



# ALEXANDRIA

## EGYPT

Alexandria is located on the Mediterranean Sea at the western edge of the Nile delta and is built upon a strip of land separating Lake Maryut, a salt water lake, from the sea and on a promontory extending into the Mediterranean. It is Egypt's second largest city with a population of some five million. It is also Egypt's main port.

Founded by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., it was once the capital of Greco-Roman Egypt and the center of Hellenic scholarship and science. It was here that the 400 foot high lighthouse of Pharos was constructed, one of the seven wonders of the world. According to legend, St. Mark introduced Christianity to Alexandria in 62 A.D.

Very little remains of ancient Alexandria as the modern city was built directly on top of the old one. Today it is a major industrial region with cotton being the most valuable export, followed by cereals and vegetables. Other industries produce paper, processed foods, asphalt and oil products. The Mediterranean climate, cooler temperatures and beautiful beaches have made Alexandria a popular tourist resort, especially with the Egyptians who leave Cairo to escape the summer heat.



### HISTORY

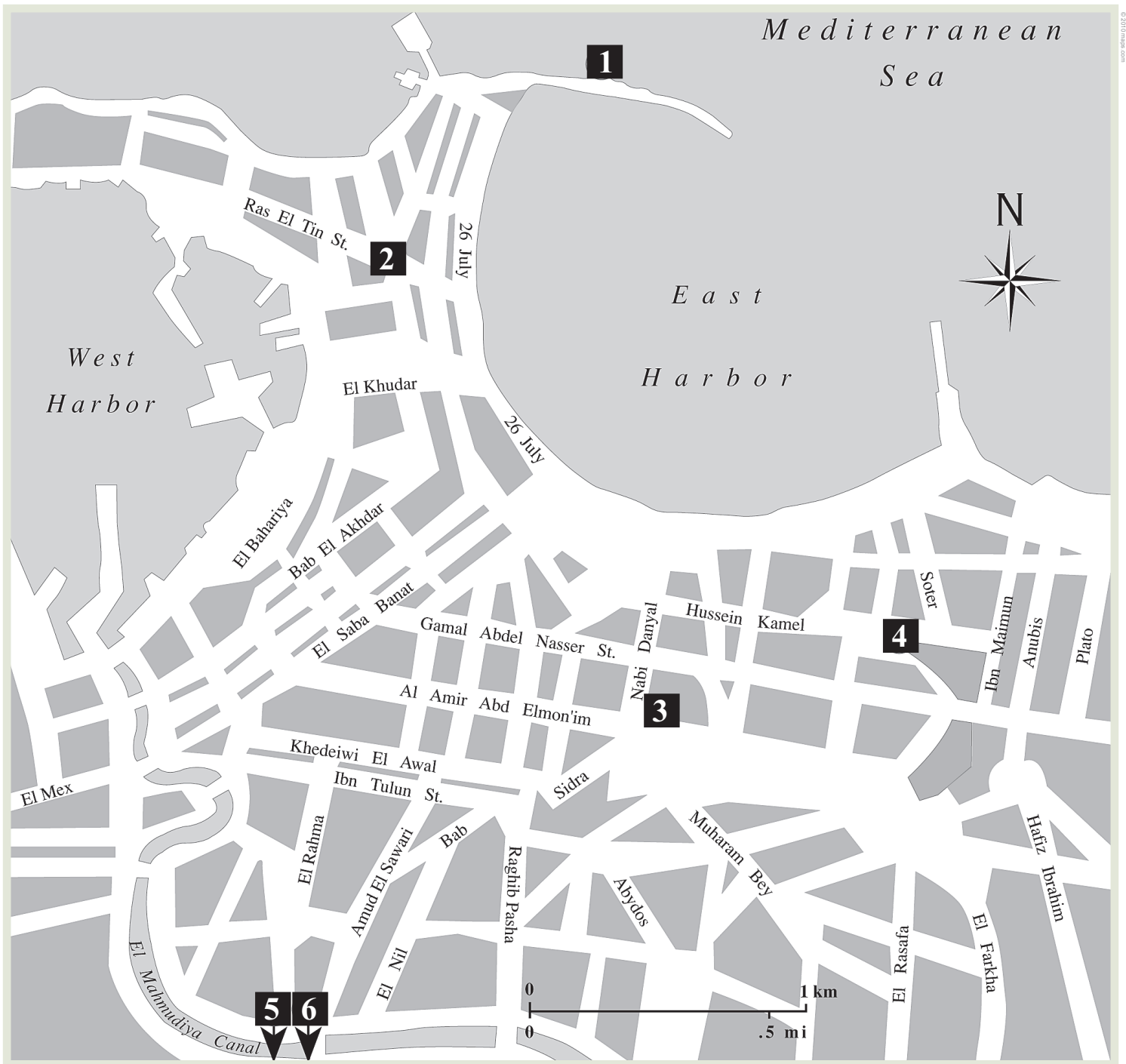
Alexander the Great founded the city on the site of a small fishing village in 332 B.C. On his death, Ptolemy Soter took control and under his rule, and that of his descendants, the city became a major trade center and focal point of learning. The ancient library had 500,000 volumes and it was here that Euclid invented geometry. During the time of Ptolemy II, the 400 foot lighthouse of Pharos Island was constructed (279 B.C.) Trade increased and Alexandria became the richest commercial center in the east.

It was in Alexandria that Julius Caesar met Cleopatra. After her death, Egypt was taken over by the Romans who ruled from 30 B.C. to 395 A.D. The city continued as the capital of Egypt under Rome, who used the country as their empire's granary.

In the fourth century A.D. Byzantium replaced Rome as the ruler of Egypt, Christianity flourished and the Coptic Church was acknowledged. An army invaded Egypt in 640 A.D. and made a new capital in Cairo and Alexandria's importance began to decline.

A series of earthquakes jolted the area and in the thirteenth century a violent quake was responsible for destroying the immense Pharos Lighthouse. In the 1880's Muhammed Ali realized Alexandria would make a fine port for his navy and redug the canal to the Nile, thus rejuvenating the city.

Alexandria became a favorite holiday spot for wealthy Turks and Egyptians. After the revolution and ousting of King Farouk, extensive rebuilding was carried out in the city.



## ALEXANDRIA PLACES OF INTEREST

**1 Fort Qait Bey** was built on the foundations of one of the seven wonders of the world, the Pharos lighthouse. Completed in 1480, the fort was expanded by Mohammed Ali in the 19th century.



**2 The Mosque of Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi** is the city's largest mosque and is dedicated to the patron saint of Alexandria's fishermen and sailors.

**3 The Roman Amphitheatre** is the only example of a Roman Theatre to be found in Egypt.

**4 At the Greco-Roman Museum** you will find displays of ancient times honoring the Greek and Roman heritage. Included are 21 rooms of mosaics, glass, coins, sculptures and the Tangra figures. Other features include a mummified crocodile, human mummies, the bust of a Roman Emperor and a Ptolemaic mural.

**5 Pompey's Pillar** is 84 feet high and made from Aswan rose granite and was dedicated in 297 A.D. to Emperor Diocletian. It contains a maze of subterranean galleries and some 40,000 relics. This site is located south of the main city.

**6 Catacombs of Kom Ash-Shuqqafa** is located close to Pompey's Pillar. The catacombs date back to the second century A.D. and held some 300 corpses.

## Beyond Alexandria

**Cairo**, the capital of Egypt, is south and east, some three hours drive by either the road through the Great Western Desert or along the Nile Delta. Numerous sights, museums and shops abound in this bustling city of approximately 18 million people, one of the largest communities in the world.



The **Pyramids of Giza**, located near Cairo, are one of the seven wonders of the world. These musoleums were built to show the ancient Egyptians' belief in eternal life. They contained the Pharaoh's tomb, but were also storage places for treasures and solar barques (boats for transport in the afterlife). You can actually go inside the large Pyramid of Cheops, built of about 2.5 million limestone blocks. There are separate charges to enter the Pyramid plateau and the encased solar barque.

The **Sphinx**, located at the Pyramid plateau, was carved almost entirely from one tremendous piece of limestone and is about 165 feet (50 meters) long and 73 feet (22 meters) high. Legend has it that it was engulfed by sand and hidden completely for years until the sun god Ra appeared to the man who later became Tuthmosis IV and offered him the crown of Egypt if he would free the Sphinx.

**Rashid** can be found 30 miles to the east of Alexandria on the coast. This is the location where the famous Rosetta Stone was discovered by Napoleon's troops and literally was the key to ancient Egyptian inscriptions.

**El Alamein**, 55 miles to the west of Alexandria, is the area of the famous battle between the British Eighth Army under Montgomery and the Africa Corps led by Rommel. The first great turning point of World War II, it is marked by war cemeteries and a museum.



## SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Alexandria and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult [azamarclubcruises.com](http://azamarclubcruises.com) or contact the onboard Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

**Bargaining:** Be prepared to bargain – it is expected in markets. It is wise to not show too much interest in the item and start the bargaining with a price much lower than you are really prepared to pay and then barter up to that point. Bargaining is not an accepted practice in shops.

**Tipping:** Here it is “baksheesh” and is more than just a reward for good service and is regarded as supplemental income. Wages in Egypt can tend to be low so baksheesh is a vital supplement to the income of workers. You'll be expected to tip a small amount for something as minor as having the door opened for you. In most of the restaurants frequented by tourists 12% service charge and 5% government tax are included in the bill, however, you are expected to add a little extra as well.

**Dress Code:** As the population is predominantly Muslim, a strict dress code is followed. The rule of the thumb is: the less seen the better. For men: long pants and long or short sleeved shirts to hide shoulders. For women: no shorts or uncovered shoulders. Skirts or dresses should cover at least the knees and as much of the arm as possible.

## LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Ful (cooked, mashed fava beans) is a favorite; it is served with a pita type bread called aish baladee. Try the harira soup with herbed lamb, lentils and chick peas, followed by either couscous or tajina. Kofta and kebab are two of the most popular dishes in Egypt, Kofta is ground meat peppered with spices, skewered and grilled over a fire just like shish kebab. Kebab is similar but the meat isn't ground. Grilled tomatoes and onions are also served.

Shay (tea) and kahwa (coffee) head the list of popular drinks in Egypt. Both are usually made very strong and served with an extreme amount of sugar. The beer, Stella, is served in 750 ml bottles. An Egyptian staple is asab (sugar cane juice). Soft drinks are widely available. You will find some pretty good local wines, a very sweet tasting liqueur called Abu Simbel, western hard liquors are available in the major hotels. Bottled water is recommended.

## SHOPPING

The main shopping areas are at the Ramle Tram Station (1.5 km from port), Mansheya Square (2 km from port) and the Gold Souk (2 km from the port). Egypt generally is known for budget souvenirs. The most popular items being hieroglyphic drawings of pharaohs, queens, gods and goddesses which can be found on anything from paper to brass tables. Copperware, brassware, gold, silver, ceramics, alabaster and papyrus are readily available. A cartouche with the name of a friend spelled in hieroglyphics makes an interesting gift. Egyptian cotton is renowned. Full-length robes, or galabiyas, for men can be made to order. Avoid ivory products as they are not allowed to be imported to many countries including the United States and Canada.

