

# AMAZING ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS



Written by The Good and the Beautiful Team



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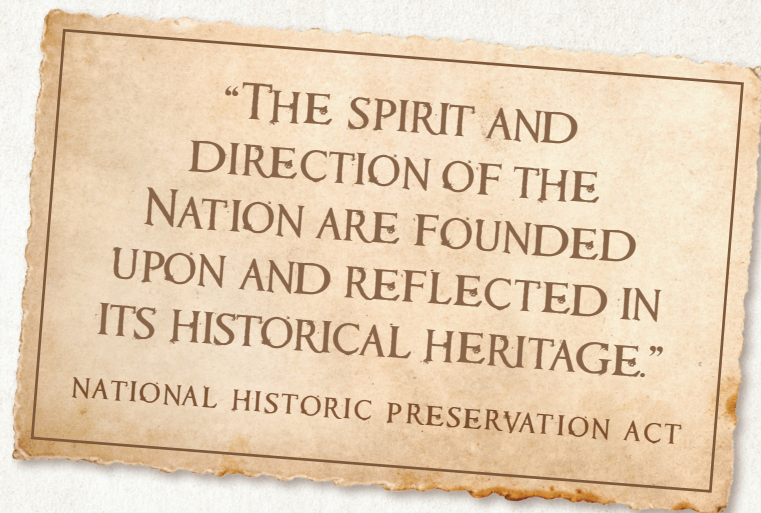


In 1966, the United States government passed the National Historic Preservation Act, which protects sites that are deemed important to the history

of our country. One of the largest countries in the world had declared a stance on the significance of discovering and studying how groups of people who came before us lived and the significance of protecting these historical sites for future generations to study.

The hard work and determination of countless adventurous archaeologists to uncover and examine evidence of the lives of ancient and more recent civilizations have led to a deeper understanding of humanity—where we came from and where we can go from here. Knowing how people once lived, how they used the natural materials around them, what they did for jobs, what they ate, what sicknesses affected them, and what they treasured is essential to the understanding of how and why human behavior has changed over time.

*Around the world there are many fascinating, mysterious, and sometimes slightly disturbing archaeological sites. Let's explore some of the most famous amazing archaeological digs!*





# ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS SITE MAP





Interior carving of Ramses II



Inside the temple are engravings of Ramses II and his favorite wife, Nefertari, along with drawings depicting Ramses' victory at the Battle of Kadesh. The artwork, history, and awe-inspiring large-scale size of this temple make it the second most visited site in Egypt, behind the Pyramids of Giza.







# JERUSALEM TUNNELS

The Western Wall, also known as the Wailing Wall, is part of the longest remaining portion of the wall that once surrounded the Jewish Temple Mount in Jerusalem. King Herod built the wall around the temple in about 20 BC. The Romans later destroyed the temple in AD 70, but a portion of the retaining wall survived. Today, the Western Wall forms a part of the support structure that surrounds the Dome of the Rock and is located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Archaeologists first began digging tunnels near the Western Wall in 1864. Among the first discoveries made through the digging of these tunnels were wells and water systems that date back to Biblical times. These archaeologists also uncovered large stone arches that once connected the city to the Temple Mount. Later, after the Six-Day War in 1967, more tunnels were dug below the wall, eventually creating the Western Wall Plaza and Tunnels, which are now popular tourist attractions. During a tour of the tunnels, tourists can touch the original stones of the temple wall and walk where the market would have been during Jesus' time, as evidenced through the thousands of ancient coins that archaeologists have found there.

ISRAEL

Jerusalem



Tunnel passage



Broken stone cup found in excavation







Petroglyph at Mesa Verde's  
Petroglyph Point





The mummy rested in a solid gold coffin that was housed by two more nested coffins, which were made of wood and covered in jewels. The coffins were inside a big stone box called a sarcophagus. The death mask located inside was a truly fabulous find, one of the most famous artifacts of ancient Egyptian history.



Treasures found in tomb





# TUTANKHAMEN'S TOMB

You've probably heard about "King Tut." His tomb is one of the most famous archaeological finds to date. On November 4, 1922, Egyptologist Howard Carter discovered one step of a stairway that was buried in debris in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. Carter and his financial backer, Lord Carnarvon, opened the tomb on November 26, 1922.

Tutankhamen was a king in the 18th Egyptian dynasty. He became king when he was nine years old, and his reign was short, only from around 1332 BC to 1323 BC (less than ten years). This young king was buried with several thousand treasures and artifacts, including statues, jewelry, and clothing. It took Carter's team ten years to document the tomb's contents! Most of these items now belong to the Cairo Museum.

The tomb was large, around 111.5 square meters (1,200 square feet) in size, and contained four rooms. In one of those rooms was the most exciting find of the entire dig: the mummified body of King Tutankhamen. The walls in the burial chamber were covered with brightly painted murals. The paintings had brown spots all over them, which were created by microbes.

Scientists aren't sure why King Tutankhamen died. He and his tomb and treasures still fascinate people today. Modern technology has even been used to construct a digital view of what the young king may have looked like!



King Tutankhamen's death mask





The Lascaux cave has around 6,000 paintings and engravings in the vast tunnels of the underground system. The depictions are mostly of animals—deer, horses, aurochs (an extinct type of ox), a bear, and some felines. There is also one depiction of a human, along with some mysterious geometric designs.



# LASCAUX CAVE

Imagine discovering a magnificent art gallery buried underground that has not seen the light of day for thousands of years! Four teenage boys wandering around France's Dordogne region made such a discovery in 1940 when they climbed down a 15-meter (50-foot) shaft into a cave and were greeted by an array of beautiful paintings and engravings. The boys were astounded and brought their teacher back to the cave to show him their find. Lascaux cave was soon receiving thousands of visitors, which took a toll on the air quality. Algae and mold began to grow, destroying the precious art, so the cave was closed to the public in 1963. Replicas were built so the public could still safely marvel over the ancient art.

Lascaux cave is located in Southwest France near the village of Montignac. Amazingly, there are 147 other ancient sites and 25 other decorated caves in the same region! Though no one knows for sure why the paintings exist, it does not diminish the impressive parietal art.

Parietal: a term for prehistoric art found in caves, rock shelters, or cliff overhangs





To make the art,  
the artists would blow paint  
through hollow bones to spray on the  
walls, along with using either primitive  
brushes or swabs. Many of the paintings  
incorporate the rounded cave walls as part  
of the art itself. The sheer size of some of  
the paintings means that scaffolding must  
have been used to create such large dimensions!

French postage  
stamp, 1968





Some of the moai had petroglyphs carved into them, symbols that may have represented the family of each carver. It is thought that each family had their own moai carved in the likeness of an important ancestor, around which ceremonies were performed. All the moai face inland and were believed to keep watch over the villages and farmland.



Bird carvings  
on a moai



In the field of archaeology, the discovery of our past as a people continues. History is constantly being rewritten with the unearthing of new artifacts, buildings, artwork, remains of once-living beings, tools, and written work. It is the way we interpret these findings that is important, and the way we use that information to shape human behavior in the future that is crucial to making the future as bright as possible.

*As archaeologist Sarah Parcak, who specializes in Egyptology, once said:*

“ARCHAEOLOGY  
HOLDS ALL THE KEYS  
TO UNDERSTANDING  
WHO WE ARE AND  
WHERE WE COME FROM.”

*Do you agree?*







# AMAZING ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS



Travel around the world and take a look at the past one archaeological dig at a time. From King Tut's tomb to cities that lie under water, explorers and scientists have found more than just buried treasure! Grab a shovel and get ready to learn about some of the world's more incredible discoveries in *Amazing Archaeological Digs*.



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