

Friday, January 16th, 2026

Destination Experience & Excursions

5:15 am – 12:30 pm (Passport required)

Optional tour to the temples of Abu Simbel (by flight)

2:00 pm

Dune surfing (Optional tour)

6:15 – 8:30 pm (Lifejacket recommended)

Sound & Light show in Philae temple (Optional tour)

All day

S.S Sphinx stays in Aswan

Photo opportunity

The monuments in your tour

Information about Abu Simbel temples

Rediscovery

With the passage of time, the temples fell into disuse and eventually became covered by sand. Already in the 6th century BC, the sand covered the statues of the main temple up to their knees. The temple was forgotten until 1813, when Swiss orientalist JL Burckhardt found the top frieze of the main temple. Burckhardt talked about his discovery with Italian explorer Giovanni Belzoni, who travelled to the site, but was unable to dig out an entry to the temple.

Belzoni returned in 1817, this time succeeding in his attempt to enter the complex. He took everything valuable and portable with him. Tour guides at the site relate the legend that "Abu Simbel" was a young local boy who guided these early re-discoverers to the site of the buried temple which he had seen from time to time in the shifting sands. Eventually, they named the complex after him: Abu Simbel

Onboard service & Activities

4:15 – 5:15 am

Breakfast in the restaurant

8:00 – 9:30 am

Late breakfast in the lounge bar

12:30 pm

Lunch buffet in the restaurant

5:30 – 6:30 pm

Happy hour in the lounge
Enjoy our Egyptian's selection

7:15 – 7:30 pm

Daily talk with the Egyptologist in the lounge bar

7:30 pm

Dinner is served in the restaurant

All day movie on documentary channel

"Abu Simbel & Philae temples saved"

"Duration 55 min."

Egyptian's Happy hour cocktail

Walking dead mummy

Tequila, lemon juice, orange juice and ginger

Special attention to...

Docking Address: Aswan city (Marsa Misr Travel)

Expected Weather

Today: Sunny

Temp. min. 6 C / 43° F – max. 24° C / 75° F

Practical Tips

Comfortable walking shoes are recommended

Wellness & Spa Treatments

While onboard, unwind with a spa treatment at the
S.S Sphinx Spa and visit our fitness center

Gift shop opening time

1:00 – 3:00 pm

6:00 – 9:00 pm

Abu Simbel temples

The Great Temple of Abu Simbel

The Great Temple at Abu Simbel, which took about 20 years to carve, was completed around year 24 of the reign of Rameses the Great (which corresponds to 1265 BC). It was dedicated to the gods (Amun, Ra-Harakhty) and Ptah, as well as to the deified Rameses himself. It is generally considered the grandest and most beautiful of the temples commissioned during the reign of Rameses II, and one of the most beautiful in Egypt. Four colossal 20 meter statues of the pharaoh with the double Atef crown of Upper and Lower Egypt decorate the facade of the temple, which is 35 meters wide and is topped by a frieze with 22 baboon sand flank the entrance. The colossal statues were sculpted directly from the rock in which the temple was located before it was moved. All statues represent Rameses II, seated on a throne and wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. The statue to the left of the entrance was damaged in an earthquake, leaving only the lower part of the statue still intact. The head and torso can still be seen at the statue's feet. Next to the legs of the colossi, there are other statues no higher than the knees of the pharaoh. These depict Nefertari, Rameses' chief wife queen mother Mut-Tuy his first two sons Amun-her-khepeshef, Rameses his first six daughters Bintanath, Baketmut, Nefertari, Meritamen, Nebettawy and Isetnofret.

Highlights

The Great Temple of Abu Simbel (02)

The entrance itself is crowned by a bas-relief representing two images of the king worshipping the falcon-headed Ra Harakhty, whose statue stands in a large niche. This god is holding the hieroglyph user in his right hand and a feather while Ma'at, (the goddess of truth and justice) in on his left; this is nothing less than a gigantic cryptogram for Rameses II's throne name, "User-Maat-Re". The facade is topped by a row of 22 baboons, their arms raised in the air, supposedly worshipping the rising sun.

Another notable feature of the facade is a stele which records the marriage of Rameses with a daughter of King Hattusili III, which sealed the peace between Egypt and the Hittites. The inner part of the temple has the same triangular layout that most ancient Egyptian temples follow, with rooms decreasing in size from the entrance to the sanctuary.

The temple is complex in structure and quite unusual because of its many side chambers. The hypostyle hall

(sometimes also called pronaos) is 18 meters long and 16,7 meters wide and is supported by eight huge Osirid pillars depicting the deified Rameses linked to the god Osiris, the god of the underworld who always remained in the dark. These are dates that allegedly the king's birthday and coronation day respectively,

But there is no evidence to support this, though it is quite logical to assume that these dates had some relation to a great event,

Local Specialties

Aswan style beef

ETHNIC POINTS FOR EGYPT

Islam

Islam is practiced by the majority of Egyptians and governs their personal, political, economic and legal lives. Islam emanated from what is today Saudi Arabia. The Prophet Muhammad is seen as the last of God's emissaries (following in the footsteps of Jesus, Moses, Abraham, etc) to bring revelation to mankind.

He was distinguished with bringing a message for the whole of mankind, rather than just to a certain peoples. As Moses brought the Torah and Jesus the Bible, Muhammad brought the last book, the Quran. The Quran and the actions of the Prophet (the Sunnah) are used as the basis for all guidance in their religion. Among certain obligations for Muslims are to pray five times a day - at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, And evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. Friday is the Muslim holy day. Everything is closed. Many companies also close on Thursday, making the weekend Thursday and Friday.

During the holy month of Ramadan all Muslims must fast from dawn to dusk and are only permitted to work six hours per day. Fasting includes no eating, drinking, cigarette smoking, or gum chewing. Foreigners are not required to fast; however, they must not eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum in public. Each night at sunset, families and friends gather together to celebrate the breaking of the fast (iftar).