

## Northern Sudan – Royal Cities of the Nile

### Tour Code SU

Sudan is home to one of the world's oldest civilisations, with settlements dating back to 3000 BC. Located to the south of Egypt, the River Nile links the two countries both historically and geographically, however unlike its neighbour, Sudan remains virtually untouched by tourism. These magical lands of ancient Nubia offer a rich, cultural heritage, warm friendly people and a true sense of exploration. This unique archaeological tour covers the major sites that are concentrated to the north of Khartoum, including comfortable overnight lodges based at the location of the breathtaking ruins of Karima and Meroe. This makes this arid region of extraordinary archaeological interest and beautiful landscapes now accessible with a very reasonable degree of comfort. There is also the opportunity to extend your stay to visit the most beautiful of Sudan's Egyptian temples at Soleb with a three night stay in a private Nubian house.



3000 BC Pyramid ruins, Meroe  
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#### ITINERARY

##### Day 1 Fly to Khartoum

Evening departure from London Heathrow with Egypt Air via Cairo to Khartoum

##### Day 2 In Khartoum

Early morning arrival into Khartoum and transfer to the Holiday Villa hotel with immediate rooms. Morning at leisure. In the early afternoon we visit the capital's landmarks including the visit of the Archaeological Museum that, besides many beautiful objects, contains two beautiful temples rescued by UNESCO and moved from the Lake Nasser area, when it was flooded by the water. A welcome dinner has been arranged at a local restaurant. (B,D)

##### Day 3 Visit Omdurman. Drive to Meroe.

We cross the confluence between the Blue and the White Nile near the Presidential Palace where in 1885 General Gordon was beheaded by the Mahdi's troops and we reach Omdurman, the old capital of Sudan, where we see the Mahdi's Tomb from outside and the Khalifa's House Museum. Late in the morning we begin the journey northward before we encounter more than 40 pyramids, located on top of a hill, some of them perfectly preserved, which belong to the Royal Necropolis of Meroe. Arrival at the Meroe Camp with a beautiful view onto the pyramids. Three nights accommodation in comfortable and fully furnished tents, dinner (B,L,D)

##### Day 4 In Meroe. Visit the Necropolis and the Royal city of Meroe

The Royal necropolis of Meroe is located at about 3 km from the Nile on some hills covered by yellow sand dunes. Several pyramids stand out with their sharp shapes against the clear sky. Each one has its own funerary chapel with the walls fully decorated with bas-reliefs that show the King's life and offers to the gods. In the afternoon we move along the Nile to visit the ruins of the royal city. The excavations confirm that the town of Meroe used to cover a large area and the royal city was located in a central position, surrounded by suburbs and a boundary wall. Most of the area where the city is located, formed by many small hills covered by red clay fragments, has still to be excavated by the archaeologists (B,L,D)

##### Day 5 In Meroe - the temples of Naga and Mussawarat

We spend the morning visiting the site of Naga located about 30 km to the east of the Nile and one of two centres that developed during the Meroitic period. We visit a temple dedicated to *Apedemak* (1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.): a wonderful building with bas-relief decorations depicting the god with a lion's head, the Pharaoh, noblemen and several ritual images. Another temple dedicated to *Amon* with many statues of rams and beautiful gates decorated with bas-reliefs stands nearby. We continue to Mussawarat, This settlement is located in a beautiful valley crowned by hills.

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Here the ruins of a very big temple are visible; it once played an exceptional important role. Its main characteristic, the "Great Enclosure" is made by many constructions and boundary walls which surround a temple built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. Picnic in the area and then return towards the camp. We will stop at the town of *Shendi* to visit the colourful market. (B,L,D.)

### Day 6 Drive to Karima

We continue on the road that skirts the Nile to the city of Atbara, located on the confluence between the Nile and the Atbara River. Here we cross the Nile and we enter the Bayuda Desert, an area bounded by the loop formed by the Nile between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> Cataract and characterised by sharp black basalt mountains, most of them volcanic and typically cone-shaped. Here we see Bisharin nomads, who live in familiar groups in small huts made of intertwined branches close to the rare water wells, with their caravans and herds of camels and donkeys. We leave the asphalt road and adventure across Wadi Abu Dom before arriving at Merowe. We visit the Pyramids of Nuri, one of the three necropolises of ancient Napata. Three nights with dinner at the comfortable Nubian Resthouse (B,L,D)

### Day 7 Visit Karima and Pyramids of El Kurru

We spend the morning in Karima that lies at the foot of the Jebel Barkal, a wonderful isolated red sandstone mountain, considered holy since the ancient times, where there is a large temple dedicated to the Pharaohs of the New Reign and to their patron, Amon. Several sculptured granite rams that were said to border a long avenue that probably led to a pier on the Nile sit nearby. At El Kurru where there is one of the necropolis of the ancient capital, Napata, we can visit two tombs, which are excavated in the rock under the partially collapsed pyramids, that are decorated with images of the Pharaoh, of the gods and multi-coloured hieroglyphic inscriptions. We continue to a site rich in fossil trunks in the desert before we return to Karima (B,L,D)

### Day 8 Visit Old Dongola and Nubian Villages

Today it is a long day on the road but full of interesting encounters and visits. Early in the morning we will follow the Nile until we reach the archaeological site of Old Dongola. Here a Christian Coptic temple with marble columns as well as several churches are situated on the banks of the Nile. This area is the central part of the Nubian region. Here the population lives in small villages amongst yellow sand dunes and palm trees they speak a different language from the Arabs and also the Islamic religion is not as "strict" as in other regions. The women don't cover their faces and readily speak to foreigners. Some houses in the Nubian Villages are painted and decorated with colourful patterns and flowers. Enthusiastic hospitality abounds, people will often invite foreigners to visit their home and share a meal or a cup of spiced tea. Picnic in the area. In the evening we return to Karima (B,L,D)

### Day 9 Drive to Khartoum. Visit National Museum

Today we drive south along the tarmac road across the Western Desert. We stop for lunch in a simple "chai house" and in the afternoon we reach Omdurman and visit the interesting souk. At sunset time we move near the tomb of the sufi leader Ahmed al Nil to witness a Whirling Dervish Ceremony Check in at the Holiday Villa hotel. A farewell dinner has been arranged at a local restaurant.

### Day 10 Fly to London

Morning transfer to the airport after a leisurely breakfast. Late morning flight with Egypt Air via Cairo arriving to London Heathrow in the evening (B)

**Cost £2395.00** per person in a twin room (excl. international flight)

Single supplement charge £375.00



Colourful Nubian women, Karima  
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#### Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied by Patrick Syder FRGS
- ▶ Sudanese guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ Transportation in private a/c Toyota Land Cruisers and Toyota Hilux outside Khartoum; bus or minibus in Khartoum
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Accommodation ranges from three star hotel in Khartoum, permanent tented camp in Meroe and Rest house in Karima, all with en-suite facilities
- ▶ All meals in Meroe and Karima
- ▶ Dinners in restaurants in Khartoum
- ▶ Photo permit and passport registration fees
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Bottled water daily
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, visa fees, alcoholic drinks, guide and driver gratuities, Turkish Airlines international flights are not included in the land tour cost (Egypt Air international flights start from £445.00 through Flight Centre UK) (Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)