HANDBOOK
CAMP HABIBA
NUWEIBA, EGYPT
Dear Camper,

We live in interesting times. We can see the many ways in which vast numbers of people are suffering in many parts of the world. We can see materialism, waste, pollution and war. We can also understand that every person and every living thing is endangered by human induced climate change. It has become impossible for us to ignore what is happening. We have been called to act for the benefit of all who are alive and future generations.

As individuals, no matter how hard we work, it is not possible to consider restoring the Earth ... but together we are an amazing force and if we so choose we can restore all degraded landscapes wherever they are on the Earth. Restoration needs to be at the centre of human intention. When we collaboratively study how to restore the Earth our lives have real meaning. When we live our lives restoring the Earth we know we are doing what we can to redress many of the mistakes of the past and ensure that future generations will enjoy a fully functional Earth.

You are at the heart of this initiative. Congratulations and thank you for choosing to become a camper with Ecosystem Restoration Camps to help restore paradise on earth. We want you to have the best experience restoring with us. We created this handbook to answer most of your questions. Of course if you need any more information, contact one of our staff and they will be more than happy to assist you.

Let’s go camping and restore the earth!

John D. Liu
INTRODUCTION

Your camp hosts Maged and his wife Lorena started Habiba in 1994. Habiba community is composed of an organic farm, a beach lodge and a learning centre. All complementing each other with one purpose: creating balance in the Bedouin life in Sinai. This happens through creating an alternative method to relying completely on the traditional tourism-based activities, and providing the community with means for financial stability. An interdisciplinary approach to raise the community’s social awareness toward the necessity of applying the basic principles of Permaculture, Responsible Tourism, and Knowledge Transfer.

The vision of Camp Habiba is to re-green the desert through creating a sustainable, regenerative and self-sustaining food system for the local Bedouin communities. This is being done by revegetating the water catchment area, known as Wadis, with native and endemic plants.

Another major activity is to support the local Bedouins to re-green their large back gardens with a mixture of native plants and food crops.

Nuweiba lies on the coast of Al-Aqaba Gulf in the eastern part of south Sinai (Egypt). Since 1934 and until now, Nuweiba has been inhabited by two Bedouin tribes called Tarabin and Muzeina.

Habiba Community, which includes our beach lodge, communal organic farm and our learning center, is dedicated to building a strong, healthy future for the entire South Sinai Community. Founded in 2007, Habiba Organic Farm acts as a community-based
farm to benefit the people of South Sinai. Our farm serves as a beacon to what can be accomplished through sound organic farming practices in the desert. Local people have seen the result, and today agriculture is beginning to flourish across the region.

Through university and NGO partnerships, Habiba is expanding the role of Habiba Organic Farm in the region and is beginning to serve as a training hub for integrated sustainable development that serves as a model for Egypt’s South Sinai and beyond.

The main cornerstones of the Habiba community are the Sinai Palm Foundation, Habiba Learning Center, Womad, and Habiba Regenerative Learning Centre.

We’re excited to have you with us! Let’s regenerate.
WHAT TO EXPECT AT CAMP HABIBA

THE RESTORATION/REHABILITATION WORK

Habiba has a large dream, to regreen the desert around them. They have proven that it's possible at their original site, and are rolling out their regreening strategies to the Wadis (water catchment areas), and the backyards of their Bedouin neighbours. Your role in this mission is to support this work, which will involve a variety of activities, including:

• Soil rebuilding through composting and organic fertilizer application
• Irrigation system management
• Pest management
• Monitoring
• Waste management
• Transplanting
• Polyculture planting
• Seed collection of native plants from the wild
• Rammed Earth building
• Making and applying the mulch layer
• Empowering the local community, especially the indigenous people
THE CLIMATE

The climate in Nuweiba is classified as a desert due to the scarcity of rainfall which is less than 10 in / 25 cm per year. The summers are hot, and can reach up to 45 degrees celsius, especially in the afternoon. The winters are short, and the heat is very dry, with an average day time temperature of 15-20 degrees celsius. Most of the Sinai (excluding the mountains) is classified as an extremely arid region or “too dry to support vegetation”. Habiba aims to change that.

Please prepare for these temperatures when you visit the camp.

THE CULTURE

Habiba Community lies in Nuweiba, South Sinai in a territory called Wast, which is inhabited by the Bedouin tribe of Arab Himdan. 3 km away from Tarabin and 15 minutes by car from Muzeina. Habiba’s location makes it a strong linkage point between three Bedouin tribes of different beliefs and traditions.

Respect, generosity, hospitality, and love are the four pillars of the Bedouin culture. The term “Bedouin” is derived from Arabic badiya, which refers to the desert and the term badu, which refers to a person living in the desert. The Bedouin refer to themselves as Arabs and more specifically identify themselves with a particular tribe, many of which originated from what is now Saudi Arabia.

As times have changed, some Bedouins have shifted from their traditional nomadic lifestyle. There has been a cultural and intellectual shift by the movement from mountains and coastlines to large cities. We aim to capture as much of this knowledge as possible before it is forgotten.
Typically, within the Bedouin culture, it is the task of the woman to take responsibility for the household, the goats, the backyard garden and raising the kids. The women are generally centered within the home throughout their life, putting the needs of the husband as a priority.

Currently a small collective is being implemented based out of the Habiba Community, called Diamonds of Sinai. The aims of the program are to: empower young mothers and women of the Bedouin community through the creation of personal cosmetic products, enhance parent-child relationships, enrich cross-cultural exchanges, increase hygiene awareness, and help to recover their femininity.

Men generate income for their families. They do a wide variety of jobs such as selling items on the market, fishing, taxi drivers and in tourism. The kids start going to kindergarten when they are 3 or 4 years old and continue going to school until they are 15 or 16, or until they begin working with their fathers. The girls tend to get married at an early age and begin to start their own families. The kids are always playing in the streets, often getting creative with local resources such as old tires and wire. Sometimes they even come to the Habiba Regenerative Learning Center and help out.

Bedouin’s language is Arabic but with a Bedouin dialect so let’s call their language the Bedouin Arabic. This language is much closer to the traditional Arabic present throughout the Middle East, however European dialect has influenced the Arabic language in countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya.

If you are interested in learning the local language, most people within the Habiba community will be happy to teach you, just as long as you ask nicely.
The food they eat consists of fish (se-mack), and vegetables like eggplant (beh-tin-gan, o-ber-gin), tomatoes (ta-mah-tim), and cucumbers (key-arr). Most of the meals are consistent on a day to day basis with the occasional chicken (fre-ek) for special occasions.

THE ACCOMMODATION

Habiba is a small, barefoot lodge, perfectly positioned to provide accommodation that shows off all South Sinai’s greatest treasures. Surrounded by mountains, reefs and a private beach on the Red Sea, overlooking the Gulf of Aqaba, Habiba Beach Lodge is the ultimate in seclusion, Bedouin culture and exotic adventure.

Here at Habiba Beach Lodge we offer affordable single, double, and triple air-conditioned rooms suitable for independent travelers or groups. Individual travelers can camp in their own tent or sleep on the beach using all the infrastructure of the shared kitchen, restaurant, and shower rooms either in Habiba Beach Lodge or on Habiba Organic Farm.

Our lodge provides highly trained staff and guides who ease you into an extraordinary desert experience. Return from your explorations each day and relax in a hammock by the beach or perhaps swim the local reefs. Play chess, cards or have a cool drink in our sea cafe and enjoy a leisurely dinner with your fellow travelers.

Whether you are seeking adventure, relaxation or a combination of the two, the unique location and diversity of Habiba Beach Lodge provides an unforgettable experience for all.
THE FOOD

The chef at Habiba Beach Lodge can satisfy all of your culinary wishes, but any special requirements should be communicated prior to arrival. Traditional Egyptian cuisine is our standard. The meals provided are mainly vegetarian in line with our concept of farming and self-sustainability. Our organic veggies from the farm make superb salads, soups, and sauces.

WHAT TO BRING

- Work boots or comfortable sturdy shoes
- Sleeping bag/Tents
- Thermals
- Clothes for cold temperatures and to protect from the wind (in winter)
- Gloves
- Towel
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Natural sun-cream
- Natural toiletries
- Water bottle
- Books, paper and pens, playing cards for in the evenings
- A musical instrument, if you play
HOW TO GET HERE

The closest airport is Sharm el Sheikh International Airport. Taxis from the airport to Nuweiba cost 1500 EGP (about 88 Euros). Habiba Community will be more than happy to arrange the transport from and to the airport.

From Cairo, tickets can be purchased from Turgoman East Delta bus station in Ramsis or in Abbasiya. The ticket to Nuweiba costs 220 EGP and the trip takes around 8 hours. Buses are safe and very clean.

From the Port of Nuweiba, taxis can be taken to Habiba Community for 50 EGP. The locals know the way, and a taxi taken from outside Nuweiba will frequently stop to ask people on the street for directions. Don’t worry, this is normal. It’s best to negotiate prices before getting in the taxi. If the driver does not speak English, they will find someone to translate for you, but they all speak enough English.

When traveling through Sinai, it’s important to keep your passport at hand as there are many security checkpoints that may require it.
ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

SINAI PALM FOUNDATION

Established and operated by Habiba, the Sinai Palm Date Foundation is bringing new means of sustainable income to the local community.

With a pilot project already underway, the future focus of expanding palm date agriculture in the city of Nuweiba promises to be an exciting development in the years to come.

By encouraging the local population to invest in Medjool date palm trees, Habiba will organise and coordinate the planting and care of an organic, fruit-producing tree that can provide a steady stream of income for the Habiba Learning Center years into the future.

Through the project’s unique focus, the Sinai Palm Foundation is connecting a wide range of people from varying cultures in the pursuit of organic, sustainable agriculture, as well as promoting education for the Nuweiba community.

Our partners from around the world have the opportunity to sponsor a palm tree, helping the local community while encouraging cultural enrichment and the collaboration of ideas in the process.
HABIBA LEARNING CENTER

Habiba Learning Center provides after-school education programs for local children. The main aim is to develop and prepare the young Bedouin generation for life’s challenges that lie ahead, by working on skills and knowledge, along with raising agriculture and nutritional awareness.

Habiba learning center currently provides an after-school education program for local children aged between 5 and 13 years. The academic subjects which we cover include Arabic, English and Math. We believe strongly however, in a teaching that is beyond the books: skills and life-lessons. In virtue of this, many of the activities we run involve subjects such as: Music, Art, Ethics, Social Responsibility and caring for one’s environment.

We invite the community children to get involved in the farm and teach them the importance of producing healthy food.

The learning center is devoted to the concept of Applicable Education. We teach Geometry through Lego and Meccano, Biology through observing plants and animals, and Math through functionally applied methods (using recycled materials). The Learning Center also nurture the particular skills or interests of each individual and encouraging development of these skills.
WOMAD

WOMAD Sinai is established to help the Bedouin women of Sinai earn a living. They are taught how to make bags, clothes, accessories, and more. These women sell them to visitors at small prices to make income.

There products can be bought directly at different locations:

- Habiba Beach Lodge
- WOMAD Facebook Page
- Andalusia Gallery Facebook Page

HABIBA REGENERATIVE LEARNING CENTER (HRLC)

Lately, the excessive irresponsible practices in agricultural activities in Nuweiba have adversely affected the economic, social and environmental aspects. This impacted the welfare of Bedouin communities.

As Habiba community observed that, they took the initiative to make a change, creating a community with a balanced ecological economy in Nuweiba.
Based on the site’s immersion within the community, Habiba Community have identified that a major area of focus for the Habiba Regenerative Learning Center (HRLC) is to create a solid foundation of fertile organic soil to provide the necessary nutrients to support all types of life.

To accomplish this, we have a series of missions that are part of the process of creating a healthy soil foundation to support multiple varieties of plants, which include but are not limited to:

- Acquiring food waste
- Compost maintenance
- Irrigation management
- Manure collection
- Manure distribution
- Mulching
- Planting
- Crop Maintenance
- Conducting individual research
- Experimental setup and recording
- Seed bombing
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION CAMPS

Ecosystem Restoration Camps is a global non-profit foundation that supports camps that act as research and training centres for the restoration of degraded ecosystems. They have been operating since February 2017.

VISION

We envision a fully-functional, peaceful, abundant, biologically diverse earth brought about through cooperative efforts for the ecological restoration of degraded lands.

OBJECTIVES

Our objective is to encourage the practice of regenerative sustainable livelihoods by providing educational programs in environmental restoration, regenerative agriculture, (soil restoration, water retention, water management, livestock management), sustainable energy, and regenerative practices for personal health and well-being.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Habiba Community has a determined purpose of creating balance in the Bedouin life in Sinai through creating an alternative method than the reliability on the traditional tourism based activities on one hand, and to provide the community with financial stability on the other hand. An interdisciplinary approach to raise the community’s social awareness toward the necessity of applying the basic principles of Permaculture, Responsible Tourism, and Knowledge Transfer.

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Permaculture

Knowledge Transfer

Responsible Tourism

Educational Activities

Farming

Educational Tourism

Children Education

Women Education

Economical Activities

Food Production

Womad

Sinai Palm Foundation

Post Harvesting

Marketing

Social Media Page

Gallery

Catalogue
HEALTH AND SAFETY AND INSURANCE

When you apply to attend a program at Camp Habiba you acknowledge that you and you alone are responsible for your personal well-being and safety. This means if an activity is causing discomfort or pain it is up to you to do what you need to care for yourself.

All Campers are required to have personal health/accident insurance or travel insurance valid for our region. We adhere to the highest level of safety protocols and employ proper personal protection equipment for all activities. A safety briefing will be given at the 1st day orientation. Medical services if required are five minutes away in Central Nuweiba Hospital.

We encourage all campers to read through the Campers Agreement, which is a contract between the Camp and the Camper as to how your relationship will work and the agreements that you will uphold for one another during your stay. You can find the campers agreement on our website. You will be asked to sign the agreement upon arrival at the camp.

If you choose to leave the camp for a walk or trip to town we request you notify one of the Camp Staff members. We recommend having a mobile phone with our contact numbers with you while offsite in the event you require assistance.

We encourage all campers to arrive in a state of wellness! If for some reason you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, cold, flu, or any potentially communicable illness immediately prior to arriving at Camp Habiba, we ask that you postpone your experience until you are well. Your tuition will be credited to a future event or can be donated to the Ecosystem Restoration Camps movement.

COSTS

The costs are 22 Euros a night per person. This covers accommodation, food, coordination, plants, tools and teaching costs.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions at all about the experience.

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Camp Habiba
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