

SPIEKERMANN

TRAVEL SERVICE



ETHIOPIA (With Timket celebration) & SOMALIA

January 15 – January 27, 2027

Led by Local Guides

Friday, January 15

Arrive in Addis Ababa - Lalibela (ETHIOPIA)

Upon arrival in Addis Ababa, connect to the flight to Lalibela, a UNESCO World Heritage Site often referred to as the “Eighth Wonder of the World.” Built in the 12th century by King Lalibela of the Zagwe Dynasty, the rock-hewn churches were carved over a period of 24 years from a single mass of stone. Upon arrival, meet the local representative and transfer to *Harbe Hotel or similar* for check-in. After lunch, begin the guided tour of the first group of rock-hewn churches, including **Bete Medhanealem** (“House of the Savior of the World”), **Bete Maryam**, **Bete Meskel**, **Bete Denagil**, **Debre Sina**, and **Bete Golgotha**, including the Selassie Chapel. These remarkable structures are interconnected by trenches and courtyards and represent a unique architectural tradition found only in Ethiopia. Return to the Hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, January 16

Lalibela - Addis Ababa

After breakfast, continue the exploration of Lalibela with visits to the second group of churches, including **Bete Emanuel**, **Bete Merkorios**, **Bete Abba Libanos**, **Bete**

Lehem, and the double church of **Bete Gabriel-Rufael**. These churches reflect advanced Axumite architectural influences and strong religious symbolism.

After touring, transfer to the airport for the flight back to Addis Ababa. Upon arrival, transfer to the *Jupiter Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, January 17

Addis Ababa - Gonder

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight to Gonder, the 17th-century capital of Ethiopia. Upon arrival, transfer to the *Goha Hotel or similar*. Begin a city tour with a visit to the **Royal Enclosure**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring the castles of Emperor Fasiledas and his successors. Continue to the **Bath of Fasiledas**, an important site during the Timket celebrations, and visit **Debre Birhan Selassie Church**, renowned for its magnificent wall and ceiling paintings depicting biblical scenes and angelic figures. Also visit **Kuskuam Monastery**, associated with Empress Mentewab and Ethiopian imperial history. Return to the Hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, January 18
Gonder (Ketera – Timket Eve)

In the afternoon, attend **Ketera**, the eve of Timket (Epiphany), commemorating the baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan. On this day, the **Tabots** (replicas of the Ark of the Covenant) are ceremonially removed from their churches and carried in procession to the Bath of Fasiledas, accompanied by priests chanting, dancing, and playing traditional instruments. The Tabots remain overnight by the water in preparation for the main celebration. Return to the *Hotel* in the evening for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, January 19
Gonder (Timket – Epiphany Celebration)

Very early in the morning, proceed to the **Bath of Fasiledas** to witness the climax of the **Timket celebration**. The blessing of the water by high priests marks the most dramatic moment, followed by joyful scenes as participants plunge into the pool. After the ceremony, the Tabots are escorted back to their respective churches in colorful processions filled with music and ritual. Return to the Hotel for a late breakfast and rest, followed by continued participation in the afternoon processions. Dinner and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, January 20
Gonder – Bahir Dar

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the short flight to Bahir Dar. Upon arrival, transfer to the *Hotel* and embark on a boat excursion on **Lake Tana**, the largest lake in Ethiopia and a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Visit the 13th-century island monastery of **Ura Kidane Mihiret**, known for its vibrant biblical paintings. Observe traditional papyrus boats along the lake and view the point where the **Blue Nile** flows out of Lake Tana. If fortunate, hippos may be spotted near the shoreline. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, January 21
Bahir Dar - Axum

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight to Axum via Addis Ababa. Upon arrival, begin touring with a visit to the **Archaeological Museum**, followed by **Stelae Park**, home to towering granite obelisks including the famous stela returned from Rome. Transfer to the *Consular Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, January 22
Axum – Addis Ababa

After breakfast, continue the city tour with visits to the **Palace of the Queen of Sheba**, the **Church of St. Mary of Zion** and its museum, the **Bath of the Queen of Sheba**, the **Tombs of King Kaleb and Gebre Meskel**, the **Ezana Stones**, and the **Tomb of King Bazen**, believed to date to the time of Christ. After lunch, transfer to the airport for the flight to Addis Ababa. Upon arrival, transfer to the *Jupiter Hotel or similar* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, January 23
Addis Ababa (Melka Kunture & Tiya Stelae)

After breakfast, drive south to visit the UNESCO-listed **Tiya Stelae**, featuring a remarkable collection of intricately carved stone monuments dating between the 10th and 15th centuries. Continue to **Melka Kunture**, an important archaeological site revealing stone tools and evidence of early human activity. After a picnic lunch, return to Addis Ababa. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at a traditional restaurant featuring live music and cultural performances. Overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, January 24
Addis Ababa – Mogadishu (**SOMALIA)**

After breakfast, transfer to the airport to your flight to Somalia. Upon arrival in **Mogadishu**, the Capital of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The city was chosen by the Italians to be the capital of Italian Somalia in 1905 and since then it has been the main city of Somalia. Mogadishu's authority over the rest of the country since 191, is symbolic, since both the city and the rest of Somalia are divided into zones of influence government by clans. Upon arrival in the early afternoon, meet your guide and head for lunch then head to visit the **Old Italian Cathedral** (with special permission), a stunning structure built in 1928, which was tragically destroyed in 1992 during the onset of the Mogadishu Civil War. Next, visit the **Unknown Soldier Monument**, erected in 1964 to honor those who fought for Somalia's independence. Afterward, make your way to the **Grand Mosque**, where you can admire its architecture from the outside. Transfer to *Shamo Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight **(B,D)**

Monday, January 25
Mogadishu

After breakfast, start the day with a visit to **Liido Beach**, the premier leisure destination in the capital. Enjoy a scenic 20-minute **boat ride**, offering the perfect opportunity to take a refreshing swim in the clear waters. As you relax by the shore, interact with friendly locals and savor a warm cup of tea or coffee. Next, head to the **Camel Farm** for a unique experience, where you will have the chance to sample fresh camel milk and learn about these fascinating creatures. Return to the Hotel for lunch and enjoy some free time before heading out for further exploration of the city. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, January 26
Mogadishu

Start the day with breakfast at the *Hotel*, then head to the scenic **Fishing Dock**, where you will have the opportunity to capture stunning photos of the harbor and its surroundings. From there, visit the iconic **lighthouse**, built in 1934, and admire its impressive structure from the outside. Take a relaxing break at a modern, **local café** where you can sip on refreshing tea or coffee while engaging with friendly locals, offering you a glimpse into the vibrant community. Continue the cultural exploration

with visits to both a **primary** and **secondary school**. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the education system and interact with the curious children, adding a personal touch to your experience. Return to the *Hotel* for lunch, and if you wish, enjoy an optional guitar performance for some light entertainment. Next, embark on a visit to **Hamar-Weyn**, the oldest market in Mogadishu. Wander through the maze of narrow streets, exploring the bustling shops and vibrant market atmosphere. This is your chance to meet locals, soak in the lively environment, and take in the essence of the country. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, January 27

Mogadishu - USA

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back home. **(B)**

We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed

Tour Cost (Land Only):

\$7,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$495.00

Price based on a minimum of 2 travelers & maximum 6 travelers.



Tour Includes:

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- Domestic air in Ethiopia.
- Accommodation in standard first-class hotels and lodges as mentioned or best available and 4* Hotels and accommodations.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Bottled water while on tours and safaris.
- English-speaking guides during all tours.
- Transportation by 4WD Land cruiser.
- All entrance fees to mentioned sites.
- Visa support documents (if required).

Tour does not include:

- International Airfare USA - Addis - Mogadishu -USA.
- One way air (Addis to Mogadishu)- Currently approx.. \$400.00
- **Ethiopia Visa** (Currently an e-visa & cost is approx. \$62.00) (<https://www.evisa.gov.et/visa>) - subject to change.
- **Somalia visa** (currently - \$60.00 - subject to change.
- Alcoholic and Drinks with or without meals & meals not mentioned.
- Tips to personal porters during primate trekking.
- Any price increase imposed by local suppliers.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, internet fees, etc.).
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Gratuities to guide, driver, porters, hotel staff, etc.
- Travel protection insurance (HIGHLY recommended).