



Cairo Kit | Culture Kit Description List

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Books

1. Disney Books



Just like in the US, Disney films and books are very popular in Egypt. Of course, the stories are translated into Arabic for Egyptian audiences. Two of the books in the kit are based on Disney films. Can you tell which stories they are?

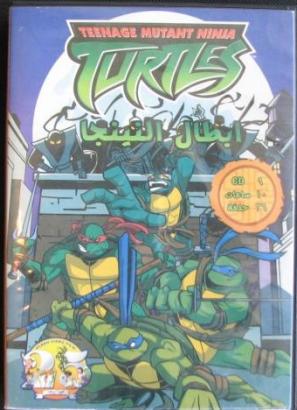
2. The Tenth Seed



Traditional tales that teach a lesson are also popular in Egypt. The Tenth Seed is a story about understanding that even the little things are important. It has an English translation, so you can read it even if you don't read Arabic.

DVDs

3. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles DVD

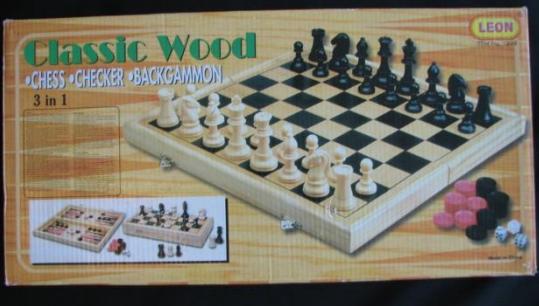
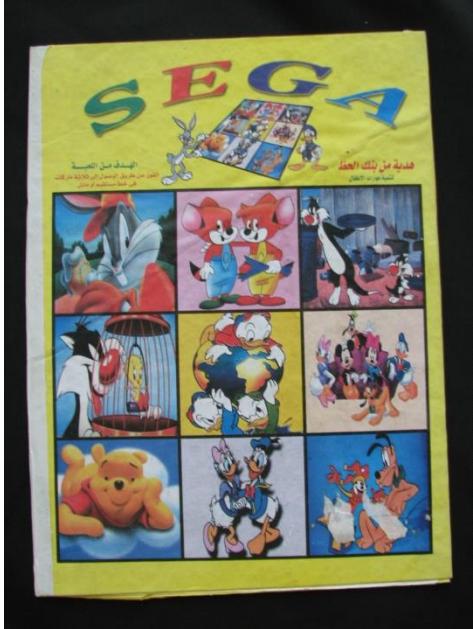


Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is popular in Egypt, as it is in many countries. Cartoons like this are easily shared, because producers in different countries can simply dub in dialogue in the appropriate language. The fast-paced action and the funny-tough talk of the Turtles make it a favorite with younger TV viewers in Egypt.

4. Basant al-Diyasti DVD		<p>Basant al-Diyasti is a popular series about a mismatched young couple. The man is very old-fashioned, and the woman is very up-to-date. They can seldom agree on what they want, but by the end of each episode, they come to an understanding about what's important. In Egypt, where people live by both modern and traditional rules, it's a fun reminder that some values are timeless.</p>
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Games

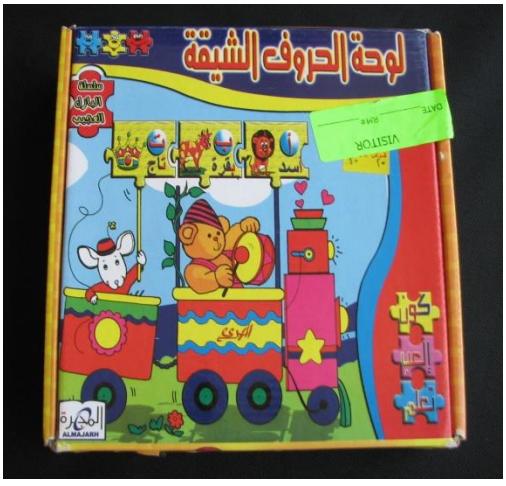
5. Bank El Haz game		<p>Bank El Haz is a popular game, much like Monopoly. Players use cars as tokens, roll a die, and move the car the number of spaces shown on the die. Where you land on board determines the amount of money you receive or have to give to another player or to the bank. You can buy cities and markets, and so control those squares on the board. But you can get in trouble, too, if you land on another player's property, or are sent to jail. A player with no more money or property loses, and has to leave the game. The player with the most money at the end of the game wins. This can take hours, and so Bank El Haz is most popular in the summer, when school is out.</p> <p>Note: Bank El Haz is forbidden in Saudi Arabia, and among stricter families in the Middle East. Those parents who permit their children to play the game may use it as a lesson. The thinking is that once children have seen how gambling leads most often to losing, they will be less likely to be tempted to gamble.</p>
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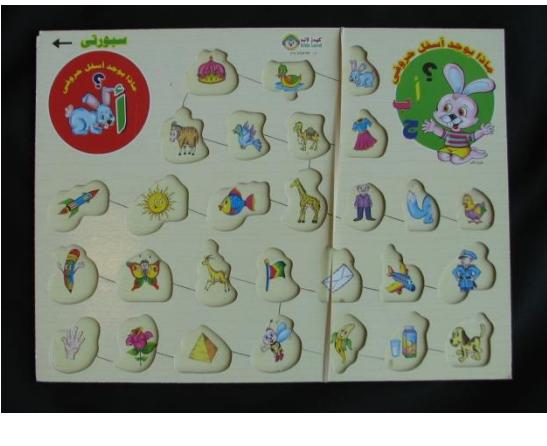
6. Backgammon		<p>In Cairo, adults frequently play backgammon and dominos in a café. Backgammon tends to be a very loud game, with banging of pieces and fists on the table after a good (or bad) move.</p>
7. Dominos		<p>Dominos tends to be much quieter than backgammon. No one brags or jokes about the game as they are playing. There even may be a soft cloth placed on the table, so that the dominos don't click as they are played.</p>
8. Cards		<p>Playing cards for money is forbidden in Egypt, as it is in most Muslim countries. But playing just for fun is permitted, and enjoyed by both adults and children. Many card games involve matching suits or numbers, collecting pairs, or playing a higher card in order to win. At the end of a game, the loser may have to do something for the winner, like get tea or bring some candies to the table.</p>
9. SEGA Game		<p>SEGA is a traditional game played by children in Egypt, similar to chess. Young boys and girls, and even elders, played SEGA in villages and small cities in northern Egypt. It is also a very popular game in many other Arab countries. Players use stones or wood as their moving parts, but the parts of each player are different (one player uses stone, one uses wood). The game can be played in 3x3 cells, or more – all the way up to 24x24 cells! In the game, players use a number of techniques in order to get the other player out of the field.</p> <p>Do you recognize any of the characters in the photos?</p>

Religious Items

10. Prayer Rug		Devout Muslims pray five times a day (before dawn, just after noon, in the afternoon, just after sunset, and at nightfall). Muslims use a special prayer rug on the floor, to ensure that the area is clean. A large prayer rug would most likely be used at home, and a smaller one kept for use at work. When praying, the top of the mat must be pointed towards Mecca. The prayer mat has a very strong symbolic meaning and traditionally taken care of in a holy manner. It is disrespectful for one to place a prayer mat in a dirty location or throw it around in a disrespectful manner.
11. Prayer Robe		Muslims prepare for prayer very carefully. Before praying, a Muslim performs a ritual washing (wudu), and makes sure that their clothes and the prayer space are completely clean. A woman might slip on the prayer robe over her clothes at home (or take the robe to the mosque for prayers).
12. Qur'an CDs		Listening to the Qur'an is also a pious act for Muslims. There are two CDs in the culture kit related to the Qur'an. One of the CDs offers a popular recitation of the Qur'an by Mohamed Jibreel (red CD), the most famous current reciter in Egypt. If you travel by taxi in Cairo, you might find that the cab driver is playing this CD. The other CD features interpretations of the Qur'an by Sheik Mohamed Mutwali al-Sharawi (green CD). Sharawi's television program, in which he explained the Qur'an with humor and references to everyday life, was a great favorite all over the Middle East.

13. Prayer Booklet		<p>Outside of the five daily prayer times, Muslims may use prayer booklets to help guide their prayers. Prayer is very important in the Islamic faith. Prayers should be performed with true remembrance of God. Through prayer, Muslims feel closer to God; are reminded to be grateful for God's blessings, and of God's greatness. Prayer booklets may address topics such as these: "Messages on Ablution and Prayers: How the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform the prayers; Prayers should be performed in groups; How to preform (Wudu') ablution."</p>
14. Laptop		<p>Part of prayer is the recitation of suras (verses) from the Qur'an. A young Muslim just learning to pray may use the laptop as a help in memorization. If you press a key, you can hear a prayer or sura. Note that there's a special key to repeat the recitation, so a child can hear it again and again, to help in learning it on their own.</p>
15. Prayer Beads		<p>In Islam, prayer beads are referred to as Misbaha, Tasbih or Sibha and contain 99 beads, corresponding to the Names of God in Islam. Sometimes only 33 beads are used, in which case one would cycle through them three times. The beads are traditionally used to keep count of these short prayers:</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Subhan allah (glory to Allah) El hamdu lilah (praise be to Allah) Allahu akbar (Allah is the greatest)</p> <p>Prayer beads are most often made of round glass, wood, plastic, amber, or gemstone. The cord is usually cotton, nylon, or silk. There is a wide variety of colors and styles on the market, ranging from cheap mass-produced prayer beads, to those that are made with expensive materials and high-quality workmanship.</p>

16. Wooden display		<p>The Quran is the central holy text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be the word of God (in Arabic: Allah) which was spoken to Muhammad, the Prophet of the Islamic faith. The Qur'an is divided into parts called <i>suras</i>, much like the Bible's books and further divided into what is called <i>alia</i> which consists of a line of more. While the Qur'an has been translated into many languages, during prayer it is read only in Arabic, so even in places where Arabic is not spoken such as Malaysia, Indonesia, China, India and England among many others, you can hear the call to prayer and people reciting their prayers in Arabic. Muslims also display particular verses of the Qur'an in the house or in the office. The wooden hanging features Qur'an 2:286. The translation can be found paired with the wooden display in the culture kit.</p>
17. Incense Cones		<p>Incense has been used for spiritual, aesthetic, and therapeutic purposes in many different faiths and cultures. Incense in Islam is not used during worship but used throughout the Islamic World to remind the believers of the rewards in Paradise. In some Muslim countries, Olive tree leaves are burn as incense. On Friday or on special holy days, one of the incense cones might be burned to release its beautiful fragrance.</p>
Educational Items		
18. Alphabet Puzzle		<p>Young children use this wooden alphabet jigsaw puzzle in learning the alphabet. Notice that the spaces follow the general shape of each letter. The alphabet begins at the top, at the far right, with alif and ends at the bottom row at the far left, with yā (yeh). Of course, children learn the Arabic alphabet from right to left, the same way Arabic is read and written. Notice that children can use the back of the puzzle as a space for arranging the letters to form words.</p>

19. Letter Jigsaw Puzzle		<p>The cardboard letter jigsaw puzzle also helps young children to learn the alphabet and to form words on their own. Note that each letter is associated with an animal or an object. This visual cue helps in memorization, and children have fun exploring what images make up their name.</p>
20. Classroom Posters		<p>Egyptian teachers use Classroom Posters on the wall to introduce words and concepts just as US teachers do. The images here are arranged by theme, and include their names in English and Arabic. The themes are wild animals, domestic animals, sea animals, vegetables, and clothes. Make your own list according to each theme. How many images are the same as those you might find on posters in the U.S.? How many are different? (Sometimes English and Arabic materials have mistakes in them. A common mistake made by English speakers is to connect Arabic letters incorrectly. Sometimes Arabic speakers misspell an English word, or use the wrong word. There's a mistake in one of the English words in these posters. Can you find it?)</p>
21. Numbers Workbooks		<p>Egyptian children learn to write to different kinds of numerals. These Numbers Workbooks offer practice for learning and memorizing both the numeral systems.</p>

22. Boy's School Uniform		<p>Egyptian boys wear uniforms in school. In private schools, the uniform is a white shirt and tie, and matching jacket and pants.</p>
23. Girl's School Uniform		<p>Egyptian girls also wear uniforms in school, with a blouse, pants, and jumper. At about twelve, some girls begin wearing the <i>hijab</i> (headscarf) with their uniform.</p>

Other Items

24. Tybah Sewak		<p>The item in the package marked "Tybah Sewak" is a natural toothbrush, made from a fragrant twig. The user chews on it, fraying the end, and brushes teeth with the bristles. The used top is to be cut after usage. After cutting, the new top to be used. The use of this natural toothbrush is associated with the hadith (the traditions relating to the life of Prophet Muhammad). The Prophet Muhammad is quoted in various hadiths recommending use of the sewak. Muslims revere the Prophet Muhammad, and seek to emulate him in daily life – one way to do this is by following these healthy practices, even before each prayer, this means at least 5 times a day!</p>
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25. Egyptian Flag	 A photograph of the Egyptian national flag, which consists of three horizontal stripes of equal width. The top stripe is red, the middle is white, and the bottom is black. In the center of the white stripe is the national emblem of Egypt, featuring the 'Eagle of Saladin' standing on a shield with a falcon above it.	<p>Egypt's national flag was formally accepted in 1984. It has three stripes—red, white, and black—with an eagle. The stripes were introduced on the Egyptian flag following the Revolution of 1952. The 'Eagle of Saladin,' the coat of arms of Egypt, is displayed prominently at the center. We saw this flag displayed very often and prominently in Cairo's Tahrir Square during the revolution in January, 2011. The flag is hoisted on all Egyptian governmental buildings on Fridays, national holidays, the opening session of the People's Assembly, and any other occasions as determined by the Minister of the Interior. Abusing the flag in any way is a criminal offense.</p>
26. Red Tarboush	 A photograph of a red Tarboush hat, which is a felt cap shaped like a shortened cone or cylinder. It is made of red felt and has a small tassel attached to the top center.	<p>The tarboush is a felt hat in the shape of a shortened cone or cylinder made of red felt, usually with a tassel attached to the top. In Turkish, it is called a fez. This hat owes much of its development and popularity to the Ottoman era (1299-1923). The Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II (ruled 1808-1839) first introduced the fez in 1826 when he abolished wearing of the turban by his troops in favor of the newly arrived hat from North Africa. The new hat also met the needs of Muslim worshipers for a head covering without a brim so that they could touch their forehead to the ground during prayer. The Egyptian Army wore the classic hat until 1950. The popularity of the tarboush ended in the early 1950s.</p>