

# RIDE EGYPT

*Written by Lila Joy Ginsburg*

**Yes, you're going to Egypt.** And yes, everyone will have an opinion about it. But nobody warns you about the real danger; you'll fall so hopelessly in love with this place that going home will feel like the hardest part. **Ride Egypt's Deluxe Edition Tour** is an 11-day horseback adventure that practically spans the length of Egypt, from the Great Pyramids and the vast Black and White Deserts, through the ancient temples of Luxor, with an optional extension all the way south to Aswan and the Nile. This isn't a highlight reel of tourist stops. It's a deep dive into a side of Egypt most travelers never get to see, shared with you by locals who have lived it their whole lives.

What you're about to read is one version of a carefully curated itinerary, but no two trips are the same. Yours bends and shifts around you, with personal guides by your side from arrival to farewell. The riding is built for intermediate to advanced riders, but everyone is welcome and accommodated for, with bespoke non-riding adventures woven throughout. And if you're wondering about the horses, they're treated like family, just like you. Each beautifully healthy and genuinely loved Arabian horse is matched to you with real thought and care. This isn't a mass-market tour, it's a handcrafted compilation of experiences built just for you.

Ride Egypt offers a variety of packages, or you can work with them to design something entirely your own. Check out their website and their (honestly amazing) Instagram to get connected and see what's possible. And prepare to be amazed because what's possible, is beyond comprehension.

Photo Credit @mattio.films

# EQluxe *escape*

## Day One: The Great Pyramids of Giza & the Road to Bahariya Oasis

This trip starts with a bang. Whatever jet lag you carried off the plane? Gone — obliterated by a tidal wave of awe, pure adrenaline, and the Egyptian sun reminding you that you are very much not in Kansas anymore. Because your first day in the saddle isn't some gentle warm-up ride through a manicured park. No. You're riding at the foot of the Great Pyramids of Giza.

You'll meet your equine partner for the days ahead — a stunning Arabian horse dressed in gorgeous tack, with bottomless endurance and a gait so impossibly smooth you'll never want to get off. These horses are legends in their own right: elegant, fiery, and born to run. And run you will. As you launch into a full gallop across the desert floor, colossal pyramids towering at your side, you may genuinely need to pinch yourself. The warm wind whips your face, hooves thunder beneath you, and three of the most iconic structures on Earth loom as your backdrop — it's the kind of moment that rewires your brain. This is real. This is happening.

Halfway through, you'll rein in to catch your breath — and maybe gulp some water, because the desert sun does not play around — for an up-close encounter with the ancient stones themselves. One of the original Seven Wonders of the World, right there within arm's reach. Consider this: the Great Pyramid contains roughly 2.3 million limestone blocks, some weighing up to 80 tons, placed with insane precision over about 20 years — no UFOs required, just 30,000 workers with superhuman determination and a plan we still can't fully explain. Scientists credit human ingenuity. The History Channel says otherwise. Standing at the base looking up, you'll understand why both arguments feel convincing.



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## Day Two: The Black Desert

If yesterday set the bar, today launches it into orbit. Welcome to the Black Desert — a vast, golden expanse punctuated by dark volcanic hills that rise from the sand like ancient sentinels. You meet your desert partner for the day — the same who carried you through yesterday's adventure, now rested and ready. The moment you give the signal, your horse surges forward into a long, powerful gallop. Hooves drum the sun-baked desert floor, manes fly, and the horizon rushes toward you in a blur of gold and black. The thrill is intoxicating — that perfect, primal rhythm between rider and horse, endless sand stretching in every direction, nothing but speed and sky.

Just when you think there's nothing but sand for miles, a Bedouin tent appears on the horizon like a desert mirage — low-slung, woven, and perfectly at home in the sand. Inside is a burst of color — vibrant textiles and bold geometric patterns lining the walls. A freshly prepared authentic meal is laid out with care, flavors bold and earthy. After hours in the saddle you've truly earned it. While you eat and swap stories with your fellow riders, the horses rest nearby, getting their own well-earned lunch and water. Then you're back in the saddle, riding on as the light softens and the shadows lengthen.

As night falls and the desert heat finally loosens its grip, you return to Tzila Bahariya, where you enjoy a few hours by the pool, followed by a delicious Bedouin-style dinner. Every dish is rich with bold, earthy flavors perfected over generations — the kind of meal that makes you close your eyes and slow down. Then, the evening comes alive. Around the campfire, a Bedouin celebration kicks off — the deep pulse of tabla drums, the bright, hypnotic wail of the mizmar, and the haunting notes of a ney flute drifting into the night. It doesn't feel like a performance — it feels like you've been invited into someone's home. You dance, you laugh, you sit close to the fire while the desert sky explodes with more stars than you've ever seen. Later, lying in bed, you replay it all — the gallops, the music, the firelight — and somehow the night feels just as wild as the day.

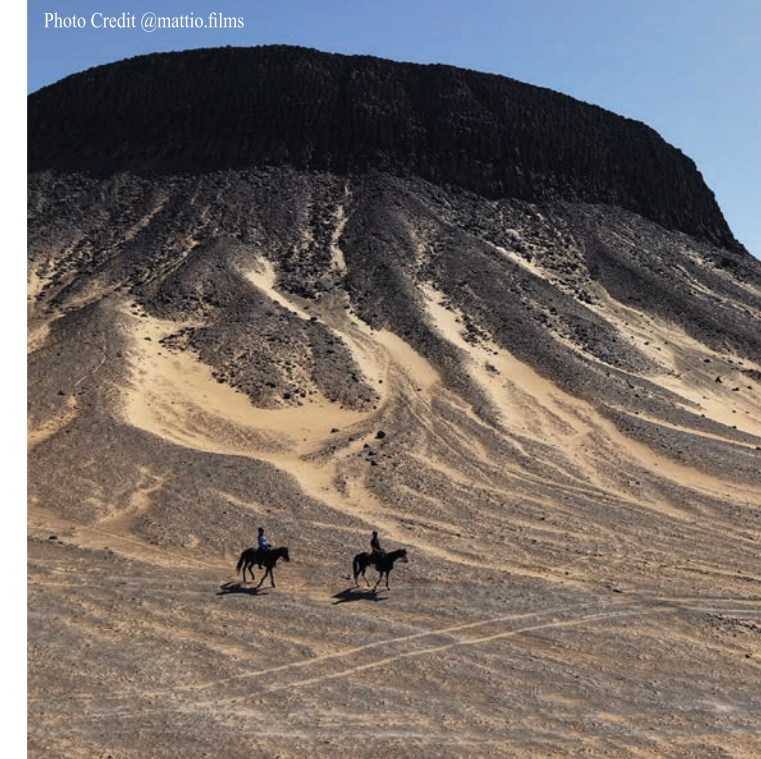


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After the ride, a walking tour brings you face-to-face with the Great Sphinx, and a deep dive into the world of Egyptology and the history of the Pharaohs gives your mind as much of a workout as your legs just had. In the afternoon, you'll stop for lunch at the Pyramids Edge Hotel, enjoy a stunning view and delicious meal, and then hit the road for a few hours drive southwest to the Bahariya Oasis, a lush paradise of swaying date palms, fruit trees, and natural hot springs. Your lodging at Tzila Bahariya awaits — a stunning eco-lodge built from local clay and brick, its reddish-orange buildings nestled among 36 acres of lush greenery, rolling hills, and natural springs. The horses settle into comfortable quarters nearby while you sit down to a delicious Bedouin-style dinner under the first of many jaw-dropping starlit skies. Get some rest. The desert is calling, and tomorrow it means business.



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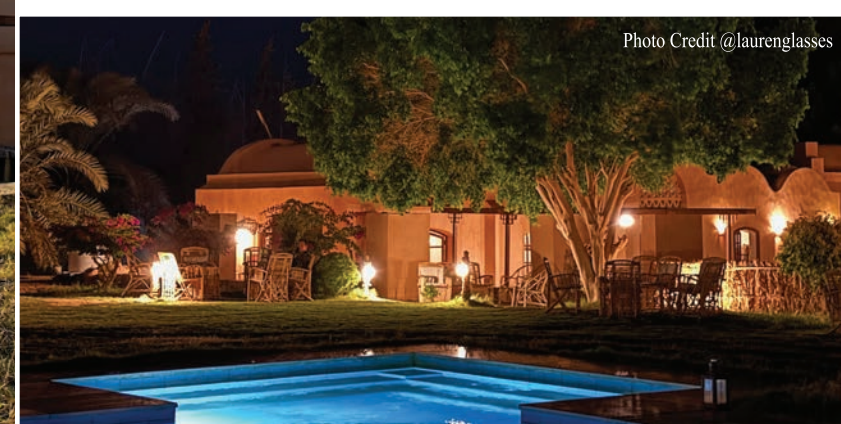


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### Day Three: The White Desert

If the Black Desert felt like riding through an action movie, the White Desert is the part where you wonder if someone slipped something in your tea. Massive chalk pillars loom overhead like half-melted monuments from a civilization that never existed. Some look like dripping candles frozen mid-collapse; others balance on impossibly thin stems, defying every law of physics you thought you trusted. You simply can't shake the feeling that you've left Earth entirely and landed on the moon.

You spend a few hours wandering this otherworldly landscape until once again, a Bedouin tent materializes in the middle of the landscape, looking like something out of a dream. You'll eat another deliciously prepared meal, while the horses rest and refuel nearby. After lunch, someone pulls out dresses and jewelry — and suddenly there's an impromptu photoshoot happening! You drape yourself in flowing fabrics, layer on the accessories, and pose against a landscape that looks like it was designed by a set decorator on another planet.

Then it's back in the saddle for one last afternoon ride with your desert partner — and somehow it tops the morning. As the sun drops, the chalk formations catch the colors as they shift with the sun; you're galloping through a painting that keeps changing colors. When you finally dismount, you hug your new best friend goodbye. Three days together, and you've built something real.



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Now you're faced with a choice: return to the comfort of the lodge, or camp beneath the stars in the White Desert. Trust me, you want to choose the latter.

Your camp is a scattering of large Bedouin tents, and amongst the surreal landscape, you've reached peak glamping. Settle into a giant communal tent where a delicious dinner is spread out, and eat like royalty in the middle of nowhere. Then it's back outside for round two — another campfire, more music, more dancing under a sky so thick with stars it doesn't look real. You can see the Milky Way — actually see it — a river of light stretching across the entire sky. You'll crawl into your tent eventually, and fall asleep knowing that few people on Earth have experienced anything quite like this.



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### Day Four: Desert Secrets & the Return to Cairo

You wake up in the White Desert and for a few seconds you genuinely don't know where you are. The chalk formations are glowing warm gold with hints of purple in the early light. Camp breakfast is simple and perfect — and then things get loud. You climb into offroad vehicles that charge straight up desert hills, tip over ridges, and barrel down steep inclines with everyone screaming and laughing. You try sandboarding — which is exactly as ridiculous and fun as it sounds — and cap it all off by sinking into a natural hot spring in the middle of the desert, which feels absolutely incredible after hours in the desert sun.

Arrive back at Tzila for one last delicious meal, and then drive to Cairo. The desert is behind you now, but it doesn't feel like it. The smell of campfire is in your hair, the heat and sand is still on your skin, and every time you close your eyes, you're back in the saddle.



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### Day Five: Desert Secrets & the Return to Cairo

After so many action-packed days, it feels nice to sleep in, savor a late breakfast at your gorgeous hotel, and maybe even lounge by the pool. By midday you'll check out and head to the Grand Egyptian Museum, one of the largest archaeological museums on the planet. Walking among the treasures of **King Tutankhamun** and thousands of meticulously preserved artifacts, feeling the weight and wonder of 5,000 years of civilization pressing in around you. Enjoy another delicious meal at the Pyramid's Edge and get one last glimpse of those amazing pyramids. In the afternoon, a short 45-minute flight whisks you south to Luxor — and an entirely new chapter of this adventure. The temples, the tombs, and a fresh set of incredible horses are waiting.

**Day Six: Luxor — The Land of the Pharaohs**

Even the camping so far has felt deluxe — Bedouin tents with actual beds, feasts in the middle of nowhere, starlit dance parties — but your new home base in Luxor puts the luxe in Luxor. The Hilton Luxor Resort & Spa is right on the Nile, with lush grounds and the kind of luxury that makes you want to cancel the rest of the trip and just live here. But you won't, because as you step outside and see hot air balloons drifting silently over the West Bank in the golden dawn light, you realize this place is just the warm-up.

Luxor hits different. The energy shifts from desert wildness to something deeper, more ancient, more reverent. And once again, you get to choose your own adventure:

For the culture seekers: take a tour of the Valley of the Kings — the hidden desert canyon where over 60 pharaohs were buried across five centuries. Their tombs cut deep into the rock and are painted with scenes meant to guide them through the afterlife. You'll walk into chambers that were sealed for three thousand years. Then it's on to the Temple of Hatshepsut, one of the most powerful rulers in Egyptian history — a woman who declared herself Pharaoh and commissioned a temple so magnificent it's still considered one of the finest pieces of architecture ever built, carved directly into the cliffs. You'll also tour a traditional Alabaster factory, where artisans hand-carve the same luminous stone that lined the tombs and temples of the ancient world, using techniques passed down for generations.

For the saddle-obsessed: Spend most your day in the saddle — wake up early to beat the heat and experience hours of culture and pure riding bliss. You'll ride through fields where farmers work the land exactly as their ancestors did centuries ago, and soak up a landscape that hasn't changed in millennia.

Either way, the day ends with a flying dress photoshoot at the Valley of the Kings — yes, one of those photoshoots, with fabric billowing dramatically against ancient stone. By this point your Instagram has already been through a lot on this trip, but this might actually break it. Good luck choosing just one photo.

The evening brings everyone back together for dinner at the Hilton, overlooking the Nile. After days of desert camps and Bedouin feasts, a luxurious hotel buffet dinner hits a little differently — and you've earned every bite.



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Photo Courtesy Hilton Luxor



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**Day Seven: Luxor Continued**

Another adventure packed day from the start — take a water taxi across the Nile, then ride a tuk-tuk (or, if you're feeling bold, the back of a motorbike) through Luxor's West Bank streets to the Ride Egypt stables. These stables are different than what you might be used to, and you definitely find yourself in Barn Envy — they're vibrant, colorfully painted, and beautifully furnished, with no detail left unnoticed. The Luxor horses themselves are stunning, and you get to meet them all before being paired with your new partner.

Then you ride. Not through open desert this time — through Luxor itself. Busy streets, narrow alleyways, rural villages, farmlands. Children wave and shout hello as you pass. Donkey carts roll by. Motorbikes honk. And your horse? Doesn't even blink. These animals are afraid of absolutely nothing, and watching them navigate chaos with total calm is its own kind of magic.

Lunch is at the White Villa, a local hotel where the pool is the main event — because Luxor is hot, and by now your face is wearing a lovely layer of desert dirt that no amount of face covering fully prevented. After lunch, you ride back to the stables, say goodbye to your new best friend, and head back to the Hilton.

The rest of the afternoon belongs to the infinity pool — overlooking the Nile, complete with a swim-up bar, and so beautiful you might not move for hours. Let the sun dry your skin, order another drink, and just exist for a while.

That night, you visit Karnak Temple — and nothing prepares you for it. This is the largest ancient religious complex ever built, constructed and expanded by over 30 pharaohs across nearly 2,000 years. The Great Hypostyle Hall alone contains 134 massive columns, some standing over 70 feet tall, carved floor to ceiling with hieroglyphs that tell stories of gods, battles, and divine power.

You somehow make it back to the Hilton and into bed. Get whatever sleep you can. Because tomorrow, you're getting up before sunrise.



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### Day Eight: Sunrise & Balloons Over Luxor

Once again, you get to choose your own adventure — and once again, there's no wrong answer. You can saddle up for a sunrise horseback ride through Luxor's West Bank, or opt for a hot air balloon ride instead. But if you chose the ride — and you know you did — here's what happens:

It's dark when you begin the ride; you can't see the road ahead, and you have to trust your horse and guides completely — which, after these past few days, there's no question. You gallop through the pre-dawn stillness of Luxor's West Bank. Then, as you cross a bridge, one of the guides gives a signal — and suddenly, everywhere, hot air balloons begin to inflate. Countless balloons all at once, glowing like giant lanterns against the dark sky. They rise all around you, and are in awe as the sun and the balloons lift together into a sky turning gold and pink. It is, without exaggeration, one of the most beautiful things you will ever see.

You ride on to the Colossi of Memnon — two enormous statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, nearly 60 feet tall and over 3,400 years old. A delicious breakfast at a local café refuels everything, and then you're greeted by your tour guide: a man known as Egyptiana Jones, dressed exactly the way you'd hope. He takes you to Medinet Habu — the mortuary temple of Ramses III and one of Luxor's best-kept secrets. While tourists flood the Valley of the Kings, this place is often blissfully quiet. The walls are covered in some of the most vivid painted reliefs in all of Egypt — brilliant blues, deep reds, and golden yellows that look like they were painted yesterday, not three thousand years ago.

Then you climb back on your horses and ride through the city to the stables. This is the last ride. You hug your horse. You thank your guides. And you don't say goodbye. It's until next time, because you already know you will be back for more.

Photo Credit @Zahnarzt.marquardt



### The Aswan Extension

Think the adventure is over? Not even close. For those who aren't ready to say goodbye just yet, the journey continues south to Aswan — where the Nile widens, golden granite boulders frame the riverbanks, and the air hums with the warmth of Nubian culture.

Your home base is Artika Wadi Kiki, a collection of traditional Nubian houses set right on the Nile — walls painted in vivid blues, oranges, and earthy reds, handmade from mud and brick, topped with soft Nubian domes. The Nile here is a completely different river: clearer, quieter, wilder, with green islands floating between the banks and a pace that slows to something almost sacred. Your King Nile View room earns every letter of that name — you fall asleep to the sound of the just the Nile and the night.

From here, you venture deep into the desert to the mighty temples of Abu Simbel — four colossal statues of Ramses II carved from solid rock over 3,000 years ago, staggering in scale and rescued stone by stone during the building of the Aswan High Dam. Back in Aswan, a Nile cruise on a charming wooden boat turns golden as you drift past granite boulders and palm-fringed banks — and then you jump in and actually swim in the Nile, cool and impossibly clear.

Your final morning brings the Temple of Philae — dedicated to the goddess Isis, resting on a small island, reached by water taxi. Then it's the marketplace, where you haggle for spices, textiles, and handmade jewelry, and find the papyrus shops where you can have your name painted inside a cartouche — your name in the same hieroglyphic script as Ramses and Cleopatra. The grand finale: lunch at the Sofitel Legend Old Cataract, the iconic hotel where Agatha Christie wrote much of *Death on the Nile*, perched high above the river with sweeping views and Moorish grandeur that makes you want to whisper. Having your last meal here, overlooking the same Nile view that inspired one of the greatest mystery novels ever written, feels like the most perfect ending imaginable. Aswan lets you go gently — golden light, palm-fringed banks, and the feeling that time itself has decided to slow down and savor the view, one last time, just for you.

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