

Calling Egypt from the US



The best way to call home from the US is the **prepaid phone cards**. They are called "prepaid" cards because you buy and pay for them first. You can purchase calling cards for different values (\$5, \$10, \$20 etc). You can purchase them from supermarkets, post offices, gas stations, online etc. You can call virtually from everywhere where you find any phone. With a calling card it is possible to place local, long distance or international phone calls as well. Depending on your call destination and the available rates, a recorded voice message will tell you the available minutes or dollar amount left on your card, and will connect your call. The card has on its back a **toll free number** and a **PIN number** (or calling card number) composed of 10-13 digits. You dial the toll free number first and a voice message will guide you through the calling process

How do you choose the card that's right for you?

You should be aware of a few hidden tricks calling card companies use. Most cards have **hidden fees**, various connection fees which will make them finally more expensive. Don't make your decision on the rate/minute only. A card which advertises a rate of 1.9c/min but charges you an additional 50c connection fee each time you call, is not cheaper than another one with 3.9c/min flat fee, especially if you are making short calls.

Calling Cards Recommended *

Rechargeable AT&T flat fee calling card purchased from **Sam's Club**. You can purchase it initially with 400, 600, and 1000 and up to 2000 minutes. It offers**:

- low flat rate in the US, 3.4 cent/min
- 1 minute increment billing
- no connection fee
- no service or maintenance fee
- low payphone surcharge fee
- no expiration date
- it's rechargeable in 200 minutes increments
- good rate with Canada

* Recommendation is based on several individual opinions to call all over the world, you might find cheaper prices. Recommendation is based on voice clarity /price.

** Policy is subject to change, please review the policy every time you buy it, if you decided to go with this recommendation.

Pay phones

There are public phones available on streets. These are called payphones. You can use coins, calling cards, and your credit card to place a call. If you use coins a 3 minute local or long distance call will cost you 35c. Most phones will accept quarters (25c), dimes (10c) or nickels (5c) coins. Pennies (1c) are not accepted.

If you want to call someone and you don't have any money, calling card or credit card, you can still place a **collect call**. This is when the other party you are calling will pay for the call. You will have to dial the operator (see instructions on the phone) and tell her you want to place a collect call. The operator will ask you the phone number you want to call, will call the number for you, and ask the party if they will accept the collect call or not. If they do, operator will put you through. If the party you are calling decides to refuse the collect call the operator will let you know and you will get disconnected

When placing collect calling instead of just dialing the operator pressing "0" you can place collect calls cheaper by dialing **1-800-CALL-ATT** or **1-800-COLLECT**. These are special collect call services which will give you a cheaper rate per minute than other services. All toll free numbers from any phones are free. If you call a Toll free number from your cellular phone, you will be using your cellular phone plan minutes.

Useful Tips

- **What is a Toll Free Number?**

A toll free number is a telephone number that can be called at no cost to the caller, because the recipient pays for the cost of the call. It is also referred to as '800' numbers, although toll free numbers can start with the area codes, 800, 888, 877, and 866.

- **The Phone Directory service (411 service)**

411 is a free of charge phone number (except from cell phone, which may or may not be free). 411 gives you access to the directory service, where you can ask for the phone number and the address for practically everything –people, shops, restaurants, museums ...etc. It is very helpful.

- **The Emergency phone number (911)**

The number "911" is the **universal emergency number** for everyone in the United States. If you are having a case of emergency –theft, heart attack, fire ...etc., you can dial the emergency number 911. You will be connected to a trained emergency agent, who receives your phone number and your address automatically, and is able to take the necessary help actions.

Shopping



There are a lot of shopping places in the USA. Please be advised for the following as it might help getting your needs for competitive prices

- 1- For weekly shopping, look for the Sunday newsletter; every Sunday you will find the deals on different groceries and supermarkets so you can determine where you can get your week supplies. The deals usually last for a week and price change takes place on the following Sunday. Please be advised that price change does not mean that this item will go lower it might go low or up. You also can view the deals on the internet on weekly bases.
- 2- The best time to get hot deals on clothing and electronics is the second day after the big holidays like Memorial Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Usually you can get the best deals after Thanksgiving.
- 3- Few stores have a membership card which is free of charge. If you are a frequent purchaser from that store, then it is better to get the membership card, as they provide some bonus buy program for their members (i.e. members get some advantages and rewards).
- 4- Few shops don't accept debit/credit cards for payments less then 5\$ or 10\$. Or in some cases they don't accept cards at all. Hence you may find the display board saying "Cash only".
- 5- You will be getting some discount coupons of some items of certain stores, in your mailbox. Don't hesitate to show them at the respective counters to get discounts on those items.
- 6- You have right to give back or change any item within some period of time if you are not happy with the product you purchased, unless it is an edible or any perishable item. For this, you have to have the receipt that proves you bought this item. It is very important to keep your receipts. Also, most

of the time you will have a period of guarantee that varies depending on the item. For example, a guarantee of one year is often offered on electronic items. If your purchased item is broken during the guarantee period –even after 11 months and 29 days, for one year guarantee- you have to right to repair it, change it, or even get your money back, depending on the store policy. Of course, no receipt, no guarantee. So, always keep your valuable receipts.

For Regular Shopping: Well-known Market Places:

Some of these shopping markets are: **Wal-Mart, save mart, K-mart, Safeway, Albertsons, Longs Drugs, Rite Aid, Target, and Walgreens** etc.

In supermarkets, if the cashier asks for paper or plastic? It means what you would like to carry your stuff in, paper bags or plastic bags.

Miscellaneous notes

- At fast food joints, you will be asked if the food is for "**Here**" or "**To Go**". "Here" means dine-in, and "To Go" means packed/ parceled.
- At most restaurants, it is a custom to tip the server. Normally you should tip around 15%-20% of the check (not bill).
- In open buffet restaurants, it is a custom to use a fresh plate for each next serving. Leave the earlier one at the table itself, server will clear it up.
- At any dine-in place, don't go and occupy any empty table yourself. Wait at the front desk, as someone will assist you to get seated.
- Are you a Vegetarian? Or you do not want to eat meat thinking it might be pork? No Problem! Just be careful while ordering to specify "**no meat**" and don't say anything else like "**without meat**", "**meat-less**" etc., as they don't understand these terms
- When you want a soft drink without ice, specify "**No Ice**", and not "**Without Ice**".
- In US the T.V. channels can't be tuned according to your wish. For e.g. ESPN will come on channel 39 for everybody, you can't change it. This is applied according to your area and the cable company.
- Never ever ask for a **rubber** when you need an **eraser**. Here a rubber means "condom"!!
- The date is written as, MM/ DD/ YY i.e. Month/ Day/ Year
- When you are going to smoke, don't say, "I am going out for a fag". "Fag" in British English means, "to smoke", whereas in American English, it means "Gay".

- Smoking is prohibited inside 99% of the buildings, even in your apartment. In some realities, you can be fined heavily or others can sue you if are found smoking inside buildings.
- It is recommended to use water filters for drinking water, as there may be some lead content in it. Some rental companies make you sign paper work with lease contract relieving them from the responsibility if you experience symptoms of lead toxicity.
- Males wearing pink color shirt is normally taken as the sign of being Gay.
- At work or elsewhere while talking, if you want to say YES, just say "YES". Don't nod your head up and down. Moving your head side to side is very confusing, and it's mostly taken as NO.
- Don't say, "Phone was engaged", as here engaged means getting engaged. Instead say "There was a busy tone".
- Don't say, "I'll ring you back." or "I'll give you a ring later". Here ring is the engagement ring, rather say "I'll call you, or buzz you.
- Don't offer chewing gum, or a breath freshener to others. It gives them a message that they have bad breath. Your intention may not be that, but it is easily mistaken.
- Don't call a black person a "Negro" or "Black"; it is always polite to call them "African Americans". Also never call an "American Indian" as a "Red Indian", they get very offended.
- Don't walk/sit with arms around the shoulders of anybody of same sex, as you might be mistaken for a Gay or a Lesbian.
- When standing in a line, make sure there is enough space between you and the person standing in front of you. If you stand too close to strangers, they feel you are invading their personal space....Watch Out!!!
- During your conversation, don't say, "I have a doubt", rather say "I have a question/query"
- **FREE** is a buzz word here. You may get hundreds of advertisements with FREE in bigger fonts. Make sure that you read and understand all terms and conditions. Look for any hidden costs (generally referred as catch) before accepting such offers. **Note:** Generally, the catch is written in almost unreadable font size.
- You can check for almost everything on the Internet. Information is usually updated. You can know addresses, business hours, make reservations ...etc. Get the habit of using Internet. It will save you a lot of time.
- In Egypt, people don't like leaving voice messages. If the called party doesn't answer, the caller usually hangs up, and tries again later. In USA, people use voice messages pretty often. They check their messages frequently. So, leave your voice message, and how you can be contacted later, and most probably you will be answered in a short period of time.
- Also, emails in USA are a very convenient way of communication. People in Egypt prefer human contacts such as phone calls or personal meeting. Here, you better get used to communicating using emails. People check their emails several times a day. In a lot of situations, emails are more

useful than phone calls. They are even considered as official documents in some cases.