

**Small Ship Adventure Co.**

Specialising in Small Ship Cruising Worldwide



# Voyage Through the Red Sea

**Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Sudan & Eritrea**

*Aboard the Clipper Odyssey*

**October 9 – 27, 2012**

## **ITINERARY**

**Tuesday, October 9**

**Cairo, Egypt**

Arrive in Cairo and transfer to our hotel. Gather this evening for a welcome dinner.

**Wednesday, October 10**

**Cairo / Giza**

Our tour begins with an exploration of the Egyptian Museum's extensive collection of ancient artifacts, including treasures from King Tutankhamen's tomb. We continue to Giza, where we view the impressive Great Pyramid and the Sphinx. Return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

**Thursday, October 11**

**Cairo / Alexandria / Embark Clipper Odyssey**

This morning we drive to Alexandria. We visit numerous monuments, including Pompey's Pillar, the catacombs, amphitheater, and the Library of Alexandria, opened in 2002. This evening board the Clipper Odyssey and settle in before we set sail.

**Friday, October 12**

**At Sea**

Enjoy a relaxing and educational day at sea as our lecture series begins.

**Saturday, October 13****Beirut, Lebanon / Byblos**

This morning we arrive in Lebanon's historic capital and depart overland to beautiful Byblos. The city's history reaches back 7,000 years and offers a panoply of Phoenician, Roman, and Byzantine-era ruins. After lunch on board we visit the National Museum where artifacts from prehistoric times to the medieval Mamluk period are on display. Then continue with a guided tour of Beirut whose recent turbulent past is in a remarkable state of fast-forward recovery.

**Sunday, October 14****Beirut / Baalbek**

Today we drive across the fertile Bekáa Valley to Baalbek, one of the most impressive sites of the ancient Roman world. We explore the well-preserved temples of Jupiter, Bacchus, and Venus, surrounded by lovely gardens, as well as the Roman Acropolis, considered to be among the most important ever built.

**Monday, October 15****Port Said, Egypt / Tanis**

We disembark in Port Said and depart for Tanis, once capital of Egypt from 1070 to 715 B.C., this is the most important archaeological site in Egypt's northern delta. Our historians guide us through this extensive site, which is studded with obelisks, statues, and stately columns.

**Tuesday, October 16****Port Said / Suez Canal Transit**

Today we begin our southbound transit of one of the world's greatest engineering feats: the 101-mile-long Suez Canal. Learn the history of the canal and the ancient trade routes that preceded it and enjoy views of the contrasting landscapes.

**Wednesday, October 17****Sharm el Sheikh / Monastery of St. Catherine**

From the coastal town of Sharm el Sheikh, we ascend nearly 5,000 feet to explore the 6th-century Monastery of St. Catherine. The church houses one of the world's most magnificent collections of gold icons, dating back to the 5th century, and the museum has a sampling of manuscripts second in importance only to those of the Vatican. Alternatively, take a local boat to Ras Mohammed to snorkel among some of the world's best coral reef ecosystems.

**Thursday & Friday, October 18 & 19****Safaga / Luxor**

After an early breakfast we depart overland from Safaga for an overnight excursion that explores Luxor's magnificent ancient splendors. At the enormous complex of Karnak we are greeted by an impressive gate, still in near-perfect condition, and walk among obelisks of staggering height. After check-in and lunch at our hotel, we walk along the Avenue of the Sphinxes to visit the Luxor Temple, in the heart of the city. The soaring red granite obelisk, colossal statues of Ramses II, Amenhotep III's colonnade, and the mosque built atop the pharaonic temple are supremely photogenic highlights.

The following day we cross the Nile to explore the Valley of the Kings, a World Heritage Site. The magnificently decorated tombs of Egypt's greatest pharaohs are cut deep into the rocky mountainsides of the valley. We visit the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, constructed on three massive terraces. We continue to the two "singing" statues of King Amenhotep III, which once guarded his namesake temple and the largest temple of Thebes. For lunch we board feluccas, traditional Nile sail boats and savor local delicacies as we cross the Nile back to the west bank. We then return to our ship in Safaga.

### **Saturday, October 20**

#### **At Sea**

Our lecturers prepare us for our upcoming cultural experiences during our day at sea.

### **Sunday, October 21**

#### **Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**

Today we set out for a walking tour of Jeddah's well-preserved old city. Many of the traditional houses in this protected area were built from Red Sea coral and are embellished with intricate wooden carvings. The large souk is a feast for the senses, with vendors extolling the virtues of their spices, carpets, incense, and jewelry. After lunch at a festive local restaurant, we explore the Abdulraouf Khalil Art Museum where more than 200 rooms reveal the history of Saudi Arabia.

### **Monday, October 22**

#### **Suakin, Sudan**

Situated just south of the modern harbor of Port Sudan is the old city of Suakin, which served as a major trading stop on the route to Mecca. A walking tour takes us down pathways between old buildings constructed of coral blocks, while camels, donkeys, and local people remind us that traditional life continues off the beaten path. After a folkloric performance, we return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon of snorkeling and diving in the warm, marine-life-rich waters of the Red Sea.

### **Tuesday, October 23**

#### **Massawa, Eritrea**

Disembark after lunch for an exploratory tour of Massawa, once a major Ottoman port in the 16th century. The old architecture still reflects the traditional dry coral and wood beam construction. We view the 15th-century mosque, the sprawling dhow docks, and the colorful bazaar housed in one of the surviving Ottoman buildings.

### **Wednesday, October 24**

#### **Dahlak Archipelago**

The Dahlak Archipelago consists of nearly 200 islands, only four of which are inhabited by a population that continues its traditional lifestyle of pearl fishing and goat- and camel-herding. Seabirds nest here in great profusion and coral reefs are home to hundreds of marine species, including dolphins, sharks, dugongs, and several turtle species. Today we explore the region, and enjoy some exceptional snorkeling and diving.

**Thursday, October 25**

**Massawa / Disembark / Asmara**

Disembark this morning and drive to Asmara for lunch. This capital city has an Italian flavor that blossomed during the Italian occupation, from 1869-1936. This afternoon tour the National Museum and the market, with dinner and overnight at our Asmara hotel.

**Friday & Saturday, October 26 & 27**

**Asmara / Frankfurt, Germany**

Enjoy a tour of Asmara this morning. Highlights include the Catholic cathedral, the mosque, and the Coptic cathedral. After lunch enjoy an afternoon at leisure, and later depart for the airport for your flight to Frankfurt.