



Egypt

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Welcome to Egypt

Embark on a journey of discovery through the enchanting lands of Egypt, where ancient history, vibrant culture, and exquisite cuisine converge to create an unforgettable travel experience. In this comprehensive guide, curated by the experts at TravelLab, we invite you to delve into the heart of this captivating country, uncovering its hidden treasures, iconic landmarks, and culinary delights along the way.

At TravelLab, we believe that travel is not just about visiting destinations; it's about immersing yourself in the rich tapestry of sights, sounds, and flavors that make each place unique. With our deep passion for exploration and commitment to responsible tourism, we have meticulously curated this guide to showcase the best of Egypt, from its bustling bazaars and ancient ruins to its picturesque coastlines and vibrant cities.

Whether you're drawn to the majestic beauty of Cairo's skyline, the mystical allure of Luxor's temples, or the pristine beaches of the Red Sea, our guide offers insider tips, expert recommendations, and personalized itineraries to help you make the most of your Egyptian adventure. And of course, no journey through Egypt would be complete without indulging in its world-renowned cuisine – from savory koshari and molokhia to sweet kunafa and strong Egyptian coffee, the flavors of Egypt are sure to tantalize your taste buds and leave you craving more.

Join us as we embark on a voyage of discovery through the captivating lands of Egypt. With TravelLab as your trusted guide, the journey promises to be as unforgettable as the destination itself.



TravelLab Founder

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Egypt at a Glance

Egypt at a Glance

The Republic of Egypt is located in the Northern hemisphere, primarily nestled in Northeast Africa, with a smaller portion in Asia via the Sinai Peninsula, bridging the two continents together.

- Language: Predominantly Arabic, with various regional dialects and minority languages.
- Capital: Cairo
- Government: Semi Presidential Republic
- Size: 1,010,408 km²
- Currency: Egyptian Pound (EGP)
- Time Zone: EET (UTC+2)
- Founder: Considered to be King Menes (Narmer), who is traditionally credited with having united Upper and Lower Egypt.
- Neighbouring countries include Libya to the west, Sudan to the south, Israel and the Gaza Strip to the northeast.
- Surrounding bodies of water include the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the east, making Egypt a pivotal link between North Africa and the Middle East.



"Turkey is a European country, an Asian country, a Middle Eastern country, a Balkan country, a Caucasian country, a neighbour to Africa, Black Sea coucuntry, Caspian Sea, all these."

Abdül Kâmil Pârvutoğlu

"There are two great virtues that glorifies a human being. Man being brave, woman being fair and honest. Apart from these two, there is one virtue for both men and women. To be loyal to their home and their country and even give their life for it. Turks are heroes having this virtue. Because of this, we can always kill Turks. But we can never defeat them."

Napoleon Bonaparte

FAQS

What is the best way to get to Egypt?

The most common way for international travelers to get to Egypt is by air. Cairo International Airport (CAI) is the primary international gateway, serving numerous airlines from around the world. Other significant airports include those in Alexandria, Luxor, Sharm El Sheikh, and Hurghada. If you're in neighboring countries, there are also road and sea options, but flying remains the most efficient and popular choice.

For those looking to non-rev, I wish there was a magic formula I could share. It is just a matter of finding the route with the best availability. Due to the pandemic, airlines continue to adjust their routes and frequencies, and changes are the norm. As people begin to travel more, I have noticed a lack of availability when flying stand-by to Egypt. Clients in the past have been successful at non-rev'ing and others have opted for full fare tickets, especially when flying with family members.

Convenient connecting cities are FRA, CDG, DOH, IST, FCO, LHR and ATH. Many decide to non-rev from the US to Europe, and then purchase a confirmed ticket for their final leg to Cairo.

Please note, travel insurance will not cover any situations arising from non-rev travel, so plan accordingly.

Why is it recommended to purchase travel insurance?

While I understand this adds a small fee to your total trip, it is done for your protection and peace of mind. I have sourced an outstanding company, which covers both COVID-19 related issues as well as pre-existing conditions. You are free to use another company as well. Trust me when I tell you that having travel insurance will give you peace of mind against any unforeseen circumstances.

How do I get my tourist Visa?

Your tour includes a “Meet & Greet” service upon arrival at the airport. Each of you will be individually met at the airport and escorted through immigration and customs by our representative. The representative will also take care of processing your entry visa. It is a seamless process, and you have absolutely nothing to worry about. As you step off the aircraft you will proceed to a health check, where your temperature is taken, and your PCR or Vaccine records will be checked. Once you pass this filter, you will see a representative with a THINKCAIRO sign. This is your escort who will guide you the rest of the way, until reaching your hotel.

Is Egypt safe?

Cairo is a city with a population of more than 20 million. As any big city, it has its share of problems, including traffic, pollution and congestion. However, crime is not on the top of this list. Cairo may seem intimidating, but it is actually quite safe. Police presence is noticeable everywhere, shops and cafés are open late, and the streets are never deserted. Locals are approachable and extremely eager to help tourists. A great tip, no matter where you travel, is to always be alert, follow your instinct and take care of your valuables.

What is the language spoken in Egypt?

Egyptian Arabic is the official language in Egypt. English is widely spoken throughout, especially in tourist areas and major cities.

How can I get around in Cairo?

The BEST way to get around whilst in Cairo is UBER. It is extremely inexpensive, reliable and most of all it is safe.

Walking is another amazing way to discover this enchanting city. Please be extremely careful when crossing busy streets, as there are few pedestrian crossings. One trick I learned is to shield yourself with a local, watch them carefully and cross the street when they are crossing.

Can I purchase alcohol in Egypt?

Egypt is an Islamic country and, although not illegal, the sale and consumption of alcohol are regulated by the government. Hotel bars and restaurants have licenses to serve alcohol, and some restaurants/bars in the city as well. Should you want to purchase alcohol, a chain of stores called "Drinkies" offers a great selection of spirits, beer and wine. All alcoholic beverages sold in Egypt are produced locally. If there is a specific brand you must have- I suggest purchasing it at Duty Free either in your departure city, connecting city or even upon arrival in Cairo. Cairo airport has duty free shops available for those arriving into the country- outside of customs.

How much money will I need?

This highly depends on your spending habits. You will need money for meals not included in the itinerary, gratuities, shopping and other incidentals. Cairo can be as expensive or as inexpensive as you want it to be, although it is a relatively cheap country to dine and shop. You can use ATMs or exchange USD or EUR to local currency at the many "currency exchange offices" at the airport or near your hotel. If you are planning to withdraw funds at an ATM, please call your bank and set a travel alert as well as make sure what fees are involved when withdrawing money abroad. Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in fine restaurants, stores and hotels. However, more informal shops and dining options only accept cash. Please plan accordingly. I would say 20-30 USD per day should be more than enough to meet all your needs.

Are there any special customs I should observe?

Yes, due to cultural and religious differences, some customs may be different than what you may be accustomed to.

1. Most women in Egypt behave conservatively with strangers.
2. Normal contact between couples is quite acceptable, but intimate actions in public (such as kissing and fondling) may irritate most passers-by.
3. Mosques require visitors to remove their shoes before entering.
4. Use the right hand to eat or give gifts.
5. It is inappropriate to discuss religion with Egyptians, especially from an atheistic point of view. Please be respectful as religion is a big part of daily life.
6. Avoid taking photos of government buildings, military installations or abandoned colonial buildings, as you will encounter some issues with the guards.

Should I be weary of visiting Egypt as an LGBT traveler?

Egypt is a conservative society that condemns homosexuality. Although not a crime, homosexual acts are, and can be punishable with prison terms and/or deportation.

Discretion is vital and public displays of affection should be avoided by both LGBT and heterosexual couples. Top end hotels will have no problem with a same-sex couple or "friends" staying in the same room, but it is preferable to always maintain a low profile and be discreet so staff members do not raise any eyebrows. Please refrain from discussing LGBT issues with locals, and practice caution during your stay in Egypt. Thousands of LGBT visitors travel around Egypt every year and have no issues. Remember to maintain an understanding of cultural sensitivity regarding the issue. Please use common sense and your best judgment.

Whilst your hesitation is understandable, rest assured you will encounter no issues during your stay, as long as you use your best judgement.

The use of dating apps whilst in Egypt is strongly discouraged.

What is the weather like in Egypt?

Generally, Egypt has a desert climate, although the Mediterranean coastal areas enjoy a moderate temperature. May- October are considered the hot season, and cooler temperatures are experienced from October – May. Even during the warmest months, nights in Cairo tend to be cooler, which gives you a nice break from the heat.

Do I have to stay in my hotel after the day's tour has ended?

NO, definitely not, and I encourage you to go out and enjoy the city's culture and energy. This is your holiday and enjoy every minute of it. Explore this amazing city which offers so much excitement. The hotel is centrally located, with very easy access to some really cool neighbourhoods.

Is tipping customary in Egypt?

Tipping 10-15% of your bill total is customary at cafes and restaurants, and loose change is acceptable for food purchases from street vendors and markets.

Often known as 'backsheesh', tipping is standard practice in Egypt. If you're happy with the service provided by waiters, drivers and other workers, leaving a small tip is a good way to show your appreciation. For smaller purchases, rounding up the bill or not asking for any change is an appropriate way of leaving a tip. If you are at a restaurant or hotel, check if a 10%-12% service charge has already been added, and think about tipping a little extra for the wait staff who will likely not receive any of this charge.

You should also tip drivers and tour guides, as well as other service staff who look after you on a day-to-day basis. The exact amount will differ depending on the level and length of service, but as a general rule of thumb, consider tipping a driver EGP 80-100 (4-5 USD) and a tour guide EGP 200-250 (10-12 USD) for a full day on top of the base costs.

Are there any restrictions with regards to Prescription Medications?

Pharmacies are usually open 24 hours and sell most items including antibiotics without the need for a prescription. Prescription medications from home are best left in their original container, showing doctor's prescription information. Certain controlled substances are not allowed in Egypt, for a full detail of these restrictions please click on the following link: [Click Here](#)

What are opening times and business days for different types of establishments?

- **General Businesses:** 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday to Thursday.
- **Banks:** 8:30 AM – 2 PM, Sunday to Thursday.
- **Tourist Attractions:** Usually 9 AM – 5 PM, some with extended hours.
- **Restaurants:** Often open from noon to midnight or later.
- **Pharmacies:** Generally 9 AM – 10 PM, with some operating 24/7.

Do women have to wear a hijab?

No, women are not legally required to wear a hijab in Egypt. However, Egypt is a predominantly Muslim country, and many local women do wear the hijab as a reflection of their religious and cultural beliefs.

For female tourists, it is not mandatory to wear a hijab, but dressing modestly is advised, especially when visiting religious sites or rural areas. Modesty in this context usually means wearing clothes that cover the shoulders, cleavage, and knees. When visiting mosques or other religious landmarks, women might be required to cover their hair. It's a good idea to always carry a scarf or shawl in your bag for such occasions. Being sensitive to local customs and dressing modestly not only shows respect but can also help avoid unwanted attention.

What should I pack?

For Women:

Modest Clothing: In general, it's advisable to wear clothing that covers the shoulders, cleavage, and knees. Loose-fitting cotton clothes are ideal because of the heat.

- **Tops:** Consider packing blouses or T-shirts that have short or long sleeves. Avoid spaghetti straps or very low-cut necklines.
 - **Bottoms:** Long skirts, capris, or pants are preferable. While shorts are acceptable in resort areas, longer garments are more appropriate elsewhere.
 - **Dresses:** Maxi dresses are both stylish and modest.
-
1. **Headscarf:** Even if you don't wear it regularly, it's good to have one on hand especially when visiting religious sites.
 2. **Swimwear:** If you're staying at a resort or hotel with a pool, or you plan to visit the Red Sea, pack a swimsuit. At beaches and resort pools, regular Western swimwear is acceptable.
 3. **Comfortable Footwear:** Sandals and comfortable walking shoes are a must, especially if you're planning on sightseeing.
 4. **Sunglasses and Hat:** Protect yourself from the sun.
 5. **Undergarments:** Consider moisture-wicking or breathable types due to the heat.
 6. **Evening wear:** If you're planning on fine dining or attending special events, pack a semi-formal outfit.
 7. **Light Jacket or Cardigan:** For cooler evenings or air-conditioned places.

What should I pack?

For Men:

1. Casual Wear: Loose cotton shirts, polo shirts, or T-shirts are recommended. It's best to avoid sleeveless shirts when not at the beach or pool.
2. Pants/Shorts: Lightweight cotton pants are great. While shorts are accepted, especially in resort areas, pants might be more appropriate when visiting religious or rural areas.
3. Swimwear: For hotel pools or beaches along the Red Sea.
4. Comfortable Footwear: Comfortable walking shoes or sandals.
5. Sunglasses and Hat: To shield from the sun.
6. Evening wear: Consider packing a semi-formal outfit if you're thinking of dining out or attending special events.
7. Light Jacket or Sweater: For the cooler evenings.

General Items:

1. Sunscreen: The Egyptian sun can be intense.
2. Personal Medications and Toiletries: While you can find most things in Egypt, it's always good to have your preferred brands on hand.
3. Adapter and Voltage Converter: Egypt uses the European-style two-pin round plug. The standard voltage is 220V.
4. Travel Pillow and Earplugs: Useful for long journeys or if you're a light sleeper.
5. Hand Sanitizer and Wet Wipes: Can come in handy, especially when traveling through crowded places or if you're planning to try street food.
6. Reusable Water Bottle: To stay hydrated. Remember to fill it with bottled water.
7. Daypack: For day trips and excursions.

What is the food like?

Egyptian cuisine is a delightful blend of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavors. It's characterized by its use of fresh ingredients, a variety of spices, and rich flavors.

Traditional Dishes:

1. **Ful Medames:** A staple in the Egyptian diet, this dish consists of fava beans cooked with oil and salt, often garnished with lemon, garlic, and cumin. It's commonly eaten for breakfast and can be found throughout the country.
2. **Koshary:** A popular and hearty dish, koshary mixes rice, pasta, lentils, chickpeas, fried onions, and a spicy tomato sauce. It's served with side toppings like garlic juice or vinegar.
3. **Molokhia:** A green soup made from finely chopped jute leaves, it's cooked with garlic and coriander and typically served with rice or bread and chicken or rabbit.
4. **Ta'meya (Falafel):** Unlike its chickpea counterpart in other parts of the Middle East, Egyptian falafel is made from fava beans and is usually deep-fried to perfection.
5. **Mahshi:** Vegetables (like bell peppers, tomatoes, or zucchini) or vine leaves stuffed with a flavorful mixture of rice, herbs, and spices, sometimes with minced meat.
6. **Sayadiya:** A coastal dish, primarily from Alexandria, it's made from white fish served with rice and a spiced caramelized onion sauce.

When trying Egyptian food, it's essential to venture into both restaurants and street food stalls to get a comprehensive taste of the country's diverse culinary offerings. Whether you're a fan of meat, a vegetarian, or have a sweet tooth, Egyptian cuisine has something to offer for every palate. Always ensure you're eating from clean and reputable places, especially when trying street food.

Breads:

- Aish Baladi: Egyptian flatbread that's slightly coarse and is a staple with most meals.
- Feteer: A flaky layered pastry often stuffed with a variety of ingredients, from sweet (honey, nuts) to savory (cheese, minced meat).

Sweets and Desserts:

- Baklava: Thin layers of phyllo pastry filled with nuts and sweetened with honey.
- Basbousa: A sweet semolina cake soaked in simple syrup, often topped with almonds.
- Om Ali: A delicious warm dessert made from layers of bread, milk, nuts, and raisins.
- Rice Pudding: Creamy and flavored with vanilla, often sprinkled with cinnamon.

Beverages:

- Tea: The national drink, often enjoyed black and sweetened, sometimes brewed with fresh mint.
- Qahwa (Coffee): Traditional Arabic coffee, which is often strong and flavored with cardamom.
- Sugarcane Juice: A refreshing drink, especially popular in the summer months.
- Sobia: A coconut and rice drink flavored with sugar and cinnamon, typically sold during the month of Ramadan.

Street Food:

- Shawarma: Thin slices of marinated meat (often beef or chicken) wrapped in bread with garlic sauce, tahini, and vegetables.
- Hawawshi: Egyptian-style meat pie, where spiced meat is stuffed inside aish baladi and then baked.

Is bargaining customary in Egypt?

Yes, especially in bazaars and markets. Bargaining is a cultural norm, and it's expected for many non-fixed-price items. Start by offering about half the asking price and negotiate from there.

What is other essential and practical information I should know before travelling to Egypt?

Time Zone

Egypt operates on Eastern European Time (EET), which is UTC +2. Egypt does not observe Daylight Saving Time.

Voltage

The standard voltage in Egypt is 220V, and the frequency is 50Hz.

Electrical Outlets

Egypt primarily uses Type C and Type F outlets, which are the round-pin varieties. If your devices have a different type of plug, consider bringing a universal adapter.

Wifi Availability

Yes, many hotels, restaurants, and cafes, especially in tourist areas, offer free Wi-Fi. However, the speed and reliability can vary. If you need a constant internet connection, consider purchasing a local SIM card with a data plan.

Mobile Networks

Egypt has a good mobile network coverage, with the main providers being Vodafone, Orange, and Etisalat. In major cities and tourist areas, 4G is widely available. For extended stays, it might be cost-effective to buy a local SIM card.

Tap Water

It's generally recommended for tourists to avoid drinking tap water in Egypt. While it's treated and is technically safe, the difference in mineral content from what you might be used to can upset your stomach. Bottled water is widely available and inexpensive.

Vaccinations Required

While no vaccinations are required for entry into Egypt (unless you're coming from a yellow fever-endemic area), it's wise to be up-to-date on routine vaccines.

What is the Country Code and Dialing Instructions for Egypt?

Dialing Instructions for Egypt:

1. From abroad to Egypt: If you're calling Egypt from another country, you would dial your country's exit code, followed by Egypt's country code (20), and then the local number. For example, from the U.S. or Canada, you would dial 011 (the exit code) + 20 + the local number.
2. Within Egypt: If you're in Egypt and calling within the country, just dial the local number. If it's a landline, it usually starts with a 0, followed by a city code, and then the local number. For example, Cairo's city code is 02, so you'd dial 02 + the local number.
3. From Egypt to another country: First dial the exit code, which is 00, followed by the country code of the nation you're calling, and then the local number.

Always keep in mind that mobile numbers might have different prefixes, and it's always a good idea to double-check specific numbers or ask locals for assistance if you're unsure.

What are some important telephone numbers to know, including emergency numbers and embassy numbers?

- Emergency: 122 (police), 123 (ambulance), 180 (fire).
- Country Code: +20
- Cairo Area Code: 02
- Dialing Instruction: For international calls: +20 (country code) followed by the area code and then the local number.
- Embassies: It's wise to keep the contact number of your country's embassy in Cairo. Most embassies are located in the Zamalek or Garden City areas of Cairo.

TRAVEL TIPS

MONEY EXCHANGE

In Egypt, cash is exchanged without commission in most exchange offices, banks, or hotels. ATMs (cash point machines) are available in most busy areas and accept worldwide cards. Some ATMs also display instructions in English. It is advisable to inform your bank in advance that you are traveling to Egypt, as some banks automatically prevent the use of cards abroad to combat fraud. Egyptian newspapers and the internet publish exchange rates daily.

WATER

Tap water in Egypt is high in minerals and can upset the stomach, so it is recommended to use bottled water instead. Some upper-class hotels offer complimentary bottled water, while others may charge for it. Most shops sell bottled water, and you can still brush your teeth with tap water, but do not swallow it.

BUSINESS HOURS

****Working Hours & Public Holidays:****

Offices and banks in Egypt are generally open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday, with a break from 12:00 to 1:30 PM. Touristic shops, restaurants, and bars usually stay open until late at night.

OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS

- ****Public Holidays in Egypt:****
-
- - January 7: Coptic Christmas
- - April 25: Sinai Liberation Day
- - May 1: Labor Day
- - July 23: Revolution Day (anniversary of the 1952 revolution)
- - October 6: Armed Forces Day (commemorating the October War of 1973)
- - Varying Dates: Islamic holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha
-

(Note: Islamic holidays are based on the lunar calendar and thus vary each year.)

TOILETS

Western-style flushing toilets are commonly used in hotels, restaurants, museums, and public toilets in urban areas of Egypt. Traditional "squat" toilets are often found in bus stations and more rural areas. Many public toilets in Egypt require a small payment (normally around 1 Egyptian Pound).

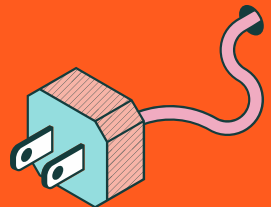
VISITING MOSQUES

Foreign visitors should remove their shoes and show the same respect they would to any other house of worship when visiting mosques in Egypt. It is best to avoid visiting mosques during prayer times. Women should cover their heads and arms, and avoid wearing miniskirts. Men should not wear shorts.



TELEPHONE

When using a phone in Egypt, remember to dial the country code +20 before the local number. For travelers, purchasing a local SIM card is a convenient option, readily available at airports and major cities, enabling easy access to affordable data and local calls. While public phones are less common nowadays, they can still be found in some tourist areas and major transportation hubs.



Egypt has a 220 V power system, and adapters are needed because the plug sockets are typically two-pronged.



Most tour and hotel staff in Egypt appreciate small tips given with discretion, but it is not mandatory. Taxi drivers do not expect tips, but rounding up the fare for convenience is common practice. In restaurants, it is customary to tip around 10% of the bill, depending on how satisfied you are with the service.



EGYPT

Libyan Desert

SEA

Alexandria

Siwa

Kufra Oasis

Al Jawf

Sarra

ZOU

STRIP

Tabari

A vibrant street market in Egypt, likely a souk, with a large striped awning covering the walkway. People are walking through the market, and various goods, including clothing and food, are displayed on the stalls. The scene is bustling and colorful, capturing the essence of traditional Egyptian market life.

Egyptian Social and Cultural Traditions

Egypt, a country with a storied history that stretches back thousands of years, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and diverse social traditions. As the cradle of one of the world's oldest civilizations, Egypt's cultural tapestry is a blend of ancient customs and modern influences, creating a unique and vibrant society.

Family

Family is the cornerstone of Egyptian society, with strong bonds and a deep sense of loyalty characterizing familial relationships. Extended families often live close to one another, maintaining regular contact and support. Major life events, such as weddings, births, and funerals, are significant occasions that bring families together, often involving elaborate celebrations and gatherings.

Respect for elders is a fundamental aspect of the social structure. Older family members are accorded great respect and often play a crucial role in decision-making processes within the family. This respect extends to the broader community, where elders are generally treated with deference.



Hospitality

One of the most notable aspects of Egyptian culture is its renowned hospitality. Egyptians take great pride in making guests feel welcome, often going out of their way to offer food, drink, and a comfortable environment. Visitors are typically greeted with warmth and generosity, reflecting a deeply ingrained cultural value of treating guests with utmost respect.

When invited to an Egyptian home, it is customary to bring a small gift, such as sweets or flowers. Removing shoes before entering the house is also a common practice, and guests are usually offered a seat of honor. It is polite to accept any refreshments offered, as refusing can be seen as impolite.

Religion

Religion plays a central role in the daily lives of Egyptians, with the majority of the population adhering to Islam. The five daily prayers, known as Salah, mark the rhythm of the day, and the call to prayer, or Adhan, echoes from mosques across the country. Fridays are particularly significant, as the Jumu'ah prayer is an important communal event for Muslims.

Christianity also has a significant presence in Egypt, primarily through the Coptic Orthodox Church. Coptic Christians celebrate their own religious festivals and traditions, which are deeply rooted in the country's ancient Christian heritage.

Basic Arabic phrases for foreigners

WORDS AND TRANSLATION BY NAWAF AL FAZARI

If you've just come to Oman, either as an expat who's arrived here to work, for a tourist who wants to explore what the country has to offer, sooner or later, you're going to need to communicate in Arabic, particularly if you need help with something. Omanis are known to be super friendly, and are sure to help you, and these (simplified) basic Arabic phrases should help get your message across quicker.

How much for this?

بكم هذا؟

Bi kam hadha?

Thank you very much!

شكرا جزيلا

Shukraan jazeelaan

Where can I find...?

وين أقدر أحصل

Wen aqdar ahasal

Hello, how are you?

مرحبا كيف حالك

Marhaba, kayf halik?

Sorry, I don't speak Arabic.

أسف ما أتكلم عربي

Ana asif, ma'a atkalam Arabi



Holy Month of Ramdan



In this section of our guide to Egypt, we delve into the significance of Ramadan and Eid, two of the most important religious observances in the Islamic calendar. As a country with a rich tapestry of cultural diversity, Egypt provides a unique backdrop for experiencing these sacred traditions. Join us as we explore the meaning of Ramadan, the customs associated with fasting, and the joyous celebrations of Eid al-Fitr, all while highlighting the importance of respectful engagement and cultural sensitivity in this multireligious society.



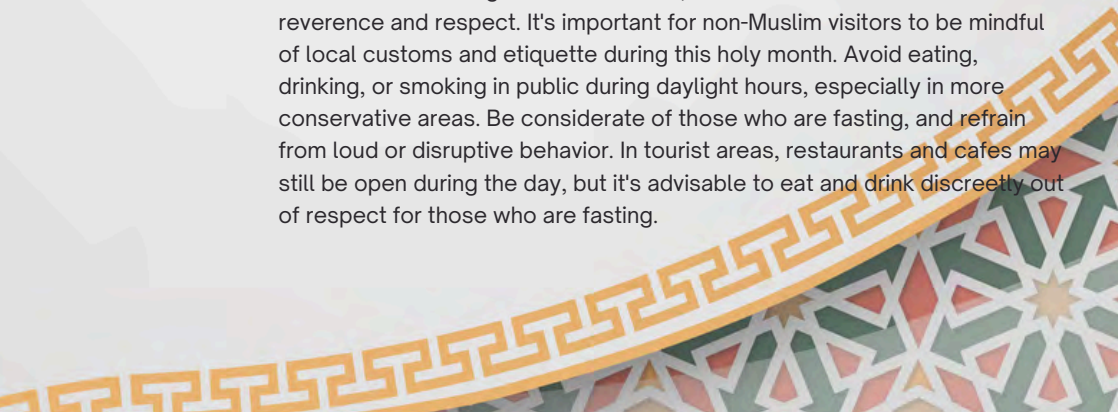
Ramadan and Eid in Egypt

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, holds great significance for Muslims around the world. It is a time of fasting, prayer, reflection, and spiritual growth. Lasting for 29 or 30 days, depending on the sighting of the moon, Ramadan commemorates the month during which the Quran, the holy book of Islam, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and other physical needs as a means of purifying the soul, practicing self-discipline, and empathizing with those less fortunate. The pre-dawn meal before the fast begins is called "sahur," while the meal to break the fast at sunset is known as "iftar." These meals are often shared with family and friends, fostering a sense of community and solidarity.

Eid al-Fitr, the festival of breaking the fast, marks the end of Ramadan and is celebrated with prayers, feasting, and charitable giving. It is a joyous occasion that brings families together to express gratitude, seek forgiveness, and share blessings.

In Egypt, where Islam is the predominant religion but the country is also home to diverse religious communities, Ramadan is observed with reverence and respect. It's important for non-Muslim visitors to be mindful of local customs and etiquette during this holy month. Avoid eating, drinking, or smoking in public during daylight hours, especially in more conservative areas. Be considerate of those who are fasting, and refrain from loud or disruptive behavior. In tourist areas, restaurants and cafes may still be open during the day, but it's advisable to eat and drink discreetly out of respect for those who are fasting.





A Gastronomic Journey Through Egypt

Experience the tantalizing flavors of Egyptian cuisine, where centuries-old recipes and vibrant spices converge to create a culinary paradise. Indulge in traditional delights such as succulent kebabs, aromatic baklava, and savory koshari, each dish a testament to the country's rich culinary heritage. From bustling street markets to cozy family-run eateries, every meal in Egypt promises a symphony of tastes and textures that will leave you craving more. Prepare to embark on a gastronomic adventure like no other, as you discover the diverse and delectable world of Egyptian food.

Traditional Delights

- **Kebabs:** Grilled to perfection, Egyptian kebabs are typically made from lamb or beef, marinated with a blend of spices and herbs that create a mouthwatering flavor.
- **Baklava:** This sweet pastry, made of layers of filo dough filled with chopped nuts and sweetened with syrup or honey, is a favorite dessert that perfectly balances sweetness and crunch.
- **Koshari:** A popular street food, koshari is a hearty mix of rice, lentils, chickpeas, and macaroni, topped with a spicy tomato sauce and garnished with crispy fried onions.

Culinary Heritage

Egyptian cuisine reflects the country's diverse history, with influences from ancient Egypt, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. Each dish tells a story, blending traditional ingredients and cooking methods that have been passed down through generations.

Dining Experience

From the vibrant street markets of Cairo to the charming family-run restaurants in Alexandria, dining in Egypt is an experience in itself. The bustling atmosphere, the aroma of freshly cooked food, and the warm hospitality of the locals make every meal memorable. Whether you're enjoying a quick bite from a street vendor or a leisurely dinner in a traditional restaurant, the flavors of Egypt will captivate your senses.

A Gastronomic Adventure

Explore the iconic dishes that define Egyptian cuisine

Koshari



Kubbah

Hawawshi



Falafel



Top 8 Cairo Restaurants



2024

LA PETIT CHEF

It's a culinary spectacle in the Four Seasons First Nile Boat in Cairo – and it's not to miss. The little chef from Marseille, France, invites to an unforgettable 3D projection mapping show on the table. The show is paired with a great story, music and an exquisite four-course-dinner.

FELFELA

Felfela is a great eatery for enjoying original Egyptian cuisine in a fine dining ambience. The restaurant opened the doors in 1959 and is since then family owned and operated by the Zaghloul family.

LUCILLE'S

Since 1995, Lucille's is the place where locals go, when they don't wanna eat Egyptian food. Lucille's serves International dishes, pasta, steaks, burgers, and they are also famous for their fluffy pancakes with maple syrup.

ANDREA MARIOUTEYA

Andrea Mariouteya is the real Cairo restaurant experience. The eatery has been family owned and operated since 1958. Famous for their chicken and the view. It's hard to beat a dinner with a pyramid view. This is why the spot is usually busy and very attractive for tourists.

ABOU TAREK

On the corner of Maarouf and Champollion street, you find Abou Tarek. The place is a hotspot for Koshary, the national dish of Egypt. The mix of pasta, fried rice, brown lentils, vermicelli, topped with sauces, chickpeas and fried onion, is their bestseller.

GRANITA

Granita is definitely a place to relax, cool down, to enjoy refreshing drinks and delicious food. Named after the popular semi-frozen dessert, it's a great hangout locals appreciate. The colorful café on the Grounds of a Cathedral in Zamalek offers Egyptian and International eats.

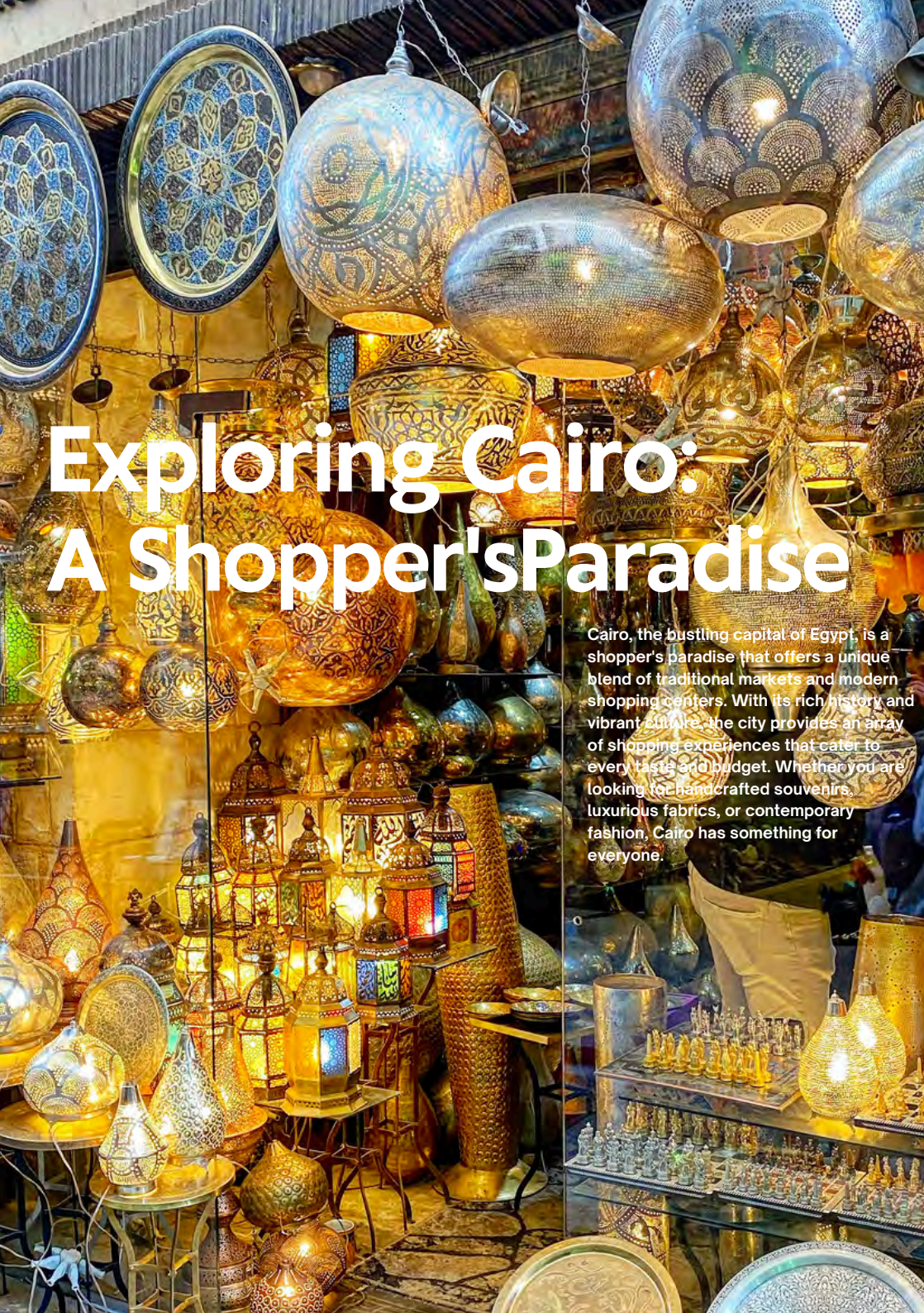
MAKINO

Locals talk about Makino as one of the best Japanese restaurants in Cairo. The interior of the Japanese eatery focuses on light neutral colors and wood, the Nile view from the restaurant and the riverside terrace is beautiful.

PIER 88 NILE RIVER

Cairo loves Pier 88 Nile River for their Italian cuisine, their pastries, and the ambience. Executive chefs Mostafa Seif, Artem Vasilevich and Ahmed Agha, all of them award-winning food experts, creating classic dishes with a modern twist.





Exploring Cairo: A Shopper's Paradise

Cairo, the bustling capital of Egypt, is a shopper's paradise that offers a unique blend of traditional markets and modern shopping centers. With its rich history and vibrant culture, the city provides an array of shopping experiences that cater to every taste and budget. Whether you are looking for handcrafted souvenirs, luxurious fabrics, or contemporary fashion, Cairo has something for everyone.



“Shopping in Cairo is not just about buying; it's about embarking on a journey through time, culture, and tradition, where every purchase tells a story of centuries-old craftsmanship and vibrant bazaar culture.”

Traditional Markets

Khan El Khalili Bazaar:

One of the most famous and historic markets in Cairo, Khan El Khalili is a labyrinth of narrow streets and alleyways filled with shops selling everything from intricate jewelry and beautiful textiles to spices and traditional crafts. The bazaar dates back to the 14th century and offers a glimpse into the city's rich cultural heritage. Haggling is a common practice here, so be prepared to negotiate for the best prices.

Souq El Gomaa:

Known as the Friday Market, Souq El Gomaa is an open-air market where you can find an eclectic mix of goods, including antiques, second-hand items, and unique collectibles. This market is perfect for treasure hunters looking for one-of-a-kind finds.

Perfumes



Perfume shopping in Cairo is a sensory delight, where the fragrant scents of traditional attar oils and exotic spices fill the air. Local perfumeries offer a wide range of unique and handcrafted fragrances, often made with natural ingredients and age-old techniques. Exploring the perfume shops in Cairo's markets and bazaars allows you to discover personalized scents that capture the essence of Egypt's rich olfactory heritage.

CAIRO

Cairo is unquestionably one of the world's great metropolises. The city, often called the "Mother of the World," has served as the capital of great civilizations including the ancient Egyptian and Islamic empires. With its rich historical and cultural legacy, Cairo offers a captivating blend of the ancient and the contemporary, making it a unique destination for travelers. While the seat of government has moved to the New Administrative Capital, Cairo remains Egypt's largest and most vibrant city. Straddling the Nile River, it offers a compelling blend of ancient and modern influences.

Historic sites such as the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx are vivid reminders of the city's long and illustrious history. These ancient wonders attract millions of visitors each year, providing a direct connection to Egypt's storied past. The Egyptian Museum, housing the world's most extensive collection of Pharaonic antiquities, including the treasures of Tutankhamun, offers a deeper insight into the civilization that once thrived along the Nile.

The Islamic heritage of Cairo is equally impressive, with landmarks such as the Citadel of Saladin, the Al-Azhar Mosque, and the Sultan Hassan Mosque showcasing exquisite Islamic architecture and artistry. The bustling bazaars like Khan El Khalili are not just places to shop but are experiences in themselves, where the scents of spices and perfumes fill the air, and the sounds of haggling and traditional music create an immersive atmosphere. Traditional Egyptian baths (hammams) offer a window into a cultural practice that has endured for centuries, providing relaxation and a sense of history.

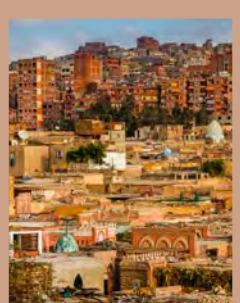
Cairo's history is not its only lure. The city boasts numerous innovative boutiques, bars, galleries, clubs, and restaurants that contribute to its dynamic urban culture. Zamalek, an upscale district on Gezira Island in the Nile, is known for its trendy cafes, art galleries, and nightlife. Downtown Cairo, with its historic buildings and vibrant street life, is undergoing a renaissance with new cultural spaces and eateries opening regularly. Maadi, a leafy suburb, offers a more laid-back vibe with its tree-lined streets and expatriate community.

Cairo is also a city of contrasts where modern skyscrapers stand alongside ancient minarets and bustling markets. The city's culinary scene reflects its diversity, offering everything from traditional Egyptian dishes like koshari and ful medames to international cuisine. Street food is an integral part of Cairo's food culture, with vendors selling delicious snacks like ta'ameya (Egyptian falafel) and shawarma on every corner.

Art and culture are thriving in Cairo, with numerous galleries, theaters, and cultural centers. The Cairo Opera House is a hub for the performing arts, hosting ballet, opera, and music concerts. Contemporary art galleries showcase the work of both established and emerging Egyptian artists, reflecting the city's role as a cultural capital.

In a city with so many fascinating sights, it can be difficult to know where to start. Here are some suggestions to help you explore Cairo:

1. **The Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx:** No visit to Cairo is complete without seeing these iconic ancient structures. Take a guided tour to learn about their history and significance.
2. **The Egyptian Museum:** Spend a few hours exploring the vast collection of artifacts, including the golden treasures of Tutankhamun.
3. **Khan El Khalili Bazaar:** Wander through the narrow alleys of this historic market, where you can buy everything from jewelry and souvenirs to spices and traditional crafts.
4. **Islamic Cairo:** Visit the Citadel of Saladin, the Al-Azhar Mosque, and the Sultan Hassan Mosque to admire the stunning Islamic architecture.
5. **Coptic Cairo:** Explore the Hanging Church and the Coptic Museum to discover the rich Christian heritage of the city.
6. **Zamalek and Downtown Cairo:** Enjoy the vibrant arts and dining scene in these trendy neighborhoods, and take a walk along the Nile Corniche.



Unveiling the Enchantment Luxor

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Nestled in the heart of Egypt, Luxor is a city of timeless charm and unparalleled historical significance. Renowned for its monumental temples, tombs, and the legacy of the pharaohs, Luxor invites travelers to embark on an unforgettable journey through its storied past.

The Ancient Thebes

Once known as Thebes, Luxor was the capital of ancient Egypt during the New Kingdom. The city, divided by the Nile River, features the Temple of Luxor on the East Bank and the Valley of the Kings on the West Bank.



LUXOR

An Unforgettable Journey

Whether drifting over the West Bank in a hot air balloon, exploring pharaonic tombs, or soaking in the Nile's splendor, Luxor offers an unparalleled experience. Discover the heart of a civilization that continues to captivate and inspire travelers from around the globe.



Experiencing a hot air balloon ride at sunrise over Luxor is a breathtaking adventure that offers a unique perspective on the ancient city. As the sun rises, the golden light illuminates the temples, tombs, and the lush landscape along the Nile, creating an unforgettable panoramic view. This serene and awe-inspiring journey allows you to float peacefully above some of Egypt's most iconic landmarks, making it a highlight of any visit to Luxor.





MARVEL AT THE STUNNING TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT, A TESTAMENT TO THE ARCHITECTURAL BRILLIANCE AND GRANDEUR OF ANCIENT EGYPT, NESTLED AGAINST THE CLIFFS OF DEIR EL-BAHARI.

Majestic Temples and Monuments

Karnak Temple Complex: The largest religious building ever constructed, with the Great Hypostyle Hall's 134 massive columns.

Luxor Temple: An elegant monument in the heart of the city, built primarily by Amenhotep III and Ramses II.

The West Bank Wonders

Valley of the Kings: Home to the tombs of New Kingdom pharaohs, including Tutankhamun, adorned with elaborate murals and hieroglyphs.

Temple of Hatshepsut: A stunning mortuary temple dedicated to Queen Hatshepsut, with a unique terraced design.

Colossi of Memnon: Two massive stone statues of Pharaoh Amenhotep III, standing as impressive reminders of ancient grandeur.


Timeless Charm and Modern Luxuries

Luxor blends the past with the present, offering bustling souks, modern hotels, and restaurants. The city's contemporary comforts make it a perfect base for exploring its treasures.

An Unforgettable Journey

Whether drifting over the West Bank in a hot air balloon, exploring pharaonic tombs, or soaking in the Nile's splendor, Luxor offers an unparalleled experience. Discover the heart of a civilization that continues to captivate and inspire travelers from around the globe.

Discover Aswan: Egypt's Southern Gem



Nestled along the banks of the majestic Nile River, Aswan beckons travelers with its captivating blend of scenic beauty, rich history, and vibrant culture. This charming southern city serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most renowned ancient sites, including the awe-inspiring temples of Philae and Abu Simbel, where visitors can marvel at the grandeur of ancient Egyptian architecture and artistry. Beyond its archaeological treasures, Aswan offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from leisurely felucca rides on the tranquil Nile to exploring the colorful Nubian villages with their unique cultural heritage. With its welcoming atmosphere, diverse attractions, and picturesque landscapes, Aswan invites visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty and history of Egypt's enchanting Nubian region.

Abu Simbel: Egypt's Monumental Marvel

Nestled on the shores of Lake Nasser in southern Egypt, Abu Simbel beckons travelers with its awe-inspiring grandeur, rich history, and breathtaking landscapes. This iconic site is home to the magnificent rock-cut temples of Ramses II and Queen Nefertari, where visitors can marvel at the colossal statues and intricate carvings that tell tales of ancient Egypt's glory. Beyond its monumental treasures, Abu Simbel offers a unique experience of tranquility, with stunning sunrises and sunsets over the desert and lake. With its majestic atmosphere, historic significance, and serene surroundings, Abu Simbel invites visitors to immerse themselves in the splendor and legacy of Egypt's ancient civilization.

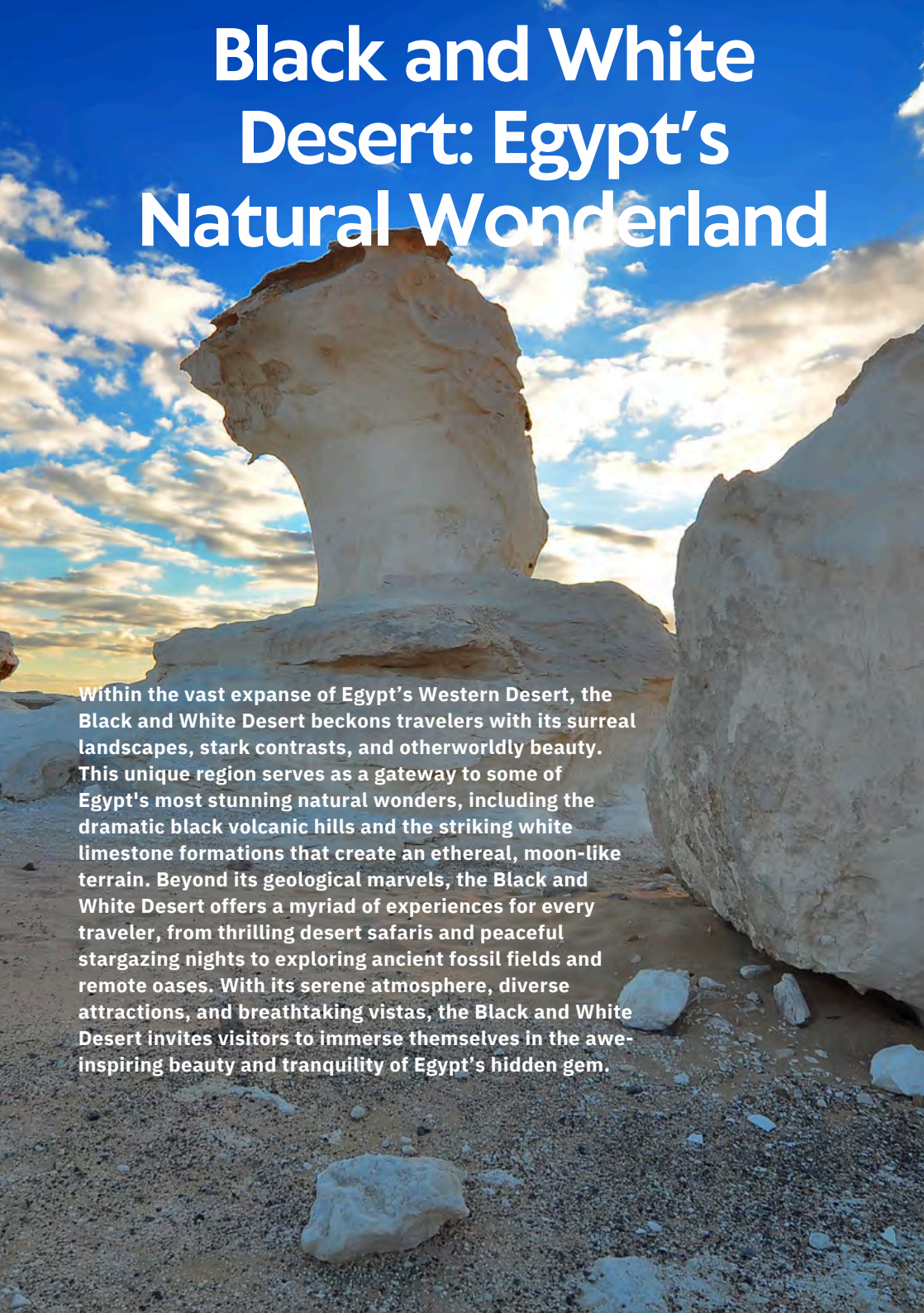




El Gouna: Egypt's Red Sea Gem

El Gouna beckons travelers with its stunning lagoons, luxurious resorts, and vibrant nightlife. This charming coastal town serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most pristine diving and snorkeling spots, where visitors can explore the colorful coral reefs and abundant marine life. Beyond its aquatic treasures, El Gouna offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from leisurely boat rides through its picturesque waterways to golfing on world-class courses and enjoying gourmet dining. With its welcoming atmosphere, diverse attractions, and breathtaking landscapes, El Gouna invites visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty and relaxation of Egypt's premier resort destination.

Black and White Desert: Egypt's Natural Wonderland



Within the vast expanse of Egypt's Western Desert, the Black and White Desert beckons travelers with its surreal landscapes, stark contrasts, and otherworldly beauty. This unique region serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most stunning natural wonders, including the dramatic black volcanic hills and the striking white limestone formations that create an ethereal, moon-like terrain. Beyond its geological marvels, the Black and White Desert offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from thrilling desert safaris and peaceful stargazing nights to exploring ancient fossil fields and remote oases. With its serene atmosphere, diverse attractions, and breathtaking vistas, the Black and White Desert invites visitors to immerse themselves in the awe-inspiring beauty and tranquility of Egypt's hidden gem.

FAYOUM



Just a short drive southwest of Cairo, Fayoum beckons travelers with its lush landscapes, rich history, and tranquil ambiance. This charming region serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most remarkable natural and cultural treasures, including the stunning Lake Qarun and the ancient ruins of Karanis, where visitors can explore remnants of Greco-Roman civilization. Beyond its historical sites,

Fayoum offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from birdwatching in the serene Wadi El Rayan protected area to marveling at the unique rock formations in the Valley of the Whales (Wadi Al-Hitan), a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The area is also known for its vibrant handicrafts, particularly the beautiful pottery produced in the village of Tunis. With its welcoming atmosphere, diverse attractions, and picturesque landscapes, Fayoum invites visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty and serenity of Egypt's hidden oasis.

Marsa Alam

Marsa Alam beckons travelers with its unspoiled beauty, vibrant coral reefs, and luxurious resorts. This tranquil coastal town serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most pristine underwater sites, including the world-renowned Elphinstone Reef and the enchanting Dolphin House, where visitors can dive and snorkel amidst an abundance of marine life. Beyond its aquatic treasures, Marsa Alam offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from exploring the ancient emerald mines of Wadi El Gemal to embarking on thrilling desert safaris.



Siwa Oasis

This remote and enchanting oasis serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most unique cultural and natural treasures, including the historic Temple of the Oracle of Amun and the picturesque Shali Fortress, where visitors can explore remnants of the oasis's storied past. Beyond its historical sites, Siwa offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from relaxing in the natural springs and floating in the therapeutic salt lakes to embarking on adventurous desert safaris and discovering the beauty of the Great Sand Sea.

The area is also known for its traditional Berber culture, with vibrant handicrafts and distinctive architecture that provide a glimpse into the local way of life. With its serene atmosphere, diverse attractions, and stunning landscapes,



Dahab

Along the stunning Gulf of Aqaba, Dahab beckons travelers with its relaxed vibe, vibrant coral reefs, and bohemian charm. This laid-back coastal town serves as a gateway to some of Egypt's most spectacular diving and snorkeling sites, including the world-famous Blue Hole and the mesmerizing Lighthouse Reef, where visitors can explore the underwater wonders teeming with marine life.

Beyond its aquatic adventures, Dahab offers a myriad of experiences for every traveler, from windsurfing and kitesurfing in the crystal-clear waters to exploring the scenic landscapes of the Sinai Desert on camelback or by jeep.

The town is also known for its eclectic cafes, artisan shops, and a lively beachfront promenade that offers a perfect blend of local culture and international flair. With its welcoming atmosphere, diverse attractions, and breathtaking scenery, The area is also known for its traditional Berber culture, with vibrant handicrafts and distinctive architecture that provide a glimpse into the local way of life. With its serene atmosphere, diverse attractions, and stunning landscapes,



North Coast

The North Coast of Egypt, stretching along the Mediterranean Sea, beckons travelers with its pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and upscale resorts. This idyllic coastal region offers a perfect escape for relaxation and leisure, featuring luxurious accommodations, vibrant nightlife, and a serene atmosphere ideal for a rejuvenating getaway.



Diving in the Red Sea

A full-page underwater photograph of the Red Sea. On the left, a large, textured coral reef structure rises vertically, covered in various types of coral and small fish. In the center, a scuba diver in a blue wetsuit and black fins is swimming towards the right. The water is a deep, clear blue, filled with many small, bright orange fish. In the bottom right corner, the head and mask of another diver are partially visible.

Diving in the Red Sea offers an unparalleled underwater experience with its vibrant coral reefs, diverse marine life, and crystal-clear waters. This world-renowned diving destination boasts sites like Ras Mohammed, the Blue Hole, and Thistlegorm wreck, providing unforgettable adventures for divers of all levels.

We hope this guide has provided valuable insights and inspiration for your journey through Egypt's enchanting destinations. At TravelLab, we are committed to curating unforgettable travel experiences that immerse you in the beauty and culture of each destination. Thank you for entrusting us with your travels, and may your adventures be filled with joy, discovery, and cherished memories.

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