

EGYPT

Follow in the Footsteps of the Holy Family, Alexander the Great & Ancient Pharaohs

Egypt • October 18–31, 2026

A collaboration between aktiv planet & the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of Rochester

aktiv planet travel dispatch

EXPLORE BOLDLY. TRAVEL RESPECTFULLY.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare travelers not just for the journey ahead, but for meaningful, respectful engagement with the cultures, landscapes, and people they encounter. Through each dispatch, we aim to inspire curiosity, deepen understanding, and build a sense of shared adventure — empowering travelers to explore boldly, connect authentically, and move through the world with intention.

Purpose of an aktiv planet travel dispatch

An aktiv planet travel dispatch aims to:

1. Prepare with Purpose

It provides practical information and cultural context so travelers feel confident, informed, and grounded. From packing tips to etiquette guides, the dispatch ensures that everyone arrives not just ready to explore, but ready to connect.

2. Deepen Cultural Understanding

Each dispatch highlights the people, history, customs, and unique spirit of the destination. It promotes respectful travel by fostering curiosity and awareness — turning a trip into a meaningful cultural exchange.

3. Build Excitement

It builds anticipation and unity among travelers. Through sneak peeks of the itinerary, local phrases, and fun facts, the dispatch fuels that "we're-really-going!" energy and invites travelers to imagine themselves there.

4. Strengthen the aktiv planet Community

The dispatch encourages communication and collaboration — travelers are reminded to check shared documents, use the questions section, and stay engaged with the aktiv planet team and each other.

5. Deliver in aktiv planet's Voice

Written in a tone that's warm, curious, respectful, and just a little playful, the dispatch reflects aktiv planet's core values: responsible adventure, cultural respect, curiosity, and connection.



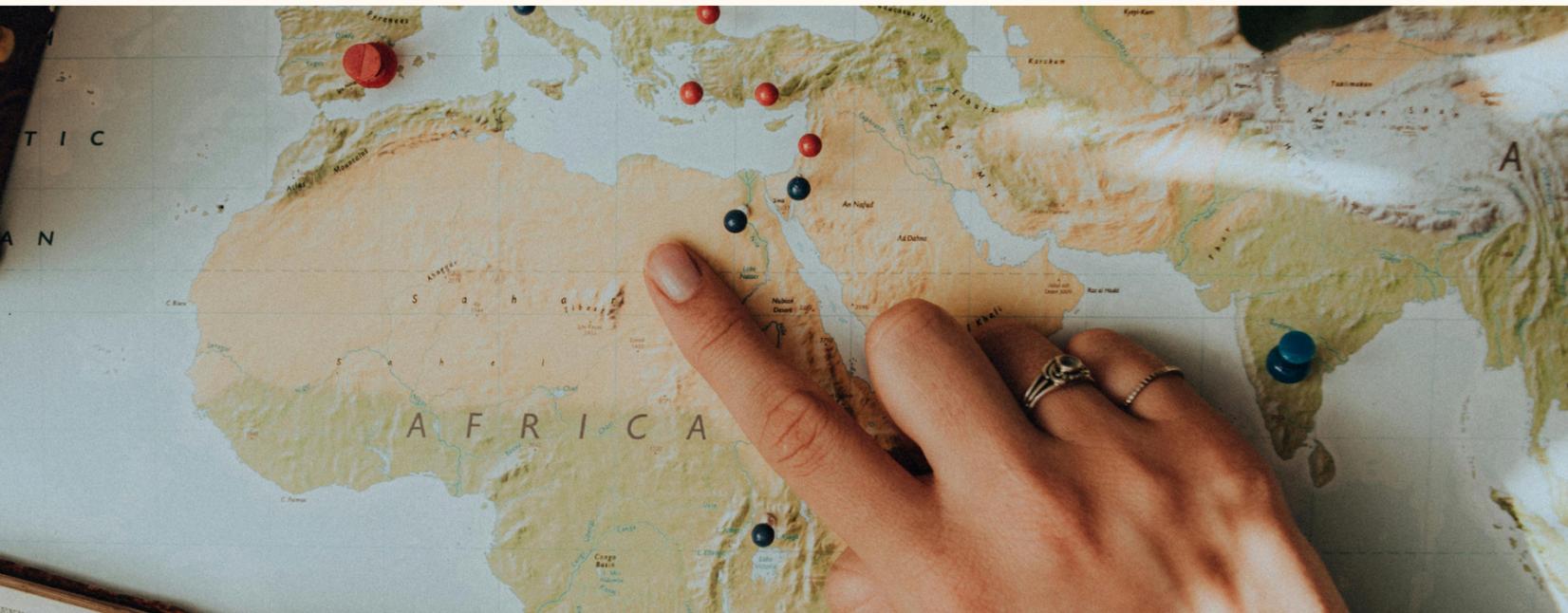
A Journey Through Egypt: From Ancient Beginnings to Today



Before discovering Egypt with your own eyes and all your senses, aktiv planet would like to introduce you to Egypt through its history, with a special focus on its Greek and Christian past. With so many thousands of years to explore, this is only a succinct overview, but we trust it will pique your curiosity and enrich your experience when you finally set foot in this extraordinary land.

We believe that having a general idea of a place's history before you travel allows you to see more deeply and connect more meaningfully. When you know the stories behind the monuments, the people, and the faith traditions, the sites come alive. A temple becomes more than stone; a church becomes more than walls; and a bustling street becomes part of a long continuum of human life. Of course, this travel dispatch is not meant to replace the immense knowledge of the guides who will accompany us, but rather to give you a broad foundation on which their insights will build. With this background in mind, your journey through Egypt will not only be visually stunning, but also intellectually and spiritually engaging.

So let's begin our journey through Egypt's story...



The Dawn of Civilization



Egypt is often called the “**cradle of civilization**” and for good reason. Along the fertile banks of the Nile River, some of humanity’s earliest achievements in writing, agriculture, and statecraft unfolded. Around 3100 BCE, King Narmer (AKA Menes) unified Upper and Lower Egypt, giving rise to the first of many dynasties.

For nearly 3,000 years, **pharaohs** ruled a land defined by monumental architecture, spiritual devotion, and extraordinary advancements. The Old Kingdom (c. 2700-2200 BCE) gave us the iconic pyramids of Giza. The Middle Kingdom (c. 2050-1710 BCE) emphasized culture and art. The New Kingdom (c. 1550-1070 BCE) brought expansion, wealth, and famous rulers such as Hatshepsut, Akhenaten, Tutankhamun, and Ramses II.

The **Nile** itself was the heartbeat of Egypt: its annual floods brought life to the desert, ensuring rich harvests. The river also linked people and trade, creating a sense of unity and identity that carried Egypt through centuries of change.

Tip: Armelle’s favorite thing to do on a Nile cruise is to sit on the top deck and simply watch life unfolding along the river—farmers tending fields, fishermen casting their nets, children playing on the banks—scenes that have changed little over the centuries.

Alexander the Great and the Founding of Alexandria



Egypt's grandeur inevitably attracted conquerors, from the Persians to Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies, and finally the Romans after Cleopatra VII's death in 30 BCE.

In 332 BCE, **Alexander the Great** swept into Egypt, welcomed by many as a liberator from Persian rule. He declared himself Pharaoh, blending his Greek heritage with Egyptian traditions. Most significantly, he founded Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast, a city that would soon become one of the greatest in the ancient world.

Alexandria, one of our visits, was designed as a cosmopolitan hub, linking the cultures of **Greece** and Egypt. It was here that the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, stood as a beacon for sailors. It was also home to the Library of Alexandria, envisioned as a repository of all the world's knowledge. Though the library was eventually destroyed, its legend endures as a symbol of human curiosity and learning. Ready to visit the **Bibliotheca Alexandrina**?

Alexander himself left Egypt soon after, never to return, but his name lived on in the city he created. After his death in 323 BCE, his general Ptolemy seized control, ushering in three centuries of Greek rule under the Ptolemaic Dynasty.



The Ptolemaic Dynasty and Cleopatra



The **Ptolemies** ruled Egypt from 305 to 30 BCE, blending **Greek** and Egyptian traditions in unique ways. They portrayed themselves as Pharaohs, worshipped Egyptian gods, and built magnificent temples, yet they also introduced Greek culture, language, and governance.

The dynasty reached its height under Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who expanded Alexandria's influence as a center of trade and learning. Greek **philosophers**, **mathematicians**, and **scientists** (like Euclid and Archimedes) were drawn to the city, making it the intellectual capital of the Mediterranean.

Perhaps the most famous Ptolemaic ruler was **Cleopatra VII**, whose intelligence, charisma, and political skill made her one of history's most iconic queens. Fluent in several languages (including Egyptian, unlike many of her predecessors), she sought to preserve Egypt's independence amidst the rising power of Rome. Her relationships with Julius Caesar and later Mark Antony tied Egypt's fate to Rome's destiny.

With Cleopatra's death in 30 BCE, the Ptolemaic Dynasty ended, and Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire. Yet the Greek legacy lived on in Egypt's architecture, philosophy, and cultural life, layers that you will witness when you visit sites like Kom Ombo and Alexandria today.



The Rise of Christianity in Egypt



Egypt played a central role in the development of **Christianity**. According to tradition, the Holy Family sought refuge here when fleeing King Herod, creating a sacred connection that endures to this day.

By the first century CE, Christianity had spread across the Roman Empire, and our group will explore many of Egypt's sacred Christian sites, including the **Church of the Virgin Mary** in Ain Shams, an important site where the Holy Family is believed to have passed, as well as other historic churches and monasteries that bring the stories of early Christianity to life.

Egypt also became a **land of saints and monks**. The desert, once seen as barren, transformed into a spiritual landscape where seekers of faith retreated to live in solitude and prayer. Figures like Saint Anthony the Great and Saint Pachomius pioneered monasticism, a tradition that continues across Christian communities around the world.

Despite periods of persecution under Roman emperors, Christianity thrived as communities met in homes, deserts, and hidden spaces. By the fourth century, after Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity, **Egypt became the heart of Christian spirituality**, a center for scholarship, monastic life, and pilgrimage.



The Coptic Heritage



Today, Egypt's Christian heritage lives on in the **Coptic Orthodox Church**. "Coptic" comes from the Greek word Aigyptios, which means Egyptian, and reflects the deep roots of Christianity in this land. Copts trace their lineage back to those earliest followers of Saint Mark.

Coptic churches are known for their rich liturgy, haunting chants, and beautiful iconography. Many of the earliest monasteries still stand in the desert, including the monasteries of **Wadi Natrun**, which will be one of our fascinating visits.

Christianity in Egypt was not without challenges. Following the Arab conquest in the 7th century, Islam became the dominant faith, and over the centuries, the Christian population declined. Still, the Copts preserved their traditions, language, and faith. Today, about **10%** of Egyptians identify as Coptic Christians, making them the largest Christian community in the Middle East.

Our group will be guided through Coptic Cairo, home to churches like the **Church of the Virgin Mary** in Maadi, where it is believed the Holy Family boarded a boat to Upper Egypt, and the **Church of Saint Sergius** (believed to be a resting place of the Holy Family). This special day will offer you a vivid reminder of Egypt's role in the Christian story.



Egypt Today



Modern Egypt is a tapestry woven from its many layers of history. From pharaonic temples and Greco-Roman ruins to Coptic churches and Islamic mosques, the country reflects centuries of **continuity** and **change**.

Cairo, a bustling metropolis, balances ancient treasures with modern life. While we are in the capital, our group will explore Old Cairo with its historic churches and ancient streets, the **Salah Eldeen Citadel**, and the **Alabaster Mosque of Muhammad Ali**, while Luxor and Aswan will transport us into the world of the pharaohs.

As you can see, Egypt's story is layered, complex, and endlessly fascinating. From the world of the pharaohs to the wisdom of the Greeks, from the rise of Christianity to the vibrant modern nation of today, Egypt has always been a land where civilizations meet and history leaves its mark.

During **your trip**, you will walk through history, touch it, and feel it all around you. The temples, churches, mosques, and streets you will explore are living chapters of a story that continues today. At aktiv planet, we hope this introduction has sparked your curiosity. The true depth of Egypt will be revealed to you by the extraordinary guides and the unforgettable moments you will experience firsthand.



Practical Information – Accommodations & Travel Insurance



Hotel in Cairo

aktiv planet would like to accommodate you as much as possible and unless you have requested a single occupancy room at the hotel, the rooms will welcome 2 people. We would like to know what your bedding preference is: 2 beds or 1 bed? Note that most hotels in Egypt offer a full or queen but rarely a king size bed. aktiv planet does not guarantee that your preferred bed configuration will be available but we will share the information with the hotel.

For your cabin during our **Nile cruise**, please also provide your preference, and I will communicate it to the company. Again, we will do our best to accommodate your choices.

*Please provide Demosthenes Euclid at
agocnyyouth@gmail.com with
your full name + your companion's full name
(as on your passports) and your bedding preference
no later than 31 October 2025*

Travel Insurance

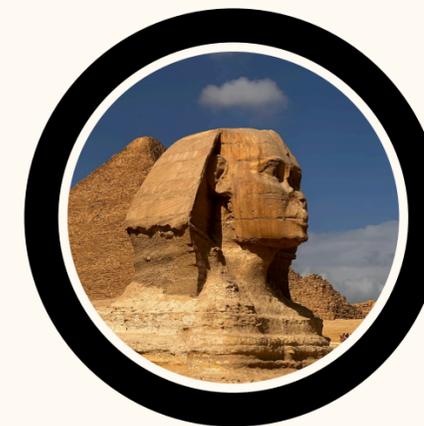
It is essential that you **protect yourself** and your trip with travel insurance. There are many options out there, and aktiv planet recommends that you carefully review coverage, ensuring that it matches your needs, before purchasing whatever insurance will best respond to your needs.

Contact Us



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egypt



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REMINDER

Contact Demosthenes Euclid at agocnyyouth@gmail.com to:

- Make your second deposit **NO LATER THAN 30 September 2025**
- Provide all required traveler details so we can keep everything running smoothly

Let the journey
transform you.

