

Friendly Planet Travel, Inc.

Pyramids and Nile Cruise with Petra: Our Touring Itinerary (Egypt Air)

Important Note: Due to extremely limited & sometimes unreliable air & ground transportation in Egypt some changes in the itinerary may occur even after the tour has commenced. These changes may include a different sequence of the cities visited; change from flight to travel by road and in rare instances, change in accommodations. Friendly Planet will do its utmost to assure the highest possible level of comfort and provide visits to all the advertised sights despite these possible changes. If changes are necessary, your tour director will inform you. Your patience and understanding are greatly appreciated!

Day 1: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 - Depart USA

Your fascinating journey to Egypt begins this evening as you depart JFK International Airport in New York for your non-stop, overnight flight to Cairo.

Day 2: Thursday, March 18, 2010 - Cairo

Cairo Sheraton

Afternoon arrival in Cairo, where East and West come together in a wonderful and chaotic mix of old and new. You'll be met by our representatives and transferred to your centrally located 5-star hotel overlooking the Nile River. Your hotel is within walking distance of downtown shopping districts, restaurants, and the famous Egyptian Museum, so enjoy time to explore independently. This evening, join your fellow travelers on an optional dinner cruise with entertainment aboard a floating Nile River restaurant.

Day 3: Friday, March 19, 2010 - Cairo, Pyramids & Sphinx

Cairo Sheraton

This morning, after breakfast, your guide will escort you on a fascinating tour of the most famous of all sites in Egypt--the Pyramids of Cheops and Chephren. These monuments have stood for 46 centuries and are considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World, possibly the most visited monuments of Egypt. The Sphinx, a feline character with the body of a lion and the face of Khufu (Cheops in Greek) is 50 meters long and 22 meters high. Carved from a single stone, it lies just before the Pyramids, and even today its meaning and origin remain shrouded in mystery. The afternoon is yours to explore Cairo on your own, or take advantage of an optional afternoon tour to the Egyptian Museum, where you'll see, among other treasures, the priceless antiquities of Tutankhamen's tomb. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 4: Saturday, March 20, 2010 - Cairo, Flight to Luxor

M/S Tamir Henna

Transfer to the airport this morning for the flight to Luxor, capital of the New Kingdom when Pharaoh Ahmos, in 1580 BC, drove foreign invaders (the Hyksos) from Lower Egypt. It was then that Luxor became a grand city of luxurious palaces, huge temples, large gardens, as well as an important diplomatic and trade center of the ancient world. Transfer from the airport to the pier for embarkation aboard your deluxe Nile cruise ship, the Tamr Henna. Settle into your cabin and enjoy lunch aboard. This afternoon, visit the East Bank of the Nile. Highlights of today's tour include visits to the Temple of Karnak, one of the most overwhelming monuments of the Pharaonic legacy, with work carried out on the temples over a period of 1500 years, and Luxor Temple, strikingly graceful and added to over the centuries by Tutankhamen, Ramses II, Alexander the Great, and others. Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 5: Sunday, March 21, 2010 - Luxor to Esna

M/S Tamir Henna

After breakfast, disembark and board your touring coach to visit the West Bank of the Nile and the Valley of the Kings, where 64 of Egypt's Pharaohs have their royal tombs hewn into the sheer rock. Continue to the impressive Deir El Bahari mortuary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, an architectural wonder built against the backdrop of a looming cliff face and the Colossi of Memnon, two huge seated statues of Amenhotep III. Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 6: Monday, March 22, 2010 - Esna, Edfu & Kom Ombo***M/S Tamir Henna***

Your cruise ship sails from Esna to Edfu. As you go south, you will have an opportunity to view rural life in Egypt. The crops, methods of farming, animals and irrigation systems have changed little from 4,000 years ago. Here you best appreciate the fascinating contrast of ancient and modern ways of life, which coexist in Egypt and make it one of the world's most interesting of travel destinations. At Edfu, you'll take a horse-drawn carriage to the Temple of Horus, Egypt's best preserved temple, then board your ship and sail to Kom Ombo, where, in ancient times, sacred crocodiles basked in the sun on the river bank. The Temple of Kom Ombo is unique in all of Egypt and is shared by the two gods Sobek and Haroeris. These Ptolemaic temples overlook the Nile and feature fascinating drawings on the walls, including detailed drawings of surgical instruments. Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 7: Tuesday, March 23, 2010 - Kom Ombo & Aswan***M/S Tamir Henna***

Sail to Aswan, the gateway to Africa for the ancient Egyptians. Originally called "Sain" from "sanite", the red granite extracted from its quarries, Aswan became a hub of trade in spices, leather, ivory, fruit, grains, baskets and mummified and living crocodiles. An optional tour to Abu Simbel, the site of the Great Temple of Ramses II and one of the most magnificent of all temples in Egypt, is available early this morning. After lunch aboard your cruise ship, visit Philae Temple which for centuries was the holiest site for Isis worshippers. The temple was officially closed down in the 6th century A.D. by the Byzantine emperor Justinian and was the last pagan temple to exist in the Mediterranean world. After the construction of the Aswan Dam, the half-submerged Temple complex was completely dismantled and rebuilt to the original orientation on the nearby island of Agilika, which rises higher from the water and has been reshaped and landscaped to resemble the original Philae. Metal pylons on the old island of Philae can still be seen rising from the water to the south of Agilika. Before returning to your cruise ship, enjoy a tour by felucca (a small, swift Egyptian sailboat) around Elephantine Island, once the center of modern Aswan. Conclude today's sightseeing at the magnificent Botanical Gardens of Lord Kitchener. Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 8: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 - Aswan/Cairo***Cairo Sheraton***

This morning's visits include Aswan's High Dam, which controls the Nile and is a major source of hydroelectric power in Egypt. Also visit the granite quarries where a huge, cracked obelisk will clearly demonstrate how the giant stones were carved from rock. Transfer to Aswan airport for the short flight back to Cairo. Enjoy time at leisure to explore the city on your own. Or, take advantage of an optional guided tour of Old Cairo (\$45), including the Citadel of Saladin, built on the remains of a Crusader-style fortress and the Alabaster Mosque. Continue to the world-famous Khan El Khalili bazaars, where the sights, sounds, spices and exotic clothing and jewelry, hand-hammered copper, ceramic ware and other treasures await your deft bargaining to win them at astounding prices. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 9: Thursday, March 25, 2010- Cairo/Amman/Petra***Taybet Zaman***

Transfer to the airport for the short flight from Cairo to Amman. After customs formalities, board your touring coach and drive south, via the Kings Highway, to Petra. Arrival early this evening at your deluxe hotel located very close to the archeological site of Petra, where you'll enjoy a spectacular view of the ancient site and surrounding mountains. Join your fellow travelers for dinner and a stroll around the grounds of this fascinating hotel. Included meals: breakfast, dinner.

Day 10: Friday, March 26, 2010- Petra/Amman***Landmark Hotel***

Your guided tour begins with a ride on horseback and then a walk through the Siq, a narrow gorge flanked by huge cliffs. As you reach the end of the Siq, you'll behold the breathtaking sight of the Treasury, its elaborately carved façade looming high above you. Explore the various tombs and structures in this site and marveling at the artistry and creativity that must have inspired the Nabateans to construct so marvelous and dramatic a city. Later this afternoon, drive north to Amman and your hotel. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 11: Saturday, March 27, 2010- Amman*Landmark Hotel*

Located in the heart of Amman's diplomatic and business districts—just minutes away from the vibrant city center—your hotel is close to Amman's major historical sites including the Citadel and the Roman amphitheatre. Explore the city at leisure, or take an optional tour to Jerash. Located 30 miles north of Amman, Jerash is considered one of the largest and most well-preserved sites of Roman architecture in the world outside Italy. To this day, its colonnaded streets, baths, theaters, plazas and arches remain in exceptional condition. Within the remaining city walls, archaeologists have found the ruins of settlements dating back to the Neolithic Age, indicating human occupation at this location for more than 6500 years. After lunch, return to Amman where you'll visit the major historical sites, including the Roman amphitheatre, Archaeological Museum, and the ruins of the Temple of Hercules. This evening, you're invited to join your fellow travelers for an optional dinner at a local restaurant. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 12: Sunday, March 28, 2010- Amman/Cairo*Airport Area Hotel*

Full day at leisure to explore Amman on your own. Later this afternoon you will be transferred to the airport for the first leg of your return flight. Arrive in Cairo and transfer to your hotel. Included meals: breakfast.

Day 13: Monday, March 29, 2010- Cairo/USA

Today you'll be escorted to the airport and board your return flight to the USA. Your fascinating journey comes to an end as you arrive in the USA later today. Included meals: breakfast.