

# Value World Tours

## TIPS ON TRAVEL to *EGYPT & the NILE - 2016*

Latest Update, 20 November, 2015 – st/VWT

### **To Our "Valued" Guests!**

Welcome to the fascinating world of exploring this ancient destination! We at **Value World Tours** are pleased to have the opportunity to introduce **Egypt**, its culture and people to you!

Your participation in traveling to **Egypt** spreads friendship and understanding between our people. **Therefore, you act as an "Ambassador" of the United States when visiting a foreign land. The impression you leave will have an everlasting effect on future relations between our countries.**

It is therefore important that we advise and prepare you for some of the cultural and social differences you will encounter. These *Travel Tips* have been designed to provide useful information and helpful suggestions to ease your adjustment and help you get around any obstacles you may encounter. Your journey will be greatly enhanced if **you take the time to prepare for it**. Thoroughly acquaint yourself with the information provided herewith - but also talk to others who have been there, study one of the many comprehensive guide books available, **or check the Internet!** The effort you put into planning your trip before you go will make all the difference...*Thank you!*

### **Welcome to Egypt**

Situated in Africa's northeast corner, Egypt stretches over more than a million square km. More than 95% of the land area is barren desert, which has induced 90% of the population to live in just 3% of the total land area; the fertile Nile Valley and Delta.

Egypt borders Libya in the west, Sudan in the south, the Mediterranean Sea in the north, and the Red Sea and Israel in the east. The eastern region, across the Suez Canal, is Sinaia. This region slopes up to the high mountains of Mt Katherine (Gebel Katarina at 2642m/8666ft is Egypt's highest point) and Mt Sinai. Along Egypt's Mediterranean coast there are countless white sand beaches, some developed as tourist resorts but many still pristine and isolated. North of Cairo, the Nile splits into a series of tributaries that flow into the Mediterranean.

Egypt's climate is hot and dry most of the year. During the winter months - December, January and February - average daily temperatures stay up around 20°C (68°F) on the Mediterranean coast and a pleasant 26°C (80°F) in Aswan. Maximum temperatures get to 31°C (88°F) and 50°C (122°F) respectively. Winter nights only get down to 8°C (45°F), the Egyptian version of "chilly." Alexandria receives the most rain with 19cm (7.5in) each year, while Aswan is almost bone-dry with just 2mm annually. Between March and April the *khamisi* blows in from the Western Desert .

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## A Short History of Egypt

The Nile's fertile banks - the source of economic, social, political and religious life - gave birth to the world's first nation state and a powerful civilization that invented writing and erected the first stone monuments. Around 5000 years ago the independent riverfront states were unified under Menes, giving rise to the first dynasty of pharaohs.

The pharaohs were considered divine and they ruled over a highly stratified society. The first pyramid was built in the 27th century BC; over the next 500 years the monuments grew increasingly grander. Monarchical power was at its greatest during the 4th dynasty when Khufu, Khafre and Mycerinus built the Great Pyramids of Giza. Through the 6th and 7th dynasties power was diffused and small principalities began to appear.

Later, an independent kingdom was established at Thebes (present-day Luxor) and, under Montuhotep II, Egypt again came under control of a single pharaoh. From 1550 to 1069 BC, the New Kingdom bloomed under rulers such as Tuthmosis I, the first pharaoh to be entombed in the Valley of the Kings and his daughter Hatshepsut, one of Egypt's few female pharaohs.

While Egypt was ruled by generals: Ramses I, II and III, and Seti I, massive monuments and temples were built. However the empire was in disarray when the Greek conqueror Alexander the Great arrived in 332 BC and established a new capital.

Under Ptolemy I, Alexandria became a great city. The Ptolemies ruled Egypt for 300 years, but their reign was plagued by great rivalries amongst the nobles. Meanwhile an expanded Roman empire began taking an interest in Egypt. Between 51 and 48 BC, Egypt was ruled by Ptolemy XIII and his sister Cleopatra VIII, when Julius Caesar sent his rival, Pompey, from Rome to watch over them. Ptolemy had Pompey killed and banished Cleopatra. Caesar came along, threw Ptolemy into the Nile, appointed another of Cleopatra's brothers, Ptolemy XIV, as joint leader, and became Cleopatra's lover. In 47 BC Cleopatra gave birth to Caesar's son and two years later had her brother killed. When Caesar was assassinated the following year, Marc Antony came and fell in love with Cleopatra. An unhappy Roman senate sent Octavian to deal with Marc Antony 10 years later. Following the defeat of their naval forces at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide, after which Egypt became part of the Roman Empire.

When the empire fell apart, the Nubians, north Africans and Persians invaded, but Egypt remained relatively stable. In AD 640 the Arabs arrived, bringing Islam. Western European Christians seized much of the weakening empire in the Crusades of the 11th century, but in 1187 the Syrian-based Seljuks sent an army and Salah ad-Din (Saladin) fortified Cairo and expelled the Crusaders from Jerusalem. Salah ad-Din enlisted Turkish mercenaries, but they ended up overthrowing his dynasty and ruled for two and a half centuries before Egypt fell to the Turks in 1517. Since most of the Mamluks (the mercenaries) were of Turkish descent, the Turkish Ottoman sultans, based in Constantinople, largely left the Mamluks alone as long as they paid their taxes. This continued until Napoleon invaded in 1798, only to be ousted by the British in 1801, in turn expelled by Mohammed Ali, a lieutenant in the Albanian contingent of the Ottoman army. Said Pasha, Ali's grandson, opened the Suez Canal in 1869.

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Crippling national debt enabled British and French controllers to install themselves in 1879, and the British terminated the hold that Turkey had over Egypt. During WWI Egypt aligned itself with the Allies, and shortly afterwards the British allowed the formation of a national political party - the Wafd. King Fuad I was elected head of the constitutional monarchy and for the next 30 years the British, the monarchists and the Wafdists jockeyed for power. The Arab League was founded after WWII by seven Arab countries, including Egypt, but the war had left Egypt in a shambles, and its defeat in Israel's 1948 War of Independence saw the chaos escalate. In 1952 a group of dissident military officers, led by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, orchestrated a bloodless coup. The British and French were loath to relinquish control, so they invaded. The USA and the Soviet Union joined the United Nations-deployed peacekeepers and insisted that the invaders should leave. Nasser became a hero, particularly among Arabs. **CURRENT UPDATE: As most are aware, Egypt has been going through political struggles since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Cairo is still facing protests from various political and religious opponents, however, popular tourist venues are open, ships are sailing the Nile and the number of visitors is slowly increasing. The safety of foreign visitors is the priority of our ground handlers.**

## Facts for the Traveler

**Bargaining is a part of life in Egypt** and virtually everything is open to negotiation. This includes your lunchtime roadside snack and the felucca's in which you ride down the Nile. The few rules to observe in the bazaars are these: never offer a price that you don't want to pay, get a feel for the real price before you begin haggling, take your time and enjoy the **friendly sport** of it (which might include a cup of tea from the vendor), and remember that you're never obliged to buy anything - you won't offend anyone.

***Be aware that pickpockets operate around tourist sites, so avoid carrying money in your back pocket.***

## GENERAL CRUISE & TRAVEL TIPS

**Vouchers:** If traveling within a group or on any set program, vouchers may **not be required** or issued. If traveling as an individual and/or **deviating from the regular itinerary**, we may issue vouchers for the additional services you paid. **When included, vouchers will be listed on the check-off list sent with your final documents.**

**Air Tickets:** Whenever your international tickets are purchased through **us**, they will be included with your final documents. In some cases, when tickets are issued directly by the airlines, **they may be sent to you under separate cover. Please consult your check-off list. Please note that most tickets today are issued electronically and may be emailed to you.**

**Transfers:** If you have purchased your airfare through **Value World Tours**, or have **prepaid** your arrival transfers through us, **please look for our triangle Global Travel Group Signs & Tour Guides, AFTER you exit the Customs Area of the airports!**

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**In case there are just a few passengers, someone may be holding your individual names on a signboard at the airport.**

If you have purchased **land/cruise only** and are arranging for your own arrival and departure transportation, the names and addresses of your hotels or port locations will be listed on the **Contact Sheet** enclosed in your final documents.

**TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:** Before leaving home for the airport, please ensure that you have your valid **PASSPORT** and appropriate **VISAS**. Based on our programs and countries visited, **VISAS** are currently required for traveling to **Egypt & Jordan**. Please make sure your US passport is valid beyond your scheduled travel dates (usually 6 months beyond) and check for visa updates with the U.S. or the appropriate foreign consulates at least 90 days prior to your departure. **If you a holder of a foreign passport, please check with each countries respective Consulates.**

**\*EGYPT Visas:** All visitors to Egypt are required to have a visa and a passport. Visas can be obtained on arrival for approximately **\$30** per person. For Jordan (if buying our Jordan extension) the entry visa costs **\$30** per person – purchased on arrival. If flying via Egypt air and returning to Egypt another re-entry visa **\$25** must be paid. (*valid at the time of printing – subject to change*)

**BAGGAGE:** Make a detailed list of everything you pack for the trip, and then leave this list at home. We cannot be responsible for lost baggage, but most airlines will make every effort to recover baggage or make proper compensation if you are able to itemize the suitcase contents. It is also a good idea to tape a piece of paper **INSIDE** your luggage which shows your full name, home address and telephone number. **The purchase of Travel Insurance is always strongly recommended!**

**BAGGAGE WEIGHT:** Please remember that weight allowances vary and are lower when flying domestic, and intra-continental routes (***Cairo to Luxor/Aswan and similar***), utilizing smaller aircraft. Check your airline ticket for instructions and pack accordingly **or you may face over-weight charges!**

## **OUR FINAL DOCUMENTS – TRAVEL PORTFOLIOS**

**FREE ELECTRONIC DELIVERY:** *Once final payment is received all paper documents including: day by day itinerary, travel tips, airline tickets, contacts and other related information will be sent to your electronically via email. **This service is free, provided we have your email address.***

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## General River Rules – NILE CRUISES

1. **Maritime Law** - As with a pilot on a plane, the Captain of a ship is the **ultimate law**. He/She is responsible for the ultimate safety and comfort of the vessel and its passengers. It is within the Captain's jurisdiction to change the sequence of stops, ports, etc. if he/she deems it necessary due to inclement weather conditions, high water levels, dock and lock schedules, technical reasons, etc. The Captain has the right to remove unruly passengers, quarantine the ship in case of disease and similar. Therefore, although unlikely, **certain changes in schedules may happen**. Though we expect to provide sightseeing of all of the attractions listed in our cruise program, there is a possibility **that the sequence of touring** may be altered to take into account the operating hours at museums, galleries and monuments. Shore excursions may be changed in response to sailing conditions and other factors. *Your understanding and cooperation in such instances will be expected as well as appreciated!*
2. **Cultural Differences** - Remember that you may be traveling through a country whose political, social and cultural background may be different from your own. Do not let political differences govern your perspective. Instead, travel with an open mind, and you will satisfy your curiosity about the people, their lands, their history and their culture.
3. **Service** - If you receive poor service at any point, try to take it in good humor and solve it directly. If you have any serious complaints, take them to your guide and/or Cruise Director.
4. **Bureaucracy** - Expect a little bit of red tape, and try not to be bothered by bureaucratic rituals which may be different from country to country.
5. **Do not compare things you see by American standards**. The diverse river vessels were all specifically built for cruising the narrow rivers, low lying bridges and tight locks of a river. Therefore, although quite comfortable, they are small and practical and should not be compared with huge ocean faring vessels. Above all, keep your sense of humor and enjoy the cultural legacies, physical geography and rich variety of the people as you sail through this unique and different land.

*Make it your responsibility to be on time so as not to hold up the group. Be attentive and refrain from talking to your neighbor while the guide/s are speaking or providing information regarding the tour. Wait for all information to be given before asking questions. Any special requests regarding group activities should be directed to the Tour Director who is responsible for representing the interests of the whole group. Your local guides will refer all requests back to the tour director. Your cooperation in these matters will not only be greatly appreciated but will increase both the group's and your personal enjoyment of the tour.*

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**VARIOUS: Please check our web site for updated information:**

[www.RiverCruises.Net](http://www.RiverCruises.Net)

**OUR SHIPS:** For our various Egypt programs depending on season and availability we use a carefully selected number of deluxe vessels, all of which conform to the highest standards of service we expect. All are classified as 5-star deluxe vessels and are carefully selected for their superb on board comfort, service, food and entertainment as well as for their itineraries. Whichever ship we may use – rest assured that you will be pleased. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Most of our ships feature identical cabins on all decks (except for suites). Please refer to our current ship deck plans found on line and in our current brochures. The following are general descriptions which apply to all vessels we offer on the Nile.

**PUBLIC AREAS:** A beautiful one sitting restaurant, serves a full array of fine buffet style cuisine, from full breakfasts to light lunches to themed dinners each evening. On board lectures and activities are complemented with nightly live entertainment (belly dancing, Dervish dances, Galabaya parties and similar), offered in the panoramic lounges on these ships. Large sundecks sport a pool and bar and ample deck chairs. All of our ships also feature additional bars, reading areas, a nightly lounge with entertainment, business center, souvenir shop and some have spa facilities. See [www.RiverCruises.net](http://www.RiverCruises.net)

**THE CABINS:** All rooms have individual climate control, a mini refrigerator, safe, telephone, TV, and a hairdryer in the bathroom. Most of our ships have full floor to ceiling windows or French Balconies with sliding doors that open. See **deck plans on line.**

**CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS:** The dress code on all of our cruises is **SPORTY/INFORMAL!** So please - **PACK LIGHTLY!** *Combine a few t-shirts, several shirts, with 2 wrinkle free slacks, one skirt, one sweater, a pair of shorts, a wind-breaker and a sports jacket - and you are done!* Leave your formal evening clothes at home; *tuxedos and gowns are not appropriate!* The only times you may wish to "dress up" are for the Farewell Dinner aboard the ship or in a nicer Cairo restaurant. On these occasions, a jacket and tie for gentlemen, and a cocktail dress for the ladies will be fine. But generally, the dress code is informal (**and that goes for excessive jewelry too!**) **Remember - you are traveling to see - not to be seen!** Keep it simple and you'll thank yourself later! **DO pay particular attention to footwear** - you should have a good pair of comfortable walking shoes with thick rubber soles and firm arch supports. If you buy new shoes, **"break them in"** before the trip. Suitable footwear aboard the ship would be sneakers, deck shoes, tennis shoes and similar rubber-soled shoes. **Our cruises involve extensive walking during visits ashore, so you need to be comfortable!**

**Please remember that Egypt is a Muslim country and showing too much "skin" in public is frowned upon – especially when touring mosques and other cultural or religious sites - so please dress accordingly.**

**CURRENCY:** The onboard currency is the Egyptian pound. Major credit cards are accepted.

**LAUNDRY:** Towels are changed every day, linen is changed every third day. Laundry service is offered at additional cost. Please check the price list provided in your cabin for additional information.

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**WATER:** Even though water is purified, we suggest against drinking tap water from onboard cabins and in the hotels. Bottled water is inexpensive and can be purchased anywhere.

**HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS:** Due to limited services for the disabled and because of extensive walking on our excursions, **we do not recommend these cruises to people with severe disabilities.** Those passengers with lighter physical disabilities must report them to us at the time of booking. Most cabin doorways and public rest rooms are **not wide enough to allow access by standard wheelchairs.** Passengers confined to wheelchairs must provide their own collapsible chair, and may find certain areas of the ship inaccessible.

**DOCTOR:** *Please note that the medical facilities and personnel are only equipped to provide basic medical care.* The ship staff cannot offer care for conditions requiring specialized expertise or equipment. Passengers with pre-existing medical conditions, or in the event of an emergency, may be evacuated to a medical care facility ashore at the passenger's own expense. Existing medical problems which may require treatment by the vessel's staff must be brought to the attention of Value World Tours at the time of booking. **Value World Tours, Inc or the vessel's owners and operators shall not be liable for any act or omission of the physician and/or nurse.** If you require special medicines, it is essential that you bring them with you from home, as only a limited range of medicines are available.

**ELECTRICITY:** Electrical current in hotels and on board the ship is 220 volts/50MHZ. In order to use any appliances, (including shavers, chargers for cameras etc.) you will need to bring:

- 1) **Universal Transformer:** to convert from US 110 Volts to 220. (Please check your equipment: some of the latest electronics automatically convert between a range of voltage)
- 2) **Universal Adapter Plugs:** for sockets that are different than at home. Since there are no supplies of converters/ adapters, we recommend you purchase a transformer/ adapter plug set at a travel or appliance store before you leave.

## **MONEY & GRATUITIES**

**Money:** The unit of currency is the Egyptian Pound (EGP), which is divided into 100 piastres, though you will not find coins or bills smaller than 25 piastres. Most credit cards are accepted in major hotels and restaurants. Visitors are advised to take traveler checks in US Dollars or Pounds to avoid additional exchange rate charges. Banks are usually closed on Friday and Saturday, but private exchange bureaus, called 'Forex', are open daily and banks in major hotels are open 24 hours. Cairo branches of the Egyptian British Bank and Banque Misr have ATMs available that accept Visa, MasterCard and Cirrus and are quite common in the main tourist areas. The exchange rate at the time of printing is **approximately: 1 USD = 7.80 Egyptian pounds**

**SHOPPING:** *A word of “warning”. As is customary throughout the Middle East, wherever you turn, you will be approached by street-side vendors hawking everything from fake jewelry to Russian military watches! **SHOP WITH CAUTION!** On all of our itineraries, our ground handlers make a point to stop in several “pre-screened” shops where the goods and the merchants have been known to be reliable. Nevertheless, use bargaining and common sense when shopping as “returns” are next to impossible and we cannot be held reliable for your shopping purchases. When in doubt, confer with the local guides – but remember – sometimes they get a commission kickback as well...your Egyptologist is probably your best source of information and reliability.*

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## GRATUITIES

Tipping today has become commonplace in all tourist destinations, but especially in the Middle East! Due to the volatile nature of the local economy, salaries for regular folk are pitiful compared to rising costs and inflation - let alone if we compare them to western standards. **Consequently, for the majority of the people working in the service industries (hotels, restaurants, travel), tips and gratuities have become a large source of their income. Therefore, your gracious generosity will be appreciated throughout your trip.** However, unlike in many places in the west including the United States - where tips are tacked on to your bill or demanded (*regardless of the quality of service*), tips in the "east" are still left to your discretion! Therefore, no service - no tip! **The choice is still yours.** Since we are always asked for general tipping guidelines, here they are:

### **Individual tips:**

- ***Egyptologist:*** Are so called “national guides” who escort you from the moment you arrive to the moment you depart! These are superb individuals who will oversee all of your transportation and travel needs and will be your “guiding light” throughout your incredible journey!  
**Suggested - \$5-\$7 per person/per day**
- ***Local guides*** for daily touring in Cairo and along the excursions along the Nile:  
**\$3 per person/per occurrence**
- ***Drivers:*** Who dodge the traffic and get you safely where you need to go! **\$2 pp/per day**
- ***Felucca “drivers” in Aswan:*** **\$5 per person**

### **Pooled tips for the ship’s crew:**

Staff aboard the Nile Cruisers work as a team, from the lowliest deck boy to the Captain – all of whom are needed to provide you with the superb service wherever you may turn! Therefore, we recommend **\$10 per person per day which will be shared by the entire crew.** If any one individual endears themselves to you especially, feel free to reward them directly.

The practice of “gifting” or “baksheesh” is common in Egypt as it is in all of the Middle East. Therefore passengers would be wise to have a reserve an extra cash amount of \$200 to \$250 per person, in **one/five/ten dollar NEW bills (no coins, or old US notes)** to give to all those who provide a service such as hotel porters, airport luggage handlers, camel handlers, carriage drivers, restroom attendants, etc. Your small tips will be appreciated!

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

For the hotel names and addresses used for your specific departure, please consult the **CONTACT SHEET** supplied with your final documents. In addition, the following address may be useful to you:

**U.S. Embassy Cairo, 5 Tawfik Diab, Garden City, Cairo, Egypt.**

**Tel: [20] [2] 2797-3300**



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## SOME USEFUL ARABIC PHRASES

- marhaban Hello; welcome
- 'as-salâmu °alaykum Hello; Peace upon you
- °alaykumu s-salâm Hello; Peace upon you, too
- kayf hâluk? How are you?
- shukran. al-hamdu li-lâh. wa ant? Thank you. Fine, by God's mercy. And you?
- 'anâ bi-khayr I'm fine
- ma°a salâma Go without fear
- ilâ l-liqâ' So long; Until the next time

## PACKING TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

1. **Liquid soap.** This is generally hard to get in foreign places.
2. **Small toiletries:** toothpaste, shampoo, body lotion etc. Bring as much as you plan to use, in order to avoid buying this on the trip as these often come in large bottles in North Africa.
3. **A hat.** Caps or hats in Egypt are often very decorated, and this might not be your style.
4. **Sandals, good quality and used.** Open sandals will be your best friend, but they should be of such good quality that they will last the entire journey. And they should already be broken in. You don't want to be slowed down by sore feet.
5. **Trousers that can be made into shorts.**
6. **A fold up bag for keeping souvenirs** that won't fit into your tight backpack.
7. **A pouch to keep dirty clothes,** in order to protect the rest of your luggage.
8. **A bag** for your money, tickets and passport. We suggest our **popular fanny packs.** Carry them in front of you and beware of pocket thieves! Or use a *money belt.*
9. Put some **survival money** in your luggage — in addition to what you safeguard in your pocket!
10. **Sun screen / Insect repellent**
11. **Lip balm with UV protection.** Remember that ordinary lip balm may not be enough for the desert sun and heat!
12. **A spare set of eyeglasses or contact lenses.**
13. **SUNGLASSES with UV protection**
14. **Any prescription you need or over the counter medicine – place in carry-ons not suitcases!**
15. **Transformers and electric European style wall plugs (electricity is 220/240)**

### AVERAGE annual temperatures in EGYPT (High/ Low in Fahrenheit):

CITY	JAN	MAR	MAY	JUL	SEP	NOV
ASWAN	75/46	82/ 61	99/ 77	103/ 83	99/ 79	80/ 63
CAIRO	65/49	73/ 54	89/ 64	93/ 72	90/ 69	75/ 58
LUXOR	74/42	83/ 56	100/ 71	104/ 78	99/ 74	81/ 56

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