



OMO TOURS AND CAR RENT

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Tour Code: OTE-4004
Duration: 13days 12night
Tour Title: History & Nature With Maskel Festival

Day1. Arrival to Addis Ababa and transfer to hotel.

Day2. In the morning, sightseeing tour of Addis Ababa that includes: **The National museum, Ethnographic museum and Merkato** /The largest open air market in Africa/. Late in the afternoon, drive to the great Meskel Square where the colorful Meskel festival takes place. In this festival, processions of finely dressed priests and locals celebrate the finding of the 'True Cross' with songs and dances around an enormous bonfire. **Overnight Hotel**

Day3. After breakfast in the hotel, start driving 304 km north of Addis Ababa to Debre Markos visiting the Debre Libanos Monastery (13th century AD), which is the largest monastery in the country. You will have picnic lunch around the 'Portuguese Bridge' where you have a chance to encounter one of the endemic mammals of Ethiopia – the Gelada Baboon or the bleeding heart baboon. Cross the Blue Nile Gorge, which is comparable with the American Grand Canyon, and further drive to the city of Debre Markos for overnight. **Overnight Hotel**

Day4. In the morning, drive 250 km to Bahir Dar, a town on the shore of Lake Tana; the largest lake in Ethiopia (3,600km). Lake Tana is home to thirty-seven islands, of which twenty shelter churches of significant historical and cultural interest. After lunch, drive 32 km south of Bahir Dar to Tis Isat to visit the famous Blue Nile Falls. It is locally known as Tis Isat which means Smoke of fire. Then, drive back to Bahir Dar and enjoy walking and bird watching around Lake Tana. **Overnight Hotel**

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Day5. In the morning, have a remarkable boat trip on Lake Tana to visit the island monasteries of Ura Kidane Mihret (16th century AD) and Azwa Mariam (16th century AD). These monasteries are decorated with frescos, elaborate painted ceilings, church crosses, crowns and attires of former Ethiopian kings and emperors. Then, after lunch at your hotel, drive 185 km to Gondar which was the capital of Ethiopia in the 17th and 18th centuries. Overnight Hotel

Day6. After breakfast, sightseeing tour of Gondar which includes:- The “ROYAL COMPOUND” with many majestic castles constructed in the European middle age architectural style, Bath of Fasiledes- (bathing palace): it stands in a rectangular, neatly walled depression, which is filled with water once a year for the Timkat (EPIPHANY) celebrations, and, though popularly referred to as a ‘bathing palace’ and the finest of the Gonderian churches of Debre Birhan Sillassie or ‘Trinity at the mount of light’. It was built during the reign of Emperor Iyasu (1682-1706). Overnight Hotel

Day7. After breakfast, drive to Debarq visiting the Felasha village. Trek in Semien mountain National park to visit the endemic Gelada baboon and admire the beautiful landscape. Overnight Lodge

Day8. Morning, make an Excursion trip to Chenek for spotting the endemic and rarest animal, Walia Ibex. Have a picnic from the hotel and enjoy the awesome landscape with magnificent scenery near by the camping site. Late in the afternoon drive back to the Lodge. Overnight Lodge

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Day9. After an early breakfast, drive to Axum through the western side of Simien Mountains National Park and crossing the Tekeze River Gorge. Overnight Hotel

Day10. Sightseeing tour of Axum which is the ancient capital of Ethiopia. This day, visit the Archeological museum of Axum, the Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion which is believed to be the last resting place of the Original Ark of the Covenant, and in the afternoon visit the famous 'Stele field' (4th Century AD and UNESCO World Heritage Site, the ruin palace and tomb of King Kaleb and King Gebre Maskel (5th and 6th Century AD) and the residence of the legendary Queen of Sheba (9th century BC). Overnight Hotel

Day11. After breakfast, transfer in to airport for your flight to Lalibela which is home to the 12th century hand carved rock churches of King Lalibela (1181 - 1221) whom the town is named after. After lunch in your hotel, visit the first group churches of Lalibela (UNESCO World Heritage Site) which are found northeast of a stream named 'River Jordan'.

Day12. In the morning, make a mule ride to the hill top semi monolithic church of Asheten Mariam (13th Century AD). The peak of the hill offers a wonderful viewpoint to have bird eye view of the surrounding area including the town of Lalibela. For those participants not interested in the mule ride, an alternative excursion to Na'akuto Leab cave church will be organized. In the afternoon, visit the second and the third group of churches of Lalibela.

Day13. Transfer to Lalibela air port to fly back to Addis Ababa, and have a last minute shopping and city tour of the city. Evening departure

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