

# WILDLIFE AND CULTURAL SAFARI TO ETHIOPIA

*Modern Ethiopia is the product of thousands of years of interaction among peoples in and around the Ethiopian highlands region in the north and amongst the Nilo-Saharan agriculturists, fisherman and pastoralists in the south. Anthropologists believe that East Africa's Great Rift Valley is the site of humankind's origins, and from these beginnings various ethnic groups have combined to produce a culture that at any given time differed markedly from that of the surrounding peoples. The evolution of this early "Ethiopian" culture was driven by a variety of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. One of the most significant influences on the formation and evolution of culture in northern Ethiopia consisted of migrants from Southwest Arabia. They arrived during the first millennium B.C. and brought Semitic speech, writing, and a distinctive stone-building tradition to northern Ethiopia. They seem to have contributed directly to the rise of the Aksumite kingdom, a trading state that prospered in the first centuries of the Christian era and that united the shores of the southern Red Sea commercially and politically. It was an Aksumite king who accepted Christianity in the mid-fourth century, a religion that the Aksumites bequeathed to their successors. The subsequent establishment of what became the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was critical in molding Ethiopian culture and identity.*

## **DAYS 1 & 2 – ADDIS ABABA**

Following your arrival in Addis Ababa you are met and transferred to the Hilton Hotel. You spend the day touring the amazing sights of this vibrant city and its surroundings which includes the churches of Mariam and the Archangel Raguel on Mount Entoto and the National Archaeological Museum with its exhibits ranging from the 3.5 million-year-old bones of Lucy, relics and treasures from the Axumite and Gonderene periods through to the period of the monarchs Tewodros and Menelik II. Your accommodations, at the Addis Ababa Hilton, are located on a 6-hectare site in the heart of the city. B/L/D

## **DAY 3 – BAHIR DAR**

In the morning you transfer to the airport and board the scheduled flight to Bahir Dar. This is the source of the Blue Nile and the location of the island monasteries of Lake Tana. Your accommodations are in Kuriftu. B/L/D

## **DAYS 4 & 5 – GONDER & THE SIMIEN MOUNTAINS**

In the morning you drive to Gonder, arriving at the Goha Hotel in time for lunch. In the afternoon you travel to the Simien Mountains National Park with its gelada baboons, walia ibex and packs of simien wolf (the rarest canid in the world). Endemic birds include the thick-billed raven, black-headed siskin, wattled ibis, white-billed starling, spot-breasted plover, white-backed black tit and

## **DAYS 6 & 7 – LALIBELA: 'A PRAYER IN STONE'**

In the morning you fly to Lalibela. Here you are met and transferred to the Jerusalem Guest House. At the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries King Lalibela of the Zaghyou dynasty built a series of rock hewn churches – now rightly acknowledged to be one of the wonders of the world. Eleven churches in the town are named for him and are all still in use today. B/L/D

## **DAYS 8 & 9 – BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

In the morning you fly to Robe and check into your accommodations at Webe Shabele. From here it is a relatively easy drive to the Bale Mountains National Park where you search for the endemic Simien wolf and mountain nyala. B/L/D

## **DAYS 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15 - SOUTH OMO, LUMALE CAMP**

A real kaleidoscope of vanishing cultures, the Omo Delta lives up to its reputation of being nothing less than the last great tribal region left in the world today. You spend 6 days here but the amount of time spent in each village depends on what ceremonies are planned and how much time you want to spend with the people you meet. The following is an outline of the program but the actual itinerary is flexible ensuring that there is enough time to immerse yourself in these remote and fascinating cultures. This is a remote area, many of the men carry Kalashnikov rifles, and although we consider it to be safe, obviously no guarantees can be made. Our boat operator also has excellent relations with the local headmen and tribes of the area, and they, in turn, have come to appreciate the value of tourism. During the week you camp near one of the larger Karo villages and, from here, boat along the Omo River either upstream, downstream or across to the far banks to visit the different tribal people. Tribes visited include the Karo, the Mursi, the Hamar and the Nyagatom. Your camp is a very comfortable but simple base on the river banks. The 'igloo' tents are standing height and fully insect proofed with integral ground sheets and an awning over the door. Your bedding is freshly made up each day and the cot beds have comfortable mattresses and a decent pillow. Each tent has its own shower and toilet (long drop). The food is very good and wines, beers and some spirits are available. B/L/D

## **DAYS 16 -17 – LOWER OMO DELTA**

After breakfast you take speed boats south to the Omo Delta and spend 2 days camping on an island with the Dassanech. Although they consider themselves pastoralists, the Dassanech also practice flood retreat cultivation on the vast expanses of the Delta. Known for their very colorful dowry ceremony, the Dassanech men wear ceremonial cheetah and leopard skins with Ostrich plume headdress,

The ceremony culminates with an evocative dance and the fine dust of the delta wells up above the village, goats and sheep are handed over in part payment of the bride dowry. B/L/D

#### **DAY 18 – LOWER OMO DELTA / ADDIS ABABA**

On your last day you leave early in the morning and transfer to Omo Rate. Here your private charter flight awaits to fly you back to Addis Ababa. On arrival you are met and transferred to day rooms in the Hilton Hotel. Later in the day you transfer to the Bole International Airport and check in for your international flight. B/L/D

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#### **2009 all inclusive costs - private safaris only**

2 passengers, US\$ 35,395 per person in twin  
3 passengers, US\$ 28,095 per person in twin  
4 passengers, US\$ 24,395 per person in twin  
5 passengers, US\$ 21,295 per person in twin  
6 passengers, US\$ 19,295 per person in twin  
7 passengers, US\$ 17,295 per person in twin

Single room supplement adds \$1600 to the safari cost

#### **Included in the price of your safari:**

- ALL accommodation and meals on safari as indicated in this itinerary (meal plan)
- ALL government hotel taxes and service charges
- ALL Land transport in specially built safari Vehicles
- ALL river transport as specified in the itinerary
- ALL internal air transport as specified in itinerary
- ALL National Park, entrance fees & nature walks
- ALL tips and gratuities to airport & hotel/lodge porters
- ALL Negotiations and entries to historic, cultural and protected sites
- ALL administrative, development and operational costs
- ALL portorage and airport assistance
- Bottled mineral water with all meals, fully customized safari vehicles, expert trip leader & local escorting guides

#### **Not included: (unless specifically requested)**

- Personal Laundry, beverages and other personal expenses
- Tips to models on location and to hotel/guest house bar staff for personal beverages or room service
- Gratuities to driver / guides
- International flights/visa fees

Please call (205-972-8733) or e-mail ([wds2830@bellsouth.net](mailto:wds2830@bellsouth.net)) to receive a detailed copy of this itinerary

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