

1 CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

The palace of Queen Cleopatra has disappeared under the sea in Alexandria harbour. No problem! There are plans to preserve it in an underwater museum.

2 ABU QIR BAY

Over 200 years ago, the broad sweep of Abu Qir Bay saw an all-night naval battle between the British and the French.

3 LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

Somewhere under the busy streets of Alexandria lie the ruins of the one of the greatest libraries the world has ever known.

4 SILVER SANDS AT SIDI ABDOUL-RAHMAN

Here's the place to stay: for a small fortune you can rent a seaside villa built for the President of Egypt!

If you're afraid of things creepy, don't go down the stairs! The rooms below were carved out to house dead bodies.

5 EL ALAMEIN

After the exciting battle of Rosetta, here are some much sadder ones: the gravestones of those who fell at the Battle of El Alamein.

6 WADI EL NATRUN

The desert looks pretty bleak here, but that's why early Christian holy men chose it as a place to live.

7 THE KHAN EL-KHALILI BAZAAR

A few years ago the loveliest area of Cairo was an enormous rubbish dump!

8 THE CITY OF THE DEAD

Fed up with noisy neighbours? Come to the el-Anda district of Cairo. It's dead quiet. Literally!

9 THE CATACOMBS KOM ESH SHUGAFRA

Objects from the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun are just some of the amazing items inside the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

10 THE GLORIES OF GIZA

Over 40 million years ago, the deserts of North Africa were under the sea - and there are whale fossils to prove it.

11 WHALE BONES IN THE DESERT

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12 KING KHUFU'S BOAT

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The quaint village of Tunis in the El-Fayoum Oasis is a centre of artistic creativity, especially pottery.

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The 'Pharaonic Village' just outside Cairo is an attempt to imagine life in Egypt 3,000 years ago.

20 A CAMEL RIDE

You could visit the Pyramids by car or bus or even on a bike. But the very best way is by camel, at sunset.

21 FAVA BEANS

Some say fava beans (broad beans) have been grown beside the Nile for over 6,000 years.

22 THE WADI EL-RAYAN WATERFALLS

Egypt's only waterfalls are in the middle of the desert. How strange!

23 SAILING ALONG

Perfect peace on our luxury dahabya, a river cruiser with sails.

24 AMARNA, THE CITY OF THE SUN GOD

It was here that Pharaoh Akhenaten tried to persuade his people that there were not many gods, but one: the Sun.

25 SAND EVERYWHERE!

The Nile flows through the Sahara, the world's largest hot desert. Its name means 'desert' in Arabic - so Sahara Desert actually means 'Desert desert'!

26 METERTITI, THE LADY OF GRACE

The beautiful queen of Pharaoh Akhenaten was also known as his Beloved, the Lady of Grace, and the Sweet of Love.

WONDERS OF THE MILE

Cruise upstream through the history and mystery of the mighty River Nile, from the golden beaches of the Mediterranean to the Great Lakes of East Africa.

3 THE ROSETTA STONE

Though Rosetta means 'little rose' in Italian, the town is famous for a black stone rather than a red flower.

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THE RIVER NILE

A FEW THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE WE SET OFF...

The Nile is so much more than just a river: It's a...

- **Record-breaker:** at least 6,853 km (4,258 miles) in length, it's the longest river in the world. No one knows precisely where it begins.

- **Thread that links together the 11 countries through which it flows:** Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan and Egypt.



- **Lifeline providing Egypt and Sudan with most of their water.**

- **Highway for thousands of boats, big and small.**

- **Powerhouse:** the river's power generates more than 10% of Egypt's electricity.

- **Moving history museum:** along its banks lie many of the world's finest ancient monuments.

- **Living timeline that runs from the beginning of human civilization to today!**

1. CLEOPATRA'S PALACE

Cleopatra - a queen, not a pharaoh - is perhaps the best known of all the rulers of ancient Egypt. When she was 11 years old, she married her 4-year-old brother - yes, the Egyptian royal family did some weird things in those days! She took control of Egypt after he drowned in the River Nile.

Later, the famous Roman general Julius Caesar came to Egypt with an army. He knew all about the beautiful Cleopatra, but refused to meet with her. Legend has it she smuggled herself into the palace at Alexandria inside a rug - and she and Caesar became very good friends.

If plans for an underwater museum go ahead, we will soon be able to see the palace where all this happened.



2. ABU QIR BAY

It's 1798. The great French general, Napoleon Bonaparte, has sailed across the Mediterranean with a large army and invaded Egypt. A British fleet commanded by Admiral Horatio Nelson has foiled the stop Napoleon, and the French army is now safely ashore.

The ships that brought Napoleon lie at anchor in Abu Qir Bay (also known as Aboukir Bay). Protected by reefs and shallow water, they believe they are safe. But they are not.

Daringly, Nelson orders his fleet to attack just as it's getting dark. The fighting is so furious that at 10pm both sides take a 20-minute nap before starting up again! In the end, the British are triumphant and Napoleon is cut off from France.

Let's go scuba diving in the bay and see if we can find some cannon balls!

3. THE ROSETTA STONE

When writing was invented, people used mini-pictures to represent things. The picture-writing used by the ancient Egyptians is called hieroglyphs. More modern writing used shapes (letters of the alphabet) to represent sounds. This gradually replaced hieroglyphic writing, and before long no one even knew how to read it. For centuries people stared at the strange symbols of the ancient Egyptians and wondered what they were all about.

Then, in 1799, a French soldier found a stone in the wall of Fort Julien, Rosetta. On it was a message in three types of writing.

Two were types of Greek, which scholars could read; the third was hieroglyphic. After hours of head scratching, experts in Greek finally deciphered the hieroglyphs: the key to the world of pyramids had been found at last!



4. LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

About 70 cities were named after Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), the famous general from Macedonia. Alexandria, at the mouth of the River Nile, was the finest of them all. And the finest thing in Alexandria was its gigantic library. It may have held as many as 400,000 hand-written scrolls (books written on long rolls). When a ship docked in Alexandria, the captain had to give all his books to the library. Scholars then copied them out, kept the originals, and handed the copies back to the captain!

So where is this fantastic library now? We have no idea. All we know is that it was destroyed - perhaps by accident - over 1,000 years ago. Sadly, houses and streets were built over the ruins so we don't even know where it stood.

5. SILVER SANDS AT SIDI ABDUL-RAHMAN

Where the Nile enters the sea, the sand and silt it brings with it dye the water a dirty brown colour. But drive 132 km (82 miles) west along the coast to Sidi Abdul-Rahman, and you're not far from paradise.

At least, you used to be. The clear blue sea, the unspoiled, sugar-white sand of the beaches, the dusty dunes... It was all too good to last. The place is now being transformed into a multi-million-dollar resort and renamed 'Marassi': lush hotels, night clubs, bars, water skiing...

6. THE CATACOMBS OF KOM ESH SHUGAFRA

The catacombs of Kom Esh Shugafra were discovered by accident. By a donkey! Over 115 years ago, the poor animal disappeared into a mysterious hole in the ground. When the owner went to look, he found himself peering into a huge graveyard.

Catacombs are underground cemeteries. Those at Kom Esh Shugafra were dug about 1,800 years ago, probably for an important and wealthy man and a woman. Over the next 200 years, the tombs were expanded with space for dozens more bodies.

Alexandria was home to people from every corner of the world. We can see this in the designs of the catacombs. There are alcoves for old-style Egyptian mummies, a Greek-style statue and a carving of a lady with a classy Roman hair-do.

7. THE KHAN EL-KHALILI BAZAAR

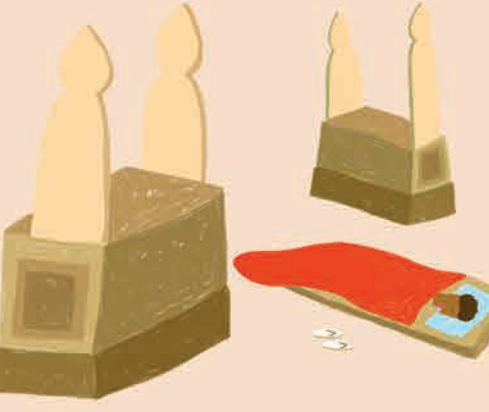
Imagine a maze filled with small shops and stalls, each piled high with everything you might want to buy; add noise, heat and smells... and you have the marvellous Khan El-Khalili bazaar. This place is so chaotic, so higgledy-piggledy, so huge - so EXCITING!

Beside the market stands the famous Fishawi's Café. The same family have been running it for almost 250 years. All of Cairo - rich and poor famous and unknown - meets here to chat and drink mint tea.

8. THE CITY OF THE DEAD

In a city of overwhelming bustle and noise, Cairo's el-Anafa district is a grim exception. It's a massive burial ground, known as the City of the Dead. There are reckoned to be around 1 million tombs here, some centuries old and crumbling, others brand new and built of gleaming marble.

Corpses are not the City of the Dead's only inhabitants though. In the dark and narrow streets, amid the silent tombs, there dwell an unknown number of Cairo's poorest citizens. They live here because it's cheap - if they can get into an old tomb and don't mind the other residents, they have a home rent free.



9. EL ALAMEIN

The mouth of the River Nile lies very close to where two continents meet: Africa to the west, Asia to the east. That makes this part of the world a sort of crossroads. For thousands of years, traders from north, south, east and west have gathered here to exchange goods and pass on news.

Conquerors have also cast their greedy eyes over the region. At first came the mysterious Hyksos people, then Persians, Romans, Arabs and Turks. They were followed in modern times by the French, British and Italians.

During World War II, the German General Erwin Rommel advanced along the coast towards Alexandria. Here, at El Alamein (meaning 'two flags' in Arabic), the Allies stopped him in a decisive battle. The remains of tanks, lorries and guns litter the desert - a rusting reminder of the grim events of almost 80 years ago.

10. WADI EL NATRUN

A wadi is a riverbed that only runs with water when it rains, which is not very often out here in the desert! The ancient Egyptians loved this place because - as the name suggests - it was where they found natron. Natron is the salty-looking mixture they used for preserving dead bodies as mummies.

The early Christians loved this place, too, and built monasteries here. Men like St Amun, St John the Dwarf, St Moses the Black and St Pishoy chose to live here to get away from the temptations of world. They believed that out in the empty desert they could concentrate on what really mattered: praying to God.

11. CRUISING

In many ways Egypt is the Nile. Without the river, civilization would never have appeared in this region 7,000 years ago. Even today, Egypt is mainly the strip of green a few miles wide on either side of the great brown river that brings life to the desert.

The ancient Egyptians sailed up and down the Nile in all sorts of craft - and so can we. There are rowing boats, brightly painted pleasure cruisers and large tourist boats that are more like floating hotels. So, after the hustle and bustle of the city, let's settle down on deck with a cool drink and watch the enchanting Egyptian landscape slip by.

12. THE AL-AZHAR PARK

A family of Muslim rulers (Caliphs) founded the city of Cairo over a thousand years ago. Less than 50 years ago, a member of the same family staying in a Cairo hotel was dismayed by what he saw outside his window - a 500-year-old rubbish tip. The Agha Khan, the man in the hotel, decided to do something about it.

A multi-million-dollar donation followed, and the bulldozers and builders moved in. Gradually the area was transformed into a beautiful green park fed by the waters of the Nile. Ancient archaeology was restored, hotels built, paths and walkways constructed, trees and flowers planted. Today the Al-Azhar Park is officially recognised as one of the World's Great Places.

13. THE GAYER-ANDERSON MUSEUM

When British army officer Major R.G. Gayer-Anderson Pasha was serving in Cairo, he fell in love with the place. He did not go back to Britain on retirement, but made his home in one of the oldest and most interesting houses in the city.

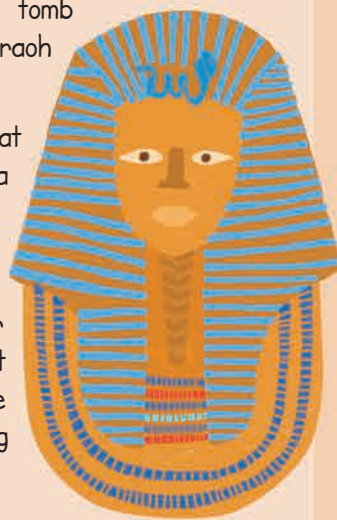
Built in the 17th century, the building was once owned by a wealthy woman from Crete. Gayer-Anderson bought the House of the Cretan Woman, restored it and filled it with his vast collection of carpets, works of art and other interesting objects from around the Arab world. He left instructions that on his death the house and its contents should go to the people of Cairo as a museum.

14. CAIRO'S MUSEUM OF TREASURES

During the 18th century, it was fashionable for wealthy Europeans to buy ancient Egyptian artefacts and ship them home. The way to stop this happening was to build a museum in Cairo large enough to hold the country's treasures. So in 1902 the world's first purpose-built museum was constructed in Tahrir Square. Its 107 halls contain some 160,000 objects.

Europeans were not the only people to rob Egypt of its treasures. Long before they turned up, the Egyptians themselves were breaking into the tombs of the ancient pharaohs and stealing their valuables. However, one important tomb remained untouched. In 1922, the archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the 3,350-year-old tomb of the boy pharaoh Tutankhamun.

The world gasped at what was inside: a coffin of solid gold, a glittering face mask, thrones and over 5,000 other objects thought necessary for the afterlife - including spare underwear.



15. THE GLORIES OF GIZA

There is so much we don't know about the Pyramids of Giza, especially the Great Pyramid of King Khufu. We can see that it was a tomb aligned with the stars. But how on earth, 4,500 years ago, did they build it a near perfect square, and pile up 2.3 million stone blocks to a height of 146 metres (479 ft)? All we can do is stare in astonishment at what is surely the greatest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

And not far away stands another mystery: the Great Sphinx. What was the purpose of the gigantic, 4,500-year-old statue of a lion with a human head? Why are there three tunnels inside it and when were they dug? The temple standing before it has 24 pillars... Perhaps these represent the hours of the day and the Sphinx was the Sun God? We will probably never know.



16. WHALE BONES IN THE DESERT

We leave the River Nile behind us for a while and head out into the desert. We're aiming for a spot 150 km (93 miles) southwest of Cairo. In Arabic it's Wadi El Haitan, but we tourists know it as the Valley of the Whales. Here, in a brand new Fossil and Climate Change Museum, we find some fascinating fossils.

What makes them so important is that they belonged to a species of whale that had legs! The remains confirm what scientists had always suspected: whales were originally land animals that evolved into sea mammals millions and millions of years ago.

17. KING KHUFU'S BOAT

In 1954, an Egyptian archaeologist uncovered a deep pit next to the Great Pyramid. In it, perfectly preserved, was a 44-metre (144-ft) boat belonging to King Khufu. It was carefully taken to pieces and reassembled in a special museum.

The boat is a masterpiece. The pieces fit together like a jigsaw and are held in place with pegs and rope made of grass.

What was the boat for and why was it buried in its own grave? We don't know. Some scholars think it was to carry Khufu's body to its final resting place; others put forward a more fanciful suggestion: the boat carried Khufu across the sky while he was being the Sun God. The world's first flying boat!

18. TUNIS, AN OASIS OF ART

The Tunis story began more than fifty years ago when a couple of poets came to the beautiful El-Fayoum Oasis to write. Twenty years later, the Swiss potter Evelyn Perret and her husband moved in. Their pots were soon in demand - and so were their skills. Evelyn has been giving pottery lessons to local children ever since.

Painters, poets and writers followed the potters, and today Tunis is an oasis of creative culture with its own Art Centre and annual Pottery Festival.

19. A VILLAGE FROM THE PAST

Cairo's Pharaonic Village tourist attraction offers some suggestions about what Egyptian life was like in ancient times. Actors play ancient Egyptians, so we can even chat to a pharaoh when we visit the village's newly-built temple. But wait a minute... The ruler and his court are speaking Arabic, a language the original pharaohs wouldn't have been able to make head or tail of. Perhaps we'd be better off sticking to mummies and statues. They might not talk, but at least they're real.

20. A CAMEL RIDE

The camel is the ship of the desert, so it makes sense to visit the Pyramids on the back of one. Three handy tips: 1) Get onto your camel when it's sitting down. 2) Lean back when it stands up: as it rises rear-first, you can be catapulted over its head. 3) Cling on tight: a camel moves both legs on one side at the same time, swaying alarmingly.

Now you've got the hang of it, head for the Pyramids just as the sun is going down. Turn away from the noisy sprawl of Cairo and gaze out over the desert with the Pyramids in the foreground. The scene glows with the burning colours of the sunset.

21. FAVA BEANS

Why are there so many bean fields beside the Nile? Well, *ful mudammas* - beans in the pot - is the Egyptian national dish. And since we're here, we'd better learn the proper Egyptian recipe.

Here goes: soak dried fava beans for a day in a special *ful* pot known as a *qidra*. Add onion, tomatoes, garlic, a pinch of salt - and anything else you want (e.g. butter or olive oil). Cover and simmer over a low heat all night. Eat for breakfast, perhaps with fried eggs - yum!



22. THE WADI EL-RAYAN WATERFALLS

An oasis is a rare and precious thing in Egypt. Rather than let the salty water from the Fayoum Oasis drain away, it was channelled to an artificial lake. When this lake was full, the water was led down a slope to the Wadi El-Rayan, and a new lake began to form. And there, between the two, are Egypt's only waterfalls.

The area, 65 km southwest of Fayoum, has now become a miraculous and carefully protected nature reserve. In the green vegetation between the blue waters of the lake and the golden brown sand of the desert, there live rare gazelles and foxes, and over 150 species of bird.

23. SAILING ALONG

Though the Nile is a huge river, it can still get pretty crowded with noisy boat traffic. The bigger vessels chug along to the steady throb of their diesel engines - but we've chosen to travel by *dahabiya*, a smaller, old-style river cruiser powered by broad, red-and-white striped sails.

We sit on cane chairs, shaded from the Sun by a canvas awning, and watch the real Egypt slip slowly and silently by on either bank... The children swimming in the shallows, the farmers in their fields irrigated by the Nile's generous waters, and the sharp-eyed kingfishers waiting patiently for a catch. It's how our Victorian ancestors travelled - and how Egyptians themselves have been travelling since the dawn of civilization.

26. NEFERTITI, THE LADY OF GRACE

In trying to change Egypt's religion, Pharaoh Akhenaten was greatly helped by his lovely wife, Queen Nefertiti. How do we know she was lovely? In 1912, a German archaeologist working at Amarna uncovered a painted stone and plaster bust (head and shoulders statue) of a delightful lady. She was later identified as none other than the famous queen.

Nefertiti was powerful as well as beautiful. Scholars believe she was co-ruler with her husband, and may even have ruled on her own after his death. The truth will probably never be known - but we do have that bust to remind us that, ruler or not, Nefertiti was a truly remarkable woman.

27. THE HOOPOE

The hoopoe is a common bird in this part of the world. Apart from its cry, it has three distinctive features: 1) It moves up and down when it flies, like a giant butterfly. 2) A pair of hoopoes are never far apart. They even pass food between each other. 3) The bird's long black bill is ideal for burrowing into the desert in search of scrummy grubs to eat.

Hoopoes are friendly. If you approach it while it's digging, it looks up, nods a quick 'good morning', and goes back to work.

