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Life in the Indus Valley

The Indus Valley civilisation covered a massive area. It was built around the river Indus that runs through modern day northeast Afghanistan, Pakistan and northwest India. At the time there was a second big river called the Ghaggar-Hakra but this dried up.

The Indus Valley civilisation started around 3200BC. Farmers moved into the area and set up small farms where they kept cows and sheep. In time these grew into major cities. Evidence shows that the people from the Indus Valley made objects from clay, had their own writing and used tools to farm the land. They also traded (sold and swapped goods) with other people like those in the ancient Sumer.

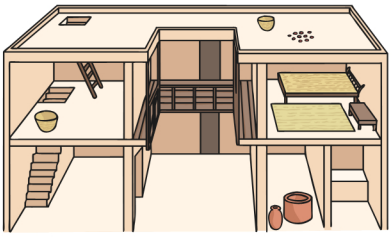
The lost cities of The Indus Valley civilisation were not found until 1826 when a British soldier called Charles Masson saw mounds of bricks that he thought looked like castles. In 1856, workers that began building The Great Indian Railway found and used old bricks that turned out to be from buildings in the Indus Valley.

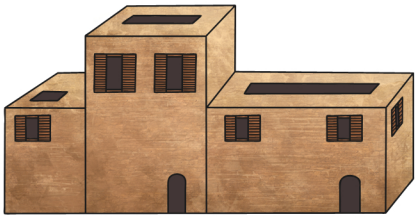
Cities

The Indus Valley civilisation was the biggest of its time and many thousands of people lived in the main cities. The cities were built near rivers that gave water for cooking, washing and drinking. The water, which flooded the river each year, kept the soil good for growing crops. The river also allowed traders (people who bought and sold) to sail to other cities. However, not everyone lived in cities; lots of farmers, fishermen and traders lived outside the cities in small villages. Buildings in the cities were made from mud bricks that were dried in the sun.

Homes

There were big and small houses in the Indus Valley cities. Some had one floor but richer people had two or even three. The walls of the houses were very thick, which kept them nice and cool inside. There were no windows in the walls facing the main street so that people inside could not hear the noise outside. Richer people's houses had many rooms and some even had a central courtyard, but some poorer people only had one or two rooms to live in. Houses had flat roofs and people would use them to keep cool, meet friends and store goods. The rooms inside the houses were used as places to eat, sleep and wash. Keeping clean was very important so houses had bathrooms with simple toilets and showers. Clean water was brought in from wells in the streets, although some richer people had their own wells.





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