



Nile Valley: Luxor

095 / POP 484,132

Includes ➔

Sights	186
Activities	213
Tours	215
Festivals & Events	215
Sleeping	215
Eating	221
Drinking & Nightlife	224
Entertainment	224
Shopping	224

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Sofra Restaurant & Café (p222)
- ➔ Al-Moudira (p223)
- ➔ Silk Road (p223)
- ➔ Nile Valley Hotel (p223)
- ➔ As-Sahaby Lane (p222)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Al-Moudira (p221)
- ➔ Hilton Luxor Resort & Spa (p218)
- ➔ Nefertiti Hotel (p216)
- ➔ Beit Sabée (p219)
- ➔ La Maison de Pythagore (p217)

Why Go?

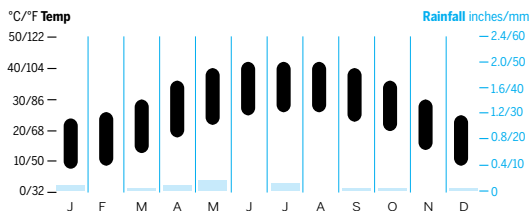
Luxor is often called the world's greatest open-air museum, but that comes nowhere near describing this extraordinary place. Nothing in the world compares to the scale and grandeur of the monuments that have survived from ancient Thebes.

The setting is breathtakingly beautiful, the Nile flowing between the modern city and west-bank necropolis, backed by the enigmatic Theban escarpment. Scattered across the landscape is an embarrassment of riches, from the temples of Karnak and Luxor in the east to the many tombs and temples on the west bank.

Thebes' wealth and power, legendary in antiquity, began to lure Western travellers from the end of the 18th century. Depending on the political situation, today's traveller might be alone at the sights, or be surrounded by coachloads of tourists. Whichever it is, a little planning will help you get the most from the magic of the Theban landscape and its unparalleled archaeological heritage.

When to Go

Luxor



Apr–May, Oct–Nov Some of the best months to visit, with the richest light.

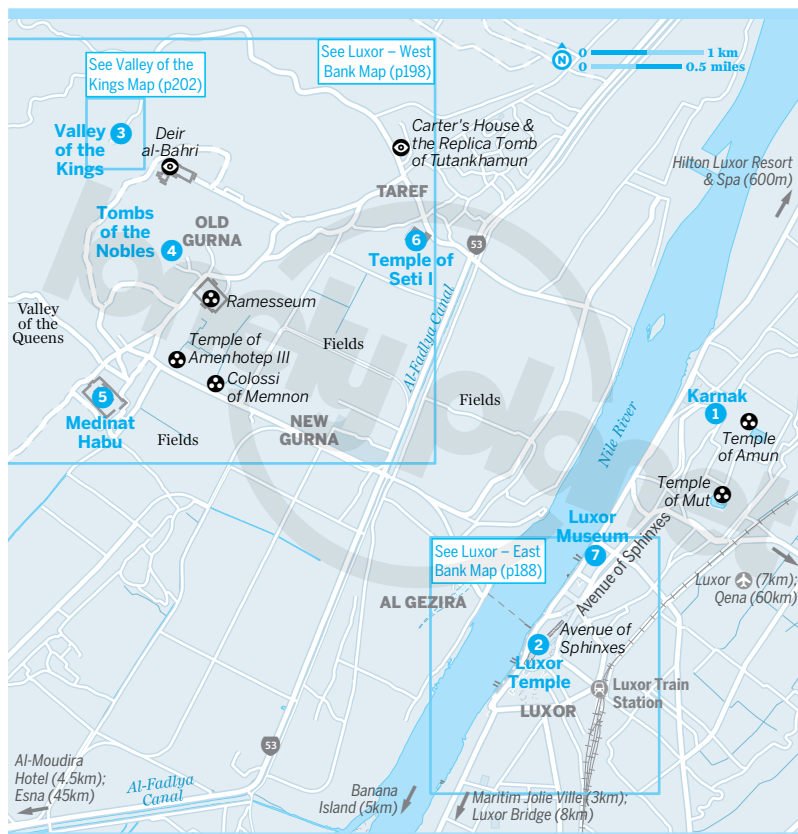
Sha'aban (May–Jun) The month when the city celebrates its holy man, Youssef Abu al-Haggag.

26 Nov The day Howard Carter opened the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.

History

Thebes (ancient Waset) became important in the Middle Kingdom period (2055–1650 BC). The 11th-dynasty Theban prince Montuhotep II (2055–2004 BC) reunited Upper and Lower Egypt, made Thebes his capital and increased Karnak's importance as a cult centre to the local god Amun with a

temple dedicated to him. The 12th-dynasty pharaohs (1985–1795 BC) moved their capital back north, but much of their immense wealth from expanded foreign trade and agriculture, and tribute from military expeditions made into Nubia and Asia, went to Thebes, which remained the religious capital. This 200-year period was one of the



Nile Valley: Luxor Highlights

1 Wander around the stone thickets of gigantic papyrus-shaped stone columns in the great hypostyle hall at **Karnak** (p186).

2 Marvel at the stunning architecture of the **Luxor Temple** (p193) and return later at night to see the beautifully lit carvings on the walls.

3 Like the pharaoh, be led by the gods into the afterworld in the **Valley of the Kings** (p199).

4 Glimpse the good life of an ancient Egyptian aristocrat on the tomb walls in the **Tombs of the Nobles** (p197).

5 Wander through the

best-preserved Theban temple, **Medinat Habu** (p208), in the soft, late-afternoon light.

6 Sense the spirituality of the rarely visited **Temple of Seti I** (p210).

7 Visit the numerous treasures of the compact **Luxor Museum** (p195).