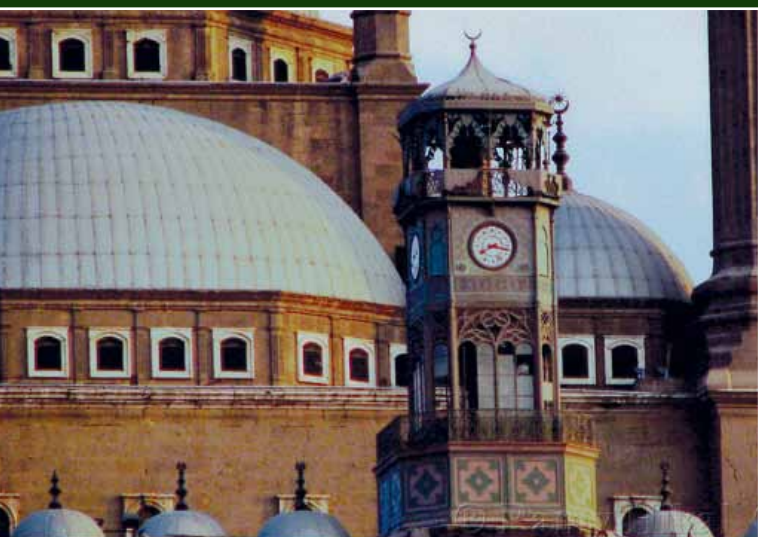


# Long Live The Citadel



The Citadel is one of the world's greatest monuments to medieval warfare, as well as a highly visible landmark on Cairo's. Legend has it that Salah ad-Din chose the site for its healthy air. The story goes that he hung pieces of meat up all around Cairo. Everywhere the meat spoiled within a day, with the exception of the Citadel area where it remained fresh for several days. But in reality this location provides a strategic to defend outside attackers.

Saladin also intended to use the Citadel as the basis for uniting the townships of Fustat and Cairo into a single city. Although this attempt did not go as well as planned, the Citadel itself would serve as the seat of Egyptian government for 700 years.

The best building techniques of that time was used to construct the original Citadel. Great, round towers were build protruding from the walls so that defenders could direct flanking fire on those who might scale the walls. The walls themselves were ten meters (30 ft) high and three meters (10 ft) thick. Bir Yusuf was dug in order to supply the occupants with drinking water.

After the death of Salah ad-Din, his nephew, Al-Kamil, reinforced the Citadel by enlarging several of the towers; specifically Burg al-Haddad (Blacksmith's Tower) and the Burgar-Ramlah (Sand Tower) making them fully three times larger. Many innovations and improvements would be made over the years, particularly during the Mamluk period. During the Ottoman period that perhaps the most iconic addition was made to the Citadel—the Mosque of Muhammad Ali. the mosque also reflects the Istanbul style of architecture, particularly the Blue Mosque of Sultan Ahmad, and differs enough from the Ottomans to suggest some independence.

South of the Mosque the Gawharah (Jewel) Palace was built to house the Egyptian government until it was later moved to the Abdeen Palace. Besides, another palace named Har-eem Palace was also constructed during the reign of Muhammad Ali.

Today there is also a National Police Museum, and Military Museum at the Citadel.

Today the Citadel is one of Egypt main attractions and is often the most popular non-pharaonic monuments. One may walk through time here, from the medieval era onward.

Recently open-air stages were constructed within the Citadel complex to host annual cultural event s with the laudable aim of producing summer musical performances at the heart of Islam Cairo.