



# Touching Ethiopia Tours

**Title:** *Best of Ethiopia*

**Mode of Transportation:** *Flight and Drive*

**Duration:** *19 Days and 18 Nights*

**Highlights:** *History, National Parks, Lakes, wildlife and Culture*

## SHORT DESCRIPTION

Apart from a couple of internal flights at the starting and ending days of the tour, the whole part of this package would be on surface with comfortable vehicles. At each destination, we pick the best available accommodation options.

From the source of the Blue Nile, this package comprises visits to the living rock hewn churches of Lalibela, the dramatic landscapes of the Simien Mountains, ancient churches of Gheralta Mountains, the lowest desert of Danakil Depression, the diversified fauna & flora of the Bale Mountain, and the untouched tribes of the Omo Valley.

## DETAILED DAILY PROGRAM

### Day 1: Arrival in Addis Ababa and connecting for a domestic flight to Bahir Dar

Immediately after your arrival at Bole International Airport Terminal 2, you will meet our staff and proceed to the domestic terminal for check in in your internal flight to Bahir Dar, the source of the Blue Nile. Upon arrival in Bahir Dar Airport, you be pick up by our representatives and drive to your hotel.

After a quick shower and rest at your hotel, you leave for a boat trip on Lake Tana for visiting its island monasteries. You will visit Kibran Gabriel, Debre Maryam and Ura Kidane Miheret, Afternoon, you will have an excursion to the smoking Blue Nile-the Blue Nile Falls, Late afternoon, drive back to your hotel.

*Overnight stay at Jacaranda Hotel, Bahir Dar*

### Day 2: Drive to Gondar

Gondar, the camelot of Africa, is notable for its royal palace and fabled orthodox church. The afternoon is dedicated to cover the Royal Palace, Bath, and Debre Berhan Selassie Church.

*Overnight stay at a Goha Hotel, Gondar*



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## Day 3: Drive to the Simien Mountains National Park-acclimatizing for the next day

After a relaxed breakfast at your hotel in Gondar, you leave for a day trip to the Simien Mountains for you will enjoy a thrilling landscape and wildlife. The friendly gelada baboon, fauna and flora are of the appealing attractions in the park.

*Overnight stay at Semien Lodge, Semien mountains national park*

## Day 4: Exploring the Simien Mountains

On this day, you will have a short hike around Sankaber. The trek starts with a gentle stroll through the *Erica* heather that hangs on white lichen and mosses, resembling an old man's white beard. Along the route keep an eye open to spot the elusive and elegant klipspringer. After 2-3 hours you will reach the viewpoint where you encounter the recurrent and imposing Jinbar waterfall.

*Overnight stay at Semien Lodge, Semien mountains national park*

## Day 5: Drive to Lalibela-the home to monolithic churches

On the way, you will have a stop at Awra Amba Village. This community is a booming, gender-equal democracy and a massively winning communal project. This has allowed group of people to invest in social services, like education and healthcare, which they have shared with thousands of people in the region.

You will be arriving Lalibela late afternoon. You will have leisure time to your hotel. Evening, you leave for Azmari House where you will also try traditional dances and teji, local honey-made beer.

*Overnight stay at Sora lodge, Lalibela*

## Day 6: Discovering the Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela

The churches are grouped into three. Start your morning visit from the Northern Group: Bete Medhane Alem, Bete Maryam, Bete Golgotha Mikael, Bete Meskel, and Bete Denagel.

After lunch, you will visit the Eastern Group: Bete Amanuel, Bete Qeddus Mercoreus, Bete Abba Libanos, Bete Gabriel-Rufael, and Bete Lehem. Finally, Bete Giyorgis is the only and the most famous church of the Western Group.

*Overnight stay at Sora lodge, Lalibela*

## Day 7: Drive to Ghrealta Area via the magical landscapes of Sekota, Wag Himra Zone of the region



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the drive would be long; however, you will have some stops for catching the stunning landscapes and people of Agew.

*Overnight stay at Gheralta Lodge, Gheralta*

## **Day 8: Exploring the ancient churches of Gheralta Area**

Once you have an early quick breakfast at your lodge, you drive and climb up to Abuna Yemata Guh. Beside to the panoramic views, Abuna Yemata is popular for attractive and well-preserved frescoes that decorate two cupolas, while the bones of monks from the open-air tombs lie around.

For beyond-belief views and fine paintings, you will also visit Daniel Korkor Church once you visit Maryam Korkor church. The distance between the two church is just a couple of walk.

*Overnight stay at Gheralta Lodge, Gheralta*

## **Day 9: Drive to Dallol-Sunset at Lake Assale**

The drive to the desert departs in the morning after a breakfast at your lodge. The lake is a former bay of the Red Sea, which from time to time got connected and disconnected and as it became disconnected the salts accumulated to layers of several hundreds of meters deep.

*Overnight stay at camping*

## **Day 10: Morning at Dallol then drive Erta Ale**

Placed 100m and more below sea level, the Danakil Depression is about the hottest and most inhospitable place on earth. Afternoon, you will drive to Erta Ale. After dinner at Erta Ale, you will walk out for a breathtaking volcano lavas and captures.

*Overnight stay at camp*

## **Day 11: Proceed to Lake Afdera and proceed to Logia**

Notable for salt mining and hot springs (where you can swim in it a well), Lake Afdera is seldom visited; however, it is a must-to-see place in the desert for an absolute experience of witnessing people extracting salt locally from the green water. Then, proceed to Logia for an overnight.

*Overnight stay at camp or best available hotel, Logia*



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## Day 12: Drive to Awash National Park

Based on your arrival time and interest, we may have a game drive in Awash National Park for a few wildlife and waterfall.

*Overnight stay at Awash falls Lodge, Awash*

## Day 13: Proceed driving to Bale Mountain

Arriving Dinsho in early afternoon, we will have a short trek at Dinsho where mandatory scout and local guide join us. We do also pay the entrance here. Then, we will look for Mountain Nyala and klipspringer around Dinsho.

*Overnight stay at Hotel/Lodge, Goba/Bale Mt.*

## Day 14: Bale Mountains National Park

We would suggest dedicating this day for a trip to Sanetti Plateau. Most trips up to the heights result in a sighting of the rare Ethiopian Wolf but even those trips that do not get a sighting can be sure of amazing bird watching, stunning views and, at 4000m above sea level, a truly breathtaking experience.

*Overnight stay at Hotel/lodge, Gobe/Bale Mt*

## Day 15: Drive to Arba Minch

On our way to Arba Minch, we will have a slip-road drive to Senkele Sanctuary, a park aiming to preserve the Swayne's Hartebeest. Then proceed driving to Arba Minch. Upon arrival time, we may have a trip to Dorze village when we visit bamboo huts.

*Overnight stay at Haile Resort, Arba Minch*

## Day 16: Drive to Turmi-Hamar Village

Leave Arba Minch after a breakfast at your hotel. Then, proceed to Hamar. Key Afar and Konso will be visited on the way. The Hamar are known for their unique tradition of "bull jumping," which initiates a boy into manhood. First, female relatives dance and invite whipping from men who have recently been initiated; this shows their support of the initiate, and their scars give them a right to demand his help in time of need. The boy must run back and forth twice across the backs of a row of bulls or castrated steers, and is ridiculed if he fails.

*Overnight stay at Buska Lodge, Turmi*



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## Day 17: Morning drive to Dassanech and Afternoon excursion to Karo Tribe

After a relaxed breakfast at your lodge, you will head to Omo River so to visit the Dassanech Village. This is the most southerly of the tribes who live in Ethiopia's Omo Valley. In this harsh world, there are times when members of the Dassanech tribe lose their cattle and goats, and with them their livelihood. The way they deal with this, by switching to an alternative means of support by the shores of Lake Turkana, is an example of how life has to adapt in fundamental ways in the face of some of the most inhospitable conditions in the world. Cattle are central to the lives of the Dassanech – just as they are for the other tribes of the Omo Valley. As well as meat, milk, leather for clothing, houses and mattresses, they provide status in the tribe, and the bride-wealth that allows a man to marry.

Afternoon, drive to Karo tribe. Using white chalk and red ochre, the karo women create intricate circle, spiral and cross-hatched designs in order to look more beautiful and stand out of the crowd. What's more, it's not just the women who use this technique in a bid to be more visually appealing to the opposite sex. The men also paint their faces and bodies to boost their sex appeal

### *Overnight stay at Buska Lodge, Turmi*

## Day 18: Drive to Jinka and visit the Jinka Cultural Museum

The South Omo Research Centre Museum has a collection of the most of the locally usable items by the tribes in a display area with some written explanations.

### *Overnight Stay at Hotel/Resort, Jinka*

## Day 19: Morning drive to Mago National Park for Mursi and afternoon fly back to Addis Ababa

In the early morning, we drive to Mursi village through Mago National Park in the Park. East of the Omo River, and stretching south towards the Chew Bahir basin, Mago National Park is rich in wildlife with few human inhabitants. The vegetation is mainly savannah grassland and savannah bush, extending across an area of 2,160 square kilometres. Mammal species total 81, including hartebeest, giraffe, roan antelope, elephant, lion, leopard and perhaps even a rare black rhino. Temperatures swing between 14 and 41 and rainfall is low. Mago National Park is part of the famous Central and Southern Ethiopia National Parks and Tribes Circuit.

Midday, we will check in to Jinka airport for our flight to Addis Ababa.

## DEPARTURE!



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