

# Installation guide

# Department of Modern Arabic Instruction

Academic year 2023-24

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# Introduction

You are about to begin a semester or a year at the Department of Modern Arabic Instruction (DEAC).

This department is located within the French Institute in the Mounira quarter, not far from downtown. You will be supervised and accompanied by a team of 18 teachers, a senior administrative assistant, a junior administrative assistant, a department administrator, an office assistant (printer), and myself (the director).

You will live a wonderful adventure in a key country of the Arab world. As the Egyptian saying goes:

"اللي شرب من مية النيل لازم يرجع لها"

« Who drinks water from the Nile shall return to her. »

In my case, it has proven true. 20 years ago, I was a student at the DEAC just like you! I would like your sojourn in Egypt to be as formative for you as it was for me. I therefore thought best to provide you with a practical guide so that your time in Egypt will pass as smoothly as possible.

I asked six students from the class of 2021-2022, who studied in Egypt for a full year, to use their experiences to inform this guide. I would like to thank them for their participation and the generosity they showed in giving their time to make life easier for incoming students. My thanks go to Mr Adrien DUCHATEAU, Ms Ophélie GREUIN, Mr Lounis JAHIDI, Ms Alizée MILLION, Mr Antoine POIRIER et Mr Martin REVY.

I then asked the *Huda Sha'arawi* class of 2022-2023 for their help in updating the guide. I would like to thank the students who answered the call, in particular Mr Ilai BERISSI and Mr Etienne REMOND, in addition to Ms Selma GALLET for her translation of this guide.

After an introduction to the DEAC's staff, this guide is structured around four parts: preparing for your journey, packing, settling in, and daily life!

Read what follows attentively and prepare for your sojourn the right way!

Ali MOUHOUB  
Director of the DEAC

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# **The DEAC Team**

# The DEAC Team



## Ali MOUHOUB

Regional Inspector for the French Ministry of Education since 2015  
Director of the DEAC since September 2021  
A fan of Farid al-Atrash and Fairuz!

## Administrative team



## Hecham AHMED

Employee of the French Institute since 2017  
Office Assistant (printer) at the DEAC since November 2021  
I am the linchpin of the DEAC. Without me, no textbook in your hands!



## Nourane DESSOUKI

Senior Administrative Assistant at the DEAC since 2018  
Every Sunday, I keep you informed about Arabic cultural activity in Cairo!  
Fan of downtown!



## Salah IBRAHIM

Junior Administrative Assistant responsible for AV and manager of the DEAC platform  
I joined the DEAC in May 1995. That's 28 years of experience in various positions!  
I have seen eight directors come and go, two of whom were former DEAC students!

## Teaching team



## Guihad ABDELKADER

Teacher of Arabic as a modern foreign language for 7 years  
I joined the DEAC in October 2019  
I love colours!



### Ahmed ABDOU

Teacher of Arabic as a modern foreign language for 25 years  
I joined the DEAC in October 2001  
Patient and calm, I'm known as a "quiet force." Grammar is very important to me!



### Mohammad ABDELMOUGHITH

Teacher of Arabic as a modern foreign language for 17 years  
I joined the DEAC in October 2008  
Everyone calls me Maurice! I keep a very close eye on what's happening on the Egyptian artistic and cultural scene!



### Arwa AGGAG

Teacher of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language for 4 years  
I joined the DEAC in February 2023  
There's nothing better than coffee in the morning!



### Hossam AHMED

Teacher of Arabic as a foreign language for 9 years  
I joined the DEAC in October 2021  
I love horseback riding!



### Essam AL MOHAMMADY

Teacher of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language for 11 years  
I joined the DEAC in October 2017  
I love the idea of sharing Arabic language and culture and learning from students about the particularities of their cultures.



### Karim ARAFA

Teacher of Arabic as a foreign language for 12 years  
I joined the DEAC in February 2023  
Writer and playwright!



### Amr ESSAM

Teacher of Arabic as a foreign language for 13 years  
 I joined the DEAC in 2017  
 Ping-pong champion!



### Omar FATHI

Teacher of Arabic as a foreign language for 18 years  
 I joined the DEAC in October 2019  
 I was a lecturer at Sciences Po in Menton, France two years in a row!



### Bassem FOUAD

Teacher of Arabic as a foreign language for 10 years  
 I joined the DEAC in September 2019  
 Karim ARAFA and I were members of the theatre troop at the university.



### Yasmina HEIFIZY

Teacher of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language for 15 years  
 I joined the DEAC in 2017  
 I love reading and cooking  
 I'm passionate about discovering different cultures.



### Ahmed MAGDY

Teacher of Arabic as a modern foreign language for 10 years  
 I joined the DEAC in October 2016  
 I'm the geek of the team!



### Dara MAHMOUD

Teacher of Arabic as a foreign language for 25 years  
 I joined the DEAC in September 2000  
 I love poetry, music and the cinema, but above all I have a thing for Lebanon. I  
 had the current director as a student!





### **Racha OMAR**

Teacher of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language for 16 years  
 I joined the DEAC in September 2007  
 I love translation and theatre!



### **Abdelhalim SHEHATA**

Teacher of Arabic as a modern foreign language for 10 years  
 I joined the DEAC in September 2019  
 I have the same first name as a great Arabic singer, the one known as "العندليب". Coincidence or not, you will hear my voice regularly in audios.



### **Mohammad YASSIN**

Teacher of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language for 12 years  
 I joined the DEAC in October 2019  
 Like Abdelhalim, my voice can be heard on many audios.  
 I have a passion for perfumes.



### **Khadija YOUSSEF**

Teacher of Arabic as a Modern Foreign Language for 8 years  
 I joined the DEAC in October 2021  
 I love singing and Arabic music, and would be delighted to introduce you to them!





**Preparing  
for your  
journey**

# Preparing for your journey

## ❖ Health and safety conditions

Check the Advice to Travellers page of your country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs before you leave, and on a regular basis. The French version can be found on the ministry's website <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs/> (there's also a downloadable app). The health conditions are changing, in particular over the last few years due to the evolving COVID-19 crisis. You will have to check for any travel requirements on the website of the Ministry



Concerning COVID-19:

- Wearing a mask is generally not systematic in Egypt, but in the case of an upsurge in the virus, wearing a mask may become compulsory at the Institute.
- Self-tests are not available in Egypt at present. PCR and antigenic tests are available in labs (at a cost of between 500 and 1500 EGP).

## ❖ Vaccines and insurance

Make sure that your mandatory and recommended vaccines are up-to-date. You can check with your GP or visit this website for details:

<https://pasteur-lille.fr/centre-prevention-sante-longevite/vaccins-et-voyages/preparer-ses-voyages/>



You must have international health insurance (including repatriation insurance) and civil liability insurance. You should give a copy of this to the DEAC administration upon your arrival.

Make sure to have information about your medical insurance with you. Reimbursements of any medical expenses in Egypt will be processed but it can take a long time. Some insurance companies will cover a number of treatments; make sure to check what yours offers.

I can provide a reference to the company "April International", which is aimed at expats and travellers and includes repatriation, but there are many other insurance providers for you to choose from.

Keep in mind that there are no medical accords between Egypt and France and repatriation will be very costly without insurance. Check for your own country.

It is essential to have insurance coverage, both because we will require proof of it, but also because quality care is expensive in Egypt. The first thing a hospital will ask is whether you have insurance. If you don't have insurance, they won't treat you!

## ❖ Bank

Check the conditions of your own bank. Some reduce or waive fees. Most online banks offer services abroad without fees (transfers, withdrawals, and payments) but again, you should check before leaving.

It's a good thing to bring approximately 500 euros in cash for your settling-in expenses.

Never withdraw money from a freestanding ATM (one that is not attached to a bank with tellers) as you won't be able to get your card back if the ATM swallows it. It happens!

### ❖ Official documents

Your passport has to be valid for six months after the planned end of your stay. If not, you'll have to contact your embassy or consulate for a renewal.

Remember to digitize all your official documents (identity card, passport, visa, drivers' license, social security card, student card, photo ID). Bring the originals and printed copies.

A student card can give you some good discounts in monuments and museums. If you have official proof of an Arab nationality, you should bring that as well, as this allows you to get the Egyptian/Arab price at tourist sites.

### ❖ Stay connected

To access some websites but also use social networks to their full extent (notably: to make WhatsApp calls), you should download a VPN before you arrive.

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# Packing up

## Packing up

### ❖ Medicine

There are pharmacies everywhere in Cairo and they are well-stocked with most common medications. It is however recommended that you purchase some things beforehand.

**Plan for fatigue**, as the change in setting, noise, heat, and the concentration necessary for a foreign language will all take their toll on you. You should plan ahead and come with vitamins (think acerola, ginseng, magnesium...).

It is recommended to **arrive with basic medications** to deal with some common issues. This could be:

- Paracetamol (but be careful not to take above the recommended dose, as this can badly damage your liver in only a few hours);
- Treatment for stomach disorders (constipation and diarrhoea happen frequently at the beginning of a stay);
- Treatment for intestine recovery if you have a bad case of travellers' diarrhoea (or use strong antibiotics);
- Treatment for urinary tract infections;
- Bandages and dressings of various sizes;
- Compresses, sterile adhesive plaster, and a good antiseptic solution;
- Antihistamines if you suffer from allergies.

There is a lot of dust, sand (particularly during *khamsin* season), and pollution in Cairo, so you should bring some saline solution or other moisturizing eye drops.

If you wear contact lenses, you'll have to bring the necessary products. If you wear spectacles, it is strongly recommended that you bring a spare pair in case anything happens. It is however fairly easy and cheap (approx. 600 EGP) to have a new pair made (ask your teachers, they'll be happy to direct you to good opticians).

Remember to bring good sunglasses!

Surgical masks are cheap and very easy to find in Cairo. Fabric masks being rare and of lower quality, it is recommended that you bring them with you. The dust in Cairo is such that maintaining your fabric masks in good condition might be difficult, so I recommend that you use surgical masks.

If you take a specific medication, bring a good amount of it and don't forget to take the prescriptions with you, as it may be required at the Cairo airport. If there is a medication you have to take daily, it is highly recommended that you plan ahead and bring the necessary quantity. In France, it is possible to get up to 6 months of medicine at a pharmacy by submitting a sworn statement; check what is possible in your country.

Sunscreens are much more expensive in Egypt than in Europe, as many are imported, and the composition of some of them might not be the safest. No matter your skin tone, you need to protect it.

### ❖ Sleep

Life in Cairo is fairly pleasant but as stated above, it is a very dusty, polluted, and loud city. You should bring earplugs if you need complete silence to sleep. If you need complete darkness,

you should also bring a sleeping mask, as you will seldom find blinds or shades that completely block the light.

### ❖ Contraception and STD prevention

You'll be able to find condoms (but not all of them, often more expensive and not always good quality). Remember to bring your own contraceptive medicine, as contraceptive pills exist here but with a different dosage.

### ❖ Sanitary material

It is fairly easy to find sanitary pads. Tampons are more difficult to find (only in pharmacies and they're very expensive, 10 tampons for 5€); those with applicators are extremely rare.

### ❖ Clothing

You can buy anything here, but remember that brands commonly found in France are much more expensive in Egypt.

Bring some warm clothes: there is indeed winter in Egypt, it can last a while and be cold. Winter days are pleasant but you will feel cold at night, in particular inside flats where thermal insulation is often lacking. Thermal clothing is useful. Bring jumpers, coats and scarves.

You should also bring outfits for various occasions (parties, weddings, cocktails, events at the French Institute, the opera, etc.). It is also possible to buy a suit or have one made for affordable prices in Cairo.

Clothes can get damaged quite fast in Egypt because of the dust, the pollution, and the sometimes defective washing machines. We recommend that you avoid bringing expensive clothes. In addition, Cairo's streets will wear out your shoes—bring multiple strong pairs.

### ❖ Books

As students at the DEAC, you will have access to the library of the French Institute which offers a wide array of books in French and Arabic. The International Arabic Book Fair which takes place in January will allow you to buy books in Arabic at very good prices.

I still recommend that you come with some books which are difficult to find here and cheaper in France:

- A good dictionary that you will use forever, and that will be particularly useful during literature exams;
- A good grammar book: you will have around 4 hours of grammar a week, but it's a good idea to have a reference book in your own language (with explanations and exercises).

As for the Egyptian dialect, I suggest the application: [Egyptian Arabic Dictionary](#).

### ❖ Stationery

Some students have trouble working with the notebooks that can be found on the Egyptian market, so bring your own pens and papers.



**Do not put in your luggage:** anything illegal! Egyptian law is very strict. Substances considered illegal elsewhere are also illegal in Egypt (so no cannabis or related products). Others which are sold freely in France like *poppers* or painkillers like tramadol are forbidden here! Possessing, consuming, or providing prohibited substances is severely punished by law and the conditions of detention are particularly harsh.

Be aware that after you have retrieved your luggage from the carousel, it will be scanned again by the Egyptian authorities!





# Settling in in Egypt

# Settling in in Egypt



1. Arrival date: you should plan for a period of flat searching and settling in which is variable but usually takes between 10 and 15 days. Finding a flat quickly will allow you to use the remaining time before the placement tests to find your footing, and maybe even travel given that September is a particularly good time of year for this.
2. Before your arrival, register with embassy or consulate in order to be contacted in case of security issues or a crisis.

## ❖ Cairo International Airport

Upon arrival at Cairo airport, those of many (but not all) nationalities obtain a tourist visa for 25 USD that lasts for a month, with an automatic extension of 15 days for a total of six weeks. The counter is located to the right just before passport control queues. After you arrive with the tourist visa in hand, the DEAC will assist you with the procedure to obtain your residency permit. As of now, the price for the residency permit is 1950 EGP, and you can also request an additional multi-entry visa which will cost between 700 and 800 EGP (this allows you freely travel in and out of Egypt without re-applying for the residency permit upon your return).

The airport wifi can't always be used with foreign SIM cards. You can buy an Egyptian SIM card at the airport or wait until you go into town (the prices are the same). The main difference is that fewer providers are present at the airport. You will also find ATMs and exchange offices (but with less favourable rates than in town) at the airport.

After picking up your luggage, it will be scanned again and then you'll exit the airport, which is where you'll find taxis. Most of them don't have counters and you'll have to negotiate the rate. A trip from the airport to *Tahrir* square costs between 300 and 400 EGP depending on your negotiation skills. Only get into the taxi if you've agreed on a rate. Don't take a taxi that already has another passenger. Remember that not all taxi drivers know all the streets by heart, so you'll have to anticipate and identify reference points.

If you have data, you can use the usual apps (*Uber* and *Careem* allow you to pay by card or cash, *Indriver* only cash...). Order vehicles through these apps from the B5 parking lot and don't be surprised if the drivers call you to confirm your location and destination before picking you up.

## ❖ The first days

As mentioned above, you should have registered with your consulate. Remember to bring a passport-sized ID photo with you to the DEAC.

## Telephone and SIM card

With all phone providers (the main ones in Egypt are *Orange*, *Etisalat*, *Vodafone* and *WE*), we strongly recommend that you install the provider's app. It will let you check how much 4G data, call time, or how many texts you still have left on your plan.

You can recharge your plan/bundle on the provider's app (although a foreign bank card might be declined) or in one of the many shops. *WE*, *Etisalat* and *Vodafone* all locations on Qasr el Eyni and *Orange* is on Mobtadayan (all close to the French Institute). You can also recharge at the many corner stores of Cairo (you'll tell them how much you want to pay and give your phone number, then you'll be able to renew your bundle in the provider's app).

It is also possible to customize your bundle online (in the app) while checking the total price.

### Where to live for the first days ?

We recommend here affordable hotels, preferably downtown, and in particular hotels where students go, which will allow you to meet people settling in in Egypt, like you.

The most popular ones are: *Dahab Hostel, Paradise Inn Hostel, Pension Roma, and Al Bustan.*

Be careful with your personal things if you choose a hostel or a dorm, as tourism numbers are up and there are many travellers.

This year, a number of students used Airbnb and were satisfied.

### Où rencontrer des Français qui s'installent et des Égyptiens ? Where to meet other expats settling in and Egyptians?

- at the French Institute in Mounira, in the restaurant in particular;
- at the Halawa Café, which is a HQ of sorts for the DEAC students. The owner is often very helpful;
- at the Falak Café Book Store (excellent quiet place to study) in Garden City;
- at 5GYM (a gym across the street from the French Institute);
- at Bashandy's (unofficial canteen of the DEAC students);
- at El Horreya Café (Bar/café in downtown Cairo at Bab El Louk).

#### ❖ Searching for a flat

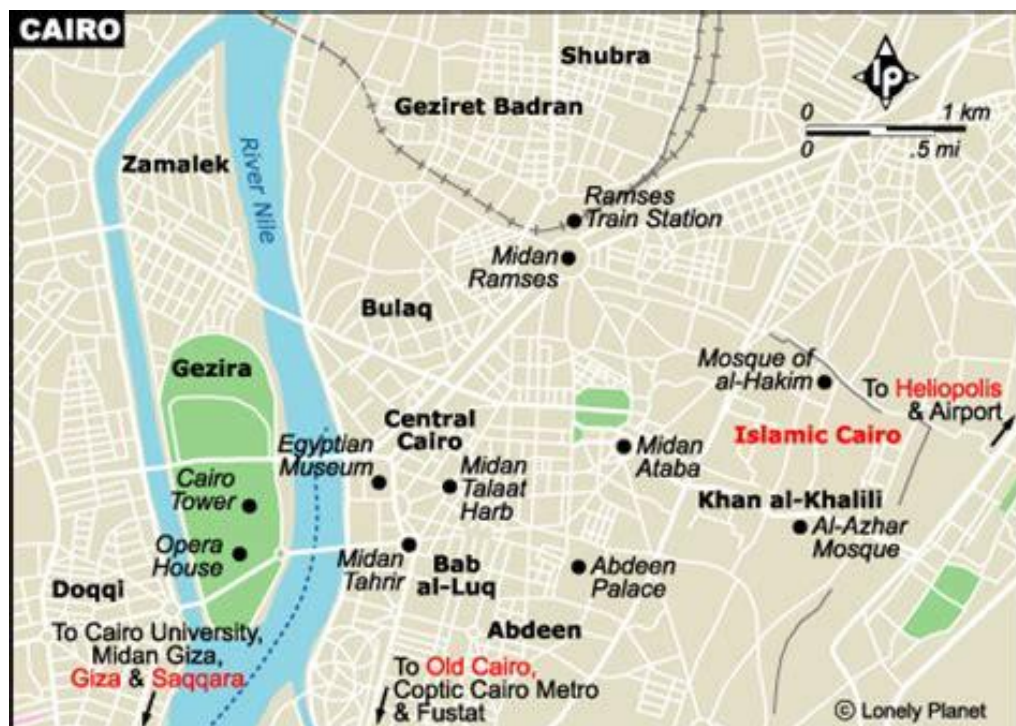
It's an adventure, and you need to put in the time to do it! I strongly recommend not to rent a flat remotely, as scams are common. Flats are usually big, with 3 bedrooms on average, so most students choose to share a flat. Again, I can only advise against choosing roommates online through social networks. More and more landlords permit male and female tenants to share a flat provided that none of the flatmates is Egyptian.

#### ❖ The neighbourhoods

As traffic is bad, we recommend that you live close to the French Institute, and in particular in the following quarters: Mounira, Garden City, Downtown, or Dokki.



- **Mounira** : the Institute is there, so you won't have transportation costs to get to your classes. Daily life there is affordable (markets, subway at the Saad Zaghloul station, cafés). A lot of DEAC students live there among middle- and working-class Egyptians. The area is lively but can be very loud sometimes.
- **Garden City** : close to the Institute (there's a crowded avenue to cross, but one gets used to it), it's winding, tree-lined, and quiet. Many expats live in this quarter and several embassies are located there. The cafés are quiet and convenient to study in, with the regulars being students, expats and Egyptians. Some good restaurants and several banks.
- **Downtown** : the heart of Cairo, this area is very lively and has a variety of shops (clothing, bookstores, antique shops, etc.), many hotels, restaurants, bars, cafés... Located north of Garden City and Mounira, it stretches from Tahrir square to Ramses station. A lot of it is (theoretically) pedestrian-only streets, along with busy avenues (be wary of the noise). It's undergoing renovations, with all the annoyances that entails, but it's authentic. There's a heavy police presence.
- **Dokki** : a big quarter on the other side of the Nile (Giza). To get to the Institute, you can take the subway, a taxi or Uber (15 to 20 minutes by car). More modern than Mounira, more local than Zamalek, more lively than Garden City. Many shops and supermarkets, some good restaurants, some museums.
- **Zamalek** : very lively and has a lot of cafés, restaurants, and shops. Cultural life: opera, cinema, museums, art galleries. Many expats live there and the area is more expensive but also cleaner. It takes around 15 minutes by car to get to the Institute, with taxis being the most convenient means of transportation. There's one subway station on the north side of the island, which will take you to Mounira with a change at Nasser station in 25 to 30 minutes.
- **Maadi** : located south of Cairo, it's mostly inhabited by middle-aged expats and families. Relatively wealthy and quiet, but also somewhat lively. 30 to 40 minutes on the subway to the DEAC, if you live close enough to a station.



## ❖ Flat visits

It's very difficult to estimate an average rent as the criteria vary a lot (size and condition of the flat, area, landlord, *simsar* (real estate agent), your negotiation skills, etc.). Based on rents this year, I'd say you should plan between 3500 and 5500 EGP per room per month for flats in Mounira, Garden City, Downtown and Dokki. If you're in Zamalek or Maadi, it can easily go up and above 5500 EGP per room and per month.

**We recommend that you insist on paying your rent in EGP, as this will save you money in the end due to the favourable exchange rate.**

You don't need to prepare files to give during the visits like you'd do in France for example, as only an ID is required when you sign the lease: the landlord uses it to declare their tenants. There are no proper real estate agencies. The *simsar*, a sort of informal real estate agent, offers flat visits. You have to agree on their rate beforehand: at most the equivalent of half of month of rent (the other half being paid by the landlord).

You will only give them the money after you've signed the contract. They can't ask you for money if they've haven't found you a flat for which you've signed a lease.



1. All *simsars* aren't equal, some are really dishonest and should be avoided! Don't hesitate to ask us for advice on who to use.
2. Avoid as much as possible to take a flat whose owner is abroad. Things can get very unpleasant, very fast. An owner living in the US was extremely obnoxious with some students recently.
3. Most rents are paid in cash.
4. You will usually be asked for a deposit of the equivalent of half a month of rent, a full month at most. Be careful with the conditions for the return of this deposit, which must be specified in the lease.

Be very clear with your request, you have to identify your search criteria and communicate them to the *simsar*, in writing in a text message if need be. If from the start he takes you to visit flats which don't match your request, don't hesitate to firmly tell him so you don't waste your time.

If you're considering a mixed-gender flatshare, you have to say it clearly. You should also remind the *simsar* that you might invite both men and women to your place or have parties with alcohol and music. If you have a pet, you also have to mention it.

These details may seem obvious to you but it's always better to clarify them.

## ❖ The flat

Before you decide, you have to do the following with the *simsar* and the landlord (they're often women) present:

- Go over the points mentioned earlier.
- Know ALL the additional costs:  
Regular bills (gas, water, electricity) and payments details. In addition to the usual costs, there are additional costs linked to renting in Egypt:



- the *bawwab* (the doorman/superintendent). He's paid 100 to 200 EGP a month per person; the price varies depending on the area and the type of building;
- the *zabbal* (garbage collector) He's paid 50 to 150 EGP each month per flat and the price varies depending on the area and the type of building.

- Inspect the flat:

It's an important step because the landlords are often reluctant to have work done once the flat is occupied. If any work is necessary, ask that this is done before you move in and before you sign the lease!

Even if you are already prepared for a difference from your local standards, you have to thoroughly inspect the flat and particularly look at:

The sound and thermal insulation ( the state of doors and windows). Even if it's unlikely the landlord will commit to replacing these, at least you'll know what to expect;

The state of the air conditioning (proper functioning and noise): this is fundamental, as it can be very warm even at night;

The state of the taps (hot water is not always a given);

The electrical installations and the gas;

The state of the mattress; look for bed bugs or other potential pests;

The wifi (if the flat has an Internet subscription set up, installing a new wifi system can be a hassle).



1. Take a picture of all the counters (gas, electricity, water), in the presence of the landlord.
2. As soon as the landlord leaves, change the locks. Some landlords enter the flats when tenants are not home.

### ❖ The lease

Only sign the lease if it's written in English and mentions clearly the conditions for the return of the deposit and the advance notice of departure.

Before you sign, check in particular that:

The return of the deposit is not linked to an absurd condition like requiring you to find another tenant when you leave;

The end date on the lease matches your situation;

The conditions for the departure and in particular for the advance notice satisfy you.



1. On no account should you leave a set of keys to the *bawwab* or even the *simsar*.
2. Once you've signed the lease, the landlord must declare your presence to the police, which can lead to unannounced visits from them. Do not worry overmuch and don't hesitate to tell me about it. In any case, you must obey the police and answer their questions. If they ask for a point of contact, give the details of the DEAC and in particular my information.



# **Living in Egypt**



# Living in Egypt



**Remember:** once you've signed your lease, register with your embassy!

## ❖ Safety

You will find out that in Cairo and most of Egypt, there are no safety issues on the street. Petty crime is rare and the police are very efficient. Some rules are to be followed, but they're mostly about common sense. Here are a few:

- Respect local habits, in particular around the relations between men and women;
- Put your wallet in a bag you will wear in front of you when you're in a crowded place. Of course, don't put your documents, your money, or your phone in a back pocket;
- Avoid wearing expensive items in your daily life (jewellery and watch);
- Always be dressed appropriately (to the local standards) in public, and for women in particular. Wear clothes that cover your arms and legs down to the knees. As a rule, be careful about your appearance when you're in contact with the local population. You should also remember that foreign women, accompanied and even more alone, will be subject to more attention;
- Be careful when using a camera, as they are strictly controlled by the local authorities. It's forbidden to take photos of some places or sensitive buildings like military sites, ministries and embassies, banks, some infrastructure like the airports, the Suez canal, power plants or water tanks, some religious or family events, the police and the military;
- Avoid political, religious, and sexual conversations with your Egyptian contacts;
- Don't take part in demonstrations or social and political meetings;
- Always be reachable by phone, and keep on your person the emergency numbers of your embassy and the DEAC (refer to the last part of the guide).



While travelling the country:

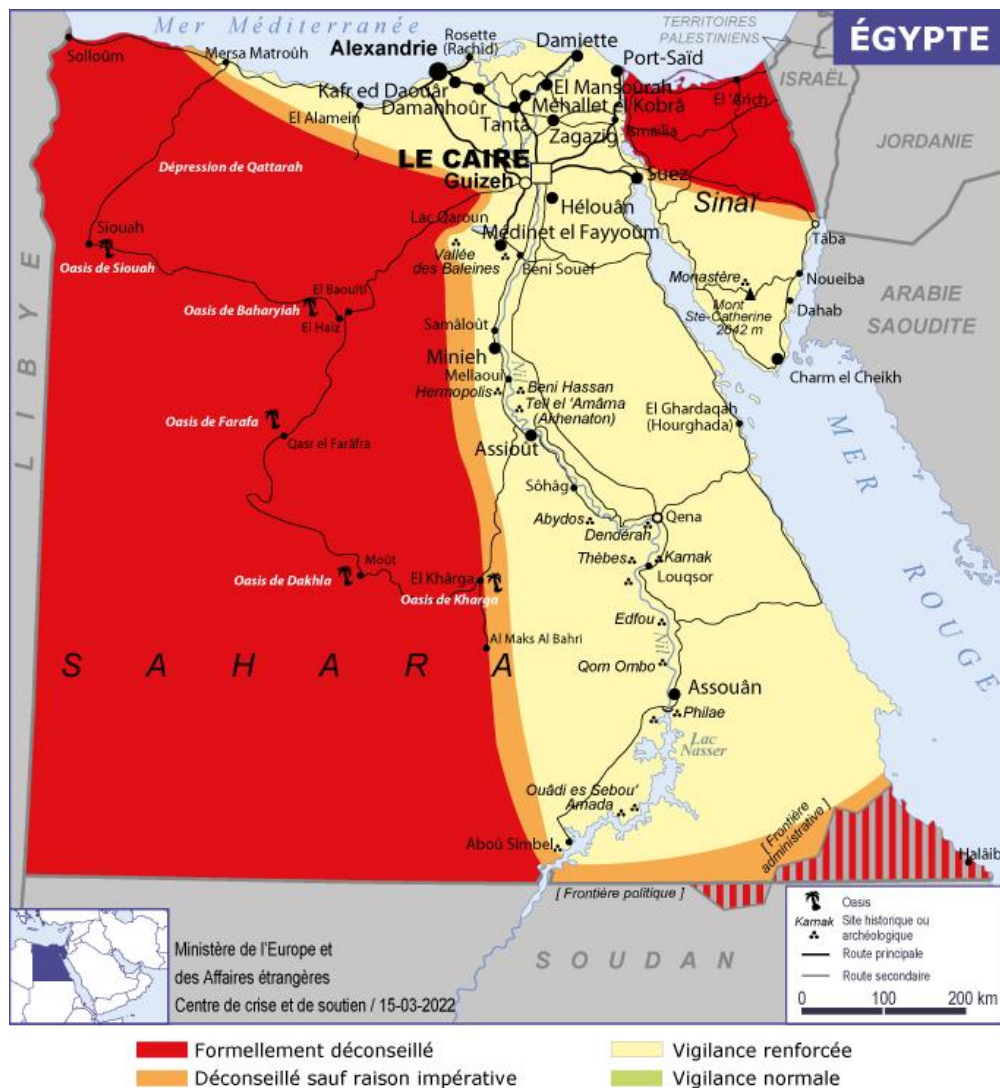
1. Don't drive on Egyptian roads without a guide who knows the routes and speaks Arabic. Don't drive at night or take a bus.
2. Give an outline of your route to a trusted person who's not travelling with you.
3. Keep your passport, visa and residency card on your person, as they'll be requested on check-points and at the hotel.
4. It's not unusual for hotels to refuse to give you a room if you are a man and a woman without official marriage documents.

## ❖ Travelling in Egypt

You will live in a country with many dimensions and very different landscapes from one region to another. Before you start discovering the country, read the following attentively.

Firstly, know you won't be able to visit everything as you will have a lot of work at the DEAC and there's a lot to see. There are also some zones which are recommended to avoid, and even forbidden depending on your country's guidelines. In the rest of the country it's possible to travel, as long as you follow the general guidelines.

Check your Ministry of Foreign Affairs' or your embassy's website to know their recommendations for Egypt.



This map isn't fixed, it's updated on a regular basis and according to recent events.

## ❖ Getting around Cairo and Egypt

### Public transit

**Subway:** it's an efficient, fast, and reliable means of transportation and the cars are fairly clean. Two cars are reserved for women, but woman are allowed to ride in any car (as opposed to men).

The subway ticket costs between 5 and 10 EGP depending on your destination (check the maps next to the counters in the stations).

Cairo has a dense and **complex network of buses and minibuses**. Bus stops are on request. They're very cheap but we don't recommend them for safety reasons (very « dynamic » driving, almost systematic lack of insurance, unreliable hygiene, risk of sexual harassment...).

## Individual transport

**Taxis** are also cheap (20 to 25 EGP from Downtown to Dokki or Zamalek).

Some advice:

- If the taxi doesn't have a counter, either change taxis or agree on the rate as soon as you get in the taxi. It's a good exercise as you'll have to negotiate in Arabic, but it can be irritating.
- To estimate the rate, you can check an app like *Uber* and remove around 10 EGP.
- If the taxi has a counter, ask the driver to start it before you even get in!

Several apps offer cars for hire: *Uber*, *Careem*, *Indriver*.

*Uber* is probably the most reliable, and *Indriver* the cheapest (but with this app you can only pay cash and the drivers often don't have much change).

The **Tuk-tuks** are three-wheeled vehicles, very cheap but also very dangerous as they're often driven by teenagers without much of a sense of responsibility on the road. I strongly advise against using them!



**Motorcycles and scooters should be avoided, as they are a dangerous option.**

## Leaving Cairo

To reach other cities, you can take minibuses, trains, buses (*GoBus* and *Swvl* are reputable), private taxis or even planes depending on the distance and your budget. We recommend you don't travel by night.

Minibuses are the cheapest but also most dangerous option as accidents happen quite often. The trains are often very late but the railroad network is decent.

## ❖ Daily life advice and good deals

**Average wage:** the concept of average wage isn't well-known in Egypt and wages can vary quite a lot. The average wage is around 6000 to 8500 EGP but it's really an estimate as a large part of the population earns less than 6000 EGP per month.

**Average shopping basket:** for reference purposes, here is the price of some basic commodities

Commodity	Price in EGP	Commodity	Price in EGP
Water	5 to 10 for 1,5 litre	Sweet potato	10 for a kilo
Milk	20 for a litre	Tomato	10 à 15 for a kilo
Sunflower oil	150 for a litre	Carrot	15 for a kilo
Olive oil	150 to 200 for a litre	Onion	10 for a kilo
Egyptian bread	10 for 10 pieces	Cucumber	15 for a kilo
Pasta	30 for a kilo	Potato	15 for a kilo
Rice	15 to 20 for a kilo	Courgette	10 à 15 for a kilo
Eggs	100 for a box of 30	Lemon	30 for a kilo
Tuna	20 to 35 for a can	Orange	15 to 20 for a kilo
Tomato sauce	20 to 25 for a can	Banana	40 to 60 for a kilo
Coca-Cola can	7 to 10	Watermelon	80 to 90 for a kilo
Beer bottle	30 to 45	Mango	80 to 90 for a kilo
Cigarette package	25 to 60	Grapes	30 to 40 for a kilo

**Delivery:** You will find out that groceries or meal delivery is very common here. Two apps dominate the market (*Instashop* for groceries, *Talabat* for meals). You can pay by card directly in the app or cash on delivery.



If you choose to pay cash, you prepare the money and when the delivery person arrives, you get your items and pay for them. It's good form to give a tip of 5 to 10 EGP.

**On no account should you let the delivery person enter your flat!**

**Drinking water:** you can brush your teeth with tap water in Cairo but not in any other city, and you shouldn't drink it anywhere. We recommend that you buy packs of 12 or 20 bottles in shops.

**Alcohol:** In Egypt, alcohol is tolerated only in very specific settings. You can buy alcohol in small shops or in *Drinkies* stores.

However, **it is absolutely forbidden to drink in the street or in any other public space.** Alcohol consumption is restricted to bars, nightclubs, some restaurants, and your own home. When you buy alcohol, it is mandatory to take it with you in closed or opaque black plastic bags in order for it not to be visible.

Be advised that when you arrive on Egyptian soil, you have 48 hours to go to one of the duty-free shops located in the city to buy one to two bottles of alcohol. You'll have to show your passport with the date of entry.



**Alcohol may be adulterated.** Sometimes obviously so (brands like Jan David's instead of Jack Daniel's, Jon Warder instead of Johnny Walker), but it is often impossible to know. When in doubt, it may be best to abstain (your liver will thank you). Some choose to limit their alcohol intake to beer. In any case, avoid the cheaper bottles of liquor with a price point between 70 and 150 EGP.

**Food:** Cairo has a lot of markets and supermarkets. Fruits and vegetables are good quality, although their growing conditions are unclear: you should therefore wash them well (for example with water and white vinegar).

Bear in mind that things are not consistently kept chilled.

Unfortunately, even if you are very careful, it can be assumed that you'll go through at least one episode of Traveller's diarrhoea. You'll be glad then to have read the guide and brought your emergency kit! Be particularly careful with street food (which I recommend you avoid) and any dish containing red meat. Never eat raw meat or fish.

**Restaurants and bars:** in Egypt, taxes are not usually included in the prices written of the menus: you'll have to add 14% for taxes and 12% for service. Don't be surprised if you have to pay for cutlery. It's also usual to leave a tip to the wait staff.

Predictably, Zamalek and Maadi have very good restaurants, particularly if you're looking for non-Egyptian food. In the last few years some good-quality Lebanese and Syrian restaurants have opened and are quite successful. All restaurants also deliver (via the *Talabat* app). Here are some addresses for good cafés and restaurants:

### Coffee shops

**Halawa Café:** as mentioned earlier, it's the DEAC students' HQ. A typical Egyptian coffee shop very close to the French Institute.

[https://www.tripadvisor.fr/Restaurant\\_Review-g294201-d16891145-Reviews-Halawa\\_Cafe-Cairo\\_Cairo\\_Governorate.html](https://www.tripadvisor.fr/Restaurant_Review-g294201-d16891145-Reviews-Halawa_Cafe-Cairo_Cairo_Governorate.html)

**Falak:** a very pleasant spot in Garden City with reliable wifi.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/FALAK/731032650243293?fref=ts>

**El villa:** an unusual place in Garden City, different rooms with various atmospheres

<https://www.facebook.com/elvilla1863/>

**Nitocris café:** a quiet coffee shop in Downtown with board games at your disposal and which offers good drinks and desserts.

<https://www.facebook.com/NitocrisseCafe/>

**Sufi bookstore:**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sufi-Bookstore-Zamalek/225666720875466?fref=ts>

**Sip:** one the expensive side, but one of the few cafés with very reliable wifi.

<https://www.instagram.com/sip.egypt/?hl=en>

**Holm café:** a lovely place to study.

[https://www.instagram.com/holm\\_cafe/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/holm_cafe/?hl=en)

**Cilantro:** a chain of coffee shops, they're everywhere and their wifi is usually decent.

### Restaurants

Next to the Institute, hence convenient for your lunch break

Of course there's the restaurant of the Institute itself: **Les Jardins de Mounira**. This restaurant is conveniently located inside the Institute and it serves balanced meals. The DEAC students get a discount on the daily menus.

**Restaurant Bashandy:** a restaurant chain, one location is very close to the French Institute. Sells typical Egyptian sandwiches for very cheap prices.

**Tasha:** with a wide variety of Egyptian dishes, Tasha is a good (and safe) introduction to local food. The owner will welcome you with a smile in a cosy atmosphere. You'll just have to be patient, as it can take up to 40 minutes to get your meal.

**Abou Samra:** pasta and Egyptian-style crêpes.

**Koshary Seto:** fast service and good koshary.

A little further, so not for the weekday lunch breaks

**Abou Tarek Koshary:** a local institution that offers a traditional dish: *Koshary*. Not necessarily the most appetizing dish, but after tasting it it's easy to become addicted! It's anything but low-cal, though.

**Al Koukh:** this Downtown restaurant is decorated like a Beduin tent and offers safe and tasty Egyptian food.

**Antique Khana:** located in Zamalek, this restaurant offers Western food in a vintage setting.

**Taboulah:** an excellent Lebanese restaurant with a branch in Garden City and one in Zamalek, but on the expensive side.

**The Greek club:** a mythical spot in Talaat Harb where the food is good and the prices reasonable, if you have the patience for it.

<https://fr.foursquare.com/v/the-greek-club/4ceec8190acea35d5b4cebae>

**Al Dahhan:** a chain of reasonably priced Egyptian restaurants which caters to local families.

<https://www.facebook.com/eldahan1890/>

**Mat3am al-ikhlās:** a popular place serving very good sandwiches. You'll be immersed in the language and the culture.

<https://goo.gl/maps/Yk65TbNkCEq>

**Kebdet el Prince:** an iconic Egyptian restaurant in Imbaba. It's an institution and you'll have to be patient.

<https://ar-ar.facebook.com/KebdetElprince/>

**Eish we Malh:** a very popular restaurant with Egyptian regulars, the menu is varied but the quality inconsistent. The place is pleasant, located downtown across from the synagogue.

<https://fr-fr.facebook.com/eishmalh/>

**Mandarine Koueider:** a chain of pastry shops where you'll enjoy delicious pastries and homemade ice cream.

It's very common to use *Talabat* to get meals delivered. I'd rather recommend you go out to practice your Arabic rather than choosing dishes in English and online... Here are some favourites of the DEAC students (although I don't support those choices):

- Wimpy: a fairly new burger chain which quickly won the hearts of the students.
- Gad: a chain of restaurants offering shawarma and other sandwiches like the Egyptian hawawshi.
- Bazooka: a burger chain specialising in chicken.
- Baba Abdo: for koshary.

## ❖ A healthy mind in a healthy body!

### Sports

- Running is strongly discouraged in the city, in particular because of the traffic, the condition of the pavement, and the pollution, not to mention the heat.

- There are gyms all around the city, including next to the Institute, and there are choices for every budget.

- Boxing: some students practiced boxing in Dokki with an Egyptian coach. They were satisfied with the training, so we can put you in contact.

- Football: games are played once or twice a week on the football field of the El Horreya high school in Bab El Louk (15 minutes by foot North of the Institute, through Saad Zaghloul). These games are organised by football-loving Egyptians and not by a club (we can put you in contact).



- Rugby: working on the same principle as football, a team with players from different nationalities meets in Maadi (we can put you in contact).

- Swimming: it's an expensive activity but some students found a cheap and satisfactory swimming pool: <https://eg.arabplaces.com/cairo/bab-el-shaaria-youth-center-244426>  
The only problem is that it seems not to be mixed-gender!

## Cultural life

Cairo offers an interesting cultural program, but events are not always easy to find. The administrative assistant of the DEAC will keep you updated on a weekly basis, but here are already some tips:

- **the French Institute:** a very rich and varied program, closely linked to the Egyptian scene. You'll be informed of the events and activities and might even be part of them.

- **the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology (IFAO):** the next-door neighbour of the French Institute, this beautiful institution offers high-quality lectures (in Arabic, English, and French), but also concerts in its lovely garden. It has a well-supplied library.  
<https://www.ifao.egnet.net/actus/manifestations/>

- **Makan:** a centre hosting Zar performances (on Wednesdays). It's very close to the Institute, next to the Saad Zaghloul subway station.  
<https://www.facebook.com/ECCAMakan?fref=ts>

- **the Cairo Opera House:** an institution managing the music and dance venues in Cairo and Alexandria, including the Gezira Opera and the downtown Gomhoriya Theatre.  
The events are registered on the calendar of the main website  
<https://www.cairoopera.org/schedule.php>  
The details of some of the events are only announced on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/243293402441720/events>.

- **Zawya:** an independent cinema located downtown which plays international movies all along the week. The programme is announced on Wednesdays for the next week.  
<https://www.facebook.com/zawyacinema/>

- **the Jesuit cinema centre Al-Nahda** plays an international movie with Arabic subtitles every Saturday night, and organises film-related events  
[https://www.facebook.com/EINahda.jesuit/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/EINahda.jesuit/?ref=page_internal)

- **the Goethe Institut:** the German cultural centre which offers movies, conferences and other events. It's also a pleasant place to study.  
<https://www.facebook.com/Goetheinstitut.cairo/>

- **El Sawy Culturewheel:** a performance space with concerts, theatre, puppet shows, etc. The quality is good and the language level is understandable. I encourage all students to go there.  
<https://www.facebook.com/ElsawyCulturewheel/>

- **The Arabic language academy** organises conferences in *fusha*, with an elegant and understandable language level.  
[https://www.facebook.com/arabicacademy.eg/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/arabicacademy.eg/?ref=page_internal)



**- theatre in Arabic:** the plays are numerous and of uneven quality, but as a student it's always interesting to regularly attend plays, even if you're a beginner! Here are the main theatres:

**Rawabet artistic space:**

[https://www.facebook.com/RawabetArtSpace/events/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/RawabetArtSpace/events/?ref=page_internal)

**Salam theatre:** <https://www.facebook.com/masr7elsalam>

**Al-Husabir theatre:** [https://www.facebook.com/Msr7Alhusabir/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/Msr7Alhusabir/?ref=page_internal)

**Tali3a theatre:** [https://www.facebook.com/masr7tale3a/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/masr7tale3a/?ref=page_internal)

## ❖ Dating

I'll give you some tips here, and while some of them might seem obvious to you it's still better to mention them:

- Relationships outside of marriage can be accepted without too much trouble for foreigners (e.g. in hotels and rentals). Things get more difficult when one of the people is Arab or identified as such (such as having a recognizably Arabic or Islamic name).
- Kissing in public is frowned upon (between foreigners) and virtually impossible between a foreigner and an Egyptian.
- Casual dating is much less common in Europe than in Egypt. Be very careful on dating apps, as catfishing and scams are common. A first date will have to be in a public place and during the day. It would be prudent to tell a trusted person when you have first dates.

## ⚠ ⚠ ⚠ Bear in mind that:

1. In local minds, European women can be seen as « easy » and your behaviour will be interpreted according to those preconceived ideas.
2. The outcome of some homosexual encounters has been dramatic, even fatal. Men have been robbed, beaten, or ended up in intensive care, so please be careful!

## ❖ Health

Always consider a hospital visit as a last resort. Requesting a second medical opinion from an insurance-approved doctor can be useful if the treatment prescribed by the Egyptian doctor doesn't seem to be working.

Always take your passport with you when you go to a hospital, as some will keep it once they admit you to the emergency department.

There's an app (Rizek) which allows you to make medical appointments of all kinds.

Here is a list of medical professionals recommended by DEAC students:

### General practitioners

Here are the doctors on the French consulate's list:

#### **Dr Sabry Ghaly**

Ghaly's Medical Group

32-33, El Golf – Maadi – Le Caire

Phone: 02 23 80 99 95 (appointment only)

0100 866 22 77 (emergencies only)

Email: [drghaly@ghalygroup.com](mailto:drghaly@ghalygroup.com)

**Dr Chérine Kahil**

Phone: 0122 218 22 79

Email: [cherine@kahil.net](mailto:cherine@kahil.net)

**Dentist**

**Dr Mahmoud Shalash** (english-speaking) :

✉ 69 road 9, Maadi ;

☎ +20 122 369 9967

**Dermatologist**

**Dr Salonaz** (english-speaking) : ☎ +20 1005356636

**Gynecologist**

**Dr. Samer Sourour** (male – French-speaking)

El-Mansour Mohamed - Zamalek:

Close to bank Ahly and HARDEE'S. To make an appointment call (or send a WhatsApp message) every day except Thursdays / Fridays between 11:30 et 1.

Phone: 02 27 35 45 75 / 0120 33 81 731.

Maadi: 5 road 263 - New Maadi. Close to pharmacy Moustafa. To make an appointment send a WhatsApp message to 0128 06 799 73. You can also call 02 27 54 48 78 on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 9am to 5pm.

**Ophtalmologist**

**Dr. Mohamed Hosny** (English-speaking)

4 Shebab - Mohandeseen

Phone: 0100 000 7675;

Saturday-Wednesday 12pm-3pm, Sundays and Tuesdays 3pm-6pm.

**Chiropractors**

**Kareem El-Arabi** (English-speaking)

48 el-Farrik Abd El-Moneim - Agouza

Phone: 0100 101 4014

**Alice Khaïter** (French)

20 road 213, Maadi

Phone: 0111 224 1674

(only on weekends)

**Emergencies**

We've had only positive reviews of the emergency department of the As-Salam hospital in Maadi.

For reference purposes: a blood test and an x-ray will cost around 7000 EGP (which you can pay by card). Health costs in Egypt are very expensive as soon as you have to do some tests so you have to plan ahead, and **insurance is essential**.

# Important phone numbers and safety advice

## DEAC

- Ali Mouhoub : 00 20 122 021 7050
- Wadia Abdel Messih : 00 20 122 366 2739

## HOSPITALS - CAIRO

- Al Salam International de Maadi : 19885 / +20 2524 02 50 / +20 2524 00 77
- Anglo-Américain de Zamalek : +20 2735 61 64 / +20 2735 61 62

## PHONE NUMBERS OF THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN CAIRO

### Cairo Embassy:

Embassy switchboard: 00 202 35 67 32 00

Emergency number: 00 202 35 67 33 10

## FRENCH CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES

### Hurghada:

M. Mamdouh Fadl Abeskhairoun

Address: Kasr El Fadl, Magawish, P.O Box 199, Hurghada

Phone: +20 65 346 90 10

Fax: +20 65 346 90 20

Mobile: +20 122 319 35 13

Email: [mamdouh@fadl.biz](mailto:mamdouh@fadl.biz)

### Sharm el Sheikh:

Mme Jeanne Khanty-Banoub

Address: Safari Road, Neama High - Neama Bay, Sharm el Sheikh, South Sinai.

Mobile: +20 122 327 72 94

Email: [khatygigi@gmail.com](mailto:khatygigi@gmail.com)

### French consular agency in Luxor:

Marie-Christine Gerber, honorary Vice-consul

Address: Medinet Abou, Baïrat, West Bank, Louxor

Phone: +20 122 226 41 59 / +20 106 296 60 60

Email: [art\\_et\\_voyage@hotmail.com](mailto:art_et_voyage@hotmail.com)

In case Mrs. Gerber is absent: Mrs. Christine BORGNA. Mobile: +20 155 931 76 00 /

Email: [christineborgna@gmail.com](mailto:christineborgna@gmail.com)

## OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police: 122

Tourist police: 126

Medical emergency (Ambulance): 123

Fire department: 180

**You're now all set to go!**

أهلا وسهلا بكم في أم الدنيا