



18TH DYNASTY

Colossi of Memnon

All that remains of a once-mighty mortuary temple

Why it matters

Two colossal statues of Amenhotep III, each standing about 18 meters tall, are all that remains visible above ground of his mortuary temple, which recent excavations revealed to have once been the largest mortuary temple ever built in Thebes — larger even than Karnak in its original footprint — before it was destroyed by floods and earthquakes over the centuries and its stone plundered for later temples.

Ongoing excavations behind the statues have uncovered additional colossal statues of the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet, with more royal statue fragments still being unearthed from beneath the sand.

≈18 m

height of each statue

2seated statues of
Amenhotep III**130 AD**Emperor Hadrian came to
hear them**10 min**

is enough for a stop

Plan your visit

Hours	Open-air site, visible all day
Ticket	Free — no ticket needed
Photos	Free
Time	10–15 minutes
Best time	Early morning light, on the way to the West Bank sites
Where	West Bank, on the main road to the Valley of the Kings

Prices and hours checked October 2026. Always confirm at the ticket office. Card payment only at most ticket offices.



WALK IT IN THIS ORDER

What to look for

The bigger picture

The statues were named 'Memnon' after a legendary Greek hero, after ancient Greeks noticed one of them emitted a strange moaning sound at sunrise, caused by a crack from an earthquake — a sound that stopped after Roman-era repairs. This strange phenomenon drew visitors from across the Roman Empire, including emperors such as Hadrian, who left Greek and Latin inscriptions and poems carved into the statues' bases recording their visits.

1 The two giants

Amenhotep III sits on his throne, with his mother and his wife Tiye carved beside his legs.

2 The 'singing' statue

The northern colossus used to moan at sunrise after an earthquake crack — until Roman repairs.

3 Ancient graffiti

Greek and Latin poems left by Roman visitors are still carved on the legs.

4 The lost temple

Behind the statues, excavations are bringing back the largest temple ever built in Thebes.

Good to know

- They can be viewed directly from the road in just a few minutes, making them a convenient quick stop at the start or end of a West Bank tour.
- Combine with the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu, both very close.
- Watch for traffic — the statues stand right by the road.



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Sources: Luxor Guide narration script — Colossi of Memnon; Egyptian Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities ticket listings (2026); UNESCO World Heritage List — Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis (1979). **Photo:** Diego Delso, delso.photo, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.