

EGYPT

Sightseeing Information

(This information has been provided compliments of the NPPA. The sights listed are suggestions they are not necessarily included in the tour to Aswan/Luxor.)

1. Luxor

Homer's hundred-gated Thebes stands 676 km south of Cairo. It boasts the most awe-inspiring conglomeration of ancient monuments in the world.

Main sites to visit on the East Bank:

The Temples of Karnak, a holy city of pylons, hypostyle halls, colossal statues, shrines and obelisks, built over centuries, The Sound and Light Spectacle show at Karnak is a unique experience.

Luxor Temple: Dedicated to Amon, whose marriage to Mut was celebrated annually when the sacred procession moved from Karnak to Luxor Temples. The Luxor Museum,

The Luxor Museum: situated between the Temples of Luxor and Karnak, it displays selected pieces excavated in the Luxor area

Main sites to visit on the West Bank:

Valley of the Kings where 64 of Egypt's Pharaohs had their palatial resting places hewed into the sheer rock, including Tut Ankh Amen, Seti I, Ramses III, Amenhotep II and Ramses VI.

Valley of the Queens less grandiose, but stills mind-boggling tombs, the finest being that of Nefertari, Ramses II's wife. The Tombs of the Nobles, the most important being those of Nakht, Minna, Ramose, and Sennefer.

Queen Hatshepsut Mortuary Temple, "Deir El Bahari". An architectural tour-de-force built against the sheer Theban cliff range.

The Colossi of Memnon The only remnants of Amenhotep III funerary temple

Medtnet Habu, Ramses III's mortuary temple.

The Ramesseum, The funerary temple of Ramses II.

Tourist Information Office Tel.: 095/382215

2. Aswan

On the east bank of the Nile, 900 km south of Cairo, lies one of the world's best known winter resorts, a spot where the River with its foliage-clad, rocky islands is at its most scenic beauty, and the warm, dry climate is both curative and delightful.

Sites to visit:

Elephantine Island is the scene of the Nilometre, a museum, and some temple remains.

Plantation Island is a showplace of rare and exotic species of trees and flowers.

The Tombs of the Nobles, tunneled into the western cliff-face, they comprise murals depicting the nobles everyday life and their journeys to Africa.

Mausoleum of Agha Khan, described Aswan as the most beautiful spot on earth where he preferred to build his tomb.

The Unfinished Obelisk, hewn and smoothed on three sides. The fourth still attached to the granite quarry-bed, is a concrete example of how the Ancient Egyptians went about fashioning these graceful monuments.

The Monastery of St. Simeon, dating back to the 6th Century, reflects the hermit life practiced by the early Egyptian Christians.

Philae Temple, dismantled and reassembled on Agilika Island, it was the sacred complex dedicated to Isis and Osiris. At night the Sound and Light Show is a magical experience.

The Nubian Museum, houses artifacts representing prehistoric, Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic periods.

The High Dam at Aswan is one of the three largest dams in the world.

45 Km north of Aswan, set on a plateau over looking a bend in the Nile, is the Ptolemaic *Temple of Kom-Ombo*.

The Temple of Kalabsha built by the Roman Emperor Augustus and exemplifies a blend of Pharaonic and Roman architecture.

Another temple of the Ptolemaic period stands in the village of Edfu, 123 Km north of Aswan, remarkable for its magnitude and practically intact.

Tourist Information Office Tel 097/323297/312811

3. Abu Simbel:

Situated 280 Km south of Aswan. It houses the temples of Ramses II and his wife Queen Nefertari. The sun still rays penetrate to the Holy of Holiest of the main temple on the same two days of the year: the 22nd of February, the King s birthday and on the 22nd of October, the date of his coronation.

How to get there:

- By air there are daily flights from Cairo, Luxor and Aswan.
- By bus from Aswan.

4. CAIRO

Cairo, Egypt's capital, standing where East meets West and combining the exoticism of the one and the sophistication of the other, is the largest city in the African continent and the heart of the Arab World. With its minarets, picturesque Oriental bazaars plus Nile-side hotels, apartment blocks, and gracious residential districts, it is also a rare blend of a long past still throbbing with life and a vibrant, modern present.

Main Sites of Tourist Interest in Cairo:

The Egyptian Museum of Antiquities houses the richest collection of antiquities from the 3000-year old-Egyptian civilization, including the treasures of King Tut Ankh Amun.

The Coptic Museum, in Old Cairo, comprises rare collections dating back to the early Christian period (1st to the 7th Centuries). The nearby churches, the oldest in Christendom, reflect vividly the earliest manifestations of the Coptic spirit in art and worship.

The Church of St. Sergius, a 5th century basilica in Old Cairo, built over a crypt where the Holy Family is believed to have stayed during their flight into Egypt. The Museum of Islamic Art is the repository of masterpieces representing the flowering of Islamic art in successive eras.

Al Azhar Mosque and University were founded in the 10th century AD the university has since then remained the world's oldest and leading center of Islamic learning.

The Mosque of Ibn Touloun, named after the founder of the Toulounid State who built it in 878 AD., has the unique feature of an external spiral staircase winding up a minaret that is also, in shape, unlike any other.

The Mosque of Sultan Hassan built by Al Nasser Hassan Ibn Mohammed Ibn Qalawoon in 1385 AD, it is generally regarded by art historians as being among the supreme achievements of Islamic architecture.

The Citadel of Saladin (Salah El-Din) Built in 1183 in the medieval stronghold tradition. located atop the Mokattam hill-range, it commands a strategic view of the entire capital and, together with the Mohammed All Mosque raised by its namesake more than six centuries later, dominates the Cairo skyline.

Al Matariya Obelisk and the Virgin's Tree. The suburb of Matariya stands on the site of one of Egypt's most ancient cities On called by the Greeks Heliopolis where the world's first observatory once towered, and of which nothing but the Obelisk now remains. There too, is the Virgin's Tree, which provided the Holy Family with shade and shelter during their sojourn in Egypt.

Dr. Ragab's Pharaonic Village. Live models acting out ancient Egyptian life. On Jacob's island, Giza. Tel. 571 8675/6

Khan El-Khalili is one of the world's best-known oriental bazaars where silver, brass and leatherware, wooden objects inlaid with shell and mother-of pearl, jewelry and koftans are still fashioned by craftsmen practicing skills passed down along generations.

Cairo Tower, 187 meters in height, is the tallest concrete building in the East; a landmark of modern Egypt from the top of which visitors can enjoy a panoramic view of the city

Cairo International Conference Center. Located in Nasr City, it comprises three main conference halls, a fourth for receptions and fifth for exhibitions. In addition, there are fully-equipped secretarial offices

Main Sites of Tourist Interest near Cairo:

The Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza stand on a desert plateau some 15 km out of Cairo, immutably majestic as they have been for thirty-five centuries. The Sound and Light shows performed, in different languages, are an unforgettable experiences. *Tel. 3852880.*

The Step Pyramid at Saqqara. Was built for the Pharaoh Zoser. By Imhotep architect, physician, philosopher and statesman the prototype, in fact, of human genius, in 2816 BC. The first large-scale stone structure in history, the Step Pyramid marks a transitional phase in the evolution of an architectural and mystic concept from the simple mastaba to the smooth-sided pyramid in its final form.

The Saqqara area, about 27km south-west of Cairo, is also the setting for the pyramids of Unas, the mastabas of Mereruka, Ti and Ptahotep. Here, too, is the Serapeum where the sacred Apis bulls were entombed, each in a massive sarcophagus, in cavernous underground galleries. Adjoining Saqqara is Memphis, site of the capital established by Mena (or Narmer) who united Upper and Lower Egypt into one Kingdom and founded the First Dynasty about 3400 B.C. A gigantic statue of Ramses II, and the exquisite Alabaster Sphinx are of particular note.

Al Zahraa Stud Farm. Of special interest to Arab horse lovers is Al Zahraa Stud Farm at Am Shams, where some of the finest through bred strains are nurtured.

Tourist Information office Tel.: 3913454