



Travel Talk tours will take you on a pilgrimage of culture, history, adventure, fun and relaxation. You will visit ancient sites, explore the treasures of Egypt, discover the magnificent pyramids and sphinxes, meet local people and partake in numerous activities throughout your Egypt experience. Before you leave for your adventure, it is important that you read this pre-departure information to ensure that your trip runs as smoothly as possible. While we appreciate that you are embarking on an adventure holiday that will produce its own share of surprises, it is also true that forewarned is forearmed. This information is not written with the intention of being anything other than general information that we hope will help you be more prepared for your holiday. The philosophy of Travel Talk is simple: to provide excellent value for money for budget conscious and adventurous travellers without compromising their experiences. We achieve this by providing quality transportation, accommodation, sightseeing and information services. We hope that our philosophy will exceed your expectations and the following information will help you have a memorable journey in Egypt.

VISAS

All visitors to Egypt are required to have a visa and a passport valid for another six months. Visas can be arranged through Egyptian embassies worldwide. Visitors from the US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Korea, Colombia and EU countries may be able to purchase a visa stamp upon arrival in Egypt, please note that visa fee USD 25, it can only be paid in USD, GBP or EURO. South Africans need to arrange their Egyptian visa prior to arrival.

ESSENTIALS

Before you leave your country, we recommend you to make sure you have the following:

- ➔ Passport
- ➔ Airline or transportation ticket
- ➔ Tour voucher
- ➔ Insurance policy
- ➔ Visas (if necessary)
- ➔ Label on your travel bag
- ➔ Pre-departure information
- ➔ Money (cash and/or travellers cheques)
- ➔ Credit card

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is recommended to all passengers travelling on Travel Talk tours to have personal insurance to assist with any medical and other costs. Please do not forget to take a copy of your insurance policy with you. While there are no mandatory vaccinations for travellers to Egypt, it is advisable to ensure your typhoid, polio and tetanus inoculations are up to date. Some travellers feel more confident with hepatitis and meningitis inoculations as well. Rabies exists only in rural areas and it is very unlikely that you will come in contact with a rabid animal on tour.

Immunisation is generally available in a series of three injections over a period of one month (lasts 3 to 5 years) or a single visit booster dose (lasts only 6 to 12 months). Please consult a medical practitioner for advice. Most people find Egypt to be a friendly and hospitable country and feel quite comfortable wandering around alone during the day. However, as with most foreign countries, it is recommended that you exercise more caution at night and do not walk alone. It is wise not to accept gifts of food or drink from any strangers. Take care with your passport, credit cards and money - a money belt to fit beneath your clothes is highly recommended.

It is also recommended to take at least one set of modest clothing. It is a sign of respect to cover your shoulders and legs when visiting mosques and also helps to avoid unwanted attention. A headscarf for women is necessary when visiting mosques in Egypt.

WHAT TO WEAR...

As a general guideline, clothing should be lightweight, loose fitting and easily washed. In Summer, cotton clothing is much more comfortable than other materials like nylon. Clothing and accessories that will protect you from the sun is also necessary. It's a good idea to pack a white or light coloured, long sleeve cotton shirt. In Winter you will need warmer clothing, especially at night. Please also keep in mind that when visiting religious sites, appropriate attire is required. It is recommended for females to pack a scarf.

MONEY

The local currency is Egyptian Pound (EGP) and 1GBP is approximately 23 EGP. Most towns in Egypt have ATMs that are linked to major international networks. Credit cards are accepted in most tourist areas, but if you are travelling off the beaten track, be prepared to have some cash. It is difficult to guess how much money you will need each day, however as a general rule approx. 15-20 GBP per day helps for extra meals and entrance fees.

WEATHER

Egyptian summers are hot and dry in most of the country & humid in the Delta and along the Mediterranean Coast. In recent years the humidity has spread to Cairo and the city swelters in August. Winters are mild with some rain, but usually there are bright, sunny days and cold nights. Spring and autumn are only short seasons and during the 50 days (khamaseen) between the end of March and mid-May, dust storms can occur sporadically. If you are travelling between November and March on a tour that includes trekking in the Sinai or cruising on the Nile you should expect temperatures to fall considerably at night. At this time of year temperatures can often fall below freezing near Mt. Sinai.

Month	Cairo		Luxor		Aswan		Dahab	
	C	F	C	F	C	F	C	F
Jan	18	65	21	70	21	70	22	72
Feb	20	68	23	74	23	74	23	73
March	22	73	28	83	27	82	26	78
April	27	82	33	93	33	92	30	86
May	31	89	37	100	37	99	34	94
June	33	93	40	104	39	103	38	99
July	33	93	40	104	39	103	38	100
Aug	33	92	38	102	38	102	38	101
Sept	32	90	37	99	37	99	36	96
Oct	29	85	33	93	33	93	32	89
Nov	23	75	27	81	26	80	28	81
Dec	19	67	22	73	22	72	24	74

EATING & DRINKING

Egyptian eating habits differ from our norm. Most natives begin the day with a light breakfast of beans (or bean cakes), eggs, and/or pickles, cheese and jam. Most families eat their large, starchy lunch between 14:00 and 17:00 and follow it with a siesta. They may take a British-style tea at 17:00 or 18:00 and eat a light supper (often leftovers from lunch) late in the evening. Dinner parties however, are scheduled late, often no earlier than 21:00. In restaurants, lunch is normally between 13:00-16:00 and dinner is between 20:00-24:00.



The shish-style kebab is extremely popular and can be served with or without skewers but always with traditional sides of greens and tomato salad, tahini sauce and pita bread. Bread is always whole wheat pita, coated with coarse ground wheat - it is heaven warm and straight from the oven. Often pita is served with a dipping sauce; tahini, hummus or babaganoush, and makes a fast, healthy, and delicious meal. The traditional and ubiquitous salad is chopped tomato, coriander, mint, little green peppers (not jalapenos but similar) and onions coated with garlic oil.

Other vegetables that grow well and are popular include beans, chickpeas and fava, which are stewed for breakfast, hearty stewed for lunch and ground and pasted for tahini and hummus dips. Mashed eggplant is the main ingredient in babaganoush and is also used in Egyptian moussaka with a mild, white cheese. Okra, cabbage, cauliflower and potatoes are used frequently; stewed with tomatoes and garlic. Rice is a staple food and is consistently wonderful, even for breakfast! Grilled pigeon is the acclaimed delicacy. You can taste local fish caught in the Red Sea; i.e. perch and tuna.

Egyptian bazaars display staggering amounts of spices, sculptured into colourful spice pyramids - from yellows of saffron and ochres of curries, to deep blues of powdered indigo dye. Food is usually spiced, but not spicy. Cumin and salt are found on restaurant tables.

There are not so many Middle Eastern deserts to speak of but fresh fruit and juice bars are very popular. There is nothing quite as refreshing as a freshly squeezed orange juice, sweetened with cut sugar cane, on a hot Egyptian day. Most of the hotels serve alcoholic drinks, but during Ramadan some hotels may close their bars.

Locally produced spirits and wine are worth a try (and cheaper than imported brands) and the local beer "Stella" is very good.

SHOPPING

Shopping, shopping, and shopping! What holiday is complete without checking out the local wares; and Egypt is no exception to the rule. Shopping ranges from the famous Khan el-Khalili Bazaar, which remains largely unchanged since the 14th Century, to the modern air-conditioned centres displaying the latest fashions.

Particularly good buys are: spices, perfumes, gold, silver, brass and copperware, carpets, leatherwork, glass, ceramics and mashrabiya. You can try some of the famous street markets for fabrics (including Egyptian cotton), the Tentmakers Bazaar for applique-work, Mohammed Ali Street for musical instruments and the Camel Markets for that out of the ordinary souvenir... okay maybe not to buy, but definitely worth a visit for interest's sake.

The typical souvenirs for tourists are Egyptian themed clothing and statues which can be purchased from almost any stalls catering for tourists.

A considerable aptitude for negotiation will unquestionably result in lower prices in tourist areas - such as the Khan and shops around the pyramids and old or Coptic Cairo.

Most other places such as grocery stores and shopping malls, the prices are fixed and not really negotiable. In some shops, a friendly effort aimed at getting a discount may be fine, but in most cases this could cause offense.

OPENING HOURS

Normally shops and department stores are open from 9:00am to 9:00pm with possible variations from town to town (except for the Ramadan period). Banks in Egypt are open Sunday through Thursday from 9:00am to 2:00pm and they are closed on Friday and Saturday. Post Offices are open from 9:00am to 2:00pm and are closed on Friday.

ELECTRICITY

All appliances require a double round pin type plug for 220 volts AC, 50- hertz.

TIPPING

Tipping is a way of life in Egypt. It is not just a "reward" and should not really be called a tip. In Arabic, it is called "baksheesh" and is part of the traditional payment structure for services, whether they are good or bad. Everyone tips everyone. You should budget for around US\$ 4-5 per day for tipping. Your bus driver, felucca staff and guide may also be honoured with such a traditional appreciation.

DISTANCES

The following information will give you a better idea of the times travelled to help you plan your day:

- ➔ Cairo-Aswan : 982 kms, 12 hrs
- ➔ Aswan-Luxor : 247 kms, 3 hrs
- ➔ Aswan-Abu Simbel : 309 kms, 3.5 hrs
- ➔ Luxor- Cairo : 735 kms, 9 hrs
- ➔ Cairo-Hurghada : 453 kms, 6 hrs
- ➔ Hurghada-Luxor : 286 kms, 4.5 hrs
- ➔ Cairo-Dahab : 630 kms, 9.5 hrs
- ➔ Cairo-Nuwebia : 540 kms, 8.5 hrs
- ➔ Dahab-Sharm : 100 kms, 1.5 hrs

FELUCCA BOAT

Feluccas are traditional sailing boats that have been used on the Nile for centuries. They are very simple sailing boats and have no engines or toilets. There is a single deck on which you can stretch out during the day under a shade awning. Each felucca sleeps 6-8 people and is crewed by a captain and a deck hand - both of whom have grown up along the banks of the Nile. As well as being experienced Nile sailors they also make the most delicious meals out of simple local ingredients. You may sit down to a lunch of local bread, white cheese, hummus and delicious fresh juicy tomatoes or a dinner of pasta and mixed vegetables with delicious tomato sauce. The deck is covered with mattresses and cushions and you will sleep sardine style across the boat, however a light sleeping bag will be necessary if you are travelling in the winter.

NILE CRUISER

We use 5-star cruisers on our Nile Cruise tours. On the Nile Cruise boat, there is an ample deck space, a large sundeck and a spacious, shaded seating area with its own bar and the best views of the majestic Nile. Meals are served in the air-conditioned restaurant and there is a lounge bar where you can enjoy your evening listening to music or playing cards. The air-conditioned cabins have a private ensuite shower, toilet and washbasin as well as a large window offering a panoramic view of the river. Although the meals are included in the tour price, drinks will cost extra and please note the prices on the cruise boat can be higher than the usual Egyptian restaurants & bars.



AIRPORT TRANSFER

Your arrival airport transfer is included if;

- You fly into the city in which your tour starts
- You arrive on the first day of your tour OR you have booked pre-accommodation through us
- You forward your flight details to us, at least 10 days in advance, including:
 - Date of flight
 - Flight number
 - Arrival time
 - Name of travellers to be picked up

If you do not want an airport transfer to the hotel, please let us know by either phoning the office (0208 099 95 96) or sending us an email (info@traveltalktours.com). Please note the hotel check-in time is from 13:00.

ACCOMMODATION

The hotels used on Travel Talk Egypt tours are rated 5-star (Boutique hotel in Dahab). The main criteria in the hotel selection process is cleanliness, private bathroom facilities and location (usually central). If you are travelling on your own, you'll be allocated a twin or triple room with other group member/s of the same gender. Travellers who have paid a single supplement will stay in single rooms. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee the availability of double beds for couples.

Your tour leader will organise the rooming arrangements at check-in according to the rooming lists. We can therefore not guarantee any last minute changes.

PRE&POST TOUR ACCOMMODATION

Should you require pre or post tour accommodation, please notify us (or your agent) at the time of booking and we can make the arrangements for you. This information will be clearly stated on your voucher. Unless a room is immediately available, most hotels will not allocate your room until at least midday.

TRANSPORTATION

You can expect comfort and reliability on our modern coaches and mini buses. Most vehicles feature air-conditioning, safe and secure luggage storage, comfortable seats, and a sound system.

TOUR LEADER

Your tour leader's role is to ensure that all aspects of the trip run smoothly. He/she will share their local knowledge, advise you on ways to spend your free time and coordinate the day-to-day running of the tour. From time to time situations can arise and things may not always go according to plan. If this occurs, your tour leader may require your cooperation and understanding. Furthermore, should you have any problems on tour please let your leader know so that the correct steps can be taken. Please bear in mind that when you travel on a combined tour, you will have different groups and a different leader for each leg.

ENTRANCE FEES

- ➔ Giza Pyramids/Sphinx - Cairo ££ 200
- ➔ Sakkara Pyramids - Cairo ££ 180
- ➔ Valley of the Kings - Luxor ££ 244
- ➔ Luxor Temple - Luxor ££ 160
- ➔ Karnak Temple - Luxor ££ 200
- ➔ Edfu Temple - Aswan ££ 180
- ➔ Komombo Temple - Aswan ££ 140
- ➔ Philae Temple Aswan ££ 180
- ➔ Egyptian Museum Cairo ££ 220
- ➔ Salah El Din Citadel - Cairo ££ 180
- ➔ Unfinished Obelisk Aswan ££ 80
- ➔ Hatchepsut ££ 142
- ➔ Great Library 70 ££
- ➔ Citadel - light house 80 ££
- ➔ Catacomb 80 ££
- ➔ Pompey's Pillar 80 ££

Note: In Egypt the entry fees may be discounted if they are purchased with an international student ID. All fees are subject to change and have been quoted in Egyptian Pound.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- ➔ Blue hole Excursion (Dahab) 34 USD
- ➔ Mountain dinner (Dahab) 24 USD
- ➔ Nubian dinner (Aswan) 26 USD Abu
- ➔ Simbel (Aswan) 94 USD
- ➔ Hot air ballon (Luxor) 124 USD
- ➔ Pyramids S&L show (Cairo) 30 USD

MISSED THE WELCOME MEETING

Being avid travellers ourselves, we know that unforeseen circumstances can arise. If you are late and miss the welcome meeting, don't stress, just check the information board in the hotel lobby for the next day's programme as the Cairo city tour starts around 8:00am. If you arrive on Day 2 or after, please contact your tour leader to organise to meet up.

LANGUAGE

The language used in Egypt is Arabic. Please find below some words and phrases to help you during your stay.

Hello	Selaam
Goodbye	Ma Salama
Yes	Aiwa
No	La
Welcome	Marhaba
Please	Minfudluk
Thank you	Shokran
Excuse me	Lao Samaht
Sorry	Assef
Perhaps	Yenken
How are you ?	E-zayak
Good morning	Sabah El-kheir
Good evening	Masa El-kheir
Good night	Tesbah Ala kheir
Today	En nahar-da
Tomorrow	Bukra
Yesterday	Imbarih
I'm well, thank you	El Humdoolelaa
Money	Fuluss
How much is it ?	Bekam ?
Too much !	Ketir !
I don't understand	Ana mish fahem
Leave me alone	Etrokny wahdy
Where is ...?	Fein....?
Here	Hena
Water	Maya
Coffee	Ahwa
Tea	Shy
The bill	El Hesab
Pharmacy	Ssaydaliya
Doctor	Doctur