

# Arrival Guide

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## Bibliotheca Alexandrina Alexandria 2008



The Bibliotheca Alexandrina Arrival Guide for Alexandria 2008 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](http://www.bibalex.org).

Information in this Guide is correct at the time of preparation, July 2008, 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.

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## Welcome...

*Marhaba* and welcome to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Here at the BA we pride ourselves on being a cultural complex leading Egypt into the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 just celebrated its fifth 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;
- Nine permanent exhibitions;
- Three 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.

For further information about the Library please check the BA website: [www.bibalex.org](http://www.bibalex.org)

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/50hertz 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 arrival<sup>1</sup>. 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. For more information about the rules and regulations concerning Visa and other issues, please check the following link:  
[http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA\\_Portal/en-GB/Services/Rules+and+Regulations/](http://www.mfa.gov.eg/MFA_Portal/en-GB/Services/Rules+and+Regulations/)

- **Health Check** – There are no required vaccinations to enter Egypt except for visitors travelling from Yellow Fever or Cholera infected regions<sup>2</sup>. 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 3-5 EGP for their services rendered (assisting you with your bags, parking your car, etc.). Make sure, however, that you do not tip professionals or businessmen 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. Taxi fast call in Alexandria: (03) 4210111 / 4210050 or from any Mobile: 64236.*
- **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 2 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 three mobile networks in Egypt are Vodaphone, MobilNil and Etisalat. Once in Egypt you may select any carrier (for more information please consult [www.mobinil.com.eg](http://www.mobinil.com.eg) or [www.vodafone.com.eg](http://www.vodafone.com.eg) or [www.etisalat.com.eg](http://www.etisalat.com.eg)).
  - 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 5.55 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 hourly from 8.00 a.m. till 10.00 p.m. directly from the airport to Alexandria (15<sup>th</sup> May Station-Smouha) and cost around 40 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 (+203 3633552 or +203 5435222). There is also the West Delta company that departs from the airport every hour and costs around 35 EGP (+203 3633993).



- 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 50 EGP, but make sure you negotiate the price before you leave the airport. Train schedules and reservation information are on the following link: <http://www.egyptail.gov.eg/docs/online/online.html>

### Train Types

The following table shows the different types of trains:

<b>Express</b>	Air-conditioned 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes. Sometimes called <b>French</b> (pronounced -faransawi- in Arabic).
<b>Speed</b>	Air-conditioned 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes. Sometimes called <b>Spanish</b> (pronounced -asbani- in Arabic).
<b>Turbine</b>	Air-conditioned 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> class. Pronounced -tourbini- in Arabic
<b>Nefertiti</b>	Luxurious carriages that may be appended to a train. It has compartments, each has 6 comfortable seats. Its fare is higher than the first three types.
<b>Sleeping</b>	Luxurious trains that runs only between Cairo and Luxor/Aswan. The ENR sleeping trains are operated by a private company called ABELA.
<b>Ordinary</b>	Only 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> classes (not air-conditioned). Stops at villages and centers. Tickets are issued directly at the station with no prior reservation.

**ADVICE** When you query or reserve on a train, the TRAIN NUMBER is your key. Also the reserved ticket has the Wagon and Seat numbers printed on it.

- 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.

<b>Company</b>	<b>Phone Numbers</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Avis</b>	+202 22652429	Cairo Intl. Airport Cairo, Egypt
<b>Europcar</b>	T: +202 22672439 F: +202 22689088	Cairo Intl. Airport Cairo, Egypt
<b>Hertz</b>	T: +202 3303 4241 F: +202 3347 4172	195 Str. 26th of July, Mohandeseen Cairo, Egypt
<b>J Car</b>	T: +202 22652340 F: +202 3360 3255	8 Jeddah str., Mohandeseen Cairo, Egypt

- 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 23422591. Limousines from Cairo to Alexandria usually cost anywhere between 500 to 1.000 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 40-50 EGP and from Nozha, about 25-30 EGP. Make sure you negotiate the price with the taxi driver before you leave the airport.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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