



Mountains and Mystery Tour in Northern Ethiopia - 8 Days

Itinerary

Day 1 – The pagan temple at Yeha

Fly from Addis Ababa to Axum. Take colourful photos and buy small souvenirs from local craftswomen at the basket market. After lunch explore the intriguing pre-Christian pagan temple at Yeha. This is the oldest standing structure in Africa south of the Sahara Desert and dates from about 800 BC. Recently an even older palace structure was unearthed nearby.

Distance - Axum to Yeha: 50 km. Drive time: 1 Hour each way

Day 2 – Explore enigmatic Axum

The UNESCO World Heritage Site city of [Axum](#) was the capital of the Axumite empire from 400 BCE to 1000 CE. Today, it is considered the holiest Christian city in Ethiopia. Walk into impressive royal tombs and admire the world's largest single-stone obelisk's, or stelae. Visit the grounds of the church that every Ethiopian believes houses the legendary Ark of the Covenant. Stand in the throne room of the reputed Queen of Sheba's palace ruins.

Day 3 – Ascend to The Roof of Africa

Drive the spectacular mountain route from Axum to Debarq. This extraordinary mountain road has recently been rebuilt and makes for a fine driving adventure. Climb from a low point of 985 m above sea level at the Takeze River bridge to 2,850 m by the end of the day. The views are breathtaking.

Distance - Axum to Debarq: 260 Kms. Driving time: 6 Hours

Day 4 – Simien Mountains National Park

In the morning drive into the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the [Simien Mountains](#) National Park and gaze across the Roof of Africa. Explore on foot looking for troops of endemic Gelada Baboons, stand as close as you dare to the edge of 500 m cliffs and enjoy the unique flowers and trees that thrive at 3,300 m. After lunch, drive to Gondar and relax for the rest of the afternoon.

Distance - Debarq to Gondar: 110 Kms. Driving time: 2 Hours

Day 5 – Gondar the City of Castles

Spend the morning in Gondar. Explore the history and architecture at the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Fasil Ghebbi. This is also known as the Royal Enclosure of castles and was built by a succession of kings and a queen when Gondar was Ethiopia's capital for 200 years from the early 17th century. Other highlights include [Emperor Fasilide's 'Bath'](#) and murals in the Debre Birhan Selassie church which is famous for the angelic faces painted on the ceiling.

After lunch drive to Bahir Dar.

Distance - Gondar to Bahir Dar: 180 Kms. Drive time: 3 Hours

Day 6 – The source of the Blue Nile

Bahir Dar is on the shores of Lake Tana the source of the Blue Nile which supplies 80% of the water that flows into the Mediterranean as The Nile. We will cross by boat then take a forest walk past coffee bushes growing under old-growth trees full of monkeys and birds to a famous church known for its elaborate murals and history. You'll see local artists using paints made from natural pigments including berry juices and have a chance to buy small examples of their work. After lunch in a hotel garden overlooking the lake, we take another boat trip to look for shoreline [birdlife](#) and the sometimes elusive hippos. If we have time we can explore the buzzing market or take a stroll along the beautiful lakefront walkway watching out for the many water birds including brilliantly coloured Malachite Kingfishers and African Sea Eagles.

Day 7 - Lalibela, City of carved rock churches

Fly to from Bahir Dar to Lalibela chiselled inside and out from the solid rock about 1,000 years ago. King Lalibela wanted Christian pilgrims to be able to visit this New Jerusalem instead of the long and dangerous journey to the 'old' Jerusalem. Lalibela is full of surprises.

Day 8 - Highlights of Addis Ababa

Fly from Lalibela to Addis Ababa and experience one of the most compelling cities in Africa. There are many options depending on the time available. You can visit museums, a contemporary art gallery, shopping, a women's weaving co-op creating contemporary designs, music and bookshops or sip espresso coffee at boutique coffee-roaster cafes. You will feel the dynamic vibe of the diplomatic capital of Africa, home to the HQ of the African Union.

This evening's dinner and accommodation in Addis Ababa are not included in the tour price but these can be organised for you as part of our service.

Contact us today to join a travel group with
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