

# Health Tourism in Egypt

## Treatment and fun

Cairo- Mushera El-Fishawy

Health tourism has grown considerably throughout the world and in Egypt in particular. One of the important health tourist resorts is Al-Ghardaqa the largest city on the western coast of the Red Sea, south of Suez. It is famous for its natural resources, with sands rich in therapeutic minerals. There are many resorts, such as the Anna Aslan Centre (named after the Romanian scientist Anna Aslan) which became famous for treatment of age-related illnesses and organ function deterioration associated with old age, depression, osteoarthritis, Parkinson disease, symptoms of menopause and atherosclerosis. There is also Safaga, south of Al-Ghardaqa considered the number one health tourism resort in Egypt, especially for rheumatic diseases and psoriasis.

### The School of Psoriasis Treatment

The discovery of the treatment for psoriasis happened accidentally, Dr. Hani Al-Nadher, Professor of Dermatology and head of the National Centre for Research told Islamic Tourism. In the late eighties officials in the Red Sea region noticed an amazing phenomenon: tourists who came to the Gulf of Safaga to enjoy diving and were sufferers of psoriasis recovered completely after spending two to three weeks in this region. This observation was then conveyed to the Ministry of Scientific Research for study. A team of specialised doctors from the National Research Centre started the study of this amazing phenomenon in the early nineties, and concluded that among the

population in this region (some 45,000), there was no single case of psoriasis.

Dr. Al-Nadher explained that environmental treatment means the use of natural products to treat a given disease without the use of any chemicals. That is why the treatment consists of swimming in the Gulf of Safaga where the water has a high density of salt and exposure to ultraviolet rays of sun light in the early morning or at sunset.

### Why Safaga?

Dr. Al-Nadher has the answer. Safaga, he says, is situated on a Gulf with few islands and corral reefs which reduces the speed of the current, raising the concentration of salt and minerals. Due to this increase, there is a reduction in the earth's gravity which ➤



سفاجا.  
Safaga.



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leads to the activation of blood circulation and the rush of blood towards the skin. This results in a balance between the concentration of salt between the cells and tissues and the external environment and has a great influence in the treatment of psoriasis. The second factor is the high concentration of ultraviolet rays in this region.

From 1995 hundreds of patients from Egypt and abroad started coming to Safaga where around 2,000 people are now treated annually. The city has developed extensively: it has been provided with all the services and facilities required for tourism and existing facilities were renovated to cope with the increased interest in health tourism.

Laboratory tests have proven that the sands of Safaga contain a high, safe percentage of radioactive material, such as uranium, thorium and potassium, as well as most other minerals. It has also been proven that the sand has a high percentage of gold salt used in the treatment of ➤



رئيس المركز القومي للبحوث الدكتور هاني الناظر مع الكاتبة.  
Dr. Hani Al-Nadher with the writer.

المياه والجبال الغنية بالمعادن.

The water and the hills in the distance are full of minerals.



rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, joint effusion and skin inflammations.

## Spas with therapeutic properties

Many hot spas are located in the province of south Sinai, between the Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, such as The Pharaoh Baths and Moses Baths. The water is therapeutic because of its sulphur content. A chemical and bacteriological analysis of this water, has established that it is effective in treating a number of diseases prompting investors to fund a tourist health resort, which has become a magnet for visitors from all over the world. It includes a tourist village and a centre for environmental therapy.

Halwan has spas with mineral and sulphur content not found any where else. The water is also distinguished by its purity and is useful in treating several diseases. Halwan has a sulphur centre for natural treatment and for the treatment of rheumatic diseases and pains. The centre also treats skin disorders, osteoarthritis, joint stiffness and fractures with malunion, chronic circulatory insufficiency of limb arteries, ovophoritis and severe obesity.

## The Oases

Passing Geza, you come to the Sea Oases which has developed rapidly to become a tourist expansion of greater Cairo – an area full of spas and places for health tourism. It could become one of the largest health resorts in the world, due to its dry climate, and sunshine throughout the year, especially in the area of "Halfa Spas".

Siuah, in the west of the country, takes a prominent place among health tourism resorts. In addition to its pure environment and good weather, it has sand hills that made it the pearl of the western desert.

To the south east of Siuah, lies "Dacro Mountain". The locals swear by its therapeutic powers. It is known to cure rheumatic diseases, joint pains and organ deterioration. People who suffer from these diseases go to the locals who bury them in the sand – hence the name for the treatment: "burial in the sand", for about fifteen to thirty minutes every day for two weeks during summer. This treatment became a big hit with tourists.



Diving Pool-Sheraton Sharm Hotel.

حوض السباحة-فندق شيراتون الشرم.



Swimming Pool Complex- Sheraton Sharm Hotel.

مجمع أحواض السباحة-فندق شيراتون الشرم.

A number of health treatments are available in Wadi al-Jadid province which makes up about 67 percent of the western desert of Egypt. The area is well known for its dry climate, temperatures of up to 43 degrees centigrade, fine sands, therapeutic plants and spas which contain sulphur, calcium, magnesium and iron. Plants are used to treat diseases such as, colic and diseases of the digestive system, diabetes mellitus and some rheumatic pains.

The Outer Oases are famous for their deep wells, with water gushing at about 100 m and heat reaching 28 degree centigrade. Among the wells are "The Bulaq Wells" and the

collection of "Naser Wells" 18 km to the south of Kharigah city. The water here can be used to treat chronic pains, rheumatic diseases, skin disorders, kidney stones and pains and respiration problems.

Similar features are found in the Interior Oases and in Aswan province which is called "The Rose of the South". With the islands of Elfinten and Isis, it is one of the best winter health resorts in the world.

Egypt has some of the finest health tourism resorts. Spas with healing properties attract visitors from all corners of the globe and the health tourism continues to expand and develop. ■