

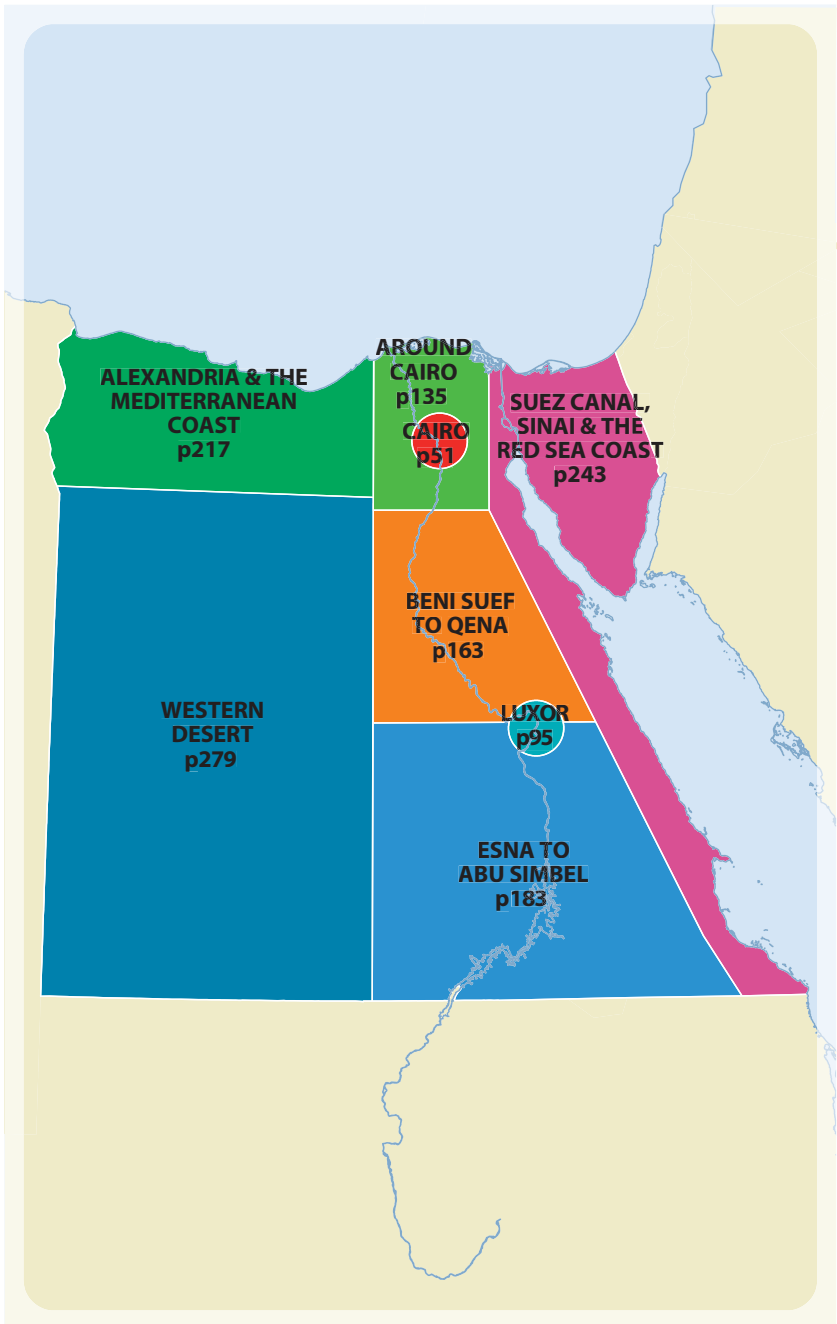


lonely planet



discover  
**EGYPT**

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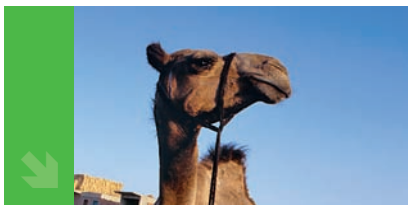
# DISCOVER EGYPT



**Cairo (p51)** The capital of Egypt is both an historical treasure trove and a fast-growing bundle of energy – chaotic but irresistible.



**Luxor (p95)** The long-time capital of ancient Egypt is being reshaped into the world's largest open-air museum.



**Around Cairo (p135)** Around the capital lie early cities and pyramids, monastic retreats and a magical, palm-lined oasis.



**Beni Suef to Qena (p163)** Beyond the tourist trail, this part of the Nile is studded with tombs, temples and early churches.



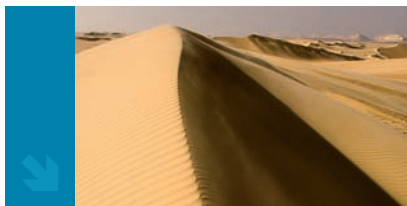
**Esna to Abu Simbel (p183)** Awesome monuments, bustling towns and enchanting river scenes on this stretch of the Nile.



**Alexandria & the Mediterranean Coast (p217)** City of museums and cafes near clear-blue waters and endless beaches.



**Suez Canal, Sinai & the Red Sea Coast (p243)** Colonial architecture, Bedouin culture, and world-class diving in the Red Sea.



**Western Desert (p279)** This least visited region has beautiful oases surrounded by dunes and vast expanses of emptiness.

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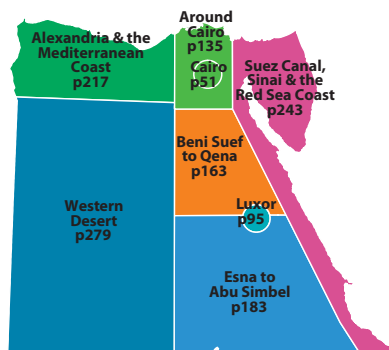


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**CATACOMBS OF KOM ASH-SHUQAFA** p220

Ponder the fascinating blend of Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman influences that made Alexandria

**SAQQARA** p147

Wonder at the oldest pyramid and the amazing scenes on the tomb walls

**WHITE DESERT** p282

Drive through a surreal moonscape of white wind-blown rock formations and desert sands

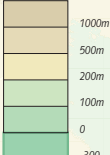
**ABYDOS** p166

Make a pilgrimage to this sacred spot, home of some of Egypt's finest wall carvings

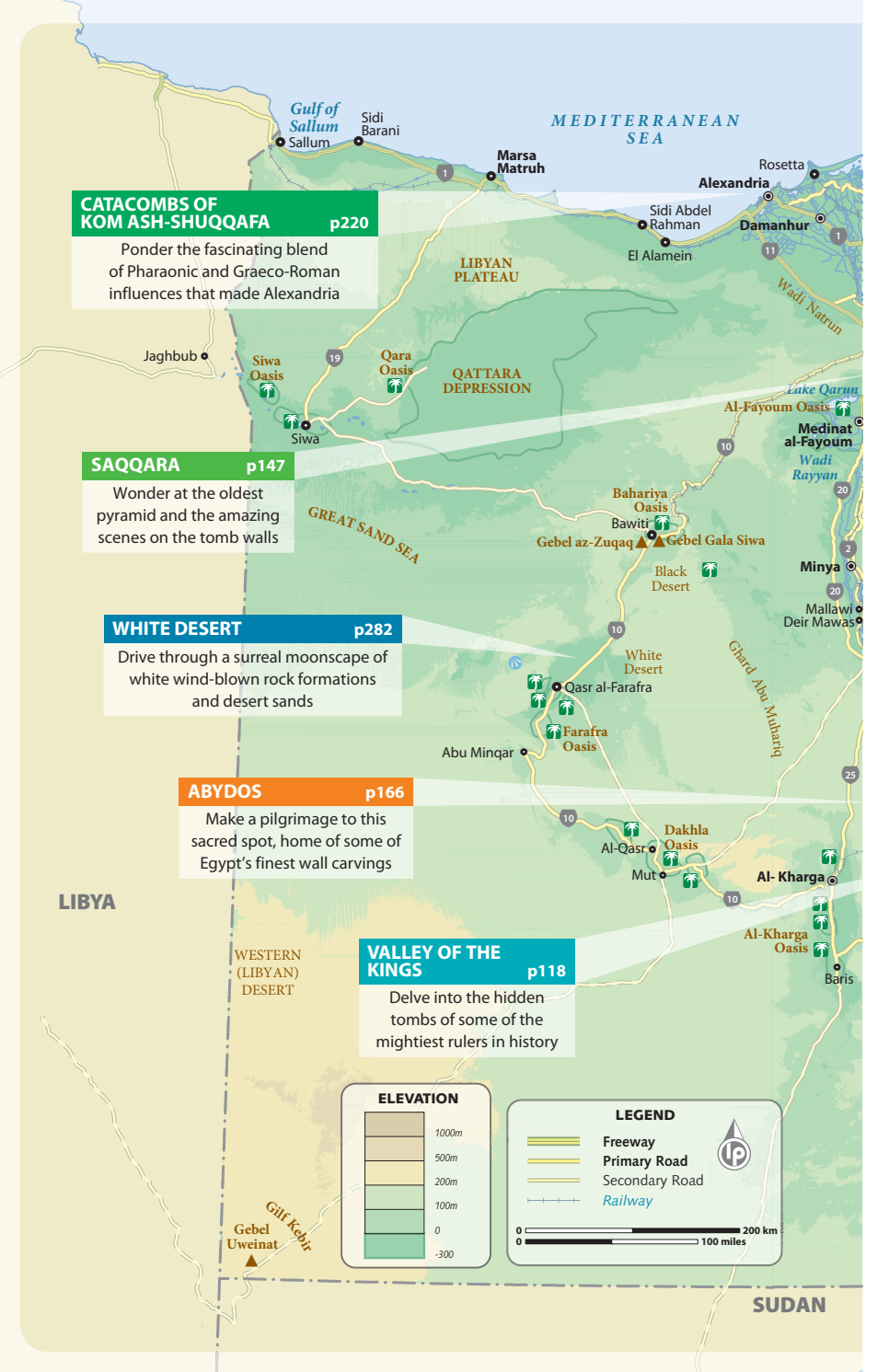
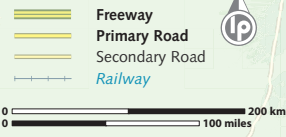
**VALLEY OF THE KINGS** p118

Delve into the hidden tombs of some of the mightiest rulers in history

**ELEVATION**



**LEGEND**





**EGYPTIAN MUSEUM, CAIRO** p54

Marvel at Tutankhamun's treasures and the perfect beauty of Old Kingdom art

**ISLAMIC CAIRO** p73

Stroll along Islamic Cairo's streets for splendid monuments, cafes and great shopping

**ST KATHERINE PROTECTORATE** p246

Scale towering Mt Sinai and see the sunrise over this fabulous landscape

**RED SEA** p270

Don your diving gear to see the vast coral reefs and technicolour multitude of fish

**TEMPLES OF KARNAK** p109

Marvel at the scale of one of the world's greatest religious complexes

**THE NILE** p186

Sail on the river of history for the trip of a lifetime

**EGYPT**  
**SUDAN**

Political Boundary

Administrative Boundary

# ↙ THIS IS EGYPT



**There are two predominant and clashing images of Egypt. One is a place of beauty and culture, the *Land of the Pharaohs* and tour brochures. The other is the Arab world's most populous nation, a struggling, noisy hive of energy, both frustrating and exciting.**

Many visitors come to Egypt expecting the history – and the sun – and end up fascinated by the living culture. But the two are not mutually exclusive. The past has shaped the present and the present increasingly imposes on the past. By Egyptian terms, Cairo – whose original name is Al-Qahira, 'the Victorious' – is a newcomer, founded a mere 1000 years ago. But like most Egyptian towns and cities, it sits on ancient remains: Roman Babylon has been swallowed by its southern suburbs, most of ancient Heliopolis sits at the end of Cairo's airport runway and the Sphinx stares unseeing from the foot of the Pyramids in urban Giza.

Modern Egypt has some pressing concerns. With a population of over 80 million, limited farmland and a shortage of water, the challenges facing the country are enormous.



But Egyptians are nothing if not resourceful. Until recently there was little to Egypt beyond the thin south–north strip of the Nile, but the Aswan Dam has allowed some desert to be reclaimed (at what environmental cost remains to be seen), while the Red Sea and Mediterranean coastlines have been intensively developed.

In spite of the rapid change, Egyptians have held on to many of their traditional characteristics. They are playful people and love to laugh. They are rarely pushed to violence, having endured many a dictator and crisis over the millennia. And they are immensely hospitable.

Stunning monuments, vast deserts, coral-filled waters, characterful people – these are elements you can find in many countries, but in Egypt they are strung together in such a way as to make a journey here a memorable, perhaps even life-changing, experience.

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