

Hidden Treasures

Country(ies): Sudan

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C 4x4 vehicle & boat

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 16

Days: 10 Days

Start location: Khartoum, Sudan

End location: Khartoum, Sudan

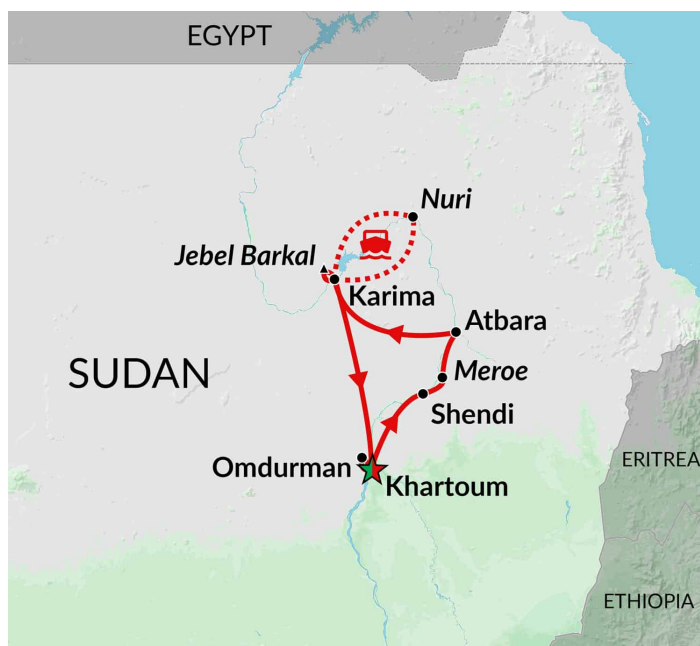
Departs On: Thursday or Friday

Meals: Breakfasts - 9, Lunches - 8, Dinners - 6

Highlights:

Capital city Khartoum, Sufi Whirling Dervishes, old souk of Omdurman, Naga & Mussawarat, Meroe Pyramids, Jebel Barkal, Nubian house in Karima, Nuri

Places Visited: Khartoum, Shendi, Meroe, Atbara, Jebel Barkal, Karima, Nuri & Omdurman



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Khartoum

Upon arrival our staff will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel in Khartoum where they'll help you settle in and introduce you to the local area. An optional city tour is available if you arrive this morning.

OVERNIGHT: Khartoum hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Single Room Supplement (SUSGHT) || Extra day in Khartoum - pre-tour

Day 2: Khartoum to Karima

We'll leave Khartoum this morning and head northwards to visit the animal market on the outskirts of Omdurman. The market here sells different types of cattle, sheep and camels which are brought here from various parts of Sudan. Our journey then continues across the flat Western Desert, before we cross Wadi Muqaddam with its many acacia trees. We'll make a short stop at a local tea house, in effect a very spartan roadside service station used by local truck drivers for a meal and some rest. On arrival in Merowe we'll cross the Nile and arrive in the small town of Karima where we spend the night.

OVERNIGHT: Karima Nubian Rest House

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Karima, Necropolis of El Kurru and Jebel Barkal

Our tours today start with one of the Nubian desert landmarks, Jebel Barkal. These isolated red sandstone mountains have been considered holy since ancient times and can be seen from a far distance across the desert. Here we'll see a large temple dedicated to the Pharaohs of the New Reign and their patron Amon. Known as Amon's 'Pure Mountain', the equivalent of the Olympus of the Nubians, this was the heart of Nubian religion for more than 1,000 years. Along with the ruins of the main temple there we can see several sculptured granite rams that it is thought bordered a long avenue leading to a pier on the River Nile. The archaeological sites here are on the World Heritage list.

In the afternoon we will head south to the village of El Kurru to see one of the necropolises of Napata, the ancient capital. The main tomb of interest here is excavated in the rock under some partially collapsed pyramids, and is decorated with images of the gods, Pharaohs and has various multicoloured hieroglyphic inscriptions. Our final visit today is to the fascinating site of an ancient forest with hundreds of petrified tree trunks. Sunset over the desert then rounds off the day.

OVERNIGHT: Karima Nubian Rest House

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Nile boat trip and the Pyramids of Nuri

After breakfast, we visit the market in Karima where we can have a real experience of daily life of the local Sudanese people. We'll then take to the water and board a small motorboat for a pleasant trip along the Nile to see the contrasts between the sandy stretches and cultivated islands. The 4th Cataract on the Nile is a little further north from here, where rocky granite formations speeded the waters up and formed many rapids which also impeded navigation. However, since the Merowe Dam was built in 2008 these scenic rapids are no more. After a picnic

lunch we'll visit the archaeological site of Nuri which is home to many pyramids, among them one for the great Pharaoh Taharqa, who was part of the 25th Dynasty of Egypt.

OVERNIGHT: Karima Nubian Rest House

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Karima, visit Old Dongola

We have a long day on the road today, but busy with various different and interesting visits and encounters. After an early start we'll visit a very local and traditional market, before following the Nile to the archaeological site of Old Dongola. The site here comprises Coptic Christian churches with marbled columns as well as other ruins situated on the bank of the Nile. We are in the heart of the Nubian region here, and the local population live in small villages and speak a different language to the Arabs in Sudan. Women are not required to cover their faces and speak readily with foreigners and tourists. Several houses in these villages are painted with patterns of flowers, but most are completely white. We'll have our picnic lunch in one of the village houses with tea and coffee prepared by our Nubian host family. In the afternoon we'll return to Karima.

OVERNIGHT: Karima Nubian Rest House

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Karima - Ghazali Monastery - Meroe

After crossing a bridge over the Nile this morning we enter the Bayuda Desert, an area bounded by the loop formed by the Nile between the 4th and the 6th Cataract. The desert here is characterised by sharp black basalt mountains, most of them volcanic and typically cone-shaped. En-route we will visit the Monastery of Ghazli. We're also likely to come across isolated groups of Bisharin Nomads. They live in small family groups with their caravans and herds of camels and donkeys close to isolated water wells in huts made of intertwined branches.

Later we'll cross the Nile again using a local ferry boat, or ponton. These ferry crossings can be great fun, with the boats busy with people, vehicles, camels, goats and donkeys. After crossing the river, all of a sudden we'll get our first view of over 40 pyramids, some perfectly preserved, located on the top of a hill. This is the Royal Necropolis of Meroe, which will be our focus tomorrow.

Note - the Wadi Abu Dom track is possible only if we have a minimum of 2 vehicles - if we have a very small group with only 1 vehicle we will take a different route on tar roads.

OVERNIGHT: Meroe Pyramids permanent tented camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Exploring the Necropolis of Meroe, Royal City and other sites

This morning is dedicated to a visit and tour of the Meroe pyramids. This will include the Royal Necropolis of Meroe, which sits on hills covered by yellow sand dunes around 3km from the Nile. Several of the pyramids stand out particularly, with their sharp shapes edged against the clear sky. Each pyramid has its own funerary chapel with bas-reliefs decorating the walls showing the King's life and offerings to the gods. If it is open, we will also visit the Tarabil School which we support as part of our responsible tourism activities. After a coffee break at the local village of Kabushia we will visit the Sun Temple, the Western Necropolis and the Quarries of the Meroitic civilization. Finally we'll enjoy sunset at the Pyramids.

Note - we may not be able to visit the ruins of the Royal city, which was closed by UNESCO to evaluate damage caused by a flood of the Nile.

OVERNIGHT: Meroe Pyramids permanent tented camp

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Meroe to Khartoum via Mussawarat & Naga. Dervishes ceremony

We'll leave the Meroe Pyramids this morning and head southwards back towards Khartoum. On the way we'll visit the site of Mussawarat which sits in a beautiful valley, surrounded by hills. The ruins of a large and important temple are visible here. The temple's main feature is its 'Great Enclosure' which is made up of many boundary walls and constructions surrounding a temple built in the 1st century A.D. Our next stop is then at Naga, one of two centres that developed and thrived during the Meroitic period. Here, amidst a typical Saharan rocky and sandy environment, we find a temple dedicated to Apademak from the 1st century A.D. This is a wonderful building which various bas-relief decorations depicting the Pharaoh, noblemen, the god with a lion's head, and several other ritual images. Close by is a small and rather odd construction, known as the 'kiosk' which has columns and arches, and where we can pick out Egyptian, Roman and Greek styles all in the same building. Our final visit is to a temple dedicated to Amon which has many statues of rams and beautiful gates decorated with more bas-reliefs. Finally we finish our loop through northern Sudan by returning to Khartoum.

After checking in, and before sunset, we will head to the tomb of the Sufi leader Ahmed al Nil to see the fascinating and impressive Dervishes Ceremony (note - this is only possible on Fridays and if we arrive back into Khartoum in time to leave the hotel by 3pm).

OVERNIGHT: Khartoum hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Khartoum City Tour. Nuba wrestling

After a leisurely breakfast we start our sightseeing by crossing the confluence of the Blue and White Nile rivers near the Presidential Palace. In 1885 General Gordon was beheaded here by the Mahdi's troops. We'll then reach the old capital of Sudan, Omdurman, where we'll see the Mahdi's Tomb from the outside, the interesting Khalifa's House, home to a small museum about the Mahdiya (closed for refurbishment in 2022). We should have a little time to explore Omdurman's colourful souk before we take a pleasant boat ride to see the confluence of the Nile rivers. In the afternoon we'll visit the National Museum which hosts many important historical items and houses two beautiful temples in its gardens. These were rescued by UNESCO and moved here when Lake Nasser was flooded. (Note - the inner part of the museum was closed for refurbishment in 2022, but the temples in the garden should still be available to visit).

In the early evening we will hopefully enjoy a final highlight, the Nuba Wrestling competitions in Khartoum North. This is a fascinating sport, traditional in the Kordofan region of Sudan, and takes place on Fridays, Saturdays and Wednesdays (Note - the event was paused during Covid times, but hopefully will resume).

The order of visits in Khartoum may change or be moved to a different day according to museum opening hours and other local factors.

OVERNIGHT: Khartoum hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: Extra day in Khartoum - post-tour

Day 10: Khartoum, departure airport transfer

We transfer you to the airport from your hotel around 3 hours before your flight departure time. If you have booked a full night's hotel accommodation then your day is free until we transfer you to the airport for your onward flight.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Included

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service (on tour days)
- Services of a local tour leader throughout
- All sightseeing tours as per itinerary
- Mineral water outside Khartoum
- Boat excursion on the Nile (life jackets will be provided)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Visa invitation letter for most nationalities

Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Arrival taxes
- Sudan visa fees (an invitation letter will be provided)
- Additional paperwork for Visa on Arrival service if required (US\$220, payable in Khartoum)
- Travel insurance (compulsory - [available from Encounters Travel](#))
- Entrance fees to archaeological sites, photo permits and local passport registration (EUR 300)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for tour leader & driver
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

The section of this tour out of Khartoum operates in two directions on different dates - either starting with Meroe, or starting with Karima. The same sites and overnight stops are maintained, just in the opposite order. Please see the Dates & Prices notes for the direction that applies to your tour.

From 1 Jan 2024 the tour will shorten by one day to 9 days, with Day 4 in Karima in effect removed. All the same sites will be visited however, with the tour of the Nuri Necropolis moved to Day 6. The Nile boat trip currently on Day 4 will no longer be included but may be available as an option to add locally.

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Single Room Supplement

Min numbers: 1

This group tour is based on twin-share accommodation. If you are a single traveller and would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, please add this option onto your booking. If you are happy to share a room, please let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you pay your balance, then 50% of the single room supplement fee will be payable. If a room share becomes possible after you have paid your balance then your payment towards the supplement will be refunded. Room shares are arranged in order of booking. Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

Price: Starting from - \$635

Extra day in Khartoum - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing. Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Price: Starting from - \$80

Extra day in Khartoum - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds a full night in the hotel at the end of your tour on Day 9 or on future days, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (the standard tour price covers day-use only in the hotel up to around 11pm). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing. Note: Single room supplements apply.

Price: Starting from - \$80

Khartoum 4-star hotel upgrade

Min numbers: 1

This option upgrades the hotel in Khartoum to the 4-star Grand Holiday Villa hotel. Single room supplements apply. Formerly the Grand Hotel, this period hotel was built in the late 1800s and originally was the office of the famous British explorer Thomas Cook. This elegant historical building exudes an old world charm of the colonial era. The hotel is centrally located in the heart of Khartoum's commercial hub, and features 160 guest room. Overlooking the Blue Nile, it once hosted the rich and famous, including Queen Victoria and Sir Winston Churchill.

Price: Starting from - \$85

Khartoum 5-star hotel upgrade

Min numbers: 1

This option upgrades the hotel in Khartoum to the 5-star Corinthia hotel. Single room supplements apply. The Corinthia Hotel Khartoum is an elegant structure of steel and glass located in the heart of Khartoum's commercial district. This luxurious hotel sits at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile and surrounded by exquisite landscaped gardens. Each of the hotel's 230 rooms and suites offer a spectacular panoramic view of Khartoum as well as the River Nile, and include a Mini bar, flat screen TV and free Wi-Fi.

Price: Starting from - \$275

Visa paperwork service

Min numbers: 1

Obtaining Sudan visas is not always straightforward. There are two options: Obtain your visa in advance This provides the most surety and peace of mind, but it is more expensive and time consuming as you will need to either visit your local Sudanese embassy or post your documents back and forth. Most nationalities (including UK) now need both an invitation letter from our partners in Sudan, and also a letter from the Sudanese Ministry of Interior to accompany your application. Obtain your visa in Khartoum airport on arrival This is a little cheaper, less hassle and works fine. We will provide you with the invitation letter and obtain the paperwork from the Sudanese government that you will need. This option covers the cost of the additional paperwork you will need to secure your Sudanese visa by either of these routes. The price is payable in US Dollars cash to our local partners in Sudan after you arrive. There is then an additional visa fee, payable at the immigration desk in the airport. This fee is US\$100 for most nationalities, and US\$150 for US citizens. It is best to allow one month before you arrive to complete all the registrations. We will need a scanned copy of your passport. The process can sometimes be completed more quickly, but this cannot be relied upon.

Price: Starting from - \$265

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Sudanese 3-star level in Khartoum as well as comfortable guesthouses, Nubian houses and deluxe tented camps Meroe. Upgrades to higher level hotels in Khartoum are available on request. All bedding is provided in the tented camps. Sleeping bags are provided at the Nubian house on the Soleb extension.

Hotel accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will stay in a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. Our routes in Sudan, available public transport options and the distances involved mean that we use private vehicles such as Toyota Landcruisers (max 4 passengers / vehicle) or Toyota Hilux (max 3 passengers / vehicle) throughout this tour.

3. Airport Transfers

This tour includes an airport meet and greet and transfer service on the first day of the tour. Our rep. will be holding an Encounters Travel signboard or have your name displayed for easy identification. If you can't find our representative, our emergency contact numbers will be provided on your tour confirmation voucher.

A departure transfer to the airport is also included at the end of the tour. Please check the tour itinerary and your flight times; most international flights leave Khartoum in the early hours of the morning, and as a result if you have upgraded the hotel in Khartoum to 4 or 5-star we normally only include a day-use room in the Khartoum hotel for your final day. A full night is included in the standard 3-star hotel. If you will need a full night in the hotel and have upgraded the accommodation, a supplement will generally need to be added.

No refund is available on missed transfers or portions of your trip owing to incorrect flight details being provided or delayed flight arrival. Any additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

If your flights arrive/depart before/after the tour starts/ends then we will be very happy to arrange additional accommodation and airport transfers for you. We will aim to book these in the same hotel as the main tour, though this will be subject to availability (upgraded hotels are also available on request). If you do not book your additional accommodation through us, then our arrival/departure service is not included and you will need to make your own airport transfer arrangements.

Arrival Procedure:

There are often long queues at the immigration desks, and there can be further delays if you are getting your "visa on arrival" (see Passports and Visas). After passport control proceed to baggage reclaim where there can be more long waits. After you have your luggage you will be asked to show your bag receipts (normally stuck to your boarding pass) and you may also have your bags manually checked by the airport officers. This is quite normal, and they will just be checking that you are not bringing anything illegal in Sudan into the country (eg. alcohol, pornographic magazines etc. (please note that some normal magazines you may carry may have some images of undressed public characters...and this may be considered inappropriate). If anything undesirable is found, it will be confiscated and not returned.

Our representative will then meet you just outside the glass door with an Encounters Travel signboard or your name

displayed.

4. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Our Sudan tours start and finish at Khartoum airport (KRT).

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our Sudan group departures to have a minimum of 2 and maximum of 16 travellers.

At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local Sudanese guides and reps wherever possible. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

6. Entrance fees & permits

The tour price does not include permits and entrance fees to the National Museum and archaeological sites visited during the tour. To cover these, plus photo permits and local passport registration, a fee of EUR 260 per person will be collected in Khartoum at the start of the tour. Please ensure you have 260 Euros (or equivalent in US Dollars) in new bills, ideally small denominations (\$10/\$20). Please also bring 2 passport photos with you which are needed to complete the permits.

Camera Fees & Permits:

Visitors are required to obtain a permit for photography of any kind, and we will obtain this for you. The permit will stipulate where you can or cannot take photos. There are strict restrictions on taking photographs; photography of military areas or personnel, bridges, broadcast stations, public utilities, slum areas and beggars is strictly prohibited. Always ask prior to taking photos.

Video cameras incur an additional fee of US\$20 for each archaeological site and must be obtained in advance - please let us know several weeks before arrival if you wish to bring a video camera.

7. Tipping

Bahsis (bahk-sheesh) or tips are commonplace and customary in Sudan. Wages for service staff in Sudan are very low and tips are a necessary supplement to meagre incomes.

Having said that, tipping is always optional, and the amounts paid should reflect the service level provided, and your personal budget. We are often asked for advice on common amounts, and for assistance with tipping. Some suggested guidelines are given below.

Restaurants and taxis: Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change. More up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour guide. We suggest USD 2 per person per day for local guides.

Drivers: You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group however USD 2 per person per day is generally appropriate.

Tour Guides: To answer your next question. . . as a guideline we suggest for your tour guide between USD 25-40 per person for the entire tour, but ultimately, its up to your satisfaction with their service and your budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount.

8. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

South Africa: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Namibia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Botswana: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if

arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

[Zimbabwe](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

[Zambia](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

[Malawi](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

[Tanzania](#): Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

[Kenya](#): Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

[Uganda](#): Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

[Sudan](#): Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

[Morocco](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this [US CDC information](#) about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

9. Language and Customs

The official languages in Sudan are Arabic and English, according to the 2005 constitution. English is not widely spoken except by officials and hospitality workers. In contrast to many places in the world, it is the older generations that tend to speak the better English.

Sudan is an Islamic nation, and the government has imposed a form of Sharia law. **Alcohol and drugs are forbidden, as is homosexuality.** You should assume that any foreigner will be treated as a local, and dealt with accordingly; in many cases, given a jail sentence of several months and a whipping, the minimum being forty lashes. Do not in any circumstances, show images/statues/figures etc. of the prophet Muhammad.

Sudanese women tend to wear very conservative clothing and cover their heads, so out of respect, foreign women

would be wise to do the same, even if they observe other tourists who do not respect this custom. Men should wear long trousers, not shorts. If in doubt, play it safe and cover up.

The Sudanese do not expect foreigners to adhere to Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, but it would be tactless to eat, drink or smoke in public.

10. Visa Requirements

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country, have at least 2 clear pages, and no Israeli stamps. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Obtaining Sudan visas is not always straightforward. There are two options:

- **Obtain your visa in advance**

This provides the most surety and peace of mind, but it is more expensive and time consuming as you will need to either visit your local Sudanese embassy or post your documents back and forth.

Most nationalities (including UK) now need both an invitation letter from our partners in Sudan, and also a letter from the Sudanese Ministry of Interior to accompany your application.

Please allow a minimum of 4 weeks for the whole process to complete. You may be asked to attend the embassy/consulate for a short interview to confirm you are genuine tourists. Sometimes visas are issued the same day, but often you will need to return a few days later to collect your passport. Most embassies/consulates also offer a postal option. You can also use a visa agency, but you will still need us to provide all the paperwork and cover the costs for it, as well as paying the visa agency.

There is then an additional visa fee, payable at the immigration desk in the airport. This fee is US\$100 for most nationalities, and US\$150 for US citizens.

- **Obtain your visa in Khartoum airport on arrival**

This is a little cheaper, less hassle and works fine. We will provide you with the invitation letter and other the paperwork from the Sudanese government that you will need.

Once arranged we will send you an entry permit - you must print this out and take this with you, or you will not be allowed to board your flight to Khartoum.

On arrival you will exchange this permit for a visa sticker in your passport (first show your passport and entry permit to one official, then proceed to the Counter Visa desk to pay the visa fee and get your visa sticker).

The visa fee is US\$100 or US\$150 for US citizens, payable in cash to the customs officer in the airport (use one \$100 bill and one \$50 bill issued no earlier than 2009).

For both of these options you will need to make an additional payment in US Dollars cash to our local partners in Sudan after you arrive for the provision of the paperwork required to process your visa. Please check the Options section for details or speak to your travel consultant for more details.

Please send us a scanned or photographed copy of the identity pages of your passport as soon as possible after you have booked so that we can obtain the necessary paperwork for you.

11. Time

The time in Sudan is GMT plus 3 hours. Daylight saving adjustments are not applied.

12. Voltage

Sockets accept two round pronged plugs (Type C / D) and the electricity supply is 230 volts. Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

13. Money

The Sudanese Pound (SDG) = 100 piasters. Notes are in denominations of SDG50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1. Coins are in denominations of 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 piasters. The Sudanese Pound has replaced the Sudanese Dinar, which was phased out on 30 June 2007. 1 Sudanese Pound = 100 Sudanese Dinars = 1,000 old Sudanese Pounds.

Please note that credit cards and debit cards are NOT currently accepted in Sudan.

The best place to exchange money is at the airport, the rates are often much better than the rates at hotels. Currency should be exchanged only at official bureaux de change and banks, and receipts should be retained. There are severe penalties for changing money on the black market. Please note that only new US Dollar bills are accepted in Sudan - old or worn bills will not be accepted.

14. What to take

Luggage: To facilitate easy transport of everyone luggage in the vehicles, we ask that you bring soft luggage with you, and not rigid suitcases. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in your accommodation during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

Luggage limits: Again to ensure space and comfort in the vehicles you will be travelling in, we request that you bring no more than 15kg of main luggage on this tour. For hand-luggage most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg and we ask that you try to restrict yours to 5kg max.

Clothing: Sudan's climate ranges from hot and dry in the north to humid and tropical in the equatorial south. October to April is the best time to visit. Temperatures range from 30-38C during the day in October/November and March/April (12-18C at night), and 25-30C in December/January/February (5-10C at night). The summer months can go well over 40C though we don't generally run tours during this period. Dust storms (the haboob) blow occasionally from July to August and November to January. You will need clothing for very hot days but you also need warm clothes for the evenings and nights when the temperature can drop significantly, particularly in the deserts.

Sudan is largely Muslim and operates a version of Sharia law. Modesty rates highly in Sudan, especially for women, so please ensure clothes are loose fitting and not too revealing. Visiting women not expected to wear a veil or cover their heads but we suggest you bring a headscarf or sunhat with you anyway as it is often welcome in the desert and hot sun. Neither men or women should wear shorts.

Other items: Bedding (sheets, blankets, pillow) is provided in the Meroe desert camp but we recommend bringing a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner for comfort all year round (even with the best efforts, sand can find its way pretty much everywhere). We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

Nimitti: Between February and the end of April there may be lots of "nimitti" which are small, harmless, but extremely annoying flies in the north (Tombos, Soleb area) – these flies are the ones that make the pollination of the palms. We will provide fly nets to wear over the face, and the tour leader will recommend to wear long sleeved tops.

15. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Thursdays between October and April. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 4 travellers. If there are only 2 or 3 travellers per date we can still run the tour but an extra supplement will be due. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

Private and tailor-made tours are also available on any date; please contact us for details and prices.

16. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

17. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).

18. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

19. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

20. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

21. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the

activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

22. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration System removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

Printed on: Saturday 27th of April 2024

Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
