat and risk assessment is essential when following Best Management Practice 5 (BMP5).

22 August 2022. London, UK. After more than a decade of effective threat-reducing counter-piracy operations the shipping industry has removed the 'Indian Ocean High Risk Area' (HRA).

Notification of the removal of the HRA from 0001 UTC on 1 January 2023 by industry bodies was forwarded in a submission today, 22 August, to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the next meeting of the Maritime Safety Committee scheduled to start on 31 October 2022.

The removal of the HRA reflects a significantly improved piracy situation in the region, largely due to concerted counter-piracy efforts by many regional and international stakeholders. No piracy attacks against merchant ships have occurred off Somalia since 2018.

The IMO has been informed of the decision made by International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), BIMCO, International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA), INTERCARGO, INTERTANKO and Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF).

Measures enacted to secure the waters by military, political, civil society, and shipping industry, as well as Best Management Practices guidance, have reduced the threat of piracy in the Indian Ocean.

The removal of the HRA will come into effect at 0001 UTC on 1 January 2023, allowing charterers, shipowners and operators time to adapt to the changed threat from piracy. Best Management Practices 5 (BMP5) will continue to provide the necessary guidance for shipping to ensure threat and risk assessments are developed for every voyage to mitigate the risks presented by remaining security threats in the region. The shipping industry will continue to monitor and advise on maritime security threats to assist the safe transit of vessels and the seafarers who crew them. Pre-voyage threat and risk assessments should consider the latest maritime security information from organisations supporting the VRA.

The area being removed is the "High Risk Area" as shown on UKHO Chart Q6099. The Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) administered by UKMTO has not changed. Ships entering the VRA are encouraged to report to the UKMTO and register with the Maritime Security Centre for the Horn of Africa (MSCHOA) in accordance with industry BMP (Best Management Practices).

1.15.2 Acronyms & What They Mean

UKMTO - UK Maritime Trade Operations. <http://ukmto.org> United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations (UKMTO) is a Royal Navy capability with the principal purpose of providing an information conduit between military which (includes/security forces) and the wider international maritime trade. UKMTO delivers timely maritime security information, often acting as the primary point of contact for merchant vessels involved in maritime incidents or travelling within an area of high risk (HRA).

UKMTO also administers Voluntary Reporting Areas (VRAs), as detailed in a variety of Maritime Security Charts. These schemes are to enhance the security of merchant vessels and therefore

vessels/masters/CSOs and Companies are encouraged to send regular reports, providing their position/course/speed and ETA at their next port whilst in transit.

In the event of an incident UKMTO is able to inform relevant regional authorities and warn and advise vessels in the near vicinity of the incident (See and Avoid process). The information is provided to the wider shipping industry, therefore providing ship owners and Masters with information that could affect their own company risk assessment in that transit.

UKMTO receives information from many organisations within the region including a variety of maritime operations centres and port authorities, this enables enhanced Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA) that is utilised in supporting the global maritime trade.

All information received by UKMTO is strictly controlled in a secure information system and recognizes that the source and content of the information is often sensitive. It is important to note that whilst UKMTO liaises with military maritime operations, its role is not to coordinate a military response.

UKMTO strives to understand the global maritime environment therefore directly supporting the maritime industry. It achieves this by knowledge of events that can impact the security, safety, environment and subsequently the safe navigation of the sea.

MSCHOA & EU NAVFOR – Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa

With up to 95% of EU Members States' trade (by volume) transported by sea and 20% of global trade passing through the Gulf of Aden, EU NAVFOR gives considerable effort to safeguarding trade and freedom of navigation through this strategic area, as it is essential for the welfare of Nations.

The Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA), located in Brest, is an initiative established by EU NAVFOR in close co-cooperation with the shipping industry. Vessels transiting the area are monitored 24 hours a day, whilst the provision of an interactive website enables the Centre to communicate the latest counter-piracy guidance to the Maritime Industry, and for shipping companies and operators to register their vessels' movements through the region. EU NAVFOR, and, by association, CMF's and independent deployers' naval assets may then be dispatched as required in the event of any emergency.

Owners and operators who have vessels transiting the region are strongly encouraged to register with MSCHOA, before reaching our vessel registration area to improve their security and reduce the risk of attacks or capture. Additionally, EU NAVFOR fully supports the Best Management Practices for Protection against Somalia Based Piracy (BMP). The BMPs can be downloaded [here](#).

BMP – Best Management Practices: This is a document created by MSCHOA and UKMTO to describe to the shipping industry how to prepare for and transit the High Risk Area.

HRA – High Risk Area

1.15.3 Reporting

This section copied from the HRMTOA document labeled “Best Management Practices to Deter Piracy and Enhance Maritime Security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea”, v5, published June 2018.

Download this document as a PDF file from this link:

<https://www.ukmto.org/indian-ocean/best-management-practices>

All ships are strongly encouraged to inform military organisations of their movement as this is essential to improve military situational awareness and their ability to respond. Once ships have commenced their passage it is important this reporting continues and the guidelines in this section and annexes C, D and E are adopted to ensure common understanding. The two principal military organisations to contact are the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) and Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA).

UKMTO

UKMTO acts as the primary point of contact for merchant ships and their CSOs, providing liaison with military forces in the region. UKMTO administers the Voluntary Reporting Scheme, under which merchant ships are encouraged to send regular reports. These include:

1. Initial report (upon entering the VRA).
2. Daily reports (update on ship's position, course and speed).
3. Final reports (upon departure from VRA or arrival in port).
4. Reports of suspicious/irregular activity (when necessary).

UKMTO is able to communicate with ships and CSOs directly, in order to disseminate Warnings and Advisories of incidents within the region:

- Warnings: Simple messages describing that an incident has occurred in a Lat/Long and with a time. This is normally accompanied by direct UKMTO-to-ship telephone calls to all ships within a nominated radius of the incident to give ships the earliest possible alert.
- Advisories: This is the next tier of alerts to ships, normally of sightings/reports that are relevant within the region.

UKMTO offers regular information to ships on its website www.ukmto.org and in a weekly report summarising the previous week's activity. UKMTO is also able to offer Masters and CSOs the opportunity to conduct drills and exercises to support their passage planning in the region. Companies that are interested can contact UKMTO +44(0)2392 222060 or watchkeepers@ukmto.org

Ships and their operators should complete both UKMTO vessel position reporting forms and register with MSCHOA.

1.15.4 Passage Numbers in 2020

Joana – July 2020: According to records kept by Capt Heebie (Prince of the Red Sea – an agent for the Suez Canal), there were 53 yachts that completed this passage this season (December 2019 to June 2020). Most of these were Northbound, but there were several Southbound. The Southbound boats benefit from consistent North winds at the Northern section, but then are challenged as they close in on Djibouti and try to go East or South.

My own records show 40 boats, but the difference lies mainly in the number of cruisers that do not belong to the Red Sea Facebook Group. Perhaps 1/3 of the cruisers following this route either chose not to belong, or were unaware of the group. These numbers are definitely lower

than last year, and I suspect the reason is that many cruisers postponed departure, or became stuck in Maldives, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Thailand because of COVID-19 — and simply made the right choice to delay their passage until next year. At this time, there are probably 10 boats “stuck” in Djibouti, Port Ghalib, Port Hurghada and Jordan. They chose to berth their boat and fly home.

1.16 Recent Cruiser High Risk Area Transit Reports

Incentive – March 2023: Timing of passage: Departed Uligamu, Maldives on 20-2-2023 11am local time. Arrived in Djibouti on the 6th of March 2023 at 3pm local time.

Departed Djibouti towards Suakin, Sudan on the 10th of March 2023 9am local time.

Reporting to UKMTO and MSCHOA:

- Before departure from Uligamu, Maldives we’ve sent our initial report to UKMTO and MSCHOA.
- Email: watchkeepers@ukmto.org and postmaster@mschoa.org
- After that we’ve sent one position report daily at 08.00 UTC to both email addresses.
- Upon arrival we’ve sent our final report.
- (From Djibouti to Sudan and from Sudan to Suez we will do the same).
- Reporting forms formats can be found on: <https://www.ukmto.org/indian-ocean/reporting-formats>

Approach:

After leaving the IRTC at point A (11°54.095'N 45°0.010'E) we more or less aimed for waypoint 11°46.350'N 43°8.499'E north of Iles Moucha and followed the recommended track on Navionics (purple line) from there.

Upon approach, the Djibouti Navy will call on VHF16 to ask for boat and crew details. Once anchored you’ll probably get a visit from the coastguard for a quick check. It’s not a real inspection. They just look inside, need to see some paperwork and take a picture. This takes maybe 10 minutes. (see rest of the Djibouti information in the [Djibouti section](#))

Joana – November 2020 – Yemen: The coastal waters of Yemen should be entirely avoided. One yacht had a skiff race by obviously under remote control during an attempted act of terrorism on a Saudi oil tanker. These acts are not directed at cruisers, but you may end up suffering collateral damage if you stray too close to Yemen. Do not pass between Socotra and mainland Somalia.

Anthem – October 2019 – Kenya to Djibouti: Anthem arrived safe in Djibouti 4 days ago and we would like to share with you some information about our sailing from Lamu (Kenya) to Socotra (Yemen) and then into the Gulf of Aden till Djibouti. Sorry for the long post but it might be helpful for the next boats on similar route.

ABOUT ANTI PIRACY COALITION in the high risk area and IRTC:

Before leaving Kenya we registered Anthem to UKMTO and MSCHOA (as already explained in this group) following their instruction.

Since day one we started sending once a day to UKMTO their official "daily report" format; we always received back an automatic confirmation email. One day we received a phone call on the satellite, hard to hear clearly but they just wanted to know everything was OK.

The second day of sailing we received an email from Lieutenant Wim Planke of MSCHOA and we started to correspond twice a day with him.

Every day a Japanese aircraft overflew us releasing a general message on VHF16. A couple of times they called us on our satellite phone to be sure we were ok (we guessed they saw our zigzagging around at very low speed tacking into light winds and strong current).

So the anti-piracy coalition system works very well and we felt pretty safe. Plus, as soon as we reached about 150nm from the African coast, we crossed many merchant ships on the similar route (most of them with armed guard on board).

Noonsite – September 2019: 17 September 2019: A sailing yacht (probably moving south through the Red Sea) was boarded approximately 120nm NW of the Northern boundary of the High-Risk Area in position 1629.58N 04008.32E at 15:30 UTC. This sailing yacht called MAYDAY on channel 16, most likely because they mistook Eritrean Coast Guard officials for pirates. This position is Harmil, a military outpost which should not be visited by recreational vessels. Two days later the UKMTO confirmed that the yacht was safe and proceeding to its destination.

Paseafique – June 2019: Security Issues: We registered with the Horn of Africa Maritime Security Centre and reported daily to the UK Maritime Trade Organisation while on route from Lamu to Port Suakin, Sudan. We did not encounter any security issues nor did we see any suspicious skiffs.

Muttley – June 2019: Socotra - Port Ghalib: Once in the IRTC, we were constantly surrounded by ships. We had radio contact with Japanese Navy and Chinese radio on a semi regular basis. We felt very safe.

We were approached by 2 skiffs coming from the south one afternoon, which was a bit suspect. One circled around the bow while the other followed behind, keeping a distance of about 100m for about 5 mins. I got straight on the phone to the UKMTO and within minutes we could see a warship on the horizon that then shadowed us for the next few hours as a precaution.

Facebook – April 2019 (edited) - Piratical Encounter off the Coast of Somalia: And so it came to pass, the long awaited 1700 nm escapade along the treacherous pirate infested coastline of Somalia.

With a well prepared flotilla of 3 catamarans, authorities advised, all fueled up and up to the minute weather forecasts, what could go wrong.

Well pretty much everything, my radio stopped working about a mile out to sea, the weather wasn't as predicted, the currents atrocious and then we all went in different directions, but hey we were on our way to the Med.

The first 9 days where probably the worst sea conditions I have ever experienced, not big and dangerous just bloody rough, after Mogadishu the conditions abated, the currents changed and the wind became our friend again even though I had no idea where the others were.

After an entanglement in a fishing net and a confrontation and ramming by the owners of the net, I found myself \$400 poorer for the experience, plus some minor damage to the boat. Pirates have nothing on these Somalia fisherman.

But I tidied myself up and headed for the Horn of Africa and the downwind leg to Djibouti, about 600 nm and relative safety.

As I rounded the Horn I decided to follow 2 container vessels closer to the coast as a bit of a shortcut, you would, wouldn't you?

A Japanese Naval patrol plane flew over and radioed me to check if I was ok and advised that they were there to help and could be contacted on ch 16 if I was in peril, my radio was working again. I thanked him and felt re assured of my safety.

The sea was calm, wind right behind, smooth sailing at about 5.5 knts so I decided to duck down to the port engine room to do a little maintenance. Now to set the scene....when one sails alone on these long crossing more often than not clothes are optional, most of the days are spent just lazing about on my bed in the cockpit, so no real need to frock up.

So down in the engine room for about 20 minutes, naked, and I hear voices outside, not the usual voices you hear on long crossings, these were real. I jumped up on the engine block and poked my head out the hatch, here was a small Somalia fishing boat with 4 men on board coming up to the back of the Vamonos.

2 men were perched on the bow ready to jump on board, I yelled at them to not come aboard but they ignored my polite directions and jumped on to the port transom, the first aboard then pulled a rather large knife from his trousers, I retreated into the engine room which is accessed by folding back the mattress in the port bed room.

The pirate, as I decided he was now, started to thrust the knife at me through hatch but I was too far away down in the engine but I was stuck there and for a brief moment thought I was bugged.

The pirate then decided to get down the hatch but needed 2 hands to do so and it was then I was able to scramble backwards out of the engine well, not very elegantly, and retreat to the main cabin area.

I quickly searched for something to stop the blaggard and could only lay my hands on an empty 20L water bottle which I launched at him as he came after me.

It bounced of him like a paper towel but it gave me vital seconds to reach out to the cockpit for my anti pirate weaponry which I had earlier assembled.

The first thing I laid my hands was a beautifully weighted piece of willow in the form of a Grey Nicholls cricket bat, oh what joy--I felt immediately back in control.

As the bugger came up the steps towards me with knife raised I again asked him politely to leave the boat but again he ignored me so I let go with 3 almighty cross bat shots to his arm, shoulder and a glancing blow to the head.

He stopped but did not retreat so he got 3 more good hook shots to the body and shoulder, he did retreat. Back into the bed room out the hatch and over the transom into the water, 3 steps I think he took. On his way he handed his knife to his bemused mate who was rifling through the bedroom for booty, he had not seen the cricket lesson I gave to his mate and started shaking

the knife at me, no requests this time I just let loose with 3 of the best I could muster, I was a bit cranky by then.

He retreated or hobbled out the hatch and I pursued him via the cockpit.

He was defiant, showing me that he had lifted my favorite torch so I picked up my 3 pronged hand spear and launched at him across my day bed, he too leapt into the water.

So we have 2 pirates in the water about 200 mtrs behind the boat while the other 2 in the fishing boat were still beside me yelling out, money, money, money, I told them no way, get fucked, fuck off and they did. They turned around and went and picked up their mates and headed back to the mainland.

It was while I was watching them disappear that I glanced down at my nakedness and wondered what they thought when they saw an old naked man appear out of the cockpit carrying a cricket bat and holding a 3 pronged spear, I may never know but they were sporting wry smiles as they departed.

I then made 3 Mayday calls but got no response, I still had 4 days of sailing before Djibouti.

I gathered myself after the brief but intense encounter and turned to beer to settle the nerves, during the daylight hours that remained I gathered an even more formidable arsenal of weaponry and traps.

Speargun locked and loaded, 2 hand spears 7 knives strategically placed around the cabin and cockpit, a welcome mat with drawing pins in it, cricket bat of course, 2 fish gaffs, soap on the transoms, trip ropes every where, I could hardly move but for a clear path to the beer fridge.

4 days of anxious watch, no more than an hours sleep at a time.

I saw nothing but large cargo vessels and finally sailed into Djibouti harbour to be greeted by my 3 other buddy boats, they all had very uneventful trips, why me?

Blue Eye – April 2019: The biggest concern is obviously the safety of the Gulf of Aden, and for what it's worth we felt very safe. Even safer than out in the Arabian Sea actually, where we were approached by fishing boats several times (and on one occasion it seemed we were being pursued, but they veered off after a while). This scared the hell out of us to be honest, we hadn't expected to see them out in the middle of the ocean, but in the end they were typically friendly and only wanted to trade fish for cigarettes and booze.

So it was a relief to get to the Gulf of Aden where Navy boats are everywhere, there's plenty of shipping, and we even had a flyover on day two. We stuck to the middle of the IRTC and felt this was a good tactic.

The rest of the Red Sea was fine safety-wise, just obviously don't go to Yemen, or Asseb in Eritrea. Keep an eye out for any developments elsewhere too.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: Once we entered the corridor until Bab el Mandeb we were overflown and contacted daily by a Japanese navy aircraft. In the corridor we haven't seen a single warship, but heard them radioing multiple times daily. We had no doubt that the ships have been close by at all times. There was a lot of traffic within the corridor. Most of the times, several freighters were close by, but we also met cruise ships enroute. As we were passing Bab el Mandeb we encountered two skiffs, each with 5 men on board, which we found a bit strange, but they didn't approach us. Our impression is that the watchkeepers are doing an amazing job

in closely and efficiently monitoring the corridor at all times. We felt secure throughout our transit.

Wade Alarie – April 2018: I've just realized that there were actually two incidents of note that took place in early 2016 - in Yemeni waters off the island of Jazirat al Hanish al Kabir. Two different sailing yachts, on different dates - were fired upon by people on shore. Unfortunately, neither of these incidents were sufficiently well reported and caused some people (myself included) to believe that they were the same incident.

The incident with SY MILASHKA was reported on Noonsite February 4, 2016, whilst the one with SY TRIM became part of an article written and available on the Internet. Bottom line - don't try to stop in Yemen, other than Socotra.

TRIM's Red Sea Passage article is here:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/303369822/Across-Arabian-Seas-Pt-2>

Eric Rigney - April 2018 (from Suakin)· We checked in with UKMTO prior to departure. Left Cochin March 10, arrived Massawa, Eritrea March 30.

Followed winds to southern edge of eastern MSTC entrance, well above Socotra where coalition forces warned of increased piracy activity.

We stayed about 2nm south of the corridor. Glad we transmitted AIS and ran with lower running lights. Nearly hourly VHF CH16 broadcasts from coalition warships making their presence & services known. Daily, sometimes twice, naval aircraft flybys with direct radio contact made with each vessel. Much commercial shipping traffic.

Twice we had what appears now to have been fishing boats approach us.

1) Mothership stopped 1.5 nm in front of us, boarded their 4 OB skiffs with men, and continued N as we did a 180 to see if they'd follow. No coalition warship responded but a US commercial ship relayed. Asked if we saw ladders on board. Did not. Said likely a non-incident, which it was, but they monitored us for as long as we needed.

2) A 60' dhow approached us from behind. When within 2nm, we hailed assistance without reply to coalition forces. UKMTO monitored us over email. Boat came within 200m, we hailed MAYDAY. Djibouti port control responded, but were confused--thought we were at their harbor. Heard plane, hailed naval aircraft on VHF 16 again. Successful. They flew over, monitored us, felt the boat proved a non-threat.

Sailed into Red Sea entering the west side of corridor and staying there until corridor ended, then sailed to Massawa, Eritrea.

So, nothing bad happened, just a couple of scares.

Southern Wing – March 2018 – Assessing Fishing Boat Risk: Crossing the Arabian Sea was a dream passage, nothing like my last trip and I have never experienced an ocean passage like it. One foot seas and still doing 8 to 10 kts. Nearly all the way to Suakin.

A help to determine how dangerous skiffs are!!!!

While we were anchored in Socotra we often had up to 5 or 6 fishing mother ships anchored beside us with 3 skiffs or dories strung in a line behind them.

The mother boats were all similar, about 50ft to 55ft long with a high cabin at the back and low freeboard amidships. Not particularly made for rough seas. The dories were close to 40ft long with a high bow. Of interest, is that ALL the skiffs had small outboards and we're only capable of 6 to 7 kts revved up. We saw them flat out around the anchorage! They didn't have bigger outboards on the mother ships.

We saw quite a few of them between Socotra and Djibouti and usually motoring along at about 6 or 7 kts. None of them showed any interest in us and none changed their course towards us.

So, whenever we saw this configuration a few miles away we were always interested in the size of the outboards and some of our fears were allayed. We still took all precautions ready to make contact with UKMTO and naval forces etc but were fortunate enough not to need to.

Kings Legend – March 2018: We did feel very safe throughout the whole passage, being monitored by the UKMTO. We did see a couple warships, but they did not respond when we tried to reach them over the VHF. This must be their protocol to keep silent until a mayday call reaches them.

Just once we saw a potential mothership dragging 4 skiffs behind it, crossing our path, so we were on high alert and immediately called the UKMTO. They did not approach us however, so it may just have been real fishermen heading home.

We stayed inside the neutral zone on our westbound passage and made another fuel stop in Djibouti.

Alytes – March 2016: When done researching and weighing the risks for our family, we concluded to take the route through the HRA and the Red Sea without guards. Why that? The most important bit of information was the fact, that there have been no officially reported attacks on ships under way since about 20 months at that time. The last attack on a yacht was even older. We monitored this closely as we approached the area further. Still no attacks when we reached Sri Lanka and after our four week visit of the island.

A potentially serious risk would be during the time of elections in Djibouti. We planned our visit to leave before the hot phase of campaigning.

Concerning piracy risks, we were convinced that the robust mandates of by western and Chinese governments back in 2011 have stopped professional piracy. The now widespread employment of armed security teams on commercial ships has very much deterred Somali pirates from attacking their boats, too (in comparison to the criminals on the West-African coast, who are more ready to engage in lengthy firefights with on board guards). Our assessment did include a smaller risk of violent and potentially armed fishermen from African coasts.

Our crew did take some extra precautions for the trip: We drew up a risk reaction scheme (what to do if a suspicious vessel approaches certain distances to our catamaran) and trained it playfully. We did it in a way not to scare our ten-year-old daughter. Instead, she was given little tasks and was therefore included as valuable part of the watch at times (as this can be done for a child her age). We also decided what to do when being attacked: As in other situations, we would be ready to deter and resist vigorously instead of risking capture being taken as hostage.

ALYTES got some new equipment, too. Additionally to our high volume / long distance pepper-spray and machetes, we equipped floating lines to foul pursuer's propellers, some incendiary devices as well as a fake assault rifle to mimic an armed security team from a distance. Fenders

and ropes were used to block an easy entry via the transom. We had trained on how to aim parachute flares horizontally without hurting the own crew long before we entered the HRA. We felt well prepared for the risks expected.

As for the route and sailing routine, we just added two rules: stay as far away as possible from any coast (except the Maldives and Socotra, which were safe at the time) and continuously keep a sharp lookout. The latter meant that we did have at least one person in the convoy on lookout. That is a change for us Pacific Trade Wind sailors as we are used to empty oceans most of the time. Nevertheless, it did feel a lot safer to know that there were eyes on the horizon at all times. Besides that, everything was just as any ocean passage.

There is a staging area for commercial convoys and guarded passages on both ends. A war ship is usually present. In our case, it was an Indian destroyer. Navy ships of many nationalities would be seen each day. We were contacted from surveillance aircraft each day in the IRTC as well. Sometimes helicopters would perform close flybys with soldiers having their smart phones ready to film our beautiful Parasailor or our friend's impressive trade wind sail setup.

We felt more secure than at any time during our circumnavigation. Tongue in cheek we developed the feeling that the biggest risk in the IRTC was a collision with one of the many war ships.

During the transit of the corridor, we experienced two suspicious approaches. In the first late evening, a 20 ft. boat with navigation lights switched on approached the last yacht of our convoy and attempted to circle it in a distance of about 300 meters. The other convoy vessels reacted by taking down their headsails and rushing toward the scene using their engines. The stranger disappeared. The second boat crossed the bow of ALYTES (being at the front of the convoy at that time) in one NM distance in daylight.

The vessel was approximately 40 ft. long carrying a skiff and many blue kegs of some sort. We were quite alerted by the setup, raised the alarm and posed as mock security team on the rails. After passing us, the boat then slowed down and turned around, but it did not close in.

The convoy kept close together and passed the site without problems. We could not assess, whether the approaching crews were fishing (thus making strange maneuvers), plainly curious or actually ill-willing. We were happy to have employed an offensive "not to be messed with" approach to avoid finding out.

On the first occasion, we did contact UKMTO to give them a heads up, as we were truly a bit worried. They reacted very professionally and we were convinced that we would have been efficiently supported if the situation would have developed into something serious.

Tamarask – January 2015: We had only a couple of suspicious approaches that we wrote off as most likely curious fishermen at the time. One skiff was particularly suspicious... we spotted them from over a mile away with two occupants. We put three guys with assault rifles on the deck by the time they came near. Once within 100 meters, they saw our guns on display, one guy put his hands in the air and they buzzed off at high speed.

On review of the photos we took during the incident, we now see there was a third guy hidden beneath the deck level (or maybe just sitting low to avoid the wind) and what appears to be a rifle sitting on the driver's lap, hidden beneath a jacket, that we also didn't notice at the time of

their approach. Very difficult to say for sure what was going on - maybe our minds are playing tricks. This was approx 50 miles off Yemen, about 200 miles east of Aden.

There were no other incidents that we think could possibly have been pirates. We stayed near the commercial transit corridor (patrolled by coalition warships) and stayed on the Yemeni side most of the time. I would probably do the routing this way again.

Watchkeeping: It is difficult because it requires eagle eyes for 10 days or so - a marathon task when 99.999% of the time you are staring into an empty and boring blue ocean. We saw nothing before entering the Gulf of Aden, so preserve crew and energy for that 10 day period. Good radar is helpful, but not a replacement for good visual during the day. Good binoculars were very helpful for identifying suspicious objects from a long distance - we had 15x magnification with image stabilizers (Canon @ \$1100) and were very pleased with the investment. Another pair of regular magnification (8x) is better for scanning the horizon.

At least three people are needed to maintain alertness at all times, preferably four in my opinion. Early identification of skiffs is the big challenge - if you can do that and have weapons on the deck, I doubt there is much chance of an attack. The biggest hazard is failing to spot them until they are alongside.... in my opinion.

1.17 Shipping Your Boat

From Sail SE Asia FB Group: Sevenstar Yacht Transport - Phuket to the Med.

There may be other options, but this company has advertised on the Sail SE Asia group several times.

Sevenstar Yacht Transport.

Sailings in March, April, and May 2018, contact Chris chris@sevenstar-asia.com +66 860 454 634

There is some benefit in organizing a group rate, and this is usually done starting in the Fall. People on the Sail SE Asia Facebook Group organize it.

Question – Mar 2019 – Cost of Sailing vs Shipping: Does anyone know of any comparisons that have been conducted to evaluate the different and various costs involved with:

- A) Ship transportation to the Med.
- B) Sailing to the Med via South Africa.
- C) Sailing via the Red Sea.

Excluding time scales, difficulties and/or personal likes/dislikes and purely just focusing on costs are there any comparisons anywhere ?

For example picking a figure out of the air--if it costs \$40,000USD to ship a yacht from Thailand to Turkey then how much would the costs be to sail from Thailand to Turkey including food, marinas, wear and tear and everything else one would expect to associate with that venture ?

Leslie Godfrey – Mar 2019: For us, we estimate \$4,000 per month while sailing to cover our entire cruising life style while on passage across oceans, stopping in to explore islands and countries along the way - regular boat maintenance, visa checkin fees all included. This holds historically accurate except when we are in first world areas like US, New Zealand, Australia

and then our cost estimates go up by 20%. So, for the routes you ask about, for us these three options are likely to pencil out at (A) ship transport we got a quote for \$30,000 (B) Via South Africa we expect it to take 13 months at \$4K/mo average, so \$52,000, and (C) via Red Sea we would expect that route to take four months so \$16,000.

Once we arrive in the Med, the \$4,000/month average will likely increase significantly. I worry it will be double, but my hope is to keep it to only \$6k/mo. These figures are for our style of exploration at checkin points and general maintenance of a well refit 1981 40ft Monohull. It wouldn't cover any sort of large refit requirement if a problem like that would arise - which is most pertinent to the South Africa route as it seems the most likely route to put significant pressure on the boat to cause breakage and unexpected refit needs.

Bob Mott – Mar 2019: I sailed from Phuket on the 1st March. First stop Andamans with a permit as the shake down part of the trip as it was a delivery of a 65 foot steel Roberts sloop. We spent a week in the Andamans and then to Male, the capital, direct. Should have gone to one of the northern islands but was worried about fuel and provisions. We had 4 aboard. We didnt stop in Sri Lanka to avoid agent fees. Paid no fees in Male. From there non stop to Djuboti , extra fuel put aboard. I have enough fuel in every case for over 50% of the passage. From there non stop to Suez. Did that section in April with zero bad weather for the whole 1200NM or so. Agent fees in Suez and some baksish. Next stop Malta then a few hops to Sardinia due to a storm, then Menorca and Melorca , Motril Spain for a top up and Gibraltar. Cost were not overly high. Weather in Med lousy till we got past Sardinia. In Gibraltar 18th May.

1.18 Organizing a “Rally” / Convoy to Cross

Bob Bechler sv Sisiuti (FB) – Feb 2018: (posted in response to someone inquiring about a rally for 2019): Let me point out a couple of difficulties. This year there were over 25 boats making the passage northbound. For one reason or another the departure dates ran from January to nearly April. They left from Singapore, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Cochin India. Cochin was the most popular point of departure but not all boats could come there because of visa limitations. The fleet consisted of some VERY fast catamarans and much slower monohulls. One boat, like last year, hired a 3 person Armed Security Team at a rate of approx \$200/day/person. The boats left for the Red Sea in small groups based on schedule, departure point, destination, and speed. The smaller groups had 3-5 boats each. Even then within a few days they were separated on Passage by miles. I have left on organized rally's of over 100 boats. Within a day it is normal not to even see another boat until the first anchorage.

What kind of escort? If it is an organized rally, who is responsible if something goes wrong. Who gets sued? With such varied dates, speeds, destinations, how many escorts will be needed? Some boats want to stop in Socotra, some just want to get thru the High Risk Area as fast as possible. Very few want to go to Djibouti. Is it even necessary to travel with an escort? Last year, no yachts reported any incidents. This year one yacht reported seeing approaching skiffs. No weapons or overt threats. Coalition aircraft were summoned and on the scene within 15 minutes and the skiffs left the area. All yachts are registered with the military patrols and are overflown daily as well as daily position reports to coalition forces.

If you want to take on an armed security team they are met and loaded in international waters. You cannot stop in any country until their arms are offloaded on a ship in the Red Sea. So you need to coordinate multiple boats to meet at sea at the same time. That point is usually in

international waters off Sri Lanka. Then a straight run to the Red Sea. No provisioning or rest stops enroute. You can't show up in countries with armed forces on board.

For this year's group, none of us are just "hoping for the best". We have plotted courses using coded waypoints so we can report position relative to coded spot. We all register with the military patrols. They know we are coming and watch for us. There are specific protocols for reporting daily position and emergency contact with coalition forces on patrol in the region. All in all it is much better than in past years.

Alytes – March 2016 (written after completion of their trip): Originally, we were ready to sail solo. We thought that in the very rare case of an attack by professional pirates of the "old school" (featuring mother ships, up to ten men in two skiffs armed with assault rifles and rocket propelled grenades), a convoy would offer additional security. Neither us nor any of our sailing friends are trained or equipped to repel such a force.

However, as time developed, we happened to meet some old friends, a family of four on a Dutch flagged monohull. During a relaxed sundowner, we discussed the idea of sailing together. The boats were performing more or less equally and - as families - we had similar approaches to speed, safety and comfort. Both crews also had the same view on the risks in the area: a residual risk of small boats featuring small fishermen crews (1 - 3 persons), potentially armed with single assault rifles and looking for some extra cash when running into seemingly vulnerable yachts. No real risk of professional, organized piracy as experienced up to 2014. We talked about some common ground on how a convoy could work out and actually be fun: minimal speed, maximal speed, when to start the engines, maximum distance under engine and what to expect, if one of us is actually approached or even attacked by suspicious vessels. We also discussed a viable communication routine. We realized that our goals and tactics would be very similar. We decided to go together.

Some upsides were expected from that strategy: The convoy would provide more fun, as we could socialize on the tour. The kids are friends and were hoping for calm days to meet on one of the boats. We did believe that a convoy would deter the "Kalashnikov Fisherman". As mentioned above, these guys were basically fishermen "armed to the level commonly experienced in the area" (quote taken from the UKMTO Best Practice Manual 4).

Before embarking on the trip, a third boat approached us to check whether they could join. We agreed, did the same routine of convoy-coordination in the now larger group and got ready to sail from Galle, Sri Lanka to Djibouti.

Due to wind conditions, our convoy sailed a bit south of the usual route, making the trip a tour of roughly 3.000 NMs. It took about 18 days. Wind conditions east of the Maldives were a bit too calm: A lot of engine and a lot of socializing. During this phase, the convoy strategy paid off nicely. In the first days, we were meeting on the boats for sundowners and had frequent close "drive-bys" to exchange kids, fish, cookies or chocolate mousse between the boats.

Later the wind picked up and the typical offshore routine commenced. The convoy was doing routine calls each morning at 09:00 LT and at 20:00 LT to coordinate course, speed and "propulsion tactics" for the next hours. The boats were sending the proposed position reports to the United Kingdom Marine Traffic Organization ("UKMTO") each day. So the good guys knew where we were. We were also exchanging position data with another befriended family boat that

decided to sail solo, as they left some days later and their catamaran had much better performance than our boats.

Tamarask – January 2015: We went with one other boat, which had benefits and drawbacks vs solo. On the plus side, they were extra eyes, which was very helpful at times.

It was very difficult keeping pace with just two boats - constant sail adjustments, dragging up to 5 weighted warps at times, etc... this was the drawback.

We used cheap walkie talkies (FRS frequencies) to communicate within 1 mile, and VHF when we were too far apart (but not Ch 16). Keeping boats within 0.25 miles at all times is impossible, even if it's just two of them. I suggest drifting apart at night when the risk is very low, then tightening up an hour before sunrise - radar is essential for this task. At night we used anchor lights instead of nav lights, which look identical to stars from any distance, and it's very helpful at close range for the convoy - I would not suggest going totally dark.

1.19 AIS Transmit or Not?

Question on Red Sea FB Group – 2019: What do people do with their AIS when in a high risk area? Do you turn off transmit? Only transmit at night (have there been any known attacks that happen in darkness?). Reprogram it to appear as a low value or armoured vessel...?

Person 1: Everybody has different opinions about this.

UKMTO wants you to leave it on and sail down the 3 nm wide corridor between the patrolled E and W bound shipping lanes..It would be hard to go down there without it on as you are so close to the ships. Most boats do this. But as it's mostly directly down wind the engine is used a fair bit.

We sailed to the S of the shipping corridor, as most encounters with skiffs had been to the N ,or Yemen side of the corridor, so that we could sail more and motor less. So we only turned it on between sunset and 0300 hrs to reduce our detection by skiffs. Then during the daytime we then moved closer to the patrolled corridor, especially when we heard a ship requesting military help over the VHF.!!!

Most reports seem to show most skiff contact is in daylight hours before midday.

Person 2: The UKMTO recommends that you have your AIS on continuously as well as the correct navigation lights etc. They also want you to sail down/up the 2-mile wide separation zone of the IRTC.

We did exactly as the UKMTO recommended and had no problems. The pirates/Yemen terrorists are very unlikely to go into the centre of the IRTC, they will most likely carry out any attack on or from the outside or even well away from the IRTC. The most recent suspected attacks were carried out in areas well away from the IRTC.

You should also understand that the pirate skiffs operate from a Mother-ship, which is likely to have some form of Radar and possibly AIS.

You also need to understand that there are two classes of AIS. Class A (used by BIG boats) and Class B (used by recreational vessels, Yachts etc.).

Since AIS uses the same VHF frequencies as marine VHF, it has similar radio reception capabilities, which is basically line of sight. This means that the higher your VHF antenna is mounted and the more power it transmits at, the greater the reception area will be.

Reception from Class A vessels (which transmit at 12.5W) that are 20 or even 30 miles away on open water is not uncommon.

Class B transponders use lower power for transmissions (2W similar to a hand held VHF), therefore you can expect Class B vessels to be acquired when they are 5 to 7 miles away.

If the baddies are using Radar they are as such capable of seeing and tracking you at a greater distance than they would be able to using AIS.

Therefore, in reality they could pick you up by either eyeball or Radar well before picking you up on AIS.

Furthermore, if they have AIS then for them to be able to pick you up they would need to have theirs on making them more visible to the Naval and Aircraft surveillance teams in and around the High Risk Area (HRA).

Do as the UKMTO recommend and you will be fine.

Make sure you know how to shut off transmit to your AIS without affecting the receive capability.

Person 3: Receive-only AIS units are still a thing by the way, as is silent mode on AIS transceivers.

Class B AIS transmissions from a sailboat will almost always be picked up farther away than radar will pick up the same boat, and radar will generally pick up a sail boat farther away than the eye will. Curvature of the earth horizon issues and the rather stealthy radar profile of a sailboat come into play.

In perfect flat seas the horizon between two items each 10m above the sea is 8 miles, so a radar 10m high would theoretically be able to see a radar reflector on a mast 10m high at 8 miles. That however would take a pretty good (military) radar unit to pick out a radar reflector at that distance. Class B AIS often exceeds the 7 mile number (it is not truly line of sight). I know from experience that commercial shipping often has my AIS signal before a radar contact, as I have discovered when coordinating crossings or other CPA issues with them.

Tamarask – January 2015: We used ours on and off depending on our perception of the risk of encountering commercial ships vs pirates. We used it all the way to Gulf of Aden, then switched off. We switched on again when we crossed the transit corridor. Ours is a transmitter and receiver, with no option to switch off the transmitter... would have been ideal to have a receiver only.

1.20 Cruising Information Sources

We are indebted to the people and organizations below for documenting their experiences and sharing them with us. We hope they don't mind that we've gathered their comments into this document to share with other cruisers who don't have internet

A few details about the boats are included, where we know them, so you can assess what 'a foot under the keel' means, for example.

Where it's important, we've annotated the contributions. But every section is a mix of several sources.

1.20.1 The Bible: The Red Sea Pilot

May 2023: We are told by Elaine Morgan that they have just completed a full update of the Red Sea Pilot, now renamed the Red Sea Cruising Guide, and it is in the publishers' (Imray) hands, with a target release date of late 2023 or early 2024. It will be published in both digital and paper format. <https://www.imray.com/product/Red-Sea-Pilot/IB0105-1/>

1.20.2 Government Publications

The USA publishes it's sailing directions online, free to download. Here is the current link to the Red Sea Sailing Directions:

<https://msi.nga.mil/api/publications/download?key=16694491/SFH00000/Pub172bk.pdf>

The Egyptian government website for the Canal

<https://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/English/Pages/default.aspx>

1.20.3 Local Websites

Here are some websites you should visit when you are looking for information on this area:

1.20.4 Cruiser Reports

For most of the earlier sources, we have gleaned the information off the internet (cruiser's websites, blogs, and online forum postings) or out of an SSCA bulletin. For the sources reported below as 2014-2023, much of the info has come directly from our cruising friends, and the Red Sea Crossing Facebook Group.

1.20.5 Red Sea Passage Facebook Group (Private Group)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/533268780130097/>

You must ask and be approved before being admitted to the group. They are admitting only cruisers who actually intend to cross the IO on their boat in the near future.

For now, the admin is Wade Alarie (wade@svjoana.ca) with Sherry McCampbell (sherry@svsoggypaws.com) as backup. Email Wade with your boat name and general passage plans (where from and to, and approximately when) and ask for admission to the group..

1.20.6 Noonsite

Originally started by Jimmy Cornell, this site is a great repository of information for all those out-of-the-way places. Made possible by YOUR contributions.

<http://www.noonsite.com>

1.20.7 Seven Seas Cruising Association

The SSCA is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a monthly publication that is mostly letters

from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. They also have a good website and a well-attended bulletin board. Membership is reasonable, and the monthly publication is available electronically every month. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

<http://www.ssca.org>

1.20.8 Ocean Cruising Club

The OCC is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a website and bi-annual publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. Membership is reasonable, and the publication is available electronically. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

<http://oceancruisingclub.org>

1.21 Printed Sources

1.21.1 The Bible: The Red Sea Pilot

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<https://www.imray.com/product/Red-Sea-Pilot/IB0105-1/>

If you are doing the Red Sea, you MUST have a copy of the Red Sea Pilot. Last updated in 2002, and hard to find in hard copy in 2023, it has sketch charts, and some GPS information for every possible stop along the coast.

Red Sea Pilot – Morgan & Davies – 2002: Imray, Laurie, Norie & Wilson; 2nd edition (December 15, 2002): This fully revised 2nd ed. pilot covers the entire stretch of the Red Sea from Aden to Cyprus. Including ports and anchorages on the Red Sea coasts of Oman, Yemen, Aden, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Suez Canal, Israel and Cyprus. Over 70 anchorages were resurveyed and new ones explored. One key improvement is the coverage of diving sites.

[Amazon Link](#)

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: The Red Sea Pilot from 2001 is a little outdated formality wise, but still very helpful as it's summarizing best anchorages, approaches and has many accurate charts - we wouldn't recommend going without it.

Pacifique – June 2019: The Red Sea Pilot book in our opinion is a must have.

We found the Navionics charts to be inaccurate in some places, especially with regard to reefs.

Tamarask – January 2015: Some places are not charted well, particularly the south part of Egypt around Foul Bay. We used both Navionics, and CMAPS at all times, and the combination was helpful and generally accurate, although the resolution in parts gets very low, so give everything a wide berth, and watch out for coral bommies if any of your charts indicate shallow colors.

The Red Sea Pilot book is essential - definitely do not go without every page for Sudan and Egypt.... excellent anchorage suggestions and words of advice in the text. Have a few cartons of cigarettes to use as gifts for coast guard buffoons.

1.21.2 Cruising Guides

We are consciously NOT duplicating any printed, copyrighted information here. It takes a lot of effort AND money to publish a cruising guide, and we firmly believe that if it is still in print, you should BUY it, not steal it (in electronic form).

The Red Sea Pilots – there are versions of the Red Sea Pilot and the Red Sea and Gulf of Oman Sailing Directions put out by the UK Hydrographic Office and the US Hydrographic Office. They are available from Amazon.com, but don't get great reviews. Most of these, in some version or another, are floating around as PDF files in the cruiser community.

1.21.3 Recommended Reading

For background, we recommend the following books:

[Red Sea Run – Fatty Goodlander](#) – An amusing account of one cruiser's run up the Red Sea.

William Pardo – May 2018: For an incredible read and a better understanding of the culture, I highly recommend these two books:

Wilfred Thesiger's Arabian Sands (crossing the Empty Quarter desert through Yemen, Oman and the UAE, 1945-50)

Michael Asher's In Search of the Forty Days Road (English teacher in Sudan jumps on a truck, finds himself in a camel market, buys one, and rides off into the Bedouin lands; 1980s). Incredible stories, and surprisingly recent.

Also an informative book written directly for Westerners doing business in Arabia: Don't They Know its Friday? I haven't read it but it's widely known.

2 Passage Reports

2.1 Thailand to Maldives

Tehani-Li – January 2004: This passage across the Indian Ocean from SE Asia to the Middle East was fortunately broken up into two parts with a very nice stop in Uligan, the topmost island in the Maldives. We left Phuket on January 10th with great anticipation to “get a move on” after spending 18 months in SE Asia. We would have had a great crossing if the NE Monsoon, which blows at this time of year like clockwork, lived up to its name and had blown from the NE.

Actually, for us it blew from the East and as our course was 269 degrees (West) that meant we had to go dead downwind – our worst point of sail. So we had to gybe (turning downwind) our way across sailing as much as 40 degrees off the rhumb line! (The rhumb line is not a sweaty horde of thirsty sailors waiting at the bar as you might rightly assume but the straight line course between two points).

We have trouble poling out the gennie as our pole is too small, totally inadequate actually, so we need to get a better one. But from here on in it should be mostly upwind work, where we excel. Wind on the beam or forward thereof, we fly.

Illustrating the difficulties going downwind without the right gear, our rhumb line distance from Phuket, dipping down under Sri Lanka (been there, done that, bought the T-shirt) and up again to Uligan was 1550 nautical miles.

However, due to the gybing we really sailed 1905 miles! It took 12 days, about two days longer than we had hoped. Oh, and at 4 AM one morning the boom came off the mast.

All the rolling around out there with the light wind but persistent mid-ocean swell caused the gooseneck pin, a half inch stainless bolt, to finally shear in half. Always concerned about the gooseneck, the fitting that holds the ever important boom to the ever important mast, I had a new one made out of stainless steel in Phuket to keep as a spare.

Of course, we didn't have a new pin made – didn't tink o' dat! We managed to jury rig the boom back on in the dark as a squall was bearing down on us. There is nothing like working under pressure in the dark, in the middle of the ocean when you're exhausted to really get the most out of sailing.

Twelve rocking and rolling daze after leaving Thailand we arrived in beautiful, unspoiled Uligan, Maldives. Off the beaten track to say the least, Uligan is the one island at the very top of the Maldives in a very S. Pacific-looking atoll where yachts are allowed to stop, rest and refuel before continuing across the IO.

We enjoyed it so much we spent nine days resting and refueling. We have always enjoyed the Maldives and Uligan proved to be no exception with courteous and kind people and spectacular beaches and scenery. However, although there were lots of fish, the coral was all dead. Snorkeling is much better in Chagos.

2.2 Thailand/Lankawi to Sri Lanka

Kurukulla – January 2023: January 23 at 0600 we set sail for Sri Lanka, 1170 miles to our west. Light winds from the north lapsed to nothing by mid-day but the lull was short lived, and by the

first evening we were cracking along at 6-7 knots. The most memorable part of this passage was the torrential tropical rain which lasted for almost two days in the middle part of the voyage, Fortunately we were never without wind and only once did we have to reef the mainsail for excess of wind. The majority of the passage was spent between close hauled and broad reaching on starboard.

We passed south of the Nicobar Islands in the early hours of January 26th and arrived off the south coast of Sri Lanka on 31st of January. It was an 8 day passage averaging just over 6 knots, not bad.

The winds as we approached Galle became light and fluky followed by gusty north-westerlies, just what we didn't need for the entry! That said, by 1100 on the 31st we were tucked in alongside a rather bedraggled looking boat named "Test of Time", in the "marina" at Galle. For marina read a small basin with no pontoons and large black fenders randomly secured around the walls! That said some berths had access to power and water so not all bad.

2.3 India to the Red Sea Entrance

Anemos – February 2020: Anemos left Cochin on 22nd January 2020 and arrived in Djibouti on February 6th. Once in the High Risk Area we communicated daily with UKMTO and had VHF contact with overhead Orion from the International coalition forces. In the International Recommended Corridor, we sailed down the centre, and with the constant flow of big ships going N and S felt quite safe. We were also in touch with other boats doing same route by SSB. Not much wind for two or 3 days out of Cochin, but once in the Arabian sea, good SE carried us all the way to Djibouti. We stopped in Djibouti because we needed new battery, but would have gladly bypassed it! We only stayed 3 days in Djibouti, leaving on Feb 12.

Complexity – March 2020 – Cochin to Djibuti: We are in Djibouti after an 18-day passage from Kochi, India. We had a slow but relatively uneventful trip. The winds were often light and calm with currents against us. Congratulations to Elis and Lukas, our crew, having completed their first ocean crossing on a small sailboat. They were good shipmates even when conditions were very hot and/or rough.

Our refrigerator quit working the first day out of India. We carried on. We wasted only a small bit of our fresh food. As always, we had lots of canned and dried foods aboard.

We sailed as much as we could to conserve our fuel. When motoring we did so at low RPMs to sip rather than gulp our diesel. We carried enough diesel to motor roughly 1200 of the 1800 nautical miles of the passage. We doubled our number of jerry jugs before leaving Thailand. We did not want to run out of fuel before reaching Djibouti!

The most risky segment of our passage was the last half in the high risk area between Yemen and Somalia where piracy in the past was common.

In past years Somali pirates have taken vessels of all sizes from little sailboats like ours to giant tankers. Their prisoners are held in brutal conditions. The pirates demand ransoms of millions of dollars for the vessels and crews. If not paid, the crews are killed. The pirates still attack ships but are much less successful now.

Military forces from a coalition of 32 nations now patrol the region specifically to minimize acts of piracy. Most big ships now string razor wire along their rails, carry professional armed guards, have fire hoses ready to deploy and hardened citadels on the ships for crew to shelter in if pirates manage to board. Warships and planes patrol the transit corridor described below.

The Internationally Recognized Transit Corridor (IRTC) stretches 500 nautical miles in a corridor between Yemen and Somalia. It consists of two five-mile-wide travel lanes for the big ships separated by a two-mile strip down the middle. The west bound ships travel in the north lane and the eastbound ships travel in the south lane. Small and relatively slow vessels like ours are encouraged by the military coalition to travel in the separation zone. That is exactly what we did.

When the IRTC and military protection were first established, they explicitly did not protect small vessels like cruising sailboats. They only protected big commercial ships. That has changed. Yachts are unequivocally discouraged from traveling in this region. Cruising boats that do are now also covered by the military coalition. We register with them in advance and report our position and travel details daily. In the event of an attack or approach by a suspicious vessel we are instructed to call the watchkeeper who will organize a military response. Happily we did not need to do so. We did hear warships from time to time on the radio. A Japanese war plane flew over us at least once a day.

The big ships stayed strictly to their assigned lanes in the IRTC. The only two ships that we saw in the separation zone were crossing and did so properly at a right angle. One small cargo ship that did so did not have AIS made us anxious by briefly heading straight for us for a time until they steamed on over the horizon to the south. Pirates are known to use stolen vessels to stage attacks. We were in direct communication with the watchkeeper during this short time.

We thought it would be hard to sail 500 miles through open ocean in a two-mile-wide lane. Turns out it was very easy. We mostly sailed dead down wind with the sails wing on wing. We only occasionally had to reconfigure them. Winds were light enough, mostly 5-15 k, that we did not reef at night as is our usual practice on passage.

The first 3/4 of the passage was very dark with almost no moon. The Arabian Sea is rich with life. The bioluminescent plankton made the water sparkle and glow at night. It was magical under the gloriously brilliant stars above. In places the water surface was thick with green algae. There were great expanses thick with jellyfish. We saw many seabirds, a few of which landed on the boat to rest and eat their catch. Many flying fish and squid ended up on our deck.

We saw dolphins many times and once saw pilot whales. One night we were surrounded by dolphins lit up by bioluminescence as they swam through the glowing sea. We could clearly see every detail of their bodies underwater! We often also heard them through the hull.

We were happy to reach Djibouti and will write a bit about it soon.

Joana – February 2020 – Cochin to Djibouti: We arrived in Djibouti on 7 February after 16 days at sea. We mostly had good wind, but had to motor for several days to “escape” India, and again in the last 24 hour run into the port of Djibouti.

In total, we ran the Volvo for 120 hours and burned 570L of our 1150L carried (850L in two tanks, 300L on deck). We did not see or hear of any pirate activity. We did see a couple of fishing boats and several coalition warships, surveillance aircraft and helicopters. The pirates

(those that are left) don't have a chance here. We were contacted directly by Japanese and Indian Navies.

We tried hard to catch fish, but in the end managed to catch just two fish, one tuna and one mahi-mahi. Nonetheless, there was often an abundance of flying fish, sometimes as many as 15-20 landing on the deck overnight.

On a beam reach, our sail configuration in light winds was a Code Zero and main sail. This was a "dream point of sail", 10-12 knots of wind and less than 1 meter seas.

Once we were "in the corridor" following the International Recognized Transit Corridor (IRTC) between Yemen, Somalia and Socotra, the wind was mostly dead astern and we sailed "wing on wing". Again, this was a very comfortable sail, for several days.

We had some "belt" problems when running the engine. It appears that the intense heat and humidity were hard on the Volvo belts, and I had to change both early in the trip, while underway. Initially, I tightened two sets of belts (two for the Volvo water pump and alternator, and a second pair for the 200A alternator) but then they broke after a few hours – forcing me to replace them underway. Fortunately, I had several spare pair, and managed to source even more when we arrived in Djibouti.

With light winds and a very low sea state, it was possible to put a few jerry cans of diesel into the tanks on most days.

We also had problems with a "dirty tank". I'm not blaming the fuel of India, but rather that the boat sat for a long time, and any diesel bugs present had an opportunity to grow. Polishing? Sure, I polished every month for two days, but the polishing pump is a low pressure pump, compared to the Volvo fuel pump. Therefore, when the seas get rough and there is sediment in the tank, it gets stirred up and clogs the lines, largely due to the stronger suction effort of the Volvo. Thankfully, our boat has two diesel tanks and it is an easy matter to switch to the aft tank, if the forward tank gives trouble. A few days after arrival, we pumped out all the "bad fuel" into empty jerry cans, mucked out the tank with rags, and then poured the diesel back into the tank through a high quality filter. We replaced our spent diesel with locally purchased diesel, at the service station, for about \$ 1.11USD per litre.

Bird of Passage – February 2020 – Cochin to Socotra: We had 1400 NM from Cochin in India to our anchorage in Socotra. Started on the 29th of January and arrived 10 days later. For the first time since the Philippines two years ago I managed to make contact with a WINLINK radio station, (3B8DU in Mauritius). I could now use my HAM-radio for e-mail. I also used it to talk to other boats on their way over the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea. Together we had a network on 8137 kHz 3AM and 3PM every day UTC.

Not so much wind to begin with when we left Cochin in India and then increasing winds as we moved west. We were lucky to have acceptable wind almost all the way and used less than 100 liters of diesel for motor sailing. The last days we had strong winds (more than 20 knots) and made good daily distances, more than 150 NM per day.

We registered with UKMTO (UK Maritime Trade Operations) and MSCHOA (Maritime Security Center Horn Of Africa), and twice a day I sent position reports to UKMTO from a satellite telephone

Soul – March / April 2018: We have seen a number of posts on what is the best time to transit through Indian Ocean to Suez so we thought it was time that we posted our experience. We are 16m Cat "Soul" that made the passage from Kochin to the Med this year.

We departed Kochin 28th Feb. GRIB's at the time were showing calms until well offshore from the Indian coastline and light NE monsoon winds through to Socotra and varying winds through the HRA zone down the Gulf of Aden. This is pretty much what we got.

The first few days out of Kochin we had some good sailing, mostly on the wind during the day but very light motor sailing at night, we were able to make due West. On the fourth day out we got into the NE breeze and had four days of very fast sailing. Each night the breeze freshened necessitating putting in at least one reef around sunset.

8th March we were 40nm E of Socotra and the wind dropped out completely and we motored for 24h against a strong head current. Gradually the wind filled in from astern and we had a gennaker run most of the way down the center of the shipping lanes through to Bab el Mandeb.

We continued on with good sailing breeze to Massawa, Eritrea, completing the 2300nm in 14 days.

Mostly we had good sailing in the Red Sea, having only to sit out three days of N winds on two occasions, but when winds were light, particularly when we were in the Gulf of Suez, we motored to get the miles done before N winds came.

We left Soul in Port Ghalib to do a Nile trip and waited in Suez to get the right conditions in the Med.

We transited Suez Canal 22/23 April and sailed direct to Cyprus.

No issues when transiting the High Risk Area (HRA). We were well aware of the military presence, listening to the radio communications between coalition force vessels and planes. Running down the center of the shipping lanes was great being able to see ships most of the time. It was a great trip and we loved the varied cultural experiences, incredible scenery, and of course the diving, snorkeling and fishing in the Red Sea was superb.

Eric Rigney - March 2018 (from Suakin): Left Cochin March 10, arrived Massawa, Eritrea March 30.

Sailed, motor sailed, sailed, motor sailed, sailed. Motored 9 of the 20 days.

Followed winds to southern edge of eastern MSTC entrance, well above Socotra where coalition forces warned of increased piracy activity.

Stayed about 2nm south of the corridor. Glad we transmitted AIS and ran with lower running lights. Nearly hourly VGF CH16 broadcasts from coalition warships making their presence & services known. Daily, sometimes twice, naval aircraft flybys with direct radio contact made with each vessel.

Southern Wing – Feb / Mar 2018: We left Cochin on the 23 Feb and it was a bit too late for winds for crossing the Arabian Sea. Up until then the NE monsoon winds had been well established and I couldn't believe that when we left there was a long term calm area in the middle of the Arabian Sea.

Most of the boats from that time onwards did HUGE amounts of motoring. We headed well S to skirt the calm area and had dream sailing in 0.3 seas with rarely a white cap and still doing 8 to 10 kts. But we do like light weather!

This is in direct contrast to my last trip across 30 yrs ago in early Jan with 15kt N to NE all the way across with lots of spray across the decks! SO... the last week of Feb for the crossing is likely to be too late unless you like lots of motoring. It was the most common complaint made by nearly all the boats.

2.4 Oman to Djibouti

Mai Tai – December 2021: By 1600 we got our clearance and untied our dock lines, hoisted our yankee and main and enjoyed a brisk sail for the first night out.

But that wasn't to last and for the next 6 days we had 0 to 10 knots of wind blowing us gently westward. The only trouble was that the wind only blew 5 hrs a day, from 2pm until just after sunset.

We were prepared for long periods of little or no wind in this region, so we were carrying extra fuel in jerry cans on deck, but we could never have imagined such long periods with not a breath of wind at all. None! We motored for 86 hrs in a total passage time of 156 hours.

We are sailing just north of the busy shipping lane, one of the busiest in the world with hundreds of ships moving eastward or westward continuously. Our AIS sets off an alarm that alerts us to any vessel that approaches within 10 miles of our position. We saw a few ships as we approached Djibouti in the early hours of the morning and we dropped anchor in the harbour around 0900hrs.

We had been in touch with an agent named Ahssan, who arranged for us to get our PCR tests done. With a negative result we will then be allowed to leave the boat. We already had our E visas which we had applied for a couple of months ago costing \$US 30 each.

Sisiutl – December 2019: Some comments on the HRTC. We started along the north outside instead of center traffic separation lane. There we saw 2 India registered ships leave the traffic corridor on a shortcut to Salalah, Oman. They were doing what drivers in India do. Make a traffic lane wherever you like. We avoided the recommended center separation lane because in the middle of the night we saw two ships side by side in that lane, one doing 18kts passing. We crossed to south side and had little traffic outside the defined corridor.

Wind: On our passage if you scribed a line on our centerline and added a barb and tail it would be the wind vector usually in low teens. My all-time least favorite point of sail, dead down wind.

We encountered flies 20 miles out and mosquitos and flies in port.

At the end of the HRTC we opted for Djibouti for minor repairs, to avoid forecast 30kt winds entering Red Sea, and Christmas break. We won't stay long here.

2.5 Going from E African Coast to the Red Sea Entrance

Mai Tai – December 2021 – Kenya to Djibouti/Oman: When we left Kenya to go direct to Djibouti, we had no plans to stop along the way. However, while under way, after about 10 days at sea, we discovered a major oil leak in the engine. We could have tried to sail on to Djibouti, 700nms away, but we knew the winds would be very light for days on end. Plus, we use our

engine to run our water maker. Without an engine, we decided it would be prudent to make an emergency diversion to [Port Salalah, Oman](#), for repairs. Salalah was about 185 miles away to the north, downwind and with a large bay to safely drop anchor, under sail, on arrival.

We had no visa arranged but when we sent an email via our satellite phone explaining our situation, the Port Captain agreed to allow us an emergency entry into their port, the busiest container port on the Arabian Coast.

Anthem – October 2019 – Kenya to Djibouti: Anthem arrived safe in Djibouti 4 days ago and we would like to share with you some information about our sailing from Lamu (Kenya) to Socotra (Yemen) and then into the Gulf of Aden till Djibouti. Sorry for the long post but it might be helpful for the next boats on similar route.

ABOUT ANTI PIRACY COALITION in the high risk area and IRTC:

Before leaving Kenya we registered Anthem to UKMTO and MSCHOA (as already explained in this group) following their instruction.

Since day one we started sending once a day to UKMTO their official "daily report" format; we always received back an automatic confirmation email. One day we received a phone call on the satellite, hard to hear clearly but they just wanted to know everything was OK.

The second day of sailing we received an email from Lieutenant Wim Planke of MSCHOA and we started to correspond twice a day with him.

Every day a Japanese aircraft overflew us releasing a general message on VHF16. A couple of times they called us on our satellite phone to be sure we were ok (we guessed they saw our zigzagging around at very low speed tacking into light winds and strong current).

So the anti piracy coalition system works very well and we felt pretty safe. Plus, as soon as we reached about 150nm from the African coast, we crossed many merchant ships on the similar route (most of them with armed guard on board).

ABOUT THE SAILING:

We left Lamu on October 1st heading east to gain our 200nm from Somali coast but either wind and current didn't allow us to go any further than 170nm and not for long. We encountered a strong SSW current since we reached the line of 170nm from the coast, we tried to go back west a little bit (closest distance to Somali coast has been 120nm) but the current was also increasing going north, from 2,5 to 3,5 kn against us. It has been very hard to cover more than 120nm a day. Apart for this inconvenient current, the downwind sailing has been quite good, the sea never rough (never more than 1,5 m of swells and waves).

The strong current loses strength around 08° 38'N 052° 40'E (about 1kn against us).

For few days we had wind thanks to the several tropical storms building up during the day, we caught every breeze we could from any direction.

We arrived in Socotra on October 11th after 11 days (of which 5 of them motoring).

Left Socotra October 13th at 2100hrs (UTC+3) heading to a waypoint 2nm south of the IRTC. We had to change this WP a few times, moving it slightly west because of the wind. We met the westerly current very soon, not so strong but good enough. We kept (more or less) a COG parallel to the IRTC just 2nm south of it so to not interfere with the numerous merchant ships.

We arrived in Djibouti on October 19 that 0200hrs (UTC+3) after 5 full days (of which 1 and half of motor sailing).

We left Kenya in a hurry because it seemed to us that the NE monsoon had already started, all of the sudden, and indeed it did. Leaving Kenya a week before would have given us stronger southerly wind for a faster sailing (even with the strong current we encountered).

Paseafique – March 2019: The passage from Lamu, Kenya, to Socotra in March was a long beat to windward. Wind direction and current kept us pinned closer to the Somali coast than we would have liked. However, for us there were no security issues.

Ocelot – Richards Bay to Red Sea: You want to avoid the Agulhas Current, so you probably want to hug the coast going north. Some shoot straight across right away, but When we left Richards Bay, we hugged the coast up to Maputo, running up the 30m line (& actually caught a slight counter current), then just N of Maputo headed NE across the current, as that looked like where the current was the narrowest. We met 1 boat who'd hired an idiot captain & they went up the middle of the channel & had a horrible trip. This link will give you the details up to Mayotte:

<http://svocelot.com/Landfalls/Newsletters/Mayotte/MayotteLetters.htm>

2.6 Maldives to the Red Sea Entrance

Kurukulla – March 2023: We departed Uligan in the Maldives on the 21st of March at midday; heading out of the archipelago on starboard tack, close hauled. For the first two hours we motor-sailed, partly because of lack of wind but mostly so that we started the passage with the service batteries fully charged. Our first 48 hours were plagued by light and variable northerly winds. So variable that, although Kurukulla was set up to sail at a set angle to the wind, the autopilot repeatedly alarmed every 10 minutes indicating a wind shift of more than 20°. Very frustrating but it kept the watch-keeper awake!

After two days the winds settled to a constant 6-10kts from the NE and Kurukulla showed her pace averaging 5.5 knots over the next 5 days. The downside of departing from the Maldives for this passage was the lack of good quality, fresh, produce with which to stock up. We sailed with what we could find but some had to be ditched within days, it had obviously been kept refrigerated for too long when in transit to the Maldives.

Our planned route took us to a waypoint at the eastern end of the 500 mile Internationally Recognised Transit Corridor (IRTC) which we intended to join before passing through the area at greatest risk of piracy. This would provide us with cover to a point 110 miles east of Djibouti.

The beginning and end of the western Indian Ocean transit were great sailing, beam reaching in 7-10 kts of wind, the middle 4 days were excruciating, drifting in the midst of the ocean with 0-3 kts of wind from varying directions with Kurukulla struggling to achieve 3 kts at best. We held out and didn't motor for more than a few hours at a time; this was necessary in order to recharge the batteries (on stbd tack the solar panels go into the shade of the mainsail halfway through the afternoon, limiting their output). Eventually our patience paid off, a steadily building southerly wind! This lasted until we were halfway through the IRTC, when again the wind died to nothing and we were forced to resort to the motor in order to maintain progress. This is not an area of the world where you want to hang around! Fortunately the windless phase lasted only a few hours and we were off again on a reach on port gybe which lasted all the way to Djibouti.

See check-in details in the [Djibouti section](#).

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: We started our crossing March 15 from Uligan in the Maldives straight to Suakin. We felt secure during our passage and would again go the same route.

Passage to the Red Sea: We went from Uligan straight to Suakin, only stopping twice to rest overnight at Sadla island and Harmil in Eritrea for getting some rest (without clearing in) and waiting for southerly winds.

We started with light wind from Uligan and sailed slowly but constantly until 100 nm from Socotra. Winds died for 2-3 days, but picked up again once we entered the IRTC in the Gulf of Aden. We had some great downwind sailing in the traffic separation zone with 20 knots plus from the rear and have been lucky enough to straight pass Bab el Mandeb. Currents were mainly with us.

Muttley – May 2019 - Male-Socotra: 6 days, 1275 miles Great conditions all the way, calm seas and 10-15kt SW winds most the time.

Kings Legend – March 2018: We have just arrived in Sawakin after a great passage from Galle (Sri Lanka). We stopped in Uligamu for fuel. From Uligamu we had good winds to the IRTC corridor.

2.7 Socotra to Djibouti

2.8 Passage Up the Red Sea (South to North)

2.8.1 Djibouti to Port Ghalib

Kurukulla – April 2023: Our plan to leave Djibouti on Monday, 10th of April, was scuppered by a forecast of strong northerly winds spreading down the Red Sea. At best it now looked as though we would depart on Friday 14th or possibly late on Thursday 13th; we had to wait and see! It was simply not worth leaving earlier to face a 1000 mile beat to windward.

Eventually, we set off at first light on Friday, northwards, to be steadily lifted by a NE wind which was veering towards the E. By the time we reached the narrows at Bab El Mandeb we had gybed twice to stay out of the shipping lanes and were benefiting from a wind firmly in the south. Giving Perim Island, which guards the Bab El Mandeb straits on the Yemeni side, a clear berth to starboard, we headed north enjoying a relaxing downwind sail.

It was not to last! 90 Miles later, as we drew level with the Hanish Islands, whilst passing between them and the Yemeni Coast, the wind died away to nothing. Not to be beaten we started the engine to motor onwards until the wind picked up. I noticed the engine seemed noisier than usual but all checks revealed nothing until it gave a final cry of grief and came to an abrupt halt. Another check around, including for ropes round the propeller, revealed nothing untoward. A very brief attempt to restart the engine was successful but the noise was appalling! We shut it down immediately and resigned ourselves to sailing north.

We had intended calling into Sudan but fortunately the gearbox failure forced a change of plan. Had it not happened we might have ended up stuck in Suakin, just South of Port Sudan, sitting out the military coup. As it was, we decided to head further north still to get repairs done in Port Ghalib in Egypt.

Port Ghalib was 850 miles to our north, and, as we were to discover, not quite as described. The web site described it as a full service marina with a range of facilities. In fact it is a 10% built daydream of some Kuwaiti billionaire surrounded by oceans of sand and not much else. But first we had to get there! The next 10 days were initially spent drifting downwind in light airs and later working the wind shifts, battling light winds, whilst beating northwards. Only in the last 24 hours before reaching Port Ghalib did we get any significant wind and of course the morning of our arrival it was blowing 26 knots from the north making sailing alongside an interesting challenge.

Another X – February 2023: Because of extreme luck with the weather we only made one stop between Djibouti and Suez. That was in Suakin. After 4 days in Suakin, the most perfect weather window opened for us, so we went directly to Suez. The whole passage from Djibouti to Port Said took only 18 days.

Mai Tai – December 2021 – Djibouti to Sudan: The Bab El Mandeb Channel is a very busy shipping channel for boats heading north and south along the 1500nms to and from the Suez Canal. We sailed just outside the designated shipping lanes, but at any one time we could have 60 to 80 ships come up on our AIS monitor. We did see some that passed within a mile or so from us and were surprised to see that there were also those that did not have their AIS on. We were on constant watch, day and night.

Unfortunately, Eritrea has closed its borders to all tourism, so we had to sail 550nms past this coastline with so much fascinating history and head straight for Sudan, a country where a military coup had recently been declared. This coup was mainly in the capital city of Khartoum, 1000 kms inland. So, fortunately they were still welcoming visiting cruising yachts along the coast. Sudan is the largest country in Africa and one of the poorest in the world.

We were heading for the ancient city of **Suakin** to officially check in to Sudan, but after 5 days at sea, we rested at a couple of anchorages along the coast before arriving in Suakin.

At our first stop, in **Khor Nawarat**, we got a very un-friendly “welcome” from a boatload of men, ramming right into the side of Mai Tai, saying they were from the Sudanese Navy, demanding our papers and telling us to leave. They broke the lifelines and bent our railings when they hit us. They refused to leave us alone so Kay played the “distraught old lady” hoping that one of the young ones might take pity on us, thinking of his grandmother!! It seemed to work. Whatever, they eventually left us alone, then a couple of them came back to apologise the following day.

We needed to get off the boat and go for a walk, so we dinghied in to a beach. All we saw was desert and more desert, mountains in the far distance and nothing but flat desert in between.

Just past the new ferry terminal at Suakin, we have to pass through a very narrow channel past Suakin Island, to get to our anchorage. Another yacht lies at anchor, but there was no one onboard.

More on Suakin in the [Sudan section](#). Mai Tai’s original blog post with pictures:

<https://sailingmaitai.com/uncategorized/southern-red-sea-djibouti-to-sudan/>

Mai Tai – December 2021: Suakin to : Moving on up the coast of Sudan we find dozens of deep bays called marsas that offer good protection for anchoring as we head north.

We were watching the weather carefully to pick the ideal day to leave.

We finally got our weather window so lifted anchor at dawn, set the sails and enjoyed a beautiful overnight passage all the way to our next anchorage called Marsa Inkeifal, 140 nms up the coast.

It was a lovely surprise to see another yacht at anchor in this large protected bay. I got very excited at the thought of other cruisers, chats, sharing of stories and hanging out with other like-minded people. Our new cruising friend was a Frenchman named Jacques on a 54ft ketch. He was such a wealth of knowledge, having spent the past 16 years in Sudan, taking diving charters to the beautiful reefs that the Red Sea is famous for. We really enjoyed his company and are keeping in touch regularly now.

Looking out from the cockpit, it seemed that the landscape was a repetition of the same flat sand dunes, no villages, no roads, no hope. But just as I was thinking that it crossed my mind that it was missing a few camels to complete the picture, A moment later, right in front of my eyes, was a whole herd of camels wandering along the shoreline, being driven by a herdsman on camelback.

After almost a week we got a weather window to take another bite of our passage north. Once again, we were up at dawn with the rising sun, everything was ready for another overnight passage, but.... the engine wouldn't start!!! We sailed back to Suakin and got the problem resolved—air in the injection pump.

Another sunrise departure from Suakin and we were lucky enough to get perfect winds to allow us to sail overnight to the next Marsa north of Inkeifal called **Marsa Shinab**. Our Electronic charts plus our Red Sea Bible, make navigating these reef-riddled areas much safer.

We only stopped in Shinab one night because we were keen to get to the next anchorage as we could see on our weather prediction app that a long period of strong northerlies was coming, meaning we could be locked down for at least a week or two. We were keen to be somewhere with good internet and with some civilisation around.

As we arrived just off the entrance to Marsa Oseif the engine started to overheat. "What now?" we both said. I quickly shut the engine down and opened the engine cabinet to clouds of billowing steam. We drift/sailed out away from the narrow entrance to Marsa Oseif and let the engine cool enough that we could inspect it. As I began to add water back into the heat exchanger, I could see the water running out a small split in one of the hoses. We couldn't fix it in that moment because I didn't have any hose that would fit. We really needed to get into the protection of the harbour before the rising wind got too strong. So, Kay stayed below with a pitcher of water and fed it into the engine at the same speed that it was leaking out the split hose. Meanwhile, I continued to motor the last 3 miles into the harbour. I guess, technically, we didn't have to sail in to port this time! We got in to Marsa Oseif and dropped anchor and that is where we are at present.

We sent a message to our friend Jacques, and explained our situation and he immediately replied that he had a spare hose onboard that we could have. Jacques hired a local guy to bring the part to us, over 100 miles across the desert on a tuk tuk. He arrived with it at 5 o'clock at night, and had to drive all the way back again. We were happy to pay him his \$140. Within 24 hours we had a new, proper hose in place and the engine is running again.

Joana – March 2020 – Djibouti to Port Ghalib: We left Djibouti on the morning of 17 February, bound for Massawa Eritrea.

After a stay of 8 days in Eritrea, it was time to move on and head North to Suakin Sudan.

Eritrea to Suakin: With the normally strong Northerly winds that blow down from the Med to the Red Sea, we are finding ourselves following a pattern of “move North when the wind is light or non-existent”. We found ourselves at Port Suakin for exactly 3 days. The first two days, I didn't even get off the boat. I was occupied with taking on 800L of fuel in jerry cans.

Suakin to Port Ghalib: Our first stop was labelled as the best anchorage in the Red Sea, Khoo Shinab, about 166nm North of Suakin and about 290nm South of Port Ghalib Egypt. The anchorage was large, barren, and nearly devoid of any sign of human existence. This is a deep and well protected anchorage, the site of an ancient riverbed.

We motored the next 310nm directly to Port Ghalib, Egypt and arrived on 14 March, just two hours before a whopper of a storm!

Anemos – February 2020 – Djibouti to Port Ghalib: We left Djibouti on Feb. 13th and arrived Port Ghalib March 5th. For family reasons we were trying to do the trip as quickly as possible. We stopped in Sawakin (very good agent, cheap fuel and reasonable fresh supply at local market), then had to anchor and wait out the weather twice, and despite motoring quite a bit, we did not need to refill with fuel between Djibouti and Port Ghalib (we carried about 500lt). We were lucky with favourable winds practically all the way to Sawakin.

Left Djibouti on Feb. 12th, wind still in N quarter, so night stop in **Obock** where we safely tied to massive old mooring buoy at 11°57.778'N / 043°18.189'E.

After that, we had good stern winds all the way to Suakin, Sudan, again opting for central lane in shipping corridors. Arrived Suakin (most of the lights indicated on charts do not work--wait for good light to enter) on Feb. 17th. [See Suakin details here.](#)

After Suakin did mostly motoring, staying inside reef when possible and finding anchorage if wind over 15 knots. We made 2 stops on the way N:

- Marsa Umbeila Feb. 23rd to 26th (21°58.59'E / 036° 51.857'E) a good protected anchorage, sand, scenic views of desert and mountains. Use good morning light to enter. Also Open CPN Google Earth files really help on this trip!
- Second stop past Foul Bay (we tacked our way up in NNW winds 20/25 knots) at Greater Mahabis Island 28th Feb to March 4th (the island really a spit of sand and coral but gives good protection) 24°18.812'N / 035°23.133'E again
- Use good light, Red Sea Pilot wpts and OpenCPN / satellite charts!

Arrived Port Ghalib March 5th.

Bird of Passage – February 2020 - Socotra to Djibouti: The advice from the military forces responsible for the security in the Gulf of Aden is that sailing yachts should follow the commercial shipping lane with running lights and AIS turned on. This meant that when we left Socotra, we first took a north westerly route to join the shipping corridor and then followed it, in the middle, where there was no commercial traffic. The red dots are our daily positions.

We sailed in the middle of the corridor for 3 days and then left it to continue to Djibouti where we arrived on the 21st of February. 680 NM from Socotra. [See their Djibouti report here.](#)

Muttley – June 2019: Socotra - Port Ghalib, 8 days, 1600 miles: Had good breeze all the way to the Bab al Mandab strait which was great for conserving fuel. Mainly from the south at 15kts .We left Socotra on a NW bearing of about 300 degrees until we intersected the IRTC. By heading NW first we kept a safe distance from Somalia .

Once in the IRTC, we were constantly surrounded by ships. We had radio contact with Japanese Navy and Chinese radio on a semi regular basis. We felt very safe.

We were approached by 2 skiffs coming from the south one afternoon, which was a bit suspect. One circled around the bow while the other followed behind, keeping a distance of about 100m for about 5 mins. I got straight on the phone to the UKMTO and within minutes we could see a warship on the horizon that then shadowed us for the next few hours as a precaution.

The next stretch up to Port Ghalib seems to take a long time! Mostly light winds on the nose but each afternoon and most of the night it would clock around to the west, allowing for some good sailing.

Port Ghalib is just a resort town really with lots of bars and restaurants, a nice spot though to unwind. We are expecting to get our cruising permit today, then we will refuel and continue heading north toward Suez.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019 – Weather in April/May: Weather in the Red Sea in April and beginning of May: Sailing was straight forward until **Suakin**. Winds were shifting each couple of days from northerlies to southerlies or calm. The northern Red Sea was challenging though and meant mainly motoring. We have been stuck for nine days in a row in Khor Shinab, Sudan, at constant 30-40 knots on the nose. It was even not possible to launch the dingy for going ashore. Within minutes headwinds kicked in, at which time you want to be securely at anchor, especially since charts are also not very good throughout the Red Sea.

Forecasts not always have been accurate and usually winds were blowing at least 5-10 knots stronger as forecasted. Weather windows (meaning light headwinds) to travel northbound under engine have been short, 2-3 days at the most, before again being stuck for several days.

Blue Eye – April 2019: Sailing wise, we found it easy enough to pick weather windows and anchor hop our way up until just before the Gulf of Suez, where it seems almost inevitable you'll be beating. That was no fun to be fair, but overall it was much better than we expected.

FB Group (Red Sea) – April 2019: From 50 miles south of Massawa onwards only wind on the nose, between 5-7 Beaufort! Some days in gusts even more. The later you go, the stronger the winds. We still have to sail up the Gulf of Suez. Had to stop in el-Gouna due to a rig failure. But we saw a lot of interesting places on the way and our kids said, they wouldn't want to miss this part of the voyage. Because it gives you an insight in parts of the world where you normally don't go. Yemen, Eritrea, Sudan who would choose these countries as a holiday destination?

Tamarask – January 2015: The wind should be good for the lower 400 miles of Red Sea.

Once in **Sudan** you will want to go behind their reefs for flatter water and better motoring. Get a Sudan cruising permit from Mohammed in Port Suakin so you can stay behind the reefs for shelter from the wind, and the military will most likely give you huge problems if you don't have a sailing permit (luckily we had one, and were boarded twice in Sudan by Navy boats, who really didn't seem much different from pirates to us). If you don't have a Sudan sailing permit, try to

stay outside the reefs, especially as you approach the disputed area near the Egyptian border - THEY WILL FIND YOU AND BOARD YOU THERE.

Do not go behind the Saudi reefs unless a true emergency - the authorities are idiots and will detain you for no reason.

It is much more windy in the middle of the Red Sea, so hugging the coast on the west side is the best option if wind is in the face in my opinion, at least until around Port Ghalib in Egypt, where the reefs end. Egypt seems to have no problem with cruising boats using their reefs for shelter. Plan for some days hunkered down behind reefs waiting for wind to settle.

More fuel is better.

2.8.2 Port Ghalib to Suez

2023 Notes: From Captain Heebi (Ehab Soukar at Sea of FB), Prince of the Red Sea Agency: New allowed anchorages for short stops due to weather

North of Port Ghalib:

1. Soma Bay 26° 50.91' N / 033° 58.85' E
2. El Tur 28° 14.03' N / 033° 36.66' E
3. Ras Abu Zenima 29° 02.61' N / 033° 06.88' E
4. Ras Matarmah 29° 26.706' N / 32° 43.379E
5. Ras Sudr 29° 34.60' N / 032° 42.25' E
6. Suez Waiting area west side if you arrive late night, w1 anchorage.

Kurukulla – April 2023: We had our gearbox repaired in Port Ghalib, but it failed again a day later, so we opted to stop in Hurghada. Though only 120 nm north of where we were when the engine quit again, it took us 3 days to get there. We were plagued initially with no wind, and in the last 36 hours, strong north winds against which we had to battle. Of course, we were again to arrive just after sunset when entry to the marina is prohibited. Next morning, having sought shelter overnight in a bay to the south of Hurgada, we completed a 15 mile beat to windward in 30 kts of wind and arrived off the Hurgada marina.

Kurukulla – June 2023 – Hurghada to Suez: By the time we got cleared out from the International Port at Hurghada, it was too late to make for one of the “allowed anchorages” (where you are allowed to anchor when in transit without visas”) on the Sinai side of the Red Sea and hence we settled for an “illegal” anchorage in the lee of Bluff Point on Small Gubal Island some 30 miles north of Hurgada. To prove the gearbox and to save time we motored to windward in the face of 25kts of North wind. Fortunately we arrived just as night fell and were able to pick up a mooring usually used by dive boats during the day.

Next morning we set off early, again under engine, motoring into wind, heading for the anchorage at Marsa Zaytiyah, a small oil terminal 15 miles NW of the Gubal Islands. This was another “illegal” anchorage but by now I had given up caring and nobody came to check us. We anchored inshore of several rig support vessels and a tanker discharging/embarking cargo and spent a very pleasant night, undisturbed by the authorities.

From Marsa Zaytayah we did cross the Strait to a beautiful anchorage at El Tur (aka Tor), our first “permitted” anchorage for those on passage who do not have a valid Egyptian visa. It is a popular Foil Boarding resort with a beautiful white sand beach, none of which were we allowed ashore to enjoy! Our only attempt to go ashore, to buy fuel, was thwarted by two military guards who although sympathetic to our needs were refused approval, to let us briefly ashore, by their superiors (the decision took 45 minutes to be referred up and down the chain of command!) We returned onboard with our empty Jerry-cans.

The following day we made a late start, intending to sail north, taking advantage of the lighter nighttime winds. 1800 saw us departing the anchorage heading for Ras Abu Zenima, a bay with an apparently obsolete mineral loading facility, which is the next “permitted” anchorage as you sail NW. The distance was 55 miles, directly to windward, hence we sailed 70+ but arrived midday the following day. Not a beautiful anchorage but good holding on sand and well enough protected.

Good enough that we decided to take a rest day here and depart, about 36 hours after our arrival, at 0500 on the 28th of June. This allowed us to reach our final “permitted” anchorage, at Ras Sudr, 40 miles directly to windward, by nightfall. The flog to windward up the Red Sea had been the longest beat to windward since our ill thought out sail, in the Caribbean, from Curaçao to the BVI, some years back, and had been decidedly less pleasant.

At Ras Sudr we opted for the easterly of the two recommended anchorages, just off the large desalination plant and taking care to avoid the sea suction pipe on the bottom stretching offshore from the plant. The holding was again good, on sand, and we settled for a relaxing night. The following day would see us underway early again heading for Port Suez and the entrance to the Suez Canal.

Initially it looked as though we were in for a final beat to windward but the wind veered consistently during the morning, meaning that we reached the outer anchorages of the Canal waiting area without tacking. From here, on reaching anchorage W1, we dropped the sails, sought clearance from Port Control, which came back immediately, and then motored into the Suez Canal “Yacht Club”, keeping clear of the main channel.

Mai Tai – Feb 2022: Take care following old cruising information! Captain Heebe suggests ONLY the following stops (see above) in route from Port Ghalib to Port Suez.

All other ports are now basically off limits to foreign vessels except in the case of an emergency.

The Navy/Coast Guard are spreading military bases along the coast and prohibiting yachts from stopping except in the places mentioned above. This is changing almost weekly. By checking out of Port Ghalib, you eliminate the need for the cruising permit. However, you will not be allowed ashore at any of the anchorages mentioned above.

Mai Tai – March 2022: We missed the weather window due to delays in processing our exit papers. So we went to **Ras Toronbi** to wait for the next window. Ras Toronbi turned out to be a lovely anchorage, tucked in behind a long tongue of coral, sheltered from any sea swell, but not the wind. Coral patches were not far off our stern while at anchor, but we felt secure with good holding for our anchor. We hoped!

We still had 300 miles to go to get to Port Suez. The chances of getting a 3-day break in the strong northerlies was slim, so we had several places marked on our chart where we could take

refuge if needed. It took us 3 overnight passages over 10 days to get to Port Suez and we were very pleased that we had been patient, always waiting for the right conditions to move each time.

The first stop was at **Soma Bay**, near Port Safaga, where we waited for three days as 25 to 30 knot winds blew through. Soma Bay is a well-known tourist destination for kite surfers and wind surfers, and there were many out loving these stormy conditions. The Resorts on shore were very similar to those at Port Ghalib with a line-up of dive boats for those preferring to go diving.

The next overnight sail took us to **El Tur** in the Gulf of Suez, a fishing town situated on the Sinai Peninsula. This was another well protected anchorage where we spent 3 nights waiting for the next break, when we would hopefully make it all the way to Port Suez.

There is a large military base and airfield here and we enjoyed watching the brightly colored fishing boats coming and going. The fishermen were very friendly waving and shouting as they came past us.

The Gulf of Suez, which is only about 15 miles wide, has a huge amount of traffic, particularly all the shipping traffic, heading north and south, to and from the Suez Canal. These ships stay in their designated shipping lanes which we stay clear of, unless we have to cross from one side to the other. This we do very carefully, using the AIS positions on our chart plotter and making sure we stay clear of the paths of these ships travelling between 10 and 12 knots in both directions.

Currently, there are 163 ships within 50 nms of us, all travelling at 10 to 12 knots.

Then, on either side of the shipping lanes, we have to watch out for the fishing boats, which do not have AIS but are easily visible with all their lights on deck as most of these boats are fishing for squid. A constant lookout is essential and we sometimes have to change course to pass between them.

I was surprised to see large areas of oil platforms. These are well marked on the charts, but we can never relax when navigating around them with all their support vessels coming and going.

Our third weather window allowed us to sail all the way from El Tur to Port Suez. Even on these short passages, the weather forecast can never be relied upon and the wind can rise suddenly from 5 knots to 25 knots, lasting a few hours or so, or more, but enough to create a nasty steep chop which is invariably “on the nose”, cutting our speed, at times, down to 2 knots. In these conditions, we have to have a plan B anchorage in mind, just in case we can't make our next planned anchorage before nightfall.

We were very lucky with the weather on this last leg and we saw the silhouette of Port Suez on the horizon around 0900. It was glassy calm and many ships lay at anchor outside the Canal entrance. We called on VHF, to announce our arrival and we were soon given permission to proceed to the Port Suez Yacht Club where we were greeted by our Canal Agent, Captain Heebi who had everything well organised and told us we would be able to do the first part of the Canal the next morning morning at 0600hrs.

Anemos – September 2020 – Port Ghalib to Suez: Our departure from Port Ghalib was delayed to Aug 24th because of Covid 19 lockdown. April to May are much better periods to go north! Here is where we anchored on the way:

- Soma Bay 26°50.6'N / 33°59.07'E good protection, sand and coral.
- Makhadiq Bay, 27°02.50'N / 033°54.037'E. Good protection, beware floating lines though.
- Endeavour Harbour, Tawila Island, 27°33.583'N / 33°46.726'E very good protection, entrance tricky to spot, trust the Red Sea Pilot wpt! No internet reception, also busy construction site. **Note: As of March 2022, this is NO LONGER A POSSIBLE STOP.** It is now an Army Base, and if you do stop (for emergency repairs/weather) you will pay, a lot.
- Marsa Thelemet, 29°03.558'N 032°38.127'E. To get there we stayed inside the reef up to Zeitiya, following "strong wind route" in Pilot. We were so glad to reach very good protection and holding in Thelemet, where we anchored in 7 m sand and mud. We had a 3 day wait and rest, and from there we reached Port Suez in 9 hours.

Then we stayed alongside the shipping lanes going N, wrongly trusting in a favourable forecast.

Muttley – June 2019 – Hurghada to Suez: From Hurghada we had a rough overnighter to Suez with 35kts on the nose the whole way.

Tamarask – January 2015: The north half of the Red Sea was awful for us because of wind in the face all the time (early January)... probably better by March / April.

2.9 Passage Down the Red Sea (North to South)

Rick Delaney – 2019: We left Port Said in May. Winds behind us 50%, headwinds 25%, no winds 25%. Some storms with lightning maybe average 1 hour per day.

South west monsoon is late June to November. I prefer to sail in monsoon season to get following winds. But I keep a close watch on the weather and hire a private meteorologist to guide me.

Our trip was Port Said thru the Suez with stops at Sudan, Djibouti and Socotra.

I highly recommend **Sudan** and agent Mohammad for refueling. Good safe anchorage. Diesel fuel is 50 cents per liter. Mohammad is a super honest guy.

Djibouti was great for food provisioning. No need for an agent there. It was easy to do the check in and out by yourself. You just need to have local Djibouti currency to pay. Getting diesel through an agent is virtually impossible, but you can buy yourself in jerry cans nearby .

Socotra is expensive and barren. But the agent there is also super nice and honest and can arrange diesel at about 90 cents per liter.

2.10 Passage up into Jordan

Tregoning – April 2023: After a very relaxing two-day passage, motor-sailing for 174 nm in mostly calm conditions from Soma, Egypt, we arrived in Aqaba, Jordan, at 12:30 pm on Wednesday, (19th April). We had to specify to the authorities what time we would arrive, and Randall was happy to pull into to the quarantine dock within 1 minute of our designated time. It was fortunate that during our passage, it had occurred to me to wonder if Aqaba was in a different time zone from Soma, and we discovered that indeed it was, so it was lucky that we did not arrive an hour late.

The only strange thing that happened on the passage was that the first afternoon and night were very humid with the Bimini windows rapidly steaming up on both sides. In what is normally such a dry climate, this was quite surprising. In the middle of the night, Randall had to cope with crossing the traffic that was entering or leaving the shipping lanes in the Gulf of Suez. Luckily, he could use the radar and AIS so that watching out of the steamy windows was not quite as essential.

The Gulf of Aqaba is not very wide, mostly about 9 nm, and mountain ranges rise steeply from the shoreline on either side. Our chart showed a peak on the Saudi Arabia side of 1,058 m (3,471 feet) and on the Sinai, Egyptian side of 1,594 m (5,230 feet). With depths up to 1,707 m (5,600 feet) it is indeed a significant rift in the earth, an extension of the African Rift Valley and Red Sea, which continues north through to the Dead Sea, the lowest terrestrial place on the planet.

A few cargo ships and two cruise-ships (one very large and one smaller one) were also moving through the Gulf of Aqaba, but we did not see any small, local fishing boats until we reached Jordanian waters. We were hailed on the VHF radio by the Jordanian Navy just before we crossed from the Saudi/Egyptian waters. They were satisfied that we were heading to Ayla Marina in Aqaba and asked us to call the Aqaba Port Authority as we approached the city at the northeast head of the Gulf. A little while later they called us back to warn us that we were heading towards Israeli waters and suggested that we stay at least 0.5 nm on the Jordanian side of the border. The lines on our two charts were slightly different so we turned right to stay closer to the Jordanian shore.

Although relations between Jordan and Israel seem to be fairly stable at the moment, there appears to be great sensitivity about the border between the two countries on the land at the head of the Gulf, and their waters. The entrance to Ayla Marina is only a hundred meters or so from the border, so we could not stay the prescribed distance all the way, but there was no doubt that the Jordanian Navy were watching us on AIS as well as from a couple of patrol boats. Until we were warned about it on a snorkeling boat a couple of days later, we did not realize that photography is not allowed near the marina entrance/border. Phones and cameras have been confiscated from boats in the past. We were so busy trying to get through to the marina on the VHF radio, that I was not taking pictures as I would usually.

[More on Jordan](#)

2.11 Passage Through the Suez Canal

Kurukulla – July 2023: By 0730 we had slipped our moorings at the Suez Canal Yacht Club and were waiting adjacent to the main channel for our pilot, Mostafa, to arrive which he did shortly afterwards aboard an SCA Pilot Cutter.

Having introduced ourselves we set off keeping to the west side of the canal on the very edge (It seemed rather counter intuitive keeping to the Port side of the channel!). Initially we were being overtaken by the northbound convoy passing some 50m on our stbd side and later we were to have the southbound ships heading towards us. Notwithstanding the size of some of the shipping passing there is plenty of room in the edges of the canal for small craft but caution is needed to avoid the vast amounts of rusting, obsolete, infrastructure adorning the edge of the canal; rotting redundant jetties, berthing piles etc. and even the occasional snapped off navigation mark, all of which represent a distinct hazard to small boats.

By 1530 we were berthing alongside in the new, and half constructed, SCA marina at Ismalia. Almost before we had tied up Mostafa was ashore and heading for home, he didn't even stop to ask for baksheesh, which we had been warned to expect.

30 minutes later were we to find out the reason for his haste. The berth he had directed us to was not available for use, as the marina was yet to be commissioned and handed over to the SCA! We were thrown out and had to anchor off for the night! After a couple of rapid phone calls to Felix Agency we were ensured that our pilot for the next day knew where to find us and sure enough Sayeed arrived, spot on 0900, in an SCA Pilot Cutter.

Unlike Mostafa, Sayeed was determined to helm for the majority of the transit. I was quite happy as it freed me to do more sightseeing! The only break he requested was at 1300 when he took a 10 minute break and retired to the foredeck to undertake his religious devotions.

By 1715 we were in the eastern channel at Port Said (the western was blocked by the closed bridge) and dropping Sayeed of onto another pilot cutter. He too declined the opportunity of requesting baksheesh.

Philip Wise – Transiting with a Sick Engine: A bit of advice for those who aren't sure they can make 5 knots through the Canal. We tried going through the canal with just one engine as the other engine started a high pitched whine 5nm up the canal.

They have speed cameras at check points and once we got below 5 kts they ordered us to return to Suez or face very high fines or pay for \$1000 /hr tow.

Surprisingly there are quite strong currents in and out of the canal up to the lakes. You can observe them by looking at the markers behind the Suez Yacht Club waving back and forth as the current goes past them. They can be 1 -1.5 kts. So next time I picked a favourable current ,a total of 3 kts difference. !!

The N'ly afternoon sea breeze is also a consideration at this time of the year.

We also, fortuitously, experienced a 1kt favourable current N of the lakes.

So, favourable currents and early starts were our goal in June a couple of years ago.

Muttley – June 2019: The northbound transit of the canal is closed until the 10th of June. The small craft office is closed due to national holidays for the end of Ramadan.

FB Group (Red Sea) – May 2019: Last year we had to wait for a day at Ismailia to let a Warship go through.

Another consideration is that in June the land is starting to warm up starting to produce an afternoon seabreeze after lunch time, but it seems to affect S of Ismailia later in the afternoon. Stronger as you approach the Med.

This can affect you if you have a low powered engine going up the canal in the afternoon. But it also gives an on shore breeze when you exit the canal.

Most boats, unlike us, don't experience this as they go up earlier in the year.

Tidal currents in springs can be surprisingly strong in the Canal from Suez to the Bitter Lakes. Which we discovered to our dismay.

2.12 Leaving Egypt for the Med

Kurukulla – July 2023: We had decided to head straight out into the Mediterranean and not spend a final night in quarantine at the SCA Yacht Club at Port Said. I had been assured that the berth there was not very comfortable as it is susceptible to the wash of all the passing traffic.

By 1800 Sunday afternoon we were out in open waters, in 18kts of NW breeze, navigating the shallows off Port Said with the departing northbound convoy. Given the wind was “bang on the nose” for Marmaris, I opted to make ground to the north to get us clear of all the commercial traffic, navigating our way through the numerous oil rigs and well heads that populate this area.

By midnight we were becalmed, in fact from midnight to 0600 we made one mile, backwards, due to the easterly current. Frustratingly the winds stayed this way for the next 24 hours, nonetheless we persevered; I was determined to end the circumnavigation as I had started it, under sail!

For the next days we tacked to windward in an effort to cover the 385 miles to Marmaris, taking advantage of any windshifts, but slowly, with an average of only 5-6kts of true wind, 3-4kts of boat speed! The forecasts kept promising us west to south west winds but the reality the majority of the winds were westerly or north westerly! By 1800 on the 6th of July we had reached the Greek Islands of Kastellorizon, still some 80 miles east of Marmaris.

Ultimately I capitulated and we motored for the night of 6/7 July; the wind had dropped to zero and the seas were lumpy; to say the least, my least favourite conditions!

Late on 7 July 2023, after nearly seven and a quarter years (one tenth of my life to date) we were back from where we had started the circumnavigation, on 2nd of May 2016.

Muttley – June 2019: Once out the other side, we overnighted to **Tel Aviv**. They take their security very seriously in Israel, and we had continuous radio contact with the Navy for the last 50 miles to Herzliya. We even had military drones following us a lot of the time.

Check in to Israel was easy, although very thorough. We are now in the marina at Hertzliya, 6miles north of Tel Aviv as the marina in Tel Aviv has an 18m maximum length so we couldn't fit. It is great up here and Israel has really impressed me. It's a beautiful, clean country, with everything you could ever need. I highly recommend stopping here after you do the canal.

3 Maldives

The Maldives are covered more completely in the [Indian Ocean Crossing Compendium](#). However, many boats headed for the Red Sea also make a quick stop in Uligan, at the north end of the Maldives. Here are a few cruiser reports.

Asadhulla Mohamed (Maldives Agency) – Feb 1, 2020: I just want to inform that finally we made it!! I promise to many cruisers that we will make Maldives as a cruiser/sailors friendly country! Now I believe that you don't have to worry about putting Maldives on your 'places to go' list.

Please note that concerned authorities agreed to start implementing the following changes from 1st April onwards

Please check the below changes and let me know still if there is any other concern to visit Maldives. The government is very positive and I am here to work on behalf of you guys..

If you want to talk to me privately, please email to me: assad@realseahawksmaldives.com

Contact: +9607934946

- Tracking device will not require if the vessel already has and AIS/Tracking device on board.
- No additional clearance is required to go Hulhumale' safe anchorage if the vessel is cleared from Uligan or from Addu
- Customs inward and outward clearance cost will reduce from USD130 to USD30
- Sanitation cost will reduce from USD65.00 to USD12.00
- No anchoring fee up to 30 days.
- Vessels less than 15m LOA can stay up to 72 hours (For refueling and provisioning) without paying any government charges.

The Ministry of Tourism is expecting that they will start giving a free cruising permit for sailors from 1st May

(So we are expecting that there will be NO charges for cruising permit from 1st May)

3.1 Uligan

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: The passage from Sri Lanka to Uligan was very quiet with no or very little winds. But it was easy enough to stock up fuel in Uligan. Our visit in Uligan was absolutely amazing, locals are extraordinary supportive not only in organising diesel from the neighbor island, but also in showing us around. We had a superb time. Stocking up fresh produce is possible, but product selection is depending on the visit of the last supply ship. There is also a small farm directly on the island happy to sell pumpkin, eggplant and tomatoes to cruisers. Especially for our little boys, 4 and 6, Uligan was a perfect starting point before the long passage.

Tamarisk – March 2015: We used Assad as an agent in Uligamu in **Maldives** - excellent in every way for yacht services (very reasonably priced too) and was able to find a security contractor at the last minute and also arrange for a crew change there (which is impossible to do without advance paperwork). The weapons depot is in Male, so if going via Maldives, you will need to get down to Male for departure.

If you want to cruise the Maldives islands, the permit is expensive (around \$700), the remaining fees without the sailing permit were around \$300 (including agency fees).

Assad's contact info is:

Tel : [\(+ 960\) 3300794](tel:+9603300794) | Fax: [\(+ 960\) 3300794](tel:+9603300794) | Mobile [\(+960 \) 7934946](tel:+9607934946) |

Email: Assad@realseahawksmaldives.com

Gaviota of Cowes – Feb 2020: We have just spent 8 days in Uligan in the Maldives and would highly recommend a stop here, the interesting news is as from 20th February there will be a new pricing structure as follows:

1. Sailors can stay up to 72 hours/3 days without paying any government charges
2. Sailors can stop up to 8 days at a greatly reduced price. Customs - inward and outward clearance 35 \$US, Health Sanitation Certificate 12 \$US. Total of other Port Charges 25 \$US.

Asadhulla Mohamed of Real Seahawks has campaigned hard with the Maldivian Government for these changes and our whole 8 day experience here has been a very good one.

The sea is crystal clear and fish life is abundant, Assad and Hammidh went out of their way to make our check in and visit a total pleasure.

400 people live in Uligan and the sand streets and coral and concrete built houses are neat and tidy. Local people are very friendly and delighted to have visitors and the local food is very good, in fact the Maldivian Fish Curry was voted by the BBC as Number 5 in the World's Top 10 Curries.

Internet: Assad gave us SIM cards on arrival which can be topped up in the local shop and the 4G Internet is fast here. Hammadh arranged for our laundry to be done and through him we ordered some vegetables and bread which arrived the next day from a neighbouring Island, try the local home made chapattis, ours arrived still warm, they are delicious.

Fuel: Diesel was delivered to the boat and cost 97 cents a litre.

Trash Disposal: Rubbish is an issue for them as there is no official rubbish collection so if you can keep it until your next stop, that is preferred.

Things to do: Assad arranged a wonderful fishing trip to a nearby deserted Island and it was amazing watching the local men spear fishing, and then us being invited to join them to eat the catch after. Local people in the Islands are now offering Guest House style inexpensive accommodation to encourage more tourists to enjoy the real culture and food of the Islands and I understand there are now cheap flights from Cochin.

Big excitement here is that the President of the Maldives is visiting Uligan on 20th February and big celebrations are planned, I wish we could have stayed for them but if any of you are able to be here then you will not be disappointed.

Contact Asadhulla Mohamed of Real Seahawks on +960 7934946 and asadhullamohamed@gmail.com or via FB Messenger.

Tehani-Li - Jan/Feb 2004: We enjoyed Uligan so much that we spent nine days resting and refueling. We have always enjoyed the Maldives and Uligan proved to be no exception with courteous and kind people and spectacular beaches and scenery. However, although there were lots of fish, the coral was all dead. Snorkeling is much better in Chagos.

The fish didn't seem to get too many visitors either as they were all quite curious. And the squid were everywhere. I bought a bag of cheapo squid jigs in Phuket and decided to get one out and see what would happen. I could see all the squid hovering like black Klingon warships in the shade of our boat just under the surface. Having never squid jigged before I wasn't sure what would happen as I let the jig plop into the water.

Several squid came over to investigate and one of the dumber ones lunged at it and was promptly ensnared. I yanked him to the surface and it promptly started squirting black ink at the boat! After I got him in a bucket – a messy affair – I did the rest of the jigging from the dinghy which is easier to wash. In no time we had half a dozen of the suckers.

One of the cruisers in the anchorage, there were about ten boats there, came over with a book that showed how to prepare squid. This we did and enjoyed calamari that night. Well, word was out and the next day everyone started squid jigging and trying their luck. I caught another

bucketful and other cruisers wanted to buy my jigs from me! There were squid BBQs at night on the boats and the fun never stopped.

Lastly, as you might expect, there isn't too much to do in the bright lights of Uligan. When not wreaking havoc on the local squid population we spent our time socializing with the other yachts. One day we went to the beach with the Dutch yacht, Quest. They have three small very blonde boys who attracted all kinds of attention from the much darker locals. Maurice, the Dad, had two America's Cup replica radio controlled yachts that he and I sailed around while the kids splashed in the water and chased the inquisitive local children about.

Another time we got every yacht in the anchorage together for a dinner ashore in a local home. Cost was \$5 a head and you were able to sample all the local dishes – mostly fish and breadfruit. It was quite nice. By the way, the Maldives are a strictly muslim country and all must go to the mosque five times a day. Needless to say, alcohol was strictly forbidden on shore. (Interesting historical footnote, alcohol, or the distillation of spirits, is an Arab invention and the word itself is Arabic.....).

You were also not allowed on shore after 10 PM but had to be back on your boat by then and no local people were allowed on your boat. If you wanted to give a present to a local person you had to get permission from Customs first. There were many rules but all were explained with an easy-going, shy smile and they really understood we were coming from a different culture.

No effort was made to restrict our activities unduly and we respected their laws. The agent, Mohammed of Alliance Marine, was very helpful and his cousin, Aideel taught me some phrases in Arabic that we will practice going up the Red Sea.

So if you are crossing the Northern Indian Ocean in a small boat do stop at Uligan. Lastly, there have been some rumors that they will build a marina in the atoll. Naseer, the local magistrate for one of the islands, told me that they are in the last stage of planning and it could be completed in a year or so.

It won't be on Uligan. They have picked a deserted island where they will put the marina and a restaurant or two. "Like a resort," he told me. Nice people but they are still determined to keep the yachties away from the local population at all cost.

Once the new marina is built I wonder if we will still be allowed to go to Uligan. It will be a shame if that is no longer possible.

<http://www.theseaissalt.com/uligan-maldives/>

4 Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is covered in the Indian Ocean Crossing Compendium.

5 India (Kochi / Kochin / Cochin)

Here are a few bits of info, just in case you don't have the [Indian Ocean Crossing Compendium](#) directly at hand. But most of the info about Cochin is maintained in the IO Compendium. You can find it ONLY on the Files links in the Indian Ocean Crossing and Red Sea Passage Facebook groups.

5.1 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

Sail SE Asia FB Group – Nov 2023: Nizar, the cruiser's friend in Kochin, passed away a few years ago, but his 2 sons have taken over the role. Contact +918921307504. nizarnazar000@gmail.com or [Nizar Nazar](#) on Facebook.

5.2 Obtaining Visas Prior to Arrival

A visa is required in advance for all nationalities. You can apply for a visa online. See this website to start:

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/>

Liberte – FB November 2019: Indian e-visa update: the 60-day e-visa has been replaced with a 30-day or 1-year e-visa.

30-day visa: you can only apply for this visa 30 days before you arrive. Cost is \$25 USD.

1-year visa: can be applied for up to 90 days before you arrive. Cost is \$40 USD.

Both visas are booked online. There may be a 2.5% fee for paying for the visa by credit card.

1 Year Visa: Here are the details I received today when my 1-year e-visa was granted.

e-Visa Validity period is 365 days from the date of issuance of this ETA.

Activities Permitted : Recreation/Sight-Seeing

Continuous stay during each visit should not exceed 90 days.

Multiple entries will be granted within the e-Visa validity period stamped on your passport.

Note : Please carry a copy of this ETA at the time of your arrival in India.

e-Visa is non-extendable, non-convertible & not valid for visiting Protected/Restricted and Cantonment Areas. If you intend to visit Protected/Restricted/Cantonment areas, you would require prior permission from the Civil Authority.

For EU-citizens the one year only permits 90 consecutive days!

With the one-year visa, Americans and Canadians can stay in country for 180 days at a time, multiple entry, for up to one year.

Much more detail and cruiser experiences are provided in the Cochin section of the Indian Ocean Crossing Compendium.

5.3 Satellite Phone Restriction & Drones

Sisiuti – February 2019: Satellite phones are forbidden in India. They will be sealed by Customs if you declare them. Yesterday Customs came to the marina checking sat phones to insure the seal had not been broken. They were tipped off by the Navy that a satellite phone had been detected in the marina. Do not try their patience or test their detection system. Security is taken very seriously by authorities.

I could not import a sim for IridiumGo. It was the use of IridiumGo that was detected by Indian Navy.

Chris: How to get an Inmarsat satellite phone authorized for use in Indian waters

Currently, a No Objection Certificate (NOC) can be obtained from the Indian Department of Telecommunications for INMARSAT-B, INMARSAT-C, INMARSAT-M, INMARSAT-Mini M, INMARSAT- Multimedia Mini M (M4).

Wade: In reality, portable satcom devices are not prohibited, but highly regulated. If you bring one in, it is easier to declare it, seal it in a locker, and then unseal and use again on departure. All of the commercial ships coming in and out of India have satcom devices. If you have one, and don't declare it, and use it in Indian waters - they will find you within hours.

Philip: Last year (2018) we declared our Inmarsat on arrival in both Sri Lanka and India .They were satisfied and said it was OK .The Andemans were the same, whilst another yacht with an Iridium had lots of trouble.

But I know they can enforce different regulations from year to year or even boat to boat.

Also, be well aware of Albert's drone experience in Egypt.

Drones: Drones are not forbidden, but highly regulated. If you arrive with one, don't use it.

5.4 Kochin International Marina

Sail SE Asia FB Group – Nov 2023: Nizar, the cruiser's friend in Kochin, passed away a few years ago, but his 2 sons have taken over the role. Contact +918921307504. nizarnazar000@gmail.com or [Nizar Nazar](#) on Facebook.

Sail SE Asia FB Group – Aug 2019: The marina itself is a bit run-down but still serviceable. There are daily power cuts but the resort operates a standby generator that always kicks in, within 20 second.

Elizabeth Coleman – January 2019: We are here in Kochi. We have done some travelling around and have left the boat here. There is security on the 2 entrance gates and also a guard at the marina. We feel safe and secure and are happy to leave our boat here whilst we are away.

6 Salalah, Oman

Country Code: 698

Time Zone: GMT + 4

6.1 Formalities

Red Sea Facebook Group – Dec 2023 - Checking In: I used the Hawana Marina as a port of entry to Oman. To check in you will need an agent - Khimji Ramdas Shipping LLC

Agency fee is 1425 USD including coastal permission for one month (520 USD). Unfortunately, without this permit you will not be able to stay in the marina.

Mai Tai – November 2021: Oman has been closed to foreign yachts for two years due to Covid. Our boat was the first foreign yacht they allowed to enter since they opened the country. Everything has changed.

1. You must have received a tourist visa for Oman prior to your arrival for all persons onboard.
2. You must have an official Covid vaccine certificate complete with QR code for all onboard.
3. To enter the port you are still required to have an agent. However, there are no more yacht agents because there have been no yachts. Only large commercial shipping agents are available. This is a bit of a problem because the shipping agents really don't want to deal with our problems and questions. They are not set up for it. Port Salalah is the largest shipping port on the Gulf of Aden and the agents deal with 400 meter container ships, not yachts. Their fees are ridiculously high. Like US\$3,000 just for talking to you. Then they start charging for the paperwork and transporting the documents, and on and on. So be aware that stopping here is not going to be a cheap option until they sort this out.
4. Initially you will anchor outside the port to the north of the big port breakwater, which offers pretty good protection in 12 metres depth on sand. Your agent will need to get permission for you to enter the port, which will be given when there are no commercial ships moving in or out. We waited three days before we were let in. You will be assigned a spot on one of the huge concrete walls to tie up. Make sure you allow enough line to handle a 2.5 meter tidal range. There are no floating docks for yachts and yachts cannot anchor inside the port. You will not be allowed off your boat until your agent organizes a PCR test for you. The nurse will come down to the boat to administer the test. Usually it takes 24 hours for the results. The cost was \$70 each. After your test results are back your agent will come around to collect your passports and ship's documents and take them to the Coast Guard and Immigration. We didn't see our agent for over a week. They just can't be bothered with cruisers.
5. Once you receive your passport stamp and your boat is cleared into the country you will need to pay your port fees through your agent, which vary according to your size and the number of days you had to wait for clearance. In our case, because we were under 15 meters in length and under 20 tons the port fees were waived. That seems to be the minimum limit.
6. You will now be asked to move out of the port to Hawana Marina, which is about 12 nms east of the port and a \$50 taxi ride out of town. (see more comments in Marina section)



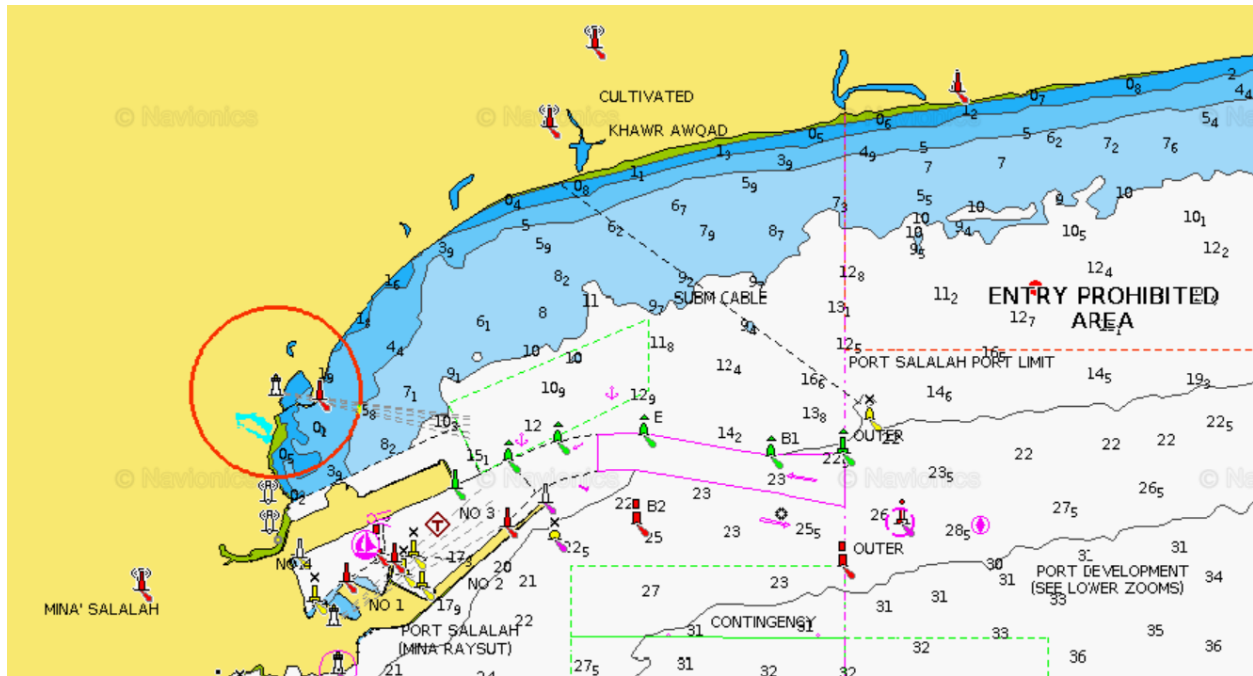
Mai Tai's blog is here:

<https://sailingmaitai.com/uncategorized/>

Red Sea Pilot Updates – 2019: The Hawana Marina is not yet a port of entry so all vessels must check in Port Mina Raysut. Marina staff will advise on agents to organize clearance until on-site clearance becomes available.

6.2 *Salalah Port*

Salalah Port is a large industrial port. The best place for yachts is Hawana Marina, 15 miles east (see next section for details).



The sailboat in the picture above is located at 16-56.64 N / 54-00.50 E

Red Sea FB Group – January 2023: Contacts in Oman

Elias from Khimji Ramdas Shipping LLC in Muscat at +968 9935 5258. And Nidhin from same LLC in Salalah at +968 9942 9598.

Taher Al Mousa is a Jordanian that has lived in Oman for twenty years and is a great guy for resourcing things. +968 9238 7843. Taher is too notch!

Ahmed Hussain is the marina manager at Hawana resort in Salalah and can be reached at +968 9639 6127

6.3 Salalah Marina Hawana



The entrance to the Hawana Complex is located at 17° 01.506' N / 054° 18.222' E



Marina Berthing Plan

Phone: +(968) 9284 9132
 Coordinates: (1701'31.21" N, 54'18'13.20" E)

Hawana Salalah Marina • Salalah, Sultanate of Oman • Mobile: (+968) 9284 9132 • Email: marinas@muriya.om • hawanasalalah.com

Red Sea FB Group – December 2023: I wanted to stop at Hawana Marina to sit out the strong SW in August, but the marina has only a small entrance open to SW and in/out was closed due

to it was too dangerous to enter or leave the marina. Surely an interesting place and Oman is a beautiful country.

Red Sea FB Group – December 2023: A bit of info about the place where we stopped - Hawana Salalah Marina. It is a well protected marina on the territory of a large hotel complex with very friendly and caring staff. The berths are equipped with shore electricity and water.

At the moment they only have one floating pier for guest yachts. C-Berth 8 on the plan. At all other berths you will feel the tide (about 1.5 m). But in the near future the marina promises to become more comfortable.

The complex has several swimming pools, as well as bars and restaurants. There are several small shops with basic necessities. But if you need to replenish your food supply, you will have to travel about 20 minutes to a large supermarket by taxi (15 OMR one way). There are beautiful beaches within walking distance. At the Fanar hotel reception there is Wi-Fi with very fast internet.

MONOHULL BERTHING FEES **PRIVAT BOATS**



LOA UP TO (m)	DAILY of 2023	DAILY of 2024	MONTHLY OF 2023	MONTHLY OF 2024	ANNUAL FEES OF 2023	ANNUAL FEES OF 2024
5,5	7	7,35	110	115,5	552	579,6
6,5	23	24,15	124	130,2	607	637,35
7,5	27	28,35	137	143,85	667	700,35
8,5	31	32,55	152	159,6	734	770,7
9,5	34	35,7	169	177,45	808	848,4
10,5	38	39,9	188	197,4	888	932,4
11,5	41	43,05	202	212,1	950	997,5
12,5	60	63	216	226,8	1018	1068,9
13,5	65	68,25	230	241,5	1088	1142,4
14,5	70	73,5	246	258,3	1165	1223,25
15,5	74	77,7	264	277,2	1247	1309,35
16,5	79	82,95	282	296,1	1333	1399,65
17,5	84	88,2	301	316,05	1427	1498,35
18,5	111	116,55	324	340,2	1526	1602,3
19,5	117	122,85	346	363,3	1633	1714,65
20,5	123	129,15	370	388,5	1747	1834,35
21,5	129	135,45	389	408,45	1870	1963,5
22,5	135	141,75	408	428,4	2000	2100
23,5	141	148,05	428	449,4	2141	2248,05
24,5	176	184,8	450	472,5	2290	2404,5
25,5	184	193,2	481	505,05	2450	2572,5
26,5	191	200,55	505	530,25	2622	2753,1
27,5	198	207,9	530	556,5	2804	2944,2
28,5	205	215,25	558	585,9	3001	3151,05
29,5	212	222,6	586	615,3	3211	3371,55
30,5	220	231	614	644,7	3437	3608,85
31,5	227	238,35	646	678,3	3677	3860,85
32,5	234	245,7	684	718,2	4054	4256,7
33,5	241	253,05	712	747,6	4256	4468,8
34,5	248	260,4	748	785,4	4469	4692,45
35,5	256	268,8	785	824,25	4693	4927,65
36,5	263	276,15	823	864,15	4927	5173,35
37,5	270	283,5	865	908,25	4927	5173,35
38,5	277	290,85	952	999,6	5173	5431,65
39,5	284	298,2	1000	1050	5432	5703,6
40,5	292	306,6	1049	1101,45	5704	5989,2

- 10 % discount for Residents
- 40 % discount for Dry store
- 50 % discount for Muriya employee

Yacht berthing above 40.50 m LOA: upon arrangement
Private floating structures fee: upon arrangement

PRICES

Correspond to stern berthing. Alongside berthing is charged +60%.
Extra charge for catamaran +40% (stern berthing)

Water and Electricity:
Charged by metered consumption as per Municipality rates
Daily fees are valid from the time of arrival until 14:00 of the next day

PAYMENT

Mooring fees are paid in advance
Delayed mooring or services fees are subject to default interest (3%)
Charged fees are in accordance with the declared stay and change only after a new declaration
Paid fees are not refundable.

DISCOUNT

Residents: 10% of published tariff for non-commercial boat operators

MONOHULL BERTHING FEES **COMMERCIAL BOATS**



LOA UP TO (m)	DAILY of 2023	DAILY of 2024	MONTHLY OF 2023	MONTHLY OF 2024	ANNUAL FEES OF 2023	ANNUAL FEES OF 2024
5,5	8	8,4	132	138,6	662	695,1
6,5	28	29,4	148	155,4	729	765,45
7,5	32	33,6	164	172,2	801	841,05
8,5	37	38,85	183	192,15	881	925,05
9,5	41	43,05	203	213,15	969	1017,45
10,5	45	47,25	226	237,3	1066	1119,3
11,5	50	52,5	242	254,1	1140	1197
12,5	72	75,6	259	271,95	1221	1282,05
13,5	78	81,9	276	289,8	1306	1371,3
14,5	84	88,2	295	309,75	1398	1467,9
15,5	89	93,45	317	332,85	1496	1570,8
16,5	95	99,75	338	354,9	1600	1680
17,5	101	106,05	361	379,05	1712	1797,6
18,5	133	139,65	389	408,45	1832	1923,6
19,5	140	147	415	435,75	1960	2058
20,5	148	155,4	444	466,2	2097	2201,85
21,5	155	162,75	467	490,35	2244	2356,2
22,5	162	170,1	490	514,5	2400	2520
23,5	169	177,45	514	539,7	2569	2697,45
24,5	212	222,6	540	567	2748	2885,4
25,5	220	231	577	605,85	2940	3087
26,5	229	240,45	606	636,3	3146	3303,3
27,5	238	249,9	636	667,8	3365	3533,25
28,5	246	258,3	670	703,5	3601	3781,05
29,5	255	267,75	703	738,15	3853	4045,65
30,5	264	277,2	737	773,85	4124	4330,2
31,5	272	285,6	775	813,75	4412	4632,6
32,5	281	295,05	821	862,05	4632	4863,6
33,5	289	303,45	854	896,7	4864	5107,2
34,5	298	312,9	897	941,85	5108	5363,4
35,5	307	322,35	942	989,1	5363	5631,15
36,5	315	330,75	988	1037,4	5632	5913,6
37,5	324	340,2	1038	1089,9	5913	6208,65
38,5	333	349,65	1142	1199,1	6208	6518,4
39,5	341	358,05	1200	1260	6519	6844,95
40,5	350	367,5	1259	1321,95	6844	7186,2

Yacht berthing above 40.50 m LOA: upon arrangement
Private floating structures fee: upon arrangement

PRICES

Correspond to stern berthing. Alongside berthing is charged +60%.
Extra charge for catamaran +40% (stern berthing)
Water and Electricity:
Charged by metered consumption as per Municipality rates
Daily fees are valid from the time of arrival until 14:00 of the next day

PAYMENT

Mooring fees are paid in advance
Delayed mooring or services fees are subject to default interest (3%)
Charged fees are in accordance with the declared stay and change only after a new declaration
Paid fees are not refundable.

Mai Tai (Red Sea Facebook Group) – November 2021: We visited the Hawana Marina in our rental car just to check it out. It looks like someone had a great idea and then Covid struck. There are hundreds of condos wrapping around a man-made system of canals in the desert but nobody is there. There are only two marina berths with floating docks, one was occupied. They are trying to charge US\$65 per night for a 14 meter berth. Noonsite mentions 160 berths with floating docks. That may have been someones marketing dream but it isn't the reality. The only grocery shop was a small minimarket. There were a few restaurants but they were all closed up. It looks a bit sad really, out of town, with nothing to do. Might get better as the country starts opening up more but we didn't see any reason to move our boat there, especially at that price.

Indian Ocean Facebook Group – September 2021: You can contact Haytham the marina manager via WhatsApp and phone at +968 2464 5555

Red Sea Facebook Group – August 2020: Hawana Marina is where you want to go to get fuel in Salalah. Port Salalah is very very hard to get fuel unless there's a huge number of you, Hawana has a fuel dock and is very nice. Little pricy at the shops around marina but it's your best bet in Salalah. <https://www.hawanasalalah.com/marina/>

Sisiutl – May 2019: We are in the new marina about 15 miles east from the main port. I have never been in the main port and leave that to others to report. This marina is planned for 170 boats but only a fraction of that number fit today. The breakwater is well done and offers great protection. The marina is surrounded by resorts and shops. We can use all their facilities.

There are, however, no 'marina' facilities like showers, laundry, storage, and toilets for boaters. There is a fuel dock @ .65USD/Liter. Water and electricity are metered and charged. There are many slips that are used for tours, fishing, diving, etc. There are only a couple of spots for the typical cruising yacht.

One major downside is isolation. The marina is 15 miles from the town of Salalah. A \$40USD Taxi each way. We found a driver that does it for \$12. In short I would recommend Salalah for a short respite R&R, and refueling stop. Visas are \$50/person per month. \$25 for 10 day visa. The marina is approx \$500/month.

You must have 3rd party liability insurance to stay in Oman and you can't buy it here unless your boat is registered in Oman (we bought ours online through EdwardWilliam.com. Excellent repair services are available. As mentioned, a short stay is fine but longer stays can be spendy.

Red Sea Pilot Updates – Sep 2019: Hawana Salalah Marina 17°01'31N 54°18'13E

This new marina is 14 nautical miles 0700 from the fairway buoy at the entry for Port Mina Raysut. The Port Taqah Fishery Harbour with a similar artificial breakwater entrance is 3.5M further east.

The new marina has been designed to accommodate 170 boats up to 60m in length. Minimum depth 3.70m. Floating pontoons and stern to quay berthing. Metered electricity and water on each berth. 24/7 security.

Facilities: Berthing costs approx \$500/month. Showers and toilets not yet ready. WiFi at marina office, laundry and groceries 10 min. away by car. Fuel available at 0.65USD/litre. Resorts and shops.

Contact: Ahmed Hussain, Dock Master ahmed.hussain@muriya.om

+968 9284 9132 Mobile +968 9639 6127

www.hawanasalalah.com

7 Yemen

Yemen operates on Arabia Standard Time.

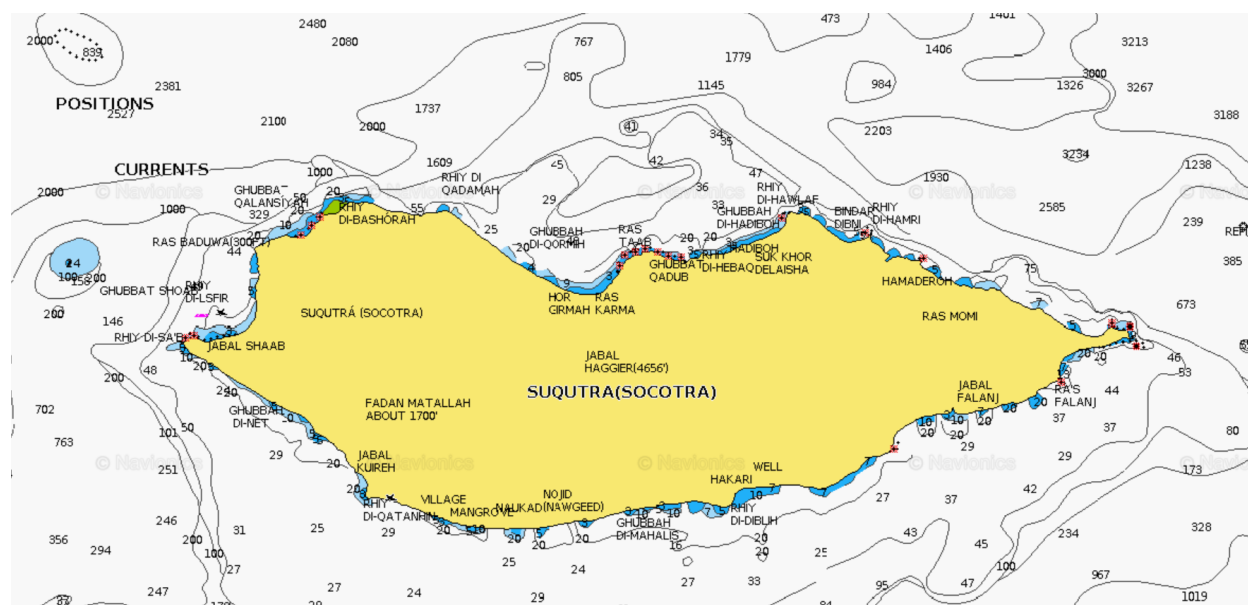
Noonsite – Jan 2023: No part of Yemen, apart from Socotra, is safe from violence. Kidnappings, shelling, and aerial bombardment pose significant risk of death or serious injury. The destruction of infrastructure, housing, medical facilities, schools, and power and water utilities has also increased hardships inside the country.

7.1 Socotra

<http://socotra.info/>

<https://www.noonsite.com/place/yemen/socotra/>

Socotra is an island at the SE entrance to the Gulf of Aden, owned by Yemen.



Noonsite – Feb 2021: Socotra is officially part of Yemen and is a small archipelago of 4 islands located between the Guardafui Channel and the Arabian Sea. It is a popular place to stop and re-provision on the way to the Red Sea.

The largest island, Socotra, is where the capital Hadibo is located, just 15 km from the port. There is however no public transport, but a trip to the city and back can be organised by an agent.

Socotra is renowned for its biodiversity with over 700 species found nowhere else in the world. Until recently, the island was very isolated from the outside world.

Joana – April 2021: Please DO NOT sail between mainland Somalia and Socotra. A former member of our group took this route two years ago (Kenya to Red Sea) and snagged some nets of Somali fishermen. He ended up paying them off, and the next day was the subject of an attack by an irate fisherman. He beat them off with a cricket bat. UKMTO highly discourages this route, and if you do so - you will be "on your own".

7.1.1 Approach and Arrival

Approaching the island from the East, it is advisable to keep at least 10 miles offshore. The eastern extremity of Socotra is dangerous for its sandbanks reaching far out into the ocean and strong currents.

The guiding landmark to the harbor entrance is a tall sand dune with an oil storage facility under it. Entry at night is possible, but not recommended due to local trade ships anchored with no lights.

The entrance to the harbor, where the pier and anchorage are located, is safe.

Anchorage Position: 12° 40.80'N, 54° 04.67'E Approximately 6nm East of Hadibo.

To get to the anchorage, you will need to pass numerous cargo and fishing boats at anchor. Good holding in 5-7m just West of the pier. This will keep you out of the way of small trade ships coming alongside the pier.

During the southwest monsoon the north shore of Socotra experiences strong offshore winds from the mountains. The port area gets very strong and gusty winds from all directions making anchoring here not tenable.

Dinghy Docks: Dinghies can land on a small beach near the western base of the pier by the port security tent.

Docking: There is a long breakwater with a dock at the end where commercial boats offload. The harbor is protected from winds and waves from the north-east, which predominate during the winter season. During the southwest monsoon (from early June to early September) the port area does suffer from strong gusty winds from all directions.

The UAE have upgraded the port and yachts can now moor up to the pier.

7.1.2 Clearance

Noonsite – January 2020: This is an official Port of Entry.

Before Arrival: Immigration and the Port Authority want to know in advance about the arrival of yachts on Socotra. This can avoid any misunderstanding with security at the sea port.

A few days in advance of your arrival send an e-mail (with a copy of all passports, name of the boat, ETA) to your agent.

One person suggested as an agent is Denis Romanov, local yachtsman, at Socotra Tamam Tourist Agency. He can assist with clearance and services for visiting yachts. He also organizes island tours and is extremely helpful. Email: office@socotra.info Number: 00967777758792 VHF: Channel 72

Your agent will inform the officials about your visit and prepare all the necessary papers.

General Clearance: When you enter the harbor, a security boat will meet you and help choose a place to anchor.

A port official will check the number of people on board, after which you will be allowed to go ashore by dinghy. Port staff will need your passports, ship papers and last port clearance for check-in and visa. At the same time, a customs officer will do a quick yacht inspection.

Fees: The total cost of obtaining clearance, including agents fees is approx. \$230.

There is an additional \$10 charge for boats that bring passport and customs control aboard.

A tourist visa costs approx. \$150.

Fees for Immigration services is \$50 per person if you stay for a week and \$100 if you stay up to a month.

Short Stopover: If you are just planning on making a short stop in Socotra to refuel, get water and provisions, then as long as you don't go ashore and see the island, neither a visa nor clearance is required, saving a lot of time and money. The agent can bring supplies on board.

7.1.3 Other Anchorages

Delisha: 12° 41.33' N, 054° 08.33' E (About 4 miles east of the Port Anchorage)

During the southwest monsoon (from early June to early September) this is the only acceptable place for anchoring. This anchorage is located in front of a camp site and is very protected.

7.1.4 Cruiser Comments

Bird of Passage – Feb 2020: Two days ago we anchored at the pier on the strange island of Socotra. It reminds us of the Galapagos, with untouched nature, many endemic species and also the amazing Dragon Blood Trees of course. It has long been a dream for us to come here.

The island belongs to Yemen and everything is extremely old-fashioned and poor. You cannot buy a data SIM card here, and also cannot buy beer or wine. All women over 15 go in black comprehensive attire. They are poor people. It is quite primitive here. But very beautiful.

Our agent let us borrow his wife's SIM-card, which he bought in Dubai and it has 3G mobile data. The local telephone company only sells SIM-cards for voice calls.

Agent is Ghanem Hassan Ali, tel: 00967770272222, E-Mail: kubrhi@gmail.com Good guy, knows Socotra out and in. Fixes anything that is possible to fix.

The last night of our stay the wind increased and a tough swell started building up in our anchorage. In the middle of the night we had to take our anchor up and seek shelter closer to the pier where the local boats were staying. Finally, after sunrise, we managed to tie up in safety on the leeward side of Gulf Star, a small cargo ship.

Bird of Passage was well protected from the wind behind the Gulf Star but the swell was still a problem. Many lines were needed before she was happy and not all of them made it more than a few hours before they broke.

We ultimately spent a week on Socotra. Here is what we paid:

Visa=150\$/person

Agent fee=230\$

One day Tour=100\$

800 liters of water delivered by truck directly to the boat=23\$

Paseafique – June 2019: Socotra was an interesting but relatively expensive stop. We did the island tour and indeed the natural environment is unique but not necessarily a must see in our opinion.

Muttley – May 2019: Socotra is a great place to stop. Ghanem Ali (the agent) is really efficient and very nice. We refuelled with 2000litres of diesel at the dock (0.90c/lt) as well as doing an island tour and some provisioning. Very safe place.

Highly recommend a stop here on the way through.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: You'll need USD for the passage as there is no ATM in Suakin and Socotra, maybe Massawa and USD are preferred in Egypt. The Red Sea Pilot from 2001 is a little outdated formality wise, but still very helpful as it's summarizing best anchorages, approaches and has many accurate charts - we wouldn't recommend going without it.

FB Group (Red Sea) – Mar 2019: Paseafique, with my husband and a crew on board, have had an uneventful passage from Lamu, Kenya to Socotra. It was mostly windward, and with current against them for some of the time. They spent a week on Socotra and while they had an interesting time, my husband thought it was over-priced, as others have noted.

The agent was helpful, and the charges were as he quoted. They paid a total of US\$530, which included \$100 for the one day tour for the two of them. Good quality drinking water was available to fill the tanks. They are now on their way to Djibouti.

Philip Wise – Jan 2019, passage 2018: Socotra was probably one of the highlights of last year's voyage.

We arrived at 2200hrs so hung off the harbour till daylight and then security escorted us in and anchored with 3 other yachts on the E side of the jetty. There are spectacular mountains and interesting town. Alex acted as our agent and escort and driver. We thoroughly enjoyed our week there.

There were a number of fishing boats and dhows there and a security vessel on patrol most of the time, so it felt safe enough.

FB Group - December 2018: Socotra news for cruisers (update Dec 18)

There are two bits of news. One is good, the second is not very.

Last year, some yachtsmen who stopped at Socotra faced certain difficulties. Some of them were not allowed to go ashore. This was due to the presence on the island of soldiers from the Emirates and the tightening of the security regime.

This year, with the advent of the new governor and the withdrawal of the military from the Emirates from the island, the situation has changed for the better. All papers are issued to yachtsmen and tourist visas are issued for those who want to see the island.

However, some confusion remains with different authorities. The bad news is that clearance in Socotra has become more expensive. Now we have to pay extra money to two authorities - the coast guard and the security service.

Additional payment is about \$115. Thus, the total amount of clearance on Socotra (including agency fees) is \$345 now. A tourist visa costs \$100 per person, which allows you to travel around Socotra without any problems accompanied by a local guide.

The boat Formidable 3, which made a short stop at Socotra in early December for fueling, watering and buying food, was the first to be faced with new requisitions from the security service and the coast guard.

We hope that the new government of Socotra soon sorted out with unauthorized extortion by security forces in the future the cost of registration of yachts will be as before.

It is possible that in this case it was the payment for urgency (yacht wanted to stay on Socotra only one day), and in the future we can avoid these costs, but the sailors, who plan to stay on Socotra, should be ready for such unplanned spending. In any case, we will try to minimize your expenses on Socotra.

The Emirates have completed work on updating the seaport. Much work has been done. Now yachts can moor to the pier. Several photos of the reconstructed port you can find in attachment.

Also, the Emirates opened a new gas station. Good quality diesel fuel is delivered from the Emirates. The cost of a liter of diesel fuel is about \$0.52. Car with water tank (2-3 tons) order to seaport is ~\$45

Agent on Socotra - Ghanem Ali (office@socotra.info)

7.1.5 Weather

Red Sea Group – April 2021: The reason for the lack of cyclones in this part of the world in July and August is because of extreme wind shear at elevations. This same wind shear causes accelerated winds around Socotra, often exceeding 35 knots according to the pilot charts.

Comment: We had 55 kts true blowing from Guardafui with gusts up to 70 kts , stressing to say the least, we stayed in Socotra for a week waiting for the window

Comment: We sailed from SA to Red Sea a year or three ago. Agree with all comments. The wind around Socotra can be fierce. Very limited bolt holes. Plan carefully. Spend some time sailing in Djibouti.

7.1.6 Things to See and Do

A tourism site for Socotra is <https://socotra.info/>

This is run by Denis Romanov, local yachtsman, at Socotra Tamam Tourist Agency. He organizes island tours and is extremely helpful.

Email: office@socotra.info Number: 00967777758792 VHF: Channel 72

7.2 Aden

Noonsite - August 2018: It is not advisable to visit Yemen due to the current political and security situation.

Cruisers visiting here in March 2014 reported treatment by officials to be friendly and courteous. However, American cruisers visiting here in January 2015 found quite the reverse and were boarded by the aggressive military and treated with hostility.

In April 2015 Aden was reported to have fallen to Houthi rebels. All the rebel-held areas bordering the Gulf of Aden have become major targets for coalition airstrikes.

All Yemen ports except Socotra should be avoided.

Position: 12° 46.57'N, 45° 02.92'E (harbor entrance)

Noonsite – January 2015: Be sure to make contact with Aden Port Control before entering this port on VHF Channel 13 or 16 well in advance of the buoyed channel to get approval for entry.

It is recommended to anchor on the port side of the entry channel where all the commercial ships are anchored. Avoid going anywhere near the starboard side as there is a military base here.

Beware of the big mooring buoys in the approach channel and also rocks and submerged cables in the yacht anchorage area.

Formalities are carried out ashore. The dinghy can be left at the ferry dock, where a customs officer will meet the captain and accompany him to the office. Immigration will be visited next, where passports are held until departure and every crew member has issued a shore pass.

A passport photo is required for the shore pass which allows a seven day stay for no charge. This can be extended, again with no charge.

The last stop is at the Harbour Master's office.

In order to visit the capital, Sanaa, a three month visa is required. This costs US\$35 per person and you will need written permission from the Harbour Master, which he will grant on condition that someone is looking after your yacht while you are away.

There are no check in or departure fees, but the Port Control office must be visited before leaving.

Tamarask – January 2015: Refueling in Aden was a nightmare because of the authorities, who were very unfriendly and nearly arrested us for having weapons - avoid under all circumstances - they are like monkeys with guns and they ransacked our boat, apparently looking for TNT.

If you have to go in there, definitely don't go near the port without first negotiating with the Port Authority on VHF, and anchor on the left side of the entry channel where all the commercial ships are anchored - there's a military base on the right side and they are psychotic. Agent Omar, listed on Noonsite as the agent who can arrange for fuel to the boat, is dead... his daughter (who picks up his phone) is not very helpful and difficult to understand.

7.3 Hamish Islands – Stay Well Away

Red Sea FB Group – January 2023: They attacked a merchant ship in 2018. They shot at SV Trim (I think around Feb 2019?) and hit a towel hanging outside. And they shot around 20 warning rounds at SV Lakota around May 2022 with one boarding her.

Noonsite – January 2020: Jabal Zugar and Hamish Islands: Exert caution here as a yacht stopping for emergency repairs in February 2016 was shot at from ashore.

8 Djibouti

8.1 Country Overview

Wikipedia – January 2020: Djibouti (jih-BOO-tee); Afar: Yibuuti, Arabic: جيبوتي Jībūtī, French: Djibouti, Somali: Jabuuti, officially the Republic of Djibouti)

Djibouti is a country located in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Somaliland, in the southeast, Ethiopia in the south and west, Eritrea in the north, and the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in the east. Across the Gulf of Aden lies Yemen, which does not share a land border with Djibouti. The country has a total area of 23,200 km² (8,958 sq mi). The state of Djibouti is predominantly inhabited by two ethnic groups, the Somali and the Afar people, with the former comprising the majority of the population.

In antiquity, the territory together with Somaliland was part of the Land of Punt. Nearby Zeila, now in Somaliland, was the seat of the medieval Adal and Ifat Sultanates. In the late 19th century, the colony of French Somaliland was established following treaties signed by the ruling Somali and Afar sultans with the French and its railroad to Dire Dawa (and later Addis Ababa) allowed it to quickly supersede Zeila as the port for southern Ethiopia and the Ogaden. It was subsequently renamed to the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas in 1967. A decade later, the Djiboutian people voted for independence. This officially marked the establishment of the Republic of Djibouti, named after its capital city. The sovereign state joined the United Nations the same year, on 20 September 1977.

In the early 1990s, tensions over government representation led to armed conflict, which ended in a power-sharing agreement in 2000 between the ruling party and the opposition.

Djibouti is a multi-ethnic nation with a population of over 1,007,457 inhabitants (the smallest in mainland Africa). French and Arabic are the country's two official languages. About 94% of residents adhere to Islam, which is the official religion and has been predominant in the region for more than a thousand years. The Somali (Issa clan) and Afar make up the two largest ethnic groups. Both speak the Cushitic branch of the Afroasiatic languages.

Djibouti is strategically located near some of the world's busiest shipping lanes, controlling access to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. It serves as a key refuelling and transshipment center, and is the principal maritime port for imports from and exports to neighboring Ethiopia. A burgeoning commercial hub, the nation is the site of various foreign military bases, including Camp Lemonnier. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional body also has its headquarters in Djibouti City.

8.2 Agents & Check-In

From Red Sea FB Group

Ahssan Phoenix Mohamed, ahssan2017@gmail.com , WhatsApp +253 7762 7015

FB <https://www.facebook.com/benj.mohamed.3>

Incentive - March 2023 - Clearance: We cleared customs and immigration without an agent, so it was an affordable stop. We are a small boat on a small budget and didn't need any other services the agent offered so we decided to do the clearance ourselves. It turned out to be pretty easy. Just be aware that during the weekend on Friday and Saturday there might be a difference because offices might be closed. The Muslim weekend often begins on Friday at noon.

You can go to the offices by dinghy. Tie up to the concrete wall where all the tug boats are. It's not really dinghy friendly but you'll find some ladders or a large tire to tie up to and climb up (easiest at high tide). Position of the wall (find a suitable spot yourself) 11°36.589'N 43°8.124'E.

First you walk to the **capitainerie** (harbour master) 11°36.658'N 43°8.081'E. There are 4 wooden doors in a very old building and you need be at the one on the left. They speak English, ask for some paperwork and explain costs for anchoring. This takes maybe 10 minutes.

Then you go to **immigration** which is a 1 minute walk away. Location: 11°36.670'N 43°8.122'E

Here you have to pay \$30 USD per person for a 30-day visa (for Dutch citizens). Make sure you bring the exact amount, they'll probably won't have any change. You can also ask for a shore pass here. All ready within 10 minutes and everybody is very friendly.

Checkout works the same. You visit the capitainerie first where you will get your port clearance and have to pay the anchorage fee in local currency. It is 5700 Djibouti franc (about \$30 USD) for 1-4 days. I don't know the fees if you stay longer. Again make sure that you have the exact amount because they won't have any change.

Checkout at immigration takes 2 minutes. You'll get a stamp in your passport and that's that. You're ready to go again

Another X – Mar 2023: Our agent in Djibouti was Ahssan. We were satisfied with his services - except for a 50 US\$ fee for using the local harbor to land our dinghy. The fee should cover all expenses, but in reality the locals in the harbor demanded payment every time we used the harbor. Ahssan needs to get a better agreement with the locals in the harbor or stop charging the fee.

Clean diesel can be delivered out to your yacht by Ahssan.

We made an interesting trip with Ahssan to the salt lake. It was expensive but good.

In Djibouti you can buy any kind of food you like. Everything is available in the big supermarkets.

Red Sea FB Group - Feb 2023: We left Djibouti 10 days ago. We did the clearance on our own, 30 dollar per person, quick and easy. No need agent.

Ahssan – Nov 2021: I would like to update the last information concerning Djibouti. The port fees to be changed are no longer \$15 for the first 3 days, the cost of the first 3 days is now \$32. The following 3 days remain at \$10.

The e-visa is not valid for anyone coming by sea. It is necessary to apply for a visa on arrival and it costs \$ 30 but you have to pay in Djibouti francs.

For fuel less than 1000 liter, you have to pay for the transportation of the diesel to the boat, by taxi from the diesel station.

if you have a specific question, do not hesitate to write to me, your agent who cares about your well-being. Come and spend a pleasant stay in Djibouti and exchanging our culture.

Red Sea FB Group – December 2021 – From Capt Heebi (Egypt Agent): I would like to recommend Ahssan Phoenix Mohamed As my sub agent in Djibouti

0025377627015

I have very good report from sailors and also I have been warned from yacht on red sea passage group about an agent charge 4000\$ for nothing. Just my advice if you go to Djibouti

Ed Note: And a number of other cruisers chimed in and confirmed that Ahssan Phoenix Mohamed was the right guy to use for an agent in Djibouti. You can find him on the Red Sea Group with that name on FB. Best to contact in advance and understand fees.

Red Sea FB Group - November 2021: Mai Tai used Ahssan Phoenix Mohamed as agent. ahssan2017@gmail.com to get fuel.

Irene – Aug 2020: Moustique handled our paperwork, refueled us by jerry can, delivered groceries, and provided a sim card (we couldn't officially check in because of COVID restrictions). He worked cheerfully tirelessly in the miserable heat and got us back on our journey in just a few days. And we've needed every bit of the fuel and ate every bit of the food, so it's a good thing we did business.

One night, we dragged anchor a bit in one of the vicious squalls we encountered there. We were in the process of re-anchoring when Moustique called - he had seen our anchor light out of position and was worried. That's an agent who cares!

His phone number is 77 78 17 89

Ed Note: Several other cruisers who had stopped in Djibouti in 2019 and 2020 replied to this FB comment and did not have such good things to say about Moustique. For example: "out of all the boat helpers or agents, including the canal pilots, from Thailand to the Med he was the only one we had trouble with"

Gaviota – Late Feb 2020: You DO NOT need an Agent to clear in - be warned the 'Agent' Ali or his men will come to the boat and tell you that you do! If you fall for this, their Agency charge is 350\$US when to check in on your own will cost you 30\$ US per person for a 30 day Visa, plus an anchoring fee of 15\$US for the first 3 days at anchor in the Port then 10\$US for every 3 days after (this is paid on departure).

Check in is at the Main Port just North of the anchorage, there is a rusty old ladder on the harbour wall (hidden behind the boats tied there), climb this, turn left and walk to small sheds at end - (warning there is thick coal dust covering everything and you will get dirty!) - you will then

find The Capitaine du Port, Aden who is extremely helpful and speaks good English. Port Captain and Immigration are close to each other. Because of The Corona Virus alert it is necessary to see the Quarantine Officer first and it is best if you ring Aden on arrival on +25377819639 who will arrange this, the Quarantine Officer took our temperatures and also wanted to see International Vaccination Travel Record books and checked for Yellow Fever vaccination.

Try and ensure you have the correct money for Immigration 30\$US per person - we didn't and it was suggested the change was to be their 'gift' - we didn't argue! You can report officials for corruption! Remember to ask Immigration for a Port Pass to get you out of the Port Gates though it is more convenient from the anchorage to dinghy over to the Port du Peche as it is next to the Shopping Mall.

8.3 Cruiser Reports

Kurukulla – April 2023: Eighteen hours after we left the IRTC we were sailing under mainsail alone, biding our time, in order to enter Djibouti in daylight. By 0730 we were anchored off the now defunct Yacht Club, (currently used by US Forces as an R&R facility) awaiting our agent to come aboard and steer us through the formalities of entry.

In the event it was all very simple, a visit by the Coast Guard, a visit to the Immigration office in the commercial port and a visit to the Harbourmaster. All done! After that our agent insisted on taking us out to lunch which seemed a rather strange invite, this season being Ramadan and he being Muslim! He took us to a local restaurant where there were a few people milling around outside but inside was rammed with diners. On offer was roast goat, chicken, mountains of rice and fresh salad. All that was missing was a glass of wine or beer! The food was generous to the extent that we were not allowed to leave without a “doggie bag” bursting with the uneaten remains (the tradition here is that you eat all that is offered! If not, you take it with you. Not to do so is an insult!)

After lunch we were given a lift to the local Mall (very modern and impressive) in a local minibus. The doors were tied on with ginger string, the seats were held together with plastic bags as seat covers and the steering obviously had about half a turn of slack before anything happened! Notwithstanding these defects we got to the mall in one piece.

The prime trader in the mall is a large Geant supermarket, very modern and well stocked. The prices however came as a bit of a shock after so long in Asia, double or treble what we had become accustomed to paying. After buying a few essentials and visiting an ATM to acquire some local currency we headed back to the boat for a bit of a rest. I had been on the go since 0200 and was wilting in the heat!

The next two days were spent quietly onboard, there not being a lot to see or do in Djibouti. On the evening of day three we were invited to dine aboard Black Duck with Riley and Clara, her owners; she was a boat we had first encountered in Galle. He is American/Australian and she is Danish. They had set sail from Tasmania just as Kurukulla and I were arriving in Australia. Subsequently a very enjoyable (if slightly drunken) evening was had by all.

Incentive - March 2023: I've written down some information about Djibouti that I thought could be useful to the group. We considered it a very convenient stopover and because we cleared

customs and immigration without an agent, it was also affordable. Hope this will help others in the future.

Timing of passage:

Departed Uligamu, Maldives on 20-2-2023 11am local time. Arrived in Djibouti on the 6th of March 2023 at 3pm local time.

Departed Djibouti towards Suakin, Sudan on the 10th of March 2023 9am local time.

[Details of their MSCHOA Reporting.](#)

After leaving the IRTC at point A (11°54.095'N 45°0.010'E) we more or less aimed for waypoint 11°46.350'N 43°8.499'E north of Iles Moucha and followed the recommended track on Navionics (purple line) from there.

Upon approach to Djibouti, the Djibouti Navy will call on VHF16 to ask for boat and crew details. Once anchored, you'll probably get a visit from the coast guard for a quick check. It's not a real inspection. They just look inside, need to see some paperwork and take a picture. This takes maybe 10 minutes.

Anchorage: Anchored in 7m mud with good holding. Position: 11°35.962' N 43°07.842' E

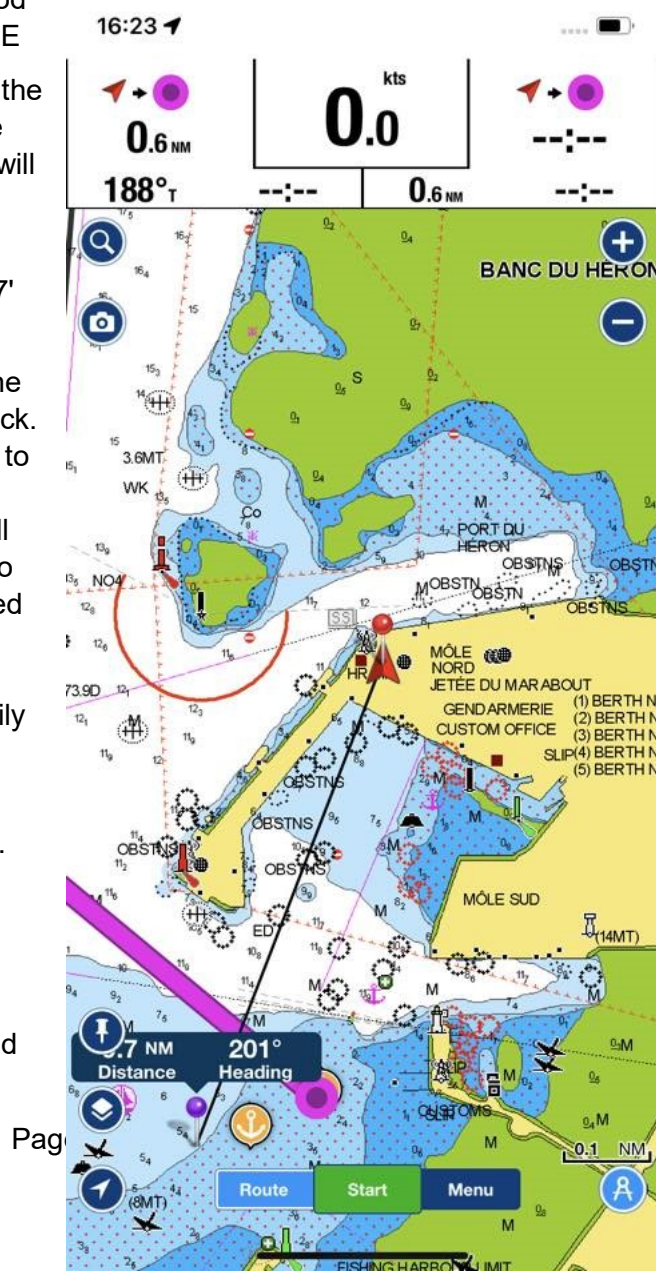
There is plenty of space. Just be careful of the wrecks on the south side of the area (some are partially above the water). Local boats will sometimes race through the anchorage at high speed.

Dinghy access & Fee: Position 11°35.717' N 43°7.976' E

When entering the small harbour keep to the port side and continue all the way to the back. You can tie up on the long pontoon closest to shore. You will be approached by several guys that want to watch your dinghy. They'll try to charge \$5,- or \$10,- every time you go ashore. We agreed with one of them (named Pashir and smelling of alcohol really badly) \$50 for one week access to the dock. Probably still too much, but it saves you daily price negotiations.

ATM/Local currency: There are two ATM machines in the local Bawadi Mall close by. It's a 5 minute walk. (11.5913775, 43.1327326 on Google maps)

Groceries: We only visited the Geant supermarket in the mall because we didn't need much. They have everything you could



wish for (except alcohol) but most of it is expensive. You can pay cash or card.

Apparently the casino supermarket that's about 4km from the dinghy dock sells alcohol but we didn't go there.

Sim card/internet: In the shopping mall just past the Geant Supermarket and close to the ATM you will find a phone shop where you can buy a sim card. You can choose plans like 5Gb (costs about \$6 USD) valid for 3 days or 12Gb (costs about \$12 USD) for a week. The people in the shop will help you to activate the sim. You need to bring your passport in order to be able to buy a sim card.

If you run out of data you can buy a top up card at the supermarket. Go back to the people in the phone shop and they will help you to activate the additional plan.

Internet works okay but not great and Facebook for example doesn't work without a VPN connection. WhatsApp does work normal but sometimes is very slow.

Laundry: Be aware! If you have laundry done via the agent you will be charged an insane amount of money. I asked for a quote and apparently the company the agent uses charges per piece.

One pair of trousers will cost you about \$2.50 USD. A whole bag of laundry will easily result in a \$50 or more bill.

We didn't bother to look for another laundromat (you probably will have to take a taxi for that) and did our laundry by hand.

Water: You can get water at the dinghy pontoon to fill up jerry cans. The boys will try to charge you for it, but don't pay because it is for free.

If they make a problem out of it ask for **Mr. Mohamed Ewado**. He seems to have some kind of authority and made sure we could get as much water as we needed for free.

The quality is not very good. We tested it at 950ppm (unfiltered).

You can buy drinking water in the mall but in one of the small shops at the harbour, where you park the dinghy, you can also buy 6-packs of 1,5L bottles so you don't have to walk very far with it.

Garbage: You can get rid of your garbage at the dinghy pontoon. One of the guys on the pontoon will take your bag(s) and bring them to a bin. They didn't ask money every time but we gave them some coins (\$1 / \$2). They will always ask for more but if you say it is enough they will stop asking and accept what they get.

Continuing to the Red Sea:

We would strongly advise to wait for winds to calm down in Bab el Mandeb before leaving Djibouti. Often winds average 25+ kts gusting 40+kts in this area. We went through with 15-20kts from behind which was fine. The waves were bigger than expected with these winds so I can imagine conditions can get very rough here when the winds pick up. We stayed on the west side just outside the shipping lane and followed the westerly route up (south of Hanish islands).

Just be careful close to the Muhabakka islands 13°22.644'N 42°34.859'E.

Sea You–March 2022: If you are on a stopover in Djibouti and want to take an excursion to Lake Assal, we recommend Momo Rayed

Tel + 253 77636317 or mohamedrayed@hotmail.fr

Price from 5 people: 11000 Fdj transport, guide and meal

Reference : French army use these services . He is very friendly and give a lot of details on the road.

Aurelia – January 2022: SV Aurelia recently stopped in Djibouti on its way to the Med. Here is some information which might be useful for those who will follow us.

It is good to have an agent upfront to give all the necessary information and a ETA as soon as possible. We used [Ahssan Phoenix Mohamed](#) (found on FB under that name).

On arrival contact port control / coast guard and give them the name and phone# of your agent.

In our case we had 3 boats around us on arrival and it was at the beginning difficult to understand who is working with our agent. Only talk to your agent and refer to him if others want something from you.

Choose an anchorage a bit westerly from the marina to avoid to be asked to move your boat and to avoid the swell from in-/outcoming boats. Our final position was 11° 35.944' N 043° 07.827' E

SIM cards and cash (also \$) are available at Bawadi Mall nearby. Liquor store and gas station are located north in the port area.

Clarify costs/prices of services upfront. I know this is normal but somehow it was difficult for me to get this information upfront.

It seems to be possible to clear in on Friday/Saturday too but for us it was a bit difficult. Arrival between Sunday and Wednesday might be easier.

Mai Tai – December 2021: We saw a few ships as we approached Djibouti in the early hours of the morning and we dropped anchor in the harbour around 0900hrs.

We had been in touch with an agent named Ahssan, who arranged for us to get our PCR tests done. With a negative result we will then be allowed to leave the boat. We already had our E visas which we had applied for a couple of months ago costing \$US 30 each.

After 4 days at anchor here and armed with our negative PCR results and e-visas, we went to check in with Immigration for official entry into the country. We couldn't believe it when we were told that E Visas are only valid at airports, and not for boats arriving by sea!!!! We had specifically mentioned on the application that we were arriving by sailing yacht and therefore had no hotel address to fill in on the form. Lane has an infinite amount of patience, but also an equal amount of stubbornness, all done with a smile, of course.

But there was nothing we could do or say, and we had to pay for another visa, issued here at the office. This seems to be the name of the game in this part of the world.

We weren't intending on staying long in Djibouti. After our 7-day passage from Port Salalah, we just needed to top up our Diesel and replenish our fresh food ready for the Red Sea passage. We have been forewarned that we could be in very remote anchorages, waiting for days or

weeks at a time, for the right weather, to continue, so we needed plenty of provisions. At this time of the year strong northerlies blow almost all the time, and you really can't beat into them because of the big nasty steep seas these winds generate. We were advised to be prepared to just sit it out and wait. Patience, patience.

Because of the strategic position of Djibouti at the western tip of the Gulf of Aden, it was interesting to see the numbers of international war ships pulling in here, using this as their base to help patrol for pirates in this region.

Djibouti was a French colony from 1862 until their independence in 1977, which explains why the main languages spoken here are French and Arabic. Also finding a French "Geant" supermarket within walking distance from our anchorage was a bonus. I was able to stock up on more delicious cheeses and meats and spices.

While at anchor in the Port area, we were entertained by the parade of boats coming and going, fishing boats and tourist boats taking guests out to a local island to dive on the reefs there, although there were very few foreign tourists at this time. There was one other cruising yacht here with whom we were hoping to buddy boat with up the Red Sea, but they decided to leave and head straight through, without stopping along the way. What a shame.

Messenger – Early Sep 2020: We are enjoying the anchorages of Djibouti. We wanted to let everyone know that Djibouti has more to offer than an ugly port area. We are anchored in a nice anchorage called Le Sable Blanc, just 2 miles east of Tadjoura village (approx 15 nm NW of the main port).

Tadjoura Village: 11° 47.04' N / 042° 52.95' E (med moored to quay, posn approx)

Le Sable Blanc: 11° 46.72' N / 042° 55.44' E (anchored in bay, posn approx)

We were able to do a Coronavirus test 2 months ago, a week after our arrival (because it was very complicated to get it organised), and so we got a 3 month visa for 40 US dollars. The cruising permit was for free. When you have the time it's worth to cruise around a bit and explore the country.

Bird of Passage – Feb 2020: The anchorage in Djibuti has good holding and is well protected from wind and sea. The rest of the services offered by the harbour are not so good but the city has good shops and a western style mall close to the harbour. We were soon approached by an "Agent", Mohammed Ali, who offered his services. He would pick us up in his boat and take us to the nearby fishing harbour where he had his car and could then take us to any place in the city we wanted. This sounded good, compared to the alternative which is much more complicated. More on that later.

First he took us to the Immigration office where we got a 30 day visa for 30 USD each, plus had to pay 20 USD to the immigration officer and 20 USD to his friend. He called it a souvenir. Then he called for the "quarantine officer" who came aboard dressed in protective clothing, gloves and facemask. He charged us 50USD (after tough negotiation) for not having proof of Yellow fever vaccination for all crew members.

For three days Mohamed Ali was very helpful and we got SIM-cards, lots of shopping (including beer and wine) and a cruising permit to make it possible to see more of the country. We had read about "Lake Ghoubet" and wanted to cruise there for a few days. After our trip to Lake Ghoubet we would come back to Djibouti harbour and he would then help us with laundry, water

and diesel. The price for his services was 350 USD. Much money but I have seen worse and it included everything for one week except for the diesel and the visa. Good so far, but now we wanted to see Lake Ghoubet.

Lake Ghoubet or Ghoubbet al-Kharab in arabic (Gulf of the Demons), has a narrow entrance with strong tidal currents but once you're in, the sea is calmer. Surrounded by old volcanoes and 200 meters deep this "lake" has an unusual fauna that has attracted scientists for a long time. Jacques Cousteau, for example, was here in the 50's to watch Whale Sharks but he found more.

In Lake Ghoubet, close to Devils Island, Cousteau discovered a terrible maritime creature and insisted it never be revealed to humanity. Since then, locals and visitors have been telling frightful stories about the Island of the Devil. Locals say that the bay is occupied by the "Sheytan", the devil, and that it is a forbidden place to go, especially during sunsets or at night.



Unfortunately we could not find a comfortable anchorage anywhere near Devils Island. The easterly sea breeze blew with 20+ knots and the swell found it's way around everywhere. Maybe Sheytan didn't like us. So, we left the island and motored across the lake to Fare du Ghoubet, number 2 on the map image.

Here we found a calm and very beautiful place to stop for the night. High volcanic mountains around us, calm clear water and coral below.

And on one of the hills around us, one of our crew found a wreck of a small airplane that crashed more than 20 years ago, also mentioned on page 84-85 in the Red Sea Pilot, ISBN 0 85288 554 7.

Next day we moved to Baie de l'Etoile, number 3 on the map. Protected from swell but more windy than Fare du Ghoubet. Here I found a whole beach covered with the remains of dead old trees. Made a beautiful impression. Like a grave yard.

After three days we returned to Djibouti city and called Mohamed Ali to make plans for diesel, water, laundry and check out. We wanted to leave as soon as possible because the winds would now be favourable to enter the Red Sea. He said he would pick us up at ten o'clock, next morning. And that was the last we heard from him. We never saw him again. Word said that he had a conflict with the fishing harbour and was not allowed to use it anymore. I now had to reorganize everything that needed to be done. This would take more time and money.

First thing I did was to take the dinghy into the harbour and look up Mr. Aden, the port captain. I explained the problem to him and he advised me to get water myself from Zam-Zam water company. I went there with a taxi and met the manager who promised to deliver water the next

day. Back in the boat I managed to get hold of a new agent who delivered diesel the same day to a cost of 2 USD/liter!

The next day we would get water from Zam-Zam and then check out and be on our way to the Red Sea, we hoped, but no. Zam-Zam never showed up and did not answer the telephone. So, a new visit to the Port Captain and he then offered us 800 liters of water good for washing but not for drinking. We could buy mineral water in plastic bottles from the shop in the harbour.

Said and done, the next morning we took 800 liters of his bad water and bought 75 liters of expensive mineral water in the shop. Then we paid for our anchorage and checked out with Immigration. Finally free to leave Djibouti.

I think we were lucky to get help from the Port Captain. Our agent Muhamed Ali and Zam-Zam water company were not to trust and cost us a lot of extra time and money. And the laundry we had to do on board in bad quality water.

Gaviota – Late Feb 2020: You DO NOT need an Agent to clear in - be warned the 'Agent' Ali or his men will come to the boat and tell you that you do! If you fall for this, their Agency charge is 350\$US when to check in on your own will cost you 30\$ US per person for a 30 day Visa, plus an anchoring fee of 15\$US for the first 3 days at anchor in the Port then 10\$US for every 3 days after (this is paid on departure).

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Try and ensure you have the correct money for Immigration 30\$US per person - we didn't and it was suggested the change was to be their 'gift' - we didn't argue! You can report officials for corruption! Remember to ask Immigration for a Port Pass to get you out of the Port Gates though it is more convenient from the anchorage to dinghy over to the Port du Peche as it is next to the Shopping Mall.

There's a lot of people out to fleece you here, if you decide to use Ali for fuel he will charge you 10,000DJF (approx 50\$US) for taking you to the fuel station where you pay for the fuel yourself 198DJF (just over 1US\$ per litre), then bringing you and fuel back to the boat, one of his men came with the fuel and did not want to help put it into the tanks (probably another 10,000DJF for that service!) though in the end he did.

We were hoping to buy a replacement Alternator here and went with Ali, who does know everyone here, but didn't find one (this cost us another 10,000DJF - 50US \$). If you leave your dinghy on Ali's dock (he has laid claim to the first dock on the left as you enter the Port du Peche - pink + yellow striped building (fisherman's harbour near the anchorage) it will cost you 5\$US regardless of how long you are.

Prices in Djibouti are crazy and the poverty is very sad to see. The big Mall near the Port du Peche sells a lot of luxury items at highly inflated prices, we found a supermarket called Casino (taxi ride 1000DJF 5US\$) which sold wines and spirits along with upmarket produce - prices to match. I suggest unless you have a large bank balance and can blank out the extreme poverty and inequality here or need a fix of excellent expensive French wines and cheeses or like us need fuel - avoid stopping here!

On a good note, most of the local people we came across were extremely helpful and delighted to talk to visitors - a little French helps but many spoke a little English, taxis are pretty cheap and 1000 DJF (5US\$) gets you most places in the Town, SIM cards for 4GB internet are available from Djibouti Telecom for 1,000DJF (5US\$) which includes 5GB data for 3 days which can then be topped up at any kiosk for 500DJF (2.50US\$) for another 5GB for 3 days.

Schiron – Feb 2020: Be careful with the so called „Agent“ Mohamed Ali. He charges a ridiculous amount of money (350\$) for his service. His service is to tell you that you are not allowed to do anything by yourself, so he can help with clearance or bring you to shore and drive you to the supermarket or wherever. You don't need an agent for clearance and if you go to to shore by yourself and take a normal taxi it will be way cheaper than paying Mohamed 350\$.

Our case was, that he drove us with his boat to do the clearance. We were thankful and wanted to give him 20\$, which is a fair amount of money, for a not so long Dinghi ride and half an hour time, but he refused. Besides that we didn't use his „Service“ at all. We cleared out by ourselves.

He came, after we cleared out, to our boat and demanded his agency fee. Normal price 350\$. Because we didn't use him much, he wanted 200\$ from us.

We offered him again the 20\$. He denied, called the Harbour Master and gave us the phone. Harbour Master said, he is not allowed to charge us the money.

If you think, you need an agent, make sure, you talk about prices and what is included in the service beforehand. But basically you don't need him.

He tried to intimidate and threaten us afterwards.

The Harbour Master/ Capitainerie is a very good guy. Ask him if you need any information.

Someone Else Commented: This agent is best used if you stay for a longer time and need a lot of help. In that case you will actually save money. If you walk to the mall (and back with all your bags) and really want to save money by doing a lot of work yourself, don't use Mohamed. We used him to fix Checking in, SIM-cards, Cruising permit to Lac Ghoubet and numerous trips to the mall and other places and we are not finished yet. So, we think it was quite a good bargain.

Ocean Bird – Feb 2020: We arrived two days ago in Djibouti after a very good passage from Galle. We felt very safe with Chinese navy war ship, Japanese aircraft, UKMTO calling us on VHF and sat phone.

Good provisioning here and a BRICO center very well stocked.

Five boats are here now. We have Mohamed as agent and he was very professional and helpful.

Joanna – Feb 2020: SV Joana has made a safe 16 day 2020nm passage from Kochi to Djibouti. There was no sign of pirates, but we did see a few fishing boats and several coalition warships, surveillance aircraft and helicopters. We reported to UKMTO twice daily by email. We received VHF radio calls from aircraft and warships. We never heard anything bad on the radio. We caught two fish!

Unfortunately, we arrived in Djibouti on Friday morning, the worst time to arrive. Although we did clear in, their weekend is Friday and Saturday. A few points to note about Djibouti (that I've not seen anyone comment on before) if you're planning to come here:

1. There is NO Customs, it is a duty free country.(we have a new wind instrument coming in by DHL)
2. Getting a SIM card and internet service is bureaucratic, but manageable.
3. The anchorage water IS clean enough to swim in, and run the water maker.
4. You HAVE to make your clearances at the port (Port Captain, Immigration and maybe quarantine) and it is best to do it at high tide (although still a BUGGER).
5. Diesel is \$1.11 USD at the service station.

The jib Sunbrella UV strip started to fall off (rotten threads) so we took that in to an upholstery guy (modest sailmaker) to restitch it (with our Sunbrella and our thread). Again, this is a result of high UV, high temperatures and high humidity of India. In retrospect, we should have taken down the jib and staysail, and we considered it at the time, but never sourced a good location to store them. But the guy eventually did nothing, so after 7 days – we took it back. Together with Steve and Liz on Liberte, Diane and Mariona made the necessary repairs. Diane used her own sewing machine as well as re-stitching a lot of the sunbrella strip on by hand. We rented an office space in the “marina” for \$100 USD (for a day) and went at it.

Getting Internet is a hassle here in Djibouti, you have to visit the national Telecom company – and the network is “so-so”. On the other hand, none of the malls or restaurants offered any wifi either, or at least none that we could find. We bought three SIM cards and the only real issue has been that we initially we couldn't “hotspot” our iPhones, but another cruiser showed us how to change the ATN settings in our devices and then we were OK.

We had a replacement Raymarine ST60 wind instrument shipped in from Canada via DHL. The experience of extracting this package from Djibouti airport customs was entirely unpleasant, but at least I got the package 7 days after it was shipped from Canada. Sadly, it didn't solve our problem. We will continue sailing without the utility of a wind direction or speed instrument.

In the end, we never took the Djibouti tour, it was just too expensive at \$400 USD. Also,

All told, we stayed 10 days in Djibouti. It's a shame really because we ended up leaving with a bad impression. It seems there are lots of angry people shouting at each other. It's not a culture that I can appreciate.

When checking in, I noticed the tidal range made using the wall at Customs a bit of a challenge, so I made sure to check the tides with TidesChart.com before going back there.

Since our weather window was vanishing quickly, we sailed on in the morning of 17 February, bound for Massawa Eritrea.

Sisiutl – December 2019: Fuel is \$1.09 /L Djibouti and \$.50/L in Suakin.

Sisiutl – FB Dec 2019: In response to question from someone else about eVisas on arriving Djibouti: "I'm looking back though Anthem's very helpful report of Djibouti in Oct 2019. You mention 30 day visas for \$30, so it appears you got them on arrival. However looking at the FAQs on the Djibouti eVisa website <http://evisa.gouv.dj> , it states that "no visas will be issued at the airport or any other border points as of 1 May 2018". It appears there is some flexibility on this. Have any cruisers successfully used the eVisa process to clear into Djibouti?"

Visa on arrival issued by the Port Captain are quite routine and no hassle at all. We didn't have eVisas, so don't know if that helps or hurts. The entire process took 30 minutes here and nothing complicated about it.

As an aside I know some have enjoyed Djibouti but I haven't seen ANYTHING worth making a stop here. There are nice supermarkets if you need more provisions for the Red Sea. Some divers have reported interesting dives. For us there was nothing worth putting up with the fly's and mosquito's.

Interesting side note. For a country that has a Yellow Fever problem I was amazed to not find any mosquito repellent. And fuel is \$1.09 /L Djibouti and \$.50/L in Suakin.

If you do come to Djibouti the Coast Guard will first come to your boat to complete initial formalities. Very likely an agent will accompany them. Refuse his services. An agent is NOT needed in Djibouti. Just follow the instructions posted elsewhere on our Facebook page.

Anthem – FB Nov 2019: SV Anthem stopped in Djibouti on her way North into the Red Sea, in October 2019.

We are very happy to have received permission to cruise Djibouti waters (they are keen to promote the area and have more boats visit) and were pleasantly surprised with what we found. Exploring the Gulf of Tadjourah and Ghoubet Al Khareb is something we would definitely recommend to other cruisers. This is our experience of the Country and the cruising.

Clearance Procedures: NO need of agent. A translator is useful if you don't speak French or Arabic.

Keep in mind that being a Muslim country, the weekend is on Friday and Saturday (all major offices, government and business are closed).

As you approach the port, call port control in VHF16. We were actually called prior to making our planned call so they saw us coming. As you arrive at the anchorage (at the so called "yacht club" area, approx. 11°36N, 043°07E), a local police boat will come to check on you, usual formalities, and eventually tell you where to anchor.

The Harbor Master office (ask for Capitainerie du port) and the Immigration office are on the extreme north west side of the big port, near the coal terminal. Dock your dinghy at the concrete wall. It can be a bit difficult to find a suitable place to call a dingy home within the port while you are onshore. But we felt the entire area was "safe" to leave the dingy all day. Port fee is currently USD 15 for the first 3 days, then USD 10 every 3 days you stay at anchor in the port. You pay it when checking out.

Both the Harbor Master Aden (phone +25377819639) and his assistant Ahmed Farad Ali are very professional, welcoming and helpful people, they speak good English so whatever you need, ask to them first.

Immigration visa costs USD 30 per person for 1 month. You will get also a pass to access the port areas. Easy.

The port anchorage has extremely good holding and is well protected. The entire port area and the city are very safe. These things make Djibouti a good place to leave the boat for touring the country inland.

Money: Local currency is the Djiboutian Frank (DJF) but some officers accept USD as well.

In town there are several banks and ATMs. It is also possible and easy to change USD into DJF via the local female money changers situated outside the port front gate and in and round the city market area. As at Oct 2019 US\$1 was 175 DJF at the port gate and 177 DJF in town. It is safe to change money on the street.

Cell and Internet: Djibouti Telecom is the only phone carrier and you need to attend their office in town with your passport to purchase a SIM card. Once you have a SIM you can buy credit at any local shop and purchase a range of bundles. Internet is quite expensive (USD 15 to get 7 GB but only lasts for 7 days) but the connection is very good in town and quite good at several anchorages as well.

Provisioning: Outside the port gate several taxis are always available to drive you around. Fee for a one-way ride from the port to the town center (or supermarket) is between 500 to 1000 DJF (approx. USD 5).

In the supermarkets it is possible to find a vast range of food products (all imported and not cheap) but it is nice to stock up on things you may not have seen for a while. It's easy (we enjoy local markets) to walk into the local market in town (at Place Rimbaud – read “Rambò”) and purchase a vast range of good quality fresh fruits and vegetables at local prices with most imported from Ethiopia. Several little shops sell a bit of everything, especially local traditional spices and goods, and worth a visit.

Fuel is possible. It is relatively expensive and complicated if you want to come along side (speak to Aden as per above) to take it on via a hose. Jerry cans, is the usual shuffle to fuel stations.

Cruising Permit: To sail in Djibouti waters a cruising permit is required. This can be obtained from Mr Ali Mirah Chehem Daoud (Director of the Affaires Maritimes) at his office just outside the port gate (ask for tourism office), on the right side, first floor. Ali Mirah is very welcoming, professional, speaks very good English and he will provide you with the permit and other information you need to cruise.

Anchorages: Commonly around the Gulf of Tadjourah and inside Ghoubet Al Khareb (Lake Ghoubet), anchorages can be deep. Many are in about 20-25 m depth. The charts are fairly accurate geographically but not depth wise. Bottom conditions vary between sandy bottom, rock and mud.

The entry to Lake Ghoubet (Petite Pass) is narrow but deep and flushed with strong tidal currents that can reach up to 7 kn. Whirlpools make for an interesting phenomena.

We dove the Petit Pass (Huge Grouper and lots of fish) and anchored at 11°33.355N 042°40.233E.

Our favorite anchorage in Lake Ghoubet was in the East corner of Fare du Ghoubet bay 11°29.158N 042°41.491E, which is a bit like a gorge with volcanic walls, peaceful and stunning surrounding.

We also anchored west of Guinni Koma Island near a Chinese salt port. 11°32.305N 042°31.902E. From here it is a short dingy ride to land on a small safe beach called "Plage du Ghoubet". We negotiated a ride over to the salt lake called "Assal", where salt is mined.

Another anchorage at 11°34.537N 042°31.485E provides shallower good holding and access to the bay called Baie Du Lac Sal. Here is where the Rift Valley depression meets the ocean. Many past lava flows are present onshore.

At 11°35.127N 042°32.083E we dove the "crack" of the Rift Valley (where you can see underwater the separation of the Africa plate from the Somali plate) and snorkeled with a Whale Shark. The whale sharks visit Djibouti from November till February and it is a great place to see them.

Once you get away from the big commercial port of Djibouti the cruising is extremely peaceful and quiet, with only small local fishing boats around. Djibouti is working hard to protect their natural environment and marine resources (trawlers and industrial fishing boats are forbidden) and the coast guard patrols the waters of the entire gulf. The result is very healthy coral reefs with a lot of fish and other wildlife. For diving, visibility is variable (from fair to good) with water temperature around 32°C.

On land Djibouti is also a paradise for geologists and volcano lovers being surrounded by volcano cones and lava flows with some very unique features. These include the junction (or it's better to say the separation) of three tectonic plates (African, Somali and Arabian) and the commencement of the Rift Valley. Lake Assal is the deepest depression on the Africa continent, being 153 m below the sea level. The shallow areas of the lake are covered by salt that has been harvested for centuries and traded all around Africa and the Middle East.

Hot springs flow into pools of thermal water in which you can swim.

Djibouti is generally a hot and hard rocky desert (with rainfalls few and far between) but the people are very friendly, polite and discrete. It is very safe to walk anywhere at anytime of the day or night. It is very easy to meet locals and have interesting chats to share mutual life experiences.

If you are sailing this way, take some time to visit and explore Djibouti.

Paseafique – June 2019: Djibouti was a surprise given the previous reports particularly about how dirty it is reputed to be. The port authority area is dirty as it is a coal shipping dock but otherwise it is like other East African places. There is an excellent supermarket in a mall within walking distance and a safe dinghy dock. Alcohol was expensive as was internet data. Obtaining a SIM card was time consuming.

FB Discussion – Mar 2019: Can you please clarify the situation regarding Djibouti visas as we are not sure whether you can get them on arrival any more.

A1: We went to Djibouti in February this year and we get a visa for \$30us for 1 month very easy, but otherwise the stop is not interesting. Very complicated with the people who want to take care of the dinghy--too long trip for such a little interest. We were very disappointed and stayed only 3 days.

A2: Yes you can get them on arrival. We paid 60 dollars for 2 people. (19-2-2019).

A3: Regarding your dinghy--look for the tall, quiet man on a dhow near the dinghy dock. Discreetly give him \$10, and he will shoo away the others and make your stay pleasant.

Walk along the road with the Somali refugee food shops, colour and humour.

Be the first to ride the new electric train from Djoubhti to Addis Abba and tell us.

Walk around the old town in the evening, talk to the colourful women money changers on the corners, they will change any currencies. Get badgered by urchins, and dodge the stones thrown at them by their embarrassed adults. Chat to the machine gun toting guards at the excellent supermarkets. Be surprised by the perfect English of the Japanese engineer in the good hardware store. Admire the handless man having tea at the fishermen's wharf near the dinghy dock. Don't forget its baguette not bread. Chew some kat, everyone else is.

A4: It was very interesting in that it was one of the worst places I've ever been. I don't regret going at all, but it's not a welcoming city. We didn't have a shore pass but walked past security anyway. Luckily I was adopted by a friendly man at the port called Rambo, who guided me around on my errands and was happy with a bundle of qat for his company. I think travelling outside of the city would be worthwhile, especially for the geology

Red Sea FB Group - March 2019: I am in Djibouti right now had to pay \$30 USD for immigration and it will be about the same amount for the harbour master (depends on the length of your stay). I did not use an agent.

Kings Legend – March 2018: made another fuel stop in Djibouti. We used Mossi (Moustique) who sorted us out and paid \$1.10/litre and \$100 on top to bring it aboard doing a couple runs with our jerrycans.

The paperwork in Djibouti was very easy and fast, because we only stayed 1 day.

9 Eritrea



Noonsite – January 2020 – Eritrea Overview: The two ports of entry, Massawa and Assab are located at either end of the country – Massawa in the south and Assab in the north. Note however that Assab is closed to sailing yachts, except in emergencies, so Massawa is the only clearance port available to recreational vessels at this time.

It used to be easy to clear in at one, cruise the coast and then clear out at the other, however it appears that cruising permits are difficult to get hold of in 2019.

There are restricted ports and areas and these should be confirmed with the authorities when clearing into Eritrea. For example, Harmil is a military outpost and should not be visited by yachts. It is recommended not to venture too close to the coast where there are military installations.

There is a lack of navigation aids along the Eritrean coast so night sailing close to shore is not recommended.

ARRIVAL FORMALITIES

Yachts have reported stopping in remote anchorages on the way to Massawa before clearing-in without experiencing problems, even when questioned by the Eritrea Coastguard (for example Aucan (15 30.15N 040 48.79E) and Port Smyth (15 32.08N 039 59.60E)).

Sensitive areas, such as those near the border with Sudan, Djibouti and Ethiopia, and military areas, should be avoided.

Important Note: Assab is closed to sailing yachts and only available in case of emergencies.

General Process:

The authorities should be contacted by radio before approaching any port.

No agent is needed.

Port Control will most likely direct you to go alongside a commercial dock, so prepare your fenders and hull protection accordingly as these are normally encrusted with barnacles and designed for large ships.

It is not permitted to anchor before completing formalities ashore.

Checks will be made by Customs, Quarantine and Immigration and paperwork completed. It is necessary to report to the Port Authority and Immigration, even if you already have a visa. You will need copies of crew lists and your "Nil List" declaration.

A 48-hour shore pass for each crew member will be issued by the Port Authority when you first check-in and checked at the port gate on entry and exit.

No visa is required for the first 48 hours. If you wish to stay longer you must apply for a visa (see Immigration for more details).

Domestic Cruising:

Entry formalities have to be completed again at each port of entry even if clearance procedures have already been conducted.

A sailing permit to cruise the Eritrean coast will be issued on departure. There are a number of ports/areas that must be avoided (see restrictions for details).

CLEARING OUT

You cannot depart before 0700 hours or after 1800 hours.

You will need to visit Immigration with an up-to-date crew list and complete an exit immigration card, cancel your visa and shore pass. You will also have to fill in and sign a declaration stating you have no stowaways on-board.

Your boat is then checked by officials, who will issue a sailing permit which allows you to sail along the rest of the Eritrean coast. It does not, however, allow you to go to the Dhalak Islands (at Massawa).

You are then required to leave immediately.

Travel During the Hajj (8th to 12th (or in some cases 13th) of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar, which fell in August in 2019). Massawa and Asmara are major ports for Muslim pilgrims traveling for the Hajj. During this time of year, there will be increased traffic in and around the ports.

Immigration Procedure:

A 48-hour shore pass will be issued upon arrival. For longer stays or travel inland, a visa is required.

It is necessary to report to the Port Authority and Immigration, even if you already have a visa.

Nationals of Kenya and Uganda may enter visa-free and nationals of Sudan may obtain a visa on arrival.

The 30-day visa can now be obtained in Massawa, for US\$50 per person. First, go to the immigration office in the Port area. Here you must fill in an entry card which the officials will stamp. Take this, your passport, 2 passport photos and your shore pass to the Immigration office outside the port gate. You will have to fill in another form before they can issue you the visa. Processing of visas is slow as it is done by computer and power cuts are frequent, so may take a few hours. It is unknown how this visa is obtained in Assad.

Visa in advance: These are best-secured through an Eritrean consulate or embassy, but some visitors have reported success with a “pre-arranged” visa (essentially the same as a visa on arrival, but with advanced notice given to authorities). Eritrean Embassies have websites where a visa application can be downloaded. When you apply for a visa to Eritrea, you must do it at an Eritrean diplomatic mission in – or accredited to – the country where you are a citizen and nowhere else. If there is no Eritrean Embassy or other mission in your country, contact your foreign office/ministry to verify the nearest accredited Eritrean mission.

For a tourist visa, you need to submit specific information about when and at what port you will arrive and depart. You may need to assure the authorities that all aboard will be departing on the same yacht. If exchanging crew or leaving via an airport, the onward ticket must be shown at check-in.

Archaeological Site Permit:

To visit any of the archaeological sites of Eritrea, you'll need to get a special permit (i.e., the Travel Permit for Foreigners) from the Ministry of Tourism – Tourism Service Centre on Harnet Avenue in Asmara.

9.1 Warning!

December 2022 – Passage through Inner Reef: Hello, my experience in Eritrea in December 2022 may be relevant. I sailed southward using the inner passage in December 22, on account of the sea state in the middle of the Red Sea. The Coast Guard (three dudes without uniforms on a skiff with machine guns) visited within 30 minutes of entering territorial waters, and we

came to an agreement in Arabic – they said we were fine as long as we did not approach close enough to shore to suggest an intention to anchor.

We were stopped subsequently three times and each time were able to explain our intentions (again in Arabic, no English), without any problems – except, in one instance, a demand for a modest €50 bribe. About 25 miles out from Assab, a more formal outfit stopped us and took our passports for a couple of hours, only to return and give us permission to proceed.

Here's where things went south: one of my crewmembers asked if we could refuel in Assab (very frustrating and not necessary). They then insisted on guiding us to the main port of Assab, where a very professional group of Navy officers required us to wait until they could do proper background checks. They were polite and helpful, even bringing us the country's famously fantastic beer. But we were stuck for 48 hours. They did facilitate refueling.

My sense is that as long as you stay well away from the coast, make your intentions clear, and do not attempt to anchor, the inner passage should be unproblematic. But you should make time for delays. Also, be aware that the British, American, and Swedish embassies/consular authorities were 100% useless, saying they had no contacts with the government. Only the Russian Embassy was helpful. Good luck!

Noonsite – Mid 2020: Murat Reis (a Lagoon 450) under Turkish flag, on the last leg of their circumnavigation back to Turkey were held for over a month by Eritrean authorities..

As they approached Eritrea looking for refuge due to a severe storm, they informed the Turkish embassy in Eritrea that they needed to stop and were given approval to enter Massawa.

Text messages from the crew to their families on 25 April indicated that on entry “soldiers” boarded the catamaran and told the crew their yacht was being redirected to to Penisula di Buri Island, 29 miles from Massawa. Their phones were taken away.

They were held for a number of weeks. It took the president of Turkey getting involved to get them released.

There was never a full report released about what happened.

Xamala - March 2020: 27 March - we are in Eritrean waters, so tells us the crew on the massive white Dhow that nearly rammed Xamala. I'm still in shock and ask them to give us distance and talk on the radio rather than across the boats. We explain our situation and the need to anchor at one of their islands to wait for the strong northerly winds to stop. We promise to not go on land and they reluctantly give us an ok. We anchor at Adjuz Island, position 15°13 N 40°13.8 E.

31 March - left before dawn for Harat Island, there is a lot of activity on a large Dhow anchored nearby, we see them turn on deck lights and launch a fast dinghy, it reaches the last boat of our convoy, Randivag is given orders to stop, they tell the dinghy crew that the boats are going to Egypt.

In our next anchorage at Harat Island we are being watched by a Dhow anchored in the distance. A small boat comes past and takes photos of us and the boats. They identify themselves as a research crew, we believe it is still the navy watching us. The good news for the Xamala crew is that all our navigation equipment is now working. We have depth sounder,

wind instrument, and our AIS working. We can see the other boats on our screen. We are forever grateful for the help we received from our fellow cruisers.

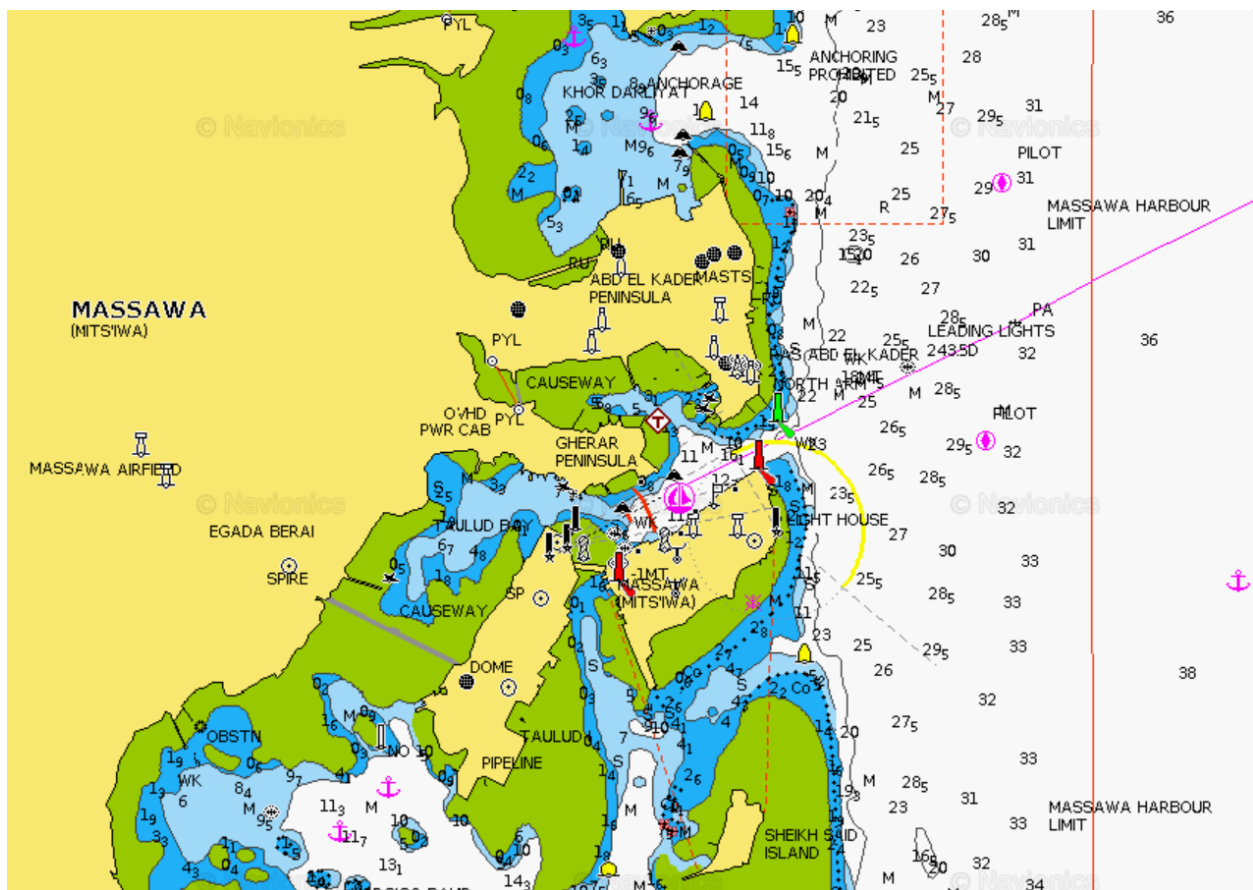
A Turkish catamaran was one day behind us. In the area of Massawa they were boarded and detained for three months by the Eritrean Navy. Their release was negotiated by the Turkish foreign minister and happened late June.

9.2 Massawa

Noonsite – January 2020: Massawa is the largest natural deep water harbor on the Red Sea. Within it lies the Dhalak Archipelago, a group of hundreds of islands and islets, which is a protected Marine Park. This area offers beautiful winter cruising, however, unfortunately, the islands are “out of bounds” currently to foreign yachts.

An interesting side trip for those stopping in Massawa is to the inland capital of Asmara.

Repair facilities are limited, although there are small boatyards and workshops that will be able to carry out simple repairs.



Massawa Harbour

The sailboat in the Navionics chartlet above is located at 15-36.77 N / 39-28.54 E

Noonsite – December 2019: This is a commercial port and port of entry, well sheltered by linked islands. The old city contains a mixture of Italian, Egyptian and Ottoman architecture, reflecting the city's colorful history. A good stop to visit Asmara for the day (3-hour drive).

It is now possible to get diesel here, although does require some paperwork – see below for more details.

If going to Massawa in order to get permission to visit the nearby Dhalak Islands, the latest reports are that these islands are still “out of bounds” to foreign yachts (since 2013). The tourist office in Massawa is very helpful and it’s worth checking with them for the latest situation.

Entry during daylight is straightforward, but lights are missing in the approaches and there are many unlit hazards.

15° 36.91’N, 39° 28.98’E (port entrance)

General Clearance:: When you are near the entrance to the Port, call “Massawa Port Control” on VHF Channel 16 (and 13) and ask permission to enter. This may take several tries if they answer at all! Be patient.

They will direct you to go alongside one of the tug boat docks. Once alongside you will undergo Immigration, Customs and Quarantine checks. It is necessary to report to the Port Authority and Immigration, even if you already have a visa.

It is not permitted to anchor before completing formalities ashore. It is essential to have extra-large fenders as the quay walls are covered in sharp marine growth and the quay is exposed to side wind and swell.

No agent is needed. Clearance is reported to be quick and free. Immigration will issue a 48-hour shore pass – beyond which a visa must be obtained.

The Immigration office is situated in a green building, Customs just next to the port gate.

A one month visa costs US\$50 per person. To get a visa, go to the Immigration office in the port and fill in an entry card (similar to those used when arriving in a country by plane). This is then stamped and you must take it with your passport, two passport photos and your shore pass to the Immigration Office outside the port gate. Here you will fill in another form and spend a few hours waiting for them to issue the Visa.

If you wish to travel to Asmara, you require a travel permit. This you get from the Ministry of Tourism in Massawa “new” town at Edaga. You fill in the top part of this form and take it with a copy of your passport (showing the passport information pages and the Visa page) to “Security”, which is in the building with the blue balcony shutters across the road from the Total Fuel station. Here they will fill in the bottom part, stamp and date it. You then go back to the Ministry of Tourism who will also stamp it and you pay for the Permit (30 Nakfa). Get two copies of the completed form, give one to the Ministry of Tourism and take one back to “Security”. This whole process should take no more than two hours.

Departure Clearance: No matter if you are heading south or north the checkout is basically the same.

You cannot depart before 0700 hours or after 1800 hours. You go to the Immigration Office inside the port and take with you an up to date crew list. There they will fill in an exit immigration card and cancel your visa and shore pass. You will fill in and sign a declaration stating you have no stowaways on-board. Your boat is then checked by the officials (making sure you do not have any stowaways etc) and they issue a sailing permit which allows you to sail along the rest of the Eritrean coast. It does not, however, allow you to go to the Dahlak Islands. In theory,

another permit is needed for that but they no longer allow foreign vessels to go there. You are then required to leave immediately.

Dhalak Islands: These are currently “out of bounds” to foreign yachts and applications for permits will likely be denied. We have left details on how to apply for a permit below, should the situation change. Check with the tourist office on arrival.

The paperwork in order to visit the off-lying Dhalak Islands is complicated and expensive. The process is as follows:

First secure a travel permit for Asmara. Remember to take it with you to Asmara as it will be checked! For details on getting to Asmara see the transport section.

In Asmara go to the tourist department to get a travel permit for the Dhalak Islands. You must apply before 09:00 to get it by 16:30.

Back in Massawa, you must then go to the Ministry of Tourism to pay for the cruising permit (US\$50 + US\$20 per person – except the captain). A copy of the Dhalak cruising permit must then be given to the Navy office, valid for a maximum 10-day trip.

Docking: After formalities are completed, yachts must berth where indicated.

The anchorage is very sheltered and getting ashore is easy.

Main Quay: If mooring on the quay, be sure to use a side/breast anchor or come stern-to with plenty of scope. The quay is very exposed to side swell and wind and is an uncomfortable and at times a dangerous place to be.

Shore passes must be shown on leaving the port by the designated gate.

Berthing in the port continues to be free of charge.

The cost of diesel here is greatly inflated as it is only available with proof of local funds being exchanged at the official bank rate which is almost four times more expensive than the ‘street’ exchange rate.

A local man (Mike from the coffee shop near the port gate) can assist with repairs, laundry, deliveries of fuel and water as well as travel to Asmara. He is very charming, but be sure to check what commission he is charging.

Security: Beware of petty thieves boarding at night if at anchor.

Red Sea FB Group – Late 2021: We stopped in Massawa. They were kind to welcome us in the commercial port as I cried over the VHF about being very low on fresh water. But then it took 4 days to get diesel and some minor provisions....I had to call the Turkish consulate to speed up things. So if you have a schedule to follow I don't advise Eritrea.

They are very sensitive about Covid. It does not matter if you could show proof of vaccination or take PCR test. No one is allowed to leave the boat and go ashore. We are 3 onboard, 2 of us has double dose of Pfizer vaccination, one has not got any. After the doctors visit to the boat and checking temperature of each crew, they just clear you to stay in the port, in your boat with strict warning of not to step ashore.

The diesel is very high quality and I paid 1.1 usd. Provisions; in our case, cigarettes, olive oil, paper plates/cups, potatoes, spaghetti and bottled drinking water is ridiculously expensive. The potable water is supplied free by the port up to 3000 liters.

Joana – Late Feb 2020: Since our weather window was vanishing quickly, we sailed on in the morning of 17 February, bound for Massawa Eritrea. We had strong winds for most of it, but in the last 12 hours had to motor in, and this bird sat on our whisker pole for most of it, taking a break.

Massawa is a dirty, impoverished East African port “city”, important to the war-torn country of Eritrea. Here in a nutshell, is their history. They have been at odds with Ethiopia for hundreds of years. In the 1920's, Italy colonized the country and made big improvements to their infrastructure and sent nearly 100,000 Italian emigrants here in the 20's and 30's – to settle. You can easily see the Italian influence in the roads, bridges, building architecture – and even people's faces. In WWII, the British supported Ethiopia, defeated Eritrea and merged the two and drew inconvenient and non-sensible borders (as they did). Then, the Eritreans started to fight for their independence again, and finally in about 2000, a peace was declared and UN peacekeepers were here for a while. Eritrea has its independence, but is very low on the scale of development, even for African nations.

We could get some fruit and vegetables in the night market (forget about lettuce, broccoli, etc, it's just not in their diet) and there are a few shops or supermarkets with nearly nothing on the shelves. The night market was located on the edge of town, and people were really shy about getting their picture taken, so we had to be careful not to offend anyone.

Touring: I've heard Eritrea described as the North Korea of Africa. Now I know why. For \$50 USD per person, we got 30 day visas, and together with the correct internal travel permit (everybody needs it here) we found two good days to make a side trip to the capital city of Asmara to see the best that there is on offer. Even in the capital city, there were dozens of Internet cafes, but the odd few that were operating offered Internet at speeds equivalent to what we saw in Canada in about 1995, and can't support any Apple apps or software. Just forget about it. Cuba is at least a generation ahead of these guys.

Although they have plenty of natural resources, I don't know how or why any Western industry would brave coming to this country to setup, it's just way too risky. We had to wait until we got to Sudan to get Internet access.

The road trip up to Asmara was very interesting. The bus ride was cheap at about \$3.50 USD per person, but very rough and at times nerve wracking. At an elevation of 2300m, the climate was cooler and really above the clouds. It was chilly in the evenings and you needed at least an extra shirt or sweater. Locals in Asmara rarely make the trip down to Massawa at sea level, where the temperature in July/August can reach 42-45C.

Much to my surprise, Asmara was a very clean, organized and pleasant city. Eritreans in general are very friendly and calm people, but in Asmara, there was a distinct Italian flare to everything. Cafes and bars were plentiful, and people seemed to have a very calm and tranquil lifestyle. Most Eritreans are Christian, and this was the Catholic Church in Asmara.

There was also an Italian government funded public school with some Italian staff. Although the people in Asmara suffer from drought, and our overnight stay at the African Pension was

impacted, the people seem to be quite happy and carrying on. At least there is no war! We ate pizza, spaghetti, Italian deserts and gelato – and had cappuccinos.

One place we visited in Asmara is called the recycling depot. Here, we saw all kinds of goods come in and get recycled into hundreds of different products. There is a carpentry area, a metal working area, gears and springs – you name it.

After a stay of 8 days, was time to move on and head North to Suakin Sudan.

Paseafique – June 2019: Massawa, Eritrea, provided a satisfactory stop along the way. The main anchorage is small and if there are too many yachts, the second anchorage can take the overflow but it is further to dinghy in. Port security check bags when coming back in to the port area from town and if you bought alcohol, a bribe may be needed. Beer is cheap at the bars but expensive to take away. Friendly people. There are basic restaurants and fresh fruit and vegetables in a town nearby. No supermarket. Interesting history given the war.

Blue Eye – April 2019 (Recap of S to N Trip): Massawa, Eritrea was an interesting stop, and would have been wonderful I imagine, had we not been stupid enough to fail to bring US dollars with us. Make sure you have lots of these.

Arakai – March 2018 – Massawa: We have just spent 2 days at Massawa, Eritrea and enjoyed it immensely. Here is some information for you and feel free to share.

Call “Massawa Port Control” on VHF Channel 16 when 5nm from harbour entrance to warn them of your arrival. We called at 1250 and they told us to hurry up as their lunch break was looming.

We were told to proceed to Berth 1 on the dock for clearance. This was near where the tug boats are moored but it was not numbered. We waited for someone to wave to us on the dock.

Lucky for us the tide was high but at lower levels there are a lot of oysters on the dock which may rupture fenders.

We secured only bow and stern lines as the only bollards to tie up to were spaced quite a distance apart. You will need to have long lines.

Three officials boarded us and all formalities were completed in 15 minutes after a quick search of the boat. We were asked if we wanted a visa but we requested we only wished to stay 2 days. There is no charge for a short stay. You must have a crew list. We also had to supply a “Nil declaration”. It will be easier if you have it written in advance.

It is I, the master of sailing boat AraKai, declare that I carry:

no passengers

no pets (I stated we had a cat but after showing her vaccination papers it was no problem)

no stowaways

no drugs

Master to sign with ship’s stamp and date.

We were given a shore pass card valid from 28/02/18 to 1400 02/03/18. We were asked for a bribe but after offering cigarettes it was declined. It’s the first time we have been asked for bribes so we failed miserably on that front.

We proceeded to the anchorage as directed by the officials. We anchored at 15° 36.64'N 39° 28.31'E.

Dinghies can be tied up on the side dock near the tug boats but have fenders and an anchor handy to keep away from the oysters. It would easily puncture an inflatable dingy.

You have to show your shore pass and passports when exiting/entering the port.

We exchanged U\$ at the Grand Dalak Hotel (its visible from the anchorage) and is an easy walk across the causeway. U\$1=15 Nakfa.

The old town of Massawa near the port has some beautiful architecture remnants of their rich cultural history. Even riddled with bullet holes it's quite stunning.

Shops tend to be open 0700-1300 and then from 1700-2100. Prices are expensive.

Restaurant meals cost roughly U\$10. Portion size was large and easily feeds 2 people. Beer was 23 Nakfa per bottle.

Mike from the Yasmin Cafe apprehended us but we had no need for his services i.e fuel, water, laundry.

We found everyone had good English so communication was not a problem.

You can grab a bus to Erdaga (10 minutes away) which has a small market. It's just over the second causeway on your right. Large bus costs 2 Nakfa, smaller yellow mini bus costs 3 Nakfa one way. On Friday there is a larger market 500 metres down the street.

The Northern Red Sea Regional Museum is worth seeing. It's located 400m on the left of the second causeway. It has a blue sign with an arrow. We had an informative guide and cost us 60 Nakfa. It was a highlight for us.

Checkout formalities is also easy. Proceed to the immigration office which is near the Port Control office (all inside the port). The office is not signed but is across the street from the Port Control Office and on the second floor. We had been asked to clear out at 1000 as it was Friday and Muslim prayer day. One immigration officer came with us back to the boat and after exchanging paperwork asked for a bribe. Once again what we offered was not excepted.

We were told to leave immediately and call "Massawa Port Control" to advise of our departure. You can anchor outside the harbour entrance but we had a 15 knot northerly wind so we proceeded to Sheikh El Abu an island approximately 26nm north.

We enjoyed Massawa and are happy we stopped.

Sheena Cook – FB Feb 2018: Eritrea – Not to be missed. Having read some reports on Eritrea we came here with reservations.

We have now been here for some 10 days. The buildings surrounding the port area are amazing, many in ruins. As we walked around there is an electrifying atmosphere of how it would have been in the past. We spent a morning just wondering the mud trodden alleyway's, talking to the locals who are just going about their daily chores. The people here are perhaps some of the happiest and friendliest we have come across on our trip so far. We came across a family who were preparing meals for the 'truckers' that visit the port, they invited us to share the food they were preparing, further along the way we were invited into a home, bare stone walls, a mud floor, small wooden benches very few 'home' comforts as we would know them, non the

less it was a lovely home. The family was wonderful, one of the teenage girls was styling another's hair using a 'hot iron' that was shaped like a comb. Probably the hi-lite of our day was to see an Eritrean wedding, as the bride and groom were getting into the car, a group of 10 or so women came along the ally, banging a drum and wailing. They gathered around the car making their music for about 5mins before the car moved off.

We caught the bus to Asmara, a must if you stop here. It's around a 4-hour trip give or take. We decided to stay overnight and found a reasonable hotel for 79.00\$ including breakfast. We found a lovely restaurant serving 'Traditional' dishes, we had Tibsi Fillet, diced pieces of beef tenderloin sautéed with, onion, chilli tomato, spice and butter. Served with Enjera and salad. As our waitress served our food she took time to demonstrate how to eat this dish. The beef casserole, Enjera and salad all come to the table in separate dishes, she then explains that the beef goes onto the Enjera, then the salad, she adds, salt and oil to the salad then leaves us to enjoy. It was delicious.

While we were sat drinking coffee an Eritrean man joined in our conversation, he told us his family moved to Australia many years ago, he and his 6 brothers stayed however his mum and dad returned to Eritrea. As he was leaving he told us he had covered the costs of our coffee's. We probably spoke no more than 50 words to him. On the return trip our coach was fully of very lovely locals who shared with us whatever food they had for the trip, we in turn shared nuts and lollipops. About 30km from Massawa the bus stopped for a rest break, a couple of young girls asked us to join them at their table. We ordered soft drinks while they had some scrambled egg and bread rolls. As we were about to leave we asked for our bill to be told the young girls had covered this.

We have loved every minute of our time here, not once have any of us felt unsafe. The local people are in our opinion just wonderful.

The processes and procedures for Massawa are similar to those detailed within the Red Sea Pilot book. However, time has moved on and some parts have changed.

Checking In (Massawa): On arrival you call up Port Control on VHF Channel 16. They will direct you to go alongside one of the docks. Usually Dock No 2 behind the tug boats. Be aware that side of the dock is encrusted with barnacles. Use plenty of fenders and fender boards. Once alongside you will undergo Immigration, Customs and Quarantine checks. They will fill in some paperwork, you need two copies of your crew list and two copies of your "Nil List" declaration.

Once these checks are done they will issue each crew member a 48-hour shore pass and you can move your boat to anchor. They advise you anchor at the far West of the Port, where the wreck being cleared is shown (it has gone) in Pilot book and not to go around to Taulud Bay as shown in Pilot book as it is not safe from theft. We (5 boats) anchored here very comfortably and without issues for 10 days.

Visa: If you require to stay longer than 48 hours you need to obtain a 30-day Visa which costs 50\$ per person. First you go to the immigration office in the Port area where you fill in an entry card (similar to those you fill in when arriving in a country by plane). This is duly stamped by them and you take that, your passport, 2 Passport Photos' and your shore pass to the Immigration Office outside the Port Gate. Here you will fill in another form and spend a pleasant few hours waiting for them to issue the Visa.

Travel: If you wish to travel to Asmara, you require a travel permit. This you obtain from the Ministry of Tourism in Massawa “new” town at Edaga. You fill in the top part of this form take it along with a copy of your passport showing the Passport information pages and the Visa page to “Security” which is in the building with the Blue balcony shutters across the road from the Total Fuel station (just before the long causeway leading to “new” Massawa and shown in Pilot book). Here they will fill in the bottom part, stamp and date it. You then go back to the Ministry of Tourism who will also stamp it etc. You will then pay for the Permit (30 Nakfa), you then need to get 2 copies of the completed form, give one to the Ministry of Tourism and take one back to “Security”. This whole process should take no more than some 2 hours it just seems very convoluted.

To travel to Asmara, you use the local “yellow” mini buses to get to Massawa Bus Station. There you get either the “Government” Bus (42 Nakfa) or a smaller “Private” Bus (70/80 Nakfa). The bus timetable is based on Africa time. It leaves when it is full. The first bus is 0400 the last being around 1600 they leave about every hour or so. It takes 4 hours over some spectacular mountain ranges with some stunning scenery.

Money: The exchange rate is controlled by the Government. When we were there Feb 2018 it was 15 Nakfa to 1 USD. You can exchange for local currency at any Bank, Hotels, Money Exchange Shops and of course the Black Market. The black market rate was much less than the official rate. In one instant it was 10 Nakfa to 1 USD. You have to pay for everything in local currency although hotels can be paid in USD.

9.3 Assab

Noonsite – January 2020: Assab is closed to sailing yachts, except in emergencies, so Massawa is the only clearance port available to recreational vessels at this time.

Red Sea Group (southbound) - November 2018: My husband is currently passing Massawa area, southbound, deciding to push through to Assab instead to be closer to exit to take a window of opportunity to sail out. However, after finally getting a number for port Manager in Assab, Eritrea, he told me they do not have permission to receive foreign yacht and they will not be allowed into the port at all, not even for fuel. So Assab port is closed for sailing vessels.

10 Sudan

10.1 Agents

From the FB Group Red Sea Passage:



10.1.1 Port Sudan, Sudan

Mohamed Ahmed, WhatsApp +249 91 214 2678, mohamedabubaker945@gmail.com

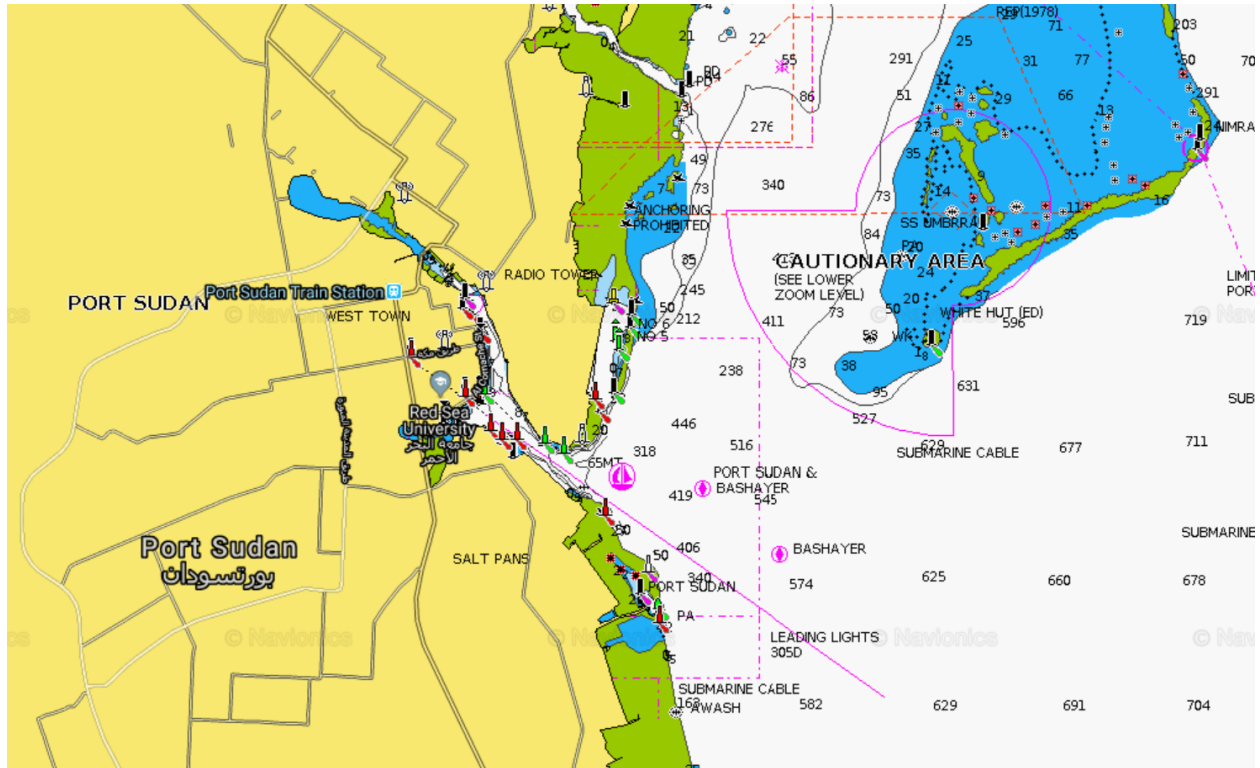
Khalid Saadan (Mohammed Saaden), WhatsApp +249 91 232 1348, shamkhatour@gmail.com

10.1.2 Suakin

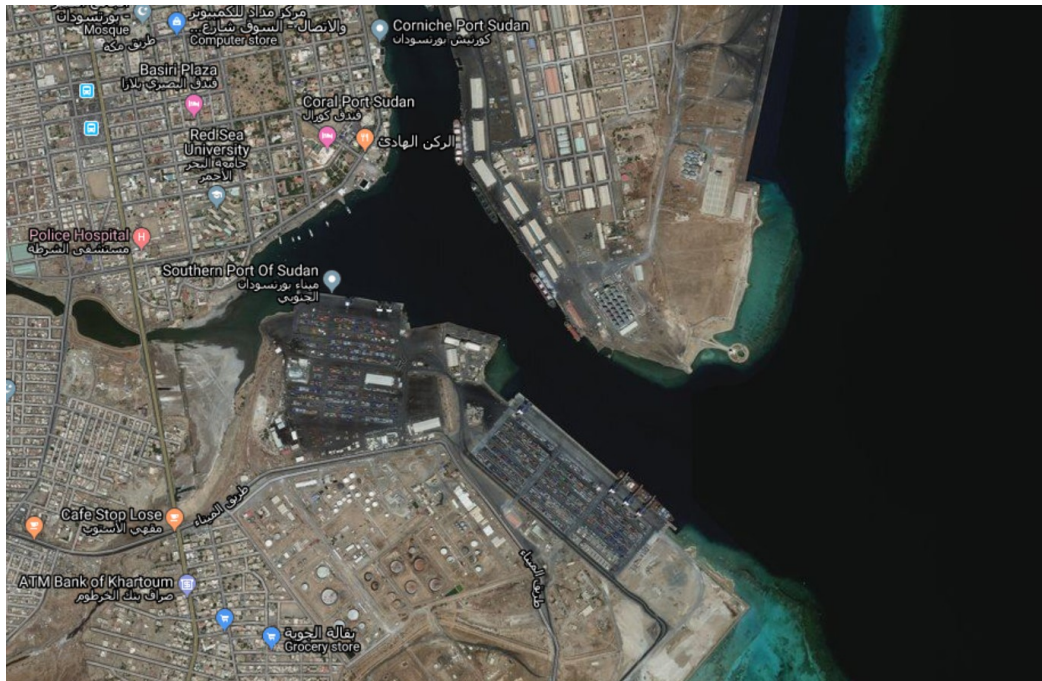
Suakin, Sudan: [Mohamed Ahmed](mailto:mohamedabubaker945@gmail.com), WhatsApp +249 91 214 2678, mohamedabubaker945@gmail.com

Another X – March 2023: Mohamed Abubaker was outstanding as agent in Suakin. Charming and efficient. We really enjoyed the atmosphere in Suakin. It is one big ruin and the people are very poor, but it had a special charm that we fell for. Clean Diesel was easy to get through Mohamed. Only basic provisions are available.

10.2 Port Sudan



The sailboat in the picture is located at 19-36.08 N / 37-14.70 E



FB Group (Red Sea) – Port Sudan: It's worth keeping Port Sudan on your contingency list. We were 50 miles off the Saudi coast attempting to circumvent a storm coming down but it started to move to the east and so we made directly westward towards the Sudanese Coast and just managed to get into the Port before the sandstorm with all its fury struck.

The entrance to the harbor is straightforward, we picked up a mooring buoy and put down a heavy kedge for security. There are large Dive boats moored close by and they have large tenders that service them that shunted us ashore whenever we wished which saved us launching the dinghy and leaving it precariously ashore. One of them brought out an agent Mr. Ali Sidi who turned out to be blind and completed the formalities seamlessly. He knew the town well enough from memory to show us around while we ensured he wasn't run over. We got some quite technical welding work done ashore in one of the many roadside workshops and restocked our food supplies. It was pleasant sitting aboard watching the local Optimists racing in the aftermath of the sandstorm.

10.3 Suakin / Sawakin



The sailboat in the picture is located at 19-08.27 N / 37-22.25 E



Red Sea Group – Feb 2022: When approaching Suakin we were called by port control (I called before but no answer) asking short questions about who we were and where we came from. The atmosphere softened quickly when I told them that Mohamed Ahmed is our agent!

Mai Tai – December 2021: Just past the new ferry terminal at Suakin, we have to pass through a very narrow channel past Suakin Island, to get to our anchorage. Another yacht was at anchor, but there was no one onboard.

We have been in communication with an Agent, Mohammed Abubaker, who will take care of all our checking in to Sudan for us, so it was a pleasure to finally meet him when he came out to Mai Tai to welcome us to Sudan, He took all our necessary paperwork for our entry into the country. He is so efficient and a real gentleman.

Suakin Island, has a very rich and fascinating history dating back thousands of years and I can't wait to visit to find out more.

For 3000 years the port on the small island of Suakin was strategically crucial for trade to powerful empires in the east.

Later, Suakin Island became the main port for African Muslims taking dhows across the Red Sea on pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, and soon became very wealthy with magnificent buildings of stunning coral blocks and beautifully carved woodwork. Suakin was the height of Medieval luxury on the Red Sea.

In the 18th century, the port became the hub for the slave trade. But when slavery was abolished, business in Suakin began to slow. A new port was being built in Port Sudan, 50 miles up the coast, and once that opened in 1905, most people abandoned Suakin to move to the bigger city. The coral buildings, soon crumbled and fell into the heap of rubble we see today.

The Sudanese government has recently signed a 99yr lease with Turkey with their promise to rebuild the island to its former glory.

Today, the city of Suakin with a population of about 44,000 is extremely poor. Only a few remains of the past remain as reminders.

There is no running water, nothing grows, a small amount of power is brought down from a dam up in the mountains and donkeys are the main mode of local transport.

While in Suakin, we took a drive up to Port Sudan, (a city with a population of 480,000) to see what we could find there for fresh provisions. As it happens, there was not much, except some mozzarella cheese and a market stall selling New Zealand apples and Kiwifruit, amazingly good condition despite the transport time.

Red Sea FB Group - November 2021 – There was a coup in Sudan in 2021. Just prior to the coup, one boat reported: "Just to mention we are very satisfied with recent service in Suakin port (Sudan) from agent Mohamed Ahmed Abaker, very efficient, simple and convenient!!"

Since the coup, apparently internet service is down, and Mohamed Ahmed Abaker has not been responding to emails.

Red Sea FB Group - Summer 2021: I can Highly recommend the service of Mohamed Abubaker. I use his service now from 16th winter time ...And Suakin is a perfect and safe place to refill food and fuel for crossing the Red Sea

Joana – March 2020: We stopped in Suakin Sudan for only a few days. With the normally strong Northerly winds that blow down from the Med to the Red Sea, we are finding ourselves following a pattern of “move North when the wind is light or non-existent”. We found ourselves at Port Suakin for exactly 3 days. The first two days, I didn’t even get off the boat. I was occupied with taking on 800L of fuel in jerry cans.

I found the people of Sudan to be polite, warm and open. There is very little English spoken here, or in the signs. Unfortunately, this country has suffered from being labelled by the USA as a country that supports International terrorism. It’s a paradox that Saudi Arabia hasn’t been identified in the same manner, particularly when ALL of the hijackers that crashed those two airliners into the World Trade Centre in 2001 and killed nearly 3000 people – were all citizens of Saudi Arabia.

The shore agent here is Mohamed, and he has a solid reputation for supporting cruisers as they pass through Suakin. He supported us, and my only wish was that we could have stuck around longer, to see more of his country. Sadly, our weather window was upon us, and we were hastened to move on.

We’re getting less sunlight in the day as we move North, and we also notice its getting colder. In India, we were used to daily temperatures of 32-34C, and in Sudan, its more like 21-28C, due largely to that cool wind blowing from the North. The water temperature is noticeably cooler, and it seems that we’re less enthusiastic about going into the seawater every day. Its quite a bit colder. There is always sand in the wind, and it will take months to get the boat clean.

Our first stop was labelled as the best anchorage in the Red Sea, Khoo Shinab, about 166nm North of Suakin and about 290nm South of Port Ghalib Egypt. The anchorage was large, barren, and nearly devoid of any sign of human existence. This was our view as we entered this deep and well protected anchorage, the site of an ancient riverbed.

On arrival, we saw a couple of bedouins walking on shore, and I think they were fishermen. We also saw camels wandering around, but never seemed to be able to get a good photo. The reefs were amongst the best we’ve ever seen with abundant fish and brilliant corals. There was no internet though, not a whiff.

Since we don’t own a drone, we had to get an “overhead view” the old fashioned way, by walking up the mountain. The views were spectacular!

Anemos – Feb 2020: Arrived Sawakin (most of the lights indicated on charts do not work--wait for good light to enter) on Feb. 17th.

The inner harbour is well protected and the local agent was honest and helpful. A good stop despite extreme poverty of local people.

We anchored at 19° 06'.42N 037° 20'.34 E.

Arbutus – Feb 2020. We have been in Suakin, Sudan for 5 days now. We were happily surprised when Mohammed came out to meet us with his own boat (our dinghy was stored away for the passage from Cochin). He took our documents, came back with an officer who took less than 30 sec to inspect the boat, and at the end of the day came back with our shore passes, sim card, and local currency.

Mohammed is very likable and provides an excellent service. He brought 2x20 litres of drinking water directly to the dinghy landing and took back the empties for \$10usd. However, after 5 days here we realize he charges a premium for his services.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE

Mohammed -- \$1usd = 80 Sudanese pound.

Currency exchange shop in Port Sudan -- \$1usd = 103 Sudanese pound. At the local coffee shop in Suakin we were approached by a gentleman who's rate was \$1usd = 100 Sudanese pound.

LOCAL SIM CARD

Mohammed -- \$10 for 5Gb (Sudani SIM)

We bought a second one in town for less than \$3usd 5Gb (Zain SIM - in Suakin connection not as fast as Sudani SIM).

Then we topped up our data on Sudani SIM 10GB = \$3.

***If staying a short time or only making small purchases we would use Mohammed

DIESEL

After reading comments from this group and advice from our friends who came through last year, we attempted to get diesel ourselves. What a gong show... We hired a taxi/tuktuk, drove to the nearest open station in town (2 others in town are abandoned), but then didn't stop... There was a big line up of long haul trucks, but not sure if this was the reason why we didn't stop. Next station was a circus. The line up was never ending and there were so many people just walking around. We realized no one was getting any fuel. The pumps were empty.

Despite this the locals told us we need a paper to get fuel because we had jerry cans (office right behind the station), but the person who provides this paper left for the day. We were told to come back the next morning at 7am...ummm will you have fuel by then?!?! After a google search seems like Sudan has been running out of fuel for a long time now.

We gave up and asked Mohammed.

Mohammed -- \$0.50/Lt

Station -- \$0.04/Lt (4.17 Sudanese pound)

Mohammed told us foreigners cannot get fuel, but from our experience we don't think this is true. On our drive to Port Sudan today we passed the gas station. They had fuel and the line up was moving.

Is it worth it to do it yourself? You need to see, with your own eyes, how long the line ups are!

PORT SUDAN

Purchased new starter battery for the engine. \$102 usd.

Julianne Comment: When we were in Suakin the long line up was always just for petrol. you need the paper for the jerry cans but it doesn't cost anything beside the tuktuk costs and we got a paper for 600liter and were told we could come back and get another paper whenever we wanted.

Joanna Comment: I just had a talk with Mohamed about diesel. He uses his cans and his guys man-handle and transfer the diesel. Also, he told me that he pays 42 cents per litre for the diesel that he sells to us for 50 cents. I am buying 800L diesel from Mohamed.

Sisiutl – December 2019: Fuel is USD \$1.09 /L Djibouti and \$.50/L in Suakin.

Paseafique – June 2019: In Port Suakin, we again found very friendly and also honest people. Fruit and vegetables and bread available. Dinghy safe due to honesty. No overcharging. Snorkeling good along coast and islands north of Port Suakin.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: Sudan: Suakin is a great place to stock up on fuel at very reasonable prices. Also a variety of fruits and veggies can be obtained at the local market. In the shops close to the gas station basic supplies are available including frozen meats.

We enjoyed visiting Suakin. People are very poor though, roads are dusty and hygiene in the small shops around old Suakin, which is mainly debris, is at least uncertain.

If you can spare kids clothes or toys Suakin is the place to leave them. Sanganeb with its lighthouse and amazing reef was one of the highlights of our circumnavigation.

Blue Eye – April 2019 (Recap of S to N Trip): Sudan is stunning. In fact Sudan might have justified the whole trip. That a revolution was brewing across the desert in Khartoum was not at all apparent in sleepy Suakin, where we checked in with the help of Mohammed the agent, who was excellent and extremely helpful in aiding us with our liquidity problems! Some spots up the Sudanese coast were mind blowing, as was the generosity of the people. Please go.

FB Group (Red Sea) – April 2019 – Getting Diesel: There seems to be a little confusion about diesel prices in Suakin, Sudan. I can't check at the moment but I heard from a few cruisers its says on Noonsite diesel costs ~40 US cents at the petrol station. We paid in the last days 4.22 Sudanese pounds which is little less than 10 US cents. If you want to fill diesel or gasoline into jerry cans you need a paper to do so.

From the three times I went to the petrol station they only insisted once on it (foreigner bonus, as the locals always need it). The tuktuk driver know where to get it—it's only about 3 minutes ride away. Doesn't cost anything, and they speak a little English in the office. They just want to know how much and for what you need it. Reason for this is, they want to prevent hoarding of diesel/gasoline.

Calculate between 200-500 sudanese pounds for taxi/tuktuk to the petrol station and back. The drivers are happy to wait and help so I was happy to pay bit more (normal TukTuk ride from the harbour to market / bus station is 20 pounds, taxi ride to Port Sudan 320 pounds).

Mohamed has lowered his price, he is charging 25 pounds (50 cents) per liter, delivered to the dinghy dock. Because we bought 750 liters of diesel for us it was worth it to get it ourselves.

Quality of diesel seems to be excellent in Sudan (Djibouti we only bought 120 liters, terrible quality).

Someone Else: 7th April Suakin via Mohammed 130USD for 260 ltrs... he even provided the Jerry cans for 60 ltrs... all picked at the dinghy dock in good timing no hassles at all ... huge queues at the gas station about 30min walk .. for those who may give it a try, wish you a lot of luck!!

Sandy Wise – FB Apr 2018: We would highly recommend Ahmed for a guide around Suakin. He speaks fairly good English and is a lovely young man. After you obtain a sim from Mohamed you can ring Ahmed on 0905616121 or 0902172836. He will pick you up in a tuktuk and take you to get fruit and veg and meat and frozen chickens.

Kings Legend – March 2018: The approach to Sawakin is pretty straightforward, do call port control on VHF 14 and check your depth when reaching the narrow gap to the Old Town.

Cathy Bunn – FB Feb 2018: After a 17 day run from Uligan Maldives, glad to be in Suakin, Sudan....not to be missed. We feel like we are in a time warp here and although everything is totally bombed out everyone is incredibly friendly and welcoming and the anchorage very secure. Cheap fuel (15c/litre!) is available if you are prepared to get it yourself (the agent will get it for you for a mere 80c/litre!!!!).

Amber Nectar – April 2017: Report on Suakin, North Sudan, visited from 24 till 29 April 2017 Without knowing we arrived at Suakin together with "Storm Bird" (Achmed from Turkey) just behind us and "Luke 8:24" (Aussie Stephen and crew) arrived a few hours later. The last time we had seen each other was on Socotra.

We were the first to enter the Harbor and it is a beautiful place. We were welcomed along the shore by a group of local ladies who waved to us from the ruined town. The eloquent and elegant Mr. Mohamed with his white robes was waiting for us at the dinghy dock because we had called him with the sat phone. Mr. Mohamed is the agent for Sudan and you pick him up from the shore and then take him to your boat. He charges \$150 US for two people and \$200 for three or more and that is it. The money is partly for Customs and Immigration, etc... but you will never see either of them. You are also NOT getting a stamp in your passport but you do get a "cruising permit" cum clearance paper from Mr. Mohamed when you leave. It is all very simple and easy going. We are great believers in the K.I.S.S. principle and Occams Razor (Sod's and Murphy's laws at times also apply!)

There are ferries going from Suakin to Jedda (for Mecca, takes 24 hours) for the pilgrims and you can also go (if you would ever want to visit the Saudis) but you have to clear that with Mr. Mohamed as you don't have a stamp in your passport from Sudan. And for Mekka, you have to be a Muslim.

Mr. Mohamed changes your US dollars although you can do it "in the street" but it is easier to do it with him and the rates are the same. In any case the banks have very bad rates, Mr. Mohamed is much better. You can also order 20 litre bottles of good drinking water from him which he brings to the dinghy dock for shop prices and no extras. There is a handy bread shop quite near the dinghy dock with yummy fresh pittas. There are many markets in town for fresh veggies and fruit or meat. Just walk around.

Mr. Mohamed also can provide you with a hotspot if you like which you can use on your boat and the internet connections are excellent and much better than either Socotra or Djibouti. He charges \$15 US for this (the SIM card). So we had the hotspot and the other boats borrowed the hotspot from time to time to have internet of their own. It worked fine for everybody. If you run out of GBs Mr. Mohamed reloads the SIMcard.

First night we had an excellent chicken BBQ dinner in town with all crews together to celebrate Tony's birthday and Mr. Mohamed ferried us in his old Mercedez and picked us later up for free.

We walked at twilight through the town and met some boys who sold beautiful knives, handmade with leather straps and iron work, something unique for \$20we have never seen them again anywhere else.

The people in Suakin are very poor (as everywhere else...) so we had for a long time collected things like glass jars, bottles with stops, kitchen stuff, cutlery, fabrics, clothes, shoes, bags and we had a big valise with small old tools like screwdrivers, a soldering iron, spanners, screws, washers etc...Even plastic bottles are valuable. We also had a collection of ropes and lines we never used and which had been lying in our hold for 10 years. We have divided our stuff between Mr. Mohamed and the fisherman's village at the other side of the bay. Mr. Mohamed was extremely happy and grateful with these gifts and from then on he did everything for free (our laundry for example). After all the trading on Socotra and giving away stuff at Suakin our boats waterline was lifted about 10 cm. We wanted to "lose weight" for the Suez Canal...but more later

We also organized a morning to play games with some of the local school children. We had asked Mr. Mohamed to invite them and quite a lot came to the harbour. Funny thing was that they all came with their Dads on motorbikes and there were no Mums involved. A bit like Socotra where the women and girls were also hardly visible. If you saw something black moving in Socotra you could bet it was a woman. If you saw some bright colors moving in Suakin, 99% chance it was a woman. The women in Suakin are not veiled and they wear scarves in bright colors not black, but you don't see many in public. Public life is a men's affair.

We had stuffed toys for the children and pens and notebooks etc.. We also had some hats but we don't know if they really liked them... We did some jumping games for prizes and we taught them to play with a Frisbee donated by our crew member Lucas. Some of the boys were really good after a short instruction.

If there is really a place where unused stuff and tools/clothes/ ropes can get a good "hut" than it is in Suakin. Please, collect and dig up your old stuff and make those people happy. The ladies at the nearby fishermen's village were pulling the things out of my hands, so eager were they to get some fabrics, bags or shoes. If you see how they live in huts on the beach you can understand what it means for them to get a present. The biggest hits were the stuffed animals, the children were "going wild" with many happy faces. You can understand that we had a such good time at Suakin even if it was only for 5 days.

Tamarask – January 2015: Port Suakin in Sudan is much better for refueling and you don't need to clear into Sudan to do it... it's a simplified procedure with shore passes - I think this is the best place to make first landfall after the crossing. Use Mohammed as an agent (phone +249 912 142 678) who will know of your arrival and be waiting for you on the south side of the Old Town island inside the harbor - make sure you contact the port authority on approach. Decent provisioning, water is available in jerry cans, and Mohammed can sort out most things you'd need.

10.4 Anchorages and Anchoring in Sudan

Mai Tai – December 2021: We were heading for the ancient city of Suakin to officially check in to Sudan, but after 5 days at sea, we rested at a couple of anchorages along the coast before arriving in Suakin.

10.4.1 Siyal Islands (22-47 N / 36-13 E)

Tregoning – April 2023: Arriving at the reefs around the Siyal Islands mid-morning, we saw several mid-size fishing boats. After the overabundance of fishing vessels in Southeast Asia, we realized that we had not seen any in the Red Sea for several weeks. As we headed towards the anchorage that the Soggy Paws Compendium showed others had used before, we unexpectedly had to avoid some very shallow bommies (coral heads). Fortunately, they were highly visible in the bright sunshine and clear water.

We had chosen the Siyal Islands as our destination because it was the northernmost anchorage in Sudan. The first of the anchorages in Egypt where boats-in-transit are allowed to stop was almost 300 nm further north. Randall had identified some other Sudanese anchorages between Marsa Fijab and the Siyal Islands, in case we needed somewhere to stop due to adverse conditions, but we were thankful to have made it to Siyal before the northerly winds returned.

The anchorage was on the south side of the longest of the Siyal Islands, which was little more than an east-west lying sandbar with some low shrubs and groundcover vegetation. Despite a flat bottom that we assumed was sand, the anchor would not set on our first attempt. This made us a little concerned that it might be a thin layer of sand over coral rock. We moved a little further west and this time the anchor set beautifully in the sand. There was no protection from the northerly winds, but we were delightfully sheltered from any waves by the Island.

This anchorage had proved to be very comfortable despite more than 20 knots of northerly wind. The site did not have the large areas of clear reef that we had hoped for based on the charts and satellite pictures. However, once we realized the area was mostly sand bottom, this provided us with a very secure anchorage. Given these conditions, our two snorkels were much more enjoyable and productive than we had anticipated.

10.4.2 Shatira Islands & Khor Nawarat

Mai Tai – December 2021: At our first stop, in Khor Nawarat, we got a very un-friendly “welcome” from a boatload of men, ramming right into the side of Mai Tai, saying they were from the Sudanese Navy, demanding our papers and telling us to leave. They broke the lifelines and bent our railings when they hit us. They refused to leave us alone so Kay played the “distracted old lady” hoping that one of the young ones might take pity on us, thinking of his grandmother!! It seemed to work. Whatever, they eventually left us alone, then a couple of them came back to apologise the following day.

There wasn't much ashore, but we needed to get off the boat and go for a walk. What we found was desert and more desert, mountains in the far distance and nothing but flat desert in between.

10.4.3 Marsa Inkeifal

Mai Tai – December 2021: Marsa Inkeifal: 140 nms up the coast from Suakin. Calm and protected.

10.4.4 Marsa Shinab

Tregoning – March 2023: With a week of strong northerly winds forecast, we needed to be anchored somewhere comfortable and secure. We would have loved to have stayed at

Sanganeb Reef and snorkeled every day, but we did not feel confident that the anchoring was secure, and we worried about damage that the anchor and rode might cause. So, our target was about 25 nm further north at Marsa Fijab, a cove within the coastal fringing reef.

We arrived around midday which allowed us to see any shallow water very well. The shades of dark blue to turquoise water with the brightly lit sandy shoals and islet reminded us strongly of the Bahamas. Using satellite photos, our electronic charts, and sightings from the bow, we followed the Z-shaped route into the reef and around some small, flat islets. The starting waypoint for the route was not accurately portrayed in the Red Sea Pilot, which was a bit confusing, but the map was very helpful.

Inside the reefs we were fully exposed to the wind but the sheltered water behind the reefs and low islets remained comfortably calm. Much to our delight after the angst at Sanganeb Reef, the bottom was flat sand with very good anchor holding and plenty of room.

A small fishing boat passed us as it was going out of the channel, otherwise we were out there on our own. We could see a small settlement on the shore 0.5 nm west of us, a larger collection of houses further south, two communication towers, and traffic moving on a north/south highway. Beyond the relatively flat coastal plain, multiple, receding ridges of mountains rose with a jagged collection of peaks inland. There was some green vegetation close to the shore, but from a distance the mountains looked very stark and dry.

As the days progressed, even with 20+ knot winds we felt very securely anchored. As the winds increased, the less we could see of the inland mountains due to the dust in the air. Also, we could not see as deep into the water as the small waves and water motion stirred up the sediments. We had been surprised in Djibouti as to how cloudy it was, not just haze, smoke, or dust but overcast grey clouds. Here with the mostly cloudless skies, we had the luxury of plenty of solar and wind power allowing us to play music on the stereo most of the day and make water as needed...Woohoo!

Mai Tai – December 2021: Marsa Shinab: Protected, but no internet

10.4.5 Marsa Oseif

Mai Tai – December 2021: Marsa Oseif: There is a Navy/Police base here, a refugee camp and a small village nearby. It is a desolate, windblown place but the harbor provides good holding for our anchor in the strong winds. We can buy fish from the local fishermen and today we bought some fresh vegetables. At least we are able to keep in touch with our friends and family and get this blog off while waiting for the next weather window to continue north, which could mean seeing the New Year in while at sea.

Melian - 2018: We did this last year and went straight from Sudan.

We stopped in a few places in Sudan in the way up - after having checked out and it wasn't a problem. Marsa Osief and Marsa Shinab were amazing and good places to hide from the winds.

Try and do the run north straight from Sudan, picking a good weather run. We waited in Marsa Oseif for about 3 days and then had a quick stop in the Siyal islands on the way up.

10.4.6 Sanganeb Reef (19-44 N / 037-27 E)

Anchorage: 19° 43.9410' N / 037° 26.8820' E in 8m mixed sand and coral.

Tuvalu - April 2023: We anchored at 8m sand and corals. Lifting up the anchor it took us a bit of time to free the chain from some small corals, but it was not really a big issue. Very good



protection, we had winds from the north up to 28 knots, and it was still calm on the anchorage.

Tregoning – April 2023: We left Suakin at 7am and motored north into the wind, arriving at Sanganeb Reef at 4:30 pm. At this time the light was not ideal for seeing into water looking for shallow bommies, but using satellite photos, two charts, and me peering over the bow, we actually got into the small lagoon fairly easily.

SV Libby was already anchored on the east side of the lagoon and John called on the VHF radio to tell us what they have found. We ended up anchored in the northwest corner quite close to reef, but far enough away so that we would be safe when the winds changed to light SE as forecast for the next day.

We rowed over to the shallow reef on the east side of the lagoon's entrance

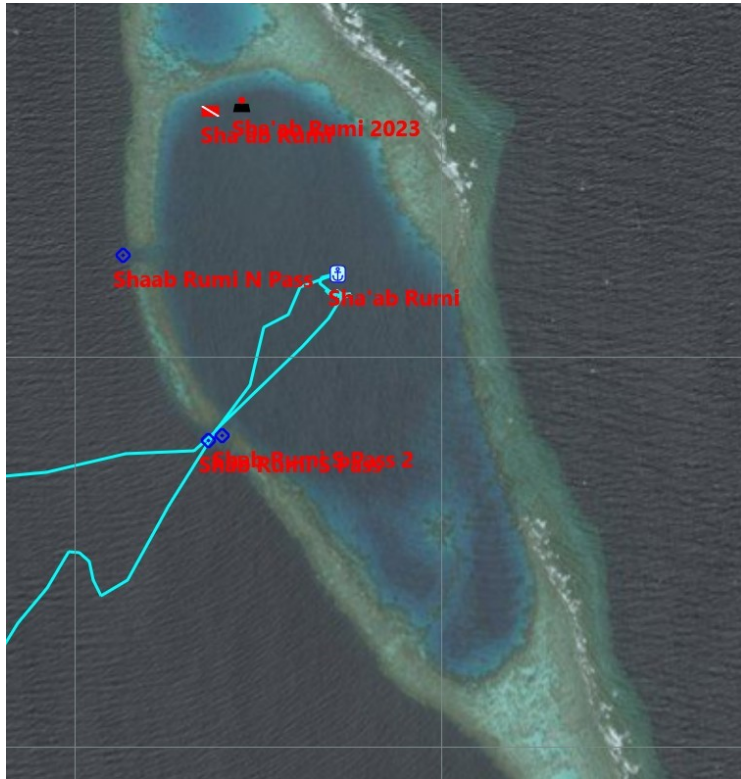
pass, next to the range-markers used to get to the lagoon entrance. Oh, what a joy to be snorkeling again, and with such marvelously clear water, coral in the best condition that we had seen in months, and with so many species we had never seen before. It was truly exciting and wonderful.

On Friday night (24th March) and the following morning the wind was from the south. The anchor held us firmly away the reef and the anchor watch alarm did not go off, but neither of us slept very well once the wind got up. We left the reef at 5:45 am, following our breadcrumb trail (track on the chart-plotter) back out through the pass and reef in the early morning light. We soon unfurled the jib, shut off the engine, and had a very pleasant downwind sail to our next anchorage.

With a week of strong northerly winds forecast, we needed to be anchored somewhere comfortable and secure. We would have loved to have stayed at Sanganeb Reef and snorkeled every day, but we did not feel confident that the anchoring was secure, and we worried about damage that the anchor and rode might cause. So, our target was about 25 nm further north at Marsa Fijab, a cove within the coastal fringing reef.

10.4.7 Shaab Rumi (19-57N / 37-24E)

Tuvalu - April 2023: We entered thru the S pass and picked up a mooring at



19°56.826' N / 037°24.2260' E.

No land here, only coral reefs. No mobile connection. But the best diving ever seen.

Snorkeling in Sanganeb was absolutely great, but Rumi is still better, if possible.

10.4.8 Taila Island / Marsa al'Atshan

Anchorage:

Tuvalu - April 2023: We anchored just at the south side of Taila Island, behind the tiny sand. Good holding in 4 meters of sand. Perfect protection with northerly winds, with southerly you can move to the other side (we didn't have to).

We tried to dinghy ashore, but around 100 m out its too shallow and you can't land and go for a walk.



11 Egypt

Albert Cook – April 2022 – Wintering over in Egypt: Up until 2016 many yachts used to winter (Oct/Nov – Apr/May) in Egypt. There was a regular rally Vasco de Gamma that used to go from the Med to India (on even number years i.e. 2012) and return India to Med (on odd number years i.e. 2013). We first visited in 2012/13 and spent a wonderful winter sailing down to Sudan and back up with no hassles whatsoever. In 2014/15, we created the Red Sea Sailing Safari and took 14 yachts again all the way south to Sudan and back again. In those days to transit (return included) through the Suez Canal cost \$350 (All fees for agents, immigration etc.) + \$310 Canal Authorities Fees. To enter and leave Hurghada, El Gouna (Abu Tig) cost nothing. Port Ghalib cost \$80. The Marinas (all of them) cost for a 15m yacht were \$220 / month plus water & electric. A 30-day cruising permit cost \$30.

With your 6-month cruising permit (\$180), you could free sail without worry the whole of the Egyptian Red Sea. Sometimes the military (usually young conscripts) would come and check paperwork but there was never any hassle and you would often spend an hour or so talking, laughing and drinking (soft drinks) with some of the nicest people you could wish to meet.

Most yachts would enter Egypt around end of October / beginning of November. Make their way straight to Hurghada Marina. Some would spend the next 6 months there venturing out for day/week sails. Others like us would stay there until after Christmas but travel to see the marvellous inland sights (Nile Valley, Cairo, Western Desert etc.), then spend the next 4 months sailing to Sudan and back enjoying all the various anchorages (Marsa's, Islands, Wadis, reefs etc.) and ports either snorkelling, diving, swimming or just chilling. All this done either on your own or with a group of other yachts.

Then it was back to the Suez Canal by end Apr / beginning of May to ensure you could transit back up the canal as the return was included in the fee as long as done within 6 months of transiting down.

However, since 2016 Port Authority Fees, bureaucracy and a portion of corruption have made all of the above a thing of the past. Port Clearance from Port Said and Port Suez used to cost \$20, now it is over ten times that amount. There was no entry or exit fees for Hurghada you just went straight into the Marina. Now you have to go via the new "Hurghada International Port" at a cost of \$600 in and \$600 out. Not to mention the limitations now imposed by the Coastguard in respect to free sailing and apparently additional admin fees every time you wish to go sailing, be it for a day, a week or month. Port Ghalib has raised their fees from \$80 to over \$250. Some locations are now out of bound completely or apparently mooring fees of over \$1000 per night are being imposed.

So overall wintering in Egypt is no longer an attractive and viable proposition until matters return to the pre 2016 years. Mohamed Mohsen has taken on the challenge of improving sailor's experiences in the canal and it's associated Yacht Clubs (Marina's) for which he is to be commended. However, I wonder if he will have the necessary influence to change the Port Authorities, Harbour Authorities, Coast Guard, Immigration, Customs and the various military departments. For that to happen and for it to happen in the foreseeable future will probably need the intervention of the President Abdel Fattah Saeed Hussein Khalil el-Sisi.

Mai Tai – Feb 2022: First, we strongly advise that you DO NOT stop in Egypt. *Ed Note: This is because they had such trouble clearing out of Port Ghalib.*

Checking in to Port Ghalib: Your first stop in Egypt when coming from the south should be Port Ghalib. All other anchorages should be avoided. Most are patrolled by the Egyptian Navy / Coast Guard / Police and you will likely be harassed and possibly fined for stopping without first checking in. One yacht we met was fined \$10,000!

When you are a week from arriving in Port Ghalib you should contact an agent and send them all necessary documents. You do not need a visa before arriving. You will be able to get a 30 day visa on arrival.

Before Covid, yachts could stop in Port Ghalib just for fuel and not have to clear in. This is no longer an option. Every foreign yacht must clear in when entering Port Ghalib, even if they just need fuel. Once you have entered the country you will be able to buy fuel. However, be aware that it takes five to seven days to clear out of Port Ghalib due to the Coast Guard process of issuing port clearances. These must be issued in Cairo and even the agents have no control over this process. You are a prisoner in the marina, paying daily berth rates, until Coast Guard decides to let you go.

You must have your vaccination certificate with QR code to enter Egypt. Yellow fever is also required if you have stopped in Sudan prior to your arrival in Egypt.

The Coast Guard or Customs will require you to hand over all weapons, including spear guns. In addition, they also will require you to turn over any drones you may have onboard. Apparently these will be returned to you when you check out but where do you have to collect them from? Probably Hurghada.

An hour or so before entering the Port call Port Control on VHF Channel 10 and request permission to enter. You will be directed to the Customs Dock for clearance procedures. This process usually takes most of the day. Expect to remain on the Customs Dock six or more hours. No one is in any hurry here. Be sure you have strong fenders for the concrete wall you will be tied to.

Quarantine officials will inspect the boat and your vaccination papers. Then, immigration will stamp your passports with your visa. Next, Customs will come on-board and we don't know what they do as they only spent about 2 minutes inside.

You will now be directed to your marina berth. There is no option to anchor here. You must pay for a berth. The berths are all stern-tie and a port inflatable will assist you to tie the mooring lines. There is water and power available at each berth. The local dive boats told us the water is only for washing, not for drinking. We did drink the water here but it was run through our carbon filter first. We did not use the power.

Check in Costs: January 2022

Agent: US\$150

Immigration: US\$150

Visas: US\$25 / person

Quarantine: US\$40

Customs: US\$30

Government Marina Tax: US\$30 / month for under 15 meters, \$50 for over 15 meters (paid to the marina).

Med Asia Sailing Safari – Nov 2019: If coming from the south, the first port of entry is Port Ghalib and the next is Port Suez. Coming from the North the first port of entry is Port Said the last being Port Ghalib.

Hurghada is no longer a port of entry for yachts. Until October 2018, the check in / out at Port Ghalib was done by the Harbourmasters Office. Now you have to use an agent. There is only one agent for Port Ghalib namely, Nasco. From information posted on various sites, web pages etc. the fees to check in which includes 1-month cruising permit is some \$500+.

If you intend to spend time in Egypt (sightseeing etc.), you can stay in the Port Ghalib Marina (approx. \$320 per month plus water & electric). This is a very safe and secure place with reasonable provisions and access to Marsa Alam Airport and although further away, Hurghada Airport.

Once you have a cruising permit you can in theory sail along the Egyptian coast and stop just about anywhere. Although you cannot go on land. You can only go on land at Port Ghalib, Marsa Alam, Hurghada Marina, Abu Tig Marina, Port Suez, Ismailia and Port Said.

If you go to Hurghada, again new rules have come about since they build the new “Hurghada International Port Building”. Once upon a time you could sail straight into the Marina, where your agent would do all necessary paperwork etc. Now even if you have a cruising permit you have to check in and out of the Port before you can enter or leave the marina. In 2017/18 we paid 250\$ per yacht in Port Authority & agent fees. But, since then it has become a lottery and is anyone’s guess. We know of some who have paid \$750+ and have heard of \$1000. Even the agents Prince of the Red Sea and Felix Maritime are advising yachts to miss out Hurghada.

The fees for Hurghada Marina are the same as Port Ghalib. The facilities (provisions, shopping, bars, restaurant’s etc.) are far better here and you are only 4 miles from Hurghada Airport. Unfortunately, the Port Authority fees make it an expensive and frustrating stop over.

If one wants to visit Egypt without paying over inflated agent and Port Authority fees and you have the capability of sailing from Sudan to Port Suez then that is the way to go. You can check in at Port Suez, stay as long as you like at Port Suez Yacht Club and visit the rest of Egypt (Valley of the Kings, Cairo, Alexandria etc.) from there. Your agent Prince of the Red Sea or Felix Maritime will advise and assist as necessary.

For those coming from the North you can check out at Port Suez but will need to sail direct to Sudan.

There are certain anchorages between Sudan and Port Suez that can be used as a rest stop where you are unlikely to get any officials come to check you. However, should you get checked use the last page of the Red Sea Pilot and bluff your way. “Breakdown, fatigue etc. etc.”

Blue Eye – April 2019 (Recap of S to N Trip): If there is one reason not to come up the Red Sea, it’s that Egypt is at the end of it. You just have to accept that they’re going to get a lot of your money, and that they’ll relish taking it. Captain Heebi, Prince of The Red Sea, is a man you can trust, though. I would recommend his agency services for the canal.

11.1 Checking In

Joana – Nov 2023: You do not need to check-in to pass through the Suez Canal. Most ships every day pass through just like this. Their crew does not “enter” the country of Egypt. However,

if you wish to visit Egypt, you may check-in at many places. In my opinion, the best place to check-in and visit Egypt is at Ismailia, in the middle of the Suez Canal. Talk with your agent.

Ismailia has new docks and new facilities. The docks at the yacht club at Port Suez are minimal and in poor shape. Talk with your agent about the possibilities for rental car and tourist services at both.

11.1.1 Agents

1. Alexandria, Egypt: [Asmaa Khaled](#), NASCO Tours, headoffice@nasco-yachts.com

(Asmaa Khaled can also offer services throughout Egypt)

2. Port Said, Egypt: Prince of the Red Sea and NASCO

3. Port Suez, Egypt: [Ehab Soukar At Sea](#) (Prince of the Red Sea), WhatsApp +20 100 552 2988

Also NASCO Tours offers services in the Suez Canal

*invitations have been extended to Felix Maritime

4. Hurghada, Egypt: Asmaa Khaled (NASCO) offers services in Hurghada

5. Port Ghalib, Egypt:

Mohamed M Abu-ghazala (NASCO Tours), WhatsApp +20 106 166 6441

Mohamad Mostafa (NASCO Tours), WhatsApp +20 106 338 8064

portghalib@nascotours.com yachting@nascotours.com

11.1.2 Port Ghalib Check-In

This section only deals with the check-in process. See more info on getting around Port Ghalib [here](#).

Mai Tai - 2022 Update: Your first stop in Egypt when coming from the south should be Port Ghalib. All other anchorages should be avoided. Most are patrolled by the Egyptian Navy / Coast Guard / Police and you will likely be harassed and possibly fined for stopping without first checking in. One yacht we met was fined \$10,000!

When you are a week from arriving in Port Ghalib you should contact an agent and send them all necessary documents. You do not need a visa before arriving. You will be able to get a 30 day visa on arrival.

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Visas: US\$25 / person

Quarantine: US\$40

Customs: US\$30

Government Marina Tax: US\$30 / month for under 15 meters, \$50 for over 15 meters (paid to the marina)

Red Sea Group - Mar 2022: We recently left Port Ghalib. Seems everybody had different experiences. Here are some tips based on mine:

Tell the agent your ETA 48h before your arrival. I know it won't be accurate, but try your best.

Call Port Captain when in range and again on entry.

On arrival, people will help you tie on the Customs pier starboard alongside.

Be patient to wait for customs, doctor, immigration etc. Agents do their best but also they have to wait.

Do not have drones with you. They will take it until you check out and you have to charge a huge fee for it.

Do not tie near the Eilly Bar. The music is extreme loud and was a real torture for me, my crew and neighbors. All complaints, even with the harbor master, didn't help.

11.1.3 Egypt e-Visas

Nasco, agent in Port Ghalib, is charging a \$50USD immigration fee plus \$27 USD per person visa unless you already have an Egypt EVisa. With an EVisa, Nasco does not charge the \$50 fee.

The EVisa is available online for \$25. It is good for 30 days, multiple entry and expires 90 days from issue date.

<https://www.visa2egypt.gov.eg/eVisa/Home>

I have had some difficulties with the Egypt e-visa portal and have not yet been able to successfully lodge an application. Another boat has lodged the application but is unable to get the payment to go through despite trying two different credit cards. I hope that others have more success.

11.1.4 Covid Regulations – Fall 2020

From Capt Heebi (one of the Agents):

The current instructions for the all the Red Sea Ports, starting 1 Sep 2020... Marsa Alam, Hurghada, and Sharm el Shiek. All yachts intending to check in:

1/Must have PCR Certificate before arrival. The date of issue must be not exceeded 72 hour.

2/yachts that have no PCR on arrival must do the certificate from the health authorities in Egypt. They will be transferred by the boat agent from Hurghada and back again to Hurghada by agent's car. That will cost at least officially \$120 per person on board + charges for the extra car 200 km distance.

The yacht must inform the agent 48 hours before arrival at Port Ghalib or Hurghada with a crew list.

All the above is ignored for yachts coming direct to transit the Suez Canal.

11.1.5 Yellow Fever Certificate

Wade Alarie – April 2019: There is something new when checking in to Egypt. The Prince of the Sea (Egypt Suez Canal Agents), have advised Noonsite that new health restrictions have come into force with immediate effect.

This means that the crew of any vessel entering an Egyptian port must have a Health Certificate if they have departed from one of the following countries:, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Bangladesh or Brunei Dar Salam.

However, a health certificate is not required if the boat spends a minimum of seven days at sea after leaving any of these ports before arriving at a port in Egypt.

The Noonsite article has been amended. Now it says that "However, neither a health certificate or Yellow Fever certificate is required if the boat spends a minimum of seven days at sea after leaving any of these ports before arriving at a port in Egypt." Nonetheless, I've read that a Yellow Fever vaccination (and I've had at least two in my life) last a lifetime. So, it would be a good idea to have your proof of vaccinations handy on entry to Egypt.

Another person said: We were turned away from Port Ghalib two weeks ago by the Quarantine people as we had been in Sudan and one of the crew could not show a Yellow Fever vaccination card.

New rules from April 1st 2019.

FB Group (Red Sea) – April 2019 – Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirement: I have just received this email from the agent in Port Ghalib: “Kindly to confirm that all crew will come on board will be holding yellow fever vaccinations certificate in order to comply with Quarantine new regulation which are in force since Apr 1st requesting any crew will come from Sudan should hold international vaccination certificate to be allowed to enter Egypt, otherwise they will be held at the Quarantine hospital for 6 days under quarantine custody to be checked and get the vaccination certificate which valid for life, otherwise they will not be allowed to check in at Any Egyptian ports.”

11.2 Checking Out

Red Sea FB Group – Feb 2023: I (and a few other boats) had problems with exit clearance there last year with like you say delays of 7 - 10 days, frustration, and once cleared having missed good weather windows and being forced out in bad weather.

However, since then Felix agency has a representative there that seems to have improved the situation. Contact them to check.

Mai Tai – Feb 2022: Before COVID, cruisers regularly day sailed up the coast of Egypt and checked out in Port Suez. In those days there was a cruising permit you could buy for US\$150, which gave you permission to stop at most bays and harbours. According to Captain Heebe (Prince if the Red Sea Agency), you now must check out of Port Ghalib because it has become so much trouble and so expensive to do it in Port Suez. In addition, Captain Heebe suggests ONLY the following stops in route from Port Ghalib to Port Suez:

- Soma Bay
- El Tur,
- Ras Abu Zinema
- Ras Matrma
- Ras Sudr

All other ports are now basically off limits to foreign vessels except in the case of an emergency.

The Navy/Coast Guard are spreading military bases along the coast and prohibiting yachts from stopping except in the places mentioned above. This is changing almost weekly. By checking out of Port Ghalib, you eliminate the need for the cruising permit. However, you will not be allowed ashore at any of the anchorages mentioned above.

Checking out of Port Ghalib does not cost any money as you paid for both checking in and checking out when you arrived. However, Coast Guard control the whole coast of Egypt and only they can issue you a permit to exit Port Ghalib. The week it takes to receive this permit means you may miss a perfectly good weather window to move north.

Postscript: After nine days of hell trying to leave Port Ghalib to catch a weather window north, the weather window has long since past. Now, only after the assistance of the New Zealand Ambassador in Cairo, our permit to leave was finally issued. However, they have told us we only have 30 hours to leave port. They decided the weather is not so bad for us (how do they

know?). So we leave tomorrow morning even though the next weather window isn't until the 6th of March.

11.3 Bringing in Parts from Overseas

Kurukulla – April 2023 – Shipping a Gearbox from UK to Hurghada: We arrived in Hurghada with a destroyed gearbox. We had already tried to repair it in Port Ghalib, but it failed again within a day. So we needed to ship in a new gearbox.

The UK supplier, Engines Plus from Gloucestershire (the UK Sole Diesel agents) decided that it would be impossible for them to ship to Egypt, via DHL, because of the delays and bureaucracy they were likely to encounter. One step forward, two back!

After five days of to-ing and fro-ing I eventually managed to persuade Engines Plus to supply a new gearbox. Ultimately the MD agreed to accept the order provided I arranged collection, shipping and all clearances into Egypt, via DHL. In making my arrangements I was ably assisted by Ahmed of Egyptian International Motors (EIM), Cairo, who agreed to arrange inwards shipping to Egypt via his DHL account and to handle all the clearances; his fitter would then assist Mahmoud in installing it. What could possibly go wrong?

It took another six days to reach an agreed form of the paperwork to accompany the item, and hopefully speed, the gearbox through Turkish customs, at which point it was Friday (the equivalent in Egypt of Sunday in Europe), meaning that everything stopped until after the weekend. The next obstacle was DHL's automated system for booking shipments as it would not allow the UK dispatcher, Engines Plus, to book it to another company's DHL account. EIM, whose account it was, assured me it could only be booked for collection by the dispatcher! Another impasse! Eventually I persuaded Engines Plus to actually talk to DHL by telephone, (an old fashioned concept of doing business) and they agreed to accept the tasking. This was close of day Tuesday; after two and a half weeks, scores of e-mails, and innumerable telephone calls to UK, I eventually received confirmation that DHL had been tasked, and agreed, to collect. Now I can sit back and wait for it to arrive.

By now I was on first name terms with Katherine at Engines Plus and my start of working day (0900 UK time, 1100 Egyptian) phone call revealed that DHL were still waiting for acceptance of the tasking from EIM; they were the receivers, in Egypt, whose account it was being charged to. At the Egypt end Ahmed assured me (sending photographs of his account screen as proof) that no request had been received but 2 hours later he came back to say it had now arrived and approval had been given. I immediately phoned Engines Plus again and passed on the good news. An hour later they e-mailed me to say according to the DHL website the booking on DHL, that they had raised, had been cancelled as time expired and they would have to go through the whole process again! They also intimated that this was getting beyond a joke and was not at the top of their priority list!

To try to speed things along (or perhaps more accurately get them moving) I contacted the DHL help desk in Egypt. The person I spoke to, Shady Raoof, was a breath of fresh air and assured me that he could solve the problem. He then telephoned Engines Plus direct and unfortunately got Hedley Beavis, (Director and Company Secretary), not Katherine. Hedley refused point blank to have the company involved any further and basically said that if any more input was required from them they would cancel the order and refund the monies paid.....Really helpful!

Shady however had an alternative option and offered up the necessary form that would allow the package to be pulled from Egypt and not pushed from UK. So far so good. As it was now close of working day in Egypt he assured me that, if we completed the one form necessary, he would action it the following day. Great. All I needed now to complete the form were the size and weight of the package. There was only one possible source for this information so I telephoned Engines Plus again; this time I got a work companion of Katherine who informed me that Katherine was busy downstairs dealing with DHL who had arrived to collect my gearbox!

I was assured that when Katherine returned she would e-mail me with the dimensions of the package and the outcome of the discussions with DHL. As a consequence I waited until almost close of day (UK time) before phoning again; this time Katherine gave me the dimensions. It was only after I started to give these dimensions to DHL, later on, that I realised that for a gearbox measuring no more than 35cm in any direction, a box measuring over 125cm in length seemed rather excessive! To make things worse I then discovered that DHL charge by what they call "Volume related weight", i.e. they use the box dimensions to estimate the weight and this weight is then used to reach the cost, \$US2100 ! A further phone call to Engines Plus, next day, revealed I had been given the dimensions of the wrong box (surprise – surprise) and the true dimensions measured a maximum of 35cm in any one direction, result ... shipping cost \$US200 which was much better!

Once I was sure the gearbox was on its way I returned to the question of recovering the VAT. When I raised this subject with Hedley Beavis at the time of paying for the gearbox; he assured me that his company could definitely not supply it VAT free but that DHL could be tasked to recover the VAT as they processed the outgoing shipment. I assumed he knew his job and accepted his word Wrong!A call to DHL and a confirmatory call to HMC&E showed this to be absolute balderdash! DHL cannot process VAT refunds and HMC&E advice was that only the vendor can effect a VAT free sale when it is being exported by a courier. HMC&E advice was that, to meet the rules, - "All they have to do is retain a copy of the airway bill and to place it with their copy of the receipt, as proof that it was exported and entitled to be sold VAT free". Simple, but initially too difficult for Engines Plus!

Having been picked up at midday on Friday the 9th of June, by mid day on the 11th it was in Cairo. Despite a minor hiccup over the delivery address (soon sorted out by Ahmed at EMI) it looked as though DHL were on track to meet their predicted delivery date of 13h of June, great! This all worked as planned and by Sunday the 18th it was ready for collection from EMI in Hurgada.

11.4 Marinas in Egypt

Sep 2023: There's a new marina called [Ismalia Yachts Marina](#).

Wade Alarie – April 2022: In Egypt, there are a multitude of



commercial ports (Alexandria, Port Said, Port Suez, and Hurghada for example) and 5 (that I know of) so-called Tourism Marinas (Ghalib, Abu Tieg, Hurghada, Oma Dome/Port Sokhna and Taba Heights).

The government-assessed fees at the commercial ports are based on cruise ship and ferry boats, large commercial operations - in other words — large sources of revenue. The government-imposed fees at Ghalib and Abu Tieg are noticeably less, largely because of this. This is why the fees in Hurghada have been historically prohibitively expensive.

If you're wondering where some of these places are: Abu Tig Marina (El Gouna Resort) is at 27° 24.4500' N 033° 40.5400' E. Oma Dome is at Port Sokhna on the Egyptian coastline about 25nm South of Port Suez and Taba Heights is in the Gulf of Aqaba.

I was in Alexandria in mid Feb 2022. It is a large and well protected harbour. You may enter Alexandria, but not clear in or out there. You would have to clear in elsewhere (Port Said / Fouad) first. I was told there are currently no Customs or Immigration facilities in Alexandria. Secondly, you're right, Soma Bay marina is small, but I corresponded with them in 2020, and they offered to provide us with a berth, but they are not a port of entry.

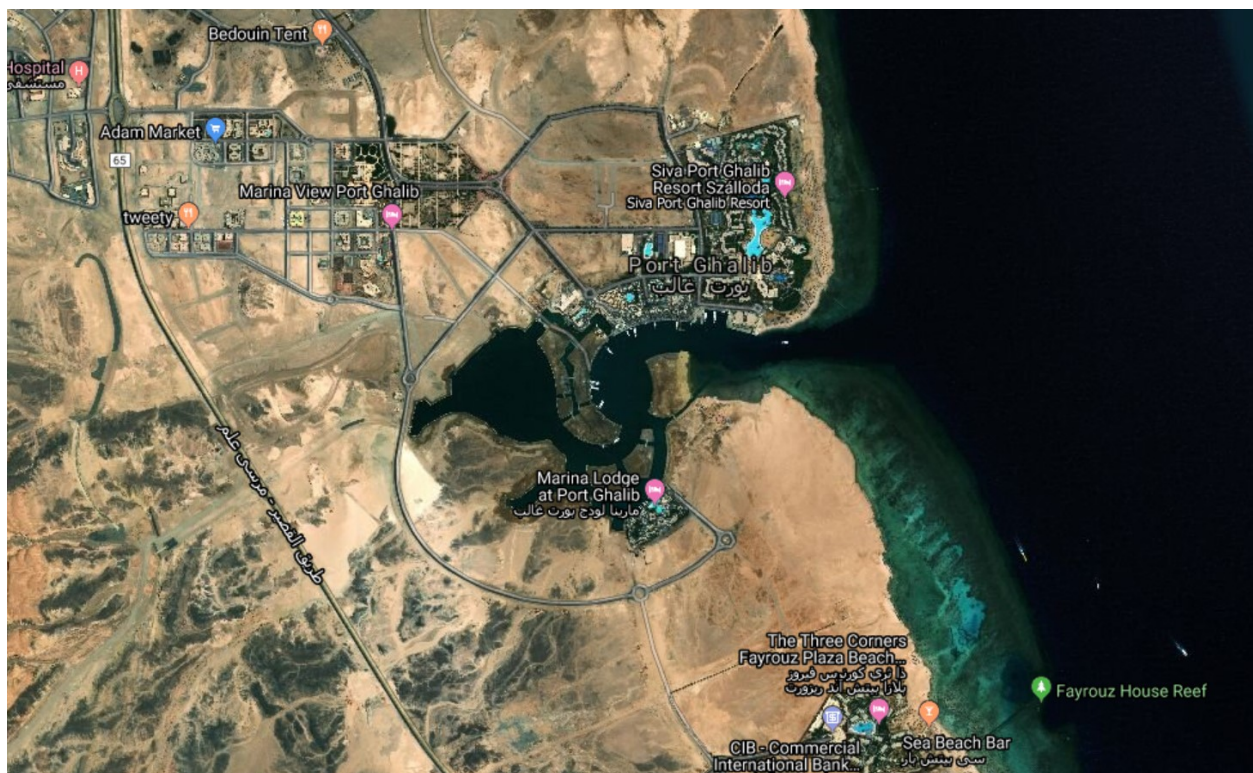
Albert Cook – April 2022: Yes there are other "Marina's" besides Port Ghalib and Hurghada.

- El Gouna (Abu Tig) comes under the Hurghada International Port jurisdiction so suffers the same as Hurghada Marina.
- Dome Marina is a hotel complex with a small ramshackle harbour with very shoal depths (really not suitable for yachts).
- Taba Heights is again a small marina (really a ferry terminal) and again shallow and not suitable for mono hulled yachts.
- Port Suez and Port Said (actually Port Fouad) are really Yacht Clubs owned by the SCA.
- There is also a Marina at Sharm El Sheikl but that's out of bounds to yachts.
- There is another at Abu Soma but again very small.
- With respect to the prohibitive costs mentioned. Hurghada Marina is privately owned. The extraordinary costs come about from the new rules requiring all yachts entering Hurghada waters to check in and out of Hurghada International Port (about 1/2 mile north of the Marina) before entering and after exiting the Marina. To the best of my belief yachts cannot enter Alexandria which is in the Mediterranean and not the Red Sea.

11.4.1 Port Ghalib



The sailboat in Port Ghalib in the picture above is located at 25-31.99 N / 34-38.37 E



Local Information Source: <http://www.portghalib.com/>



(for Foreign Registered Vessels)
Tariff inclusive of Sales Tax (where applicable)
(Exchange rate by the central bank of Egypt up to date)

Projected Berthing Tariff 2023						
Annual Fees						
L.O.A.	Up to 10 M	10.10 to 20.00 M	20.10 to 30.00 M	30.10 to 40.00 M	40.10 to 50.00 M	Over 50.00 M
Price/m	\$387.00	\$499.00	\$586.00	\$1,008.00	\$1,122.00	\$1,347.00
Monthly Fees						
L.O.A.	Up to 10 M	10.10 to 20.00 M	20.10 to 30.00 M	30.10 to 40.00 M	40.10 to 50.00 M	Over 50.00 M
Price/m	\$81.00	\$65.00	\$75.00	\$129.00	\$143.00	\$172.00
Weekly Fees						
L.O.A.	Up to 10 M	10.10 to 20.00 M	20.10 to 30.00 M	30.10 to 40.00 M	40.10 to 50.00 M	Over 50.00 M
Price/m	\$15.00	\$18.00	\$24.00	\$38.00	\$44.00	\$52.00
Daily Fees						
L.O.A.	Up to 10 M	10.10 to 20.00 M	20.10 to 30.00 M	30.10 to 40.00 M	40.10 to 50.00 M	Over 50.00 M
Price/m	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$7.00	\$11.00	\$12.00	\$13.00
Short Stay Fees						
Up to 4 hours: 40% of the Daily Fee		4 to 8 hours: 50% of the Daily Fee		Over 8 hours: Full Daily Fee		
15% Discount on monthly berth fee for foreign Registered vessel that are in storage after the expiry of the specified customs Clearance of 12 months only, and storage period is up to 4 months only , (for Vessels not under the category of SPECIAL RATE)						
Special Rate (From November to May) For Sailing Yachts Under 16 M						
Monthly Rate 473 US\$ For Mono hull & 709 US\$ For Ctamaran						
Daily Rate 37 US\$ for Mono hull & 48 US\$ For Ctamaran						
Special Rate (From November to May) For Sailing Yachts From 16M to19M						
Monthly Rate 788 US\$ For Mono hull & 1024 US\$ For Ctamaran						
Daily rate 53 US\$ For Monohull & 68 US\$ For Ctamaran						
Special Rate for cruise Ships , Ferries and mega yachts staying at Waiting area out side the marina 20 US\$ per/pax Berthing Fees for Waiting area, arrival , deparure Tenders at immigration dock for Embarking and Barkeing passengers through arrival and deparure halls including facilites						
Emergency Visit Only						
Emergency visit for vessel up to 20 M		\$100.00	Per Day			
Emergency visit for vessel from 20.01M Till		\$200.00	Per Day			
Emergency visit for vessel from 30.01M Till		\$400.00	Per Day			
Emergency visit for vessel over 40.01M		\$700.00	Per Day			
Other Services Fees						
Fresh Water	\$6.00	Per Cubic Meter				
Solid Waste Disposal Service	\$1.00	Per Waste Bag				
Refueling Service Fee	\$5.00	Up to 1000 Liters / Per Vessel				
Refueling Service Fee	\$10.00	1000 to 3000 Liters / Per Vessel				
Refueling Service Fee	\$20.00	Over 3000 Liters / Per Vessel				
Power Supply	\$0.30	Per KwH				
Supply of solid waste bags	\$1.50	Package of 10 Bags				
Fax	\$5.00	Per Sheet				
E-mail & Internet Services	\$0.12	Per Minute				
Photocopies	\$0.15	Per Sheet				
Underwater Services	\$40.00	Per Hour				
Pumping out	\$10.00	per Service				
Slip way Service	\$25.00	Up to 6 M LOA / Service				
Slip way Service	\$50.00	6 M to 14 M LOA / Service				
Slip way Service	\$100.00	14.10 M to 20 M LOA / Service				
Repair fess	\$100.00	Per Day				
Receipt of fees collected from foreign vessels for authorities services ministerial decree No. 539/2003 (Temporary Clearance)	\$30.00	Up to 18 M LOA / Per Vessel				
	\$50.00	Over 18 M LOA / Per Vessel				

Figure 11-1 Port Ghalib Marina Fees 2023

Kurukulla – April 2023: Port Ghalib was not quite as described. The web site described it as a full service marina with a range of facilities. In fact it is a 10% built daydream of some Kuwaiti billionaire surrounded by oceans of sand and not much else.

In messages, via Garmin, the marina had told us we would not be allowed to enter in the hours of darkness (1800 – 0600) and not to arrive before 0900. Of course we arrived 15 miles from the marina at 1900 the night before entry and then spent the night, sailing under main alone, slowly gaining to the north. By 0900 we were ready to enter but it was not until 1000 that we were given approval to enter; or so we thought. The day tripper diving boats, setting off for their outings, took priority; their passengers looked less than impressed with the heavy seas! At 1000 the marina manager informed us, on VHF, that they were ready to receive us. Much to their horror we then sailed in when what they had intended was for two of their RIBs to tow us in. By the time we were near the Port Control station, aiming for the quarantine berth, we had the RIBs in attendance simply getting in the way.

Eventually I brought Kurukulla to a halt, 2 metres off the berth and they pushed us on whilst we secured our lines. It was only then a very irate Marina Manager informed me it was “not allowed” to sail into the harbour, “It was too dangerous!”

The remainder of the day was spent wrestling with the bureaucracy until, at 1700, we were told we would be towed to a quiet alongside berth where, if needed, we could lift the engine ashore.

The next two days were spent firstly researching the problem which transpired to be a failed gearbox causing the engine to lock-up.

Next problem was finding a mechanic, capable of pulling the engine into the cabin in order to dismount the gearbox off the back. Within hours our agent had brought onboard a mechanic and the guy had the engine out, and the gearbox off by the end of the day. We even ran the engine sitting on the deck of the cabin to prove our analysis. It ran perfectly, proving, without a shadow of doubt, our problem was the gearbox! Another mechanic; Mahmoud, from Gear Box Marine at Hurgada, 120 miles north; took the gearbox away to strip and early next day forwarded us a video of the disassembled gearbox; not a pretty sight! They had found a spares agent in Cairo and were promising a rebuild in 6 days.

I was not holding my breath but true to his word they had it back onboard late the following Wednesday and the local mechanic had it 90% reinstalled that evening. They came back next day to complete and left me the job of tidying the job up, re-clipping all the cabling, and cleaning up. Not something that occurs to Egyptian mechanics! That done, a quick “Basin Trial” where the gearbox sounded much better, if not perfect, and we were ready to depart.

Two days later, with all bills paid, (the total price of entering Egypt at Port Ghalib for a 40' yacht,, excluding tours but including agents fees, was close on \$US1000) we were ready to set off for the Suez Canal.

The first sign of things to come was that I managed to break the gear/throttle lever the night before departure. A “new” one was produced overnight (or at least newly spray painted white!) at a cost of £160, the most expensive gear lever in Christendom! That problem solved we prepared to set off.

I decided to do a quick trial of the gearbox whilst alongside, before letting go the ropes, and it jammed in ahead and would not move to neutral or astern! A quick disconnection of the

operating linkage proved that it was the gearbox at fault, thereafter a quick visit from a mechanic confirmed my diagnosis; hence, we settled for a re-run of the previous six days! We were going nowhere!

The following day, Mahmoud, the owner of Gear Box Marine (GBM), arrived mid-morning to inspect the problem. An hour later we were again manoeuvring the engine off its mounts and separating the gearbox from the engine for him to take it back to Hurgada and dismantle it again. In the meantime I looked up the price of a new Twin Disc, Technodrive gearbox, £696.00 ex VAT from the UK, possibly the better option; but we decided to wait for the strip down diagnosis the next day. Three days later, after pulling the engine out twice, we eventually had a noisy but working gearbox such that, after 2 weeks alongside, we could leave. That was when we were told that the Coast Guard would not give us approval to leave for another two days! Fortunately that was quickly rescinded and we were then told that we had to be out by midday; it was now 1030 and we needed to re-victual and water! In the end we just made it!

Red Sea Group - Mar 2022: We recently left Port Ghalib. Seems everybody had different experiences. Here are some tips based on mine:

Tell the agent your ETA 48h before. I know it won't be accurate, but try your best.

Call Port Captain when in range and again on entry.

On arrival, people will help you tie on the pier starboard alongside.

Be patient to wait for customs, doctor, immigration etc. Agents do their best but also they have to wait.

Do not have drones with you. They will take it until you check out and you have to charge a huge fee for it.

Do not tie near the Eilly Bar. The music is extreme loud and was a real torture for me, my crew and neighbors. All complaints, even with the harbor master, didn't help.

Prepare 1 or 2 long lines to tie on mooring buoys with stern to the concrete pier. Marina helps you with a Zodiac.

There are no showers on the marina. You must use your own.

Go to the village for laundry, provisioning, and (late) lunch. There is also a shop selling SIM-Cards. It is all round <https://goo.gl/maps/jjJS2ddeSYszRDgm7> .

Fresh market is beside this market: <https://goo.gl/maps/63fsRm7BybszV9nQ7>

SIM-Card: I preferred Vodafone 40 GB for about 45 USD instead of "We". "We" had a slightly better signal but is more expensive and the measurement of a GB is "sophisticated". My 30 GB was empty after using less than 17 GB.

ATMs you find at the entry of the harbor terminal and as well in the village.

Expensive Alcohol you can buy also in the village. Near <https://goo.gl/maps/dZLnfaWHumJGci86A>

Buying diesel is complicated. Do it via your agent and be patient. They do not like EGP but they take it.

Tell the agent at least 4 days upfront when you want to leave. Security Team of the Coast Guard is the bottle neck.

Marina takes VISA, Agent cash.

Mai Tai – Feb 2022: See Mai Tai's comments on Check In and Check Out at Port Ghalib above.

Marina Fees: Check with your agent for current charges. We paid \$450/mo off season rate for under 15 meter monohull.

Sim Cards: There is a small computer store in the employee village a couple of kilometers walk from the main marina. We paid 300ep for approximately 36 gigabytes of data at this store, far less than we were quoted in the tourist village. The Vodafone sim is probably the best option because it will work in most places all the way through Egypt. The stores down in the tourist area all want to sell you sim cards because they double or triple the price. We stayed away from these stores.

Laundry: There is a place that does laundry in the same building as Adam Market and the computer store but on the west side of the building.

Diesel: Diesel and petrol are available at the fuel dock next to the Customs Dock. They do not want to fill jerry cans, only internal fuel tanks. However, our agent was able to get special permission to fill our jerry cans after much discussion. We paid US\$1.18 / litre in February, 2022. We didn't need petrol. Bottom line, if your jerry cans are full, leave them full and top up your main tanks at the fuel dock. We made the mistake of transferring our jerry cans into the main tanks first so we could take them over by dinghy to fill them. Wrong move!

Groceries: There are three grocery stores in the employee village. They mostly carry the same things but you can get enough food to survive while you are here. Certain days are better than others as all supplies come in from Quseir or Hurghada, usually once each week. The fresh vegetables are not very fresh and will not last long on board. If you need to get a big stock of fresh vegetables that will last, it is worth driving up to the market in Al Quseir. We had to go to Hurghada for visas and found wonderful fresh vegetables there. However, it is a long way if you are just going for veggies.

Repairs and Maintenance: There are no diesel shops or chandlers in Port Ghalib. The local dive boats all go to Quseer or Hurghada for repairs. You can find many marine parts in Hurghada but it is nearly a 3 hour drive each way. We needed a repair to our refrigerator and the nearest technician was in Quseer, an hour away. We waited a few days until he was in Ghalib for another job.

Visa renewal: Because we did some land travel while the boat was safe in Port Ghalib, we had to extend our visa. In the past, Immigration and Customs allowed a two week window from the time your visa expired to allow you to wait for a weather window to get out of the port with no fines. Sadly, the Egyptian Navy now requires that your visa be within it's official operating dates before they will grant you permission to leave. In our case, we were one day past our visa expiry date when we applied for our exit permit and it was denied. This forced us to get an extension on our visas, which can only be done in Hurghada, 3 hours drive away, and at a cost of \$108 each. The minimum time to process a visa extension is ten days from application date so we also missed our next weather window. Be aware that Egypt is a moving target. Meaning

that what you are told may be how things were last week. We found that even our agent was unaware of this change. Although, we later discovered that he was conveniently unaware of many things.

Other Stuff:

The Coast Guard prohibits moving around inside Port Ghalib by boat between the hours of 1800 and 0800. This includes dinghies! Which means if you are berthed on the south side of the harbour (this is where foreign vessels are normally berthed) you will not be able to go in to the main village for dinner or even a drink in the evening unless you walk the four kilometres around the bay – and back, in the dark. Just another control tactic being implemented by the Coast Guard. This is applicable to Egyptians as well, although we occasionally heard outboards go by in the dark.

You cannot get a dive tank filled in Port Ghalib. All the dive tanks are collected each evening from the local commercial dive boats and driven by truck to Quseir, an hour to the north. They are filled during the night and returned the next morning.

If you need LPG you have to buy a full “exchange tank” and transfer the gas to your own tanks. You may be able to send your tank to Quseir for filling, but check with your agent. You will probably need to send your connector with the tank.

Port Ghalib is a dive destination only. Guests fly in, dive for five days and fly out. They are captive at their chosen resort. All food is provided at their hotel. There is nothing here to see except desert and a few flash resorts, which are off limits to cruisers. However, this is a safe place to leave your boat if you want to see a bit of ancient Egypt. You can hire a car and driver in Port Ghalib, as we did, and go to Luxor and the Valley of the Kings. We spent three nights and four days going to Luxor and really enjoyed it. You can also do this on a day trip packed into a big bus leaving at 0400 and returning after dark. Your agent can help you choose. If we had known how difficult it was to leave here, we may not have bothered going.

Why do we recommend that you do NOT stop here? There are three problems that are difficult to ignore.

1. If you just need fuel, it will be very expensive to check in, pay your agent, pay your marina fee (daily rate is \$35 for under 15 meters during low season), pay your visa fees, immigration and customs, etc. That makes the cost of diesel very high, especially if you are just topping up your jerry cans.
2. Port Ghalib is like a ghost town built by Disney World. All fancy hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops but no real town. This place was built for dive tourism and there are no chandleries, work shops or hardware stores. There are no fresh food markets here and the stores that do sell food are often lacking in fresh supplies. You can see all there is to see in two days – one if you walk fast. So the only reason to enter Port Ghalib is to leave your boat and travel inland.
3. When you want to leave, you need to apply for your exit permit from coast guard. This is where you will learn about “Egyptian Time”. It seems that no one is in a hurry to see your wallet leave town and coast guard has complete control of every port and marsa from here to Port Suez. We had to apply for our exit permit twice before we could finally leave. The first one we applied for finally arrived after the weather window had gone so we opted to wait for the next window. However, we found out that the exit permit is only good for five days and the next weather window was two weeks away. In addition, this

delay meant that our initial 30 day visas expired. The only place to extend our visas is in Hurghada, a 3 hour drive each way. You cannot extend your visas online anymore. OK, so another \$108 each for the visa plus travel to and from Hurghada. We did that, but they can no longer just stamp your passport with the extension. You now have to wait ten days for a new visa identification card, which is issued in Cairo. Also, you have to pick this up in person. This means another round trip to Hurghada. Then we watched the weather patterns and apply for the exit permit again. This time it took seven days to receive it and even though we are already two days into a three day window, we are leaving anyway. Enough is enough. We will be so glad to be out of Egypt.

Anemos – August 2020: Due to the Coronavirus, we left our boat in Port Ghalib from March to August. Having now left Port Ghalib, I thought I'd give group members my appraisal of it.

In a nutshell, it's a good pit stop, but not a great marina.

FOR: the second Nasco agent we had (the first one went on holiday during the lockdown and apparently has come back yet!), called Mohamed Gerrard, was good: courteous, responsive, helpful, he got things done and more importantly, WHEN he said he would get them done. He even went the extra length to bring us a gift of 4 kgs of onions the day we were leaving, as we had not been able to find any during our shop for provisions.

SAFETY: The marina provides a safe place to leave your boat if you want to explore historical sites from there, such as Luxor.

Fuel: price was reasonable 1.18\$ US/ lt. and easy as you can fill up at the Total station by the port entrance.

AGAINST: This is not a real marina in that it provides very few services: Waste disposal, water and electricity are provided (at a fee). But no showers or toilets, no laundry facilities, no supermarket in the marina (although Mohamed did take us to some local shops which had basic supplies). There was a tantalizing pool right next to our dock, but we were not allowed to use it! Also there was a restaurant providing buffet type "all- you- can-eat" meals for the people staying in the resort on a package holiday. But we tried it only once: the food was very ordinary and the final bill exorbitant!

Boat cleaning: CHECK PRICE BEFOREHAND! The young man who cleaned our hull was called Mido. I believe he's a caretaker of one of the big dive boats sitting in harbour. He did a good job, but tried to rip us off when it came to paying him, asking for 150\$ US for approximately 2 1/2 hrs work! We gave him less and he was not happy! The usual problem in Egypt...

So, all in all, a mark of 3 out of 5, but I would not go there to have a great time! (To be fair, we saw it in exceptional circumstances).

Joanna's reply to this post: Fair assessment of Port Ghalib Marina. We spent 3 months there during lockdown time (12 March - 9 June 2020). There are two entities: the marina (which unfairly claims a label as "a marina", and the tour agency NASCO.

The "marina" has no relationship with any of the glitzy resorts or their facilities. At this time, you have to use "the" agent provided by NASCO for check-in and out. Although I couldn't fault either NASCO'S Mohamed 1 or Mohamed 2 with shoddy business practices like fraud or cheating, it is worth noting that neither of them were interested in "back-sheesh". Unfortunately, the whole Port Ghalib area suffers from a characteristic over-abundance of tourists and their money.

Cruisers are not like tourists. We don't fly in with "a bag of money", spread it around for 7 days and then fly home to our jobs.

Joanna – March 2020: SV Joana is in Port Ghalib Egypt, now. We've been here since 12 March. A dive live aboard from Sudan just arrived at the dock. Port Ghalib is not closed. The NASCO agent Mohamed has just informed me that Port Ghalib will not close. Having said that, I understand that the world-wide situation is fluid, but that is the situation now, and that's what I've been messaged only 5 minutes ago.

Their website offers a heavily discounted berth, \$300 for a 16m monohull. There is a small community of expats and locals (who work in the tourist industry) that remain here. The roads in/out are closed to passenger traffic, but supplies are still moving. You must make a reservation, your own communication with the Port Ghalib authorities. The marina website portal is:

<http://www.portghalib.com/marina/>

I suggest that you visit their portal, and make a request for a reservation using their form. ALSO, send an email to Captain Fawzy and NASCO tours.

The Captain in charge of the marina is (we haven't met him but have heard many good things) sherif.fawzy@portghalib.com

You must be cleared in by an agent that works for NASCO tours:

portghalib@nascotours.com

yachting@nascotours.com

The marina at Port Ghalib is hardly a marina, per se – at least in my experience. Its a bunch of resorts, restaurants and souvenir shops sharing a common bay and dock area (mostly for commercial dive and snorkel charters) with room for about a dozen sailboats. They advertise toilets and showers, but the toilets are the same ones that the fly-in tourists use, public toilets. There are no showers, none. They advertise wifi available, but in truth it costs \$0.12 USD per minute to use the wifi in their office. A better solution is to buy a Vodaphone SIM card and use a hotspot. The “docks” are all concrete wall, Med-moor style, OK by me. Thankfully, we had assistance to get into this spot, as there was a lot of wind blowing from the side – at the time.

The marina staff helped to put their AC plug on the end of my electrical cord, so I didn't have to buy one. They say the water is not good to drink, but I tested it, and its 237ppm desalinated water, probably better than what we drink with our own water maker. There are no minerals in the water, but I believe that as long as you balance that with a healthy diet of fruit and vegetables, there is no downside to drinking desalinated water. Some water makers now come with a system to add some minerals, just not salt. I haven't yet been to the marina office, but I did request a month long stay. At this time of the year it's a fixed price, \$300 USD for a 16m boat, for a month. It's a good deal. I wonder how long that deal will last?

We took a walk about, and found a beached sailboat, a Beneteau, about 42 feet. It has been here for a few years and is pretty much stripped of anything valuable, although the Perkins engine is still there.

Like much of Egypt, there is a reef just past the beach. I can only surmise that the boat hit a reef, lost its rudder and went aground – quickly. These Beneteaus have a spade rudder, one

that is vulnerable when hitting a reef, rocks or a sea container. They do, however, turn-on-a-dime when in the marina.

There are 10 sailboats here now, most of them travelling North, when possible. The Suez Canal is open, but that's it. All the Mediterranean ports are closed. One of these boats is a Dutch sailboat, moving South through the Red Sea – heading to SE Asia. Most of the owners and crew have flown back to their home countries because of the world wide corona virus pandemic. In fact, most of the staff working here have also gone home, simply because there are virtually no tourists to stay in the hotels, buy restaurant food, go diving or buy souvenirs. Egypt, like most countries, has closed its borders for two weeks to non-Egyptian nationals. At least with no tourists around, the internet is fast enough!

Two more sailboats arrived yesterday, one all the way from India. A German single-hander arrived two days before us and sailed (single handed) all the way from the Maldives. I think it was about a 28 day passage.

We are keen to see the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, Asswan etc — but you can't drive more than about 50km in this area before running into a police checkpoint. They are enforcing Egyptian law, and no unnecessary travel is permitted. All of these tourist sites are closed. In the meantime, we'll just have to bide our time.

Muttley – June 2019: After a few days relaxing in Port Ghalib, we refueled and headed north. Refueling was a hassle as they only accept cash, and the ATM will only give you the equivalent of about \$120usd each transaction, and a maximum of 3 transactions per day. We wanted to take on 2000 litres but only took less than half that due to cash restraints.

Paseafique – June 2019: I joined the boat in **Port Ghalib, Egypt** where we checked in and obtained our cruising permit. We left the boat there for a trip to Luxor -the first time for both of us and definitely worthwhile. We stopped in several places on the way north to Port Tawfiq (none on the Sinai Peninsula). We were not approached by any officials (or “unofficials” for that matter) and did not need to show our cruising permit. We left the boat in Tawfiq for a trip to Cairo -again a first time and definitely worthwhile.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: Egypt is a pain and a bureaucratic nightmare. Clearance in Port Ghalib took us 10 hours, and getting the cruising permit more than 48 hours. Also with the cruising permit it is not permitted going ashore outside of the Port Ghalib area without additional clearance (and costs) in Hurghada, Sharm el Sheik and so on. We didn't get why we would need this permit, expect for the Egyptians making money.

FB Group Red Sea Crossing – April 2019: Since there has been that many critical comments I feel one should explain a bit more what this place is about.

1 - Port Ghalib is a tourist place, one of these fake all-inclusive tourist destinations in the middle of nowhere. Therefore, when you arrive, they (men only!!) have dollar-signs in their eyes, meaning you have to watch out. However the marina is 300 dollars per month. This is far less as you will pay in the Med. The reefs around there are colorful. The water is clear - good for diving and snorkeling.

2 - The fees are as stated already. You have to pay for the sailing permit and the agent claims he has to go to Hurgada to get it for you. Not sure he really has to go personally. Still, there is

no way around that. You can only avoid these costs if you go directly to Suez. The rumor says, it is even more expensive in other ports.

3 - We needed a spare part from the UK. The agent wanted 400 dollars to get the part out of the customs. We decided to get it delivered to Luxor (which we wanted to visit anyway) instead to a DHL shop and had to pay approx. 100 dollars for customs clearance.

4 - Everybody tells you that you are not allowed to rent a car as a foreigner unless you have a special permission to drive in their country. This is not true! We got a car from the airport and drove (ourselves) to Luxor. There is only one road across the mountains for which you need a permit. Otherwise everything is easy.

5 - Don't buy a SIM card in Port Ghalib! All the Vodafone shops are a scam. They sell you cards which are far too expensive and more or less useless since you cannot use them for phone calls. In Luxor we got a 10 GB sim card with 20 min free international calls for approx. 10 dollars.

FB Group (Red Sea) – Mar 2019: In Port Ghalib we paid to check out :

agent 120 (they give us back \$6)

customs \$15 for Nasco service

sailing permit 150

We paid because we felt that Nasco could manufacture a delay to depart. They gave the papers to us as the boat started to leave from the mooring.

Again, please avoid Port Galib.

FB Group (Red Sea) – Mar 2019: Port Ghalib: The harbour master Capt Sherif has sent me the below e-mail. For those who are on route to Port Ghalib and for those who have been through and had to pay these extortinate fees I suggest they should write to Capt Sherif (sheriffaw@gmail.com) and express your feelings /concerns.

If we all write then maybe things will change if not for the immediate ones sailing through but for the future sailors.

“Good day Capt : Albert

Thanks for a kind complains about Nasco Tours .

As I have mentioned they start in charge first of October 2018. They have completed a processing 9 Yachts check inn and out

Up to date addition with 3 Yachts through the last 2 day.

No comments or complains from any of those yachts .

We have about 17 yachts under way

The marina management have Customers Satisfaction survey sheet Agent Evaluation is an important Item

The marina will inspect all the sheets and we will evaluate the agent services.”

Ball in everyone's park. If anyone has contact with those on route, can you write and advise the situation and tell them to complain like mad.

March 2019: NASCO (a company), agent in Port Ghalib, is charging a \$50USD immigration fee plus \$27 USD per person visa unless you already have an Egypt E-Visa. With an E-Visa, Nasco does not charge the \$50 fee.

The EVisa is available online for \$25. It is good for 30 days, multiple entry and expires 90 days from issue date.

<https://www.visa2egypt.gov.eg/eVisa/Home>

March 2019: For those sailors who are coming to Port Ghalib:

Captain Jamal (or Chamal) from Port Control) was visiting me and other boats to clarify things. He was very upset about Nasco.

NASCO paid me back 120\$.

It is still not clear if you have to pay leaving from here and what and for what service. It is clear that they have tried to rip people off.

Anyhow it seems one has to get a cruising permit, no matter if you stop along the way to Suez or not. But 150 \$ maybe is way too much but I do not know. Maybe 30\$ is the government fee?

Another problem was the transfer service from the marina to the main part of Port Ghalib. They tried to charge 2\$ or 1,5€ per person / trip. It is free of charge! No matter how often you go. One may also use his own dinghy but only from sunrise to sunset.

11.4.2 Hurghada

Kurukulla – April 2023 – A Stop for Gearbox Repairs: Despite our agent in Port Ghalib having promised to inform them of our impending arrival, without engine, they seemed quite surprised to see us. They obviously had little idea on how to manoeuvre a sailing vessel, without engine. But eventually we were safely alongside their fuelling jetty and I breathed a deep sigh of relief!

After all that we were ready for a rest... but it was not to be. I had to go to the harbourmasters office and check in before I could relax. It proved to be the most expensive marina to date, four days - \$US 380 ! This later morphed into one month stay for \$US 780, a rather better deal.

As our 30 day visas for Egypt were about to run out in only a few days, we were now forced to take temporary residence in Egypt and extend the customs clearance for Kurukulla; another £300 bill, (excluding the agents fees; these fees remain outstanding until you leave and render an unpleasant surprise when you finally depart).



After living in Egypt for 3 weeks I'm still not sure I would want to be resident here despite Hurgada being a tourist diving centre and much more lively. Many Egyptians seem to think all Europeans have bottomless pockets!

Having eventually settled in for a long awaited rest, that evening the mechanics arrived to again remove the gearbox. Next morning I was able to go see the internal damage for myself and it was obvious the gearbox was beyond repair. Hence, with the aid of Mahmoud I again started the process of acquiring a new gearbox, which would have to be ordered from UK, Spain or Italy. The biggest problem was that no one was prepared to even estimate how long it would take to arrive. Hence my decision to book into the marina for a month... Any incoming gearbox has to pass all the bureaucratic hurdles of import controls and customs "checks", otherwise known as extortion, before the owner can get their hands on it!

See [Bringing in Parts from Overseas](#) section for details of what Kurukulla went through to get their gearbox from the UK to Hurghada.

Having been picked up at midday on Friday the 9th of June, by mid day on the 11th it was in Cairo. Despite a minor hiccup over the delivery address (soon sorted out by Ahmed at EMI) it looked as though DHL were on track to meet their predicted delivery date of 13th of June, great! This all worked as planned and by Sunday the 18th it was ready for collection from EMI in Hurgada. Next problem was availability of Mahmoud who was working away. Fortunately he was due back on the following Tuesday.

Throughout all of this saga I had also been having a running debate with the management of the marina over the total lack of facilities; no toilets, showers or laundry facilities available, all of which were advertised in their publicity. It reached the stage where I stormed into the manager's office having been told by his "secretary" that he was too busy to see me! On entry I found he was not present and did not work from here! His office was in Cairo! Fortunately a resident of one of the marina side apartments overheard the altercation and took pity on us offering us use of the facilities of their apartment. Thank you Hein and Marja, you saved our day!

The story was that the "VIP" facilities were under maintenance and unavailable (despite the fact we had been given access to them and used them once, after which they were quickly permanently locked!) The PR Manager informed me that they had "no idea when the facilities might be back available and I had to realise this was Egypt not Europe, things are different here!". I am not sure he realised how insulting that statement was to his fellow countrymen!

By close of day Wednesday we had a working gearbox installed. We were set for departure on Thursday midday after topping up with all the usual, water and food.

It was then we discovered that Egypt was shutting down for the coming week for the festival of Id-ul-Adha when all government departments close for a week! This left us with a choice of officially departing Egypt from Hurgada (no visa is necessary to transit the Suez Canal) or potentially delaying again at Suez waiting for Customs and Immigration clearance. We chose the former having already suffered enough delay!

You cannot clear out from the marina, so we had to relocate to the "International Port" where we berthed on filthy black fendering more suited to a cruise liner. After we waited the mandatory two hours for the "over-pressed" officials to attend to us (there was nothing else going on in the whole International Terminal but it still took two hours!) we were free to leave.

By now it was too late to make for one of the “allowed anchorages” (where you are “allowed to anchor when in transit without visas”) on the Sinai side of the Red Sea and hence we settled for an “illegal” anchorage in the lee of Bluff Point on Small Gubal Island some 30 miles north of Hurgada. To make sure the gearbox was fully operational, and to save time, we motored to windward in the face of 25kts of North wind. Fortunately we arrived just as night fell and were able to pick up a mooring usually used by dive boats during the day.

April 2021 – We are just leaving Hurghada heading back to Mediterranean after wintering in and around Hurghada.

A couple of points and recommendations that may be of interest to some without any particular order:

- 1) I remember reading in the Red Sea Compendium that someone had an Egyptian cruising permit that was never checked, well, mine was every time I went out.
- 2) Do NOT forget to hoist the courtesy flag after you bring down the Q-one. \$4500 fine.
- 3) Now I never went there myself, but apart from Sudan that everyone seem to enjoy, it was also not difficult getting permission from the Tourism Ministry of Somaliland to go into Berbera. They seemed very happy I had the interest as they haven't welcomed many sailing boats the last 100 years. Supposedly completely different from Somalia, it seems very stable and safe now according to friends who do business and help with UN projects there, but having spread out family visits, I couldn't go in the end.
- 4) If you need anything done in Hurghada, I've trusted guide/first mate Ehab from a german dive/tour-boat who is very practical and knows when to bring in other, eg Electrician, Stainless Steel Welder as needed and has all connections to do everything at a very decent price. Work done was recaulking, fixing fridge, pumps, stainless ladder and stanchions etc. Even trusted him with taking care of kids, dog, keys etc! His Whatsapp number is: +20 111 157 4067
- 5) Another good contact is Captain Radwan who will be able to assist with all dealing with authorities, booking trips, etc at a very reasonable price. Very helpful and among the few ever to actually follow up and check everything is ok. His wife Gisela also very helpful (from Germany). When it comes to clarity and good Communication and willingness to help, Radwan is on par with Ehab Soukar At Sea (he should probably be your guy in Hurghada actually, Captain Hebi!). His Whatsapp number is +20 100 034 4317
- 6) My agent for clearance out of Hurgada is Captain Hebi and I will be checking out of Suez and not Hurghada. Port clearance out of Hurghada was \$60.

Noonsite – February 2020: Hurghada is located at the southern end of the Gulf of Suez. It is possible to secure an agent here for the Suez canal transit, although better deals may be found in Suez.

Position 27°13.44'N / 033°50.59'E (marina entrance)

Yachts coming from the south can check into Egypt at Port Ghalib Marina or Hurghada Port. (It is no longer possible – since 2015 – to check in at Hurghada Marina as the first Port of Entry: a visit to either Port Ghalib or Hurghada Port must be done for visa and canal fees.)

Note that Port Ghalib marina is recommended as the fees currently being charged in Hurghada Port are ridiculously high (as much as \$1000 per entry including agent fees).

Yachts coming from the north and wanting to visit Hurghada can do the check in at Port Said and take their visas from there and ask for a port clearance to Hurghada Marina. Be sure to specify Hurghada Marina so that you can go directly to the marina and avoid having to go to Hurghada Port first. The agent in Hurghada will finish the customs clearance on arrival at the marina.

It is advisable to contact the marina or the shipping agent before arrival in order to confirm the rates and the formalities, in case there are any changes.

Clearance at Hurghada Port

The Port Officials do not start until 0900 hours and finish at 1700 hours, so time your arrival accordingly. It is better to turn up at Hurghada Port early in the morning and try and avoid Fridays, as most officials will be off or away praying.

Formalities are lengthy if not using an agent (it is possible officials may refuse to deal with you directly if you choose not to hire an agent). Each arrival must be registered with Immigration. All foreign flagged boats are liable for a Customs Fee, which will be done with the Agent in Hurghada, along with the other paperwork.

When you arrive in Hurghada Port, you can either come alongside the dock (if there's space between the fast ferry and fishing boats, and if you are happy with going alongside) or drop anchor just outside. If you anchor, the officials and agent will come to your boat in order to complete the formalities.

The agent will take the ship's documents, passports, and last Port Clearance. It can take up to four hours to complete formalities. The agent will keep the documents in order to finish all the necessary clearances, before returning them to you at the marina. You will be given a copy of the cruising permit, the original is held by the agent until you leave.

Permission is required to move the boat anywhere within the port, even to get fuel or go to the marina. Get this permission in writing as often as possible.



Note: Yachts can not clear in at Abu Tig, Hurghada Marina or El Gouna, they have to go to Hurghada Port first to complete check-in and then they are allowed to sail onwards.

Clearing Out of Egypt

This can be done using your agent. Fees are approx. 240\$. Note you must exit Egypt waters immediately.

Med Asia Sailing Safari – Nov 2019: Hurghada is no longer a port of entry for yachts. Until October 2018, the check in / out at Port Ghalib was done by the Harbourmasters Office. Now you have to use an agent. There is only one agent for Port Ghalib namely, Nasco. From information posted on various sites, web pages etc. the fees to check in which includes 1-month cruising permit is some \$500+.

If you go to Hurghada, again new rules have come about since they build the new “Hurghada International Port Building”. Once upon a time you could sail straight into the Marina, where your agent would do all necessary paperwork etc. Now even if you have a cruising permit you have to check in and out of the Port before you can enter or leave the marina. In 2017/18 we paid 250\$ per yacht in Port Authority & agent fees. But, since then it has become a lottery and is anyone’s guess. We know of some who have paid \$750+ and have heard of \$1000. Even the agents Prince of the Red Sea and Felix Maritime are advising yachts to miss out Hurghada.

The fees for Hurghada Marina are the same as Port Ghalib. The facilities (provisions, shopping, bars, restaurant’s etc.) are far better here and you are only 4 miles from Hurghada Airport. Unfortunately, the Port Authority fees make it an expensive and frustrating stop over.

Muttley – June 2019: Because we couldn’t get as much diesel as we wanted in Port Ghalib (due to cash issues) we decided to stop in **Hurghada** to top up the tanks. BAD IDEA!

As it is in Egypt, nothing is easy. It took 2 full days to get a port clearance and authority from the coast guard to simply visit the fuel dock. Massive headache.

From here we had a rough overnighter to **Suez** with 35kts on the nose the whole way.

Albert Cook – 2017: In the Hurghada area there are 2 Marinas, Hurghada Marina and one 12 mile further north called El Gouna (Abu Tig). Previously, having checked into Egypt at either Port Said if coming from the North or Port Ghalib if coming from the South you sailed straight to the Marina. The new rules require you to check in at Hurghada Port prior to going into either Marina and after leaving either Marina.

11.4.3 El Gouna / Abu Tig Marina (Haulout)

Joana – 2019: El Gouna, about 25km North of Hurgada has a lift of some sort. Their website says they can handle vessels up to 16m, 1.8m draft. I recommend you contact them, and ask for details. <https://abutig-marina.com/abutig-marina-home/facilities/>

Alfred Cook – 2017: In the Hurghada area there are 2 Marinas, Hurghada Marina and one 12 mile further north called El Gouna (Abu Tig). Previously, having checked into Egypt at either Port Said if coming from the North or Port Ghalib if coming from the South you sailed straight to the Marina. The new rules require you to check in at Hurghada Port prior to going into either Marina and after leaving either Marina. This yacht arrived at Hurghada on 3rd Dec 2017. Checked in at Port (takes about 2 hours)) then moved to El Gouna Marina.

11.4.4 Suez Canal Yacht Club (Port Suez)

[See the Suez Canal section.](#)

11.4.5 Suez Canal Yachts Marina (aka Ismailia Yachts Marina)

Sep 2023: Berthing rates for ISMAILIA YACHTS MARINA :-

Up to 10 m > 30\$

More than 10 to 20 m > 40\$

More than 20 m > 50\$

More than 30 days to 90 days > 50% off

More than 90 days to 6 months > 70 % off

Some government information here:

https://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/English/Navigation/NavigationCirculars/Pages/Sca_27-9-2023.aspx

11.4.6 Port Said “Yacht Club”

Kurukulla – July 2023: This is another facility for yachts managed by the Suez Canal Authority. It is in Port Said at the north end of the Suez Canal.

We opted not to spend the night here as we would not be allowed off the boat. And I had been assured that the berth there was not very comfortable as it is susceptible to the wash of all the passing traffic.

11.5 Anchoring and Anchorages in Egypt

2023 Notes: From Captain Heebi (Ehab Soukar at Sea on FB), Prince of the Red Sea Agency: Allowed anchorages for short stops due to weather. More details about each anchorage further below.

Even when you ARE permitted to stop and anchor (presumably to wait for weather), and even with a “sailing permit”, you are NOT permitted to go ashore. You are not supposed to launch your dinghy or go snorkeling/diving. You should not go ashore except at “ports”. (paraphrased from a statement by Captain Heebi).

1. Wadi Gimal 24° 39.47' N / 035° 09.48' E
2. Marsa Alam 25° 04.60' N / 034° 53.93' E
3. Soma Bay 26° 50.91' N / 033° 58.85' E
4. Marsa Zaraba 27° 50.17' N / 033° 59.64' E
5. El Tur 28° 14.03' N / 033° 36.66' E
6. Ras Jihan (Gihan) 28° 30.47' N / 033° 17.24' E
7. Ras Abu Zenima 29° 02.61' N / 033° 06.88' E (29°02.444'N / 33°6.973'E)
8. Ras Matarmah 29° 26.71' N / 032° 43.38' E (29°26.789'N / 32°43.335'E)
9. Ras Sudr 29° 34.60' N / 032° 42.25' E (29°34.803'N / 32°42.440'E Ras Sudr)
10. Suez Waiting area west side if you arrive late night, W1 anchorage.

As of March 2023, there are additional anchorages that Captain Heebi has submitted for approval for yachts to stop, but approval has not yet been given. So make other stops at your own risk.

Additional anchorages that have been proposed but not approved as of Mar 2023:

28°56.148'N • 33°10.047'E Ras Budran

28°09.443'N • 33°39.425'E Shield Rayah

27°09.481'N • 33°58.943'E Abu Rimath

26°42.125'N • 33°58.937'E Gaziret Safaga

26°05.914'N • 34°17.181'E Quseir

25°47.031'N • 34°29.393'E Marsa Wizr

2022 Notes: THINGS HAVE CHANGED A LOT IN THE LAST 2 YEARS... anchorages that were once OK to anchor are no longer OK.

Q: I was looking to enter the Red Sea from the Med in late 2020 and stay in the Egypt region on anchorages and do some diving etc for 3 months and then come back to the Med. From your experience is this feasible to avoid marinas and stay on anchor at a reasonable expense?

A: To sail around Egypt and stay in anchorages you will be in Egyptian waters which will require a cruising permit. Cruising permits are only issued in Hurgahada and Port Ghalib. Furthermore in 2015 they changed the rules in that you could not be more than 10 days out of a marina / port. After 10 days you had to report back in and get further clearance from the coastguard.

A: As an alternative to Egypt, the diving in Sudan is amazing if you have your own equipment. You can anchor in the marsas free. Supplies in Port Sudan and some in Suakin.

11.5.1 Absolutely DO NOT STOP

Below are anchorages that in past years have been favorite stops of cruisers, but now are no longer permitted to stop. Stopping in any of these places could cost you as much as \$1000 USD per night.

11.5.1.1 Marsa Thelema (Do Not Stop Here) (29-04N / 32-38E)

29° 03.56' N / 032° 38.13' E

This used to be a good stopping place, but as of January 2022, Capt Heebie says do not stop here.

11.5.1.2 Tawila Island / Endeavour Harbour (Don't Stop Here) 27-33N / 33-47E

This used to be a good location to stop, but it is no longer

It is now an Army Base, and you are prohibited to stop.

Dr NO – March 2022: I arrived Wednesday evening after dark. Single-handed, tired, recovering from illness but desperate to go home, I had skipped Soma Bay and wanted to move on as far as possible before the forecast strong wind set in.

Arrived around 1900 and saw a lot of lights and buildings. Not in Red Sea Pilot, not on navionics and neither on the open CPN google earth pictures.

I was happy to find however, three sets of lit red/green buoys nicely marking the entrance. All this made me think it was a resort.

In the spot where I was going to drop anchor, N27°33.8 E033°47.0 there is a big solid pontoon with visitor-friendly cleats, electricity and a fuel station. I didn't think there was enough room left to anchor so went side-to to the pontoon in the howling wind.

Soon the owner of a motoryacht, also parked on same pontoon, came over to tell me I wasn't supposed to be there, it's an army base, and the only way I could stay was by claiming engine failure. He works as a security guard and lives on his boat.

A delegation of 6 men came to tell me it was ok to stay because of my engine problem, but I paid 400 USD for one night (negotiated down from 600). I got a receipt from "Tawila Island Marina, Marina Authority". I felt ripped off.

I got diesel at 1.67 USD / liter.

An hour later they came to tell me, if I wanted to stay more nights there would be a degressive tariff.

The next two days I beat my way up to El Tor where I am waiting now for the wind to calm down a bit. I hope to be left alone.

11.5.1.3 Port Berenice (Do Not Stop Here!)

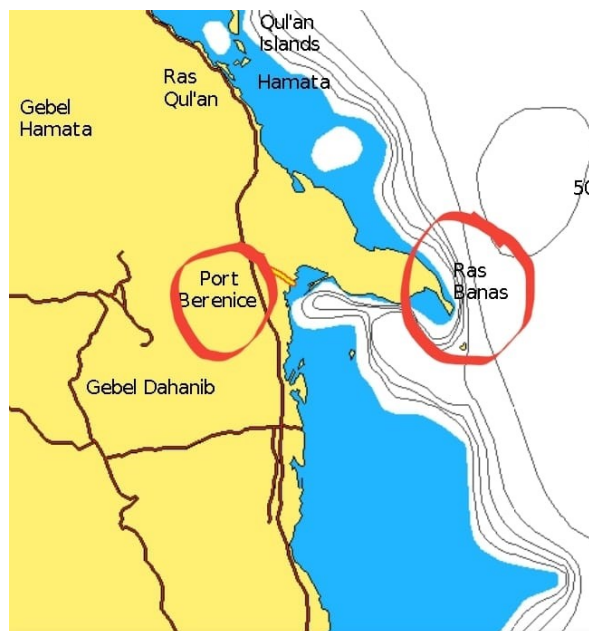
23-54.748 N / 35-34.405 E

Captain Heebie – January 2022: Do not stop at Port Berenice, Marsa Thelamat, Ras Banas. It will cost you more than the cost of your boat.

The Egyptian Navy has been very aggressive recently about keeping yachts out of this area. It used to be a well-placed stopover for yachts moving up and down the Red Sea.

Captain Heebie – April 2021: Do not stop at Port Berenice—it is a Navy Base, and they do not want yachts there.

A French yacht went there and told the Navy officer "My agent is Capt Heebie", and gave him my number. The officer called me and said that the boat would be arrested. I explained to the Captain that he must leave immediately.



11.5.1.4 Marsa Malab (Do Not Stop Here!)

Captain Heebie – June 2023: Though Marsa Malab was on the list of requested anchorages, the officials have denied this request due to security reasons. Don't stop here!

11.5.1.5 Ras Banas (23-51N / 35-47E)

23°51.129'N • 35°47.258'E Ras Banas

11.5.2 Approved Anchorages 2023

The below anchorages have specifically been approved as temporary stopping places when enroute up or down the Red Sea. If you have not checked in to Egypt, you can stop for weather and rest, but must not put your dinghy down, go snorkeling or scuba diving, or go ashore.

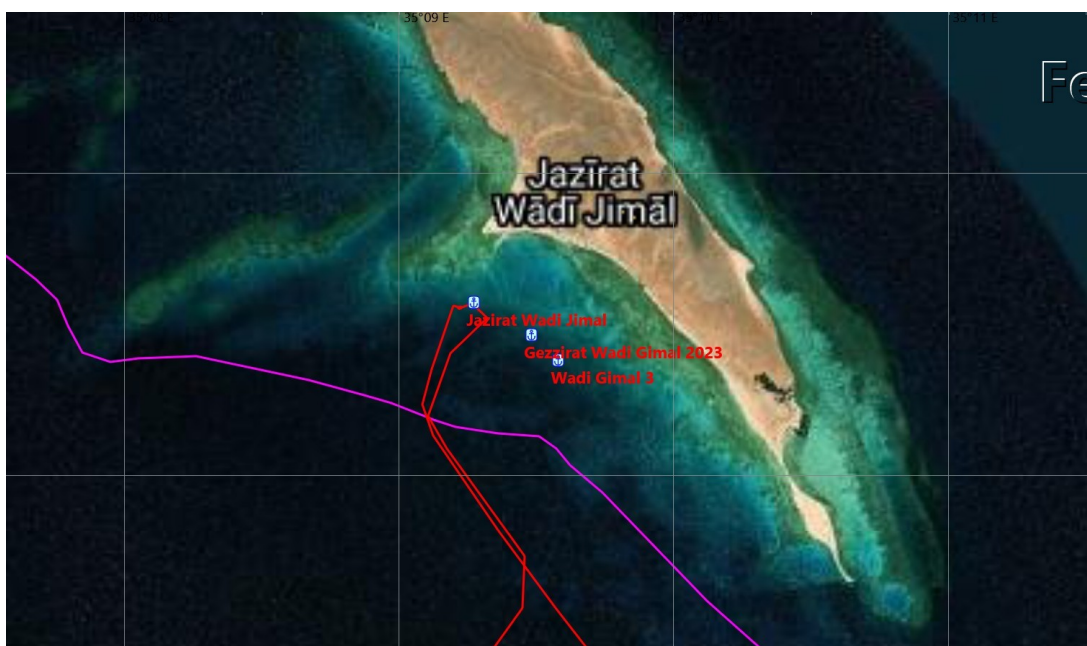
11.5.2.1 Wadi Gimal (24-40N / 35-10E)

Anchorage: 24°39.468' N / 035°09.479' E Confirmed by Capt Heebi to be a permitted stop.

Tuvalu – April 2023: 6 meters sand. Easy anchorage on a wide open to South Bay behind the reef. You could also enter at night, it's free of danger. If your draft less than 1.5 m you could go closer to the beach, once crossed the corals heads, it's again 3 meters.

Good protection against northerly winds, we had 34 knots.

Black Duck – May 2023: 24° 39.385' N / 035° 09.576' E) Last night at midnight, we dropped the anchor in the lee of Wadi Gimal, our first stop in Egypt. No internet here. On our 2nd day here, the boat is slowly getting covered in a thin layer of sand. If we stay here long enough we might be able to build sand castles in the cockpit.



The nights are cold, the water is freezing, at least to us who are acclimatized to the tropics. The wind blows strong through the day and calms for a few hours in the night, enough that we can sleep comfortably without worrying about being blown back south to Sudan. (Black Duck stayed 8 days here waiting for weather, with some other boats).

11.5.2.2 Marsa Alam (25-04N / 34-54E)

Tuvalu April 2023 – Reef Anchorage: We stayed at the reef off Marsa Alam for an overnight stopover with moderate NW winds of 15 knots. Anchorage at 20 meters on sand and some corals. Good protection against northerly winds. We had some troubles to lift up the anchor, but with it's not really a problem.

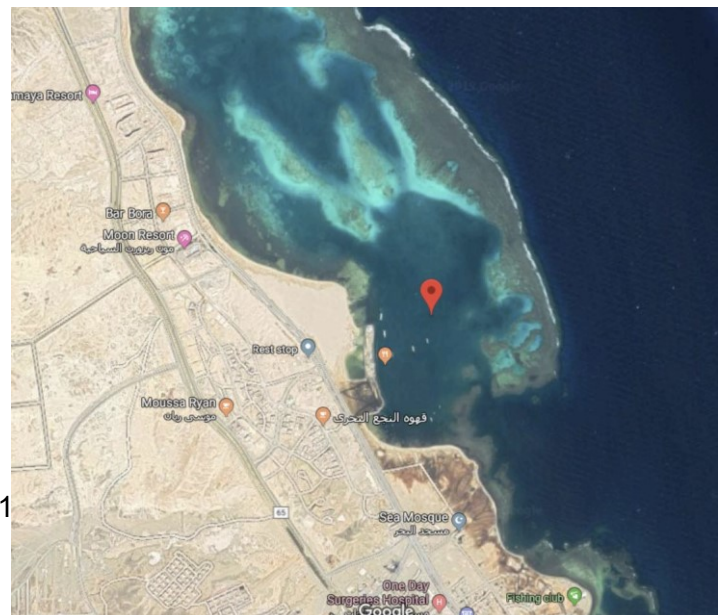
Alfred Cook – March 2020: Marsa Alam is at 25° 04.60N / 034° 53.93E, some 30Nm south of Ghalib, and is a good safe anchorage where fuel can be delivered by sea or land as long as it is officially authorised. Yes, any sailor can plead his / her own case but we sailors try to help one another. When you are at sea with limited fuel, limited communication it would be good if someone said, it's okay, come in we have sorted it for you.



From my experience of the Egyptian Navy you will be lucky if they do not ram you as opposed to offer you fuel.



Liberte – March 2020 - Marsa Alam Town - Diesel fuel: Two days ago we were in Marsa Alam on the Egyptian coast, south of Port Ghalib. The local border control guys came out in a RIB to check our paperwork. We had completed the Arabic letter from the back of the Red Sea Pilot and handed it to them. They then went to the next boat beside us and asked them if they needed fuel, to which they said yes. They were told 140 litres would cost \$175 US.



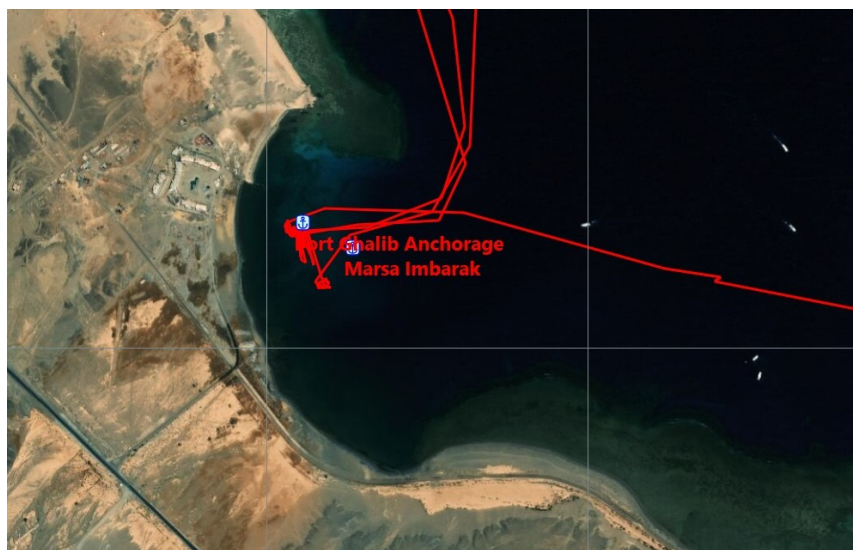
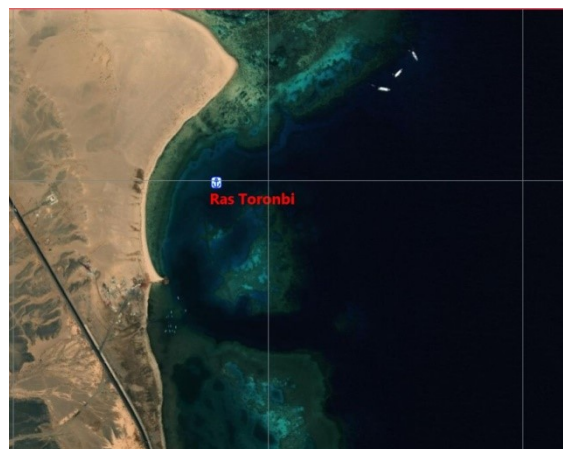
The local guys then returned and were told the price had jumped to \$275 US. So yes, there is fuel available - it just depends how much you are prepared to pay for it.

Response from Another Cruiser: As there are not any fuel facilities for boats in Marsa Alam, the only way you can get fuel is from a normal vehicle fuel station. However as fuel is subsidized by the government it is illegal for foreigners to purchase fuel from roadside stations. It is also illegal for locals to sell fuel from a roadside fuel station to foreigners. It can only officially be purchased from go government authorised stations where additional taxes have been applied, I.e Port Ghalib or Hurghada. Fines if caught are very heavy. Please do not get caught out, please be careful out there.

11.5.2.3 Near Port Ghalib (25-32N / 34-39E)

Per Kjellqvist – October 2022: Ras Toronbi just north of Port Ghalib. In the past we have stopped there many times. Earlier this year I stopped there, and I know several others who did also this year. No one had to pay. But, of course things change every day in Egypt.

Ras Honkorab to the south of Port Ghalib is also a very good place. I stopped there as well in February this year without being accosted.



034°39.160'E (approx).

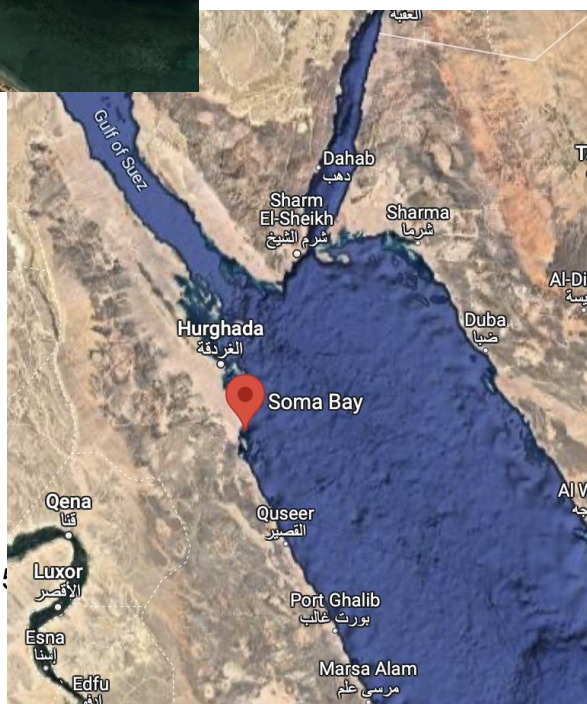
Alfred Cook – March 2020:

There is a bay, **Marsa Imbarak** about 1.5/2 NM south of Port Ghalib which is shallow and quite safe from the winds. The local Dive and Day Tripper boats know it well.

25°30.653'N,

11.5.2.4 Soma Bay (26-51N / 33-59E)

Anchorage: 26°50.917' N / 033°58.676' E



11.5.2.5 Marsa Zaraba (27°50N / 33°59E)

RSP Pgs 223-224

May 2023: Captain Heebi indicated that this is on the list of permitted anchorages for “wait for weather” stops. (Stay aboard, don’t drop the dinghy, don’t go diving/snorkeling).

Anchorage location approximately

27°51.363' N / 033° 59.478' E

11.5.2.6 El Tur (28-14N / 033-37E)

RSP Pgs 227-228

Anchorage: 28°14.149' N / 033°36.5461' E, 3-4m Mud. Watch out for wrecks/abandoned ships on the way in.

Kurukulla – June 2023: We stopped in a beautiful anchorage at El Tur (aka Tor), our first “permitted” anchorage for those on passage who do not have a valid Egyptian visa. It is a popular Foil Boarding resort with a beautiful white sand beach, none of which were we allowed ashore to enjoy! Our only attempt to go ashore, to buy fuel, was thwarted by two military guards who although sympathetic to our needs were refused approval, to let us briefly ashore, by their superiors (the decision took 45 minutes to be referred up and down the chain of command!) We returned onboard with our empty Jerry-cans.

11.5.2.7 Ras Jihan / Ras Gihan (28-30N / 33-17E)

RSP Pgs 228-230-Half an anchor

Nov 2023: Captain Heebi indicated that this is on the list of permitted anchorages for “wait for weather” stops. (Stay aboard, don’t drop the dinghy, don’t go diving/snorkeling).

Anchorage: 28°30.47' N / 033°17.24' E



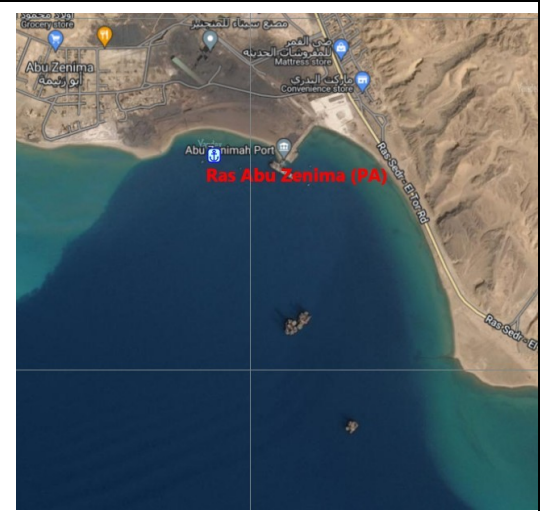
11.5.2.8 Ras Abu Zenima (29-02N / 32-43E)

RSP Pgs 233-234

Anchorage: 29-02.63'N / 33-06.60'E, 8-16m sand



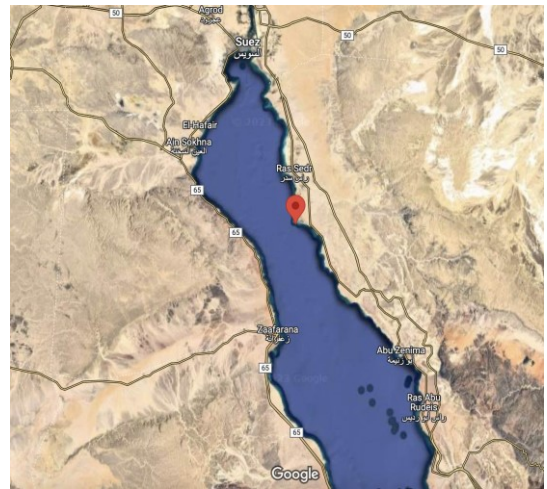
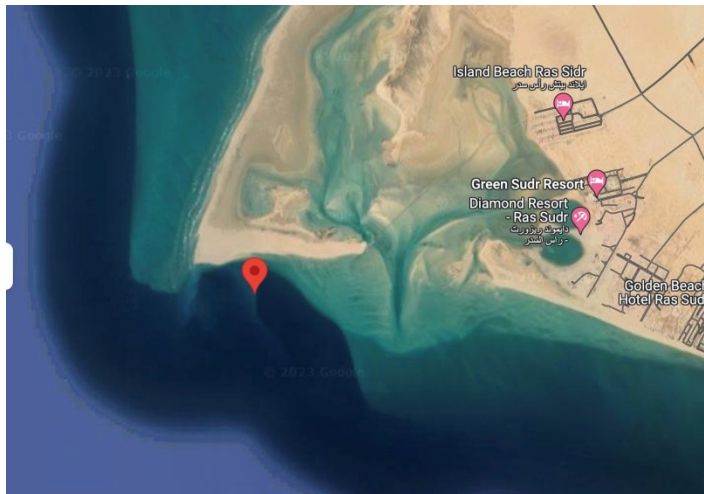
El Tur Anchorage



Abu Zenima Anchorage

11.5.2.9 Ras Matarmah (29-27N / 32-43E)

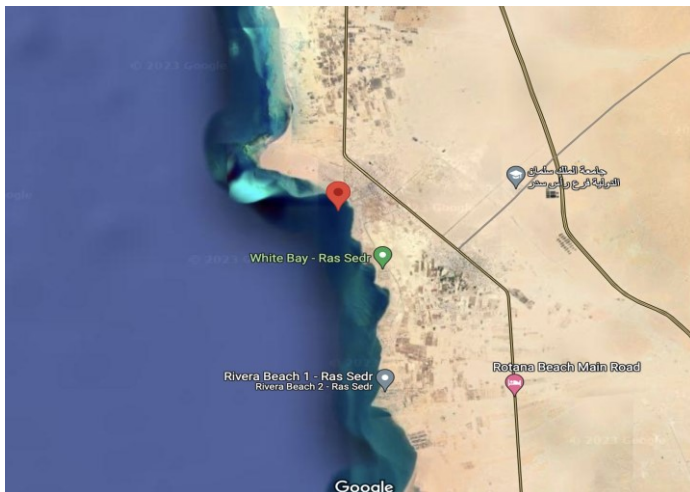
Anchorage approximately: 29°26.706'N - 32°43.379'E



11.5.2.10

Ras Sudr (29-35N / 032-42E)

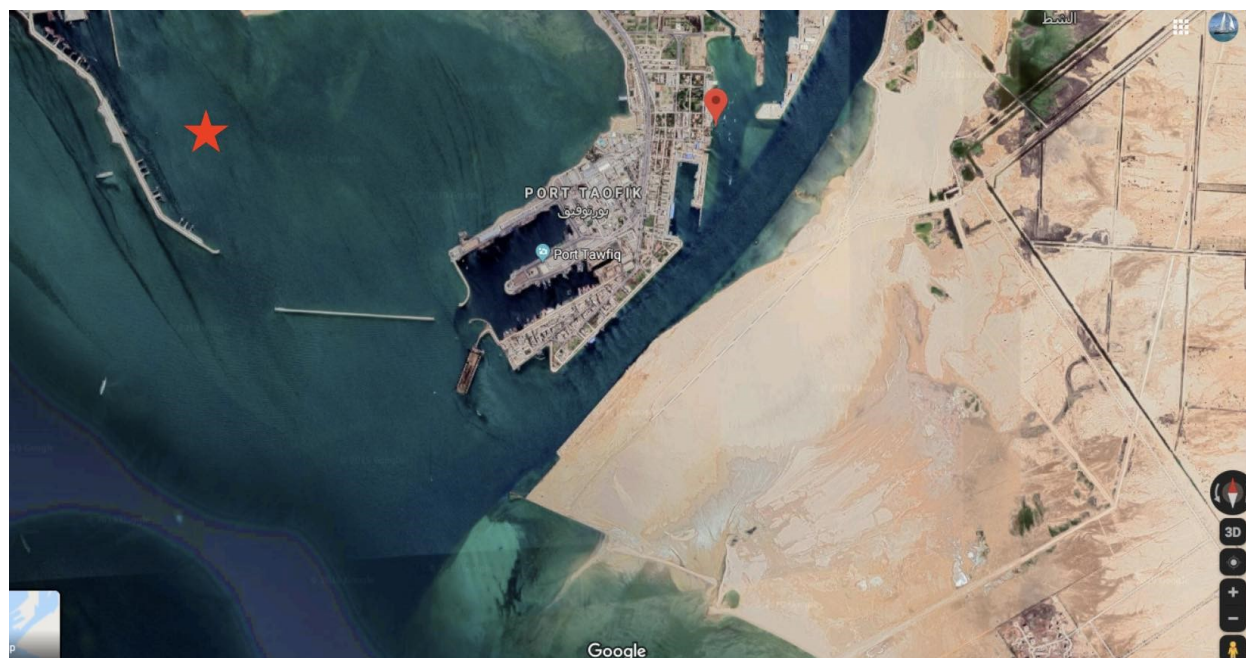
Anchorage, approx.: N 29° 34.80' E 032° 42.47' Off the beach, north of some conspicuous looking mooring buoys at 9-10m depth, on soft sand.



11.5.3 Suez Waiting Area

Suez Waiting area west side if you arrive late night, starboard anchorage.

[More on Suez here.](#)



11.5.4 Other Locations People have Reported

Rick Delaney – 2019: In Egypt we stopped at several coral reefs. Big Brother's reef highly recommended. Excellent diving, snorkelling. Lighthouse keeper very friendly. Offers tours of lighthouse and T-shirts for sale

FB Group (Red Sea) – August 2019: What is the "officialdom" presence like in the southern part of Egypt? Meaning, are there patrols or something that would get upset if we had to stop in at an anchorage due to adverse winds (we wouldn't plan on going ashore and would likely choose a remote location) and we weren't officially checked in yet? We are planning on going up to Jordan via the Gulf of Aqaba and it would very costly to have to check in to Egypt twice. If the weather allows, we'd just go direct from Sudan... but not sure if we'll find 3 consecutive days of good weather. If it's not doable on the Egypt side, how about the Saudi side?

Melian: We did this last year and went straight from Sudan.

There are not many patrols in Egypt further south but you will get into trouble if they do find you. We stopped in a few places in Sudan in the way up - after having checked out and it wasn't a problem.

Stopping at Port Ghalib is very expensive- around the \$400 if I recall so we avoided it. Much cheaper and easier in Port Suez.

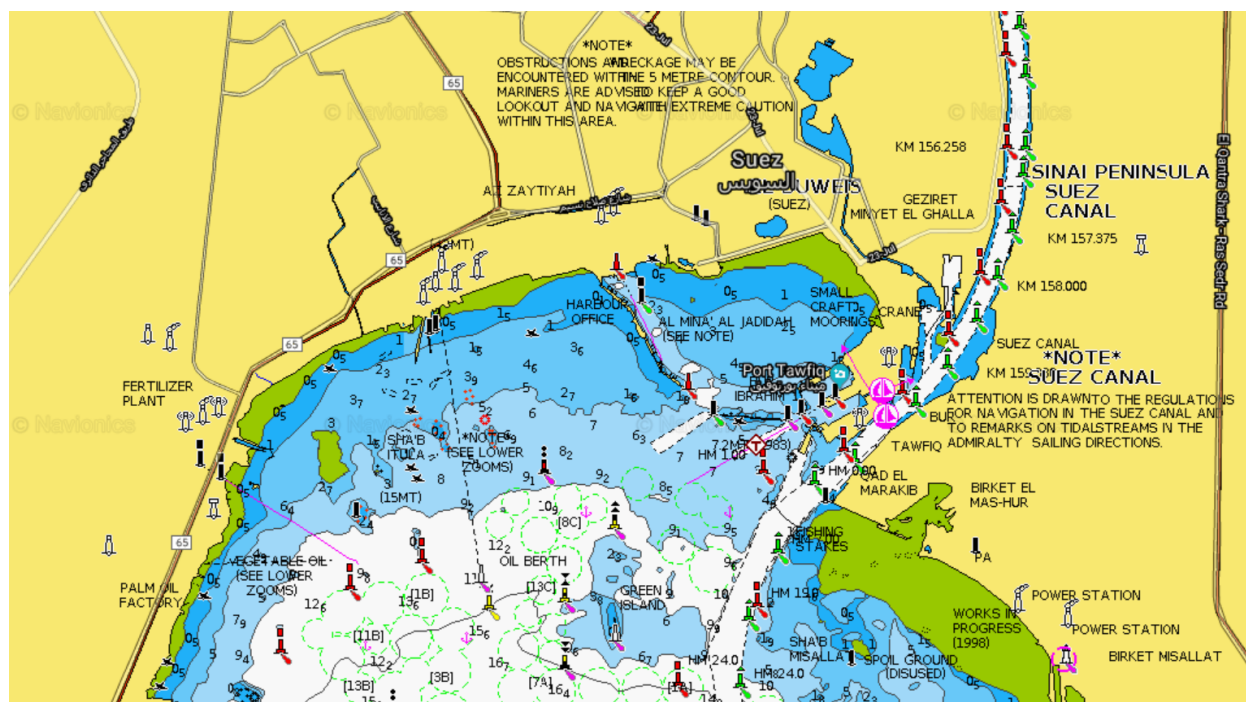
Try and do the run straight from Sudan picking a good weather run. We waited in Marsa Oseif, Sudan, for about 3 days and then had a quick stop in the Siyal islands on the way up.

Juliane - We stopped twice in Egypt before checking in in Suez, just anchored but didn't go ashore. We got checked both times by the military, we presented a copy of the Arabian letter from the Red Sea Guide and we were allowed both times to stay until the wind got better again. We weren't asked for any money or bribes.

James: We stopped at an Anchorage in Egypt near the border with Sudan, before checking in at Ghalib. There was a military presence there, and they just wanted a few details about us, where we were headed etc.

11.6 Suez Canal

11.6.1 Suez (Port Tawfiq)



Kurukulla – June 2023: On reaching anchorage W1 at Port Suez, we dropped the sails, sought clearance from Port Control, which came back immediately, and then motored into the Suez Canal “Yacht Club”, keeping clear of the main channel.

Here we moored head and stern between buoys off the club house at around 1600. No sooner had we completed this manoeuvre than the marina appeared in a small boat inviting us to go stern to on the outer berth of their jetty. This we achieved, mooring alongside a local motor boat, securing ourselves in the only empty berth on the pontoon.

Not long after, Mostafa, from Felix Agency, appeared and we started the process of getting a canal transit organized. There was some hope that we might get away the following morning early and therefore started a slightly frantic set of preparations--we needed water, fuel and food; none of which could we go ashore to get ourselves. We were required to remain within the secure compound, attached to the clubhouse, but we were not allowed in the clubhouse either!

My understanding was that the club is owned and operated by the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) for the benefit of transiting yachtsmen, but it seems to have been taken over almost entirely by local boat owners. The only facility available to transiting yachtsmen is a set of bathrooms and showers inside the secure area.

Late that night, having been shopping on our behalf and arranged delivery of 100ltrs of diesel, Mostafa finally informed us that we would not be commencing our transit the following day; it was not his fault, he had tried his best, but the SCA would not give approval. Hence, with no alternative, we passed the next day restfully in our secure compound. At 2230 that night the news finally arrived that we were approved to transit, starting somewhere between 0600 and 0800 next day.

Another X – March 2023: After 4 days in Suakin the most perfect weather window opened for us, so we went directly to Suez. In Suez, Capt. Heebi awaited us at the yacht club. He was extremely efficient and friendly and gave us all the information we needed. There is a bathroom and some showers in the yacht club and Heebi's staff can deliver anything you need from the city. No diesel available.

Wade Alarie – Feb 2022 – Fuel in Port Suez: Some people are under the impression that you cannot get fuel in Port Suez. Capt Heebie (Ehab Soukar At Sea) advises that for a temporary period (due to work in the Port Suez zone), he can supply 200L in jerry cans to visiting yachts, but not more.

Gaviota of Cowes – June 2020: Gaviota of Cowes arrived Ismallia Thursday 4th June, we overnighted from Marsa Thelemet to take advantage of a rare light wind window.

Call Suez Port Control VHF Channel 14 when you are close to the Suez Canal and they will advise when you can enter to go through to Port Tawfik Yacht Club. It is very busy and we were told to wait as we arrived during the Northbound convoy going through. Arrival after 9.30am and before the Southbound ships start to come through about midday would be a good plan.

Susie Harris – May 2020 – Canal Agent Felix Maritime: I would like to make a comment about our Suez Canal Agent Felix Maritime. We were looked after right from the very first email while still in India. Then through the Red Sea we received regular emails and phone calls. All interactions were very professional, in this very difficult year of COVID-19. On arrival in Suez we were looked after by Abdo and Mustafa. Abdo sorted out the fuel problem, Mustafa did the best shopping for us bringing excellent food. We can recommend them as an agent for the Suez Canal.

Paseafique – June 2019: Capt Heebi in Port Tawfiq (Suez) deserves a special mention. He was extremely professional and helpful and we would highly recommend him. His communication was very good although we would have preferred more notice that the Suez Canal small vessel office was closed for about 6 days for the end of Ramadan festivities.

The same cannot be said for the **Port Tawfiq Yacht Club yardman, Kaka**. He is constantly on the take always looking to squeeze money and gifts from the yachties, and at times can be very unpleasant to deal with. We were tied up to the jetty there which was convenient but that made it easy for Kaka to hang around us.

The Suez Canal transit was uneventful. Both pilots were nice guys, especially the second one - he brought his own water and snacks which he insisted on sharing with us. He also gave us a

small gift each. They both asked to take the helm to which we did not agree until they had been on board for a while. When we did allow them to helm the boat, one of us stayed in the cockpit at all times, and both were very good. We gave them US\$20 each in an envelope as they left the boat. We also gave the second guy a small gift. The pilot boat that picked up the second guy wanted cash or cigarettes which we did not give. He was not happy but did not cause us trouble.

By the time we left Egypt, we had certainly had enough of being pestered to buy things and give backsheesh.

Muttley – June 2019: Suez is actually a kind of nice place, for Egypt. Capt Heebi was very helpful, although Kaka at the yacht club is a slimy pest who should be avoided at all costs!

We were very glad to leave Egypt and the canal transit was easy and hassle free. Both pilots we had were very nice but of course expected gifts and cash. Standard Egyptian style.

Sabrina Kuttruff – May 2019: Suez is different (from Port Ghalib) and a bright spot. We experienced Captain Heebi from Prince of the Red Sea as efficient and professional.

11.6.2 Suez Canal Transit Costs & Regulations

Various notes:

- You are required to have the ORIGINAL of your yachtregistration, a copy will not be accepted
- You must be able to maintain 5 knots, or risk being assigned a tow at the cost of \$1000/hour.
- The most recommended agent as of early 2021 is Captain Heebie, Prince of the Red Sea. His Facebook name is Ehab Soukar at Sea. His email address is princeoftheredsea@gmail.com. One prominent Red Sea Group member said this “We found him to be very professional and thorough. We highly recommend his services.”
- Noonsite has a comprehensive list of agents that offer services in the Suez Canal. <https://www.noonsite.com/report/suez-canal-transit-information/>

Noonsite – March 2021: A transit of the Suez Canal requires some planning. There is a lot of paperwork to complete and a pilot is required for the whole transit. In addition, there is an overnight stop at Ismailia and clearance has to be completed once the transit is complete. It is possible to complete the formalities oneself when transiting from Port Said but an agent has to be used for a transit from Suez Port.

Visas are not needed by anyone traveling on a yacht transiting the Suez Canal and remaining in the port area. For more details see Egypt Formalities.

It's important to note that in March 2021 the port clearance fees for canal transits were hiked up dramatically to over \$900 (from \$60). Agents are opposing this fee increase, however for now it makes a Suez transit much more expensive.

Gaviota of Cowes – June 2020: We used Captain Heebi Prince of the Red Sea as our Agent and he has been excellent, helping us even before we arrived in Suez. He was at the Yacht Club when we arrived and he and boatman Karkr helped us tie up to mooring balls bow and

stern. Captain Heebi came straight aboard and the paperwork commenced followed by lots of visits Customs, Quarantine etc.

Prices charged were as follows:-

Suez Canal Dues (\$250 is payable in advance before measurement, the measurement is calculated by a formula it is not done on tonnage). Ours ended up as \$280. Advise a gift to the measurer.

Port Clearance \$60

Quarantine \$15

Immigration \$18

Security of State \$18

Port Dues \$20

Agent \$80

An extra charge is 2 lots of \$20 for the 2 pilots who are to take you through the Canal. To avoid spending the whole 8 hours being asked for presents Captain Heebi suggests he keeps the \$20 for the 1st Pilot and \$20 is put in an envelope and given to Mr Yasser at Ismallia for the 2nd Pilot. This seemed to work okay and our first Pilot Mustapha did a good job.

We ordered 120 Litres of Fuel at \$1.20 a litre from Karkr – be warned the fuel will arrive in the middle of the night! So after no sleep the night before we had Karkr banging on the boat about midnight. He wanted the fuel putting in so he could have his jerry jug back – answer was no, so this was sorted the next day. We did hear that fuel price to Egyptians was 25 cents a litre so there is a very good profit on the fuel run.

Day 2 seemed to be a round of people turning up and wanting gifts. Karkr does actually earn his and we didn't mind giving him a bit extra. T-shirts are a very good gift and luckily we had some rally ones which had been the wrong size so had never been worn.

We were told the Pilot would arrive at 5.00am – he actually turned up at 4.00am in the dark, we were still asleep so it was not a good start but we got going bleary eyed! You arrive at Ismallia about 1.30pm. There is a stretch of the Canal before Ismallia where the Canal splits into 2 Channels one Northbound traffic and one Southbound. The Pilots take you into the Southbound Channel and the Control Tower do not like it! There was a lot of shouting from the Control Tower at the start, our Pilot went below and had a sleep. Keep to the left hand side as close to the Channel markers as possible as you will have some huge ships coming straight at you. There is plenty of room to pass and I reckon it cuts the distance into Ismallia. We did not let the Pilot take control, you are the Captain, listen to his advice but make your own decisions.

There was nobody to help at **Ismallia Yacht Club** when we arrived and they do not have a boat to assist you! It is Med style mooring, pick up the buoy and back onto the Quay! Have a rope of at least 100 foot ready plus a boat hook. We didn't know this so were not prepared and it was a bit of a nightmare. Be warned it is pretty shallow at low tide near the Quay so keep your boat well backed off. Water is free so it is a great opportunity to wash the Egyptian sand off everything. Cost \$21 per night.

FB Group (Red Sea) – Nov 2019 – Port Fees: I have been in contact with a June Shipping Company, that states:

Dear Sir, with all pleasure to be agency in Egypt kindly noted that
agency fees will be 70 \$
port clearance will be 50 \$

Regards

Dr captain Magdy Salah
+01222392604

Canal fees maximum for your yacht 150\$

Sheena: To the best of our belief 'Magdy' is associated with or to Felix. email: magdy_felix@hotmail.com . Also magdy@zafmarine.com . It must be noted that Felix use a number of subsidiary companies so therefore June Shipping and zaf will ultimately be part of Felix. They have a similar set up for the agency in Hurghada. Hope this gives a better understanding of how 'Felix Agency' operates.

I would suggest you contact Capt Heebie, Prince of the Red Sea and Abdo from Felix for quotes. There is a lot of info on our facebook page "[Med Asia Sailing Safari](#)". For your info here is Heebie's email : princeoftheredsea@gmail.com

Wade: It clearly makes a difference whether you are Northbound or Southbound. There was a lot of discussion on this last year. The Southbound fees for all yachts are quite a bit higher. This is the quote I got from Capt Heebi Prince of the Red Sea - for a Northbound Suez Canal transit, by email on 9 Sep 2019.

Suez canal Dues \$8 per ton (volume)

After measurement of the yacht.

Port clearance 60\$

Port dues 20\$

Immigration 15\$

Agent fees 100\$

FB Group (Red Sea) – Aug 2019 – Southbound Port Fees: We have just received the below information from Prince of the Red Sea in respect to Port Clearance Fees at Port Said for south bound traffic.

Dear All,

New Port Clearance (Sailing Permit) Tariff (Southbound transit):

1. Yachts up to 20 meters 200 \$.
2. Yachts over 20 meters 250 \$.

The Ministerial decision to reduce the Tariff of Port Clearance, to be implemented from August 1st 2019.

I think there's going to be more decisions about Yachts, I will keep you posted of all news.

Ashraf & Capt. Heebi.

Miyagi Moon – April 2019 - Fees Update: Following discussions with the agents in Egypt namely, Prince of the Red Sea, Felix Maritime and Nasco the below are the details of their present fees. We have been informed that these may change in June due to changes in the Government Fees. (original source: [Noonsite](#))

We would advise that anyone transiting through Egypt gets written quotations from all the agents and from there to determine which one to use.

We have also been in communication with the Port Ghalib Harbour Master about the “Monopoly” situation of Nasco being the only agent at Port Ghalib. He has advised that he will be inviting others to act as agents so there more completion and better service.

Boats Arriving at Port Said

	Prince of the Red Sea	Felix Maritime
Agent Fees	100\$	100\$
Port Clearance	690\$	<20m-550\$ >20m-650\$
Visa (per person)	25\$	25\$
Other Expenses		
Port Authority	100\$	
Immigration	15\$	
Inspection	40\$	
Immigration	70\$	
Suez Canal Tonnage	8\$/Ton	9\$/Ton
	930\$	785\$

Boats Arriving at Port Suez

	Prince of the Red Sea	Felix Maritime
Agent Fees	100\$	100\$
Port Clearance	40\$	80\$
Visa (per person)	25\$	25\$
Other Expenses		
Port Authority	20\$	
Immigration	15\$	
Canal Insurance	20\$	
Immigration	70\$	
Suez Canal Tonnage	8\$/Ton	9\$/Ton
	220\$	275\$

Boats Arriving at Hurghada from Port Suez

Prince of the Red Sea	Felix Maritime
------------------------------	-----------------------

Agent Fees	150\$/200\$	100\$
Hurghada Port Fee (Arrival)	1800LE	700\$
Hurghada Port Fee (Departure)		700\$
Customs Clearance	50\$/100\$	
Visa		Obtained in Port Said
Other Expenses	1000LE	100\$ Port & Light Dues
Cruising Permit	200\$/250\$	30\$/Month
	400\$ + 2800LE	1630\$

Boats Arriving at Hurghada from the South

	Prince of the Red Sea	Felix Maritime
Agent Fees	150\$/200\$	100\$
Hurghada Port Fee (Arrival)	1800LE	700\$
Hurghada Port Fee (Departure)		700\$
Customs Clearance	50\$/100\$	
Visa	25\$	25\$
Other Expenses	1000LE	100\$ Port & Light Dues
Cruising Permit	200\$/250\$	30\$/Month
	450\$ + 2800LE	1655\$

Boats Arriving at Port Ghalib

	Nasco	
Agent Fees	120\$	Check In
	120\$	Check Out
Temp Customs Clearance	30\$	
Customs Clearance	15\$	
Immigration	50\$	
Visa (per person)	27\$	
Sailing Permit	150\$	
	512\$	

For Prince of the Red Sea contact princeoftheredsea@gmail.com

For Felix contact abdo_felix@hotmail.com

For Nasco contact yachting@nascotours.com

FB Group (Red Sea) – Mar 2019: COSTS IN SUEZ

We use PRINCE OF THE RED SEA (PRSea) agent (Heebi) as our agent.

fees including agent, port etc. \$195

canal fee 26 ton measured boat\$ 221

yacht club \$21/day

PRSea charges \$195 for agent+port+ etc.

The canal fee is separate from PRS charge of \$195. It depends on the Canal Authority measurement. Our Tayana V-42 is LOA 42 ft . Our canal fee was \$210.

FB Group (Red Sea) – Mar 2019 – Tipping the Canal Pilot: We transit today from SUEZ to Ismailiyah. The pilot was nice we gave him a pair of sunglasses a good meal drinks but once in Ismailiyah we gave him 20us and he was not happy at all. All the Egyptian system is just backchich and it's very boring I think I ll never come back to this country

Boat 1: I always put \$20 in a sealed envelope and give it to them as they step off the boat onto the pilot boat with biscuits etc for their children.They are reluctant to open it in front of the pilot boat crew .Never a complaint.!!

I always say it's a present and thank them for a good day. But I have been fortunate to have had nice fellows.

Boat 2: We put \$20 in lots of small bill so it looked like more.

Boat 3: We put ours in a sealed envelope, made up of small denomination, and made it clear that it is easy for us to remove a note each time they complain, thankfully all our pilots were good.

Cathy Bunn (FB) – March 2018: Checked into Port Suez yesterday and will start our transit of the canal tomorrow. We used Captain Heebi of Prince of the Red Sea and are pleased to report that we are very happy with the services he provided. No nasty surprises when it came to paying....\$80 agent fee, \$40 Port Clearance and the transit dues which for us came in at a modest \$176 (for 22 tonnes for a 13.45 m x 4.2 x 2.1 m vessel), as he quoted.

After committing to using him as an agent, Felix lowered his quote to \$10 agent fee, \$40 port clearance which seemed a bit too good to be true.

11.6.3 Ismailia (the middle stop in the Suez Canal)



30-35.20 N / 32-16.22 E

Another X – March 2023: After 2 days in Suez, we sailed to Ismailia. When we arrived to Ismailia the Khamsin was blowing 35 kn. The marina is under construction and for the time being it is a terrible place to be. Dirty, noisy and ugly. On top of that, a local working boat from the marina ran into us while we were moored - creating a big gelcoat defect.

In total Ismailia was the worst experience I have ever had with a “marina”. The only positive experience was that Mohamed Mohsen from the Suez Canal authorities did what he could to apologize for everything. He is doing a remarkable effort to remove baksheesh from the Suez Canal passage and to make life easier for yachties. Our first pilot didn't ask for anything. Our second pilot asked for his gift and was clearly annoyed when I told him that baksheesh was not allowed anymore.

Diesel can be delivered, but you need to provide jerrycans.

If the weather is rough in the Mediterranean you need to stay in Ismailia. It is not possible to stay in Port Said.

Red Sea FB Group – Feb 2022: A French yacht had a problem in Ismailia, all I know is that Capt Heebie posted this: “Today we protests the problem of the suez canal for the yachts to the suez canal chairman admiral osama rabiah during the stay of the french yacht Rising Xtar in Ismailia.

And we been promised from admiral osama by many very things will happen in Marina Ismailia shortly

The french man get free of charges food and alot of stores as gift from the admiral office.

Good news will be share as soon as issue is resolved.”

Bird of Passage – April 2020: We left Port Suez at 5.30 this morning and arrived in Ismailia around 14.00. Hard winds on the lake and pilot came outside with a very pale face. He was a 24 year old, very nice and polite but did not speak any English at all. He did not need to be fed because of Ramadan. He also did not ask for a tip.

After that came a sandstorm. Bird of Passage completely brown again.

General chaos (as usual) when everybody (5 boats in all) was mooring stern to in Ismailia. It took a couple of hours before everything calmed down. Still hard wind but settling soon.

Marina fee: 30 USD/night

Asked for diesel but not possible today. Maybe in Port Said tomorrow?

ATM available here close to club building. Restaurant has chicken for take away. Reminds a little of Ghalib. You can walk around some and the general air is quite relaxed.

Paseafique – June 2019: In retrospect, we should have explored the cost of checking out in **Ismailia** which would have given us the freedom to wait there for a better weather window for the passage to Cyprus.

11.6.4 Port Said (North End of Suez Canal)

Another X – March 2023: If the weather is rough in the Mediterranean you need to stay in Ismailia. It is not possible to stay in Port Said.

11.6.5 Cruisers Reports of the Transit

Canal transit reports are [here](#).

11.7 Touring while in Egypt

Red Sea FB Group – April 2023 – Luxor from Suez: Clearing in/out in Port Ghalib or Hurghada is possible but extremely expensive. We met a boat that spent \$2000!

So we have chosen to visit from Suez. You can leave your boat safely with a good team to look for. \$21 for a night. Maybe this could also be done from Ismailia.

Visa costs \$25 per person + \$133 to clear in/out (more reasonable!). We took the night train from Cairo to Luxor. We had 3 fantastic days visiting great sites.

We used a tour agency that organized a tailor-made excursion for us. Mahmoud was nice and professional, and the arrangements (transfers, hotels, French-speaking and highly qualified guides) were really great. There are certainly plenty of great agencies--this one was particularly reactive as we organized everything just 1 or 2 days before arriving in Suez. Sailing in Red Sea is not easily to plan in advance!

Crossing the Red Sea without taking time to visit this incredible country would really be a pity. So we hope this will help. Prices are only indicative, this is what we paid but can change according to \$/EP rates and authorities decisions.

Agency we used: <http://touregypt.fr> mahmoud.egy80@yahoo.com WA +201223797757

Another cruiser chimed in *“Totally second what she said. Getting to Luxor was a definite highlight of our time in the Red Sea. And even if wanting to visit Cairo only, visas and clearance fees are reasonable, as the rest is very cheap. Transport from Suez to Cairo by minivan (~2 USD/pers), meals at cafes (~4 USD/pers), fruits & veggies (~1 USD/kg). AND, people are so friendly! You will hear “Welcome to Egypt” everywhere you go. I am feeling grateful for the very warm welcome in this awesome country.”*

Kurukulla – April 2023 – Luxor from Port Ghalib: While waiting in Port Ghalib for gearbox repairs to be completed, we organized a one-day trip to Luxor which proved to be a great idea but involved a 0330 start! By 0800 we were in Luxor and by 0900 our guide had reached the front of the admission ticket queue for entry to the Valley of the Kings (you might get the impression that despite being sold as a package deal by our agent this was not the best organized trip!).

We visited the tombs of Rameses III, Rameses IX, and Merenptah, (10 minutes per tomb to avoid overcrowding!) all dating back ~ 3000 years, before heading to the Temple of Hatshepsut, the iconic temple you see in all Egyptian tourism advertising!

Here we had 30 minutes to wander the site before heading to the most important part of the day (at least as far as our guide was concerned) the artisan *workshop” where we were shown the workers producing original Egyptian artefacts.

At the rate they were working it would take 3000 years to produce the thousands of items in the shop! I suspect the “Made in China” labels had all been removed but that was as near as they came to being artisan products! Sadly our guide’s disappointment that we did not launch into a buying spree colored the rest of the visit. I suspect some of his fee came from the “kickback” from the shop owner!

After the “all inclusive” lunch in the “Nile View Restaurant”, (which didn't have a Nile View because of the screens stopping dust and debris invading the restaurant from the building site separating it from the banks of the Nile) we were then taken, by boat, across the Nile, to the Temple of Karnak; an immense site with mind boggling structures.

Amazing to think that this temple was constructed around the same time as Stonehenge in UK. Also of note was the empty plinth where the obelisk, now standing on the northern embankment of the Thames, in London, once stood!

By the end of this visit we were under pressure from our guide to leave and head back to Port Ghalib, what no one had explained was that this was to allow us to pass through the police checkpoints (of which there were many) which do not allow “tourists” to exit Luxor after 1700 in the evening; we had been told we would be leaving at sunset i.e. 1915. Once we realized we were leaving 2 hours early, we suggested to the driver we should stop for dinner en route but this suggestion also fell on stony ground and we ended up stopping at the same unenticing cafe/bazaar that we had stopped at on the outward journey.

As a consequence we were back in Port Ghalib by 2115 and not midnight as predicted by the tour vendor, our agent! Notwithstanding we had all enjoyed the day, especially the insight into rural Egypt on the journey to and fro, so overall a success but far from what it was advertised to be!

Red Sea FB Group – Feb 2023: We visited Luxor when we were at Port Ghalib and Giza and nearby areas when we were at the Suez Yacht Club. Both good trips arranged by Felix Agency.

Mai Tai – January 2022 – Luxor from Port Ghalib: Our trip to Luxor was wonderful. We had met Mustafa, a local driver who actually comes from Luxor and who would drive us the 350 km across the desert so we could relax and watch the seemingly endless sand dunes unfold around every bend, during the four hours it takes to reach Luxor.

As we neared Luxor and the Nile River, we entered the fertile valley of Qena, where 80% of Egypt's produce is grown. What a contrast to the desert we had been living with for so long. Here they grow everything for the local markets, and from where buyers from all over Egypt come to stock up restaurants and stores in every region.

There are huge fields of sugar cane which is processed at a nearby refinery. Many of the fields are family-owned plots, so most of the work is still done by donkey and cart. Produce is taken daily to the main market in Luxor and whatever is left at the end of the day is bought by stall holders of surrounding villages, up and down the Nile.

We became immersed in the famous sights of Luxor. We had booked in to the Nefertiti Hotel, a very authentic 2-star hotel situated right next to the Luxor Temple, walking distance to Karnak Temple and the Nile River. It was perfect. The rooftop terrace restaurant had a view over the Nile.

From our hotel, we walked everywhere and found that just a couple of streets back from the main tourist area, life went on as normal for the local families. There were very few tourists in Luxor at this time, which was surprising. However, since Covid, tourism numbers have dropped considerably, so it is now very difficult for most of these people to earn money. The only people who tried to hassle us here were the drivers of the horse-drawn caliches used as taxis for the tourists, but we chose to walk. We later learned that motorized taxis are not allowed in Luxor.

The children loved to greet us with "what's your name?", "where you from?" and "you're welcome". So friendly.

The next day, Mustafa took us around the left bank to visit the Valley of the Kings and several of the other famous sights over there.

I was so glad to finally get to visit a number of these incredible sights and was astounded to realize they are still excavating and discovering many more buried beneath the desert sands. Many of the valuable treasures are now to be found in the Museum in Cairo, but just to see the incredible paintings inside the tombs of the various Pharaohs was amazing. The enormity of these huge caverns, is mind boggling.

The entrances to many of these tombs are so deceiving when you see the treasures and ornate caverns found inside.

Mustafa then arranged for us to share a delicious lunch on a small Felucca, before dropping the lines and spending the afternoon sailing up the Nile. With Lane at the helm, we set sail up the famous Nile River, visited a banana plantation and admired the fertile rural scenes as we sailed by. What a treat this was. It is incredible how well these boats sail even with little wind and battling the river currents. Coming back, however, we lost our wind completely, so the captain simply took up 2 floorboards and began rowing. This obviously wasn't the first time using this method to get home.

We considered extending our stay so we could visit the Aswan Dam and venture further south to Abu Simbel. However, I had ticked off the Valley of the Kings from my bucket list and we felt it was time to get moving north again on Mai Tai.

11.8 Leaving Egypt

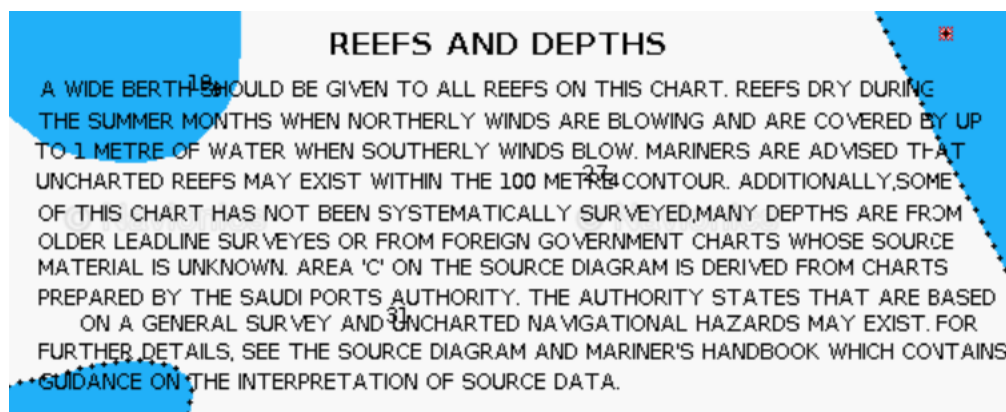
Muttley – June 2019: Once out the other side, we overnighted to **Tel Aviv**. They take their security very seriously in Israel, and we had continuous radio contact with the Navy for the last 50 miles to Herzliya. We even had military drones following us a lot of the time.

Check in to Israel was easy, although very thorough. We are now in the marina at Hertzliya, 6miles north of Tel Aviv as the marina in Tel Aviv has an 18m maximum length so we couldn't fit. It is great up here and Israel has really impressed me. It's a beautiful, clean country, with everything you could ever need. I highly recommend stopping here after you do the canal.

12 Saudi Arabia

KSA is an abbreviation for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

From the Navionics chart, outside of Jeddah



Latest website for Jeddah Yacht Club is this one: <https://www.jeddahyachtclubandmarina.com/>

12.1.1 Jeddah

Capt Heebie – Nov 2023: Recommended Agent for Jeddah:

Hadeel Khawagi

Yacht Specialist | Yachts Operation

Tel: +966 14 322 2046 Ext. 149

Fax: +966 14 322 4388

Mobile: +966 58 312 2255

Email: hadeel@faisal-higgi.com or yachts@faisal-higgi.com

Website: www.faisal-higgi.com

Nov 2023 – Red Sea FB Group: We have just left Jeddah a few days ago. If I can recommend you a place for stop, it is Jeddah and not Egypt, everything is much easier and more welcoming there.

I only can say about our agent Faisal Higgi agency they have charged us 575 \$ agency fee and we got special discount from marina fee around 50\$/night. There are really nice people there.

You can choose if you transiting for only 4 days or want to stay longer, then you need to do the sailing permit as well as tourist visa. But your agent will deal with it. Go out in Jeddah city anywhere you can get Uber and food shopping is best in Red Sea Mall shop called Danube.

May 2023 – Leelawadee – Jeddah Update: I just got a quote from [Jeddah Yacht Club](#) for my 47ft Cat. They offer now special conditions for bluewater cruisers.

For my boat: 60 Euro/ day which is a super interesting offer which makes the JYC a must-stop location.

Conditions to get this rate as following:

- You must be a genuine sail-powered blue water cruiser (not a professional yacht or charter vessel).
- You must be on an adventure.
- Our discounted rate is extended for 2 weeks (this can allow you some time to explore Jeddah and its surroundings) which is SAR15/ per m /day ex VAT and utilities;
- After 2 weeks it goes to our rack rate of SAR45.

These are berthing rates. In addition to this, there is a \$500 USD agent fee, which includes paperwork for in and out.

The current price of fuel is 1.22USD/ ltr.

As part of clearance documents, Saudi Arabia asked for a safety certificate for life raft and fire extinguisher.

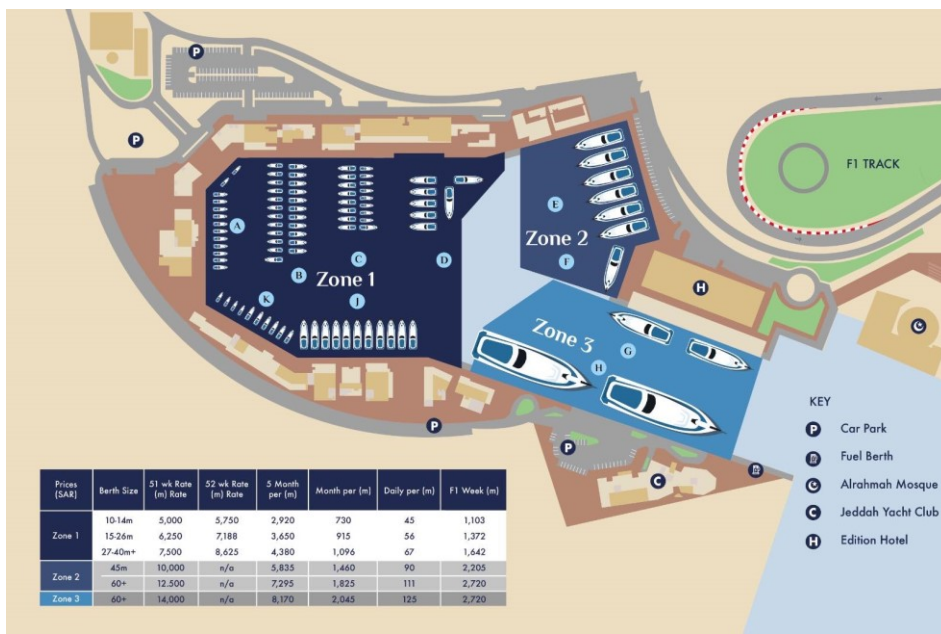
Comment from another cruiser who visited Saudi 1 month earlier:

“The marina is great and Colin the marina manager is great. That rate is correct.

Be very careful of the agent fees. I mean be very careful. Do your own visa online. Learn the online system for the navigation permit and do this while you still have good internet. We took fuel in Jeddah, but it was a huge drama. Once again Colin came to the rescue. The price was not expensive, but not cheap. Similar to other places in the Red Sea.”

February 2023 – Jeddah Yacht Club: I emailed yesterday and got a response from Colin at JYC almost within the hour - so maybe retry writing. (Same for Faisal-Higgi.)

I’m posting what I got from Jeddah YC below - not cheap but it’s a start and it is way cheaper than what I have seen written last year. There are monthly weekly daily options etc - note this is purely marina costs and no agent costs which is



where it gets really pricey. Colin said they are working on that problem.

Zatara – October 2022 - Jeddah: We arrived safely in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia a few days ago and I can't say enough kind words about our experiences here at the Jeddah YACHT CLUB.

Communication prior to arrival was easy, checkin was quick and affordable, and the yacht club itself is absolutely beautiful. They offer fuel, high-speed internet, and the friendliest folks in the world!

We had meetings today and it looks like we are going to get to cruise the coastline up to Aqaba with a few limitations. We are the first to do this so they are working on how this unfolds. And it will only get better as time passes here.

I can tell you that my feeling is they really want yachties here and they are doing what it takes to keep them here. We are excited about this place. The Saudi people are so nice and friendly. Provisioning is top notch.

Depending on what I see up north this is truly looking like a destination for yachties. Not just a stopover to the Med.

Here is the Internet page for the Jeddah Yacht Club, too easy to find. No mention of costs of clearance, or even if clearances are done here. No mention of the requirement for an agent either. I'd say that if you're interested, inquire with the Club.

<https://www.jeddahyachtclubandmarina.com/>

When it comes to agents whether it be in KSA Egypt Jordan it is a must as the government bureaucracies are huge. Even the agents don't know what the government is doing most of the time as a person in charge has different ideas about laws and such and a new guy takes charge it all changes again

Aquarius – Oct 2022: We made an emergency stop in Saudi Arabia. Please contact agent for the details, but like any country in the region- prior arrangements are needed. We just had an exception. Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DF4BWbQo0Dg>

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Supervisor | Yachts' Operations Dept.
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Mobile: +966 58 312 2255
Email: yachts@faisal-higgi.com
Website: www.faisal-higgi.com

FB Group (Red Sea) – March 2022: Q: How close can we pass to the Saudi coast without "problems"?

Answer (Wade Alarie): This is a tricky question. As you must know, 60-100 yachts pass near the Saudi coast every year, without any reported issues. During the early months of COVID-19 in April/May of 2020, I know of one US flagged catamaran that requested and received emergency assistance (food and fuel) from the Saudi navy. Also, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is now open to tourism and one of our members actually cleared in a few months ago. Lastly, if you don't anchor, and don't hit a reef - I wouldn't worry about getting into difficulty with the Saudi authorities. Keep your AIS, lights and radio on. I hope you have very good charts.

12.1.2 Cruising Saudi Arabia

Sybaris (Per Kjellqvist on FB) – October 2022: I was there on SY Sybaris from November 2021 to January 2022 as one of the first sailing boats ever to officially check-in for tourism by boat. We arrived in Duba in the North, and departed from Yanbu. We used an agent. Jeddah marina was not yet finished, but we visited by car and talked to an English and an Australian staff member. No prices existed then, but all other marinas from Yanbu to Jeddah creek were quoting over \$5,000 /month.

The check in and out cost us around \$8,000 in total.

The coast from the Gulf of Aqaba all the way down to just north of Yanbu was off limit due to 3 mega projects being built in the area.

We were allowed to sail from Yanbu to Jeddah, but only if we had a signed contract at the destination. At such a trip we were allowed to spend 2 weeks at anchor at any of around 10 anchorages given to us as a list, and we had to choose which ones before leaving. They were all exposed dive spots used by day tripper boats, and I only deemed one of them safe enough for an overnight stay.

An Italian yacht who spent the winter in South Saudi which we met in Port Ghalib reported the same check in/out prices as us. They also had the unfortunate event of filling up the boat with diesel in Jeddah and then being told when they were checking out that diesel bought in Saudi could not be exported. They had to empty the tank of the same amount before leaving.

We had major discussions with our agent and others while there, and it is positive to see that things might already have changed since then.

I can't wait to get more updates on your experiences.

Sybaris (Per Kjellqvist on FB) – December 2021: Sybaris has arrived and checked into Saudi Arabia (Duba commercial harbour). Very smooth process so far and we have to wait here until tomorrow for our PCR test results.

We were not a special case. Saudi is really opening up for tourism now.

Having said that, our experience here is still early days. We have successfully checked in. Now we have to continue straight down to Yanbu (around 240nm) because the whole northern coast is off limit for everything (locals included) such as boating, sport fishing, beaches and camping because they have started building 3 "mega projects" (think Dubai).

South of Yanbu and the Jeddah area is free.

December 30, 2021: Wade reminded me that many people here are curious to hear about our trip to Saudi Arabia.

I will publish a more comprehensive report later, but for now I want to report that all has gone well. We checked in successfully. We are currently moored up to a hotel jetty just north of Yanbu, and we have done some land travel with a rental car.

Saudi is very open and welcoming now. The social changes that have taken effect over the last 3-4 years are incredible. Doing land travel there are no restrictions, no off-limit areas, no photography restrictions, no being followed and watched etc. All in all, very pleasant.

The procedure for entry is to go to one of three commercial ports. Duba, Yanbu, or Jeddah. There your agent will meet up and handle all procedures (immigration, customs, and PCR test). We had to stay 2 nights in Duba to complete the process. The cost was roughly 900\$.

Checkout is in the same three ports, but the process should only take a few hours, and the cost a bit less.

But you cannot stay in any of the three commercial ports, so once checked in you have to move to a marina, hotel jetty, or fishing harbour that can issue a "contract" (proof that you are going there). The agent then gets you a permit from the coast guard to go there. The voyages between such "contracts" can take max 14 days, and during those days you can pre-choose 5 places to stop at (reefs or empty bays).

I am still working with my agent with the exact costs and will post all exact details in my report.

The main problem here are exorbitant prices and lack of viable marinas or harbours.

We ended up at a hotel jetty just outside Yanbu. Our agent negotiated a what they referred to as a "reasonable" price because the agent CEO knows the hotel owner. The price was SAR 920 (€217) / night. The owner had brought that down from SAR 1'725 (€406) / night.

We did not know the price until the morning we arrived because "the owner was hard to get a hold of". Suffice to say we could not accept to stay at those prices, so we agreed to stay one night and then either find a better and cheaper alternative further south or exit Saudi and go to Sudan. After two days of negotiation and since we wanted to stay a month, we managed to get the price down to SAR 5'750 (€1'355) / month and we were relieved to start doing some land travelling.

Not so fast. Nothing is what it seems in this country. When we went to pay a deposit the next day, we were told that we would have to pay 4 nights at SAR 920 and 1 month at SAR 5'750. Why 4 nights we said? We hadn't even been there 4 nights, and we had never agreed to the SAR 920 to begin with. That would mean SAR 9'430 (€2'225) for a month and 4 days. The discussion on this is still going on.

January 14, 2022: We checked out of Saudi Arabia today and departed from Yanbu commercial harbour at 21:50. It been an interesting month and 8 days. Sometimes frustrating, but also educational, fun, and memorable.

Their FB page is here:

<https://www.facebook.com/Sybaris-Yacht-Charter-101736804963622/>

13 United Arab Emirates

13.1 Fujirah

(From local website Jan 2020): The United Arab Emirates was formed in 1971 and is comprised of seven emirates. Fujairah, one of these emirates, is located on the East Coast on the Indian Ocean. It is the only emirate that is situated on the beautiful Indian Ocean and therefore attracts many tourists. To the west of Fujairah are the breathtaking Hajar Mountains. The Hajar Mountains are the highest mountain range in the eastern Arabian Peninsula and run through both the UAE and Oman, peaking at 2,980m high. The entire emirate of Fujairah is 1,488 square kilometres and is made up of 2 main cities (Fujairah and Dibba Al Fujairah) and

six main areas (Masafi, Murbeh, Qidfa, Al Bithna, Al Siji, Al Bidyah). However, Fujairah only makes up 1.8% of the whole of the United Arab Emirates.

Although Fujairah may be a smaller emirate, it is the only one that lies on the Indian Ocean. For this reason, it has become a very popular vacation site for many residents of other emirates, as well as countless tourists. The beaches in Fujairah stretch on for miles of uninterrupted serenity. With beautiful calm waters and quiet beaches, people from all over flock here to relax in the sun and sand. However, if you're looking to get out on the water, there are plenty of options to suit. If you're looking for some speed, to feel the rush of the sea breeze through your hair, there are many places to hire jet skis and banana boats.

But if you're looking for something slower and more relaxing, there are plenty of options available too. Fishing, for example, has been a large part of the economy for centuries and to this day, the UAE nationals are still intimately connected to the sea. There are numerous options for those of you who are fishing enthusiasts such as deep-sea fishing both bottom and trolling. Fujairah is also one of the best places to go snorkeling and scuba diving in the UAE. Dibba Al Fujairah boasts many hotels ready to take people out to view the world beneath the waves. Regardless of whether you're a lover of the sea or not, there really is no better way to end a fantastic day than to watch a spectacular array of color erupt in the sky as the sun melts behind the water.

Sue Antifaoff (FB) – Feb 2018: We stayed at the Fujairah International Marine Club. Nice Place, helpful people, if a little expensive on the daily rate. 8 AED per foot per day. If you are going to stay longer than 5 days you should pay for the month.

13.2 Dubai

Ocean Cruising Club Facebook Group – Jan 2020: By way of introduction, I am the newly appointed OCC Port Office for Dubai (and wider United Arab Emirates) as a member is the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club.

While the Arabian Gulf may not be on the cruising path of most long distance cruisers, the Oman and UAE waters offer some of the regions safest and most stunning cruising grounds, with a combination of traditional Arabian culture and hospitality and modern cities and facilities incl. repair yards and work shops.

With hundreds of years of trading and seafaring traditions, the Arabian Gulf and Arabian Sea still see wooden dhows trading as far as Africa and India.

While the region continues to experience geopolitical tensions, it is possible to enter Oman and UAE waters and transit through the Strait of Hormuz, with some preparations and precautions (not unlike those taken for passages through the Bay of Aden to/from the Red Sea - in fact during the last few weeks we have had 3 60-70ft sailing yachts arriving in the UAE on passage from Lankawi via Maldives (through the Strait of Hormuz) to UAE.

I am available to provide advice and assistance to anyone looking to explore this corner of the Arabian waterways, and welcome you to the United Arab Emirates Æ feel free to contract me on cruising@doscuae.com (see the port office section on the OCC website for further info)

Lars Lind, OCC Port Officer, Dubai (and wider UAE)

14 Jordan

Unknown person & Date: Jordan is fantastic but stay in the middle on the way up, as Saudi are not very nice and the Egyptian side is patrolled by Israeli military and they are very jumpy. Email the yacht club to let them know you are coming or you will not be allowed to enter until they sort out the paperwork. We waited with the Jordanian navy about 4 hours on their border.

Tregoning – April 2023: On approaching Aqaba, we had called the Port Authority as requested, and we were welcomed to Jordan. When we could not raise the marina on the VHF, the Port Authority official said that the marina radio was not working and offered to phone them for us which was very kind. By the time we entered the marina, we did not know exactly where to dock but soon noticed several uniformed officials standing on a lone dock on our left, who soon started waving at us. A marina dock-dude helped us to tie up our dock-lines, and then the three officials came aboard. Not much was said.

The procedures for clearing into Jordan were a little unclear so after our passports were stamped, and the boat was searched (although no drawers or lockers were opened) we waited at the dock for an hour or so. Eventually, I wandered towards the marina where our neighbors from Djibouti, Sea Pearl, Libby, and CathayOz, were already. A member of the marina staff told me that we should pull alongside Sea Pearl and that is where we are now positioned.

Around the marina is a very attractive complex of hotels/apartments, shops, and restaurants, and we look west across the fence of the international border, which is just a few hundred meters away, to the city of Eilat, Israel. The marina has beautiful, large, new floating docks with plenty of empty berths. Mostly it accommodates locally owned powerboats and diving/sightseeing charter boats, so the facilities for live-aboard cruisers are a bit limited (no showers, bathrooms a bit of a walk into the shopping area, no laundry). However, there is a small grocery store that sells essential food items and alcohol (beer is expensive but liquor like vodka is, surprisingly, not so). We managed to find a place to buy a SIM card for the phone (probably not the cheapest but the most convenient option) and, amazingly, a couple of tasty ice-creams.

There is a Carrefour Supermarket in the town of Aqaba.

We went on a commercial snorkeling trip with Diverse Divers from the Ayla Marina Village. The boat was comfortable, and we enjoyed chatting with some Canadians who were finishing a two-week tour of Egypt and Jordan. Sadly, the trip was affected by strong winds blowing down the Gulf, and a full boat load. Even though the sites chosen were behind a bit of a headland reducing the size of the waves, there was a bit of surface current which clearly made the captain and dive-masters a bit nervous about the snorkelers. This meant that we had to snorkel in two groups of ten and were only in the water for about 20 minutes, almost half of which was waiting

The snorkel itself was a bit disappointing, as the coral was not particularly impressive (especially after our good fortune in Soma Bay). There were some interesting walls (about 5 m or 16 feet high) topped by a very shallow reef towards the shore. The deeper water did not look like a particularly interesting diving site although we did see one large turtle as we approached the shallower area. Clearly, the option of sites was very limited by the rough weather.

The second snorkel was nearby, over the wreck of the cargo ship Cedar Pride. Disabled by a fire and half sunk off Aqaba in 1982, the ship was bought by the King of Jordan (a keen diver),

cleaned of all oil, and was deliberately sunk in 1985 as a diving attraction. The ship lies on its side and coral is just starting to grow on it. Our snorkel there was even shorter than on the reef. With the top of the wreck 12 m (40 feet) deep, it was not particularly interesting seen from the surface and I could not get very close to the fish on it. The divers probably had a much better time there. There are other diving sites where airplanes and military tanks have been sunk in shallower water, but these were not an option in the windy conditions.

The wind made it all seem quite cold, too, so many people (including Randall) only did one of the snorkels.

Apparently, we are not allowed to launch our dinghies, presumably due to the sensitivity of the border lying so close to the marina entrance. So, trying to go for a snorkel in our own dinghy was out of the question. Going from shore might be possible if dive-boats were in the area to show where the good sites were.

As we entered the Gulf of Aqaba through the Strait of Tiran, we saw quite a few commercial dive-boats along the coastline and by the sections of reefs in the middle of the Strait. This would probably be a better location for snorkeling but would require being cleared into Egypt. We also knew that the currents could be quite fast between the reefs, so local knowledge would be useful. With water depths suddenly changing from over 305 m (1,000 ft) to 85 m (280 feet) in a short distance, we found the current speeds quite variable, and they rippled the otherwise calm water surface into what we call "chuckling water."

Meanwhile, we have now turned our attention to exploring a little of inland Jordan. We have just booked a rental car starting on Monday morning, and hotel rooms for two nights in Petra and one night at Wadi Rum.

Tregoning – May 2023: We have been in Jordan for two weeks and it has been a thoroughly enjoyable and busy stay. We have had a fabulous dose of Middle Eastern history and dramatic desert landscapes during our three-night inland visit to Jordan. We rented a car and spent two nights in Wadi Musa, outside the ancient city of Petra, and one night at Wadi Rum, a protected area of desert with amazing rocky and sandy landscapes. Aqaba was also nice with its castle ruins, history in the Arab Revolt of 1916-1918, and its excellent Bird Observatory.

Jacki Lu - April 2023: We finally arrived in Aqaba, Jordan. It was one of the hardest trips we've had. It took us 4 days and 18 hours from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to Aqaba, plus 2 days and 3 nights sheltering in an unnamed island in Saudi Arabia. We only sailed 8 hours of the whole trip and mostly we motored or motor sailed. We used a huge amount of diesel and it was our most expensive trip so far. With only 12 miles to go, we were hit by a squall, with 45 knots of wind and 3 metre waves.

Zatara – November 2022: Checking into Ayla Marina Aqaba Jordan.

First off, this is a first class place. [Adel M Maani](#) (on Facebook under that name) is the manager there and they will take care of all that you need including all of the check-in Documents.

They have different rates for different levels of service so make sure you tell Adel M Maani, what you need or don't need so that he can quote you accordingly.

This is a great place to relax with kids. They have lots to do there.

Make Sure of the following:

You have safety inspection reports less than one year old for all your life rafts and Fire Protection. Or you will have to do that.

THEY DO NOT LIKE DRONES!! I will let you best figure out how to handle that. They took ours which was fine and gave them back when we left--No big deal.

They are working on Freedom of Movement issues with boats. Once again, they have a very small coast line and so places are limited.

They sell lots of Booze, and you can wear what ever clothes you want.

This was a great place to take off and go see Wadi Rum and Petra.

15 Israel

Zatara – November 2022 n- Eilat Israel Check in

So we arrived in Israel from Aqaba Jordan. Here is how you get into Eilat

Contact the Navy and fill out this form, and send it back to them on Whatsapp +972529484030 or email them shipping@mail.idf.il

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ym2UkwmQ6K0solq0KWxO4OnoSVmf_ous

after that email all your copies of passports and boat stuff to

mataltaskyam@israports.co.il

then go to this website link and fill out the online form

<https://taskyam.israports.co.il/#!/SmallVessel/Search>

Also Email immigration with all of your stuff

Eilatimgr@gmail.com

and that is all you have to do.

You have to stay outside of Israeli Waters until the navy has cleared you. It takes about an hour.

After that go to the port and immigration and customs will come out.

I don't think it cost over 300.00 USD total to get into the country.

You can have parts shipped here, and you won't have to pay Customs or duties. But you do have to pay them up front but very easy to get them back from the Customs office.