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ABU SIMBEL

Abu Simbel is a set of two temples located in the south of Egypt near the border with Sudan.

It was constructed for the pharaoh Ramesses II who reigned for 67 years during the 19th century BC (19th Dynasty). He built two great temples at Abu Simbel to stamp his authority in the region. They are the Sun temple of Ramesis himself and the Hathor temple of his favourite wife, Nefertari.



The entrance to the Sun Temple is flanked by 4 enormous seated statues of the Pharaoh (each over 20 metres or 67 feet high). They themselves may be the most recognisable site in Egypt after the Giza pyramids. It is when you enter the temple and gaze in awe at the paintings on the wall, many of which you have seen before in books or on the TV, that the true splendour of Abu Simbel becomes apparent.



With the construction of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960's, the temples were threatened with submersion under the rising waters of Lake Nasser. A 4 year project was undertaken to cut the temples from the rock and reconstruct them on higher ground – 200 feet (over 60m) above the original site! A truly remarkable feat of engineering.

The temples at Abu Simbel are one of the most amazing sites in Egypt and should be a must on any agenda.

