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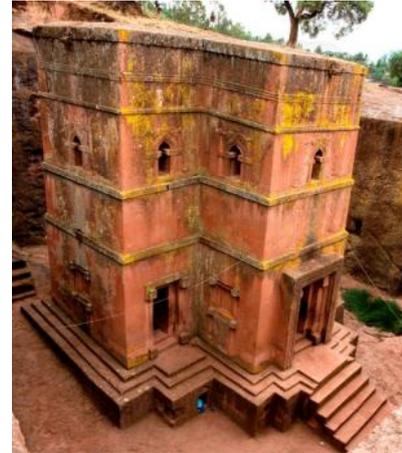
PO Box 59314

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AAT-1115

ETHIOPIA HISTORIC ROUTE, SIMIEN MOUNTAINS & HARAR

Duration: 16 Days / 15 Nights



Tour Highlights:

- Explore the dramatic nature of the Blue Nile Gorge & Tiss Isat Falls and take a 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
- Explore the dramatic scenery of the Simien Mountains National Park
- Visit the splendid vestiges of the fabled Queen Sheba in Axum
- Visit the old city of Harar which is considered the "fourth holiest city of Islam" after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem
- Walk the path of pilgrims to the amazing rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Explore the fascinating and strange cultures of the indigenous tribes of the Omo Valley in a modern 4WD.
- Traditional Ethiopian farewell dinner with "coffee ceremony"

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 Ethnological Museum at Addis Ababa University, 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: Addis Ababa-Debre Markos, 300 kilometers, about 6 hours drive

After breakfast drive to Debre Markos via Dejen which is the famous Teff growing region in the country. Teff is staple food of Ethiopians. After 103 kms drive, visit the 13th C monastery of Debre Libanos and the 17th C Portuguese Bridge. En route have stop over to visit the Oromo tribal village. Further down, you will enjoy the fabulous Blue Nile Gorge. Similar to the Grand Canon of USA. Overnight Debre Markos Shebel hotel.

Day 3: Debre Markos - Bahar Dar, 270 kilometers, about 5 hours drive

Drive about 250kms to Bahar Dar, a town by the edge of Lake Tana, through the beautiful scenery and visiting the Amhara people and their villages. Have a lunch at Bahar Dar, the capital of the Amhara National Regional State. Afternoon, we make city tour of Bahir Dar that includes: Colorful market where someone could find the pottery, traditional handmade woven clothes, etc. Visit Woito Basket market and Mount Bezawit where the palace of Emperor Haile Selassie is gracefully situated. This hilltop is the best viewing point for the town, the lake and the river. Overnight Tana Hotel.



Day 4: Bahar Dar

After breakfast drive to the small town of Tis Abay to visit to the impressive Blue Nile Falls, locally known as Tis Isat or 'Smoke of Fire'. The falls throws up a continuous spray of water droplets which drench onlookers up to a kilometre away. Much of the water is diverted to for Hidro electric Generation but it is worth visiting for the walk around and see the country side. The area around the river is extremely fertile and the Amhara people who live here farm wheat, sorghum and Teff, from which injera, the national bread, is made. After the Falls, return to Bahir Dar for lunch the rest of the afternoon take a boat trip on Lake Tana to visit ancient monasteries. We will visit two of the most accessible and representative of the monasteries, still serving their original function, Ura Kidane Mehret, and Azwa Maryam. Overnight Tana Hotel

Day 5: 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.



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<p>Day 6: Drive to Simien Mountains After early breakfast we drive to Debarq, the head quarter of the Simien Mountain National Park. We proceed to Sankaber, where we walk around through breath-taking scenery enjoying endemic Gelada Baboons and the bone breaker giant bird Lammergeyer.</p>  <p>Day 7: Drive Axum, ca. 7 h This drive is probably the most spectacular in Ethiopia. The road descends from 3100 meters through hairpin bends down the Simien Mountains to 1400 meters in just 40kms! The drive down to Adi Arkay showcases not only the immensely beautiful Simien Mountain massifs but also the people who eke out an existence in this unforgiving countryside. The drive continues through the Tekeze valley, crossing the Tekeze River and onto Axum.</p> <p>Day 8: In Axum Visit historical and archaeological sites in Axum. The ancient city marks the location of the heart of ancient Ethiopia, when the kingdom of Axum was the most powerful state between the eastern Roman empire and Persia. The archaeological and historical attractions in Axum include: the archaeological museum, the magnificent monolithic steles and obelisks, the tombs of king Kaleb and king Gebre Meskal, the legendary bath of Queen Sheba and the ruins of her palace. The 16th century cathedral St. Mary of Zion, the holiest church in Ethiopia, is said to host the original Ark of the Covenant. The churches and monasteries of Axum are richly endowed with icons and historical crowns of ancient emperors.</p> <p>Day 9: Drive to Mekele, ca. 6 h After breakfast drive through the historical town of Adwa, a major African battlefield. Visit the 5th century B.C. ruins of Yeha's temple - a large pre-Christian temple consisting of a single oblong chamber. The temple is believed to be the oldest standing building in the country. You will also visit the 6th century A.D. church of Aba Afse close by. On the way visit the rock church of Wekro Cherkos.</p> <p>Day 10: Drive to Lalibela, ca. 10 h On this day, you will have the longest drive but the magnificent scenery with gigantic up and downs is nice to experience. Visit Lake Ashenge on the way which is good for birding. We arrive in Lalibela in the late afternoon.</p> <p>Day 11: In Lalibela Full day sightseeing tour of Lalibela, famous for its rock hewn churches dating back 800 years. There are no less than 1000 churches in the Lasta Region of Lalibela, some hidden in enormous caves, but it's exceptional to find 11 churches of such master craftsmanship in one location. These brilliant feats of engineering and architecture are often referred to as the "Eighth wonder of the world". Explore the atmospheric subterranean complex of passages and the 11 remarkable rock-hewn churches which until today remain a place of pilgrim and devotion for Ethiopian Christians. The construction of the 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 underlaid by dark grey basalt and in-</p> 		

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<p>terconnected 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. Two are decorated with interesting wall paintings and carved figures.</p>		
<p>Day 12: Drive to Kombolcha, ca. 7 h After breakfast drive through the highland area of Delb. Stop over at Hike town to visit the 13th century monastery of Hike Istifanos on the island of Lake Hike. Proceed to Kombolcha for dinner and overnight stay.</p>		
<p>Day 13: Drive to Awash, ca. 7 h Drive to Awash and visit the magnificent Awash water falls. The Awash National Park is home of Oryx antelopes, Kudus and many colorful birds like Bustards, Sandgrouse, Secretary birds etc.</p>		
<p>Day 14: Drive to Harar, ca. 6 h After breakfast drive from Awash Sebat Killo to Harar. You will be driving through the Hararghe Mountains and will see plenty of coffee and 'chat' fields. The region is well known in growing one of the best qualities of coffee in the world. We arrive in Harar early in the afternoon.</p>		
<p>Day 15: In Harar Visit colorful Muslim and Christian markets (known for basketry), the museum and traditional Hararie houses situated within the famous walled city. In the evening visit the hyena man feeding wild hyenas in a bizarre spectacle.</p>		
<p>Day 16: Drive to Addis Ababa, ca. 8h, departure After breakfast we drive to Addis Ababa. In the evening fare well dinner party, with dances from the different ethnic groups, in a traditional Ethiopian restaurant. Afterwards transfer to the airport for flight home.</p>		
<p>PRICE Price per person (on the basis of 2 travellers) = US\$ 3,345 Price per person (on the basis of 3 travellers) = USD 3,100 Price per person (on the basis of 4 travellers) = USD 3,000 & Single room supplement US 400</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, 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 and visits according to the itinerary - All ground transportation including insurance, fuel and all costs of the driver - Boat trip on Lake Tana - 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 		