

# *Italian Tourism Co. Ltd*

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## SUDAN

### Karima and Meroe: the Kushite Empire

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*5 days*



#### Day 1 / Khartoum – Old Dongola - Karima



Pick up from your hotel in Khartoum and then departure northward towards *Abu Dom*. After 6 hours drive, we reach the site of ***Old Dongola***, where there are the ruins of a Christian Coptic temple with marble columns as well as several rest of churches situated on the banks of the Nile. We will also visit the nearby village of ***Gaddar*** where we can see nicely painted Nubian houses. We drive across the Nubian Desert to reach the small town of ***Karima*** where, just at the foot of *Jebel Barkal*. Dinner and overnight in our NUBIAN REST-HOUSE. (D.)



## THE NUBIAN REST- HOUSE IN KARIMA



*Karima is a small town located on the right bank of the Nile, close to the famous archaeological site at the foot of Jebel Barkal, south of the 4<sup>th</sup> Cataract. The Nubian House is a charming small hotel built in the typical Nubian style just at the foot of Jebel Barkal, the holy mountain of the old Egyptian and Nubian Pharaohs. It is surrounded by a large private enclosure, with a nice garden and leisure area. Each one of the 22 A.C rooms is characterized by a peculiar Nubian door and has its own private bathroom and a pleasant veranda. The decor and finishing have been carefully selected. They come mainly from Italy and provide an elegant yet rustic charm. A reception, a restaurant and a living room with decorated walls complete the wonderful setting. All the buildings are made with local bricks covered by hand-spread clay plaster as used in the Nubian area. The hotel is managed by an Italian manager with the help of well-trained Sudanese staff.*



[http://www.italtoursudan.com/prop\\_nubianresthouse.php](http://www.italtoursudan.com/prop_nubianresthouse.php)

### Day 2 / Karima - Jebel Barkal and the necropolis of El Kurru



Landmark in the Nubian Desert, **Jebel Barkal** ("Jebel" means mountain in Arabic) can be seen from a few dozen kilometres whilst still in the open desert. At the foot of this wonderful and isolated red sandstone mountain, considered holy since the ancient times, there is a big 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. Besides the ruins of the big temple there are still several sculptured granite rams that were supposed to border a long avenue that probably led to the pier on the Nile. In the mountain wall there is a big room decorated with bas-relief. The Royal



necropolis of the ancient city of *Napata*, the Nubian capital (from 800 to 400 b.C.) before the Meroitic period, had a large number of pyramids, located in three different places: few hundred metres north of *Jebel Barkal*; a dozen kilometres southwards from the holy mountain, in *El Kurru*; in *Nuri*, which is located on the other bank of the Nile.

After lunch at the *Nubian Rest House* we then move southwards to the village of *El Kurru* where there is one of the necropolises of the ancient capital, *Napata*. Here we can visit one or two tombs, which are excavated in the rock under pyramids - partially collapsed - and are totally decorated with images of the Pharaoh, of the gods and multicolour hieroglyphic inscriptions. The trip goes on with the visit to a site, rich in fossil trunks in the desert. In the evening return to *Karima*, accommodation at the *NUBIAN REST-HOUSE*, dinner and overnight stay. (B.L.D.)



### Day 3 / Karima – Nuri – Bayuda Desert - Meroe

After breakfast, we cross the Nile to reach the *Pyramids of Nuri*. Little walk among these ancient ruins where the pyramid of *Pharaoh Taharqa* dominates among the others. After the visit we enter the *Bayuda Desert*, an area bounded by the loop that the Nile forms between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 little vegetation 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. After a picnic in the desert, we then reach the town of *Atbara*, located on the confluence between the Nile and the *Atbara River*. Here we cross the Nile for the last time. We start driving south on a level ground area where there are many small camel thorn acacia trees as far as we can see. And then, all of a sudden, we can glance at more than 40 pyramids, located on top of a hill, some of them perfectly preserved, which 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.)



## MEROE CAMP



*Meroe tented Camp is located in Bagrawyia, (about 230 km. north of Khartoum) overlooking the beautiful pyramids of Meroe. Accommodation consists of 22 twin-bedded tents (4x4 m), tastefully furnished. Each one has its own private bathroom (hot shower) hut with shower and toilet. The Camp is located 2 km from the Royal Necropolis. Each tent is equipped with a veranda with two comfortable chairs to relax in front of the astonishing view of more than forty pyramids. The tents have electricity produced by a generator working till 11:00 pm. A restaurant building is available for the guests. The Camp is managed by an Italian manager with the help of well-trained Sudanese staff. With this permanent facility, this arid region of extraordinary archaeological interest and beautiful landscapes become accessible even to those reluctant to sacrifice their comfort.*



[http://www.italtoursudan.com/prop\\_meroecamp.php](http://www.italtoursudan.com/prop_meroecamp.php)

### Day 4 / Meroe - visit of 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. Lunch at Meroe Camp. 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.)

### Day 5 / Meroe - Naga and Mussawarat temples - Khartoum

After breakfast at the camp, we spend the morning visiting the two archaeological sites. The site of *Naga* is located about 30 km to the east of the Nile and it is one of the 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* (1<sup>st</sup> century a.D.): a wonderful building with bas-relief decorations depicting the god with a lion's head, the Pharaoh, noblemen and several ritual images. A few metres away there is a small and odd construction with arches and columns, named "kiosk", in which we can notice Egyptian, Roman and Greek styles, all at the



same time. Not far away we reach another temple dedicated to *Amon* with many statues of rams and beautiful gates decorated with bas-reliefs. We then go to *Mussawarat*, not far away from *Naga*. This settlement is located in a beautiful valley crowned by hills. Here the ruins of a very big temple are visible; it once played an exceptional important role. Its main characteristic, the "Great Enclosure", is made by many constructions and boundary walls which surround a temple built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century a.D. The large number of elephants represented on these walls makes you think



that this animal used to have an important role in this area. Beyond the big *wadi* there is another temple - restored by a German archaeological mission - dedicated to the god *Apedemak*. Picnic in the area and in the afternoon return to Khartoum. Drop off at your hotel in Khartoum (B.L.)

**End of service**

*The itinerary can be run in opposite direction without any changes for the visits and the excursions.*

**Khartoum, July 2014**



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