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MYSTERIES OF ETHIOPIA

13 days, Addis Ababa to Addis Ababa

Trip code DEHNG

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Awra Amba Community Visit, Gonder
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Ploughshare Women's Association Visit, Gonder
- Your Journeys Highlight Moment: Community Injera Making Demonstration and Traditional Dinner, Gonder
- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group
- Arrival transfer
- Excursion to Blue Nile Falls
- Boat trip on Lake Tana
- Bahir Dar market visit
- Guided tour of Debre Berhan Selassie Church, Fasiladas's Bath, and historic castles in Gondar
- Simien Mountains trek
- Visit to Axum historical sites
- Guided tour of the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela
- Asheton Maryam hike
- Internal flights
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

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 June 27th, 2016 - December 31st, 2016

ITINERARY



NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1

ADDIS ABABA

Arrive at any time. Arrival transfer included.

Addis Ababa, founded more than a century ago, means “new flower” in Amharic. At an elevation of 2,400m (7,874 ft), it's the third highest capital in the world and the climate is pleasantly cool. The city mixes past and present, the streets a mishmash of expensive cars, old Russian (Lada model) taxis, along with donkeys, sheep, and goats. Traditional mud houses stand not far from austere fascist architecture and private-sector banks.

Accommodation in Ethiopia is not to the standard of the west or other parts of Africa where tourism is more developed. Please see about accommodation section in trip details for more information.



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Arrival Transfer **Addis Ababa Bole International Airport - Addis Ababa**

You will be met at the airport and transferred to the hotel to start your adventure.

ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Day 2

ADDIS ABABA/BAHIR DAR

Take a late morning flight to Bahir Dar. Enjoy a guided hike to the Blue Nile Falls. The falls are some of Africa's most scenic and are known as Tis Issat, which means "smoking water."



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Plane

Addis Ababa Bole International Airport – Bahir Dar Airport

1h-1h30m

565km

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Blue Nile Falls Hiking Excursion

Bahir Dar

Enjoy a two-hour hike to the Blue Nile Falls, crossing over the Blue Nile via the historic Portuguese bridge. You can also take a path to the bottom of the falls to experience a close-up view. During full flood (July - September), the falls increase to 400m (1,312 ft) across and a 45m (148 ft) drop.

Private Vehicle

Bahir Dar

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.



Optional Activities - Day 2

Bezawit Climb

Bahir Dar

Drive to Bezawit, the palace of Haile Selassie, which lies on a hill 5km (3.1 mi) outside of Bahir Dar. The panoramic views of the Blue Nile River, Lake Tana, and the town are absolutely stunning.

Day 3

BAHIR DAR

Take a boat trip on Lake Tana to enjoy stunning views and visit monasteries including Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam. In the afternoon, take a city tour with a visit to the Bahir Dar market.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Lake Tana Boat Trip (Monastery Visit)

Lake Tana

Visit two monasteries on Lake Tana. Both men and women can visit these monasteries, Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam. From Ura Kidane Mihret, go for a twenty-minute walk through the forest on Zege Peninsula to a second monastery, Azwa Maryam. Have a short visit at this monastery before boarding your boat.

Bahir Dar Market

Bahir Dar

Visit the busy market in Bahir Dar, where you can see colourful woven clothing, basketry, cereals, spices, and other local goods.

Day 4

BAHIR DAR/GONDER

Visit the egalitarian community of Awra Amba with a local expert. You'll learn about the unique way of life that sets men and women equally in all community, social, and labour matters. Continue to Gondor and visit the Kusquam Castle.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle

Bahir Dar - Gonder

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

ACTIVITY

Visit the unique egalitarian community of Awra Amba. Founded in 1980, the village, which aims to relieve poverty and provide social security to its members, has been ostracized for failing to subscribe to a mainstream religion. Join a local expert and learn about the way of life in this innovative community where men and women are treated equally and labour is not divided by gender.

Kusquam Castle Visit

Gonder

Visit Kusquam, Queen Mentawab's 18th century residence and church, which 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 is also worth a visit too.

Free Time

Gonder

Enjoy some free time on your own. Opt to visit the local market.



Optional Activities - Day 4

Gondar Market Visit

Gonder

Opt to visit the city market to see the locals shopping and pick up a few trinkets for yourself or friends back home.

Day 5

GONDER

Explore Gondar and visit Debre Berhan Salassie Church, Fasiladas's castles, bath, and gardens. Visit the Ploughshare Women Crafts Training Centre in a Falasha village where underprivileged single mothers can learn pottery, weaving, and other technical skills that enable them to make a living independently. Continue to our lodge just outside Gondar. In the evening, visit the Kossoye Community where you'll learn about the staples of Ethiopian food and have an Injera making demonstration before enjoying a traditional dinner.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Fasiladas Castle and Bath Visit Gonder

Visit the Fasiladas' Castle compound, which covers an area of over 70,000sq m (229,659 sq ft), surrounded by high stone walls. Emperor Fasiladas's Palace is the oldest and perhaps most impressive of the castles. It is two stories high, has an imposing parapet and four small domed towers. Thought to be designed by an Indian architect, it reflects Indian, Portuguese, Moorish, and Aksumite influences. Following the castle visit, we drive to Emperor Fasiladas's bath and wander around the grounds shaded by huge fig trees.

ACTIVITY

Visit the Ploughshare Women's Crafts Training Centre where underprivileged single mothers can learn pottery, weaving, and other technical skills that enable them to make a living independently. Tour the facility, learn more about the initiative, enjoy handicraft demonstrations, and talk to some of the trainees. Browse the small on-site gift shop where you can see some of the completed works and finish off the experience with a traditional coffee ceremony.

Private Vehicle Gonder 30m 20km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

ACTIVITY

Venture to the Kossoye community to discover the key ingredients of local dishes and try making injera, the flatbread that accompanies most meals. Then sit down to a traditional dinner, scooping up savoury stews with injera that's fresh off the griddle.

Debre Berhan Selassie Church Tour **Gonder**

Visit Debre Berhan Salassie Church, probably the country's most famous church and a highlight of Gondar. Its ceiling is covered with famous paintings of Ethiopian cherubs and the walls portray Ethiopian saints, martyrs, and lore.

Day 6

GONDER/DEBARK'

Travel to Debark, our base for visiting Simien Mountains National Park. Relax at the scenic lodge with views of the stunning mountain ranges.

It is cold in the morning, during the day, in the evening, and at night 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 through September).



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle **Gonder - Debark'** 4h-5h 170km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Free Time **Debark'**

Relax and take in the fresh air of the mountains.

Day 7

DEBARK'

Spend the day in Simien Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Enjoy guided hiking excursions around Sankaber campsite, the Jinbar waterfalls, and Chenek campsite with its scenic views and wildlife. Return to our comfortable lodge for the evening.

The scenic Simien Mountains are a good break from the busy cities. Rising high above an eroded landscape of deep gorges and valleys, they rank as one of the continent's most beautiful (and unusual) mountain ranges. A number of peaks reach well over 4,000m (13,123.4 ft), and Ras Dashen, the highest peak in Ethiopia, is one of Africa's highest mountains. 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.

Today is a full day of hiking. Those not interested in hiking can spend the day relaxing at the lodge.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Simien Mountains Trek

Simēn

Enjoy a day visit to Simien Mountains National Park. In the morning, hike from Sankaber campsite to the Jinbar waterfalls. Later, depending on road conditions, drive as far as the Chenek campsite for a picnic lunch and short excursions in search of Walia Ibex and the Ethiopian wolf.

Hiking

Simēn

Lace up your hiking boots and get to the next stop under your own power.

Day 8

DEBARK' / ĀKSUM

Drive to Axum, Ethiopia's oldest and holiest city, which was once the home of the Queen of Sheba.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Private Vehicle

Debark' - Āksum

9h-10h

280km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 9

ĀKSUM

Spend the day exploring Axum, Ethiopia's oldest city. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was founded here in the 4th century and it remains the holiest city in the country. Visit archaeological sites and Axum Tsion church.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Axum Historical Site Visit

Āksum

Explore the Axum historical site, including visits to the main stelae field, the Queen of Sheba's palace and bath, and the 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.

Private Vehicle

Āksum

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 10

ĀKSUM/LALĪBELA

This morning, we rise early for our flight to Lalibela. Upon landing, we head out to visit historical sites, including St. George Church, and other rock-hewn churches.

Lalibela is a good place to taste the local beverage, tej (honey wine) accompanied by local traditional song and dance.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Plane

Āksum - Lalībela

45m-1h

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Lalibela Churches Tour

Lalībela

Lalibela is considered by many as the greatest of the religio-historical sites. The churches, carved out of single rocks, date back to the 11th and 12th century AD and are still in use. Visit various churches here, learning more about the culture and history of the area.

Private Vehicle

Lalībela

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 11

LALĪBELA

In the morning, enjoy a hike to Asheton Maryam, for panoramic views of the town and countryside. In the afternoon, we'll continue our tour of the second group of churches.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Asheton Maryam Hike

Lalībela

Enjoy a 3 hour morning hike to Asheton Maryam, set at 3,150m (10,335ft) on top of the highest peak. Take some time to wonder at the panoramic views of the town and countryside. While this hike can be strenuous and demanding, there is an option for those who wish to hire a mule.

Lalibela Churches Tour

Lalībela

Lalibela is considered by many as the greatest of the religio-historical sites. The churches, carved out of single rocks, date back to the 11th and 12th century AD and are still in use. Visit various churches here, learning more about the culture and history of the area.

Private Vehicle

Lalībela

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Day 12

LALĪBELA/ADDIS ABABA

Take a late morning flight to Addis Ababa. Opt to enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Plane

Lalibela - Addis Ababa Bole International Airport

1h-2h

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Day 13

ADDIS ABABA

Depart at any time.



Meals included

Breakfast



TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Departure Day

Not ready to leave? Your CEO can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

What's included

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- Internal flights
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What are the main highlights of this trip?

Discover rock-hewn churches in Lalibela and castles in Gondar, visit the Awra Amba community and learn about the local way of life, enjoy a traditional coffee ceremony at the Ploughshare Women's Crafts Training Center, learn how to make injera (Ethiopian flatbread) before a delicious traditional dinner

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Discover rock-hewn churches in Lalibela and castles in Gondar, visit the Awra Amba community and learn about the local way of life, enjoy a traditional coffee ceremony at the Ploughshare Women's Crafts Training Center, learn how to make injera (Ethiopian flatbread) before a delicious traditional dinner

Is there a disclaimer I should read before booking this trip?

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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.

Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?

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.

What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

ACCOMMODATION

Please note that due to the remote nature of our Ethiopia adventures some of our accommodation may seem rustic by western standards.

VACCINATIONS

It may be required to show a Yellow Fever certificate upon entering the country. Please check in with your local consulate and health expert for advice on Yellow Fever and other inoculations required for this area.

What is the group leader like?

Throughout the entire 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.

How large will the group be?

Max 15, Avg 10.

What meals are included in this trip?

12 breakfasts, 1 dinner

What are the meals like on this trip?

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).

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Plane, minivan/bus, boat, walking, hiking.

What transportation will we take on this trip?

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.

Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?

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.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Hotels (12 nts).

What kind of accommodation can I expect on this trip?

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.

Please ensure that you bring enough toiletries as most hotels do not supply them.

What is the joining hotel?

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

What are the joining instructions?

An arrival transfer is included on this trip 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 National Geographic Journeys in our joining hotel. Due to customer experience and quality considerations, all services related to the tour must be continuous.

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 are a couple bank kiosks to the far right of the visa counter where you can exchange US or Euros into Ethiopian Birr. These give the current bank rate.

After completing immigration procedures and claiming your luggage in the airport, exit to the large arrivals hall. Turn right at the meet/greet area and look for the Ambassador Hotel booth. It is the first one in the far right corner of the hall. The Ambassador Hotel staff at the booth will direct you to the shuttle bus that will take you to the hotel. If the greeting staff happen not to be at the booth upon your arrival, wait until they arrive or call the hotel reception at +251 (0) 11 6188284 / 81.

What happens if I experience problems when arriving?

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.

Who should I contact in case of an emergency?

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.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Local Operator (Ethiopia)

Steven Olson

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time)

From outside Ethiopia: +251 11 6 299 863

From within Ethiopia: 011 6 299 863

After hours emergency number:

From outside Ethiopia: +251 911 478 058

From within Ethiopia: 0911 478 058

G Adventures Local Office (Nairobi, Kenya)

From outside Kenya: +254 727 208 832

From within Kenya: 0727 208 832

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, we have a toll-free line for North America, which will connect you directly with our Toronto office.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 800 465 5600.

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Outside North America, Australia and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

Are there any additional packing suggestions I should consider?

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 medium-sized rolling bag, duffle 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.

What should be on my packing list?

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Hiking/Trekking:

- Gloves
- Hat
- Hiking boots/sturdy walking shoes
- Hiking pants (Convertible/Zip-off and quick dry recommended)
- Snacks (Protein bars, chocolate, dried fruits, candies, energy sweets)
- Socks (Trekking socks – woollen or synthetic, not cotton)
- Thermal base layer (Woollen or synthetic, not cotton)
- Walking poles (Highly recommended)

Smart Dress:

- Smart outfit (For evenings out)

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear Note: Please ensure you bring a windproof rain jacket if you are travelling to Ethiopia between June, July & August.

When can I do my laundry on this trip?

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.

What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

Please note that upon arrival by air to Addis Ababa, nationals of some countries can obtain a visa for approximately US\$50. 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.

IMPORTANT NOTE

It may be required to show a Yellow Fever certificate upon entering the country. Please check in with your local consulate and health expert for advice on Yellow Fever and other inoculations required for this area.

Where can I read detailed notes about this trip?

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.

Customs at Arrival

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

What should I consider when planning my personal expenses and discretionary spending for this itinerary?

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.

What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?

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.

How much emergency money should I bring on this trip?

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!

Do I need to pay a departure tax?

USD20, usually included in most international air tickets.

Should I be tipping on my trip?

Tipping is an expected, though not compulsory, component of your tour program. The gesture serves as an expression of appreciation for exceptional service, and amounts given are up to your discretion.

Tipping is one of the most direct ways that you can have a positive economic impact within the African community. Although it may not be customary for you, it is 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 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 person format:

G CEOs and drivers: \$5-10 USD each, per day worked

Supply Driver \$3-5 USD (full day)

Restaurant/Café servers: 10% of cost of bill, especially when in a large group (no envelope required)

Local guides: \$1 USD for every couple of hours

What activities are optional on this trip?

Bahir Dar

- Bezawit Climb

Gonder

- Gondar Market Visit

Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

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. Travellers should also carry a basic first-aid kit and hand sanitizers/antibacterial wipes on their travels. Medical facilities are basic throughout these countries. For your own safety, we strongly recommend that you advise your tour leader of any medical condition that may affect you while travelling with the group. Your tour leader will be able to inform you of local health advisories (e.g. drinking water quality). Please ensure you have all the inoculations recommended by your doctor.

Yellow Fever Certificate Note: (Updated: May 2017)

It is compulsory to show a valid Yellow Fever Certificate if you are travelling to the following G Adventures-visited countries from a Yellow Fever endemic country:

- Botswana
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Rwanda
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

For some of these countries, proof of Yellow Fever vaccination is also required for passengers who have travelled more than 12 hours through the airport of an endemic country. If other countries not endemic to Yellow Fever have been visited after visiting an endemic country, then a Yellow Fever certificate may still be required on entry. Please check country-specific regulations before your departure.

Malaria

Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease that is present in some regions in Africa. Risk of malaria can increase during periods of heavy rain, during the rainy seasons, and in densely populated areas of Southern & East Africa. To prevent malaria, we recommend speaking to your doctor about taking preventative medication (prophylaxis), combined with regular use of insect repellent spray/cream. Please check updated travel health advisories specific to malaria before your departure.

What do I need to know to about safety and security on my trip?

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/

What are the trip specific safety considerations?

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, bank cards, 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.

What rules should I know before joining this trip?

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.

Is travel insurance required for my trip?

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.

What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

How should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

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.

How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

Earn 5% off your next G Adventures Tour (up to \$100 USD)*

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us and to thank you for your time, we are pleased to offer a 5% discount (up to a maximum of \$100 USD) off your next G Adventures holiday. All you need to do is submit the form within 4 weeks of the completion of your tour, and you'll be able to join the thousands of travellers who have taken 2, 3, 4 or even 10 or more tours with us!

Discount cannot be combined with other offers or applied to 'Independent' style trips. Maximum discount value is \$100 USD (or equivalent currency). Valid for new bookings only. G Adventures reserves the right to withdraw or modify this offer at any time without notice. Limited to one discount per person.

Does G Adventures have an email newsletter I can subscribe to?

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.

How old must I be to join this trip?

You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a G Adventures tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our [LGBTQ+ page](#) for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

Dossier Disclaimer

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

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.

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.