

ARCE Grand Tour of Egypt 2023
Suggestions for Pre-departure Reading

EGYPTIAN HISTORY: ANCIENT AND MODERN

The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt

Ian Shaw, ed., Oxford University Press, 2004

Good for reading before you depart. Well organized.

A History of Egypt: From Earliest Times to the Present

Jason Thompson, American University in Cairo Press, 2011

There is more to Egypt's fascinating history than the pharaonic period.

The Red Sea Scrolls: How Ancient Papyri Reveal the Secrets of the Pyramids

Mark Lehner and Pierre Tallet, Thames and Hudson, 2022.

What the Dynasty 4 papyri of Inspector Merer (discovered by Tallet in 2013) tell us about building the Great Pyramid and the organization of the work force. Written by two great authorities.

Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt

Nina Burleigh, Harper, 2007

Cairo: The City Victorious

Max Rodenbeck, Knopf, 1999

Fascinating, and very readable history of Cairo

When Women Ruled the World: Six Queens of Egypt

Kara Cooney, National Geographic, 2018

Cairo in the War 1939–1945

Artemis Cooper, Penguin, 1989

A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology

Toby Wilkinson, Norton, 2020.

Very good account of the big names and discoveries, most in the context of 20th century Egypt and its move to political independence.

ANCIENT LIFE AND CULTURE

Egypt and the Egyptians

Douglas J. Brewer and Emily Teeter, Cambridge University Press, 2007
Overall treatment of history, geography, religion, language, and art.

Pharaoh's People: Scenes from Life in Imperial Egypt

T. G. H. James, The Bodley Head, 1984
Very readable and informative; still highly recommended for daily life.

Ancient Egypt

David P. Silverman, ed., Oxford University Press, 2003
A group of illustrated essays on a wide variety of topics.

How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs: A Step by Step Guide to Teach Yourself

Mark Collier and Bill Manley, University of California Press, 2003
Yes, you can learn to read simple inscriptions!

Common Birds of Egypt

Bertel Bruun and Sherif Baha el Din, American University of Cairo Press, 1990
Slim volume with good illustrations. Available in Cairo.

RELIGION

Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many

Erik Hornung, Cornell University Press, 1996
Not the easiest read, but the standard work.

Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Egypt

John Taylor, University of Chicago Press, 2001
Packed with fascinating information and excellent illustrations. Highly recommended.

Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt

Emily Teeter, Cambridge University Press, 2011
Essential information on what ancient Egyptian religion (priests, offerings, funerary and temple cults) was about and how belief formed the society and economy.

ART & ARCHITECTURE

Building in Egypt: Pharaonic Stone Masonry

Dieter Arnold, Oxford University Press, 1997
The standard work on construction. Excellent diagrams and text.

Ancient Egyptian Statues: Their Many Lives and Deaths

Simon Connor, American University in Cairo Press, 2023. Fascinating information about why

statues were made, and how they were used and reused. Highly recommended.

The Art of Ancient Egypt

Gay Robins, Harvard University Press, 2008. Best one-volume source.

The Complete Pyramids

Mark Lehner, Thames & Hudson, 1997

The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt

Richard Wilkinson, Thames & Hudson, 2000

LIGHTER READING

A Thousand Miles up the Nile

Amelia B. Edwards, Norton Creek Press, 1993 (various editions available) – reprint of 1880s classic.

Crocodile on the Sandbank

Elizabeth Peters (A.K.A. Barbara Mertz), Grand Central Publishing, 2013
Or any of the Amelia Peabody novels. You either love 'em, or don't.

Out of Egypt: A Memoir

André Aciman, Riverhead Books, 1994

Story of a Jewish family in Alexandria; highly recommended for what life was like before the revolution.

The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: My Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World

Lucette Lagnado, Ecco, 2007

Story of an elite Egyptian family and their transition from gracious mid-century Cairo to the realities of a new life in America.

Naguib Mahfouz

The Trilogy (*Palace Walk*, *Palace of Desire*, and *Sugar Street*) or especially *Midaq Alley*, all of them set in neighborhoods in Islamic Cairo, are especially recommended.

Midnight in Cairo: The Divas of Egypt's Roaring '20s

Raphael Cormack, Norton, 2021

History of the Ezbekkiya area (Opera Square) that was once the center of Cairo's vibrant nightlife. Lots of cultural history in addition to the divas.

Playing Cards in Cairo: Mint Tea, Tarneeb and Tales of the City

Hugh Miles, Abacus, 2008

Illuminating view of modern social life of young women in upper middle class Cairo.

Michael Pearce

The many Mamur Zapt detective novels are set pre-WWI Cairo.

GUIDE BOOKS

Egypt Travel Guide

Lonely Planet, 2018

DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Egypt

DK Publishing, 2017

Thebes in Egypt: A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor

Nigel and Helen Strudwick, Cornell University Press, 199. Everything you want to know about Thebes and its monuments.

VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

Video from ARCE:

The Red Monastery: <https://www.arce.org/conserving-coptic-heritage-historic-egyptian-american-partnership>

Podcasts from ARCE:

Work at Karnak: <https://www.arce.org/podcast/archive-series>

On kingship: <https://www.arce.org/podcast/kingship-ancient-egypt>

On Tutankhamun: <https://www.arce.org/podcast/tutankhamun-series>

Netflix: “Finding Ola” (originally “Awza Mitgawiz” “I want to get married”) Egyptian serial (2022) about an upper class 40ish woman and her family in their gated community home, her divorce, finding herself through a new career. Watch for her mother player by Sawan Badr, a very famous Egyptian movie star.

Video about King Tut: “The Photographs that Brought Tutankhamun to Life: The Man who Shot Tutankhamun.” Harry Burton and his work (1 hour). Highly recommended.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axlFQ2IRW2A>

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