

## Ancient Encounters

**Country(ies):** Egypt & Jordan

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** A/C car/minibus/coach, sleeper train, felucca sailboat & flight

**Group size:** Min: 2 | Max: 18

**Days:** 16 Days

**Start location:** Amman, Jordan

**End location:** Cairo, Egypt

**Departs On:** Saturday

**Meals:** 2019: Breakfasts - 15, Lunches - 5, Dinners - 6  
2020: Breakfasts - 16, Lunches - 5, Dinners - 6

**Highlights:** Jordan's desert castles, Jerash Roman ruins, Ajloun & Shobak castles, Dead Sea swim, Dana Nature Reserve, Petra tour, Wadi Rum safari & camp, Pyramids & Sphinx, Philae temple, Felucca cruise, Valley of the Kings, Karnak, Red Sea.

**Places Visited:** Cairo, Aswan, Luxor, Hurghada, Amman, Madaba, Kerak, Petra & Wadi Rum



# Itinerary

## Itinerary for 2019 Tours

### Day 1: Welcome to Amman, airport to hotel transfer included

Once you arrive at Queen Alia International Airport, one of our staff members will meet you and transport you to your hotel in Amman. They'll help you settle in, let you know the plan for tomorrow and then you have the rest of the day to rest or explore your new surroundings independently.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Amman - pre-tour || Single room supplement (JOSGAE18)

### Day 2: Visiting Jordan's Desert Castles & touring Amman

After breakfast, we'll make our way to Jordan's famous 'desert castles' of Qasr al-Kharrana, Qal'at al-Azraq and Qseirr Amra. These imposing structures can be found on the old trade routes built during the Umayyad era and remnants of this period can still be seen today in the form of frescoes, bath houses and wells.

We'll head back to Amman for lunch at a local restaurant, enjoying falafel and hummus, before we enjoy a walking tour of Jordan's capital city. We'll visit some of its top tourist attractions such as the Amphitheatre, the Folklore Museum as well as the Citadel. We'll also browse through its busy markets - giving you a chance to taste Knafeh - a tasty sweet treat - all the while being taught some basic Arabic terms to use throughout the rest of our tour through Jordan.

If there's time left, we may visit a few traditional handcraft and art galleries, before we return to our hotel in Amman.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

### Day 3: Explore ancient Jerash & hike to Bronze Age dolmens

We'll say goodbye to Amman for now, as we travel north to Jerash - the one of the best examples of a Roman provincial city in the whole of the Middle East. We visit the spectacular Forum, Roman colonnaded street, the Nymphaeum and Artemis Temple.

Also on the agenda today is a visit to the towering Aljoun Castle - which was crafted in the 12th century by the Ayyubids and extended in the 13th century by the Mamluks. The castle also once served as the hub for Saladin's Arab forces, who defeated the Crusaders in the 12th century. The mountains, hills and forests around Aljoun Castle are surprisingly lush and tree covered and are very popular with hikers from Jordan and abroad.

Our next stop on our Jordan tour is a visit to Rasoun village, where we'll meet a Jordanian family - our homestay hosts. After settling into our accommodation for the night, we'll take a walk through the hills to see some Bronze Age Dolmens, which date back around 5000 years. Dolmens are stone burial chambers formed by a huge stone slab atop two or more standing stones.

For dinner, a delicious, home-cooked traditional Arabic meal will be prepared by our host Jordanian family, and we spend the evening chatting with them about life in Jordan.

**OVERNIGHT:** Rasoun homestay

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 4: From Ajloun to Madaba, Mount Nebo & the Dead Sea**

We reluctantly say goodbye to our hosts in the Rasoun village after a shared breakfast, as we journey south to Madaba to see the amazing Byzantine mosaics excavated from throughout the town. We'll see the 'Madaba Map', the oldest preserved mosaic map of the Holy Lands before heading to Mount Nebo and wonder at the view where Moses looked across to the Promised Land and later died and was buried.

After lunch, we'll head to the Dead Sea where you have the afternoon to float in the sea, try the invigorating properties of the mud by the beach, and rest by the resort pool. Swimming in the Dead Sea is a strange and wonderful experience and one you'll never forget.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dead Sea Resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 5: Dana Biosphere Reserve & Shobak Castle en-route to Petra**

Today, we'll make our way down the Dead Sea coastline, passing lots of deep canyons and gorges as they meet the sea. After we pass some salt flats at the southern end of the Dead Sea we head up through the mountains towards Petra, stopping for a short hike in the beautiful scenery and hills of the Dana Biosphere Reserve along the way. This is Jordan's largest nature reserve, and there are great views of the valleys and hills on the various trails around the restored Dana village. Spring is a particularly lovely time to visit with the terrain surprisingly green and full of flowers. We'll stop for a home-made lunch in the village and take a walk before continuing to the imposing crusader castle at Shobak, finally arriving at Petra late in the evening.

An option is available this evening to get a first taste of Petra on the atmospheric Petra by Night tour, during which the Siq Trail and area outside the Treasury are lit up with hundreds of candles.

**OVERNIGHT:** Petra hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Petra by night

## **Day 6: A full day in Petra & overnight Wadi Rum Bedouin Camp**

Today is all about exploring the rose-red city of Petra - the former capital of the Nabataean Kingdom and has since become one of the Modern 7 Wonders of the World. We'll walk through the Siq to get here, until we reach the Treasury - which is carved out of solid rock and stands over 40 metres high.

We'll learn about the history of this magnificent site and the Nabataean people who built it, exploring its caves and tombs carved into the sandstone cliffs around us. You'll be given some time to do some exploring on your own - you could hike up to the towering Monastery which offers breathtaking views of the Jordan Valley or take a walk to the High Place of Sacrifice.

Late this afternoon, we'll head into the nearby Wadi Rum desert, where we'll spend the night under the stars, staying in a comfortable Bedouin camp situated amongst the sand dunes and against the rocky cliffs, well away from the busy roads and traffic. If you'd like, you can even take a sleeping bag to a secluded spot and sleep outside, underneath the starry skies above.

**OVERNIGHT:** Wadi Rum Bedouin Camp

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 7: A jeep safari and Bedouin experience in Wadi Rum, travel to Amman**

Today we head out on a jeep safari through the sandy terrain of Wadi Rum, beneath the towering 'jebels' - stopping every now and then to marvel at its sand dunes, strange rock formations and rock bridges.

We'll also participate in a few activities derived from Bedouin traditions such as walking with a local shepherd with their sheep and goats to a Bedouin tent, where we'll help make lunch. You can also choose to do other activities such as shearing sheep and goat's hair, grinding and roasting coffee beans and making bread.

Afterwards, we'll head back to camp before driving north on the Desert Highway back to Amman. Tonight, we'll head to the local coffee shops and cafes near our hotel, where you can try a sheesha or a game of backgammon as we enjoy our last night in Jordan.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 8: Fly to Cairo, free time**

We transfer you to Amman airport today to board your flight to Egypt's busy capital of Cairo (not included). Once you arrive in Cairo, one of our staff will be there to meet you before taking you to your hotel, situated close to the Great Pyramids. We'll have some time to settle in before being introduced to the local area and we'll also arrange tomorrow's collection time.

You have the rest of the day to explore Cairo independently. Options are also available to head out on an evening dinner cruise on the Nile River or enjoy a mesmerising sound and light show at the pyramids (both available to book locally on arrival).

Note: the Amman-Cairo flight is left out of the set tour price as it is often more cost effective for you to include this flight as part of your main international flight ticket. We are happy to book all your international flights, just this Amman-Cairo flight, or none of them at all, whichever works best for you. Direct flights are available with both Egypt Air and Royal Jordanian Airlines. To help keep the group together we recommend Egypt Air MS720 which departs Amman between 09.30-10.30. However, you can also fly at other times during the day - all transfers in Amman and Cairo are included.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cairo 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Amman to Cairo flight

## Day 9: Visiting the Great Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza

Our tour of Egypt begins with a drive to Giza on the outskirts of Cairo to visit the Sphinx and the three great pyramids of Egypt. One of our local Egyptologist guides will be accompanying you on this and all of your other sightseeing tours, and you'll find them a wealth of knowledge and full of enthusiasm about Egyptian history, and their country in general. At 500 feet high and 750 feet wide at its base the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) is an awesome man-made structure constructed of giant stone blocks with a hard limestone casing. The casing has, over the years, been stripped away to leave exposed the inner block structure. Together with the smaller pyramids of Khafre (Chephern) and Menkaure (Mycerinus), the majestic sight of these enormous structures rising out of the desert is a breathtaking spectacle. You will have the opportunity to climb down right inside the pyramids if you wish, though your guide cannot accompany you (a limited number of tickets are available for the Great Pyramid). Following on from the Pyramids we then head to the Egyptian Museum. Home to the fantastic Tutankhamun exhibit the museum hosts a huge number of other ancient Egyptian artefacts.

This evening we transfer to the station for the overnight sleeper train to Aswan (approx. 12 hours). You'll enjoy dinner on board in your private twin-berth compartments before the steward sets your beds up for the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Sleeper train to Aswan

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Cairo to Aswan flight upgrade

## Day 10: Aswan, Nubian Village and the Philae Temple

This morning we arrive in Aswan and transfer to our hotel overlooking the Nile which is at its most picturesque here, with lush green islands, and feluccas sailing to and fro. Aswan itself is a melting pot of African and Middle Eastern cultures, most easily experienced by wandering through the busy markets. It's also part of the ancient region of Nubia, which comprised parts of present day southern Egypt and northern Sudan around the Nile rivers. Many descendants of the Nubian people still live here and we'll visit a local Nubian village to see their colourful houses, simple way of life and to enjoy a traditional lunch.

We continue our tour this afternoon with a visit the Temple of Philae, a beautiful island complex dedicated to Isis and reclaimed from the rising waters of Lake Nasser, which we reach by a scenic boat ride. The evening is then free to look around Aswan's spice and general markets, and to walk up and down the popular Corniche, on the banks of the Nile. An option is also available to take a camel ride through the sands on the far bank of the Nile to St. Simeon's monastery. If you've chosen the Abu Simbel option then head to bed early this evening to be ready for a very early start tomorrow morning.

**OVERNIGHT:** Aswan 5 star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Abu Simbel option, then Nile felucca cruise

An option is available this morning to visit the temples built by Ramses II at the amazing UNESCO world heritage site of Abu Simbel. We depart very early with the aim of seeing the rising sun over the temples. Transfers, guiding, and entrance fees are included. If you don't visit Abu Simbel, then this morning is free.

We board our traditional Nile felucca at lunchtime to enjoy an afternoon sailing down the Nile. Floating down the Nile on a felucca is one of Egypt's most enjoyable activities and you'll be able to watch local rural Egyptian life pass you by on the banks of the river as you drift past. Our Nubian crew will sail the boat and entertain you on the way, as well as preparing meals for you. Our separate facilities boat will join with us from time to time during the day and moor up with us at night. This boat has a welcome toilet and showers on board as well as a hygienic kitchen. You sleep on the deck of the boat tonight (mattresses, blankets and mosquito nets provided). This is a fun, but basic experience, and we offer an optional upgrade to spend this night back in the

Aswan hotel instead of sleeping on the felucca for those wishing some more comfort. You then rejoin the rest of the group the next morning.

**OVERNIGHT:** On board felucca

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Abu Simbel overland || Upgrade from felucca to hotel in Aswan

## Day 12: Edfu temple, Luxor temple at night

After breakfast on-board we bid farewell to our felucca crew and visit the nearby temple at Edfu before continuing on north to Luxor. The town of Luxor is built on and around the ancient site of Thebes, and boasts the largest concentration of ancient ruins in the Nile Valley, if not the world. To the west of the Nile lies the City of the Dead, with its mortuary temples and rock-hewn tombs, whilst to the east lie the Temples of Luxor and Karnak.

We check into a luxury 5-star hotel on the banks of the Nile and have time to relax and enjoy time by the pool this afternoon.

Later this evening we'll take a walking tour of the smaller Luxor Temple which is right in the middle of town and beautifully lit up at night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Luxor 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Luxor, West bank tour, Karnak temple, to Hurghada

We cross the Nile early this morning to begin our tour of Luxor's West Bank. Home to the Valley of the Kings, the dusty tombs in this ancient burial site are still revealing their secrets today and so it remains one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Our tour includes several of these Pharaonic tombs, as well as the temple of Queen Hatchepsut, Deir El-Medina (Valley of the Artisans), and the huge Colossi of Memnon.

A spectacular hot air balloon flight over the west bank of the Nile is available this morning (expect an early start to catch sunrise as the balloon rises).

After lunch we'll tour the huge temple complex at Karnak, once the religious centre of Thebes and Upper Egypt. It was linked to Luxor by an extensive avenue, lined with sphinxes, and the whole complex was in turn linked to the

Nile via a canal through which moved the sacred boats of the god Amun. Entering through a smaller sphinx-lined avenue, built by Ramesses II, you come to the immense pylon entrance. Inside the huge Courtyard are three chapels dedicated to the gods Amun, Khous and Mut. The remarkable Hypostyle Hall has 134 towering columns, each carved with scenes of gods and pharaohs, and hieroglyphic inscriptions adorn the walls.

We'll then leave the Nile Valley and drive to the Red Sea resort of Hurghada where we check into a 5-star resort. Your stay here is on a 'soft all inclusive' basis, with all meals, soft drinks and snacks included but not alcoholic beverages.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurghada 5-star resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Hot air balloon in Luxor

## Day 14: Free time at the Red Sea

Your day is free today to relax and enjoy your time by the Red Sea. Hurghada is world famous for its scuba diving and snorkelling and the rich Red Sea marine life here attracts divers from all over the world. Other adventurous activities available include wind surfing and kite surfing, glass bottomed submarines, quad biking, camel rides and sea fishing trips. Our local rep based in Hurghada will be on hand to help make any arrangements. Hurghada itself has an interesting marina and old town to explore.

If you wish, we can book extra nights in the resort in Hurghada for you to extend your time here - please contact us for details and prices.

*Note: Please note that when adding extra nights in Hurghada you will leave the group here and miss the remaining activities in Cairo. You can either finish the tour in Hurghada or return later to Cairo. Please contact us for more information and customised pricing.*

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurghada 5-star resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 15: Fly to Cairo and Khan-el-Khalili bazaar

We fly back to Cairo this morning and you then have some free time to explore Cairo as you choose or subject to the flight timings you may take an optional tour. These include a city tour in Cairo which visits Coptic Cairo, the Citadel and Mohamed Ali Mosque, or a half day tour to Saqqara, Dashour and Memphis to learn more about the history and evolution of pyramid building. Other full day options further afield include a visit to the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan.

In the late afternoon we take a guided walk through the back streets and bazaars in Old Cairo. We'll walk through the huge Bab al-Futuh gateway and explore streets dedicated to metalwork, spices, pottery, fabric, jewelery and anything else you can imagine as we gradually enter the more touristy Khan-el-Khalili bazaar. We'll have time for a break to try some mint tea and a shisha pipe and this is a great final opportunity to pick up some souvenirs of your time in Egypt.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cairo 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Cairo city tour || Nile dinner cruise in Cairo || Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis

## Day 16: Free time in Cairo, hotel to airport transfers included

You have the day free to do some last minute sightseeing and shopping before we transfer you to the airport to board your flight back home. If you have a late flight, you can head out on one of our optional Cairo city tours or add a few extra nights to your time in Cairo to explore the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Alexandria day trip || Cairo city tour || Wadi Rayan day trip (Valley of the Whales) || Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - post-tour

## Itinerary for 2020 Tours

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**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Amman - pre-tour || Single room supplement (JOSGAE18)

### Day 2: Visiting Jordan's Desert Castles & touring Amman

After breakfast, we'll make our way to Jordan's famous 'desert castles' of Qasr al-Kharrana, Qal'at al-Azraq and Qseirr Amra. These imposing structures can be found on the old trade routes built during the Umayyad era and remnants of this period can still be seen today in the form of frescoes, bath houses and wells.

We'll head back to Amman for lunch at a local restaurant, enjoying falafel and hummus, before we enjoy a walking tour of Jordan's capital city. We'll visit some of its top tourist attractions such as the Amphitheatre, the Folklore Museum as well as the Citadel. We'll also browse through its busy markets - giving you a chance to taste Knafeh - a tasty sweet treat - all the while being taught some basic Arabic terms to use throughout the rest of our tour through Jordan.

If there's time left, we may visit a few traditional handcraft and art galleries, before we return to our hotel in Amman.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

### Day 3: Explore ancient Jerash & hike to Bronze Age dolmens

We'll say goodbye to Amman for now, as we travel north to Jerash - the one of the best examples of a Roman provincial city in the whole of the Middle East. We visit the spectacular Forum, Roman colonnaded street, the Nymphaeum and Artemis Temple.



Also on the agenda today is a visit to the towering Aljoun Castle - which was crafted in the 12th century by the Ayyubids and extended in the 13th century by the Mamluks. The castle also once served as the hub for Saladin's Arab forces, who defeated the Crusaders in the 12th century. The mountains, hills and forests around Aljoun Castle are surprisingly lush and tree covered and are very popular with hikers from Jordan and abroad.

Our next stop on our Jordan tour is a visit to Rasoun village, where we'll meet a Jordanian family - our homestay hosts. After settling into our accommodation for the night, we'll take a walk through the hills to see some Bronze Age Dolmens, which date back around 5000 years. Dolmens are stone burial chambers formed by a huge stone slab atop two or more standing stones.

For dinner, a delicious, home-cooked traditional Arabic meal will be prepared by our host Jordanian family, and we spend the evening chatting with them about life in Jordan.

**OVERNIGHT:** Rasoun homestay

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 4: From Ajloun to Madaba, Mount Nebo & the Dead Sea**

We reluctantly say goodbye to our hosts in the Rasoun village after a shared breakfast, as we journey south to Madaba to see the amazing Byzantine mosaics excavated from throughout the town. We'll see the 'Madaba Map', the oldest preserved mosaic map of the Holy Lands before heading to Mount Nebo and wonder at the view where Moses looked across to the Promised Land and later died and was buried.

After lunch, we'll head to the Dead Sea where you have the afternoon to float in the sea, try the invigorating properties of the mud by the beach, and rest by the resort pool. Swimming in the Dead Sea is a strange and wonderful experience and one you'll never forget.

**OVERNIGHT:** Dead Sea Resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 5: Dana Biosphere Reserve & Shobak Castle en-route to Petra**

Today, we'll make our way down the Dead Sea coastline, passing lots of deep canyons and gorges as they meet the sea. After we pass some salt flats at the southern end of the Dead Sea we head up through the mountains towards Petra, stopping for a short hike in the beautiful scenery and hills of the Dana Biosphere Reserve along the way. This is Jordan's largest nature reserve, and there are great views of the valleys and hills on the various trails around the restored Dana village. Spring is a particularly lovely time to visit with the terrain surprisingly green and full of flowers. We'll stop for a home-made lunch in the village and take a walk before continuing to the imposing crusader castle at Shobak, finally arriving at Petra late in the evening.

An option is available this evening to get a first taste of Petra on the atmospheric Petra by Night tour, during which the Siq Trail and area outside the Treasury are lit up with hundreds of candles.

**OVERNIGHT:** Petra hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Petra by night

## **Day 6: A full day in Petra & overnight Wadi Rum Bedouin Camp**

Today is all about exploring the rose-red city of Petra - the former capital of the Nabataean Kingdom and has since

become one of the Modern 7 Wonders of the World. We'll walk through the Siq to get here, until we reach the Treasury - which is carved out of solid rock and stands over 40 metres high.

We'll learn about the history of this magnificent site and the Nabataean people who built it, exploring its caves and tombs carved into the sandstone cliffs around us. You'll be given some time to do some exploring on your own - you could hike up to the towering Monastery which offers breathtaking views of the Jordan Valley or take a walk to the High Place of Sacrifice.

Late this afternoon, we'll head into the nearby Wadi Rum desert, where we'll spend the night under the stars, staying in a comfortable Bedouin camp situated amongst the sand dunes and against the rocky cliffs, well away from the busy roads and traffic. If you'd like, you can even take a sleeping bag to a secluded spot and sleep outside, underneath the starry skies above.

**OVERNIGHT:** Wadi Rum Bedouin Camp

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: A jeep safari and Bedouin experience in Wadi Rum, travel to Amman

Today we head out on a jeep safari through the sandy terrain of Wadi Rum, beneath the towering 'jebels' - stopping every now and then to marvel at its sand dunes, strange rock formations and rock bridges.

We'll also participate in a few activities derived from Bedouin traditions such as walking with a local shepherd with their sheep and goats to a Bedouin tent, where we'll help make lunch. You can also choose to do other activities such as shearing sheep and goat's hair, grinding and roasting coffee beans and making bread.

Afterwards, we'll head back to camp before driving north on the Desert Highway back to Amman. Tonight, we'll head to the local coffee shops and cafes near our hotel, where you can try a sheesha or a game of backgammon as we enjoy our last night in Jordan.

**OVERNIGHT:** Amman hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Fly to Cairo, free time

We transfer you to Amman airport today to board your flight to Egypt's busy capital of Cairo (not included). Once you arrive in Cairo, one of our staff will be there to meet you before taking you to your hotel, situated close to the Great Pyramids. We'll have some time to settle in before being introduced to the local area and we'll also arrange tomorrow's collection time.

You have the rest of the day to explore Cairo independently. Options are also available to head out on an evening dinner cruise on the Nile River or enjoy a mesmerising sound and light show at the pyramids (both available to book locally on arrival).

Note: the Amman-Cairo flight is left out of the set tour price as it is often more cost effective for you to include this flight as part of your main international flight ticket. We are happy to book all your international flights, just this Amman-Cairo flight, or none of them at all, whichever works best for you. Direct flights are available with both Egypt Air and Royal Jordanian Airlines. To help keep the group together we recommend Egypt Air MS720 which departs Amman between 09.30-10.30. However, you can also fly at other times during the day - all transfers in Amman and Cairo are included.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cairo 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Amman to Cairo flight

## Day 9: Cairo, Pyramids, Sphinx & Museum tour

Our tour of Egypt begins with a drive to Giza on the outskirts of Cairo to visit the Sphinx and the three great pyramids of Egypt. One of our local Egyptologist guides will be accompanying you on this and all of your other sightseeing tours, and you'll find them a wealth of knowledge and full of enthusiasm about Egyptian history, and their country in general. At 500 feet high and 750 feet wide at its base the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) is an awesome man-made structure constructed of giant stone blocks with a hard limestone casing. The casing has, over the years, been stripped away to leave exposed the inner block structure. Together with the smaller pyramids of Khafre (Chephern) and Menkaure (Mycerinus), the majestic sight of these enormous structures rising out of the desert is a breathtaking spectacle. You will have the opportunity to climb down right inside the pyramids if you wish, though your guide cannot accompany you (a limited number of tickets are available for the Great Pyramid). Following on from the Pyramids we then head to the Egyptian Museum. Home to the fantastic Tutankhamun exhibit the museum hosts a huge number of other ancient Egyptian artefacts.

This evening we transfer to the station for the overnight sleeper train to Aswan (approx. 12 hours). You'll enjoy dinner on board in your private twin-berth compartments before the steward sets your beds up for the night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Sleeper train

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Cairo to Aswan flight upgrade

## Day 10: Aswan, Nubian Village and Philae Temple

This morning we arrive in Aswan and transfer to our hotel overlooking the Nile which is at its most picturesque here, with lush green islands, and feluccas sailing to and fro. Aswan itself is a melting pot of African and Middle Eastern cultures, most easily experienced by wandering through the busy markets. It's also part of the ancient region of Nubia, which comprised parts of present day southern Egypt and northern Sudan around the Nile rivers. Many descendants of the Nubian people still live here and we'll visit a local Nubian village to see their colourful houses, simple way of life and to enjoy a traditional lunch.

We continue our tour this afternoon with a visit the Temple of Philae, a beautiful island complex dedicated to Isis and reclaimed from the rising waters of Lake Nasser, which we reach by a scenic boat ride. The evening is then free to look around Aswan's spice and general markets, and to walk up and down the popular Corniche, on the banks of the Nile. An option is also available to take a camel ride through the sands on the far bank of the Nile to St. Simeon's monastery. If you've chosen the Abu Simbel option then head to bed early this evening to be ready for a very early start tomorrow morning.

**OVERNIGHT:** Aswan 5 star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Abu Simbel option. Nile Felucca Cruise

An option is available this morning to visit the temples built by Ramses II at the amazing UNESCO world heritage site of Abu Simbel. We depart very early with the aim of seeing the rising sun over the temples. Transfers, guiding, and entrance fees are included. If you don't visit Abu Simbel, then this morning is free.

We board our traditional Nile felucca at lunchtime to enjoy an afternoon sailing down the Nile. Floating down the Nile on a felucca is one of Egypt's most enjoyable activities and you'll be able to watch local rural Egyptian life pass you by on the banks of the river as you drift past. Our Nubian crew will sail the boat and entertain you on the way, as well as preparing meals for you. Our separate facilities boat will join with us from time to time during the day and moor up with us at night. This boat has a welcome toilet and showers on board as well as a hygienic kitchen. You sleep on the deck of the boat tonight (mattresses, blankets and mosquito nets provided). This is a fun, but basic experience,

and we offer an optional upgrade to spend this night back in the Aswan hotel instead of sleeping on the felucca for those wishing some more comfort. You then rejoin the rest of the group the next morning.

**OVERNIGHT:** On board felucca

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** Abu Simbel overland || Upgrade from felucca to hotel in Aswan

## Day 12: Edfu temple, Luxor temple at night

After breakfast on-board we bid farewell to our felucca crew and visit the nearby temple at Edfu before continuing on north to Luxor. The town of Luxor is built on and around the ancient site of Thebes, and boasts the largest concentration of ancient ruins in the Nile Valley, if not the world. To the west of the Nile lies the City of the Dead, with its mortuary temples and rock-hewn tombs, whilst to the east lie the Temples of Luxor and Karnak.

We check into a luxury 5-star hotel on the banks of the Nile and have time to relax and enjoy time by the pool this afternoon.

Later this evening we'll take a walking tour of the smaller Luxor Temple which is right in the middle of town and beautifully lit up at night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Luxor 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Luxor, West bank tour, Karnak temple

We cross the Nile early this morning to begin our tour of Luxor's West Bank. Home to the Valley of the Kings, the dusty tombs in this ancient burial site are still revealing their secrets today and so it remains one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Our tour includes several of these Pharaonic tombs, as well as the temple of Queen Hatchepsut, Deir El-Medina (Valley of the Artisans), and the huge Colossi of Memnon.

A spectacular hot air balloon flight over the west bank of the Nile is available this morning (expect an early start to catch sunrise as the balloon rises).

After lunch we'll tour the huge temple complex at Karnak, once the religious centre of Thebes and Upper Egypt. It was linked to Luxor by an extensive avenue, lined with sphinxes, and the whole complex was in turn linked to the Nile via a canal through which moved the sacred boats of the god Amun. Entering through a smaller sphinx-lined avenue, built by Ramesses II, you come to the immense pylon entrance. Inside the huge Courtyard are three chapels dedicated to the gods Amun, Khous and Mut. The remarkable Hypostyle Hall has 134 towering columns, each carved with scenes of gods and pharaohs, and hieroglyphic inscriptions adorn the walls.

**OVERNIGHT:** Luxor 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Hot air balloon in Luxor

## Day 14: Luxor to the Red Sea at Hurghada

After a lazy morning we leave the Nile Valley and drive to the Red Sea resort of Hurghada where we check into a 5-star resort. Your stay here is on a 'soft all inclusive' basis, with all meals, soft drinks and snacks included but not alcoholic beverages.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurghada - 5-star resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 15: Red Sea at Hurghada, free day**

Your day is free today to relax and enjoy your time by the Red Sea. Hurghada is world famous for its scuba diving and snorkelling and the rich Red Sea marine life here attracts divers from all over the world. Other adventurous activities available include wind surfing and kite surfing, glass bottomed submarines, quad biking, camel rides and sea fishing trips. Our local rep based in Hurghada will be on hand to help make any arrangements. Hurghada itself has an interesting marina and old town to explore.

If you wish, we can book extra nights in the resort in Hurghada for you to extend your time here - please contact us for details and prices.

*Note: Please note that when adding extra nights in Hurghada you will leave the group here and miss the remaining activities in Cairo. You can either finish the tour in Hurghada or return later to Cairo. Please contact us for more information and customised pricing.*

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurghada 5-star resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 16: Drive to Cairo, Old Cairo & Khan-el-Khalili bazaar tour**

We drive back to Cairo this morning (approx.. 5hrs) and check into a city centre hotel. An upgrade to an internal flight is also available on request. In the late afternoon we take a guided walk through the back streets and bazaars in Old Cairo. We'll walk through the huge Bab al-Futuh gateway and explore streets dedicated to metalwork, spices, pottery, fabric, jewelery and anything else you can imagine as we gradually enter the more touristy Khan-el-Khalili bazaar. We'll have time for a break to try some mint tea and a shisha pipe and this is a great final opportunity to pick up some souvenirs of your time in Egypt.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cairo 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Hurghada to Cairo flight upgrade

## **Day 17: Cairo, free time, departure airport transfer**

Your time is free today for some last minute sightseeing or shopping until we transfer you to the airport for your departure flight. If you have an afternoon or evening flight departure, then a half-day tour of Coptic Cairo and the Citadel is available today, or you could take another half-day tour to learn more about the evolution of pyramid building at Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis. tours are also available today. Alternatively you can add extra nights to your time in Cairo which would allow you to take a day trip to the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Alexandria day trip || Cairo city tour || Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis || Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - post-tour

## **Included**

- 5 nights in 3 to 4-star hotels in Jordan
- Jordan village homestay in Rasoun, and Bedouin desert camp in Wadi Rum
- 6 nights in 5-star hotels in Egypt
- Overnight sleeper train from Cairo to Aswan in private twin-berth cabins (flight upgrade available)
- Overnight Nile felucca sailboat trip (hotel upgrade available)
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- All transport and transfers in private AC vehicles (plus Bedouin jeeps in Wadi Rum)
- Sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Services of an English speaking tour leader and local guides in Jordan
- Services of a local Egyptologist guide in Egypt
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Internal flight from Hurghada to Cairo (2019 only)

## Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Amman to Cairo flight (available on request or bookable with your international flight ticket)
- Jordan Visa fees (free visa available with your Jordan Pass - see tour notes)
- Egypt Visa fees (available on arrival for US\$25 for most nationalities)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees in Jordan (included in your Jordan Pass, approx. US\$99 - see tour notes)
- Entrance fees in Egypt (allow approx. US\$85)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tipping kitty in Egypt (allow US\$45) plus tour guide tips
- Tips in Jordan
- Hotel gala dinners (see Tour notes)
- Any other items not mentioned above

## Notes

### Hotel Gala Dinners:

Many of Egypt and Jordan's hotels and Nile cruise boats arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is often optional on Christmas Eve (24 Dec) but may be compulsory on New Year's Eve (31 Dec), whether you attend or not. Prices can range from around US\$50 to over US\$150 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. More information is available on request.

**2019 Departures - 16 days** - During 2019 this tour runs as a 16-day trip, including an internal flight from Hurghada to Cairo on Day 15.

**2020 Departures - 17 days** - During 2020 this tour adds an extra night to your time in Luxor and then takes advantage of the fast new road from Hurghada to Cairo instead of flying. This journey takes around 5 hours, which ends up around the same as taking the flight, with all the airport check-ins and luggage collection etc. taken into account.

# Options

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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.

## Petra by night

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$29.00

This magical experience takes you in through the narrow and winding Siq to the Treasury at the entrance to Petra. The whole route and the sand in front of the Treasury is lit up by numerous candles creating a beautiful and atmospheric sight. While at the Treasury you'll also enjoy some traditional Bedouin music and tea.

Pricing includes your entrance ticket and any transfers required to and from your hotel. Please bring a flashlight/torch with you for this trip as the path through the Siq is rough underfoot in places and while there are candles all the way, a torch provides extra assurance against mis-stepping.

## Abu Simbel overland

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$120.00

The temples built by Ramses II at Abu Simbel are one of Egypt's highlights, and have a fascinating story behind them to go with their impressive size. When Lake Nasser was flooded, the final water level was going to submerge several temples, the most important of which being Abu Simbel. The temple was therefore dismantled completely and rebuilt further up the hillside where it sits today. The temple stands today as a testament to Ramses II and the great building prowess of the ancient Egyptians, as well as to modern engineering. We depart Aswan early in the morning to join an escorted convoy which departs Aswan at around 04.30. This gets us to Abu Simbel to see the temples in the light of the rising sun, and we then have a guided tour with one of our Egyptologists and some free time before we drive back to Aswan (approx. 3 hours drive each way, with around 2 hours at the temples). All transfers, guide, and entrance fees are included. The tour itinerary is designed so you will not miss any other activities if you choose this option. Note - we choose the overland route to get to Abu Simbel as the flight times there are unreliable and the journey using the flight is much more segmented (you get more rest on the coach), not to mention it is much more expensive to fly.

## Hot air balloon in Luxor

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$120.00

This popular optional tour starts early in the morning so that you experience the sunrise over the Valleys of the Kings & Queens, temples and desert. We endeavour to use the earliest flights of the day as they are timed to fit with the rising sun, this means that times may vary. You get around 1 hour in the air.

## **Cairo city tour**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$60.00

This half day guided tour of Cairo tour begins with Islamic areas including the Citadel of Saladdin, boasting the famous Alabaster Mosque of Mohammed Ali. Then we head onto the Coptic area of Cairo where the Romans constructed the fortress of Babylon. The church of St. Mary was built over the ruins of two towers of the fortress whilst it is more commonly known as the Hanging Church next stop is St. Sergius which is said to be the resting place of the Holy Family. The tour finishes at the Khan-el-Khalili bazaar.

Prices shown are based on a minimum of 2 people travelling. Solo traveller supplements apply.

## **Cairo to Aswan flight upgrade**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$135.00

This option provides an upgrade from the overnight sleeper train to an internal flight with Egypt Air. An extra night in the hotel in Cairo or Aswan is included in place of the train. Flight times vary and are subject to availability. Breakfast is included in the hotel, but you will miss the airline-style dinner provided on the sleeper train. Single room supplements apply.

## **Amman to Cairo flight**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$235.00

This flight is a required part of the tour. It is left out of the set tour price as it is often more cost effective for you to include this flight as part of your main international flight ticket. We are happy to book all your flights, just the Amman-Cairo flight, or none of them at all, whichever works best for you. Direct flights are available with both Egypt Air and Royal Jordanian Airlines. You can fly at anytime during the day - all transfers in Amman and Cairo are included.

## **Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$75.00

This half day guided tour on the outskirts of Cairo tour provides more insight into the history and evolution of pyramid building, and of the Egyptian civilisation. Our tours are based in the area of ancient Memphis, a former capital of Egypt. First we'll visit Saqqara, a huge desert necropolis which was built for the kings and nobles of the Old Kingdom. Here we see Zoser's 'step' pyramid and the adjacent Imhotep museum where we learn more about Memphis and the history of the region. Next we head to Dashour to see one of the next attempts at pyramid building. Dashour's moniker of the 'bent pyramid' shows they still had a bit to learn, but this is a fascinating site and the pyramid still has much of its original limestone cladding. We'll then return you to your hotel.

Prices are based on a minimum of 2 people choosing the option. Solo traveller supplements apply.



## Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - post-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$75.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## Extra day in Amman - pre-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$59.00

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.

## Upgrade from felucca to hotel in Aswan

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$70.00

Although our overnight felucca journey is an amazing experience and often a highlight of the tour, the basic overnight accommodation is not for everyone. This upgrade is designed for those who would like a little more comfort in place of the overnight felucca sailboat trip, where you sleep on the deck of the boat.

You may choose to sail on the felucca for a couple of hours with the main group, and have lunch and dinner on the boat and then get transferred back to your hotel in Aswan in the evening. Or you can remain in Aswan for the whole afternoon to look around the markets and Corniche independently, and not do any sailing at all, as you prefer (no meals are included if you remain in Aswan).

Your night in Aswan will be spent in a 5-star hotel. The next morning we will transfer you to rejoin the group after they leave the felucca, and the rest of your tour will continue as normal from there on. Prices shown are based on travelling in low season (April to September) and staying in a shared twin/double room.

High season and single room supplements apply.

## Single room supplement (JOSGAE18)

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$615.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

**Note:** The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

# Tour Notes

## 1. Accommodation

The hotels used on this tour are rated at the 3 and 4-star level in Jordan, and 5-star level in Egypt. This gradual increase is intentional to improve your comfort as your time away goes on. Local star ratings may vary from international standards but we ensure we use some of the best hotels available at the level stated. Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will have a private double room.

A friendly local homestay is included for one night in Rasoun village. Accommodation here is in shared rooms holding up to 4 people. There are a number of homes in the village that will accommodate guests, so depending on our final group size we may split across several houses. We will all eat together in one house with the hosts, who will also provide a tour of the village. All beds and bedding are provided. Bathrooms are separate and shared but quite basic. Overall you can expect a simple but comfortable, and very welcoming experience with good food and interesting insights into local village life in rural Jordan.

In Wadi Rum we use a Bedouin camp located inside the Wadi Rum Protected Area. Accommodation is in permanent traditional goat hair tents with proper beds and all bedding provided. Bathrooms are separate, though some en-suite tents are also available and subject to availability you can upgrade to these locally if you wish. You can also bring a sleeping bag if you wish, and find a sheltered spot on the rocks on the edge of the camp and sleep under the stars.

Please see the Felucca note for more information on the overnight Nile felucca cruise.

One night is also included on a sleeper train in Egypt (see Transport).

### Gala Dinners

Many of Egypt and Jordan's hotels arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is often optional on Christmas Eve (24 Dec) but may be compulsory on New Year's Eve (31 Dec), whether you attend or not. Prices can range from around US\$50 to over US\$150 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. More information is available on request.

## 2. Felucca Sailboat

This tour features an overnight felucca cruise. Feluccas are very basic traditional Nile sailboats and are a fun and relaxing way to travel down the river. You sleep on the deck of the boat (mattresses and some blankets are provided, but we suggest that you bring a sleeping sheet, blanket or light sleeping bag during the winter months of November-February). There are no toilet facilities on board, but you will be joined several times each day and at night by our support boat where a toilet and warm showers will be available. Mosquito nets are provided for use while you are sleeping but you should bring mosquito repellent for the evenings and early mornings. Your Nubian boat crew will cook all your meals while on board and entertain you in the evenings.

If you would prefer some more comfort in place of the felucca cruise, then an upgrade to an extra night in the hotel in Amman is available. You then rejoin the group the next morning after they finish on the felucca, and carry on with them to Luxor.

### 3. 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.

In Jordan we use private AC minivans/minibuses for all the transfers and journeys throughout the tour, depending on the number of travellers in the group. The jeeps used in Wadi Rum are provided by the local Bedouins we work with, and while suitable for your desert safari, they may fall below the normal safety and quality standards for vehicles we use during the rest of our tours.

In Egypt we again use AC minivans/minibuses/coaches, many of which are fitted with speed limiters, and all are inspected and checked daily.

For the overnight train journey from Cairo to Aswan (approx. 12 hrs) this tour uses the overnight sleeper train. This train has private twin berth cabins with large seats and fold-down beds with sheets, pillow & blanket. The lockable cabins also have a washbasin and storage cupboard, and an airline tray-style evening meal and breakfast is included. If you wish you may upgrade this journey to an internal flight.

#### **Hurghada-Cairo flight**

We take an internal flight from Hurghada to Cairo at the end of the tour. This saves you a long 7-hour drive and gives you time to explore Cairo that day too. Our preferred flight on this day is around 08.30, however when this flight is unavailable or not operating we will also make use of the 05.30 flight.

#### **Amman to Cairo flight**

The connecting flight from Amman to Cairo is not included in the price of this tour. It is left out of the set tour price as it is sometimes more cost effective for you to include this flight as part of your main international flight ticket. We are happy to assist with all your flights, just the Amman-Cairo flight, or none of them at all, whichever works best for you. Direct flights are available with both Egypt Air and Royal Jordanian Airlines. To try to keep the group together we recommend Egypt Air flight MS720 which departs Amman between 09.30 and 10.30, though if necessary you can fly at other times too - all transfers in Amman and Cairo are included.

### 4. Transfers

Our Egypt and Jordan tours include a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Amman and Cairo airports, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers.

On arrival in Jordan our representative will meet you in the immigration hall of Amman airport, before passport control. They will assist with visa formalities and then help you with your luggage and take you to your hotel.

On arrival in Egypt, our representative will meet you in the immigration hall of Cairo airport before you get to passport control. They will assist with visa formalities before helping you collect your luggage and taking you to your hotel.

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

On our Shoestring group tours we do offer optional hotel upgrades in Jordan. This may mean that additional pick-up and drop-offs are required each day. We do endeavour to ensure that all hotels used are close to each other and to streamline and time arrangements to limit any extra driving time as much as possible.

## 5. 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.

## 6. 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, on our small group tours we won't ever put you in a full size coach packed with other people and just one guide. Having a smaller group size also allows us to stay in more interesting accommodation, like the homestay in Rasoun, and to include some activities and experiences that just wouldn't be possible with large numbers.

This tour has a minimum group size of 2, and maximum of 14 for the Jordan section, and 18 in Egypt where we may join with other travellers doing one of our Egypt only tours.

To accompany you on the tour in Jordan we provide an English speaking local tour leader/driver and specialist guides in Jerash, Amman and Petra. Groups of 5 or more will have both a driver and a professional guide throughout the trip. In Egypt a professional Egyptologist guide will accompany you for all the tours in Cairo, and then from Aswan to Luxor. We also have representatives in all the major towns/cities en-route who will look after the practical arrangements for the tour.

At Encounters Travel we only use local Jordanian and Egyptian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

## 7. Activity level

This tour includes several walks or hikes in Jordan and while you do not need to be super fit by any means, you should bring suitable footwear.

In the Ajloun Forest Reserve we will hike through scrubland and forest for several hours in the afternoon. The guide will vary the route and duration of the walk based on how everyone is feeling and the current weather.

In Dana Biosphere Reserve we'll take a short walk through the hills around the restored Dana village. Trails are generally always dry and a little rocky but we won't be taking one of the longer more challenging hikes here.

In Petra, you will be doing a lot of walking to explore the site. The minimum distance you'll walk, from the entrance to the Siq, through the Siq to the Treasury, through the site to the Theatre and Byzantine church, and then back out again, is around 8km. If you would like to hike up to the Monastery, or High Place of Sacrifice, you should expect to add another 2 or 3km, much of it up or down. You can take everything at your own pace, but do be prepared for a long day. Again comfortable walking shoes and a daypack are required.

There are no walks of similar durations on the Egypt section of the tour. However, access on and off the feluccas is by way of planks and steps, and you do need to be fairly mobile for this part of the trip.

## 8. Entrance Fees & Jordan Pass

The tour price does not include entrance fees to the sites visited on the tour.

### Jordan:

We strongly recommend that you purchase a **Jordan Pass** prior to your travel to Jordan. This is a special package that has been designed by the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities for tourists visiting Jordan. As well as including a discounted package of entrance fees covering all the sites in Jordan that you will visit on this tour (plus many others), the Jordan Pass also provides free downloadable digital brochures on each attraction, plus a free tourist visa for entering the country (40JD if obtained on arrival in Jordan).

The cost for the **Jordan Wanderer Pass** suitable for this tour is JD70 (approx. US\$99). Passes are available by completing a simple online form before you travel, taking care to make sure your passport details are entered correctly as this doubles as your visa application. Your Jordan Pass will then be emailed to you as a pdf document, which you should print out and bring with you. You will then need to show this print out at the immigration desk on arrival in Jordan to obtain your free entry visa, and also at each attraction where it will be scanned to confirm your entry. [Obtain your Jordan Pass here](#)

### Egypt:

Please check the Exclusions section above for a guide to the amount you should allow for this tour as these do vary from time to time (a 50% discount for minors or ISIC card holders is also often, but not always available). Your guide will be happy to collect payment for all the entrance fees at the start of the tour, and pay them for you as you go along if you wish.

## 9. Passports and Visas - Jordan

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. 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.

To promote tourism to the country, the Jordanian government has designed the **Jordan Pass**. This provides adults of most nationalities with a free single entry Jordan visa (for stays of 3 nights or more), a discounted package of entrance fees, and free digital brochures for the various sites in Jordan. Please check the Jordan Pass tour note for more information.

Double or multi entry visas for Jordan are no longer available and you will need to arrange two visas if you are doing a combination tour (eg. with Egypt and/or Israel) that visits Jordan more than once. Exceptions may occur if you are crossing to and from Israel via the King Hussein Bridge - please contact us for details.

If you wish to arrange your visa separately in advance, or if your stay will be shorter than four days/3 nights, then a visa fee of 40JD (approx. USD 57) will be due.

Families with children under 12 are recommended not to purchase the Jordan Pass as entrance fees are not charged in Jordan for children under 12. Our Jordan Family tour prices include your entrance fees and we will also arrange a free visa for you on your arrival into Amman airport.

Other nationalities may require a visa prior to arrival and to obtain this in advance, please contact your local Jordanian embassy or consulate or a visa agency for details. In addition, if you plan to enter Jordan via the southern Wadi Araba crossing (Eilat-Aqaba) or the Allenby Bridge/King Hussein border with Israel in the north, you will need to obtain your Jordan visa in advance as these are not available on arrival at the border.

## 10. Passports and Visas - Egypt

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. 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.

We recommend that you contact your closest Egyptian consulate or embassy for current information for your nationality.

In general official advice is that all nationalities obtain their Egypt visas in advance, as we cannot guarantee that you can get them in the airport. An online e-visa is available through <https://visa2egypt.gov.eg/eVisa/>. Please do not use any other website as there are many scam sites offering Egypt e-visas.

In practice however, many nationalities (including British and European, Australian, New Zealand, USA, Canadian) can and do obtain their visas on arrival in Cairo airport. The process is much quicker and simpler, the cost is currently **US\$25 p/p** and must be paid in hard currency (i.e. GBP, USD or EUR) - you'll be given change in local currency if necessary. There are no forms to fill in and you don't need to bring passport photos. Visas are issued at one of the bank desks in the immigration hall, before you get to passport control. Our representative will have met you by this stage and will assist with the process.

All African & Indian nationals, and some others, will need to obtain their visas in advance.

For further information on your visa requirements, please either contact us or your local Egyptian embassy/consulate.

## 11. Tipping

**Jordan:** Tipping is common practice in Jordan, as a sign of appreciation for services provided. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. US\$3-8 per person per day would be appropriate.

**Egypt:** Tipping is also very much a part of Egyptian culture and customs, and many people you meet along the way will expect and make it clear they are waiting for a tip. To make it easier for you to budget and to remove much of the stress and hassle of tipping lots of people as you go along, we collect a 'Tipping Kitty' at the start of your time in Egypt. Your guide will manage this as the tour goes along and ask one or more of the group members to assist and make some of the payments. The kitty provides tips for a wide range of people you'll meet along the tour including hotel porters, train and station staff, drivers, site guards, local reps etc. Please check the Excluded section below the tour itinerary for a budget for this tour. Your Egyptologist guide is not included in this kitty and you may tip them at the end of your tour subject to your satisfaction with and appreciation of the service they have provided. Again you should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. As a guideline, approx. US\$3-8 per person per day would be appropriate.

## 12. 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:

Egypt: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Jordan: Tetanus, Hepatitis A

Israel: Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis

Lebanon: Diptheria, Hepatitis A

Malaria is not generally present unless it has been contracted abroad; you do not need to take malaria prophylactics.

More information is available here: [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Israel](#), [Lebanon](#)

Note: We are aware of some places in Egypt using 'black henna' instead of pure brown henna. Black henna contains a chemical dye PPD (paraphenylenediamine) which can result in severe allergic reactions and resultant scarring. To be safe we recommend avoiding any henna tattoos while in Egypt unless you are certain they are using pure brown henna.

## 13. Time

The time in Egypt, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon is GMT plus 2 hours and in UAE GMT plus 3 hours. Daylight saving adjustments have historically been applied in some years but not others. At present it appears that there will be no daylight saving changes in Egypt 2016 and beyond, though this may change at short notice (with a resulting impact on flight times and schedules). In Jordan and Israel, daylight saving of one hour is generally applied between the end of March and the end of October, making it GMT plus 3 hours. Exact dates vary from year to year and sometimes the changes may be scrapped altogether.

## 14. Voltage

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). 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 (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

## 15. Money - Jordan

The local currency in Jordan is the Jordanian Dinar (JD). You do not need to arrange to bring any Jordanian Dinar with you to Jordan as exchange facilities are available in the international airports and in most hotels, banks and bureau de changes in major towns. You should try to obtain and keep hold of small denomination notes or coins on you during the tour as these are useful for toilets, tips and small purchases. ATMs are readily available in major towns and many local shops will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

While in Jordan you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in Jordanian Dinar, though tips for guides and drivers may be paid in hard currency (GBP, USD, EUR).

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

## 16. Money - Egypt

The local currency in Egypt is the Egyptian Pound, often denoted 'LE'. The Egyptian Pound can vary significantly in value against the British Pound, but sticks fairly close to the value of the US Dollar. You do not need to arrange to bring any Egyptian Pounds with you to Egypt, as change facilities are available in all the hotels, airports and banks. You should try to obtain and keep hold of small denomination notes or coins on you during the tour as these are useful for toilets, tips and small purchases. ATMs are readily available in major towns and many local shops will accept VISA/Mastercard or Amex, but may charge fees of up to 10% - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

While in Egypt you will need sufficient funds to cover meals not included in the itinerary, drinks, snacks, souvenirs and personal expenses such as laundry. These should generally all be paid for in Egyptian Pounds. You may also need to pay for the tour Tipping Kitty and site Entrance Fees while you are in Egypt. Payments for these may be made to your tour guide in hard currency (USD, GBP, EUR) at the start of your tour. Please see your tour Included/Excluded details for more information and guideline amounts for these.

It is difficult to recommend a level of personal spending money which will suit everyone as this can differ greatly, but as a guideline, we would suggest allowing USD 15-25 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

## 17. What to take

**Luggage:** Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Egypt and Jordan. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Clothing:** Most of your time in Egypt will be in a hot weather, while the climate in Jordan varies widely from hot days in the summer to cool and sometimes wet days in the winter months. However, at night, and especially in the deserts, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required on the cruise boats or in 4 or 5-star hotel restaurants. Long sleeves are recommended to protect from mosquitoes if you are on the felucca. Modesty rates highly in Egypt and Jordan, especially for women, so to respect the local culture & people, please ensure all clothes are loose fitting and not revealing. Shorts (not hot-pants) are OK in tourist sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (we suggest that your shoulders should remain covered). In the centre of Cairo and Amman, and when visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

**Other items:** We recommend that you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, small towel, money belt, small torch, camera & charger. If you will be travelling on a felucca sailboat in Egypt then we recommend bringing a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner all year round for comfort, and a light sleeping bag in the winter months (November to February). If your tour includes an overnight Bedouin camp in Jordan then bedding (sheets, blankets, pillow) is provided but we recommend bringing a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner for comfort all year round (even with the best efforts, sand does find its way pretty much everywhere). In the winter months, or if you think you would like to sleep under the stars instead of in your tent, then we recommend you bring a sleeping bag with you as it can get very cold at night.

**Footwear:** For tours that are going on board a felucca sailboat, or walking on the Siq Trail in Wadi Mujib, we recommend that you bring some footwear that you don't mind getting completely wet. As there is a fair amount of walking involved on many of our tours in Jordan and Egypt, whether that be just sightseeing or some hiking, we



recommend you bring comfortable walking shoes with you. You do not need any smart dress shoes, unless you want to visit some fancy restaurants and to dress up accordingly.

## 18. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Saturdays throughout the year. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers and a maximum of 18. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request. Please do check our website for special offers on particular dates.

## 19. 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.

## 20. 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 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.*

## 21. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

## 22. 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).

## 23. 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](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](http://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

## 24. 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.



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**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.

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