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探索月歷
Explorers' Month

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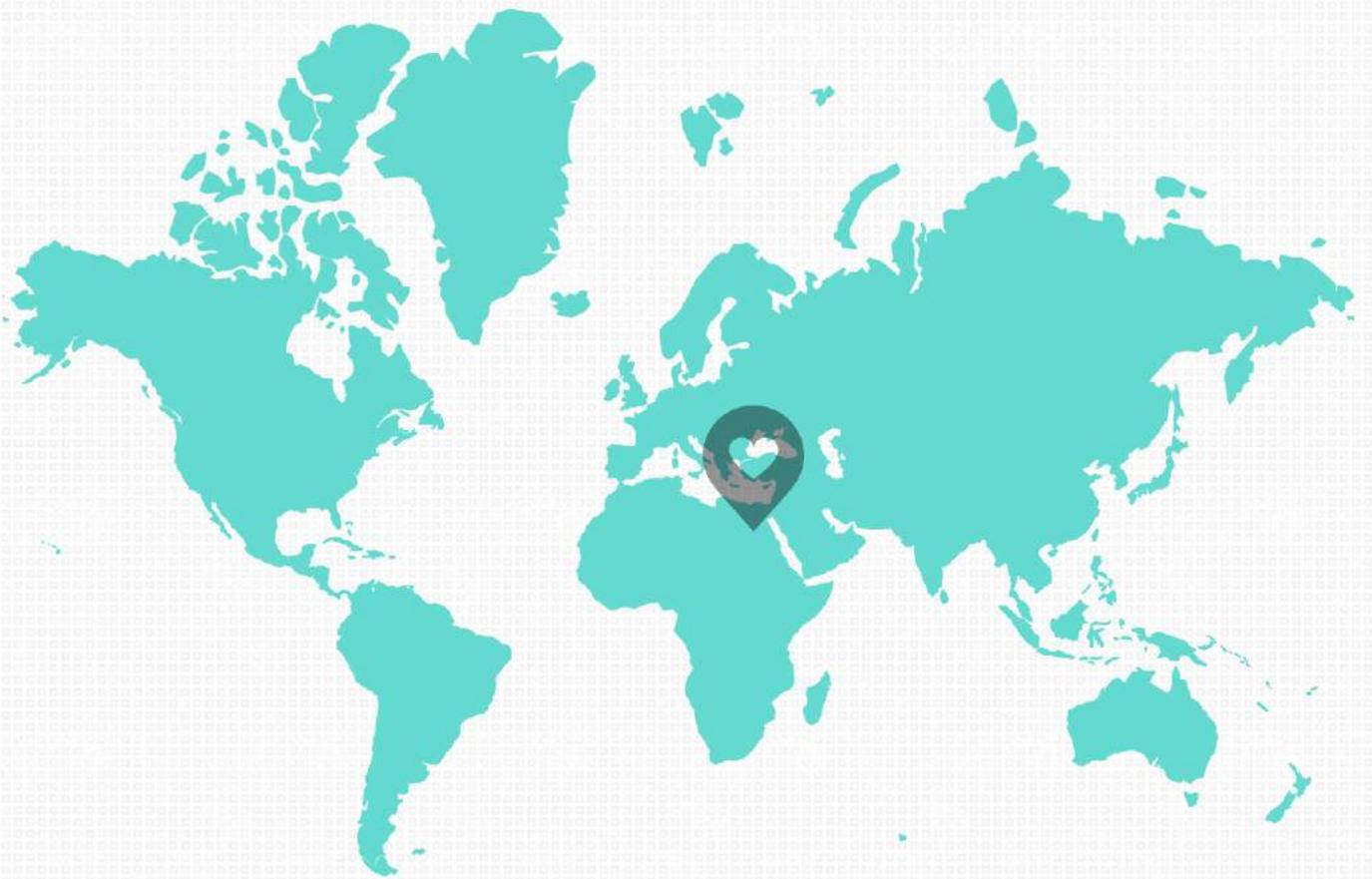


Egypt



ARMCHAIR TRAVELLER

Travel Guide 2 GO~



COUNTRY OF THE MONTH:

EGYPT





Egypt 101

أهلاً وسهلاً



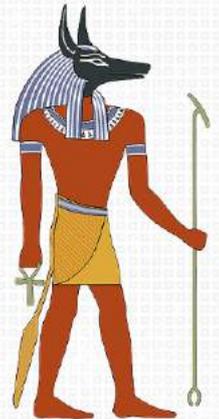
Coat of arms of Egypt



The Arab Republic of Egypt

- Capital: Cairo "The Victorious City"
- Official Language: **Arabic**
- Anthem: Bilady, Bilady, Bilady (**Bilādī, laki ḥubbī wa fu'ādī**)
- Population: 101 M

With an impressive history dating back over 5000 years, Egypt offers a very different type of tourist experience. It showcases much of **man's history**, his achievements, and the glorious monuments that stand to tell a tale for our future generations.



#1

There were over 2,000 ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses.



Language in Egypt

Egyptians speak a continuum of dialects. The predominant dialect in Egypt is **Egyptian Colloquial Arabic**, which is the vernacular language. **Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)** is the official language and the most widely written; additionally, it is the **liturgical language of Islam**, the majority religion and state religion of Egypt.

Arabic alphabet

أ	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ
alef	beh	teh	theh	jeem	hah	khah
د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص
dal	thal	reh	zain	seen	sheen	sad
ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق
dad	tab	zah	ain	ghain	feh	qaf
ك	ل	م	ن	هـ	و	ي
kaf	lam	meem	noon	heh	waw	yeh

Hello
مرحباً
[marhabaan]

Goodbye
مع السلامة
[mae alsalama]

Nice to meet you
فرصة سعيدة
[farash saeiduh]

Good morning
صباح الخير
[sabah alkhyr]

Good evening
مساء الخير
[masa' alkhyr]

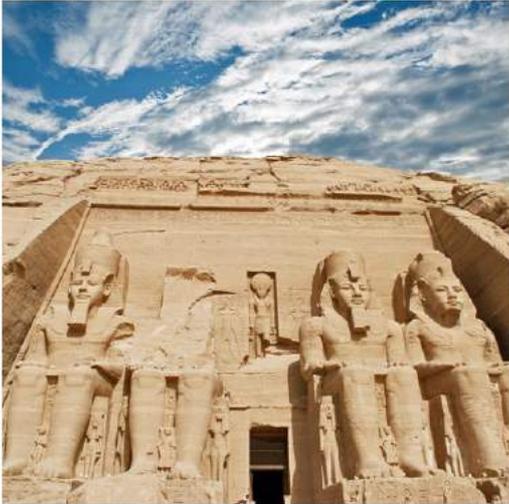


Tourist Spots



1. Pyramids of Giza

The last surviving of the **Seven Wonders of the Ancient World**, the Pyramids of Giza are one of the world's most recognisable landmarks. Built as tombs for the mighty Pharaohs and guarded by the enigmatic **Sphinx**, Giza's pyramid complex has awed travellers down through the ages and had archaeologists (and a fair few conspiracy theorists) scratching their heads over how they were built for centuries.



2. Abu Simbel

Even in a country festooned with temples, Abu Simbel is something special. This is **Ramses II's great temple**, adorned with colossal statuary standing guard outside, and with an interior sumptuously decorated with wall paintings. Justly famous for its megalithic proportions, Abu Simbel is also known for the incredible feat, which saw the **entire temple moved from its original setting** – set to disappear under the water because of the Aswan dam – during the 1960s in a massive **UNESCO operation** that took four years.



3. Alexandria

The **most European of Egypt's cities**, Alexandria has a history that not many others can match. **Founded by Alexander the Great**, this **seaside** city has an appealing days-gone-by atmosphere that can't be beaten. Although today, there are few historic remnants of its illustrious past – feted in songs and books – this is a place made for aimless strolling along the **seashore Corniche, café-hopping, and souk shopping**.



The Blue Hole: Divers' Cemetery or Underwater Cathedral?



Probably the **most dangerous diving spot** in the world, the **Blue Hole** is a 120-metre-deep sinkhole, five miles north of Dahab. Its nickname is the **"divers' cemetery"**, yet thousands continue to flock here each year, unperturbed by the increasing number of those who never returned.

Many of those who died were attempting to swim under **the arch**. Below 56m, the sea wall stops, revealing a **cavernous, 26-metre-long tunnel** from the Blue Hole to the open ocean. Those who descend 100m are faced with a 50-metre-high opening to the Red Sea; it is said to be like standing in an **underwater cathedral v**.

However, it can be **disorientating**. Divers have reported seeing light emerging from the tunnel and, believing it was the surface, have swum down to it. At this depth, it's possible to succumb to a condition known as **nitrogen narcosis**, in which breathing gases at high pressure causes mental, and sometimes physical, impairment.





More Places For You to Explore...



1. White Desert

Egypt's kookiest natural wonder is the White Desert, where **surreally shaped chalk mountains** have created what looks like a **snowy wonderland** in the middle of the arid sand. The landscapes here look like something out of a science fiction movie, with **blindingly white boulders** and **iceberg-like pinnacles**. For desert fans and adventurers, this is the ultimate weird playground, while anybody who's had their fill of temples and tombs will enjoy this spectacular natural scenery.



2. Siwa Oasis

Way out west, Siwa is the **tranquil tonic** to the hustle of Egypt's cities. This gorgeous little **oasis**, surrounded by **date palm plantations** and numerous **fresh water springs**, is one of the Western Desert's most picturesque spots. The town is centred around the ruins of a vast **mud-brick citadel** that dominates the view. This is a top spot to wind down and go slow for a few days, as well as being an excellent base from which to plan adventures into the surrounding desert.

3. St. Catherine's Monastery

One of the oldest monasteries in the world, St. Catherine's stands at the foot of **Mount Sinai**, where Moses is said to have received the **Ten Commandments**. This desert monastery is home to an incredible collection of religious iconography, art, and manuscripts (some of which can be seen in the on-site museum), as well as the **burning bush**. For most visitors here, a trip to St. Catherine's also involves a hike up Mount Sinai to see sunrise or sunset. Take the camel path for the easy route or climb the famous **Steps of Repentance** if you want better views.



4. City of the Dead

Along the eastern edge of Cairo stands the district of **Al-Qarāfah**, a unique zone made up of an extensive series of cemeteries. In this vast, dusty district stand the **exquisite shrine-mosques and mausoleums** of early religious leaders.

Owing to the **rapid population growth** and the ensuing **housing shortage** that occurred following Egypt's independence in 1922, **housing and shops have sprung up** in the City of the Dead, where it is estimated that more than one million Cairenes live, many without municipal utilities or an official address.



Food



Traditional **Shawarma** is a street food sandwich made throughout the Arab world.

It consists of meat cut into thin slices, stacked on top of each other on a spit, and slowly roasted vertically. The two most popular kinds of shawarma are **chicken and beef** and traditionally the list included **lamb**.



Mahshi is a dish of vegetables stuffed with ground beef and rice, that are cooked in a tomato and cumin sauce.

In Egypt, mahshi is present on all banquet tables for **weddings**, family reunions, and especially during the celebrations of the month of **Ramadan**.



Stuffed pigeon is a very popular main dish in Egypt and many other countries in the Middle East.

Egyptians select the plumppest, **six-week-old squabs**. If they wait longer, the pigeons become too tough and muscular—the avian equivalent of veal becoming beef.



In Egypt, **Sugarcane Juice** is known as **asab** and is sold in juice shops around the country. The largest juice shop in Egypt is in **Soft El Laban**, Giza.

Egyptians also mix lemon with asab and let it ferment to produce a fermented variant of the drink. The most highly prized asab comes from **Minya**, Egypt.



Crepe has pretty much become an essential part of everyone's life, and there is a number of crepe places all over Egypt.

In this country, crepe is filled mostly with meat, like chicken, beef rather than fruit and ice-cream that we used to know!



Often called the national dish of Egypt, **Kushari** is a hearty combination of flavors and textures all topped off with spicy tomato sauce and fried onions.

This is a traditional dish dating back to the **1800s** when, at the end of each month, families would have in their pantries. The remnants were thrown together into a **hearty meal** that in recent years has become a widely popular street food.



Story time: Umm Ali - Dessert

Made with cracked bread, milk, and nuts oven-cooked in a pot, Umm Ali has become a famous treat served during Ramadan and many other celebrations. It has even exceeded the boundaries of Egypt to be a well-known desert all over the Arab world. But do you know the delicacy has a rather dark history?



During the **Egyptian Mameluke era** in approximately the 1200s, Assalih Ayyub, the Sultan of Egypt, purchased **Shajarat Al-Durr** as a bondmaid before he became Sultan. Shortly after, Shajarat Al-Durr gave birth to a son named Khalil, and Assalih Ayyub made her a **Sultana**.

After the Sultan died, Shajarat Al-Durr decided to **consolidate her power by marrying Ezz Al-Din Aybak** and assigning him as the Sultan. However, Ezz Al-Din Aybak was **already married to Umm Ali** whom Shajarat Al-Durr asked him to divorce. All the same, they got married and he became the **Sultan**.



Shajarat Al-Durr.
Image credit: Alchetron

But the marriage was quickly marred by dispute and suspicions became part of their relationship. In order to **expand his power, Sultan Aybak decided to marry** the daughter of Badr Al-Din Lo'alo'a, the Ayyubi Amir of Al-Mousel. **Shajarat Al-Durr was very jealous and she order her husband to be killed** by one of her loyal servants. The newly widowed Shajarat Al-Durr claimed it was a sudden death, but Ezz Al-Din Aybak's first wife, **Umm Ali**, did not believe that and **decided to avenge the death of her former husband** and father of her child.



Umm Ali, the first wife, ordered her bondmaids to kill Shajarat Al-Durr in revenge for stealing her husband and killing him. **Shajarat Al-Durr was beaten with wooden made slippers to death**. In celebration, Umm Ali ordered her cook to create a new and delicious dessert and distribute it to everyone. She announced that the **dessert was a celebration for the death of Shajart Al-Durr** and ordered everyone to receive a Shajarat Al-Durr gold coin with his or her dessert.



All the people were happy with the delicious dessert, the gold coin, and the reign of their new sultan and his mother, Umm Ali. They chanted her name in thanks and named the dessert after her!



Recommended Restaurant from Serag (our speaker)

Mohamed Ahmed Restaurant

A historic Egyptian vegetarian restaurant providing dishes include falafel, lentil soup, foul/fuul (fava beans) and etc.

Many famous people including state politicians, diplomats, and even the Queen Isabella of Spain visited and had their pictures framed on the wall of the restaurant!

Address:
30 El Helmeya St. Amprozo, Alexandria 21599
Egypt

