
GEEO ITINERARY

zETHIOPIA – Summer

Day 1: Addis Ababa Arrive at any time. Airport arrival transfer included.

As today is the arrival day, you may arrive at any time and an arrival transfer is included. If you would like to explore Addis Ababa we can book you an optional day tour. You will either need to arrive early this morning or fly in the night before if you wish to have the day tour. We can book you a pre-night if you would like. There are no planned activities until an evening welcome meeting. Check the notice boards or ask at reception for the exact time and location of the group meeting, typically 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. After the meeting, you might take the opportunity to head out for a meal in a nearby local restaurant to get to know your tour leader and traveling companions further. Please make every effort to arrive on time for this welcome meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up. Addis Ababa, founded more than a century ago, means “new flower” in Amharic. At an elevation of 2,400 m (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. Accommodation in Ethiopia is not to the standard of the west or other parts of Africa where tourism is more developed. Please see Trip Notes section further below for more information.

Day 2: Addis Ababa/Axum (B) Fly to Axum. Explore many archaeological sites in the afternoon.

This morning, we fly to Axum, where we will spend the afternoon exploring the many archaeological sites found in the city. Axum is Ethiopia's oldest and holiest city and was once the home of the Queen of Sheba. We will 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. Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by plane

Day 3: Axum/Simien Mountains NP (B) Travel, via the Lima Limo Valley, to Debarq. Relax at the lodge with views of Simien Mountains National Park.

Today, we travel, via the Lima Limo Valley, to Debarq, our base for visiting Simien Mountains National Park. At the end of the long day's journey, relax in the lodge, featuring stunning views of the mountain ranges of the Park. Approximate travel time: 9-10 hrs by private vehicle

Day 4: Simien Mountains NP/Gondar (B) Spend the day in Simien Mountains National Park. Enjoy guided hiking excursions around Sankaber campsite and the Jinbar waterfalls. In the late afternoon, drive to Gondar.

Today, we enjoy a day visit to Simien Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. In the morning, we hike from Sankaber campsite to the Jinbar waterfalls. Later, depending on road conditions, we drive as far as the Chenek campsite for a picnic lunch and short excursions in search of wild animals and to soak up more of the indigenous landscape. Those not interested in hiking can spend the day relaxing at the lodge. The scenic Simien Mountains are a good break from the busy cities of Ethiopia. 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 4,000 m (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 (or bearded vulture) can also be found soaring over the valleys here. In the late afternoon, we continue on to Gondar. Approximate travel time: 4-5 hrs by private

vehicle

Day 5: Gondar Area (B) Enjoy a cultural and nature excursion in a rural Amhara community. Return to Gondar for lunch. In the afternoon, visit the Debre Birhan Silassie Church.

We spend the morning today with a guided exploration of the area around Gondar, during which we will learn about the different traditions and cultures of the Amhara region and Ethiopia and try our hand at traditional Ethiopian Injera (bread) making. We return to Gondar in time for lunch. In the afternoon, we visit Debre Berhan Salassie Church, 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. Approximate travel time: 30 mins by private vehicle

Day 6: Gondar/Bahir Dar (B) Explore Gondar further in the morning. Drive to Bahir Dar.

In the morning, we visit the Fasiladas' Castle compound, which covers an area of over 70,000 sq 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 and 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. In the afternoon, we drive to Bahir Dar. Approximate travel time: 3-4 hrs by private vehicle

Day 7: Bahir Dar (B) Take a boat trip on Lake Tana. Visit monasteries, including Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam. In the afternoon, enjoy a guided hike to the Blue Nile Falls.

We start the day with a boat trip on Lake Tana, taking in the stunning scenery and visiting two monasteries on the lake. Both men and women can visit these monasteries, Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam. From Ura Kidane Mihret, go for a 20-minute walk through the forest on Zege Peninsula to a second monastery, Azwa Maryam. Following a short visit at this monastery, we once again board the boat for its return journey. In the afternoon, we enjoy a 2-hour guided 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. During full flood (July-September), the falls increase to 400 m (1,312 ft) across and 45 m (148 ft) drop.

Day 8: Bahir Dar/Lalibela (B) Drive to Lalibela.

Today, we spend most of the day driving to Lalibela, a good place to taste the local beverage, tej (honey wine), accompanied by local traditional songs and dance. Approximate travel time: 6-7 hrs by private vehicle

Day 9: Lalibela (B) Enjoy a full day exploring the rock-hewn churches, including St. George Church, and other historical sites.

In the morning, you may opt to take a 3-hour hike to Asheton Maryam for panoramic views of the town and countryside. Set at 3,150 m (10,335 ft) on top of the highest peak, this hike can be strenuous and demanding, but there is an option for those who wish to hire a mule. You may enjoy the rest of the day exploring the rock-hewn churches, including St. George Church, and other historical sites. 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.

Day 10: Lalibela/Addis Ababa (B) Board a morning flight to Addis Ababa, where

the tour ends on arrival at Bole International Airport. Do not book your return flight any earlier than 5:00 p.m.

In the morning, we take a short flight back to Addis Ababa, where the tour ends on arrival at Bole International Airport. Please note: Given the uncertain nature of timing when it comes to air travel, we strongly advise booking onward travel only after 5:00 p.m. Approximate travel time: 1-2 hrs by plane. Want more adventure? GEEO will give you a discount for booking more than one program in the same summer! Book two or more GEEO programs and receive 10% off on the lesser value program (up to 3 programs). For more details please click [here](#). Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!