

# EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY

## The Gods of Ancient Egypt...

Made popular with the Book of the Dead and a thousand cheesy Curse of the Mummy movies, Ancient Egypt still holds its fascination in the modern world. In this electronic internet age, the Egyptian government should really consider renaming the place E-gypt.

The language barrier can be a little tricky. As with most hieroglyphic translations, the old Egyptian names have many variant spellings in English. Seth is [SET](#) in his ways, and [RA](#) is also the eye of Re.

There was also a mysterious plague of missing hieroglyphs at the time of the New Kingdom (1550-1070 B.C.), when foreign influence made certain letters vanish from the language. Egyptian scribes valiantly tried to reinstate them by adding extra letters to the ends of words, which led to much confusion. And still does.

More confusion arises from the Egyptian tendency to join deities together at different periods. With all the permutations, one God can have an enormous number of names. Amon, Amen, Ammon-Ra, Amen-Re, Amun, Amon-Re... You get the idea.

If you want to get ahead or give yourself a headache then Egypt is the place to be. Egyptian Gods go in for cumbersome and elaborate headgear, and tend to stroll around with animal heads. Usually without the matching body. Along the Nile there are only so many animals to go round. So they do have to share, which causes much confusion.

Although [HORUS](#) had the head of a hawk, he was not alone. Hawk-heads hawk their wares all over the place in Egyptian mythology. Other very popular heads are serpent, dog, jackal, bull, frog, hippo, crocodile and lion. There are also the odd wobbles like the [SPHINX](#) with a human head and lion body. Horns, globes and plumes are almost obligatory accessories and you can have an animal head enhanced with all these embellishments.

Cats were considered to be sacred creatures. They were mummified, and this was done with the utmost respect. No vivisection was involved, which is probably more than you can say for the humans.

Having invented mummification, the Egyptians were very much into otherworldly preparations. This is not surprising as the many Gods of Judgment and Death were waiting on the other side and would be most insulted if a soul turned up looking scruffy.

The messy business of burial was looked after by a whole subset of undertaker Gods. These were in charge of embalming — and handled many bits not normally on public view.

This obsession with death may seem a bit morbid today, but the Egyptians viewed it all with healthy fascination. The Book of the Dead was a bestseller. At least they waited until you were dead from natural causes.

## EGYPTIAN DEITIES:

# HATHOR



Egyptian Love Goddess

Also known as HERET

Goddess of Love and Happiness, which seems to have been in short supply in that part of the world

As protector of women, she's often described as a cow, but she is far more than that: she is seven cows all at once. Have you ever heard of such a thing?

The mother of ANHUR under the name Heret, she certainly put herself about a bit. She was certainly a Goddess of great complexity, associated with love, fertility, naughtiness, moon, music and cavorting. She has more associations with whatever was going on than you could shake a sistrum at.

As a welcome passenger on the RA cruises, she had the hots for RA or vice-versa. You never know with Sun Gods. Once when RA was being jeered at by Earthlings for looking frail after a heavy night, she took up a cudgel on his behalf. There was a rampage of frazzling which wiped out half the humans in the Nile Valley. She vowed to come back and take care of the rest after a weekend break.

Initially flattered, RA was now horrified. To prevent further carnage he made secret arrangements with the brewing industry. Seven thousand jugs of red beer were poured into the Nile to look like blood of the slain.

Intrigued by the vast red lake, **HATHOR** stopped to peer at her red reflection. A finger to the lips of the image, and a little lick. Mm, tasty. One thing led to another and as plotted the biggest one-Goddess binge of all time was under way.

Some time passed before **HATHOR** woke up. She could remember very little. She certainly couldn't remember drinking all that beer. If there was any carnage it was nothing to do with her. It was a pity that all the witnesses appeared to be dead. She did remember setting out on this enterprise in the company of SEKHMET, so it was all probably his fault.

If it would help to compensate for any distress, she would be willing to donate a generous proportion of her Godly time to take on the duties of Revelry and Quaffing.

Furthermore she would also undertake the planning of the Nile Floods, so important to Egyptian agriculture. This could easily be calculated as she represented the Dog Star Sirius and, according to THOTH, if Sirius rose before the sun or some such thing, flooding was imminent. Sorted.

Now **HATHOR** was popular and endearing and not given to ripping people apart. Whereas SEKHMET was liable to bouts of being bloody-minded. We can only go with the theory that it was a prank that got out of hand thanks to SEKHMET.

## HATHOR FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **HATHOR**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **HERET**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Female**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Love**

God of : **Love**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 114320

# ISIS



Egyptian Mother Goddess

Also known as ASET

## Popular Goddess of Motherhood, Royalty and Family Commitment

The daughter of GEB and NUT, she went to the ends of the Earth to find the remains of her murdered husband OSIRIS. With cunning ingenuity she managed to reassemble the body for burial, and couldn't resist one last rite which was more fertility than funeral.

In consequence, she became pregnant with glorious HORUS, and had to go into hiding before bad brother SET found out. Luckily her mothering skills paid off and HORUS grew into a SET-beating superhero who became the first ruler of a peaceful united Egypt.

**ISIS** settled down to enjoy royal life, attending garden parties and state functions in her role as King's Mother. She now has a fetching line in headgear featuring cow horns and sun disc. We've seen this before somewhere. Royal Ascot perhaps.

**ISIS** was one of the few Egyptian Gods the Greeks took a fancy to, and she even went through to the Romans. There was a temple built to her at Pompeii. The cult became very popular and her consort OSIRIS was probably the foundation of the Greek/Egyptian Hybrid-God SERAPIS.

During the Cleopatra/Anthony affair, Cleo saw herself as the personification of **ISIS**. With her departure, the Roman Senate did its best to demolish her Egyptian shrines, but

you can't keep a good Goddess down. By the time of Julius Caesar the cult was thriving and had its own festivals.

All through this, **ISIS** shook her sistrum — which she retained despite her classical look statue makeover.

With the Christians she happily became identified as the Virgin MARY. The Armenian liturgy even retained the rattling sistrum sound. Penitents crawling on a symbolic search for Christ were only replacing the earlier devotees on the symbolic search for OSIRIS.

## ISIS FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **ISIS**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **ASET**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Female**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Motherhood**

God of : **Mother**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 70014

# BAST



Egyptian Protection Goddess

Also known as AILUROS, BASTET, UBASTET

Popular Cat-headed Goddess of Fertility and Catfights

Daughter of RA, **BAST** was originally a lion-headed Sun Goddess of Protection before becoming a super-powered Top Cat with lunar tendencies. She has a flair for avenging wrongs and scratching enemies where it hurts. In fact she was feisty enough for the Greeks to have identified her with ARTEMIS.

**BAST** also performed a vital public emergency service. In the event of fire, her cat servants would run into the flames to draw out the power. These were the original fire extinguishers. However, cats were revered in ancient Egypt and we're sure there was no deliberate cruelty involved. After all, with nine lives, they were very likely to come back, albeit slightly singed.

Whether or not the Egyptians made much use of these fire-fighting services, there's no denying that cats were highly revered. Dead felines were mummified and sent to join **BAST** in the spirit world.

**BAST**'s official headquarters appears to have been at Bubastis on the Nile Delta, where she had an annual festival. A lot of water has flowed down the Nile since then and festivals are few and far between. Why not hold your own cat festival? It may do you and your cats the power of good.

Over time, the nurturing instincts of mothering cats came to be associated with **BAST**'s protective care and she developed a reputation as a Mother Goddess. There's also a tendency nowadays to regard **BAST** as the Goddess of Sex and Lesbians, but that has more to do with modern sex-kittens. Cats are very sensual animals but you don't want to get scratched.

We feel sure it is due to **BAST**'s powers that we now have smoke alarms and catflaps, so never underestimate the power of the original Cat-Woman. And remember, kind to cats means tough on rats.

See also our entry on **BASTET**, a cat goddess who is remarkably similar...

## BAST FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **BAST**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **AILUROS, BASTET, UBASTET**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Female**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Protection**

God of : **Protection**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 68717

# THOTH



Egyptian Wisdom God

Also known as TAHUTI, TEHUTI, THOT

## Fantastic Egyptian God of Art, Science, Astronomy and Literature

Pronounced ‘tot’, he’s the great ibis-headed all-rounder for Arts, Science, Music, Astronomy, Speech and Letters. A good egg. Thoroughly recommended.

If ever a God was greater than great it was **THOTH**. In one translation his name is prefixed with the word ‘great’ no less than eight times. Thith may have helped to reduce the embarrassment cauthed by having a name that lookth like a lithp.

His resume seems too impressive to be true — but most of the facts speak for themselves. He is the master of time, mathematics, astronomy, readin’, writin’, ‘rithmatic — and almost anything else you can point a pair of dividers at.

365 days in a year? Thank **THOTH** (see [IAH](#) for the full story). 12 hours of day and 12 hours of night? Thank **THOTH**. Circles having 360 degrees? Thank **THOTH**.

His bestselling BOOK-OF-THE-DEAD is still in print and you will never be able to hitch-hike to Heaven on the Nile without it.

He does have his eccentricities — he sometimes likes to revert back to the good old OGDOAD days and appear as a baboon. Not just any old baboon, but one that could have written the complete works of Shakespeare before Shakespeare existed. (Now there's an idea — it's always been known that Shakespeare could hardly write his own name let alone spell it, so who *really* wrote all those plays that bearded scene-shifter claimed as his own?) In the custom of the times he chose the head of an Ibis with a fancy wig for those high-flying occasions.

Encouraging RA to call himself Top God left THOTH free to run just about everything without any fuss or hassle. Pocket calculators? THOTH used the whole firmament, available to all on a grand scale. Think Sky.

To make it easier, all the stars and planets required for calculation are associated with favorite Gods. Need to work something out via Sirius? Log in and have HATHOR guide you. Need the moon for phases, time or tides? Go to THOTH; he chose to be Top Moon God alongside his best buddy KHONSU.

Cool, modest, unflappable, and a brilliant arbitrator, THOTH has stood the test of time, time and time again. Full ticks and tocks to this tip-top God.

He was also known to Greek God geeks as Hermes Trismegistus, possibly to avoid talking with a lisp.

## THOTH FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **THOTH**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **TAHUTI, TEHUTI, THOT**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Wisdom**

God of : **Wisdom**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 65159

# ANUBIS



Egyptian Funerary God

Also known as ANPU, IMEUT, IENPW, INPU, LENPW, YINEPU

## Egyptian God of the Dead and Lord Dog of Mummy Wrappings

Give him a bone. He's the famous funeral God with the black dog's head. But is he a doberman or a jackal? No-one really knows for sure. ("Down, Anubis down!" No, it must be a jackal.)

Legends disagree who his parents are — some claim OSIRIS was involved while earlier myths claim he is the primordial son of spooky NEPHTHYS and shining RA. Even BAST gets a tongue-in-cheek mention as possible mother. However we reckon he is definitely *not* the son of Cow Goddess HESA as some sources claim. That's surely a cross-breed too far.

His morbid occupation goes back to the dawn of time. Death was a serious business to the ancients and **ANUBIS** ruled over it with grim majesty for eons until OSIRIS took over the job.

Nowadays **ANUBIS** takes a back seat in funeral matters, but still likes to be involved in the judging of the dead. He holds the scales of justice steady while your soul is weighed. If it's heavy with the weight of sin, you'll be fed to AMMIT as punishment. But if you're light enough he'll lead you to OSIRIS for the top prize of everlasting afterlife.

## ANUBIS FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **ANUBIS**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **ANPU, IMEUT, IENPW, INPU, LENPW, YINEPU**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Funerals**

God of : **Funerals**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 61399

# RA



Egyptian Creator God

Also known as RE

## Re: Egyptian Top God. The Eye of the Sun

Previously known as ATUM, he's the most important Egyptian God. He created himself out of the mound formed by the OGDOAD's primordial chaos, and then made SHU and TEFNUT to form the world. Now he sails across the sky in his solar boat.

Mankind was made from his tears and if that doesn't make you grateful, just go to Egypt and look at the midday sun. There he is — that's his all-powerful eye bearing down on you.

But is he all-powerful? There are times when he seems to be waning a bit and feeling his age.

He has a very strange relationship with the Sky Goddess NUT (who arches backwards across the world and probably symbolizes the Milky Way). In the evening he sails through her mouth and then has to battle through her nightmare insides.

Like some computer-devised video game, he wends his way through twelve gates at the rate of one per hour without getting zapped by malevolent hideous monsters. And like some end-of-game baddie, the snake God APEP lies in wait hoping to gobble him up. Once these perils are traversed, he surfaces via NUT's birth canal to greet the new day.

He's not alone in this enterprise — selected top Gods came along for the thrill of pitting their skills and chilling out in no uncertain manner. THOTH, MAAT, HATHOR, HORUS are the top crew, with ABTU and ANET as early warning system and KHEPRI the dung beetle as a sort of morning mascot.

The night boat is called Mantchet, and there's also a day boat called Semketet, where they probably laze around sunbathing and drinking cocktails as they recount their night time adventures.

Shrouded in the mists of Chaos and speculation of cosmic genealogy, **RA** may or may not have had parents. NUT is often put forward as his mother, but is most likely due to his habit of popping out to be reborn after the night shift.

Later in life there were some amalgamations. **RA** was so much in the spotlight that many Gods tried to get in on the act by adding his name to theirs for added glory. The most notable of these was AMUN-RA.

**RA** himself seems to have opted for semi-retirement, although he remains very much in the public eye and has a full schedule of guest appearances.

## RA FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **RA**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **RE**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Creating**

God of : **Creation**

Associated with : **Sun**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 58733

# SET



Egyptian Chaos God

Also known as SETEKH, SETESH, SETH, SETI, SUTEKH

Chaotic God of Anarchy. Also handles War, Storms and Deserts

His nickname is The Red God, but whether this is politics, hair color or sheer embarrassment it's difficult to ascertain.

He's a bit of a mix and match, with donkey ears, a scorpion tail, and the head of a mysterious Egyptian aardvark. He can also turn up as a hippo with the jaws and tail of a crocodile.

But one thing's for sure: **SET**'s a nasty piece of work. In fact he's the God of Evil Chaos, and loves nothing more than creating mayhem.

Not content with constantly messing up the peaceful farms of OSIRIS, he finally lost his temper and killed him.

But not even scattering the remains far and wide could save him from retribution. HORUS son of OSIRIS came seeking vengeance and the battle lasted eighty years.

Not one to fight fair, **SET** tore one of HORUS's eyes out, but HORUS went straight for the testicles. (If you think that's disgusting, you should read MIN's entry which has in-depth coverage.) The other Gods cheered and awarded him the victory, banishing **SET** to the upper realms of RA where he became the voice of thunder.

He hasn't mellowed with age. If he enters the body of a human he can drive them mad. We're not surprised. It doesn't bear thinking about.

## SET FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **SET**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **SETEKH, SETESH, SETH, SETI, SUTEKH**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Chaos**

God of : **Chaos**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 53190

# OSIRIS



Egyptian Underworld God

Also known as NED-ER-TCHER, USIRE

## Mr Big of the Egyptian Underworld

He's not a gangster as such but is definitely in charge of the Dead End scenario. Married to the beautiful ISIS, he was quite content to rule Vegetation and Fertility until he was knocked off by his evil brother SET, who locked his body in a chest and chucked it into the Nile.

But nothing's ever that simple when it comes to the Gods, and the chest was washed up on the shore, stuck in a giant tree, turned into a pillar and relocated to the palace of King Byblos where ISIS, having searched high and low, eventually found it.

Cursing his luck, wicked SET chopped the body into a zillion pieces and scattered them all over Egypt. So poor ISIS had to search all over again, collecting bits and pieces of her dead husband until she had every last scrap.

Then RA took pity on her and sent THOTH and ANUBIS to help put the jigsaw puzzle back together. Luckily there were no pieces missing. Except one.

Sometimes small details get overlooked, but they can be of prime importance. SET in his savage spite ensured there was one piece missing when ISIS came to reconstruct OSIRIS. He had thrown the Schlong Of OSIRIS into the Nile, where it had been swallowed by a fish. But ISIS, summoning all her Godly Reconstruction powers, which were by now formidable, managed to fashion another one. It was made out of gold — and fully functional. (Do not attempt this at home — battery-operated devices will not suffice.)

The reconstructed OSIRIS was mummified for burial; and he looked so fine in his shiny wrappings that ISIS couldn't resist one last fling. As luck would have it, her charms breathed new life into him and she became pregnant with HORUS.

Meanwhile, thanks to his Underworld connections, the resurrected OSIRIS was promoted to Judge of the Dead alongside MAAT and THOTH. Consequently he now has little time for being non-judgmental.

OSIRIS also found a new lease of life as part of the SERAPIS Project, a collaborative religious venture between the Greeks and Egyptians...

## OSIRIS FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **OSIRIS**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **NED-ER-TCHER, USIRE**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **the Underworld**

God of : **Underworld**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 52728

# SHU



Egyptian Air God

Also known as SU, ŠU

Slightly prudish God of Dry Air and father of the Sky

He works alongside his twin sister TEFNUT. He deals in the dry dusty variety, while she's more than a little wet. So you could call him the God of Dehumidifiers. At least they didn't have air guitars to contend with.

**SHU** is the son of ATUM and fathered NUT (the Sky), and GEB (the Earth), with a little help from TEFNUT. But things didn't quite go according to plan. The Sky wouldn't stay put and kept falling down onto the Earth.

As gravity hadn't yet been invented, **SHU** decided there must be another reason. And there was. **NUT** and **GEB** were passionately in love and sneaking tight embraces at every opportunity.

It wasn't so much a case of "Did the Earth move for you?" as "Did the sky fall on top of you last night?"

**SHU** put a stop to all this, but not before **NUT** had given birth to some very important new Gods. And now **SHU** stands between **NUT** and **GEB**, holding up the sky like an Egyptian **ATLAS**.

## SHU FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **SHU**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **SU**, **ŠU**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **the Air**

God of : **Air**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 47817

# AMUN-RA



Egyptian Supreme God

Also known as AMUN-RE, AMEN-RA, AMEN-RE, AMON-RA, AMON-RE, AMMON-RA, AMMON-RE

## Egyptian blue chip merger of Amun and Ra

These two deities joined forces in much the same way that multi-national corporations do today. AMUN, Inc and RA, Corp became the gargantuan **AMUN-RA** Corporation — slogan: "The Sun in Splendor".

With offices all over the continent, profits zoomed through the roof and the Egyptian stock market was at an all-time high.

### AMUN-RA FACTS AND FIGURES

Name : **AMUN-RA**

Pronunciation : *Coming soon*

Alternative names : **AMUN-RE, AMEN-RA, AMEN-RE, AMON-RA, AMON-RE, AMMON-RA, AMMON-RE**

Location : **Ancient Egypt**

Gender : **Male**

Type : **deity**

In charge of : **Everything**

God of : **Supreme, Everything**

Celebration or Feast Day : *Unknown at present*

Good/Evil Rating : *Unknown at present*

Popularity index : 46985