



Egypt

Planning a trip to Egypt? Then you should talk to us... We offer independent expert advice and the ability to deliver top quality itineraries with the best tour operators that are exceptional value for money. Arranging your travel through The Specialist Travel Consultancy also reduces the time you have to spend researching and planning your trip. And our service is completely free!

Contact us to discuss your travel requirements on **0845 838 7667** or for more information on the service we offer please visit our website: www.thestc.co.uk

- We can arrange:**
- Expeditions & project work •
 - Walking & trekking •
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 - Cultural tours •
 - In depth archaeology tours •

Facts & Highlights

Full Country Name: The Arab Republic of Egypt.

Area: 1,001,450 Sq. Km (386,560 sq. mi).

Population: 70.5 million (2004).

Capital: Cairo (population - 16.7m).

People: Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers (99%); Other (1%).

Language(s): Arabic (official), Berber dialects, English and French widely understood.

Religion(s): Muslim (94%), Coptic Christian, Bahá'í and other (6%).

Currency: Egyptian Pound

Government: A Republic with Presidency. The People's Assembly is elected every 5 years.

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50Hz.

Time: GMT + 2 hours



The Pyramids of Giza: Everyone knows what they look like, but nothing quite beats seeing them up close at sunrise.

Valley of the Kings: Walk amongst historic sites and ancient temples in this open air museum.

Abu Simbel: Visit this majestic rock cut temple that was raised some 61m to make way for Lake Nasser.

The Sinai Desert: Leave the world behind and walk with the Bedouin through the wadis and granite mountains of the stunning Sinai Desert.

The Red Sea: Relax and unwind on beautiful beaches and snorkel and dive amongst colourful coral.

The White Desert: Camp among surreal rock formations in this remote area of central Egypt.

We are all well aware of the wonders of Egypt, from the Sphinx and Pyramids to the Valley of the Kings and ancient Luxor. However, a visit just to these Meccas of history would only be scraping the surface of the delights that Egypt conjures up with seemingly incredible ease.

From an educational adventure travel perspective, Egypt is one of the most fulfilling short haul destinations. Sadly, it is often overlooked in favour of more "exotic" destinations further afield. Egypt obviously has history in abundance, but it also offers a wide variety of spectacular desert landscapes, excellent trekking, a rich culture and excellent diving.

It is sometimes difficult to grasp the depth and richness of Egypt's history; after all, it spans some five millennia from the Pharaohs to the Assyrians, Nabataeans to the Greeks, Romans, Turks, French and British. Since returning to full independence in 1952, Egypt has made full use of its extraordinary array of natural and historical wonders. It is without doubt a unique country and justifiably popular. However, the popularity of Egypt should not necessarily detract from the wonders that it offers; with the right tour operator and expert guides, it is possible to see Ancient Egypt in a way that the

majority of tourists can only ever dream of.

The Nile is an integral part of life in Egypt and to fully appreciate it you should spend at least a night on board a Felucca. These traditional sailing boats are still used to transport produce and goods short distances along the river and they provide a unique perspective of life along its banks.

Away from the main tourist areas bordering the Nile, Egypt's geographical delights are sure to impress. To the west lie vast expanses of beautiful, but desolate desert. 4x4 expeditions into the strange rock formations of the White Desert, or the great sand sea of the Western Desert are truly unique experiences. Camping under the stars and seeing how the local Bedouin live in this harsh landscape is surely a highlight of any trip to Egypt.

To the east of the Nile lies the Red Sea with its glorious beaches and world-class diving amongst colourful coral reefs and wrecks. In the north, the Sinai Peninsular offers an altogether different side of Egypt, and the perfect opportunity to get far off the beaten track. As remote desert regions go, the Sinai is one of the most delightful and intriguing. The high granite mountains are dissected by deep ravines and wadis. It is here that the Bedouin of the Sinai still lead a remote, nomadic existence. Opportunities for trekking, desert adventures and unique interaction with the local people, make the Sinai a place for a truly memorable trip.

Whatever your travel requirements, be it history, adventure or a longer expedition, contact us and we will work with you to establish a suitable programme.



Suggested Itineraries

1 Week (Adventure tour)

Day 1 Fly to Cairo.

2 In depth look at the Pyramids; overnight train to Aswan.

3 Visit the Nubian Museum; explore the surrounding islands.

4 Morning visit to Abu Simbel; board felucca and sail to Kom Ombo.

5 Visit Kom Ombo Temple; all day sailing.

6 Aboard felucca.

7 Arrive Edfu - visit to temple; transfer to Luxor, visit east and west banks - Karnak, the Valley of the Kings and Queen Hatshepsut's Temples. Overnight train to Cairo.

8 Arrive Cairo; visit Archaeological Museum, afternoon free.

9 Fly to London.

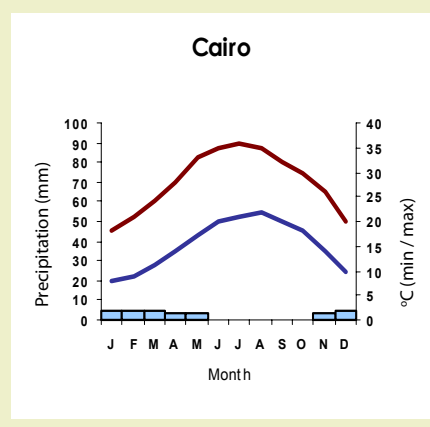
Geography & Climate

Twice the size of France, Egypt is one of the hottest and sunniest countries in the world. Much of the land is barren desert (both rock and sand) apart from a narrow strip either side of the Nile River which is lush and fertile. Since the construction of the dam at Aswan, the Nile offers a reliable lifeline of irrigation with its water originating from as far south as Uganda.

The Sinai Peninsular, the geographic bridge linking Africa to Asia, is characterised by desert and granite mountains reaching as high as 2,400m.

The north of the country has warm winters with some cool days and frequent rain, although still not enough to support crops. Southern and central regions may go for years without any significant rainfall. In the mountains of the Sinai Peninsular it is common for snow to fall in winter, although it rarely gives lasting cover.

Egypt can be visited year round, although the summer months are characterised by intense heat, particularly in the south of the country. Spring and autumn, and (depending on the region to be visited) also winter, are better months to travel as temperatures are cooler and the sun more forgiving.



2 Weeks (Ancient History Tour)

DAY 1 Fly London/Cairo.

2 In Cairo; visit Egyptian Museum & Pyramids at Giza.

3 Visit Memphis, Saqqara and Dashur en route to El Fayyum Oasis.

4 Via Maidum Pyramid to El Minya.

5 Visit Beni Hassan and Tel El Amarna en route to Assiut.

6 Via Abydos and Dendera Temples to Luxor.

7 Free morning; afternoon visit Karnak Temple by horse-drawn calesh.

8 Train to Aswan; possible visit to Philae Temple.

9 Visit Abu Simbel by road.

10 Camel trek to St Simeon's Monastery; board riverboat and cruise to Kom Ombo, visit Kom Ombo Temple.

11 Cruise to Esna via Edfu.

12 Cruise to Luxor

13 Donkey trek to Valley of the Kings and Hatshepsut Temple; afternoon free; overnight sleeper train to Cairo.

14 Arrive Cairo; visit Archaeological Museum, afternoon free.

15 Fly Cairo/London.

3 - 4 Weeks

Any combination of the above linked with possible extensions to include the White Desert west of the Nile, trekking in the Sinai Peninsular and a visit to St. Catherine's monastery, or diving in the Red Sea. It is also possible to link Egypt with time in Jordan, visiting Petra, Wadi Rum and the Roman ruins of Jerash.

National Holidays

Apr 25: Sinai Liberation Day

May 1: Labour Day

July 23: Revolution Day

Oct 6: Armed Forces Day

Muslim dates (vary with the Muslim year)

Muslim New Year

Birth of the prophet Mohammed

Eid ul-Fitr

Eid ul-Adha

Regulations & Red Tape

A full passport, valid for 6 months after your return date, is required for travel in Egypt. British passport holders currently need a visa (£15 single entry), although this can usually be obtained on arrival.

Festivals

June sees the annual International Belly Dance Festival, held in Cairo. Famous stars and choreographers give workshops on this dying art.



Customs

Clothing should be conservative; avoid skimpy shorts or tops. Long sleeves and loose trousers or a long skirt will be more comfortable in the heat. Left hands are considered 'unclean' in Arabic cultures. Offering money with the left hand is especially insulting. The Muslim month of Ramadan (dates vary) involves fasting from dawn until dusk. Foreigners and non-Muslims are exempt, but consideration to locals should be shown by not eating in public between these times.

Price Guide

Prices vary enormously depending on the length and style of trip required, and various other factors. A one week adventure tour as described here is likely to start from £900 per person including international flights. A 3 week expedition would be between £1600 and £2200, dependent on the itinerary.

Useful Addresses

Egyptian Consulate

2 Lowndes Street, London, SW1X 9ET

Tel: 0207 235 9777

Web: www.egyptianconsulate.co.uk

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1230 (visa submissions); 1430-1600 (visa collection)

Egyptian Tourist Office

Egyptian House, 3rd Floor, 170 Piccadilly, London, W1V 9EJ

Tel: 0207 493 5283

Web: www.egypttreasures.gov.eg

More Information

To discuss the travel and tour possibilities that Egypt offers in greater detail and get free, impartial advice on suitable tour operators, please contact:

The Specialist Travel Consultancy

PO Box 514

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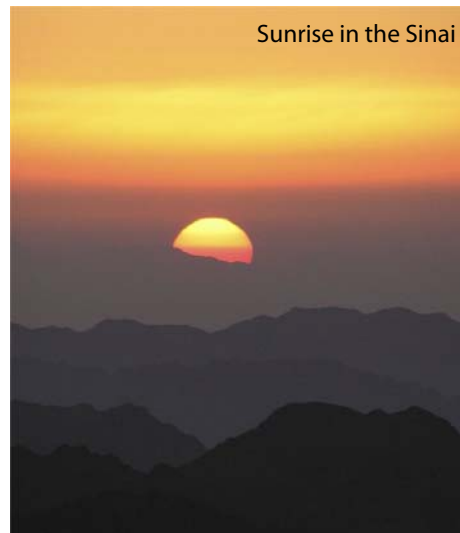
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Sunrise in the Sinai



Images courtesy of istockphoto.com & Exodus Travels