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## GEEO ITINERARY

EGYPT UPGRADED Group 1- Winter

### **Day 1: Cairo Arrive at any time.**

Arrive in Cairo at any time. Check into our hotel and enjoy the city. Check the notice boards or ask at reception for the exact time and location of the group meeting, typically 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. After the meeting, you might consider heading out for a meal in a nearby local restaurant to further get to know your tour leader and traveling companions. Please make every effort to arrive on time for this welcome meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up.

### **Day 2: Cairo/Alexandria (B) Embark on a guided tour of the Great Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. Continue to the historic Mediterranean city of Alexandria.**

We begin the day with one of the real highlights of any visit to Egypt, a visit to the three pyramids of Giza. While once located in remote desert, they now touch the suburbs of modern Cairo. No matter how many photos or documentaries you have seen, your first glimpse of these marvels of the ancient world will take your breath away. As a qualified Egyptologist, your tour leader is able to expertly explain the facts and myths behind these three mammoth works of art. You will get to enter the first Pyramid as part of the tour. You will also visit the mysterious Sphinx with its lion's body and man's face. You will have the option of visiting the Solar Boat Museum (80 EGP). It displays one of the pharaoh's funerary barges - it may just be the oldest boat in existence! In the afternoon, we drive to the historic Mediterranean city of Alexandria. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

### **Day 3: Alexandria (B) Spend the day exploring this ancient seaside city, including Pompey's Pillar, the catacombs, and the new Alexandria Library.**

We spend today exploring this ancient seaside city of Alexandria. Founded by Alexander the Great around 331BC, Egypt's only Mediterranean city is characterized by a distinctly European atmosphere and a refreshing sea breeze. We start with a visit to Pompey's Pillar. The name "Pompey's Pillar" is actually a misnomer, as it has nothing to do with Pompey, having been erected in 293 for Emperor Diocletian, possibly in memory of the rebellion of Domitius Domitianus. We also visit the Catacomb of Kom ash-Shuqqafa. These tombs were tunneled into the bedrock in the age of the Antonine Emperors (2nd century AD) for a single wealthy family still practicing the ancient religion of Egypt. They represent the last existing major construction of the old Egyptian religion. The Ancient Library of Alexandria was probably the largest and certainly the most famous of the libraries of the ancient world. It flourished during Greek rule and functioned as a major center of scholarship, until at least the time of the Roman conquest of Egypt and likely for many centuries thereafter. The old library was destroyed in a fire around the 1st century BC. We visit the magnificent new library, which was opened in 2002 very close to the site of the ancient one. Lastly, you will have the opportunity to enjoy an optional seafood dinner at one of the city's many outdoor restaurants.

### **Day 4: Alexandria/Cairo (B) Head back to Cairo, including a tour inside the monasteries of Wadi Natrun en route. Visit the Egyptian Museum with an option to see the mummy room.**

We start off the day by driving back to Cairo. Along the way, we will stop and take a tour with a local monk at the monasteries of Wadi Natrun. The history of the Wadi and its importance to Coptic Christians dates back to the 4th century AD. They are some of the earliest Christian monasteries still remaining in the world today. There will be time to grab a quick lunch before our afternoon visit to the Egyptian Museum. With over 10,000 pieces from every period of Egyptian history, including the treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun, the display can be a bit daunting. Your tour leader will direct you to the most important and magnificent items. There is also plenty of free time for you to explore on your own,

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including a chance to visit the famed Mummy Room where you can view the ancient remains of some of Egypt's most important rulers. (There is an extra 120 EGP entrance charge for the Mummy room.)  
Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

**Day 5: Cairo/Aswān (B, D) Catch an early morning flight to Aswan. Opt to explore Aswan market. Later, take a scenic felucca ride on the Nile to a Nubian village, where we enjoy a home-cooked dinner with locals.**

This morning, we catch an early flight to Aswān, which has a distinctively African feel. Small enough to walk around and graced with the most beautiful setting on the Nile, the pace of life is slow and relaxing. You might opt to explore the busy Aswān market. Late in the afternoon, we board a local boat, known as a felucca, to take a trip along the magnificent Nile, with views of the Aga Khan Mausoleum and Kitchener Island. We'll stop on the largest of the Nile islands in this area, Elephantine Island. We'll walk through a village and its surrounding fields and learn more about the life of the Nubian people. Finally, we enjoy a delicious traditional dinner at a local home. Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by plane

**Day 6: Aswān (B, D) Early in the morning, drive to the famed temples of Abu Simbel for a guided tour. Later, board our river cruise ship for the night. Opt to visit the Aswān high dam.**

Early in the morning, we take a private bus to the famed temples of Abu Simbel for a guided tour. The visit allows around 2 hours at the site to wander through the different temples and learn more about the construction, history, and relocation of these magnificently preserved structures. The temples, built by Ramses II between 1274-1244 BC, would now be under Lake Nasser, if not for the wonders of modern engineering. Later, board our river cruise ship for the night and start our luxury riverboat ride down the Nile. Approximate travel time: 6.5 hours by bus

**Day 7: Aswān/Kom Ombo (B, L, D) Spend 2 days floating down the Nile on a luxury riverboat with a guided tour of Kom Ombo Temple en route. In between excursions, relax on the boat decks.**

Following breakfast, we set sail on our 2-day luxury riverboat cruise. Before too long, it is time for a shore excursion with a visit to Kom Ombo, a temple dedicated to Sobek, the crocodile god. It still contains an ancient mummified crocodile. Please note, there is an additional 50 EGP fee to take photos in the Crocodile museum. In between excursions throughout the boat trip, we'll relax on the decks of the boat with a drink, watching the passing desert sands. Approximate travel time: All day by boat. Overnight aboard luxury riverboat.

**Day 8: Kom Ombo/Luxor (B, L, D) Continuing cruising the Nile, relaxing and taking in the desert scenery while observing daily life along the river. Arrive in Luxor in the evening.**

Today, we continue our Nile cruise, relaxing on board and watching the lovely scenery drift by. Arrive at Luxor in the evening where our boat will moor for the night. Approximate travel time: All day by boat. Overnight aboard luxury riverboat.

**Day 9: Luxor (B, L) Visit the Colossi of Memnon. Enjoy guided tours of the Valley of the Kings and Temple of Hatshepsut. Eat lunch with a local family.**

After checking into our hotel, we enjoy a full-day guided excursion to the famous Valley of the Kings. We will rise early to catch the sunrise from the motorboat that will take you across the Nile to the West Bank. From here, ride through farmer's fields to reach the Valley of the Kings. Descend the narrow, rock-hewn corridors and take in the magnificent decoration and designs of the tombs of the pharaohs at the Valley of the Kings. While the treasure is now all gone, the tombs contain the most incredible paintings of the life of their occupant and stories from the Book of the Dead. We will visit three tombs in total and may

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opt to visit the famous tomb of King (“Tut”) Tutankhamun (an extra 120 EGP each). We then visit the impressive Funerary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, which seems to rise out of the surrounding limestone outcrops – it’s a reminder of the power women held in the Ancient Kingdom. Our last stop today is the two mammoth statues of Amenophis II at the Colossi of Memnon, which used to stand at the front of a temple. Check out the ancient graffiti discussing the statues. We also enjoy lunch with a local family on the West Bank of the Nile. With what remains of the afternoon, you can explore Luxor at your own pace.

**Day 10: Luxor (B) Enjoy an excursion to the magnificent temples of Karnak and Luxor. In the afternoon, use free time to explore the Bazaar or museums.**

This morning, we enjoy a visit to the Karnak Temple, once the center of all religious life in ancient Egypt. Built and extended by successive generations of rulers, take time to admire the amazing architecture, massive columns, and painted hieroglyphs. Then we take in the beauty of the Luxor temple, an architectural splendor located near the Nile and right in the center of downtown Luxor. One of Egypt’s most impressive temples, Luxor has been used as a place of worship all the way from its conception in 1390 BC to the present day. Evidence of ancient worship, Coptic Christianity and Islamic architecture are found throughout the temple, illustrating how the regional culture has evolved over several thousand years. In the afternoon, you will have free time to explore on your own. You might choose to wander the bazaar to shop for souvenirs or visit the Mummification Museum to learn about the ancient art of embalming.

**Day 11: Luxor/Cairo (B) Catch a flight back to Cairo. Opt to visit the Khan el-Khalili Bazaar, tour Coptic Cairo, or enjoy a dinner on a floating restaurant on the Nile.**

This morning, we catch a flight back to Cairo. You will have the rest of the day to explore this amazing city. You might wish to visit the Khan El Khalili Bazaar, which is legendary for its fine brassware, copper, perfumes, leather, silver, gold, antiques, and more; or head out to Cairo’s most ancient area, Coptic Cairo, or perhaps relax by the hotel pool. An optional farewell dinner and show on one of Cairo’s famous floating restaurants is also available. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by plane

**Day 12: Cairo (B) Depart at any time.**

This morning, our program ends after breakfast. Feel free to depart at any time. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don’t see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator’s much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!