

# Serendipity Travels

## AROUND THE WORLD 2022

Our travels in October—November 2022 took us around the world from west to east. Join us as our journey continues in Egypt. Previously, we visited [Greece and Israel](#).

### Part 2: Egypt

30 October 2022

#### Port Said, Egypt [32° E]

Another country, another customs and immigration situation. Egypt has a “visa on arrival system.” If you arrive at an airport, they collect US\$25 and stamp your passport; one person can obtain the stamp for several. Easy for a plane with a few hundred people. If you arrive on a ship with over a thousand people, the queue would be lengthy. The ship collected our passports the night before. Sometime after docking but before we were awake, the Egyptian customs people came aboard and stamped all the passports. The only hassle was returning them to the passengers, which took a while.

#### Nile Delta

On the morning of 30 October, we disembarked in Port Said and boarded a coach for the an excursion to “The City of Alexandria,” which is about 160km to the west. In some places the highway is modern and fast. In others, the road is being rebuilt, for good reason. There are also a few towns along the way. The trip took over four hours. In addition to our guide and driver, we had a security person on board. Along most of the way, we were accompanied by two or more police cars or pickups, with armed personnel on board. Egypt wants to protect its guests from any troublemakers.



Nile Delta photos are at [Nile Delta 2022](#). Most of these pictures were taken through the window of a moving bus.

#### Alexandria

Alexandria was founded on two islands at the edge of the Nile Delta and the Mediterranean Sea by Alexander the Great. It has been a seaport for some 2500 years. Its lighthouse was one of the seven wonders of the world, unfortunately destroyed by an earthquake centuries ago. Alexandria was, and is, also a seat of learning.

The Library of Alexandria in ancient times collected manuscripts and was a place of study for early scholars. Wars and the intolerance of one religion for



another lead to the destruction of the original library. More recently, a new, modern library has been built on the site of the original. Opened in 2002, it is an impressive structure for the accumulation and access of knowledge in many languages. We visited the library, observed the large open study areas, saw a demonstration of its [website](#), and visited the antiquities exhibits.

Leaving the library, we had a wonderful lunch on the shore of the great harbor of Alexandria. Then, we visited the National Museum and finally the Catacombs. The ride home was faster than the ride to, but we were off the ship a total of 14 hours. Tomorrow is a “sea day” as we traverse the Suez Canal.

Alexandria photos are at [Alexandria 2022](#). Most of the exterior pictures were taken through the window of a moving bus.

## 31 October 2022

### Suez Canal, Egypt [32° E]

We left our berth at about 05:00 this morning, part of a large convoy heading south. From the southern entrance, a large convoy heads north. We will meet in the Great Bitter Lake. Much of the Canal is one-way at a given time. Most of the built-up area is on the west side, closer to the Nile Delta (and away from other nations that might be hostile). We saw several pontoon bridges ready to be launched from the west side—these bridges could carry tanks and other heavy vehicles.

Transiting the Suez Canal is not all that exciting for a cruise ship passenger. There are no locks. The scenery is generally sandy, with occasional small cities on the banks. The terrain is pretty flat. In the north, the canal is a long straight line. Fortunately, all the ships stayed in their lane and none blocked the canal, as happened last year with the *Evergiven*.

Total time to transit the canal was about 10 hours. We were through the canal by 15:00, but then anchored for bunkering (i.e., refueling) until after 20:00. Once fueled, we departed the Suez City area for Safaga, our last stop in Egypt.

Today's photos are at [Suez Canal 2022](#).



## 1 November 2022

### Safaga, Egypt [33° E]

Given our late departure from Suez City, our arrival in Safaga was about an hour late. Once secure, however, the crew did a good job of moving people off the ship and onto their tour busses. Most of the tours, including ours, “The Temple Complex of Karnak,” headed across the desert between the Red Sea and the Nile. We found the journey to be a very interesting part of the day. The eastern part, close to the Red Sea, is quite hilly. As one gets closer to the Nile, the terrain is flatter. But, until one is a few miles from the Nile, the land is dry, and we saw no vegetation.

We arrived in the Nile Valley near the town of Qena, which is some distance north of our destination. The drive took us along an irrigation canal, and we were able to observe the villagers who farm the area. Favorite modes of transportation include small trucks, tuk-tuks, donkey carts, and mini-busses. North Americans would find driving here a bit nerve-wracking. Our Egyptian



driver took it in stride, with ample use of his horn. He seemed most comfortable straddling the white line that runs down the middle.

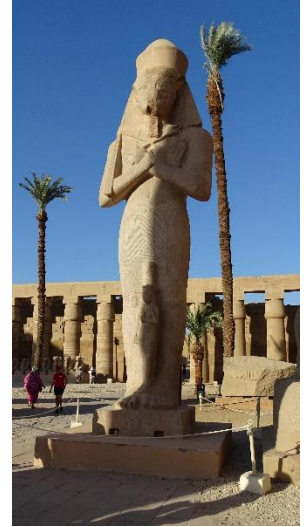
Our destination was the town of Luxor. Those with a sense of Egyptian History will know Luxor as the modern name of Thebes, which was the capital of the Middle Kingdom (about 3500 years ago). The Pharaohs moved their places of rule and burial from Memphis (modern day Cairo) up the river. Instead of Pyramids, they dug burial chambers in the nearby mountain valley. The Valley of the Kings contains King Tut's tomb, and many others.

Thebes was the home of two very important temples, Karnak and Luxor. We visited Karnak, dedicated the most important god of the time, Amun-Ra, the sun god. We were told it is the largest temple complex in the world, occupying some 200 acres. Many of the original columns are still in place, and some of the original paintings are still evident. The pictures include views of the massive columns of the main hall and details of the hieroglyphics that cover most of the surfaces.

After a tour through parts of the temple and some free time for picture-taking, we returned across the desert to our ship. On the way, we were able to observe the villagers at the end of their workday. Tomorrow brings another country.

Eastern Desert and Nile Valley pictures are at [Eastern Desert and Nile Valley 2022](#). Once again, these pictures were taken through the windows of a moving bus.

Luxor pictures are at [Luxor 2022](#).



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The journey continues to [Jordan and Oman](#) in Part III of this log.