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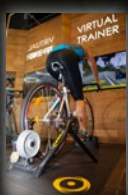
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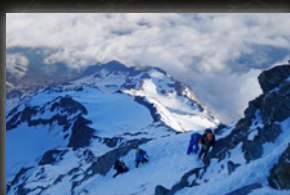
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VOL. 6, NO. 8
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EDITORIAL

Travel your own way

Travelling is the main interest of OutdoorUAE readers, and we make sure we quench that thirst every month. There are so many amazing places in this world and all of us have so many varied motivations to travel; adventure, relaxation, sports, work and much more. Now is the time of vacation and we are all already physically or mentally on some mountain, laying on the beach or exploring some exotic place, as this is like a breath of fresh air that will keep us energetic for another full year.

If I had my own way, I would travel all the time and would spend two or three months in one place so that I can hike all the trails and know the people better. Of course, I like a bit of adrenaline and pushing my limits now and then, but for me meeting some strangers on a hiking route who become my friends by the end of the trip is the most amazing experience when I travel. It's as if during a trip we are more willing to establish human relations. We smile more and we talk more. This is why I value peoples' experience more than anything. Or maybe I am just getting older... and wiser.



Nela Macovei
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To give you inspiration and motivation for travelling and the outdoors, here at OutdoorUAE we are developing continuously by adding new videos to our portfolio, introducing further themes to our coverage and new people to our team of experts. We keep everything fresh in the magazine, on our website www.outdooruae.com, and across our social media channels on, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. This way, we keep you connected with the outdoors, especially now that the new season is upon us and it will be packed with events! Follow us and share your own experiences, and have an outdoorsy season ahead!

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**WHEN YOU'RE
DONE READING,
PLEASE RECYCLE!**

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EVENTS CALENDAR

STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST EVENTS

AUGUST 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

**Khareef Half Marathon, Salalah, Oman**

Take advantage of the cooler climate and start the season early with this half marathon organised by TRI.ME and Muscat Triathlon Club. A 5km event is also available.

When: 19th August

Where: In the grounds of Salalah Gardens Mall, Oman.

Contact: For more information, visit www.mtc-triathlon.com or www.premieronline.com

**Boulder Bash at Rock Republic**

Self score your bouldering skills throughout August before battling it out in the live final, which is based on skill, not time.

When: From 7th August

Where: Rock Republic, Dubai Investment Park

Contact: Email rockrepublic@globalclimbing.com

**Spinneys Build Up Ride 1 of 4**

Prepare for the Spinneys Dubai 92 Cycle challenge with this build up ride of 35km.

When: 2nd September

Where: Nad Al Sheba Cycle Path

Contact: www.hopasports.com or www.cyclechallenge.ae

AUGUST 01

Dubai Sports World

Continuing throughout August, Sports World provides air conditioned relief and a wide range of activities.

When: June 5-August 27

Where: Dubai World Trade Centre

Contact: www.dubaisportsworld.ae

AUGUST 20

BeSport Individual Time Trial Series – Race 2

Cycle a 30km loop against the clock this summer, with prizes up for grabs.

When: 20th August

Where: BeSport Bike Shop, Al Wathha

Contact: www.premieronline.com



AUGUST 06

The Olympics

If you'd rather watch others take part in sports than brave the heat yourself, be sure to tune in to the Olympics, held in Rio de Janeiro, for some inspiring performances from international athletes.

When: From 6th August

Where: Showing at locations around the UAE

AUGUST 25

Oceanic Triathlon Training Weekend

Combine a weekend away with targeted training for the half Ironman distance in swimming, cycling and running. Other distances can be catered for.

When: 25th August

Where: The Oceanic Hotel and Spa, Khorfakkan

Contact: www.premieronline.com



BEST SHOTS



THE ORIGINAL
MULTIFUNCTIONAL
HEADWEAR

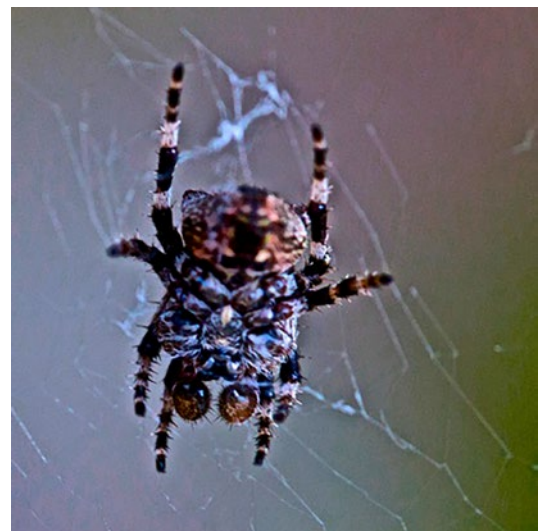
Here are the best shots sent in by you for our monthly photography competition! Thank you for all your entries, they were all great and it was hard selecting the best photos this month. Congratulations to the top three winners, who will each receive Buff headwear, five free copies of the magazine and the Advance Off-road Guidebook: **Moritz Niggemann**, **Graham Malkin** and **Beerta Maini**. Well done!



Moritz Niggemann
MX Ride at Fossil Rock, Dubai



Graham Malkin
Rock out in the UAE



Beerta Maini
Macro shot of a spider in France

ACTIVITY REPORT

MESMERISING MONT BLANC

Words by: Cynthia Salame

Photos by: Cynthia Salame and Samer Hajjah

.....
"All Men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous Men, for they may act on their dreams with open eyes, to make them possible."

T. E. Lawrence
.....

After our successful Kilimanjaro climb in January 2016, my husband Samer and I were thirsty for our next adventure. Our next target: Mont Blanc. Why summit Mont Blanc? "Because it's there," as George Mallory says. Mont Blanc is the highest peak in Western Europe; standing at 4,809m, this majestic mountain is ranked eleventh in the world in terms of topographic prominence. So the mountaineering motivation was there; the thrill, the target, the preparation, and the desire to achieve. But something more important was missing - giving a meaning to our climb. Which is why we chose to climb for Al Jalila Foundation by raising funds that would directly go to medical research on cancer and diabetes (through Just Giving-a platform for NGO crowd funding): www.justgiving.com/Cynthia-Salame.

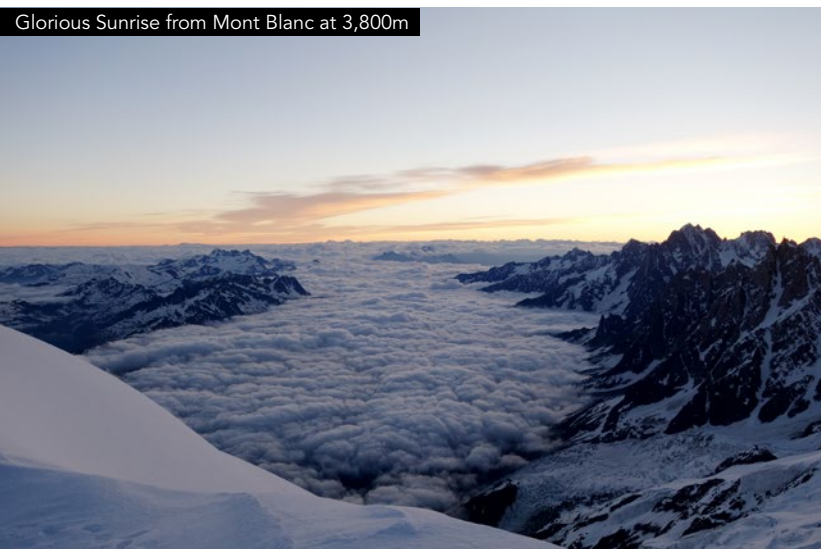
Preparation

In terms of physical strength training, we practiced stairway climbing 3 times a week by going up and down our 10 floor building around ten times (target was 100 floors), carrying a 10-15 kg back-pack! It was a very boring, painful and suffocating exercise (our building's stairways are not

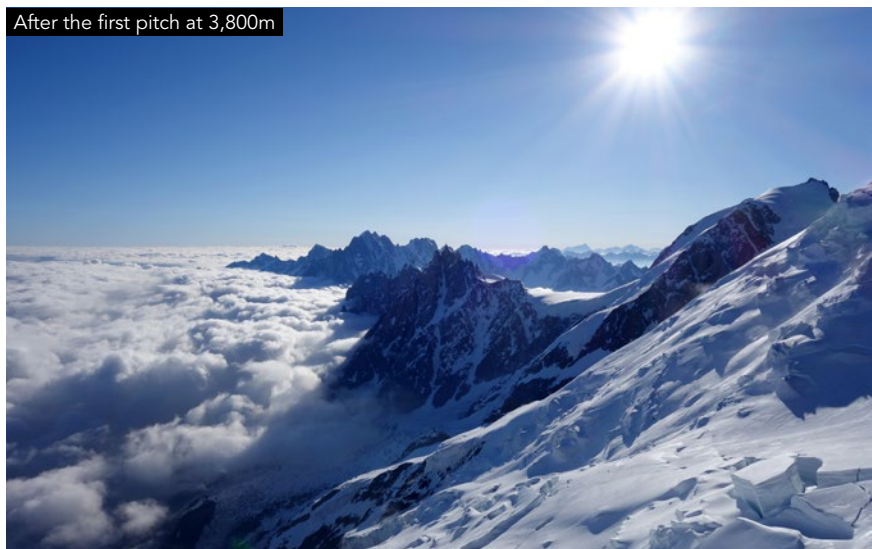
equipped with air conditioners). Climbing up was bearable, but climbing down you could feel the stress on your knees, your legs shaking, and your calves pumping. The elevator was always a temptation, but our internal conscience reminded us that climbing down was essential to develop quad strength for the descent.

On some weekends, we used to hike carrying the backpacks in areas such as Jabal Hafeet, Jabal Al Jais, Stairway to Heaven and Jabal Shams (the highest peak in Oman) to name a few. Moreover, we are both rock climbers who constantly climb at indoor gyms in Dubai during weekdays and outdoors during weekends in RAK, Tawiyan (UAE) and Oman.

Rock climbing is very useful to develop spatial awareness, agility and balance along with the added benefit of building strength in our core, arms and legs. In addition, we took part in interval training, which helped prepare our body for exertion at altitude. All of this physical training empowered our mental strength; the silent will to move on, climb on, and the certitude that all of this preparation will pay great dividends in achieving success on the mountain.



Glorious Sunrise from Mont Blanc at 3,800m



After the first pitch at 3,800m



Ridge at 4,500m



Cynthia & Samer at the Summit

The day before our departure

We were so excited for our European trip to begin! We packed our duffle bags, our bedroom literally looking like a warehouse for mountaineering gear! I had to iterate out loud every item going in the duffle bag to make sure I was crossing it off the list and to be certain that I was not packing some of Samer's gear by mistake.

Our adventure happened to start as early as the airport, whereby we had a connecting flight via Doha and our flight there had a delay which made us nearly miss our second plane to Geneva (it was already the last call the moment we landed in Doha!). I got to practice my mountaineering skills at the airport, sprinting with a jam packed rucksack through the terminal and skipping all the escalators and going for stairs! Thankfully, we somehow managed to make it to the plane, whilst getting a serious work out! A long nap followed and after that I remember the precious moment Samer woke me up to show me the Mont Blanc summit from the plane!

My heart skipped a beat as the mountain stole my breath... It was so grand! So statuesque and so pure!

Our third companion, Paul, (joining us from Beirut) was already waiting for us at a rock climbing crag close to our lodge when we arrived in the climbing capital of the world. Chamonix was such a magical mountaineering haven! Wooden houses, greenery, lakes, all adorned by the majestic Mont Blanc spilling one of its glorious glaciers into the valley. An urge to climb took over but we didn't have a rope or quick draws...

Luckily, our guide was equipped with the missing gear that we needed, and we spent half of the next day multi-pitch climbing to warm up to our upcoming summits. Chamonix truly has a mystical aura springing from its history of being the birth place of alpinism...

The following day, we drove over to Helbronner in Italy where we practiced crevasse rescue and self-arrest in stormy weather. The cold was so intense that day that I couldn't feel my fingers, so I had to quit the crevasse

rescue session and rush back to the hut due to aching fingers as blood started bidding through them...

Having practiced the skills needed, and waking up to great weather, we set off for the first of our acclimatisation climbs on a peak in the Vallee Blanche called Aiguille de Toule (3,538m/11,594ft). We successfully summited after climbing a steep section in deep snow and traversing an exposed ridge. The view was breathtaking; a never ending carpet of peaks gracefully pierced the blue skies on the infinite horizon...

Our next acclimatisation climb was Gran Paradiso, the highest mountain in Italy standing tall at (4,061m/13,323ft) followed by Tresenta (3,609 m/11,840ft). Summiting both not only helped us acclimatise to the high altitude, but also built the confidence we needed before setting off for the massive Mont Blanc. We however failed to acclimatise to the overwhelming beauty of the surroundings and we were stricken by a constant state of awe.



Ridge after the first pitch at 3,800m

The climb

A rest day later, and after a heavy dose of uncertainty due to ever-changing weather, we got the greenlight from our guide to take a shot at our dream. It was damp and rainy when we set off on day one, having to climb roughly 900m in altitude gain to reach Refuge Tete Rousse where we were to spend the night, before pushing for the summit. Half way up, the weather got worse and a thunderstorm broke, unleashing fearsome winds, lightning and heavy snowfall. All the other groups heading up turned back, and the outlook was getting dim. The mountain had unleashed its fury and no Man is worthy of challenging her might. Luckily, our guide knew an emergency shelter close to where we stood, and we rushed to it, hoping Mont Blanc would change her mind, granting us the privilege to visit her throne. To our astonishment, a ray of sun broke through the dispersing clouds and we touched a welcoming invite by the commanding force...

We spent the night at 3,200m in the refuge from where we started our summit attempt the following morning at 4am. The



Al Jalila Foundation Summit photo Samer Hajjar and Cynthia Salame



Samer Hajjar on the Summit

first pitch was quite steep and exposed, with 600 vertical meters of scrambling on ice and rock. But the reward was grand; we witnessed a glorious sunrise beyond what words can describe. There we were, two hours after we set off in the cold night, standing on a snow-coated ridge above an ocean of clouds, failing to make sense of the magnificent shades of radiating colors illuminating the horizon. It's beyond what the eye can behold or the imagination can conceive. We wished for a poet as we felt unworthy of describing what laid before us. Nature, in all its glory, exposing her unparalleled beauty, narrating her perfection in a heavenly composition... a masterpiece superseding humanity, worthy of Gods.

The wind was strong and the snow plentiful, but the mountain was empty due to the storm of the previous day. The skies were blue, indicating the mountain's acceptance of our presence. It was more of a spiritual climb from thereon in. Alone on this massive massif of unequalled prominence, reflecting on life and the splendor of this world, this was the real summit we reached, deep within us. Not a second passed in the

coming hours of ascent without a profound feeling of gratitude for being allowed to be present in such a majestic environment.

Around 4 hours later, we reached a ridge at around 4,300m, feeling the thinning of the air. The ridge was relatively narrow and the wind was blowing hard, but our morale was as high as where we stood. We could feel the realisation of our dreams without losing an ounce of the respect we held for the mountain.

On the final summit ridge, containing our emotions was a losing battle. As we reached the summit, we couldn't help but splurge the unfamiliar mix of emotions that took over. The mountain had allowed us to stand on the very top, and the gratitude, respect, joy, enchantment, awe, self-realisation, accomplishment, utter exhilaration and so much more than my limited vocab was too much to keep in. There we were, on the summit of the legendary Mont Blanc, with a view beyond what we thought possible having conquered nothing but ourselves. At that very moment, we knew that we were changed forever...

Al Jalila Foundation is a global philanthropic organisation dedicated to transforming lives through medical education and research. It was founded by His Highness, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, in 2013. Al Jalila Foundation promotes medical education and research by investing in the UAE's medical treatment capabilities; it provides scholarships to nurture a home-grown generation of medical professionals and supports groundbreaking research that addresses health challenges prevalent in the region. Al Jalila Foundation is fully funded by the generosity of donors. 100% of funds donated to Al Jalila Foundation are invested into medical research, education and treatment in the UAE.

For more information on fundraising, visit www.aljalilafoundation.ae

CONQUERING THE Great Wall Marathon

Words : Manal Rostom
Photos by: marathonphotos.com

When I was in The Maldives celebrating my 34th birthday, I got chatting to someone from China who suggested I take part in the Great Wall Marathon. Wait...what?!! The Great Wall whaaaaaaat?! I didn't even know they had a marathon there on the Wall, let alone a marathon on one of the seven Wonders of the World. In the name of 'research', I went online, checked out the registration details, and debated so many times whether that year would be the year I would pluck up the courage to complete this life changing event.

I decided that 2016 would be that year. I remember I had a heart to heart with my good friend Rachel, who shared how important it was for me to plan out and lay out my resolutions for each year. On top of the list was the Great Wall Marathon in May 2016, and after my leave was approved in March, I started serious training.

My training composed of one long run of around 16km each week, accompanied by shorter runs with cross training three or four times a week. I also added step training and climbed the stairs to my apartment on the 25th floor every day, just to try to simulate the 5164 steps that would need to be climbed on Marathon day.



Inspection day

After landing in Beijing in the early hours of 18th May, I made my way to the Wall on the 19th. In order to register, you are required to sign up for a China Tour, and a site inspection is a compulsory activity. There's a briefing and then you are required to walk across the wall. The wall itself is so serene and majestic that it takes your breath away when you lay eyes at it at first. No, really, I was breathless. I climbed all the steps, took loads of pictures and snapchatted a good bit too.

But that was WRONG.

You shouldn't walk and climb the full wall just two days before the marathon. The following morning, I woke up so sore and couldn't work out how I would attempt the full marathon the day after. I was even scared to share this with anyone on the bus the following day for fear I would be the only one. But slowly, other runners started to admit that they too were sore. It didn't give me peace of mind as much as it made me realise that no matter how much training you had done, the steps will always be challenging. There was an option of downgrading to the Half Marathon category but I (wo) manned up and was not going to give in to my fears like this. Or self doubts. Or insecurities. Never. Not now.

Race Day

We arrived at the Wall at 7am. My nerves were under control, but I had sore legs, a sick stomach and a million doubts about whether I could finish.

Myself and Danielle, a girl I had met, stood in a long queue, waiting for our faces





to be painted with our countries flags. When it was my turn, the lady looked at me and didn't know where Egypt was. What... how come?! "Well miss, Egypt has never participated before." That really gave me an incentive. I was going to conquer, living or dead. I wanted to make history as perhaps the first Egyptian female runner to finish the Great Wall Marathon.

I proceeded to the start line, ready for the 7:50am start.

The marathon is composed of five stages:

1. 5km uphill, leading up to the wall
2. 3km across the wall
3. 26km through the Chinese villages
4. 3km across the wall
5. 5km downhill to the finish line.

To tell you that I severely struggled on that 5km uphill would not be lying. My legs were cramping, and I started crying after the first kilometer. However, I suddenly remembered my cause and what I had dedicated my run to; my late friend JB, in order to celebrate his beautiful soul.

I remembered him and it made me cry even more.

He had encouraged me to take up long distance running back in 2011, and to this day, I owe him all my running accomplishments.

There happened to be two other awesome Egyptian runners, Hisham and Mahmoud, who somehow appeared out of nowhere on that 5km stretch. They cheered me on, yelling and screaming, and urged

me to keep pushing through.

You are not supposed to 'hit the wall', in marathon terminology, anytime before the 32nd to the 34th km. I hit the wall at the 6km. You hit the wall in a marathon when you can no longer push your legs through, when you just want to stop and quit. That's how it felt when I reached 6km. It was an awful feeling, but that's when you really learn and train your mind to take over physical pain and switch on to auto pilot. You are going to just have to do it and shut up about it. You have come this far, there's no turning back now.

We walked/ran that 3km leg of the race. I was still clinging on to my Egyptian runners for support and motivation until we all started to take different paces and eventually split once we hit the villages.

Running the 26km leg in the villages

By this point, my pain was starting to subside as my mind began taking over. Kids were appearing everywhere, holding plates that they invited the runners to sign. I stopped at every corner, both for the pictures and for the memories, but my eyes were always on my watch, making sure I hit the wall to go back down before 2pm.

The 26km stretch was long and got quite boring towards the end. I tried to think of everything and anything I could, still in the knowledge that I had to reach the wall again before 2pm. Anytime there was a downhill, I would fly down just to make up for the time lost on uphill.

Hitting the wall, round two

I hit the wall at 12:30pm. I was so proud of myself. You get a band to prove that you've gone through the wall twice, and that red band was the most precious thing I received that day.

The sun was starting to intensify, and this was when I became grateful for the Dubai weather. Everyone else was clearly having issues with the heat, yet it was not a problem for me. It was hot and humid, but again I was only focused on the finish line and finishing in a decent time to represent Egypt. I wear the Hijab, but over the years I have learnt how to deal with it and what to wear especially on races like this.

I decided I wanted to speak to my dad at 35km. He lives in Kuwait, where the time would be around 7am. I called him twice, but there was no answer. I broke down and felt so alone; I needed to hear a familiar voice. I tried again at 36km and he finally answered. I was panting going up the wall

and just needed reassurance. He asked how far I needed to go, and when I told him it was just 6km, in all innocence he said, "Wow, you can walk those since you've come so far."

Of course that comment had exactly the opposite effect!

The last 5km was so smooth that I couldn't believe how quickly it went by. I remember I shut off completely and couldn't wait for the moment that I would take out the Egyptian flag and raise it high. I ran in silence inside my head. I only put two songs on repeat from my Great Wall Marathon playlist; somehow Jason Derulo's "If this ain't love" and Rihanna's "This is what you came for" resonated so much with what I was doing and why I was there.

I remember seeing the 41km sign. It was heaven. I slowly took out my flag and wore it on my back. It felt amazing. I had tears in my eyes. The little children were cheering and it was me, my flag and the finish line.

I crossed the finish line after 6 hours 24 minutes and 24 seconds. I broke down and cried for having conquered the Wall, but first and foremost myself and all the voices that played games with my mind. I was told I was the first Egyptian female to conquer the wall. I was going to take that, make history and forever feel ever so proud.



ACTIVITY REPORT

HOW TO START KITESURFING

Kitesurfing is a sport with almost infinite appeal. Your first goal is to master the kiting basics and learn about the 'wind window'. This involves working with no board, only the trainer kite

Words by: Nico de Corato

Photos by: Creativity Surfing & DubaiBlog

In the last couple of years, a community of Kitesurf and Windsurf aficionados has grown in the UAE. Every weekend there are excursions; an opportunity to go looking for waves and wind, to share a common passion, and to appreciate the beauty of this country. I first discovered this sport and saw kite surfers in action here in Dubai some years ago; it was not until three years later that I had my first kitesurf lesson.

Ninety percent of kite boarding is kite control. So to start with, my instructor, Hisham, delivered a beach-based lesson that allowed me to practice with special training kites that have short, easy-to-control lines. The key is to keep an eye on the 180-degree arc in the sky that the kite flies in, called the 'wind window'.

In the beginning, it's all about the kite. Learning good kite flying skills with a trainer kite before taking lessons will save you money and a lot of frustration. So get a trainer and practice, practice... and practice again. Trainer kites are small (2.5m to 3.5m) and are designed to be flown on the beach, in a field, water or any wide open area.

Once in the water, before strapping on a board, you'll practice controlling the kite as it drags your body through the water. After practicing with body dragging, you are ready for your first water start. That progression gave me such excitement! I steered the kite into the power zone, got yanked out of the water and started planing, then accelerated until I wiped out. Even though at the beginning you are not able to dive your kite for long, immediately you feel pure freedom.



Start your run with the board pointed about 45 degrees downwind toward the kite; there will be less resistance than with a sideways board and it'll be easier to get up. While keeping the kite hovering at the neutral noon position, carefully slip your feet into the board's foot straps. Aim the board slightly downwind, and then dive the kite hard while driving your weight through your hips, legs and feet. Once you're standing upright, dive the kite again to accelerate and get your board planing. Now lean back at a 45-degree angle and, depending on which direction you're riding, park the kite at either the 11 o'clock or 2 o'clock position.

Riding upwind returns you to the beach at the same spot you entered the water. To do this, fly the kite low and maintain even power. While edging against the kite, lean back, then swivel your hips and upper body in the direction you want to take. Push down on your back foot to keep your edge from slipping downwind. The first goal for a beginner is to end up in the same point where you started from.

The basic equipment includes:

- A kite, available in two major forms. Kites come in sizes ranging from 0.7 square meters to 21 square meters, or even larger. In general, the larger the surface area, the more power the kite has. Kite power is also directly linked to speed, and smaller kites can be flown faster in stronger winds. Seasoned kite boarders will likely have three or more kite sizes which are needed to accommodate various wind levels.

- Flying lines are made of a very strong material in order to handle the dynamic load in unpredictable wind while maintaining a small cross-sectional profile to minimise drag.

- The control bar is a solid metal or composite bar which attaches to the kite via the lines. The rider holds on to this bar and controls the kite by pulling at its ends, causing the kite to rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise like a bicycle.

- The harness together with a

spreader bar attaches the rider to the control bar. By hooking in, the harness takes most of the strain of the kite's pull off of the rider's arms, and spreads it across a portion of his body.

- The board. There are now several types of kiteboards; some kite surfers also use standard surfboards, or even long boards, although without foot straps much of the high-jump capability of a kite is lost.
- A safety hook knife is considered required equipment.

Extra equipment may include: a wetsuit or a drysuit, a helmet with or without a communication system (the one we tried had a 2 way communication system, which was very useful as you need to talk to your instructor while diving the kite), a personal flotation device (PFD), an impact vest, a GPS, signaling devices. Kites in fact don't use leashes; the slingshot effect can be skull-cracking.



With thanks to Creativity Surfing LLC. The school uses equipment exclusively from RRD (Roberto Ricci Design), the major Italian brand for water sports. Creativity Surfing is also an authorized RRD reseller: for those looking for quality equipment, the school allows you to try out the equipment before buying it. www.creativitysurfing.com

Blogger, marathon runner and triathlete, divemaster and heli rescue swimmer with Bergamo Scuba Angels. You can check my website www.dubaiblognetwork.com, contact me on social networks or via email at admin@dubaiblognetwork.com for information about this article or just to say hello.

EDVENTURES IN OMAN, FOR THE NEW SEASON!



Arabian Overland, an established tour company based in Muscat, Oman, has teamed up with an experienced international destination management company for schools, Global Edventure Travel. The partnership has developed a range of outdoor and adventurous activities in the Sultanate, and further afield, for various groups from schools and corporate to social and sports specific events.

GECO Camp Sifah is the newest development for both companies, offering a purpose built beach front camp near to



the Jebal Sifah Resort, who are themselves proud partners in the camp development. The camp's opening season hosted a range of guests from local and international schools and witnessed sports events, such as the recent Summer Season Triathlon opening event. The camp offers a range of amenities and camping in deluxe bell-tents. The location is perfect for various adventurous activities from climbing and abseiling, trail biking and hiking to bush-craft and survival, Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions, orienteering, team challenges and kayaking to name just a few of those on offer.

Also available are a host of other options country-wide, with a similar adventure camp high up on Jebal Shams, partnered with the Jebal Shams Resort, to provide a unique camping experience with the support services of the resort. Elsewhere in the Sultanate are more tours and activities, from canyoning and camel trekking to multi-day treks and mountain biking throughout the many fantastic locations to be found around the country.

International travel options are also available with regular and well-organised trips worldwide, which include: Tanzania (with safaris), climbing Kilimanjaro and other trekking options; Cambodia and Vietnam cycling tours, trekking in the Nepalese Himalayas, winter and summer camps and activities in France, with skiing holidays in the winter and adventure camps in the summer; plus a range of other options and countries available on request.

We are currently taking bookings for the new season for GECO Sifah Camp, and other group tours and activities within the Sultanate and abroad. All of our tours and programmes are tailored to suit many requests, so please contact us for more details for your school, company or social group, and we will endeavour to accommodate you.



For schools and youth groups and groups wishing to travel to our other international destinations, please contact us at
GLOBAL EDVENTURE TRAVEL:
www.globaledventures.net
enquiries@globaledventures.net
+968 91912902 / 99376288

For Oman specific programmes for corporate, social, sport and other groups for events and more, please contact us at
ARABIAN OVERLAND:
www.arabianoverland.com
enquiries@arabianoverland.com
+968 91912902 / 99376288



HOW I BECAME A MAD CYCLIST...

Words + Photos By: Anne-Elizabeth Cecillon

The first time I heard about the WOW Cyclothon was from my brother Olivier, who had decided he was going to enter this challenging endurance race with his Airbus Team, which was very appropriately named 'TF-MAD'.

All I knew about the small geological paradise of Iceland was the length of the runway at its major airport (Keyflavik) and the unpredictable weather associated with its location in the far northern hemisphere (64.1265 N, 21.8174W). I had only ever seen this isolated and sparsely populated place (330,000 people) through clouds from approximately 40,000 feet while flying over the Atlantic Ocean in an Airbus 380.

Once Olivier mentioned it, I became really keen to participate in the race but unfortunately, having missed the entry date, I would not be allowed to ride. Instead, I volunteered to drive the Class C RV that would be the support vehicle for the four avid cyclists that were all part of my brother's team.

If you are unfamiliar with this race, it is roughly 1,500km around the island of Iceland, crossing a multitude of terrains from well paved roads to mountain trails (more about that later) in very unpredictable weather. In Iceland, 15 degrees celsius is considered a heat wave! Armed with little more information than the above, I flew to Copenhagen with Emirates and connected with Iceland Air to Keyflavik, arriving a few days early to give me ample time to assess my surroundings. Once comfortably settled into my hotel, the Eyja Guldsmiden, I set out to walk around the city center and figure out how I was going to spend the next three days before the race.

Reykjavik surprised me and felt like a mixture of eastern Germany, New Zealand and



western Europe all in one. I did not expect the graffiti all over the place or the rows of very square, stern looking grey houses in some parts of the city (hence the reference to eastern Germany). In three days I went from whale watching to waterfall hunting to cave exploring in a variety of weather, ranging from 6 degrees centigrade and 30km an hour winds to nearly 19 degrees with full blue skies. You have to use group tours to get around if you do not book well in advance, and being a solo traveler I was not immediately sold on the idea. I soon warmed up to it however, as the company I had chosen (Your Day Tours) turned out to be very punctual, professional and informative, using buses small enough to promote



friendships and interesting conversations during the tours.

After doing my own thing for a few days I was really eager to start the race and get more details about the logistics involved. I met up with my brother and his team and suddenly the whole thing came to life. Already we were RACING! Racing to pick up the bicycles and have them fitted. Racing to hire the camper that would be our home for however long it would take us to complete the race. Racing to stock up on food and racing to meetings for all of the last minute details. It was a whirlwind of events with the excitement and the anticipation high. On the day of the race, being French, we decided to have a good meal before the start,



so off we went to the charming Lakjarmbrekka restaurant for a delicious meal amply complemented by Icelandic beverages.

One hour before the pistol shot, we were racing to the departure point, only to be met by the other Airbus Team of ten.

Finding it quite strange that we were now only 20 minutes before the official start and that there were only two teams in the parking lot, we called the organiser only to realise that we had been given the wrong GPS coordinates! We quickly repacked the bicycles into the RV and rushed to the departure line. Arriving with five minutes to spare, my brother ran to the start line with his bike on the side, only to be paired against George Hincapie, a 'retired' professional biker. Needless to say, he moved up his game to keep the pace and later told me he nearly saw his meal again, so great was the effort he put in to keep pace with George...

In a blur, the GO signal was given and off they went. After those months of arduous training in the Gers, ordering their team jerseys and printing logos, attending meetings, and developing nutrition plans; after so much anticipation...they were IN and they were RIDING!!! As for myself, I was following them in the RV on small winding roads along the coast, feeling extremely proud of the team and enjoying the scenery.

With 24 hours of constant daylight it was

challenging to our internal biological clocks. After one hour, as planned, my brother turned in to rest in the RV and Alexa took her turn on the bike. With that of course, as any epic story would have it, we encountered our first hardship. She had problems with her gears and could not find the sweet spot on her bike, so had to shorten her shift on the bike to 30 minutes instead of the one hour planned. Daniel, a veteran long distance runner and cyclist, jumped on his bike and started his hour. After that it was Jerome's turn and on and on it went for 51 hours straight.





We initially had planned to have a bicycle rack on the RV, which would have helped a lot with the relays, but it was no longer available when we picked up the vehicle. We mitigated the situation and got rid of one bed in the camper to fit three of the bicycles, storing the other in the corridor. We were slow at first to rotate the bicycles according to the order of cyclists but got better as we went along and by the end of the race were so much faster at it.

Excitement was high but so was fatigue as

the sleeping shifts were getting shorter and shorter. Personal space was at a minimum with 6 people in approximately 8 square meters of space. Cycling bibs were proudly "drying" from the ceiling, exhausted people were scattered on small benches or berths, food was drying in the sink (pasta was the main meal on board) and yet again and again the miles were rolling by. From flat green plains to hilly rocky places, from beaches to mountains, dry to wet weather, summery to wintery scenery, cascades,





glaciers... the kilometers kept on turning. I had another driver with me and we settled for 4 hours shifts to keep alert on the road and make sure we were always supporting and encouraging our cyclists.

Then came the famous north eastern part of the race, the one for which we were told we **NEEDED** mountain bikes. Unfortunately, we did not have the space for them, so with true French flair and fashion, my brother Olivier, a very experienced mountain biker, attacked the mountain on his road bike. Climbing on gravel roads, descending vertiginous slopes along fjords resembling Norway, with the sun his only companion as he pedaled like mad, his music giving the cadence for high RPMs, he kept the pace despite the wind, the RV being never far behind 'just in case'. On the way, Christophe (the other driver) and myself would rush to camp grounds to quickly wash the dishes, cook a new batch of pasta and of course share the dreaded duty of cleaning the toilet reservoir, sometimes fighting relentless flies. We had to be fast as the riders were getting more and more tired as the kilometers rolled by and the hours seemed to stretch longer and longer due to fatigue. Here we were at kilometer 675 battling wintry weather and brutal rain showers, knowing that we were only half way. Jerome was regretting his earlier comment of "I am tired of organising, I want to go on the bike and ride," as he was pulling on his wet clothes to get back on the bike in the pelting rain. All of us were laughing from exhaustion, trying to figure out how we were doing compared to the other teams, passing them on the way, then being over-ridden again, eating, sleeping in shifts and with only one goal and vision... The **FINISH** line.

As we were going around the south eastern part of the race, we became head to head with another team of ten female cyclists from Iceland. They were much more organised than we were, with three support vehicles, trailers, and obviously fresher legs having split the distance between ten riders instead of the four in our team. It was time for a new burst of energy with healthy

competition between their team and ours. Olivier passed them, switched the relay to Alexa and then it was up to Daniel who unfortunately took the wrong turn and was passed by the other team, meaning he had to double his efforts and pass them again in the steep climb.

With only 80km to ride, Jerome and Olivier cycled together to mentally and physically support one another, and then it was the Grand Finale with our four cyclists passing the arrival line all together. It was an incredibly proud moment to have come from Canada, France and Dubai as a team and complete this magical race in challenging conditions. We were ecstatic to have set this goal and accomplish it after months of preparation. We finished late in the evening and after being showered by bubbly on the podium, we celebrated with real showers at the campground and pizza, as it was the only place still open so late. After the first 'real meal' in two and a half days, it was

time for a very lovely night with the six of us sleeping at the same time, bunked up and cozy, being rocked to sleep by a fierce wind in the harbour where we parked and lulled by Christophe and his incredibly loud snoring!

The next morning was a 'day off', giving us the opportunity to explore the natural hot water pools, unfortunately in dreadful weather. We actually had to turn back with the camper as the wind was so strong that we were concerned about being turned over, which the rental company had previously warned us about.

In the evening we celebrated in style, dancing the night away on very tired legs and smiling to the moon and back. All in all, it motivated me to become a cyclist and upon my return I immediately bought a bike. Being an avid hiker and trekker, I am planning to build up my cycling legs quickly and do it again next year. But this time... on the bike! Stay tuned for further adventures!





Visiting Dhaka, Bangladesh

Words + Photos by: Katrin Winter

Bangladesh is a beautiful country in South Asia, famous for its rivers, long beaches, garments industry and, sadly, poverty. The capital Dhaka is said to be the most densely populated city in the world, which means every piece of land is valuable and used for a purpose.

Many rural families become slum dwellers after failing to find their fortune in the city. They live in extreme poverty and can hardly afford to buy rice and pay the rent. One such area is only about 20 minutes' bumpy rickshaw ride from the airport, and is called Gawair. This is the community in which the Maria Cristina Foundation works to provide education for children and adults. The aim of my visit was to gather data for the Foundation, but today I want to tell you about the conditions in the slum, which may rouse some of you to join me next time.

The slum is not a place for the fainthearted. It is dirty, noisy, smelly and confusing. The open sewers filled with garbage and unidentifiable liquids slowly move along the disheveled road. The shop owners have built tiny bridges to cross the sewers to their shops. Somehow I manage not to step into the sewers despite sharing the narrow path with chickens, cows, rickshaws, children and old men carrying everything from long bamboo sticks to chicken by their feet.



Carpenters are engraving flower patterns on cupboards and beds, tailors are making bed sheets and mattresses, chicken farmers are collecting eggs by the sides of the road and broken down rickshaws are being repaired right where they stopped. The numerous tea shops are filled with men passing time and chewing paan (betel leaf), their teeth red with the stuff, spitting red saliva on the street every now and then. There are entrepreneurial grandmas baking rice cakes by the side of the roads and old men

selling fish that has stayed in the sunshine for too long. The smell of the fish is mixed with the raw meat hanging outside to attract potential customers and flies.

The rickshaws are nimbly moving along and somehow managing not to collide, leaving only millimeters between each other. And then there is the foreign blonde lady. Everyone is staring at me with amazement. I have tens of children following me and asking me what my name is. Some people approach me and ask me where I'm from.





I soon realise that Estonia is not known in the slums of Dhaka and tell them I am from Zimbabwe; my husband's country, and well-known in Bangladesh for its cricket team. I have never spoken so much about a sport I know nothing about.

The houses in Gawair are a mixture of compounds filled with tiny rooms with concrete floors and metal doors and makeshift shacks made of thin metal sheets with bare earth floors. The cooking facilities are usually outside – a fire powered by gas and little ovens made of clay. Toilets are typically somewhere near the kitchen and usually consist of a hole in the ground.

Most families live in a room, which is mostly taken up by a bed. Some have cupboards and some even have a desk, whilst others have goats in the house and little chicks in a box on top of their cupboard. Some families have a thin mattress on their bed, but others sleep on a bed made of planks of wood. The sheets, if there are any, are full of holes and stains; the families lucky enough to have a rattling fan in the ceiling put it on for me and warn me not to stand up as the low stooping fan will hurt me. Many of the roofs are made of cardboard, bamboo mats or asbestos that look perilously like they are about to cave in.

It's not unusual for 8, 9 or even 10 members of a family to have only one bed, and usually it's the mother and daughters who sleep on the floor when the bed cannot fit everyone. Most families have electricity and some even have TVs, which are covered by a cloth when they are not being used to watch cricket or Bollywood dramas. The cleanliness of the homes varies a lot: some are extremely dirty and messy whilst others are humble, yet clean and tidy.

There are thousands of feral dogs roaming the streets and they keep multiplying. All the dogs are the same mongrel type and the females all seem to be pregnant or have just had puppies. They sleep most of the day and begin looking for food in the piles of rubbish and fighting with each other in the evening. Some of the dogs have scratched themselves so hard that they bleed and I cannot even imagine the types of bugs and diseases they

carry. Nobody cares for these dogs, they are like vermin shooed away with kicks and blows. The slum-dwellers tell me that the dogs sometimes bite little children and they get sick.

Despite the daily struggles and always being in survival mode, the Bangladeshi people are very generous and welcoming. They love offering tea to their guests, and after a few cups of tea guests become friends. Everywhere I went I had to stop for 10 minutes and enjoy a small cup of sweet milk tea. I was even offered a cup of tea during a visit to a bank. I once asked for a coffee and got a tea with Nescafe in it...it was not my cup of tea.

The Maria Cristina Foundation will receive guests and volunteers in Dhaka any time and the community will be excited to spend time with you. For more info visit www.mariacristinafoundation.org or e-mail marketing@mariacristinafoundation.org.



TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

THE ADMIRAL'S FISH

In search of Tarpon in Bocas del Toro, Panama

Words + Photos by: Antonio Varcasia

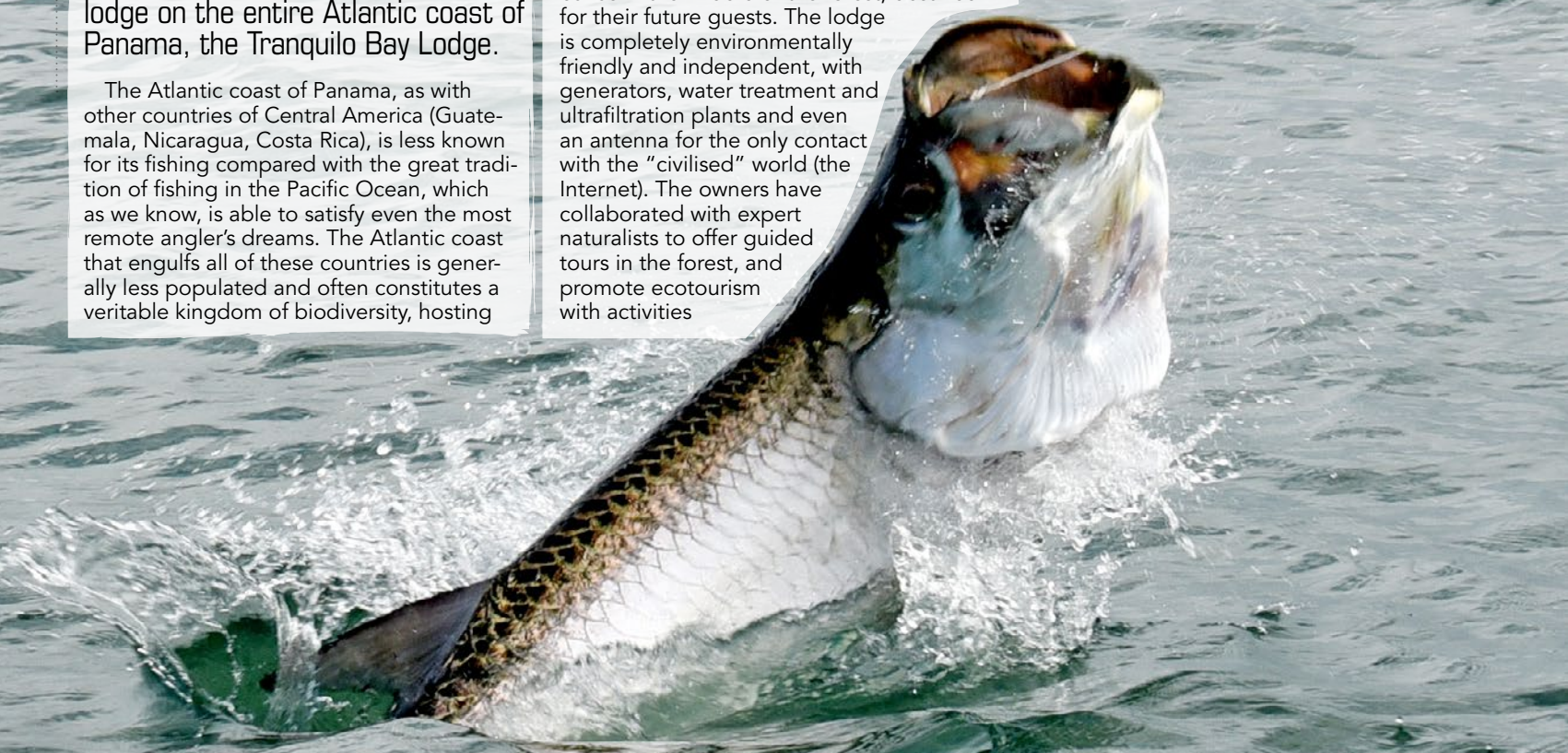
An archipelago of over 68 islands and islets located on a coral reef surrounded by mangroves and lush tropical vegetation, Bocas del Toro is situated in the north-eastern part of Panama, and is an area known predominantly for its tourism. Until a few years ago, it was the location of the United Fruit Company, one of largest brands in the world trade of bananas. The island of Bastimentos, which is also one of the three national parks of Panama, hosts the only fishing lodge on the entire Atlantic coast of Panama, the Tranquilo Bay Lodge.

The Atlantic coast of Panama, as with other countries of Central America (Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica), is less known for its fishing compared with the great tradition of fishing in the Pacific Ocean, which as we know, is able to satisfy even the most remote angler's dreams. The Atlantic coast that engulfs all of these countries is generally less populated and often constitutes a veritable kingdom of biodiversity, hosting

the last rainforests of this region.

The pacific side is undoubtedly the most authentic and wild part of the country, where fishing also incorporates adventure, wildlife exploration and the tribal traditions of natives who still speak the Ngobe-Bugle language that they used before the arrival of Admiral Christopher Columbus in 1492. But above all, the Atlantic coast is one of the best spots in the world for Tarpon.

Tranquilo Bay is the result of a dream that many of us have: three friends; Jay Viola and Jim and Renee Kimball, decided, in the middle of their professional careers in Texas, that they didn't want to grow old among the traffic, stress, and in the midst of skyscrapers. After a period of exploration in which they set aside as much money as possible, they discovered this little paradise and begin to build their home and then six cabanas in the middle of the forest, destined for their future guests. The lodge is completely environmentally friendly and independent, with generators, water treatment and ultrafiltration plants and even an antenna for the only contact with the "civilised" world (the Internet). The owners have collaborated with expert naturalists to offer guided tours in the forest, and promote ecotourism with activities





dedicated to outdoor enthusiasts, such as water sports and fishing. Jay and Jim are fishing enthusiasts and avid anglers who normally guide every fishing trip, and they know the area incredibly well.

On this island, Bastimentos, begins our fishing adventure in Panama, with a project that aims to fish through the Panama Canal and both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in the same trip. The Atlantic Ocean extends from the coast of Senegal to the Congo and Angola in the east, and in the West the fish can be seen from North Carolina in the USA up to Bahia in Brazil, most specifically across the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

Species

The location offers many possibilities for fishing, from light tackle to deep fishing on drop offs. However, the house specialty is Tarpon fishing. The guys at Tranquilo Bay fishing practice this in front of several estuaries that are present in the area, in particular the Changuinola and Sixaola, as well as other rivers that flow directly into the ocean. Fishing in the estuary allows a good chance of catching with natural and artificial baits, even when inshore waters are crystal clear. Fly fishing is possible, but as I often point out, before coming here you have to understand that due to geographical conditions (you fish often at the feet of tropical forests) and also due to the weather, many times you'll have to fish in blind casting, very different to what we usually see in the keys or Florida.

The Tarpon here reach a significant size, with specimens between 120-150 pounds being the most common. The Changuinola is also connected to the Almirante Bay through what is called "the first channel" of Panama, the Snyder. Later, the Crisis of Chiquita and especially the presence of a direct rail connection between the plantations and the Grand Panama Canal transformed



Close-up: The Tarpon (*Megalops atlanticus*)

In 1847, the Tarpon was ranked in the *Megalops* genre, whose name derives from Greek and means "big eyes", one of the salient features of the Tarpon. There is another species in the genus, the *Megalops cyprinoides*, (Indo Pacific Tarpon), which reaches much smaller sizes. The silver King is the most common of the names attributed to Tarpon fishermen, due to the diffuse glow that it emits when jumping out of the water, thanks to the silver colour of its large scales.

the Snyder canal, and you can now see many endemic species and native animals and plants. Other species that you can fish together with Tarpons are Jack Crevalle, several species of sharks, (including Blacktip and Bullshark) and even the Hardhead saltwater catfish (*Ariopsis felis*).

Tarpon females can reach a length of over 2.4 meters and a weight of 355 pounds, while males are generally smaller (Crabtree, 1995). The tarpon males have a life span of about 30 years, while females can live for more than 50 years. For Tarpon stationed in inland waters, the typical silver colour with a back that appears dark blue or gray-green colour, changes to dark brown or even black. The only variable that seems to limit their habitat is the temperature, and various studies have shown that the Tarpon is definitely thermophilic. Rapid drops in temperature can cause large die-offs of tarpon. During these drops in temperature, the tarpon usually take refuge in warmer or deeper water, such as the Changuinola river and estuary.





Fishing techniques

The Tarpon is a fish that theoretically can be captured with different fishing techniques, with natural bait (live and dead, drifting or trolling) and artificial ones (trolling, spinning and fly).

The variables to be taken into account in the fishing of this species are different. First and foremost, the environment in which it is fished (depth, oxygenation, temperature and turbidity) and the fact that the anatomy of its mouth and its characteristic jumping and shaking of the head as open as possible to the gills to make volume (weight). These two variables have a major impact on the number of strikes.

Jay and Jim have decades of experience, supported by similar experiences from their friends in Sierra Leone and Gabon. Using oversized Circle hooks (from 14/0 to 16/0), the Bastimentos guys have an impressive capture rate (almost 1:1) of fish that feed on the livebait. The curious thing is that the Tarpon were not hooked at the labial commissure as happens in almost all other fish (from billfishes to Tunas), but they are usually hooked in an almost irreversible way with the hook passing around the upper lip bone. Technically it is a very strange thing, and fishermen as well researchers spent considerable time trying to understand how this could happen. It is not a random thing as it occurs on 99% of the fish caught, and even seems not to be due to any particular technique implemented by the angler. The most plausible explanation, relates Jim, seems to be due to the fact that the Tarpon, once attached to the bait, try to swallow or

spit out the bait, but thanks to the particular conformation of the circle hook, this only serves to rotate it on its axis and leaves it set in the position we have described. This technique, besides being very effective, is also eco-friendly, since fish caught with circles cannot swallow the bait (such as is the case with the J hooks). In addition, when cutting the barb, the release of the fish also becomes much more simple and safe, both for the fish and the anglers!

For the other species present in Bocas del Toro, lure casting is always a winning technique, otherwise in estuarine environment is good to consider that species that in other contexts feeds mainly in topwater (Jacks), frequently hunt in the deeper water layers, so best choice are often noisy minnow, bucktail jigs and softbaits generously sized.

Between colors, a classic in these conditions is black, ideal when there is poor visibility, as in the estuary, and even more so in these waters, where the river often after floods releases large amounts of a native cichlid blackish color, which once in contact with the ocean's salt water, die slowly, thus constituting one of the prey (easier) for predators in the area, including Tarpon. The best times to fish in Bocas del Toro are from April and May and September til October, when the ocean is generally calm and there is an excellent fish activity.

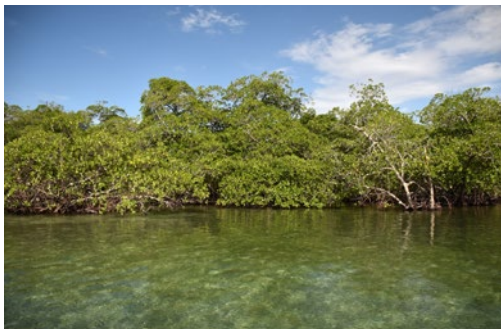
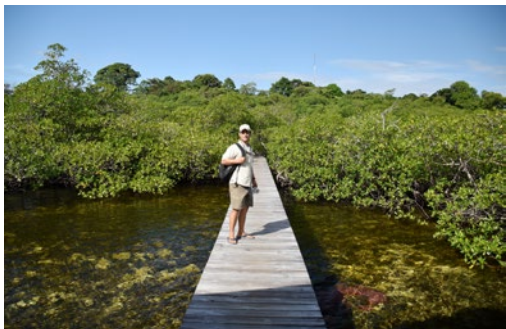
How to get there

Getting to Bocas del Toro is easier than other tropical destinations, with flights departing daily from Panama City (Albrook airport). There are several direct flights with



Air Panama (www.airpanama.com). The guys at Tranquilo Bay Lodge will pick you up at the airport and take you to Bastimentos island (a short boat trip of 30 minutes). There are no special vaccinations required, and the Tranquilo Bay food is very good and also 'Italian approved'!

For more information on the lodge you can visit their website (www.tranquilobay.com), while for further information about Panama and tourism in general it is recommended to visit the website of the Panama Tourism Board (www.visitpanama.com)



DEAD 2: THE TEST RUN

Words + Photos by: Chris and Amanda Fraser

Organising, purchasing, reorganising, modifying, reorganising some more...repeat. That seemed to be the theme for our first few weeks in Durban. Making our "house on wheels" ready for a year on the road was like putting the pieces of a very intricate puzzle together! Once Magellan was mostly organised, it was time to hit the road and try out all of our new equipment before the big day; this included the fishing gear!

Our weekend away took us to the quaint town of Dullstroom, one of South Africa's premier fly-fishing destinations. Located in between Johannesburg and Kruger National Park, Dullstroom is one of the coldest towns in the country. Combined with the chilling breeze coming from the dam, mornings had us bundled up, looking ready for a trip to Ski Dubai. However, checking in on social media and finding posts of 50c+ degree weather in the UAE, we accepted these wintery conditions with open arms.



The main idea of the trip was to go and target rainbow and brown trout on 4-5 weight fly rods. The trout generally live in very cold climates, making Dullstroom the perfect destination. When the fish are biting it can be extremely fun fishing. Coupled with the beautiful surroundings of mountains and the Highveld, it is even a great getaway for the not-so-avid fisherman. We stayed on a lovely farm which had three large dams stocked by the farmer's hatchery. Unfortunately, two of the dams were completely dried up, evidence of the severe drought faced by most of the country.

"There he stands, draped in more equipment than a telephone lineman, trying to outwit an organism with a brain no bigger than a breadcrumb, and getting licked in the process," stated Paul O'Neil in 1965...my sentiments exactly as we set up across the dam from a very serious looking family of fishermen. As a first-timer, I did not understand what all the fuss was about. However, within a few minutes, I was hooked; although I definitely did not look the part! Chris on the other hand was in his element unfurling the line over and over again. Whilst the fishing was a bit slow, we managed to land and successfully release fifteen rainbow trout of between 2-3



pounds, with no brown trout in sight.

Our weekend away concluded with a stopover in a one-horse town to test out the rooftop tent. The weather forecast indicated temperatures dipping below freezing. This would certainly put our Dubai-prone bodies to the test! Our Howling Moon rooftop tent kept us surprisingly warm and comfortable throughout the night. It wasn't until our -5 degree wakeup call that the wrath of the cold was felt. The tent and the surrounding campgrounds were covered in ice, making our generally quick pack up an arduous event. It didn't help that neither of us owned a pair of winter gloves.

Our trial was a success and we now felt 100% ready for our epic one-year adventure through Africa. Farewells to family and friends and off we'd be. Next Stop: Botswana, with stays in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, the Central Kalahari, Nxai Pan, the Okavango Delta, and Chobe National Park. Stay tuned for more of our adventures through Africa.

Learn more about our small charity, Books for the Bush on our website
www.dead2travel.com,
www.facebook.com/dead2travel.

SCENIC CAMPING SPOTS IN ROMANIA

Words By: Ileana Buzoianu

What does to camp mean? To camp is to live for a while in a tent. As simple as that! It started since wars were more frequent than now, but people also use this activity driven by their desire to escape the urban regions and its busyness and have fresh air, silent nights and no social constraints. Thus, people started going camping for recreational purposes.

Camping is for any season and any land form, but the whole preparation depends on whether you go on mountains or at the seaside, whether you prefer sunny seasons or cold ones. On these criteria, you must get ready differently.

Due to the fact that Romania has four seasons and they are still well-defined, you can camp anywhere and anytime here. When choosing a campground you must take into consideration the following: surface of the whole campground, the opening hour, pet access, car parking conditions, nudism, water, power supply, nearby lakes, rivers, pools, sea, etc.

The tent you use for camping has to accomplish certain specifications regarding fabrics, dimensions, weight, protection, ventilation, pitch difficulty, etc.

No matter the region you go camping (either seaside or mountains), the tent should have a high grade of impermeability. You should also bring with you foam mattresses and one to two season sleeping bags with limit comfort temperature of about 0°C. Use a tent calculating the number of persons going camping plus one more. You will have additional space for your luggage.

Don't forget to add a first-aid kit, a head light, a pocket knife, matches, some rope,



water recipients and waste bags. Carefully choose your clothing. It has to be adequate to both day and night temperatures. So, before going camping, inform yourself on the weather forecast of the period and region you want to travel to.

When camping on mountains, you have to be much more aware of the temperatures, no matter of the season, as mountains are unpredictable.

In addition to the equipment mentioned earlier, use a tent with a higher degree of impermeability. The material of the outer foil should be a silicon coating as it is the most efficient in the case of any extreme weather phenomenon. Take a GPS with you as well and the clothing should be technical: technical T-shirt, three-layered soft-shell pants and jacket, mountaineering boots.

When camping on mountains, you have to carefully choose the place to pitch your tent. Do not pitch it in the forest, do not pitch it around an avalanche passage. Try to find an open, flat area, but not too exposed to winds and rain.

In Romania, there are both private and public campgrounds around mountain regions starting from the oldest mountains – Măcin Mountains (dating from the end of the Paleolithic Era) to the most imposing ones – Făgăraș Mountains (2.544 m).

As over 30% of Romania's surface represents mountains and forests, the foreign tourist is recommended to take a local licensed guide on their journeys. He can guide you towards the most picturesque places, interesting spots unmapped officially, tell you stories and legends, give you adequate travelling advices.

One breathtaking place to camp in Romania is Ceahlău Mountains. The surroundings of Dochia Hut (1,750m) offer a perfect environment for camping while exploring the mountains. This also offers you the chance to experience a magnificent sunrise from Toaca Peak (1.904 m). That moment of silence when you see how light turns everything from

simple outlines to colour, shape, energy, life.

Here, you may also see an interesting phenomenon: the "shadow pyramid". This effect is an optical illusion, which is formed because of the positioning of two mountain peaks, combined with the clouds of mist, including particles of water and sunlight. It looks like a pyramid with a square base, figure considered to be extremely rare in nature. The phenomenon is unique in the world.

The Danube Delta is another fascinating place to camp. It is the second greatest delta in Europe after Volga Delta (Russia). It is another type of land form. No doubt that the impressive range of habitats and species which occupy a relatively small area makes the Danube Delta a fundamental centre for biodiversity in Europe and a natural genetic bank with inestimable value for global natural heritage.

In order to have a full experience of camping, the last place recommended is a cirque glacier called Mălăiești, in the Bucegi Mountains. The cirque is surrounded by 2,500m high stone walls. If you reach Mălăiești and have to stay overnight, there is space to pitch your tent. The area offers astonishing views and peace. Yet, it is much safer for you to hike guided by a professional. For that Oxygen Association (www.asociatiaoxigen.ro) offers you some of the best mountain trainers in the matter. Explore, dream, discover Romania!





Destination Incredible

Why The Maldives is more than just Romance and Regulators

Words + Photos by: Rachael Bruford

Cloudless skies, azure blue seas and water villas that conveniently lead directly into the tropical Indian Ocean. Despite all of this, The Maldives never particularly appealed to me. No, I'm not crazy. It's just, as an active person, the thought of going somewhere where you literally have no choice but to breathe out, stop and relax for a couple of days always seemed to be at odds with my general outlook on life and go-getting nature.

However, living in Dubai is probably as close as I'm going to get to these atolls that my friends all rave about. So surely, it makes sense to visit this island paradise and see if they live up to their hype? After all, it's pretty rare to find yourself living only a 4-hour flight away from such an otherwise remote location.



Don't get me wrong, whenever I browsed articles about The Maldives, I was blown away by their beauty. Looking back, I don't quite know what put me off visiting them sooner. I guess it was their clichéd appeal as a stereotypical 'honeymoon' destination, and the fact that there seemed to be very little to do apart from sit around doing, well... nothing.

Located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of Sri Lanka, this island nation is the smallest country in Asia, both in terms of land mass and population. It's actually a vertical chain of 26 atolls that were formed by prehistoric volcanoes which eventually became extinct and sank to the ocean floor, creating the fringed reefs and corals that make the islands so popular today.

The formation of the islands created the perfect ecosystem for an abundance of marine life, as well as one of the most idyllic tourist destinations in the world.

After looking at (and balking at the price of) a range of different accommodation, I eventually settled on Drift Thelu Veliga Retreat, situated on an incredibly small island that was located in the south Ari Atoll. A relatively new resort, I was lured in by the promise of an all inclusive package (apart

from beverages). I also liked the fact that it was small. For me, the sound of jetting off to somewhere so remote, yet spending it at a popular resort, full of people, seemed counter-intuitive. And so it was that we took the short flight from Dubai, and then a quick hop via sea plane, to our island paradise.

Upon landing on our remote island, I was immediately drawn in by the vivid shades of blue, and the fact that, despite being surrounded by smaller islands, we were seemingly in the middle of nowhere; somewhere in the Indian Ocean, in between Africa and Asia. It was at this point that my preconceived ideas about The Maldives began to change.





Being the Eid break, we had four nights in this much desired holiday hotspot. I was originally concerned that this amount of time would seem far too long, and that I would be more than ready to get back to 'reality' (i.e. Dubai) much sooner. However, as it turned out, I could have actually spent longer immersed in this tropical bliss. Despite my original reservations, and in spite of the fact that I didn't manage to do any diving during my stay (which I had fully intended to do), I fell in love with the Maldives, despite myself. Here are the reasons for the shift in my attitude:

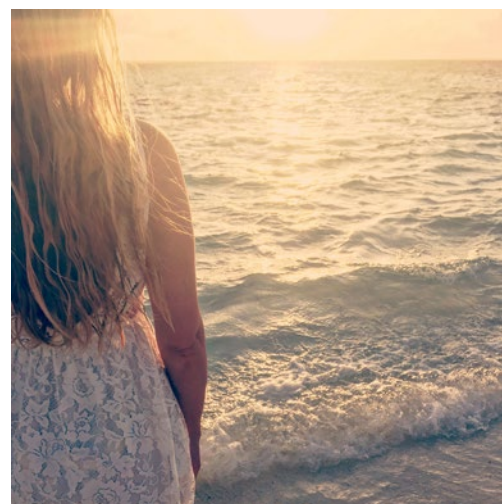
The vivid colours of nature

In an age where images are cleverly manipulated by Photoshop and Instagram filters, I never really believed those beautiful colours shining out at me from the page of a magazine, almost blinding me with their depth and clarity. It was only when I saw this for myself, with my own eyes, that I realised nature's role in creating this stunning array of contrasts. From the bright turquoise blue of the shallow water to the darker tones of the deep sea, I have honestly never seen such a range of just one colour. The changing sky, from a bright, unreal blue to a moody grey,

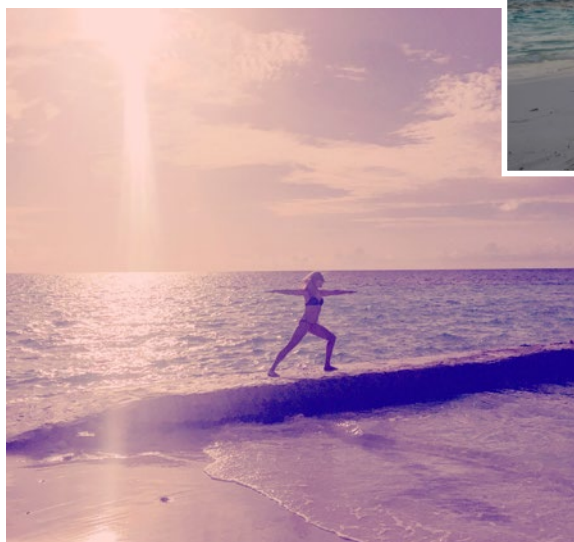
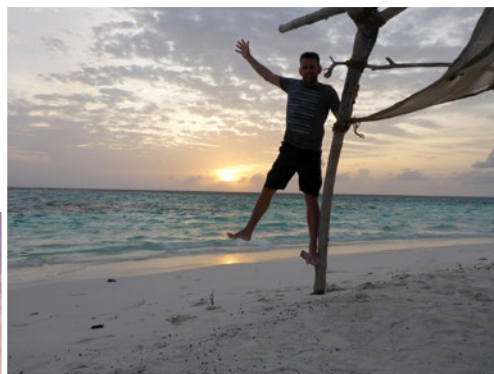
only added to this palette, and truly took my breath away every time I stopped to embrace my surroundings, which was pretty often.

Pure relaxation

There's something about the sound of the sea that can calm even the most active mind. Those four days were spent doing little, and I came to the realisation that we all need to take time out every now and again; it's just that we don't notice that we need to until we actually do it. I didn't check my emails, and for once, felt that it was ok not to do so – almost as if a mere cursory glance at my growing inbox would be to disrespect this tropical island hideaway. In fact, apart from taking pictures, I barely used my phone at all, spending the days reading and paddle boarding, with the odd bit of snorkelling thrown in too. Bringing it back to basics, the



day was punctuated with simple necessities, such as meal times (and perhaps the odd sundowner!). I slept when I felt like it, and it seemed that, maybe due to disconnecting my phone, I slept a lot deeper and had rest that was of a much better quality. I also abandoned my usual training and eventually returned from the trip fully feeling the benefit of doing very little indeed.





Marine life...right outside your bungalow

We all know that The Maldives is famous for its diving, and a multitude of articles have been written on the best spots to see some of the planet's most intriguing creatures. Although I do dive, I opted not to on this trip, but still saw many species of fish, including a stingray, from the comfort of my water bungalow. Perfect for snorkelers and families with children, there is an abundance of marine life only a couple of steps away.

Realising how fragile our planet is

The devastating 2004 Tsunami wreaked havoc on The Maldives and its tourism industry, and when you visit you really do get an appreciation of how fragile this archipelago is. With an average elevation of 1.5 metres above sea level, The Maldives is the world's lowest country. With its highest point, Mount Villingili, standing at a less than staggering two meters above sea level, it's actually the lowest 'highest point' in the world.



How to get there

Daily flights with both Emirates and FlyDubai will take you to the capital, Male', and from there you will need to either take a boat or a sea plane to your island resort. This is usually arranged by your resort, and the cost does vary. The flight time is around four hours, with an additional 30-60 minutes traveling time to get to your hotel. This makes The Maldives an ideal location for a long weekend!

When to go

The summer months of May to November are referred to as the 'low season' because the chance of rain is greater and the higher winds make for slightly rougher seas. However, prices tend to drop because of this, and the rain does not tend to last all day. Conversely, the 'high season' runs from December to February and brings with it lower humidity and better weather...but higher prices.

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THE DRUK PATH DIARIES: EXPLORING BHUTAN

Words + Photos by: Fahd Abu Aisha

Marking the start of a new series, our intrepid hiker, Fahd Abu Aisha, explores the stunning Druk Path Trek in Bhutan.

Day 1 – October 30th – The Long Journey to Shangri La

I booked this trip to Bhutan just like I booked my previous expedition climbing Mt. Elbrus in Russia; spontaneously.

Giving my gear list the brusque once-over, it was time to go. I was looking forward to the Chinese and Vietnamese itineraries that Dubai based bespoke adventure company-Rahhalah had proposed, but it was Suzanne (the first Arab woman to summit Everest and the founder of Rahhalah) who urged me towards the Druk Path Trek, vowing the

experience would be nothing short of divine. She always knows best, so I signed up blindly.

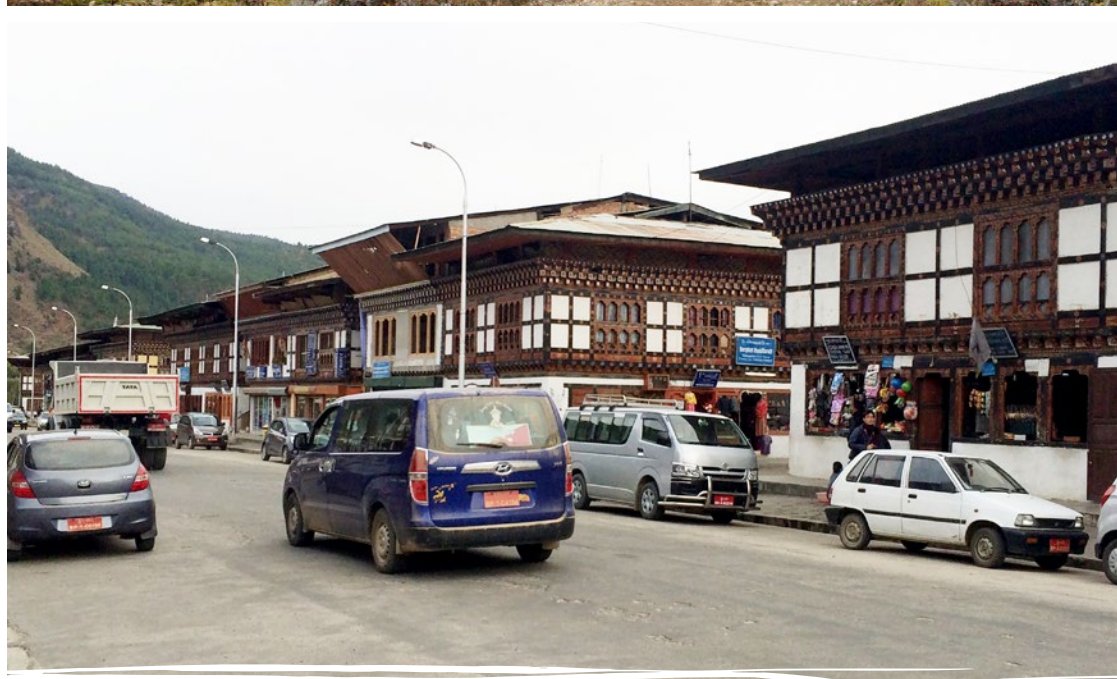
Again, as was the case with the Mt. Elbrus journey two months prior, work commitments were relentless and I ended up hurriedly packing with the urgency of one evacuating a warzone. A cruel, staggering Thursday night taxi ride to Sharjah sapped most of my energy by the time I got to the airport, and the long voyage to the Buddhist Kingdom hadn't even begun to unfold. My flight was the following sequence: Sharjah to Kathmandu, and then on to Paro, Bhutan. It wasn't the most inspirational of starts. I stuffed my face with Krispy Kreme donuts at the terminal in the hope that the sugar rush would keep me awake long enough to board the 3.30am Air Arabia flight to Kathmandu.

I passed out as soon as my head found a

nook to cushion itself against the plane window, and promptly plunged into a series of fantastical dreams of snowcapped peaks and gaping valleys. After what felt like a mere gasp of time, the nirvana I was engulfed in dissipated when the seemingly demure and chirpy plane stewardess swung the plane window open with the grace of a frantic fireman in a burning building. I withered furiously in my seat, my seething abruptly subsiding once I realised we were landing in Kathmandu.

It was hard to gather any sense of bearings at the airport other than the countless 'Home of Mt. Everest' posters that adorned every corridor. The Everest overdose was followed by a confused exchange with the immigration officer trying to find a blank page in my passport to stick the visa in. He resorted to sticking the visa in horizontally on a half full page.

My six hour layover at the airport predominantly comprised of me staring at the flight screen like a giddy child watching Cartoon Network. I gazed at the Paro flight information incessantly as it inched up the list of flights, feeling mounting convulsions with every status change from 'Blank' to 'Check-In' to 'Boarding'.



As per usual, I passed out instantly on the Druk Air flight (flight narcolepsy- one of my many talents) while we were still on the runway. I was thankful I got to wake up 10 minutes before we had arrived at our destination, giving me time to peruse the terrain from above. I stared out of the window to find the plane's wing weaving and swerving metres away from the mountains and the houses that peppered them. I could have waved to someone sitting in their living room it was that close. The landing was an experience in itself, as the small runway finally came into sight under some large hills. It demanded impressive technique to land in such a tight space.

I knew that this trip was going to be special as I strolled down the plane steps and onto the runway, shuffling into the terminal- all the while its striking Buddhist architecture had me convinced it was a temple. It was not until I had met my 3 guides that they informed me that Paro, (contrary to what I had thought) was not the capital city of Bhutan (that's Thimpu), despite the international airport being based there. Rather, that was due to the land structure of the country. I was less surprised to hear that it had been described as the most difficult

commercial airport in the world; with only a small number of airline pilots certified to operate commercial planes there.

The guides drove me through the city, enlightening me about this mysterious hermit Kingdom quietly nestled between India and China. Bhutan is the only country that measures its wealth on GNH – Gross National Happiness. Their system is monarchy based, their current King being of a fifth generation who rules over the country. His father who preceded him as the fourth King (and who is currently alive) recently implemented a democratic system establishing a parliament. Democracy is still a nascent concept in the state but 'things are changing' as was constantly re-iterated by the guides. Adherence to local culture and tradition is weakening and it may not be long before McDonalds or Starbucks begin spewing out their logos across those mountains. The Bhutan I saw might not be the same Bhutan in 10 years and that made me feel grateful I had the honour of experiencing it before the clutching grip of globalization took hold of this little nook.

After checking into my lodge, the guides took me into the town centre to do the obligatory tourist shopping. The shelves of the shops were embellished with beautiful Bud-

dhist paintings, textiles and handcraft. One handcraft in particular caught my eye, and I learned of its importance in Buddhist culture as a symbol of good luck and to ward away any evil spirits.

We returned to the lodge where I was given a thorough briefing on the trek ahead and the route we would be embarking on. I was then treated to a delicious Bhutanese six course meal; dumplings, pumpkin curry, a mushroom and cheese dish, salad mixed with mint, grilled fish on a hill of spinach and steamed rice, topped with sugary rice pudding to put me into a food coma to conquer all food comas.

Day 2 – October 31st – Mud, Mountains and Monasteries

An uninterrupted 10-hour slumber later, I woke up refreshed, with a bowl of Bhutanese Chocos and some fulfilling omelets giving me all the energy I needed. My guide Tashi and the Driver picked me up and we drove up the valley to our starting point. As we ambled up, I saw specks of farmers tending to their rice paddy fields as the sun started to rise over the hills. Tashi joked that one of Bhutan's many nicknames was the 'Rice Bowl of Asia'.



The small watchtower Ta Dzong (overlooking the fortress Paro Dzong) signified the starting point of the trail. We parked on the slope, and started managing our gear. The Driver informed us that our chef and horseman (who would be tending to the horses carrying our supplies on the trail) were running late and we should wait in the car until they arrived. The Driver asked if I listened to English music and before I could answer him, he had switched on his MP3 telling me he loved Owl City. There was something surreal about listening to 'When Can I See You Again' amongst the backdrop of the Bhutanese mountains.

The chef and horseman arrived at the foot of the hill. Tashi advised that we should start our journey and let them catch up. And so we began, strolling up the slope flanked by traditional Bhutanese homes. One notable image I remember was seeing copious amounts of chilies left to dry on the roofs of the houses. The fruit is an important part of Bhutanese diet – and the Bhutanese eat these chilies like we eat grapes.

We continued to pace through houses and farms, making good enough time that Tashi decided we could wait on the trail until the chef and horseman (and horses naturally) caught up with us. This was also because otherwise we would have nothing to eat once we reached the first camp. As we waited, an elderly Bhutanese villager appeared on the trail behind us, walking at a slow gait. He decided to rest with us. I felt I was in one of Aesop's Fables, and feared

he would ask me to answer three riddles should I wish to cheat death. Instead he told us he was walking home but then fell asleep mid-sentence.

The weather was getting chilly and I braced myself for that infamous dilemma that I and every other adventurer like myself encounters on such excursions; holding the urge to go the bathroom once I get cozy in the sleeping bag, either burying my hands between my legs or braving the freezing ice blades stabbing my body as I pull myself outside of the tent and head to the make-shift toilet.

Standing still was making us cold so we agreed to walk at a slower pace in the hopes that the duo and their horses would catch up. We woke the old man who claimed he had been thinking deeply. He joined us on our walk for 15 minutes before disappearing on a side trail into the forest. The scenery was beautiful as trees as high as buildings and as old as 1000 years enveloped us. The chill in the air transformed into raindrops and within seconds it began to pour heavily. Inadequately dressed and frightened our gear was getting wet, we hustled to shelter under the roof of a farmer's stable. The farmer was piling manure for her crops but still took time from her work to insist on providing us with a snack or drink, which we politely declined. We thanked her for her hospitality and told her we would be on our way once the rain subsided.

The rain did provide us with another period of rest, allowing the chef and horseman

to finally catch up with us. As we greeted them the rain stopped and we continued on our trail. After a half hour walk through the dense trees there was a temporary opening under the sky. A large colourful structure stood before us. This, I was told in a gentle murmur by Tashi, was a Prayer Wheel. Prayer wheels are literally wheels with prayers written on them. Once spun, they are said to generate positive energy to answer said prayers and bring peace to the people in the land. I prayed I wouldn't have to face my infamous dilemma once I got into my tent to sleep.

It was at these wheels, where we had our first officially planned break. I met an American couple from San Francisco who were on the same path. They were going on a tour around Asia, coming from India to trek the Druk Path before stopping over in Nepal for a few days and then flying back home. We shared stories of our travels before Tashi and I resumed our trail to the first camp site where they would be camping as well.

The walk had started to become a little more challenging when it started raining again. The path became muddier and slipperier. Another hour and a half later, we had finally slogged out of the forest and into the open plains. From the side of the plateau we stood on, we could see the town of Paro – a mere speck now – and on the other side; the monstrous snowcapped peaks of the Himalayan mountain range. Our camp was a few metres below the plateau but before we descended we made our way to the Jili



Zhong Monastery, which lay perched on a cliff at the edge of the highland overlooking our camp and the mountains.

We hiked over to this secluded monastery to hear soothing Buddhist music echoing through the walls from a stereo. Tashi called out for the monk but no one answered as we explored the exterior of this seemingly abandoned temple. On the other side, we found a small cluster of huts, where a young man draped in a burgundy robe appeared and instructed me to remove my shoes as he unlocked the gate inside of the 15th century sanctuary. Taking pictures was prohibited, as much as I pleaded. I grudgingly relented and you only have my word to take for it, but it was beautiful. There was an eerie air of mysticism inside the altar room, as three giant golden Buddha statues sat staring ominously. The walls of the room were painted with the avatars of the many Buddhist Gods and the rays of light protruding through the curtains heightened the spiritual aura. Vibrantly coloured tapestries dangled from the ceiling and dozens of statues of the various Buddhist deities were shelved along the altar and the walls. We thanked the monk, and headed below the ridge to our campsite.

On the slope down, we ducked under what I thought to be a line of flags strung between the branches of the trees. I had a closer look and realised they were sheets of paper covered in Sanskrit. Tashi clarified that as the wind blew the sheets, it released positive energy into the air throughout the

forest and the valley to ward off evil spirits... and bears, he (semi) jokingly added. Without sounding superstitious, there was an eerie feeling of a force around us, something in the air I could not explain. There were also black bears lurking beyond the trail but they would only come out at night. Tashi would occasionally howl on the trail to make these bears, and other wild animals, aware of our presence. It's common knowledge that loud noises scare off these brutish forest dwellers, I reminded myself

to keep two pots near my sleeping bag at night.

It began to rain heavily and the temperature plummeted. I spent the remainder of the evening in the main tent, the smoke of the makeshift oven warming my knees. After another savoury dinner of crispy chicken drenched in mushroom and cheese sauce, I headed back to my tent and buried myself in my sleeping bag, praying I would sleep through this freezing night.

To be continued...



ACTION AGAINST POACHING

Protecting Elephants and Rhinos in Mali

Words by: Rachael Bruford

Photos by: Angie Raab – Boots on the Ground

The statistics speak for themselves and strike fear into the heart of any animal lover; between 2010 and 2012, an estimated 100,000 elephants were killed for their tusks; a result of the burgeoning demand for ivory in the Far East.

In addition to this, the numbers of Rhinoceros, one of the 'big five' animals, are now down to only a fraction of what they were at the start of the twentieth century, with some subspecies now extinct or on the verge of extinction. We've all seen and been horrified by the pictures of these majestic creatures, the life drained from them and their tusks brutally removed, killed for the very thing that makes them so unique, yet at the same time, so at risk.

But now the war on poachers has entered another dimension, becoming scarily intertwined with the growth in global terrorism and the rise of militia groups and jihadists. This horrific development means that these beautiful creatures have once again fallen victim to the greed and demand of humans; and the international situation as it stands today.

Thankfully, there are people who are still making a difference; who believe, despite the changing circumstances and dwindling



numbers, that it is not too late to save these species teetering on the brink of existence. Matt Croucher, a former Marine based in the UAE, has recently returned from the West African country of Mali, where he spent three weeks working with and further educating local tribes with his own charity, Action Against Poaching. An animal lover who is particularly against trophy hunting and killing animals for greed, Matt is now using his previous military experience, not only to protect the elephant and rhino population, but also to help those whose job it is to conserve and defend these creatures – a job that is a daily battle against insurgent groups. It's an incredible story, which although in its infancy, gives the wild elephant and rhino population hope for the future.

Mali

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, Mali has experienced times of

crisis and political upheaval over the last fifty years, but nothing as serious as the situation it has faced since 2012. A coup in March of that year fractured the country, then a rebellion in the north effectively left this landlocked nation in a state of civil war, with most of the major cities falling into the hands of rebels. Suspended from the African Union, the UN became involved and French troops eventually recaptured the cities that had fallen under militia control. However, jihadist groups such as Al Qaeda still operate throughout the country, particularly in the North, which is where Action Against Poaching is focusing their efforts. With the capital, Bamako (located in the south of the country), largely under government control, the North is generally lawless. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel to several provinces, and warns against all but essential travel to the rest of the country.





Mali is roughly the size of South Africa, and is bordered by Algeria to the north, Niger to the east, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire to the south, Guinea to the south-west, and Senegal and Mauritania to the west.

The link between poaching and terror

Whereas poachers in other nations are largely thieves and gangs, the situation in Mali is slightly different. Jihadists and terror groups operating in the area are funding their insurgencies by killing already endangered animals,





such as the Saharan Elephant and Rhino, and selling their precious ivory, generally to the burgeoning Chinese market, where the popularity of figurines and keepsakes makes for a multi-billion-dollar demand. Although the price varies and fluctuates (as with any 'commodity'), the wholesale value of raw ivory is approximately \$2100 per kilo, whilst the going rate of a rhino horn is in the region of \$60,000 to \$100,000. It's sad enough when you think about the effect that this has on the local environment, on the declining population of these beautiful creatures, and the delicate ecosystem that local tribes rely on in order to survive themselves. Then



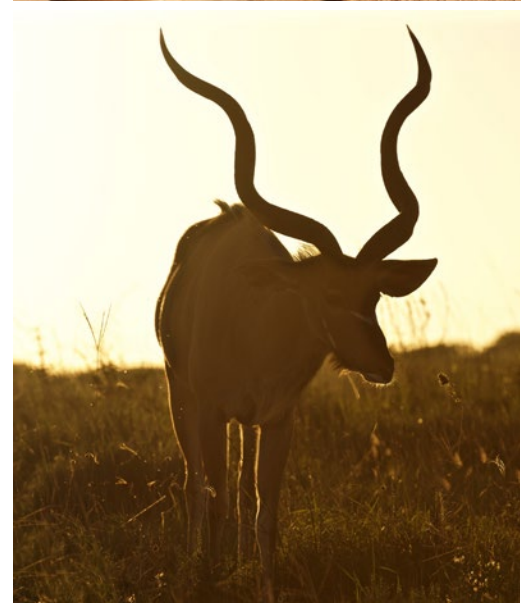
throw terror into the equation; a subject so powerful and emotive, a fear that we can all relate to. Something had to be done.

Matt and his charity

Matt Croucher GC is a former Marine who also happens to be an animal lover. With an extensive military background spanning the past 16 years, in 2008 he began to consider the possibility of working with charities in areas of conflict. Eventually, in mid-2015, Action Against Poaching was born. A 'non-for-profit organisation offering direct and proactive support to anti-poaching initiatives in Africa', Matt's first mission with Action Against Poaching took him to Mali in collaboration with the Chengeta Wildlife Foundation. Although the government of Mali is doing what it can to protect the species that are being poached, for example by employing rangers in the National Parks to track, locate and apprehend poachers,

Action Against Poaching's aim was to work with these rangers to help them further. Also accompanying Matt was 'Boots on the Ground', a documentary team who aim to tell the story of the plight of Africa's wildlife.





Action Against Poaching

Action Against Poaching's mission is to "effectively assist our partners and develop our own initiatives in the combatting of illegal poaching, the Ivory and horn trade." Their main focus is the proactive assistance of the protection of endangered species such as the Rhinoceros and Elephants. There are three main programmes that are intended to help:

Ranger Programme

Delivering training to Anti-Poaching law enforcement teams in poaching hot-spots.

Intelligence Programme

Using Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Human Intelligence to help plan a strategy that will assist Rangers and Law Enforcement to undertake their duties more effectively.

Education

Educating individuals in Mali on the law and consequences of becoming involved, as well as the moral values associated with the poaching trade. Action Against Poaching also aims to educate nations in the Far-East as to the nil-medicinal purposes of Rhino horns/ivory, and also to continue and increase education and awareness projects in more developed societies.

The mission

Action Against Poaching's initial mission in June was to educate the local population. Staying in UN bases and travelling in convoys accompanied by the army, Matt and his team headed north, some 900km away from the capital, into a militia area just 100km south of the legendary Timbuktu. Aselephants migrate from North to South, this was the perfect area in which to begin.

However, the trip was not without its risks. Just two weeks prior to Matt's visit, seven soldiers and two rangers were sadly killed in the same area. Collaboration with the local tribes was to be the key. Matt found that the locals were generally accommodating, and was able to build positive relationships with the community. Tribe members passed on information about potential jihadists and likely poachers in the area, whilst Matt and his team taught locals about explosives,

gave them weapons training and taught them how to detect landmines. By empowering and educating the community, the jihadists have a much harder battle on their hands. With over 900 active informants who infiltrate and report back things such as poaching activity, the various 'middlemen' and the routes of illegal ivory/horn trades, it is clear that tribes are behind the project. After all, their livelihood depends upon the unique ecosystem in their villages, in which elephants and rhinos play a vital role.

Sadly, there's a much more sinister reason why the local population need Matt's expertise and training. The jihadists are keen not only to make money from the killing of elephants and rhinos and the illegal selling of ivory, but also seek to halt the efforts of those who protect these incredible animals. By planting landmines in the area, many elephants and rhinos are tragically killed in the most unimaginable of ways. As if this wasn't bad enough, the militia groups also plant landmines near the mutilated corpses of these animals, with disastrous consequences for those rangers who then come to investigate these heinous acts.

By providing bomb training and teaching locals how to detect and counteract such situations, Matt and his charity are not only aiming to protect the lives of wildlife, but also the lives of those locals who seek to defend and safeguard them, too. Furthermore, teaching locals how to secure physical and forensic evidence helps to prosecute those who are caught.

Returning to Mali

Action Against Poaching plans to return to Mali in the near future, to help further with a more active patrol. With only 200-300 Saharan Elephants remaining in the wild, time is running out before these stunning animals, and the rhinos who form such a recognisable image of African wildlife, are lost forever; yet more victims of the human need for power and wealth – greed at its most distressing.

How to make a difference

For more information about Action Against Poaching, and to make a donation, visit www.actionagainstopoaching.org. You can also visit www.chengetawildlife.org and www.bootsonthegrounds.com for more about the poaching situation in Africa.

HABITUALLY HEALTHY



Words by: Chef Patrick Ikinofa

Hey guys

Hope all is well and the summer heat isn't too much to handle.

Down at The Cycle Bistro we have made a few changes.

Finally, after 3 years of dominating the Paleo scene in Dubai, we have decided to deliver.

Along with that we have also started a Paleo meal plan which can also be delivered directly to your door.

We hope that you have all enjoyed your summer break and welcome you all back to try out our new menu starting at the end of this month.

Here is a devilishly good recipe from our new menu for you to try out at home.



INGREDIENTS

Brownies

- 1 cup of walnuts
- 1 cup of cashew nuts
- 1 cup of pistachio nuts
- 3 cups of dates
- 1 cup of cocoa powder
- A dash of sea salt

Topping

- Quarter of a cup of almond milk
- 50 g of at least 70% dark chocolate (make sure it's dairy free)
- Quarter of a cup cocoa powder

- 1tbsp of maple syrup
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- Sea salt

METHOD

Place all of the nuts, apart from a few walnuts, into the blender and pulse until a powder is formed.

Remove and place in a bowl and sift in the cocoa powder and salt. Mix well.

In the meantime, place the dates in the blender and pulse until they are broken down in to little pieces.

Remove the dates and set aside and then place the nut and cocoa powder mixture back in to the blender. Add the dates a little bit at a time whilst pulsing until a nice dough is formed.

Remove and set aside and break the remaining walnuts into small pieces and add to the mixture.

Line a baking dish with baking paper and grease with a little bit of coconut oil.

Scoop the dough into the baking dish and flatten into the shape of the dish.

To make the sauce, place the almond milk in a saucepan and allow to cookover a medium heat. Add the chocolate and stir continuously until the chocolate melts. Add in the sifted cocoa powder, a little at a time, again stirring continuously. If the sauce seems too thick add more milk; if it seems too liquid add more cocoa powder. You are aiming for a thick pouring sauce. Once the desired consistency is achieved, add the maple syrup, plus a touch of sea salt and coconut oil, and stir in.

Remove the topping sauce from the heat and pour over the brownie mixture.

Don't forget about our fortnightly cooking shows! The next one is on the **16th August**.

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The Cycle Bistro

GPS location:

Latitude: N 25° 02.792
Longitude: E 055° 14.384
Phone: 04 425 6555





BRODERICK'S SWEET AND HEALTHY TREATS AFTER A POKEMON-INSPIRED JOG

Words by: Keith Perena
Photos by: Lara Antoinette Tan

There has been a recent growth in popularity of the app called Pokemon Go here in the UAE. But before you dismiss this as a contradiction towards the outdoor lifestyle by saying that apps keep you indoors, hear me out first.

The app thrives on using the world we live in as a place where one can find virtual monsters; hence, it encourages people to go outdoors, and with luck capture "Pokemon" in the UAE. I've had my fair share of the action myself and I have to say it is very tiring walking around and running the jogging track along Jumeirah Beach while capturing Pokemon on the side. This is where I found Broderick's to be very sufficient for my grumbling stomach and oh, not to mention, keeping me going for a few more kms.

Some backstory about these delectable treats first – Broderick's was founded by



two brothers based in Ireland, and the idea behind the treat is that it's sort of like a marshmallow, a biscuit and a chocolate bar all in one package. They have three different variants with a fourth one being an assortment of the latter three. It's an energy loaded snack for those who want something to keep them going for longer. It's made for outdoor enthusiasts and Pokemon trainers just like yours truly!

"Broderick's is the next best thing in snacking on the go. It is a great mix of everything that is good. It's not for the boring class. Take a monster bite and you'll know." So believes Nouman A. Siddiqui, Brand Marketing Manager at Aramtec, who distribute the products across UAE.

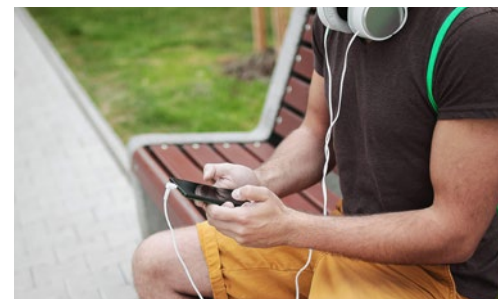
Long story short, I had an enjoyable run at the beach thanks to two things – Pokemon and Broderick's. For me, the two work hand in hand since the latter cannot keep me going further to become better with the former. Broderick's tasty treats give me all the satisfaction I could ever want from a snack bar. My only gripe is that it only has

seven pieces per pack! This is cause for concern since they are so delicious that I always find myself wanting more.

My favourite has to be 'Tiff Toff in the Tuffen'. I even brought an entire pack of it for a Pokemon field day at our nearby park. After a tiring jog coupled with some great Pokemon captures, I am always happy to sit down by the grass and indulge myself to a piece of Broderick's. That's all for now!

Cheers,

A Pokemon Go Trainer



Available at all major supermarket in the UAE



Lum-Tec Combat B33 GMT

The Ohio-based Lum-Tec Combat B33 GMT is a stylish yet functional watch that adds a touch of 'old school' design whilst featuring up to date technology. The old world style brown leather straps, included alongside black nylon straps, certainly make this watch stand out, and the GMT hand, with which you can set a second time zone, will certainly appeal to expats and frequent travellers within the UAE. Made of 316L stainless steel with a bead blasted finish and a hard coat from a Gunmetal PVD titanium Carbide, the watch is also water resistant to depths of up to 200m. Furthermore, radium tone luminescence means that it's easy to read the time even when it's dark. Those who love military style watches will be keen to investigate this watch further.

Product Description

Specifications:

- Complete assembly in Ohio
- 43mm width excluding crown
- 22mm lug width
- 13mm thick
- 316L stainless steel. Bead blasted finish
- Gunmetal PVD titanium Carbide hard coating
- High-tech Viton® gaskets



- MDV® Luminous technology. Old radium tone.
- Precision screw down crown with double diamond sealing system
- Curved sapphire crystal with clear anti-reflective coating

- GMT hand allows you to independently set a second time zone
- Threaded stainless steel caseback
- 200 meters/656 ft. water resistance
- 2 straps included: black nylon and old world style brown leather with matching hardware
- Extra spring bars included for fitting other straps
- All Swiss made R515.24 Quartz movement
- Two year limited warranty
- Limited numbered series of 150
- Free lifetime battery replacement service
- Free lifetime pressure testing and seal lubrication/cleaning

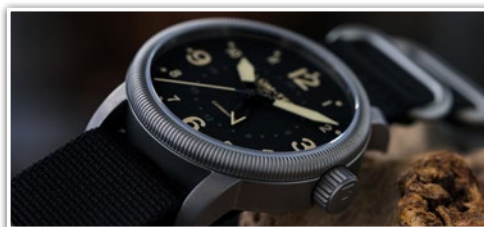
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EASY ACCESS TO A NEW 'BIG BLUE' WORLD

The Yamaha AR190; an affordable, family-friendly boat

Owning a boat is not such a distant dream as some might think. If you've owned boats before, you know already what to look for, and the price tag for your desires. But what about someone who is buying a boat for the first time?

If you want to enter the marine world and are a water sports lover, some valuable advice would be to choose a boat which offers a lot of versatility, so that you don't need to make any tradeoffs. Once you are hooked on owning a boat, you will certainly develop your passion further and can then one day decide if your second boat will lean more towards a fishing boat, a day cruise or a wake boarding boat, which are all more specific for each activity. However, if you want a boat without compromise and with a limited budget, the Yamaha AR190 is a great choice. The highest cost in owning a boat is having it berthed in a marina, but smaller boats up to approximately 30ft can be kept on the trailer, saving you money. There are free slipways across the UAE, and a 19ft boat is easy to trailer. You'll also not have problems finding parking for it since it is the size of a normal car. A 19 footer is also easy to maneuver on the water, good for tight turns (so you can enjoy wakeboarding and towables), as well as offering space for the whole family. You can also use it for fishing.

Let's have a look to the details of the Yamaha AR190 and why it is such a good choice, especially in regard to value for money.

From a difference, you might not recognise differences in the quality of a boat, and one boat can often look similar to another. Upon



closer inspection, it is easy for anyone to spot the details. Cheap and poor quality boats have an uneven hull, and if you look along the side of the boat you can spot this easily. Yamaha has a reputation for good quality and this is still true with this entry level boat. The hatches and compartments are finished to a high standard and the cushions have a two tone colour scheme.

The AR190 is planned well and makes use of every inch of available space, featuring plenty of storage; there are two compartments underneath the bow seats to both sides and an anchor compartment in the front. Further storage is situated under the seats in the stern, and there are deep storages in the deck. The console has a self draining glove box and incorporates the audio system, whilst underneath there's huge storage and access to the hatch. On the swimming platform at the stern, there's also a big wet storage compartment.

The deep cockpit provides high safety on the water especially, for families with children. From a further safety point of view, the entire floor of the boat is covered with snap in carpet with a none slip surface underneath and drain plugs.

The AR190 has seating for up to 8



people, and the bow has a standard easy filler cushion which turns the seats into a sun pad. When anchored, you can also sit comfortably on the stern's integrated swimming platform.

The engine is a 1800cc high output engine which is easily accessible under the stern seat. There is enough space around the engine for easy maintenance such as filling up oil or changing the oil filter. The jet engine is perfect for shallow water and with articulation keel high speed maneuverability is ensured. The handling is similar to normal propeller engine boats and the AR190 accelerates quickly. Accessing the boat from the stern is safe, since there is no propeller.

Even at this low price, the AR190 offers 'no wake' mode and cruise assist at the switch of a button next to the adjustable (tilt) steering wheel. The driver seat swivels and slides and has an integrated flip-up bolster.

One amazing standard feature of the AR190 is the aluminum tower and bimini. The tower is actually collapsible, so you can even park the boat in your garage or basement parking.

The boat comes with a single axle trailer with swing-away tongue and lights. The AR190 is therefore a hassle free family fun boat for everyone who wants to get out on the water without making any compromise or paying a small fortune, whilst still getting a high quality boat.



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PRODUCTS

A ROUND-UP OF QUALITY PRODUCTS AVAILABLE RIGHT HERE IN THE UAE

Lazer Street Junior Helmet

259 AED / QAR / SAR
28.200 OMR

Available at GO Sport

Classic style in a youth helmet. Unique and playful designs where reflectivity plays a big role in making the Street+ JR a favorite.

Features:

- Classic model
- Highly resistant hardshell
- Tuned fit system for stability and comfort
- Airflow for ventilation



TSG Junior Protection Set

215 AED / QAR / SAR
23.400 OMR

Available at GO Sport

This all-in-one skate protection set includes a set of knee pads, elbow pads and wrist guards for beginners and bargain hunters. The elbow and knee pads feature EVA cup foam and PE caps to provide protection against impacts and abrasions. The wrist guards stabilise hands and wrists with full straps and palm splint.

Features:

- Knee Pads
- Elbow pads
- Wrist guards
- EVA cup foam for protection
- Excellent stability



Bamboo Pinner Canyon

1,099 AED / QAR / SAR
119.500 OMR

Available at GO Sport

The Landyachtz Pinner is a carve-influenced board that will reach deep inside the soul surfer in you and give you an exhilarating ride on the concrete wave. Perfect for those who have no destination but rather are here to enjoy the waves that they create, the board provides maximum enjoyment out of what the pavement has to offer.

Features:

- Simple construction
- Classic shape
- Natural flexibility
- Soft-top grip



Envy Colt Complete Scooter

699 AED / QAR / SAR
76.000 OMR

Available at GO Sport

The Colt is a lightweight scooter designed to be ridden by the up and coming shredders of the future. Featuring 100mm metal core wheels, double clamp, chromolly forks, high tensile steel bars and the awesome Envy Colt deck, this scooter is amazing value for money.





CYCLEOPS VIRTUAL PRO TRAINER

Words by: Helle Bachofen Von Echt
Photos by: Jung Francisco

The hot summer months certainly encourage most people to escape the heat and do their preferred exercise indoors; however, the CycleOps Virtual Pro Trainer is one to make the most of all year round.

This is a trainer with a solid base, a built-in power meter and its own software to track your training sessions and progress, as well as hosting a large selection of live routes. The unit is an electronically controlled resistance trainer and able to simulate changes in gradient - yes, like riding real hills. CycleOps offer a selection of trainers and whereas the PowerSync Pro trainer comes with Bluetooth connection, the PowerBeam Pro trainer comes standard with ANT+; at a couple of hundred dirhams extra this enables you to use other programs such as the competitive software Zwift or workout software TrainerRoad.

The Riding Experience

I immediately settled into the Virtual Training testing area at the GO Sport store in Mall of Emirates, and started riding on the chosen undulated time trial course exactly like I would outside; with a good solid power output, I was dripping with sweat within 10 minutes. The riding felt smooth and realistic.

Rodolfo, the bike department representative, explained all the metrics, figures and



graphs showing on the big screen in front of me and I was keeping a close eye on the same numbers that I usually use outside on my road bike. The first thing I noticed was the accuracy of the power reading. Although I didn't compare it directly with my own device, I know my own power output from experience and tens of thousands of kilometres riding. CycleOps uses the PowerTap technology which promises an accuracy reading within 5%.

Whilst with some home trainers you can feel the rear wheel slip slightly when picking up speed, rolling through the course and turning 100+ rpm on the downhill sections, I felt the trainer providing a solid and smooth grip under me. The best and most impressive part of the riding experience, however, was the stable and solid feeling as I simulated explosive sprinting.

The Virtual Aspect

The standard software, CycleOps Virtual Training, records all metrics such as power, heart rate, cadence, speed, elevation and time, enabling you to record your training sessions and track your progress. But if you want to fully enjoy this trainer, you can hook it up to a big TV screen, and use the CVT software to download one of many pre-existing courses. If you choose to upgrade to the premium package, you can also connect up to four trainers and train together on the same route (PC only). You can virtually ride any real route in the world.

Which rider is the Pro Trainer suited for?

The Pro Trainer doesn't come cheap; at AED 4,599-4,999. However, it does come with the ultimate indoor cycling experience. For the beginner cyclist to the regular riding enthusiast, this trainer provides entertainment, motivation and purpose, all while logging the riding data. And for the elite cyclist and racer, the Pro trainer provides a solid foundation for riding hard, power output accuracy (from the PowerTap technology) and the option to pre-program

customised workouts and of course compete against friends. If the price tag is too high, CycleOps offers a wider range of good quality home trainers to suit any rider's needs.

Would I use the Virtual Pro trainer myself?

Personally I do find riding indoor on a home trainer a bit of a chore. However, this Virtual Pro Trainer would definitely appeal to me if I were seeking a trainer for home! With a regular cycling training schedule of 5-6 sessions per week, I would specifically include all year round weekly sessions at home. The Pro Trainer is a great choice, mainly for its smooth, solid and realistic feel, the endless profile and entertainment options, the power output accuracy and of course the convenience and time efficiency.

GO Sport Bike Division and Services

Located at the Mall of Emirates, you can 'try before you buy', in the CycleOps Virtual Trainer zone inside the GO Sport store. On offer in the same bike section you will find a wide range of bikes for sale, such as road, mountain, city and kid's bikes, all by recognised bike brands such as Giant, Liv and Silverback. When you purchase a bike from the store you receive a complimentary bike fit to ensure the right fit for your body's geometry. In addition, the GO Sport bike division offers maintenance services. One complimentary bike service comes with the purchase of a bike to be used within three months from the date of purchase to ensure good condition of the bike. The service team also offers education for their customers to ensure they take good care of their bicycle.

General maintenance services range from a bike wash and addressing minor concerns of the customer, to stripping down the bike and providing a full service. You can conveniently park behind the store and take the bike straight into the store from the car park.



For further details regarding the virtual trainer and bike services, contact **Rodolfo** at **GO Sport Mall of the Emirates** on +971 4 395 8951 or admin_moe@almana.com



PRODUCTS

Yamaha Molecule Tube (3 Person)

Part# SBT-43873-72-14

3,195 AED | Was: 4,195 AED

Available only at Al Yousuf Motors Across UAE

Specification:

The Yamaha Molecule incorporates HO Sphere Technology which reduces the drag typical of larger towables. The spheres are arrayed at the corners and suspend the main deck, meaning that there is less surface area contacting the water, resulting in the large Molecule being much more lively!

Features:

- Neoprene padding increases comfort.
- Boston valve for easy inflation/deflation.
- Quick-tow attachment.
- Measures inflated: 113" x 97"
- Accommodates up to 3 riders.



* Offer is valid until 31st August 2016

Jobe OMNIA board (4 sports in 1)

Part# 252115001

1,495 AED | Was: 2,995 AED

Available only at Al Yousuf Motors Across UAE

Specification:

Not enough storage in your boat to fit all your gear? Too tired to drag those hefty skis in and out every single day? The Omnia is your all-in-one solution! Ready to be used as a knee-board, ski, wake skate/board AND wakesurfer, this lightweight board adds a whole new dimension to multifunctionality. Compression molded out of PU foam and fiberglass, this family focused board can be used with great variety. Suitable for all skill levels.

4 sports in 1 board:

- Lay
- Stand
- Kneel
- Surf



* Offer is valid until 31st August 2016

Javelin 12'6" X28 Carbon

9,000 AED

Available at www.kitesurfsup.com

Performance Racing

Javelin Carbon boards are race designs suitable for ambitious racers and professional competitions. They feature a state-of-the-art rocker line and newly developed deck and bottom shape for lightning fast acceleration and ultimate gliding speed.

Available in 24", 26" and 28" widths, the newly refined Javelins feature a carbon construction, which makes for an incredibly lightweight and stiff board with even more direct board feel.

Engineered with a recessed stance area, the new shapes bring the center of effort lower, increasing rider stability without adding additional width to the body. The center double-concave bottom also maximises directional stability, while increased tail volume and tucked edges optimise board positioning for controlled, yet aggressive buoy turns with faster recovery.

The advanced dihedral nose shape allows water to instantly release instead of wrap, forcing water to split off the sides of the board instead of toward the riders' feet. This creates more lift when pearling, allowing the rider to continue their smooth pace without interruption.



Celebes Organic Coconut Water

Available at all major Supermarket in the UAE

The best Organic Coconut Water available in UAE. Coconut water is actually the juice found inside a fresh coconut. Its water is an all-natural electrolyte-filled and it is one of the nature's most refreshing drinks consumed worldwide well-known for its nutritious and health benefiting properties:

- Increases Metabolism
- Rich in nutrients
- Rehydrates the body
- Boost energy levels



OUR EXPERTS

DISCOVERING THE DHOFAR TRAVERSE ROUTE

Words + Photos by: Marina Bruce

Salalah, located in the Dhofar Region of southern Oman, is a must-do trip for many expats and GCC citizens alike, especially during the summer months of the Khareef. A relatively small area of land surrounding Oman's second city catches the tail end of the Indian monsoon and sees extensive rainfall during the months of July and August; visitors can look forward to temperatures 20-30C less than they would experience over the rest of the Gulf peninsula.

The rain normally starts falling in earnest during early July, and ceases near the end of August, but even if you can't manage to get there in the next few weeks, there is still much to see. The heavy rain gives way to light rain, drizzle and fog, but it takes a few weeks for the lush green landscape to wither and, with many of the trees in the region being evergreen, it is never truly brown.

My husband and I were fortunate to have



Crawling through a boulder field

an extended Oman trip with Mike Nott back in October 2013 when he scouted for routes for the second edition of his book, *Advanced Off-road Routes UAE & Oman*. We engaged 4WD just east of Adam and drove off-road for most of the time until we emerged near Salalah some eight days later. We recced four routes in total with Mike and since Neil and I were lucky enough to have another two weeks in Oman, we also drove most of his Empty Quarter route in reverse – our total off-road mileage for the three weeks was just over 2000kms!

We loved every off-road kilometre, but my favourite route was the Dhofar Traverse

(route 17 in the book). Starting near Thumrait, where incidentally the Thumrait Palace Restaurant does wonderful cheap curries, we headed east to camp overnight in a sheltered wadi, ready for our fifth day of off-road adventure. The first four days of the trip had gone extremely well and although none of us had felt hurried we were now a good day ahead of schedule which is often not the case!

After a leisurely breakfast, Mike led the convoy through a beautiful wide wadi, its base covered in rocks and stones bleached white, past trees, camels and "smiling" travertine rock faces on some of the hills on either side of the wadi.

Most of the route was quite straight forward and there was plenty of time to gaze around at the incredible Omani geology – it would have been a waste to go fast. The only tricky part of the route was a boulder field, which on Mike's previous trip there had required some rocks moving, but after the previous winter's rains there were no overly large obstacles in our way for our journey, and careful spotting and driving saw us through there problem free.

Once through the boulder field we stopped by some very unusual red rock formations; at first we thought they were fossils, albeit giant ones - some were 70cms across - but my geologist friend at PDO in Oman assures me that the "snail shell" formations are the result of molten rock being pushed up to the surface through some fissures in the bedrock.



Camels are common in wadis in southern Oman



View from end of the world campsite



Windbreaks, not firewood stores



We continued snaking our way through the wadi until we came across what looked at first like a huge pile of firewood. On closer inspection, we discovered it was a windbreak, presumably for the local farmers' livestock, made of intertwined branches and old tyres; we found a few more before we hit the tarmac. Despite being seven degrees south of the UAE, the Khareef creates a different climate; in the UAE the Bedouin make temporary shelter out of shade cloth and in Dhofar they create them out of tarpaulins!

After a week of remote driving, we were amazed to see a mosque in a field as the wadi opened out; with a certain sadness we realised that this heralded the last of our days with limited human contact.

However, our day was not yet over, and we drove on a small road for a few minutes then followed a very rough track for a good few kilometres until we reached what must be one of the best campsites ever. Nick-named the "end of the world campsite" it is perched on a plateau some 300 metres above the Mirbat plains and enjoys stun-

ning views over the town and out to sea.

This is a relatively short route which starts a long long way from the UAE, so perhaps you might want to tackle some more routes or you might be driving an on-road trip to Salalah and want something other than blacktop under your tyres for the day! A 4x4 is required, and good clearance is desirable for driving through the boulder field. All terrain tyres are also recommended.

Full details of the route, as well as waypoints and a CD with a downloadable route file, are available in Mike's book. You can find the book in all good book shops in the UAE and other retailers or directly order it online:

www.outdooruae.com/guidebook



Unusual rock formation



R17 Mike leads off



R14 Wadi Aydam campsite



Which way to Thumrait



Wadi Aydam in the dry season

WADI AYDAM: PART OF ROUTE 14

Mike's routes can often be broken down into stages; for instance, Route 14, the Oman Empty Quarter, can be done in three separate weekends, or you can even choose to take a tiny little chunk out of one of them, which is what we did on our Christmas trip a couple of years back.

Wadi Aydam is amazing; so good we have visited it twice and will most probably return should we find ourselves near Salalah again.

On both journeys we drove Wadi Aydam in reverse from point OE77 through to OE75; there are a few possible routes from Salalah to the start point and we opted for the road south toward Arift, then cut inland on road 45 (which is part gatch) so as to maintain a minimum distance of 50kms from the Yemen border (you can go right up to the Yemen border but we felt safer leaving a good few kms between it and us).

Once at the Wadi we chose an existing track to follow over some small hills. On our first trip we were only about 5kms along the route when we camped for the night, but on our return visit we went a further 10kms to find a slightly elevated area surrounded by small hills, which afforded us some shelter from the light wind. There was an abundance of old dead trees lying down in the wadi so we had a rather fine campfire going in no time.

We wound our way over the 45km route slowly, past piles of shrubs washed down in a previous season's rain, through gravel fields, up out of the wadi onto some gravel hills and finally through some small white sand dunes.



Wadi Aydam Southern Section

We did not need to deflate our tyres at all on our first foray through Wadi Aydam, but the second time around some soft sand in the middle caught us out. When you are driving in a wadi with varied terrain, i.e. stones, rocks and sand, then you are never sure what you will find!

This area is well beyond the reach of the Khareef but it has obviously rained at some time in recent years as there is a large area of dried mud with small plants growing between the cracks, as well as some interesting animal prints. There is a surprising amount of wildlife too; we spotted a fox, a hare, a locust and an eagle, plus we encountered many camels on both visits.

You could probably do the drive in 2-3 hours, but I'd recommend allowing about 5 hours for driving plus a night's camp, to allow time for exploring and for photos, or just for relaxing.



Wadi Aydam Christmas trip

When you come out of the Wadi at the North there is a very small petrol station and a tyre shop at Shisr where you can prepare your car for its return to the blacktop. Don't forget to visit the Lost City of Ubar when you pass through Shisr itself. This ancient city was lost for centuries until someone managed to locate it using satellite imagery!

If you are Salalah bound over the winter, why not pick up a copy of Advanced Off-Road Routes UAE and Oman to help you escape the beaten path!

Wadi Aydam mixed driving



Evidence of wildlife in Wadi Aydam



Percy Wright swimming by the Dhows

family pod of four of these beautiful mammals. These dolphins are the Indo Pacific Humpbacked Dolphin (*Sousa Plumbea* – which is the more Western variety up the coast of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula). They are characterised by a Hump out of which the Dorsal fin rises up, and a long bottle nose. Their Chinese Counterpart can be quite pink in color (*Sousa Chinensis*). Sadly, due to illegal trawl net fishing and from too much interaction with humans making them less afraid of big boats, these dolphins are regarded as “Near Threatened” by the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN). This species is very much coastal based and prefers shallow waters up to 20 meters which makes the Fjords in Mussandam the ideal area to find them.

THE KHASAB FJORDS

Words + Photos By: Dan Wright

If you want to take a trip out of the UAE and into Oman for the day or a quick overnight, then a great location to visit is the fishing port of Khasab at the end of the Mussandam peninsula.

The easiest way to access the Port of Khasab is to follow the E11 up through RAK to the border then cross over (details coming up!) and keep following the main coastal road all the way until you reach Khasab, with its international customs and immigration for Cruise ships stopping off and the Beautiful Fort. There is also a big Lulu's for you to stock up on ice, cold drinks and picnic food! If you plan to stay the night in Khasab then you can check into one of only a handful of hotels:

- **Atana Musandam Resort** – 670 AED a night (summer) with no breakfast for a family of 4
- **Atana Khasab Hotel** (used to be called the Golden Tulip) perched on the cliffs before you enter Khasab – 570 AED a night (summer) with no breakfast for a family of 4
- **Diwan Al Amir** – 310 AED a night (summer) with breakfast for a family of 4
- **Khasab Hotel** – 525 AED a night (summer) with free breakfast for a family of 4

Crossing the border is easy enough if you time it to avoid crossing with a big group. To get out of the UAE you pay a 30 AED fee (by using an electronic Government card, which costs another 10 AED to buy one) and get an exit stamp before entering Oman at a cost of 5 Omani Ryal (50 AED by credit card, not cash) and filling out an application form to get a visa with a stamp. Exiting Oman on your way home you cancel the Omani visa for free and it costs nothing to re-enter the UAE, but you do need to go into Immigration with your whole group so they can see you all. As you cross into Oman it is likely your car will be searched and it is illegal to take Alcohol into Oman. When my

family and I crossed last week into Oman at 06.30am, it took 37 minutes with no other people in immigration to cross from the UAE into Oman and be on our way again. This was after a 1hr 30 minutes drive to the border crossing from our house in Al Hamra Village in RAK, and after this it took a further hour for us to drive to Khasab. In Oman you will see 3 Petrol (Gas!) stations on the route to Khasab (one in Khasab itself) and fuel in Oman is about 50 per cent cheaper than fuel in the UAE.

It's easy to book activities from the hotels in Khasab, and there are a range of things to do there. One of the beaches at the start of the Fjords has bolted climbing routes and you can book an overnight camp there with a BBQ to make the most of it with groups of friends (don't do it in the summer!).

The diving in the area is excellent and my favorite is a 12 meter dive down to a WW2 Landing craft which has a British aircraft in pieces strapped to the deck. You can even swim with the bat fish through the Captain's Bridge!

Wildlife watching from boats or along the coastline is superb and there is a wide range of birds and sea creatures to attract you. Socotra Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*) live along the coastline in colonies thousands of birds strong, and the sea and skies can be black with them when they fly.



Socotra Cormorant Colony

You can also whistle and bang the wooden hulls to attract dolphins to swim and frolic in the bow wave of the Dhows when out on trips, and these are wonderful to watch. My 21-month old son was mesmerised by a



Indo Pacific humped back Dolphin

All along the coastline in the Fjords and around the many small islands you will see small fishing villages. The interesting thing about these is that they have no fresh water of their own. The Omani Government, in an effort to encourage people to stay in their tribal homes, offers free water and electricity to everyone in the area and on a daily basis you can see big Tanker ships carrying fresh water, mail and supplies around these coastal villages to keep them supplied.



Water stop for fishermen

The main destination of a Dhow cruise out here is usually to visit the world famous 'Telegraph Island' which is locally known as *Jazirat Al Maqlab*. The island gets its English name for being the old 'location of a British repeater station used to boost telegraphic messages along the Persian Gulf submarine cable, which was part of the London to Karachi telegraphic cable.'

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telegraph_Island)

Abandoned in the mid 1870's, this Island

stands as a last Bastion of the former British Empire and is most well known for coining the phrase; "Going round the bend" (meaning, 'to go mad'). If you visit the place and anchor there for some snorkeling and lunch you might appreciate just why this posting was such an awful place for the British Officers to be sent. Stuck on a bend of the Fjord and exposed to the relentless sun before AC was ever conceived, and surrounded by marauding not so friendly tribes, it would drive anybody crazy being posted there for months on end!



A half day Dhow trip (ours started at 9am) usually takes in Dolphin watching and a stop at Telegraph Island for snorkeling. Here the myriad of fish darting amongst corals and rocks in kingfisher blue waters is beautiful, and in the warmer months the sea's temperature can be as much as 35 degrees, making a quick dip in the sea rather like taking a warm bath! These trips cost between 150 and 250 AED per person and includes fruit as snacks and a range of soft drinks and water on ice or hot Arabic tea or coffee with dates. You find yourselves spread around the gunwales of the boat sat on Omani carpets and resting against big cushions. The sea breeze when you are under way is the equivalent of a strong AC, and despite it being 45 degrees under the sun (and maybe



35 under the awning), people were wrapping scarves and blankets round themselves!

A full day trip usually has two snorkeling stops and plenty of dolphin watching time. It will include a main lunch of local Arabic food and many people will enjoy an afternoon nap under the shade of the awning with the cool sea breeze in their face. This trip is between 250-400 AED per person. If you choose the overnight option, which is perfect if you are using the Dhow as a base for diving trips and enables you to get four decent dives in, then you are going to spend around 600 AED for the food and sleeping on deck or in tents on a beach. Diving kit and a Dive Master is extra.

As a simple opportunity to introduce your children to the Natural History of the Arabian Peninsula, these Dhow trips and a visit to Khasab Fjords are an excellent way to have a fun day out and learn a lot too. If you go at the right time of year you can

see Whale Sharks (May to October) and Whales, as well as an enormous range of fish and birds. Eating a picnic on the boat is fun and you can all relax (although parents keep an eye on children so they don't fall overboard!). The staff on the Dhows (usually a Captain and a First Mate) are friendly and informative and will cook delicious fresh sea food. There's a toilet on board and a fresh water shower to wash off the sea salt after you finish snorkeling.

As always when you venture out into the Wilds make sure you take some essentials with you. A day's Dhow trip is likely to need:

- Sun tan lotion
- Sun hats
- Sunglasses
- Swimming shorts
- Snorkel, Mask, Fins (or wet shoes)
- Rash Vest
- Towel (Some Dhows provide them)
- A few snacks (But most dhows provide food)
- A good camera and if possible a waterproof one like a Go-Pro
- A book to read as you relax on the dhow!

(You won't get a signal in the Fjords so you might as well leave your mobile phone in the car!).

Most important of all, a Dhow cruise is the perfect opportunity to relax and have fun with family or friends, take loads of photos and make loads of memories!



Relaxing on a Dhow

Dan Wright is a Wilderness Expedition Guide and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS). He has a degree in Environmental Science and works as the Project Manager of the ADAPT Adventure & Field Studies Center, based in RAK. Dan writes for a range of publications in Arabia and Asia on Environmental Issues and Personal Development. His wife Nirjala is the former Nepal National Mountain Bike Champion and their son Percy is an adventurer in the making! They spend all their spare time exploring the UAE.



LURED IN!

A TALE OF ONE MAN AND HIS LURES

Words by: Kit Belen

Photos by: Kit Belen and Rasmus Ovesen

The Start of the Journey

I was around 8 when I first saw a collection of lures for sale. Up until that point, all I was familiar with was fishing with bait. To tell you honestly, I didn't even think they would work, but as with most fishermen, the skepticism that I had gave way to wonder and curiosity, which later on turned into *want*.

The want gave me determination; more specifically, the determination to save the money to buy the lure. It was about 200 Philippine Pesos – roughly 20 AED. Although we might scoff at the amount nowadays, remember that I was in elementary school and my allowance was very meager (and let me remind you that the Philippines, although progressive, is a third world country). It took me six months to save every bit of money I came across, and when I finally bought the lure, it was like finding treasure.

The Lure of Lures

To an angler, lures are the lifeblood of their tackle box. It is the single thing that makes the fish bite – without a good one at the end of the line, the expensive rod and reel become nothing but ornaments that can't catch fish. If you are into it, lures are probably the single biggest expenditure you will have in your lifetime of fishing – because you cannot use just one lure to cover the different depths, localities, fish and situations that you will likely encounter at any given time.

There are a multitude of colours for one single lure, and truth be told, no matter what people say – an angler chooses more than just one colour of a single model – and if another guy catches a lot of fish in one particular color you might not have, I can guarantee you that you will go to one of the tackle shops and get the exact same one when you get the chance. We all have our favorite colours and we buy multiples of this



A taste of what's to come - Majority of the lures pictured here are for a 2017 release - I get to play with them a year before they get into the public's hands

colour in any lure we use; this is something that's almost sacred because you cannot run out of these colours in these lures. Now, multiply that by a conservative estimate of five types of lures, and even with this unrealistic figure, you are bound to have at least ten in your tackle box. Even if you have a lot of tackle boxes filled to the brim with lures this does not guarantee you catching fish every time you go fishing. As anglers, we feel that the more armed we are with the latest and greatest lures made, the better the chance of us catching fish. It does work from time to time and that's what gives us hope.

My Journey Continues

I started lure fishing when I felt the need to look for a better and more exciting way to catch fish. I also found waiting on a bait bite boring and frustrating at times; the crabs that go after your bait and the constant snagging of junk off the bottom made the experience less exciting for me. At this point in time, the first lure I bought still remained unused a few years after being purchased. It had treble hooks and it snagged more weed and debris than I thought it would and I still remember how long it took me to save up for it, so I was not in a hurry to lose it. I was in my first year of high school and my allowance has improved a bit so I did the most obvious thing I could possibly think of: buy more lures.

At about the same time, I also discovered two things: a section of the biggest book store uptown had a selection of fishing books. I bought my first fishing book that

same day, and the next week, I also discovered a small second hand book store tucked behind a department store in the downtown area. After rummaging through some books, I found a stash of old fishing magazines. It was at this point where I started reading up on large mouth bass, which gave me an idea of other types of lures. This is the time when I discovered that most of the techniques for bass could be used to target snakehead. This jumpstarted my interest in lures and my collection started to grow.

I read and learned from a lot of people, and after some time, I was able to determine what works and what doesn't. I also learned that there is more to working lures than just reeling them in – as soon as I learned that you can impart other actions to the retrieve than just reeling them straight in, my catch rate spiked up. It fueled the addiction and there was no turning back. For most people, this would be the end of the line; as the lures acted the way that attracts and gets fish to bite, the angler in you is content and that's all you ask for. It wasn't the case for me, I wanted to learn how things worked and I had to find out what made the lure cast far, why it swam the way it did, look for rods that make them work better, lines that made them dive deeper – basically everything that made it tick and what lures worked for which fish more effectively. I got technical, so technical in fact that when discussions came up, a lot of people I spoke with thought it was too much useless information, people scoffed, laughed and at times, even spoke ill of me

behind my back – I ignored them and continued on to what I loved doing and learning.

Another Chapter Starts

Fast forward a few years, I learned a bit more and realised a childhood dream – to write about my experiences in a magazine, which is what you are reading now. It is a journey that started when I first started to read fishing books and magazines. With this column, I was able to work with brands that offer products to fishermen – Companies LikeRTM and Deeper Smart Fish Finder reached out to me to be their brand ambassador in the UAE.

What was to come later was a bit of a shock more than a surprise, the realisation of another dream began in March 2015; the largest Fishing Tackle manufacturer in the world asked if I was interested in working with them to launch their satellite office in Dubai to supply the fast growing Middle East and North Africa market. Everything was kept under wraps and I was told to wait for them to visit and meet me. That day came later in the year, when five executives from Rapala were in town for business and wanted to meet me. The meeting was more of a long introduction more than an interview. They didn't open the position for anyone else and really had their sights on me for a while, they explained. All I had to do was to tell them that I was on board. I told them that when I was eight, I saw my first Rapala lure. I saved for six months to be able to buy the lure, and now, Rapala is asking me if I would like to join the team and help them...what should I say?



Rapala CD7 - My first lure, this one doesn't touch water and will go to my display beside my first lure

A New Beginning

Eleven months after that meeting, I received two boxes – one from Estonia and another from Indonesia. As I opened each box, I was surprised to find items that will only available to the public in 2017. An email asking me to put them to good use, and a request for feedback on some lures included that are not for this region – "do you think you can use them there?" Earlier this week, I received an email from France apologising for the delay in shipping. Some of the hooks I requested were ready, but some were not. "We are sending everything in duplicates, so please keep one set in pristine condition for your photographs".

I am still waiting for a few boxes and the shipment containing the list of rods and lures I requested for my use.

32 years ago, I had to save for six months to be able to afford my first lure. In the middle of the journey, people laughed and ridiculed me. 32 years after my first lure, I am receiving lures in the mail that the rest of the world has to wait a few months for. The box from Estonia had the exact same lure I

bought 32 years ago; the only difference is it's in the newest colour scheme and is set for release next year.

I opened the box and had the exact same feeling I had when I first held that lure I had waited six months for. I decided not to use it. I got this one free, but I had to wait 32 years for this moment. This will join my first lure in the display back home, side by side with the one from 32 years ago, both opened but both unused.

To the Future

With the ever growing number of fishing enthusiasts, there's an increase in the growth of fishing technology, and at times it's hard to keep up with what's out there. It is an exciting time to be involved in the sport, and for me, being directly involved in its growth and evolution is somewhat mind blowing.

Dreams do happen, but the road to realisation has a big price tag. If you're willing to go the extra 10 kilometers after everyone reached the finish line, it pays off. Keep an open mind and keep on going forward.

Tight lines and screaming reels,

Kit

Our fishing pro who shares his experiences and expertise with OutdoorUAE through his regular column.
thefishingkit@gmail.com



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Adventure Thailand

Words + Photos by: Jake Lyle

As one of only six countries in the world to have never been colonised, the country with the longest running monarchy and a name that translates literally to 'the land of the free', Thailand is one of those destinations that any budding traveller must see before they die.

It is one of those unique locations that has holiday opportunities to benefit any kind of traveller. The country is littered with everything from luxurious five star hotels to three-thousand-meter long zip lines. So whether you're looking to unwind in luxury and have full body massages every day, or you just want to hang from the trees and explore the jungle, Thailand is the place for you.

The adventure opportunities in Thailand are especially outstanding. The rugged landscape of this popular destination allows every adventure to be possible. Within the space of a few days and a 5km radius you can hike through a jungle, sail through the islands on a yacht and scuba dive in an aquarium-like sea. What makes this country an even more attractive option is the proximity to Dubai – just a



quick six-hour flight from Dubai international and you'll touchdown in Bangkok. From there you can choose any of the surrounding islands to fulfil your adventure dreams. My personal favourite is Koh Samui. There's a reason why Hollywood chose to film blockbuster movies like 'The Beach' and 'Tomorrow Never Dies' in this distinctive landscape, as the scenery is just too beautiful to pass up – so if it's good enough for Hollywood, it should be good enough for you!

The scenery below the surface of the water in Thailand is just as good as what is above, if not better. On the island of Koh Samui especially, there is no shortage of dive operators ready and waiting to take you out for the dive of a lifetime. Starting early, the boats usually leave between 7 and 9am, depending on the season (the earlier the better in my opinion). The boat ride out to the dive sites is half the fun. You can opt for either a larger boat, with more passengers and facilities, that takes its time to glide across the blue surface, allowing you to take in the sights at your leisure; or you can choose something faster with a little more horsepower in the engines, that will get you there in half the time and at double the speed. The latter is a little more exciting. The islands you zigzag through are unlike any others in the world. The distinctive rock formations with palm trees hanging over the

water are what give this destination its movie-ready scenery.

The dive site we visited, however, wasn't located close to one of these beautiful islands. Rather, it resided below a small, lone rock out in the middle of the ocean. Excited to go in, we quickly geared up and took the giant leap in, and as the bubbles cleared you're immediately granted over 50 meters of visibility, allowing you to see straight to the bottom as well as all around you, so you see the bottoms of surrounding vessels bobbing in and out of the water from below the surface. The dive site itself surrounded the lone rock, forming a large pinnacle, with huge rock faces crowded with colourful corals. Following the steep decline of the rock face you can settle at any depth between 10 and 35 meters, making the dive site suitable for all divers. The comfortable temperature of the water made a short wetsuit the perfect choice, not that you're really thinking about the temperature when you're surrounded with such underwater beauty.

Moving away from the wall, towards the blue, gives you a great perspective of the size of the pinnacle, as well as the amount of colour that it is giving off. When you're hovering in the blue however, you're not there alone. About 15 meters off the rock face there were huge schools of barracuda,





tuna and batfish. Although the tuna and barracuda mainly kept their distance, the batfish didn't get the memo and had a very vague understanding of personal space, coming right up to our faces and taking their time investigating my shiny new GoPro camera. Moving back to the rock, embedded in the face of the wall was a narrow, vertical tunnel, which you could enter at the bottom and ascend about 15 meters out the other end. With all these features together, this dive site made for a fantastic dive. The Lonely Pinnacle in Koh Samui is only one of thousands of dive sites in Thailand, but it's the perfect example of the diving available in this diverse country.

Getting back onto land, you can head straight into the jungle. Thailand is covered with tens of thousands of square kilometres of jungle, so it would be incredibly difficult to see it all. But if you want to cover a large amount of land in a short space of time, your best option is on a quad bike. Dirt, mud, grass and even paved paths run throughout these jungles and allow you to race swiftly though the vast expanses of vegetation without you even needing to put on a pair of hiking boots. These quad biking tours can last for hours and hours, which may seem like a heavy dose, but once you're aboard one of these 4x4s and in the Jungle, you'll never want to leave.

The jungle itself is exciting enough, filled with flora and fauna native to only these islands. Thailand has one of the highest concentrations of biodiversity in the world, so the chances of spotting something wild is high. In

my last jungle experience I was lucky enough to spot a green snake curled around a branch in the trees above me. It's safe to say I didn't spend too much time sitting directly below the tree on my ATV. And of course, as Thailand lies incredibly close to the equator, it experiences high amounts of rainfall all year round, as with any tropical location. And with rain comes mud puddles. So if you want to hit the jungle aboard one of these speed demons, I'd avoid wearing white clothes. Although the more sensible and cautious riders will steer clear of these puddles, the less cautious and reckless drivers like myself will hit these small mud pools head on, at full speed. I often later regret these decisions as I try to clean the mud out of my ears. Make no mistake though, the trails running through these jungles aren't always flat, and can often feature steep inclines, requiring a switch to 4x4 mode.

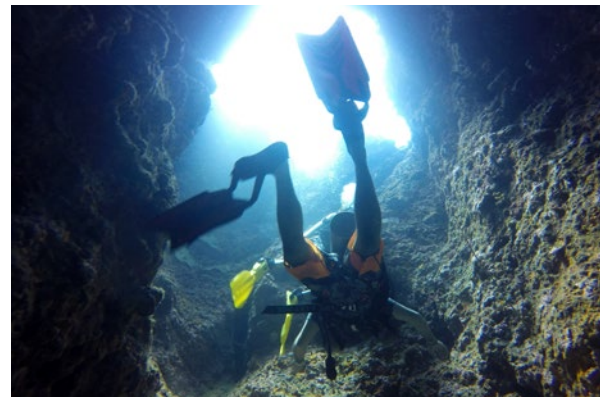
However, the careful rides up the mountains don't go without reward, and once disembarking the quad bikes you can partake in a short hike to a series of local waterfalls. This unique set of waterfalls in Koh Samui has a series of ropes that you can use to navigate your way up the three different levels. From the first pool to the second you have to be able to hold your breath for a few seconds because to get to it you need to swim through a tunnel about 3ft under the water. If you're brave enough to do that, then from the second pool you can use a rope to climb up the surrounding rock face. At the top of that you can stand under the main waterfall and feel the heavy water massage your back. Like all waterfalls, the water is cold and fresh, an invigorating change from a pool or a beach. After you've had your shower, and you've built up the necessary amount of courage, you can slide down the slippery rock face from the highest waterfall to the next one. (It takes a while to build up that courage). It's the underwater tunnels and slippery slides such as these that makes Thailand's hidden waterfalls seem like playgrounds created by the gods.

Making your way back out of the Jungle toward the ocean, you can board a yacht



for an ocean adventure that takes place above the surface. Using a catamaran to hop between these beautiful islands is a must-do experience. As we sailed through the islands we eventually picked one to throw the anchor down by. Using the paddleboards we made our way to the shore of this pristine quaint little island. Exploring the beach, we walked across the soft white sand and crossed bamboo bridges suspended between rocks. Hung from a tall palm tree on the edge of the beach was a hand crafted rope swing that was just the icing of the cake of this island paradise. All of these islands were different, and were ready and waiting for any and all ocean adventurers to explore them.

These are just a few examples of the many different adventures you can have in the land of the free that is Thailand. The clear and busy waters, the full and abundant jungles and the many different islands surrounded by soft white sand and tall palm trees can satisfy anyone's needs. Not only does the landscape provide for all adventurers, but this holiday destination also provides for all different types of travellers. The prices of hotels, restaurants and activities vary greatly and therefore makes this destination a viable option for all. If it is adventure that you seek, make your next destination Thailand.



OUR EXPERTS

TRAVELLING...WITH CHILDREN?



Words + Photos by: Haydon Kerr

I travel quite frequently for work, usually with a large group of students to various locations around the world. Sometimes people at different airports ask me things like 'how do you cope?' or 'is it tricky travelling with a group of this size?'. The truth is that I actually look at young families with 1, 2 or 3 children and I think exactly the same things to myself!

I will quite happily herd a large group of 40 teenagers through airports and around a European city, or take a similar sized bunch of 9 to 12 year olds on a week long jungle trip in South East Asia. This kind of travel doesn't phase me in the slightest, but the prospect of one day taking a baby stroller and a toddler of my own on a trip somewhere troubles me more than I'd like to admit to my pregnant wife!

When I see a dad walking around with a baby strapped to the front of his chest with one of those human holsters, I can't help but wonder if he enjoys it or not and how on earth you get yourself in and out of those devices. Many of my friends now have small children, and with multiple nephews and nieces, I have been in silent awe of how they have all managed this new phase of their lives. Especially when it comes to travel.



I'm usually the one on the airplane with a team of students trying to get them to locate a seat they're happy with next to their friend while other passengers look on. The look that I get as we make our way down the aisle to our assigned seats is one I can only imagine is the one I am guilty of giving to those families with small children. You know, the look that says 'aww your kids are cute,

but I hope you don't sit here' or 'I hope your kids don't scream the whole way'. But just getting to the destination, as I've learnt, is only the beginning!

Spending a week with my wife's family in a nice quiet rural part of the UK along with their two young children has opened my eyes a little further as to what's in store for me as an expecting Dad. Packing up to go for a short drive is not as simple as just grabbing the wallet and sunglasses, but a whole operation with regards to how long it has been between feeding, if the nappy bag is fully stocked and was the seat put back in the right car after one toddler wanted to travel in Gran's car last time?! Making sure you've got the right things packed is crucial for a smooth trip anywhere, especially with young ones.

Even going to cafes and restaurants is going to change with children in tow. Previously, I gave no thought to going out and stopping off wherever or whenever I liked for a quick coffee or a meal. Meeting up with some family and friends while away in London, my wife and I went to a café with a giant 'soft play' area. The two young ones aged three years old had a blast while the Mums could quite happily sip their coffee knowing that the kids were having fun in a safe environment and burning off just





enough energy for some downtime later on.

This has got me thinking about how important it is for these kinds of places to exist. In the UAE we are often spoilt for choice around the malls when it comes to areas for young children to play, explore and challenge themselves. More often than not, there are age appropriate activities that children can participate in under supervision while parents can sit down together to recharge and reconnect with friends. However, this isn't always the case while abroad. Yes, there are places to visit that kids love and have a lot of fun at, but what about the parents that just need a coffee without wondering if their highly active child is annoying to other guests?

While the soft play café in London wouldn't have ever been on my radar as a place to meet up with my friends, I can now see the often necessary bonus it adds for young families. Kids who were still unsteady on their feet were allowed to go off into the foam padded apparatus to climb walls

in order to jump into a pit of balls before whizzing down a slide. This goes on a sort of repeat cycle where every new attempt has a more confident climb, a bigger jump and a faster slide! It was refreshing to see that not one child in the room was sat with an iPad or other device to occupy their time. The only ones sat down were the ones taking a few minutes to drink and encourage their parent to come watch their new found skills in the play area.

Although somewhat nervous, I quite like the idea of travelling with my own kids one day and finding great places to eat too. I'm also now more aware of the places that are 'child friendly' with some kind of adventure and exploration area attached or nearby. Finding more of these cafés and restaurants is probably something that comes with a bit of parenting experience and is something I'm quite looking forward to. That might even make up a whole new kind of travel itinerary for me, where instead of my usual urban jungle trek to explore a famous



landmark, I'll include a stop at a park with a playground with something new to offer young adventurers, as well as a seat for mum to have an ice cream!



PEOPLE

Liam Bek

Age: 36

Nationality: British

Profession: English Teacher for the UAE Military forces

Interview by: Bandana Jain

Photos by: Oluwaseyi Gerrard Usman

When did you get into cycling, and what has made you so passionate about it?

Like many other runners, I got into cycling as something to do while recovering from a running injury. I got into triathlons in 2009 in Saudi Arabia with the Riyadh Triathletes, out of sheer boredom originally. I had grown to love the sports and the training, but moved to Iraq in 2011 for work and couldn't train for three years. Since moving to the UAE a year ago, I haven't looked back. Most of all I love the freedom of going out on the bike and blasting the cobwebs away, either on my own, with friends or in competition.

What's your opinion on the UAE as a place for cycling and triathlons?

Although a lot of people complain about the heat and humidity, the UAE is actually an excellent place to train. It hardly rains here and there are purpose built cycling tracks in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, which we are very lucky to be able to use. Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi opens to the public for cycling and running 2-3 times per week. The Autodrome in Dubai is also a fantastic spot for cycling. Apart from this, I also love to ride

up and down mountains, and for that we have Jebel Jais in RAK, Jebel Hafeet in Abu Dhabi (Al Ain), Hatta and Oman right on our doorstep. There are some fantastic climbs in the area around Nizwa.

What cycling events have you participated in the UAE?

The UAE has been hosting plenty of events and I have been fortunate enough to participate in many of them. I won the first position in the Male category at the Jebel Hafeet Cycle Race. In the Abu Dhabi International Triathlon long course, I placed second position in my age category. I won the first place in the recently held Besport Individual Time trial at Al Wathba in Abu Dhabi. I have also participated in TriYas and Abu Dhabi Cycle Race. On the international front, I participated in Ironman France, Nice 2016 (the first event), which I finished in ten hours and four minutes.

Which other countries have you cycled in?

France, Italy, UK, Vietnam, Spain, Austria, South America, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

How well do you train for events?

I train for triathlon and cycling together for 12-14 hours per week, on average. I plan to increase my training for the upcoming season and beat two hours five minutes for the Olympic Distance Triathlon and four hours thirty minutes for the Half Ironman distance (Bahrain Half Ironman in December and Dubai Half Ironman in January). I would like to win my age group at Abu Dhabi ITU International Triathlon.

How would you like to promote cycling and triathlon in this region?

Cycling and Triathlon are getting bigger and bigger in the UAE, and the more people get

into it, the more awareness there is of the sport and the safer it becomes on the roads as people get used to seeing us out there riding. I aim to get onto a race team this year and help to encourage young people and kids to get off the sofa, away from their

smartphones and tablets and into the parks, cycle tracks and beautiful beaches of the UAE. There are many encouraging initiatives in Abu Dhabi and Dubai which are raising awareness of health and fitness for the general population. The faster that develops, the better!

Any memorable incident that you would like to share with our readers?

I recently crashed my bike on Jebel Hafeet, because I was riding too fast down the mountain. So, my advice is have fun, but stay safe and

always watch what's going on around you.



PEOPLE



Roisin Thomas

Age: 27

Nationality: Irish

Profession: Personal Trainer

Interview by: Bandana Jain
Photos by: Supplied

Roisin Thomas's passion for cycling is quite evident from the fact that she is the first woman to cycle across the UAE in an impressive time of eighteen hours. For someone whose life revolves around cycling, Roisin is all set to promote a healthier lifestyle in the country.



When did you get into cycling?

Funnily enough, my first love was swimming and running. I got actively into cycling some three years back when I moved to Abu Dhabi. Before this, I used to cycle on and off back home in Ireland on my Uncle's bike.

You are the first woman to cycle across the UAE within 24 hours. How did this happen?

I have always been an advocate for challenging myself and trying things in an extreme way. The inspiration came to me when I began finding day to day cycling rather monotonous. I was getting bored of the same tracks, the same peer groups and the same time frames. That's when I started looking to do something new. This idea came up and I had the support of my four male cyclists. I cannot thank them enough for their support and team work that went into the task behind the scenes.

Tell us more about the event

We began at the Aldar HQ building in Abu Dhabi and ended at Nad al Sheba Cycle Park in Dubai. We started at 5am on 11th May 2016 and ended at 2:30am the following day, cycling through one sunrise and one sunset, covering a total distance of 467km. The journey, which spanned roughly 18 hours, was well ahead of schedule.

What was your objective behind this feat, and how did you feel after completing the challenge?

The whole objective was to prove that things which seem impossible, are not actually so. I believe that one has to deliberately put oneself out of their comfort zone in order to transform into a better version. I am inspired to do so much more after the success of this feat. I feel accomplished in the fact that I am an inspirational role model.

What kind of obstacles did you face in this journey?

Before the actual ride, I experienced a lot of stress, exhaustion and at some point in time, felt that I was over training. During the ride, several weather factors like headwind, sand, heat and humidity posed a challenge. Despite all of this, my spirits generally remained high throughout the ride itself.

What have been your other achievements as far as cycling is concerned?

I have achieved quite a lot in the UAE in terms of cycling. In most of the races I enter, I am on the podium. I have been part of the events running in Al Wathbha during this summer (individual time trials).

Apart from cycling, what other sports do you enjoy?

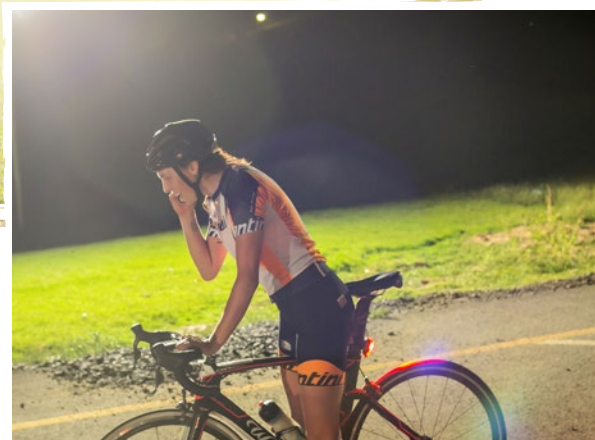
I enjoy swimming every other day and I like going to the gym sometimes for upper body strength. I also enjoy jet skiing and snowboarding. I would like to try Mountain Biking and also kite surfing.

How has your cycling experience been in the UAE?

It has been absolutely fantastic. I have been very fortunate that I have met some lovely people during my time here and have had countless opportunities. I am very fortunate to have my sponsor, BeSport, to support me in all my races. I cannot thank them enough, especially my colleague and brother Raslan Abbadi.

What do you have to say about the cycling situation in the UAE?

With the government investing heavily in a growing number of tracks, the UAE is



definitely heading in the right direction.

The growing enthusiasm of the population towards cycling and the increasing number of clubs are all a significant part of the budding cycling community out here. I would like to see more of a community for cycling in Abu Dhabi, and in particular some more group rides.

Any advice to our readers?

My advice is to prioritise what is important in your life. Surround yourself with people of the same outlook and positivity. For me cycling is a priority and my friendships and relationships stem from it.





LIGHT ROCK FISHING: Turkish Sea Fishing Delights

Interview + Photos by: Rasmus Ovesen

THE TURKISH FISHER-MAN Savas Dursun has fished his whole life, and for the past five years he has spent massive amounts of time targeting salt water species from the rocky shores of his home waters near Antalya on the Southern coast of Turkey. During those five years, he has sampled 150 species, gained tons of important experience, and has even written a book on the subject of light rock fishing – a discipline he has fully championed.

I recently got the chance to talk to Savas about his Light Rock Fishing (LRF) experiences, and to delve deeper into what fascinates him about this particular style of fishing, which involves fishing the rocky coastal shores in search of diverse species.

How did you get started Light Rock Fishing?

My first LRF session was during the Spring of 2011. That was the first time I tried small 2.5gr jigheads with little worm type soft



baits of less than 4cm – and, as usual, my target was the jack mackerel. Until the day I tried that, I was catching those fish by free spooling natural baits like shrimp, mussels, worms etc. But that day made a difference! I was now catching these fish with tiny lures and lightweight equipment, and suddenly, old-school bait fishing was history for me.

What is it that intrigues/fascinates you about LRF?

LRF is a very versatile method and the lure

range is seemingly endless. The downsizing aspect makes LRF a technique that is ideal for a lot of species that would otherwise be impossible to catch. With this technique any species of fish is catchable and unlike most other forms of lure fishing, blank sessions are very rare – and it makes the technique great for newcomers to the sport.

What attracts me to this type of fishing is that the equipment is so light that I can feel every tug and headshake of any fish I catch. Even small quarries put up a good fight on





the right LRF gear and it makes LRF fishing super-exciting and entertaining. Long story short: LRF is an enjoyable and easy way for anyone- from kids to seniors – to enjoy fishing, and actually catch something!

What kind of gear would you recommend for LRF and why?

LRF is the lightest form of lure fishing and it requires miniature lures. As a result, the rods and their actions must be chosen according to the lures. Two kinds of LRF rods are typically used: solid and tubular tip rods. Solid tip rods are more flexible and more resistant to bending, while tubular rods are fast action and more rigid and strong rods. When fishing for species of fish where you have to set the hook hard – and fight the fish with raw power - the tubular rods are recommended.

In most cases, the LRF lures used are jighead / soft bait combinations, and for this type of fishing 0-5g, 0.5-7g or similar rods of 180-230 cm in length are ideal. For faster fish, tubular rods with casting weights of 0-10g or 3-12g and lengths of about 180-270cm rods are more suitable. These rods also increase the casting range considerably.

The reels must be suitable for the LRF rods; typically sizes ranging from 500 – 2000, and for bigger fish 2500 size reels are ideal. If there is no need for fast retrieves, gear ratios between 5.1-5.3 are adequate. But if there is need for leverage and fast reeling, a gear ratio between 5.7-6.1 is a must.

In terms of lines, monofilament or fluorocarbon are the most used types in 0.10-0.16mm. In high-risk places with snags, boulders and sharp cliffs, and in places where bigger fish might be encountered, 0.20mm can be used. For feeling and sensitivity, spectra or PE braid lines can be used, but for invisibility, elasticity and absorption, mono and FC material should be used for a leader. In this case, 0.04mm braid should be coupled with a 0.16mm leader, and for a 0.10mm braid a 0.18mm leader and so on.

What are the most important factors in succeeding with LRF?

The success rate mainly depends on your knowledge of good LRF habitats and of the species, like "when, where, what they eat" etc. This way you can adjust your tackle and approach and make sure you're at the right place at the right time. I personally like to fish in the wee hours of the day – early morning and late evening. And I also like to fish when the tides are shifting. Furthermore, I prefer places where deep water meets fairly shallow water; places with drastic drop-offs, plateaus and ocean floors with a variation of rocks, boulders and seaweed.

What coastal features do you pay attention to?

When I am choosing a spot to fish, I try to first consider what species I am targeting. But I must say, most species we target on LRF gear are smaller fish that are usually very abundant across different types of habitats,

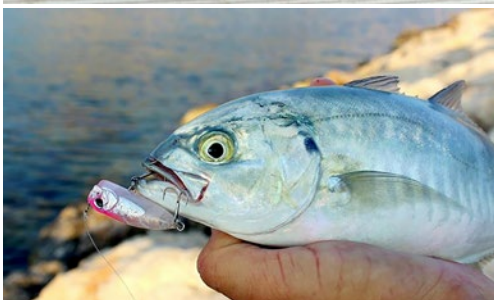
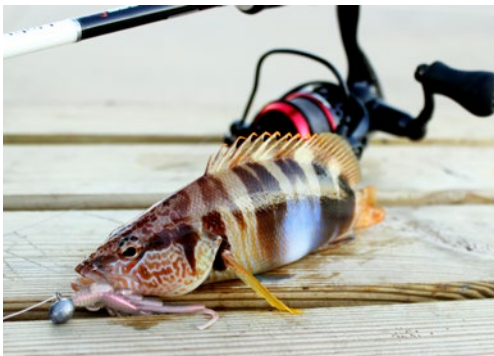


so selecting a fishing spot is generally easier than in predator fishing. I like to fish near structures such as piers, harbours, ports, marinas, estuarine habitats, mussel beds and weedy coves – these are all good LRF venues.

Wind and wind direction are usually the most critical criteria when I am choosing my fishing spot. This is due to the fact that headwinds or onshore winds radically decrease casting ability and range with light baits, jigheads etc. However, during the daytime, mild winds that churn up the shorelines a little offer great conditions for micro jigging.

Any key advice for people who would like to get started with LRF?

What I tell all newcomers to the LRF technique is that; "It's not about catching big fish, it's about catching whatever you can and having the most fun with it". This technique provides us with fun and excitement– and it is readily available in most marine environments where you have rocky shorelines and drop-offs.



PEOPLE

From overweight to a fitness expert: Essa Al Ansari

Words by: Rabi'ah

Essa Al Ansari has come a long way from being 'fat' to now being one of the leading fitness experts in the UAE. Born on 24th September, 1991, Essa is a member of the reputed Al Ansari family, who own some of the UAE's finest businesses in the hospitality and real-estate sectors.

He lived in Dubai all his life, before going on to complete his hotel management Bachelor's degree in Switzerland. After graduation, he started his work experience at the Jumeirah Group, Starwood Four Seasons hotel chain, and finally decided to join his family business of real estate and retail apartments. Defining himself as a 'sociable' individual with excellent communication skills when meeting new people, Essa believes it is a combination of these elements which define his personality best.

Looking back at his history, Essa explains, "the food cooked at home was fattening, and I was always binge eating." During the last two years of high school, he gained weight rapidly. Interestingly, when Essa was heading for Switzerland, he thought he would lose weight, considering that he would be in a new environment, but instead he ended up gaining a great deal of weight (nearly 150 kg).

His weight not only became a major issue for him, but also a source of embarrassment in public. As he points out: "I was bullied



and I did not attend any social events. For example; when I was in shopping malls, I felt very self conscious of the way people were laughing at me." Despite the bullying, Essa does not feel the need to blame anybody but himself.

The fact remains that Essa belongs to a family who are super healthy and encourage healthy eating. However, it was not easy for him to adapt to such a lifestyle. As he emphasises, "I was very stubborn since I craved chocolates, crisps and sweets. At school, I would nibble on desserts, especially cupcakes."

The turning point was at the end of 2012 when Essa's twin brother, Hamad, motivated him to make a change. He remembers how joining the gym stemmed from the point when he was sitting right in front of Hamad during one of his work outs. "Hamad asked me if I wanted to give it a try; it was his way of motivating me and boosting my morale. I worked out for five minutes and I couldn't continue. After this, I said to myself, 'I really need to hit the gym.'"

The transformation was slow, since he wanted to maintain his new found lifestyle by not rushing towards it, but by working out in a sensible manner. His persistence paid off as he felt this was a challenge he had to accomplish no matter what. There were several efforts he undertook to remain active which included swimming and walking. Interestingly, it was only when he warmed up towards the world of exercise that he formally introduced himself to the gym.

He went through strenuous training with a



complete makeover in his routine, explaining, "I had a trainer so I had to wake up early. There was a change in my lifestyle, followed by a change in my diet, where I was expected to eat baked, roasted, steamed and boiled food. It would not be wrong to say that food has definitely changed my life."

Using his weight loss transformation as a means of motivating others, Essa initiated a campaign which was designed to motivate others by talking about his journey from 'fat to fit' and by providing advice and tips on how to work out and eat correctly, through motivational tours at schools and even at corporate events. In the short space of time since he started his 'Fitness with Essa' campaign in the UAE, he has done countless tours in schools and has also participated in events. He explains the outcome has been rather fruitful, and that school children come up to him asking interesting questions relating to healthy food and even ways of how they can lose weight. Some of the fitness events he is associated with as a brand ambassador include 'SSS Fitness Fest', 'Fitness Exhibition' and 'Fitness Expo Dubai' (coming up in November this year).

Despite not having a background in fitness education, Essa believes fitness and healthy eating is an important issue that must be emphasised greatly in the UAE, since the consumption of junk and fatty food is ample. Considering the culture in the UAE where traditional food is fattening and sugary it definitely contributes to weight gain and its associated health problems.

Essa recommends the consumption of fruits such as dates as an excellent replacement of desserts. On the other hand, with regards to main course, he believes protein and carbohydrates are an excellent choice either baked, roasted or steamed. Having a balanced diet is important as he explains. Furthermore, he suggests using quinoa, which has rapidly grown in popularity over the last couple of years.

In terms of his plans, Essa anticipates taking his message and the 'Fitness with Essa' campaign beyond the Middle East. With such enthusiasm towards promoting healthy eating and fitness there is no doubt that such a motivational icon, who spreads positive energy through his experience and passion for fitness, is certainly important for the UAE.





THE OFF-ROADERS

CORNER

Siddharth's family friendly, go anywhere Patrol

Name: Siddharth Patel

Nationality: United Kingdom

Occupation: Timber Merchant

Vehicle: Nissan Patrol Safari Y61 LWB

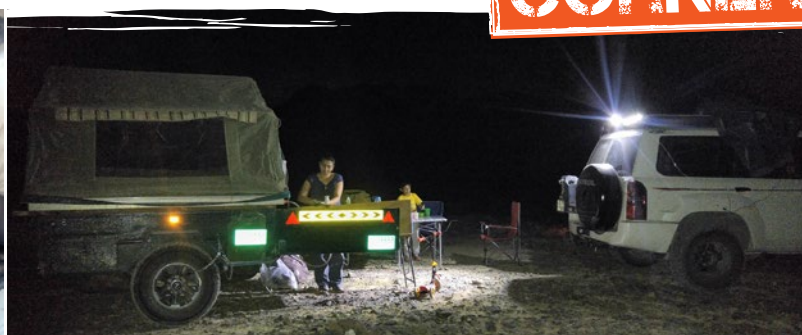
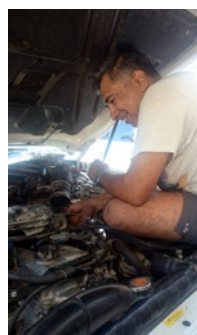
Siddharth Patel's Patrol is something that many of us dream of owning; reliable both on and off-road, easy to repair, and with just the right amount of mods to make it an incredible off-road beast. Below, Siddharth tells us all about his car and the ways in which he has modified it to cater for both his family and his own off-road driving passion – carrying out much of the work himself!

What modifications have been made, performance and cosmetic wise?

The modifications I've made have been more convenience oriented for longer journeys off-road and on tarmac (my style of driving is relaxed and long), therefore I've not made too many performance-related modifications. I also wish to own my patrol to 500,000kms just to see what issues there are when owning a vehicle for a longer duration than the norm.

The modifications that I have added are:

- A slight suspension lift to cope with the slightly higher weight as a result of all the extra camping gear (I must give a special mention to my close friend, Rickson D'Souza, who gave me his roof rack, even though I didn't plan on buying one, which after installation has been a great addition).
- A 47 litre fridge with 2nd battery. It has a few extra lights upfront and a bash plate to protect the radiator and AC condenser.
- A cargo barrier was added early on so that the rear cargo area can be loaded without strapping things down too tightly, and also to protect the rear and front passengers.
- The car has an awning as well, for that essential shade at a quick lunch stop.
- Of course, all the other paraphernalia is included, such as a compressor, GPS and rated recovery points.



• One of my last purchases has been an off-road camper trailer, which has a queen bed, and the foldout floor can fit another queen mattress. The trailer has its own pull out kitchen, and a 40 litre water tank for showers and washing up, it's quite old, but very comfortable and super convenient for my family.

Do you have something that you consider to be a 'special feature' of the car?

I replaced the front seats with orthopaedic seats as I have a bad back, and they have been fantastic! One forgets that one's back is in constant contact with the vehicle, and that it would be good idea make a change if the factory seats cause issues. An equally convenient second special feature has been the fridge with second battery; apart from the battery mounting, I installed all the wiring, circuit breakers and power distribution boxes myself. It was a great project. I do so love stopping at a traffic light and taking out some cold water in the summer heat. Also, bringing some fresh sushi for my son to eat at the campsite is always a good way to tempt him into coming camping with me!

What were your other options before you bought this car?

I was looking at an older Landcruiser 80 series as well, but it is quite rare to find them in a good condition. I used to own the previous shaped patrol, which I had to sell due to my son arriving, as the passenger seat could not fit infant and child car seats. I also required a daily driver with an automatic, so moved over to a Prado for a couple of years. This was great, but I just prefer Patrols, perhaps because I know their weak points better.

How often do you use your car, and what activities do you take part in?

It's my daily driver, and also my weekend warrior; I take it everywhere. The saying, "I may not be fast, but I can go anywhere", is probably what works for me. My car doesn't even have larger tyres, as I have noted that away from the large cities, it's hard to buy larger tyres, and the desert dwellers or mountain farmers use their original sized tyres to go everywhere! I plan to drive it across some

countries in Africa, or Asia...and I wouldn't mind an expedition trip to Saudi Arabia or Yemen when the situation permits.

Are you planning any future modifications?

Perhaps a winch and some hi-lift jack points, as I would like to do a solo trip to southern Oman and would need all these recovery gizmos if I became stranded. I do carry an extensive tool box on longer trips, and have been servicing and fitting most of the modifications myself at home. About four years ago I started restoring another car, and I am now addicted to servicing and, if possible, fixing my own vehicles. I also try to buy most of the modifications second hand or wait for a bargain. At times I import the parts needed, as it usually turns out cheaper or equivalent to local sources. I have learnt a lot about repairing cars, and keeping the cost of ownership to a minimum. Finally, I would also like to add some solar panels to charge the Patrol's second battery and the camper trailer's battery. It would allow camping at one location for a longer duration without firing up the engine.

What 4x4 do you dream of owning?

I would love a beatup old Suzuki Vitara, Suzuki Jimny, or Toyota Rav4. I would change the engine to something with a little more power, add wider wheels, and if needed make some suspension modifications. This would serve as my weekend morning blast in the dunes near home, as my Patrol is not as agile or nimble as smaller 4x4s. It does well through Liwa but I have to keep an eye on the weight that it carries, and hence I have not added metal bumpers, bigger tyres, or too many lights. My son and I plan to build a dune buggy at some point, although I haven't a clue about welding...but that is the challenge!

In reality, the next choice of a car will be a Jeep Wrangler, as my wife has been patiently using my old Prado and she is next in line for a change in vehicle. But all in all the Patrol serves me well for my needs as is, and repairing and servicing the car is fairly easy due to its simplicity in design, which also gives makes it reliable, which in turn gives me the confidence to explore further.

Want your 4X4 to be the next feature? It's all simple! Just send us an email at editor@outdooruae.com with the subject "Off-Roaders Corner" and you and your car might just be the next one on this page!





How to stay fit whilst travelling

Words by: Nicky Holland
Photos by: Jung Francisco

During the summer, temperatures can be too hot for people to withstand in the desert, so many people travel. It is important during this time that fitness levels are maintained. Some places may not have a gym and therefore, equipment you would normally use to train may be limited.

Like most expats in Dubai, I plan to go away this summer. I also plan to stay in shape when I am away. In this article I will share with you some of my favourite exercises that you can do when travelling. I will give you two options for each exercise so you can choose which works for you.



1) Incline Push up

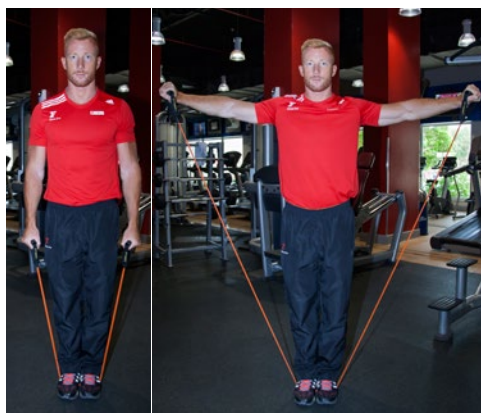
This works the chest and triceps. Just like a normal push up, the aim is to get the chest to the floor. Option one can be a normal push up, which you can do on your knees. Option two is an incline push up where your feet are raised. You can use a bench, the end of the bed or even a chair to raise your feet. Slowly and with control, lower your chest to the floor and then push up back to the starting position. Aim to complete 5 sets of 15 repetitions.



2) Alternate walking lunges

For this exercise, you just need some space

in front of you. Option one is to lunge the right leg, stand, then lunge the left leg. This slight pause between each side is the easier choice as it gives the legs a moment to rest between each rep. Option two is a continuous lunge going from right leg to left leg. You can also add some resistance by holding something in each hand or with a bar on your back. When you lunge you must keep your back straight and focus on balancing by bringing your back knee to the floor. Push through the heel of your front foot for stability. Try to complete 3-5 sets of 20 lunges, 10 on each side.



3) Resistance band shoulder fly

A great travel tool is the resistance band, which easily wraps up to fit in your case or bag. There are a number of exercises you can perform with this band. Here, I have chosen the reverse fly. An exercise that predominantly works the shoulders. Grip both handles of the band and stand up tall. The further apart your feet, the greater the resistance. Option one is to stand with your feet close together and touching. Option two would be to stand with your feet shoulder width apart or wider. Lift both hands together up in line with the shoulders, keeping both arms straight. Aim to do 5 sets of 10-15 repetitions.



4) Side plank rotation with hip lift

The plank works your core and a number of other muscles around the body contribute in keeping the body still, in an isometric contraction. The side plank is more advanced.

It will challenge your balance and your side strength. Option one is to drop your bottom knee and use that as support. Option two is to be on your toes. Make sure your elbow is directly under your shoulder and you keep your hips still throughout the rotation movement. Reach your top hand under your body whilst pushing your body weight through the bottom hand on the ground. A hip lift is simply engaging the obliques of your bottom hip, to lift your top hip to the sky. Complete 3 sets of 5 rotations followed by 5 hip lifts on each side.



5) V-sit into isometric dish

Similar to the previous exercise, this has two exercises combined. The first is a V-sit which focuses on core strength. From a lying down position on your back, with arms and legs out straight, bring your arms to meet your legs in a 'V Crunch' shape. Option one is to do this exercise. Option two is to finish with an isometric hold so your arms and legs are off the floor in a dish position. Try to do 3 sets of 10 V-sits followed by a 20 second dish hold.

Focus on your technique and feeling the movement when you are exercising. Doing this will allow you to concentrate on muscle activation, which means you will get more out of the workout if you think about the area you are working. To complete all the above exercises will take no longer than 30 minutes, which means that you can exercise whilst you travel. Getting back into training after travelling will then be a lot easier for you!



Nicky Holland
Fitness Manager, Fitness First Uptown Mirdif

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Happy Days Sea Cruising LLC, Dubai, +971 48706668, www.happydaysdubai.com

LY Catamaran, Bur Dubai, +971 566506683, www.lycatamaran.com

Marine Concept, P.O. Box 282586, Office 611, Al Barsha Business Centre, Dubai,

+971 43958022, 559603030

www.marine-charter-concept.com

Nautica1992, Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa, Autograph Collection, Dubai Marina,

+971 504262415, www.nautica1992.ae

Noukhada Adventure Company - P.O. Box 73373, C/O Ali & Sons Real Estate LLC,

Plot No. 29, Abu Dhabi – Al Ain Rd, Um Al Nar, Abu Dhabi, UAE - +971 25581889

www.noukhada.ae

RAK Marine LLC, Ras Al Khaimah City Hilton Marina, +971 72066410, 504912696,

507682345

Sea Hunters Passenger Yachts & Boats Rental, Dubai Marina, +971 42951011

Smoke Dragon of London Yacht, Abu Dhabi International Marine & Sports Club,

+971 507011958 or 504546617

Summertime Marine Sports, Dubai, +971 42573084

The Club, Abu Dhabi, +971 26731111, www.the-club.com

The Yellow Boats LLC, Dubai Marina Walk – opposite Spinneys, Intercontinental Hotel Marina, 800892, www.theyellowboats.com

Marinas
Abu Dhabi International Marine Sports Club, Abu Dhabi, Breakwater,

+971 26815566, www.adimsc.com

Abu Dhabi Marina, Abu Dhabi, Tourist Club Area, +971 26440300

Al Jeer Marina, RAK Border, Musandam

+971 72682333 or 504873185,

www.aljeerport.ae

Al Wasi Charter & Fishing, Airport Road, Al Qwais Bldg., Off. 207, Dubai, UAE,

+971 42394760 or 42959477,

www.cruiseindubai.com

Dubai Creek Marina, Deira, Dubai,

+971 43801234, www.dubaigolf.com

Dubai International Marine Sports Club, Dubai Marina, +971 43995777, www.dimc.ae

Dubai Marina Yacht Club, Dubai, +971 43627900,

www.dubaimarinayachtclub.com

Dubai Maritime City Harbour Marina, Dubai, +971 43455545

Dubai Offshore Sailing Club, Dubai, +971 43941669, www.dosc.ae

Emirates Palace Marina, Abu Dhabi, +971 26907725

Fujairah International Marine Club, Fujairah, +971 92221166, www.fimc.ae

Intercontinental Abu Dhabi Marina, Al Bateen, Intercontinental Hotel, Abu Dhabi,

+971 26666888, www.intercontinental.com

Jebel Ali Golf Resort and Spa Marina, Jebel Ali, Dubai, +971 48145555

www.jebelali-international.com

Pavilion Marina, Dubai, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, +971 44068800

Umm Al Quwaim Marine Sports Club,

Umm Al Quwaim, +971 67666644, www.uaqmarineclub.com

Dragon Boat Groups

Dubai Dawn Patrol Dragon Boating, Dubai, +971 508795645,

www.facebook.com/DubaiDawnPatrol

Dubai Diggers, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, pier next to 360, Dubai, +971 501547175,

www.dubai-diggers.com

UAE Dragon Boat Association, +971 507634008, www.dubaidragonboat.com

Camping & Hiking

Equipment

Blingmytruck.com, +971 505548255, www.blingmytruck.com

Gulf Camping, Dubai, UAE, +971 551222252 or 502550666, www.gulfcamping.com

Jack Wolfskin, Al Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi, +971 24437802

Tresspass, 2nd floor above ice rink, The Dubai Mall, +971 43398801

Urban Peak, PO Box 9587, Office 502E, Ibn Battuta Gate Offices, Dubai,

+971 44548805, www.urbanpeak.com

Tour Operators

Arabia Outdoors, Dubai, +971 559556209, www.arabiaoutdoors.com

Absolute Adventure, Dubai, +971 43926463, www.adventure.ae

Desert Road Tourism, Al Khor Plaza – 503, Dubai, +971 42959428, www.arabiatoours.com

Libra Travel & Tourism LLC, +971 43397700, www.facebook.com/LibraTravelDubai

Mountain High Middle East, Dubai, +971 506595536, www.mountainhighme.com

Sheesa Beach, Musandam, Dibba, +971 50336046, www.sheesabeach.com

Services

Adventure HQ, Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai Times Square Center, toll free: 800-ADVENTURE, www.adventurehq.ae

Barracuda Fishing and Outdoor, Street 13A 1, Al Safa 1, Dubai, +971 43466558,

www.barracudadubai.com

Global Climbing Trading LLC, Dubai Investment Park 1, Dubai,

+971 48829361, www.globalclimbing.com

Jack Wolfskin, Al Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi +971 24437802, www.jack-wolfskin.com

Services

Absolute Adventure, Dubai, +971 43926463, www.adventure.ae

Adventure HQ, Dubai Times Square Center, Sheikh Zayed Rd, toll free: 800-ADVENTURE, www.adventurehq.ae

Al Shaheen Adventure, Abu Dhabi, +971 28137444, www.alshaheenme.com

Arabia Outdoors, Dubai, +971 559556209, www.arabiaoutdoors.com

Dorell Sports Management, Dubai World Trade Centre, +971 43065061,

www.climbingdubai.com

E-Sports UAE, Dubai, +971 43697817, www.esportsuae.com

The Club, Abu Dhabi, +971 26731111, www.the-club.com

Information

UAE Climbing, +971 506456491, www.uaeclimbing.com

Mountain Biking & Cycling

Equipment/Dealers

Bikers JLT, Unit H6, Cluster H, Jumeirah Lakes Towers, Dubai, UAE, +971 526221888

Cycle Sports, Shop No. 1, Al Waleed Bldg., Al Barsha 1, Dubai, +971 43415415,

Fun Ride Sports, 301, 3rd floor, Mushrif Mall, Abu Dhabi, Rm. 4, Mezzanine floor, C-13 Bldg., Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi,

+971 24455838, www.funridesports.com

Micah's Bike Shop, Warehouse No.4 6th St. Al Quoz 3, Dubai, +971 43805228

Probike, Dubai, Al Barsha 1, +971 43255705, www.probike.ae

Rage Shop, Al Ghurair Centre: +971 4294 8634; MOE: +971 43413388; Al Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi: +971 24437617, Dubai Mall: +971 44341549, www.rage-shop.com

Revolution Cycles, Shop G05, Apex Atrium, Motor City, Dubai, +971 43697441, www.rcdxb.com
Ride Bike Shop, Sheikh Zayed Road: +971 43395602; Mirdif City Centre: +971 42840038; Al Seef Village Mall, Abu Dhabi: +971 26337172, www.ridebikeshop.com
Sportz Unlimited, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43388644 or 43391333
Tamreen Sports LLC, Khalifa Street, Abu Dhabi, +971 26222525, www.tamreensports.com
The Cycle Hub, Motor City, Dubai, +971 505528872 or 44256555, www.thecyclehub.com
Trek Bicycle Store, Seih Al Salam, Al Qudra Road, Dubai, +971 48327377; Shop #5, Reemas Building
 Al Quoz 1, Exit 46/47, Sheikh Zayed Road Dubai, +971 43211132

www.trekbikes.ae
Trikke UPT, P.O. Box 53527, Dubai, +971 43434499; P.O. Box 33869, Abu Dhabi, +971 26333377, www.trikkeme.net
Wolff's Bike Shop, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43394453, www.wbs.ae
Operator
Absolute Adventure, Dubai, +971 43926463, www.adventure.ae, info@adventure.ae
Clubs
Abu Dhabi Tri Club, www.abudhabitriclub.com
Cycle Safe Dubai, Dubai Autodrome www.cyclechallenge.ae
Dubai Roadsters, +971 43394453, www.dubairoadsters.com

Diving

Equipment

Al Boom Marine, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, +971 42894858, www.alboommarine.com
Al Hamur Marine and Sports Equipment, Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai, +971 43444468
Al Masaood Marine, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43468000, www.masaooodmarine.com
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Blue Waters Marine, +971 43808616, Dubai, www.bluewatersmarine.com
Gulf Marine Sports, Abu Dhabi, +971 26710017, www.gulfmarinesports.com
Premiers for Equipment, Sheikh Zayed 1st. Road, Abu Dhabi, +971 26665226, www.premiers-uae.com
Dive Shop.ae, Building #123, Street 26, Area 369, Al Quoz Industrial Area 4, Dubai, +971 43414940, www.diveshop.ae
Scuba 2000, Al Bidiya Beach, Fujairah, +971 92388477, www.scuba-2000.com
Diving Centres
Al Boom Diving (equipment), Dubai, Al Wasl Rd, +971 43422993, www.alboomdiving.com
Al Jeer Marina, RAK Border, Musandam, +971 72682333, www.aljeerport.ae
Al Mahara Dive Center, near Muroor St. across from main bus terminal,

+971 26437377, info@divemahara.com, www.divemahara.com
Arabian Diver, Hilton Marine, Ras Al Khaimah, +971 72226628 or 502428128 www.arabiandiver.com
Arabian Divers and Sportfishing Charters, Al Bateen Marina Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 506146931, www.fishabudhabi.com
Coastal Technical Divers, glenn@coastaltechnicaldivers.com, www.coastaltechnicaldivers.com
Deep Blue Sea Diving, International City, Dubai, +971 44308246, www.diveindubai.com
Desert Islands, Sir Bani Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE, +971 28015454, www.divemahara.com
Divers Down, +971 559888687, Dubai; Fujairah, Rotana Al Aqah Hotel Resort & Spa, +971 92370299, www.diversdownuae.com
Emirates Diving Centre, Abu Dhabi, near Meena Fish Market, +97126432444, www.edc-ad.ae
Freediving UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, +971 506130486 contactus@freedivinguae.com, www.freedivinguae.com
Freestyle Divers, Al Corniche Street, Dibba, Fujairah, +971 504514259, www.freestyledivers.me
Fujairah Rotana Resort & Spa - Al Aqah Beach, Al Aqah Beach, Fujairah, +971 92449888, www.rotana.com
Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road, Fujairah, +971 92449000, www.lemeridien-alagah.com
Neptune Diving, +971 504347902, www.neptunedivingcentre.com
Pavilion Dive Centre (equipment), Dubai, +971 44068828
Scuba 2000, Al Bidiya Beach, Fujairah, +971 92388477, www.scuba-2000.com
Scuba UAE.com, +971 502053922, www.scubauae.com
7 Seas Diving Center, Khorfakkan, +971 92387400, www.7seasdivers.com
Sharjah Wanderers Dive Club, Sharjah, +971 506683430, www.bsac406.com
Sheesa Beach, Dibba, Musandam, +971 503336046, www.sheesabeach.com
Sky & Sea Adventures, Dubai, Hilton, Jumeirah Beach Road, +971 43999005, www.watersportsdubai.com
Clubs
Atlantis Underwater Photography Club, Dubai, +971 44263000
Desert Sports Diving Club, Dubai, www.desertsportsdivingclub.net
Emirates Diving Association, Diving Village, Al Shindagha, Dubai, +971 43939390, www.emiratesdiving.com
Filipino SCUBA Divers Club (FSDC), Dubai, UAE, +971 566952421, www.facebook.com/FSDCuae
Freediving UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, contactus@freedivinguae.com, www.freedivinguae.com
Sharjah Wanderers Dive Club, Sharjah, +971 507840830, www.bsac406.com

Fishing & Kayaking

Equipment

Al Boom Marine, Abu Dhabi & Dubai, +971 42894858, www.alboommarine.com
Al Hamur Marine and Sports Equipment, Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai, +971 43444468
Al Masaood Marine, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43468000, www.masaooodmarine.com
Al Yousuf Motors, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Rd, +971 43390000, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Arabian Divers and Sportfishing Charters, Al Bateen Marina Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 506146931, www.fishabudhabi.com
Barracuda Fishing and Outdoor, Dubai, Street 13A 1, Al Safa 1, +971 43466558, www.barracudadubai.com
Blue Waters Marine, Shop 11, The Curve Bldg., Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43808616 or 553899995, www.bluewatersmarine.com
Challenging Adventure, Wadi Al Bih - Ras Al Khaimah, +971 561060798 or 44538386, contactus@challengingadventure.com
Global Climbing Trading LLC, Dubai Investment Park 1, Dubai, +971 48829361, www.globalclimbing.com
Ocean Active, Dubai, Garden Centre, +971 502898713, www.oceanactive.com
Operators
Absolute Adventure, Dubai, +971 43926463, www.adventure.ae

Al Boom Diving, Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Fujairah, +971 43422993
Al Hamra Marina and Yacht Club, Al Hamra, Ras Al Khaimah, +971 72432274, www.alhamramarina.com
Al Mahara Dive Center, Downtown Abu Dhabi, +971 501118125, www.divemahara.com
Al Wasl Charter & Fishing, Airport Road, Al Qwais Bldg., Off. 207, Dubai, UAE, +971 42394760 or 42959477, www.cruiseindubai.com
Al Shaheen Adventure, Abu Dhabi, +971 26429995, www.alshaheenme.com
Al Wasl Charter & Fishing (Al Wasl Passenger Yachts and Boats Rental LLC), Airport Road, Al Owais Building, Dubai, +971 42394761, www.cruiseindubai.com
Arabian Divers and Sportfishing Charters, Al Bateen Marina Resort, +971 506146931, www.fishabudhabi.com
Arabia Outdoors, Dubai, +971 559556209, www.arabiaoutdoors.com
Barracuda Diving Centre, Fujairah International Marine Club, +971 503366224
Belevari Marine, Abu Dhabi, +971 26594144
Captain Tony's, Yas Marina, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, +971 26507175, www.captaintonys.ae
Fun Beach Water Sports, Dubai, +971 507050433 or 506947764, www.seaworldsdf.com
Happy Days Sea Cruising LLC, Dubai, +971 48706668, 503960202, www.happydaysdubai.com
Hiltonia Beach Club, Hilton Abu Dhabi Hotel, Abu Dhabi, +971 26811900
Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road, Fujairah, +971 92449000, www.lemeridien-alagah.com
Nautica 1992, Dubai, +971 504262415, www.nautica1992.ae
Noukhada Adventure Company, Villa 332/7, Al Meena Street, Abu Dhabi, +971 25581889, www.noukhada.ae
Ocean Active, +971 504592259, www.oceanactive.com
Sheesa Beach, Dibba, Musandam, +971 503336046, www.sheesabeach.com
Soolymans Sport Fishing, Umm Suquiem, Fishing Port No. 2, Jumeirah Beach, +971 508866227, 508866228 or 503402379, www.soolymansportfishing.com
Summertime Marine Sports, Dubai, +971 42573084, www.summertime.ae
Xclusive Yachts, Dubai, Dubai Marina, +971 44327233, www.xclusivayachts.com
Clubs
Abu Dhabi Camping, Fishing & Kayaking Club, mohamed.almahrouky@gmail.com
Dubai Surfski & Kayak Club, Kitesurfers' Beach, Umm Suquiem 1, Dubai, +971 554986280, www.dskc.hu

General Sports Equipment

Distributors

Adventure HQ, Dubai Times Square Center, Sheikh Zayed Rd, Toll free: 800-ADVENTURE, www.adventurehq.ae
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
800 Sport, Al Quoz, Dubai, +971 43467751, www.800sport.ae
Flip Flop Arabia, +971 556881793, 501084010, www.flipflop-arabia.com
Global Climbing Trading LLC, Dubai Investment Park 1, Dubai, +971 48829361, www.globalclimbing.com
Highbury Trading FZE LLC, P.O. Box 16111, RAK Free Trade Zone Authority, Ras Al Khaima, +971 526799506, www.highburytrade.com
Jack Wolfskin, Al Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi, +971 24437802
Ocean Sports FZE, +971 559352735, www.kitesurfsup.com
Picnico General Trading, near Sharaf DG Metro Station, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43951113
Portable Shade UAE, Jebel Ali, Dubai, UAE, +971 508897125, www.portable-shade.net
Sport in Life Distribution, Nad Al Hammar Rd., Ras Al Khor, Dubai, UAE, +971 42896001 or 42896002, info@sportinlife.ae, www.sportinlife.ae
Tresspass, The Dubai Mall 2nd floor above ice rink, +971 43398801

Horse Riding

Equipment

Al Asifa Horse Equestrian Equipment & Requisites Trading, P.O. Box 77282, AL Khawanij 1st, Dubai,

+971 554733110, www.asifa.ae
Black Horse LLC, Baniyas West, Near Emport Abu Dhabi, +971 25866205, www.blackhorseuae.com
Bonjour Equestrian Supplies, Nad Al Hammar Rd., Ras Al Kho, Dubai, UAE, +971 42896001, +971 42896002, info@bonjourequestrian.com, www.bonjourequestrian.com
Cavalos Equine Care and Supplies, 16th Street, Al Khaliidiyah, Abu Dhabi, +971 22222433, www.cavalosuae.com
Emirta Horse Requirement Centre, Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai, +971 43437475, www.emirtahorse.com
Equestrian Clubs/Centres
Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club, Al Mushrif, Abu Dhabi, +971 24455500, www.aedec-web.com
Al Ahli Riding School, Al Amman Street, Dubai-Sharjah Rd., +971 42988408, www.alahliclub.info
Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 25568555, www.alforsan.com
Al Jiyad Stables, Behind Dubai International Endurance City, Dubai, +971 505995866, info@aljiyad.com, www.aljiyad.com
Al Sahra Desert Resort Equestrian Centre, Dubai, +971 44274055, equestrian.centre@alsahra.com
Desert Equestrian Club, Mirdif, Dubai, +971 503099770 or 501978888
Desert Palm Riding School, Near Al Awir Road (going to Hatta-Oman), Dubai, +971 43238010, www.dubaipoloclub.com
Dubai Polo Academy, Dubai, +971 508879847, www.dubaipoloacademy.com
Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club, Dubai, Arabian Ranches, +971 43618111, www.poloclubdubai.com
Emirates Equestrian Centre, Dubai, +971 505587656, www.emiratesequestriancentre.com
Ghantoot Polo & Racing Club, Exit 399, Abu Dhabi/ Dubai Highway, Abu Dhabi, +971 25629050, www.grpc.ae
Golden Stables Equestrian Club, Al Khawanej, Dubai, (Nouri) +971 555528182
Hoofbeatz, located just inside the Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club, Dubai, +971 569424551, www.hoofbeatz.com
Mushrif Equestrian and Polo Club, Mushrif Park, Al Khawanej Road, Dubai, +971 42571256, www.mushrifec.com
Rahal Ranch, Al Wathba Racing Area, Abu Dhabi, +971 565066741, www.rahalranch.com
Riding for the Disabled, Dubai, lessons@rdad.ae, www.rdad.ae
Sharjah Equestrian & Racing Club, Sharjah, Al Dhaid Road, +971 65311188, www.serc.ae
Racecourses
Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club, Al Mushrif, Abu Dhabi, +971 24455500, www.aedec-web.com
Ghantoot Racing & Polo Club, Exit 399, Abu Dhabi/ Dubai Highway, Abu Dhabi, +971 25629050, www.grpc.ae
Jebel Ali Racecourse, off the main Abu Dhabi - Dubai Highway (Sheikh Zayed road) beside the Emirates Golf Club, Dubai, +971 43474914
Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse, Al Meydan Road, Nad Al Sheba, Dubai, +971 43270000, www.meydan.ae
Sharjah Racecourse, Al Dhaid Road, Sharjah, +971 65311155, www.serc.ae

Jet Ski

Dealers

Al Masaood Marine, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road, +971 43468000, www.masaooodmarine.com
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Japan Marine General Trading, Al Garhoud Road, Liberty Building, Dubai, +971 44426395, uday@japanmarine.jp, www.japanmarine.co
Liberty Kawasaki, Interchange 4, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, Direct: +971 45019442, 45019412 or 43419341, www.libertykawasaki.com

Motocross & ATV's

Dealers

Al Badayer Rental (Rental), Dubai-Hatta Road, +971 68861161 or 507842020, www.albadayerrental.com
Al Shaali Moto, Ras Al Khor, +971 43200009, www.alshaalimoto.com



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 Telephone: +971 4 3855598
 E-mail: contact@yamahacafe.com
 AL YOUSUF MOTORS | اليوسف موتورز

Al Yousuf Motors, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Rd, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Golden Desert Motorcycles, P.O. Box 47912, E-44 Hatta Road, Al Badayer Madam, Sharjah, +971 529484616 or 505 033 800

Just Gas It, Hatta Rd., Al Aweer, Dubai, UAE, +971 559031664, www.JustGasIt.net
KTM, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road, exit 42, +971 43468999, www.ktm.com
Liberty Kawasaki, Interchange 4, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, Direct: +971 45019442, 45019412 or 43419341, www.libertykawasaki.com

Motoventure, Hobbies Club, Al Awir, Hatta Road, Dubai, +971 555437392, www.motoventure.net
mxDubai, Al Ain Road Dubai, +971 55 2090832, www.mxdubai.com
Polaris UAE (atv's), Ras Al Khor, Nad al Hamar Road, Al Ghandi Complex, Dubai, +971 42896100, M4, Sector 13, 10th Street, Mussafah Industrial, Abu Dhabi, +971 26441478, www.polarisuae.com
Sebsports, Al Quoz Industrial Area 1 Dubai, +971 43393399, www.sebsports.com
Equipment

Sandstorm Motorcycles (Rental), Al Quoz, Dubai, +971 43395608,
Sebsports, Dubai, Al Quoz Industrial Area 3, +971 43393399, www.sebsports.com
2XWheeler, Motorcity Dubai, +971 44548388, www.2xwheeler.com

Motorcycling

Distributors and Dealers

Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Ducati, Al Salam Street, Abu Dhabi, +971 24918593, www.ducati.ae
Duseja General Trading Co. LLC, Warehouse No: B3, Alquoz Ind Area #3, Umm Suqeim Road next to Max Garage Diagonally opposite Lulu Hypermarket Al Barsha, +971 43476712, www.dusejamoto.com
Harley-Davidson, Mussafah 4, Street 10, Abu Dhabi, +971 25540667, hd.auh@harley-davidson.ae, www.harley-davidson-abu-dhabi.com
Liberty Kawasaki, Interchange 4, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, Direct: +971 45019442, 45019412 or 43419341, www.libertykawasaki.com
Polaris UAE, Al Ghandi Complex, Nad al Hamar Road, Ras Al Khor, +971 42896100, www.polarisuae.com
Tristar Motorcycles, Al Awir Road, Nr Oman Transport, +971 43330659, www.tristaruae.com
Workshops and Services
Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 25568555, www.alforsan.com
Dubai Autodrome, Dubai, +971 43678700, www.dubaiautodrome.com
Emirates Motorplex, Umm Al Quwain, +971 67681166
2xWheeler Adventures, Dubai, +971 44548388, www.alainraceway.com
Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, 800 YAS (927) or +971 26599800, www.yasmarinacircuit.com

Off-Road

Dealers

Bling My Truck, +971 503634839 or 505548255, info@blingmytruck.com, www.blingmytruck.com
4x4 Motors LLC, Shk. Zayed Rd, Dubai, +971 43384866, www.4x4motors.com
Liberty Automobiles, Dubai, 800 5423789, www.libertyautos.com
Repairs and Services
AAA Service Centre, Al Quoz, Dubai, UAE, +971 4 2858989, www.aaadubai.com
Icon Auto Garage, Dubai, +971 43382744, www.icon-auto.com
Mebar Auto, Al Quoz, Industrial Area 2, Dubai, UAE, +971 43469600, www.mebarauto.com
Off Road Zone, Dubai, Al Quoz, +971 43392449, www.offroad-zone.com
Saluki Motorsport, Dubai, +971 43476939 www.salukimotorsport.com
Equipment
Advanced Expedition Vehicles, Dubai & Abu Dhabi, +971 43307152, www.aev.ae
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha

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 Abu Dhabi (Musaffah) - Tel: 02-5588890
 Sharjah - Tel: 06-5388666 | Ajman - Tel: 06-7410004
 R.A.K - Tel: 07-2351592 | Fujairah - Tel: 09-2221188
www.aymotorsports.com

Bling My Truck, +971 503634839 or 505548255, www.blingmytruck.com
Heartland UAE, Al Mafraq Industrial, Abu Dhabi, +971 569796524 or 506472447, www.heartlanduae.com
Icon Auto Garage, Dubai, +971 43382744, www.icon-auto.com
Mebar Auto, Al Quoz, Industrial Area 2, Dubai, UAE, +971 4 3469600, www.mebarauto.com
Wild X Adventure Shop, Dubai-Hatta Road, Dubai, +971 48321050,
Yellow Hat, Nad Al Hamar, and Times Square Center, Dubai, +971 42898060, www.yellowhat.ae
Tour Operators
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Desert Road Tourism, Al Khor Plaza - 503, Dubai, +971 42959429, www.desertroadtours.com
Oasis Palm Dubai, Dubai, +971 4 2628832 or 4 2686826, www.opdubai.com
Clubs
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ALMOST 4x4 Off-Road Club, +971 507665522, www.almost4x4.com
Dubai Offroaders, www.dubaioffroaders.com
JEEP Wrangler JK Fun Club, suffian.omar@yahoo.com, www.jk-funclub.com
ME 4X4, www.me4x4.com

Running

Clubs

ABRASAC, Dubai, www.abrasac.org
Abu Dhabi Tri Club, Abu Dhabi,

www.abudhabitrifclub.org
Abu Dhabi Striders, admin@abudhabistriders.com, www.abudhabistriders.com
Al Ain Road Runners, Abu Dhabi, +971 504188978, alainroadrunners@yahoo.co.uk
Mirdif Milers, Dubai, www.mirdifmilers.info
Dubai Creek Striders, www.dubaicreekstriders.org
Desert Road Runners, www.desertroadrunners.club

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Equipment

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Al Masood Marine, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43468000, www.masoodmarine.com
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Picnico, Al Fairdooni Building, Sheikh Zayed Road, Near Sharaf DG Metro Station and Mall of Emirates, +971 43951113
Surf Dubai, Umm Suqeim, Dubai, +971 505043020, www.surfingdubai.com
Surf Shop Arabia, Building 1, Al Manara Road (East), Interchange 3, Dubai, +971 564716180, www.surfshoparabia.com
Surf School Arabia, +971 556010997, www.surfschoolarabia.com
UAE Kite Surfing, +971 505626383, www.ad-kitesurfing.net
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Ocean Sports FZE, +971 559352735, www.kitesurfsup.com
Operators

Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 25568555, www.alforsan.com

Dubai Kite Surf School, Umm Suqeim Beach, Dubai, +971 504965107, www.dubaikitesurfschool.com

Duco Maritime, Dubai, Ras Al Khaimah and Abu Dhabi, +971 508703427, www.ducomaritime.com

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Kite Fly, Dubai, +971 502547440, www.kitesurf.ae

Kitepro Abu Dhabi, Yas Island and Al Dabbayyah, Abu Dhabi, +971 505441494, www.kitepro.ae
Nautica1992, Dubai, +971 504262415, www.nautica1992.ae

Shamal Kite Surfing, Umm Suqeim Dubai, +971 507689226, www.shamalkitesurfing.com

Sky & Sea Adventures, Dubai, Hilton, Jumeirah Beach Road, +971 43999005, www.watersportsdubai.com

Surf School UAE, Umm Suqeim Beach and Building 1, Al Manara Road (East), Interchange 3, Dubai, +971 43791998, www.surfschooluae.com
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Water Cooled, Watercooled Sports Services LLC, Hilton Beach Club, Abu Dhabi, +971 26395997, www.watercooleduae.com
Clubs
Abu Dhabi Stand Up Paddle, www.abudhabisup.com
UAE SUP and Surf Association, +971 26665588, www.ridersuae.com

Water Parks

Aquaventure Atlantis, Dubai, Palm Jumeirah, +971 44260000, www.atlantisthepalm.com
Dreamland Aqua Park, Umm Al Quwain, Emirates Road, +971 67681888, www.dreamlanduae.com
Wadi Adventure, Jebel Hafeet, Al Ain, +971 37818422, www.wadiadventure.ae
Wild Wadi Water Park, Dubai, +971 43484444, www.wildwadi.com

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Seaoman, P.O. Box 2394, RUWI PC 112,
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www.facebook.com/gosport.qatar
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www.mourjan-lusailmarina.com
The Pearl-Qatar Marinas, Doha, Qatar,
+974 44953894, www.ronauticame.com

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Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club,
Racing and Equestrian Club,
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www.qrec.gov.qa

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Doha Sub Aqua Club, Doha Sub-Aqua Club,
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+974 50483794, www.dohasubaclub.com
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+974 66084040, www.pdcqatar.com
Qatar Scuba Center, 187 Al Mansoura
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+974 66662277, www.qatarscubacenter.com
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+974 55319507 or 4375065, www.qdive.net
World Marine Centre, PO Box 6944,
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www.worldmarinecenter.webs.com
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Airport, Ras Abu Aboud Area, Doha, Qatar,
+974 55246651, 40405156,
www.qatardivers.com
Qatar Marine, Go Sport City Center
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