



REMAINS TO BE SEEN: The magnificent Roman theatre at Sabratha near Tripoli on the Libyan coast. Left: A water seller in the Djemaa el Fria main square in Marrakesh

EGYPT

The Nile is the biggest draw but not the only one. Discover mummies in the desert, dive in the Red Sea or contemplate the mysteries of Egypt from one of the hotels Agatha Christie stayed in.

Cairo and the Western Oases: Start in chaotic Cairo, whose suburbs have spilled over to Giza, site of the Pyramids. You'll stay at the historic, five-star Mena House Oberoi, famous as the base for great archaeological expeditions and for Christie. View the Pyramids from the jasmine-scented garden.

If four days in Cairo (take earplugs) leaves you wanting peace, you can bolt on three days in the vast Western Oases. Visit the Golden Mummies in the Bahayriyya Oasis and camp out in the lovely White Desert, where the rocks look like snow and glaciers.

Pyramid city, four days: £249 per person, based on two sharing. Includes B&B for three nights at the Mena House Oberoi, transfers, tours in Cairo and Giza, entrance fees to sites and an Egyptologist on Day 2. Prices for Bolt-on Western Oases: £149, which includes two nights in two-star hotel Bahayriyya, one night in Bedouin Desert Camp, all meals and camping equipment, transport and guide. Does not include flights. On the Go (020 7371 1113, www.onthegotours.com).