



EGYPT ALONG THE RIVER NILE

March 22 – 31, 2024

Highlights

- Tour the Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx of Giza, a short distance from your hotel
- Explore the largest archaeological museum in the world, the Grand Egyptian Museum
- Sail on a 4-night Nile River cruise aboard a luxurious Dahabiya, a distinctive two-sail boat
- Visit the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens in Ancient Thebes
- Marvel at the magnificent Temples of Luxor, Karnak, Horus, and Kom Ombo
- Take a guided tour of Cairo's Muslim, Christian, and Jewish historical sights
- Enjoy the services of expert Egyptologists and private drivers
- Experience regional cuisine, bustling bazaars, magnificent monuments, cultural events, an amazing Nile River cruise and luxurious lodging with a small, friendly group!

Optional pre-tour Experience Thursday, March 7

Arrive in Cairo this evening. The next morning, enjoy a half-day guided tour of Egypt's ancient capital city of Memphis. Explore the earliest excavated pyramids of Dahshur (the Bent Pyramid) and Saqqara (the Step Pyramid). Experience a traditional lunch at a local Egyptian restaurant.

Day 1 Cairo Airport – Giza Friday, March 8

Arrive at Cairo airport and proceed through passport control and customs. You will be met by a greeter in the Arrivals Hall who will escort you to a driver for the 45-minute private transfer to the Mena House Hotel. Originally established as a hunting lodge, the hotel is considered one of the greatest colonial era hotels frequented by kings, queens, prime ministers, and celebrities. Now a 5-star resort, surrounded by 40 acres of verdant green gardens, this palatial hotel is located in the shadows of the Great Pyramids. It has amazing views of the Pyramids from all areas of the hotel, including from the balcony of your premium, pyramid-view room.

Mena House Hotel (3 nights) www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/caimn-marriott-mena-house-cairo

Day 2 Giza Saturday, March 9

After breakfast, meet your expert Egyptologist in the lobby and begin the day with an unforgettable tour of the nearby Great Pyramids of Giza. The only present-day survivors of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Pyramids are among the greatest attractions in the modern world. You have the option of riding a camel, known as the "ship of the desert", across the sands of Giza to the Great Sphinx, a giant limestone sculpture of a mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head of a Pharaoh. Enjoy lunch at "9 Pyramids Lounge", a Bedouin-style restaurant set on the plateau of the Pyramids. Its unique location offers a view of all the pyramids in Giza. Spend the remainder of the day relaxing, swimming, strolling, dining – all on the lovely grounds of the hotel. (B,L)

Day 3 Giza Sunday, March 10

Today, you will have a very special experience. With your expert guide, explore the sparkling new Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) located near the Pyramids of Giza. Once the museum is inaugurated in 2023, GEM will be the largest archaeological museum in the world. You will be greeted at the entrance by the massive 3,200-year-old Statue of Ramesses II before embarking on a spectacular discovery of Ancient Egyptian artifacts, including the complete Tutankhamun collection, chariots and all. Many pieces from King Tut's tomb will be displayed for the first time. Your guide will expertly lead you through the vast museum to emphasize the highlights of Ancient Egypt, preparing you for the sights you will see on your voyage ahead. In the evening, gather with your friends at the hotel's "139 International Restaurant" to enjoy dinner under the stars with views of the illuminated pyramids. (B,D)

Day 4 Giza – Luxor – Esna – El Hegz Island Monday, March 11

Take a short, early morning flight to Luxor, site of ancient Thebes. Meet your expert guide and private driver to begin the sightseeing tour in Luxor. Visit the Valley of the Kings, a vast City of the Dead where magnificent tombs were carved into the desert rocks, richly decorated, and filled with treasures for the afterlife by generations of Pharaohs. Also visit the Valley of the Queens with the Temple of Hatshepsut, Ancient Egypt's only female Pharaoh. Proceed to the temple of Karnak, built over more than a thousand years by generations of Pharaohs. End the tour in nearby Esna and board the Dahabiya Amoura, a luxurious sailing ship, for your 4-night luxury cruise along the Nile. Set sail on your journey, overnighing close to El Hegz Island. (B,L,D)

Dahabiya Amoura (4 nights) www.nile-dahabeya.com/Cruise/dahabiya-amoura-4-nights

Day 5 El Hegz Island – Edfu – Silsela Tuesday, March 12

Gently sailing on your way to Edfu, enjoy a leisurely breakfast. Today, you will visit the Edfu Temple by horse carriage. The Temple is one of the largest intact temples of Egypt's monuments. Two beautiful granite statues of the Falcon God Horus flank the entrance. After touring the area, you will continue sailing to Silsela Hormoheb Temple where you will disembark for dinner, served on the grounds of the Temple or on an island in the Nile, accompanied by music to match the tranquil and magical setting. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Silslea – Kom Ombo Wednesday, March 13

While leisurely sailing to Kom Ombo in the morning, listen to the sounds of the water buffalo as they wade in the shallow water beside the banks of the Nile. Observe the various birdlife of the river and the donkeys on the shore as they go about their day-to-day business, scarcely changed since ancient times. In Kom Ombo, visit the Greco Roman Temple, a totally symmetrical building with two entrances, two halls, and two sanctuaries dedicated to the Falcon God Haroeris (Horus the Elder) and the Crocodile God Sobek. Moored near an island for the evening, enjoy dinner surrounded by the same nighttime sights and sounds heard by the ancients. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Kom Ombo – Aswan Thursday, March 14

Enjoy breakfast as you sail to Aswan, the gateway to Nubia and Sudan. Today, visit some of Aswan's highlights: the Temple of Philae, the High Dam, and the Aswan Souk (Old Market). This colorful, exotic bazaar sells a variety of goods such as perfume, spices, peanuts, talismans, baskets, carpets, stuffed crocodiles, and Gallabeyahs. Back at the dahabeya, prepare yourself for Egyptian party night celebrating with local cuisine and Arabic music. This is a good opportunity to dress in a new Gallabeyah, a traditional Egyptian garment native to the Nile Valley. (B,L,D)

Day 8 Aswan – Cairo Friday, March 15

After breakfast, bid *ma'a al-salamah* to your guide and crew. Transfer to the Aswan airport for a short, morning flight to Cairo. Upon arrival in Cairo, you will be met by a private driver who will chauffeur you to the luxurious Cairo Marriott, located on an island in the Nile River in the center of the sprawling capital of Cairo. The centerpiece of this hotel is the breathtaking Gezira Palace built for Napoleon III's wife, Empress Eugénie, as a suitable place to stay on her visit for the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Check into your room with a spectacular view of the Nile River from your balcony. The day is yours to stroll the peaceful gardens, have lunch at one of the hotel's many restaurants, relax at the hotel's luxurious spa, swim in the refreshing pool, or try your luck at the hotel's glamorous casino. In the evening, join your friends for a royal dinner in the Palace's Saraya Gallery Restaurant. Savor fine French cuisine in a dazzling and majestic setting. (B,D) **Cairo Marriott Hotel (2 nights)** www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/caieg-cairo-marriott-hotel-and-omar-khayyam-casino/overview

Day 9 Cairo Saturday, March 16

Today you will experience Islamic, Jewish, and Coptic Cairo. These three great religions have had enormous influences on Egypt's past and present. With an expert guide, begin your tour with a visit to the Citadel of Salah el Din, situated on Moqqtam Hill with fabulous views over Cairo. The main feature of the Citadel is the Mohammed Ali Mosque built as a replica to the magnificent Blue Mosque in Istanbul. The complex encompasses several mosques, a Palace, and museums. Continue the tour to the streets of Old Cairo. You will see how the past and present coexist and how different faiths have lived side by side for centuries. Visit the Hanging Church, one of the oldest churches in Egypt, and the Church of Abu Serga, said to be the place where the Holy Family stayed when they came to Egypt. The tour will include Ben Ezra's Temple, the most important Jewish monument in Egypt, said to be where Moses was born. Enjoy lunch at Studio Masr, originally known as the "Film Studio of Egypt", established in 1934. The restaurant, located inside AlAzhar Park on a high hill with the breathtaking background of the Muhammad Ali Mosque and the Citadel, serves traditional Egyptian food on an expansive terrace. Gather with your friends later in the evening to raise a glass to friendship and the incredible country of Egypt. (L)

Day 10 Cairo – Cairo Airport Sunday, March 17

Bid *ma'a al-salamah* to Egypt as you depart the hotel with your private driver to the Cairo Airport for your flight home or on to your next adventure!

\$3,950 per person includes:

Accommodations, meals, and activities specified in the itinerary
Services of expert local guides and professional drivers
In-country flights and airport transfers
Gratuities for guides and drivers

\$350 per person Pre-Tour Experience includes:

Entry fees, Lunch
Local guide, Professional Driver
Gratuities for Guide and Driver