

## LUXOR HIGHLIGHTS



**Luxor:** has often been called the world's greatest open-air museum, as indeed it is and much more, the number and preservation of the monuments in the Luxor area are unparalleled anywhere else in the world that know of. Actually, what most people think of as Luxor is really three different areas, consisting of the City of Luxor on the East side of the Nile, the town of Karnak just north of Luxor and Thebes, which the ancient

Egyptians called Waset, which is on the west side of the Nile across from Luxor. To say that the Luxor area is a major attraction for tourists in Egypt would be an understatement. It has been a tourist destination since the beginning of tourism. Even in ancient times, during the late dynasties of the Greek and Roman periods, the area drew tourists, and has been doing so ever since.

Most of the **Luxor Temple** dates to the New Kingdom period of Egyptian history. Ramses II built the pylon (the large wall in the background), two obelisks (only one remains today), and six statues of himself. The sphinxes along the "Avenue of Sphinxes" were built by Nectanebo I, and replaced the ram-headed sphinxes built by Amenhotep III. The avenue stretched from the Luxor Temple to the Karnak Temple for a distance of 2 miles. The Luxor Temple is easily identified from the front because it has only one obelisk, but as stated above Rameses II originally erected two obelisks at its entrance. The other obelisk was given to King Louis V in 1874 in exchange for a clock that no longer works, and now stands in the Concorde Square in Paris. The obelisk that remained was also included in the deal, but it turned out to be too much trouble to move it.



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**The temple of Karnak:** was known as Ipet-isut (Most select of places) by the ancient Egyptians. It is a city of temples built over 2000 years and dedicated to the Theben triad of Amon, Mut and Khonsu. This derelict place is still capable of overshadowing many of the wonders of the modern world and in its day must have been awe inspiring. For the largely uneducated ancient Egyptian population this could only have been the place of the gods. It is the mother of all religious buildings, the largest ever made and a place of pilgrimage for nearly 4,000 years. Although today's pilgrims are mainly tourists, it covers about 200 acres 1.5km by 0.8km The area of the sacred enclosure of Amon alone is 61 acres and would hold ten average European cathedrals. The Hypostyle hall at 54,000 square feet with its 134 columns is still the largest room of any religious building in the world. In addition to the main sanctuary there are several smaller temples and a vast sacred lake.



**Sound & light:** The show starts with a historical introduction covering the birth of the great city of Thebes and erection of the Karnak temple, one of the most famous temples in the world, the show also narrates the glorious achievements of some great Pharaohs like Amun; the Spectators listen to a magnificent and poetic description of the artistic treasures and great legacy, which the Karnak

temple encloses.

**Colossi of Memnon:** Amenhotep III (18th Dyn) built a mortuary temple in Thebes that was guarded by two gigantic statues on the outer gates. All that remains now are the 19.5m statues of Amenhotep. Though damaged by nature and ancient tourists, the statues are still impressive. Long after Amenhotep the Greeks decided that the statue represented their hero, Memnon, son of Tithonus, and Eos



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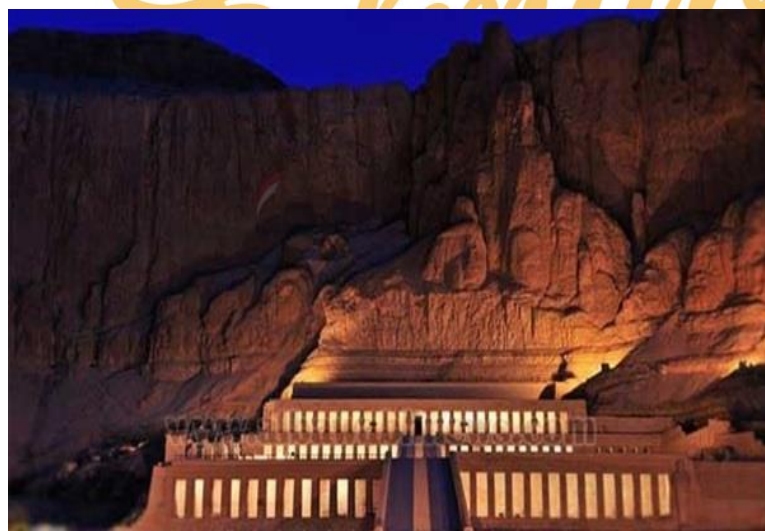
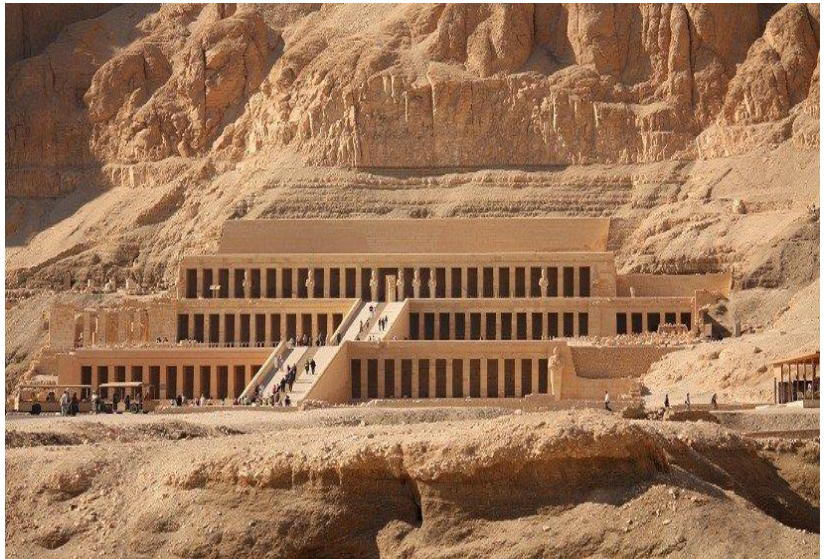


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**Valley of the Kings:** The Egyptian belief that "To speak the name of the dead is to make him live again" is certainly carried out in the building of the tombs. The king's formal names and titles are inscribed in his tomb along with his images and statues. Beginning with the 18th Dynasty and ending with the 20th, the kings abandoned the Memphis area and built their tombs in Thebes. Also abandoned were the pyramid style tombs. Most of the tombs were cut into the limestone following a similar pattern: three corridors, an antechamber and a sunken sarcophagus chamber. These catacombs were harder to rob and were more easily concealed. Construction usually lasted six years, beginning with the new reign. The texts in the tombs are from the Book of the Dead, the Book of the Gates and the Book of the Underworld. Valley of the Kings is one of the most amazing discoveries in archaeological history & it is located some 7 km from the Nile's west bank.



The mortuary **temple of Queen Hatshepsut** is one of the most dramatically situated in the world. The queen's architect, Senenmut, designed it and set it at the head of a valley overshadowed by the Peak of the Thebes, A tree lined avenue of sphinxes led up to the temple, and ramps led from terrace to terrace. The porticoes on the lowest terrace are out of proportion and coloring with the rest of the building. They were restored in 1906 to protect the celebrated reliefs depicting the transport of obelisks by barge to Karnak and the miraculous birth of Queen Hatshepsut. Reliefs on the south side of the middle terrace show the queen's

expedition by way of the Red Sea to Punt, the land of incense. Throughout the temple, statues and sphinxes of the queen proliferated. Many of them have been reconstructed, with patience and ingenuity, from the thousands of smashed fragments found by the excavators; some are now in the Cairo Museum, and others the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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