

Sneak peak into the egyptian culture essay



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So, they established a central government to regulate matters among them. On the other hand, the geographical position of Egypt helped the Egyptians to be in constant contact with the East and the West, the North and the South, a matter that helped them acquire a lot of experiences and cultures. Hence, the Egyptian community serves as a melting pot for all cultures and civilizations, yet the Egyptians maintained their habits and traditions as well as their social and cultural characteristics.

The Egyptian community, however, reflects a series of values and principles derived from various religions.

Religion is the main source of the cultural and intellectual heritage of the Egyptian people. In modern times, health care, youth and children care, the role of Non-Governmental Organizations and civil society institutions affect the nature of the Egyptian community in regards to its modern and renewed dimensions. Language in Egypt Jews avoided intermarriage with other groups in recent centuries, but they also speak Egyptian Arabic language as everyone else.

The Berbers, who lives in the west (Siwa oasis, the oases west of the Nile and along the coast west of Alexandria), speak Arabic. However, Berber language is still strong in Siwa.

Islam in Egypt is a complex and diverse religion. However Christians are mainly Coptic Orthodox.

The Jewish community has just around 200 persons residing in Egypt. Family The role of the natal family. Women, upon marriage, move to the house of

their husbands, but they remain members of their natal families. They retain their fathers' family names after marriage.

In case of divorce or widowhood, They are expected to move back to their natal home. Men have to bear the financial responsibility of caring for all single women in their families, even if these women have been previously married.

These relationships with both female and male members of the immediate family remain the strongest links in women's lives. The role of extended families. Some version of the extended family is the ideal among all classes, because they live in the same building or neighborhood with fathers, brothers, sisters, mothers, or cousins.

However, some extended families do not follow the traditional patterns in which genealogically related persons of two generations live together or in which married siblings form one household. Rather, extended families are based on the incorporation of unmarried relatives into a family.

Regardless of age, unmarried sons or daughters live with their parents until marriage. After divorce or the death of a spouse, both men and women, especially if they do not have children, are expected to return to their parents if they are still alive; otherwise, they are supposed to live with a brother, sister, or other relative. Another popular extended family pattern is the one in which a child is "borrowed" by a relative with no children of his or her own.

Among lower-class people, this phenomenon appear more often among grandparents who need the assistance of a child for housework.

Another common middle- and lower-class family pattern found in Egypt is the incorporation apprentices or work assistants, into a particular household. Such individuals have a special position, because although not all of them sleep in the house of their employer. Upper-middle and upper-class families employ domestic servants who may or may not live in the household. Most Egyptians think that family provides a sense of place, a congenial setting, and a social network for financial and personal support.

Arts, culture and music in Egypt

In the last quarter of the 20th century, Egyptian music was a way to communicate social and class issues. Singing is the most integral part of the Egyptian Music. This may have to do with the impact of both the Ancient Egyptian culture and Islam culture on Arabic Music. In European and American countries, singing is taught using musical instruments like a piano, on the other hand, in the Arabic Countries, playing instruments starts with the learning of maqams through singing. As a result of this interest in singing, different genres of singing evolved and changed during the years.

Some of these genres are detailed below: Muashahah (pl.

muashshahat) Mawwal (pl. Mawaweel) Dawr (pl. Adwar) Qaseeda (pl.

Qasaed) Nasheed (pl. Anasheed) Taqtuqah (pl. Taqateeq) Food and Drink

Food Egyptian food reflects the country's melting-pot history.

Local cooks using local ingredients have modified Greek, Turkish, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian traditions to suit Egyptian budgets, customs, and tastes. The dishes are simple and hearty, made with naturally ripened fruits and vegetables and seasoned with fresh spices.

Food in the south is closely linked to North African cuisine, more zesty than the food of the north—but neither is especially hot. The mainstay of Egyptian diets, *aysh*, or bread, is available in several forms. The most common is a pita type (a flat bread) made either with refined white flour or with whole wheat.

French-style baguettes are also available. *Ful*, fava beans cooked in a variety of ways, is another staple. Salads are typically made with ingredients selected from various foods such as greens, tomatoes, potatoes, eggs, beans, and yogurt.

Western-type salad bars have come into vogue in larger cities, and for a few pounds you can make a whole meal of the fresh produce.

Rice and bread form the bulk of Egyptian main courses, which may be served at lunch or dinner. For most Egyptians, meat is a luxury to be used in small amounts, cooked with vegetables, and served with or over rice. Meat dishes comprise most restaurant fare. The mixed-vegetable casserole or stew called *torly* is usually made with lamb or beef, onions, potatoes, beans, and peas.

To make Egyptian-style kebab, cooks season chunks of lamb in onion, marjoram, and lemon juice and roast them on a spit over a fire.

Kufta is ground lamb, flavored with spices and onions, which is rolled into long narrow patties and roasted like kebab, with which it's often served. We can order grilled chicken, firaakh mashwi, in a restaurant or buy one already cooked at streetside rotisseries. Hamaam (pigeons) are raised throughout Egypt, and when stuffed with seasoned rice and grilled, constitute a national delicacy.

Egyptians serve both freshwater and saltwater fish under the general term samak. The best fish seem to be near the coasts (ocean variety) or in Aswan, where they are caught in Lake Nasser.

Fruit and vegetables include burtu'aan bedummoh (pink oranges), which have sweet, red pulp. Tin shawki is a cactus fruit that appears in August or September. Buying fruits on the street is safe as long as you can peel them, but beware of watermelons—they may have been injected with water (which can be contaminated) to increase their weight. Egyptian pastry or pudding desserts are usually drenched in honey syrup.

Baklava (filo dough, honey, and nuts) is one of the most famous. Most restaurants and many homes end meals with fresh fruit. Beverages Bottled water is available in all areas frequented by visitors.

Both large and small bottles are sold on the street and from ice buckets at most antiquities sites. The fresh fruit and vegetable juices (asiir) available at small stalls throughout Egypt are delectable treats.

The shopkeepers blend the fresh juice and small amounts of ice and sugar water, then strain this mash into glass. Developed and popularized in the

Middle East, the drinking of ahwa (coffee) remains a national tradition. Local coffeehouses cater to men who come to drink coffee, discuss politics, play backgammon, listen to music, and smoke the hukah (water pipe).

Egyptian coffee is made from finely powdered beans brewed in a small pot.

As the water begins to boil, the grounds float to the surface in a dark foam; the ahwa is served in the pot and poured into a demitasse. Heavier grounds sink to the bottom of the cup and the lighter ones form a foam on the surface, the mark of a perfectly brewed cup. Devout Muslims do not drink alcohol, but beer, wine, and hard liquor are available in bars, restaurants, and some grocery shops. Etiquette and Customs In certain cities of Egypt traffic jams are the norm and this causes problems when doing business.

If person is from America and is meeting associates in Egypt, they could not show for the meeting.

Not only is traffic to blame but if other issues arise it's not uncommon for the Egyptians to postpone their meeting with foreigners in favor of the other commitment. It's understood that guest may have to make several attempts at having his or her actual meeting. Foreigners often take a back seat to family or local obligations. Meetings don't normally take place in a private setting. Instead, other obligations, business matters, even family issues often interrupt the original meeting.

It's not uncommon for different meetings to be taking place at one time.

Patience will be seen in a positive light so foreigners should not get angry or visibly irritate. Friday is a holy day and no business will be conducted. The

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normal work week for most Egyptians is from Saturday to Wednesday. Some government offices are closed on Thursday and Friday; others are closed on Friday and Saturday. Most business offices close at two p. m.

during working days. It's not unusual in the winter for many business to open in the morning, close in the afternoon then reopen in the late afternoon to evening.

Different calendars are used in Egypt than what are used in America. For that reason many of the Muslim holidays fall on different days than the previous year. Businesses and government offices often have very short hours during the month of the Ramadan so be sure and inquire or learn about this before making plans. Foreigners have to make sure any paperwork for business purposes contains dates from both the Muslim calendar and the Gregorian.

Modesty is important in the Egyptian culture. Most parts of the body must remain covered even though the weather may be hot and humid.

Exposing upper arms, legs or portions of the chest is considered unacceptable and even vulgar. At the same time, it can be offensive to the natives of Egypt if guests copy their style of dress.

Men should wear dress pants and long sleeve shirt with coat and tie for business. It is in poor taste to display much jewelry, particularly pendants or necklaces. It is preferred that women wear dresses or skirts which at least cover the arms down to the elbow region. Hemlines above the knee are

crude and floor-length is preferred. Exposing the knee and upper leg are taboo.

It is also preferred that a woman cover her head with a scarf but is not necessary in some parts of the land. Americans tend to stand back more when speaking to someone whereas in the Egyptian culture being very close to someone while speaking is the norm. Foreigners should try to seem not offended when someone gets close to them during conversation. Guests should not back away or turn their head. Foreigners cannot ridicule the country or an associate, even if they are ridiculing themselves.

Topics of conversation important to Egyptians may be sports, the culture, the land or industry.

Guests should not inquire about an Egyptian man's wife or kids and avoid most personal topics such as how long the man has been married, where he lives, or how many sisters and brothers he has. Bringing up the topic of Israel is not a wise idea either. When writing the name of an Egyptian associate, foreigners should use title and entire name. When speaking, they should use title and last name. Names are written in Arabic making it difficult to translate into the English language.

Know ahead of time how each person should be addressed and practice pronunciation.

If the person has no distinct title, use " Mr. ", " Mrs. " or " Miss" as labels of respect. If guests offer a gift, or a gift is given to them, they should accept it with both hands or just the right hand but never the left. If foreigners are

invited to the home of an associate should bring along baked goods or chocolates as a gift.

Flowers are not acceptable gifts since, in most parts of the country, they are seen as relative to funerals. Guests should have business cards printed in English on one side and Arabic on the other. Expect business decisions to take a long time to come to light.

Being extremely pushy won't help matters, either. Guests just have to give them the time they need or the decision will not be made in their favor.

Expect conversation to be animated, exaggerated or even emotional. The word " yes" can mean " yes", " maybe" or " we'll see". When entering a home and some other buildings foreigners should be prepared to remove their shoes. Always they should let someone walk ahead of them so that guests can follow suit.

Many Muslims refuse alcohol so if foreigners are hosting a party they should be sure that they have other drink choices available.

If guests are attending a dinner that Egyptians are hosting foreigners should leave a small portion of the foods on the plate to show that they have fed guests more than plenty. Sprinkling salt on guests' food will offend since it's virtually a statement of the food not tasting good enough. If foreigner develops a friendship with an Egyptian male, and foreigners is a man, it's not unusual for the Egyptian to hold his hand. Foreigner have to try not to react unkindly towards this gesture of friendship.

On the other hand, when introductions are being made, foreigners should not be surprised if the same man acts as if his wife is not even there.

Failing to introduce spouses is acceptable policy and guest would be rude to inquire who she is or to acknowledge her in any way. Sometimes men in this country offer a greeting kiss to other men and women often kiss other women in greetings, but rarely men to women. Foreigners should not gesture with the left hand, which is considered unclean in the Arab nation. The sign of a "thumb's up" is considered vulgar and is inappropriate.

When removing shoes, guests should lay them on their sides with the soles touching each other so that they never point at a particular person.

Showing the soles of guests' shoes is simply unacceptable in Egyptian culture. Foreigners should sit with both feet flat on the floor at all times. As with any traveling experience it's a wise idea to study the culture and tendencies to fit in as well as possible. And in many countries foreigners can offend someone easily by mannerisms so practicing certain rituals or memorizing taboos will help foreigners to succeed.