

Pyramids and Valleys

Weight limit: 95kg

Nearest airport: Cairo

12 days / 11 nights / 8 riding days



This tour offers long days in the saddle balanced by unforgettable cultural experiences for a well-rounded holiday, exploring Cairo before heading south to Luxor. Highlights will include a ride at the Pyramids of Giza, desert camping with your horses, a boat trip on the Nile and swimming with your horse. Ride forward-going horses through the desert and take in the incredible sights of this ancient land.

Guides & Group sizes

Your guide Ganun has made a name for himself in the horse world in Egypt. He is well-known around the streets of Luxor and can't go far without someone trying to sell him a horse!

Ganun has worked with horses since a young age and his understanding of them is remarkable. From Sharm El-Sheikh to Luxor, he has excelled as a guide leading horseback riding tours for over 16 years. He was even featured as a top tour guide in Luxor in 2016. In addition to leading tours, he has extensive experience training, breeding, showing, and rehabilitating horses.

The group size for this ride is limited to 2-8 people.

Horses and Tack

All of the horses are Egyptian or “Baladi” horses, the type of horse most commonly found across Egypt. Baladi horses are native to Egypt but have mixed bloodlines with Arabian and European influences. They are spirited, quick, and versatile. They are ridden in English tack.

Many of the horses have been rescued from difficult situations and rehabilitated. They are forward-going and responsive with impressive stamina for long days in the saddle. Each horse has their own unique personality, and your guides will do their best to match horse to rider based on riding ability and personal preferences.

Level of riding and fitness

You should be comfortable with the basics of riding (in control at the walk, trot, and canter). There are 3-7 hours of riding a day so a good level of general fitness is beneficial. Although there is an age limit of 16 years or older, younger riders may be considered if they have sufficient riding ability.

Accommodation & Dining

In Cairo you will stay close to the pyramids at a boutique hotel in the heart of Giza, just across the Nile from Cairo. No matter which hotel you are in, you are guaranteed to have a once-in-a-lifetime view!

In Luxor, you will stay on the tranquil West Bank, the quieter side of the Nile with fewer tourists. The riding base is in a small village surrounded by farmland not far from the sights; the atmosphere is laid back and relaxing. You might be in a charming villa with traditional dome rooms, a vibrantly decorated guest house with views of the Nile, or your own fully equipped flat. In any of the places, you will be well accommodated while still feeling integrated with the

local area. When camping, you will spend the night in a Bedouin style tent or under the stars with sleeping bags alongside the horses.

The cuisine on this ride is mainly local specialties - koshari, Egypt's national dish, "bird's tongue" soup and pigeon, falafel and ful medames.



Itinerary

Day 1

You made it to the home of the pyramids! Pickup is at Cairo International Airport. You'll be staying in Giza, across the Nile River from Cairo. When you get to your hotel, take some time to get settled in, soak in the lively atmosphere, or relax with a drink. We'll meet you for a rooftop dinner with phenomenal views of the pyramids. Watch the Sound & Light Show as you enjoy your meal. It'll be a relaxed night so you're well rested for the first day of riding.

Day 2

Kick off your adventures with an exciting ride to the Pyramids of Giza! Your spirited Arabian

mount will enthral you with their power, speed, and grace. The vast desert surrounding Giza is perfect for long gallops and exhilarating races across the sand. Dismount at the pyramids to explore the incredible complex on a guided tour that will take you into a pyramid's burial chamber and to the sphinx. Try the national dish koshari for lunch before heading to the Egyptian Museum. This expansive museum contains the largest collection of pharaonic antiquities in the world, including mummies, sarcophagi, and papyrus. Next, you'll discover one of the historic beauties behind Cairo's nickname, "The City of a Thousand Minarets." Visit one of Cairo's stunning mosques for a fantastic cultural experience before dinner in the historic heart of Old Cairo.

Day 3

After breakfast at the hotel, you'll get picked up for a unique trip exclusively for horse lovers: a visit to the world famous Straight Egyptian Arabian stud farm, El Zahraa. Remarkably, El Zahraa is the original source of all horses known as "Straight Egyptian Arabians." Their stud program has carefully preserved the heritage of the desert horses first bred by Bedouin tribes of ancient Arabia. It is one of the largest breeding farms for purebred Arabian horses in the Middle East, and stud programs around the world have been founded on its horses. As part of the Egyptian Agriculture Organization (EAO), El Zahraa is the only authorised office in Egypt responsible for registering Arabian horses. You will tour the facilities and meet the distinguished stallions and broodmares that truly embody the ideal Arabian. Spend a leisurely afternoon enjoying the magnificent horses, admiring their delicately dished faces, raised tails, and mesmerising floating trots. Dinner will be served at the hotel upon your return. The day ends with a special treat – a carriage ride to the pyramids at night!

Day 4

Today you will visit two significant historical sites south of Giza on horseback. You will begin by riding to Abusir, the main burial site for the pharaohs and elites of the Old Kingdom 5th Dynasty. The royal necropolis contains numerous tombs and fourteen pyramids, but due to poor construction, only three pyramids have stood the test of time. From here, you will make your way through the desert to Saqqara, home of the world's oldest pyramid – the Step Pyramid of Djoser. Built for Pharaoh Djoser about 4,700 years ago, it is one of the most iconic monuments and distinct pyramids in Egypt. The surrounding Saqqara plateau still leaves much to be discovered; as recently as November 2020, archaeologists unearthed more than 100 sarcophagi, many with mummies. After a tour of the pyramid complex you will ride back across the desert, enjoying plenty of opportunities for speed. A home cooked lunch of classic Cairo dishes awaits you at the stable. Then head back to the hotel to pack up for your next destination: Luxor! Just a short one-hour flight away, Luxor feels like a world apart from busy Cairo. At your accommodation, you'll unwind over a late dinner and rest up for another day in the saddle.

Day 5

Start off slow this morning with coffee and breakfast at the stable. Meet the horses before saddling up for a late morning ride along the Nile. Trot and canter on the trails that cut through the West Bank's sprawling lush farmland. See daily rural life as you ride past farmers and encounter donkeys, goats, and even water buffalo. Set up a picnic lunch in the grassy fields next to the Nile with the horses. Enjoy more laid-back riding through the village streets and along the canal. Return in the early evening for a barbecue dinner at the stable of grilled chicken, roasted vegetables, and fresh Egyptian bread. Stay warm around the fire as night falls or retreat to the stable roof to savour a quiet moment under the stars with a view of Mount Thebes.



Day 6

There is so much to explore on the West Bank, and this exciting day is spent sightseeing on and off the horses. You'll head to the stable directly after breakfast. In the morning, ride past the iconic Columns of Memnon on your way to Medinet Habu Temple. Hop off the horses to get a tour of the temple before enjoying lunch at a nearby restaurant with views of Mount Thebes. Then get back in the saddle to ride to another impressive temple of the Theban Necropolis:

Ramesseum. Built in the thirteenth century BC during the long reign of Ramses II, it exhibits the pharaoh's great wealth during this period in ancient Egyptian history. In one of its hypostyle halls, known as "Astronomy Hall", you can see the very first depiction of the 12-month calendar. On your way back to the stable, ride through swaths of farmland and enjoy lengthy canters along fields of sugar cane. Dinner is at one of our favourite Luxor restaurants. At the end of the day, relax at your accommodation and rest up for more adventures.

Day 7

Get ready for a full day of riding! Today's journey takes you from the banks of the Nile River all the way to Mount Thebes, ending with camping in the desert. You'll get an early start and begin your ride at a lively pace. Canter between fields of banana trees and past the ancient village of Old Qurna. Lunch will consist of local specialties, like "bird's tongue" soup and pigeon! An afternoon ride up Mount Thebes offers stunning views of Luxor and the Nile. Explore the hills around the Valley of the Kings on your sure-footed partner. A Bedouin tent awaits you in the desert for the night. Cook a traditional Egyptian dinner over an open fire and experience a magical desert sunset. At night, unwind around a campfire under the stars with some Egyptian tea and music.

Day 8

If you wake up early enough, you'll see colourful hot air balloons filling the sky above the Valley of the Kings at sunrise. A hot breakfast and coffee are prepared over a fire. Tack up for a relaxed ride back to the stable, this time passing through Al Aqaltah village. Lunch is at the charming Villa Nile House. After freshening up, you'll be picked up for an afternoon tour of Hatshepsut Temple, a striking tribute to Egypt's longest-reigning female pharaoh at the foot of the Theban mountains. In the evening, take it easy with a scenic boat trip on the Nile. A freshly prepared dinner is served on the boat at sunset.

Day 9

This morning's trip is an absolute must-see: The Valley of the Kings! Feel like an Egyptologist as you roam the ornate tombs of famous Egyptian rulers, transporting you to another time. The next stop is the equally impressive Valley of the Nobles, featuring well-preserved tombs with vibrantly coloured paintings, each telling a story of ancient Egyptian life. After your tours, head back to the hotel for lunch and to get ready for your afternoon ride. Start off riding at a slower pace through the village until you reach the desert, where you'll canter over the hills and kick up sand on the long flat stretches. In the evening, ride back along the Nile as the sun goes down and see the lights of the East Bank glimmering in the river. Have a refreshing drink back at the stable as you untack. Dinner is at a local restaurant.

Day 10

Today you'll venture to the other side of the Nile to see all the best sights on the East Bank. Begin your day with a classic falafel and ful medames breakfast before taking a water taxi across the river. Don't forget to bring a camera for your tours of the incredible Luxor and Karnak Temples. Take in the sights on a carriage ride to lunch at a popular local restaurant. Afterward, walk through the brilliantly displayed collection of statues, mummies, and ancient artefacts at Luxor Museum. Revisit Luxor Temple at night and go inside the remarkable Abu Haggag Mosque. Depending on the time of year, you may even be lucky enough to witness the Moulid of Abu el Haggag street festival. Walk to the souq (market) in the evening to do a little shopping or simply soak in the vibrant atmosphere. Take a water taxi back to the West Bank for a late dinner.

Day 11

This is a fun-in-the-sun kind of day with the horses! Ride to Banana Island, trotting on dusty farm trails and through leafy banana fields. Have a relaxed lunch at the picturesque Banana Island restaurant with a Nile view. After lunch, make a quick stop to see some crocodiles and monkeys at a nearby exhibit. On the ride back, you'll take the scenic Nile-side route. Canter in the green fields near the stable in the afternoon sun and then cool off in the Nile – on horseback! End the day and celebrate your last night with a lively barbecue at the stable with a fire, drinks, and music.

Day 12

If you have the time, tack up for a casual morning ride. Otherwise, relax at the stable with the horses, hang out by the Nile, or pick up some last-minute goodies to bring home. Our driver will take you to the Luxor Airport to catch your flight. Until next time, ma'salaam!

Price includes

- Accommodation and meals
- Transfer from Cairo airport and transfers to and from Luxor airport
- Other ground transportation
- Entrance fees and cultural tours
- 8 days riding

Not included

- Flights

- Personal travel expenses
- Visas
- Alcoholic beverages
- Additional activities outside of the itinerary



International flights & Airport transfers

We recommend arriving in the afternoon or earlier on the first day. This allows time for you to get to your hotel and settle in before meeting the group for dinner to kick off your tour. However, we understand if this is not possible and we can still accommodate other travel plans.

This riding tour starts in Cairo and ends in Luxor; therefore you will need to book your own transfer flight. Flights between Cairo and Luxor operate at various times daily. The following flight time(s) should be booked:

Transfer Day: 6 pm flight from Cairo International Airport (CAI) to Luxor International Airport (LUX)

Last Day of Tour: If you booked a roundtrip ticket to and from Cairo, we recommend booking a roundtrip flight between Cairo and Luxor as well. When picking your Luxor departure flight,

make sure to plan enough time between arriving in Cairo and your Cairo departure time. We advise giving yourself at least 3 hours in case of delays.

What to bring

We recommend packing layers. In the winter months, the days are warm and sunny, but the nights get cold. The low humidity can even make it feel chilly during the day in the shade. They are also good to have for sun protection.

Egypt has a conservative social culture, and both men and women tend to dress modestly. You will find the locals wearing a mix of traditional clothing (for example, galabayas) as well as Western-style clothing. In the cities and popular tourist areas, you will see tourists wearing all varieties of clothes including shorts and sleeveless tops. It is not expected that tourists dress in the local attire or for women to cover their hair (unless entering a mosque). However, we'd suggest dressing on the modest side to be respectful of the local culture. Please avoid excessively revealing clothing, military clothing, and camo.

- Riding Pants/Breeches (2-3 pairs recommended)
- Riding boots
- Helmet
- Half Chaps
- Riding Gloves
- Lightweight/breathable tops (short and long sleeves)
- Light to mid-weight jacket
- Casual bottoms (long pants/jeans/dresses/skirts recommended)
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Flip-flops or sandals
- Swimsuit
- bumbag (for carrying small personal items on rides or tours; saddle bags are provided for your use)
- Backpack or overnight bag for day trips/camping
- Sunglasses (bring an extra pair if you have one)
- Light scarf (for sun protection, cool nights, and mosque visits)
- Sunscreen
- Type C or Type F travel adapter (if required)
- Binoculars (optional for boat trips and hot air balloon rides)
- Small First Aid kit
- Travel Toilet Paper

- Hand sanitizer
- Chapstick/lip balm



Climate

Egypt offers sun and warm temperatures all year round. We operate tours through the months of September – May only. We do not offer tours from June – August to protect the horses from the extreme heat during this time of year. The months on either end of the summer are still quite hot and dry, with temperatures around 32- 38°C during the day. The winter months are very temperate and comfortable, with temperatures around 24-29°C. You may be surprised at how cool it gets at night in the winter – temperatures can drop to around 5°C.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Country specific information can also be found at National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

Travel documents

For entry requirements to Egypt for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/egypt>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements.

Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & Tipping

Tipping is important in Egyptian culture and expected for most services. That said, you will not have to worry about tipping the drivers, cultural tour guides, and hotel staff that are part of your trip. We have factored that into our pricing and will distribute those tips on your behalf.

Please note that there are some cases where we'd suggest you give your own tip. For example, it may be expected at public bathrooms, or if an employee at a temple or tomb provides a brief tour or takes photos for you. We recommend having some small bills with you to tip in these situations. Tips amounts are small, anywhere between 5 to 20 LE or about \$1. You may also choose to tip your riding guide(s) at the end of your tour.

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms

saddletravel.com

Holidays are confirmed with a 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before the start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50%
30 days or more - 30%
less than 30 days - nil

Book with confidence – Covid Guarantee:

If the ride operator is closed or you are unable to travel due to lockdown:

1/ The deposit is reissued as a rebooking voucher to rebook anytime.

2/ Any balance payment will be refunded to you in full within 1 week of departure date



Insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.

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