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Itinerary

AFRICAN COTTON AND GRAIN SAFARI

Day 1 Wednesday July 19

South African Airways flight 281
Depart Sydney 9.40pm
Arrive Johannesburg 6.20am (July 20)

Day 2 Thursday July 20

South African Airways flight 309
Depart Johannesburg 9.00am
Arrive Capetown 11.10am

Met by coach at Capetown airport by our Agritours representative and transfer to hotel. Settle in before short (optional) tour of Capetown city, Table Mountain and Signal Hill.

Capetown has strong historic links with Australia as it was a provisioning port for explorers and ships enroute to "New Holland".

Accommodation: Table Bay Hotel
Quay 6, Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Waterfront, Capetown
Phone 0011 27 21 406 5000; Fax 0015 27 21 406 5767

First class hotel with views of the harbour situated on the Victoria and Alfred waterfront with Table Mountain as its backdrop.

Day 3 Friday July 21

Breakfast at hotel

Optional tour along the Atlantic coast to the beautiful fishing town of Hout Bay. Then a boat trip to Seal Island.

Travel along the scenic Chapman's Peak drive (if open) to the Cape of Good Hope nature reserve, where the Indian and Atlantic oceans meet. Possible lunch at the Two Oceans restaurant (own cost) then drive to Simon's Town and Rondenbosch to visit Kirstenbosch botanical gardens.

Tonight visit the Victoria and Albert waterfront — one of the most popular tourist attractions in South Africa.

Accommodation Table Bay Hotel
Waterfront, Capetown

Day 4 Saturday July 22

After breakfast, depart for Stellenbosch to visit the Elsenburg Research Agriculture Station, where Dr Kobus le Roux, director of the ARC will address the group on grain production in South Africa. Inspect some of the world class grain research projects.

Travel to Stellenbosch to visit the Bergkeler (cellar in the mountain) vineyard. Inspect innovative drip irrigation and taste the best wines in southern Africa.

Travel through Franschoek which is a fascinating and historic region with a strong Dutch and French

Huguenot 17th century heritage. Then to Arniston near Bredasdorp.

Accommodation Arniston Hotel
Beach Rd. Arniston
Phone 0011 27 28 475 9000; Fax 0015 27 28 475 9633

4 star hotel on the Western Cape close to the ocean – some rooms with ocean view.
Open log fires, reed ceilings – casual atmosphere close to the de Hoop nature reserve and the breeding grounds of the southern right whale. The area is a haven for environmentalists. The hotel is a member of the classic retreats group.

Dinner included.

Day 5 Sunday July 23

After breakfast, leave for the town of Caledon and on to Bredasdorp to visit the Senasko Grain Research Station. Travel to Swellendam, with a grain farm visit on the way.

Travel to George for overnight.

Accommodation: King George Hotel
King George Park, George
Phone 0011 27 44 874 7659; Fax 0015 27 44 874 7664

This is a Victorian style hotel bordering George Country Club. Lots of sporting facilities and a nearby golf club. The hotel was built in 1991 and the rooms are modern, spacious and tastefully decorated.

Day 6 Monday July 24

Breakfast at hotel

Today you will experience the splendour of the garden route. Travel through the towns of Wilderness and Sedgefield to Knysna, the oyster capital of South Africa. From Knysna, travel to Plettenberg Bay, where we will do a short tour of one of South Africa's most popular holiday destinations. The scenery along the way can only be described as magnificent.

From Plettenberg Bay travel to the Paul Sauer bridge and the big King Edward VII tree. This tree is more than 600 years old and stands 30 metres tall. Lunch at or near Natures Valley.

Afternoon drive to Port Elizabeth

Accommodation: Protea Marine hotel
Marine Drive, Summerstrand, Port Elizabeth
Phone 0011 27 41 5832 2101; Fax 0015 27 41 583 2076

The hotel overlooks Pollock Beach and offers luxurious accommodation. It is a 73 room hotel and the restaurant specialises in fresh seafood and Italian dishes.

Day 7 Tuesday July 25

Early breakfast at hotel

Transfer to airport for flight to Durban

South African Airways flight 621
Depart Port Elizabeth 8.15am
Arrive Durban 9.25am

From Durban, coach to Pietermaritzburg, Mooi River and Frere and visit the site where Winston Churchill was captured in 1899 by the Boer forces. Then on to Spioenkop hill, where one of the bloodiest battles of the Anglo-Boer war took place.

Accommodation Sandford Park lodge
Bergville, Winterton
Phone 0011 27 36 448 1001; Fax 0015 36 448 1047

Dinner included

Day 8 Wednesday July 26

Breakfast at hotel

Depart 7.00am through the town of Ladysmith to Dundee. Visit Rorke's Drift and the Isandlwana (1898 battle site between the British and Zulus)

Travel to Melmoth and Empangeni and on to Hluhluwe and Mkuze, where we will visit the cotton farmer of the year, Mrs. C. Mathabela, who farms more than 450 ha.

Accommodation Dumazulu Lodge
Dumazulu
Phone 0011 27 35 562 0144; Fax 0015 27 35 562 0205

This hotel is connected by reeded walkways to the renowned Dumazulu traditional village and offers an ethnic experience — 20 units represent the tribes of southern Africa. The lodge is arranged in two circular formations in keeping with African living traditions. The interiors are modern decor in ethnic style.

Dumazulu is surrounded by 100,000 hectares of game reserves.

Dinner at lodge

Day 9 Thursday July 27

Breakfast at lodge

Depart for Pongola to visit Vunisa Cotton and meet Frans Grey (Manager) to discuss production in the region.

Travel on to the Makatinitini farming community and meet with farmers before lunch at Sitamoya.

Travel to the border post of Swaziland where you will overnight at the capital city of the kingdom of Swaziland, Mbabane

Accommodation Forrester's Arms
Mbabane
Swaziland

Dinner at lodge

Day 10 Friday July 28

Breakfast at hotel

Depart early to Piggs Peak and on to the South Africa border post of Jeppe's Reef.

Travel to Malelane with a farm visit enroute.

On to Malelane just outside the border of Kruger National Park.

Accommodation Mercure Hotel Premier Lodge
Nelspruit

Day 11 Saturday July 29

Early drive on an open-jeep safari throughout this beautiful world famous park. You may see any of the big five — lion, elephant, rhino, leopard and buffalo — as well as many other animals and birds. Picnic lunch included for the group in the park.

The group will be dropped at the Orpen gate where the coach will transfer us to the Kapama private game lodge — part of the Timbavati game reserve.

Late afternoon game drive.

Accommodation Luxury Kapama game lodge
Phone 0011 27 12 804 4840
Fax 0015 27 12 804 4842

Dinner included.

This private game reserve is on 12,000 hectares of undisturbed bushveld with a multitude of animal plant and birdlife. Airconditioned thatched chalet accommodation.

Day 12 Sunday July 30

Wake up early for a morning game drive. Visit the Kapama (Hoedspruit) Research and Breeding Centre. You will have the opportunity to marvel at the breeding habits of the cheetah and view the rare king cheetah — a highlight of the tour. Depart for the towns of Lydenburg, Dullstroom and Middleburg. From here to Groblersdai and on to Loskop

Accommodation Loskop Lodge

Dinner included

Day 13 Monday July 31

Breakfast at lodge

Visit the Loskop dam and the Loskop/Marble Hall cotton irrigation scheme. This scheme can be described as the heartland of the South African cotton farming area.

We will visit Larry Collet, a leading farmer in the region before visiting Delta Pine (SA) and meeting with the General Manager Danie Oliver and other Delta Pine personnel. Delta Pine will also show us around commercial farms (including small scale) in the area before lunch at the Delta Pine premises.

After lunch we will visit the Cotserve company, highly regarded in the region for cotton picker maintenance and overhauls. Giel van Helsdingen will be our host and will demonstrate various maintenance procedures.

Inspect the Clark cotton seed factory and gin, and talk with the manager Mr Hanekom.

We will then visit with dryland cotton growers of the year Willem and Lynette Van der Walt near the township of Settlers. Also accompanied by local grower Robbie Weir, we will inspect their farms and discuss production in the Springbok Flats area.

BBQ with local growers at Willem's farm that evening.

Accommodation Warm Baths

BBQ included

Day 14 Tuesday August 1

After breakfast depart for Sun City. Africa's kingdom of pleasure, Sun City is a unique, exciting casino resort. It is a stunning oasis of water and semi-tropical gardens surrounded by age old vegetation and cradled by a vast ancient volcanic crater. It borders the Pilanesberg National Park.

Our accommodation — The Cascades — is a sophisticated, elegant hotel with peaceful tropical gardens. A walkway links The Cascades hotel with round the clock fun at the magnificent entertainment centre.

Accommodation The Cascades

PO Box 7, Sun City

Phone 0011 27 14 557 1000; Fax 0015 27 11 780 7449

Day 15 Wednesday August 2

After breakfast depart Sun City for Pretoria and visit the Cullinan Diamond mine enroute to Johannesburg. For those interested an afternoon sightseeing/shopping around Johannesburg.

Transfer to airport to arrive by 5.15pm.

Emirates Flight 464

Departs Johannesburg 7.15pm

Arrives Dubai 5.40am

Day 16 Thursday August 3

Early morning transfer to your hotel. An early check-in has been arranged. Free morning to rest up or explore Dubai (and its first class shopping opportunities). An afternoon tour has been arranged to visit the world's most efficient port and cotton warehouse at Jebel Ali, a 30 minute drive up the Persian Gulf from Dubai. This tour has particular relevance to Australian growers as this port is where most of the cotton from Russia and Turkey is handled and stored on its way to Asia. So it is cotton competing in Australia's main export markets.

Evening visit to the Gold Souk (see accompanying travel guide).

Accommodation Sofitel City Centre Hotel
Deira, Dubai
Phone 0011 971 4 228 1212; Fax 0015 971 4 295 5544

Day 17 Friday August 4

Breakfast at hotel

Optional tour to the Dubai Horse Racing Club and visit to racehorse stables to see first hand one of the countries most lucrative industries. We will speak with club officials on racehorse breeding and training. The Dubai Cup is billed the world's largest race meeting.

Transfer to airport to arrive by 1.00pm

Emirates Flight 401

Depart Dubai 3.10pm

Arrive Cairo 6.00pm

Egypt Air Flight 237

Depart Cairo 8.00pm

Arrive Luxor 9.00pm

On arrival at Luxor – the ancient city of the Thebes – we will be met and transferred to our hotel.

Accommodation Luxor Sheraton Hotel Resort
Al Awameya, Luxor
Phone 0011 20 95 374 544; Fax 0015 20 95 374 941

The history of Egypt is inextricably linked to the Nile. Ever since the earliest known communities settled the Nile Valley, the river has inspired and controlled the religious, economic, social and political life of Egyptians. The last 5000 years of Egypt's history can be divided into seven periods:

Pharaonic Times (3000 - 341 BC)
Greek Rule (332 - 30 BC)
Roman and Byzantine Rule (30 BC - 638 AD)
The Arab Conquest – The Mamelukes (640 - 1517 AD)
Turkish Rule (1517 - 1882 AD)
British Occupation (1882 - 1952 AD)
Independent Egypt (1952 onwards)

The population of Egypt is 68,000,000 and 25 % of these people live in Cairo. The average rate of natural population increase is 1.8%.

Day 18 Saturday August 5

After breakfast you will be collected from your hotel by Abercrombie and Kent representatives and transferred across the Nile River where you will be escorted on a sightseeing tour of the West Bank. Visit the Colossi of Memnon, The Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut, Egypt's only female pharaoh who was credited with promoting agriculture within Egypt after an expedition to the land of Punt when she brought back a variety of plants which she adapted to the Egyptian climate. We will visit the Valley of the Queens where close to 80 tombs housing the remains of Queens and royal family have been excavated. At the Valley of the Kings, you step from a dramatic landscape of sun, sand and rugged mountain peaks into the dark silence of some of the 64 tombs discovered here to date. We will visit the tomb of Tutankhamun, where in 1922, Howard Carter discovered the spectacular array of treasures intended to assist the Pharaoh in the afterlife. You will see the artifacts when you visit Cairo later in the week at the Egyptian Museum.

Following the tour, we will check in on board the M.S Sun Boat IV in time for lunch. After lunch we visit Egypt's greatest temple — The Temple of the Karnak.

Next visit will be The Temple of Luxor, built by Amenhotep III, Tutankhamun and Horemhab during their respective reigns. Along the front of the temple pylons there are six large statues of Amenhotep, while behind the East Tower, inside the courtyard of Ramses II, is an ancient mosque built over a portion of the temple. The Colonnade of Amenophis III contains 14 papyrus-headed columns, 50 feet in height and 32 feet in circumference leading to the court of Amenophis III, also surrounded by gigantic columns.

Return to the Sun Boat IV for dinner and overnight. There is an Egyptologist always on board who will be your guide on the tours and will also be available in the evenings to answer any questions.

All meals included.

Day 19 Sunday August 6

Sail to Edfu passing the Esna Lock. This lock controls the water levels on the Nile to prevent flooding of farmland along the river. We will also see the beautifully preserved temple dedicated to the Falcon-Headed God Horus, the largest and most completely preserved Ptolemaic temple in Egypt.

We then sail to Kom Ombo passing crop and date farming on both sides of the Nile. Most of this area still uses farming methods unchanged for thousands of years. We will discuss farming methods and history of farming on the Nile with our on-board Egyptologist. Dinner and overnight at Kom Ombo on the Sun Boat IV.

All meals included.

Day 20 Monday August 7

In the morning visit the Greco-Roman temple at Kom Ombo dedicated to Horus, the Sun God and Sobek, the crocodile god. In ancient times crocodiles were found in the river and were considered sacred. Several crocodiles were encouraged to live within the temple complex and were embalmed upon death. Their mummified bodies can be viewed today.

Sail on to Aswan. After lunch on board you will be taken by Felucca — the local sailboat — to pass Kitchener's Island, Botanical Gardens and past the Aga Khan Mausoleum situated on a hill overlooking the Nile and Elephantine Island.

Overnight and dinner on Sun Boat IV in Aswan. Chance to visit the Aswan markets in the evening.

All meals included.

Day 21 Tuesday August 8

Optional half day tour to Abu Simbel (or have a leisurely morning exploring Aswan).

Those going to Abu Simbel fly from Aswan to Abu Simbel and tour with our Egyptologist to the temples of Ramses II — the grandest of all the pharonic monuments and testimony to the extraordinary civilisation of the ancient worlds. It was only 're-discovered' in 1813. These temples are on Lake Nasser and in 1964 the temples of Ramses II and Queen Nefertari were threatened with total immersion by the rising waters of the lake. UNESCO initiated a project to dismantle the temples to relocate them to higher ground. This was an amazing engineering feat. In the original position, the innermost room of the temple has four seated gods. The temples orientation is arranged in such a way that twice every year, on February 22 and October 22, the earliest sun-rays shine exactly through the long entrance on the back wall of this chamber, illuminating the statue of the gods.

When UNESCO undertook this project, the temple had to be rebuilt in exactly the same way to allow these sunrays on the same days.

Return flight to Aswan arriving at 11.35am.

In the afternoon we will be taken on a tour to the Aswan Dams and the Island of Agilika. The old dam was constructed to control the annual flooding of the Nile River, making it possible to irrigate and cultivate the land throughout the year. But the degree of river regulation achieved by the dam was insufficient and a bigger dam was to be built higher up the river. The high dam was completed in 1971, under President Nasser and it's construction not only eliminates unpredictable droughts and floods but it also serves as a huge hydro power source.

You will then take a short boat ride to the beautiful Philae Temple on the Island of Agilika. This temple was repositioned on the island to escape the flooding from the high dam.

We will visit the granite quarries, where you will see an enormous unfinished Obelisk. Granite — only found in Aswan — can be seen in Cairo at the Pyramids.

Transfer from the boat to your hotel in Aswan for overnight

Free afternoon

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| Accommodation | The Aswan Oberoi Hotel and Spa |
| | Elephantine Island, Aswan |
| | Phone 0011 20 97 314 666 Fax 0015 20 97 313 538 |

This hotel is located on Elephantine Island — an oasis in the River Nile amongst landscaped gardens. It is only a few minutes by hotel ferry into Aswan.

Day 22 Wednesday August 9

Breakfast at the hotel before transfer to Aswan Airport for our flight back to Cairo.

Egypt Air Flight 134 Departs Aswan 9.30am

Arrives Cairo 11.30am

On arrival in Cairo we will be met at the airport for a tour along the Suez Canal (joining the canal road at the tunnel) for about 15 miles. There should be vessels passing through at this time of day. From the Canal we travel onto the Australian Wheat Board's Five Star Mill, to arrive around 3:30pm. After a tour of the Mill and discussions with AWB personnel we will return to Cairo and our hotel.

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| Accommodation | Mena House Oberoi |
| | Garden Wing, Pyramids Road, Giza, Cairo |
| | Phone 0011 20 2 383 3222; Fax 0015 20 2 383 7777 |

This is one of the world's leading hotels located in the shadows of the Great Pyramids of Giza. It is an old royal hunting lodge built in 1869. You can wallow in the pool while taking in spectacular views of the pyramids.

Day 23 Thursday August 10

Breakfast at Hotel

Day of sightseeing in Cairo. First visit is the Egyptian museum, the most important collection of Egyptian antiquities in the world including the Tutankhamun treasures. After lunch at a local restaurant we will visit the famous Khan El Khallilli Bazaar where you can hone your bartering skills and proudly walk away that conversation piece you've been looking for. We will visit the pyramids and Sphinx at Giza and the Solar Boat Museum which is next to the Pyramid of Cheops. Within the museum is a magnificently preserved example of a funerary boat built to accompany the King on his journey to the afterlife.

Accommodation
Mena House Oberoi
Cairo

Day 24 Friday August 11

Breakfast at the hotel followed by an optional tour to the Mediterranean port of Alexandria. Enroute, a representative from the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture will accompany us on the bus to discuss and inspect cotton, rice and grain farming operations in the Nile Delta. After a restaurant lunch overlooking the harbour we will have a brief tour of Egypt's second largest city. Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great. The harbour was once protected by the island of Pharos. Only a few submerged fragments remain of the famous lighthouse of Pharos, one of the seven ancient wonders of the world.

Late afternoon transfer to Cairo for our return flight home.

Emirates flight 66
Departs Cairo 7.15pm
Arrives Dubai 11.50pm

Accommodation overnight Dubai Airport Hotel

Emirates Flight 66
Departs Dubai 7.50am (August 12)
Arrives Sydney 6.05am (August 13)