

## EGYPT & JORDAN

### 'The Classic Combo'

**21 days**

Created on: 29 Sep, 2025

#### Day 1 Arrive in Cairo

Welcome to Al-Qahira, "The Vanquisher," where the Nile's life-giving waters have sustained one of history's greatest civilisations for over five millennia.

As you transfer to our hotel, we enter a metropolis of over 21 million souls, nicknamed "The City of a Thousand Minarets" for its Islamic architectural splendour. Cairo has long served as the political and cultural heartbeat of the Arab world, where ancient stones whisper tales of pharaohs, caliphs, and conquerors. Tonight we gather with fellow travellers for our first evening meal, beginning an extraordinary journey through lands where humanity first learned to build monuments for eternity.

PLEASE NOTE: As tomorrow will be an early start and a full day, you may want to arrive a day early should your arrival time be late at night. Extra nights at the same hotel can be quoted/booked by your tour consultants once your flight schedule is known.

Overnight in Cairo

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

#### Day 2 Cairo: Great Pyramids & the Sphinx - Grand Egyptian Museum

We begin with humanity's most iconic monuments: the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. Impressive in their grandeur, these pyramids required over 100,000 labourers working for 20 years. The Great Pyramid of Cheops, constructed from over two million stone blocks, soars 135m (443 feet) high! You may enter one of the pyramids through narrow passageways to explore the deep inner chambers (optional - extra fee applicable).

We then encounter the Sphinx, named by Greeks who saw resemblance to their mythical winged monster. Legend tells how this creature posed riddles to Thebans, killing all who answered incorrectly! Carved from one solid limestone piece, the Sphinx has gazed across the desert for over 4,500 years.

We continue to the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), where we break for lunch at onsite restaurants. This crown jewel houses over 100,000 artefacts spanning thousands of years of Egyptian civilisation. During our guided tour, we explore the theme "Kingship and Eternity," witnessing the Hanging Obelisk, Colossal Statue of King Ramesses II, and Victory Column of King Merenptah.

Our visit culminates with "Tutankhamun - The Immersive Exhibition," taking us on a mythical journey through 3,400 years of history via state-of-the-art digital projections into the mesmerising world of the legendary Golden King.

Overnight in Cairo (Giza)

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

#### Day 3 Cairo: Dahshur, Memphis & Saqqara

We journey through Giza's suburbs, past colourful villages and plantations in the fertile Nile Valley, to Dahshur's stunning pyramids. Seneferu's Bent Pyramid and Red Pyramid, built from 2613 to 2589 BC, provided crucial learning experiences that enabled construction of the Great Pyramid of Giza. These monuments represent the transition from step-sided to smooth-sided pyramids.

We continue to Memphis and Saqqara, chronologically Egypt's most important sites. Memphis served as capital during the Old Kingdom (ca 2700-2180 BC), where we see statues including the colossal Ramesses the Great. From Memphis, we travel to Saqqara, ancient burial site for Memphis residents. Here stands the Step Pyramid, constructed by master architect Imhotep in the 27th century BC. Beginning as a simple mastaba tomb, Imhotep added five more levels until it measured 62m (203 feet) high!

We also explore the Serapeum, tomb of sacred Apis bulls associated with god Ptah. An avenue of sphinxes leads to corridors that once

housed the mummified remains of these revered creatures.

Overnight in Cairo (Giza)

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

#### Day 4 Cairo - Fly to Aswan: The High Dam, Unfinished Obelisk & Philae Temple

We fly to Aswan in Upper Egypt, Egypt's sunniest southern city and ancient frontier town. Small enough to walk around and graced with the Nile's most beautiful setting, Aswan's pace remains slow and relaxing.

We visit the High Dam, constructed between 1960 and 1971 to control the annual Nile flood. From here we enjoy panoramic views of Aswan north and Lake Nasser south. We then take a boat journey to dramatically situated Philae Temple on its island. Though relatively small, the setting's charm and excellent preservation make this essential viewing.

We conclude at the Unfinished Obelisk, where ancient craftsmen began carving directly from bedrock before cracks appeared and the project was abandoned. This remarkable site offers unique insights into ancient Egyptian stone-working techniques, with workers' tool marks and ochre-coloured lines still clearly visible.

NOTE: The actual order of our sightseeing in Upper Egypt may vary depending on variables such as flight schedules and weather. Your Tour Leader will keep you apprised of any adjustments as the tour progresses.

Overnight in Aswan

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

#### Day 5 Aswan: St. Simeon Monastery & Kitchener's Island

This morning we take a private boat across the Nile to the west bank, then travel by camel across sandy desert to the Christian Monastery of St. Simeon. Before this easy trek, our Tour Leader and camel trainer teach you riding techniques. This journey suits anyone at any age (one rider per camel) - about 45 minutes to the monastery, 15 minutes back. Those preferring not to ride can travel by truck.

Dating from the 6th century and used until the 13th century, St. Simeon's Monastery ranks among Egypt's best-preserved Christian sites. We explore the chapel, living quarters, kitchen, wine press, and storerooms, plus remains of Coptic frescoes depicting Christ, saints, and geometric patterns.

We then cruise among islands dotting the Nile. Above the river rises the Mausoleum of the Aga Khan, spiritual leader of the Ismailis, an elegant pink granite structure from 1957. The main island, Elephantine, earned its name because rocks resemble elephants bathing. On beautiful Kitchener's Island, we stroll through rich botanical gardens before enjoying a leisurely felucca sail on this traditional vessel.

Overnight in Aswan

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

#### Day 6 Aswan: Abu Simbel

A pre-dawn departure by road (+/- 3 hours, each way)\* takes us south from Aswan across the Western Desert to Nubia, or the "Land of the Gold". Our destination this morning is the impressive Abu Simbel -- the imposing rock temples of Rameses II and his queen, Nefertari.

We have a guided tour of this site, including the interior of the colossal temples. The Temple of Rameses II, with its immense statues of the Pharaoh seated on his throne, is one of the classic images of the power of the Pharaohs. Inside the temple you will see well-preserved wall decorations and several murals. There is a wonderful relief of Rameses presenting captives to various gods, including himself! We also gain insight into the reconstruction process by visiting the interior of the artificial mountain. Return by road to Aswan in time for a late lunch.

\* When visiting Abu Simbel we choose to travel by road instead of flying as the air schedules tend to be rather restrictive and do not always allow enough time at the site (much time is taken up by check-in, security, boarding, transferring etc). Driving frees us from this inconvenience and adds flexibility, plus allows us to see the High Dam en route. Departing very early ensures that we are at the site at the optimal time for photography; later in the morning, shadows fall across the temple making conditions less than ideal.

Overnight in Aswan.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 7 Aswan - Luxor via Kom Ombo & Edfu

We farewell Aswan and travel by road to Kom Ombo Temple. In ancient times, Kom Ombo held strategic importance as a trading town on the caravan route from Nubia to Cairo. Actually two temples in one, it's dedicated to Haroeris (Horus) and Sobek - the sky god and crocodile-headed god respectively. We see remains of a mummified crocodile; these creatures no longer exist in Egypt's Nile but once lived here in great numbers and were worshipped as gods.

From Kom Ombo we travel to Edfu, the largest and most completely preserved Pharaonic temple, albeit Greek-built. Dedicated to Horus, construction began under Ptolemy III in 237 BC. We explore this massive site enclosed by walls and flanked by large pylon gateways, including a Nilometer - an ancient technique for measuring the Nile's water fluctuations and setting tax levels.

Overnight in Luxor

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 8 Karnak Temple & Luxor Temple

We begin with Karnak Temple, built, enlarged, and decorated over 1,500 colourful years. At certain points, this was Egypt's most important temple. The tremendous pylon gateway and Avenue of 1,000 Sphinxes that originally ran to the Nile will awe you with their grandeur. We tour this massive complex that exemplifies ancient Egyptian architectural achievement.

After a break, we visit Luxor Temple in the evening. Dedicated to the Theban Triad of Amun, Mut, and Chons, it was built during the New Kingdom as focus for the annual Opet Festival. During this celebration, Amun's cult statue was paraded down the Nile from nearby Karnak Temple in a fertility celebration. Luxor Temple ranks among the largest ancient Egyptian temple complexes, with a huge tower built by King Ramesses II marking its entrance.

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 9 Luxor: Valley of the Kings

Dawn mist rises from the Nile as we cross by boat to the West Bank, where limestone cliffs conceal the most spectacular royal cemetery ever created. The early morning air carries whispers of ancient secrets as we meet our donkey-cart transport for a journey into the Valley of the Kings through New Gurna Village.

Our charming donkey-cart ride takes us through countryside where modern fellahin (farmers) tend fields much as their ancestors did millennia ago. Children wave from mud-brick houses, women carry water jars on their heads, and farmers guide oxen through irrigation channels. This 40-45 minute journey through timeless rural scenes connects us to the eternal rhythms of Nile life before we reunite with road transport for the final approach.

In this isolated valley dominated by pyramid-shaped mountains, we enter the sacred necropolis where New Kingdom pharaohs chose to hide their tombs from grave robbers. For over 500 years, from Tuthmosis I to Ramesses XI, Egypt's god-kings carved elaborate underground palaces into the limestone cliffs. We tour three carefully selected tombs, each revealing different aspects of ancient Egyptian funerary art and beliefs. Note that some tombs have steep stairways and all are quite dark inside (a pocket flashlight proves useful).

The Valley of the Kings represents ancient Egypt's most ambitious attempt to ensure royal immortality. Unlike the obvious pyramids, these hidden tombs were meant to remain secret forever, their elaborate chambers filled with everything a pharaoh needed for the afterlife journey.\*

We proceed to Queen Hatshepsut's funerary temple - built for Egypt's first woman to rule as pharaoh! Rising in terraced splendour against towering cliffs, this architectural marvel was discovered in the mid-19th century and remains under restoration. As afternoon shadows lengthen across ancient stones, we return through countryside to the East Bank, where we suggest visiting the excellent Luxor Museum or Mummification Museum during free time.

Tonight you may choose to attend the optional Sound and Light show at Karnak Temple, where ancient stories unfold against illuminated columns.

\* We do not include King Tut's tomb, as it's very small and relatively uninteresting, but we allow time if you wish to see it (separate ticket).

Overnight in Luxor

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 10 Luxor: Valley of the Queens

This morning we make an excursion the Valley of the Queens.\* After crossing the Nile we will board our bus for the short journey to visit this wonderful necropolis on the western shore of the Nile.

The Valley of the Queens was used as a burial site for the royal women of the 18th, 19th and 20th Dynasties. Ancient Egyptians called this place "Set Neferu" meaning Seat Of Beauty, and today only a few of the eighty tombs are open to the public (we will visit three). The Valley of the Queens holds far more than graves of queens. Please note that an OPTIONAL visit of the tomb of Queen Nefertari is available for an extra charge (your Tour Leader will advise of the current fee).

As well as our visit to the Valley of the Queens we will also have a guided tour of the workers' village and the Madinat Habu temple. Madinat Habu, also known as the temple of Rameses III was known in ancient times as Djanet, and according to ancient belief, was the place where Amon first appeared. Both Hatshepsut and Tutmosis III built a temple dedicated to Amon here, and later Rameses III constructed his larger memorial temple on the site.

\* Due to periodic and unannounced closures of the tombs at the Valley of the Queens, your Tour Leader may substitute the Tombs of the Nobles, which are equally interesting.

Overnight in Luxor.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 11 Luxor: Dendera Temple & Time at Leisure

This morning we enjoy an excursion to the fascinating temple of Dendera located north of Luxor on the banks of the Nile.

Dendera Temple is one of the best-preserved temple complexes in Egypt. Located in the city of Qena (60 km north of Luxor) Dendera was constructed for the worship of Goddess Hathor, goddess of love, beauty, and motherhood in the ancient Egyptian religion. The temple was founded by pharaoh Pepi I (2250 BC) and continued during the New Kingdom (1550-1080 BC). What was left dates back to the Greco-Roman time in Egypt. The recent cleaning of the ceiling of the Dendera Temple has revealed has exposed some of the most vibrant and colourful paintings dating from antiquity. The temple has two decorated crypts, two halls with ceilings supported by columns and two funeral chapels, from where the famous "zodiac" from the Louvre comes.

We return to Luxor for some well-deserved free time for independent exploration, shopping, napping etc after some full days of touring. The Luxor Museum is also worthwhile, as it displays a very good contextual story of Luxor and the nearby valley of the Kings and Queens. The wooden sarcophagi are the highlight -- so vivid that it's hard to believe they are thousands of years old.

Overnight in Luxor.

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Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 12 Luxor - Cairo: Museum of Egyptian Antiquities

Today we fly back to Cairo.

On arrival we proceed to the famous Museum of Egyptian Antiquities,\* where enjoy a guided tour of some of Egypt's most beloved treasures. Among the 100,000 pieces housed on the museum's two floors is the famous exhibit of Tutankhamun whose tomb was discovered by Howard Carter in 1922. The tomb and treasures of this young Pharaoh, modest by Pharaonic Egyptian standards, is perhaps the best-preserved of the discovered tombs. We also see archaeological relics from the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom and Greco-Roman periods. There is also a separated area devoted to the best-known of the Tut antiquities (the Mummies Room), which you can enter for an optional extra fee (ask your Tour Leader for the current rate).

\* With the (maybe partial) opening of the GEM and the unclear situation re the fate of the original museum, and the timing/choosing of which artifacts will be moved and which will remain, we'll plan to visit both facilities for now and adjust this program as things become clearer. Regardless of location, however, we definitely plan to see the Tut relics wherever they may be at the time of our visit.

Overnight in Cairo (central).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 13 Cairo: Coptic & Islamic Cairo - Khan el Khalili

Today visit the new National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC), a nice addition to the Cairo museum landscape and an excellent way to recap all that we have done and seen during our tour.

We then drive through the neat, tree-lined streets of the Garden City area to Coptic Cairo, the centre of Christianity in Cairo.\* We will walk the cobblestone streets and stop at a few of the churches, including that of Saint Sergius, presumed to be the spot where the Holy Family lived during their flight into Egypt. The present building dates from the 11th century. As we stroll along we will come to the recently restored Synagogue of Ben Ezra, the oldest Jewish synagogue in Egypt. Despite the 45 Jewish families that remain in Cairo, the synagogue is no longer operational.

We then proceed to Islamic Cairo, where we will tour the Citadel, begun by Saladin in the 12th century. Today the Citadel's buildings are mainly from the Ottoman period, and are truly grand. From the Citadel, actually a complex of three mosques and four museums, we enjoy an amazing view of Cairo spread beneath the hilltop. Here we will see the fabulous Mosque of Mohammed Ali, also known as the "Alabaster Mosque."

Finally we make a stop at Khan el Khalili, one of the most interesting bazaars, not only in Egypt, but also in all the Middle East. The atmosphere of this traditional market, together with the labyrinthine layout of the streets, gives visitors a glimpse into what medieval markets were once like.

\* The Coptic Cairo section of our program exists here in a tentative basis given ever-changing security considerations in this district. Your Tour Leader will advise of the current status once you have arrived on tour and a substitution may be put into place.

Overnight in Cairo (central).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 14 Cairo, Egypt - Amman, Jordan

This morning we will fly from Cairo to Amman, the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Amman, the modern and ancient capital of Jordan, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the World. The city's modern buildings

blend with the remnants of ancient civilizations. The profusion of gleaming white houses, kebab stalls with roasting meat, and tiny cafes where rich Arabian coffee is sipped in the afternoon sunshine, conjure a mood straight from a thousand and one nights.

Overnight in Amman.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 15 Amman: Jerash & Amman City Tour

Today we begin by exploring the heart of modern central Amman. We'll start with a visit to the Archaeological Museum, where we can delve into the history of the region. Following that, we'll step back in time at the Roman Amphitheatre, a rather grand structure that's seen a few centuries pass. We'll also wander through the ruins of the Temple of Hercules, imagining the city as it once was.

After our Amman exploration, we'll board our bus and head north to Jerash. This is where things get really interesting. Jerash, in its Roman heyday, was a prosperous city, and thankfully, much of it remains remarkably well-preserved. We'll stroll through the elliptical forum, a unique shape for a Roman gathering place, and take in the impressive amphitheatre. If we're lucky, we might even test the acoustics—no singing required, though it's tempting. We'll also explore the Temple of Artemis, a substantial site that gives a real sense of the scale of Roman Jerash.

To make the most of our day, we'll have our evening meal on the route back to Amman. This allows us to use our bus efficiently and, hopefully, get us back to the hotel at a reasonable hour, after a full day of Roman ruins and archaeological discoveries.

Overnight in Amman.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 16 Amman - Madaba - Mt Nebo - Shobak - Petra

This morning, we're off to Madaba, a town that's quite rightly proud of its mosaic floors. Our first stop is St. George's church, where we'll find a rather impressive mosaic map of the Holy Land, as it was back in the 6th century. It's like stepping into a historical atlas, laid out right beneath our feet.

Next, we'll journey to Mount Nebo, perched on the edge of the Jordan Valley. This is where Moses and the Children of Israel supposedly got their first glimpse of the Promised Land. On a clear day, the views are pretty expansive—you can see the Dead Sea, the Jordan River, and even Jerusalem across the valley. We'll also take a look at another large mosaic, this one depicting hunting scenes, found in the remains of a Byzantine church.

From Mount Nebo, we'll head south, following a route where, in days gone by, castles and towns were conveniently spaced a day's travel apart. Later in the day, we'll explore Shobak Castle, a Crusader fortress built in 1115 and later taken by Saladin's forces. It's a reminder of a time when this region saw a lot of comings and goings.

Finally, after a full day of mosaics, views, and castles, we'll arrive at Petra, ready to rest up for our exploration of that remarkable site.

Overnight in Petra.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 17 Petra: Site Tour

Petra was the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom from the fourth century BC to the 2nd century AD. From the 12th century until its rediscovery in 1812, Petra was lost to the world -- a closely guarded secret of the local tribes. Today the 'rose red city half as old as time' is probably the most impressive archaeological site in the Middle East, rivaling the temples and pyramids of Egypt in grandeur.

This morning, on our way into the hidden valley of Petra, we will see the Obelisk Tomb and the irrigation system that carried water from a

dam throughout the desert city. Access to the monuments of Petra is through a narrow gorge in the towering rocks called the 'Siq'. As we emerge from the 'Siq' you stand in awe in front of the 'Treasury' (El Kazneh), a graceful structure carved from the living rock. After pausing to admire the elegant columns and carvings we carry on into the valley where elaborate tombs are carved into the multi-coloured walls. Everywhere the sandstone swirls and twists in shades of red, orange, yellow, pink and white. Next we will see the Roman amphitheatre, carved directly out of the mountain, with space for over 3,000 spectators.

Further on in the main valley of Petra, are the Royal Tombs including the Palace Tomb and the Silk Tomb. We visit the temple of the Nabataeans' main god, Dushara, and we also see the 'Temple of the Winged Lion'. Our formal guided tour of the site terminates with a visit to the Petra Nabataean Museum.

At this point, you may explore further on your own, or return to our hotel to relax and/or shop. You may also take a strenuous walk up a narrow pass to see the magnificent 'Monastery' building, El Deir. The views of Petra and the surrounding area are expansive. The walk is steep and involves approximately 750 steps carved into the rock and will take APPROXIMATELY one hour up (30 minutes down).

NOTE: Access to Petra is by means of footpath only. The main sites occur near ground that is level and well-worn, though the overall site is huge. Our pace is leisurely with frequent breaks; however, to fully experience Petra you must be prepared for a considerable amount of walking and little shade. Please note that we include lunch today on the site of Petra instead of dinner this evening, which allows us to maximize our time here and still enjoy a relaxing sit-down meal without having to rely on carry-in packed lunches. Your Tour leader can assist with your evening meal plans back in the village, which we do not include today.

Overnight at Petra.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

### Day 18 Petra: El Beidha & Leisure Time

This morning, we're taking a short bus trip to 'el Beidha', also known as 'Little Petra'. It's a Nabatean site, and a rather charming one at that. But what's really fascinating is that we'll also see evidence of a Neolithic settlement, dating back a staggering 8,500 years. That's right, we're talking about one of the oldest sites in the Middle East. It shows us how a "Pre-Pottery" population, herders experimenting with agriculture, managed to make a life here. After our glimpse into the ancient past, we'll hop back on the bus and return to the hotel.

This afternoon, you've got a choice. You can take it easy and relax at the hotel, or you can head back into the main site of Petra to explore further at your own pace. There are plenty of scenic walks and hikes within the site, so if you're feeling energetic, there's no shortage of things to see. Just ask your Tour Leader for some suggestions and directions.

Overnight at Petra.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 19 Petra - Wadi Rum

This morning, we'll leaving Petra behind and heading for Wadi Rum, a landscape that's famously linked to Lawrence of Arabia's wartime campaigns.

After a lunch break, we'll switch gears and climb into smaller trucks, ready to explore the desert. Wadi Rum is a place where the sand takes on a striking red hue, and the towering rock formations look like giant, layered cakes slowly melting under the sun. It's quite a sight. We might even have the opportunity to visit a goat-hair tent and share a glass of tea with some Bedouin tribesmen, the nomadic herdsman who once formed Lawrence's army. Speaking of Lawrence, we'll also see the Hejaz Railway line that he famously sabotaged, running along the valley floor. Our desert excursion will take us on a three-hour route known as "Siq Al Barra and Om Eshreen," a journey that showcases the unique beauty of Wadi Rum.

Tonight, we'll be staying in a luxury tented camp, where we can experience a blend of traditional Bedouin culture and modern comforts. It's a chance to enjoy the desert under the stars, with a few extra comforts thrown in.

Overnight in Wadi Rum.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 20 Wadi Rum - Dead Sea

Today we're travelling north along the Dead Sea Highway, heading straight for the Dead Sea itself. This area has a rich history, with connections to King David, King Herod, Jesus, and John the Baptist. It's safe to say there's a lot of historical footsteps we're following.

Even Cleopatra recognized the unique properties of the Dead Sea, reportedly securing exclusive rights to build cosmetic and pharmaceutical factories here during the Egyptian conquest. Later, the Nabataeans discovered the value of the bitumen extracted from its waters, which the Egyptians found quite useful.

We're aiming to arrive at our Dead Sea hotel in time for lunch, which you can enjoy at your leisure. The hotel is situated right on the shores of the sea, giving you the perfect opportunity to take a dip and experience the remarkable buoyancy of the ultra-salty water. It's a rather peculiar sensation, floating effortlessly, and a chance to say you've floated in one of the saltiest bodies of water on Earth.

Overnight at the Dead Sea.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 21 Dead Sea - Departure

Today we transfer back to Amman's Queen Alia International Airport to connect with homeward flights. Departure from Amman.

LAND ONLY customers make their own way directly to the airport by taxi directly from the Dead Sea (your Tour Leader will assist).

NOTE that many international flights from Amman depart late at night. Most passengers enjoy the extra "downtime" (ie all day today) at the Dead Sea; however, some prefer to depart earlier (ie last night). You might consider this situation and your preferences before finalizing your air.

RHLAH S'IDAH

Included Meal(s): Breakfast