



Officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the landlocked country is in the Horn of Africa. Found north of Kenya, the capital and largest city, Addis Ababa is just west of the East African Rift that began developing about 25 million years ago. There is evidence that some of the earliest human ancestors, hominids, occupied this region over four million years ago. Most notably, the discovery of "Lucy" was found in the Awash Valley in Ethiopia. Some of the oldest Hominid fossils have also been discovered in the Omo region, dating to about 200,000 years ago.

Often considered the birthplace of coffee, cultivation of coffee beans began in the 9th century and Ethiopia produces the most coffee of any other nation in Africa. It provides income for about 15 million Ethiopians. Other exports include gold, leather, and more recently, flowers and plants.

There are nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Ethiopia, making it a well sought-out destination. The rich history of the country from antiquity through to recent times has seen empires, kingdoms, and dynasties leave their cultural, architectural, and religious mark throughout the country. Lakani World Tours can create an itinerary suited to your interests.

Arrive in the capital city of Addis Ababa and tour its National Museum and Trinity Cathedral. Fly to Axum, home to 1700-year-old monuments called steles. Located in the Tigray region, Axum was the center of the Aksumite Empire, that ruled the region from about 400 BCE until the 10th century. Visit the Northern Stelae Park as well as fine archaeological and ethnographic museums. Travel to Lalibela, one of the most important religious sites in the Christian world. Explore the Rock-Hewn Churches constructed during the 12th and 13th centuries. There are 11 unique churches, with many of them connected by tunnels and trenches. They were designed to represent the city of Jerusalem for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and the pilgrimage site continues to be used for daily worship, as well as a home to clergy and a gathering place for festivals and religious groups and leaders. Take a flight to Gondar, where you see the Royal Enclosure, the remains of a fortress surrounded by a 3,000-foot-long wall. From there you may drive to Bahir Dar, stopping at Amhara villages along the way, to view famous monasteries and the Blue Nile Falls. Then return to Addis Ababa for your homeward bound flight.

#### **Ethiopia Highlights include:**

- Visit the Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion and its on-site museum with many priceless relics
- Admire the 120 steles at Stele Field, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- See the churches in Lalibela, some hidden in enormous caves
- Experience Ethiopian cooking traditions in a local home
- Seek Gelada Baboons on an excursion to the Simien Mountains National Park
- Browse the Merkato, the largest open-air market in Africa

Best Time to Visit:

**MAY – OCT**

