

Trip Dossier – Feluccas & Pyramids (Red Sea Extension)

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What an adventure! See the pyramids, the sphinx and the Egyptian Museum, enjoy the excitement of sleeping on an overnight train, ride camels in the desert, relax and explore the delightful town of Aswan, sail a felucca sailing boat slowly down the Nile sleeping on deck under the stars... These are just a few highlights of this fun-filled and varied trip. And, if you have time, we recommend a few extra days on the beach for some snorkelling in the Red Sea.

Day 1 Fly to Cairo

Depart from London to fly to Cairo. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel in the bustling capital city. **Hotel 1 night, with swimming pool**

Day 2 Visit Egyptian Museum, Pyramids & Sphinx; then board overnight train

Africa's largest city is the hub of the Arabic world - a vast and teeming metropolis endowed with the treasures of three great civilisations: ancient Egyptian, Islamic, and Coptic. Today you'll visit the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World that still remains: the Pyramids at Giza, with their enigmatic companion the Sphinx. No matter how much you've seen or read in advance, nothing quite prepares you for your first view of the Pyramids rising from the desert at the edge of Cairo's encroaching suburbs - it's a truly memorable sight! Your guide will help to unravel over 4500 years of history - from their construction until the present day - although much of this is still shrouded with mystery and conjecture. We also include a visit to the world-renowned Egyptian Museum in downtown Tahrir Square. The priceless collection of antiquities includes the famed Tutankhamen collection, with the gold death mask inlaid with semi-precious lapis lazuli, cornelian, obsidian and turquoise, and the gold coffin of the boy-king who died in 1352 BC at the age of eighteen after ruling the country for nine years. You'll also see various mummies and learn all about the intricate procedure of how they were made, and why the practice of preserving dead bodies was so important to the ancient Egyptians. After your visit we'll try to ensure that you get back to the hotel with enough time to freshen up, or even rest a while. In the early evening you'll transfer to Giza Station for the overnight train to Aswan (approx 12 hours). **Overnight train (breakfast & dinner)**

Day 3 Aswan; - walking excursion to the bazaar

This morning you'll wake to scenes of the Nile flashing by as the train makes the long haul (almost 900 kilometres) southward along the Nile Valley, before reaching Aswan. Please note that the train service runs on "Egyptian time" and take any delays in your stride, it's all part of the experience! You should arrive mid morning at Aswan's station, then you'll be whisked off to your nearby hotel to check in. After Cairo's frenetic bustle, the change in pace here is noticeable and we leave you some free time so you can relax, and maybe enjoy a dip in the pool. Aswan lies just north of the Tropic of Cancer, so it's hot here, but the absence of humidity means it's rarely uncomfortable. This afternoon you may wish to visit the Philae Temple, which was nearly lost when the Dam was built, but fortunately rescued by a joint action between the government and UNESCO (optional). Later there's a gentle walking excursion to explore Aswan's prosperous bazaars - trade has always been important here as the city straddles the main route south to Nubia and the Sudan, and was once the point where camel caravans arrived bearing goods from far-off lands. In Roman times this was the furthest extremity of the empire. This point, where Arabia meets Africa, still has a fascination all of its own. One fun way to see the city - and save your legs at the same time - is to hire a horse-drawn caleche (not included) for a drive along the Corniche and up to the First Cataract for views of the Nile. You may also wish to visit the Nubian Museum. This evening we have arranged a trip over to the West Bank of the river. Here you will have dinner in a Nubian village where we can see the style of houses and way of life of the dark-skinned, lightly built Nubian people. **Hotel 1 night, with swimming pool (breakfast & dinner)**

Day 4 Aswan – optional excursion by camel to St Simeon's Monastery + felucca

We recommend that today you wear long light-weight trousers and a long-sleeved shirt as you will be exposed to the sun; hats and sun cream are vital, as is plenty of water. The morning is free or, if you prefer, join the optional camel trip and cross to the West Bank by ferry, with timeless views of the Nile studded with white-sailed feluccas shuttling to and fro as it flows majestically past massive granite boulders and islands cloaked in palm trees. Here the desert comes right down to the river bank, so on the other side you take camels to pass by the ancient Monastery of St Simeon and the Tombs of the Nobles, where the governors and priests who controlled the Nubian trade were buried in some style overlooking the river. After a morning out you'll return to the hotel by ferry and prepare to board your felucca. Head down to the riverbank to board the felucca that will take you northward down the Nile for some forty kilometres. These traditional wooden sailing boats have plied the Nile since time immemorial, carrying goods and passengers along its length. Wide-bellied and shallow in draft, they are as a result extremely stable and their distinctive triangular sail makes them instantly recognisable. There can't be a better way of seeing the Nile than under sail aboard one of these elegant craft! However the most amazing bit of

travelling by felucca is sleeping out under the night sky; if it's clear - and it generally is - you'll see more stars than you've ever seen before! **Felucca (breakfast, lunch & dinner).**

Life on the Felucca

Your felucca has a captain and crew who sail the boat; you can join in helping to sail under their guidance if you wish. Meals are cooked and served to you on board by the crew and life jackets are provided for children. Pack what you need for this overnight trip (change of clothes, toiletries, book, sun cream, camera etc) into your day sack before you board; your main luggage will be stored below deck. Life on board is very relaxed and facilities are basic; there is no toilet or running water. There are facilities for washing your hands on board and antibacterial soap is provided. We recommend you take plenty of wet wipes, and antibacterial hand wash gel is also useful. Drinks can be purchased on board from a cooler box. During the day you will make "comfort stops" on request along the way; bring a loo roll and some small plastic bags for disposing of your waste responsibly. Please do not contribute to the litter along the banks of the Nile. You will moor up on the banks of the Nile for the night, usually on a small island, but wind conditions will dictate exactly where, you may be beside other feluccas. In the evening after dinner a camp fire is usually made and with a little persuasion your crew may sing and play the Nubian drum for you, often other boats passengers will join in and sometimes a small party evolves. A toilet tent will be erected when you moor for the evening. You will sleep in your sleeping bag (which can be hired locally £10 pp) on the deck with comfortable mattresses beneath you, pillows are also provided. You will fall asleep to the sounds of Nile frogs croaking and awake early to the haunting call of the mosque muezzin calling the faithful to prayer. Mosquitoes are not usually a problem, but do bring some insect repellent. When you go ashore you may encounter local farmers and villagers going about their working day, so please dress modestly. You can swim in the Nile if you wish; your guide will tell you where it is safe to do so. Please bring your own towel. For ladies a two-piece swimming suit is more convenient attire onboard than a one-piece. Sit back, relax and enjoy a really unique adventure!

Day 5 Felucca to Kom Ombo (visit), then transfer to Luxor and visit Karnak by calesh

After a very early start, your felucca will dock at a temple that stands on a promontory surrounded by sugar cane and corn fields and overlooking the river, just a few kilometres from the settlement of Kom Ombo. The magnificent temple at Kom Ombo is dedicated to two gods: Sobek, the crocodile god, and Horus the Elder, the falcon god - both of whose figures you'll see adorning the stonework. After your visit you'll board a minibus for the trip to Luxor (around 170 kilometres).

Note: it may not be possible to reach Kom Ombo by felucca due to wind and weather conditions. In this case we may be forced to suspend sailing and substitute an excursion close to Aswan, although we will arrange for you to sleep on board the felucca just for the experience. If this occurs we will visit the temples at Kom Ombo en route to Luxor.

On arrival in Luxor we will check in at your hotel. The ancient city known to the Greeks as Thebes stood on the site of present-day Luxor. It rose to prominence around 1500 BC, when it became the capital of a unified empire that extended from Palestine to Nubia. At its peak it had a population of around one million, and now boasts the largest and greatest concentration of ancient monuments in the world. Although the capital later shifted elsewhere, it retained its importance as the centre for the worship of the god Amun.

This afternoon climb aboard a horse-drawn calesh and visit the great temples of Karnak. There is nothing that can quite compare with Karnak. The temple was originally constructed in honour of the god Amun-Ra and it was one of the most important religious sites in antiquity, eventually covering an area of 100 hectares with three main temples, some smaller enclosed temples, and several outer temples. Over 1300 years it was enlarged by successive pharaohs, with later generations adding their own embellishments to celebrate their gods and illustrate their conquests.

You can also visit the Sunshine Orphanage (by taxi at your own expense) which provides a home for life for abandoned children who come here mostly as babies. Read more about this deserving project on their website, <http://www.sunshine-international.org.uk/> - if you are interested in helping them they have posted here a wish list of items that they would be very grateful to receive, bring something along with you - or support the local economy too and buy it locally. **Hotel 2 nights, with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 6 Morning excursion to the Valley of the Kings

Early birds can take an optional balloon ride over Luxor. Rising early you will witness sunrise over the river and fly over ancient temples, a breathtaking experience. Then rejoin the group on the West Bank.



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This morning you catch the ferry across to the West Bank of the Nile, the area where burial chambers for the pharaohs, their queens, and people of noble birth were cut from the soft limestone hills to protect them from looters. You then take a donkey ride through small villages. Riding along lanes and tracks you will see the villagers going about their daily life; many will pass by on donkeys themselves - watch how graceful they are and improve your technique. You'll then continue by bus to reach the Valley of the Kings. We recommend that you wear long-sleeved tops and trousers today and bring plenty of water as you will be very exposed to the sun around the Valley of the Kings and especially at Hatshepsut's temple. After visiting some of the pharaohs' tombs you'll continue to Deir el-Bahri, the magnificent Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, who was the only woman pharaoh to reign over ancient Egypt. During the course of the morning your local guide will explain the beliefs and customs of the early civilisations, and maybe even teach you to read some hieroglyphics. The afternoon is free for relaxation.

Day 7 Free in Luxor; overnight sleeper train to Cairo

Today is free to explore the many delights of Luxor. Choose from Luxor Temple, Mummification museum, exploring the bazaars, or just relax by the Nile in one of the many restaurants and watch the world go by! This evening, you'll be driven to Luxor railway station in time to catch the overnight sleeper train back to Cairo (approx 9 hours). **Overnight train (dinner & breakfast)**

Day 8 In Cairo - free

On arriving back in the capital, you'll be driven to your hotel but the rest of the day is left entirely free so you can explore as you wish and do some last minute shopping. Perhaps visit the Khan Al Khalili bazaar in Islamic Cairo, where you can buy everything from spices, to gold and silver jewellery, to stuffed toy camels. Bargain hard here, these merchants are well practised in the art of smooth-talking. **Hotel 1 night, with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 9 Fly to London

This morning you will be driven to Cairo airport in time for the mid-morning departure of the return international flight to London.

Extension to the Red Sea

Day 7 Drive to Hurghada

Today you will set off the drive to Hurghada on the Red Sea coast, (280 km, approx 4½ hours). You stop mid-way in a service station for refreshments and then continue to the coast. Hurghada a former fishing village has expanded over the last few decades to become Egypt's premier beach resort. On arrival you will be met by our local representative and checked in at the resort. **Hotel 2 nights, with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 8 At Hurghada; boat trip on the Red Sea and snorkelling

This morning you will be met at the hotel and transferred to the harbour to board your boat for a leisurely cruise around the Red Sea. Snorkelling equipment is provided on board for you to dive in and explore the rich marine life on the reef. The rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy the various water sports and activities on offer.

Day 9 Arrive in Cairo – rest of day free

Early breakfast and transfer to the airport at Hurghada for the flight to Cairo. On arriving back in the capital, you'll be taken to your hotel but the rest of the day is left entirely free so you can explore as you wish, perhaps do some last minute shopping. You could visit the Khan Al Khalili bazaar in Islamic Cairo, where you can buy everything from spices, to gold and silver jewellery, to stuffed toy camels. Bargain hard here, these merchants are well practised in the art of smooth-talking. **Hotel 1 night, with swimming pool (breakfast)**

Day 10 Fly to London

This morning you'll be driven to Cairo airport in time for your return international flight to London.

This itinerary includes our group flights from London. If you are making other flight arrangements, please refer to your Confirmation Invoice and Joining Instructions for details of the start or end of the trip. Please remember international flights and trip dates do occasionally change, so please always purchase flexible tickets. Each itinerary is planned many months in advance and although it is our intention to operate the itinerary as printed in the brochure and detailed here, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of alterations to flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors which are beyond our control. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops may vary from those outlined but we will always endeavour to keep you informed of any such changes. Included meals are indicated in the daily itinerary.

Is this right for your family? Most kids know a little about ancient Egypt from school and this really brings it all to life as well as opening their eyes to the interesting culture and history of the friendly Egyptian people. Life on the felucca is very simple, but fascinating - very relaxing – and at the mercy of the wind!

Lone Parents Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries, including the UK, require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the relevant country embassy for further information on exactly what may be required. These details can be found on the Foreign & Commonwealth Website under the appropriate country www.fco.gov.uk/travel

Climate The best time of year to visit Egypt is between autumn and spring (Oct-Apr), when the days are normally warm to hot and the nights mild or occasionally cool. Humidity is very low and there is little or no rain. During the winter months (Dec-Feb), it can get cold on the Nile - particularly in the early mornings and evenings, so warm clothes are essential. During the summer (Jun-Aug) it can get uncomfortably hot, but the lack of humidity makes the heat easier to bear.

Average monthly temperatures in Cairo.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Max °C	18	21	24	28	33	35	36	35	32	30	26	20
Min °C	8	9	11	14	17	20	21	22	20	18	14	10
Rainfall (mm)	5	5	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	5

Optional Extras

These excursions, if available, can be arranged through your tour leader (per person cost shown below)

Aswan - caleche hire per hour	£3.00
Aswan – Philae Temple and High Dam	£20.00
Aswan – Camel ride to St Simeon’s Monastery	£16.00
Fly from Aswan to Abu Simbel (subject to availability and mode of excursion)	£125.00
Luxor – Karnak Sound and Light	£15.00
Luxor – Hot Air Balloon Ride	£65.00
Citadel and Old Cairo	£16.00
Cairo – The Pharaonic Village	£15.00
Cairo - Islamic Cairo walking tour	£10.00

These prices are a guideline only and are subject to change. Prices given may also be subject to a minimum number of participants.

Accommodation The hotels used throughout the trip are of 3 or 4 star standard, and are booked on twin share basis. All are modern, clean and comfortable, and offer friendly service and rooms with private facilities; most are air-conditioned and have swimming pools. Accommodation for one night on board the felucca is basic - you will be sleeping on mattresses spread out on the deck (a sleeping bag is essential), with a basic toilet tent on the beach. On the sleeper train every two berth cabin is equipped with a basin, razor plugs, cabin temperature control, a private reading lamp, a cabin light and a call button for the steward. Each cabin has a connecting door with the next cabin to be used if needed, particularly for families in mind. If your family are an “odd” number, on the train you may share with another family, but will not have to share with complete strangers. The mention of a swimming pool at a hotel should not be taken as a guarantee but rather an indication. You should also be aware that swimming pools at the hotels are often unheated and so can be cold in the winter months or even closed.

Food and Drink Included meals are indicated in the itinerary. Meals on board the felucca are simple but adequate, and hygienically prepared; a vegetarian option is always available. For meals not included in the itinerary you should allow £5-8 per person day to cover lunch and dinner. It is possible to eat cheaply in Egypt, but if you choose to eat in expensive restaurants you should allow a little more. Your local tour leader will be on hand to make personal recommendations. We recommend you drink plenty of bottled water.

Local Costs

Prices vary greatly in Egypt depending where you buy from, drinks are quoted below based on hotel/restaurant prices. You should expect to pay much less in a shop and much more at temple sites.

A small bottle of mineral water (500ml) in a hotel	£0.50
A large bottle of mineral water (1 litre) in a hotel	£1.00
A can of coke (soft drinks)	£0.60
A carton or bottle of fruit juice	£0.60



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A bottle of beer	£3.00
Tea or coffee	£1.00
A light lunch time snack – sandwich for example	£4.00
A two course meal* - excluding drinks	£8.00
A three course meal* - excluding drinks	£12.00

**Based on a mid range tourist restaurant.*

Currency The unit of currency is the Egyptian pound (EGP or LE). At the time of writing (Feb 2010) UK £1 = EGP 8.50. ATMs are relatively widespread in the main towns, and many hotels, and offer a convenient means of withdrawing cash in local currency. Credit cards are readily accepted in most banks, larger hotels and some souvenir shops, but not in small shops or bazaars.

Tipping is a recognised part of life in Egypt and, although it is always at your discretion, you will be expected to reward service everywhere you go. We recognise that tipping can be both confusing and irritating, so your tour leader will happily take this burden from you and run a tips kitty on your behalf. For this tour expect to contribute £20 per person for the entire tour, this will be collected in your welcome meeting. If you prefer to tip directly yourself you may of course do so.

Please also remember that your tour leader works hard and for long hours to make your holiday run smoothly, a suitable reward for good service would be £1.50-£2.50 from each person, per day. It is usual to collect this between yourselves as a group and present it to the leader on completion of the tour.

RAMADAN 2010

11th August – 8th September (dates not fixed but dependent on the lunar calendar): Please note that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. There may be some limitations to services and disruptions to schedules during Ramadan, but generally our tours still operate effectively during this period and food is available to non-Muslims throughout the day in most countries. Please be aware of the local sensitivities during the day and bear in mind that the evening breaking of the fast is usually an exciting and celebratory period! (1st August to 29th August 2011)

Language Arabic, although English is widely spoken in tourist areas.

Glossary

Good morning	Sabah el Khair	Please	Laosmahat
Good evening	Masaa el Khair	What is your name?	Esmak Eh?
Good	Helw	My name....	Esmey....
No	Laa	How are you?	Exaiak
Yes	Naam	Fine	Kwais
Hello	Ahlan	How much	Bekam
Thank you	Shockrun	Goodbye	Ma' el Salama

Time Egypt is GMT +2 hours (daylight saving time is observed late March - 30 September)

Security Whilst the vast majority of travellers never experience anything untoward it is worth taking precautions particularly in urban areas. You should take sensible precautions in crowded areas such as street markets and airports, where pick-pocketing is common, and keep clear of any street disturbances. Don't wear expensive jewellery, never leave your bags unattended, keep large amounts of money, cameras and mobile phones out of sight when walking in town centres, and avoid walking in city centres after dark. Keep copies of important documents, including passports, in a separate place to the documents themselves, together with details of credit cards. Leave copies at home with a friend too. Safeguard valuables, important documents and cash and deposit them in hotel safes, where practicable.

Passport validity - Your passport should be valid for at least six months from the date of your return.

Visas - British visitors need a visa. These can be obtained on arrival, at the Banks or exchange counters just prior to immigration, for stays of up to a month, by payment in Sterling (currently £10) USD or Egyptian Pounds - change will be given in local currency according to the exchange rate on the day. Other nationalities should check with their Embassy or contact Travcour.

Health – Vaccinations are recommended against Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio and Diphtheria. Please consult your doctor or a travel medical centre for further advice. We recommend you pack some rehydration salts and remember to drink LOTS of water everyday. To avoid stomach upsets do not eat anything uncooked and wash your hands regularly, some antibacterial hand wash gel is very useful.

Clothing & Equipment List for Felucca and Pyramids

Although Western clothing is generally acceptable, outside beach resorts Egyptians generally dress conservatively. Out of respect for local culture we recommend that - particularly if in rural areas - you dress accordingly i.e. no tight-fitting clothing, low-cut or sleeveless tops etc. Shorts are accepted in main tourist areas, but they (and skirts) should reach at least to the knee. Women should cover their heads, arms and legs when entering religious buildings. At night in the desert or on a felucca (especially Dec-Feb) it can get surprisingly cold, so pack warm and windproof clothing.

The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive and experienced travellers may well take a good deal less luggage than we recommend. We have also included a few extras that are meant to increase your comfort but are entirely optional.

CLOTHING	NUMBER PER PERSON	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Trainers or strong sandals	1 pair – all purpose wear		Soft side bag – 50-80 litres	
Walking shoes	optional		Lightweight daypack – 25 litres	
Sunhat / baseball cap	Essential (styled to shade face, ears& neck)		Sleeping Bag – 2 season or sleeping bag liner. (3–4 season between Nov – Feb) Sleeping bags can be hired in Egypt for £10pp. please pre-order	
Waterproof jacket	Lightweight		Sunglasses	
Thermal underwear	Optional – but useful in winter		Personal First Aid Kit	
T-Shirts	3+		Torch and batteries	
Long trousers	2+		Camera, film and accessories	
Short trousers / shorts	2		Washing kit – inc “dry” anti-bacterial hand-wash & wet wipes	
Long sleeve shirt	2+		Loo kit (in small bag) loo paper – remember this for the felucca.	
Thin fleece /sweatshirt	1		Towel	
Thick Fleece	Optional in winter		Swimwear & Sarong	
Warm hat & gloves	Recommend in winter			

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Passport/ Visa		Earplugs	
Air Tickets		Universal travelling adapter	
Money/Travellers Cheques		Insect repellent and sting cream	
Cash Cards/Visa		Sunscreen – lots of it	
Insurance Documents		Money security belt/pouch	
Trip Information & Itinerary			

For details regarding **hand luggage restrictions**, please visit www.baa.com for details