
GEEO ITINERARY

EGYPT FAMILY w/ LW5S – 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/Aswān (B, D) Tour the Great Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. Take a guided tour of the Egyptian Museum. Catch an overnight train to Aswan.

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 the 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 (which costs 100 EGP). It displays one of the pharaoh's funerary barges – it may just be the oldest boat in existence! 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, 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 180 EGP entrance charge for the Mummy room.) In the evening, board an overnight train to Aswan. The overnight train is a modern air-conditioned sleeper, with twin-berth beds. There is no shower in the cabin, but each cabin does have a sink. The shared toilet is at the end of each carriage. A basic airline-style tray meal for dinner and breakfast is included. Attendants can serve drinks in your compartment at extra cost or there is a bar car for socializing. Approximate travel time: 12 hrs by sleeper train

Day 3 Aswān (B, D) Explore Aswān. Visit a Nubian village and enjoy a home-cooked dinner with a local family.

We arrive in Aswān in the morning. Small enough to walk around and graced with the most beautiful setting on the Nile, the pace of life is slow and relaxing. You will have some free time in the morning to browse the souk, walk along the Nile, and/or visit the Philae Temple or the High Aswān Dam. Later, 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. Stop on the largest of the Nile islands in this area, Elephantine Island. Walk through the village and fields and learn more about the life of the Nubian people before enjoying a delicious traditional dinner at a local home.

Day 4: Aswān (B) Visit the magnificent temples of Abu Simbel.

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 hrs 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. Approximate travel time: 6.5 hours by bus

Day 5: Aswān/Kom Ombo (B, L, D) Sail the Nile on a felucca with a support boat.

Sleep onboard under the stars.

Today, we embark on a relaxing ride on a felucca (traditional sailboat) and travel down the Nile River, watching the scenery glide by. At night, we sleep on the deck under the stars (mattresses and blankets are provided). We'll enjoy delicious meals on board. The felucca itself does not have toilets or showers, but a private support boat traveling in close proximity has both. Please bring a towel.

Day 6: Kom Ombo/Luxor (B) Enjoy a guided visit to the Kom Ombo Temple before driving to Luxor. En route, visit the Temple of Karnak.

This morning, we visit the Kom Ombo Temple located in a scenic spot, right on the banks of the Nile. It was dedicated to the crocodile god, and you can still see the remains of an ancient mummified crocodile that was worshiped here thousands of years ago. Next, we drive to the Karnak Temple, which was once the center of all religious life in ancient Egypt. Built and extended by successive generations of rulers, admire the amazing architecture, massive columns, and painted hieroglyphs. Round-trip transfer included. Finally, we arrive in Luxor in the late afternoon. You may have time for an optional visit to Luxor Temple (140 EGP), an architectural splendor located near the Nile and right in the center of downtown Luxor. It's spectacularly lit in the evenings and well worth a visit. We also recommend visiting Luxor's Bazaar. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

Day 7: Luxor (B, L) Visit the Colossi of Memnon, Valley of the Kings, and the Temple of Hatshepsut. Enjoy lunch with a local family on the West Bank of the Nile.

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 opt to visit the famous tomb of King ("Tut") Tutankhamun (for an extra 250 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 that no longer exists. 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 8: Luxor/Cairo (B) Fly back to Cairo and get transferred back to your hotel. You have the afternoon free to explore Cairo.

Fly back to Cairo and get transferred back to your hotel. You have the afternoon free to explore Cairo. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by plane

Day 9: Cairo (B, D) The morning is free for you to explore Cairo on your own. In the afternoon tour Coptic Cairo and visit the Hanging Church, St Sergius Church, and Ben Ezra Synagogue. Continue to Islamic Cairo with visits to the Citadel and Mohamed Ali mosque. Take a felucca ride on the Nile before heading to Tahrir Square and Downtown Cairo for a foodie tour.

The morning is free for you to explore Cairo on your own. Around 12:30 we will meet in the lobby of the hotel to begin our Cairo day tour. We will first visit Coptic Cairo, which can be found in Old Cairo, one of the oldest sections of the city. Explore some ancient churches and key sites in "Coptic" Egypt's history, including the Hanging Church, Greek Church, Monastery of St. George, and Ben Ezra Synagogue. Then, head off to explore Islamic Cairo on foot. Stroll down bustling alleyways where life has changed little and streets are still named after ancient crafts. Don't miss the chance to visit a mosque and learn more about

Egypt's principal religion, Islam. Explore the Cairo Citadel, home to the rulers of Egypt for almost 900 years. Afterward, board a felucca to take a trip along the magnificent Nile, with views of the city. For dinner, visit the famous Tahrir square in the heart of Cairo where the 2011 revolution was centered. The square became very popular after the revolution as a symbol of freedom; it was recently renovated and an Obelisk surrounded by Sphinx has been installed in the middle of the square. Here we start our walking tour in Cairo's busiest streets while enjoying the taste of popular Egyptian food. Enjoy Koshari which is Egypt's national dish, consisting of rice, lentils, macaroni, tomato sauce, onions, hummus, and garlic. Take the opportunity to try Egyptian falafel sandwiches as well as sugar cane juice.

Day 10: Cairo/Alexandria (B, L) Travel to Alexandria, stopping to visit the Monasteries of Wadi Natrun en route. After a seafood lunch, head to the fort and citadel of Qaitbay, and then the new Alexandria Library.

This morning we drive to Alexandria. Along the way, we will stop 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 constitute some of the earliest Christian monasteries in the world. After an included seafood lunch, visit Fort Qaitbay, once considered one of the most important defensive strongholds along the Mediterranean Sea coast. It was an important part of the fortification system of Alexandria in the 15th century AD. Located at the entrance of the eastern harbor on the eastern point of Pharos Island, it was erected on the exact site of the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In the 14th century, there was a destructive earthquake and the whole building was completely destroyed; the fortification you see today was built in its place. Next, we visit the New Library of Alexandria. 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, at least until the time of the Roman conquest of Egypt, and probably for many centuries thereafter. The old library was destroyed in a fire around the 1st century BC. The magnificent new library was opened in 2002 very close to the site of the ancient one. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs hr by private vehicle

Day 11: Alexandria/Cairo (B, L) Walk through the Montazah Summer Palace gardens and then visit the ancient Roman theatre at Kom El Dikka. Gaze up at Pompey's Pillar and explore the underground catacombs of Kom El Shoqafa. Enjoy lunch then travel back to Cairo where the tour ends at around 5 PM at our Cairo hotel.

Continue exploring this beautiful city of Alexandria. Visit the Montazah Summer Palace to spend a quiet morning in the gardens near the Mediterranean Sea. Khedive Abbas Hilmy (1892-1914) built Montazah as his summer palace, to escape the Cairo heat. Located on a rocky bluff overlooking the sea, it's designed in a mix of Moorish and Florentine style. Now used by Egypt's president and off-limits to the public, the surrounding gardens are a great place to wander. By the sea, there is an unusual Victorian-style bridge running out to a small island. Visit the Roman theatre at Kom El Dikka, which is thought to have been a place more for public meetings than for performances. The theatre was discovered in 1967 when work was underway to construct a modern building on its site. It is the only Roman theatre in Egypt. Next, we will gaze up at 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. Then we explore the underground catacombs of Kom El Shoqafa. 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. Afterward, enjoy an included lunch then travel back to Cairo where the tour ends at your Cairo hotel around 5 PM. Do not book your flight home any earlier than 9 PM. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by private vehicle 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!