

Historical Ethiopia & the Simien Mountains

The cultural highlights of Ethiopia's Historic Circuit combined with three days in the Simien Mountains National Park.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels, Lodges
Grade	Tour
Duration	14 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Local Leader Ethiopia
Land only	Joining in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Max altitude	Optional walk to 4,200m, Bwahit, Day 9

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

Departures

Group departures

2021 Dates:

Sun 24 Jan - Sat 06 Feb

Sun 07 Nov - Sat 20 Nov

2022 Dates:

Sun 23 Jan - Sat 05 Feb

Sat 06 Nov - Sat 19 Nov

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday.

If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



We use English-speaking local leaders - they are certified/registered guides, and in their company you will certainly gain an insight into the way of life, traditions and culture of Ethiopia.

Your trip highlights

- Visit the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, 'Africa's Camelot' at Gondar, the World Heritage site of Axum and the Blue Nile Falls
- Spend three days exploring the most spectacular scenery in the Simien Mountains National Park, home to an abundance of rare flora and fauna
- Take a full day boat cruise on the vast expanse of Lake Tana
- Enjoy the best service, guiding and accommodation throughout

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Fly to Addis Ababa. Half day sightseeing.
Days 3-4	Fly to Lalibela. Sightseeing.
Day 5	Fly to Axum. Sightseeing.
Days 6-7	Fly to Gondar. Sightseeing. Drive to Simien Mountains.
Days 8-9	Gentle walks in the Simien Mountains National Park to Sanakber and Bwahit.
Days 10-12	Drive to Gondar and on to Bahir Dar. Visit Blue Nile Falls and boat cruise on Lake Tana.
Days 13-14	Fly to Addis Ababa. City tour. Fly back to London.

Trip summary

This definitive cultural tour in Ethiopia has been carefully designed to take you to all the most important sights on the historical circuit of Ethiopia and includes three days exploring the Simien Mountains. After a day exploring the thriving, colourful capital city, Addis Ababa, you move on to Lalibela - famous for its breath-taking rock-hewn churches - carved in the 12th and 13th centuries and still thriving as working churches today. After almost two full days here you head north to Axum, the ancient capital of the longstanding Axumite kingdom - one of the oldest African kingdoms. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Axum is one of the most important sites in Africa and is home to many spectacular, towering stelae, underground tombs, and palace ruins. Following a day viewing these 1,800 year old great monoliths, you fly to Gondar. Gondar is often described as Africa's Camelot and is home to a dozen castles built by various emperors over the course of 236 years. You will have plenty of time to stroll around the Royal Enclosure - a 70,000 square metre site housing castles from Emperor Fasiladas' reign in the 17th century.

From Gondar you drive to Sankaber to spend two full days exploring in the Simien Mountains. Home to the endemic gelada baboon, Walia Ibex and Simien Fox, the Simien Mountains also boast an abundance of intriguing endemic birds and flora and stunning scenery with dramatic gorges, canyons and escarpments. Exploring on foot, you'll be able to witness spectacular scenery in the park where you are most likely to spot the endemic wildlife. Walking is at a relaxed pace, so you will have ample opportunity to spot the unique flora and fauna, and chat to village children en route.

To complete the circuit you visit Bahir Dar and take a trip to the 328 feet wide Blue Nile Falls, known locally as Tisat, which means Smoking Water. The water plunges some 150 feet, giving rise to picturesque stream of spray clouds and rainbows. Your next day will be spent on a boat trip over Lake Tana, Ethiopia's largest lake. There are 37 islands on the lake and 30 of them have churches and monasteries of considerable historical and cultural interest. This day long boat trip visiting monasteries is a very enjoyable and relaxing way to conclude your holiday. The standard of service, food and guiding throughout this trip are first class.

Special notes

Land Only bookings

If you are booking your own flights, you will need to book on Ethiopian Airlines in order to avail yourself of our land only price. If you book with an alternative airline, there will be a supplement cost (which will be at least £250). This is because the domestic flights on Ethiopian Airlines are discounted for anyone booking their international flights with Ethiopian Airlines.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Addis Ababa. Group transfer to hotel.

Today you depart London for Addis Ababa where you arrive in the evening. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

Overnight: Wassamar Hotel, Addis Ababa

Day 2: Morning at leisure. Afternoon sightseeing.

This morning will be free for you to relax after your flight yesterday.

In the afternoon, you will visit the National Museum, famous for its palaeontology exhibits, the most prominent, important, and memorable of which is 'Lucy', a fossilised bipedal 3.2 million year old hominid. She is famed for being the oldest and most complex hominid found. You will then move onto the Ethnological Museum. This is housed inside the Addis Ababa University and provides a fascinating insight into the diverse cultures of the country. It has some imaginative displays including the music section. It is also likely you will visit St George's Cathedral and Museum where Haile Selassie was crowned in 1930.

You may briefly have time to proceed to the clothing co-operative where you can see men weaving their traditional clothes and blankets before selling them in the adjacent market. It is a not-for-profit organisation so prices are very reasonable and fixed.

Overnight: Wassamar Hotel, Addis Ababa (Meals: B)

Day 3: Fly to Lalibela. Sightseeing.

You will be taken to the airport for your Ethiopian Airlines flight to Lalibela. The routing is usually via Bahar Dar (one hour) and Gondar (20 minutes) before a further 30 minutes brings you to Lalibela. Your transfer to Mountain View Hotel will be waiting for you. The journey from the airport to the hotel is around 20-30 minutes and you drive through the town before arriving at your hotel which sits in a prime spot on the hillside above the town. Recently built, this is a delightful hotel with plenty of character and charm, which has been designed to maximise its superb location and views. Shortly after you have checked into your room, your tour guide for the day will meet you and take you to see what Lalibela is famous for - its rock-hewn churches.



There are 11 churches in total and they date from King Lalibela's reign in the 12th and 13th centuries. Not all the churches are carved into the rock-face, some are free-standing, but all are unique, captivating and are still very much used by priests, locals and pilgrims alike. Many Ethiopians make the pilgrimage here and it is a common sight to see them prostrating themselves both inside and outside the churches. Priests will proudly display their Ethiopian crosses which have many different designs. Devoid of UNESCO's scaffolding and possibly the most memorable of all the churches is Bet Giyorgis - a 15 metre, 3-tiered plinth in the shape of a Greek cross.

Overnight: Mountain View Hotel, Lalibela (Meals: BLD)

Day 4: Sightseeing in Lalibela.

Today you will see the remainder of the churches including Bet Amanuel which is freestanding and replicates the style of Aksumite buildings.

Overnight: Mountain View Hotel, Lalibela (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Fly to Axum. Sightseeing.

Today you will fly to Axum. Axum was the capital city of the longstanding Axumite kingdom, one of the most ancient African kingdoms, and represented a vital crossroads between Africa and Asia for almost a thousand

years. The ruins still visible in Axum stand as testimony to an exceptionally high level of civilisation, notably the stone monoliths which are dotted throughout the city. These spectacular 1800 year old stelae were carved from single pieces of granite and legend has it that the Ark of the Covenant's celestial powers were harnessed to transport and erect the obelisks. Axum is linked to the legend of the enchanting queen of Sheba, who, having met King Solomon in Jerusalem, on her return gave birth to Menelik I, who was the founding father of the family known as King of Kings. Legend also has it that the original Ark of the Covenant is housed in a chapel near the church of Saint Mary of Sion. The Ark is believed to have been brought back by Menelik I on his return from Jerusalem. Today you will visit the following:

The Stelae Park

The park has a number of pre-Christian obelisks (made of solid granite from the surrounding hills) some of which are thought to be more than 3000 years old. The tallest, standing, obelisk rises to a height of over 75 feet and is exquisitely carved to represent a nine-story building, similar in appearance to the tower-houses of South Arabia. The tallest fallen stelae, which according to local legend crashed to the ground in 850 AD, was 110 feet high and represented a tall and slender 13-storey building. With its rows of windows and doors complete with an imaginary knocker and lock, this symbolic house is thought to have been a dwelling of the spirits of the dead. Alternatively, it may have marked the tomb of an important monarch.

The Queen of Sheba's Palace

The site contains the remains of what was once a massive palace with finely mortared stonewalls, deep foundations and its own impressive drainage system. It is believed to be the oldest building in Axum. To date, over 50 chambers have been excavated. The floor of a large throne-room has been discovered intact and, although the upper floors and roof have long since fallen in, it is not difficult to imagine the rulers of ancient Axum holding court there.

Church of Saint Mary of Tserha Sion

The church was built by Emperor Fasilidas in 1665, and the podium on which the church is standing, may well belong to the original church erected by King Ezana or King Kaleb in the 4th or 6th centuries after the adoption of Christianity. Unfortunately, the original church was destroyed during the Muslim Christian war. Legend has it that the current church is the sanctuary of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark, according to Ethiopian belief, has remained in Axum ever since. It is kept in a special chapel annexed to the church of St. Mary of Sion. The Ark is in the care of an old and especially holy guardian monk, and according to tradition, he is the only man who is allowed to gaze upon it.

The Park of Ezana's Inscription

Within a tin-roofed hut in this central park is a famous 4th century AD trilingual inscriptions' stone of King Ezana. It is written in Sabaeen, Ge'ez and Greek and records the honorary titles and military victories of the king over his enemies.

Time permitting; you will also visit the Axum Museum before returning to your hotel. The museum houses exhibits on ancient pottery and glass, Roman amphorae, bronze jewellery and clay figurines.

Overnight: Sabean International Hotel, Axum (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Fly to Gondar. Sightseeing.

You transfer to the airport for your short flight to Gondar.

It was here in 1636 that Emperor Fasiladas made Gondar his capital. Often described as Africa's Camelot, it is the town's castles and one of its remarkable churches that inspire. Your guide will take you to visit Debre Berhan Selassie Church which has some wonderful frescoes illustrating the story of Christ, and a unique ceiling covered with the faces of inscrutable cherubs. The church is surrounded by a wall with 12 towers representing the 12 apostles.

Your next stop will be the Royal Enclosure - a 70,000 square metre site housing castles from Emperor Fasiladas' reign in the 17th century. Lastly, you will visit Fasiladas' bath which was used for Baptism ceremonies. Tree roots have consumed some of the stone wall surrounding the bath which gives it an intriguing and engaging appearance.

Overnight: Goha Hotel, Gondar (Meals: BLD)



Day 7: Drive to Simien Mountains National Park, 3,260m/10,696ft - 4 hours.

An early start today for your drive into the Simien Mountains National Park. En route to Debarq you pass the villages of Ambagiyorgis (which means Hill of St. George) and Davat. The people from this area grow lentils, fenugreek, wheat, oat, barley, beans and tef (the staple Ethiopian cereal). The predominant tribes here are Amhara - both Christians and Muslims, although the former are the dominant population. The scenery is an impressive and vast expanse of distant mountains and escarpments. You pass many eucalyptus trees which are used for building houses and for firewood, and you will see many local traders in traditional, billowing robes going from place to place on foot or horseback - always with their trusty dula (wooden staff).

The Simien Mountains National Park Headquarters is at Debarq, 3,000m/9,850ft, and here you will need to register which takes about 5-10 minutes. The drive from Gondar to Debarq takes around 2½ hours and it is likely you will stop here for tea/coffee.

You continue to drive into the National Park and shortly after the entrance to the Park you are likely to have your first, memorable encounter with a troop of gelada baboons. Due to the red patch on their chests (the subtle colours of which indicate their sexual condition at a given time), they are often called Bleeding Heart Baboons. These fascinating creatures, endemic to Ethiopia, are wonderful to observe. They are not too scared of humans, so you can get quite close, and watch them dig frantically for roots, groom their mates, or just play.

An hour or so of driving from Debarq brings you to the Simien Lodge, 3,260m/10,696ft where you will be spending the night at Bwait Ras. There may be an opportunity to have a short, late afternoon stroll before dinner at the Lodge.

Walking paths in the Simien Mountains

The walks in the Simien Mountains are aimed at leading you along the escarpment so that you can appreciate the wonderful views over the mountains. The paths are rough and rocky in places so you'll need to be sure-footed and have a reasonable amount of basic walking fitness to undertake these walks.

Overnight: Simien Lodge, Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Walk to Sankaber, 3,250m/10,663ft - 3-4 hours.

Today you will walk up to Sankaber (3-4 hours) which involves walking along the escarpment, with commanding views of the landscape. On the way, keep an eye open for the rare and the graceful raptor that is considered lord of the high plateau, the Lammergeyer, soaring in search of food. You stand a good chance of spotting the endemic thick-billed ravens (usually very interested in your lunch!), crows, kestrels and Auger buzzards.

Along the trail you will experience the enormous Afro Montane flora including the everlasting flower, Saint John's Wort or hypericum revolutum, heliocradium and archemila and what may surprise is that familiar species known to be shrubs in Europe grow to towering trees here.

Sankaber is situated at 3,250m/10,663ft and today's short walk is a gentle undulating stroll and an ideal introduction to the Simien Mountains. After your walk to Sankaber, a vehicle will take you back to your lodge.

Overnight: Simien Lodge, Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Drive to Chenek, 3,600m/11,812 ft. Walk towards Bwahit.

Just above Chenek there is a good spot for viewing Walia Ibex. You continue ascending until another good viewpoint, approx. 280m/900ft from Chenek which provides superb views of Silki 4,420m/14,901ft, and the village of Lori below. You could continue to Bwahit 4,200m/13,779ft, which rewards you with a good viewpoint on the eastern escarpment although you will doubtless be feeling the altitude here and might not wish to walk so far. From Bwahit you can see Bwahit Peak, 4,430m/14,534ft, above you, and below you to the east you can see the village of Chiro Leba.



You are likely to see plenty of activity today with local people wandering up and down the trail, sometimes with donkeys bearing loads to trade, sometimes herding their goats, and you will probably also see ox and horses ploughing the land.

Overnight: Simien Lodge, Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Drive to Gondar.

Today, you drive back to Gondar which will take about two to two and a half hours. You will arrive in Gondar late in the afternoon. After dinner at the hotel, if you are looking for a lively bar down town to celebrate the successful completion of your Simien Mountains' adventure, the Golden Gate is packed with young, trendy locals and is a great place to people watch with a couple of beers.

Overnight: Goha Hotel, Gondar (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Drive to Bahir Dar. Visit Blue Nile Falls.

Today you drive from Gondar to Bahir Dar (a name which means 'by the side of the sea' in Amharic). This drive is about 180 kms and takes some 3 hours. From Gondar you drive through the mountains with good views from Guzara, Castle of the Emperor and of the isolated rock tower known as the Devil's Nose. Your route takes you through the beautiful hill landscapes of Tara Gedam and down to the small town of Addis Zemen, some 100 kms from Bahir Dar, and round to the east of Lake Tana, crossing the Fogera Plain, a good spot for aquatic birds.



After meeting your guide you will be driven to the Blue Nile Falls - known locally as Tisat - which means "Smoking Water." The falls are 328 feet wide and the water plunges some 150 feet, giving rise to picturesque streams, clouds and rainbows. If time permits, you will drive up hill to Bezawit where you can enjoy the commanding view of Lake Tana and its island monasteries and the Blue Nile River leaving Lake Tana. You then move on to the colourful market of Bahar Dar.

Overnight: Blue Nile Resort, Bahir Dar (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Cruise on Lake Tana.

Today, you have an early start for your cruise on Lake Tana which is the largest lake in Ethiopia, with an area of 3600km². There are 37 islands on the lake and 30 of them have churches and monasteries of considerable historical and cultural interest. One of the monasteries goes back to the pre Christian era, but most of them date back to the 13th century. The cruise takes the whole day with lunch on board. You glide towards Gorgora, while visiting Ura-Kidanemihret, Azua Mariam and Narga Selassie. You will also visit the beautiful water separation, which clearly shows the Blue Nile River leaving its mother source, Lake Tana, at the departure point. The Nile and Tana have typically different colours.

Overnight: Blue Nile Resort, Bahir Dar (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Fly to Addis Ababa. Afternoon sightseeing and farewell dinner. Late transfer to airport.

You will be taken to the airport for your flight to Addis. On arrival you will be met and taken to your hotel. This afternoon, you will have time to complete any sightseeing you didn't manage to fit in on your first visit. You may be taken to see the Holy Trinity Cathedral - the final resting place of Emperor Haile Selassie and his Empress. Outside the cathedral is the memorial to the ministers killed by the Derg regime - photography here is forbidden as the PM's compound is behind the memorial. Your guide may also suggest a drive through the Mercato - one of the largest open air markets in Africa. It's considered a haven for pick-pockets, so it's wise just to drive through. It's a lively and colourful spectacle where just about everything you can think of is on sale.

For your last night, you will be taken to a local restaurant for a farewell dinner. Rooms will be reserved for you at the Wassamer Hotel so that you can rest and freshen up before having a very late check out and transfer to the airport.

Overnight: Wassamar Hotel, Addis Ababa (Meals: B D)

Day 14: Depart Addis Ababa. Fly to London.

Your flight leaves Addis in the early hours. You will arrive back in London later today. **(Meals: B)**

Our grading system

Historical Ethiopia & the Simien Mountains is graded as a Tour, as described below.

Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

Trip altitude

Important - please be aware that this trip involves travel at altitude. Whilst all our itineraries are carefully designed to optimise acclimatisation to high altitudes, participants on this trip are likely to experience some symptoms of being at altitude. The Dossier pack we provide when you book your holiday includes comprehensive advice on safe travel at altitude. If you require further information or advice on travel at altitude prior to booking please contact the office to speak to an experienced member of our team. Alternatively we recommend www.medex.org.uk as a good source of information.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ A local English-speaking leader
- ✓ English-speaking guides in Addis Ababa, Lalibela, Axum, Gondar and Bahir Dar
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ Internal flights and domestic transfers
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation on twin share, bed and breakfast basis in Addis Ababa, with farewell dinner on Day 13
- ✓ Good standard hotel/lodge accommodation outside of Addis Ababa on twin share, full board basis
- ✓ Sightseeing and all entrance fees as per itinerary
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All Park fees
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ Option to join one of our pre-trip meets in the Cotswolds

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fee
- ✗ Tips
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Addis Ababa (although farewell dinner is included on Day 13)

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Wassamar Hotel, Addis Ababa

This 4* hotel is situated in a prime location in Bole/African Avenue, and is 1.2km from the airport. Facilities include a fitness centre with sauna and steam room and business centre with Wi-fi and internet access.



Mountain View Hotel, Lalibela

This is a delightful hotel situated just above the town of Lalibela. It's perched on a hill top with fantastic panoramic views of the town and its surrounding countryside. It has been designed well to maximise its superb hilltop location. The rooms are very tastefully furnished and many have balconies with excellent views. There is a restaurant here and there are plans to build a swimming pool. It is the best hotel in town. If this hotel is fully booked, an alternative of a similar standard such as the Tukul Village in town will be arranged.



Sabean International Hotel, Axum

With en-suite facilities, wifi and wide screen TVs, this hotel is a great central point from which to explore the city of Axum. The restaurant provides both traditional Ethiopian and International cuisine.



Goha Hotel, Gondar

Perched on a hill top above the town with a great view of the town of Gondar below. This is a government run hotel and is the best in town. The en-suite rooms are attractively furnished, and it has a large restaurant area and bar. There is a shop, and internet facilities.



Simien Lodge, Simien Mountains

The Simien Lodge is built in the traditional, attractive 'tukul' style, and is clean, comfortable with hot showers, a bar with open fire, good food and friendly service. The lodge styles itself 'The Highest Hotel in Africa', 3,260m.



Blue Nile Resort, Bahir Dar

This modern, lakeside hotel is situated in the heart of Bahir Dar, just a short walk to Lake Tana, the Church of St George and the bustling Bahir Dar Market. The hotel has 3 restaurants, serves a buffet breakfast and has a bar/lounge. Rooms are well equipped with free Wi-Fi, minibar and a furnished balcony.

Meal arrangements

12 x breakfasts, 10 x lunches, 11 x dinners. Bed and breakfast in Addis Ababa plus a farewell dinner on day 13. All meals elsewhere.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

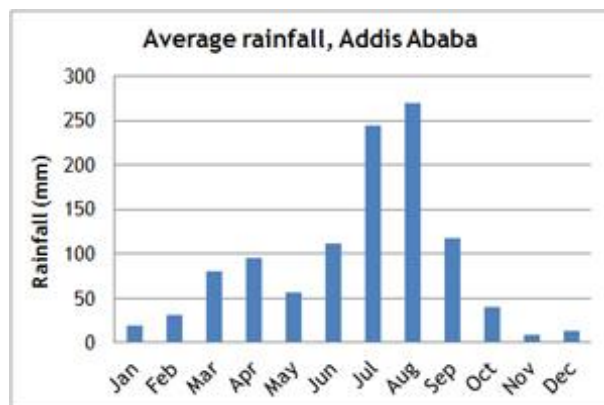
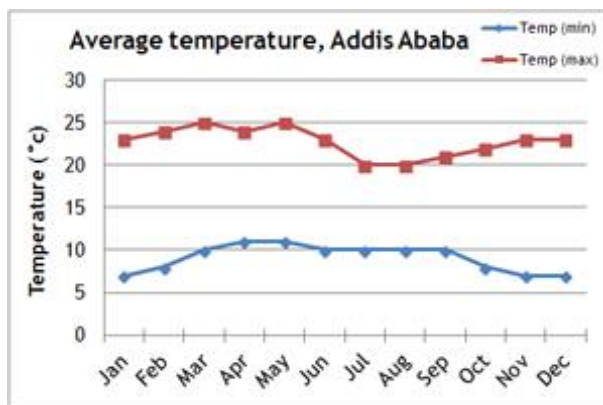
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Please contact
one of our
experts for
extension ideas

There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra nights at a hotel, visit the Bale Mountains, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities such as a safari, or birdwatching. In fact whatever's available, we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We believe this itinerary offers the perfect balance for those seeking to combine the prime sights of the Historical Circuit in Ethiopia, with exploration of the Simien Mountains and the chance to spot the endemic wildlife including gelada baboons, Walia ibex and Simien fox.
- The itinerary includes visits to the most important sights in Addis Ababa, Lalibela, Axum, Gondar and Bahir Dar with highly knowledgeable guides.
- We offer extensions to other places in Ethiopia, such as, the Bale Mountains, if required.
- We can offer a tailor-made version of this, or any other itinerary in Ethiopia. Call Niki Morgan, who has recced our trips in Ethiopia to discuss the options on 01453 844400.
- We use the best local agent in Ethiopia and you will get an unrivalled level of support and guiding services.
- We use good quality hotels, and the best of what is available outside Addis Ababa.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



Excellent organisation and use of superbly knowledgeable tour guides.
-Mr & Mrs C, South Yorkshire

It was a well thought out itinerary and as on previous holidays with Mountain Kingdoms, the in-house tour staff were very efficient. The information in the pre-trip dossier was very helpful.
-Mr & Mrs G, Wiltshire



Kuru our tour leader was efficient, caring & great fun to have around. He had excellent English.
-Mr G, Wiltshire

All in all, it was a great success!
- Mr N, Surrey

We would just like to say what an adventure we had in Ethiopia, the trip was everything we could have asked for and more. The itinerary was superb and the days we spent in the Simiens was an ideal break between the historical sites. Ethiopia is a fantastic country... Once again, many thanks for all your help in planning our holiday and we hope to travel with Mountain Kingdoms again in the future.
- Mr & Mrs W, UK



This trip offered a wide variety of sites and experiences. You ended each day feeling that no time had been wasted. We visited a local school, this was an excellent experience and gave us a chance to give something back to the delightful people of Ethiopia - an excellent 'add-on' to a delightful trip. Everything is very well organised.
-Mr & Mrs P, Gloucestershire

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

