

EGYPT: GROUP TRAVEL PROGRAMS

ANCIENT EGYPT AND OASIS ADVENTURE

13 nights: Arrive Cairo, 4 nights; drive to Bahariya Oasis, 3 nights; drive to Cairo and fly to Luxor, 3 nights; drive to Aswan, 2 nights; fly to Abu Simbel, visit sites, and fly to Cairo, 1 night; depart Cairo.

Day 1, Sunday: Arrive Cairo

Arrive Cairo airport. Transfer to the Nile Hilton (Nile view room). At leisure.

Day 2, Monday: Cairo

Morning, visit the three impressive great pyramids at Giza, the oldest and one of the only surviving Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Enter a passageway into the second pyramid, visit the solar funerary boat museum, and legendary statue of the sphinx. Also take a delightful calache ride, and watch a demo in making papyrus parchment. Lunch at Le Meridien hotel in Giza. Afternoon, visit the ancient capital of Memphis and step pyramids of Saqqara, the oldest ancient Egyptian cemetery. Also visit a carpet weaving center on return.

B, L

Day 3, Tuesday: Cairo

This morning, experience Coptic (Christian) Cairo. Visit the Hanging Church, built on the remains of a Roman fortress, and Church of St. Sergius, where the Holy Family stayed in exile. Also visit the impressive St. George Greek Orthodox Church, and simple yet significant Ben Ezra Synagogue. Enjoy lunch at Le Pacha 1901 floating restaurant. Then, explore ancient treasures at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities (including Mummies room).

B, L

Day 4, Wednesday: Cairo

Visit the 12C Citadel of Saladin, and grand alabaster mosque of Mohammed Ali. Also visit the Sultan Hassan and El Refai mosques, masterpieces of Mamluk architecture. Then, enjoy an authentic Egyptian lunch at a city restaurant, with free time to explore colorful wares at Khan El Khaleli bazaar.

B, L

Day 5, Thursday: Cairo - Bahariya Oasis

Today, we start our oasis adventure. Drive to Bahariya Oasis. En route, at Fayyum Oasis, visit the Deir-El-Malak Ghobrial (Monastery of Archangel Gabriel), Qasr Qarun, Karanis Museum, water wheels, and lake Qaroun. Continue to Bahariya and stay at the comfortable Palma Village motel.

B, L, D

Day 6, Friday: Bahariya Oasis

Take a desert safari in a Land Rover to visit a Greco Roman temple; the recently discovered museum of golden mummies; El Qasr village, the capital of Bahariya in Pharaonic times; pyramids mountain; Ain (Eye) of El Muftillah hot springs; and two tombs of the 26th Dynasty at Binantiew.

B, L, D

Day 7, Saturday: Bahariya Oasis

Another full and enjoyable day of desert safaris to visit nature's splendid artistry at the Black Desert, Crystal Mountain, and White Desert mushroom areas.

B, L, D

Day 8, Sunday: Bahariya Oasis - Cairo - Luxor

Drive to Cairo. Lunch at Sonesta Heliopolis hotel. Evening flight to Luxor, the world's greatest open air museum. Stay at Sonesta St. George hotel on the banks of the River Nile.

B, L

Day 9, Monday: Luxor

Today, appreciate the temples of Karnak, with massive pylons and pillared columns; its history spans through 13 centuries. Also visit the small but interesting and well laid out Luxor Museum. Later, this afternoon, explore the impressive Luxor temple dedicated to god Amon Ra, famous for its huge columns that end in the form of a papyrus plant.

B**Day 10, Tuesday: Luxor**

Today, we'll cross the Nile River to the west bank and discover a maze of antiquity. Walk through history at the Colossi of Memnon, the only remains of Amenhotep III funerary temple, and visit Medinet Habu and the Ramasseum, funerary temples with well preserved religious and military murals. Also visit the Valley of Kings, with tombs carved in rock-faces, and Queen Hatshepsut's temple, a magnificent three-tier temple dedicated to the only woman to rule Egypt in Pharaonic times. Afternoon, at leisure.

B**Day 11, Wednesday: Luxor - Aswan**

Drive to Aswan with packed lunch, visiting en route three well preserved cult temples with hypostyle halls, reliefs and sanctuaries at Esna, Edfu and Kom Ombo. Stay at Movenpick hotel, situated on an island in the Nile River. Evening, take a leisurely felucca boat ride across the Nile to visit the botanical gardens island.

B, L**Day 12, Thursday: Aswan**

This morning, visit the Aswan High Dam, unfinished obelisk, and Lake Nasser area. Free time. Late afternoon, enjoy a pleasant boat ride to visit the magnificent Temple of Philae, dismantled and rebuilt on Agilika Island; a beautiful setting, with artistic shrines, sanctuaries and pylons.

B**Day 13, Friday: Aswan - Abu Simbel - Cairo**

Take an early morning flight to Abu Simbel, a quaint Nubian town at the southern tip of Lake Nasser. Visit the impressive Ramses II and Nefatari temples, magnificent monuments removed and reconstructed into massive stone hills. Late morning flight to Cairo. Transfer to Sonesta Heliopolis hotel. Free time for independent activities.

B**Day 14, Saturday: Depart Cairo**

Morning transfer to Cairo airport for international departure.

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