

Information for the travelers in Ethiopia

♦ **1. Land**

Ethiopia covers an area of 1.14 million sq. kilometers or 944,000sq.miles.

♦ **2.Cilmate**

There are two seasons: the dry season prevails from October through May: the wet season turns from June to September.

♦ **3. Topography**

Ethiopia has an elevated central plateau varying in height between 2,000 and 3,000meters. In the north and center of the country there are some 25 mountains whose peaks rise over 4,000 meters. The most famous Ethiopian river is the Blue Nile (or Abbay), which runs a distance of 1,450 kilometers from the source in Lake Tana, to join the White Nile at Khartoum.

♦ **4. Economy**

About 90 percent of the population earns their living from the land, mainly as subsistence farmers. Agriculture is the backbone of the national economy and the principal exports from this sector are coffee, oil send, pulses, flowers, vegetables sugar and foodstuffs for animals. There is also a thriving livestock sector, exporting cattle on the hoof and hides and skins.

♦ **5. Language**

Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic state with a great variety of languages spoken in the country, of which there are 83 with 200 dialects. The main three languages are Amharic, Tigrigna and Oromigna. English is also widely spoken.

♦ **6.Electric Supply**

Ethiopia uses 220 volts 50 cycles Ac.

♦ **7.Time**

Ethiopia is the GMT +3 hours time zone. Ethiopia follows the Julian calendar.

♦ **8.People**

The population is estimated at 71 million (as of 2004), over 50 per cent of whom are under 20 years old.

♦ **9.Excursioins**

Excursions within Ethiopia, whether for a day or for a month, may be organized for you by any of the travel agencies or by the National Tour Operations.

♦ **10.Hotels**

Addis Ababa has hotels that cater for all pockets, from the luxurious Sheraton and Hilton hotels to the tourist-class hotels such as the Gion, the Ethiopia and the Wabi Shebelle. All tourist resorts offer a choice of modern hotels.

♦ **11.Banking Hours**

Banking hours are usually from 8:00 A.M- 4:00P.M from Monday to Friday and from 8:00 A.M– 11:00 P.M on Saturdays. Closing times may be an hour longer in some private Banks.

Most Banks work through lunch time. However foreign exchange services are closed during lunch hours (12:00 noon - 1:00P.M).

♦ **12. Currency**

The local currency is the Ethiopia Birr, made up of 100 cents. Birr notes are available in denominations of 5, 10, 50 and 100. Visitors may import an unlimited amount of foreign currency, but this must be declared on arrival to the customs authorities on the appropriate blue colored form. Foreign currency may only be changed at authorized bank and hotels and a receipt must be obtained. The copy of currency declaration form must be retained, as it will be required by customs on departure. Visitors, however, will be able to change back any excess Ethiopia Birr to foreign currency at the airport before departure. If you do have Ethiopian Birr to cash at the airport, you must, in addition to the currency declaration form, bring with you all the receipts for exchange transaction.

♦ **13. Customs**

Duty-free imported are permitted for up to:

- A) 200 cigarettes, or 50 cigars, or ½ lb of tobacco.
- B) 2 liters of alcoholic beverages
- C) Half-liter or two bottles of perfumes.

Visitors may export souvenirs, although some articles (such as animal skin and antiques) require an export permit.

♦ **14. Communications**

Telephone, fax and internet access is available in Addis Ababa in most Hotels, at the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation Main Office and at private internet service centers situated around the city.

♦ **15. Public Holidays**

Public holidays are celebrated according to the Ethiopian (Julian)calendar which consists of twelve months of thirty days each and a thirteen month of five days (six days in leap year). The calendar is seven years behind the Western or Gregorian calendar, with New Year falling in the month of September.

September 11	Ethiopia New Year
September 27	The Finding of the True Cross (Meskal)
December 6 *	Id Al Fater
January 7	Ethiopian Christmas
January 19	Ethiopian Epiphany
February 11*	Id Al Adaha
March 2	Victory of Adwa
April 25	Ethiopian Good Friday
April 27	Ethiopia Eastern
May 1	International labor day
May 5	Ethiopian patriots' Victory day
May 13	Moulid (Birth of the prophet Mohamed)
May 28	Downfall of the Dergue regime

* The holidays of Id Al Fater and Id Adaha have movable dates.

♦ **16. Health Requirements**

Prior to entry, visitors should be in possession of the valid health certificate for yellow fever. Vaccination against cholera is also required for any person who has visited or transited a cholera- infected area within six days prior to arrival in Ethiopia.

♦ **17. Visa and Immigration requirements**

Visa applications may be made at Ethiopian's diplomatic mission overseas. However, nationals of 33 countries below are now allowed to receive their tourist visas on arrival in Ethiopia at the regular charge. The list includes Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States. For China including passport issued in Hong Kong (SAR China) and Macao (SAR China), Visa is available on arrival.

♦ **18. Courier and Money Transfer Services**

Money transfers can be made through Western Union and Money Gram. Both have representative branches in Addis Ababa and also make their services available from Private and National Banks. For courier services, DHL, FedEx, UPS, TNT and EMS have Office in Addis Ababa.

♦ **19. Bole International Airport**

The new Bole International Airport is situated 8 kilometers from the center of the city (a 15 minute drive under normal conditions). Paid parking, luggage carts and uniformed porters are available at the Airport terminal.

Taxis are readily available. The National Tour Operation (NTO) has yellow Mercedes sedans which can be ordered at their Airport Desk. The rates for these taxis are fixed and receipts will be given if requested. Privately-owned blue cabs and yellow cabs are also in abundance, but do not have fixed rates; establishing their fare is advisable before getting in to the vehicle. Foreign exchange services is available at the arrivals lounge.

Security at the Airport is tight and travelers need to produce their tickets and passport to enter the terminal Building. All other visitors are required to pay a fee of two Ethiopian Birr at the booths located in the parking lot and need to show identification cards at the guard post.

Source: Ethiopian Airline, worldwide timetable booklet