

How to mummify

Reading comprehension

In Egyptian times, people believed that they had to be mummified in order to reach the afterlife and live forever. Egyptians saw death as a temporary state and they believed the spirit needed a body. This was why a process called mummification was used. The process of mummification would depend on the person's rank, status or wealth. Someone important would get the best method of mummification.



Stages of mummification

Beware: grizzly, yucky details included!

Firstly, the body was washed in water and salt from the River Nile. The brain was then removed and thrown away. To get the brain out, a hook was put up the person's nose and the brain was pulled out through the nostrils!

Next, the body was slit open down the side and the organs were removed. The heart was not taken out, as Egyptians believed it would help guide them to the afterlife. The lungs, intestines and stomach were cleaned and placed in special jars called canopic jars. The lids of the jars represented the gods who would protect the organs. Hapi protected the lungs. Duamutef protected the stomach. Imsety protected the liver and Qebehsenuef protected the intestines.

After that, the body was filled with myrrh and other spices before being sewn up. The cavities, such as the nose and mouth, were filled with a special salt called nitron. This salt also covered the body to stop the flesh from rotting. The body would be left for about 40 days until it had completely dried out.



After 40 days, the body was stuffed with material and spices to give it back its original shape. They would then oil the skin to soften it and add false eyes and a wig to make the corpse more life-like. Next, the whole body was wrapped in linen bandages and a mask was placed over the head. They made the masks look like the person's face.



If the Egyptian was rich, they would be placed in to a stone coffin. If they were not rich, a wooden coffin was used. The coffin would then be placed in a tomb. To complete the mummification, Egyptians were buried alongside their favourite possessions, such as clothing or jewellery. Even pet cats and dogs were mummified to keep the dead person company!

Believe it or not!

The peculiar ritual of mummification can be seen today in museums. The people mummifying the bodies did such a good job that features of the dead can still be seen today!

