



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Land of the Pharaohs



The Oberoi Philae at Luxor

DAY 1 – Arrival in Cairo.

On arrival in Cairo you will be met by our representative who will organise your Egyptian visa and assist you through immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel.

GUARANTEED PYRAMIDS VIEW AT THE MENA HOUSE OBEROI

Your rooms are in the newer Garden Wing of the hotel. You may request a guaranteed Pyramid View Room for a special supplement of £48 per person for the 3 night stay. These rooms are in high demand so early booking is essential. Upgrades are also possible for a supplement to the historic Palace Wing of the hotel - details on request.

DAY 2 – Pyramids, Sphinx and Solar Boat Museum.

Your hotel is located right next to the Pyramids of Giza. After a leisurely breakfast, you will meet your World Discovery guide and spend the morning visiting this last surviving wonder of the ancient world. View the three monumental pyramids of Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus, and also the nearby Sphinx, dating from 2,500 BC, whose familiar outline is known to everyone yet whose purpose and meaning still remain a mystery. An added bonus this morning is the included entrance to the Solar Boat Museum. Located at the foot of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, this purpose-built building houses the unique 140-foot ancient Egyptian boat which was discovered in pieces on this spot as recently as 1954 and carefully reconstructed over a period of 14 years. The afternoon is free, with the option of visiting the site of ancient Memphis, first capital of the unified Upper and Lower Egypt (3,200 BC), and the funerary complex of Zoser at Saqqara, including the superb Step Pyramid, described by one historian as the "beginning of architecture". This evening there is the option of attending the spectacular Sound and Light performance at the Pyramids.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 3 – The Egyptian Museum.

Drive into Central Cairo for your visit to the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities. Whilst perhaps lacking the clarity of presentation of more modern establishments, this grand old building is unmissable, and contains the finest collection in the world of ancient Egyptian artefacts, including the astonishing array of treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun. For an additional fee you may choose to visit the Royal Mummy Room containing the bodies of such legendary pharaohs as Tuthmosis II, Seti I and Ramses II. Return to your hotel in Giza for lunch, or you may choose to stay on in the city and enjoy an optional excursion to Old Cairo; we have a choice of 3 itineraries: (a) The Citadel of Saladin, Mosque of Mohamed Ali and the famous Khan al-Khalili bazaar, (b) Islamic Cairo, including the glorious Ibn Tulun Mosque and (c) The Coptic Museum and Gayer-Anderson House.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 – Fly to Luxor to join your Nile Cruise. Sail to Qena.

An early wake-up call (unavoidable in Egypt due to the domestic airline schedules) and breakfast, followed by your private transfer to Cairo Airport for the short flight to Luxor. On arrival you will be met and transferred direct to the Oberoi Philae at its mooring on the eastern banks of the Nile. This excellent cruise ship, recently voted amongst the Top Ten Cruises in the World by readers of the Condé Nast Traveller magazine, will be your home for the next 6 nights. After lunch, the Oberoi Philae sails north from Luxor along the Nile to reach Qena for overnight.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner.

DAY 5 – Denderah.

Your first shore visit is to the Temple of Hathor at Denderah, not usually included in cruise itineraries due to time constraints. This beautiful Graeco-Roman temple was almost completely buried in sand until its rediscovery in the 19th century and as a result is one of the best-preserved in Upper Egypt. One of its highlights is the astronomical ceiling in the Hypostyle Hall, with its symbolic representation of the heavenly bodies. After the visit the Oberoi Philae sails back to Luxor. In the evening there is the option of attending the Sound and Light Show at the Temple of Karnak.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner.

NOTE: During the winter months (usually late November to early February), the water levels on the Nile north of Luxor are too low for the boat to cruise to Qena. The Temple of Denderah is therefore visited from Luxor by road.

DAY 6 – Luxor. Temples of Karnak and Luxor.

The morning is free for you to explore Luxor. As ancient Thebes, Luxor was the capital of Egypt's New Kingdom (1550-1069 BC) and has attracted tourists and travellers since Greek and Roman times with its incomparable wealth of monuments. You may wish to pay a visit to the Luxor Museum which has an excellent collection of statues and funerary goods from ancient Thebes, or shop in the lively bazaars. In the afternoon there are included visits to the two great Pharaonic temples of the East Bank. The vast temple complex of Karnak is quite simply overwhelming, covering more than 100 acres. At its heart lies the enormous Temple of Amun with its colossal Hypostyle Hall of 137 columns and its sacred lake. The XVIIIth Dynasty Temple of Luxor, located close to the Nile in the centre of town, is built on a smaller scale, but many consider it more beautiful than Karnak. Approached through an avenue of sphinxes, the temple contains some excellent reliefs and its Colonnade of Amenophis III is renowned for the elegance of its giant papyrus columns. Overnight in Luxor.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner.

DAY 7 – Valley of the Kings and Western Thebes. Sail to Esna.

In the early morning cross the Nile to visit the magnificent archaeological remains of Western Thebes. You will visit three tombs of the pharaohs in the famous Valley of the Kings (the selection of tombs open for visiting varies from time to time). For an additional fee, payable on the spot, you may visit the most famous tomb of all – that of the boy-king Tutankhamun, sensationally discovered in 1922 by Howard Carter. During your morning on the Western bank of the Nile you will also visit Deir el Medina, the site of a very special workman's village whose ancestors were the craftsmen who built and decorated the tombs of the Pharaohs, the monumental mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, and the two Colossi of Memnon, the latter badly ravaged by time but still impressive in their size and majesty. Return to the Oberoi Philae for lunch and then enjoy a leisurely afternoon sailing on the Nile in the direction of Esna, where the ship will moor for the night.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner.

DAY 8 – Temples of Edfu and Kom Ombo.

Sail to Edfu, where you will step ashore to visit the Temple of Horus, the largest and best-preserved Ptolemaic temple in Egypt. The entrance to this awesome complex is guarded by two elegant black granite statues of the falcon-god Horus, son of Osiris. Return to the Oberoi Philae and sail to Kom Ombo, whose unusual, totally symmetrical, temple is dedicated to two gods – the falcon-god Haroeris (Horus the Elder) and Sobek, the crocodile god. The temple is in a beautiful setting overlooking the Nile.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner.

DAY 9 – Sail to Aswan. Aswan sightseeing including the Temple of Philae.

Sail in the morning to Aswan, gateway to Nubia, situated downriver from the First Cataract on the Nile. It was here that the British built a dam between 1898 and 1902, but this was superseded by the Aswan High Dam, constructed by President Nasser in the 1960s, resulting in the creation of Lake Nasser, the largest artificial lake in the world. In the afternoon you will visit the High Dam, the Northern Quarries, famed for the Unfinished Obelisk, and also the superb Temple of Philae, rescued from the rising waters of the lake by UNESCO and painstakingly reconstructed on its own new island. Philae was the centre of the cult of Isis, and the magnificent Temple of Isis dominates the site. Overnight in Aswan.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner.

DAY 10 – Depart for home.

Disembark after breakfast. An optional excursion by air may be taken to visit the incredible temples at Abu Simbel on the shores of Lake Nasser. In the early afternoon fly back to Cairo to connect with your homeward flight.

Meals included: Full breakfast.