

Simien Mountains Trek & Ras Dashen, Ethiopia

Abundant wildlife, beautiful scenery, welcoming villagers and Ethiopia's highest mountain - all in one trek.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Trek
Accommodation	Hotels, Camping
Grade	Strenuous
Duration	14 days from London to London
Trekking / Walking days	On trek: 8 days
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	4,550m/14,928ft, Ras Dashen, Day 11

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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Departures

Group departures

2021 Dates:

Sun 10 Jan - Sat 23 Jan

Sun 24 Oct - Sat 06 Nov

2022 Dates:

Tue 11 Jan - Mon 24 Jan

Sun 23 Oct - Sat 05 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.

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 highlights

- Trek through stunning scenery, remote villages and abundant wildlife in the Simien Mountains National Park
- Summit Ethiopia's highest mountain with excellent acclimatisation and a well-paced itinerary to maximise your chance of success
- Visit the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela and 'Africa's Camelot' at Gondar
- Enjoy the best service, guiding and accommodation throughout

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Fly to Addis Ababa. Sightseeing.
Days 3-4	Fly to Lalibela, sightseeing. Fly to Gondar, sightseeing.
Days 5-6	Drive to Simien Mountains National Park. Trek to Sankaber and on to Geech.
Day 7	Trek to Immetgogo, Saha and Kedadit.
Days 8-9	Trek to Chenek. Trek to Ambiko via Bwahit Pass, 4,200m/13,780ft.
Day 10	Rest day.
Day 11	Climb Ras Dashen, 4,550m/14,928ft, and descend to Ambiko.
Day 12	End trek at Chiroleba. Drive to Gondar.
Days 13-14	Fly to Addis Ababa, sightseeing. Fly to London.

Trip summary

This is the ultimate trek in the Simien Mountains. With eight days of trekking it takes in all the National Park's gems including the endemic wildlife havens of Sankaber, Geech and Chenek, and Ethiopia's highest mountain Ras Dashen, 4,550m/14,928ft. Brimming with endemic fauna including the Geleda baboon, Walia ibex and Simien fox, an abundance of interesting flora and some of the world's most majestic and colourful birds, the Simien Mountains should be on every trekker's 'wish list'. The trek also offers you the rewarding experience of summiting Ethiopia's highest mountain, Ras Dashen from where there are breath-taking, panoramic views. And, to maximise your chances of successfully summiting this peak, we have included a rest day before your summit day.

After sightseeing in Lalibela and Gondar you drive to the Simien Mountains National Park headquarters at Debarq to sign in, before starting your trek on the escarpment near Michibiny and walking to your first camp. You then have five wonderful days trekking through stunning wild country, taking in a couple of lesser peaks and crossing the Bwahit Pass, to reach Ambiko from where you make your thrilling ascent of Ras Dashen. However, it's not only the trekking that will leave an indelible impression. Ethiopia has a rich culture and ancient history and no visit to the country would be complete without taking time to explore its key cultural and historic attractions. Prime among these are the remarkable rock-hewn churches of Lalibela and the impressive 17th century castles at Gondar.

You begin and end your trip in the thriving modern-day capital of Addis Ababa where you will discover its lively outdoor market, fascinating museums and good quality restaurants, offering a cultural and culinary feast in this well-balanced itinerary.

The standard of service, food and guiding throughout this trip are first class.

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, 2,680m/8,793ft. Full day's sightseeing.

You will be taken to the airport for your Ethiopian Airlines flight to Lalibela. The journey from the airport to the Mountain View 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 and 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.



After lunch back at your hotel, you will return to 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 4: Fly to Gondar. Sightseeing.

Your flight to Gondar is 30 minutes and you will be picked up on arrival and driven to the Goha Hotel which is government run and is the best standard hotel in town. It is situated on top of a hill with a superb viewing point from which to admire the town below. The drive from the airport to the hotel is around 30-40 minutes and you will pass the yellow Italian buildings and the piazza of the town en route. 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. After lunch at the hotel, you will meet your guide and be taken 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 giving it an intriguing and engaging appearance.

Overnight: Goha Hotel, Gondar (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Drive to Simien Mountains National Park - 4 hours. Trek to Sankaber, 3,250m/10,663ft - 2 hours.

An early start today - you drive into the Simien Mountains National Park to the start of your trek. 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 tribe 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. From Gondar to Debarq is around 2½ hours of driving and it is likely you will stop here for tea/coffee. Maps can be purchased here, although at 300 Bir (about £20) they are very expensive, so you would be better advised to purchase a map from home.

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 and a half of driving from Debarq brings you to an escarpment near Michibiny, 3,203m/10,508ft, where you will leave your 4 wheel-drive vehicle and walk for 2-3 hours to camp. Although you could drive straight to Sankaber, it is a very pleasant walk and will help you limber up for the coming days. It will also help with acclimatisation. The views are stunning and you may encounter the thick-billed raven, eagles and vultures. Flora you may see on today's walk includes lavender, thyme, St. John's Wort, wild iris, the endemic Abyssinian rose, fennel and solanum. The latter is from the tomato family, yellow in colour with a very prickly leaf. It is poisonous, but the locals use it for washing purposes.

Sankaber campsite is situated at 3,250m/10,663ft and you are likely to be greeted on arrival by your crew with biscuits, nuts, popcorn, tea and coffee. The campsite has toilets, an alfresco shower (for those unconcerned about lack of privacy and cold water), tukuls (round huts with conical roofs) which the crew usually cook and sleep in. Today's short walk is a gentle undulating stroll and an ideal first day.

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Trek to Geech, 3,600m/11,811ft - 6 hours.

Your walk this morning begins with a very pleasant and reasonably gentle stroll through heather and lichen forests. You may be lucky enough to spot the elegant klipspringer (antelope). After about 2½ hours you reach a viewing spot at 3,110m/10,203ft on a small hill top (Deche Nedala). This is where you will see the impressive Jinbar waterfall and vultures often circling in this deep gorge. You then climb fairly steeply for half an hour or so before the ground levels out, and eventually you reach the road. Here you may encounter some enterprising local children selling colourful little boxes made from a type of thick grass, painstakingly woven together. You leave the road from the left and proceed on a trail through several side valleys to reach Jinbar valley. It is here that you are highly likely to spot a troop of gelada baboons. You head down to the Jinbar River at 3,195m/10,482ft, to bathe your dusty feet and have lunch. Today you are spoilt with a feast of flora including the endemic Abyssinian rose, the endemic globe thistle, jasmine flowers, lavender bushes, thyme and olive trees - these do not bear olives, but the locals use the branches as tooth-picks and the stems for charcoal, this latter use has caused the olive trees to become endangered.

After lunch, you cross the river and ascend gradually on a good path for around 2 hours. On your afternoon's walk you will see hillsides terraced with barley. Unfortunately this cultivation along with overgrazing, has led to extensive soil erosion here. The highlanders barter their barley with the lowlander's tef. Tef is a staple Ethiopian cereal which is used to make Injera, the national dish.

After about 1¾ hours from the lunch spot you approach the village of Geech, 3,465m/11,368ft, home to a Muslim population of around 300 households. They live in Tukuls (round huts with conical thatched roofs). The average family have around 6 children. Above Geech, you will see the endemic giant Lobelia. Measuring up to 10 metres in height, the plant grows for as long as 20 years before flowering, then dying. Another 135 metres of gradual ascent brings you to Geech camp, 3,600m/11,811ft - a large plateau with a few tukuls for your crew to cook and sleep in. On your walk today you stand a good chance of spotting vultures, lammergeyers, the endemic thick-billed ravens (usually very interested in your lunch), crows, kestrels and buzzards.

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Trek to Immetgogo, 3,926m/12,880ft, Saha, 3,785m/12,418ft, and Kedadit, 3,760m/12,336ft - 4 hours.

A pleasant gentle uphill walk of around 2 hours, passing many of the endemic lobelia brings you to your first peak, Immetgogo at 3,926m/12,880ft. Along the trail you can see, on your right, the peak of Inatye 4,070m/13,277ft, where you will have your lunch tomorrow. You can also just see Chenek - your campsite for the following day. At the top of Immetgogo you have a breath-taking panoramic view of the surrounding mountains, including Ras Dashen, and the lowlands. You can see much of your entire trekking route including Arkwasiye and Sona. Birds you are likely to spot en route today include lammergeyers, buzzards, falcons, hill chats, and larks.

Another hour of walking brings you to Saha 3,785m/12,418ft with a stunning view of the dramatic gorge below and two enormous rock towers. This is a good spot for lunch as you watch lammergeyers soar over the gorge. Your final viewpoint for the day is about another hour away at Kedadit, 3,760m/12,336ft. A half hour downhill stroll brings you back to Geech campsite. Today is a nice, easy day as the next few will be quite long and demanding.

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Trek to Chenek, 3,600m/11,812ft - 7-8 hours.

Today you begin by ascending gradually for about 1½-2 hours. You then descend with an impressive view of the cliff face and gorge below Immetgogo. You may be fortunate enough to spot Walia Ibex here and, for the extremely fortunate, there may be a very rare sighting of the endangered and endemic Simien Fox, or Ethiopian Wolf as it is sometimes known. There are very few remaining in the park.



Your lowest point before you begin ascending to the peak of Inatye is 3,600m/11,811ft. You ascend fairly steeply at first and then more gradually. You may well see shepherds herding their goats and gelada baboons. Your highest point today, where you will have lunch is Inatye at 4,070m/13,353ft. This takes about four hours from Geech campsite. You have an excellent panoramic view from this summit, of Immetgogo, Bwahit Peak, and the surrounding escarpments and mountains. You now begin your 2½-3 hour descent, steeply at first, taking care on the rocky trail, and then more gradually. You are likely to encounter 'mini' goat-herders here who are friendly children from the local village. About 10 minutes from camp there is an excellent viewpoint for potential Walia Ibex sightings. On the ornithological front, it is also a great day for spotting lammergeyers, buzzards, falcons, the endemic black-headed siskin, ground scraper thrush, and hill chat. The buzzards have an endearing habit of perching atop the giant lobelia. The inside of the lobelia is hollow and rumour has it that this is where poachers hide their weapons. There is a community lodge here which has a couple of beds and sells beer.

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Trek to Ambiko, 3,145m/10,318ft, via Bwahit Pass, 4,200m/13,780ft - 8-9 hours.

Today is quite a tough and long day with 945m/3,100ft of total ascent and 1,400m/4,600ft total descent - a day to protect those knees by making full use of your trekking poles! Take plenty of water.

Just above the campsite there is a good spot for viewing Walia Ibex. You continue ascending until another good viewpoint, approximately 280m/900ft from the campsite, which provides superb views of Beroch Wuha, 4,272m/14,016ft and Silki, 4,420m/14,901ft, and the village of Lori below. You continue ascending until you reach Bwahit Pass at 4,200m/13,779ft. From here 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 now embark on your long descent to the river - your lowest point on today's walk, at 2,800m/9,186ft.

You will see plenty of activity with local people wandering up and down the trail, sometimes with donkeys bearing loads to trade, sometimes herding their goats, and you are likely to see ox and horses ploughing the land. After about three hours walking downhill from the pass you come to Chiro Leba - a sizeable village where you see village life in all its glory, and there may be a market taking place where vegetables, meat, herbs and spices are traded. Another hour or so of descent brings you to the river where you may like to follow the lead of your guide and give your feet a treat of a cold dip. From here it is about 1½ hours of ascent to reach Ambiko village and your night's stop. The village has an attractive circular church crowned with seven small spires which signify the seven sacraments.

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Rest/acclimatisation day in Ambiko.

As yesterday was a long day, and climbing Ras Dashen will also be a tough day, we have decided to add a rest day here so that you are feeling fully fit and acclimatised for your ascent of Ras Dashen the following day. For those who would like to gain some height and help with acclimatisation, you could walk up to the col at 3,680m/12,073ft, and enjoy the scenery in the light. You will be taking this trail the following day, but you won't see much of it as it will be dark.

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Climb Ras Dashen, 4,550m/14,928ft, and descend to Ambiko - 10-12 hours.

Your big day! You will have breakfast around 4.30am, ready for a 5am start. It can be quite cold and windy on the trail today, especially before the sun comes up so dress accordingly. Have your head-torch ready as you will be starting in the dark, although moonlight is remarkably effective for lighting up the trail. You begin walking reasonably steeply uphill on a good, rocky trail for about two hours where you will come to the col at around 3,680m/12,073ft. From the col you begin contouring around the hillside where you are likely to encounter the villagers tending their herd of goats or walking beside their donkeys loaded up with produce to trade. There is a plethora of giant lobelia on your walk today up to around 4,000m/13,000ft, and you are likely to spot buzzards and falcons soaring ahead. After contouring gradually for an hour or so you start ascending more steeply.



Eventually you reach a wall which was built by the Italians for defensive purposes. There is a plateau here which is a good spot for a well-earned breather and a snack. From here it will take around 2 hours to the summit. The trail is reasonably obvious and easy until the last 50m/160ft or so where it becomes a straightforward and very enjoyable scramble. Congratulate yourself, fellow trekkers and guide as you top out at 4,550m/14,928ft, on a successful ascent of Ethiopia's highest mountain. Here you can see Analu which looks deceptively higher than Ras Dashen, but is, in fact 4,473m/14,675ft. For your descent, you retrace your steps all the way back to your campsite, making sure to take in all that you missed on your ascent due to exertion and darkness!

The total ascent made today will be approximately 6-7 hours, with 4-5 hours descent (1,300m/4,265ft of ascent and descent).

Overnight: Camp - Simien Mountains (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Trek to Chiroleba - 3 hours. Drive to Gondar.

You retrace your steps back to Chirobela (approx. 3 hours walking). Here you will be met by the vehicle and drive back to Gondar. 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 trek, the Golden Gate is packed with young, trendy locals and is a great place to people watch with a couple of beers. The Ras Dashen Brewery is also a great place with good food and is an interesting way to buy beer.

Overnight: Goha Hotel, Gondar (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Fly to Addis Ababa, sightseeing. Check in at hotel. Late group transfer to airport.

This morning you will be taken to Gondar airport for your 1½ hour flight (sometimes via Axum) back to Addis. On arrival you will be met by your guide and have a little time to complete any sightseeing you didn't manage to fit in on your first visit.

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: Wassamer Hotel / In flight (Meals: B)

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

Simien Mountains Trek & Ras Dashen is graded as a Strenuous trekking holiday, as described below.

Strenuous

Our strenuous trekking holidays can involve anything from 10 to 30 days on trek and are often in remote areas, far from 'civilisation'. Rest days are interspersed but there may be up to 7 consecutive days of hard walking. Most treks reach altitudes of at least 4,900m/16,000ft and there will be a great deal of ascent and descent. The majority of our strenuous treks utilise camping, tea house or mountain lodge accommodation.

These holidays are suitable for fit individuals who have regular experience of mountain walking.

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, Gondar and on trek
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ A single, timed group airport transfer for international flights on arrival and departure
- ✓ All internal flights and domestic transfers
- ✓ Good standard hotel accommodation on twin share, bed and breakfast basis in Addis Ababa
- ✓ All meals on full board in Lalibela and Gondar
- ✓ Sightseeing in Addis Ababa, Lalibela and Gondar
- ✓ Camping facilities and all meals on trek
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicles
- ✓ All park fees
- ✓ Pack animals to carry your kit bag
- ✓ A free high-quality Mountain Kingdoms kit bag
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ 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
- ✗ Lunch and evening meals in Addis Ababa
- ✗ Tips

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

Wassamar Hotel. This 4 star 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.



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.



Camp - Simien Mountains

Camping. Sleeping tents and mattresses will be provided, but you will need to bring your own sleeping bag.

Meal arrangements

12 x breakfasts, 10 x lunches, 10 x dinners. Bed and breakfast in Addis Ababa, 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.

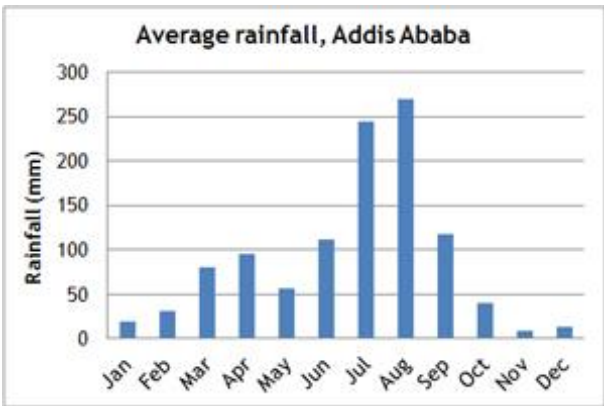
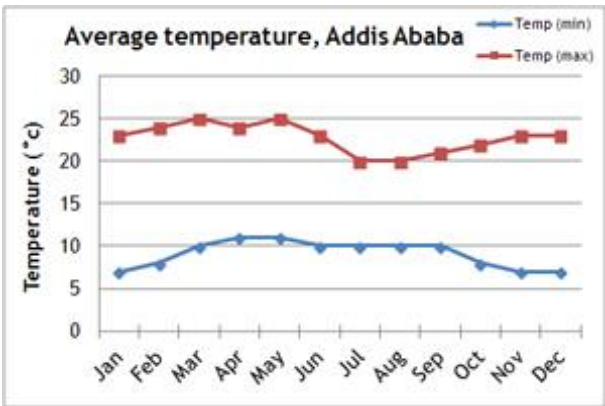
Further information

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.



There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra nights at a hotel, visit other cultural and scenic attractions such as Axum, Lake Tana or 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 include the summit of Ras Dashen, Ethiopia's highest mountain, and most importantly, we include a rest day before your summit day to make sure you feel fit and well acclimatised before ascending Ras Dashen.
- The trekking route includes the escarpments around Sankaber, Geech and Chenek where you are most likely to spot the endemic wildlife including gelada baboons, Walia ibex and Simien fox.
- The itinerary includes sightseeing in Addis Ababa, Lalibela and Gondar with highly knowledgeable guides.
- Our operations manager, Niki Morgan, has recce'd this route and believes it offers all the highlights of the Simien Mountains, and is excellent value.
- We offer extensions to Axum, or anywhere else in Ethiopia if required. We can offer a tailor-made version of this, or any other itinerary in Ethiopia. Call Niki on 01453 844400.
- We use the best local agent in Ethiopia and you will get an unrivalled level of food, support and guiding services.
- We use good quality hotels, and the best of what is available outside Addis Ababa.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects often associated with larger groups.
- 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, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. 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



My first time with Mountain Kingdoms and the holiday was BRILLIANT. The trek leader Kura and support staff couldn't have been more accommodating, knowledgeable or helpful. All the people we met were just delightful. The standard of vegetarian food on the trek was superb. It was the small surprises that really made the trip special - the camp crew greeting us with singing and dancing when we got back from Ras Dashen and the coffee ceremony that was prepared for us.
-Mrs R, York



We had a very pleasant, friendly and knowledgeable local leader. He listened to people's comments and was very attentive. Good knowledge about flora, fauna and history - an excellent leader. We enjoyed the combination of culture and mountain trekking - other companies did not offer this.
-Mrs M, Surrey



This was extremely well planned and executed. The route, length of time and critical use of a rest day were all improvements on competitors' similar treks. The whole experience was enjoyable, a thoroughly planned route, a very compatible group of an ideal size, a flexible approach by the local tour leader and service provider. The trek leader and local guide were both exemplary in providing information and looking after the welfare of every member of the group. I have been on many, many treks but few as well organised as this one.
-Mr B, London

The standard of care given by your local agents was excellent. Our guide was absolutely amazing. Not only was his knowledge of all things Ethiopian amazing, but his interaction with people we met added a great deal to our understanding of local issues and generally added to our enjoyment of this trip. He looked after our interests with a passion and was very intuitive to our needs. All the staff were first class throughout.
-Mr & Mrs L, Belgium

Good group, well protected. A patient, friendly local leader, very reliable. We were very pleased to find that MK has a fine reputation there, everyone spoke highly of MK. The country has massive potential for tourism. Some very good close contact with Ethiopian people and culture, e.g. the Tej-house in Lalibela; coffee ceremony in village.
-Mr & Mrs D, 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.

