

About Egypt Sinai

Full Name

Arab Republic of Egypt (Masr)

Capital City

Cairo (El Kahera)

Area

1,001,449 sq km

386,659 sq miles

Population

75,097,301

Time Zone

GMT/UTC +2 ()

Languages

Arabic (official)

Religion

94% Muslim, 6% Christian

Currency

Egyptian Pound (1 EGP= 100 piastres)

Electricity

220V 50HzHz

Electric Plug Details

European plug with two circular metal pins.

Egypt is bordered by Libya to the west, Sudan to the south, and by the Gaza Strip and Occupied Palestinian Territory to the east. Egypt's important strategic position lies in being a bridge between Africa and Asia.

Apart from the Nile Valley, the majority of Egypt's landscape is a desert. The winds blowing can create sandy dunes more than 30 m high. Egypt includes parts of the Sahar Desert nad part of the Lybian Desert.

Egypt is divided into 29 governorates. The governorates are further divided into regions. The regions are then subdivided into towns and villages.

Main cities:

Cairo , Alexandria, Luxor, Aswan, Ismailia, Marsa Matrouh, Mansura, Port Said, Suez, Arish, Al Tor, Sharm el-Shiekh, Dahab, Nuweiba.

SINAI (Sina)

Sinai Peninsula or Sinai is a triangular peninsula which is about 60,000 km².

It lies between the Mediterranean Sea to the north, and the Red Sea to the south, and is the only part of Egyptian territory located in Asia as opposed to Africa, effectively serving as a land bridge between the two continents. The peninsula is currently controlled by Egypt, which has divided the region into two Egyptian governorates (South Sinai and North Sinai) and contains a population of approximately 1.3 million people.

Over the past 30 years the Sinai has become a tourist destination due to its natural setting, rich coral reefs, and Quranic as well as Biblical history. The Gulf of Aqaba with its underwater treasures, Mount Sinai with its religious significance and magnificent Sinai desert – this is a trio attracting millions from all over the world to visit Sinai.

The original and major population of Sinai are Bedouin who claim themselves to have their roots amongst the purest Arab genealogies. Over centuries each tribe (between 14 to 27 tribes) possesses its own territory around local oases. The Mizayna tribe located between El-Tor and Nuweiba; the Tarabeen taking vast lands from Nuweiba to Al-Arish or the Jebeliya – around the St. Catherine territory...and many more scattered between the mountains and on the shores. Nowadays growing tourism industry in Sinai involves a great number of Bedouin and changes their original character, but still keeping the language, traditional customs or common law (urf) –different from Islamic jurisprudence let Sinai Bedouin be its own social group inside Egyptian society.

Currency and Money Issues

The currency for the Egyptian are Egyptian Pound (E£) = 100 Piastres. Notes are in denominations of £200; £100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 1, 0.50, 0.25 and Coins are in denominations of 100; 50, 25, 20, 10 and 5 Piastres. Please note that 100 Piasters make £1 pound Egyptian.

Credit cards: MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and Visa are widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travelers cheques: To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take travelers cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling. Currency Restrictions: The import or export of local currency is limited to E£1000. There are no restrictions on the import or export of foreign currency as long as it is declared in an official customs form. Banking Hours: The banking hours are Sunday to Thursday, 8.30 am to 5 pm. Please don't bring Scottish pounds, Irish punts, and New Zealand dollars etc. as they are not accepted here! If you at any point during your tour, you run out of money, and your credit cards are not being accepted, you still can get money wired to you from abroad. In Egypt, there are plenty of Western Union branches; it takes just a few minutes to get any sum of money sent you from abroad. TIP: Don't change your \$, £ or Euro until you arrive in Egypt – the conversion rate is far better here.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Air

The national airline is Egypt Air (MS). All main carriers service throughout Egypt.

Sea

The main coastal ports are Alexandria, Port Said and Suez . A car ferry service is also available from port to port. There is also a ferry route between Hurghada and Sharm-El-Shiekh and between Aqaba (Jordan) and Nuweiba (Egypt).

Borders

There are two border crossings between Israel and Egypt: one runs from Cairo via El Arish to Rafah on the north Sinai coast, and the other from Cairo via Suez and Taba to Eilat. Daily coaches leave early in the morning. Passengers in taxis and rented cars are not permitted to cross the borders between Israel and Egypt. Privately owned vehicles may be taken across the border, provided the appropriate documentation is obtained.

Visas

should normally be obtained in advance , however, travelers entering Egypt via Taba may be able to obtain visas at the border.

GETTING AROUND:

Air Egypt Air operates daily flights between Cairo, Alexandria, Luxor, Aswan, Abu Simbel, New Valley, Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada. Sea/River There is a steamer service that provides daily ferry service from cities.

The traditional Nile sailing boats, or better known as feluccas, can be hired by the hour for a more relaxed sailing on the Nile. There are over 160 individually-owned boats of all categories operating on the Nile. Rail A comprehensive rail network offering a high standard of service is operated along the East West axis from Salloom on the Libyan border to Alexandria and Cairo, and along the Nile to Luxor and Aswan. There are also links to Port Said and Suez.

There are frequent trains from Cairo to Alexandria, and also several luxury air-conditioned day and night trains with sleeping and restaurant cars from Cairo to Luxor and Aswan for the Nile Valley tourist trade. For the overnight train, bookings should be made two weeks in advance through a travel agent Road Drivers drive on the right side of the road. Besides the Nile Valley and Delta, which holds an extensive road network, there are paved roads along the Mediterranean and African Red Sea coasts.

The speed limit is usually 90kph (56mph) on motorways and 100kph (62mph) on the desert motorway. Private motoring in the desert regions is not recommended without suitable vehicles and a guide. Bus The national bus system serves the Nile Valley and the coastal road. Main routes are from Cairo to St Catherine, Sharm el-Sheikh, Dahab, Ras Sudr, El-Tour, Taba and Rafah; from Suez to El-Tour and Sharm El Sheikh; and from Sharm el-Sheikh to Taba, Nuweiba, El-Tour, Dahab and St Catherine. Taxi Taxis are available in the larger cities and are metered. Long-distance group taxis for all destinations are cheap, although fares should be agreed in advance.

Travel seasons

Top season in Egypt is the "Winter Season" which for the travel industry starts 1st of October and lasts until end of April. Summer Season is from 1st of May until 31st of September. Peaks periods are Christmas and New Year which normally last from 20th of December until 10th of January. Second peak season is Easter - dates here vary from year to year. Some destinations will have peak season during the summer (as Alexandria and Al Arish) due to the Egyptian summer holiday and summer guests from Arab countries.

Climate and Weather

The Egyptian summer is hot and dry in most of the country, and humid in the Delta and along the Mediterranean Coast. In recent years the humidity has spread to Cairo, and the city swelters in August! Winter is mild with some rain, but usually it is bright, sunny days with cold nights.

During the summertime, sun protection is the most important single consideration for an Egypt trip, especially for the fair-skinned. Wearing a sunhat is essential. Cheap, and pure cotton, sunhats are made locally and available everywhere.

Travel clothing should be light and comfortable, 100% cotton clothing is the best and robust shoes are a must! The climate of Egypt is characterized by a hot season from May to October and a cool season from October to May.

Extreme temperatures during both seasons are moderated by the prevailing northern winds. In the coastal region average annual temperatures range from a maximum of 37° C (99° F) to a minimum of 14° C (57° F). Wide variations of temperature occur in the deserts, ranging from a maximum of 46° C (114° F), during daylight hours, to a minimum of 6° C (42° F) after sunset. During the winter season desert temperatures often drop to 0° C (32° F). Winter (between October and May) weather is colder than most people anticipate, and cold winds blow over the desert at sunrise and sunset.

Even when it is warm outside, it can be surprisingly cold inside the massive stone Temples. In winter, showers can fall everywhere, so bring a few items of light but warm clothing, so that you can cope with the cold early mornings and the occasional, and unseasonable, cold snap.

Bring one or two dressy outfits along for evenings out, especially for parties, and special occasions or just to get out of your tour clothes! If you are staying in a hotel or on a cruise boat, please be warned that luxury hotels and all the Nile Cruises have efficient, but surprisingly

pricey laundry services.

If you object to paying 12LE for laundry, you can wash out your T-shirts; just bring some detergent with you, as well as a few yards of clothing line. Also bring a swimsuit, as most good hotels and cruise ships have nice, warm, swimming pools. If you are heading out into the desert, you will get dry quickly, so make sure that you have a good stock of water with you. Egyptian mineral water is available everywhere. Remember to cover your head at all times.

Nationalities that need pre-arrival visa

Most European citizens can purchase an entry or tourist visa upon arrival in Egypt. Citizens of the following countries though are required to be in possession of a pre-arrival visa: :: All African countries :: Kyrgyzstan :: Afghanistan :: Lebanon :: Armenia :: Macau :: Azerbaijan :: Macedonia :: Bangladesh :: Moldova :: Bosnia and Herzegovina :: Pakistan :: Chechnya :: Palestine :: Croatia :: Philippines :: Georgia :: Serbia and Montenegro :: India :: Sri Lanka :: Indonesia :: Tajikistan :: Iran :: Thailand :: Iraq :: Turkey :: Israel :: Turkmenistan :: Kazakhstan :: Uzbekistan

To apply for a visa, please contact the nearest Egyptian consulate. For a list of all diplomatic missions, see the Egyptian ministry of foreign affairs' website.

Your application requires the following documents: A passport that is valid for at least another six months One passport-sized photograph A completed application form The visa fee depends on your nationality. South African and Sudanese citizens pay no fee; others pay between 20 and 60 US\$. A tourist visa is valid for three months from the date of issue and allows you to stay in Egypt for 30 days from the date of your arrival Transit Visa •

Foreigners arriving in Egypt on board cruising ships are granted a permission to visit the port of arrival for 24 hours and catch their ship at the same port. They can also be granted a permission to enter the country for a visit not exceeding a period of 2 days before catching their ship at the port of arrival or at any other port. • Air passengers transiting in Egyptian airports are allowed entry for a quick trip not exceeding the period of 24 hours. In the event of emergency landing, passengers are entitled to enter Egypt for a period of: 24 hours in case of poor weather conditions. 48 hours in case of technical faults to the aircraft. Notes:

Visitors entering Egypt at the overland border post to Taba to visit Gulf of Aqaba coast (from Taba to Sharm El Sheikh excluding Ras Mohammed National Park) and St. Catherine only, can be exempted from visa and granted a free residence permit for fourteen days to visit the area.

Those in possession of a residence permit in Egypt are not required to obtain an entry visa if they leave the country and return to it within the validity of their residence permit or within six months

Passports and Identity Cards

All nationalities, except for Italian, German, Luxembourgian and Belgium need a passport with minimum 6 months validity. Italian and German citizens can enter Egypt with their identity cards; the identity card must be valid for travel abroad and have a minimum validity of at least 6

months from arrival date. In such a case visitors need to have: - 2 recent pictures - 1 photocopy of the identity card Upon arrival (or during the flight) they will be asked to fill in a form that will be handed over in the customs desk. Children Children must be in their parents' passport or being in possession of their own passport or (for Italian and German citizens) identity card valid for travel abroad. If the child is more than 10 years old, a recent picture must be on parents' passport. Children more than 11 years old cannot be in parent's passport and need a personal passport.