

BACKGROUND

Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs – a Royal BC Museum feature exhibition

May 18–December 31, 2018

More than 5,000 years ago ancient Egyptians established an enduring civilization that has captivated the world since its rediscovery. We've been enthralled with King Tut's gold, Nefertiti's beauty and Cleopatra's wiles. It is time to uproot those stereotypes, address misconceptions and discover what life was really like for the people in ancient Egypt.

Visitors will start the journey where it all began– the Nile. This vital artery made the civilization possible: it was a means of transport and a source of water. Harnessing the annual flood and the fertile agricultural land revealed by receding floodwaters allowed the ancient Egyptians to turn to other things. Learn about the different regional climates and seasons, local plants and animals and how the ancient Egyptians used natural resources to build their monuments.

Once visitors are oriented to the land, they will meet the Pharaohs. The Pharaoh's role is to maintain *Maat*– a principle that encompasses truth, balance, order, harmony, law, morality and justice. Learn about key Pharaohs, from Khufu of the Old Kingdom all the way up to Ramses II of the New Kingdom.

The Pharaoh is a representative of the gods on earth and the next area of the exhibition explains what that means. Learn about ancient Egyptian religion, from the gods of fertility and nature to the death deities. See the importance of religious temples, spaces and rituals.

Not much would be known about ancient Egyptian religion without writing. The invention of hieroglyphic writing, and simplified versions of it, made communicating for economic, private and religious reasons possible. Learn about the rise of the state and the role that writing and scribes played in that process.

Significant advancements in the field of archaeology have helped to answer many questions about what life was like for ancient Egyptians. Questions like what sorts of jobs did people do? Could they pick their careers? How did people live (from the Pharaoh to the labourer)? What did they believe about death? How did they prepare for the afterlife? Visitors will have their questions answered and emerge with a clear picture of life at this time.



A picture of ancient Egyptian life would be incomplete without mentioning festivals. People in ancient Egypt enjoyed multiple feast days related to a variety of deities and the Pharaoh.

Just as revellers today dress to the nines for swanky New Year's Eve parties, ancient Egyptians wanted to look their best for their celebrations. The cultures of ancient Egypt and 21st century North America may have entirely different standards of beauty, but both revere the idea of beauty. In Ancient Egypt, beauty (aka *neferu*) was about striving for perfection in life and the afterworld. Beauty was expressed in jewellery, clothing, hygiene and make-up.

The exhibition concludes with death. Visitors will learn what ancient Egyptians' beliefs were; what happened in the afterlife and how these ideas changed over time. Discover what was needed to prepare for death, including sacred texts, protective amulets, grave goods and highly decorated coffins and tomb chambers. Visitors will have the opportunity to walk into a replica tomb—certainly to be an intense experience.

The exhibition features more than 300 original artifacts. Highlights include the 4,000 year-old wooden coffin belonging to an official named Nakht, a stunning offering stela, and an exceptional bust of Hatshepsut that is widely regarded as one of the finest works of Egyptian culture.

Co-curated by Dr. Christian Tietze from Weimar and Dr. Christian Bayer from the Pelizaeus-Museum, *Egypt: The Time of Pharaohs* is one of the largest touring exhibitions about ancient Egypt from internationally important Egyptology collections of the University of Aberdeen, the Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim, the Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin and the Gustav Lübcke-Museum in Hamm. The exhibition is created in partnership with Museums Partner.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. We are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

- 30 -

Media contact:

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries
778-679-1379 news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca
#RBCMEgypt

 @RoyalBCMuseum  [royalbcmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/royalbcmuseum)  [RoyalBCMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalBCMuseum)





ROYAL BC
MUSEUM