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MAGICAL EGYPT TOURS with John Anthony West

MAGICAL EGYPT INTENSIVE STUDY TOURS

Led by John Anthony West

Ancient Egypt is like no other civilization. Join me on a personally guided visit to the sacred places of Egypt. Discover in magnificent art and architecture the work of an advanced science of the spirit. Experience the great monuments and temples of this ancient land as they were meant to be seen and used by the Egyptians themselves.

[Travel Tips and Reading List](#)

Currently Scheduled Egypt Trips for 2009:



- October 25 Departure USA
- November 6 Departure from Cairo
- February 16 Departure USA
- February 28 Departure from Cairo

[book your trip](#)

[see link below for reservations](#)

Magical Egypt Tour Itinerary

Regular Tour Price: \$4795*# single person, double occupancy (includes airfare, hotel accommodations, domestic air travel, tips and services - unless specifically mentioned otherwise).

*** Due to an added day on the trip, the descending dollar and sharply increased airfares and hotel rates, I've been obliged to raise the price for this tour. Sorry, but it can't be helped.**

While plane fares are locked in, there could be unannounced additional taxes levied, fuel surcharges and security fees applied. If that happens I will have to pass those on to clients, but these will not be exorbitant.

Day 1: Depart USA for Cairo, Egypt

6:30 PM EgyptAir departure from New York JFK. Check in at least 3 hours prior to departure time. **Prior to departure check up-to-the-moment security regulations.**

Day 2: Cairo, Giza

Arrive Cairo airport midday. Tour representatives see us through customs and baggage claim. Air-conditioned coach through Cairo to our 5-star hotel in Giza near the Great Pyramid. Introductory briefing en route. Dinner on your own.

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Day 3: Giza Pyramids and The Great Sphinx

Early breakfast at our hotel. Private 8 AM visit to the Sphinx enclosure. We spend about 2 hours in and around the enclosure, the Great Sphinx and its adjacent temples. Lots of geology, but this establishes the validity of the 'Lost Civilization' theory, important for everything that follows. Also, discussions of the many (usually unacknowledged) mysteries involved in building these amazing structures, what lies behind their extraordinary energetic/emotional impact, etc.

We work our way up the Plateau, past the Old Kingdom tombs of nobles and notables, toward the pyramids. More important evidence along the way (e.g. the 'Tomb' of Khentkaus, a Queen of Menkaure [builder of Third Pyramid], and also, because few tourists visit these places, we're on our own and get a good visceral sense of what was going on in these early times.

Up on the Plateau around the pyramids much more evidence (architectural/ geological) for the 'Lost Civilization'. Huge 200 ton paving blocks we could barely move today, etc. Two distinct masonry styles and therefore two distinct building periods...

This takes us to between noon and 1 PM, depending upon how much input there is from group members. Always lots of questions and if anyone in the group has expertise relevant to and/or complementing my explanations, discussions can be long, lively, detailed and instructive.

Then a visit to the so-called Solar Boat of Khufu, his amazing, intact, meticulously re-configured funerary boat, which is both a demonstration of the extremely sophisticated woodworking techniques in place 2500 BC and also of the power and wisdom of anchoring the spiritual quest in the material/ physical world.

When the Quest is relegated solely to the intellect, as in the case of much contemporary mysticism, it tends to become abstract and effectively ineffective.

Lunch (included) at an excellent local seafood restaurant. By now it's 3 PM and that's enough for most of us!

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Day 4: Sakkara and Dahshur

6 AM wake-up call, 7:30 departure. Essential to start punctually to get there at opening bell! 20 minute bus ride to the Sakkara Necropolis.

We start with the Old Kingdom Tombs of the Nobles of the Vth and VIth Dynasties (ca. 2350 – 2200 BC) with their vibrant, detailed but apparently mundane 'scenes of daily life'. They are most assuredly scenes of daily life, but more importantly they are actually metaphors for transformation. (Even the academics are coming around to recognizing this deeper significance, though generally they understand neither the meaning nor the validity of 'transformation'.)

Sakkara gets crowded early so we sometimes have to change our sequence of visits to try to avoid the crowds or even choose alternative tombs to visit.

After the Noble Tombs, we go to the Sakkara Step Pyramid Complex itself, built in the reign of the IIIrd Dynasty Pharaoh Zoser (ca. 2700 BC), under the direction of his genius Master of All Trades, the

legendary Imhotep.

Sakkara is supposed to be the first major stone complex in Egypt, and for that matter, the world, but the sophistication of its plan and the virtuosity of its execution makes it hard to believe that it's been invented on the spot – like imagining the 2008 Porsche just happened out of the blue.

We discuss Egypt as a 'legacy' not as a 'development'.

Sakkara is also remarkably 'modern' looking, as though it were a new campus for, say, The University of Arizona designed by Frank Lloyd Wright on a particularly inspired day. There are reasons for this...

The interior of the Necropolis enclosure was the scene of the curious Heb Sed festival, which is to be understood as an initiatic process; the culmination of a life of inner work, rather than as proof that the King was physically fit to go on reigning (the usual explanation).

More evidence for the 'Lost Civilization Theory' (henceforth LCT) close by the Step Pyramid itself. Examples of calculated resonance at work in certain strange shrines. The theme of 'transformation' expressed in innumerable metaphors. Complex in expression but simple in its goal, Egypt is a One Issue Civilization – virtually **all** of its creative energy is devoted to the quest for immortality and the development and perfecting of the soul. In words this may sound as though Egypt gets repetitive, but actually it doesn't, any more than successive concerts or baseball games or chess matches are repetitive. The infinite variations complement/implement the exercise.

Lunch included, at a delightful local kabob restaurant. And then on to the Red and the Bent Pyramids at Dahshur. The Red Pyramid, with its resonating main chambers and earlier megalithic third chamber (academics call this a 'plundered tomb chamber'. It is neither plundered, nor a tomb chamber) is the second most spectacular pyramid after the Great Pyramid.

The Bent Pyramid is a generally unrecognized architectural marvel. 60% of the casing blocks are still in place, so you get a sense of what a completed pyramid once looked like. The construction methods needed to build it defy explanation...

If there are any architects or builders in our group, have a go at it.

En route back to our hotel, we visit a local factory where children weave beautiful carpets colorful, original wall hangings.

Dinner on your own. Try one of the excellent Giza or Cairo restaurants.

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Day 5: Cairo to Luxor

Breakfast and mid-day or early afternoon -as opposed to early morning- flight to Luxor (we hope!). Check into our 5 Star hotel.

6 PM visit to the floodlit Luxor Temple, the 'Temple of Man, where R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz developed his revolutionary 'Symbolist' interpretation of ancient Egypt over the course of fifteen years' work at the site. This prodigious scholarly work overturns virtually everything we have been taught in our schools regarding the level of sophistication attained in very ancient times, which in turn calls into question much that we consider axiomatic about 'Progress.' In Schwaller's Symbolist interpretation, science, art, religion and philosophy are fused into one vast, coherent doctrine – quite the opposite of what we experience today. Luxor is the temple that best expresses that great fusion.

We discuss and demonstrate what 'sacred' architecture is, and just why it works the way it does. We begin to understand the importance of Number, Geometry, Proportion, Harmony and Measure in Art, Architecture ... and life itself.

By 7:30 the Temple is usually emptying out and we have it nearly to ourselves. In a chamber that represents the vocal chords we see what is in effect a depiction of the 'Annunciation', the 'god' Amon telling the Queen Mother that she will bear a 'Divine' child, 1350 years before this becomes central to Christianity. (All along we will be drawing attention to Egyptian doctrines, myths and metaphors that are normally associated with Christianity. Gurdjieff called Egypt 'esoteric Christianity'.) When the temple closes at 9PM, we leave.

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Day 6: Luxor – West Bank

After breakfast we cross the Nile (30 minute bus ride) for a long day exploring the West Bank of the Nile (the entire area, east and west, was 'Thebes' to the ancient Greeks) The West Bank is entirely funerary in significance: here we have the massive funerary complexes of the New Kingdom, the Valley of the Kings where all New Kingdom pharaohs were buried, vividly decorated tombs of the Nobles - related thematically to those we've seen at Sakkara but markedly different in execution and expression. This is a day much devoted to discussions of Egypt's complex and mysterious funerary beliefs and practices.

If we are mystified, we're not alone. Even to the new Kingdom Egyptian scribes recording and reworking earlier texts, they are 'mysterious' but in the broadest sense they're comprehensible; they combine two separate but intertwined doctrines: the path of Horus (which becomes the doctrine of 'salvation' in Christian doctrine) and the doctrine of reincarnation (which corresponds loosely to the Vedic/Buddhist tradition). Our own Church of Progress tells us that both paths lead nowhere, so they are more or less dismissed as mumbo jumbo or studied as curiosities. But if the C of P priesthood cannot make any sense of them, we can -- and the experience of the visit, however unfamiliar the means of expression, is nevertheless vivid. Even the --to us-- bizarre practice of elaborate mummification starts to make sense.

We visit (not necessarily in this order) the great (but controversial) Queen Hatshepsut's Temple of **DEIR EL BAHARI**, another structure, like Sakkara, with a peculiarly 'modern' look to it. To the ancient Egyptians it was 'the most splendid of all' ...and so it must have been. Even in its present state it's pretty spectacular.

We also explore the Ramesseum, mortuary temple of Ramesses the Great, with the fallen colossus that inspired Shelley's famous poem, *Ozymandias*, (or instead Medinet Habu, the Beethoven's Fifth of Egyptian architecture, which is both the Alpha and Omega of Egyptian Cosmology. It is here that the Eight Primordials come into existence. These are shadowy entities, male and female (portrayed as serpents or frogs), which precede manifestation, and play roles remarkably like the 'vibrating strings' of cutting-edge String or Torsion Theory. And it is also here that storehouses in ancient times held the finished treasures of Egypt: furniture, unguents, musical instruments, jewelry, etc., in other words the fruits of all that transformational earthly creative activity. Medinet Habu is thus both planting time and harvest time. A little shrine, dedicated to the princess Amenerdais, Head of the Chantresses (6th C. BC) was the inspiration for Verdi's *Aida*.

We have an early lunch at a lovely typically rustic, outdoor Egyptian local restaurant and then on to the **VALLEY OF THE KINGS**. Avoiding crowds in the West Bank is problematical but when it's lunch for everyone else we'll be relatively crowd-free at this otherwise thronged site. And we may be able to get special permission (without extra cost, or maybe not much) to one or another of the closed but particularly significant tombs. Our reactions to these unfamiliar places could prove instructive.

Back to our East Bank hotel.

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Day 7: Dendera and Abydos

Unfortunately, we have to do this with an armed security convoy which gives us less time than we'd like, since everyone else in the convoy wants to spend half an hour in each of these places and get back to go shopping, or else do nothing. But we haggle for extra time and usually get enough to not feel short changed.

Abydos Temple, built by Seti I, father of Ramesses the Great, is one of the highest expressions of New Kingdom relief work, most in excellent condition, and some with the colors still vibrant. This is an Osiris temple; Osiris representing the cosmic principle of becoming and return, and also of the divinity immanent within humanity. En route to Abydos (2 ½ - 3 hr drive) I talk at length about the Osiris myth and its relevance to our time, and any other time. The Osiris/Isis/Horus/Seth cycle, historicized, becomes the central doctrine of Christianity, then later the basis of Hamlet, and most recently, Disney's *Lion King*.

Selective effacing of certain reliefs within the temple is always attributed to Christian fanatics, bent upon destroying the temple's pagan 'magic'. But it is no such thing. More on this anon and on site.

Also behind Seti's Temple of Abydos there is the **Oseirion**, one of the most powerful, mysterious and resonant places of all Egypt, and almost certainly a major piece in the Lost Civilization Theory.

DENDERA TEMPLE

Doggy bag lunch en route.

Dendera is entirely Ptolemaic/Graeco-Roman, (ca. 150 BC – 80 AD) consecrated to Hathor, goddess of love, music, dance and sexuality (equated by the Greeks to Aphrodite). Hathor is also the Cosmic Feminine, Mistress of the Cycles of Time and Mother of the Universe.

It's here that we get our first real taste of what time is doing to Egypt. While the knowledge of geometry/harmony/proportion/ and measure is still intact, the exquisite and easy virtuosity of New Kingdom art and sculpture has turned unwieldy, clumsy and uninspired. It is a fascinating lesson for us, watching Egypt degenerate in front of our eyes and it is the first among many examples. Apart from an exercise in art history, on the scholarly/philosophical/scientific level, in and of itself, it disproves the egregious fiction we've all been brought up with: that history is a fundamentally steady, linear and gradual ascent from primitive beginnings to our enlightened selves with our hydrogen bombs and bobble-head dolls.

In Egypt we see exactly the opposite happening, and this calls for some serious discussion and in some cases a major revision of certain notions we've all had drummed incessantly into our heads in our so-called 'educational system'.

But regarding Dendera, however corrupted the art, the temple retains its power. An inscription in a crypt closed to the public declares that Dendera is based 'upon a plan found on a goatskin scroll written in the time of the Companions of Horus', one of the two long, perhaps-not-fictional periods the Egyptians said preceded the rise of their own Dynastic Egypt. So Dendera would be another good place to go looking for still more evidence for the LCT. Like all 'goddess' temples, Dendera was a healing site; a ruinous mud brick structure adjacent to the temple was once a sanatorium where dream analysis was carried out.

While reactions to Luxor Temple and Abydos are invariably very positive, Dendera often gets polarized reviews. For some, despite the inferior art work, it is a favorite temple, a place of profound cosmic peace, for others it is dark, gloomy, even spooky. It will be interesting to test our group's reactions.

The wholesale, but still selective effacing of relief work prevailing here demonstrates who is responsible: it is the Egyptian priesthood at some later date and for reasons of their own effectively 'decommissioning' the temple.

We could use more time here, but we're locked into the convoy's schedule and also the official temple closing time, and not much can be done about it.

Back to Luxor (about an hour's drive).

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Day 8: Luxor: Karnak Temple/ Luxor Museum

Very early 6 AM visit to the vast **KARNAK TEMPLE**, consecrated to Amon in his role of animator of form, the 'breath of life across the waters'.

Each major temple at Luxor represents one stage in their (and our!) cosmology, stages in the genesis of the universe. Huge joyous processions once connected one temple to another. So the Egyptians, through an act of conscious deliberate sympathetic magic, were themselves mimicking and therefore participating in the process of creation itself. We can no longer do this – we've lost the necessary magic spell to access it – but the power of these temples provides an echo, an inkling, an appreciation of what life had once been like, when a genuine civilization, itself in a cosmologically ordained descending octave, last prevailed.

The Hypostyle Hall at Karnak is one of the architectural wonders of the world, and there is much else there that is both emotionally/spiritually moving as well as intellectually revelatory. If Luxor is The Temple of Man, Karnak is the Temple of Organic Creation and the Hypostyle Hall symbolizes this with its double banks of 9 x 7 gigantic columns. Those schooled in Number Symbolism should appreciate the significance of this curious numerical choice. .

We do a private meditation session in a secluded Sekhmet Chapel in the company of the great

Goddess's granite embodiment. We leave Karnak awed, humbled, exhilarated and ...very much looking forward to a late breakfast.

The rest of the day free ... for shopping and/or much needed rest and a late afternoon visit to the small but beautifully designed, masterpiece-rich Luxor Museum.

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Day 9: Luxor/Aswan

We go by intrusive but unavoidable bus convoy to Aswan. 3 ½ hour drive more or less. (We bring doggy bags or picnic supplies)

First to the **UNFINISHED OBELISK** at the ancient granite quarries, where a planned, half-excavated 1200 ton single block of granite failed to make it out of the bedrock. Here we get a good taste of Egyptian technology in action, and we believe we can explain here what is next to impossible to convey anywhere else in Egypt: how with very simple tools the Egyptians managed to accomplish what is practically impossible to accomplish even with modern machines...but even so, plenty of mysteries remain.

Then to **PHILAE TEMPLE**, consecrated to Isis in her role of Mother of Horus (the Christians changed her name to the Virgin Mary, but she's Isis, like it or not). Philae is on an island in the middle of the Nile (now it's the lake backed up behind the British 'Low Dam' built in 1904). Quintessentially feminine, it is one of the most beautiful and moving sites in all of Egypt, despite the relatively inelegant Ptolemaic relief work and the wholesale, but telling selective defacing. It's here that the transition of the ancient Egypt doctrine of Immortality segues almost seamlessly into Christianity as we observe.

Back to our Aswan Movenpick Hotel, elegantly modernized and refurbished on an island in the middle of the Nile, a (center-fielder's) stone's throw from shore. Neat place! There's a felucca ride – beautiful hour long boat sail on a picturesque little lateen-rigged sailboat around the purling, green island-studded Upper Nile. Later we visit the thronged Aswan Bazaar, part traditional Nubian, part, alas!, now touristy... but fun

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Day 10: Free Day with Abu Simbel Option

By popular request this day has been added to the itinerary. Let me explain.

Abu Simbel is high on the list of must-see Egyptian marvels, but...

When I had longer trips, we would bus down to Abu Simbel, spend overnight in the no-frills hotel there, cajole our way into a private session in the great temple in the evening, visit it again, privately, at sunrise when it's in its glory and head back to Aswan.

But tightened security measures, a dreadful sound and light show, and hundreds of tourists streaming off the new cruise boats plying Lake Nasser between Aswan and mooring there in the evening have made that Abu Simbel evening visit impossible. The sunrise visit is now also unmanageable. A fifty bus convoy heads from Aswan to be at Abu Simbel at opening time. And during the day, full planes shuttle back and forth between Aswan and the temple. In short, it is now next to impossible to experience this memorable place without throngs of people milling around. The much diminished temple experience combined with the time and considerable expense factor convinced me –with deep regret- to omit it from the itinerary. Even so, a number of people have said that despite all those mitigating factors, they would have liked to take the shuttle plane to see Abu Simbel. And since, by this time, some down time from our intensive pace would be deeply appreciated by others, I've added this extra day. (Abu Simbel option by plane, \$220)

Day 11: Cairo/Giza

Flight back to Cairo followed by a shopping expedition to the famed Khan el Khalili bazaar where much of the Egyptian handicrafts are produced. An ancient labyrinth of thronged little stalls and workshops, the bazaar is an experience in its own right. Leather, brass, hand blown glass, jewelry, fabrics, inlay work and much else to choose from. The workmanship is often excellent and bargains can be had -- if you bargain hard for them!

Check back into the Mena House Hotel

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Day 12: Cairo/Giza –Cairo Museum & Private Great Pyramid Meditation (optional) *

If possible (it can't be guaranteed) we do our Meditation Session before the Pyramid opens to the public. Then a late breakfast at our hotel, followed by a mid-morning visit to the Cairo Museum with its four thousand years of Egyptian masterpieces, including the priceless Tutankhamen galleries, the Akhenaton room and the greatest selection of incomparable Old Kingdom sculpture anywhere in the world.

The museum visit sums up and recapitulates the entire two week experience.

Farewell dinner.

* The Pyramid Meditation in the Great Pyramid is for many a profound, life-enhancing experience. But the price is a flat \$1800 (as this is written) based upon a group of fifteen. If less people sign on for the session the \$1800 gets divided up by whatever the number is.

Day 13: Cairo to New York

Early breakfast and departure for Cairo Airport and our flight back to New York Same day afternoon arrival.

Adios, Egypt! Though for many it proves to be Au Revoir.

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Note: The sequence of events listed in this itinerary is typical but not absolutely specific; the order may change from trip to trip depending upon local exigencies, unavoidable schedule changes, etc. But we visit all the sites listed, conditions permitting

Note: Shorter or longer private tours with John Anthony West are possible by arrangement

For those joining the group from outside the USA or utilizing air miles, see the LAND ONLY option described on the reservation form.

You may be interested for your peace of mind in reading a piece by on the [safety of traveling to Egypt](#) at this time. If you would like to read comments written by some who have already taken this trip, please [click here](#).

Click here for reservation form

Print version of Magical Egypt Tours schedule

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"If you do not see Egypt through 'symbolist' eyes, you do not see Egypt at all."

John Anthony West



"I feel I've been given passage on the barque of eternity -- steered by Consciousness and Action, or Magic."

John McGeehan



"Leaving it was like going into exile ... one of the many unique things about your trips is the combination of spiritual depth with intellectual rigour."

Lynda Whall, Lawrence Brightman



"The trip was absolutely incredible for me ... a life-changing experience."

Anne McGlynn



"The absolute highlight was being able to get into the Sphinx enclosure!!"

Mike Valetta



Now that I've returned, I turn grateful to your writings -- and those of Schwaller de Lubicz -- and my experience deepens, broadens, fills with meaning.

John McGeehan



"I've been on the standard tour of Egypt and it doesn't compare with your tour."

Mike Valetta

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