

Egyptian Explorer - 8 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



Egypt at its best! A one week family holiday with camel riding, boating on the Nile, a visit to a village school, pyramids, tombs and Tutankhamen's treasure. This tour, set at a pace ideal for families offers valuable insight into the life, culture and mysteries of Ancient Egypt, coupled with plenty of free time for relaxing by the pool or independent exploration.



HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Cairo - Pyramids & Sphinx at Giza Plateau
- Islamic Citadel & Khan el-Khalili bazaar
- Egyptian Museum & King Tut's 9kg solid Golden Mask
- Aswan - boating on the Nile to Sahal island and lunch with village family
- Visit to local primary school, village/market walks
- Luxor - Temple of Karnak by day
- Luxor Temple illuminated by night
- Valley of the Kings

What's Included

- Maximum group size: 25
- Breakfast daily, 1 lunch with village family
- Sahal Island, 1 dinner - onboard train
- 6 nights 4 - 5 star hotels
- 1 overnight train: Cairo - Aswan (2 berth sleeper cabin train)
- Giza - camel ride by the pyramids
- Aswan - boating on the Nile and visit to a Nubian island
- Luxor - horse-drawn carriage to Luxor Temple
- Airport arrival transfer (from Cairo International Airport) on day 1 and departure transfer (from Luxor International Airport) on day 8
- Touring of Cairo, Giza, Aswan & Luxor
- Escorted by an Egyptian tour leader/guide degree qualified in Egyptology
- All relevant transfer and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: Adult \$40-48 USD / Child \$20-28 USD
- Entrance Fees: Adult \$80-90 USD / Child \$40-50 USD
- Gratuity for your tour guide. We suggest \$20-30 USD per adult. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture.
- International flights and visa

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Cairo

Saturday. Welcome to the land of the Pharaohs and the start of your family holiday! Arrive Cairo airport and included transfer to hotel and overnight. Free afternoon and evening. **Overnight - Cairo**

Day 2 : Pyramids & Camel Riding

Cairo. After a good nights rest, we start our day with an exciting visit to the famous pyramids and lionheaded Sphinx at Giza Plateau. Known as Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus, the

pyramids were built by a highly skilled corps of mathematicians, masons, surveyors and stonecutters. About 2.5 million limestone blocks, quarried locally and weighing in excess of 6 million tonnes, were used in the construction of Cheops! Afterward we enjoy a camel ride across the desert sands before visiting a Government supervised papyrus emporium. Here, you can buy genuine papyrus at quite reasonable prices. **Overnight - Cairo (B)**

Day 3 : King Tutankhamen's Treasure



Cairo - Aswan. This morning we visit the world famous Egyptian Museum. A mind-boggling array of relics and antiquities (some 100,000 relics) from almost every period of ancient Egyptian history are housed in the museum located in central Cairo, making it one of the foremost in the world. The collection was first gathered under one roof in Bulaq in 1858 by August Mariette, a French archaeologist who had excavated in Upper Egypt.

The collection was moved to its present neoclassical home in 1902. Since then, the collection has grown and grown and the museum is literally busting at the seams! Arguably the most famous exhibit is the solid gold funerary mask of King Tutankhamen. Made of solid gold and weighing 11kg, the mask was found covering the head of mummy, where it lay inside a series of 3 sarcophagi. In addition, there are the dazzling worldly possessions found by Howard Carter in the king's tomb, on display. The incredible contents displayed here of the rather modest tomb of the boy

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king can only make one wonder about the fabulous wealth looted from the tombs of pharaohs far greater than King Tutankhamen who only reigned for nine years.

For a small price you can also go view the Royal Mummies. The Royal Mummy Room houses the mummified bodies of some of Egypt's most illustrious kings and queens, who ruled Egypt between 1552 and 1069 BC. They include King Ramses II, his father Seti I, Tuthmosis II and Queen Meret Amun (wife of Amenhotep I). They lie in individual glass cases kept at a constant temperature of 22 C. Some of the mummies are so well preserved, they still have thick locks of hair, visible finger nails and smooth, if blackened skin!

This afternoon we tour the Islamic Citadel of Saladin, and the city's famous and buzzing Khan al-Khalili bazaar, whose shops and stalls groan under the weight of pharaonic souvenirs, belly-dancing costumes, spices and more. We later journey to Aswan by overnight sleeper train. At the train station, there will be the opportunity to buy more water and snacks for the trip ahead. Overnight - Sleeper Cabin Train. **Overnight - Sleeper Cabin Train (B, D)**

Day 4 : Rural villages & markets



Explore the Nubian city of Aswan with a guided walk of the local market and souq. Stunningly situated right on the Nile, a walk along the river corniche to view the many boats is a real treat, as is Aswan bazaar. Free afternoon. **Overnight - Aswan (B)**

Day 5 : Aswan - your way



Aswan. Optional early morning air excursion to famous Abu Simbel - the gargantuan rock-cut temple of King Ramses II, the Great Builder

(details of this optional excursion are featured in our brochure and online). Possibly the most awe-inspiring temple of all ancient Egypt, with its gargantuan rock-cut facade, Abu Simbel was created to revere the mighty pharaonic ruler King Ramses II. Guarding the entrance to the temple, the four famous colossal statues of Ramses II sit majestically, staring out across the desert, seemingly since time began. Famously, the temple was re-located in a multi-million dollar operation in 1972, further up from the shoreline of Lake Nasser, which had threatened to erode the foundations of this monolithic temple complex.

If you choose not to embark upon this optional excursion, there is plenty to do in Aswan, including relaxation at the hotel, exploration of Aswan and its beautiful shoreline and corniche or perhaps strolling in the city's bazaar, located near the corniche. **Overnight - Aswan (B)**

Day 6 : Boating on the Nile

Aswan - Luxor. This morning we board a motor boat and cruise along the River Nile, passing some of the small islands en route to Sahal island, where we disembark and visit a local village and school before enjoying lunch at the home of an Egyptian family. The motor boats of Aswan are proudly owned and crewed by friendly local sailors and they have been adapted from a felucca style of vessel to comfortably carry travellers. After lunch we cruise back to Aswan for our afternoon/evening train journey, north to Luxor.

Home of the legendary Valley of the Kings and Temple of Karnak, 4000 year-old Luxor is ancient Egypt at it's best. Enjoy some rest and relaxation. **Overnight - Luxor (B, L)**

Day 7 : Karnak Temple & Luxor Temple by night



Luxor. Good morning Luxor! Opt to take an early morning hot air balloon excursion. From high above we look down upon ancient Thebes, remarkable landscape and local villages waking up to start their day. Later we visit Karnak Temple. A spectacular temple on a gigantic scale dedicated to the Theban gods, Karnak is an awesome complex of sanctuaries, pylons, chapels, halls and obelisks, all dedicated to the Theban gods and to the greater glory of Egypt's Middle and New Kingdom rulers. Gigantic in proportion, at over 1.5km by 800m and the fact that almost every pharaoh left his (or her) mark here with evolving artistic and architectural

styles, wandering through the temple is one of the highlights of a visit to Egypt. Perhaps enjoy a game of hide and seek with the kids in the vast Hypostyle Hall, with its gargantuan columns!

This evening, we travel in horse-drawn carriages to the illuminated Temple of Luxor where we enjoy a tour in the cool evening air. The remainder of the evening is free to spend at leisure. **Overnight - Luxor (B)**

Day 8 : Valley of the Kings



Luxor - Cairo. Early this morning we cross the Nile River to the West Bank for a guided tour of the legendary Valleys of the Kings.

Attempting to confound thieves and grave robbers, the New Kingdom pharaohs awaiting their passage into the after-life were secretly entombed with their worldly wealth in the cliffs of the valley. The cliffs, bereft of vegetation are home to a vast necropolis of tombs, some of which you can enter and visit. Some of the tombs are so well preserved; the colors of some of the incredible pharaonic friezes are still as vibrantly coloured as when first painted.

Some of the best known tombs are those of Ramses II, Seti I, Amenhotep II and of course, the tomb of King Tutankhamen. Discovered intact in 1922 by Howard Carter, it represented possibly one of the most dazzling archaeological finds ever. King Tutankhamen's solid gold funerary mask and his priceless cache of treasures entombed with him for his journey to the afterlife, are now on display at the world famous Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

In all, more than 60 tombs have been excavated, though possibly the greatest find since the tomb of King Tutankhamen, is that of the largest tomb believed to be the burial place of more than 50 sons of Ramses II. So far more than 110 chambers and corridors have been discovered, coupled with 4 mummies. It'll be a few years yet before the tomb is open. Its proof though that the ancient Egyptian's are still confounding us!

After leaving Valley of the Kings and saying goodbye to our tour guide we return to our hotel, where here here will be a little time to freshen up before hotel check out and onward departure transfer to Luxor international Airport. Our tour concludes at this point with fond memories of a magical family holiday to Egypt!



Note: Flights departing Luxor can be reserved anytime after 1.30pm today.(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Visas

Visas are required by all visitors to Egypt. Visa forms are available from us. The Embassy of Egypt advises all travellers to procure their visa prior to entry into Egypt. However it still remains possible for nationals of some countries to procure their tourist visa upon arrival at Cairo International Airport.

Please note that in the event of visa refusal at port of entry, on the go cannot be held responsible.

All RSA passport holders must procure their Egyptian visa prior to departure.

When filling in an Egyptian visa form, you will be asked to provide your address in Egypt. For the purposes of this form, please use the following address: 68 Merghany St, Abou Ghaly Building Heliopolis, Cairo. Telephone: +2 02 241821 65

If your holiday incorporates a stay in Jordan, followed by further arrangements in Egypt (ie you travel to Jordan and then return to Egypt) you will need to procure a Multiple Entry Egyptian Tourist Visa that is only available before travelling to Egypt.

Please note that visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is solely the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go Tours.

If travelling with us from Egypt to Jordan via Aqaba Seaport (the Jordanian port of entry if arriving from Egypt) a Jordanian Tourist Visa is obtainable upon arrival, free of charge for UK, EU, AUS, NZ, CAN and USA passport holders. For all other nationalities please check with your local Jordanian Embassy. On departure from Jordan, via land or sea, a 5JD departure tax of is applied to all visitors.

Etiquette

Despite the inevitable ups and downs of travelling abroad, you will generally be shown great hospitality in Egypt. In return, please demonstrate sensitivity and respect for the local customs. Egypt is a Muslim country; so care should be taken to dress respectfully in large cities and towns, for example, when at markets and in public places.

- Ladies should avoid wearing 'clingy, tight or suggestive' attire, and stick to cool, flowing, cottons in busy city areas and markets
- Take care to dress conservatively and ensure that limbs are covered and remove footwear prior to entering a mosque.
- Ex-military style clothing should not be worn
- Ask permission before taking photographs of people.
- Beach attire is fine on board felucca cruises, at beach resorts or touristic areas i.e. at the Pyramids.
- Particular respect should be shown to Muslim women.

- The standard form of greeting is a handshake. Men and women do not kiss at any time as a form of greeting.

Mosques, Religion & Ramadan

90% of the population are Muslim. Others are Coptic Christians or followers of other faiths. All mosques (with the exception of Sayyida Zeinab and Al-Hussein in Cairo) are open to non-Muslims but cannot be visited during prayer times. For Egypt's best mosques, go to Islamic Cairo. Dress conservatively. Ensure limbs are covered and shoes removed when entering any Mosque. Men must refrain from wearing shorts, as must women.

RAMADAN

Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world and adherents of the Muslim faith fast during daylight hours and break their fast with lavish meals and lively celebrations in the evening. Ramadan culminates a month later in a 3 day celebration called Eid al - Fitr. Many shops (excluding those which cater mainly to tourists) and attractions close earlier during Ramadan. As such we will start our tour earlier during this period to make the best use of time, leisure time will be offered in the late afternoon. Note: Traffic is exceptionally heavy during Ramadan, especially toward the time of breaking the fast.. Forthcoming Ramadan dates are as follows. (approximate) - 21 July - 20 August 2012
09 July - 07 August 2013

Many shops (excluding those which cater mainly to tourists) and attractions close earlier during Ramadan, so our itinerary is slightly altered to ensure we visit all itinerary attractions. Non Muslims are not expected to fast over Ramadan, but it is considered impolite to eat food or drink on the street.

Trouble Shooting

These things will most likely never happen, but it's good to be prepared if they ever do. Here are a few tips to keep your trip hassle-free. Egypt is no worse than anywhere else when it comes to crime. The biggest problem seems to be petty theft, including pick-pocketing and bag snatching. Minimise your chances of being robbed with these tips:

- Leave valuables in the hotel safe deposit or better still, at home
- Carry your passport on your person or a photocopy as ID
- Carry your bag close to your person rather than over your shoulder
- Travel in a group or pair, especially if you are female
- Don't catch cabs late at night on your own
- Never drink anything offered to you in the street, unless you opened it yourself

Please note On The Go Tours will not be held liable for loss or damage to personal property under any circumstances.

It's not like home

Travel to far - flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home.

You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

Climate

Temperatures in Egypt are generally high (25 - 30 degrees) and even hotter in the summer months from May to September, when the sun can be fierce and temperatures soar, so pack light comfortable clothing, sunscreen and a hat.

In Cairo and the Nile Delta region, winter (October to February) can be cooler - so take a jacket, long-sleeved tops and trousers for the cooler evenings. The south remains warm during this time but again, temperatures do drop in the evenings. Rainfall is negligible with the most falling along Egypt's Mediterranean coastline.

Health Requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). Vaccination requirements can change so please check with your local health care provider before travel.

Currency

Egyptian Pounds (EGP or LE). Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are easily exchanged. You can obtain Egyptian Pounds (LE) at any major bank or your hotel. Exchange rates are subject to fluctuations.

- USD 1 = EGP 6.0
- GBP 1 = EGP 9.3
- AUD 1 = EGP 6.0
- EURO 1 = EGP 7.70

Holiday Money

All funds collected in Egypt for entrance fees or optional excursion that you may wish to undertake are payable in local currency (EGP).

Time

Egypt is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)

Essential Packing

- Sleeping bag for the felucca or for camping in the White Desert (if applicable to your tour).
- Lightweight cotton garments.
- Comfortable walking shoes for the Pyramids and Valley of the Kings Pack flip flops/thongs/jandals to wear aboard the Nile felucca or Nile Cruiser
- DEET based mosquito repellent & antihistamine cream
- 2 pin, European electrical adaptor.



- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume and torch
- Neck pillow, sleeping bag and eye mask, if travelling on the overnight seater train.
- Sleep sheet or sleeping bag if travelling with us to Jordan and staying at our Wadi Rum camp.

If doing a felucca cruise, undertaking the Mt Sinai excursion in Dahab or travelling between November and March, pack warm clothes (i.e. – fleece, jacket, trousers, jeans, hat and scarf) as temperatures plummet at night. Due to sometimes icy conditions at the summit of Mt Sinai, hiking boots and thermal clothing are a sensible consideration if undertaking the optional climb in winter (November - March).

Arrival Transfers

A complimentary airport arrival transfer is included in your tour. Upon arrival at Cairo Airport you will be met by a representative from On The Go Tours either just before immigration or in the baggage hall near the luggage belt of your respective arriving flight. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative. Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative. After collecting your luggage you will be escorted to our awaiting transportation.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to Egypt is delayed, please call or send a text message to the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher.

Travelling by overnight train

SEATER TRAIN: On many of our group tours journeying south from Cairo to Aswan and/or Luxor, we utilise the overnight SEATER train service. This style of train offer basic and a modest level of comfort. Seating is reserved in air-conditioned Nefertiti Class or 1st Class Reserved seater wagons. Nefertiti style seats are located within 6 person, semi enclosed cabins. Whilst seats don't recline, the lights can be switched off inside your cabin. While 1st Class Reserved wagons are open, lights can not be turned off though the seats are wide and do recline. It is suggested you bring some ear plugs and also an eye mask for personal comfort. A neck pillow is also good idea, for a little added comfort. Rest rooms (which are very basic in standard) are located at the end of each wagon.

It is possible to upgrade to a sleeper cabin, reservations need to be made PRIOR to departure. Please ask your reservation consultant for more information.

Occasionally, the Nefertiti Class and the 1st Class Reserve train service are cancelled, in which case we would need to revert to a sleeper service at an additional cost to the passenger. You would be advised in Egypt, as although this occurrence is rare, there would be little notice offered.

SLEEPER TRAIN SERVICE, SLEEPER CABIN UPGRADE: On our Jewel of the Nile and Family tours we include the Sleeper Cabin Train as part of your journey. If you book our SLEEPER TRAIN UPGRADE this is also the service that you will be travelling on. Sleeper Train Cabins are equipped with 2 bunk beds with linen provided. Cabins are lockable, A/C and lighting are also controlled from the inside. Each cabin has a washbasin and small towel and western style bathrooms are located at the end of the carriage. Dinner and breakfast (of an average standard) are served throughout the journey.

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