

# ElGouna Library



ElGouna Library is set to be one of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina embassy libraries across the country. ElGouna library, situated along the shores of the Red Sea, is set on the track of accomplishing the Bibliotheca's mission of spreading knowledge and culture beyond the restraints of a single city, thus promoting tolerance and understanding. ElGouna Library is the archetype of a new age in librarianship: the books on the shelves are important, but the true wealth of this library lies in how it is technologically and digitally set up to face the challenges of our time.

ElGouna library was constructed with an architectural flair that blends the Oriental origin of the country with some classical Greek and Roman structures. The interior is an archetypal modern facility, with ornamentals and inscriptions reflecting the universal values which the institute will represent. The entire facility embraces the natural scenery around it, blending tones of blue, brown and green to compliment its surroundings, allowing the readers to indulge in the Wi-Fi supported open air reading area so as to mingle the touristic nature of the site with the purpose of the library.



Upon entering into the library, there are many places for the visitor to choose from. Study rooms are provided allow researchers to enjoy a quiet time for studying at a workstation where internet connection is provided. The reading area has around 750 shelved books that were donated by Bibliotheca Alexandrina. While these may seem as the apparent stock of the library, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Embassy section of ElGouna library hosts a wealth of e-resources provided by the BA, allowing the visitor to feel as though he was in the BA's own premises.



There are many e-resources provided by the BA on the site:

- A book repository is available carrying some **50,000 digital books**, with more to come. It allows you to perform a full morphological search on all the texts in the repository or in a selected text in particular, and it highlights the results of the searched keyword where ever referenced.
- Access to web portals of the digitized **Description de l’Egypte** and **L’Art Arabe**. The former collection was compiled in the 20 years following Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798 and documents every aspect of the Egyptian history, antiquities, modern state, and geography of that period, while the latter pertains to Islamic monuments in Egypt and was compiled in 1877. The web portals of these collections provide efficient browsing tools and advanced search tools that allow for full morphological search in the text and plate volumes, highlighting the obtained results. The portals also have an ISIS in-house developed image service that allows for downloading the images bit by bit so as to adapt to the needs of slower internet connection. Another attractive feature in *L’Art Arabe* is the cross referencing between the text and plate volumes so that the user can locate which extracts and images are relevant to each other.

- The **Holy Books** web portal carries antique manuscripts of the three holy books, the Torah, the Bible and the Quran. The manuscripts can be viewed side by side with the translation of the texts in French and English, or they can be accompanied by exegesis. All the texts are fully searchable, and we can search in all three holy texts at the same time, or to limit the search into a single chapter.
- **Al-Hilal Digital Collection** is a digital copy of the issues of Al-Hilal magazine since its first publication in 1892. The collection covers 115 years of publication and the web portal allows you to search through the volumes and thoroughly read the articles.
- **Arab InfoMall** is a website that provides access from which Egyptian and Arab NGOs can both present their activities and observe what others are doing at the national and regional levels, presenting means of cooperation between civil society organizations in the Arab world and abroad.
- **Development Gateway** is an interactive portal for information and knowledge sharing on sustainable development and poverty reduction.
- **La Main à la Pâte (LAMAP)** is an educational site that aims to help teachers promote scientific thinking and investigation amongst primary school children. Teachers can pose questions on the site, where they can be answered by assigned professors. This can benefit the school students in ElGouna.
- **Supercourse** is a global repository of lectures targeting educators across the world. It has a network of over 45,000 scientists in 175 countries who are sharing for free a library of over 3,385 lectures.



While all these resources are available in the Embassy section of the library, they are also available in the reception area, on a touch screen equipped area for a more interactive approach. In the reception both tours and tutorials can take place to illustrate how the material may be explored.



Beyond the e-resources, an additional feature that will add a cultural dimension to ElGouna Library is the **CULTURAMA**. The CULTURAMA is the first fully interactive 9 screen 180° projection worldwide, which allows the audience to explore different eras of Egyptian history, starting from Pharaonic times till the present.

A service that aims to strengthen the ties between what occurs in the Library and the Bibliotheca is the **webcasting** service that broadcasts live feeds of the events taking place in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Conference Center. Not only are they broadcasted live, but they will also be locally archived on servers at ElGouna Library so that visitors can access them at any time they choose.

Hopefully, ElGouna library will become a worthy representative of Bibliotheca Alexandria by the Red Sea, setting an example for modern libraries to come on the importance of immortal digitized material and may it stand as a beacon to collaboration, tolerance and the importance of knowledge.