



Your dream as an archaeologist come true: Egypt. Archaeological Tour of the Nile Valley (Cairo, Luxor and Aswan, Egypt)

1. General information

An academic training course in the form of a ten-day archaeological tour of Egypt, conceived not as a conventional tourist trip but as a field course. The group visits the best-known monuments of Egyptian civilization and also other places in the Nile Valley that are rarely visited, accompanied at all times by a guide and by an expert in Egyptian archaeology who explains each site from the point of view of research: how it was excavated, what is known and what is still under discussion. The route combines Cairo and its surroundings with a cruise on the Nile between Luxor and Aswan.

The aim of the course is for students to get to know at first hand the fundamental archaeological sites of Egypt and to learn to read them as an archaeologist does: to identify building phases, iconographic programs, stone-working techniques and funerary contexts, and to understand how archaeological research has built the knowledge we have today of that civilization.

The starting point is the pyramids of Giza, the only one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world still standing, with the Sphinx and the valley temples of the 4th Dynasty (c. 2600-2500 BC), and the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), which holds the complete burial goods of Tutankhamun and the solar boat of Khufu, together with the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir. From Cairo the group reaches Saqqara and Dahshur, two less frequented necropolises that explain the origin of the pyramid: the step pyramid of Djoser, the mastabas of the high officials, the Serapeum with the burials of the Apis bulls, and the Bent and Red pyramids of Sneferu.

In Upper Egypt two sites away from the usual circuits are visited, the temple of Hathor at Dendera and that of Seti I at Abydos, center of the cult of Osiris, and then ancient Thebes: Karnak and Luxor on the east bank and, on the west bank, the Valley of the Kings, the temple of Hatshepsut and the Colossi of Memnon. The final stretch is made on board a Nile cruise, one of the most attractive experiences of the course: for four nights the boat sails up the river from Luxor to Aswan and the journey itself becomes a lesson in historical geography, with stops at the Ptolemaic temples of Edfu and Kom Ombo, the First Cataract, a felucca ride and the sanctuary of Isis at Philae, the last pagan temple of Egypt to close, in the 6th century.

The itinerary follows, from north to south, a large part of the historical sequence of Egypt, so that students can relate each monument to its period:

- Early Dynastic period (c. 3100-2700 BC): Abydos, cemetery of the first kings and origin of the cult of Osiris; the Narmer Palette in the Tahrir Museum.
- Old Kingdom (c. 2700-2200 BC): Saqqara, Dahshur and Giza, from the step pyramid to the great pyramids; mastabas and royal statuary.
- New Kingdom (c. 1550-1070 BC): Thebes with Karnak, Luxor, the Valley of the Kings and Deir el-Bahari; the Abydos of Seti I; the burial goods of Tutankhamun at the GEM.
- Ptolemaic and Roman period (332 BC-4th century AD): Dendera, Edfu, Kom Ombo and Philae, with their late temple architecture, and the Serapeum of Saqqara.
- Late Antiquity and Christian Egypt: reuse of temples as churches, the closure of Philae and the first Coptic communities, visible at several of the sites on the route.

2. What you will learn

2.1. On the visits

- How the pyramids were built: evolution from the mastaba and the step pyramid to the smooth-sided pyramids of Dahshur and Giza; quarries, ramps, transport and finishing of the stone; current state of the scientific debate.
- Organization of a royal funerary complex of the Old Kingdom: pyramid, mortuary temple, causeway, valley temple and cemeteries of courtiers.
- Reading an Egyptian temple: pylons, courtyards, hypostyle halls and sanctuary; differences between the temples of the New Kingdom (Karnak, Luxor) and those of the Ptolemaic period (Dendera, Edfu, Kom Ombo, Philae).
- Funerary archaeology of the New Kingdom: structure of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, decorative programs and funerary texts, ancient looting and modern discoveries, with the case of Tutankhamun as an example.
- Relief, painting and statuary: conventions of representation, carving and polychrome techniques, and how to distinguish periods and styles on the monument itself.
- Applied hieroglyphic writing: recognition of royal cartouches, titularies and offering formulae on the walls of temples and tombs.

2.2. Theory

- Introduction to the history of Egypt from the Predynastic period to Roman and Christian Egypt: chronology, dynasties and main events.
- Religion and funerary thought: the main gods, the cult of Osiris, divine kingship and the conception of the afterlife that explains tombs and temples.
- The Nile as the axis of the territory: agriculture, communications, cities and necropolises along the valley.
- History of Egyptology: from the Napoleonic expedition and Champollion to Mariette, Carter and the current missions; how the collections of the Cairo museums were formed.
- Egypt and the Mediterranean: contacts with the Greek and Roman world and the survival of Egyptian cults in late antiquity.

3. Directed at

Students and graduates in archaeology, history, anthropology, art history, Egyptology and related disciplines who wish to get to know on the ground the main sites and museums of Egypt with an archaeological reading, and anyone interested in Egyptian archaeology who would like a first field experience guided by specialists.

No prior knowledge is required.

4. Field School life & language

The course lasts ten days. On the first day participants travel on their own to Cairo from anywhere in the world and are received at the organization's hotel, which will be communicated in advance; there is no scheduled activity that day, so that everyone can arrive at the time that suits them. On the second day, at seven in the morning, the group has breakfast and sets off to begin the route. From the second to the ninth day the complete itinerary is carried out: Cairo and its surroundings, the flight to Luxor, the Nile cruise to Aswan and the return to Cairo, where the group spends the last night. On the tenth day, after breakfast, each participant leaves the hotel for the airport at the time of their flight.

General outline of the route, subject to adjustments according to opening hours, internal flights and unforeseen circumstances:

- Day 1. Arrival in Cairo and reception at the hotel.

- Days 2 and 3. Cairo and its surroundings: the pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, the necropolises of Saqqara and Dahshur and the museums of the city.
- Days 4 and 5. Flight to Luxor and visit to the great temples and necropolises of Middle Egypt and ancient Thebes, on both banks of the Nile. Boarding the cruise.
- Days 6 to 8. Nile cruise between Luxor and Aswan, with stops at the Ptolemaic temples of the river and on the island of Philae. Return flight to Cairo.
- Day 9. Cairo. Last night at the hotel.
- Day 10. Breakfast and departure for the airport.

The usual day is devoted entirely to touring and visiting the sites, temples and museums of the program, with stops for meals at the points set by the organization. The explanations at the sites and during the journeys are given by the guide and by the expert in Egyptian archaeology who accompany the group throughout the course.

Accommodation is in high-category hotels, four and five stars, in Cairo, in double or triple rooms, separated by sex, each with a full bathroom and shower, and for four nights on board a Nile cruise ship between Luxor and Aswan, on a full-board basis. The cabins are double, for two people of the same sex, and have a bathroom with shower. Hotel meals are of a standard continental type.

The course is taught in English.

5. Certificates

At the end of the course students receive a certificate of participation stating the hours and the activities completed. Participants with outstanding performance may request a letter of recommendation from the organization.

6. Sessions & Cost

Sessions	Dates	Cost
Session #1	2027 May 24 – June 02	\$ 3400
Session #2	2027 June 14 – June 23	\$ 3400
Session #3	2027 July 19 – July 28	\$ 3400
Session #4	2027 July 28 – August 06	\$ 3400
Session #5	2027 September 13 – September 22	\$ 3400
Session #6	2027 October 04 – October 13	\$ 3400

7. Course fee

The course fee includes:

- Tuition and teaching.
- Accommodation in four- and five-star hotels in Cairo, in double or triple rooms, with breakfast.
- Four nights of Nile cruise on a full-board basis.
- All meals of the program.
- Internal flights Cairo–Luxor and Aswan–Cairo.
- Transfers and transport throughout the route, within the course itinerary.
- Entrance tickets to the sites, temples and museums of the program, including the visit to the interior of several pyramids, one at Giza and two at Dahshur, and the Grand Egyptian Museum.

- English-speaking guide and expert in Egyptian archaeology during all the visits.
- Basic travel insurance during the stay.
- Taxes and fuel.
- Certificate of participation.

Not included:

- Airfare from the student home to/from Cairo (Egypt).
- The entry visa for Egypt, which each student obtains on their own online before the trip (visa2egypt.gov.eg) or on arrival at Cairo airport. Its current cost is about \$ 30 for a single-entry visa.
- Drinks.
- Tips, should they be required.
- Optional insurance and cancellation insurance.
- Any other service not specified in the previous section and any personal extras: telephone, laundry, etc.

8. Spaces available

The course is limited to a maximum of 15 participants per session, with a minimum group of 10 people for the session to take place. Reservations are only effective once payment of the registration fee is received. If for any reason the course is cancelled, the amount is refunded in accordance with the field school's refund policy.

9. Information and reservations

Contact:

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