



Djibouti

POP 906,000

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Best Places to Eat

- ✦ Restaurant-Café de la Gare (p559)
- ✦ Restaurant Saba (p559)
- ✦ Mukbassa Central – Chez Youssouf (p559)

Best Places to Stay

- ✦ Le Héron Auberge (p558)
- ✦ Sheraton Djibouti Hotel (p559)
- ✦ Campement Touristique d'Asbole (p561)
- ✦ Campement Touristique de Bankoualé (p562)
- ✦ Plage des Sables Blancs Campement (p563)

Why Go?

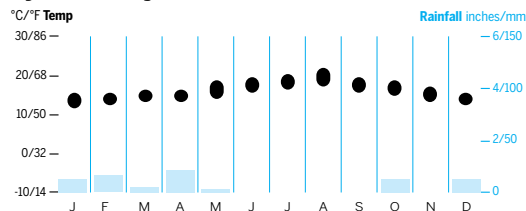
This tiny speck of a country packs a big punch. What it lacks in size, it more than makes up for in beauty, especially if you're a fan of geological oddities. Few countries in the world, with the possible exception of Iceland, offer such weird landscapes – think salt lakes, extinct volcanoes, sunken plains, limestone chimneys belching out puffs of steam, basaltic plateaus and majestic canyons. Outdoor adventure comes in many forms, with superb hiking, diving and kitesurfing – not to mention snorkelling alongside whale sharks in the Gulf of Tadjoura.

Barring Djibouti City, the country is refreshingly void of large-scale development. It's all about ecotravel, with some great sustainable stays in the hinterland that provide a fascinating glimpse into rural life.

Travelling independently around Djibouti may not come cheap, but despite the high cost of living you'll surely leave this little corner of Africa with new experiences and wonderful memories.

When to Go

Djibouti City



May–Sep You'll swelter under average daily temperatures of about 40°C.

Oct & Feb–Apr The shoulder seasons are not a bad time to visit, especially in the Goda Mountains.

Nov–Jan Ideal time to visit. Perfect for outdoor activities. Whale sharks make their annual appearance.

DJIBOUTI CITY

POP 600,000

Djibouti City is evolving at a fast pace, and there's a palpable sense of change in the air. Today's forward-looking city is vastly different from the battered French outpost to which it was reduced in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet under its veneer of urban bustle, the city remains a down-to-earth place, with jarring cultural and social combinations. Traditionally robed Afar tribesmen, stalwart GIs, sensuous Somali ladies and

frazzled businessmen with the latest mobile phones stuck to their ears all jostle side by side.

Djibouti City boasts good infrastructure, including hotels, bars, clubs and restaurants.

Sights

Djibouti City is big on atmosphere but short on sights. The European Quarter, with its whitewashed houses and Moorish arcades, is a strange mix of Arab and European. To



Djibouti Highlights

- 1 Catch local vibes while wandering through the animated streets of **Djibouti City** (p555).
- 2 Dive or snorkel around **Moucha Island** (p560).
- 3 Get up close and personal with (harmless) **whale sharks** (p557).
- 4 Unwind on picture-perfect **Plage des Sables Blancs** (p563).
- 5 Descend to the lowest point on the African continent, 150m below sea level, at **Lac Assal** (p561).
- 6 Wander flabbergasted in a Martian landscape at **Lac Abbé** (p561).