

## Northern Sudan – Royal Cities of the Nile

### Tour Code SU

Sudan is home to one of the world's oldest civilisations, with settlements dating back to 3000 BC. Located to the south of Egypt, the River Nile links the two countries both historically and geographically, however unlike its neighbour, Sudan remains virtually untouched by tourism. These magical lands of ancient Nubia offer a rich, cultural heritage, warm friendly people and a true sense of exploration. This unique archaeological tour covers the major sites that are concentrated to the north of Khartoum, including comfortable overnight lodges based at the location of the breathtaking ruins of Karima and Meroe. This makes this arid region of extraordinary archaeological interest and beautiful landscapes now accessible with a very reasonable degree of comfort.



3000 BC Pyramid ruins, Meroe

#### ITINERARY

##### Day 1 Fly to Khartoum

Afternoon departure from London Heathrow with BMI British Midland International via Beirut to Khartoum

##### Day 2 In Khartoum

Arrival into Khartoum airport early this morning at 0350 and transfer to the Sharga hotel with immediate rooms. Morning at leisure. In the early afternoon we go to Omdurman, the ancient capital of Sudan, where we visit the lively and colourful market. A welcome dinner has been arranged at a local restaurant. (B,D)

##### Day 3 Drive to Meroe. Visit Naga and Mussawarat

After breakfast, we begin our journey northward. After about 3 hours we reach the site of Naga which is located about 30 km to the east of the Nile and is one of two centres that developed during the Meroitic period. In Naga, in a typical Saharan environment with rocks and sand, we find a temple dedicated to Apedemak (1st century AD) a wonderful building with bas-relief decorations depicting the god with a lion's head, the Pharaoh, noblemen and several ritual images. Close by we reach another temple dedicated to Amon with many statues of rams and beautiful gates decorated with bas-reliefs. Continuing to Mussawarat, this settlement is located in a beautiful valley crowned by hills where we visit the Elephant Temple, much bigger but less well preserved than those at Naga, and the Lion Temple. Picnic lunch in the area After visiting the sites, we return to the main road where we continue our journey northward. All of a sudden, we can glance at more than 40 pyramids, located on top of a hill, some of them perfectly preserved, that belong to the Royal Necropolis of Meroe. Arrival at the permanent tented camp of Meroe with a beautiful view onto the pyramids. Accommodation in comfortable and fully furnished tents, dinner and overnight stay (B,L,D)

##### Day 4 In Meroe. Visit the Necropolis and the Royal city of Meroe

The Royal necropolis of Meroe is located at about 3 km from the Nile on some hills covered by yellow sand dunes. Several pyramids stand out with their sharp shapes against the clear sky. Each one has its own funerary chapel with the walls fully decorated with bas-reliefs that show the King's life and offers to the gods. In the afternoon we move along the Nile to visit the ruins of the royal city. The excavations confirm that the town of Meroe used to cover a large area and the royal city was located in a central position, surrounded by suburbs and a boundary wall. Most of the area where the city is located, formed by many small hills covered by red clay fragments, has still to be excavated by the archaeologists. Dinner and overnight stay at the permanent camp. (B,L,D)

### Patrick Syder Travel

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### Day 5 Journey to Karima

After breakfast we leave from Meroe and we continue on the road that skirts the Nile to the city of Atbara, located on the confluence between the Nile and the Atbara River. Here we cross the Nile and we enter the Bayuda Desert, an area bounded by the loop formed by the Nile between the 4th and the 6th Cataract and characterised by sharp black basalt mountains, most of them volcanic and typically cone-shaped. They alternate with level pebble stretches and large valleys crossed by dry wadis where only little vegetation survives and dorcas gazelles can be seen. It is very likely to meet isolated groups of Bisharin nomads, who live in familiar groups in small huts made of intertwined branches close to the rare water wells, with their caravans and herds of camels and donkeys. Arrival at Merowe where we cross again the Nile to reach the comfortable Nubian Rest house in Karima for three nights. (B,L,D.)

### Day 6 Visit Karima and Pyramids of El Kurru

We spend the morning in Karima that lies at the foot of the Jebel Barkal, a wonderful isolated red sandstone mountain, considered holy since the ancient times, where there is a large temple dedicated to the Pharaohs of the New Reign and to their patron, Amon. Amon's ancient 'Pure Mountain', the Olympus of the Nubians, was the religious Nubian heart for more than 1000 years. Beside the ruins of the big temple there are still several sculptured granite rams that were said to border a long avenue that probably led to a pier on the Nile. On the mountain wall there is a large room decorated with bas-reliefs. The Royal necropolis of the ancient city of Napata, the Nubian capital (from 800 to 400 BC) before the Meroitic period, had a large number of pyramids in El Kurru and in Nuri, which is located on the other bank of the Nile. At El Kurru where there is one of the necropolis of the ancient capital, Napata, we can visit two tombs, which are excavated in the rock under the partially collapsed pyramids, that are decorated with images of the Pharaoh, of the gods and multi-coloured hieroglyphic inscriptions. We continue to a site rich in fossil trunks in the desert before we return to Karima (B,L,D)

### Day 7 Nile cruise and Pyramids of Nuri

After breakfast, we visit the market in Karima, where we get a real insight into the everyday life of the Sudanese people before heading through the Nubian Desert with its vast stretch of soft, undulating sands. Until recently this drive would take you to the beautiful granite rocky formations of the 4th Cataract where the Nile ran turbulently among rocks forming rapids and a beautiful wild landscape, making navigation of the river very difficult. However in April 2008 the new Dam of Merowe was completed and flooded to create an artificial lake. We take a cruise on the Nile and take the opportunity to walk on the small islands to explore the sandy beaches along the Nile edges. In the afternoon we cross the Nile to spend time at the Pyramids of Nuri. (B,L,D)

### Day 8 Drive to Khartoum. Visit National Museum

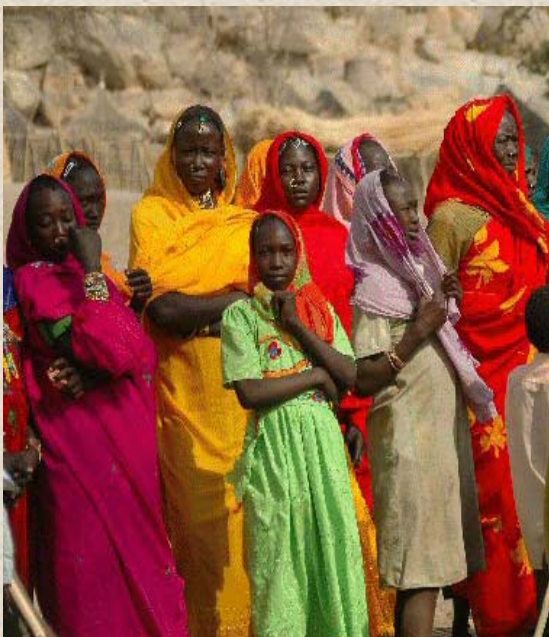
Today we drive south along the tarmac road across the Western desert to Khartoum and transfer to the Sharga hotel. This afternoon we visit the capital's landmarks including the visit of the Archaeological Museum that, besides many beautiful objects, contains two beautiful temples rescued by UNESCO and moved from the Lake Nasser area, when it was flooded by the water. A farewell dinner has been arranged at a local restaurant (B,L,D)

### Day 9 Fly to London

Transfer to Khartoum International airport for the 0545 BMI flight via Beirut to London Heathrow T1 arriving at 1300

**Cost £2195.00** per person in a twin room (excl. international flight)

Single supplement charge £300.00



Nubian women in traditional dress, Karima

#### Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ Sudanese guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ Transportation in private a/c Toyota Land Cruisers and Toyota Hilux outside Khartoum; bus or minibus in Khartoum
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Accommodation ranges from three star hotel in Khartoum, permanent tented camp in Meroe and Rest house in Karima, all with en-suite facilities
- ▶ All meals in Meroe and Karima
- ▶ Dinners in restaurants in Khartoum
- ▶ Photo permit and passport registration fees
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Bottled water daily
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

Not included – travel insurance, visa fees, drinks, guide and driver gratuities, departure taxes, Khartoum lunches, BMI international Flight (from £500) with Opodo. For latest price click