



# Grand Tour of Egypt: Cairo, Pyramids of Giza & Nile River Cruise

15 days | 18 days with Red Sea extension

Listen to timeworn tales echo through bustling souks and witness colossal stone icons stand as silent sentinels—this is Egypt in all its glory. Venture deep into hidden valleys where temples and tombs tell the stories—and keep the secrets—of ancient royalty. Begin your trek in Cairo, where reverence for the past harmoniously coexists with the vibrant rhythms of a modern capital. In the company of your Egyptologist Tour Director, see the Pyramids of Giza, the last standing Wonder of the Ancient World, before continuing to Alexandria on the lush Mediterranean coast. Succumb to the gentle sway of a Nile cruise, where tranquil waters carry you to Luxor and Aswan. Extend your trip to the seaside oasis of Hurghada where you'll cruise, swim, and snorkel the Red Sea.



## Your tour package includes

- 9 nights in handpicked hotels
- 4 nights aboard a Nile River cruise ship
- 13 breakfasts
- 5 lunches
- 10 dinners with beer or wine
- 11 sightseeing tours
- Egyptologist, who's also your Tour Director
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 2 on-tour flights

## Included highlights

- Pyramids of Giza
- Great Sphinx
- Grand Egyptian Museum
- Alexandria's Corniche & Citadel
- Wadi El Natroun
- Temples of Karnak and Luxor
- Luxor's Valley of the Kings
- King Tut's tomb
- Temple of Edfu
- Kom Ombo
- Aswan

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2.5 hours daily across uneven terrain, including cobblestone streets and paved roads, with some hills and stairs.

## Group size

15–38

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Cairo today.

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## Cairo → 3 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Cairo

*Included meals: dinner*

Welcome to Egypt, where stories etched in stone await your discovery and your own Egypt story is set to unfold.

Transfer to your hotel and get settled in, there's so much to see and savor ahead. This evening, enjoy an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Old Cairo

*Included meals: breakfast, welcome dinner*

Set off on a guided tour of Old Cairo, whose strategic location in the Nile River valley drew the area's first settlements 2,000 years ago. You'll explore labyrinthine alleys and ornate mosques as you learn more about Egypt's history from your Egyptologist—who is also your Tour Director.

- Enter the massive Mosque-Madrassa of Sultan Hassan—one of the most prestigious learning institutions in the Islamic world when it was built in the 14th century. Let your eyes linger over the elaborate Islamic geometric patterns, the peaceful courtyard, and the intricately designed mihrab (prayer niche).
- Head next door to the equally impressive Rifa'i Mosque, also known as the Royal Mosque, where modern royal figures like the last Shah of Iran and the last King of Egypt have been laid to rest.
- View the Cairo Citadel, built in the 12th century by mighty Salah al-Din and originally used as a fortress, it remained as the seat of the Egyptian government until the 19th century.

Don't miss your chance to experience Cairo's multicultural diversity with an optional excursion that delves into its Coptic Christian and Jewish heritage, or use your free afternoon to venture out on your own. Perhaps the vibrant alleyways, artisan workshops, and colorful stalls of the historic Khan el-Khalili market will entice you.

Gather with your fellow travelers for a welcome dinner with beer or wine at a local restaurant this evening.

*Please note: Travelers are required to remove shoes when entering the Mosques. Women must cover their hair, arms, and legs. Men must cover their legs.*

+ Coptic Cairo

### Day 4: Pyramids of Giza & the Grand Egyptian Museum

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch*

Meet up with your Tour Director and set off on a guided tour of Giza, Egypt's third-largest city and home to some of the world's most enduring ancient monuments.

- Uncover the Pyramids of Giza, the only Wonder of the Ancient World to have survived into the modern era. Standing as tall as 480 feet (146 meters) when it was built, the Great Pyramid of Giza continues to amaze with its size and the precision with which it was constructed.
- Visit the enigmatic, 4,500-year-old Great Sphinx, the largest monolith statue in the world, carved from a single limestone bedrock.
- Enter the Grand Egyptian Museum, said to be the world's largest museum, and explore the vast collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts alongside your Egyptologist.
- Enjoy an included lunch at a local restaurant.

*Please note: If the Grand Egyptian Museum is not yet open to the public, a visit to the Egyptian Antiquities Museum will take its place.*

Dine like an Egyptian by adding an optional excursion for a home-hosted dinner where you can sample Egypt's complex traditional flavors like dukkah and fenugreek.

+ Cairo Home-Hosted Dinner

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## Alexandria → 2 nights

### Day 5: Alexandria via Wadi El Natrun

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Make your way to the Egyptian coastal city of Alexandria, stopping along the way in the desert oasis of Wadi El Natrun, or the Valley of Salt, whose vast salt lakes are known for their

distinctive pinkish-red hue. Wadi El Natrun is also renowned for its historical monastic settlements and the valley is home to several ancient Coptic Christian monasteries dating back to the 4th century, some of which are still active today.

- Uncover the history of how ancient Egyptians once harvested Natrun salt in the area, a key component of the mummification process.
- Enter a local monastery and learn how Wadi El Natrun became a haven to early Christians escaping persecution from the Roman Empire.

Continue to Alexandria where you'll sit down for an included dinner with beer or wine this evening.

### Day 6: Sightseeing tour of Alexandria

*Included meals: breakfast*

Set out to get to know Egypt's second-largest city and explore centuries-old ruins. Founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC, the city became a major center for Hellenistic culture. Expect a lush Mediterranean coastline, historical sites, and a thriving contemporary art scene in this cultural and educational hub.

- Enter the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a major library and cultural center on Alexandria's Mediterranean coast, paying homage and recapturing the spirit of the bygone Great Library of Alexandria.
- Drive along the Corniche—Alexandria's scenic waterfront promenade—to the 15th-century Citadel of Qaitbay, a fortress built on the former site of the Lighthouse of Alexandria.
- Climb the towering limestone ramparts of the Citadel and take in panoramic views of the city hugging the shoreline and the harbor dotted with boats.
- Learn about Banlastic, a local nonprofit working to reduce single use plastics in Egypt, and receive a gift made from recycled plastic.

Alexandria is the perfect place to delve into Egypt's history under the Greek and Roman empires with an optional excursion. You can also use your free time this afternoon to return to the Corniche and bask in the sea breeze, stop at a café along the promenade, or find a spot along the waterfront and watch the sun melt over the Mediterranean.

+ Greco-Roman Alexandria & Lunch

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## Luxor → 2 nights

### Day 7: Transfer to Cairo & flight to Luxor

*Included meals: breakfast*

Return to Cairo this morning, then fly to Luxor, known to travelers and historians as “the world’s greatest open-air museum” due to its incredible concentration of ancient Egyptian monuments, temples, and archaeological sites. You may have seen them in books or movies, but prepare to be more than a little starstruck. Excavations and discoveries continue to this day as new findings shed light on the lives of ancient Egyptians.

Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel and enjoy a free evening in the city. For an unforgettable experience, book an optional excursion on the Nile aboard a felucca, a traditional Egyptian sailboat. Want to spend your free night in the city? Luxor’s monuments take on a special life at night via dramatic sound and light shows that immerse you in history.

*Please note: On some departures the Nile River Felucca Ride & Dinner excursion will take place on day 8 and the included dinner from day 8 will move to day 7.*

+ Nile River Felucca Ride & Dinner

### Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Luxor Temple

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Enjoy a morning walking tour through Luxor Temple, located on the banks of the Nile River. With your Egyptologist, you’ll see one of the world’s highest-quality collections of Egyptian artifacts, including a statue recovered from King Tutankhamun’s tomb.

As you approach Luxor Temple, an avenue of human-headed sphinxes creates a dramatic and awe-inspiring entrance. The temple unfolds with a series of striking architectural elements that include massive columns, colossal statues, and hieroglyphs.

Continue sightseeing through Luxor on your own with a free afternoon—consider a side trip to the Mummification Museum—but we highly recommend the optional excursion to the Temple of Hathor. With an exquisitely preserved astronomical ceiling depicting zodiac signs and constellations, it’s an invaluable historical record of Egyptian astronomy. The Temple of Hathor is also your chance to ponder the mystery and intrigue of the “Dendera Light” whose motif depicts the Egyptian creation myth.

Tonight, gather with your fellow travelers for an included dinner with beer or wine.

*Please note: On some departures the included dinner will take place on day 7 and the Nile River Felucca Ride & Dinner excursion will take place on day 8.*

+ Dendera & the Temple of Hathor

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## Nile River Cruise → 4 nights

### Day 9: Sightseeing tour of Luxor’s West Bank & cruise embarkation

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Spend the morning relaxing and catching up on sleep or brave an early start for an optional but certainly once-in-a-lifetime hot air balloon ride soaring high over the Valley of the Kings and the Nile.

Later, head out to tour the Nile’s West Bank with your Egyptologist.

- Explore the Valley of the Kings, a series of tombs nestled between rugged limestone and mountains in the Theban Hills, where the barren, rocky terrain contrasts with the lush greenery of the Nile’s eastern bank.
- Tour the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, one of the few female pharaohs. Carved directly into the sheer mountain cliffs, the temple stands out with colonnaded terraces connected by gently sloping ramps as well as relief carvings of the queen and her storied accomplishments.
- View the 64-foot-high Colossi of Memnon, circa 1350 BC—a pair of massive stone statues that stand in front of the Mortuary Temple of Amenhotep III. Very little of the temple remains today, but the twin statues maintain a watchful gaze toward the river.
- Enter King Tut’s tomb, famous for containing the ancient Egyptian treasures a ruler would need in the afterlife, such as clothing, food, chariots, games, and ceremonial items.

Board your cruise ship this afternoon and enjoy an included lunch before settling into your cabin.

Sit down for an included dinner served with beer or wine aboard the ship this evening as the gentle waves carry you and your fellow travelers down the Nile.

+ Nile River Hot Air Balloon Ride

### Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Karnak

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Head off the ship today to explore the painstakingly excavated Temple of Karnak. It’s said that 30 pharaohs presided over the building

of the temple—a sprawling and vast ancient site. You’ll feel a palpable connection to the ancient world as you walk in the footsteps of priests and worshippers who came here for thousands of years.

Venture off on a walking tour through the complex to see the Precinct of Amun-Re, whose mudbrick walls stretch over 1.5 miles in circumference. Gaze over extensive hieroglyphic inscriptions marking moments in history, and end at the Temple of Khonsu—a smaller, more intimate temple dedicated to the god of moon and time.

This afternoon, enjoy an included lunch before sailing toward Edfu. Then, sit down for an included dinner served with beer or wine this evening.

### Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Edfu & Kom Ombo

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Set sail for Edfu and Kom Ombo this morning and disembark your ship for guided tours, with your Egyptologist leading the way, to some of the best-preserved Egyptian temples in the country.

- Walk through Edfu’s Temple of Horus, a classic example of Ptolemaic architecture, with massive stone walls and towering pylons. It’s also one of the few temples in Egypt where inscriptions on its walls describe how it was built and used in ancient times.
- Enjoy an included lunch aboard your cruise ship.
- Visit the Temple of Kom Ombo, noted for its dedication to two deities, Sobek and Horus, constructed as two symmetrical temples aligned parallel to one another. Although they were initially constructed during the Ptolemaic period, they were expanded after the Roman conquest of Egypt, resulting in a blend of both Egyptian and Greco-Roman architectural styles.

Sit down for an included dinner with beer or wine aboard the ship this evening.

### Day 12: Sightseeing tour of Aswan

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Enjoy a free morning on board the ship or add an optional excursion to Abu Simbel to visit the temples of Ramses II and his wife Nefertari, originally carved into the mountainside and painstakingly relocated to save them from being submerged by Lake Nasser.

*Please note: Depending on flight schedules, the Abu Simbel optional excursion may be offered on day 13 instead of day 12.*

Later, enjoy an included lunch, served with beer or wine, before continuing on to Aswan for a sightseeing tour of the city led by your Egyptologist.

- Board a boat and visit the temples at Philae, located on an island in the Nile River. Watch in awe as enormous columns and imposing facades rise from the water, emblazoned with hieroglyphics.
- Walk through the colorful local market where you'll find perfumes, spices, traditional talismans, and souvenirs.

Sit down for an included dinner with beer or wine aboard the ship this evening.

+ Abu Simbel

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## Cairo → 2 nights

### Day 13: Disembarkation & flight to Cairo

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Disembark your cruise in Aswan and fly back to Cairo.

After sitting down for an included dinner with beer or wine, enjoy a free evening in Cairo. Ask your Tour Director for a recommendation or find a cozy café on your own for some mint tea and kunafa, a spun pastry soaked in sweet syrup and sprinkled with pistachios.

### Day 14: Free day in Cairo

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

Spend one last day in Egypt exploring Cairo's frenetic streets and boisterous culture on your own, or take an optional excursion into the depths of antiquity—Saqqara and Dahshur—where you'll view the inimitable Step Pyramid of Djoser, the world's oldest complete stone building.

Celebrate your trip with your fellow travelers during tonight's farewell dinner with beer or wine at a local restaurant.

+ Saqqara & the Bent Pyramid with Lunch

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## Flight Home

### Day 15: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport to board your flight home or extend your trip with a relaxing, resort-style sojourn on the shores of the Red Sea. And yes, you'll want to dive right in.

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## + Red Sea extension

You won't want to skip a chance to reminisce over your journey through Egypt's monuments while relaxing seaside. Extend your trip to the Red Sea resort city of Hurghada, renowned for its colorful underwater ecosystems and miles of sandy beaches.

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## Red Sea → 2 nights

### Day 15: Flight to Hurghada

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Board a flight to the beautiful seaside Hurghada where soft golden sands meet crystal-clear aquamarine waters. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel and enjoy an included lunch.

Enjoy free time for the rest of the afternoon—before sitting down for an included dinner this evening.

### Day 16: Red Sea cruise & snorkeling

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Take to the pristine waters of the Red Sea today for a cruise along the coast. You'll have plenty of time for swimming and snorkeling where you'll see coral reefs and vibrantly colored fish, turtles, eels, and stingrays as you hop between the islands of Giftun and Mahmya.

Return to your hotel and freshen up for an included lunch.

Enjoy a leisurely afternoon to relax or explore on your own—a trip to the old town of El Dahar for Egyptian coffee or a souk where you can practice your haggling skills—before gathering with your fellow travelers for tonight's included dinner.

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## Cairo → 1 night

### Day 17: Flight to Cairo

*Included meals: breakfast*

Enjoy a leisurely morning at the resort before boarding an afternoon flight back to Cairo.

Tonight, gather with your fellow travelers to enjoy a farewell toast.

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## Flight Home

### Day 18: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home—ma'a as-salama, or go with peace as the locals say.

# Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.\* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: [goaheadtours.com/EGG](https://goaheadtours.com/EGG) | 1-800-597-0350

## Day 3: Coptic Cairo

\$85/\$95\* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Set off to visit some of the sites of importance to Egypt's Coptic community, the largest Christian denomination in Egypt. You'll explore the Coptic Museum to learn about Egypt's ancient Christian heritage before visiting the Church of the Virgin Mary, known as the Hanging Church. Then, enter the Ben Ezra Synagogue, which is rumored to have been built on the place where baby Moses was found. You'll also learn about the mass exodus of Egyptian Jews in 1948 and the government's recent efforts to preserve the country's synagogues.

## Day 4: Cairo Home-Hosted Dinner

\$129 (3 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

Join a local at their home in Cairo to enjoy traditional dishes and dine like a true Egyptian. During this dinner, you'll receive an authentic understanding of your host's day-to-day life while learning about Egyptian culture and traditions from a new perspective. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

## Day 6: Greco-Roman Alexandria & Lunch

\$85/\$95\* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon, includes lunch)

Spend the afternoon diving into the historic period when Greek and Roman empires controlled Egypt. Begin with an included lunch before heading to the Ancient Roman Theatre, which was only discovered in 1960, where events like concerts, conferences, and government summits were held until the 7th-century. While at the amphitheatre, you'll learn about the downfall of Cleopatra's Egypt, the end of the Ptolemaic Dynasty and how Alexandria was claimed by the Roman Empire. Next, visit the Catacombs of Kom el Shoqafa, Egypt's largest known Roman funerary complex for a guided tour before returning to your hotel.

## Day 7: Nile River Felucca Ride & Dinner

\$85/\$95\* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon, dinner included)

Board a felucca, a traditional Egyptian sailboat, in Luxor and relax as you float down the Nile River. You'll view the east and west banks of the river and soak in views of the Temples of Karnak and Luxor as you learn about the lifestyle of the people who live in this region of the country. Make a stop at Banana Island to enjoy some tea and snacks. Then, head back to the boat to watch the sun dip below the horizon before disembarking and heading to a local restaurant. You'll dine on traditional Egyptian cuisine paired with beer and wine.

## Day 8: Dendera & the Temple of Hathor

\$79/\$89\* (6 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Head north from Luxor to Dendera where you'll explore the Temple of Hathor, one of Egypt's most well-preserved temples, with some structures dating as far back as 2500 BCE. Embark on a guided tour through the complex, where you'll see historical influences from the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman rulers in intricately decorated rooms started by Ptolemy IX Soter II and nearly completed by Cleopatra. Learn about Hathor, the Egyptian sky goddess, and her counterpart, Horus, along with the circular zodiac carved into the temple's ceiling. Hear how one of Napoleon's artists discovered the only known circular zodiac chart in 1799 during France's effort to expand into Egypt, prior to it being stolen and brought to the Louvre during the early 1800s. Be sure to take time to admire the original vibrant colors and artwork inside the temple, preserved by sand and layers of soot from Bedouins who sought shelter in the complex long after the Ptolemaic Dynasty ended.

## Day 9: Nile River Hot Air Balloon Ride

\$225/\$235\* (2 hours, departs in the early morning)

This morning, rise with the sun and float above ancient temples, the Nile, and the Valley of Kings. Begin with crossing the Nile by ferry to the West Bank where you'll then transfer by bus before taking to the skies aboard your balloon. After watching the balloon inflation, you'll gently soar into the air and get a truly impressive view of Egypt's archaeological history. Please note: This activity is weather-dependent. We recommend wearing layers for the cooler morning weather.

## Day 12: Abu Simbel

\$389 (6 hours, departs in the morning)

Fly from Aswan to Abu Simbel, where you'll visit the temples of Ramses II and his wife Nefertari, relocated block by block to the shores of Lake Nasser after the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The temples' statues now stand 680 feet from their original site but their grandeur endures. Please note: This excursion involves extensive walking on rugged terrain, so sturdy footwear is advised. Headwear and extra sunscreen are also recommended. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 70 days prior to departure.

## Day 14: Saqqara & the Bent Pyramid with Lunch

\$89/\$99\* (9 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

The Pyramids of Giza are often the highlight of anyone's trip to Egypt, but today you'll embark on an exploration of Saqqara and Dahshur, home to some of Egypt's—and the world's—oldest sites. Travel from Cairo to Saqqara where you'll find the iconic Step Pyramid of Djoser, the world's oldest complete stone building which dates back to 2649 BC. Learn about the construction of the pyramid as well as the vast underground system of tunnels which served as the royal burial site of the city of Memphis. Sit down for an included lunch before continuing to Dahshur, another royal necropolis

featuring several pyramids which served as a blueprint for the Pyramids of Giza. Visit the Bent Pyramid, whose design flaws have formed its unique shape over time. You'll have a chance to see the original smooth top layer of the pyramid not commonly found on other structures due to erosion. Continue to other pyramids in the complex, such as the massive Red Pyramid and the remains of the Black Pyramid.

\*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at [goaheadtours.com/terms](https://goaheadtours.com/terms)