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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AAT-1112

ETHIOPIA HISTORIC ROUTE, SIMIEN MOUNTAINS & HARAR

Duration: 10 Days / 9 Nights



Tour Highlights:

- Domestic flights between all destinations for comfort and more time to explore
 - Walk the path of pilgrims to the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
 - Visit the Castles of Gondar, 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 as well as the Muslim holy city of Harar
 - Explore the dramatic nature of the Blue Nile & Tiss Isat Falls
 - Shop the stalls of Merkato, the largest open-air market in Africa
 - Enjoy the amazing landscape of the Simien Mountains Range
 - Traditional Ethiopian farewell dinner with "coffee ceremony"
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Travel date:

Every day departure with a minimum of two participants.

AAT-1112	ETHIOPIA HISTORIC ROUTE, SIMIEN MOUNTAINS & HARAR	10 Days / 9 Nights Flight / Surface
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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 where 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: 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, 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.



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: Excursion to Simien Mountains

After early breakfast we drive from Gondar to Debarq, the head quarter of the Simien Mountain National Park. We proceed to Sankaber, where we walk around enjoying endemic Gelada Baboons and the bone breaker giant bird Lammergeyer. Afternoon drive back to Gondar.

Day 5: Fly Axum

After breakfast fly to Axum. After transfer to the hotel and refreshment, visit the historical and archaeological sites of 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.



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Flight / Surface**

Day 6: 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 underlaid by dark grey basalt and 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. Two are decorated with interesting wall paintings and carved figures. 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 from apertures in the walls high above. In a corner are three empty graves symbolically dug for biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Day 7: In Lalibela:

After breakfast take a mule ride to the 13th century rock hewn monastery of Asheten Mariam. The church is situated on the top of a mountain at an altitude of 3150 metres. The roundtrip takes about 4 hours. We return to Lalibela for lunch. In the afternoon, visit the other groups of rock churches. Bet Giyorgis, the most elegant church, lies somewhat isolated in the southwest 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.



Day 8: Fly to Addis Ababa

After breakfast you will check in to the airport for your flight to Addis Ababa. Afternoon visit of the Ethnological Museum. Overnight in 4-star hotel.

Day 9: Fly to Dire Dawa, drive to Harar

After breakfast transfer to the airport and flight to Dire Dawa, the second largest city of Ethiopia. Upon arrival drive 55 km to the walled city of Harar. Visit the city wall, the gates and the narrow streets, lined with traditional Harari Gagar houses, the colorful Muslim and Christian markets (known for basketry). After lunch visit the Hareri museum and the Rimbaud House, a fine traditional house dating from the period when the French poet Rimbaud lived in Harar. Finally visit the traditional Hareri house. As evening falls local men attract wild hyenas to the city in a bizarre spectacle as they feed the scavengers.



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<p>Day 10: Fly to Addis, Departure After breakfast drive to Dire Dawa where you will have a short stay, then fly to Addis Ababa. En route we stop at the town of Awaday to see the biggest chat market of the country. Chat a stimulant leaf which people chew to be excited. 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>		
<p><u>PRICE</u></p> <p>Price per person (on the basis of 2 travellers) = US \$ 2,000 Price per person (on the basis of 3 travellers) = US \$ 1,700 Price per person (on the basis of 4 travellers) = US \$ 1,540 Single room supplement = US \$ 240 Plus domestic flights ca. 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 - 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 - 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 and snacks - Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc . - All what is not included in the list above 		