



Pharaonic Egypt

From Cairo to Abu Simbel

3–14 January 2026 (MM 870)

12 days

Lecturer: Professor Lloyd
Llewellyn-Jones

29 October– 9 November 2026 (MM 217)

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A comprehensive introduction to Pharaonic Egypt visiting the principal sites from Giza to Abu Simbel.

A full and busy tour but it avoids rush and allows time to contemplate and absorb.

Includes a visit to the newly opened Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM).

Egypt holds a unique place in world history: the deep antiquity of Egyptian civilisation inspires awe in everyone who visits this beautiful country where myth, legend and history converge. Through the midst of the land, with its origins deep in Africa, flows the Nile, the life-giving source of all that created and has sustained Egypt throughout the millennia.

Nearly two thousand years separate King Narmer, the unifier of Upper and Lower Egypt around 3100 BCE, and Ramses II, the pharaoh who built the awe-inspiring temples of Abu Simbel, and it was yet another thousand years before Egypt's last ruler, Cleopatra VII, took her own life as her kingdom became a province of Rome.

Nowhere in the world have so many ancient monuments survived for so long, on such a scale, and in such fine condition. Discover ancient Egyptian civilisation in the most magnificent historical sites: the Pyramids at Giza, the temples of Luxor (Thebes), and the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, where the pharaohs rest in eternal glory. Explore tranquil Aswan, while enjoying the serene beauty of Nubian culture, and visit Abu Simbel, Temple of Isis at Philae, and the site of the worship of the crocodile-god at Kom-Ombo. The magnificence of Egypt's temples and tombs is supplemented by an unrivalled collection of ancient artefacts in the many museums scattered throughout Egypt. Get to know the three great museums of Cairo which now hold the country's most important pharaonic collections: the old, but wonderful, Egyptian Museum at the heart of the city, the Museum of Egyptian Civilization



Denderah, wood engraving c. 1880 in *The Land of the Pharaohs*.

with its royal mummy collection, and the newly opened Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), standing on the edge of the Giza Plateau.

As we traverse the ancient paths from Cairo to Aswan and to Luxor, we will meet with pharaohs, queens, and courtiers, and immerse ourselves in the history of the pharaonic past. Egypt captures the imagination like no other destination. This tour provides a rich perspective on the archaeology, history, religion and art of this fascinating ancient civilisation.

Itinerary

Day 1: Fly at c. 9.45am (Egypt Air) from London Heathrow to Cairo, arriving c. 4.20pm (time in the air: c. 4 hours 40 minutes). Time to settle into your room before dinner. First of three nights in Cairo.

Day 2: Cairo. After an introductory lecture, drive to the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, displaying a vast collection of artefacts, including the unmissable Royal Mummies Gallery. In the afternoon visit the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities to view the richest collection of Pharaonic art in the world, including treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Day 3: Cairo, Giza. The recently opened Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) is now the world's largest archaeological museum,

holding King Tut's full treasure collection and relics spanning Egypt's ancient history to the Greek and Roman periods. On the edge of Cairo, the Giza Complex, home to the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx – Egypt's most iconic archaeological site – dates back over 4,500 years. Third and final night in Cairo.

Day 4: Abu Simbel. Early morning flight to Aswan. Drive to Abu Simbel for a first visit to the dramatic twin temples of Ramesses II and his Great Royal Wife, Nefertari, on the shores of Lake Nasser. Some free time in the afternoon before returning to Abu Simbel for the evening sound & light show. Overnight in Abu Simbel.

Day 5: Abu Simbel, Aswan. A second early-morning visit to Abu Simbel offers the chance to experience the site at its best, avoiding the peak crowds. Drive to Aswan. Enjoy a scenic ride on a Felucca (a traditional wooden sailboat) on the Nile at sunset, before returning to the hotel for dinner. First of two nights in Aswan.

Day 6: High Dam, Temple of Philae. The High Dam is one of the engineering wonders of the world. View in the distance the imposing Kalabsha temple, relocated to the banks of Lake Nasser during the construction of the High Dam. Between the High Dam and the Old Dam lies the Temple of Philae, dedicated to the goddess Isis, which was reconstructed

Ancient Egypt continued

on a landscaped island after the flooding of its original location. Also visit the ancient granite quarries where a flawed obelisk dating to the 18th Dynasty lies unfinished. Final night in Aswan.

Day 7: Kom Ombo, Edfu, Luxor. Drive north to Kom Ombo to explore the remains of the unique double temple to Sobek and Haroeris (Horus the elder), teetering on the banks of the Nile. Continue through the agricultural landscape of Southern Upper Egypt and visit the Temple of Horus at Edfu, one of the best-preserved temples in Egypt. On the way to Luxor, stop at the Temple of Esna, renowned for its remarkable astronomical reliefs. Arrive in Luxor for the first of five nights.

Day 8: Luxor. Spend the morning at Luxor Temple, a magnificent sanctuary dedicated to Amun, closely linked to Karnak Temple through the grand Opet Festival. Later, explore the Luxor Museum, which houses ancient Egyptian artefacts from Thebes, including statues from the Karnak Cachette, a well-preserved mummy of Ramses I, and exquisite reliefs from Akhenaten's reign.

Day 9: Luxor. Drive to the Theban West Bank, the vast city of the dead, home to the Valley of the Kings, where New Kingdom pharaohs were buried in magnificently decorated rock-cut tombs. Visit their grand mortuary temples, built as Houses of Eternity for the royal cult. Deir el-Bahari is the stunning terraced temple of Hatshepsut, honouring Egypt's great female pharaoh. Return via the Tombs of the Nobles, adorned with exquisite reliefs and vivid scenes of festivals and funerary rites.

Day 10: Abydos, Dendera. Follow the Nile north to Abydos, the sacred cult centre of Osiris, god of the afterlife. A major pilgrimage destination, it was also the burial site of Egypt's earliest pharaohs. Here, the Temple of Seti I is one of Egypt's most impressive, renowned for its well-preserved reliefs. In the afternoon, visit the Dendera complex, site of the Temple of Hathor, which features a breath-taking astronomical ceiling and vivid reliefs, including a famous depiction of Cleopatra VII and Caesarion.

Day 11: Luxor. Visit the ancient site of Thebes and the vast temple complex of Karnak, which includes another spectacular temple dedicated to Amun. Continue to Deir el-Medina, the village of the skilled workmen who built and decorated the royal tombs. A rare settlement

site, it features the inhabitants' own decorated tombs with perfectly preserved colours. Also visit the Ramesseum, the magnificent memorial (or mortuary) temple of Pharaoh Ramesses II. Fifth and final night in Luxor. *(In November, fly in the afternoon from Luxor to Cairo and overnight in Cairo).*

Day 12: Luxor. Late morning transfer to Luxor Airport for the group flight to London via Cairo, arriving at c. 9:00pm. *(In November, morning visit to Memphis, before driving to Cairo airport to take the 5.40pm flight arriving in London at c. 9:00pm).*

Lecturer

Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones. Chair of Ancient History at Cardiff University and a specialist in the history and culture of the ancient Near East and Greece. Lloyd has published widely on the history of Iran, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and other times and cultures in global history. His books include *Creating a Hellenistic World, King and Court in Ancient Persia, The Hellenistic Court, Persians: the Age of the Great Kings, Ancient Persia and the Book of Esther*, and *The Cleopatras: the Forgotten Queens of Egypt*. His next publication is about the great city of Babylon and he is currently engaged in a research project on the royal harem in ancient Egypt and the Near East. Lloyd has contributed to TV documentaries for the BBC, Netflix and others and is a regular guest on popular podcasts including 'The Ancients and Empires'. He is an ordained minister in the Church in Wales.

Practicalities

Included: internal flight between Cairo and Aswan with Egyptair (and only in November between Luxor and Cairo); travel by private air-conditioned coach for airport transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 9 lunches (10 in October, including 3 picnics) and 9 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and national guide.

Internal flight: if you choose to take the tour without international flights, the internal flights between Cairo and Aswan on Day 4 is still included. Only in November, the second internal flight from Luxor to Cairo on Day 11 is also included.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. If you are flying with the group we will arrange for it to be issued on arrival (the cost is included in the tour price); if you are flying independently this must be organised prior to arrival in Egypt. Passports must be valid for 6 months from entry into Egypt.

Accommodation. In Cairo: Kempinski Nile Hotel (kempinski.com): a 5-star boutique hotel, centrally located. **In Abu Simbel: Seti Abu Simbel Lake Resort** (setiabusimbellakeresort.com-egypt.com): located near the iconic temples, it offers stunning views and elegant accommodation. **In Aswan: The Movenpick Resort** (movenpick.accor.com): a 5-star resort on Elephantine Island. **In Luxor: Steigenberger Nile Palace** (hrewards.com/en/steigenberger-nile-palace-luxor): 5-star hotel set along the Nile River.

How strenuous? This is a long and demanding tour not suitable for anyone with any difficulty with everyday walking or stair-climbing. Visits to the archaeological sites involve walking over rough and uneven ground and some standing. There are also some early starts, a few long coach journeys, and the daytime heat can be tiring.

Average distance by coach per day: 55 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.