SHEIKH A LEG AND GET TO SHARM

EGYPT RESORT IS PERFECT FOR WINTER SUN

EGYPT wasn’t high on my list of dream destinations. But then I realised that the troubles in Cairo were a good six hours’ drive — 300 miles — from the coast.

So when a friend suggested an all-inclusive break in Sharm El Sheikh, my longing for the sun overcame my fear of any political strife. And on this occasion I’m glad I decided to follow my heart, rather than my head.

Sharm is situated at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, on Egypt’s coastal strip along the Red Sea. Before 1967, it was little more than a fishing port but, since the early Eighties particularly, the government has encouraged continued development of the city. Today Sharm is one of Egypt’s best-known tourist spots.

Clean, safe and relatively hassle-free, it reminded us of Milton Keynes but with added sunshine and minus the concrete cows.

We stayed at the Sierras resort in White Knights Bay, a 15-minute drive from the airport.

Like most of the accommodation in Sharm, the Sierra is all-inclusive and there is a choice of restaurants and bars on site. There are four pools, too, three of which are adults only, so relaxing wasn’t a problem. December sees temperatures rising to 28°C and beyond, although it does start to get a bit chilly around 4pm as the sun goes down and the wind whips up.

For those who prefer being in the water than beside it, the Red Sea is right on your doorstep. It is known as a diver’s paradise but you can see some of the most beautiful sea life in the world even without scuba gear.

We saw belly dancers and fire-eaters

We visited Ras Mohammed, Sharm’s national marine park for a day’s snorkelling and it was wonderful just swimming in this underwater kingdom.

We stayed at the Sierra hotel in White Knights Bay, a five-minute drive from the airport.

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GETTING THERE: We booked through Travel- and paid £500 for one week’s all-inclusive accommodation and flights. Thompson, Thomas Cook and Easy Jet all fly to Sharm El Sheikh, travel.co.uk. More info: soho-sharm.com

‘RYDER CUP’ RIVALRY IS ALL DOWNHILL

Skiing’s equivalent of the Ryder Cup — with fewer triples and more gong handovers — comes to Zermatt, Switzerland, this January. The Swatch Skiers Cup hits town from January 4-10 and guests can watch the names unfold between the European and American teams, right, in two disciplines.

There is fast-paced Freeride skiing and explosive Backcountry Slopestyle, a showcase for freestyle stunts. Europe is currently 2-1 up in the fledging series. See swatchskierscup.com for details.

Seven nights self-catering at the 4* La Perle Apartments in Zermatt are from £557 with Crystal Ski, including flights and transfers. See crystalski.co.uk or call 0871 231 2256.


OR go long-haul to Canada. Ski Solutions has 35 per cent off a week in Whistler.

Seven nights room-only at the 4* Four Seasons is from £1,475 with Heathrow flights on March 29. Book by November 15. Check out skiesolutions.com or call 020 7471 7479 for details.

CONSOLE YOURSELF ON A GAMERS’ TOUR

Gamers are used to action in exotic locations so a round-the-world trip makes perfect sense for them.

STA Travel has teamed up with retailer GAME for this global adventure, using the likes of Grand Theft Auto, Max Payne and Tomb Raider as inspiration.

Kicking off in Edinburgh, home to games creator Rockstar North, the tour visits London, Phuket, Seoul, Tokyo, LA, San Francisco, New Hampshire and New York, visiting designers, game locations and arcades along the way.

It is not cheap at £5,000 but at least it will get pudgy-skinned gamers out of doors and away from their playstats for a change. See game.co.uk/expogamingadventure.

Lowcostholidays.com offer 35 per cent off a week in Phuket, Thailand, for £409.

Lowcostholidays.com has also teamed up with European team Latitudelife for a Winter Sports tour of the Alps. For more info, see latitudelife.co.uk.