



Excerpted Reviews from *AtNight Cairo*

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By Craig McGuire

Once a nightlife wasteland, Cairo now has a number of discos, clubs and casinos. Every tourist should see a nightclub show featuring a belly dancer while in Egypt. (Although belly dancing is now considered decadent and immoral by most of the staunchly Muslim Egyptians, the shows remain popular with tourists and visiting Arabs.)

The best belly dancer in Cairo is Fifi Abdou, who performs at the Meridien Hotel. Call the hotel for details and reservations. Also look for Dina, Cairo's second most famous dancer and, arguably, the most beautiful. She dances Tuesday and Sunday at the Semiramis Inter-Continental's Horoun Al-Rashid nightclub. The Marriott's *Nile Maxim* dinner cruise also features excellent dancers.

Clubs are generally open 10 pm-3:30 am.

BARS, TAVERNS AND PUBS

Just about every major hotel in the city has a bar and disco. Their quality varies, but there are a number of other good, atmospheric hangouts. All serve alcoholic beverages and accept most major credit cards.

Ambassador Club—A posh bar with subdued lighting. Daily lunch, nightly snacks. Minimum charge is £E 65 for lunch and £E 30 at night. Open daily noon-2 am. Semiramis Inter-Continental Hotel, Corniche al-Nil (downtown), phone 355-7171.

Cairo Cellar—After 10 pm you can barely hear your companions in this lively restaurant/bar which is jammed most nights. Lawyers, engineers, computer specialists and secretaries all converge at this place. Fantastic long bar, consistently acceptable cuisine (distinguished for top-quality steaks). Minimum per person: £E 25. Open daily noon-3 am. President Hotel, 22 Taha Hussein St. (Zamalek), phone 341-6751.

Deals—Squeeze into this tiny, raucous pocket pub and enjoy the cozy, smoky scene, a favorite haunt of Cairo's British expat community and wayward diplomats. Excellent bar food, fun music. Sayyed al-Bakry Street (Zamalek), close to the Marriott, phone 341-0502.

Deals 2—Younger, more sophisticated brother to Deals. Darker and more stylish than the original, with good Italian food, great bar menu and jazzy interior. Music by the deejay is a bit loud for easy conversation, but the casual, hip ambience is very comfortable. Gol Gamal Street (Mohandiseen), phone 305-7255.

Harry's Pub—A very attractive British transplant, as witnessed by the high bar stools, draft beer and equestrian prints. So-so food, but appealing youthful staff. A great meeting place. Open noon-2 am (last order at 1:30 am). Marriott Hotel, Gezira Street (Zamalek), phone 340-8888.

Taverne du Champs de Mars—This turn-of-the-century bar was brought over piece by piece from Belgium and rebuilt. It has a European charm no other pub in Cairo can match. A preferred hangout for Cairo's ultra-discreet gays, it's also a favorite with the straight crowd. Minimum charge is £E 15.25 per person. Open 11 am-1 am. Nile Hilton Hotel, Corniche al-Nil (back door leads to Tahrir Square), phone 578-0444.

LIVE MUSIC



The following venues for live music accept most major credit cards and serve alcoholic beverages. Cover and/or a minimum order varies widely.

Absolute—Music by international bands every night in a hip, crowded atmosphere. Dance if there's room—or if there isn't. A deejay spins disks between sets. Lots of young diplomats and foreign teachers. Food is served from a full menu. Open 1 pm-2:30 am. 8 Amman Square (Dokki), phone 349-7326.

Aladdin—Arabic music and belly dancing are performed here nightly—but these amenities complement the delicious Lebanese specialties served, and the wonderful views of the Nile afforded by this hugely popular restaurant. Live *tahkt* (traditional Middle Eastern band) music begins at 8 pm, followed by a belly dancer at about 10:30-11:30 pm. Treat yourself to the city's best Middle Eastern meze (tray of savory appetizers). Main courses include skewered and grilled chicken, beef and fish, with Middle Eastern pastries presented as a sweet finale. Dinner and show cost about £E 77. Open nightly 8 pm-midnight for dinner (and also open 1-4 pm for lunch). \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. In the Cairo Sheraton Hotel, Galaa Square (Giza), phone 336-9700 or 336-9800.

Cairo Jazz Club—Live jazz nightly in a lounge bar atmosphere. This is the only *nightly jazz* venue in town. Full menu that changes regularly and a full bar. Food is inexpensive but mediocre. Cover charge of £E 7.50 per person. Call for current schedule. Reservations recommended for special shows and on weekends. 197 26th of July St. (Agouza), phone 345-9939.

Piano Piano—This restaurant and bar is still one of the hottest places in town. If you want to mingle with Cairo's rich and famous, this is the place to go. At night the long, long bar with its Nile views is packed, perhaps because of the pianist/singer and the intimate dance floor. Open for music, dinner and bar service daily 8 pm-2 am. Reservations needed for dining. \$\$\$. World Trade Center, 1191 Corniche al-Nil (Maspero), phone 574-9556.

Windows on the World—This is one of Cairo's premier bars for stunning views. You see a big chunk of the Nile and—on a clear day—the pyramids far in the distance. Go before sunset for daytime observation, then stay until dark to watch the city's lights twinkle. Take along a camera. Minimum charge is £E 38 per person. Open every day except Wednesday 4 pm-2 am. Live music starts at 10 pm—usually a singer with a cover band doing all sorts of international favorites. Ramses Hilton Hotel, Corniche al-Nil, phone 575-8000.

NIGHTCLUBS

While most nightclubs are in five-star hotels, Cairo's night scene is beginning to grow. Below are some of the current favorites. All clubs listed below accept most major credit cards and serve alcoholic beverages.

Crazy House Disco/Anchovy's Restaurant-Bar—The disco component of this members-only club opened to much drunken fanfare from Cairo's glitterati. The scene has simmered down a bit, however. Loud dance music, house dancers, crazy decor and full bar—all in a very Western-style disco ambience. Short-term or one-night VIP memberships available for visitors; call for prices. Downstairs in the same building is Anchovy's Restaurant-Bar, with mediocre food and music from the '60s, '70s and '80s in a lounge atmosphere. Both in Cairo Entertainment Center, 1 Salah Salem Rd., phone 366-1082.

Jackie's Joint—This perennially popular club at the Nile Hilton is one of the hottest spots in town. A deejay spins international dance and chart favorites most nights. Door policy changes frequently; call to check beforehand if it's to be couples only. Must be over age 21. Glamour dress. Open 9:30 pm-4 am. Front door at Corniche al-Nil (back door at Tahrir Square), phone



578-0444.

Saddle—A popular disco in the pyramids area, located at the Mena House Oberoi Hotel, Pyramids Road in Giza, phone 383-3222.