



Eritrea

POP 5.87 MILLION / 291

Includes ➔

Asmara.....	567
Keren.....	572
Massawa.....	573
Understand Eritrea	575
Survival Guide.....	576

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Sallam Restaurant (p573)
- ➔ Napoli Pizzeria (p571)
- ➔ Hamasien Restaurant (p571)
- ➔ American Bar (p571)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Albergo Italia (p570)
- ➔ Grand Hotel Dahlak (p573)
- ➔ Africa Pension Hotel (p570)

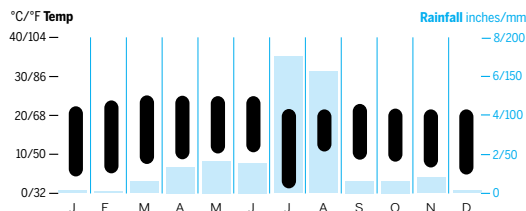
Why Go?

Historically intriguing, culturally compelling and scenically inspiring, Eritrea is one of the most secretive countries in Africa. For those with a hankering for off-the-beaten-track places, it offers challenges and excitement alike, with a unique blend of natural and cultural highlights.

Eritrea wows visitors with its scenery, from the quintessentially Abyssinian landscapes – escarpments, plateaus and soaring peaks – to the deserted and desertified beaches of the Red Sea coast. Culturally, Eritrea is a melting pot. It might be a tiny country by Africa's standards, but it hosts a kaleidoscopic range of ethnic groups. It also features a superb array of archaeological sites that tell volumes of history. The cherry on top is Asmara, Eritrea's delightful capital and a whimsical art deco city. Despite the tough political and economic situation, and the odd travel restrictions, this country remains one of the most inspiring destinations in Africa, particularly for travellers that want something a little different.

When to Go

Asmara



Jan Followers of the Orthodox church celebrate Christmas (7th) and Epiphany (19th) in the highlands.

May Eritreans take to the streets in celebration of Independence Day on the 24th.

Sep Sombre celebrations mark the anniversary of the beginning of the War for Independence on the 1st.

ASMARA

POP 805,000 / 01 / ELEV 2347M

An unexpectedly delightful capital city, Asmara is dotted with art deco and modernist architecture, authentic street-front coffee shops that make for prime people-watching, and sobering testaments to the many difficult

years of fighting in the lead up to, and ensuing years since, independence. Also, as long as travel restrictions remain in place for the rest of the country, Asmara offers the most freedom to travellers, with anywhere within 25km of the city fair game for exploration without needing to apply for travel permits.



Eritrea Highlights

1 Art Deco Architecture (p572) Discovering Asmara's dazzling collection of colonial-era architectural wonders.

2 Massawa Old Town (p573) Exploring the ruined alleyways and faded-glory buildings of this historic coastal town, which suffered heavy bombing at

the tail end of the War for Independence.

3 Keren Camel Market (p572) Soaking up the languid atmosphere of Eritrea's beguiling and multicultural second city, and joining the weekly walk out to haggle for camels and other livestock on the edge of town.

4 Tank Graveyard (p569) Getting a first-hand look at the devastation wrought by decades of war at this military-hardware dumping ground on the outskirts of the capital.

5 Qohaito (p573) Speculating on Eritrea's mysterious past at these enigmatic ruins on an old Aksumite trade route.