



The Oven That Beat the Pyramids

How ancient Egypt hatched millions of eggs long before electricity

Egypt Hatched Eggs 2,400 Years Ago

Long before electricity, Egyptians were hatching eggs at scale. Mud-brick ovens called mamal date to the 4th century BC, making them one of the ancient world's great engineering feats.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Fire Up Top, Eggs Below

Each oven had two tiers. Camel and cow dung burned in the upper chambers; warmth fell to the eggs below. Workers turned the eggs and tested temperature by pressing them against their eyelids.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

A Scale That Stunned the World

By 1839, Egypt had around 450 ovens. By 1895, each oven could hatch 300,000 eggs per season. In the 1910s, these ovens produced over 90 million chicks a year.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Greater Than the Pyramids

In 1750, French naturalist Rene de Reaumur published the first accurate account of the ovens Europeans called mythical. He declared: 'Egypt ought to be prouder of them than her pyramids.'

Source: [Amusing Planet](#)

A Secret Passed Without Writing

The mamal's techniques were a guarded family secret, passed from parent to child within the same families for over 2,400 years, surviving the end of the pharaohs, the Roman conquest, and every empire that followed.

Source: [Amusing Planet](#)

Still Burning in Egypt Today

Hundreds of traditional mamal still operate in Egypt. Dung has given way to petrol lamps and electric heaters, but no thermometers are used. The eyelid test still guides every hatch.

Source: [Amusing Planet](#)

IN SHORT

From Egypt's ancient ovens to a Multan morning, the humble egg has always deserved this much care.

References

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