



ANCIENT EGYPT AND THE SINAI 16-DAYS/14-NIGHTS CAIRO, THE NILE CRUISE, 3-NIGHTS IN SHARM EL SHEIKH AND 3-NIGHTS IN DAHAB

Day 1 - Friday – Departure

Depart New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport this evening for Egypt. Dinner and a light breakfast are served on board.

Day 2 - Saturday – Cairo

Ahlan Wa Sahlan! Welcome to Egypt, Land of the Pharaohs! Upon arrival at Cairo International Airport, your tour representative will greet you, and assist you with Visa and Customs formalities. After check-in at the hotel and time to freshen up, meet with your Guide to visit the exciting days ahead. As you drive through Cairo, you will see some interesting ancient monuments. A welcome dinner this evening will introduce you to Egyptian Cuisine.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE HOTEL (D)

Day 3 – Sunday - Cairo



Today visit the Giza Plateau where you see three Pyramids, the greatest being that of Cheops. It took 100,000 workers more than 20 years to construct. Entrance into one (1) of the pyramids is included. Southeast of the Great Pyramids is the Sphinx, carved out of solid

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natural rock in about 2650 BC, a magnificent monument with the head of the Pharaoh and the body of a lion. Continue to visit the first Pyramid ever built, the Step Pyramid of Zoser, in the Sakkara Complex. When Memphis was the capital of Egypt, during the Old Kingdom period, Sakkara was its necropolis. Spread over seven kilometers of desert, Sakkara is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Before returning to the hotel, visit the remains in Memphis, the first capital of united Upper and Lower Egypt.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE HOTEL (B, L)



Day 4 - Monday – Cairo

This morning you will be introduced to the masterpieces of ancient art in the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, including the Mummy Room. The museum is home to the vast findings of King Tutankhamen's tomb and other important pieces of Egypt's history. There will be time to shop at the Khan El Khalili Bazaar, known for its narrow alleys. Hundreds of shops are selling all types of Egyptian handicrafts, silver and gold jewelry, cottons, copperware, and perfumes.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE HOTEL (B, L)

Day 5 - Tuesday - Cairo/Aswan - Optional Abu Simbel/Nile Cruise



This morning a short flight will bring you to Aswan to board your Nile Cruise or you may select the optional pre cruise three-hour Abu Simbel excursion to visit the great Temples of Ramses II and his wife Nefertari. The colossal statues were originally carved into the side of a natural cliff that had to be rescued from the rising waters of Lake Nasser. After your excursion and upon your return to Aswan you will embark your Nile cruise. After lunch, visit Aswan's High Dam, Granite Quarries, and Unfinished Obelisk. Afterwards continue by felucca to enjoy Kitchener's Island with its beautiful gardens and to view the mausoleum of the Agha Khan.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE NILE CRUISE SHIP (B, L, D)

Day 6 - Wednesday – Nile Cruise Aswan/Kom Ombo/Edfu

After breakfast sail in a small boat to the Philae Temple, situated on the island of Agilika. Like Abu Simbel, the temple was relocated in order to protect it from the rising water of the High Dam, built in 1960. The main sanctuary on the island is dedicated to the Goddess Isis and her son Horus. Ancient

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Egyptians believed that Isis was the Goddess of Magic, and when she wept, the Nile flooded. This afternoon set sail for the city of Kom Ombo, known as "Ombos" in ancient times. Its location on the Nile, from which the routes from Nubia to the Nile Valley could be controlled, gave it strategic importance. The city became prosperous when the temple was built in the Ptolemaic era. The temple is divided into two symmetrical halves. The left side is dedicated to the falcon-headed god, "Heroeris," and the right side to the crocodile god, "Sobek". Reliefs of Ptolemaic Pharaohs are found in the porch area. The remainder of the temple consists of a crypt, chapels, remains of a birth house, Roman wells where sacred crocodiles may have been kept. On the walls of the temple, you will see the first recorded representation of medical instruments. Sail onto Edfu, midway between Aswan and Luxor.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE NILE CRUISE SHIP (B, L, D)

Day 7 - Thursday – Nile Cruise Edfu/Luxor

Begin the day by visiting the magnificently preserved temple of Edfu. The sandstone temple of Horus, the Sun God, was built under the Ptolemies and completed by the mid first century, BC. In the colonnaded court, we will see the surviving statue of a pair of falcons representing Horus. A series of smaller chambers leads to the Sanctuary of the God, which is lit by three openings in the ceiling. Ceremonies, celebrations, and war scenes are shown on the walls of the temple. Later today, we sail to Esna, pass the lock, and arrive in Luxor, ancient Thebes. This afternoon explore the East Bank of the Nile including the Temple of Luxor. Here, the Avenue of Sphinxes, famous for its artistic degree of uniformity, leads to the entrance of the temple where a seated colossus of Ramses II and a towering Obelisk sit. Continue to the Karnak Temple, one of the most impressive monuments of ancient art and architecture in the world. The carvings, which adorn all of the walls, depict the history and conquests of many of Egypt's Pharaohs.

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Day 8 – Friday – Luxor

Disembark the ship in the morning and cross the West Bank to explore the Valley of the Kings. The Valley of the Kings houses 63 tombs belonging to the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom, including the famous tomb of King Tutankhamen. Many of the tombs, carved out of the bedrock, retain their original bright colors and fine relief's and scenes, thought to guarantee the safe passage of the Ka to the after life. Afterwards continue to Deir El Bahri to visit the mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut considered one of the finest buildings in Egypt.

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Day 9 - Saturday – Sharm El Sheikh

A short flight will take you to Sharm El Sheikh, the “Land of Turquoise” where rock meets coral reefs and the desert stops at the sea. Sharm El Sheikh offers rich and elegant seaside resorts and is often called the “Egyptian Riviera.” This afternoon you will be transferred to the port for an orientation dive.

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Day 10 – Sunday - Sharm El Sheikh – Ras Mohamed

Today you will dive one of the Sinai’s most spectacular areas the Straits of Tiran. Starting from the north the first reef is Jackson Reef and on its edge rests the wreck of a freighter. The southeastern end, where the currents are weaker, is the perfect mooring place for all kinds of diving vessels. Starting your dive towards the north, you will come across a forest of awesome Gorgonian fan corals dancing in the current at about 80-100 feet as well as a wide variety of reef fish. The long, narrow Woodhouse Reef, which you dive as a drift dive from north to south, is home to reef sharks and eagle rays. At 130feet you can find a small "Satellite Reef" 60feet in length; with its numerous caves and outstanding underwater landscape. This is the most interesting section of the dive. Thomas Reef is the smallest of the 4 reefs but be aware! This location is for experienced divers only and it is always recommended to make a "test dive" to verify the direction of the extremely strong currents! Drift dive with the current and you will find some of the most colorful soft coral gardens anywhere in the gulf. Gordon Reef with its Lighthouse is the most eastern point of the Straits; another freighter wreck rests here on the reef table, almost parallel to the one on Jackson Reef. Here you will see huge varieties of reef fish and large schools of groupers. On the sandy bottom at 15feet, many Garden Eels are peeking out from the seabed moving gently in the currents. It is a popular habitat for eagle rays and reef sharks who mainly cruise at greater depths but are often spotted popping up for lunch and to take a look at the divers. On the way to and from Tiran always look out for dolphins, as they love to swim along the boats.

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Day 11 - Monday – Sharm El Sheikh - Straits of Tiran Diving

Today you will have the opportunity to take three dives, beginning at the most spectacular sites in all of the undersea, and the “masterpiece” of wall dives Ras Mohammed. It has been said that if there were just one dive place in the world to dive that would be Ras Mohammed. The Ras Mohammed Wall extends from the Eel Garden in the north to a large rock formation in the south called the Shark Observatory. Above the surface is a sheer limestone cliff with a fringing reef below. Drifting southward with the gentle current, every ledge and crevice has something different to offer. Colorful soft corals grow from overhangs, surrounded by Anthias, which flutter around the wall like butterflies. Giant gorgonian fans, up to 15 feet across, spread horizontally on some of the ledges.

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A few areas, especially in deep crevices, are dark and devoid of life, while others are brilliantly colorful and alive with activity. Caves provide refuge for soldier fish, hatchet fish, and silver sweepers. If you look upward, you will notice schools of jacks or tunas, a shark or eagle ray. This sight will keep you in awe!

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Day 12 - Tuesday – Sharm El Sheikh/Dahab

Leave Sharm El Sheikh by bus to Dahab. Dahab was originally a Bedouin fishing village that today is world-renowned for its many reefs immediately adjacent to the waterfront hotels. This afternoon enjoy a shore dive, seeing the vibrant coral gardens and marine life.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE HOTEL (B, D)

Day 13/14 - Wednesday/Thursday – Dahab



The next two days will be spent exploring the numerous legendary dive sites both North and South of Dahab. The most famous shore diving is in the North with the dive sites of The Canyon, The Blue Hole and The Bells. The North Dahab dive sites are just a short 5 mile drive from the Dahab Hilton Resort. The following sites may be visited. The Canyon: The closet dive site from Dahab and also the most accessible for divers. The dive operation companies park the vehicles; divers gear up and enter the water right at the dive site entrance. The site is famous for a

large crack in the sea floor starting at 40 feet, going down to 90 feet and is accessible for divers who wish to swim through the "Canyon." It is also known for colorful hard and soft corals and schools of colorful reef fish. Rick's Reef, situated on the north of the Canyon dive site, is a perfect place to make a drift dive toward the lagoon of the Canyon when a mild current is present. This is a very relaxing dive, excellent for photography. Octopus, Scorpion fishes, Morays, school of Red Sea Goatfishes fish and Fusiliers are always around on the sandy plateau patches with coral heads. The sandy bottom often hosts Bluespotted Stingray and amazing Napoleon Wrasses. The sloping coral garden stretches from the entry of the dive site to the fishbowl of the Canyon of beyond. The Blue Hole: A couple of miles up the road from the Canyon find a small Bedouin village of restaurants surrounding a coral peninsula called the Blue Hole. The Blue Hole is a submarine pothole (a kind of cave), around 400 feet deep. There is a shallow opening around 30 feet deep, opening out to the sea and a 90 foot tunnel, known as the arch, the top of which is 170 feet. The Hole itself and the surrounding area have an abundance of coral and reef fish. Deep descents into the Blue Hole or through the tunnel are only for divers with

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proper technical dive training and equipment. The Bells: A 100 foot walk from Northern edge of the Blue Hole Bedouin village is a small pool in the coral shoreline where divers enter and go down a sloppy chute called the "Bells." It takes divers through the coral reef line and exits on the outside reef wall at 80 feet where divers peer into the deep blue abyss as they turn south and head towards the Blue Hole. After gently swimming south for 200 feet along the sheer walls of coral, divers enter the Blue Hole over the shallow opening which faces seaward with a max depth at 30 feet deep. Deco stops at the Blue Hole are spent in a local Bedouin restaurant, where you can ride a camel or just watch divers walk by as you enjoy your lunch. North of the Blue Hole is a dive site called Ras Abu Galum which is best reached by camel. Ras Abu Helal which means "Cape of the growing moon", is situated 2 miles south of the Canyon. This extensive site features an inshore reef top dropping steeply to a sandy lagoon of 35 foot maximum depth with a semicircular shape. This dive site, at a depth of more than 100 feet, features a small narrow canyon which lies beyond the scope of recreational diving. The surrounding coral gardens throughout the site are excellent and fish life is equally diverse. Among the hundreds of reef species, notable residents are Unicorns, big Groupers, Triggerfish's, starry Puffers, Wrasses, and Hawksbill turtles are also common here.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE HOTEL (B, L, D)

Day 15 - Friday – Return to Cairo

Today leave Dahab for Cairo where you have the day at your leisure. This evening enjoy a farewell dinner.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 5-STAR DELUXE HOTEL (B, D)

Day 16 - Saturday – Departure

Farewell to ancient Egypt and the Sinai tour as you are escorted to the airport for your return flight. **(B)**

Please Note: This itinerary sequence is subject to change due to hotel availability, dive boat regulations, weather conditions, and government restrictions.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- International Air New York/Cairo/New York
- Domestic Air Cairo/Aswan-Aswan/Luxor/Sharm El Sheikh-Cairo
- 4 nights accommodation in Cairo at a 5-star deluxe hotel
- 5 days/4 nights 5-star deluxe Nile Cruise
- 3 nights accommodation in Sharm El Sheikh at a 5-star deluxe hotel
- 3 nights accommodation in Dahab at a 5-star deluxe hotel

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- All transfers: Cairo/Aswan/Luxor/Sharm El Sheikh/Dahab
- Sightseeing and transfers by deluxe motor coach
- English speaking Egyptologist-guide throughout Egypt
- Full day sightseeing Pyramids (entrance into 1 pyramid)/sphinx –Memphis/Sakkara
- Full day sightseeing Egyptian Museum of Antiquities including entrance into the Mummies Room-Citadel, Mosque & Bazaar
- All entrance fees and shore excursions on Nile Cruise
- Sharm El Sheikh and Dahab 5 ½ days of dive excursions (excluding dive equipment & park fees)
- 14 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 12 dinners
- Hotel taxes, service charges and portorage
- Luggage Tags, Travel Bag, Passport Wallet and First Aid Kit

NOT INCLUDED

- U.S. Departure Taxes & Airport Security (\$285.00 subject to change)
- Domestic air within the U.S.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, inter-net services, dive services i.e. equipment, etc is not included, soft drinks, coffee, tea (except at breakfast), mineral water, alcoholic beverages, passport fees, tips to drivers, guides, transfer people, travel insurance, etc.....

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