

# Overseas Adventure Travel<sup>®</sup>

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide<sup>®</sup>



Immersion in Egypt: Cairo to Luxor  
2026

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world on one of Overseas Adventure Travel's (O.A.T.'s) NEW **Immersions** itineraries.

As you may already be aware, **Immersions** itineraries are shorter versions of some of our most popular O.A.T. adventures. For our more active travelers who wish to make the most of their limited time abroad, these itineraries have been carefully crafted to include all the iconic must-sees of a destination along with O.A.T.'s signature people-to-people interactions that connect you to local culture and create the most treasured travel memories.

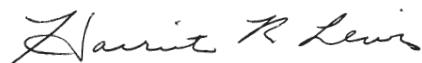
Like all our adventures, **Immersions** itineraries provide you with an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You may find yourself spending **A Day in the Life** of a local community, sharing a meal during a **Home-Hosted Visit**, or discussing **Controversial Topics** that impact everyday life. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of one of our local Trip Experience Leaders. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to arrive a few days early\* to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis  
Chair  
Overseas Adventure Travel

\*Early arrival option unavailable on **Immersion in Iceland: Selfoss to Reykjavik**

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Kom Ombo Temple

## New! Immersion in Egypt: Cairo to Luxor Small Group Adventure

**Egypt:** Cairo, Luxor, 5-night Nile River-Yacht cruise, Aswan

Small groups of no more than 16 travelers, guaranteed

**11 days starting from \$4,995**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/egl2026pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/egl2026pricing)

Discover the legacy of ancient Egypt—from the treasures of Tutankhamen to the tranquil enchantment of Aswan. Along with five nights in historic hotels such as the iconic Winter Palace in Luxor that let you experience some of the romance and glamour of an earlier era, you'll spend 5 nights aboard a privately chartered, **16-passenger dahabeya—the *Asiya* or *Aton***—and slowly drift along the Nile on a journey back in time to the days of the Pharaohs on this adventure of a lifetime.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 9 nights accommodation, including 5 nights aboard a privately chartered, 16-passenger *dahabeya*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 24 meals: 9 breakfasts, 7 lunches, and 8 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 14 small group activities
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader who is also an accredited Egyptologist
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next O.A.T. trip

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

**Immersion in Egypt: Cairo to Luxor**



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Depart U.S.
2-3	Cairo, Egypt
4	Fly to Luxor
5	Esna • Embark ship • Nile cruise
6-9	Nile cruise
10	Fly to Cairo
11	Return to U.S.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Cairo** before your main adventure from **\$280** per room, per night

## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

**Pacing:** 4 locations in 11 days with two 1-night stays, including 5 nights aboard a classic private river-yacht; and two internal flights.

**Physical requirements:** You must be able to walk 2-3 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities on most days; you will need to access vehicles by ladder without aid; agility is required to board and disembark the yacht.

**Flight time:** Travel time will be 17-20 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/egl](http://www.oattravel.com/egl)

## EGYPT: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Learn about the age-old methods a local farmer utilizes on the banks of the Nile during our **A Day in the Life** of Besaw Island, and then share a traditional lunch with him and his family. Plus, enjoy a **Home-Hosted Dinner** in Luxor, and take part in the culinary traditions and customs of daily life.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** Spend 5 nights aboard a **16-passenger dahabeya**, a classic river-yacht. Plus, you'll engage in the **Controversial Topic** of women's rights in Cairo.

# Immersion in Egypt: Cairo to Luxor

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

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### Day 1 Depart U.S.

Fly overnight from the U.S. to Cairo, Egypt.

### Day 2 Arrive Cairo, Egypt

- Destination: Cairo
- Accommodations: Cairo Marriott Hotel or similar

**Afternoon/Evening:** Upon arrival in Cairo, an O.A.T. representative will meet you and escort you to your hotel.

After settling in, we'll regroup in the lobby and your Trip Experience Leader will lead you and your fellow travelers, including those who arrived early in Cairo before the main adventure, on an orientation walk around the hotel grounds and surrounding area. Your Trip Experience Leader will also answer any questions you may have about our **Immersion** adventures.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer suggestions on where to dine, or you may choose to eat at the hotel's restaurant.

**Evening:** After dinner, you're free to explore on your own or retire to your room to rest up from your flight and prepare for tomorrow's discoveries.

### Day 3 Visit the Pyramids of Giza •

**Controversial Topic: Women's rights in Egyptian society: the law versus traditions**

- Destination: Cairo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Cairo Marriott Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Drive to Giza to behold the Great Pyramids, including the greatest of them all—the 4,500-year-old Great Pyramid of Khufu. The only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Great Pyramid was built for the Egyptian Pharaoh Khufu (Cheops in Greek) and was the world's tallest man-made structure for more than 4,000 years. We can ponder another mystery for the ages at the Sphinx, enigmatic guardian of the Giza Plateau.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Return to our hotel for the remainder of the afternoon free to relax or do some further exploring independently. Then, we'll join a local woman to discuss the **Controversial Topic** of laws protecting women's rights in Egypt versus the reality of traditional women's roles. Egypt has made progress toward gender equality in recent years. But while many laws have been put in place to protect and strengthen women's rights at home and in the workplace, the reality is more complex. In many local communities, these laws are doing little to change longstanding traditional roles for women in



Egyptian society. We will meet a local Egyptian woman who give us an overview of new laws the Egyptian government has put in place to enforce women's rights and how these laws are having little impact in many local communities. She'll share her personal story and tell us about the obstacles many women still face in communities that are resisting women's independence.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant in Cairo this evening.

**Evening:** The remainder of your evening is free for you to take advantage of the hotel's amenities, relax with your travel companions in the lounge, or retire to your room and prepare for tomorrow's flight to Luxor.

#### **Day 4 Fly to Luxor • Explore Karnak Temple • Home-Hosted Dinner**

- Destination: Luxor
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Winter Palace Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** A breakfast box will be available for travelers at the hotel early this morning.

**Morning:** Early this morning, we'll head to the airport for our flight to Luxor—which will be like a journey back in time from Egypt's current capital, Cairo, to its ancient capital of Thebes. While flying high above the Nile, one gains an appreciation of how the mighty river enabled such a magnificent civilization to develop along its fertile banks—something noted by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who called Egypt the “Gift of the Nile.”

Modern-day Luxor grew out of the ruins of ancient Thebes. And we'll begin to grasp the scope and grandeur of the monuments and temples along both banks of the Nile at this special locale—Luxor Temple and the Temple of Karnak on the East bank, and the remote

Valley of the Kings on the West bank. Upon our arrival in Luxor this morning, we'll explore the Temple of Karnak. With its massive gate built by Ptolemy III, Karnak is one of the most important ancient sites in all of Egypt. Ancient Egyptians, who believed that their chief deity Amun-Ra first created himself and then everything else, called Karnak *Ipet-Isut*, “the most perfect of places.” And perfection was eventually attained at Karnak, which was built over the course of 1,300 years by successive kings and queens, who each added their own tributes to Amun-Ra, replacing or expanding existing monuments in ever more grand styles.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll check in to our hotel, and you'll have some free time to relax and get settled in.

Then, we'll regroup in the lobby of our hotel for one of the highlights of our Egypt adventure: a **Home-Hosted Dinner** with a local family. We'll break up into smaller groups and depart for the home or apartment of our host family, which will be located in the suburb of Awamiya. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about life in the region—so come hungry for your home-cooked meal, and bring plenty of questions for your welcoming hosts.

**Dinner:** Dine in the home of a local family, and learn about life in the legendary city of Luxor from these residents while we watch as they prepare an authentic dinner. Each family has a different background—some of them may be teachers, bank tellers, or shop owners, for example. Our meal this evening will consist of typical regional dishes—like *mahshi* (eggplant and zucchini), *moussaka* (an eggplant, meat, and potato-based dish), and *tahini* salad (made from toasted, ground sesame)—and the family will sit down with us to savor it. We'll

finish off our meal with a traditional dessert like *basbousa*, cake sweetened with a simple syrup, or *knafah*, filo pastry filled with cheese.

**Evening:** The rest of your evening is free to relax at the hotel, or perhaps to head over to the Luxor market, which is about half a mile from our hotel.

## **Day 5 Valley of the Kings • Esna & Temple of Khnum • Begin Nile cruise**

- Destination: Luxor
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Asiya* river-yacht or *Aton* river-yacht

**Activity Note:** Today's activities require an early wakeup call.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll depart the hotel in the morning, crossing over to the west bank of the Nile by motorboat, and then traveling by coach to the Valley of the Kings. The Valley of the Kings, situated in a secluded locale in the Theban Hills, is where the great pharaohs were buried in rock-cut tombs and surrounded by all the treasures they would need in the afterlife. Almost all of the sacred burial chambers were plundered over the millennia—with the exception of an obscure young ruler whose reign lasted a mere decade. On the afternoon of November 26, 1922, British archaeologist Howard Carter made a small hole in a sealed doorway, inserted a candle, and peered inside. Completely untouched, Tutankhamen's burial chambers contained thousands of priceless objects inside, along with a gold coffin containing the mummy of the teenage king.

Upon arrival in the Valley of the Kings, we'll set off on a walking tour, which includes a visit to the tomb of this young pharaoh, followed by a visit to the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, built for Egypt's first known female monarch.

Ruling for 20 years in the 15th century B.C., Hatshepsut is also considered one of Egypt's most successful pharaohs.

Then, we'll drive south to Esna, a town on the Nile's western bank, where we'll board our private river-yacht.

**Lunch:** Aboard our yacht.

**Afternoon:** Before we begin our Nile River cruise, we'll enjoy a walking tour of Esna, which was an important stop on the camel-caravan route for centuries.

To set your expectation for the days ahead, a word about our private 16-passenger *dahabeya*—your accommodations for the next five nights: This is not your typical large river ship. Instead, you'll experience a gentler, more gracious era in travel. In fact, the history of the *dahabeya* goes back to the Pharaonic times, and inscriptions of these vessels have been found in the tombs of ancient Egyptian Kings. They take their name from the Arabic word for gold (*dahab*), since the earliest form of this boat was golden colored. As we glide quietly across the Nile's timeless waters, guided by the gentle winds and whims of the currents, our small motorized tender is there to nudge us along when we require assistance. The intimate size of our vessel also allows us to visit ancient temples at quiet times, and gives us access to the smaller islands and riverside villages unavailable to travelers on the big river ships. Quietly moored in secluded locales, we can spend peaceful evenings relaxing on deck, gazing out at the Nile to imagine a time when Cleopatra and Julius Caesar drifted past these very same waters aboard the Egyptian queen's gilded barge.

With a crew of 15 along to provide attentive, personal service to our small group of just 16 travelers, we'll begin our romantic journey along the Nile this afternoon. Our first cruise



will last approximately four hours, plenty of time to appreciate just how relaxing this form of Nile travel can be while taking in the vistas to either side of the river where life plays out along its banks unchanged for centuries. We'll arrive in Higz, a small village along the Nile's east bank.

**Dinner:** Aboard our yacht.

**Evening:** You are free to relax on deck to admire the night sky or settle into your cabin for the night.

### **Day 6 Cruise to Edfu • Discover Edfu Temple**

- Destination: Nile cruise
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Asiya river-yacht, Aton river-yacht or similar

**Breakfast:** Aboard our yacht.

**Morning:** After breakfast, we'll enjoy a village walk in Higz before returning to our yacht and setting our course for Edfu. During our scenic 5-hour cruise, perhaps you'll join our Trip Experience Leader for a discussion on pharaonic life, or maybe try your hand at senet, an ancient Egyptian board game that was a favorite pastime of Tutankhamen.

**Lunch:** Aboard our yacht.

**Afternoon:** Arrive at Edfu, a town on the west bank of the Nile that is home to the best-preserved cult temple in Egypt. Here, we'll visit the Temple of Horus, dedicated to the falcon-headed god. After exploring the remarkable hieroglyphs and bas-reliefs of Egypt's second largest temple, we'll cruise well beyond the lights and noise of Edfu to moor for the night at Fawaza, a quiet little village further down the Nile.

**Dinner:** Aboard our yacht.

**Evening:** Free to mingle with your fellow travelers over a drink at the bar, or retire to your cabin for the night.

### **Day 7 *A Day in the Life* of Besaw Island • Education for girls in rural Egypt discussion**

- Destination: Nile cruise
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Asiya river-yacht or Aton river-yacht

**Breakfast:** Aboard our yacht.

**Morning:** When we rise this morning, our yacht will have already set sail. So, during our breakfast, we can admire the palm trees, farmland, donkeys, and tranquil scenes of traditional Egyptian life as we slowly cruise farther south along the Nile. We'll then arrive at Besaw Island to begin our *A Day in the Life* discoveries with a local farmer and his family. The ancestors of these local farmers moved to this island after the building of the Aswan High Dam. As irrigation became more regulated and agrarian reform took effect, Besaw transformed into a viable, agricultural haven, and land previously owned by the wealthy was redistributed among agricultural workers. This 500-strong island community primarily cultivates mangoes, bananas, dates and feed for their livestock. They are noticeably isolated from surrounding areas, as there are no bridges, no modern developments, and electricity only came to the island around 2010. Besaw is seemingly frozen in time, where the pace of life is much like the gentle breeze and long-established traditions are the beating heart of local culture.

Upon arrival at the farmer's property, we'll be welcomed into their home. There, we'll begin with a conversation about education for girls living on the island. As we learned earlier on our journey, Egypt is quite split on the subject

of women's rights and the resistance to such progress is significantly greater in rural areas like Besaw. Many residents believe that learning to read and write is sufficient education for girls and that they should begin thinking about marriage in their teenage years. Furthermore, education can be a burden on families because children must travel to the mainland to attend school—meaning parents and elders lose out on the extra domestic help. However, as we get to know our host, we'll come to find out that not all people here have such old-world views on the subject. We'll also have the opportunity to ask any questions we might have about the issue—perhaps you'd like to know how forward-thinking residents are working to change the minds of conservative neighbors, or you might wish to ask about local school curriculums.

Then, we'll stretch our legs with a walk through the village crop fields. In summertime, we'll stroll through dense rows of lush mango plants and banana palm trees—two of the most lucrative commodities grown here—and if we happen to visit in winter, we'll see zucchini, tomatoes, lettuce, okra, parsley, and other types of produce. We'll also have the chance to observe some of the livestock, such as water buffaloes, cows, sheep, and various poultry. All of this life is sustained, of course, by strategic irrigation methods, which we'll learn about and even have a chance to try our hand at throughout our walk. Depending on the time of year, we may also have the opportunity to seed the land or harvest some of the crops.

**Lunch:** In the farmer's home, featuring traditional dishes like orzo chicken soup, sun-baked bread, fried chicken, or beef stew, followed by a semolina-based dessert.

**Afternoon:** We'll head back to our river-yacht and resume sailing. Our next stop will be Fares Island, home to a traditional Egyptian village

where we'll take advantage of the local mode of transport—a type of auto-rickshaw called a Tok-Tok—to visit with a local craftsman.

**Dinner:** Aboard our yacht.

**Evening:** We'll spend the night aboard our river-yacht docked on Fares Island and enjoy the remainder of the night free.

## **Day 8 Visit Kom Ombo • Cruise to Aswan**

- Destination: Nile cruise
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Asiya* river-yacht or *Aton* river-yacht

**Breakfast:** Aboard our yacht.

**Morning:** Shortly after breakfast, our yacht will arrive at Kom Ombo, a riverside town surrounded by sugar cane fields that is home to Egypt's only double temple. Dramatically situated along a bend on the Nile, the beautiful Graeco-Roman Kom Ombo Temple features one side dedicated to the local crocodile god, Sobek, and the other side dedicated to the falcon god, Haroeris. A unique feature of Kom Ombo is a series of engravings thought to be among the world's first representations of medical and surgical instruments. After exploring Kom Ombo, we'll return to our river-yacht and cruise to Aswan.

**Lunch:** Aboard our yacht.

**Afternoon:** You'll want to be on deck as we drift along this enchanting stretch of the Nile where the desert closes in on the river, tropical islands abound, and lateen-sailed feluccas are seen gliding past the ancient ruins. Upon arrival in Aswan, we'll gather together for a discovery walk through Aswan's bustling spice market. We'll hunt for bargains at a colorful bazaar of aromatic spices, Nubian crafts, embroidered *galabayas* (traditional Egyptian garments), and more.

**Dinner:** Aboard our yacht.

**Evening:** We'll moor for the night at the city's edge, relatively secluded from Aswan's main bustle. You can relax on deck this evening and take in the views of the Nile and Aswan for the final night of our cruise.

### Day 9 Explore Temples of Philae

- Destination: Nile cruise
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Asiya* river-yacht or *Aton* river-yacht

**Breakfast:** Aboard our yacht.

**Morning:** After breakfast, we'll drive to Philae and then take a boat to the island temple of Philae, center of the cult of the goddess Isis. Similar to the plight of Abu Simbel, this temple complex was moved in order to save it from the rising waters of Lake Nasser. Our discoveries include the Temple of Isis, with its courtyards flanked by granite lions and walls covered in ancient gods and goddesses; and Trajan's Kiosk, with its 14 majestic stone pillars.

After our visit, we'll drive back to our *dahabeya* for lunch.

**Lunch:** Aboard our yacht.

**Afternoon:** Spend the afternoon relaxing or exploring Aswan on your own, perhaps shopping for last-minute keepsakes.

**Dinner:** Enjoy your final dinner onboard our yacht.

**Evening:** Free to relax onboard, witness life along the Nile, or to begin packing for tomorrow's flight to Cairo.

### Day 10 Fly to Cairo • Visit Grand Egyptian Museum

- Destination: Cairo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Cairo Marriott Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** Aboard our yacht.

**Morning:** After breakfast, we'll head to the airport for our flight to Cairo. Upon arrival, we'll journey outside Cairo to the Giza Plateau to visit the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), home to the greatest Pharaonic treasures in the world. The world's largest archaeological museum covering a single civilization, the museum's vast exhibits will lend context to our later discoveries as we trace the history of Egypt from Cheops to Cleopatra. After our guided tour, we'll have time to explore on our own.

**Lunch:** On your own. You may choose to dine at a restaurant inside the Grand Egyptian Museum.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, enjoy free time to further explore the Grand Egyptian Museum on your own before returning to our hotel in Cairo. You'll have a little time to relax before dinner.

**Dinner:** Tonight, we'll enjoy a Farewell Dinner at our hotel's restaurant.

**Evening:** You are free to retire to your room or perhaps enjoy some cocktails at the bar with your fellow travelers on our final night in Egypt.

### Day 11 Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Transfer to the Cairo airport for your return flight back to the U.S.

## YOUR NILE RIVER-YACHT

### Cruise the Nile aboard a privately-chartered, 16-passenger Egyptian *dahabeya*

Cruise the timeless waters of the Nile for five nights aboard a *dahabeya*, a classic river-yacht that glides between Luxor and Aswan, exclusive to our group of no more than 16 travelers. The *Asiya*, the *Aida* and her sister ship, the *Amunet*, are among Egypt's first eco-friendly *dahabeyas*. Intimately sized, they are able to access many of the ancient monuments, small islands, and riverside villages that the large, motor-driven river ships can only pass by. Elegant and informal, they pay homage to the 200-year-heritage of *dahabeya* design with a pleasing blend of wooden decks and traditional Egyptian touches with a host of modern amenities.

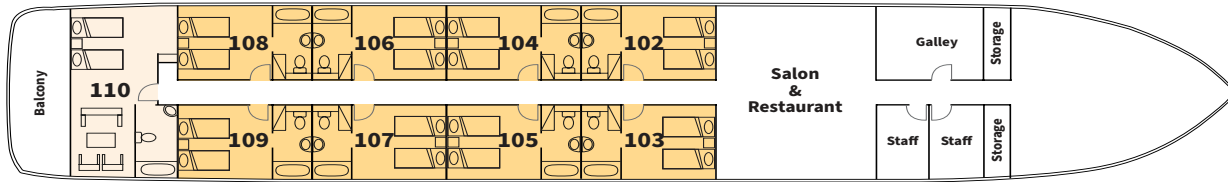


## SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Dining areas:** Most meals are served in the Upper Deck around a large banquet table. Meals may also be served in the salon/bar area. Wine and beer are included with meals, and complimentary tea, coffee, and mineral water are available at any time of the day while onboard.
- **Indoor common areas:** The salon/bar, an air-conditioned area at the bow of the Lower Deck, can be used as a place to meet or relax with a cold or hot beverage, or as an alternative dining area. There is also a small library with board games and satellite TV.
- **Outdoor common areas:** The Upper Deck features a partially shaded Sun Deck area with sun loungers and sofas, two pergolas (one with bar service), and a traditional Arabic seating area with plush cushions.
- **Wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. **Please note:** *Wireless Internet access may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.*



## ASIYA RIVER-YACHT



### Cabin Categories

- A** Suite with two twin-size beds and private balcony
- B** Standard cabin with two twin-size beds

O.A.T. uses three different dahabeyas in Egypt, the Asiya, Aida, and Amunet, depending on the trip departure date. This deck plan is typical but ships may vary slightly in size, cabin configurations, and facilities.

**Length:** 156 feet

**Beam:** 24.6 feet

**Registry:** Egypt

**Built:** 2008

**Cabins:** 8 at 150 sq. ft.,  
1 at 245 sq. ft.

**Passenger capacity:** 16

**Crew/Nationality:** 15 crew/  
International

**Group Size:** 16 travelers maximum,  
with 1 Trip Experience Leader

**Stairs, no elevator**

## CABIN FEATURES

- 8 cabins of approximately 150 sq. ft., 1 cabin (suite) at 245 sq. ft.
- Outside-facing cabins with windows, suite cabin with small private balcony
- Two single beds (or one double) with Egyptian cotton bedding
- In-cabin amenities: Individually-controlled air-conditioning, wardrobe, telephone
- In-bathroom amenities: Private bath with shower, wash basin, hair dryer



Cabin with two single beds

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking only the main trip, you will need 2 blank passport pages.

## Visas Required

**We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. *This information is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.*

- **Egypt: Visa required.** U.S. citizens will require a visa to enter Egypt; detailed instructions and information will be included in your Visa Packet, as noted above.

## Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

## **Traveling With a Minor?**

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

## **Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents**

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

## **Overseas Taxes & Fees**

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

### PACING

- 4 locations in 11 days with two 1-night stays, including 5 nights aboard a classic private river-yacht; two internal flights of 1-2 hours each

### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk 2-3 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities on most days
- Visit to the Valley of the Kings includes walking over uneven terrain and navigating up and down difficult wooden steps inside some of the tombs
- You will need to access vehicles by ladder without aid; agility is required to board and disembark the yacht as we will dock in areas without any piers; at various sites, you will need to climb up and down steep inclines, with stooping and kneeling to enter and exit some areas
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

### CLIMATE

- The climate in Egypt varies from cold to extremely hot. During the dry summer months of May/June through September/October, temperatures can easily get into the 90°s and 100°F in Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan. Temperatures between October and May usually range from the 50°s (in the mornings) to the 80°F. Like all desert climates, winter temperatures in Luxor and Aswan can drop dramatically after sunset, so you may wish to bring extra layers for nights, when temperatures can drop as far as the high 40s (°F).

### TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Travel over city streets, rugged paths, cobbled streets and unpaved roads in some places



- We travel via air-conditioned motorcoach (no toilet onboard), 16 passenger twin-sailed *dahabeya* (which may require the assistance of our small, motorized tug boat when sailing upstream), motorboat

## **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

- Travel time will be 17-20 hours and will most likely have one connection of 3-4 hours

## **ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES**

- We spend 5 nights aboard a privately chartered river-yacht (with small, motorized yacht tender); cabins are air-conditioned and include private bath
- Water levels may require changes in our moorings and the location of our riverside barbeque
- Hotels feature a variety of Western-style amenities and personal services; all hotels include private baths

## **Steps to Take Before Your Trip**

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## **No Vaccines Required**

### **Recommended Vaccines**

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

### **Medication Suggestions**

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- A pain medication. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed.
- Motion sickness medicine, if you are susceptible

## Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

### Safe Water

Tap water in Egypt is not safe to drink. (The only exception is the tap water onboard your ship, which is filtered and safe to drink.)

In countries where the tap water isn't safe, you should use bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth at any hotel. Bottled water is readily available for purchase throughout Egypt. Inspect each bottle before you buy it to make sure the cap is sealed properly. Carry a bottle in your daypack at all times. Bottled drinks and juices, and hot drinks that have been boiled, are safe to drink. Avoid drinks with ice in them.

## **Food Safety**

We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Our local staff can suggest restaurants for the meals you take on your own. To prevent upset stomach, pay attention to food preparation in Egypt, where the tap water is unsafe. Avoid salads and fruit that may have been washed in local water. (Salads and fruit served on board your ship are the exception; as is fruit that you peel yourself, which is usually safe.)

## **Preventing Schistosomiasis**

Schistosomiasis is a disease contracted by swimming or wading in fresh water that is contaminated with tiny organisms called flukes (there is no risk in salt water). These flukes can penetrate unbroken skin, and they are common in untreated river and stream water in Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa. The disease can produce a variety of acute symptoms ranging from fever to joint pain, nausea, and cough. Chronic infections—which can occur even when there have been no acute symptoms—can cause lung, liver, intestinal, or bladder disease.

Although the disease is treatable, it is obviously wisest to avoid it by refraining from swimming, wading, or bathing in any water whose purity is not known. You do not have to worry about becoming infected by minor splashes while boating, but you should restrict your swimming to places known to be uncontaminated, such as hotel or shipboard pools.

## **Don't Push Too Hard**

One of the most important parts of staying healthy on an active trip is to not push yourself too hard if you feel tired. Respect your own limits. Your trip schedule offers some degree of flexibility. If your energy level is low on a certain day, you can sit out a walking tour or a road excursion. Our local staff can tell you about the distance, time, and terrain of our walking excursions in advance, and can usually suggest rewarding alternative activities.

## **Drink Plenty of Liquids**

When you travel, especially in the dry desert climate of Egypt, you can easily become dehydrated without knowing it. If your fluid balance is low, you are more susceptible to fatigue and illness. Air travel will dry you out, so drink liquids and avoid alcohol on your flights. During the trip, don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink. Instead, drink by the clock: drink one to two quarts of water or juice each day, in addition to drinks at meals. If you find yourself tired or unwell, and don't know why, it may be that you simply need to drink more. Note that tea, coffee, and alcoholic beverages are diuretics and do not help maintain hydration.

## Sun and Heat Exposure

It can be very hot at mid-day. Be sure to wear your hat and use plenty of sunscreen. Be aware of the signs of heat exposure. Be especially concerned if you feel hot, but are not perspiring.



# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as U.S. dollars, local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They are hard to exchange and not accepted as payment.
- **Bring a number of \$1 and \$5 bills.** In many places in Egypt, you'll be able to pay or tip in U.S. dollars, but you'll need small bills to make exact change.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Egypt:** Egyptian Pound (LE). U.S dollars (\$) are also widely accepted in Egypt.

## How to Exchange Money

Since you can pay with U.S. dollars in Egypt and credit cards are commonly used, exchanging money isn't as important on this trip as it would be in other parts of the world. However, if you want to exchange money before your trip, you *might* be able to do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Note that we say "might" because the currencies on this trip can be hard to find due to banking restrictions. You may need to call a few places or do some checking online.

If you would rather exchange money on your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some banks and at exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1-\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

**Egypt:** ATMs are common in cities and towns, but may be hard to find in rural villages or at archeological sites like the Pyramids.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**Egypt:** Credit cards are widely accepted *except* at open-air stalls (like bazaars), cafes, or taxis—expect these to be cash only.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*

- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$10 U.S. per traveler, per day. You'll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. *Please note crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per room, per night. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don't need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours, as well as tips for waitstaff during any included off-ship meals.

Keep in mind that the giving of tips (*baksheesh* in Arabic) is customary in Egypt for many services. In return, you will find many Egyptians eager to provide service, often with genuine friendliness. If you don't want to tip, be sure to politely but firmly decline the service offered. We recommend carrying a supply of Egyptian one-pound notes for small tips.

## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

If you are booking your own flights, please keep in mind that it can take **up to 2 hours** to get from the airport to your first hotel in Cairo on the main trip due to heavy traffic. For flights arriving after 8pm on Day 2, this will mean a late arrival to your hotel followed by a full day of discoveries on Day 3. You may want to consider arriving 1 day early to acclimate and relax after a long travel day. For more information, please contact our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**.

### **Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased**

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

### **Optional Tours**

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

### **What You Need to Know**

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).



## **Communicating with Home from Abroad**

### **Cell Phones**

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is unlocked, then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

### **Calling Apps**

We recommend you use WhatsApp while abroad to communicate home and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

### **Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers**

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

### **Receiving Calls from Home**

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

### **How to Call Overseas**

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**Egypt:** +20

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person
Weight restrictions	<b>Varies by international airline.</b> The current industry standard is 50 lbs for checked luggage and 15 lbs for carry-ons.
Size Restrictions	<b>Standard airline size:</b> Checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+ width + depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches
Luggage Type	A sturdy suitcase with wheels and lockable zippers.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
<b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.	

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

## Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** One duffel bag or suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Please do not bring a rigid (plastic shell) suitcase.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Most of your clothing should be for warm, dry climates**—lightweight, loose fitting, and made of 100% cotton. But you'll still want to bring a warmer layer due to temperatures dropping at night in the desert climate (and you may want it during the day on the air-conditioned bus). While most of the accommodations we use are modern and offer heating/air-conditioning, you will experience a traditional Nubian house and a classic *dahabiya* as you sail on the Nile, neither of which are heated.
- **Footwear:** You'll be on your feet a lot during the trip and walking over some rough, slippery, and sometimes sandy/muddy surfaces. We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or similar supportive sports shoes, particularly for our daytime shore excursions from the *dahabiya*. Aboard ship, you'll be asked to leave your shoes on deck, so please plan to have a secondary pair of "boat shoes" with good traction to wear on board.
- **You can buy clothing designed especially for travel.** Look for clothes that offer adequate sun protection. **If you like to hand-wash your clothes**, bring socks and underwear made of material that will dry out overnight.
- **When traveling with a companion**, we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack two outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.

## Dress Codes: Shorts, Headscarves, and other FAQ

Dress on our trip is functional and casual; there are no formal wear evenings. For most travelers a casual dress code in a hot and sunny place means shorts and/or sleeveless tops. But are these culturally acceptable? In Egypt, the answer is yes, but a qualified one.

Generally dress in Egypt tends to be conservative and modest. "Modest" means locals of both genders will cover legs and arms, wear higher necklines, and local women may cover their hair with a scarf. Therefore shorts and sleeveless tops are more for tourists. It is OK for you to wear them, as long as you don't mind that everyone knows you're a visitor. Also, there are a few subtle guidelines to keep in mind when wearing shorts.

For example, the longer the shorts are, the better (to the knee is best). Sleeveless tops are acceptable, but on women the necklines should still be modest. Lastly, the more religious or more traditional a place is, the less acceptable shorts or sleeveless tops become. So the outfit that is fine for exploring ancient temples may not be considered polite at a mosque, synagogue, or at a Home-Hosted visit. Generally in places of worship or in someone's home it is better to cover up your shoulders and legs. In fact, when visiting a mosque or synagogue you may be handed a wrap and asked to drape it over you so that you are properly covered; this is common throughout the Middle East. Christian churches also require modest dress, meaning covered shoulders (no sleeveless tops) and shorts/skirts that fall below the knee.

In countries we visit, most Muslim women and Christians choose to cover their hair; some will also cover their face as well. As a visitor, you will not be expected to cover your hair, except perhaps in a mosque, where it may be required for entry. If a mosque requires something specific, there will be a private "women only" entrance where you can rent the appropriate dress, so it is not necessary to bring a scarf. Male travelers may be asked to cover their head in synagogues; if so, there are usually yamakas that you can borrow. Depending on the synagogue, female travelers may also be asked to cover their hair, which you can do with a scarf or a hat. (But this is not usually a requirement.)

Of course, the application of these guidelines varies. You'll see younger people and city dwellers dressed in a more causal style than their parents or in the small villages. And, naturally, many foreign tourists are not sensitive to the issue of dress at all. But travelers who are thoughtful about the issue will get more respect and a warmer welcome.

## **Recommended Packing Lists**

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using **www.weather.com** and consulting the "Climate" chapter of this handbook.

And don't forget a reusable water bottle—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

## **Recommended Clothing**

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts in a breathable fabric, like cotton or cotton-blend. Polo shirts are more versatile than T-shirts.
- ☐ Trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best.
- ☐ Walking shorts: Cut long for modesty. See the "Clothing Suggestions" section in this chapter for details.

- ☐ Shoes and socks: We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or supportive sports shoes. Aboard ship, you will be asked to leave your shoes on deck – please plan to bring a secondary pair of “boat shoes” with good traction.
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor for sun protection
- ☐ Light sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket (air conditioning can be cold in museums, motor coaches, etc).
- ☐ Underwear and sleepwear
- ☐ Swimsuit
- ☐ Scarf: Due to dusty conditions in the desert, previous travelers recommend bringing a scarf to cover your face on dusty paths, especially for travelers with existing respiratory issues.

### Seasonal Clothing Recommendations

For November – March departures, add these items to your list

- ☐ A pair of heavier pair of trousers or light long underwear for evenings on deck
- ☐ Warm sweater or jacket
- ☐ Hat and gloves
- ☐ Warm sleepwear for your stay on the dahabiya

### Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses and a neck strap
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 45 or stronger (essential for the desert)
- ☐ Insect repellent with DEET
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues and/or toilet paper for restrooms
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial “waterless” hand cleanser
- ☐ Cough drops to help with dust



- ☐ Flashlight (useful inside the Pyramids/temples)
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (your Trip Experience Leader may request a photocopy of your passport to ease the check-in process at hotels)
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards
- ☐ Electrical transformer & plug adapters: see “Electricity” for details

## Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Electrolytes, in case of dehydration
- ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ☐ Antihistamine: Benadryl
- ☐ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ☐ Band-Aids
- ☐ Moleskin foot pads
- ☐ Antibiotic: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- ☐ Optional: An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- ☐ Optional: A strong prescription pain medication for rare emergency purposes
- ☐ Optional: Motion sickness medicine if you are susceptible

## Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

## Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Egypt are 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220/240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet; this outlet is only for low-voltage appliances, like electric shavers. (Your bathroom also comes equipped with a hair dryer).

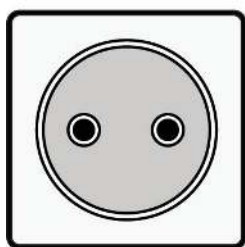
## Plugs

Aboard ship, the plugs are standard American plugs.

In hotels, the shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet—Type A, Type B, and so on. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**Egypt:** C is the most common plug type.

### Type C



## Availability

**A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays.** Travelers dependent on electricity supply (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) should consider a different adventure.

## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Egypt:** Egypt's climate can be summed up in three words: hot, sunny, and dry. Most of the country is desert; the only cultivated fields are on the banks of the Nile and in the Nile Delta. Temperatures are generally hot, but not always. During the winter it can be chilly in the north (Cairo and Alexandria), or on a foggy morning on the Red Sea. Please pack some warm clothing if you are traveling during these months. Sandstorms, which can occur from March to May, can cause inconveniences with regard to sightseeing.

**Alexandria, Egypt:** Alexandria is located in the lush, warm Nile Delta, an area quite different from the dry, hot southern parts of Egypt. In the summer months, temperatures are rarely extreme, although humidity increases. Winter brings occasional mild storms but severe weather conditions are rare.

**NOTE:** If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- [www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)
- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)
- [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	CAIRO, EGYPT			LUXOR, EGYPT		
	Avg Temp (high-low)	% Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Avg Temp (high-low)	% Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	65 to 49	74 to 50	5	70 to 45	73 to 45	1
FEB	68 to 50	71 to 42	3	74 to 49	64 to 34	--
MAR	73 to 54	72 to 37	2	83 to 58	55 to 26	--
APR	82 to 59	68 to 30	1	93 to 65	45 to 19	--
MAY	89 to 64	71 to 26	1	100 to 71	41 to 17	--
JUN	100 to 68	76 to 27	--	115 to 75	40 to 17	--
JUL	105 to 75	83 to 35	--	104 to 78	42 to 20	--
AUG	92 to 72	85 to 38	--	102 to 77	45 to 23	--
SEP	90 to 69	83 to 38	--	99 to 74	50 to 27	--
OCT	85 to 65	81 to 40	1	93 to 68	56 to 34	1
NOV	75 to 58	77 to 48	1	81 to 56	66 to 45	--
DEC	67 to 51	75 to 53	3	73 to 48	73 to 51	--

MONTH	ASWAN, EGYPT			ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	70 to 52	57 to 29	--	64 to 50	78 to 62	2.0
FEB	74 to 55	45 to 22	--	65 to 50	78 to 59	1.6
MAR	82 to 61	38 to 15	0.1	68 to 53	79 to 59	0.8
APR	92 to 72	30 to 13	0.4	75 to 58	78 to 57	0.4
MAY	99 to 77	26 to 12	0.3	79 to 63	80 to 58	0.4
JUN	115 to 81	26 to 11	--	83 to 69	82 to 60	0.4
JUL	103 to 83	27 to 12	--	84 to 73	82 to 64	0.4
AUG	102 to 82	31 to 14	--	86 to 74	81 to 64	0.4
SEP	99 to 79	34 to 14	--	84 to 72	78 to 61	0.4
OCT	93 to 74	40 to 18	0.2	81 to 66	81 to 62	0.4
NOV	80 to 63	51 to 26	--	74 to 59	79 to 62	1.2
DEC	72 to 55	57 to 32	0.1	67 to 52	79 to 63	2.0



## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

**Please Note:** *To ensure you get as much exposure to local culture as possible, you'll enjoy the services of a Trip Experience Leader in Egypt who is a certified Egyptologist.*

### Egyptian Culture

Modern Egypt is so much more than just its ancient heritage. The streets of Cairo, Alexandria, and Luxor are filled with influences from the Greeks, to the Arabs of North Africa, to the Nubians from Sudan. The country has always been a crossroads of trade and culture, allowing it to adapt and become a major player in the Middle East.

These comings and goings of different people were made possible in part by the value Egyptians place on hospitality. This is a keystone in their culture, where being friendly, open, helpful is considered a virtue. (Although a devout Muslim may keep some distance with a person of the opposite gender.) As a visitor this can be to your advantage—people will want to answer questions, give directions, and tell you about their country. They will also ask you about your home and family, sparking a real connection.

But the friendliness can be a bit overwhelming at times, especially as Egyptians tend to stand closer, talk louder, and use more hand gestures than Americans. Egyptians also favor the hard sell, so be prepared to say a firm “no, thank you” on repeat to persistent salesclerks. (Or even ignore them outright by not making eye contact; a pair of dark sunglasses can be helpful.) Bargaining is encouraged, even for things you would expect to have a clear price like taxi fare or a cup of coffee. Initially, these differences may make you feel a bit uncomfortable, but keep in mind that discomfort is not the intent—the locals are just treating you like one of them.

Another major cultural value in Egypt is a person's social connections. Like the old adage says, “it's not what you know, but who you know”. Leveraging their network and extended family is how many Egyptians find the services they need such as a mechanic, doctor, dentist, etc. And it's the same when navigating complex bureaucracy; you start by reaching out to a cousin who is in government or a friend of a friend. This is why social class in Egypt is not just defined by how much wealth you have, but also who your family is and how connected you are.

Fortunately, you'll have the advantage of an instant connection in Egypt: Your Trip Experience Leader, who will be on hand to guide you through all the nuances of Egyptian culture during your adventure.

## **Language**

Egyptian Arabic is considered the standard Arabic dialect, meaning it is widely understood in other Arabic-speaking countries. As a result, Egypt's media—movies, music, and news—has come to dominate the MENA (Middle East and North Africa). The Egyptian accent is so popular on Middle Eastern TV that news anchors in other Arabic-speaking countries will often use it instead of their own local accent.

Of course, this all applies to spoken Arabic. Written Arabic (or literary Arabic) is standard across all nations as it is based on the classical Arabic found in Quran.

## **Religion**

Religion plays an important part of daily life in Egypt, so an understanding of the two most prominent religions (Islam and Christianity) will assist you in your discoveries.

### **Islam**

Although you could date the founding of Islam to the 5th century, its roots can be traced back further. Indeed, many believers see Islam's founder, Muhammad, as a continuation of a line of prophets that goes back to Moses and Abraham. Like other regions, the Islamic tradition has both a holy book (the Koran) and a collection of teachings and judgments passed down by scholars over the years (Sharia and Fiqh).

There are two main branches, the Sunni and the Shia, although all Muslims are expected to follow the same basic principles, known as the Five Pillars: to testify to God's greatness, to practice charity, to fast during specific times (such as Ramadan), to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once, and to pray daily.

Of these five tenets, the one you may notice the most while in Egypt is the daily prayers. Practicing Muslims are expected to pray five times daily: at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. The call to prayer, called the *adhan*, is sung or broadcast from minaret towers to remind the faithful that it's time to come to the mosque.

Friday is the Muslim holy day, so businesses are usually closed. Many companies also close on Saturday, making the weekend Friday and Saturday. Local businesses may also close for religious holidays or festivals. (Again, we suggest checking an online holiday calendar for exact dates.) During Ramadan, many locals will be fasting, limiting the number of restaurants that are open to the public. Technically, Islam also forbids alcohol at all times of year, although this rule is not universally followed and usually does not apply to foreign visitors. However, it may mean that some establishments are "dry" and will not serve it.

## Modest Dress

- **When visiting a synagogue:** Male travelers should cover their head to show respect. (Usually the synagogue will have yamakas—a type of skullcap—on hand for you to borrow.) Depending on the synagogue, female travelers may also be asked to cover their hair, which you can do with a scarf or a hat. Generally speaking, an Orthodox synagogue will have the strictest dress codes: shorts may not be allowed; skirts should be to the knee or longer; shoulders should be covered; and necklines should be modest. As in any place of worship, it is best to turn off your cell phone or put it on silent.
- **When visiting a mosque:** It is polite to be modestly dressed (no bare shoulders, no skirts or shorts above the knee). You may be asked to remove your shoes. In some mosques, female visitors are *not* required to cover their hair, in others you may be asked to do so. Typically a mosque that requires special dress for female visitors will have pieces to lend or rent.
- **When visiting a church:** Many churches in this region require modest dress, meaning covered shoulders and skirts or shorts that fall below the knee.

## Toilets

Although all our accommodations feature Western-style toilets, “Turkish-style” toilets (i.e. squat toilets) are common in public restrooms. For women travelers who are novices at using a squat toilet, a skirt is usually easier to maneuver than pants. We strongly recommend that you bring pocket-size tissues and/or toilet paper as it is not available in public restrooms (unless you tip the bathroom attendant, who will then give you some). Public restrooms at popular tourist sites have been known to charge approximately 10 EGP for use.

## Dining Aboard Your Private, Classic River-Yacht

A selection of wine, beer, and other beverages will be available for purchase onboard your river-yacht. In Egypt, keep in mind there is a special tax on alcohol which can be significant. This means that you will likely experience higher prices than what you would typically find at home. A bottle of wine may start at \$30-40 in Egypt, depending on the vintage.

Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas.

## Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

## Egyptian Cuisine

Egyptian food may not be fancy, but it has a simple, fresh, and hearty appeal. Dining out is often a social occasion and may involve many courses, a shared platter of *mezze* (starters/small plates), or an after-dinner coffee or *shisha* water pipe. While in Egypt look for Middle Eastern specialties such as:

- **Mezze:** Small plates that may be served as starters, snacks, or a light meal. These are often served with flat bread, which is used to scoop up the dips and toppings. Common kinds include humus, *tahini* (sesame spread), *tabbouleh* (a mix of bulgur wheat, parsley, garlic, and tomato), *baba ghanoug* (eggplant dip), salads, and *fuul* (slow-cooked fava beans with garlic).
- **Taamia**, also spelled *ta'amiyya*: The Egyptian version of falafel, fried balls of ground beans or chickpeas, served warm wrapped in bread with veggies and toppings.
- **Kofta and kababs:** *Kofta* are spiced lamb meatballs, while *kababs* are skewered chunks of meat (beef or lamb); both are grilled on a fire.

- **Firekh:** Rotisserie-style chicken, usually served by the half. And if you want to try a more unusual poultry dish, look for anything with *hamam* (pigeon) which most people compare in taste to dark meat chicken.
- **Omm ali:** A type of bread pudding topped with cream, nuts, and raisins before being baked in the oven.
- **Drinks:** Strong Turkish-style coffee and sweet mint tea are commonly served. Most Egyptian Muslims refrain from alcohol, but will serve it to visitors or people of other religions. Beer has a long history in Egypt—there is evidence that it was drunk in Pharaonic times—and you can still find locally made brands like Stella Meister, Stella Premium, or Saqqara. For a refreshing non-alcoholic drink, look for stalls with hanging nets filled with fruit. Here you can buy fresh-squeezed juices in a variety of flavors (just don't get ice).

## Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

### Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

### Crafts & Souvenirs

#### Egypt

Traditional souvenirs include gold and silver jewelry, papyrus artwork, cotton goods, tapestries, carpets, leather goods, copperware, brassware, basketry, fine inlaid woodwork, and spices. In many bazaars, you can observe artisans working in the traditional methods, and this is part of the fun of shopping.

Bargaining is extremely commonplace in Egypt, and may someday replace soccer as the national sport. If this is your first experience with it, don't worry—you'll quickly find your own style. On smaller items, start by bidding half the asking price, or even less. The only rule is: If you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Often if you start to walk away, you'll hear a lower price. And remember, whatever price you pay is OK, as long as the item is worth that price to you.



When looking at large items, like carpets or artwork, you'll often be invited to sit down and drink a cup of tea with the merchant and make small talk for awhile. If you are on a group excursion, please remain aware of what other group members are doing. If you are the only one trying to buy something at that time, you might want to return later.

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **[www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

## DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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### Egypt

#### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 384,345 square miles
- **Capital:** Cairo
- **Languages:** Arabic is the official language; English and French are common second languages.
- **Ethnicity:** Egyptian 99.6%, other 0.4%
- **Location:** Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip, and the Red Sea north of Sudan, and includes the Asian Sinai Peninsula
- **Geography:** Egypt is almost entirely desert. Only about 2% of the land is arable. As a result, 99% of the population lives on only 3.5% of the land, mostly along the Nile River Valley and fertile delta.
- **Population:** 106,445,318 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 90%, Christian (majority Coptic Orthodox) 10%
- **Time Zone:** Egypt is seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in D.C., it is 7:00 pm in Egypt.

#### National Holidays: Egypt

Egypt celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Ramadan and Moulid El Nabi. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

1/25 Revolution Day

4/25 Sinai Liberation Day

5/1 Labour Day

7/23 National Day

10/6 Armed Forces Day

#### Egypt: A Brief History

Archaeological records show highly developed civilizations in both Upper and Lower Egypt a far back as 4000 BCE, making this remarkable country 6,000 years old. No other country boasts such a long and uninterrupted history.

In 3200 BCE, King Menes unified Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom, starting a 3,000-year stretch of rule by royal dynasties. Historians further divide these 3,000 years into four main time periods: the Early Dynastic Period (the time of Menes); Old Kingdom (c. 2613–2181 BCE); Middle Kingdom (c. 2055–1786 BCE); and New Kingdom (c. 1567–1085 BCE). The gaps between the kingdoms are called the “intermediate periods”.

The Early Dynastic Period is when ancient Egypt as we know it began to take form. It is during this time that the king, or pharaoh, became identified with the sun god (Ra) and ruled from a capital at Memphis (about 12 miles south of modern Cairo). This is also when the Egyptians began to intentionally mummify their dead, a ritual that was to last thousands of years.

Then in about 2360 BCE, the pharaoh Djoser asked his chief architect and priest Imhotep to design a funerary monument for him; the result was the first of its kind—the Step Pyramid at Saqqara. The age of the pyramids had begun, and with it, the Old Kingdom.

This was a time of prosperity, peace, and above all, pyramids. But the ambitious building programs depleted the royal coffers, as did a 50-year drought that started about 2200 BCE. The pharaoh’s power waned, and the Old Kingdom split apart into warring states ruled by independent nobles. This first intermediate period lasted for about 150 years, during which buildings, roads, and irrigation systems—as well as Egyptian society itself—began to deteriorate.

After a long struggle between the smaller states, the rulers of Thebes (a religious city close to modern Luxor) re-unified Egypt in about 2055 BCE. This was the Middle Kingdom, and for the next two centuries, Egypt once again enjoyed a period of great peace and prosperity.

One of the greatest achievements of the Middle Kingdom was the construction of an enormous irrigation system. Another notable aspect was the introduction of trade and commerce via ships. The pharaohs sent ships up the Nile River to Nubia and across the Mediterranean. They used gold and copper from mines in Sinai to build the colossal Temple of Amen at Karnak.

In 1800 B.C., the Hyksos, a foreign people from the north, laid siege to Egypt. The Egyptians fought on foot, as they had for centuries. The invaders used horses, chariots, and superior bows. It was no match; the Hyksos easily won, ending the Middle Kingdom and ushering in the second intermediate period. For the next several decades, northern Egypt was an occupied land. However, the Egyptians in the south quickly adopted the Hyksos’ new means of warfare and began a successful war of liberation, ushering in the age of the New Kingdom.

Armed with their newly learned techniques of warfare, the rulers of the New Kingdom set out to build an empire through foreign conquest. They were highly successful, conquering lands throughout Asia, North Africa, and the Mediterranean. The New Kingdom is also notable for its cast of characters. All the most famous kings and queens—the female pharaoh Hatshepsut, the heretic king Akhenaton, the beauty Nefertiti, Ramses the Great, and the boy-king Tut—were from this time period. These great rulers were buried in rock-cut tombs in the Valley of the Kings. (Pyramids had gone out of fashion.)

Eventually the New Kingdom declined, leaving Egypt vulnerable to outside forces. In the south the Nubian rulers from Kush (present-day Sudan) took over and ruled for some 100–200 years. In art, the Nubian rulers styled themselves as black pharaohs and created hybrid culture that was part Egyptian and part African. (Even today, many in southern towns like Aswan will call themselves “Nubian”.) The northern parts of Egypt were seized by the Persians (in 525 BCE) and the Greeks under Alexander the Great (in 332 BCE). The famed Queen Cleopatra was a descendant of one of Alexander’s generals, and her death is often cited as the end of ancient Egypt.

For the next 2,000 years, Egypt was conquered and occupied by the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, and British. The most influential of these occupations came when the Arabs conquered Egypt between 639–641 CE. The Arabs ruled Egypt for several centuries as part of the larger Islamic empire. During this time, the majority of Egyptians converted to Islam, a cultural change that had a lasting impact.

In 1517, Egypt was once again conquered, this time by the Turks. The country became part of the Ottoman Empire, though Turkish sultans granted relative autonomy to local Egyptian rulers. However, by the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire had fallen into decline, and colonial European powers seized the opportunity to exert their influence in Egypt.

By the time the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, Egypt owed millions of dollars in debt to Britain. In order to erase the debt, Egypt ceded control of its share of the canal to the British. The Egyptian people were strongly critical of this action, and a coup against the monarchy seemed almost inevitable. Meanwhile, the British were concerned that Germany would attempt to capture the canal by force.

To guard against civil unrest and protect its interest in the canal, Britain declared Egypt a British protectorate and sent occupational forces in 1883. For all practical purposes, Egypt became a British colony. The British finally granted independence to Egypt in 1922 but retained control of the canal until 1936.

Throughout the middle part of the last century, Egypt fought a series of brief wars with Israel over the Sinai and the Gaza Strip, including 1967’s Six Day War. In 1979, the two countries signed a monumental peace agreement. Initially the treaty was controversial—so much so that President Anwar Sadat was assassinated—but his successor, Hosni Mubarak found a way to balance diplomatic relations between the Arab League, Israel, and the U.S. This “middle ground” position has allowed Egypt to take a larger role in the Middle East as ally and moderator. In 1991, Egypt was one of the allies that fought against Iraq in the Gulf War; in subsequent years Egypt has acted as a moderator between Israel and the Palestinians.

Sadly, Mubarak’s domestic politics were not nearly as successful as his foreign policy. Charges of political and police corruption, censorship, and suppression of other political parties became more and more common. Perhaps most controversial of all was his use of the “state of emergency” law, which was first enacted in 1967 after the Six-Day War. Citing the assassination of his predecessor and concerns of terrorism, Mubarak brought back the law in 1981—and kept it in place even during his final days in office in 2011.

Fed up with the stringent emergency laws, and angry over corruption and high unemployment, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 as part of the Arab Spring. Mubarak stepped down after 18 days, new elections were held, and after a period of some uncertainty a new constitution went into effect in 2014.

### **Events That Shaped the 20th Century: The Egyptian Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring refers to a series of pro-democracy protests that began in Tunisia on December 18, 2010, which quickly spread to various Arab nations within the Middle East and Northern Africa. For Egypt, Arab Spring begins first with the death of a young man by the name of Khaled Said. In mid-2010, Said was dragged out of a cybercafé in Alexandria and beaten to death by two police officers. As with many cases involving police brutality in Egypt, attempts were made by the government to cover up and suppress the incident.

Although it was the death of Muhamad Bouazizi that started the Arab Spring in Tunisia, the death of Khaled Said proved to be a great catalyst for revolution in Egypt. Following his death, a Facebook group known as “We Are All Khaled Said” was created and garnered hundreds of thousands of memberships. Members of the Khaled Facebook page organized its young followers to protest against Said’s death and the unbridled police brutality under President Hosni Mubarak’s regime on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011; a national holiday meant to honor the work of the police force

The protest on January 25<sup>th</sup> brought together various opposing groups within Egyptian society including Islamists, feminists, anti-capitalists, and many others. However, protesters were swiftly met with violence from the police force. After several days of protesting, the first civilian was killed. Arab Spring in Egypt would continue for the next 18 days until on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, when President Hosni Mubarak stepped down, having been in office for nearly 30 years. Thousands of Egyptians took to the streets to rejoice, and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces took power with a pledge to draft a new constitution and establish a new government within 6 months.

Protests and strikes would continue to ensue until free and fair elections in Egypt were finally implemented in June of 2012, when Mohamed Morsi was elected president. His term however, was short lived as his policies were too reminiscent of the Mubarak regime. In 2013, Morsi was pushed out of office by a military coup d’état led by Abdel el-Sisi. New laws and policies were introduced to further cement his regime, revitalizing the wave of oppression felt in the country. To this day, Abdel el-Sisi remains as the current President of Egypt. Although the issues that sparked the Arab Spring still persist in Egypt, there is hope that change inspired by the Arab Spring is still underway.



## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### Egypt

***The Buried: An Archaeology of the Egyptian Revolution*** by Peter Hessler (2019, Travel Narrative/Memoir) When American ex-pat Peter Hessler moved from China to Egypt in 2011, his colleagues at the *New Yorker* joked that it would be a much quieter place...and then the Arab Spring happened. Hessler recounts his experiences through the friendships he made with local people, giving a great insight into modern Egypt.

***The Woman Who Would Be King: Hatshepsut's Rise to Power in Ancient Egypt*** by Kara Cooney (2014, Biography) The engaging story of Hatshepsut, a woman who ruled Egypt's New Kingdom not as queen, but as pharaoh. The author takes great care to parse out what we know as fact and what we can make educated guesses about.

***Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs*** by Barbara Mertz (2008, History). An updated classic history of ancient Egypt by the author of the Amelia Peabody mysteries (her pen name is Elizabeth Peters). Mertz's great enthusiasm and scholarship brings ancient Egypt to life for the general reader.

***The Memoirs of Cleopatra*** by Margaret George (1998, Historical Fiction) This epic historical novel answers the question "What would Cleopatra's story look like from her point of view?". Or if you prefer non-fiction, then look for ***Cleopatra: A Life*** (2010) by biographer Stacy Schiff, which works to sort the woman from the myth.

***Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive*** and ***Clea*** by Lawrence Durrell (1957-1960, Fiction). Known collectively as *The Alexandria Quartet*, the author uses WWII Alexandria as a grand backdrop for the grand stories of a group of Europeans living in Egypt. If four books seem too much to start with, try the first of the series, *Justine*.

### Suggested Films & Videos

#### Egypt

***Syriana*** (2006, Drama). An interesting political thriller that tries to portray how oil and politics intersect through multiple story lines, some of which are set in an unnamed country in the Middle East.

***The English Patient*** (1996, Romance) Set during WWII, the film follows the recovery of a man known only as "the English Patient" as he recuperates from severe burns after crashing in the Sahara. Binoche plays Hana, the French-Canadian nurse who tends to Fiennes while he recovers. The patient's captivating past is eventually uncovered through a series of dramatic flashbacks that occur as he gradually regains his memory after the crash.

**Justine** (1969, Drama) The year is 1938. The setting is Alexandria. Darley, a young British schoolmaster and poet, makes friends with Justine, the mysterious wife of a Coptic banker. Through their friendship, Darley learns of a plot against the British that aims to arm the Jewish underground in Palestine.

**Caesar and Cleopatra** (1945, Classic) What happens when the leaders of two of history's most powerful civilizations come together? Find out in this witty and layered film that investigates the romance that developed between Caesar, emperor of the Rome, and Cleopatra, the last Egyptian pharaoh. For a different take on the life of this famous female pharaoh, watch **Cleopatra** (1963) starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

**Five Graves to Cairo** (1943, Classic) British Army Corporal John J. Bramble is retreating from Rommel's Afrika Korps when he stumbles upon an out-of-the-way hotel Sidi Halfaya, Egypt. In order to avoid capture by the Germans, Bramble assumes the identity of a deceased waiter.

## Useful Websites

### Overseas Adventure Travel

[www.oattravel.com](http://www.oattravel.com)

### Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### Electricity & Plugs

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### Foreign Exchange Rates

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### ATM Locators

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### World Weather

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### Packing Tips

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### U.S. Customs & Border Protection

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### National Passport Information Center

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### Holidays Worldwide

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

### History & Culture

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App, Skype, or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

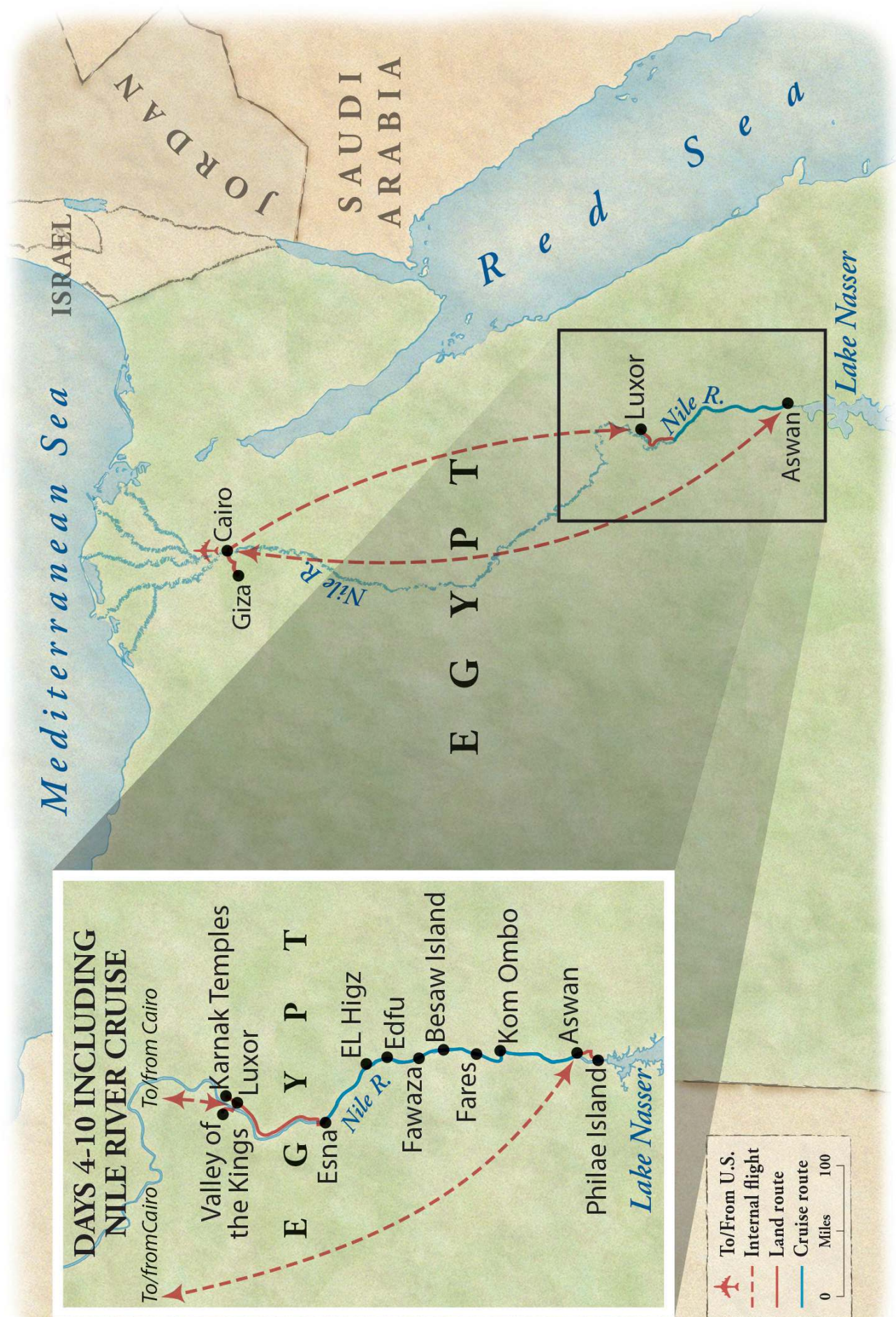
### **GeoSure**

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

### **Chirpey**

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more







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23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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