

# Ancient Egypt's Temples

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The Ancient Egyptians put a lot of effort into constructing their temples. Egyptian temples were carefully planned and built over many years. Planning would start with the selection of a location. Location was important. Alignment with the sun, moon or stars was sometimes a factor in the design of the temple.

Before they could begin work, they performed **religious rituals** to prepare the site. After that, hundreds of workers set to laying out the foundation and building the walls of the temple. Stone was the most common material because of its strength. Craftsmen cut the stones so perfectly that mortar, the material that holds most brick or stone structures together, was not usually needed. Workers used ramps to access the higher areas.



*Stone blocks from the mortuary temple of Sahure*

When the walls were finished, workers would **carve art** into the walls, decorating the pieces with paint or gold leaf. Shrines, religious statues, ornate columns and other decorations would finish off the decor of Ancient Egyptian temples.



*Wall reliefs at Kom Ombo temple*

## Use of Ancient Egyptian Temples

*Egyptian temples were built to honor the gods and Egyptian pharaohs, and to act as homes for these honored beings.*



The temples of Ancient Egypt were more than places of worship. Priests carried out **rituals** in them every day, sometimes with the help of musicians and performers. When there was a holy day, the priests would have a festival. Unlike festivals now, they were mostly attended by priests, but large festivals would draw a crowd of onlookers.

Everyday people could come to temples to give their **prayers** to priests. They could also pray in certain areas of the temple that were public. Some people were able to stay at temples after deciding to devote their lives to it, even if they were not priests. Workers needed to keep the temples running were also in and around temples providing food, cleaning, cooking, etc.