

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

Days: 17 days

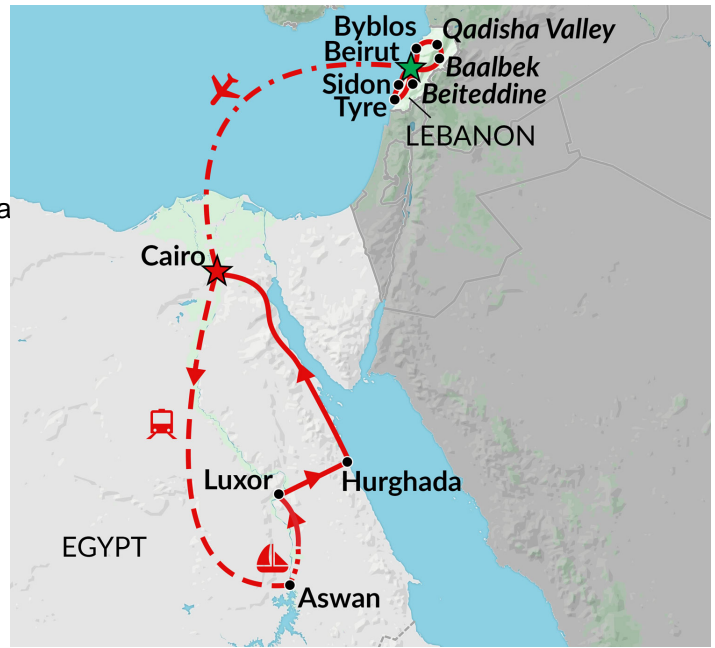
Start Location: Beirut, Lebanon

End Location: Cairo, Egypt

Meals: Breakfasts - 16, Lunches - 4, Dinners - 4

Highlights:

Beirut, Beiteddine, Tyre, Sidon, Baalbek, Ksara Caves, Cedars, Qadisha Valley, Baatar 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

Your tour starts with your arrival at Beirut International Airport. Our representative will meet you, and you will be transferred to your hotel. Overnight in Beirut.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Beirut - pre-tour

Day 2: Jeita Grotto, Harissa cable car & Baatara Gorge

After leaving Beirut and heading north towards Byblos, we'll experience a thrilling visit to the spectacular Jeita Grotto. Here a system of limestone caves spans a distance of almost 9 kilometres, and contains one of the largest collections of stalactites and stalagmites in the world. It is a symbol of the country and was a finalist in the New 7 Wonders of Nature competition. Depending on the water level you can explore both on foot and by boat.

Next, we visit Harissa, famous for containing an important Christian shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary, known as Our Lady of Lebanon. We take a cable car to the top of the Basilica, from where we can enjoy a spectacular view of the Bay of Jounieh, considered one of the most beautiful bays in the Middle East.

Then, we'll head inland to visit the unique Baatara Gorge sinkhole, where during the spring and especially rainy periods a 255-metre waterfall cascades into an enormous cavern known as the Baatara Pothole. The cave is also called the Cave of the Three Bridges, for the three natural stone arches over which the waterfall drops. This is a spectacular natural phenomenon and we have time for a short hike here, and can also explore nearby Douma Village. A traditional Lebanese lunch is included today.

The day finishes with a short drive to the beautiful Qadisha Valley where we spend the night in the Monastery of St. Anthony, in a separate building with simple but comfortable en-suite accommodation (a nearby guesthouse will be used if the monastery is closed to visitors or unavailable).

OVERNIGHT: Qadisha Valley monastery or guesthouse

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS:

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, we have 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.

Our 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, we stop at 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 we 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.

OVERNIGHT: Byblos hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Morning in Byblos, Ksara Winery

We spend this morning exploring the harbour area and highlights of Byblos. Our destination today will be the village of Zahle, however we'll be making a stop along the way at the Ksara Winery which is possibly the oldest winery in Lebanon. The caves and tunnels have a total length of approximately 2 miles and have been used for generations as wine cellars. You'll have a guided tour of the caves and winery before sampling (and buying if you wish) some of the produce in a wine tasting session.

OVERNIGHT: Zahle guesthouse

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Baalbek & Anjar

Today we head to Baalbek, a definite highlight of any visit to Lebanon. Called "Heliopolis" or "City of the Sun" by the Romans and Greeks, it is home to a famous temple complex that is superbly well-preserved. This complex, which is one of the finest examples of Roman architecture at its peak, was built as a sanctuary dedicated to worshipping the Heliopolitan triad of god- Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury. Pilgrims would flock to the temple in their thousands in order to venerate the triad. Still largely intact, the temple has outstanding artistic and historical value.

We then visit the Umayyad city of Anjar, located in the Bekaa Valley. Founded in the 8th century by Caliph Walid, it provides evidence of excellent town-planning and features mosques, palaces, and baths. It also features 600 shops, indicating that it was an important commercial centre.

In the afternoon we'll return to Beirut.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Deir al Qamar, Beiteddine & Beirut City Tour

We leave Beirut after breakfast and we drive to the Chouf Mountains to visit the village of Deir al Qamar, its name meaning "Monastery of the Moon". The village is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the capital of Lebanon

during the 17th century. It is quaint and charming, with stone houses and winding roads.

We then continue onto the beautiful Beiteddine Palace. The palace, constructed in the 19th century by Emir Bashir, is exceptionally well-preserved and is a testament to the opulence of the time.

Finally, we return to Beirut in the afternoon where we'll have time for a city tour. Lebanon's capital and largest city. It is one of the oldest cities in the world, and has had a turbulent history, both ancient and modern. This is evident in the contrast of modern buildings seen alongside small old houses and historical architecture, some still displaying bullet holes and damage from the civil war in the 1970s. Highlights visited include the Beirut Souks, the Corniche, and the downtown region. We will also see the Pigeon Grotto, or the Rock of Raouché, a famous natural formation rising out of the sea.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Tyre & Sidon

Today we tour the south of Lebanon. We begin by visiting Tyre, also known as Sour in Arabic. It is more than 4,000 years old and was a great ancient Phoenician city. Tyre is filled with important historical landmarks and is currently a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Our next destination is Sidon, or Saida, also an ancient Phoenician city, possibly the oldest. The city became wealthy due its excellent production of glass, as well as a purple dye extracted from murex, a type of shellfish. It is now a fast-growing city, and important both administratively and commercially.

In Saida, we will visit the Crusader Sea Castle, the great Mosque, Khan el Franj, and other interesting sites. You will also get the chance to stroll through the old souks. Overnight in Beirut.

OVERNIGHT: Beirut hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Fly to Cairo and transfer to hotel

Today we'll transfer you to Beirut Airport for your flight to Cairo (the cost of this flight is not included in the tour price, however we can assist you with booking this if preferred. Often it'll be cheaper to include this flight on the same ticket as your main international flights). Upon arrival our staff will meet you at the airport, assist you with obtaining your visa and luggage, and then transfer you to your hotel for the start of your trip. They will help you settle in, introduce you to the local area, and explain tomorrow's arrangements. The rest of the day is free. If you arrive early today you may like to take one of our optional tours such as the Cairo City Tour or visit to Saqqara, Dahshur and Memphis.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Cairo city tour Wadi Rayan day trip (Valley of the Whales) Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis

Day 9: Cairo, Pyramids, Sphinx & Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) 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 Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). Home to the fantastic Tutankhamun exhibit the museum hosts a huge number of other ancient Egyptian artefacts. *Please note: While we will have dedicated time to visit the Museum highlights, the GEM holds one of the largest archaeological collections in the world and therefore it won't be possible to explore the museum in its entirety. If you wish to explore further, you have the option to add on our GEM re-visit package, which will allow you to return and explore at your leisure during your scheduled free time.*

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:

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. 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:

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 (the Valley of the Craftsmen), 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:

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 fly back to Cairo later. Please contact us for more information and customised pricing.

OVERNIGHT: Hurghada 5-star resort

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS:

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 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, [available from Encounters Travel](#))
- 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.

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 be 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 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 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 a hotel in Aswan instead. You then rejoin the rest of the group after they finish on the felucca. Your time is free in Aswan, but additional sightseeing tours are available locally on request. 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 (Dec 2025), the standard entrance fee is approximately \$31 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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).

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')

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.

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.



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.

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 Note: Due to recent changes in the visa regime for Canadians, a visa on arrival or e-visa will no longer be possible for Canadian Citizens entering Egypt after October 1st 2023. Until further notice Canadian passport holders must obtain a visa prior to arrival, from the nearest Egyptian Consulate.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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: Diphtheria, 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.

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.

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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.
