

# Egypt proves a great value destination for Australians



Despite the tough economic times, Egypt held up remarkably well during 2009 and major wholesalers are already reporting even stronger sales in 2010.

By Jenny Burns

**T**HE strong Australian dollar, together with the lingering impact of the economic crises has resulted in Egypt being a good value for money destination for Australians, a trend which is expected to continue.

The Egyptian Tourist Authority (ETA) is predicting a 10 per cent increase in tourism numbers in 2010. In 2009 63,029 Australians visited Egypt. The ETA's advertising campaign currently underway in Australia is expected to play a major role in boosting numbers as does the appeal of Egypt.

"Egypt has the advantage of a rich array of natural, historical and cultural tourist attractions," says Tourism Counsellor Embassy of Egypt Tokyo, Ibrahim Khalil.

"The majority of Australians going to Egypt are going to see the Egypt of the Pharaohs, the pyramids and the sphinx, sail on the Nile and scuba dive in the Red Sea. Desert adventures, for example four wheel driving, golf and luxury spa holidays, are also becoming increasingly popular."

Many wholesalers are now combining Egypt with other destinations

such as Jordan and Libya.

Tempo Holidays senior product manager, Jeremy Hearst, says passenger numbers were down in 2009 after a record number of tourists travelled to Egypt in 2008.

"This was a trend experienced not just from the Australian market, but from around the globe," he adds.

"The signs for 2010 are very good for Tempo with a large number of passengers having already travelled and strong forward bookings for the remainder of the year, including the summer low season."

Bunnik Tours national marketing manager, Victoria Brett, says Egypt is one of the company's best selling destinations. Sales were strong in 2009 and 2010 is looking even better with lots of forward bookings and enquiries.

"Egypt is one of those destinations that really has something to offer even the most experienced of travelers, so it's not surprising that it continues to remain popular for Australian travellers," says Brett.

Insight Vacations managing director, Lorraine Sharp, says Egypt has continued to sell extremely well for Insight year on year, particularly in the past five years with a growth of 77 per cent between 2004 and 2009 alone.

marketing manager Praful Albuquerque. "Egypt has been a popular destination in the Australian market and traditionally clients visiting Egypt include a three or four night's cruise from Luxor to Aswan or vice versa and a couple of nights in Cairo, which has more or less been the traditional way of exploring Egypt."

International Destinations managing director, Margaret Hill, says 2009 saw a downturn in travel to Egypt.

"Tourism was badly affected by lesser numbers from Europe and Russia," she says. "The upside was some great specials on offer, especially by the more deluxe hotels."

"2010 is looking much better. It's good news for Australian travellers to the Middle East. Prices are still low and the Australian dollar is up."

Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre chief executive officer, Halina Hussein, says Egypt performed extremely well for the company in 2009 and in fact was the company's best selling destination.

"In a year in which consumers were focused on value, Egypt was a real winner," she says. "Our emphasis on private tours, which are very cost effective in Egypt, is a strong attractor."

"Forward bookings for Egypt in 2010 are maintaining that trend."

Icon Holidays managing director, Simon Hills, says despite the general downturn in most destinations last year, Egypt bookings have held up remarkably, with marginal growth in booking numbers and a reasonable growth in revenue.

"Prior to the selling season we launched a number of new products targeted at the more discerning FIT client looking for something different in Egypt," he says.

"Forward bookings for 2010 are already at an all time high, and barring global mishaps we are looking forward to our biggest year yet in Egypt sales."

"Australians make up approximately 40 per cent of our total Egypt clientele," she says. "The popularity of Egypt can be attributed to travellers becoming more adventurous and seeking out more exotic holiday destinations. Egypt offers travellers the chance to explore and experience a country of unique cultures and ancient historical sights."

African Wildlife Safaris is extremely pleased with the growth in business to Egypt and the Middle East, after the release of its first stand alone brochure late last year.

"The brochure has enabled us to expand our program of tailor-made up-market travel to this region," explains

## EMTA free agent seminars

AGENTS wanting to know more about Egypt are encouraged to attend the Eastern Mediterranean Tourism Associations' (EMTA) seminars in March, with a session being held in Parramatta on March 9 and Sydney on March 10.

"These seminars are essential participation for the smart agent who wants their share of this fast growing lucrative market," says EMTA chair, Iain Ferguson.

"Entrance is free and agents can update

their destination and product knowledge from EMTA's members."

Ferguson says an increasing number of operators are now linking Egypt with other destinations in the region.

"We are seeing many more overland tours on offer and the seminars are a great way to find out more about these tours."

Ferguson says another excellent source of information is EMTA's website [www.emta.org.au](http://www.emta.org.au)

# Improvements to Egyptian attractions

INTERNATIONAL Destinations 15-day deluxe "Travel in Antique Land" tour incorporates a four-night Nile cruise, together with visits to Egypt's best known attractions.

Departing Australia on May 4, the tour includes eight nights accommodation in deluxe hotels including the Grand Hyatt and Mena House Hotel in Cairo, the Sonesta St George Hotel in Luxor and The Seti I Hotel in Abu Simbel. Also included is Nile cruising from Luxor to Aswan on the *MS Nile Goddess*, which features deluxe cabins with panoramic windows and private bathrooms with full-size tubs.

The tour costs from \$6895 share double (a single supplement is an extra \$1165.00), which also includes Singapore Airline airfares, a number of meals, domestic Egyptian airfares, services of a tour escort ex Sydney and extensive sightseeing.

According to International Destinations managing director, Margaret Hill, there have been significant changes to tourism facilities, especially in Upper Egypt, changes which surprised and impressed her.

"In Cairo, work continues to update



The Red Pyramid at Dashur built for Pharaoh Snefru, now open to the public.

the former Nile Hilton right alongside the museum. We understand it will open as the Ritz Carlton," she says.

"Old Arab Houses are being transformed in to 'Hotels de Charme', similar in style to the Riads of Morocco. The first to open, and getting good reviews, is the Talisman Hotel in the centre of Cairo.

"After many years of viewing from the outside, entry is now permitted inside the Red Pyramid at Dashur.

Built for the Pharaoh Snefru, the Red Pyramid is as big as Kefren at the Giza Plateau."

Hill says plans to convert Luxor into a living museum are now well underway.

"The city is delightful. Streets are lined with flower gardens, the Corniche of the Nile is transformed with new boarding facilities for cruise boats and the embankment walkways are tiled and lined with shops," she says.

## Egypt a drawcard for families

GREECE and Mediterranean Travel Centre (GMTC) is offering more Egypt product this year, including new tours in the Nubian south, an extra family tour option and some heavily discounted tour options for those who are happy to travel with a larger group.

The Egypt programs also include all the favourite tours and Nile cruise options. While usually private tours, GMTC's Egypt Super Savers gives travellers the chance to save 25 per cent off the tour price of two of its Egypt tours when travelling with other GMTC clients.

GMTC Egypt Family tours include savings of up to 40 per cent for children under 12.

Two family options are included in GMTC's 2010 Egypt brochure, the 11-day "Egyptian Family Adventure" and the 10-day "Egyptian Family Getaway". Prices start from \$1616 per person for three star accommodation, \$1866 for four star and \$2198 for five star.

Children under 12 accompanying adults receive a 40 per cent discount off the adult tour price for the first child and 30 per cent for a second child on the four and five star packages, and a 35 per cent discount for the first child and a 20 per cent discount for a second child on the three star package.

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# Plenty of options flying with Royal Jordanian

ROYAL Jordanian Airlines (RJ) is urging agents to look at its airfare options to Egypt.

"Flying to three destinations in Egypt, RJ eliminates unnecessary backtracking and offers more choice and flexibility," says Royal Jordanian Australian manager, Iain Ferguson.

"With daily connections ex Australia on oneworld alliance partners Qantas, British Airways or Cathay Pacific via Bangkok or Hong Kong, RJ's flexible fare structure fits with almost every wholesaler's



Egyptian tour program."

Fares in conjunction with THAI over Bangkok are also available.

From Australia there is a choice of stopovers in Bangkok or Hong Kong or Amman or all or none at no extra cost.

RJ flies between Amman and Cairo

up to four times a day, daily to and from Sharm el Sheik and five times a week to and from Alexandria.

"This comprehensive frequency not only caters for direct on-line links to/ from RJ's intercontinental network but also allows for a stopover in Jordan before linking with a Jordan to Egypt overland tour, or to visit Petra before flying on to Egypt, or up to Athens or Istanbul or Rome to pick up a cruise.

"Royal Jordanian's competitive net fares offer a range of value added features in addition to these stopover

opportunities – namely special side trip rates, short stay Jordan stopover packages, surface sectors, mixed class travel, through fares to Europe with Egyptian stopover and conditional STPC in Amman," Ferguson adds.

"RJ's building block fare structure means agents can tailor their own net fare to whatever their client's arrangements are.

"Finally there's one more bonus flying with Royal Jordanian, oneworld Frequent Flyers earn frequent flyer points."



Boutique cruising at a leisurely pace aboard a Dahabiya

## Cruise the Nile in style on traditional sail boat

AFRICAN Wildlife Safaris' new brochure focuses on areas that are off the beaten track and offers cruise options that are different from the standard Nile cruises, according to marketing manager Praful Albuquerque.

"Some of the unique programs featured in our brochure include an eight-day cruise down the Nile on a traditional sail boat known as Dahabiya," he says.

"These sail boats are similar to those used by royalty and offer a boutique style of cruising at a leisurely pace, visiting major temples as well as rural villages on the river bank."

For those interested in exploring the Nile in luxury, AWS

offers a seven-day cruise aboard the exclusive *Oberoi Zahara*.

"This is the ultimate Egyptian tour, allowing travellers to discover 5000 years of Egyptian culture at a leisurely pace with private luxury touring, Egyptologist guides and private docking arrangements unique to the Zahara to avoid the crowds," Albuquerque says.

"For those looking to go off the beaten track we offer an "Oasis Safari" where you can drive down into the desert to the Bahari Oasis known for its valley of the Golden Mummies and its many dinosaur remains."



# Unwrap the wonders of egypt

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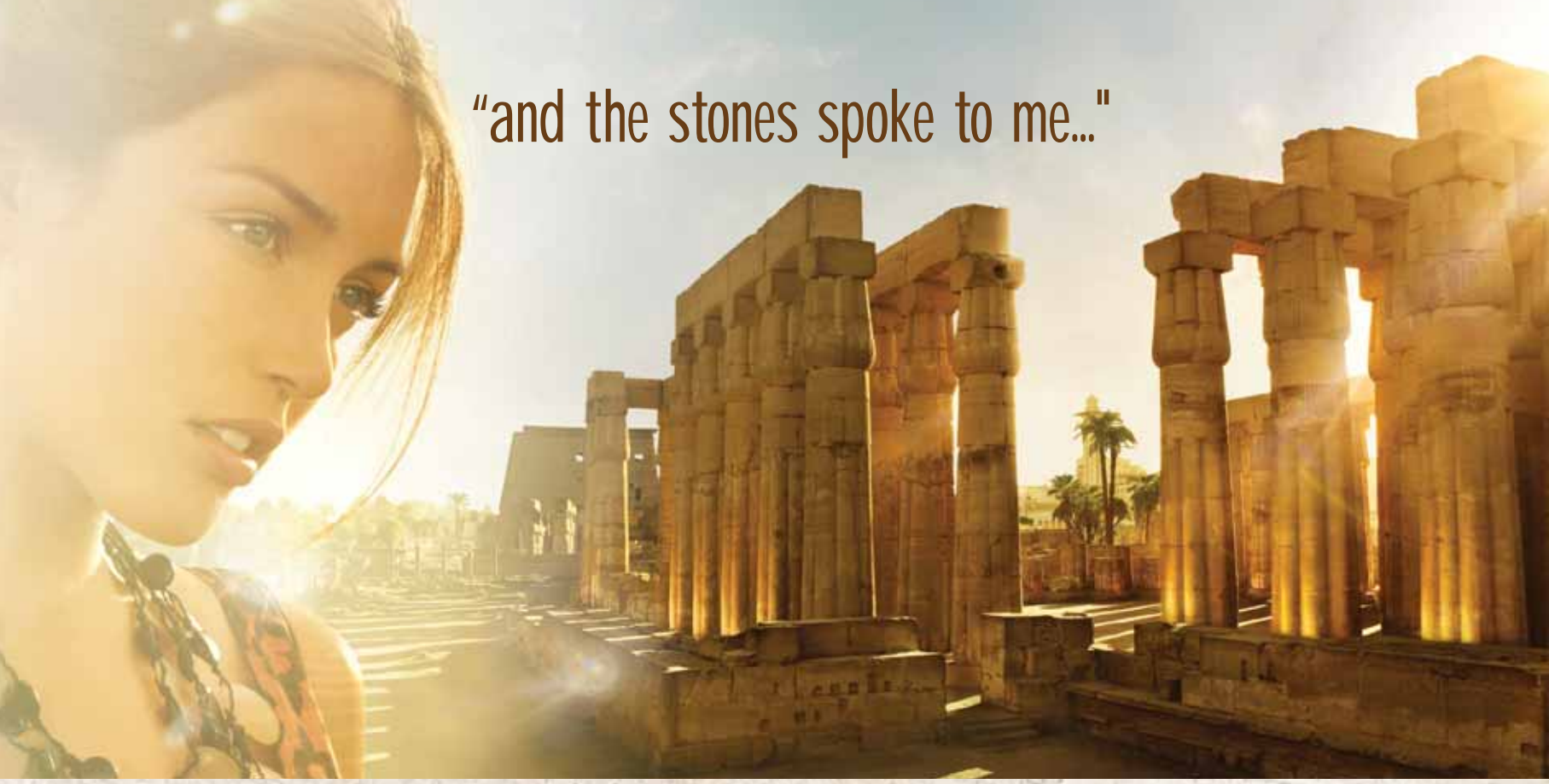
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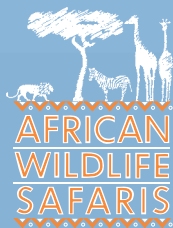
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For further information, contact African Wildlife Safaris on 1300 363 302 or (03) 9249 3777  
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## destinationEgypt

*sellingEgypt*

### First hand experience helps sell fascinating Egypt

LISA Balcomb has been fascinated by Egypt's ancient history since her school days, now she is helping her clients see and learn more about this history and Egypt's many other attractions.

"I have been fortunate enough to fulfill a dream and travel to Egypt so I can use my first hand experiences to help sell the destination to my clients," says Lisa, a senior consultant with Travelworld Kotara in Newcastle.

"Clients seem to be more reassured if you have first hand knowledge of travelling through the area and that definitely helps secure the booking."

The Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx are usually first on the must-see list of clients followed by the Valley of the Kings and Abu Simbel.

"Of course, areas like Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada on the Red Sea are well known as some of the best diving and snorkelling spots in the world, so they are definitely on the list for the water lovers," Lisa explains.

The age group of the clients plays a part in the products she recommends and sells.

"For our younger and more adventurous

travellers I recommend an organised tour – but perhaps something that is tailor made for the younger generation," she says.

"There are several products out there offering small group travel that allow a degree of flexibility on a day to day basis, yet still offer the security of being with a group of like-minded travellers.

For the more mature market, Lisa says Insight Vacations has a fantastic range of products and itineraries for Egypt.

"These are the tours that I recommend to my clients who are after a smaller, more intimate group – but are also looking for a high standard of accommodation and inclusions.

Personal safety and cultural differences can cause some challenges.

"There is a view that Egypt can be an unstable area and this can be a challenge with some clients," says Lisa.

"A consultant who is confident in selling Egypt and has developed a good rapport with their client should be able to answer any questions they may have to put their mind at ease."

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Temple of Queen Nefertari at Abu Simbel in Egypt

### Combine Egypt with Oman or Libya

BUNNIK Tours' new 2010/11 touring program contains tours to Egypt as well as a number of other programs combining Egypt with some less well-known destinations.

For example the 23-day "Tripoli to the Pyramids" tour combines Egypt with Libya and costs from \$9378 per person (twin share).

"Libya is not so popular for tourists but its jam-packed full of ancient masterpieces from the Roman and Greek empires, which makes a truly fascinating place to visit," says Bunnik Tours national marketing manager, Victoria Brett.

Another new tour is the 22-day "Egypt and Oman" tour, which costs from \$7954 per person (twin share).

"This tour combines all the wonders of ancient Egypt with Oman – a country unchanged for centuries," Brett says.

Also on offer is the 17-day "Egypt in Depth", which costs from \$5195 per person (twin share). Prices for all three tours include airfares, accommodation, pre-paid tips, four night luxury Nile cruise, many meals and extensive sightseeing.



## New campaign set to inspire interest in Egypt

EGYPTIAN Tourism officials are confident the current marketing campaign running in Australia will help lead to a 10 per cent increase in visitor numbers in 2010.

The campaign, part of a worldwide push by the Egyptian Tourist Authority, includes television and print consumer advertising supported by e-marketing tactics and public relations.

A 60-second television commercial is being shown on Discovery Channel, Lifestyle, Arena and National Geographic channels. In addition print advertisements are appearing in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Courier Mail*, *The Age* and *The Australian*.

The campaign which has the tagline 'Egypt - Where it all begins', runs until the end of March.

Tourism Counsellor Embassy of

Egypt Tokyo, Ibrahim Khalil, says the main concept of the campaign is that Egypt is mystical, warm and spirited and has a great story to tell.

"Egypt has been a source of inspiration and continues to inspire," Khalil says. "Egypt inspires great stories and is where it all begins. There is the insight that anyone who visits Egypt does not just have a holiday - they have an intense and rich experience. And as the experience is recounted, it becomes a story."

Khalil adds that the campaign also highlights Egypt's unique fusion of cultures. "Egypt is a melting pot of many people from different cultures and religions, and offers mystical experiences - culture plus leisure plus adventure," he says. "The tagline also highlights Egypt's affordable luxury and year round welcome."

## New tours take in less-visited sights

TEMPO Holidays is offering a number of new products to Egypt. These include the Total Egypt package, which combines a Nile and Lake Nasser cruise.

"This new package has sold very well after we launched it with a 40 per cent discount when we released the 2010 brochure," says Tempo Holidays' Jeremy Hearst.



The Montazah Gardens in Alexandria

Tempo has also introduced three new packages that start in Cairo.

"The Flavours of Cairo" packages have

been designed to expand on the regular visit to Cairo and give travellers the opportunity to visit some of Egypt's less-visited sights.

The "Flavours of Cairo and the Western Desert" tour ventures into the deserts and oases to the west of Cairo.

"It also includes a visit to the Valley of the Golden Mummies where up to 10,000 golden mummies were recently discovered, as well as a night camping in the desert," Hearst says.

"The Flavours of Cairo and the Sinai" travels from Cairo into the Sinai Peninsula. Visitors can climb the biblical Mount Sinai, and visit the ancient St Catherine's Monastery, en-route to Sharm El Sheikh on the Red Sea coast.

"The Flavours of Cairo and the Red Sea" ventures through the Eastern Desert, stopping at a number of monasteries en-route to Hurghada on the Red Sea.

All "Flavours of Cairo" packages also include the sightseeing highlights of Cairo such as the pyramids and the Egyptian Museum.

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