

THE GREAT PYRAMIDS OF GIZA AND THE SPHINX

The Great Pyramid was built as a tomb for the pharaoh Khufu. The pyramid once held all the treasures that Khufu would take with him to the afterlife.

The Great Pyramid of Giza is part of a larger complex called the Giza Necropolis. There are two other major pyramids in the complex including the Pyramid of Khafre and the Pyramid of Menkaure. It also includes the Great Sphinx and several cemeteries.

When the pyramid was built, it was around 481 feet tall. Today, because of erosion and the removal of the top piece, the pyramid is around 455 feet tall. At its base, each side is approximately 755 feet long. That's well over twice as long as a football field! In addition to being tall, the pyramid is a massive structure. It covers an area of over 13 acres and is constructed with around 2.3 million stone blocks. Each of the stone blocks is estimated to weigh over 2000 pounds.



It took 20,000 workers around 20 years to build the Great Pyramid. Its construction began around 2580 BC, shortly after Khufu became pharaoh, and was completed around 2560 BC. No one is quite sure how the pyramids were built. There are a lot of different theories as to how the Egyptians were able to lift such large stone blocks all the way up to the top of the pyramids. It is likely that they used ramps to move the stones up the sides of the pyramid. They may have used wooden sleds or water to help the stones slide better and reduce friction.

Inside of the Great Pyramid are three major rooms: the King's Chamber, the Queen's Chamber, and the Grand Gallery. Small tunnels and air shafts lead to the chambers from the outside. The King's Chamber is at the highest point in the pyramid of all the chambers. It contains a large granite sarcophagus. The Grand Gallery is a large passageway around 153 feet long, 7 feet wide, and 29 feet high.

Great Sphinx of Giza- What is it? The Sphinx of Giza is a colossal [limestone](#) statue of a resting [sphinx](#) located in [Giza](#), [Egypt](#), that likely dates from the reign of King [Khafre](#) (c. 2575–c. 2465 BCE) and depicts his face. It is one of Egypt's most famous landmarks and is arguably the best-known example of sphinx art.

The Great Sphinx is among the world's largest sculptures, measuring some 240 feet (73 meters) long and 66 feet (20 meters) high. It features a [lion's](#) body and a human head adorned with a royal headdress. The statue was carved from a single piece of limestone, and pigment residue suggests that the entire Great Sphinx was painted. According to some estimates, it would have taken about three years for 100 workers, using stone hammers and copper chisels, to finish the statue.

Most scholars date the Great Sphinx to the 4th [dynasty](#) and pin ownership to Khafre.

However, some believe that it was built by Khafre's older brother [Redjedef](#) (Djedefre) to [commemorate](#) their father, [Khufu](#), whose pyramid at Giza is known as the Great Pyramid. These theorists claim that the face of the Great Sphinx bears more resemblance to Khufu than Khafre, and that observation also led to speculation that Khufu himself built the statue.



The Great Sphinx has greatly deteriorated over the years, various efforts have been undertaken to preserve the statue. Whereas the body has suffered the most [erosion](#), the face has also been damaged, and its nose is notably missing. According to some, the damage was caused by [Napoleon](#)'s troops, who shot off the nose with a cannon. However, illustrations that date before Napoleon reveal a noseless sphinx. Another theory contends that Muhammad Sa'im al-Dahr, a Sufi Muslim, mutilated the statue in the 14th century to protest [idolatry](#).