

## *By Paddlewheel Steamer Down the Nile*

### *March 13 - 24, 2011*

*In 1917 the last King of Egypt ordered an elegant River Cruiser to be built as a small floating guest house to entertain visiting dignitaries, such as European royal families, generals & diplomats. The boat was intentionally small to create an intimate feel, and it was elegantly appointed, with mahogany and brass used inside, spacious covered decks outside, and powered by the very latest steam engine. Even after the King abdicated, the succeeding rulers of Egypt recognized the beauty of the vessel and it continued to be used for official government hospitality well into the 20th century. Coal disappeared as the power*



*source, but the petrol powered steam engine still belches steam from the vessel, reminding passengers of what travel was like in days gone by. Now massive modern cruisers with discos and casinos fly past the Karim, in a hurry to be somewhere, but the passengers are all standing on their deck, gawking at the charming small paddlewheel boat, envying the 28 people who are enjoying "time travel" to an era long gone in the rest of the world. To maintain a high quality of service, there are 29 crew members to care for the needs of 28 passengers.*

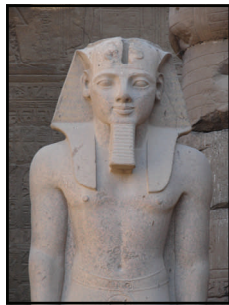
*This journey on that vessel, the SS Karim, weaves together the magical allure of two eras: the unhurried elegance of travel by slow paddlewheel steamer, and the magnificent sites of a fabled land. The turning of the paddlewheels takes you back on a water road through a land that looks much as it did hundreds, if not thousands of years ago. Farmers and children on donkeys, fisherman in small boats, and shy villagers*



*smile and wave. Groves of date palms, bananas, mangos, avocados and fields of corn, wheat and other crops line the river, occasionally interspersed by simple villages of mud brick homes. These small villages are in the footprints of previous villages that have existed on the river's edge since antiquity, and are remarkably unchanged. There are old men smoking the hookah in the village square, women minding infants, and children of all ages tending donkeys, cattle, and shepherding sheep. The Egyptians are naturally friendly and we are greeted by smiles and waves. Because we are travelling in a low draft, flat bottomed, smaller vessel, we can sail closer to shore for a better view.*



*The Pharaohs left a legacy in stone for Egypt that is unrivalled in any other country in the world. They competed from generation to generation to exceed the scale and number of monumental statues and temples built by their predecessors; when they couldn't out-build them they simply erased their own! The overall collection is so extensive to see everything: even a year spent exploring couldn't achieve that. I have been and I have personally taken 150 people to knowledge to select the best possible opportunities to create a special visit to some of the most important & beautiful sites for you. I am proud to be one of only 3 people in the world who can charter the Karim, and one of just a few individuals who arrange individually crafted itineraries to Egypt instead of pre-packaged tours, and I only offer this trip once every 3 years. I'm always looking to improve on previous trips, and here is what I have planned for March 2011:*



***Saturday March 12th:*** *Depart the US on an overnight flight to Cairo, Egypt. Because of the large number of time zones, it is advisable to have a stopover in your journey in someplace like London, Paris or Frankfurt, where there are non-stop flights onward to Cairo.*

***Sunday March 13th:*** *Arrival in Cairo, clear Egyptian Customs, and take a taxi to our hotel, which is only 5 minutes from the Terminal. The evening is free, and I try to meet people at the hotel when they arrive.*

***Monday March 14th:*** *We stay near the Cairo Airport so that we can catch an early flight to Luxor, the ancient Egyptian capital of Thebes. My regular Guide, Essam, will meet us in Luxor and we begin sight-*

seeing on arrival with the enormous Temple of Amun at Karnak, which is the size of approximately 11 Medieval European Cathedrals. For many generations each Pharaoh added a building or monument of some kind to Karnak, so we enter thru an avenue of ram-headed Sphinxes leading to cavernous halls of massive columns, obelisks 6 stories tall, massive statues, side-temples, a sacred lake, tall pylons, and a maze of niches for statues. The Temple complex was in fact a small city, focused on religion, but with the facilities for living incorporated into the complex. At one time the Amun Priests controlled much of the wealth of Egypt, rivaling the Pharaohs in some periods.



While we are touring Karnak, our luggage will be transferred to the Karim and set in our rooms. We board in time for our daily buffet lunch, and set sail upriver towards Esna, about 20 miles up-river, where we will moor for the night. After dinner (inside the dining room nightly) you might want to stroll thru a small market street to view a Ptolemaic period temple which is only a few hundred yards away from the river, but will be closed when we arrive. It is usually lighted and there is a see-through fence around it.

Tuesday March 15th: We continue up the Nile from Esna to Edfu, passing through a set of locks en route. In Edfu we board horse drawn carriages for a ride through city streets to the Temple of Horus, the falcon god. The temple had been mostly covered in sand in antiquity, and when it was excavated it was discovered that many of the wall engravings were preserved in great detail, including original color inside and out. It's an impressive temple, and the best part to me are the massive pylons, which must have inspired Cecil B. DeMille when he had the sets designed for "The Ten Commandments", because it looks like Yul Brynner will be sallying forth with his parade of chariots chasing the Hebrews at any moment. The crew of the Karim welcomes us back on board with a cool facecloth and warm Egyptian tea.



We have a satisfying afternoon of steaming up the Nile, with lunch served outdoors so we can enjoy the scenery. Afternoon Tea is served daily at 4 PM and can also be enjoyed on the covered after-deck. Towards evening we arrive at Kom Ombo where we should be able to enjoy the sunset, then moor overnight.

Wednesday March 16th: After breakfast we visit a unique symmetrical temple with back-to-back sanctuaries dedicated to two gods: the Temple of Sobek (the crocodile god) and Haroeris (an older Horus) in one building. The temple is from the Ptolemaic period, named for the Greek General Ptolemy, who inherited Egypt as his part of the Empire when Alexander the Great died. In Roman times there was a connection with medicine and there are interesting carved images of medical instruments. In the crypt a secret passage led to a place underneath the statues of the gods, where a priest would speak the god's commands to impressed and cringing worshippers.

We have a short sail with lunch outdoors to Aswan, our furthest point South on the Nile. This afternoon we visit the old Dam and an unfinished obelisk carved out of solid rock, which was left 3/4 finished when a crack was discovered while carving it. Afterwards we take a small boat to visit the Temple of Isis and other smaller temples on a sacred island; all of them were submerged by the old British dam, and later moved to this higher island. They are now beautifully situated in a natural setting which was sculpted to match their original locations, and the fact that they are on an island adds to their mystique, as it surely did in ancient times. Afterwards we return to the Karim for dinner and stay moored overnight in Aswan.



Thursday March 17th: This morning you may choose to take an Optional trip to visit the Temple of Abu Simbel, where massive statues of Ramses II have greeted the morning sun for 3,700 years. They are a shrine to his power, importance, divinity and his enormous ego. The fact that they survive is a testament to the determination of the world to save them when they were threatened by the flood waters of the rising Aswan dam in the 1960's. The trip involves a short flight to Abu Simbel, where you are met and transferred with our guide to the site. It is a remarkable place, unique in location and structure, and worth considering, especially if you do not plan to visit Egypt again in the future.



*We take a short felucca ride on the Nile, then have lunch as we sail Down the Nile to Edfu, where we moor for the night.*

*Friday March 18th: A full day of sailing brings us back to Luxor, where we first boarded the Karim. Luxor was named Thebes in ancient times, and it is where we have access to some of the best known sites, such as the Valley of the Kings, and to some lesser visited but more deserving sites.*

*A very civilized afternoon Tea Party: You are invited to attend in Costume, and channel the imagery of Miss Marple, Agatha Christie, Hercule Poirot, Lawrence of Arabia, or any other non-specific character from 1917 - 1939. A flapper? A dashing Colonel? Winston Churchill? A character from Agatha Christie's "Death on the Nile" perhaps? Come in a traditional Egyptian 'Galabiyya' (which are available for sale everywhere.) Sources for monocles are available on line for Hercule look-alikes. We'll have a group photo taken to commemorate your special adventure on the Nile.*

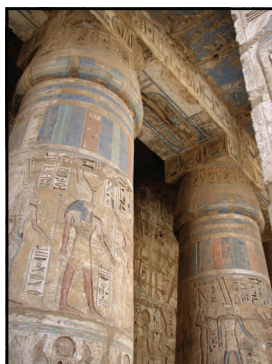


*Saturday March 19th: This morning we cross the Nile to the West side to visit the Valley of the Kings, where Howard Carter discovered the Tomb of Tut-ankh-amen. You'll have a 3 tomb ticket and can choose which ones you'd like to visit, although there is a surcharge to visit Tut's tomb, payable at the time. (Note it is one of the smallest and least important tombs in the Valley of the Kings.) Guides are not allowed to go with tourists into the tombs, but we'll suggest some good ones to choose from. Afterwards we visit the Temple of Hatshepsut, the famous female pharaoh, which is one of the classic architectural images of the world, with terraced levels of stone that dramatically unfold from the hillside. These are world-class sites, and important to see. We return to the Karim for lunch.*



*After lunch we go into Luxor town to see the Temple of Luxor. While not as massive as Karnak, it was important to the Pharaohs and has some unique statues of Ramses and Tut-ankh-amun. The Egyptian Antiquities Department is excavating and restoring an adjacent street lined with hundreds of ram-headed sphinxes that ran between Luxor & Karnak temples and was used for ceremonial processions.*

*Sunday March 20th: Today we take a coach trip to two very important temple-sites about 40 miles from Luxor: Abydos and Dendura. These are not on the standard tourist route, but in my opinion they are among the best sites in Egypt. At Dendura the Temple of Hathor - the cow goddess, goddess of joy and sexual love who the Greeks identified with Aphrodite - has an intact roofed temple with excellent columns in the "hypostyle" hall and sanctuary, and 32 treasure crypts. There is also a birthing house related to Horus, and on outside walls colossal reliefs showing Cleopatra and Caesarian, her son by Julius Caesar.*



*At Abydos the Temple of Seti I has a gallery of kings, with images of 76 Pharaohs...but purposefully omitting Hat-shep-sut and some politically incorrect Pharaohs (such as Akhenaton, the Pharaoh who tried to revise Egyptian religion in favor of monotheism.) We have lunch between visits, and return to the Karim for dinner and an end of the cruise party.*

*Monday March 21st: After breakfast we disembark the Karim and travel by private coach back to the West Bank of the Nile for a full day of sightseeing to lesser known tombs and sites typically not included by most tours. These places are among my absolute favorite places in Egypt. One area is the Valley of the Tombs of the Queens, Nobles and Artisans, where you'll see exquisite wall paintings of everyday life in ancient Egypt. We have lunch outdoors at a small tree-shaded restaurant nearby, and continue with other visits, including the massive temple of Ramses, Medinet Habu.*



*We return to Luxor where I have requested rooms at the Winter Palace (where Agatha Christie and other famous Brit's stayed before WWII, and as a backup pending confirmation, I have an excellent 5 star hotel confirmed.) Dinner is on your own, and our central location lends itself to walks along the river, or exploring small shops in the old part of town. Overnight in Luxor.*

Tuesday March 22nd: An early departure flight back to Cairo, where we are met and transferred to the Egyptian Museum. The Museum can not possibly be comprehended in one visit, so there is time for a morning visit with Essam guiding, then free time for lunch, and more time in the afternoon for you to see things you missed, or want to look at again. Late in the afternoon we'll go to our hotel, and owing to our early start and a busy day with lots of time on your feet, tonight is deliberately free. We have a choice of 5 star hotels, the selection has not been made at time of the brochure printing.



Wednesday March 23rd: West of Cairo lie the most famous monuments of ancient Egypt: the Great Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. We'll begin our day by visiting underground tombs (called Mastabas) in Saqqara, South of Giza, because the wall paintings are the best in Egypt. Think of these as 4,500 year old color photos, showing every aspect of life from that period. We'll visit the Step Pyramid (the first Pyramid,) nearby. We stop for lunch at a buffet, then we have the afternoon to see the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx at Giza. The interior of the great Pyramid is extremely claustrophobic (cramped, steep corridors and stale air.) Only 100 people per day are allowed in, plus you must purchase an expensive ticket to get in. For these reasons it's not really feasible to include the interior in our visit, but there will be time for photos at each place, and a walk around a Pyramid, where you can get a good sense of the difficulties of construction and appreciate the skills of the workers and architects.



There will be things that you still want to do in Cairo: shopping is one of them, and shops are often open until 8 PM, so there will be free time in Cairo after the Pyramid touring, and we'll gather for an end of the trip drink in the evening to say farewell.

Thursday March 24th: End of the planned trip. Since flights depart at widely varying times, I suggest having the hotel book you a taxi, which costs about \$20 - \$25 for 2 or 3 people, and can give you direct door to door service (this is how I personally have gotten to the airport for many years.) We are only scratching the surface of Cairo, so if you can make time to stay over and see more, I heartily encourage you to do so. Our tour company in Egypt can get excellent rates at hotels if space is requested at least 2 months in advance. We're not visiting Cairo's famous bazaar (the Khan-al-Kalili), the Coptic and Medieval areas or sites, and several impressive Mosques, all of which are easily accessible to tourists should you decide to spend a few more days in Cairo after our tour.



Details about costs, payments, inclusions, and general information about this tour, and touring in Egypt in general:

All of the sightseeing that is listed in the itinerary is included in the price, except the Optional Tour to Abu Simbel and the surcharge for Tutankhamun tomb. The Abu Simbel Option costs \$255 including the airline ticket and admission fees; Tut's tomb is about \$10.

All of the lodging, on the SS Karim and in hotels before and after is included in the tour cost. All meals on the Karim are included, and other meals are also included except where I specifically state "on your own."

The basic tour cost is \$3515 per person in Twin or Double occupancy. All of the cabins accommodate 2 people, but there are a few rooms which can be made available to Singles on the Karim for a supplement (please inquire for cost.) It is much more desirable if either you or I can arrange for a congenial roommate to share your stateroom, if you do not already have one. Single rooms are also available for the pre and post cruise land package for \$265 per person. There are 2 forward cabins with small balconies available for \$250 per cabin, and the King's cabin Aft, which has a very large private balcony, and a larger than normal room, available for \$400 for the cabin.

An airline ticket from Cairo to Luxor round trip is \$250 per person and it is not included in the tour price; the price is not guaranteed until the ticket is paid for (I suggest as soon as possible to lock in the price.)

*Other things not included are: laundry, alcohol / bar tab, bottled water, Trip Insurance, telephone or internet charges, and tips. You should budget \$10 per person per day for the Karim crew (\$80 per participant), and approximately \$65 for Essam. In both of these cases you are likely to be so impressed that you may want to give more; these are the minimum requirements.*

*The payment schedule is determined by my obligation to the ship owners. A \$1200 per person deposit is required to save space; a 2nd payment of \$1300 is due on October 27th, 2010; the final payment of \$1015 is due on January 21, 2011. Please download a Trip Registration Form from my web page and send it with the 1st Deposit ([www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/](http://www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/))*

*Cancellation policy: Chartering a historic vessel like this is a serious commitment for a small trip organizer. The trip has 16 pre-registrations and I suspect that the remaining space will fill up steadily. (The only other US company allowed to charter the Karim charges \$5600 per person.) However the danger to me is if you drop out and I can't replace you, so all payments are non-refundable once they are made unless either you or I can find a replacement of the same gender (for singles) or another couple (for couples.) If a replacement is found you can transfer 75% of your payments to any future Ken-trip.*

*Travel Insurance: In general terms Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance is a good investment for your peace of mind and protection. However there are specific conditions and clauses which are important to understand when you purchase travel insurance; an example is the requirement to purchase the insurance policy shortly after you send in your first trip deposit if you have a pre-existing medical condition. Please read the information sheet on Travel Insurance on my web page: [www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/](http://www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/)*

*In the event that you are unable to join the tour due to unpredictable acts of weather or forces of nature, or acts of War, God, or any other cause that can not be foreseen, such as a strike by airline employees, or revolution, no refund for any portion of the tour can be made.*

*Patience is a useful tool when you are travelling in a foreign country: I have to remind myself of that constantly. The captain and crew, our Guide Essam, myself, and all of the other people who take part in making this trip possible will do our utmost to ensure that everything unfolds as planned, but if sightseeing has to be re-arranged or modified due to circumstances out of our control, we request your patience and cooperation.*

*Physical condition: There are no extremely strenuous activities on this tour, but there is uneven ground to walk on, and there is often some standing while the guide is pointing out details (such as on tomb paintings and other architectural details.) You should advise me when booking a space if you have any physical condition which might impact your ability to walk or keep up with the group, and if you have any medical condition which requires you take medication and / or seek regular treatment from a physician.*

*Special diets: The cuisine on board the Karim includes plentiful vegetables and other dishes suitable for vegetarians, and people who are lactose intolerant or need gluten free diets have been able to eat according to their dietary needs. The chef and his assistants go to great lengths to do their best to cater to special dietary needs, but no diet except vegetarian can be guaranteed, so please check when booking if you have any special dietary requirements other than vegetarian.*

*Make all checks payable to Ken McFarland and mail to: 3875 Geist Road #E323, Fairbanks AK 99709  
Email contact: [ken\\_mcfarland@earthlink.net](mailto:ken_mcfarland@earthlink.net) ~ Fax: (907) 456-7558. Because I am "on the road" so often the telephone isn't a good way to reach me, but the number is (907) 456-7556.*

