**1. Karnak Temple:**

The temple complex of Karnak is the largest religious building ever built, and was constructed over a span of 2,000 years (it’s around 4,000 years old in total!). Construction started in the Old Kingdom and was continuously added to until the Ptolemaic era, with approximately 30 different pharaohs contributing. It’s the second most visited site in Egypt after the Pyramids of Giza.

Keep in mind that Karnak is massive. Some people enjoy having a guide there to explain backstories, but others prefer to explore at their own pace - there’s no way a guide could explain everything in Karnak in a few hours. The temple complex is also home to the Open Air Karnak Museum. If you’re heading to the Luxor Temple (below) after Karnak, make sure to walk down the Avenue of the Sphinxes which has connected the two temples for thousands of years. This 3 km pedestrian path is newly opened to the public, and some of the 1350 original human-headed sphinxes still line the avenue until today.

**Local tip:** Karnak closes at sunset, but they’re open super early - 6 am! Worth considering if you’re visiting during one of the hotter months. At night they have a Sound & Light Show there, and it looks beautiful lit up

**2. Luxor Temple:**

Constructed around 1400 BC (more than 3,400 years ago), Luxor Temple differs from most other ancient Egyptian temples due to the fact that it wasn’t built for worship of a particular god or pharaoh. It was mainly used as a place where pharaohs were coroneted and crowned, sometimes even conceptually (for example, Alexander the Great claimed he was crowned there but no evidence suggests he was ever there).

During medieval times, the Muslim community built on the Luxor Temple site, and until now a functional mosque remains part of the temple complex.

**Local tip:** Luxor Temple is open until 10 pm, so a great time to go is before sunset so you can see everything clearly, and then experience the temple all lit up at night when it gets dark. Keep in mind however that this shrewd tip is not a secret one, and sunset and nighttime is sometimes when the temple is at its most crowded.

**Temple of Hatshepsut:**

Known primarily for the mortuary temple of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut of the New Kingdom, Deir el Bahri was originally chosen as the location for the mortuary temple of the pharaoh who founded the Middle Kingdom, Mentuhotep II. Hatshepsut’s temple though is the star of the show, even after a lot of it was defaced by her salty stepson in an attempt to erase her from history. He obviously, you know, failed.

The massive terraced monument is surrounded by a steep cliff, and it was in this cliff that archaeologists found a cache of royal mummies, moved in antiquity from the Valley of the Kings. Many of these recovered mummies are now at rest in the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo, where you can go see them in the Royal Mummy Gallery.

**Local tip:** there’s a little electric tram at the entrance that will take you up to the temple if you don’t feel like walking in the sun - once at the temple itself, there’s not much shade.

**Mummification Museum:**

Mummification museum in Luxor (ancient Thebes), intended to provide an understanding of the process to preserve the body. The ancient Egyptians not only applied embalming to dead humans but also to many animals (Cats, dogs, crocodiles…. etc.). God Anubis (the Jackal) was the god of embalming and mummification.

Mummification process is believed to have taken around 70 days, accompanied by many rituals. The organs of the deceased were carefully removed through a small incision (10 cm) in the left side of the body and preserved in Canopic jars. The body was then dried in sodium nitrate, or nitrate salt brought from Wadi El Natron, for about 40 days, and finally wrapped in bandages of linen. Magical amulets were placed within the wrappings on various parts of the body to protect the deceased. The family then received the body and placed it in a coffin for burial.

Local Tip:

the Luxor museum:

The Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art is set in an exceptional location in the ancient and world-famous town of Luxor, The museum is situated in a superlative position on [the Nile](https://www.journeytoegypt.com/en/blog/nile-river-map) Corniche road which connects the **Luxor and Karnak temples**, parallel to the great **River Nile** and facing the **Ramesseum**on the **west bank.** The river traverses the town centre, thus dividing it into two sections.

The [Luxor temple](https://www.journeytoegypt.com/en/discover-egypt/luxor-temple) cache (see below) was stumbled upon by sheer **accident in 1989** while routine soil samples were being taken from the courtyard of **King Amenhotep III**. The cache consists of unique and unusual statues of various gods, goddesses and kings which are very well preserved and exceptional in their beauty and magnificence. When the discovery was made, it was decided that a special room be allocated for the exhibition of this priceless treasure. Such a room was therefore added and an innovative method of exhibiting this unique collection was also devised.

Local Tips:

**valley of the kings:**

Valley of the Kings is a treasure trove of archaeological wonders, containing dozens of tombs filled with art and hieroglyphics. See King Tutankhamun’s tomb—the most famous sight in the valley—then tour the temples of the sons of Ramses II and of Amenhotep III and others to marvel at the centuries’ old art and artifacts.

The valley stands on the west bank of the Nile opposite Thebes (modern Luxor), within the heart of the Theban Necropolis.The wadi consists of two valleys: the East Valley (where the majority of the royal tombs are situated) and the West Valley (Valley of the Monkeys (.

Local Tips: