

## Middle East Trek

### 5 week - Istanbul to Cairo

Turkey - Syria - Jordan - Egypt



An epic overland trip through the Middle East! Start in beautiful, historic Istanbul, make your way across gorgeous Turkey, through friendly Syria, into the gold desert sands of Jordan, and finish in ancient Egypt! Too many highlights to list!

#### **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

## Tour Price

**Price:** GBP 725 + GBP 270

**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:** 37 days

**Crew:** 2 crew

**Vehicle:** Boat/Dhow, Overland Truck, Public Transport

**Tour Code:** IC37-08

## 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 to 9 : 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 10 : 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 11 to 12 : 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 13 : 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 14 : 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 15 : 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 16 : Palmyra to Damascus.** After our visit to stunning Palmyra we turn back west towards the oldest inhabited city in the world - Damascus.



**Day 17 : 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 18 : 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 19 : 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 20 : 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 21 : 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 22 : 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 23 to 24 : 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 peninsular.



**Day 25 to 27 : 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 28 : 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.



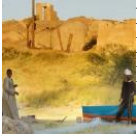
**Day 29 to 30 : Mount Sinai to Luxor (via Hurghada).** Crossing from Asia to Africa we drive UNDER the Suez Canal and travel along the coast heading south and then west to reach Luxor - home of the Valley of the Kings and the massive Karnak Temple.



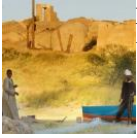
**Day 31 : Luxor.** The west bank of the Nile is where you will spend this morning. Visit the historic Valley of the Kings as well as the Valley of the Workers with our Guide and see the dramatic and quite amazing funerary glory of the ancient Pharaohs. We stop at the Colossi of Memnon and those who want to can have a ride on a trusty donkey through the local villages. A free afternoon to explore Luxor itself.



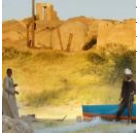
**Day 32 : Luxor to Aswan.** After a couple of days in busy Luxor it is nice to get back on the road. Travelling alongside the Nile we arrive in the quieter and more relaxed town of Aswan where feluccas seem to be the main source of transport! Visit a traditional Nubian Village, try a riverside cafe, and get ready for a early start tomorrow.



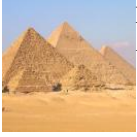
**Day 33 : Aswan.** An early start but well worth the trip - Abu Simbel awaits. Built by Ramses II, the Sun Temple now sits on the edge of Lake Nasser in the southern desert close to the Sudan border. Once back in Aswan check out the Temple at Philae, take a felucca to Elephantine Island or visit a proper Nubian village.



**Day 34 to 35 : 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 36 : 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 37 : 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.

## 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 31 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
- **Fishing on the Dam**
- **Game Ride by Horseback** - \$75
- **Karnak Temple** - \$12
- **Kitchener Island Botanic Gardens** - \$8
- **Lebanon Day Trip from Damascus** - \$175
- **Luxor Temple** - \$10
- **Nubian Village Dinner** - \$8
- **Oludeniz Paragliding** - \$120
- **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

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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.

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## Departure Dates

Start - End

23 Apr 2013 - 29 May 2013  
14 May 2013 - 19 Jun 2013  
27 Aug 2013 - 02 Oct 2013  
23 Sep 2013 - 29 Oct 2013  
15 Nov 2013 - 21 Dec 2013

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## Before and After Your Trip

Your pre-departure meeting starts at approx 18h00 the day before the trip starts at the Sultan Hostel 21 Akbiyik Caddesi Sultanahmet Istanbul [www.sultanhostel.com](http://www.sultanhostel.com).

Your trip departs from the Sultan Hotel at 08h00 on Day 1. We suggest you get there 15 minutes before to avoid delays.

Your trip ends at/in Cairo on . 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/>

Frequently Asked Questions - <http://www.overlandinAfrica.com/faq/>

Why book with OverlandinAfrica.com - <http://www.overlandinAfrica.com/about/why-book-with-overlandin-africa/>

Feedback from past overlanders - <http://www.overlandinAfrica.com/feedback/>

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Read more about the countries on this tour

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Egypt - <http://www.overlandinAfrica.com/egypt/>

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