



PROJECT DOSSIER

THE BLUE NILE & BEYOND

NAIROBI to CAIRO

9 weeks

8,800kms

**Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea,
Sudan, Egypt**

Itinerary Guideline

- Week 1:** Nairobi to Lake Naivasha, foot safari in Hell's Gate National Park. North to Samburu National Park, Kaisut Desert & Marsabit, into Ethiopia.
- Week 2:** Into the Ethiopian Rift Valley to Lake Awasa, Shashamene hot springs.
- Week 3:** The central highlands to Addis Ababa, markets & bazaars of the capital. Mountain roads north to Lalibela & ancient monolithic churches. To Bahir Dar.
- Week 4:** Lake Tana & source of the Blue Nile. Tisisat Falls, the Monasteries of Gonder. Simien Mountains, 2,000 year old city of Axum.
- Week 5:** Into Eritrea to Massawa, & the Red Sea.
- Week 6:** Inland to Sudan, the jebels of Kassala to Khartoum and the junction of the White & Blue Niles.
- Week 7:** Temples of the Nile and the Nubian Desert to Wadi Halfa & Egypt .



- Week 8:** To Abu Simbel on Lake Nasser and Aswan. Down the Nile aboard felucca sailing boats from Aswan to Kom Ombo.
- Week 9:** To Luxor, Karnak & the Valley of the Kings. To the Red Sea, Hurghada and on to Cairo via the Suez Canal.

PLEASE NOTE:

With the present political situation that prevails between Sudan and Egypt we are unlikely to be able to cross the land border to Egypt and thus we will probably need to go by ferry from Port Sudan to Safaga or Suez in Egypt. This situation could change so please check with Encounter or your agent for updates.

HIGHLIGHTS & ROUTE

Africa's Great Rift Valley is a wide and often dramatic geological fault running from Mozambique and Lake Malawi through Tanzania and Kenya (spawning Mts Kilimanjaro and Kenya on the way) to Ethiopia and the Red Sea, the river Jordan and the Dead Sea.

KENYA

Lake Naivasha, 100kms from Nairobi, is one of the freshwater lakes of the Valley, and home to a huge variety of bird species. Joy Adamson (Born Free) built a house here; the small Hell's Gate National Park is one of only two in the country to allow access on foot. The gorge and cliffs protect zebra, baboon, ostrich and gazelle which in turn attract leopard and cheetah.

To Thomson's Falls at 2400m in the cool Aberdare Hills, past the snow peaks of Mt Kenya to the Samburu National Park and the wild and undeveloped tribal territories of the northern frontier. Across the lands of the Samburu to the scrub of the Kaisut Desert - canyons and camels, craggy mountains, volcanic craters and sudden oases of forested hills. Marsabit is the town of the north, a market and meeting place for the Rendille, Boran and Galla peoples - clothed in hide, wearing multicoloured beads and necklaces, fierce in tradition and independence of ways.

ETHIOPIA

Climbing roads lead into the central highlands of Ethiopia 2-3,000m along the chain of Rift Valley lakes. It is a beautiful lush land, a temperate climate of woodlands and eucalyptus, small towns, wheat and tobacco.

To the hot springs at Shashemene and Lake Awassa, then to Addis Ababa beneath Mt Entoto. The market is one of the largest and liveliest in Africa, with everything from beer and vegetables to gold and silver jewellery, frankincense and myrrh. In the mountains north of Addis is Lalibela, where beautiful monolithic churches were built in the 12th and 13th centuries and remain today as one of the unrecognised wonders of the world.

The highland town of Bahir Dar lies on the shores of Lake Tana, source of the Blue Nile. Islands in the lake are dotted with monasteries dating from the 17th century. We drive via the impressive

Tisisat Falls on the Blue Nile to the old capital of Gonder. This was once part of the ancient Axum Empire, of the Queen of Sheba, and trade with Egypt, Greece and India in ivory, silks and spice. Then Axum faded and Gonder rose.

On to Simien National Park and Axum. Castles and palaces, showing influences from Europe, North Africa and Arabia were built by the emperors during the height of Gonder's power in the 17th and 18th centuries. Monasteries and beautifully muralled churches reflect the area's 1,700 year association with Christianity.

ERITREA

On the western shores of the Red Sea, Eritrea is Africa's newest country - formed in 1993 after a war that lasted 30 years. Massawa on the Red Sea coast, whilst badly bombed in 1990, is still a charming city.

Inland again, across the escarpments and wild, rugged hills of northern Eritrea we reach the border with Sudan at Kassala.

SUDAN

Kassala is a pleasant city of mango, banana, guava and pomegranate orchards - overlooked by the bizarre sugar loaf mountains and jebels that dominate the horizon from a long distance. From Wadi Medani we travel alongside the Blue Nile again, into Khartoum and its sister city of Omdurman. Here is the confluence of the two Niles, where the twin cities were founded on the slave trade between Black Africa and Turkey. Here are route will most likely take us east to Port Sudan on the Red Sea to sail north to Egypt.

EGYPT

Across the wastes of the eastern Sahara are the great statues of Ramses and Nefertari and the Sun Temple at Abu Simbel, isolated and alone in the sands. Fronting this incredible rock temple, four colossal statues of Ramses II guard the southern approaches to Egypt.

At Aswan, where the Nile flows in its full majesty out of Lake Nasser, the river is studded with rocks and islands, amongst which glide graceful white feluccas - traditional shallow draft Nile sailing boats. On one of these islands are the lovely temples of Philae. Boarding feluccas we sail slowly down stream to Kom Ombo's temples

and tombs of the 'Old Kingdom'. Then by road to Luxor; the great temple of Amun at Karnak (Thebes) and the Valleys of the Kings and Queens.

Our final journey will take us to the Red Sea with opportunities to snorkel in coral reefs near Hurghada before travelling on to Cairo via the Suez Canal.

N.B. SHOULD WE HAVE TO TAKE A FERRY FROM PORT SUDAN THEN OUR ROUTE WILL MISS DONGOLA AND WADI HALFA - INSTEAD TAKING IN SUEZ AND THE RED SEA BEFORE REJOINING THE NILE AT ASWAN.

N.B.B. YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE A FLIGHT FROM ASWAN SHOULD YOU WISH TO TAKE THE OPTIONAL VISIT TO ABU SIMBEL AS AT PRESENT THE ROAD IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

(06/98)

DELAYS OR FORCED ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

The possibility of some delay en route is planned into this project and we expect to arrive on time. But, by the very nature of trans-continental travel in Africa, it should be recognised that longer delays outside our control can still happen. It is suggested that you do not make any firm commitments within 10 days of the scheduled end date of the project in Cairo.

If we are delayed en route, no additional payments to Encounter will be asked of you. Major forced changes to our projects are unusual in Africa.

When they do happen it is because of a border closure or civil insurrection making it impossible or imprudent to enter a particular country or region. If, for reasons beyond Encounter's control, we are obliged to utilise unplanned air or sea transport Encounter would bear the first US\$300 of any additional expenditure arising out of or in connection with the continuation of the trip. Should the additional expenditure exceed US\$300 per person then a contribution would be required from you of up to (but not exceeding) US\$300. Any further amount beyond this would again be met by Encounter.

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

The high heat of the Sudan and Upper Egypt, together with minimal facilities throughout much of the project's route can take their toll. Living a nomadic/camping lifestyle for two months under these conditions requires a flexible and adaptable approach, and cannot be recommended to many people over the ages of 40-45. Water for personal washing may occasionally need to be restricted in the deserts. Some time is spent at altitudes up to 3,200 metres and some effects of altitude sickness and oxygen deprivation may be felt. The night time temperatures in the Ethiopian highlands can get down to 0°.

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 PROJECT COST

All transport food, camping equipment and supplies, local guides, camping fees, tolls, entrance fees as follows: Hell's Gate foot safari, Samburu National Park, churches and monasteries of Lalibela and Gonder, Axum, Simien National Park entrance fees, Felucca sail trip on Nile, 1½ days entrance to the Valley of the Kings including 2 tombs, entrance to site of Pyramids and Sphynx. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

Flights to Nairobi and homewards from Cairo and transfers to/from airport and airport taxes in connection with same; vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, occasional lunches in major centres (minimal

cost), personal clothing/equipment and items of a personal nature. Other individual entry fees to museums/sights not stated above (minimal cost). Accommodation and meals in Nairobi before and Cairo after the expedition.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables and stools, light, cooking equipment and utensils, mosquito nets, 1st aid kit.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A four seasons sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack, or a daypack. Personal clothing, strong footwear, water bottle, personal medicines and toiletries etc. No specialised clothing or equipment is necessary and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Soft bags or frameless backpacks are the most suitable kinds of luggage to bring. Most flights into Nairobi and out of Cairo have a 20kg baggage limit.

TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck, on foot in Hell's Gate National Park (day hike), ferry between Sudan and Egypt either via Lake Nasser or Red Sea. Nile feluccas between Aswan and Kom Ombo (1 day).

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout; on deck aboard Nile feluccas between Aswan and Kom Ombo (1 night). Occasional and basic campground facilities exist in some cities and centres, usually extending to simple washing/showering and toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. (Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic and day to day routines etc.).

MEALS, COOKING and FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts and evening meals, picnic lunches. Project members are involved in daily fresh food shopping and meal preparation. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat where available and safe, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves,

supplemented by truck supplies of canned and dried goods in areas where fresh supplies are unavailable or severely limited. We frequently bake our own bread).

Meals are prepared by felucca crews on Nile. In a few larger cities where a day is spent in individual sightseeing or activities away from the truck, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal. Vegetarians usually have no great difficulty maintaining an adequate diet in Africa, though it must be accepted that for a few days at a time in remoter desert regions fresh supplies may not be available, and your meals may need to rely heavily on canned and dehydrated vegetables, cereal staples, canned fruit etc. Please advise Encounter in advance if you are a strict vegetarian.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than **6 months** after the end of the project, and which contains not less than **10 blank pages**. Your passport should also be free of any evidence of having visited Israel. Visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality, and even then are subject to sudden change. Some visas need to be obtained before departure, others en route. 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 any visas you may require before departure. Visas en route are applied for as a group with the assistance of your Project Leader.

INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on p60 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 £90 / US\$150 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, occasional lunches in major centres, (average) en route visa costs, individual museum entry fees and some souvenirs. You should budget a further US\$40 per day that you spend in Nairobi or Cairo before or after the project to cover hotel, meals etc.

Ethnic crafts can be tempting, attractive and good value in Africa. Posting them, or getting them home may not be. Good buys can include East African ebony and hardwood carvings, bracelets, baskets, weaving and jewellery; Kelims, rugs, tapestry, hand beaten brass and copperware in Egypt. Many small 'treasures' need not cost much at all. Carpets and the best hardwood carvings start at about US\$80. Credit cards are generally accepted only in a few of the larger cities. We have included an average of what most people spend on souvenirs in the figure previously stated, but it's a subjective amount - and the limit is only what you impose on yourself!

Apart from this, and your en route visas, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money in Africa.

ARRIVING & LEAVING

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Nairobi hotel at 17.00 two days before project departure date. This meeting is also your latest arrival time as we must finalise visa arrangements for Eritrea.

If you are arriving early: Nairobi is an interesting city with plenty to do - National Museum, Nairobi National Park, Karen Blixen's house, Snake Park and Railway Museum, Bomas of Kenya (traditional dance and songs), cinemas, shopping along Kenyatta Avenue and city market, Indian Ocean at Malindi - 1 day's bus or train from Nairobi, or Lamu Island - 1 hr by air. Reservations at our Nairobi hotel before departure may be made through Encounter, with payment by you directly to hotel on arrival.

Ending: Even though serious delays en route are unlikely, we would prefer that you not have any firm commitments for up to 10 days after scheduled expedition completion date in Cairo.

INTERESTING READING

Uhuru (Robert Ruark), Born Free (Joy Adamson), In Search of the Forty Day Road (Michael Asher), Gods, Graves and Scholars (C.W. Ceram), The Blue Nile (Geoffrey Moorehouse).

A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

CLIMBING MT KILIMANJARO

The walking climb of Kilimanjaro (5,894m) is a challenging but very worthwhile experience not to be missed if you are fit, in the area, and have the inclination and time! The climb, including hotel in Moshi at start and end, takes 7 days/6 nights. A further travelling day should be allowed at each end to get between Nairobi and Moshi, just across the border in Tanzania at the base of the mountain.

The cost of the climb including all government, hut, and entry fees, guide, porters, food, hotel and meals before and after the climb is US\$650 - 700. This is payable direct to the climb operators in Moshi on your arrival. The climb may be started on any day of the week. If you like, Encounter can make a confirmed reservation for you. (There is a reservation charge by Encounter of US\$50 for this). Reservations are recommended as only a limited number of people at a time are allowed on the mountain. If you think you might be interested, ask for our information dossier on Climbing Kilimanjaro.

COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

The Blue Nile and Beyond joined with a 9 week **Safari South** from Cape Town makes an 19 week trip **Cape to Cairo**, including a week layover in and around Nairobi.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment.....
Flights to/from Nairobi & Cairo.....
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.