

EGYPT

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EGYPT

24.11.2010 - 3.01.2011 - 1854 km - **1 month i 10 days**

CULTURE DIFFERENCES

After passing couple of Arab countries, we have not experienced a greater shock in Egypt. If you obey rules related to Islam religion and culture, you should not have too much trouble (information available in the practical information relating to Syria). The exception, which shocked us, was Egyptians love for dirt, dust and noise. Sometimes we had the impression that this nation cannot live without these three components. If we reported earlier that Syria was dirty, we must now decide to withdraw Syrian leadership and hand it over to the Egyptians. If we reported that Lebanese drivers were crazy - in comparison to the Egyptians, the Lebanese have no clue about the breaking driving regulations :-)

STEREOTYPES - FACTS AND MYTHS

"In Egypt there is a terrifying robbery "

This is true in the tourist areas, such as the Pyramids of Giza, Luxor and Aswan. Most specialize in this are gangs of kids who are trying to sell you something, distracting your attention, while others are robbing your pockets. This way I nearly got robbed in Aswan. In other places, we felt very comfortable and safe. Even in Cairo, we were not scared to wander down the dark streets in the night. In small towns, where we were nearly almost crushed by a curious crowd, Egyptians had many opportunities to steal something from us. Never anything like this has happened. Overall, Egypt made on us an impression of a safe country. Of course, caution is needed always and everywhere, that's why we never left our bikes unattended or even under the care of locals (as is often done in Turkey). In the night we felt very safe in our tents.

"City of Dead in Cairo, is a very dangerous place which is better to avoid."

The city of dead is an inhabited cemetery. As the population of Cairo grows very fast, there is not much space left anymore. So people use every available space, including cemeteries. This mythical place, it is not contrary to rumors so dangerous. The fact that people live in the tombs is extraordinary but when you go there, it turns out that this is another district of Cairo, with streets, buses, shops, schools, and small workshops as everywhere else. Contrary to what the name suggests, the city of the dead is a very vibrant place, full of life. In our opinion, worth seeing. Do not only wander there after dark.

DANGERS

1. Dirt, dust, noise, and crazy drivers.
2. Diarrhea. A serious type with high fever (up to 40 degrees) and abdominal pain. This disease is caused, as they say, by another bacterial flora in Egyptian food. In practice, this flora is the result of dirt and feces in the food (usually from unwashed hands or vegetables, particularly lettuce). The most effective drug is Antinal (nifuroxasidum) together with something against fever. .
3. The Red Sea coral reefs and most of its inhabitants. Best do not touch anything, do not go barefoot in the water.
4. On the desert e careful of snakes, spiders and scorpions.
5. The terrorist attacks - during our stay in Egypt, there was a bomb explosion in the Catholic church in Alexandria.
6. Swindlers, crooks and pickpockets. This applies to tourist destinations, major cities where very often you can meet someone who pretends that he wants to help you, but eventually he will demand an astronomical bakshish (tip). In places such as Giza, you have to watch out for crooks cooperating with corrupt police. They are trying to push the naive tourists to hand some small gift that is supposed to bring happiness and luck. Then they urge tourist to hide it in his pocket, because it is a gift. When this "gift" will land in your pocket, they will immediately begin to scream that they got robbed! Then "police" come and blackmails the white man, for example, that either he will pay 200 bucks or they will arrest him for theft. So remember - do not touch or take anything to your hand!!!

LANGUAGE

Arabic.

Except of touristic places, nobody will speak English. Basics of Arabic necessary, especially for shopping.

VISA

We came to Egypt by ferry from Jordan (Aquaba - Nwebe). On the ferry, they took our passport in return for which we got a scrap of paper, a "certificate", which we had to present in the morning, to get released from the vessel. Our passports, already with visas, were waiting for us at the port, in the police station. There we paid for visas 15\$ for one month. Even though, tourist visa allows only for a month, there is no problem if you overstay it up to 15 days. This information we checked personally at the office in Aswan. We were leaving Egypt with 10 days delay and we had no problems. If someone chooses to travel only to Sinai, he gets a free visa "Sinai only", but with this visa, it is not allowed to pass Suez Canal.

On the way out, there is an exit fee - 2 EL.

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