

# 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 Roman-era temple of Philae, ‘Jewel of the Nile’.

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

**Lucia Gahlin** 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

**October 11-28, 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 February 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 and 18 lunches or 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 Friday 11 October, in the lobby of the Sofitel Cairo Nile El Gezira. The tour ends after breakfast on Monday 28 October, at the Le Meridien Hotel Cairo Airport.

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

### Friday 11 October

#### 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]

### Saturday 12 October

#### 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]

### Sunday 13 October

#### 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]

### Monday 14 October

#### 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 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.

## **Tuesday 15 October**

### **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)

## **Wednesday 16 October**

### **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 discovering this historical archaeological site. After lunch, our final stop is at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina with its Antiquities Museum. Overnight Alexandria (B, L)

## **Thursday 17 October**

### **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)

## **Friday 18 October**

### **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)

## **Saturday 19 October**

### **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)

## **Sunday 20 October**

### **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)

## **Monday 21 October**

### **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)

## **Tuesday 22 October**

### **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. Following lunch, we visit Hatshepsut's memorial temple at Deir el-Bahri. Returning to the East Bank by coach and boat, Lucia will give a talk this evening. Overnight Luxor (B, L)

## **Wednesday 23 October**

### **Karnak & The Luxor Temple and Museum**

This morning we visit the cult temple of Amun-Ra, chief of the deities of the New Kingdom and the largest religious site in the ancient world. The temple is unusual for its longevity, having been continuously used for a period of some 2000 years. 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 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

October 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 galleries and museums
- negotiate walking over uneven ground
- walk up and down steps and slopes
- get on and off a coach and boat



## Thursday 24 October

### Tomb of Nefertari

Our touring in Luxor continues, and we visit the New Kingdom of tombs of queens and princes in the Valley of Queens including a visit to the rarely-visited tomb of Queen Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II. We also visit Ramesses III's memorial temple, 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)

## Friday 25 October

### Edfu & Kom Ombo

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 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)

## Saturday 26 October

### 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)

## Sunday 27 October

### 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)

## Monday 28 October

### Depart

The tour concludes after breakfast. (B)



## ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

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

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