



The Great
Canadian
Travel Group
Inc.

1349 Portage Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R3G 0V7

Egypt Practical Information

Egypt, officially the Arab Republic of Egypt, is a transcontinental country spanning the northeast corner of Africa and southwest corner of Asia by a land bridge, the Sinai Peninsula. Cairo is its capital and largest city. Egypt is home to a vast desert, the Nile River and Great Pyramids. They drive on the right-hand side of the road.



Documentation



Canadian passports are required for visitors to travel to Egypt and must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the date you expect to leave Egypt. A visa is required to visit Egypt. If you intend to stay for more than one month and have obtained a visa; a 30-day visa will be stamped in your passport regardless of the visa previously granted and you are responsible for renewing this 30-day visa.

Airports

Cairo International Airport (CAI)

Cairo International Airport is the biggest airport in Egypt and one of the biggest in Africa. Cairo International Airport is the main gateway to the wonders of the ancient pharaohs. Flights to Cairo airport are available from many cities in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The airport is situated 22km from central Cairo.

Sharm el-Sheikh International Airport (SSH)

Sharm el-Sheikh Airport is an airport well known by many across Europe. The airport is the main gateway to Egypt's popular Sharm el-Sheikh and Dahab resorts. Sharm el-Sheikh International Airport is located 18km northeast of Sharm el Sheikh Centre, near Ras Nasrani.

There are many other airports located throughout Egypt.



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Location and Geography

Egypt is in the northeastern corner of Africa. It shares borders with Sudan, Libya and Israel. The country consists of mostly desert with flora surrounding the Nile River and Nile Valley. The Nile River is about 1200km long and it flows in a northward direction. Egypt is divided by the Nile River into desert plateaus. The Western Desert covers about two-thirds of Egypt and is home to multiple oases. It is composed of great ridges of blown sand scattered with stony tracts. The Eastern Desert covers about one-fourth of Egypt and is home to the Red Sea Hills and Red Sea Coastal Plain. The tallest hill is Mount Shā'ib al-Banāt which reaches 2,187 metres tall. At the foot of the Red Sea Hills the narrow coastal plain widens southward, and parallel to the shore there are almost continuous coral reefs. Egypt is also connected to Asia by the Sinai Peninsula which is covered by rugged mountains including Mount Catherine (Jabal Kātrīnā) Egypt's highest mountain, which has an elevation of 2,642 metres.



Population

Egypt's population is just over 97 million people, as of the 2017 census, representing 1.27% of the world's population. They are the 13th most populated country in the world. Cairo's population is at 20.4 million people, about 20% of the country's total. Most of Egypt's people live along the banks of the Nile River, and more than two-fifths of the population lives in urban areas.



People and Culture

The Ethnic background of Egypt is a mixture of Indigenous African ancestry mixed with Arab ancestry due to a history of foreign invaders and immigration. Egypt belongs to a social and cultural tradition that is Arab and Islamic. The deserts of Egypt contain nomadic, seminomadic, and sedentary groups each with their own distinct ethnic characteristics.



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Language

The country's official language is Arabic. There are many Arabic languages, but most Egyptians speak Egyptian Arabic, with a few speaking Sai'di Arabic, Eastern Egyptian Bedawi Arabic and Sudanese Arabic. English, French, German and Italian are all taught in schools.

Economy

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Egypt's economy. One of Egypt's most well-known tourist attractions, and the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still in existence, is the Giza Necropolis. This is an archaeological site that includes all of the six pyramids, the Great Sphinx, and several cemeteries. Egypt has several oil refineries and significant natural gas deposits. Multiple resources are available for mining such as phosphate, coal, manganese and iron. While lacking in fertile land agriculture is an important part of the Egyptian economy as well with cotton being a major export. Egypt exports about one third of the world's supply of cotton. Manufacturing is also a significant part of the economy.



Climate and Weather

The climate in Egypt varies from surprisingly cold to extremely hot. Along the northern coast of the country the climate is Mediterranean during winter (December through March) – cool, windy and humid, with occasional rains. Summer in Egypt (June through September) is usually very dry with extremely hot temperatures into the 30's, sometimes breaking 45° C. Many of Egypt's best-preserved sites are in desert regions where it never rains. The parched atmosphere and desert winds can sway temperatures from hot in the day to freezing at night. Shoulder seasons of April-May and October-November are particularly pleasant months to travel.

Electricity

Voltage is 220V. Frequency is 50Hz and power sockets are type C/F.





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Currency

The Egyptian pound is the official currency of Egypt. The pound is divided into piasters. The Egyptian pound is mainly a paper currency with various denominations. Coins are used for fractions of a pound. All Egyptian notes are bilingual with an Arabic and English side. Currency exchanges are available at official banks, official money exchange offices and some major hotels.



Credit Cards

American Express, MasterCard and Visa are accepted generally in bigger hotels/restaurants in Cairo and in other major tourist areas.

Business and Banking Hours

Bank hours are 8:30am – 2:00pm Sunday to Thursday in major towns and cities with smaller towns operating on a more varied schedule. Banks are closed Fridays, Saturdays and most holidays. General shopping hours vary by season. In winter shopping hours are 9:00 am to 7:00pm. In summer shopping hours are 9:00am to 2:00pm and 4:00pm to 8:00pm. Many shops are closed Fridays because of Islamic Sunday. Egypt has special shopping hours during Ramadan Festival.

Tipping

Tipping is widespread in Egypt as it supplements low Egyptian wages. It is custom to tip as discretely as possible. Generally, tip 10-15% of the service you have paid for.

Telephone and Emergency

The international dialing code is 20. To dial to Canada or the United States dial 01-(area code)-(phone number).

Emergency Numbers

Police: 122

Ambulance: 123

Fire Brigade: 180

Tourist Police: 126



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Health Information

Healthcare system is below Canadian standards. Travel insurance is recommended for travel to Egypt. It is also recommended to bring all prescription medications and any over-the-counter medications you may need during your travel. Basic first aid supplies may also come in handy.

Public Holidays and Events

Jan 1 - Bank Holiday

Bank Holiday is a public holiday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jan 7 - Coptic Christmas Day

Coptic Christmas Day is a public holiday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jan 25 – Revolution Day

Anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 which led to the declaration of the modern republic of Egypt, ending the period of the Kingdom of Egypt. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Apr 25 - Sinai Liberation Day

Sinai liberation day is a public holiday in Egypt which celebrates the liberation of the land of Sinai from occupation back to Egyptian sovereignty. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Apr 26 - Coptic Good Friday

Good Friday commemorates the moments leading up to and including the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament of the Bible. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Apr 27 - Coptic Holy Saturday

Holy Saturday is the day between Jesus Christ's crucifixion (Good Friday) and his resurrection (Easter Sunday), according to Christian belief. Many Orthodox Christians commemorate the burial of Christ on this day. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Apr 28 - Coptic Easter Sunday

Easter celebrations in Orthodox Christian communities usually include a spit-roast lamb dinner and a display of hard-boiled eggs, dyed red to symbolize the blood of Christ. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.



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Apr 29 - Spring Festival

Many Orthodox churches around the world observe Easter Monday, which is the day after the Orthodox Easter Sunday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

May 1 - Labor Day

Associated with the start of spring as well as the celebration of workers. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jun 5 - Eid el Fitr

The first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal. It marks the end of Ramadan, which is a month of fasting and prayer. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jun 6 - Eid el Fitr Day 2

Marks the end of Ramadan, which is a month of fasting and prayer. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jun 7 - Eid el Fitr Day 3

Marks the end of Ramadan, which is a month of fasting and prayer. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jun 30 – Revolution Day

Commemorates Egyptian protests against President Morsi. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jul 1 - Bank Holiday

Bank Holiday is a public holiday. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Jul 23 - Revolution Day July 23

Revolution Day, public holiday celebrated in Egypt to commemorate the military coup of July 23, 1952, that led to the end of the monarchy and the establishment of an independent republic. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Aug 11 - Arafat Day

An Islamic holiday that falls on the 9th Day of Dhu al-Hijjah. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.



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Aug 12 - Eid al-Adha

Eid al-Adha is an Islamic festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim (also known as Abraham) to follow Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son. Muslims around the world observe this event. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Aug 13 - Eid al-Adha Day 2

It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Aug 14 - Eid al-Adha Day 3

It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Aug 15 - Eid al-Adha Day 4

It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Aug 15 - Flooding of the Nile

The flooding of the Nile has been an important natural cycle in Egypt since ancient times. It is celebrated by Egyptians as an annual holiday for two weeks starting August 15, known as Wafaa El-Nil. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Sep 1 – Muharram

The Islamic New Year is on the first day of Muharram, the first month in the lunar Islamic calendar. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Sep 12 - Nayrouz

Nayrouz or Neyrouz is a feast when martyrs and confessors are commemorated within the Coptic Orthodox Church. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Oct 6 - Armed Forces Day

Celebrating the day in 1973 when combined Egyptian and Syrian military forces launched a surprise attack on Israel and crossed into the Sinai Peninsula, which marked the beginning of the October (Yom Kippur) War. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.

Nov 10 - Prophet Mohamed's birthday

Sunni Muslims observe the Prophet Muhammed's birthday on the 10th day of the Islamic month of Rabi' al-awwal, while Shi'a Muslims mark it on the 17th of this month. Muhammed is believed to be the last prophet. It is a day off for the general population, and schools and most businesses are closed.