

Overseas Adventure Travel®

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide®



New! Immersion in Egypt: Cruising the Nile River
2026

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

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

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

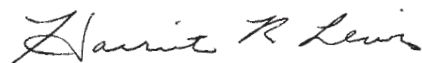
Like all our adventures, **Immersions** itineraries provide you with an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You may find yourself spending **A Day in the Life** of a local community, sharing a meal during a **Home-Hosted Visit**, or discussing **Controversial Topics**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

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

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

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

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Overseas Adventure Travel

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

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Abu Simbel

New! Immersion in Egypt: Cruising the Nile River Land Adventure

Egypt: Cairo, 7-night Nile cruise, Luxor, Qena, Edfu, Kom Ombo, Aswan, Abu Simbel

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

12 days starting from \$4,995

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **\$895**

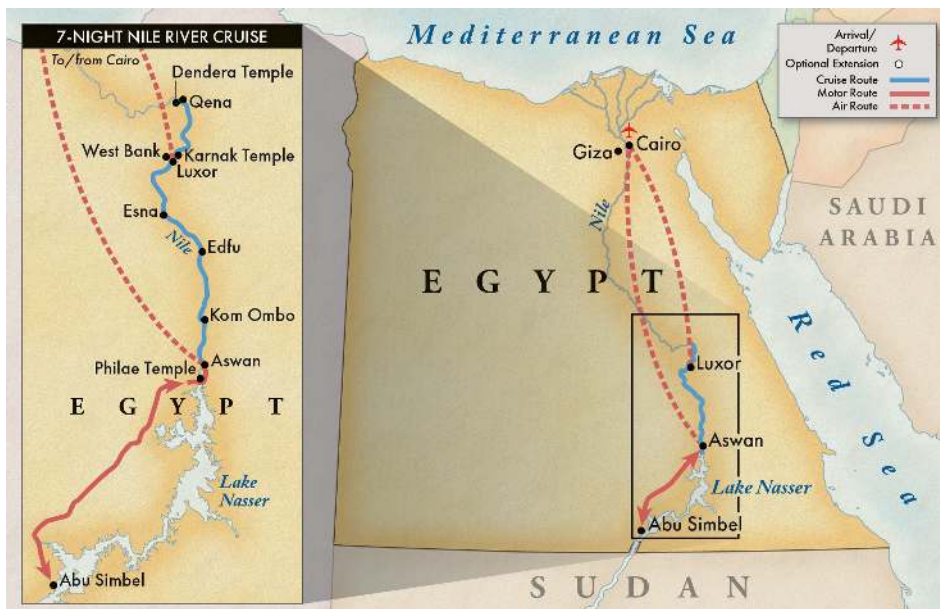
For departure dates & prices, visit www.oattravel.com/eyl2026pricing

Journey to Egypt and experience a land of superlatives, from the ancient streets of Cairo to the Great Pyramids of Giza and the treasures of Tutankhamen at the just-opened **Grand Egyptian Museum**. At the heart of this adventure is a seven-night cruise along the mighty Nile. Aboard the privately chartered **75-passenger Nefertiti**, you'll witness Egypt's wonders, millennia of history, and vibrant culture.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 10 nights accommodation, including 7 nights aboard the privately chartered, 75-passenger *Nefertiti* small ship
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 28 meals: 10 daily breakfasts, 9 lunches, and 9 dinners
- 16 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Gratuities for local motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- Visa fees for entrance to Egypt (if you have an airport transfer with us in Cairo)
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

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



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Depart U.S.
2-3	Cairo, Egypt
4	Fly to Luxor • Embark ship
5-6	Luxor • Qena
7	Valley of the Kings
8	Edfu
9-10	Aswan • Abu Simbel
11	Disembark ship • Fly to Cairo
12	Return to U.S.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

ARRIVE EARLY

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

- Arrive early in **Cairo** before your main adventure from **\$500** per room, per night

WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

Pacing: 12 days, with 7 nights aboard the privately-chartered 75-passenger *Nefertiti*, one two-night hotel stay, and one single-night hotel stay.

Physical requirements: Walk 1-3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day. Expect to travel over city streets, rugged paths, cobble streets, sand, and unpaved roads in some places.

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

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/eyl

EGYPT: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

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

People-to-People Experiences: Enjoy *A Day in the Life* experience on a riverside farm will serve as an interesting contrast: You'll meet a family of subsistence farmers and help them tend to their fields before returning to your ship via a traditional *felucca* boat.

O.A.T. Exclusives: Spend 7 nights aboard the **75-passenger *Nefertiti* small ship**. Plus, visit the Temple of Dendera to explore its ancient Greek and Roman origins.

Immersion in Egypt: Cruising the Nile River

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your overnight flight to Cairo, Egypt.

Day 2 Arrive in Cairo, Egypt

- Destination: Cairo
- Accommodations: InterContinental Cairo Semiramis or similar

Afternoon: You'll arrive in Cairo this afternoon or evening. Meet your fellow travelers at the hotel, including those who arrived early in Cairo before the main adventure.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend local dining options. Or you can venture to downtown Cairo on your own, perhaps to try a local favorite like *koshari* (a mix of rice, pasta, lentils, and tomato sauce).

Evening: Your evening is on your own.

Day 3 Cairo • Explore Pyramids & Sphinx • Grand Egyptian Museum

- Destination: Cairo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: InterContinental Cairo Semiramis or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today features the Giza Plateau, home of Egypt's signature attractions: the Pyramids of Giza. The largest of these three structures is the Great Pyramid of Khufu, probably built more than 2,600 years before

the time of Christ. Standing 480 feet tall, this pyramid is the last of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World that still stands. Of course, we'll also see the inscrutable and mysterious Sphinx, carved almost entirely from one piece of limestone. When Napoleon first set eyes on the monument, it was still covered in sand up to its neck. Today it has been excavated, revealing the paws of a resting lion and chambers at its base. Take some time to revel in the history embedded in every block of stone and in the incomprehensible size of each structure standing tall in the desert sand.

Lunch: At a restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll drive outside Cairo to the Giza Plateau for a visit to the Grand Egyptian Museum. The museum's collections are arranged chronologically, so you'll feel as though you are walking through time. As we begin our tour together, our Trip Experience Leader will enhance our discoveries during a conversation about Ancient Egypt, describing how the earliest civilization took root on the banks of the Nile, tracing the division of dynasties during the Pharaonic era, and providing insights into the country's best-known kings and queens. Our tour will feature highlights of each historical period, including the spoils of Tutankhamun's father, King Akhenaten, and his wife Nefertiti. You'll have some time to explore the museum independently before we return to the hotel by mid-afternoon.

Dinner: This evening, we'll enjoy a cocktail followed by a Welcome Dinner at a restaurant in our hotel.

Evening: You are free to retire to your room or gather with your fellow travelers to discuss the day's discoveries.

Day 4 Cairo • Fly to Luxor • Explore Karnak Temple • Embark ship

- Destination: Luxor
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Fly to Luxor this morning.

Lunch: Upon arrival in Luxor, a boxed lunch will be provided as we make our way to Karnak Temple.

Afternoon: We'll set off to explore Karnak Temple, the huge complex of shrines, built and enlarged over a period of 1,300 years. The ancient Egyptians called the enormous temple complex of Karnak "the most perfect of places," and today it is one of the most important sites in Egypt as it encompasses a wealth of ancient Egyptian history, primarily between the Twelfth and Twentieth Dynasties. Construction began under Senusret I in the 19th century BC, and subsequent rulers continued to expand the complex with their own shrines, rooms, and monuments.

Your Trip Experience Leader will point out some of the temple's most noteworthy features as you explore together. Its centerpiece is the huge Hypostyle Hall, with its outer walls decorated with battle scenes. Walk through the soaring Hall of Pillars, and imagine how difficult it must have been to construct the 134 columns here without the use of modern machinery. You'll also see the tallest obelisk in Egypt—97 feet tall and weighing approximately 320

tons—which was raised by Queen Hatshepsut in honor of the god Amun. You'll also have the opportunity to seek out your own discoveries. Be sure to take a close look at the walls—most are covered in hieroglyphics that seem as deep and pronounced today as they might've been when they were first carved 3,000 years ago.

After our visit, we'll transfer to the dock where our privately chartered small ship awaits us. For the next seven nights, the 75-passenger *Nefertiti* will carry us from one iconic site to the next and give us an intimate look at life along the Nile River. Travel this storied waterway as many have over the centuries—from Cleopatra to Agatha Christie—and trace the routes of legendary pharaohs who built their empires along the Nile. As we sail, relax on your private balcony—a feature not often found on other Nile River ships—and keep an eye out for traditional *felucca* boats gliding in the water alongside us, while simple stone homes cozy up to the riverbanks.

Later, gather with your fellow travelers in the lounge for a Welcome Briefing and the first of a series of nightly Port Talks. These informative conversations, led by your Trip Experience Leader, will give you an overview of the following day's itinerary and prepare you for the destination ahead. Shortly afterwards, enjoy a Welcome Cocktail and meet the crew before dinner.

Dinner: Gather for a Welcome Dinner onboard in the ship's dining room. In addition to the standard dinner options (appetizer, soup, entrée, and dessert), we'll enjoy a few more special offerings at this celebratory meal. We'll also meet the *Rayes* (chief) of our ship. As a native of Upper Egypt, the *Rayes* will likely be wearing a traditional *galabeya* (floor-length tunic) throughout our voyage. But there's no need for you to match his formal style: The

dress code for dinners onboard is smart casual. However, some travelers choose to wear a day dress or slacks to the Welcome Dinner.

Evening: We are docked in Luxor for the evening; you have the freedom to explore the city as you wish.

Day 5 Luxor • Optional Luxor Hot-Air Balloon Ride • *A Day in the Life* of an Egyptian village

- Destination: Luxor
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Activity Note: As it did for the ancient Egyptians, high water makes for a smoother sail. As such, from mid-November to mid-February, when tides are low, your ship will stay in Luxor for the evening. Travelers who opt to take our hot-air balloon excursion should be prepared to awake very early in the morning. Also, please be aware that limitations on how many ships per hour can pass through the Esna locks could affect the order in which you visit sites during your cruise.

Early Morning: As the sun rises over Luxor, so can you—aboard an optional hot-air balloon ride (weather permitting). The sights, sounds, and sheer spectacle of seeing these antiquities from the sky will surely make for a memorable morning.

Breakfast: Onboard our ship.

Morning: Today, we'll enjoy our *A Day in the Life* experience with a local family on the west bank of the Nile River. The east bank, where our ship is currently docked, is Luxor like you've always imagined: home to bustling markets, the elegant Old Winter Palace Hotel, and the grand Luxor Temple. The other side of the Nile, however, seems like a different world entirely. Rural, reedy, and less developed, the west bank is home to villagers who are far removed

from the Hollywood-ready attractions just across the water. Most of the houses here are modest, made from mud bricks or concrete and surrounded by date-palm and henna trees.

We'll drive to El Ramla or one of the other villages on the west bank. Upon arrival, we'll set off on a walking tour of the village, while learning about everyday life in this close-knit community from a villager and local leader whose family has lived on the west bank since the 1960s. Then, we'll venture deeper into the village for the opportunity to participate in some hands-on activities. Then, we'll sit down with members of the family and spend some time discussing their lives, struggles, taboos, and traditions. We might also help feed the animals or use the old millstone to grind wheat into flour.

Lunch: We'll gather around the table to enjoy a meal with the family. Our lunch concludes—with a cup of either black or hibiscus tea. While it may seem counter-intuitive to drink a warm beverage in a hot climate, Egyptians know that it actually tricks the body into cooling off.

Afternoon: We'll bid farewell to the family and walk to the Nile's bank, where we'll encounter a local icon: a *felucca*. These traditional wooden-hulled boats with lateen (triangular) sails ply the water in profusion here. They're the ideal vessel to take us back to our ship on the east bank. Our leisurely crossing will allow us to take in the views of both sides of the Nile and reflect on the power of this ancient, life-giving river.

We'll re-board our river ship and set sail to Qena. Following a safety briefing aboard ship, our groups will engage in an enlightening conversation on hieroglyphics with your Trip Experience Leader before dinner.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 6 Qena • Explore Dendera Temple • Luxor • Explore Luxor Temple

- Destination: Luxor
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Activity Note: During low-water season, from mid-November to mid-February, you will travel from Luxor to the Dendera Temple complex via bus.

Breakfast: Onboard our ship.

Morning: Early this morning, we will awake in Qena—a docking destination few other travel companies offer. Situated north of Luxor, Qena sits at a bend in the Nile, and is ideally positioned at the intersection of two main roads. Both a market town and a provincial city, Qena is also the perfect base for visiting the nearby Temple of Dendera.

We'll disembark to visit the colorful Temple of Dendera, built by Romans and Greeks and dedicated to Hathor—goddess of maternal and family love. This well-preserved temple complex contains birth houses, a Coptic church, the Hathor Temple, and Hypostyle Hall. One of the celebrated features of the temple is an astronomical ceiling intricately decorated with vultures, winged disks, and the union between Hathor and Horus. Paintings on the ceiling—which are some of the most well-preserved in the ancient world—also represent the two halves of the sky with its northern and southern constellations, the hours of day and night, the sun and moon, and the symbols of the zodiac.

After returning to our ship, the *Nefertiti* will begin cruising back to Luxor.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Enjoy some time at leisure as we continue making our way to Luxor this afternoon. Sit out on your private balcony and drink in the passing vistas of everyday life along the banks of the Nile River. Perhaps you will witness a farmer leading his cattle to graze in the fields, or local women bringing their brightly-colored laundry to the banks for washing. Later, you may also choose to take part in an onboard cooking lesson with our ship's chef to learn how to prepare a local specialty.

Upon arrival in Luxor, we'll disembark and make our way to Luxor Temple. Rising from the east bank of the Nile, this sprawling ancient complex was a center of power for Egypt's mighty pharaohs over a nearly 1,500-year period. The temple complex was largely built by Amenhotep III and Ramses II, the most celebrated pharaoh of the New Kingdom (his reign lasted some 66 years, up until his death at age 91). Many other pharaohs and rulers added to the temple over the centuries. Tutankhamen even contributed—the only mark left by the boy king.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Gather with your fellow travelers to enjoy onboard entertainment tonight.

Day 7 Valley of the Kings • King Tutankhamun's tomb • Temple of Queen Hatshepsut • Esna

- Destination: Luxor
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Breakfast: Onboard our ship.

Morning: This morning, we'll visit the west bank of the Nile, the hilly area that was once the Necropolis of Thebes. It's here that we'll

visit the Valley of the Kings, with its many tombs chiseled deep into the cliff sides. Several great leaders, as well as many less important rulers, are buried here, and more tombs are being discovered even today. This is where Howard Carter discovered the treasures of Tutankhamun in 1922, which we will have the opportunity to discover for ourselves. Each tomb is long and narrow, has the king's formal name and title inscribed in it, and each is decorated with his images and statues. Because these tombs were long sealed from the elements, their walls have retained the vibrant colors and deeply chiseled details that were added by the original builders thousands of years ago.

We'll explore a few of these tombs together with our Trip Experience Leader, and also have time to visit others independently before heading over to the nearby Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the monument of one of Egypt's greatest rulers, and one of its only female pharaohs. As we leave the fabled valley, we'll stop at the pair of massive statues of Amenophis, known as the Colossi of Memnon. These statues are the only remnant of a temple dedicated to Amenhotep III—later, the Greeks determined that the statues represented their hero, Memnon. We'll return to our ship by motor boat.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After lunch, the afternoon is at your leisure. Our vessel will pass south through the locks of Esna early this evening.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy onboard entertainment tonight before you settle in for the evening.

Day 8 Explore Edfu • Explore Kom Ombo

- Destination: Edfu
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Activity Note: As it did for the ancient Egyptians, high water makes for a smoother sail. As such, from mid-November to mid-February, when tides are low, your ship will stay in Luxor for the evening. Water levels may also affect transportation to the Temple of Dendera on Day 9.

Breakfast: Onboard our ship.

Morning: We set sail for Edfu early this morning, arriving shortly after breakfast. Then, we'll disembark and drive to Edfu's Temple of Horus. Dedicated to Horus, the god of the sun and planets, the falcon (Horus's symbol) is prominent in the vivid hieroglyphs and bas-reliefs of the temple. Thirty-eight columns surround the court, and a fine statue of Horus stands guard over the entry. Every available surface is carved with hieroglyphs describing offerings to the god.

We'll head back to our ship and then sail to our next destination—Kom Ombo.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: This afternoon, we'll visit the Temple of Kom Ombo. Set on a hill overlooking a bend in the river, the Greco-Roman style temple of Kom Ombo (actually two temples) is unique, as it is Egypt's only double temple dedicated to two deities instead of one—Sobek, the crocodile god, and Horus, the great, winged falcon god. Everything here is doubled and perfectly symmetrical along a central axis—twin entrances, twin courts, and twin colonnades.

Dinner: Enjoy an Egyptian dinner buffet onboard ship featuring traditional Egyptian fare—perhaps including *shawarma*, thinly sliced meat roasted on a spit; or *umm ali*, bread pudding with pistachios.

Evening: After dinner, take part in a *galabeya* dress party, where you'll have the opportunity to try on one of the traditional embellished robes.

Day 9 Philae Temple • Explore Aswan

- Destination: Aswan
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Breakfast: Onboard our ship.

Morning: Upon arrival in Aswan, we'll set off to visit Philae Temple, which is dedicated to Isis, an enchantress known as the giver of life, the protector of kings, and the mother of god.

Originally located along the Upper Nile, Philae Temple was relocated downstream to Agilika Island in 1970 to protect it from the flooding caused by the construction of the Aswan Low Dam. The temple complex dates from the 26th Dynasty, with additions through the Roman period. It was one of the last temples built in the classical Egyptian style, as well as one of the last tributes to a goddess. Pilgrims would come from all over the Mediterranean to worship Isis here. This temple's towering silhouette has left a lasting impression on visitors for centuries, and its unique architecture makes for a fascinating journey through its jigsaw-like halls.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Enjoy a leisurely afternoon in Aswan, where your ship will remain docked. Take time to relax onboard or head ashore to explore the city's lively markets and scenic riverside at your own pace.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy the evening as you wish.

Day 10 Aswan • Explore Abu Simbel

- Destination: Aswan
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: *Nefertiti* Small Ship

Activity Note: Today features a long drive and a very early wake-up. Our drive to these temples will take about 4 hours along some bumpy roads. After spending 4 hours exploring Abu Simbel and enjoying lunch, we will return to Aswan, a journey of another 4 hours.

If you would like a more relaxed day, you may choose to remain in Aswan and explore on your own. Perhaps you'll opt for a *felucca* ride around the botanical island, or delve into Nubian culture at the Nubian Museum.

Breakfast: Onboard in our ship's dining room.

Morning: Enjoy a full-day excursion to Abu Simbel. Along the way, our Trip Experience Leader will shed light on Egypt's Nubian people. An indigenous group of African descent, Nubians have long maintained a language and culture distinct from those of their Arab neighbors. With the construction of the Aswan High and Low Dams, thousands of Nubian people and monuments—including Abu Simbel—were displaced by flooding. Upon arrival, we'll explore the two temples built by Egypt's great Pharaoh Ramses II (Egypt's longest-ruling king) as a tribute to the deities and his favorite wife Nefertari. Originally carved into a mountainside, the temples feature richly detailed stone monuments—including four 65-foot tall statues that flank the entrance to the Great Temple. Unlike other Egyptian temples, which typically feature a linear structure, Abu Simbel's design includes myriad

side chambers. The whole interior is packed with bas-reliefs depicting battle scenes, as well as pillars and monuments to the gods.

In an epic feat of modern engineering, the massive temples of Abu Simbel were moved to their present location when construction of the Aswan High Dam in 1960 created Lake Nasser and flooded their original location. This extraordinary operation to save one of the world's greatest treasures took years, and the efforts of an international team of engineers and archaeologists. The temple is now backed by an artificial mountain built to resemble its original setting.

Lunch: At a restaurant in Abu Simbel.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll return to Aswan, where you'll have time to refresh before dinner.

Dinner: Join your fellow travelers for a Farewell Cocktail followed by a Farewell Dinner as we prepare to say goodbye to our ship and crew.

Evening: Gather with your fellow travelers to enjoy onboard entertainment tonight.

Day 11 Aswan • Disembark ship • Fly to Cairo

- Destination: Cairo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: InterContinental Cairo Semiramis

Breakfast: Onboard our ship.

Morning: Disembark the ship this morning and drive to the airport for our flight to Cairo.

Lunch: Boxed lunches will be provided as we make our way to Cairo.

Afternoon: Upon arrival, we'll check in to our Cairo hotel.

Dinner: Tonight, toast to your discoveries with your fellow travelers during a Farewell Dinner at our hotel's restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 12 Cairo • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

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

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. They will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

Please note: Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

Luxor Hot-Air Balloon Ride

(Day 5 \$165 per person)

As the sun rises over Luxor, so can you on an optional hot-air balloon ride. The sights, sounds, and sheer spectacle of seeing these antiquities from the sky will surely make for a memorable morning.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

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

Need to Renew Your Passport?

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

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

Recommended Blank Pages

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

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

Entry Requirements

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

- **Egypt: Visa required.** U.S. citizens will require a visa to enter Egypt. For this cruise, the cost of this visa will be included for U.S. citizens **if you have an airport transfer with us in Cairo.** *Airport transfers are included with our international flights provided you arrive in Cairo on the standard date for your tour. If you’ve made your own flight arrangements, you can purchase an airport transfer from us provided you arrive at the Cairo airport on the standard arrival date. If you arrive in Cairo early—even with flights arranged through us—than you will need to get your own visa, which U.S. citizens can easily do at the Cairo airport for about \$25 per person.*

If you are staying longer in any of these countries, you should check with their embassy or consulate for the applicable regulations. If you are not a U.S. citizen, your visa requirements may differ; we recommend contacting the nearest embassy/consulate or calling our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at 1-800-556-9990 to check.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

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

Traveling With a Minor?

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

Travel Protection Required:

Overseas Adventure Travel requires all travelers purchase travel protection with Medical Evacuation coverage of at least \$200,000 and Medical Expense coverage of at least \$50,000, due to the remote nature of your adventure.

O.A.T. Travel Protection:

If you **purchase your Travel Protection Plan** through O.A.T., no further action will be needed, as the Medical Evacuation coverage and Medical Expense coverage meets these requirements.

Your Own Travel Protection:

If you purchase your own travel protection, we recommend you review the plan to ensure Medical Evacuation coverage of at least \$200,000 and Medical Expense coverage of at least \$50,000 is included. Once you confirm your plan meets the requirements, you will need to email the following information to **TravelCoverage@oattravel.com**:

- Traveler Name(s)
- Reservation Number
- Trip Protection Provider
- Policy Number
- Date of Purchase
- Copy of your Policy Documents

You can also contact our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814** to review this policy. You will be required to provide proof of coverage by 60 days prior to departure at the latest.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

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

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

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

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

GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has 3 groups with a maximum group size of 25 travelers with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

PACING

- 12 days, with 7 nights aboard the privately chartered 75-passenger *Nefertiti*, one two-night hotel stay, and one single-night hotel stay
- Two four-hour bus rides and two internal flights

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 1-3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them
- Please be aware that the average ceiling height at the entrance doors of the *Nefertiti* is 5.9 feet; 6.8 feet at the doors of ship's Reception area; and 6.06 feet at the doors to the Restaurant & Bar/Lounge
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Travel over city streets, rugged paths, cobble streets, sand, and unpaved roads in some places
- Travel by 75-passenger small ship and by coach

- Changes in tides and water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary. During low-water season, from mid-November to mid-February, you will travel from Luxor to the Dendera Temple by bus

CLIMATE

- The climate in Egypt varies from cold to extremely hot
- During the dry summer months of May through October, temperatures can range from 90°–100°F
- From June to September, temperatures can easily reach 90°–100°F and even up to 110°F (in the shade) in Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan
- Winter temperatures between November and April usually range from the 50s (in the mornings) to 80°F and can drop dramatically after sunset, as far as the high 40s

FLIGHT INFORMATION

- Travel time will be 17–20 hours and will most likely have one connection of 3–4 hours (depending on airline)

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

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

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

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

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

Medication Suggestions

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- A pain medication. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed.

- Motion sickness medicine, if you are susceptible

Traveling with Medications

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

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

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

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

Allergies

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

Safe Water

Tap water in Egypt is not safe to drink.

In Egypt, you should use bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth at any hotel. During your Nile cruise, the tap water onboard your ship is filtered, but we still recommend you stick to bottled water. Bottled water is readily available for purchase throughout Egypt. Inspect each bottle before you buy it to make sure the cap is sealed properly. Carry a bottle in your daypack at all times. Bottled drinks and juices, and hot drinks that have been boiled, are safe to drink. Avoid drinks with ice in them.

Food Safety

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

Don't Push Too Hard

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

Drink Plenty of Liquids

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

Sun and Heat Exposure

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

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

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

Local Currency

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

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

How to Exchange Money

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

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

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

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

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

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

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

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

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

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

Shipboard Account

This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, and American Express, are not accepted.

Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Please note: Like our European cruises, your bill for any optional tours taken during the trip will be paid with your Trip Experience Leader, who will have you fill out a form onsite with your credit card information. (You can only pay for optional tours by credit/debit card.) For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

Exchange Services

You will have opportunities to change money or use an ATM before boarding the ship. But in case of emergencies, we offer a one-time money exchange onboard of up to \$100 per person, per cruise.

Tipping Guidelines

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

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$16–\$18 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. *Due to international banking laws, we are not able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Housekeeping at hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Taxis:** You should agree on a price with the driver before you take the taxi, so tipping is not necessary unless you receive “above and beyond” service.
- **Restaurants and cafes:** 10% of the bill is considered polite. Most restaurants in Egypt charge a service fee, but this doesn’t go to your waiter—it is more a cover charge than a tip.
- **Restrooms:** If there is an attendant on duty, it is customary to give them a small tip of about 5–10LE (about \$0.30–\$0.60 US) for paper and/or soap.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

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

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

Quick Definitions

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

Air Inclusive Travelers

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

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

Arriving in Cairo on Flights You Arranged

If you are booking your own flights, please keep in mind that it can take **up to 2 hours** to get from the airport to your first hotel in Cairo due to heavy traffic. For flights arriving after 6pm on Day 2, this will mean a late arrival to your hotel followed by a full day of discoveries on Day 3. You may want to consider arriving one day early to acclimate and relax after a long travel day. **However, if you do arrive early, you will not qualify for an airport transfer and will need to get your own visa for Egypt.** For more information, please contact our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

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

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

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

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

Optional Tours

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

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".

- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

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

Calling Apps

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

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

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

Receiving Calls from Home

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

How to Call Overseas

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

Egypt: +20

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person
Weight restrictions	Luggage is limited to 44 lbs for checked luggage and 11 lbs for carry-ons.
Size Restrictions	Standard airline size: Checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+ width + depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches
Luggage Type	A sturdy suitcase with wheels and lockable zippers.
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.	

Don't Forget:

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

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** One duffel bag or suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Please do not bring a rigid (plastic shell) suitcase.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.
- **In Case of Delays:** While luggage delays are rare, you should know that if your luggage is delayed in Egypt, customs officers will need to unlock it before releasing it from the airport. This will require your presence at the airport with your passport.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Most of your clothing should be for warm, dry climates**—lightweight, loose fitting, and made of 100% cotton. But you'll still want to bring a sweater or other layer for when the air conditioning is on high. (Also, the desert it can be cold at night.)
- **If you like to hand-wash your clothes**, bring socks and underwear made of material that will dry out overnight.
- **You can buy clothing designed especially for travel.** Look for clothes that offer adequate sun protection.
- **Pack a few pieces of clothing and any medications in your carry-on**, in case your luggage is delayed. If traveling with a companion, consider “cross-packing,” i.e., pack two outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa.
- **You'll be on your feet a lot** during the trip and walking over some rough and slippery surfaces. We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or similar supportive sports shoes for our daytime shore excursions. Aboard ship, the soles of your shoes should offer good traction

Dress Codes: Shorts, Headscarves, and other FAQ

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended Packing Lists

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

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

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts in a breathable fabric, like cotton or cotton-blend. Polo shirts are more versatile than T-shirts.
- ☐ Trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best.

- ☐ Walking shorts: Cut long for modesty. See the “Dress Codes” section in this chapter for details.
- ☐ Shoes and socks: We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or supportive sports shoes for excursions. Aboard ship, the soles of your shoes should offer good traction.
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor for sun protection
- ☐ Light sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket (air conditioning can be cold in museums, motor coaches, etc).
- ☐ Underwear and sleepwear
- ☐ Swimsuit

Seasonal Clothing Recommendations

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

- ☐ A pair of heavier pair of trousers or light long underwear for evenings on deck
- ☐ Warm sweater or jacket and hat

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses and a neck strap
- ☐ Sunscreen, SPF 45 or stronger (essential for the desert)
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Washcloth (not always supplied)
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues and/or toilet paper for restrooms
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial hand cleaner
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ☐ Travel money purse, worn under your shirt or jacket; money belt
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards

- ☐ Electrical transformer & plug adapters: see “Electricity” for details

Medicines

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

Electricity Abroad

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

Voltage

Electricity in Egypt is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220/240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V service will ruin the motor. If you have

something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 220 volt outlets only.

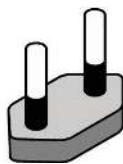
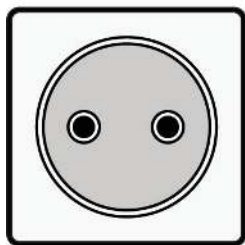
Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you may need multiple adapters on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Egypt: C is the most common plug type.

Type C



Availability

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

CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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

Low Water Levels in Winter

The water levels on the Nile raise and fall with the seasons, and the lowest levels are usually from mid-November to mid-February. This isn't an issue for most of our ports of call, but it can prevent us from sailing to Qena (Dendera Temple). If you are traveling in December or January, your ship may dock in Luxor instead. **If so, you'll still visit Dendera Temple.** The only difference is that you'll travel by coach from Luxor instead of from Qena.

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

- www.intellicast.com
- www.weather.com
- www.wunderground.com

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

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

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

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

MONTH	ASWAN, EGYPT		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	70 to 52	57 to 29	--
FEB	74 to 55	45 to 22	--
MAR	82 to 61	38 to 15	0.1
APR	92 to 72	30 to 13	0.4
MAY	99 to 77	26 to 12	0.3
JUN	115 to 81	26 to 11	--
JUL	103 to 83	27 to 12	--
AUG	102 to 82	31 to 14	--
SEP	99 to 79	34 to 14	--
OCT	93 to 74	40 to 18	0.2
NOV	80 to 63	51 to 26	--
DEC	72 to 55	57 to 32	0.1

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

Nefertiti

The *Nefertiti* offers a host of amenities to make you feel right at home. Designed to carry no more than 75 passengers, the ship's size ensures an intimacy and a unique opportunity to enjoy its many facilities. Amenities include a restaurant with open seating, sun deck with lounge chairs, a library, bar, lounge, dance floor, and small souvenir shop. Main Deck cabins feature two twin beds, upper-deck views, and closer proximity to the ship's lounge and bar.

Included features of all Nefertiti cabins:

- All outside cabins, each with a private balcony with seating for two
- Cabin sizes of approximately 215 sq. ft.
- Individual air conditioning
- Either two twin beds OR one double European bed
- Sufficient closet and dresser space
- Color TV (note that reception will only be available when docked in port)
- Hair dryer
- Desk
- Private shower, hair dryer, shampoo, and soap
- In-room safe
- All non-smoking cabins

Please note: *This ship features either two twin beds or one double bed per cabin. Twin beds cannot be pushed together.*

An important word: While our fleet features larger-than-usual riverboat cabins, please keep in mind that these ships are river vessels, not large ocean cruise ships. Riverboat cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many river ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring rich carpeting with white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Two glasses per person of complimentary house wine, house beer, or a selection of soft drinks are included at both lunch and dinner. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase, starting at approximately \$35-40 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table, for a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day.

Open-table, single-seating for all meals: Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

Dining times: Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

- Early riser breakfast: 6:30-7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:30-9:00 am
- Lunch: 1:00-2:30 pm
- Dinner: 7:00-9:00 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol, gluten-free, or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call us to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

Dress code: The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

Non-smoking policy: The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the Sun Deck until disembarkation.

Dock and Landing Etiquette

River waterways are simply not big enough to support large landing docks such as those built on ocean shorelines. It is common for river ships to tie up alongside each other at some piers—particularly in ports where docking area is restricted. While we try to arrange the most convenient mooring available in each port of call, outboard boats may occasionally obstruct views, and you may have to step across other ships when you want to go ashore.

Headsets

During your trip, complimentary headsets, or Whispers receivers, are provided on our guided tours through the places we visit. These receivers and headsets allow you to hear your Trip Experience Leader and our local guides better. If use a hearing aid or have strong preferences for headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headsets/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by smartphones, computer jacks, etc.

Wireless Internet Access

Limited wireless Internet service (WiFi) is available for free in the cabins and common areas on board. If you want to use the WiFi connection you'll need to bring your own device—the ship does not rent or loan electronic devices. To use the WiFi, please visit Reception after you board for access information. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong connection to the local cell phone network, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration.

TV Reception

Because the ship does not have a satellite dish onboard, you should expect that TV reception will only be available when we are docked in port.

Laundry & Linen Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently is costs about \$2.00 per shirt). Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available. There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels will be changed on your request using the international water conservation code—a towel left on the floor will be replaced; a towel left hanging up will not.

Medical Care

Should you need medical assistance, please contact the ship's 24 hour reception deck. They will arrange for a doctor to come onboard or for transport to the nearest medical facility against charge.

Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call.

Recreational Facilities

These include the sun desk, a small dipping pool, library, and lounge with a bar and dance floor. A word about the lounge and bar: Afternoon tea with cake and cookies will be provided daily. Filter coffee, standard breakfast tea, mineral water, soft drinks, and juice will be complimentary throughout the day. Other tea and coffee drinks (i.e. cappuccinos, lattes, etc.) will be available for purchase. Two glasses of local beer or wine per person will be included at both lunch and dinner; during the rest of the day a selection of alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and wines is available for purchase at the bar. Prices are in U.S. dollars.

Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls from the ship are placed via Reception. We advise you to use them only for an emergency, as this is a very expensive service (for example, a call to New York City would cost about \$3.75 per minute). Calling Cards cannot be used over the ship's phone system.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ship.

Elevator/Chairlift

The ship does **not** have an elevator or chairlift onboard.

Shore Excursions

Included during your cruise are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Trip Experience Leader will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications

- **History:** Built in 2000, completely refurbished in 2018
- **Size:** 233x43 ft.
- **Capacity:** 75 passengers, 40 crew members

- **Layout:** 40 cabins, 3 decks
- **Elevator:** No
- **Average ceiling height:** The entrance doors of the *Nefertiti* is 5.9 feet; 6.8 feet at the doors of ship's Reception area; and 6.06 feet at the doors to the Restaurant & Bar/Lounge

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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

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

Egyptian Culture

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

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

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

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

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

Language

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

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

Religion

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

Islam & Ramadan

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

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

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

Friday is the Muslim holy day, so businesses are usually closed. Many companies also close on Saturday, making the weekend Friday and Saturday. Local businesses may also close for religious holidays or festivals. The biggest religious holiday is Ramadan, a month-long celebration that is meant to teach the values of restraint and charity. To participate, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. The fast is strict and includes no eating, drinking alcohol, cigarette-smoking, or gum-chewing during daylight hours. But as the sun starts to set, everyone rushes home so they can celebrate *iftar*—the joyous breaking of the fast. Suddenly the evening comes alive with music, eating, and shopping. The festivities often continue well into the night. The mosques and some streets are decorated with lanterns, special meals are prepared, and nighttime social events and festivals are planned.

If you'll be visiting Egypt during Ramadan, what does this mean for you? Visitors are not required to fast, but out of respect you shouldn't eat, drink, or smoke openly. (It is OK to eat indoors, but you wouldn't sit outside with food.) Expect that some restaurants will be closed and others may not serve alcohol, but your Trip Experience Leader will be on hand to advise you of places to eat. Also, it is important to keep in mind that many of the people you meet will be participating in the fast, so they might not be their usual selves. It helps to have a bit of patience.

Ramadan follows a lunar calendar, so its dates change significantly from year to year. If you're interested in checking what holidays might fall during your trip, an online holiday calendar like www.timeanddate.com/holidays is a great resource.

Judaism & the High Holy Days

Considered the oldest of the monotheistic religions, Judaism has its roots in ancient times, with more than 3,000 years of history. Although there are three main branches (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform) the fundamentals remain the same. A practicing Jew is expected to follow the holy commandments as revealed to Moses, follow Jewish law, attend synagogue, fast during specific holidays, and keep *Shabbat* (Sabbath) from sundown Friday to sundown on Saturday. Many also adhere to kosher dietary laws, so you may not find pork or shellfish on the menu at local establishments.

The biggest holidays in terms of importance are probably the 10-day stretch from Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). Known collectively as the "High Holy Days", this is a period of reflection and family time, so most businesses will close or be on reduced hours due to low staff. Yom Kippur in particular is very solemn, and it is no exaggeration to say the entire country shuts down.

Lastly, a few words about the Western Wall in Jerusalem: As the last remains of the Second Temple, many see this as one of the most sacred places in Judaism, and as a result, its popularity cannot be underestimated. Be prepared for crowds and please follow whatever guidelines your Trip Experience Leader outlines.

Modest Dress

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

- **When visiting a church:** Many churches in this region require modest dress, meaning covered shoulders and skirts or shorts that fall below the knee.

Toilets

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

Important Note: In museums or at archaeological sites throughout the Middle East, there may be restrictions on using your flash or photos may not be permitted in certain areas (for example, photography is not allowed in King Tut’s Tomb at the Valley of the Kings). Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light.

Photography Fees

Some sites and museums will charge a fee (up to \$20 per device) for the privilege of taking photos. We recommend bringing some additional cash (approximately US\$50–60 per person) to exchange for local currency for these occasions.

Safety & Security

- **Common Sense and Awareness:** As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don’t be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people. Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.
- **Money belts/Neck wallets:** Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket and the rest of your money in a neck wallet or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place. Don’t leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (set your own personal number). Please utilize them.
- **Woman Travelers:** Foreign women may experience some hassling by local men in Egypt. It is usually inconsequential, and it is greatly reduced if you dress in a modest style. Exercise the same caution you would with strangers at home. We encourage women to stay with a group after dark or if exploring out-of-the-way places.

One last note—traffic is horrific throughout the Middle East, especially Egypt. Exercise extreme caution when attempting to cross any street. Consider hiring a taxi (at a nominal fee) for short distance transport.

Taking Photographs

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

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

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

Egyptian Cuisine

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

- **Mezze:** Small plates that may be served as starters, snacks, or a light meal. These are often served with flat bread, which is used to scoop up the dips and toppings. Common kinds include humus, *tahini* (sesame spread), *tabbouleh* (a mix of bulgur wheat, parsley, garlic, and tomato), *baba ghanoug* (eggplant dip), salads, and *fuul* (slow-cooked fava beans with garlic).
- **Taamia**, also spelled *ta'amiyya*: The Egyptian version of falafel, fried balls of ground beans or chickpeas, served warm wrapped in bread with veggies and toppings.
- **Kofta and kababs:** *Kofta* are spiced lamb meatballs, while *kababs* are skewered chunks of meat (beef or lamb); both are grilled on a fire.
- **Firekh:** Rotisserie-style chicken, usually served by the half. And if you want to try a more unusual poultry dish, look for anything with *hamam* (pigeon) which most people compare in taste to dark meat chicken.
- **Omm ali:** A type of bread pudding topped with cream, nuts, and raisins before being baked in the oven.
- **Drinks:** Strong Turkish-style coffee and sweet mint tea are commonly served. Most Egyptian Muslims refrain from alcohol, but will serve it to visitors or people of other religions. Beer has a long history in Egypt—there is evidence that it was drunk in Pharaonic

times—and you can still find locally made brands like Stella Meister, Stella Premium, or Saqqara. For a refreshing non-alcoholic drink, look for stalls with hanging nets filled with fruit. Here you can buy fresh-squeezed juices in a variety of flavors (just don't get ice).

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

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

Returns

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

Crafts & Souvenirs

Egypt

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

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

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

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

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

The top three points to know are:

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

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Egypt

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

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

National Holidays: Egypt

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

1/25 Revolution Day

4/25 Sinai Liberation Day

5/1 Labour Day

7/23 National Day

10/6 Armed Forces Day

Egypt: A Brief History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Egypt

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

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

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

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

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

Suggested Films & Videos

Egypt

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

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

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

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

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

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

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

GoogleMaps or Maps.me

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

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

Rome2rio

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

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber or Bolt or Grab

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

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

What's App or Skype or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

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

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

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

TripWhistle

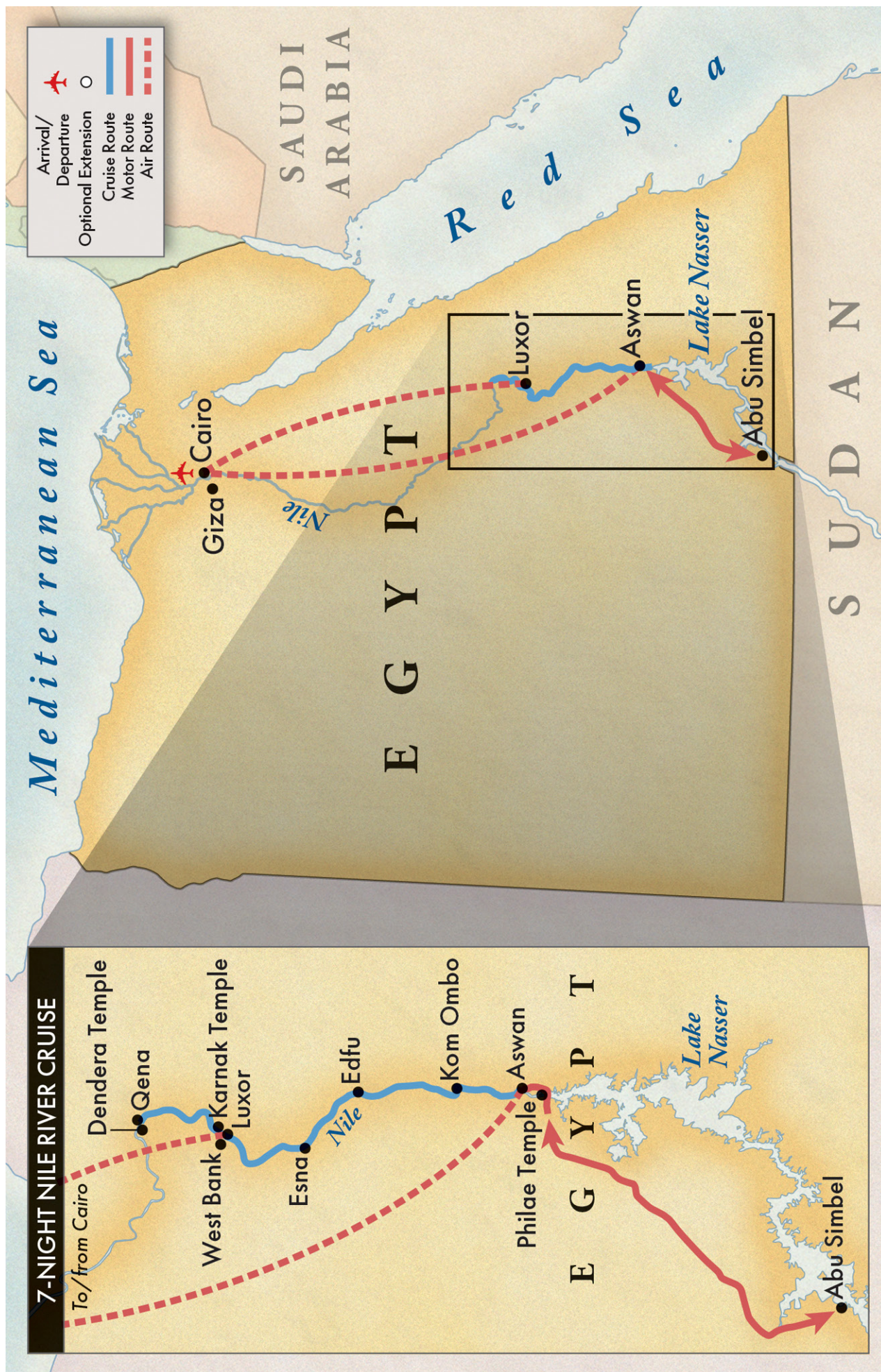
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Chirpey

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



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Submitted by Joy and Don Janke,
8-time travelers from Stevensville, MI



Submitted by Julia Schneider,
5-time traveler from Pinellas Park, FL



Submitted by Martin Schwartzman,
30-time traveler from Woodbury, NY



Submitted by Paul Stark, 17-time traveler
from Edina, MN



Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler
from Foster City, CA



Submitted by Steven dos Remedios,
23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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