



ACADEMY TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

EGYPT

ALEXANDRIA TO ABU SIMBEL

OVERVIEW

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

Travel the full length of the Nile Valley from Alexandria to Abu Simbel, to visit both the highlights of ancient Egypt, and some of the rarely-visited sites. Visit icons such as the Great Pyramid at Giza, the Valley of the Kings, and Karnak Temple, but also archaeological sites off the beaten track, including Tell el-Amarna, the remains of an ancient city built by the ‘heretic’ pharaoh Akhenaten, whose fascinating changes to art and religion still provoke debate.

We cover 3000 years of ancient Egyptian history, from the pyramids of Egypt’s Old Kingdom, through to the imperial splendour of the New Kingdom and the Roman-era temples of Alexandria and Philae – ‘Jewel of the Nile’, culminating with the emergence of Egypt’s Coptic Christian culture.

This 18-day tour offers a varied and comprehensive exploration of the pyramids, rock-cut tombs, temples and towns of ancient Egypt, examining an ancient civilization not just of pharaohs but also of ordinary people. Join us for a memorable journey through Egypt’s colourful and vibrant history and landscape.



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

November 20 - December 7, 2024

TOUR PRICE

\$13,995 per person, twin share
\$2,990 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour. An instalment of \$1,500 will be required in March 2024 on confirmation of flights and cruise.

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

13 nights’ accommodation in centrally located hotels, all breakfasts, 10 lunches and 8 dinners. **4** nights aboard the Nile Cruise, with all meals onboard and shore excursions. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 6.00pm on Wednesday 20 November, in the lobby of the Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezirah.

The tour ends after breakfast on Saturday 7 December, 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 are immediately recognisable but we truly get to understand this world with visits to sites such as the Step Pyramid of Djoser, the oldest pyramid of all.

The Grand Egyptian Museum

Scheduled to open in 2023, 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 four nights 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 20 November

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 21 November

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 22 November

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 23 November

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)

Sunday 24 November

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 25 November

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 26 November

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 27 November

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 28 November

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)

Friday 29 November

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 30 November

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 1 December

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 2 December

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
(4 nights)

Alexandria, Helnan Palestine Hotel
(2 nights)

Cairo, Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezira
(1 night)

Minya, Nefertiti Hotel
(2 nights)

Abydos, House of Life
(1 night)

Luxor, Hotel Pavillon Winter
(2 nights)

Nile Cruise, Embrace Dahabiya
(4 nights)

Cairo, Le Meridien Cairo Airport
(1 night)

WEATHER

November is a good time to travel to Egypt. The extreme summer temperatures begin to wane and temperatures are milder although still warm. Expect day time temperatures of between 30-33°C with minimums around 19°C. Rain is extremely unlikely.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is physically demanding. To participate on this tour, you should be able to:

- keep up with the group at all times
- walk for 5-7 kilometres over the day
- stand and slow walk for up to 90 minutes in galleries and museums
- negotiate walking over uneven ground
- walk up and down steps and slopes
- get on and off a coach and boat



Tuesday 3 December

Tomb of Nefertari

Our touring in Luxor continues, and we visit the New Kingdom tombs of queens and princes in the Valley of Queens including a visit to the exquisite rarely-visited tomb of Queen Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II. 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 4 December

Edfu & Kom Ombo

This morning we go ashore to visit the Temple of Horus at Edfu. The Temple is extremely well preserved and dramatic, and 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 5 December

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 6 December

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 7 December

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