




Luxor

Luxor الألفسُر Al 'Uqsur — City —	
	
	
Luxor Location of Luxor within Egypt	
Coordinates: 25°41'N 32°39'E	
Country	 Egypt
Governorate	Luxor
Area ^[1]	
• Total	416 km ² (unknown operator: u'strong' sq mi)
Population (2010) ^[2]	
• Total	487896
Website	www.luxor.gov.eg ^[3]

Luxor (Arabic: الألفسُر *Al 'Uqsur*) is a city in Upper (southern) Egypt and the capital of Luxor Governorate. The population numbers 487,896 (2010 estimate),^[2] with an area of approximately 416 square kilometres (**unknown operator: u'strong'** sq mi).^[1] As the site of the Ancient Egyptian city of Thebes, Luxor has frequently been

characterized as the "world's greatest open air museum", as the ruins of the temple complexes at Karnak and Luxor stand within the modern city. Immediately opposite, across the River Nile, lie the monuments, temples and tombs on the West Bank Necropolis, which include the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens. Thousands of international tourists arrive annually to visit these monuments, contributing a large part towards the economy for the modern city.

History

Luxor was the ancient city of Thebes, the great capital of Egypt during the New Kingdom, and the glorious city of the god Amon-Ra. The city was regarded in the Ancient Egyptian texts as *w3s.t* (approximate pronunciation: "Waset"), which meant or "city of the sceptre" and also as *t3 ip3t* (conventionally pronounced as "ta ipet" and meaning "the shrine") and then, in a later period, the Greeks called it Thebai and the Romans after them Thebae. Thebes was also known as "the city of the 100 gates", sometimes being called "southern Heliopolis" ('Iunu-shemaa' in Ancient Egyptian), to distinguish it from the city of Iunu or Heliopolis, the main place of worship for the god Re in the north. It was also often referred to as *niw.t*, which simply means "city", and was one of only three cities in Egypt for which this noun was used (the other two were Memphis and Heliopolis); it was also called *niw.t rst*, "southern city", as the southernmost of them.



Luxor Temple

The importance of the city started as early as the 11th Dynasty, when the town grew into a thriving city, renowned for its high social status and luxury, but also as a center for wisdom, art, religious and political supremacy.^[4] Montuhotep II who united Egypt after the troubles of the first intermediate period brought stability to the lands as the city grew in stature. The Pharaohs of the New Kingdom in their expeditions to Kush, in today's northern Sudan, and to the lands of Canaan, Phoenicia and Syria saw the city accumulate great wealth and rose to

prominence, even on a world scale.^[4] Thebes played a major role in expelling the invading forces of the Hyksos from Upper Egypt, and from the time of the 18th Dynasty through to the 20th Dynasty, the city had risen as the major political, religious and military capital of Ancient Egypt.

The city attracted peoples such as the Babylonians, the Mitanni, the Hittites of Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), the Canaanites of Ugarit, the Phoenicians of Byblos and Tyre, the Minoans from the island of Crete.^[4] A Hittite prince from Anatolia even came to marry with the widow of Tutankhamun, Ankhesenamun.^[4] The political and military importance of the city, however, faded during the Late Period, with Thebes being replaced as political capital by several cities in Northern Egypt, such as Bubastis, Sais and finally Alexandria.

However, as the city of the god Amon-Ra, Thebes remained the religious capital of Egypt until the Greek period.^[4] The main god of the city was Amon, who was worshipped together with his wife, the Goddess Mut, and their son Khonsu, the God of the moon. With the rise of Thebes as the foremost city of Egypt, the local god Amon rose in importance as well and became linked to the sun god Ra, thus creating the new 'king of gods' Amon-Ra. His great temple, at Karnak just north of Thebes, was the most important temple of Egypt right until the end of antiquity.

Later, the city was attacked by Assyrian emperor Assurbanipal who installed the Libyan prince on the throne, Psammetichus.^[4] The city of Thebes was in ruins and fell in significance. However, Alexander the Great did arrive at the temple of Amun, where the statue of the god was transferred from Karnak during the Opet Festival, the great religious feast.^[4] The grandeur of Thebes would still remain a site of spirituality, and attracted numerous Christian monks in the Roman Empire who established monasteries amidst several ancient monuments including the temple of Hatshepsut, now called Deir el-Bahri ("the northern monastery").^[4]

Climate

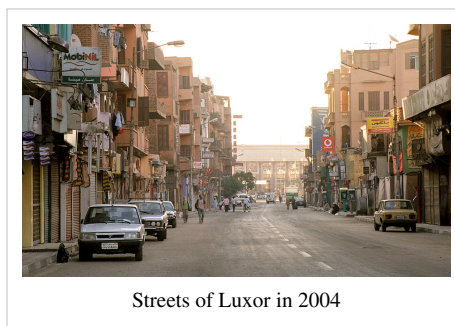
Climate data for Luxor													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	23.0	25.4	27.4	35.0	39.2	41.4	41.1	40.4	38.8	35.3	28.9	24.4	33.4
Average low °C (°F)	5.4	7.1	10.4	16.0	20.2	22.6	23.6	23.2	21.3	17.3	11.6	7.1	15.5
Precipitation mm (inches)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.04)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.04)
<i>Source: Climate Charts</i> ^[5]													

Rainfall in Luxor is rare. The city can receive between 0.0 and 6.0 millimeters of rain per month. Average annual rainfall is 2.3 mm (**unknown operator: u'strong'** in) per year.

Economy

The economy of Luxor, like that of many other Egyptian cities, is heavily dependent upon tourism. Large numbers of people also work in agriculture, particularly sugarcane.

The local economy, reliant on tourism, was greatly hit by the Luxor massacre in 1997, in which a total of 64 people (including 59 visiting tourists) were killed, at the time the worst terrorist attack in Egypt (before the Sharm el-Sheikh terrorist attacks):^[6] it reduced tourist numbers for several years.^[7] However, tourist numbers have since recovered. Following the 2011 Arab Spring, tourism to Egypt dropped significantly again affecting local tourist markets.



Streets of Luxor in 2004

To make up for shortfalls of income, many cultivate their own food. Goat's cheese, pigeons, subsidized and homebaked bread and home-grown tomatoes are commonplace among the majority of its residents.

Tourism development

A controversial tourism development plan aims to transform Luxor into a vast open-air museum. The master plan envisions new roads, five-star hotels, glitzy shops, and an IMAX theatre. The main attraction is an 11 million dollar project to unearth and restore the 2.7-kilometre-long Avenue of Sphinxes that once linked Luxor and Karnak temples. The ancient processional road was built by the pharaoh Amenhotep III and took its final form under Nectanebo I in 400 BCE. Over a thousand sphinx statues lined road. The ancient road now being excavated was covered by silt, homes, mosques and churches. Excavation started around 2004.^[8]

Infrastructure

Transport

Luxor is served by Luxor International Airport.

A bridge was opened in 1998, a few kilometres upstream of the main town of Luxor, allowing ready land access from the east bank to the west bank.

Traditionally, however, river crossings have been the domain of several ferry services. The so-called 'local ferry' (also known as the 'National Ferry') continues to operate from a landing opposite the Temple of Luxor. The single fare (June 2008) is 1 L.E. - one Egyptian Pound - per passenger for foreigners. Egyptian nationals pay ¼ of that, 25 piasters. This ferry is mainly used by the locals although a number of foreigners do use it.



Luxor railway station

The sites on the west bank are further than you think and you will need transport - taxi drivers often approach ferry passengers, and it is recommended that a fare be negotiated ahead of time. There are also local cars that reach some of the monuments for 25 piasters, although tourists rarely use them. Alternatively, motorboats line the east bank of the Nile all day providing a quicker, but more expensive (5 L.E.), crossing to the other side.

The city of Luxor on the east bank has several bus routes used mainly by locals. Tourists often rely on horse carriages, called "calèches," for transport or tours around the city. Do not ask calèche drivers to go to the west bank, because it is too far for the horses, not to mention

illegal. Taxis are plentiful, and reasonably priced, and since the government has decreed that taxis older than 20 years will not be relicensed, there are many modern air-conditioned cabs. Recently, new roads have been built in the city to cope with the growth in traffic.

For domestic travel along the route of the Nile, a rail service operates several times a day. A morning train and sleeping train can be taken from the railway station situated around 400 metres (**unknown operator: u'strong'** yd) from Luxor Temple. The line runs between several major destinations, including Cairo to the north and Aswan to the south.

Sights of modern-day Luxor

East bank

- Luxor Temple
- Luxor International Airport
- Karnak Temple
- Luxor Museum
- Mummification Museum
- Winter Palace Hotel

West bank

- Valley of the Kings
- Valley of the Queens
- Medinet Habu (memorial temple of Ramesses III)
- The Ramesseum (memorial temple of Ramesses II)
- Deir el-Medina (workers' village)
- Tombs of the Nobles
- Deir el-Bahri (Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut, etc.)
- Malkata (palace of Amenophis III)

- Colossi of Memnon (memorial temple of Amenophis III)






A caleche four wheel carriage

International relations

Twin towns — Sister cities

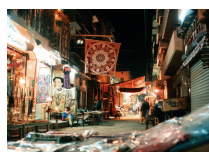
Luxor is twinned with:

-  Kazanlak, Bulgaria
-  Baltimore, Maryland, United States^[9]
-  Parintins, Brazil

Gallery



Hot-air ballooning
over the west bank



Street market in Luxor



Pharaonic
statue in
Luxor
Temple



Panoramic view of Luxor

References

- [1] luxor.gov.eg (<http://www.luxor.gov.eg/population.htm>)
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- [6] Shock in Sharm (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/752/fr4.htm>) 23 July, Serene Assir, Al-Ahram Weekly
- [7] "Solidly ahead of oil, Suez Canal revenues, and remittances, tourism is Egypt's main hard currency earner at \$6.5 billion per year." (in 2005) ... concerns over tourism's future (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/741/eg1.htm>) accessed 27 September 2007
- [8] McGrath, Cam (2011-06-16). "Mideast: Sphinx Avenue Paved With Bitter Memories — Global Issues" (<http://www.globalissues.org/news/2011/06/16/10131>). Globalissues.org. . Retrieved 2011-09-16.
- [9] "Baltimore City Mayor's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs - Sister Cities Program" (<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/intl/sistercities.php>). . Retrieved 2009-07-18.

External links

- Theban Mapping Project (<http://www.thebanmappingproject.com/>): website devoted to the Valley of the Kings and other sites in the Theban Necropolis
- Luxor World Heritage Site in panoraphies (<http://www.WHTour.org/87>) - 360 degree interactive imaging
- Kamil, Jill (November, 2008). "The Development Plan for Luxor" (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2008/921/heritage.htm>). *Al-Ahram Weekly, Issue No. 921*.
- Luxor Temple picture gallery (<http://www.remains.se/picturem.php?ObjectID=133&Browse=AREA>) at Remains.se

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