Generous and loving Father, 
thank You for our daily bread, 
and our so much more... 
for fields grown high with crops, 
branches bowed low with fruit, 
cupboards stocked with provisions, 
and this table, crowded with friends. 
Bless our food, and our time together 
as we celebrate Harvest with You. 
But above all, may Your gifts to us overflow up, over and out 
in joyful, free-flowing generosity to those beyond our table - 
in our own community, 
in rural Egypt, 
and across the Middle East. 
For we know we have received much to give much away, 
so help us sow seeds of change with Embrace 
- by the power of Your grace, 
Amen.
Meet Hana

Hana’s baking bread in the traditional way her mother taught her. But the future she’s shaping with her dough is brand new.

Hana’s husband is too ill to work, which made their family’s situation particularly precarious. So Embrace’s partner, Think and Do, gave her a microloan to get her bread business off the ground. This seed money set her up with grain for the bread, and fuel for her stove. Now she’s expanding into creating sweets for festivals and even starting to pay some of her neighbours to help … in bread!

Think and Do are one of three Embrace partners in Egypt using small business loans to help enterprising people in difficult circumstances plant new businesses. From bread-making to shop-keeping to hairdressing to crafting lintels for houses – all kinds of life-giving, new futures are starting to blossom here!

Meet Hana

Savouring Hana’s bread

Egyptian flatbread is called aish baladi and is similar to pitta bread (khobz kami) but larger. It’s made with wheat flour sprinkled with wheat bran, and baked in a special stone oven.

‘Aish’ means ‘life’ or ‘to live’ in Arabic – a great name for daily bread! And ‘baladi’ means native, or indigenous, to Egypt. To try making some, go to saveur.com/aish-baladi-recipe

Hana’s bread is a special, local variety, which uses other corn as well as wheat, and creates a harder bread.

Egypt factfile: Did you know?

96 million people live in Egypt – compared to 66 million in the UK.

Almost all of them live on just a small fraction of the country’s land, close to the River Nile.

Cairo is the largest city in all of the Middle East and Africa. But more than half of all Egyptians live in areas where farming is the main way to earn a living.

Almost one in three Egyptians live below the poverty line. In farming areas, this proportion can rise to nearer two in three struggling to meet their basic needs.

The 2011 revolution, ongoing political instability, issues with the value of the Egyptian pound, inflation, and recent water shortages have all damaged Egypt’s economy and income streams. As ever, the poorest are hardest hit.

Around 10 million Christians live in Egypt – representing 80% of Christians in the Middle East. Many play a significant role in society. A very high proportion of them belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, which has its own Pope (currently Tawadros II) and traces its roots all the way back to the apostle Mark!

The Bible was translated into the Coptic language as early as the second century.

Egypt doesn’t have one main time of Harvest like the UK. With 300 days of sunshine a year, there can be multiple cycles of sowing and reaping! But there is a significant celebration at this time of year.

The Feast of El-Nayrouz, or Coptic New Year, starts on 11 or 12 September and runs for two weeks. It has a thankful tone and includes praying blessing on harvests in the year ahead. So … happy Nayrouz!