

# Upper and Lower Egypt

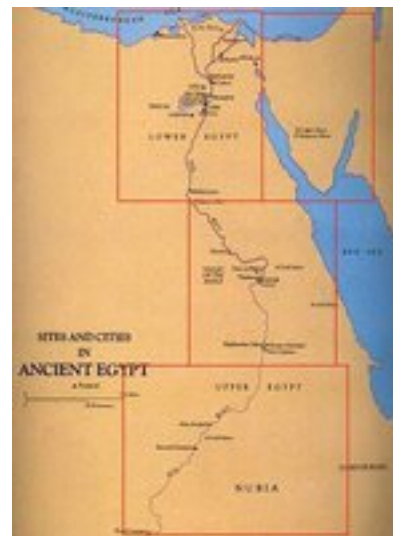
By Cindy Grigg

Long, long ago, Egypt was divided. There were two kingdoms in Egypt. They were called Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Lower Egypt was the land around the mouth of the Nile River in northern Egypt. Upper Egypt was in the south.

It is believed that Meni, or Menes in the Greek language, was a king of Upper Egypt. Some say that Menes was also called Aha. He is believed to have conquered Lower Egypt around 3100 B.C. This would have made him the first king or pharaoh to control all of Egypt. This time in Egypt's history is known as the 1st Dynasty.

Experts are not sure that Menes really existed. Some believe that the first king was named Narmer. Some believe Menes and Narmer were the same man. Others disagree.

Whoever the first pharaoh was, we know that Ancient Egypt had 31 dynasties. The 1st Dynasty began around 3100 B.C. when Upper and Lower Egypt were united. The 31st Dynasty ended in 332 B.C.



Egypt's dynasties are grouped into three major time periods. Each time period is called a kingdom. The three kingdoms are the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. However, not all of the 31 dynasties fall into one of the three kingdoms. There are gaps in between. The gaps were often times of trouble for Egypt.

Upper and Lower Egypt

## Questions

1. How many dynasties did ancient Egypt have?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Lower Egypt probably got its name because \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. The land around the mouth of a river is lower in elevation than surrounding land.
- B. The river's water was lower in that part of the land.
- C. It is found on the lower part of a map.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Around what year did the 1st Dynasty begin?

- A. No one knows when it began.
- B. 3100 B.C.
- C. 332 B.C.
- D. 332 A.D.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. The author's main purpose for writing this story was to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. persuade
- B. inform
- C. entertain



# The Story of Ra

By Vickie Chao

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In the beginning, before the world was made, there was a deep, dark ocean called Nu. One day, a shining egg rose above the surface. It said, "I am Ra, the Shining One."

Ra was the king of all gods and goddesses. Upon his appearance, he started naming things. Everything he named became its being. When Ra called out "Shu," he made the god of air. When Ra called out "Tefnut," he made the goddess of rainfalls. When Ra called out "Geb," he made the god of earth. When Ra called out "Nut," he made the goddess of sky. Ra named so many things. By the time he finished, he had created everything in the sea and on the land. He even created living people, the first men and women in the world. They lived in Egypt.

Ra wanted to teach the people he made how to live. So he took on the shape of a man and became the first pharaoh, king of Egypt. Since Ra was now in the form of a man, he could no longer stay young forever. He was bound to grow old one day. After ruling Egypt for many thousands of years, that time finally came. At his old age, Ra began to notice that his people no longer respected him. They laughed at him. They mocked him. They said, "Look at Ra! Ra is so old! His bones are like silver, his flesh like gold, and his hair the color of lapis lazuli!" They also said, "We can't go on like this. We need a new leader."

Ra was angry when he heard about those horrible things his people said of him. He became even angrier when he found out that they were plotting with Apophis. Apophis was an evil god that looked like a snake. He was Ra's biggest enemy. After uncovering the plan, Ra called for a meeting. He asked Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, and Nu to join in. He said to them, "Listen to those ungrateful people! They tried to team up with Apophis to get rid of me. I will not tolerate this! I will train my eye -- the sun -- at them and scorch them! I will destroy them all!"

Shu, Tefnut, Geb, and Nut trembled at the fury of Ra. But Nu was not afraid. He said, "Ra, many people still fear you. They will not follow Apophis, the snake. Please spare those who are loyal to you." Ra gave this advice a quick thought and agreed. He sent his lioness daughter, Sekhmet the Slayer, into the world to seek out the guilty ones.

Sekhmet the Slayer roamed across Egypt. She tracked down and killed every man and woman who spoke ill of Ra. Soon, the Nile ran red with blood. Ra was happy with Sekhmet the Slayer's work at first. But when he realized that his daughter was out of control, he became wary. He said, "Bring before me swift messengers who can run as quiet as shadows." He ordered the messengers to go up the Nile and bring back the red earth found on a small island there called Elephantine. The messengers took off right away. They returned before the nightfall with baskets full of the red earth. Ra told the female priests in the Temple of Ra to make seven thousand jars of barley beer. He had them add the red earth to the drink so it would look as red as blood. Before dawn, the seven thousand jars of barley beer were poured out over the field in front of Sekhmet the Slayer's resting cave. When Sekhmet the Slayer woke up and saw the red blood, she was overjoyed. She licked her lips and drank hungrily. For the whole day, Sekhmet the Slayer did nothing but drink. She finally stopped when she could have no more of barley beer. She fell into a deep, drunken sleep. She did not kill any person that day.

When Sekhmet the Slayer woke up the next day, Ra called out to her, "My daughter, return to me in peace." Sekhmet the Slayer came to him and gently hung her head. Ra announced, "I will give you a new name. You are no longer Sekhmet the Slayer. From now on, you are Hathor the Comforter of People."

With that proclamation, the goddess Hathor was born, and the people of Egypt were freed from terror. In memory of that special day, ancient Egyptians held a festival of Hathor at the New Year. They celebrated by drinking lots of barley beer!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## The Story of Ra

### Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. According to this legend, who was the king of all gods and goddesses?
- A. Hathor
  - B. Apophis
  - C. Sekhmet
  - D. Ra
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Ra's eye is the moon.
- A. False
  - B. True
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Who advised Ra not to punish all men and women in Egypt?
- A. Nu
  - B. Tefnut
  - C. Nut
  - D. Geb
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which of the following statements is correct?
- A. Hathor is the god of air.
  - B. Tefnut is the goddess of sky.
  - C. Geb is the god of earth.
  - D. Nut is the goddess of rainfalls.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What did Apophis look like?
- A. A cow
  - B. A bird
  - C. A lioness
  - D. A snake
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Why was Ra angry with the people of Egypt?
- A. Because they lied
  - B. Because they plotted to get rid of him
  - C. Because they refused to learn
  - D. Because they were lazy
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What did Ra ask the swift messengers to get from the small island of Elephantine?
- A. Green earth
  - B. Yellow earth
  - C. Blue earth
  - D. Red earth
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How many jars of beer did Ra ask the female priests in the Temple of Ra to make?
- A. 700
  - B. 7,000
  - C. 70,000
  - D. 70

# How Did Ancient Egyptians Make Mummies?

By Cindy Grigg

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*Caption: Canopic jars of Neskhons, wife of Pinedjem II. Made of calcite, with painted wooden heads. Display at the British Museum*

The Ancient Egyptians believed there was life after death. They believed the body had to be preserved for the next life. The pyramid was a safe place to keep the body. Mummification, the process of making a mummy, was used to preserve the body. It began in Egypt around 2600 B.C.-more than 4,600 years ago! The whole process took about 70 days.

When a person died, the body was cleansed and laid on a special table. The table was slanted so fluids could run off. A jar was placed beneath to catch the fluids. The brain was removed through the person's nostrils. It was thrown away because they thought it was useless. They believed the heart controlled the body! The heart was left untouched. The heart was believed to be the home of the person's personality, intelligence, and emotions. The kidneys were left alone, perhaps because they were too hard to remove. The body was packed with natron. Natron was a natural salt compound that pulled liquids from the body's tissues. This drying process took about forty days. The liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines were wrapped in linen strips. They were put into tightly sealed jars. These jars were called canopic (ca NOH pic) jars and often had images of Egyptian gods on them. The lids of these jars had heads of the four sons of Horus. Each would protect a particular organ.



After the body was dried, the embalming process began. The mostly empty body was stuffed with sawdust or linen to fill it and make it look more lifelike. The skin was rubbed with oils and perfume. Melted pine resin coated the body's outer surface. The face was painted with makeup. A wig was made for the head. The head, fingers, and toes were wrapped with linen strips. More linen strips wrapped the arms and legs. Lastly the torso was wrapped. Resin was used as a kind of glue. The body might have as many as twenty layers of linen strips. It's estimated that about 400 yards of linen fabric was used for each body. It took embalmers about two weeks to wrap a body.

"Magical" jewels and amulets were wrapped into the strips to protect the mummy from harm. Spells were said between each layer to ask for good luck. The mummy's face was covered with a mask. The mask looked like the dead person so that the spirit would recognize its body in the afterlife. Pharaohs, rulers of Egypt, often had masks made of gold. The final layer of linen wrapping was coated with resin to waterproof it. The mummy was put into a coffin or series of coffins. The coffin was placed into an outer sarcophagus and sent to the burial chamber. The mummy's sarcophagus and the canopic jars were placed into the tomb. Things the person might need in the afterlife were placed in the tomb with the mummy.

Not all mummies were people. The Ancient Egyptians also mummified animals. Most of them were cats, but mummies of dogs, crocodiles, and other animals have been found, too.

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## How Did Ancient Egyptians Make Mummies?

### Questions

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\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Bodies were mummified \_\_\_\_\_ years ago in Egypt.

- A. 400
- B. 4600
- C. 700
- D. 2600

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. The \_\_\_\_\_ was believed to be the home of the person's personality, intelligence, and emotions.

- A. heart
- B. lungs
- C. kidneys
- D. brain

3. What compound was used to dry out the body?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 4. The liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines were put into tightly sealed jars called \_\_\_\_\_ jars.

- A. canopic
- B. amulet
- C. pharaoh
- D. sarcophagus

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Melted pine resin was used \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. to coat the body's outer surface
- B. as a kind of glue for the linen wrappings
- C. as a waterproof final coating
- D. all of the above

6. What was done with the person's brain?

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7. Why was the mummy given a mask?

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# How Did Ancient Egyptians Make Mummies?

By Cindy Grigg

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You may have seen mummies in scary movies or as Halloween decorations. Mummies can't walk around and scare people like they do in movies. But mummies are real. In ancient Egypt, great care was taken with a dead body to make a mummy. How did they make mummies?

The mummification process took seventy days to make a mummy. First, the internal organs were removed. An iron hook was passed through the nose into the brain. The brain was thought to be of little use. After it was drained out through the nose, it was thrown away. The belly was cut open. The lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines were taken out. Sometimes, these internal organs were thrown into the river or buried. For important mummies, though, the organs were placed in special jars called canopic jars. The jars were kept near the mummy in the tomb. The heart was thought to be the seat of the soul. It was left inside the body. It would be weighed in the afterlife against the Feather of Truth.

Then the body was washed and filled with herbs and spices. The cut in the belly was sewn shut. Natron, a type of salt, was used to dry it out. The salt absorbed all the fluids from the body. After forty days packed in natron, the skin dried and looked like leather. It was then rubbed with oil. The body cavity was stuffed with sawdust or linen to give it a lifelike shape. Resin or tree sap was melted and poured into the skull. Sometimes the nose and mouth were sealed with beeswax. Then the body was carefully wrapped with strips of linen. Linen is a cloth made from the flax plant. Amulets, or magical charms, were put inside the wrappings. Resin covered the outer layer of wrapping. A mask was placed over the head.

Fine oils were used to scent the finished mummies of important people. Pharaohs were given masks of solid gold. Mummies were placed in coffins. A simple burial might have the mummy placed inside one coffin. Royal burials had several decorated coffins, one inside another. Once the mummy was placed in its coffins, it was ready to be taken to its tomb. Coffins were then placed inside a stone sarcophagus. The tomb was filled with everything the dead person might need in the afterlife.



How Did Ancient Egyptians Make Mummies?

## Questions

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1. How long did it take to make a mummy?

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2. What was done with the lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines of "important" mummies?

- A. They were thrown into the river.
- B. They were weighed in the afterlife against the Feather of Truth.
- C. They were placed in special jars and kept in the tomb near the mummy.
- D. none of the above



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\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Was the heart or the brain thought to be more important in the afterlife?

- A. brain
- B. heart

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ was a type of salt that was used to dry out the body.

- A. Amulet
- B. Resin
- C. Canopic
- D. Natron

5. What is linen made from?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 6. What caused the body to dry out?

- A. The desert heat caused the body to dry out.
- B. Resin covered the outer layer of wrapping, and this caused the body to dry out.
- C. The body cavity was stuffed with sawdust or linen.
- D. The salt (natron) absorbed all the fluids from the body.

## Isis and Osiris

By Vickie Chao

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A long, long time ago, a legend tells us that a god named Osiris was the king of Egypt. He was a very kind king. He made fair laws. He taught his people how to farm the land. And he showed them how to respect the gods. Thanks to Osiris, people lived in peace. They were very happy.

Set, Osiris's brother, was jealous of Osiris. He wanted to be the king himself. He spent a lot of time thinking how he could get rid of Osiris. One day, an evil idea came to him. Set ordered a beautiful wooden chest. The chest was a rare item at the time because trees did not grow in Egypt. After he received the chest, he held a dinner party honoring Osiris. Osiris and many gods came to his party. They ate and drank. They had a great time!

After the feast, Set brought out the beautiful wooden chest for all to see. He told his guests that he would give the chest to whoever fit it best. The guests were excited. They took turns getting into the chest. But none of them fit it perfectly. Then, Set turned to his brother. He asked Osiris to give it a try, too. Osiris stepped into the chest. He fit in it perfectly! As soon as Osiris got into the chest, Set's seventy-two wicked friends surrounded the chest and nailed the lid shut. They sealed every crack with molten lead so no air could enter. After the deed was done, they threw the chest into the Nile River.

The guests at Set's dinner party were horrified. The news spread fast. Soon, every god and every person knew Set had killed his own brother. But there was nothing they could do. Set got his wish. He became the king of Egypt.

Isis, Osiris's wife, was very sad when she heard of the tragedy. She wanted to find her husband's body. She wanted to give him a proper burial so his soul could rest in peace. But Isis didn't know where to look. The Nile had carried the chest to the sea. No one knew where it had gone. Before leaving Egypt to search, Isis entrusted Buto, a cobra goddess, to look after her newborn son, Horus. Buto lived on the island of Chemmis, near the mouth of the Nile. Afraid that Set would find Horus and kill him, Isis loosened the island and sent it floating on the waters. Only after she did that did she feel safe enough to begin her journey. Isis looked everywhere. She asked everybody. She never gave up. One day she heard about a tree that grew all of a sudden on the shore of a faraway country called Byblos. She figured that this miracle must be the work of her husband. She went to Byblos right away. By the time she got there, the king of Byblos had cut down the tree and used it as a pillar for his palace.

Isis put on a disguise and waited patiently outside the palace. She approached the queen's servants who came out for errands. She introduced herself as a hairdresser and offered to braid the girls' hair. As Isis set out to work, she breathed a wonderful perfume into each braid. When the girls returned to the palace, they smelled very nice. The queen noticed and asked them about it. She then had Isis brought to the palace and liked her immediately. The queen hired Isis to take care of her son, who had been weak since birth. Under Isis's watch, the prince grew very healthy. The queen was happy at first, but she became worried. She feared that Isis was a witch. One night she stayed up late and watched Isis secretly. She saw Isis put the prince in a fire. She saw Isis turn into a swallow. The horrified queen came out from hiding and snatched her son from the flames. "Fool!" exclaimed Isis. She removed her disguise and revealed her true identity. She told the queen that she was going to make her son a god. But now everything was ruined! The queen fell on her knees before the goddess and begged for forgiveness. Isis forgave her and asked the queen to give her the pillar in return. The queen agreed. Isis broke the pillar into pieces and retrieved the chest hidden inside.

After a long journey on the sea, Isis returned to Egypt with the chest. She hid it in the marshes and left to get her son from the floating island of Chemmis. While she was away, Set and his friends went hunting nearby and discovered the chest by accident. He broke it open and tore Osiris's body into fourteen pieces. He spread them all over Egypt. When Isis came back with Horus and saw the empty chest, she broke down and cried. Her sister, Set's wife, felt very sorry for her and decided to help. The two goddesses searched every corner of Egypt. Upon recovering all the pieces, they sewed them together and wrapped Osiris's body in linen. This, it is said, was how the first mummy came to be made.



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Isis cast a magical spell over her husband's body and brought him back to life. Later on, Osiris became the lord of the dead. He ruled Duat, the land of the dead. Set kept on looking for Isis and Horus. He wanted to kill them. But he never did, for he did not know about the floating island of Chemmis. Horus grew up safely. He had a man's body and a falcon's head. After avenging his father and killing Set, Horus became the king of Egypt -- lord of the living.

Isis and Osiris

## Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. According to this legend, who taught Egyptians how to farm the land?
- A. Set
  - B. Osiris
  - C. Isis
  - D. Buto
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. What was the relationship between Set and Osiris?
- A. They were brothers.
  - B. They were best friends.
  - C. They were cousins.
  - D. They were father and son.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Isis disguised herself as a \_\_\_\_\_ to get into the palace of Byblos.
- A. queen
  - B. hairdresser
  - C. doctor
  - D. witch
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Who helped Isis recover her husband's body?
- A. her son
  - B. her father
  - C. her mother
  - D. her sister
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What did Isis turn into at night when she was taking care of the prince of Byblos?
- A. a swallow
  - B. a pigeon
  - C. a falcon
  - D. an angel
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. According to this legend, who ruled the land of the dead?
- A. Isis
  - B. Set
  - C. Osiris
  - D. Horus

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. How many wicked friends of Set helped him kill Osiris?
- A. 68
  - B. 14
  - C. 72
  - D. 29
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What did Set and his friends do with the chest?
- A. They buried it.
  - B. They hid it.
  - C. They burned it.
  - D. They threw it into the Nile River.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Egyptians believed that Osiris was the first mummy ever made.
- A. false
  - B. true
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How did Set kill Osiris?
- A. He put him in a chest and drowned him.
  - B. He buried him.
  - C. He poisoned him.
  - D. He shot him.