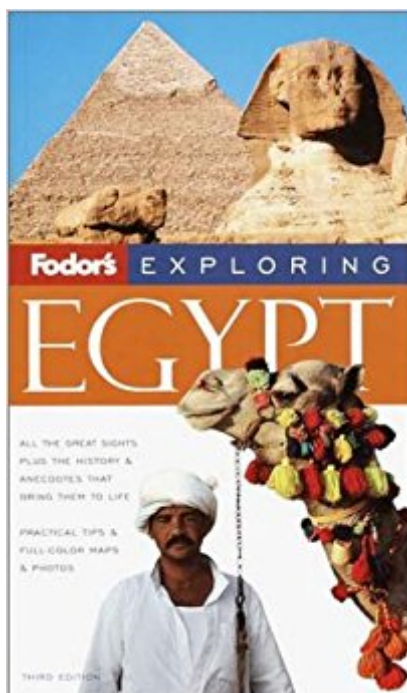


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# Fodor's Exploring Egypt, 3rd Edition (Exploring Guides)



## Synopsis

Fodor's Exploring Egypt 3rd ed. "Authoritatively written and superbly presented...Worthy reading before, during, or after a trip." -- Philadelphia Inquirer "Absolutely gorgeous. Fun, colorful, and sophisticated." -- Chicago Tribune Fodor's Exploring Guides are the most up-to-date, full-color guidebooks available. Covering destinations around the world, these guides are loaded with photos, essays on culture and history, descriptions of sights, and practical information. Full-color photos make these great guides to buy if you're still planning your itinerary (let the photos help you choose!), and they are perfect companions to general guidebooks, like Fodor's Gold Guides. What to See Extraordinary coverage of history and culture Itineraries, walks and excursions, on and off the beaten path Architecture and art Where to Stay Quick tips in every price range Where to Eat Savvy picks for all budgets The Basics Getting there and getting around When to go & what to pack

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## Customer Reviews

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The Nile Valley  
Egypt occupies 3.3 percent of Africa's landmass, but 95 percent of Egyptians inhabit only about 5 percent of their country, most of it near the Nile. The Nile runs through rainless Egypt from south to north and irrigates it like the blessed river that Muslims believe runs through the gardens of paradise. It is worthy of praise: flowing out of the lakes of Ethiopia and Uganda, it is over 3,800 miles long, and for the last 1,600 miles of its course through Sudan and Egypt, it has no tributaries and receives very little rainfall. So vital is it to the country that Egypt is defined according to its direction of flow. The south of the country is known as Upper Egypt, while the north is called Lower Egypt, and when asked for directions, Egyptians will often refer to the river: qibli, toward the mountains in the south, and bahari, to the sea in the north.  
The River's Course  
The ancient Egyptians used the lotus plant, with its thin stem and a fan-shaped bud, as one of the icons to depict their watery lifeline. Seen from the air, the river still looks very much like that. In southern Egypt, the Nile Valley is extremely narrow in places as the river passes between harder rock formations that it has been unable to erode. Farther north, where the rock formations are softer, the river averages more than half a mile in width, while its valley stretches some 6 miles from east to west. After passing Cairo, the Nile splits into the branches that have created the Delta. In antiquity the Nile had seven branches, but now there are only two, which flow into the Mediterranean near Rashid (Rosetta) and Dumyat (Damietta). Between them lies some of the most fertile land in the country: low-lying, irrigated by a network of canals, and intensively farmed. The Delta has been an inspiration to Egyptians to reclaim land from the desert, but even a river as powerful as the Nile has its limits and beyond its reach lie the rock and sand of the deserts. The Western Desert  
To ancient Egyptians, the west was the place of the dead, so it must have seemed appropriate that threats to Egypt's security often came out of the Western Desert, from the Libyans in antiquity to the Germans in World War II. The desert here is relatively flat, with depressions that have created oases. Ironically, it is to the west that some Egyptian strategists look for the country's development. Oil fields have been found in the north, while the planned Toshka Canal will irrigate huge swaths of the southern desert. The Eastern Desert  
Unlike the Western Desert, the narrower stretch of land between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea coast is mountainous. The Red

Sea mountains rise to a height of 2,500 feet and, as the ancient Egyptians knew, are rich in gold and other minerals. Although close to the Nile Valley, the Red Sea mountains were almost considered another country, where hermits went to retreat from the world. The last of the region's seminomadic tribes have now been settled.

**Holy Desert**The Sinai desert offers an even more dramatic landscape than the Eastern Desert. The peninsula is flat along its coastal plains, rough and rugged in the south and the center. The sacred Gebel Musa (Mt. Sinai), where Moses is said to have received the Ten Commandments, rises to 7,497 feet while the neighboring Gebel Katerina is Egypt's highest mountain at 8,668 feet.

**A Little Understanding**Insha'allah and bokra reveal something about the Egyptian character, but another common word ma'alesh has even more uses. "Never mind." Foreigners rarely use it, but when an Egyptian travels and the plane is late, the food cold, or the only room left in the hotel faces a wall -- in other words, when they can't get what they want -- ma'alesh is their gracious and sympathetic response.

**Separating the Sexes**Women can sit anywhere on the Cairo metro and Alexandrian tram system, but there are always cars where men are not allowed. Sexual segregation is not a matter of legislation, but increasingly it is the norm.

**Covering Up**Egyptian women tend to cover themselves up outside the house, so when Egyptian men see a girl's bare shoulder, or her figure in see-through clothes, they often consider it a sexual provocation and will stop to stare. Yet when a woman openly breastfeeds her baby in the street they will hardly even notice.

**The Spoken Word**Traditions of storytelling go back to long before the Arab invasion. Pre-Islamic stories were inevitably epics, long narrative cycles relating the adventures of heroes and the desperate acts of lovers. The Hilaliya (the story of Abu Zayd) and Laila and Majnun are but two examples of stories that are still in circulation today. The audience, assembled in cafés (or in houses for special occasions), would already know the story but would enjoy the raconteur's embellishments. It was from this tradition that medieval European writers like Boccaccio and Chaucer drew their inspiration. Egyptian storytellers were popular until the advent of radio and television. Theater director Hassan el-Geretly is currently engaged in recording as many of these epic narratives as possible in an attempt to preserve and reinvent the tradition.

Maybe I'm missing something, like perhaps there was an update from this edition and I just bought this, I'm not sure, but except for the fact it's a decade old, this provides plenty of background information for Egypt. Every traveler needs to have something to look at during the bus rides from one pyramid to the next, and something like this does just the trick. I'd recommend buying a used copy for a penny, which is currently available, so you can't go wrong at all for \$4. A good overall

look at the country, and you really can't go wrong.

Great book. Unfortunately they started killing tourists so I cancelled my trip.

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