

Cairo to Damascus - 17 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



The ultimate adventure - Egypt, Jordan & Syria in one amazing holiday! Journey beyond the pyramids to ancient Thebes, sail the river Nile & relax by the Red Sea. Add the hidden city of Petra, a 4x4 safari in Wadi Rum & incredible Damascus - the oldest city on earth.



WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Cairo - Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza Plateau, Necropolis of Saqqara, Egyptian Museum
- Aswan - High Dam, Philae Temple, River Nile
- Nile felucca cruising - islands en route
- Kom Ombo - Temple of Kom Ombo
- Edfu - Temple of Horus
- Luxor - Temple of Karnak
- Valley of the Kings, Colossi of Memnon, Temple of Queen Hatshepsut
- Dahab - Red Sea coast - swim, relax, opt to snorkel or scuba dive in the clear coastal waters
- Rose City of Petra, Jordan

- Wadi Rum desert and safari, Jordan
- Al Karak - 12th century crusader castle, Jordan
- The Dead Sea, Jordan
- Madaba - Christian market town and Church of St George, Jordan
- Damascus - Martyrs Square, the Old City, Souq, al-Hamidayya, Umayyad Mosque, Saladin's Tomb, Straight Street, St. Ananias Church, Syria
- Optional - Palmyra or Krac des Chevaliers, Syria

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Cairo

Saturday. Welcome to Egypt and the start of your holiday! Arrival at Cairo Airport, you will be met by a representative from on the go. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative. Cairo International Airport can appear to be a little chaotic to the uninitiated. This is normal! If arriving to Cairo prior to 08:00, included transfer and hotel check in. At 10:00 we depart on a guided tour of the Egyptian Museum or officially the great Museum of Egyptian Antiquities. The prize exhibit has to be the priceless treasures of King Tutankhamen.

If arriving later in the day you will be transferred to your hotel where the remainder of the day can be spent at leisure. **Overnight - Cairo**

Day 2 : Pyramids & Saqqara

Cairo – Aswan. After a good nights rest, we have a full day of touring planned for today. You'll need to have your bags packed as we'll be travelling down to Aswan in southern Egypt tonight. This morning entrance fees and tipping kitty will be collected from everyone. Tipping kitty will cover all the tipping in Egypt, excluding tips for the felucca captain and your tour guide.

We then visit the famous pyramids and lion-headed Sphinx at Giza Plateau. Known as Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus, the pyramids were built by a highly skilled corps of mathematicians, masons, surveyors and stonecutters. About 2.5 million limestone blocks, quarried locally and weighing in excess of 6 million tonnes, were used in the construction of Cheops!

Leaving the Pyramids of Giza, we'll sometimes drop into a government supervised papyrus emporium. Here, you can buy genuine papyrus at quite reasonable prices. Continuing to the necropolis

What's Included

- 16 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 4 dinners
- 5 nights 4 - 5 star hotels - Egypt, 3 nights 3 star hotels - Jordan, 3 nights 2 star hotels - Syria
- 1 night deluxe desert camp, Wadi Rum and 2 nights felucca (open deck)
- 1 overnight train: Cairo - Aswan (seater train), 1 night bus: Luxor - Dahab
- Ferry crossing: Nuweiba - Aqaba
- Airport arrival and departure transfer day 1 and day 17
- Touring of Cairo, Giza, Saqqara, Aswan, Edfu, Luxor, Dahab, Petra, Wadi Rum, Karak, Madaba, Damascus
- Swimming in the Dead Sea
- 4x4 desert safari through Wadi Rum
- Hammam bath experience & Mt Qassioun sunset, Damascus
- Escorted by Egyptian tour leader/guide qualified in Egyptology and licensed Jordanian and Syrian tour guides
- All additional transfers and transportation in A/C vehicles
- Syrian Tourist Visa, (excluding service fee - USD\$10) and excluding USA passport holders. See our tour go guide for more info.

What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: \$55-70 USD
- Entrance Fees: \$180-210 USD
- Tip for your tour guides in Egypt, Jordan and Syria. We recommend you allow \$3 - 5 USD per day, per traveller. Tip for your Felucca Crew/ Nile Cruise staff, and driver

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updated on 11-01-2012



of Saqqara, we can explore the myriad tombs and temples at this site and see Zoser's step pyramid - constructed by Imhotep, the pharaoh's chief architect in 2700 BC!

Later there will be a chance to have dinner before catching the overnight seater train to Aswan. Option to upgrade to sleeper train cabin, see brochure or website. **Overnight - Train (B)**

Day 3 : Philae Temple



Aswan. Arrive and check into our hotel. A visit out of town takes us to the mighty high Dam – a modern feat of engineering, the by-product for which is Lake Nasser – the world's largest artificial lake! Continuing, we enjoy a short boat trip to Agilika Island for Philae Temple - dedicated to the goddess Isis. The temple dates from 4th century BC but the Ptolemies and the Romans up to 3rd century AD built most of the existing structures. Later, free time to perhaps do some shopping in the colourful souks and markets or simply relax in this attractive town which straddles the River Nile. **Overnight - Aswan (B)**

Days 4-5 : Felucca Sailing

Aswan – Nile felucca cruise – Kom Ombo. Day 4 - Optional early morning air excursion to famous Abu Simbel - the gargantuan rock - cut temple of King Ramses II, the Great Builder (details of this optional excursion are featured in our brochure and online). Possibly the most awe-inspiring temple of all ancient Egypt, with its gargantuan rock-cut façade, Abu Simbel was created to revere the mighty pharaonic ruler King Ramses II. Guarding the entrance to the temple, the four famous colossal statues of Ramses II sit majestically, staring out across the desert, seemingly since time began. Famously, the temple was re-located in a multi-million dollar operation in 1972, further up from the shoreline of Lake Nasser, which had threatened to erode the foundations of this monolithic temple complex.

If you choose not to embark upon this optional excursion, there is plenty to do in Aswan, before our early afternoon departure on our Nile felucca cruise. You can relax at the hotel, explore Aswan and its beautiful shoreline and corniche or perhaps do a spot of shopping.

This afternoon, we board our wind-powered Nile felucca for a 2-night voyage on the River Nile upstream to Kom Ombo. Felucca's are simple sailboats based on a unique design and have plied the mighty Nile since ancient times. Our feluccas

are proudly owned and crewed by friendly local sailors and they have been adapted to comfortably carry our travellers. On Day 5, a stop will be made at the Temple of Kom Ombo. 2 nights onboard the felucca. All meals included.

NOTE: As feluccas are wind-powered, our itinerary cannot be rigidly defined. However, during our cruise, we make plenty of stops to visit points of interest, areas for swimming and for the purpose of performing our ablutions. (there are no toilets or showers on board) The felucca sails during the day, and prior to sundown, the anchor is dropped and we moor at the riverside for the night. The craft carries between 5-10 passengers comfortably and the deck is strewn with soft colorful cushions and rugs and equipped with a canopy that offers shade and protection from the elements. Nothing beats the experience of sleeping under a blanket of stars, though you'll need to bring a sleeping bag/ sleeping sheet and also a towel with you. Soft drinks, water and beer can be purchased aboard.

THE NILE FELUCCA CRUISE: Before boarding the felucca, it is important you prepare a day bag - taking care to pack things you feel you'll need during the cruise, as your large bag will be placed in below deck storage. If unable to swim, you must advise your tour leader before boarding the felucca.

5 STAR NILE CRUISER: Those travellers who have opted and paid the supplement to travel aboard the Nile 5 Star cruiser will be provided with their cruising schedule upon arrival in Cairo. Boarding of the Nile 5 star cruiser will usually be on Day 3 for a period of 3 nights, or on Day 4 for period of 3 nights. **Overnight - onboard Felucca (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

Day 6 : Kom Ombo & Edfu Temple

Kom Ombo - Edfu - Luxor. Disembarking in Kom Ombo, we enjoy a visit to the Temple of Horus at Edfu. Having the distinction of being the largest and most completely preserved pharaonic, albeit Greek-built, temple in Egypt, it was one of the last monumental temples built on a large scale. Though much newer than the temples of Karnak and Luxor, its excellent state of structural preservation fills in a lot of historical gaps because it is, in effect, a 2000 year old replica of an architectural style that was already age-old during Ptolemaic times.

Back on the bus, we rejoin the police convoy as we drive north to Luxor. Home of the legendary Valley of the Kings and Temple of Karnak, 4000 year-old Luxor is ancient Egypt at it's best. Enjoy some rest and relaxation. Tonight, an optional visit is available to the Temple of Luxor. The excursion is payable locally. Rest of evening free. **Overnight - Luxor (B)**

Day 7 : Valley of the Kings



Luxor - Dahab. An early start allows us to avoid some of the fierce heat as we venture to the awesome Valley of the Kings. The first monument you'll see on the West Bank is the imposing 18m-high Colossi of Memnon, which represent the remains of the temple of the hedonistic Amenophis III. Further highlights include the legendary Valley of the Kings and the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut. The Valley of the Kings is studded with often highly decorated tombs, constructed to once house the regal sarcophagi enclosed mummies of the mighty pharaohs awaiting their passage into the after-life.

Later this afternoon after time to relax, we visit the Temple of Karnak - a spectacular complex of sanctuaries, pylons, chapels, halls and obelisks, all dedicated to the Theban gods and to the greater glory of Egypt's Middle and New Kingdom rulers.

Tonight, we travel to Dahab by overnight private bus (journey time, approximately 17 hours). Do purchase some water and snacks for the journey ahead of our departure. **Overnight - Bus (B)**

Days 8-9 : Dahab



Dahab - Petra (Jordan). Arrival and hotel check-in. Scuba diving, snorkelling, sun-worshipping, chilling, shopping - take your pick.

Day 9 - we offer an optional snorkelling excursion to the Blue Hole. 80 metres deep, the Blue Hole boasts an abundance of colourful coral, fish and marine life. Most of the aquatic species live within the first 5 metres beneath the sea level. **Overnight - Dahab (B:2)**

Day 10 : Aqaba

Dahab - Petra (Jordan). Today we transfer to Nuweiba Port to cross the Gulf of Aqaba by ferry and travel onward to Petra. This evening we will meet our Jordanian tour guide and other tour



members continuing with us through Jordan and onto Syria.

Overnight - Petra (B)

Day 11 : Petra



Petra. Possibly the jewel in Jordan's glittering archaeological crown, Petra should have been the Eighth Wonder, and so it is no surprise that it has recently been voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Accessed on a walk through a penetrative, narrow, deep siq, the end prize is the hidden valley where the Rose City of Petra lies. As you reach the end of the Siq, you'll come across the spectacular façade of Al Kazneh – the Treasury of Petra. It's natural to have an Indiana Jones moment here as it was this building that served as the Holy Grail's resting place and the prize that Indy so coveted. This rose red building actually served as a royal tomb, but got its name from the legend that pirates hid their treasure there. More amazing Nabataean and Roman ruins follow, including an 8000 seat amphitheatre, royal tombs and Mausoleums.

As the Treasury is passed, the hidden valley widens to reveal the remains of the city proper. An erosion-hewn masterpiece all but lost to the modern world until 1812 when a Swiss explorer rediscovered it, Petra is full of ancient tombs and ruins ripe for modern-day discoverers like us! If you are feeling energetic, why not continue up the hillside along the ancient steps that take you to the Monastery, to take in the stunning views. Consider opting for our Petra Kitchen bolton tonight (see the website or brochure for more details). **Overnight - Petra (B)**

Day 12 : Wadi Rum

Petra - Wadi Rum. This morning we can return to the Rose Red city for further exploration. Then drive to Wadi Rum for a 4x4 desert safari before enjoying a traditional Jordanian dinner and a night in the desert. A vast, silent landscape of ancient riverbeds, pastel coloured stretches of sandy desert and amazing eroded rock formations known as jebels that rise from the desert floor, the desert landscape of Wadi Rum is simply stunning. The region is also home to semi-nomadic Bedouin living in their great goat hair tents, tending their herds of sheep and goat and preserving a lifestyle that has been practised here in the desert for centuries. **Overnight - Wadi Rum (B, D)**

Day 13 : Karak Castle & the Dead Sea



Wadi Rum - Karak - Dead Sea - Madaba. This morning, we explore the well preserved 12th century crusader castle of Al Karak. It took the Crusaders some twenty years to erect their fortified stronghold, which through the proceeding centuries withstood countless attacks and siege. Once finished in 1161, it became the residence of the lord of Transjordan, by then the most important fief of the Crusader kingdom, rich in produce and tax revenues. Note: Shobak crusader castle maybe visited as an alternative to Karak.

Descending some 1300 metres to the lowest point on the earth's surface we arrive at the Dead Sea. After an included lunch, spend the afternoon swimming, lathering up with a detoxifying mud bath and bobbing about in the ever warm mineral-rich body of water. After we continue onto Madaba - famed for its Byzantine mosaics. Here, if time permits you'll have time to explore before dinner at a lovely local restaurant. **Overnight - Madaba (B, L, D)**

Day 14 : Damascus

Madaba - Damascus (Syria). Spend the morning at leisure before travelling to the Syrian border. After attending to immigration we continue to the nation's charming capital, Damascus. **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 15 : Damascus



Damascus. Today, we enjoy a tour of reputedly the oldest continuously inhabited city on earth. Lying about 80 km inland from the Mediterranean Sea, Damascus has a wealth of historical sites dating back to many different periods of the city's history. Since the city has been built up with every passing occupation, it has become almost impossible to excavate all the ruins of Damascus that lie up to 8

feet below the modern level! Damascus is made up of a sizeable old city, divided into the market area, Muslim area, Christian area and the Jewish area. All three groups are still represented in Damascus, even if the Jewish community now only counts a few thousand. Thoroughly charming, compact and bustling, Damascus (Ash-Sham to locals) is studded with rich examples of Islamic and Ottoman architecture. The heart of the city is Martyrs Square. In the side streets just off the square, there are lots of eateries serving shawarma and felafel, and pastry shops serving sweetmeats.

However, just east is probably the real beating heart of Damascus - the Old City. Surrounded by what was once a Roman wall and rebuilt several times over the last 2000 years, the Old City boasts a main thoroughfare, Straight Street which has been here since Graeco-Roman times. Just beyond the Citadel is the colourful Souk al Hamidiyya, a stone's throw from the Umayyad Mosque. Built in 705AD, the facades around the central courtyard are adorned with golden mosaics. South of the mosque is Azem Palace. This evening, enjoy a hamam at a Damascene bath house before taking in the magnificent views from Mt Qassioun. **Overnight - Damascus (B)**

Day 16 : Palmyra or Krac des Chevaliers



Damascus. Free day to enjoy Damascus or book our optional excursion to Ma'alula, an ancient town where the locals still speak Aramaic, the language of Christ & Krac des Chevaliers, a crusader castle of epic proportion OR the spectacular ruins of Palmyra – perhaps Syria's number one sight (both excursions payable locally).

Krac des Chevaliers was described by travel writer Paul Theroux as the epitome of the dream castle of childhood fantasies, and at your first glimpse of this huge and magnificent castle towering down from its hillside position, you'll understand why. Inside you can see wonderfully preserved frescoes and some Gothic style internal architecture, as well as the amazing views of the surrounding countryside.

Palmyra is found in the middle of the Syrian desert and is known for its exceptional beauty - age has turned the buildings of the ancient caravan city to pink. Palmyra was an important and wealthy city from the 2nd century BC as it was located on the silk road trading route connecting Persia, India, China and the Roman Empire. A colonnaded street leads us to the ruined city where we will see a well preserved theatre, interesting Museum, the



striking Ba'al temple (built later in the city's history) & the series of largescale funerary monuments, which now form the so-called Valley of the Tombs.
Overnight - Damascus (B)

Day 17 : Damascus

Monday. Damascus. Our tours ends after breakfast and onward transfer to Damascus airport.

Please note: If more than 4 persons, the group will travel with a driver (not a tour guide) from Madaba - Damascus. Our driver will attend to all immigration formalities for passengers and vehicles. If less than 4 persons, public transport will be used on this journey with representation at the Syrian border.(B)

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Visas

Visas are required by all visitors to Egypt. Visa forms are available from us. The Embassy of Egypt advises all travellers to procure their visa prior to entry into Egypt. However it still remains possible for nationals of some countries to procure their tourist visa upon arrival at Cairo International Airport.

Please note that in the event of visa refusal at port of entry, on the go cannot be held responsible.

All RSA passport holders must procure their Egyptian visa prior to departure.

When filling in an Egyptian visa form, you will be asked to provide your address in Egypt. For the purposes of this form, please use the following address: 68 Merghany St, Abou Ghaly Building Heliopolis, Cairo. Telephone: +2 02 241821 65

If your holiday incorporates a stay in Jordan, followed by further arrangements in Egypt (ie you travel to Jordan and then return to Egypt) you will need to procure a Multiple Entry Egyptian Tourist Visa that is only available before travelling to Egypt.

Please note that visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is solely the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go Tours.

If travelling with us from Egypt to Jordan via Aqaba Seaport (the Jordanian port of entry if arriving from Egypt) a Jordanian Tourist Visa is obtainable upon arrival, free of charge for UK, EU, AUS, NZ, CAN and USA passport holders. For all other nationalities please check with your local Jordanian Embassy. On departure from Jordan, via land or sea, a 5JD departure tax of is applied to all visitors.

Climate

Temperatures in Egypt are generally high (25 - 30 degrees) and even hotter in the summer months from May to September, when the sun can be fierce and temperatures soar, so pack light comfortable clothing, sunscreen and a hat.

In Cairo and the Nile Delta region, winter (October to February) can be cooler - so take a jacket, long-

sleeved tops and trousers for the cooler evenings. The south remains warm during this time but again, temperatures do drop in the evenings. Rainfall is negligible with the most falling along Egypt's Mediterranean coastline.

Health Requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for typhoid (valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). Vaccination requirements can change so please check with your local health care provider before travel.

Currency

Egyptian Pounds (EGP or LE). Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are easily exchanged. You can obtain Egyptian Pounds (LE) at any major bank or your hotel. Exchange rates are subject to fluctuations.

- USD 1 = EGP 6.0
- GBP 1 = EGP 9.3
- AUD 1 = EGP 6.0
- EURO 1 = EGP 7.70

Funds collected in Egypt for entrance fees or optional excursion that you may wish to undertake are payable in local currency (EGP).

Time

Egypt is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)

Essential Packing

- Sleeping bag for the felucca or for camping in the White Desert (if applicable to your tour).
- Lightweight cotton garments.
- Comfortable walking shoes for the Pyramids and Valley of the Kings
- DEET based mosquito repellent & antihistamine cream
- 2 pin, European electrical adaptor.
- Two spare passport photos & a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swim costume and torch
- Sleep sheet or sleeping bag if travelling with us to Jordan and staying at our Wadi Rum camp.

Arrival Transfers

A complimentary airport arrival transfer is included in your tour. Upon arrival at Cairo Airport you will be met by a representative from On The Go Tours either just before immigration or in the baggage hall near the luggage belt of your respective arriving flight. The prominent sign depicting our company logo easily identifies our representative. Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative. After collecting your luggage you will be escorted to our awaiting transportation.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the

arrival hall) or your flight to Egypt is delayed, please call or send a text message to the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher.

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