

## Egypt Society - Everyday Life Inside Egypt

Most aspects of modern Egyptian society are influenced by the dominant religion, Islam. It plays a huge role in both public and private life, shaping everything from daily routines and food to clothing. Islam is not just the state religion but also a way of life for many Egyptians.

If you plan to visit Egypt, it's helpful to know that the country has over 109 million people. There are three main ethnic groups: Arabs, Nubians (in the south), and Berbers (in the Western Desert). Fun fact about the Nubians—they are known for their low prices, so there's no need to bargain with them!

Most Egyptians follow Sunni Islam (about 90%). However, not everyone in Egypt is Muslim. There are also Christians, known as Copts, who trace their roots back to the ancient Egyptians. Today, they are a minority (about 10 million people), but before the Arab conquests, they were the dominant group. One unique detail is that Copts are not part of the Vatican, and you can often recognize them by a cross tattooed on their hand.



## Trading Cities and Farming Villages

In rural Egypt, most people work in farming and raising animals. Since tourists rarely visit these areas, selling souvenirs isn't profitable there. However, in cities like Cairo or Luxor, things are very different. Egyptians in these cities are experts in the art of shopping. They welcome tourists with sweet tea, the smell of incense, and essential oils to encourage them to buy souvenirs. They sell anything that tourists might want.

If you plan to shop, it's helpful to learn how to bargain, although locals often treat it like a secret skill. Don't be shy to let them show you their goods or invite you for a casual cup of tea—it's all part of the experience. Egyptians know that many tourists prefer to look rather than buy, so you won't offend anyone by walking away.



One thing you might notice is that bazaars and markets are mostly filled with men. Women usually stay home and take care of the household, so it's common for men to help you pick out a handbag or scarf instead of women.



## **Globalization in Egypt**

Life in the city is fast, busy, and very noisy. Everywhere you go, you can hear the sounds of vendors, drivers, and rushing taxis. City women dress in a way that suits the urban lifestyle, often looking more modern and European compared to those in villages. They wear scarves in trendy styles, use a lot of makeup, and are more likely to work or leave the house regularly.

For women who don't work, especially in the summer, life starts in the evening. Shops and restaurants open after sunset when the temperature cools down. People relax, sip black tea with fresh mint, and enjoy a shisha pipe while watching tourists pass by.



## Egyptian Fashion Show

It's not true that Egypt rejects all fashion because of Islamic dress rules, especially for women. Not all women cover their bodies, and today many choose to do so on their own, not because of pressure from husbands or fathers. In big cities, many women show their faces, hair, and dress in a European style. Even women who wear a *hijab* (a headscarf) or a *niqab* (a face covering with only the eyes visible) often follow fashion trends. They want to look good and spend hours shopping for clothes. At home, there are no strict rules—women can wear whatever they want, from stylish outfits to pajamas!

You might wonder how women feel about belly dancers or others wearing tight or revealing clothes. Belly dancers, for example, are usually performing as part of a tourist attraction, and many of them are not Egyptian. For Muslim women, occasions like their wedding night are very special. They spend weeks looking for the perfect outfit to impress their new husbands, especially if the husband had only seen their eyes before the marriage.

Fashion in Egypt is changing quickly, and women pay close attention to trends. Even under a long coat like an *abaya*, women enjoy complete freedom to express themselves.



In Egypt, it's perfectly normal for men to kiss each other on the cheek or even hold hands. While women around the world often greet each other with two cheek kisses, Egyptian men kiss four times. Holding hands between men is also common and simply shows respect and friendship, though outsiders might confuse it with something else.

However, public physical contact between men and women—whether couples or even married pairs—is not allowed. This reflects cultural traditions and rules about interactions between different sexes.



## **A Very Honorable Nation**

Egyptians are known for their hospitality. Even on organized trips, you'll notice it. At markets, vendors often invite you for tea and a friendly chat. If you're invited to someone's home, say yes! Bring a small gift and remember to leave your shoes outside before entering. You'll likely be greeted by many people because Egyptians are very family-oriented. They enjoy eating meals together and, like everyone else, love to gossip.

In Egypt, there is great respect for the elderly, and men take pride in protecting the reputation of their wives, sisters, and daughters. Older visitors or adults with disabilities are treated with kindness and respect as part of local values.

Egyptians are cheerful and have a good sense of humor, often joking about life and politics. They are sociable, family-focused, and spend a lot of time with friends, family, and helping those in need.

Visiting Egypt and spending time with its people—whether Muslim or Christian—will make your trip truly special. The memories you make will stay with you forever, and you'll likely want to return. Egypt is a place that touches your heart, and its people will feel like lifelong friends.

Looking for a special way to explore Egypt? Check out our luxury Egypt tours for an unforgettable adventure!