Egypt Adventure

*Valid for departures before December 31*

# Introduction

Welcome to Sojourn Adventure Travel real life experiences... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do.

Revel in a taste of Egypt's history, beauty and colour on this short but action-packed trip along the longest river in the world. Cruise the Nile on a felucca, discover the largest and most impressive pharaonic temples, chat and dine with interesting locals and live it up in this country of deserts, bazaars, monuments and good old-fashioned adventures.

# Style

## Sojourn Adventure Travel Original

This is how it all started; the trips that made us one of the world's leading operators of small group adventures. And they're still as popular as ever! Original trips are all about variety: the places, the people, the activities, and even the accommodation and transport we use. From homestays to market trips to visits to community projects, there's a new experience every day, with many activities included.

# Trip Map



# Itinerary

## Days 1-2 Cairo

Salaam Aleikum. Welcome to Egypt!

You can arrive at any time on day 1 as there are no activities planned until the important welcome meeting at 4pm. Look for a note in the hotel lobby as to where this important meeting will take place. If you are going to be late please leave a message with the hotel reception.

At the group meeting we will be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information, so please ensure you have all details on hand to provide to your leader.

After the meeting, there is the option of joining your fellow travellers for dinner.

If your flight is scheduled to arrive late we recommend that you consider booking a night's accommodation prior to the trip so you can ensure you are able to attend the important group meeting.

Check-in time at our joining point hotel is after 2pm. Early check-in is not guaranteed, however if you arrive early, luggage storage is available. Speak to the hotel reception on arrival.

Our first night is spent in a hotel.

Following the meeting, we head out to Khan al-Khalili to check out the madness and colour of this famous bazaar.

Wonderfully chaotic, crowded, and always colourful, Cairo is a fascinating mixture of modern city and ancient wonders. If you arrive early there are plenty of things to see and do. Take a walk along the Corniche or travel along the river by felucca. If the crowds and the noise of the city are too much, catch the metro into the oldest part of the city, the Coptic Christian sector. With its narrow cobbled streets and ancient churches, it is a haven of peace and quiet.

On day 2 we travel out to Giza to visit the unsurpassed pyramids and Sphinx. We will aim to get away early to avoid the heat and crowds for the experience. We make a stunning approach to the Pyramids across the surrounding dunes by camel allowing stunning panoramic views of this iconic sight. After our fun with the camels your local guide will take you through the amazing history of the area.

We will have some time to explore the Pyramids up close: Pyramid of Khufu (The Great Pyramid of Cheops), Pyramid of Khafre (Chephren) and the Pyramid of Menkaure (Mycerinus)- the smallest. From a distance Khafre's pyramid looks larger than Khufu's, but this illusion is due to the structure being built on higher ground. When they were built they were covered in white limestone- they would have been gleaming but now most of the casing stones have been removed but you can still see some on the apex of Khafre's pyramid.

If you wish to enter the inside of a Pyramid ask your Group Leader to assist. Entrance is not included although there is time to do so. Please note that the inside thoroughfares of the Pyramids are very small and very warm, so those suffering from claustrophobia should not attempt.

The statue of the Great Sphinx still retains the mysteries which have puzzled scholars, tourists and scientists for thousands of years. It is made from an outcrop of stone left behind from the quarrying for the Great Pyramid, it has been buried by desert sands, excavated and repaired many times. The body of the Sphinx is almost 60m long and 20m high. It was known as 'Abu Hol' or Father of Terror to the Arabic people. We don't know who first built the statue- this is one of the mysteries of the colossal monument.

Please note that you will be required to walk around the complex of the Pyramids. It can be very hot in the summer months so be prepared for some hot and sweaty walking with little relief. Don't forget to take some water with you.

After the pyramids there will be a break for lunch and a chance to try some of the local specialities for those who are hungry. We then head back to the city centre to visit the Egyptian Museum. With thousands of exhibits, it's easy to lose yourself in the many corridors - but don't miss the Tutankhamun rooms, where the famous golden death mask of King Tut and his gilded sarcophagi are displayed. The afternoon is free to continue exploring the city.

This evening, we board an overnight sleeper train to Aswan. Please ensure you return to the hotel with plenty of time to spare before departure for our train. Your leader will designate a meeting time and we will travel together to Giza Station in the early evening.

For your comfort we travel aboard a sleeper train with fold out beds (as opposed to a seater train) to Aswan (approx. 13 hrs). This is a very comfortable air conditioned, 2 berth cabin. All bedding is provided on board by the porter. Western style toilets are located in each carriage. In rare circumstances you may be paired with a group member of the opposite sex in your cabin dependant on the group configuration. On other occasions you might have the opportunity to share with a local person of the same sex, again determined on the group configuration. Included dinner and breakfast are served on board. If you are a vegetarian you may want to purchase something extra beforehand to supplement your meal as only a single type of meal is served for dinner which always includes meat.

## Days 3-5 Aswan/Nile Felucca

The Nile, Elephantine Island and white-sailed feluccas: welcome to Aswan. This Nubian city is Egypt's southern gateway to Africa and an important market town - take time here to check out one of the country's best bazaars.

After settling in we head out to enjoy the spectacular scenery around Aswan where the Sahara meets the Nile. We take a motor boat ride to a nearby beach where you can climb a sand dune for a rewarding view. Later in the afternoon we take a walk around the magical Elephantine Island for our first taste of Nubian life and visit a nearby village where we join a local family for dinner and an unforgettable insight into the life and culture of the local people.

On day 4 you have the option to travel to the temples of Abu Simbel. There are 2 ways to make the journey south to see these remarkable temples.

### Option 1: Flying to Abu Simbel

Some travellers prefer to fly to Abu Simbel from Aswan. The flight time is 40 minutes each way. Flights can be booked on-line through EgyptAir: http://www.egyptair.com/English/Pages/Default.aspx#

Return flights vary throughout the season, the day of the week booked, and how far in advance you book, but expect to pay between 150-300USD

Due to the southerly location it is recommended to book the early flight and visit Abu Simbel at sunrise to avoid the heat

### Option 2: Private minivan

A less expensive option is to hire a minivan with other group members who are also interested. This can be organised from Aswan. The ride is 3 hours each way with a very early departure from Aswan at approximately 4AM.

Please note that Abu Simbel is an optional activity. Your group leader will not be travelling with you on this visit. The entrance fee is paid on arrival to the site, and if you wish a local guide can be hired on arrival.

For those that don't wish to travel to Abu Simbel a visit to nearby Philae Temple is highly recommended. Dedicated to the goddess Isis, Philae was painstakingly moved and reassembled after the construction of Aswan High Dam flooded its original island location.

Nights 3 & 4 we stay in a hotel and on day 5 we board feluccas to spend the day out on the river and then a night under the stars. Our Nubian sailing crew provides all the meals, which are hearty and delicious.

A felucca is a traditional wooden sail boat with broad canvas sails. The boat has a canopy that offers shade and protection from the elements; however there is no cabin or enclosed section. Please note that conditions are basic during our felucca trip but if you are prepared to rough it a bit you are sure to have the adventure of a lifetime. We sleep outside, on the deck of the felucca on mattresses. While blankets are provided, a sleeping sheet is recommended. During the colder months (October to March) it can get very cold at night (as low as 5 degrees) so a sleeping bag is recommended for this period. Unfortunately there is no sleeping bag hire available.

There are no toilets on-board our Nile felucca, but while sailing we will stop at the groups requests on the riverbank for toilet stops with nature. For your convenience at the completion of the days sailing we will assemble a western style toilet and tent close by on the riverbank. Any assistance from the group building the toilet tent is always much appreciated.

Please note that we may need to make slight alterations to our Nile itinerary throughout the year, depending on winds and currents. As the felucca is a sailing craft without any outboard engine, if there is no wind - we will not travel very far.

Nonetheless watching the sun setting across the Nile in the evening is a sight you will remember. This is the absolute highlight of the trip for many of our travellers.

## Days 6-7 Luxor

We say goodbye to our felucca and the crew before transferring by road to Luxor (approx. 3.5 hrs).

Situated on the banks of the Nile, Luxor was once the ancient Egyptian capital of Thebes. From the spectacular temple complex of Karnak to the unbelievable paintings and hieroglyphs in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, this open-air museum is full of wonderfully preserved reminders of the Pharaohs.

On arrival to Luxor we take some time to freshen up before we head out to our Sojourn Adventure Travel Foundation Project - Animal Care Egypt, to check out the great work they are doing here for the local animals. Next is a late afternoon visit to explore the magnificent Karnak Temple, perhaps the most impressive of the entire ancient Pharaohs' monumental works. It is a jam packed day, but what a great introduction to this extraordinary city.

We start our West Bank tour early on day 7 transferring to the west bank of the Nile to the Colossi of Memnon - two 17 metres high statues on the West Bank. Carved from granite blocks they represent the Pharaoh Amenhotep III.

We then hop onto donkeys (in the winter months only of October - May) for a ride of a different kind through the nearby local villages and fields such as sugar cane (approx. 30 mins). We dismount our donkeys and continue on to the spectacular royal burial site of the Valley of the Kings to visit 3 of the most interesting tombs. Here your group leader will explain the history and legends of these remarkable people.

Please note that a visit to King Tutankhamen's tomb is not included in our visit, but can be arranged as an option with advance notice. Ask your Group Leader if you are interested for details.

After our fun in the Valley of the Kings we are invited to a local family's home for lunch to try some tasty traditional home cooking.

The rest of the afternoon of Day 7 is free before we catch an overnight sleeper train back to Cairo. Options for this afternoon would be to visit the Luxor Museum, the Luxor Temple or the Mummification Museum. You can hire a bicycle to ride out into the surrounding countryside. For a more upscale option perhaps check out the Winter Palace, a lovely 5-star historical building with wonderful views over the Nile - a great place for a refreshing cocktail.

## Day 8 Cairo

Returning to Cairo early in the morning on our overnight train, there is time for a farewell breakfast and a chance to reflect on the wonders we have seen.

You are free to depart at any time on day 8, but please arrange for departing flights after 3pm in case of any travel delays on the overnight train and bad traffic hindering your taxi or transfer.

# Culture Shock Rating

Expect some culture shock. You will be exposed to signs of poverty and access to services may be sporadic. The food will be quite different and English speakers harder to find. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and really experience the location.

# Physical Rating

Some easy physical activities included in your trip. No physical preparation is required to make the most of the journey.

## Physical Preparation

Physical fitness levels:

A reasonable level of fitness is expected and will certainly help increase the enjoyment of the trip. Some of the archaeological sites and activities included involve a fair amount of walking.

Long and rough travel days:

There may be some long travel days and some rough travelling. Windy and rough roads make for some challenging travel experiences. If you experience travel sickness we recommend you consider medication to help ease the discomfort.

Early mornings:

On some long travel days we depart early in the morning to ensure we optimise our time at our next destination.

# Included Activities

This is a list of included activities on this trip. All other activities are optional and at your own expense. For a list of optional activities and sightseeing available on this trip, see the optional activities section below. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not be refunded.

* Khan al-Khalili bazaar visit
* Pyramids and Sphinx
* Camel ride at the Pyramids
* Egyptian Museum
* Aswan boat tour
* Nubian village visit and meal
* Overnight Felucca sailing trip
* Donkey ride (seasonal - not in Summer)
* Colossi of Memnon
* Valley of the Kings (3 tombs)
* Home cooked traditional meal with local family in Luxor
* Karnak Temple
* ACE (Animal Care Egypt) Sojourn Adventure Travel Foundation Project (if time)
* Comfortable overnight sleeper train (both directions- Cairo to Aswan & Luxor to Cairo)

# Optional Activities

We list the following optional activities for your information. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only.

They are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Sojourn Adventure Travel nor included in price of this trip. If you do any of them, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Sojourn Adventure Travel.

These optional activities listed are suggestions about what is possible to do in each location. It may not be possible to do all activities listed in the time that you have. We recommend you do some planning in advance to decide what you most want to do in each location. Please note that the below prices are the entrance fees only and do not include transport fees to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated.

## Cairo:

* Citadel – EGP50
* Coptic Museum (Cairo) - EGP50
* Islamic Art Museum (Cairo) - EGP40
* Cairo Tower (Cairo) - EGP65
* Antiquities Museum Mummies Hall (Cairo) - EGP100
* Sufi dance performance at Khan al-Khalili (subject to performance scheduling) - free

## Giza Pyramids:

* Entrance to the Great Pyramid of Cheops - EGP100
* Entrance to the 2nd Pyramid of Khafre - EGP30
* Solar Boat Museum - EGP50
* Pyramids Sound and Light Show - EGP75
* Pyramid of Saqqara – 60EGP

## Aswan:

* Abu Simbel Temple Entrance - EGP90
* Abu Simbel transport by bus - EGP120
* Abu Simbel flight - from USD150 (book with www.egyptair.com)
* Philae Temple - EGP50 (+ EGP10 for boat)
* Philae Temple Sound and Light Show - EGP75
* Monastery of St. Simeon - EGP25
* Nubian Museum - EGP50
* Tombs of Nobles - EGP30
* Unfinished Obelisk - EGP30
* Kalabsha Temple - EGP35

## Luxor East Bank sights:

* Karnak Temple Sound and Light Show - EGP100
* Luxor Temple - EGP50
* Luxor Museum – EGP80
* Mummification Museum - EGP50
* Hot Air Balloon - USD110
* Bicycle hire - EGP10

## Luxor West Bank Sights:

* Tomb of Tutankhamun (KV54) (Luxor) - EGP100
* Hatshepsut Temple - EGP30
* Medinat Habu Temple - EGP30
* Ramasseum Temple - EGP30
* Valley of the Queens- EGP35
* Tombs of the Nobles – EGP30

## Shopping:

There are many opportunities to purchase souvenirs and handicrafts while on this trip. Popular purchases include: gold and silver jewellery, perfume and Pyrex perfume bottles, essential oils, papyrus art, alabaster statues and silver including cartouches (hieroglyphics).

While we do not make arrangements for specific shopping excursions due to our passengers feedback, there may be opportunities where your local guides can offer services if you are particularly interested. Please note it is customary for local guides (not Sojourn Adventure Travel Group Leaders) to accept commission from the factory or shop in exchange for their service.

You are under no obligation to purchase anything from local guides and we do encourage you to enjoy shopping in the markets to compare prices and quality.

Please note that in Egypt, silver is a common souvenir in the form of jewellery and other items. The silver in Egypt is generally stamped with '800' meaning that it is 80% silver and 20% other metal. This is a reduced quality to the silver you may be more familiar with which is '925'- higher quality.

## Hot Air Ballooning in Luxor:

There is a possibility of an optional Balloon Flight on the West Bank of the Nile in Luxor. There are many companies who offer flights. While we can arrange the balloon experience with our preferred operator, who has provided good and safe service in the past, we must advise that you are free to choose your own balloon flight operator if you have specific safety concerns. Please note this is an optional activity so any balloon flight is taken at your own risk.

You may notice other local agents around Luxor selling balloon flights at varying prices. You are free to choose your own options. Balloon rides organised through our preferred operators are sold at a fixed rate throughout the season. Ask your Group Leader to assist on arrival to Luxor.

Generally the activity is advertised as a flight over the Valley of the Kings. No matter what any agent says, this can not be guaranteed as the flight is entirely dependent on the direction of the wind. From our experience very few flights actually go over the Valley of the Kings and instead fly close to Hatshepsut and the Colossi of Memnon. While you may have booked a 'sunrise' balloon flight, please be aware that this does not always eventuate in time for the sunrise due to logistical reasons and weather conditions.

Got extra time before or after your Sojourn Adventure Travel adventure? Maybe there is an URBAN ADVENTURE in one of the cities that you're visiting on your trip?

Sojourn Adventure Travel's Urban Adventures are the city tour with a difference - there are more than 100 to choose from in over 30 cities around the world, with new trips added regularly. They are a great way to get under the skin of the city you're visiting, in just a few hours. To make a booking contact your local travel agent, Sojourn Adventure Travel consultant.

# Accommodation

Hotels (4nts), felucca (1nt), overnight sleeper train (2nts)

The style of accommodation described in the day to day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions alternative arrangements may need to be arranged due to availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

Additional accommodation:

If you have purchased pre or post trip accommodation, you may be required to change rooms at the start or the end of the tour.

Triple Sharing:

When we have 3 single female travellers or 3 single male travellers on a trip we occasionally make use of triple-share rooms.

# Meals

While travelling with us you will experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. On our camping trips we often cook the region's specialties so you don't miss out. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Please check the 'meal inclusions' section of these notes for details of meals included.

Allow USD $145 for meals not included.

## Meal Inclusions

4 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches, 4 Dinners

Breakfast is generally a very simple affair and typically consist of bread, jam & tea/coffee & on occasions tomato, cucumber, & juice (or similar).

# Transport

Overnight sleeper train, private bus, motor boat, felucca, taxi, camel, donkey (seasonal)

# Group Leader

All Sojourn Adventure Travel group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders or our local partners' group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Sojourn Adventure Travel endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders. Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see and recommend local eating venues. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects.

At Sojourn Adventure Travel we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit - and who better to hear it from than the locals themselves? If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture then your leader can recommend a local guide service in the most of the main destinations of your trip.