

## Christmas

2022

We've had a fairly uneventful year, but with the pandemic waning we were finally able to get back to some traveling.

We returned to Oregon from our winter escape in Arizona in early April, but winter lingered much too long this year. We extended our winter stay this time to the end of April. Our summer was busy with catching up on maintenance at our house and occasionally taking camping trips with our friends.

The highlight of our year was a 2-week tour of Egypt along with our friends Joe and Libby, including a week-long Nile River cruise. It was an extremely busy tour with every day filled from an early start to a late finish, although we did enjoy some relaxation time on board the boat. I'll just give a day-by-day synopsis here.

On Tuesday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, we arrived in NYC. The next day, we toured New York and went to the top of the Empire State Building. On Thursday, we left for Cairo, arriving on Friday their time after an 11-hour flight and checking into our hotel.

On Saturday, we visited the great pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, then in the afternoon we visited the pyramids of Sakkara, including the step pyramid, the oldest surviving pyramid.

Sunday, we toured Cairo, visiting the Khan El Khalil Bazaar and the Egyptian Museum which included the King Tut exhibit, then Monday we caught a flight to Luxor, where we toured the temple of Karnak and the temple of Luxor, then visited a papyrus craft store. In the afternoon, we boarded a Nile River cruise boat and set sail for Edfu.

On Tuesday, we took an excursion to the west bank, where visited the valley of the kings and entered the tombs of Ramesses I, Ramesses V & VI and Ramesses IX. From there, we traveled to the temple of Hatshepsut, the female ruler that masqueraded as a man while ruling Egypt. We also visited an alabaster factory, where alabaster stone is shaped and polished into magnificent works of art and utilitarian objects. From there we stopped to view the Colossi of Memnon, two gigantic statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep II.

Wednesday the boat set into Kom Ombo, where we visited the temple of Kom Ombo, dedicated to Horus the sun god and Sobek, the crocodile god. Overnight we cruised to Aswan.

Thursday in Aswan, we visited the Temple of Abu Simbel, a massive temple moved to high ground when the Aswan High Dam started flooding the area. The entrance to this temple, flanked by gigantic statues of Ramses II and his wife Nefatari, is second only to the pyramids as a recognizable symbol of Egypt.

Friday, we explored the Aswan High Dam and learned about the history, and visited a Nubian Village to have a beverage at a Nubian home and hear a talk from the family patriarch about Nubian history and culture. On Saturday we returned to Edfu where we toured the temples, then returned to the boat and sailed for Luxor.

On Sunday, from Luxor, we took a bus ride to visit the Temple of Hathor dedicated to the wife of the god Horus. This temple is the best preserved of all Egyptian temples, with vibrant colors decorating the interior.

On Monday, we boarded a flight back to Cairo and checked into our hotel. In the afternoon, we visited the Coptic areas of Cairo, including the "Hanging church", and viewed the space where Mary, Joseph and the Christ child are reported to have hidden during their flight to Egypt, and heard about the persecution of the Christian population during the rule of the Islamic Brotherhood. At the hotel that evening, we attended a wonderful goodbye dinner with our guide. The next day we boarded our flight back to NYC.

Our mail is being forwarded, but to avoid delays you can use our address here; 1403 W. Broadway Ave. #450 Apache Junction, AZ 85120. I posted some of the better travel pictures on our website, [www.majorspain.com](http://www.majorspain.com).

Here's wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Please keep in touch.

John and Janet Spain

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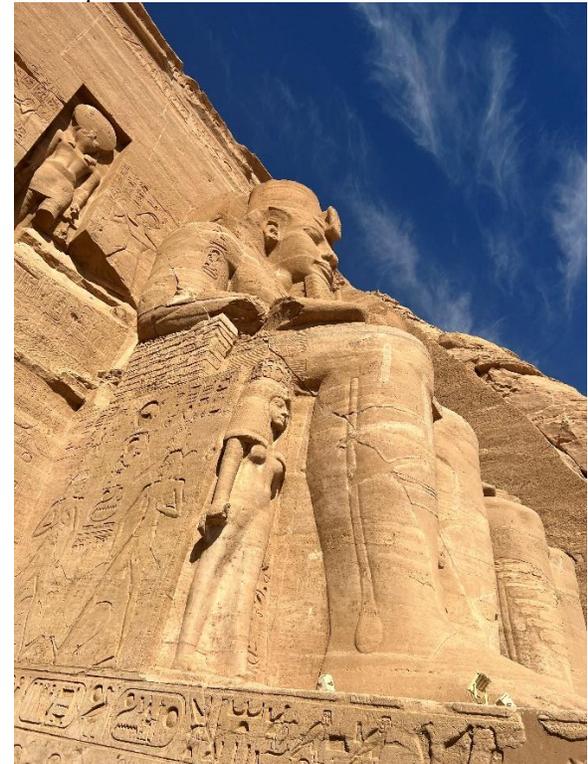
At the plains of Giza



The temple of Karnak



Inside the tomb of Ramses (valley of the Kings)



The statue of Ramses II at the Temple of Abu Simbel



Entrance to the Temple of Abu Simbel



Alcove under the Hanging Church where holy family hid