

NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

Gondar, Simien Mountains & Lalibela

January 21 - January 26, 2025
Led by Local Guides

Ethiopia is a culturally rich country in Africa, known for its remarkable architectural gems and deeply rooted religious traditions. Celebrating holy days is a way of life here, where ancient historical traditions and rituals have been meticulously preserved. The country boasts contrasts and extremes, with remote and wild places waiting to be explored.

One of the highlights of this tour is the majestic Simien Mountains, a rugged landscape that has been intricately carved over time. This UNESCO World Heritage Site offers a breathtaking backdrop for your journey. In Lalibela, admire the exquisitely carved rock-hewn churches that stand as a testament to the country's architectural prowess and religious devotion. Venture further north to Gondar, nestled in the foothills of the Simien Mountains, and Lalibela to witness firsthand the awe-inspiring churches carved out of solid rock. These ancient structures are not only architectural marvels but also hold significant religious and historical importance.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Tuesday, January 21
Addis Ababa - Gondar



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to **Gondar** and upon arrival, begin the tour of the town's most important sites. Visit the **castle compound** and explore the 17th-century **Castles of Emperor Fasilidas** who was renowned as the founder of Gondar, and **Yohannes**, which was home to Ethiopian emperors and includes the remains of a castle-like fortress-city. The fortress is a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its architecture and historical significance. Also visit **Eyasu**

castle, which was the last great Gon Darine monarch and a member of the Solomonic dynasty, **David, Bakaffa castles** along with **Queen Mentiwab castle** who was the wife of Emperor Bakaffa and a major political figure during the reigns of her son, Emperor Iyasu, and her grandson Iyoas I. Also see the **bath of Fasiladas** and the **church of Debre Berhan Selassie** with the famous wall and ceiling paintings. Then transfer to *Goha Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, January 22

Gondar - Simien Mountains National Park



Begin the day with a drive North of Gondar to the **Simien Mountains National Park**, home to the gelada baboons, klipspringers, and wattled ibis. A drive through the park offers breathtakingly beautiful landscapes. Enjoy the views and may get the opportunity to spot some of the wildlife on the way to the *Simien Lodge or similar* where we will check-in, have dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Optional hiking available.

Thursday, January 23

Simien Mountains - Weleka - Gondar



Free morning at leisure where you can spend the morning hiking to **Jinbar Falls** or enjoy the nature and scenery of the Mountains. In the early afternoon, drive back to **Gondar** stopping along the way at **Weleka**, once a major center for Ethiopian Jews and known for its **synagogue**, **Jewish cemetery**, and its **pottery**. Enjoy some shopping at a nearby craft shop organized by women. Upon arrival, transfer to *Goha Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, January 24

Gondar - Lalibela



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for our flight to **Lalibela** and upon arrival, begin our guided tour of the **first group** of the rock-hewn churches including **Bete Medhanealem**, "House of the Savior of the World," built during the Zagwe dynasty, **Bete Maryam** "House of Mary," the first church to be built by King Lalibela, **Bete Meskel** where only men are allowed inside, **Bete Denagil**, "House of the Virgins," a small church devoted to the Church of the Martyrs of the Virgin Maidens and the "double church" of **Debre Sina** and **Bete Michael** in which the "Selassie-Chapel" is integrated. Transfer to *Mezena Resort or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, January 25

Lalibela



Spend the day exploring the **second group** of churches including "the double-church" of **Bete Gebrel** and **Rafael**, meaning "The House of The Archangels," the tablet-less **Bethlehem** meaning "House of Holy Bread," **Bete Merquorios**, "house of Saint Merkorios," **Bete Emanuel** with its Axumite architectures on its walls, and **BeteAbba Libanos** named after Abba Libanos, a famous Saint at the time. Meskal Kibra, the wife of St. Lalibela, built Abba Libanos church as a memorial for her husband. Head to visit the famous cross-shaped church of **Bete Giorgis**, built by ONE unbroken piece of stone. This church is

connected to the other ten sunken-stone churches through a series of elaborate tunnels. Return to the *Resort* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, January 26

Lalibela - Addis - USA



Head in the morning to visit **Na'akueto La'ab Cave Church**, situated within a natural cavern in the highlands surrounding Lalibela. Then, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".

Special tour remarks:

- Tourist infrastructure and facilities are limited & often quite primitive.
- Hotels may change at the last minute without prior notice due to reasons beyond our control.
- Air-conditioners in this part of the world do not cool a room to American standards of comfort.
- In the more remote areas, hotels may be basic with few amenities, poor service, and possible equipment failure such as no hot water, broken faucets, clogged drains, etc.
- Brownouts or blackouts may occur or there may be limited electricity available.
- This trip involves long drives in hot weather over poorly maintained and very bumpy roads.
- There are a lack of modern medical facilities and chronic health problems should be discussed with your physician before joining this tour.
- A high level of flexibility, tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, sense of adventure, and willingness to go with the flow if things change is expected while visiting these countries.



Tour Cost (Land Only):

2 travelers \$2,895.00

3 travelers \$2,495.00

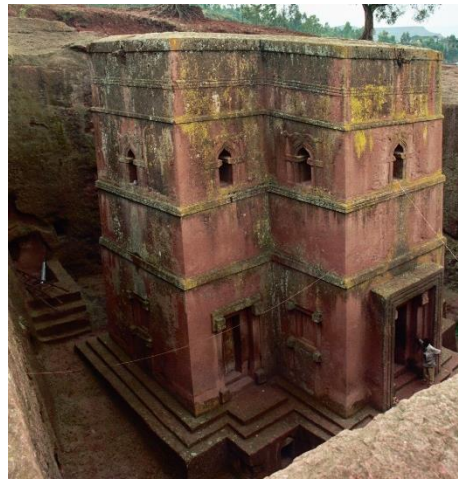
4-6 travelers \$2,195.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$495.00

Price based on group size minimum of 2 participants and maximum of 6 participants

Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: ***



Tour includes:

- Airport/Hotel/Airport transfers.
- Transportation with A/C coaster and 4WD.
- Accommodation at mentioned Hotel or similar (3-4 stars) including the night in Addis Ababa on January 20.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Daily bottles of water on tours
- Entrance fees to all sites mentioned.
- Entrance to National Park.
- Addis-Gondar-Lalibela-Addis flights.
- Professional English-speaking guide.

Trip Grade:

III Challenging: Parts of the trip are physically challenging, involving hiking on rough terrain or in sand or at high altitudes. There may be very long drives on rough roads, weather conditions with high heat or humidity, and the presence of insects. You may have simple picnic lunches, primitive bathroom facilities along the road & remoteness from modern towns or cities.

Lodging Level:

*****Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. 3 - 4 stars in the main cities.

Tour does not include:

- International Air USA-ADDIS-USA.
- Ethiopian visa (multi-entry - \$70.00 – subject to change).
- Alcoholic drinks and beverages with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Travel insurance (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).

