

Northern Historic Tour of 9 days

- All year tour
- By road
- All days in hotel

Day - 1 – Excursion Addis Ababa to Kombolcha

Day – 2 – Kombolcha – Dessi – Weldia – Gashena - Lalibela (Roha)

Day – 3 – A day dedicated to visit the rock-hewn churches and surroundings of Lalibela

Day – 4 – Lalibela – Sekota – Korem – Mekele, hotel.

Day – 5 – Mekele – Wekro – Adigrat – Yeha - Adwa – Axum

Day – 6 – A day dedicated to visit the surroundings of Axum

Day – 7 – Axum– Tekeze River – Debark – Gonder

Day – 8 – Half day visit to Gonder sites – After noon to Bahar-Dar

Day – 9 – A day dedicated to visit Monasteries of Lake Tana and Blue Nile falls – B-Dar

Day – 10 – Bahir Dar - Addis Ababa

Detailed Itinerary for the tour

In this tour, visitors will explore the cultural and natural complexity of Ethiopia's northern region, Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia which is also rich in fish species, the famous Nile river and its Fall, Siemain mountains national park, over 4 major tribes with over half of the population, 5 languages of which, one called Geez is an ancient language since 3BC till now in use in Every Orthodox church, with so many ceremonies and market days full of colors and 3 world heritage sites will be explored during these days.

Day - 1 – Excursion Addis Ababa to Kombolcha

Getting there: - 375 kms, 8am-5pm, 9hours drive including 1 hour lunch break at Debre-Birhan and stopping for photos. Overnight in hotel.

Sightseeing: - All day, asphalted picturesque road. Lunch at 14th century town, Debre Birhan, also a sister of French town. Here is an open sight of the low lands of Afar depression and the valley of a river called Awash. There is a chance to see colobus monkey and the endemic Gelada Baboon. Crossing local markets in different locations by the road side which is very interesting for cultural costume, hair style (which indicates whether a girl is virgin, engaged or married) of different ethnics & tribes, of Semitic, Cushitic, Christians and Muslims of Oromo, Amhara, Argoba, Kobo and Afar tribes meet together on a weekly market day. Overnight in a hotel.

Day - 2 – Kombolcha – Desse – Weldia – Gashena - Lalibela (Roha)

Getting there: - 300 kms, 7am-6pm, 8hours drive, asphalted road up to Weldia and gravel road then some 30 kms of asphalted road up to Lalibela (Roha), including 2 hours stopping on the way for photos of different colorful markets and lunch break at Weldia. Overnight in hotel.

Sightseeing: - In this part of Ethiopia, tribes of Amhara and Oromo, Muslims and Christians live under one roof, in marriage as a family. Their unique rhythm and dance is widely practiced throughout the country.

Day - 3 – A day dedicated to visit the surroundings of St. Lalibela rock hewn churches

Getting there: - Walking, all the eleven churches of **St. Lalibela** are all in a walking distance, less than 1sq.km which are visited, half day 8am-12am five churches and half day 2pm-5pm the rest six churches.. Overnight in hotel.

Sightseeing: - There are over 24 rock-hewn churches around Lalibela but we will visit the closest 11 in town and 2 out of town. Roha town (Lalibela) at 2600m altitude, visit the surroundings of Roha town and its people, the monastery and the two story cottages rear elsewhere but found here. **St. Lali-bela** (which means Honey-eater) was a king and Saint who reigned around 12th century for 40 years, like other eleven Zagewi dynasty kings who ruled Ethiopia between 920AD – 1253AD. (There had been two dynasties in Ethiopia, Solomon dynasty and Zagewi). This ancient town was visited by the Portuguese priest traveler **Francisco Alvares at 1521AD** and wrote a book called “**A True Relation of the Lands of Prester John**”. Lalibela churches were deliberately hewn as a symbol of Heaven. A living story of the Bible. Dividing the ten churches in to two, Heavenly of Jerusalem and Earthly of Jerusalem by a river named Jordan. Each church is named and architecturally hewn to memorize stories from the Bible. One of them, **Bete Medhane Alem** (house of Emanuel) is the largest monolithic rock-hewn church in the world, measuring 11.5m in height and covering 800sq.m. A plain building with its 36 pillars inside and 36 pillars outside, modeled to memorize Abraham’s Tent from the bible. All the eleven churches have treasures like 12th century processional crosses, hand crosses and ecclesiastical books made of goats’ skin the then paper. The churches of St. Lalibela are recorded as **UNESCO’s world heritage**.

Day - 4 - Lalibela – Sekota – Korem – Mekele

Getting there: - 450 km, 7am-6pm, 9hours drive including 1hour break for Lunch and stopping for photos on the way. Overnight in hotel.

Sightseeing: - Picturesque road, crossing through different tribes & villages, at the end of the day joining the land of Tigre, the third largest northern ethnic in Ethiopia, overnight will be at Mekele, capital of the Tigry region.

Day - 5 - Mekele – Wekro – Adigrat – Yeha - Adawa - Axum

Getting there: - 240kms, 8:30am – 5:30pm, 4hours drive excluding 3hours for visiting 5th B.C temple and 3rd A.D church.

Sightseeing: - On the way admiring the unique style of the Tigrian houses made of stone even the roof. At Wekro there is a 4th century rock-hewn church called Wekro Kirkos, five minutes walk then 20minutes drive to visit one of the oldest 4th century church, believed to be hewn by the well known, twin kings, Ezanz and Suzana, named **Abreha we Asbeha** after accepting Christianity officially by the first Bishop of Ethiopia, **Abba Selama**.

On the road Adigrat – Adewa, is a route frequented by the caravan, salt traders from the shore of Lake Afdera, in Danakil depression. Yeha a living testimony of ancient civilization of our ancestors is constructed by huge blokes of stones. A visit to a small museum by the temple which boasts to keep many ancient illuminated manuscripts, crowns, crosses, and many treasures rear to see else where in Ethiopia. Adewa is one of the places which Ethiopians confirmed their unity to safeguard Ethiopia’s sovereignty. Emperor Menilik II defeated the Italian colonialist on March 1st, 1896 at a daylong battle at Adewa. As Ethiopia was the only

independent country in Africa. The day of Adewa is a day of celebration through all African countries as it is declared at its 100th memorial celebration and at the Head of States summit.

The **Victory of Adewa** is an inspiration to most black people. Our flag **Green, Yellow and Red** is a base for over twenty countries.

Day - 6 - A day dedicated to visit the surroundings of Axum

Getting there: - Visit the surroundings of the mysterious ancient city of Axum. Overnight in hotel.

Sightseeing: - Axum is one of the six world heritage sites recorded from Ethiopia by **UNESCO**. Axum is a small city, which has an important historical significance in Ethiopian history. The first historical evidence of the kingdom of Axum starts around the 3rd century BC, when the Egyptian-influenced state of Meroe was flourishing near modern-day Shendi in Sudan. Axum gradually grew in power and conquered not only Meroe but also the Kingdoms in southern Arabia, profiting from the trade in silk and spices from India to Europe via the Red Sea. Some idea of Axum's contemporary importance is given by the 3rd century Persian writer called Mani, who listed it as one of the four great kingdoms in the world, along with Persia, China and Roman. Axumites had a unique language called Geez, with a script some how similar to Sabaen alphabet, also Semitic, is still in use at the liturgy. Tigriña, Agewegna and the official language at present "Amharic", are some of the derivatives of Geez. Axum with its glorious obelisks made of single blocks of granite, over 1000 in number, moved 2kms from its rocky platform to be erected at Axum, the tallest stood over 23m high, 150tons, the largest monolith stelea in the world. Axum is the Holiest city of the Ethiopian Orthodox church.

Morning: - visit to the Stelea field, tomb of King Kaleb and his son king Gebre-Meskel and the church of **S.t Mary of Zion**, the original Ark of the Covenant which is kept under a chapel built next to the 17th century church by King Fasil of Gonder, believed to be given by **God** to the children of Israel. It was **Moses** at Mount Sinai, who received the Tablets of Law, the **Ten Commandments**.

Afternoon: - visit the Musueum which has so many artifacts and objects found through excavations since 1908AD. Then 15minites drive to Dngur and Gobedra, a hillside quarry from where the stelaes are transported to be erected around Axum.

Day - 7 – Axum – Tekezze River – Debark – Gonder

Getting there: - 372kms, 9hours drive, 7:30am – 5:30pm including 1hour for lunch on the way and 1hour for entrance formalities of the Seimen Mountain National Park head quarter at Debark. Over night camping at Sankaber Campsite

Sightseeing: - Departing Axum, crossing one of the sixth trans-boundary rivers of Ethiopia called Tekezze (its source is around Lalibela) and it's desert valley which has 59 species of Acacia of which, 8 are endemic species and trees of Myrrh (*Boswellia pirottae*) which are endemic, are some of eye-catching scenes which are on the way. Then will arrive at Debark mid-afternoon then after bureau formalities at the head quarter of Siemen Mountains National Park which **UNESCO** has recorded, as world heritage, will 1:30hour to join the Sankaber Campsite. Overnight.

Afternoon: - Enjoying the magnificent low land scenery, stop on the way at a village called Woleka or Felasha village to see the ancient styled pottery of the Jews.

Day – 8 – Half day visit to Gonder sites – After noon to Bahar-Dar

Getting there: - Half day Mixed By car and walking. Then lunch break before leaving Gonder.

Morning: -visit the surrounding of Gonder Castle, the oldest in Africa; the magnificently decorated 17th century church Debre-Birehan Silasi.

After noon: - 180kms, 1pm-4pm, 3 hours drive on motorway up to Bahar-dar. Then 60kms to go and return to Bahar-Dar after visiting the Blue Nile Falls.

Sightseeing: - Founded by King Fasiledes (Fassil) in 1635A.D, has served as imperial capital for 250 years. With its strategic hilltop location at an altitude of 2200m in the southern foothills of the Seimen Mountains, Gonder is best known for its 17th century castles, Royal swimming pool and most notably the superbly decorated church of Debre Berhan Silasie which are among the six UNESCO's world heritage list.

Day – 9 – Bahir Dar - Addis Ababa, hotel

Getting there: - 520kms, 7:30am – 5:30pm, 7hours drive including 1hour lunch break.

Sightseeing: - Picturesque road, stunning view crossing the Nile gorge which is stretched in 40kms.