

# SKEPTIC

With Distinguished  
Guest Lecturer **Professor**  
**Marc Van De Mieroop**

# EGYPT AND THE NILE

January 8 – 18, 2026





# SKEPTIC

Dear Friends,

We invite you to join distinguished guest lecturer, **Marc Van De Mieroop**, Miriam Champion Professor of History at Columbia University, on an exceptional trip to Egypt that includes the country's famed ancient sites.

The Egypt of the Pharaohs has been the object of endless fascination in the Western world ever since Herodotus traveled there in the middle of the 5th century BC and recorded what he could gather of Egyptian customs, traditions, and religion. This journey, specially curated for The Skeptics Society, includes visits to most of the sites Herodotus would have encountered, as well as to many he could not possibly have seen, because they had been buried beneath desert sands long before he arrived.

Just outside Cairo, in Giza, marvel at the sole remaining Wonder of the Ancient World, the Pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx. In Cairo proper, explore the newly acclaimed Grand Egyptian Museum. From Aswan, near the massive dam that finally, in 1970, allowed authorities to control the flow of the Nile, visit Abu Simbel, whose Great Temple is dominated by immense statues of Ramses II and his wife, Nefertari. Also discover Elephantine Island and the ruins of ancient Abu, dating to about 3000 BC.

After boarding the elegant riverboat, *M/S Jaz Viceroy*, sail north on a voyage that includes the temples at Kom Ombo and Edfu before docking in Luxor. From Luxor (ancient Thebes), explore both banks of the Nile: the temples dedicated at Luxor and Karnak on the East Bank, and the tombs of the Valley of the Kings on the West Bank, easily one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. This is where the remains of King Tutankhamun were discovered. Adding to the enjoyment of this unique journey will be the lectures and discussions of Professor Marc Van De Mieroop. His deep knowledge of ancient Egyptian civilization will surely give you a better understanding of ancient Egypt and enrich your travel-learning experience.

This truly is a beautifully designed introduction to the glories of ancient Egypt. I hope you will be able to join us to explore the land of the Pharaohs along the Nile.

Warm regards,



Dr. Michael Shermer  
Executive Director  
The Skeptics Society

P.S. 9% of your cruise fee will be a tax-deductible donation to The Skeptics Society - a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

Cover photo: Sphinx and the Giza pyramids

## DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURER

### MARC VAN DE MIEROOP



**Marc Van De Mieroop** is Miriam Champion Professor of History at Columbia University, New York where he regularly teaches a lecture course on Ancient Egyptian history that draws large undergraduate enrollments. He has published numerous books and articles on various aspects of Egyptian history, ancient Near Eastern history, and World History. The second edition of his *A History of Ancient Egypt* appeared in 2021. His other books include *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II* (2007) and, most recently, *Before and After Babel: Writing as resistance in ancient Near Eastern Empires* (2023). He has received various fellowships including from the Guggenheim Foundation, the ACLS, the NEH, and the Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften in Vienna.



Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, Luxor





Karnak Temple in Luxor



Botanical garden on Kitchener's Island



# ITINERARY



Tutankhamun's Mask

Thursday, January 8, 2026  
**DEPART THE UNITED STATES**

Friday, January 9  
**CAIRO, Egypt**

Throughout history, Egyptians have referred to their country as Umm Ad Dunya, "Mother of the World," because of their homeland's remarkable achievements in religion, culture and science. We start our discovery of this fabled land in Cairo, Egypt's most important city. Our representative will meet you at the airport and assist you through immigration and customs formalities. You will also be joined by our experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director, who will accompany you throughout your time in Egypt. Transfer by coach to the *Giza Palace Hotel* (or similar), located near the Pyramids at Giza, home for the next three nights. (D)

Saturday, January 10  
**GIZA AND MEMPHIS**

After breakfast, tour the sole remaining Wonder of the Ancient World, the Pyramids of Giza. Built as massive tombs on the orders of the pharaohs nearly 4,000 years ago, their extraordinary shape, impeccable geometry, and sheer bulk stand as tributes to the achievements of ancient Egypt. Ponder the Sphinx, a limestone statue of a mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head of a human, believed to have been built during the reign of pharaoh Khafre. After lunch at the *Marriott Mena House Hotel*, travel the short distance to Memphis, capital of the Old Kingdom of Egypt during the period when most of the pyramids were built. Also visit the Necropolis of Saqqara, site of the famous Step Pyramid, designed by Imhotep and believed to be the oldest stone-hewn building complex ever constructed. (B,L,D)

Sunday, January 11  
**GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM AND MANIAL PALACE**

Start the day at the acclaimed Grand Egyptian Museum, which has one of the world's most important collections of ancient artifacts, including those of King Tutankhamen. The museum showcases over 100,000 artifacts and is the world's largest archaeological museum. Other masterpieces in the museum include the Narmer Palette, a 5,000-year-old ceremonial engraving; the statue of Khafre, builder of the second pyramid at Giza; and the Tanis collection, an extensive selection of glittering objects unearthed from six tombs in 1939. Lunch at the *Steigenberger El Tahrir Hotel* is followed by a visit to the Manial Palace and Museum, a fascinating blend of architectural styles—Ottoman, Moorish, Persian, and European Rococo. Located on Rhoda Island in a minor branch of the Nile, the compound is surrounded by Persian gardens, themselves ensconced within an extensive English-landscaped park. Dinner this evening is at the hotel. (B,L,D)

Monday, January 12  
**CAIRO/ASWAN/ELEPHANTINE ISLAND**

After breakfast at the hotel, an early morning flight brings you to Aswan. Check in to the *Mövenpick Resort Hotel* (or similar), your home for the next two nights. Lunch at a local restaurant is followed





The 20-plus year construction of the 872,000 sq. ft. Grand Egyptian Museum, Cairo

by an excursion to the Aswan Botanical Gardens on Kitchener's Island, named after the late-19th-century army commander who transformed it into a vast garden of flora from East Asia, India, and Africa. The island now abounds with birdlife as well as hundreds of species of plants. From Kitchener's Island, it is a short boat ride to Elephantine Island, whose southern end is the site of ancient Abu. Founded at the beginning of the 1st dynasty as a fort to guard Egypt's southern frontier, Abu quickly became a busy trading center, and remained strategically important throughout the Pharaonic period as a point of departure for military and commercial expeditions into Nubia and further south. Dinner is at the hotel in Aswan. (B,L,D)

**Tuesday, January 13**

#### **ASWAN/ABU SIMBEL/ASWAN**

Travel today via round trip air excursion to Abu Simbel, home to the immense statues of Ramses II and his wife Nefertari. Abu Simbel's Great Temple is 98 feet high and 115 feet long, with four colossal statues depicting Ramesses II on his throne at the entrance. Beneath these giant figures are smaller statues depicting Ramesses' conquered enemies: the Nubians, Libyans, and Hittites. The structures were created, at least in part, to celebrate Ramesses'

victory over the Hittites at the Battle of Kadesh in 1274 BC. In the 1960s some remarkable creative engineering saved the temple complex from the rising waters of the Nile caused by the erection of the Aswan High Dam. Return to Aswan for an afternoon at leisure, with lunch and dinner served at the hotel. (B,L,D)

**Wednesday, January 14**

#### **ASWAN/EMBARK**

Breakfast at the hotel and check out before joining an excursion to the Aswan High Dam. After 11 long years of construction, the dam was finally completed in 1970. More than two miles long at its crest, the massive \$1 billion project ended the cycle of flood and drought that had plagued the Nile River basin for millennia. Its control of the flow of the river helps keep agricultural land irrigated, improves navigation, and generates electric power. From the dam, continue via motorboat to Philae, an island downstream from the Aswan Dam that is home to a temple dedicated to the goddess Isis. Learn about Philae's history on a guided tour that includes its courts, colonnades, and halls. In the afternoon, embark the five-star *M/S Jaz Viceroy* for a three-night cruise on the Nile. Lunch and dinner are aboard the ship. (B,L,D)



Hallway of Al Aqmar Mosque, Cairo







Aswan Botanical Gardens

Thursday, January 15

### ASWAN/KOM OMBO/EDFU/LUXOR

This morning, *Jaz Viceroy* calls at Kom Ombo for a visit to a temple that is unique in Egypt for the fact that it is dedicated to two different deities. Two nearly identical sets of halls, courts and sanctuaries line each side of the complex. The southern half of the temple was dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek, God of fertility and creator of the world, while the northern part of the temple was dedicated to the falcon god Haroeris. Over lunch, sail to Edfu to visit one of the best preserved of all Egyptian temples. The inscriptions on its walls provide important information on language, myth and religion during the Greco-Roman period. Explore the temples and learn more about ancient Egypt's most significant deities. Return to the ship and set sail for Luxor. (B,L,D)

Friday, January 16

### LUXOR

The modern town of Luxor is the site of ancient Thebes, the capital of Egypt beginning in the twelfth dynasty and reaching its zenith during the New Kingdom. This morning tour the Temples of Karnak and Luxor on the town's East Bank. Karnak is the name of the ancient Temple of Amun at Thebes, believed to have been an observatory as well as a place of worship. The largest temple complex ever built, this site represents the combined achievement of many generations of architects and craftsmen. It consists of three main temples, smaller enclosed temples, and several outer temples located about 2 miles north of the main complex. Then move on to Luxor Temple, also dedicated to Amun, king of the gods. An avenue of sphinxes connects it to the Temple of Amun at Karnak. The Temple of Luxor has been a sacred site throughout history. After Egypt's pagan period, a Christian church and monastery were located here, followed by the 13th-century Mosque of Abu el-Haggag, which continues in use today. Overnight aboard *Jaz Viceroy* docked in Luxor. (B,L,D)

Saturday, January 17

### LUXOR/DISEMBARK/CAIRO

Disembark after breakfast and tour Luxor's West Bank. Your first

stop is the Valley of the Kings, the Necropolis of Thebes, where you visit tombs from various dynasties, cut into the mountainside. One of the most famous archaeological sites in the world (a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979), this valley is where the remains of King Tutankhamun were excavated. Continue to the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the only woman ever to reign over Egypt as pharaoh. Hatshepsut died in 1458 BC, and she is buried, like her male counterparts, in the Valley of the Kings. The last stop on the West Bank is the Colossi of Memnon, two monumental statues representing Amenhotep III (1386-1353 BC) of the 18th Dynasty. Transfer to the airport for a late afternoon flight to Cairo, where you will enjoy dinner and overnight at the *Intercontinental City Stars Hotel* (or similar). (B,L,D)

Sunday, January 18

### CAIRO/USA

Check out after breakfast and transfer to Cairo International Airport for flights homeward. (B)



Abu Simbel Temple



## RATE PER PERSON

### Category 1

- In Double room at hotels and onboard Nile ship: \$ 7,390
- In Single room at hotels and onboard Nile ship: \$ 9,355

### Category 2

- In Double room at hotels and Suite onboard Nile ship: \$ 7,980
- In Single room at hotels and single Suite onboard Nile ship: \$ 10,095

## PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Luxury hotel accommodations at the *Giza Palace* (or similar) in Cairo (3 nights), *Mövenpick Resort Hotel* (or similar) in Aswan (2 nights), and the *Intercontinental City Star* (or similar) in Heliopolis, Cairo, (1 night).
- Three-night Nile cruise from Aswan to Luxor onboard the elegant river ship *M/S Jaz Viceroy*.
- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. Mineral water, wine or beer with lunch and dinner.
- Meet and transfer from Cairo airport to the hotel on January 9 and from Cairo hotel to the airport on January 18.
- Lectures and discussions by Professor Marc Van De Mierop.
- Domestic airfare - Cairo to Aswan; Aswan to Abu Simbel (round trip); Luxor to Cairo.
- Sightseeing tours including transportation by deluxe coach, entrance fees, whisper devices and expert English-speaking Egyptologist guide.
- Services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- Group transfers and handling of luggage overseas at designated times from the airport to the hotel and hotel to the airport, and if applicable, hotel/pier transfers.
- Gratuities to hotel staff, ship's crew, porters, drivers, and guides.
- Egyptian entry visa fee.
- All local taxes, including port dues and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

**NOT INCLUDED:** International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Nile cruise program can be amended without prior notice due to navigational restrictions or may change in sequence but not in visits.



Temple Kom Ombo



Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs carved on the stone wall in the Karnak Temple, Luxor

## GENERAL INFORMATION

SKEP 26L-0108

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

**CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS:** All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

**INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

**ITINERARY:** The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

**RATES:** Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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# Explore Egypt and the Nile

With Distinguished Guest Lecturer  
**Professor Marc Van De Mieroop**

**January 8 – 18, 2026**



Traditional felucca boats on Nile in Aswan

**FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION**

**PLEASE CALL**

**THALASSA JOURNEYS AT**

**866-633-3611**

or email

**[reservations@thalassajourneys.com](mailto:reservations@thalassajourneys.com)**