

CAIRO

Cairo (Arabic: القاهرة al-Qāhira), is the **capital city of Egypt**, and is the largest city in Africa, and the Arab World. It is the **largest metropolitan area in Egypt**, and is one of the **most populous in the world**. Cairo has long been the center of the region's cultural and artistic life, and has the oldest and largest film and music industries in the Arab World, earning it the name of the "Hollywood of the East". While Al-Qahirah is the official name of the city in Arabic, Egyptians often refer to it simply as Masr (the Arabic name for Egypt itself). Cairo was founded by the Fatimid Caliphate, replacing Fustat as the seat of the government, and serving as the capital of Egypt ever since.

Cairo has a population of about 8 million people, according to the 2008 population census. The number of inhabitants was about a million higher at the time of the census, but this was adjusted downwards on the 17th of April 2008 when the new government of Helwan was created from parts of the old Cairo government. Cairo's metropolitan area has a population of about 17.8 million people. Cairo is the sixteenth most populous metropolitan area in the world. It is also the most populous metropolitan area in Africa.

Cairo has a mix of historical and modern cultural sights. This includes the Pyramids, the Hanging Church, Saladin's Citadel, the Virgin Mary's Tree, the Sphinx, and Heliopolis, Al-Azhar, the Mosque of Amr ibn al-'As, Saqqara, the Cairo Tower, and the Old City. Cairo is nicknamed "The City of A Thousand Minarets".



The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, known commonly as the Egyptian Museum, is home to the most extensive collection of ancient Egyptian antiquities in the world. It has 136,000 items on display, with many more hundreds of thousands in its basement storerooms.

Khan el-Khalili is for many the most entertaining part of Cairo. It is an ancient shopping area, nothing less, but some of the shops have also their own little factories or workshops.

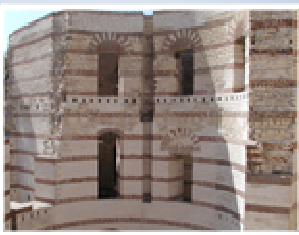
The suq (which is the Arabic name for bazaar, or market) dates back to 1382, when Emir Djaharks el-Khalili built a big caravanserai (or khan) right here. A caravanserai was a sort of hotel for traders, and usually the focal point for economic activity for any surrounding area. This caravanserai is still there, you just ask for the narrow street of Sikka Khan el-Khalili and Badestan.

Old Cairo, the part of Cairo that contains Coptic Cairo and Fostat, which contains the Coptic Museum, Babylon Fortress, Hanging Church, the Greek Church of St. George, many other Coptic churches, the Ben Ezra Synagogue and Amr ibn al-'As Mosque.



The Coptic Museum is a museum in Coptic Cairo, Egypt with the largest collection of Egyptian Christian artifacts in the world. It was founded by Morcos Smeika Pasha in 1910 to house Coptic antiquities. The museum traces the history of Christianity in Egypt from its beginnings to the present day. It was erected over a land offered by the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria under the guardianship of Pope Cyril V.

The Coptic museum houses the world's most important examples of Coptic art.



Babylon Fortress was an ancient fortress city or castle in the Delta of Egypt, located at Babylon in the area today known as Coptic Cairo. It was situated in the Heliopolite Nome, upon the right (eastern) bank of the Nile, at latitude 30°N, near the commencement of the Pharaonic Canal (also called Ptolemy's Canal and Trajan's Canal), from the Nile to the Red Sea.

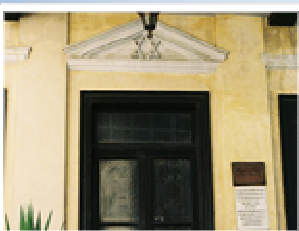
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Saint Virgin Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church also known as the **Hanging Church** (El Muallaqa) is one of the oldest churches in Egypt and the history of a church on this site dates to the 3rd century A.D.

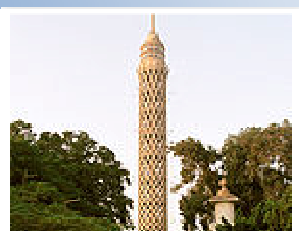
The Hanging (The Suspended) Church is named for its location above a gatehouse of Babylon Fortress, the Roman fortress in Coptic Cairo (Old Cairo); its nave is suspended over a passage.

The church is approached by 29 steps; early travelers to Cairo dubbed it "the Staircase Church." [2] The land surface has risen by some 6 metres since the Roman period so that the Roman tower is mostly buried below ground, reducing the visual impact of the church's elevated position. The entrance from the street is through iron gates under a pointed stone arch. The nineteenth century facade with twin bell towers is then seen beyond a narrow courtyard decorated with modern art biblical designs. Up the steps and through the entrance is a further small courtyard leading to the eleventh century outer porch.



The Ben Ezra Synagogue (Hebrew: ארזע וב תסנכ תיב, Arabic: دبع عم (ارزع نب), sometimes referred to as the **El-Geniza Synagogue** (Hebrew: הזינג לא תסנכ תיב), is situated in Coptic Cairo, Egypt. According to local tradition, it is located on the site of where baby Moses was found. The land for the synagogue was purchased in 882 CE for 20,000 dinars by Abraham ibn Ezra of Jerusalem.

This was the synagogue whose geniza or store room was found in the 19th century to contain a treasure of abandoned Hebrew secular and sacred manuscripts. The collection, known as the Cairo Geniza, was brought to Cambridge, England at the instigation of Solomon Schechter.



The Cairo Tower is a free-standing concrete TV tower in Cairo. It stands in the Zamalek district on Gezira Island in the Nile River, in the city centre. At 187 meters, it is 43 meters higher than the

Great Pyramid of Giza, which stands some 15 km to the southwest.

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