

THE  
**SWITCHERS**

Your guide to off-the-beaten-path sustainable travel and shopping

# Egypt





– SPOTLIGHT

# Egypt

Recognized for its history and nature, Egypt's tourism sector is steadily recovering, leaving opportunity for sustainable tourism initiatives to take root and grow. This guide will help you travel beyond the standard tourist attractions, and gain a deeper understanding of the country and the innovative entrepreneurs who call it home.

This trip, have a different kind of experience: one that is as responsible and environmentally-conscious as it is fun.

Planning a trip can be overwhelming, so we kept this guide simple. It is separated into four sections:

– THE FOUR SECTIONS YOU WILL FIND:



WHERE TO  
STAY



WHERE TO  
EAT



WHAT TO  
DO



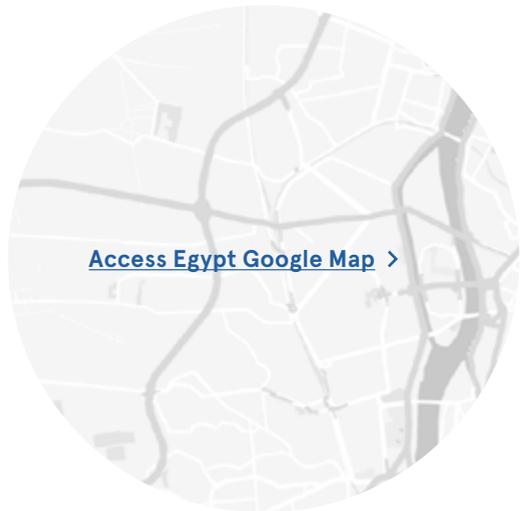
WHAT TO  
BRING HOME

We have also created a [Google Map](#) featuring each location mentioned, and underlined text can be clicked to access relevant websites.

Each section features the projects and creations of our Egypt-based Switchers — the green entrepreneurs creating circular, sustainable economies to benefit their country and beyond.

Whether you are traveling for business or work, we hope you discover something new and inspiring through the Switchers highlighted in this guide.

Happy travels!  
The Switchers





— HIGHLIGHTS

**30**

national parks &  
protected areas

including Ras Mohamed  
National Park and Wadi Rayan

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**4.5**

million visitors

to Egypt in 2016

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**773,000**

jobs in Egypt

supported by tourism



# Where to Stay

Venture out of Cairo and discover Egypt's dazzling array of eco-lodges and camps. From beachfront property to mountainous terrain, our Switchers offer a diversity of accommodation types for any budget and travel style. Leave your laptops and smartphones at home — these sustainable accommodations are the prime spot for a digital detox.





# Dayra Camp

## Nuweibá, South Sinai

### — PERFECT FOR

Low budget travelers and artists who want to meet like-minded individuals.

**Dayra Camp** offers many responsible travel activities including snorkeling trips, guided hikes to nearby mountains and canyons, safari trips, desert Bedouin nights, and other activities. Want to stay close to camp? Participate in a jam session, art workshop, or bonfire night where you can relax under the stars.

### — ACCOMODATION

Huts, bungalows, and tents are made from eco-friendly and recyclable materials. Huts and bungalows come fit with 2 electrical outlets, a lamp, small furnishings, and mosquito nets, while tents are more basic. Guests can also bring their own tent and camp on the beach. Accommodation is €16 per

person, and price includes breakfast and dinner. Dietary needs can be accommodated.

### — GETTING THERE

Dayra Camp can arrange transportation for guests from Sharm El Sheikh airport, Cairo, Taba, and other locations.

### — HOW TO BOOK

Call **Ahmed Abo El Seoud** (Dayra Camp co-founder) at:



[+20 11 43 333 131](tel:+201143333131)



[Dayra Camp Facebook page](#)



[Read the Story on Switchers](#) >



— NEW HERMOPOLIS

# New Hermopolis

Tune El Gebel, Minia

## — PERFECT FOR

Hosting a retreat or meeting for groups of 12-24 people.

Found near the original historical site, **New Hermopolis** adopts a belief of the ancient city of Hermopolis: that arts and culture can transform society and bring people together. Take a day trip to various historical and archaeological sites and settle in for a night of entertainment featuring performances by the famous *Mallawi Stick Dancing Group* or *Sufi* chanting groups. New Hermopolis consumes nearly zero energy thanks to natural building styles, solar energy, and smart water consumption.

## — ACCOMODATION

Guests are hosted in 12 studios with two adjoining rooms and ensuite bathrooms. There are 4 larger studios to accommodate families. Studio rooms surround a Blue Lotus pond and landscaped garden. Accommodation is for a minimum of 12 guests, and ranges from €70 to €100 per person. Price includes breakfast and dinner.



## — GETTING THERE

New Hermopolis can arrange transportation for guests from Cairo and Luxor. Transport to local sites can also be arranged.

## — HOW TO BOOK

New Hermopolis is open between October 1 and April 30. Groups of 12-24 people can book New Hermopolis by emailing Founder, **Mrs. Abdel-Nasser Mervat**.



[mervatnasser@newhermopolis.org](mailto:mervatnasser@newhermopolis.org)



[mervatnasser@aol.com](mailto:mervatnasser@aol.com)



Read the Story on Switchers >



# Basata Eco-Lodge

Nuweibá, South Sinai

## – PERFECT FOR

Families who want an ecologically and economically-friendly vacation away.

Egypt's first eco-lodge! Everything at Basata is recycled: food waste feeds local animals and salt water is used to wash dishes and fill toilets. Activities include relaxing on the sandy beach, swimming, and snorkeling to explore the local coral reef. **Sherif El Ghamrawy** and his staff can also arrange desert and mountain expeditions with the surrounding Bedouin population, and guests can spend a night sleeping beneath the stars.

## – ACCOMODATION

Camping sites and bamboo huts are on the beach and share a common toilet and shower area. Private, mud-brick chalets have been built using traditional Egyptian architectural styles and have ensuite bathrooms. Each of the 20



huts and 9 chalets has a unique design. Vegetarian and fish meals are prepared on site, and guests have 24-hour access to a shared kitchen space. Pricing ranges from 10€ to 80€ per person.

## – GETTING THERE

Guests can take the public bus, or Basata Eco-Lodge can arrange taxi transportation from Cairo or Sharm.

## – HOW TO BOOK



[+20 693 500 480](tel:+20693500480) or [+20 693 500 481](tel:+20693500481)



[basata@basata.com](mailto:basata@basata.com)



[Basata Eco-Lodge Facebook page](#)



[Read the Story on Switchers](#)



# Talist Siwa

## Siwa Oasis

### – PERFECT FOR

Peace and serenity in a less frequented oasis

Talist Siwa is a family-run ecolodge and organic farm in northwestern Egypt. Started by **Al Sayed Al Domiaty** and **Nabila Aziz**, the husband and wife/architect and interior designer team have created an oasis within the Siwa Oasis. Alongside their three sons, the family has created an eco-lodge that incorporates many of their own sustainable designs. Activities include mountain hiking, safari trips in the Western desert, and visiting the oasis to have a sand bath, an ancient technique used to increase moisture in the body.

### – ACCOMODATION

There are double, triple, and quadruple bungalows, and Siwian vernacular rooms. Bungalows are timber structures covered with fixed fabric, and include a bathroom. Siwian rooms are



constructed with local sandstone. Decorations include local carpets and handmade pottery. Pricing ranges from €36 for the bed and breakfast double room to €65 for a two-bedroom suite. Food is prepared using crops grown in the eco-lodge organic garden.

### – GETTING THERE

Private transportation can be arranged from Alexandria and Cairo, or guests can take a public bus from either city using West Delta; free transportation to and from Siwa town.

### – HOW TO BOOK



+20 100 644 5881



[talist.siwa@yahoo.com](mailto:talist.siwa@yahoo.com)



[Talist Siwa Facebook page](#)



[Booking.com](#)

[S Check the Ecolodge Website >](#)



# What to Bring Home

Why buy standard souvenirs when Egypt is home to so many creative green entrepreneurs? Our Switchers have taken their creative eye for design and applied it to upcycle and transform waste into unique products that benefit local artisans and community groups across the country. Pick up a one-of-a-kind item — it is only fitting to accompany your once-in-a-lifetime trip.



— CAIRO, EGYPT



# Up-fuse

## Cairo, Egypt

### — WHAT IS IT

**Up-fuse** is a Cairo-based social enterprise created by product designers **Yara Yassin** and **Rania Rafie** in 2013. The lifestyle brand collects, washes, and compresses tens of thousands of plastic bags each year, transforming them into colorful, upcycled sheets. Artisans snip and sew, turning this former trash into fashion-forward, functional, and ethically-conscious tote bags, backpacks, and other accessories. Each of Up-fuse's products is proudly made in Cairo by a team of local community members. Bags press flat, making them the perfect travel companion.



### — HOW MUCH

Prices range from €5 for change purses to €81 for backpacks.

### — WHERE TO BUY

Virgin Megastores in Cairo; ABN'g World in Zamalek district, Cairo; Up-fuse mini store (105 Al Banafseg 10, New Cairo); or online



[www.up-fuse.com](http://www.up-fuse.com)

S [Read the Story on Switchers](#) >



# GebRaa

Cairo, Egypt

## – WHAT IS IT

**GebRaa's** beautiful, handmade items pay homage to the heritage of Egypt, all while making sure profits benefit local communities of artisans. GebRaa was created by **Rania Salah Seddik**, an Egyptian social entrepreneur who wanted to ensure traditional craftsmen and women stayed in business. Each of GebRaa's products are made from natural, local materials, including recycled glass, textile waste, and palm tree waste. Shawls are delicately created by various women's cooperatives across the country.



## – HOW MUCH

Prices range from €8 for a mother of pearl box to €40 for a large mother of pearl tray. Shawls start at €25.

## – WHERE TO BUY

From GebRaa's office in Downtown Cairo: 80 Kasr El Aini st, Garden city, third floor, apt 5. Contact GebRaa through Facebook first to check the availability of items.

 [GebRaa's Facebook page](#)

 [Read the Story on Switchers](#) >



# Jereed

Cairo, Egypt

## – WHAT IS IT

**Jereed** upcycles palm tree waste, creating a made-in-Egypt wood-substitute that can be used to make various gifts and souvenirs. The business was founded by **Aliaa Nour, Muhammed Darwish**, and **Omar Moneim**, three young Egyptian entrepreneurs. Fill your bags with their gorgeous, customizable palm leaflet bags and coasters. Looking for something bigger? Jereed also creates beautiful furniture pieces like tables, pouffe chairs, and buffet units using its upcycled palm tree waste. The Jereed team can help coordinate shipping within Egypt and internationally for larger items.



## – HOW MUCH

Prices range from €4 for the bags without custom embroidery to €3 to €5 for the coasters. Have a high quality image you would like on your coasters? Have custom coasters made for €7.

## – WHERE TO BUY

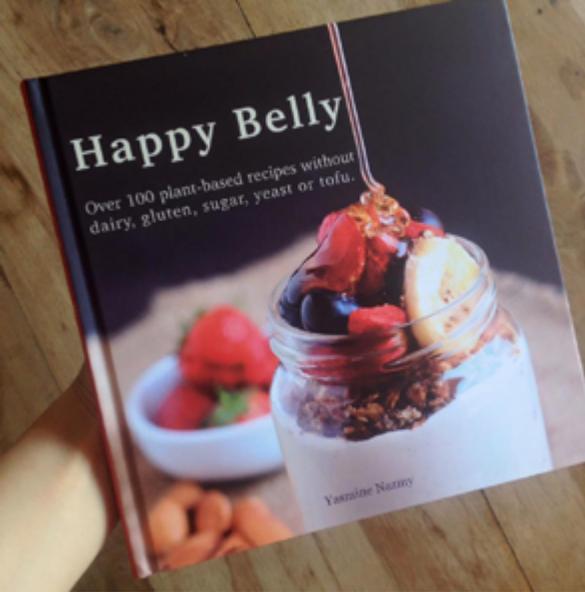
From Jereed's Facebook page, or their online shop (coming soon).



[Jereed's Facebook page](#)



[Read the Story on Switchers](#) >



# The Happy Belly Cookbook

Cairo & Alexandria

## – WHAT IS IT

This is the first cookbook published by young Egyptian food entrepreneur, **Yasmine Nazmy** (whom you may have read about in our “Where to Eat” section!). The Happy Belly Cookbook features more than 100 of Yasmine’s dairy, gluten, and sugar-free recipes. Mindful of the fresh ingredients Egyptians can actually find in-store and at-the-market, Yasmine has created classic dishes that are perfect for food-lovers everywhere.

## – HOW MUCH

€15 for the dual English-Arabic cookbook.

## – WHERE TO BUY

In Cairo: [Osana Family Wellness](#), [ElMarket](#), [Ma7ali](#), [The Breathing Room](#), [Bio Shop](#), [YallaYoga](#), [Holm Cafe](#), [Zamalek Market](#)

In Alexandria: [Teatro Eskendria](#);

In Dahab: [Marine Garden Camp](#);



[Online using this link](#)





# What to Do

As the capital of Egypt, Cairo, is a must-see for all those interested in ancient civilisations and its modern day context. After all, the Great Pyramid of Giza is the only Ancient Wonder of the World that is still around today!

Our Switcher, Rania Salah Seddik, of the Egyptian eco-friendly and social artisan crafts initiative GebRaa also happens to be a Cairo cultural expert. Here are her top tips on what to do with four days in the lively city:



— GREAT PYRAMID AT GIZA



### – DAY ONE

Although admittedly an ambitious plan for your first day, she highly recommends starting early enough to explore the diversity in ancient architecture by visiting the [Great Pyramid of Giza](#) and the [Great Sphinx](#), the stepped [Pyramid of Djoser](#) as well as the [Bent Pyramid](#) near Dahshur.

To experience Cairo by night, head to [Zamalek island](#) on the river Nile to rub shoulders with both locals and expat crowds looking to enjoy the myriad of modern bars and restaurants this hip area is laden with.

## – DAY TWO

By the second day, you'll be ready for some indoor activity and the [Egyptian Museum](#) is the place to see over 150,000 pharaonic antiquities housed there. After this, a stroll around downtown Cairo to walk the different architectural styles adopted over time as Egypt sought to define itself over the years. There is no better way to enjoy the sunset than with a trip on a Felucca, the traditional wooden sailboat, to wrap up the day's events.

Rania suggests exploring [Coptic Cairo](#) where you'll find many historically important churches, including one that was converted into a synagogue. [Souq El-Fustat](#), an excellent traditional arts and crafts market, can be found in the same area, along with [Fokhareen](#), a pottery makers' village. Both are ideal for souvenir shopping with a side of haggling. Rania also suggests checking out what's on at [Darbi718](#), a top-notch contemporary art and culture center that serves as the main hub for local and international artists.





— CAIRO, EGYPT

### – DAY THREE

The time has come to spend the day on [Muizz Street](#) in [Islamic Cairo](#). Stretching over almost one kilometer, this is one of the most famous and important streets in Cairo, featuring Medieval Islamic architecture. Let yourself get lost while strolling — you'll be transported back in time, and the streets tell the stories of civilizations long gone.



### – DAY FOUR

If you happen to have another day in Cairo, Rania suggests it would be well spent visiting the [Cairo Citadel](#), the [Mosque-Madrassa of Sultan Hassan](#), and the nearby [Al-Rifa'i Mosque](#).

Other parts of Egypt worth visiting: [South Sinai](#) near the [Red Sea](#) and the [Dakhla Oasis](#) in Central Egypt are both beautiful, natural wonders perfect for a relaxing escape. For more ideas of what to do in different regions of the country, check out what sustainable tourism activities are being hosted by another one of our Switchers, the [New Horizon Association for Social Development](#).



# What and Where to Eat

Egypt is as rich in gastronomy as it is in culture and history. While our Switchers work in varying sustainable sectors, they have plenty recommendations on what to eat and where.

**FOOD PRICING RANGES:**

€ = EGP 5-60

€€ = EGP 65-150

€€€ = EGP 155-300



## —WHERE TO EAT

Switcher [Nawaya](#) is one of the leading sustainable food initiatives breathing life back into agriculture in Cairo's suburbs. They help small-scale farmers implement sustainable practices and connect their artisanal food products to Cairo's consumers via their community brand, [Baladini](#). You can find Baladini's products at Zamalek District's Sunny Market, Nature's Gift Stores, and Nun Market on Saturdays.

For more delicious, seasonal, and healthy food choices in Cairo, [Nawaya](#) co-founder, Laura Tabet, also recommends one of their

regular collaborators: [Ma7ali Deli and Grocer](#) in Maadi. As part of the Slow Food Network, Nawaya also partners with [Eish + Malh](#) on the first Friday of every month to run the Slow Downtown: Farm to Fork Menu & Market.

Vegan chef and green lifestyle enthusiast, [Yasmine Nazmy](#), can also be found serving up freshly made veggie burgers alongside all her other [KAJU products](#) (€-€€) at her Earth Deli Market stall at Zamalek's market on Saturdays.



## —WHAT TO EAT

In terms of what to eat, here are the highlights:

*Foul* is a dish of cooked fava beans, served with oil, cumin, garlic, onion, and fresh lemon juice, in addition to other herbs and spices. *Ta'amia* (Egyptian *falafel*) are made from split fava beans rather than the chickpeas most commonly used in Middle Eastern cuisine. Both of these dishes can be sampled at any local place. Well known chain establishments include Gad (€), [Felfela](#) (€€), and El Shabrawy (€€).

A must-try while in Egypt are the fresh fruit juices. Egypt might be the best country for this beverage, with its rich variety, affordability, and accessibility from any juice bar. How will you know which storefront is a juice bar? Just look for the fruits being displayed outside! Common favorites include sugarcane and mango in the summertime, whereas fresh pomegranate juice is the star during the winter season. Other varieties include doum palm with its gingerbread-like taste, carob,



guava, banana, lemon with mint, and natural energy drinks made of dates, nuts, chocolate, and honey.

Street food in Egypt is also highly recommended: sample between grilled corn, popcorn, *hummus el sham* (a savory, hot chickpea drink), and grilled sweet potato. [Zooba](#) (€€) is a good choice for a contemporary take on traditional Egyptian street food.

More upscale dining options in Cairo include [Abu El Sid](#) (€€), [LYCHEE](#) (€€) and [Be Good to You](#) (€€€). Other traditional dishes not to be missed are [Koshari](#), [Molokhia](#), and *Feteer* (Egyptian pancakes available with sweet or savory fillings).



# Credits and Disclaimer

To see the location of all businesses and sites mentioned, visit our custom map.



[Access the Egypt Google Map](#)

All photo and statistics credits can be found in this [Document](#).

The Switchers travel guide was created by Mayya Hussein and Hilary Duff, with assistance from Eman El-Sherbiny, Daniel Hires and Ananda Alonso.

Have comments or questions? We would love to hear from you at



[theswitchers@scprac.org](mailto:theswitchers@scprac.org)

A special thanks to the Switchers in Egypt, whose knowledge, talents, and innovations made this guide a reality!



Regional Activity Centre  
for Sustainable Consumption  
and Production

Follow the stories of Mediterranean changemakers online:



[Switchers Website](#)



[Switchers Facebook](#)



[Switchers Instagram](#)

## — DISCLAIMER

*The Switchers is a community of inspiring green entrepreneurs and changemakers in the Mediterranean region.*

*It is also a place where entrepreneurs of a similar passion for the environment can meet.*

*The Switchers are individuals, enterprises or civil society organizations implementing innovative and ecological solutions that contribute to sustainable and fair consumption and production models. They are active in a variety of fields, such as organic farming, green tourism, renewable energy, or waste management.*

*The platform [theswitchers.eu](https://theswitchers.eu) tells their stories of sustainable transformation and change. We aim to contribute towards a more differentiated picture of the region, and shine a light on the people who are working on a greener economy.*

*The Switchers platform has been developed by the [Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production \(SCP/RAC\)](#) in the framework of the [SwitchMed Programme](#).*

*The [SwitchMed Programme](#) is implemented under the coordination of the [United Nations Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#) and is executed in collaboration with the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UN Environment\)](#), [Economy Division](#); and the [Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production \(SCP/RAC\)](#) a component of the [United Nations Environment Programme-Mediterranean Action Plan \(UN Environment/MAP\)](#), in close coordination with the [European Commission](#).*

*SwitchMed implementing partners work to accelerate the transition to Green and Circular Economy through capacity development for resource efficiency in the manufacturing industry, training for start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop skills in eco-design, green business plans,*

*marketing and financing for sustainable products and services, agreements with the political leaders to establish a regulatory and legal framework, empowerment of civil society organisations to pioneer socially innovative solutions that tackle environmental challenges, and an action network of interested parties to connect with similar initiatives and networks, exchange information and broaden current activities.*

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Well.**

THE  
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