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## Culture and Entertainment

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**Overview** Over the course of history, Egypt has integrated a series of civilizations that have merged together and evolved into a unique and rich culture of multiple facets and dimensions. This has had a great effect on the Egyptian character, known for its tolerance, heartiness and hospitality.

Egypt boasts a panoply of historical sites and modern entertainment avenues in all its governorates, offering a unique experience where the ancient and modern strands converge and interact.

**Pharaohs** The Pharaohs ruled Egypt for thousands of years. They founded a magnificent civilization as witnessed in their legacy of fascinating monuments (mainly concentrated in the south of Egypt).

Among the most famous of these: The Pyramids, The Sphinx of Sakkara, The Kalabsha Temple and Abu Simbel Temple in Aswan, Dayr El Bahareya Temple and Karnak Temple in Luxor, in addition to temples in other governorates, such as the Temple of Ramses II in Minya. The famous Egyptian Museum in Tahrir, downtown Cairo, hosts the largest ever Pharaonic collection, including that of the enigmatic Tut-Ank-Amoun.

**Greco Roman** The Pharaonic era was then followed by the Greek era, during which the Ptolemaic dynasty ruled and founded the great city of Alexandria. During the succeeding Roman era, Egypt became the jewel of the Roman Empire and the center of scientific research where the Alexandria Library and University were founded.

In addition to the Greco Roman Museum, some of the most important sites are: The Sinking City and Pompey Pillar in Alexandria, Serapeum in Sakkara and Dandara Temple in Egypt.

**Coptic** From the time the Virgin Mary sought refuge in Egypt with her holy son Jesus, the Coptic civilization has taken root in Egypt as seen in its many ancient churches, e.g. The Monastery of the Virgin in Minya, the Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai and the Suspended Church in Cairo. The Coptic Museum in Cairo displays ancient Coptic manuscripts that tell the story of the holy family and the evolution of Christianity in Egypt.



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## Islamic

Following the defeat of the Romans at the hands of the Arab leader “Amr Ibn El As,” Islam spread all over Egypt and became the official religion of the country. The Islamic civilization flourished in Egypt as attested by the architecture of Older Cairo and its centuries-old monuments, e.g. Al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo (with its most ancient and important University of Islamic Studies), the Citadel in Cairo and Fort Qaitbay in Alexandria. The Islamic Museum in Cairo displays a fascinating collection of Islamic arts.

## Modern Art and Music

Egypt has many modern art museums. For instance, Mahmoud Khalil Museum in Cairo exhibits a wide collection of paintings by some of the most important painters in the world, such as Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin and Mahmoud Said. Moreover, exhibits of modern painters' works are regularly held in Sakkia El Sawy and the Cairo Opera House in Cairo.

Egyptian music is a unique blend of Arabic, African, and Western influences, among others. Concerts are regularly organized by the Cairo Opera House and Sakkia El Sawy.

## Cultural Centers

There are many foreign cultural centers in Egypt that offer various services, such as language courses, libraries, and programs in native language. The main cultural centres in Egypt are: The French Cultural Center (CCCF), The Japanese Cultural Center, The Russian Cultural Center, The British Council, The Spanish Cultural Center, The German Cultural Center, The Indian Cultural Center and The Italian Cultural Center. (Note: Center in text is spelled the way it is in the heading.)

## Egyptian Cuisine

Traditional Egyptian cuisine is one of the most distinguished in the world. “Foul and Falafel” (made of beans) and “Molokheya” (made of green leaves) are among its most typical dishes. Most of the hotels offer Egyptian food menus, and many restaurants specialize in Egyptian cuisine.

## Reference:

- Egypt's Information Portal: <http://www.eip.gov.eg/>
- Egyptian Tourism Network: <http://www.tourismenet.net/>