

ONTA 2023

[LIII ONTA ANNUAL MEETING CAIRO \(Egypt\) \(ontaweb.org\)](https://ontaweb.org)

What to do before or after the conference?

Are you making your plans to attend the 53rd Annual Meeting of ONTA? We recently sent out descriptions of some of the places you will want to explore in and around Cairo [LIII ONTA ANNUAL MEETING CAIRO \(Egypt\) \(ontaweb.org\)](https://ontaweb.org). Now the same link provides details about some of the other incredible places to visit while in Egypt. From the ancient wonders along the banks of the Nile, to exotic Mediterranean and Red Sea destinations with world-class beaches and spectacular under water splendor, ONTA 2023 provides you an amazing opportunity to explore and enjoy one of the world's top tourist destinations. Take a minute to read below about some of the places you can easily access before or after the meeting. And please visit the webpage and contact us if you have questions about the meeting or about travel arrangements. We hope to see many of you in September!

Places to Visit Beyond Cairo

Luxor is a city on the east bank of the Nile River in southern Egypt. It's on the site of ancient Thebes, the pharaohs' capital at the height of their power, during the 16th–11th centuries B.C. Today's city surrounds 2 huge, surviving ancient monuments: graceful Luxor Temple and Karnak Temple, a mile north. The royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens are on the river's west bank. The **Karnak Temple complex** is an astonishing World Heritage site,



housing three famous temples within its premises – the Temple of Khons, the Great Temple of Amun and the Festival Temple of Tuthmosis III. Since the complex is a vast open site, it is

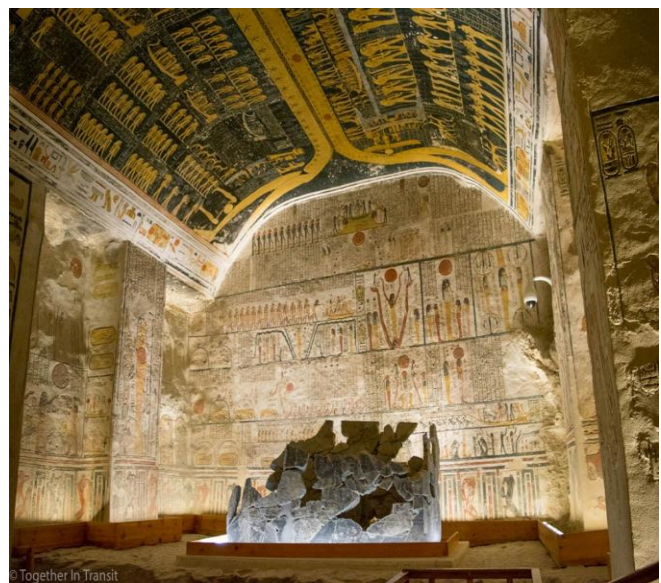
advisable to spend a minimum of 2-3 hours to explore the entire complex.

Continue to **Luxor Temple** which was once joined to the Temples of Karnak by a 1.25 milelong Avenue of Sphinx, a portion of which marks the entrance to the temple. The temple dates to approximately 1400 BC and is dedicated to the rejuvenation of kingship rather than the Pharaohs, cult gods or deified versions of the king in death. During the Roman era,



the temple and its surroundings served as a legionary fortress and acted as the home of the Roman government in the area.

The famed **Valley of the Kings**, hidden between rocky escarpments, was the final resting place for the kings of the 18th, 19th, and 20th dynasties. Their main attraction is their wonderfully vivid wall paintings. Since it was believed that the dead man, accompanied by the sun god (or perhaps having become one with the sun god) sailed through the underworld at night in a boat, the walls of the tombs were adorned with texts and scenes depicting this voyage and giving the dead man instruction on its course.



Explore the recently renovated mortuary **Temple of Queen Hatshepsut**, the



second historically confirmed female Pharaoh. She is generally regarded by Egyptologists as one of the most successful Pharaohs, reigning longer than any other woman of an indigenous Egyptian dynasty, and remembered as the first great woman in history of whom we are informed.

End the visit to the West Bank with a visit to the Colossi of Memnon, the only remaining monuments of the mortuary temple of Amenhotep III. Two magnificent twin statues of pharaoh Amenhotep III and two smaller statues carved by his feet (one being his wife and the other his mother), stand graciously in the horizon of the magnificent Luxor horizons. They are famously named for the sounds emanating from one in the early morning hours.



Aswan is one of the most relaxing Egypt holiday destinations in the far south. In ancient Egypt, it was called Swenette and housed the stone quarries that supplied material to build the famous pyramids. However, Aswan is now known for its breathtaking views of the desert dunes and the Nile River. The Elephantine Islands are the perfect getaway for a relaxing weekend. The colorful Nubian villages in the center of the island are offbeat Egypt tourist attractions and make for a great evening stroll.

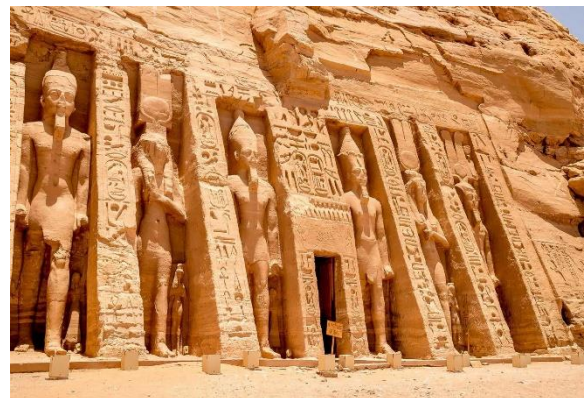
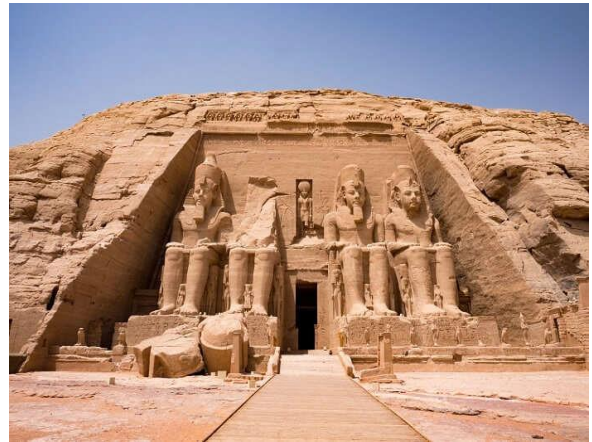




The **Kom Ombo, and Edfu** temples are included on Nile cruises between Luxor and Aswan and can also be accessed by day tours from Aswan.



The Temple of **Abu Simbel** is further south of Aswan along the shores of Lake Nasser. Here the twin temples of Ramesses II and his queen Nefertari were carved right into the mountains and are one of the most popular destinations.



Alexandria city once housed the world's biggest library and was a jeweled outpost for the Greco-Roman empires. Since then, little remains of the fabled places in



the city, but the city has become one of the best Egypt destinations away from the grind and dust of the rest of the Egyptian cities. The Pompey pillar square is a great place to hang out, and the streets are lined with chic cafes in a welcome break from the cuisine elsewhere in Egypt. Most visitors to Alexandria beeline first to this modern

re-imagining of Alexandria's ancient Great Library. The **Bibliotheca Alexandrina** is one of Egypt's most important contemporary landmarks and the cultural heart of the city.



Stroll the **Corniche** or head underground at the catacombs of **Kum el-Shuggafa**. Resembling an imposing castle fortress, **Fort Qaitbey** was built in the 1480s by Sultan Qaitbey on the site of the Pharos Lighthouse, to protect the city from the crusaders who used to attack the city by sea.



Dine out in Alexandria's fish restaurants or dive in the ruins of the pristine lighthouse in Alexandria. This dive is one of the most popular archeological dives in the world.

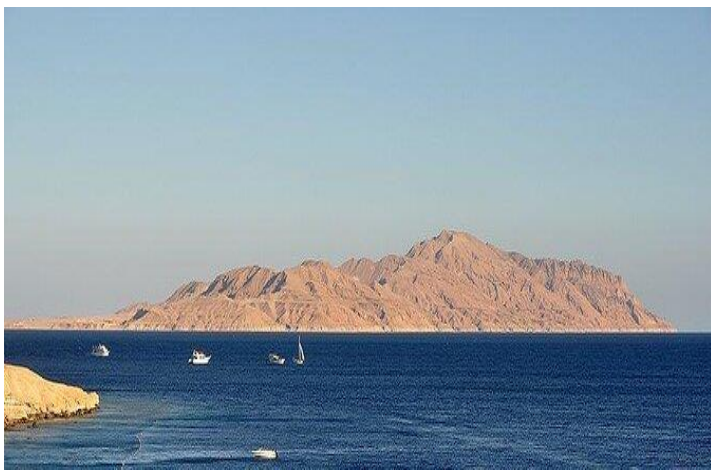


Underwater wonderlands and exotic marine life make **Sharm el Sheikh**, a resort nestled between Tiran Island and Ras Mohamed National Park, one of the world's top diving destinations. Tucked amidst the colorful coral reefs and mangroves of the Red Sea as well as the inland desert of the Sinai. It has crystal-clear waters that allow divers and snorkeling enthusiasts to easily spot the vibrant corals as well as vertebrate and invertebrate marine species.



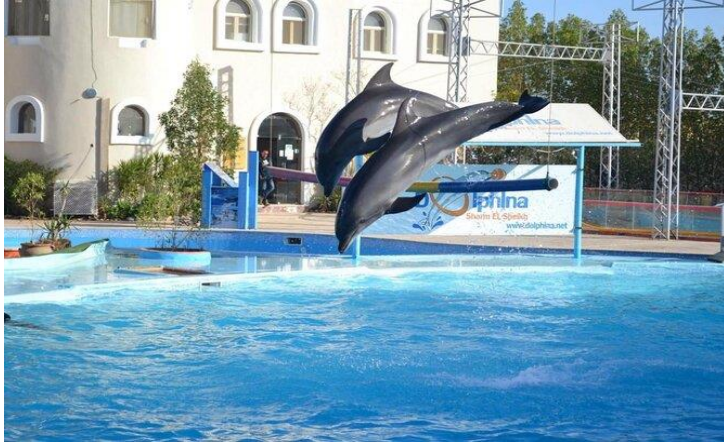
Sharm el Sheikh Old Town (**Sharm el Maya**) was the first resort area in Sharm el Sheikh, created when the Israelis occupied the Sinai Peninsula after the Six-Day War. Today, the Old Market is a major point of interest in the area, a popular beach resort.

With dancing fountains, live performances, a 7D cinema, shops, and eateries, **Hollywood Sharm el Sheikh** is part theme park, part shopping mall. Kids generally adore the dinosaurs, the animated hosting team, and the cinema, while adults value the choice of restaurants.



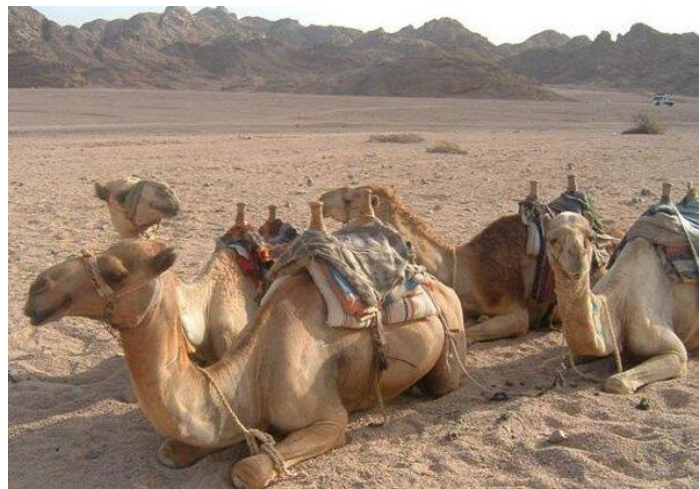
Sun-worshipping crowds give way to energetic nightlife when the sun sets at **Na'ama Bay**, where resorts, clubs, and bars share Sharm el Sheikh's most happening shoreline. Whether you're exploring the undersea world, hopping a ride on a parasail, or keeping the party going back on land, there's plenty of fun to be had here.





The only dolphinarium in South Sinai, Sharm el Sheikh's **Dolphina Park** houses a pod of dolphins in its state-of-the-art facilities. Trained professionals care for and work with the dolphins—naturally very intelligent and playful animals—while giving visitors to the park an opportunity to observe.

Beyond the coast, more than 94 percent of Egypt is comprised of desert, so it's no surprise that Egyptian history and culture developed around life in this harsh environment. Explore Egypt's desert from Sharm el Sheikh on camels, the best ways to experience the stark beauty of Egypt's desert lands. One of the most remarkable locations in the



Sinai desert is the **Monastery of Saint Catherine**, the oldest active Eastern Orthodox monastery in the world, renowned for its extraordinary holdings of Byzantine art. Located at the foot of Mount Sinai and built between 548 and 565, it is the oldest continuously inhabited Christian

monastery in the world. The monastery was built by order of Emperor Justinian, enclosing what is claimed to be the burning bush seen by Moses.

Horghata is Egypt's most well-known beach resort town, and its home to the country's best stretches of coastline, its best hotels, and its best diving sites. Yes, Hurghada can be touristy, but the resorts are here for a reason. The beaches that span the Red Sea coastline of Egypt are absolutely beautiful in many places. Offshore, the warm waters of the Red Sea are crystal clear and teeming with marine life. The beaches are always one of the best things to do in Hurghada because after all, this is a beach resort town.



But, visit the town and shop the souks. While the markets aren't quite as big as those you'll find in Cairo, they are much easier to navigate here. Go scuba diving or snorkeling. One way to learn more about the region's oldest inhabitants is to join a Bedouin Dinner tour.

