



HEIMAT

T O U R S



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ETHIOPIA

LAND OF ORIGINS

Ethiopia situated between the Red Sea and the Great African Rift Valley almost centrally between the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator. Ethiopia is the place where Lucy (Dinkinesh), walked and a country of great antiquity, beauty, complexity and also home of coffee. Ethiopia was one of the first countries in the world to adopt Christianity and the only state to survive the European Scramble for Africa, had in fact become a beacon of freedom for the Black World. The country is a land with immense geographical contrast. High mountains (which in the Simien region tower over 4620m), give way to flat lowlands that in the Afar or Danakil depression, to the north-east, actually sink 116 below sea level, also described as the hottest place in the world.



ETHIOPIA

HISTORIC ROUTE

Yeha

In the early 1st millennium BC some aspects of culture, such as architecture and art as well as script, language, religion and the form of governance can be observed in numerous settlements in northern Ethiopia and south-eastern Eritrea. In Yeha in the highlands of the province of Tigray developed a polity called Di'amat. Monumental buildings such as temples and palaces were erected, extraordinary handicrafts were produced, and artistic works were created. The inhabitants lived in multi-storied houses, and they buried their dead in shaft graves.



Aksum

The ancient city of Aksum has been described as the historic centre of Ethiopian civilization. Queen of Sheba and her son Menelik the first once ruled here. Aksum was moreover a great commercial empire, trading with countries as far as Arabia, Egypt, Persia, India, and Ceylon, and producing its own currency of gold, silver and bronze. The beautifully carved obelisks of Aksum, which were obviously produced by exceedingly skilled craftsmen, are decorated with elaborate doors and windows, as well as beam-ends (referred to by the scholars as “monkey-heads”) reminiscent of those in the stone and wooden buildings of ancient Aksumite palaces and other buildings.



Lalibela

Tradition claims that, shortly after his birth, he was surrounded by a swarm of bees, seeing this, his mother, seized by the spirit of prophecy, cried out, “The bees know that this child will become king!” He was accordingly given the name Lalibela, literally, “The Bees Recognizes his Sovereignty”. Lalibela was the capital of the Zagwe Dynasty, which ruled over Ethiopia from the 10th century to the mid 13th century. In 12th century king Lalibela established a remarkable group of eleven churches. The churches are big— several are in excess of 10m high and, because they are carved below ground level, they are ringed by trenches and courtyards, the sides of which are cut into with stone graves and hermit cell, and connected to each other by a tangled maze of tunnels and passages.

Harar

According to Ethiopian Muslims, after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, Harar used to be the fourth holy city of Islam. It still is a center of Islamic study and devotion. In the ancient walled city, 82 mosques can be found. It has 102, often centuries-old shrines, in which outstanding Muslims are buried. It was a stopover for caravans that were on their way from the Red Sea to the interior of the country and the continent. The dromedaries transported ivory, coffee, tobacco, and slaves were also taken. Jugol, the city wall, was constructed by the 42nd Amir of the 72, that ruled Harar, Amir Nur, between 1559 and 1567.



Gondar

The city of Gondar was founded in 1632 by Emperor Fasilidas, the city served as the imperial capital for 250 years. Gondar is best known for its 17th century castles and palaces, often described as the Camelot of Africa. More than 44 churches were located in Gondar. Most of them were destroyed in 1888, during an attack by Muslims from Sudan, but a miracle of miracles the greatest pearl was saved: Debre Berhan Selassie, the church of the Enlightened Trinity. Inside, the colorful ceiling full of faces immediately draws the attention. The large, almond- shape eyes do not let you go.



CULTURAL ROUTE



Mursi

Mursi People live between the Omo River and the Mago River, they are approximately eight thousand. When a Mursi girl comes of age, a cut is made between her lower lip and mouth, and as time goes by, the hole created widens, until there is enough space for a clay disc to be placed inside. The same is done to her earlobes. The larger the clay dish, the greater her value at the marriage market. Traditionally a man can only marry after he has won a donga, a fight in which two men painted white fly at each other, each a two meter long pole. Marriageable women decide amongst themselves which of them will marry the victory.



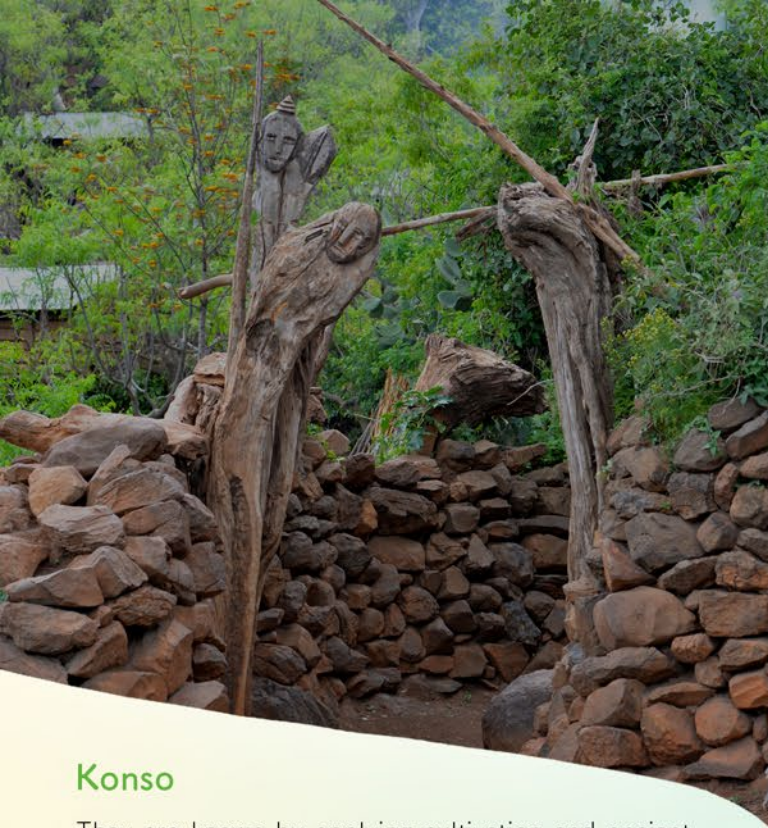
Daasanach

The approximately fifty thousand Daasanach consists in several smaller groups. Their land borders the Omo River, a few of them live in Kenya and Sudan. They dwell in huts around a community cattle corral.



Hamer

The Hamar lives between Konso and the more southern Lake Turkana and Lake Chew Bahir. Their population is estimated fifty thousand. They are the most richly decorated people of Ethiopia with their clothes, hairdo and embellishments. Women go dressed in goatskin aprons; they leave their breast bare or cover them with a piece of goatskin.



Konso

They are known by applying cultivation and ancient techniques alternating crop patterns, irrigation and terracing. Throughout the centuries they have always built kilometers of terraces against the hill slopes to enlarge their cultivating area. In the past the Konso built walls around their villages as protection against wild animals and enemies.



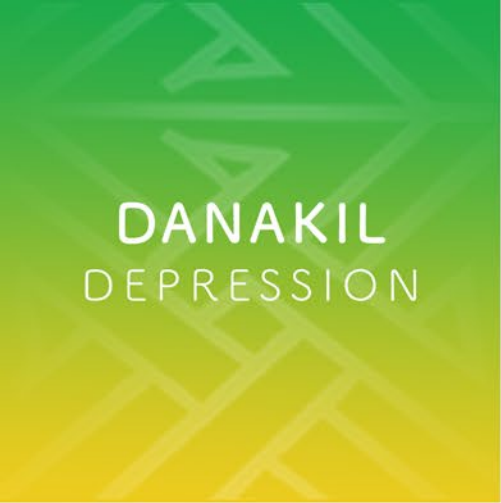
Dorze

The Dorze live at an altitude of 2,900 meters. The houses are beehive-shaped. They are entirely constructed from organic material, particularly bamboo, they remain fit to live in for forty years. The Dorze are the best weavers in Ethiopia, they travel throughout the whole country with their mule-drawn carts to sell their textiles. Women make a bread called "enset" from false banana trees. It is a tradition staple crop in this part of the country and its roots, trunk and leaf are used intensively.

FESTIVALS



Ethiopia has a number of festivals throughout the year. Enkutatsh is the Ethiopian New Year, on September 11. Same month on 27th is the festival of Meskal, which celebrates the finding of the true cross by St. Helena, the wife of Constantine the Great. Ethiopia's most celebrate festival is Timkat, the Epiphany, on January 19. The holy Tabot, a replica of the Ark of the Covenant, is removed from each church around the country where the ceremony will take place.



DANAKIL DEPRESSION



Danakil Depression is one of the earth's hottest and most inhospitable places. Parts are more than 116 meters below sea level and noon-time temperatures soar to above 50°. After the Rift opened, much of this area was flooded by the in-rushing waters of the Red Sea, a flood that was subsequently stemmed by fresh volcanic activity that raised barriers of basaltic lava. The dramatic and colorful geological formations caused by the hot springs rich in sulfur, potash, and salt. Erta'Ale is one of the main attractions of the Danakil Depression, and it is one of the few volcanoes in the world that has almost persistent lava lake.

ETHIOPIA

QUICK FACTS



Location:

Situated between the Red Sea and the Great African Rift Valley, on the eastern flank of Africa, facing Arabia, bordering Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, and Sudan.

Capital:

Addis Ababa was settled in 1886 and christened by Queen Taytu, consort of Emperor Menilik II.

Government:

Ethiopia is an independent republic operating under the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The President is the head of state, while the Prime minister is the head of government.

Currency:

Birr. Exchange rates: US\$1= 28.20 Birr, Euro 1=32.10 Birr. (January 2019)

Area:

1,133,380 million sq km (437,600 sq mi).

Population:

The population estimated to be 100 Million. Approximately 28% are under the age of 14 and almost half are under 35.

Language:

82 languages and 200 dialects are spoken. They can be subdivided into four language families: Cushitic Hamitic – Semitic Hamitic- Omotic and Nilotic. The most widely spoken are Oromifa, Amharic (official language), Tigrigna and Somali.

Religion:

45% Ethiopian Orthodox, 34% Islamic, 18% Protestant and 3% are indigenous religion.

Communications:

Country Code: +251, fax and internet services are available at every city. Most hotels, restaurants and cafeterias are also providing Wi-Fi services.

Time and Calendar:

Ethiopia is in the GMT + 3 hours time zone. Ethiopia follows the Julian calendar, which consists of 12 months of 30 days each and a 13th month's of 5 or 6 days (in leap year).

Climate:

The climate of Ethiopia varies mainly according to elevation. The principal rain season occurs between mid-June and September, followed by a dry season that may be interrupted in February or March by a short rain season.

Endemic Mammals and Birds:

There are 284 species of mammals of which 31 are endemic and 7 are large mammals. Gelada Baboon, Starck's Hair, Giant Mole Rat, Abyssinian Wolf, Menilik's Bush Buck, Mountain Nyala, Swaynes Hartbeest, Walia Ibex, Wild Ass among others. There are 861 species of Birds of which 17 are endemic to Ethiopia.



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