

AET 007 - 16DAYS ETHIOPIAN HIGHLIGHTS BY A HELICOPTER TRANSFER

Itinerary Prepared For Luxury Market



Duration: 15Nights/ 16 Days



Accommodation: Best available Hotels



Tour Starts: Addis Ababa



Tour Ends: Addis Ababa

Guide: Multilingual guide is available on request.



Trip Highlights

- Visiting the hub of Addis Ababa city.
- Danakil Depression – walking on the Sulphur pools of Dallol, one of the driest and most tectonically activity areas on the planet.
- Overlooking Erta Ale, fiery volcanic crater, is a continuously active basaltic shield volcano.
- History, religion, scenery and wildlife.
- Blue Nile falls, and Lake Tanna Monasteries
- Explore the wild life and landscape of the Simien Mountains & the city of Gondar.
- Touring through the Lalibela- Rock Hewn Churches
- Visit the local villages, meet with elders ...
- Involve with everyday tasks such as farming, weaving, food preparation, hunting, gathering ect.
- The Bale Mts. is the perfect spot for nature lovers, One park many world.

This trip covers History, culture, religion, different social activities, scenery and wildlife. Ethiopia is an ideal country to explore by helicopter or charter plane. A journey from the electric palette of the Danakil Depression at 100m below sea level, to the sheer cliffs of the Tigrai Mountains pocked with rock-carved churches, to the scrub-covered spires of the Simien Mountains, to a rite of passage bull-jumping ceremony in the Omo Valley, the stunning views of the Bale Mountains & many more.

Addis Ababa is the largest city of Ethiopia and its capital city at the same time. Addis Ababa, which in Amharic means "a new flower", is located in the center of the country, 2100- 2300m above the sea. It is one of the highest-located capital cities in the world. Here you can do various activities depending on your available time.

Erta Ale and Dallol are among the most bizarre and fascinating places on the planet. Visiting the Danakil Depression and exploring the alien volcanic landscape of this remote corner of Ethiopia is a truly unique experience that will leave you in awe. Many describe this adventure as akin to visiting another world...



Abuna Yemata Guh, a steep ascent up the side of the Gheralta massif. This steep ascent soon turn into a climb using foot holds and hand holds chipped into the sandstone rock by the passage of many hands and feet. The climb and the walk along very narrow ledges with sheer drops to the side is not one for the faint hearted.

Discover the mysteries of Ethiopia, a land of deep traditions dating back more than 3,000 years, on this exclusive trip explore the wonders of Lalibela, Gondar and Bahir Dar with the unspoiled nature of the Simien Mountains National Park, past stunning scenery of jagged peaks and panorama over the lowlands.

Discover the incredible number of different ethnic groups in and around the Omo Valley. Explore their villages, learn about local customs and wander through bustling markets on a specific day of the week.

Visitors with an interest in observing pre-materialist cultures or in anthropology will find much to fascinate them in the different ethnic groups situated along the Omo River, with marvelous scenery, wild life and bird life as an added bonus.

Along the Omo River a variety of different ethnic groups are found, such as the Tsemay, Arbore, Hamar, Galeb(Dasenech), Karo, Benna, Ari, and Mursi, Bume(Nyangatom), Bodi, Surma, whose contact with the modern world has come only within the last two to three decades. The Omo, flowing for nearly 1000 km from the highlands south west of Addis Ababa to Lake Turkana in Kenya, provides excellent opportunities for white water rafting.

Bale Mountains National park, a journey that is both scenic and exciting. Located in the Oromia Region of southeast Ethiopia, the Bale Mountain National Park is one of those landscapes that keeps you guessing. From volcanic peaks, to glacial lakes to swamps, it's not a place that runs out of things to show you.

The park is rich in birds and endemic animals like the Nyala. It also has all the levels of vegetation from grasslands to thick forests. More than 60 mammal species and 260 birds have been found at the Bale Mountains National Park. This park is the perfect spot for trekking and horseback riding. You will be able to spot the endemic Mountain Nyala, the Menelik Bushbuck and the Ethiopian wolf and explore lakes, waterfalls and deep gorges. You can either explore the park on foot with a guide or on horseback. The best time to visit the park is November to March but be prepared as the nights can get to below freezing temperatures.

Trip Summary

Join us in a Journey of endlessly rewarding but, nevertheless very challenging & fascinating trip. If you are interested to explore one of the glorious ancient human beings civilization in the continent of Africa, this tour is completely designed for your best and it defiantly suites your interest. You might be found yourself



confused throughout this trip and continuously asking yourself why this great human being civilizations unable to sustain by the past and present Ethiopian generations? Might be there is the super Natural power interventions on all those great ancient civilizations evidences? Why don't you join us with this tour and put your own hypothesis for this argument?

Our life time journey begins with the city tour of Addis Ababa, followed by The Danakil Depression: with a baking temperature, wastelands of salt - it's hard to imagine a more brutal landscape than Africa's Danakil Desert. But for the Afar people, this is a home to die for. The discovery of this fascinating historic route also continues to the spectacular views of Gerhalta massif & Tigray churches.

We reach to the striking Simien Mts. via Axum city, the lovely landscape of Simein Mountains, where you'll enjoy a half day walking with the troops of Gellad Baboon – Endemic for Ethiopia. After a morning walk through the beautiful scenery of the mountains then we will back to Gondar visiting the famous Royal Enclosures and proceed to Bahir Dar, where we will explore the interesting medieval periods of Lake Tana monasteries and the marvellous Blue Nile falls.

Our Journey will also touch the splendid Rock churches of Lalibela, considered as one of the eight wonders of the world and you will have enough time to learn more about these rock churches with your guided tour.

Then the trip goes to a fascinating tour to the south Omo valley, where a mosaic of indigenous tribes intriguing cultural value, beautiful landscape and diversified tribes with their own unique village settlements for a century. This trip is carefully designed to offer you the best of Omo Valley with the exceptional experience of the local villagers' interaction with visiting one of the tribe's family houses as a guest. All of this is yours in this package will guarantee you a fantastic journey of discovery to the Omo Valley Tribes. And finally we will stay in the stunning Bale Mountains.

Generally the best time to visit Ethiopia is between October and June, when it is the dry season. Rains tend to stop in early October, meaning afterwards the highlands are lush and green – perfect for trekking amongst pretty wildflowers that have sprung up. Be sure to bring a sweater all year round due to the elevation.

Our main Helicopter / Charter plane providers are:

- Abyssinian Flight service <https://abyssinianflights.com/>

Helicopter Type: ET-AUS, Bell Helicopter Textron Inc., Model: Bell 407, Capacity: 6+2 Seats

- Aquarius Flight service <https://www.aquarius-ethiopia.com/> -also worked with tropic air

Helicopter type: Eurocopter AS 350 B3's, Fitted with satellite tracking software, Capacity: 5+1Seats, Speed: 115 knots, Endurance: 3.5 hours.

- Trans Nation Airways <http://vince1.midroc-tg.com/>

Helicopter type: Bell 222 twin engine, Capacity: 5+2 Seats,

- National Airways <https://www.nationalairways.com/>



National airways mainly provide charter services.

- We also organize Balloon Flight Tours from the highlands of Ethiopia together with Abyssinia ballooning <https://www.abysiniaballooning.com/> - specialized in Branded balloon, Hot air balloons & Basket branding flights.

Things to bring with you; during the dry season, although days can be cool, a hat and high SPF sunscreen are still essential to avoid sunburn. Temperatures can drop dramatically in the evenings so pack warm clothes. During the heavy rainy season between June and October trails can be wet and muddy so proper trekking shoes are essential.

TRIP IN DETAILS

DAY 01

ADDIS ABABA

- L- D

Welcome to Addis Ababa.

Addis Ababa "New Flower" is the third highest capital in the world. It is located at 3,000m above sea level which offers bracing temperatures and plenty of fresh highland air. Addis Ababa is a pleasant city with interesting museums and one of the largest open-air markets in Africa, "Mercato".

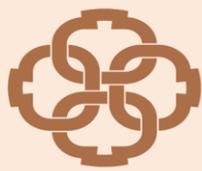
Addis Ababa is Africa's diplomatic capital with headquarters for the Organization of African Unity and the United Nation Economic Commissions for Africa.

On your arrival at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, after clearing immigration and customs welcome by Absolute Ethiopia Tours staff and get transferred to your hotel.

Depending on your arrival time it is possible to arrange sightseeing in Addis Ababa with a national guide and this includes;

A visit of the National Archaeological Museum; ranks among the most important museums in sub- Sahara Africa. It housed the 3.5 million-year-old bones of Lucy. Lucy is believed to be the ancestor of all Human kind. It has lots of ancient exhibits that reflect the importance of Ethiopia as the 'Cradle of Mankind'. Its historic room features finery worn in the wars, such as crowns, weapons, and pictures of wartime heroes and kings. Lunch can be served at the gate of the Museum – famous Lucy gazebo restaurant, have both local and international dishes.

The Holy Trinity Cathedral, built in 1945, this cathedral is renowned for its stunning stain-glassed windows which depict scenes from the Old and New Testament of the Holy Bible. The Trinity Cathedral also houses the tombs of the late emperor and his family as well as the tomb of English feminist Sylvia Pankhurst.



Bole Medhane alem Cathedral

And a visit of Merkato; the Largest open Market in Africa; where virtually every possible commodity is on sale, from livestock to computers. It is closed on Sundays & for a visitor good at bargaining, there is a huge selection of Ethiopian arts and crafts.

Meals: Lunch & Dinner are included

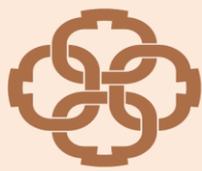
Accommodation: Best available Hotel- Sheraton Addis Luxury Collection >5*

<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/addlc-sheraton-addis-a-luxury-collection-hotel-addis-ababa/.com>

or Hyatt Regency Addis Ababa Hotel https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/ethiopia/hyatt-regency-addis-ababa/addra?src=corp_lclb_gmb_seo_eame_addra

Accommodation overviews in Addis Ababa

The Sheraton in Addis a truly luxury hotel in Addis, There are over 10 restaurants and bars and 293 rooms and suites in all, a spa offering massaged, jacuzzi, sauna and pools and a kids club and kids swimming pool. The most basic 'Classic Rooms' feature King size bed, Individually controlled air-conditioning, data connections. All guests receive a complimentary morning coffee or tea served up to 8:30 AM upon request with wake up call. The main reason for staying here is to take advantage of the pleasant heated swimming pool and garden areas. This is the best place in Addis to sit back in peaceful garden and swimming pool surroundings and enjoy a cup of tea.



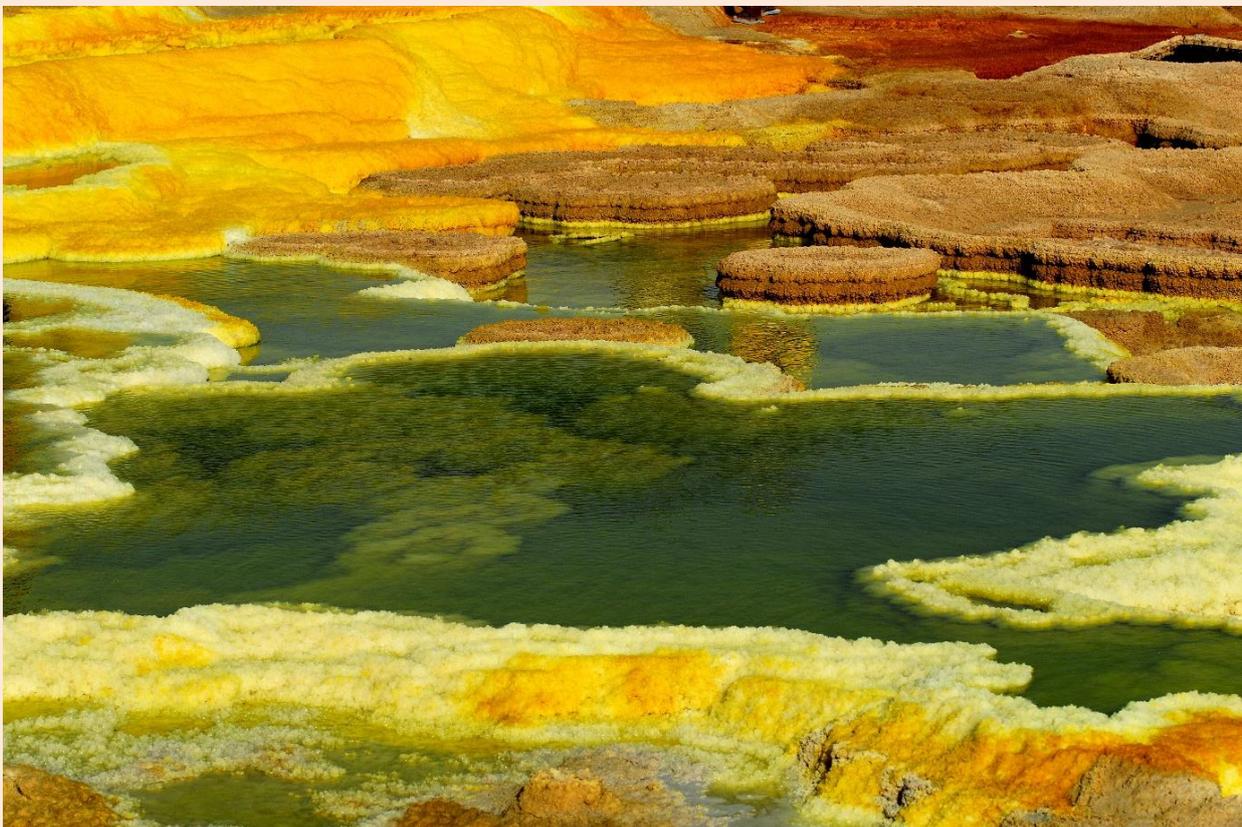
Hyatt Regency Addis Ababa Hotel, located on Meskel Square, 15 minutes from Bole international airport, an ideal high-end urban base for exploring the Ethiopian capital. Positioned a brief walk away from the United Nations Conference centre and within short distance of the presidential palace, this 188-room hotel (the first Hyatt Hotel in Ethiopia) combines convenience with modern character. Hyatt Regency offers guests two on-site restaurants, four distinct bars, a spa, fitness centre, and outdoor heated infinity pool.

DAY 02

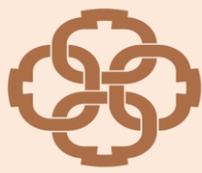
HELICOPTER TRANSFER TO DALLOL & ERTA ALE

B- L- D

Following your hearty breakfast at the Sheraton Addis hotel get transfer to the airport for your helicopter transfer to Dallol & Erta ale.



The Danakil Depression straddles the Eritrean border to the east of the Tigrayan Highlands, is officially listed as the hottest place on earth, with an average temperature of 34-35degree centigrade. The Danakil Depression is one of the most inhospitable regions of the world, but is nonetheless spectacular, full of eye-catching colors, as in the sulphur springs. The desert has several points lying more than 100 meters below sea level; also a place for the long camel caravans loaded with salts.



Erta Ale, fiery volcanic crater, is a continuously active basaltic shield volcano, the most alluring and physically challenging natural attraction in the planet. It Rises from below sea level to an altitude of 613m; Erta Ale is a shield volcano with a base diameter of 30km and a 1km² caldera at its summit.



Then head to the Korkor /Gheralta lodge, northwest of Mekelle (the capital of Tigray). Gheralta is a home for a quarter of the rock churches, some famous for their stone workmanship, ancient paintings and old manuscripts, and others known for their magnificent view and difficult ascent.



The scenery of Gheralta is spectacular. The view of the graceful Mount Gheralta and the far-reaching Hawzien plain is a rare combination of extraordinary beauty.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Best available Hotel - Korkor Lodge <https://korkorlodge.com/>

Gerhalta lodge <https://gheraltalodgetigrai.com/>

Accommodation overviews in Gerhalta Region

Korkor Lodge offers twelve thatched bungalows whose ambience is defined by the reds and browns of the stone walls and wooden floors. Each has a private bathroom with a hot shower and either a king-size double or twin beds, with the option of more/different beds upon request. The region is an arid plain of Table Mountains, cliffs and more than 140 sites of archaeological interest, including many shrines, ancient Sabeian and Axumite sites and the country's largest single concentration of cliff churches. There is a very strong focus on localism and sustainability at Korkor Lodge, which is reflected in its use of traditional construction techniques in all the buildings. The walls are all of open, colourful stone hewn by local masons, roofs are thatched and the dark wood floors and furniture complete a picture that is both authentic and comfortable.

Gheralta lodge is located in the Gheralta area, with its unique chain of mountains. The lodge is famous for its restaurant with leisure area and service zone besides the four big secular figs trees and a breath taking view of the Gheralta Mountains landscape. Your helicopter will drop you in the lodge's compound.



DAY 03

B- L- D

THE ANCIENT TIGRAY CHURCHES & THE GERHALTA MASSIVE

After a relaxing morning, set out by helicopter to explore the remote corners of the Tigray Mountains. In the afternoon, fly to the remote churches of Gheralta Massif, Abuna Abraham and Abuna Yemata. First, marvel at the architectural diversity of Abuna Abraham, taking in its beautifully carved cupolas, bas-reliefs and crosses. Proceed to Abuna Yemata, a remote cliff-side church carved into a vertical spire of Tigray's northern highlands. Accessible only on foot, Abuna Yemata rewards your climb with exquisite frescoes and spectacular views — sights reserved for a privileged few.

The monastic church of Abune Yemata: The scenery is breath taking and the mountains resemble pillars reaching to the sky. The church is carved on the cliff face of the Guh Mountains. The challenging and the only way to the church are footholds and handgrips in the rock face. Just before the entrance to the church there is a narrow ledge carved in the cliff from which one can view a sheer drop of approximately 250m to 300m. In fact, the church is not only known for its difficult ascent but also for its truly remarkable murals. It is colourfully decorated wall to wall with exciting murals of Old and New Testament stories. Nine of the twelve apostles are depicted in a round frame on the ceiling. Abune Yemata on his horseback is shown on one of the walls. Each church had a unique painting style. Yemata was the most elaborate.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Korkor Lodge <https://korkorlodge.com/>

Gerhalta lodge <https://gheraltalodgetigrai.com/>

DAY 04

B- L- D

HELICOPTER TRANSFER AXUM & SIMIEN MOUNTAINS

Today transfer to Axum, the site of Ethiopian's most ancient city, from around 200 BC to 700 AD, Axum was the seat of an Empire which extended across the Red Sea to Arabia, traded with India and China, minted its own coinage, had its own alphabet and notational system, constructed great engineering works and dams and which was reckoned in the 4th century to be one of the four great powers of the ancient world.

Axum is renowned for its cathedral of St. Mary Zion, whereas legend has it the original Ark of Covenant is housed and also there are several monolithic stelae, which are made of single pieces of granite of which three of them have identical decoration.



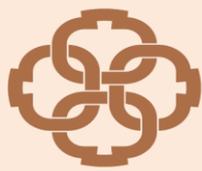
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Following lunch at Atranos Hotel, catch your helicopter and head to the Simien Mountains.

Enjoy a spectacular flight through the Tekeze Gorge to the Simien Mountains. The Tekeze River has created one of the world's deepest canyons. The mountains are surrounded by deep valleys and on a good day, you can enjoy views that stretch for hundreds of kilometres. As well as the epic vistas, the Simien Mountains are important for the diversity of flora and fauna.





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The Simien Mountains National Park is situated about 100km north of Gondar and is one of Africa's largest mountain ranges. At least a dozen of the peaks are over the 4,000m mark, including Ras Dashen, the highest peak in Ethiopia. The western side of the range, excluding Ras Dashen, was designated as the Simien Mountains National Park in 1969, and the entire range was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. The Simien range consists of several large plateaus divided by large river valleys. The spectacular views stretch north towards Eritrea. Three of Ethiopia's endemic large mammals are residents of the Simiens. The Ghelada Baboon is the most common with an estimated population of 7,000. They are often to be seen grazing in herds of up to 400 individuals. There is also the rare Ethiopian Wolf, with a population of no more than 50 that exists high up on the mountains slopes of Ras Dashen, Bwahit and Kidus Yared. Finally there are 600 Walia Ibexes still surviving. Non-endemic mammals include Klipspringer, Bushbuck, and the Common Jackal. Flora includes St John's Wort and an array of Aloe.



Visit Sankaber the first camp sight of the Simien Mts. Here you will find one of the most spectacular mountain scenery in Ethiopia. Stop to watch Ghelada Baboons and observe their foraging habits, and take a short walk to a waterfall (the ground here is uneven).

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Best available Hotel - Limalimo Lodge <https://limalimolodge.com/>
Moderate Hotel -Simien Lodge <http://www.simiens.com/>



Enjoy the beautiful morning scenic view of the mountains. The view of the Hyena Meda, Immet gogo /3926m/and proceed to Chennek, 3,620m, home to endemic Walia Ibex, as well as Klipspringers and Bushbucks. Chennek is one of the most spectacular spots in the Simien Mountains and the surrounding slopes are thick with giant Lobelias and Afro-Alpine scrub.



A picnic lunch will be arranged for you at a scenic spot.

A sighting of the Walia Ibex is not guaranteed and is usually dictated by the road conditions, because these animals generally inhabit an area at least 90km from the lodge.

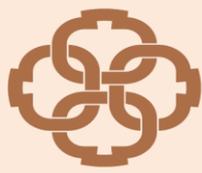
Remarks: Please bring warm clothing and rain wear. Despite its closeness to the equator, the Simien Mountains tend to get quite cold at night

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Limalimo Lodge <https://limalimolodge.com/>
Simien Lodge <http://www.simiens.com/>

Accommodation overviews in Simien Mts

Limalimo Lodge offers 14 rooms scattered throughout the site's sprawling 10 hectares, communal bar, restaurant and large terrace – complete with fire-pit – afford truly spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The décor is a unique and striking blend of the contemporary and the traditional, with thatched roofs, local woods and



stylish rammed earth walls that have been integral in keeping the construction local and sustainable. The sleeping rooms are a mixture of twin, double, triple and family. In keeping with the main areas, the feel of all the rooms is elegant and subtle, thoughtfully blending comfort with distinctive local finesse. Each room's location affords seclusion and spectacular views, coming with en-suite facilities. Electricity, hot water and heating are provided by sustainable sources, whilst water for the gardens is recycled. Each room includes a private terrace. Wi-Fi is available, though please be advised a clear connection is not always guaranteed.

Simien Lodge is located near the Simien Mountains National Park on a hilltop with fantastic views of the countryside. The highest hotel in Africa includes 20 bungalows furnished in the style of the country and an on-site restaurant.

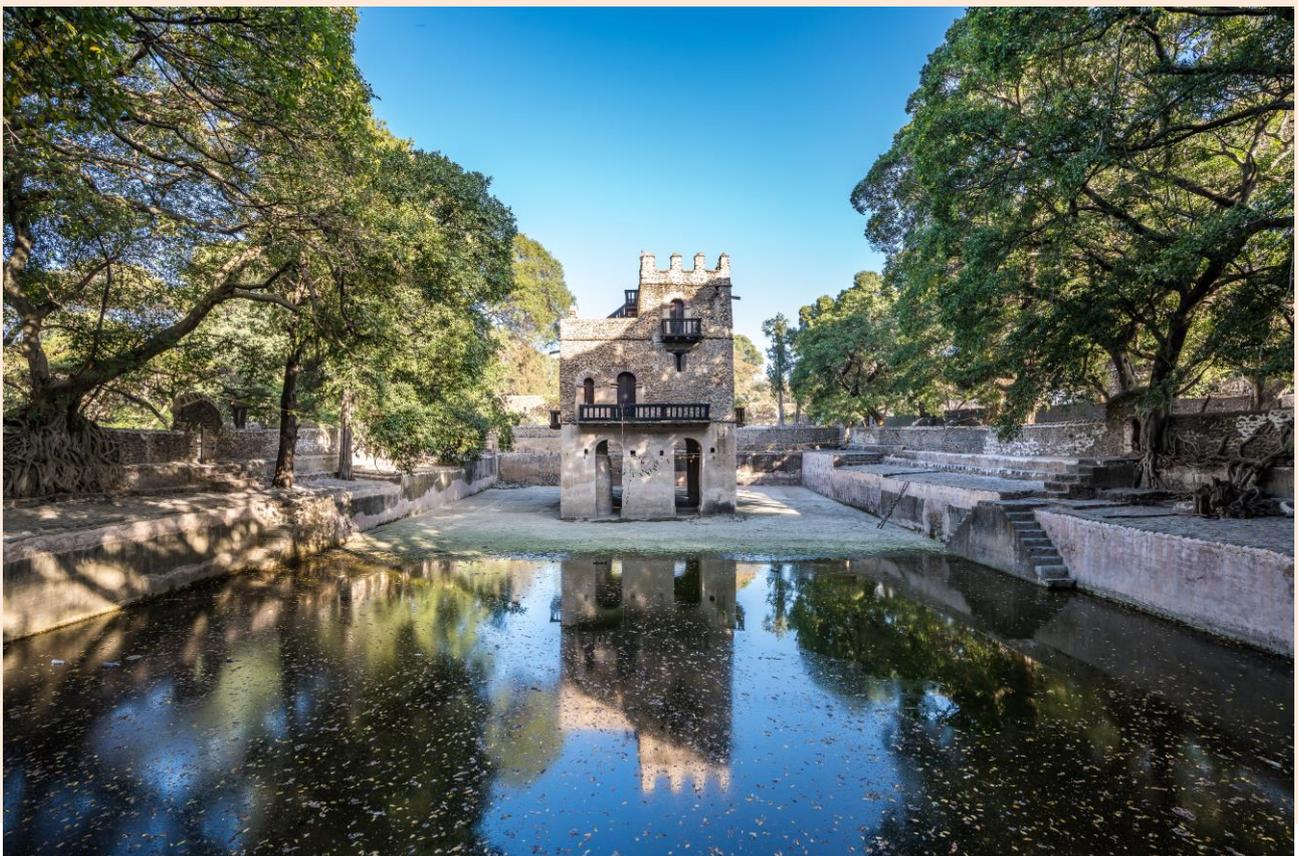
DAY 06

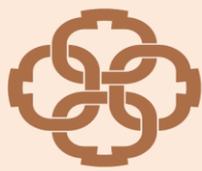
B- L- D

HELICOPTER TRANSFER TO GONDAR & BAHIR DAR

Early morning, enjoy the scenic sunrise view by flying over the Mountains. Then transfer to Gondar, the imperial city of King Fasilidas. The kings of Ethiopia based their power in Gondar for two centuries. The city was the first capital of the Ethiopian empire, which began in 1632 with the reign of Fasilidas.

In Gondar, there are a dozen castles built by various emperors over the course of 236 years. Many picturesque ruins lie in the royal enclosure like the fairy-tale castles. The castles reflect the glory of Gondarine kings and characterized by lime mortar style. Gondar has now become one of Ethiopia's largest and most impressive cities, with its walled Royal Enclosure.





Gondar's most famous monuments are its exceptionally well preserved 17th-century castles. The largest and best is that of King Fasilidas. It is a stone-built construction with round turrets and wooden balconies. The king also built a remarkable bath a mile or so outside of town known as the 'Pavilion of Delight'. The Bathhouse of Fasil at which thousands of Ethiopians celebrate Timekat festival every January. This whole complex of buildings is unique in Ethiopia and unlike anything found elsewhere in Africa.

Visit the Royal Enclosure or Fasil Gibbi, encompasses the castles of various Gondarene emperors. The Fasiladas Palace; the Quskuam Church (believed to be the home of famous explorer James Bruce during the 1770's). After 2-km drive from the town centre visit the bath of King Fasilides. The pool is now the central stage on which the Timkat or Epiphany festival is celebrated in Gondar.

Debre Berhane Selassie church with its remarkable walls and ceiling completely covered with murals - the angels' faces on the ceiling have become a common motif in Ethiopian design.

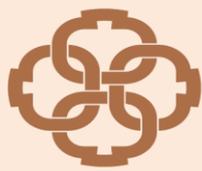


Visiting the local market - Originally held only once a week, Kidame Gebya (Saturday Market) is now daily market place selling everything from traditional clothing to fruit and vegetables.

And then transfer to Bahir Dar for the overnight stay.

Accommodation: Kuriftu Resort & Spa <https://kurifturesorts.com/bahir-dar>

Avanti Blue Nile Resort <http://www.bluenileresorthotels.com/>



Accommodation overviews in Bahir Dar

The Kuriftu Resort is set on the shores of Lake Tana, has 14 spacious luxurious traditional stone cottages (28 rooms in total, with one room on the ground floor and another on the first floor) set around a gorgeous pool, with breath-taking views of the lake.

The resort has been sensitively developed (which is more than can be said for its neighbours), the service is excellent and free massage treatments are included in your stay.

The shared areas include a reception, bar/lounge area, swimming pool, restaurant, extensive outdoor seating and spa.

Avanti Blue Nile resort is a luxury hotel & resort with a total of 135 en suite rooms, providing a lovely lake views across Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. The restaurants serve both international and national dishes, free Wi-Fi service, bar services and many more.

DAY 07
BAHIR DAR

B- L- D

Bahir Dar is the capital of the Amhara region situated on the shores of Lake Tana, the largest lake in the country. Bahir Dar is one of the best well-planned cities in Ethiopia. Bahir Dar means "by the side of the sea".

Following breakfast, leave for the visit of the Blue Nile Falls, locally known as "Tissiat" – which means "Smoking Water." The Falls are 328 feet wide and the water plunges some 150 feet, giving rise to picturesque stream clouds and rain-bows. Blue Nile Falls is 32kms from the city. On a clear sunny day you can walk for about 30min walk to the base of the falls. Meet with the locals around for a short coffee break. Cotton spinning is the most famous activity in this area.





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After lunch embark on a cruise on Lake Tana, the largest highland lake in Ethiopia. Lake Tana is also the source of the Blue Nile, a fact that may explain many of Ethiopia's links with the ancient world. Even today, the papyrus tankwa that sail the lake bear a striking resemblance to the boats of Ancient Egypt.

Visit the Zeghie Peninsula & the locals, known for its 14th century, round, grass roofed churches and their magnificent wall murals, the Azoa Mariam and Ura Kidane Mehret churches, its architectural style is a typical example of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church having mud plastered round wall with conical thatched roof. Ura is known especially for its fine frescoes, manuscripts, ecclesiastical objects like crown of various emperors dated from the 14thc, processional crosses of silver& gold, silver-drum and royal vestments, and an impressive display of illuminated bibles written in Ge'ez, the religious language from which Amharic is derived. And then walk through dense forest with lots of bird life & coffee plantations.

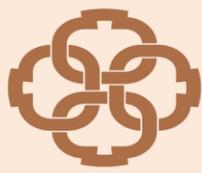


And in late afternoon enjoy the sightseeing in Bahir Dar - have a look around the city of Bahir dar including Agelgil Market & Bazawit Hill Top which offers a spectacular view of the surrounding, the city, the islands of Lake Tana and Blue Nile leaving the lake. With some luck hippopotamus colonies can be seen at the bottom. There is the palace of Emperor Hailesillase built in the 1960s which you could see from the outside.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Kuriftu Resort & Spa <https://kurifturesorts.com/bahir-dar>

Avanti Blue Nile Resort <http://www.bluenileresorthotels.com/>



Following breakfast you fly to the small town of Lalibela, which is home to one of the world's most astounding sacred sites, comprising eleven medieval rock-hewn churches, each carved entirely out of a single piece of stone.



Lalibela, the 'New Jerusalem', was built by King Lalibela 'with the help of angels' in the 12th century, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its eleven rock-hewn churches. Perched among wild craggy mountains and vast rocky escarpments, there is a stark cathedral-like grandeur to Lalibela. The houses of Lalibela are of a design unlike anywhere else in Ethiopia, two-storey circular stone constructs that huddle in an amorphous mass over the steep slopes on which the town is built.

The rock-hewn churches are large and several are more than ten metres high. Because they are carved below ground level, they are ringed by trenches and courtyards, the sides of which are cut into with stone graves and hermit cells, and connected to each other by a tangled maze of tunnels and passages.



The eleven rock churches, thought to be at least 200 years old, are divided into two groups and are visited by foot. The steps are uneven and walking around can require a little agility.

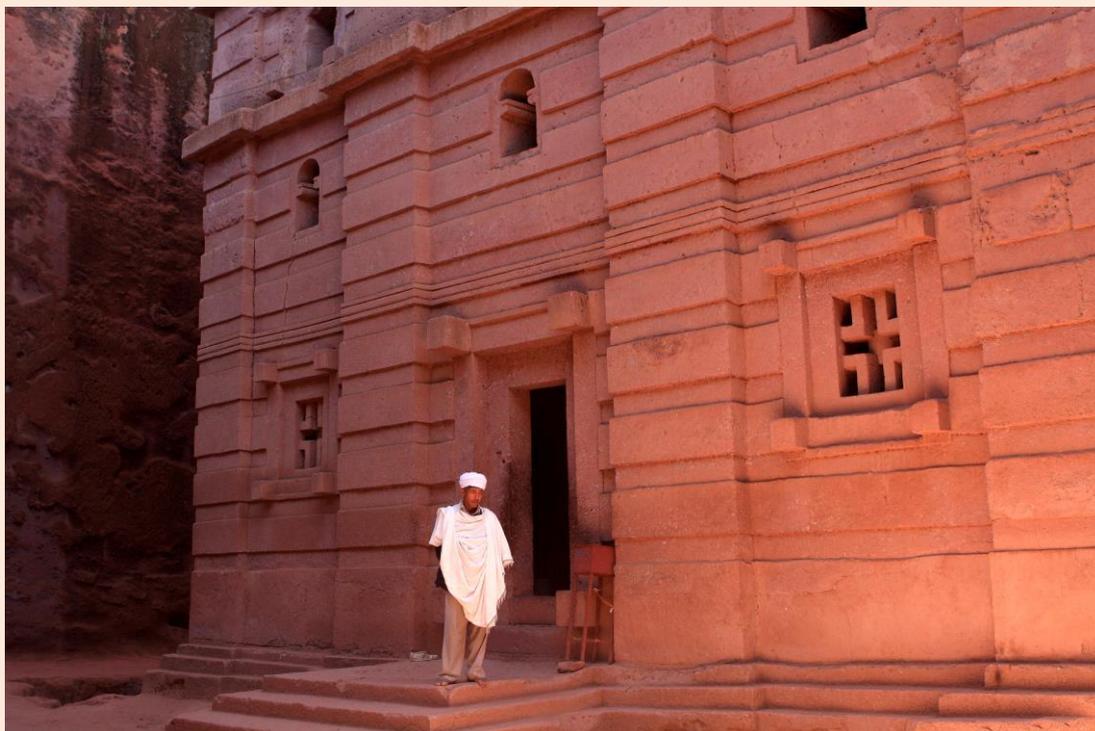
After the decline of the Axumite Empire, lamenting their lost grandeur, Ethiopia's rulers retreated with their Christian subjects to the lofty escarpment of the central uplands. There, protected by mountain battlements more formidable than anything the hand of man could fashion, they were able to repel an increasingly expansionist and militant Islamic army by trapping and confusing their enemies in the precipitous maze of valleys that intersects the high plateau. Inevitably, a fortress mentality took root: an intense suspicion of the motives of strangers, a hatred of intrusion and interference, and a protective secrecy. From roughly the seventh to the 16th century AD, the Ethiopians were encompassed by the enemies of their religion, and were described by the British historian Edward Gibbon as having "slept for near a thousand years, forgetful of the world by whom they were forgotten". It is true, moreover, that in holding back those who sought to destroy their faith, the highlanders also effectively cut themselves off the evolving mainstream of Christian culture. However, this is the only sense in which they slept. Their unique, idiosyncratic civilisation was otherwise very much awake, a singular and spirited affirmation of the creative power of the human intellect.

Lalibela, previously known as Roha, was named after the king. The word itself, which translates to mean 'the bees', recognises his sovereignty and the people of the region still recount the legend. Lalibela was born in Roha in the second half of the 12th century, the youngest son of the royal line of the Zagwe dynasty, which then ruled over much of northern Ethiopia. Despite several elder brothers, he was destined for greatness from his earliest days. Not long after his birth, his mother found a swarm of bees around his crib and recalled



an old belief that the animal world foretold important futures. She cried out: "The bees know that this child will become king".

At the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century, King Lalibela of the Zagwe dynasty built a series of rock-hewn churches. There are eleven churches in the town named after him, with others in the surrounding countryside. All are still in use today.



It is estimated that the churches took 25 years to construct. For the kingdom based around Roha to have kept a large work force engaged in economically unproductive labour for such a long period means that it disposed of a large economic surplus and was very wealthy. The area was clearly fertile and agriculturally productive, whereas now deforestation and other forms of ecological degradation have made it barren.

In the afternoon visit the north-west cluster of churches consists of Bet Medhane Alem, Bet Maryam, Bet Meskel, Bet Danaghel, Bet Debre Sina, and Bet Golgotha. Also included in this tour is the isolated monolith of Bet Giyorgis (the Church of St George). Bet Medhane Alem is the largest monolithic rock-hewn church.

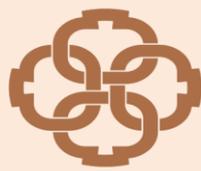
Take a part in a traditional coffee ceremony.

Ethiopia's coffee ceremony is an integral part of the social and cultural life. It is an important cultural ritual that's been passed from generation to generation. An invitation to attend a coffee ceremony is considered as a mark of friendship or respect and is an example of Ethiopian hospitality.

Accommodation: Sora Lodge <http://soralodgelalibela.com/>

Alternative: Maribela Hotel <https://hotelmaribela.com/>

Mezena Lodge <https://mezenalodge.com/>



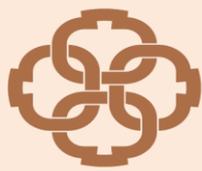
Accommodation overviews in Lalibela

Sora Lodge <http://soralodgelalibela.com/>

Sora Lodge offers a unique and spectacular view of the Asheten Mariam Mountain, the valleys and countryside villages around Lalibela. All rooms in our three-storeyed main building have a large private veranda facing east, providing unforgettable views of the sunrise, while the sunset can be watched from the common verandas facing west. They provide 6 tukuls/ traditionally round huts, 12 rock hewn rooms, tree houses & 9 standard rooms equipped with modern amenities and neat, private bathrooms with hot showers. The restaurant offers a stunning view of the valley, the river, the surrounding mountains and the small villages nearby. And their menu includes Ethiopian and Western cuisine.

Alternative: Maribela Hotel <https://hotelmaribela.com/>

Hotel Maribela is located in the heart of the Lalibela Mountains, spacious and modern rooms, all with breathtaking views of the Ethiopian highlands. Hotel Maribela was built with a very appealing design, inspired by the famous rock churches of Lalibela. The tasteful interior decoration gives every guest the very best in Lalibela hospitality. Each of the 20 rooms has a private balcony with day-beds from which to enjoy the panoramic mountain views. The rooms come with single, double or twin beds, mostly four-posters with attractive traditional engravings; all rooms are en-suite and have a light and airy ambience. Both local and international dishes are served in the restaurant, free Wi- fi service is also available.



Mezena Lodge <https://mezenalodge.com/> Mezena Lodge sits among a grove of trees, possesses extraordinary views across the valley towards the town of Lalibela, and consists of 30 bungalows and a main lodge. The main lodge includes two restaurants, a large bar, a coffee ceremony room, gift shop, and a spa – sauna, steam room, massage service, gym and a large terrace with a swimming pool. Wi-Fi is also available throughout the lodge.

DAY 09
LALIBELA

B-L-D

In the morning road journey to the cave church of Yemrehane Christos, 40kms, built by the king of the same name before the reign of King Lalibela. The church is constructed inside a cave, in Axumite style, similar to the church at Debre Damo, with alternating levels of wood and stone.

If the date (to be advised) meets, attend the yearly celebration of King & Saint Yimrehane Kirstos which is attended by tens thousands of pilgrims from all over Ethiopia, making it one of the most joyous annual pilgrimages in Lalibela. It is celebrated with greater devotion, the congregation wrapped in white shawls sing with joy along with the priests' one after the other and among the swaying choir the priests chanting, dancing, and singing around the church letting out a deep boom of the drums and female's voice respond in a piercing chorus of ululations. Then return back to the town.

Following lunch visit the second group of the rock churches. The south-east cluster of churches is more irregular in design than the north-western cluster. Several of the individual churches in this cluster are thought to have been secular in origin, and some predate the reign of King Lalibela by five centuries. The churches in the south-east cluster include Bet Gabriel-Rafael, Bet Abba Libanos, Bet Lehem, Bet Emanuel, and Bet Mercurios. According to legend, Bet Abba Libanos was built overnight by Lalibela's wife, Meskel Kebre, who was assisted by a group of angels.

The rest of the day at leisure or you can learn about Ethiopian culinary. You'll experience best how to make Ethiopian foods like injera, shiro and other vegetarian options & then dine in a local family house. Possible to start from shopping the ingredients like the vegetables (fresh)...

To the people of Ethiopia, Injera is the staple food, eaten with every meal of the day. Injera is a pancake (tasted a bit sour) shaped product mostly made from teff, although other grain products, like maize are sometimes also used. Injera is eaten with hands, by picking up meat or vegetables first and then dipping and soaking it in sauce of gravy. Teff is a gluten free grain, grown in the highlands of Ethiopia.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Accommodation: Sora Lodge <http://soralodgelalibela.com/>

Alternative: Maribela Hotel <https://hotelmariabela.com/>

Mezena Lodge <https://mezenalodge.com/>

DAY 10

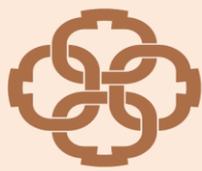
HELICOPTER TRANSFER TO ARBA MINCH

B- L- D

After a relaxing morning in your hotel transfer to Arba Minch, the home of two Ethiopia's largest Rift Valley lakes, beautiful landscape (God's Bridge), forty (40) springs Nechisar National Park, crocodile ranches, crocodiles market and the highland of Dorze village on its doorstep. The city is also a gateway to the Omo valley and Konso on the Southern circuit. It is one of the best destinations in Ethiopia.



Visit the home of the Dorze people at Chencha, 40kms from the city. The Dorze are renowned cotton weavers whose tall beehive-shaped dwellings are among the most distinctive traditional structures to be seen anywhere in Africa. The main occupations of the region are subsistence farming and weaving. The Shama cloth produced around Chencha is regarded to be the finest in Ethiopia: Plain white Gabbi robes and brightly colored scarf-like Netalas are sold along the roadside. Explore the local Dorze market decorated with many colours.



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Late afternoon, enjoy the boat trip on Lake Chamo - one of the best features of the park. Attraction of the boat trip includes viewing of large number of hippos and crocodiles from a very close range. There is a good place to watch large number of crocodiles on the shore of Lake Chamo. The place known as "Azo-Gebeya" meaning Crocodile Market offers one of Africa's most impressive displays of big crocks.





ABSOLUTE ETHIOPIA TOURS

Building Absolute Vacations!

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Haile Resorts 4* <http://www.hailehotelsandresorts.com/>

Paradise lodge ≥3** <https://www.paradiselodgeethiopia.com/>

Accommodation overviews in Arba Minch

The Haile Resort in Arba Minch is located on the edge of the precipice on the edge of the East African Rift Valley and greets its guests with a wide view of the Abaya and Lake Chamo. The spacious rooms have air conditioning and a balcony, inviting you to rest. The restaurant serves international food. Guests can pamper themselves in the on-site wellness center or enjoy the view over the lakes and the Grabenbruch by the pool.

DAY 10

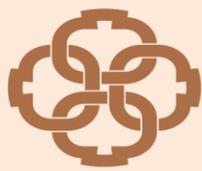
B- L- D

HELICOPTER TRANSFER TO KARA

Following a relaxed morning in Arba Minch, transfer to Kara Village, Ethiopia's Famous Body Painters.

The remote expanse of the lower Omo River basin is home to 15 seasonal nomadic tribes, whose range is limited by loosely defined traditional tribal land borders, the parched hinterlands and the mighty vein of watery life that is the River Omo.





ABSOLUTE ETHIOPIA TOURS

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Famous for their body and face painting, the Kara or Karo people are a Nilotic ethnic group that resides along the east banks of the river in southern Ethiopia. With an estimated population between 1000 and 3000, the Kara tribe is one of the smallest tribes amongst the Omo valley tribes. They practice flood retreat cultivation, grow maize, sorghum, and beans. They fish, breed cattle and goats, and they largely rely on the rivers yearly flood for sustenance.



The clay hair bun can take up to three days to construct, and is usually re-made every three to six months. Their painted facemasks are spectacular. Karo women scarify their chests to beautify themselves. Scars are cut with a knife, and ash is rubbed in them to produce a raised welt. Being the smallest ethnic group in the area, this group obviously struggles with direct threats from nearby peoples that have more gun power, outnumber them, and likely build coalitions with one another.



The Kara and Hamar are closely related and they speak virtually identical Omotic languages. Their tribes are of the same ancestry and some of their cultural practices intertwine, making room for a rich cultural history together. Their neighbors include the Bana, Hamar, Bashada, Nyangatom, and Mursi and they have traded amongst each other for beads, cloth, cattle, and food.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Lumale Camping site

Accommodation overviews in Kara - Dus village

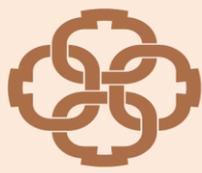
Lumale camp lies nestled under an ancient ficus grove in a stunning location overlooking a sweeping ox bow bend of the river Omo, within the heart of the unique and remote cultural wonderland of the Omo River basin. The camp offers a once in a lifetime holiday experience. Lumale camp though eco-friendly and community friendly located near the village of Duss remains intimate and exclusive. It offers a perfect base to explore and discover the wonders of the tribes, traditions and cultures of the Omo River Basin with the genuine thrill of a real African adventure coupled with high standards of style and comfort. Duss is the seat of the Karo government and their unique log constructed parliament.



DAY 11
EXCURSION TO TURMI

B- L- D

Turmi is the home for the Hammer tribes who are well known for their body decoration, moonlight dance (Evangedi Dance) and Bull jumping. Bull jumping is a ceremony, which marks the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. The elite jump over a line of 10 to 30 bulls four times completely nude without falling and joins the next rank called Maze. Maza are other men that have successfully completed the bull jumping event.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Lumale Camping site

DAY 12

BOAT RIDE TO MURSI VILLAGE

B- L- D

Following breakfast you will transfer to the unforgettable remote region of Mursi tribes by a motor boat. The Mursi are noted for their body scarification, body painting and most striking is the clay plate that is inserted into the lower lips of the women. They can be reached after boating upstream and then a short hike to their village.

They are the most renowned of the Omotic - speakers, famed for their practice of inserting large clay plates behind the lower lips of their women and colourful dresses and also they go in for body scarification.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Lumale Camping site

DAY 13

B- L- D

BOAT RIDE TO MUGUJI / KWEGU or OMO DELTA

Following breakfast boat ride to Muguji / Kwegu. Or full day boat ride to Omo Delta.

The Kwegu people (or Muguji people) are hunter-gathering and agro-fishery people of Surmic ethnic extraction inhabiting the shores of the Omo River in southwestern Ethiopia. The ethnic Kwegu who are one of the smallest ethnic groups in Ethiopia with the population of about 700 and facing extinction resides predominantly Southwest, Omo River west bank, Kuchur village, and a small group in the north.

They are primarily fishermen, hunters and cultivators; they spend a large part of their time on the river and are noted for their canoe-making skills. The speed of the river's current and the dangers from the crocodiles render these skills vital.

The Omo Delta is a little known corner of the Valley. Accessed by boat, and an important archaeological site in terms of tracing our evolutionary beginnings, the Omo Delta is a stunningly remote area of islands and marshes. Inhabited by the Dassanech and crocodile hunting El Molo tribes, it is also of immense anthropological importance. Virtually untouched, the Dassanech villages are scattered among the islands, and in the riverine forest that runs north along the banks of the Omo River, and on into southern Ethiopia.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Lumale Camping site



DAY 14

HELICOPTER TRANSFER TO BALE MTS.

B - L - D

SANETTI PLATEAU & HARENNA FOREST

Full day visit with picnic lunch on Sanetti Plateau, 4000masl, with its striking Afro-Alpine flora, such as the Giant Lobelia and Red Hot Poker. It is the best place in Ethiopia to see the Simien Wolf, the rarest canid in the world, while the huge rodent population, including the endemic Giant Mole Rat, supports a variety of raptors. The rare Wattled Crane is often seen, while there are a good number of the Spot-breasted Plover. Tullu Dimtu at 4377 m is the second highest mountain in Ethiopia and then return back to the Harenna forest and birding around the lodge here one comes encounter with olive baboon, gureza monkey, bush buck, bush pig, leopard, lions and wild dogs.

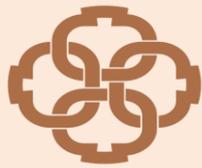


Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodations: Bale Mts. Lodge

Accommodation overviews in Bale Mts

Bale Mountain Lodge is a thatch, stone and wood build situated in the Harenna Forest. It has 12 guestrooms including a romantic treehouse. Each room has a wood burning stove and colourful throws on the beds, with matching curtains. The main lodge has a lounge and dining area, and comes with a bar, fireplace, natural



waterfall dip and shared terrace. A 'splash' pool beneath a natural waterfall is a unique feature of the lodge, and a sauna is planned.

DAY 15

HIKING IN THE BALE MTS.

B - L - D

Today transfer to Dinsho the head quarter of the Bale Mountain National park, is inhabited by Oromo people look for the three of the endemic mammals: Menelik's Bushbuck, Semien Fox, and Mountain Nyala. And birds Blue-winged goose, Spot-breasted lapwing, Abyssinian long claw, Wattled ibis, Black-headed siskin, Rouget's rail. Other mammals you can expect to see here are warthog, boor reedbuck, Gureza monkey, as well as several other water and grassland birds.



After your picnic lunch or lunch in local restaurant, make a short hike along the woodland part of the national park chance to spot endemic Mountain Nyala, Menelick Bushback, Bohor Reedbuck and bird species. Then transfer to the lodge for the overnight stay.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodations: *Bale Mts. Lodge* <http://www.balemountainlodge.com/>



DAY 16
HELICOPTER TRANSFER TO ADDIS ABABA

B-L-D

Following breakfast transfer back to Addis Ababa and either you can have free time at your hotel or go for shopping in Addis or more visits in Addis Ababa city.

Tonight you will have a wonderful cultural evening at one of Addis Ababa Restaurant; Ethiopia is a mosaic of people with more than 80 languages, different lifestyles, costumes and cultural dances. Take a chance to experience some of these cultural dances and traditional meals with a drink of Tej, a type of wine made from Honey.

A Day use at your hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are included

Accommodation: Sheraton Addis Luxury Collection >5* <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/addlc-sheraton-addis-a-luxury-collection-hotel-addis-ababa/.com> or

Hyatt Regency Addis Ababa Hotel https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/ethiopia/hyatt-regency-addis-ababa/addra?src=corp_lclb_gmb_seo_eame_addra

DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight. Many thanks & have a safe flight.

End of Services

B = Breakfast **L = Lunch** **D = Dinner**

YOUR ITINERARY INCLUDES

Accommodation:	All accommodation as detailed with private facilities.
Meals/Beverages:	Meals on Full board basis Breakfasts, Lunches & dinners with one soft drink or bottled water per meal per person are included
Transfers/Transport:	Airport welcome, assistance with luggage, and transportation by air-conditioned comfortable spacious vehicles, complete with bottled water.
Sightseeing:	Multilingual guide is available with a supplement
Cultural activities	Cultural activities mentioned in day by day are included
Entrance Fees:	All entrance fees as per the program are included
Local taxes	All necessary local Government taxes are included
Porterage fees	Porterage fees at the Airport and Hotels.
Other activities	Coffee ceremony, and Honey wine drinks (Tej).



Traditional farewell Dinner in Addis Ababa

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Domestic Flights: A strict luggage restriction of 20kgs per person and hand luggage, applies to all light aircraft flights within Ethiopia. It is important that you carry soft-sided or "barrel" bags, as hard-sided suitcases (Samsonite-style) cannot be fitted into the small holds of light aircraft if you use the charter flights on this program.

Excess Baggage: Excess baggage may be safely stored at hotel in Addis Ababa.

YOUR ITINERARY EXCLUDES

Miscellaneous: Visa for Ethiopia.

Flight International & Helicopter transfers.
Helicopter transfers fare is quoted separately on the flight section.

Gratitude Tipping

Tour Leader Charge FOC

Insurance: Insurance coverage of personal loss, injury, illness or damages incurred during your trip. We strongly recommend travel /cancellation insurance.

Personal expenses: Items of a purely personal nature such as drinks (unless noted), laundry, dry cleaning, internet, fax, or telephone charges and transfers/sightseeing or meals not included in "Your itinerary includes".

Baggage allowance: Excess baggage charge.

Tour Package - to be advised