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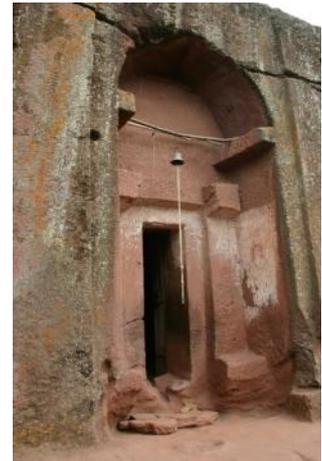
PO Box 59314

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AAT-1124

TREKKING IN THE SIMIEN MOUNTAINS, GONDAR, AXUM & LALIBELA

Duration: 17 Days / 16 Nights



Tour Highlights:

- Climb Mount Ras Dashen, Africa's fourth highest peak
- Enjoy dramatic landscapes, high peaks, gigantic drops, wide valleys and endemic wildlife in the Simien Mountains, known as 'The roof of Africa'
- Visit the Castles of Gondar, which are also known as Africa's Camelot.
- Boat trip to visit Lake Tana's ancient monasteries Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam
- Visit the splendid vestiges of the fabled Queen of Sheba in Axum
- Explore the dramatic nature of the Blue Nile & Tiss Isat Falls
- Shop the stalls of Merkato, the largest open-air market in Africa
- Walk the path of pilgrims to the stunning rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Traditional Ethiopian farewell dinner with "coffee ceremony"

Travel date:

Every day departure with a minimum of two participants.

AAT-1124	TREKKING THE SIMIEN MOUNTAINS, GONDAR, AXUM & LALIBELA	17 Days / 16 Nights Flight / Surface
<p>Day 1: Arrival in Addis Ababa WELCOME TO ETHIOPIA. On arrival in Addis Ababa our representative will meet you at the 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, 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.</p>		
<p>Day 2: Drive Bahir Dar, ca. 8 h After breakfast drive to Bahir Dar via Debre Markos and Dejen, the famous teff growing region in the country. En route visit the 13th century monastery of Debre Libanos. Further down, you will enjoy the fabulous Blue Nile Gorge, similar to the Grand Canon of the USA.</p>		
	<p>Day 3: In Bahir Dar After breakfast 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, visit the impressive Blue Nile Falls, locally known as Tiss Isat or 'Smoke of Fire'. The Fall is in the small town of Tiss Abay, 30 Kms from Bahir Dar and then walk about 20-30 minutes to reach the best viewpoint of the falls.</p>	
<p>Day 4: Drive to Gondar On the 180 km long drive to Gondar you experience a typical Ethiopian 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 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.</p>		
<p>Day 5: Drive to Sankaber and walk to Geech In the morning drive to Debarq, ca. 100 km from Gondar. After we pick up our local guide we drive on to Sankaber where we start our trekking, accompanied by muleteers and mules who carry the equipment. The walk to Geech takes about 5-6 hours and brings us to the Jinnbar Falls. After crossing the river we ascend for about two hours to Geech through giant Lobelia trees. The scenery is wonderful and herds of the endemic Gelada Baboons can be seen on the way. Camping at Geech campsite (3600m)</p>		
<p>Day 6: Geech – Imetegogo – Geech This day we walk to the best viewing points of the National Park. Imetegogo enables you to look 360° to all directions. After a short break continue to Seha, the other terrific viewpoint. After picnic lunch we continue to the last viewpoint, Quedadit and return to the campsite afterwards. The walk takes about 4-5 h and is not hard. If we are lucky we might see mammals like the Simien Wolf, Walia Ibex and Klipspringers. Camping at Geech</p>		

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Day 7: Geech—Chenek

We trek 6-7 h to Chenek through giant Lobelia trees, where a lot of wildlife can be seen. After picnic lunch walk on the edge of the Enatye escarpment (4000m), which offers an other breathtaking view. Finally we descend to Chenek, the best place to see the endemic Walia Ibex and more Gelada Baboons. Overnight camping at Chenek (3600m)

Day 8: Chenek—Ambiquo

We walk 7-8 h to Ambiquo climbing the Buhit (4430m) peak, the 2nd highest next to Ras Dashen. After refresment at the summit we descend towards Chero Laba and cross the Mesheha River. We spend the night in Ambiquo, before the big day on Ras Dashen. Overnight camping at Ambiquo (3200m).



Day 9: Ambiquo—Ras Dashen—Maje

Pre dawn start towards mount Ras Dashen (4543m), the most challenging day of the trek. We head up the valley to the small village of Mizma, from where we climb steeply upwards, eventually reaching an impressive amphitheatre made up of three major buttresses of expanded rock. One of them is our goal, Ras Dashen. It is then an easy scramble to the summit of Ras Dashen, which is Africa’s fourth highest peak. After taking in the impressive view descend to Maje (3200m) for camping. The whole round trek takes about 8-10 hours.

Day 10: Ambiquo—Arquazeye

Walk from Ambiquo to Arquazeye through magnificent landscape. The path leads us back down to the Mesheha River (2800m). Our destination tonight is Arquazeye (3600m). It is another great day to take in some more incredible views of mount Wali Kend and mount Silky in a distance. The whole round trek takes about 6-7 hours. Overnight camping in Arquazeye



Day 11: Arquazeye—Mekarebia

From Arquazeye we descend for about 2 hours and cross a river, where we stop for a swim and for washing some clothes. Overnight camping in Mekarebia

Day 12: Mekarebia—Mulit

On the way to Mulit we stop again for a swim in a river. In the afternoon we ascend for 2 hours before reaching Mulit. Camping in Mulit

Day 13: Drive Axum, ca. 7h

Trek ca. 2 hours from Mulit to Adi Arkai, meet the vehicles and drive to Axum, which is probably the most spectacular drive 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



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<p>Arkay showcases not only the immense beauty of Simien Mountains but also the people who eke out an existence in this unforgiving countryside.</p>		
<p>Day 14: 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 some of the historical crowns of ancient emperors.</p>		
<p>Day 15: 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.</p>		
	<p>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 underlaid by dark grey basalt and interconnected by a maze of tunnels and passages with openings to hermit caves and catacombs. The Lalibela churches are included in the World Heritage List since 1978. 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, the largest one, 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. In a corner are three empty graves symbolically dug for biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.</p>	
<p>Day 16: 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 lead 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, comprise of Bet Emanuel, Bet Mercurios, Bet Abba Libanos and Bet Gabriel-Rufa'el.</p>		
<p>Day 17: Fly to Addis, Departure After breakfast fly to Addis Ababa. Rest of the day use for last souvenir shopping and 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>		

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<p><u>PRICE</u></p> <p>Price per person (on the basis of 2 travellers) = US \$ 3,570 Price per person (on the basis of 3 travellers) = US \$ 2,925 Single room supplement = US \$ 250 Plus domestic flights ca. US \$ 150</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 accommodation outside of Addis Ababa - All accommodation based on twin room occupancy - All camping gear, trekking staff and packing animals - 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 parks and villages - All transfers according to the itinerary - All ground transportation including insurance, fuel and all costs of the driver - 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, incidental meals and snacks - Video filming and photographing fees - Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc . - All what is not included in the list above 		