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Trip Notes

PETRA & THE PYRAMIDS



HIGHLIGHTS

- A whole day to explore Petra, the 'Rose Red city'
- Spending the night under the stars in Wadi Rum
- The magnificent views for the top of Mt Sinai
- Time to explore the wonders of Luxor, including the magnificent temple of Karnak
- Discover the Valley of the Kings
- The spectacular Pyramids at Giza

SUMMARY



Often cited as the birthplace of civilisation, both Jordan and Egypt provide an excellent introduction to the ancient world with their rich history and breathtaking sites. We spend a full day exploring Petra, one of the most spectacular ruins in the world, as well as extensive guided visits to Egypt's greatest sites in Cairo and Luxor. We also spend time exploring the deserts of this region, with a night under the stars at Wadi Rum and a rewarding climb of Mt Sinai before swimming or snorkelling on the Red Sea coast.

This trip is varied, both in the itinerary and activities and in the accommodation. In the main cities we stay in comfortable hotels but there are nights spent in the desert and close the Red Sea where facilities are basic. The trip is graded leisurely/moderate and you should have a good level of fitness as to enjoy the trekking in the Sinai.

JOINING THE TRIP IN LONDON

13 days, depart London Monday, return Saturday.

Itinerary start

The group flight from London is a daytime flight departing on Day 1 of the itinerary.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of **British Midland (BMI)**. Current flight timings are given below; these were correct at the time of publication but they cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

Flight details

Depart	Time	Arrive	Time
London Heathrow 1	12:35	Amman	19:50
Cairo	17:10	London Heathrow 1	20:45

All flight times are local

UK Regional Flights

Exodus can arrange flights from the majority of the UK's regional airports that are more flexible and convenient than if booked separately. Please contact our sales team for details.

Please note that if booking your regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum connecting time, but baggage handling at Heathrow is known to be subject to delays.

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus has booked it. Those arriving from London on non-group flights should read the airport transfer section below for information on reaching the start point. Please check with the Exodus office if you are unsure whether or not a transfer is included.

JOINING THE TRIP IN AMMAN

13 days, start Amman, end Cairo.

Itinerary start

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in Amman on the afternoon of Day 1 of the itinerary listed below, though excursions do not start until the morning of day 2. Details of how to reach the start point are given in the Final Joining Instructions. Hotel check-in times are normally from around 3pm.

Airport Transfers

If you require airport transfers, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight.

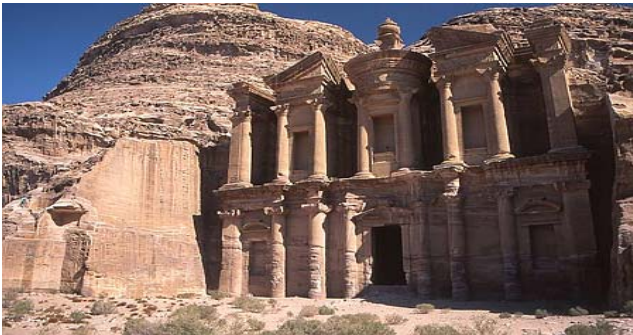
If you choose to join the group transfer but arrive on different flights, you must make your own way to Terminal 1 to meet the group transfer.

Group flights can be rescheduled, so you must check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense. Joining the group transfer is free of charge.

If you would like us to organise a private arrival transfers for you, the cost is £30 per vehicle 1 - 2 client and £55 per vehicle for 3-6 clients and is payable before departure. Please ensure that you provide us with all relevant information at least 2 weeks before departure. If you decide to make the journey independently, we would recommend that you agree a fare with the taxi driver before the journey and please note that the majority of taxis do not have air conditioning. Visitors do tend to get charged more than Egyptians for taxi rides.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY



The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicate the type of accommodation normally used (see accommodation section overleaf for key to codes) and meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)

Day 1 Start Amman. CH

Day 2 To Petra via the Dead Sea We start the day by travelling down the King's Highway and then descending to the deepest spot in the world, the Dead Sea, for a 'float' in the thick saline waters. Continuing on the King's Highway that winds its way up and down many wadis, the largest being the spectacular Wadi Mujib. There are many stops of interest en route to punctuate the driving including Mt Nebo, Kerak and Madaba. Departing from Mujib, we head south to reach Jordan's premier historical site and one of the world's most outstanding ancient cities, Petra. **SH (B)**

Day 3 A full day to explore Petra The 'Rose-red city, half as old as time' - Petra was hidden for centuries until the Swiss explorer Burkhardt made his great discovery in 1812. The Nabateans, an Arab tribe that arrived here in the sixth century BC, founded Petra. Building at Petra began in the third century BC and continued through the Roman period, financed by taxes levied on the desert caravans. Two features of Petra are unique: firstly, it is a city made defensible by being built down a series of chasms, rather than on a hilltop; and secondly, it is built directly into the rock - beautiful red and yellow sandstone carved into the most impressive facades which glow in the brilliant sunlight.

After walking down the siq, the narrow chasm that is the only entrance to the city, we come out directly in front of El Khazneh, the Treasury. Continuing to the centre of the city, we pass the houses and tombs of the rich citizens, and the amphitheatre. A long walk beyond the centre is El Deir, the monastery, with its superb facade topped by a huge urn.

Please note that due to current Jordanian group regulations the journey to the siq may have to be taken on horseback - this costs US\$10 per day and is included in the price.

During our time at Petra we may take a walk to the 'High places' where few other visitors visit. This can be quite arduous and is dependant on the group. It is not recommended for those who are unsure of their fitness, however donkeys can be hired locally if required. **SH (B)**

Day 4 The desert scenery of Wadi Rum

We join the modern desert highway and make our way to Wadi Rum, a stretch of beautiful sand and rock desert. This is where Lawrence of Arabia and Prince Faisal assembled the Arab tribes for the attack on Aqaba in the First World War, and also where the film of 'Lawrence' was shot. We take a 4WD drive safari to see the highlights of Wadi Rum (don't forget your camera). The night skies can be spectacular here and we enjoy them to the full, sleeping under the stars. **PC (B,L,D)**



Day 5 Aqaba, Nuweiba and St Catherine's monastery We transfer to Aqaba in the morning for the ferry over to Nuweiba, which may be subject to delays. We will be changing from our Jordanian guide to an Egyptian one on this day. The ferry ride is unled. On arrival at Nuweiba we drive to St. Catherine's Monastery. **BH (B,D)**

Day 6 Mount Sinai and the canyons of the Sinai This morning we get up very early for an ascent of Gebel Mousa, better known as Mount Sinai (2,285m), where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Rising at 1:30 am can be a shock but it will assure us of wonderful dawn views. We can climb to the summit via 3,750 steps cut into the rock, known as the 'Steps of Repentance', alternatively you can hire a camel for most of the way. The views at dawn are magnificent as we look across the barren mountain range. On our descent, via the camel road, we visit Saint Catherine's Monastery, built around the putative Burning Bush, where God manifested himself to Moses (Exodus 3:5-6). It was once only accessible by being winched over the high walls, but we can now enter by more conventional means. The inside of the monastery is a fascinating collection of chapels, monks' cells and even a mosque. After this climb we will then take a walk through the white sandstone canyon towards the lush green oasis of Ein Khodra. The oasis lies on the old pilgrim route from Jerusalem to St Katherine's and is one of the sites that the children of Israel led by Moses came to rest in their journey across the Sinai. During our time at the White Canyon there may be times when you will have climb over rocks (there are ropes to assist) as there is no clear pathway in parts. Please be sure to take lots of water as this day is a busy one and it can get hot in the desert. Tonight we camp in a beach camp on the shores of the Red Sea. **CC (B,L,D)**



Day 7 The Coloured canyon and Abu Gallum An early start today as we transfer to the beautiful Coloured Canyon. Here the river has cut through the Sandstone layers exposing the beautiful yellow and red colours beneath. Depending on the season and the sea temperature the afternoon can be spent swimming at Ras Abu Galum, one of the most beautiful protected areas in Egypt. Later we transfer direct to Sharm El Sheikh. **CH (B,L)**

Day 8 Free morning and transfer to El Gouna The morning is free to relax on the beach or have a swim in the Red Sea, one of the finest places to visit in the world for marine life. The reefs are home to a wealth of coral and fish and the water is clear and warm. In the afternoon we catch the ferry to Hurghada. (On some occasions we may take a flight instead between Sharm and Hurghada) El Gouna is 30mins from Hurghada. **CH (B)**

Days 9/ 10 The marvels of the New Kingdom in Luxor This morning we drive to Luxor where we spend the next two days exploring the wonders of this city. On arrival we transfer to our hotel. During our time in Luxor we will visit the incredible sites on both the East and West banks. On the East bank we see the Luxor Temple and the huge Karnak Temple Complex. Built over 1500 years, Karnak is a confusion of pylons, courtyards, halls and sanctuaries. Its Hypostyle hall has 134 columns 23 metres high and 15 metres in circumference! Crossing the Nile to the west bank we see the Valley of the Kings & Queen Hatshepsut's Temple. The Valley of the Kings contains the once hidden tombs of over 64 Pharaohs, including Tutankhamun, Seti I, Ramses III and IV. A discreet entrance in the hillside takes the visitor underground, through a series of corridors and anti-chambers that lead us down to the burial chamber and sarcophagus. The walls are covered in brightly painted images and hieroglyphs - a map of the afterlife to ensure the king's safe passage. One ticket allows us to see three tombs. Visits to

tombs are now strictly controlled to halt further deterioration of wall paintings - each tomb is periodically closed for a number of weeks. Our guide will attempt to choose three tombs that represent a range of styles. Tutankhamun's tomb is visited with a separate ticket. The energetic can walk over a small but steep ridge (about 30 mins) to Queen Hatshepsut's Temple at Dehr El Bahri, otherwise we drive. Cut from an east-facing cliff, the temple is famed for its carved reliefs and paintings, as well as its impressive proportions, best viewed from above. There is also time to see the Colossi of Memnon and a view of the Ramesseum - a now fittingly dilapidated epitaph to Ramses II, who built so much for his own glory. **CH (B)**



Day 11 At leisure in Luxor Today is free to explore Luxor. You may wish to revisit some of the ancient sites or alternatively an optional trip to the temples at Abydos. These are considered to be some of the most important archaeological sites where many tombs were found, belonging to the 1st and 2nd Dynasties. In the evening we board the overnight sleeper train to Cairo. **S/T (B)**

Day 12 Cairo and the Giza Pyramids A memorable day visiting the pyramids at Giza on the western outskirts of Cairo. Home to the Great Pyramids of Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus and the timeless and enigmatic Sphinx, these great monuments to the afterlife defy the imagination. Only the throng of sightseers, Egyptian and foreign, milling around their huge foundations keep the viewer in the 21st century. In the afternoon we visit the incredible Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, which contains relics dating back to 4000 BC, including the fantastic riches of Tutankhamun's tomb. Here is the unique opportunity to survey the many fabulous treasures of Egypt in one. **CH (B)**



Day 13. End Cairo. (B)

For those on group flights, these depart in the afternoon and will arrive in the UK the same day.

KEY TO ACCOMMODATION

CH Comfortable Hotel, Lodge or Gite - twin rooms with en suite facilities, reliable electricity and water supply, good service and some added amenities.

SH Standard Hotel, Lodge or Gite - no-frills hotel, usually with twin rooms and en suite facilities. Service and amenities are generally adequate.

BH Basic Hotel, Lodge or Gite, Mountain Hut, Village House - Can be communal, often consisting of just a bed and shared facilities. Bed linen not normally provided. Running water, toilets and electricity may be inconsistent or non-existent. Cleanliness is not always assured.

CC Comfortable Camping - permanent tented campsites, which generally offer walk-in tents, en suite facilities and proper beds, may have added amenities.

PC Participatory or Basic Camping - normally in two person tents, although sometimes fixed communal tents are used. Organised campsites if used may only have basic facilities. Wild camps may have no facilities provided. The group performs camp chores, although our staff provides advice and assistance.

Sleeper train - as detailed below.

ACCOMMODATION, FOOD & TRANSPORT

Accommodation

We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

In Jordan we try and stay in hotels with swimming pools but this cannot be guaranteed. In Egypt, all the hotels that we use have swimming pools. Camping in the desert in Jordan is basic however the beauty and serenity of the desert makes it a wonderful experience. Our camp in the Sinai is like a beach camp. We stay in small basic huts close to the Red Sea.

Sleeper Trains These are air-conditioned and deemed first class by Egyptian standards with 2 berth sleeper cabins and bunks. The train has toilet, lounge and provides an evening meal but it is basic compared with western standards.

Single Accommodation The cost for a single room is £190 (including sleeper train)

Extra Accommodation can be arranged pre or post tour. Please speak to a consultant at the time of booking if you would like additional accommodation.

Food In the itinerary we state which meals are included on which day.

Whilst staying in hotels we usually eat in local restaurants to allow maximum flexibility of choice. Allow about £150 to cover these meals

Food in Egypt and Jordan involves such things as kebabs, chicken, stews, pitta-bread, felafel, beans, aubergine and other vegetables, pickles, salads and the like. Dishes tend to be simple and wholesome. If you are vegetarian, please note that main meals are limited in choice, however mezze is almost always available in restaurants and is a good, filling choice for vegetarians. There is also a good choice of seafood available when at the Red Sea.

Ramadan

Please note that the Muslim month of Ramadan will take place from 21st August - 19th September 2009 (dates can shift slightly). This is a time when followers of Islam do not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. This can sometimes affect the opening hours of certain tourist sites. However we will ensure that the itinerary is affected as little as possible if you travel during this period. Food and drink is available to tourists during the day.

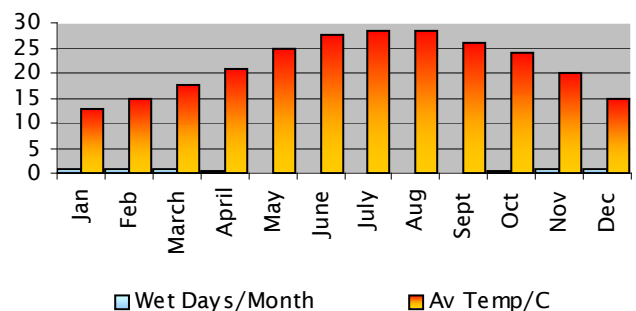
Transport

Road transport is by private air-conditioned mini/midi-bus and roads are generally good though we do go in to the desert where things can get a little bit of bumpy! Travelling is generally restricted to a few hours a day and the mode of transport is varied. As detailed above, during our trip we use boat, train, minibus and Bedouin 4WD - camel is optional!

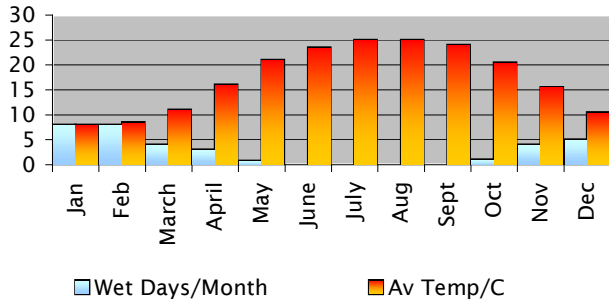
WEATHER

It is warm and clear throughout most of Egypt and Jordan in the spring and autumn. During the winter it can get very cold in the desert with clear skies and temperatures can drop to 2 C at night. Rain is a possibility, but probably on no more than 2 or 3 days. Aqaba and the Sinai are very hot when the air is still, but there is usually a breeze. It can get cold at night. Rain is unusual but possible.

Weather Chart for Cairo



Weather Chart for Amman



IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

Specifically to this trip, we would highlight the following issues for you to consider:

This is very much a cultural trip, looking to explore these two countries steeped in history. To walk up to the sacrificial high places at Petra, you should have a reasonable level of fitness. Your leader will be able to offer you further advice about the walk. However although it's a tiring day it is well worth the effort.

There are a couple of long days of travelling, but it is necessary so that all the sites can be seen in good time. Although there is lots of travelling, there are plenty of stops to stretch your legs and the scenery you pass definitely makes it worth wild. Please also take the weather into consideration; both Jordan and Egypt can get very hot. We try and plan our trips outside of the summer heat; however the areas around the red sea can still be very hot in spring and autumn.

This trip has been graded as grade A/B (leisurely/moderate.) The comfort level at the hotels and the fitness required to visit the cultural sites means that the majority of this trip is classed as leisurely. However there are few days (when camping or in the Sinai desert which are classed as moderate – where facilities are a basic and the activities (climbing Mt Sinai and visiting the White and Coloured canyon) require a good level of fitness.

In person, by phone or online.

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