

The Best of Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, The River Nile

April 4 – 11, 2009



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COST OF ADVENTURE:

**Land & Air (from New York): \$3,025 (+ air taxes / surcharges) per person
(based on 2 people sharing a room)**

Single supplement: \$650 • Los Angeles add-on: \$350 per person plus taxes

Saturday, April 4th

Depart: New York En Route

Depart New York on this evening's Egyptair flight to Cairo, Egypt.

Sunday, April 5th

Arrive: Sonesta, Cairo

Arrive Cairo today where you are met and assisted through Customs & Immigration formalities and transfer to the Sonesta Cairo.

Monday, April 6th

Embark Cruise

M/Y Alyssa

Transfer to the airport this morning for your flight to Aswan. On arrival, embark your luxurious 5-star Nile cruise boat the M/Y Alyssa. Lunch on board ship.

After lunch visit the Aswan High Dam, the Granite Quarries and the Temple of Philae.

Located near Aswan, the world famous High Dam was an engineering miracle when it was built in the 1960s. It contains 18 times the material used in the Great Pyramid of Cheops. The Dam is 11,811 feet long, 3215 feet thick at the base and 364 feet tall. Today it provides irrigation and electricity for the whole of Egypt and, together with the old Aswan Dam built by the British between 1898 and 1902, 6km down river, wonderful views for visitors.

From the top of the two mile long High Dam you can gaze across Lake Nasser, the huge reservoir created when it was built, to Kalabsha temple in the south and the huge power station to the north.

The High Dam created a 30% increase in the cultivatable land in Egypt, and raised the water table for the Sahara as far away as Algeria. The electricity producing capability of the Dam doubled Egypt's available supply.

Afterwards continue to the granite quarries. These are the quarries which supplied the ancient Egyptians with most of the hard stone used in the building of the Pyramids, Temples and a huge Unfinished Obelisk. Three sides of

the shaft which measure nearly 42 meters long were completed except for the inscriptions and it would have been the largest single piece of stone ever handled if a flaw had not appeared in the granite. So here it lies where the disappointed stonemasons abandoned it, still partly attached to the parent rock and with no indication of what it was intended for.

Even when it seemed that it was destined to be lost forever beneath the rising water of the Nile, Philae Temple was moved to the Island of Agilika to be saved from being lost forever under the waters of Lake Nasser. The romantic and majestic aura surrounding the temple complex of Isis on Philae is a must see for all travelers to Aswan.

Return to the ship late afternoon in time for afternoon tea. Dinner aboard ship. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, April 7th

Aswan / Edfu

Cruise M/Y Alyssa

Cruise to Kom Ombo and visit the temple shared by two gods, Sobek and Haroeries. Be sure to see the mummified crocodiles and the Nilometer where the priests determined the current year's taxes!

Sail to Edfu and visit the most well preserved temple in all of Egypt -- the Temple of Horus at Edfu. After a short ride by caleche (horse-drawn carriage), this is your chance to study the exact layout of one of these fabulous Pharaonic structures. Enjoy the fun of "haggling" with the local merchants as you walk from the temple. Dinner and dancing onboard. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, April 8th

Luxor –

Cruise M/Y Alyssa

After breakfast on board visit the West Bank. The West Bank of the Nile opposite Luxor and Karnak is the Theban Necropolis or City of the Dead where the Pharaohs were buried. There are at least 900 tombs carved in the rock. One tomb took about 6 years to finish. Workmen cut the tombs from soft limestone and decorated them with scenes

and inscriptions to guarantee the safe passage of the dead into the next world.

Many Egyptologists think that the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahri is the finest building in Egypt and one of the most impressive in the world. The temple is set in a great amphitheater and its 3 terraces etch the rock formation in the cliff behind. Hatshepsut was the first Egyptian woman to rule as King, ruling for 20 years.

After lunch on board visit Luxor's East Bank, best known by its Greek name, Thebes. During the 18th and 19th dynasties, Thebes was at its peak because of victories in war and its strategic position between the Delta and the Nile Cataracts to the south. It was the capital of Egypt in the New Kingdom and became the permanent residence of the Pharaohs during that period. An amazing amount of architectural buildings are still standing in remarkably good condition.

Sightseeing includes the Luxor Temple which stands in the center of the town, built mainly by Amenophis III in the 18th Dynasty to demonstrate the power of this New Kingdom pharaoh. Major additions to the temple were made by Ramses II in the 19th Dynasty. Luxor Temple was dedicated to Amun, The God of Thebes, his wife Mut and their son Khonsu (The Moon God). One of the two obelisks which originally stood in front of the temple was installed in a Place de la Concorde in Paris in 1936, a gift from the Egyptians. Your tour also includes a visit to the Karnak Temple, a complex of temples, obelisks, pylons, court colonnades, hall reliefs and sanctuaries. It covers an enormous area which was once restricted to priests and pharaohs.

The most famous part is the Hypostyle Hall which contains 134 columns; 12 in the central aisle and 122 in wings on either side. The center columns are 23 meters high and their capitals can hold 100 men.

The construction took place over a period of 1300 years. The sacred site of Karnak was the center of worship of the Sun God Amun. The main temple is dedicated to him. The pharaohs of the 19th Dynasty made Karnak the principle sanctuary of the land. Return to your boat for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, April 9th
Luxor / Cairo
Le Méridien Pyramids

Transfer to the airport this morning for your flight to Cairo.

On arrival begin your afternoon of sightseeing. You'll be touring the most famous shopping district in Egypt – the Khan el Khalili Bazaar in the heart of Old Cairo.

Afterwards, tour the most noticeable monument of Islamic Cairo - the looming fortress of the Citadel. Inside is the dramatic Alabaster Mosque of Mohammed Ali.

Return to your hotel for check-in.

The stunning Le Méridien Pyramids resort, nestled between the city and the wilderness, boasts unparalleled views of the majestic, ancient splendour of the Giza Pyramids. A mere glance out your window reveals the secrets of one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Le Méridien Pyramids is surrounded by luxuriantly landscaped gardens, providing a respite of greenery amidst golden sands.

With a peerless choice of restaurants and cuisines, a Royal Club floor, wireless connectivity and magnificent swimming pool and spa amenities, Le Méridien Pyramids is conveniently located only twenty minutes from Cairo's city centre and the ideal place to explore the ancient mysteries of Egypt. **(B)**

Friday, April 10th
Cairo

Le Méridien Pyramids

This morning takes you to the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, the greatest repository of ancient artifacts in the world, from the famed treasures of King Tutankhamon to the multitude of exquisitely carved statues and sarcophagi dating from the 1st Dynasty, to the highly evocative Mummies Room (extra entrance fee if you wish to visit).

After lunch at a local restaurant it's off to the Giza plateau where you begin your sightseeing with a visit to the fabled Great Pyramids of Giza - Cheops, Chephren and Mykerinos.

See the inscrutable Sphinx, the giant man/beast which has puzzled men for generations.

Transfer to Le Méridien Pyramids later this afternoon for overnight. **(B,L)**

Saturday, April 11th
Cairo / New York

Transfer to the airport in time for your international flight home. Arrive New York this afternoon. **(B)**



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