



EXPLORING ANCIENT EGYPT NEW YEARS ON THE NILE

December 28, 2008 – January 8, 2009

Day 1 – Sunday – December 28 - Departure

Depart New York this evening on an overnight flight to Egypt.

Day 2 – Monday – December 29 – Cairo

Welcome to Egypt, Land of the Pharaohs! On arrival, you will be met by a representative and assisted with obtaining your visa. After immigration and custom formalities, Mr. Afifi El Shimy your Egyptologist-guide and host will meet you. After sometime to rest explore the Giza Plateau where stands three Pyramids, the greatest being that of Cheops. It took 100,000 workers more than 20 years to construct. Southeast of the Great Pyramids is the Sphinx, carved out of solid natural rock in about 2650 BC, a magnificent monument with the head of the Pharaoh and the body of a lion. Then enjoy a welcome to Egypt dinner.

ACCOMMODATIONS: LE MERIDIAN PYRAMIDS HOTEL OR SIMILAR (D)



Day 3 – Tuesday – December 30– Cairo

This morning visit the first Pyramid ever built, the Step Pyramid of Zoser, in the Sakkara Complex, as well as the newly opened museum. Have lunch and then drive to Old Cairo where you will be introduced to some of the masterpieces of ancient art in the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, including the Mummies Room. The museum is home to the vast findings of King Tutankahmun's tomb and other important pieces of Egypt's history. The day ends with a visit to the Khan El Khalili Bazaar, known for its narrow alleys and hundreds of shops selling all types of Egyptian handicrafts, silver and gold jewelry, cottons, copperware and perfumes.

ACCOMMODATIONS: LE MERIDIAN PYRAMIDS HOTEL (B, L)

Day 4 – Wednesday – December 31 – Cairo/Luxor

Today you will fly to Luxor, ancient Thebes. This afternoon you will explore the East Bank of the Nile including the Temple of Luxor. Here, the Avenue of Sphinxes, famous for its artistic degree of uniformity, leads to the entrance of the temple where a seated colossus of Ramses II and a towering Obelisk sit. Continue to the Karnak Temple, one of the most impressive monuments of ancient art and architecture in the world.

The carvings, which adorn all of the walls, depict the history and conquests of many of Egypt's Pharaohs. This evening enjoy a New Years Eve celebration at your hotel.

ACCOMMODATIONS: SONESTA ST. GEORGE HOTEL OR SIMILAR (B, D)



Day 5 – Thursday – January 1 – Luxor

Happy New Year! Cross to the West Bank, one of the most mysterious places in the world. Built into the mountain hundreds of tombs have been excavated in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens. Visit the Ramesseum. Ramses II built his fabulous mortuary temple on the site of Seti I's ruined temple, where he identified himself with the local form of the God, Amun. You will then have an opportunity to visit three tombs in the Valley of the Kings including the Tomb of Tutankhamun found intact and excavated in 1922. Many of the tombs, carved out of the bedrock, retain their original bright colors and fine relief's and scenes, thought to guarantee the safe passage of the Ka to the after life. Next, it is on to Deir El Bahri to visit the mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, considered being one of the finest buildings in Egypt. Hatshepsut ruled Egypt as King for 20 years. This evening you may join the optional Sound & Light Show at the Karnak Temple complex (at your own expense).

ACCOMMODATIONS: SONESTA ST. GEORGE HOTEL OR SIMILAR (B, D)

Day 6 – Friday – January 2 – Luxor – Nile Cruise

This morning you will return to the West Bank. Visit Medinet Habu Temple of Ramses III. The complex of buildings here dates from the early 18th Dynasty, when Hatshepsut and Tutmoses III dedicated a temple to Amun, to Roman times. Its history continued until the 9th century CE since a Coptic church was established in the second courtyard of the mortuary temple. Medinet Habu is about 4 miles from the Valley of the Kings near the foot of the Theban Hills at the southern end of western Thebes. The mortuary temple is the best-preserved temple at Thebes. Ramses III had an unusual entrance built for the complex, modeled perhaps on citadels he had seen on military campaigns in Syria. The tower is in the form of a "migdol," a kind of fortified gatehouse. The complex thus had the look of a fortress since originally a mud brick wall 35 feet thick and 60 feet high enclosed it. Continue to visit the tomb of Rekhmire via the colossi of Memnon. Located on the southeastern slope of the Sheikh Abd el-Qurna hill, it is one of the largest of the private tombs. Rekhmire was a vizier, the highest-ranking official under the pharaohs Tutmosis III and Amenophis II during a period when Egypt's empire stretched to its farthest extent and was at the peak of her prosperity. It is believed that his great grandfather and grandfather also were viziers. He was responsible for the area of Egypt extending from Aswan north to Assiut. Return to the East Bank and embark on your Nile Cruise ship, the Queen of Hansa. The afternoon is at your leisure.

ACCOMMODATIONS: QUEEN OF HANSA NILE CRUISE SHIP OR SIMILAR (B, L, D)

Day 7 – Saturday – January 3 – Luxor/Ezna/Edfu

Today you will leave Luxor and sail to Ezna. Pass the lock and continue sailing to Edfu where you will overnight.

ACCOMMODATIONS: QUEEN OF HANSA NILE CRUISE SHIP OR SIMILAR (B, L, D)

Day 8 – Sunday – January 4 – Edfu/Kom Ombo/Aswan

Begin the day by visiting the magnificently preserved temple of Edfu. The sandstone temple of Horus, the Sun God, was built under the Ptolemies and completed by the mid first century, BC. In the colonnaded court, we will see the surviving statue of a pair of falcons representing Horus. Ceremonies, celebrations, and war scenes are shown on the walls of the temple. Sail to Kom Ombo where you will visit the Kom Ombo Temple. The temple is divided into two symmetrical halves. The left side is dedicated to the falcon-headed god, "Haroeris," and the right side to the crocodile god, "Sobek". On the walls of the temple you will see the first recorded representation of medical instruments. Continue sailing to Aswan.

ACCOMMODATIONS: QUEEN OF HANSA NILE CRUISE SHIP OR SIMILAR (B, L, D)

Day 9 – Monday – January 5 – Aswan

After breakfast disembark the ship and transfer to the airport for a flight to Abu Simbel where you will visit the mighty temples of Ramses II. Return to Aswan and visit Aswan's High Dam, Granite Quarries, and Unfinished Obelisk as well as view Kitcheners Island with its beautiful gardens and to view the mausoleum of the Agha Khan. Later this afternoon take a small boat to visit the Philae Temple. The main sanctuary on the island is dedicated to the Goddess Isis and her son Horus.

ACCOMMODATIONS: NEW CATARACT HOTEL OR SIMILAR (B, D)

Day 10 – Tuesday – January 6 – Aswan/Cairo

This morning you will take a short flight to Cairo. Visit Old Cairo. Here you will see the Ben Ezra Synagogue and the St. Serguis Church. A short drive will take you to the citadel of Salah El Din built by the famous Arab Sultan Salah El Din (Saladin), in the 12th century and the Mohammed Ali Mosque situated inside the citadel known for its alabaster wall.

ACCOMMODATIONS: SOFITEL GEZERIAH HOTEL OR SIMILAR (B)

Day 11 – Wednesday – January 7 – Cairo

The day is at your leisure or you may choose to join an optional excursion to Alexandria (at your own expense) including lunch at a seafood restaurant. Drive via the Pyramids Road to Alexandria the second largest city in Egypt and known as "The Pearl of the Mediterranean". Visit the main sites of the city including The Alexandria Library Museum, the Alexandria National Museum, the Catacombs of Kom es-Shouqafa and Pompey's Column. Return to Cairo. The day is at your leisure. This evening enjoy a farewell dinner.

ACCOMMODATIONS: SOFITEL GEZERIAH HOTEL OR SIMILAR (B, D)

Day 12 – Thursday – January 8 – Departure

Farewell to Egypt! (B)

PLEASE NOTE: itinerary sequence subject to change without prior notice due to government regulations and hotel/cruise availability.