

Abu Hureyra

by: [CrystalFoot](#)

Tell Abu Hureyra is an archaeological site located in the Upper Euphrates valley in modern Syria, in the Fertile Crescent. This tell is a collection of collapsed houses, debris and prehistoric objects that have accumulated over the years and has since been submerged by Lake Assad. This archaeological site was inhabited from c. 11,500 to 7,000 years ago in radiocarbon years (1). The village was inhabited by hunter gatherers who eventually transitioned to farming and became the earliest known farmers in the world. The hunter gatherers adopted agriculture in 11,000 BP (1).

Abu Hureyra became perhaps the largest group of people to permanently settle in one place at the time, with its village consisting of around 200 people (2). The first group of people, known as Abu Hureyra 1 of the Epipaleolithic era, lived in Abu Hureyra for about 1,300 years until the return of glacial climate conditions, known as the Younger Dryas era. Before the change in weather, the hunter gatherers collected plants and hunted gazelles, before transitioning to farming cereal grains, such as rye (3). After the Younger Dryas era, which lasted 1000 years, Abu Hureyra 2 domesticated sheep and goats as a steady protein source and expanded the farming practices of Abu Hureyra 1 (2).

Archaeologists have recovered stone tools that were used to grind the cereal grains as well as woven baskets made by women in order to collect seeds or water. They also collected teeth that showed wear from consuming cooked foods (3). Their advancement in food preparation is notable, considering many people before this time consumed their food raw.

The agricultural advances of the people of Abu Hureyra are perhaps the most significant aspects of this archaeological site. Abu Hureyra is considered the origin of farming and agriculture.

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Abu Hureyra

by: [DressDrone](#)

Abu Hureyra or Tell Abu Hureyra (“tell” refers to a small mound or hill) is an archaeological site located in the upper Euphrates Valley in modern day Syria (1). This location was inhabited from 13 kya to about 6 kya (2). The time that Abu Hureyra was inhabited is split into two timelines. The first is known as Abu Hureyra 1, which lasted from 13,000 – 12,000 years ago. During this time, the people that lived here were hunter-gatherers whose diet consisted of over 100 plant seeds and fruits gathered from around the Euphrates Valley (2). The humans of Abu Hureyra 1 lived in pit houses (2).

The second stage of inhabitation, Abu Hureyra 2, lasted from 9,400 to 7,000 years ago (2). During this time, the humans that lived at Abu Hureyra adopted agriculture, instead of foraging for their food. They farmed crops such as wheat and beans. These farmers lived in mud brick houses (2).

Abu Hureyra allows us to study the human evolution from hunting and gathering to adoption of agriculture. The remains found at this site are mostly comprised of human and plant remains that were taken from soil samples (3). The remains found at this site show us that Abu Hureyra is one of the oldest examples on the entire planet of humans’ transition to an agricultural lifestyle (3). The adoption of agriculture allowed humans to have larger population centers and interpersonal interactions due to the proximity in which people could live to each other. The inhabitants of this site also lived through a significant time of environmental change because the transition from the Pleistocene to Holocene era occurred during the time that Abu Hureyra was inhabited (3).

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Gobekli Tepe

by: DrumThief

In Southeastern Anatolia, Turkey lies the archaeological site of Gobekli Tepe. This site is believed to have been the world's first temple. It contains 22 acres of architecture consisting of circular and rectangular compounds, each with elaborately carved T-shaped monoliths in the center. (2) These structures are the oldest monoliths discovered, predating Stonehenge by 6,000 years. (1)

The people who created this monument were part of a hunter-gatherer society that settled north of the Fertile Crescent in the Pre Pottery Neolithic period.(2) At the time of its creation, the area was a very lush wetland that was full of wildlife, making it an excellent area for hunting and gathering.(1) The oldest areas of the structure are the circular compounds which date back to 9500 BCE. The oldest dated remains of agriculture in the surrounding area are from 9000 BCE, which would mean that agricultural societies developed after this very large communal structure.(2) The people eventually buried the site as it had lost relevance to them for reasons unknown.(3)

Gobekli Tepe was built over the course of 15 centuries, requiring labor and resources to be diverted to a massive task other than survival. This points to a significantly large population, relative abundance of resources, and hierarchies for construction and resource management. (3) Despite the incredibly long construction period, the temple shows a very cohesive belief system. Each new addition to the structure had the same central pillars as well as similar carvings of dangerous beasts. The meaning of the temple is still primarily speculation, but it is clear that it was very important to the society that made it.

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Gobekli Tepe

by: [EarthBase](#)

The southeast Anatolian region of Turkey is made up of valleys and plateaus. Near the city of Urfa, a butte called Gobekli Tepe (Potbelly Hill) was found to be man-made. Using radar and geomagnetic surveys, a large stone circular vestige was found buried under this mound. (1) Recent research quashed the idea that this structure was a cemetery. Evidence revealed that it was built during the Neolithic period - 9500-8000 BCE. It was utilized for approximately 1,000 years and then abandoned in 8000 BCE.

Archeological data speculated that Gobekli Tepe was used for ritualistic purposes. It has become known as the world's first temple. (2) Massive limestone pillars measuring up to 16 feet tall and weighing as much as ten tons were set purposefully in a circular fashion with a dimension of 17 x 24 meters. Relief carvings of animals, abstract characters, insects, and icons covered many pillars which could have had religious meaning. (3) Gobekli Tepe might have been used solely for religious purposes, for there are no indications of permanent settling in regards to burials, refuse, or home dwellings.

The Neolithic Period predates the existence of the wheel, writing, metal, pottery or communal living. (4) The hunter-gatherer lifestyle had no technology other than stone hammers and blades. Nonetheless, these nomadic people built the massive Gobekli Tepe with collective builders. There was the need for communal living to continue building consistently.

A solidarity-focused goal caused their lifestyle to change and be restructured into labor forces of builders. Hunters and gatherers provided sustenance. Social dilemma most likely befell this culture when issues of inequality of work and food distribution became cognizant. Regardless, this populace shared commonality in a mutual belief system. The final structure known as Gobekli Tepe is evidence they were on a common path that kept them united.

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Spirit Cave (Thailand)

by: [FinalCrust](#)

In the Pang Mapha district, Mae Hong Son Province of northwest Thailand lies a river facing cave named the Spirit Cave (1). At 650m above sea level, this cave was occupied from 12,000 BP to 7500 BP by early humans belonging to the Hoabinhian culture, a term used to describe peoples use of river-cobble stone tools (3). In this hot tropical environment, radiocarbon dating of ancient plants, pottery, lithic tools, and a freshwater crab placed the Hoabinhian culture at late Pleistocene and early Holocene eras (2). The plants that were found included, two strains of peas, Chinese water chestnuts, black pepper, gourds, and beans, indicate the first signs of domestic agriculture and foreshadows Southeast Asian cuisine (2). The decorated pottery contained both stone and vegetal materials (plant resin) revealing that the culture was evolving from an economy of hunter-gatherer to horticulturist (3). The upper levels of the cave contained log coffins as well as the found pottery, this suggests that art was a prominent part of their burials and ceremonies (3). Many of the lithic tools were used for farming and cooking and were built from the stone quartzite (1). The freshwater crabs, found and dated, gave evidence that the cave was used during the early Holocene era and hints at their diet (1).

These archaeological findings at the Spirit Cave play a significant role in explaining the early economic evolution from hunters and gatherers to agricultural management and crop domestication. The crop dating also proved that Thailand's crop cultivation preceded the Middle East (2). Attention to detail in pottery and tools indicated the importance of art within the Hoabinhian culture.

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Spirit Cave (Thailand)

by: [FunStomp](#)

Spirit Cave is in Thailand in Southeast Asia, 650m above sea level overlooking a stream with nearby sites such as Banyan Valley Cave and Steep Hill Cliff (1). This place was not sought out initially because of doubts of possible evidence found at open-aired habitations, however there is a decent number of artifacts to be found (2). This site is important because of the domestication of fauna and flora.

Spirit Cave is split into two different layers and within the first layer consisted of archaeological artifacts such as pebble-cores, grinding stones, and retouched flakes (3). The second layer consisted of artifacts such as adzes and knives (3). The adzes and knives are the earliest artifacts of edge grinding in Mainland Southeast Asia. The hunters and gatherers are believed to have existed 12,000 years BP to about 7,500 BP and received their name because they used unifacial river cobbles as tools (3). Also, fragments of ceramics were discovered, however they have not been able to form an entire vessel.

Also, Spirit Cave is known for the flora and fauna, especially how the inhabitants domesticated plants for the first time in Southeast Asia. They discovered carbonised plant remains such as types of beans, nuts, etc. (2). Plant life found at this site concluded their diet consisted of wild or tended nuts and legumes were used for a light source (3). The faunal remains consisting of bats, deer, domesticated pig, etc. were also discovered concluding there was woodland hunting, and they would cut these animals into small pieces and cook them over large fires (3).

In conclusion, Spirit Cave is important because this site shows the first signs of domestication of plants in Southeast Asia. The adaptation of domesticating plant life could open many new opportunities for human life.

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