



# ETHIOPIA, HISTORIC ROUTE & DANAKIL DEPRESSION, (ZGA)

Addis Ababa to Gondar 21 Days, departing 3rd December 2021



## TRIP OVERVIEW

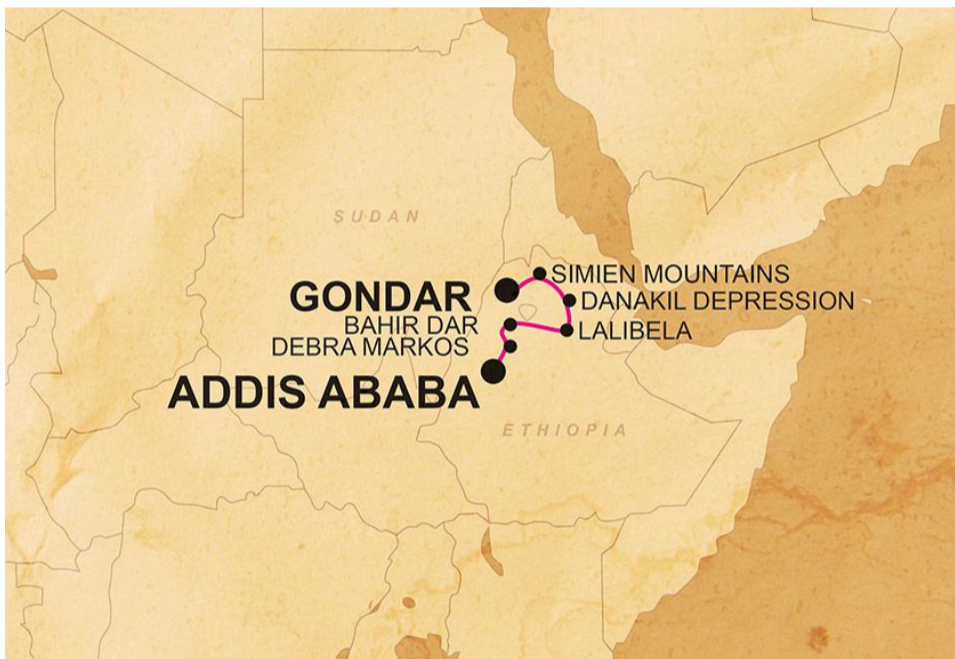
**Trip Style:** Overlanding  
**Route:** Addis Ababa to Gondar  
**Duration:** 21 Days  
**Transport:** Overland Expedition Vehicle, Boat  
**Accommodation:** Comfortable Hotel 12 nights  
 Basic Hotel 3 nights  
 Camping without facilities 5 nights  
**Meals:** Breakfasts x 20, Lunches x 5, Dinners x 5

**Physical Challenge:** ● ● ● ○ ○

Depending on the trip, activities may include treks of 3-4 hours at altitude or across hilly terrain, multi-day treks at sea level, horseback riding, canoeing and other adventurous activities. A moderate level of fitness is required.

**Lifestyle Challenge:** ● ● ● ● ●

This is a trip for people with a real sense of adventure. You will be camping for the majority of the trip and the trip will include many long drive days and wild camps. The terrain may be very rough and the roads and facilities may be very basic or non-existent. The itinerary may be very flexible.



# DAILY ITINERARY

## Day 1 - Addis Ababa (3rd December 2021)

**Border Information:** If joining in Addis Ababa, you will most likely enter Ethiopia at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (IATA code: ADD).

There will be a group meeting at the joining hotel at 6:00pm. Please look out for a note from your tour leader at the reception when you arrive giving more details about this important meeting.

If you are travelling to the Sudan and have arranged to pick the visa up in Addis Ababa, you will need to arrive at least 2 working days early to collect the visa.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Addis Ababa before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Addis Ababa.

Accommodation: Sarem International Hotel A""

## Day 2 - Debre Markos (4th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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We will start our journey today with a drive to the small town of Debre Markos. En route we will drive to the bottom of the dramatic Blue Nile Gorge and up the other side!

## Day 3 - Bahir Dar (5th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we will complete our drive to Bahir Dar, a small town on Lake Tana, the source of the mighty Blue Nile.

## Day 4 - Bahir Dar (6th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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On our first full day in Bahir Dar, we will have an included boat trip on Lake Tana to visit the famous old monastery of Gabriel Ure Kideth and to visit the spot where the lake outflows into the start of the Blue Nile.

## Day 5 - Bahir Dar (7th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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On our second day, we will head off in the truck to visit the Blue Nile Falls and take a short walk around the area to the historic Portuguese Bridge. We will have some free time in the afternoon to take optional visits to some other spots around Bahir Dar such as the 'Hippo bridge' and the Tigray war memorial.

## Day 6 - Awra Amba (8th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we will drive to the ideological village of Awra Amba. Run by the infamous Zumra Nuru the village operates with the belief that everyone is equal and should have a say in how their home is run. We will take a tour of the village and camp on the outskirts.

## Day 7 - Lalibela (9th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we have a full day's drive through the beautiful scenery of central Ethiopia to reach the small medieval town of Lalibela.

## Day 8 - Lalibela (10th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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On our first day in Lalibela, we will have an included full-day guided tour of the world-famous 13th-century rock churches of Lalibela. Our guide will be able to explain the fascinating history of Lalibela and its churches, and there will be plenty of time to explore, absorb the haunting atmosphere inside the churches, and take plenty of photographs of the incredible architecture and the religious rituals within.

## Day 9 - Lalibela (11th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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On the second day, we will have a free day for further exploration or optional activities. We will have opportunity to hike up the nearby mountains to the Asheten Monastery, visit the Yemrehana Kristos cave church outside the town, or freely explore the Lalibela churches again at your own pace.

## Day 10 - Mekele (12th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Leaving Lalibela behind us, we have a full days drive through increasingly mountainous scenery to reach the town of Mekele.

## Day 11 - Danakil Depression (13th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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After breakfast meet your 4 x 4 vehicles and drive to Hamed Ella. On the way you will pass through the beautiful Tigre Villages and the escarpment of the Afar depression, this is commonly known as the cradle of mankind and is part of the Great East African Rift Valley. Along the way you will see camel caravans going to the traditional salt mine or to the North Eastern highlands of the country, loaded with salt bars in the old traditional way. We will also stop at Brehalle where we will get our permits and scouts for the trip into the Danakil Depression.

## Day 12 - Mekele (14th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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On the second day we drive to Dallol. Here in Dallol you will visit the beautiful land covered by salt, sulfur and different minerals that gives the area a spectacular colour. We will then continue on to Lake Asale to witness the beautiful salt flats.

This is an extremely intense environment and a very adventurous three days, certainly a once in a lifetime experience. However, if you feel like your personal fitness can not withstand this pressure then there is a chance this may not be the trip for you.

Today we will make our way back to Mekele ending our time in the stunning Danakil Depression.

## Day 13 - Axum (15th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we will visit one of the famous rock-hewn churches of Tigray (either the Abraha Atsbeha or Wukro Chirkos church), then continue through the increasingly breathtaking mountain scenery of the Adwa mountains to reach the ancient town of Axum in the far north of Ethiopia.

## Day 14 - Axum (16th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we will have an included half-day guided tour of the incredible historical sites of Axum, the capital of the once-mighty Axumite Empire - included in this tour will be seeing the Stelae Field, the Tomb of King Kaleb, and the Palace of the Queen of Sheba. We will have a free afternoon to make optional visits to other places such as the Church of St. Mary of Zion, the supposed resting place of the Ark of the Covenant.

## Day 15 - Debark (17th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Leaving Axum behind us, we continue our journey with a full day of driving through the foothills of the Simien Mountains to reach the small village of Debark. The roads here are very tough, but we are rewarded with more truly breathtaking scenery!

Debark is the gateway to the Simien Mountains NP, and on arrival we will have a briefing from our local mountain guide explaining the various trekking options that we will have during our excursion starting the following day.

## Day 16 - Simien Mountains NP (18th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today marks the start of our 3-day excursion into the Simien Mountains NP. The area is home to some of Africa's most jaw-dropping mountain scenery and is a great opportunity to enjoy some incredibly beautiful treks and breathtaking views!

The area is also home many indigenous animals, and during our time here we hope to spot Lammargeyer vultures, geladas, Walia ibex, and (if we are very lucky) klipspringers and Ethiopian wolves.

We will spend 3 nights in the incredible Simien Mountains NP. On each day we aim to provide an option for a long trek (of 5-8 hours), a short trek (2-5 hours) or no trekking.

*Please note that we must keep a flexible itinerary in the Simien Mountains, as our options will largely be determined by the weather.*

*Please also note that the camping areas in the NP are very basic, and are essentially wild camps with long drop toilets. Please also note that the food and provisions available in Debark and the NP are very limited, and it is also likely to be very cold at night (often dropping below freezing), so please be prepared! You will need to bring a suitable sleeping bag and mat with you from home to ensure you are ready for this environment.*

## Day 17 - Simien Mountains NP (19th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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Today we once again have the choice between joining a short trek or a long trek. Each one will have a guide and a superb route showing off the best the Simiens have to offer.

## Day 18 - Simien Mountains NP (20th December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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This is our final day of trekking in the National Park. Once again there will be a choice between short and long routes as we soak in the final moments of the mountains.

## Day 19 - Gondar (21st December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today we head back out to the mountains to Debark, and then finally join the tarmac road again to reach the ancient royal city of Gondar!

## Day 20 - Gondar (22nd December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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Today, we will have an included half-day guided tour of the historical sites of Gondar, including Gondar Castle, the King Fasilades' Baths and the Debre Birhan Selassie church.

## Day 21 - Gondar - End Date (23rd December 2021)

**Meals:** Breakfast

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**Border Information:** If you are finishing in Gondar, you will most likely exit Ethiopia at Gondar Atse Tewodros Airport (IATA code: GDQ).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Gondar. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact the Sales Team if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

Accommodation:

## ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

### **Drive Times**

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

### **Accommodation and Meals Included**

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

### **Optional Activities**

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

**Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564**

## **A FEW RULES**

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

## **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](mailto: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.

# IMPORTANT NOTES

## OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

## SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

## VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)
- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

## ALTITUDE WARNING

### **Warning - this trip goes above 2800m.**

Please note that this trip spends time above 2800 metres/9200 feet where it is possible for travellers to experience some adverse effects on your health due to the altitude, potentially including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). Because of this it is very important that you make yourself aware of the cause and effects of travelling at altitude and monitor your health during this trip.

For further information please [download our AMS information sheet](#) or refer to the following website: [www.high-altitude-medicine.com](http://www.high-altitude-medicine.com). If you are starting your trip in a destination above 2800m/9200ft we strongly advise reading this information prior to arrival. Your leader will also hand you a copy of the AMS information sheet during your trip as well as holding a short meeting prior to travelling to altitudes above 2800m/9200ft for the first time.

**Some travel insurance companies will stipulate a maximum altitude limit. Please ensure that you are covered and if necessary pay the additional premium of extended cover.**

## ETHIOPIA NOTES

### ETHIOPIA NOTE

Please note that accommodation prices in Ethiopia may significantly increase during late December and January due to several national holidays surrounding Coptic Christmas; this may push the price of the kitty up an extra **USD50** per person. We will endeavour to negotiate and save money on the ground where possible, but please be aware that we are likely to need extra money in the kitty for trips over this time.

Please also note that we must keep a flexible itinerary in the Simien Mountains, as our options will largely be determined by the weather. The camping areas in the Simien Mountains National Park are very basic, and are essentially wild camps with long drop toilets. The food and provisions available in Debark and the National Park are very limited, and it is also likely to be very cold at night (often dropping below freezing), so please be prepared by bringing suitably warm clothes, and a 4-season sleeping bag and sleeping mat.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 15th June 2021**