

The Ethiopian Odyssey

A Once in a Lifetime Journey to Ethiopia



The Hilton, Addis Ababa - Tana Hotel, Bahir Dar – Gohar Hotel, Gondar – Yeha Hotel, Axum – Roha Hotel, Lalibela – The Hilton, Addis Ababa - Expedition Base Camp, Lumale – Expedition Mobile Camp, Omo Delta - The Hilton, Addis Ababa



The “Ethiopian Odyssey” is an unbelievable adventure through north and southwest Ethiopia, a once in a lifetime expedition that grants you privileged access to the remotest and most traditional areas of Africa. Led in the best tradition of Africa House by guides who are the recognised experts in their field.

We’ll tour the famous sites of Coptic Ethiopia – visions of the Lost Ark, Prester John and Haile Selassie conjure in the mind. We’ll then fly to Southwest Ethiopia and using expedition motorboats and mobile camps, we’ll the explore areas that are otherwise inaccessible. You’ll have a unique and privileged access to a lost world.

Day 1

The Hilton, Addis Ababa

On landing in to Addis, we’ll be there to meet you and take you to the Hilton. Ethiopia does not enjoy an overwhelming choice of accommodation but the Hilton is in the heart of the city on a 15-acre site and will be the perfect place to rest up before the start of your adventure tomorrow. Addis is a mixture of new and old. Menelik II founded the city in 1886 and although there are plenty of high rise monstrosities it has not lost its atmosphere and charm.

Day 2

The Tana Hotel, Bahir Dar



This morning you will catch the est 50 minute schedule flight up to Bahir Dar. Bahir Dar is one of Ethiopia's more impressive towns, located on the shores of Lake Tana, the largest lake in the country.

There are 37 islands on Lake Tana and 30 of them have churches and monasteries of considerable historical and cultural interest. After breakfast we will have the morning to take a city tour of the town.

We will break for lunch before taking a boat excursion out on the lake to an island monastery called Ura Kidane Mehret that dates back to the Middle Ages. After this, we will then return to town and overnight at the Tana Hotel.

Day 3

Hotel Goha Gondar, Gondar

After breakfast, we'll fly to Gondar, Ethiopia's royal capital until 1868. Its location at the intersection of several caravan routes made it the perfect location for a capital. It was founded by Emperor Fasilides in 1632 and has been the home of the Falasha, the "Black Jews" of Ethiopia, ever since. In 1991 many left for Israel, a story that has not been a complete success.



Gondar has been called the "Camelot of Africa" because of its castles and churches. It is not known for sure who built the castles but many surmise they're the work of Portuguese craftsmen.

It will take some while to explore the Royal Enclosure that lies in the heart of the city. It is surrounded by high stonewalls and connected all together by a series of tunnels and raised walkways. The oldest and most impressive of the castles in the Enclosure is Fasiladas' Palace. Its roughly hewn brown basalt stones reflect Indian and Moorish influences.

A must to see is also the Debre Birhan Selassie Church, famous for the "winged angel" faces that decorate its entire ceiling. The "Trinity at the Mount of Light" is one of Ethiopia's most revered places to visit adorned with frescos that depict in full technicolor the life of Ethiopia.

Day 4

Yeha Hotel, Axum



A sixty minute flight this morning will take us to Axum, the legendary residence of the Queen of Sheba as told in the *Kebre Nagast*, the 'Book of Kings'. It is recounted that the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant to Axum where it remains today, preserved in a sanctuary under the watchful guardianship of the priesthood.

Axum was the capital of the Axumites, one of the oldest African empires, and represented a crucial connecting-point between Africa and Asia for almost a thousand years. You will visit the pre-Christian granite monoliths decorated in symbolic engravings. Known as Steles, there were seven in all, including the one which has recently been returned from Rome – Mussolini took it there during Italy's invasion of Ethiopia.

You will also visit the church of Saint Mary of Zion, which contains the crowns of Ethiopian kings and other treasures, and the museum of

Axum which has a wide collection. Please note that women are not permitted to enter the church.

There is an incredible amount to see and serious historical immersion. Once in Axum, we can discuss a day plan appropriate to what you would most like to see and experience.

Days 5 & 6

Roha Hotel, Lalibela



The final visit on your northern tour is to Lalibela. At the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, King Lalibela organized the construction of a series of rock hewn churches. Carved out of pink granite rock, they really are wonders of the world. Each church has a unique architectural style; all are

superbly carved and most of them are decorated with well-preserved paintings.

The largest, Bete Medani Alem, is 100 feet long, 70 feet wide, 35 feet high, and has walls that are up to six feet thick. We will spend the day gently exploring the churches.

Our second day in Lalibella allows us a chance to further explore Lalibela and visit more of the fascinating churches located in this city. We have the option of visiting



Yemrahane Krestos which is a remarkably beautiful church built in typical Axumite style within a cave, or taking an excursion to Asheten Maryam church with a mule and guide. We will also spend our second night at Roha Hotel.

Day 7

Hilton, Addis Ababa

Today after a leisurely morning we fly to back to Addis Ababa and spend a night at the Hilton to recharge our batteries before beginning our incredible expedition tomorrow.

Days 8 – 12

Expedition Base Camp, Lumale



We'll catch the morning flight to the provincial strip at Jinka. We then set off in rugged 4x4 vehicles to reach our expedition base camp at Lumale, amidst the Karo tribe. Our camp on expedition will be basic but of the highest quality. Each tent is tall enough to stand up in and has two camp beds with high quality mattresses. A traditional "naval" bucket shower tent and long drop loo is shared between two tents. There is then a mess tent where we will all eat the freshest food, re-supplied by boat up from Kenya. Most importantly, there will always be cold drinking water and ice available for your chosen dust settling cocktail.

As is the nature of expedition, we'll play much by ear day to day. However, we have many excursions we intend to carry out. Many of them follow.



We'll culturally immerse ourselves in the Karo tribe. They are our immediate neighbours to camp on the one side of the river. They have remarkable traditions that we will see throughout our stay. You'll be free to wander in and out of their settlement as you wish.

After nearly a decade of currying relations with the Karo, you'll also have a chance to witness many of their traditional Karo dancers perform their extraordinary evening ceremony in the village of Duss.

Using fast expedition speedboats we'll explore the waterways of the homerange of the Muguji. We will also stray across the boundaries of the Kweko and the Mursi tribes, famous for their enormous lip plates.



The Nyagatom, a tribal subset of the greater Karamajong people have occupied across the river. Infamous as one of the most feared tribes in the whole of Eastern Africa, we enjoy a privileged relationship with them and you'll have unrivalled access to their world too.



On one of our days, we'll meet up with our vehicles and climb 60 km's in to the Hammar Mountains where we'll explore the area and search for one of their phenomenal "Bull Jumping" and whipping ceremonies.

Day 13- 15

Expedition Mobile Camp, Omo Delta, Dassenich Tribe



We'll navigate down the river in to the Omo Delta, the home range of the Dassenich nation and more specifically, the Galeb tribe. We'll further explore on foot and by boat.

The Omo River runs through south-west Ethiopia and will take us on a magnificent journey observing the different tribes who

reside along the banks. This expedition allows a very unique insight the different cultural and traditional practices.

Day 16

The Hilton, Addis Ababa

This morning we catch a charter flight from the Kenya Ethiopia border back to Addis Ababa where there is a day room reserved for you at the Hilton. Here you can relax and reflect on your journey before your international flight home.





Included in Odyssey price:

Full board accommodation in best available twin-bedded tents/rooms at best available hotels; all entrance fees; all park entry and camping fees; government taxes; all casual meals detailed in the itinerary and all service charges relating to accommodation and meals; vehicle running expenses and transportation by 4-wheel drive safari vehicle, internal flights; boat fee, Flying Doctor Services to nearest major hospital and most importantly, an Africa House Guide to accompany you.



Not included in Odyssey price:

Gratuities and any other items not specially quoted for or of a purely personal nature; alcohol; international flights to and from Kenya/Ethiopia, airport departure taxes, entry visas, laundry in hotels, personal travel insurance, trip cancellation cover, international medical evacuation, tips and gratuities; laundry services; holiday supplements over Easter, Christmas and New Year; and charges for telephone calls or faxes sent; anything not included in itinerary.