

56 Day Cairo To Nairobi

Please note that our itineraries are not set in stone and can be subject to change.

Week 1

Our first day is spent in **Cairo** visiting the great **Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza** with our **Egyptologist guide**, we also visit the **Egyptian Natural History museum** in the afternoon.

The following morning we drive out of Cairo and head for the **Western Desert** leaving both modern and ancient civilizations behind us for a few days. Described as the 'desert of deserts' this vast world of desolation and beauty covers 2.8 million square kms.

We visit **3 isolated oases, Bahariyya, Farafra and Dhakla** where u can roll down sand dunes, hire a desert guide and some camels and head out to explore this sand sea and walk through the winding lanes of mud houses at the **Citadel of Mut. Luxor** is where, based at a campsite, we have two full days to explore the city and surrounds. Both **Luxor Temple and Karnak Temple** are within easy walking distance. On our second day in Luxor we organise a trip to **Valley of the Queens and Valley of the Kings**. Here, the remarkably well-preserved tombs of **Ramses II and Tutankhamun** have coloured paintings and hieroglyphics that still seem fresh after 3000 years.

Week 2

A half day drive further south brings us to **Aswan**. Here you will notice the first of many cultural changes on this trip. The darker Nubian people in Aswan lead a more relaxed and less hectic pace of life than their Egyptian countrymen. We base ourselves here for the next 4 or 5 days to organise visas and in which time you can organise a **2 or 3 day felucca cruise to Edfu and Kom Ombo and also visit Abu Simbel**, the stone monuments built by the greatest of all **Pharaohs, Ramses II**.

From Aswan we take the ferry across **Lake Nasser** to the port of **Wadi Halfa in Northern Sudan**. The ferry takes about a day and is a supremely relaxing way to travel and a great opportunity to mix and chat to local Sudanese people.

Week 3

From Wadi Halfa we rejoin our expedition vehicle for our drive across the **Nubian Desert**. We spend much of this journey hugging the banks of the Nile, passing through sleepy Nubian villages where we can rest in tea rooms or potter around the local souqs.

The hospitality in Sudan can be surprising. For such a poor country with so many recent problems, people are often only too willing to invite you into their homes and often to share their meals. **Khartoum** is our next stop and it has a fantastic setting on the confluence of the **Blue and White Niles**. Our stay here is on the banks of the Nile at the quirky but interesting Blue Nile Sailing Club. It's office is housed in one of General Kitcheners old Gunboats, a relic from the British military campaign against the Mahdi over a century ago. For such a large city, Khartoum feels quite laid back.

In our few days here you can visit the **Hamed al Nil Tomb** and witness the **dancing dervishes** who perform every

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Friday as well as the daily camel market or take a boat trip on the Nile. You can also visit the ancient **Pyramids at Meroe to the north of the city & the temples at Naqa.**

Week 4

We then head towards **Ethiopia** passing through the towns of **Wadi Medani and Gedaref** along the way. Many of the roads we travel on in Ethiopia are very poor dirt or gravel roads and often in mountainous areas so travel is slow Ethiopia has a lot more visual indigenous history than any other sub-Saharan country and in the towns of **Gondar** (the capital of Ethiopia from 1632 until 1868) **and Bahir Dar** where we spend a few days at each, it is possible to organise visits to some of these famous sites, including the holy city of **Axum and the 12th century rock-hewn churches at Lalibela.**

Week 5 & 6

Our route to **Addis Ababa** takes us via **Lake Tana** and the spectacular **Blue Nile Gorge and Blue Nile Falls.** From **Bahar Dar** you can organise boat trips to some of the small islands which have **Monasteries** dating back up to 900 years and which are still looked after by monks who live from subsistence farming. We spend a couple of days in Addis and then on our way south from Addis we travel down through the **East Africa Rift Valley**, passing a number of lakes and some of the most dramatic scenery in the world. Huge black peaks dominate the sky line and some of the soda lakes have vast colonies of **pink flamingos and great white pelicans.**

The north of Kenya is very remote with nomadic tribes people like the **Rendille in Marsabit and the Samburu** who still wear very distinctive and often elaborate dress. We travel along the **East Africa Rift Valley**, passing a number of lakes and some of the most dramatic scenery in the world. We pass the foothills of **Mount Kenya**, which brings us to our next stop at **Eldoret.**

Week 7

From here we cross the Kenya - Uganda border, and continue to **Kampala.** We have a free day to spend in local cafes and nightspots. The following day we as head west through swamps, patches of forest and fertile green countryside, we'll visit a number of small towns and villages where you will see **roadside stalls manufacturing and selling traditional musical instruments & where we can buy fresh rotisseries, roasted meat & vegetables, as well as roasted bananas.** We also stop at the spot where our route crosses the **equator.**

Next is the **Virunga range** of volcanic mountains and the rainforests on these mountain slopes are home to several families of **Mountain Gorillas.** We will visit the gorillas in either **Uganda or Rwanda.** It is estimated that only around 500 to 600 of these gentle giants remain. This mountainous area on the borders of Rwanda, Uganda and Zaire (now renamed Democratic Republic of Congo) is their only natural habitat and they are periodically threatened by poachers and political instability in the area.

One permit allows you to spend about 50 to 60 minutes with one of the gorilla families. Trekking to find them in groups of 6 or 8 can take anything from half an hour to 5 hours. The organisations and well-trained guides that continually monitor and protect the families are conscientious and responsible. If we view them from Uganda there is



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the opportunity to **paddle out onto Lake Bunyoni in canoes** and visit some of the nearby islands or visit nearby villages & schools. From Rwanda there is also the chance to visit the **genocide museum** in Kigali, which is a moving and interesting experience.

Week 8

Returning to **Kampala** there is the opportunity to visit a **Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Rehabilitation centre** on one of the islands on **Lake Victoria**. At **Jinja**, we **cross the Owen Falls Dam on the Nile** where Lake Victoria pours its water into the beginning of the Nile River. We camp next to the Nile at **Bujagali Falls** where fishermen guide their dugout canoes into the steaming rapids. We use more modern rubber rafts, and go on a days **whitewater rafting**. We re-enter Kenya and make our way to the Great Rift Valley with its lakes and abundant bird and wildlife. At **Lake Nakuru** we take a game drive past **Black Rhino, Giraffe, Buffalo, Zebra and a horde of other game and millions of Pink Flamingos** which feed noisily along the shoreline.

We also pay a visit to **Elsamere, the home of Joy Adamson of Born Free fame**. You can also **hire mountain bikes and cycle or walk through Hells Gate National Park** - the only game reserve in Kenya in which this is allowed! Or for a less active but equally enjoyable game viewing experience visit the **Crater Lake Game Sanctuary**. Both offer excellent scenery & opportunities to spot hyrax, abundant bird & plant life along with several types of gazelle, impala and eland.

Its then onto Nairobi, where we stay in a private campsite on the edge of town and we pay a visit to **Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage**, where Oasis helps support one of the elephants (Kamboyo) and to see the amazing work the centre does with rescued and injured elephants. We then visit the nearby **Giraffe Centre** to learn more about and hopefully get up close and feed these gentle and majestic creatures.

Those on the 8 week trip finish here in Nairobi.



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