



Egypt Fast Facts

Population:

77,505,756 (July 2005 est.)

Capital:

Cairo

Currency:

Egyptian pound (EGP)

Religion(s):

Islam (predominantly Sunni) 94%,
Coptic Christian and other 6%

Language(s):

Arabic (official), English and French
(widely understood by educated classes)

Major Events:

Revolution Day, 23 July (1952)
Islamic holidays and festivals

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Online Resources

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The American University in Cairo
<http://www.aucegypt.edu/>

Egyptian Embassy in Washington DC
<http://www.egyptembassy.us/>

USAID Egypt
<http://www.usaid-eg.org/>

The Ancient Egypt Site
<http://www.ancient-egypt.org/index.html>

Egypt Today – The Magazine of Egypt
<http://www.egypttoday.com/>

iAgora.com
<http://istudy.iagora.com/>

Lonely Planet:
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

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Egypt at a Glance...

Studying in Egypt opens a captivating world of wonders that has intrigued people since ancient times. Today, Egypt offers both ancient and modern marvels, while its burgeoning economy and vital political position continue to have a profound influence on the world.



Situated in the east corner of North Africa, Egypt is a bridge between Europe, Africa, and Asia, as well as the crossroads of the Middle East. It is the most populous country in the Arab world. Its capital, Cairo, is the largest city in the Arab world and a major cultural and political center. Egypt is bordered by Libya, Sudan, Israel, and the Gaza Strip, and has major ports on the Mediterranean and Red Seas as well as the Suez Canal. Because Egypt's land is predominantly desert, approximately 90% of the population lives on only 3% of the total land area, mostly in close proximity to the Nile. This rich, life-giving river has defined Egypt's survival and prosperity from antiquity to the present.

Egypt's amazing history began around 3,000 BC, with the birth of an ancient civilization that is still visible in marvels like the Sphinx, the ancient capital of Memphis, Luxor, and the Pyramids of Giza, the only survivors of the Seven Wonders of the World. Egypt's last native dynasty fell to the Persians in 341 BC. Periods of foreign domination were led by Alexander the Great, the Ptolemaic Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs,

Mamelukes, Ottoman Turks, French, and eventually the British. With these groups came two new religions - Christianity and Islam - and a multitude of cultural influences.

Modern Egypt was ushered in by two rulers: Napoleon Bonaparte arrived in 1798, establishing ties with Europe, and Mohammad Ali, who ruled as Pasha from 1805 to 1849, established the Egyptian Parliament and had the Suez Canal built. Egypt was under British authority from the 1880's until it achieved independence in 1936. The 1952 Free Officers revolution brought about the end of the Egyptian monarchy and led to the development of a socialist state. Today, President Hosni Mubarak leads the Arab Republic of Egypt and is committed to economic and political liberalization as well as maintaining positive relations with the West. Egypt is a major player in the Middle East peace process. The economy has tremendous potential in industries such as oil and gas, tourism, agriculture, food processing, and textiles.

As you explore Egypt, you will be struck by the dichotomy of a country that weaves together the timeless elements of its past with its dynamic present. With 16 million inhabitants, Cairo can be crowded and chaotic, but at the same time it is awash with stunning architecture and antiquities. Modern day Cairo is a good place to attend the symphony, exhibitions, and events such as the Cairo International Film Festival and several Arab music festivals. Students in Cairo can enjoy a warm and friendly life-style, walking in the streets, talking to people, meeting with friends in cafés, watching movies in cinemas, and eating popular Egyptians dishes such as falafel and koushary in traditional restaurants.



Egypt also offers wonderful opportunities for those who like the sea. Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada have very nice spots for scuba diving and snorkeling that are visited by beach lovers from all over the world. Egypt's main port and second largest city, Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, is home to the ancient Lighthouse and the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina on the site of the famous ancient Library. Today, students in Alexandria can experience Egyptian culture while soaking in the beauty of the Mediterranean Sea.

You will find Egypt a rewarding although perhaps challenging



place to study, given different cultural values and norms. With the tensions in the Middle East today, the value of cultural understanding between the Islamic and Western worlds has never been greater. Egypt exerts enormous influence in the Arab world, and as a student there you can become a doorway to greater communication and openness between cultures and peoples.

The American University in Cairo is committed to this kind of interaction, with the goal of fostering understanding across world regions, cultures, and religions. AUC, founded in 1919, offers a wide range of classes, practical applications, and professional specializations, taught in English. Its mission is to provide high quality educational opportunities to students from all segments of Egyptian society as well as from other countries, and to contribute to Egypt's cultural and intellectual life. The Al-Azhar mosque, built in 971, is considered the oldest Islamic university. Cairo University, the largest public university in Egypt and the Arab world, was founded in 1908. It now serves about 155,000 students through numerous institutes, campuses, and over 100 research facilities.

Higher education in Egypt is provided by some 20 universities and by higher institutes of technical and professional training, both public and private. Egypt is an excellent location to study Egyptology, anthropology, Middle Eastern studies, history, and Arabic language, among other exciting subjects. Go and savor the contrasts while learning from this dynamic country with timeless appeal.



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