



Ancient Egypt & the Nile River

EXTEND YOUR TRIP

Israel: Jerusalem | Jordan: Petra & Amman

Egypt: Alexandria & Cairo

Stopovers Available in Amsterdam, Istanbul,
London, Madrid, Munich, Paris, or Rome

Stopover Available in Addis Ababa, Dubai,
Nairobi, Tel Aviv, or Johannesburg

Your Travel Handbook

CONTENTS

Travel Documents & Entry Requirements	3
Visas Required	3
Advance Information for Jordan	5
Rigors, Vaccines & General Health	6
Vaccines Required	7
Money Matters: Local Currency & Tipping Guidelines	10
Tipping Guidelines	13
Air, Optional Tours & Staying in Touch	14
Optional Tours	15
Communicating with Home from Abroad	15
Packing: What to Bring & Luggage Limits	17
Dress Codes: Shorts, Headscarves, and other FAQ	18
Suggested Packing Lists	19
Electricity Abroad	22
Climate & Average Temperatures	24
Aboard Your Ship: Cabin Features, Dining & Services on Board	27
Nefertiti	27
Ship Specifications	30
About Your Destinations: Culture, Etiquette & More	32
Egyptian Culture	32
Language	33
Religion	33
Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More	38
Demographics & History	41
Egypt	41
Facts, Figures & National Holidays	41
Egypt: A Brief History	41
Israel	44
Facts, Figures & National Holidays	44
Israel: A Brief History	44
Jordan	46
Facts, Figures & National Holidays	46
Jordan: A Brief History	47
Resources	49
Suggested Reading	49
Suggested Film & Video	52
Useful Websites	54

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking only the main trip, you will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension to Israel & Jordan:** You will need 2 additional pages, for a total of 4.
- **Post-trip extension to Alexandria:** No additional pages are needed.
- **Both the pre-trip extension and the post-trip extension:** You will need 4 blank passport pages in total.
- **Stopover in Amsterdam, Munich, Rome, Nairobi, or Johannesburg:** You will need to add 2 additional pages to the applicable total listed above.
- **Stopover in Istanbul, London, Madrid, Paris, Addis Ababa, Dubai, or Tel Aviv:** You will need to add an additional page to the applicable total listed above.

Visas Required

We'll be sending you a detailed **Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 90 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we're providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. *This information is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.*

- **Egypt (main trip and post-trip extension): Visa required.** U.S. citizens will require a visa to enter Egypt. For this cruise, the cost of this visa will be included for U.S. citizens **if you have an airport transfer with us in Cairo.** *Airport transfers are included with our international flights provided you arrive in Cairo on the standard date for your tour. If you've made your own*

flight arrangements, you can purchase an airport transfer from us provided you arrive at the Cairo airport on the standard arrival date. If you arrive in Cairo early—even with flights arranged through us—than you will need to get your own visa, which U.S. citizens can easily do at the Cairo airport for about \$25 per person.

- **Israel (pre-trip extension or optional stopover): No visa required.** U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter Israel.
- **Jordan (pre-trip extension): Visa required.** U.S. citizens will qualify for a free group visa in Jordan. To arrange this, we will need information from you no later than 30 days prior to your departure. Please refer to the “Advance Information for Jordan” section of this chapter. *Please note that if you choose to travel in Jordan on your own before or after your trip with us, you will need to get your own visa—even if we arrange the flights for you.*
- **Turkey (optional stopover): Visa required.** We suggest you obtain an e-visa in advance through the Turkish government’s website as visas cannot be obtained upon arrival.
- **Ethiopia (optional stopover only): Visa required.** U.S. citizens will require a visa for Ethiopia; detailed instructions will be included in your Visa Packet, as noted above.
- **Kenya (optional stopover only): Visa required.** It is important that you get this visa in advance.
- **United Arab Emirates (optional stopover only): Visa required.** Currently, the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) allows U.S. citizens to get a tourist visa free of charge on arrival in Dubai.
- **The Netherlands, England, Spain, Germany, France, Italy, and South Africa (optional stopovers only): No visas required.** A visa is not required for U.S. citizens for stays of up to 90 days.

If you are staying longer in any of these countries, you should check with their embassy or consulate for the applicable regulations. If you are not a U.S. citizen, your visa requirements may differ; we recommend contacting the nearest embassy/consulate or calling our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at 1-800-556-9990 to check.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Advance Information for Jordan

In order for our local office to prepare for your entry into Jordan they will need the following information **at least 30 days prior to your departure**:

- Full name
- Nationality
- Passport number
- Date of expiration of passport
- Date and place of birth.

If you have not already provided this information to us, you may do so by mail, online via your My Planner, or by calling Traveler Support. If you have already provided this information, then you need not call. Even if you have already provided this information, you may receive an automated mailing requesting a confirmation.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has a group size of 20-25 travelers (average of 22) with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

PACING

- 15 days, with 7 nights aboard the privately chartered 75-passenger *Nefertiti*, one four-night hotel stay, and one three-night hotel stay

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 1-3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Travel over city streets, rugged paths, cobble streets, sand, and unpaved roads in some places
- Travel by 75-passenger river ship and by coach
- Changes in tides and water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

CLIMATE

- The climate in Egypt varies from cold to extremely hot
- During the dry summer months of May through October, temperatures can range from 90°-100°F
- From June to September, temperatures can easily reach 90°-100°F and even up to 110°F (in the shade) in Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan

- Winter temperatures between November and April usually range from the 50s (in the mornings) to 80°F and can drop dramatically after sunset, as far as the high 40s

FLIGHT INFORMATION

- Travel time will be 17–20 hours and will most likely have one connection of 3–4 hours

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel> or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

Vaccines Required

COVID-19

Overseas Adventure Travel requires that all travelers are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and are able provide proof of their vaccination upon arrival at their destination. A full vaccination is defined as having been inoculated by an approved vaccine and receiving a booster shot at least 14 days prior to your departure. This requirement is not contingent on the countries the tour visits, but a strict company policy due to the nature of the pandemic.

Medication Suggestions

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- A pain medication. You might need this in the unlikely event of an injury in a location where medical attention would be delayed.
- Motion sickness medicine, if you are susceptible

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>. (Pick the country and then follow the links to “Local Laws & Special Circumstances”; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Safe Water

Tap water in Egypt and Jordan is not safe to drink. But in Israel, the tap water is safe.

In Egypt and Jordan, you should use bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth at any hotel. During your Nile cruise, the tap water onboard your ship is filtered, but we still recommend you stick to bottled water. Bottled water is readily available for purchase throughout Egypt. Inspect each bottle before you buy it to make sure the cap is sealed properly. Carry a bottle in your daypack at all times. Bottled drinks and juices, and hot drinks that have been boiled, are safe to drink. Avoid drinks with ice in them.

Food Safety

We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Our local staff can suggest restaurants for the meals you take on your own. To prevent upset stomach, pay attention to food preparation in Egypt, where the tap water is unsafe. Avoid salads and fruit that may have been washed in local water. (Salads and fruit served on board your ship are the exception; as is fruit that you peel yourself, which is usually safe.) In Israel these precautions do not apply as the water there is safe to drink.

Don't Push Too Hard

One of the most important parts of staying healthy on an active trip is to not push yourself too hard if you feel tired. Respect your own limits. Your trip schedule offers some degree of flexibility. If your energy level is low on a certain day, you can sit out a walking tour or a road excursion. Our local staff can tell you about the distance, time, and terrain of our walking excursions in advance, and can usually suggest rewarding alternative activities.

Drink Plenty of Liquids

When you travel, especially in the dry desert climate of Egypt, you can easily become dehydrated without knowing it. If your fluid balance is low, you are more susceptible to fatigue and illness. Air travel will dry you out, so drink liquids and avoid alcohol on your flights. During the trip, don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink. Instead, drink by the clock: drink one to two quarts of water or juice each day, in addition to drinks at meals. If you find yourself tired or unwell, and don't know why, it may be that you simply need to drink more. Note that tea, coffee, and alcoholic beverages are diuretics and do not help maintain hydration.

Sun and Heat Exposure

It can be very hot at mid-day. Be sure to wear your hat and use plenty of sunscreen. Be aware of the signs of heat exposure. Be especially concerned if you feel hot, but are not perspiring.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as U.S. dollars, local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card. Amex cards are not widely accepted in Egypt and cannot be used to purchase optional tours, so a Visa or MasterCard will be more useful.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They are hard to exchange and not accepted as payment.
- **Bring a number of \$1 and \$5 bills.** In many places in Egypt, you'll be able to pay or tip in U.S. dollars, but you'll need small bills to make exact change.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Egypt

The monetary unit of Egypt is the Egyptian pound (LE), which is divided into 100 piastres (pt). In Arabic, a pound is a guinay and piastres are qirsh or girsh. Banknote and coin denominations are:

- Banknotes: 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 pounds
- Coins: 25 and 50 piastres; 1 pound

U.S. dollars are widely accepted in Egypt, especially by local vendors and at markets. When paying in dollars, you should use exact change and the bills should be in good condition; although it doesn't happen a lot, some places will decline a bill that is dirty, torn, or has writing on it.

Local currency is needed for government-sponsored tickets, such as entrance fees for non-included sites or photo tickets. Typically, locally currency is also more useful in situations that require small change or where paying in dollars would be overpaying—tips to the restroom attendant, paying for taxis/buses, etc. Our local staff will advise you on when it is best to pay in local currency and the best places to exchange money. No matter what currency you're using, having a number of small-domination bills is key because it facilitates tipping. Specifically, we recommend bringing a lot of \$1 bills for tipping or making exact change.

Israel

The official currency of Israel is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS), which is divided into 100 agorot. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 20, 50, 100 and 200 shekels
- Coins: 10 and 50 agorot, and 1/2 (one half), 1, 2, 5, and 10 shekels

Local currency is strongly preferred, although some hotels will accept US dollars (usually at a poor rate of exchange).

Jordan

The Jordanian *dinar* (JD) is a decimal currency, divided into 10 *dirham*, 100 *qirsh* (sometimes translated as *piastres* in English) or 1,000 fils. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: JD 1, 5, 10, 20, and 50 dinar
- Coins: 1/2, 1, 2.5, 5, and 10 qirsh; 1/4, 1/2, and 1 dinar

U.S. dollars are not widely used in Jordan; the local currency is generally preferred. Dollars might do in a pinch, especially if the person receiving them is in a travel- or tourist-related business.

How to Exchange Money

Since you can pay with U.S. dollars in Egypt, and credit cards are commonly used in Israel and Jordan, exchanging money isn't as important on this trip as it would be in other parts of the world. However, if you want to exchange money before your trip, you *might* be able to do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Note that we say "might" because the currencies on this trip can be hard to find due to banking restrictions. You may need to call a few places or do some checking online.

If you would rather exchange money on your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some banks and at exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best.

All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1-\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

Egypt: ATMs are common in cities and towns, but may be hard to find in rural villages or at archeological sites like the Pyramids.

Israel: Generally ATMs are common in cities and towns throughout Israel. Only in rural villages or in places far off the beaten track will ATMs be hard to find.

Jordan: Generally ATMs are common in cities and towns throughout Jordan, but may be hard to find in rural villages or in places far off the beaten track.

Credit & Debit Cards

Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although the Discover card is accepted in some countries outside the U.S., it is not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

Egypt: Credit cards are widely accepted *except* at open-air stalls (like bazaars), cafes, or taxis—expect these to be cash only.

Israel: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Israel, but you may still need cash for small businesses or in rural areas of Israel.

Jordan: Though major American credit cards are widely accepted in Jordan, smaller businesses or places in rural areas may not accept cards.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Shipboard Account

This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.) and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, and American Express, are not accepted.

Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Please note: Like our European cruises, your bill for any optional tours taken during the trip will be paid with your Trip Experience Leader, who will have you fill out a form onsite with your credit card information. (You can only pay for optional tours by credit/debit card.) For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

Exchange Services

You will have opportunities to change money or use an ATM before boarding the ship. But in case of emergencies, we offer a one-time money exchange onboard of up to \$100 per person, per cruise.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines.

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$8–\$12 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard Crew:** We recommend a flat tip of \$10–\$12 U.S. per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. *Due to international banking laws, we are not able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Housekeeping at hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Taxis:** You should agree on a price with the driver before you take the taxi, so tipping is not necessary unless you receive “above and beyond” service.
- **Restaurants and cafes:** 10% of the bill is considered polite. Most restaurants in Egypt charge a service fee, but this doesn’t go to your waiter—it is more a cover charge than a tip.
- **Restrooms:** If there is an attendant on duty, it is customary to give them a small tip of about 5–10LE (about \$0.30–\$0.60 US) for paper and/or soap.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Keep in mind that the giving of tips (*baksheesh* in Arabic) is customary in Egypt for many services. In return, you will find many Egyptians eager to provide service, often with genuine friendliness. If you don’t want to tip, be sure to politely but firmly decline the service offered. We recommend carrying a supply of Egyptian one-pound notes for small tips.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early, Stay Later, or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. Airport transfers can be purchased at an additional cost through a Traveler Support agent at **1-800-221-0814**.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at **www.oattravel.com/myplanner** under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**.

*If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: **www.rome2rio.com**.*

Arriving in Cairo on Flights You Arranged

If you are booking your own flights, please keep in mind that it can take **up to 2 hours** to get from the airport to your first hotel in Cairo due to heavy traffic. For flights arriving after 6pm on Day 2, this will mean a late arrival to your hotel followed by a full day of discoveries on Day 3. You may want to consider arriving one day early to acclimate and relax after a long travel day.

However, if you do arrive early, you will not qualify for an airport transfer and will need to get your own visa for Egypt. For more information, please contact our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**.

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is "unlocked", meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is unlocked, then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with "Pay as You Go" cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you'll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Receiving Calls from Home

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Egypt: +20

Jordan: +962

Israel: +972

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person
Weight restrictions	Luggage is limited to 44 lbs for checked luggage and 11 lbs for carry-ons.
Size Restrictions	Standard airline size: Checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+ width + depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches
Luggage Type	A sturdy suitcase with wheels and lockable zippers.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** One duffel bag or suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Please do not bring a rigid (plastic shell) suitcase.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.
- **In Case of Delays:** While luggage delays are rare, you should know that if your luggage is delayed in Egypt, customs officers will need to unlock it before releasing it from the airport. This will require your presence at the airport with your passport.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Most of your clothing should be for warm, dry climates**—lightweight, loose fitting, and made of 100% cotton. But you'll still want to bring a sweater or other layer for when the air conditioning is on high. (Also, the desert it can be cold at night.)
- **But December and January can be cold and rainy.** Parts Israel and Jordan get snow in winter; other areas get heavy rains. If you are traveling in December or January, keep this in mind, especially on the pre-trip extension.
- **If you like to hand-wash your clothes,** bring socks and underwear made of material that will dry out overnight.
- **You can buy clothing designed especially for travel.** Look for clothes that offer adequate sun protection.
- **Pack a few pieces of clothing and any medications in your carry-on,** in case your luggage is delayed. If traveling with a companion, consider “cross-packing,” i.e., pack two outfits of your clothing in your companion’s luggage and vice-versa.
- **You’ll be on your feet a lot** during the trip and walking over some rough and slippery surfaces. We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or similar supportive sports shoes for our daytime shore excursions. Aboard ship, the soles of your shoes should offer good traction

Dress Codes: Shorts, Headscarves, and other FAQ

Dress on our trip is functional and casual; there are no formalwear evenings. For most travelers a casual dress code in a hot and sunny place means shorts and/or sleeveless tops. But are these culturally acceptable? In Egypt (and Jordan on the pre-trip extension), the answer is yes, but a qualified one.

Generally dress in Egypt and Jordan tends to be conservative and modest. “Modest” means locals of both genders will cover legs and arms, wear higher necklines, and local women may cover their hair with a scarf. Therefore shorts and sleeveless tops are more for tourists. It is OK for you to wear them, as long as you don’t mind that everyone knows you’re a visitor. Also, there are a few subtle guidelines to keep in mind when wearing shorts.

For example, the longer the shorts are, the better (to the knee is best). Sleeveless tops are acceptable, but on women the necklines should still be modest. Lastly, the more religious or more traditional a place is, the less acceptable shorts or sleeveless tops become. So the outfit that is fine for exploring ancient temples may not be considered polite at a mosque, synagogue, or at a Home-Hosted visit. Generally in places of worship or in someone’s home it is better to cover up your shoulders and legs. In fact, when visiting a mosque or synagogue you may be handed a wrap and asked to drape it over you so that you are properly covered; this is common throughout the Middle East. Christian churches also require modest dress, meaning covered shoulders (no sleeveless tops) and shorts/skirts that fall below the knee.

In countries we visit, most Muslim women and many Jewish women (plus some Christians) chose to cover their hair; some will also cover their face as well. As a visitor, you will not be expected to cover your hair, except perhaps in a mosque, where it may be required for entry. If a mosque requires something specific, there will be a private “women only” entrance where you can rent the appropriate dress, so it is not necessary to bring a scarf. Male travelers may be asked to cover their head in synagogues; if so, there are usually yamakas that you can borrow. Depending on the synagogue, female travelers may also be asked to cover their hair, which you can do with a scarf or a hat. (But this is not usually a requirement.)

Of course, the application of these guidelines varies. You’ll see younger people and city dwellers dressed in a more causal style than their parents or in the small villages. And, naturally, many foreign tourists are not sensitive to the issue of dress at all. But travelers who are thoughtful about the issue will get more respect and a warmer welcome.

Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. You may also want to consult the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts in a breathable fabric, like cotton or cotton-blend. Polo shirts are more versatile than T-shirts.

- Trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best.

- Walking shorts: Cut long for modesty. See the “Dress Codes” section in this chapter for details.
- Shoes and socks: We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or supportive sports shoes for excursions. Aboard ship, the soles of your shoes should offer good traction.
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor for sun protection
- Light sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket (air conditioning can be cold in museums, motor coaches, etc).
- Underwear and sleepwear
- Swimsuit

Seasonal Clothing Recommendations

For November – March departures, add these items to your list

- A pair of heavier pair of trousers or light long underwear for evenings on deck
- Warm sweater or jacket and hat

Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses and a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 45 or stronger (essential for the desert)
- Insect repellent
- Washcloth (not always supplied)
- Pocket-size tissues and/or toilet paper for restrooms
- Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial hand cleaner
- Flashlight (useful inside the Pyramids/temples)
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Travel money purse, worn under your shirt or jacket; money belt

- Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards
- Electrical transformer & plug adapters: see “Electricity” for details

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Electrolytes, in case of dehydration
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Antihistamine: Benadryl
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids
- Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotic: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- Optional: An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- Optional: A strong prescription pain medication for rare emergency purposes
- Optional: Motion sickness medicine if you are susceptible

Optional Gear

- Eye drops for dry, dusty conditions
- Light folding umbrella, to be used to block the sun
- Hand-wash laundry soap, and maybe clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Travel journal/note pad/reading material
- Home address book

- Photos, small gifts like pens
- Phrase book
- Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- Folding walking stick or trekking pole (sold in most camping stores)
- Portable fan
- Compact binoculars. *If your hotel in Cairo is close to an embassy, you may be asked to store the binoculars at the front desk, but you can take them with you during the day.*

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity in Egypt, Israel, and Jordan is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, MP3 players, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220/240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 220 volt outlets only.

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you may need multiple adapters on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

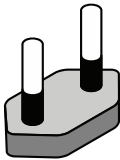
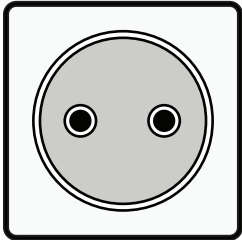
Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Egypt: C is the most common plug type.

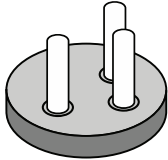
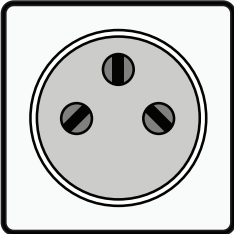
Israel: C and H

Jordan: C, D, F, and G

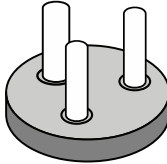
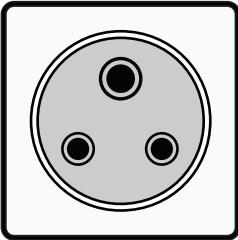
Type C



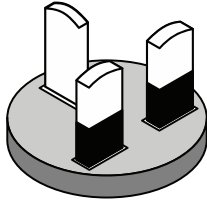
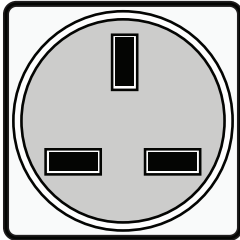
Type H



Type D



Type G



Availability

A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays. Travelers dependent on electricity supply (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) should bring a backup power source or consider a different adventure.

CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Egypt: Egypt's climate can be summed up in three words: hot, sunny, and dry. Most of the country is desert; the only cultivated fields are on the banks of the Nile and in the Nile Delta. Temperatures are generally hot, but not always. During the winter it can be chilly in the north (Cairo and Alexandria), or on a foggy morning on the Red Sea. Please pack some warm clothing if you are traveling during these months. Sandstorms, which can occur from March to May, can cause inconveniences with regard to sightseeing.

Jordan: About 90 % of the country is desert with an annual rainfall below 8 inches and falling as low as 1–2 inches in places. Although Jordan is thought of as having a hot climate, the country's climate is as diverse as its scenery. It has four well-defined seasons. In early fall and spring, the weather is ideal, with plenty of warm sun and comfortably cool evenings. During winter, it can be quite chilly with some rain in Amman and the surrounding area. On occasion, nights can dip below the freezing point. Dry, bitter winds often accompany the colder temperatures. Snow is not unheard of, so if you are traveling in winter, keep that in mind.

Low Water Levels in Winter

The water levels on the Nile raise and fall with the seasons, and the lowest levels are usually in the winter. This isn't an issue for most of our ports of call, but it can prevent us from sailing to Qena (Dendera Temple). If you are traveling in December or January, your ship may dock in Luxor instead. **If so, you'll still visit Dendera Temple.** The only difference is that you'll travel by coach from Luxor instead of from Qena.

NOTE: If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- www.intellicast.com
- www.weather.com
- www.wunderground.com

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to go online to www.oattravel.com/myplanner for your 10-day forecast.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	CAIRO, EGYPT			LUXOR, EGYPT		
	Avg Temp (high-low)	% Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Avg Temp (high-low)	% Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	65 to 49	74 to 50	5	70 to 45	73 to 45	1
FEB	68 to 50	71 to 42	3	74 to 49	64 to 34	--
MAR	73 to 54	72 to 37	2	83 to 58	55 to 26	--
APR	82 to 59	68 to 30	1	93 to 65	45 to 19	--
MAY	89 to 64	71 to 26	1	100 to 71	41 to 17	--
JUN	100 to 68	76 to 27	--	115 to 75	40 to 17	--
JUL	105 to 75	83 to 35	--	104 to 78	42 to 20	--
AUG	92 to 72	85 to 38	--	102 to 77	45 to 23	--
SEP	90 to 69	83 to 38	--	99 to 74	50 to 27	--
OCT	85 to 65	81 to 40	1	93 to 68	56 to 34	1
NOV	75 to 58	77 to 48	1	81 to 56	66 to 45	--
DEC	67 to 51	75 to 53	3	73 to 48	73 to 51	--

MONTH	ASWAN, EGYPT			JERUSALEM, ISRAEL		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	70 to 52	57 to 29	--	53 to 44	72 to 61	5.2
FEB	74 to 55	45 to 22	--	55 to 44	69 to 59	4.7
MAR	82 to 61	38 to 15	0.1	60 to 47	63 to 52	3.6
APR	92 to 72	30 to 13	0.4	71 to 55	48 to 39	1.0
MAY	99 to 77	26 to 12	0.3	78 to 60	41 to 35	0.1
JUN	115 to 81	26 to 11	--	82 to 64	44 to 37	--
JUL	103 to 83	27 to 12	--	84 to 67	52 to 40	--
AUG	102 to 82	31 to 14	--	85 to 67	57 to 40	--
SEP	99 to 79	34 to 14	--	83 to 66	58 to 40	--
OCT	93 to 74	40 to 18	0.2	77 to 62	56 to 42	0.6
NOV	80 to 63	51 to 26	--	66 to 54	61 to 48	2.4
DEC	72 to 55	57 to 32	0.1	57 to 47	69 to 56	4.2

MONTH	AMMAN, JORDAN		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	52 to 39	84 to 64	2.5
FEB	55 to 40	82 to 58	2.5
MAR	61 to 44	79 to 52	1.7
APR	71 to 51	68 to 40	0.7
MAY	80 to 57	60 to 34	0.1
JUN	85 to 63	58 to 34	--
JUL	88 to 67	59 to 36	--
AUG	88 to 67	66 to 38	--
SEP	85 to 64	71 to 39	--
OCT	79 to 58	72 to 41	0.2
NOV	66 to 49	76 to 50	1.1
DEC	56 to 42	85 to 65	1.9

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

Nefertiti

The *Nefertiti* offers a host of amenities to make you feel right at home. Designed to carry no more than 75 passengers, the ship's size ensures an intimacy and a unique opportunity to enjoy its many facilities. Amenities include a restaurant with open seating, sun deck with lounge chairs, a library, bar, lounge, dance floor, and small souvenir shop. Main Deck cabins feature two twin beds, upper-deck views, and closer proximity to the ship's lounge and bar.

Included features of all Nefertiti cabins:

- All outside cabins, each with a private balcony with seating for two
- Cabin sizes of approximately 215 sq. ft.
- Individual air conditioning
- Either two twin beds OR one double European bed
- Sufficient closet and dresser space
- Color TV (note that reception will only be available when docked in port)
- Hair dryer
- Desk
- Private shower, hair dryer, shampoo, and soap
- In-room safe
- All non-smoking cabins

Please note: *This ship features either two twin beds or one double bed per cabin. Twin beds cannot be pushed together.*

An important word: While our fleet features larger-than-usual riverboat cabins, please keep in mind that these ships are river vessels, not large ocean cruise ships. Riverboat cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many river ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Two glasses per person of complimentary house wine, house beer, or a selection of soft drinks are included at both lunch and dinner. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase, starting at approximately \$35-40 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day.

Open-table, single-seating for all meals: Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

Dining times: Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

- Early riser breakfast: 6:30-7:30 am
- Breakfast: 7:30-9:00 am
- Lunch: 1:00-2:30 pm
- Dinner: 7:00-9:00 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call us to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

Dress code: The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

Non-smoking policy: The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the Sun Deck until disembarkation.

Dock and Landing Etiquette

River waterways are simply not big enough to support large landing docks such as those built on ocean shorelines. It is common for river ships to tie up alongside each other at some piers—particularly in ports where docking area is restricted. While we try to arrange the most convenient mooring available in each port of call, outboard boats may occasionally obstruct views, and you may have to step across other ships when you want to go ashore.

Headsets

During your trip, complimentary headsets, or Whispers receivers, are provided on our guided tours through the places we visit. These receivers and headsets allow you to hear your Trip Experience Leader and our local guides better. If use a hearing aid or have strong preferences for headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headsets/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by iPods, computer jacks, etc.

Wireless Internet Access

Limited wireless Internet service (WiFi) is available for free in the cabins and common areas on board. If you want to use the WiFi connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook)—the ship does not rent or loan these devices. To use the WiFi, please visit Reception after you board for access information. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong connection to the local cell phone network, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration.

TV Reception

Because the ship does not have a satellite dish onboard, you should expect that TV reception will only be available when we are docked in port.

Laundry & Linen Service

Laundry service is available for a fee (currently is costs about \$2.00 per shirt). Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available. There will be one change of bed linens during your cruise. Towels will be changed on your request using the international water conservation code—a towel left on the floor will be replaced; a towel left hanging up will not.

Medical Care

Should you need medical assistance, please contact the ship's 24 hour reception deck. They will arrange for a doctor to come onboard or for transport to the nearest medical facility.

Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the region, theme dinners, organized discussions, and talks on upcoming ports of call.

Recreational Facilities

These include the sun desk, a small dipping pool, library, and lounge with a bar and dance floor. A word about the lounge and bar: Afternoon tea with cake and cookies will be provided daily. Filter coffee, standard breakfast tea, mineral water, soft drinks, and juice will be complimentary throughout the day. Other tea and coffee drinks (i.e. cappuccinos, lattes, etc.) will be available for purchase. Two glasses of local beer or wine per person will be included at both lunch and dinner; during the rest of the day a selection of alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and wines is available for purchase at the bar. Prices are in U.S. dollars.

Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls from the ship are placed via Reception. We advise you to use them only for an emergency, as this is a very expensive service (for example, a call to New York City would cost about \$3.75 per minute). Calling Cards cannot be used over the ship's phone system.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ship.

Elevator/Chairlift

The ship does **not** have an elevator or chairlift onboard.

Shore Excursions

Included during your cruise are many sightseeing tours. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Trip Experience Leader will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications

- **History:** Built in 2000, completely refurbished in 2018
- **Size:** 233x43 ft
- **Capacity:** 75 passengers, 40 crew members

- **Layout:** 40 cabins, 3 decks
- **Elevator:** No

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

Egyptian Culture

Modern Egypt is so much more than just its ancient heritage. The streets of Cairo, Alexandria, and Luxor are filled with influences from the Greeks, to the Arabs of North Africa, to the Nubians from Sudan. The country has always been a crossroads of trade and culture, allowing it to adapt and become a major player in the Middle East.

These comings and goings of different people were made possible in part by the value Egyptians place on hospitality. This is a keystone in their culture, where being friendly, open, helpful is considered a virtue. (Although a devout Muslim may keep some distance with a person of the opposite gender.) As a visitor this can be to your advantage—people will want to answer questions, give directions, and tell you about their country. They will also ask you about your home and family, sparking a real connection.

But the friendliness can be a bit overwhelming at times, especially as Egyptians tend to stand closer, talk louder, and use more hand gestures than Americans. Egyptians also favor the hard sell, so be prepared to say a firm “no, thank you” on repeat to persistent salesclerks. (Or even ignore them outright by not making eye contact; a pair of dark sunglasses can be helpful.) Bargaining is encouraged, even for things you would expect to have a clear price like taxi fare or a cup of coffee. Initially, these differences may make you feel a bit uncomfortable, but keep in mind that discomfort is not the intent—the locals are just treating you like one of them.

Another major cultural value in Egypt is a person's social connections. Like the old adage says, “it's not what you know, but who you know”. Leveraging their network and extended family is how many Egyptians find the services they need such as a mechanic, doctor, dentist, etc. And it's the same when navigating complex bureaucracy; you start by reaching out to a cousin who is in government or a friend of a friend. This is why social class in Egypt is not just defined by how much wealth you have, but also who your family is and how connected you are.

Fortunately, you'll have the advantage of an instant connection in Egypt: Your Trip Experience Leader, who will be on hand to guide you through all the nuances of Egyptian culture during your adventure.

Language

Egyptian Arabic is considered the standard Arabic dialect, meaning it is widely understood in other Arabic-speaking countries. As a result, Egypt's media—movies, music, and news—has come to dominate the MENA (Middle East and North Africa). The Egyptian accent is so popular on Middle Eastern TV that news anchors in other Arabic-speaking countries will often use it instead of their own local accent.

Of course, this all applies to spoken Arabic. Written Arabic (or literary Arabic) is standard across all nations as it is based on the classical Arabic found in Quran.

Religion

Religion plays an important part of daily life in Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, so an understanding of the two most prominent religions (Islam and Judaism) will assist you in your discoveries.

Islam & Ramadan

Although you could date the founding of Islam to the 5th century, its roots can be traced back further. Indeed, many believers see Islam's founder, Muhammad, as a continuation of a line of prophets that goes back to Moses and Abraham. Like other regions, the Islamic tradition has both a holy book (the Koran) and a collection of teachings and judgments passed down by scholars over the years (Sharia and Fiqh).

There are two main branches, the Sunni and the Shia, although all Muslims are expected to follow the same basic principles, known as the Five Pillars: to testify to God's greatness, to practice charity, to fast during specific times (such as Ramadan), to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once, and to pray daily.

Of these five tenets, the one you may notice the most while in Egypt and Jordan is the daily prayers. Practicing Muslims are expected to pray five times daily: at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. The call to prayer, called the *adhan*, is sung or broadcast from minaret towers to remind the faithful that it's time to come to the mosque.

Friday is the Muslim holy day, so businesses are usually closed. Many companies also close on Saturday, making the weekend Friday and Saturday. Local businesses may also close for religious holidays or festivals. The biggest religious holiday is Ramadan, a month-long celebration that is meant to teach the values of restraint and charity. To participate, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. The fast is strict and includes no eating, drinking alcohol, cigarette-smoking, or gum-chewing during daylight hours. But as the sun starts to set, everyone rushes home so they can celebrate *iftar*—the joyous breaking of the fast. Suddenly the evening comes alive with music, eating, and shopping. The festivities often continue well into the night. The mosques and some streets are decorated with lanterns, special meals are prepared, and nighttime social events and festivals are planned.

If you'll be visiting Egypt during Ramadan, what does this mean for you? Visitors are not required to fast, but out of respect you shouldn't eat, drink, or smoke openly. (It is OK to eat indoors, but you wouldn't sit outside with food.) Expect that some restaurants will be closed and others may not serve alcohol, but your Trip Experience Leader will be on hand to advise you of places to eat. Also, it is important to keep in mind that many of the people you meet will be participating in the fast, so they might not be their usual selves. It helps to have a bit of patience.

Ramadan follows a lunar calendar, so its dates change significantly from year to year. In 2020 it will run from April 23-May 22 and in 2021 it will be from April 13-May 12. If you're interested in checking what holidays might fall during your trip, an online holiday calendar like www.timeanddate.com/holidays is a great resource.

Judaism & the High Holy Days

Considered the oldest of the monotheistic religions, Judaism has its roots in ancient times, with more than 3,000 years of history. Although there are three main branches (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform) the fundamentals remain the same. A practicing Jew is expected to follow the holy commandments as revealed to Moses, follow Jewish law, attend synagogue, fast during specific holidays, and keep *Shabbat* (Sabbath) from sundown Friday to sundown on Saturday. Many also adhere to kosher dietary laws, so you may not find pork or shellfish on the menu at local establishments.

While in Israel, you'll find that many shops and restaurants are closed on Saturday in observance of the Sabbath. In some places public transport runs on a reduced schedule—or even stops completely—but taxis are generally still available. And during Jewish holidays, many sites will be closed or operating on reduced hours—but on the plus side, there may be special services or festivities you can join! Again, we suggest checking an online holiday calendar for exact dates.

The biggest holidays in terms of importance are probably the 10-day stretch from Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). Known collectively as the “High Holy Days”, this is a period of reflection and family time, so most businesses will close or be on reduced hours due to low staff. Yom Kippur in particular is very solemn, and it is no exaggeration to say the entire country shuts down.

Lastly, a few words about the Western Wall in Jerusalem: As the last remains of the Second Temple, many see this as one of the most sacred places in Judaism, and as a result, its popularity cannot be underestimated. Be prepared for crowds and please follow whatever guidelines your Trip Experience Leader outlines.

Modest Dress

- **When visiting a mosque:** It is polite to be modestly dressed (no bare shoulders, no skirts or shorts above the knee). You may be asked to remove your shoes. In some mosques, female visitors are *not* required to cover their hair, in others you may be asked to do so. Typically a mosque that requires special dress for female visitors will have pieces to lend or rent.

- **When visiting a synagogue:** Male travelers should cover their head to show respect. (Usually the synagogue will have yamakas—a type of skullcap—on hand for you to borrow.) Depending on the synagogue, female travelers may also be asked to cover their hair, which you can do with a scarf or a hat. Generally speaking, an Orthodox synagogue will have the strictest dress codes: shorts may not be allowed; skirts should be to the knee or longer; shoulders should be covered; and necklines should be modest. As in any place of worship, it is best to turn off your cell phone or put it on silent.
- **When visiting a church:** Many churches in this region require modest dress, meaning covered shoulders and skirts or shorts that fall below the knee.

Toilets

Although all our accommodations feature Western-style toilets, “Turkish-style” toilets (i.e. squat toilets) are common in public restrooms. For women travelers who are novices at using a squat toilet, a skirt is usually easier to maneuver than pants. We strongly recommend that you bring pocket-size tissues and/or toilet paper as it is not available in public restrooms (unless you tip the bathroom attendant, who will then give you some).

Laundry Service

Laundry service and dry cleaning are available through your hotel for an additional fee.

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most the countries on your itinerary is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph an older woman. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject, try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK. Please do not take photographs of military personnel or military compounds, because this may result in the confiscation of your camera. Photos may not be allowed in religious buildings; ask first.

Important Note: In museums or at archaeological sites throughout the Middle East, there may be restrictions on using your flash or photos may not be permitted in certain areas (for example, photography is not allowed in King Tut’s Tomb at the Valley of the Kings). Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light.

Photography Fees

Some sites and museums will charge a fee (up to \$20 per device) for the privilege of taking photos. We recommend bringing some additional cash (approximately US\$50-60 per person) to exchange for local currency for these occasions.

Safety & Security

- **Common Sense and Awareness:** As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people. Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.
- **Money belts/Neck wallets:** Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket and the rest of your money in a neck wallet or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (set your own personal number). Please utilize them.
- **Woman Travelers:** Foreign women may experience some hassling by local men in Egypt. It is usually inconsequential, and it is greatly reduced if you dress in a modest style. Exercise the same caution you would with strangers at home. We encourage women to stay with a group after dark or if exploring out-of-the-way places.

One last note—traffic is horrific throughout the Middle East, especially Egypt. Exercise extreme caution when attempting to cross any street. Consider hiring a taxi (at a nominal fee) for short distance transport.

Egyptian Cuisine

Egyptian food may not be fancy, but it has a simple, fresh, and hearty appeal. Dining out is often a social occasion and may involve many courses, a shared platter of *mezze* (starters/small plates), or an after-dinner coffee or *shisha* water pipe. While in Egypt look for Middle Eastern specialties such as:

- **Mezze:** Small plates that may be served as starters, snacks, or a light meal. These are often served with flat bread, which is used to scoop up the dips and toppings. Common kinds include humus, *tahini* (sesame spread), *tabbouleh* (a mix of bulgur wheat, parsley, garlic, and tomato), *baba ghanoug* (eggplant dip), salads, and *fuul* (slow-cooked fava beans with garlic).
- **Taamia**, also spelled *ta'amiyya*: The Egyptian version of falafel, fried balls of ground beans or chickpeas, served warm wrapped in bread with veggies and toppings.
- **Kofta and kababs:** *Kofta* are spiced lamb meatballs, while *kababs* are skewered chunks of meat (beef or lamb); both are grilled on a fire.
- **Firekh:** Rotisserie-style chicken, usually served by the half. And if you want to try a more unusual poultry dish, look for anything with *hamam* (pigeon) which most people compare in taste to dark meat chicken.

- **Omm ali:** A type of bread pudding topped with cream, nuts, and raisins before being baked in the oven.
- **Drinks:** Strong Turkish-style coffee and sweet mint tea are commonly served. Most Egyptian Muslims refrain from alcohol, but will serve it to visitors or people of other religions. Beer has a long history in Egypt—there is evidence that it was drunk in Pharaonic times—and you can still find locally made brands like Stella Meister, Stella Premium, or Saqqara. For a refreshing non-alcoholic drink, look for stalls with hanging nets filled with fruit. Here you can buy fresh-squeezed juices in a variety of flavors (just don't get ice).

Israeli Cuisine

Israeli cuisine is a mix of Middle Eastern flavors and dishes from elsewhere that were brought back as a remnant of the diaspora. So you'll find influences from the Mizrahi (North African), Sephardic (Spanish/Portuguese), and Ashkenazi (Northern European) communities alongside old favorites like hummus and falafel. And of course, many establishments keep kosher, meaning they follow the Jewish dietary laws. This includes no pork, no shellfish, no mixing of meat and dairy, and regulations about how food can be prepared and by whom.

- **Common ingredients:** No matter the dish, you'll likely find at least one of these in it—olives or olive oil, chickpeas, couscous, garlic, preserved lemons, dates, or pita bread. Also common is *tahini*, which is a seasoning made from nigella seeds.
- **Challah:** A light and doughy kosher bread that uses eggs instead of milk or butter. This gives it a distinctive pale yellow color and rich flavor. For breakfast, try the toasted version with a fried egg in it.
- **Shakshuka:** Eggs pan-fried in tomato sauce, served as a breakfast dish.
- **Israeli salads:** Large bowls of local produce (cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers, onions, etc.) are served throughout the day—sometimes even at breakfast.
- **Shawarma:** Technically a Turkish dish, but very popular here as a street snack or meal on the go. Rotisserie-style meat (usually lamb or beef) is thinly sliced then served warm in a pocket of bread with veggies and sauce.
- **Masabacha:** This staple is a bowl of warm chickpeas—some remain whole, some smashed—in *tahini* with olive oil, chopped herbs, and spices.
- **Cheese dishes:** The two most popular cheeses are *bulgarit* (a soft white cheese like feta, but less crumbly) and cottage cheese. But cheese is also a main ingredient in many snacks like *khachapuri* (Georgian cheese bread), *haloumi* (fried sticks of cheese), and *kanafeh* (a layered dessert of shredded pastry over soft cheese and soaked with sweet syrup).
- **Mutabuk:** Hand-tossed filo dough filled with soft white cheese or nuts and fruit, baked in an oven and served with powdered sugar on top.

- **Drinks:** Hot day? Try a cool glass of tart pomegranate juice, packed with vitamins and antioxidants, or an ice café, which is basically a coffee slushy. Or if you want something with a kick, look for local liquors such as Tubi 60 (a lemon-and-herb flavor) or *arak* (anise-flavored).

Jordanian Cuisine

Despite the fact that the country is landlocked, you'll find a lot of Mediterranean flavors here, with herbs, garlic, onion, tomato sauce and lemon all being common. But you'll also see traditional Middle Eastern ingredients like za'atar spice and mint. Plus Jordan is one of the largest producers of olives in the world, and as result both olives and olive oil are ubiquitous in Jordanian cooking. Dishes to try include:

- **Mansaf:** Tender lamb cooked served on a platter with flatbreads and rice. You'll find variations of this dish throughout the region, but Jordan's version is unique because they use a type of dried yogurt (*jameed*) to make a sauce for the meat.
- **Maqluba:** Slow-cooked rice, chicken, potatoes, and vegetables served with a dramatic flair—the pot is flipped upside down over your plate or bowl.
- **Zaarb:** This combination of marinated meat (usually lamb or goat) and veggies cooked over hot coals in the sand comes from the nomadic Bedouin people.
- **Jordanian hummus** (fattet hummus): Like regular hummus but with torn-up pita bread and pine nuts mixed in and then topped with olive oil.
- **Snacks:** Roasted nuts coated in spices, sugar, or salt are popular, as are Middle Eastern staples like roasted chickpeas and falafel (ground chickpeas shaped into balls or patties and deep fried).
- **Kunafa:** This dessert is made of syrup-soaked pastry on top of cheese or cream.
- **Drinks:** Sweet mint tea, thick Turkish-style coffee, and fresh juices (pomegranate, sugar cane, or lemonade) are on offer.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Egypt

Traditional souvenirs include gold and silver jewelry, papyrus artwork, cotton goods, tapestries, carpets, leather goods, copperware, brassware, basketry, fine inlaid woodwork, and spices. In many bazaars, you can observe artisans working in the traditional methods, and this is part of the fun of shopping.

Bargaining is extremely commonplace in Egypt, and may someday replace soccer as the national sport. If this is your first experience with it, don't worry—you'll quickly find your own style. On smaller items, start by bidding half the asking price, or even less. The only rule is: If you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Often if you start to walk away, you'll hear a lower price. And remember, whatever price you pay is OK, as long as the item is worth that price to you.

When looking at large items, like carpets or artwork, you'll often be invited to sit down and drink a cup of tea with the merchant and make small talk for awhile. If you are on a group excursion, please remain aware of what other group members are doing. If you are the only one trying to buy something at that time, you might want to return later.

Israel

Among the best buys in Israel are ceramics, copperware, religious articles, jewelry, diamonds, furs, handicrafts, beauty products with Dead Sea minerals, and original works of art. If you like to bargain, comb the colorful local markets and bazaars in Jerusalem for interesting handmade arts and crafts.

Many shops have been approved for tourists by the Israel Ministry of Tourism. These shops display a sign stating "listed by the Ministry" and carry the Ministry's emblem (two scouts carrying a bunch of grapes on a pole between them). This is the symbol of quality merchandise and courteous service.

Jordan

Common buys in Jordan include Byzantine-style mosaics (still hand-made in Madaba) and bright, multi-colored weavings. Bottled sand art—where colored sand is layered inside a bottle to create a picture—is also popular, especially in Petra.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.

- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Egypt

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 384,345 square miles
- **Capital:** Cairo
- **Languages:** Arabic is the official language; English and French are common second languages.
- **Ethnicity:** Egyptian 99.6%, other 0.4%
- **Location:** Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip, and the Red Sea north of Sudan, and includes the Asian Sinai Peninsula
- **Geography:** Egypt is almost entirely desert. Only about 2% of the land is arable. As a result, 99% of the population lives on only 3.5% of the land, mostly along the Nile River Valley and fertile delta.
- **Population:** 103,811,977 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 90%, Christian (majority Coptic Orthodox) 10%
- **Time Zone:** Egypt is seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in D.C., it is 7:00 pm in Egypt.

National Holidays: Egypt

Egypt celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Ramadan and Moulid El Nabi. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

1/25 Revolution Day

4/25 Sinai Liberation Day

5/1 Labour Day

7/23 National Day

10/6 Armed Forces Day

Egypt: A Brief History

Archaeological records show highly developed civilizations in both Upper and Lower Egypt a far back as 4000 BCE, making this remarkable country 6,000 years old. No other country boasts such a long and uninterrupted history.

In 3200 BCE, King Menes unified Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom, starting a 3,000-year stretch of rule by royal dynasties. Historians further divide these 3,000 years into four main time periods: the Early Dynastic Period (the time of Menes); Old Kingdom (c. 2613–2181 BCE); Middle Kingdom (c. 2055–1786 BCE); and New Kingdom (c. 1567–1085 BCE). The gaps between the kingdoms are called the “intermediate periods”.

The Early Dynastic Period is when ancient Egypt as we know it began to take form. It is during this time that the king, or pharaoh, became identified with the sun god (Ra) and ruled from a capital at Memphis (about 12 miles south of modern Cairo). This is also when the Egyptians began to intentionally mummify their dead, a ritual that was to last thousands of years.

Then in about 2360 BCE, the pharaoh Djoser asked his chief architect and priest Imhotep to design a funerary monument for him; the result was the first of its kind—the Step Pyramid at Saqqara. The age of the pyramids had begun, and with it, the Old Kingdom.

This was a time of prosperity, peace, and above all, pyramids. But the ambitious building programs depleted the royal coffers, as did a 50-year drought that started about 2200 BCE. The pharaoh’s power waned, and the Old Kingdom split apart into warring states ruled by independent nobles. This first intermediate period lasted for about 150 years, during which buildings, roads, and irrigation systems—as well as Egyptian society itself—began to deteriorate.

After a long struggle between the smaller states, the rulers of Thebes (a religious city close to modern Luxor) re-unified Egypt in about 2055 BCE. This was the Middle Kingdom, and for the next two centuries, Egypt once again enjoyed a period of great peace and prosperity.

One of the greatest achievements of the Middle Kingdom was the construction of an enormous irrigation system. Another notable aspect was the introduction of trade and commerce via ships. The pharaohs sent ships up the Nile River to Nubia and across the Mediterranean. They used gold and copper from mines in Sinai to build the colossal Temple of Amen at Karnak.

In 1800 B.C., the Hyksos, a foreign people from the north, laid siege to Egypt. The Egyptians fought on foot, as they had for centuries. The invaders used horses, chariots, and superior bows. It was no match; the Hyksos easily won, ending the Middle Kingdom and ushering in the second intermediate period. For the next several decades, northern Egypt was an occupied land. However, the Egyptians in the south quickly adopted the Hyksos’ new means of warfare and began a successful war of liberation, ushering in the age of the New Kingdom.

Armed with their newly learned techniques of warfare, the rulers of the New Kingdom set out to build an empire through foreign conquest. They were highly successful, conquering lands throughout Asia, North Africa, and the Mediterranean. The New Kingdom is also notable for its cast of characters. All the most famous kings and queens—the female pharaoh Hatshepsut, the heretic king Akhenaton, the beauty Nefertiti, Ramses the Great, and the boy-king Tut—were from this time period. These great rulers were buried in rock-cut tombs in the Valley of the Kings. (Pyramids had gone out of fashion.)

Eventually the New Kingdom declined, leaving Egypt vulnerable to outside forces. In the south the Nubian rulers from Kush (present-day Sudan) took over and ruled for some 100–200 years. In art, the Nubian rulers styled themselves as black pharaohs and created hybrid culture that was part Egyptian and part African. (Even today, many in southern towns like Aswan will call themselves “Nubian”.) The northern parts of Egypt were seized by the Persians (in 525 BCE) and the Greeks under Alexander the Great (in 332 BCE). The famed Queen Cleopatra was a descendant of one of Alexander’s generals, and her death is often cited as the end of ancient Egypt.

For the next 2,000 years, Egypt was conquered and occupied by the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks, and British. The most influential of these occupations came when the Arabs conquered Egypt between 639–641 CE. The Arabs ruled Egypt for several centuries as part of the larger Islamic empire. During this time, the majority of Egyptians converted to Islam, a cultural change that had a lasting impact.

In 1517, Egypt was once again conquered, this time by the Turks. The country became part of the Ottoman Empire, though Turkish sultans granted relative autonomy to local Egyptian rulers. However, by the beginning of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire had fallen into decline, and colonial European powers seized the opportunity to exert their influence in Egypt.

By the time the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, Egypt owed millions of dollars in debt to Britain. In order to erase the debt, Egypt ceded control of its share of the canal to the British. The Egyptian people were strongly critical of this action, and a coup against the monarchy seemed almost inevitable. Meanwhile, the British were concerned that Germany would attempt to capture the canal by force.

To guard against civil unrest and protect its interest in the canal, Britain declared Egypt a British protectorate and sent occupational forces in 1883. For all practical purposes, Egypt became a British colony. The British finally granted independence to Egypt in 1922 but retained control of the canal until 1936.

Throughout the middle part of the last century, Egypt fought a series of brief wars with Israel over the Sinai and the Gaza Strip, including 1967’s Six Day War. In 1979, the two countries signed a monumental peace agreement. Initially the treaty was controversial—so much so that President Anwar Sadat was assassinated—but his successor, Hosni Mubarak found a way to balance diplomatic relations between the Arab League, Israel, and the U.S. This “middle ground” position has allowed Egypt to take a larger role in the Middle East as ally and moderator. In 1991, Egypt was one of the allies that fought against Iraq in the Gulf War; in subsequent years Egypt has acted as a moderator between Israel and the Palestinians.

Sadly, Mubarak’s domestic politics were not nearly as successful as his foreign policy. Charges of political and police corruption, censorship, and suppression of other political parties became more and more common. Perhaps most controversial of all was his use of the “state of emergency” law, which was first enacted in 1967 after the Six-Day War. Citing the assassination of his predecessor and concerns of terrorism, Mubarak brought back the law in 1981—and kept it in place even during his final days in office in 2011.

Fed up with the stringent emergency laws, and angry over corruption and high unemployment, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets on January 25th, 2011 as part of the Arab Spring. Mubarak stepped down after 18 days, new elections were held, and after a period of some uncertainty a new constitution went into effect in 2014.

Israel

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 8,019 square miles
- **Capital:** Jerusalem
- **Languages:** Hebrew is the official language; Arabic and English are also spoken.
- **Ethnicity:** Jewish 75% (of which Israel-born 74.4%, Europe/America-born 17.4%, Africa-born 5.1%, Asia-born 3.1%), non-Jewish 25% (mostly Arab)
- **Location:** Israel is bordered by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Geography:** Israel is home to a variety of geographic features, from the Negev desert in the south to the mountain ranges and lush plains of the Galilee, Carmel, and the Golan in the north to the lowest point on earth, the Dead Sea.
- **Population:** 8,049,314
- **Religions:** Jewish 75%, Muslim 17.5%, Christian 2%, Druze 1.6%, other 3.9%
- **Time Zone:** Israel is on Israel Standard Time, seven hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C. it is 1pm in Jerusalem.

National Holidays: Israel

Israel celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Passover,

among others. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

Israel: A Brief History

The state of Israel occupies most of what was Palestine until the early 20th century. One of the world's most ancient civilizations thrived in nearby Jordan—objects from archaeological digs on the Jordan River date to 9000 B.C. Canaanites and Amorites moved in around 3000 B.C., followed by the armies of Sargon, king of Sumer and Akkad. Later, Abraham came in from Mesopotamia—a group of nomads in tow—and created settlements in Canaan, in a mountainous region near today's Israel. Saul formed a kingdom here around 1023 B.C.; his predecessor, David, moved in on Jerusalem and claimed it as his capital. The Roman Empire descended on Israel in 63 B.C., giving the likes of Herod the Great and Pontius Pilate control of it. Jesus is believed to have preached in and around Jerusalem around this time. The Empire soon grew unsteady under Caligula, which

triggered a series of Jewish uprisings over many years. But the Jewish people were defeated with the razing of their city. The province of Palestine was decreed. And the great Diaspora, the scattering of the Jewish people, began.

In A.D. 331, Christianity became legal after Emperor Constantine converted to the religion. With his conversion, and that of countless others, the Holy Land became the object of intense curiosity and dedication. Elaborate structures, like the churches of the Holy Sepulchre and the Nativity, rose from Palestine's desert sands.

But there was a dramatic shift only 300 years later, when Jerusalem fell to Caliph Omar in 638. The caliph claimed that the Prophet Mohammed had risen to heaven from the Temple Mount, and he declared Jerusalem a Holy City of Islam. Christians near and far were outraged, organized an army by 1099, and moved in on Jerusalem with a vengeance, killing countless Muslims and settling in for 100 years of rule. By 1187 the Muslims regained their footing, though it took another 100 years for them to overtake the last Crusader stronghold in 1291.

Over the next 500 years, power changed hands regularly, though not always with the same scale of violence. Eventually, it landed in the Ottoman hands of Suleyman the Magnificent, who rebuilt Jerusalem's city walls.

By the mid-19th century Ottoman control of Israel was waning. Britain opened a consulate in Jerusalem, and in 1839 as a means of dealing with the persecution of Jews in Europe, Sir Moses Montefiore, a British Jew, began promoting the idea of a Jewish state. In 1878 the first Jewish colony was founded, and before long the first wave of immigrants was flowing in. At the same time, the Arab population of Palestine was becoming strongly nationalistic and anti-European, setting the stage for conflict.

During World War I, Britain promised to recognize an Arab state, and to support a Jewish homeland in Palestine. At war's end, Britain gained control of the country, and as atrocities leading up to World War II escalated, it halted all migration to Israel. But illegal immigrants flocked there still, only to be met with violence from the Arab population. In 1947 the situation reached an impasse: Britain relinquished its control, the U.N. passed a resolution to divide the country between Arabs and Jews, and Israel officially came into being on May 14, 1948. Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon invaded immediately thereafter—but all were defeated. By the time a ceasefire was declared in May 1949, Israel had extended its territory into Palestine. Many Jewish people immigrated soon after.

In 1956, Egyptian forces moved in to take control of Suez. Israeli, British and French armies responded quickly, descending on Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The international community pressured Israel to return the Sinai to Egypt, and British and French troops withdrew. But hostilities continued: On June 5, 1967 Israel attacked Arab troops that had uncomfortably gathered along its borders with Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. In the "Six-Day War" that followed, Israel extended its territory into the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. But it was not to be an easy acquisition for Israel; Yasser Arafat and his Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), claiming to solely represent all Palestinians, vowed to get their land back and annihilate the Israeli state.

In the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Egypt attempted to regain the Sinai from Israel. In the end, the two countries signed a mutual recognition pact that returned the land to Egypt. Ties with Lebanon and Syria were also eroding. In 1981, Israel invaded Lebanon and formally annexed the Golan Heights from Syria; this border area is still a disputed territory decades later. But relations with other nations have improved. For example, a peace deal with Jordan was signed in 1994.

A popular 1987 Palestinian uprising, the intifada, intended to end the advance of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza via guerrilla warfare against Israeli forces. The 1993 Oslo Peace Accord set their sights on mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, along with limited Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza. When the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in 1995, bets were off for success, especially since his successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, took a hard line in negotiations. Under his watch, Israeli settlements spread in the West Bank and Gaza, leading to increased terrorist activity.

1999 saw the election of Ehud Barak. At Camp David, he sought guarantees of safety and security from Yasser Arafat and proposed a plan for a Palestinian state. His offer was rejected and the pair reached an impasse in regard to Jerusalem's status, the return of Palestinian refugees, and a final settlement. The situation deteriorated with fighting in the West Bank between Palestinian Authority police and Israeli soldiers.

Occasional fighting erupted during the early 21st century, which in turn prompted the election of Ariel Sharon as prime minister of Israel in 2001. He committed to a complete withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip, which was completed by September 2005. Sharon also mandated the erection of a controversial wall that isolates the West Bank (Palestine), and added to a similar barrier around the Gaza Strip. Since Sharon's premiership, Israel has seen the Second Lebanon War in 2006, a blockade of the Gaza Strip, corruption scandals, and social demonstrations in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.

Jordan

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 34,495 square miles
- **Capital:** Amman
- **Languages:** Arabic is the official language of Jordan; English is also spoken.
- **Ethnicity:** Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%
- **Location:** Jordan bordered by Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria.
- **Geography:** To the east, Jordan is arid desert plateau; to the west, highlands. The Jordan River flows through the Great Rift Valley and separates Jordan and Israel. The highest elevation is Jabal Ram (5,689 feet) and the lowest is the Dead Sea (-1,594 feet).
- **Population:** 8,117,564

- **Religion:** Muslim 97.2% (predominantly Sunni), Christian 2.2% (majority Greek Orthodox, but some Greek and Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations), Buddhist 0.4%, Hindu 0.1%, other 0.1%
- **Time Zone:** Jordan is on Eastern European Time, seven hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 1pm in Amman.

National Holidays: Jordan

In addition to the national holidays listed below, Jordan celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Adha and Eid-al-Fitr. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day
 05/01 Labor Day
 05/25 Independence Day
 12/25 Christmas Day

Jordan: A Brief History

Today's Jordan was part of Palestine—most of which is now the state of Israel—until the early 20th century. For more information, see the pre-20th-century history section under Israel. So the country's history as a separate nation didn't really begin until World War I, when the Turks (who ruled the region) allied themselves with the Germans. As a countermeasure the British send T.E. Lawrence (aka Lawrence of Arabia) to join the Great Arab Revolt against the Turks. This movement was led by Sharif Hussein of Mecca, and his sons Abdullah, Faisal and Ali; together with Lawrence they developed brilliant guerrilla warfare tactics that defeated the large the Turkish armies with a much smaller force only a few thousand Arabs.

But in the end Lawrence had made a promise to the Arabs that he couldn't keep—independence once the war was over. With the Allied victory came bitter disappointment when Arab hopes for independence were betrayed, and Britain took Palestine. They renamed it Transjordan and confirmed the Sharif's eldest son, Abdullah, as its ruler.

In 1948 Israeli Arabs and Jews went to war, and became far too preoccupied to notice when Transjordan claimed the West Bank and part of Jerusalem as its own, and renamed itself Jordan. In 1953 King Hussein took the throne and Jordan's economy soared, thanks to tourism and generous aid from the U.S. Israel retook the West Bank and Jerusalem during The Six Day War of 1967—Jordan's tourist trade and much of its agriculture disappeared. Palestinian refugees poured in from the Occupied Territories. Before long, the PLO was threatening King Hussein's power. An especially violent war ended only when many of the radicals moved to Lebanon.

The 1994 peace treaty between Jordan and Israel dropped economic barriers and increased cooperation on security and water. But Palestinians worried that the treaty did not account for their presence in the region and many felt threatened. Jordan increased ties with Yasser Arafat's Palestine National Authority and worked toward agreements with them. As King Hussein moved his country toward democracy, he has also mended relations—cut during the 1991 Gulf War—with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Hussein's death in February 1999 left the future uncertain. He had

named his eldest son, King Abdullah II, to succeed him just weeks before he died, but the move was controversial because the Constitution requires that both the king's parents be Arab and Muslim by birth (Abdullah's mother was a British citizen).

Despite the controversy over his succession, King Abdullah II enjoys support from the international community and most Jordanians, including the influential Palestinian community. Part of the credit for his "approval ratings" goes to his widely popular consort, Queen Rania, whose parents were Palestinian refugees in Kuwait. In the years since his succession, the King has moved his country towards closer relations with Israel, called for democratic changes in the wake of the Arab Spring, and dealt with the war in neighboring Syria by taking in refugees and strengthening the border.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Egypt

The Buried: An Archaeology of the Egyptian Revolution by Peter Hessler (2019, Travel Narrative/Memoir) When American ex-pat Peter Hessler moved from China to Egypt in 2011, his colleagues at the *New Yorker* joked that it would be a much quieter place...and then the Arab Spring happened. Hessler recounts his experiences through the friendships he made with local people, giving a great insight into modern Egypt.

The Mummy Case, He Shall Thunder in the Sky, and A River in the Sky by Elizabeth Peters (1975–2017, Mysteries). Just a few of the titles in the popular series featuring intrepid sleuth Amelia Peabody, an archeologist who can't help getting embroiled in murder.

The Woman Who Would Be King: Hatshepsut's Rise to Power in Ancient Egypt by Kara Cooney (2014, Biography) The engaging story of Hatshepsut, a woman who ruled Egypt's New Kingdom not as queen, but as pharaoh. The author takes great care to parse out what we know as fact and what we can make educated guesses about.

Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs by Barbara Mertz (2008, History). An updated classic history of ancient Egypt by the author of the Amelia Peabody mysteries (her pen name is Elizabeth Peters). Mertz's great enthusiasm and scholarship brings ancient Egypt to life for the general reader.

Down the Nile: Alone in a Fisherman's Skiff by Rosemary Mahoney (2007, Travelogue). Mahoney weaves the tale of her quest to row the Nile with deft portraits of the people she meets, particularly Amr, the sailor who takes her under his wing, and astute comments on contemporary Egypt.

The Way of Herodotus: Travels with the Man Who Invented History by Justin Marozzi (2007, Travel Narrative). A modern travel writer recreates the journeys of the ancient Greek historian Herodotus through Egypt, Iraq, Greece, and Turkey.

The Egyptologist: A Novel by Arthur Phillips (2004, Historical Fiction). A clever historical novel set against the backdrop of 1920s Egyptian archaeology.

The Memoirs of Cleopatra by Margaret George (1998, Historical Fiction) This epic historical novel answers the question "What would Cleopatra's story look like from her point of view?". Or if you prefer non-fiction, then look for ***Cleopatra: A Life***(2010) by biographer Stacy Schiff, which works to sort the woman from the myth.

Death on the Nile and ***Death Comes as the End*** by Agatha Christie (1937 and 1944, Mysteries). Agatha Christie lived in Syria and the Middle East with her archaeologist husband Max Brown in the 1930s, the source for many of her wildly popular mysteries.

Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive and **Clea** by Lawrence Durrell (1957–1960, Fiction). Known collectively as *The Alexandria Quartet*, the author uses WWII Alexandria as a grand backdrop for the grand stories of a group of Europeans living in Egypt. If four books seem too much to start with, try the first of the series, *Justine*.

Palace Walk, Palace of Desire, and Sugar Street by Naguib Mahfouz (1956–1957, Fiction). Commonly referred to as the “Cairo Trilogy”, these are the three most famous works (out of 40) by the Nobel Prize-winning Egyptian author. Often compared to Balzac, his novels provide insight into life in Egypt.

Ancient Evenings by Norman Mailer (1983, Fiction). A controversial and spicy novel about life, death, and re-incarnation in Pharaonic Egypt. Mailer’s complex writing style seems to divide readers into “love him/hate him” camps.

Israel

The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East by Sandy Tolan (2020, Memoir) The Palestinian–Israeli conflict takes on a new meaning in this hopeful true story about an unlikely friendship. Previous travelers have recommended it as good way to get background information on the conflict in a format that is more like a novel than a history book. Note: There’s also another book called **The Lemon Tree** (2017) that may be of interest. Written by Ilil Arbel and Ida Rosenfeld, it details a Siberian family’s travels to Israel to honor their deceased son.

Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn by Daniel Gordis (2016, History) At 500-plus pages, this book may not be as concise as the title suggests. But it has been widely praised for its balanced view on Israeli history and the author’s willingness to discuss both the good and the bad.

Second Person Singular by Sayed Kashua (2011, Fiction) A successful lawyer finds a book in a secondhand shop with a note in his wife’s handwriting to another man. What is their connection? Written by an Israeli–Arab author, the novel deals with how those of Arab descent can and cannot assimilate in Israeli society.

To the End of the Land by David Grossman (2008, Fiction) Superstitious Israeli mother Ora believes that if she stays home while her son is in the army, he could come to harm. So to prevent this she leaves home and starts a two-week hike across Israel with her dog and an ex.

Once Upon a Country, A Palestinian Life by Sari Nusseibeh (2007, History/Memoir) A leading Palestinian scholar and leader offers a close-up look at the troubling recent history of his country and the Middle East from a Palestinian perspective, sharing his rationale for promoting a two-state solution to the problems affecting the region.

Exile by Richard North Patterson (2007, Mystery) The fast-paced story of a trial lawyer who must defend the woman he loves against a charge of assassinating the Israeli Prime Minister. Historically questionable, but great for those looking for a page-turner.

Mornings in Jenin by Susan Abulhawa (2006, Fiction) A controversial novel that follows the story of a fictional Palestinian family through four generations, the loss of their home, and life in the Jenin refugee camp.

A Tale of Love & Darkness by Amos Oz (2002, Memoir) A family saga set in the Jerusalem between the 1930s and 1950s that centers around the author's mother, a tragic figure who took her own life when he was only 12 years old. Although sometimes sad, many readers felt it captured an important time in Israeli history through the lens of a single family.

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant (1997, Fiction) Based on the Old Testament story of Dinah, daughter of Jacob, and other Biblical women, Red Tent offers a striking portrait of what life in Biblical times might have been like.

To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account by Saul Bellow (1976, Travelogue). A collection of Bellow's observations and reflections, written after a trip to Israel, some of which appeared earlier in the *New Yorker* magazine.

The Source by James Michener (1965, Fiction) Michener traces the history of Judaism through artifacts found in an archeological dig of the fictional city Tel Makor. The author deftly blends fact and fiction by using an imaginary site to represent real human history.

Exodus by Leon Uris (1958, Fiction) A big blockbuster novel that tells the big sweeping story of the creation of Israel.

Jordan

The Confusion of Languages by Siobhan Fallon (2017, Fiction) Two American military wives follow their husbands to Jordan—Cassie experienced and rule-following, and Margaret, the novice who want to explore. As the begin to form a friendship for sorts, Margaret suddenly disappears.

The Cry of the Dove by Fadia Faqir (2007, Fiction) Salma has committed the ultimate sin against her Bedouin tribe—she had a child outside of wedlock. Forced to flee to England and leave her child behind, she forges a new life, but soon the longing to see her daughter overwhelms her and she risks it all to go back.

Married to a Bedouin by Marguerite Van Geldermalsen (2006, Memoir) The true story of how a New Zealand-born nurse became the wife of a Bedouin souvenir-seller of the Manaja tribe, and lived with him and their children in a community of 100 families in the ancient caves of Petra in Jordan.

Leap of Faith: Memoirs of an Unexpected Life by Queen Noor (2005, Biography) The absorbing, personal story of Jordan's American-born Queen Noor touches upon her husband's efforts at peacemaking, his death, and contemporary Arab-Israeli relations

The Language of Baklava by Diana Abu-Jaber (2005, Food) A foodie memoir about growing up as a Jordanian immigrant in upstate New York, and all the delicious shish kabobs, goat stew, and yes – baklava that the author's father cooked for the family.

Appointment with Death by Agatha Christie (1938, Mystery) Detective Hercule Poirot is forced to step in when an American wife is found murdered in Petra.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom by T. E. Lawrence (1922, Memoir) Written by the real-life lead character in the movie *Lawrence of Arabia*, these are his vivid descriptions of the battles fought and the territory explored during the Arab Revolt of 1916-18.

Suggested Film & Video

Egypt

Cairo Time (2009, Romance) Alone in Cairo and waiting for her husband's arrival, Juliette (Clarkson) finds herself falling for her husband's friend, Tareq (Siddig). Juliette grows closer to Tareq as he tours her around this magical city, and the two soon find themselves wrapped up in an unexpected affair.

Syriana (2006, Drama). An interesting political thriller that tries to portray how oil and politics intersect through multiple story lines, some of which are set in an unnamed country in the Middle East.

The English Patient (1996, Romance) Set during WWII, the film follows the recovery of a man known only as "the English Patient" as he recuperates from severe burns after crashing in the Sahara. Binoche plays Hana, the French-Canadian nurse who tends to Fiennes while he recovers. The patient's captivating past is eventually uncovered through a series of dramatic flashbacks that occur as he gradually regains his memory after the crash.

Death on the Nile (1973, Mystery). A star-studded adaptation of a classic Agatha Christie whodunit. Can private detective Hercule Poirot discover the murderer onboard his Nile cruise ship before he or she slips away? Another good version by the same title was filmed in 2003 for the PBS TV series *Masterpiece Mystery*. It stars David Suchet, who has played Poirot on British television since 1989. And yet another adaptation by Kenneth Branagh is slated for 2021.

Justine (1969, Drama) The year is 1938. The setting is Alexandria. Darley, a young British schoolmaster and poet, makes friends with Justine, the mysterious wife of a Coptic banker. Through their friendship, Darley learns of a plot against the British that aims to arm the Jewish underground in Palestine.

Caesar and Cleopatra (1945, Classic) What happens when the leaders of two of history's most powerful civilizations come together? Find out in this witty and layered film that investigates the romance that developed between Caesar, emperor of the Rome, and Cleopatra, the last Egyptian pharaoh. For a different take on the life of this famous female pharaoh, watch ***Cleopatra*** (1963) starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

Five Graves to Cairo (1943, Classic) British Army Corporal John J. Bramble is retreating from Rommel's Afrika Korps when he stumbles upon an out-of-the-way hotel Sidi Halfaya, Egypt. In order to avoid capture by the Germans, Bramble assumes the identity of a deceased waiter.

The Mummy (1932, Classic/Horror). Karloff stars in this classic monster movie as an ancient Egyptian priest brought back to life in 1930s Cairo. Or you could look for the popular comedy/action remake, released in 1999, starring Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz.

Israel

Fill the Void (2013, Drama) After her sister Ester dies in childbirth, 18-year-old Sharia is asked to cancel her upcoming wedding and marry her widowed brother-in-law instead. A rare look into the Hasidic community in Israel by a female filmmaker.

The Other Son (2012, Drama) Two children—one Israeli and one Palestinian—discover they were switched at birth in this French film set in Israel. In French and Hebrew with subtitles; also released as *Le fils de l'autre*.

The Band's Visit (2007, Comedy) A witty and hopeful comedy about what happens when an Egyptian police brass band is stranded in a small Israeli town. Some dialogue is in Hebrew with subtitles, but much is in English—the only language the Egyptians and the Israelis have in common. The film was so well-liked that the story been made into a Tony award-winning musical.

Six Days in June (2007, Documentary) A serious and thoughtful documentary describing the events, aftermath, and ramifications of the Six Day War from both the Arab and Israeli viewpoints. Travelers interested in documentaries may also want to look for *Elusive Peace: Israel and the Arabs*, also by PBS (2005, Documentary). The PBS crew were given unprecedented access, and managed to arrange interviews with President Clinton, Yasser Arafat, and Israeli Prime Ministers Sharon and Barak.

Operation Grandma (2000, Comedy) A short satirical film about three brothers trying to get around the various obstacles giving grandma a proper burial. Considered a cult classic in Israel where catchphrases like “I can’t talk about it, the enemy is listening,” have entered everyday speech.

The Ten Commandments (1956, Classic) A classic Bible epic about the life of Moses, as directed by the king of Bible epics, Cecile B. DeMille.

Jordan

Jordan: The Royal Tour (2002, Documentary) King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein hosts this well-produced tour of Jordan.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989, Adventure) The third film in the Indiana Jones series as archeologist/adventurer Indy looking for his kidnapped father, the Holy Grail, and a way to outsmart the Nazis on his trail. Not a serious movie in any way, but a lot of fun, and key scenes were filmed at Petra in Jordan.

Lawrence of Arabia (1962, Adventure) A sweeping epic about the famous, yet enigmatic, T. E. Lawrence—a British soldier who fought with the Arabs against the Turks in WWI. The score and beautiful cinematography earned this movie a spot on the AFI’s (American Film Institute) Top 100 Films list.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel

www.oattravel.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Store

www.oatshop.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

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