



exodus

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Trip Notes

SINAI TREK

Trip code: TXS
Country: Egypt
Amended: May 2010
Edition No: OP 3 2010
Valid from: 05 May 2010 - 31 Dec 2010



HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Sinai** Stark and dramatic landscape with peaks, wadis and beautiful dunes
- **The tranquillity of the desert** We go off the beaten track as we trek in the Sinai and experience the tranquillity of the desert
- **Bedouin camping** We spend 5 nights under the stars with our camp team who swiftly erect our tents and prepare traditional meals on open fires
- **Mount Sinai** We rise early to climb the fabled mountain and watch the sun rise from the summit

SUMMARY



With its majestic peaks, vast desert, beautiful waters and a mystical past, the Sinai is the perfect wilderness to be discovered on foot. With the help of our friendly local Bedouin guides we trek through this vast and empty wilderness, taking in beautiful sights and ancient temples as we go. After time at the fisherman's town of Abou Zaneima on the Gulf of Suez, we head to Mount Sarabit, from whose summit there are striking views out over the jagged and parched landscape. We could not trek in the Sinai without climbing the fabled Mount Moses and visiting St Catherine's Monastery. The impressive landscape and a real insight into local culture and history ensures that this trek will live long in the memory.

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

Specifically to this trip, we would highlight the following issues for you to consider:

This trip has been graded as grade B/C (moderate/challenging) Moderate/Challenging graded trips are suitable for clients with a good level of fitness. Previous trekking experience is desirable but not vital as long as you are confident of your physical condition. We use comfortable hotels in Cairo but whilst trekking in the Sinai the facilities are basic. Large parts of the day whilst in the Sinai will be spent trekking and you need to be fit enough to cope with this. We will be walking on sand and over rocky terrain.

We camp in the desert, visiting remote areas with basic facilities so please take this in to consideration in assessing whether this trip is right for you.

Egypt can get hot, especially during our summer, which can cause discomfort whilst travelling. Care should be taken to drink a lot of bottled water. The hottest months tend to be June to September in Egypt where temperatures can reach (if not exceed) 35 degrees.

Desert temperatures can be more extreme and it has been known to get down to freezing temperatures during the night in the desert. Please be prepared for this.

JOINING THE TRIP IN LONDON

8 days, depart London Sat, return Sat.

Itinerary start

The group flight from London is a day flight departing day 1 of the itinerary.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of **British Midland** (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

UK Regional Flights

Exodus can arrange flights from the majority of the UK's regional airports that are more flexible and convenient than if booked separately. Please contact our sales team for details.

Please note that if booking your regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum connecting time, but baggage handling at Heathrow is known to be subject to delays.



Exodus Travels Ltd

Grange Mills, Weir Road, London SW12 0NE

Sales & Reservations: (44) 0845 330 6008 • Fax: (44) 020 8673 0779 • E-mail: sales@exodus.co.uk • www.exodus.co.uk



KLM regional departures.

KLM offers services from the following UK airports to Amsterdam to connect with flights to and from Cairo: Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds/Bradford, London City Airport, Humberside, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and Teeside.

If you are interested in this option, then please request this at a time of reservation.

Please note that if booking your regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum connecting time, but baggage handling at Heathrow is known to be subject to delays.

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus has booked it. Those arriving from London on non-group flights should read the airport transfer section below for information on reaching the start point. Please check with the Exodus office if you are unsure whether or not a transfer is included.



JOINING THE TRIP IN CAIRO

8 days, start Cairo, end Cairo.

Itinerary start

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in Cairo on the evening of Day 1 of the itinerary listed below. Details of how to reach the start point are given in the Final Joining Instructions. Hotel check-in times are normally from around 3pm.

Airport Transfers

If you require airport transfers, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight.

Please note that the British Midland group flight arrives in to Terminal 3. If you choose to join the group transfer but arrive on different flights, you must make your own way to Terminal 3 to meet the group transfer.

Group flights can be rescheduled, so you must check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense. Joining the group transfer is free of charge.

If you would like us to organise a private transfer for you, the cost is £27 for 1 person, £36 for 2 people sharing, £45 for 3 people sharing and £39 for 4 people sharing and is payable before departure. Please ensure that you provide us with all relevant information at least 2 weeks before departure. Please note that the cost of a taxi is likely to be about £150-£180 should you decide to make your way independently. We would recommend that you agree a fare with the taxi driver before the journey and please note that the majority of taxis do not have air conditioning. Visitors do tend to get charged more than Egyptians for taxi rides.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

The entries in **bold** at the end of each day indicate the type of accommodation normally used (see accommodation section overleaf for key to codes) and meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)

Day 1 Start Cairo. On arrival at Cairo International Airport, for those on the group transfer, a local representative will meet you just before you enter the baggage hall. **CH**

Day 2 This morning we have an early start as we leave the hectic city of Cairo behind us. We meet the Gulf of Suez and follow the Sinai coast down to the fisherman's city of Abou Zeniema. Here we meet our friendly Bedouin guides who give us an insight in to trekking in the desert. We then head off road to the area of Sarabit El Khadem. This is an interesting journey as we pass ancient mining sites, colourful mountains and dunes to finally reach Jebel Sarabit. **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 3/4 We spend two days in this area, initially arising early to start our trek to the summit of Jebel Sarabit (850m). Our aim to reach an ancient Egyptian temple situated on the top of the mountain, dedicated to the god Hathor. There is time admire the impressive views of the vast

Sinai landscape (the views here are outstanding!) and tour the ancient temple. We also visit some ancient turquoise mines - in the Pharonic period Sarabit El Khadim was well known for the mining of the precious stone. The evenings are spent with our Bedouin guides who always like to give us an insight in to their culture, history...and music! **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 5 We cross through the heart of the Sinai (by 4WD) to reach The Forest of Pillars. Surrounded by peaks and the barren (yet impressive) central Sinai landscape, our trek takes us past some unique black columns rising from the desert floor. **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 6 Today we reach Wadi Baba with some unique and interesting rock formations. We later transfer to St Catherine's and our Bedouin lodge for a relaxing evening before our early start the following day. **FC (B,L,D)**

Day 7 We rise in the very early hours of the morning (sometimes as early as 12am!) and we head to Mount Moses. On reaching the foot of the mountain, we start our 3-hour climb of the fabled mountain. We reach the summit (2285m) for sunrise. The views over the Sinai, especially in the light of dawn, are breathtaking. After descending we visit the St. Catherine's Monastery, and head back to Cairo. **CH (B,L)**

Day 8 End Cairo. (B)

For those on group flights, these depart in the afternoon and will arrive in the UK the same day.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation

We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

Our hotel in Cairo is of a good 4/5 star (Egyptian classification) standard with a pool and a choice of restaurants. Camping in the Sinai is basic. Our Bedouin guides and assistants will erect the tents and prepare all meals. Please note that we trek in remote areas and our Bedouin camp sites are wild camps.

Single Accommodation is available at a supplement of £80.

Extra Accommodation is available in Cairo pre and post tour. Prices and booking are available on request. Please contact our sales team for further information.

KEY TO ACCOMMODATION:

We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

CH Comfortable Hotel, Lodge or Gite - twin rooms with en suite facilities, reliable electricity and water supply, good service and some added amenities.

FC Full-service Camping - two person tents sometimes in a private or public campsite that contains a communal ablutions block and other amenities and sometimes in a wild camp with toilet tents and mess tent or dining equipment provided. All camp chores are done for you from erecting / dismantling of your tent, to cooking & washing up.

FOOD & TRANSPORT

Food

In the itinerary we state which meals are included on each day.

All breakfasts, 6 lunches and 5 dinners are included.

Breakfasts whilst trekking will include fresh fruit and freshly baked bread. Lunch will be a cold meal and will be taken as we stop in the shade for a well-earned break. The evening meals will be local cuisine, simple but wholesome.

Food in Egypt involves such things as kebabs, chicken, stews, pitta-bread, felafel, beans, aubergine and other vegetables, pickles, salads and the like. Vegetarians can be catered for if they accept that the options may be somewhat limited.

In the desert all cooking equipment including stoves, pots, etc. for communal cooking are provided along with plates, cups and cutlery. The guide will either be cooking on gas or on fires made with wood brought to the camp on camels.

Bottled water will be provided during the trek.

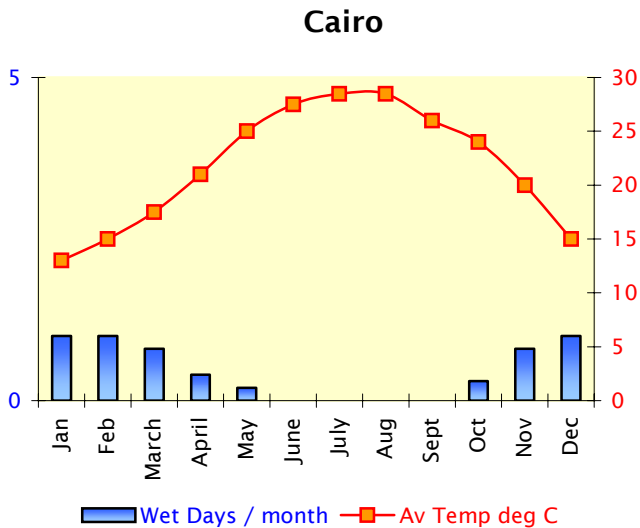
Transport

Road transport is by private air-conditioned mini/midi bus. Once in the Sinai we start our 6 day trek in the desert. Our Bedouin guides will accompany us and you will never need to carry anymore than your day pack.

Walking conditions

Whilst trekking in the desert we will be walking for 5 - 8 hours a day. On our arrival in the Sinai we hope to walk for 3-4 hours in the afternoon depending on our arrival time. Conditions underfoot can be uneven. You will walk on sand, up rocky peaks and there are times when you will be required to climb over boulders or pass over small water pools.

WEATHER



Rain is very rare in all parts of Egypt and most days are sunny and clear. Summer temperatures often reach the upper 30's, and those who are affected by heat may wish to avoid the period between June and September. The winter months can be surprisingly cold, especially on the Nile or at night. The average daytime maximum in Cairo in January is 20°C, night time minimum is 8°C. In the summer these temperatures are 35°C and 22°C respectively. The temperatures can be more extreme in the desert and it has been known to get down to freezing.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment.

Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company. Exodus trips are designed to allow a high degree of economic benefit to the local communities; we buy local produce, eat local food and use local services, thus ensuring that as much money as possible is retained within the local economies and the host communities. With our responsible tourism policy we are continually reassessing our holidays, trying at all times to ensure that they are socially, economically and environmentally sound.



Awards for our work on Responsible Tourism

2006. British Travel Awards: Environmentally Responsible Tourism Company.

2004. Responsible Travel Awards: Best Tour Operator.

2002. BA Tourism for Tomorrow Awards: Highly Commended.

For full details of our Responsible Tourism Policy please visit:

www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

Please note that we now require you to send in a photocopy of your passport prior to departure. This is a request from the local tourist police.

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visas are required by all non-Arab nationalities and currently cost \$15. Please note that the Egyptian Visa can be obtained on arrival, just before passing through passport control, from the Visa office and is payable in \$US, £UK, Eur and EGP..

Although it is recommended that you obtain your visa on arrival, if you would like to obtain your visa before departure, the address of the Egyptian Embassy in London is 2 Lowndes Square, SW1. Tel: 020 7235 9719. Visas are now generally available for same day collection, although this should NOT be relied upon. Opening hours are 09.30 to 12.30 for applications, 14.15 to 16.00 for collection of passports after the visa has been issued. Postal applications direct to the embassy for visas are not recommended as the service takes 15 to 20 days.

For further information on how to obtain visas please call Travcour on 020 7223 5295 or visit their website: www.travcour.com

Visa regulations can and do change without notice and if you are not a British passport holder please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Please note that recently Egyptian officials have also requested tourists carry a copy of their passport with them whilst in the country.

Vaccinations and Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

It is advised that you are vaccinated against diphtheria; tetanus; poliomyelitis; hepatitis A and typhoid.

The above information can change at short notice, and as we are not qualified to answer all your questions in regards to travel health we strongly recommend you contact your GP or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information.

Nomad Travel Clinics are experts in preparing people for travel, providing expert advice on vaccinations, anti-malarial and staying healthy whilst overseas. We have arranged a special 10% discount for Exodus passengers on any vaccinations that you may require! Take along your Nomad discount card, sent with your confirmation pack, or call Exodus for your special discount code.

Visit www.nomadtravel.co.uk/exodus for further information.

For additional information please visit: www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

Insurance - Are you adequately covered?

Please ask for details of the Exodus insurance policy that has been tailored to provide specific cover for our trips. It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). If taking an alternative policy you must be sure that you are covered for any activities that are part of this trip or optional activities that you intend to take part in. For further information please see the insurance section of the Exodus Travel Advice guide or visit www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/travel-insurance.

Local Time is GMT +2hrs (though please check for the time difference during Ramadan). Egypt also has a summer time similar to the UK, when clocks are advanced one hour between May and September.

Group, Staff and Support

The group will generally be between 4 and 20 people. There will be a local leader and drivers and local guides/Bedouin assistants where needed.

The minimum age of clients on this trip is 16 years. Please note that children aged 16 or 17 years of age must be accompanied by (and share accommodation with) a parent or legal guardian.

Join the Exodus Online Community:

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view our range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups that have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Compass Café forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be automatically entered into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the Compass Cafe you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy... so what are you waiting for?

<http://www.exodus.co.uk/community>

MONEY MATTERS

Exodus and Local Payments

There is no local payment on this holiday. As of 1 January 2008, Exodus no longer uses local payments to cover part of the cost of the holiday. While some of the headline prices seem higher, we have not added any extra costs into the total price, apart from the local payment and any standard annual fluctuation in price.

If you are comparing prices with other operators, please check the total price paid, as we believe that Exodus offers the best balance between value for money and operational quality.

Currency Information

The Egyptian unit of currency is the Pound (EGP), divided into 100 piastres. In September 2009 the official tourist rate of exchange was approx. £1 = EGP 8.9. There is no limit to the amount of foreign currency that can be brought into the country, and we do not recommend you to get Egyptian currency prior to departure. Money can be changed at the airport on arrival or at the hotel in Cairo. When you leave Egypt it is possible, though not easy, to re-exchange Egyptian Pounds into foreign currency.

It is advisable to bring your personal spending money in small denomination, preferably cash as travellers cheques are becoming less widely accepted. Any hard currency (e.g. UK£, US\$, Euro etc.) is acceptable at banks in Egypt.

Hotels can also usually change money at a good rate, and they are often quicker than banks. We suggest that you take some money in cash, as hotels will often not accept travellers cheques.

ATM availability

There are ATM machines in Cairo..

Credit Card Acceptance

Although they are accepted in most tourist bazaars, please do not rely on any credit cards in Egypt. It is possible to purchase larger items such as carpets with Visa, American Express and some other major cards.

Extra Expenses and Spending Money

See 'Food' and 'Visas'.

Tippling (leader and local staff)

Our local staff are paid well and fairly for their work with Exodus.

"Baksheesh" is an ever-present fact of life in Egypt. Although we are not visiting any major cities you will be asked for tips around Mt Sinai. We suggest you allow at least **\$30 per person** exclusively for this purpose. Your guide will often take this amount off you at the start of the trip and use it to tip for services on your behalf. This is purely to take the hassle out of this activity for you and is not compulsory. Your leader will keep a list of all baksheesh paid and will return any unused amount to the group towards the end of the trip.

Tippling your Leader You may feel that your leader has performed well over the course of your time in Egypt and want to show your appreciation of their services. If you would like to tip your leader we suggest a figure of approximately USD\$4-5 per person per day. For confirmation the Baksheesh figure stated in the section above does not include any tip for your trip leader.

For your commission free holiday currency, pre loaded cash cards and travellers cheques delivered directly to your door at very competitive rates, visit us on www.currency-express.com/exodus and receive free delivery on orders over £300.

WHAT TO TAKE

Essential Equipment and Clothing

This should be read in conjunction with our 'What to Pack' section in the Travel Advice booklet.

You will need the following:

You will need a 2/3-season sleeping bag and liner for use when camping in the desert. We recommend a 3-season sleeping bag ideally. We also recommend bringing a thermarest.

You also need to take 4 passport photos with you in case required locally for identification/trekking registration. Lightweight walking boots, lightweight trousers, shorts, fleece and warm sweater/coat (for the nights), hat (for sun protection), towel, sunglasses, torch, sunscreen, insect repellent (though there are no mosquitoes in winter)

Please note that Egypt is a Muslim country and there are times that women may be asked to cover up.

Optional items:

Camera, swimwear and binoculars.

Much of the equipment mentioned above is available at very competitive prices at the Exodus online shop, '[Exodus Travel Essentials](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community)' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit www.exodus.co.uk/community for more information.

Baggage and Baggage Allowance

Exodus kitbags are available for purchase at £25, which includes postage, packing and VAT. Please note that they are available within the UK only.

At time of publication - the standard weight limit for hold baggage on the recommended international carrier for this trip is 20kg. In case this changes, please check your individual flight ticket to reconfirm this.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check www.baa.com and/or the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

If you would prefer to buy your own equipment we have a wide variety available in our very own Exodus shop, '[Exodus Travel Essentials](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community)' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit www.exodus.co.uk/community for more information.

READING LIST

Exodus suggests below a series of books, guides or maps that may be useful or interesting for your trip.

If you are interested in any of these books then please visit our very own Exodus shop, '[Exodus Travel Essentials](http://www.exodus.co.uk/community)' in partnership with Amazon. Please visit www.exodus.co.uk/community for more information.

There are numerous guidebooks to choose from. Both **Lonely Planet** and **Rough Guide** cover Egypt; others, which we have read and found useful, are listed below.

Guide to Egypt

Michael Haag, Excellent readable guide with much detailed sightseeing information and useful practical sections.

Fodor's Guide to Egypt, *Hoddor & Stoughton*, A typical Fodor guide.

The Search For Ancient Egypt, *Thames and Hudson* A very interesting summary of the re-discovery of Ancient Egypt.

An Introduction to Ancient Egypt, *T. G. H. James*, Another fairly exhaustive archaeological guide.

Mt Sinai, *Joseph Hobbs*

For fiction try:

The Map of Love, *Ahdad Souief*, Shortlisted for the 1999 Booker prize.

The Nobel Prize-winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz is also well worth reading.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CLIENTS

Please note that Exodus operate a 24 hour duty office for emergencies, which can be contacted on 0044 (0) 1582 644 100.

Anytime that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure or at www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/essential-information?

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between these Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes are the correct version and supersede the brochure. Abnormal conditions or other events beyond our control can prevail at any time, particularly in remote or off the beaten track destinations, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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HOW TO BOOK YOUR TRIP

- 1. Check availability** Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.
- 2. Secure your place** You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.
- 3. Complete your booking and payment** When you're ready to book, go to www.exodus.co.uk for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque.

Book with confidence Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.

