

THE FAYOUM ECOTRAVEL GUIDE





BRAVO

The BRAVO project – Building Rural Assets with Valuable Opportunities – was created to help overcome economic hardship in the Fayoum and provide economic empowerment to the local community through their development in three key areas: agriculture, handicraft and tourism.

BRAVO is financed by the Italian-Egyptian Debt for Development Swap and implemented by the Italian NGOs M.A.I.S. (Movimento per l'Autosviluppo, l'Interscambio e la Solidarietà) and COSPE (Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti). The Egyptian Company NSCE (North South Consultants Exchange) is responsible for the sustainable tourism component. NSCE's aim is to build an infrastructure for sustainable tourism in the Fayoum by increasing the value of the cultural and natural heritage of the Oasis, while promoting the area as an attractive destination for local and international tourists.



The combination of stunning landscapes, unique culture and the proximity to Cairo makes Fayoum an attractive weekend destination.



The Fayoum is an oasis for bird watching lovers. Each year the bird sanctuaries draw thousands of bird watchers to the Fayoum.

Among the key objectives of the BRAVO project is promoting the Fayoum as an eco-tourism destination. Accordingly, the BRAVO eco-tourism component targets different stakeholders, as they all have an integral role in adding to this area's wealth and recognition as an eco-friendly destination. Tour guides, graduates from the Faculty of Tourism & Hotels, Fayoum University, and some local service providers received extensive training implemented by BRAVO experts about the region and the basics of sustainable tourism.

Fully integrated eco-tour itineraries and maps were designed to link natural, archaeological, cultural and rural heritage sites. The featured villages in the BRAVO eco-tours are Qarun, Tunis, Nazla and Medinet Madi, with their unique and rare character, handicrafts, heritage, culture and nature.

The BRAVO routes offer a number of flexible itineraries allowing visitors to discover the cultural, natural and rural assets of Qarun, Tunis, Nazla and Medinet Madi in an environmentally friendly manner, which promotes sustainable tourism as a viable alternative to mass tourism. The BRAVO eco-tours focus on the inclusion of the local communities, from local eco-guides and businesses like restaurants, boat, camel or horse rentals to other local services.



The Fayoum

The Fayoum Oasis, a rural area 90 km from Cairo, played an important part in every culture that has swept through Egypt, the Pharaohs, Greeks and Romans, the Coptic Christians and finally the Muslim Arabs, leaving Fayoum with nothing but a rich and unique culture with unparalleled history, handicrafts, touristic sites and nature. The Fayoum also has the first UNESCO protected nature reserve in Egypt, the overflow basin Wadi El Rayan.

Despite its cultural and natural wealth, the Fayoum has remained largely on the periphery of the social and economic development, where it suffers from deprivation, unemployment, lack of education and deteriorating economic and environmental conditions.

BRAVO realizes the potential in the Fayoum and that its resources could become, if appropriately utilized, a major asset in combating the current economic status and that the Fayoum could become a model for sustainable tourism in Egypt.





Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is the new wave of tourism worldwide. Tourists are now aware and try to make a positive impact on the society, environment and economy of the destinations they visit.

Sustainable tourism and eco-tourism have the same principles, they both put in consideration current and future social, economic and environmental development.

Sustainable tourism addresses the needs of all stakeholders: tourists, the industry, tour operators, the local culture, the environment and the host communities making sure that sustainable tourism is a positive experience for all.

Benefits of Sustainable Tourism

- Promotes respect to the natural environment
- Supports the conservation of rare natural sites
- Preserves the culture and traditions of the local people restoring pride and dignity to their heritage
- Encourages close encounters between travelers and the local community, which creates a strong interchange of culture and ideas and a better understanding of social habits
- Improves the social and economic standards of the local people by opening up opportunities in tourism activities
- Opens new possibilities for locally operated businesses to thrive





BRAVO Key Activities

- Promote sustainable tourism itinerary routes connecting the villages of Nazla, Tunis and Qarun with the archaeological sites of Qasr Qarun and Medinet Madi
- Market the BRAVO itinerary among tour operators and the local community
- Arrange visits to Nazla pottery village where terracotta pots are fired in towering kilns
- Organize visits to glazed pottery workshops in Tunis and see how socio-economic development was achieved
- Offer donkey, camel or horse rides and walking tours along the shaded country lanes of the south-western part of Lake Qarun
- Explore the Greco-Roman Temple of Qasr Qarun
- Discover Wadi El Rayan protected area with its 2 lakes, waterfalls and visit the archeological site of Medinet Madi
- Enjoy the annual Tunis Pottery Festival and Qasr Qarun Festival
- Use professional well-trained sustainable tourism guides experienced in the Fayoum Region



Hike your way from Qasr Qarun to Lake Qarun through a picturesque and tranquil path flanked with vineyards and palm trees.

The Greco-Roman Temple "Qasr Qarun" is an exquisite piece of architecture. With its halls, staircases, corridors and hidden crypts, it is one of the most important archaeological sites in the Fayoum. The "Qasr Qarun Sun Festival" is held every year to celebrate the rare occasion of the sunlight hitting the temple's innermost sanctuary.



Medinet Madi is also known as "the Luxor of Fayoum". The site dates back to 2000 BC when the Pharaohs settled in the Fayoum region. The discovery of Medinet Madi is considered one of the greatest discoveries in Egypt in the 20th century.



Nazla is distinguished by its traditional open-air pottery workshops which use remarkable methods following the techniques of the ancient Egyptian potters. Nazla produces plain, utilitarian products mainly for the local market. The last remaining potters of Nazla are struggling to keep themselves and their ancient art alive.

Tunis, also known as the "Artist's Residence", is a success story for cultural and rural development. The village now has 10 pottery workshops serving the local and international market.

Every piece of the colourful glazed Tunis pottery is creatively handcrafted leaving each item a unique masterpiece. The "Tunis Pottery Festival" is an annual cultural highlight.



Tunis village offers a number of comfortable eco lodges and hotels.



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Help us demonstrate that sustainable tourism is a viable alternative to mass tourism and can contribute to the livelihood of local communities.

Visit our Online Blog: <http://www.fayoumecotravelguide.net>

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