DISCOVER ETHIOPIA
OCTOBER 24-November 10, 2018
TRIP ITINERARY

Discover Ethiopia, a country of striking natural beauty and rich history. Begin in Addis Ababa with a briefing at the U.S. embassy. Fly north to the majestic Blue Nile, whose source is considered sacred by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and watch the waters plunge down towering cliffs at Tis Issat Falls. Walk among gelada baboons in the breathtaking Simien Mountains. Visit Gondar, Ethiopia’s 17th-century capital, and Axum, the center of the legendary empire of the Queen of Sheba. Marvel at the remarkable rock-hewn churches in Lalibela, then travel to the southern Omo region, where more than two dozen indigenous tribes have lived isolated from the outside world for millennia.

STUDY LEADER: DANIEL E. LIEBERMAN is Edwin M. Lerner II Professor of Biological Sciences and chair of Harvard’s Department of Human Evolutionary Biology. Dan was educated at Harvard (AB ’86, PhD ’93) and Cambridge University (MPhil ’87), and he has undertaken fieldwork in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. He studies the fossil record of human evolution to determine why the human body looks and functions as it does. Much of his research focuses on the unusual nature of the human head. Dan is especially interested in when, how, and why early hominins first became bipeds and then exceptional endurance runners. His research suggests that long-distance endurance running played a key role in the evolution of the genus Homo.

GROUP SIZE: Limited to 14 travelers

PRICING: $9,595 per person, double occupancy / $1,775 single supplement

SCHEDULE BY DAY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24
DEPART U.S.
Depart the U.S. on independent flights to Ethiopia.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25
ARRIVE ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Arrive in Addis Ababa, capital of Ethiopia, this morning and transfer to your hotel.

In the afternoon tour take a city tour. Visit the Holy Trinity Cathedral (Selassie Cathedral), the largest Orthodox church in Ethiopia; and Africa Hall, the permanent headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

In the evening attend a welcome dinner at a local Ethiopian restaurant.

Overnight: Sheraton Hotel / (D)
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26
ADDIS ABABA

In the morning visit Mt. Entoto, part of the Entoto Mountain chain, reaching 10,500 feet above sea level and offering spectacular views of Addis Ababa in all directions. See the Maryam Church and the remains of the emperor’s palace.

Return to Addis, stopping en route at Entoto Beth Artisan, an Ethiopian social business dedicated to providing fair-wage employment to over 100 local women.

Have lunch at the Asni Gallery where you will meet the gallery’s dynamic founder, Konjit Seyoum, for a discussion of fine art in Ethiopia today.

Next visit the National Museum to see a replica of the skull of Lucy, a woman who would have lived in Hadar in Eastern Ethiopia about 3.5 million years ago.

Conclude the afternoon at the bustling Mercato, the capital’s largest shopping area.

End the day with a briefing at the US Embassy.

In the evening enjoy a traditional dinner at the private home of Eyerusalem Gedlu, a member of the Ethiopian diaspora who at age 17 fled from the Derg to Washington DC and has now reclaimed a huge villa in Addis as her ancestral home.

Overnight: Sheraton Hotel / (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27
LAKE TANA

Depart this morning on a flight to Bahr Dar in the north-western highlands. The town is located on the southern shore of Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile and the largest lake in Ethiopia.

Upon arrival, board a local boat for a cruise on the lake. See papyrus growing on the shore and admire the many papyrus boats that sail on the lake. During the cruise, stop to visit the Ura Kidane Mehret Church on the Zeghe Peninsula.

After lunch at a local restaurant, visit the market. Saturday is the most important market day and there will be many local people selling a variety of goods.

In the afternoon take an excursion to the spectacularly beautiful Tis Issat (Blue Nile) Falls where the Blue Nile plunges over a 150-foot rock face to form one of Africa’s most spectacular waterfalls.

Conclude the day with a drive to the Kuriftu Resort and Spa for dinner and overnight.

Overnight: Kuriftu Resort and Spa / (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28
GONDAR

Drive to Gondar this morning, arriving in time for lunch at a local restaurant.

Tour the vast Royal Enclosure where high stone walls encircle five castles, a complex of connecting tunnels and walkways, and several smaller buildings.

Next visit Debre Birhan Selassie (Trinity and Mountain of Light) Church, famous for its beautiful art.

End the day meeting with Nigisti Gebreselassie, the director of Yenege Tesfa (Hope for Tomorrow), an organization that works with the street children of Gondar to provide shelter and education.

Continue to the Goha Hotel where you will dine this evening.

Overnight: Goha Hotel / (B, L, D)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29
GONDAR

Depart this morning for a full day excursion to the Simien Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The drive takes you through dramatic highland scenery composed of jagged peaks, or ambas.

Stop en route at Ploughshare Women Crafts and Training Center where local women are producing wonderful ceramics and crafts.
Upon arrival at the park, enjoy a walk along a ridge, offering superb views of the mountains. This will be a gentle walk with an opportunity to see Lammergeyer Vultures, Gelada Baboons, and bushbuck.

Today’s lunch will be a picnic served outside in the mountains.

Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

Overnight: Goha Hotel / (B, L, D)

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30**

**AXUM**

Depart this morning on a flight to Axum. Upon arrival transfer to the Yeha Hotel in time for lunch.

Visit the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion. Built in the 17th century, the church stands near the ruins of an earlier 4th-century church, which is the country’s oldest and holiest Christian shrine. It is rumored that the Ark of the Covenant is housed here.

Continue on to the Axumite Heritage Foundation. Once the residence of the governor of Axum, it is now a research center and library.

There will be some free time for independent exploration this afternoon.

Enjoy dinner at the hotel restaurant.

Overnight: Yeha Hotel / (B, L, D)

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1**

**LALIBELA**

Depart on a flight this morning to Lalibela. Upon arrival transfer to the Maribela Hotel where you will have lunch.

Begin exploring Lalibela’s wonderful churches. The churches are divided into eastern and western clusters, separated by the Jordan River. In the eastern cluster, the churches are mostly excavated from below the ground and are surrounded by courtyards and trenches. Several of these are monoliths or three-quarter monoliths (free from the surrounding rock on three of four sides). This afternoon the focus will be on the seven eastern cluster churches: Bet Medhane Alem, Bet Maryam, Bet Meskel, Bet Danaghel, Bet Debre Sina, Bet Golgota and the Selasie Chapel.

Dinner this evening is at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Maribela Hotel / (B, L, D)

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31**

**AXUM**

Prior to breakfast this morning there will be an opportunity to attend a religious ceremony at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion.

After breakfast, depart the hotel to see a number of famous granite obelisks, or monolithic stelae, thought to be the markers for underground burial chambers. The largest surviving one (over 65 feet high) is by legend the work of King Ezana, the first monarch of Axum to embrace the faith of Christianity.

Next visit the Axum Museum, whose fine collection includes a display of tablets inscribed in a variety of languages and an array of Axumite household artifacts.

After lunch at the hotel, drive to King Ezana’s inscription. Housed in a small shack, this is an Ethiopian version of the Rosetta stone.

Continue on to visit the tombs of King Kaleb and Gebre Meskel.

Dinner this evening is at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Yeha Hotel / (B, L, D)

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2**

**LALIBELA**

Today, wander through the churches in the western cluster. The churches of the western cluster are similar to many of the churches in Tigre in that most of them were excavated from a vertical rock face by exploiting existing caves or cracks in the rock.

Bet Gebriel-Rufael is a strange church surrounded by a rock trench of perhaps fifteen feet in depth. In effect, this trench is rather
like a dry moat and it must be crossed on a rickety wooden walkway. Bet Emmanuel is considered by art historians to be one of the finest and most precisely worked church in Lalibela, possibly because it was the private church of the royal family.

Lunch is served at a local restaurant.

Continue the afternoon with a visit to the isolated monolith of Bet Giorgis. Like the churches of the eastern cluster, it is excavated below ground level in a sunken courtyard enclosed by precipitous walls. The most remarkable feature of this church is that it is carved in the shape of a symmetrical cruciform tower.

Enjoy dinner this evening at the Ben Anena Restaurant, which offers stunning architecture and views.

Overnight: Maribela Hotel / (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4
ARBA MINCH

Early this morning visit the fish market of Awassa. Continue on to Arba Minch—a drive of about 5½ hours—passing though the panoramic landscape of the Hadiya and Wolayita people. This is some of the most fertile land in Ethiopia, where abundant fruit and cotton are grown.

Stop at Lake Abaya, originally known as Lake Margherita. As a result of a large number of sediments suspended in the water, the lake has a red color. After lunch, travel along the side of Lake Abaya and arrive at Arba Minch mid-afternoon.

Arba Minch (meaning “Forty Springs” in Amharic) takes its name from the bubbling streams that spring up amid the undergrowth of the luxuriant forest surrounding the town. The Lower Omo Valley is a spectacularly beautiful area with diverse ecosystems including grasslands, volcanic outcrops, and one of the few remaining ‘pristine’ riverine forests in semi-arid Africa that supports a wide variety of wildlife.

Upon arrival, transfer to the Paradise Lodge and enjoy dinner there this evening.

Overnight: Paradise Lodge / (B, L, D)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5
ARBA MINCH

After breakfast, begin learning about the different tribes that inhabit the southern Omo region.

The major tribes are the Hamer, Dorze, Mursi, Karo, Bena, Tsemay, Ari, and Surma. These culturally diverse tribes—each with their different languages, customs, and dress—continue their traditional lives with little influence from the outside world.

This morning’s focus will be on the Dorze people, who live high in the Guge Mountains. The Dorze were once fierce warriors and are famous for their beehive shaped huts. Learn how they make fermented, unleavened bread from the fibers of the false banana tree and enjoy a performance of their traditional dance.
After lunch take a boat trip on the aquamarine waters of Lake Chamo, where hundreds of hippos emerge in the morning and afternoon to graze on the grassy shores. Chamo is also sanctuary for several thousand Nile crocodile, some reaching lengths of up to 23 feet.

Dinner this evening is at your lodge.

**Overnight: Paradise Lodge / (B, L, D)**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6**

**TURMI**

Depart for Turmi, stopping en route at Konso for a special visit to the home of Kala Gezahegn, ruler of the Konso people.

After lunch at the Kanta Lodge, proceed to Weyto and visit the Tsemay tribe who live in the semi-arid region of the Omo Valley. The Tsemay are agro-pastoralist and use both livestock herding and agriculture to survive.

Visit the Arbore people, a small tribe with ancestral and cultural links to the Konso people. They are pastoralists, measuring wealth by the number of cattle owned, and perform many ritual dances while singing which are said to eliminate negative energy. 
*Road permitting.*

End the day with a visit to a traditional Hamar village. The Hamar make their living as cattle herders and farmers.

Continue to Turmi, arriving late in the afternoon. Overnight and dinner are at the Buska Lodge.

**Overnight: Buska Lodge / (B, L, D)**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

**TURMI**

This morning depart to Omorate to visit the semi-nomadic pastoral Dassanech people who live on the banks of the Omo River. Board a dug-out canoe to cross the river to visit a Dassanech village.

Return to the Buska lodge for lunch, then visit a Karo village on the eastern bank of the Omo River. The Karo (or Kara), are a small tribe with an estimated population of fewer than two thousand people.

Drive back to the Buska Lodge for dinner and overnight.

**Overnight: Buska Lodge / (B, L, D)**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**JINKA**

After lunch drive through Dimeka to Jinka.

Stop in Key Afer to visit the villages of the Bena people, who are neighbors with the Hamer tribe. It is believed that the Bena actually originated from them centuries ago. Today is market day!

En route to Jinka visit the village of Yetnebarsh, home of the hospitable Ari people to sample *areke*, their own liquor made from sorghum, garlic and maize.

Proceed to Jinka, and the Eco-Omo Lodge for dinner and overnight.

**Overnight: Eco-Omo Lodge / (B, L, D)**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9**

**ADDIS ABABA**

Drive to Mago National Park to visit with the Mursi tribe, a pastoralist ethnic tribe. The Mursi live in a UNESCO World Heritage site, 62 miles north of the Kenyan border.

After lunch visit the South-Omo Museum and Research Center focusing on the region’s ethnic groups and preserving aspects of traditional tribal life.

Depart Jink on a late afternoon flight to Addis. Upon arrival, transfer to the Sheraton Hotel.

Enjoy a farewell dinner at the Gusto Restaurant.

**Overnight: Sheraton Hotel / (B, L, D)**
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10
ADDIS ABABA

This morning drive to the main campus of Addis Ababa University, housed in the city's second oldest palace, Haile Selassie. Visit the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library and Museum and the Ethnological Museum, which provides an interesting overview of Ethiopian culture, art, and crafts.

Meet with Dr. Rick Hodes, an American doctor who has lived and worked in Ethiopia for over 20 years. He is the medical director of Ethiopia for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the senior consultant at a Catholic mission helping those with heart disease, spine disease, and cancer. His work is the subject of the HBO documentary *Making the Crooked Straight* as well as a new book.

Lunch is at the Top View restaurant.

Return to the hotel and relax prior to your evening departure. Day rooms have been reserved until 6.00pm.

Transfer to the airport for evening flights back to the US.

Day Room: Sheraton Hotel / (B, L)