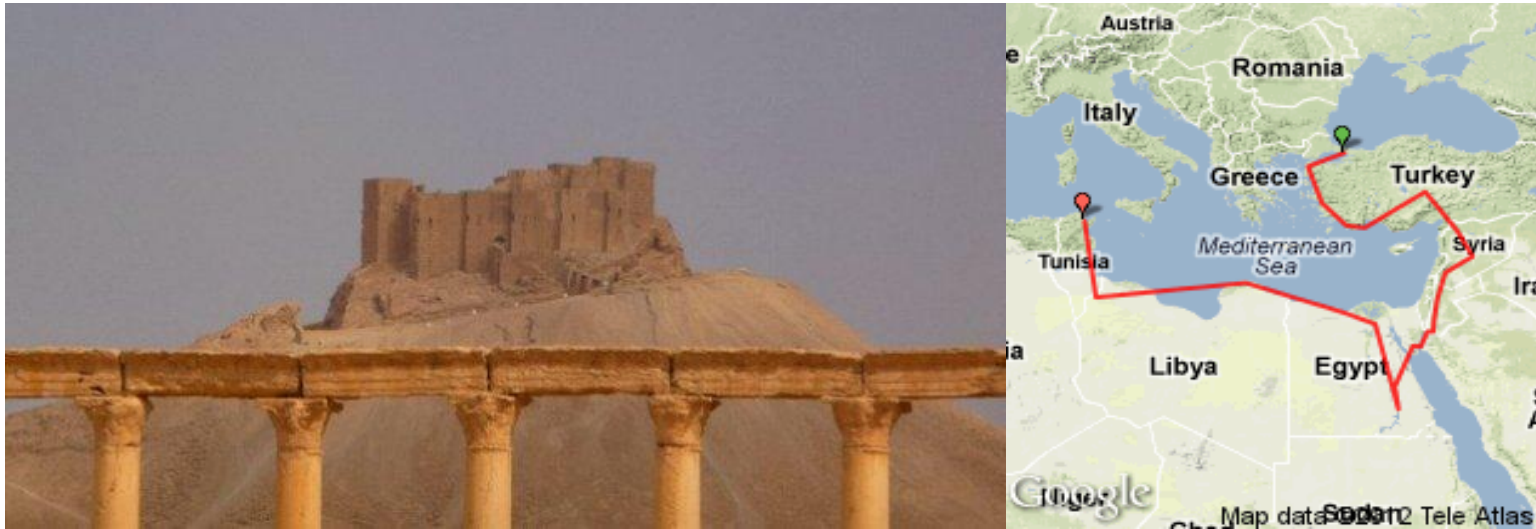


Middle East Caravan

8 week - Istanbul to Tunis

Turkey - Syria - Jordan - Egypt - Libya



It doesn't get much better than this! Cover the Middle East and North Africa from top to bottom on this awesome trip. Roman ruins, belly dancing, ancient history, Pyramids, historic WWI and WWII battlefields, the Mediterranean Coast... the list goes on!

Top Destinations visited on this tour

Istanbul - Gallipoli Peninsula - Selcuk - Oludeniz - Olympos - Cappadocia - Aleppo - Palmyra - Damascus - Mount Nebo - Petra - Wadi Rum Desert - Aqaba - Dahab - Mount Sinai - Luxor - Aswan - Cairo - El Alamein - Cyrene - Nalut

Tour Price

Price: GBP 1095 + GBP 490

Local Payment: Local Payment is a portion of your total tour cost which is paid locally to your Crew, in cash, at the beginning of your tour.

Tour Length: 58 days

Crew: 2 crew
Vehicle: Overland Truck
Tour Code: ITT58-08

Tour Itinerary



Day 1 : Istanbul to Gallipoli Peninsula. Leaving the bustling city of Istanbul behind we head into the countryside through olive groves and rural settlements to Gallipoli and the Straits of the Dardanelles.



Day 2 : Gallipoli Peninsula. Gallipoli is synonymous with World War I where the ANZAC and Allied forces battled for 9 fruitless months against the Turkish. It is a moving experience to visit the war graves and battlegrounds here and the lessons learnt from this campaign defined a chunk of nation-building history particularly for the New Zealanders and Australians.



Day 3 to 4 : Gallipoli Peninsula to Selcuk (via Troy). Leaving historic Gallipoli behind we cross the Straits of the Dardanelles, leave Europe and enter Asia. We stop at Troy - historic site of the famous Trojan Horse - before making our way to the coast and the huge, ancient Roman site of Ephesus.



Day 5 : Selcuk. A chance today to take a trip to the ancient city of Ephesus. Built by the Greeks in 1000BC and then 'renovated' by the Romans, this huge ancient city boasts a 24,000 seat amphitheatre, a harbour with no water and a library said to be second only to the Great Library of Alexandria. All still in pretty good condition!



Day 6 to 7 : Selcuk to Oludeniz. After our first major brush with Roman history we travel towards the Mediterranean coast and the small town of Oludeniz. Depending on the weather we may stop off at Pamukkale mineral springs for a hot-water soak or take the scenic mountain route towards Marmaris.



Day 8 : Oludeniz. A free day today to enjoy the beautiful Med coast and all the water activities it offers. To get a birds-eye view take the opportunity to Paraglide from one of the best sites in Europe and Asia.



Day 9 to 10 : Oludeniz to Olympos. A day's drive will see us at the home of the 'Eternal Flame' and we spend the next 2 nights either camping or sleeping in tree houses! A night visit to the Chimaera or 'Eternal' flame is well worth the walk. Burning natural gas escaping from numerous fissures in the rock lights up the mountainside and is a very interesting natural phenomenon. It is also believed by many to be the original birthplace of the Olympic (Games) Flame. Spend a day on the beach or hire a bike and explore.



Day 11 : Olympos to Cappadocia. Leaving the coast we climb into the inland mountainous regions of Turkey. Some stunning, green mountain scenery gives way to the other-worldly look of the Cappadocia region. Don't be surprised if it looks a bit empty - many people live underground! Prepare to be amazed!



Day 12 to 13 : Cappadocia. Over hundreds of years Cappadocia houses, churches, forts, businesses and even entire cities have been carved out of the volcanic rock - underground! A few days in the Goreme Valley gives you time to visit many of these sites, see some belly dancing, take a hot air balloon ride and check out the carpets of Eastern Turkey.



Day 14 : Cappadocia to Aleppo. Heading south today we cross into Syria - home of some of the most hospitable people you can meet. A long history boasts the rule of Persian, Egyptian, Roman and Babylonian Empires, and even the 'Crusades' passed through. Tonight's stop is the town of Aleppo.



Day 15 : Aleppo. The bustling market town of Aleppo is a great day out cruising around the markets for cheap curios, checking out the beautiful citadels and absorbing the Syrian culture.



Day 16 : Aleppo to Palmyra. Driving toward the desert we stop at the 800 year old Crusader Castle of Crac de Chevaliers. Look out for the carved lions of Richard the Lionheart over the gate. Then the oasis town of Palmyra awaits. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was once one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world - from the massive size and numerous architectural influences of the ruined city that remains, you can see why.



Day 17 : Palmyra to Damascus. After our visit to stunning Palmyra we turn back west towards the oldest inhabited city in the world - Damascus.



Day 18 : Damascus. A chance today to explore the oldest inhabited city in the world.



Day 19 : Damascus to Damascus (via Beirut). A fantastic opportunity today to see a small part of another country and culture. Depending on the political situation in Lebanon there is the option of taking a one day guided tour via Baalbek Roman Temple to Beirut. Try the 'all you can eat' Lebanese lunch, take the city tour of Beirut and check out this vibrant city fast recovering from the civil war of the 80's and 90's.



Day 20 : Damascus to Mount Nebo. Crossing the border into Jordan we make our way to Mount Nebo for the night. Mt Nebo is a place of highly religious significance as it is believed to be where Moses got his first sight of the 'promised land' as well as where he was buried. On a clear day you can see all the way to Jerusalem and Jericho in Israel. A visit to the remains of the 4th century church will give you a glimpse of the stunning, detailed, and original mosaic floor.



Day 21 : Mount Nebo to Petra. The Dead Sea conjures images of ancient resort-style days. Here, therapeutic mud baths and not so therapeutic mud fights, are followed by an unusual swimming experience in this highly buoyant salt sea! After washing the salt off we continue to the town of Wadi Musa - the base camp for day trips to one of the highlights of the Middle East - the Rose Red City of Petra.



Day 22 : Petra. This 6th century BC Nabataean city was only rediscovered in the 1800's after being lost for over 1000 years. A walk through the Siq brings you to Petra's most famous site - The Treasury. The Nabataeans who carved this vast red city controlled the spice and slave caravans from Asia travelling to ancient Arabia. One of the most amazing highlights of any trip to the Middle East!



Day 23 : Petra to Wadi Rum Desert. Travelling further south we spend the night in the Wadi Rum Desert - the old stomping ground and headquarters of Lawrence of Arabia during the Arab Revolt of 1917-18. Here there is the option to take a 4WD jeep safari deep into the desert with your local Bedouin guide.



Day 24 : Wadi Rum Desert to Aqaba. The busy port of Aqaba is our base while we get through the tricky cross border procedures we need to leave Jordan and enter Egypt. Once the paperwork is finalised the ferry will take us to Taba and from there we drive the 100kms to Dahab where we spend the next few nights.



Day 25 to 26 : Aqaba to Dahab. We spend some time sorting out the complicated and sometimes time consuming process of leaving Jordan and entering Egypt. Depending on the ferry across this short stretch of the Red Sea we may have time to explore the duty free port of Aqaba before arriving on the Sinai peninsula.



Day 27 to 29 : Dahab. Laid back Dahab is a bit of a 'hippie village' that boasts warm water, great sunshine and fantastic scuba diving or snorkeling opportunities. Spectacular coral gardens and marine life is just metres from the shore. Try a camel trek, quad bike tour into the desert, visit St Catherine's Monastery, climb Mt Sinai or simply relax on the beach.



Day 30 : Dahab to Mount Sinai. Heading into the mountains we wind our way up to the hidden monastery of Saint Katharine. A couple of hours walking up hill is rewarded by a glorious sunrise over the Sinai ranges and Mount Sinai - Mose's Mountain.



Day 31 to 32 : Mount Sinai to Luxor (via Hurghada). Crossing from Asia to Africa we drive UNDER the Suez Canal and travel along the coast heading south and then west to reach Luxor - home of the Valley of the Kings and the massive Karnak Temple.



Day 33 : Luxor. After jumping off the felucca we can visit Kom Ombo temple and the Temple of Horus at Edfu before arriving in Luxor. Spend the afternoon exploring some of the many sights. The massive Karnak Temple is definitely worth spending some time at!



Day 34 : Luxor. The west bank of the Nile is where you will spend this morning. Visit the historic Valley of the Kings as well as the Valley of the Workers with our Guide and see the dramatic and quite amazing funerary glory of the ancient Pharaohs. We stop at the Colossi of Memnon and those who want to can have a ride on a trusty donkey through the local villages. A free afternoon to explore Luxor itself.



Day 35 : Luxor to Aswan. After a couple of days in busy Luxor it is nice to get back on the road. Travelling alongside the Nile we arrive in the quieter and more relaxed town of Aswan where feluccas seem to be the main source of transport! Visit a traditional Nubian Village, try a riverside cafe, and get ready for a early start tomorrow.



Day 36 : Aswan. Head out to explore this beautiful town perched on the banks of the Nile. Aswan is rich in Nubian culture and pretty laid back. Wander through the souk and along the Corniche, stop in a riverside cafe for a cold drink, have dinner in a Nubian home or visit the Old Cataract Hotel - made famous by a Agatha Christie novel.



Day 37 : Aswan. An early start but well worth the trip - Abu Simbel awaits. Built by Ramses II, the Sun Temple now sits on the edge of Lake Nasser in the southern desert close to the Sudan border. Once back in Aswan check out the Temple at Philae, take a felucca to Elephantine Island or visit a proper Nubian village.



Day 38 to 39 : Aswan. The next two days and nights are spent sailing the Nile in a traditional Felucca - watching Egypt glide by, and sleeping under the stars.



Day 40 : Aswan to Cairo. A long (but not so bad) overnight train gets us to Cairo - home of the Pyramids, Sphinx and the amazing Egyptian Museum. A free afternoon allows time to get your bearings and absorb the atmosphere in this bustling city.



Day 41 : Cairo. This hectic city has lots to offer! Home of the Giza Pyramids and the Sphinx, the Egyptian Antiquities Museum, Mohammed Ali Mosque, Khan el Khalili and the Citadel... the list goes on. Explore with a guide or on your own.



Day 42 to 44 : Cairo to El Alamein (via Alexandria). The beautiful Mediterranean coast lies before us as we make our way to historic Alexandria. Ancient Roman ruins are worth exploring and the SCUBA diving is fantastic. We then turn west and travel to the turning point of WW2 - El Alamein. The Museum is a must see as well as paying your respects at the many cemeteries and memorials in the region. Touching and interesting at the same time.



Day 45 to 48 : El Alamein to Cyrene (via Tobruk). Crossing the Lybian border we enter Tobruk - home of some of the most crucial battles of World War II. Cemeteries and trenches remain and we have the chance to explore them before the short drive to Cyrene. This ancient Greek city was established in the 7th century BC and boasted Plato as a resident.



Day 49 to 55 : Cyrene to Nalut (via Leptis Magna). The warm waters of the Med allow us the chance to cool off and freshen up as we travel toward Leptis Magna, one of the best preserved Roman cities left in the world. Grab a local Guide and spend the day in ancient Roman times. After crossing the Hamadat al-Hamrah desert we will reach Ghadames and can explore the alleyways and sand dunes in the area. The town of Nalut awaits and we prepare to cross into Tunisia.



Day 56 to 58 : Nalut to Tunis. Crossing the border we enter Tunisia and head for Matmata, known for its troglodyte villages, before continuing on to the oasis towns of Nefta and Tozeur. These 2 towns are closely linked to the mystical Sufi religion. From here it is a short drive to Le Kef where we will spend the day relaxing or visiting its fortified kasbah. Just before reaching Tunis we pass through the most dramatic Roman site in Tunisia, Dougga.

Included Highlights

These 4 highlight(s) are included in your tour cost.

- **Cairo Antiquities Museum**
 - **Giza Pyramids**
 - **Nile Felucca Excursion**
 - **Sphinx**
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Optional Highlights

These 28 highlight(s) are optional activities which you can do on your trip. We have supplied indicative prices so you can plan your spending money accordingly:

- **Abu Simbel Day Trip** - \$45
 - **Aleppo City Tour** - \$6
 - **Aswan High Dam** - \$25
 - **Cappadocia Hot Air Balloon Trip** - \$300
 - **Crac de Chevaliers Castle Tour** - \$15
 - **Dashour and Saqqara Pyramids Excursion** - \$40
 - **Desert Ouad Biking** - \$60
 - **Edfu Temple** - \$10
 - **Ephesus Guided Tour** - \$25
 - **Karnak Temple** - \$12
 - **Kitchener Island Botanic Gardens** - \$8
 - **Lebanon Day Trip from Damascus** - \$175
 - **Luxor Temple** - \$10
 - **Nubian Village Dinner** - \$8
 - **PADI Advanced Open Water Course - Red Sea** - \$260
 - **PADI Introductory Dive - Red Sea** - \$75
 - **PADI Open Water Dive Course - Red Sea** - \$360
 - **Palmyra City Tour** - \$12
 - **Pammukale Hot Springs** - \$25
 - **Petra Guided Tour** - \$84
 - **Philae Temple** - \$10
 - **Red Sea Guided Diving** - \$60
 - **Refresher Dive** - \$65
 - **Temple of Queen Hatshepsut** - \$10
 - **Turkish Bath** - \$40
 - **Valley of the Kings & Queens Tour** - \$34
 - **Wadi Rum Jeep Safari** - \$40
 - **Windsurfing - Red Sea** - \$72
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General Notes

Approx 50% of all meals are included. This itinerary is a rough guide only and is subject to change on a trip by trip basis.

Departure Dates

Start - End

23 Apr 2013 - 19 Jun 2013
14 May 2013 - 10 Jul 2013
23 Sep 2013 - 19 Nov 2013
15 Nov 2013 - 11 Jan 2014

Before and After Your Trip

Your pre-departure meeting starts at approx 18h30 the day before the trip departs at the Sultan Hostel.

Your trip departs from the Sultan Hostel Akbiyik Caddesi Sultanahmet Istanbul Turkey at 08h00 on Day 1. We suggest you get there 15 minutes before to avoid delays.

Your trip ends at/in Tunis on late afternoon on the last day. Please note end times are approximated.

Contact us from information and prices for the pre and post tour accommodation, flights, transfer, car rental and activity bookings.

Visa Information - <http://www.overlandinafrica.com/before-you-go/visas-and-passports/>

Vaccinations - <http://www.overlandinafrica.com/health/>

Travel Insurance - <http://www.overlandinafrica.com/before-you-go/travel-insurance/>

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