



Your passport to adventure

Ancient Christians in Egypt

Country(ies): Egypt

Tour type: Special Interest

Transport: A/C Minibus & 4x4 jeep

Group size: Min: 1 | Max: 0

Days: 11 Days

Start location: Cairo, Egypt

End location: Cairo, Egypt

Departs On: Any day

Meals: Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 7, Dinners - 3

Highlights: The Pyramids & Sphinx, Coptic Cairo & Church of St Sergius, Mount Sinai, Christian monasteries, Biblical sites including Tanis & Wadi Natrun monasteries

Places Visited: Cairo, Alexandria, Ismailia, St Catherines Monastery & Suez



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Cairo, transfer to hotel

You arrive at Cairo Airport where we meet and greet and transfer you to your hotel. Our Egypt Uncovered rep. Welcomes you, helps you settle into the hotel, and outlines the plan for the next few days.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Cairo - pre-tour || Single room supplement (EGSIAC)

Day 2: Cairo, Egyptian Museum & Coptic Cairo tours

We have a full day of tours planned for today which begins with a visit to the Egyptian Museum, which houses a vast collection of artefacts from Egypt's past, including the famous King Tutankhamun display. After an included lunch we continue to Coptic Cairo which is home to many ancient churches. Whilst in Coptic Cairo we will visit the Church of St George, Al Moalaka Church and the Church of St Sergius which is believed to have been built on the spot where the holy family rested at the end of their journey into Egypt. Later on we visit the Coptic Museum which is home to an excellent collection of Coptic artefacts.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Cairo, Pyramids & Sphinx tour, Wadi Natrun

After breakfast we take you on a tour of the pyramids & sphinx at Giza. The majestic sight of these enormous structures rising out of the desert is a breathtaking spectacle. Here you have the chance to climb inside one of the pyramids (there are a limited number of tickets available for the Great Pyramid). Before continuing on to the Sphinx you will visit the Solar Boat Museum which is located close to the Pyramids. The Museum houses a full size, intact boat which was discovered in 1954 in a pit cut into the Giza bedrock. The boat is almost certainly the oldest, largest and best preserved boat in antiquity.

Close by, the mysterious Sphinx stands guard, as it has done so for thousands of years. You have another guided tour around the sphinx and some free time to walk around and take photos.

Following our tour of the Giza plateau we leave Cairo and head north towards Alexandria. Along the way we will visit the monasteries around Wadi Natrun and have a picnic lunch. The monasteries around Wadi Natrun were born from Christian hermits who sought to emulate St Anthony by forming these remote communities. The four monasteries were constructed in the 4th century; however each of the monasteries has been totally ruined and reconstructed at least once in its life. Much of what you see today dates to the 18th century.

After time at Wadi Natrun our journey continues north to Alexandria where we will spend the evening. After checking into your hotel the remainder of the evening is free for you to get accustomed to your new surroundings.

OVERNIGHT: Alexandria hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Alexandria city tour

After breakfast we have a full day tour of Alexandria. Your tour of the city includes the Roman amphitheatre, which has twelve semi-circular marble tiers and is in remarkably good condition, Pompey's pillar, and the Catacombs of Kom al-Shoqafa, which is the largest Roman cemetery in Alexandria. Dating from the beginning of the Second Century AD this fascinating underground cemetery displays a unique blend of Pharaonic and Roman art. Later in the afternoon you will also visit Qait-Bay Fort and the famous Library of Alexandria.

OVERNIGHT: Alexandria hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Drive to Ismailia via Tanis

We leave Alexandria behind today and follow the Mediterranean coast to Ismailia. Along the way we make a stop along the Nile Delta to visit the town of Tanis. During Biblical times Tanis was known by the name Zoan, as referred to in the Bible. In the film the Raiders of the Lost Ark, Tanis was said to be the hiding place of the Ark of the Covenant. The city was founded late in the 20th dynasty and became the northern capital of Egypt during the 21st dynasty under the rule of Smendes. Tanis then remained Egypt's northern capital into the 22nd dynasty. There are many ancient sites at Tanis, including temples and a royal necropolis. In 1939/1940 Pierre Montet discovered the intact burial sites of Psusennes I, Amenemope and Shoshenq II which contained a large amount of Gold, Jewellery, Lapis Lazuli and many other precious items which are now housed in the Cairo Museum.

After time in Tanis we continue on to Ismailia where we will spend this evening.

OVERNIGHT: Ismailia hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Drive to St Catherine's Monastery

After free time in Ismailia we cross the Suez Canal and drive into the Sinai Peninsula to St Catherine's Monastery. St Catherine's is located at the foot of Mount Sinai, although known as St Catherine's, the full, official name is 'The sacred and imperial Monastery of the God-trodden Mount of Sinai'. The Greek Orthodox monastery is now a UNESCO World Heritage site, and has been declared the world's oldest working Christian monastery - although, the Monastery of St Anthony also holds claim to that title.

The monastery was built between the years 527 and 565 around the 'Chapel of the Burning Bush' which was built at the site where Moses is reported to have seen the burning bush. The living bush is reputed to be the original. You have lunch and dinner in a basic hotel before getting some rest as you have a very early start tomorrow.

OVERNIGHT: St Catherine hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Mount Sinai Hike, drive to Suez

At approximately 0130 you will begin your hike to the summit of Mount Sinai. Bedouin tradition says that Mount Sinai is the mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. Some Christian traditions however, place this event at the nearby Mount Serbal. A monastery was founded at the foot of Mount Serbal in the 4th century; it was only in the 6th century that the monastery was moved to its current location at the foot of Mount Catherine, and is now known as St Catherine's Monastery. For Muslims, Mount Sinai also has religious significance and a chapter in the Quran is named from it. You should reach the summit of Mount Sinai in plenty of time to watch the spectacular sunrise over the Sinai Mountains.

After your descent you will have time for some breakfast before visiting St Catherine's Monastery, home to an important icon collection. You will also have time for lunch at St Catherine's before we continue our journey to Suez. After checking into the hotel you will have some free time.

OVERNIGHT: Suez hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Monasteries of St Paul & St Anthony, drive to Cairo

We will have breakfast in Suez before following the Gulf of Suez south to the town of Zafarana. Here you will visit the Monasteries of St Paul and St Anthony. The Coptic monastery of St Paul lies in Egypt's eastern desert far from any other ancient ruins. St Paul is said to have been born to rich parents, however by the age of 16 both of his parents had died. Paul gave up his inheritance and gave his life to God, seeking refuge in a cave in the Eastern desert, where he lived until the age of 113. St Paul lived a life of extreme austerity, and is said to have been fed half a loaf of bread each day by a raven. At around 340AD the well-known desert monk St Anthony is said to have visited St Paul just before he passed away. Legend has it that when Paul died, 2 lions dug his grave. St Anthony then buried Paul and designated him a saint. It was above St Paul's cave that the monastery you see today was built. It dates back to around the 5th Century.

The monastery of St Anthony was founded around 356 AD just after the death of St Anthony, on his burial site. Although a Coptic monastery today, throughout its history, the monastery was often multi-faith, home to monks from many different Christian religions. Amazingly the monks who inhabited the monastery today still speak Coptic; a religion directly descending from that of the ancient Egyptians.

Today, St Anthony's is a self-contained 'desert village' with a bakery, a mill, gardens and 5 churches. The best of these churches is that of St Anthony himself. Recently the Egyptian Council of Antiquities and the American Research Centre in Egypt collaborated to restore many of the exceptional wall paintings. Many of these paintings date back as far as the 7th and 8th centuries and depict holy knights in bright colours and the hermit founders of the monastery.

After spending time at these historic monasteries, we drive back to Cairo.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Visit Fayoum Oasis

After an early breakfast we head out of Cairo to the Oasis town of Fayoum. Whilst at the Oasis you will see the famous bucket-wheels and will have the chance to visit the Karanis Museum and the remains of the ancient Roman city. You will have lunch beside the banks of Karun Lake before returning to Cairo in the afternoon.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 10: Memphis, Saqqara & city tour

Ensure you don't miss breakfast today as we have a full day of tours ahead. We begin the day with a visit to Memphis and Saqqara. Memphis is thought to have been founded by Menes (aka Narmer) around 3100 BC. At this time Memphis was located at the apex of the Nile Delta, giving it control of overland and river communications. The city is often regarded as the world's oldest imperial city and even after Thebes became Egypt's capital, Memphis continued to hold sway over much of the country. Memphis remained Egypt's second city until Ptolemaic times. Today, not much remains of this once great city, however some of its glory is evident in the great necropolises scattered across the desert landscape. To truly appreciate Memphis, you need to recall the city's great past.

After time in Memphis we continue on to Saqqara, which lies 25km to the south of Cairo. Djoser's (Zoser's) Step Pyramid (built 4700 years ago) dominates the skyline and is believed to have been the ancient Egyptians' first attempt at Pyramid building. The entire 7km stretch of desert at Saqqara is a treasure trove of pyramids, temples and tombs, which we will have plenty of time to explore while we learn about the history of pyramid building in Egypt. We return to central Cairo around lunch time to visit the Khan-el-Khalili bazaar where we will have lunch in one of the local restaurants.

In the afternoon we visit the Citadel of Salah el Din, with its collection of Mosques and Palaces. You can always be guaranteed an excellent view over the city from here and on a clear day you may even be able to see the Pyramids.

OVERNIGHT: Cairo hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 11: Cairo, tour ends with transfer to airport

Your tour ends after breakfast and your time is free until we transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Cairo - post-tour

Included

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary in 3-star and 4-star hotels
- All transport and transfers in private AC vehicles
- Overnight sleeper train from Cairo to Luxor
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Sightseeing tours as detailed in the itinerary
- Services of a local Egyptologist guide for all the sightseeing tours
- Entrance fees to sites visited
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees (available on arrival for most nationalities)
- Travel Insurance (mandatory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Tour guide tips
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)

- Tipping kitty (allow US\$55)
- Hotel Gala Dinners (if charged by the hotels on 24 & 31 Dec, see Tour notes)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Hotel Gala Dinners

Many of Egypt's hotels and Nile cruise boats arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is often optional on Christmas Eve (24 Dec) but may be compulsory on New Year's Eve (31 Dec), whether you attend or not. Prices can range from around US\$50 to over US\$150 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. More information is available on request.

Options

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

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

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

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

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

Single room supplement (EGSIAC)

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$420.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

Note: The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

Wadi Rayan day trip (Valley of the Whales)

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$170.00

This tour provides a great contrast to the Pharaonic sites you have visited on the rest of your tour. We leave Cairo and head to the Fayoum region where we head for the Wadi Rayan Protected Area, which surrounds a fresh-water lake in the middle of the desert, filled by the remaining irrigation water from the Fayoum area. There are several waterfalls here (popular in Egyptian pop music videos), and a bird hide which gives good views of the lakes birdlife, particularly in the winter months when the lake is an important stop for migrating water-birds. We also visit the Springs Oasis area, a rare example of an uninhabited Saharan oasis, and host to many different plants and animals, including Dorcas Gazelle, Ruppell's Sand Fox and Fennec Fox. After a stop for a packed lunch, we then drive into the stunning desert & mountain scenery of Wadi Hitan (Valley of the Whales). This World Heritage Site is accepted as the most significant site in the world to demonstrate the evolution of whales, and we take a 2-3km walk here to see several specimens of fossilised whales of different types sitting on the surface of the sand, as well as fossilised mangroves and the remains of crab holes.

This tour requires a full free day in Cairo, but can also be arranged straight after you arrive back in Cairo from Luxor/Aswan from the overnight sleeper train. We can also arrange it on any tour if you add extra days before and after your main tour. Prices shown are based on 2 or more people travelling, with an additional supplement due for solo travellers.

Nile dinner cruise in Cairo

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$75.00

This option offers an evening of cruising up and down the Nile through the centre of Cairo on a 5-star riverboat while enjoying some middle eastern cuisine as well as a traditional Egyptian Sufi and Belly Dancing show. A great way to spend a free evening in Cairo and see some more of the city. Transfers to and from your hotel are included.

Extra day in Cairo - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$59.00

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

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Cairo - post-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$59.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Tour Notes

1. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. In Egypt we do not use any public tourist buses or overnight coach journeys as we know that people don't sleep on board and end up very tired for the following few days. All the vehicles we use are air-conditioned, many are fitted with speed limiters, and all are inspected and checked daily. Some 4WD vehicles used on desert safaris may not always have air conditioning where they are only used for short periods.

2. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions.

In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Egypt: Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A

Jordan: Tetanus, Hepatitis A

Israel: Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis

Lebanon: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A

Malaria is not generally present unless it has been contracted abroad; you do not need to take malaria prophylactics.

More information is available here: [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Israel](#), [Lebanon](#)

Note: We are aware of some places in Egypt using 'black henna' instead of pure brown henna. Black henna contains a chemical dye PPD (paraphenylenediamine) which can result in severe allergic reactions and resultant scarring. To be safe we recommend avoiding any henna tattoos while in Egypt unless you are certain they are using pure brown henna.

3. Passports and Visas - Egypt

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

We recommend that you contact your closest Egyptian consulate or embassy for current information for your nationality.

In general official advice is that all nationalities obtain their Egypt visas in advance, as we cannot guarantee that you can get them in the airport. An online e-visa is available through <https://visa2egypt.gov.eg/eVisa/>. Please do not use any other website as there are many scam sites offering Egypt e-visas.

In practice however, many nationalities (including British and European, Australian, New Zealand, USA, Canadian)

can and do obtain their visas on arrival in Cairo airport. The process is much quicker and simpler, the cost is currently **US\$25 p/p** and must be paid in hard currency (i.e. GBP, USD or EUR) - you'll be given change in local currency if necessary. There are no forms to fill in and you don't need to bring passport photos. Visas are issued at one of the bank desks in the immigration hall, before you get to passport control. Our representative will have met you by this stage and will assist with the process.

All African and Indian nationals, and some others, will need to obtain their visas in advance.

For further information on your visa requirements, please either contact us or your local Egyptian embassy/consulate.

4. Time

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

5. Voltage

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

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

6. Money - Egypt

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

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

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

7. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that

you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

8. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You can pay your deposit or full balance online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer. We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

9. Travel Insurance

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

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

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

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

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

10. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected. Financial failure insurance is provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of their tour.

Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

11. Responsible Tourism

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

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

- Don't prejudice: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Egypt Uncovered shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

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

12. Follow Us Online

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

www.facebook.com/EgyptUncovered

www.twitter.com/encounterstrav/ (yes, without the 'e')

13. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print

of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.

['Travel Aware' campaign](#)

14. Tipping

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Tipping is very much a part of Egyptian culture and customs. To make our prices more transparent and so it is easier for you to budget and less hassle while in Egypt, on our small group tours we organise a 'Tipping Kitty' which needs to be paid as a local payment and will be around US\$25-50 depending on the length of your trip. Payment is collected in US Dollars cash or can also be paid with Egyptian Pounds or other currencies converted to US Dollars at our monthly exchange rate. This kitty provides tips for a wide range of people you'll meet along the tour including hotel porters, train and station staff, drivers, site guards, local reps etc. Please check the Included/Excluded notes below the tour itinerary for more information on how much to budget for this kitty.

On private/tailor-made tours this tipping kitty is included in your tour price.

Your Egyptologist guide (and Bedouin guides in the desert) is not included in this kitty and you may tip them at the end of your tour subject to your satisfaction with and appreciation of the service they have provided. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. USD 10-15 per person per day would be appropriate.

Children under the age of 12 do not need to pay anything towards the tipping kitty.

15. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very provide suggestions for flights to go with your tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Nearly all our Egyptian tours start and finish in Cairo airport (CAI).

16. Transfers

Our Egypt tours include a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Cairo airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers. Our representative will meet you in the immigration hall of Cairo airport before you get to passport control. They will assist with visa formalities before helping you collect your luggage and taking you to your hotel.

Your airport transfers are only included on the first and last day of the set tour itinerary, plus on any additional days if you book your hotel room with us. If you make your own arrangements for additional accommodation at either the beginning or the end of the tour then you will need to arrange your own airport transfers on these days.

17. Entrance Fees

Our Small Group tours do not include entrance fees to the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. We do however normally include these in prices for Tailor-Made and Escorted tours. Please check the Inclusions and Exclusions section below the tour itinerary for a details about your tour and the amount you may need to budget. This amount is subject to change and will be reconfirmed in Egypt at the start of your tour. A 50% discount for minors or ISIC card holders is often, but not always available. Your guide will be happy to collect payment for all the entrance fees at the start of the tour, and pay them for you as you go along if you wish. This payment is normally collected in US Dollars cash together with payment for any Tipping Kitty used on the tour, though you may also pay with Egyptian Pounds or other currencies, converted to USD. Local exchange rates are set on a monthly basis and based on local bank rates so may not match the exact rates you may find online on the day.

18. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our Egypt small-group departures to have a maximum of 18 travellers. Shoestring tours may have a slightly larger maximum group size of 35 people but rarely run with more than 20.

On tours including Nile Cruises, we normally send our own Egyptologist guide on board with you and arrange private sightseeing tours along the way rather than joining the larger groups arranged by the cruise boat. On some Private/Tailor-made tours we may set the tour pricing to be based on using joining these boat groups, though a supplement is always available for a private Egyptologist guide for tours from the boat (requires advance booking). Please check the Inclusions/Exclusions section for details of the guiding arrangements on your tour.

In Egypt we provide fully trained, local English-speaking graduate Egyptologist guides to run your tour and escort you during all of the sightseeing in Cairo and the Nile Valley. We also have permanent local reps in all the main towns/cities and Red Sea resorts who are also at your service, and will be handling all the practical arrangements for the tour. We use local Bedouin guides for tours through the desert.

On some departures we may use one guide in Cairo, and a second guide for the Aswan to Luxor section.

At Egypt Uncovered we only use local Egyptian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

19. What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Egypt. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips – you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

Luggage limits: There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

Clothing: Most of your time in Egypt will be in a hot climate. However, at night, and especially in the deserts, the temperatures can drop quite dramatically. So you must pack for cool conditions. Formal dress (eg. suits & ties) is not required on the cruise boats or in 5-star hotel restaurants. Long sleeves are recommended to protect from mosquitoes if you are on the felucca. Modesty rates highly in Egypt, especially for women, so to respect the local culture & people, please ensure all clothes are loose fitting and not revealing. Shorts (not hot-pants) are OK in tourist

sites, as are T-shirts, but these should not show too much bare flesh (we suggest that your shoulders should remain covered). In the centre of Cairo, and when visiting any mosques, legs and arms should be covered.

Other items: If you will be travelling on a felucca then we recommend bringing a light sleeping sheet or sleeping bag liner all year round for comfort, and a light sleeping bag in the winter months (November to February). We also recommend you bring a sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, a basic first aid kit, toiletries, money belt, small torch, camera & charger.

20. Accommodation

Most of our small group tours use high quality hotels at the Egyptian 5-star level in Cairo, Aswan, Luxor and Hurghada, all with swimming pools and a choice of restaurants and bars. Our private/tailor-made tour itineraries use a wider mix of hotels, from comfortable mid-range hotels at the 2-4 star level (generally the best available in some of the less visited places included in the particular itinerary) up to some of the very best deluxe 5-star properties in the country.

Please check the Accommodation tab on the tour page or download these Tour Notes for details of the normal hotels used. On our group and shoestring tours, these hotels may change from time to time for other properties of a similar standard. If you would like to guarantee a particular hotel, please request a tailor-made tour.

Nile cruise tours are generally based on Egyptian 5-star deluxe level boats - please check the Accommodation section on the tour page for details.

Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms/cabins with air conditioning. All couples will be given a private double room/cabin. Single travellers may choose to pay a single room supplement to guarantee themselves a single room throughout the tour. Alternatively, they may choose to share a room with one or two other travellers of the same sex.

Single travellers

On most of our Egypt tours, if you are happy to share a room/cabin with another traveller of the same sex, then if you are travelling solo, you do not need to pay the single supplement cost, even if you end up with a single room during the tour. This does not apply to all tours - please check the single room supplement option on your tour for full details.

Gala Dinners

Many of Egypt's hotels and Nile cruise boats arrange a very special gala dinner with entertainment in the evening on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Payment for these is often optional on Christmas Eve (24 Dec) but may be

compulsory on New Year's Eve (31 Dec), whether you attend or not. Prices can range from around US\$50 to over US\$150 per person. Final decisions on prices and whether dinners are compulsory are made relatively close to the time. We aim to always select hotels that make their Gala Dinners optional, though this is not always possible. Gala dinner prices are therefore not included in our prices above, but will be added to your booking if they become required. More information is available on request.

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