

travel

Flights between Israel and Egypt now boarding

Scheduled stops provide wanted shuttle service

This is a historic day for travelers to the Middle East. Today, for the first time, regularly scheduled airline flights begin between Cairo in Egypt and Tel Aviv in Israel.

El Al, the Israeli Airline, will fly Boeing 707s twice a week between Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv and Cairo International Airport in Cairo.

Lotus Airways of Egypt will also fly the route twice a week, using DC-8s. The new ruling gives each airline the option of adding one additional flight per week along this route.

The flight will take 45 minutes. It will cost \$170 round-trip. Airline officials are presently organizing schedules to dovetail these flights with flights coming into the mideast from other countries.

The Egypt-Israel flight will be offered at up to half price when incorporated into other international air tickets.

THE NEW AIR link will be of special interest to American travelers, who have previously been required to fly from Tel Aviv to Cairo via Cyprus. According to area travel agents, travelers who regularly fly to Israel have been agitating for more than a year for a route that would allow them to combine such a trip with a tour of Egypt.

Egypt became of the popular places to travel after Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made his historic journey to Israel; and it has retained this favorable status throughout the Mideast peace negotiations.

I have not yet visited Israel but I was in Egypt last spring with a group of travel writers from throughout the United States and Canada while the peace negotiations were in progress.

President Carter's name was on everybody's lips because of the Camp David peace initiatives. Egyptians on city streets and in small village bazaars had their radios tuned to the speeches being given by Sadat and Begin from either side of the Nile.

During a press conference with the Egyptian minister of tourism, the most often-asked question was "when will our North American readers be able to travel directly from Cairo to Tel Aviv."

The answers had words like soon and patience in them, but the tourism officials were clearly anxious to attract American tourists and their dollars and well aware that an air link between Egypt and Israel was an important step towards that goal.

THE EGYPTIAN government is combining both public and private financial investments in a five-year plan designed to attract large numbers of new tourists. In 1978, Egypt attracted 1,054,000 tourists out of 164 million tourists by 1983.

This will require a substantial increase in tourist facilities throughout Egypt. First-class hotels and restaurants are now available in main areas such as Cairo, Alexandria, Luxor and Aswan. The five-year plan will encourage the development of more hotels, recreation centers, travel agents, bus tours and other travel-related businesses for travelers at various budget levels.

Resort areas are also being built on the Red Sea near Hurghada and on the Mediterranean coast near Alexandria. Resorts are designed to offer a newer and more contemporary dimension to the traditional tour of Egyptian antiquities.

When you travel up the Nile to Luxor, the ancient city of Thebes, and on to Aswan, the marketplace of the ancient city of Mediterranean civilizations, you acquire a new perspective on the Israeli-Arab conflicts that have dominated our newspapers for 35 years.

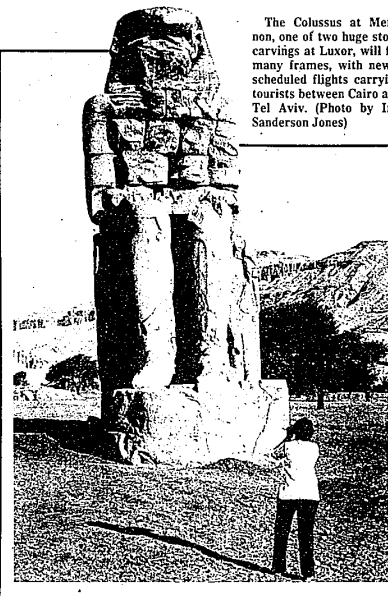
The Colossi of Memnon, two huge stone carvings near Luxor, have been there for at least a century when the biblical exodus of Israelites from Egypt took place more than 1,300 years before Christ. They were old before the time of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea.

The camel market at Luxor is as ancient as the Old Testament. The Egyptians ride their donkeys on the desert and along the Nile now as they did throughout these lands thousands of years ago.



travel log

Iris Sanderson Jones



The Colossi at Memnon, one of two huge stone carvings at Luxor, will fill many frames, with newly scheduled flights carrying tourists between Cairo and Tel Aviv. (Photo by Iris Sanderson Jones)

More deregulation a boon to consumers?

Here we go again folks. The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) has deregulated another aspect of the airline industry, so we are all in for another game of travel confusion.

The deregulation of airline fares has so far been to the advantage of the consumer, but nobody in or out of the travel business has understood a single thing about air fares since.

You thought it was only YOU who didn't understand. I felt the same way until I started hearing the jokes made by people who work for airlines.

They don't understand either. The public relations department of an airline often doesn't even know about a new fare until they read another advertisement in the paper.

Well, now there's a new dimension. The board has deregulated commissions paid by airlines to travel agents, so that travel agents can be more competitive and the consumer can benefit.

This is how the game of confusion has been played so far. I was on a plane for Louisiana three weeks ago when I read in the New York Times that CAP had made deregulation official. From now on, agents would not be paid the same fixed commission on air tickets they write for various airlines. Each airline would create its own commission schedule. United had already announced one.

According to the story, confirmed by a press release I later received and by a United official, United would pay a travel agent \$8.50 for every travel coupon written, no matter how long the flight.

A travel agent in New Orleans, who writes a lot of shorter domestic flights, thought it was great. A flight from Detroit to New Orleans through Atlanta would have two coupons both ways, so he was satisfied.

The other airlines weren't talking. They hadn't decided yet.

Just as well. Today I got a newpress release from United Airlines. They have decided to modify their plan so that agents can make more on long-distance flights.

It is now a six-tier plan, in which United will pay \$7.50 for each flight coupon up to 1,499 miles, a \$5 bonus for flight coupons up to 1,999 miles; a \$10 bonus up to 2,999 miles; a \$20 bonus up to 3,999 miles; a \$25 bonus up to 4,999 miles; and \$30 bonus for flights 4,500 miles and more.

WHAT ELSE IS in the mail from the airlines?

Sabena, Belgian World Airlines, is offering special fares April 15 through May 28 to promote its new scheduled flights between Detroit and Brussels. You can fly a 747 for \$333 round-trip during that six-week period.

Flights will leave Detroit, starting April 9, at 8:15 p.m. Mondays and Saturdays, and at 6:40 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Regular fares will range from \$463, super-budget and off-season, to \$856 excursion and in-season.

Evergreen International, a U.S. charter airline, has started two weekly flights between Philadelphia and Freeport, Bahamas. Evergreen is exploring flights to the Bahamas from Detroit (as well as from Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.) by the summer of 1980.

ALIA, the Royal Jordanian Airline, is offering half-day seminars to Midwest businessmen and women who are interested in the Middle East. They will be at the Ramada Inn, Romulus, from 8:30-1:30 a.m. Thursday, March 6. They will discuss business, banking, exports, Islamic law and the present political situation.

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Both packages include: Round-trip Coach air fare on United. Interisland transportation via Aloha Airlines or Hawaiian Airlines. Complimentary meals and beverages en route to and from Mainland. Round-trip airport-hotel transfers. Flower lei greeting. Complete baggage handling throughout (2 pieces). Escorted sightseeing tour of Honolulu and the Waialua River Cruise in Kauai. Prices per person/2 to a room, and vary depending upon departure date. Fare includes all taxes and service. (Ground meals not included.) Prices are subject to change without notice.

For details, including departure dates and special rates for children, send for your Hawaii folder today. Or call your Travel Agent. Or call United at 336-9000.

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