

# EGYPT

## COUNTRY INFORMATION

EGYPT's scope is amazing, from the Sphinx and pyramids to the Nile and ancient Luxor. In the fifth century BC, Herodotus wrote of Egypt that "nowhere are there so many marvelous things...nor in the world besides are to be seen so many things of unspeakable greatness", and not too much has changed.

It's not just the monuments of Pharaohs that have drawn travelers to this country since long before the birth of Christ. It's the legacy of the Greeks, Romans, and early Christians, and the profusion of art and architecture accumulated from centuries of successive Islamic dynasties

### Traveling in Egypt

- **Please be aware that travel to Egypt is physically demanding.** Domestic air schedules dictate the use of early morning flights, days are sometimes long, and sightseeing stops often involve many steps and/or uneven walking surfaces.
- Traffic along the Nile River is often crowded. Multiple boats will be docked alongside your ship all the way to the dock, making it necessary for you to pass through those ships in order to reach the shore.
- **Travelers with physical disabilities and those who require frequent or ongoing medical attention should carefully consider their participation in Egypt tour programs and advise Ker & Downey of their health situation at the time of booking.**

### Passport and Visa Information

- A passport and visa are required.
- Passports must have **at least six months** validity remaining.
- Travelers can obtain a renewable thirty-day tourist visa on arrival at an Egyptian airport for a \$15 fee, payable in U.S. dollars.
- Visitors arriving overland and/or those previously experiencing difficulty with their visa status in Egypt should obtain a visa prior to arrival.
- Travelers arriving from Israel at the Taba border crossing are advised to obtain a visa prior to their arrival. Otherwise they are granted either a no-fee, fourteen-day visa valid for travel within Sinai only, or they may buy a thirty-day tourist visa for \$15 upon submission of a travel agency support letter.
- Keep in mind that your passport must be surrendered for police registration on arrival in Egypt. At all other times, however, we recommend that you carry your passport with you and memorize its number, date of issue, and place of issue.
- It is always best to make sure regulations have not changed before your visit to Egypt.
- For USA, Canada, and United Kingdom passport holders, visas can be pre-purchased and given to you upon entry.

**Note:** Please be aware that although Ker & Downey will advise you of the current information concerning visas and other requirements, it is your responsibility to reconfirm the information and obtain all necessary documents for entry to countries listed on your itinerary. Visa requirements change frequently.

## Health Requirements and Information

### Yellow fever:

Proof of yellow fever immunization is required if arriving from an infected area.

### Malaria:

Malaria is only present in the El Faiyûm region of Egypt, and is not present in most tourist regions, or along the Nile.

### Bilharzia:

Swimming in the Nile or its canals, walking barefoot in stagnant water, or drinking untreated water is not recommended as it places you at risk of exposure to bacterial and other infections, including the parasitic disease schistosomiasis (bilharzia).

### Avian Influenza:

“As of March 11, 2008, the World Health Organization has confirmed forty-seven human cases of the H5NI strain of avian influenza in Egypt since March 2006. Commonly known as “bird flu”, these cases have resulted in twenty deaths. Travelers to Egypt...are cautioned to avoid poultry farms, contact with animals in live food markets, and any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with feces from poultry or other animals. In addition, the CDC and WHO recommend eating only fully-cooked poultry and eggs.”  
[<http://travel.state.gov>]

**Note:** It is very important to maintain (or even increase) your daily intake of fluids while in Egypt to avoid the dangers of dehydration, which can occur unexpectedly with Egypt’s extremely dry climate.

## Customs

Travelers regardless of age are allowed free import of:

- 200 cigarettes OR 25 cigars OR 200g of tobacco
- 2 liters of alcoholic beverage
- A reasonable quantity of perfume and 1 liter of eau de cologne
- Non-commercial articles of a value up to EGP 5s00
- Cameras, radios, recorders, and bathing, diving, or fishing equipment must be registered on arrival. If you do not export them, a customs tax will be levied.

You may only export small quantities of gold and silver for personal use.

If you favor a particular brand of spirits, you may want to use your duty-free liquor allowance to purchase a bottle en route to Egypt, or at the duty-free shop outside the arrivals hall in Cairo. Alcoholic beverages, particularly gin and wine, are very expensive and sometimes in short supply on board Nile cruise boats. Please be advised, however, that beverages purchased in this manner cannot be left with the bar on board. Also, there is often a corkage fee if you request the bartender to open a bottle that is not purchased on board.

If you are taking foreign-made possessions on your trip abroad (video cameras, etc.), consider carrying copies of documents such as bills of sale, insurance policies, or receipts for purchase/repair as proof of prior possession.

Drugs, firearms, and cotton may not be brought into the country.

The export of any antiquity or any item older than 100 years without a license is forbidden.

You may import up to EGP 5000 in local currency and up to USD \$10,000 or its equivalent. You may export up to EGP 5000 in local currency and up to USD \$10,000 or its equivalent.

### **Airport Information**

Cairo International Airport is located about fourteen miles northeast of Cairo and has two terminals. Luxor Airport is located about eight miles east of Luxor and has one terminal. Aswan International Airport, also known as Daraw Airport, is located in Aswan. All of the airports have shopping and money exchange services.

### **Airport Departure Tax**

The airport departure tax is included in the price of the ticket.

**Note: Airport departure taxes may or may not be included in the price of your ticket and are subject to change at any time without notice. Please set aside money in advance to avoid delays and frustrations.**

### **Domestic Baggage Limits**

- EgyptAir: 43 lbs total

**Note:** Excess baggage can result in an extra charge at your own expense.

### **Safety**

Keep a modest profile and avoid public political gatherings and demonstrations. Travel in the country's south remains restricted, and unless you use public transport, protected convoy is the only way to get between the major sites unless a private escort is arranged.

### **Photographic Restrictions**

- There are many different rules that govern photography in Egypt, depending on the specific site or monument. These restrictions are truly in the interest of preservation, and your full cooperation is expected.
- Signs are usually posted in restricted areas; but, if in doubt, ask your guide rather than risk confiscation of your film. At some places, a ticket must be purchased to use cameras and/or video equipment.
- Photographic fees vary greatly and are subject to change without notice.
- All video equipment must be registered immediately upon arrival at Cairo Airport. The use of video equipment is prohibited on the West Bank at Luxor and at the Valley Temple at the Sphinx, and no photography whatsoever is permitted at Aswan High Dam or inside the Egyptian Museum (see "Photography Etiquette" below). Here is a partial list of current fees for the use of video cameras (without lights only):

Saqqara (inside tombs).....25 Egyptian Pounds per tomb;  
Pyramids (inside).....100 Egyptian Pounds per pyramid;

- The fee for "still" cameras at the Pyramids and at all museums and tombs that allow photography is usually 5 to 10 Egyptian Pounds. Please note, however, that tripods are NOT allowed in most museums that permit photography or inside tombs.

## Photographic Etiquette

- When photographing people, always ask permission first (or have your guide ask). The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed.
- As stated above, there are some places where photography is prohibited; and these areas are usually clearly marked.
- Under no circumstances should you take photographs of military or police personnel, nor should you take photographs of military areas or airports. (This includes the Aswan High Dam, where photography of any kind is strictly prohibited.)
- Taking photographs when permission is not granted is inconsiderate at best and may result in the confiscation of your film.

## Climate

- Egypt is a year-round travel destination with a reputation for having one of the hottest, driest, and sunniest climates in the world. Therefore, many travelers fail to anticipate how much temperatures can vary in a single day at any time of the year—or how cold it can get during the winter months. The body can also be stressed moving in and out of air conditioning.
- **October through May** is perhaps the best period to visit Egypt. Daytime temperatures are usually comfortably warm at this time of year (though it can be cool enough for a sweater).
- In the **summer** months, daytime temperatures are extremely high. Almost all hotels (and all Nile cruise boats) are air-conditioned to provide relief from the extreme heat of the summer months. In Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan, sightseeing vehicles are also air-conditioned.
- In the **winter**, nighttime temperatures may plummet and a hot daytime desert can become surprisingly cold. This is especially important to note if you are traveling from December through February, when temperatures can be as low as 40° Fahrenheit after sunset and warm clothing is necessary.
- **April** is a month of unpredictable weather when the normally warm weather may be intensified by hot, intense desert winds.

Average daily high/low temperatures (Fahrenheit) and average number of days with rain:

<b>Cairo, Egypt</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Ave. Max Temperature (°F)	66	68	73	82	89	94	94	94	91	85	76	68
Ave. Min Temperature (°F)	49	50	54	60	65	70	73	73	71	66	58	52
Ave. Precipitation (in)	.15	.13	.13	.02	.01	0	0	0	0	.01	.06	.15

<b>Aswan, Egypt</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Ave. Max Temperature (°F)	72	76	84	95	102	106	106	106	103	96	84	75
Ave. Min Temperature (°F)	49	51	58	67	75	79	81	81	77	71	60	52
Ave. Precipitation (in)	0	0	0	.01	0	0	0	0	0	.02	0	0

<b>Luxor, Egypt</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Ave. Max Temperature (°F)	73	76	84	95	102	106	106	105	102	95	84	75
Ave. Min Temperature (°F)	44	46	53	62	70	74	74	76	72	65	54	46
Ave. Precipitation (in)	.04	0	.36	.01	.02	0	0	0	.02	.1	.04	.04

*Weather conditions may vary depending on location in Egypt.*

## Clothing

- Since temperatures in Egypt vary considerably from month to month, your travel wardrobe should be planned according to the month in which you are traveling. To maximize the versatility of your travel wardrobe, we recommend packing lightweight clothing that can be worn in layers and one warm sweater or jacket. Clothing made of a natural, “breathable” fabric (such as cotton or wool) is generally the most comfortable.
- The winter months of **December through March** (and occasionally April) are cool by day but can be very cold at night. During these months, pack warm clothes made of wool or knit fabrics and be sure to take along an extra-warm coat for evenings.
- From **May through early June and September through November**, clothing of heavy cotton (or lightweight blends) is recommended.
- From **June through August**, daytime temperatures are consistently over 90 degrees (Fahrenheit) and can be as high as 110 (F), so loose-fitting clothing of lightweight cotton will be most comfortable.
- Casual clothing, such as slacks and Bermuda-length shorts, is perfectly acceptable for most daytime sightseeing
- On board the Nile cruise boats, “smart casual” or “business casual” attire (sport coat for men, dress or “nicer” attire for ladies) is most appropriate for High Tea and dinner. For dinner at the larger hotels in Cairo, men may want to bring a jacket and tie and ladies one or two semi-formal dresses (although standards have relaxed in recent years, and this is not absolutely essential). No shorts are to be worn at dinner.
- Egypt’s climate is dry all year around, so you will not usually need rainwear (unless you are going to Alexandria from December through February).
- A pair of comfortable, low-heeled walking shoes with soft soles is essential at any time of the year. We recommend shoes with crepe or rubber soles for desert walking and exploring tombs.
- We suggest that you carry a change of comfortable clothing in your hand luggage on the day you board your Nile cruise boat, as cabins are usually not available for occupancy until noon and you may arrive some time before that. You will then be able to relax comfortably on deck while awaiting access to your cabin. Since some hotels (and Nile cruise boats) have swimming pools, remember to pack a swimsuit.
- Although Egyptians are accustomed to foreign visitors, please remember that Egypt is still a conservative country, especially with regard to women. Modesty of dress is expected. Short skirts and bare arms should be avoided, especially on days when your sightseeing includes visits to mosques, churches, or synagogues. Scarves must be worn over the head (and shoes removed) when entering a mosque.

## Laundry

Good laundry service is available on board the M.S. Salacia and Triton, and at nearly all hotels, so there is no need to bring a great deal of clothing. It is also suggested that you request laundry service only at hotels and on cruise ships where you have at least a two-night stay, to ensure that your laundry is returned to you before you check out or disembark.

## Currency

In Egypt, the unit of currency is the Egyptian Pound, which is divided into 100 Piastres. Notes are issued in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100 Pounds. There are also notes with denominations of 5, 10, 25, and 50 Piastres as well as some coins.

- Banking services are available 24 hours a day at Cairo Airport and at the larger Cairo hotels. A bank representative also routinely boards each of the Nile cruise boats for the convenience of passengers wanting to convert currency.
- We recommend carrying approximately 75% of your money in the form of traveler's checks and 25% in cash.
- Credit cards are accepted in most major hotels and restaurants, but not in smaller shops, markets, or businesses. Visa is the most widely accepted credit card, although Visa and MasterCard are not accepted on board the M.S. Salacia and the M.S. Triton Nile cruise boats.
- Personal checks are generally not accepted in Egypt.

## Gratuities

In Egypt, tipping in USD is acceptable. Egypt has a reputation for accepting "Baksheesh" (Tips) for their hard work. It is a good idea to include about twenty-five U.S. one-dollar bills to be used for incidental tipping.

- Transfers: \$5.00
- Transferman: \$10.00 per airport transit service
- Cruise staff: \$15 per person per day (payable in the tip box)
- Hotel porters: \$1.00 per bag in/out (unless included)
- Egyptologist guide: \$10.00 per person per day (payable direct to the guide)
- Half day Egyptologist guide: \$5.00 per person

**Note:** Tipping is a personal decision based on the service received. Please remember, there is no obligation to tip and American standards for tipping are some of the highest in the world. The above is only a suggestion for your convenience.

## Food

- Generally, food is clean and well prepared in Egypt, especially in leading hotels, on Nile cruise boats, and in restaurants. However, it is always important to take precautions when traveling.
- All water used in preparation of food, drinks, and ice is triple filtered including flash pasteurization on board the M.S. Salacia and Triton. Additionally, the ships are inspected on a monthly basis by a British hygiene company, "Crystal Hygiene".
- After a few days in Egypt, it is quite possible that you may get the local version of "tourista," (commonly known in Egypt as "gyppie tummy"). You should not be alarmed, as this is rather common, but be prepared to treat it by having a remedy with you. In addition, it is extremely important to take the medicine as soon as stomach upset occurs. Do not wait in the hope that symptoms will disappear on their own.
- If your tour includes all meals, lunch on the day of your visit to Abu Simbel will either be on board your Nile cruise boat, a basket lunch, or at your hotel in Cairo (depending on the timing of your flights).
- If you are not on a Ker & Downey group tour programs and your travel arrangements do not include all meals, we recommend taking snacks along for the flight to Abu Simbel, as it is a long time between breakfast and your next meal on the day of this excursion. Generally the flight does not return to Cairo until late afternoon, and there are no suitable places to eat lunch once you leave your Nile cruise boat.
- Tap water is not potable. It is suggested that you drink bottled water or water that has been boiled and filtered. Eating uncooked vegetables should also be avoided.

## **Shopping**

Haggling is acceptable in markets and small shops in Egypt. Egypt is well-known for silver pieces, and glass bottles are another interesting, though delicate, souvenir to bring back. You can also buy papyrus reproductions of many pieces of ancient Egyptian artwork. Remember that it is illegal to sell antiquities, so if a shopkeeper offers you a genuine antique, they are probably trying to fool you. However, **reproductions** of antiques can be a good buy if you can talk the price down from that of a “genuine antique”. Also note that many “handmade” goods are not really handmade, so you should not be ashamed of trying to bargain with the shopkeeper over something you like.

**Note:** The purchase of “natural treasures” for export from any country is strictly illegal, and the responsibility rests entirely on the buyer. (In Egypt, international customs regulations now virtually forbid the exportation of antiques.) If you are approached by someone offering this type of “curio” for sale, do not buy it. International agreements are such that, if you are caught with such a restricted item, it will almost certainly lead to prosecution.

## **Time Zone**

GMT + 2

## **Language**

Arabic

## **Voltage**

In Egypt, electricity runs 220/240 volts. If you do bring electrical appliances, take along an international converter kit complete with a set of adapter plugs. Most hotels and high quality cruise ships have U.S. type 2-pin, 110-volt outlets in the bathroom.

## **Emergency Numbers**

Ambulance: 123

Fire: 180

Police: 122

## **International Calling**

To call Egypt from the U.S. or Canada, dial (011 + 20) before the number.

To call the U.S. or Canada from Egypt, dial (00 + 1) before the number.

## Suggested Reading

David, A. Rosalie. *The Ancient Egyptians: Religious Beliefs & Practices*: Clearly written, excellent reference for religion, politics, and archaeological sites.

Edwards, Amelia. *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*: Originally published in 1877, this is the first general archaeological survey of Egypt's ruins.

Farid, Abdel Magid and Peter Mansfield. *Nasser – The Final Years*: A look at the period between the 1967 war with Israel and Nasser's death in 1970.

Quirks, Stephen and Jeffrey Spencer. *The British Museum Book of Ancient Egypt*: An impressive visual and textual guide.

Romer, John. *The Valley of the Kings*: The story of the tombs and ancient royalty buried in the Valley.

Stannard, Dorothy. *Insight Guide Egypt*: An easy-to-read guide to modern travel, with twenty-one maps.

White, J.E. Manchip. *Ancient Egypt: Its Culture and History*: An account of pre-dynastic civilization through the Ptolemies.