

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



EGYPT & THE ETERNAL NILE

October 27–November 10, 2025

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Journey through antiquity from Cairo and the Great Pyramids to Abu Simbel and Ancient Nubia and Lake Nasser—and a classic voyage along the Nile from Aswan to Luxor before returning to Cairo.

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner

MONDAY, OCT 27

DEPART U.S. CAIRO, EGYPT

Depart on an overnight flight to Cairo.

TUESDAY, OCT 28

ARRIVE CAIRO

Arrive in the Egyptian capital and transfer directly to your hotel. As guests' arrival times may vary greatly, there are no group activities or meals planned.

Overnight: *Sofitel Cairo Nile el Gezirah*

WEDNESDAY, OCT 29

CAIRO

Meet your fellow travelers and tour director at a morning briefing about the journey ahead.

Then set out for the day, beginning at the world-renowned Egyptian Museum, which holds more than 120,000 relics and antiquities from almost every period in Egyptian history.

Continue to the Citadel of Saladin, a spectacular medieval fortress set high on a hill with extraordinary views of the city below.

Built in 1176 to guard against the Crusaders, the Citadel was the home of Egyptian rulers for nearly 700 years, including famed leader Mohammed Ali, whose gilt tomb is inside.

After lunch at a local restaurant, return to the hotel. Tonight, enjoy a reception and welcome dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: *Sofitel Cairo Nile el Gezirah* (B, L)

THURSDAY, OCT 30

CAIRO

In the morning, encounter the Giza Plateau and its three famed pyramids, including the Great Pyramid (or Pyramid of Cheops), which ranks among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. A truly awe-inspiring sight, the Great Pyramid was built around 2600 BCE, and at more than 450 feet tall, was the tallest man-made structure on earth for nearly 3,800 years. In front of the Pyramids stands the serene Sphinx, whose leonine body and human face were carved almost entirely of one piece of limestone and submerged by desert sands for thousands of years.

Spend time visiting the pyramids, seeing them up close and marveling at their 4,600-year longevity.

After lunch at a local restaurant, visit Old Cairo—so named because the ancient Roman fort named Babylon stood here—the city's oldest section that is a maze of medieval streets, Islamic mosques, minarets, and domes.

Begin at 5th-century St. Sergius, the oldest church in the area. Inside, 12 columns representing the 12 Apostles separate the nave from the aisles. Also visit el-Muallaqa, the "hanging church" built over the bastions of a Roman gate. Believed to date from the 7th

century, the church features a ceiling that resembles an ark, and a carved marble pulpit considered the finest in Egypt.

Also stop at St. George's Church, dating to the 10th century and built on top of an ancient Roman tower. Famed as the only round church in Egypt, St. George's still functions as an active house of worship and ranks as Egypt's principal Greek Orthodox church.

Return to your hotel in the late afternoon. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Sofitel Cairo Nile el Gezirah* (B, L)

FRIDAY, OCT 31

CAIRO / ABU SIMBEL / EMBARK LAKE NASSER CRUISE

Set off very early in the morning on a flight to Aswan where you board a motorcoach for the 3½-hour ride across a corner of the Sahara to Abu Simbel.

Enjoy lunch together onboard before visiting the Aswan High Dam. When the dam was built in the 1960s to control the mighty Nile, it was expected to double the country's hydroelectric supply. While creating one of the world's largest manmade lakes (Lake Nasser), the resultant flooding had the potential to destroy most of the native Nubian villages found here, as well as several irreplaceable monuments in the lowlands, among them Abu Simbel. To preserve these monuments, the Egyptian Department of Antiquities, in conjunction with UNESCO, embarked on a rescue project beyond the scope of anything that had ever before been attempted: they dismantled several ancient sites, stone by stone, and rebuilt them on higher ground.

See the results of these efforts at Abu Simbel, a massive complex of temples guarded by four colossal statues of Ramses II, each more than 60 feet high. Inside, the walls are covered with incredibly well-preserved murals depicting scenes of Queen Nefertari and her court, and of King Ramses in battle.

The afternoon is at leisure aboard your ship.

As the desert sun goes down, return to Abu Simbel to experience a sound-and-light show amid the massive statuary here.

Return to the *Prince Abbas* in time for dinner on board.

Overnight: *M/S Prince Abbas* (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, NOV 1

LAKE NASSER CRUISING—KASR IBRIM / AMADA / WADI EL-SEBOUA

Today, explore the heart of ancient Nubia, the kingdom that bordered southern Egypt during antiquity and was Egypt's gateway to Africa. Though heavily influenced and often ruled by Egypt, Nubia had a culture and history distinct from that of its more powerful neighbor. It had its own kings, some of which were cooperative with modern Egypt's, while others were competitive. Nubia has long been incorporated as a part of modern Egypt, but some Nubians have struggled to maintain their cultures and traditions, much of which are now dying out because of assimilation and changing times.

During breakfast, cruise to the settlement of Kasr Ibrim, the last vestige of Nubian culture still in its original location. Learn about this ancient settlement from aboard the ship (it's prohibited to go ashore here) and continue to Amada to tour the 18th-dynasty Temple of Amada, built during the reign of Tutmosis III and the oldest surviving Lake Nasser temple. To preserve its fragile paintings, the temple was moved to its current location in its entirety, not block by block as with the other Nubian temples.

During lunch, cruise to Wadi el-Seboua to explore the reconstructed Dakka temple, dedicated to Thoth, the god of wisdom and justice, and spend the night.

Tonight, dine aboard your ship.

Overnight: *M/S Prince Abbas* (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, NOV 2

LAKE NASSER CRUISING—WADI EL-SEBOUA / VALLEY OF THE LIONS / ASWAN

Spend this morning in Wadi el-Seboua touring the Valley of the Lions with its striking avenue of sphinxes.

In the afternoon, cruise to Aswan, the city where Agatha Christie wrote the famous *Death on the Nile*.

Enjoy lunch and dinner together on board.

Later this evening, arrive in Aswan and spend the evening on board.

Overnight: *M/S Prince Abbas* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, NOV 3

DISEMBARK / ASWAN / EMBARK NILE CRUISE SHIP

Disembark early this morning in the desert lands of Aswan and set out to visit New Kalabsha, site of Kalabsha Temple, the largest freestanding Nubian temple of them all.

This sandstone temple dedicated to Mandulis, the Nubian god of religion, was moved from Old Kalabsha and reconstructed here when Lake Nasser's rising waters threatened the site. The temple preserves Egyptian and Greek history—both languages are carved into the temple walls.

Return to the ship for breakfast, then bid farewell to the crew before embarking on a tour of the Aswan High Dam. Considered a miracle of engineering when completed in 1965, the dam required some 18 years of work.

Numbers tell part of the story: it stands 11,811 feet long, 364 feet tall, and at its base is 3,215 feet thick. For some context, 18 times more material was used to construct the Aswan High Dam than to construct the Great Pyramid at Giza. But in addition to doubling Egypt's electrical supply, the dam's construction—and subsequent creation of Lake Nasser—also caused the relocation of up to 90,000 Nubians from their homeland.

Next, visit the Temples of Philae on the island of Agilkia. Before the Aswan Dam was built, the temples, originally located further

upstream, were submerged by Nile flooding for six months each year. In much the same manner as Abu Simbel, the Philae ruins were dismantled and reconstructed on Agilkia, which was landscaped to resemble antiquity's Sacred Island of Isis. The oldest part of the temple dates from the 4th century BCE, though construction continued until the 3rd century CE. Visit the Hall of Nectanebo, the oldest part of the complex, along with the Outer Temple Court, the Temple of Isis, and the beautiful Osiris Chambers, decorated with bas reliefs of Isis, her sons, and other deities.

With temple touring in Aswan complete, board the second ship of the tour, your floating hotel for four-nights on the Nile.

After lunch on board, embark small feluccas (replicas of ancient Nile sailboats) for a relaxing afternoon sail. Admire the river scenery as you make your way slowly down the Nile, passing close by the Botanical Gardens on Kitchener's Island, named after British Army officer Lord Kitchener, who served as Consul General of Egypt from 1911 to 1914, and Elephantine Island, with its huge granite rocks.

Return to your ship in time for dinner together.

Overnight: *M/S Sun Ray* (B, L, D)

TUESDAY, NOV 4

NILE CRUISING—KOM OMBO / EDFU / LUXOR

This morning, cruise to the ancient trading town of Kom Ombo, which sat on the great caravan route from Nubia. Here see outstanding Nile views from an unusual double temple, dedicated both to the crocodile god Sobek and to the falcon god Haroeris (Horus the Elder).

Continue to Edfu to explore the Temple of Horus, considered Egypt's best-preserved ancient temple (having spent centuries buried beneath desert sands). Construction of the complex began under Ptolemy III in 237 BCE and was completed nearly 200 years later; the temple's remains were not discovered until 1900. See the 12 enormous columns that stand in front of the Great Halls and stop to

admire the wall inscriptions in the Hall of Consecrations.

Return to the ship for lunch.

In the afternoon, cruise to Luxor as you enjoy afternoon tea along the way.

Tonight, attend the captain's welcome cocktail party wearing traditional Egyptian *galabeya*. Later this evening, arrive and dock at Luxor.

Overnight: *M/S Sun Ray* (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, NOV 5

NILE CRUISING—LUXOR / WEST BANK

In the morning, set out on an exploration of the Luxor West Bank, a region that surpasses even Cairo in number and the importance of its ancient sites.

Begin at the haunting Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens, an isolated valley holding the tombs of more than 50 New Kingdom monarchs and nobles, each in a tomb constructed underground in an attempt to mirror the underworld. For many years, Egyptians inhabited this vast City of the Dead to protect the tombs from grave robbers, though, sadly, some of the tombs were indeed looted over the centuries. What remain, however, are some of the most magnificent paintings seen anywhere in Egypt. The tombs were filled with sand, which not only protected everything inside, but also served as a sort of embalming element for the paintings, preserving them from the wind and sun. Today some of the paintings have been covered by glass for further protection. To visit all the tombs would be impossible; your tour director will select some of the most interesting.

Then visit the dramatic Temple of Hatshepsut, dedicated to one of the few female pharaohs; and the enormous Colossi of Memnon, two 64-foot-high statues that once guarded the gates of a mortuary temple.

A traditional Middle Eastern belly dancing performance accompanies dinner on board tonight.

Overnight: *M/S Sun Ray* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, NOV 6

NILE CRUISING—LUXOR / EAST BANK

Today, explore the East Bank, beginning at Karnak. Here tour Luxor Temple, where the statue of Amun-Ra, the Sun God and God of Creation, would travel in a procession from Karnak Temple for festivals held during annual flood season. Over the years, more rulers built onto the temple, including Tutankhamun, Ramses II, and even Alexander the Great. Visit the Great Court of Ramses II, the Temple of the Theban Triad, and the obelisk, whose twin stands in the Place de la Concorde in Paris. Then move on to the even more splendid Karnak Temple, which was under construction for some 1,500 years. It comprises the three main temples of Amun, Mut, and Montu, as well as smaller enclosed temples and several outer temples located a short distance north of Luxor. Also see the temple's enormous pylons, the Temple of Ramses II, the Great Hypostyle Hall, and the two Obelisks of Hatshepsut.

Return to your ship in time for dinner.

Overnight: *M/S Sun Ray* (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, NOV 7

DISSEMBARK / LUXOR

You may wish to rise early this morning and view the West Bank of "the world's greatest open-air museum," as Luxor has been called, from above in an optional hot air balloon ride. (At the time of printing, the cost of the 45-minute balloon ride is approximately \$120USD per person).

Later this morning, disembark and visit Luxor Museum, housing relics discovered at Luxor. Among the museum's notable artifacts: the mummies of pharaohs Ahmose I (reigned ca. 1539–1514 BCE) and Ramses I (reigned 1292–1290 BCE); items from the pharaoh Tutankhamun's renowned tomb; and statuary from the New Kingdom era (ca. 16th–11th century BCE).

Enjoy lunch together before transferring to your hotel where you have the afternoon and evening free. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Steigenberger Nile Palace* (B, L)

SATURDAY, NOV 8

LUXOR / CAIRO

Early this morning, transfer to the airport for the flight to Cairo.

Upon arrival, navigate the exotic Khan el-Khalili bazaar, Cairo's most popular and believed to be the largest in the Middle East, if not the world. Here visit artisans who have passed down their skill from generation to generation, perfecting all types of crafts including wood, perfume, leather goods, and glassware. There are bargains to be had on almost every corner, but shoppers are expected to barter hard for them.

After exploring Khan el-Khalili, check in to your hotel. Lunch and dinner are on your own.

Overnight: *Sofitel Cairo Nile el Gezirah (B)*

SUNDAY, NOV 9

CAIRO

Today, visit some of the finest sites in Egyptian antiquity, beginning this morning at the open-air museum at Memphis, Egypt's first capital. The history of Memphis stretches so far back into history that its origins have been lost to time; the city was already in existence during the reign of Iry-Hor, the pharaoh of Upper Egypt during the 32nd century BCE and one of the earliest historical figures known to mankind by name. Once a magnificent city ruled by legendary King Menes who united Upper and Lower Egypt, Memphis is now a pleasant remnant of long-ago times, with sculptures, a Sphinx, and a limestone colossus of Ramses II.

Next, stop is at nearby Sakkara, a necropolis used for more than 3,000 years to bury Old Kingdom royalty—and still largely unexcavated today. Much of Sakkara's splendor remains and can be seen in the Step Pyramid, which was once the largest stone structure ever built. The Step Pyramid forms the center of a remarkable funerary complex, which includes a broad "hypostyle" hall (a structure whose roof is supported by columns), a great court, and stone altars representing Upper and Lower Egypt.

Return to your hotel midday; the afternoon is at leisure for further independent exploration or relaxing and enjoying the hotel's amenities. Lunch is on your own today.

Tonight, celebrate your adventure along the Nile at a farewell dinner at your hotel.

Overnight: *Sofitel Cairo Nile el Gezirah (B, D)*

MONDAY, NOV 10

DEPART FOR U.S.

Very early this morning, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the United States.

Meals: *B*

OPTIONAL EXTENSION:

JORDAN: PETRA & AMMAN

NOVEMBER 10–12, 2025

MONDAY, NOV 10

CAIRO / AMMAN / PETRA, JORDAN

In the morning, board the 1½-hour flight to Amman. Upon arrival, board a motorcoach for the drive to Petra.

Along the way, visit the important pilgrimage site of Mt. Nebo, where Moses was buried overlooking the Jordan Valley. See the site's 4th- and 6th-century Byzantine churches, the first of which was built to commemorate Moses' death.

Arrive in Madaba, "City of Mosaics," whose chief attraction is a mosaic map of Jerusalem and the Holy Land dating to the 6th century. Originally created from more than two million colored stones, the map today remains relatively well preserved despite its advanced age.

After lunch together, continue to Petra, reaching your hotel this evening in time for dinner on your own.

Overnight: *Mövenpick Resort Petra (B, L)*

TUESDAY, NOV 11

PETRA

Today, explore Petra, the “rose-red city, half as old as time” that was established around the 6th century BCE and eventually drew fame for its success in the spice trade and for its ingenious hydraulic engineering systems.

Forgotten for more than a thousand years, Petra was rediscovered only in the 18th century; the central part of the city wasn't excavated until 1958. In fact, even today only a small fraction of this UNESCO World Heritage site has been uncovered. Built as a fortress by the wealthy Nabateans, the city that once stood here housed nearly 10,000 people. The architecture represents some of the most sophisticated of its time, and the variegated rock changes colors with the sun, transforming from a rosy pink to a golden yellow.

Travel on foot, entering Petra by the breathtaking mile-long canyon leading to the site. At the end of the canyon (or siq), you are confronted with Petra's most revered and wondrous façade: Al-Khazneh. Translated as “The Treasury,” this massive and ornately carved building was constructed as a mausoleum some two thousand years ago. The name “treasury” derives from the local tribes assuming it contained treasures from a bygone era.

Among the other sites on today's itinerary: the 4,000-seat theater, the colonnaded street, the Temple of the Winged Lions, and the Royal Tombs set high up into the cliffs.

In the afternoon, enjoy lunch together at a restaurant within the archaeological park, then have free time to continue exploring Petra or to relax and have a drink in one of the beverage tents scattered throughout the site.

Return to the hotel late this afternoon and enjoy dinner together.

Overnight: *Mövenpick Resort Petra (B, L, D)*

WEDNESDAY, NOV 12

PETRA / AMMAN

In the morning, depart Petra bound for Amman, traveling the Desert Highway that was the region's original north/south road dating to Biblical times.

The once and current capital and one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, Amman is known for its harmonious blend of ancient and contemporary architecture, and also for the countless relics of its Roman, Byzantine, and Arab past.

Upon arrival, have lunch at a local restaurant to enjoy a falafel sandwich, a Middle Eastern specialty. Then, set off on a walking tour that takes us off the beaten tourist path and acquaints us with this lively Middle Eastern capital.

Begin with the Ottoman-style Grand Hussein Mosque, built in 1924 on the site of an ancient temple in the heart of downtown Amman; then through the busy streets and vegetables markets to the Nymphaeum, a 2nd-century fountain hidden behind private houses and shops. The next stop comprises another 2nd-century landmark, the 6,000-seat Roman Theatre, which is still used today for sporting and cultural events; and the ancient Citadel (El-Qala), which offers excellent views of the city from atop Jabal al-Qala'a, one of Amman's signature seven hills.

After checking in at your hotel, the remainder of the day is free for independent exploration and dinner on your own.

Overnight: *Grand Hyatt Amman (B, L)*

THURSDAY, NOV 13

AMMAN / JERASH

Travel today to the Roman ruins of Jerash, dubbed the “Pompeii of the East” for its splendid state of preservation. Because of its popular trade routes, Jerash flourished during the reign of Alexander the Great when it became part of the Holy Roman Empire's Decapolis (the 10 major Roman cities of the East). After the Persian invasion of 614 and a series of consequential earthquakes, Jerash

survived as nothing more than a small rural village until its rediscovery in 1925.

Here, explore the colonnaded streets, theaters, churches, and temples that comprise the largest Roman site outside of Italy. Lunch today is on our own.

Lunch today is on your own.

Return to Amman mid-afternoon and dine together tonight at your hotel.

Overnight: *Grand Hyatt Amman (B, D)*

FRIDAY, NOV 14

AMMAN / DEPART FOR U.S.

Very early in the morning, depart for the airport for departure flights.

Meals: *B*