

# The Mamluks | Everyday life in the Mamluk Sultanate

‘Contemporary society was astonishingly heterogeneous ethnically, religiously and even linguistically.’

In the hierarchy of society within the Mamluk sultanate, the Mamluks themselves formed the elite who lived quite separately from the urban and rural populations. Contemporary society was astonishingly heterogeneous ethnically, religiously and even linguistically. In addition to the Mamluks, themselves of foreign, largely Turkish or Caucasian origin, Egypt accommodated significant communities of indigenous Egyptians and Arabs, Armenians, Syrians and Greeks. Sadly, comparatively little is known about the ordinary people of the Mamluk Empire, as the historical sources of the period tend to concentrate on the achievements of Mamluk sultans and their elite.



**Name:**

Comb

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 8th century / AD 14th century Mamluk

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**

Everyday items like this comb give small glimpses into the daily lives of ordinary people.

---



**Name:**

Kohl Container

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 8th–9th century / AD 14th–15th century Mamluk

**Details:**

Museum of Islamic Art  
Cairo, Egypt

**Justification:**

A container used to hold kohl, a cosmetic used to accentuate the eyes, the use of which was common for both men and women of the period.

---



**Name:**

Lunch box

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 9th / AD 15th century Mamluk

**Details:**

The British Museum  
London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

Complete meals could be conveyed in these food containers. They were lockable to prevent anyone poisoning the contents.

---



**Name:**

Bottle or perfume sprinkler

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Mamluk

**Details:**

Jordan Archaeological Museum

Amman, Jordan

**Justification:**

Perfume and incense were integral to a Muslim's personal hygiene, and in addition were used to fragrance the interiors of mosques and palaces.

---

**Name:**

Bottle

**Dynasty:**

Hegira mid-8th century / AD mid-14th century Mamluk

**Details:**

Calouste Gulbenkian Museum

Lisbon, Portugal

**Justification:**

The upper-classes of the Mamluk Empire would have aspired to a lifestyle comparable to that of the Mamluk elite.

---