

Highlights of Ethiopia - DEHE

15 days: Addis Ababa to Addis Ababa

What's Included

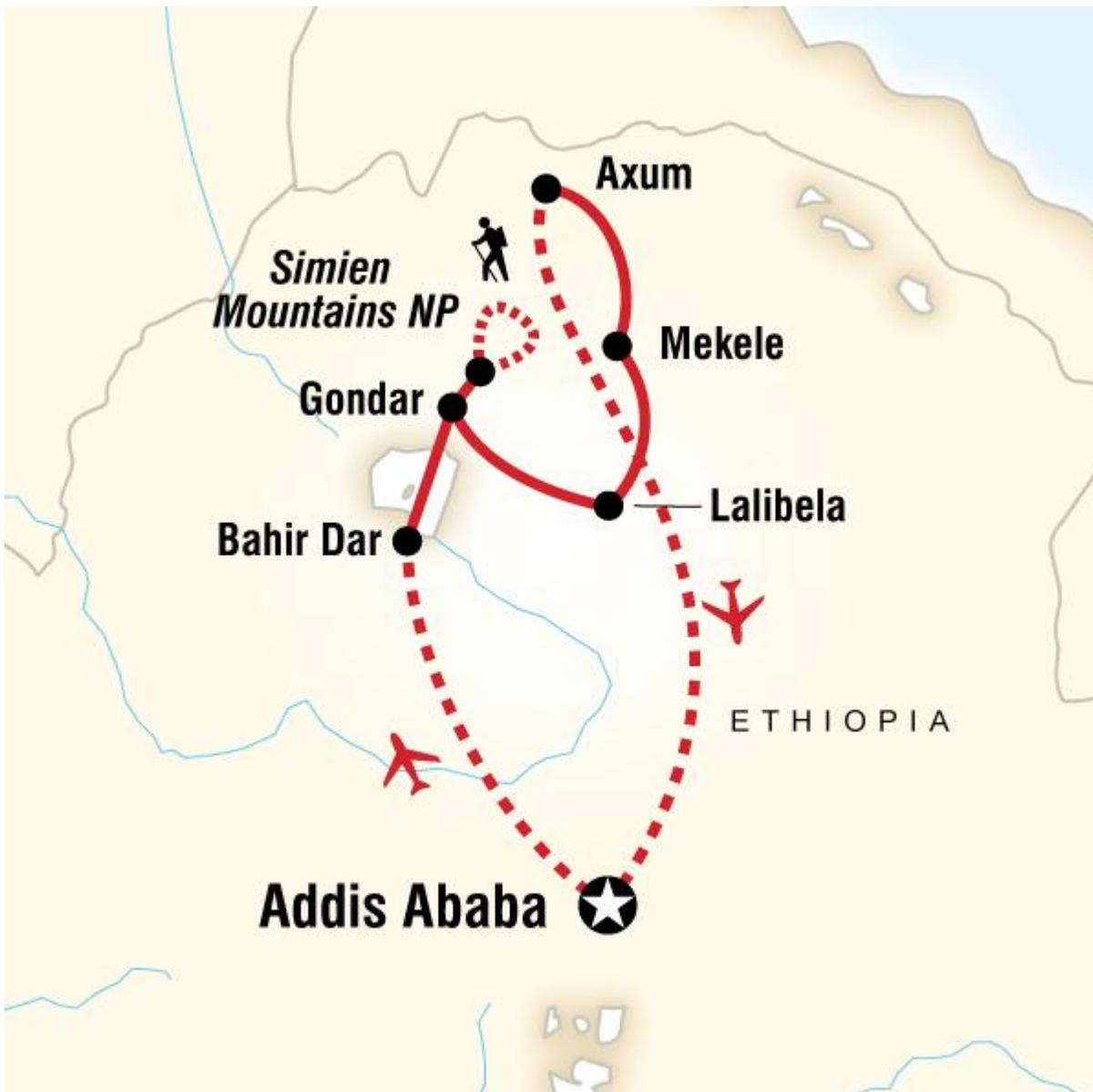
Arrival transfer, Guided Tour of the Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Guided tour of Debre Berhan Selassie Church, Fasiladas' Bath, and historic castles in Gonder, Boat trip with guided monasteries tour and visit to a traditional home museum on Lake Tana, Excursion to Blue Nile Falls. Simien Mountains trek with local guides. Mekele City Tour, Entrance fees and guided visits to Wukro and Abreha We Atsbeha churches, Yeha Temple, Axum Historical Site and churches, and Kuskum Church and Palace

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VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2013 - December 31st, 2013

Itinerary



Day 1 Addis Ababa

Arrive in Addis Ababa any time, an arrival transfer is included. A brief departure meeting will be held in the hotel reception area on Day 1 of your tour. Upon arrival look for information from your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) on the hotel bulletin board regarding meeting time.

Addis Ababa, founded more than a century ago, means 'New Flower' in Amharic. At an elevation of 2400m, the third highest capital in the world, the climate is pleasantly cool. The city mixes past and present, statues from the imperial times coexist with placards from the former Marxist Regime. Huge billboards advertise current activities in the city and modern businesses, as well as development organizations' goodwill projects. The streets are a mesh of expensive cars, old Russian "Lada model" taxis, along with donkeys, sheep and goats. Traditional mud houses stand not far from austere Fascist buildings and private-sector banks.

The National Museum contains a wide array of Ethiopian historical artifacts focusing on the pre- Aksumite, Aksumite, Solomonic, and Gonderine periods. It also has a wide array of Ethiopian art ranging from 14th century parchment to 20th century canvas oil paintings by leading modern Ethiopian artists. The museum houses anthropological and archaeological displays including Lucy, the fossilized hominid discovered in 1974. Entoto, about 3000m above sea level, is the highest point of the capital and the seat of Emperor Menelik II of Ethiopia. Here you enjoy panoramic views of the capital and the museum adjacent to the church of St. Mary.

Merkato is the largest open market in Africa where you can find a bit of everything. The spice market is very interesting for its colourful displays and aromas. One of the highlights of the Merkato is the "recycling market" where old tires are turned into sandals, corrugated iron is made into metal buckets, and olive oil tins from Italy are made into coffee roasters and scoops.

Day 2 Bahir Dar (1B)

Estimated Travel Time: about 1 hour flight

Approximate Distance: 565 km

This morning we embark on a short early morning flight to Bahir Dar so you have to be up very early in the morning for your breakfast and 2 hr before departure airport transfer. You may visit the market in Bahir Dar, where you can see colourful woven clothing, basketry, cereals, spices and other local goods. Opt to climb up to Bezawit, the palace of Haile Selassie which lies on a hill 5km outside of Bahir Dar. The panoramic views of the Blue Nile River, Lake Tana and the town are beautiful. There is a chance you'll be able to see some hippos while along the Blue Nile. Monitor Lizards and otters are also in the area, but not as common to see, make sure to keep an eye out.

Bahir Dar is a fast-growing town, considered one of the more attractive towns in Ethiopia due to its ideal location on the shores of Lake Tana and its palm tree-lined streets. At 68 km wide and 73 km long, Lake Tana is Ethiopia's largest lake and is dotted with several islands, many of which are home to old monasteries. The open-ended papyrus boat (tankwa) has been used for centuries and continues to be used on Lake Tana today.

In the afternoon depart on an excursion to the Blue Nile Falls, about 35kms from Bahir Dar. Upon driving to the entrance, you can take a 1-2 hour hike to the falls crossing over the Blue Nile via the historic Portuguese bridge. Proceed along a path that takes you to the bottom of the falls so you can experience it up close. These falls are some of the most spectacular in Africa. During full flood (July - September) the falls increase to 400m across and a 45 meter drop. Unfortunately, in drier times of the year, the water has been reduced by three fourths of its natural flowage due to the recent construction of an electrical dam.

Day 3-4 Gonder (2B)

Estimated Travel Time: 3-4 hours

Approximate Distance: 180 km

On the morning of Day 3 visit three monasteries on Lake Tana. Both men and women can visit the first monastery, Ura Kidane Mihret. Near Ura Kidane Mihret is a traditional house museum that we will visit, along with two island monasteries, Kibran Gabriel and Entos Eyesus. Kibran Gabriel can only be visited by men, so while the men are visiting that one, the women will visit the neighboring Entos Eyesus. Depart for Gonder following lunch.

Once in Gonder we visit the "Fasiladas" Castle compound which covers an area of over 70,000 sq metres, and surrounded by high stone walls. Emperor Fasiladas' Palace is the oldest and perhaps most impressive of the castles. It is two stories high, has a crenellated parapet and four small domed towers. It is said to have been designed by an Indian architect and shows synthesis of Indian, Portuguese and Moorish, as well as Aksumite, influences. Following the castle visit, we drive to Emperor Fasiladas' bath where we wander around the grounds shaded by huge fig trees.

You will then have time for an optional tour of Gondar market, some time to explore Gonder town on your own or simply relax and try to strike up a conversation with the locals.

Later in the afternoon, we continue to Debre Berhan Salassie Church. Debre Berhan Selassie Church lies 2km northeast of the castle enclosure. It is probably the country's most famous church and a highlight of Gonder. Its ceiling is covered with famous paintings of Ethiopian cherubs and the walls portray nearly all Ethiopian saints, martyrs and lore.

Gonder has been called "Africa's Camelot". It is one of the main attractions along the northern historical route. For 200 years it was Ethiopia's capital after Emperor Fasiladas founded it in 1636, well recognized for its wealth, splendor and fame at the time.

Day 5-6 Simien Mountains National Park (2B)

Estimated Travel Time: Day 5: 4-5 hours

Approximate Distance: Day 5: 130 km

Day 5: After breakfast in Gonder, depart for Debark, the starting point for our trekking. After lunch, we register with the park authorities and head to the Simien Lodge to relax before a full day in the Simien Mountains tomorrow.

Day 6: Enjoy a full day visit of the Simien Mountains National Park. In the morning we hike from Sankaber campsite to the Jinbar waterfalls before driving as far as Chenek campsite for a picnic lunch and short excursions in search of Walia Ibex and the Ethiopian wolf. Return to Simien Lodge for the evening.

The scenic Simien Mountains are a good break from the historic architecture and monuments of the cities. Known as the "roof of Africa" they rank as one of the continent's most beautiful mountain ranges. A number of peaks reach well over 4000m, and Ras Dashen, the highest peak in Ethiopia, is one of Africa's highest mountains. The Simien Mountains have been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here you can see some of Ethiopia's remarkable flora and fauna including Gelada baboon, Walia ibex, and if you're lucky, the Ethiopian wolf. The huge lammergeyer is also found soaring over the valleys here. It is cold in the mornings,

evenings and nights, and during the day when there is cloud cover or sleet. Ice often forms on water in the early mornings during the cold period of December through February and afternoon spurts of hail frequent the beginning of the rains (April -May).

Day 7 Gonder (1B)

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 130 km

Travel towards Gonder, en route we make a short stop at the Ploughshare Women Crafts Training Centre in a Falasha village, a centre for giving handicraft skills to underprivileged single mothers. You have the option to purchase arts and crafts here and sit in on a coffee ceremony. A small donation (20-50 Birr) is appreciated.

Upon arrival back in Gondar we visit Kusquam, Queen Mentawab's 18th century residence. Kusquam is found on the outskirts of Gondar. Empress Mentawab built both the church and castle here. The church is dedicated to St. Mary. The skeletal remains of Empress Mentawab, Emperor Iyasu II, and her grandson Iyoas are all found underground inside the church. The impressive banquet hall castle with outer wall cross relief are also very interesting to visit.

Day 8-10 Lalibela (3B)

After an early morning start, we have a long drive from Gondar to Lalibela stopping for scenic views and lunch en route, arriving in Lalibela in the early evening.

The churches inside Lalibela town are grouped as the first and second cluster. In the morning of Day 9 we explore Lalibela's first group of churches, then in the afternoon we drive to Yemrehana Kristos (2 hours) for a half hour hike to the church.

The morning of Day 10 you will have a chance to take an optional tour to Asetan Maryam, set at 3150m on top of the highest peak surrounding Lalibela with panoramic views of the town and countryside. In the afternoon, we'll continue our included visit with the second group of churches.

Lalibela is considered by many as the greatest of the religio-historical sites. It is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it is the 8th Wonder of the World. Lying in the rugged Lasta Mountains at 2630m, Lalibela remains an isolated and undeveloped area. Among the dimly lit passageways of tunnels and medieval churches you find robed priests and monks meandering and there is a lingering aroma of incense and beeswax candles. The churches, carved out of single rocks, date back to the 11th and 12th century AD and are still being used. Lalibela is a good place to taste the local beverage, Tej, or honey wine with local traditional song and dance. All church entrances and visits in Lalibela are included activities.

Day 11-12 Mekele/Hawzien (2B)

Estimated Travel Time: Day 11: 9- 10 hrs; Day 12: 5 hrs

Approximate Distance: Day 11: 409 km; Day 12: 109 km

The winding road through breathtaking mountain scenery takes us past spectacular views of Sekota and Alamata Mountains. We stop for lunch on Day 11 at a local restaurant in a small town called Woldia. Mekele has been the capital of Tigray since Emperor Yohannis IV (1871-1889) designated it so, and it has recently grown to be fifth largest city in Ethiopia.

After breakfast on Day 12, we take a short tour of Mekele then drive to Hawzien after lunch, visiting Abraha Atsbera on the way. In the afternoon we have the option to walk to Debre Tsion Abraham or Abune Yemata guh depending on the group preference.

Hawzien has a 3,000 year history. Originally an old trading centre, today the area is exclusively agricultural. Many ruins in the area still bear testimony to the day in 1988 when the dictator Mengistu wanted to punish the rebels and over 2,500 people died under napalm bombs.

Days 13-14 Axum (2B)

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 194 km

After breakfast visit Maryam QorQor before returning to Hawzien for lunch. The church of Our Lady Mary at Qorqor (Maryam Qorqor) is a fascinating rock-cut church of the monastery founded by Abba Dane'el of Gar'alta (in Tegre) during the second half of the thirteenth century.

In the afternoon we drive to Axum via Yeha, the area believed to be the site of Ethiopia's oldest civilization, dating back to between the 5th and 8th century B.C.

Spend all of Day 14 exploring the Axum historical site, including visits to main stelae field, Queen of Sheba's palace and bath, and Church of Tsion Maryam (St. Mary of Zion), which is believed to be the first church in Sub Saharan Africa and claimed to house the Ark of the Covenant.

Axum is Ethiopia's oldest city, dating back some 2,000 years when it was the hub of the Axumite Empire. The Queen of Sheba made it her capital 1000 years before Christ. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was founded here in the 4th Century and Axum remains the holiest city of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

Day 15 Addis Ababa (1B)

Estimated Travel Time: 1 hour flight time

Approximate Distance: 1000 km

After breakfast we transfer to the airport and fly from Axum to Addis Ababa. The tour ends upon arrival to your post tour hotel in Addis Ababa, please arrange ongoing travel after 3pm today.

What's Included

Arrival transfer, Guided Tour of the Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Guided tour of Debre Berhan Selassie Church, Fasiladas' Bath, and historic castles in Gondar, Boat trip with guided monasteries tour and visit to a traditional home museum on Lake Tana, Excursion to Blue Nile Falls. Simien Mountains trek with local guides. Mekele City Tour, Entrance fees and guided visits to Wukro and Abreha We Atsbeha churches, Yeha Temple, Axum Historical Site and churches, and Kuskuam Church and Palace

Highlights

Exploring rock-hewn churches in Lalibela and castles in Gondar, admiring the monasteries of Lake Tana, witnessing the Blue Nile Falls, discovering the Simien Mountains and historical Axum

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. This tour finishes upon arrival into Addis Abba in the afternoon of Day 15. You may choose to fly out that same evening. Otherwise, we recommend that you add on a final night's stay at our ending hotel.
2. Please note that due to the remote nature of our Ethiopia adventures some of our accommodation may seem rustic by western standards.

Group Leader Description

Throughout the entire 15-day journey in the north of Ethiopia, you will be accompanied on your trip by a Chief Experience Officer (CEO). The Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will be the group manager and leader. He organizes the trip, and will be there to assist you when needed. He will have a general knowledge base of the region, history, culture, and wildlife. He will take care of the small things so you can concentrate on enjoying your adventure. In addition, for some included activities, we engage in local guides to add to the experience and share their expertise.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, Avg 10

Meals Included

14 Breakfasts.

Meals

When meals are not included, your hotel will have a restaurant or you will be advised of a good local establishment. Part of the excitement of a G Adventures trip is the ability to try local dishes when possible. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is not expensive. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though, and you may choose to explore some local restaurants on your own or with your travel companion(s). All camp meals while trekking will be prepared from fresh local produce. Hot breakfasts will be provided to keep us warm in the cold mornings. Lunches will be provided and will be light meals such as sandwiches or salads. All evening meals will be hot and will consist of continental and/or local dishes. Meals will be prepared by the crew with assistance from you if you would like to help cook, this is not compulsory. Vegetarian meals and other dietary requirements need to be specified prior to arrival.

Meal Budget

Allow USD200-300 for meals not included.

Transport

Plane, minivan, minibus, boat.

About our Transportation

For this tour we use a combination of flights, minivans, minibus and boats. We use a 12-seater minivan when the group is 7 passengers or less. For larger groups, we will upgrade to a 23-seater coaster bus with cushioned seats, and sliding windows. This style of transportation is a comfortable way to travel through the region. No matter the size of the group there will be extra space to benefit the group. Many of the roads in Ethiopia are under construction. Though at times the quality can be quite good, much of the time we will need to slow our traveling speed, and accept the bumps and dust along the way.

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Comfort hotels (14 nts)

My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops

About Accommodation

Accommodation in Ethiopia is not to the standard of the west or other parts of Africa where tourism is more developed. Hotels don't always have much character, as they are made more functional than decorative and the choice is limited due to both lack of local and foreign demand. As such customer service standards are lower, due to lack of a large tourism industry and lack of exposure to western service standards. Plumbing can be simple and not always reliable and water pressure is weak, especially in dry season. Safety, location, and cleanliness are our top criteria when choosing hotels. We choose the best one that meets our criteria, and constantly evaluate the options that are out there.

Joining Hotel

Bole Ambassador Hotel
Millennium Apartment Hotel Road, which is off the better known Airport Rd .
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
+251 11 618 8284

Joining Instructions

If you are obtaining your visa upon arrival at the Bole International airport, the queue is just before you go through immigration check point. There is a Dashen bank that you can change your US dollars into Birr there. It gives the current bank rate.

An arrival transfer is included with all Classic-Comfort style tours when you arrive on Day 1, or when you arrive up to three days prior to the tour, provided that you have booked your pre-accommodation through G Adventures in our joining hotel. Due to customer experience and quality considerations, all services related to the tour must be continuous.

To receive your complimentary transfer, proceed through the international or domestic arrivals area and look for a transfer person holding a G Adventures sign with your name. Ask him/her what hotel he/she will take you to (do not volunteer this information). Then present your passport for proof of identity.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have a pre-booked airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact G Adventures during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call our local G Adventures operator - EthioGuzo Tour and Travel. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

G Adventures Operator - EthioGuzo Tour and Travel (Ethiopia)
Open 5 days a week, 9am to 6pm local time (GMT +3).
Tel: Int. Dialing Code +251-11-6299863 (during office hours) (EthioGuzo staff)

After hours emergency numbers: Steven or Eyerusalem +251911478058

If you are unable for any reason to contact EthioGuzo or our local office, we have a toll-free line for North America, which will connect you directly with our Toronto office. In the event that you cannot get through, you can reach a member of our Operations department at the mobile number below.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 800 465 5600.
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Outside North America, Australia and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

You will be on the move a lot, so our advice is to pack as lightly as possible. Your baggage should be clearly labeled and restricted to one large waterproof duffel bag or backpack, maximum 15kg, plus a daypack. Luggage limits on airlines are strictly enforced and space on vehicles is limited. Porters are not available, so be prepared to carry your own bags.

It is important to pack clothes for warm days and cool evenings, a warm jacket is recommended. In the Simien Mountains, you will be trekking in at high altitudes, and you will be passing through a number of different climate zones, and should pack to prepare for a number of extremes – hot and sunny, cool, cloudy, and misty, fog, rain, wind, and lastly cold. You may experience one or all of these

conditions in the same day on your trek. The use of lightweight, breathable, easily removable layers of clothes works best to allow you to adapt to the local conditions. We recommend breathable, moisture-wicking fabrics made of wool or synthetic fibers. Cotton is not recommended for hiking as it does not allow for heat or moisture to enter or escape, and it will not dry once wet. Please note that it gets cold at high altitude, and for this, in addition to several warm layers and good boots, you will need warm protection for your hands and head. Lastly, though only a few degrees north of the equator, and at altitude, the sun's effects are heightened. Use a hat, sunglasses, sun screen, and wear proper clothing to protect yourself from the sun, to reduce the risk of sunstroke. A set of smart casual clothes is also advisable.

It is suggested to bring a few items to give to locals in the community. Clothing and toiletries are very much appreciated. One suggestion is to bring along quality old clothes for your own use in the Simiem Mountains, and then give them away afterwards to the local guides, scouts, cooks, and drivers.

Checklist

Suggested Items:

- Warm Fleece or wool jumper/jacket
- 4 shirts/t-shirts, cool and breathable
- 1 Long-sleeved shirt
- 1 pair of shorts, mid-thigh or longer
- 2 pairs of long hiking trousers, lightweight, breathable
- 1 pairs of long trousers
- Waterproof Hiking Boots, or very sturdy shoes
- Tennis shoes or sandals for lounging in the evening
- Comfortable, breathable socks (wool or synthetic fibers recommended)
- Winter hat/Warm hat,
- Warm gloves/mittens
- Day pack, for you to carry
- Water bottle, and water purification tablets or purifier (bottled water is also available for purchase) - Sun hat, Bandana (many uses - head protection, handkerchief, wrap injuries)
- Sunglasses
- Headlamp / torch / flashlight (with extra batteries and bulbs)
- Camera and extra memory card/film
- Extra batteries (recommended)
- Pocket knife / Utility knife
- Electricity Plug Adapter
- Personal First Aid kit (should contain Lip balm with sunscreen, Aspirin, Ibuprofen , Malaria pills, band aids/plasters, adhesive tape, anti-histamine, Antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder (salt and sugar mix), throat lozenges, insect repellent, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Toiletries (soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, razors, etc)
- Hand sanitizer gel/Sanitizer wipes
- Toilet paper - can be purchased in Addis Ababa and other larger towns along the way.
- Candles, matches - can be purchased in Addis Ababa and other larger towns along the way.
- Plastic bags for packing (rain protection)

Optional Items: Hiking poles, Hiking Gators (protective covers) for your hiking boots, reading/writing material, binoculars, cover for backpacks, Playing cards, games, frisbee, notebook, pens/pencils

For donation in the local communities: clothing, notebooks, pens, pencils, pins, flags, pictures, postcards from your country for local villagers or children.

Documents:

- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Yellow fever certificate
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- USD cash
- Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
- G Adventures vouchers, pre-departure information and Trip Details document

- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required

Laundry

Hand washing of clothes can be done at most of the hotels where we stay. We recommend you bring a non polluting/biodegradable soap, as well as a roll of simple string to act as a drying line for your clothes. If you arrive in the late afternoon, or if there is poor weather, it may not be possible for your clothes to completely dry. Your start/end hotel may also have laundry service for a fee.

Visas

All countries require travellers to have a valid passport (with a minimum of 6 months validity). Please note that upon arrival by air to Addis Ababa, nationals of some countries can obtain a visa for approximately US\$20. There is often a queue for this. Please do your research before travelling. This information is accurate at the time of writing. Though as fees and policies can change, we highly recommend that you contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your responsibility to have the correct travel documentation.

Detailed Trip Notes

American Dollars that are series 1999 or earlier are not accepted and very difficult to change in Southern and Eastern Africa, because of past forgeries.

Location

Ethiopia is a ruggedly mountainous country covering 1,098,000 sq kms and surrounded by Kenya, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and Djibouti.

Climate

Ethiopia has two main seasons, a dry season from October through May and a rainy season from June through September. Temperatures vary according to altitude, but are commonly on the mild side.

Main Rains in Rift Valley occur from March – June and light rains from October – December.

Time

Ethiopia is in the GMT + 3 hrs time zone and follows the Julian calendar which consists of 12 months of 30 days each plus a 13th month of 5 or 6 days.

Communications

Telephone, fax and email are available in most main towns but are most reliable in Addis. The IDD code for Ethiopia is +251.

Electricity

Electric supply is 220 volts, 50 cycles AC. The wall socket accepts two circular-shaped prongs, so an adapter is required. Video camera batteries may be recharged at hotels along the route.

Photos

Photographs should not be taken of military or strategic buildings or airports. Ask permission to take photos of any person or home. Sometimes money is requested for photos.

Religion

There is mostly Orthodox Christianity and Islam through most parts of Ethiopia. Traditional African beliefs such as animism and totemism in the Rift Valley Southern Region.

Language

Amharic is the official language, although over 80 local languages are spoken throughout Ethiopia. English is understood by most educated young people. About 45 languages spoken in Rift Valley Southern region.

Begging

Beggars are common especially in Addis Ababa and larger towns. Children will often crowd around asking for money or other items. Tour guides will inform you on ways to deal with beggars. Have pens for kids, basic medicine for locals in the Simien Mountains. Giving to one person where there is a group usually ends in a scramble.

Customs at Arrival

Cameras, computers and major electrical items may need to be declared on arrival.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

American Dollars that are series 2006 or earlier are not accepted and very difficult to change in Southern and Eastern Africa, as there are a lot of forgeries. As a result, these notes CANNOT be accepted as Local Payment.

Credit cards are useful for cash advances in Addis Ababa, but you must remember to bring your PIN number (be aware that many ATM machines only accept 4-digit PINs). Advanced cost a 12USD fee locally for transactions under \$200 and a 5.5% commission for any transaction over \$200.

International debit cards do not generally work in Ethiopia.

While ATMs are available in Addis Ababa, there are no guarantees that your credit or debit cards will actually work in Africa. Check with your bank, but you are encouraged to bring cash. Large denominations, such as \$50 and \$100 notes are most easily exchanged. We do not recommend bringing traveller's cheques.

Do not rely on credit or debit cards as your only source of money. A combination of US dollar cash and cards is best. Always take more rather than less, as you don't want to spoil the trip by constantly feeling short of funds.

If you have extra Ethiopian Birr at the end of your trip that you wish to change back to a major foreign currency (USD, Euro), this can be done at banks of the Hilton, Sheraton and Ghion hotels or at the bank in the airport.

As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com.

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

USD20, usually included in most international air tickets.

Tipping

Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and 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 East African 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. The best method of tipping someone that has served the whole group is to plan in advance, and not rush when it comes to saying goodbye. A suggestion would be for each group member to contribute anonymously by putting their tip into an envelope. This often works the best and the group as a whole should gather to present the gift to the recipient(s), offering their thanks and showing their appreciation. This method brings the action out into the open, allowing for a friendly and appreciative interaction between the group and the recipient(s).

You may use the following as a guideline, all given in a per client format: Restaurant/Café servers: 10% of cost of bill, especially when in a large group (no envelope required); Tour Driver US\$3 (full day); Local Guides (ex. forest, village walks) Trek assistants US\$1 per day; CEO: \$20 per week. These amounts vary depending on the number of people in your group.

Optional Activities

Optional activity prices are subject to change and can fluctuate in relation to the high/low season and the number of people on a specific excursion. Not all excursions listed here may be available, due to season, or weather conditions. As generally not a lot of time is spent in start/end cities, you may want to arrange to arrive early, or stay longer after the trip in order to allow sufficient time to participate in optional activities there.

All prices are in US dollar amounts, per person.

Tour of Addis Ababa: 1 pax = US\$ 100, 2 pax = US\$ 65, 3 pax = \$50, 4 or more pax = US\$35

Bahir Dar market (self-guided) FREE

Lake Tana papyrus boat weavers (self-guided) \$5

Bezawit palace of Haile Selassie (self-guided) FREE

(entry not allowed but good views of the surrounding landscapes and lake Tana if it's not hazy)

All prices are per person (unless stated otherwise), and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

We recommend you contact your family physician, or your local travel clinic for the most up-to-date health information at least one month before departure.

Please ensure you have all the inoculations recommended by your doctor for travel in Ethiopia. Immunization against Hepatitis A & B, Tetanus & Typhoid is recommended. Be aware that Ethiopia has regions where malaria is present, including Bahir Dahr. We thus recommend that you take malaria medication; your doctor should be able to recommend the necessary prophylactics. Travellers should also carry a basic travel first-aid kit, hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as medical facilities are basic throughout these countries. An important item to include is a liquid or gel hand sanitizer and/or alcoholic/sanitary wipes, as they will aid in personal cleanliness and hygiene throughout the trip. The local tap water should not be consumed, so any water treatment tablets (ex. iodine), drops, etc, would help. If you have any pre-existing medical condition, you must inform G Adventures prior to the purchase of the tour, and upon arrival, to the CEO so he/she can be prepared to help you.

Sand flies and Mosquitoes

Are found in the areas visited. Mosquitoes are more prevalent in areas that receive more rainfall, and sand flies, though generally found on the coast, can also be found in dry & dusty conditions inland. Both tend to come out in the early evening and early mornings. Protective clothing, and insect repellent are highly recommended during these times.

Malaria

This infectious disease is transmitted by mosquitoes carrying the parasite. These mosquitoes are found at altitudes of under 1,800m, and thus can be found in a couple of the towns visited. You must have prophylactics which you can obtain from your local doctor at or health clinic.

Sun

It is very important that you wear sun block, even on a cloudy day, or at high altitudes when it feels cool, as we are near the equator and the sun is very strong. A sunburn can turn a pleasant trip into a painful trip.

Hydration

Even when days are cool please be sure to drink a minimum of two litres of water and refrain from drinking too many diuretics, as while when travelling outdoors the breeze can dehydrate you quickly as well as the heat.

Diarrhea:

It is normal for people travelling overseas to get an upset stomach due to a change of climate and food. Please make sure that you wash your hands and stay away from street food.

Physical Fitness

Although our trek is not a technical one, you will have to be in moderate to good physical condition. Regular hikes are one of the best ways to prepare. All aerobic exercises such as cycling, running, swimming and funnily enough aerobics are good for strengthening the cardiovascular system. Generally, any exercise that increases the heart rate for 20 minutes is helpful but don't over do it just before the climb.

Altitude and Acclimatization

Altitudes are generally defined as follows:

- High altitude 2,400m – 4,200m
- Very high altitude 4,200m – 5,400m
- Extreme altitude above 5,400m

We stick almost entirely just to “high altitude” zones, and it is likely that you will experience at least some form of mild altitude sickness. It is caused by the failure of the body to adapt quickly enough to the reduced level of oxygen in the air at an increased altitude. There are many different symptoms but the most common are headaches, light-headedness, nausea, loss of appetite, tingling in the extremities (toes, fingers) and a mild swell of ankles and fingers.

These mild forms are not serious and will normally disappear within 48 hours. But if the situation gets worse, medical attention should be sought.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

It is suggested to bring a few items to give to locals in the community. Clothing and toiletries are very much appreciated, as are pens, pencils, notebooks, or mementos from your country to give as souvenirs. Small items such as sugar-free gum are handy to trade for the opportunity to take photos.

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

Please note that all passengers traveling to Antarctica are required to fill out this questionnaire.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

- www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Trip Specific Responsible Travel

It is suggested to bring a few items to give to locals in the community. Clothing, educational material and others are very much appreciated. It is advisable to ask the CEO when and how to handle any of your material that you brought with you.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Local Dress

It is recommended to cover legs, and to remove shoes and hats in churches and monasteries. Women should cover their hair with a shawl in churches/monasteries. Please note that Ethiopia is a fairly conservative country, so please dress accordingly.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at customerservice@gadventures.com and we will send it on to you.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](#), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](#) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.