



The Magnificent Mosques of Egypt - From the Oldest to the Newest



[Your Itinerary, maps and weather](#)



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The Magnificent Mosques of Egypt

Your experience on this tour embraces over 1,145 years of history from the building of the Mosque of Ibn Tulun in the Islamic quarter of Old Cairo in 836 AD, to the current day with the 2024 opening of the Grand Mosque in New Cairo. And along the way you will also venture into the Citadel and Mosque of Muhammad Ali, constructed in 1832. And at each of the 3 mosques your guide will take you through the character of the architecture which distinguished each of these magnificent places of worship.

Islamic architecture covers the architectural styles of buildings associated with Islam. It includes both secular and religious styles from the early history of Islam up to this day. The Islamic world embraces a wide geographic area ranging from western Africa to eastern Asia. And whilst there are common aspects shared across Islam, there are unique adaptations that distinguish different regions. Regions have developed their own style according to their history, political, social and economic influences on them. Artistic expression finds different avenues and nowhere greater than in Islam.

The Principles of Islamic Architecture

There are 7 unifying expressions within Islam which unite the approach to architectural expressions. These are: Tawhid (Unity), Ihtiram (Respect), Ikhlas (Sincerity), Ilm (Knowledge), Iqtisad (Balance), Haya (Modesty) Dhikr (Remembrance)

Islamic architecture is characterized by certain forms, decorative elements, and styles that include:

- **Forms:** Minarets, domes, muqarnas vaulting, and arches
- **Decorative elements:** Repeated patterns, intricate woodwork, and Arabic calligraphy
- **Styles:** Indo-Islamic, Moorish, Mughal, and Persian

The 3 main types of Islamic architecture

The main Islamic architectural types are the Mosque, Tombs, Palaces and Forts.



Spanning a Thousand Years

Cairo is often referred to as the city of a thousand minarets. The city is home to thousands of mosques. For your experience we have chosen 3 mosques which literally span one thousand years, and these include:

- Ibn Tulun (Old Cairo), Muhammad Ali (Old Cairo) and The Grand Mosque (New Cairo)

From the oldest mosque in Egypt and Africa to the newest. A truly amazing day of history, architecture and design and an insight into the diversity of Islam.



The Mosque of Ibn Tulun

- The **Mosque of Ibn Tulun** is one of the oldest mosques in Egypt and Africa being completed in 879. It is 1,145 years old.
- It has the only mosque to have survived in its full original form.
- It was the largest mosque in Cairo in terms of land area until the building of the Grand Mosque completed in 2024.



The Only Mosque To Survive in Its Original State

- It is built around an open square courtyard which allows natural light to travel through. It is constructed around a courtyard, with one covered hall on each of the four sides, the largest being on the side of the direction of Mecca.
- Ibn Tulun Mosque features ancient architecture styles of Egypt, its decorations being created from carved stucco and wood.
- It is made with mud brick and baked brick for construction, allowing for enormous architectural complexes to be built at relatively low cost. It has a uniform colour.





An Active Place of Worship

- One local legend says that it is here that Noah's Ark came to rest after the deluge, rather than at Mount Ararat.
- The mosque can accommodate 5000 worshippers
- Parts of the James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* were filmed at the mosque.



The Mosque of Muhammad Ali

The **Mosque of Muhammad Ali** is a historic mosque in Cairo, Egypt. It was commissioned by Muhammad Ali Pasha and completed in 1857. It is situated in the Cairo Citadel and is one of the most visible mosques and landmarks in Cairo. And the distinguishing feature of this mosque is that it combined various functions not only as a place of worship, but offices, tombs and other functions.



Architectural Grandeur

The mosque is, to this day, a place of worship for over 10,000 people. It's also an **architectural masterpiece**. With amazing ceilings and stained glass, the mosque has looked over the ever-changing skyline of Cairo for over 150 years.. 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 Mosque is Located in the Citadel

The mosque was built in an entirely Ottoman and European-influenced style, further setting it apart from other monuments. It is sometimes called the [Alabaster Mosque](#) due to the alabaster covering for its walls. The main material is limestone likely sourced from the Great Pyramids of Giza



Masjid Misr The Grand Mosque – New Cairo

Egypt's Grand Mosque draws influence from the scenery of the Nile combining modern design elements with traditional Islamic features. The Grand Mosque, a library, an Islamic museum, a conference center, ceremonial halls, classrooms, retail stores, and a seven-story parking structure with room for 3,000 cars are all part of the newly built Islamic Cultural Centre.

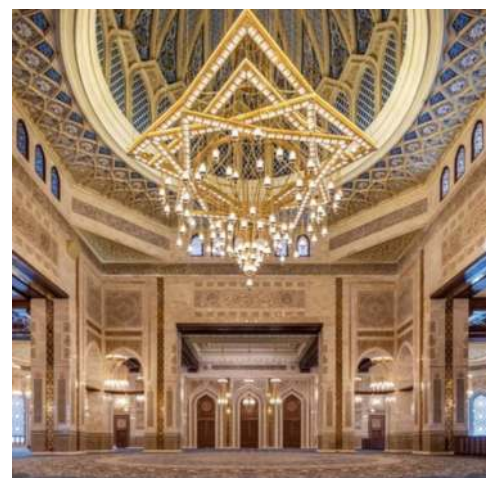


The Largest Mosque in Africa

Covering an area of 250,000 sqm, the mosque can accommodate approximately 131,000 worshippers, a capacity only exceeded the two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina.

The towering minarets (140 metres high) are almost as tall as Cairo Tower and have observation decks that overlook the new capital

The main dome sits on the centre of the mosque; from the floor to the top of the dome, the space reaches a staggering height of 58 metres





Integrating Various Designs

The mosque is modelled after a lotus blossom signifying purity and spirituality. Inside are calligraphy, intricate geometric designs, and other elements of Islamic creative culture.

The main chandelier (50 tonnes and the heaviest in the world) hangs mid-air under the dome, with lanterns offering a nostalgic aura within its Islamic star design.

Ceilings of natural interlocking wood, inspired by various Islamic eras, each of which are depicted with all their intricacies.





Inclusions

- Pick up and return to your hotel in air conditioned vehicles
- Water
- Lunch at a local restaurant
- Services of an English-speaking guide
- Entrance fees to each mosque

Exclusions

- Personal expenditure of any kind
- Tips
- Alcoholic Drinks and extra meals (other than those stated in the itinerary)



Appendix

The Mosque of Ibn Tulun

- The **Mosque of Ibn Tulun** is one of the oldest mosques in Egypt and Africa being completed in 879. It is 1,145 years old.
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- It was the largest mosque in Cairo in terms of land area until the building of the Grand Mosque completed in 2024.
- It is built around an open square courtyard which allows natural light to travel through. It is constructed around a courtyard, with one covered hall on each of the four sides, the largest being on the side of the [qibla](#), or direction of [Mecca](#)
- Ibn Tulun Mosque features ancient architecture styles of Egypt, its decorations being created from carved stucco and wood.
- The Abbasids were an Arab dynasty that ruled between 750 and 1258 and it was Ahmad ibn Tulun, the Abbasid governor of Egypt from 868-884 that commissioned the mosque.
- The Abbasids favoured mud brick and baked brick for construction, allowing for enormous architectural complexes to be built at relatively low cost. It has a uniform colour. It is built entirely of well-fired red brick faced in carved stucco; it has ziyadas and a roof supported by arcades on piers.
- It was designed by the prominent Egyptian architect Saïid Ibn Kateb Al-Farghany
- The mosque was constructed on a small hill called Gebel Yashkur, "The Hill of Thanksgiving." The mosque has been used for several purposes. One local legend says that it is here that Noah's Ark came to rest after the deluge, rather than at Mount Ararat.
- The mosque can accommodate 5000 worshippers
- Parts of the James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* were filmed at the mosque. It is also featured in a level of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, where Lara Croft has to trap a minotaur inside the mosque.

The Mosque of Muhammad Ali

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- 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.
- The mosque was built in an entirely Ottoman and European-influenced style, further setting it apart from other monuments. It is sometimes called the **Alabaster Mosque** due to the alabaster covering for its walls. The main material is limestone likely sourced from the Great Pyramids of Giza
- The mosque represents Muhammad Ali's efforts to erase symbols of the previous rulers that he sought to replace and as a tribute to his son who died in 1816.

Architectural Grandeur

The mosque is, to this day, a place of worship for over 10,000 people. It's also an **architectural masterpiece**. 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 over 150 years.

Amazing Interiors and Ceilings

- 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.

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.

Masjid Misr The Grand Mosque – New Cairo

The Grand Mosque, a library, an Islamic museum, a conference center, ceremonial halls, classrooms, retail stores, and a seven-story parking structure with room for 3,000 cars are all part of the newly built Islamic Cultural Centre.

Egypt's Grand Mosque draws influence from the scenery of the Nile combining modern design elements with traditional Islamic features. The mosque is modelled after a lotus blossom signifying purity and spirituality. Inside are calligraphy, intricate geometric designs, and other elements of Islamic creative culture.



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- The towering minarets (140 metres high) are almost as tall as Cairo Tower and have observation decks that overlook the new capital
- The main dome sits on the centre of the mosque; from the floor to the top of the dome, the space reaches a staggering height of 58 metres
- Every corner of the mosque is enough, both in size and detail, to be considered a mosque on its own. Each offers a unique view of the 32 metre wide dome, which had been assembled on the ground and then lifted up.
- Drawings by Egyptian artists and painters were painted on special fabrics which were then installed in place.
- The main chandelier (50 tonnes and the heaviest in the world) hangs midair under the dome, with lanterns offering a nostalgic aura within its Islamic star design.
- Ceilings of natural interlocking wood, inspired by various Islamic eras, each of which are depicted with all their intricacies. “
- Positioned on an elevated platform 24 metres high, Masjid Misr will offer a unique view of the new capital and its governmental district.
- Drone Footage Credit: MTA

Photography Credit: Essam Arafa