

NYYC Egyptian Expedition *January 29 – February 12, 2011*

Saturday, January 29

Depart the USA. (Some members are departing sooner.)

Sunday, Jan. 30 CAIRO

Arrive Cairo airport. Tour members who do not have an Egyptian visa may get one at the airport. For those without visas, go to one of the bank/currency exchange windows on the right side of the hallway immediately before reaching the Immigration booths. You can buy your visas there.

All tour members will be met by a representative from Egitalloyd, our local tour provider, and will be transferred to the garden wing Mena House Hotel.

Since members will be arriving at different times, you are on your own this day. The gate to the Great Pyramids, which are just across the street from the Mena House, open at 7 in the morning and close just before sundown. Check with the hotel desk for directions to the front gate if you wish to walk over on your own. There is an entrance fee.

7:30PM: The group will meet for a light dinner in the Khan El Khalili restaurant.

Monday, Jan. 31 CAIRO

7:00AM Wake-up call

6:30AM on Breakfast is available in the El Kedive restaurant.

8:30AM Departure by bus from the Mena House for a full morning in Islamic Cairo including the Citadel. The Citadel, near the center of Cairo, was fortified by the Ayyubid ruler Salah al-Din (Saladin) between 1176 and 1183 AD, to protect it from the Crusaders. He planned a wall around the city, anchored on one side by the Citadel and on the other by the Nile. (Saladin defeated the Crusaders on July 4, 1187 at the Battle of Hattin in the Holy Land.) Touring continues at the Ibn Tulun Mosque, which was finished in 879 AD and is the oldest mosque in Egypt.

Lunch will be at the Oberoi Khan El Khalili (Naguib Mahfouz restaurant).

Then we will walk from Bab el-Futuh to the Khan El Khalili Bazaars. This walk will take you to the most architecturally interesting monuments from the Fatimid and Mamluk periods.

Our two buses will be waiting at a prearranged time and place to take members back to the Mena House. Those wishing to extend their shopping or touring may arrange for their own Taxi back to the hotel.

6:30PM A welcome cocktail party in the Shahrayar Ballroom. Following the cocktail party, an important “orientation” lecture and crash Egyptian overview history course will be given by one of our Egyptian hosts.

7:30PM This evening’s dinner will be in the Abu Nawas restaurant.

Tuesday, Feb. 1 CAIRO

6:30AM Wake-up call

6:30AM on Breakfast is available at the El Kedive restaurant.

8:00AM Board our buses for a morning at Giza to include the Great Pyramid, Sphinx and the Solar Boat Museum. The director will greet us if he is available. The largest of the three great pyramids was built about 2560 BC, over a period of 20 years, for the 4th Dynasty pharaoh Khufu (Cheops in Greek). It contains 2 million large stone blocks that were quarried from nearby. In order to be built in 20 years one block had to be put in place every 5 minutes, 24/7/365.

We will return to the Mena House Hotel for lunch in the Al Rubbayat restaurant.

Touring continues this afternoon at ancient Memphis and Saqqara. Here we will see the first pyramid, called the “Stepped Pyramid” which is the oldest cut stone, multi-story building in existence. It is 20 stories high and its complex is a marvel of Old Kingdom architecture. It covers an area of 37 acres surrounded by a wall built from a thick core of local stone. It was built in Djoser’s reign, from 2667 to 2648 BC. Imhotep is said to have been the architect, a man much revered in his own time and even deified in later history. After completing our touring we will return to the hotel to relax before our dinner out.

7:00PM In the evening there will be a festive dinner in a Bedouin tent near the Great Pyramids.

Wednesday, Feb. 2 CAIRO

7:00AM Wake-up call

6:30AM on Breakfast is available at the El Khedive restaurant.

8:30AM An early start will take us to Old Cairo visiting the 4th century Church of St Sergius, considered the oldest Christian church still existing in Cairo, the 7th century Coptic Hanging Church, and the Ben Ezra Synagogue which was founded in 882.

Our lunch will be in Al Azhar Park, a 30 hectare oasis donated by the Aga Khan to the people of Egypt. The Studio Masr restaurant displays picturesque views of Old Cairo.

We will spend a full afternoon at the Cairo Museum, the repository for the world's largest and greatest collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts from predynastic to the Roman period -- nearly 5,000 years. Our touring party will be broken up into four groups of about 16 people each. Each group will have its own Egyptian specialist. Headsets will be loaned to every participant, which will assist us in hearing the commentary of our group leader. The tickets to the mummy exhibit are included and it is located on the second floor.

The Cairo museum is old, crowded, and the acoustics are what one might expect in a building with stone walls and concrete floors. Each group will go its own way, but all four groups will be taken at one time or another to all of the most significant exhibits.

The tour will last about 2 hours and 30 minutes. Those wishing to sit down, may go outside the front door to a small café to the right of the main entrance, or they may return to the bus. Those wishing to stay longer may arrange for their own taxi back to the hotel.

7:30PM Buffet dinner in the El Khedive restaurant.

Thursday, Feb. 3 ASWAN

4:30AM Wake-up call

5:00AM Luggage placed outside your door for collection

5:00AM Breakfast El Khedive restaurant

6:00AM Transfer to the Cairo airport

8:00AM Flight departs for Abu Simbel

This morning we have arranged a private charter flight directly to the famed Abu Simbel, which now resides on the shores of southern Lake Nasser just north of the Sudan border.

Built around 1244 BC, the temple complex of Abu Simbel took about 20 years to build. King Ramses II was not shy about self promotion for posterity and the giant statues were also meant as a warning to the Nubians.

9:45AM Our bus will take us to the site of two incredibly well-preserved temples constructed by Ramses II as a lasting memorial to himself and his Queen, Nefertari. These two temples were carved out of the rock in the 1950s and moved up hill to be saved from the rising waters of Lake Nasser, thanks to the Aswan dam built by the Soviets. Abu Simbel is a World Heritage site that you will never forget. The visit will last less than two hours. This is enough time to inspect all of the well-preserved wall reliefs inside the temples, as well as to appreciate the imposing statues on the outside.

12:00PM Our chartered flight departs for Aswan

12:45PM Arrive into Aswan and transfer to our hotel, Movenpick Elephantine Island, in time for lunch.

Afternoon visit the Nubian Museum, which documents the inhabitants of the area from pre-historic times to the 25th Dynasty when the Nubians from the area of the 4th cataract in what is now Sudan conquered and ruled upper and lower Egypt. This museum is modern and carefully planned to show only the finest example available of the periods it covers.

There should be time in the late afternoon to visit the spice bazaar.

7:00PM Cocktails by the pool followed by dinner in the Orangerie Restaurant.

Friday, Feb 4 ASWAN

7:30AM Wake-up call

8:00AM Luggage placed outside your door for collection

6:30AM on Breakfast in the Orangerie Restaurant

9:00AM We will then visit the stone quarry from where many of the Egyptian obelisks found in Central Park, on the banks of the Thames, in the Place de la Concorde, in Rome, and elsewhere around the world -- to say nothing of those still residing in Egypt -- were originally taken. We will then visit the High Dam built by the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Our last visit this morning is to an island where Philae, one of the best preserved ancient temples, has been preserved. Built over several hundred years starting in the time of the 25th dynasty Nubian king, Taharqa, it was finished by the Ptolemies in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.

12:30PM We board the Sonesta Star Goddess Nile River boat, our home for the next six nights, and have lunch. Luggage will have been placed into all members' cabins by the good fairies.

2:30PM Afternoon Felucca Races. Six felucca sailboats built in a tradition that has survived from antiquity, have been chartered at great expense by the NYYC for the first Nile Felucca World Championship, otherwise known as NFWC. The six skippers will be those NYYC members surviving an elimination series administered by race officials sometime prior to the race. Nile Felucca Rules (NFR) will apply. All members wishing to crew or simply to be moveable ballast are welcome to get in one of the six racing feluccas.



Kevlar and carbon fiber sails are prohibited by NFR rules but nevertheless, good sail shape will be at a premium during the first Nile Felucca Championships.

6:30PM Our guest Egyptologist, Dr. Lanny Bell, will give his first lecture. We are honored to have Dr. Bell join our expedition as our historical and cultural guide.

7:30PM Award ceremony. The coveted perpetual Nefertari Trophy will be handed out to the winning skipper immediately before dinner on board. (Please have your cameras ready for this historic occasion.)

Saturday, Feb 5 EDFU

- 7:00AM** Wake-up call
6:30AM on Breakfast is served
8:30AM We will depart for a morning visit to the Kalabsha Temple, built in 30 AD by Emperor Augustus and dedicated to fertility and a Nubian solar deity.
- 12:30PM** We return to the Star Goddess for lunch on board. Our ship sails for Kom Ombo.
5:00PM Lecture #2 by Dr. Lanny Bell.
6:00PM We dock at Kom Ombo and visit the Temple of Sobek, the crocodile-headed god revered by the Egyptians. Nearby mummies of crocodiles have been found. The temple was built by the early Ptolemies over a much older temple built by Tuthmosis III.
8:00PM Dinner and dance music.

Sunday, Feb 6 LUXOR

- CRUISE** Sail to Edfu
8:30AM Wake-up call
7:30AM on Breakfast is served
10:00AM Visit the Temple of Horus in Edfu (also known as the Temple of Edfu), considered the best-preserved cult temple in Egypt. This is partly because it was built later than most. Yet despite its later date, it exactly reflects traditional architecture and so provides an excellent idea of how all the temples once looked.
- Sail the remainder of the day.
- 12:30PM** Buffet Lunch
- Cross the Esna Lock & sail to Luxor (ancient Thebes).
Lecture #3 by Dr. Lanny Bell.

Visit the Luxor Museum in early evening. Inaugurated in 1975, the museum is housed in a small, purpose-built building. The museum prides itself on the quality of the pieces and the uncluttered way in which they are displayed. Among the most striking items on display are grave goods from the tomb of Tutankhamun; a collection of 26 exceptionally well preserved New Kingdom statues that were found in 1989 buried in a cache in nearby Luxor Temple; and the royal mummies of two pharaohs - Ahmose I and Ramses I.

- 8:00PM** Dinner aboard ship

Monday, Feb 7 LUXOR

- 6:30AM** Wake-up call
7:00AM Breakfast is served
8:00AM Visit the Valleys of the Kings and Queens. The tombs to be visited are those of Tutankhamun and three others selected from the tombs available today. For a period of nearly 500 years from the 16th to 11th century BC, tombs were constructed for the Pharaohs and powerful nobles of the New Kingdom (the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Dynasties of Ancient Egypt). The valley is known to contain 63 tombs and chambers (ranging in size from a simple pit to a complex tomb with over 120 chambers).

We will also visit the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri, one of Egypt's most spectacular monuments. Hatshepsut (pronounced hat-shep-suit) ruled 1508–1458 BC and was the fifth pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty. She is generally regarded by Egyptologists as one of the most successful pharaohs, reigning longer than any other woman of an indigenous Egyptian dynasty.

We will visit Medinet Habou, the Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, a huge complex second only to Karnak in size and better preserved. Medinet Habu is among the least visited of the major sights at Luxor, but it deserves more attention than it gets.

- 1:30PM** Lunch on board the Star Goddess
Afternoon Lecture #4 by Dr. Lanny Bell.

Early evening Visit to Luxor Temple. The earliest parts of the temple still standing are the barque chapels just behind the first pylon built by Hatshepsut, and appropriated by Tuthmosis III. The main part of the temple - the colonnade and the sun court were built by Amenhotep III, and a later addition by Rameses II, who built the entrance pylon, and the two obelisks (one of which was taken to France, and is now at the centre of the [Place de la Concorde](#)) linked the Hatshepsut buildings with the main temple.

8:00PM Dinner and Galabiya Party.

Tuesday, Feb 8 LUXOR/QUINA

OPTIONAL: BALLOON OVER LUXOR

3:30AM Wake-up call

4:00AM Breakfast is available

4:30AM Departing from your Luxor hotel or cruise ship you will cross the Nile River to the West Bank before sunrise where your balloon awaits. After a safety briefing and introduction to your ground crew and pilot, you will climb into the balloon's basket and get ready for lift off. As you gently rise into the dawn sky, enjoy the tranquility of the early morning sun rising over the East Bank, illuminating the city and mountains. Get your cameras ready and enjoy the unique opportunity to view the magnificent panorama of the monuments of Thebes and Luxor town from a unique angle. The flight will last one hour

6:30AM Return to the ship and join the group for a second breakfast.

7:00AM Wake-up call

7:00AM on Breakfast available

8:30AM Morning visit to Karnak Temple. The complex is a vast open-air museum and the largest ancient religious site in the world, measuring about one mile by 3/4 of a mile. It consists of four main parts of which only the largest, the Precinct of Amun-Re, currently is open to the general public. The key difference between Karnak and most of the other temples and sites in Egypt is the length of time over which it was developed and used. Construction of temples started in the Middle Kingdom and continued through to Ptolemaic times. Approximately thirty pharaohs contributed to the buildings, enabling it to reach a size, complexity, and diversity not seen elsewhere. One of most famous aspects of Karnak, is the Hypostyle Hall in the Precinct of Amun-Re, a hall area of 50,000 sq ft with 134 massive columns arranged in 16 rows. 122 of these columns are 10 meters tall, and the other 12 are 21 meters tall with a diameter of over three meters.

12:30PM-CRUISE Lunch aboard the Star Goddess. Sail to Quina

Late afternoon Lecture #5 by Dr. Lanny Bell.

7:30PM Dinner aboard ship

Wednesday, Feb 9 LUXOR

5:00AM Wake-up call

5:30AM Breakfast available

6:30AM Drive by bus to Abydos. Abydos was occupied by the rulers of the Predynastic period, whose town, temple and tombs have been found there. The temple and town continued to be rebuilt at intervals until the thirtieth dynasty, and the cemetery was used continuously. The pharaohs of the first dynasty were buried in Abydos, including the first dynasty's founder, Narmer, and his successor, Aha.

The oldest temple in Abydos dates to 3150 BC, the beginning of the Old Kingdom. It was during this period that the Abydos boats were constructed. The building during the eighteenth dynasty began with a large chapel of Ahmose I. Then Thutmose III built a far larger temple, about 130 x 200 ft (40 x 61 m). Seti I, in the nineteenth dynasty, founded a temple to the south of the town in honor of the ancestral pharaohs of the early dynasties; this was finished by Ramesses II.

1:00PM Lunch on board the Star Goddess

2:00PM Next we visit the temple of Dendera, which is one of the newest and the best preserved temples in all of Egypt. The temple proper is the Roman Period birth house of Dendera on the west, built by Nero or Trajan. The temple is dedicated to Hathor.

CRUISE Sail back to Luxor arriving late.
Lecture #6 by Dr. Lanny Bell

7:30PM Dinner aboard the ship. Late evening arrival in Luxor.

Thursday, Feb 10 LUXOR

7:00AM Wake-up call

7:30AM Luggage collection

7:00AM Breakfast available

8:30AM Disembark. Our second visit to the west bank of Luxor includes the tombs and ancient village of the artisans, Deir el-Medina, one of Egypt's best-preserved town sites. The village was home to the artisans who worked on the tombs in the Valley of the Kings during the 18th to 20th dynasties of the New Kingdom period (ca. 1550 - 1080 BCE). The ancient town is a World Heritage site. We then visit the nearby Ramesseum. Ramesses II built his fabulous mortuary temple early in his reign, and it took twenty years to complete. In antiquity this great temple reportedly rivaled the wonders of the temple at Abu Simbel. The pylons, some of the oldest examples of such structures, are decorated with scenes from the Battle of Qadesh (Kadesh) showing Ramesses fighting the Hittites.

2:00PM Check into the Sonesta St George Luxor Hotel with time for lunch on our own. The remainder of the afternoon is free,

7:30PM Farewell dinner at our hotel.

Friday, Feb. 11 LUXOR/CAIRO

Breakfast at hotel

Free morning. This is the time to visit the market, or to see secondary sites not seen, or to return to your favorite places for a second look.

12:00PM Luggage collection and check-out

3:00PM We will transfer to the airport for our 5:00PM flight to Cairo.

6:10PM We arrive into Cairo and transfer to the Sonesta Cairo Airport Hotel.

Dinner on your own.

8:30PM Those tour members departing on Delta #85 tonight will transfer back to the airport for their 11:25pm flight.

Saturday, Feb 12

Breakfast at the hotel.

Depart. Individual airport transfers have been arranged for various flights.

Bon Voyage!

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Text prepared by Jeff Hammond