



PROJECT DOSSIER

ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

ADDIS ABABA to ADDIS ABABA

15 days

2,500 kms

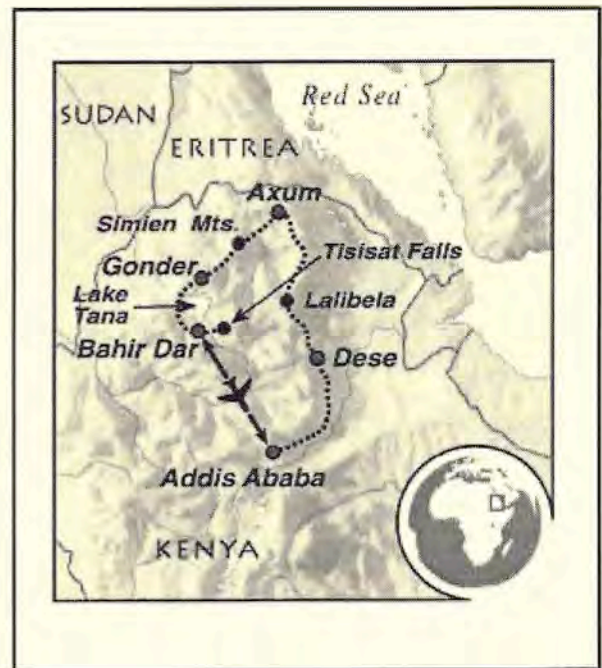
(2100 kms land distance)

Ethiopia

Itinerary Guideline

FROM ADDIS ABABA

- Day 1:** Addis Ababa, trip preparation, afternoon departure.
- Day 2:** Along winding roads through beautiful mountain scenery over passes 3,000 metres high north towards Dese.
- Day 3:** Dramatic scenery over high passes towards Mekele, where we turn west to Lalibela.
- Days 4 & 5:** Arrive Lalibela – the hilltop town famous for its medieval monolithic churches. Guided visits to the churches and opportunity to hike to remote monasteries.
- Day 6:** Descend from Tigrean mountains to Mekele.
- Day 7:** Travel via Adigrat en route to Axum.
- Day 8:** Axum - visit the Baths of the Queen of Sheba, the giant obelisks, and other ancient sites.
- Days 9 & 10:** Over the spectacular Wolkefit Pass to Gonder, via Simien National Park.
- Day 11:** Explore the ancient city of Gonder, the one time Capital city, visit the historical castles and monasteries.
- Day 12:** South to Bahir Dar on shores of Lake Tana.



- Day 13:** In Bahir Dar, visit the Blue Nile & the Tisisat Falls, return to Bahir Dar.
- Day 14:** Spend the day on Lake Tana visiting the island monasteries and enjoying the scenery by boat.
- Day 15:** Fly by domestic flight to Addis Ababa – free time. Arrangements end p.m.

NB. Every second departure operates in reverse direction i.e flying to Bahir Dar on Day 1 to follow the itinerary in reverse.

PLEASE NOTE:

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route. i.e. activities and timings.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is a land of extremes, a land of remote and wild places. Some of the highest, most rugged and inaccessible places on the African continent are found here. One of the larger countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and occupying a large part of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia is rare in that it has unusual wildlife, breathtaking scenery and intriguing historical sites.

The people of Ethiopia are as fascinating as the scenery. They are intrinsically religious and as you travel through the countryside you see many a distant octagonal church topped with a Ethiopian cross, they are certain to be packed every Sunday. Ethiopia's Islamic tradition is also strong and offers colourful contrast, particularly in the eastern and southern parts of the country. Aware and proud of these differences, Ethiopia's people have worked together and have prevailed over war, famine and disease for centuries.

Recorded history for the Ethiopian region began at an early period. Three thousand years before Christ the ancient Egyptians sent expeditions down the Red Sea in quest of gold, ivory, incense and slaves.

The country's rich tapestry of history is woven with fascinating facts and legends: The tales of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; the journey of the Ark of the Covenant; stories of the ancient kingdom of Axum; the fabled city of Gonder and the King of Lalibela who reputedly founded the rock-hewn churches, one of the great sights of the world. All this makes Ethiopia a unique and memorable country.

Addis Ababa, the modern capital of Ethiopia lies beneath Mount Entoto in the heart of the Ethiopian Highlands. Addis Ababa was founded by Menelik II in 1887 and became the capital of Ethiopia in 1896. The market here is one of the largest and liveliest in Africa, with everything for sale from beer and vegetables to gold and silver jewellery, frankincense and myrrh. The scenery to the north of Addis Ababa is spectacular with high passes looking down into deep ravines with lush green forested slopes. The road winds through the picturesque and mountainous province of Tigray to Axum.

Lalibela is set on a hilltop in the highlands, the city can be impossible to get to by road, particularly in the rainy season. Here is one of the unrecognised wonders of the world, beautiful 12th and 13th century monolithic churches hewn straight out of the bedrock.

Axum is the holy city of Ethiopia and dates back some 2000 years to when it was the capital of the empire which gave rise to what is now Ethiopia. Axum is famous for the remains of its ancient

grandeur, huge granite monoliths litter a field outside the town, one of these measures an incredible 30 metres in length. In the town there is the Queen of Sheba Palace and baths.

The holiest shrine in Ethiopia is here in Axum, the church of St Mary of Zion, according to local tradition, the original Ark of the Covenant is kept here, having been smuggled from Jerusalem by Menelik I. Sadly, women are not allowed inside the Church and no-one is allowed to see the Ark.

From Axum to Gonder the scenery is every bit as dramatic as from Addis Ababa to Axum. The road winds its way over the Wolkefit Pass and through the mountainous terrain past Mount Ras Dashen, Ethiopia's highest peak at 4620 metres. Then via Simien National park, which apart from spectacular views boasts an abundance of wildlife: baboons, ibexes, Simien foxes and predatory birds including the very rare lammergeyer.

The city of Gonder was the capital of Ethiopia from 1632 until 1868. Here are found monasteries, castles and palaces showing influences from Europe, North Africa and Arabia, these were mostly built by the emperors during the height of Gonder's power in the 17th and 18th centuries. The monasteries and churches are beautifully muralled reflecting the area's 1,700 year association with Christianity.

The Tisisiat Falls on the Blue Nile are 400 metres wide and 50 metres deep and are very impressive indeed particularly after the rainy season in October. Bahir Dar is the main town sitting on the shore of Lake Tana. The lake's islands are dotted with monasteries dating from 11th to 14th centuries. There are still monks living on these islands existing on the produce they grow on their individual islands.

GROUP SIZE

21 max. including Encounter staff. Local guides will be employed at certain places of interest where their knowledge is advantageous to our visit.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Some time is spent at altitudes up to 3,200 metres and some effects of altitude sickness and oxygen deprivation may be felt. Apart from the altitude there are few other significant physical demands other than the camping / nomadic lifestyle. However for those who raft, this is an exciting and adventurous project operating far from roads and communication lines. It requires good stamina and the ability to function well on minimum comforts. Rafts are propelled by group paddle power. No previous rafting experience is needed

but you must be a competent swimmer and unafraid of the water

THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the Project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

INCLUDED IN EXPEDITION COST

All transport, including the domestic flight between Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa (or v.v), food, camping equipment & supplies, local guides, camping and accommodation from published starting date of expedition until end date. Entrance costs included are: Axum Museum; Simien National Park; monolithic churches in Lalibela; boat trip to island monasteries on Lake Tana, visit to Tisisat Falls. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

EXPEDITION COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights to/from Addis Ababa, transfers to/from airport & airport taxes, vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major centres (minimal cost), personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Individual entry fees to museums/sights not shown above (minimal cost).

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag (minimum 3 seasons), a medium sized bag or backpack, a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines & toiletries etc. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary. You probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Most airlines flying in and out of Africa impose a 20 kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

Encounter 4 WD expedition truck and plane to / from Bahir Dar and boat on Lake Tana.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout (except in Lalibela or resthouse). Campground facilities in cities & main centres, otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. (Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfast & evening meals, picnic style lunches. Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves etc, supplemented by local & imported canned & dried goods in areas where no fresh supplies available. Project members involved in daily fresh food shopping & meal preparation. In larger towns where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will usually be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is very minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than **6 months** after the end of the expedition, and which contains not less than **2 blank pages**. Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and are subject to change. Encounter or your agent can advise you of all the up to date visa requirements applicable to you, and their costs. We can also help you in obtaining your visas before departure.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on page 60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.

MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

As a guideline you should budget approx. **US\$ 100 per week** to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in main centres, laundry, optional activities, individual museum entry fees & some souvenirs en route. You should allow **US\$ 40 per day** in Addis prior to departure for incidentals such as hotels, food etc. Ethnic crafts and similar souvenirs can be attractive and tempting in Africa.

(Ebony & hardwood carvings, bracelets & jewellery, baskets, weaving, tribal implements, pottery & ceramics). Their cost and posting them home may not always be. Apart from this, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in Africa.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE EXPEDITION

We recommend that, if possible, you arrive in Addis Ababa the day before the projects departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights. There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Addis Ababa hotel at 09.00 hrs on the morning of Day 1. This meeting is also the **absolute latest arrival time**. If you are arriving early, Addis Ababa is an interesting city to wander around, especially the Mercato market.

LEAVING AT END OF EXPEDITION

Arrangements end on arrival in Addis Ababa on the afternoon of day 15. You should **not** make any homeward flight arrangements for this same day. Delay to our arrival date is unlikely, and a flight out for the next day is usually practical if you are in a hurry to get home.

INTERESTING READING

The Blue Nile (Alan Moorehead), *Ethiopia* (Spectrum Guides).

A full list of recommended reading & titles - in novels, guidebooks, history and maps is given in our pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment

Return flights.....

Visas.....

Vaccinations.....

Insurance.....

Personal spending money.....

Total_____

The information in this dossier 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 Encounter Overland Ltd.