

MAGICAL EGYPT -- TRAVEL TIPS AND FURTHER READING

WEATHER

The winter weather can be colder than you think in the North (around Cairo/Alexandria). Temperatures can get down into the 40's at night from mid-December to the end of February. Perfect travel weather but too cold to swim. There is often a high wind early in the morning in the desert. Have a jacket, and a light sweater or two that will keep you warm at a chill, windy 40°. Layers are better than one heavy item, since it warms up very rapidly once the sun gets high, and midday temperatures may be in the 80's under a bright sun. The chance of a winter rain shower or two is slight but present in the north.

Also bring gloves and a wool stocking hat or the like. Remember, once we're out in the desert, we're out and it could be a while before we have roof over ourheads and walls around us.

October / November and April / May average around 60 by night, 85 by day in Cairo, warmer to the south. Perfect. Bring your bathing suit.

The summer is hot everywhere, very hot in the south (110 and over in the afternoons) but bone dry and there are fewer tourists but still, more than you might expect. On summer trips we start early and get back by noon or thereabouts and lounge around the pool the rest of the day. It's unacceptable only to those who really hate the heat. For others it's not a major problem; certainly better than New York or DC in the 90's. (and such places have no pyramids or Luxor Temples to compensate for the discomfort.

DRESS & GEAR

100% cotton clothes are best, loose-fitting and comfortable. In particular, look for a good 4-pocket safari jacket --ideal for carrying the innumerable things you want to carry about and still have instantly accessible. Everything should be comfortable and practical. Good safari gear is not universally available. Look in outdoor/travel specialist catalogues such as Orvis, Eddie Bauer, Norm Thompson (all these are high end) and also Cabela's (very reasonable -- that's my supplier).

Dress clothes are not essential. But almost everyone likes to get a bit dressed up for the several parties at night, so an outfit or two is not a bad idea. Women often like to buy the traditional long 'galabiyas', the long, flowing, comfortable, cotton gown that men wear in rural Egypt, and which, much gussied up with embroidery, serve as tour dress wear (for men, too).

Dress Code: The Islamic dress code for women, relatively relaxed in Egypt in any case, (no shorts, arms and head covered) does not apply to ancient Egypt (and never did). Most of our time is spent at the ancient Egyptian sites, or in towns geared to accommodate tourists. They are used to women in shorts with arms bared. But in Cairo or off the beaten track, the dress code is worth observing, if only to avoid hassle -- though the head scarf isn't essential.

Shoes: Stout light jogging or walking shoes. Essential! Chukka boot style is best for keeping sand out of shoes. Bring sandals as well.

Sun Hat: Essential! Cheap effective cotton sunhats are readily available in Egypt if you don't want to bring your own. My favorite, the old fashioned, (more or less) genuine, colonial pith helmet has re-appeared after a period of apparent extinction and is available, reasonably priced from

www.villagehatshop.com. They do not, however, fold for easy storage and so need some special care to travel around with. There's no real need for them in the winter months.

Sun glasses: If you like or need to wear them in bright sun, bring them. The sun is very bright indeed.

Water bottle or canteen: Insulated is better. Cheap army canteens available in Army/Navy stores are fine, though high tech camping versions may represent expensive improvements.

Tote or small back pack: Useful for cameras, doggie bags, extra bits of clothing, trail mix, etc. Colorful cheap canvas totes printed with Pharaonic motifs are readily available in Egypt.

Extra bag: Bring a spare, light, folding duffel to take purchases back home. Cheap, colorful (not very well-made) canvas duffels are available in Egypt.

Camera Equipment. Film cameras are now on the Endangered Technology list. If you're still using one, bring the film of your choice with you; you might not find what you want in Egypt any longer. For the digitized, bring appropriate spare memory sticks, just in case.

Use of a flash is not permitted in temple interiors -- which poses a problem for cameras with an automatic built-in flash feature. If you try keeping your finger over the flash, the camera won't adjust to the proper larger lens aperture and slower speed needed to get a decent shot. It is now also illegal to use a camera in any of the tombs or museums.

Video Cameras: More or less the same restrictions apply, with a few additional wrinkles. You cannot use a tripod, but a monopod is OK ... usually. (There's bureaucracy for you!).

Medicine: Bring a two week supply of any medication that you need on a regular basis and think might be difficult to procure in Egypt. Bring contact lens spares, glasses, etc. Blowing sand can be a problem with contacts. Bring a pair of spare glasses just in case the problem becomes acute. If you have a favorite sun block, bring it; otherwise this and other normal toiletries are available at hotel concessions and elsewhere.

Mosquito repellent is useful. The best antidote for bites is probably 100% Aloe gel, available in health food stores.

Laundry: Laundry service is swift and efficient and not outrageously expensive, given normal 5 Star Hotel charges. If you don't want to splurge on this option, either bring enough clothes so that you don't need to use the laundry service or bring Woolite or another cold water wash. With the new breathable, super lightweight, quick-dry nylon supplex gear readily available, you can get through the trip with just a few items of clothing for the entire trip. A couple of yards of nylon clothesline and clothes pins will also come in handy.

Flashlight: Essential, and invariably useful. The brighter the better.

Binoculars: Optional, but useful -- especially small, easy-to-carry, high powered, field glasses.

Odds and Ends, Miscellaneous, Afterthoughts: A few Ziploc bags of various sizes come in handy to keep things separate from other things, to prevent leaky bottles, etc., and often so does a bit of duct tape for emergency luggage repairs and the like. A box of man-size tissues is useful and so are pocket packs

of Kleenex. Travel pillow: Those little U-shaped, inflatable travel pillows (available in luggage shops, mail order houses, and, usually, airports) take some of the stress off your neck on the long plane and bus rides. MAKE A FEW XEROXES OF THE INFORMATION PAGE OF YOUR PASSPORT. After an obligatory initial surrendering of your passport at our first hotel stop (to have it registered with the police) you can use the Xerox wherever your passport is needed without having to give it up.

HEALTH:

No shots are needed for Egypt. A number of very nasty diseases are rife among the rural poor of Egypt, mainly acquired from unsanitary conditions; swimming in the stagnant canals, etc. But these do not affect the tourist trade at all. 'Pharaoh's Revenge' is usually the worst that tourists come down with. It's no fun, but is usually over in a day.

In the event 'Pharaoh's Revenge' hits, a bacterial antiseptic called Antinel (nifuroxazide - whatever that may be) is readily available in Egypt, apparently formulated for the infamous revenge -- even though no one is sure what causes it in the first place. It works, especially if taken at the onset of symptoms. Whatever the thinking behind it, Antinel works better than Lomotil or anything else people get from their doctors over here. There seem to be few if any side effects. Beyond that, the 'Revenge' is unpredictable. On some trips almost no one comes down with it, yet on another identical trip just a few weeks later or earlier, almost everyone comes down with it. No one knows why.

It is thought that megadoses of acidopholous starting at least six weeks before departure works as a preventative. A pharmacist tells me that to really be effective, you should take much more acidopholous than the label suggests: up to six tablets twice a day and always on an empty stomach. The newly developed Primadopholous is supposed to have the same effect, taken once a day on an empty stomach. I am not really 100% certain if the acidopholous works or if it's a health fiction. I know of no legitimate controlled tests. But it does seem as though those who take the pills get very mild cases, and are over it quicker than those who don't.

Jet lag combined with overstimulation is often a problem in the early days of the trip. I find that Melatonin, much touted as a jet lag antidote, works brilliantly. Calms Forte, a homeopathic sedative (available in health food stores) also lets you sleep your way out without the usual sleeping pill side-effects of drowsiness and heaviness. There is also another new homeopathic remedy specifically formulated to prevent Jetlag, called, straightforwardly enough NoJetlag. Otherwise, bringing the sleeping pill of your choice is not a bad idea.

Heartburn. The food is good in Egypt these days; usually very good. But it's a different cuisine and the American/Westernized stomach often grumbles in response. Papaya Enzyme pills from the health food store seem to counteract acidity better than Roloids or the like.

Hunger pangs: We are up early, and out at the sites for long hours so there are often protracted periods between meals. Egyptian-style snacks from local vendors are not recommended for the unacclimatized. It's not a bad idea to bring a supply of Trail Mix or some other homegrown snack of your choice. We often pack individual doggie bags for ourselves at breakfast (sometimes these become lunch) but even so, snacks come in handy.

(Note: Though we stay in deluxe accommodations throughout, the trip itself is more arduous than many people anticipate. We are up early; we do a lot of walking and climbing and the impact of so much sacred art day after day takes its toll. This is not to discourage the elderly. On my trips the young get no

less exhausted than the septuagenarians. But be prepared for an assault on your inner resources.)

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RECOMMENDED READING LIST

There is no single preferred way to prepare for Egypt. Many like to read everything they can that's relevant in advance; others prefer to read little or nothing, or just never get around to their homework before the plane leaves. Actually, it is a matter of personal preference. A familiarity with the principles and terminology of the 'Symbolist' interpretation obviously provides a head start toward understanding. But it is no substitute for the experience and a solid reading background in general can lead to preconceptions and expectations that have to be dispelled over the course of the trip. On the other hand, going in 'cold' with little or no homework done leaves you open, and the temples perform their stone magic with little or no internal or intellectual opposition. Many prefer it that way after the fact. After two weeks of Egypt, you have acquired both the experience and the explanation in tandem and you come back to your homework (usually exhausted but exhilarated). What you read now makes visceral sense and you have the context of experience. In other words, if you haven't time to do your homework in advance, don't fret about it.

Following is a selected list of the books that I consider most useful as advance reading. More complete bibliographies can be found in both *Serpent in the Sky* and *The Traveler's Key*.

(Note: I have tried to list only books in print or that you stand a fair chance of finding in a bookstore or library. Asterisks single out those I consider most important for advance reading. I've also included newly published titles and others that only have come to my attention since the bibliographies in *Serpent* and the *Key* were compiled.)

'SYMBOLIST' EGYPT/ESOTERIC PHILOSOPHY/ALTERNATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

* *THE TRAVELER'S KEY TO ANCIENT EGYPT & SERPENT IN THE SKY: The High Wisdom of Ancient Egypt* (Quest Books), John Anthony West.

THE TEMPLE IN MAN, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, Inner Traditions International.

SACRED SCIENCE, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, Inner Traditions International.

* *THE EGYPTIAN MIRACLE*, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, Inner Traditions International.

** *THE TEMPLE OF MAN*, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz. (2 vols). (Handle with care! You've been warned!)

HER-BAK & HER-BAK, DISCIPLINE, Isha Schwaller de Lubicz, Inner Traditions International.

* *SACRED GEOMETRY*, Robert Lawlor, Crossroad.

* *A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CONSTRUCTING THE UNIVERSE*, Michael Schneider

* *THE SCIENCE OF THE DOGON & THE SYMBOLISM OF THE DOGON*, Laird Scranton

CONNECTIONS: The Geometric Bridge Between Art and Science, Jay Kappraff, McGraw Hill.

* *EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES*, Lucie Lamy, Inner Traditions International.

THE GODDESS SEKHMET, Robert Masters, Amity House.

TEMPLE OF THE COSMOS, & SHAMANIC WISDOM OF THE PYRAMID TEXTS, Jeremy Naydler, Inner Traditions International.

* *THE MESSAGE OF THE SPHINX*, (in UK, *KEEPER OF GENESIS*), Graham Hancock & Robert Bauval, Crown.

IN SEARCH OF THE MIRACULOUS, P.D. Ouspensky.
AWAKENING OSIRIS, Normandi Ellis, Phanes.
HATHOR RISING, Alison Roberts, Inner Traditions

SACRED SEXUALITY IN ANCIENT EGYPT, Ruth Schumann Antelme

THE GIZA POWERPLANT, Christopher Dunn

THE SPIRITUAL TECHNOLOGY OF ANCIENT EGYPT & BEFORE THE PHAROAHS, Edward F. Malkowski

LE MYSTERE DES CATHEDRALS, Fulcanelli: master alchemist.

FULCANELLI AND THE ALCHEMICAL REVIVAL, Genevieve Dubois

PYRAMIDS AND PYRAMIDOLOGY

* *SECRETS OF THE GREAT PYRAMID*, Peter Tompkins, Harper & Row.

THE GREAT PYRAMID DECODED, Peter Lemesurier, Avon.

TRAVEL AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

IN SEARCH OF SECRET EGYPT, Paul Brunton.

* *LETTERS FROM EGYPT: A Journey on the Nile, 1849-1850*; Florence Nightingale, Weidenfeld & Nicholson.

FLAUBERT IN EGYPT, translated and edited by Francis Steegmuller, Academy.

ONE THOUSAND MILES UP THE NILE, Amelia Edwards, Dover.

* *RIVER IN THE DESERT: Modern Travels in Ancient Egypt*, Paul William Roberts, Random House.

GENERAL INTEREST/ACADEMIC EGYPTOLOGY

ETERNAL EGYPT, Pierre Montet, Mentor.

ATLAS OF ANCIENT EGYPT, John Baines & Jaromir Malek, Facts on File.

MYTH AND SYMBOL IN ANCIENT EGYPT, R.T. Rundle Clark, Thames & Hudson.

ATLANTIS/COSMOLOGY/REVISIONIST HISTORY

* *FINGERPRINTS OF THE GODS & SUPERNATURAL*, Graham Hancock, Crown.

BEYOND THE BIG BANG: Ancient Cosmology and the Science of Continuous Creation, Paul LaViolette, Inner Traditions International.

EARTH UNDER FIRE, Paul LaViolette, Inner Traditions International.

BLACK ATHENA: The Afro-Asiatic Roots of Greek Civilization (Vol. I), Martin Bernal, Rutgers.

* *VOICES OF THE ROCKS & VOYAGES OF THE PYRAMID BUILDERS*, Robert M. Schoch
THE MATRIX OF CREATION & SACRED NUMBER AND THE ORIGINS OF CIVILIZATION, Richard Heath.

New, Relatively New and Noteworthy Books and DVDs. (Go on line for further info/reviews on these and other titles. I have no time just now for even mini-reviews of my own.) But the Internet provides a unique service to humanity by making reviews, other vital information and reading samples of any given title available at the click of a button)

TRUTH IS THE SOUL OF THE SUN, Maria Isabel Pita. I almost never recommend novels set in Ancient Egypt. They rarely capture the essence of what I believe was the real Egypt. This biographical novel about Queen Hatshepsut is a compelling exception. See my own mini-review among the reviews posted on Amazon.

FORGOTTEN CIVILIZATION, Robert M. Schoch In his usual thorough way, Schoch may be zeroing in on the cataclysm that brought down the last Ice age and with it, the great civilization in place at that time.

SHAMANIC WISDOM OF THE PYRAMID TEXTS, Jeremy Naydler An erudite, intriguing and compelling re-interpretation of these enigmatic texts.

ATLANTIS AND THE CYCLES OF TIME, Joscelyn Godwin. Everything you ever wanted to know about both Atlantis and "Atlantis" but never knew where to look. A magisterial work of scholarship.

EGYPT'S ETERNAL LIGHT, Sarite Sanders. Arguably the best book of photographs of Egypt ever published. In b/w infrared, Sanders captures both the mystery and the majesty of Egypt as no one has ever done before. It makes an ideal present for the visual connoisseur

THE COSMOLOGICAL ORIGINS OF MYTH AND SYMBOL: From the Dogon and Ancient Egypt to Tibet, China and India; SACRED SYMBOLS OF THE DOGON: The Key to Advanced Science in the Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs. Laird Scranton. Step by step, and book by book, Scranton is proving the existence of an advanced cosmological science across the entire globe in ancient times.

MAGICAL EGYPT: A Symbolist Tour. 8 Episode DVD. This is the magnum opus based upon my work and of course centered upon Schwaller de Lubicz's Symbolist re-interpretation of the ancient Egyptian sacred science. If you cannot travel to Egypt yourself, this extraordinary series is as close as you can get to the real thing. Created by my genius (a word I do not use indiscriminately!) partner Chance Gardner, MAGICAL EGYPT is a feast for the eyes and an endless source of delight for the heart, mind and soul. You can buy the set direct from me at a friendly discount.

The Demographics of Paradise: *Egypt in Poetry*; If I were Rumi: *Poems from the Heartland*; The Testament, and Thirteen Clues for the Beginning Mind: *Stories* (not poetry this time) *of Inner Truth* by Linda Pearce.

The rarest of literary art forms must be the truly metaphysical poem (as opposed to New Age "spiritual" waffle). When it happens, it is an alchemical fusion of resonating language, profound philosophy and precise passion ... an instance of language overreaching itself. Linda Pearce's poetry realizes that heady and felicitous mixture as does nothing else contemporary that I can think of.

Order direct from her for autographed copies <http://eternalplanet.com>