

DENVER - AXUM SISTER CITIES  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
AURORA – ADAMA SISTER CITIES  
PRESENT

# 2017 ETHIOPIAN TOUR



Sept. 25 – Oct. 9, 2017

# ITINERARY

**Sept. 25:** Arrive Addis Ababa. *In'quan dehna metah* and "Welcome to Ethiopia". Our local tour agency, FK Tours, will be on hand to transport you to the hotel. Day free for altitude adjustment and relaxation after our long flight. Evening welcome dinner for everyone on the tour. (Hotel rooms will be included for participants arriving in Addis Ababa the previous evening. Passengers arriving from Los Angeles the morning of Sept. 24 will have to purchase an extra night.)

**Sept. 26:** Today Ethiopia celebrates the festival of Meskel, which commemorates the finding of the True Cross in the Fourth Century. Addis Ababa marks the holiday with a colorful parade of floats, music, and religious pageantry that culminates in the lighting of a huge bonfire. We will take in all the festivities from a special VIP viewing stand in Meskel Square. This will be an unforgettable day!

**Sept. 27:** This morning fly to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Lalibela, perhaps the most memorable stop on the historical circuit. Here, 11 unique rock-hewn churches were carved into the rugged mountainsides. Enjoy an afternoon excursion to the first group of the 11 rock churches.

**Sept. 28:** Mule trip through the countryside to the ancient Asheton Mariam monastery, with return by car. In the afternoon, visit the second group of the 11 rock churches.

**Sept. 29:** Fly to Axum, the epicenter of Ethiopian Christianity. Afternoon visit to the Obelisk Park. The seven granite stelae, the tallest rising to 108 ft., mark the royal cemetery where the tombs of kings are still being excavated. The stelae imitate multi-storied palaces and are decorated with carved doors, windows and beams. We will visit the excavations and explore the tombs.

**Sept. 30:** Visit Yeha, the 2,500 year-old ruins of a Sabaeen city. The 40 ft. high stone temple, which now encloses a church, is inscribed with Sabaeen inscriptions and reliefs of ibexes. Judaic relics and historical artifacts are housed here. Drive back to Axum via Adawa, site of King Menelik II's 1896 victory over the Italians that preserved Ethiopia from colonial occupation.

**Oct. 1:** Morning tour includes Axum's museum, widely rated as Ethiopia's best; the outside of the chapel where the Ark of the Covenant is said to have been housed for some 3,000 years; and the 17th century Maryam TSION Cathedral (unfortunately closed to women), the holiest church in Ethiopia. Sister city visits this afternoon for the Denver-Axum committee members. For our other tour participants, why not spend the afternoon at leisure visiting some of the local shops for exquisite locally made clothing, jewelry, and handicrafts.

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**OPTIONAL ROUTINGS BEGIN**  
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## ADAMA SISTER CITIES ITINERARY: OPTION 1

**Oct. 2:** Morning flight to Addis Ababa and drive on the new four lane toll highway to Adama, a showplace of the nation's transformation to modernity.

**Oct. 3:** Adama sightseeing, including visits to the Wonji Sugar Factory, the local train station of the new, Chinese-built Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, and the Oromo Parliament Building, symbolic of Ethiopia's recognition of formerly ignored ethnic groups.

**Oct. 4:** A morning of Sister City visits for our Aurora-Adama Sister City committee members. Leisure time for everyone else. This afternoon a relaxing and refreshing visit to the Sodere Hot Springs.

**Oct. 5:** Adama-Lake Langano and an afternoon at leisure.

**Oct. 6:** Lake Langano is a popular destination for Ethiopians and international tourist alike, famous for its variety of birds and other wildlife. Our wildlife viewing excursion will include both land visits and a boat trip on the lake itself.

## AXUM-HISTORIC ROUTE: OPTION 2

**Oct. 2:** Today the long but rewarding drive from Axum to Gondar, the former royal capital of Ethiopia. The drive cuts through the impressive Simien Mountains, the 'roof of Africa'. This is Ethiopia's most mountainous region filled with spectacular scenery and gorgeous views. Hopefully we will encounter birds and game like the Gelada Baboon, Walya ibex, and the Simien fox, animals found nowhere else in the world.

**Oct. 3:** Gondar is the former royal capital of the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, embodied in the castles of the Royal Compound, which led to its name the "Camelot of Africa". Explore the castles and visit the Debre Berhan Selassie church.

**Oct. 4:** Today our Gondar Sister Cities committee member will visit their local counterparts. This will be a leisure day for the other participants. FK Tours will offer an optional opportunity to visit the Ethiopian Jews ("*Bete Israel*"), remains of a once larger community many of whom have now emigrated to Israel.

**Oct. 5:** Fly to Bahir Dar on Lake Tana, source of the Blue Nile River and an area known for its island monasteries. Boat trip on Lake Tana to visit these ancient monasteries.

**Oct. 6:** Excursion to the Blue Nile Falls. Great birding en route. Cross a 17<sup>th</sup>-century bridge built by artisans sent to Ethiopia from Portuguese India. Return across the Blue Nile River by *tankwa*, a traditional Ethiopian reed boat. After lunch, a guided visit of Bahir Dar town.

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## OPTIONAL ROUTINGS REUNITE

  
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**Oct. 7:** Return to Addis Ababa from Bahir Dar and Lake Langano. This afternoon Our FK hosts will offer a program of optional sightseeing activities, including a visit to the sprawling Merkato, the largest open air market in Africa. This evening enjoy a traditional Ethiopian dinner followed by colorful folkloric singing and dancing highlighting Ethiopia's cultural diversity.

**Oct. 8:** Full day city tour of Addis Ababa: Menelik's Mausoleum; National Archaeological Museum; a drive to Mount Entoto for a breathtaking view of the capital and a visit to Emperor Menelik II's palace and the Entoto Mariam Church.

**Oct. 9:** A day at leisure. This evening a transfer to the airport for late departures to Washington and Los Angeles. Our companions remaining in Ethiopia will be leaving us today. Morning arrivals Oct. 10 in the United States.

## **COST**

Land: \$2,770 Axum-Adama Sister Cities Itinerary: Option 1

\$2,930 Axum-Historic Route: Option 2

In-country air: \$188 if arriving on Ethiopian Airlines

\$544 if arriving on any other airline

Tour participants must choose one option; it is not possible to do both. Prices are per person based on double occupancy. Prices include:

- All transfers to/from airports in Ethiopia
- Hotels including all taxes and fees
- Three meals each day (only two meals on Sept. 26 and Oct. 9)
- All ground transportation by bus
- Expert English speaking guides throughout the tour
- All taxes and service charges
- Porters' fees, tips to waiters, drivers and guides
- All activities named in the tour description
- All entrance fees
- \$200 tax deductible donation to the Axum Sister City Projects Fund

Not Included: Drinks, telephone calls, laundry, personal items purchased, excess baggage fees, vaccinations and medications, passport/visa fees.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Payments: A \$250 deposit is due at time of booking. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure. Payments may be by personal check or credit card (with additional 3.2% premium).

Travel Insurance: Medical facilities are very limited. Tour participants are urged to purchase travel insurance that covers medical and hospital expense and also includes medical evacuation when necessary.

Cancellations: Cancellations received 90 days or more prior to departure, \$100 per person. 89-60 days: 25% of the tour price; 59-45 days: 50% of the tour price; 44-31 days: 75% of the tour price; 30 days or less: 100% of the tour price. Tour participants are strongly advised to purchase tour cancellation insurance that covers cancellation for any reason.

Single passengers: Single passengers may be accommodated with payment of a single supplement. Please phone for details.

Extra nights in Addis Ababa: Available before and after the tour at \$75 per person (double) per night. Especially recommended for passengers arriving in Addis Ababa the morning of Sept. 24.

Air connections: Passengers are responsible for making their own way Addis Ababa. Tour managers are not responsible for failure to take tour flights or for missed activities.

Required Documentation: United States citizens are required to have a visa to enter Ethiopia. Passengers are responsible for compliance with all medical and passport/visa requirements for entering Ethiopia. Please visit the Ethiopian embassy website for up-to-date requirements.

**For more information contact:**

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