

# [Bast-egyptian goddess](https://assignbuster.com/bast-egyptian-goddess/)

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Bast, also known as Bastet, Basthet, Ubasti, Pasht and ‘ the lady of the East’, is the Egyptian goddess of cats, protection, fertility, music, dance, patron of the first fire brigade and the protector of the all Seeing Eye.

In the earlier days of ancient Egypt she was also the goddess of the home. Bast is shown in most painting with the body of a woman and the head of a domesticated cat. Although, in some earlier paintings she was pictured as having the head of a lioness. She is often depictured in a white gossamer gown holding an ankh, the Egyptian symbol for life. Sometimes, she would even take the form of a black cat with a decorated collar and earrings.

In the earlier dynasties Bast was the protector of the home and homeowners frequently hung charms on the front door, which would summon Bast to help them if the house was ever robbed. She was also considered to be a great mother figure and many statues have visualised her with several kittens at her feet. Mothers would buy necklaces with these kittens on it. They would have one kitten for every child they hoped to have. In Egyptian mythology Ra (the sun god,) would be eaten each night by Hathor, the cow headed goddess.

Then, during the night he would travel through Duat to be born again in the morning, when the sun rises. Bast protected him every evening from the monsters that threatened to kill him during his nightly journey. That’s she the goddess of protection. It’s also why she’s called the lady of the East, because, without her the Egyptian’s believed that the sun wouldn’t rise in the East every morning. You may have also heard about her sister and counterpart: Sekhmet.

Sekhmet was almost the exact opposite of Bast. While Bast was the Lady of the East and protected Lower Egypt, Sekhmet was known as the Lady of the West and favoured Upper Egypt. Moreover, Sekhmet was fabled to have the head of a lioness whereas Bast’s upper body was that of a domesticated cat. And, although Bast protected Ra in the older days of Egypt, Sekhmet was his original guardian. But she was uncontrollable, and spread plagues and illnesses, so Ra sacked her hired Sachet’s much gentler counterpart.

And, even though she was being called away on all this urgent business, Bast still found time to play with her best friends: cats. In fact, her temples were literally swarming with them, many permanent residents. But they didn’t have time to smell the roses, if a village hut caught fire, they couldn’t exactly call triple zero. So they called the cats, yep if a house was ablaze, they’d release the cats into the house and they’d chase the fire away. Don’t get me wrong the Egyptians loved their cats; if one died they mummified it and everything. And besides, it didn’t matter if one came back with a slightly singed whisker because all they had to do was take it back to the temple and Bast would grant it life again.

This may be where the rumour that cats have nine lives comes from.