

# EGYPT

## ALEXANDRIA TO ABU SIMBEL

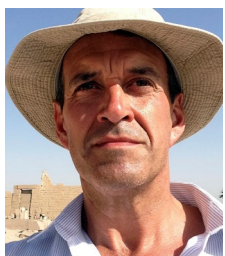
### OVERVIEW

Ancient Egypt – land of the pharaohs, colossal statues, vast pyramids and magnificent many-columned temples.

On this 18-day tour led by Egyptologist Dr Bill Manley, travel the full length of the Nile Valley, from Alexandria to Abu Simbel, visiting both the highlights of ancient Egypt and some of the rarely-visited sites. Our tour includes icons such as the Great Pyramid at Giza, the Valley of the Kings, and Karnak Temple, as well as archaeological sites off the beaten track, including the necropolis of Beni Hasan and the ancient city of Tell el-Amarna.

Along our journey, we cover 3,000 years of ancient Egyptian history, from the pyramids of Egypt's Old Kingdom through to the Roman-era temple of Philae, as we examine an ancient civilization not just of Pharaohs but also of ordinary people.

We conclude our tour with a five-day private cruise aboard a stylish *dahabiya*, as we set sail along the Nile from Luxor to Aswan. At an un-rushed pace, we soak in the teeming life along the river banks while exploring the extraordinary rock-cut tombs, temples and towns that await.



### TOUR LEADER

**Dr Bill Manley** is an Egyptologist and expert on hieroglyphic texts, and author of several best selling books about pharaonic Egypt. Bill holds a PhD from University College London.

### TOUR DATES

**February 5-22, 2025** | 18 Days

### TOUR PRICE

**\$14,860** per person, twin share  
**\$3,260** single supplement

### TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

### GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

### ITINERARY

Cairo (4 nights), Alexandria (2 nights), Cairo (1 night), Minya (2 nights), Abydos (1 night), Luxor (2 nights), Nile Cruise (4 nights), Cairo (1 night)

### INCLUSIONS

**Land component:** 13 nights' accommodation in centrally located hotels. All breakfasts, 13 lunches and 8 dinners. Internal economy flights as indicated, all ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.

**Cruise component:** 4 nights aboard the Embrace Dahabiya, with all meals and drinks onboard, all shore excursions, and the group tip for staff.



PRIVATE CHARTER

# NILE CRUISE

ABOARD THE EMBRACE NILE DAHABIYA



## SAIL FROM LUXOR TO ASWAN

A voyage along the world's longest river reveals the best of Egypt's past and present, as we sail upstream from Luxor to Aswan on a private five-day cruise aboard the stylish Embrace dahabiya – modelled on a traditional sailing boat.

Our route covers the Upper Nile, a section of the river in southern Egypt known for the country's most impressive ruins and archaeological discoveries, where we take in both the East and West banks of Luxor, the Horus temple at Edfu and even the mummified crocodiles of Kom Ombo.

### About the Embrace dahabiya

Launched in November 2021, Embrace is a modern style dahabiya, while maintaining her Egyptian and Bedouin design. The ship operates solely under sail, assisted by tug boats into port. With a private charter, it allows us to call in at ports which just can't cater to large ships, and we can time our visits to avoid having to contend with the tourist crowds.

With three decks onboard, she is also perfect for small groups. There are 13 large cabins, all with large windows, a mini-fridge, private bathroom and air-conditioning. Onboard solar panels generating power ensure a quiet and comfortable journey.

On the bottom deck you'll find a large salon, offering a spot to enjoy an evening of reading or playing board games. The top deck offers a spacious sundeck, with sunbeds and seating areas to relax. There are also several different Egyptian and Bedouin-style seating areas around the dahabiya to sit back and enjoy life on the Nile. To escape the outdoors, the Aquarium room is fully glassed, where the dining area can also be set up if the weather calls for it.

All onboard dining is included, served buffet style, along with an open bar serving drinks.

*“The Embrace dahabiya was just fabulous – it made such a difference having the boat to ourselves.”*

Participant on the Egypt tour, January 2024





## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Start & Finish

The tour starts at 6.00pm on Wednesday 5 February, in the lobby of the Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezirah.

The tour ends after breakfast on Saturday 22 February, at the Le Meridien Hotel Cairo Airport.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

### Cairo's Great Monuments

The pharaohs of Egypt created great monuments to see themselves through the afterlife. The Pyramids at Giza and the Sphinx are immediately recognisable but we truly get to understand this world with visits to lesser-known sites, such as the Step Pyramid of Djoser.

### The Grand Egyptian Museum

Scheduled to open in 2024, the Grand Egyptian Museum, situated just outside of Cairo on the Giza Plateau (next door to the Pyramids), will not only be the new crown jewel of Egypt, but is set to be one of the largest and most renowned museums in the world. A new modern GEM awaits.

### Archaeological Sites

Travel to Alexander the Great's city of Alexandria, and along the Nile Valley to Minya and Abydos to explore Middle and New Kingdom sites and an operational working dig at Tell el-Amarna.

### Cruising the Nile

Spend five days gently meandering down the Nile River aboard our exclusive cruise. Relax in the well-appointed air conditioned cabins and gaze at the stars from the deck by night.

### Valley of the Kings and Queens

In Luxor we make an excursion across the Nile by boat, exploring burial sites and monuments on the West Bank. Visit the eighteen-metre high Colossi of Memnon and see the vibrantly decorated tombs.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D & PL (Picnic Lunch)

### Wednesday 5 February

#### Arrive

The tour commences at the hotel in Cairo at 6.00pm. Meet your tour leader and fellow travellers in the lobby of the hotel for an introductory talk and drinks followed by dinner in the hotel. Overnight Cairo (D)

### Thursday 6 February

#### Saqqara

Depart by coach this morning for Saqqara to see the Step Pyramid of 3rd dynasty pharaoh, Djoser, which effectively stands at the dawn of history. We are able to go inside the pyramid of the great king Unas to see the earliest known Pyramid Texts, and into the New Kingdom tombs of Maya and Horemheb, Tutankhamun's chief treasurer and chief general respectively. After lunch, we visit the mastaba tomb of Mereruka, the tomb of Ptahhatp, the earliest known philosopher, and the Apis bull burials in the Serapeum that have re-opened. Tonight, we enjoy a welcome dinner in the hotel. Overnight Cairo (B, L, D)

### Friday 7 February

#### Pyramids, All Shapes & Sizes

Today we explore the Giza plateau's iconic monuments of the 4th dynasty – the Sphinx, and Great Pyramid of Khufu, son of Sneferu. After lunch in Giza, we visit the Red and Bent Pyramids at Dahshur. Both built by the pharaoh Sneferu, it is possible to go inside. There will be a talk in the hotel this evening. Overnight Cairo (B, L)

### Saturday 8 February

#### Museums of Egypt

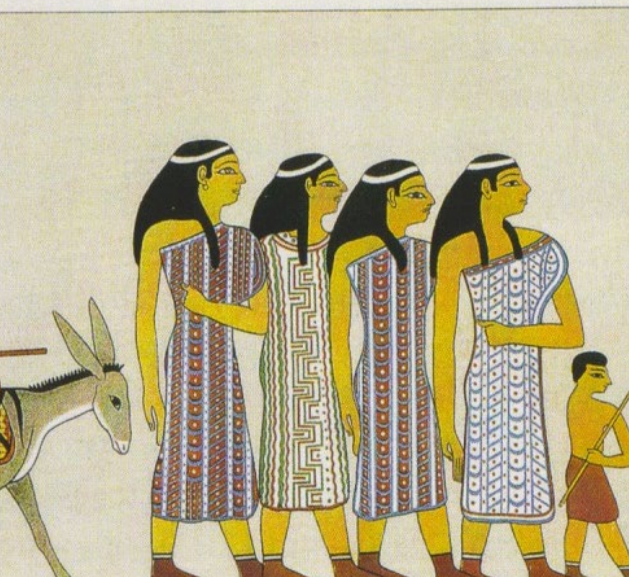
This morning we visit the oldest archaeological museum in the Middle East. The Egyptian Museum, housing some of the largest collection of Pharaonic antiquities in the world. After lunch, we visit the Royal Mummies Hall at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. Later, we gather for a talk in the hotel. Overnight Cairo (B, L)



Grand Egyptian Museum



Beni Hasan



## Sunday 9 February

### Alexandria

We depart Cairo by coach for Alexandria. Upon arrival, we visit the archaeological site of Kom el-Dikka, a well-off residential area in Graeco-Roman times, with lovely villas including the Villa of the Birds, bathhouses and a theatre. We stop at the National Museum of Alexandria before enjoying dinner in the hotel. Overnight Alexandria (B, D)

## Monday 10 February

### Greco-Roman Egypt

This morning we depart by coach for the Serapeum. We explore this Greco-Roman Period site that was once an ancient Greek temple built by Ptolemy III Euergetes, including so-called Pompey's Pillar. We continue to the Catacombs of Kom el-Shugafa looking deep into this fascinating subterranean archaeological site. After lunch, our final stop is at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina with its Antiquities Museum. Overnight Alexandria (B, L)

## Tuesday 11 February

### Wadi Natrun & the Grand Egyptian Museum

Today we begin our tour visiting Wadi Natrun known for its Coptic monasteries where thousands of Christians escaped from Roman persecution in the 4th century. We then continue by coach to Cairo, where we check into the hotel in Giza. This afternoon, subject to opening, we explore the new Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), set to be the largest archaeological Museum in the world, followed by a talk in the hotel. Overnight Cairo (B)

## Wednesday 12 February

### Beni Hasan

This morning we depart Cairo for Middle Egypt, an area still off the radar for most travellers. After a picnic lunch, we explore the exquisitely painted tombs of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom provincial governors or nomarchs at Beni Hasan. The tombs are reached by a long flight of stone steps up the hill affording a bonus panoramic view of the Nile Valley. Bill will give a talk this evening followed by dinner in the hotel. Overnight Minya (B, PL, D)

## Thursday 13 February

### Tell el-Amarna

Today we visit the city of Akhetaten at Amarna, established by the heretic pharaoh Akhenaten under his vision for a society dedicated to the cult of one god. Although the city had only a brief existence it has been carefully excavated and provides an unusually accurate picture, because Akhenaten chose a completely new site to construct his city. Our full day visit allows us to explore the city and its suburbs, including the Temple of Aten, the 'Palace of Nefertiti', and tombs decorated in the 'Amarna-style' of art. This evening we gather for dinner in the hotel. Overnight Minya (B, PL, D)



Temple of Hathor



Hatshepsut

### **Friday 14 February Tuna El Gebel**

We depart for Abydos, stopping at Tuna el-Gebel, a necropolis with tombs dating mostly to the Greco-Roman Period. Here we visit Akhenaten's rock cut boundary stela, the catacombs which stored sacred mummies of baboons, ibises and falcons, the tomb of tragic Isidora and the unique temple-tomb of Petosiris, a high priest. After lunch at the rest house, we continue to Abydos. Overnight Abydos (B, PL, D)

### **Saturday 15 February Abydos & Dendera**

Our focus this morning is the spectacular Temple of Seti I, one of the most complete and beautifully decorated temples in Egypt. A major feature is a long list of names of 76 kings of Egypt acknowledged by Seti as legitimate pharaohs. We visit the temple of Osiris and learn what they tell us about the origins of the pyramids here at perhaps the oldest pharaonic site in the country. Continuing to Dendera we visit the Temple of Hathor, who is seen as the patroness of love and fertility. The temple is visually stunning with a grand entrance, detailed carvings and hieroglyphs, famous for its scenes of Cleopatra and her son with Julius Caesar. Recent cleaning has revealed the vibrant and detailed astronomical painted reliefs on the ceiling. Arriving in Luxor, we check in and enjoy dinner in the hotel. Overnight Luxor (B, PL, D)

### **Sunday 16 February Valley of the Kings**

Crossing by boat to the West Bank and the Valley of the Kings, we marvel at the 'Colossi of Memnon' and explore some of the 63 known tombs built for the pharaohs and nobles of the New Kingdom including Tutankhamun's tomb. We go on to visit Hatshepsut's memorial temple at Deir el-Bahri. Returning to the East Bank by coach and boat. Later, there will be a talk in the hotel. Overnight Luxor (B, L)

### **Monday 17 February Karnak & The Luxor Temple and Museum**

This morning we visit the cult temple of Amun-Ra, the largest religious site in the ancient world. The temple is unusual for its longevity, having been continuously used for a period of more than 2000 years. We will spend some time at the recently restored historical Temple of Khonsu and later, we visit the delightful Luxor Museum, which houses a wonderful collection including a famous statue of Thutmose III. Just before lunch we board our cruise boat, our base for the next four days. In the afternoon we visit Luxor Temple, joined by a magnificent, sphinx-lined processional way to Karnak temple. Dinner this evening is on board our cruise boat. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

## HOTELS

Hotels on this tour are all 5-star with the exception of our accommodation in Minya & Abydos, where we have confirmed the best available properties.

**Cairo, Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezira**  
(5 nights, total)

**Alexandria, Helnan Palestine Hotel**  
(2 nights)

**Minya, Nefertiti Hotel**  
(2 nights)

**Abydos, House of Life**  
(1 night)

**Luxor, Sofitel Winter Palace Garden Pavillion Hotel**  
(2 nights)

**Nile Cruise, Embrace Dahabiya**  
(4 nights)

**Cairo, Le Meridien Cairo Airport**  
(1 night)

## WEATHER

Visit Egypt when the temperatures are quite cool, which is ideal for visiting the sites. Average day time temperatures range between 18-23°C in Cairo and Aswan with minimums around 9°C. Bring warm clothes for the mornings and evenings when it can get quite cold.

## FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

### Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at an easy to regular pace, sometimes on uneven terrain. One of the most challenging parts of the tour will be inclines and steps, as we go inside the Pyramids and tombs. Within the Valley of the Kings, you will find ramps and/or small short steps down into the tombs.



## Tuesday 18 February New Kingdom Tombs

Our touring in Luxor continues, we visit the New Kingdom tombs of queens and princes in the Valley of Queens including a visit to the King Seti I Tomb at the Kings Valley. We also visit Ramesses III's memorial temple at Medinet Habu. Returning to our ship for lunch, we cast off from the banks and cruise down the Nile for the remainder of the day. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

## Wednesday 19 February Edfu & Kom Ombo

This morning we go ashore to visit the Temple of Horus at Edfu. The Temple is extremely well preserved, with many fine reliefs and a hidden ambulatory. It is dedicated to Horus and was built in Greco-Roman times. After lunch, we cruise to Kom Ombo to see the double temple of the crocodile-headed god, Sobek and falcon-headed god, Horus the Elder. We continue sailing to Aswan this evening. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

## Thursday 20 February Abu Simbel

Today we fly to Abu Simbel, south of Aswan. Pharaoh Ramses II had two temples carved out of solid rock here and built so precisely that twice every year the first rays of the morning sun shine down the entire length of the temple-cave to illuminate the back wall and three of the four gods seated there. The colossi of the king, wearing the characteristic 'nemes' head cloth and double crown (of Upper and Lower Egypt), are each 20 metres high, while the facade is more than 35 metres wide and 30 metres high. After lunch, we return to Aswan. Tonight is spent aboard the boat docked in Aswan. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

## Friday 21 February Temple of Philae & Aswan Dam

Our excursion today takes us to the picturesque island of Philae where the exquisite temple of Isis rises out of the river. We also visit the Aswan High Dam. Built in the 1960's it has radically affected the ancient monuments in this area, and life in Egypt more generally. After lunch, we fly on to Cairo for our farewell dinner this evening. Overnight Cairo (B, L, D)

## Saturday 22 February Depart

The tour concludes after breakfast. (B)



## ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Jamal Fairbrother** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

[jamal@academytravel.com.au](mailto:jamal@academytravel.com.au)