

Sinai (Egypt) سيناء

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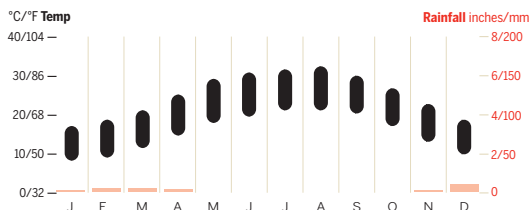
Why Go?

Rugged and starkly beautiful, Sinai's vast and empty desert heart has managed to capture imaginations throughout the centuries. It has been coveted for both its deep religious significance and its strategic position as a crossroads of empires; prophets and pilgrims, conquerors and exiles have all left their footprints on the sands here.

Today travellers flock to Sinai's seaside resorts, which serve up a medley of sun-drenched holiday fun and offer a springboard to the underwater wonders of the Red Sea. Step away from the buzz of the coast, though, and you'll find Sinai's true soul. Here amid the red-tinged, ragged peaks and endless never-never of sand, the Bedouin continue to preserve their proud traditions while finding ways to cope with the increasing infiltration of modern ways. On a star-studded night, surrounded by the monstrous silhouettes of mountains, you'll realise why Sinai continues to cast a spell over all who visit.

When to Go

Taba



Mar Head into the desert when spring's flurry of life colourfully carpets the sands.

Apr Celebrate all things Sinai at the Dahab Festival.

Oct Shrug off the winter blues by sneaking in some autumn sun along the coast.

Sinai Highlights

- 1 Dive in the **Red Sea**, an underwater fantasia of coral mountains and ghostly shipwrecks
- 2 Follow in the footsteps of prophets and pilgrims along the time-worn Steps of Repentance on **Mt Sinai** (p365)

3 View one of the world's most important collections of early religious art and manuscripts at **St Katherine's Monastery** (p364)

4 Snorkel the Lighthouse Reef then relax with a beer, sheesha (water pipe) and new friends, at a waterfront restaurant in the backpacker vortex of **Dahab** (p359)

5 Escape the crowds to laze on a beach, with a blissful to-do list of nothing,

