Texas Camel Corps

Egypt/Sinai
Dear friends,

Hello and thanks for your interest in the Texas Camel Corps and our Egypt/Sinai trips. I’m sure you’ll be excited about the adventure we’ve got planned.

This will be unlike any other travel you’ve ever done- the majority of the time you’re living in Egypt/Sinai, eating what the locals eat, experiencing a side of Egyptian and Bedouin cultures that no large groups could possibly see. Only a handful of nights will you be in tourist accommodations- the rest of the time you’ll experience Egypt and Sinai just like the locals, because that’s whom you stay with. From the donkey carts in the streets to the various vendors in the neighborhood; from Ahmed the neighborhood baker to the neighbor lady across the street who loves to practice her English. Every sight, sound and smell will become familiar to you. Beware! It may be really difficult to readjust to your former life when you return home.

In Egypt/Sinai, you’ll experience the Sphinx and Pyramids of Giza, trek the historic Sinai desert, visit the medieval quarters of Cairo, take a day-trip to Petra in Jordan, snorkel or dive in the Red Sea, hike up Mt. Sinai and more!

All of the above sites and activities are incredible and defy description, yet I propose something even greater will stick out in your mind as THE highlight of your trip: The truly lasting memories will be of the people you live with in Egypt and in Sinai. From the Muzeina Bedouin, the family of Saleh bin Suleiman, our host in the Sinai desert and in Cairo, the family of our host, Adel Said Hamza. Your participation is so important to my two “families” and the financial impact this has for Saleh’s and Adel’s homes is inestimable.

This is truly a one-of-a-kind experience that puts you in the homes of people I consider kin. With this comes responsibility, of course. A willingness to be flexible and the ability to overcome some culture shock are vital, but I also consider our group to be “ambassadors” of sorts. We won’t just make an economic contribution to Adel’s and Saleh’s families, we’ll also be demonstrating that Westerners have the same set of values that they do, that we’re much more alike than we are different. Saleh and his wife Freija and Adel and his wife Suad take great pride in having you in their homes; we should reciprocate by being good guests. Please consider all the areas I cover in the following pages, to make sure this experience is right for you and that you’re right for this experience.

You could visit Egypt with “XYZ Travel” and have a great trip, so what do I offer that’s so different? Personal relationships. Billions of tourists have seen the Pyramids and King Tut’s treasures. Very few travelers have the opportunity to get so close and personal with the true heart of Egypt and Sinai: its people.

It’s an obligation to you, my guest, to share the same warmth, hospitality and depth of generosity that I experienced on my first trip back in 2001 when I was simply looking for more knowledge about camels. What I got was so much more.

It is my intention to share a part of the world with you that I’ve encountered- Bedouin and Egyptians who have become family to me and places we’ll visit that now feel like home each time I’m there. This is the Egypt and Sinai I hope to share with you.

Thanks for your time,
Texas Camel Corps

**Egypt/Sinai**

One-of-a-kind experiences, based on home-stays with locals.

Discover Cairo, trek the Sinai with Bedouin on camelback, visit Petra and more - not as a tourist, you’ll be LIVING in Egypt!

"I’ve traveled all over the world, but I’ve lived in Egypt!" - Vance D., Texas

"My life will never ever be the same and I am so thankful. My life has been enriched beyond my dreams." - Susan L., Alabama

In Sinai, the Bedouin lifestyle is simple and beautiful. You’ll truly discover yourself in the desert’s open spaces.

www.texascamelcorps.com

In Cairo, you’ll live with an Egyptian family and witness the Middle East’s legendary hospitality and generosity.

The family of Saleh bin Suleiman, (sitting, right) your host in Sinai.

The family of Adel Said Hanza, (second from right), your host in Cairo.
Personal Relationships

Traveling in small groups (8-10 guests maximum) allows you the chance to have unique, one-on-one exchanges with the Egyptians and Bedouin you meet.

A: Group member Mike W. and Magdy, son of our Cairo host Adel, spend an afternoon at the zoo.

B: Susan L. and Saida, niece of Saleh, our Bedouin host in Sinai.

C: Suleiman, son of Saleh, takes a break from hiking with young Delany B.
Adel’s House in Cairo

Multiple generations live here, which is common in Egypt.

Adel’s wife, Suad, and he have five children—Said, Sona, Sebha, Mohamed and Magdy as well as four grandchildren.

Extended family comes and goes and there’s always activity in the house, sometimes ‘til midnight or later!

Ahlana wa sahlan (welcome) to your home in Egypt.

Walking around Adel’s neighborhood.

You’ll be greeted by Ahmed, who runs the bakery; you’ll trade smiles with the folks on the street selling vegetables; Adel’s sons, Magdy and Mohamed, will be happy to help you count your money if you want to stop and buy an ice cream. Watch out for the cars. And the donkeys. And the horses. And, oh yes, the camels.
Experience the region’s rich history. From Pharaonic times to the Islamic (medieval) period and beyond. The Sphinx and Pyramids of Giza; Egyptian Museum; Ibn Tulun Mosque (among others); Citadel; Khan el Khalili Market; Dervish dancing; Camel Market; Monastery of St. Catherine; Petra and more!

**What You’ll See**

- Sphinx and Pyramids of Giza
- Ibn Tulun Mosque
- Citadel
- Dervish dancing
- Khan el Khalili Market
- Camel Market
- Monastery of St. Catherine
- Petra and more!

Dervish dancing, a ritual of Sufi (mystic) Islam, is not to be missed. The performance takes place in a medieval caravansary and is utterly breathtaking. You’ll be blown away!

- Petra, built by the Nabataeans in nearby Jordan. A day-trip from Sinai reached by van, ferry and bus and well worth it.
- Khan el Khalili market—medieval bazaar that dates to 1382. Rugs and spices, clothes and jewelry can all be found here.
- Tour the 1,600-year old Monastery of St. Catherine, at the base of Mt. Sinai. Hike up Mt. Sinai in time for sunrise.
Clockwise from upper right:
Caravan’s shadow on rocks.
Oasis of Ain Khudra.
Hiking in Sinai.
Group at goat-hair tent.
Our Sinai host, Saleh Bin Suleiman.
Group around campfire.
Treking past 5,000-year old tombs.
Camels walking over gravelly plain.

Background image: Hajja Mileyha, one of the many Bedouin you’ll meet while trekking Sinai and one of my dearest friends.
There is no other tour of Egypt that brings you so close to locals.

I always tell guests, "If the Pyramids are the highlight of your trip, I’ll give your money back." Saleh’s and Adel’s families will forever change you.

Below: Laura and Suleiman exchange headgear while trekking in Sinai.

Below: Isaac S. and Suleiman, both gifted artists, enjoy drawing by candlelight at the oasis of Ain Khudra.

Left: Arrington M. and Bedouin girls share colors and coloring books.

Above: Barbara N-C. and Bedouin kids at village of Wadi Samghi.

Left: Playing cowboys and Bedouin.

Left: Texas Camel Corps owner Doug Baum with Ahmed, the baker in Adel’s neighborhood where you’ll stay in Cairo. Past guests have been invited in to help make bread.

Right: Stephanie and Jennifer D. play “Duck, Duck, Goose” with neighborhood kids in Cairo.

Below: John (“Hogan”) H. lifts Adel’s son Magdy in his best “rasslin’” move.

Right: Julie H. plays patty-cake with Bedouin girls at village of Wadi Samghi.
Texas Camel Corps Egypt/Sinai FAQ’s

What does it cost?  Sample, 13-day itinerary listed is $2475/person, based on double occupancy ($100 single supplement). Finalized itinerary will affect cost. 4 guests minimum, 10 guests maximum.

What’s included?  All accommodations (home-stays and hotels); all ground transfers; all entry fees into historic sites (see itinerary); most meals; most tips to local guides and drivers.

What’s not included? Airfare to/from Egypt; tips to any hotel staff; tips to horse/carriage operators at Petra; entry visa for Egypt (call or email for visa assistance), dive/snorkel fees. For meals not included, see itinerary.

What type of clothing should I bring?  For daytime in Cairo or Sinai, I recommend long sleeved shirts over T-shirts (layering is the best protection in the desert for hot or cold temps), long pants, hiking boots in Sinai and comfortable walking shoes in Cairo. For Sinai, a wide brimmed hat. For the nights, in either location, a light jacket or fleece pullover, warm ups or flannel pajamas, wool socks or your day clothes along with a knit cap to cover your head. Women should dress conservatively. Even though Egyptians and Bedouin are accustomed to seeing tourists in Western fashion (up to and including bikinis at hotel swimming pools or on the beach), I find it easier if we try to bend to local customs. Do bring a swimsuit; wetsuits will be provided to those who wish to snorkel/dive. Women need not feel obligated to cover their heads unless visiting a mosque or other area that requires it.

What other gear should I bring? Heavy, warm sleeping bag for the nights out in the desert (you may also need this in Adel’s house); canteen, sunblock, toilet paper. Camera (video and still) and lots of film, batteries and memory cards. Also, a large fanny pack or small backpack so film, camera, etc are easy to access while on the camels.

How heavily/lightly should I pack?  Lean heavily toward the light side, how’s that?! You can leave things in Cairo at Adel’s house while we’re out in the Sinai. Take out into the desert exactly what you’ll need for the trek. Remember, everything you bring on the trek needs to be able to fit on a camel. An added benefit to light packing is the ease with which you can pass through security both coming and going. One great idea, though, is to bring some empty luggage for hauling back home anything you’ve purchased.

Any other miscellaneous items I should bring? Candy for Bedouin children we meet along the way. Small perfumes and hand cremes for the Bedouin women. Family photos (everyone will want to know about your family). Snacks like beef jerky, granola and trail mix for the days in the desert and during transfers. Ziploc bags for miscellaneous storage. Pocket knife/tools are handy, but can easily be taken up at security checkpoints.

What’s the hygiene protocol?  Bring toilet paper with you (you’ll need some for Adel’s house in Cairo and in the desert)! Get toilet paper that is used for camping or in motor homes, Cairo’s plumbing is very sensitive. In Sinai, dig a hole and bury or burn. You may choose to follow “Leave No Trace” guidelines: Pack it in, pack it out (Ziploc bags). There is an outhouse-style privy at the oasis of Ain Khudra, but the rest of the time, you’ll need to find a big rock to hide behind. For brushing teeth, use the bottled water that our guides will have on each camel or in a truck. You can use the spring water at Ain Khudra to wash hands and face or you can use water from the Bedouins’ jerry cans.

What are the sleeping arrangements?  Communal in both Cairo and Sinai. At Adel’s, an entire section of the second floor is for our group; think: dorm. Lots of twin beds all lined up here and there. In Sinai we’ll stay in the beyt sha’ar (goat-hair tent) of my friends Salem and Emira at one stop, or you can pick a spot around the area, in the sand. At the oasis of Ain Khudra, we’ve got a couple of thatched roof lean-tos and at the other stops it’s simply the open desert, in the sand, or possibly in caves.
What do we eat? Meals while trekking in Sinai are simple, one-pot dishes, generally pasta or rice-based with chicken, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers and onions. Fresh, handmade flat bread and hot tea are staples. Tuna and feta cheese are really good on the flat bread made in the coals of a fire. I’ve also had fish with rice- fish that has been salted and dried, then “re-animated” by soaking it in water and placed in with the rice. Not bad, but watch for the bones. Sometimes breakfast is leftovers from the night before, sometimes it is simply bread, cheese, hard-boiled eggs and jam. Our Bedouin guides will go shopping before our trek to acquire all of the grocery items we will need for the days and nights in the desert. On the camels, or possibly in an accompanying truck, the Bedouin will have bottled water for the group.

In Cairo, Adel’s wife Suad is the consummate chef. Dinners of chicken, lamb, goat, beef and fish are all common, with rice, pasta, bread and various salads filling the HUGE platter that will be set before you. As a special meal, if you’d like, Suad can even prepare camel. Beware if Adel offers you lemons! Suad stuffs lemons with peppers and they will set your mouth on fire! Breakfast at Adel’s house is filling: falafel, bread, cheese, butter, dates and some folks’ favorite: French fries! Suad also makes a terrific “roz m’aml”- rice with milk, vanilla and sugar. On sightseeing days in Cairo I recommend easy, to-go lunches like falafel and shwarma. These cost only pennies and are found everywhere, like taco stands in the US Southwest.

As a woman traveler should I be nervous? In Cairo, we’ll be living in a neighborhood that does not see tourists everyday. On the other hand, you’ll be visiting many sites where Westerners are seen frequently. Sadly, many in the Arab world form their opinions of other cultures based solely on what they see on TV. Sexuality has a subtle public face in Egypt, at least to our sensibilities, in stark contrast to the West. In a group, of course, the chances of being harassed are lessened than if you were to travel alone. Women travelers should dress conservatively, not showing arms or legs nor should shirts be low-cut. Women will be required to wear scarves when we visit mosques (don’t bring one- borrow one from Adel’s wife Suad or buy one from the Bedouin ladies you meet). Among the Bedouin you should have no problems. They are accustomed to female travelers and are taught from a very young age to respect women. Women in Bedouin society (and the Islamic world in general) do take a perceived back seat. Women in our group will be welcome in all circles, though sometimes the guides will separate themselves from the guests at times of rest or at mealtime. Bedouin men and children will eat in a separate group from the men. This is also true, sometimes, at Adel’s house in Cairo. In public, Bedouin women traditionally keep their faces covered from Bedouin men, but relax this and other customs around visitors both male and female when Bedouin men are not around. Though covering one’s face is not as prevalent in Cairo, the ladies of Adel’s house do cover their hair, but when we men folk aren’t around, you ladies may share some time with Suad sans scarf. This is an opportunity to “let her hair down” and it’s a great time to get to know one another. Also, I’m happy to provide names and email addresses of guys and gals from past groups or you can call my wife, Trish, to ask questions. She’s made the trip and would be happy to offer her thoughts.

What other Bedouin/Arab customs should I be aware of? The Bedouin and Arab societies are very formal, but most of the people you’ll meet are sensitive to the fact that Westerners can’t know everything about their culture and are very forgiving. At mealtime, all conversation comes to a halt. When entering someone’s home or coming into a circle around a campfire, it’s proper to take off one’s shoes and sit cross-legged or on your knees. To show the bottoms of one’s feet will offend. Also, don’t extend your left hand for shaking or use it for passing food. The left hand is, to put it mildly, the one used for hygiene. In all matters of custom, it is best to let our hosts dictate the decorum. They will motion or direct us verbally as to what is proper in most settings. However, having a basic knowledge of these customs will go a long way in endearing the group to our hosts. Some of the Bedouin are very steadfast in their breaking for prayer and others are less strict. While traditionally Muslims break for prayer five times a day, we may not see our Bedouin guides do this at all. Like most people, it’s up to each individually. In Cairo, our host Adel slips away at prayer time or ducks in a nearby mosque when we’re out sightseeing.

What is the overall danger of traveling in Egypt? I’ve been in one traffic accident (I wasn’t driving!) in Egypt. I must admit, I’ve never felt safer than when I travel Egypt, due to the very visible law enforcement presence on the streets. We will be assigned a security guard for all private transfers, as are all foreign groups. This will be as we drive from Cairo to Sinai and back to Cairo. Travel insurance is an option, of course and the US State Department web site has any relevant travel advisories and updates on the web at: http://www.travel.state.gov/egypt/html.
Can you describe a normal day while trekking/sightseeing in Cairo? The daily routine out in the desert is pretty simple. Wake up between 7 and 8 and have breakfast. We move in the cooler parts of the day, typically from 9 or 10 ‘til 12, with lunch at a mid-day stopping point. From 1-3 we may hike or siesta and from 3-4 or 5 in the afternoon we continue down on the trail ‘til we arrive at our next destination. In Cairo, we’ll rise around 7 (depending on how many folks need to shower), eat around 8, leave by 9. We’ll hit our first stop (use the bathroom before you leave the house, there are very few public restrooms in Egypt) and stay there ‘til lunch. Grab a bite en route to the afternoon’s activity, then return to Adel’s for dinner. Counting traffic to and fro, that’s a lot of action. Traffic (“zah-ma” in Arabic) is an activity all its own!

In Sinai, will we be riding camels the entire time? There will be short times during the trek that we will be expected to walk, not ride. This usually occurs when we need to cross any mountain passes. These periods are never very long and you’ll welcome them after any length of time up on the camel.

Are the camels in the Sinai different from your camels in Texas? The camels of the Sinai will differ from those that we use in our Texas treks in a number of ways. The saddles aren’t as big and padded as those that we use here and do take some getting used to. Where we use primarily castrated males, it is a point of pride that the male camels the Bedouin use are intact. This can lead to some cantankerous behavior. Once on the camels, don’t be offended if the guide leads your camel; he knows his camel and it may be that his camel will fight with one of the others or there are some other, camel-specific reasons he needs to remain close by. In short: it’s not you, it’s the camel! Additionally, the Bedouin tend to like catering to guests and feel like leading your camel (particularly you ladies’) from the ground is an obligation. If you’re comfortable riding on your own and there are no camel-specific safety concerns, though, they’ll certainly accommodate you. The Bedouin tend to “drive” their camels from behind on the ground like herds of goats and rest assured, I’ve never seen a runaway camel in the Sinai! These camels all know the routes we’ll be taking and are too dependent upon their owners for food to stray.

What’s the time difference from Texas to Egypt? Egypt is 8 hours ahead.

Is international phone service easily accessible? In Egypt, cell phones are everywhere. I keep one at Adel’s house in Cairo and take it with us out to the desert. You’re welcome to use it to call home, receive calls, send/receive text messages, etc. Just keep up with your minutes if you call out, it’s not cheap; incoming calls don’t cost anything.

Is internet access available? Adel has a computer with a quick DSL connection so you can check email or show his son Magdy your house on Google Earth (he loves that!). In Sinai, hotels have access at reasonable rates and there’s an internet cafe in St. Catherine’s.

What are the average temperatures December-April? Highs: 70’s-90’s, lows: 40’s-50’s, cooler in the mountains. Because of the Nile, Cairo can be humid; Sinai, dry.

Where should I keep my passport? On your person most of the time. Hotels log our passport numbers and ask for passports upon check in. Additionally, authorities in Sinai may make copies before our trek and before leaving for Petra. When sightseeing in Cairo, you can leave it at Adel’s if you like.

What should I do about exchanging money? You can cash traveler’s checks or exchange currency at banks easily in all of Egypt. Egyptian pounds run roughly five to the U.S. dollar. Banks are open Sunday to Thursday from 9 am-2 pm and 7 pm-9 pm, but oftentimes are closed inexplicably or alternately opened on Friday/Saturday! U.S. currency is widely accepted and credit cards can be used in some places. I recommend exchanging a good amount into local currency at the airport, upon arrival in Egypt. This can make things easier when shopping, particularly when it comes to making/receiving change. ATMs are available in major cities and credit cards work best in these, while debit cards are hit or miss. U.S. dollars are widely accepted for tips.

What do souvenirs cost? Mass-produced, plastic jewelry for sale by the Bedouin, for instance, can run from $1-$5 and there are MULTITUDINOUS opportunities for purchases on the camel trek every time we stop. Every Bedouin woman and child (and some of the more shameless men) roll out a towel or blanket
covered with jewelry, unique rocks, olive-wood camels, etc, all for sale. Occasionally, there will be a handmade treasure among the trinkets (blanket, purse or some other textile) and I’ll be happy to point those out to you. Be patient with this process, please; this is oftentimes the only way for these women to make money. I choose not to look at these situations as a way for the Bedouin to receive money, rather as a way for us to contribute to the local economy. Bedouin code, however, wouldn’t allow for us to simply give money without their reciprocating. In Cairo, rugs can run from reasonably priced into the thousands of dollars. Camel saddles and saddlebags average between $100-300 (let me know beforehand if this is something you want, we’ll need to arrange this). Perfume and papyrus make kitschy gifts, but can be picked up affordably all over Cairo. T-shirts are usually made of Egyptian cotton and are very good quality, costing just a few dollars. Gold and silver jewelry ranges as you might expect based on quality.

**Can you tell me about our guides?** Saleh bin Suleiman is our lead guide and is a Bedu (singular) of the Muzeina tribe. He will assemble a team of other Bedouin (plural, literally “of the Bedu”) men, mostly relatives, with camels to assist him. I know many of the guides in the area and all are very fine gentlemen. Saleh is in his early 60’s and has been guiding travelers through the Sinai for 35-plus years. In his life he has crossed the Sinai on camel six times! For three months out of the year, he and his family leave their home in Nuweiba and live among extended family out in the desert. Saleh’s English is minimal, but one of the other guides he brings may speak better English. Saleh’s oldest son, Suleiman, is deaf, but the sign language the Bedouin use for the many deaf among them is easily picked up. Adel Said Hamza, our host in Cairo, is in his mid-40’s. He will be our host and camel guide around the Pyramids and will accompany us around Cairo. He’s been working with camels all of his life and learned his skills from his grandfather. He is of the Awlad Ali tribe (historically from Libya) and speaks very good English. What he lacks in book knowledge about Ancient Egypt, he more than makes up for with a willingness to make sure that your experience in Egypt is unforgettable. Make one mention of something you want to pick up and, *Ala Kazam*, the next morning it appears for you! Once you’ve met Adel and his family, you are family, too.

**What immunizations are needed before traveling to Egypt?** Check the CDC online or your local health department for recommended shots. In the past Typhoid and Hepatitis, among others, have been listed.

**Do I need to get my Egyptian visa ahead of time?** I recommend getting it before arriving. The line at the Cairo airport is long and having this already in place can expedite the discovery of your lost luggage (HA!) and getting out of the airport more quickly. I’ve got the visa application and am happy to email or fax it to you. You can also get it online at: [www.touregypt.net/visa.htm](http://www.touregypt.net/visa.htm). When you’re ready to fill it out, please call or email me. There is specific information that I’ll need to provide. At any rate, you’ll want to request a “multiple-entry” visa. This will make things easier because we do leave Egypt and have to re-enter after visiting Petra, in Jordan. The cost is the same for single-entry or multiple-entry, currently $15, but is scheduled to increase soon to $17 or $18.

**Description of accommodations:**

Along the Red Sea and in St. Catherine’s near Mt. Sinai, we’ll stay in 3 or 4-star hotels and the Monastery Guest House, respectively. Hotels along the Red Sea coast will be familiar to Western travelers. The Monastery Guest House is basic, but should offer no surprises. In Cairo, Adel’s 4-story brick home is quite nice and should provide little or no culture shock, though there’s only one bathroom in our “dorm” area, so some cooperation will be necessary. Among the Bedouin in Sinai, think: camping.
Sample Itinerary (subject to changes and/or substitutions which may affect cost)*

Day one: Your Cairo arrival. Adel (our host, rhymes with "bottle") and I pick you up at airport. Overnight at Adel's.

Day two: Breakfast at Adel's, then Cairo sightseeing: camel market of Birqash and Sphinx/Pyramids of Giza. At Giza, the entry fees into the Solar Boat Museum and to enter one of the Pyramids are included. Also included is a camel ride around the area. Dinner at Adel's house, then Dervish dancing (If everyone's beat or just jet-lagged, we can put the Dervishes off until later in the trip). Overnight at Adel's. (Lunch today not included.)

Day three: Breakfast at Adel's, then transfer to town of Taba in Sinai, on the gulf of Aqaba, by private van/bus. Overnight at 3 or 4-star hotel. (Lunch and dinner today not included.)

Day four: Early (6:30 a.m.) departure from hotel by van/bus to port of Taba, Egypt for ferry to Aqaba, Jordan, then bus to Petra and back, with lunch. Ferry back to Taba, then take van/bus a half-hour south to town of Nuweiba that night. Overnight in 3 or 4-star hotel. (Boxed breakfast and lunch are included today; dinner tonight not included. Horse or carriage ride, if you want, is included at Petra, but a tip is not.)

Day five: Breakfast at hotel (included). Half-day snorkel or dive (extra cost) in the Red Sea, shopping or just laying around on the beach. Lunch (not included- we can pick up some koshary to go) then take my buddy Iyabhiem's jeep to meet Saleh, patriarch of my Bedouin family, and camels near village of Wadi Samghi. Camel trek to area called Wadi Arwaybayya. Overnight in goat-hair tent of my friends Salem and Emira. (All meals while on trek are included.)

Day six: Trek from Arwaybayya to oasis of Ain Khudra. Side hike (optional) along the way into Closed Canyon. Overnight at oasis in palm-thatched hut.

Day seven: Trek from Ain Khudra past Makhtoub, the Inscription Rock (Nabataean, Greek, Arabic inscriptions), to area in open desert called Burgaa. Overnight in open desert.

Day eight: Trek from Burgaa to area near Bir Safra ("yellow well"). Overnight in open desert.

Day nine: Trek from Bir Safra to area called Wadi Nawamis, home to 5,000-year old stone tombs. After lunch, short ride to meet vehicle, then transfer to town of St. Catherine, near Mt. Sinai. Dinner (included) and overnight in Monastery Guest House.

Day ten: Early morning wake up (3:30-4 a.m., do you hate me yet?) for hike up Mt. Sinai (camels available for extra fee), returning by 9 for breakfast (included), then tour 1,600-year old Christian monastery of St. Catherine 'till noon. Afternoon transfer back to Cairo (Lunch not included today- we can pick up something as we leave St. Catherine). Try to sleep in the van/bus and plan to arrive hungry at Adel's- he'll be worried, thinking the Bedouin have starved us!

Day eleven: Breakfast at Adel's house, then Cairo sightseeing: Citadel (seat of Egyptian government for over 600 years), Gayer-Anderson Museum (two 16th/17th century homes, joined by a British officer serving in Cairo in the 1930's), Ibn Tulun mosque (one of the largest and oldest in Egypt; unique for its minaret, patterned after one in Samarra, Iraq) and Khan el Khalili (medieval bazaar, portions of which date to 1382). Dinner and overnight at Adel's tonight. (Lunch today not included.)

Day twelve: Breakfast at Adel's, then Cairo sightseeing: morning at Egyptian Museum (all of King Tut's treasure is here except his inner coffin and mummy, which are in the Valley of the Kings). Entry fee into the Mummy Room (Ramses, Hatshepsut and more) is included. Afternoon open for free time (ride horses at Pyramids, additional shopping, bookstore, nap, etc...) If we didn't catch the Dervish dancing earlier, I highly recommend we catch 'em tonight. Dinner, pack and clean up at Adel's before tomorrow's flights home. (Lunch today not included.)

Day thirteen: Your departure or stay on for other adventures.

* Itinerary can change due to unforeseen closings, construction, change of operating hours, etc. The lifestyle in Egypt/Sinai is very laidback and, as a result, schedules are very fluid and flexibility is of utmost importance.
The following Arabic language “quick guide” is spelled out phonetically in English and will help endear you to our hosts:

min-FAD-lak..........................please (spoken to a male)
min-FAD-lik..........................please (spoken to a female)
min-FADL-kum........................please (spoken to a group)
SHOO-kran...........................thank you
AF-wan..............................you’re welcome
MUM-kin..............................Is it possible/Can I/Am I permitted?
MAR-ha-ba............................welcome
sa-LAHM wa a-LAY-koom..........peace be upon you
ma-sa-LA-ma..........................goodbye
kayf HA-lak..........................How are you? (to a male)
kayf HA-lik..........................How are you? (to a female)
kayf HAL-kum........................How are you all?
KWAY-iss..............................nice/well/good
II HUM-da-la-leh....................Thanks be to God
In-SHAL-lah...........................God willing
Shy......................................tea
Akl......................................food
MA-ya.................................water
JA-mal.................................camel
Naar.................................fire
yi-GHAN-nee..........................sing
ha-DEE-ya..............................gift

Ana....................................I
IN-ta.................................you (male)
IN-tee.................................you (female)
SOO-ra...............................photo
bint.................................girl
WA-led...............................boy
OOS-ra...............................family
aw-LEHD.............................children
Lee....................................for
WA-dee...............................dry creek bed
Ana AN-dee...........................I have
Ana AW-za...........................I want or like (feminine)
Ana AH-wiz...........................I want or like (masculine)

WA-had..............................One
it-NEYn..............................Two
thi-LE-tha............................Three
AR-ba.................................Four
HAM-sa...............................Five
SIT-ta.................................Six
SA-bah...............................Seven
the-MON-ya..........................Eight
TIS-sa...............................Nine
ASH-ra..............................Ten