



Tips on Studying Abroad at the American University in Cairo in Egypt

Want to know what it's like to study abroad? Want to know what your peers think? Your fellow Georgia Tech students who have previously gone on this exchange program gave their opinions so that future participants have the inside scoop on their host institution and host country.



Classes

- I would highly recommend the classes offered at the American University of Cairo. They provided me with an in depth understanding of the causes and sources of anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism in the Middle East through interacting with the local students and professors.
- The quality of instruction, overall, was great. However, My US Foreign Policy professor and my Comparative Politics of the Middle East professor were highly disappointing.

Finances

- Look into the National Security Education Program Scholarship!
- Finances were very easy to take care of if you planned accordingly. Many Americans make the mistake of using Credit or Debit cards to withdraw money from ATMs that charged high transaction fees. I recommend opening two bank accounts at the local Commercial Bank International (CBI) branch on the AUC campus. Keep one account for storing Egyptian pounds and another for American dollars. Egyptian pounds are more or less worthless outside of Egypt so convert to them smartly. The American dollars account will be necessary when traveling anywhere outside of Egypt as many countries request payment of their visas in dollars. It worked out great for me.

Housing

- Living accommodations and meals all depend on how much you're willing to pay. Overall, apartments and food are extremely cheap. I stayed in the dorms first semester which costs about the same as here and then moved to a huge 2 bedroom apartment and paid less.

Cultural Differences

- Don't be shy and intimidated by the new landscape, culture, and language. Be assured that people go out of their way for Americans, but DO NOT be arrogant. Do not fall prey to the traditional stereotypes. After all, most Egyptians have their stereotypes about Americans; a prominent one is Americans as sexually promiscuous. To any women traveling, you will be harassed by Egyptian men, but ONLY verbally. Cairo is a safer city than many American cities in my opinion.

Transportation & Travel

- I traveled a lot. It was very easy geographically with Cairo's airports having a high variety of airlines to choose from. There were direct flights to Sub-Saharan Africa, the Greater Middle East, and Europe.



*These comments do not reflect the views of GT's Office of International Education. They are based on students' individual opinions and are, therefore, not necessarily representative of all student experiences.



Lifestyle

- Student life is fairly segregated. The university is divided into many cliques: the Coptic Christians, the devout Muslims, and the Study Abroad students. But, if you venture to make local Egyptian friends, you will be rewarded. The students are very friendly and affable. A little initiative on the part of an American is all that is required to make good friends. I participated in the Model United Nations Conference and in the International Court of Justice with mostly Egyptian law students from Cairo University. I had a great experience working and discussing issues of international law with them.
- I spent most of my time with Americans, only because I roomed with one. But on campus most of my time was spent with other international students and local Arab students. The last few days before I left Cairo I spent the night at a Sudanese friend's apartment.
- If you look for friendship you will be rewarded. However, I think many of the American study abroad students refused to do so because most of them were all housed in the dorms together or roomed with each other and therefore they had a nice comfort zone that probably most did not want to breach by attempting friendship with locals. Or as my roommate told me, since he already had to deal with stress of the foreign surroundings, he just didn't want to deal with the addition stress of making friends from a different culture.



Food

- Meals became redundant after a while since becoming sick from eating unclean food was a common occurrence by Americans.
- The fresh fruit juices are the best over there.

Communication

- To call the US I used Skype, which is a free Internet telephony program. When I moved to an apartment without internet, my mother would call my cell phone using a calling card. My roommate had a cell phone with an American number that could get reception nearly anywhere in the world so he could call home or anyone in the US could call him at it would be as if anyone in the US was making a regular to another phone number in the US.

Participant Profiles

Please see information of contributing students below. If a blog or website is listed, feel free to take a look! Also, if an e-mail address is listed, you may contact that student if you have any questions about their study abroad experience.

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