



## **Remote River Expeditions**

### **ETHIOPIA**

#### **The Historic Route**

#### **Itinerary Options & Notes**

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These journeys pass through the scenic Ethiopian highlands and leads to the historical sites of the country in the north. The trip covers **Bahir Dar**, where one finds lake Tana with over thirty monasteries scattered on the lake; **Gondar**, known for the ancient castles and churches; **Axum**, the ancient city of Ethiopia known for the famous obelisks standing in the center of the town and where the ark of the covenant is believed to be kept; **Lalibella**, which is known as the Jerusalem of Ethiopia and known for the rock hewn churches where Major church events still takes place.

#### **Bahir Dar, Gondar, Axum, Lalibella**

#### **10 Days / 9 Nights / By air**

Code: EFS204

1. Arrive to Addis Ababa
2. Addis - Bahir Dar - in the afternoon, visit the Blue Nile falls
3. Bahir Dar- Boat trip on the Lake Tana (the biggest lake of Ethiopia) and visit the monastery churches.
4. Bahir Dar- Gondar- afternoon visit the castles and Debre Birhan Selassie church
5. Gondar- Visit the Felasha Village and the panoramic scenery of the Simien Mountains
6. Gondar-Axum - visit the town of Axum
7. Axum- Lalibella- visit the first group of the churches
8. Lalibella- visit the second group of churches and the market in the town or excursion to the Ashen ton Mariam church.
9. Lalibella - Addis, city tour in the afternoon
10. Departure

#### **Historical Route**

#### **14 Days / 13 Nights / By car**

Code EFS 205

1. Arrival to Addis Ababa
2. Addis-Kombolcha
3. Komolcha -Lalibella
4. Lalibella- in the morning visit the first group of the churches. Afternoon visit the second group of the churches.
5. Lalibella- Mekelle
6. Mekelle-Axum- visit the Stele of Axum
7. Axum- Visit the church of Tsoin Mariam Church
8. Axum-Gondar- through the Semien Mountains, reach Gondar. Visit the city and the famous castles of Fasilledes.
9. Gondar-Bahir Dar-afternoon visit the Blue Nile falls
10. Bahir Dar- Boat trip on Lake Tana to visit the monastry churches
11. Bahir Dar- Dejen
13. Dejen-Addis- on the way visit the monastery of Debre Libanos
14. Departure

\* On request, it's possible to arrange a longer boat trip on Lake Tana \*



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#### **Historical Route**

#### **10 Days / 9 Nights / By Air and Car**

Code EFS 206

1. Arrive to Addis
2. Addis-Bahir Dar (flight)- In the afternoon visit the Blue Nile falls
3. Bahir Dar-Boat trip on Lake Tana to visit the Monastery churches
4. Bahir Dar- Gondar (by car)- in the afternoon visit the city
5. Gondar -Axum
6. Axum- city tour
7. Axum- Lalibela- In the morning, Visit the first group of the churches and in the afternoon, the second group.
8. Lalibela- in the morning, excursion to the Asheton Maryam Church and in the afternoon visit the market in the town
9. Lalibela-Addis
10. Addis - City tour and in the evening departure

#### **Historical Route**

#### **10 Days / 9 Nights / By Car and Air**

Code EFS 207

1. Arrival to Addis
2. Addis-Lalibela-by air- visit the first group of churches and in the afternoon the second group
3. Lalibela- in the morning visit the Ashanti Maryam Church and Nakuto Lab church
4. Lalibela -Axum-By air-
5. Axum-
6. Axum-Gondar by air- visit the city
7. Gondar- Gorgora -Bahir-Dar {by car and long boat trip)
8. Bahir Dar
9. Bahir Dar- Addis (by air)
10. Addis- City tour in the morning and in the evening departure



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#### Axum

As it appears in the Glory of Kings (the Kibre Negest), the Ethiopian national saga written in the 14th Century, Axum was the capital of the queen of Sheba and the capital of the Axumite kingdom which dominated the most important crossroads of Africa and Asia.

**What to Visit:** The number of famous obelisks standing at the middle of the town, identify Axum widely. The greatest ancient granite monoliths in the world measuring over thirty three meters and weighing about 500 tones lies in broken segments on the ground close to the standing stelae. The second largest obelisk measuring twenty four meters had also fallen and was looted during the Italian invasion.

The third highest stelae which measures twenty three meters, still stands in Axum.

The other attraction of Axum is the Church of the St. Mary of Zion, which is the home of the Ark of the Covenant, believed to be brought by Menilik I, who is believed to be the son of King Solomon of Jerusalem. The church which is the home of the Ark of the Covenant is also a repository of former Ethiopian Emperors' Crowns making St. Mary the holiest sanctuary of Ethiopia.

**When to visit:** Though Axum can be visited through out the year, it's more impressive during church festivals, Ethiopian Christmas ( January 7 ) , Epiphany ( January 19) and the festival of Maryam Zion celebrated at the end of November .

#### Bahir Dar

The Lakeside town which is visited with "tankuas" (papyrus canoes) is famous for the Lake Tana, which is the largest water body in Ethiopia and the source of the Blue Nile fall.

**What to Visit:** The thirty-seven scattered islands in Lake Tana, which are accessed through boats. And about twenty of them are shelter of churches and monasteries that are culturally and historically significant for the country.

**When to visit:** Bahir Dar can be visited at any time of the year. However, the falls are at their best at the end of the Ethiopian rainy season, which runs from June to September.



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#### Gondar

Gondar, the royal capital of Ethiopia, was founded by Emperor Fasiladas in 1635. In its long years as a capital, the settlement emerged as one of the largest and most popular cities in the realm.

Gondar is famous for its many medieval castles and the design and decoration of its churches. The earliest of the castles was created by Fasiladas himself, where from the top; one can see the breath taking view of the city. Besides the famous palaces, one should visit the so called "Bathing Palace of Emperor Fasiladas", which is still used for the annual Timket or Epiphany celebrations and the abbey of the redoubtable eighteen century Empress Mentewab at Quesquam, in the mountains just outside Gondar.

**What to Visit:** The most impressive two storied palaces of Emperor Fasiladas and the other palaces built by his descendants and the bathing place of the Emperor. The Debre Brahan Sellasie Church or the Trinity at the Mount of light, the Ras Michael Seul church, the house of Echege and the Felasha peoples (Judaic Ethiopians) also worth to be visited

**When to Visit:** Gondar can be visited at any time of the year but would be exceptionally interesting during church festivals, Ghenna or Ethiopian Christmas on January 7 and Timkat or Epiphany on January 19

#### Lalibella

The city Carved from legend is recorded as the eight wonder of the world by UNESCO. It's the land where former Axumite Christian leaders retreated with their Christian subject. Lalibella, which is formerly known as Roha is named after the last king of the Zagwe Dynasty.

**What to Visit:** The most impressive Churches of Lalibella, which are carved out of soft red volcanic tuff on which they stand. The mysterious churches where some lie completely hidden in deep trenches and the others standing in quarried caves are complex in architecture and concept.

**When to Visit:** Lalibella can be visited at any time of the year but it's highly colorful during the religious festivals, Ethiopian Christmas celebrated on the 7th January and Timket Celebrated on the 19th of January



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**Harar**

The old town of Harar came into formal existence since 1520. The town is exceptionally known for the erect encircling walls, which tightly embrace the town. In addition it's known for the most exciting and rich market probably the most colorful in the country. It's also known for its handicrafts, the 99 Mosques that make Harar, the 4th Muslim holy city. Besides all these, Harar is also known for the hyena man who feeds the wild hyena with hand and mouth.

Harar can be visited at any time of the year.