

# Domestic Varsity Festival Tour Packages

## Attractions Overviews

Orthodox Christianity and Islam, the two main religions in Ethiopia, have coexisted since Mohammed's time. The first believers in Islam were converted while the prophet Mohammed was alive and the first mosque was built in the eighth century. However, culturally the Orthodox Church has dominated the political, social, and cultural life in the highlands, as it has been official religion of the imperial court and hence also of the feudal establishment until Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974. Since the religion and state have been separated

In General festivals/ Celebrations in Ethiopia are great and colorful events, mostly religious, and frequently take place over several days. During the festivals days People dress in traditional costume and celebrate festivals across the country.

## History of Christianity in Ethiopia

Ethiopians date the coming of Christianity to Ethiopia to the fourth century AD, when a Christian philosopher from Tyre named Meropius was shipwrecked on his way to India. Meropius died but his two wards, Frumentius and Aedesius were washed ashore and taken to the royal palace. Eventually they became King Ella Amida's private secretary and royal cupbearer respectively.

They served the king well, and Frumentius became regent for the infant prince Ezana when Ella Amida died. Frumentius and Aedesius were also permitted to proselytize the new religion in AXUM (as modern Ethiopia was then known). After some time, Frumentius and Aedesius returned to the Mediterranean, traveling down the Nile through Egypt to do so. When they reached Egypt, Frumentius contacted bishop Euthanasias of Alexandria and begged him to send missionaries back to AXUM, since the people there had proved so ready to receive the gospel.

Athanasius agreed that the need was urgent, and immediately appointed Frumentius to the task, which needed someone fluent in the language and sensitive to the customs of AXUM. He ordained Frumentius the first Abuna or bishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Frumentius has since come to be known as the Abuna Salama or bishop of peace. His mission was successful and, with the support of king Ezana, Ethiopia became a Christian nation.

## **History of Islam in Ethiopia**

The coming of Islam into the Middle East and North Africa only three centuries later isolated it from the rest of Christendom. The Ethiopian highlands at that time were primarily Christian in the North-East, Judaic in the North-West and mostly animist in the South.

When Prophet Mohammad was threatened of being destroyed by his opponents he sent his close family members and followers of his new religion to go to Ethiopia where he believed they could be safe and treated with respect and dignity.

“The Prophet Mohammed realized that he could not protect his followers from the attacks, and said ‘go to the Habesha, there is a Christian king there. There is justice in his kingdom. Habesha is the land of truth. Therefore, go there until we achieve victory with the help of Allah.’ ~ Ibn Eshaq~

Bilal (an Ethiopian) was Prophet Mohammad’s first Muaddhin/Muezzin in Islam throughout his lifetime he was the person appointed in the mosque to lead, and recite, the call to prayer (adhan azzan) for every event of prayer and worship in the mosque.

### **ENKUTATASH - (Ethiopian New Year, September 11<sup>th</sup>)**

This festival celebrates both the New Year and the Feast of John the Baptist at the end of the long rains in spring, when the Highlands become covered in wild flowers. Children dressed in new clothes dance through the villages, distributing garlands and tiny paintings. In the evening every house lights a bonfire and there is singing and dancing.

### **MESKAL - (Finding the True Cross, September 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>)**

Meskal is second in importance only to Timket and has been celebrated for over 1,600 years. The word actually means "cross" and the feast commemorates when the cross of Christ was discovered to Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great.

In Addis Ababa, celebrations start in the early afternoon when a procession bearing flaming torches approaches Meskal Square from various directions. Participants include Priests in brightly colored vestments, students, brass bands, contingents of the armed forces and floats carrying huge lit crosses. They circle the "demera" and fling torches upon it while singing a special Meskal song.

Thousands gather at the Square to bid farewell to the rains and welcome in "Tseday" the spring season with its profuse "Meskal" daisies and golden sunshine. As evening darkens, the flames glow brighter. It is not until dawn that the burning pyramid consumes itself entirely and the big tree at the center finally falls. During the celebrations, houses are stocked with "tella" the local beer, and strangers are made welcome.

### **GENNA - (Christmas, January 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>)**

Year after year Christians recall the story of the Christ child in a manger, shepherds on Judean hills witnessing the celestial song of angels as they pronounced the Long Expected One had come. Celebrated on January 7<sup>th</sup> and preceded by a fast of 40 days, on the eve of Christmas people gather in churches for mass that lasts about 3 hours.

The clergy and "Debtera" (scholars versed in liturgy and music of the church) lift their voices in hymns and chant just as it has been for over a thousand years when Ethiopia accepted Christianity. After mass, the fast is broken so the clergy and crowd alike disperse to their homes to feast. Food and drink is plentiful, with many homes preparing special meals that are characteristic to all big festivities highlighted on the Ethiopian calendar.

### **TIMKET - (Epiphany the baptism of Christ, January 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>)**

Timket is the greatest festival of the Ethiopian year, falling just 2 weeks after Ethiopian Christmas. It is actually a 3-day affair preceded by the eve of Timket when the dramatic processions take place through a night of fasting, to the great day itself and the commemoration of Christ's baptism in the Jordan River.

Ketera, the Eve of Timket is when the Priests bring out the Tabots - replicas of the 2 tablets of laws received by Moses, which are normally housed inside the altar symbolizing the Ark of the Covenant. Priests bless the water of the pool or river where the next day's celebration will take place. It is the Tabot, rather than the church building which is consecrated and given extreme reverence. Visitors have the unique chance to experience a festival lost to the rest of the world.

### **FASIKA - (Easter, variable April or May)**

Easter is one of the greatest festivals of the Ethiopian people, celebrated after 55 days of fasting. Devout followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church offer daily prayers at the Church and do not eat until 3 PM, except Saturday and Sunday when prayers are conducted early in the morning. Easter always takes place in glorious weather and enormous effort is put into making the occasion memorable.

Gifts are prepared for children and most people are resplendent in their best clothes, usually the dazzling white traditional dress. Everyone spends Easter Eve at the Church praying until 3 am when it is announced that Christ has risen! This, in dramatic contrast to the brilliant jewel colors of the ceremonial velvets and satins of the priests' robes and sequined velvet umbrellas, make this festival entirely splendid

## **EID AL- FITR**

Eid Al-Fitr is an Islamic festival celebrated amongst Muslims in Ethiopia and world-wide. It is a festival mainly of the breaking of the Ramadan Fast. It's is also called the sugar feast or the sweet festival. The muslim faithful fast 29 or 30 days breaking it at the dawn of Eid Al-Fitr (depending on the moon sighting over Mecca) as mentioned in the Quran. This day has a particular way of Salatel or way of prayer and followers pay the Zakat and Fitra before offering their prayers. As the Salatel Eid is commanded to be prayed by the mass, Ethiopian muslims do so in most cities and towns, the most prominent one being the National Stadium of Addis Ababa.

### **Eid al-fitr prayer in Ethiopia**

The day begins by cleansing oneself and getting ready for prayer of thanksgiving to Allah with a clear body and mind. Wearing new clothes is one of main themes of the festival, as well as paying Zakat (remembering the dead by giving money to the needy) and Fitra which is feeding the less able or the poor to break their fast.

After prayer or Salatel Eid, Ethiopian Muslims go back to their homes to celebrate by eating the delicacy prepared for the occasion followed by sweets and Khat. The day continues to be celebrated by Zeyira or visiting eachother to say Eid Mubārak.

## **ID –AL- ADHA- Hajj Pilgrimage**

Id-Al-Adha national holiday celebrating the end of the Hajj Pilgrimage to Mecca, In Ethiopia, and the holiday is most colorfully celebrated at Gurage Zone and Addis Ababa. -

Eid al-Adha is an Islamic festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim (also known as Abraham) to follow Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son Ishmael. Muslims around the world observe this event.during the festival Animals are decorated in plastic jewellery for Eid al-Adha, a holiday celebrated in memory of Abraham's sacrifice

## **HIDAR ZION - (Celebration of St. Mary November 29<sup>th</sup>)**

The Virgin is one of the most venerated of all religious figures in Ethiopia. About 33 days are annually dedicated to different celebrations in the commemoration of Mary. "Hidar Zion" is associated with the presence of the Ark of the Covenant in Axum and the belief that the Ark itself is a symbolism to her womb.

This festival is attended by tens of thousands of people from all over Ethiopia making it one of the most joyous annual pilgrimages in Axum, the "sacred city of the Ethiopians."

## **KULUBI GABRIEL - (Celebration of St. Gabriel December 28<sup>th</sup>)**

Almost every Christian in Ethiopia has a patron Saint and one of the most popular is Gabriel. The 28th of December and 26th of July are dedicated to the annual and colorful celebration of this Saint. The origin of the Church of St. Gabriel is traced back to the last decade of 19th century and it was Ras Mekonnen (Haile Selassie's father) who is credited with the construction.

Vast crowds of people congregate on the day of this celebration. People of all ages, sexes, classes and religion gather from all corners of Ethiopia, reaching 100,000 or more. Pilgrims walk to the Church to make or fulfill a vow, to ask favors, or in many cases to give thanks for favors granted. Some carry heavy rocks on their backs, particularly for the last few kilometers uphill to the Church. Babies born through Gabriel's intervention are brought to the front of the Church for baptism. During the duration of the celebration 1,000 babies may be christened, most of them named after Saint Gabriel.

Title	Ethiopian Historic route Tour to Bahirdar, Gonder with TIMKET- epiphany festival at LALIBELA and Omo valley tribal expedition
Tour Code	FDTP 001
Tour Duration	11 Nights and 12 Days
Mode of Transportation ( Surface drive + Domestic flight)	Surface Drive with –Minivan/ Bus/ Four- wheel drives with domestic flights
Number of travelers	Optional
Type of accommodation	Your choose Hotels or Lodges Up market/ Moderate/ Budget /camping
Attraction Highlights	<p>Timket festival at Lalibela with Bahirdar and Gonder for the medieval monastery at Lake Tana with castle of Gonder from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, custom, live culture.</p> <p>The Omo Valley in Southern Ethiopia is a little visited area of Ethiopia containing some of the most colorful tribes and ethnic groups. The fascinating costumes, colorful ceremonies and celebrations, arts, crafts, music and dance of the Benna, Hamar, Murci, Karo, Geleb, and people are very special. In the Omo Valley region many of the tribal groups have changed little over hundreds of years and they offer the visitor extraordinary insight into a variety of traditional cultures. On this trip, you get truly off the beaten track, exploring little visited villages and vibrant tribal markets of the Southern Ethiopia.</p> <p>And the festivity of TIMKET at LALIBELA, Many believers leap fully dressed into the water to renew their vows. Timket Krestos - baptism of Christ – is merely a commemoration, not an annual rebaptism. After the baptism the tabots( Arc of the covenant replica) of each church, except St. Michael's church, start their way back to their respective churches. The elders walk solemnly, accompanied by singing, leaping of priests and young men and beating of prayer sticks in an ancient ritual.</p>

Departure Point/ Place:-Addis Ababa Bole Airport Domestic Terminal 1

Departure Time: - 12:00 Western / 6:00 Ethiopian Time

## **DAY 1- FLY ADDIS ABABA – BAHIRDAR**

Morning after everyone gather at the departure point/Place and time at 6:00 an hour flight to fly Bahirdar, arrival and directly transfer to the hotel, after breakfast take a boat trip on Lake Tana and visit two of the most accessible and representative of the monasteries with very beautiful well painting from the medieval time still serving their original function, Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam then ride back to Bahirdar on the way see the outlet of the famous Blue Nile the longest river in the world as it depart from the lake. Lunch break and Afternoon a drive to the Blue Nile Falls, (the water amount of the fall is depending on the rain), but the drive and walking by its self is great and enjoyable, Overnight hotel.

## **DAY 2- BAHIRDAR- GONDER**

After breakfast drive to Gonder 180 km to conduct tour of Gonder known as the “Camelot” of Africa, nestled in the foothills of the breathtaking Semien Mountains National Park in the northwestern part of the country was the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century capital city of Ethiopia, which was founded by Emperors Fasiladas (1632 – 1667) and was home to a number of emperors & warlords, curtsies and kings who built several castles and palaces around the area. Visit the oldest and the most impressive Gonderine structure, the magnificent castle compound including the two storied palace of emperor Fasiladas, built of roughly hewn brown basalt stone held together with mortar, the fantastically decorated Debre Brehan Silassie Church (light of Trinity),the bath (now baptismal place during Ethiopian epiphany, January 19) of king Fasiladas and the ruined palace of Queen Mintiwab at Qusquam, where the Scottish explorer James Bruce used to reside for sometimes, overnight hotel

## **DAY 3- LALIBELA AFTERNOON ATTEND THE EVE OF TIMKET**

Morning after breakfast drive to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Lalibela - the Jerusalem of Ethiopia, in a fitting final to your Ethiopian adventure, explore the first group of the monolithic red-Tuff churches incredibly carved into the rock, on the way picnic lunch, around 4:00 PM arrival at Lalibela and directly attend the festivity of TIMKET

*PM attend the eve of TIMKET, You will attend the colorful processions of the eve of Ethiopian Epiphany. In this procession, the replicas of the original Ark (Tabots) from different churches will be removed and are carried by priests under huge, colorful umbrellas. Deacons also carry processional crosses, religious paintings and bells. On the occasion, a lot of people will sing, dance and ululate accompanying the priests all the way to the place where the Tabots are supposed to make there over nights, as long as you want stay in the churches, then transfer to your hotel, overnight hotel*

#### **DAY4- FULL DAY LALIBALA -MORNING ATTEND THE FESTIVAL OF TIMKET- AFTERNOON VISIT ROCK CHURCHES OF LALIBELA**

Very early in the morning around dawn ecclesiastics and believers go to the water and attend the praying. A senior priest dips a golden processional cross in the water to bless it and extinguishes a consecrated candle in it. Then he sprinkles the water on the people in commemoration of Christ's baptism.

Many believers leap fully dressed into the water to renew their vows. Timket Krestos - baptism of Christ – is merely a commemoration, not an annual rebaptism. After the baptism the tabots of each church, except St. Michael's church, start their way back to their respective churches. The elders walk solemnly, accompanied by singing, leaping of priests and young men and beating of prayer sticks in an ancient ritual.

Afternoon visiting the brilliant feats of engineering and architecture are often by many referred as the “8<sup>th</sup> wonder of the world” which is exceptional to find eleven churches of such master craftsmanship in one place. In this morning among the eleven remarkable rock hewn churches built by king Lalibela in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D, you will visit the first cluster of churches that represents the earthly Jerusalem then you will visit the second cluster of churches, which represents the heavenly Jerusalem, finally visit the most beautiful and monolithic cruciform church of Saint Gorge, overnight hotel.

#### **DAY 5- FLIGHT -LALIBELA- ADDIS ABABA- DRIVE TO AWASSA**

Early in the morning around 6:00 excursion to Asheton Mariam monastery with Hiking/ mule ride approximately will take 3- 3:30 hours and coming down meet the car and directly transfer to the airport to fly back to Addis Ababa with the afternoon flight, arrival at Addis and straight head to southward to Awassa passing through the interesting Great Rift Valley admiring the Lake and the savanna grass land, arrival to Awassa overnight hotel

#### **DAY 6- AWASSA- ARBAMINCH- on the visit the Dorze tribe**

Mornings after breakfast drive will take you along the scenic farmlands of Gurage People. We will also drive through the Wolayta farmlands, with views of the lush green hills and valleys, on the way visit the Dorze tribe and their village, famed for their bee hive shaped houses and their weaving skills. Weaving is a primary profession for many Dorze. They are also farmers, who prevent soil erosion by ingenious terracing of the mountainsides. Around their huts they have their own little garden with vegetables, spices; tobacco and Enset (false-banana or musa Ensete). You arrive late in the afternoon at Arba Minch - meaning 'Forty Springs' in Amharic. Arba Minch takes its name from the bubbling streams that cover the groundwater forest occupying the flats of the town, Overnight hotel



### **DAY 7- ARBAMINCH-JINKA- on the way visit Key Afer Market- Thursday**

Morning after breakfast drive to Jinka arrival at KEY AFER- Tribal Market- one of the best market in the OMO VALLEY since at list four different tribes are coming to attend the weekly market, after lunch break and more visit the market head to Jinka and visit the southern Omo cultural research center, overnight hotel/ lodge

### **DAY 8- JINKA- MURSI TRIBE AT MAGO- TURMI**

After breakfast early in the morning leave Jinka and drive to Mursi village to visit and appreciate the very attractive culture of Mursi tribe. They are renowned for the strange custom followed by their women who, on reaching maturity, have their lower lips slit and circular clay discs inserted. Proceed to Jinka continue driving to after that head to Turmi, overnight Lodge.

### **DAY 9- TURMI- OMORATE-DASENCH TRIBE- on the way DIMEKA MARKET late afternoon HAMER VILLAGE-**

This day early in the morning after breakfast drive 73 km west to visit the Dassench/Geleb people; who inhabited in the bank of Omo River and we cross the Omo River by locally made boat to see the village these tribes are semi nomadic with very little agriculture on the bank of the Omo River, then drive to DIMEKA weekly market after lunch break head back to Turmi and free time in the lodge late afternoon visit the HAMER tribe with their own way of life interaction with their way of life, overnight Lodge.

Remark: - if there is any ceremonial activity like traditional dance, Bull jumping ceremony you will be informed by your guide so based on that you will pay the extra payment for the ceremony.

### **DAY 10- TURMI- KARO TRIBE AT MURULLE & - ARBAMINCH- on the way stop at KONSO**

Morning after breakfast Head to Murulle to see the Karo tribe, famous for their body painting (they prepare the ink for the painting from locally available material like flower, soil and animal blood) we will also admire the scenery view of the Omo river from the edge of the village, then drive to Arbaminch on the way stop at KONSO to visit the Konso tribe with their king- UNSCO registered site for their extensive terracing and practice of making a wooden grave mark for their hero and kings, Late afternoon you will arrive in Arbaminch, overnight hotel

### **DAY 11- ARBAMINCH- LANGANO- Morning boat trip on Lake Chamo**

Morning After breakfast boat trip on Lake Chamo, Boat trip on Lake Chamo is along the best anywhere in Ethiopia. One can spot many Hippos and the world's most spectacular concentrations of Giant Crocodiles. The water birds are great the scenery is truly unforgettable

Morning then head to Langano passing the Great Rift Valley, arrival to the Rift valley Lake afternoon free time, overnight lodge

### **DAY 12- LANGANO -ADDIS ABABA- HALF DAY CITY TOUR OF ADDIS ABABA**

Early morning game drive in Abeyata Shalla National park for wild life, birding and spectacular water fall and proceed to Addis Ababa and half day city tour of Addis Ababa, starting your tour from National Museum (archaeological and historical), which has the best collection of Ethiopian antiquities and archeological discoveries, including the famous oldest hominid Lucy; then drive up to Mt. Entoto, once used as a capital of the country -the highest part of the capital, where you will have a panoramic view over the town of Addis Ababa, finally cultural farewell dinner with traditional dinner and live cultural dance performance in one of the best Ethiopian traditional restaurant then transfer to the airport for your departure

**END OF THE TOUR**

## Detail service

### Included:-

All accommodations	Your choose of Hotels/ Lodges/ Camping Up market/ Moderate/ Budget
Meal plan:- Optional meal plan BB- Bed & Breakfast HB- Half Board- Lunch/ Dinner FB- Full Board- Lunch & Dinner	Your choose of Meal Plan, with one complimentary soft drinks/ water
Transportation (All ground transportation)	very good condition Minivan/ Bus/ Four-wheel Drive
Entrance fee	All entrance fee in the sight and village
Guiding service	Professional English speaking guide throughout the trip and a local guide in each destination and scout in the case of attraction sight and national park
Boat trips	Boat trips at lake Tana
Water	Daily bottled water
Government tax	Since our company is legal our price include government tax

### Not included:

- International air tickets,
- Any meal which is not mentioned in the included part
- Alcohol beverages,
- Tourist Insurance,
- Video filming and photography fees,
- Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc
- All expense that are not mentioned in the included part

Title	Ethiopian Historic route Tour to Bahirdar, Gonder with GENA- Ethiopia Christmas- festival at LALIBELA and Omo valley tribal expedition
Tour Code	FDTP 002
Tour Duration	11 Nights and 12 Days
Mode of Transportation ( Surface drive + Domestic flight)	Surface Drive with –Minivan/ Bus/ Four- wheel drives with domestic flights
Number of travelers	Optional
Type of accommodation	Your choose Hotels or Lodges Up market/ Moderate/ Budget /camping
Attraction Highlights	<p>Gorgeous gorges, runes of palace, spectacular scenery, paintings, peoples, customs Scenery, monuments, falls, lakes, wild life, mosques, and Churches, Birds, rock hewn churches, boat trip, culture, Ancient monasteries, custom, live culture...much more .</p> <p>The famous historic route is one of the best destinations In the world to travel back centuries back to perceive the civilizations of the ancient and medieval Ethiopia and all the artifacts, rock churches, steals, runes of palace and castles are living testimonies.</p> <p>Gena Festival is celebrated on every 06 January after a 40 days fasting among Orthodox Christians. On the eve of Christmas or “Genna” as Ethiopians refer to it, people gather in churches to pray in mass that lasts about 3 hours. The clergies, Priests, Bishop &amp; people lift their voice in hymns and chant just as it has been practiced since 4th century on which Ethiopia (Habesha, Abyssinia) has been accepted Christianity as official religion of the country. After mass praying, the fast will be broken, and then all classes of people disperse to their homes. Food and drink will be in abundance at these times. Relatives will have a chance to meet and share life and</p>

Departure Point/ Place: - Meskel Squire

Departure Time: - 6:00 Western / 12:00 Ethiopian Time

## **DAY 1- DRIVE ADDIS ABABA – BAHIRDAR**

Morning after everyone gather at the departure point/Place and time at 7:00 start drive to northward passing through the Entoto hills, after driving hundred km detour to visit the 13<sup>th</sup> century monastery of DEBRE LIBANOS established by Teklehaymanot and a visit to the 16<sup>th</sup> century bridge of Portuguese. Continue drive and pass through the amazing Blue Nile gorge, lunch break at Debre Markos, continue to drive through the beautiful flat farming land late afternoon arrival at Bahirdar, overnight hotel

## **DAY 2- FULL DAY BAHIRDAR**

morning after breakfast boat cruise on this beautiful highland lake to see the monastery church of the beautifully decorated Ura Kidanmihret, and Azwa Mariam that allows both genders. Under the thatched roof of the monastery, there are some distinctive colorful frescoes of religious scenes an impressive display of illuminated bibles written in “Geez” the religious language from which Amharic is derived then afternoon will take a scenic drive of 32 km to the little town of Tiss Abay and walk for about twenty minutes to visit the famous Blue Nile Falls. The falls is locally known as Tiss Isat meaning, “Water that smoke”. Those who may wish to descend to the base of the falls must be climb back to the other side and cross the Blue Nile in a boat in-order to back to the point of departure, overnight hotel.

## **DAY 3- DRIVE BAHIRDAR- LALIBELA**

After breakfast drive to Lalibela, through DEBRE TABOR Chain Mountains and Gashena Highlands on the way just before arrival Lalibela visit the cave churches of NAKUTELAB church, overnight hotel

## **DAY 4- FULL DAY LALIBALA- EVENING ATTEND THE EVE OF GENA**

Full day at Lalibela visiting the brilliant feats of engineering and architecture, are often by many referred as the “8<sup>th</sup> wonder of the world” which is exceptional to find eleven churches of such master craftsmanship in one place. In this morning among the eleven remarkable rock hewn churches built by king Lalibela in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D, you will visit the first cluster of churches that represents the earthly Jerusalem. In the afternoon you will visit the second cluster of churches, which represents the heavenly Jerusalem, finally visit the most beautiful and monolithic cruciform church of Saint Gorge, late afternoon Late afternoon drive back to your hotel, after dinner evening - ATTEND THE EVE OF GENA

*PM attends the whole night mass service of Christmas, Evening attends the eve of Ethiopian Christmas or locally called GENA (Gena Festival is celebrated on every 06 January after a 40 days fasting among Orthodox Christians. On the eve of Christmas or “Genna” as Ethiopians refer to it, people gather in churches to pray in mass that lasts about 3 hours. The clergies, Priests, Bishop & people lift their voice in hymns and chant just as it has been practiced since 4th century on which Ethiopia (Habesha, Abyssinia) has been accepted Christianity as official*

*religion of the country. After mass praying, the fast will be broken, and then all classes of people disperse to their homes. Food and drink will be in abundance at these times. Relatives will have a chance to meet and share life and experience, Overnight hotel*

#### **DAY 5- LALIBELA- MEKELLE**

Early Morning after attending mass service breakfast break then drive to Mekelle passing through outstanding chains of Mountain via Weldia on the way picnic lunch, overnight hotel

#### **DAY 6- MEKELLE- GERALATA**

Morning after breakfast head to the Geralta cluster to visit the rock churches of Tigray dated back from the 6-9<sup>th</sup> century established by the nine saints who came from Syria during the time of Kaleb and Gebremeskel kings of the Axum dynasty, the rock churches are carved on the top of mountain façade today you will visit the rock churches namely Abrehawe Atsbha, Wekro Cherkos, Mariam Korkur in the morning and finally ABUNE YEMATA – The most difficult to ascend but worth to see the surrounding mountains from the top of the cliff, after that continue drive to Hawzen/ Geralat, overnight Hotel/ Lodge

#### **DAY 7- GERALATA- AXUM- VISIT AXUM**

Morning after breakfast drive to Axum on the way a quick visit to the 8-5<sup>th</sup> Century Temple of Yeha after arrival visit of Axum, a place where the cradle of Ethiopian culture Christianity and the first capital of Ethiopia until the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D., On this day you will visit the small but rich archaeological museum, the famous stele park, where the magnificent single block of stones erected since 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Saint Mary of Zion Cathedral, where the original Holy Ark of the Covenant is still sheltered, however except one guardian (priest) no one is allowed to enter in to the sanctuary where the ark is stayed. Continuing your visit which includes the subterranean tomb of king Kalbe and his son king Gebremeskel, 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD, the trilingual inscription of king Ezana and finally visit the ruin palace and bath of Queen of Sheba who was the mother of king Menilik I of the 950 B.C, overnight hotel

#### **DAY 8- AXUM- SIMIEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK/DEBARK**

Early in the morning after breakfast drive through the Tekeze gorge and the Simien Mountains National Park escarpments, via one of the most scenic roads of Ethiopia and the Tekeze river gorge. This trip is a trying one, but it is the most rewarding for those who love exceptional scenery, overnight hotel

#### **DAY 9- FULL DAY SIMIEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK- GODER**

Early in the morning Trip to Simien Mountain Proceed to Sankaber, 37Kms farther the head quarter which is your first trekking starting spot, 3250 ms above sea level. Spend the day trekking around the camp sites. Lunch will be served by lunch boxes on top of the view point;

here you will see some endemic Ethiopian Birds like wattle Ibis, and some mammals like the Gelada Baboon. Around 16:30PM drive back to Gonder, overnight hotel

#### **DAY 10- MORNING VISIT GONDER- FLY BACK TO ADDIS ABABA**

Morning after breakfast visit Gonder known as the “Camelot” of Africa, nestled in the foothills of the breathtaking Semien Mountains National Park in the northwestern part of the country was the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century capital city of Ethiopia, which was founded by Emperors Fasiladas (1632 – 1667) and was home to a number of emperors & warlords, curtsies and kings who built several castles and palaces around the area. Visit the oldest and the most impressive Gonderine structure, the magnificent castle compound including the two storied palace of emperor Fasiladas, built of roughly hewn brown basalt stone held together with mortar, the fantastically decorated Debre Brehan Silassie Church (light of Trinity),the bath (now baptismal place during Ethiopian epiphany, January 19) of king Fasiladas then transfer to the airport to fly back Addis arrival more free time for Shopping and evening head to the farewell Evening cultural dinner party in one of the Traditional Ethiopian restaurant with dances from the different ethnic Groups.

#### **END OF THE TOUR**

## Detail service

### Included:-

All accommodations	Your choose of Hotels/ Lodges/ Camping Up market/ Moderate/ Budget
Meal plan:- Optional meal plan BB- Bed & Breakfast HB- Half Board- Lunch/ Dinner FB- Full Board- Lunch & Dinner	Your choose of Meal Plan, with one complimentary soft drinks/ water
Transportation (All ground transportation)	very good condition Minivan/ Bus/ Four-wheel Drive
Entrance fee	All entrance fee in the sight and village
Guiding service	Professional English speaking guide throughout the trip and a local guide in each destination and scout in the case of attraction sight and national park
Boat trips	Boat trips at lake
Water	Daily bottled water
Government tax	Since our company is legal our price include government tax

### Not included:

- Any meal which is not mentioned in the included part
- Alcohol beverages,
- Tourist Insurance,
- Video filming and photography fees,
- Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc
- All expense that are not mentioned in the included part



Title	Ethiopian Historic Tour with Simians Mountains and a special celebration of TIMKET Festival in Gonder.
Tour Code	FDTP 003
Tour Duration	8 Nights and 9 Days
Mode of Transportation ( Surface drive + Domestic flight)	Surface Drive with –Minivan/ Bus/ Four-wheel drives with domestic flights
Number of travelers	Optional
Type of accommodation	Your choose Hotels or Lodges Up market/ Moderate/ Budget /camping
Attraction Highlights	<p>The famous historic route is one of the best destinations In the world to travel back centuries back to perceive the civilizations of the ancient and medieval Ethiopia and all the artifacts, rock churches, steals, runes of palace and castles are living testimonies. Extraordinary insight into a variety of traditional cultures.</p> <p>With this trip you will experience gorgeous gorges, runes of palace, spectacular scenery, paintings, peoples, customs Scenery, monuments, falls, lakes, wild life, mosques, and Churches, Birds, rock hewn churches, boat trip, culture, Ancient monasteries, custom, live culture and much more</p> <p>Timket- Epiphany</p> <p>Timket, or Timkat, is Ethiopian for Epiphany. Although the holiday commemorating Christ's baptism in the River Jordan is observed by Christians all over the world, Timket is of special significance in Ethiopia. It is the most important and colorful event of the year.</p>

Departure Point/ Place:-Bole Airport Domestic Terminal-1

Departure Time: - Morning 5:45 Western / 11:45 Ethiopian Time

## **DAY 1 - FLY ADDIS- BAHIRDAR - FULL DAY BAHIR DAR**

Early in the morning around 5:45 AM arrival at the domestic terminal of Addis Ababa Bole Airport check in and fly to Bahirdar, after an hour arrival to the airport and transfer to the hotel. after breakfast take a boat trip on Lake Tana and visit the most accessible and representative of the monastery with very beautiful well painting from the medieval time still serving their original function, Ura Kidane Mehret then ride back to Bahirdar on the way see the out late of the famous Blue Nile the longest river in the world as it depart from the lake. Lunch break and Afternoon a drive to the Blue Nile Falls, (the water amount of the fall is depending on the rain), but the drive and walking by its self is great and enjoyable, Overnight hotel.

## **DAY 2 & 3 - January 18 & 19- BAHIR DAR – GONDER- VISIT GONDER- ATTEND THE TIMKET- EVE & ACTUAL DAY FESTIVAL**

Actual After breakfast drive to Gonder 180 km to conduct tour of Gonder known as the “Camelot” of Africa, nestled in the foothills of the breathtaking Semien Mountains National Park in the northwestern part of the country was the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century capital city of Ethiopia, which was founded by Emperors Fasiladas (1632 – 1667) and was home to a number of emperors & warlords, curtsies and kings who built several castles and palaces around the area. Visit the oldest and the most impressive Gonderine structure, the magnificent castle compound including the two storied palace of emperor Fasiladas, built of roughly hewn brown basalt stone held together with mortar, the fantastically decorated Debre Brehan Silassie Church (light of Trinity), the bath (now baptismal place during Ethiopian epiphany, January 19) of king Fasiladas and the ruined palace of Queen Mintiwab at Qusquam, where the Scottish explorer James Bruce used to reside for sometimes, overnight hotel

### *Timket- Epiphany*

*Timket, or Timkat, is Ethiopian for Epiphany. Although the holiday commemorating Christ's baptism in the River Jordan is observed by Christians all over the world, Timket is of special significance in Ethiopia. It is the most important and colorful event of the year.*

*The festival starts on Timket Eve, January 18th, eleven days after the orthodox Christmas. Although the festival is largely religious, it has no lack of secular elements such as partying and match-making. According to the Ethiopian epic Kebra Negast, the Ark of the Covenant was stolen from Jerusalem and brought to Ethiopia during the first millennium BC. Since then, it has become the most sacred element of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.*

*Early in the afternoon on Timket Eve, the replicas of the Ark, covered by silks, are carried solemnly by priests from each church to the nearby body of water. Accompanying the procession are tens of thousands of church members and believers, chanting, dancing, beating drums, blowing horns, waving prayer sticks and rattling sistras(a simple musical instrument). All in all, it resembles the scene described in the Old Testament.*

*As evening falls, the priests and the pious believers participate in an overnight vigil around the Arks until dawn. Then huge crowds gather around the water. After the chief priest blesses the water, the celebration reaches its climax. Many jumps into the water, the rest are eager to get a splash. After the religious vows are renewed, some of the Arks are paraded back in the same celebratory fashion.*

#### **DAY 4- DAY TRIP TO SIMIEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK**

Early in the morning Trip to Simien Mountain drives to Debark, 100Kms from Gonder, the Headquarter of the Simien Mountains National Park. Proceed to Sankaber, 37Kms beyond, which is your first trekking starting spot, 3250 meters above sea level. Spend the day trekking around the camp sites. Picnic Lunch will be served by lunch on top of the view point; here you will see some endemic Ethiopian Birds like wattle Ibis, and some mammals like the Gelada Baboon. Then late afternoon drive back to Gonder, overnight hotel

#### **DAY 5- GONDER- AXUM (FLIGHT) A VISIT THE ANCIENT HOLY CITY OF AXUM**

A flight further north takes you to the oldest city in Ethiopia, Axum-birth place of Ethiopian civilization, Eight Km drive to the Town check in hotel. This afternoon explore the city. Visit the interesting museum in stelae field, the impressive Stelae Fields and also the grounds of the 16th-century Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion, home of the original Ark of the Covenant, Queen of Sheba ruin palace and Tomb of Kaleb and Gebre Meskel at certain place will be dropped for souvenir shopping and stretching your legs to the hotel, Overnight Hotel.

#### **DAY 6- AXUM-LALIBELA (FLIGHT) - a visit to the 8<sup>th</sup> wonders of world**

Fly to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Lalibela - the Jerusalem of Ethiopia, in a fitting final to your Ethiopian adventure, explore the first group of the monolithic red-Tuff churches incredibly carved into the rock. Your will lead you through the network of crevices and tunnels linking each of the churches. The churches are still in use today: finally walk to the separately standing, uncovered and beautiful Saint Georges Church down to narrow path to church, step inside and you will see a robed priest going about his timeless business Late afternoon drive back to your hotel, Overnight Hotel.

#### **DAY 7- FULL DAY LALIBELA - VISIT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> WONDERS OF WORLD**

Morning Excursion in the surrounding of Lalibela: - you can decide which one you want from the following three sites

- 1- Short drive about 30 minutes Nakutalab cave but built church up into the side of a hill which is considered as the third type differ from Monolithic and Semi Monolithic churches in the town or

- 2- A mule ride or trek about 2; 30-3:00 hours round trip to Ashotem Mariam church on the highland mountain to have an outstanding view of the surrounding and a visit to a rock church believed to be the first work of King Lalibela.
- 3- Drive to Yemrhane Kirstose Monastery 42 KM- dirt road but rewarding scenery and visit the buildup cave church prior to the rock churches of Lalibela with amazing surrounding, overnight hotel

Drive back to your hotel and after lunch break take drive to the eastern (second) group of rock churches: smaller in size, these are no less impressive, with intricate carvings and many dark tunnels to explore. Late afternoon we will take you to an Ethiopian coffee ceremony with Ethiopian honey wine and a great view of the surrounding landscape and the sunset, Overnight Hotel.

#### **DAY 8- FLY LALIBELA- ADDIS ABABA**

Morning after breakfast fly back to Addis Ababa after lunch break shopping and free time for coffee then evening farewell cultural dinner in traditional Ethiopian restaurant with live cultural music.

#### **END OF THE TOUR**

## Detail service

### Included:-

All accommodations	Your choose of Hotels/ Lodges/ Camping Up market/ Moderate/ Budget
Meal plan:- Optional meal plan BB- Bed & Breakfast HB- Half Board- Lunch/ Dinner FB- Full Board- Lunch & Dinner	Your choose of Meal Plan, with one complimentary soft drinks/ water
Transportation (All ground transportation)	very good condition Minivan/ Bus/ Four-wheel Drive
Entrance fee	All entrance fee in the sight and village
Guiding service	Professional English speaking guide throughout the trip and a local guide in each destination and scout in the case of attraction sight and national park
Boat trips	Boat trips at lake Tana
Water	Daily bottled water
Government tax	Since our company is legal our price include government tax

### Not included:-

- Any meal which is not mentioned in the included part
- Alcohol beverages,
- Tourist Insurance,
- Video filming and photography fees,
- Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc
- All expense that are not mentioned in the included part

Title	Ethiopian Historic Tour with Simians Mountains and a special celebration of MESKEL Festival in Addis Ababa.
Tour Code	FDTP 004
Tour Duration	8 Nights and 9 Days
Mode of Transportation ( Surface drive + Domestic flight)	Surface Drive with -Minivan/ Bus/ Four-wheel drives with domestic flights
Number of travelers	Optional
Type of accommodation	Your choose Hotels or Lodges Up market/ Moderate/ Budget /camping
Attraction Highlights	<p>The famous historic route is one of the best destinations In the world to travel back centuries back to perceive the civilizations of the ancient and medieval Ethiopia and all the artifacts, rock churches, steals, runes of palace and castles are living testimonies.</p> <p>Extraordinary insight into a variety of traditional cultures With this trip you will experience gorgeous gorges, runes of palace, spectacular scenery, paintings, peoples, customs Scenery, monuments, falls, lakes, wild life, mosques, and Churches, Birds, rock hewn churches, boat trip, culture, Ancient monasteries, custom, live culture and much more</p> <p>The remarkable colorful festival of Maskel (finding of the true cross) Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Gondar, cultural, stunning scenery, nature and much more...</p>

Departure Point/ Place:-Meskel Squire

Departure Time: - Noon 12:00 PM Western / 6:00 Ethiopian Time

**DAY 1 - September 26- ADDIS ABABA MESKEL SQUIRE ATTEND THE AFTERNOON FESTIVAL OF MESKEL**

Noon around 12: pm meet at the Meskel Squire to attend the afternoon procession of the Meskel festival where the procession takes place with the high Ethiopian Orthodox clergies and prists are dancing and chanting by the big bonfire to commemorate the finding of the true cross in the 4<sup>th</sup> century where Jesus Christ is crucified, overnight hotel

## **DAY 2- ADDIS ABABA- BAHIR DAR (FLIGHT) FULL DAY BAHIR DAR**

Early in the morning around 6:00 AM transfer to the airport domestic terminal to fly Bahirdar, arrival and directly transfer to the hotel, after breakfast take a boat trip on Lake Tana and visit two of the most accessible and representative of the monasteries with very beautiful well painting from the medieval time still serving their original function, Ura Kidane Mehret and Azwa Maryam then ride back to Bahirdar on the way see the outlet of the famous Blue Nile the longest river in the world as it depart from the lake. Lunch break drive to the Blue Nile Falls, (the water amount of the fall is depending on the rain), but the drive and walking by its self is great and enjoyable,

## **DAY 3- BAHIR DAR- GONDER on the way detour to visit the AWRA AMBA Community and Visit part of GONDER**

Morning drive to Gondar through the beautiful and fertile countryside on the Lake Tana side on new paved road, it takes 2:30hours to Gondar on the way detour to visit the Awra Amba community

Awra Amba is an Ethiopian community of about 400 people, located 73 kilometers east of Bahir Dar in the Fogera woreda of Debub Gondar Zone. It was founded in 1980 with the goal of solving socio-economic problems through helping one another in an environment of egalitarianism—in marked contrast to the traditional norms of Amhara society.

Founded by Zumra Nuru, who currently serves as co-chairman of the community, with 19 other people who shared his vision, as of 2007, Awra Amba has some 400 members, and is lauded as a model to alleviate poverty and promote gender equality in a country where women are generally subservient to men

After that head to Gonder, upon arrival lunch break then afternoon visit the fantastically decorated Debre Brehan Silassie Church (light of Trinity) dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the bath/ swimming pool (now baptismal place during Ethiopian epiphany, January 19) of king Fasiladas, overnight hotel

## **DAY 4- GONDER- SEMINE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK**

Early in the morning after breakfast we drive to the jagged panorama of the Simien Mountains National Park, famed for its exclusive landscape, afro-alpine vegetation and unique wildlife, where you spot the endemic Gelada Baboon troops, enjoy the dramatic scenery and a troop friendly Gelada Baboon at very close distance and a variety of Birds such as Mountain Thrush, Thick-billed Raven, Lammergeyer and much more just to name a few. Arrive to the lodge check in, have lunch, after short rest will hike for about 2-3 hrs on the edge and beautiful escarpment to view the beautiful and green valley, wondering the long day eating and grooming of Gelada Baboon families and then trace back to the Lodge, overnight hotel/ lodge

## **DAY 5- SEMINE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK- visits GONDER- fly to AXUM**

Morning after breakfast drive back to Gonder on the way just before arrival visit the FELASH village the Ethiopian black JEW though they all are airlifted to Israel still there remaining synagogue and tradition of making pottery can be visited in their old settlement. Upon arrival conduct tour of Gonder known as the “Camelot” of Africa, nestled in the foothills of the breathtaking Semien Mountains National Park in the northwestern part of the country was the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century capital city of Ethiopia, which was founded by Emperors Fasiladas (1632 – 1667) and was home to a number of emperors & warlords, curtsies and kings who built several castles and palaces around the area. Visit the oldest and the most impressive Gonderine structure, the magnificent castle compound including the two storied palace of emperor Fasiladas, then after lunch break transfer to the airport to fly Axum, overnight hotel

## **DAY 6- FULL DAY VISIT THE ANCIENT HOLY CITY OF AXUM**

Morning after breakfast explore the birth place of Ethiopian civilization Visit the interesting museum in stelae field, the impressive Stelae Fields and also the grounds of the 16th-century Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion, home of the original Ark of the Covenant, Queen of Sheba ruin palace and Tomb of Kaleb and Gebre Meskel at certain place will be dropped for souvenir and stretching your legs to the hotel, Overnight Hotel.

## **DAY 7- AXUM -LALIBELA (FLIGHT) - a visit to the 8<sup>th</sup> wonders of world**

Fly to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Lalibela - the Jerusalem of Ethiopia, in a fitting final to your Ethiopian adventure, explore the first group of the monolithic red-Tuff churches incredibly carved into the rock. Your will lead you through the network of crevices and tunnels linking each of the churches. The churches are still in use today: finally walk to the separately standing, uncovered and beautiful Saint Georges Church down to narrow path to church, step inside and you will see a robed priest going about his timeless business Late afternoon drive back to your hotel, Overnight Hotel.

## **DAY 8- FULL DAY LALIBELA - VISIT THE 8<sup>TH</sup> WONDERS OF WORLD & The Surrounding**

Morning Excursion in the surrounding of Lalibela: - you can decide which one you want from the following three sites

- 1- Short drive about 30 minutes Nakutalab cave but built church up into the side of a hill which is considered as the third type differ from Monolithic and Semi Monolithic churches in the town or
- 2- A mule ride or trek about 2; 30-3:00 hours round trip to Asetem Mariam church on the highland mountain to have an outstanding view of the surrounding and a visit to a rock church believed to be the first work of King Lalibela.



- 3- Drive to Yemrhanekirstose Monastery 42 KM- dirt road but rewarding scenery and visit the buildup cave church prior to the rock churches of Lalibela with amazing surrounding, overnight hotel

Drive back to your hotel and after lunch break explore the eastern (second) group of rock churches: smaller in size, these are no less impressive, with intricate carvings and many dark tunnels to explore. Late afternoon we will take you to an Ethiopian coffee ceremony with Ethiopian honey wine and a great view of the surrounding landscape and the sunset, Overnight Hotel.

#### **DAY 9- Fly LALIBELA- ADDIS ABABA-**

After breakfast transfer to the airport to fly back to Addis Ababa, arrival more free time for Shopping and evening head to the farewell Evening cultural dinner party in one of the Traditional Ethiopian restaurant with dances from the different ethnic Groups.

#### **END OF THE TOUR**

## Detail service

### Included:-

All accommodations	Your choose of Hotels/ Lodges/ Camping Up market/ Moderate/ Budget
Meal plan:- Optional meal plan BB- Bed & Breakfast HB- Half Board- Lunch/ Dinner FB- Full Board- Lunch & Dinner	Your choose of Meal Plan, with one complimentary soft drinks/ water
Transportation (All ground transportation)	very good condition Minivan/ Bus/ Four-wheel Drive
Entrance fee	All entrance fee in the sight and village
Guiding service	Professional English speaking guide throughout the trip and a local guide in each destination and scout in the case of attraction sight and national park
Boat trips	Boat trips at lake Tana
Water	Daily bottled water
Government tax	Since our company is legal our price include government tax

### Not included:-

- Any meal which is not mentioned in the included part
- Alcohol beverages,
- Tourist Insurance,
- Video filming and photography fees,
- Tips and items of personal nature like laundry, souvenirs, etc
- All expense that are not mentioned in the included part