



RED SEA CRUISING INFORMATION

Despite our concern about the unstable political situation and possible attacks by pirates, our decision to sail through the Gulf of Aden, up the Red Sea and into the Mediterranean was outstanding. Many sailors understand the Red Sea as a mere transit area to get to the Suez Canal as quickly as possible. They sail accordingly and as far as the prevailing north winds allow, as fast as possible to Suez, but miss an incredibly beautiful sailing area with a variety of excellent anchorages in coral reefs, with great diving and friendly people in Sudan and Egypt. So, absolutely no need to rush!

Our Cruising information's for sailors are treating only what we have seen, where we have been. We are not native English speakers, so sorry about all the grammatical mistakes! Photos and lyrics (in German and Spanish, but not in English) can be found on www.tuvalubarcelona.es. But you must find out by yourselves if you like it as much as we do...

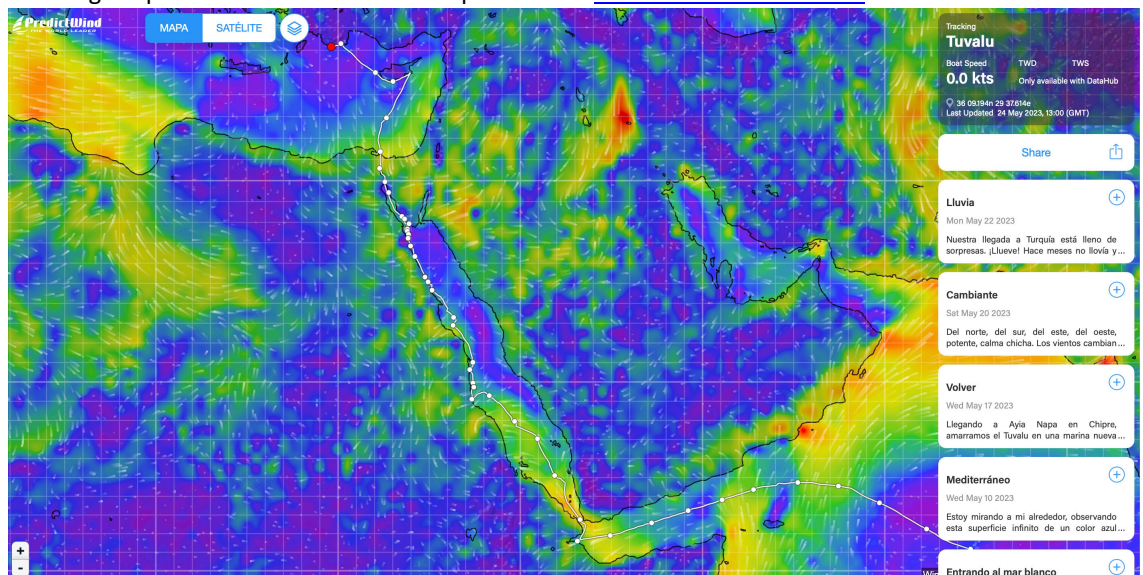
BASIC INFORMATION

Track

Our track, including an miniblog in Spanish, will be find on

<https://forecast.predictwind.com/tracking/display/SV-Tuvalu/>

Our blog in Spanish and German and nice pictures on www.tuvalubarcelona.es



Boat

We are sailing a Dufour 40 Performance, draft 2.10m.

Clearance

We made clearance in Djibouti, Suakin, Hurghada (Egypt in), Suez (Egypt out). So we passed long time between Sudan and Egypt without having clearance papers, but this is more or less accepted by the Egypt authorities. It would have been possible to make clearance in Port Ghalib. We avoided it as we didn't need any fuel or food, and at the end you sail and stop as well going north.

Even once made official clearance in Hurghada / Egypt, obtaining visa stamps in the passport and a cruising permit, officially we couldn't go on land in the anchorages between Hurghada and Suez. However, we went for walks on shore every time when we didn't see any police station or village in front of the anchorage.

So, clearing into Egypt makes only sense when you want to go for land trips, seeing the small towns, making shopping or having crew changes on the way. We made it and felt very happy with it, even if it is really high pricing.

Agents

Even if before sailing around the world we never used them, in this country's you will need an agent. Basically, because most of the authorities are only speaking Arab (and you won't, I guess) and bureaucracy is a nightmare. The only exception could be Djibouti, at least if you are speaking French. Contact all the agents some days before you leave the last country and losing internet connection. The only smooth way is using WhatsApp. Often, they ask for many ship documents and pictures from your equipment, sending it as photos through WhatsApp. In general, if you send them emails by Iridium or if you call them, they do not reply. So, WhatsApp is the only way (Nb. if I'm not wrong the last IridiumGo Exe (spring 2023) is able to send WhatsApp)

Nautical charts

Navionics is very often completely wrong or even with very poor details. CM93 on OpenCPN too. It's mandatory to use Google Earth offline if you want to enter to the reefs of Sudan and Egypt. We are using an Android tablet with geolocation, which allows us to switch on OpenCPN between Navionics, CM93 and Google Earth, all offline. This very very useful tablet was configured by Philippe from SV ULANI. <http://www.ulani.net>



There is also circulating in the sailor community a shared Dropbox archive with all the Google Earth images, which you can use.

Books

The Red Sea Pilot book is old, but still very useful. It's mandatory to have it on board. You can't buy it anymore, but it's circulating in the sailor community as a PDF. Henry de Moinefrid published 100 years ago a very nice book, calling on French "Les secrets de la mer Rouge". Available also in German and English as an e-book. It gives you an idea about the past of the Red Sea. Maybe there have not been so many changes since the...

GULF OF ADEN

Piracy was still an issue when we crossed it coming from Maldives early 2023. So, we sailed under the vigilance of the international military force.

Organizations

There are two principal military organizations who are protecting ships in the high risks area HRA the last 600 miles arriving to Djibouti:

- A. The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO)
- B. The European Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MSCHOA). The MSCHOA is the planning and coordination centre for the EU Naval Forces (EU NAVFOR)

At the moment (spring 23) it seems that both are operating as usual. Even if at Noonsite they announced the end of the HRA, on the website of UKMO and MSCHOA I can't find anything about it. In Djibouti we talked with some Spanish militaries and they confirmed that they are still working as usual in the area.

Safety Areas

There are two different areas and a corridor.

- A. Voluntary Reporting Area (VRA) > 2000 miles to Djibouti / 300 miles before arriving to Maldives
- B. High Risk Area (HRA) > 1000 miles to Djibouti
- C. The Maritime Security Transit Corridor (MSTC) > 600 miles to Djibouti

We contacted UKMTO ukmto@eim.ae MISCHOA postmaster@mschoa.org already in Phuket, obtaining all the necessary information about the trip through the Gulf of Aden and the first leg from Djibouti up to the Red Sea. In my opinion it's mandatory to have an Iridium on board, not only for the weather the for safety. You needs to be able to make phone calls anytime in case of an piracy emergency and send emails. With IridiumGo this works perfectly. From Maldives on we sent to both organizations daily at 8 in the morning our position. Once in the HRA High Risk Area we entered in the safety chanal

Reports

1. Daily report every morning at 08:00 loc time aprox with IridiumGo SMS to
 - a. postmaster@mschoa.org
 - b. ukmto@eim.ae
2. Text:
 - a. Boat name
 - b. Position GPS
 - c. Course
 - d. Speed
3. Type of reports:
 - a. Initial report (Upon entering the VRA)
 - b. Daily reports (Update on ship's position, course and speed)
 - c. Final reports (Upon departure from VRA or arrival in port)
 - d. Reports of suspicious/irregular activity (When necessary)

Emergency

In the event of a suspicious approach, or if in any doubt, call UKMTO without delay to +971 50 552 3215

Experience

We entered in the MSTC Chanel and sailed from the on in the 2 miles wide frame between the separate traffic zones. It was easy and save, even always we saw a lot of tankers going up and down at both sides. You are not alone! From time to time a military aircraft overflow us, asking about boat name and speed. We never saw any pirates!

From Djibouti on we made the same strategy, till the end of the MSTC. Eritrea and Yemen in our time were still no way to go, as both are in civil wars. Yemen seems at the moment (spring 23) on the way to find peace, so hopefully soon it will be possible to anchor there. Just days after we left Suakin, Sudan entered in a new violent war, so maybe it's not possible anymore to stop there. The entire region is politically not very stable, so inform you well but don't refuse to sail the Red Sea. It's a great sailing area and stop as well as you can. Don't rush!

DJIBOUTI

Djibouti

Anchor Position 11°35.954'N 43°7.954'E

Coming from the Maldives we made clearance her with agent Assan Phoenix Mohammed, WhatsApp +253 77627015. He was resolving mostly all quite professional, but all the extras have been very expensive (f.e. laundry). At the end we spent 800 USD. But he made also a very good service bringing me to a very good dentist, spending the hole day for free with us. We tried to get a cruising permit for to go to Illes Moucha, but he was not able to resolve it. It's also possible to make clearance without agent here, takes a little bit more time but it works. SV Eucalypt which was close to us has done it.

The anchorage is easy, 4 meters sand, plenty room. The Dinghy Dock is at the small harbor just in front, you pay a small fee (50 USD / week) but it's safe and easy. You can buy everything in Djibouti, there are big French supermarkets for the expats with all, including any type of alcohol. But it is very expensive. More fun is going to the local market in the streets around the bus station. You can't fill up American system gas bottles, but you can buy new French system ones.

ERITREA / YEMEN

Do the civil wares on both country's we didn't stop in any of the small islands of both side of the coast. What a pity. Close to the Yemen Jabal Zubayr Island at 14°58.955'N 42°7.816'E we get visit from 3 skiffs with automatic rifles AK 47 on the bow, heading to us. At the end it has been only the Yemen Police, but during an instant we have been terrified. In our blog you will find the whole story.

SUDAN

Advise: Just after our wonderful time in Suakin and Sudan waters the country entered into a violent war.

Suakin

Anchor Position 19°6.481'N 37°20.348'E

The entrance is easy, but be careful in the narrow channel, just close to the big old house in runes at the island of the old town. Keep your course there at the NW part, as there are two dangerous shallows in the SE of 19°6.772'N 37°20.363'E and 19°6.663'N 37°20.358'E (marks with a with plastic). We drought 2.10 Meters and you will find the way in with no problem. As everybody, we made clearance to Sudan here, with agent Ahmed Mohamed. WhatsApp +249 91 214 2678. He's the only one and I think its mandatory to use him. He is doing a very good job resolving any problems. So, we felt very comfortable with him.

Suakin is extremely poor, but the people are nice and friendly. The city seems to be very safe, no robbery or crimes. You can walk around without being worried about your goods. In the "new" town you can go shopping, basically fresh fruits and vegetables. The agent will provide you a SIM card, internet works, but very very slowly. A visit to the old town is very interesting, even if all is breaking down just like after a big earthquake. But its scenic!

Sanganeb Reef

Anchor Position 19°43.941'N 37°26.882'E

Our track for entering was:

19°44.316'N 37°26.303'E

19°44.187'N 37°26.816'E

19°44.099'N 37°26.798'E

19°43.983'N 37°26.800'E

We anchored at 8m sand and corals. Lifting up the anchor it took us a bit of time to free the chain from some small corals, but it was not really a big issue. Very good protection, we had winds from the north up to 28 nods, and it was still calm on the anchorage. You will found any island here, but the big lighthouse. You can visit it an clime up to the top. Amazing view! Here you will find Sudan mobile connection. The 6 (!) workers have been very friendly to us and we bought some T -Shirt (10 USD) with images from Sanganeb. There is an incredible good snorkeling, just in the north of the anchorage. Don't miss it!

Shab Rumi

Mooring Position 19°56.826'N 37°24.226'E

This is Jaques Cousteau Reef, the Meka of diving. Entering trough the SW pass, 19°56.402'N 37°24.198'E, made with TNT by Cousteau is easy with calm sea. 20 meters wide, at the north side you will find a small bacon marking the channel. Once inside its mostly very deep. No land here, only coral reefs. No mobile connection. But the best diving ever seen. Snorkeling in Sanganeb was absolutely great, but Rumi is still better, if possible.

Taila Island

Anchor Position 20°38.062'N 37°13.490'E

We anchored just at the south side, behind the tinny sand. Good holding in 4 meters of sand. Perfect protection with northerly winds, with southerly you can move to the other side (but we didn't have done it). Behind the dunes of the coast of Sudan there are several lines of mountains giving so an amazing panorama. We went with the dinghy to the sandy island walking around and enjoying the sunset. Really a great spot! In the morning we tried to go to the coast by dinghi, but around 100 m before arriving its to shallow and you can't land and go for a walk.

EGYPT

We didn't cleared in till Hurghada, stopping and diving, but without going on shore.

Sha'ab Abu Fendera

Anchor Position 22°53.488'N 36°18.449'E

A part of a isolated one meter high rock, similar to a huge mushroom, you will find only a large semi submerged reef. No sandy islands like shown in Navionics. You will anchor just like in the middle of nowhere. But the reef providing good protection against all what is coming from the north (NE till NW), which converts Sha'ab Abu Fendera to a very useful stop on

your track up or down the Red Sea. We have had up to 28 nods of wind from 300 degrees and have stayed well and safe. Obviously it's not a "official stop over anchorage" before making clearance to Egypt (f.e. in Port Ghalib). No mobile coverage.

As they are saying in the Red Sea Pilot it's mandatory to enter with good daylight. But as we arrived late we entered super careful and with absolutely no wind at dark night, only using our Google Earth geolocated images (which works on Open CPN) and a track from another sailor. The GPS points on the Red Sea Pilot are perfectly located, we entered from the east side. Enter from 22°53.450'N 36°18.950'E in a straight line to 22°53.300'N 36°18.550'E, so you will be safe. North of this line there is still an isolate bummie. We anchored deep in 22 meters on sand, no coral, good holding, so we put all the chain we had (85m) and stayed perfectly. There are only some small isolated corals spread away in the sand bottom, but you see them perfectly in the cristal clear water. Snorkeling should be amazing, but we didn't.

During the night arrived two fisher boats and anchored more or less close to us. We bought them a very nice fish. There is nothing to do here then fix your boat, waiting for better weather and enjoy the high sea on a safe place. It's simply amazing!

Gezzirat Wadi Gimal

24°39.468'N 35°9.479'E

Easy anchorage on a wide open to South Bay behind the reef. You could also enter at night, it's free of danger. Good protection against northerly winds, we had 34 nods. 6 meters sand. If you draft less then 1.5 m you could go closer to the beach, once crossed the corals heads, it's again 3 meters. But more outside it's also perfectly save. Nice and save place for waiting winds from the south.

There is absolutely no problem heading from here directly to the north, use go carefully to 24°40.060'N 35°7.071'E and then to 24°41.600'N 35°6.821'E. Always 3 meters deep or more.

Shaab Samadai

Entrance from the south on 24°58.757'N 35°0.106'E

This is a complete atoll with a wonderful lagoon inside with turquoise water. Very good protection against northerly winds. Several US aid moorings at 24°59.040'N 35°0.190'E. This is a National Park and you can't stay overnight, you needs to leave at 3 PM. So, arrive at 4PM and stay overnight, I would say... if some is coming tell him that you have an engine problem to fix.

By ourselves we arrived at 2:30 PM and found some big local dive boats attached directly to some coral blocks inside of the lagoon, destroying the corals. Absurd and surreal. One of them came over telling us that it is forbidden to stay overnight and that we would run into a big problem if we stay here overnight. So, I don't know why, we believe him and left again.

Our agent from the nearby Port Ghalib recommended this reef as an oficial anchorage on the way up north before clearing in to Egypt. Later on in Hurghada we talked to him about this issue. But I didn't got a clear response, maybe it's just like often in Egypt: there are many rules and many ways to apply them, all is continues changing and depends of moment and persons....

Marsa Alam Reef

Anchorage 25 04.3903 N 34 56,1578E

We stayed here for a overnight stopover with moderate NW winds of 15 nods. Anchorage at 20 meters on sand and some corals. Good protection against northerly winds. We had some troubles to lift up the anchor, but with it's not really a problem.

Ernesto Reef

Anchorage 25°18.806'N 34°46.046'E

We anchored at 20 meters on sand, some small coral heads. We stayed here several days with strong winds up to 33 nods from the north. The protection was acceptable, with winds over 30 nods some times not very comfortable. But save. Local dive boats pick up the moorings attached to the corals, but I understood it as to dangerous for a sailing vessel, as then you can't swing around. It would be more calm behind the big coral head in the middle of the small "bay", but it's a very narrow space there. Navionics is wrong and without details, use satellite pictures. We had some troubles to lift up the anchor, but at the end it wasn't a big issue. The snorkeling around the reef is excellent, don't miss it.

A local man delivered us here SIM cards and some food.

Abu Daba

Position Mooring 25°20.689'N 34°46.376'E

We picked up a local dive mooring which was attached to an isolated coral head, just in between the 3 reefs. The deep of the coral head is over 3 meters in low tide. Check the holding of the mooring! There are 3 different reefs Abu Daba 1, 2 & 3. Absolute excellent snorkeling around Abu Daba 2, but probably all are good. Navionics is wrong with no details, use satellite pictures. No protection against winds, stay here only with calm sea. Usually at Fridays this location is full of big dive boats heading or coming from Port Ghalib on there week trips. Avoid Friday's but the rest of the week usually you are alone.

Soma Bay

Anchorage 26°50.828'N 33°58.747'E

We entered from the east at night, following the waypoints 26°49.800'N 33°59.499'E and 26°50.160'N 33°59.290'E. Easy and no problem. Good anchorage with perfect holding on 10m sand. We didn't went on shore as we still didn't made clearance in Egypt. The snorkeling close to the sandy island is ok, but in comparence to the reefs more in the south a bit poor.

Ibrahim, a local man, will deliver you food, beer, SIM card and fuel. Even if you didn't made clearance yet in Egypt. WhatsApp him to +20 102 0456528.

Clearance Egypt in Hurghada

Comercial dock 27°13.796'N 33°50.693'E

We prepared our oficial entry of the country with Mohamed from Felix Maritime Agency. After calling port control on VHF CH16 and a short waiting time of 15 minutes we moored in the SE corner of the comercial dock, which is deep and free of danger.

All the process went smoothly and without problems. We payed with credit card using the mobile of our agent USD 1052 directly to the Egypt administration. After 2 1/2 hours we could move down to the marina.

Marina Hurghada

Entrance at 27°13.443'N 33°50.582'E

We called them on VHF CH74 and after a short time we could move in. Plenty free berth here, very helpful marina stuff. There are many restaurants (the best is the Egyptian one) and a lot of day tourism due the dive boats. But the feeling is nice, friendly and peaceful, and after many weeks offshore crossing the Red Sea this is a perfect place.

Behind the marina you will found the real town, which is a completely different world. The Fish Market is amazing, the Mosque wonderful, the rest poor like Djibouti. You can easily by food in large supermarkets like Carrefour close to the marina. Alcohol is sold only in Restaurants, but for a good price. We went to Samos Restaurant, which is close to the marina.

Once in the marina, Mohamed from Felix Maritime Agency provided us fuel and benzine in jerrycans, refilled our American system gas bottles, made some laundry and have been very helpful for any issue what we needed. A great choice!

Shi'b al Irj

Anchor position 27°24.822'N 33°51.769'E

Only 10 miles in the north of Hurghada Marina. Anchored at 10m, sand. Wide and easy, but you needs to enter carefully between the coral heads using Google Earth. The semi submerged reef protects very good against the waves of the northerly winds. Great snorkeling. Dolphins!

Endeavor Harbor / Tawila Island

Anchor position 27°34.240'N 33°47.881'E

10m sand, good holding, easy entering. Would be possible to enter by night, but we didn't. Before sunset a boat from the resort with a kind of oficial with with uniform came over claiming for a harbor fee of 75 USD. As we had a engine problem (dirty diesel) we didn't had to pay. Next morning the problem resolved we left the anchorage. Even with the resort beside it's a nice spot and would have been worth to stay another night, going for walk on land.

Bluff Point

Anchor position 27°40.573'N 33°48.220'E

A big wide, beautiful bay with plenty room behind the choral reef for anchoring. We found many Dive boats attached to the corals, but all is big enough. We anchored at 10 meter, sand, some corals, good holding. Very nice walk to the beach and up to the lighthouse.

Qaysum

Anchor position 27°40.294'N 33°44.284'E

Easy anchorage on 6m sand. Would be possible to enter by night, but we didn't. We stayed here with 33nods from the north, calm and good holding. The island in front is all sand, but quite scenic. Good for a long walk with desert feeling. We found here some tourism boats with kite surfers, many of them enjoyed the good winds and flat seas.

Kanisha (Sinai Peninsula)

Anchor position 27°55.910'N 33°53.793'E

15 m sand, good holding, perfect protection against northerly winds. Nice surroundings under the 2200m high mountains of Sinai. Sadly the nearby police station didn't allowed us to go for a walk on land.

Shaykh Riyah (Sinai Peninsula)

Anchor position 28°9.755'N 33°39.195'E

8m sand, very good holding, calm anchorage with W / N / E winds. Shelter from waves, but not from the winds. There is a police station nearby, so we didn't went on shore. Very nice spot, even a kind of middle of nowhere. High mountains in the back, in front a sand bank with small fisher boats.

Abu Meish (Sinai Peninsula)

Anchor position 29°25.977'N 32°46.566'E

As we had southerly wind we went behind this semi submerged reef. Deep on low tide only 2.7 meters. The reef is not giving a lot of protection, but we also don't know how it would have been "outside". We couldn't go on shore, as the fishers here has informed the police. But I think if you anchor with northerly winds at the westerly corner you will be far away from anywhere and it won't be a problem.

Suez Yacht Club

Port position 29°56.867'N 32°34.367'E

We called to Mustafa, our Agent from Felix Maritim. First we moored between 2 mooring balls, the we could move to the small dock. We got different visits from the authorities, but all was well and smooth organized by Mustafa. Next day we went shopping to the fish market, a big round building in down town. Amazing offer of fresh fish and seafood, also fruits ne vegetables. All very cheap and good quality. We made the trip to downtown mainly by taxi, stop the taxi in the street everywhere. Uber was not working.

On the dock we found a kind of mariner, trying to help us and asking for baksheesh. His not employer of the marina, so we didn't let him work for us.

Ismailia Yacht Club

Port position 30° 35.108N 32° 16.397E

We moored directly on the dock alongside, as we have been the only yacht. Water for free. They can deliver food, diesel if you needs. We couldn't go out of the small concert area, as we have made already the clearance out of Egypt. The officials there are very nice, as always in Egypt.

Suez Canal Passage

All quite easy, you needs to run at minimum 5 knots boats speed. Suez - Ismailia 45nm, Ismailia - Port Said 40nm. The first leg is more interesting. Big tankers re sailing together with you, doble of speed. So keep always at the left side. There are

currents, sometimes 1.5 nods in favour, sometimes against. In each leg you will have a pilot on board. The first one was very nice, we had a lot of fun with him as he was speaking some english, the second one was a boring guy.

EGYPTEN FEES

For the administration work we used Felix Maritim Agency. They have agents in every port. All went smooth and fast with them.

Hurghada

After sailing in Egypt waters coming from the south, finally we entered official to Egypt making clearance in Hurghada, staying 9 days with the boat in the marina, flying to Cairo for sightseeing and having a crew change. We left Hurghada marina with a kind of internal cruising permit, making clear out in Suez and then we crossed the canal. However, this permit also not give you permission to go on land outside of official ports - at least if there is a police station nearby.

Hurghada Agent fee

The men of Felix Maritim Agency in Hurghada is Mohamed WhatsApp +20 101 5509749. He is doing a very good job, highly recommend, resolving every problem which we had. We would book him again anytime. Some days Amany was also there - even if his usually in Port Galib. But you don't need him, Mohamed is doing a perfect job. 100 USD agent fee

Official clearance fee in Hurghada

Payed online directly to the Egypt administration by credit card, through the smartphone of our agent Mohamed. 1052 USD

Hurghada Marina fee

Payed by credit card, including water, no electricity, no shower, no laundry, 40 feet, 9 nights, 95USD / night 855 USD

Egypt internal Cruising Permit fees

Payed cash to the agent in Hurghada.

140 USD Maritime inspection

150 USD Immigration

50 USD Coast Guard

60 USD International Security

50 USD Visa (2 Pax)

60 USD Crew Change (1 in, 1 out)

Suez Yacht Club / Canal fees

The men in Suez from Felix Maritim agency is Moustafa WhatsApp +20 106 9912287. He is doing a very good job, highly recommend, resolving every problem which we had. We would book him again anytime.

583 USD (credit card) Canal fee

78 USD (credit Card) Clearance Fee

50 USD Agent fee

Ismaeli Yacht Club fees

No fees

CYPRUS

Ayia Napa Marine

Marina position 34 58.71N 33 56.86E

As we needed to make clearance, we needed to choose one of the Port of entries. The marinas in Cyprus seems to be very full, the only one which was available was Ayia Napa Marine. The marina is brand new, very safe, very nice architecture, a well management and a smooth clearance. The only bad thing is the price: 90€ / night + VAT. After staying long time in the Red Sea its coming back to all the luxury of Europe!

IMPRINT

We have written this very personal information about what we have experienced and applied ourselves. So with all subjectivity and without any claim of a full cruising guide completely covering the sailing region. Of course, we are looking forward to additions and corrections, we will occasionally update this document on our website.

We are not native English speakers, so sorry about all the grammatical mistakes!

This PDF should be gladly passed on to all your friends - by mail, on the memory sticks, printed, however. This is what we thought about it and that is why we wrote it. However, the distribution and publication remains subject to commercial intentions; the copyright – also in parts - remains unrestricted to us.



We have been sailing around the world slowly since 2011 with our Dufour 40 Performance "TUVALU". 50'000 nautical miles are behind us (as of 2023), and hopefully many more. Our website is in Spanish and German. All about us you can find here: www.tuvalubarcelona.es/index.php/crew/, further details on the yacht as well as our blog on www.tuvalubarcelona.es.



Fair winds
Hans & Imma