



A Women's TravelCircle to Egypt & the Nile **A 13-Day, 12-Night Journey Across River, Desert, and Sky**

January 24 - February 5, 2027
Arrive/Depart at Cairo International Airport

Trip at-a-Glance

We spend **four nights in Cairo**, exploring ancient neighborhoods, museums, markets, and the pyramids, before flying south for **one night in Luxor**, including a sunrise **hot air balloon** and visits to the Valley of the Kings and Luxor Temple by night. From there, we settle into the rhythm of the river with **four nights cruising the Nile** from Luxor to Aswan, stopping at legendary temples and enjoying a private early-morning visit to Philae and a felucca sail. We then continue to **Abu Simbel for one night**, experiencing its monumental cliff-carved temples, before returning to **Cairo for three final nights** to savor the city, share a closing circle, and celebrate our journey together.

Sunday, January 24 — Welcome to Egypt

Welcome to Cairo and the beginning of our time together in Egypt.

***Cairo** is a city of astonishing layers—where ancient pyramids rise at the edge of a modern, fast-moving metropolis, and daily life unfolds alongside some of the world's oldest sacred sites. Expect vibrant markets, historic neighborhoods, world-class museums, and a constant hum of energy that feels at once overwhelming and deeply alive. Cairo's personality is bold, curious, and resilient—a place that doesn't perform for visitors so much as invite you to witness history still being lived.*

Upon arrival at **Cairo International Airport**, you'll be met by our local tour facilitator, who will assist you with your **entry visa and immigration formalities**. From there, we'll transfer together to our **boutique hotel in Cairo**, where you'll have time to settle in after your travels.

4:30 PM — Opening Circle & Welcome Tea

We'll gather for our first circle together, easing into the journey with a welcome tea and a reflective opening led by **Shasta Nelson**. This is a gentle arrival space—time to land, meet one another, and mark the transition from everyday life into this shared experience.

6:30 PM — Welcome Dinner

We'll share our first meal together, a relaxed welcome dinner designed to nourish and ground us after a long travel day.

Meals Included: Welcome Tea, Dinner

Overnight: Boutique Hotel, Cairo

Monday, January 25 — Coptic Cairo & Women's Exchange

Morning: Guided Tour of Coptic Cairo (9:00 AM – 2:00 PM)

After breakfast, we head into **Coptic Cairo** for a private guided exploration of one of the city's oldest and most spiritually significant neighborhoods. Known for its quiet, contemplative atmosphere, this area weaves together centuries of faith, refuge, and continuity through ancient churches, a historic synagogue, and narrow stone-lined streets.

Highlights include:

- **The Hanging Church**, one of Egypt's oldest Christian churches
- **The Church of St. Sergius and Bacchus**, traditionally believed to have sheltered the Holy Family
- **The Ben Ezra Synagogue**, located near the ancient riverbank associated with the story of Moses

1:00 PM — Lunch

Lunch will be at either a **monastery café** or a **traditional garden restaurant**, depending on availability.

3:00 PM — Women's Circle & Cultural Exchange

In the afternoon, we gather for a **women's circle with invited local women**, creating space for conversation, shared stories, and cross-cultural connection.

Evening at Leisure

Dinner is on your own tonight, offering time to rest, explore locally, or enjoy a quiet evening at the hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Overnight: Boutique Hotel, Cairo

Tuesday, January 26 — Saqqara, Social Impact, & Perfume-Making

Morning: Saqqara & the Step Pyramid

This morning we travel south of Cairo to **Saqqara**, home to one of the most significant archaeological landscapes in Egypt. Here we'll explore the **Step Pyramid of King Djoser**, designed around 2630 BCE by the architect **Imhotep**. Widely considered the world's oldest freestanding stone structure, the pyramid's six-tiered design marked a turning point in architectural history.

We'll also view several surrounding Old Kingdom pyramids and tombs, offering a broader sense of this ancient necropolis.

Lunch at a Local Egyptian Restaurant

We'll enjoy lunch at a local restaurant featuring traditional Egyptian cuisine.

Afternoon: Visit with a Women-Focused NGO

After lunch, we'll spend time with a **local Egyptian NGO** focused on **gender equity and combating discrimination against women**. This visit offers a grounded look at contemporary social efforts and the lived realities of women in Egypt today.

Hands-On Perfume-Making Experience

We'll end the afternoon with a **hands-on perfume-making class**, learning about Egypt's long history with fragrance and creating a personal scent to take home.

Evening at Leisure

Dinner is on your own this evening, with time to rest, reflect, or explore at your own pace.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Overnight: Boutique Hotel, Cairo

Wednesday, January 27 — From Cairo to Luxor

After breakfast, we'll transfer to **Cairo International Airport** for our flight to **Luxor**. (Depending on flight timing, there may be some free time for light shopping or last-minute browsing before departure.)

Afternoon: Arrival in Luxor & Salt Cave Experience

Upon arrival in Luxor, we'll settle into our hotel before enjoying time at a **newly opened salt cave**, where we'll experience **halotherapy**—a calm, restorative pause after travel and a gentle way to acclimate before the days ahead.

Evening: Luxor Temple by Night

As evening falls, we'll visit the **Temple of Luxor**, beautifully illuminated under the night sky. This temple has long been admired not only for its grandeur, but for its symbolic design. Philosopher and Egyptologist **R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz** famously referred to it as the "Temple of Man," reflecting the harmony between architecture, proportion, and human consciousness.

We'll take time to experience the space slowly, allowing the atmosphere and scale of the temple to speak for itself.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight: 4-Star Hotel, Luxor

Thursday, January 28 — West Bank of Luxor & Nile Cruise Begins

Early Morning: Hot Air Balloon Ride

For those who choose to participate, the day begins early with a **sunrise hot air balloon ride** over the West Bank of Luxor, offering sweeping views of the Nile, farmland, and ancient temples from above. (The hot air balloon ride is included, but can be refunded if someone wants to opt out.)

Morning: Valley of the Kings & West Bank Highlights

After breakfast, we explore the West Bank of ancient Thebes, one of the most powerful landscapes in Egypt, where art, architecture, and beliefs about the afterlife were woven together with extraordinary intention. Our visits include:

- **The Valley of the Kings**, with several royal tombs, including the tomb of **Ramses IV**
- **The Temple of Hatshepsut**, dramatically set against the desert cliffs
- A stop at the **Colossi of Memnon**, the massive seated statues that have stood guard for millennia

Afternoon: Embark on Our Nile Cruise

Following our explorations, we'll transfer to our **Nile cruise ship (4-star, all inclusive)**, where we'll check in and enjoy lunch onboard. The afternoon allows time to rest, unpack, and take in the rhythm of life along the river as we begin our journey south.

A Nile cruise is one of the most iconic and enduring ways to experience Egypt, following the same river route that has connected temples, towns, and civilizations for thousands of years. Traveling by river allows for a slower, more immersive rhythm—linking extraordinary sites with ease while offering a uniquely relaxed and scenic way to move through the heart of the country.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Overnight: Nile Cruise

Friday, January 29 — Karnak Temple & Sailing to Edfu

Morning: Temple of Karnak

Today's primary focus is the extraordinary **Temple of Karnak**, the largest religious complex ever constructed. Walking through its vast courtyards and towering columns offers a powerful sense of the ambition, devotion, and artistry of ancient Egypt at its height.

Afternoon: Sail the Nile & Esna Lock

After returning to the ship for lunch, we begin sailing south toward **Edfu**, passing through the **Esna Lock**, an experience that offers a fascinating look at modern river navigation layered atop ancient waterways.

The afternoon is unhurried—time on deck to watch the Nile banks drift by, read, journal, or simply rest.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Overnight: Nile Cruise (Edfu)

Saturday, January 30 — Edfu, Kom Ombo & Sailing to Aswan

Morning: Temple of Edfu

We begin the day early with a visit to the **Temple of Edfu**, dedicated to **Horus**, the falcon-headed god. Remarkably well preserved, this is one of the most complete ancient temples in Egypt, offering clear insight into temple design, symbolism, and ritual life.

Midday: Sail the Nile

After returning to the ship, we continue sailing south along the Nile. Life unfolds slowly along the riverbanks—villages, farmland, and palm trees passing by as we enjoy lunch onboard and time to rest or take in the view from the deck.

Afternoon: Kom Ombo Temple

We stop at **Kom Ombo**, a striking riverside temple uniquely dedicated to two gods—**Sobek**, associated with healing and fertility, and **Horus the Elder**. Set dramatically along the Nile, the temple's symmetry and location make it one of the most picturesque stops of the journey.

Evening: Sail to Aswan

We continue sailing toward **Aswan**, arriving later in the evening.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Overnight: Nile Cruise

Sunday, January 31 — Philae Temple & Felucca Sailing

Early Morning: Private Visit to Philae Temple

Today begins very early for a truly special experience. We travel by coach to the lakeshore and transfer by motorboat to **Philae Island**, where we have reserved the **Temple of Isis** for our group **for two hours before public opening**. Get ready for a truly special experience!!!! xoxo

Dedicated to Isis, Egypt's divine mother, Philae is a serene and beautifully situated temple complex. We'll take ample time to explore the island and temple grounds quietly, allowing space to experience this sacred site without crowds.

Late Morning / Afternoon: Return & Lunch

After returning to the ship, we'll enjoy lunch onboard and time to rest.

Afternoon: Felucca Sailing on the Nile

Later in the afternoon, we take a **traditional felucca sail** on the Nile. These simple sailboats offer a peaceful, unhurried way to experience the river, catching the breeze and watching Aswan drift by from the water.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Overnight: Nile Cruise

Monday, February 1 — Abu Simbel

Morning: Disembark & Travel to Abu Simbel

After breakfast, we check out from the cruise ship and travel by **bus to Abu Simbel**. Upon arrival, we'll check into our hotel.

Lunch at the Hotel

Afternoon: Abu Simbel Temples

This afternoon we visit the extraordinary **Abu Simbel Temples**, carved directly into a mountainside for **Ramesses II**. (Many travelers report this site as the true highlight of their entire trip! It's remote, but deeply unforgettable and impressive!) Relocated in the 1960s to protect them from flooding, the temples are both an ancient artistic achievement and a modern engineering marvel. Few places so clearly reveal the ambition, artistry, and enduring legacy of ancient Egypt as Abu Simbel, where monumental design and historical preservation meet in one extraordinary setting.

Standing before the colossal statues and exploring the interior chambers offers a powerful conclusion to our journey up the Nile.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight: 4-Star Hotel, Abu Simbel

Tuesday, February 2 — Abu Simbel to Cairo

Morning: Travel Day

After breakfast, we transfer to **Abu Simbel Airport** for our flight to **Aswan**. Upon arrival in Aswan, we remain in transit until boarding our onward flight to **Cairo**.

Afternoon: Arrival in Cairo

Upon arrival at **Cairo International Airport**, we'll transfer to our **boutique hotel** and check in.

The remainder of the day is unstructured, offering time to rest, unpack, or enjoy a quiet evening after a full travel day.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Overnight: Boutique Hotel, Cairo

Wednesday, February 3 — Culinary Cairo & the Grand Egyptian Museum

Morning: Spice Market Visit

We begin the day with a guided walk through a **local spice market**, taking in the colors, aromas, and rhythms of everyday Cairo.

Late Morning: Hands-On Cooking Class

From there, we head to a **private kitchen** for a hands-on cooking class, where we'll prepare and share a traditional Egyptian meal together.

Afternoon: Grand Egyptian Museum

In the afternoon, we visit the **Grand Egyptian Museum**, Egypt's newest and most comprehensive museum, home to countless artifacts spanning thousands of years of history. Highlights include the treasures of **King Tutankhamun**, along with major statues, reliefs, and collections never before displayed together.

Evening at Leisure

Dinner is on your own tonight, allowing time to rest or explore at your own pace.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Overnight: Boutique Hotel, Cairo

Thursday, February 4 — Giza Plateau & Farewell

Morning: Pyramids of Giza & the Sphinx

We spend our final full morning at the **Giza Plateau**, exploring the **Great Pyramids and the Sphinx**. With a knowledgeable guide, we'll learn about the history, construction theories, and enduring mystery surrounding these iconic structures.

Lunch Overlooking the Plateau

We'll enjoy lunch at a restaurant overlooking the pyramids—an opportunity to take in the view and reflect on the journey we've shared.

Afternoon: Papyrus Institute & Shopping

After lunch, we visit the **Papyrus Institute** on Al Haram Street, where we'll learn about the traditional papyrus-making process and have time for shopping.

Wrap-Up Circle & Farewell Dinner

In the evening, we gather for a **closing circle** to reflect, share, and mark the completion of our journey together, followed by a **farewell dinner**.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Overnight: Boutique Hotel, Cairo

Friday, February 5 — Departure

After breakfast, we'll transfer to **Cairo International Airport** for your onward journey home.

Meals Included: Breakfast

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