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Best time to visit Egypt

by: Bill Benson



No question, the Great Pyramids of the long lost Pharaohs are a must see. They are on just about everyone's bucket list, but when you ask people who have just returned from that must-see, trip of a lifetime how it was many an answer will be returned with just one word. Hot. And so it is. Egypt is located on the eastern fringe of the great African deserts and it certainly does get warm. But it's a dry heat some will say. Whatever. [Aswan](#) is 108 degrees in July is brutal no matter the near zero humidity. If you are the odd type who prefers to keep sunstroke to a minimum, there is a simple solution to this dilemma. Visit the Pharaoh's Land in winter.

During the first two months of the year the average daytime temperature in [Cairo](#) is a pleasant 65 degrees Fahrenheit. In Lower Egypt a quite enjoyable 70 degrees Fahrenheit. This shirt sleeve weather allows the Indiana Jones in us all to crawl through the most stifling of Kufu's Pyramid corridors in Giza or the confining Tutankhamen's tomb in Thebes without falling prey to the clutches of Anubis, like all those cursed and sweaty tomb robbers. You can walk amongst the redwood sized pillars of Karnak and under the magnificent statues of Luxor, without even a deodorant change. Sure, the desert nights get a bit cold but even during a ride up the Nile on the open deck of a Felucca, a comfy extra blanket is all you need.

The winter months also make exploring the fantastic dunes of the Great Sand Sea or the majestic barren history of the Sinai enjoyable, without the survival classes. Bedouin nomads will lead you to their oasis and upon camping out under the night sky, reveal a heaven of stars you never thought possible. After hiking Mt. Sinai in the evening, you can wake to see the sunrise turn a rocky wasteland beautiful and climb down in the cool morning to pay homage to a once very hot bush. Before leaving the Sinai be sure to head over to Dahab for a quiet off season backpacker scene. Enjoy delicious karkaday tea and tahina dip while resting on pillows under a warm, not hot, coastal sun. If you don't mind adding a little cold water to the adventure be sure to try some scuba diving at this under the Red Sea paradise.



Another perfect reason to visit Egypt in winter is that its very literary jewel on the Mediterranean empties in the colder months. Yes, come see Alexander the Great's old library and modern Egypt's spectacular new one without the crowds. With all the fair weather visitors back to work in Cairo you can peacefully walk the great Corniche along its Eastern Harbor visiting the wonderful Al Mursi Mosque and old Fort Quaitby. As you look out on the harbor, picture all the history, imagine the fleets of Alexander, Antony and Cleopatra and the more recent British Dreadnoughts. If you want to experience some of the history yourself go scuba dive the underwater remains of the great Pharos Lighthouse, or explore the ancient site below Pompey's Pillar. Later that night walk the vibrant Alexandria streets and enjoy some kofta or strong Turkish coffee at Pastroudis.

Egypt has so much to do, so many amazing things to see that most visitors don't know where to begin, but before you pick the sights be sure to pick the right month. Before the sandstorms of March and the blinding heat of summer, before the tour group attacks of fall and the holiday getaways, winter is the right time to visit and hear 'Welcome to Egypt'.

Guest writer [Bill Benson](#) chronicled his travels around the world and continues to share trip planning advice, photos and stories that he gathered along the way.

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