



PROJECT DOSSIER

CRADLES OF OUR CIVILISATION

ISTANBUL to CAIRO

OR

CAIRO to ISTANBUL

6 weeks & 2 days

6,000 kms

Turkey, Syria, Lebanon Jordan, Egypt

Itinerary Guideline

ISTANBUL to CAIRO

Week 1: In Istanbul, time to explore the city, then via the Sea of Marmara to Gallipoli, the Dardenelles, Troy and Ephesus.

Weeks 2 & 3: Aegean and Mediterranean Turkey to Tarsus - beaches, fishing villages and historical sites/castles, Fethiye, Side, Anamur and Adana.

Week 4: We visit Aleppo and Palmyra before entering northern Lebanon to Balbeck & Beirut.

Week 5 & 6: Cross back into Syria to Damascus, enter Jordan visiting Jerash and Petra. From Aqaba by ferry to Egypt and so to Cairo, old city, the pyramids & Sphinx. Then by train to Aswan, felucca sailing boats down Nile to Kom Ombo; Luxor and Valley of the Kings. Train back to Cairo. Suez Canal and the Sinai to Mount Sinai. Return Cairo.



CAIRO to ISTANBUL

Weeks 1 & 2: Cairo, site of the Pyramids and Sphinx, train to Aswan and felucca sailing boats down Nile to Kom Ombo. Luxor and Valley of the Kings, train back to Cairo. The Suez Canal, and across Sinai to Mount Sinai. Ferry to Aqaba and Jordan, Red Sea beaches, Petra and Jerash.

Week 3: To Syria and Damascus. Northern Lebanon to Balbeck and Beirut. Then to the ancient desert oasis of Palmyra & Aleppo.

Weeks 4 & 5: Mediterranean and Aegean Turkey - beaches, fishing villages and historical sites/castles, Fethiye, Side, Anamur and Adana.

Week 6: Troy and Ephesus, the Dardenelles, Gallipoli, the Sea of Marmara to Istanbul.

PLEASE NOTE:

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights.

While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

DELAYS OR FORCED ALTERNATIVE ROUTES:

The possibility of some delay en route is planned into this expedition and we usually arrive on time. But, by the very nature of the journey, it should be recognised that longer delays outside our control can still happen. Although these are uncommon in Asia, it is still suggested that you do not make any firm commitments within 3 days of the scheduled end date of the Cradles of Our Civilisation. If we are delayed en route, no additional payments to Encounter will be asked of you. Major forced changes to our expeditions are also unusual in Asia. When they do happen it is because of a border closure or civil insurrection making it impossible or imprudent to enter a particular country or region. In the worst of cases this could involve an over-flight of the affected area. If this were to happen, Encounter would meet the first US\$ 300 per person of the fare. Should more than this be needed, a contribution from you of up to (but not exceeding) US\$ 300 would be required. Any further amount beyond this would again be met by Encounter.

Highlights & Route**ASIA MINOR:**

Our journey begins in Istanbul, the gateway to Asia, where the streets are packed with diversion - bargain for carpets, gold, metalwork and hand tooled leather in the Grand Bazaar. The Topkapi palace and museum, tall minarets and grand mosques, the waterfront of the Golden Horn, and tastes for every appetite. From Gallipoli we ferry across the Hellespoint to Asia Minor. Aegean shores of sun and eternity, fishing villages, wine and

music. History springs from every turn in the warm hillsides: here are the ruins of Troy and Ephesus, Pammukale's mineral springs and the Roman baths of Hieropolis; the tombs and temples of Thermessos hidden high in the pine hills. This is the Mediterranean's 'Turquoise Coast' of hidden coves and beckoning sands - lazy days just to swim, relax and explore market towns and fishing villages like Kusadasi, Fethiye, Kas and Antalya. (Optional overnight cruise from Fethiye aboard Turkish caique to local bays and inlets - approx. US\$ 50).

THE LEVANT & EGYPT: East beyond Tarsus we cross into Syria and the Levant - the 'fertile crescent' and the Holy Land. Aleppo's souk is the largest and perhaps the oldest in Asia, and Hama's great waterwheels speak of ancient skills far in advance of their time. Out in the Syrian Desert the time softened ruins of Queen Zenobia's city, Palmyra, echo the footfall of camel caravans that carried wealth and knowledge from Samarkand, India and farthest China. Style driven boulevards and plazas in Damascus cannot hide the intriguing undertow in cobbled backstreets and pavement coffee houses, in whispered secrets over hookah pipes and along the cornucopian alleys of the covered bazaar. Our route now takes us into northern Lebanon, visiting the old city of Balbeck and then Beirut, returning to its former glory. We enter Jordan - to Amman, the great Roman forum at Jerash and the biblical shores of the Dead Sea. The dry ravines and narrow chasm walls of Wadi Musa reveal the red sandstone temples and treasure-houses of Petra where for centuries the Nabataean Arabs maintained an independent city-state, collecting and controlling the flow of wealth throughout the known world. The sands and beaches of Aqaba are washed by the warm, crystal-clear waters of the Red Sea. Leaving our truck behind in Jordan we cross by boat to Nuweiba - and our chartered transport to Cairo, the Treasures of Tutankhamun, the site of the Pyramids and inscrutable Sphynx. A train journey along the banks of the Nile takes us far inland to Upper Egypt and Aswan (Optional same day return flight from Aswan

to Sun Temple and statues of Ramses and Nefertari at Abu Simbel near Sudan border - approx. US\$ 100). We board traditional Nile feluccas to sail slowly downstream toward Kom Ombo and the majestic Valley of the Kings. By train to Cairo. Across the Suez Canal to drive the Bedouin deserts of the Sinai to Mount Sinai. Return to Cairo, and flight routes home from this land of the Pharaohs where Asia and Africa merge.

GROUP SIZE

24 max. including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easier project with no demands other than the extended camping/nomadic lifestyle.

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

All transport, food, camping equipment and supplies, hotels and guest houses in Lebanon and Egypt, local guides, camping fees, entrance fees and activities as detailed from published starting date of expedition until arrival in Cairo (after upper Egypt and Sinai) or Istanbul. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights from/to Cairo/Istanbul, transfers to/from airport and airport taxes, vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major cities (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment and items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights

(minimal cost). Accommodation/ meals in Istanbul/Cairo before/after the project.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables and stools, light, cooking equipment and utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack and a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines and toiletries etc. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Soft bags or frameless backpacks are the most suitable kinds of luggage to bring. Airlines flying in and out of Cairo have a 20kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck between London and Aqaba, Red Sea Ferry Aqaba - Nuweiba (4 hrs), chartered bus and driver in Egypt with overnight train Cairo - Aswan and Luxor - Cairo (1 night each), felucca sailing boats on Nile from Aswan - Kom Ombo (1 day).

ACCOMMODATION

Budget hotels and guest houses in Beirut and Egypt (approx. 12 nights), Nile felucca (1 night). Otherwise camping throughout. Equipped campsites in parts of coastal Turkey; then basic campground facilities in main centres only, usually extending to simple washing/showering and toilet arrangements. Otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. (Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic and day to day routines etc.).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts and evening meals, picnic lunches. Expedition members are involved in daily fresh food shopping and cooking. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat where available, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese,

preserves, supplemented by canned and dried goods in areas where no fresh supplies available). Restaurant/hotel meals in Beirut and Egypt, and meals prepared by felucca crews on Nile. In larger cities where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than **8 blank pages**. Your passport **must** also be free of any evidence of having visited Israel.

Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to sudden change. Some visas need to be obtained before departure, others en route. Encounter or your agent can advise you of all the up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining any visas you may require before departure. Visas en route are applied for as a group with the assistance of your leader/driver.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking. Please bring your vaccination certificate to the pre-departure meeting.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should allow approximately **£80/US\$ 130 per week** to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, some individual museum entry fees and some souvenirs. You should budget an

additional £25/US\$ 40 per day that you spend in Cairo/Istanbul after or before the expedition to cover hotel, meals and incidentals. Good buys can include leatherwork and ceramics, ornate copper and brassware, gems and jewellery, gold and silver, and inlaid woodwork. Many small 'treasures' need not cost much at all. Credit cards are accepted in most cities. Apart from this, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in Asia.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING

You must be in the Istanbul hotel at 1800 hrs two days before the project departure date for the pre-departure meeting and for Cairo departures, at the Cairo hotel at 0800 hrs on the morning of day 1. (If you are arriving early: Cairo is a frenetic and fascinating city - Goldsmiths bazaar and the souks, horse racing at Gezira, football matches, river taxis on the Nile, the camel market, opera and ballet; theatre, cinemas, cafes and an unusual nightlife. Equally, Istanbul is an interesting place to spend a few extra days, with its mosques, palaces, museums and bustling markets). Even though serious delays en route are unlikely, we would prefer that you not have any firm commitments for up to 3 days after scheduled expedition completion date.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'Cradles of Our Civilisation' is also a part of 'The Backroads of Asia' expedition (Istanbul -Kathmandu or vice versa) which travels onward from Egypt into the mountains and nomadic lands of central and eastern Turkey; the deserts, cities and oases of Iran to Pakistan and tribal lands of the Khyber, the plains and palaces of India to the Himalayas and Nepal. On departures from Istanbul you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing on to Kathmandu. And on departures from Cairo you may be joining part of a group that has already been on the road for 9 weeks from Nepal.

INTERESTING READING

Anatolian Tales (Yashar Kemal), Among the Believers (V.S. Naipaul), Gods, Graves and Scholars (C.W. Ceram). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

SPECIFIC DETAILS

On Mailing Lists for receiving letters from home, the best ways to organise and carry your spending money, clothing lists etc. are all contained in our Pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment

Return flights.....

Visas.....

Vaccinations.....

Insurance.....

Personal spending money.....

Total _____

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.