

Pharaonic Encounters

Country(ies): Egypt

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C minibus/coach & sleeper train

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 18

Days: 6 Days

Start location: Cairo, Egypt

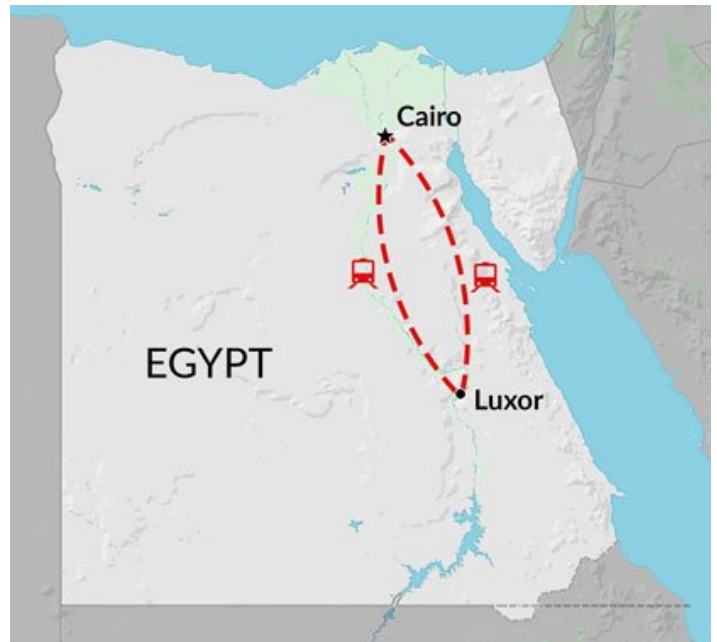
End location: Cairo, Egypt

Departs On: Tuesday

Meals: 2019: Breakfasts - 5, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 2
2020: Breakfasts - 6, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 2

Highlights: The great Pyramids & Sphinx, dramatic Karnak temple, King Tut's death mask in the Egyptian museum, hidden tombs of the Valley of the Kings

Places Visited: Cairo & Luxor



Itinerary

Itinerary for 2019 Tours

Day 1: Arrive into Cairo, transfer to hotel

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 close to the Pyramids 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 you may like to take an evening dinner cruise on the Nile, or enjoy a spectacular sound and light show at the pyramids (both available to book locally on arrival).

OVERNIGHT: Cairo 5-star hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Nile dinner cruise in Cairo || Single room supplement (EGSGPE) || Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - pre-tour

Day 2: Cairo, Pyramids, Sphinx & Museum tour

Our tour of Egypt begins with a trip to the famous Egyptian Museum with its huge number of ancient Pharaonic exhibits. Home to the fantastic Tutankhamun exhibit the museum hosts a huge number of other ancient Egyptian artefacts. 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. Following on from the museum we then head to Giza on the outskirts of Cairo to visit the Sphinx and the three great pyramids of Egypt. 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). This evening we transfer to the station for the overnight sleeper train to Luxor (approx. 9 hours). You'll enjoy dinner on board in your private twin-berth compartments before the steward sets your beds up for the night.

OVERNIGHT: On board sleeper train

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: Cairo to Luxor flight upgrade

Day 3: Luxor, West Bank tour, free time

We arrive into Luxor early this morning and cross the Nile 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.

Your afternoon is then free to relax and enjoy the facilities of your 5-star hotel on the banks of the Nile. You can also explore Luxor further, do some shopping or browsing in the market, visit the mummification museum or enjoy a felucca trip to nearby Banana Island. Additional sightseeing is also available if you'd like an even more in depth

exploration of Egyptian history. For example, the Rammesseum, Medinat Habu and Valley of the Queens on the west bank of the Nile are all worth a visit. Your tour guide will be happy to arrange any extra visits for you (an extra cost will apply to cover transport, entrances and the guide's services).

OVERNIGHT: Luxor 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Luxor, Karnak temple

Your morning is free today and you can enjoy a welcome lie in after your early start yesterday. 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. In the evening we take the overnight sleeper train back to Cairo (approx. 9 hours)

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).

OVERNIGHT: On board sleeper train

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: Hot air balloon in Luxor || Luxor to Cairo flight upgrade

Day 5: Cairo optional tours, Old Cairo & Khan-el-Khalili bazaar walk

We arrive back into Cairo this morning and transfer to our hotel. Most of the day is then free to explore Cairo as you choose or you may take an optional tour. These include a city tour in Cairo which visits Coptic Cairo, the Citadel and Mohamed Ali Mosque, or a half day tour to Saqqara, Dashour and Memphis to learn more about the history and evolution of pyramid building. Other full day options further afield include a visit to the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan (you'll miss the bazaar walk if you take these full day options).

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

OVERNIGHT: Cairo 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

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

Day 6: 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 evening flight departure, then the Cairo City Tour and Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis tours are also available today. Alternatively you can add extra nights to your time in Cairo which would allow you to take a day trip to the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to

see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

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

Itinerary for 2020 Tours

Day 1: Arrive into Cairo, transfer to hotel

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 close to the Pyramids 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 you may like to take an evening dinner cruise on the Nile, or enjoy a spectacular sound and light show at the pyramids (both available to book locally on arrival).

OVERNIGHT: Cairo 5-star hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Nile dinner cruise in Cairo || Single room supplement (EGSGPE) || Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - pre-tour

Day 2: Cairo, Pyramids, Sphinx & Museum tour

Our tour of Egypt begins with a trip to the famous Egyptian Museum with its huge number of ancient Pharaonic exhibits. Home to the fantastic Tutankhamun exhibit the museum hosts a huge number of other ancient Egyptian artefacts. 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. Following on from the museum we then head to Giza on the outskirts of Cairo to visit the Sphinx and the three great pyramids of Egypt. 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).

This evening we transfer to the station for the overnight sleeper train to Luxor (approx. 9 hours). You'll enjoy dinner on board in your private twin-berth compartments before the steward sets your beds up for the night.

OVERNIGHT: On board sleeper train

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: Cairo to Luxor flight upgrade

Day 3: Luxor, West Bank tour, free time

We arrive into Luxor early this morning and cross the Nile 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.

Your afternoon is then free to relax and enjoy the facilities of your 5-star hotel on the banks of the Nile. This evening we visit Luxor temple, which is located right in the middle of town and beautifully lit up at night.

OVERNIGHT: Luxor 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Luxor, Karnak temple

Your morning is free today and you can enjoy a welcome lie in after your early start yesterday. 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, Khonsu and Mut. The remarkable Hypostyle Hall has 134 towering columns, each carved with scenes of gods and pharaohs, and hieroglyphic inscriptions adorn the walls. In the evening we take the overnight sleeper train back to Cairo (approx. 9 hours)

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).

OVERNIGHT: Luxor 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Hot air balloon in Luxor

Day 5: Luxor, free day and optional tours

Your day is free today to relax in the hotel or take an additional optional tour if you'd like an even more in depth exploration of Egyptian history. For example, the Ramesseum, Medinet Habu and Valley of the Queens on the west bank of the Nile are all worth a visit, as is the Luxor Museum. You can also explore Luxor further, do some shopping or browsing in the market, visit the mummification museum or enjoy a felucca trip to nearby Banana Island. Your tour guide will be happy to arrange any extra visits for you or you can book the sightseeing tours in advance.

In the evening we head back to the station to catch the overnight sleeper train back to Cairo. Flight upgrades are available on request.

OVERNIGHT: Luxor 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: Luxor to Cairo flight upgrade || Extra West Bank tour in Luxor || Luxor Museum tour

Day 6: Cairo optional tours, Old Cairo & Khan-el-Khalili bazaar walk

We arrive back into Cairo this morning and transfer to our hotel. Most of the day is then free to explore Cairo as you choose or you may take an optional tour. These include a city tour in Cairo which visits Coptic Cairo, the Citadel and Mohamed Ali Mosque, or a half day tour to Saqqara, Dashour and Memphis to learn more about the history and evolution of pyramid building. Other full day options further afield include a visit to the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan (you'll miss the bazaar walk if you take these full day options).

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, jewellery and anything else you can imagine as we gradually enter the more touristy Khan-el-Khalili bazaar. We'll have time for a break to try some mint tea and a shisha pipe and this is a great final opportunity to pick up some souvenirs of your time in Egypt.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo 5-star hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

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

Day 7: 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 evening flight departure, then the Cairo City Tour and Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis tours are also available today. Alternatively you can add extra nights to your time in Cairo which would allow you to take a day trip to the colonial city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast, or a trip into the desert outside Cairo to see the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Whales at Wadi Rayan.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

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

Included

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary in 5-star hotels
- All transport and transfers in private AC vehicles
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Overnight sleeper train in private twin-berth cabins (flight upgrades available)
- Sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Services of a local Egyptologist guide for all sightseeing tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded

- International flights
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees (allow approx. US\$65)
- Tipping kitty (allow US\$30)
- Drinks, snacks, guide tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Hotel gala dinners (see Tour notes)
- 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\$150 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. More information is available on request.

2019 Departures - 6 days During 2019 this tour runs as a 6-day trip starting on Tuesdays.

2020 Departures - 7 days During 2020 this tour adds an extra night to your time in Luxor and starts on Saturdays. This gives you a bit more time there to see the huge number of ancient sites, enjoy your time exploring the town and to relax in your hotel on the banks of the Nile. During November and December 2019 both versions will run.

Options

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

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

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

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

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

Single room supplement (EGSGPE)

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$215.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

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

Hot air balloon in Luxor

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$120.00

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

Cairo city tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$60.00

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

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

Nile dinner cruise in Cairo

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$75.00

This option offers an evening of cruising up and down the Nile through the centre of Cairo on a 5-star riverboat while enjoying some middle eastern cuisine as well as a traditional Egyptian Sufi and Belly Dancing show. A great way to spend a free evening in Cairo and see some more of the city. Transfers to and from your hotel are included.

Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$75.00

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

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

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

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$70.00

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

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

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$75.00

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Cairo to Luxor flight upgrade

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$135.00

This option upgrades the overnight sleeper train from Cairo to Luxor to an internal flight. Instead of spending the night on the train, you transfer to the airport and fly to Luxor, spending an extra night in the hotel there.

Flights are subject to availability. Single room supplements apply.

Luxor to Cairo flight upgrade

Min numbers:

Price: \$145.00

This option upgrades the overnight sleeper train from Luxor to Cairo to an internal flight. Instead of spending the night on the train, you transfer to the airport and fly to Luxor.

Flights are subject to availability. Single room supplements apply.

Extra West Bank tour in Luxor

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$80.00

This half-day tour is ideal for travellers who are looking for a more in depth insight into Pharaonic history and who would like to see as many ancient sites as possible during their tour. We cross back to the West bank of the Nile and visit three important sites not included on our main tours. We'll visit the Ramesseum, which was the mortuary temple for Pharaoh Ramses II, and Medinat Habu, the second largest ancient temple discovered in Egypt. Medinat Habu is the mortuary temple for Ramses III and has extensive and deeply carved hieroglyphs, some of which retain their original brightly coloured painting which is very rare to see. Finally we'll visit some tombs in the Valley of the Queens, where many wives of the Pharaohs were buried, as well as princes, princesses and other important nobility.

It can get very hot on the west bank of the Nile so make sure you bring a sun hat and plenty of water. You'll be accompanied by an Egyptologist guide and all transfers to and from your hotel are included. Solo traveller supplements apply.

Luxor Museum tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$50.00

The Luxor Museum has a much smaller collection than the huge Egyptian Museum in Cairo, but the collection is beautifully displayed and includes some very important and impressive specimens. These include a huge red granite head of Amenhotep III, a calcite double statue of the crocodile god Sobek and some items from Tutankhamun's tomb such as boats, sandals and arrows. There are also some items from the periods after the end of Pharaonic Egypt. The museum is normally open in the mornings from 9am-2pm and then in the evenings from 5pm-9pm. Your guide will advise you of current opening times and arrange a guided visit to fit around your other sightseeing. Your entrance ticket and transfers to and from your hotel are included. Solo traveller supplements apply.

Tour Notes

1. Accommodation

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.

Shoestring tours use good quality 3 and 4-star level hotels, all with air-conditioned en-suite bathrooms. The hotels in Aswan and Luxor on this level of tour also have swimming pools.

Our private/tailor-made tour itineraries use a wider mix of hotels, from comfortable mid-range hotels at the 2-4 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 small-group and shoestring 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 deluxe level boats - please check the Accommodation section on the tour page 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. Single travellers may choose to pay a single room supplement to guarantee themselves a single room throughout the tour. Alternatively, they may choose to share a room with one or two other travellers of the same sex.

Single travellers

On most of our Egypt tours, if you are happy to share a room/cabin with another traveller of the same sex, then we will aim to pair you up and arrange a room-share. If a room share is not available, or if you would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then an additional single room supplement will be payable. This will be refunded or removed from your booking if you have requested a room share and are paid up later. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Some tours have different rules for single supplements - please check the single room supplement option on your tour for full details.

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\$150 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. More information is available on request.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. In 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 safari options may not always have air conditioning where they are only used for short periods.

For the overnight train journeys between Cairo and Luxor (approx. 9 hrs) this tour uses the overnight sleeper train. This train has private twin berth cabins with large seats and fold-down beds with sheets, pillow & blanket. The lockable cabins also have a washbasin and storage cupboard, and an airline tray-style evening meal and breakfast is included. If you wish you may upgrade these journeys to internal flights.

3. Transfers

Our Egypt tours include a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Cairo airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers. Our representative will meet you in the immigration hall of Cairo airport before you get to passport control. They will assist with visa formalities before helping you collect your luggage and taking you to your hotel.

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

4. International Flights

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

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Nearly all our Egyptian tours start and finish in Cairo airport (CAI).

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.

Shoestring tours have a maximum group size of 26. On dedicated Nile Cruise tours you may join larger boat groups for the sightseeing trips, though a supplement is always available for a private Egyptologist guide for these tours (requires advance booking).

Specialist escorted tours and workshops may have different group sizes - please download the Tour Notes for details.

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 for the Aswan to Luxor section.

At Encounters Travel we only use local Egyptian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of some of our most

famous Egyptian guides.

6. Entrance Fees

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

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\$25-45 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, 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.

On private/tailor-made tours we can also arrange a tipping kitty if you wish, or you can tip people as you go along the tour. Your guide will be happy to help advise either way.

8. Health and Vaccinations

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

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

In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

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.

9. Passports and Visas - Egypt

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

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

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

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

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

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

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. What to take

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.

14. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour starting on Tuesdays 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.

15. 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.

16. Travel Insurance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. Financial Security

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

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour.

Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

18. 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).

19. Follow Us Online

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

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

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

20. Before you travel

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

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

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

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



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