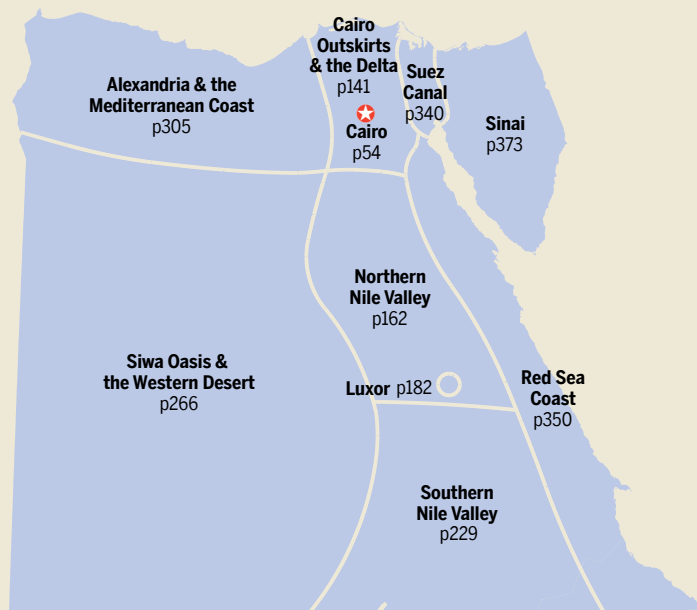




Egypt



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Itineraries



2 WEEKS Treasures of the Nile

Many visitors now skip Cairo and fly direct to Luxor, the world's largest open-air museum. There's plenty to keep you busy here before spending a few days cruising the Nile, which is definitely the most relaxed way to see Egypt.

In **Luxor** spend two days on the east bank visiting **Karnak** and **Luxor Temple** and the brilliant **Luxor Museum**, as well as strolling through the souq. The next few days cycle around the west bank of the Nile where the major sights include the **Valley of the Kings**, the **Ramesseum** and the **Memorial Temple of Hatshepsut**. Try to save some energy for less-visited sights, such as **Medinat Habu**, the **Tombs of the Nobles** and **Deir Al Medina**, which can be just as rewarding.

In the second week arrange four days sailing up the Nile to **Aswan** on a budget-friendly felucca or a luxurious dahabiyya; the shorter version is to find a taxi to take you there, stopping at the temples on the way. From Aswan you can visit the temples at **Abu Simbel**, perched on the edge of Lake Nasser.



Egypt Top to Bottom

In a month you can cover most of Egypt's main sights – a trip of nearly 2000km. This takes in Egypt's most romantic desert oasis and snorkelling in the Red Sea, as well as seeing the most important monuments along the Nile and enjoying the urban delights of Cairo.

On the first morning in **Cairo**, visit the Egyptian Museum to get a grasp on the country's long history. Have a few days of urban delights in the modern metropolis. Along with the top sites, make time to sit in one of the city's bustling *ahwas* (coffeehouses), wreathed in sweet shisha smoke. Next, visit the **Pyramids of Giza** and continue to the necropolis of **Saqqara**.

Head south from Cairo on the sleeper train to **Aswan**, where you can soak up Nubian culture and make the side trip for a day or two to the awesome temples of **Abu Simbel**. Sail back down the Nile from Aswan to **Edfu** on a felucca, or take a taxi stopping at various temples along the way, continuing on to **Luxor**. Visit the vast temple complex of **Karnak**, and Luxor Temple on the east bank, and then hang out on the west bank of the Nile for a few days – there is so much to see here. For a great day out of Luxor, take a boat or drive to the sacred site of **Abydos**, visiting the Ptolemaic temple at **Dendara** on the way.

When you've had your fill of ancient ruins, head from Luxor to **Al Quseir** for some days of snorkelling and relaxing on a Red Sea beach. When you're done head back to Cairo, and on the way stop in at the **Monastery of St Paul** and **Monastery of St Anthony**.

Return to Cairo and from there take the train to **Alexandria** and spend a couple of days in its wonderful cafes and museums. From there continue along the Mediterranean coast heading for **Siwa Oasis**, one of Egypt's most idyllic spots. This is the best spot for hanging out for a few days, cycling around the oasis and perhaps going on a desert safari.



Desert Escape

The Western Desert offers a wonderful mix of lush oasis gardens, stunning desert landscapes and ancient monuments. There's nowhere in Egypt as peaceful as the oases.

Begin a trip to the amazing Western Desert with a bus from Cairo or Asyut to **Al Kharga Oasis**, and explore the Al Kharga Museum of Antiquities as well as the Graeco-Roman temples and tombs.

From Al Kharga, head northwest to **Dakhla Oasis** to see the fascinating, hive-like mudbrick settlements of Balat and Al Qasr. Next, hop north to the small and quaint **Farafra Oasis**. From there you may be able to make a two- or three-day trip to camp in the stunning **White Desert National Park**, and then head for the closest oasis to Cairo, **Bahariya**.

The desert road from Bahariya to **Siwa Oasis** is currently closed, so you will have a long detour via Cairo to get there. Worth the trouble? Certainly. Perched on the edge of the Great Sand Sea, and surrounded by some staggeringly beautiful desert, Siwa is renowned for its dates as well as for being the place of the oracle where Alexander the Great was declared son of the god Amon.



Urban Jaunt

Get a taste of contemporary urban life in Egypt's two largest cities. The heaving metropolis of Cairo allows you to wander through time in its different quarters. In Alexandria, soak up cafe culture and catch a glimpse of the Graeco-Roman achievement.

In **Cairo**, head to the Egyptian Museum to immerse yourself in Egypt's long history and then stroll through the faded elegance of Downtown. The next day visit the **Pyramids of Giza**, and continue to the necropolis of **Saqqara**. For contrast on your third day, take the metro to Coptic Cairo and visit the excellent Coptic Museum. Take a taxi to Al Azhar Park to enjoy lunch and great views over the city and then spend the afternoon in Islamic Cairo. On your last day, cafe-hop in leafy Zamalek, visit some art galleries and end atop the Cairo Tower for a final view.

The next morning, take an express train to **Alexandria**. Follow a morning in the stunning Bibliotheca Alexandrina with a visit to the excellent Alexandria National Museum. On your second day, indulge in nostalgia: ride the creaking streetcar and tour Pastroudis and other cafes where the city's literati once sipped coffee.

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- Sleeping
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- Eating

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- Drinking & Nightlife
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- Entertainment

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- Shopping

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- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
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- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

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Jessica Lee

Cairo, Cairo Outskirts & the Delta, Sinai, Suez Canal

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