



# Ethiopia & Djibouti



Jean-Bernard Carillet, Anthony Ham

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Ethiopia & Djibouti .....	4
Ethiopia & Djibouti Map .....	6
Ethiopia & Djibouti's Top 14 .....	8
Need to Know .....	16
If You Like.....	18
Month by Month .....	21
Itineraries .....	23
Regions at a Glance.....	27

## ON THE ROAD

<b>ADDIS ABABA.....</b>	<b>30</b>
History .....	32
Sights .....	32
Activities .....	42
Tours.....	42
Courses .....	42
Festivals & Events .....	42
Sleeping.....	43
Eating .....	50
Drinking & Nightlife.....	54
Entertainment.....	56
Shopping .....	57
Information .....	58
Getting There & Away .....	59
Getting Around.....	61

## SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA..... 133

Butajira .....	136
Hosaina .....	136
Sodo .....	137
<b>Rift Valley Lakes.....</b>	<b>138</b>
Lake Ziway.....	138
Lake Langano .....	139
Abiata-Shala Lakes National Park .....	139
Shashemene .....	140
Awasa .....	142
Lephis.....	145

## Bale Mountains..... 146

Dodola .....	146
Bale Mountains National Park .....	147
Dola-Mena .....	152

## South to Kenya..... 153

Dilla .....	153
Yabelo .....	154
Borana National Park – Yabelo Wildlife Sanctuary .....	155
Moyale .....	155

## Arba Minch & Around..... 156

Arba Minch .....	156
Nechisar National Park .....	159
Dorze .....	161
Konso .....	162
Konso Kantas .....	163

## The Lower Omo Valley..... 164

Jinka .....	166
Mago National Park.....	170
Key Afar .....	170
Turmi .....	171
Arbore .....	172
Dimeka.....	173
Kangaten & Kolcho .....	173

## NORTHERN ETHIOPIA..... 63

Debre Libanos.....	66
Bahir Dar .....	67
Lake Tana .....	72
Gonder .....	75
Gorgora .....	85
Wunenia & Kosoye .....	86
Simien Mountains National Park .....	86
Aksum .....	93
Adwa .....	106
Adigrat .....	107
Rock-hewn Churches of Tigray .....	107
Mekele .....	116
Danakil Depression .....	119
Lalibela .....	120
Dessie .....	130
Kombolcha .....	131
Bati .....	131
Menz-Guassa Community Conservation Area .....	131
Debre Markos .....	132



**SURMI VILLAGE, KIBISH**  
P175



**BET MARYAM CHURCH**  
P73

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

Omorate.....	174
Weyto.....	174
<b>Southwest Omo Valley.....</b>	<b>174</b>
Kibish.....	175
Omo National Park.....	175

## **EASTERN ETHIOPIA.....177**

Bishoftu (Debre Zeyit)...	179
Awash National Park....	181
Djibouti Road.....	184
Asaita.....	186
Dire Dawa.....	187
Around Dire Dawa.....	191
Harar.....	191
Around Harar.....	200
Jijiga.....	201

## **WESTERN ETHIOPIA..... 202**

<b>The Western Highlands.....</b>	<b>203</b>
Addis Alem.....	203
Ambo.....	203
Mt Wenchi.....	206
Guder.....	206

Nekemte.....	207
Bedele.....	208
Metu.....	208
Tepi.....	209
Mizan Tefari.....	210
Jimma.....	211
Weliso.....	214
Kafa Biosphere Reserve.....	214

<b>The Western Lowlands.....</b>	<b>215</b>
Gambela.....	215
Gambela National Park.....	220

## **DJIBOUTI..... 306**

<b>Djibouti City.....</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Around Djibouti.....</b>	<b>318</b>
Lac Assal.....	318
Lac Abbé.....	318
Goda Mountains.....	319
Plage des Sables Blancs.....	321
Tadjoura.....	321
Obock.....	322
<b>Understand Djibouti... 323</b>	
<b>Survival Guide.....</b>	<b>325</b>

<b>Ethiopia Today.....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Ethiopia's History.....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Ethiopian Culture.....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Legendary Ethiopia... 260</b>	
<b>Ethiopian Cuisine.....</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>Ethiopia's Environment.....</b>	<b>272</b>

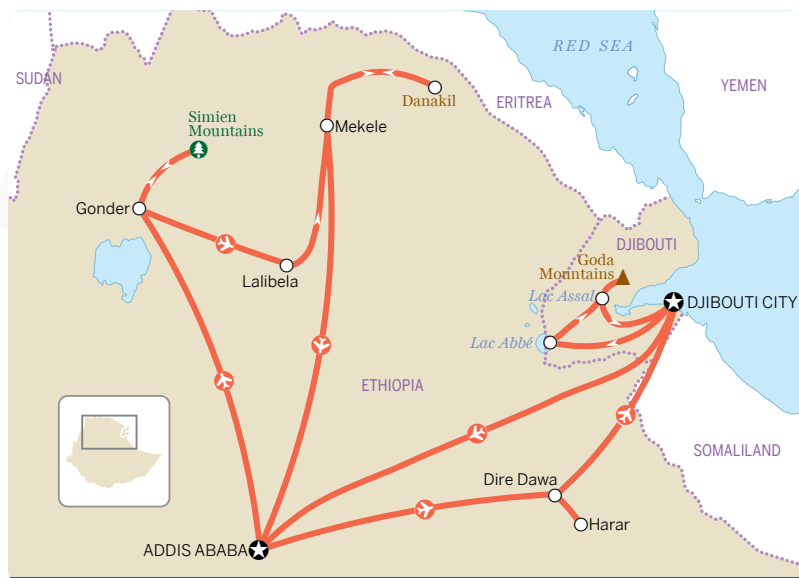
## SURVIVAL GUIDE

<b>Directory A–Z.....</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Transport.....</b>	<b>290</b>
<b>Health.....</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>Language.....</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>Index.....</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>Map Legend.....</b>	<b>351</b>

## SPECIAL FEATURES

<b>Top Experiences.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ethiopian Culture.....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Legendary Ethiopia... 260</b>	
<b>Ethiopian Cuisine.....</b>	<b>264</b>

# Itineraries



## 2 WEEKS Ethiopia & Djibouti's Grand Tour

If you only have two weeks but want to see the best that Ethiopia has to offer, this is the itinerary for you, with a good mix of historical sites and towns, fabulous landscapes and wildlife, with some high-altitude trekking thrown in.

Spend a full day in **Addis Ababa**, long enough to sample its museums and fine restaurants, then fly to **Gonder**, one of the country's most monument-rich historic towns. Then it's on to **Simien Mountains National Park** for Ethiopia's best trekking and fine wildlife-watching. It's another short flight to **Lalibela**, then plan on a minimum of two days exploring the rock-hewn church masterpieces for which Lalibela is known. Then head north to **Mekele**, en route to a couple of nights in the **Danakil Depression**. Fly from Mekele back to Addis, where you may have to stay overnight, then fly east to **Dire Dawa** and stay long enough to catch onward transport to **Harar**, one of Ethiopia's most intriguing cities. With a few days still up your sleeve, return to Dire Dawa for a flight to **Djibouti City** and a three-day tour of **Lac Abbé**, **Lac Assal** and the **Goda Mountains**. Finish with a flight back to Addis.



3  
WEEKS

## Southern Ethiopia

While most visitors come to Ethiopia because of what's on offer in the north, it's just as rewarding to point your compass south with its fine landscapes and rich cultures.

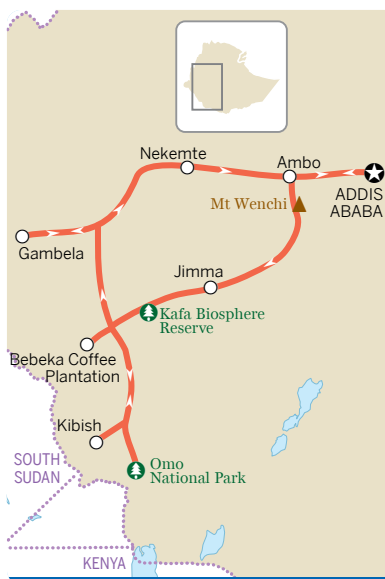
You could start with the impressive rock-hewn church of **Adadi Maryam**. Then head south to World Heritage-listed **Tiya**, one of southern Ethiopia's most important stelae fields. Little is known about their significance; some of them are engraved with enigmatic symbols, which adds to the sense of mystery. Next stop: **Lake Hare Sheitan**, some 50km south of Tiya. It's a circular crater lake filled with deep-green waters – very photogenic.

Southwestern Ethiopia's largest city, **Arba Minch** is a good base if you want to explore the nearby **Nechisar National Park**, where you'll have a good chance to spot gargantuan crocodiles, zebras, Swayne's hartebeest and the odd Abyssinian lion. From Arba Minch you can also detour up the mountains to see the woven houses and traditional lifestyle in a **Dorze** village and then continue south and visit the amazing, fortresslike **Konso** villages, at the gateway to the cultural riches of the **Lower Omo Valley**.

In Omo, visits to ethnic villages such as those of the Mursi above **Mago National Park**, the Karo northwest of **Turmi** and the Daasanach along the mighty Omo River at **Omorate** will transport you to another world; as will the important markets in **Jinka**, **Dimeka** and **Key Afar**. If you're lucky, a Jumping of the Bulls ceremony will be happening during your visit.

Slip east before turning north for a night lakeside in modern and orderly **Awasa**. Then it's time for some remote trekking amid Ethiopian wolves and superb scenery in **Bale Mountains National Park** and around **Dodola**.

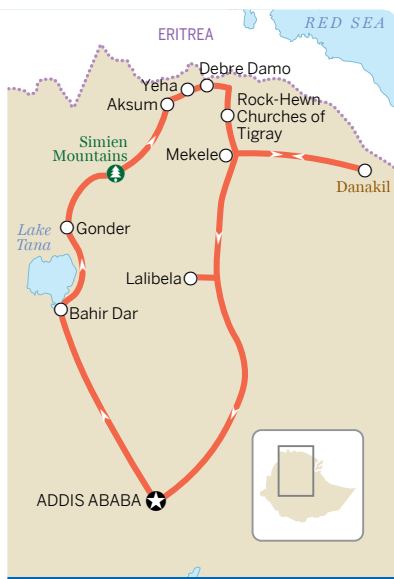
See the hot springs and flamingo flocks in **Abiata-Shala Lakes National Park** before unwinding in a lakeside resort and doing a bit of birdwatching at **Lake Langano**. Stop at **Lake Ziway** to see hippos, birdlife and island monasteries. You could spend another night on a lake at **Debre Zeyit** before returning to the chaos of Addis Ababa.



## 2 WEEKS The Wild West

A journey out into the lush, green west is one for trail blazers, with splendid mountain and lowland scenery, a taste of the south's fascinating cultural mix, and some coffee explorations en route.

Leaving Addis it's a short and easy drive to **Mt Wenchi** where a crater lake and a beautiful day walk awaits. Next head past golden fields to bustling **Jimma** and its museums. Stop off overnight in **Kafa Biosphere Reserve** for a day trek and a visit to the coffee museum, whereafter a long day's driving south will take you deep into Surma country and the village of **Kibish**. After a few days, venture into the wilds of **Omo National Park** in search of wildlife and wild landscapes, then up to the **Bebeka Coffee Plantation**. Drive along misty mountain ridges and through dense forests before descending into the steamy lowlands to fascinating **Gambela**, home of the Nuer and Anuak peoples. From Gambela you have two options – complete the loop by heading back to Addis via **Nekemte** and **Ambo**, which makes for a scenic mountain ride, or flying back to Addis from Gambela.



## 2 WEEKS Historical Circuit

The historical sights along this loop north of Addis Ababa are monumental in both scale and detail.

After a few days revelling in the chaos of **Addis Ababa**, head north to palm-fringed **Bahir Dar** for a day. Spend the next day at **Lake Tana** exploring some of the lake's centuries-old island monasteries. Next wander the extensive ruins of 17th-century castles in **Gonder**. Looming 100km north, the **Simien Mountains** are one of Ethiopia's most stunning national parks.

Push on to **Aksum** where pre-Christian tombs underlie splendid 1800-year-old stelae (obelisks). After two days, venture to the 3000-year-old ruins of Ethiopia's first capital, **Yeha**, and to the cliff-top monastery of **Debre Damo**. Then head south and search out Tigray's precarious and stunning **rock-hewn churches**. A short hop to the south is **Mekele**, which is the obvious launching pad for the desolate expanses of the **Danakil**. Back in Mekele, drive south to **Lalibela**. Its astounding rock-hewn churches and myriad tunnels have poignantly frozen 12th- and 13th-century Ethiopia in stone. After three or so days here, it's back to Addis Ababa.



DIETMART TEMPS, COLOGNE / GETTY IMAGES ©



NICK FOX / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Top: Surmi with body painting (p169), Ethiopia.

Bottom: View of the 'Bridge of God' (p156) between lakes Chamo and Abaya, Nechisar National Park, Ethiopia.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

*Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book*





## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Jean-Bernard Carillet

Southern Ethiopia, Eastern Ethiopia, Djibouti

Jean-Bernard is a Paris-based freelance writer and photographer who specialises in Africa, France, Turkey, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and the Pacific. He loves adventure, remote places, islands, outdoors, archaeological sites and food. His insatiable wanderlust has taken him to 114 countries across six continents, and it shows no sign of waning. It has inspired lots of articles and photos for travel magazines and some 70 Lonely Planet guidebooks, both in English and in French. One of his favourite continents is Africa, which he has travelled the length and breadth of for more two decades and been thoroughly enlightened by 24 of its amazing countries. Jean-Bernard also researched the Understand Ethiopia section.



### Anthony Ham

Addis Ababa, Northern Ethiopia, Western Ethiopia

Anthony is a freelance writer and photographer who specialises in Spain, East and Southern Africa, the Arctic and the Middle East. When he's not writing for Lonely Planet, Anthony writes about and photographs Spain, Africa and the Middle East for newspapers and magazines in Australia, the UK and US. In 2001, after years of wandering the world, Anthony finally found his spiritual home when he fell irretrievably in love with Madrid on his first visit to the city. Less than a year later, he arrived there on a one-way ticket, with not a word of Spanish and not knowing a single person in the city. When he finally left Madrid 10 years later, Anthony spoke Spanish with a Madrid accent, was married to a local and Madrid had become his second home. Now back in Australia, he continues to travel the world in search of stories. Anthony also researched the Plan Your Trip, Survival Guide and Health sections.

### Published by Lonely Planet Global Limited

CRN 554153

6th edition – Sep 2017

ISBN 978 1 78657 040 6

© Lonely Planet 2017 Photographs © as indicated 2017

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: [lonelyplanet.com/tp](http://lonelyplanet.com/tp).

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'