

Short tours for those on transit or business

Addis Ababa

Founded in 1886 by Menelik II, Addis Ababa is situated at 2,500 meters (8000 ft) above sea level which makes it the third highest capital city in the world next to La Paz in Bolivia. This hospitable and one of the safest cities in the world, enjoys an excellent climate all year round, with an average temperature of 25C(77F).

With a multi-ethnic population of over 5 million, Addis Ababa is a pleasant city with wide avenues of jacarandas, interesting museums, and one of the largest open-air markets in Africa, known as the "Mercato".

Addis Ababa Half-day and full-day city tours

AET-AA-001: Addis Ababa city tour [half day]

Half day city tour of Addis Ababa which includes the National Museum, the Merkato, St. George Cathedral and the view of Addis Ababa from Mount Entoto.

You will start your city tour of Addis Ababa with the National Museum of Ethiopia. This is one of the best museums in quality and diversity of the exhibits. Archeological exhibits include the 3.5 million-year-old fossil of Lucy (or Dinkinesh – 'thou art wonderful' - in the native language), a hominoid woman of the species of *Australopithecus Afarensis*. The discovery of Lucy's fossil in 1974 forced a complete rethink of human genealogy, providing that our ancestors were walking 2.5 million years earlier than had been supposed. The National Museum also contains many wonderful artifacts dating back to pre-Axumite civilization.

City tour of Addis Ababa continues with the visit to Merkato, the largest open-air market in Africa, where almost every possible commodity is on sale. Our visit continues with St. George Cathedral, one of the oldest cathedrals in Addis Ababa. Finally, we will drive uphill to Entoto, which once was Emperor Menelik II's permanent camp. Driving the hill there is a considerable drop in altitude and the air is filled with the scent of the Eucalyptus trees which covers the area. From the top, there is a panoramic view of the capital and surrounding countryside. After spending some time around the hill, we will drive back to the hotel. End of tour!

AET-AA-002: Full day Addis Ababa City tour

Full day city tour of Addis Ababa which include the National Museum, Ethnographic Museum, Merkato, Ba'ata Mariam Church, St. George Cathedral and the view of Addis Ababa from Mount Entoto.

You will start your city tour of Addis Ababa with the National Museum of Ethiopia. This is one of the best museums in quality and diversity of the exhibits. Archeological exhibits include the 3.5 million-year-old fossil of Lucy (or Dinkinesh – ‘thou art wonderful’ - in the native language), a hominoid woman of the species of Australopithecus Afarensis. The discovery of Lucy’s fossil in 1974 forced a complete rethink of human genealogy, providing that our ancestors were walking 2.5 million years earlier than had been supposed. The National Museum also contains many wonderful artifacts dating back to pre-Axumite civilization.

We continue our tour of Addis Ababa with visit to the Ethnographic Museum which is found inside the compound of the Addis Ababa University. This museum is very different to the National Museum, but equally absorbing, this museum exhibit, a varied array of artifacts and daily objects related to most ethnic groups living in Ethiopia.

After lunch, city tour of Addis Ababa continues with the visit to Merkato, the largest open-air market in Africa, where almost every possible commodity is on sale. Our visit continues with St. George Cathedral, one of the oldest cathedral in Addis Ababa. Finally, we will drive uphill to Entoto, which once was Emperor Minilik II’s permanent camp. Driving the hill there is an considerable drop in altitude and the air is filled with the scent of the Eucalyptus trees which cover the area.

From the top, there is a panoramic view of the capital and surrounding countryside. After spending some time around the hill, we will drive back to the hotel. End of tour!

AET-AA-003: Debre Libanos & Blue Nile River Gorge [1 day]

Blue Nile Gorge, often called Ethiopia’s own Grand Canyon is found 213 K.M north of Addis Ababa. This majestic and enormous gorge, is known for its magnificent physical feature and alluring natural beauty. After visiting the gorge, you will drive back to Addis en-route visiting Debre Libanos Monastery. Debre Libanos is an important monastic center for Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. The monastery was founded by the renowned 13th century mystic, St Teklehaimanot.

Before driving back to Addis, we will stop at the Jemma River Gorge. The Jemma River is one of the tributaries of the Nile, and there is a drop of nearly 1000 metros to the valley below. We will walk downhill to the 17th century Portuguese Bridge. Here we can expect to see plenty of birdlife including the Banded Barbet, the Black headed forest oriole, the White billed starling, the Red Billed starling, the White winged cliff chat, the White backed black tit, white cheeked Turaco and Hemprich's hornbill. We will also see one of Ethiopia's endemic mammals, the Gelada or bleeding heart baboon. Leaving the Gorge we drive back to Addis Ababa to arrive Addis late in the afternoon.

AET-AA- 004 : **Adadi Mariam & Tia Stela [1 day]**

Melka Kunture pre-historic site is situated on the southern face of the Awash River Gorge opposite Melka Awash. It's regarded to be one of the most important Stone Age sites in Ethiopia. This site is best known for the numerous Stone-Age artifacts that have been unearthed along the river including a variety of clevers, hand-axes, and other tools made from basalt and other hard rocks. The site has also proved to be an important source of fossils of extinct mammals.

After visiting the Melka Kunture Archeological site, drive to Adadi Mariam rock-hewn church. This rock hewn-church was built in the 12 century AD as those of the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. In fact local tradition ascribes it to King Lalibela who is said to have had it built on his visit to Mount Zuqwala in 1106.

Driving further south you will find Tiya, where you will see the northernmost example of a peculiar type of engraved, standing stelae which stretch across parts of southern Ethiopia. These stelae are believed to have been erected between the 12th and 14th centuries and are almost certainly grave markers. Recent excavations at Tiya have revealed the remains of young people of both sexes, aged between 18 - 30 and buried in fetal positions. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Stelea field at Tiya today comprises more than 45 stones of up to 2m.

AET-AA-005: **Debre Birhan - Ankober [1 day]**

In the morning, we start driving north on the Dessie Road. Our first stop on this route will be the historical city of Debre Berhan, which is located 130 km from Addis Ababa. The great Emperor Zera Yaqob (1434 - 1468) made his imperial capital here, after seeing a "heavenly light" (almost certainly Halley's comet) , which he took as a divine sign.

Later rulers abandoned the town, but it once again became an important center under the Shoan kings, notably King Sahle Selassie (1813 - 1847).

Then we continue driving to Ankober. Ankober traces its history to the 12th century, reaching its climax in the 19th century with the coronation of Minilik II as King of Ethiopia. It served as capital of Showan rulers until the founding of Addis Ababa as a capital in 1886. Here you will visit the ruins of Minilik palace, an ancient Christian Monastery and you will also enjoy a spectacular view of the Great Ethiopian Rift Valley across.

After visiting Ankober, we will drive back to Addis Ababa with a stopover at Debre Birhan to arrive Addis Ababa late in the afternoon.

AET-AA-006: Menagesha Forest & Wonchi Crator Lake [2 days]

Day 01: Addis Ababa - Suba Forest - Weliso

In the morning, drive to Suba and walk in the beautiful natural forest full of beautiful birds and some mammals. While taking a walk in the forest you will see: indigenous trees which are older than 400 year including juniper and podocarpus.

You will also see endemic birds like: Abyssinian cat bird, banded barbet, golden backed wood pecker, black headed forest Oriole and wattled ibis and some endemicanimals Menelik's bushbuck. In the afternoon, drive to Weliso and spend the rest of the day around Weliso in the beautiful lodge.

O/N: hotel.

Day 02: Weliso-Wonchi Crater Lake - Addis Ababa

In the morning, drive to Wonchi crater lake en-route enjoying the magnificent countryside scenery . In about 27 K.M distance we will be driving up for about 1000 mt difference in altitude.

At Wonchi, you will have a walk and/or horse ride to the view point where you will see one of the most beautiful crater lake and drive back to Addis Ababa through Ambo to arrive Addis late afternoon.

O/N: hotel.

AET-AA-007: Awash National Park and Debre Zeit crater Lakes [2 Days]

Day 01: Addis Ababa - Nazret - Awash National park

Drive to Awash National Park through Debre Zeit, Mojo and Nazret. Late afternoon, game drive in the Awash National Park. In the park you will visit the spectacular Awash Fall and spot different game animals including: Oryx, Swine's hartebeest, bushbucks, olive baboons, and crocodiles near the Awash River fall and different specious of endemic birds.

O/N: hotel.

Day 02: Awash National Park - Debre Zeit Crater lakes - Addis Ababa

In the morning, drive back to Addis Ababa en-route visiting the crator lakes of Debre Zeit which includes Hora, Kuriftu and Bisheftu Lake to arrive Addis Ababa late in the afternoon.

AET-AA-008: Rift Valley Lakes - Awassa [2 days]

Day 1: Pick up from the hotel is at 8:00 a.m before heading south to the Great Ethiopian Rift Valley, passing through the town of DebreZeit, and by the lakes of Koka, Zeway, Langano, Abiata and Shalla.

Surrounded by mountains, Lake Awassa is one of Ethiopia's most beautiful lakes in the Rift Valley and is home to enormous population of aquatic birds. Along the shore of this lake we can also see hippos, Colobus, Velvet monkeys and baboons

In the afternoon, you can have a boat trip among the fishermen and enjoy the afternoon watching birds including the lovely African Fish Eagle, malachite kingfisher and many other aquatic birds.

Day 2: Awassa-Langano-Addis Ababa

In the morning, visit the fish market, where the fishermen sells their catches to the people and feed the birds with the left over. You will have the chance to closely witness this daily activity of the fishermen and the local people. You will also closely see a variety of species of birds which are used to human company. After breakfast, we will drive back to Addis Ababa with a stop for lunch along the shore of the lake.

AET-AA-009: Ethiopia Rift Valley Lakes [2 Days]

Day 1: Addis Ababa - Zway - Langano - Shalla - Abiata

In the morning, drive south to the Great Ethiopian Rift Valley, passing through the town of Debre Zeit, and by the lakes of Koka and Zway. At lake Zway, we will stop for short boat trip to visit the beautiful Zway Lake and Hippo spotting. On the shore of Lake Zway, we will can also see different aquatic birds including: African pygmy Geese, yellow billed storks, Collared Pratincoles, Lesser and greater Jacanas, African Jacanas, White Pelicans, Fish Eagles, crowned and common cranes. Then we will continue driving to Lake Langano where we will check into Sabana Lodge.

After check in, visitors can choose between activities: can go for a swimming, do some kayaking, walk along the shores of the lake or go bird watching in the acacia forests full of beautiful birds along the shore of the lake.

Late in the afternoon, will take a short drive to Shalla and Abiata National Park. With a depth of 300 meters, Lake Shalla is the deepest of the Rift Valley Lakes. Before getting close to the shore of Lake Shalla, we will have a stop at a view point where we can see look at the two lakes. En-route here, we will see a number of hot springs which are boiling hot that locals boil different things including, egg and maize in them. We then continue towards Abiata Lake, where by this time of day the lakes shores will be pink from the thousands of both lesser and greater Flamingo's which feed in the shallows. African Pochard, Avocet, Gull billed Tern and Pintail, Ruff and a variety of ducks are among other species to be seen.

O/N: Sabana Lodge - Langano.

Day 2: Langanano - Addis Ababa

We will spend the morning relaxing by the lake, take our lunch in the hotel and leave for Addis Ababa about mid-day.

AET-AA-010: Shashemene - Wondogenet [2 days]

Day 1: Addis Ababa - Shashemene - Wondogenet

In the morning, drive south to the Great Ethiopian Rift Valley, passing through the town of DebreZeit, and by the lakes of Koka and Zeway. At lakeZway, we will stop for short boat trip to visit the beautiful Zway Lake and Hippo spotting. On the shore of Lake Zway, we will can also see different aquatic birds including: African pygmy Geese, yellow billed storks, Collared Pratincoles, Lesser and greater Jacanas, African Jacanas, White Pelicans, Fish Eagles, crowned and common cranes.

We will have lunch stop at Lake Langanano and continue driving to Shashemene. Shashemene is situated at a crossroads, with roads north south and east west. It is also home to a Rastafarian community from the Caribbean. Emperor Haile Selassie I granted them land here in perpetuity in recognition of the support and solidarity of the people of African origin in the Caribbean for Ethiopia at the time of the Fascist aggression in 1935, when Mussolini's Italian forces invaded the country.

From Shashemene we will drive to the mountain and spa resort of Wondogenet - or "place of heaven". Haile Selassie had a lodge here, now part of the hotel, and the waters are reputed to have curative properties. The hot water comes gushing out of the rocks and one can stand underneath, getting a natural hydro massage. There is also a naturally heated swimming pool.

You may prefer to relax in the natural spa, or enjoy the naturally forested scenery around the lodge having a relaxing walk on the hill overlooking the lodge, with plenty of bird life: the endemic yellow fronted parrot, the Black-headed forest Oriole and the Golden-backed Woodpecker can easily be seen, along with the Redwing starling, Grosbeak Weaver, Mountain wagtail and Black Rough wing Swallow and wildlife - with Colobus and Velvet monkeys, anubis baboon and bushbuck.

Day 2: Wondogenet - Langanano - Addis Ababa

In the morning, relax around the lodge and return to Addis Ababa. We will have a stop for lunch at the Sabana Lodge on the shores of Lake Langanano, and arrive in Addis Ababa late afternoon.

Upon request, Grand Holidays Ethiopia can arrange tours combining any of the short tours and excursions mentioned above. Please contact us, we would be pleased to help get the best out of your short stay in Ethiopia.

Grand Holidays Ethiopia Tours can arrange short tour and Addis Ababa city tour for your short stay in Addis Ababa. Whether you are looking for Addis Ababa city tour, or do some short excursions out of Addis Ababa, or short tours in Ethiopia or rent a car in Addis ababa car rent, car rent in Ethiopia, hotels in addis ababa, hotel reservations in Addis Ababa, we can handle it all.