



Egypt

Pyramids and pharaohs, a green ribbon of river through the desert, and a busy, friendly country that has welcomed travellers for thousands of years.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Cairo

POPULATION

About 109 million living in Egypt (official estimate, May 2026)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Arabic. Most people speak Egyptian Arabic in daily life

CURRENCY

Egyptian pound (EGP), divided into 100 piastres

AREA

About 1 million km²

GOVERNMENT

Republic with an elected president and parliament (President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, since 2014)

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Mount Catherine in the Sinai, about 2,640 m (published heights differ slightly)

LONGEST RIVER

The Nile. With the Amazon it is one of the two longest rivers in the world; which one is longer depends on how they are measured

NEIGHBOURS

Libya, Sudan, Israel and the Gaza Strip (Palestine). Egypt and Sudan both claim the Halaib Triangle on the Red Sea coast. Across the Gulf of Aqaba: Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Across the Mediterranean, the nearest countries are Cyprus and Greece

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+20

A 45-minute trip to Egypt

Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Egypt together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 3100 BC: Upper and Lower Egypt are united; 1869: The Suez Canal opens; 2025: The Grand Egyptian Museum opens. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Koshari and Ful medames. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "Es-salamu alaykum" (Peace be upon you (hello)), "Sabah el-kheir" (Good morning), "Sabah en-nur" (Morning of light (the reply to good morning)). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/egypt/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Egypt and its cities



- Cairo (Cairo Governorate, on the Nile at the head of the delta): The Al-Azhar Mosque and Khan el-Khalili bazaar, The Egyptian Museum on Tahrir Square, Historic Cairo, a World Heritage Site, Tahrir Square
- Alexandria (Alexandria Governorate, Mediterranean coast): The Citadel of Qaitbay, The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Seafood by the sea, A long seafront promenade
- Giza (Giza Governorate, west bank of the Nile): The Pyramids of Giza, The Great Sphinx, The Grand Egyptian Museum
- Port Said (Port Said Governorate, at the Mediterranean end of the Suez Canal): The northern entrance of the Suez Canal, Ferries between Africa and Asia, Old houses with grand balconies
- Luxor (Luxor Governorate, Upper Egypt): Karnak and Luxor Temple, The Valley of the

Kings, Hot air balloon rides at sunrise, Nile cruises to Aswan

- Aswan (Aswan Governorate, Upper Egypt): Felucca trips on the Nile, The Aswan High Dam and Lake Nasser, The Nubian Museum, Philae Temple nearby
- Abu Simbel (Aswan Governorate, far south, on Lake Nasser): The temples of Ramesses II and Nefertari, The sun festival in February and October, Lake Nasser
- Hurghada (Red Sea Governorate, Red Sea coast): Diving and snorkelling on coral reefs, Giftun Island, Beach resorts
- Sharm El Sheikh (South Sinai Governorate, southern tip of the Sinai): Coral reefs and diving, Beach resorts, International conferences
- Siwa (Western Desert, near the Libyan border): The Temple of the Oracle of Amun, Salt lakes and hot springs, Dates and olives, The Great Sand Sea
- Saint Catherine (South Sinai Governorate, in the Sinai mountains): Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, Mount Catherine, Egypt's highest peak

A short history of Egypt

Farming villages grew up along the Nile thousands of years ago, and about 3100 BC Upper and Lower Egypt were joined into one kingdom. The dates of the early pharaohs are approximate, and scholars differ by decades or more. After the pharaohs came Persian, Greek and Roman rule, then the Arab conquest, Cairo's great medieval dynasties, the Ottomans, and British control, before Egypt became independent in 1922 and a republic after the revolution of 1952.

3100 BC **Upper and Lower Egypt are united**

About 3100 BC a king from the south, usually identified as Narmer and remembered in later tradition as Menes, brought the Nile Valley (Upper Egypt) and the delta (Lower Egypt) under one ruler. Pharaohs kept the title 'Lord of the Two Lands' for three thousand years.

2560 BC **The Great Pyramid is built**

Around 2600 to 2560 BC the Great Pyramid at Giza was raised as the tomb of the pharaoh Khufu, in about 26 years, from some 2.3 million stone blocks. At about 146 m high, it stayed the tallest structure made by people for more than 3,700 years. Dates in this era can differ by a few decades between scholars.

1279 BC **Ramesses II becomes pharaoh**

Ramesses II, often called Ramesses the Great, began a reign of about 66 years in around 1279 BC. He built on a huge scale, including the temples of Abu Simbel and parts of Karnak, and he is the Ozymandias of the Greek writers.

331 BC **Alexandria is founded**

Alexander the Great took Egypt from the Persians in 332 BC and founded Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast in 331 BC. After his death his general Ptolemy became king, and the Greek-speaking Ptolemies ruled Egypt from Alexandria for almost three centuries.

30 BC **Egypt becomes a Roman province**

After Octavian, the future emperor Augustus, invaded Egypt, Cleopatra VII, the last queen of the Ptolemaic dynasty, died in August 30 BC. Egypt became a Roman province and the empire's main source of grain.

AD 641

Arab armies take Egypt

Arab forces led by Amr ibn al-As conquered Byzantine Egypt between 639 and 642, ending about seven centuries of Roman rule. Over the following centuries Arabic replaced Coptic as the everyday language and most Egyptians became Muslim.

AD 969

Cairo is founded

The Fatimids, a dynasty from North Africa, conquered Egypt in 969 and founded a new royal city whose name, al-Qahira, 'the Vanquisher', became Cairo. The Al-Azhar Mosque was begun the following year.

1798

Napoleon invades Egypt

Napoleon Bonaparte landed with a French army in 1798 and defeated the Mamluks at the Battle of the Pyramids. The French stayed only until 1801, but the scholars who came with the army studied the country, and in 1799 French soldiers found the Rosetta Stone.

1869

The Suez Canal opens

After ten years of work, the Suez Canal opened on 17 November 1869, linking the Mediterranean to the Red Sea without locks. Ships between Europe and Asia no longer had to sail around Africa.

1922

Egypt becomes independent

After a nationwide uprising in 1919, Britain, which had occupied Egypt since 1882, declared Egypt independent in February 1922. Egypt became a kingdom under Fuad I, though Britain kept troops and strong influence for decades.

1922

Tutankhamun's tomb is found

On 4 November 1922 Howard Carter's team found the first step of the tomb of the young pharaoh Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings. Almost untouched for more than 3,000 years, it held over 5,000 objects, including the famous gold mask.

1952

The 1952 revolution

On 23 July 1952 the Free Officers, led by Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser, took power, and King Farouk gave up the throne. Egypt was declared a republic in June 1953, and Nasser became its leading figure.

1956

The Suez Crisis

On 26 July 1956 President Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. Britain, France and Israel invaded, but under strong pressure from the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Nations they withdrew, and the canal stayed in Egyptian hands.

1979

Peace treaty with Israel

President Anwar Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin signed a peace treaty in Washington on 26 March 1979, following the Camp David Accords of 1978. Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula by 1982, and the small border town of Taba was handed back in 1989 after international arbitration.

2011

The 2011 revolution

Mass protests began on 25 January 2011, with Cairo's Tahrir Square at their heart. After 18 days President Hosni Mubarak, in power since 1981, resigned on 11 February. Years of political upheaval followed.

2025

The Grand Egyptian Museum opens

After more than 30 years of planning and building, the Grand Egyptian Museum near the pyramids of Giza was officially opened on 1 November 2025. It shows Tutankhamun's complete collection together for the first time.

What people eat in Egypt

Egyptian cooking grew out of the farms of the Nile Valley and Delta: beans, lentils, rice, vegetables, bread and plenty of garlic and onions. A meal usually starts with salads, dips and cheese served with bread, followed by the main dishes. Lunch is the main meal of the day, often eaten in the afternoon, and dinner tends to be late and lighter. Round loaves of eish baladi come with almost everything and serve as a spoon, and a glass of tea is offered to every visitor.

Koshari

All of Egypt, a street food from Cairo to Alexandria

Often called Egypt's national dish: rice, small macaroni and brown lentils, topped with chickpeas, a garlicky tomato sauce and a heap of crispy fried onions. Everyone adds garlic vinegar and hot sauce to taste. Some restaurants sell nothing else.

Ful medames

All of Egypt, the classic breakfast

Small brown fava beans cooked slowly until very soft, then mashed with olive oil, cumin, garlic and lemon. It is eaten at breakfast with bread, pickles and salad, and traditionally cooked in and served from a large metal pot. It is often called one of Egypt's national dishes.

Ta'ameya (Egyptian falafel)

All of Egypt; falafel most likely began in Egypt

Egypt's falafel, made from dried fava beans rather than chickpeas, with lots of parsley, coriander and dill, so it is bright green inside. The fritters are fried until crisp and tucked into bread with tahini sauce, tomatoes and rocket.

Molokhia

All of Egypt, with roots in ancient Egypt

A thick green soup made from finely chopped jute leaves cooked in chicken or rabbit stock, finished with garlic fried with ground coriander. It has a silky, slightly slippery texture, a little like okra, and is served with rice and chicken or bread.

Fatta

All of Egypt, a feast dish

Layers of crisp toasted bread and rice soaked in meat broth, topped with a garlic, vinegar and tomato sauce and pieces of boiled lamb or beef. It is made for special days: Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, a first pregnancy, and for Coptic Christians, Christmas.

Mahshi

All of Egypt, a family dish

Vegetables stuffed with rice mixed with tomato, herbs and spices, then simmered slowly in broth. Courgettes, peppers, aubergines and cabbage are all used, and stuffed vine leaves are called mahshi waraq enab.

Hawawshi

Cairo; also popular in the Nile Delta, with its own version in Alexandria

Flat Egyptian bread stuffed with minced meat spiced with onions, pepper, parsley and sometimes chilli, then baked until the bread is crisp and the meat juicy. In Alexandria the meat is baked between two rounds of dough instead.

Feteer meshaltet

All of Egypt, a very old tradition

A large, flaky pastry of many paper-thin layers of dough brushed with ghee, baked until golden. It is eaten sweet with honey, molasses or jam, or savoury with cheese and olives, and is a traditional gift for guests and holidays.

Eish baladi

All of Egypt, since ancient times

Egypt's everyday round flatbread, made with wholewheat flour and bran and baked in very hot ovens until it puffs up into a pocket. It is eaten at almost every meal, torn into pieces to scoop up beans, dips and stews.

Feseekh

All of Egypt, a custom going back to ancient times

Grey mullet that has been salted, fermented and dried, with a very strong smell and taste. It is eaten above all at Sham Ennessim, the spring festival, with onions, lettuce and bread. Safety: badly prepared or old feseekh can cause botulism, a rare but very dangerous food poisoning. Never make it at home; buy only from trusted shops, check the date, and avoid it if you are pregnant or have a weak immune system.

Om Ali

All of Egypt

A national dessert of Egypt: pieces of pastry or bread baked in sweet hot milk with nuts, raisins and coconut until the top is golden. It is often compared to bread and butter pudding, but it is made without eggs.

Basbousa

All of Egypt; similar cakes are found across the Middle East and the Balkans

A golden semolina cake baked in a tray, soaked in sugar syrup and cut into diamonds, often with an almond on each piece. It is a favourite in Egyptian sweet shops and at

home.

Kunafa

All of Egypt, above all during Ramadan

Fine strands of pastry baked with butter until crisp and golden, filled with cream, nuts or cheese and soaked in syrup. In Egypt it is one of the sweets most closely linked with Ramadan evenings, together with qatayef, small stuffed pancakes.

Karkadeh (hibiscus tea)

All of Egypt

A deep red drink made from dried hibiscus flowers, served very sweet, usually ice cold in summer and hot in winter. Street sellers and cafés in Cairo sell it everywhere.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- Bread is used as a spoon: tear off a piece of eish baladi to scoop up beans, dips and stews from shared dishes.
- Tea is offered to every visitor, at home or even in an office. Egyptians sometimes call it 'wageb', the duty, and it is polite to accept.
- Lunch is the main meal, often eaten in the afternoon, and dinner is usually late and lighter. In summer, restaurants fill up after 10 pm.
- Portions are generous and your host will keep offering more. Leaving a lot of food is frowned upon, so take small helpings to start.
- During Ramadan, families break the fast together at sunset, and many people set up tables in the street to feed the poor and passers-by.

Koshari

Often called Egypt's national dish: rice, small macaroni and brown lentils, topped with chickpeas, a garlicky tomato sauce and a heap of crispy fried onions. Everyone adds garlic vinegar and hot sauce to taste. Some restaurants sell nothing else.

Ingredients

- 200 g brown lentils, rinsed
- 200 g rice, rinsed
- 50 g vermicelli, broken into short pieces
- 200 g small macaroni
- 1 tin (400 g) chickpeas, drained
- 3 large onions, thinly sliced
- Vegetable oil for frying
- For the tomato sauce: 2 tablespoons oil, 4 cloves garlic crushed, 400 g passata or chopped tomatoes, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, a pinch of chilli flakes, 2 tablespoons white vinegar and salt
- For the garlic vinegar (da'a): 4 cloves garlic crushed, 4 tablespoons white vinegar, 4 tablespoons water, ½ teaspoon ground cumin and a pinch of salt

Method

1. Simmer the lentils in plenty of water for 20 to 25 minutes, until tender but still whole, then drain.
2. Fry the onions in about 1 cm of oil over a medium heat, stirring often, for 20 to 25 minutes, until deep brown and crisp. Lift them onto kitchen paper and keep 2 tablespoons of the oil.
3. In a pan, fry the vermicelli in the onion oil until golden, stir in the rice, add 400 ml water and a little salt, cover and cook on a low heat for 15 minutes. Gently mix in the lentils.
4. Boil the macaroni in salted water until just tender and drain.
5. For the sauce, fry the garlic in the oil for a minute, add the tomatoes, cumin, chilli and salt and simmer for 15 minutes, then stir in the vinegar. Mix the garlic vinegar ingredients in a small jug.

6. Pile the rice and lentils on each plate, then the macaroni, the chickpeas, a ladle of tomato sauce and a handful of crispy onions. Everyone adds garlic vinegar and extra chilli at the table.

Ful medames

Small brown fava beans cooked slowly until very soft, then mashed with olive oil, cumin, garlic and lemon. It is eaten at breakfast with bread, pickles and salad, and traditionally cooked in and served from a large metal pot. It is often called one of Egypt's national dishes.

Ingredients

- 2 tins (about 400 g each) ful medames or fava beans, with their liquid
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt
- To serve: chopped parsley, chopped tomato, sliced spring onion, chilli, pickles and warm flatbread

Method

1. Tip the beans and their liquid into a pan and simmer for about 10 minutes, adding a splash of water if they look dry.
2. Mash them roughly with a fork or potato masher, leaving some beans whole.
3. Stir in the garlic, cumin, lemon juice and salt to taste.
4. Spoon into a bowl, pour over the olive oil and top with parsley and tomato. Serve with bread for scooping, spring onion, chilli and pickles. Important: people with G6PD deficiency (favism) must not eat fava beans.

Ta'ameya (Egyptian falafel)

Egypt's falafel, made from dried fava beans rather than chickpeas, with lots of parsley, coriander and dill, so it is bright green inside. The fritters are fried until crisp and tucked into bread with tahini sauce, tomatoes and rocket.

Ingredients

- 250 g dried split fava beans (skinless), soaked in plenty of cold water for 12 to 24 hours
- 1 small onion, roughly chopped
- 4 cloves garlic
- A large bunch of parsley, a bunch of coriander and a few sprigs of dill
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- Vegetable oil for deep frying
- To serve: flatbread, tahini sauce, sliced tomato and rocket

Method

1. Drain the soaked beans very well and pat them dry. Do not cook them first.
2. Blend the beans, onion, garlic and herbs in a food processor to a coarse green paste, not a smooth purée. Stir in the cumin, ground coriander and salt and leave for 30 minutes.
3. Just before frying, mix in the bicarbonate of soda. With wet hands, shape small flat patties and press sesame seeds onto one side.
4. Heat the oil in a deep, heavy pan to about 175°C, no more than one third full, and fry a few patties at a time for 3 to 4 minutes, until deep brown outside and cooked right through. Drain on kitchen paper.
5. Serve hot in bread with tahini sauce, tomato and rocket. People with G6PD deficiency (favism) must not eat fava beans.

Molokhia

A thick green soup made from finely chopped jute leaves cooked in chicken or rabbit stock, finished with garlic fried with ground coriander. It has a silky, slightly slippery texture, a little like okra, and is served with rice and chicken or bread.

Ingredients

- 400 g frozen minced molokhia (jute leaves), from Middle Eastern or Asian food shops
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 2 tablespoons ghee or butter
- Salt and black pepper
- To serve: cooked rice, cooked chicken pieces and lemon wedges

Method

1. Bring the stock to a simmer in a large pan and season it with salt and pepper.
2. Add the frozen molokhia and stir until it has melted into the stock. Heat until it just simmers, but do not let it boil hard, or the leaves can sink and separate.
3. In a small frying pan, fry the garlic and ground coriander in the ghee, stirring, until golden and fragrant. Take care not to let the garlic burn.
4. Stir the hot garlic straight into the soup. It will sizzle loudly.
5. Serve at once in bowls, with rice, chicken and a squeeze of lemon.

Om Ali

A national dessert of Egypt: pieces of pastry or bread baked in sweet hot milk with nuts, raisins and coconut until the top is golden. It is often compared to bread and butter pudding, but it is made without eggs.

Ingredients

- 1 sheet (about 320 g) ready-rolled puff pastry
- 100 g mixed nuts (pistachios, almonds and hazelnuts), roughly chopped
- 50 g raisins
- 30 g desiccated coconut
- 1 litre whole milk
- 80 g sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 150 ml double cream
- Ground cinnamon to serve

Method

1. Bake the pastry as the packet says, until puffed and golden, then let it cool and break it into bite-sized pieces.
2. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan). Scatter the pastry in an ovenproof dish with the nuts, raisins and coconut.
3. Warm the milk with the sugar and vanilla until it is steaming and the sugar has dissolved, then pour it over the pastry.
4. Spoon the cream over the top and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until bubbling and golden. For a darker top, put it under a hot grill for 1 to 2 minutes, watching closely.
5. Serve warm, dusted with cinnamon. It contains nuts, so check with guests who have allergies.

Useful phrases

Es-salamu alaykum

es-sa-LAH-moo ah-LAY-koom · Peace be upon you (hello)

Sabah el-kheir

sa-BAH el-KHAYR · Good morning

Sabah en-nur

sa-BAH en-NOOR · Morning of light (the reply to good morning)

Masa' el-kheir

ma-SAH el-KHAYR · Good evening

Izzayak? / Izzayek?

iz-ZAI-yak / iz-ZAI-yek · How are you? (to a man / to a woman)

El-hamdu lillah

el-HAM-doo lil-LAH · Thanks be to God (I'm fine)

Ismi ...

IS-mee · My name is ...

Bikam da?

bi-KAM da · How much is this?

Da ghali awi

da GHAAH-lee AH-wee · That's very expensive

La, shukran

LAH, SHOOK-ran · No, thank you

Fein el-hammam?

FAYN el-ham-MAM · Where is the toilet?

Betetkallem engelizi?

be-tet-KAL-lem en-ge-LEE-zee · Do you speak English? (to a man; to a woman: betetkallemi)

Ana mesh fahem / fahma

A-na mesh FAH-hem / FAH-ma · I don't understand (said by a man / by a woman)

El-hesab, law samaht

el-hi-SAB, law sa-MAHT · The bill, please

Mayya, law samaht

MY-ya, law sa-MAHT · Water, please

Da zaki awi!

da ZAH-kee AH-wee · It's delicious!

Inshallah

in-shal-LAH · God willing

Ramadan kareem

ra-ma-DAN ka-REEM · Ramadan is generous

Things you might not know

- 1.** The Great Pyramid of Giza was the tallest structure built by people for more than 3,700 years, and it is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still largely standing.
- 2.** Egypt is about 1 million km², but around 95% of Egyptians live along the Nile Valley and Delta, on about 5% of the land.
- 3.** Egypt lies on two continents: the Sinai Peninsula, east of the Suez Canal, is part of Asia.
- 4.** In the 1960s the temples of Abu Simbel were cut into huge blocks and rebuilt on higher ground to save them from Lake Nasser. They were placed so that, as in ancient times, the rising sun reaches the statues deep inside twice a year, around 22 February and 22 October.
- 5.** The Rosetta Stone, found by French soldiers in 1799, carries the same decree in hieroglyphs, Demotic and Greek. It helped Jean-François Champollion unlock hieroglyphs in 1822, and it has been in the British Museum since 1802.
- 6.** In the Western Desert, Wadi Al-Hitan, 'the valley of the whales', holds hundreds of fossils of early whales, some with small hind legs. As of 2026 it is Egypt's only natural World Heritage Site.
- 7.** Egyptians call their country Masr, and in everyday speech often use the same name for Cairo. A proud saying calls Egypt 'Masr umm ed-dunya', the mother of the world.
- 8.** Napoleon's soldiers did not shoot the nose off the Sphinx: that is a popular myth. Drawings from 1737, decades before Napoleon came, already show it missing. Marks on the face show it was removed on purpose with rods or chisels, and a medieval historian blamed a religious zealot in 1378.
- 9.** As of 2026, Egypt has won the Africa Cup of Nations seven times, more than any other country.
- 10.** In 1005 the Fatimid ruler al-Hakim banned his subjects from eating molokhia, the green soup that is now one of Egypt's favourite dishes.
- 11.** As of 2026, Egypt has seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the pyramid fields from Giza to Dahshur, ancient Thebes at Luxor, Historic Cairo and the Nubian monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae.

12. Tutankhamun's tomb held 5,398 objects. Since the Grand Egyptian Museum opened in 2025, the whole collection can be seen together in one place for the first time.
13. Sham Ennessim, a spring festival with roots in ancient Egypt, is a public holiday celebrated by Egyptians of all religions, always on the Monday after Orthodox Easter, with picnics, coloured eggs and salted fish.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Egypt, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Koshari or Ful medames? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- The Suez Crisis (1956). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Peace treaty with Israel (1979). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen The Pyramids of Giza, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Egypt, which would it be and why?

QUIZ

How well do you know Egypt?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. The Citadel of Qaitbay in Alexandria stands on the site of which ancient wonder?

- A) The Temple of Artemis
- B) The Colossus of Rhodes
- C) The Lighthouse of Alexandria
- D) The Hanging Gardens of Babylon

2. Around 22 February and 22 October each year, what happens inside the Great Temple of Abu Simbel?

- A) The Nile floods the entrance hall
- B) Musicians play inside all night
- C) The rising sun lights up the statues deep inside
- D) The temple is closed for cleaning

3. Feseekh, a salted and fermented fish, is traditionally eaten at the spring festival of Sham Ennessim.

- A) True
- B) False

4. Napoleon's soldiers shot the nose off the Great Sphinx with a cannon.

- A) True
- B) False

5. Which act by President Nasser in 1956 set off the Suez Crisis?

- A) Declaring Egypt a republic
- B) Signing a peace treaty with Israel
- C) Uniting Egypt with Syria
- D) Nationalising the Suez Canal

6. What is Egypt's currency called?

- A) The Egyptian pound
- B) The Egyptian dinar
- C) The Egyptian riyal
- D) The Egyptian dirham

7. In Egyptian Arabic, 'ma'lesh' is a way of saying 'don't worry' or 'it's okay'.

- A) True
- B) False

8. What is the capital of Egypt?

- A) Luxor
- B) Alexandria
- C) Cairo
- D) Giza

9. Om Ali is a savoury pie filled with minced meat.

- A) True
- B) False

10. In Egypt, what is 'baksheesh'?

- A) A small tip
- B) A kind of pastry
- C) A boat on the Nile
- D) A desert wind

11. During Ramadan, visitors to Egypt are expected to fast from dawn to sunset.

- A) True
- B) False

12. The Egyptian Arabic word for bread, eish, comes from an Arabic word meaning what?

- A) Life
- B) Wheat
- C) Round
- D) Fire

Quiz answers

1. C) The Lighthouse of Alexandria

It was built in the 1470s on the site of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, which earthquakes had destroyed.

2. C) The rising sun lights up the statues deep inside

On those mornings the rising sun lights up the statues deep inside the sanctuary. When the temple was moved, it was placed so that this would still happen.

3. True

True. Feseekh, fermented grey mullet, is eaten above all at Sham Ennessim. It must be bought from trusted sellers, because badly prepared feseekh can cause botulism.

4. False

False. That is a popular myth. Drawings from 1737, before Napoleon's army arrived, already show the nose missing, and marks show it was removed on purpose with rods or chisels.

5. D) Nationalising the Suez Canal

Nasser announced nationalising the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956, and Britain, France and Israel invaded. Egypt had become a republic in 1953, united with Syria in 1958 and signed peace with Israel in 1979.

6. A) The Egyptian pound

The Egyptian pound, divided into 100 piastres, has been Egypt's currency since 1834. In Egyptian Arabic it is called the gineh.

7. True

True. Ma'lesh means don't worry, it's okay or never mind, and it is also used to say sorry. You will hear it many times a day.

8. C) Cairo

Cairo is the capital and by far the largest city. Much of the government has moved to the New Capital east of Cairo, but as of 2026 the constitution still names Cairo as the capital. Alexandria and Thebes, today's Luxor, were capitals in ancient times.

9. False

False. Om Ali is a sweet pudding of pastry or bread baked in hot milk with nuts, raisins and coconut. The meat-filled bread is hawawshi.

10. A) A small tip

Baksheesh is a small tip, for example for a bathroom attendant or a driver. Keep small

notes handy, but you do not have to pay for help you did not ask for.

11. False

False. Visitors are not expected to fast, but eating, drinking or smoking in public in the daytime is seen as insensitive.

12. A) Life

Eish comes from an Arabic word meaning life or living, a sign of how central bread is to Egyptian meals.

Egypt visa page

Name: _____ Date: _____



Next stops

Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____
Country: _____	Country: _____	Country: _____

Play the interactive version, collect a stamp in your passport:

<https://worldstroll.com/countries/egypt>