



SOCOTRA
THE ISLAND OF DJINNS

LATE MARCH - EARLY APRIL 2024

Ignacio Palacios

SOCOTRA

Socotra is a small archipelago located in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Yemen. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site and is known for its unique and diverse flora and fauna, with many species found nowhere else in the world. The island is also home to several stunning beaches, cliffs, and caves, making it a popular destination for photography. The rugged and isolated landscape, combined with the island's rich cultural history, make Socotra a truly unique and captivating place to photograph.



IP Travel Photography tours focus on taking you to places, which have a unique appeal for photography. We seek the beauty of landscape, wildlife and seascape and the heritage of cultural diversity. This tour to Socotra has been carefully designed together with a local guide who has operated in the island running tours for many years and has worked with various photography groups.

Ignacio prides himself on a 'hands on' approach, which enables our guests to avail of sessions in which there are photo critiques and a chance to reflect on images captured whilst on tour. It is recommended that all participants bring laptops or tablets so that we can benefit from interaction and discussion, and ways of editing our images to get a result reflecting your own unique vision and style.

Tour Highlights:

- Photograph the unique and well known Dragons's blood trees and Socotra's spectacular endemic flora
- Capture the unique, rich and distinct birds and fauna
- Photograph Socotra surreal landscapes, sand dunes canyons, caves and amazing coastline
- Meet the locals and immerse yourself in one of the most beautiful UNESCO sites in the world
- Traveling in early April to have the opportunity to photograph the famous Bottle trees blooming, showing their pink flowers

“Socotra is a place like no other on earth, a land of otherworldly beauty where nature and culture are inextricably linked.”

Ignacio Palacios



Monsoon-formed sand dunes composition.

ITINERARY

“Socotra is a place of breathtaking beauty, with landscapes that seem to belong on another planet. It is a place of extraordinary biodiversity, with more than 700 species of plants and animals that are found nowhere else on earth.”

Ignacio Palacios



DAY 1 | An otherworldly terrain

We welcome you at the Socotra airport before heading to our traditional Socotri house, our choice to make you feel at home as soon as you set foot on the island. You'll meet our local team and hit the road after a quick briefing. The road provides a first glimpse of Socotra's unique territory as we continue along the northern coast to the eastern extremity of the island.

Enjoy plenty of opportunities to photograph during an amazing scenic drive while passing small villages, pristine beaches, and strange plant life. Approaching Arher, dramatic twin sand dunes are set against the sheer rock faces creating a breathtaking contrast between the elements.

200 meters high, these monsoon-formed dunes surround a freshwater creek exiting a cave in the granite massive and end upon the beach: simply unbelievable. Enjoy the unspoiled beach, relax on the green grass or climb the massive dune to reach a fantastic vantage point from where to photograph.

It is here we will enjoy dinner and camp for the first night.

DAY 2 | Time of plenty

Homhil is a name you will remember. Here you will hug the first Dragon's Blood tree of your life. A narrow goat trail leads to the protected area of Homhil, probably the most rewarding one-hour hike of your life. Let's swim in the gorgeous natural pool also known as the "infinity pool" surrounded by the most unusual flora on the planet, overlooking the turquoise ocean below. Homhil is home to *Dracaena Cinnabari*, Frankincense trees, and *Adenium Obesum*. Plenty of opportunities and compositions whilst photographing the Dragon's Blood tree, one of the highlights of the island.

We will return to Arher for lunch, the afternoon is yours to relax in the surrounding serenity or to join another hiking to the top of the plateau. The hike to the mountain ridge offers a bird's-eye-view of the northern and southern shorelines. A highlight of the trip unique to our tour. Alternatively, we can visit the traditional village of Erissel for sunset. Here on the easternmost tip of the island we will interact and photograph the locals, witness the outstanding local fishermen's activities and visit a family house for a Socotri chai.

Afterward, we will dine and camp once again at the stunning Arher beach.



Dragon's blood trees.



Unique vegetation.

DAY 3 | An aquatic paradise

Wadi Kalissan is one of Socotra's hidden wonders. The dirt track heading southeast passes through some very remote areas of the island where you can experience the Socotri alien-looking landscape at its best. A 30-minute hike down to the wadi takes us to this spectacular series of turquoise pools of fresh water, fed by small waterfalls, set in smooth, white limestone. It's a unique playground for swimming, jumping, diving, and climbing.

In the afternoon we drive to the nearby Dihamri marine protected area. It is one of the richest coral reefs in the archipelago. Relax and snorkel in the bay enjoying the unique combination of underwater flora and fauna such as parrotfish, moray eel, sea urchins, barracudas, sea turtles, and more.

Dinner and overnight camping at Dihamri beach.

DAY 4 | A place apart

We leave the coast heading to Diksam plateau, the true home of the *Dracaena Cinnabari*. Small settlements are hidden around the crevasses of the valley where nomadic Bedouin herdsmen will welcome us on the edge of a gorge: the most spectacular limestone landscape on the island.

The gorge drops 700 meters to the valley floors, with views providing a remarkable atmosphere of prehistory.

We continue through the unique and oddly shaped Fermhin forest: where Socotra's iconic Dragon's Blood trees abound everywhere. Plenty of photographic opportunities again. Here we will get to know the famous resin and its miraculous properties, while local children seek cover under the upside-down umbrella-shaped canopies. As the road descends 400 meters into Wadi Dirhur, we plunge into a profound chasm slicing through the granite. At Wadi Dirhur, we enjoy one of the island's greatest secrets: an oasis surrounding a freshwater pool with a natural waterslide.

Dinner and overnight in Diksam plateau.

ITINERARY CONTINUED

“Socotra is a magical, mystical place, where the beauty of nature is matched only by the warmth and hospitality of the local people.”

Ignacio Palacios



DAY 5 | Sandy bliss

Leaving the central highlands, we descend to the southern coast, where the plateau ends and the endless panorama of the Indian Ocean opens. The destination is Aomak with its immaculate white sandy beaches.

After lunch, we visit Socotri villages scattered around the southern plain before reaching Dagub cave. This grotto has some very interesting rock formations and it has long been used by villagers for ritual purposes and to shelter their cattle in the monsoon season.

The afternoon is dedicated to another mind-blowing Socotra feature: a desert within an island. The appearance of Zahek's blinding white sand dunes will delight even the most experienced Sahara traveler. Climb, slide down, meditate and wander around for some astonishing views before sunset.

Dinner and overnight camping at Aomak beach or in the middle of the dunes depending on the season.

DAY 6 | Unforgettable enthusiasm

Finally, we head west to enjoy the last two days of relaxation in paradise. Detwah lagoon is a protected area situated at the confluence of the Arabian Sea and the currents of the Indian Ocean.

With its magical landscape and an array of sea birds, stingrays, and other oddly shaped fish the lagoon is a blessed ecosystem adorned with a breathtaking white sandy tongue surrounded by the warm turquoise waters of the bay, one of the most beautiful beaches on the planet.

The village of Qalansiya lies at the north/west tip and it's the second biggest settlement on the island. We will get lost in the narrow alleyways, meeting friendly people and many curious children.

In the afternoon you can join a fascinating hike to the highest peak of the surroundings. This surely is one of the best views on the island.

Dinner and overnight camping at Detwah lagoon.



A rugged and isolated ecosystem.



DAY 7 | Ethereal feelings

How does it feel to wake up on such a remote and idyllic beach? We move to Qalansiya port dotted with fishing boats and its lively market. If you are a passionate fisherman Socotra is a fishing paradise.

More adventure awaits! The spectacular boat cruise along the cliffs of the western coast towards the beach of Shoab is very likely to reward us with sightings of spinner dolphins.

Once we've reached the shore of Shoab, we'll indulge in this remote and pristine beach setting and get ready to feast again on delicious fresh seafood brought by local fishermen or even caught by you. In the afternoon we sail back to the port having the unique chance to swim with dolphins.

Enjoy the last sunset walking on the endless sandbank emerging from the crystal-clear shallow waters.

Dinner and overnight camping at Detwah lagoon.

DAY 8 | Farewell

After an early breakfast, we drive you to the airport for your flight back.

Please note: As nature rules the island, this itinerary may vary according to weather conditions but April is the best month of the year to photograph the wildflowers. We may also follow this itinerary backward.

The spectacular coastline of Socotra.

PHOTOGRAPHY EXPERIENCE

Central to this unforgettable tour is YOU. Through Ignacio's guidance, you'll not only learn the secrets of the masters, but you'll take your photography skills to the next level and leave your adventure with a collection of powerful, moving photographs that you'll share with pride.

Some of the photography skills you'll learn throughout the tour include:

- The art of composition
- Post-processing techniques tips and tricks
- How to work with light
- Optimising your equipment and filters
- Pre-visualisation and the creative process
- The unique techniques of landscape photography, wildlife photography, portrait photography, while also touching on aerial, black and white, and night photography
- Ignacio will also be there to offer one-on-one guidance on other specific skills you'd personally like to master.

Camera Skills

The best way to learn the art of photography is by taking photos. So Ignacio will be by your side in the field sharing insight and guidance as you shoot. Helping you create great photos as you shoot. No matter your skill level or equipment, you'll learn the craft with an award-winning master.

The Creative Process

Although during this tour it might be challenging to find a comfortable place for postprocessing, you'll also have the opportunity to process and enhance your images using Lightroom, Photoshop and other editing software. Learning first-hand how to create photographs that tell a story, evoke emotion and ultimately help you find your unique style and personality as an artist.

Critique Session

Should you dream of entering competitions, or simply wish to push yourself as a photographer, critique sessions are an invaluable part of the learning process. Ignacio will offer one-on-one critique sessions during the tour. Providing constructive evaluation and feedback supported by recommendations and tips through the eyes of a professional. While having your work critiqued can feel overwhelming at first, this is one of the most powerful ways to improve your skills as a photographer.

Level of photography

All skills levels are welcome. Whether you're a beginner or expert, the tour is designed to cover all aspects of image capture and post processing as it applies to where you are on your photography journey. As for equipment, we can help you optimise the equipment you chose to use from mobile phone to tablets, compact camera to digital SLR cameras. Please contact Ignacio in advance if you would like to discuss what equipment to bring to the trip.

Physical considerations

There will be times when the group might need to embark on a walk/hike to visit and photograph the best locations. As part of the pre-tour planning, we ask you share any existing health conditions with us so we may plan for your comfort and safety.

“Socotra is a place of unparalleled natural beauty, with landscapes that are both rugged and surreal. It is a place of wonder and discovery, where the magic of nature is always just around the corner.”

Ignacio Palacios



The spectacular coastline of Socotra.



IGNACIO PALACIOS

When it comes to photography and travel, few can rival Ignacio Palacios' experience, skill, and passion. A third-generation photographer, Ignacio has been honoured with over

100 prestigious photography prizes and awards from around the world and has travelled to over 90 countries in his 20 years career. It's little wonder he's developed a reputation as a leading photographer in the fields of travel, landscape, and nature photography.

Born in Spain, Ignacio now calls Sydney, Australia home – though his unmistakable Spanish spirit continues to influence his work and define his signature style.

Combining his love of travel and photography has proved a powerful combination, and today Ignacio leads some of the world's best photography tours to incredible destinations around the world. As an AIPP double Master of Photography, Ignacio shares his insight, experience, and technique with his clients to help them find their own success and joy on their photographic journey.

"I hope that through my images and my tours, I can open people's eyes to the incredible world we live in. I want to give my guests both travel and photographic experience. We are privileged to have such a beautiful planet and it's our responsibility to respect, cherish and protect it."

Ignacio's distinct, award-winning style can be defined by his mastery of composition, colour, and light. With his minimalistic style and unique ability to connect with his audience through storytelling through his images, Ignacio invites his audience to experience the subject not as how he captured it, but how he experienced it, evoking an emotional connection between the viewer, subject and artist.

Photography and travel will always be Ignacio's passion, and he is dedicated to helping others ignite their passion too.

www.iptravelphotography.com.au



Camels used for trekking the island.

"I believe that photography can be way of change and I feel an obligation and responsibility to share what I have captured and created with my camera in the hope that I can not only inspire people to take better images but to care for the environment."

Ignacio Palacios

CHECKLIST

Camera equipment

- DSLR. To bring a couple of bodies is always recommended (check your baggage allowance with your airline/travel agent)
- Tripod with quick release plate
- Standard zoom, wide angle and telephoto lens
- Plenty of batteries and a couple of chargers
- Shutter cable release
- Polarising filter and ND filters
- Laptop computer with Photoshop and Lightroom and/or Capture One. Please make sure that these programs are working properly on your laptop before you arrive.
- External backup drives (SSD recommended) and memory cards for storage
- Lenses that cover the range of 24mm to 400mm plus, perhaps, a x1.4 teleconverter.

What to bring, clothing and other

- Water bottle (1lt) to avoid the use of plastic bottles for mineral water. Our guide will make sure to refill your bottle whenever necessary.
- Sun block and sun glasses (protection against UV)
- Hat
- We recommend comfortable clothing made of fabric that breaths (such as cotton) and pack a combination of short sleeve and long sleeve top and pant options
- Comfortable hiking boots.

Luggage preparations

- We recommend you shrinkwrap your baggage at your departure airport
- Ensure your telephoto lenses are packed in protective casings designed for this specific lens
- We also suggest you carry your camera equipment as carry-on luggage where possible. In the event your luggage is delayed or lost, you can still shoot the moment you arrive.

IP Travel Photography reserves the right to cancel this workshop. In the event of this happening, all payments received will be refunded but participants shall have no further claim against IP Travel Photography arising from such cancellation. Any such refund will not include payments for any bookings for other services made in addition to the itinerary outlined above. The responsibility for such bookings lies with the participant. As such, IP Travel Photography recommends participants to purchase a travel protection and cancellation insurance prior to paying the first deposit. It is recommended that the cancellation insurance covers for the whole cost of the trip.

To reserve your place for 2024 or to make an enquiry, please email ignacio@iptravelphotography.com.au

“My strongest motivation is to create. I want to create beautiful images of natural subjects that can inspire others and the joy comes from sharing those incredible moments.”

Ignacio Palacios



TERMS AND CONDITIONS



WORKSHOP DATES AND PRICES

Tour dates: **late March–early April 2024**

The tour commences and finishes at **Socotra Airport**
(Weekly flights from Abu Dhabi)

Standard cost: **US\$6,990** per person

Maximum **8** participants

A deposit of **US\$2,000** is required when you book the workshop

Terms of payment

- A deposit of US\$2,000 must be paid to secure your place. The deposit is non-refundable unless you can sell your place to someone else
- Note: the workshop is quoted in US\$. To calculate the rate in AU\$, the currency exchange rate will be obtained from the Westpac website at the time of transferring the deposit and balance (<https://www.westpac.com.au/personal-banking/services/currency-converter/>). If you are located outside Australia, I accept payments in US\$ through PayPal only
- The Registration Form must be filled in and signed by each participant at the time of paying the first deposit Participation will be declined otherwise
- The remaining balance must be paid on or before 1 January 2024
- Bookings will be accepted strictly in the order they are received
- Important: the workshop requires a minimum of 6 participants to run so please don't book your flights until the trip has been confirmed.

What's included

- Full 8 day and 7-night tour, instruction by Ignacio Palacios and guided by local company. Tent accommodation. We pitch tents and fold them for you. This includes mattress, bed sheets, pillow and blanket.
- All meals and accommodation
- All excursions

- 4WD vehicles, Toyota Land Cruiser with premium service: each vehicle comfortably seats only 3 passengers plus the driver making sure, all travellers have a window seat
- Airport transfers
- English speaking local guides
- Park/reserve fees and permits
- Boat ride to Shoab beach
- Local taxes.

What's not included

- Flights (Abud Dhabi-Socotra cost around USD\$850 per person)
- Accommodation and meals prior to or following the expedition
- Travel, cancellation and equipment insurances
- Visa fee (around USD170)
- Alcohol consumption, extra beverages in between main meals or souvenirs
- Laundry services
- Any other personal expenses
- Tips/gratuities.

Note on tips: gratuities for local guides, hotel staff, butlers etc. are not included on this tour. However, if you feel that any staff has given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them. We emphasize that such tips should be at your own discretion and based solely on the level of your service satisfaction.

Cancellation Policy

A written notice of any cancellation must be received by you at which time the following cancellation fees will apply:

- If cancelled between 1 January 2024 and 1 March 2024, 50%

of the workshop cost will be payable

- If cancelled after 1 March 2024, a fee equal to 100% of the workshop cost will be payable
- Failure to pay by the due dates will be considered a cancellation of the booking and fees paid will be non-refundable
- Bookings made after 1 January 2024 must be paid in full
- No refunds will be made for unused portions of the workshop. The photography workshop is sold as a land package (no airfares included)
- Cancellation fees are not transferable.

Camera gear

There is really no limit to what camera gear you take. Check with your airline about weight restrictions. Whatever level of camera equipment you have, we will help to ensure you get the most out of it. Check the camera equipment checklist at the end of the brochure but if you want to discuss specific equipment for this trip, contact me.

Fitness and health considerations

Sometimes participants will be required to walk on uneven terrain or tracks and hiking. A basic level of walking fitness will help, but this tour is not a hiking tour or a trekking tour so nothing extreme will be required. If you have concerns about your own capabilities or health, please check with your doctor before booking a place. By signing the Registration Form, you

guarantee that to the best of your knowledge, you do not have any physical or other disability that could create a risk for you or other tour participants. Once a booking has been accepted by IP Travel Photography, medical circumstances will not be accepted as an exemption to the Cancellation Policy above.

Within the Registration Form, please indicate any health issues, allergies or dietary requirements. IP Travel Photography does not assume any responsibility or liability for medical care or special dietary requirements. If a participant becomes ill during the workshop, IP Travel Photography reserves the right to continue the tour for the benefit of the rest of the participants. IP Travel Photography will make every effort to assist you whilst trying to minimize disruption of the workshop for other participants.

Visas/Covid-19

I will provide guidance on this to obtain your visa and we will update you before the trip with regards to covid tests (if required) prior departure.

Rights

IP Travel Photography reserves the right to:

- Substitute hotels/accommodation
- Make changes in the itinerary or transport if required due to changes in airline schedules, or when necessary. We may be forced to change or alter the itinerary due to unforeseen

circumstances; please be aware, however, that we will attempt to stick as close to the original program as possible

- Cancel the workshop prior to departure, in which case a full refund of all payments received will be given. If such an event occurred, IP Travel Photography will not be responsible for any other expenses such as non-refundable air fares, visa fees and other related expenses. The responsibility for such bookings lies with the participant. As such, IP Travel Photography recommends participants to purchase a travel protection and cancellation insurance prior to paying the first deposit
- Substitute the tour leader and guest photographer as originally specified, in which case this substitution will not entitle the participant to a refund
- Accept or refuse any person as a participant in the workshop
- Change the price of the workshop at any time due to adverse currency exchange fluctuations, airline schedule changes, fuel and tax price charges
- Change the price of the workshop at any time due to major unforeseen increases in expedition related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

Liability

The operation of the workshop is at the sole discretion of Ignacio Palacios (IP Travel Photography Pty Ltd), having in mind the wellbeing and interests of all participants and the safe and sensible operation of the program as specified within this itinerary IP Travel Photography does not accept any liability for the acts, omissions or default, whether negligent or otherwise of third party providers IP Travel Photography disclaims liability for any injury, damage, loss, delay, additional expense or trouble caused by force majeure or any other event which is not preventable by reasonable diligence on IP Travel Photography's part.

IP Travel Photography

IP Travel Photography is an ASIC business name with Australian Business Number 16578586693 and registered in Australia under the Business Names Registration Act 2011. IP Travel Photography Pty Ltd (Ignacio Palacios) will guide and provide photography tuition to all participants during the tour. IP Travel Photography is not a travel agent or travel service provider.







**TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE FOR 2024
OR TO MAKE AN ENQUIRY, PLEASE EMAIL
IGNACIO@IPTRAVELPHOTOGRAPHY.COM.AU**



IGNACIO PALACIOS
TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

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