Splendors of the Nile River & Ancient Jordan

September 28–October 13, 2019
17 Days/16 Nights
From $6,672 per person, double occupancy
Saturday, September 28 .................. Arrive at Cairo International Airport  
Hotel: Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza (2 nights)

Sunday, September 29  ............................................................ Cairo
The ancient quarter of Cairo is intense—the colors, the sounds, the density of people—and it’s likely been this way for thousands of years. Your local expert will show you the 12th century Citadel of Salah al-Din, a massive compound containing mosques and museums and offering breathtaking views of Cairo. Located high above the eastern end of Cairo the citadel was the home of Egypt’s rulers for more than 700 years and is one of the oldest attractions in the city. Inside the citadel you’ll visit the great Alabaster Mosque, also known as the Mosque of Muhammad Ali. The mosque’s expansive Turkish-style interior is lit by a beautiful array of lamps suspended from the intricately decorated ceiling.

You’ll also visit the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, established in 1900 and by far the most impressive collection of Egyptian antiquities and pharaonic treasures in the world, including mind-boggling treasures once buried with the boy king Tutankhamen. (B)

Monday, September 30 ...................... Cairo, Fly to Luxor (Embark),  
Cruising the Nile, Dendera
After a short flight to Luxor on the east bank of the Nile, accompanied by your trained Egyptologist, you can stroll through the grand avenues of sphinxes and halls of gigantic columns of the magnificent Temple of Karnak. Karnak is a massive and simply astounding site, reflecting the combined achievements of many generations of ancient builders—as many as 80,000 laborers took part in its creation during the 19th Dynasty alone. Buried under sand for a thousand years, the UNESCO-designated Karnak complex is composed of three main temples, smaller enclosed temples and several outer temples.

Later, you’ll board the elegant River Tosca and set sail for beautiful Dendera. Enjoy a Gala Reception and dinner onboard this evening. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 1 ........................Dendera, Cruising the Nile, Luxor
The day starts with the impressive Temple of Hathor at Dendera—dedicated to the goddess of love and beauty. The temple dates to when the heirs of Alexander the Great ruled over Egypt and adopted Egyptian culture and religion as their own. Built between 125 BC and AD 65, it is one of the best-preserved temples in all of Egypt and features a rare bas-relief of Cleopatra with Caesarion, the son she bore to Julius Caesar.
Return to Luxor for some free time before visiting the ancient Temple of Luxor at sunset. Enter the temple through the great pylon—a ceremonial gateway—where two enormous statues of Ramses II still stand, along with a pink granite obelisk (its mate stands in the Place de la Concorde in Paris, France). Continue on to an enormous interior courtyard, where the Abu Haggag Mosque once stood atop the ruins of the temple. You can still see a ghostly remnant of the mosque on the east side of the courtyard, high above the columns, its arched doorway opening into thin air. *(B,L,D)*

The temple’s chief architects were Egypt’s “Sun King,” and Ramses II, and it was constructed over hundreds of years, beginning around 1400 BC. It was dedicated to the “father of all life,” the god Amun.

At the rear of the temple is the Sun Court, as well as the Bark Shrine that was rebuilt by Alexander the Great (who is depicted bare-chested on the walls). The Luxor Temple complex is at its most stunning at sunset, when it is illuminated with the golden glow of the setting sun. *(B,L,D)*

**Wednesday, October 2 .................. Luxor, Cruising the Nile, Kom Ombo**

Get an up-close view of two gigantic statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, better known as the Colossi of Memnon. Sixty feet tall and gazing eastward toward the rising sun, the statues depict Amenhotep seated on his throne. The Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri is another highlight today. One of Egypt’s rare female pharaohs, Hatshepsut is considered by historians to have been one of the most successful rulers of ancient Egypt. Both the setting and the construction of her temple make it unique among the landmarks of Egypt, built into the face of steep cliffs at the basin.

You’ll also visit one of the most famous archeological sites in the world—the remote and barren Valley of the Kings, used for royal burials for nearly 500 years. Much of our understanding of Egyptian mythology has been garnered from these ancient chambers. It was here that the bodies of great pharaohs such as Ramses II and Thutmose III were once laid to rest and where the mummmified remains of the boy king Tutankhamen are still on display. Within the tombs and along the walls of the Valley of the Kings, inscriptions from the Book of the Dead provided instructions on how the pharaohs could safely journey to the next world and avoid the dangers that lay on the way.

Return to the ship and set sail for Kom Ombo. Tonight, don your *galabeya* (traditional Egyptian attire, samples of which will be available for purchase onboard if you’d like to participate but didn’t bring your own) for a festive onboard party featuring traditional Egyptian music. *(B,L,D)*

**Thursday, October 3 .................. Cruising the Nile, Kom Ombo, Aswan**

The Kom Ombo Temple, unlike most ancient Egyptian temples, is dedicated to two gods—the crocodile god Sobek and the falcon god Horus the Elder.

After a scenic cruise to Aswan, you’ll take a small boat on a bird-watching excursion along the Nile. Keep an eye out for different species of herons, kingfishers, vultures, sunbirds and other wildlife that thrive in the marsh grass along the riverbanks. *(B,L,D)*

**Friday, October 4 ...................... Aswan**

Today is an epic day, filled with wonders from start to finish. You’ll visit the Aswan High Dam—as well as the Unfinished Obelisk and the beautiful Philae Temple complex.

The Aswan High Dam, completed in the 1970s, is a marvel of modern engineering that boasts some truly epic dimensions—it is 11,800 feet (3,597 meters) long; 3,215 feet (980 meters) wide at its base; and 304 feet (93 meters) high—with a reservoir capacity nearly five times that of the Hoover Dam. You’ll also visit the Unfinished Obelisk, commissioned by Queen Hatshepsut yet never completed due to a flaw discovered in the stone. If completed, it would have been the largest and heaviest obelisk ever attempted, weighing more than two million pounds (907,185 kilograms).

Another highlight today is the beautiful Philae Temple complex, originally situated on the island of Philae. It was painstakingly transferred to the island of Agilkia after the construction of the Aswan High Dam to save it from the rising waters of Lake Nasser. Today you will sail serenely down the Nile in a *felucca*—a small traditional boat with large triangular sails—a wonderful way to experience the river as Egyptians have for a thousand years. Later, relax over afternoon tea at the historic Old Cataract Hotel Aswan, a colonial-era gem that was depicted in Agatha Christie’s acclaimed mystery novel *Death on the Nile*. *(B,L,D)*

**Saturday, October 5 ............... Aswan, Cruising the Nile, Kom Ombo, Edfu**

Spend the day at leisure or join us for an optional excursion to see the magnificent temples of Abu Simbel. *(B,L,D)*
Sunday, October 6 ............... Esna, Cruising the Nile, Luxor
Today you’ll visit the Late Roman Temple of Esna, one of the last Egyptian temples ever built and buried under debris for many centuries. Later, savor the Nile’s majestic scenery as the ship cruises to Luxor. (B,L,D)

Monday, October 7 ............. Luxor (Disembark), Fly to Cairo
Disembark in Luxor and transfer to the airport for your return flight to Cairo. Check in to the Four Seasons Hotel Cairo at Nile Plaza and enjoy free time in the city before attending a sensational Sound and Light Show at the pyramids of Giza.

This evening’s Sound and Light Show at the Pyramids is a fantastically creative and colorful introduction to these ancient wonders and the amazing people and culture that built them. (B)

Tuesday, October 8 ...................... Cairo
It’s a day of Bucket List Moments today as we venture to Ancient Memphis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a number of amazing monuments to see.

At the Giza Necropolis, the face of ancient Egypt—the Great Sphinx—awaits your visit. With the body of a crouching lion and the head of a man, it is the largest monolith statue in the world.

Today you’ll also visit the only surviving Wonder of the Ancient World, the Pyramids of Giza. Beholding these legendary structures up close lets you appreciate their stone masonry and awe-inspiring architectural precision. Until as recently as the 19th century, the oldest and largest of the three pyramids—Khufu—was the tallest building in the world; when it was completed around the 26th century BC, it stood about 50 stories high. (B)

Wednesday, October 9 ...... Depart Cairo, Welcome to Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a landscape that has changed little in 2,000 years. On arrival at Amman airport, you are transferred to your hotel to relax and settle in. Later, join your Travel Director for drinks and a Welcome Dinner. (D)

Hotel: Amman Marriott Hotel (1 night)

Thursday, October 10 ............... Jerash and on to Petra
The journey to Jerash reveals the most beautifully-preserved example of a Greco-Roman city still in existence. Enter through Hadrian’s Arch, to explore the grand ruins of the Temples of Artemis and Zeus, where you can listen to the Whispering Column. Overlook the vast Oval Plaza and Cardo Maximus, the key Roman road. Return to Amman for sightseeing of the huge Roman Amphitheatre and the Citadel Hill. After some free time, continue south to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Petra, voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. (B,D)

Hotel: Petra Marriott Hotel (2 nights)

Friday, October 11 ...................... Exploring Petra
This day is devoted to the beautiful ‘rose-red city, half as old as time.’ You enter this lost city through a narrow gorge, the Siq, with walls that rise up to 200 metres. Emerge from the path to see the magnificent Treasury, carved out of solid rock and standing over 40-metres-high. Wind your way through the canyon to explore the Roman Amphitheatre, which once seated 3,000 spectators, and the ancient tombs. (B,D)

Saturday, October 12 ...... Shobak, Mount Nebo and Amman
Follow the King’s Highway to visit Shobak, an authentic 12th century crusader fortress, perched on the side of a rocky mountain, standing guard over a barren and desolate land. Admire the towers and Arabic calligraphy on the external walls before discovering the original Crusader chapel, palace complex, and even a set of secret passages! Continue to Mount Nebo, one of the most revered holy sites of Jordan, where Moses stood and saw before him the Promised Land. At Madaba, visit the famous Greek Orthodox Church of St. George with its amazing 6th century mosaic map depicting the entire Holy Land, stretching from Jordan and Palestine in the north, to Egypt in the south. Later, return to the Jordanian capital where you are at leisure. (B,D)

Hotel: Amman Marriott Hotel (1 night)

Sunday, October 13 ...................... Depart Amman
Your journey concludes with a transfer to the airport. (B)