



EGYPT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SECURITY AND SAFETY:

1. Is Egypt safe to visit, especially after the political events that took place after the Egyptian Revolution?

-Tourists have been visiting Egypt for centuries and Egyptians have well-earned reputation for warmth and kindness toward visitors. Egyptian cities are generally very safe, especially in area where tourists frequent.

-Since the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, there has been intermittent unrest and political violence in Egypt, but even the most intense episodes have occurred in a relatively small area of Cairo and other cities. Tourist sites, mostly located far from these areas, have not been affected and there is no negative feeling toward foreign visitors among Egyptians. While Egypt is certainly still dealing with a political transition, it has not significantly affected the experience of tourists in the country.

-We have rarely had to even slightly adjust our itineraries to avoid protests and there has never been an instance when our clients were in danger. Most of our clients rave these days about how safe they felt during their trip.

2. Is Egypt considered a safe destination in comparison to other countries in the world?

- Egypt generally has a very low crime rate. Travelers will be safe in Egypt if they take sensible precautions that would apply to any tourist destination around the world.

3. Is there any special advice for women travelers while visiting Egypt?

-There are many touristic areas in Egypt where special concerns are not necessary; however, in less touristic places, relatively modest dress is recommended. Women should avoid very tight clothing, keep their shoulders and knees covered, and avoid very revealing necklines. Men should also avoid particularly revealing clothing as all Egyptians generally dress more modestly than in many parts of Europe and America. For instance, wearing shorts is not very common among Egyptians. Dressing with relative modesty is a way of respecting the local culture.

- The metro in Cairo has separate cars for women that might be more comfortable, especially during rush hours when the cars can be very full.

VISAS AND ARRIVAL:

1. How can I obtain my visa to visit Egypt?

- Visitors to Egypt must have a passport valid for at least six months after their arrival and all foreign citizens must obtain a visa to enter Egypt. You can apply for a tourist visa at any Egyptian embassy or consulate around the world.

-Travelers of the following nationalities can purchase a 1 month entry visa without application upon arrival in Egypt: Australia, Canada, Croatia, European Union, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Macedonia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States. This only takes a few minutes to do at a bank window before you go through customs

- Egypt generally has three types of entry visas.



1. Entry visa--valid for one month; given to any non-Egyptian citizen entering the country without a previously purchased visa
2. Transit visa--given to any non-Egyptian citizen entering the country for a limited period of time for transit reasons
3. Tourist visa--valid for up to 3 months and available with single or multiple entries; purchased by the majority of visitors to Egypt from a Egyptian embassy or consulate before arriving in the country

2. How do I apply for a visa to enter Egypt if I live away from the country of my nationality?

- If the traveler has a residence permit to live in another country, they can apply for a visa from the Egyptian embassy or consulate in that country or buy a visa upon arrival in the Cairo, Hurghada, or Luxor Airports. If they do not hold a residency permit, they must obtain their visa from the Egyptian embassy/consulate in the country that issued their passport.

3. If I have already obtained a visa to enter Sinai, will I be able to visit other destinations in Egypt?

- The visa for Sinai allows tourists to travel anywhere in the Sinai Peninsula; however, if they want to visit another part of Egypt, like Cairo, Hurghada, Luxor, or Aswan, they will need to obtain a new visa using the methods described in question 1

4. Can I extend the period of my tourist visa beyond its expiration?

- It is possible to extend a tourist, but this requires obtaining an extension from the Mogamma building in the Tahrir Complex in Cairo or other governmental offices in another city. There is a two-week grace period after your visa expires during which you may purchase an extension without being subject to a fine.

5. Can I combine my visit to Egypt with another country?

- Tourists visiting Egypt sometimes visit other countries in the Middle East or North Africa in the same trip.

8. Can I travel to Egypt by sea?

- Although Egypt has many ports situated both on the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, the number of passengers arriving in Egypt by boats or ferries has greatly decreased because of cheap airfare and package holidays that use air travel. There is only one exception to this: the crossing by ferry from Aqaba, Jordan to Nuweiba in Sinai. The boats that used to sail directly from Greece or Cyprus to Egypt's Mediterranean ports no longer exist.

- There are several cruise lines operating in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which stop at various ports in Egypt and Jordan

PURCHASING ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES:

1. Can I bring a personal supply of cigarettes and alcohol with me when I am visiting Egypt?

- It is always recommended for travelers who wish to have their own supply of cigarettes and alcohol with them in Egypt to purchase them upon arrival. There are duty free shops in the



airports in Cairo, Luxor, Hurghada, El Gouna and Sharm El Sheikh. Tourists are allowed to purchase up to 3 liters of alcohol and up to 200 cigarettes on arrival.

2. What happens if I didn't purchase my alcohol and cigarettes upon arrival, will I have the chance to buy them elsewhere in Egypt?

- Tourists have 48 hours after arrival to buy these products from any duty free shop in Egypt. Duty free locations are in the airports in Cairo, Luxor, Hurghada, El Gouna and Sharm El Sheikh. There are also several other locations in Cairo and in hotels in Sharm El Sheikh, El Gouna and Hurghada. You will be able to purchase up to 3 liters of alcohol and up to 200 cigarettes.

3. Can I bring my supplies of alcohol and cigarettes with me from any other country while I visit Egypt?

- The allowance for cigarettes or alcohol brought to Egypt from another other country is 1 liter of alcohol and 200 cigarettes.

LANGUAGES:

1. Do Egyptians speak languages other than Arabic?

- English is studied in school all over Egypt. This is why most Egyptians, who live in the cities, speak or understand at least some English words or phrases. Fewer Egyptians can speak French, Italian, Spanish, and German; however, professionals, who work in the tourism sector, are accustomed to visitors who cannot speak Arabic and they will speak enough English and other languages to fulfill the needs of most travelers.

2. Do I have to learn Arabic in order to enjoy my visit to Egypt?

- Many travelers enjoy their stay in Egypt without learning a single word of Arabic; however, it is always good to learn a few Arabic words to expressing greetings or thanks. If you are planning to visit some places other than popular tourist destinations, it is advisable to learn some Arabic phrases. Generally, Egyptians are friendly and are happy to help anyone, especially foreigners and tourists, even if there is a language barrier.

OPENING HOURS:

1. Is it allowed for non-Muslims to enter historical mosques in Egypt?

- Non-Muslims are generally welcome to visit mosques in Egypt; however, it is always advisable to seek permission before entering mosques outside Cairo and Alexandria where people are less accustomed to tourists. Tourists and foreigners are welcome in almost all mosques in Egypt, except mosques where the relatives of the prophet Mohamed were buried like the Mosque of El Hussein and the Mosque of Sayeda Zeinab. Tourists are more than welcome to visit most mosques at any time expect when they are being used for prayer, on Friday and during the five prayers of the day.

2. Is there any special dress code to be followed during visiting a mosque in Egypt?

- There aren't really special clothes to be put on while visiting a mosque in Egypt; however,



modest dress would be highly recommended and in some mosques, women will be asked to cover their hair and perhaps their arms and legs. Both women and men will be asked to remove their shoes before entering a mosque.

3. What are the most important historical mosques in Cairo?

- Cairo, nicknamed as the 'City of a Thousand Minarets', features a large number of remarkable and historical mosques. The most notable among them are the Mosque of Mohamed Ali in the Saladin Citadel, built in the beginning of the 19th century, the Mosque of Al Sultan Hassan, built in 1361 AD, the Mosque of Al Azhar, built in 970 AD and restored and enlarged many times afterwards, the Mosque of Amr Ibn El Aas, the first mosque in Africa built in 640 AD, the Mosque of Ahmed Ibn Tulun, built in 878 AD, and the Mosque of Al Hakem, built in 1013 AD. Tourists are welcome in all of these mosques on any day, except Friday.

4. Are tourists allowed to enter the Christian monuments in Egypt?

- In Egypt, churches are treated the same as mosques. Most churches and monasteries welcome tourists and foreigners, except during Lent. Modest dress is also advisable while visiting Christian monuments in Egypt.

5. What are the most notable Christian monuments in Egypt?

- Christianity arrived in Egypt as early as the 1st century AD and as the birthplace of Christian monasticism, Egypt hosts many interesting churches and monasteries. These include the Monastery of Saint Catharine in Sinai, the Monastery of Deir Abu Makkar and the Monastery of the Syrians in Wadi El Natrun, and the Monasteries of Saint Anthony and Saint Paul near the Red Sea to the North East of Hurghada. There are many historical churches in Egypt as well, especially in Cairo and Alexandria, like the Church of Saint Barbara and the Hanging Church in Coptic Cairo.

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. Can I take pictures while visiting the monuments in Egypt?

- Photography is allowed in most of the historical sites and museums in Egypt, but some of them have extra charges for taking in a camera. However, in some museums, like the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, and some historical sites, like the Valley of the Kings in Luxor, photography is prohibited and visitors are asked to leave their cameras at the reception before entering.

2. Can I take photographs of the people, streets, etc. in Egypt?

- Egyptians are well known all over the world for their tolerance and hospitality; however, it is always polite to ask permission before taking a photograph of people, especially women, and stores or products. Photography is non-permitted around army bases, airports, dams, bridges, and in metro. In most places where photography is prohibited there will be signs to notify you.

HEALTH ISSUES:

1. Are there any health issues that I should worry about in Egypt?

- Generally speaking, tourists face few unique health problems in Egypt, but occasionally travelers experience some gastric disturbance resulting from drinking tap water or eating from a



local restaurant not recommended by their tour guides or the receptionist in hotel. Some travelers might suffer sunburn or heatstroke from the heat and sun during the summer if they are not careful; however, taking the proper precautions and drinking bottled water can eliminate any health risks.

2. Are there certain vaccinations to be taken before traveling to Egypt?

- There are no obligatory vaccinations that should be taken before being granted with the visa of Egypt. However, it would be recommended for the senior people and for young children to take vaccinations against Hepatitis C, Typhoid, and an oral dosage of Tetanus.

CURRENCY AND BANKING IN EGYPT:

1. What is the official currency in Egypt?

- The official currency of Egypt is the Egyptian pound, or "Geneh" in Arabic, and commonly abbreviated as LE. One Egyptian pound is 100 piastres, or "irsh" in Arabic. There are banknotes of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 LE and there are coins of 25 piastres, 50 piastres, and 1 pound. It can sometimes be difficult to find change for large bills so it is always advisable to have change on hand for taxis and tips.

2. Will I be able to exchange dollars, Euros, or other currencies in Egypt?

- There are a large number of banks and exchange offices that can change cash and travelers' checks in Egypt. Moreover, many touristic shops, restaurants, and bars will actually accept dollars or Euros at rates that are relatively close to the official ones. Makes sure you know the current exchange rate of dollars or Euros to Egyptian pounds.

3. How common is the use of credit cards in Egypt?

- Credit cards are widely used in Egypt in hotels, many shops, restaurants, and cafes. Most stores in markets like Khan El Khalili and the Luxor touristic market accept credit cards. The most common types of credit cards used in Egypt are Visa, Master Card, and American Express.

TIPPING IN EGYPT:

1. Is it a common practice to give tips in Egypt?

- Due to the low salaries of many professionals in Egypt, many people depend on tips, or *baksheesh* as it is called in Egypt, as a major part of their income. Therefore, tipping is considered customary in Egypt.

2. How much should I tip?

- The amount depends on the situation. In a restaurant, it is good to give between 5 and 10% tip directly to the waiter even when there is service added to the bill. The service tax does not go to the waiter. For a small favor, like carrying luggage or parking a car, a few Egyptian pounds would be appropriate. Not more than five. Often times in Egypt you will find someone tending to the bathroom to keep it clean. Giving them one Egyptian pound is an appropriate amount.

- Tipping your tour guide and vehicle driver is completely optional but should be considered if you're provided with great service. If you decide to tip feel free to give what you think your experience was worth.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVELING AROUND EGYPT:

1. Will it be easy for me to find transportation from the Cairo Airport to other destinations in the city?



- There are several transportation options available from the Cairo Airport. The fastest and most common way is to take a taxi. The moment you step out of the airport, you will find many taxi drivers offering you a ride. It is advisable to avoid riding in the old black taxis as they don't use meters and the drivers may ask for an exaggerated fare. The new white taxis, which use a meter, are a good choice if you are going anywhere around Cairo, but at the airport you may find yourself negotiating the price even with these new taxis. If you are going to Central Cairo, you should pay more than 60 LE.
- There is a limousine service offered by the Cairo Airport, which is more expensive than other transportation means, but still relatively cheap when compared to the cost of transportation in North America or most European countries.
- We recommend using the Cairo Airport Shuttle Bus, which you can reserve ahead of time if you are already in the country by calling 19970. You can also hire a car upon arrival if you look for the desk in the Arrival Hall, but you may have to wait for a short time. It is more expensive than a taxi, but it removes the hassle of negotiating a price and you will have a comfortable, private van to yourself.

2. Are there any trains that go from Cairo to major cities in Egypt?

- The trains in Egypt fall generally into two categories; the air-conditioned trains that include the luxury wagons and local trains that stop in each village or town every 15 to 20 minutes. The local trains are crowded and do not provide much in the way of comfort. The A/C trains usually offer first and second-class cars. Both offer good options for travelers, but for a modest extra charge, the first class cars offer larger, and more comfortable seats. There are around 15 A/C trains from Cairo to Alexandria every day and five from Cairo to Luxor and Aswan, which also stop in the major cities of the Nile Valley on the way. There are also two overnight sleeper trains from Cairo to Luxor and Aswan, which will provide you with a private cabin and a hot dinner. Demand for trains in Egypt can be very high. It is recommended that you book your tickets several days in advance.

3. Is it a good idea to take the train from Cairo to distant destinations in Egypt like Aswan?

- Generally speaking, the standard of the railways service in Egypt is pretty good. The Egyptian railway network connects the Nile Valley, the Delta, and the Suez Canal. In the summer there are also trains to the resort areas along Egypt's Mediterranean coast.
- Because of the high prices of domestic flights in Egypt, air travel does not always suit budget travelers. While it takes longer, train travel provides a cheaper option and the experience of seeing the entire Nile Valley by train is a memorable one. The sleeper trains from Cairo to Aswan and Luxor are designed specifically for tourists, leaving Cairo at 9 PM and arriving in Luxor at around 4 AM and in Aswan around 7 AM. These trains are comfortable and the guests will be offered a private cabin and a hot dinner.
- Bus travel is also available to all of these locations for Turgoman Bus Station, located near the main train station in Downtown Cairo. Buses provide another affordable travel option.

4. Can I travel by train from Cairo to Hurghada or Sharm El Sheikh?

- No, the railway service in Egypt does not pass the Suez Canal to reach any cities in Sinai and it doesn't go further south than the Ismailia along the Red Sea coast. Other than airplanes, tourists can take the buses from Cairo to reach cities like Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada. It is also possible to hire a taxi to take you to these places, but this can be expensive without traveling companions to divide the cost.

5. Is it a good idea for tourists to ride in the public buses of cities like Cairo and Alexandria



- The buses in cities like Cairo and Alexandria literally cover the whole city. These buses are cheap (fare is less than 1 Egyptian pound), it can be difficult to know where each bus route will take you and the buses are sometimes extremely crowded. Therefore, it is recommended to use other transportation means, like taxis or the metro when in Cairo.

6. Is it advisable to ride in the underground metro in Cairo?

- The metro is one of the best ways to go from one place to another within Cairo. With the streets being crowded with cars and people most of the day, the metro has become the fastest means of transportation in the Egyptian capital. Although the metro can get rather crowded during the rush hours, it is still a good way to get around Central Cairo.

- The metro in Cairo goes from Helwan, the southernmost point in the city to Al Marg, located in the northeastern section of the city. The second line goes from Shubra in the north of Cairo to Giza in the western section of greater Cairo. The third line of the metro of Cairo will actually reach the airport eventually, but there are only 5 stations currently operating. The price of the ticket is one Egyptian pound for going from any station to another on any of the three lines. Each train on the metro has two wagons that are specified for women all day long, which can be a good option especially when the trains are very crowded.

THE MOST REMARKABLE SIGHTS AND MONUMENTS IN EGYPT:

1. What are the sights and activities that are not be missed while visiting Egypt?

Egypt, with its rich distinctive history, is a country that offers a lot to the tourists and a traveler can never see everything in one or even a couple of visits. This is why there are a number of monuments and some activities that tourists are advised not to miss if they visit Egypt. These include:

- Visiting the Pyramids of Giza
- Visiting Egyptian Museum of Antiquities
- Visiting Saladin Citadel and Mohammed Ali Mosque
- Going on a Nile Cruise from Luxor to Aswan or vice versa
- Eating Kebab and Kofta, the Egyptian traditional meat dish
- Visiting the Luxor and Karnak temples in Luxor
- Visiting Abu Simbel
- Going to Khan El Khalili touristic market in Cairo
- Visiting the monuments of the West Bank of Luxor including the Temple of Hatshepsut and the Valley of the Kings
- Eating "Fool", Egyptian beans, and "Koshary", a traditional Egyptian pasta dish