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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AAT-1118

BAHIR DAR, GONDAR, LALIBELA & OMO VALLEY TOUR

Duration: 13 Days / 12 Nights



Tour Highlights:

- Explore the dramatic nature of the Blue Nile & Tiss Isat Falls
- Boat trip on Lake Tana to visit the ancient monasteries Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam
- Visit the Castles of Gondar, which are known as Africa's Camelot
- Walk the path of pilgrims to the amazing rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Shop the stalls of Merkato, the largest open-air market in Africa
- Explore the fascinating and strange cultures of the indigenous tribes of the Omo Valley in a modern, air-conditioned 4WD
- Visit the Dorze, the Konso, the Woito, the Mursi, the Tsemay, the Arbore and the Oromo Borena in their villages
- Traditional Ethiopian farewell dinner with "coffee ceremony" and traditional dances of different ethnic groups

Travel date:

Every day departure with a minimum of two participants.

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Day 1: Arrival in Addis Ababa

WELCOME TO ETHIOPIA. On arrival in Addis Ababa our representative will meet you at Bole International Airport. After transfer to your hotel an overview of the program will be given. The rest of the day visit historical sites in Addis Ababa including the National Archaeological Museum, where the 3,6 million year old skeletal remains of “Lucy” rest, which were discovered in 1974. Proceed to the Holy Trinity Cathedral and Mount Entoto, which rises up to an altitude of 3200 meters and offers a panoramic view of the metropolis. Overnight in 4-star hotel.

Day 2: Fly Bahir Dar, Blue Nile Falls

After breakfast fly to Bahir Dar, a small town on the southern shore of Lake Tana. The lake is the source of the Blue Nile and the largest lake in Ethiopia. Thirty of its thirty-seven islands host churches and monasteries of considerable historical and cultural interest. After refreshment take a boat trip on Lake Tana to visit two of the most accessible and representative monasteries, Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam, which still serve their original function. In the afternoon, take the short walk to the best viewing point of the impressive Blue Nile Falls, locally known as Tiss Isat or 'Smoke of Fire'.



Day 3: Drive to Gondar

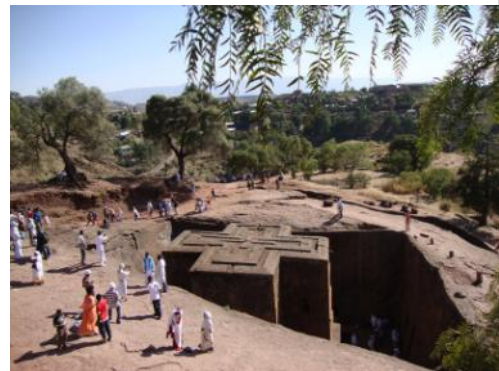


On the 180 km long drive to Gondar you experience a typical Ethiopian-African landscape - wide grazing land, hilly mountains and numerous farmlands. Visit the castles and churches built by emperor Fassiledes and his descendants, also known as Africa's Camelot. Later proceed to the fascinating Debre Birhan Selassie Church - one of the World's heritage sights. Its walls and ceilings are decorated with scenes of biblical lore and medieval history.

Day 4: Fly Lalibela

After breakfast transfer to the airport and flight to Lalibela. The town of Lalibela, lies among the Lasta Mountains at 2630 m above sea level and remains until today a place of pilgrim and devotion for Ethiopian Christians. The construction of the eleven rock-hewn churches is attributed to king Lalibela of the Zagwe Dynasty. Some of the 12th century churches are monolithic, carved from a sloping mass of red volcanic scoria interconnected by a maze of tunnels and passages with openings to hermit caves and catacombs. Some are of the basilica type, having archaic features and imitating architectural elements from earlier periods, yet they differ in design and style.

Afternoon visit of the first group of six churches which lie in rock cradles one behind the other: Bet Golgotha, Bet Mika'el, Bet Maryam, Bet Meskel, Bet Danaghel and Bet Medhane Alem. Bet Medhane Alem is built like a Greek temple and its stone floor is so polished by the countless numbers of visitors that it reflects shafts of light from apertures in the walls high above. In a corner are three empty graves symbolically dug for the biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.



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<p>Day 5: In Lalibela: After breakfast drive to Nakuto Le’Abe Monastery. King Nakuto Le’Abe abdicated his throne in 1270 AD and went to this cave to live a hermit’s life. The cave, sitting on the edge of a steep cliff, has ever since become a monastery. It houses one of the most interesting collections of ancient crosses, illuminated manuscripts and other icons some of which are attributed to its founder Nakuto Le’Abe. Afternoon visit of the other group of rock churches in Lalibela. Bet Giyorgis, possibly the most elegant of all the Lalibela churches, lies somewhat isolated in the south-west part of the village on a sloping rock terrace. It can only be reached through a tunnel. The group of four, south of the Jordan River, consists of Bet Emanuel, Bet Mercurios, Bet Abba Libanos and Bet Gabriel-Rufa’el.</p>		
<p>Day 6: Fly to Addis Ababa then Drive to Lake Langano After breakfast you check in to the airport for your flight to Addis Ababa. Meet vehicle and drive heading south for Lake Langano. En route stop at Zeway town and visit The Lake then continue driving to Lake Langano .</p>		
<p>Day 7: Drive Arba Minch Drive to Arba Minch visiting Chench and the Dorze village, high in the mountains north of Arba Minch. The Dorze are well known as master weavers and live in interesting igloo-shaped houses. Arba Minch - meaning 'Forty Springs' in Amharic - takes its name from the bubbling streams that cover the forest and the flats of the town.</p>		
	<p>Day 8: Boat Trip on Lake Chamo then drive to Jinka After breakfast take a boat trip on Lake Chamo, where you can spot many hippos and spectacular concentrations of giant crocodiles. The water birds are great the scenery is unforgettable. Locals fish here in traditional fishing boats. Then after drive to Konso where you visit the Konso people, known for colorful dresses and unusually engraved wooden statues, used as grave markers. Continue along impressive land terracing to the village of the Woito people, near the Woito river. On the way to Jinka stop at the Key Afer Market (Thursday is market day), a tribal market, where different ethnic groups gather to sell and buy their agricultural products.</p>	
<p>Day 9: Jinka – Mursi - Jinka - Turmi After breakfast leave Jinka and drive to Mursi village and visit the very attractive culture of the Mursi tribe. They are renowned for the strange custom followed by their women who, on reaching maturity, have their lower lips slit and circular clay discs inserted. Then drive back to Jinka and continue to Turmi through Dimeka to visit Hamar people and their village. Turmi is a small town, which is the base to visit the Hamar village.</p>		
<p>Day 10: In Turmi After breakfast drive to Karo village and visit the Karo people in the afternoon visit the hammer village. Hamers have remarkable hairstyles made from ochre, water and binding resin. They rub the mixture into their hair then twist the strands repeatedly to create coppery-colored locks. This is a sign of wealth and welfare. Hamers are considered to be masters of body decoration.</p>		

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<p>Day 11: Turmi - Yabello Drive to Yabello visiting the Arbore and the Tsemay people en route. After lunch stop at Konso, continue to the region of Oromo Borena and visit their village, which are well known in cattle rearing. From their deep 'singing well' they carry water to their cattle by forming a long line of people and passing on the buckets while singing.</p> <p>Day 12: Yabello - Awassa Drive from Yabello to Awassa through the beautiful Sidamo mountains and wide coffee plantations. In the late afternoon walk by the side of Lake Awassa</p> <p>Day 13: Drive Addis, departure After breakfast drive to Awassa and visit the fish market. Then drive back to Addis Ababa along the Great Rift Valley lakes. En route we stop on the viewpoints of the Lakes Shala, Abyta and Langano. In the evening have a fare well dinner party in a traditional Ethiopian restaurant with dances from the different ethnic groups. Afterwards transfer to the airport for departure.</p>		
<p><u>PRICE</u> Price per person (on the basis of 2 travellers) = US \$ 2,810 Price per person (on the basis of 3 travellers) = US \$ 2,400 Single room supplement = US \$ 320 Plus domestic flights ca. US \$ 300</p>		
<p>Price includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special qualified guide as well as mandatory local guide and scout fees in parks and villages - 4-star hotel in Addis Ababa and the best available hotels outside of Addis Ababa - All accommodation based on twin room occupancy - Meals in Addis, on bed and breakfast basis - Meals out of Addis, on full board basis - Farewell dinner in Addis to enjoy traditional Ethiopian food and music - All entrance fees at sites, churches, parks and villages - All transfers according to the itinerary - All ground transportation including insurance, fuel and all costs of the driver - Boat trip on Lake Tana and Lake Chamo - A traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony at a convenient time in the program - Government taxes <p>Price doesn't include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International flights - Lunch and Dinner in Addis Ababa - Any kind of drinks, alcoholic or non-alcoholic - Video filming and photographing fees - Incidental meals, snacks and drinks - Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc . - All what is not included in the list above 		

