



adventure
associates

Ethiopia – Ancient Abyssinia

A BOUTIQUE ADVENTURE TO AN ANCIENT LAND OF WONDERS

EXPEDITION MANUAL



Welcome

The Ancient Lands of Ethiopia await

We are thrilled to offer an amazing journey of discovery to the Horn of Africa; lands which were once traversed by the caravans of the Queen of Sheba. Few nations, if any, can boast the historic splendour of Ethiopia, with its rock-hewn churches of living worship and traditions.

Ethiopia is a nation of surprises, full of diversity and contrast, from the ancient to the modern. Legend has it that Emperor Menelik I, the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, brought the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Aksum, where he settled and established one of the world's longest known, uninterrupted monarchical dynasties.

We have assembled a superb mix of features and attractions for this adventure - including the Bale and Simien Mountains and the colourful Omo Valley.

Our journey is one of ease and comfort, full of fascinating cultural legacies. It is a tour offering exceptional value. Over and above the extensive sightseeing programme, you'll have very little additional expenditure throughout the journey.

We look forward to welcoming you!



Murals of saints line the walls of Ethiopian Orthodox Churches



Hamerkop



Freshly roasted coffee

PROPOSED ITINERARY

Ethiopia is an ancient land, dating back to the very beginnings of mankind. It is also the land of the Queen of Sheba; a place of legendary rulers; fabulous kingdoms of ancient history. Mother Nature was in a playful mood when she created Ethiopia. The result is a land that varies greatly from one region to the next. With more than 80 languages and some 200 dialects, each ethnic group preserves its own unique customs and traditions. You will find all the major religions of the world in Ethiopia. But for all the exotic variety, the people of Ethiopia are as one and their friendliness and hospitality infectious.

Our 27-day Ancient Abyssinia tour can be divided into two separate tours:

- **The Diverse South: 14 days**
- **Ancient North: 15 days**

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All domestic flights
- All airport/hotel/airport transfers
- All accommodation with private facilities at the best available hotels & lodges
- All meals from day 1 lunch to day 27 breakfast
- Adventure Associates escort & English speaking local guide
- All sightseeing, boat trips, entrance and park fees
- Spacious air-conditioned coaster bus and comfortable 4WD vehicles
- 1 litre of bottled water per person per day
- All service charges and taxes

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International airfares and taxes
- Other meals or sightseeing not specified in the itinerary
- Personal travel insurance
- Medical expenses, vaccinations etc.
- Visa costs
- Tips/gratuities
- Personal expenses like alcoholic drinks, laundry and communication

Dancing Hamar – tribal initiation ceremony of young men



PROPOSED ITINERARY – ANCIENT ABYSSINIA

PART 1: The Diverse South (14 days)

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Days 1-2: Join Addis Ababa (2355m)

On arrival you will be met at the airport by a representative of Adventure Associates and transferred to the group hotel. We will spend these days exploring the capital and be treated to an authentic Ethiopian cooking class and coffee ceremony. We also plan to visit the Fistula Hospital.

Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital (also known as "Hamlin Fistula Hospital") and its regional Hamlin Fistula Centres provide comprehensive care for women who suffer from incontinence, physical impairment, shame and marginalisation as a result of an obstetric fistula. The hospital was created by the Australian obstetrician and gynaecologists Catherine Hamlin and her husband Reginald Hamlin to care for women with childbirth injuries and has been in operation since 1974.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's sprawling capital in the highlands; bordering the Great Rift Valley; is the country's commercial and cultural hub. Its National Museum exhibits Ethiopian art, traditional crafts and fossils, including replicas of the famous early hominid, 'Lucy'. We also visit the burial place of the 20th-century emperor Haile Selassie and the copper-domed Holy Trinity Cathedral, a neo-baroque architectural landmark. **B,L,D**

Day 3: Addis Ababa – Jinka

Following breakfast we fly south to Jinka. After checking in to our lodge we will visit the Ari village. Ari people are privileged to have the largest territory of all the tribes in the area, and the most fertile land for growing coffee and corn. The women are known for selling pottery and wearing skirts made from banana trees. **B,L,D**



Addis Ababa



Lucy, the early hominid

Traditional Meskel umbrellas



Day 4: Jinka – Turmi

This morning we visit the South Omo Museum, which contains cultural displays from the 16 different ethnic groups living in the region. After lunch, we drive to Turmi and on the way visit a Banna village. **B,L,D**

Day 5: Turmi – Omorate – Turmi

After breakfast we drive to Omorate and visit the Dassanach people. The Dassanach are traditionally pastoralists, but in recent years have become agro-pastoralist, which means they grow crops and raise livestock. Back to Turmi for lunch and in the late afternoon we visit the Hamar village. The Hamar women are striking, wearing beautiful colourful beaded skins, ornate necklaces and metal bangles around their wrist and ankles. Famous for their hairstyle – a crown of long dread-lock braids covered in ochre. These women are the most colourful of the Omo people. The Hamar are known for their unique custom of "bull jumping," that initiates a boy into manhood. First, female relatives dance and invite

whipping from men who have recently been initiated. This shows their support of the initiate and their scars give them a right to demand his help in time of need. The boy must run back and forth twice across the backs of a row of bulls or castrated steers and is ridiculed if he fails. **B,L,D**

Day 6: Turmi – Konso – Arba Minch

Today we drive to Arba Minch and on the way visit Konso. Known for its stonewalled village and cultural landscape, Konso society is largely agricultural, involving irrigation and terracing of mountain slopes. It is recognised for its communal and sustainable terrace system, which is registered by UNESCO. Staple crops include sorghum and corn, with cash crops including cotton and coffee. Cattle, sheep, and goats are raised for food and milk. Their village is also well known for traditional wooden totems "waka", used to mark graves of their clan chief and warriors. Although today there are marked differences between the Konso and their Oromo neighbours. **B,L,D**



A young Dasanesh girl from Omorate



Hamar women



Konso wooden totems called waka

Bull jumping ceremony of the Hamar tribe



Day 7: Arba Minch – Lake Chamo - Dorze Village (2300m)

Today we take a boat trip on Lake Chamo. Lake Chamo is one of the lakes of the famous Rift Valley with a surface area of 317 km². The lake is fringed with beds of Typha (Cattail). During the boat trip, we will have the opportunity to spot Hippo, Nile crocodile and aquatic birds. We will also journey to the Dorze Village located in the Guge Mountains. The Dorze occupy the Eastern edge of the Gamo Highlands above Lake Abaya, about 2600m above sea level. The Dorze people are famous for their unique beehive houses built from bamboo tree, dancing, traditional weaving and authentic lifestyle. We take lunch at Dorze Lodge and then take a picturesque walk overlooking the Rift Valley and its lakes. **B,L,D**

Day 8: Arba Minch – Lake Langano

Today we journey to the Hara Lodge, located on the shore of Lake Langano, another of the Rift Valley lakes. En-route we stop in Shshamene for lunch and

transfer into 4WDs. After checking into the lodge, we can explore this water sanctuary, which is rich in bird and other wildlife. **B,L,D**

Day 9: Lake Langano and Chitu Crater Lake

This day is dedicated to exploring more of the Rift Valley lakes. We will take a drive to Chitu Crater Lake. The lake is nestled within a tuff explosion crater that formed some 10,000 years ago due to volcanic activity. The surface of the 20m deep Lake stands a full 80m below the crater rim and its saline algae-rich shallows harbour a semi-resident flock of 10,000-20,000 flamingos. **B,L,D**

Days 10-12: Lake Langano – Bale Mountains (4000m)

En-route to the Bale Mountains we visit the park's headquarters and hope to see two endemic mammals, the Mountain Nyala and Menelik's Bushbuck. We proceed to the Bale Mountain Lodge via the Sanetti Plateau where we spend the next two



A typical Dorze house



Dorze's are famous for their weaving

A Magical Evening on Lake Lagonao



days. Bale Mountain National Park contains the Haremma forest, a largely unexplored area situated to the south of the mountains and thought to contain many undiscovered species of reptile and a wealth of birds, including the endemic white-backed black tit, Abyssinian catbird and woodpecker. The Park offers some wonderful trekking opportunities and the largest population of Ethiopian wolves is found here. Other mammals we might see are olive baboon, guereza monkey and if we are lucky the Bale monkey **B,L,D**

Day 13: Bale Mountains – Addis Ababa

After breakfast we drive back across the beautiful countryside of Sanetti Plateau and take an early afternoon flight from Goba back to Addis Ababa. **B,L,D**

Those joining the Ancient North tour arrive today on day 13 in Addis Ababa

The immense escarpment of Tigray



PART 2: Ancient North (14 days +1)

Day 14: Addis Ababa – Mekele – Wukro – Gheralta

After breakfast we take a morning flight to Mekele and then drive to Gheralta. On the way we visit the Wukro Chirkos church, a semi-monolith that juts out from a low cliff and is one of the most accessible rock-hewn churches in Tigray. Time permitting we also plan to visit the Wukro Archaeological Museum, famous for its incredibly well-preserved 2,800-year-old Adi Akaweh sacrificial altar, which was discovered as recently as 2007 and ranked amongst the ten most significant ancient artefacts from Ethiopia. **B,L,D**

Days 15-16: Gheralta – Tigray region

The scenery of Gheralta and the Tigray region is stunning. The Tigray is the homeland of the Tigrayans, Irob and Kunama people. We take time to explore the Tigray rock-hewn churches



The fairytale-like Haremma Forest



Ethiopian wolf



The rock church of Wukro

that are unique and predate those of Lalibela. Many Tigrayan churches were carved into the existing caves and crevices of impregnable looking cliff faces. We hope to explore the Abune Yemata at Guh, Abuna Adraham Debre Tsion and the Teka Tesfai cluster of churches. We will also take some time to just relax around the lodge and admire the breathtaking view. **B,L,D**

Day 17: Gheralta – Aksum (2131m)

After breakfast we drive to Aksum via Adigrat, and on the way stop to explore the Temple of Yeha -site of the Temple of the Moon, Ethiopia's oldest standing structure. It is also famed for its amazing rectangular stone temple, the oldest known sacred site in Ethiopia, dated from around 500 BC. In the afternoon we reach the historic city of Aksum and will visit the obelisks, the largest single pieces of standing stones anywhere in the world and a UNESCO listed site. Time permitting we also plan to visit the Aksum Museum

Simien Mountains in full bloom

and Mariam Sion Church – built on the site of Ethiopia's first church AD. The Palace of Sheba; Tombs of Kings Kaleb and Gebre Meskel. **B,L,D**

Day 18: Aksum – Limalimo (2950m)

There is much to see in Aksum, so if we missed some of the sites on the previous day, we will have a little time this morning before driving to Limalimo Lodge. This drive is especially scenic, travelling through the lowlands of the Tekezze Valley and then climbing up into the Simien Mountains National Park. **B,L,D**

Days 19-20: Simien Mountains (highest peak 4550m)

During these two days we spend our time exploring and viewing the endemic fauna and flora of the Simien Mountains National Park at over 3200 metres. The Simien Mountains National Park is a UNESCO listed World Heritage Site with exceptional mountainous scenery. It is here that the Gelada



Gheralta and its breathtaking vistas



Stunning frescoes inside the Abune Yemata Guh



Aksum stela field

Baboon (bleeding heart Baboon) is found. **B,L,D**

Day 21: Limalimo – Gondar (2133m)

Following breakfast we drive through the beautiful countryside to Gondar. On arrival we will have lunch and then the rest of the afternoon will be spent visiting the castle compound of Fasil Ghebbi UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Debre Birhan Sellassie church (Light of the Trinity) with its 16th century paintings and frescoes. Gondar was the first capital city of the Ethiopian empire, which began in 1632 with the reign of King Fasilides. In Gondar there are dozens of castles built by various emperors over the course of 236 years. Our time in Gondar includes visits to the palaces, residences and open-air baths of King Fasilides. **B,L,D**

Day 22: Gondar – Lalibela

In the morning we will take a flight to Lalibela. After lunch we visit the Southern cluster of the rock-hewn

The Church of Saint George

churches – Lalibela was the 3rd capital of Ethiopia from 11th to 13th century and it was during this period that King Lalibela excavated the magnificent rock-hewn churches an official 8th Wonder of the World. **B,L,D**

Day 23: Lalibela – Yemrehanne Kirstos Monastery

Lalibela is one of Ethiopia's holiest cities, and a centre of pilgrimage. The population of Lalibela is almost completely Ethiopian Orthodox Christian. Ethiopia was one of the earliest nations to adopt Christianity in the first half of the fourth century, and its historical roots date to the time of the Apostles. The churches themselves date from the seventh to thirteenth centuries, and are traditionally dated to the reign of the Zagwe dynasty King Gebre Mesqel Lalibela.

Following breakfast we visit the northern cluster of rock churches, here we find the famous church of Saint George. After lunch, we drive through



Gelada Baboon



The Royal Castles of Gondar



Monastery of Yemrehanne Kirstos



the picturesque Lasta Mountains to the monastery of Yemrehanne Kirstos. This 'cave church' predates the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, and is one of the most beautiful and colourful of its kind. Built from marble and wood, it is beautifully decorated both inside and out with remarkable architectural skill. The cave also contains many mummified bodies of pilgrims from centuries past. **B,L,D**

Day 24: Lalibela – Gondar – Bahir Dar

We fly back to Gondar and continue driving to Bahir Dar. Along the way we will stop at the Bezawit Palace area for vast views of the Blue Nile River and Lake Tana. **B,L,D**

Day 25: Bahir Dar – Blue Nile Falls

In the morning we visit the Blue Nile Falls a 32 km drive southwest of Bahir Dar, to the small town of Tiss Abay and then walk for about 30 minutes to a viewpoint of the falls – estimated to be between 37m and 45m high, consisting of four streams that originally vary from

a trickle in the dry season to over 400m wide in the rainy season. **B,L,D**

Day 26: Bahir Dar – Lake Tana – Addis Ababa

Today we will take a boat excursion in Ethiopia's largest water body, Lake Tana (3,600 sq. km) to visit the monasteries of Ura Kidane Mihret and Azwa Mariam, which are found on the largest peninsula of the lake. These monasteries are known for the colourful frescoes of religious scenes, various ancient crosses, paintings, murals and an impressive display of illuminated Bibles written in Ge'ez, Ethiopia's oldest language. In the afternoon we fly back to Addis Ababa and enjoy a final group dinner. **B,L,D**

Day 27: Depart Addis Ababa

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for onward flights home. **B**



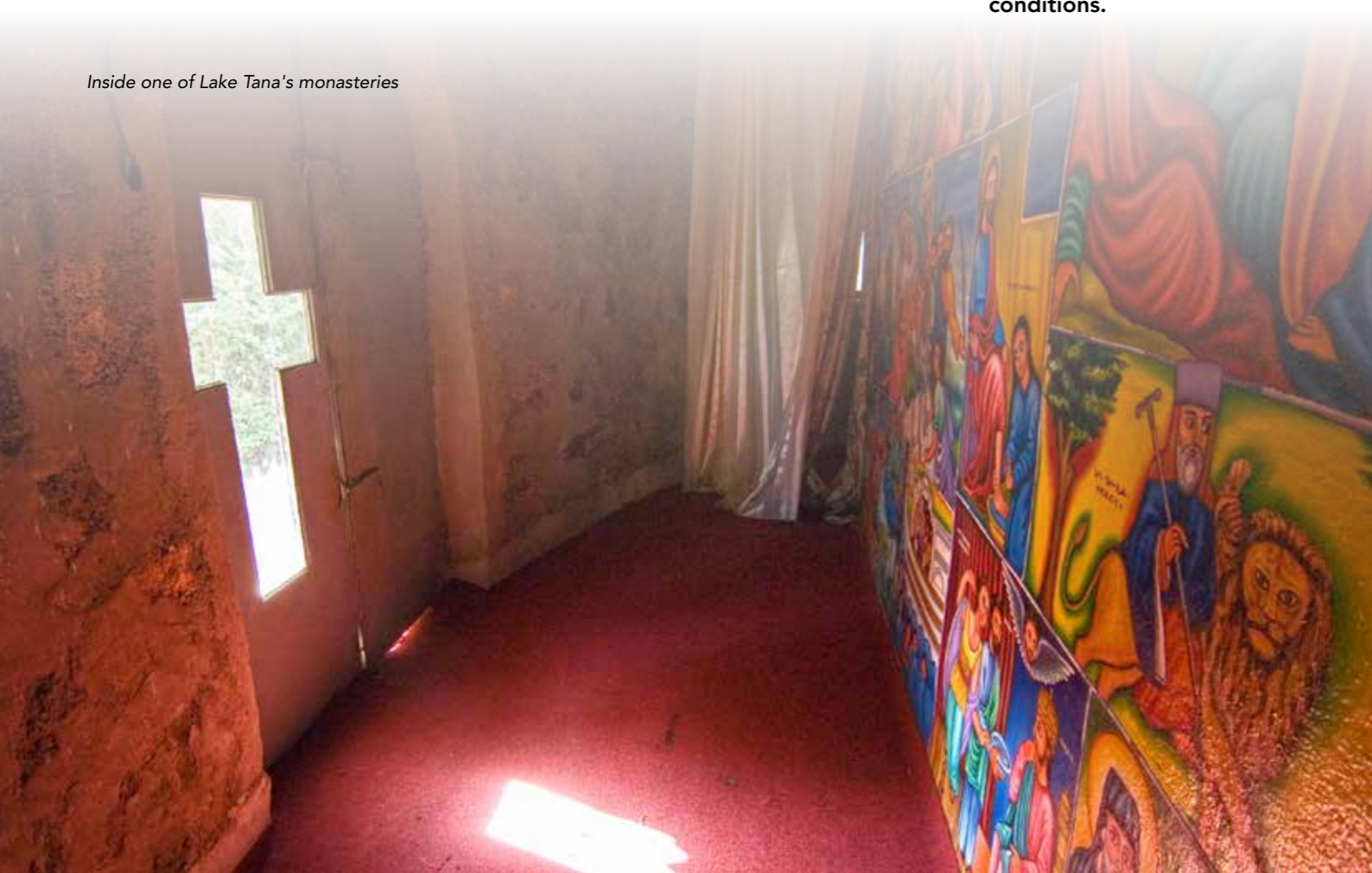
Blue Nile Falls



The celebration of Meskel –27 Sept

Please note: The proposed itinerary is just a guide and changes could be made due to events out of our control; such as domestic flight schedule changes, hotel availability and road conditions.

Inside one of Lake Tana's monasteries



HOTELS WE USE

We have researched and selected the best hotels in each region we visit to make sure you're always looked after by friendly staff, that you enjoy good food and have clean and comfortable rooms with en-suites. Here are some examples of the wonderful Ethiopian accommodation you'll experience.



Days 1,2,13,26 Zeist Lodge, Addis Ababa



Day 3 Eco Omo Safari Lodge, Jinka



Days 4,5 Paradise Lodge, Turmi



Days 6,7 Paradise Lodge, Arba Minch



Days 8,9 Hara Lodge, Lake Langano



Days 10, 11, 12 Bale Mountains Lodge



Days 14,15,16 Korkor Lodge, Gheralta



Day 17 Sabeen International Hotel, Aksum



Days 18,19,20 Limalimo Lodge, Debarq



Day 21 Myleko Lodge, Gondar



Days 22,23 Mezena Lodge, Lalibela



Days 24,25 Kuriftu Resort and Spa, Bahir Dar

OUR EXPEDITION LEADERS

DANIEL ADEME TIRFE

Daniel is the Managing Director of our partner company in Ethiopia and will be our guide on tour. He is passionate about delivering a quality travel experience. Daniel has a vast knowledge of all aspects of Ethiopia, having been a high school teacher prior to developing an interest in tourism. The combination of his knowledge as a teacher, travel consultant and a naturally gregarious personality, makes him the ideal tour guide.

Daniel has travelled widely, attending workshops and training sessions in Africa and other parts of the world, as well as obtaining his MA degree in Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University, deepening his knowledge of the diverse cultures and peoples of Ethiopia.

Daniel's vision is to provide an authentic experience of his country, conserve the fragile environment, and to help boost the income of local communities through sustainable travel practices.

SUE WERNER

Sue graduated as a veterinary nurse before embarking on a more adventurous life as a professional outdoor guide. Over the past 25 years she has worked as an expedition leader, photographer and tour guide. Throughout that time she has been at the cutting edge of developments in adventure travel, mainly specialising in Antarctica and the High Arctic. Her enthusiasm has taken her to many remote corners of the world, including Ethiopia, Madagascar, the Amazon, Africa and the Himalaya. Spending three months living in Grytviken, working for the South Georgia Heritage Trust was a highlight of Sue's career. In January 2015, Sue took the helm at Adventure Associates and continues to plan even more exciting journeys to remote destinations.

Gelada Baboons en route to their cliff top evening abode



ETHIOPIA AT A GLANCE

GEOGRAPHY

Full name: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Location: Northeast Africa; it shares borders with Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya and Djibouti

Size: 1,104,300km²; the tenth-largest country in Africa

Climate: Varies by region, from temperate highlands to hot lowland desert

Capital: Addis Ababa, population 4 million

Main International Airport: Bole International Airport

PRACTICALITIES

Time Zone: GMT +3

Electricity: 220V current alternating at 50Hz. Plug standards vary; most common are the type C (European two-pin) and Type L (Italian three-pin)

Currency: Birr

International dialing code: +251

Driving side: Right

Visa: Required by all tourists

HUMAN STATISTICS

Population: 113.5 million (2020)

Life expectancy: 67.8 years (2020)

Poverty: Since 2000, when Ethiopia had one of the highest poverty rates in the world, households have

experienced a decade of remarkable progress in well being and the country has seen a 33% reduction in the share of the population living in poverty

Official languages: Amharigna (Amharic); Oromifa and English are mostly widely spoken

Religion: Predominantly Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Protestant Christianity

POLITICS & ECONOMY

Leader: President Sahle-Work Zewde (since October 2018)

Economy: Subsistence agriculture, coffee, chat, mining, tourism, Mineral exploration and mining has stepped up in recent years - there are reserves of natural gas, coal, gold, copper, tantalum, potash, zinc, iron ore, marble, precious and semi-precious stones

National Airline: Ethiopian Airlines

Flag: Vertical bands of green at the top, yellow in the centre and red at the base.

In the middle of this is a symbol representing the sun – a yellow pentagram from which, emanate several yellow rays

National anthem: "March Forward, Dear Mother Ethiopia"



Picturesque Simien Mountains National Park is UNESCO World Heritage listed



THE COUNTRY

GEOGRAPHY

Known as Abyssinia until the 20th century, Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa. Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia are known as the Horn of Africa, a name derived from its shape being reminiscent to a rhinoceros horn. Ethiopia is located in the eastern part of Africa lying between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer. It is bounded on the Northeast by Eritrea and Djibouti, on the east and southeast by Somalia, on the south by Kenya and on the west and northwest by Sudan. Since 1995, Ethiopia has been divided into 9 administrative regions (Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations and Nationalities, Harari, Benishangul, Gambela and Somali) and 2 city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa).

Ethiopia covers 1,122,000 square kilometres with a population of 113.5 million. 80-85% of the population lives in rural areas and depend for survival on agricultural products such as teff, wheat, maize, barley and sorghum. Ethiopia is the tenth largest and the third most populous state in Africa after Nigeria and Egypt.

A mountainous country, it is admired for its natural beauty. The Ethiopian plateau is divided into northeast and southwest by the Great Rift Valley that extends from Mozambique to the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley, passing in a south-north direction through Ethiopia. There are numerous lakes in the Great Rift Valley, many of them tourist destinations. The northern part of the Great Rift Valley known as the Danakil Depression is about 125m below sea level and the hottest region in Ethiopia, where temperatures climb to 50°C. To the west of the plateau lies the gorge of the Blue Nile River and Lake Tana, Ethiopia's largest lake and the source of the Nile River.

Although the average elevation of the plateau is about 1600 metres; the lowest point is the Danakil Depression (125m below sea level) and the highest peak is Ras Dashan (4620m above sea level) in the Simien Mountains.

CLIMATE

Ethiopia is in the tropical zone lying between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer. It has three different climate zones according to elevation.

Kolla (Tropical zone) – is below 1830m in elevation and has an average annual temperature of about 27°C with annual rainfall about 510mm. The Danakil Depression (Danakil Desert) is about the hottest region in Ethiopia where the temperature climbs up to 50°C.

Woina dega (Subtropical zone) - includes the highlands areas of 1830 – 2440m in elevation has an average annual temperature of about 22°C with annual rainfall between 510 and 1530mm.

Dega (Cool zone) – is above 2440m in elevation with an average annual temperature of about 16°C with annual rainfall between 1270 and 1280mm.

Ethiopian Seasons

There are three seasons in Ethiopia. September to February is the long dry season known as the bega; this is followed by a short rainy season, the belg, in March and April. May is a hot and dry month preceding the long rainy season (kremt) in June, July, and August. The coldest temperatures generally occur in December or January (bega) and the hottest in March, April, or May (belg). However, in many localities July has the coldest temperatures because of the moderating influence of rainfall.

WILDLIFE

Ethiopia has 31 endemic species of mammals. The African wild dog prehistorically had widespread distribution in the territory, however, with last sightings at Finicha'a, this canid is thought to be potentially extinct locally. The Ethiopian wolf is perhaps the most researched of all the endangered species within Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is a global centre of avian diversity. To date more than 856 bird species have been recorded, 20 of which are endemic to the country. 16 species are endangered or critically endangered. A large number of

these birds feed on butterflies, like the *Bicyclus anynana*.

Historically, throughout the African continent, wildlife populations have been rapidly declining due to logging, civil wars, pollution, poaching, and other human factors. A 17-year-long civil war, along with a severe drought, negatively impacted Ethiopia's environmental conditions, leading to even greater habitat degradation. Habitat destruction is a factor that leads to endangerment. When changes to a habitat occur rapidly, animals do not have time to adjust. Human impact threatens many species, with greater threats expected as a result of climate change induced by greenhouse gases.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Ethiopia is a land that has enjoyed a very long and rich history. It is one of the nations that can trace its establishment back through millennia towards the very dawn of civilisation. The country is believed to be the origin of humankind as witnessed by the earliest hominid fossil ever to be discovered. Lucy or Dinkinesh is a 3.2 million year old skeleton of a bipedal hominine, *Australopithecus afarensis*, discovered in Afar regional state and on display at the National Museum in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia has its own script, notational system and calendar. The country adopted Christianity in the 4th century long before the rest of the world. Muslim communities were established in Ethiopia in the 7th century after the triumph of Islam in its birthplace, the Arabian Peninsula. There was also a large community of the Bete Israel known as Ethiopian Jews who were relocated in the 20th century to Israel.

The battle of Adowa, which took place on March, 1896, is commemorated each year in Ethiopia as a decisive victory of Africans over colonial forces, which allowed Ethiopia to remain an independent state while Europeans were dividing the rest of the continent amongst themselves. To revenge the defeat at the battle of Adwa, the Kingdom of Italy led by Benito Mussolini invaded and occupied Ethiopia in 1935 and

occupied the country for six years. The occupation left no impact on the character of the Ethiopian people.

RELIGION

The main religions in Ethiopia are Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Paganism. Ethiopia is a predominantly Christian country and the majority of Christians are Orthodox Tewahedo Christians. There are a minority of Christians who are Roman Catholic or Protestant.

The Aksumite kingdom adopted Judaism and the Law of Moses during the reign of King Menelik I, who was the son of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Christianity was adopted as a main faith in 341 AD. Since then Ethiopia has been observing both Old and New Testament practices.

FESTIVALS

7 January	Genna (Ethiopian Christmas)
19 January	Timkat (Ethiopian Epiphany)
2 March	Adwa Day
1 May	International Labour Day
5 May	Patriots' Victory Day
28 May	Downfall of the Derg
11 September	Enkutatash (Ethiopian New Years)
27 September	Meskel (Finding of the True Cross)

Moveable Festival Days:

March - April	Siklet (Ethiopian Good Friday, which falls two days before the Orthodox Easter Sunday (Fasika))
May - June	Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)
July - August	Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)

CULTURE

Ethiopia has a diverse mix of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. It is a country of more than 80 different ethnic groups each with their own language, culture, customs and traditions. One of the most significant areas of Ethiopian culture is its literature, which is represented predominantly by translations from ancient



Greek and Hebrew religious texts into the ancient language Ge'ez, modern Amharic and Tigrigna.

Ge'ez is one of the most ancient languages in the world and is still used today by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has its own unique customs and traditions, which have been influenced by Judaism.

The Tigrayans' history and culture is derived from the Aksumite Kingdom tradition and culture whereas the history and culture of the Amhara people is derived from the post Aksumite imperial reign of Menelik II and Haile Selassie.

LANGUAGE

Ethiopia has many indigenous languages (84 according to the Ethnologies, 77 according to the 1994 census), most of them Afro-Asiatic (Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic), plus some that are Nilo-Saharan.

English is the most widely spoken foreign language and is the medium of instruction in secondary schools and universities. Amharic was the language of primary school instruction, but has been replaced in many areas by local languages such as Oromifa and Tigrinya.

After the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, the new constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia granted all ethnic groups the right to develop their languages and to establish mother tongue primary education systems. This is a marked change to the language policies of previous governments in Ethiopia.

CLOTHING

The Ethiopian traditional costume is made of woven cotton. Ethiopian men and women wear this traditional costume called gabbi or netella. Women often wear dresses (Kemis) and netella with borders of coloured, embroidered, woven crosses, but other designs are also used. Other ethnic groups and tribes in the south and west of the country wear different costumes that reflect their own traditions. Some tribes partially cover their body with leather but others do not wear any clothes at all, merely decorating their faces and bodies with distinctive images.

CUISINE

The best-known Ethiopian cuisine consists of various types of thick meat stews, known as wat in Ethiopian culture, and vegetable side dishes served atop injera, a large sourdough flatbread made of teff flour. This is not eaten with utensils, but instead one uses the injera to scoop up the food. Almost universally in Ethiopia, it is common for a group of people to eat from the same dish placed in the centre of the table. It is also a common custom to feed others in your group with your own hands a tradition referred to as "gursha". Traditional Ethiopian cuisine employs no pork or shellfish of any kind, as they are forbidden in the Christian (Ethiopian Orthodox), Islamic and Jewish faiths.

Colourful marketplaces are to be found throughout Ethiopia



GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

ACCLIMATISATION

The Simien Mountains and Bale Mountains are at high altitude and although serious problems are rare, it is worth educating yourself of the symptoms and methods to reduce the risk of acute mountain sickness (AMS). The hardest thing about altitude sickness is that it is very difficult to predict who will be affected. Fitness has little impact; in fact fitter types often struggle more as they are more complacent gaining altitude too quickly.

There is a fairly well established method for reducing the risk of (AMS):

- Walking at a steady, slow pace with plenty of stops gives your body more chance to acclimatise to the altitude and ensures you keep getting a rich supply of oxygen to your blood. Do not be tempted to try to keep up with the quickest in your group, keep to your own pace.
- Drink and eat well. Many of the symptoms of altitude sickness can be confused with dehydration making diagnosis difficult. Dehydration occurs faster at higher altitudes and results in headaches. Concentrate on drinking water regularly throughout the day and drink more than you would normally expect (4L a day is a good benchmark).

- Diamox is effective in enhancing the speed of acclimatisation and reducing the symptoms of altitude sickness. Its side effects include increased urination, which can increase the chances of dehydration. Seek specialist medical advice if you are considering using Diamox.

How altitude sickness affects you:

- Mild AMS: Symptoms of mild AMS include headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, loss of appetite and generally feeling a bit worse for wear. It affects the majority of people above around 3,000m. The symptoms can be alleviated by taking ibuprofen, Mild AMS does not affect your ability to continue walking, but it certainly doesn't make it any easier.
- Moderate AMS: Moderate AMS symptoms include severe headache that don't go after taking painkillers, vomiting and decreased coordination. The only solution is descent of at least 300m. You can continue the ascent if symptoms have subsided after 24 hours at the lower altitude.
- Severe AMS: Severe AMS is a more severe form of moderate AMS that requires immediate descent to an altitude below 1000m.

Flamingos graze on Chitu Crater Lake



TRAVEL INSURANCE

Our expedition travels to a remote corner of the globe where medical evacuation may be difficult and very expensive. **We strongly advise you to purchase travel insurance that covers you for emergency evacuation, full medical cover, trip cancellation and lost luggage.**

Where a person requires hospitalisation or medical treatment including evacuation, all costs associated with this are the full responsibility of that person.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance please check that your policy (particularly if it is issued by your credit card provider) covers you for the destination that you are visiting and covers any pre-existing medical conditions.

Adventure Associates can provide you a quote with our recommended travel insurance partners.

MEDICAL CHECK

Given the remote areas we are travelling to, we ask you to visit your doctor for a medical clearance. We also advise to have a dental check and a visit to the TM+VC travel doctor for all your required inoculations <https://www.traveldoctor.com.au>

A yellow fever certificate is not required for entry into Ethiopia unless you are coming from a yellow fever endemic zone. However, some countries may insist you have a certificate upon returning from Ethiopia, so it's safest to ensure yours is still current and to bring it with you.

VISA

The Ethiopian Tourist eVISA was launched by the Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs in Ethiopia in June 2017. The eVISA for Ethiopia authorises the citizens with passports valid for at least six (6) months from arrival date in Ethiopia to apply for a tourist eVISA online. Once issued, the Ethiopian eVISA is valid for 30 or 90 days depending on the applicant's selection. The eVISA for Ethiopia <https://www.evisa.gov.et>

****Please ensure your passport is valid for six months beyond the end of your trip.**

MONEY MATTERS

The Ethiopian Birr is the currency of Ethiopia. The currency code for Birr is ETB, and the currency symbol is Br. It is wise to bring US dollars to the country and exchange them on arrival (it is not possible to get hold of Birr outside Ethiopia). It can also be difficult to exchange Birr when you leave the country so budget accordingly. Banknotes: Frequently Used: Br5, Br10, Br50, Br100 and 1 USD = approx. 30Br.

Some hotels and major companies also accept US dollars. There is a growing number of ATMs at the airport and in the country that dispense cash only in birr.

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary so consider your own



spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping.

TIPS/GRATUITIES

Tipping is an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. It is one of the most direct ways that you can have a positive economic impact within the community. Although it may not be customary for you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, as an important source of income for those in the tourism industry. Giving a tip should be seen as a formal 'thank you' and the action should in no way be awkward.

In order to avoid confusion and for the ease of all involved we suggest contributing approx. USD 350 per person for 27 days & USD 175 for a 14 day tour into a kitty before the beginning of the trip. **(Adventure Associates can include this on your final invoice at the time of final payment).**

The main tipping will then be looked after by your tour leader who will take care of distributing the group gratuities/tips to the local guides, drivers, etc. throughout the trip as needed.

Have a small amount of Birr (5Br & 10Br) handy for



tipping porters who carry your luggage to your room.

SAFETY & VALUABLES

Make photocopies of all your important documents (passport, visa, airline ticket, credit cards, emergency contacts, travel insurance policy with emergency hotline numbers etc.) Leave one set of copies with a friend or relative at home and keep another in your main luggage, in case your hand luggage with the originals goes missing.

Please leave any non-essential valuables at home (jewellery, expensive watch etc.) Money belts worn underneath clothing are useful. Don't take all your money with you when out sightseeing. We advise utmost caution at popular tourist spots and especially the airports – don't leave luggage unattended.

Adventure Associates is not to be held responsible for the loss or theft of any valuables. We recommend you bring with you only what you consider necessary.

SHOPPING & SOUVENIRS

A lively culture of traditional hand-worked craftsmanship and a plethora of markets all over the country make Ethiopia a wonderful destination for



The Fasilides castles in Gondar



connoisseurs of high quality traditional hand woven cloths and other handicrafts. Hand woven items include a wide variety of baskets, scarves, shawls, table cloths and cotton towels. Ethiopia is also recognised for its leather products and it is possible to find a range of good quality leather jackets, bags and traditional crosses, which are usually made from wood, silver or other metals.

Terracotta coffee pots are a popular purchase, and readily available everywhere in the country.

Support local artisans. Ideally, buy your souvenirs at the source. Where that isn't possible, a good range of items can be found at markets and craft stalls. Avoid crafts that look generically African but are not produced in Ethiopia.

It is illegal to buy and export genuinely old religious manuscripts, icons and church paintings and other artwork without a permit. It is also ethically dubious to remove such artefacts from their place of origin. Rather buy a modern artefact based on the old church designs.

ELECTRICAL CURRENT

In Ethiopia the standard voltage is 220 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. You can use your electric appliances

in Ethiopia, if the standard voltage in your country is between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa). In Ethiopia the power sockets are of type C also known as the standard "Euro" plug, E, F and L.



MEALS

Meals during the tour are included as indicated in the itinerary as (B.L.D). Meal times may vary according to the day's activities and flight schedules.

WATER

Water varies in purity from place to place. It is safer to drink bottled or mineral water. Be wary of ice blocks, unpeeled fruit and salads unless served in better class hotels and restaurants. Iodine water purification tablets or a Steripen can also help.

GIFTS TO THE LOCALS

Please do not give money, presents, or sweets to

children. If you wish to make a contribution we suggest bringing along: educational material (pens, markers, note-books, coloured pencils, rubbers and chalks), soccer balls and children's clothes. In consultation with our local guide, we will organise where it's best to distribute these items.

TIME CONVERSION

Ethiopia, as with most of its neighbours, operates on East Africa Time, 3 hours ahead of GMT/UTC and 7 hours behind Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) and 8 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard Time. There is no daylight saving in place, as the country's equatorial location means that sunrise and sunset fall at a relatively similar time (around 06:30 and 18:30) throughout the year.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We are committed to offering low-impact tours that benefit traveller and host alike. We work with local communities, businesses and individuals to develop sustainable tourism opportunities that help local economies while minimising negative environmental and cultural impacts.

Things you can do:

- Bring rechargeable batteries, a battery charger (and plug adapter if necessary). Batteries are very toxic and Ethiopia does not have proper disposal facilities. Rechargeable are best but if this is not possible we recommend that you bring any used batteries back home with you for proper disposal.
- Do not hand anything to children along the roads.
- Please ask before taking pictures.
- Dress respectfully: In most places we visit shorts and t-shirt are OK to wear. If we are to enter any Ethiopian church, it is recommended to cover legs, and to remove shoes and hat and women should also cover their head with a scarf.

TRAVELLER'S TIP

Start your adventure with an open mind and resolve to take any itinerary changes in your stride – relax and enjoy your opportunity to visit this fascinating country and its people. Areas we visit are extremely interesting, however, some parts remain remote and tourism infrastructure is often largely undeveloped. Please understand that delays and variations to the itinerary, transport, hotels and food standards, may occur.

Collecting precious water after the rain



Giant Lobelia in Simien Mountains National Park



PACKING HINTS & CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

We recommend you keep your baggage to a comfortable minimum. Pack simply and lightly. Clothing that you can layer will prepare you for all kinds of weather. In packing your carry-on bag for the flight, we suggest you pack essential toiletries, medicines (no more than 100ml) and a change of clothing in the event you reach your destination without some of your checked luggage. As the majority of the country is at altitude, it is important to pack clothes for cool nights (potentially below 0°C if you are in the Simiens or Bale Mountains). You won't always need all the layers, but it is best to come prepared.

In tropical conditions, shorts and lightweight shirts are most comfortable, but loose, long-sleeved shirts and long pants in a natural, lightweight fabric (e.g. cotton, linen), offer protection against the sun and insects. For women, a loose cotton dress (or cotton skirt/top) is comfortable and cool. Dress is casual for the entire trip; please leave formal evening wear at home!

CHECK LIST

In general, one should dress conservatively. **It does get cold, so bring some warm clothes.** Do not bring a lot of clothes, just three or four outfits.

The following clothing list is designed to assist you in preparing for your tour:

- 2 pair of shorts/skirt, loose & comfortable
- 3 T-shirts or short sleeve shirts
- 2 long-sleeved quick dry shirts
- 2 pairs of comfortable travel pants
- Fleece jacket and/or light down puffer jacket
- 1 set of thermal underwear
- A raincoat or poncho
- Light gloves & beanie
- Socks, underwear etc.
- Sunhat with brim or a cap
- Bathing suit / sarong is optional
- Handkerchiefs
- Walking shoes with good soles
- A head scarf for women when entering churches
- Closed in sandals or slip-ons

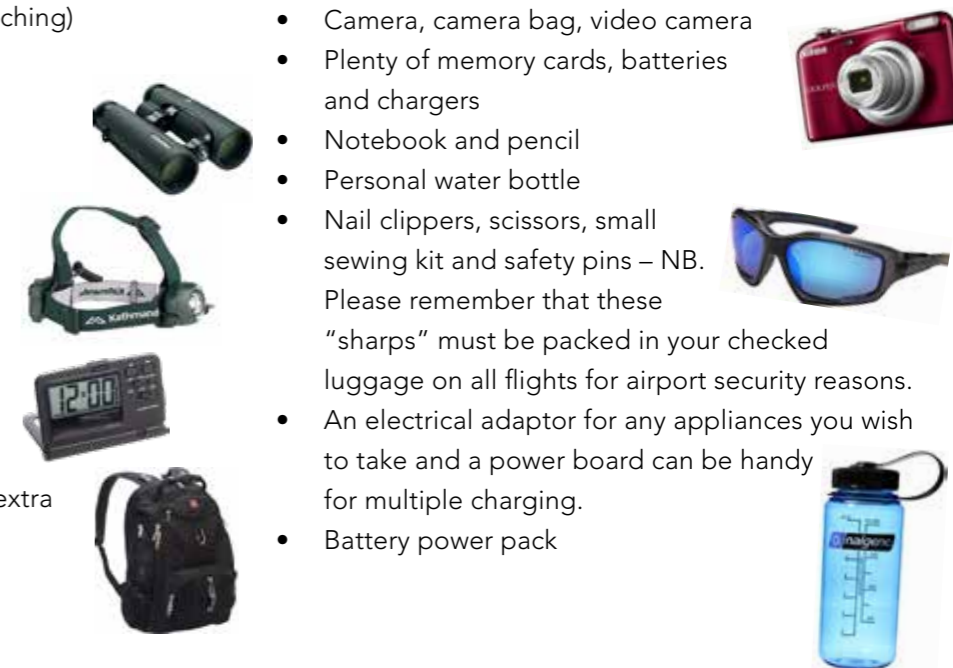


Meskel commemorates the finding of the True Cross



The following items may come in handy during your adventure:

- Binoculars (essential for bird watching)
- Travel umbrella
- Small flashlight or head torch
- Travel alarm clock
- Traveller's clothes line
- Backpack suitable for carrying your photographic equipment and safety kit during the day.
- Walking poles (collapsible)
- Spare set of prescription eye glasses or contact lenses for emergencies
- Sunglasses with a strap (and an extra pair in case you lose yours)
- Camera, camera bag, video camera
- Plenty of memory cards, batteries and chargers
- Notebook and pencil
- Personal water bottle
- Nail clippers, scissors, small sewing kit and safety pins – NB. Please remember that these "sharps" must be packed in your checked luggage on all flights for airport security reasons.
- An electrical adaptor for any appliances you wish to take and a power board can be handy for multiple charging.
- Battery power pack



IMPORTANT: PLEASE KEEP ALL TRAVEL DOCUMENTS SUCH AS PASSPORT, AIRLINE TICKETS AND TRAVEL VOUCHERS WITH YOU DURING YOUR FLIGHTS

Mursi girl with a typical head decoration



PERSONAL FIRST-AID KIT

The following suggested supplies and medications are intended to handle the problems that happen most often on a trip. Please talk to your doctor to modify the kit for your individual preferences and allergies. We will carry a group first aid kit, but you should have your own supply of these frequently used items.

- Sunscreen factor 30 or above
- Lip Balm with sunscreen protection
- Throat lozenges such as Strepsils
- Assorted Band-Aids or similar plasters
- 1 course of broad-spectrum antibiotics, such as, Cephalexin, Noroxin or Ciprofloxacin.
- Should you have an allergy to a particular antibiotic please make sure you bring a course that is safe for you to take.
- Loperamide (Imodium) for diarrhoea
- Promethazine (Phenergan) 25 mg or other anti-nausea medication
- Decongestant (Actifed, or Drixoral)



- Anti-inflammatory drugs (such as ibuprofen)
- Paracetamol (acetaminophen)
- Diamox for altitude sickness
- Cold & Flu tablets
- Alcohol hand sanitiser – to disinfect your hands before eating & toileting
- Any personal medications



Market day in Bahir Dar



PHOTOGRAPHIC TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

We expect that everyone will bring some kind of camera, be it a mobile phone or a professional SLR camera with all the bells and whistles. Remember to take extra memory cards and some spare camera batteries with you, as it can be expensive or inconvenient to purchase these whilst travelling in Ethiopia.

Be careful with photographs or video recordings. Ask your local guide first if it is appropriate to take photographs or to make video recordings in communities, at burial sites etc. Photographs should not be taken of military or strategic buildings or airports. Avoid close up shots, and never remunerate people with money for a photograph. However in the Omo region it is usually requested for portrait photos.

Below are a few simple tips and suggestions that may help you get sorted before you go. Whatever camera you bring it is possible to get good images.

- Get to know your camera, make sure it is working correctly and that you understand all its main functions.

- Read and bring the instructions manual. Download an electronic version onto your laptop.
- Remember to pack the battery charger.



- Have some way of keeping your camera equipment dry and safe from dust. Lightweight nylon dry bags work well and are available in many sizes.
- Tripod and Monopod: A quality tripod is invaluable for the serious photographer. However they can be big, heavy and cumbersome to carry during our walks. A monopod is lighter and can be used as a walking stick for support.
- If you bring an SLR camera, a good zoom lens for wildlife photography will be handy. 200mm – 300mm is a good focal length. (Remember that on an SLR camera with a 1.5 crop-factor sensor a 200mm lens is equivalent to a 300mm lens on full frame sensor).
- We recommend that you carry all photography equipment, cords, chargers and storage devices in your carry-on luggage in case your main luggage is left behind somewhere.

Ethiopia – a photographer's dream come true



SUGGESTED READING LIST

GUIDEBOOKS

Bradt's Guide Ethiopia: The bestselling guide to Ethiopia in recent years. Author: Philip Briggs

Ethiopia – Culture Smart The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture. Author: Sarah Howard

Understanding Ethiopia: Geology and Scenery Ethiopia's geological story which enables non-specialist readers to share the author's thrill at gaining a deeper insight into the processes which produced, and continue to shape, this amazing country. Author: Frances M Williams

Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia: A Guide to the Remote Churches of an Ancient Land. Authors: Bob & Marie-Jose Friedlander

TRAVEL WRITING/MEMOIRS

In Ethiopia with a Mule: In 1966 Dervla Murphy travelled the length and breadth of Ethiopia, first on a mule, Jock, whom she named after her publisher, and later on a recalcitrant donkey. Author: Dervla Murphy

Ethiopia: Through Writers' Eyes. As there are only a handful of destinations left in the world that have retained their ability to shock the traveller with their unique perspective. Author: Yves Stranger

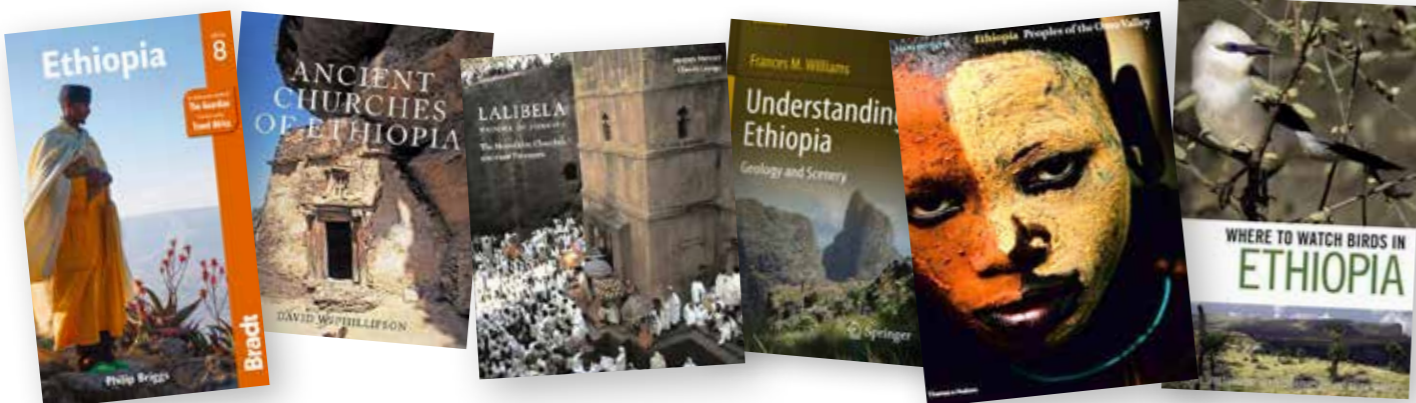
Where the Wild Coffee Grows: The Story of Coffee from the Forests of Ethiopia to Your Cup. Author: Jeff Koehler

The Autobiography of Emperor Haile Sellassie I: King of All Kings and Lord of All Lords; My Life and Ethiopia's Progress 1892-1937. Author Haile Sellassie

HISTORY & CULTURE

A History of Ethiopia: In this eminently readable, concise history of Ethiopia, Harold Marcus surveys the evolution of the oldest African nation from prehistory to the present. Author: Harold G Marcus

Lalibela: Wonder of Ethiopia: The Monolithic Churches and Their Treasures The UNESCO World Heritage site of Lalibela in Ethiopia is one of the most extraordinary places in the world. Authors: Claude Lepage & Jacques Mercier



Ethiopia: Peoples of the Omo Valley. Magnificently produced, this two-volume publication is a superb chronicle of the Omo Valleys fast-vanishing and excruciatingly hard way of life. Author: Hans Silvester

Ancient Churches of Ethiopia: The kings of Aksum formally became Christian during the second quarter of the 4th century, making Ethiopia the second country in the world (after Armenia) officially to adopt the new faith. Author: David W. Phillipson

WILDLIFE, FLORA & FAUNA

Where to Watch Birds in Ethiopia: Ethiopia is one of Africa's top birding destinations, harbouring dramatic scenery, a wonderful diversity of habitats, over 30 endemic species, and a number of other regional specialities. Authors: Merid Gabremichael, Claire Spottiswoode & Julian Francis

Amphibians and Reptiles of Ethiopia and Eritrea: This book is the first attempt to summarise what appears to be known about the amphibians and reptiles of Ethiopia and Eritrea in a single volume. Author: Malcolm Lagen

Ethiopian Wolf: Discusses the physical characteristics, behaviour, and eating habits of the Ethiopian wolf. Author: Fred Harrington

Birds of the Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and Socotra - Revised and Expanded Edition. Authors: Nigel Redman, John Fanshawe & Terry Stevenson

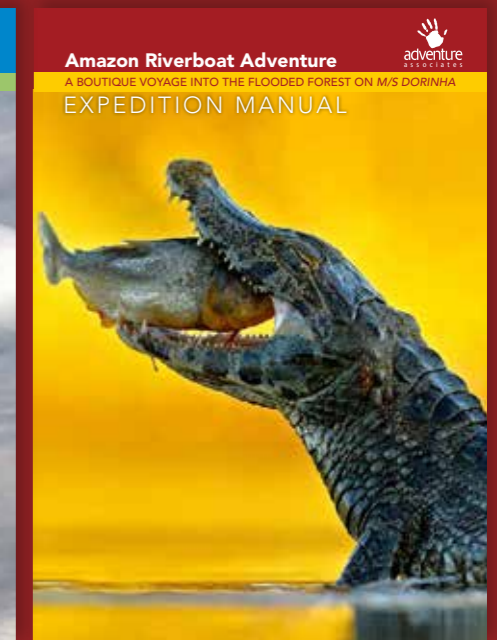
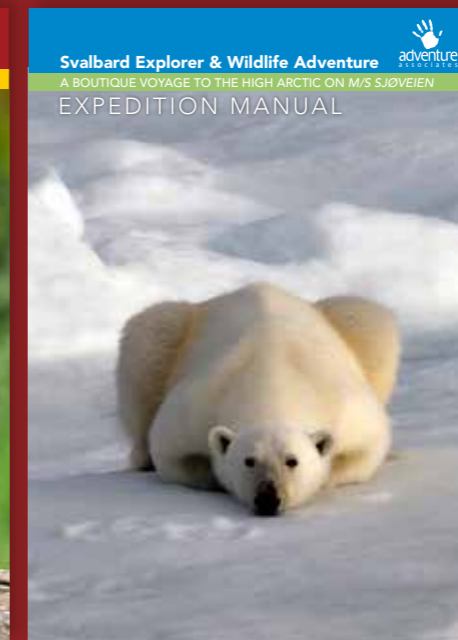
Field Guide to Common Trees & Shrubs of East Africa: Paperback – August 1, 2011 by Najma Dharani

A selection of these books can be bought online from the following online book stores:

Nhbs books – Everything from wildlife, science & environment:
<https://www.nhbs.com/browse/search?q=ethiopia>

Book Depository: <https://www.bookdepository.com/search?searchTerm=ethiopia&search=Find+book>

CONTACT US FOR OUR OTHER DESTINATION MANUALS



Phone: (+61 2) 6355 2022

Visit our website and check out all our other wonderful destinations: from Antarctica to the Amazon, from Madagascar to the High Arctic



adventure associates

experience the extraordinary

www.adventureassociates.com



Email: mail@adventureassociates.com



PO Box 246,
Blackheath NSW 2785 Australia
Phone (+61 2) 6355 2022
Email mail@adventureassociates.com
Web www.adventureassociates.com