

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 Lucia Galhin, 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

Lucia Galhin is an Egyptologist based in the UK and has a wide range of experience as an educator, researcher, archaeologist and museum curator. She is author of books including *Egypt: Gods, Myths and Religion*.

TOUR DATES

January 8-25, 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 8 January, in the lobby of the Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezira. The tour ends after breakfast on Saturday 25 January, at the Le Meridien Hotel Cairo Airport.

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

Wednesday 8 January

Arrive Cairo

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 9 January

Saqqara

Depart by coach this morning for Saqqara to see the Step Pyramid of 3rd dynasty pharaoh, Djoser, which is also the oldest monument we visit from the Old Kingdom. 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 temple-tombs of Maya, Tutankhamun's treasurer, and his general, Horemheb. After lunch, we visit the Imhotep Museum, the mastaba tomb of Mereruka, and the Apis bull burials in the Serapeum that have re-opened after decades of being closed. Tonight, we enjoy a welcome dinner in the hotel. Overnight Cairo [B, L, D]

Friday 10 January

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 trace the evolution of royal burials from stepped to smooth sided pyramids with a visit to the Red and Bent Pyramids at Dahshur. Both built by the pharaoh Sneferu, the Bent Pyramid was the first, unsuccessful attempt at a smooth-sided pyramid. Determined to build an appropriate resting place, Sneferu succeeded in building his pride and glory with the Red Pyramid and it is possible to go inside. Lucia will give a talk in the hotel this evening. Overnight Cairo [B, L]

Saturday 11 January

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. Overnight Cairo [B, L]

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

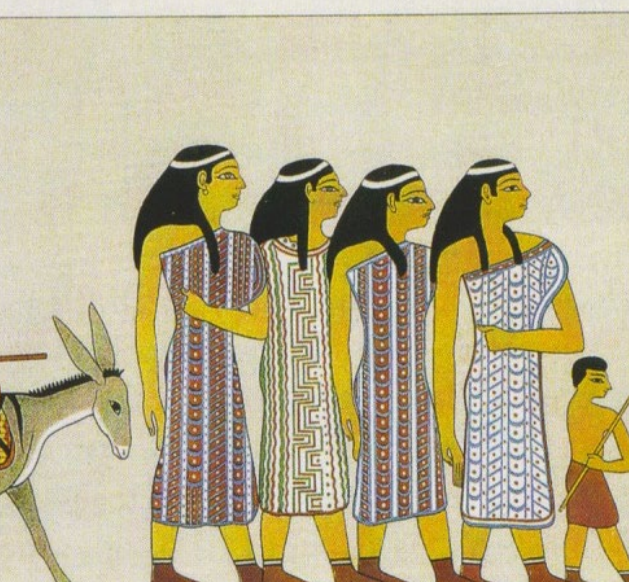
In Luxor we make an excursion across the Nile by boat, exploring burial sites and monuments on the West Bank. Visit the eighteen-metre high Colossi of Memnon and see the vibrantly decorated tombs.



Grand Egyptian Museum



Beni Hasan



Sunday 12 January

Alexandria

We depart Cairo by coach for Alexandria. Upon arrival we have lunch at a local restaurant and then spend the afternoon at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina with its Antiquities and Manuscripts Museums. We enjoy dinner this evening in the hotel. Overnight Alexandria (B, L, D)

Monday 13 January

Greco-Roman Egypt

This morning we depart by coach for the Catacombs of Kom el-Shugafa discovering this historical archaeological site. We continue to the Serapeum and 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 stop at the National Museum of Alexandria before lunch. After lunch we visit the archaeological site of Kom el-Dikka, a well off residential area in Roman times, with lovely villas including the Villa of the Birds, bathhouses and a theatre. Overnight Alexandria (B, L)

Tuesday 14 January

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, L)

Wednesday 15 January

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. Lucia will give a talk this evening followed by dinner in the hotel. Overnight Minya (B, PL, D)

Thursday 16 January

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. Lucia will give a talk this evening followed by dinner in the hotel. Overnight Minya (B, PL, D)



Temple of Hathor



Hatshepsut

Friday 17 January

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, 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 18 January

Abydos & Dendera

Our focus this morning is the spectacular Temple of Seti I, one of the most complete and beautifully decorated temples in Egypt. Dedicated to Osiris, a major feature is a long list of cartouches known as the Abydos Kings List. Carved into the temple wall, it contains the names of 76 kings of Egypt acknowledged by Seti as legitimate pharaohs. 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. 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 19 January

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 the fallen colossus, 'Ozymandias' in Ramesses II's memorial temple, the Ramesseum. We visit the New Kingdom tombs of queens and princes in the Valley of Queens including a visit to the including a visit to the King Seti I Tomb at the Kings Valley. Following lunch, we visit Hatshepsut's memorial temple at Deir el-Bahri, and Ramesses III's memorial temple, Medinet Habu. Overnight Luxor (B, L)

Monday 20 January

Karnak & The Luxor Temple and Museum

We begin the day at Karnak temple, the cult temple of Amun-Ra, chief of the deities of the New Kingdom and the largest religious site in the ancient world. We go on to visit the delightful Luxor Museum, which houses a wonderful collection including a famous statue of Thutmose III. After lunch we visit Luxor Temple, unusual for its longevity, having been continuously used for a period of some 2000 years. Later, we board our cruise boat, our base for the next four days. Dinner this evening is on board our cruise boat. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

Tuesday 21 January

Edfu

This morning we go ashore to visit the Temple of Horus at Edfu. The Temple is very dramatic and quite extensive, with many reliefs and hidden ambulatory. It is dedicated to Horus and

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, Hotel Pavillon Winter
(2 nights)

Nile Cruise, Embrace Dahabiya
(4 nights)

Cairo, Le Meridien Cairo Airport
(1 night)

WEATHER

January is the ideal time to visit Egypt and explore the sites, when the temperatures are quite cool. 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.



was built in Greco-Roman times. Returning to our boat for lunch, we cast off from the banks and cruise down the Nile for the remainder of the day. Lucia will give a talk this evening. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

Wednesday 22 January Kom Ombo

Today 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 and Lucia will give a talk this evening. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

Thursday 23 January 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 and visit the fascinating Nubian Museum to learn about the civilisation, history and culture of the Nubian people from Prehistoric times to the present. Tonight is spent aboard the boat docked in Aswan. Overnight Nile Cruise (B, L, D)

Friday 24 January 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 25 January Depart Cairo

The tour concludes after breakfast. Our hotel is linked to Cairo Airport for departing passengers. (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:

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 academytravel.com.au