Tribes & Wildlife Of The Rift (ZEN)

Nairobi to Addis Ababa 24 days, departing 26 Jan 2013

Comfort Zone: Basic Luxury
Physical Challenge: Easy Hard
Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Nairobi to Addis Ababa
Length: 24 days
Transport: Overland expedition vehicle, jeeps
Accommodation: Mainly camping at campsites and wild camps with some small local run hotels and guesthouses.

Ratings for this trip

Comfort Zone: Basic / Adventurous

Basic comfort levels. Expect to rough it every now and again. On OVERLAND TRIPS be prepared to have some nights wild camping, campsites with basic facilities as well as some basic hotels, often on a multi-share basis. Some of the roads we travel along may be poor. On our ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS you will stay in simple, budget (1-2 star) accommodation with some shared facilities. Some accommodation may be on a multi-share basis and transport will be mainly local.

Physical Challenge: Strenuous in parts

STRENUOUS IN PARTS: These are physical tours; we may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through hot and steamy tropical countries. Physically it can be quite tough, but not necessarily all the time and there will be plenty of rest days and time to relax as well. The fitter you are the more you will enjoy the trip.

Countries Visited

Ethiopia

With a friendly atmosphere, a country brimming with history, tribes and national parks. Ethiopia is a country that is as diverse as you can get in Africa.

Along the Sudanese frontier it changes from semi-desert to high mountains. The highland area and the Simien Mountains are known as the Roof of Africa and are home to the ancient Ethiopian Christian kingdom. In the far east of the country is a vast desert, home to Islamic nomads. In the south is the Rift Valley with stunning lakes and flora and fauna. To the south-west are the unique tribal lands of the Omo Valley and Mago National Park.

The principle national park is the Simien Mountains National Park, and with the range of wildlife in the park and great mountain vistas, it is nothing short of amazing. The parks most famous inhabitants are the Gelada Baboons.

Ethiopia is an ancient Christian kingdom and has architecture unusual in this part of Africa as a result. The rock churches of Lalibela and the forts of Gondar are completely unique in East Africa.

It is a country full of life and colour, and this is expressed through the sound of music. It is very diverse, as so many cultures across the country have their own sound. Most of Ethiopia's music is folk inspired and is influenced from other

North African countries. The range of sound is diverse and there are many traditional instruments. Chordophones, Aerophones, Idiophones and Membranophones are the most common sounds used in traditional music.

Vegetables and meat are the basis of many of the dishes in Ethiopia. Berbere is an ingredient used in many dishes. A cross between chilli powder and other spices give dishes a distinct taste when added to beautiful stews. Food brings Ethiopians together, and the act of Goorshsa shows this. This is the act of ripping off a piece of injera bread, rolling it in the sauce and placing it in a friend's mouth. This is an act of friendship and the larger the injera, the greater the friendship.

Kenya

Kenya is a country full of life and colour; of tribes and tradition and of wildlife and game parks.

In the lively capital of Nairobi there are so many attractions to fill a few days. The Karen Blixen museum was donated by Denmark after popularity of 'Out of Africa'. The location of the museum now is also home to some beautiful wildlife including horses. Most visitors also take in the elephant orphanage and giraffe sanctuary, offering the chance to feed the giraffes from a raised platform.

Of course it's the wildlife that draws most people to Kenya due its excellent national parks and reserves such as The Maasai Mara (also known as the Masai Mara to the Mara to locals), Nakuru and Samburu . Of course most people want to get a snap of the big five but there are also good chances of seeing the lesser predators of the genet, jackal and hyena.

Mount Kenya is the country's highest mountain and is the 2nd largest mountain in Africa after Kilimanjaro. Standing at a height of over 5000 metres, it towers over the surrounding plains and is no mean feat to scale with most climbers regarding it as more of a challenge that it's taller cousin in Tanzania .

Kenya's music scene is one of the most eclectic in the whole of Africa. With over 40 regional languages across the country, the folk music of Kenya is incredibly varied. Many of the regions have their own type of music, and one of the most inspiring is the Polyphonic style of the Maasai region in which chanting makes up the song's rhythm.

Tribes all over Kenya are proud of their products, whether it is music or textiles or food. The staple diet is mainly maize based and although each region has its own specific taste, there are many that are common across the country. One of these is Sukuma wiki. It is a phrase that means "to push the week". This meal is full of seasonal vegetables which will last a family a week.

Kenya does pack a lot into a small space but don't underestimate the country, in terms of tourism it is Africa’s biggest hit!

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Nairobi

Sat 26 Jan 2013

Border Information: If Joining in Nairobi, enter Kenya at Nairobi Airport.

Group meeting at 18:00hrs. Staying in a comfortable hotel with good facilities.

If you arrive early why not head out and explore the National Museum of Kenya, the Karen Blixen Museum (author of Out of Africa), or Bomas (displays of traditional homesteads of several Kenyan tribes in an outdoor village).

Hotel for the night: Kivi Milimani Hotel
Kivi Milimani Hotel.
Milimani Road
PO Box 20681

Nairobi
+254-20-2722358

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight in Kenya's capital, Nairobi	Included in tour
NNP Animal orphanage & Safari walk, Nairobi	USD 20
Karen Blixen Museum, Nairobi	USD 14
Giraffe Centre, Nairobi	USD 12
Carnivore Restaurant, Nairobi	USD 40
Bomas of Kenya, Nairobi	USD 40
National Museum, Nairobi	USD 14

Nairobi

Nairobi is a lively city with a cosmopolitan atmosphere. The Kenyan capital takes it's name from the Maasai meaning 'Place of Cool Waters'. Today it is a busy, bustling place that comes alive through it's many markets, shops, bars and restaurants, not to mention it's vibrant nightlife. If you have time to explore the city, the National Museum of Kenya and Karen Blixen Museum are both worth a visit, or you can get up close to the Giraffe's and help to feed them at the Langata Giraffe Centre.

Day 2: Lake Naivasha

Sun 27 Jan 2013

This morning we depart for our camp on the shores of Lake Naivasha (140 km, approx 3-4 hours), one of the most beautiful of the Great Rift Valley bodies of water, to relax by the lakeside.

Our camp ground has showers and flush toilets.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the Elsamere Born Free foundation & High tea at Lake Naivasha	Included in tour
Walking safaris with big game in Naivasha	USD 40
Hippo spotting boat trip, Lake Naivasha	USD 20

Lake Naivasha

One of the few freshwater lakes in the Great Rift Valley, Lake Naivasha has floating islands of papyrus reeds and a border of flat-topped acacias. It's also home to a healthy population of hippos a tremendous variety of birds and the Elsamere Conservation Centre, once the home of the Adamsons of 'Born Free' fame.

Day 3 to 4: Nakuru National Park

Mon 28 Jan to Tue 29 Jan 2013

We have the morning free to explore a little more before departing for our campsite near to Nakuru town (120 km, approx 3-4 hours).

The following day we head into Nakuru National Park for a game drive in Jeeps.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Safari in Lake Nakuru National Park	Included in tour
Kenyan colonial farm visit	

Nakuru National Park

Lake Nakuru National Park was established in 1968 to protect the huge flocks of lesser and greater flamingos that live here. At times there are over one million of these spectacular birds roaming around the acrid waters of the soda lake that is the centrepiece of the park. Even if you are not a keen birdwatcher the sight is inspiring and it is not hard to understand why the lake has become such a favourite for African wildlife documentaries. Nakuru is also where much of the film "Out of Africa" was shot.

The park is located on the floor of the Rift Valley and is a mixture of bushland, forest and rocky escarpment. Each area is an important habitat for many different species of wildlife. Besides the prolific birdlife, the park is also well established as one of East Africa's premier parks for big game. Beside the lake, hippo, waterbuck, warthogs, Bohor's reedbuck and zebra can regularly be found. Further up in the forests there's a large population of black and white colobus monkeys; and the ultimate forest predator, the leopard. The bushland on the valley floor is home to a large variety of antelope and gazelle including eland, impala, Chandler's reedbuck and the tiny dikdik; and the inevitable pride of lions.You can also see Rothschild giraffe here, but Nakuru's biggest draw is probably it's rhinos. In the late 1980s the Kenyan Wildlife Services

used the park as a rhino sanctuary, and it now has a stable black and white rhino population.

Day 5: Naro Moru

Wed 30 Jan 2013

Leaving Nakuru, we travel through fantastic scenery as we travel to the slopes of Mt Kenya, spending the night on the grounds of one of the many lodges that are dotted around the area.

We might choose to utilise one of our spare days here to explore nearby Sweet Water Game Sanctuary or take the opportunity to explore the lower slopes of Mt Kenya.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight in Naro Moru at the foothills of Mount Kenya	Included in tour
Horse riding, Naro Moru	USD 15
Nayaroi caves (Mau Mau) & waterfalls, Naro Moru	USD 15
Nature Trails, Naro Moru	USD 10

Day 6 to 7: Samburu National Reserve, Samburu community village visit

Thu 31 Jan to Fri 01 Feb 2013

We travel on to Samburu National Reserve (140 km, approx 4-5hours).

We'll take a game drive into the park and also visit a Samburu Village just outside the Samburu National Reserve

The camp is in the heart of the park. Facilities are drop toilets and cold showers.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Wildlife safari in Samburu National Reserve	Included in tour
Visit to Samburu tribal community and cultural project	Included in tour

Samburu National Reserve

The Samburu region has hardly been touched by tourism and its pristine wilderness is home to a fascinating mix of Kenya's nomadic tribes who still retain traditional ways of life. These tribes include the Samburu, Rendille, Turkana, and Kalenjin.

The Samburu National Reserve is famous for its reticulated giraffes, Grevy's zebras, graceful gerenuks, and Beisa oryx, whilst crocodiles are often seen in the river. If we are lucky, we may also see lions or leopards here. The Ewaso Nyiro River meanders through the reserve forming a ribbon of oases in the parched landscape.

We will visit the Samburu Cultural Centre outside Samburu National Reserve. Similar in appearance to the Maasai but lesser known, the Samburu are a proud warrior tribe. Here we watch traditional Samburu dancing, and learn about Samburu tribal life and customs. The project is run by Samburu tribesmen for the benefit of the community.

Samburu community village visit

We stay at a Samburu village just outside the Samburu National Reserve. Similar in appearance to the Maasai but less known, the Samburu are a proud warrior tribe. Here we watch traditional Samburu dancing, and learn about Samburu tribal life and customs. The project is run by Samburu tribesmen for the benefit of the community.

Day 8 to 9: Moyale, Marsabit

Sat 02 Feb to Sun 03 Feb 2013

The following day we travel on to Marsabit (240 km, approx 7-10 hours). The road will be a little bumpy to say the least however the scenery makes up for this as we travel through the black lunar landscape and pass mountain greenery, spectacular craters, watercourses, bush country and termite mounds.

Due to security issues in this particular area we will be accompanied by two police escorts.

The following day we make our way to the border town of Moyale (265 km, approx 8-11 hours), where we set up camp.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Remote overland journey through the wilds of southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya	

Moyale

The market town of Moyale splits the countries of Kenya and Ethiopia. There is a nice atmosphere that runs throughout the town and more of this can be discovered through exploring.

Marsabit

Marsabit lies on the extinct volcano of Mount Marsabit. Surrounded by forests on the hills, it is a contrasting image to the deserts in the background. At the heart of the forest is Lake Paradise. This gorgeous site attracts animals such as elephants and buffaloes to the spot and this and the Bongole Crater create a fascinating location for people all over to come and gaze at the beauty of the town.

Day 10: Konso
Mon 04 Feb 2013

Border information: Exit Kenya at Moyale, Enter Ethiopia at Moyale

This morning we cross the border in to Ethiopia, we then have a full day of travel on towards Konso (330 km, approx 8-9 hours) home to the local Konso people. We mayl have time to explore the local market and perhaps take a tour of some traditional houses.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight in Konzo, centre of the Konso people	Included in tour
Visit the cultural handicraft market in Konso	

Konso
In the far south of Ethiopia on the banks of the Sagan river is Konso, gateway to the Omo Valley. The whole way of life in the villages here has changed little over the centuries and old traditions are strongly upheld.

Konso Development Association (KDA)
Some 550 km south of Addis Ababa, near to Konso, the Gersale Village is working rehabilitate and conserve land that has been exploited by years of overuse.

The Konso Development Association (KDA) is working with the local community to rehabilitate degraded lands in the Gersale village. The community-based nursery raises a range of tree seedlings while soil and water conservation activities lay the groundwork for reviving an ecosystem in otherwise harsh conditions. After touring the nursery you will be able to plant seedlings in a degraded area during a ceremony blessed by a local elder. Nametags with the name of the donor, date of the planting and country of origin will be made to commemorate the donation and hung in the nursery. The collection of nametags will represent a global village of travelers and donors who have worked alongside local villagers to restore the natural resource base and provide sustainable livelihoods through a healthier, more productive ecosystem.

To ensure sustainability, part of the travelers' contribution goes towards hiring community members to regularly water and care for the seedlings.

Reforestation revitalizes land, allowing farmers to eventually work the soil in a sustainable way, and attracts native wildlife. Locals raise trees in community-based nurseries, cultivating a variety of seedlings and create "Community Commitment" enclosures to protect newly planted seedlings. Soil and water conservation activities help ensure that the community led effort is sustainable long-term. Already, KDA and local community members have planted over 40,000 trees in sensitive watersheds and have a goal of planting at least 150,000 more.

How you can help

You can plant trees in the Gersale Village by letting your tour leader know you want to make a donation and include a visit to the project during your visit to Konso. While traveling you can donate directly to our project partners in the field as part of your visit. Upon return you can also donate to these projects on the Global Giving website online.

$20 = to plant a tree in Konso and support its maintenance by local communities

About KDA

KDA was founded in 2000 as a response to the natural and socio-economic problems at the root the region's pervasive poverty. KDA is a community-based development organization that facilitates work to sustainably improve the livelihood and living conditions of the people in the Woreda region.

Day 11 to 13: Omo Valley Region
Tue 05 Feb to Thu 07 Feb 2013

In the far south of the country lies the Omo Valley area. We drive down through this remote region (145 km, approx 5-6 hours) to either the settlement of Turmi or Jinka which is our launch point for the Omo Valley. From here we will spend 3 nights and 4 days visiting a combination of markets and small tribal settlements in the surrounding region.

You should be aware we will be travelling through very remote areas where road and sanitary conditions will be rough. We will staying in basic camp sites.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided Omo Valley Tribal Tour visiting either the Hamer, Banna, Mursi or Ari tribes.	Included in tour

Omo Valley Region

The Omo Valley region is unusual in that it is home to so many different tribes all living very close to one another in such a small area. Anthropologists believe that this is because thousands of years ago this area of Africa acted as a kind of ethnic crossroads, as different groups of people migrated between north, south, east and west.

Exploring the many small communities and settlements here will give you a fascinating insight into the different tribes, their cultures, traditions and way of life. On Dragoman trips we travel with a local guide, who will be able to introduce us to the Hamer, Arbore and the Dascensch tribes, among others.

There are also other tribal groupings throughout the area and our guide will point out the different tribes and their customs. Life is distinctly tribal throughout the region, with few modern amenities.

Day 14 to 15: Arba Minch

Fri 08 Feb to Sat 09 Feb 2013

Leaving the Omo Valley we drive to Arba Minch (110 km, approx 2-3 hours).

We spend time here to allow exploration of the area. Options include a five-hour boat trip into Lake Chamo National Park to the Crocodile Market.

For those who prefer a less strenuous day, you can hire bikes and ride around the local area, or perhaps visit the local government-run crocodile farm.

We will camp for two nights in Arba Minch

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 nights exploring Arba Minch and the surrounding area	Included in tour
Bicycle hire, Arba Minch	USD 10
Boat trip on Lake Chamo to see the crocodile 'market'	USD 65
Visit to the Crocodile farm, Arba Minch	USD 5

Arba Minch

Meaning 'forty springs', Arba Minch takes its name from the streams found between the two Rift Valley lakes of Abaya and Chamo. The town has stunning views over the lakes and surrounding forested areas, and also has an excellent and vibrant market.

Lake Chamo National Park is home to what the locals refer to as the 'crocodile market'. This is a place on the shores of the lake where vast numbers of crocs congregate, some of which reach over seven metres in length. The lake is home to the Guji and Ganjule people who traditionally hunt hippos and are famed for their 'ambatch boats', which resemble the boats carved in the tombs of the ancient Egyptians

Day 16: Wendo Genet

Sun 10 Feb 2013

We head today to Wendo Genet located approx. 35Kms from the town of Awasa located on the shores of Lake Awasa.

Tonight we will camp in the grounds of the Hot Spring Hotel.

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Activity	Approximate Cost
Relax in the Hot Springs at Wendo Genet	USD

Wendo Genet

Wendo Genet (also known as Wondo Genet) is a resort town in Ethiopia. Located southeast of Shashemene in the Sidama Zone of the Southern Nations.

Wendo Genet is known for its hot springs and is surrounded by primary Ethiopian forests. The Wendo Genet hotel was established in 1964, on land used as recreation site for the royal family until 1975. Emperor Haile Selassie bequeathed its name, meaning "Wondo Paradise", in reference to the beautiful panorama with a rich endowment of forests, wildlife and abundant water.

Day 17: Awassa

Mon 11 Feb 2013

Today we will head to Awassa to visit the Awassa Childrens Project which is an organisation dedicated to housing, feeding, educating, providing health care and AIDS Education to children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

After visiting the project we will stop in Awassa town for shopping and stay overnight in Awassa Town in a small local run pension.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the Awassa Childrens Project	Included in tour

Awassa

Awassa (also spelled Awasa or Hawassa) is a city in Ethiopia, on the shores of Lake Awassa in the Great Rift Valley where fishing is it major local industry.

Awassa was capital of the former Sidamo Province from about 1978 until the province was abolished with the adoption of the 1995 Constitution. This city is home to Hawassa University, Awasa Adventist College, and a major market. Important local attractions include the St. Gabriel Church and the Awassa Kenema Stadium.

During our time in Awassa we will visit the Awassa Childrens Project. The Awassa Children's Project promotes sensible, culturally responsible relief work aimed at assisting children primarily orphaned by AIDS, educating people in Africa's Sub-Saharan region about AIDS prevention, and offering a proactive and immediate approach towards the resolution of serious health and social issues facing the region.

The Awassa Children's Project (ACP) is a grassroots non-profit organization formed in 2001. ACP supports several organizations in Awassa, Ethiopia: a children's centre that provides housing, food and education for over 60 children orphaned by AIDS; One Love Theatre (OLT), an AIDS education theatre company; and the Awassa Youth Campus, a community center in downtown Awassa which features-free to all Awassa children-aikido, sports, tutoring, art, music and a library, among other activities. These organizations continue to grow and dramatically improve the lives of Awassa children and the community in which they live. Especially in these times of dramatically increasing food costs in Ethiopia, your support is critical to our continued success.

For further information on the project please go to http://www.awassachildrensproject.org/

Day 18 to 20: Bale Mountains National Park

Tue 12 Feb to Thu 14 Feb 2013

Leaving Wendo Genet we drive on towards the Bale Mountains National Park (180 km, approx. 4-5 hours).

We will drive high onto the plateau in search of the Ethiopian Wolf.

In the Bale Mountains we stay in dorms in a basic lodge.

Activity	Approximate Cost
3 nights in the wilds of Bale Mountains National Park	Included in tour

Bale Mountains National Park

Bale Mountains National Park is situated on a high plateau surrounded by mountain peaks which soar to over 4000 metres in height. As you climb into the hills the terrain changes from forest on the lower slopes through junipers and heather to the exotic moorlands of the plateau, criss-crossed by fast-flowing streams. This beautiful park is home to three species unique to Ethiopia; the Simien red fox, Menelik's Bushbuck and the Mountain Nyala. There are some 200 species of bird within the park including 13 of Ethiopia's 23 endemic species.

Day 21 to 22: Lake Ziway, Tulu Gudo Island

Fri 15 Feb to Sat 16 Feb 2013

North of the town of Shashemene is the beautiful Lake Ziway.

We will stay at Lake Ziway for 2 nights during which time we will take a boat tour across Lake Ziway to Tulu Gudo Island for a guided tour.

During your time at Lake Ziway you will also have the option to become involved in the Stoves and Livelihoods community project whereby you can make a donation to the project.

Our 2 nights will be spent in a small local run hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided tour of Tulu Gudo Island on Lake Ziway	Included in tour
Scenic boat trip across Lake Ziway to Tulu Gudo Island	Included in tour
Get invloved with the "Stoves & Livelihood" project at Lake Ziway	USD 34

Lake Ziway

Lake Ziway, about 60 miles south of Addis Ababa, and its surrounding area, nurtures an array of wildlife. Birds, hippopotamuses and fish roam the lake, which is dotted with five islands. One of the islands, Tulo Gudo, is said to have housed the Ark of the Covenant in the ninth century. Long inhabited by the Gurage, an ethnic group rich in history and culture, the areas surrounding the lake are now under unprecedented pressure from deforestation.

Promoting Energy Saving Stoves to Save Livelihoods
Sustainable Environment and Development Action (SEDA)

Persistent poverty has created an informal industry of deforestation. Workers cut trees to sell as fuel and women gather wood to cook long hours over open fires.

The "Stoves and Livelihoods" project is designed to improve the health of local families and conserve the natural environment by introducing energy saving stoves to communities throughout the Central Rift Valley. These low-tech stoves cut firewood consumption in half. In addition to conserving local forests, the project protects women and children, who are most susceptible to the common respiratory illnesses caused by traditional indoor cooking methods. Often responsible for cutting firewood, women and children save up to two hours a day gathering fuel. And by protecting the natural environment, the project and its champions are creating a virtuous cycle that promotes a sustainable tourism economy, which pays dividends to workers and maintains the destination's iconic appeal.

How you can help.....

You can provide a cook stove to someone in need by letting your tour leader know you want to make a donation during the visit to the project. You can donate directly to our project partners in the field as part of your visit. Upon return you can also donate to these projects on the Global Giving website online.

Even small donations can make a huge impact!

$34 = 1 cook stove provided to a family, and training to help ensure reduction in deforestation and cleaner household air

About SEDA

SEDA has been working on promotion of environmentally friendly technologies complimented by various environmental rehabilitation, livelihood development and community based eco-tourism projects in numerous districts of Central Rift Valley since 1994. The organization has focused on promoting energy saving stoves as a key environmental development strategy. So far, more than 2000 women have been trained and given fuel efficient stoves through SEDA.

Tulu Gudo Island

Among Ethiopia's many ancient legends is that of the Ark of the Covenant. One of the islands on Lake Ziway, Tullo Gudo, is said to have housed the Ark of the Covenant in the ninth century

The story goes that King Menelik I, the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, brought the powerful relic to Ethiopia in the 4th century B.C. Hidden within the Saint Mary Zion Church in Aksum, the Ark rested peacefully until the 10th century when the violent campaigns of warrior-Queen Gudit threatened to destroy the church. To protect the Ark, it was carried far south to the island now known as Tulu Gudo, where it remained for some 70 years before being safely returned to Aksum. Those that brought the Ark to Tulu Gudo came to be known as the Zay people, the guardians of the Ark. Tulu Gudo's Maryam Tsion Monastery boasts a number of millennium-old manuscripts that are said to have accompanied the Ark of the Covenant on its journey to the island.

On Tulu Gudo Island we learn about the unique culture of the Zay people. Though just 900 of them live on the island, their culture and language are completely different from the surrounding Oromo people. We pass through the village, meet the community, experience the local way of life, and discover traditional weaving. The Maryam Tsion Monastery is the highlight of the tour. Home to a fascinating collection of ancient relics dating back over 1,000 years, the monastery houses relics such as the beautiful Gedle-Kidusen manuscript, a parchment book written in Ge'ez, as well as a number of stunning platters and crosses.

Day 23: Addis Ababa

Sun 17 Feb 2013

We travel from Lake Abiyata to Addis Ababa (215 km, approx 5-6 hours).

Why not take the chance to head to one of the city's many restaurants for the chance to eat some local food and perhaps listen to some traditional music.

In Addis Ababa we stay in a hotel.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overnight in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa	Included in tour
Overland journey to Addis through the immense Blue Nile Gorge	Included in tour

Addis Ababa

Referred to more commonly as "Addis", Addis Ababa (220 km, approx 7-8 hours) lies amongst wooded hills at an altitude of about 2300 metres, giving it a pleasant climate. Addis has many sights to offer visitors and we have free time to explore the sites. Get a fascinating glimpse into Ethiopia's many tribal groups at the Ethnological Museum, see the stunning fossil collection at the National Museum, and don't miss the chaotic bustle of the Merkato (local market). All manner of arts and crafts can be found in the souvenir shops on Churchill Avenue.

Day 24: Addis Ababa

Mon 18 Feb 2013

Border Information: If finishing in Addis, exit Ethiopia at Addis Airport.

If continuing on then you will have free time to explore the sights of Addis Ababa.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit "Lucy" at the National Museum, Addis Ababa	
Stroll through the Mercato one of the largest markets in Africa, Addis Ababa	
Visit Africa Hall - a symbol of African independence and optimism, Addis Ababa	
St George's Cathedral (Giorgis Cathedral) built to commemorate Ethiopia's victory over the Italians, Addis Ababa	
Visit the Menelik Mausoleum, built to serve as the tombs of emperors and princes, Addis Ababa	

Visa Information:

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

We intend following the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often in areas without western infrastructure. You should expect that some these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation for the North, East & South Africa and Middle East Itineraries

Travelling in North, East & South Africa or Middle East can be demanding - long, rough travel days, dusty conditions and basic campsites all provide a challenge. The conditions in the North can be more challenging than in the East or South, where public camp sites and bathroom facilities can be very basic and may be non existent in the case of bush camps. You will need to be fit enough to help every day with the camp chores (cooking, washing up, general camp set up) as well as putting up and taking down your own tent. There are some long driving days and some early morning starts. The step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down the step at least 8-10 times a day. There are some long days driving on rough roads on all itineraries.

Visa Information

Most countries we visit on our travels will require visas. Some are best obtained before you leave home and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy /consulate. However our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this

does increase the cost it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

Kenya

Kenyan visas are required by most nationalities.

Single entry visas are available at the point of entry to most nationalities and cost $50USD or $20USD (post 2003 US dollar bills) for transit visas. (Some nationalities require visas to be purchased in advance - you MUST check before departure).

Multiple entry visas are required for people travelling to Rwanda to visit the Gorillas. We recommend that you obtain this in advance as you cannot obtain a Multiple entry visa at the border. However if you are unable to obtain a multiple entry visa before travel you will have to purchase Single visas upon each entry into Kenya at the border.

For more information, including application forms and visa fee rates, is available at http://www.kenyahighcommission.net. Kenya there is an airport departure tax of $20. Payment is also accepted in Kenyan Shillings. This tax is normally included in the price of airline tickets but if you are unsure, you should check with the airline or travel company.

Ethiopia

Most nationalities require a visa for entry to Ethiopia and you must obtain this before travel in your county of residency. Most Embassies or Consulates of Ethiopia only accept visa applications from nationals of the county in which the Embassy is located so for example the Ethiopian Embassy in London will only accept applications from British passport holders or those who hold an appropriate work / residency visa in their passport. Please see this website to find your closest embassy or consulate http://embassy.goabroad.com/embassies-of/ethiopia.

Important: If you have not obtained an Ethiopian visa before travel this could result in you having to send your passport back to your country of residency to obtain the visa at an extra personal cost, and could even result in you missing days of the trip waiting for your passport to return.

Please also note: If you are travelling on a long combination trip i.e. starting in Cape Town or Cairo you must apply for a 3 or 6 month visa to ensure the visa is still valid upon entry. The Embassies in Cairo and Nairobi no longer issue visas to non Egyptian or Kenyan residents so you will NOT be able to obtain one in either of these places.

Visa on arrival at Addis Ababa airport

Some tourist visas can also be issued on arrival at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.

Tourist visas can only be issued on arrival to:
• foreign nationals who are coming from countries where there is no Ethiopian Mission
• foreign nationals who are coming from and are permanent residents in any of the following internationally recognised tourist-generating countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea Republic, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States.

If applying for a tourist visa on arrival, visitors will need to bring with them two recent passport-sized photographs and no less than US $20 before their application can be processed.

When applying for the visa the form will ask you for a contact in Ethiopia please put:

Hotel Taitu
Piazza
Addis Ababa
+251 111 560787

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on this trip, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US$10 and a maximum of US$20 per day.

This will cover individual expenses such as drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

What else you need to know

Currencies & Cash

It is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Do also bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, a sensible mix of cash, travellers cheques, cash passports such as TravelEx cards and ATM cards is best. However, most of our past passengers have said they wished they had been told to bring more cash. Apart from the convenience of being able to change money in many more places, you will sometimes get a much better exchange rate for cash.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from **2003** or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on.

Cash machines are readily available in most of East and Southern Africa but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Please note that there are no cash machines in Sudan.

Credit cards such as Visa and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over $50.

Pre and post trip accommodation and connecting flights

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of your joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay. Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet. Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival, however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer as not all hotels offer this service.

Accommodation on tour

Dragoman overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. The type and variety of accommodation is determined by conditions on each of our routes. The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp. This allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. We will also arrange as many village or local homestays as possible, allowing us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

Group size?

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location, however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi for example will visit Zanzibar at the same time as groups starting their trips in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Who travels with Dragoman?

Our passengers come from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

Our Community

At any time before or after you book you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories You can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in, it's free and easy.

We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other - you can join here

Our crew and guides

Our crew are passionate about travel and always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips two western crew who are responsible for the group and the overall organisation will accompany you. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and to offer suggestions of things to do and see. In East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes. In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or all of the journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

(If travelling in East & Southern Africa, also please see the note about our code-share crew)

Your tour leader has a duty of care to all of their passengers and therefore they have the authority to ask passengers to leave the trip if they require medical assistance, are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Medical conditions

We ask all of our passengers to declare any pre-existing medical conditions and in some cases you will be asked to complete one of our medical questionnaires. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude we also require all passengers to complete an altitude questionnaire. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases passengers should be prepared for some long driving days and possible limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to region and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in. It is essential that you check with either your doctor or a travel clinic in good time before you travel.

In the UK we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up to date vaccination and health information. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

A good source of up to date information is the World Health Organisation - http://www.who.int/en/

Malaria

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your vaccination centre for the most up-to-date requirements

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wear long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping out, use a mosquito net. Wear repellent applied directly to the skin or soaked into clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights, in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

Meals and group participation

On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger, you're part of the crew, pitching in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. We operate a rota system, dividing the group into smaller units of 5 or 6 people, so that these duties are shared equally amongst the group. These jobs will include things like collecting water and firewood, loading the back locker, supervising the kitty and food stores etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals will be included in the kitty and this means that you will be working as a group to prepare meals and cook for your group. (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck, however you will still be required to help prepare meals). If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

Responsible tourism & code of conduct

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit.

You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page. All passengers are required to obey all laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs, firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any passenger found contravening such laws or customs may be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Overland travel and security

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise passengers to leave any valuable jewellery, watches etc at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice.

Please note: Any personal effects that are left on the truck, even if they are stored in the safe, are left at your own risk and Dragoman cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft that may occur.

The safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a major priority of Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers

Leaders reports from off the road

Local contacts we have built up over 29 years of experience

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. You should always make yourself aware of the travel advice before you book and again before you travel. Below are links to some of the websites

Britain. http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country

Australia. http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/

New Zealand. http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £3,000,000 and £10,000,000 respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

Emergency contact

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in theses trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries – for example they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas. We recommend that any policy has the following minimum levels of cover: Medical (incl. repatriation) £5,000,000 Personal Liability £5,000,000 Cancellation and Curtailment £5,000 Loss of Baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer_relations@dragoman.co.uk. You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for you trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Luggage & Kit List

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip your main luggage will be kept in the back locker so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is maximum 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to, there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**Ground mats are provided on our non "in-depth" overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town.*

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months
- Mattress or compressed foam
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife
- Cotton sheet sleeping bag (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper – this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp

For a comprehensive kit lists take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel have created. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list

Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 liters of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilized water stored in the purpose built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your Overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your hip pocket!

Personal medical kit

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit

Electrical equipment

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

The kitty

The Kitty is a group fund paid separately from the trip price at the start of your trip which covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

It is an amount that each passenger puts into a central fund and is monitored by the Dragoman crew. It's payable in full at the start of your trip, and in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips

The kitty system is very unique to over landing as it allows us to have flexibility on the road. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally.

The kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Local inflation and costs vary throughout the year and so we review kitties on a monthly basis. Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

Your kitty can be paid in a mixture of US Dollar cash and local currency and most of our travellers choose to bring a cash passport with them for withdrawing local currency (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM to give to your leader within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

Continuing your trip

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

Contingency emergency fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you should be prepared to contribute towards the costs and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it. On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD10 to USD15 per person.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 22/05/2013