

Egypt



Introduction

Egypt, officially Arab Republic of Egypt is a country in northeastern Africa and southwestern Asia. It's northern boarder is the Mediterranean Sea, on the east lies Israel and the Red Sea, Sudan is to it's south, and on the west is Libya. The land of the Nile River, Egypt is the cradle of one of the world's greatest ancient civilizations and has a recorded history that dates from approximately 3200 BC.

Although modern day Egyptians are usually lumped together with "the Arabs" due to their language and Islamic traditions, this is not completely accurate. There is a truly Bedouin Arab grouping within Egypt, who are still largely nomadic tribal people living in isolated oases and roaming through the country's vast desert regions. Many Bedouin Arabs reside the Sinai Peninsula and along the Red Sea coast, across from Arabia.

Fun Fact

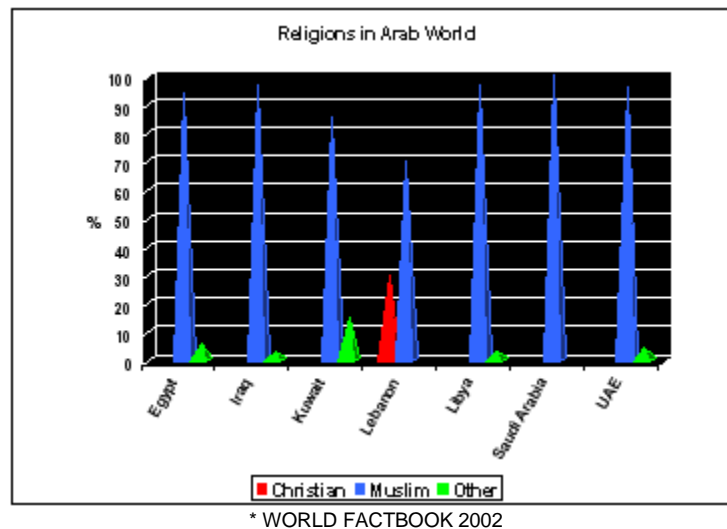
Egyptians often consider their country to be a bridge between the European West and the Arab East. Thus, business practices may resemble European or Arab practices or anything in between.

Geert Hofstede Analysis Egypt

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The Geert Hofstede analysis for Egypt is almost identical to other Arab countries their Muslim faith plays a large role in the people's lives. Large power distance and uncertainty avoidance are the predominant characteristics for this region. This indicates that it is expected and accepted that leaders separate themselves from the group and issue complete and specific directives. [More Details](#)

Religion in Egypt



Appearance

- Foreigners are expected to abide by local standards of modesty however, do not adopt native clothing. Traditional clothes on foreigners may be offensive.
- Most of the body must always remain covered despite the heat.
- A jacket and tie are usually required for men at business meetings. Men should wear long pants and a shirt, preferably long-sleeved, buttoned up to the collar. Men should also avoid wearing visible jewelry, particularly around the neck.
- Women should always wear modest clothing in public. High necklines sleeves at least to the elbows are expected. Hemlines, if not ankle-length should at least be well below the knee. A look of baggy concealment should be the goal, pants or pant suits are not recommended. It is a good idea to keep a scarf handy, especially if entering a Mosque.

Behavior

- Space relationships among members of the same sex will be much closer than North Americans and Europeans are comfortable with. Egyptians will tend to stand close and moving away may be seen as a sign of aloofness. On the other hand, men and women stand farther apart from each other than is the custom in United States and Europe.
- Only the right hand should be used for eating. Throughout most of the Middle East the left hand is reserved for bodily hygiene.
- Try not to sit with your legs crossed. Showing the sole of your shoe is considered an insult to another person.
- Tapping the two index fingers together is considered a crude gesture meaning, "Would you sleep with me?"
- It is common to smoke in public. Be considerate to others present and offer your cigarettes.
- While dining it is considered impolite to eat everything on your plate. Leaving food on your plate symbolizes abundance and is considered a compliment to your host.

Communications

- Names are often confusing. It's best to get the names (in English) of those you will meet, speak to, or correspond with ahead of time so that you can find out both their full names and how they are to be addressed in person.
- Arabic is read from right to left and books or magazines start at what would be the last page in the U.S. Printed literature should have an impressive back cover, even if printed in English.
- Nearly all Egyptians speak Arabic. Most international business people will speak English, French or both.
- Frequently appointments are interrupted by phone calls and visits from friend and family.
- Business cards should be printed in English on one side and Arabic on the other.
- Documents should carry two dates, the Gregorian (Western) date and the Hijrah (Arabic) date.