



# Somaliland

POP 3.5 MILLION

## Includes ➔

Hargeisa .....	657
Around Somaliland ...	660
Las Geel .....	660
Berbera .....	661
Burao .....	662
Understand Somaliland .....	663
History .....	663
Survival Guide .....	664

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Summer Time Restaurant (p659)
- ➔ Saba (p659)
- ➔ Kulan Art Cafe (p659)
- ➔ Shamaxle Restaurant (p663)

## Best Places to Stay

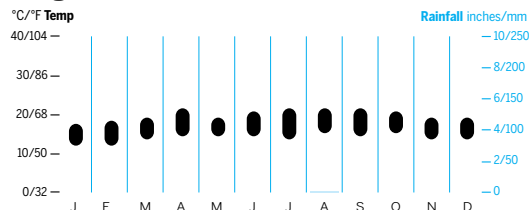
- ➔ Ambassador Hotel Hargeisa (p658)
- ➔ Oriental Hotel (p658)
- ➔ City Plaza Hotel (p662)
- ➔ Maan-Soor Hotel (p658)

## Why Go?

While Puntland and Somalia have been sliding towards the abyss and are absolute no-go zones for all Westerners, the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland has, like a phoenix, risen from the ashes by restoring law and order within its boundaries. It's slowly emerging as a potential destination for adventurous travellers, with plenty of wonderful surprises. Admire some exceptional rock paintings, feel the pulse of the fast-growing capital, walk along deserted beaches, visit bustling market towns and be awed by stunning landscapes – wherever you go, you'll feel like a pioneer. Its tourist infrastructure is still embryonic but it's this sense of pushing Africa's secret door ajar that makes Somaliland one of the most weirdly fascinating countries you could hope to visit right now. Even if you can't get a cold beer.

## When to Go

### Hargeisa



**Dec–Mar** Best weather: very few rains and cool temperatures.

**Apr–Sep** Rain in April, May and September makes travel tough. July and August are oppressively hot.

**Oct & Nov** Weather is mixed, but temperatures make shoulder season a good travel time.

# HARGEISA

POP 1.2 MILLION

You'll never forget your first impression of Hargeisa. Sure, the capital of Somaliland still bears the scars of the civil war that destroyed the country in the past decades, but it's a city in transition. The streets are alive, the roads are busy, and the air thick with a very bearable cacophony of vehicle horns and calls to prayer. And it's surprising to see that Hargeisa has all the conveniences a traveller could hope for: good-value hotels with English-speaking staff, a couple of tasty restaurants, internet cafes, electronics stores, tea shops, markets, bus stations, taxis...but no alcohol, and absolutely no nightlife.

Hargeisa lacks standout sights but if you like your markets colourful and clamorous, and enjoy the feeling of being the only tourist wandering its streets, you might just find it appealing.

## Sights

Let's be frank: the ambience and the sense of exploration are the pull here. Visually, Hargeisa is fairly underwhelming, with nothing much of interest except perhaps the city's

war memorial – a Somali Air Force **MiG jet** (Independence Rd) – and the imposing **Jama Mosque** (Independence Rd).

## Central Market

MARKET

(off Independence Rd) Hargeisa's centrepiece, the expansive central market is a wonderful (and largely hassle-free) place to experience a typical Somali market. Its lanes hide everything from perfume to household objects, electronic goods, wind-up radios and clothes. The food vendors have some of the most fascinating displays – think pyramids of colourful fruits and vegetables.

## Livestock Market

MARKET

(☉daily) An essential part of the Hargeisa experience is the livestock market, which lies on the outskirts of town. It's a fascinating place to wander. Always ask permission before taking photographs.

## Sleeping

### Hadhwanaag

HOTEL \$

(☏ 521820; s/d US\$10/15) As far as Hargeisa prices go, the Hadhwanaag is good value. The low-slung building occupies a leafy compound, a five-minute walk away from



## Somaliland Highlights

- 1 Dream of purchasing your own ship of the desert at the livestock market in **Hargeisa** (p657).
- 2 Visit one of the world's

- finest open-air galleries of prehistoric rock art at **Las Geel** (p660).
- 3 Nurse a soft drink, feast on fresh fish and relax

- on deserted beaches in **Berbera** (p661).
- 4 Immerse yourself in the bustling provincial town of **Burao** (p662).