



Western Ethiopia

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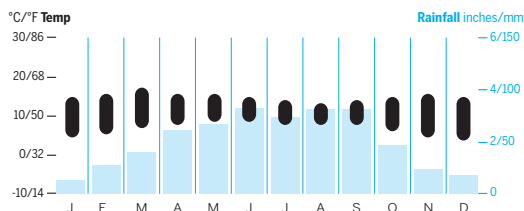
Why Go?

Western Ethiopia is undisturbed and seldom visited, yet it's one of the most beautiful regions in Ethiopia. Rain forests, coffee plantations and muddy agricultural towns share the landscape with savannah grasslands, wildlife-infested swamps and high plateaus carpeted in fields of tef (an indigenous grass cultivated as a cereal).

As impressive as the scenery is, it's the ethnic diversity that is the real attraction: white-robed highlanders flock to churches; Surmi women with giant lip plates and men painted white like spirits of the night patrol the lowlands; and, on the South Sudan border, ritually scarred Nuer peoples stride across the grasslands with their long-horned cattle. The Anuak peoples of the Gambela region believe that to continue travelling west is to fall off the edge of the world. The Anuak are wrong on this score: the world doesn't end in western Ethiopia, it just feels that way.

When to Go

Jimma



Jan–Mar Huge numbers of antelope move through Gambela National Park.

Oct–Nov Meskel flowers bloom: the countryside glows green and yellow.

Dec–Mar The dry season is the easiest time to get to southwest Omo Valley.

