

ETHIOPIA

The Historic Route



DAY 1 / Khartoum – Addis Ababa by flight

From Khartoum airport, flight to Addis Ababa operated by Ethiopian Airlines.

Transfer to your hotel and time at leisure.

Overnight stay at the hotel.

DAY 2 / Addis Abeba – Bahar Dar by flight - Nile waterfalls and excursion at Tana Lake

After breakfast at your hotel, flight to **Bahar Dar**.

Upon arrival you will proceed for a pleasant excursion to the Blue Nile waterfalls.

The *Tississat waterfall*, in Aramaic “smoking water”, has been described by travellers as one of the most beautiful in the world. To reach the waterfalls we take a pleasant walk of about half an hour across several villages. This will be a wonderful occasion to meet local people.

Please note that due to the new dam recently built, the level of the lake sometimes is very low and the waterfalls are almost dry.

Return to Bahar Dar for lunch and, in the afternoon, pleasant cruise on **Tana Lake**. During this excursion we visit some interesting monasteries (*Ura Kidane, Asua Mariam*), hidden among the vegetation along the banks of the lake and on the islands. This is where monks used to live and to be buried around 14th-century and where some wonderful paintings and manuscripts are still preserved.

Located at 1860 m, with an heart-shape, the Tana Lake has a volcanic origin: the rocks around it, which create the islands, suggest that the lake was originated after a lava obstruction due to strong eruptions.

Not all the monasteries allow women to enter; even female animals can't stay on certain islands.

Return to Bahar Dar, dinner and overnight stay. (B.L.D.)

According to boat availability, the excursion on the Tana Lake can be moved in the morning without any changes to the visits and inclusions.



DAY 3 / Bahar Dar - Gondar by land (150km - 3hrs) – half day sightseeing

After breakfast at your hotel, departure to Gondar along an interesting route that crosses picturesque villages and breathtaking landscapes.

Gondar was the seat of the Ethiopian emperors in XVII-XVIII centuries. It preserves the splendour of these ancient time thanks to ruins of the antique imperial castles and the remains of some of the forty-four old churches. These sites make Gondar one of the most interesting city of the country and for this reason it is also named '*Camelot of Africa*'.

Lunch in a local restaurant and dinner and overnight stay at the hotel. (B.L.D.)

DAY 4 / Gondar – Lalibela by flight and sightseeing

Discovered for the first time by the Europeans in 1520, **Lalibela** was always isolated due to the difficult access which allowed to preserve its authenticity and beauty.

Following the local tradition, the well known monolithic churches have been built over 23 years by *Lalibela*, emperor of the *Zaguè* dynasty, before 1225, probably with the help of Coptic artisans coming from Egypt or Jerusalem.

Each building is made by one-piece rock with its basement still in the stone. Through tunnels and narrow passages excavated in the rock, it is possible to wander from church to church in order to admire this religious rocky monumental complex, unique in the world.

On certain dates, it is also possible to assist to religious ceremonies. These are unique moments, completely authentic, to be shared with the extremely warm and welcoming local people. It will be a wonderful occasion to try to understand this strong and deep religiousness which permeates the daily life of this people and shines through each Ethiopian cultural expression.

Meals and overnight stay at the hotel. (B.L.D.)

DAY 5 / Lalibela – Addis Abeba by flight – city tour

After breakfast at your hotel, flight to Addis Abeba. Later in the morning sightseeing of **Addis Ababa**, capital city of Ethiopia. Risen as small conglomerate on the upland at 2400 m, along the caravan routes, and then extended by *Menelik* in 1887, Addis Abeba, the “*new flower*”, counts now more than five million inhabitants and it is home of the biggest market of the whole Africa.

Visit the **National and Ethnographic Museum** that, among several interesting rests, hosts the skeleton of *Lucy*, the *Australopithecus Afarensis* discovered in the *Awash Valley* in 1974. This important relic is strongly connected with the beginning of the history of human being and it is dated back three million years ago.

DAY 6 / Addis Abeba – Khartoum by flight

Time permitting before boarding the flight back to Khartoum, time at leisure at the large open air market, which is divided by goods in several areas: from spices to fabrics, from doors and windows to electronic items, all of this in the chaotic and cheery Ethiopian crowd.

Transfer to the airport and boarding your flight back to Khartoum.