

SUGGESTED OPTIONAL SIGHTSEEING IN CAIRO

1. **Half Day Egyptian Museum:** **\$ 41,-** **Per Person**

Museum: Your Egyptologist will escort you today on a fascinating tour of 7,000 years of Egyptian history with a visit to the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, open since 1902. The Museum exhibits over 120,000 objects in its 107 halls, comprising the world's greatest collection of Ancient Egyptian artifacts. Two grand halls containing countless artifacts and one room reserved for the golden treasures, all from the world-famous tomb of the boy-king Tutankhamun astound and delight visitors. More than 2 million people flock to this magnificent site each year.

2. **Half Day Pyramids & Sphinx:** **\$ 38,-** **Per Person**

Pyramids: Embark on an unforgettable tour of the Great Pyramids of Giza built for the Pharaohs Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus. They were constructed about 2500 BC with blocks of limestone from the plateau and from the Turah hills on the outskirts of Cairo. The Great Pyramid of Cheops alone, the only present-day survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, required over 2,300,000 blocks of stone, each weighing about 2.5 tons. At its base, it covers 13 acres of land. Millions of visitors come each year to ponder the fascinating mystery of their existence and explore the ancient burial chambers within.

Sphinx: Visit the Valley Temple, housing the mysterious Sphinx, located in what was once a quarry to the east of Chephren's pyramid. One theory suggests this Pharaoh's workers shaped the body into a lion and gave it their king's face, as a guardian of the necropolis. Almost a thousand years after its construction, King Thutmose IV placed a stela between the front paws. It describes how the Sphinx had spoken to the then prince in a dream, promising him kingship if he cleared away the desert sand that was choking the Sphinx. Explore this and the many other legends surrounding this timeless regal figure.

3. Half Day Memphis, Sakkara: \$ 38,- Per Person

Sakkara: Across the Great Court of the Pyramid Complex of Zoser in Sakkara, stands the Step Pyramid, the oldest known of Egypt's 107 pyramids, which was built by Imhotep, one of the world's most famous historical figures. This architect of the world's first freestanding stone structure, which you will visit today with your Egyptologist, is often also recognized as the world's first doctor, as well as a priest, sage, poet, and astrologer. Although the original structure was a burial chamber 28 meters underground, Imhotep enlarged it several times to eventually reach a six tiered rectangle 60 meters

high. Sakkara seems to have been the first area where limestone was employed, not only for the outer casing of the pyramid but also to cover interior walls.

Memphis: Founded around 3,100 BC during the Old Kingdom, Memphis is the legendary city of Menes, the king who united Upper and Lower Egypt. According to tradition, he first created dikes to protect the area from Nile floods and then started building. Much of what we know of Memphis comes from its necropolis, texts and papyrus from other parts of Egypt, and Herodotus, who visited the city. Early on, Memphis was probably a fortress from which King Menes controlled the land and water routes between Upper Egypt and the Delta. Later, this great city became the administrative and religious center of Egypt, was home to a cosmopolitan community and most likely one of the largest and most important cities in the ancient world.

4. Half Day Old & Coptic Cairo: \$ 29,- Per Person

Coptic Cairo:

Fortress of Babylon: Explore the remains of the old Fortress of Babylon, built by the Persians around the 6th century B.C. The area is called Old Cairo (Masr el Atika), for this is indeed the oldest part of the city, and the remains of the fort are Cairo's oldest original structure. When the Romans took possession of Egypt, they also used the fort for a time, recognizing its strategic location, enabling them to control both traffic and trade on the Nile. Later, it was also a refuge of Coptic Christians, who were persecuted by the Roman Christians in Alexandria.

Church of St. Sergius: The walls of the fortress also enclosed the Church of St. Sergius, a 4th century church, dedicated to Sergius and Bacchus, two soldier-saints martyred a few years before in Syria by Maximilian. According to tradition, it was built on the spot where the Holy Family, Joseph, Mary and the infant Christ, rested at the end of their journey into Egypt. They may have lived here while Joseph worked at the fortress.

Hanging Church: The Hanging Church (El Muallaqa), so named for its location on top of the southern tower gate of the old Babylon fortress with its nave suspended above the passage, is curious indeed. (Muallaqa translates to 'suspended') The church was first built, in the 3rd or 4th century, though possibly not at this location. The main church is

thought to have been built between the 5th and 6th centuries with the southeastern section called the "upper church" being added later.

Though destroyed in the 9th century, it was rebuilt in the 11th century and became the seat of the Coptic patriarchate until the 14th.

Church of St. Barbara: This modest church is named for Saint Barbara, a beautiful young lady who most likely lived during the 4th century; she was the daughter of a pagan merchant who tortured and killed her when she converted to Christianity. Although the main portion of the Church dates from the late 7th century, a door found during one of the church's restorations could date as early as the 4th. It was most likely reconstructed between 1072 and 1073 to house the relics of Saint Barbara. The chapel still contains her remains.

Synagogue of Ben Ezra: The Synagogue of Ben Ezra hails from the time of the once thriving Jewish community in Egypt under the leadership of Rabbi Ben Ezra. Inside, the so-called "Geniza Documents" were found, a treasure hailed as an unparalleled source of information about life of the Jews in Egypt's past. The basilica-style temple contains a Jewish heritage library inaugurated in 1997. At the back of the temple, the coffers in which the infant Prophet Moses was placed by his mother, was reportedly found in a deep well.

5. **Half Day Citadel, Khan El Khalili:** **\$ 41,-** **Per Person**

Islamic Cairo: Take a fascinating tour of Islamic Cairo, starting with the ancient Citadel, a spectacular medieval fortress perched on a hill above the city. Originally built by Salah El-Din in 1176 to fortify the city against the Crusaders, it has never been without a military garrison. The Citadel was modified and enlarged over the centuries by subsequent rulers, most notably Muhammad Ali Pasha, one of the great builders of

Modern Egypt, who was responsible for considerable alteration and building within the Citadel. Today it is a complex of four mosques and four museums, including the beautiful and graceful Mohamed Ali Mosque. Built from 1830 to 1857, the mosque also became the site of the great Ottoman ruler's tomb. From the arcaded courtyard, enjoy a magnificent view across the city to the pyramids in Giza. Just in the shadows of the Citadel is the Mosque of Sultan Hassan. Built in 1356 AD as a mosque and religious school for all sects, it was designed so that each of the four main Sunni sects could have their own 'madrasa' or school within while also sharing the mosque.

Khan El-Khalili Bazaar: Proceed to the fascinating Khan El-Khalili Bazaar – reputed to be the largest bazaar in the Middle East. Originally founded as a watering stop for caravanserai in the 14th century, the bazaar has now grown to vast proportions. As you wander through the labyrinth of narrow streets you will find workshops and stalls selling all manner of things from woodwork, glassware and leather goods to perfumes, fabrics and Pharaonic curiosities. Remember to bargain hard!

6. Sound & Light Show, Pyramids: \$ 38,- Per Person

Transfer to the Giza Plateau for the incredible spectacle of the Sound & Light Show at the foot of the Great Pyramids. Narrated by the enigmatic Sphinx, the show will lead you on a fascinating tour through the history of the Pyramids, complete with lasers which outline the cartouches of the pharaohs and show the secret hidden chambers within. An unforgettable experience!

7. Dinner Cruise with Show: \$ 47,- Per Person

Transfer to the banks of the Nile for tonight's dinner on the M/S Scarabee (or similar), one of Cairo's most luxurious cruising restaurants. Admire the lights and sights of Cairo by night as you cruise gently down the river for two hours, enjoying a 5-star international buffet meal. After dinner, you will be entertained by a spectacular mix of Egyptian folkloric music and dancing, and an expert oriental belly dancer. Return to your hotel in air-conditioned bus.

8. Overday Alexandria with lunch: \$ 87,-Per Person

Drive to Alexandria: Depart by air-conditioned coach along the desert highway to the city of Alexandria, the "Pearl of the Mediterranean".

Catacombs of Kom El Shugafa: Your first visit today is to the Catacombs of Kom el Shugafa are the largest Roman burial site discovered in Egypt to date, consisting of three tiers of tombs and chambers cut into the bedrock to a depth of about 35 meters. Constructed in the 2nd century AD as a single- family crypt, these tombs represent the last existing major construction for the sake of the old Egyptian religion. They were later expanded to hold more than 300 individual tombs. There is even a banquet hall where grieving relatives paid their last respects with a funereal feast. Though the motifs are pure ancient Egyptian, the architects and artists were schooled in the Greco-Roman style, resulting in an amazingly integrated art quite unlike anything else in the world.

Roman Amphitheater: The only Roman amphitheater in Egypt was discovered quite recently, during the foundation digging for a new apartment building. The well-preserved theatre once stood with thirteen semi-circular tiers of white marble imported from Europe. It contains galleries, sections of mosaic-flooring and marble seats for up to 800 spectators. At one point, it may have even been roofed over to serve as an Odeon for musical performances and some inscriptions suggest that it was sometimes also used for wrestling contests.

Alexandria National Museum: The collection in this newly opened museum includes thousands of items spanning from the Pharaonic Era, through Greco-Roman times, to the Modern Era. Papyrus scrolls, ancient perfume bottles and painted mummy cases are tastefully displayed as well as classic Greek statues. The artifacts guide the visitor right up to the times of Mubarak and illustrate Alexandria's role in the modern history of Egypt.

Lunch: Lunch today is at a traditional restaurant overlooking the beach.

Alexandria Library and Museum: The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is not only a library, but also an integrated cultural complex, with libraries, museums, exhibition areas, educational centers, and an international conference center. It is built on the believed site of the old Library of Alexandria, built by Ptolemy I. It was the largest in antiquity, frequented by scholars from all over the Mediterranean from the 4th Century BC until its eventual destruction by fire seven hundred years later.

Aboul Abbas Mosque: One of Alexandria's foremost religious buildings, this beautiful mosque is the largest in the city, originally dating from 1775. Built by the Algerians over the tomb of the thirteenth century Andalusian saint Ahmed Abu al-Abbas al-Mursi, it was rebuilt in 1943 with the four domes and towering (73 meter) minaret that still stand today.

Qait Bay Fort: This 15th century Mamluk fort overlooks the entrance to the Eastern Harbour in Alexandria. Built on the foundations of the Pharos lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, it incorporates both a castle and a mosque within its walls. Just north of Qait Bay lies the site of the famous underwater excavation where hundreds of pillars, statues, and sphinxes have been found.

Return to Cairo: Drive back to Cairo in your air-conditioned bus.

Full day Museum + Islamic or Old & Coptic Cairo including lunch:
US\$ 81, Per Person

Full day Pyramids + Memphis + Sakkara including lunch:
US\$ 77,- Per Person

**ALL ABOVE RATES ARE VALID
FOR MINIMUM 20 PAX**