



# HIGHLANDS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF ETHIOPIA

29 DAY TOUR, MAY 9 - JUNE 6, 2014  
WITH SUE VERRALL

Join Sue Verrall as she shows you Ethiopia, a country that she knows intimately, has lived in for many years and explored extensively. This is a journey off the beaten path with the opportunity to see and experience the real Ethiopia. Enjoy the spectacular scenery of plugs and chasms in the Simien Mountains and the natural beauty of the alpine lakes and high altitude moors of Bale National Park. Wildlife enthusiasts will enjoy looking out for the unique wildlife that live here, the Simien Fox, Gelada Baboons, the Mountain Nyala and abundant colourful birdlife. History lovers will enjoy the well preserved 12th Century Churches of Lalibela and the historic Royal Castles of Gondar. It is however, the warmly welcoming local people that will be the highlight. These diverse and unique people who have carefully preserved their proud traditions for centuries will invite you into their homes and hearts.



## Meet Your Tour Escort

Sue Verrall has lived and worked in East Africa for sixteen years. Initially in Ethiopia which won her a deep respect for African cultures then onto Zimbabwe and Tanzania as well as visiting many other African countries and islands. A landscape and rural development specialist, now based back in North Canterbury, she has drawn on her sixteen years accumulated regional knowledge and many friendships to create a rare experience of people, animals and fun times.

## Tour Highlights

- 12th and 13th Century Rock Churches of Lalibela
- The "home" of Coffee
- Traditional music and dancing
- Gelada Baboons
- Simien Mountains
- Ancient Cultural Ceremonies
- Giant Lobelias in the Afro - alpine moors
- Royal Castles of Gondar
- Traditional rural lifestyles
- Walk within an Afar tribal compound

From \$13,495<sub>pp</sub> twin share\*

*Adventure Travel*

Life. Time. Experience.



# Your Tour Itinerary

Day 1: Fri 09 May, Depart NZ

Day 2: Sat 10, Arrive Addis Ababa

You are met on arrival in Addis Ababa and transferred to your hotel. The name of the city in Amharic means 'new flower'. Founded in 1886 by Menelik II, it is located at 2,500 m above sea level in one of the highest parts of the Entoto Mountain chain. Eucalyptus and Jacaranda trees adorn this rapidly developing city which is home to interesting museums and one of the largest open-air markets in Africa, known as the "Mercato". This evening we enjoy a vibrant welcome dinner as we are introduced to Ethiopia's stunning traditional dancing and food.

Day 3: Sun 11, City Tour of Addis

Today enjoy a full-day city tour which includes Entoto Mountain, the site from which Menelik the founder of Addis Ababa descended down to the plains. We visit two churches built by Menelik and the National Museum, one of the most important sub-Saharan museums in all of Africa. It is home to the fossilized humanoid Lucy (3.4 millions years old) as well as an amazing collection of artifacts, royal items and art. After a late lunch we visit the Fistula Hospital established in 1974 by the Hamilins, gynaecologists from NZ and Australia, who pioneered the development of Fistula surgery and have established a training hospital.



Painted church of Bahir-Dar

Day 4: Mon 12, Bahir Dar

An early flight to Bahir Dar, one of Ethiopia's most attractive towns, with its palm lined avenues, flamboyant trees and scenic location on the southern shore of Lake Tana. The Lake is the source of the Blue Nile and famous for its many monasteries. Today we travel across the lake to Zeghe peninsula and visit the two Churches of Azuwa Mariam and Ura Kidane Mehirat which is renowned for its wall painting. We drive to the Blue Nile falls some 30km from the town and enjoy a 20 minute walk to view these spectacular falls.

Day 5: Tue 13, Drive to Simien Mountains

We drive to the magnificent Simien Mountain National Park today - a UNESCO World Heritage Site since the late 1960s. This Park presents perhaps the most dramatic scenery in Africa - great volcanic plugs, formed some 40 million years ago. In the Simien, visitors can see the endemic Gelada or bleeding heart baboon, the Wallia Ixex, the Ethiopian Wolf and rock hyrax, and endemic birds such as the Thick billed

Explore the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela



Raven, Black headed Siskin, White Collared Pigeon, Wattled Ibis, White billed Starling, Spot breasted Plover and White backed Black Tit. Cruising Lammergeyers are often seen. The park is also famous for its Afro-Alpine flora, meadows and grasslands punctuated by Giant Lobelia and Red Hot Pokers. Our summit accommodation is at 3260m. It will be cold tonight and tomorrow night.

Day 6: Wed 14, Simien Mountains

Today we drive further along the ridge watching the mists swirl and unfold in the deep chasms. The spectacular scenery of the Park is recognized by UNESCO as a unique wilderness of chasms and high rocky torsi. The yellow Meskel daisy flowers in the spring giving a golden hue to the meadow areas. Weather and altitude acclimatisation permitting we can enjoy walking among the plants that have evolved in isolation atop these high mountains. Relax this afternoon remembering this is high altitude and late afternoon we will return to the ridges to watch the troops of Gelada Baboons feeding before retreating en mass down the cliffs where they sleep each night in safety away from the hyenas.

Day 7: Thu 15, Gondar

Today we visit the Debarq village market before continuing through to Gondar, the capital and commercial center of Ethiopia from the 17th to mid 19th century. It was founded by Emperor Fasildas as his imperial seat in 1636. After lunch we visit the Royal Enclosure or Fasil Gibbi with the castles of Emperors. We then visit the bath of King Fusillades - the pool is now the central stage on which the Timkat or Epiphany festival is celebrated. Finally drive



Watch the Gelada baboons

to Debre Berhane Selassie church, the only church that was saved from Mahdist invasion in the 1880s. The walls and ceiling are completely covered with murals - the angels' faces on the ceiling have become a common motif in Ethiopian design.

Day 8: Fri 16, Fly to Lalibela

Fly to Lalibela and transfer to your hotel. At the end of the 12th and early 13th centuries King Lalibela of the Zaghwe dynasty built a series of rock hewn churches - the New Jerusalem as he called it - now rightly acknowledged to be a UNESCO world heritage site. The first group of six churches we visit lie in rock cradles one behind the other, the largest of which is built like a Greek Temple. In a corner are three empty graves symbolically dug for biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Bet Giyorgis possibly the most elegant of all the Lalibela churches, lies somewhat isolated in the southwest part of the village on a sloping rock terrace and can only be reached via a tunnel. The group of four, south of the Jordan River includes Bet Emanuel with its elaborate exterior which is much praised by art historians.

Day 9: Sat 17, Lalibela

Today we take a picnic lunch and drive across wide plains to visit the cave church of Yemrehane Christos, built by the king of the same name before the reign of King Lalibela. A 20 minute walk takes us to the cave which houses this beautiful Axumite style church with its alternating levels of wood and stone being the finest example of its kind in Ethiopia. We visit a livestock market before returning to Lalibela. This afternoon you can visit the sites which you didn't see on the first day or take a rest.

Day 10: Sun 18, Drive to Kombolcha  
Driving to Kombolcha via Woldiya and Dessie, about 400km, en route you experience vast plateaus to fertile mountain valleys with differing styles of farmhouses. We stop to meet a family who allow us to visit their home. Stopping for lunch and a short walk in a small town before we travel over the mountain to

Dessie for a "buna" (Ethiopian coffee), then onto Kombolcha.

Day 11: Mon 19, Bati Market - Bilen

This morning visit the famous Bati Market which for more than 2 centuries has hosted Ethiopia's largest cattle and camel market. Attracting up to 20,000 people every Monday this is where a variety of ethnic groups from the highland meet with the Afar people. Afar people seem to belong to another Africa altogether: the tall women with their wide plaited hair styles and elaborate ornate jewelry, the tall, proud men strutting with Kalashnikovs slung over their shoulder, and a lethal traditional dagger tucked away in a prominent hide sheath. It will be a hot drive to Bilen arriving mid afternoon and after a short rest we go to meet the Afar tribes as they gather their livestock into the compound for the night.

Day 12: Tue 20, Harar

The medieval walled city of Harar stands amid green mountains, on the east wall of the Great Rift Valley near the Somali border. Harar's heritage is almost entirely Muslim and Oriental; with its 90 mosques and shrines and is considered to be the fourth most sacred centre



*Ethiopian coffee ceremony*

of the Islamic world. Its Islamic character is best expressed in the Grand Mosque (AL JAMI), which dominates the town and is renowned for its intricately worked filigree jewelry of Silver, Gold, and Amber. This evening we visit the most enduring attraction, the "Hyena Man" show.

Day 13: Wed 21, City tour of Harar & drive to Dire Dawa

Exploration of the old Walled town of Harar includes the Harari Museum, Rimbaud House, the 16th century grand Mosque with its elegant

twin towers and slender minaret, the church of Medhane Alem with its traditional religious art works, the tomb of Abu Said and the colourful Shoa Gate Market where one can shop for indigenous handicrafts and jewelry. A short drive this afternoon to Dire Dawa.

Day 14: Thu 22, Flight to Addis Ababa

Before our flight we can visit the colourful Dire Dawa market specializing in local foods and spices. Back in Addis Ababa you can relax at your hotel or visit a coffee factory or perhaps visit the Mercato market.

Day 15: Fri 23, Drive to Bale Mountains

Passing through Nazret a fertile farming valley we leave the busy main road travelling to Asela before we begin the climb up to the Didda Plateau.

This remote region still has its distinctive cultural differences in their style of clothing and houses. The Bale Mountain National Park now has a new road access which allows us to drive across the wide plains and rolling farmlands where many grains are grown. We stop for a walk hoping to find the mountain Nyala, a chocolate coloured deer in the lower forests. Arrive late afternoon.

Day 16: Sat 24, Bale Mountains - Sanetti Plateau

At 3,500-4,500m this wild alpine plateau has been known as "Middle earth" for centuries. It is the largest single expanse of Afro-Alpine moorland with many species of mammals and 260 species of birds. We will watch for the comical giant mole rats as they dive down their burrows and the Ethiopian wolf as they hunt. At this high altitude we walk slowly as we inspect the impressive Giant lobelia with their spires reaching 4-5 metres.

Day 17: Sun 25, Awassa

Departing after breakfast we arrive in Awassa a busy provincial town where the rest of the day is free for a catch up. Buy some personal supplies, have a swim or simply rest.

Day 18: Mon 26, Coffee Estate - Yirga Alem

Down from the plateau we drive along the base of the great East African rift to Yirga Alem, visiting a coffee estate to learn the farming of coffee - which was first found in Ethiopia and is their national pride. Wait until you taste an Ethiopian coffee!

Day 19: Tue 27, Yabello

After breakfast we drive to Yabello; here we observe the Ari and Tsemay tribes with their differing house styles and dress. We are now entering areas newly opened to tourism which already have a well deserved reputation as the "Cultural Garden of Ethiopia".



*Visit an Afar tribal village*

Day 20: Wed 28, Turumi

A morning visit to the singing well of the creator Dumbuk, which supports many thousands of cattle living for miles around. Water is retrieved from the well communally, by a row of up to 50 men who sing and chant as they pass buckets from one another. We then visit the Lake Chew Bet at El Sod, a major source of Salt bars. Later we drive across very dry savannah to Turumi the home area of the beautiful Hamer people.

Day 21 - Thu 29 Kolcho Village -Hamer Village

We take an excursion to Kolcho Village established on the banks of the Omo River to visit some of the Karo people. The Karo excel in face and body painting. In the evening we will visit a Hamer village. The Hamer are a fine looking people; both men and women take great pride in their appearance, shaving and colouring their hair, oiling their bodies and decorating themselves with beads and bracelets worn around arms and legs.

Day 22: Fri 30, Jinka

Driving across the savannah lands to Jinka and into fertile hills near Key Afer, we stop at the Jinka museum for an excellent insight into cultural practices and lifestyles of this Omo area. An optional walk down the hill into Jinka town and opportunity to mingle with the townsfolk where the airstrip is right down the centre of the street - also used as the soccer ground /meeting area, before we reach our Eco accommodation.

Day 23: Sat 31 Mago, National Park - Mursi Tribe - Konso

A early start to our drive across the mountain into Mago National Park gives us a better opportunity to see the small Dik Dik, baboons Colobus monkeys and some bush buck. We drive to the village to meet some of the Mursi tribe known by their body scarification and (among the women) the wearing of lip plates. After lunch we drive through to Konso.

Day 24: Mon 01 June, Konso - Arba Minch  
Today we visit the Konso village and have a meeting with their King, a young man who trained as an engineer but who has returned home to take up his inherited duties. This village is very different as they have remained on this site for many hundreds of years.



*Discover ancient Gondar*



## Tour Itinerary (continued)

The people are known for their intricately terraced hillsides (recognized and acknowledged by UNESCO as a sustainable farming system), fine woven materials, layered dresses and the carved totems with which they decorate their graves. This afternoon we drive to Arba Minch taking time to enjoy the boat trip on Lake Chamo where we view large numbers of hippos and crocodiles at very close range. The place known as "Azo-Gebeya" meaning Crocodile Market offers one of Africa's most impressive displays of big crocs. Then continue a short drive to Arba Minch.

Day 25: Tue 02, Chencha - Lake Langano  
On our journey back we visit the home of the Dorze people in the Chencha mountains, renowned cotton weavers whose tall beehive-shaped dwellings are among the most distinctive traditional structures to be seen anywhere in Africa. Their main food source is the false banana. The shama cloth produced around Chencha is regarded to be the finest in



Lip plates of the Mursi

Ethiopia: plain white gabbi robes and brightly coloured scarf-like netalas are sold, great shopping. Tonight we stay at the Italian lodge on the shores of Lake Langano.

Day 26: Wed 03, Addis Ababa  
Our final full day in Ethiopia, we drive from Lake Langano across to the Tiya prehistoric site; classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage, these stellas are believed to have been erected between the 12th and 14th centuries. Arriving in Addis in the afternoon.

Day 27: Thu 04, Flights home  
Morning for final shopping/exploring around Addis Ababa or relaxing before we head out to the airport. Time to say goodbye to Sue before catching your early afternoon flight home.

## Tour inclusions

- Economy class airfares from CHCH or AKL flying Emirates
- Tour Escort ex CHCH
- 20 Breakfasts, 14 Lunches, 16 Dinners
- All National Park fees & Guides
- All mentioned transport (including internal flights, ferry) and activities
- 25 Nights accommodation as detailed

Not included: Visas, travel insurance (compulsory), drinks and items of a personal nature.

Want to enjoy more of Africa? This tour can be combined with our 2014 Swahili Safari Tour escorted by Sue Verrall in June. Ask us for details.

To secure your place: Send your \$2,500 non-refundable deposit per person with completed Booking Form to Adventure Travel. For more details and to book: Phone: 03 364 3400 or 0800 747 737, E-mail: advchc@hotmail.co.nz, Mail: PO Box 2477, Christchurch

## About Adventure Travel

We are the premier boutique travel agency within the House of Travel Group; we are New Zealand owned and operated. Specializing in travel to far-flung places, we have travelled extensively around Africa and we return regularly to ensure our knowledge is current. We aim to experience those places through your eyes, and then return with our knowledge and passion to share with you. Consequently, we like to think our clients come back home with the stories that everyone else misses; our goal is to genuinely connect you with the location and its culture.

We are very proud to be working with Sue to bring you this amazing journey to a destination that was "home" for Sue. Our clients adore Sue's expertise and local knowledge - a combination that makes for a great experience.

## Explore Ethiopia's rich history and culture



\*CONDITIONS: Price - The price of \$13,495 per person is based on twin share. Single Supplement - For those travellers wanting their own room, the tour price is NZD\$14,795pp. Land Only Price - Should you wish to combine Africa with Europe or extend elsewhere in Africa, eg to see the Mountain Gorillas, please talk to us, we are happy to provide a land only price and airfare and pre or post tour arrangements. Business Class Supplement available on request. Please check with Adventure Travel. Payments - The price quoted is for payment by cash, cheque or direct bank transfer. Cheques: Should be made payable to 'Adventure Travel'. Our postal address is PO Box 2477, Christchurch. Bank Transfer: 06 0801 0495605 02 - House of Travel On Oxford Ltd, using 'Ethiopia' as a reference. VISA or Mastercard payments will incur a 2% convenience fee and American Express a 3% fee. Deposit: In order to confirm your booking, a non-refundable deposit of NZD\$2,500 per person is required. An airfare component of approximately \$3,000 may be required to be paid in 2013 on confirmation of group numbers. Final payment will be due no later than 15 February 2014. Prices are based on a minimum group size of 10 (maximum 20). Should the group size be less than 10, a small group surcharge will be applied. Pricing is based on an exchange rate of USD\$1 = NZD\$0.84 and we reserve the right to apply a currency surcharge should the NZ Dollar weaken significantly against the US Dollar before final payment is due.

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