

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Simien Mountain Trek and Lalibela (ES 2017)



TRIPDURATION
13
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic

Accommodation Grade: Simple

Tour Type: Small Groups

Trek Grade: Challenging

Trip Code: ES

Trip Highlights - Simien Mountain Trek and Lalibela

- ✓ Simien Mountains: trek one of Africa's most spectacular and least visited mountain ranges in Africa.
- ✓ Ras Dashen: climb Ethiopia's highest peak at 4543m.
- ✓ Camping: enjoy wild camping in stunning locations.
- ✓ Gondar: discover the medieval Fasilidas Castle and Debre Berhan Church.
- ✓ Lalibela: Explore impressive churches carved in rocks.

Trip Essentials

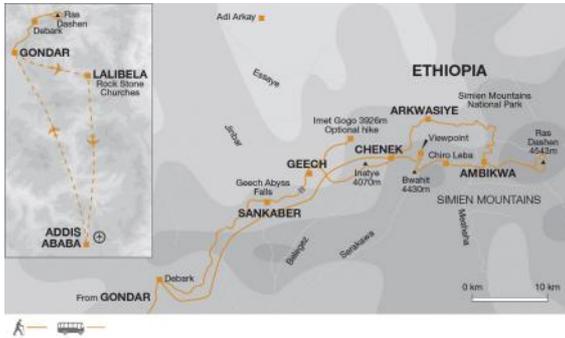
Accommodation:	5 nights Standard Hotel 7 nights Simple Camping
Included Meals:	13 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 7 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Addis Ababa
End Point:	Trip ends: Addis Ababa
Maximum Altitude on Trek (m):	4543
Transport:	4WD, Bus, Flight
Countries:	Ethiopia
Minimum Age:	From 16 years

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Simien Mountain Trek and Lalibela

The Simien highlands of northern Ethiopia form one of the major mountain massifs in Africa. A highlight is the ascent to the summit of Ras Dashen - Ethiopia's highest peak and the fifth highest on the continent. As we trek through this isolated region we admire the spectacular scenery of rocky plateaus, spires, mesas and deep gorges. On our return we also visit Lalibela, home to the impressive rock-cut churches.



Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Simple

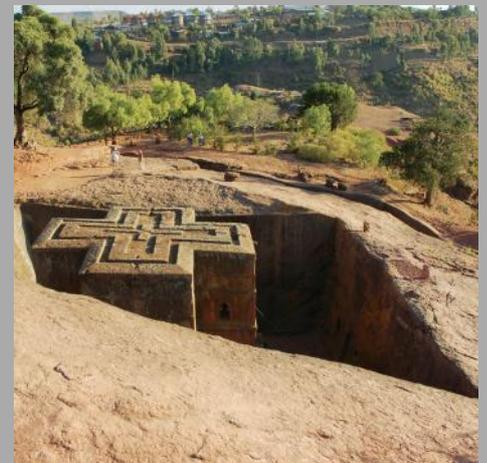
No-frills accommodation which includes berths on sleeper trains, rooms in village houses, boat cabins, campsites, huts and simple family-run lodges, guesthouses and hotels. Sleeping arrangements are simple and amenities are adequate, sometimes with en suite facilities and occasionally communal.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Trek Grade: Challenging

You need to have a good level of fitness and previous trekking experience is recommended. Trekking days are generally longer, challenging and at higher altitudes. Terrain may be difficult and ascents and descents are often demanding.



Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Addis Ababa. PM: orientation tour of the city

Addis is situated at an elevation of around 2438m and is just over a century old. It has some elegant modern buildings and is quite spacious with wide streets and green areas. It remains the capital of a predominantly rural area and the Mercato is one of the largest open markets in Africa. This afternoon we will have an orientation tour of the city visiting the Ethnographical Museum and the church of the Holy Trinity, whose large dome and slender pinnacles make it a landmark in the city, followed by a drive up Entoto Hill to take in a panoramic view of Addis Ababa.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 2 Fly to Gondar and visit local sites including castle ruins

Today we take a short, but scenic flight to Gondar, located on the high plateau just north of Lake Tana. The town of Gondar was the imperial capital of Ethiopia for 200 years. Gondar's most famous monuments are its exceptionally well preserved 17th century castles. The largest and best is that of King Fasilidas. It is a stone-built construction with round turrets and wooden balconies. This whole complex of buildings is unique in Ethiopia and unlike anything found elsewhere in Africa. On arrival, as well as visiting the castle ruins and King Fasilidas baths, we'll also make a visit to the Debre Berhan Selassie Church famed for its ceiling frescoes of many angel faces.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Drive to Simien Mountains National Park via Debarq; PM trek to Sankaber

Today, we drive to Debarq, the village base for hiking in the Simien Mountains. The range lies north of Gondar and many of the peaks rise above 4,000m with the highest being Mount Ras Dashen at 4,543m, the fifth highest in Africa. The mountains are criss-crossed with tracks made by the local people travelling from village to village or moving their animals to fresh pastures. The combination of these tracks and the spectacular scenery make for excellent walking. We start our trek with walk to our first camp Sankaber. Today's 5.5km walk is expected to take around 2.5 hrs. * During the trek we may spend each night in a different place. The circuits walked will vary depending on local conditions and on the group's ability. Details of the standard circuit we might take are given below - the itinerary for days 6 to 12 is given as an example only.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Trek to Geech Camp via Sankaber

We trek today to Geech camp via Sankaber, with the possibility of seeing gelada baboons and red-hot poker plants en route. The gelada baboon is endemic to Ethiopia and has adapted to living on the nearly vertical cliff faces. We may also see the Jinbar river waterfalls today that plummet into Geech Abyss. The Abyss is a vast canyon cut into the main wall of the escarpment. Today's 12km walk is expected to take around 6hrs.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Optional acclimatisation hike to Imet Gogo from Geech Camp

A flexible day with a morning optional acclimatisation hike to the viewpoint of Imet Gogo (3926m). From the viewpoint there are spectacular views of the lowlands and across the Simien range with rock spires and mesas prominent. Keep a close look out for the elusive simien fox. It's misnamed as it is not really a fox but a member of the dog family restricted to Ethiopia. Today's optional hike of 10km is expected to take around 4hrs.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 Trek to Chenek Camp traversing the Jinbar river

We aim to trek to Chenek camp today on a good trail via Inatye (4070m) and along the escarpment. This exciting walk traverses the Jinbar river and provides us with fantastic views. You may like to take the opportunity to freshen-up in the nearby stream south of camp. Today's 13km walk is expected to take around 8hrs.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Trek to Ambikwa

Today we trek to Ambikwa and plan to stop at a spectacular viewpoint (4200m) north of Bwahit where, on clear days, we can see across the Mesheha river to Ras Dashen peak. We then descend steeply and pass through the village of Chiro Leba to follow a stream bed until we reach the large Mesheha River. We'll cross the river and follow a path up the east side of the valley to Ambikwa village, (3200m) where our camp sits in a little meadow next to a small church. Today's 17km walk is expected to take around 11hrs.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Ascent of Ras Dashen; returning to Ambikwa

Starting before sunrise we follow the main valley up and climb steeply via Mizma village houses to reach a ridge crest and open grassy slopes (3700m) on our invigorating ascent of Ethiopia's highest mountain. Next we traverse around ridges and climb more steeply to a broad col at 4250m. Keep an eye open for giant lobelia, by far the most spectacular plant of this region with flower stalks up to 8m high. Eventually we enter a huge semicircular basin of rocky peaks and buttresses - Ras Dashen. The last section involves some rock scrambling and climbing to a fine viewpoint at 4543m. We'll spend the rest of the day hiking back to our camp. Today's 21km walk is expected to take around 10hrs.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Recross the Mesheha River en route to Arkwasiye

Today we recross the Mesheha River as we make our way to Arkwasiye and our campsite there (3150m). Today's 15km walk is expected to take around 6hrs.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**
Your own tent available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Walk to Chenek. Drive to Gondar

We have an early start this morning for our trek to Chenek (3620m). On arrival we have a packed lunch before our drive to Gondar. The drive takes three to four hours and about a third of the road is unmade. On arrival we check into our hotel for the night. Today's 12km walk is expected to take around 6hrs.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 11 Fly to Lalibela. Visit rock stone churches

This morning we fly to Lalibela for a two-night stay in one of the world's most remarkable historic sites. Although churches carved in rock are found in other parts of the world, those found in Ethiopia are particularly interesting. Generally, they were excavated on all sides of a rectangle, leaving a large block of granite isolated in the centre. This rock was then shaped and formed both inside and out and the carvings show extremely skilful workmanship. Lalibela, the New Jerusalem, is thought to have been constructed some 800 years ago by King Lalibela as his capital city. These days, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is a small village. This afternoon's tour involves a certain amount of scrambling through a labyrinth of tunnels. The churches stand in two main groups on either side of a stream, known locally as 'The River Jordan'. There are 11 rock-cut churches, and we will visit several. The most impressive of the

churches is Bet Giorgis, which is carved in the form of a Greek cross and approached through a passage in the rock. Between them, these rock-cut churches are one of the great wonders of the world.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 12 Mule trek to Ashatan Maryam Church

Located among the mountains that encircle Lalibela are several more isolated churches. Using mules, we journey for some two hours to Ashatan Maryam Church and are rewarded with stunning views over Lalibela and the peaks and mountains of these remote highlands. Reached by steep shale paths, it will be necessary to dismount in places due to the terrain. Good footwear is a must. Vertigo sufferers or people with a low level of fitness may choose not to partake in the mule trek, your tour leader can advise you. This afternoon we return to Lalibela, allowing more time to explore the rock-cut churches.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 13 Fly to Addis where tour ends

We fly back to Addis Ababa this morning where the tour ends.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 7 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Ethiopia

Lunch £: 3.00

Dinner £: 6.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Ethiopia

Bottle of Beer £: 1.50

Water £: 1.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Addis Ababa - National museum £3.00

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$90 for tipping of local drivers, guides, muleteers and for any miscellaneous tipping of hotel staff.

Foreign Exchange

Ethiopia

ATM Availability: Very Limited.

Credit Card Acceptance: Limited.

Travellers Cheques: Very difficult to exchange and are not recommended. Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currencyexpress.com/explore/>

Local Currency: Ethiopian Birr.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: It is advisable to take your spending money in Sterling, Euros or US Dollars cash (high denomination notes usually get better exchange rates). Please note that any pre- 1999 or torn US Dollar bills will not be accepted in Ethiopia. Please keep any receipts as you may be able to change back any unused local currency.

Where to Exchange: Your Tour leader will advise you.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must

fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Ethiopia: Visas for UK nationals can be obtained on arrival, although this can change at short notice, and you should be prepared to queue on arrival. Please ensure you have 2 recent passport sized photos with you when applying on arrival, these may or may not be asked for.

For a single entry visa you can apply via the e-visa website: <https://www.evisa.gov.et/#/home>. You will need to print a copy of your evisa approval letter and present this with your passport at immigration upon your arrival. The approval letter will take a minimum of 3 days to be processed so we strongly advise for you to apply within plenty of time before your departure. You will be permitted to stay within Ethiopia for upto 30 days or upto 90 days depending on which single entry visa you request. We strongly recommend for you to read the Help section on the e-visa website before applying.

Should you wish to apply for a visa prior to departure, please note that a single entry visa is valid for 30 days from the date of issue, so you must submit your application no more than two weeks prior to departure. It is also possible to apply for a multi-entry visa which is valid for 3 months from issue.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

Ethiopia

We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid and polio. Although the risk is low you may also consider immunisation against rabies and meningococcal meningitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.



Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 3	5.5km	2.5hrs
Day 4	12km	6hrs
Day 5	10km	4hrs
Day 6	13km	8hrs
Day 7	17km	11hrs
Day 8	21km	10hrs
Day 9	15km	6hrs
Day 10	12km	6hrs

Optional Walks

Maximum Altitude on Trek (m)

4543

Trekking Details

Trek for 8 days for an average of 7 to 9 hours walking each day, mostly above 3000m. (Day 5 is optional). Maximum altitude is the summit of Ras Dashen, 4543m. Mules carry all food, luggage and equipment. We have graded this trek as challenging.

Altitude Description

In the Simien Mountains trekking is strenuous with 6-8 hrs a day walking on average, at altitudes of 3,000- 4,500m, though there are some longer days (including the ascent of Ras Dashen, 4,543m). There is very little flat walking involved. We cover approx 65 miles, ascend 7460m and descend 6880m. Your leader will ensure that during your stay in the mountains you acclimatise enough before an ascent of Ras Dashen. At altitude you will find yourself moving slower than usual, but this gives an excellent opportunity to admire the spectacular views. Bear in mind that the trek to the summit of Ras Dashen is optional, and can be omitted if so wished.

Please note this trip goes to an altitude where there is a risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), a common and usually harmless condition caused by reduced air pressure and a lower concentration of oxygen. Whilst the itinerary has been specifically designed to allow your body to acclimatise gradually, the speed of onset and severity - as well as the height at which AMS develops can vary greatly between individuals; being physically fit affords no special protection. If symptoms occur while on tour you must let your tour leader know immediately. For further advice when travelling at altitude we recommend visiting the medical advice website of "Medex" and downloading their information booklet: http://medex.org.uk/medex_book/english_version.php

Travellers with heart or lung conditions, anaemia, asthma, high blood pressure, or taking the contraceptive pill must seek the advice of their GP and specifically mention the maximum altitude the trip reaches (please refer to Tour Essentials box on front page of your Tour Notes). Please take these to your medical appointment so that your doctor has the full details of your trip.

You must have adequate travel insurance for your trip. Please ensure that your insurance policy covers you to the maximum altitude indicated above. If you have Explore insurance you will be covered to this altitude.

Climate

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is generally pleasant and warm, but varies with altitude. The long rains usually arrive mid- June to early September and the short rains between mid-February and April although this pattern has been completely erratic in recent times. After the rains, the highlands of northern Ethiopia are usually green and thus particularly scenic. The temperature all year round rarely falls below 18°C. Night-time temperatures in the mountains can be cold and can drop below freezing at higher altitude. There is a strong risk of sunburn at high altitude in Ethiopia. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Clothing

Socks

It is best to wear a pair of liner socks under a pair of fairly thick loop stitch socks. This helps to protect your feet against blisters. Avoid nylon socks, they are abrasive, don't breathe well and can cause blisters.

Jacket

After sunset, temperatures can fall below freezing. A very warm jacket is the most convenient way of keeping warm when the

temperature drops.

Waterproofs

Breathable waterproofs made from material such as Goretex not only protects against rain and wind but also stops you from overheating. They breathe and avoid condensation that you will experience from nylon waterproofs.

Long Trousers

For everyday walking, light cotton trousers are the most suitable. Jeans are not recommended as they are often difficult to walk in over longer distances and become cumbersome when wet.

Thick jumper/fleece jacket

A thick jumper or fleece jacket is necessary as nights can be very cold at altitude. Make sure that your waterproof jacket is loose enough to wear over your sweater or fleece.

Track suit

Comfortable around the villages and much more practical (and warmer) to sleep in than pyjamas. Alternatively, thermal underwear is good.

Shorts

Shorts can be very comfortable to walk in but you must carry long trousers with you in case you get either sunburned or cold. Follow your tour leaders advice on local sensitivities to wearing shorts during the trek.

Gloves

Especially useful in the morning and in the evening at higher altitudes. Also bring a scarf to cover your face from the dust during the day and a warm hat/balaclava.

Swimwear

There will be swimming opportunities during the trek

Equipment

Sleeping Bag As you do not carry it yourself this may be down or synthetic, but it must be 4-season (temperature -10°C to -5°C). A cotton liner helps to keep your bag clean.

Sleeping Mat Regular sleeping mats will be provided but if you would prefer an inflatable thermarest style you will need to bring your own.

Walking poles are recommended.

Water Bottles, water along the trail must never be considered as drinkable. Take at least a 2 litre personal water bottle, preferably insulated. A personal supply of water purification tablets/drops, enough to purify 30 litres is essential. Powdered fruit juice can be used to disguise the taste.

Energy snacks, including chocolate and sweets, are also recommended whilst on trek.

Sunglasses/Snow Goggles A good pair of sunglasses are essential for protection against UV rays and glare at high altitudes.

Sun Hat, High Factor Sun Cream/Block & Lip Salve Choose a high factor suncream (Factor 15 or more) to protect your skin against the sun at high altitudes. A combination sunblock/ lipsalve is ideal for facial protection.

Torch/Batteries/Bulb A small torch is essential for finding things at night. Often a head torch is useful for the early ascent to the summit. Remember to bring some spare batteries.

Toiletries Keep heavy cosmetics to a minimum. Essentials are toothbrush/paste, soap (preferably biodegradable), small towel. Wet wipes are great for a quick clean up, so bring a pack of those.

Personal First Aid Kit On each trek a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials. Please do not give medicines to local people without consulting the tour leader.

Footwear

Walking Boots

Probably the trickiest part of all. We strongly recommend walking in good boots. Trainers, or shoes of a similar ilk simply do not give the ankle support afforded by a decent pair of boots. Many people now trek in the lighter weight Goretex or leather boots They have the advantage that they take little breaking in. The slightly heavier traditional leather walking boots are also good. Avoid the types often found in high street shoe shops which are simply cheap trainers with a higher canvas side sewn on - they give little support and will probably not last the trek. Above all, your boots must be well broken in and comfortable. We do not recommend borrowing or renting boots. It is a good idea to carry your boots in your hand luggage on international flights or wear them - should your luggage be delayed, your well broken in boots are the one thing which will be irreplaceable. Gaiters are useful to keep snow and/or scree out of your boots.

Trainers or Trekking sandals

Useful around the villages and when travelling.

Luggage: On Tour

A kitbag/barrel bag carried by mules on trek, a stuff-sack to store surplus belongings while on trek and a daysac. Pack mules are used to carry equipment, food and most personal gear. Pack heavy/dense items into your kitbag.

Trek Kit Bag

Before leaving Gondar there is plenty of time to re-sort luggage into what you need on trek and what can be left in Gondar. Think about what you are taking on trek (remember your sleeping bag) and then think how big your kit bag needs to be. An ex-army type can usually be obtained cheaply. A nylon or canvas bag with a zip along the top is also suitable. Whatever you choose, it must be strong, as porters are not very gentle with baggage. Soft luggage is preferable! Framed rucksacks are unsuitable. The weight limit for the bag and its contents is 15kg but you will probably find that you do not need this much. Please note there are occasional opportunities to hand wash clothing whilst on the trek.

Small Rucksack/Daysac

During the course of a trekking day, you do not have access to the luggage that is being carried for you by the porters. In any mountain region the weather can change rapidly and you must be equipped for this eventuality. Your daysac should, therefore, be large enough to carry the following: waterproofs, sweater, long trousers (if walking in shorts), warm hat and gloves, sun hat, sun cream, water bottle (at least 2litre), tissues and your packed lunch. Most people normally find that this adds up to about 2 to 3kg. Camera equipment can be heavy so think carefully when deciding what to take. Other optional items in a daysac might be binoculars,

a diary or a book to read at lunch time. It is usually more comfortable to carry a slightly larger pack that is not full than to carry a small pack that is overfull or with 'bits' tied on the outside. Something between 20 and 25 litres capacity is probably the most suitable. A shoulder bag is not a practical alternative.

Plastic Bags

If you pack your gear in plastic bags inside your kit bag they will stay dry in case of rain. It will also be easier for you to sort through. Remember, the less you have to unpack in the evening, the less you have to repack each morning! A bin liner to pack inside your daysac is also a good idea.

Luggage allowance on trip: 15Kg

General Information

Country details

Ethiopia

Population: 96,633,458

Size of Country: 1,104,300 sq km

Major Language: Amharic, English

Religion: Christian, Islam

Time Difference to GMT: +3

Electric Supply & Plugs

Ethiopia

2 Pin Round



Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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