

Mysteries of Ethiopia - DEHNG

13 days: Addis Ababa to Addis Ababa

What's Included

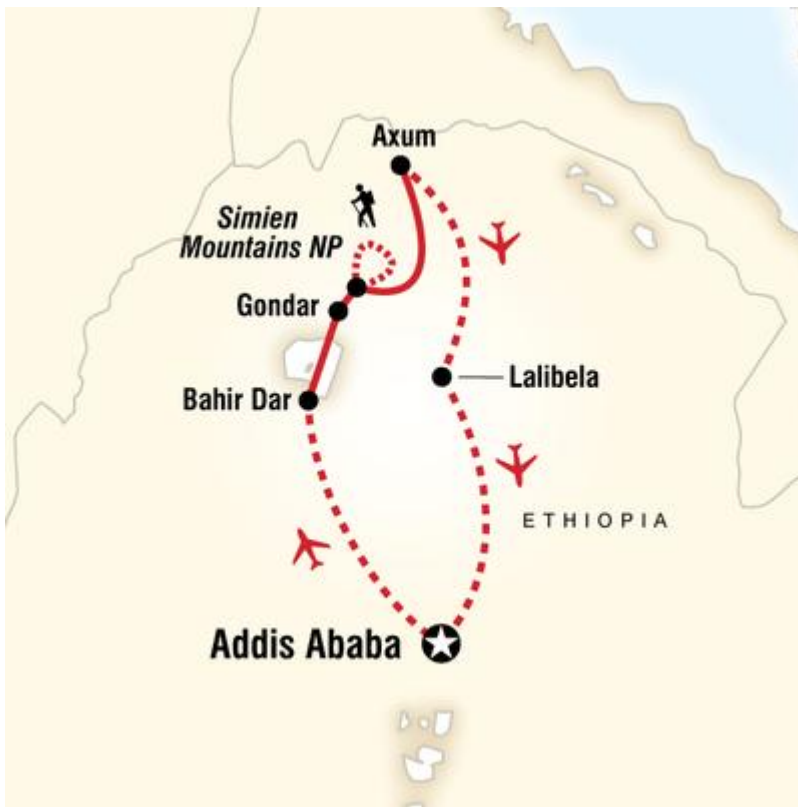
- Arrival transfer
- Excursion to Blue Nile Falls
- Boat trip on Lake Tana
- Bahir Dar market visit
- Guided tour of Debre Berhan Selassie Church, Fasiladas's Bath, and historic castles in Gondar
- Kossoye Community cooking lesson and dinner
- Simien Mountains trek
- Visit to Axum historical sites
- Guided tour of the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela
- Asheton Maryam hike
- Interesting articles, helpful tips, and photography advice from National Geographic before you depart
- 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 January 1st, 2016 - December 25th, 2017

Itinerary



Itinerary

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.

Private Vehicle

Addis Ababa Bole International Airport – Addis Ababa

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Arrival Day and Welcome Meeting

1h17:00

The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. After introductions, your CEO will review the details of your tour.

Accommodation

Kaleb Hotel

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Day 2 Addis Ababa/Bahir Dar

Fly 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.”

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. These falls are some of the most spectacular in Africa. During full flood (July - September), the falls increase to 400m (1,312 ft) across and a 45m (148 ft) drop.

Private Vehicle

Bahir Dar

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Optional Activities

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.

Meals included: Breakfast

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.

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.

Accommodation

Goha Lodge

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 4 Bahir Dar/Gondar

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 Debre Berhan Selassie Church and Kusquam Castle.

Private Vehicle

Bahir Dar – Gondar

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private ride.

Awra Amba Community Visit

Gondar

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.

Debre Berhan Selassie Church Tour

Gondar

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.

Kusquam Castle Visit

Gondar

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

Gondar Afternoon

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

Optional Activities

Gondar Market Visit

Gondar

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

Accommodation

Goha Lodge

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 5 Gondar

Explore Gondar and visit 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.

Fasiladas Castle and Bath Visit

Gondar

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.

Ploughshare Women's Association Visit

Gondar

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

Gondar

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Community Injera Making Demonstration and Traditional Dinner

Gondar

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.

Accommodation

Semien Lodge

Lodge

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner

Day 6 Gondar/Debarke'

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

Private Vehicle

Gondar – Debarke' 2h30m-3h130km

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private ride.

Free Time

Debarke' Afternoon

Relax and take in the fresh air of the mountains.

Accommodation

Semien Lodge

Lodge

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 7 Debarke'

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.

Simien Mountains Trek

Simien

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

Simien

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

Accommodation

Goha Lodge

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 8 Debarke'/Aksum

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

Private Vehicle

Debarq' – ■ksum9h-10h280km

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Accommodation

Jerusalem Guesthouse

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 9 ■ksum

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.

Axum Historical Site Visit

■ksum

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

■ksum

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Accommodation

Jerusalem Guesthouse

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 10 ■ksum/Lal ■bela

This morning, we rise early for our flight to Lalibela. Upon landing, we head out to visit historical sites, including St. George Church, Yemrehana Kristos, 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.

Plane

■ksum – Lal ■bela45m-1h

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

Private Vehicle

Lal ■bela

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Lalibela Churches Tour

Lal ■bela

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.

Accommodation

Jerusalem Guesthouse

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 11 Lalibela

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.

Asheton Maryam Hike

Lalibela

Enjoy a 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.

Lalibela Churches Tour

Lalibela

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

Lalibela

Stretch out and scan the scenery from the comfort of a private vehicle.

Accommodation

Axum Hotel

Hotel

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 12 Lalibela/Addis Ababa

Morning flight to Addis Ababa. Opt to enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

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.

Accommodation

Gehralta Lodge

Lodge

Note: Your accommodation may vary depending on season and availability

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 13 Addis Ababa

Depart at any time.

Departure Day

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

Meals included: Breakfast

What's Included

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. Kossoye Community cooking lesson and dinner. Simien Mountains trek. Visit to Axum historical sites. Guided tour of the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. Asheton Maryam hike. Interesting articles, helpful tips, and photography advice from National Geographic before you depart. Internal flights. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Trek into the Simien Mountains and discover the rock churches of Lalibela. This is Ethiopia the National Geographic Journeys way. Book here.

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

ACCOMMODATION

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 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

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).

Transport

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

About our Transportation

For this tour we use a combination of flights, minivans, minibuses 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

Hotels (12 nts).

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.

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

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

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.

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.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

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 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.

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
- Quick-dry socks
- Wool socks
- Winter hat/Warm hat,
- Warm gloves/mittens
- Day pack, for you to carry
- Reusable water bottle
- Water purification tablets or filter (optional)
- Sun hat/Bandana
- 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
- Plastic bags for packing (rain protection)

Camera with extra memory cards and batteries

Personal Entertainment

Binoculars

Waterproof backpack cover

Walking poles (Optional)

Gaiters

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\$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.

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\$3-5 (full day); Local Guides (ex. forest, village walks) Trek assistants US\$3-5 per day; CEO: US\$5-7 (full day). 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.

City Tour of Addis Ababa: 1 person = US\$120, 2 persons = US\$67, 3 persons or more = US\$45

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

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.

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.

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.

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 G Adventures for Good 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.