

A weeklong sojourn
in the Red Sea
to freedive and swim with wild spinner dolphins

Sataya, Egypt



from the **13th until the 21st of November 2021**

with Gaïane De Brabanter and Frédéric Chotard

on liveaboard **La Vela**
through Sea Dolphin travel agency



Price : 1450€ (excl. flights)

Contact : info@consciencebleue.com & seadolphin@free.fr

Book your place online :

<https://www.sea-dolphin.fr/shop/egypte/80-dauphins-et-initiation-apnee-delphinienne-egypte-sud-sataya-13-11-2021.html>



« ... Dolphin apnea is inspired by dolphin behaviors and values, where the point is not depth, nor records, but a better knowledge of oneself through the wonderful mirror that water is. It is a collective freediving practice whereby individualism gives place to sharing out and benevolent solidarity; whereby the way of moving becomes a more artistic dance with underwater life; whereby inner wellbeing harnesses deeper relaxation; whereby the states induced by freediving let us experience ourselves spiritually - so that we better at giving, and loving ? »

Dolphin apnea is about approaching the underwater element freely, independently, autonomously, with beautiful measure and with the intention of experiencing states of communion with Nature, be it face to face, or be it in the hope of living an authentic experience of connection with underwater life. Encountering underwater fauna on one breath have nothing to do with scuba-diving or captive encounters, in that the freediver is not a mere abstract observer but a discreet participant in the entirety of the underwater realm. Therefore, as one glides into the sea while holding one's breath, one must listen to the signs of her strong and uncompromising Nature. One must feel the subtle body information so as to survive each immersion. We dive consciously on inner-pilot and we learn slowness, observation, energy-saving economy. We learn to open up to the unknown, and to trust oneself... We reconnect with all those ways no longer existent in the «normal» world where fear increasingly gains on territory.

Dolphin apnea is more than a sport, it allows one's becoming into an autonomous whole through the exploration and the research of our respective potential. Our own potential is often hidden but the mirror of water has it that we can invite it to emerge. Through games of adaptation, this vision of freediving enables the discovery of treasures hidden in our own depths, from the first immersion on. All this is not so easy to reach: being able to settle, to listen and respect Nature, to listen and respect oneself, let live and express one's emotions can sometimes take a lifetime.

Practicing dolphin apnea helps in the inner transformative process by inviting us to dive in ourselves and staying connected to the real world through the contact of the sea, of Nature, of the body's limits in the water and of deep emotions.

One cannot cheat the sea: living face to face with her in respect, listening, and adaptation is probably one of the best school of life to date. Freediving is contacting the sea from inside and letting another world open to us, with its own values. It is a fact that encountering dolphins touches the bottom of men's heart, wake our



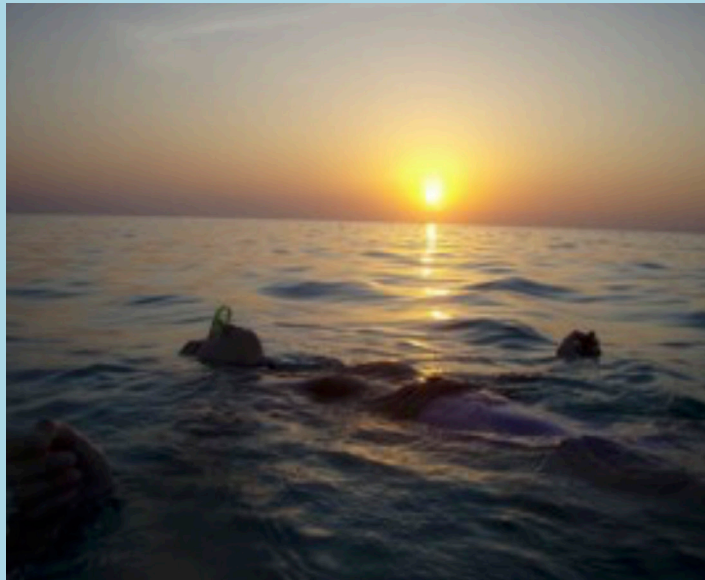
child's soul, and that freediving with dolphins indeniably changes something in us... But with experience, practicing dolphin apnea without dolphins brings the same benefits, maybe even more in that it allows us to retrieve the dolphin in us, to 'dolphinize' ourselves. We feel stronger, freer, more loving, more connected to Nature, and certainly more ourselves...»



Dolphin apnea and wata

Dolphin apnea, as described previously, seeks to help discover the sacred in water. Wata, a form of water meditation, can help us even more to touch on this profound inner dimension of freediving as it helps one access altered states of consciousness in a secure and protected environment.

When I took my training in Wata with her creator, Arjana Brunschwiler, it helped me enormously to build dolphin freediving in that Wata has the meditative component of freediving that dolphin apnea seeks to repeat in an oceanic environment and in the depths. From then on I started using Wata in order to connect with altered states of consciousness more easily, and in order to reach a state of abandon and hyper-relaxation this fabulous technique allows.



Active meditations, breathwork and yoga...

In addition to freediving sessions, deck workshops are offered in complement to the 'work' in the water, such as meditation (in relation with movement, music and breath) and yoga (asanas and Hatha, Bastrika and Pranayama sequences). It is in order to breathe better, thus improve freediving ability.



Time spent in the sea strengthens, sharpens and relieves our mind, as playground games played by children at school. It is with a curious, playful and benevolent attitude towards life that our blue conscience (from *scire*: to know in latin), our water mind, connects us wholly to the greater living whole, an ensemble whose description oftentimes surpasses words and duality.

Likened to a school of the sea, Conscience Bleue oversees a series of workshops and conferences complimentary to the encounter of marine mammals in their element: it aims at providing the supplementary information, the little golden nugget, that enables the eye to see what it watches; the ear to hear what it listens to; and the body to feel what it lives as we encounter Sataya's spinner dolphins, as well as her abundant coral life, and water.

Conscience Bleue is a benevolent form of educational project, a shortcut towards a better coherence between the heart and the brain as a result of strengthening our connection with the living world that surrounds us.

Concretely, Conscience Bleue's moments aboard range from scientific conferences addressing anything from reef biodiversity and dolphin behaviour, to workshops on the breath and freediving, as well as restorative yin yoga sessions. It is the fruit of several years of academic and non-academic research in marine biology and animal behavior and of hundreds of hours spent observing life underwater driven by a deeply ingrained interest in the beauty of life - at your disposal aboard to sustain the value of your presence in the experience that is encountering another kind of life.



Spinner dolphins of Southern Egypt

In this shallow turquoise lagoon just a few miles off the arid mountainous desert in Southern Egypt, several groups of spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*) gather regularly in the day to take shelter from the sometimes difficult conditions in the pelagic Red Sea. Here, dolphins are totally free and wild, and for once it is man who goes towards the animal and not the animal who must sacrifice its freedom to satisfy man's curiosity or pleasure.



As authentic as encountering a wild animal in its environment gets, it requires a very respectful attitude towards the wild species. Therefore two specialists in cetacean encounters accompany the group to ensure to the best of our ability that respect towards the animals and their social needs is guaranteed, as well as the best possible encounter between man and dolphin in a safe setting.

We have never experienced a «dolphin-free» trip, however we cannot fully guarantee dolphin presence in the bay as they remain free roaming. Imagine yourself one week in the heart of the Red Sea, sheltered within the calm waters of a 5-km long coral reef the shape of a heart, swimming freely with a hundred of dolphins. Imagine yourself hearing their whistle, sensing them closeby, and locking your eye in their benevolent gaze. Imagine yourselves feeling their energy and love, and enjoying their moments of wit and wisdom. Then, imagine yourself returning from such incredible encounter on a somptuous boat and surfing the encounter's energy during workshops, meditations, body and breath work, and moments of exchanges with the guides.



HOME FOR THE WEEK : La Vela



This large, charming liveaboard is a wooden 30-meter long schooner of Turkish origin. She comfortably hosts ten double cabins, all equipped with a small and large bed, bed sheets, bath towels, a small en-suite bathroom with private shower and toilet, as well as AC.



Three meals are served everyday based on a menu conceived by a certified dietician and created by a talented Egyptian chef. Menus include vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. Soft drinks are included. La Vela is equipped with, depending on group size, one or two zodiacs for dolphin encounters.

ACCOMPAGNEMENT



Frédéric CHOTARD, practices freediving with wild dolphins since 1994. He is a certified freediving FFESSM (MEF2) and scuba diving (PADI OWDI) instructor and an underwater photographer. His first dolphin experiences took place in Florida, he then roamed the world in search of other dolphin encounter sites. He discovered Sataya in 2003 in Egypt and set up « Sea Dolphin » the first company to offer « specifically dolphin » trips in this place. In order to bring more depth and meaning to dolphin experiences, he was the first to offer themed weeks. Years of experience with dolphins and freediving have him develop from 2010 another facet of freediving which he calls « dolphin apnea » - less performance oriented, but more inclined towards the collective, artistic and therapeutic aspect of this discipline.

With around 200 weeks spent in Sataya over 17 years, he has become an expert in this Red Sea dolphin population and enjoys an experience matched by few. He is also a trained practitioner in watsu, wata, relaxation techniques and aquatic massages.



Gaïane DE BRABANTER, biologist whose published research focussed on social transmission among juvenile spotted dolphins, discovered freediving in 2015 and has been using it ever since to get closer to their reality in order to bond better. SSI freediving instructor and underwater photographer, she has organized a dozen of retreats aimed at encountering fantastic marine species such as the spinner dolphins of Sataya. Conscience Bleue is her professional project and she likens it to a fun school of the sea, whose 'curriculum' is designed to open our mind about our place on Earth. She is a yoga instructor and teaches yin yoga since 2018 in complement to freediving courses mostly, but to other sports practices too.

Booking conditions

Our trip is open to healthy people who can swim correctly. A medical certificate testifying you are fit for swimming and freediving will be asked. It is important to have an interest in the program in order to ensure coherence within the group. Certified freedivers will be asked to show proof of insurance (ex: DAN). Age matters little to take part in the trip, so long as the medical certificate is in order.

A note about the Red Sea

Weather forecast wise, we are 99% certain to have blue sky and beaming sun on our trip, as it rains less than 5 days a year in the Red Sea. Make sure you pack appropriate sun protection such as hat and coral/environment-friendly sunscreen. In November, the water temperature should be around 28 Celsius degrees and a thin 3-mm wetsuit may be useful. Shorty wetsuits are available for rent aboard or you can buy your own prior to departure. Sometimes the wind may justify a slight program adjustment.





PROGRAM ...

J1 : Flight to Marsa Alam or Hurghada. Meet up at the airport, welcome and transfer by minibus to the marina where we will board La Vela. Settling in cabins.

J2 : Sunday, administrative paperwork and morning departure towards Sataya lagoon. On the way, we will stop by a lagoon, test snorkelling gear and participants' ability in the water. The group will introduce itself and we will go over the week's program. In the evening, Fred will give an overview of dolphin freediving and dolphins. First night in Sataya.

J3-J7 : Each day articulate itself around dolphin encounters and their interest in interacting, especially in the morning. Afternoons are dedicated to exploring the beautiful reef, and deck workshops.

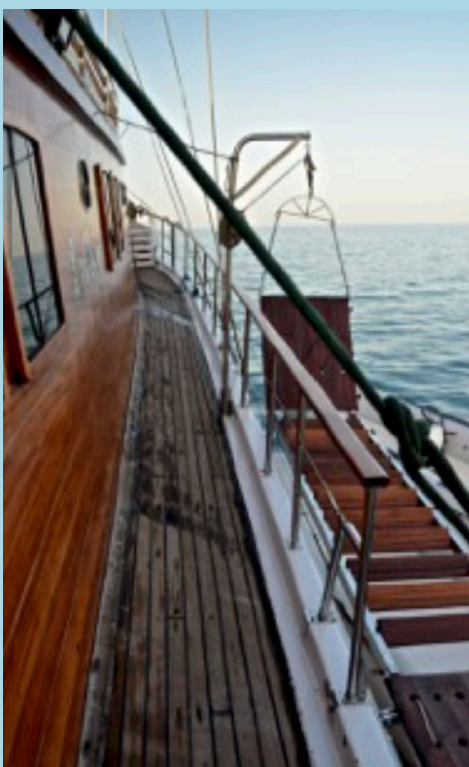
J7 : Last immersion with the dolphins, and departure from Sataya in the morning towards the marina. Stop by another lagoon, and return at the marina by 4pm. Last night aboard at the marina unless flight schedule requires transfer to the airport.

J8 : Goodbyes and transfert to airport. Note : Meals after Saturday's breakfast are not included.

This program may vary according to weather forecasts and Nature's surprises. The group's maximum size is 21 people, including guides.

Strong points of the experience...

- A mindful and respectful dolphin encounter with an experienced team.
- The guides' experience as well as the program offered aboard to develop one's ease in the water and optimise one's chance of a «real» encounter with the dolphins
- A warm and clear sea (usually more than 30 m. visibility)
- Exceptional coral sites and tropical fish
- A charming and comfortable boat
- A warm crew and delicious food for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests.



Price (excluding flight) : 1450€/pp -

Average flight price from Paris to Marsa Alam at this time of year : 680 €

Average flight price from Brussels to Marsa Alam at this time of year : 500 €

The price (excl. flights) includes :

- Return airport transfert from Marsa Alam or Hurghada to La Vela
- The 6 or 7-nights full board cruise (according to flight schedule)
- Accompaniement by the team mentioned above
- Soft drinks
- Governmental tax

The price (excl. flights) does not include :

- Return flights to Marsa Alam or Hurghada
- Alcohol beverage (beer is sold aboard for 4€)
- Visa 25\$ or 23€ – (bought inside the airport upon arrival)
- Sataya tax : approx. 60€
- Crew tips, approx. 30€ à 50€ (paid at the end of the week in cash)
- Mandatory cancellation and medical insurance
- Gear rental if necessary (paid cash aboard)

Prices here mentioned may fluctuate lightly according to conjuncture and sanitary crisis

Sign up online directly through this link :

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A note about packing

Pack light, but pack at least two swimsuits, sunglasses, sunscreen, a hat, and relaxing clothes for workshops. Once aboard, we live barefoot and spend most of our time in swimsuits. One sweater is useful in November for the evenings. Yoga mats are available aboard. Please select environmentally-friendly shampoo, soaps and creams and have a reusable water bottle. We ask you take your plastic waste back with you.

The boat is equipped with 220V electricity plugs for phones, cameras, ... Don't forget your chargers. There is hardly any network coverage aboard (a tiny bit in the evenings) and phone calls are expensive, so texts are probably the best way to give news since there is no wifi aboard. Remember to avoid liquids, creams or knives in carry-on as security will confiscate them at the airport.



A note about snorkelling and freediving gear

You can bring your own freediving equipment or you can rent it aboard (freediving fins and mask, monofin, ...). Water temperature should be around 28 Celsius degree, wearing a wetsuit is not compulsory but is recommended (3mm max) for freediving outings as one can easily cool down when freediving. If you have a monofin, it is recommended to bring it (pack it carefully and check it in at the airport with a «fragile» tag). Swimming with a monofin in a natural environment with wild dolphins is a fantastic experience but requires an efficient movement. It also totally goes with the «dolphin apnea» spirit. It is possible to rent monofins aboard but we ask you book in advance.