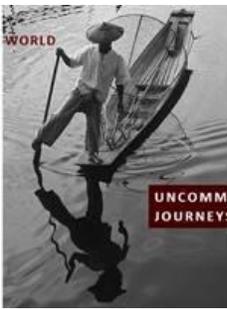


DISCOVER THE WORLD

venture
beyond the
ordinary



UNCOMMON
JOURNEYS, LLC

Ethiopia: Journey into the Medieval Past

January 11 - 26, 2021



The kingdom of Abyssinia, known today as Ethiopia, is a “must visit” for anyone intrigued by the medieval past, captivated by timeless cultures, and inspired by religious pageantry. Churches and palaces reflect the genius of history’s architectural masters, and speak softly of a bygone era. These epic sites, enduring monuments to emperors and legends, shelter priceless relics from a powerful, devout, ancient civilization. But that’s not all! The tour coincides with the Timket (Epiphany) processions and ceremonies of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith. And there’s more! The majestic landscape of the bio diverse Simien Mountain Range rivals the Grand Canyon, and the Danakil Depression is a geological marvel where inhabitants wrest a living from salt mining. You must see it to believe it. Then again, we’ve seen it and we *still* can’t believe it!

Tour Highlights

- **Nomadic salt traders and geothermal fields of the Danakil Depression**
- **Monolithic hand-carved rock churches of Lalibela**
- **Splendid processions of the Timket (Epiphany) ceremonies**
- **Simien Mountains, the most spectacular of the diverse Ethiopian landscapes**
- **Medieval monasteries of Lake Tana, source of the Blue Nile**

Tour price, per person, based on double occupancy *

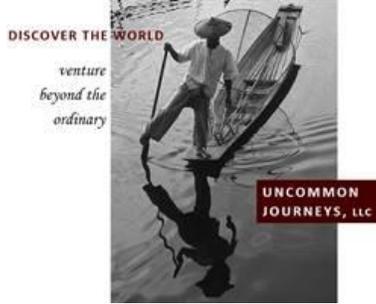
8 participants: US\$7,900

9 participants: US\$7,600

10+ participants: US\$7,300

single supplement: US\$ 978

* In accordance with domestic flight pricing, if you fly Ethiopian Airlines internationally, you will receive a US\$249 credit off the tour price. You must book directly with Ethiopian Airlines. Code share flights are not eligible.



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Tour Price

The tour price is based on a minimum of 8 participants. It includes 15 nights of accommodations, all meals from dinner on January 11 through breakfast on January 26, domestic airfare, ground transportation, airport transfers, entrance fees, gratuities, and the services of a tour director and an English speaking guide. The tour price does not include international airfare, visa, alcoholic beverages, extra nights or day rooms in Addis Ababa, if required due to flight schedules.

Deposit

A deposit of US\$500 is required to reserve a place on the tour. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure.

Cancellation Policy

In accordance with hotel cancellation policies, the following charges will apply:

- US\$500 deposit fully refundable if Uncommon Journeys cancels the tour
- US\$500 deposit fully refundable if participant cancels before July 11, 2020
- US\$200 cancellation fee if participant cancels between July 11 – September 11, 2020
- US\$500 deposit non-refundable if participant cancels after September 11, 2020

Tour Director

The tour is organized and led by Debbie Jefkin-Elnekave. Debbie's knowledge of Ethiopia, profound appreciation for the people and customs, and passion for sharing this amazing country, ensure a very rewarding journey. To learn more about Debbie, please visit www.uncommonjourneys.biz and click on Video.

International Flights

You must book and purchase your own airline tickets to Addis Ababa. | Many flights arrive in and depart from Addis Ababa at odd hours, some in the middle of the night. | You must arrive in Addis no later than January 11 and depart no sooner than the morning of January 26. | Depending on your point of origin, you may cross the international dateline, so please plan accordingly. | Many airlines that service Ethiopia do not offer daily flights.

Passport and Visa Requirements

A passport with 6 months validity and a visa are required to enter Ethiopia. You may obtain the visa upon arrival.

Waiver of Liability

Uncommon Journeys assumes no responsibility for accidents or injury to individuals participating in the tour. You will be required to read, accept and sign an agreement, which releases Uncommon Journeys from any responsibility of liability.

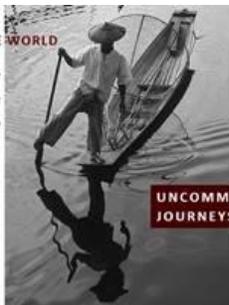
Preserving the Ethiopian Culture

Much of the world has been taught by well-intentioned but misguided tourists to beg for money, candy, pens, toys, lipstick and trinkets. These handouts belittle the people, erode the local culture, perpetuate a negative stereotype of patronizing foreigners, and create reliance on begging. They also encourage parents to exploit their children by sending them out to beg from tourists instead of going to school. We are determined that our presence will not endanger the gracious Ethiopian way of life. In order to preserve the culture and dignity of the people, we enforce a strict policy against handouts. If you feel it would be difficult to comply with our policy, you should reconsider before signing up for the tour. On the other hand, if you share our philosophy of sustainable tourism and our commitment to preserving this gentle culture and dignified way of life, we look forward to sharing our love of Ethiopia and the trip of a lifetime with you.

The Fine Print

The rewards of travel are greatest when we venture off the beaten path and explore remote regions. Please note...

- Our accommodations are the best available, but some are basic by Western standards.
- There are two nights of camping in igloo tents with camping toilets and showers.
- There are several days of long drives over rough terrain in air-conditioned Land Cruisers.
- The walk to the Blue Nile Falls takes one hour over rocky, hilly terrain.
- Ethiopia is dusty!



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Day 1 | Monday, January 11 | Arrive Addis Ababa

A traditional dinner, with music and dance performance, is the perfect introduction to Ethiopia's rich cultural heritage.

Day 2 | Tuesday, January 12 | Fly Addis Ababa → Axum

Axum was the seat of a kingdom that began in the 5th century and thrived for 2000 years. It was also home of the legendary Queen of Sheba. Her son, Menelik I, reputedly brought the Ark of the Covenant to Axum from his father, King Solomon of Jerusalem. It is said to be sheltered here, in the 17th century Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion.



Day 3 | Wednesday, January 13

Axum → Mekele

Today we drive 5 hours to Mekele, our base for visiting the Afar region of the Danakil Depression.

Day 4 | Thursday, January 14

Mekele → Ahmed Ella

What could compel us to drive 5 hours (in air conditioned Land Cruisers) to the hottest inhabited place on the planet, which National Geographic dubbed "the cruelest place on earth"? Just wait and see.



Day 5 | Friday, January 15 | Ahmed Ella (Dallol)

Today defies the maxim that "seeing is believing." If ever a place left us jaw in hand, spellbound, speechless, stunned and amazed, that place is Dallol. We've taken thousands of photos of the hypothermal field but they don't do justice. We've tried to write about the salt extraction village and salt caravans, but they defy description.



Day 6 | Saturday, January 16 | Ahmed Ella → Mekele

Drive 5 hours to Mekele.

Day 7 | Sunday, January 17

Mekele → Lalibela

Drive 7 hours to Lalibela, former capital of a 12th century dynasty, and important religious pilgrimage site.

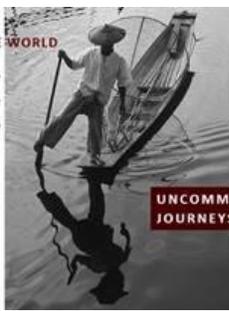
Day 8 | Monday, January 18 | Lalibela

This morning we visit monolithic rock-hewn churches, believed to be a representation of Jerusalem. This afternoon is Ketera, the beginning of Timket, (Epiphany). Festivities begin with a procession of priests bearing sacred icons, manuscripts and crosses. They converge onto the ceremonial grounds for holy mass, kinetic dancing, chanting, drumming and trilling ululations. We end the day with a traditional coffee ceremony.

Day 9 | Tuesday, January 19 | Lalibela

Yesterday's revelry is transformed to a peaceful calm this Timket morning, as if someone has waved a magic wand over the town. Following mass, worshippers are anointed with holy water to commemorate Christ's baptism, and the treasured icons are returned to the churches for safekeeping, under the watchful protection of the priests and deacons. The last worshippers depart, marking the end of Timket, and the dust settles once again across Lalibela and across the delicate surface of history.





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Day 10 | Wednesday, January 20 | Fly Lalibela → Gondar

Gondar is dubbed the “Camelot of Africa.” Once the capital of the Ethiopian Empire, it contains important architectural structures marked by Hindu, Arab and Baroque influences. Our sightseeing includes the local market, 17th century palace of Emperor Fasilidas, castle of Emperor Iyasu I and the library of Emperor Yohannes I.

Day 11 | Thursday, January 21 | Gondar → Semien Mountains

The Simien Mountains are only a 4 hour drive away, but they’re a world apart. Of this bio diverse, geological marvel, Rosita Forbes wrote, “A thousand thousand years ago the old gods must have played chess with those stupendous crags, for we saw bishops, castles, an emerald knight, and far, far away a king, crowned with sapphire and guarded by a row of pawns.”



Day 12 | Friday, January 22 | Semien Mountains

We trek to Chenek, a nature lover’s paradise, with stunning landscapes of the escarpment ridges. With any luck we’ll spot a gelada baboon, walia ibex or wolf.



**Day 13 | Saturday, January 23
Semien Mountains → Bahir Dar**
A 7 hour drive takes us to Bahir Dar. It rose to importance in the late 16th century, with the arrival of Jesuit missionaries, and it has remained a place of economic and commercial importance.



Day 14 | Sunday, January 24 | Bahir Dar

This morning we explore Zege Island, which shelters churches, monasteries and 14th century artifacts. This afternoon we visit the Blue Nile Falls, a miracle of nature and vision of grandeur. Note: If the dam is closed, we will not be able to view the falls.

Day 15 | Monday, January 25 | Fly Bahir Dar → Addis Ababa

Day 16 | Tuesday, January 26 | Departure

*“We depart from Abyssinia, the richer for a host of memories,
The poorer for the little bit of oneself that
One leaves behind on every journey.”*

~ Rosita Forbes