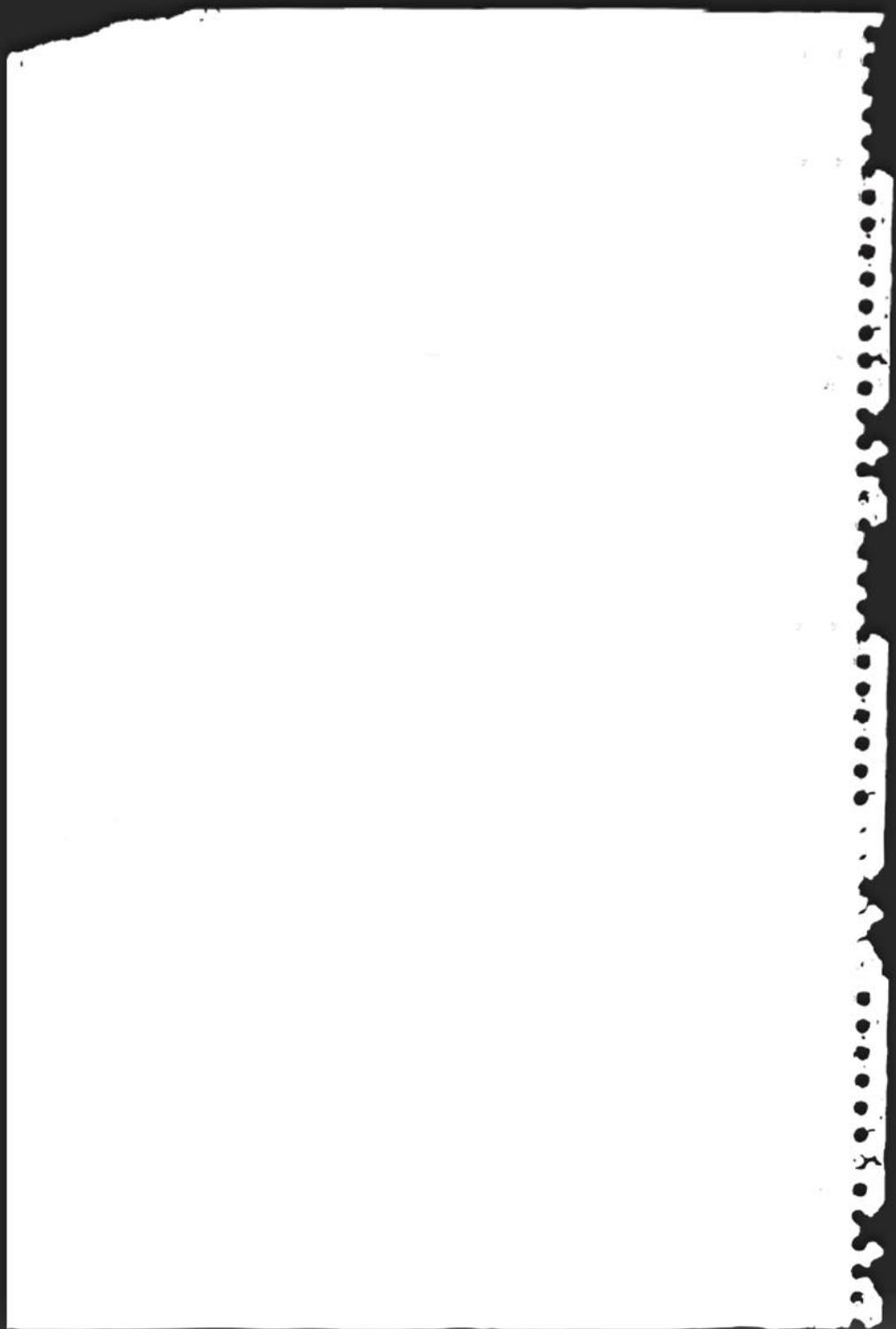




THE LAST MILLIONAIRE

Cairo

BBC



Index

Cairo	p 4
History	p 6
Neighbourhood Districts	p 8
The Big Sights	p 10
Eating/Drinking	p 13
Bars/Clubs	p 16
Arts/Entertainment	p 18
Shopping/Fashion	p 20
Sport/Leisure	p 21
Media	p 23
Practical Stuff	p 24
Useful Words and Phrases	p 28

Cairo City Guide

Noisy, crowded and choking traffic – Cairo is a city that assaults the senses and breeds a love/hate relationship. Split in two by the Nile and with the desert on its doorstep, Cairo is an exotic and chaotic mix of ancient and modern. It has 4,500 year old magnificent pyramids on its doorstep yet modern concrete suburban sprawl threatens to engulf them. With little city planning, traffic flyovers and summer smog Cairo would never top the list of “best quality of life” cities, but somehow it continues to grow and flourish, and it could never be described as dull. The secret to enjoying this teeming egalopolis of 17 million is to do as the Cairenes do – take the city at face value, expect the unpredictable, and employ lots of patience and good humour.



In Egyptian Arabic the word for Cairo and Egypt are the same which is an indication of the importance of this capital. Situated in Africa, but Arab in culture, Cairo is a strategic, political centre of the Islamic world. Egypt's population of 76 million make up a quarter of the Arab world. The influx into the crowded capital has snowballed in recent decades with young men in particular heading for the Cairo from the Delta villages. Almost 97% of Egypt is desert – and development conurbations follow the fertile Nile valley and delta. 96% of the population are Muslim with the rest being mainly Coptic Orthodox Christians.

Tourism is Egypt's biggest money earner and visitors to Cairo come for the bazaars, museums and mosques and most of all the pyramids. 92% of Egyptian holiday makers travel on packages and organised tours. Cairenes are highly entrepreneurial and wherever there are groups of tourists there will be an opportunistic hard sell salesman or someone offering a service for which they will demand baksheesh (tip/payment). Egyptian wages are extremely low compared with Europe – for example a government employees average salary is between 300- 600 Egyptian pounds (£30 -£60) a month. Cairo is extremely cheap for tourists.

Egypt became a republic in 1952 after a military coup overthrew King Farouk. The present president is President Mubarak who has been head of state since 1981.

Arabic is spoken universally in Cairo– but there is understanding of French and English (both former colonial rulers). Spoken Egyptian Arabic is considerably different from other Arab nations – e.g. Saudi Arabic – but the written form is identical across all of the Arab countries. Arabic text reads from right to left – and it's impossible to transcribe Arabic exactly into English – so some street names and maps have different translations of the same Arabic name – e.g. the Saqqara or alternatively Sakkara pyramids.

History

Egypt produced one of the earliest and most significant civilisations in the world. The country is synonymous with the rise of the great pharaohs – but it was also home to many other powerful dynasties – Greek, Roman, Arab, Ottoman and was first a Christian region, then Islamic. In 5000BC, whilst Europe and America were inhabited by stone age hunters, the ancient Egyptians were already building civilised societies and could produce food, cosmetics, create art on stone and pottery and had invented agricultural tools.

Egypt has been on the frontline of world history. In modern times it's been at the centre of Middle East politics and as a strategically crucial trade route the Suez canal has witnessed several battles for control.



*Tutankhamun
death mask*

3000BC

The first ruler of the Nile Valley was King Menes. He was the first Pharaoh and he founded the first of 30 dynasties which were to rule Egypt for 3000 years. These dynasties ruled a great world empire from their capital Memphis – the ruins of which lie just outside Cairo.

2600BC

Imhotep was the genius architect of Pharaoh King Zoser who created the first pyramid at Saqqara – just outside modern Cairo.

1352-1327BC

The era of Pharaoh Akhenaten who is most famous for being married to the beautiful legendary Nefertiti who is depicted in many paintings and sculptures. Akhenaten was succeeded by 9 year old boy-pharaoh Tutankhamun. Tutankhamun died aged just 18 and his tomb and its treasures are Egypt's most famous.

1279-1213BC

Pharaoh Ramses II constructs many grand monuments and temples and during his 60 year reign leaves his mark on almost every significant monument in Egypt.

332 - 30BC

Alexander the Great conquers Egypt. When Alexander died an early death, one of his generals declared himself king of Egypt - Ptolemy I Soter. The succession of Ptolemaic kings made Alexandria their capital. The last and most famous of the Ptolemies was Cleopatra. Until modern times Cleopatra was the last ruler of an independent Egypt. The country fell under Roman, Byzantine, and later under Ottoman rule.

30BC – 640AD

Roman and Byzantine rule. In 45AD St Mark brings Christianity to Egypt – known as Coptic Christians. In 451 the Copts are expelled from the Orthodox Church.

640 – 1517

Arab conquest of Egypt and the introduction of Islam.

1517 – 1790

Egypt is ruled as an Ottoman province from Istanbul.

1798-1802

The French and then the British occupy Egypt. The important trade route between the East and Europe through Suez becomes strategically important and prompts the British and French attempts to control it. Napoleon led a fleet to try to seize Suez but was turned back by Nelson.

1869

After 10 years of construction the Suez Canal is opened.

1939-45

During WW11 the Suez Canal was vital to the Allied war strategy. Egypt was first invaded by the Italians then by the Germans in November 1942. The Allies were victorious at El-Alamen which was a vital turning point in the War.

1952 - 1970

Revolution - King Farouk is overthrown by a military coup and Egypt declared a republic. Army general Nasser becomes the country's first prime minister and later president. When he nationalises the Suez Canal in 1956 Britain, France and Israel invade Egypt to try to take control of Suez, but Nasser is successful in expelling them – making him a national hero.

1970s

Nassar dies and is succeeded by President Sadat who sets about restructuring government and wins the Nobel Peace prize with the Israeli Prime Minister Begin for their work towards peace in the Middle East at Camp David. In 1981 Sadat is assassinated by radical Islamists.

1981 - present

President Mubarak succeeds Sadat and is the current President. In 1997, 58 tourists were killed by Islamic militants bombs at Luxor and in 2005 three suicide bombs exploded in Cairo killing 10 people, including tourists, and injuring others.

Neighbourhood Districts

Islamic Cairo

The area that most tourists head to. This is the labyrinthine medieval centre of the city, rich with monuments including the El Azhar Mosque.

Old Cairo

Also known as Coptic Cairo. This historic walled area with its narrow lanes contains the Coptic Museum and churches and a medieval synagogue. This is one of the oldest-inhabited parts of the city.

Zamalek

An exclusive island in the middle of the city, linked to the rest of Cairo by the Kasr en Nil bridge. Zamalek is the site of luxury villas, embassies, and an exclusive sporting club. Wealthy Cairenes and a contingent of expats inhabit Zamelek and hang out in its restaurants, bars and designer shops. The Cairo tower is located here. It was once the largest concrete structure in the world, and still dominates the Cairo skyline.

Heliopolis

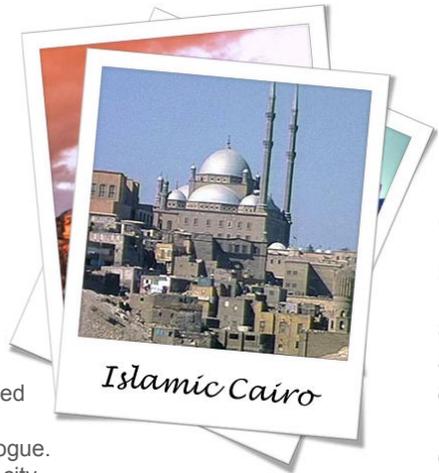
A middle-class suburb with 20th century grand apartments and villas, although modern concrete construction threatens the atmosphere of the district.

Downtown

Wide boulevards and refined buildings reminiscent of Paris. In recent decades the area has become run-down, but the district retains its artistic bohemian community with art galleries housed in Beaux Arts buildings. The must-see Egyptian Museum of Antiquities is here, as is Midan Et Tahrir (Liberation Square), the centre of the city - a chaotic traffic interchange and home to the "Mugamaa" - an Islamo-Stalinist 1940s concrete monster which houses Cairo's government bureaucrats.

Giza

On the West bank of the Nile. In recent years the concrete buildings of this suburb have spread rapidly until the district now has the ancient pyramids on its doorstep, only the desert and the Nile prevent it from sprawling any further. 5 star hotels and good restaurants, bars and clubs are located close to the banks of the River Nile, and less exclusive establishments are close to the pyramid site.





HELIOPOLIS

DOWNTOWN

ISLAMIC CAIRO

ZAMALEK

OLD CAIRO

GIZA

The Big Sights

The Pyramids

Without doubt the overwhelming reason for tourist visits to Cairo. The pyramids are the most instantly recognisable monuments in the world. There are 3 main pyramid sites which can be visited from the city – the busiest and most crowded is the closest site at Giza.

The massive pyramids at Giza are the last remaining Wonders of the Ancient World.

They would have once been entirely smooth limestone structures but now the stone blocks

are exposed – either because they have fallen

- or because the pyramids have been used as quarries over the centuries.

There are still arguments over how these monumental structures were built.

Giza is also the site of the legendary Sphinx, carved out of a huge block of limestone. The massive statue is thought to bear the face of the pharaoh Khafre.

In the evening a popular son et lumiere show which illuminates the spectacular pyramids is held at a theatre beside the Sphinx. As the number one destination

for coach tours the site and nearby town is surrounded by enterprising Cairenes who earn their living from the visitors. There are stalls selling everything from

trinkets to water and arriving tourists are approached by touts and offered a horse or camel ride around the site, or longer treks which take their riders further into the desert or on the 3 hour ride to the next pyramid site at Saqqara.

30 km south of Cairo -**Saqqara**, is the second major pyramid site and necropolis - archeologically it's hugely significant as a burial ground for over 3,500 years. The Step Pyramid of Zoser was the first ever to be built in 2,650BC. Sprawling over 7km of desert there are the remains of 11 pharaoh pyramids with stunning tomb decorations, and hundreds of tombs of lesser mortals. There are fewer hawkers at this site and they are more closely regulated than at Giza.

A further 20km on south from Saqqara is the least visited **Dahshur** Pyramid site. One tenth of the number of visitors make the trek here – in summer just 250 a day compared with 2500 a day to Giza. Tourists who do make the effort have a far less hassled experience with no stalls or touts othering them. The only opportunistic Egyptians here are the camel-riding uniformed tourist police who charge baksheesh to have their photo taken. Dahshur is home to the “Bent” pyramid – so called because it rises steeply for three quarters of its height before tapering at a gentler slope near the top and the vast Red Pyramid – named after the red limestone it was built from. Tours inside take visitors through a long claustrophobic passage to three 15m high chambers.

On the major roads around the 3 pyramid sites are carpet shops, and papyrus museums which are stop-offs for the coaches carrying tourists to the pyramids.



The Egyptian Museum of Antiquities

Attracting 7,000 visitors a day this museum, built in 1902, holds the world's best collection of Egyptian artifacts. It's crammed with over 130,000 objects - more than a century's worth of discoveries and it would take at least a full day to do it justice. It's far from a state-of-the-art museum and many of the exhibits are cramped, in dusty cabinets and confusingly labelled, but the treasures are undeniable. The mummy room and the Old Kingdom room are highlights, as are the Treasures of Tutankhamun - an exhibition of 1,700 objects found by Howard Carter in 1922.

The Egyptian Museum of Antiquities

Midan Tahrir

Downtown

Tel: (02) 2 575 4319

www.egyptianmuseum.gov.eg

Opening: 9am-6.45pm daily

Admission: Charge

Khan al Khalili

This maze of alleys and bazaars in Islamic Cairo has been the commercial centre of the city since the Middle Ages. The main thoroughfare of Sharia El Azhar is where thousands of tourists come to buy souvenirs. Off the main drag are smaller streets where the locals shop. There is a gold market and an authentic spice and perfume bazaar.

Shari'al Muski is a chaotic pedestrian street where wholesalers sell clothes and housewares to locals and smaller traders.

The nearby Sharia El Khayamiyya is a street of tentmakers where craftsmen make traditional caravan tents from bright orange and yellow fabrics. Bespoke tents can be made up to an individual's instructions. Sharia El Sheikh Muhammed Abdou is where to find Cairene artisans producing products with authentic traditional designs.

Khan al Khalili,

al-Azhar Street,

Between Midan al Husayn and Sharia al Muski

Opening: 9am-6pm Mon-Sat

Admission: Free

Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque

Built in 879 this is the largest and oldest functioning mosque in Cairo.

Thousands gather weekly to pray in its central courtyard. Designed on a vast scale it employs classic Islamic architecture. The large paved courtyard with its elegant arcades is a peaceful haven and the climb to the top of the famous spiral minaret is worth it for the spectacular views of the city.

Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque,
Sharia el-Saliba / Sharia Tulun,
Opening: 8am-4pm daily except prayer time on Fridays
Admission: Free

Al Azhar Park

Not on the well trodden tourist path but this park should be as it offers a much needed breath of peace and calm from the choking city. This beautifully landscaped park has over 74 acres of Islamic designed gardens with fountains, orchards, a lake and a great café/restaurant that has 360 degree views of the city.

AL Azhar Park
Salah Salem Street
Tel: (02) 2510 3868 / 2510 7378
www.alazharpark.com
Opening: 10am-10pm daily
Admission: Charge

Eating/drinking

Egyptian food is a mixture of Turkish, Syrian, Lebanese, and Greek. As a capital city Cairo serves up an international menu. Local everyday food is available at cafes – which don't usually have menus – and street stalls, whilst more formal eating is offered in restaurants and hotels whose customers are middle-class Egyptians and tourists. Egyptians love bread and eat lots of pitta-style flat bread with every meal. Tomatoes feature in the majority of dishes. A street food staple is the fava bean – served up with tomatoes and onions with boiled egg for breakfast or stuffed into pitta bread for lunch. Taamiya – a falafel based on white beans is widely available.



Only visitors with strong stomachs should partake in street food. To avoid food poisoning only drink bottled water and bottled or canned drinks, avoid ice and ice cream and food that is kept warm for a length of time and anything that is uncooked – like salads and make sure fruit is peeled.

A typical Egyptian café will serve lamb kebabs or kofta (meatballs) with dips like hummus and babaghanoug (aubergine dip). Chicken and pigeon are served – sometimes in a tageen – an earthenware pot used to make a stew with rice. Cafes are very cheap with meals costing less than a pound. Restaurants offer more choice and serve mezze – a range of small starters including dips, olives etc, mahshi – which are stuffed vegetables and torly – a mixed vegetable and meat casserole. Eating out even in top restaurants is cheap compared to European standards – a 3 course meal costs between £7.50 and £10. The best Egyptian food is found in people's homes and there is a strong tradition of home cooking.

As a Muslim country there is no culture of drinking alcohol but it is widely available in Cairo – particularly in tourist areas where there is a small but vibrant bar culture. The Egyptians brew their own versions of Stella and Sakkara lager which are fine, but their homemade bootleg spirits like Johnny Talker and Good Gin are to be avoided as they have been linked to cases of serious illness. Cairo has hundreds of juice bars – where juice is squeezed from seasonal fresh fruit. The national drink is black tea served in a small glass with lots of sugar or with mint. Coffee houses known as “ahwa” serve up strong black stewed coffee, again with lots of sugar. The more traditional “ahwa” are populated by men only, smoking on a sheesha – a water pipe filled with molasses tobacco.

Cafes/Restaurants

Al Fishawi

In the bazaar of Khan El Khallia in the heart of Islamic Cairo this is the city's most famous coffee house. Huge old mirrors, high ceilings and brass tables make it an incredibly atmospheric place. It was opened in 1773 and has been managed by the same family. Turkish coffee, tea and sheesha is available 24 hours a day. One speciality is karkaday – a deep purple hibiscus infusion.

Al Fishawi, Off Midan Hussein, Khan El Khalili

Tel: (02) 2590 6755

Opening: 24 hours

Felfela

This is the original and best of the Felfela chain. Mostly a tourist clientele but an occasional local comes here to eat mezzes and kebabs served in a long hall. Décor is kitsch with Egyptian artefacts and stuffed animals.

Felfela, 15 Shar'a Hoda Sharaawi, Downtown

Tel: (02) 2392 2833

Opening: 8am- Midnight

Americana Fish Market

Located on the upper deck of a permanently moored boat on the Nile in Giza this restaurant has a reputation as one of the best fish restaurants in town and you'll need to book. Catches of the day are sold by weight and then cooked to order.

Americana Fish Market, 26 Sharia el-Nil, Giza

Tel: (02) 2570 9693

Opening: Noon-2am

Sequoia

In a fantastic riverside location - this al-fresco hip restaurant is very popular with well-heeled Cairenes and has fantastic views across the Nile. Egyptian food and cocktails are reasonably priced.

Sequoia, Sharia Abul Feda, Zamalek

Tel: (02) 2735 0014

Opening: Daily lunch and dinner

Grand Hyatt Hotel - Revolving Restaurant

For a smart French dining experience with a view take the lift to the 41st floor of the Grand Hyatt hotel and dine in its revolving restaurant. Don't worry about feeling dizzy it takes 75 minutes to revolve through 360 degrees.

Grand Hyatt, Corniche En Nil

Tel: (02) 2365 1234

Abou El Sid

Popular with Cairenes and foreigners this is a cool retro-styled restaurant serving Egyptian classics. The décor is kitsch with paintings by local artists on the wall. Booking essential.

Abou El Sid, 157 26th July Street

Tel: (02) 2735 9640

Opening: Noon-2am

Bars/Clubs

The Egyptian weekend is Friday/ Saturday – so the big nights out are Thursday and Friday. Cairo is buzzing after dark in the summer when people come out to socialise in the cooler nighttime. Most places don't get going until late – and carry on until at least 3am.

Cairo has a fair share of rough male-only spit and sawdust drinking dens - definitely not recommended for women on their own. Any hotel that is 3 star plus has its own bar and these are generally hassle-free but tend to have a minimum charge.

The Zamalek district delivers some good spots. There is a clear distinction between a disco - where people dance – and a nightclub – which is a dinner and show experience. Some of the discos have a couples-only policy.

La Bodega

Located in a first-floor apartment at the heart of the Zamalek district. There is a striking red bar, and a lounge restaurant serving Asian fusion food which is popular with its smart but laid-back Egyptian and ex-pat clientele.

La Bodega, 1st Floor, 157 26th July Street
Tel: (02) 2735 6761

Deals

A bar that is popular with a younger crowd – intimate and congenial with pop videos for entertainment.

Deals, 5 El-Sayed el-Bakri
Tel: (02) 2736 0502

Latex at the Nile Hilton

Although it sounds like a venue for lovers of all things rubber this is not a fetish club. This disco tries hard to be hip with house played most night and soul on Mondays and R&B on Tuesdays. Minimum charge from midnight at weekends.

Latex at the Nile Hilton, Corniche al Nil, Downtown
Tel: (02) 2578 0444

Rithmo

The place to be seen for the city's young beautiful people. Located in the Semiramis Intercontinental Hotel, Tuesday is the big night at this bar with a dancefloor. Bring your bling.

Rithmo, Semiramis InterContinental, Corniche En Nil

Tel: (02) 2795 7171

Arts/Entertainment

Dinner Cruises

Onboard the Nile Maxim dinner is served as your ship floats down the Nile, whilst you are entertained by a bellydance floor show.

Onboard the Nile Peking serves a Chinese menu and has a belly dancers and a bar and disco. Dinner-cruise boats don't come more kitsch than the Nile Pharaoh and Golden Pharaoh which are mock-ups of Pharonic barges. There are also permanently moored restaurant boats that don't travel the Nile.



Cairo Museum

Belly Dancing

Cairo is at the centre of international bellydancing with annual dance festivals held every summer in the city (the Nile Group festival is on 16-23 June 2008). The festivals offer classes and workshops and events such as bellydancing costume shows. It is possible to have bellydancing private lessons. Because of an increase in religious conservatism there is a growing social stigma towards bellydancing in Egypt. These days more and more dancers are foreign rather than Egyptian. The wealthy top stars – perform in the nightclubs of the 5 star hotels like the Semiramis Intercontinental, Cairo Sheraton and the Marriott. The nightclubs of Pyramids Road and downtown Cairo also offer bellydancing nights but these are generally seedy and the quality of the dancing can be poor.

Semiramis International, Shariah Cornish el-Nil, Roda
Tel: (02) 2795 7171

Cairo Sheraton, Galae Square
Tel: (02) 2333 69800

Cairo Marriott, 16 Sharia Saray El Gezira
Tel: (02) 2728 3000

Music

There is a fairly limited live music scene. The Cairo Opera House hosts ballet, opera and classical concerts. For traditional music the Arabic Music Institute stages performances and Arabic music and theatre is also performed at Beit al Harrawi in Islamic Cairo and the Balloon Theatre in Agouza. The Cairo Jazz Club in Mohandiseen has a nightly show.

The Cairo Opera House, Gezira Exhibition, Gezira Island
Tel: (02) 2739 8144
www.cairooperahouse.org

Arabic Music Institute, 22 Ramsis Street
Tel: (02) 2574 3372

Beit al Harrawi, behind al Azhar Mosque, Islamic Cairo
Tel: (02) 2510 4174

Balloon Theatre, Sharia El Nil, Agouza
Tel: (02) 2392 63 36

The Cairo Jazz Club, 197 Sharia 26th July, Agouza
Tel: (02) 2345 9939

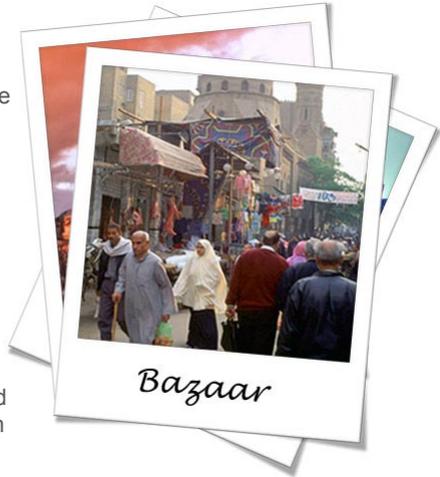
Whirling Dervishes

The Mawlawiyya is an Egyptian religious sufi sect also known as the Whirling Dervishes. A performance for tourists of the infamous whirling ceremony is held every Saturday and Wednesday evenings at the Wikala al-Ghuri, not far from Khan al Khalili. Performances are for an hour and are free. The shows are very popular and a big queue of tourists waits for each performance.

Wikala al-Ghuri, Muiz Street, off Sharia al-Azhar

Shopping/Fashion

Most tourists will make at least one visit to the Khan al Khalili bazaar (see “Big Sights” section). Typical souvenirs include brassware, rugs and carpets, handblown Muski glassware, backgammon boards and essential oils from the perfume bazaar - tourists are expected to haggle for the best price. At Khan al Khalili there is an endless supply of cheap kitsch plastic versions of antiques – from papyrus to pyramids. Good quality, officially approved reproductions of scarabs, papyrus, tomb paintings and pharaoh statues are available at the museum shop at the Egyptian Antiquities Museum.



Fair Trade Egypt sells high quality Egyptian crafts including camel-hair rugs, cottons and embroidered clothes. Prices are fixed and profits help rural and village communities. Nagada sells the hand woven quality cotton which Egypt is famous for, and traditional earthenware pottery from the Nile Valley as well as jewellery, and cotton and silk clothing.

Cairo is a great place to pick up a bellydancing costume. There are specialist shops in the Khan al Khalili like Al-Wikalah or Amira el-Khattan where you can buy off the peg sequinned and beaded bras and skirts, or one can be tailormade.

The Birqash Camel market is 21 miles outside Cairo and this bustling, noisy, smelly camel market is the largest in Egypt. Camels are not only for tourists - the animals are still widely used in Egypt to carry people and goods.

Khan al Khalili, al-Azhar Street, Between Midan al Husayn and Sharia al Muski

The Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, Midan Tahrir, Downtown,
Tel: (02) 575 4319

Fair Trade Egypt, 27 Yehia Ibrahim, El-Zamalek, Tel: (02) 2735 1045

Nagada, 13 Refa'a Street, Dokki, Tel: (02) 2748 6663

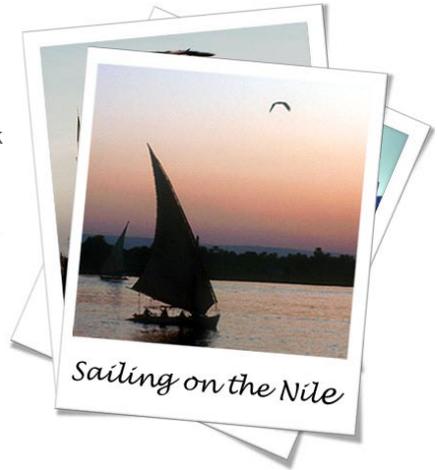
Al-Wikalah, 73 Sharia Gawhar al-Qayid (off the Muski)

Amira el-Khattan, 27 Sharia Basra, Mohandeseen, Tel: (02) 2749 0322

The Birqash Camel market, Birqesh (60km North of Cairo)

Sport/Leisure

In common with most of the rest of the world the most popular spectator sport is football. Cairo has 2 rival teams – Zamalek and Al-Ahly who share the Cairo Stadium during the season of September – May. The Nile presents opportunities for rowing and sailing. Rowing - a legacy of British colonialism - is the preserve of ex-pats and middle class Cairenes. Teams who are members of the Al-Nil Sporting Club compete at the weekends. Sailing on the Nile takes place in the elegant shallow-bottomed boats called feluccas which sail with distinctive triangular sails. They are still used to carry produce and people on short journeys up and down the Nile, but more often they are hired by the day or half day by tourists who take a picnic on board. Feluccas can be hired from the waterfront locations.



The area around Cairo has several golf courses – the newest is the Dreamland Golf and Tennis resort, there are also courses at Mena House Oberoi Hotel and Mirage City Golf Club at the Marriott Hotel.

Other leisure activities include walking in the Al-Azhar Park (see “Big sights” section), a National Circus in Aguza, or for tourists who want to combine history, education and entertainment in one digestible bite there’s the Dr Ragab’s Pharaonic Village on Jacob Island. Reached by boat from the Nile’s Corniche waterfront. Here are replica temples and 10 mini-museums which include exhibits of Hellenic, Coptic and Islamic civilizations, mummification and ancient arts. There is a cast of costumed Egyptian actors performing tasks to illustrate different eras, demonstrating how papyrus is produced and the art of Ancient Egyptian make-up. Dr Ragab’s is one of the few places to pick up genuine hand painted papyrus. Altogether a kitsch 3 hours simulation of life in Ancient Egypt.

Cairo Stadium, Stad El-Qahira El-Dawly, Nasr City

Dreamland Golf and Tennis resort, 6th of October City Road, Dreamland City
Tel: (02) 385 53333

Mena House Oberoi Hotel, Tel: (02) 377 32222

Mirage City Golf Club Marriott Hotel, Tel: (02) 2409 1464

Al-Azhar Park, Salah Salem Street, Tel: (02) 2510 3868 / 2510 7378

National Circus, Aguza, near Zamalek Bridge, Tel: (02) 2347 061

Dr Ragab's Pharaonic Village, 3 Sharia Bahr al-Azam, Tel: (02) 2571 8675

Media

There is an English language daily newspaper – Egyptian Gazette – which carries news and listings. There is a weekly English edition of Al-Ahram and monthly Egypt Today which are also good for listings.

Radio

Nogoum (100.6FM) music station plays Arabic pop while Nile FM (104.15FM) plays western pop music. Music Programme (89.0FM) plays folk and classical.

TV

Cairo's terrestrial channels are state controlled and include a diet of football and Koran readings. Nile TV has English subtitles on most programmes. Satellite channels are available in hotels.

Practical Stuff

Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months on entry into Egypt.

A visa is necessary for entry into Egypt and can be obtained on arrival at Cairo airport.

Local Laws and Customs

- Egypt has strict laws against the use, possession or trafficking of illegal drugs. If you are convicted of any of these offences, you can expect to receive a hefty prison sentence.
- Do not take photographs near military or official installations.
- As a Muslim country it is appropriate for women to dress conservatively. Dress modestly if visiting a mosque or a religious shrine. Visitors should remove their shoes and women should cover their heads and arms, and not wear shorts or miniskirts. Avoid visiting when people are praying – particularly Friday lunchtime prayers.
- The export of antiquities is prohibited.
- When invited to a home it's normal to take your shoes off before entering.
- Public displays of affection are disapproved of – that includes holding hands and kissing in public is definitely disapproved of. Although homosexuality is not in itself illegal in Egypt – homosexual acts in public are, and homosexuals have been convicted of public indecency.

Tipping

It is expected that relatively wealthy foreigners are generous with baksheesh – tipping. These are often extremely small sums and are expected for services like unlocking a room at a museum or looking after shoes at a mosque – where a tip of between one and five Egyptian pounds is appropriate (10p – 50p). Even though restaurants include a service charge it is usual to give between two and five Egyptian pounds (20p -50p) direct to the waiter. Taxi drivers expect a small tip. Tipping or baksheesh payments in dollars are most appreciated.

Water and Health

Only drink bottled water and make sure the bottle is sealed before buying it. To avoid food poisoning don't eat food from a street stall and be wary of any food that has been kept warm for a length of time. Avoid ice and ice cream and anything that is uncooked – like salads - unless you are sure that it is a hygienic kitchen. Make sure fruit is peeled.

Money

Egypt's currency is the Egyptian pound
Symbol is £E or LE

Exchange rate:

GB Pounds to Egyptian Pounds:

GB£ 1 = 10.57 £E

GB£ 5 = 52.85 £E

GB£10 = 105.70 £E

Egyptian Pounds to GB Pounds:

£E 1 = 0.09

£E5 = 0.45

£E10 = 0.90

One Egyptian pound is equal to 100 piastres. Notes come in denominations of £E100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1. Coins are in denominations of 50, 25, 20, 10 and 5 piastres.

Credit cards are only accepted in large hotels, expensive restaurants and shops, but not elsewhere.

Cost of Living

Movie ticket	£E 25.00
Small bottle of water	£E 1.50
Souvenir t-shirt	£E 40.00
Average museum admission	£E 50.00

Local information

Time: GMT + 2 hour (summer)

Sunrise and sunset:

Mid June:

05:50 sunrise

19:57 sunset

Weather:

In Cairo it's always warm, and in summer very hot. January and February (10-20°C/50-68°F) can be overcast with the occasional shower. Between March and April, Cairo is occasionally subject to the khamseen, a dry and very dusty wind storm which blows in from the parched Western Desert at up to 150kph (93mph). During summer the city is (35-38°C/95-100°F).

Dialling codes:

The international country dialling code from the UK to Egypt is +20 and the Cairo city code is +2.

The outgoing international code dialling out of Egypt is 00, followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom).

Many numbers in Cairo are still given as 7 digits eg 123 4567 – but new number changes have changed the 7 digit numbers to 8 digits by adding 2 in front of the 7 digits – eg 2 123 4567. To dial a Giza number you need to add 3 in front of the 7 digits – so it becomes 3 123 4567.

Dialling within Cairo from a mobile phone use the (02) prefix.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 220 volts, 50H. European 2 round pin plugs are needed.

Working Hours

Government offices 8.30am – 2pm Sun- Thurs

Banks 8.30am – 2pm Sun- Thurs

Shops 10am – 8pm Daily (small places closed Friday 12- 3pm for prayers)

Public Transport

The best way to get round Cairo is to walk – although watch out for the traffic alongside you which is heavy and crossing the road requires guts and determination. Alternatively the metro is clean and efficient and simple to use, and taxis are cheap. Buses are overcrowded slow, and more complicated to use. Self-driving or cycling is not recommended.

Metro

Trains run from 5.30am to midnight. Tickets can be bought in the station and there is a flat fare of E£1 (10p). The front carriage of each train is reserved for women travelling on their own. Route maps are in English and Arabic. Line one connects the northeast suburb of El Marg with the southern district of Helwan – via Mubarak, Sadat, Saad Zaghoul, Saiyida Zeinab, Mari Girgis and Maadi. Line two connects Shubra in the north to El Monib – via Mubarak, Ataba, Sadat, Opera and Giza.

Taxis

The taxis that are seen everywhere are the black and white Fiats, Ladas and Peugeotts. Cars can be very battered. With the horrendous traffic a journey could take 20 minutes or 90 depending on the time of day. These taxis don't have working meters and a driver will tell you the cost at the end of the journey, but fares are very cheap – crossing Cairo costs between E£4 and E£15 (40p to £1.50). To hail a cab shout out your destination and if it's where the driver wants to take you, he'll stop. It's not unusual for these taxis to pick up other passengers, who will share your journey.

There are more luxurious limo taxis – usually Mercedes which wait around 5 star hotels – these will cost 3 times as much as the standard cabs.

A third type of taxi is the bright yellow Cairo Cab, which do use a meter.

They are priced somewhere between the black and white Fiats and the limo service.

Useful Words and Phrases

masc = masculine; fem = feminine

ai as in eye

aa as in bad but lengthened sound

aw as in rose

'a glottal stop as in bottle

'a as when asked to say ah by the doctor

ey/ay as in day

ee as in feet

gh like the French r (back of the throat)

kh as in Scottish loch

ENGLISH	EGYPTIAN	PHONETICS (Where available)	NOTES
Welcome	marhaba		
Hello	ahlan wa sahan		
How are you?	ez zayyak (masc) ez zayyek(fem)		
I'm fine, thanks. And you?	kwayyis šukran, ez zayyak?		
What's your name?	esmak eh?		
My name is...	ana esmi		
Where are you from?	men ayna anta/anti?		
Pleased to meet you	saadot belkak		
Good morning	sabah el-kheir	sa-baH il kheer	Emphasis on the H
Good afternoon	duhr el-kheir		

Good evening	masa el-kheir	Masa il kheer	
Good night	tesbah ala kheir	Tes-baH al kheer	
Goodbye	salam		
Good luck	bettwafeeq		
Yes	naam		
No	la		
Please	men fadlak(m) men fadlik (f)	min FAD-lak min FAD-lik	
I don't understand	ana mish fahem		
Please speak more slowly	min fadlak takallam ala mahlik		
Please write it down for me	mumkin tiktibuh/tiktibeeh		
Excuse me	assef		
How much/many?	bekam?	bi-kaem	
Sorry	aasif (m) / asfa (f)		
Thanks	shook-ran	SHUK-ran	
Where's the toilet?	Fein el hammam	feyn il ham-MEM	
Help! Fire! Stop!	el-Ha'nee! haree! U'af!		
Call the police!	itasal bil bulees		
Receipt	mumkin		

0	Sifr/zero		
1	Waahid		
2	Itnayn		
3	Talaata		
4	Arba'a		
5	Khamsa		
6	Sitta		
7	Saba's		
8	Tamanya		
9	Tis'a		
10	'ashara		
11	Hadashar		
12	Itnashar		
13	Talatashar		
14	Arba'tashar		
15	Khamastashar		
16	Sittashar		
17	Saba'tashar		
18	Tamantashar		

19	Tisa'tashar		
20	'ishreen		
30	Talateen		
40	Arbi'een		
50	Khamseen		
60	Sitteen		
70	Saba'een		
80	Tamaneen		
90	isa'een		
100	Miyya		