

## Gods of Egypt

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**Country(ies):** Egypt

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** A/C minibus, cruise-boat & flights

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

**Days:** 10 Days

**Start location:** Cairo, Egypt

**End location:** Cairo, Egypt

**Departs On:** Saturdays

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 8, Lunches - 4, Dinners - 5

**Highlights:**

The Pyramids & Sphinx, Egyptian Museum, Philae Temple, Abu Simbel option, luxury Nile cruise, Temple of Karnak & Valley of the Kings, Colossi of Memnon, Red Sea at Hurghada

**Places Visited:** Cairo, Aswan, Luxor & Hurghada



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive in Cairo, transfer to hotel

Upon arrival at Cairo airport, we will meet you and assist you with visa formalities and luggage collection, then transfer you to your hotel. Our rep will help you settle in, then the rest of the day is free at your leisure. If your flight lands early, then you could take a first look at the pyramids with an amazing sound and light show, or perhaps head into downtown Cairo for a Nile dinner cruise and show.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cairo 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Single room supplement (EGSGDE) || Extra day in Cairo (5-star) - pre-tour

## Day 2: Cairo, Pyramids, Sphinx & Museum tour

Your Gods of Egypt tour begins with a visit to the enigmatic Sphinx and the three greatest pyramids in Egypt. At 500 feet high and 750 feet wide at its base the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Cheops) is a breath taking man-made structure, built from enormous stone blocks with a white limestone covering. Over the years, the limestone covering has been stripped away to expose the inner block structure. Along with the smaller pyramids of Khafre (Chephern) and Menkaure (Mycerinus), the inspiring sight of these huge structures looming out of the desert is an unforgettable site. You will have a chance to climb inside the pyramids if you wish, but you're on your own, as your guide cannot accompany you (a limited number of tickets are available for the Great Pyramid). After the Pyramids we then head into downtown Cairo to explore the sprawling Egyptian Museum. The museum is home to the famous Tutankhamun exhibit and a huge number of other ancient Egyptian artefacts. One of our experienced local Egyptologist guides will be with you on this tour, and all of your other sightseeing tours. You'll discover our amazing guides have a wealth of knowledge and full are of enthusiasm about Egyptian history, and their country in general. In the evening we transfer to the airport for a domestic flight to Aswan, where we are met and transferred to our hotel overlooking the Nile.

**OVERNIGHT:** Aswan 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Abu Simbel option, board Nile cruise, Aswan tours

We awake this morning to see one of the most beautiful stretches of the Nile in Egypt in front of us. The river here is dotted with islands and felucca sailing boats and Aswan itself is an intriguing mixture of African and Middle Eastern cultures which can be easily seen by strolling through the bustling markets. You have some free time this morning to explore, walk along the Corniche on the banks of the river, or take a trip to the Nubian Museum, which has a collection of artefacts from the Nubian people. We check out of our hotel and onto our Nile Cruise boat for lunch before our organised sightseeing in Aswan starts in the afternoon with a tour to the Temple of Philae. This beautiful island temple is dedicated to Isis and was saved from the rising waters of Lake Nasser. It can only be reached by a scenic boat ride. The rest of the day is free though 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.

There is also an early morning optional visit to the UNESCO world heritage site of Abu Simbel, built by Ramses II. This is an amazing site that was completely dismantled and rebuilt when Lake Nasser was flooded.

**OVERNIGHT:** Nile Cruise Boat

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Nile cruise to Komombo & Edfu

We spend the day today sailing down the Nile, enjoying our time relaxing on the sun deck and watching rural Egyptian life pass us by. Our first stop is at the beautifully situated riverside temple at Komombo. This somewhat unusually styled temple is in fact a double temple, with one side being consecrated to Sobek, the crocodile god and the second dedicated to Horus - the falcon-headed Sky God. We then continue sailing on to the Temple of Horus at Edfu. We overnight here.

**OVERNIGHT:** Nile Cruise Boat

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Edfu temple, Luxor temple at night

This morning we explore the Temple of Horus, the best preserved temple in the whole of Egypt, it has many inscriptions in the Coptic language and is adorned with paintings. We then sail onwards, passing through the lock on the Nile at Esna, before arriving in Luxor. Luxor is built on and around the ancient site of Thebes, and has the greatest concentration of ancient ruins in the Nile Valley, if not the world. To the west, across the Nile, lies the City of the Dead, with its mortuary temples and rock carved tombs, and to the east stand the Temples of Luxor and Karnak.

In the evening we'll take a walking tour of the smaller Luxor Temple, which is in the centre of town and is colourfully lit up by night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Nile Cruise Boat

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: 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 temples of Queen Hatchepsut and Medinat Habu, 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, 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.

**OVERNIGHT:** Luxor 5-star hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Hot air balloon in Luxor

## Day 7: Luxor to the Red Sea at Hurghada

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

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

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 8: 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 to finish there. Please contact us for more information and customised pricing.*

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurghada 5-star resort

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## **Day 9: 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 10: Cairo, free time, departure airport transfer**

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

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

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

## Included

- 6 nights accommodation in 5-star hotels
- 3 nights on board 5-star-deluxe level Nile Cruise boat
- All transport and transfers in private AC vehicles
- Domestic flight from Cairo to Aswan
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Services of a local Egyptologist guide for all the sightseeing tours
- Private guiding for our group during the Nile cruise
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

## Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (USD 25 available on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel Insurance (mandatory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to sites visited (allow approx. US\$89)
- Tipping kitty (allow US\$70)
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tour guide tips
- Hotel Gala Dinners (if charged by the hotels on 24 & 31 Dec, see Tour notes)
- Any other items not mentioned above

## Notes

### Similar tours:

The following tours run alongside this trip with slight adjustments in the itinerary and accommodation...

- [Discover Egypt](#) - changes the flight from Cairo to Aswan to the sleeper train, and changes the Nile Cruise to an overnight felucca sailboat trip outside of Aswan
- [Nubian Adventure](#) - adds an extra night in Luxor and then returns to Cairo to make a 9-day tour instead of heading to the Red Sea at Hurghada
- [Ancient Encounters](#) - adds our signature 8-day small group [Jordan Encounters](#) tour to the start, followed by the Discover Egypt trip, making a 17-day tour in total

### 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 normally 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 in 5-star hotels. 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, especially for New Year's Eve. 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. More information is available on request.

# Options

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

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

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

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

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

## 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 accommodate 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 10)

**Price:** Starting from - \$120

## 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. Entrance fees to the site (approx. US\$10, 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.

**Price:** Starting from - \$150

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

**Price:** Starting from - \$75

## Wadi Rayan day trip (Valley of the Whales)

**Min numbers:** 1

This tour provides a great contrast to the Pharaonic sites you have visited on the rest of your tour. We leave Cairo and head to the Fayoum region where we head for the Wadi Rayan Protected Area, which surrounds a fresh-water lake in the middle of the desert, filled by the remaining irrigation water from the Fayoum area. There are several waterfalls here (popular in Egyptian pop music videos), and a bird hide which gives good views of the lakes birdlife, particularly in the winter months when the lake is an important stop for migrating water-birds. We also visit the Springs Oasis area, a rare example of an uninhabited Saharan oasis, and host to many different plants and animals, including Dorcas Gazelle, Ruppell's Sand Fox and Fennec Fox. Before lunch, we'll make a stop in the sand dunes surrounding Wadi Rayan to have a go at Sandboarding. After a stop for a packed lunch, we then drive into the stunning desert & mountain scenery of Wadi Hitan (Valley of the Whales). This World Heritage Site is accepted as the most significant site in the world to demonstrate the evolution of whales, and we take a 2-3km walk here to see several specimens of fossilised whales of different types sitting on the surface of the sand, as well as fossilised mangroves and the remains of crab holes.  This tour requires a full free day in Cairo, but can also be arranged straight after you arrive back in Cairo from Luxor/Aswan from the overnight sleeper train. We can also arrange it on any tour if you add extra days before and after your main tour. Prices shown are based on 2 or more people travelling, with an additional supplement due for solo travellers.  Price includes lunch whilst in Wadi Hitan and entrance fees.

**Price:** Starting from - \$170

## Saqqara, Dashour & Memphis

**Min numbers:** 1

This half day guided tour on the outskirts of Cairo tour provides more insight into the history and evolution of pyramid building, and of the Egyptian civilisation. Our tours are based in the area of ancient Memphis, a former capital of Egypt. First we'll visit Saqqara, a huge desert necropolis which was built for the kings and nobles of the Old Kingdom. Here we see Zoser's 'step' pyramid and the adjacent Imhotep museum where we learn more about Memphis and the history of the region. Next we head to Dashour to see one of the next attempts at pyramid building. Dashour's moniker of the 'bent pyramid' shows they still had a bit to learn, but this is a fascinating site and the pyramid still has much of its original limestone cladding. We'll then return you to your hotel. Prices are based on a minimum of 2 people choosing the option. Entrance fees to the sites visited are not included (budget approx. USD 12). Solo traveller supplements apply.

**Price:** Starting from - \$75

## Single room supplement

**Min numbers:** 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. 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: Single room supplement prices may vary seasonally. 

**Price:** Starting from - \$900

## 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.



**Price:** Starting from - \$135

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

**Min numbers:** 1

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

**Price:** Starting from - \$135

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## 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.

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.

### 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. More information is available on request.

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## 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.

This upgraded tour also avoids any overnight train journeys, instead flying from Cairo to Aswan. We will drive on the new faster road back from Hurghada to Cairo, though this journey may be upgraded to a flight if you prefer.

Nile cruise boat itineraries are subject to alterations depending on local conditions at the time of travel. Some sailing may be done after dark. Boats may moor up alongside each other at night, requiring you to cross through other boats to reach the shore. On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve the cruise boats normally run a special Gala Dinner. The cost of this is sometimes compulsory, whether you attend or not, and is not included in our group tour prices, but will be added to your booking price if required.

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### 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.

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### 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. Nearly all our Egyptian tours start and finish in Cairo airport (CAI).

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.

#### **Travel Zoo / Groupon Flight Inclusive Packages**

Encounters Travel occasionally offer flight inclusive packages - In this case, your international flights will be included as per the package you have purchased. Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

#### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

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

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

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### 5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our Egypt small-group departures to have a maximum of 18 travellers.

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.

Whilst the majority of our tours are guided in English, we do offer a limited number of small group departures which are led by experienced Egyptologist guides fluent in French or Spanish. Notes are shown next to each departure date to highlight these. Guiding in other languages is also available on private departures (eg. German, Italian, Polish) - please contact us for details and quotations.

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 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.

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## **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.

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## **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\$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, or by credit card (3% fee). 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.

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.

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## 8. 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](https://visa2egypt.com). 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\$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.

**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.

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## 9. Money - Egypt

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

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

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

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## 10. 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.

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## 11. Dates and 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. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request.

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## 12. 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.

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## 13. Travel Insurance

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

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

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the

form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

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

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

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

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

## **Covid-19**

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

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## **14. 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.

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## **15. Responsible Tourism**

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

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

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.

- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

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

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## 16. Follow Us Online

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

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

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

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## 17. 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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## 18. 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.

[gov.uk/travelaware](http://gov.uk/travelaware)





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

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

#### **How Water-to-Go Technology works:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## **19. 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.

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## **20. Time**

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

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## **21. Voltage**

Sockets are two round pronged and 220 volts (Type C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already.

If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

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

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