

## 1 **Mummies around the World – Dried, Smoked, or Thrown in a Bog**

2 Polish scientists are **launching** what they say will be the world's largest scientific study of Egyptian mummies,  
3 which will look for **clues** to ancient diseases, the mummies' **former occupations**, and even whether the corpses  
4 were left-handed. Though Egypt's mummies are perhaps the most famous, cultures around the world have found  
5 creative ways to **preserve** their dead. Here are a few of world's mummies, including some you may not have  
6 heard of, and their strange path to pseudo-immortality.

### 7 **Bog Bodies**

8 Ireland is known for its fairy tales of leprechauns and sprites, but it **turns out** there's something even stranger  
9 hiding out in the mists – bog bodies. Bodies thrown into the bogs of Ireland hundreds of years ago are preserved  
10 by this **hostile** environment. Bogs have very little oxygen, keeping the bacteria that eat dead bodies at bay and  
11 allowing bog bodies to be preserved for centuries. One of the most **recent** of Ireland's bog bodies is 4,000 years  
12 old, 500 years older than King Tutankhamen of Egypt.

13 Though the bog can tell us about the lifestyle, diet and living **conditions** of a person, it also destroys DNA,  
14 so no one knows the bodies' **exact** lineages. Some scientists think that the Irish bog bodies were former kings,  
15 **violently** murdered and then tossed into the bog because they **failed** to **protect** their people from disease or  
16 famine. Little did they know that their bodies would be preserved for millennia.

### 17 **World's Oldest Mummies**

18 Chile's Chinchorro mummies are the oldest known **intentionally** created mummies in the world, dating back  
19 9000 years. The Chinchorro were a fishing people living on the coast of what is now southern Peru and northern  
20 Chile, where the **remains** of what are known as the "Black Mummies", named for the **layer** of black  
21 manganese, a metal resembling iron, that **coating** their bodies, were hidden in **forgotten** cemeteries for  
22 millennia.

23 To create a Black Mummy, Chinchorro morticians cut off the body's head, arms and legs, scooped out the  
24 organs and flesh, and often **emptied** the brain through a hole in the skull. The skin was **peeled** away from the  
25 body and reattached later, like taking off and putting on a sock. Morticians completed the process by shoving  
26 hot coals into the trunk cavity to dry the cadaver. Afterward, morticians rebuilt the body with sticks and animal  
27 hair, and **covered** it in white ash. As a final touch, morticians attached a crop of short black hair to the scalp,  
28 and painted the corpse black with manganese.

29 No one knows why the Chinchorro mummified their dead. It's possible they believed in an afterlife, or perhaps  
30 natural **disasters** such as earthquakes and El Niños pushed their people toward mortuary rituals and **ancestor**  
31 worship.

### 32 **How to Become a Mummy**

33 The grueling and fatal **practice** of self mummification was **undertaken** by Buddhist monks in Japan, China,  
34 and India. Some believed that it would give them special powers; others thought they'd one day awaken as if  
35 from a sleep. Such monks **restricted** themselves to a **diet** of nuts and seeds for about three years and then spent  
36 another three years eating only bark and roots. The **goal** was to deplete their bodies of all fat so, once they'd  
37 died, the bacteria that eat corpses would have less food. Afterward, monks drank a **poisonous** tea, causing them  
38 to vomit repeatedly so they'd lose their remaining bodily **fluids**. The **lack of** water in their bodies and poison  
39 **flowing** through their veins would, again, make it more difficult for bacteria to **decompose** the body after death.

40 When the end was near, the monks moved to a tomb, **equipped** with only an air tube and a bell. These devout  
41 men meditated, ringing the bell each day to tell those on the outside they were still alive. When the bell stopped  
42 ringing, the air **supply** was **cut off**, and the tomb was **sealed**. Not all **attempts** at self-mummification were  
43 successful, in fact most failed, and the bodies decomposed. Today, self-mummification is **discouraged** by  
44 Buddhist religious leaders, but it's a practice that has existed since at least the 12th century. In 2015,  
45 a self-mummified Buddhist monk was **discovered** entombed in a Buddha statue in China.