

**Walk over “God’s chessbord”
admire spectacular mountain landscapes
historic monuments and beautiful paintings...**

Duration

15 giorni

Description

The North of Ethiopia is one of the most remarkable areas in the country for history and art. It offers testimony of the glorious past of the first Christian African country and its powerful Empire, which dates back thousands of years. Its amazing monuments, its precious treasures, its wonderful frescos, through the boundless landscapes of Simien Mountains, rich in endemic flora and fauna, will lead the tourists to an extraordinary experience.

Must see

Axum: palaces, obelisks and fortresses. Lalibela: eleven monolithic churches hewn out of the rock over 800 years ago; their beauty and artistic and architectural accomplishment, make them “the eighth wonder of the world”. Bahir Dar: Blue Nile’s majestic waterfalls and Tana Lake which has 37 islands hosting ancient Coptic monasteries rich in wonderful frescos. Gondar: castles, memories of an imperial era, churches with magnificent wall paintings. Simien Mountains.

When to go

The best period of the year to visit this area of the country is during the religious celebrations; these events are popular for pilgrims. The most important Coptic festivities are: Christmas (Gena) at the end of December, Epiphany (Timket) on January 19 and Easter (Fasika), generally celebrated one week after the Catholic Easter. All areas can be

visited from January to December, but in July and August it is the rainy season. During these two months because of the muddy roads and the low clouds that can affect the visibility of the landscapes, it is not advisable to trek. Moreover night time temperature can drop below zero

Means of transport

Minibus (coaster) / 4WD.

Hotels

3*/4* hotels. During trekking tents 1-4 man erected by our staff... > See *itinerary n°2*.

Notes

In a few monasteries and churches women are not allowed to enter. In general, the trekking is not too demanding. However the trekkers should be reasonably fit. It also takes sometime to adjust to the altitude.



3 SIMIEN MOUNTAINS AND HISTORIC ROUTE

Day by day

01 

Arrival in Addis Abeba, transfer and hotel accommodation. Lunch and city tour: we visit the National Museum, interesting for Sabei finds and Lucy's remains, an Australopithecus Afarensis who lived in the Awash valley 3 million and half years ago; the Ethnological Museum, the Entoto Hill, the most panoramic city place and the open market, one of the largest in Africa. Dinner and overnight at Ghion hotel.

02 

Flight to Addis Abeba-Bahir Dar. Arrival, transfer and hotel accommodation. Boat trip on Tana Lake - visit 3 monasteries on the peninsula, where paintings and manuscripts, which go back to the Ethiopian Middle ages, are kept. The walls of the monasteries are painted with scenes of New Testament and local Saints' life. Very interesting are: icons, silver Coptic crosses, regal crowns and holy vestments. Back to the hotel for lunch. In the afternoon visit to Blue Nile's waterfalls, the town and the market. Dinner and overnight at Tana hotel.

03 

Flight Bahir Dar-Gondar. Arrival, transfer and hotel accommodation. Visit castles in the imperial area, Debra Bhiran Selassie church with its famous ceiling painted with magnificent angels and Zobel castle, which is known as Emperor Fasilidas's swimming pool. Dinner and overnight at Goha hotel.

04 

Drive to Debarq, the trekking starting point; from Debarq up to Buyit Ras, a panoramic area where can be easily seen the Gelada Baboons. Dinner and overnight camping.

05 

Four hours trekking through wonderful panoramas, meadows and forests to reach Sankaber at 3.200 meters altitude, accommodation and overnight camping.

06 

Walking through mountains and slopes, we reach Geech (3.600mt/5-6 hours) via Michibi. Geech is one of the most naturally remarkable place for the numerous of endemic plants and mammals. The territory belongs to a botanic area named "Afroalpine" where you can find plants like Erica Arborea, Hypericum Revolutum, Lolebia, Festuca Gelebertiana and animals like Walia Ibex, Gelada Baboons and more rarely, the Simien wolf or fox. There are also many birds. Among these, the Gypaetus


Barbatus, a big bird of prey. Dinner and overnight camping.

07 

From Geech to Chenek, 5 hours hiking. Five kilometers from Geech, it is worth trekking to Imet Gogo (3,926), to see one of the best places of Simien mountains: Ambe of Takassè. From here travellers have two options: trekking up to Saha, another panoramic area at the top of K'adadit or to Chenek area for overnight camping.

08 

Departure to Bwahit Mountain. 2/3 hours hiking up to the peak (around 4,400 meters). From the top of the mountain you can see Ras Dashen Mountain and on the way back to the camp it is possible to stop in one of the best watching points to see Walia Ibex, a type of wild goat. Dinner and overnight at Chenek camp.

09 

Back to Sankaber via Geech (7/8 hours hike). Dinner and overnight at Geech camp.

10 

Early morning trek to Geech village (30 minutes hike). Drive to Sankaber and then to Axum. Late afternoon arrival, dinner and overnight at Yeha hotel.

11 

Axum city tour: the Obelisks, the Queen Saba's palace, the Saint Mary of Sion church that hosts the Ark of the Covenant brought to Ethiopia by Menelik I in the days of King Salomon, a small museum with interesting finds, a testimony of the trades between Axumite Empire, Egypt and South Arabic peninsula. Dinner and overnight at Yeha hotel.

12 

Flight Axum-Lalibela. Arrival and hotel accommodation. Lunch. Early afternoon visit the first group of monolithic churches. Lalibela is famous for these churches and is known as "the African Petra or Jerusalem. The underground and cross-shaped Saint George Beta Marian church with walls and ceilings beautifully painted and the majestic Beta Medane Alem represent one of the biggest tourist attractions of Ethiopia. Dinner and overnight at Roha hotel.

13 

Early morning visit to the Asheten Mariam church on the mountain. Early afternoon visit to the second group of churches. Unbelievable carving work! The reddish stone monolithic rock were dug inside and carved outside to shape the roof, the façade and the walls that were chiseled to make doors and win-



dows. The churches are connected by underground passages. Dinner and overnight at Roha hotel.

14 

Transfer to the airport for the Flight Lalibela - Addis Abeba. Arrival, transfer and hotel accommodation. Free afternoon with minibus available. Dinner in a typical Ethiopian restaurant with traditional songs and dancing. Overnight at Ghion Hotel.

15 

Departure.