

EGYPT

Overview:

Egypt, occupying the northeast corner of Africa, stretches over more than one million sq. km/400,000 sq. mi. It is probably one of the world's oldest vacation spots. Egypt borders Libya in the west, Sudan in the south, the Mediterranean Sea in the north, and the Red Sea and Israel in the east. Long before the birth of Christ, travelers have been drawn to Egypt by images of pyramids, the Sphinx, ancient Luxor and the Nile River. The Pharaohs, the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks and the British have all ruled Egypt, and now modern democratic Egypt is an amalgam of these legacies and the influences of Islam and the 20th century. More than 90 percent of Egypt's land area is a vast desert landscape with 99 percent of the population (approximately 60 million people) nestled into three percent of the total land area of the fertile Nile Valley and Delta.



But Egypt is much more than pyramids and monuments. Mud-brick villages stand beside Pharaonic ruins surrounded by buildings of steel, stone and glass. Bedouins live in goatskin tents and farmers till the earth with the simple tools of their ancestors. Townsfolk dress in long flowing robes; others wear Levis and Reeboks. Nowhere are these contrasts played out so colorfully as in **Cairo**, a massive city and Egypt's capital, bustling with people and ringing to the sound of car horns, ghetto blasters and muezzins summoning the faithful to prayer.

Cairo, together with Egypt's other major cities of **Luxor**, **Aswan** and **Alexandria**, offer sophisticated culture experiences like romantic cruises down the Nile on festive river boats, tickets to grand operas and experimental theater, dancing at hot night spots, overnight stays at luxury hotels and dining at five star restaurants. About 640 km./400 mi., south of Cairo, **Luxor**, the center of Egyptian power from 200 to 750 BC, lies on the east bank of the Nile. Its awesome tombs, temples and statues are a witness to mankind's ageless achievements. **Aswan**, a favorite winter resort since the beginning of the nineteenth century, lies 115 mi./184 km. south of Luxor. Some of Egypt's most beautiful scenery can be found here at the Aswan High Dam. Aswan is Egypt's sunniest southern city and ancient frontier town, with a distinctively African atmosphere. **Alexandria**, called the "Pearl of the Mediterranean," is Egypt's second largest city. It offers visitors some remains of its ancient glory with a wide stretch of Corniche, and wide sandy beaches.

In contrast to its bustling cities, Egypt is also a place for a diver's dream dip into the Red Sea or a quiet camel caravan through the desert. The eastern region, across the **Suez Canal**, is **Sinai**. This region slopes up to the high mountains of Mt. Catherine (Egypt's highest point at 2642 m./8700 ft.) and Mt Sinai. Along Egypt's Mediterranean coast there are countless white-sand beaches, some developed as tourist resorts, but many still pristine and isolated. North of Cairo, the Nile splits into a series of tributaries that flow into the Mediterranean.

Egypt is a land bustling with life, sound, visual beauty and excitement. The Egyptians are outgoing, warm and have a distinct sense of humor. They have respect and liking for foreigners, and a deep sense of tolerance for other races, religions and nationalities. For thousands of years, Egypt has been the playground of emperors and kings.

Major Attractions:

Islamic Cairo is the old medieval quarter, and stepping into its neighborhoods is like moving