

Cultural Experience Egypt

tour.duration

12 day

tour.overview

Encompassing Egypt's greatest highlights and a three-day [luxury Nile cruise](#). This adventure enhances a wide variety of included activities with the expertise of our guide, through whom you'll gain a greater appreciation of the region's history and archaeological finds. Discover the secrets of the Great Pyramids and explore the Valley of the Kings, then meet local people and share a traditional meal. A combination of air-conditioned transport and domestic flights will get you to the sights – and your comfortable accommodations – quickly and conveniently. From ancient history to bustling modern Cairo, embark on an incredible journey to the very heart of Egypt.

tour.itinerary

Day 1

Cairo

Welcome to Egypt. You will be met on arrival at Cairo airport and transferred to your hotel. Overnight in Cairo

Day 2

Cairo

This morning after breakfast, you will see some of the world's most iconic sights – the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. Instantly familiar yet retaining a mystique and power, getting up close to these incredible pharaonic tombs is amazing. Explore the structures that have stood tall for 4,500 years. In addition, for an additional charge, you may be able to go inside the Great Pyramid of Khufu, (although occasionally it may be closed to visitors). The inside thoroughfares of the Pyramids are very small and very warm, so for those suffering from claustrophobia, it is not recommended. Please note that you will be required to walk around the Pyramids complex. It can be very hot in the summer months, so be prepared for little shade and pack appropriate clothing, sun protection, and carry lots of water. Afterward, make your way to the Egyptian Museum, home to one of the world's great collections of antiquities. Wander the treasure-filled halls of the museum, and make sure to check out the Mummies Hall (optional) for a close encounter with some of the country's most important queens and pharaohs. The masses of gleaming artifacts recovered from the tomb of Tutankhamun are a remarkable sight. From gold jewelry to the famous golden death mask and his gilded sarcophagi, this pharaoh was certainly prepared for the afterlife.

Day 3

Alexandria

Jump in a private van today and drive following the 'desert road' to the Mediterranean coastal city of Alexandria (approximately 3 hours). Egypt's second-largest city and main port, locals call this vibrant city the Bride of the Mediterranean Sea. The Greek architect Dinocrates built Alexandria in 331 BC under the orders of Alexander the Great. The city, immortalizing Alexander's name, quickly flourished into a prominent cultural, intellectual, political, and economic metropolis. It was the renowned capital of Ancient Egypt's last royal dynasty, the

Ptolemies, and the site of the Pharos. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, this lighthouse acted as a beacon, guiding sailors away from this notoriously treacherous stretch of coastline. On arrival, head underground and delve into the mysteries of the Kom ash-Shuqqafa catacombs. This Roman burial site is the largest of its kind in Egypt and was discovered, quite accidentally, by a hapless donkey. The crypts are 20 meters below street level, and what probably began as a small family tomb grew into a labyrinth of chambers that could accommodate more than 300 bodies. Murals and reliefs inside show how Alexandria was a place where Egyptian and Greek funerary myths coexisted. Stop by the strikingly modern Bibliotheca Alexandrina, inspired by the original great library of Alexandria and built to hold over 8 million books. Take some time to stroll along the Corniche and around Fort Qaitbey to enjoy the fresh Mediterranean air.

Day 4

Alexandria

This morning, pay a visit to Al Montazah Palace and Gardens. Montazah garden is home to two palaces, one built-in 1892 and another in 1932 by King Fuad I, and acres of picturesque gardens. The gardens are located along the shoreline and flow from splendidly landscape gardens into great beaches. Soak up the surroundings before returning by private van to Cairo (approximately 3 hours). Take some time to relax or get some supplies before you board an overnight sleeper train to Aswan (approximately 13 hours).

Day 5

Aswan

The Nile, Elephantine Island, and white-sailed feluccas: welcome to Aswan, Egypt's southernmost city. Its easy-going charm is due in no

small part to its large Nubian population. The city is Egypt's southern gateway to Africa and an important market town, so take time here to check out one of the country's best bazaars. When you arrive you will explore the beautiful Temple of Isis (the Goddess of health, marriage, and wisdom), which was rescued from the rising waters of the Nile and relocated on Philae Island. It is a marvel of decorative pylons featuring some of Egypt's finest carvings – definitely one of the real gems of Upper Egypt. In any free time, you might choose to visit the excellent Nubian Museum, which highlights the history, art, and culture of the Nubians. This evening you will experience the modern Nubian culture first-hand with a visit to a nearby village. You will join a local Nubian family for dinner and get an unforgettable insight into the daily life of the local people. This is a rare and memorable experience, giving you the chance to become fully immersed in the local culture.

Day 6

Nile Cruise

This morning take a short flight (approximately 45 minutes) from Aswan to Abu Simbel, where you will explore some magnificent temples (flights not included). Built by Ramses II. It was the gateway to Egypt for Southern Africans and its imposing facade delineated the line between what was the Pharaoh's land and what was not. The four gargantuan statues of Ramses guarding the Great Temple, are carved directly out of the mountain on the west bank of the Nile. This is one of Egypt's most memorable sights. Return from Abu Simbel and transfer to meet your Nile cruise boat. Enjoy a fantastic mix of total relaxation and organized sightseeing on an iconic Nile River cruise to Luxor. At some point today, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the river from a felucca, a traditional Nile sailboat.

Day 7

Nile Cruise

Continue your leisurely cruise down the Nile, with today's stop at Kom Ombo Temple, north of Aswan. Built on a high dune overlooking the Nile, the complex sits picturesquely ruined on the river's edge and dates back to the early 2nd century BC. The complex is unique because it has a mirror-image design, divided down the middle, with either side dedicated to a different set of Gods. One-half is known as the Temple of Sobek (the crocodile-headed god of fertility), and it includes details on the Ancient Egyptian's relationship with crocodiles, whom they revered and feared in equal measure. The other half is dedicated to Haroeris (also known as Horus the falcon God). In addition, the whole temple is full of fascinating reliefs. Return to the cruise boat where you will continue traveling upriver. With free time relaxing on the sundeck. Then take in the surrounding sights desert hills forming a backdrop to lush riverbanks. Fishermen casting their nets and farmers working their land.

Day 8

Nile Cruise

Today finds you moored near Edfu, a beautifully preserved temple also dedicated to Horus, the falcon-headed god. You will disembark and discover the lively streets of Edfu town – get acquainted with the bustling town center and the bazaar. Then continue to the temple, perhaps the best preserved in the whole country. The scale is incredibly impressive, with soaring sandstone walls covered in reliefs and hieroglyphics. You will pass through the Grand Temple entranceway into a colossal courtyard ringed by 32 towering columns. Each is richly decorated with patterns and was once the site of a great altar. As you explore further you will discover endless reliefs. Like the gods Horus and Thoth pouring sacred water over King Neos Dionysos – the library, a laboratory, and the holy sanctuary where a golden statue of Horus once stood. The sense of awe that comes from touring

this temple is incredible. Return to your boat for your final night aboard. In addition, make the most of the incredible views of one of the world's greatest rivers.

Day 9

Luxor

Your Nile cruise ends in the open-air museum of Luxor from the spectacular temple complex of Karnak to the Valley of the Kings. Luxor is full of wonderfully preserved reminders of the Pharaohs. Today you will visit the magnificent Karnak Temple, which is perhaps the most impressive of all the ancient Pharaohs' monumental works. One of the world's most celebrated temple complexes. Karnak is a house of the gods built over some 200 years. Your guided tour of this vast temple of impressive pylons, obelisks, and chapels will reveal its finest sections. Such as the Avenue of Sphinxes and the Great Temple of Amun. The rest of the day is free for you to relax. Then shop in the excellent bazaar (open until quite late) or perhaps experience the atmosphere of a local teahouse.

Day 10

Luxor

Today you will hop in a private minivan and discover some of the many wonders of ancient Thebes. Your first stop is the Colossi of Memnon, two 17-meter-high statues on Luxor's west bank. Carved from granite blocks, they represent the Pharaoh Amenhotep III and were once part of an impressive colonnade. Continue to the spectacular royal burial site of the Valley of the Kings. Buried under the arid hills here are over 60 tombs of pharaohs, many richly decorated with reliefs and paintings. With your leader. Explore this sprawling and spectacular place. Where the pharaohs of the New Kingdom (16th to 11th century BC) secretly interred for all eternity.

Your group leader will explain the history and legends of these remarkable people and their funerary rites. In addition, the significance of the many paintings and hieroglyphics is still well preserved in the deepest tombs. You will visit three of the most interesting royal tombs and then continue to the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. A stunning colonnaded building set against high cliffs creates a spectacular natural amphitheater. One of Egypt's greatest queens; she built this temple to prove her importance among her ancestors. The afternoon is yours to explore. Perhaps you would like to shop in the market. Alternatively, visit the world's first Mummification Museum to discover the secrets of pharaonic preservation.

Day 11

Cairo

Catch a short flight back up to Cairo this morning (approximately 1.5 hours). On your return to the capital. Visit the Islamic parts of the city. Moreover, the frenetic backstreets of the local bazaar (Khan el-Khalili) with your trip leader. A labyrinth of narrow streets and passageways, Khan is one of the biggest and oldest markets in the world. The 'Khan'. Sprawling around an old area known as Al-Azhar is a quintessentially Cairo experience. A warren of alleys with stalls serving up a succession of intoxicating scenes. It retains a distinctly medieval feel. You might explore the gold market. Then maybe gather your fellow travelers for a celebratory kebab, kofta, or sheesha as this Egypt Experience ends.

Day 12

Cairo

There are no activities planned for the final day and you are able to depart the accommodation at any time.

tour.included

Meet-and-assist services upon arrival and departure

Transportation on private air-conditioned vehicles

Accommodation at 5-star hotel, including breakfast

4 days, 3 nights on board a 5-star Deluxe Nile Cruise

All sightseeing tours in Cairo, Luxor, Abu Simbel, Aswan and Alexandria including English-speaking Egyptologist guides, all entrance fees, and transfers

Sleeper train (Cairo-Aswan; Luxor-Cairo)

Portage when needed

All service charge and taxes

Exclusion

International Airfare

Gratuities/Tipping (Recommended)

Meals except where indicated

Drinks and any personal expenses

Entry visa to Egypt

Entrance fees to the burial chambers of the pyramids.

Entry to the solar boat museum.

Entry to the royal mummy room.

Entry to the tomb of Tut Ankh Amun in Luxor.

Camel ride around the pyramids area

Optional night activities not included as part of the itinerary

1 Person

3999\$ Per Person

2-4 Persons

2999\$ Per Person

5-8 Persons

2750\$ Per Person

9-16 Persons

2500\$ Per Person

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2500\$ /Per Person