

## Private Group Tour: 12 Day Discover the Nile Tour

A well-known archaeologist once said that no matter where you stick a spade in Egypt, you'd have a fair chance of finding ancient artifacts! In fact, there's probably no other country in the world that boasts such a wealth of ancient antiquities - the focal point of this particular trip.

We spend five full days in Cairo, exploring a number of monuments dating back to the Old Kingdom. Principal among these are the superb tombs at Sakkara, a blueprint of life and times during this period.

Arriving in Aswan we visit the celebrated Temple of Ramses II, at Abu Simbel, and the exquisite Temple of Isis, at Philae,

before boarding our Nile riverboat for a magical cruise downriver to Luxor. Our boat has a great on-board atmosphere, with comfortable air-conditioned cabins – each with their own private shower and toilet. In addition there is a cosy restaurant, where all meals are served, and a rooftop bar. The spacious top deck is ideal for sunbathing and relaxing, with excellent views of the river.

Arriving in Luxor we visit the Valley of the Kings, the beautiful Temple of Queen Hatshepsut and explore the colossal temple complex at Karnak before making our way back to Cairo.

For those seeking a deeper appreciation of Ancient Egypt, this is a fascinating journey of discovery.



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### DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

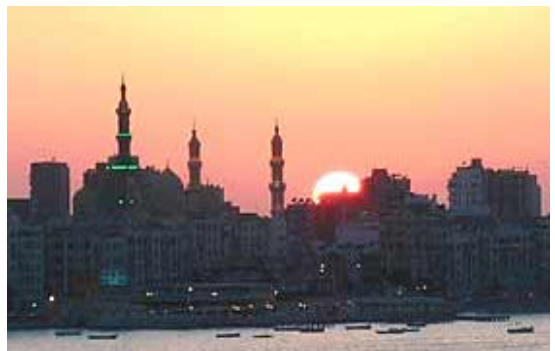
#### Day 1 / Cairo

Your trip starts today in Cairo. On arrival you will be met by a representative of Gecko's and transferred to the joining hotel. Rooms are generally available after 1.00 pm. So after you have dropped your luggage off at the hotel head out to the streets of Cairo and take in the smells, sights and sounds. No activities are planned today so the day is yours to unwind from your flight and prepare for a great 11 days ahead. This evening you will meet as a group with your tour leader for a tour briefing and then head out to a local restaurant for dinner.

#### Day 2 / Cairo

Cairo is the 'Mother' of all cities, a massive, sprawling metropolis of some 16 million people. Our first stop today is the celebrated Egyptian Museum, where our local guide explains the history and mysteries of Ancient Egypt. We see the golden mask of King Tutankhamun, and numerous other treasures and later we drive out to the edge of the desert to explore the pyramids and the nearby Sphinx. We also visit the beautiful Valley Temple of King Chephren, a superb example of Old Kingdom engineering.

Meals included: 1 breakfast



### Day 3 / Cairo-Aswan

We visit Memphis, the first capital of Ancient Egypt, and Sakkara, its necropolis. Here we explore the step-pyramid, the oldest recorded stone building in the world, constructed around 2660BC, and the predecessor to the pyramids at Meidum, Dahshur and Giza. Our guide gives us a fascinating insight into the concept and development of pyramid building. Nearby are several old kingdom tombs that are well worth visiting and once we have finished we make our way back to Cairo. The rest of our day is free to relax or explore further until it's time to head to the station for the night train to Aswan. Our air-conditioned carriage has large, comfortable seats (similar to business class seats on a 'plane) that recline to about 45°, and a simple dinner and breakfast are served on board. There is a toilet located at the end of the carriage.

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

### Day 4 / Philae Temple, Aswan

Aswan is one of our favourite places and very popular with travellers. It has an easy-going charm and it's easy to slip into its laid-back rhythm. After time to freshen up at our hotel we drive out of town to visit the beautiful Temple of Isis, at Philae. Threatened by the rising waters of the Nile (after the completion of the old dam in 1902), the temple was eventually dismantled, block by block, and re-situated on Agiliki Island. It is considered one of the most exquisite temples in Egypt and is a highlight of our trip. Returning to Aswan, we have time to explore the colourful Nubian Bazaar and after a break for lunch we head out on a felucca sailboat. This is a fun activity and there is an option to take a camel ride towards the Monastery of St. Simeon - a great way to spend the afternoon!

Meals included: 1 breakfast



### Day 5 / Abu Simbel-Nile Cruise

Rising early we travel by road to Abu Simbel, one of the most impressive temples ever built and one of the highlights of our visit to Egypt. We follow the shores of Lake Nasser and generally arrive at the temple just after sunrise, a perfect time for photographs. We enjoy a tour of the site and later return to Aswan, arriving around midday, where we board our Nile Cruise boat. After lunch, the afternoon can be spent sleeping, relaxing, reading or enjoy the sundeck.

Overnight: Cruise boat

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

### Days 6-7 / Nile Cruise

Morning finds us near Komombo where we visit the Temple of Sobek, a classically-ruined Greco-Roman temple that overlooks the river. Reboarding our boat we continue cruising towards Edfu, and from the sundeck we can enjoy timeless scenes of life on the Nile. We stop at Edfu to explore the well-preserved Temple of Horus, considered one of the finest examples of temple construction. The following day we take horse-drawn carriages to the massive complex at Karnak, built over a period of some 2000 years, and one of the greatest temples ever constructed. All meals are served in the comfortable dining room, and on one evening we enjoy an impromptu fancy-dress party.

Overnight: Cruise boat

Meals included: 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners



### Day 8 / Luxor-Cairo

This morning we head off on donkeys to the Valley of the Kings - always great fun - and visit the outstanding Temple of Hatshepsut, beautifully situated at the foot of the red Theban cliffs. The afternoon is at leisure, allowing time to visit some of the many other sights of interest. Don't miss the brilliant Luxor Museum, which has a superb collection of statues and other artifacts. Luxor Temple is also well worth exploring and then there's the extensive bazaar, which can occupy us for hours. In the evening we take the overnight sleeper train back to Cairo, with dinner served on board.

Overnight: Sleeper train

Meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

### Day 9 / Cairo

Arriving back in Cairo we are transferred to our hotel. Today we spend some time with our guide visiting Ibn Tulun and the fantastic Khan El Khalili bazaar - an amazing mix of shops and stalls that have traded goods and gossip

since the Middle Ages. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore on our own. In the older part of the city there is a lot to see, including some beautiful old mosques our tour leader can help organise taxis: but be prepared to bargain!

Meals included: 1 breakfast

### **Day 10 / Cairo**

Today is at leisure, allowing time to visit your favourite sights of Cairo, or perhaps discovering some new ones. For the real shopaholics there is time for some shopping at the bazaar.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

### **Day 11 / Cairo**

Today we do an additional visit to the Cairo Museum where our local guide explains the history and mysteries of Ancient Egypt. Later we drive out to the edge of the desert to explore the pyramids for a second time around and perhaps discover things we didn't see on the first visit.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

### **Day 12 / Cairo**

Your tour ends after breakfast today. You will be met by a representative of Gecko's and transferred to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals included: 1 breakfast

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## **About Peregrine**

Peregrine has been operating adventure holidays since 1977. Today we can help you discover all four corners of the globe, from the Polar regions, to Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and beyond. We offer high-quality, excellent-value, small-group adventures to interesting areas of the world, in harmony with the local people and the environment.

## **Trip grade**

### **Easy**

These are our easiest holidays. They can be enjoyed by almost anyone. No particular level of fitness is required.

## **Included**

An experienced English-speaking local leader, arrival and departure transfers, local guides at some sites, all transportation, accommodation, meals and sightseeing as indicated, International flights, visas, airport taxes and insurance.

## **Not included**

Additional meals, drinks, optional sightseeing tours, tips and items of a personal nature.

## **Meals**

Allow US\$90 for additional meals. Although a number of meals are included, we also allow you the flexibility to go out and make your own choices as far as what and where to eat. Your tour leader will always be on hand to offer recommendations and, in some places, he will help organise a group meal that includes a variety of local specialties; all such meals are optional.

## **Accommodation**

6 nights tourist class hotel, 3 nights riverboat, 2 nights overnight train

## **Transport**

donkey, felucca, horse-drawn carriages, overnight train, private aircon bus, riverboat

## **Optional Excursions**

\* prices below are a guide only.

### **Aswan**

- Camel Ride (1 hour) - Approx US\$7
- Nubian Museum - Approx US\$7

### **Cairo**

- Egyptian Museum - Egyptian Pounds 40

- Camel ride at the Pyramids (15 mins) - Approx US\$5
- Entrance inside Great Pyramid - Approx US\$18
- Entrance inside Chephren or Mycerinus - Approx US\$4

#### **Luxor**

- Luxor Museum Entrance Fee - Egyptian pounds 55
- Karnak Temple – Sound & Light Show - Approx US\$10
- Entrance to Tomb of Tutankhamun - Approx US\$14
- Luxor Temple - Egyptian Pounds 35

#### **Nile Cruise Schedules**

There are lots of cruise boats on the Nile and they all have to negotiate the lock at Edfu. As a result, boats arrive and depart Luxor continuously throughout the day. The printed itinerary is therefore only a guideline and you may find you have more (or less) time in either Aswan or Luxor. The actual cruising time, from Aswan to Luxor, is about a day and a half and this will mostly be done during daylight hours.

#### **Summertime Schedules**

As the days get warmer, temperatures can start to soar – particularly in Upper Egypt (Luxor and Aswan). From April to October, to avoid the midday heat, some days start very early (eg at 0500). Please be prepared for this: we try to make things as comfortable for you as possible. Your tour leader will keep you fully informed.

#### **'Baksheesh' and Tipping**

Throughout the Middle East, tipping is part of the fabric of life. The local word is 'baksheesh', which when translated into English falls somewhere in between 'tip' and 'bribe'. Everyone constantly tips everyone else and foreign travellers are expected to comply with this system. It is part of everyday life and is a form of remuneration for doing something, regardless of the standard of service. This is quite confusing for those used to the western concept of tipping as a way of showing appreciation. Over the years we have found that most of our customers find this constant need for tipping to be both tiresome and embarrassing, especially if you don't have the correct small change. To overcome this, we have established a very successful tipping kitty system. At the beginning of the tour, your tour leader will suggest collecting a set amount from each tour member. He/she will then distribute all tips along the way, on behalf of the group, to the local guides, drivers, porters and anyone else who provides services along the way. We have surveyed thousands of our previous clients and the vast majority clearly prefer this procedure. We hope that this system will also work for you. The amount will vary from trip to trip, but it usually works out to be about the equivalent of US\$3 per person per day.

If you are out on your own, for example at a restaurant, you should also leave a tip for the waiter.

**Please note** that the tipping kitty will NOT include a gratuity for your tour leader. They work hard for you and if you are happy with their service it is appropriate to tip them as well. The normal amount expected is US\$3 (or equivalent) per day from each member of the group.

#### **Ramadan**

Ramadan occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is an exciting (and at times, frustrating) time to travel in the Middle East. In the evening there is a celebratory atmosphere as people break their fast, and to witness all this is a real highlight. However, during the day, people must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual activity, so if you encounter someone who is a bit grumpy, be sympathetic! Tourist sites are generally unaffected although some places may close early, but your leader will plan around this. Most hotels bars and tourist restaurants will remain open. Overall, Ramadan is a really interesting time to visit the Middle East, although you do need to be flexible, sympathetic and sensitive. In 2008 Ramadan starts on 1 September and ends with Eid el Fitr at the end of September. The feast of Eid el Fitr can last between three and seven days, depending on the region.

#### **Travelling responsibly**

At Peregrine, we take our global responsibilities seriously. After all, we are passionate about the places we visit and want to help preserve them.

#### **Peregrine Community Trust**

The Peregrine Community Trust, a division of Peregrine Adventures, provides funds for local community projects and initiatives that promote responsible and sustainable tourism development in the destinations in which we operate. First and foremost, but not exclusively, the Trust supports projects and initiatives that advance education and employment within the tourism and hospitality industry. The Trust operates on a not-for-profit basis, with funds donated by Peregrine, our staff and our travellers, with every cent going to the nominated projects.

By donating to one of the projects supported by The Peregrine Community Trust you will help promote responsible

and sustainable tourism and make a positive difference for communities and travellers right now, and for the future. For online donations go to: [www.peregrineadventures.com/trust](http://www.peregrineadventures.com/trust)

### **Subscribe to e-news**

About once a month, we send out an electronic newsletter with news, specials and interesting articles. Subscribing is easy, and you can unsubscribe just as easily at any time.

Log on to [www.geckosadventures.com/subscribe](http://www.geckosadventures.com/subscribe) for more information.

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### **Detailed country and trip information**

For information about the countries that this trip travels to, refer to the relevant Country Notes online at [www.peregrineadventures.com](http://www.peregrineadventures.com).

With your booking confirmation, you will be sent a detailed pre-departure pack which will contain information on visas, medical issues, what to pack, money matters, vaccinations and other important trip specific information.

### **About these trip notes**

The information provided here is given in good faith and has been compiled with all reasonable care. However, things change and some of the information may become out of date. Please keep this in mind when you read it and check with us if you want to be sure about something. You can check the most up-to-date version of the trip notes online at [www.peregrineadventures.com](http://www.peregrineadventures.com). If you have any queries, please contact your travel agent or your nearest Peregrine office. We are here to help you!