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TRIP DETAILS

10 days ~ Egypt

Easy day hikes, easy touring

9 nights hotels

DATES

Dec 1–Dec 10, '07

Feb 2–Feb 11, '08

Apr 2–Apr 11, '08

Nov 2–Nov 11, '08

Dec 2–Dec 11, '08

LAND COST

\$3,945 per person
(10-15 members)

\$4,145 per person
(8-9 members)

\$4,445 per person
(4-7 members)

\$350 internal airfare



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SOBEK: LORD OF THE NILE

Tracing the Path of the Crocodile God

TRIP LEVEL

EASY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Follow the mythology of the crocodile god Sobek on a unique itinerary crafted by Richard Bangs for the PBS series *Adventures with Purpose*
- Absorb a sense of history at the classic sites at Luxor, Abu Simbel, Aswan, and the Pyramids of Giza
- Visit the newly rebuilt Alexandria Library and Museum, once the largest in the world
- Accommodations in classic hotels, including the Mena House Oberoi and the legendary Old Cataract Hotel

Revised February 20, 2008



SOBEK: LORD OF THE NILE

Tracing the Path of the Crocodile God

Here's an adventure that showcases secrets and treasures rarely seen, but one that also makes a difference! Mountain Travel Sobek co-founder Richard Bangs designed this special trip for the PBS series *Adventures with Purpose* and his companion book of the same title. It's a fascinating journey exploring the Nile through the lens of Sobek (yes, *our* Sobek!), the crocodile god that influenced so much of dynastic Egypt, and of the crocodile itself, which through poaching, pollution, and the blockage from the Aswan Dam has disappeared from the Egyptian Nile. Traveling to temples and active dig sites not included on any other itineraries, you'll witness the art and architecture influenced by the great god Sobek, as well as many other great icons of Egypt. And, you'll "make a difference" by taking one of the many live poached crocodiles at Aswan and releasing it back into the waters of the Nile, where through efforts like this it might one day thrive and reclaim its place as "Lord of the Nile."



ITINERARY

☞ This trip begins with a rendezvous in Alexandria, Egypt, **on Day 1.**

DAY 1 ~ Alexandria

Arrive in Alexandria, Egypt. You will be met at the airport by a Mountain Travel Sobek representative who will assist you with all customs and visa formalities.

You'll then visit the catacombs of **Kom El Shugafa**, the largest Roman burial site discovered in Egypt. They consist of three tiers of tombs and chambers cut into the bedrock to a depth of about 35 meters. Constructed in the 2nd century A.D. as a single-family crypt, they were later expanded to hold more than 300 individual tombs. There is even a banquet hall where grieving relatives paid their last respects with a funeral feast. Though the motifs are pure ancient Egyptian, the architects and artists were schooled in the Greco-Roman style, resulting in an amazingly integrated art quite unlike anything else in the world.

After visiting the catacombs, you will be transferred to the Helnan Palestine Hotel, with assistance at check-in. After lunch on your own, you'll pay a visit to the **Alexandria Library and Museum**. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is not only a library, but an integrated cultural complex, with libraries, museums, exhibition areas, educational centers, and an international conference center. It is built on what is believed to be the site of the old Library of Alexandria, built by Ptolemy I. It was the largest library of all antiquity, frequented by scholars from all over the Mediterranean from the 4th century B.C. until its eventual destruction by fire 700 years later.

Return to your hotel, then meet for dinner at the El-Salamlek Hotel.

D...Helnan Palestine Hotel

DAY 2 ~ Cairo

After breakfast at the hotel, we drive three hours to Cairo. We'll proceed directly to the **Pyramids of Giza**, where we'll embark on an unforgettable tour of the pyramids built for the Pharaohs Cheops, Chefren, and Mycerinus. They were constructed about 2500 B.C. with limestone blocks from the plateau and the Turah hills on the outskirts of Cairo. The Great Pyramid of Cheops alone, the only present-day survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, required over 2,300,000 blocks of stone, each weighing about 2.5 tons. At its base, it covers 13 acres of land. Millions of visitors come each year to ponder the fascinating mystery of their existence and explore the ancient burial chambers within.

We'll also visit the Valley Temple, housing the mysterious **Sphinx**, located in what was once a quarry to the east of Chephren's pyramid. One theory suggests this pharaoh's workers shaped the body into a lion and gave it their king's face, as a guardian of the necropolis. Almost a thousand years after its construction, King Thutmose IV placed a stela between the front paws. It describes how the Sphinx had spoken to the then prince in a dream, promising him kingship if he cleared away the desert sand that was choking the Sphinx.

Lunch will be at the historic Mena House Oberoi Hotel, a palatial hotel in the shadow of the Great Pyramids. Built as a palace for the Empress Eugenie during her visit to Egypt for the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the hotel's "Khan El-Khalili Café" has floor-to-ceiling windows with views over the lush gardens of the hotel, and out onto the Great Pyramids themselves. After lunch we'll check into the hotel for overnight.

B,L...Mena House Oberoi Hotel

DAY 3 ~ Cairo

Experience Egypt's long and rich history in an exciting tour to the necropolis of **Saqqara**. Here we'll see the famous **Step Pyramid of King Zoser**, a ziggurat-like structure that anticipates the later design of the great pyramids. It stands guard over the *mastabas* (noble tombs) of the Saqqara necropolis and was the first freestanding stone structure in the world. Your Egyptologist guide will show you some tombs belonging to the nobles of the past, which show the beauty and excellence of ancient Egyptian art on their walls and give an insight in the daily life of ancient Egypt.



We'll then proceed to the fascinating **Khan El-Khalili Bazaar**, reputedly the largest bazaar in the Middle East. Originally founded as a watering stop for caravanserai in the 14th century, the bazaar has now grown to vast proportions. As you wander through the labyrinth of narrow streets you will find workshops and stalls selling all manner of craftsmanship from woodwork, glassware and leather goods to perfumes, fabrics and Pharaonic curiosities. Remember to bargain hard!

We'll enjoy a five-star lunch of traditional oriental dishes at the Arabian-style Nageuib Mahfouz Restaurant. Named after the Nobel-prize-winning Egyptian author, the restaurant lies in the very heart of the Khan El-Khalili Bazaar, and is steeped in atmosphere and history. We'll follow this up with traditional Egyptian tea with green mint at Cairo's famous El-Fishawi Café, which features a stuffed hanging crocodile.



Afternoon visit to the **Egyptian Museum of Antiquities**, open since 1902. The Museum exhibits over 120,000 objects in its 107 halls, comprising the world's greatest collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts. Two grand halls containing countless artifacts and one room reserved for the golden treasures from the world-famous tomb of the boy-king Tutankhamen will astound and delight you. Our tour includes a chance to enter the Mummies Room, a specially built area dedicated to the well-preserved mummies of 12 royal kings and queens of ancient Egypt, including the Great Ramses II, Egypt's longest ruling pharaoh. We'll also

see the various crocodile mummies at the museum.

Return to the hotel for dinner on your own and overnight.

B,L...Mena House Oberoi Hotel

DAY 4 ~ Fayoum

We'll set out on a day trip to **Fayoum** (Crocodopolis), Egypt's largest oasis (one hour driving each way). Fayoum, named by the Greeks as Crocodopolis, has been inhabited for thousands of years. The prehistoric people who lived here were, at first, nomadic hunters and gatherers, but later began harvesting plants near Lake Qaroun, close to the oasis and currently Egypt's largest saltwater lake. This later developed into what was reputedly the earliest agricultural area in the world, where fences were erected and guarded warehouses built. Known as the "Garden of Egypt," Fayoum has remained an agriculture center, well known for its citrus fruits, nuts, olives, and vegetables.

After lunch at a local restaurant in Fayoum, we return to Cairo, stopping along the way to visit **Karanis**, where there are ruins of two temples dedicated to the god Sobek in an area rarely seen by tourists.

B,L...Mena House Oberoi Hotel

DAY 5 ~ Luxor

After breakfast at the hotel, we transfer to the airport and fly to Luxor. Modern Luxor is built on the site of ancient Thebes, the capital during Egypt's New Kingdom and the period when the pharaohs reached the peak of their strength and empire. We begin our sightseeing with a visit to Luxor's West Bank to explore the **Valley of the Kings**, a vast City of the Dead where magnificent tombs were carved into the desert rocks, richly decorated, and filled with treasures for the afterlife by generations of pharaohs. We will also have the chance to visit at least one tomb in the Valley of the Queens.

Rising out of the desert plain in a series of terraces, the **Temple of Queen Hatshepsut**, Ancient Egypt's only female Pharaoh, merges with the sheer limestone cliffs that surround it, as if nature herself had built this extraordinary monument. We'll also stop for a photo at the giant statues of the Colossi of Memnon, known in ancient Greek times for their haunting voices at dawn.

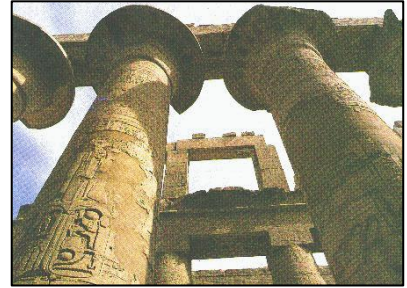
Check into the hotel. In the evening, we'll go on a tour of the East Bank of Luxor, starting with the strikingly graceful **Temple of Luxor** dedicated to the god Amun. We'll then have drinks at the Crocodile Bar of the hotel before dinner on your own.

B...Jolie Ville Crocodile Island

DAY 6 ~ Luxor

After breakfast we'll visit the exquisite **Temple of Karnak** to marvel at its obelisks and rows of ancient columns that adorn its awesome Great Hypostyle Hall—a monument that recalls the classic elegance of ancient Greece, yet is older (Karnak was built over a period of 1,000 years!). It covers an area larger than the whole of Paris's Notre Dame Cathedral.

We'll then go to the elegant and modern **Luxor Museum**, which boasts a fabulous collection of artifacts from the Theban temples and necropolis including pottery, jewelry, furniture, statues, and stele from the ancient city. Here we'll see the world's largest Sobek statue!



The afternoon is at leisure to rest, relax, or explore on your own.
B...Jolie Ville Crocodile Island

DAY 7 ~ To Aswan

After breakfast at the hotel, we drive to Aswan. En route we'll explore the largest and most completely preserved Pharaonic (albeit Greek-built) temple in Egypt, the extraordinary **Temple of Horus at Edfu**, dedicated to the falcon-headed god. After a box lunch, we continue to **Kom Ombo**, a temple dedicated to the crocodile-god Sobek. The temple stands at a bend in the Nile where in ancient times sacred crocodiles basked in the sun on the riverbank. Both these temples were built during the dynasty of the Ptolemies, the Greek rulers who ruled over Egypt from 323-30 B.C. after its conquest by Alexander the Great (Cleopatra was a member of this family). Since these Nile-side Ptolemaic temples are relatively new by Egyptian standards (only a bit more than 2,000 years old!), they are very well preserved. Arrive in Aswan and check into the landmark Old Cataract Hotel, where Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* was filmed.

B,L...Old Cataract Hotel

DAY 8 ~ Aswan

Today we'll see a **traditional Nubian village**, wander through the narrow alleys between the colorful mud-brick dwellings, and enter a typical home. Take note of the doorways, as many are carved with crocodiles at the floor, fish in the middle, and a man on top. The Ka'aba, the sacred black cube of Mecca, is also painted on some house fronts to show the owner has been on the hajj. We'll enjoy tea with a Nubian family and share the timeless Egyptian custom of friendship.

After this we shall purchase a small crocodile and release it in the Nile, then visit an Aswan *souq* where we can purchase crocodile goods for souvenirs. At the end of the day we'll take a short motorboat ride to visit the romantic and majestic Temple of Philae on the Island of Agilka, dedicated to the goddess Isis.

Return to the hotel for overnight.
B...Old Cataract Hotel

DAY 9 ~Abu Simbel

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the Aswan airport and fly to Abu Simbel. Upon arrival, we will transfer to **Lake Nasser** for a motorboat tour to search for crocodiles. Later, we'll attend the spectacular sound and light show

at the Abu Simbel temples, considered the best sound and light show in Egypt—an experience not to be missed! Dinner at a local Nubian house. Overnight at Seti I Hotel at Abu Simbel.

B,D...Seti I Hotel

DAY 10 ~ Fly home via Cairo

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the Abu Simbel airport and fly to Cairo. Depart on homeward-bound flight. B...

LAND COST

\$3,945 per person (10-15 members)

\$4,145 per person (8-9 members)

\$4,445 per person (4-7 members)

\$350 per person internal airfare (Mountain Travel Sobek will book and issue these tickets for you)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$1,000 for “requested” singles; \$500 for “forced” singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you’re traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we’ll try our best to find you a roommate. If that’s not possible, we will only charge you the “forced” single supplement of \$500.

What’s Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations in hotels
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ flights within Egypt (see separate cost above)
- ◆ airport transfers
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ entrance fees
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

What’s Not

International airfare; meals not noted in itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Expert Leadership

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you'd never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being teachers, companions, and the best of friends. You'll be in good hands with them every step of the way. Leader assignments will be confirmed in the Final Bulletin sent to you three weeks prior to departure.

Activity Level

Mountain Travel Sobek trips are designed for energetic people who like to be active and have an inquiring spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. We rate this trip as easy in nature, but touring archaeological monuments requires a fair amount of walking on uneven surfaces and stairs. You should be in good health and relatively good shape. It is important that you have a flexible and sociable nature and have a willingness to "expect the unexpected" (an important part of travel to Egypt).

If you are not optimally conditioned, we recommend that you start a training program *at least three months* before departure, gradually increasing the intensity and duration. If your health is questionable or your physical stamina is limited, please discuss other trip options with us.

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.mtsobek.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Then Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice prepared by our consulting physician (an expert in wilderness medicine), and other details from procuring visas to advice on local customs.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at www.mtsobek.com.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at www.mtsobek.com/faq and the form itself at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf.

Terms & Conditions

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form (www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

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