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## **Destination: Egypt**

Film: **Tuk-Tuk** (2015, NR, 75 mins., in Arabic w/English subtitles)

Every day, thousands of three-wheeled motorized rickshaws ("tuk-tuks") zip through Cairo, many driven by teenage boys like Abdallah, Sharon and Bika who, with no other way to help their families, are forced to navigate the city's wild urban landscapes. (Hoopla)

Film: **Oum Kalthoum** (2018, NR, 52 mins., in French w/English subtitles)

The Nightingale from Cairo. Forty years ago, the "Star of the East" died. Her death was mourned worldwide, giving rise to scenes of collective grievance. A real "Poor People's Singer" in her lifetime, she was venerated in Egypt, throughout the Arab world, and beyond. Through the power of her song, her unique voice that captured the crowds, and an exceptional repertoire, she performed the unheard-of feat of sweeping away the barriers between peoples, which, to this day, no politician has ever successfully done. (Hoopla)

E-book: **American Travelers on the Nile** by Andrew Oliver

The Treaty of Ghent signed in 1814, ending the War of 1812, allowed Americans once again to travel abroad. Drawing on unpublished letters and diaries together with previously neglected newspaper accounts, as well as a handful of published accounts, this book offers a new look at the early American experience in Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean world. More than thirty illustrations complement the stories told by the travelers themselves. (Hoopla)

E-book: **The Battle of the Nile** by Oliver Warner

First published in 1960, this is a gripping account of the decisive sea battle between the forces of Napoleon and the British under Nelson in 1798. The Battle of the Nile (also known as the Battle of Aboukir Bay) was a major naval battle fought between the British Royal Navy and the Navy of the French Republic at Aboukir Bay on the Mediterranean coast off the Nile Delta of Egypt from 1-3 August 1798. (Hoopla)

E-book: **The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets** by Khairy Shalaby

Ibn Shalaby, like many Egyptians, is looking for a job. Yet, unlike most of his fellow citizens, he is prone to sudden dislocations in time. Armed with his trusty briefcase and his Islamic-calendar wristwatch, he bounces uncontrollably through the Fatimid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk periods, with occasional return visits to the 1990s. Along the way, he meets celebrities such as Jawhar, the founder of Cairo. He also encounters other time travelers, including the historian Maqrizi. After his cassette recorder fails to impress a Fatimid caliph, he finds himself trapped in the 1300s. (Hoopla)

E-book: **The Literary Life of Cairo** by Samia Mehrez

One hundred years in the heart of the city. This book presents readings from literary works that re-construct a century of Cairo's changing social life and immerses the reader in the complex network of socioeconomic and cultural lives in the city. (Hoopla)

E-book: **Otared** by Mohammed Rabie

2025: fourteen years after the failed revolution, Egypt is invaded once more. As traumatized Egyptians eke out a feral existence in Cairo's dusty downtown, former cop Ahmed Otared joins a group of fellow officers seeking Egypt's liberation through the barrel of a gun. As Cairo becomes a foul cauldron of drugs, sex, and senseless violence, Otared finally understands his country's fate. In this unflinching and grisly novel, Mohammad Rabie envisages a grim future for Egypt, where death is the only certainty. (Hoopla)

E-book: **The Book of Safety** by Yasser Abdel Hafez

Khaled transcribes testimonies at the Palace of Confessions, a shadowy state-run agency situated in a respectable Cairo suburb. There he encounters Mustafa Ismail: a university professor turned master thief, who breaks into the homes of the great and the good and then blackmails them into silence. Mustafa has dedicated his existence to the perfection of his trade and authored *The Book of Safety*, the ultimate guide to successful thievery. With cool and incisive prose, Yasser Abdel Hafez follows Khaled into obsession with this mysterious book and its author. (Hoopla)

E-book: **The Tent** by Miral al-Tahawy

A beautifully written, powerful, and disturbing novel, featuring a host of women characters whose lives are subject to the will of a single, often absent, patriarch and his brutal, foul-mouthed mother. Told through the eyes of a young girl, the lives of the Bedouin and peasant women unfold, revealing the tragedy of the sonless mother and the intolerable heaviness of existence. Set against trackless deserts and star-filled night skies, the story tells of the young girl's relationship with her distant father and a foreign woman who is well meaning but ultimately motivated by self-interest. It provides an intimate glimpse inside the women's quarters, and chronicles their pastimes and preoccupations, their stories and their songs. (Hoopla)

E-book: **Cigarette Number Seven** by Donia Kamal

As a child, Nadia was left her with her grandparents in Egypt, while her mother sought work in the Gulf. Decades later, she looks back on her fragmented childhood from an uncertain present: it is 2011 and the streets have erupted in an unexpected revolution. Her activist father, the sole anchor in her life, encourages her to be a part of the protests and so Nadia joins the sit-in at Tahrir Square. Donia Kamal's succinct, candid prose draw us into Nadia's world: from the private to the public; from the men she has loved and lost, to her participation in the momentous events of the Egyptian revolution. (Hoopla)

E-book: **Embrace on Brooklyn Bridge** by Ezzedine C. Fishere

On the eve of Salma's twenty-first birthday, scattered friends and family converge on New York for a celebration organized by Darwish, her obstinate grandfather. Each guest's journey to this fated gathering takes on an unexpected significance, as they find themselves revisiting the choices they have made in life, and rethinking their relationships with one another and the country in which they live. Traveling seamlessly between Egypt and the United States, this is a story about how we construct and shift our identities, and about a family's search for home. (Hoopla)

E-book: **The Open Door** by Latifa Al-Zayyat

A landmark of women's writing in Arabic. Published in 1960, it was very bold for its time in exploring a middle-class Egyptian girl's coming of sexual and political age, in the context of the Egyptian nationalist movement preceding the 1952 revolution. The novel traces the pressures on young women and young men of that time and class as they seek to free themselves of family control and social expectations. Young Layla and her brother become involved in the student activism of the 1940s and early 1950s and in the popular resistance to continued imperialist rule. Not only daring in her themes, Latifa al-Zayyat was also bold in her use of colloquial Arabic, and the novel contains some of the liveliest dialogue in modern Arabic literature. (Hoopla)

E-book: **Nile Sparrows** by Ibrahim Aslan

Set in the author's own Nile-side neighborhood of Warraq, Aslan's second novel, the first to be translated and published in English, chronicles the daily rhythm of life of rural migrants to Cairo and their complex webs of familial and neighborly relations over half a century. It opens with the mysterious disappearance of the tiny grandmother, Hanem, who is over 100 years old and is last seen by her daughter-in-law Dalal. Dalal does not have the heart to tell Hanem that her grown children Nargis and Abdel Reheem have both been dead for some time. Her grandson Mr. Abdalla, who has children of his own and not a few flecks of gray in his hair, reluctantly sets out for their home village to search for her, embarking on a bittersweet odyssey into his family's past and a confrontation with his own aging. (Hoopla)

E-book: **In the Spider's Room** by Muhammad Abdelnabi

Hani was out for an evening stroll near Cairo's Tahrir Square when a heavy hand landed on his shoulder. An informant had identified him, and he was thrown into the back of a police truck. There began a seven-month nightmare as he was swept up, along with fifty other men, in the infamous Queen Boat affair that targeted Egypt's gay community. Finally free, but traumatized into speechlessness, Hani writes down the events of his life-his first sexual desires, his relationship with his mother, his marriage of convenience, and his passion for Abdel Aziz, the only man he ever truly loved. (Hoopla)

E-book: **Diary of a Jewish Muslim** by Kamal Ruhayyim

Egyptian Muslims and Jews were not always at odds. Before the Arab-Israeli wars, before the mass exodus of Jews from Egypt, there was harmony. Spanning the 1930s to the 1960s, this sweeping novel accompanies Galal, a young boy with a Jewish mother and a Muslim father, through his childhood and boyhood in a vibrant popular quarter of Cairo. With his schoolboy crushes and teen rebellions, Galal is deeply Egyptian, knit tightly into the middle-class fabric of manners, morals, and traditions that cheerfully incorporates and transcends religion-a fabric about to be torn apart by a bigger world of politics that will put Galal's very identity to the test. (Hoopla)

Virtual Tour: **Bab Zuwayla** (one of three remaining gates in the walls of old Cairo)

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