

**Wednesday:**

Turkish Air was a pleasant surprise. Great suite/beds that lay flat. Although the service was lousy, it beats flying Egypt Air which is completely dry. Our hotel is in dire need of renovation. In fact the pool is now closed for same reason. Good news is they let us share the facilities at the Oberoi Mena House. We did manage to score a suite with a terrace that overlooks the pyramids. Very noisy traffic prevents us from using it much.

**Thursday:**

City sightseeing day began with a visit to the Citadel & Mosque built by Mohamed Ali ( the original, not the boxer). Followed by a visit to the Coptic Church ( where the holy family lived for a while) and the Ben Ezra Synagogue, on the site where Moses (in his basket) was found by the Pharaoh's daughter

In the afternoon we went to the museum to see King Tut's death mask, his solid gold coffins and tons of amazing jewelry, 8 Pharaoh mummies and 80,000 other antiquities...some over 3,500 years old.

**Friday:**

Nothing prepared us for the Pyramids up close. The height, the size & the precision is unbelievable. We explored them all...in Giza Memphis & Sakhara. Won't bore you with details you can get from National Geographic.



Dinner at the Oberoi Mena House was amazing. The hotel lobby is right out of an Agatha Christy novel. So here is what we learned about Cairo according to our guide George:

- 1) Do not come to Cairo for peace & quiet
- 2) "No Cameras " means tip the guard \$1. and take all the pictures you want
- 3) Everything that was ever wrong in Egypt was the fault of the Mamaluks.
- 4) A \$300 traffic ticket means threaten the cop with his life, give him \$5. and you get off scot free

5) When driving, if there is an empty space ahead...fill it. Even if it is 4 lanes over.

### **Saturday:**

AM: 4:00 AM wakeup call for a 6:00 flight to Luxor. We arrived too early to board the ship, so we took a Felucca ride. Very relaxing. Our guide enjoyed his one hour nap. We had lunch on board and met our tablemates. Elizabeth & Di from Canada. They've been all over the world. Twice. Makes us look like rookies. Maria (Structural Engineer in Buenos Aires) and Francesco ( Energy Engineer from Avignon). Can't tell if he is her son, her boyfriend or what...but in any case, she's a lucky woman. Last but not least...Joyce. She is travelling alone as a gift to herself after a long ugly divorce. She will likely be the next "vacation meet" who ( like Glenna) will stay in my life for a long time.

PM: After lunch we head to Karnack. Very big. Very impressive. Very hot. Then on to Luxor Temple. Also impressive, still hot but, thank God, smaller. By now I am completely wilted. Mo, on the other hand, is totally captivated by the Egyptian ruins and the Egyptian hawkers. The good news is: he has finally stopped shopping for plastic pyramids and death masks. Bad news is: he now wants something more authentic. When he emptied his pockets back in our cabin, I realized that he lifted a piece of alabaster & a chunk of carved granite from the Colossus of Ramses II. If I come home alone, you'll know why.

Now it's cocktail time. Joyce, Mo & I proceed to tie one on. Continued through dinner where we included a few others in the drink fest. I went to bed, leaving Mo on the dance floor with the belly dancer.

### **Sunday:**

AM: Due to a 6:00 AM wake up call, we are too tired, too hot and too hung-over to have much fun this morning. We managed to get to the Valley of the Kings, the Valley of the Queens and the valley of the peons ( hawkers) Mo is now collecting "rocks" for our new friends. When he started looking closely at the hieroglyphs...I ran.

PM: Lazing by the pool, we encountered the most unique salesman I have ever seen. A dozen rowboats approached our ship & tied up. They placed their goods (shirts, scarves etc) in plastic bags and THREW them 6 decks up where they landed in our hands! The NY Giants' need to recruit these guys.



So then I go for a massage. This masseuse (named Russia) can lift 300 pounds, but she is packed into a 4'10" 90 pound body. Most unusual back massage I have ever had. She did not use her fingers, palms or elbows...no...she used her knees. Yeah, she climbed on top of me to do that !

After dinner, we left the boat in Edfu so that Mo could shop (surprise!) for belly dancer clackers since he couldn't find them anywhere else. Although the guy in the stall across from our boat didn't have them, he knew where to get them. So Mo, the Egyptian and the motorcycle take off in search. I guess Mo is getting more comfortable in Egypt.

### **Monday:**

This morning we visit the temple of Horus in Edfu ( not Etfu..which means "to puke" in Arabic). The temple is the best preserved in Egypt but also the most crowded. Filled with obnoxious tourists of every nationality. Mo is learning to swear in Arabic as well as French.

This afternoon is pool time and Abdullah the bartender has learned to make Egyptian Mojitos. Abdullah is my new best friend. Mo is trying to sell me to Abdullah for 5 camels.

Dinner tonight is "Egyptian night" & Mo of course, participated. He fit right in with the locals:



### **Tuesday:**

There are very few reasons good enough to rise at 3:30 AM. A pre-dawn flight to Abu Simbel happens to be one of them. Just when I thought I had seen all the temples that I cared to...there was the most impressive structure I have ever seen. Best of all, there were no crowds. After an afternoon of sightseeing in Aswan, we're back in Cairo to overnight for our trip home. Can't wait to get back to NY to sleep.

Things we learned about Egypt: ( In case you ever go)

- 1) Always (if possible) get a private guide
- 2) Always carry change. They hold you hostage in public bathrooms if you don't tip the attendant. "No money...no toilet" is the only English they know.
- 3) Be prepared to spend a lot of Baksheesh.
- 4) Don't be surprised to meet the nicest people in the world.
- 5) Don't plan to quit smoking in Egypt. Everyone smokes everywhere.
- 6) Listen to as many guides on as many tours as you can. They all have a slightly different slant on the historical events. Somewhere, between them all is the truth.