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LUXOR



Luxor is often referred to as the worlds greatest museum and it is easy to see why. Once the ancient capital city of Thebes, Luxor is home to a large number of fascinating and varied historical sites. On the East side of the Nile there are the various temples including Luxor Temple, Karnak Temple and the as well as the Luxor and Mummification museum. On the West bank is the Temple of Hutshepsut, but most famously are the hundreds of tombs of the ancient Egyptians within the Valley of the Queens, the Valley of the Nobles and, of course, the Valley of the Kings.

The quality and number of monuments in the Luxor area is quite astounding and unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Ancient Egypt is all around you.

LUXOR TEMPLE



sight to witness.

On the bank of the Nile, Luxor Temple stands as a fantastic example of ancient Egyptian architecture. Due to its small size, it is a pleasure to slowly wander through the complex, taking your time to view the columns and statues. Highly recommended is a visit to the Temple at night when it is lit and very serene. The lighting reflecting off of the structures is a beautiful

In front of the temple is the start of the Avenue of the Sphinx, which used to run the 3km to Karnak Temple. There are a number of the Sphinx', with the body of a lion and the head of a ram, which are very well preserved. It is easy to imagine this road leading off into the distance.



At the entrance to the temple complex is a huge obelisk. It was one of a pair but the other is now standing in the Place de la Concorde in Paris where it has been since 1836.



KARNAK TEMPLE

Once joined to Luxor Temple by the infamous Avenue of the Sphinx, Karnak Temple is a huge complex of columns, sanctuaries and obelisks. The site covers an area of around 1.5km. It is thought to be the largest surviving religious complex in the world.

Over a period of around 1,500 years, Karnak was built and expanded upon by many different Kings and Queens. It is quite a mixture of different styles and it is difficult to describe and still give Karnak the justice it deserves.

The most unforgettable part of the temple is the main Hypostyle Hall which is home to some 134 massive pillars. Papyrus shaped and covered in hieroglyphs, many of them still very colourful. You can spend hours just wandering through the Hall. Just remember there is so much more to see!

Karnak is also home to an excellent example of a Nilometer. See how the ancients used to predict the quality of the coming harvest by monitoring the levels of the Nile River throughout the year.

Wandering through this huge complex is one of the highlights of a trip to Luxor.

VALLEY OF THE KINGS

For a period of nearly 500 years, between the 16th and 11th centuries BC, Kings were building their tombs on the west bank of the Nile in what is now known as the Valley of the Kings.

The area has been a focus of concentrated archaeological exploration since the end of the 18th century, and its tombs and burials continue to stimulate research and interest. The valley contains at least 63 tombs, but is most remembered for the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter in the 1920's which helped make it one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world.

The quality of the tombs is truly remarkable. Each are dug into the surrounding mountains, some containing a number of tunnels, leading to huge burial chambers. It is the decoration of paintings and symbols that capture the imagination as you make your way inside, transporting you back in time.

It is easy to imagine that there are more discoveries just waiting to be uncovered.

TEMPLE OF HATSHEPSUT

Unlike many of the other temples you will see in Egypt, the Temple of Hatshepsut was carved into the side of a mountain. Built with a number of terraces, the entrance to the temple is via the 37m wide central staircase which makes you feel very small as you climb.

Hatshepsut was married to her half brother Tuthmosis II whose son was due to be his successor. When Tuthmosis died, Hatshepsut became regent and ruled Egypt for around 15 years. Although a popular ruler and brought peace to the country, her rule was challenged on a number of occasions. You will notice as you walk through the temple that Hatshepsut is often depicted as a man – complete with false beard.

