



Nile Valley: Esna to Abu Simbel

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Sofitel Old Cataract Hotel & Spa (p250)
- ➔ Eskaleh (p264)
- ➔ Philae Hotel (p249)
- ➔ Bet al-Kerem (p249)
- ➔ Mövenpick Resort Aswan (p250)

Best Activities

- ➔ Sailing in a dahabiyya (p31)
- ➔ Birdwatching in Aswan (p248)
- ➔ Taking felucca trip around the islands in Aswan (p247)
- ➔ Visiting the Daraw camel market (p240)

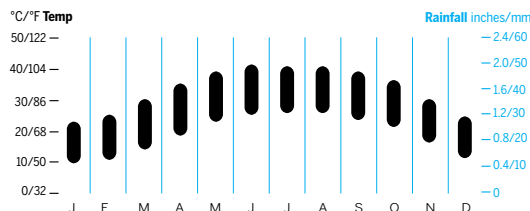
Why Go

The Nile south of Luxor is increasingly hemmed in by the Eastern Desert, its banks lined with grand, well-preserved Graeco-Roman temples at Esna, Edfu and Kom Ombo, and its lush fields punctuated by palm-backed villages – it's the ideal place to sail through on a Nile boat. The once-great city of Al-Kab provides the perfect contrast to the grandeur of the temples, while at Gebel Silsila the river passes through a gorge sacred to the ancients, who used the quarry to build the temples in Luxor. Aswan, the ancient ivory-trading post, has a laid-back atmosphere and plenty of things to see.

South of Aswan, the land is dominated by Lake Nasser, the world's largest artificial lake. On its shores is one of ancient Egypt's most awesome structures: the Great Temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel.

When to Go

Aswan



May–mid-Oct

The long summers are unbearably hot in Aswan – temperatures soar well above 45°C.

Oct–Nov & Mar–Apr

The best months to visit, with warm days and cooler nights.

Dec–Feb

Days can occasionally be grey, and it can be too cold at night to make the most of a cruise.



Nile Valley: Esna to Abu Simbel Highlights

1 Marvel at the perfectly carved walls of the most completely preserved temple in Egypt at **Edfu** (p235).

2 Discover the quarries of **Gebel Silsila**, where the pharaohs found stone to build ancient Thebes (p237).

3 Sit on the terrace of Aswan's **Old Cataract Hotel**

(p250) and watch the feluccas sail by.

4 Sense the vanity of Ramses II in the awe-inspiring **Great Temple** (p262) of Abu Simbel.

5 Wander around the little-visited **ruins of Abu** (p243) on Elephantine Island.

6 Take a boat out to the marvellous **Temple of Isis** (p254) at Philae.

7 Stroll through the **botanical gardens** (p245) of Kitchener's Island in the afternoon sun.

8 See the unusual double **Temple of Kom Ombo** (p238) in the morning light.