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Discover Ethiopia

Cultural Discovery Tour

11 Nights / 12 Days

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Sightseeing, Discovery, Light Hike & Walk options

TOUR DESCRIPTION

Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country is like nowhere else on the planet, a beautiful country blessed with a peerless history, fabulous wildlife and some of Africa's most soulful peoples. Long gone are the 1980's images of mass starvation and desperation, Ethiopia – albeit still one of the world's most impoverished countries is also amongst Africa's fastest growing economies. Considered a rugged, landlocked country split by the Great Rift Valley, Ethiopia's archaeological finds date back more than 3 million years, it's a place of ancient culture. Among its important sites are Lalibela with its rock-cut Christian churches from the 12th–13th centuries. Axum is the ruins of an ancient city with obelisks, tombs, castles and Our Lady Mary of Zion church. The Simien Mountains National Park with its bizarre jagged landscape and home to the infamous Gelada Baboon-like monkeys plus a vast array of awe-inspiring flora and fauna. The Blue Nile is sourced in Ethiopia and our boat tour across these waters puts us in the heart of this enchanting land. Offering all this and more be prepared for an exciting journey to one of Africa's most enchanting and yet to be explored locations. Experience how Ethiopia is still emerging as a world travel destination and be part of a positive socio-economic contribution that encourages intercultural understanding and awareness.





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Day 1: Addis Ababa

Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to our group hotel in Ethiopia's enigmatic capital, Addis Ababa. (Transfer approximately 30 minutes). **Addis is 7,726 feet above sea level** so take it slow on your first day! Today is a free morning. In the afternoon you'll take a tour of this bustling city, dotted with Italian architecture, interesting churches and friendly inhabitants. This relatively new city,

established by the Emperor Menelik II in 1887, is one of contrasts – the Addis Sheraton, with its 'singing fountain', is one of the most luxurious in all of Africa, yet you only need to travel a few streets away to find yourself among busy markets, dirt roads and the odd goat or two wandering around. Although Ethiopia was the only African nation never to be colonized, the Italians briefly occupied parts of it, including Addis in the twentieth century. In many parts of the city the Italian's legacy lives on in the form of old art deco buildings and coffee shops, particularly in the area known as the Piazza. Addis can seem daunting at times, but even the briefest foray into the busy streets can reveal interesting new insights. Your tour will include **the National Museum, Holy Trinity Cathedral** and a panoramic drive around the main public squares of the capital. The museum contains the remains of the fossilized hominids "Lucy", a female hominoid that lived some 3.2 million years ago and who is a key discovery on the origin of early mankind. The Cathedral houses impressive stained-glass windows and beautifully carved imperial thrones, and is also the final resting place for Emperor Haile Selassie and his family. In the evening you'll have group welcome dinner.

Included Activities

- Addis Ababa - Afternoon City Tour with National Museum, Cathedral & Panoramic Drive

Accommodation: 4 star Jupiter International hotel or similar hotel

<https://www.jupiterinternationalhotel.com/>

Meals included: Dinner at Castel Restaurant (Italian / Ethiopian)



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Day 2: Bahir Dar

This morning you will be met and transferred to the airport for a short flight to **Bahir Dar (5,980 feet)**, one of the most attractive towns in northern Ethiopia. In Bahir Dar we transfer to your hotel, lying on the shores of the lush setting of **Lake Tana**.

This afternoon, board a sightseeing boat for a cruise around a portion of the lake. Covering over 3,500 square kilometers, this is Ethiopia's largest lake and is home to scores of hippos, soft shelled turtles and bird life plus 37 islands - 20 of which

house some of Ethiopia's most venerated monasteries. Many of these monasteries are believed to date back to the 13th and 14th centuries and feature superb ecclesiastical art. Legend has it that the *Ark of Covenant* was hidden here for protection during the times when Muslim forces invaded from the east. Your boat trip will take you to the monastery of **URA-Kidane Mehret**, which dates from between the 16th and 18th centuries. It is renowned for its collection of crosses and crowns, and its incredible painted walls that offer up a virtual 'who's who' of Ethiopian saints. The boat returns to your hotel via the *source* of the 'Blue' section of the **Nile**. End the day with a sundowner drink on the boat as you float across Lake Tana.



Included Activities

- Lake Tana - Boat Cruise & Monastery visits

Accommodation: 4 star Blue Nile resort (Avanti resort) or similar hotel <http://www.bluenileresorthotels.com/>

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



Day 3: Bahir Dar After breakfast leave for the **Blue Nile Falls**. Located 32 kilometres south of Bahir Dar, the Blue Nile Falls measure over 400 metres wide and descends 48 metres in full flow. These falls are known locally as **Tis Isat (Smoking Water)** and are a spectacular sight when the conditions are right. New hydro-electrical plants and dams have somewhat impacted on their magnificence, but the sight is still a memorable one. You can take a longer scenic walk past the main viewpoint (1.5 kilometres) or a shorter



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walk to reach the foot of the falls. You will then cross the **Nile River** by boat to reach your vehicle. A leisurely afternoon is then spent in Bahir Dar. There will be the option of visiting the local market and enjoying a panoramic view of Lake Tana and the Nile from a wonderful lookout point.

Included Activities

- Blue Nile Falls easy walk & boat river crossing
- Bahir Dar - Lake Tana Lookout & Market Visit

Accommodation: Blue Nile resort (Avanti resort) or similar hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 4: Gondar

Travel north around the edge of Lake Tana this morning and head for the regal city of **Gondar (7,000 feet)**. This drive will take approximately 4.5 hours, including stops for photos along the way. Gondar was the 17th and 18th century capital of Ethiopia



and is famed for its medieval castles and churches. The city's unique **Royal Enclosure** is a UNESCO World Heritage site, home to dramatic *Emperor-built castles* unlike any other in Africa. The architecture shows the richness of **Axumite** traditions as well as the prosperity of Ethiopia in those two centuries. Spend the afternoon visiting these medieval castles and stop by the famous church of **Debre Berhan Selassie**. The church is one of the finest in Ethiopia, with walls and ceilings covered with stunning ancient murals. Later we will visit **Project Ploughshare** – a charity that helps disadvantaged women rekindle the area's once famous pottery craft.

Included Activities

- Gondar - Church & Castles tour
Gondar – Charity Project (Ploughshare)

Accommodation: Gondar hill resort or similar hotel <http://gondarhillsresort.com/>

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



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Day 5:

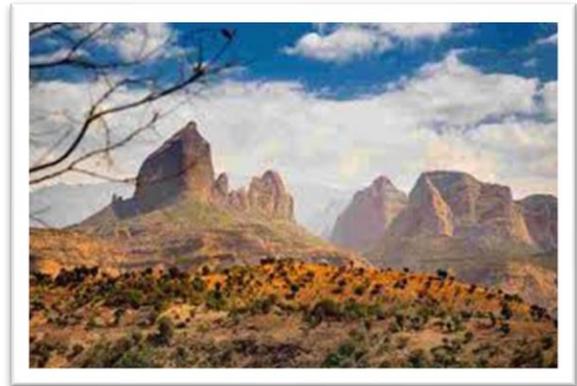
Simien Mountains National Park (Day 1)

Continue travelling north this morning, driving to the to the **Simien Mountains National Park** via **Debark**, the base for excursions to Ethiopia's most important National Reserve. The drive is 125 kilometres and will take approximately 3 hours.

After stopping at the town of **Debark (9,350 feet)** to fulfil park regulations and checking in to our hotel

Limalimo Lodge, we visit the *Simien Mountains*

National Park for the rest of day. The park is a majestic series of undulating amethyst peaks, including Ethiopia's highest point – **Ras Dejen** (4550 metres). The peaks have been eroded over millions of years and have left strange and wonderful geological formations behind. Once entering the National Park, we combine a short hike (up to 3 miles), and drive to **Sankaber** to enjoy dramatic views of the mountain landscape. The park is home to some of the world's most elusive animals, and while you're here you might encounter troops of the endemic **Gelada Monkeys**. The baboon-like species – found only in Ethiopia, are often referred to as the '*bleeding heart baboon*' or the '*lion monkey*'. Their coat is shaggy - resembling a lion, while their chest has a marked 'red heart' or patch. The Gelada baboon doesn't have natural enemies and so can be found in good numbers and are quite easy to approach! After our hiking visit, drive back to Debark and spend the evening at the lodge in pristine natural surroundings.



Included Activities

- Simien Mountains National Park – Hike and drive to panoramic viewpoints. Non walking options exist to. Viewings of Gelada Baboons. Note – *hiking distance is approximately 3 miles with various options for shorter distance and/or ride in our vehicle. The altitude of this region is around 10,000 feet.*

Accommodation: Limalimo Lodge or similar hotel <https://limalimolodge.com/> (minimalistic boutique eco-lodge set in nature)

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



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Day 6: Simien Mountains National Park (2nd Day)

Today you will enjoy more of this amazing natural landscape with a scenic drive and hiking option deeper into the *Simien Mountains National Park*. After a drive up to **Sankaber** within the park, we can hike along the edges of the escarpment with the initial stages of this path leading through extensive areas of highland grasses and heather forests. Along the way we enjoy impressive views of the escarpment with one of the best scenes being **Jinbar Wenz Waterfall** - which plummets down the **Geech Abyss**. After descending into the **Kebaw Valley**, the coach will collect us and we return to our Lodge for by mid-afternoon. Today's focus will primarily be on nature and exploring on foot more of this wonderful park. For this reason we'll have a packed lunch and you can look forward to seeing more of Simien's unique flora and fauna throughout the morning today!



- **Included Activities**

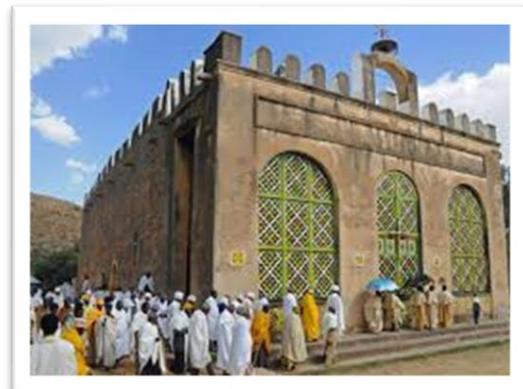
Simien Mountains National Park – Hike of 3 miles approximately with non-walking options available. *Today's hike is generally downhill throughout through wonderful grasslands and heather forests.*

Accommodation: Limalimo Lodge or similar hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Packed Lunch & Dinner

Day 7: Axum

Take the asphalt but winding road up to the fabled city of **Axum (6,990 feet)**, crossing the lowlands of the Simien Mountains and the **Tekeze River Gorge** (approximately 4.5 hours driving time). Though this is a long and winding journey, the spectacular views of the mountains makes the time slip away. You'll arrive in Axum by late afternoon. Axum was once the capital of Africa's oldest empire – the **Kingdom of Axum** and it lasted from 1 AD to 700 AD and grew to rank among the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient world. It was positioned at the centre of an





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important trading route that stretched from Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea and all the way to India and Sri Lanka. **Axumite Society** was rich, well organized and technically advanced. In this period, bronze, silver and gold coins were produced, amazing tombs and monoliths constructed, and Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia. No visit to Ethiopia should miss the opportunity to explore Axum!

Included Activities

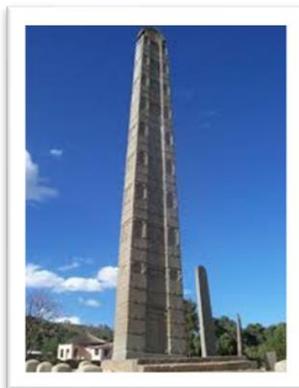
- Panoramic drive to Axum City via the Simien lowlands and Tekeze River Gorge.

Accommodation: 4 Star Sabean International Hotel or similar hotel <http://sabeaninternational.com-ethiopia.com/en/>

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 8: Axum

Today you will tour the incredible historical sites of Axum, a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Visit the remarkable **Stelae Fields** with several tombs, the ruins of the **Queen of Sheba's Palace** and the **Archaeological Museum**. The field is home to over 100 Stele (*stone or wooden obelisk slabs to commemorate funeral or military victories*).



The largest one measuring 33 metres and weighing an incredible 517 tones. These Stele monoliths are carved from a single piece of granite and are often elaborately decorated to resemble a multi-story house complete with windows, doors, locks and structural beams. Their scale reflects Axum's once great importance, and they were probably transported by elephants from a nearby quarry. The mausoleums in this area include the **Tomb of the False Door** and also the **Tombs of King Kaleb** and **Gebre Meskel**. The archaeological museum offers us further insights of this incredible society. An unimposing building with a green picket fence is the **St Mary of Zion Church**, the first church built in sub-Saharan Africa. This holds the crowns of various former Ethiopian emperors and is even said to house the most fabled biblical relic in history – **the Ark of the Covenant**.

Included Activities

- Axum - Full Day Tour

Accommodation: Sabian International Hotel or similar hotel

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



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Day 09: Lalibela

Take an early morning flight from Axum to **Lalibela (8,600 feet)** (approximately 2 hrs 15 minutes), where you will stay for two nights. Despite the town of Lalibela being isolated in the **Lasta Mountains** at 2,630 metres above sea level, it's the home of Ethiopia's top attraction and one of the world's greatest historical and religious sites, the **Lalibela Rock-Hewn Churches**. Between 1137 and 1270, several astounding rock-hewn churches were constructed in Lalibela; astonishing because most are not built from carved freestanding rocks, but instead created from huge single blocks of stone unearthed by the digging of enormous pits. You will spend two afternoons exploring the extraordinary churches that appear to be been dropped from the sky! The **Northern Group** contains seven churches, a tomb, a chapel and a sunken chapel.



At the centre of the group is **Bet Medhane Alem**, measuring 33.5 metres by 23.5 metres and is said to be the largest rock-hewn church in the world. A tunnel connects three of the churches in a courtyard to the east, whilst another tunnel connects two other churches to the west of Bet Medhane Alem. However, it is **Bet Giyorgis (St George's)**, carved in the form of a Greek cross and lying slightly apart from the main northern cluster, that is the most famous

and frequently photographed site. This church is exceptionally well-preserved and is probably the most visually perfect. The **Eastern Group** of five churches includes the only **Hypogenous Church**, where only the roof remains attached to the overhead rock.

Included Activities

- Lalibela - Afternoon Tour of the Rock-Hewn Churches

Accommodation: 3 Star Maribela Hotel or similar hotel <https://hotelmaribela.com/>

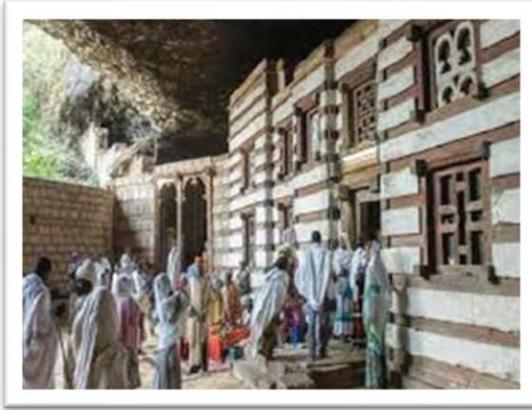
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



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Day 10: Lalibela

This morning, we will have an excursion in Lalibela region to the cave churches of **Yimrehane Kristose (8,900 feet)**, known for its unique woodwork and painting and stunning scenery. The church of Yimrehane Kristose is hidden in the rugged hills behind the village. To arrive here we travel through scenic countryside by vehicle to the village of Yimrehane Kristose, a fascinating monastery itself with incredible views over the surrounding region. After touring this important historical site, we return to Lalibela for lunch and spend

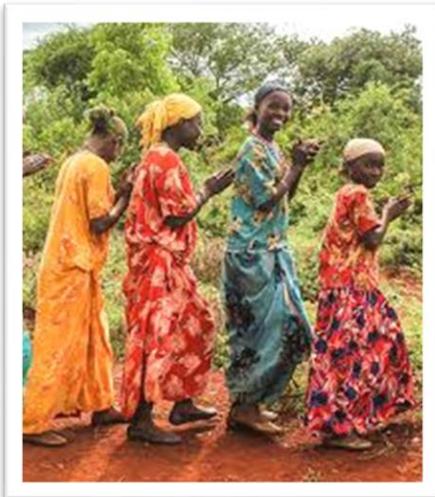
the afternoon exploring more of the haunting atmosphere inside the churches - taking plenty of photographs of the incredible architecture and the religious rituals within. This evening you will enjoy sundowner drinks and a special farewell group dinner at the Ben Ababa open-air restaurant.

Included Activities

- Lalibela – Tour of Yimrehane Kristose
- Lalibela - Sunset drinks & Farewell dinner

Accommodation: Maribela Hotel or similar hotel / **Meals Included:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 11: Addis Ababa Transfer / Final Day



Today we take our return flight to Addis Ababa. There are 3 daily flights from *Lalibela* to *Addis* and we aim to take the 10am departure – providing you plenty of time to either catch a late night international flight option out of Ethiopia or stay the night in Addis and return home the following day. Please note, after transferring to our hotel in Addis, you will bid farewell to your local Ethiopian tour leader and prepare for your journey home. No meals are provided today except breakfast in Lalibela. Your hotel room is included tonight and check out time is 11am the following day – so please book your return flights accordingly. The hotel provides a free shuttle to the airport for your flight back home.

Included Activities:

There are no scheduled activities today. This is a day of transfer and departure as guests will be departing Addis at different times. Lunch and dinner options are available in and around your hotel.



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Accommodation: 4 star Jupiter International Hotel (same as the first night)

Meals Included: Breakfast only

Day 12: DEPARTURE

Today is departure at your own convenience. The hotel will provide your free airport transfer. Note that many European-bound connecting flights depart Addis Ababa in early hours (ie. 01:00 am) so in effect you may not sleep the whole night at the hotel but your room is provided just in case. If you stayed on for the night, breakfast only is included today and no activities are scheduled.

WHAT'S INCLUDED ON YOUR TOUR

- * 11 Nights hotel accommodation in twin or double room scenario
- * All meals as per itinerary (lunch and dinners include a choice of 1 mineral water or 1 soft drink)
- * All transfers by private coach service with professional tourist class driver
- * Return airport transfers in Addis Ababa to/from tour hotel
- * Full time local English-speaking Ethiopian Tour Leader throughout
- * All entrance fees to historic sites & nature reserves as per itinerary
- * 3 domestic air flights within Ethiopia
(Note – 20 kg baggage weight per checked luggage piece and you can have 2 pieces but try to limit it to one! A carry-on bag is also permitted)
- * Half day boat excursion on Lake Tana
- * Scouting (guide) fees and entrance fees for Simien National Park
- * (1 x 20 litre water container for group) provided daily on each tour bus / bring a refillable bottle for daily use
- * Tipping Inclusions: local leaders & guides, porters at hotel & airports, hotel receptions & restaurants and drivers

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED ON YOUR TOUR

- * International Flights to / from Ethiopia
- * Insurance (health, medical emergency, evacuation, lost property, cancellation or delays, etc)
- * Additional activities, meals or transfers not scheduled in the itinerary
- * Personal expenses associated with the hotel (mini bar, laundry, communications, etc)
- * Additional beverages at meals or water bottles, etc apart from what's included (dinner includes choice of water bottle or soft drink)

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES DISCOUNT OFFER (*Pending Availability*)

If you book your flight to arrive and depart directly into Ethiopia with ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES, you will qualify for the discounted tour price (as shown in the tour price options above). This is an incentive by the airline to encourage the use of their home-grown airline! For example, ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES belong to STAR ALLIANCE group. You may book a United Airlines itinerary from the USA (also part of Star Alliance). You may very well fly from the USA to Europe on a United Plane. But if your 2nd portion of the journey arrives and departs to/from Ethiopia itself (ie. Addis Ababa), with ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES, you will have qualified for the discount. If you book in this manner, a copy of your E-Ticket must be emailed to Adventurebug: info@adventurebug.com so we can submit it to the airline direct. To see what other carriers are part of STAR ALLIANCE, click here: <https://frequentflyermiles101.com/a-list-of-star-alliance-members/>.



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IS THIS TRIP RIGHT FOR ME?

- *This trip is generally a sightseeing / discovery tour opposed to an adventure hiking experience. On a daily basis we will combine light walks around historic sites with tours from our personal bus transport. Be prepared to walk daily through villages, historic sites & some countryside where the terrain may be stony and shade not always prevalent.*
- *In Lalibela and Simien Mountains National Park we include light hikes to experience the beauty of the regions on foot. These hikes are up to 3 or 4 miles in duration and can be optional (if you choose not to hike).*
- *Parts of your trip go above 2800 metres / 9200 feet where it is common for travellers to experience some adverse health effects due to the altitude. At these heights one may feel light headedness, shortness of breath and mild head and stomach irritations. For the most part these symptoms are short-lived and after a few days travellers generally adapt to the change in altitude.*
- *There will be some long drives on this tour – exceeding 5 hours in duration (with scheduled stops).*
- *Vaccinations are required for travel in this part of Africa and taking anti-malarial tablets are strongly recommended. Please see our section on MEDICAL AND HEALTH INFORMATION below.*
- *Visits to some churches and temples require that footwear is removed and proper attire worn. For example, exposing legs and shoulders might be deemed inappropriate – we will advise beforehand where measures need to be taken.*

PASSPORT

Your passport must have a minimum of 6 months validity remaining. Please ensure the name on your passport matches the name on your booking and airline tickets. Your passport details are required to complete your booking. Take a copy of the main passport pages and other important documents with you and leave another copy at home with family or friends.

VISAS FOR ETHIOPIA

All nationalities require a visa for entry to Ethiopia. If you are flying into Addis Ababa, a 30-day visa can be purchased on arrival. You will need two passport photos and *approximately USD \$52 in cash. You may be asked for proof of a return ticket and please carry this [trip itinerary](#) as proof of your travel in the country. If you are entering at any border other than Addis Ababa airport you MUST obtain your visa in advance – however, this tour starts and finishes in Addis Ababa. For more information, please contact your closest Ethiopian embassy or consulate as this information may change. *VISA price subject to variation by 2021.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH INFORMATION

Ethiopia, like most Sub-Saharan African countries can be enjoyed by anyone in reasonably good condition and comes prepared for the rigours of this form of travel. The days can be long and with a varied diet, some altitude changes and general disruption to sleep patterns it's not uncommon to experience some health issues along the way, this is normal. Gastro bugs, some nausea and even catching a cold or nagging cough are common symptoms of travel in the developing world!

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations and anti-malarial requirements before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (including a spare pair of glasses) as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. We now recommend bringing a mouth mask in case you are coughing for more than a day and don't wish to spread your bugs to others on tour 😊.

What are the recommended vaccines for Ethiopia for and how does the disease spread?

Hepatitis A: This disease is spread by food and water. If you travel frequently, you may already have had this jab, as it is recommended for many other countries in the world as well.



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Hepatitis B: Unlike hepatitis A, hepatitis B is actually spread by body fluids and blood. It is recommended for Ethiopia.

Typhoid: Spread by water and food, this vaccine is also recommended and will be a necessary precaution for travelling to most regions in Ethiopia.

Cholera: A disease spread typically by water and also food, cholera is a disease predominant in most of Africa and Ethiopia.

Yellow fever: Yellow fever is spread by mosquitos and Ethiopia is classified as a risk zone for this disease so vaccination is recommended. <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/advice/disease-prevention-advice/yellow-fever/yellow-fever-risk-areas>

Rabies: Ethiopia is a high-risk country for rabies and vaccination is recommended for those having a prolonged stay or spending time in outdoor, rural areas or taking part on safaris in remote locations.

Meningitis: Recommended if travelling to Ethiopia during the dry season (Dec-June), meningitis is an airborne disease spread by direct contact.

Malaria: Even though we are in Malaria risk areas on days 2, 3 & 7 when we are in low altitude areas, it is recommended that you take a course of Malaria prophylactics throughout this journey. Please consult your travel doctor / clinic for the best recommended prophylactics to suit your needs. Our hotel in Bahirdar provide mosquito nets in the rooms on day 2 and 3 as it's below 2000m, the rest of the hotels don't have netting and you would take general precautions such as using mosquito spray at night when outdoors, etc.

ALTITUDE SICKNESS:

Parts of your trip go just above 2800 metres / 9200 feet where it is common for travellers to experience some adverse health effects due to the altitude - regardless of your age, gender and fitness. It even happened to Sir Edmund Hillary!

Before your trip:

Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatizing to high altitude. Please discuss these options with your doctor.

DRINKING WATER

We recommend you don't drink tap water, even in hotels. Many hotels and lodges provide safe, filtered drinking water, while bottled water is another alternative and can be purchased in all areas. On a daily basis, our personal tour bus will carry a 20 litre container of drinking water from which you can refill your personal water bottle. Adventurebug and our African partners strongly discourage the overuse of plastic bottles, bags or any single use plastic – especially in the developing world. Rehydration salts or electrolytes, motion sickness tablets, and diarrhoea blockers are handy to carry with you.

FOOD AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

When travelling to the developing world one would expect a very different culinary experience from the comforts of home! Although our meals are served in a more international way and catered to our western needs, local food is traditionally eaten with the hands and sometimes can be spicy. The sour bread known as *injera* is used as a scoop for the casserole dishes known as *wat*. You may wish to try eating in the local way to enhance your experience!

Vegetarians can be catered for, though you may find the diet somewhat limited. Vegan diets may be difficult to cater to – as well as 100% gluten free options and even some common intolerances such as nuts, MSG, etc. may be challenging to circumnavigate. Please notify of us of any dietary requirements prior to the start of your trip.

ACCOMMODATION

We have 11 night's stay in hotel and rural lodges on this excursion. We use a variety of hotels that are rated in the 3 and 4 star tourist class categories. This rating may pale in comparison to your home standards, but for Africa it's a very high level of quality. As a developing nation hot water is not always available all the time at the accommodations and don't be surprised if the electricity is cut for short spells or operates on a very low frequency or has to be cut during the night, effecting your fan or



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(where available), air conditioning – all part of the adventure away from home! Regarding air conditioning, only the Blue Nile hotel (below 2000m) has air con while the rest do not as the air is cool and comfortable both day and night.

WIFI COMMUNICATION

WIFI connection may be available at hotel reception areas (rarely in the hotel rooms) but expect it to be slow and difficult to connect to. Getting a quick email or message to family might be all the system can handle opposed to uploading photos to social media sites or even doing on-line bookings or flight check-in services. As a general warning, WIFI and internet services in general in rural Africa are still very out of date...

TRANSPORT

Private vehicle (normally a 16 seat bus with driver and local guide), Boat, Plane (3 internal flights) are provided for this excursion. Return airport transfers are also included to / from the hotel in Addis Ababa.

MONEY MATTERS

Ethiopia's currency is the **Birr** and there are one, five, 10, 50 and 100 birr notes. The Birr 1 note is slowly being replaced by the Birr 1 coin. The birr is divided into 100 cents and there are 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins. When it comes to money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals not included (*day 1 lunch and final day lunch and dinner*), drinks at meals, shopping, optional activities, tipping and laundry. It's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need – in Ethiopia we can find solutions to donate any left-over money!

MEALS NOT INCLUDED

For lunches not included, a budget of USD10 to USD15 per meal will be more than sufficient. For dinners not included, your leader will normally recommend options and restaurants where you can safely try the local specialties of the region. Expect meals to cost between USD12 to USD25.

BANKING, MONEY CHANGE AND ATMS

ATMs are found in airports and banks in major towns and most accept both Debit cards and VISA / MC for cash withdrawals. With ATMs being increasingly available in the many major towns and cities and even some campsites, credit or debit cards are a convenient way to access money. Be aware that your withdrawing limit may vary from country to country (regardless of your withdrawing limit in your home country) and it can be as low as the equivalent to USD50 per day – and some ATMs in rural areas are frequently out of cash!

Throughout Africa, cards with the Visa logo are most readily recognised, although MasterCard is also accepted in most places. **Foreign Solo, Cirrus or Plus cards do not work in any ATM at the time of print.** A charge is made for each international transaction - please check with your bank how much this fee will be. Check with your bank before leaving home that your card can be used as a debit card in Africa. You may also want to notify your bank that you are visiting Africa as it's not unknown for banks to freeze cards which show sudden transactions in other countries. If you're on a multi-country tour, your tour leader will be able to give you an approximate idea of how much money you may need for your stay in each country.

PLEASE NOTE: Many businesses and banks in Africa, especially East Africa, do not accept US dollar notes older than 2006. If you are bringing USD, we strongly recommend large bills in good condition, 2006 series onwards only. Any old or damaged notes may not be accepted.

As a general rule, for your spending needs try to carry US dollars in cash. Money can be exchanged (USD to Birr) at the airport, from banks or from most hotel receptions. Please try to keep up with your money changing or ATM withdrawals as these stops can be tedious and time-consuming during group travel.

TIPPING

Gratuities for all included meals, drivers, local guides and our main Ethiopian Tour Leader are included in your tour price. We



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also include tips for baggage handling at hotels and housekeeping staff. If you are happy with any services along the way – including our local guides and/or anyone that genuinely has helped you feel free to give them an additional tip as even the smallest token goes a long way in one of the world's most impoverished countries.

WEATHER – WHAT TO EXPECT

This tour spends the majority of time above 2000m. For this reason, the climate is pleasant with days that are not scorching hot.



PACKING & WHAT TO BRING

We recommend you pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to lift or roll your own luggage at times and walk with it for short distances. Apart from your main bag, you'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water, snacks, etc. for our daily trips. Below are some ideas and helpful tips on what you specifically need for this trip.

ESSENTIALS:

- Closed walking shoes or light boots. This trip includes some light hiking but mostly daily strolls around historic sites, etc.
- Comfortable shoes, sneakers or good walking sandals if you are accustomed to these – or wish to use them on lighter days.
- Sun protection - hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- A light head scarf for the sun and also recommended for women to wear at churches and during festivals
- A mixture of lightweight clothing, some warm items for the evenings, and long shirts and pants for protection against mosquitoes in the malaria areas. Clothes should be easy to wash and dry. Shorts down to the knees are ideal for warmer weather.

RECOMMENDED:

- Waterproof/windproof jacket is a good idea for cool evenings / mornings.
- Personal medical kit. Large kits will be on hand at the lodges and from your leader but we recommend you carry items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes, anti-diarrhoeal, probiotics, antibacterial gel, wet wipes, bandaids/plasters etc.
- Insect repellent.
- Water bottle. We recommend at least a 1.5litre capacity. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 litres of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.
- Camera with spare batteries or a rechargeable battery pack for your cell phone.

OPTIONAL:

- Ear plugs to guard against a snoring room-mate
- A good book, a journal and/or headphones for the long drives.
- A good quality, high-beam headlamp or torch for around the lodges and hotels at night.

LUGGAGE LIMIT:

Please keep your luggage to a minimum. One small soft-sided bag plus a day pack (no more than 20kgs in total per person to meet the domestic flight maximum weight limit per baggage) is essential. We recommend against bringing hard/externally framed suitcases as they are difficult to store and can damage equipment and other travellers' belongings. If your trip is beginning and ending at the same location, excess luggage can usually be stored at your arrival/departure hotel and can be collected after your trip.

VALUABLES:

Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables and use your hotel safe when and where provided. It's also a good idea to purchase a money belt or pouch that is easily hidden. We strongly recommend that you photocopy all important documents e.g.



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air tickets, passport, vaccination certificate, etc. and keep the copies separate from the originals. While not valid, a photocopy makes it very much easier to obtain replacements if necessary.

CONSERVATIVE DRESS FOR WOMEN:

In many parts of Africa women travellers should dress modestly as there is a wide range of cultural differences. Please bring skirts or shorts that reach just above the knee and tops that cover shoulders at a minimum.

SAFETY & SECURITY ISSUES

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas your itinerary covers. For USA travellers going to Ethiopia, you can follow advice from this link:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/ethiopia-travel-advisory.html>

It's also a good idea to use the following procedure for your safety: *Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive Alerts and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.*



We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.



Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in this region differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodation which we use has a fire exit, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.

BALCONIES

Some hotel balconies don't meet western standards in terms of the width of the balcony fence being narrower than 10cm. Use your best judgement on safety when manoeuvring around hotel installations in the developing world.

SEAT BELTS

Please be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and not all the transport which we use is able to provide seat belts.

PICK POCKETING & PERSONAL SAFETY

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking at night and encourage you to walk in groups and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair or on the floor and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

GROUP TRAVEL – PATIENCE AND CONSIDERATIONS

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from various degrees of experience as travellers – some are new to this sort of



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thing, others have done it many times before! Remember when you first visited a developing country?

We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

ELECTRICITY

For Ethiopia there are two associated plug types, types C and F. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins and plug type F is the plug which has two round pins with two earth clips on the side. Ethiopia operates on a **220V** supply voltage and 50Hz.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Adventurebug's *Responsible Travel Ethos* is at the heart of everything we do, from getting the basics right like respecting local cultures and the environment, to initiating projects in the Developing World that make positive contributions to communities, to volunteer efforts on a wide range of projects. At some point during our journey, Matt may share some of the projects associated with his work in tourism and social entrepreneurial stewardship.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

In case of a genuine crisis or emergency, you can reach our local operator or Adventurebug guide on the numbers below:

Adventurebug's Local Operator (Ethiopia): +254 733 523 813

Matt Butler – Adventurebug Guide: +34 635 817 819