

About Egypt

Source: <http://touregypt.net/aboute.htm>

Egypt is probably the world's oldest civilization having emerged from the Nile Valley around 3,100 BC, historically. Egypt is probably one of the oldest vacation spots. Early Greeks, Romans and others went there just for fun, and to see the wonders of some of mankind's earliest triumphs. But Egypt is much more than Pyramids and monuments. It is also Red Sea scuba diving, hot night spots, luxury hotels and five star restaurants. It is romantic cruises down the Nile on festive river boats, a night at the grand opera and it is a cultural experience like none you have ever experienced. Egypt is a land bustling with life, sound, visual beauty and excitement. More than anything else, we want you to think of Egypt as fun. For thousands of years, it has been the playground of emperors and kings, and we hope you will take the time to find out why.

The Flag of Egypt



The first national flag of modern Egypt was established by a Royal Decree in 1923 when Egypt gained conditional independence from Great Britain in 1922. The color was green with a white crescent and three stars in the middle. In 1958, a Presidential Decree established a new flag for the United Arab Republic which comprised a merger of Syria and Egypt. The new flag had three colors: red, white with 2 green stars and black. The flag was rectangular in shape and the width was one-third of its length. In 1972, the Law was amended to change the flag. The stars were removed from the flag and replaced by a golden hawk. In 1984, the hawk was replaced by a golden eagle on the eagle of Saladdin, the Ayubbid Sultan who ruled Egypt and Syria in 12th Century, the same Saladdin of the Crusades.

Color Symbolism

The color red refers to the period before 1952 Revolution which brought a group of army officers to power after deposing King Farouk, then King of Egypt. This was a period characterized by the struggle against the British occupation of the country. The white symbolizes the advent of the 1952 Revolution which ended the monarchy without bloodshed. The color black symbolizes the end of the oppression of the people of Egypt at the hands of the Monarchy and British colonialism.

Rules Governing the Hoisting of the Flag

The national flag is hoisted on all governmental buildings on Fridays, official holidays, on the inauguration of the People's Assembly session and other occasions on which the Minister of Interior orders that the flag be hoisted. The flag is hoisted daily on border posts and customs buildings. It is also hoisted on Egyptian consulates and embassies overseas on the National Day and other national occasions, as well as during the visit of the President to the country hoisting the diplomatic mission.

Penal Provisions for Contempt of the Flag

Abusing the flag in any way is a criminal offense and is punishable under law as it implies contempt of the power of the state. Penal provisions also govern abuse of foreign flags or national emblems of other countries.

The National Anthem ([Hear it](#))

My homeland, my homeland, my hallowed land,
Only to you, is my due hearty love at command,
My homeland, my homeland, my hallowed land,
Only to you is my due hearty love at command,
Mother of the great ancient land,
My sacred wish and holy demand,
All should love, awe and cherish thee,
Gracious is thy Nile to humanity,
No evil hand can harm or do you wrong,
So long as your free sons are strong,
My homeland, my homeland, my hallowed land,
Only to you, is my due hearty love at command.

Words and Music by Sayed Darwish. This national anthem was adapted after 1979. Prior to that, the National Anthem was "*Walla Zaman Ya Selahy*" (*Oh, My Weapon*) with words by Salah Shahrn and Music by Kamal Atawyl.

Overview of Egypt

Background

The regularity and richness of the annual Nile River flood, coupled with semi-isolation provided by deserts to the east and west, allowed for the development of one of the world's great civilizations. A unified kingdom arose circa 3200 B.C. and a series of dynasties ruled in Egypt for the next three millennia. The last native dynasty fell to the Persians in 341 B.C., who in turn were replaced by the Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines. It was the Arabs who introduced Islam and the Arabic language in the 7th century and who ruled for the next six centuries. A local military caste, the Mamluks took control about 1250 and continued to govern after the conquest of Egypt by the Ottoman Turks in 1517. Following the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, Egypt became an important world transportation hub, but also fell heavily into debt. Ostensibly to protect its investments, Britain seized control of Egypt's government in 1882, but nominal allegiance to the Ottoman Empire continued until 1914. Partially independent from the UK in 1922, Egypt acquired full sovereignty following World War II. The completion of the Aswan High Dam in 1971 and the resultant Lake Nasser have altered the time-honored place of the Nile River in the agriculture and ecology of Egypt. A rapidly growing population (the largest in the Arab world), limited arable land, and dependence on the Nile all continue to overtax resources and stress society. The government has struggled to ready the economy for the new millennium through economic reform and massive investment in communications and physical infrastructure.

Egyptian Geography

Location: Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Libya and the Gaza Strip, and the Red Sea north of Sudan, and includes the Asian Sinai Peninsula

Area: *total:* 1,001,450 sq km *land:* 995,450 sq km *water:* 6,000 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly more than three times the size of New Mexico

Land boundaries: *total:* 2,665 km

	<i>border countries:</i> Gaza Strip 11 km, Israel 266 km, Libya 1,115 km, Sudan 1,273 km
Coastline:	2,450 km
Climate:	desert; hot, dry summers with moderate winters
Terrain:	vast desert plateau interrupted by Nile valley and delta
Elevation extremes:	<i>lowest point:</i> Qattara Depression -133 m <i>highest point:</i> Mount Catherine 2,629 m
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc
Land use:	<i>arable land:</i> 2.85% <i>permanent crops:</i> 0.47% <i>other:</i> 96.68% (1998 est.)
Irrigated land:	33,000 sq km (1998 est.)
Natural hazards:	periodic droughts; frequent earthquakes, flash floods, landslides; hot, driving windstorm called khamsin occurs in spring; dust storms, sandstorms
Environment - current issues:	agricultural land being lost to urbanization and windblown sands; increasing soil salination below Aswan High Dam; desertification; oil pollution threatening coral reefs, beaches, and marine habitats; other water pollution from agricultural pesticides, raw sewage, and industrial effluents; very limited natural fresh water resources away from the Nile which is the only perennial water source; rapid growth in population overstraining the Nile and natural resources
Environment - international agreements:	<i>party to:</i> Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands <i>signed, but not ratified:</i> Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol
Geography - note:	controls Sinai Peninsula, only land bridge between Africa and remainder of Eastern Hemisphere; controls Suez Canal, a sea link between Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea; size, and juxtaposition to Israel, establish its major role in Middle Eastern geopolitics; dependence on upstream neighbors; dominance of Nile basin issues; prone to influxes of refugees

Egypt's People

Population:	76,117,421 (July 2004 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years:</i> 33.4% (male 13,038,369; female 12,418,254) <i>15-64 years:</i> 62.2% (male 23,953,949; female 23,419,418) <i>65 years and over:</i> 4.3% (male 1,407,248; female 1,880,183) (2004 est.)
Median age:	<i>total:</i> 23.4 years <i>male:</i> 23 years <i>female:</i> 23.8 years (2004 est.)
Population growth rate:	1.83% (2004 est.)
Birth rate:	23.84 births/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Death rate:	5.3 deaths/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Net migration rate:	-0.22 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2004 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female

	<i>under 15 years:</i> 1.05 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.75 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female (2004 est.)
Infant mortality rate:	<i>total:</i> 33.9 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female:</i> 33.12 deaths/1,000 live births (2004 est.) <i>male:</i> 34.64 deaths/1,000 live births
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>total population:</i> 70.71 years <i>male:</i> 68.22 years <i>female:</i> 73.31 years (2004 est.)
Total fertility rate:	2.95 children born/woman (2004 est.)
People with HIV/AIDS:	8,000 (2001 est.)
Ethnic groups:	Eastern Hamitic stock (Egyptians, Bedouins, and Berbers) 99%, Greek, Nubian, Armenian, other European (primarily Italian and French) 1%
Religions:	Muslim (mostly Sunni) 94%, Coptic Christian and other 6%
Languages:	Arabic (official), English and French widely understood by educated classes
Literacy:	<i>definition:</i> age 15 and over can read and write <i>total population:</i> 57.7% <i>male:</i> 68.3% <i>female:</i> 46.9% (2003 est.)

Egyptian Government

Country name:	<i>conventional long form:</i> Arab Republic of Egypt <i>local short form:</i> Misr <i>local long form:</i> Jumhuriyat Misr al-Arabiyyah
Government type:	republic
Capital:	Cairo
Administrative divisions:	26 governorates (muhafazat, singular - muhafazah); Ad Daqahliyah, Al Bahr al Ahmar, Al Buhayrah, Al Fayyum, Al Gharbiyah, Al Iskandariyah, Al Isma'iliyah, Al Jizah, Al Minufiyah, Al Minya, Al Qahirah, Al Qalyubiyah, Al Wadi al Jadid, Ash Sharqiyah, As Suways, Aswan, Asyut, Bani Suwayf, Bur Sa'id, Dumyat, Janub Sina', Kafr ash Shaykh, Matruh, Qina, Shamal Sina', Suhaj
Independence:	28 February 1922 (from UK)
National holiday:	Revolution Day, 23 July (1952)
Constitution:	11 September 1971
Legal system:	based on English common law, Islamic law, and Napoleonic codes; judicial review by Supreme Court and Council of State (oversees validity of administrative decisions); accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations
Suffrage:	18 years of age; universal and compulsory
Executive branch:	<i>chief of state:</i> President Mohammed Hosni MUBARAK (since 14 October 1981) <i>head of government:</i> Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif <i>cabinet:</i> Cabinet appointed by the president

	<i>elections</i>: president nominated by the People's Assembly for a six-year term, the nomination must then be validated by a national, popular referendum; national referendum last held 26 September 1999 (next to be held NA October 2005); prime minister appointed by the president <i>election results</i>: national referendum validated President MUBARAK's nomination by the People's Assembly to a fourth term
Legislative branch:	bicameral system consists of the People's Assembly or Majlis al-Sha'b (454 seats; 444 elected by popular vote, 10 appointed by the president; members serve five-year terms) and the Advisory Council or Majlis al-Shura - which functions only in a consultative role (264 seats; 176 elected by popular vote, 88 appointed by the president; members serve six-year terms) <i>elections</i>: People's Assembly - three-phase voting - last held 19 October, 29 October, 8 November 2000 (next to be held NA November 2005); Advisory Council - last held May-June 2001 (next to be held NA 2007) <i>election results</i>: People's Assembly - percent of vote by party - NDP 88%, independents 8%, opposition 4%; seats by party - NDP 398, NWP 7, Tagammu 6, Nasserists 2, LSP 1, independents 38, undecided 2; Advisory Council - percent of vote by party - NDP 99%, independents 1%; seats by party - NA
Judicial branch:	Supreme Constitutional Court
Political parties and leaders:	Liberal Party or LSP [leader NA]; Nasserist Arab Democratic Party or Nasserists [Dia' al-din DAWUD]; National Democratic Party or NDP [President Mohammed Hosni MUBARAK] - governing party; National Progressive Unionist Grouping or Tagammu [Rifaat EL-SAID]; New Wafd Party or NWP [No'man GOMA]; Socialist Liberal Party or Al-Ahrar [Hilmi SALIM] <i>note</i>: formation of political parties must be approved by the government
Political pressure groups and leaders:	despite a constitutional ban against religious-based parties, the technically illegal Muslim Brotherhood constitutes MUBARAK's potentially most significant political opposition; MUBARAK tolerated limited political activity by the Brotherhood for his first two terms, but moved more aggressively since then to block its influence; civic society groups are sanctioned, but constrained in practical terms; trade unions and professional associations are officially sanctioned
Diplomatic representation in the US:	<i>chief of mission</i>: Ambassador M. Nabil FAHMY <i>chancery</i>: 3521 International Court NW, Washington, DC 20008 <i>consulate(s) general</i>: Chicago, Houston, New York, and San Francisco <i>FAX</i>: [1] (202) 244-4319 <i>telephone</i>: [1] (202) 895-5400
Flag description:	three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black with the national emblem (a shield superimposed on a golden eagle facing the hoist side above a scroll bearing the name of the country in Arabic) centered in the white band; similar to the flag of Yemen, which has a plain white band; also similar to the flag of Syria, which has two green stars, and to the flag of Iraq, which has three green stars (plus an Arabic inscription) in a horizontal line centered in the white band

Egypt Economy

Economy - overview:	Lack of substantial progress on economic reform since the mid 1990s has limited foreign direct investment in Egypt and kept annual GDP growth in the range of 2-3 percent in 2001-03. Egyptian officials in late 2003 and
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	early 2004 proposed new privatization and customs reform measures, but the government is likely to pursue these initiatives cautiously and gradually to avoid a public backlash over potential inflation or layoffs associated with the reforms. Monetary pressures on an overvalued Egyptian pound led the government to float the currency in January 2003, leading to a sharp drop in its value and consequent inflationary pressure. The existence of a black market for hard currency is evidence that the government continues to influence the official exchange rate offered in banks. In September 2003, Egyptian officials increased subsidies on basic foodstuffs, helping to calm a frustrated public but widening an already deep budget deficit. Egypt's balance-of-payments position was not hurt by the war in Iraq in 2003, as tourism and Suez Canal revenues fared well. The development of an export market for natural gas is a bright spot for future growth prospects, but improvement in the capital-intensive hydrocarbons sector does little to reduce Egypt's persistent unemployment.
GDP:	purchasing power parity - \$294.3 billion (2003 est.)
GDP - real growth rate:	2.8% (2003 est.)
GDP - per capita:	purchasing power parity - \$3,900 (2003 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:	<i>agriculture:</i> 17% <i>industry:</i> 33% <i>services:</i> 50% (2003)
Population below poverty line:	16.7% (2000 est.)
Labor force:	20.1 million (2003 est.)
Labor force - by occupation:	agriculture 32%, industry 17%, services 51% (2001 est.)
Unemployment rate:	9.9% (2003 est.)
Budget:	<i>revenues:</i> \$14 billion <i>expenditures:</i> \$18.1 billion, including capital expenditures of \$2.7 billion (2003 est.)
Industries:	textiles, food processing, tourism, chemicals, hydrocarbons, construction, cement, metals
Industrial production growth rate:	1.5% (2003 est.)
Electricity - production:	75.23 billion kWh (2001)
Electricity - production by source:	<i>fossil fuel:</i> 81% <i>hydro:</i> 19% <i>other:</i> 0% (2001) <i>nuclear:</i> 0%
Electricity - consumption:	69.96 billion kWh (2001)
Oil - production:	816,900 bbl/day (2001 est.)
Oil - consumption:	562,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)
Oil - proved reserves:	3.308 billion bbl (1 January 2002)
Natural gas - production:	21.2 billion cu m (2001 est.)

Natural gas - consumption:	21.2 billion cu m (2001 est.)
Natural gas - proved reserves:	1.264 trillion cu m (1 January 2002)
Agriculture - products:	cotton, rice, corn, wheat, beans, fruits, vegetables; cattle, water buffalo, sheep, goats
Exports:	\$8.759 billion f.o.b. (2003 est.)
Exports - commodities:	crude oil and petroleum products, cotton, textiles, metal products, chemicals
Exports - partners:	US 18.5%, Italy 13.8%, UK 8.5%, France 4% (2002)
Imports:	\$14.75 billion f.o.b. (2003 est.)
Imports - commodities:	machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, wood products, fuels
Imports - partners:	US 16.1%, Germany 7.5%, Italy 6.4%, France 6.2%, China 4.8% (2002)
Debt - external:	\$30 billion (2003 est.)
Economic aid - recipient:	ODA, \$1.2 billion (2001)
Currency:	Egyptian pound (EGP)
Currency code:	EGP
Exchange rates:	Egyptian pounds per US dollar - 5.85 (2003), 4.5 (2002), 3.97 (2001), 3.47 (2000), 3.4 (1999)

Communications

Telephones:	7.43 million (2002)
cellular:	4,494,700 (2002)
Telephone system:	<i>general assessment:</i> large system; underwent extensive upgrading during 1990s and is reasonably modern; Internet access and cellular service are available <i>domestic:</i> principal centers at Alexandria, Cairo, Al Mansurah, Ismailia, Suez, and Tanta are connected by coaxial cable and microwave radio relay <i>international:</i> country code - 20; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean), 1 Arabsat, and 1 Inmarsat; 5 coaxial submarine cables; tropospheric scatter to Sudan; microwave radio relay to Israel; a participant in Medarabtel and a signatory to Project Oxygen (a global submarine fiber-optic cable system)
Radio stations:	AM 42 (plus 15 repeaters), FM 14, shortwave 3 (1999)
TV stations:	98 (September 1995)

Transportation

Railways:	<i>total:</i> 5,105 km <i>standard gauge:</i> 5,105 km 1.435-m gauge (42 km electrified) (2002)
Highways:	<i>total:</i> 64,000 km <i>paved:</i> 49,984 km <i>unpaved:</i> 14,016 km (1999 est.)
Waterways:	3,500 km

	<i>note:</i> includes the Nile, Lake Nasser, Alexandria-Cairo Waterway, and numerous smaller canals in the delta; Suez Canal (193.5 km including approaches), used by oceangoing vessels drawing up to 16.1 m of water
Pipelines:	condensate 327 km; condensate/gas 94 km; gas 6,145 km; liquid petroleum gas 382 km; oil 5,726 km; oil/gas/water 36 km; water 62 km (2003)
Ports and harbors:	Alexandria, Al Ghardaqah, Aswan, Asyut, Bur Safajah, Damietta, Marsa Matruh, Port Said, Suez
Merchant marine:	<i>total:</i> 159 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 1,194,696 GRT/1,754,815 DWT <i>foreign-owned:</i> China 2, Cyprus 1, Denmark 1, Greece 6, Lebanon 2, Turkey 1 <i>registered in other countries:</i> 50 (2003 est.) <i>by type:</i> bulk 18, cargo 41, container 5, passenger 64, petroleum tanker 14, roll on/roll off 13, short-sea/passenger 4

Egypt Military

Military branches:	Army, Navy, Air Force, Air Defense Command
Military age:	20 years of age (2004 est.)
Military expenditures:	\$2,443.2 million (2003)
Percent of GDP:	3.6% (2003)