

THE SPHINXES IN LUXOR ARE REBORN



The Egyptian Minister of State has recently announced that the ancient Avenue of Sphinxes connecting Luxor and Karnak shall be reintroduced to the public in March.

Egyptian Luxor certainly has not lost its appeal even in the context of last year's political upheavals. In fact, **tourists are slowly finding their way back there and while many visitors travel to the coastal areas, ancient history lovers long to explore Luxor.**

For thousands of years, this place has been directly linked to many powerful dynasties as well as to Egyptian gods. It once possessed a very deep spiritual and religious importance and today, the government attempts to awake the ancient spirits once more. For five years, a project has been under way to restore the once grand Avenue of Sphinxes. In March 2012, it shall conclude and the avenue will be introduced to the world once again.

Luxor was once the city of Thebes as well as the city of the god Amon-Ra. In the 15th century B.C. Queen Hatshepsut built six chapels there, dedicated to the god, that became part of the avenue, which was 2.7 km long and featured hundreds of sphinxes.

Her aim was to stress the religious status of the city. In the 4th century B.C., Pharaoh Nectanebo I had the avenue reconstructed and rebuilt. For centuries, parts of the avenue have been visible, yet the majority of the stretch has been destroyed or covered in sand.

The opening will be a proper treat for history and culture enthusiasts; a 150-meter-long stretch has been restored and hopefully, the tourists will be keen to come and enjoy the spectacular avenue first hand. Egypt is still recovering from last year's political events and the fall of President Mubarak, however, New Year comes with positive news and hopefully, local cultural initiatives will count.

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