



## Take a Tut virtual tour: Room by room

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From the moment the lights go down in the theater and the short introductory film for the exhibit *Tutankhamun: The Golden King and the Great Pharaohs* begins, it's clear that the experience will be first class all the way. The narrator is Indiana Jones, himself, Harrison Ford. And the gravitas the Oscar-nominated star lends to the intro film and the accompanying audio tour (a must-have) makes for a memorable experience that touches all the senses.

The exhibit, which is presented by the Michael C. Carlos Museum, opened at the Atlanta Civic Center on November 15 to great fanfare and some pretty impressive crowds, too. While the big parties that accompanied the opening are nice, the product has to be good. And there is no question that *Tutankhamun* is.

More than 130 artifacts from the tomb of King Tut and other ancient Egyptian sites are gathered in more than 15 rooms, the layout of which tells a fascinating story of life among the pharaohs in ancient Egypt. Joining Ford on the audio tour (which is sold separately from the admission ticket) is Zahi Hawass, secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, whose energetic recollections and descriptions of pieces are worth the price of admission themselves.

What follows is a room-by-room tour of the exhibit—that can be seen and what not to miss. Photos of many of the pieces described below can be found at [www.kingtut.org](http://www.kingtut.org), and ticket information and more news about the exhibit is on the Carlos Museum website. The exhibit is open through May 25, 2009. The descriptions below, you can read forever.

**Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt:** The exhibition gets off to an impressive start with a baker's dozen of antiquities depicting a variety of Egyptian pharaohs, including Ramesses II, commonly believed to be the pharaoh from the Bible. **Don't miss:** A wall-sized list of Egyptian pharaohs that covers some 2,000 years. It's a great reference since many of the names will be seen later in the exhibit.

**Pharaoh's Family and Private Life:** Visitors entering this room are greeted by a statue of Shepenwepet II, a Nubian-born queen of Egypt. "Private life" isn't just an empty descriptor in this room. Surely one of the exhibit's most memorable pieces—a stone toilet seat—can be seen here. **Don't miss:** A sketch of a princess eating duck is remarkably preserved on a piece of limestone. The casual, very human image is a touching contrast to the formality normally seen in ancient Egyptian art.

**Pharaoh's Court:** Antiquities related to various court attendees. **Don't miss:** Hawass's memories of discovering four small statues depicting a pyramid builder named Inty-Shedu at various stages of his life. "I will never forget seeing the eyes of Inty-Shedu for the first time." The line is delivered with such passion, a listener can't help but feel as though he's standing next to Hawass and sharing in the excitement.

**Pharaoh's Religion:** Each of the previous rooms has been filled with light, which makes the darkness enveloping this collection of antiquities related to Egyptian gods all the more dramatic. **Don't miss:** The centerpiece of the room is the inner coffin of Queen Meritamun, wife of the first king of the 18th Dynasty (1545–25 BC). Her wig remains as boldly blue as the day it was painted.

**Pharaoh's Gold:** Bling! Bling! (Yeah, I can't believe I said that either). If anything, this room is even darker than the last, enhancing the glow of the remarkably preserved jewelry. There's a reason why "Golden King" is in the exhibition title. **Don't miss:** The golden mask of Psusennes I. An iconic image of ancient Egypt you can view from every conceivable angle.

**Discovery of a Pharaoh and Discovery Theater:** Discovery of a Pharaoh is a hallway, basically, but a great setup for what comes next. The man who discovered King Tut's tomb, Howard Carter, is pictured with his patron, Lord Carnarvon on a wall-sized mural. The theater is set up like a desert camp. Such displays frequently come off cheesy, but this one works. No sand, which is good. **Don't miss:** The looped video chronicling the tomb's discovery. It's worth a few minutes of lingering.

**Antechamber:** The first glimpse into Tut's tomb. If you're touring the exhibit at a leisurely pace, it takes more than an hour to get here, but the prelude is well worth it. Tut's tomb in Egypt included four rooms and each is reproduced here with the antiquities displayed in their appropriate place. Ringing each of the tomb rooms are original photos taken by Burton, many of which appear in the Tut companion exhibition, *Wonderful Things: The Harry Burton Photographs and the Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun*, now at the Carlos Museum. **Don't miss:** A wooden bed that Tut is believed to have actually used. It still looks comfortable after thousands of years.

**Annex of King Tut:** Sort of the tomb's garage. Knickknacks galore. There is a gamebox (with all the pieces intact), a small collection of shabtis (figurines that replace the pharaoh in the afterlife, a total of 413 were found at the site), and much more. **Don't miss:** Anything. Think about the treasures in your own garage. Multiply by 10. That's this room.

**Treasury:** Speaking of treasures ... beautiful items here, no question, but make sure to read the descriptions of each item. A gorgeous golden coffinette here wasn't just for show, it held King Tut's stomach. One of several that were found, each held a different organ. **Don't miss:** If thoughts of internal organs turn your, um, stomach. Check out the incredible detail of a wooden model ship on display.

**Burial Chamber:** Everything seen here was recovered from the room that held King Tut's remains. Jewelry of all sorts is predominant. **Don't miss:** The sandals seen at left were those found on King Tut's feet, but perhaps even more stunning were the golden covers around each of his fingers and toes. There is even detail around the finger- and toenails.

**Pharaoh's Fate:** Just because you've reached the burial chamber doesn't mean King Tut's story is over. A 17-foot statue of the pharaoh greets you in this sparse area. It doesn't need any dressing up. Tutankhamun's stone-eyed gaze says it all. **Don't miss:** The description of the piece. By this point museum fatigue has probably set in and it's easy to skim past the descriptions. Don't miss this one. Great story about how statues, including Tut's on display were ... recycled.

**New Discoveries:** Welcome to modern times. Photos and video of present day CT scans of the mummy tell us more about King Tut than ever before. **Don't miss:** The full video. The lab-like setup of the room is perhaps overdone, but the scientific story told here is fascinating. The video is only a couple minutes long and you've come this far.

**Exit Hallway and Gift Shop:** This hallway leads to the gift shop and doubles as the Carlos Museum's "thank you" gallery. Definitely worth a look. **Don't miss:** Carlos Museum Director Bonnie Speed's recorded farewell and thanks to visitors. This is an Emory event after all.