

Arrival Guide

Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Alexandria 2005



The Bibliotheca Alexandrina Arrival Guide for Alexandria 2005 has been produced to help you access important information you need to know, as an international visitor, to prepare for your arrival in Alexandria, Egypt. The Guide is designed to be read before you arrive in Alexandria and contains information on traveling to Egypt, getting settled in your accommodation and enjoying your visit. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Bibliotheca Alexandrina or by visiting our website at **www.bibalex.org**.

Information in this Guide is correct at the time of preparation, September 2005, but may be subject to change. Prices are in Egyptian pounds, are indicative only and may be subject to change. This Guide is provided as information only and does not form any part of a contract between any person and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

Welcome...

Marhaba and welcome to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Here at the BA we pride ourselves on being a cultural complex leading Egypt into the 21st century. Rising on the Mediterranean shore to reclaim the mantle of the fabled ancient Library of Alexandria, the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a unique institution dedicated to the promotion of tolerance, dialogue and learning. Despite its youth – it has not yet celebrated its third anniversary – the BA encompasses:

- A library that can hold millions of books;
- A center for the Internet and its archive;
- Six specialized libraries for (i) art and audio-visual materials, (ii), the visually impaired, (iii) children, (iv) the young, (v) microforms, and (vi) rare books and special collections;
- Three Museums for (i) antiquities, (ii) manuscripts, and (iii) the history of science;
- A planetarium;
- An Exploratorium for children's exposure to science;
- Three permanent exhibitions;
- Six art galleries for temporary exhibitions;
- A conference center for thousands of persons;
- Seven research institutes covering (i) manuscripts, (ii) documentation of heritage, (iii) calligraphy and writing, (iv) information sciences, (v) Mediterranean and Alexandrian Studies, (vi) arts, and (vii) scientific research; and
- A dialogue forum

This Guide will help you discover all that we have to offer in the greatest ease and comfort. We know how hard it can be sometimes to travel abroad to country not much like your own and hopefully with these explicit details, your travel experience will be a pleasant one.

Egypt is a country rich in culture, history, and heritage, we invite you to explore it's vast wealth of adventures. Enjoy your time here in Alexandria and please don't hesitate to stop by and ask us some questions.

We wish you all the best,

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Staff

Pre-departure Information

Before you leave home, don't forget to...

- **Book and Confirm Flights** – Remember flights are continuously delayed and rescheduled, so it's important to secure your travel arrangements ahead of time to avoid any unnecessary surprises.
- **Reserve Accommodations** – If you are landing in one city (i.e. Cairo) and traveling to another (i.e. Alexandria), don't forget to book all accommodations in all cities before you arrive to ease your domestic exploration.



- **Packing Bags** – Don't forget to check the differences in climate and day-to-day weather within the major cities of Egypt. Alexandria weather differs from Cairo which differs from Luxor. Additionally, keep in mind the differences between cultures, your best bet is to wear loose fitting linen (minimum short sleeves and below the knee). Also, check to make sure that all your electrical equipment is adaptable to 220 volts/50mhzertz and two prong rounded plugs.

- **Check Paperwork** – Make sure your passport is valid with a tourist visa to Egypt. Most countries are allowed visa purchase upon arrival, while some countries are required to hold their visas prior to arrival¹. Also, it might be handy to exchange some money before arriving to Egypt in order to tip baggage boys for their assistance. In any case, currency exchanges are available in all the Egyptian airports.
- **Health Check** – There are no required vaccinations to enter Egypt except for visitors travelling from Yellow Fever or Cholera infected regions². Those travellers are required to present a certificate of vaccination upon arrival. As far as recommended vaccinations, the World Health Organization recommends all routine immunizations be completed, as well as immunizations for Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Polio (only needed once within a lifetime), and Hepatitis B (for travelers staying over 6 months).

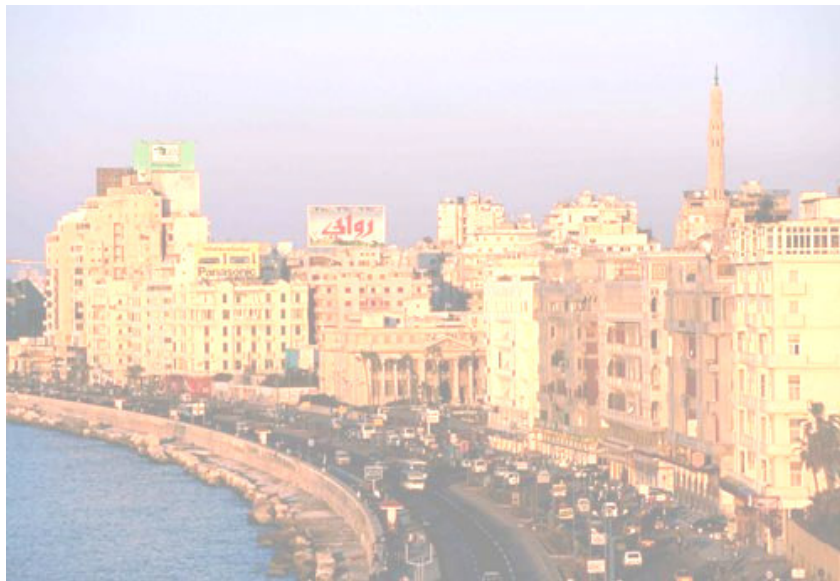


Culture Check

A traditional society...

Egyptians pride themselves on their strong cultural and religious roots, whether they be Muslim or Coptic, therefore you may experience some large difference within the social interactions of the Egyptian people. But make no mistake about it, these differences give the Egyptians their well known charm, and you will soon discover they are warm and helpful.

- **Baksheesh** (tips) – Most travelers are quite familiar with the concept of tipping. In Egypt, you may tip people in the community 1-2 EGP for their services rendered (assisting you with your bags, parking your car, etc.). Make sure, however, that you do not tip professionals or businessman who may find this offensive.
- **Dress** – As mentioned previously, Egypt is a conservative society, therefore modest dress is recommended. This means that a minimum of loose fitting, short sleeves, and pants below the knee should be worn to display the highest respect to their culture.



- **Driving** – If you are planning on renting a car, or merely riding in a form of public transportation, do not be afraid. Whereas it may seem that you are driving in a giant video game, rest assured that there is a system to be followed. If you are driving on your own, our suggestion is to follow along the other cars at first until you get the hang of things. *Please remember, directions are hard to follow in Egypt, it may be easier to take a taxi to place you are unfamiliar with.*
- **Women** – As in most Middle Eastern countries, women are given special privileges such as individual lines, metro cars, and other facilities.

Airport Arrival

After you land in any of the Egyptian international airports...

The first thing you will come across when you arrive in Cairo is Egyptian **Customs** Counters. As long as all of your papers are in order (passports and visas), there should be no problems. *Remember*, if you are planning to purchase your tourist visa upon arrival you will need to purchase the visa prior to standing in line for customs.

Once you have made it through customs you may then proceed to the **baggage** claim to collect your belongings. There are airport employees ready to assist you with your baggage or provide you with baggage carts (carts are approximately 1 USD), but don't forget to tip them.

After you collect your suitcases you will pass through one last customs check of your passports, visas, baggage, and baggage claims, and then you will enter the receiving hall. It is in the receiving hall or just outside on the curb, where you will connect with your planned or un-planned transportation.

Just some things to keep in mind...

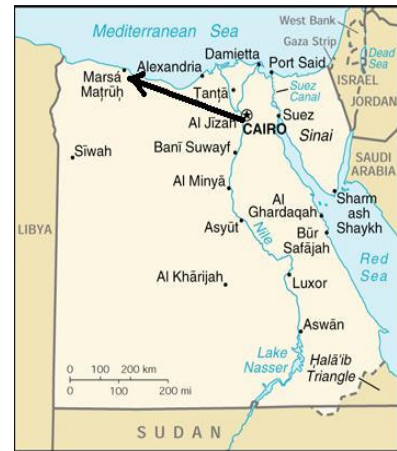
- There are **public pay phones** within the receiving halls of all the international airports, but they may only be used with the purchase of a prepaid card (may be purchased in some of the duty free shops).
 - GSM **mobiles** may be used in Egypt if you have a roaming service. The two mobile networks in Egypt are Vodafone and MobilNil.
 - If you are landing in Cairo International Airport or Burg el Arab International Airport, both airports are quite a distance from downtown Cairo and Alexandria, respectively. So expect about a half hour to an hour of **local traveling** before you reach your accommodations within the downtown areas.
 - Most employees in or around the airports speak a bit of English as well as many other languages, so don't be afraid to **communicate** and ask for assistance when needed. You will find that Egyptians are very helpful people.
 - Make sure you exchange enough of your **currency** inside the airport before you leave (approximately 6 EGP=1 USD) in order to secure any possible situations that may arise. There are few facilities in Egypt that take credit cards (this is of course with exception to all major hotels and tourist attractions).
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Local Transportation

Getting to Alexandria from Cairo International Airport...

The distance from Cairo to Alexandria is approximately 220 km northwest. The Cairo International Airport is located about 22 km from downtown Cairo. There are two terminals about 3 km apart from each other. Land transportation in Egypt allows you a few options, you may travel by bus, train, car, or limousine (it is not recommended to travel by taxi as it is too costly) to Alexandria.

- There are regular Super Jet buses that leave directly from the airport to Alexandria (Sidi Gaber Station) and cost around 35 EGP. You may call ahead to determine if there are any changes in the bus schedule as that may be the case at any time (+202 579 8181). There is also the West Delta company that departs from the airport every hour and costs around 20 EGP.



- Trains to Alexandria leave almost hourly. They are the most comfortable means of travel from Cairo to Alexandria. The only downfall is that you will need to take a taxi from the airport to the Ramses Train Station (Mahattit Ramses) which will cost you around 30 EGP, but make sure you negotiate the price before you leave the airport. Train schedules are below, but you may also call ahead to reserve (recommended), +202 575 3555 or go online to www.ata-tours.net/reservations_train.htm.

| Train type: | Exp | Exp | Ord | Turbo | Exp | Ord | Exp | Exp | Ord | Exp | Ord | Exp | Ord+ | Exp | Turbo | Exp |
|-------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Cairo depart | 0440 | 0600 | 0605 | 0800 | 0815 | 0820 | 0900 | 0930 | 1000 | 1100 | 1115 | 1200 | 1215 | 1310 | 1400 | 1410 |
| Alexandria arrive | 0700 | 0900 | 0940 | 1010 | 1100 | 1240 | 1110 | 1215 | 1405 | 1340 | 1415 | 1425 | 1540 | 1625 | 1610 | 1710 |

| Train type: | Ord | Exp | Exp | Ord+ | Exp | Exp | Ord | Exp | Ord | Exp | Turbo | Exp | Exp | Exp | Exp | Exp |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Cairo depart | 1420 | 1500 | 1510 | 1530 | 1600 | 1700 | 1705 | 1800 | 1815 | 1830 | 1900 | 2000 | 2010 | 2030 | 2140 | 2230 |
| Alexandria arrive | 1835 | 1720 | 1750 | 1810 | 1850 | 1940 | 2040 | 2010 | 2130 | 2150 | 2110 | 2245 | 2300 | 0000 | 0010 | 0100 |

Turbo - Superfast TURBOTRAIN, comfortable air-conditioned 1st & 2nd class with refreshments. Recommended train.

Exp - Air-conditioned express, comfortable air-conditioned 1st & 2nd class with refreshments. Recommended train.

Ord - Ordinary train, with very basic 2nd & 3rd class. Trains marked 'Ord+' also have air-conditioned 2nd class.

- You may choose to rent a car from the Cairo International Airport and drive to Alexandria. This is not recommended unless you are familiar with the roadways and driving in Egypt.

| Company | Phone Numbers | Address | Cairo International Airport Contact |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Avis | T: +202 794 7400 F: +202 796 2464 | 16 Mamal as-Sukkar, Garden City Cairo, Egypt | +202 291 4288 |
| Budget Rent-A-Car | T: +202 340 0070 F: +202 341 3790 | 5 Makrizy, Zamalek Cairo, Egypt | +202 265 2395 |
| Europcar | T: +202 347 4712 T: +202 347 4713 F: +202 303 6123 | 27 Sharia Libnan, Mohandiseen Cairo, Egypt | +202 291 4288 |
| Hertz | T: +202 303 4241 F: +202 347 4172 | 195 Sharia 26th of July, Mohandiseen Cairo, Egypt | +202 291 4288 |
| J Car | T: +202 335 0521 F: +202 360 3255 | 33 Sharia Missaha, Doqqi Cairo, Egypt | +202 291 4288 |
| Thrifty | F: +202 266 3313 | 1 Al-Entesar, Heliopolis Cairo, Egypt | +202 265 2620 |

- There is always curbside limousine service available right outside the Cairo International Airport (usually either Mercedes or Peugeot). To reserve in advance call Misr Limousine at +202 259 9381. Limousines from Cairo to Alexandria usually cost anywhere between 350 to 500 EGP.

Getting around Alexandria if landing in Nozha or Burg el Arab International Airports...

The best way to get from either of these airports to your hotel is to take a taxi. Alexandria taxis are generally black and yellow, and will be waiting for you right outside either airport. Taxi fare from Burg el Arab to downtown Alexandria is approximately 30-40 EGP and from Nozha, about 20-25 EGP. Make sure you negotiate the price with the taxi driver before you leave the airport.

¹ Citizens of the following countries are required to be in possession of a pre-arrival visa: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Croatia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Lebanon, Macau, Macedonia, Malaysia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, The Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sri-Lanka, Tadjikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and all African countries.

²

| Yellow Fever Endemic Countries | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Countries in Africa | | | Countries in South America |
| Angola | Gabon | Rwanda | Bolivia |
| Benin | Gambia | Sao Tome & | Brazil |
| Burkina Faso | Ghana | Principe | Colombia |
| Burundi | Guinea | Senegal | Ecuador |
| Cameroon | Guinea-Bissau | Sierra Leone | French Guiana |
| Central African Republic | Kenya | Somalia | Guyana |
| Chad | Liberia | Sudan | Panama |
| Congo | Mali | Tanzania | Peru |
| Cote d'Ivoire | Mauritania | Togo | Suriname |
| Djibouti | Niger | Uganda | Venezuela |
| Equatorial Guinea | Nigeria | Zaire | |
| Ethiopia | | Zambia | |