Compare and contrast
the mummies of ancient Egypt and Peru

*Mummies* features real mummies and coffins, including one of the oldest mummies in the world, from Pre-Dynastic Egypt to Pre-Incan Peru. The specimens appear alongside archaeological treasures of the time. Visitors will learn the individual stories of the mummies contained within the exhibition, and they will compare and contrast their societies’ responses to death, burial, and the afterlife.

Here are a few of the comparisons visitors will discover in the exhibition:

- Peruvians and Chileans made the oldest mummies in the world, starting 7,000 years ago. Egyptians made mummies starting about 5,500 years ago.
- Peruvians mummified their dead to remain connected to them. In ancient Egypt, mummification allowed survivors to send their dead off into the next life.
- The first Peruvian mummies were created with specific intention and involved elaborate processes like removing the skin. Later, Peruvians used a more natural process that drew upon the hot and dry climate in which they lived. The first Egyptian mummies were created by accident, when remains were buried beneath the hot, dry sand. Later, Egyptians developed elaborate, sophisticated mummification techniques.
- Most Peruvian mummies were not embalmed, and their organs were left in place. Most Egyptian mummies were embalmed, and their organs were removed and preserved.
- Most Peruvian mummies were prepared in a crouched position with their legs drawn to their chests. Most Egyptian mummies were prepared lying on their backs with their legs extended.
- Most Peruvian mummies were clothed, wrapped in fabric, and given a false head. Most Egyptian mummies were encased in a wooden coffin within a stone sarcophagus.
- Most Peruvian mummies were buried so that loved ones could access them and replenish the grave goods. Most Egyptian mummies were buried in sealed tombs to protect the treasures inside from being looted by thieves.

*Source: Exhibit graphics, Mummies: New Secrets from the Tombs.*

*Mummies: New Secrets from the Tombs* was developed by The Field Museum, Chicago.

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