



# Eastern Ethiopia

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Paradiso Restaurant (p189)
- ➔ Al-Hashimi Sweets (p189)
- ➔ Asham Africa (p181)
- ➔ Fresh Touch Restaurant (p199)
- ➔ Hirut Restaurant (p198)
- ➔ Awash Falls Lodge (p183)

## Best Places to Sleep

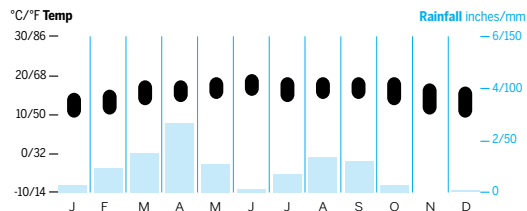
- ➔ Doho Lodge (p183)
- ➔ Asham Africa (p180)
- ➔ African Village (p188)
- ➔ Rawda Waber Harari Cultural Guesthouse (p197)
- ➔ Grand Gato (p198)

## Why Go?

Most of eastern Ethiopia is a stark landscape of dust-stained acacia scrub and forgettable towns. But scattered around this cloak of the commonplace are gems of genuine adventure. Undoubtedly, the east's *pièce de résistance* is the walled city of Harar. There's still a patina of myth about this ancient town, handed down from the days when its markets served as the Horn's commercial hub and attracted powerful merchants and Islamic scholars. The colonial-rural melange that is the modern city of Dire Dawa delights in its own odd way, while nature lovers can get their kicks at Babilie Elephant Sanctuary and Awash National Park, where the volcanic landscape takes top billing over the wildlife. The truly intrepid can follow the seemingly endless ribbon of asphalt north to the desolate southern Danakil Desert, territory that remains virtually unexplored since legendary adventurer Wilfred Thesiger first thrilled the world with tales of the proud Afar.

## When to Go

### Harar



**May–Sep** Rainy and hot season sends lowland temperatures up to 45°C.

**Sep–Oct** The seemingly barren Asaita road is painted yellow by the meskel flower.

**Nov–Feb** Driest months; best time to see elephants at Babilie, the lakes near Asaita and Harar.

## **i** Getting There & Away

**Ethiopian Airlines** ([www.flyethiopian.com](http://www.flyethiopian.com)) flies from Addis Ababa to Dire Dawa and Jijiga, and also between Dire Dawa and Djibouti. You can enter eastern Ethiopia overland from Djibouti City by bus and, as of 2017, by train

to Dire Dawa thanks the new railway line that connects Djibouti City to Addis Ababa. There's a bus-minibus combination from Djibouti City to Logiya, and connecting minibuses from Hargeisa (Somaliland) to Jijiga.



## Eastern Ethiopia Highlights

- 1 Harar's Old Town** (p193) Exploring the magical jumble of alleyways of the old walled town, and witnessing the famous feeding of the hyenas after nightfall.
- 2 Awash National Park** (p181) Taking a tour of this popular park known for its outstanding birdlife and variety of landscapes.

- 3 Babille Elephant Sanctuary** (p200) Getting out of the car and tracking elephants on foot around this underrated wildlife reserve.
- 4 Koremi** (p200) Soaking up the chilled-out atmosphere in an unspoilt village endowed with traditional houses.

- 5 Asaita** (p186) Following in the footsteps of Wilfred Thesiger around several salt lakes blessed with stark beauty.
- 6 Babille Market** (p200) Dreaming of purchasing your own ship of the desert at a lively livestock market.