

Insight Trip to Egypt with Hands Along the Nile Development Services (HANDS)



July 28-August 7, 2027 Schedule

Day 1: Wednesday, July 28 (Cairo)

For most travelers coming from the U.S., your flight will leave at least one day before (on July 27th) due to time zone differences and the distance between the U.S. and Egypt.

Upon arrival at Cairo airport, our travel agency will meet, assist, and transfer you to the hotel. In the evening, we will meet for dinner and spend the night at the hotel.

Day 2: Thursday, July 29 (Cairo)

Our journey begins with a visit to the Giza Plateau, home to the **Pyramids of Giza**—built more than 4,500 years ago and the only remaining Wonder of the Ancient World—as well as the iconic **Great Sphinx**. Those who wish may take a short camel ride in the surrounding desert or enter one of the pyramids (optional activities, available at an additional cost).

After this introduction to Egypt's ancient history, we will have lunch at a local restaurant before continuing to the newly inaugurated **Grand Egyptian Museum**. The museum houses an exceptional collection of artifacts from Egypt's Pharaonic era, presenting more than five thousand years of history.

In the evening, we will return to the hotel for dinner and a free evening to relax.

Day 3: Friday, July 30 (Cairo)

We will enjoy another full-day tour with our Egyptologist tour guide. After breakfast, we will head to **The Citadel**, overseeing the entire city of Cairo to see the Fortress of Salah el Din, and the Mosque of Muhammad Ali.

After lunch, we will visit the **National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC)**, renowned for its Royal Mummies Hall and its comprehensive presentation of Egypt's history—from prehistoric times through the Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, and modern eras.

We will end our day with a fun shopping experience at the **Khan El Khalili bazaar**. This historic open-air shopping district was designated in 1979 as part of a **Historic Cairo UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Located in the heart of Islamic Cairo, this 14th-century bazaar is considered a living heritage site. After some time shopping, we will enjoy dinner together and then will head back to the hotel for the night.

Day 4: Saturday, July 31 (Cairo)

On Saturday, we begin with a visit to the **Mukkattam** mountain area to see the **Association for the Protection of the Environment (APE)**, a **HANDS-sponsored job-skills training program for women in Cairo's garbage recycling community**. This is also a fun shopping opportunity! We'll tour the project, where women recycle scraps of glass, paper, fabric, and soda can tabs into beautiful handicrafts, and hear from some of the artisans about how the program has impacted their lives.

Following lunch, we will proceed to **Old Coptic Cairo**, one of the most historically significant areas of the city. Here, we will visit a historic Jewish synagogue and several ancient churches, including the Church of Abu Sarga (Saints Sergius and Bacchus), one of the oldest churches

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in Egypt, dating back to the 5th century A.D. The church is traditionally believed to have been built above the crypt where the Holy Family sought refuge for three weeks during their journey in Egypt.

Dinner at the hotel and optional event: Presentation and discussion with trip member and astronomy specialist Ray Murray about one or more of the following topics: Stargazing, Seasonal and Historical Astronomy, and Eclipses.

Day 5: Sunday, August 1 (Marsa Alam)

After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel and head over to Cairo International Airport where we will take a domestic flight to **Marsa Alam** on the Red Sea. Upon arrival, we will proceed to our hotel. **Marsa Alam** is a quiet coastal region on Egypt's southern Red Sea known for its pristine coral reefs, clear waters, and unspoiled natural environment. It is a top destination for snorkeling, diving, and eco-tourism. You are free to enjoy your time on the beach or in the water.

Optional activity: Evening stargazing with Ray Murray.

Day 6: Monday, August 2 (Marsa Alam)

Get ready for a total solar eclipse! As the eclipse occurs around 1 p.m., we will meet at a designated meeting point on the grounds of the hotel to settle into our viewing area and equip ourselves with proper eyewear, which will be provided. Commentary will be provided by Ray Murray. After this extraordinary event, guests will be free to spend the rest of their day enjoying the hotel's facilities and beaches. Keep an eye out for available activities—including snorkeling!

Day 7: Tuesday, August 3 (Luxor)

After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel and board a bus to Luxor. After a few stops along the way, we will arrive in Luxor, check in to the hotel, and enjoy dinner together.

After dinner, there will be a tour of the Luxor Temple.

Day 8: Wednesday, August 4 (Luxor)

After breakfast, we will head over to the **West Bank**, where we will visit the **Valley of Kings** and **Hatshepsut's Temple** and have lunch at a local restaurant. In the evening, we will have a nighttime guided tour of the **Karnak Temple**.

Optional activity, not included in our package rate: A **sunrise hot air balloon ride** offering breathtaking aerial views of the Nile River, the Valley of Kings, and Luxor's ancient temples.

Day 9: Thursday, August 5 (Cairo)

After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel and head to Luxor airport to take a domestic flight back to Cairo. Upon arrival, we will have lunch (or dinner depending on the timing of the flight) at a local restaurant, followed by check-in at our hotel in Cairo. The rest of the day will be planned after the local flights between Luxor and Cairo are announced and tickets reserved.

Day 10: Friday, August 6 (Alexandria)

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After breakfast, we will travel by tour bus from Cairo to Alexandria. Accompanied by our Egyptologist guide, we will visit the **Catacombs of Kom El Shoqafa**, one of the most notable archaeological sites from the Greco-Roman period in Egypt.

Following lunch at a local restaurant, we will continue to the **Roman Theatre**, a well-preserved ancient structure once used for public performances and cultural events during the Roman period. We will then visit the **Citadel of Qaitbay**, a historic fortress overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

At the end of the day, we will return to our hotel in Alexandria for the evening.

Day 11: Saturday, August 7 (Cairo + Departure)

We will check out of our hotel after breakfast and head over to **Bibliotheca Alexandrina** for a private tour and a meeting with the library staff. After the tour, we will have one final lunch together, then transfer directly to the Cairo International Airport to head back across the Atlantic. We wish you a safe flight back, and hope that you enjoyed this once-in-a-lifetime trip!

Note: There is a possibility that some elements of the itinerary might be changed or the timing shuffled due to circumstances beyond our control, as well as depending on the local flights' timing. Passengers will be updated promptly about any changes in the schedule.

Optional: For an additional fee, we will be able to arrange for an extra night at the end of the tour for those who wish to spend another night in Cairo ahead of their international flight.

Pricing

This once-in-a-lifetime adventure costs **\$5,400 per person for a shared room** or **\$6,500 per person for a single room.**

This price includes:

- Five nights at a **five-star Cairo hotel, like Concorde El Salam, Renaissance Marriott, or a similar hotel**
- One night at **5* Hilton Alexandria Corniche hotel (sea-view rooms)**
- Two nights at luxury **5* Jaz Elite Amara–Marsa Alam Hotel (all-inclusive stay)**
- Two nights at **4* Iberotel Luxor Hotel (Nile View rooms)**
- Three meals per day
- Bottled water and non-alcoholic drinks throughout the trip
- An English-speaking Egyptologist tour guide
- Accompaniment by a tour leader from our travel agency
- Hosting by a HANDS staff member
- **Astronomy Commentary & Stargazing:** During the trip, guests will enjoy occasional presentations and informal stargazing sessions led by fellow traveler **Ray Murray**, a former Senior Staff Technician at the University of Arizona Observatory. Ray was part of the team that cast the 8.4-meter mirror for the **Large Binocular Telescope** and has worked on several major observatories including the **MMT** in Arizona and the

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Magellan telescopes in Chile. He holds a **B.S. in Astronomy from the University of Kansas.**

- Entrance fees to sites on the itinerary
- Ground and air transport within Egypt
- Solar-eclipse viewing glasses and organized viewing of the eclipse
- The cost of your visa to Egypt, which we will obtain at the airport
- Daily tips for the driver, tour guide, and tour leader (\$15/day)
- Pre-travel Zoom orientation session (maybe just promise one)

This price excludes:

- international airfare (to/from the US)
- alcoholic drinks
- personal expenses (laundry, phone calls, etc.)
- personal travel insurance
- tips in restrooms or other settings where a trip leader isn't with you
- optional excursions (e.g. camel rides, air balloon rides, entering the pyramids, etc.)

Bonus! \$500 of your payment is a tax-deductible donation to support HANDS' work in underserved communities in Egypt!

Rates for children:

- Infants up to 5 years old: free, share parents' room
- Age 6 to 11: \$1,100 if one child will share parents' room. (For more than one child sharing the room, please contact our office as early as possible, as this will require additional coordination with the hotels in Egypt.)
- Age 12 and over: full price

Next Steps

To join this action-packed adventure, register here:

<https://handsclasses.wufoo.com/forms/2027-solar-eclipse-insight-trip-registration/>

Payment Schedule (for double occupancy room, per person):

- \$500 reservation non-refundable deposit due May 15, 2026 (Note that if you cancel the trip, this will become a tax-deductible contribution to support our work in Egypt.)
- \$1,000 2nd installment payment due July 15, 2026
- \$1,500 3rd installment payment due November 30, 2026
- \$1,000 4th installment payment due January 31, 2027
- \$1,400 (double occupancy) or \$2,500 (single occupancy) final installment payment due April 15, 2027

Payments can be made online at: [Network for Good](https://networkforgood.org/) or by check, mailed to:

**Hands Along the Nile
700 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20003**

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For inquiries about the trip, please contact us at trips@handsalongthenile.org or call our office at **703-875-9370**.