EGYPT & THE ETERNAL NILE
OCTOBER 5-19, 2020
DETAILED ITINERARY

Accompanied by an expert Egyptian guide, this singular small group journey through antiquity travels from vibrant Cairo and the Great Pyramids to Abu Simbel and the Upper Nile for a fascinating cruise on Lake Nasser. Then: a classic voyage along the Lower Nile from Aswan to Luxor before returning to Cairo.

GROUP SIZE: 12-24 guests

PRICING:
Per person double occupancy:
- $5,897 Air inclusive from Boston, New York (including airline taxes and fees)
- $4,895 Land only
- $1,295 Single supplement

OPTIONAL JORDAN: PETRA & AMMAN POST EXTENSION:
- $1,795 – Per person, double occupancy
- $395 – Single supplement

STUDY LEADER: Mark Van Baalen has served the University in a variety of roles since 1962. He received his A.B. in Astronomy in 1966. While an undergraduate he worked on the NASA-funded OSO-D satellite that flew in 1967 and obtained the first successful ultraviolet images of the Sun from orbit. Later, he turned his attention to the Earth sciences, receiving his A.M. and Ph.D. in Geology. Since 1995 he has been a Lecturer and Associate in the Dept. of Earth and Planetary Sciences. During that time he taught popular courses in physical and environmental geology, and acted as mentor to many undergraduates.

Mark and his wife Louisa, recently retired from the Kennedy School of Government, have been privileged to lead numerous HAA excursions to distant lands. On these trips, Mark lectures on the natural history of the regions being visited, as well as painting a broader picture of human interaction with its environment, now and in the past.
**SCHEDULE BY DAY**

*B=Breakfast, *L=Lunch, *D=Dinner

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 5**
DEPART U.S. FOR CAIRO, EGYPT

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6**
ARRIVE CAIRO

Today arrive in the Egyptian capital and transfer to your hotel.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7**
CAIRO

Meet your fellow travelers and tour director for a morning briefing about the journey begin. Then, set out for the day, beginning with a tour at the world-renowned Egyptian Museum, which holds more than 120,000 relics and antiquities from almost every period in Egyptian history.

Continue on 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 Muhammed Ali, whose gilt tomb is inside.

After lunch at a local restaurant, return to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure.

Tonight, enjoy a reception at the hotel before a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8**
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 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 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, including a broad “hypostyle” hall (a structure whose roof is supported by columns), a great court, and stone altars representing Upper and Lower Egypt.

After lunch at a local restaurant, visit 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, carved almost entirely of one piece of limestone and submerged by desert sands for thousands of years. Spend some time visiting the pyramids, seeing them up close and marveling at their 4,600-year longevity.

After a long day of outdoor exploration, return to the hotel late this afternoon. Dinner tonight is on your own.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9**
CAIRO / ABU SIMBEL / EMBARK LAKE NASSER CRUISE

Early this morning, fly to Aswan where you board a motor coach for the 3½-hour ride
across a corner of the Sahara to Abu Simbel. Enjoy lunch together on board the Prince Abbas.

Explore 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. After your visit, spend an afternoon at leisure aboard the ship.

Tonight, return to Abu Simbel and experience a sound-and-light show amid the massive statuary. Then, return to the Prince Abbas in time for dinner on board.

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

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
LAKE NASSER CRUISING

During breakfast, sail to the settlement of Kasr Ibrim, the last vestige of Nubian culture still in its original location. After a brief visit learning about this ancient settlement from onboard the ship (it is prohibited to go ashore here), continue on to Amada for a tour of the 18th-dynasty Temple of Amada, the oldest surviving Lake Nasser temple.

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

Enjoy dinner together on board.

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

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11
LAKE NASSER CRUISING

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

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

Enjoy lunch and dinner together on board.

Late this evening, arrive in Aswan and spend the evening on board at leisure.

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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12
DISEMBARK / ASWAN / EMBARK
NILE CRUISE SHIP

Disembark the ship early this morning in the desert lands of Aswan and set out ot visit New Kalabsha, site of Kalabsha Temple, the largest freestanding Nubian Temple of them all, which was moved and reconstructed here from Old Kalabsha. After exploring the site, return to the ship for breakfast and bid farewell to the crew.

Embark on a tour of the Aswan High Dam, which stands 11,811 feet long, 364 feet tall, and 3,215 feet thick. The dam’s construction used 18 times the amount of material used 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 Temple of Philae on the island of Agilkia. Once submerged by Nile flooding for six months each year, 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.

Later, board the second ship of the tour, your floating hotel for your four-night stay 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, home of the British hero who helped tame the Sudan, and Elephantine Island, with its huge granite rocks.
Tonight, attend the Captain’s welcome cocktail party wearing traditional Egyptian galabeya.

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

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13
NILE CRUISING

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

After returning to the ship, said on to Edfu to explore the Temple of Horus, considered Egypt’s best-preserved ancient temple. 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. Take in 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 and this afternoon’s cruise to Luxor as you enjoy afternoon tea along the way.

A traditional Middle Eastern belly dancing performance accompanies dinner on board tonight. Late this evening, arrive at Luxor where you dock.

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

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15
NILE CRUISING

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 provession from Karnak Temple for festivals held during the annual flood season. Over the years, more rulers build onto the temple, including Tutankhamun, Ramses II, and even Alexander the Great. Visit the Great Court of Ramses II, the Temple of Theban Triad, and the obelisk, whose twin stands at the Place de la Concorde in Paris.

Next, 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 view the temple’s enormous pylons, the Temple of Ramses II, the Great Hypostyle Hall, and the two Obelisks of Hatshepsut.

Return to the ship for dinner tonight.

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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14
NILE CRUISING

This morning embark on an exploration of Luxor, the ancient city that surpasses even Cairo in the number and importance of its ancient sites, which date from 2755 BCE. Begin on the West Bank at the haunting Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens, which holds the tombs of more than 50 kings, queens, and nobles.

Next, 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.

Tonight enjoy dinner aboard the ship.

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

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
DISEMBARK / 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 $150 US per person).

Later this morning visit Luxor Museum, which houses relics discovered at the site. Among the museum’s notable artifacts are 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 the hotel for an evening at leisure.

Overnight: Steigenberger Nile Palace (B, L)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
LUXOR / CAIRO

This morning, transfer to the airport for the flight to Cairo.

After checking in at the hotel, 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.

Lunch and dinner are on your own today.

Overnight: Fairmont Nile City (B)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18
CAIRO

This morning you encounter Old Cairo, the city’s oldest section and a maze of medieval streets, Islamic mosques, minarets, and domes. Begin at 5th-century St. Sergius, the oldest church in the area before visiting el-Muallaqa, the “hanging church” built over the bastions of a Roman gate. Another stop today is the restored Ben Ezra Synagogue, Egypt’s oldest, which resembles the 4th-century Coptic Church it once was. Sadly, Egypt’s Jewish community is fast disappearing and there are seldom enough worshippers here to hold a service.

Return to the hotel mid-day and 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 with a farewell dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Fairmont Nile City (B, D)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19
DEPART FOR U.S.

Very early this morning, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. (B)

OPTIONAL POST-EXTENSION:
JORDAN: PETRA & AMMAN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19
CAIRO / AMMAN / PETRA, JORDAN

This morning, board the 1½-hour flight to Amman, where you then board a motor coach for the drive to Petra. After a stop for lunch along the way, 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.

Continue on to the important pilgrimage site of Mt. Nebo, where Moses was buried overlooking the Jordan Valley. Visit the site’s 4th- and 6th-century Byzantine churches, the first of which was built to commemorate Moses’ death.

Reach Petra this evening, where dinner is on your own.

Overnight: Hyatt Zaman Hotel & Resort (B, L)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20
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. What you see here today is enough to astonish and astound even the most experienced traveler: monuments and buildings – temples, tombs, palaces, and dwellings – carved directly into cliffs of a solid mass of rock. The ruins are remarkably well preserved, giving a true glimpse into the lives of those who lived and worked here.

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 actually 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.

This afternoon enjoy free time to continue exploring Petra or to relax and have a drink in one of the beverage tents scattered throughout the site.

After this full – and fulfilling – day of sightseeing, return to the hotel late this afternoon. Enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Overnight: Hyatt Zaman Hotel & Resort (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22
AMMAN / JERASH

Travel today to the Roman ruins of Jerash, dubbed the “Pompeii of the East” for its splendid state of preservation. Due to 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. Explore the colonnaded streets, theaters, churches, and temples that comprise the largest Roman site outside of Italy.

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

Overnight: Grand Hyatt Amman (B, D)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23
LUXOR / CAIRO

Upon arrival, stop for lunch at a local restaurant to enjoy a falafel sandwich, a Middle Eastern specialty.

Then, set off on a walking tour off the beaten tourist path to acquaint yourself with this lively Middle Eastern capital. Begin with the Ottoman-style Grand Husseini 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 the hotel, the remainder of the day is free for independent exploration. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: Grand Hyatt Amman (B, L)
Very early this morning, transfer to the airport for your return flights home (B).