

EBIS'S TRIP TO MARSAALAM

'A Unique Jewel by the Red Sea'

Following the end of term exams, a group of students and several teachers from KS3 set out on an ecological and adventure trip to Marsa Alam. Located on the western shores of the Red Sea, Marsa Alam currently remains one of the few areas with an untouched paradise renowned for astonishing emerald and turquoise waters. The Marsa Alam region is famous for its snorkelling and diving sites having colourful reefs, a myriad of beautiful fish, a small shipwreck and a swim-through canyon with underwater caves.

The trip was organized by EPEA - Environmental Protection and Education Association - which is an Egyptian based non-profit organization established in 2013. Their mission is to protect and conserve Egypt's natural resources to ensure a healthy and well protected environment, which supports a sustainable society and economy. EPEA's aim in organising school trips is to engage students in fun activities while creating awareness about marine conservation.

Upon arrival and after check-in at the hotel, students received a briefing on how to use their diving equipment. They were then given the opportunity to perform their first dive experience in the

hotel's swimming pool at a depth of two metres, in preparation for their first official dive in the Red Sea the following day.

On day two, the group set out to Abu Dabab one of the best sandy beaches in Marsa Alam. Students were divided into groups of three, each supervised by a qualified diving instructor. They then embarked on their first shore dive, going to a depth of 8-10 metres with a chance to see the underwater world of reefs and marine wildlife including sea turtles and the magnificent mermaid, or 'Dugong' of the Red Sea.

One of the highlights of the trip was a road trip to the Qulaan Mangrove Forest situated 30km in the south of El Qusier on the road to Marsa Alam. There, the students had the opportunity to walk through the mangrove forest while understanding its ecological importance and how the trees adapt to living in the sea. They also met with the local Ababda tribe, learned about their culture and traditions and even tasted their traditional coffee with ginger, known as 'gabana' to the Ababda. Before the students left, they were able to buy hand-made necklaces and bracelets to help the people support their families.



A thematic end to the trip was a Bedouin dinner in the mountains. The students enjoyed tasting 'mondi', which is goat that is cooked in the ground. The Bedouins, who are known to be hospitable and friendly, went to great lengths to prepare a feast fit for a king.

Marsa Alam was an incredible experience for both the students and teachers alike. It is without a doubt that our students came back with valuable information about one of the uniquely unspoiled areas in the Red Sea region, thereby developing a stronger sense of awareness and responsibility regarding environmental issues.

