

Cultural Report IAESTE in Egypt

UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO

Egypt | August 2018



Internship

I am a Geography student in my fourth semester of Bachelor at the University of Heidelberg. For an IAESTE internship I applied, to get some practical experience abroad and an idea about what an occupation for a geographer can look like.

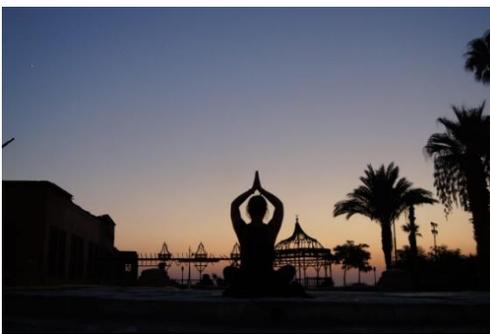
As I got the acceptance for an internship at the Center for hazard mitigation and environmental studies and research at the University of Cairo within the period of four weeks, I was very happy, because I plan to specialize my studies to sustainability and environmental issues.

At the first day of work I was very curious about what my project would look like. Before I could start, we identified a small problem. I am no chemical engineer as assumed and they didn't prepare the internship for a geographer as I assumed. But in the end this misapprehension was no problem at all and I was matched to other tasks.

I got an introduction in the topic of systemic risk management and helped to transfer a risk evaluation of the Shyakhas (districts) of Old Cairo to a map in QGIS. This was a good chance to refresh my knowledge about the QGIS software. I worked together with different people and got inspect in the topic of risk management.

Egypt

Cairo itself is definitely a megacity to remember. The first thing that comes to my mind is the dizzying traffic. On the way to the faculty I had to cross two three-lane streets and to be honest, at the beginning I was kind of afraid. Additionally at some days I couldn't stand the contrast between the heat outside and the dry and air conditioned cold inside.



But despite those two things I really liked the character of Egypt. Every person I met was so kind to me and I was impressed by the great hospitality and the positive attitude of the Egyptians. The atmosphere in Cairo is loud (honking cars all the time!), dusty and lively. We explored Cairo, the near surrounding of Cairo, Alexandria and a small area along the Red sea. I was so happy to get the chance to see the life and the landscape outside the capital, because these impressions made my picture of Egypt even more colorful.

I remember the salt lakes in the desert, the green Nile bank, the amazing coast of the red sea, the traditional chai, so much good food and fresh juices, the arabic music and the total different sign system.

Free time

The fact, that I wasn't alone, but together with two other trainees during my stay, helped me to have an even better time in Cairo. We stayed in the same student hostel (what was offered for free by IAESTE Egypt), walked together to the Faculty and spent nearly most of the time together. At the evenings we tried different dishes, visited ElMokatam – a small hill with a stunning view over the city – several times, met different people, did a boat trip on the Nile, visited the Bazar, Coptic Cairo, the Pyramids and the Citadel of Cairo.



Furthermore, there were some organized trips from IAESTE Egypt. One day we joined an anniversary celebration at the Nile-river, the other day we took part at an Egyptian wedding. We had a day trip to Fayum, (visiting the Wadi El Rayan National Park, the waterfalls and a nice resort) and got a tour around the University campus (met different people, saw nearly every building – included the library – and climbed the cupola of the main building). During the vacation we got invited to join the celebrations of the Islamic Feast Eid Al-Adha.

Traveling

A part from that we did two self-organized trips over the weekends. One was to Alexandria, the hellenistic Port-City at the Mediterranean Sea. There we visited the Citadel of Qaitbay and the library of Alexandria. The second was to Sharm el Sheikh at the red sea. We spend half a day in the bus drive along South Sinai, but that was definitely worth it! Sharm El Sheikh has amazing spots for snorkelling and diving. Thus we made a boat trip and visited the national park there for snorkelling. We saw many fishes and coloured corals — the under-water world is magnificent!



Acknowledgment

To sum it up I had a great time in Cairo. I would like to thank IAESTE – that made this trip possible and all the kind people I met – that made my stay unforgettable.

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