

ETHIOPIA – HISTORIC NORTH BY FLIGHT

ITINERARY

Tour Code:	Tour Itinerary to Northern Ethiopia (the Historic Route)
Focus:	History, Religion, Scenery
Duration:	7 Days & 6 Nights
Transportation:	Flight, Surface drive

Day 1 – Addis Ababa

Upon arrival at the airport, meet & greet with one of our representatives in Addis Ababa. Transfer from Addis Ababa Bole Airport. Transfer from the airport to any 3star hotel of your choice in the city centre is approximately 20mins. (4km)

Lunch & Dinner will be at own account. Overnight at hotel in Addis Ababa.

Day 2 – Addis Ababa – City Tour – Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast will be at the hotel. Today guest will have Addis Ababa city tour. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's sprawling capital in the highlands bordering the Great Rift Valley, is the country's commercial and cultural hub. Its National Museum exhibits Ethiopian art, traditional crafts and prehistoric fossils, including replicas of the famous early hominid, "Lucy." The burial place of the 20th-century emperor Haile Selassie, copper-domed Holy Trinity Cathedral, is a neo-baroque architectural landmark.

National Museum of Ethiopia.

This museum's greatest treasure is the partial skeleton of "Lucy," a tiny human believed to have lived over three million years ago. The museum opens from 08:30 to 17:00. Approximate time to spend is 3hrs.

Ethnographic Museum at the Addis Ababa University

Set within Haile Selassie's former palace and surrounded by the beautiful gardens and fountains of the university's main campus, is the enthralling Ethnological Museum. Even if you are not a museum fan, this one is worth a bit of your time – it's easily one of the finest museums in Africa, showing the full sweep of Ethiopia's cultural and social history across two floors.

The show starts before you even get inside: facing the entrance, look for the intriguing set of 13 stairs spiralling skyward. Each step was placed by the Italians as a symbol of Fascist domination, one for every year Mussolini held power (starting from his march to Rome in 1922). A small Lion of Judah (the symbol of Ethiopian monarchy) sits victoriously atop the final step, like a jubilant punctuation mark at the end of a painfully long sentence.

Visit the Largest Open-Air Market - MERKATO

Wading into the market chaos known as Merkato, just west of Addis' centre, can be as rewarding as it is exasperating. You may find the most eloquent aroma wafting from precious incense. Some people say it's the largest market in Africa, but as its exact boundaries are as shady as some of its characters, this is a little hard to verify.

The mass of stalls produce, and people may seem impenetrable, but on closer inspection the market reveals a careful organisation with sections for each product. You can spend your Birr on pungent spices, silver jewellery or anything else that takes your fancy. There is even a 'recycling market', where sandals (made out of old tyres), coffee pots (from old Italian olive tins) and other interesting paraphernalia can be found.

Drive to Yeka Terara for Addis Ababa City view and sunset. **Lunch included. Dinner will be at own account. Overnight at a 3star hotel in Addis Ababa.**

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Day 3 – Bahir Dar – Lake Tana – Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast will be at the hotel. Transfer from city hotel to the airport in time for a flight to Bahir Dar. The flight is approximately 1hrs flight.

Bahir Dar is the third biggest city in Ethiopia, and it lies on the southern shore of Lake Tana, the country's biggest lake. It is the capital of the Amhara region and it has a population of around 250,000. It is an established tourist destination which is often referred to as the "Ethiopian Riviera". It is a well-maintained, visitor-friendly location which offers affordable accommodation, fantastic restaurants, and numerous points of interest. Some of the highlights include the various naturally beautiful wonders which surround the city. The Blue Nile is one of the main highlights, and, its stunning waterfall. The falls are located 28 km southeast of the city and are a must see for anyone visiting Bahir Dar.

Arrive in Bahir Dar and drive to Lake Tana, take a boat ride and visit the medieval period island monasteries (beautiful mural paintings, religious books & sacred) on Lake Tana. After lunch, you will drive to and visit to the Blue Nile Fall (some 30 Km).

Lake Tane source of the Blue Nile. With a surface area of 2156 square kilometres but an average depth of only 14 metres due to high levels of sediment. Lake Tana is the largest single lake in Ethiopia and forms the main reservoir for the Blue Nile. The Lake is located at an altitude of 1788 metres on the north central plateau of Amhara. Lake Tana is used for fishing, farming, and transportation, and has a thriving tourist industry centred on the more than 30 islands on the Lake, home to numerous Ethiopian Orthodox Church monasteries dating back more than five centuries.

Lunch is included. Dinner will be at own account. Overnight at a 3star hotel in Bahir Dar.

Day 4 – Gondar – Royal Castles – Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast will be at the hotel. Depart from Bahir Dar and drive to Gondar which is approximately 185km. Check in a 3star hotel and get

ready for the Visit to the Royal Castles. The Royal Castles were built in the 17th Century A.D. the Bath of Emperor Fasilides, the Historic Debre Birhan Selassie Church, the Castle of Empress Mintewab, and Kuskwam Mariam Church (the bones of the Empress and princes rests in a glass coffin).

The Gonder of yesteryear was a city of extreme brutality and immense wealth. Today the wealth and brutality are gone, but the memories linger in this amazing World Heritage site. The entire 70,000-sq-metre compound containing numerous castles and palaces has been restored with the aid of Unesco. Knowledgeable, well-trained guides cost Birr200 and are well worth it.

The Fasiladas.

By far the most impressive, and also the oldest, building is Fasiladas' Palace, just inside the entrance gate. It stands 32m tall and has a crenulated parapet and four domed towers. Made of roughly hewn stones, it's reputedly the work of an Indian architect and shows an unusual synthesis of Indian, Portuguese, Moorish and Aksumite influences. The main floor was used as dining halls and a formal reception area. Note the wall reliefs, including several Stars of David, which trumpet Fasiladas' link to the Solomonic dynasty. The small room in the northern corner boasts its original beam ceiling and some faint frescoes. On the 1st floor, Fasiladas' prayer room has windows in four directions, each overlooking Gonder's important churches. Religious ceremonies were held on the roof, and it was from here that he addressed his people. Above Fasiladas' 2nd-floor bedroom was the watchtower, from where it's (apparently) possible to see all the way to Lake Tana. Behind the castle are various ruined buildings, including the kitchen (domed ceiling), steam bath and water cistern.

Lunch is included. Dinner will be at own account. Overnight at a 3star Hotel in Gondar

Day 5 – Lalibela – Rock-hewn Monolithic Churches of Lalibela – Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast will be at the hotel. Transfer from Hotel in Gondar to the airport for a short flight to Lalibela.

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Upon arrival, meet & greet with our representative and be taken to the hotel for check in which is approximately 25km from Lalibela Airport. Guests will visit the 11 rock-hewn monolithic carved from single rock Churches of Lalibela UNESCO World Heritage site, with magnificent architecture & paintings inside the churches. The 11 medieval monolithic cave churches of the 13th century “New Jerusalem” are situated in a mountainous region in the heart of Ethiopia near traditional village with circular shaped dwellings. Lalibela is a high place Ethiopian Christianity, still today a place of pilgrimage and devotion.

Lunch is included. Dinner will be at own account. Overnight at 3star hotel in Lalibela.

Day 6 – Axum – Stelae of Axum – Queen of Sheba’s Palace – Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast will be at the hotel. Transfer from the hotel to airport. Flight from Lalibela to Axum. Upon arrival in Axum, meet & greet with our tour representative and be transferred to the hotel.

Visit to the Stelae of Axum, the Inscription of Ezana, Queen of Sheba’s Palace, the famous St Mary of Zion Church, ruins of ancient palaces built until 4th century A.D

Lunch is included. Dinner will be at own account. Overnight at 3star hotel in Axum.

Day 7 – Departure – Breakfast & Farewell Cultural Dinner

Breakfast will be at the hotel. Transfer to the airport for a flight back to Addis. Arrival in Addis Ababa a cultural night at the renowned Yod Abyssinia Cultural Restaurant, where guests will enjoy the authentic Ethiopian cultural food along with cultural drinks, live music and dances of the diverse nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. Thereafter transfer to the airport in time for outbound flight.

Inclusions:

- Accommodation as mention above based on 3 start properties
- Breakfast & Lunches
- Private tour service as specifies in the itinerary
- Transfer from Bahir Dar to Gondar (180km)
- Land transport minibus with AC, professional drivers, and fuel
- English speaking professional guide/ tour leader
- All entrance fees, Boat fee at Lake Tana
- Bottled water every day
- Cultural night on the day of departure

Exclusions

- Dinner – supplement of \$ 30,00 per meal should guests require this to be added.
- Domestic Flights
- Tips to guides & drivers (2 -3 USD per person per day)
- Visas & Travel Insurance
- Photographing fees, night outs, personal expenses (Tips, phone calls, drinks etc)
- Any Other items of personal nature not mentioned above.

END OF SERVICES