

Facts about ancient Egyptian pets

Animals were an incredibly important part of life in Ancient Egypt. They were hunted for sport and food, reared as livestock on farms, and some species were domesticated and kept as pets.

It is thought that cats, dogs, monkeys and gazelles were often kept in Ancient Egyptian homes. These creatures certainly weren't wild anymore, but they may not have been domesticated to the same degree as pets of today.

Ancient Egyptian Dogs



Although the Ancient Egyptians named their dogs and often gave them collars, they were not treated in exactly the same way as today's pet dogs. The dogs of Ancient Egypt were mostly working animals. They accompanied their owners on hunting trips and they were frequently used as guard dogs.

Dogs were considered to be much less important and it was a common Ancient Egyptian insult to refer to someone as a dog.

Some Ancient Egyptians obviously enjoyed the companionship offered by their dogs, and dogs were sometimes mummified and buried with their masters.

Ancient Egyptian dogs were like the greyhounds, salukis and possibly even the mastiff and dachshunds of today.



Ancient Egyptian Cats



The ancient Egyptians were absolutely fascinated with cats, and it is through that most Ancient Egyptian families kept at least one as a pet.

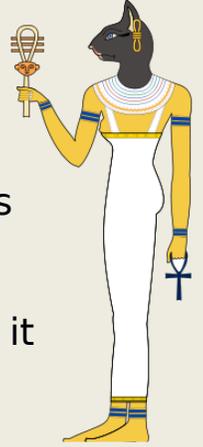
Cats were often used on hunting trips to fetch birds and fish from marshes around the Nile River.

Cats were probably originally allowed into the houses of the Ancient Egyptians because they caught rats and chased snakes away from the home. However, they soon became even more important to the lives of the Ancient Egyptians.

They look on a spiritual importance and were considered to be a sacred animal with magical powers. An Ancient Egyptians believed that keeping a cat would protect their home and bring them good luck.

Several gods and goddesses were associated with cats, the most famous of which was the goddess called Bastet.

Bastet had the body of a woman and the head of a cat. Bastet was known as the 'household goddess' and was responsible for mothers, children, pet cats, fertility and dancing.



Due to their link to the goddess Bastet, many Ancient Egyptian cats were mummified.

The popularity of the cat grew during the Ancient Egypt period and it was a common motif on jewellery, ornaments and amulets.

If an Egyptian had a dream about a cat it was thought to bring good fortune.

The penalty for killing a cat in Ancient Egypt, even accidentally, was often death.

Today's pet cats are probably related to the pet cats of the Ancient Egypt.



