



Old Cairo - A Historical & Cultural Tour



[Your Itinerary, maps and weather](#)



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Old Cairo - A World Heritage Site

This is an amazing tour of aspects of the history of Egypt as it emerged from the influence and governance of pharaohs to the emergence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam within Egypt.

Old Cairo epitomizes all that came before and the historical sites reveal the stories. Stories of the social, political and belief systems that impacted on Egypt's evolution. This experience will probably amaze you. That Moses was found in the reeds, at a site that you will visit today, or that Mary, Joseph and Jesus took refuge at the site now known as the Saints Sergius and Bacchus Church make this a very special experience. But these events are, by themselves, footnotes in an incredibly rich history of events and people.

Old Cairo is a historic area in Cairo, which includes the site of a Roman-era fortress, the Christian settlement of Coptic Cairo, and the Muslim-era settlements pre-dating the founding of Cairo proper in 969 AD. It is part of what is referred to as Historic Cairo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Coptic Cairo is a part of Old Cairo which encompasses the Babylon Fortress, the Coptic Museum, the Hanging Church, and many other Coptic historical sites. It is believed in Christian tradition that the Holy Family visited this area and stayed at the site of Saints Sergius and Bacchus Church. Coptic Cairo was a stronghold for Christianity in Egypt both before and during the Islamic era, as most of its churches were built after the Muslim conquest of Egypt in the 7th century.

The Citadel

The **Citadel of Cairo** is a medieval Islamic-era fortification in Cairo built by Salah ad-Din. It was the seat of government in Egypt for nearly 700 years from the 13th century. Its location commands a strategic position [overlooking the city](#). It was constructed from 1176–1183, and was among the most impressive military fortifications of its time.

This is a tour experience steeped in the history of Egypt. A fascinating insight into the development of this amazing country, Egypt.



What You Can Expect From Our Old Cairo Tour

We venture into **Old Cairo**, combining places of historical interest in both Coptic (Christian) and Islamic Cairo. We explore Roman ruins, the Hanging Church, the first synagogue in Cairo as well as the architectural masterpiece **Muhammad Ali Mosque**, the Citadel and the tomb of **Muhammad Ali**.



A Combination of Christianity and Islamic Sites

Old Cairo combines notable places of historical interest in both Coptic (Christian) and Islamic Cairo.

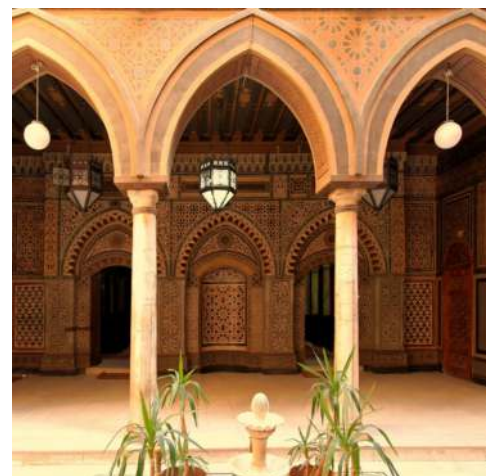
We explore the Roman ruins, the **Hanging Church**, the first synagogue in Cairo as well as the architectural masterpiece **Muhammad Ali Mosque**, the Citadel and the tomb of **Muhammad Ali**.



Coptic Cairo - The Hanging Church

Coptic Cairo has a concentration of Christian churches that date from the centuries between the decline of the pharaonic religion and the arrival of Islam when Egypt had a Christian majority.

The name '**Hanging Church**' comes from the fact that it was built atop the walls of the 4th century BC Roman fortress. It is believed in Christian tradition that the Holy Family visited this area and stayed at the site of Saints Sergius and Bacchus Church.





Coptic Cairo - Ben Ezra Synagogue

The [Ben Ezra Synagogue](#) is the oldest synagogue in Cairo and was founded in the 9th century claiming to be where Moses was found in the reeds. It is supposedly where Mary drew water to wash Jesus.

The synagogue's storeroom was found to contain a treasure of forgotten sacred manuscripts known as the Geniza Collection. The Egyptian Prime Minister reopened the synagogue in 2023 following restorations.



Islamic Cairo - The Citadel

The [Citadel of Cairo](#) is a medieval Islamic-era fortification built by Salah ad-Din. It was the seat of government for nearly 700 years from the 13th century. It commands a strategic position [overlooking Cairo](#).

It was constructed from 1176–1183 and was among the most impressive military fortifications of its time. In the 20th century it was used as a military garrison by the British occupation and then by the Egyptian Army until 1983. In 1976, it was proclaimed by UNESCO as a part of the World Heritage Site



Islamic Cairo - The Muhammad Ali Mosque

Within the Citadel is the [The Muhammad Ali Mosque](#). The mosque with its twin minarets is the most visible mosque in Cairo and is an active place of worship for Muslims. The mosque was built between 1828 and 1848 and is situated on the highest point of the Citadel.

The mosque was built by Muhammed Ali in memory of Tusun Pasha, his son, who died in 1816. However, it also represents Muhammad Ali's efforts to erase symbols of the previous rulers that he sought to replace.





Architectural Grandeur and a Tribute to a Son

The mosque is, to this day, a place of worship. It's also an [architectural masterpiece](#). And each day it hosts visitors from all over the world who come to observe the amazing architecture and interiors of the mosque.

It is a place of prayer and reflection and a peaceful refuge away from the frenetic pace of modern day Cairo. With amazing ceilings and stained glass the mosque has looked over the ever changing skyline of Cairo for centuries.



Amazing Interiors and Ceilings

Muhammad Ali chose to build his state mosque entirely in the architectural style of his former overlords, the Ottomans. The mosque was built with a central dome surrounded by four small and four semi-circular domes.

The use of this style were a defiant declaration of Egyptian independence. The main material is limestone likely sourced from the Great Pyramids of Giza



Muhammad Ali's Tomb

Muhammad Ali, whom many consider the father of modern Egypt for his numerous, enduring, modern reforms to Egypt and he is buried in a tomb in the courtyard of the mosque. This is a fitting tribute to a man who contributed significantly to the country.

You can visit the tomb when at the mosque and citadel. Its impressive architecture is a focal point on any excursion to the Citadel.





About Lunch

We enjoy taking our guests out for lunch because it's another way to experience Egyptian culture. We just want to make the following points. We only take our guests to the best restaurants.

We place good hygiene and cleanliness within those establishments as the number 1 priority. The restaurants offer both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. If you choose to pass on lunch, we won't take it personally. But please be assured, your health and safety is our overriding priority.



Contact Us

Phone: +254 0758 074 570

Email: enquiry@onehorizonafrika.com

Website: onehorizonafrika.com





Inclusions

- Pick up at 9.30 am from your hotel and return around 4.00 pm (approx.)
- Water
- Lunch
- All entrance fees, service charge, current taxes, and vat.
- Services of an English-speaking guide

Exclusions

- Personal expenditure
- Tips
- Alcoholic, soda or fruit juice drinks

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups who have made their videos publicly available on You Tube

Living Jetsetters: Muhammad Ali Mosque – inside the mosque

Michael Jiroch: A Look At Khan El Khalili Bazaar & The Hanging Church

[Reagan Schrock](#): Mosque and Citadel Fortress of Saladin, Coptic Cairo

Sheila - Visiting Ben Ezra Synagogue

The Pinoy Traveller: Muhammad Ali Mosque