ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Lebanon & Egypt Encounters

COUNTRY(IES)	Lebanon , Egypt
TOUR TYPE	Small Group
TRANSPORT	A/C car/minibus/coach, sleeper train, felucca sailboat
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 18
DURATION	17 days
STARTS	Beirut, Lebanon
ENDS	Cairo, Egypt
MEALS	Breakfasts - 16, Lunches - 4, Dinners - 4

TOUR ROUTE MAP **17 Days**



ROUTE: **Beirut** (Start) → **Kadisha Valley** → **Byblos** → **Zahle** → **Beirut** → **Cairo** → **Beirut** → **Cairo** → **Aswan** → **Luxor** → **Hurghada** → **Cairo** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Beirut, Beiteddine, Tyre, Sidon, Baalbek, Ksara Caves, Cedars, Qadisha Valley, Baatara Gorge, Byblos, Jeita Grotto, Harissa, Pyramids, Sphinx, Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), Philae Temple, Felucca, Karnak, Valley of Kings, Red Sea

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive in Beirut, transfer to hotel

Meet the representative at Beirut International Airport and transfer directly to the hotel. Once settled into the accommodation, enjoy the remaining time at leisure. You may relax after the journey or explore independently if you wish, keeping the arrival day flexible before the more structured sightseeing and activities that follow.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Beirut International Airport**
  Arrive at Beirut International Airport and meet your tour representative at the arrivals hall. You will be assisted before beginning your transfer into the city to check in at your hotel.
- **Transfer from Beirut Airport to City Hotel**
  Take a comfortable transfer from Beirut International Airport to your hotel in the city. This short journey brings you into Lebanon's vibrant capital to begin your stay.

- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Beirut hotel	None	Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

DAY 2 Jeita Grotto, Harissa cable car & Baatara Gorge

The day includes Jeita Grotto, the cable-car journey to Harissa, the shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon and Baatara Gorge before travelling to Qadisha Valley for the overnight stay. Waterfall flow at Baatara is seasonal and should not be guaranteed year-round. The source specifies a monastery setting for the night but does not identify the individual monastery, so no name should be added.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Jeita Grotto**
  Explore the impressive Jeita Grotto, a vast network of limestone caves featuring striking stalactites and stalagmites. Depending on water levels, you may visit both the upper galleries on foot and the lower caves by boat.
- **Explore Harissa (Our Lady of Lebanon)**
  Visit the important Christian shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa and ascend by cable car to the hilltop basilica. From here, enjoy sweeping views across the Bay of Jounieh, one of the Middle East's most beautiful coastlines.
- **Explore Baatara Gorge**
  Discover the Baatara Gorge sinkhole, a dramatic cavern with three natural stone bridges and a seasonal 255-metre waterfall. The site offers spectacular views, short walking trails, and a chance to explore the surrounding mountain village of Douma.
- **Drive from Jeita to Qadisha Valley**
  Travel from Jeita into the mountains of northern Lebanon, passing rural villages and dramatic scenery. This drive ends in the historic Qadisha Valley, where you will spend the night in a local monastery or guesthouse.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Qadisha Valley monastery or guesthouse	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 3 Qadisha Valley, Cedars Ski Resort & Becharre

Those interested may rise early this morning to join morning prayers with the monks of the monastery. After breakfast, there is time to explore the Qadisha Valley, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is known as the Holy Valley, and the Holy River, Nahr Qadisha, flows through it. Many caves are found along its steep cliffs, used as shelters and burial sites in ancient times, and it's a great place for a short morning hike. The first stop after leaving

the valley is the nearby village of Becharre, the birthplace of the iconic novelist and poet of Lebanon, Kahlil Gibran. The village contains a museum dedicated to him, featuring his paintings and manuscripts. Next comes the Cedars Ski Resort, famous for skiing and snowboarding. The area known as the Cedars of God is found nearby, and contains the last remaining groves of the cedar forests that once thrived in the region. The famous cedar trees of Lebanon - Cedrus Libani- are mentioned in the Old Testament and are the national symbol of the country. Later today you arrive in Byblos, an ancient Phoenician city that is thought to have been inhabited for up to 7000 years. Locally, the city is known as Jbeil and is another UNESCO World Heritage site. Byblos is filled with significant historical and archaeological sites, and also features a lovely Phoenician harbour.

ACTIVITIES

- **Hike the Qadisha Valley**
  Enjoy a short morning hike through the Qadisha Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its dramatic cliffs and hidden monastic caves. The valley offers peaceful scenery, historic hermit sites, and beautiful natural landscapes.
- **Explore Becharre (Gibran Museum)**
  Visit the Gibran Museum in Becharre, dedicated to the life and works of Lebanese poet and artist Kahlil Gibran. Explore his manuscripts, paintings, and personal belongings in the village where he was born.
- **Explore Cedars of God Forest**
  Explore the Cedars of God, one of Lebanon's last surviving ancient cedar groves mentioned in the Old Testament. This protected forest offers beautiful mountain scenery and a glimpse of the country's national tree.
- **Drive from Becharre to Byblos**
  Drive from Becharre to the coastal city of Byblos, travelling through scenic mountain and valley roads. The route offers views of rural villages before descending to one of Lebanon's oldest and most historic cities.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Byblos hotel	Breakfast

DAY 4 Morning in Byblos, Ksara Winery

Begin in Byblos with visits to the historic harbour, old town and archaeological area before travelling inland to the Bekaa Valley. The afternoon is focused on Ksara Winery, including its underground cellar caves and a guided tasting. The day therefore combines coastal archaeology with a wine-related visit in the countryside, moving from ancient urban history to a long-established agricultural and production tradition.

ACTIVITIES

- **Discover Byblos Ruins**
  Explore the ancient ruins of Byblos, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Wander through its Phoenician, Roman, and Crusader remains while enjoying views of the harbour and medieval fortifications.
- **Drive from Byblos to Ksara**
  Travel from Byblos to the Ksara region, passing coastal landscapes and rolling inland hills. This scenic route leads you toward Lebanon's historic wine-producing heartland.

- **Explore Ksara Winery**
  Visit Chateau Ksara, Lebanon's oldest winery, known for its vast cave tunnels used as natural cellars. Enjoy a guided tour of the historic site followed by a wine tasting session featuring the estate's renowned varieties.
- **Drive from Ksara to Zahlé**
  Continue from Ksara to nearby Zahlé, a charming town in the Beqaa Valley. The short journey offers views of vineyards, fertile plains, and the surrounding mountains.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Zahle guesthouse	Breakfast

DAY 5 Baalbek & Anjar

Visit Baalbek first and focus on its major Roman religious complex before travelling onwards to Anjar. The second site preserves an unusually clear example of Umayyad town planning, with public buildings, baths and commercial areas still visible. These two archaeological locations form the entire supported sightseeing programme, and the afternoon concludes with the drive back to Beirut without adding wineries or other Bekaa Valley stops.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Zahlé to Baalbek**
  Travel from Zahlé deeper into the Bekaa Valley to reach Baalbek. See fertile fields framed by surrounding mountain ranges.
- **Explore Baalbek Temple Complex**
  Explore the vast Baalbek temple complex, one of the greatest surviving examples of Roman architecture. Wander through monumental temples dedicated to Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury, each showcasing intricate stonework and extraordinary preservation.
- **Drive from Baalbek to Anjar**
  Drive from Baalbek to the nearby Umayyad site of Anjar. Cross the Bekaa Valley past orchards and villages.
- **Explore Anjar Ruins**
  Visit the Umayyad ruins of Anjar, a planned 8th-century city built by Caliph Walid. Discover its mosques, palaces, baths, and over 600 ancient shops that once formed an important commercial hub in the Bekaa Valley.
- **Drive from Anjar to Beirut**
  Travel from Anjar back to Beirut through the scenic Bekaa Valley and surrounding mountains. This afternoon drive brings you to the city for your overnight stay.
- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Beirut hotel	Breakfast

DAY 6 Deir al Qamar, Beiteddine & Beirut City Tour

Begin in the Chouf Mountains with time in Deir al Qamar, a historic stone village that once served as Lebanon’s capital. Continue to Beiteddine Palace and explore its courtyards, mosaics and refined nineteenth-century architecture. Return to Beirut in the afternoon for a city tour including the Souks, Corniche, Downtown and Pigeon Grotto, combining mountain heritage with a broad introduction to the capital’s urban and coastal character.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Beirut to Deir al Qamar**
  Travel from Beirut into the Chouf Mountains toward the historic village of Deir al Qamar. The scenic drive passes traditional stone houses and terraced hillsides, offering a glimpse of rural Lebanese landscapes.
- **Explore Deir al Qamar**
  Explore the historic village of Deir al Qamar, once the capital of Lebanon in the 17th century. Its narrow lanes, stone houses and historic squares showcase the character and heritage of the Chouf region.
- **Drive from Deir al Qamar to Beiteddine Palace**
  Continue from Deir al Qamar to the nearby Beiteddine Palace through winding mountain roads. The short drive offers views of forested hills and traditional villages along the route.
- **Explore Beiteddine Palace**
  Visit the 19th-century Beiteddine Palace, an architectural masterpiece built by Emir Bashir. Its ornate courtyards, arched halls, and preserved interiors reflect the luxury and craftsmanship of the Ottoman era.
- **Drive from Beiteddine to Beirut**
  Travel from Beiteddine back to Beirut, descending from the Chouf Mountains toward the Mediterranean coast. The drive offers changing scenery as rural landscapes give way to the vibrant capital.
- **Walk Through Beirut City**
  Take a city walk through Beirut, exploring its blend of modern architecture, historic quarters, and coastal scenery. Highlights include the Beirut Souks, the Corniche, downtown landmarks, and the famous Raouché Pigeon Rocks.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Beirut hotel	Breakfast

DAY 7 Tyre & Sidon

Travel through southern Lebanon with visits first in Tyre and then Sidon. Tyre provides the principal archaeological focus, while Sidon adds the Sea Castle, Great Mosque, Khan el Franj and old souks. After completing the scheduled sightseeing, continue north to Beirut. The day remains centred on the named Phoenician, Crusader and urban heritage sites without introducing additional stops beyond those provided.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Beirut to Tyre**
  Drive south from Beirut along the coast towards Tyre. The journey follows the Mediterranean shoreline past several coastal towns.
- **Explore Tyre Archaeological Site**
  Explore the ancient city of Tyre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site rich in Phoenician and Roman history. The archaeological area showcases extensive ruins, coastal views, and centuries of cultural significance.
- **Drive from Tyre to Sidon**
  Leave Tyre and drive north to Sidon. The short coastal drive links two of Lebanon's most historic ports.
- **Explore Sidon Sea Castle**
  Visit Sidon, one of the oldest Phoenician cities, known for its Crusader Sea Castle and historic old town. Explore its mosques, old markets, and traditional caravanserai, reflecting centuries of coastal Lebanese culture.
- **Explore Sidon Great Mosque (Al in Omari Mosque)**
  Visit the historic Sidon Great Mosque, a significant medieval Islamic landmark built over a former Crusader structure. Its courtyard, arches, and restored prayer hall reflect centuries of Lebanese coastal heritage.
- **Explore Khan el Franj**
  Explore Khan el Franj, a 17th-century caravanserai built for merchants and travelers. Its stone courtyard and arcaded rooms offer insight into Sidon's former role as a major Levantine trading hub.
- **Explore Sidon Old Souks**
  Walk through Sidon's atmospheric old souks, filled with traditional workshops, spice stalls, and local crafts. These narrow market streets reflect the city's vibrant everyday culture and historic trading traditions.
- **Drive from Sidon to Beirut**
  Travel north from Sidon along the Mediterranean coast to reach Beirut. This scenic transfer links two of Lebanon's most historic and vibrant cities.
- **Free Time in Beirut**
  Enjoy free time after your arrival to settle into your hotel or explore the surrounding streets at your own pace. Beirut's lively atmosphere offers plenty of cafés and shops within easy reach.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Beirut hotel	Breakfast

DAY 8 Fly to Cairo and transfer to hotel

Arrive in Cairo and meet the local team at the airport, where assistance is provided with visas and luggage before the transfer to your city hotel. Once settled, the rest of the day is free to rest after travelling or explore nearby streets and cafés independently. The relaxed arrival gives you time to adjust to the capital before the organised sightseeing begins, while keeping the schedule free of fixed visits.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrive at Cairo International Airport**
  Arrival at Cairo International Airport with meet & assist for visa and luggage handling.

- **Transfer from Cairo Airport to City Hotel**
  Enjoy a comfortable transfer from Cairo International Airport to your city hotel. Sit back and take in your first glimpses of Egypt's bustling capital as you travel through its lively streets.
- **Free Time at Cairo**
  Enjoy some leisure time in Cairo to relax, explore local cafés, or take in the city's vibrant streets before continuing your journey.

Departing Beirut: Airport Transfer & Flight to Cairo

Transfer from the Beirut hotel to Beirut International Airport and board the scheduled flight to Cairo. The source confirms the hotel transfer and international flight but does not specify sightseeing, meals, a Cairo airport transfer or activities after landing, so none should be added. The collection is focused on departure from Beirut and the air journey to Egypt’s capital.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Beirut to Beirut International Airport**
  Transfer from your Beirut hotel to Beirut International Airport for your onward flight. This short drive marks the start of your travel day as you depart Lebanon and head to Egypt.
- **Travel from Flight Beirut to Cairo**
  Fly from Beirut to Cairo to begin the Egypt section of your tour. This cross-country flight brings you from Lebanon's coastline to the heart of Egypt, where your local team will be waiting on arrival.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Cairo 5-star hotel	Breakfast	Cairo city tour, Wadi Rayan day trip (Valley of the Whales), Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis

DAY 9 Cairo, Pyramids, Sphinx & Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) tour

Spend time at Giza among the pyramids and Sphinx before visiting the Grand Egyptian Museum with an Egyptologist. The museum contains an enormous collection, so the scheduled visit focuses on selected highlights, with an optional re-visit package available for those wishing to explore further during later free time. In the evening, transfer to the station for the approximately 12-hour sleeper train to Aswan, including dinner and a private twin-berth compartment.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore the Great Pyramids of Giza**
  Stand in awe before the Great Pyramids of Giza, the last remaining Wonder of the Ancient World. Learn about its construction and the pharaohs who built these monumental tombs that have stood for over 4,000 years.
- **Explore Great Sphinx of Giza**
  Marvel at the enigmatic Great Sphinx, guarding the plateau with its lion's body and human face. This ancient monument is one of Egypt's most enduring symbols, shrouded in mystery and legend.

- **Explore Grand Egyptian Museum**

  Explore the world-renowned Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), home to one of the greatest collections of ancient artefacts including the treasures of Tutankhamun. Your visit offers a fascinating glimpse into Egypt's royal past.

- **Travel from Overnight Sleeper Train: Cairo to Aswan**

  Board the overnight sleeper train from Cairo's historic Ramses Station for a relaxing journey south to Aswan. Enjoy a private berth, dinner service, and the rhythmic motion of the rails as you travel through Egypt's timeless desert landscapes.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Sleeper train	Breakfast,Dinner	Cairo to Aswan flight upgrade

DAY 10 — Aswan, Nubian Village and Philae Temple

Reach Aswan and visit Philae Temple before continuing to the Nubian village experience. The temple introduces the ancient religious heritage of the region, while the village visit shifts the focus to living Nubian culture along the Nile. Together, the two visits provide contrasting perspectives on southern Egypt without adding activities beyond the temple and community experience.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrival in Aswan**

  Arrive in the serene riverside city of Aswan, where the Nile flows wide and calm. This laid-back southern gateway to ancient Nubia welcomes you with warm sunshine, friendly locals, and stunning river views.

- **Explore Philae Temple**

  Sail across the Nile to the magnificent Philae Temple, dedicated to the goddess Isis. This beautiful island sanctuary is one of Egypt's most atmospheric sites, with intricate carvings and tranquil surroundings that tell stories of ancient devotion.

- **Enjoy a Nubian Village Experience**

  Sail along the Nile on a relaxing trip to a traditional Nubian village where you'll spend the night at a Nubian style guesthouse. Discover vibrant mud-brick homes painted in bold colours, meet friendly locals, and experience authentic Nubian hospitality that reflects centuries of culture along the river.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Aswan 5 star hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 11 — Abu Simbel option. Nile Felucca Cruise

Sail from Aswan on a traditional felucca and spend the night aboard as the journey continues along the Nile. Palm-lined banks, desert landscapes and riverside settlements provide the scenery during the day, while the slower pace

offers a different perspective on Upper Egypt. The overnight stay keeps the experience centred on the river itself before travelling onwards the following day.

ACTIVITIES

- **Boarding Felucca: Aswan to Downstream**
  Board a traditional felucca and drift downstream along the Nile, taking in serene views of palm-lined banks and timeless Nubian landscapes. This slow, graceful sail captures the essence of the Egyptian River experience.
- **Overnight Sail on Felucca**
  Spend a peaceful night aboard a traditional felucca, drifting down the Nile beneath a canopy of stars. This authentic sailing experience offers a rare glimpse of Egypt's timeless river life.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
On board felucca	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner	Abu Simbel overland, Upgrade from felucca to hotel in Aswan

DAY 12 — Edfu temple, Luxor temple at night

Begin with a morning sail on the Nile aboard a traditional felucca and enjoy the quiet river scenery before stepping ashore to visit Edfu Temple. Explore the well-preserved sanctuary dedicated to Horus, then continue north towards Luxor as the journey moves from river travel into one of Egypt’s richest archaeological regions. The day combines relaxed sailing with one major temple visit and onward travel to the next destination.

ACTIVITIES

- **Disembarkation in Felucca in Aswan**
  Disembark your traditional felucca in Aswan after a scenic journey along the Nile. Meet your road transport and prepare to continue north toward Edfu.
- **Drive from Aswan to Edfu**
  Travel by road from Aswan to Edfu, passing rural villages and Nile-side farmland. This northbound drive leads to one of Egypt's most impressive and best-preserved temples.
- **Explore Temple of Edfu**
  Explore the magnificent Temple of Horus in Edfu, one of Egypt's best-preserved ancient temples. Dedicated to the falcon god Horus, its towering columns and hieroglyphs offer a vivid glimpse into Ptolemaic-era craftsmanship.
- **Drive from Edfu to Luxor**
  Travel along the scenic Nile Valley as you journey from Edfu to Luxor. Enjoy views of fertile farmlands, small riverside villages, and glimpses of ancient temples that line this historic route.
- **Explore Luxor Temple at Night**
  Explore the magnificent Luxor Temple under the night sky, when its ancient columns and hieroglyphs are bathed in golden light. The illuminated complex creates a magical atmosphere that brings Egypt's history vividly to life.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Luxor 5-star hotel	Breakfast

DAY 13

Luxor, West bank tour, Karnak temple

Cross the Nile to the West Bank of Luxor this morning, a realm steeped in ancient history and shrouded in the mystique of pharaohs and their eternal resting places. Exploration begins at the Valley of the Kings, a vast necropolis where generations of pharaohs were laid to rest in elaborately decorated tombs; venture into several of these tombs and marvel at the vibrant hieroglyphs and intricate paintings that adorn their walls, chambers that continue to reveal their secrets to archaeologists and make this one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world. The West Bank adventure continues at Deir el-Medina, a fascinating village that was once home to the skilled artisans who constructed and decorated the royal tombs, where you explore the remains of this ancient community and gain insights into the lives of the workers and their families. Next, be captivated by the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, a unique mortuary temple built into the cliffs whose elegant colonnades and terraces offer stunning views of the surrounding landscape, and no visit to the West Bank would be complete without encountering the Colossi of Memnon, two colossal statues that have stood guard over the Theban necropolis for millennia. In the afternoon, cross back to the East Bank to explore the sprawling complex of Karnak Temple, dedicated to the Theban Triad of Amun, Mut and Khonsu and a masterpiece of ancient Egyptian architecture, where you wander through vast courtyards, admire towering columns and decipher the intricate carvings that adorn the walls while your guide unravels the temple’s complex history, revealing its secrets and explaining its significance as a religious and cultural centre for over 2,000 years. For those seeking an unforgettable experience, an optional hot air balloon flight over the West Bank is available this morning, soaring above the Valley of the Kings, the temples and the Nile as the sun rises and paints the landscape in golden hues; expect an early start to catch the sunrise. This holdings gathers the royal tombs, artisans’ homes, temples and colossi that shaped the glory of Thebes.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Valley of the Kings**
  Explore the legendary Valley of the Kings, burial site of Egypt's greatest pharaohs, including Tutankhamun. Step inside beautifully painted tombs that reveal stories of the afterlife and royal power.
- **Explore Deir el in Medina**
  Discover Deir el-Medina, the ancient village of artisans who built and decorated the royal tombs. Its beautifully preserved wall paintings and workers' homes reveal the daily life of Egypt's master craftsmen.
- **Explore Temple of Hatshepsut**
  Admire the stunning mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, one of ancient Egypt's most remarkable female rulers. Set beneath dramatic cliffs, its elegant terraces celebrate her reign and divine legacy.
- **Explore Colossi of Memnon**
  Marvel at the towering Colossi of Memnon, twin statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III that have watched over the Theban Necropolis for more than 3,000 years. A breathtaking photo stop amid Luxor's open-air history.

- **Explore Karnak Temple**
  Wander through the awe-inspiring Karnak Temple complex, an enormous sanctuary dedicated to Amun-Ra. Its forest of columns, sacred lake, and intricate reliefs capture the grandeur of Egypt's New Kingdom.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Luxor 5-star hotel	Breakfast	Hot air balloon in Luxor

DAY 14 Luxor to the Red Sea at Hurghada

Travel overland from Luxor to Hurghada and experience the change from the Nile Valley to the Red Sea coast. The road journey occupies the main part of the day, followed by free time at the resort after arrival. Use the remaining hours to rest and enjoy the coastal surroundings, while any locally arranged marine activities remain personal choices rather than scheduled experiences.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Luxor to Hurghada**
  Travel across the Eastern Desert from Luxor to Hurghada, watching the golden landscape unfold as you approach the Red Sea coast, a scenic drive linking ancient wonders with seaside relaxation.
- **Free Time at the Hurghada Resort**
  Relax and unwind along the Red Sea in Hurghada. Enjoy resort facilities, stroll the palm-lined promenade, or take an optional walk through the city's Old Town to experience local life.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hurghada - 5-star resort	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 15 Red Sea at Hurghada, free day

Enjoy a blissful free day in Hurghada, where turquoise waters and golden beaches invite you to unwind. Spend the day soaking up the sun, swimming, or exploring the vibrant marine life beneath the waves. Whether you choose to relax at your resort or join optional excursions for snorkelling, diving, or desert adventures, Hurghada offers the perfect balance of leisure and discovery on Egypt’s Red Sea coast.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Day in Hurghada**
  Spend a leisurely day at your resort or by the Red Sea. Swim, snorkel, or simply lounge in the sunshine, the perfect pause to recharge before continuing your Egyptian adventure.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hurghada 5-star resort	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 16

Drive to Cairo, Old Cairo & Khan-el-Khalili bazzar tour

Leave Hurghada and travel from the Red Sea back to Cairo, where you check into a centrally located hotel before heading out for an afternoon walking tour. Explore traditional market streets associated with metalwork, spices, pottery and textiles, pass through Bab al-Futuh and continue towards Khan el-Khalili. Time for mint tea, shisha and independent souvenir browsing brings the evening to a relaxed close within Cairo’s historic commercial quarter.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Hurghada to Cairo**
  Enjoy a scenic overland drive from the Red Sea resort town of Hurghada to Egypt's bustling capital, Cairo. Pass through vast desert landscapes and glimpse local villages along the way, a journey that beautifully contrasts the calm coast with the energy of the city.
- **Guided Walk Through Old Cairo Bazaars**
  Take a guided walk through Old Cairo's atmospheric back streets, passing traditional workshops and specialty market lanes. This route offers an authentic glimpse into the city's historic trading culture.
- **Explore Bab al in Futuh Gate**
  Explore Bab al-Futuh, one of the monumental medieval gateways to Old Cairo. The gate's towers and thick stone walls mark the historic northern entrance to the city's ancient market district.
- **Explore Khan El Khalili Bazaar**
  Wander through the lively Khan El Khalili Bazaar, Cairo's most famous marketplace. Explore its maze of alleys filled with crafts, spices, jewellery, textiles, and traditional cafés offering a glimpse into Egypt's vibrant heritage.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Cairo 5-star hotel	Breakfast	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 your transfer 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.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time at Cairo**
  Enjoy some leisure time in Cairo to relax, explore local cafés, or take in the city's vibrant streets before continuing your journey.

- **Departure Transfer: Cairo Hotel to Airport**
  Transfer from your Cairo hotel to the airport for your departing flight. Reflect on your unforgettable journey through Egypt as you bid farewell to this historic land.
- **Departure from Cairo International Airport**
  Your tour concludes at Cairo International Airport, where you complete departure formalities and continue with your onward flight.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Alexandria day trip, Cairo city tour, Wadi Rayan day trip (Valley of the Whales), Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - post-tour

INCLUDED

- 12 nights in 3, 4 & 5-star hotels
- 1 night in guesthouse/hotel in Zahle
- 1 night in monastery accommodation in Qadisha Valley
- 1 night on board felucca sailboat with support boat (hotel upgrade available)
- 1 night on board sleeper train from Cairo to Aswan (flight & hotel upgrade available)
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- Entrance fees to sites visited whilst in Lebanon
- All sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Wine tasting in Ksara Caves
- English speaking guide for all tours in Lebanon
- Services of a local Egyptologist guide for all the sightseeing tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (16 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners)

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Beirut to Cairo Flight (available on request)
- Lebanon Visa fees (free on arrival for most nationalities)
- Egypt Visa fees (US$25 available on arrival for most nationalities)
- Entrance fees to sites visited whilst in Egypt (allow approx. US$81)
- Tipping kitty whilst in Egypt (allow US$65)
- Tips in Lebanon
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Hotel gala dinner supplements if applied on Christmas & New Year's Eve
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Hotel Gala Dinners

Many of Egypt'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$180 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. Please budget accordingly, especially for New Year's Eve. More information is available on request.

Tour 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.

Hot air balloon in Luxor

Min numbers: 1

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.
The price of this option is approximately $170.00. Please note that this option is only available to be booked locally, via your tour guide who will also advise you of the current price.

Alexandria day trip

Min numbers: 1

Alexandria is about 2.5 hours drive, north of Cairo on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. This ex colonial city is the second largest in Egypt and our visit will include the Roman amphitheatre with its twelve semi-circular marble tiers, the Catacombs of Kom al-Shoqafa which is the largest Roman cemetery in Alexandria, Pompey's Pillar, Fort Qaitbey (from outside), the famous modern library before returning to Cairo. If time allows you can tour inside Fort Qaitbey and we may also visit the Montazah Palace gardens. Lunch at a seafood restaurant is included. As the tour takes a full day you will either need a late evening flight departure on the last day of the tour to accommodated it, or to add an extra day to the start or end of your trip.

Prices are based on a minimum of 2 travellers choosing the option. Solo traveller supplements apply. Entrance fees to sites visited are not included (budget approx. USD 28)

Cairo city tour

Min numbers: 1

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. The entrance fees budget covers the Coptic Museum, the Citadel and the Sultan Hassan Mosque. Depending on your day, you may not have time to visit all of these.

Entrance fees to sites visited are not included (budget approx. USD 22)

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

Abu Simbel overland

Min numbers: 2

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 very early in the morning (around 4am), with the aim of getting to Abu Simbel to see the temples in the light of the rising sun. We then have a guided tour with one of our Egyptologists and some free time before we drive back to Aswan (approx. 3 1/2 hours drive each way, with around 2 hours at the temples). 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. Please note that we only offer Abu Simbel by Flight on private or tailor-made tours.

Entrance fees to the site (approx. US$17, 50% for children) are not included in the option price and should be paid locally . A minimum of 2 people is required to operate this option.

Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis

Min numbers: 1

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. Entrance fees to the sites visited are not included (budget approx. USD 21). Solo traveller supplements apply.

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

Min numbers: 1

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 Beirut - 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.

Felucca to Hotel upgrade

Min numbers: 1

If you would like some more comfort in place of sleeping on the deck of the felucca, then this option provides an extra night in the hotel or Nubian guesthouse accommodation in Aswan instead. You can still do some sailing on the boat in the afternoon and enjoy a meal on board, before getting dropped off and transferred back to your accommodation. Dinner is not included. You then rejoin the rest of the group after they finish on the felucca before continuing with the tour. Single room supplements apply.

Pyramids Camel Ride

Min numbers: 1

Experience the Giza Pyramids from a unique vantage point with an optional camel ride. This excursion takes you across the desert to a scenic view point, offering panoramic views of the pyramids. Capture memorable photos and enjoy the desert landscape.

Cairo Sunset Felucca

Min numbers: 1

Take a relaxing felucca ride on the Nile at sunset. See Cairo's landmarks from the water as the sky changes colour. Enjoy a peaceful break from the city, and get great photo opportunities of the skyline. This trip offers a calm way to

experience the Nile and create memorable moments of your time in Egypt.

The price of this option is based on a minimum of 2 travellers, single supplements may apply when this tour is operated for just 1 passenger.

Cairo Tower inc.transfers

Min numbers: 1

Experience breathtaking panoramic views of Cairo by night with an optional evening visit to the iconic Cairo Tower. This trip includes convenient round-trip transfers from your hotel, ensuring a comfortable and hassle-free journey. Ascend to the tower's observation deck and witness the city's glittering skyline, the Nile River, and the illuminated landmarks stretching into the distance.

Please note: The Cairo Tower entrance fee is not included and is approximately $8. Pricing is based on a minimum of 2 passengers, a single supplement applies when this tour is operated for just 1 adult.

Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) Visit

Min numbers: 1

Elevate your Egyptian exploration with an unmissable optional guided visit to the awe-inspiring, brand new Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) in Cairo. This monumental museum is a landmark achievement, eagerly anticipated for years, and now ready to share its treasures with the world. We will provide comfortable and convenient return transportation directly from your accommodation to the museum, allowing you to relax and anticipate the wonders ahead without the hassle of navigating Cairo's bustling streets.

Upon arrival, you will embark on an enlightening tour led by an expert guide. They will bring the wonders of the GEM to life, providing fascinating insights into Egypt's rich and captivating history and navigating you through its vast collections. Your guide will highlight the most significant artefacts, ensuring you don't miss the key exhibits, including colossal statues, intricate jewellery, and the famed treasures of Tutankhamun, all presented in a state-of-the-art setting befitting their historical importance. This guided experience will deepen your understanding and appreciation of the splendours on display.

Please be aware that the entrance fee to the Grand Egyptian Museum is not included in the cost of this optional excursion. As of the time of publication (June 2026), the standard entrance fee is approximately $35 per person.

Don't miss this exceptional opportunity to be among the early visitors to what is destined to become one of the world's most important cultural institutions, all while benefiting from the knowledge and passion of a dedicated guide. Secure your place on this excursion and prepare for an unforgettable and insightful encounter with the splendours of ancient Egypt in a truly twenty-first-century museum.

Karnak Sound & Light Show

Min numbers: 1

Experience the magic of Karnak Temple at night with a captivating sound and light show. This optional extra includes convenient round-trip transport from your hotel, ensuring a hassle-free evening as you witness the ancient wonders illuminated against the Egyptian sky.

Pricing is based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling together. Supplements may apply when this option is operated for just 1 passenger.

Siwa Oasis Extension (3 Nights) *Min numbers: 1*

Discover the wonders of Siwa Oasis on a 4-day optional tour from Cairo, featuring ancient sites, unique natural landscapes like salt lakes and desert springs, and cultural experiences before returning to Cairo.

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

Lebanon:

This tour uses a mix of accommodation including good quality 4-star hotels in Beirut and Byblos, a comfortable guesthouse Zahle and rooms in a separate new block at Monastery of St. Anthony in Qozhaya. Rooms at the monastery are simple but comfortable and en-suite and you may join the monks for their morning prayers.

Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the hotels normally used on this tour. These are subject to change to alternative properties of a similar standard. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation for a private tour.

Egypt:

Most of our small group tours use high quality hotels at the Egyptian 5-star level in Cairo, Aswan, Luxor and Hurghada, all with swimming pools and a choice of restaurants and bars.

However, some of our lower budget trips (eg. Egypt Express) use good quality 3 and 4-star level hotels, all with air-conditioned en-suite bathrooms. On some tours we also use a Nubian guesthouse in Aswan which is full of character and has a great location by the Nile.

Our private/tailor-made tour itineraries use a wider mix of hotels, from comfortable mid-range hotels at the 3-4 star level (generally the best available in some of the less visited places included in the particular itinerary) up to some of the very best deluxe 5-star properties in the country.

Please check the Accommodation tab on the tour page or download these Tour Notes for details of the normal hotels used. On our group tours, these hotels may change from time to time for other properties of a similar standard. If you would like to guarantee a particular hotel, please request a tailor-made tour.

Nile cruise tours are generally based on Egyptian 5-star level boats - perhaps equivalent to a decent international 4-star hotel standard. Please check the Accommodation section on the tour page for details. Deluxe 5-star level boats, all-suite boats, and Dahabiyas are also available on private and tailor-made tours. Please contact us for details.

Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms/cabins with air conditioning. All couples will be given a private double room/cabin. Triple cabins are not available on Nile cruise boats.

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

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.

3 Transport

Lebanon:

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 Lebanon and the small distances involved mean that we use private vehicles throughout this tour. Vehicles will be selected to be comfortable for the number of travellers in the group.

Egypt:

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 Egypt we do not use any public tourist buses or overnight coach journeys as we know that people don't sleep on board and end up very tired for the following few days. All the vehicles we use are air-conditioned, many are fitted with speed limiters, and all are inspected and checked daily. Some 4WD vehicles used on desert safaris may not always have air conditioning where they are only used for short periods.
For the overnight train journey between Cairo and Aswan this tour uses the overnight sleeper train. You will have a private lockable twin cabin on board which holds two large seats and fold down beds which the carriage steward will make up for you in the evening. Sheets, blanket & pillows are provided. The cabin also contains a wash basin and storage cupboard. An airline tray-style evening meal and breakfast are provided. The Cairo-Aswan journey takes around 12 hours.

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 normally include 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, along with day 8 in Beirut and Cairo when travelling between countries. You should plan to fly into Beirut on day 1 and out of Cairo on day 17. You will also require a flight between Beirut and Cairo on day 8 which is not included in the price of the tour.

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.

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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 Egypt small-group departures to have a maximum of 18 travellers.

In Lebanon we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

In Egypt we provide fully trained, local English-speaking graduate Egyptologist guides to run your tour and escort you during all of the sightseeing in Cairo and the Nile Valley. We also have permanent local reps in all the main towns/cities and Red Sea resorts who are also at your service, and will be handling all the practical arrangements for the tour. We use local Bedouin guides for tours through the desert.

On some departures we may use one guide in Cairo, and a second guide if you are travelling between Aswan and Luxor.

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

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6 Entrance Fees

Lebanon:

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. If you visit any sites not mentioned in the itinerary then you will need to cover the entrance fee costs.

Egypt:

Our Small Group tours do not include entrance fees to the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. We do however normally include these in prices for Tailor-Made and Escorted tours. Please check the Inclusions and Exclusions

section below the tour itinerary for a details about your tour and the amount you may need to budget. This amount is subject to change and will be reconfirmed in Egypt at the start of your tour. A 50% discount for minors or ISIC card holders is 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. This payment is normally collected in US Dollars cash together with payment for any Tipping Kitty used on the tour, though you may also pay with Egyptian Pounds or other currencies, converted to USD. Local exchange rates are set on a monthly basis and based on local bank rates so may not match the exact rates you may find online on the day.

7 Tipping

Lebanon:

Tipping is common practice in Lebanon, 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. GBP 5 / USD 8 per person per day would be appropriate.

Egypt:

Tipping is very much a part of Egyptian culture and customs. To make our prices more transparent and so it is easier for you to budget and less hassle while in Egypt, on our small group tours we organise a ‘Tipping Kitty’ which needs to be paid as a local payment and will be around US$30-80 depending on the length of your trip. Payment is collected in US Dollars cash or can also be paid with Egyptian Pounds or other currencies converted to US Dollars at our local monthly exchange rate. This kitty provides tips for a wide range of people you’ll meet along the tour including hotel porters, housekeeping staff, train and station staff, drivers, site guards, local reps etc. Please check the Included/Excluded notes below the tour itinerary for more information on how much to budget for this kitty.

Your Egyptologist guide (and Bedouin guides in the desert) 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. 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. USD 10-15 per person per day would be appropriate.

Children under the age of 12 do not need to pay this tipping kitty.

8 What to take

Lebanon:

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Lebanon. 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: The Lebanese climate varies widely from hot days in the summer to cold and wintry days in the winter. At night, especially in the mountains, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool and potentially wet conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required. Modesty rates highly in some parts of Lebanon, especially for women, so to respect the local culture and people, we recommend 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). When visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered. Bikinis and swimwear are however commonplace on some of the country's beaches.

Other items: We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

Egypt:

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Egypt. 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 climate. 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 5-star hotel restaurants. Long sleeves are recommended to protect from mosquitoes if you are on the felucca. Modesty rates highly in Egypt, 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 when visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

Other items: If you will be travelling on a felucca 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). We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, small towel, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

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9 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.

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10 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.

11 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.

12 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).

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13 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

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

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14 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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

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.

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15 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.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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16 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.

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17 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

18 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 visa2egypt. 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) can and do obtain their visas on arrival in Cairo airport. The process is much quicker and simpler, the cost is currently **US$30 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. If flying into Cairo International Airport our representative will have met you by this stage and will assist with the process.

Important Update from 1st August 2026:
As per the ongoing efforts to enhance visitor services and facilitate entry procedures into Egypt, we are pleased to announce the launch of a new Digital Visa-on-Arrival System.
The new system replaces the current paper visa sticker with a fully digital process, providing a faster, more efficient, and seamless arrival experience for international travelers.

Pilot Phase:
The pilot phase will start on 1 August 2026 at Cairo International Airport (all arrival terminals) as the first stage of implementation.
During this pilot phase, both the new digital system and the current paper visa system will operate in parallel for a limited period to ensure a smooth transition. The duration of the pilot phase will be announced in due course.
Following the successful completion of the pilot phase, the current paper visa-on-arrival system will be discontinued, and the digital system will become the standard visa-on-arrival process. The rollout to all other Egyptian airports will then take place gradually according to an implementation schedule, which will be shared with you in advance.

- **Key Features of the New System:**
  Travelers may obtain a Visa QR Code instead of the current paper sticker, this will be through: the official online portal (https://apps.visaonarrival.gov.eg/); the dedicated mobile application; or a self-service machine (SSM) located in Cairo International Airport arrival halls.
- After receiving the QR code; on email, or printed from the SSMs, it will be scanned by the passport control officer upon checking in with his/her passport.

- The QR Code may be issued before travel, onboard of a flight, or after arrival to the entry port, either by the traveler or through a travel agency.
- The QR Code will remain valid for up to 48 hours from the time of issuance.
- The total fees will be USD36, comprising: USD30 visa fee; and USD6 issuing and service fee (please note that whilst debit cards are accepted, credit cards are not).
- Once the new system is fully implemented, the current paper visa sticker will no longer be available.
- According to the progress of the Pilot Phase, we will announce the time plan for implementation in the other airports in Egypt.

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.

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19 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.

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20 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.

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21 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.

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22 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: Dipheria, 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.

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23 Money - Lebanon

The local currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese Pound (called Lira). You do not need to arrange to bring any Lebanese currency with you 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 additional fees - check before you pay. Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can not be changed in many places now, and can incur high fees.

Due to the huge recent devaluation of the Lebanese currency, if you withdraw money from an ATM or pay for things with your credit card you will be charged the official bank exchange rate which is very different to the actual

operating rate used locally. We therefore recommend that you bring enough US Dollars or Euros in cash with you to cover your required spending money during the tour and do not plan to use your credit card while in Lebanon. You can change this hard currency to Lebanese pounds at the current rates while you are there - please ask your guide for assistance on appropriate places to change your money.

While in Lebanon 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 local currency, 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 25-35 per person per day as a minimum. Allow more if you plan on doing lots of shopping, or buying many alcoholic drinks.

24 Transfers

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.

25 Passports and Visas - Lebanon

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.

For many nationalities visiting Lebanon a visa on arrival is possible at Beirut International Airport. This applies to most countries of the Commonwealth, European Union, Russia, Japan and the US continent. Even if you are eligible for a visa on arrival, it is prudent to check up to date requirements with your nearest Lebanese consulate.

Other nationalities may require a visa prior to arrival and to obtain this in advance, please contact your local Lebanese embassy or consulate or a visa agency for details.

IMPORTANT: The Government of Lebanon denies entry to Israeli passport holders, Israeli visa holders (valid or expired) and those with any evidence of travel to Israel within their passport.