



ETHIOPIA TOURISM
ORGANIZATION

Explore

ETHIOPIA

ONE COUNTRY: MANY CONTRASTS

Gonder



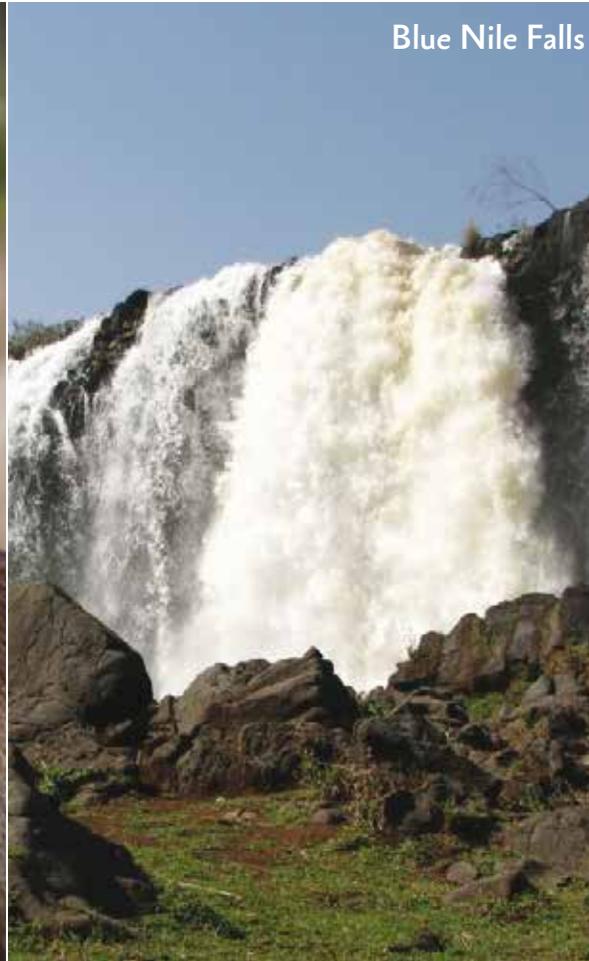
Erta Ale Volcano



Walia Ibex



Blue Nile Falls



Gheralta Mountains



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Ethiopian
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THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

ETHIOPIA RISING

I take pride in the publication of this guide. Explore Ethiopia is a publication that will herald a new dawn for tourism development in Ethiopia.

Our intention is to help build on this so that we can showcase the very best of Ethiopia as a tourism and investment destination.

The Ethiopia Tourism Organization (ETO) was formed by the government of Ethiopia as the sole marketing agency for destination Ethiopia. The ETO is also tasked with the role of developing new tourism products for Ethiopia.

BRAND ETHIOPIA

Our goal, therefore is to package this destination and present a new vibrant brand for Ethiopia as a destination.

Tourism is today one of the major drivers of the global economy and has a profound impact, especially in the developing world.

However, in Africa, we have not been able to realize our full potential and this is the role that the team at the ETO is tasked at achieving.

Our strategy to grow our numbers is pegged on a number of programmes

that we intend to roll out over the next three to four years to ensure that our destination stands out. Currently, we are working on an inventory of our tourism products before going out to the market to show what Ethiopia as a destination has to offer.

PARTNERSHIPS

One of our major strategies will be pegged on partnerships with other tourism stakeholders in Ethiopia, in the region and internationally.

For instance, we have partnered with national carrier Ethiopian Airlines, which has over the years built a strong brand for Ethiopia as a destination and it is through this partnership that we expect to fly the Ethiopian flag higher.

Through this partnership, we intend to come up with joint marketing platforms through the airline's already existing marketing infrastructure. We see this as a fantastic and more cost-effective form marketing our destination.

Furthermore, we want to partner with other tourism marketing agencies in the region and internationally. This is guided on the need to gain best practices from

some destinations that are already established.

There is not a doubt that Ethiopia is rising and rising very fast. We want to sustain this by growing our economy further.

OUR GOAL, THEREFORE IS TO PACKAGE THIS DESTINATION AND PRESENT A NEW VIBRANT BRAND FOR ETHIOPIA AS A DESTINATION

Tourism is one sector that has the potential of taking Ethiopia to a whole new level and it is through this organization and co-operation with other organizations that we intend to make this possible.



Solomon TADESSE,
Chief Executive Officer,
Ethiopia Tourism
Organization

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This is Ethiopia

THE GIFTED LAND

Ethiopia is a land of wonder and enchantment; a country that boasts one of the richest histories on the African continent.

Ethiopia is a land of full of contrasts, a land of remote and wild locations and a land that is home to cultured and friendly people. A people who are believed to have descended from some of the world's oldest civilizations.

It gives me great pleasure to work in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Ethiopia Tourism Organization towards the production of Explore Ethiopia. This guide will go a long way towards highlighting the magical beauty of Ethiopia.

This very land is the home of the fabled Queen of Sheba, the birthplace of coffee and is believed to be the home of the Biblical Ark of the Covenant.

A trip to Ethiopia, is quite literary, a home-coming for all peoples of the world. This is because it is in the Ethiopian Rift Valley, a volcanic scar that bisects this great land, where hominids first walked on two feet.

Known to many as the enchanted land or in some quarters as the gifted land, it is easy to see why. This is because Ethiopia is a land of contrasting landscapes, ancient civilizations and unique cultural traditions and boasts revered religious sites in both the Christian and Muslim faiths. A land where revered emperors heralded some of the

earliest human civilizations in Africa.

Mighty lakes and rivers dot its landscape as do unique wildlife roam its lands, wild game that cannot be seen anywhere else on earth, but in Ethiopia.

These are some of the reasons why Ethiopia is today one of the rarest countries on earth that seems to have little something for everyone. And this is why you need to visit Ethiopia.

Welcome to Ethiopia – The Gifted Land.

Denis GATHANJU,
Publisher, Explore Ethiopia

EXPLORE ETHIOPIA

A PUBLICATION OF THE ETHIOPIA TOURISM ORGANIZATION

PUBLISHED FOR



ETHIOPIA TOURISM ORGANIZATION

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P.O. BOX 2183,
ADDIS ABABA,
ETHIOPIA

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PUBLISHED BY



SAFARI COMMUNICATIONS LTD.,

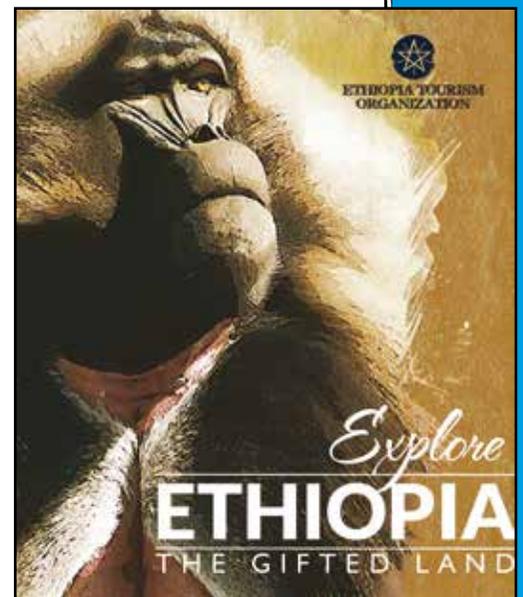
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NAIROBI, KENYA

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PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael POLIZA, Denis GATHANJU, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Shutterstock, Agencies

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COVER IMAGE: A watercolour painting effect of a Gelada Baboon created in our design studio.

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Branding & PR



Digital Publishing

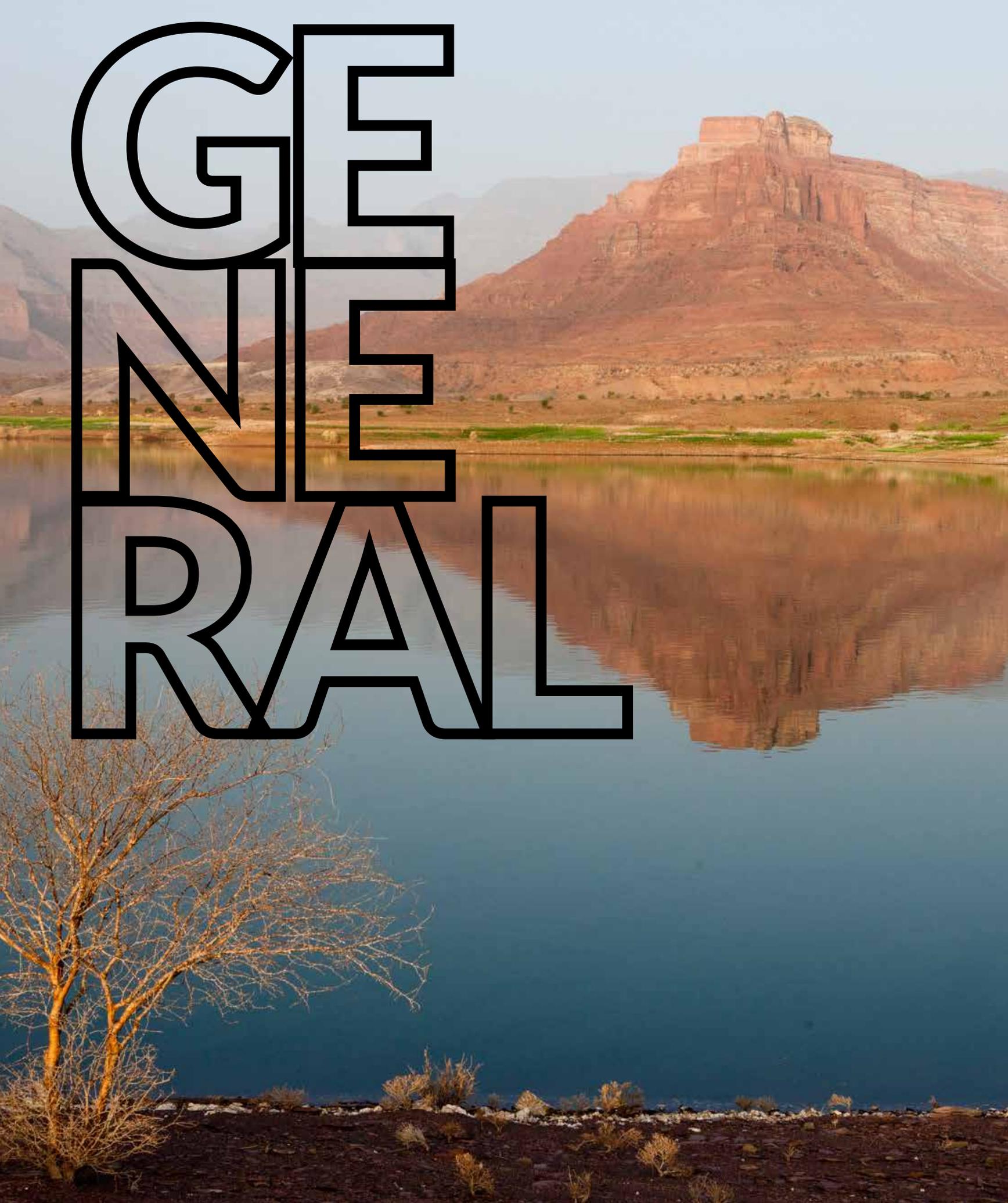


Photography



SAFARI COMMUNICATIONS

GENERAL



ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS

Only Kenyan and Djibouti passport holders are allowed to enter Ethiopia without a visa.

However, nationals from the US, Canada, most western European countries, Australia and New Zealand can acquire tourist visas on arrival at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa.

If coming into Ethiopia by road, visas must be acquired from an Ethiopian Embassy abroad as no visas are issued at border entry points.

HEALTH

A Yellow Fever card is required. It is also worth having an anti-malaria jab when travelling to Ethiopia as malaria is prevalent in regions below 2000m above sea level.

Anyone with a heart condition should seek medical advice before travelling to Ethiopia, this is because much of Ethiopia is at a high elevation. Addis Ababa is the third highest capital in the world.

GETTING THERE

Ethiopian Airlines, the national flag carrier of Ethiopia flies to major

world capitals in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and the Far East. There are also major airlines that fly into Addis Ababa.

It is however recommended to fly Ethiopian Airlines into Addis Ababa, especially if one intends to fly to other domestic destinations within Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Airlines extends a 40 per cent discount on domestic flights if the passenger flew Ethiopian Airlines into Addis Ababa.

Overland crossings from the neighbouring countries into Ethiopia is possible. However, the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea is closed and it is not recommended to travel to this region.

It should be noted that visas are never issued at the border crossings and should be obtained before travel.

MONEY

Ethiopia uses the Ethiopian Birr (ETB) as its currency. It should be noted that Ethiopia has foreign currency restrictions.

If coming into the country with more than US\$3,000 in cash, this should be

declared.

Large sums of foreign currency should also be declared on exit. It is forbidden to carry large sums of the Ethiopian Birr outside the country.

Foreign currency should be changed only at authorized banks and forex bureau. Credit and Debits Cards are widely accepted in Addis Ababa. Use only cash outside Addis Ababa.

TIME ZONE & CALENDAR

GMT +3. Ethiopia keeps the Julian Calendar which has 13 months and is 7.5 years behind the Gregorian Calendar. The Ethiopian calendar has 12 months with 30 days each and a 13th month, called Pagumen with five or six days. The Ethiopian New Year falls on 11th September.

Care should be taken when it comes to time in Ethiopia, especially outside the capital city of Addis Ababa where local timekeeping is six hours ahead.

GETTING AROUND

Ethiopian roads are extremely basic even between major towns and cities. However, the government of Ethiopia is investing heavily in





upgrading its road and rail infrastructure.

Addis Ababa will soon have one of the most modern urban light rails networks in Africa once the 34 km Addis Ababa Metro network is operational.

Travel outside Addis Ababa is through mainly mountainous terrain and the journeys are long. There are numerous state and private shuttle buses that connect Addis Ababa to the hinterland.

However, commercial vehicles are not allowed to travel at night and all journeys must end by 9pm.

Travel by air is one of the quickest ways to travel within Ethiopia. Ethiopian Airlines offers reliable and regular air connections to major towns and cities from Addis Ababa.

LANGUAGE

Amharic is the official language. However, since Ethiopia has people from diverse backgrounds, there are at least another 83 major languages and more than 200 different dialects spoken.

English is widely used, especially in Addis Ababa and fluent guides are available at all major tourist sites.

CLIMATE

The Ethiopian highlands which

cover most of the country experience a pleasant year-round average temperature of about 16 degrees Celsius and summer highs of about 25 degrees Celsius.

The lowlands are however hot during the day and cold at night. Warm clothing is recommended. The main rainy season stretches from mid-June to late-September.

FOOD & DRINK

Ethiopian cuisine is unique, fabulous, colourful, but extremely fiery. Most hotels will serve a variety of western dishes.

Coffee is a national obsession in Ethiopia. The elaborate and lengthy coffee ceremony is an experience not to be missed. The coffee is taken strong and sweet and offers quite a kick.

Alcohol is widely available in Ethiopia. Tej is a traditional local honey wine. Ethiopian bottled beers are excellent and much cheaper than imported cans. Ethiopian wine is also widely available.

EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Colourful parades and services mark key religious holidays such as Timkat (Epiphany) that takes place every year on January 19 and Meskel (Finding of the True Cross) on September 27.

New Year celebrations on September 11 are similarly vibrant.



Capital: Addis Ababa

Currency: Ethiopian Birr (ETB)

Surface Area: 1,104,300sqkm

National Regional States: Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations Nationalities and People Region (SNNPR), Gambella and Harari

Administrative States: Addis Ababa City Administration and Dire Dawa City Council.

Official Languages: Amharic, Oromiya, Tigrinya, Somali, Sidama, Guaragigna and Hadiyigna



EYES OVER ETHIOPIA

Michael Poliza is an award-winning photographer. Michael has a deep-rooted passion for Africa and has travelled the length and breath of this incredibly beautiful continent with a view to capturing Africa's magic and telling Africa's story through the powerful media of imagery.

Michael's captivating images taken from the skies above the Ethiopian Rift Valley have inspired this



POSTCARDS section of *Explore Ethiopia*.

The images capture the raw beauty of the Ethiopian countryside as seen from the skies above. From the very heart of the burning lava lake at Erta Ale in northern Ethiopia, to the touring peaks of the majestic Semien Mountains.

The images seen here were part of a project that Michael was working on for his book *Eyes Over Africa*. The journey from his native Hamburg, Germany to South Africa took Michael through the scenic Rift Valley in both Ethiopia and Kenya.

For more information on Michael's work and his books, visit his website www.michaelpoliza.com

ETHIOPIA



Africa's hidden treasure

Ethiopia is rising as a tourism destination. This Eastern Africa nation has over the last year taken a deliberate stride aimed at harnessing its tourism products, packaging them properly and displaying them to the local, regional and international markets.

Boasting one of the fastest growing economies in the world for a record, 10 years, Ethiopia has captured the imagination of not only investors, but travelers keen on sampling some of its treasures, some of which are so rare and unique, they can only be experienced in Ethiopia.

Denis GATHANJU (DG):
Explain how the Ethiopia Tourism Organization (ETO) came to be and what are its functions.

Solomon TADESSE (ST):
Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Ethiopia Tourism Organization is a new tourism marketing and promotions agency that was created by the

Government of Ethiopia under a proclamation by the Council of Ministers of Ethiopia that established the organization.

The mandate of the ETO is two-pronged. First, the ETO is mandated to promote tourism development in Ethiopia for the local, regional and international markets. The second role of the ETO is to help develop tourism products that will attract travelers into Ethiopia.

To help drive its tourism marketing agenda, the Government of Ethiopia set up a new tourism marketing agency. The new agency aptly called the Ethiopia Tourism Organization was crafted by the Ethiopian Council of Ministers and tasked with the role of packing the country's tourism products and taking them out to the market.

Denis Gathanju, the Publisher of *Explore Ethiopia* sat down for an interview with **Solomon Tadesse, the Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopia Tourism Organization (ETO)**. Excerpts:

DG What informs the timing of the creation of the ETO by the Government of Ethiopia?

ST Tourism has become a major driver of the global economy. Many countries that have a developed tourism industry have benefited largely from tourism not only in regards to foreign exchange earnings, but also in regards to offering employ-



ment opportunities and helping spur other sectors of the economy.

The Government of Ethiopia is alive to this development and has over the last few years come up with policies that are meant to help the sector take off.

In setting up the ETO, the government is showing its strong intent on helping spur the growth and development of the tourism sector in Ethiopia and further expand the services sector in Ethiopia.

DG Under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, was the department of marketing and promotions that was tasked with a similar role. How does the ETO expect to work differently to achieve the same result?

ST The ETO's focus will mainly be on tourism marketing and product development while the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's role will be focused on policy formulation and regulation of the tourism sector.

BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, OUR FOCUS WILL BE TO MAKING ETHIOPIA THE MUST VISIT DESTINATION. WE INTEND TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE BY MAXIMIZING ON THE UNIQUE PRODUCTS THAT WE HAVE IN ETHIOPIA

Through delivery of our mandate, the ETO is poised to act as a catalyst and facilitator that will help spur the tourism sector forward. We will

sort of become the interface between the industry and the markets and also, if need be, play a facilitation role between the industry players who are mainly the private sector and tourism stakeholders and the regulators mainly the Government of Ethiopia.

This way, we believe, will help the sector develop much faster.

DG With the role bestowed on the ETO towards tourism marketing and development how does your organization plan on achieving this?

ST We are currently taking an inventory of our tourism products and working out on how these could be further developed to enhance our profile as a favourable tourism destination.

Furthermore, we will be developing partnerships with other organizations locally, regionally and internationally with a view to foster close co-operation for mutual benefit.

But at the end of the day, our focus will be to making Ethiopia THE MUST VISIT destination. We intend to make this possible by maximizing on the unique products that we have in Ethiopia and these include unique wildlife, landscapes, cultures and our history.

DG With all that how would you describe Ethiopia as a tourism destination?

ST Ethiopia is not one thing. Ethiopia is many things. This is the nation that gave birth to the world's most favourite beverage – coffee. Ethiopia is the land where humans first walked on two feet; Ethiopia is the land where three of the world's major religions (Christianity, Islam and Juddaism) first took root in Africa.

Ethiopia is a land that stretches from the lowest point on earth in the Danakil Depression to the roof of Africa in the Ethiopian highlands and you can find everything in between.

In short, Ethiopia is limitless; Ethiopia gives limitless happiness. For me, Ethiopia is one country offering many contrasts. This is the hidden treasure of Africa.

DG We have witnessed the regional tourism actors, especially in East Africa, gravitate towards co-operation, and most recently, towards joint tourism marketing campaigns. Do you see Ethiopia adopting this approach?

ST That is a very good question. Yes, I think that is the way to go as it helps





forge regional bonds.

Regionally, countries such as Kenya and Tanzania have been in the tourism marketing for a far much longer time than we have. They therefore boast a wealth of information and experience that Ethiopia could tap into as it seeks to grow its tourism products. While we do not have the white sandy beaches like our counterparts, we have unique wildlife, culture and a rich history that is hard to find anywhere else in the region and in the continent of Africa. This is what we want to focus on going forward.

Our message is that Ethiopia is here not as a competitor to the other regions, but is here to offer complimentary tourism products. However, working together in tourism marketing as a region would go a long way to enhancing travel into the region. If we forge a united front in the region, then we could achieve much more. We cannot work in isolation from each other.

The tourist of this day is much more informed and knows that they want. There are those who seek a leisurely time at the beach while there are those who seek outdoor adventure, ancient African history, cultural traditions et al.

Our role at the ETO is to not only identify these travelers, but to also find and create a niche market for Ethiopia as we seek out ways of how we will introduce Ethiopia to the world.

DG The ETO has formed a unique partnership with Ethiopian Airlines. Tell us more on this partnership.

ST Ethiopian Airlines is the national carrier and is wholly owned by the Government of Ethiopia while the ETO is a government agency mandated to promote Ethiopia as a tourism destination. Our partnership has brought us together with the focus to not only increasing our numbers, but also adding value to each other.

Ethiopian Airlines has without a doubt been a very successful airline in Africa and has over the years become a strong brand for Ethiopia. For many years, many people have been flying Ethiopian Airlines from all corners of the world and have been transiting through Addis Ababa to other destinations in Africa, without actually ever experiencing Addis Ababa and Ethiopia.

It is through this co-operation with the airline that we seek to remedy the situation to ensure that travelers into Africa flying on Ethiopian Airlines get to experience Ethiopia as a destination. Our co-operation with Ethiopian Airlines is modelled on the basis of achieving this and this is the reason why the CEO of Ethiopian Airlines Tewolde Gebremariam chairs the board of the ETO to ensure that we work together to drive a common agenda of making Ethiopia a must visit destination.

DG The tourism industry in Ethiopia seems to receive a lot of confidence from local investors who have pumped millions of dollars in constructing hotels and resorts. We have also seen major international hotel groups seek out opportunities in Ethiopia, especially in Addis Ababa. What guides these massive investments?

ST Ethiopians believe in Ethiopia. No matter where they are, they know that Ethiopia is home. They take great pride in their nation and this is why they are leading the investments.

The Government of Ethiopia has further made this easier by relaxing its taxation policy, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors. For instance, the government has allowed duty-free importation of 4x4 safari vehicles for tour operators and also duty-free importation of hotel equipment.

The city of Addis Ababa has received most of these investments mainly because Addis Ababa is the political and diplomatic capital of Africa.

However, we continue to see increased interest from both local and foreign investors to establish high quality luxury camps and lodges in the Ethiopian countryside. As an organization tasked with tourism promotion and marketing, we also play a role in encouraging such investments.





POSTCARDS

BEAUTIFUL BEASTS: Giant Nile crocodiles bask in the tropical sun on the sandy banks of Lake Chamo, one of the major Rift Valley Lakes in Ethiopia





POSTCARDS

BREATH-taking BRIDGE: An overhead shot shows local residents crossing a river bridge over the Blue Nile River





POSTCARDS

VANTAGE VIEW: An overhead shot shows a remote village in the Omo Valley in southern Ethiopia

HIS TO RY



ETHIOPIA'S WORLD HERITAGE SITES

It is an open secret that Ethiopia is endowed with some of the most unique sites on the African continent. Today, Ethiopia boasts of more UNESCO World Heritage Sites than any other country in Africa.

The list of World Heritage Sites could further increase in the near future from the current nine sites, should Ethiopia manage to have included in the listing new sites that have thus far been included in a World Heritage Sites tentative list.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites are locations of utmost importance to cultural or natural heritage as described in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The convention was established in 1972. Ethiopia amongst some of the first countries in the world to ratify the convention on July 6, 1977. Its ratification of the convention meant that Ethiopia's historical sites would therefore be eligible for inclusion on the list.

At the second World Heritage Committee held in Washington, D.C. in 1978, Ethiopia witnessed the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela and the Semien National Park in northern Ethiopia inscribed on the World Heritage Sites. Seven other sites across Ethiopia have since been added to the list.

These include Fasil Ghebbi, the fortress residence of Ethiopian Emperors was added to the list in 1979. 1980 witnessed four sites get added to the list. These included Axum in the Tirgray Region of northern Ethiopia, Lower Valley of the Awash in the Afar Region, Lower Valley of the Omo and Tiya both in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region in southern Ethiopia.

The ancient city of Harar was added to the list in 2006 while the Konso Cultural Landscape in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's

Region made the list in 2011.



TENTATIVE LIST

In addition to sites inscribed on the World Heritage list, Ethiopia hopes to add to this list with at least five other sites making the tentative list of sites nominated to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The nominated sites include: Bale Mountains National Park in southern Ethiopia, Holga Sof Omar, Gedeo Mixed Cultural and Natural Landscape, Melka Kunture and Bachilt Archaeological Site and Dirre Sheik Hussein Religious, Cultural and Historical Site.

• AXUM



LALIBELA



FASIL GHEBBI



SIMIEN MOUNTAINS



HARAR



AXUM

HOME TO THE ARK OF THE COVENANT?

Axum also spelt as Aksum is an ancient city located in the Tigray Region of northern Ethiopia. The city was the original capital of the Kingdom of Aksum and is one of the oldest places in Africa that has continuously been inhabited by humans. Axum was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1980 due to their historic value.

The major Aksumite monuments in the town are the trademark stelae. These obelisks are believed to be about 1,700 years old and have over the years become a symbol of the Ethiopian people's identity.

The largest number of these stelae are to be found in the Northern Stelae Park. Their height range varies, but the Great Stelae is said to have stood 33-meters high, 3.84 meters wide and had a 2.35 metres foundation with a total weight of 520 tonnes. The Great Stelae is believed to have fallen and broken during construction.

The Obelisk of Axum, which stands 24.6 meters high, 2.32 metres wide and has a 1.36 meters foundation with a total weight of 170 tonnes, is the famous Obelisk that was removed by the Italian army in 1937 and was on display in the Italian capital city of Rome for many years before it was finally returned to Ethiopia in 2005 and reinstalled July 31, 2008. The obelisk was first broken into pieces before being

shipped.

BIBLICAL ARK OF THE COVENANT

Aside from its famed obelisks, the city of Axum boasts another major feature that is the Old and New Cathedrals of St. Mary of Zion. The Old St Mary of Zion Cathedral is said to have been built in 1665 by Emperor Fasilides. It is in this building that most Orthodox Christians and other Christians believed that the original Ark of the Covenant is under lock and key.

The new Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion stands next to the old one. The new cathedral was built to honour a promise made by Emperor Haile Selassie to the Our Lady of Zion for the liberation of Ethiopia from the Fascist occupation. The cathedral is built in a neo-Byzantine style. While women are not allowed in the old cathedral, women are however allowed inside the new cathedral.

Sandwiched between the two cathedrals is a small chapel known as The Chapel of the Tablet which was built at the same time as the new cathedral. This chapel is said to be where the original Ark of the Covenant is currently housed. Emperor Haile Selassie's consort, Empress Menen is said to have paid for its construction from her private funds.

Like in Biblical times when only a

select few were allowed anywhere close to the Ark of the Covenant, admittance to the chapel is strictly forbidden to all but the guardian monk who resides in the church.

Entrance to the chamber that is believed to house the Ark of the Covenant is even forbidden to the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church.

The two cathedrals and the chapel are, quite naturally, the focus of religious pilgrimages and considered the holiest sites in Ethiopia to members of its Christian Orthodox church.

KING SOLOMON AND QUEEN OF SHEBA

Ethiopian legend has it that it was from Axum that Makeda, the Queen of Sheba, journeyed north-east to Jerusalem to visit King Solomon. It is said that she had a son called Menelik from her short relationship with King Solomon.

Menelik is said to have grown up in Ethiopia but traveled to Jerusalem as a young man to visit his father's homeland.

Menelik is believed to have lived in Jerusalem for several years before returning to his country with the Ark of the Covenant. To this day, Ethiopian Orthodox Christians believe that the original Ark of the Covenant that Menelik brought with him from Jerusalem still exists in Axum.

HOW TO GET HERE

Axum is about 566km north of Addis Ababa.

BY PLANE

Ethiopian Airlines has daily flights from Addis Ababa to Axum
www.ethiopianairlines.com

BY ROAD

There are regular bus departures from Addis Ababa. However, it is advisable to break the trip in Bahir Dar or Gondar. Alternatively, one can hire a self-drive vehicle from Addis Ababa.

It takes at least 13 hours by road from Addis Ababa

WHAT TO SEE & DO

DUNGUR (QUEEN SHEBA'S) PALACE

The structure at Dungur is believed to have been Queen Sheba's Palace

ABBA PENTALEWON MONASTERY

The monastery is named after Abba Pentalewon, one of the Nine Saints and a man who is believed to have prayed nonstop for 40 years

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

This well-laid-out museum in the Northern Stelae Field boasts an interesting variety of objects found in the tombs. These range from ordinary household objects, such as lamps and incense burners, to glassware.

BASKET MARKET

This is one of the two popular markets in Axum. The basket market takes place every Saturday between 10.30am to noon under a large fig tree. Travellers can buy Ethiopian souvenirs at good prices.

SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE TWO CATHEDRALS IS A SMALL CHAPEL KNOWN AS THE CHAPEL OF THE TABLET WHICH WAS BUILT AT THE SAME TIME AS THE NEW CATHEDRAL. THIS CHAPEL IS SAID TO BE WHERE THE ORIGINAL ARK OF THE COVENANT IS CURRENTLY HOUSED

LALIBELA

THE NEW JERUSALEM?

Lalibela is a town in northern Ethiopia. The town has been placed on the global World Heritage Sites map thanks to its monolithic rock-hewn churches.

Like Axum further north, Lalibela is regarded by Ethiopian Orthodox Christians as one of Ethiopia's holiest cities, second only to Axum. Over the years, Lalibela has been a center of pilgrimage for much of the country. Unlike Axum, the population of Lalibela is almost completely Ethiopian Orthodox Christian.

The layout and names of the major buildings in Lalibela are widely accepted, especially by the local clergy and Orthodox Christians, to be a symbolic representation of the ancient city of Jerusalem.

CREATION OF A NEW JERUSALEM

Lalibela was initially known as Roha, but its name changed during the reign of Saint Gebre Mesqel Lalibela as an Ethiopian emperor. The city was named Lalibela in his honour after he set out to build a new Jerusalem in Ethiopia following the capture of the holy city of Jerusalem by Muslims in 1187.

Lalibela had spent some time during his youth in the Jewish holy city of Jerusalem and when he set out to build a new Jerusalem in Ethiopia, many of the new city's features had Biblical names including the city's river which was named River Jordan.

ROCK-HEWN CHURCHES

There are some 11 churches that have been identified in Lalibela. These are further grouped into four main categories.

The first category is known as the northern group which has a total of five churches namely:

- *Biete Medhane Alem* which means House of the Saviour of the World. The church is believed to be the largest monolithic church in the world. This church is the home to the Lalibela Cross. The Lalibela Cross is a large, elaborately decorated cross that Ethiopian Orthodox Christians regards as one of the most precious religious and historical heirlooms. The cross dates back to the 12th century. It is about 24 inches long and weighs about 7 kilograms. It is made from one piece of metal, either gold or a mixture of gold and bronze.
- *Biete Maryam* or House of Miriam/House of Mary is considered to be possibly the oldest of the churches in Lalibela and is considered to be a replica of the Tombs of Adam and Christ.
- *Biete Golgotha Mikael* or House of Golgotha Mikael. This church is famous because its arts. It is also said to contain the tomb of King Lalibela.
- *Biete Maskal* or House of the Cross
- *Biete Denagel* or House of Virgins

The other category is the western group which is made up of only one church called Biete Giyorgis or Church of Saint George. This church is said to be the most finely executed and best



preserved of all the other churches in Lalibela.

LIKE AXUM FURTHER NORTH, LALIBELA IS REGARDED BY ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AS ONE OF ETHIOPIA'S HOLIEST CITIES, SECOND ONLY TO AXUM

The eastern group is the third category. It has a total of five churches that include:

- *Biete Amanuel* or House of Emmanuel which is said to have been used as a royal chapel
- *Biete Qeddus Mercoreus* or House of St. Mark). This church is said to have been once used as a prison
- *Biete Abba Libanos* or House of Abbot Libanos
- *Biete Gabriel-Rufael* or House of the angels Gabriel and Raphael. This church is believed to have been royal palace.
- *Biete Lehem* or House of Holy Bread

The last category is composed of the Monastery of Ashetan Maryam and the Yimrehane Kristos church, a church that is believed to have been constructed in the 11th century in an Axumite architectural style within a cave.

HOW TO GET HERE

BY PLANE

Ethiopian Airlines has regular flights from Addis Ababa to Lalibela.
www.ethiopianairlines.com

BY ROAD

Lalibela is about 674km north of Addis Ababa. There are regular bus departures from Addis Ababa to Lalibela. Alternatively, one can hire a self-drive vehicle from Addis Ababa.

WHAT TO DO & SEE

EAT OUT

Ben Abeba is one of the favourite restaurants in Lalibela. This Ethio-Scottish-owned restaurant boasts an elegant design concept - jumble of walkways, platforms and fire pits. It is perched on the edge of a ridge offering spectacular views.

LEARN THE ART OF MAKING INJERA

Ethiopian cuisine is rich in taste and colour. Injera is one of the staple foods of Ethiopia. At the Lalibela Cookery School, visitors are taken through the paces of making injera on a wooden-fired stove.

COFFEE IN THE VILLAGE

Travelling brings us closer to the local people and culture, one way of experiencing this in Lalibela is attending a coffee ceremony with the locals in the village.

FASIL GHEBBI

The Royal Enclosure

Fasil Ghebbi or Royal Enclosure are the remains of a fortress city within Gondar in north-western Ethiopia.

The city was founded by Emperor Fasilides, also known as Emperor Fasil. The royal enclosure was used as the official home of the Ethiopian emperors between the 17th and 18th centuries.

Its unique architecture displays diverse facets of architectural influences that include the Nubian, Arabian and Baroque styles. The fortress was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.

The fortress derives its first name Fasil from the Ethiopian emperor who built it while its second name Ghebbi is an Amharic word that means compound or enclosure.

The entire complex comprises a host of other unique buildings that include Iyasu's Palace, Dawit's Hall, a banqueting hall, stables, Empress Mentewab's castle, a

chancellery, a library and three churches namely: Asasame Qeddus Mikael, Gemjabet Mariyam and Elfin Giyorgis.

The Fasil Ghebbi covers an estimated area of about 70,000 square meters. To its south is the market place of Gondar called Adababay, where imperial proclamations, during the reign of the Ethiopian emperors, were made, troops presented, and criminals executed. Today it is used as a city park.

TWELVE GATES

Fasil Ghebbi is enclosed within a curtain wall that is pierced by twelve gates arranged in a counter-clockwise manner as follows: *Fit Ber* opening onto Adababay; *Wember Ber* or Gate of the Judges; *Tazkaro Ber* or Gate of Funeral Commemoration; *Azaj Tequire Ber* (Gate of Azaj Tequire), which once was connected by a bridge to the Adababay Tekle Haymanot Church. *Adenager Ber* (Gate of the Spinners), which was also once linked

by a bridge to the Qeddus Rafael Church in the weaver's section of Gondar; *Qwali Ber* (Gate of the Queen's Attendants), next to the modern entrance to Elfin Giyorgis Church inside the royal enclosure; *Imbilta Ber* (Gate of the Musicians); *Elfign Ber* (Gate of the Privy Chamber). The *Elfign Ber* had a private passage to the private apartments of the Fasil Ghebbi.

The other gates included the *Balderas Ber* (Gate of the Commander of the Cavalry); *Ras Ber* (Gate of the Ras). This gate was also known as *Qwarenyoch Ber* to mean Gate of the Qwara people. Next to it is the *Ergeb Ber* (Gate of Pigeons).

This gate was also known as *Kechin Ashawa Ber* to mean Gate of the Gifts. Next to this gate is the *Inqoye Ber* or Gate of Princess Inqoye, who was the mother of Empress Mentewab; and finally *Gimjabet Mariyam Ber* or Gate of the Treasury of Mary, which leads into the churchyard of Gimjabet Mariyam church.

HOW TO GET HERE

Gondar is about 421 km north-west of Addis Ababa.

BY PLANE

Ethiopian Airlines has daily flights from Addis Ababa to Gondar and Bahir Dar. www.ethiopianairlines.com

BY ROAD

There are regular bus departures from Addis Ababa. However, it is advisable to break the trip in Bahir Dar or Gondar. Alternatively, one can hire a self-drive vehicle from Addis Ababa.

WHAT TO DO & SEE

IN GONDAR

VISIT THE MONASTRIES

There are a number of monasteries around Gondar. Many of these have ancient religious artefacts and paintings.

KUSKUAM COMPLEX

The Kuskuum complex is about 5 km out of Gondar Town. It was built as a retirement residence of the Empress Mentewab in 1730. Entrance fee is ETB 50.

LION CAGES

The original 'Lion Houses' were built inside the Royal Enclosure by Emperor Dawit (1721-1730) where Abyssinian Lions were kept. Emperor Haile Selassie built modern cages until he was overthrown.

IN BAHIR DAR

MARTYR'S MEMORIAL MONUMENT

This monument was erected as a dedication to the men and women who fought the Derg, the communist Committee that ruled Ethiopia between 1974 to 1987.

BOAT RIDES ON LAKE TANA

There are numerous boat rides that can be organized to visit various island monasteries and villages in the Lake Tana.

BLUE NILE FALLS

The Blue Nile Falls are located a few kilometers outside of Bahir Dar. The falls are also known as Tis Issat by the local people. Tis Issat means smoking waters.

ITS UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE DISPLAYS DIVERSE FACETS OF ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES THAT INCLUDE THE NUBIAN, ARABIAN AND BAROQUE STYLES

• AXUM

• LALIBELA

• FASIL GHEBBI

• SIMIEN MOUNTAINS

• HARAR



• AXUM



LALIBELA



FASIL GHEBBI



SIMIEN MOUNTAINS



HARAR



SIMIEN MOUNTAINS

home of endangered species

Simien Mountains National Park was established in 1969. The park is one of numerous national parks in Ethiopia.

The park is located in the northern (Simien) reaches of the Gondar Zone within the Amhara Region. The park's territory covers the entire Simien Mountains that also include the Ras Dashan, the highest point in Ethiopia. Standing at a height of 4,550 meters, the Ras Dashan is also the 10 highest peak in Africa.

Simien Mountains National Park was one of the first sites in Ethiopia to be added to the World Heritage Site list by UNESCO in 1978, however, the park has witnessed an unprecedented decline of some of its characteristic native species that in 1996, the park was added to the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Simien Mountains National Park is known as the home to a number of endangered species that include the Ethiopian wolf and the walia

ibex.

The Ethiopian wolf is native to the Ethiopian Highlands and is very similar to the coyote in terms of build and size. However, the Ethiopian wolf is easily identifiable by its long and narrow skull and sticking red and white fur. Today, the Ethiopian wolf is the world's rarest canid and is Africa's most endangered carnivore. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the Ethiopian wolf an endangered species based on its dwindling numbers. There are currently less than 400 Ethiopian wolves in the wild today.

The walia ibex is a wild goat found nowhere else in the world other than Ethiopia. The walia ibex is regarded an endangered species and is considered sub-species of the Alpine ibex. Currently, there are less than 500 individuals living in the Simien Mountains. The walia ibex is also known as the Abyssinian ibex.

GELADA BABOON

The gelada baboon is by far one of the most famous occupant of the

Simien Mountains National Park. Also known as the bleeding-heart baboon, because of its bright pink colouration on its chest, the gelada baboon is a species of what is called the Old World monkey and is only in the Ethiopian highlands, but a majority of the gelada baboon population is to be seen in the park.

Old World monkeys is a group of primates that are native to Africa and Asia mainly inhabiting a range of environments that range from tropical rain forests, to open savanna, shrublands and mountainous terrain

SIMIEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK IS KNOWN AS THE HOME TO A NUMBER OF ENDANGERED SPECIES THAT INCLUDE THE ETHIOPIAN WOLF AND THE WALIA IBEX.

HOW TO GET HERE

BY PLANE
Ethiopian Airlines has regular flights from Addis Ababa to the nearby towns of Gondar and Bahir Dar. www.ethiopianairlines.com

Air Charters into the Simien Mountains can also be arranged from Addis Ababa.

BY ROAD

Access to the Simien Mountains by road is possible from the nearby towns of Gondar and even Bahir Dar. Self-drive is possible, but it is highly recommended to use the services of a tour company.

WHAT TO DO & SEE

TRACK GELADA BABOONS
The gelada baboons are found in great numbers in the Simien Mountains National Park.

PHOTOGRAPHY SAFARIS
The scenic nature of the Simien Mountains National Park makes it a favourite nature photography site.



SOF OMAR CAVES

Sof Omar Cave is the longest cave in Ethiopia measuring about 15 km in length. It is also said to be the longest cave system in Africa. The cave is situated in the eastern part of Robe within the Oromia Region in southern Ethiopia.

The Weyib Rover flows through the Sof Omar Cave. The river sinks underground at the Ayiew Maco entrance and resurfaces about one kilometre downstream at Holuca.

Legend has it that Sof Omar was the name of a Muslim holy man who lived in the area while Ayiew was his daughter. Maco and Holuca are derived from the local dialects and they mean 'name' and 'cave', respectively.

The Sof Omar Cave system has for a long time been an important religious centre and is considered a sacred location in both to Islam and in the local Oromo traditional beliefs.

Visitors to the cave system will be mesmerized by the intricate pillar system found within the caves. These pillars are best viewed in the 'Chamber of Columns'.

The Chamber of Columns is a unique feature in the world of caves. It looks like a wide passage leaving the Web before sweeping back to the river about 100 metres downstream. The passage circumnavigates a cluster of thick columns densely packed in the centre of chamber.

The river passage continues from the Chamber of Columns meandering for about 200 metres to the Big Rapids. This striking feature is formed from a jumble of huge boulders, well worn by the actions of the river. The

river passage continues around a curve for about 250 metres before flowing around a massive boulder into the sunlight at the Holuca Resurgence. The Web continues running through a canyon.

The cave is formed along a network of joints: one set runs approximately north to south and the other east to west. Sof Omar has 42 entrances, but generally only four are useful for gaining entrance into the caves.

- Two upstream Village Entrances (one to the east and one to the west of the village)
- The Tourist Entrance downstream from the Holuca Resurgence at a point where the abandoned meander forming the dry valley rejoins the Web river
- A right bank entrance downstream of Holuca accessing the Deep South part of the Clapham's Climb Series.

Entering the cave via either of the Village Entrances the visitor passes a shrine used by the locals. The Ayiew Maco Series is a set of interconnecting passages of varying in width between one metre and ten metres. Several can be passed through to the pebble beach on the left bank of the river. The passage at the pebble beach is about 40 metres wide—the widest passage in the cave. At the downstream end of the beach the river disappears between two columns.





HARAR

CITY OF THE SAINTS

Harar is a walled city in eastern Ethiopia. Harar was included in the World Heritage List in 2006 by UNESCO in recognition of its cultural heritage.

The city's encircling wall, locally known as the *Jogal* was erected in the 16th century by one of the city's best remembered local rulers, Nur ibn-Mujahid, who is said to have also dug up a defensive trench around the city.

This 3.34 kilometer-long wall, which ensured the city's safety during its troubled days, is mainly made out of locally quarried, untrimmed Hashi stone that is held

together with mud and reinforced with stout juniper planks.

CENTER OF ISLAMIC CULTURE AND RELIGION

Known as Gey or The City by its citizens, the city of Harar was established in the 7th century by Arabian immigrants. The city consequently became the capital of the Adal Sultanate between 1554 and 1557. During this period, Harar emerged as the center of Islamic culture and religion in the Horn of Africa region.

In Arabic, the city is known as *Madinat al-Awilya* which means the City of the Saints and is today

considered as Islam's fourth holiest city after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, where the Dome of the Rock sits. The city of Harar boasts about 100 mosques, three of which are said to date back to the 10th century and the 16th century Grand Mosque with its beautiful twin towers and slender minaret.

Originally the 16th-century walls of Harar had five gates which symbolized the Five Pillars of Islam. The gates were known to the Hararis, the citizens of Harar as *bari*. The gates were situated respectively to the north, east, south-east, south, and west of the city. Each gate had its own distinctive name.

HOW TO GET HERE

BY PLANE
Ethiopian Airlines has regular flights from Addis Ababa to the nearby town of Dire Dawa. www.ethiopianairlines.com

BY ROAD

Harar is about 53 km east of Addis Ababa. There are regular bus departures from Addis Ababa to Harar. Alternatively, one can hire a self-drive vehicle from Addis Ababa.

WHAT TO DO & SEE

VISIT THE MUSEUMS

Harar Museum & Cultural Center: This is a public-run museum with a variety of art & antiquities from Harar and the surrounding regions.
Abdela Sherif Museum: A privately-run museum with a collection of more than 300 historical documents and 600 musical recordings. The museum's building was once the residence to Ras Tafari, who later became the Emperor of Ethiopia.

FEED THE HYENAS

Feeding the hyenas is one of the hallmarks of the night in Harar.

ELEPHANT TRACKING

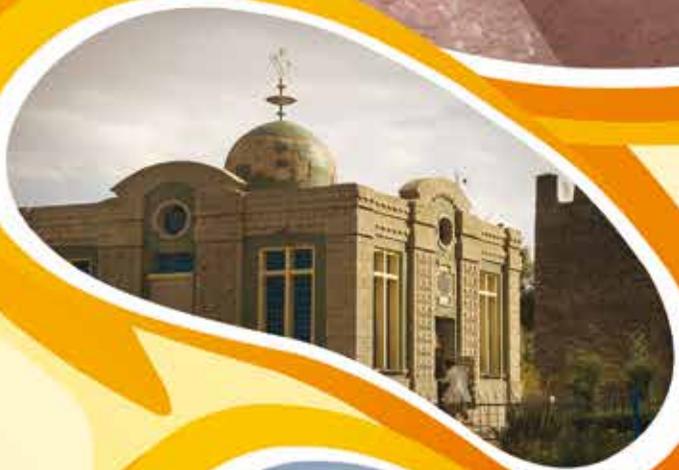
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IN ARABIC, THE CITY IS KNOWN AS *MADINAT AL-AWILYA* WHICH MEANS THE CITY OF THE SAINTS AND IS TODAY CONSIDERED AS ISLAM'S FOURTH HOLIEST CITY AFTER MECCA, MEDINA AND JERUSALEM

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LIFE STYLE



ETHIOPIAN WINERIES

WINE-MAKING GAINS TRACTION

Ethiopia is known for its rich cultural heritage steeped in century's old history and mythical legends. But very few know of a long-held wine-making tradition in Ethiopia. This wine-making tradition has over the last few years been gaining much traction and is now a gradually expanding industry that is meant to place Ethiopia firmly onto the wine-making countries list.

Traditionally, Ethiopia has been making a local wine called tedj, a type of honey-wine flavoured with gersho leaves, that are similar to hops. However, this ancient wine-making tradition is gradually being taken over by a much modern form of wine-making. Ethiopia is now growing its own grapes and producing its own signature wine. Currently, there are two wineries in the

country with a combined production of almost 12 million bottles of wine per year.

However, it has to be noted that commercial wine production in Ethiopia started during the Italian occupation of some parts of Ethiopia between 1936 and 1941 when Italian troops who had settled near Addis Ababa established the very first vineyards in Ethiopia.

The vineyards were nationalized after the Italian occupation and have since been privatized after they were sold to Awash Winery. According to wine experts, large-scale wine production in Ethiopia is possible based on the country's favourable weather patterns and diverse landscapes that include at least six climatic zones where grapes can be grown.

AWASH WINERY

Awash Winery, is by far, the oldest winery in Ethiopia. The winery has been in existence for about 70 years now. Awash Winery boasts more than 117 hectares of a wine estate that sits on a mountain plateau rising to 1,200 meters above sea level.

Currently, Awash Winery boasts an annual production of about 10 million bottles, most of which is exclusively consumed by the Ethiopian market. According to Awash, the local demand for quality wine is at an all-time high and hence wine exports are not possible, at least for now. The company is seeking to expand its vineyards by adding another 180 hectares.

TWO HARVESTS

The Awash vineyards are located in Awash Merti Jersu region some 115 km southeast of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.





Due to the close proximity to the Equator, the vines from this region have a much shorter vegetative cycle than those found in Europe or South America. That means that the wineries in this region record two harvests in a year. Normally the first harvest occurs between November and December with the second harvest coming between June and July.

DUE TO THE CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE EQUATOR, THE VINES FROM THIS REGION HAVE A MUCH SHORTER VEGETATIVE CYCLE THAN THOSE FOUND IN EUROPE OR SOUTH AMERICA

However, wine production in Ethiopia is faced by a number of challenges, key amongst them being the poor infrastructure, especially the road network which presents a considerable challenge of moving the harvested grapes from the vineyards to the winery.

In some cases, it takes more than seven hours to deliver the harvested grapes to the winery, which means

that the grapes risk getting destroyed by the baking African sun. However, this is expected to be overcome with the introduction of refrigerated trucks.

AWASH WINERY'S WINE RANGE

Currently, Awash Winery has a range of four wines. These include a white and a red wine. The Kemila Medium is a dry white wine from 2013. This is a slightly sweet white wine, mainly from Chenin blanc (80%) and Grenache Blanc. The wine has a golden colour, oxidative nose with notes of beeswax.

Axumit Sweet Red Wine 2013 is a blend of red Grenache (60%), Sangiovese, Petite Syrah, Gamay, Nebbiolo, Dodoma and Tinta Amarela. Axumit is by far the most popular Ethiopian wine with a nose of red fruit and a great acidity. The other two wines in the Awash Winery range are the Awash White wine 2014 and the Gouder Red Wine 2013.

CASTEL WINERY

Castel Winery is literally the new kid on the block in the Ethiopian wine-making industry. The winery is located in the sleepy town of Ziway some 160km south of Addis Ababa.

Castel's vineyards were established in 2007 as a partnership between the Ethiopian Government and the Castel Group, which is today one of the largest wine and beer producers in the world. The vineyard is spread across some 120 hectares with the grapes having been planted between 2007 and 2009. The winery started bottling its vintage wine this year.

Castel's vineyards are located about 1,600 meters above sea level with an annual rainfall of about 650 mm and average temperatures of 25 degrees year round. The region has sandy soils, which according to Castel Winery are good conditions for the development of quality wines and could in a few years' time rival South Africa, currently the continent's largest wine producer.

Unlike the Awash Winery that has two annual harvests, Castel Winery has instead opted for one harvest per year and has a total annual production of about 1.2 million bottles of Ethiopian Rift Valley Wine. Plans are to increase production to 3 million bottles per year by 2016.

The Castel vineyards boast exclusively planted with international grape varieties that include 55 hectares of Syrah, 38 hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon, 14 hectares of Merlot and 12 hectares of Chardonnay. In the collection is an additional 42 hectares of Sangiovese that was planted in the 1980's by the Ethiopian government.

Most of the 750,000 vines planted in these vineyards were imported from Bordeaux in France. Merlot, syrah and cabernet sauvignon grapes were chosen for the reds that make up the biggest of Castel Winery's Rift Valley Wines production while chardonnay grapes were chosen for the white wines.

CASTEL WINERY'S WINE RANGE

Castel Winery boasts a range of two wines that include Acacia Medium sweet white 2013, which is a 100% Chardonnay with a taste of banana and white flowers and has a medium sweetness in mouth.

Also in this range is the Acacia Medium sweet red 2013, a blend with equal proportions of Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Syrah. It has a nose of black fruit and a sweetness in mouth, which is very popular and appreciated by Ethiopian wine connoisseurs. Acacia Dry red 2013 has the same blend but in a dry version, with intense black fruit flavours and good freshness.

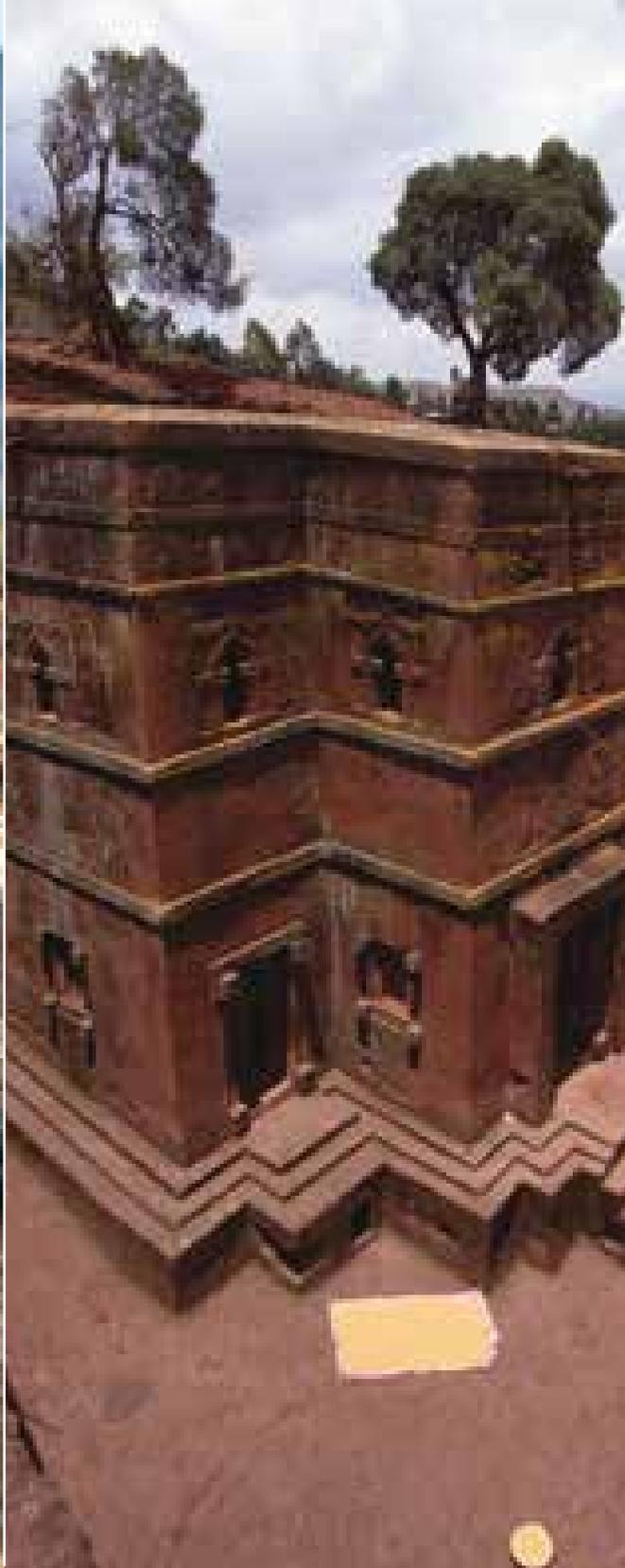
The Accacia wine range is aged in stainless steel tanks.

The second wine range in the Castel Winery comprises the Rift Valley Wines which are a premium range of wines that are partly aged in French oak barrels.

The Rift Valley Chardonnay 2013 has a nose and mouth with peach and citrus aromas and is very fresh. The addition of woodchips gives some roundness in the mouth. The Rift Valley Merlot 2013 is a crunchy wine full of red fruit with wood softened tannins.

In the same lineup is the Rift Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 which is a more powerful beautifully structured wine that is also very well made. The Rift Valley Syrah 2013 completes the range. It comes with hints of spice, black fruit and violets.





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WHAT'S IN YOUR CUP?

Ethiopian COFFEE

Ethiopian coffee is regarded to be one of the best coffee in the world due to his strong, rich taste and aroma. Ethiopia is also regarded as the natural home of coffee as it was first discovered here in the 16th century. The Coffee Ceremony is an integral part of Ethiopian culture.

Ethiopia's most favourite beverage is by far the Ethiopian coffee. Ethiopia is believed to be the birthplace of coffee and because of this, they make their coffee somewhat differently.

The Ethiopian coffee ceremony is much more than just sipping a good cup of home-brewed coffee. The coffee ceremony is an important cultural ritual that has been passed from generation to generation in the country believed to be the birthplace of coffee.

This preparation is known as the Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony, which is an elaborate process that also forms an integral part of Ethiopian's social and cultural life. An invitation to attend a coffee ceremony, especially for non-Ethiopians is considered a deep mark of friendship and/or respect. Attending or participating in a traditional Ethiopian coffee making ceremony is also an excellent way of sampling the very best of Ethiopian hospitality.

UNHURRIED PREPARATION

The coffee making ceremony is almost obligatory in the presence of a visitor, no matter the time of day. The process is normally unhurried and can take a couple of hours depending on the number of people attending the occasion. The coffee ceremony is mainly a ritualized form of brewing coffee and is almost an intimate form of taking and appreciating Ethiopian coffee.

The coffee ceremony is usually conducted by one young woman, who in most cases is dressed up in the traditional Ethiopian costume of a white hand-woven dress with coloured woven borders. The elaborate coffee brewing process commences with the ceremonial apparatus being arranged upon a bed of long scented local grass.

First, the woman fills a round-bottomed, black clay coffeepot known as a *jebena* with water and places it over hot coals. She then takes a

handful of green coffee beans and carefully cleans them in a heated, long-handled pan. She stirs the coffee beans over the hot charcoal or fire as she shakes the husks and debris out of the coffee beans to cleanse them before going on to roast them in the pan.

COFFEE AROMA

The beans are roasted over the hot charcoal until they turn medium brown. The pungent smell of the coffee beans roasting over the fire mingles with the heady scent of incense that is always burned during the ceremony. The aroma of the roasted coffee is powerful and is considered to be an important aspect of the coffee ceremony.

The coffee beans are stirred until they turned and are shining under the aromatic oil that is coaxed out of them. The coffee is then ground by hand using a pestle known as *zenezena* and a mortar called *mukecha*. The ground coffee is then poured into the *jebena* which contains boiling water and stirred slowly. At this point, the woman preparing the coffee removes the coffee beans from the heat and waves the pan to create an aromatic breeze around the house for the guests to appreciate the freshly brewing coffee.

The freshly brewed coffee known as *bunna* is then poured from the *jebena* into a decanter and allowed to cool down before it is poured back into the *jebena* and brought to a boil. The process is repeated all over again, at least three times. The coffee is then filtered as it is poured into neat rows of delicate china cups known as *cini*.

THREE ROUNDS OF COFFEE

When invited to attend an Ethiopian coffee ceremony, it is somewhat rude to refuse to drink the coffee. The coffee service, like its preparation, is rife with deep symbolism and ceremony. Service often starts with the eldest to the youngest. However, in some instances the guest of honour is served first.



A total of three rounds of coffee are served, known successively as *abol*, *tona* and *baraka*. According to Ethiopian folklore, the three names were the names of the three goats that originally discovered the original caffeine buzz thousands of years ago. The three cups of coffee taken symbolize some sort of spiritual elevation and transformation for the coffee taker.

AN INVITATION TO ATTEND A COFFEE CEREMONY, ESPECIALLY FOR NON-ETHIOPIANS IS CONSIDERED A DEEP MARK OF FRIENDSHIP AND/OR RESPECT.

The coffee is normally taken with plenty of sugar, but without milk and is generally complemented by a traditional snack such as peanuts or cooked barley.

In most parts of Ethiopia, especially in the countryside, the coffee ceremony takes place three times a day - in the morning, at noon and in the evening. It is the main social event within the village around which the village folks take time to discuss social affairs, community politics and general life.

Ethiopian Cuisine

One critical part of experiencing a destination is through its culinary offering. Ethiopia, like many African countries, offers a wide range of foods that come in all sorts of colours, smells and tastes.

Celebrated Ethiopian-born chef Marcus Samuelsson is amongst some of the people who have managed to bring the colours, smells and tastes of Ethiopian food to major capitals in Europe and North America.

It is no secret that Ethiopian food is now in the international culinary market and it is drawing a lot of culinary lovers keen on experiencing a new kind of food. Today, Ethiopian restaurants are increasing in number all across the world.

While Ethiopian food comes in different varieties, one will quickly notice that Ethiopian cuisine does not include pork. This is mainly due to religious traditions in Ethiopia that do not advocate for eating of pork. Ethiopia has three major religions: Judaism, Islam and Orthodox Christianity.

INJERA

Injera, is by far the most famous Ethiopian food it is also one of the most important foodstuff in Ethiopian cuisine because it serves not only as a source of protein and vitamins but the Ethiopians also use it as a serving platform for other dishes.

Injera is a flatbread made from teff which is a form of a grass that looks like wheat. This teff is ground and

fermented in water for several days before it is baked into large, floppy pancakes that have the texture of crepes and the taste of sourdough bread. Teff flour, from which injera is made, is incredibly high in fiber, iron and calcium. It also has all the amino acids required to be a complete protein.

Injera is served on a big, flat mat alongside other dishes such as vegetables and meat placed on top. To eat this Ethiopian food, one simply tears off a piece of injera and grabs some food with it before rolling it up and eating it up.

Injera has a somewhat sour taste in the mouth that is a direct opposite of some of the fiery foods served alongside it. Injera therefore has a calming effect in the mouth and is also very filling, just like bread.

Like wine, injera comes in various grades that range from low to high quality. Low-quality injera spots a dark colour, is very coarse and thick. This is so because it is not made from teff, but from local millet or sorghum. Good quality injera is pale, smooth and has a regular thickness and is made from teff.

The type of teff that produces the best injera is grown only in the highlands. Teff grown in the lowlands tends not to make good quality injera.

KITFO

Kitfo is yet another typical Ethiopian dish. It is made from the leanest meat which is then minced and warmed in a pan on a little butter. Berbere can also be added, but it is



recommended to have it served separately. Kitfo is also a very filling dish.

Ethiopians serve kitfo after just warming it a little. It is however not cooked. However, one can have it

IT IS NO SECRET THAT ETHIOPIAN FOOD IS NOW IN THE INTERNATIONAL CULINARY MARKET AND IT IS DRAWING A LOT OF CULINARY LOVERS KEEN ON EXPERIENCING A NEW KIND OF FOOD



BERBERE

This is a very spicy accompaniment for Ethiopian food. Berbere is a dark red blend of sun-dried chilies, ginger, garlic, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, cumin, coriander and other spices.

WAT

Wat or wot is a stew that is very spicy. It is made from red onions that are cooked in berbere which can also be mixed with either kibbeh or butter. Ginger, garlic and other spices are also added.

Wat is also an important accompaniment for Ethiopian food. It can be had as a vegetable dish or blended with meat to turn it into a meat stew dish.

Wat is a wonderful accompaniment of injera. In the highlands, they use lamb meat called bege (lamb) to make wat, while in major towns they use beef called Bure and goat meat called figel is mainly used in the arid and semi-arid lowlands.

INJERA, IS BY FAR THE MOST FAMOUS ETHIOPIAN FOOD IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FOODSTUFF IN ETHIOPIAN CUISINE

mildly cooked and served to eat. Kitfo is mainly served with minced spinach called gomen.

The dish is a tradition of the Gurage people from southern Ethiopia who normally have it with kotcho, which is a form of a bread. In the major towns and cities of Ethiopia such as Addis Ababa, there are specialty kitfo restaurants.

TERE SEGA

This dish is considered something of a luxury dish in Ethiopia. Tere sega is simply raw meat that is mainly served in traditional wedding ceremonies for the well-to-do people and on special occasions.

The dish is served alongside a chilli sauce as accompaniments and is best washed down in some red wine.

Most foreigners, however, love the chicken wat.

DOROWOT

Dorowot is a chicken-based stew that wears an intense shade of the red colour due to the berbere spices. The stew can be made from beef or chicken and is served with a whole boiled egg.

TEJ

While a coffee ceremony is the traditional way to close out a meal in Ethiopia, many prefer to wash down a good meal with something better. Tej is one such drink. It is a locally made honey-wine that comes with a thick sweetness with an orange lightness to it.

BEKOJI



HOME OF *Champions*

Ethiopia is home to some of the greatest long-distance athletes in the world.

The country has over the years continued to churn out world-record breakers in both the middle and long distance races.

The world has for long been entertained by the pulsating speed and stamina of Ethiopian athletes, be it at the Olympic Games or global city marathon circuits.

Moreover, the rivalry between Kenya and Ethiopia in the middle and long distances races has captured the imagination and attention of a global audience.

HIGH-ALTITUDE TRAINING

But while these two African athletics powerhouses are neighbours, they share something in common – they seem to have an incubation center where star athletes train hard and plot to shatter the next world record.

Kenya has for long had its high-altitude training center at Iten in the

Kenyan Rift Valley. Ethiopia, on the other hand has its own center that has over the years developed some of the most famous names in global athletics.

The little-known town of Bekoji which lies some 217km south of Addis Ababa, is the home of some of Ethiopia's greatest middle and long-distance athletes. These include the famous Beleke brothers Kenenisa and Tariku; the Dibaba trio Tirunesh, Ejegayehu and Genzebe. Other athletes to hail from this region include Derartu Tulu, Tiki Gelana amongst many others.

THE COACH

These star athletes have not only risen from this nondescript town in the middle of Ethiopia, but have been discovered and groomed into the stars they are today under the watchful eye of one Sentayehu Eshetu, a humble, quiet man. Many know him simply as The Coach.

I do not think there is any athletics coach in the world today who has discovered and moulded as many Olympic champions and world record breakers as Sentayehu.

Bekoji sits at an altitude of 10,500 feet above the sea level with an average temperature of 18 degrees Celsius. Here, the air is clean but pure, perfect conditions for a long-distance runner to train in to enhance endurance.

MORNING JOGGING RITUAL

At the nearby Bekoji grounds, is the very center from whose dusty track has risen some of the biggest names in Ethiopia's athletics history. It is

from this track that Sentayehu has moulded young Ethiopian athletes from the tender age of 12 years to be world beaters on the international athletics circuit.

Every morning, teenage boys and girls join upcoming and established athletes in a daily two-hour jogging ritual; each one of them focused to tune their bodies for endurance running - focused to become the next Olympic gold medalist, to be the next world record breaker and consequently fly the Ethiopian flag higher with pride and satisfaction.

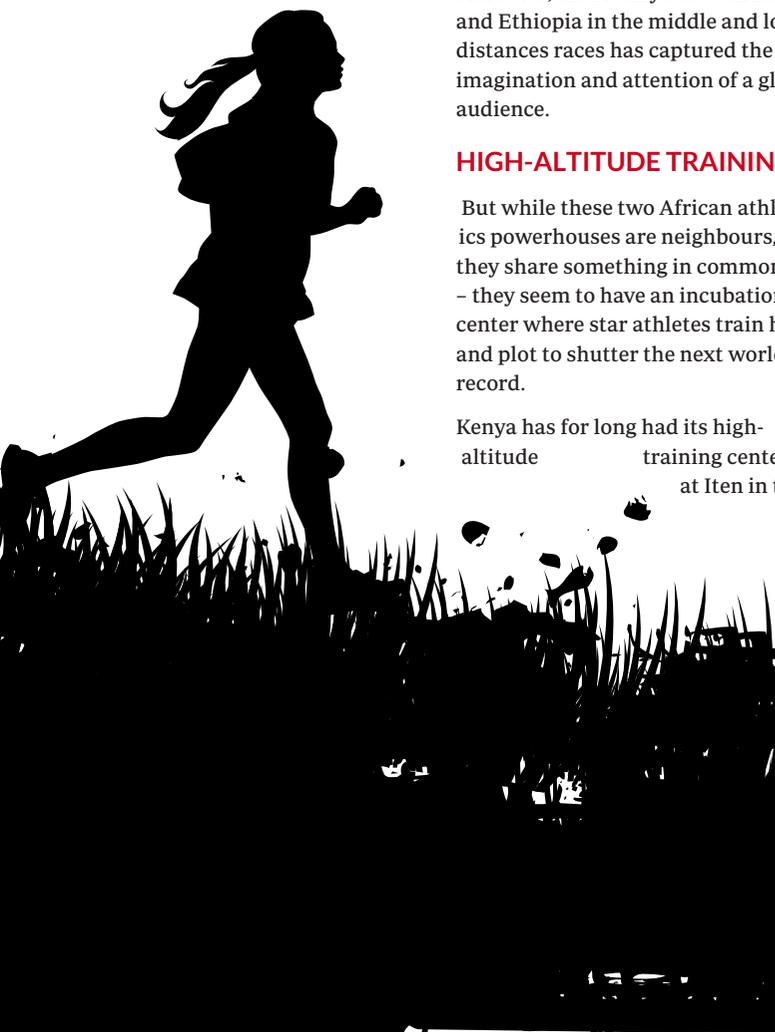
TOWN OF RUNNERS

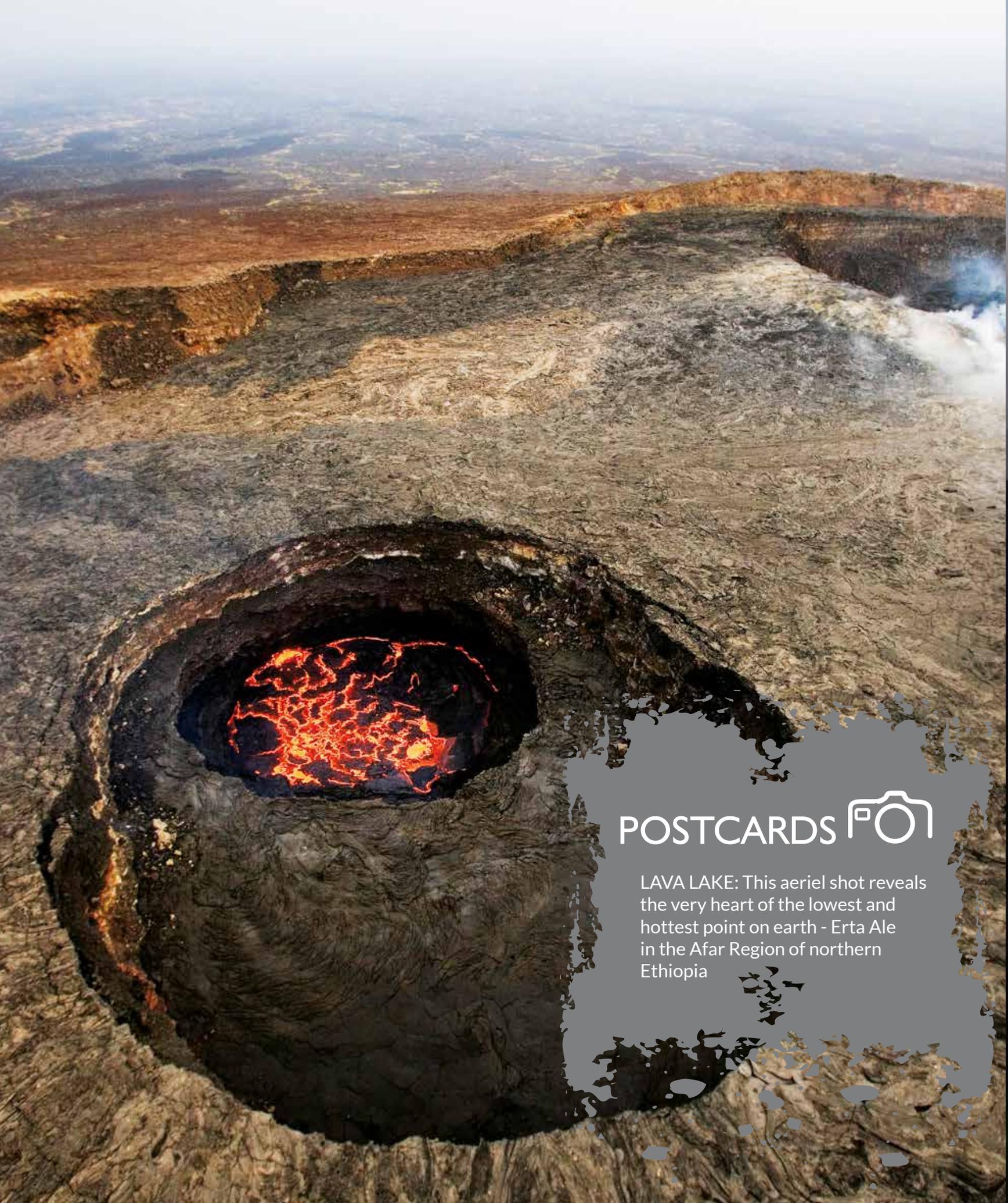
While Bekoji's sons and daughters have brought fame to the town, not so many people knew much of this place, until recently when "Town of Runners", a documentary that seeks to tell the story of Bekoji. Not

EVERY MORNING, TEENAGE BOYS AND GIRLS JOIN UPCOMING AND ESTABLISHED ATHLETES IN A DAILY TWO-HOUR JOGGING RITUAL

far from Bekoji is the sleepy town of Asella, from where the father of Ethiopian athletics Haile Gabreselassie hails from.

What is certain is that Bekoji will continue to churn out future Ethiopian athletes and could become a high altitude performance training center similar to the one developed at Iten that accommodates athletes from across the world.





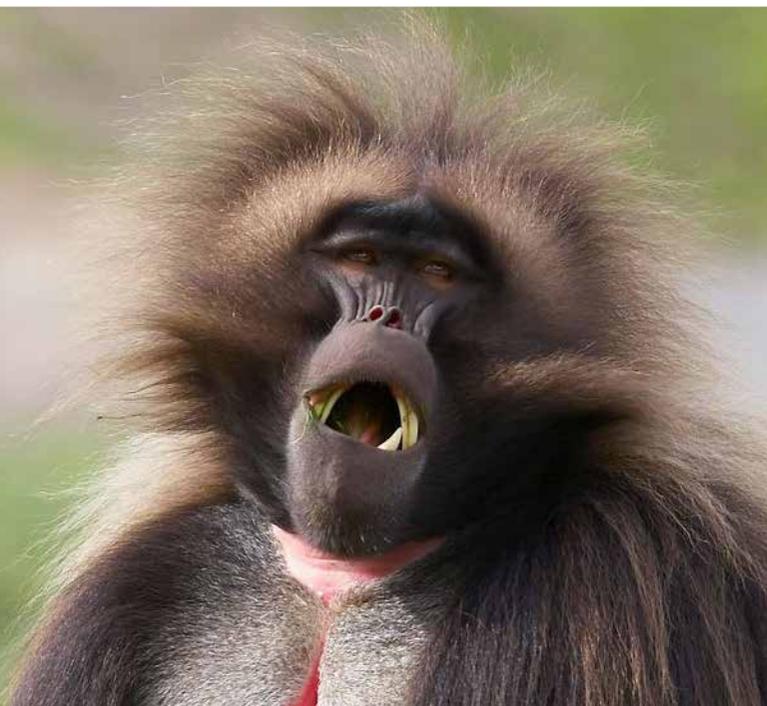
POSTCARDS

LAVA LAKE: This aerial shot reveals the very heart of the lowest and hottest point on earth - Erta Ale in the Afar Region of northern Ethiopia



NATURE

TRACKING GELADAS



in the mountains

Mention an East African wilderness adventure safari and the traditional safari destinations of Kenya and Tanzania quickly come to mind. But their northern neighbour, Ethiopia is quickly earning its stars when it comes to an adventure safari.

While Ethiopia's adventure safari product is still in its development stages, it does not boast of luxury eco-camps and eco-lodges like its two southern neighbours and neither does it boast the marauding Big Five like Kenya and Tanzania does.

What Ethiopia does offer though, is that raw safari experience where nature is king and unique wildlife species that are only unique to Ethiopia.

BLEEDING HEART BABOONS

The gelada baboon is without a doubt the signature wild game of Ethiopia. The gelada is unique to Ethiopia and cannot be found anywhere else on the African continent.

Trekking expeditions for the gelada baboon are done in the Simien Mountains National Park in northern Ethiopia. These treks are unlike any other as they take visitors to the peaks of the Simien Mountains, the highest mountains in Ethiopia, and in that offer most visitors a spectacular view of the rugged hills and valleys below.

The sight is simply mind-sketching as it reveals the sharp pinnacles of the Simien Mountains as they thrust

skywards from the deep ravines which are some sort of a rich tapestry of different hues and tints – a watercolour painting of some sorts.

DOMINANT MALES

Within this mountain range live more than 50,000 gelada baboons. Though they are known as baboons, the geladas are a species of monkey. The geladas are very social and live in large families and/or communities that sometimes number up to 100 individuals.

Like in most of the animal kingdom, the larger males guard over their females and young ones. The males have striking red chest-patches, from which they get the bleeding heart baboon nickname. They also sport long, shaggy manes

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

There are several options that visitors can take for their trek depending on how much time they have and their budget. Day-long or multi-day trips to the park are arranged from the park's office in the nearby Debarq Village.

Accommodation within the park is possible as there are at least two lodges and a third one under construction.

It is mandatory for visiting groups to be accompanied by armed park rangers inside the park.

TRACKING *Elephants*

Jumbos are part of the big five and can be found in Ethiopia, where their population has been on the increase in the recent past. In the far reaches of eastern Ethiopia is an elephant conservation area known as the Babile Elephant Sanctuary.

SUCCESSFUL ELEPHANT CONSERVANCY

The Babile Elephant Sanctuary is, by far, Ethiopia's, and perhaps Africa's, most successful elephant conservancy that has helped increase the elephant population tremendously. Currently, it is believed that up to 500 African elephants live in the conservancy.

The conservancy was created to help protect the endemic subspecies of the elephant, *Loxodonta africana orleansi*, which are a rare subspecies of the African elephant. They are rare due to their small numbers and are known to be shy and rarely come into the open.

GENTLE GIANTS

Within the conservancy, tracking the gentle giants is through the aid of a local guide. The trek takes nature and animal lovers through dusty pathways and into the elephant's territory that is full of thick thorny shrubs, cacti and dry grass.

This is by far one of the best raw safari experiences that Ethiopia offers – getting up-close to the

grazing gentle jumbos, hearing every branch break as the massive land animals eat to their feel. It is an experience not to be missed.

BIRD-WATCHER'S PARADISE

Aside from the jumbos, the Babile Elephant Sanctuary also has other wild game that include a handsome population of gazelles and Menelik's bushback, which is an antelope species.

There are also black-maned lions and cheetahs. Due to its location, the conservancy is also a bird-watcher's paradise as it plays home to more than 200 bird species.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Babile Elephant Sanctuary is located near the town of Babile which lies about 32 kilometres south of the ancient city of Harar in the Harari Regional State.

It is mandatory to have a guide while trekking inside the conservancy. The local guides can be hired from the conservancy's office.

TRACKING ETHIOPIAN



wolves at BALE MOUNTAINS

The Ethiopian wolf is another unique wildlife that can only be found in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian wolf is also Africa's most endangered carnivore, with their population currently numbering under 500 individuals. The Bale Mountains that lie south-east of Addis Ababa is where these unique animals can be spotted.

The vast wide open spaces of the Sanetti Plateau deep inside the Bale Mountains National Park can be covered on foot, or safari vehicle or better still on horse-back in search of the magnificent Ethiopian wolf, which stands out due to its distinctive russet-red coat.

UNIQUE WILDLIFE

And while at it, it is common to see some other unique wildlife that inhabit the Bale Mountains National Park.

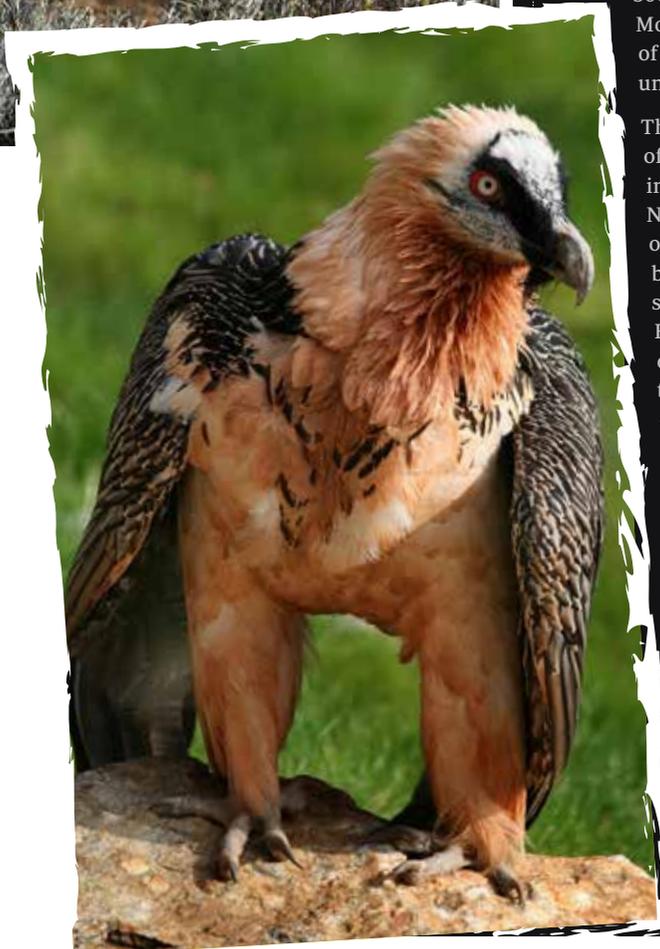
These include the mountain nyala, the spotted hyenas, as well as remarkable Lammergeyer, a bearded vulture that primarily

feeds on bones and bone marrows.

HARENNA FOREST

While a day trip is possible, it is highly recommended that visitors spend at least an extra day so as to visit the Harenna Forest which is within the Bale Mountains National Park.

Herenna Forest is a low-altitude forest that is also Ethiopia's largest cloud forest. It boasts towering trees that form a dense forest canopy. It is not possible to see the Ethiopian wolf within this forest, but the Bale monkey, lions and the spotted leopards can be seen within the forest.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

All trekking and horse riding within Bale Mountains National Park must be arranged in advance at the Bale Mountains National Park's office located in Dinsho Town or through your tour operator.

It is also mandatory to take guides with you into the park, again the guides can be sourced from the park's office at Dinsho Town.

It is also possible to hire the horses and horse handlers from Dinsho.

HARAR Hyenas

When day turns into night over the ancient city of Harar, the labyrinth alleyways of the walled Old Town fall into a deathly silence.

Soon, shadowy forms of hyenas confidently roaming down the narrow streets, for many locals is an all too common sight.

Thrill seekers will find an encounter with these feared predators a heart-stopping moment. Harar is, perhaps the only place in the world, where locals and tourists get to really feed these gallant predators.

HYENA-FEEDING TRADITION

The hyena-feeding tradition in Harar first begun in the 1950s when a local family started feeding the marauding predators with the principle believe that feeding them would spell out good fortunes for the family.

Feeding the hyenas stemmed from an age-old ritual by the local Harari population that would pour out porridge at sunset with the hope of

HYENA MEN

As day gives way to night, two hyena men begin their hyena-feeding ritual at sites just outside the city walls.

The men sitting on the ground, they then take out a piece of raw meat out of the bucket that they bring with them before threading it onto a stick and lure the hyenas out of the darkness.

Soon, a few pairs of flashing eyes appear out of the darkness and in no time, a couple of hyenas are skulking and prowling nearby.

TOURISTS FEEDING HYENAS

This is not a performance for the feint-hearted. Some daring tourists have fed the hyenas from these sticks while the local men heighten the experience for the watching audience by feeding the hyenas pieces of meat straight from their mouths.

Caution should, however be excersied while feeding the hyenas because hyenas have the strongest jaws amongst African predators. An accidental bite from these beasts could be deadly.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The hyena men of Harar set up every night from about 7 pm at two sites.

The first site is just outside the eastern city wall at the shrine of Sheikh Aw Anser and while the second site is at the Fallana Gate.

keeping away the hyenas from feeding on their livestock.

• SIMIEN MOUNTAINS • BABILLE SANCTUARY • BALE MOUNTAINS • HARAR HYENAS • DANAKIL DEPRESSION •

DANAKIL

the hottest & lowest point on earth

The Danakil Depression is the northernmost part of the Afar Depression that is also known as the Afar Triangle.

The Afar Triangle is a geological depression that sits on what is known as the Afar Triple Junction which is part of the Great Rift Valley. The Afar Triple Junction is at the crossroads of three nations that include Eritrea to

Lucy dating back to 3.2 million years were excavated.

Within the Danakil Depression are two active volcanoes. Mount Ayalu is the westernmost and older of the two volcanoes. It sits at the southern end of the Danakil Depression. The other active volcano, is known as Erta Ale. It is amongst several crater lakes bubbling molten rock from the earth's core.

Within the Danakil Depression is Dallol, which is today the hottest place on earth that is inhabited by human beings. Average temperatures are as high as 35 degrees Celsius. The temperatures in Dallol drop to a low of 25 degrees Celsius during the rainy season between September and March. These are the best times for people to visit. However, the temperatures in Dallol climb to as high of up to 50 degrees Celsius during the dry season that runs from March to September.

And lying at an altitude of 300 feet below sea level that further extends to 512 feet below sea level, the Danakil Depression is the lowest places on the planet.

WITHIN THE DANAKIL DEPRESSION IS DALLOL, WHICH IS TODAY THE HOTTEST PLACE ON EARTH THAT IS INHABITED BY HUMAN BEINGS

the north, Djibouti to the west and, to the south, the entire Afar Region in northern Ethiopia.

The Afar Region is often referred to as the cradle of hominids as it is in this region that the skeleton parts of



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CUL TURE



OMO

Valley Tribes

The Ancient African Tribes that inhabit the Lower Omo Valley in south-western Ethiopia, south-eastern South Sudan and the Lake Turkana basin in northern Kenya are, by far, some of the most unique tribal people in the world today.

The Omo Valley sits within the Great Rift Valley that cuts across from northern Ethiopia through to Kenya, Ethiopia's southern neighbour.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DIVERSITY

These are a people that have become famous for their cultural heritage and diversity.

These indigenous tribal groupings, with a total population of about 500,000 people, have had their traditional cultures remain almost intact, even as globalization continues to spread across all four corners of the world including some of the most remote locations

in the world.

Many of these tribespeople are agro-pastoralists which means they grow food crops and keep cattle as well.

These communities choose to live by the banks of the Omo River and the Lake Turkana basin during the harsh dry seasons before moving into the lush grasslands during the rainy season.

COLOURFUL BODY ART

What is striking about the tribespeople of the Omo Valley is the myriad of colours they wear on their bodies in form of colourful beadworks, animal feathers and even body art.

These colourful decorations are tribal customs that are not only meant to mark or celebrate a tribal ritual or tradition, but are also meant to designate position within the tribal community.

The decorations are also used to attract members of the opposite sex, to associate with family or their

tribe as well as to prove their bravery in battle for having slayed the enemy or a dangerous wild animal that threatened their cattle.

IMPRESS VISITORS

And just recently, this tapestry of colours is also used to impress visitors coming to the Omo Valley to

WHAT IS STRIKING ABOUT THE TRIBESPEOPLE OF THE OMO VALLEY IS THE MYRIAD OF COLOURS THEY WEAR ON THEIR BODIES IN FORM OF COLOURFUL BEADWORKS, ANIMAL FEATHERS AND EVEN BODY ART

experience the people and cultures of the Omo Valley tribespeople.

Explore Ethiopia highlights some of these tribal communities that reside within the expansive Omo Valley in southern Ethiopia.

HAMAR

The Hamar people are some of the most well-known tribes from the Omo Valley.

They live along the eastern territory of the Omo River in villages called Turmi and Dimeka.

BULL-JUMPING

One of their most important and famous cultural traditions is the leaping ceremony that is a rite of passage for young Hamar boys into adulthood. The young lad is required to jump over bulls as the entire village cheers him on.

The Hamar people are traditionally cattle herders and they also practice some form of agriculture.

They wear very colourful bracelets arms as well as colourful beads on their heads and around the hips for women. Married women wear circular wedge necklaces to show their status.

BODY ART

Body art is also important for the Hamar tribe. They cut their bodies and rub ash and charcoal into the fresh wound that creates decorative permanent prints in their bodies when it heals.

Hamar men paint their bodies with white chalk during traditional ceremonies and they also wear hair ornaments as an indication of their bravery.

The ornaments on their heads represent a kill of an enemy or dangerous animal.



KONSO

The Konso people live in an isolated region within the Omo River Valley. Since the Konso people live within a hardship area, their villages are fortified by a stone wall used as a defensive barrier.

The Konso people live within groups of communities whereby each community has a main hut.

ALLEYWAYS

Entry into Konso communities has to be through a main gate and into a maze of alleyways. The alleyways are incorporated into the overall design of the communal village set up as a security measure that makes it difficult for enemy warriors to gain access into the village.

The Konso people are mixed agriculturists. They are known to grow crops even though the lands in which they live in are dry and infertile.

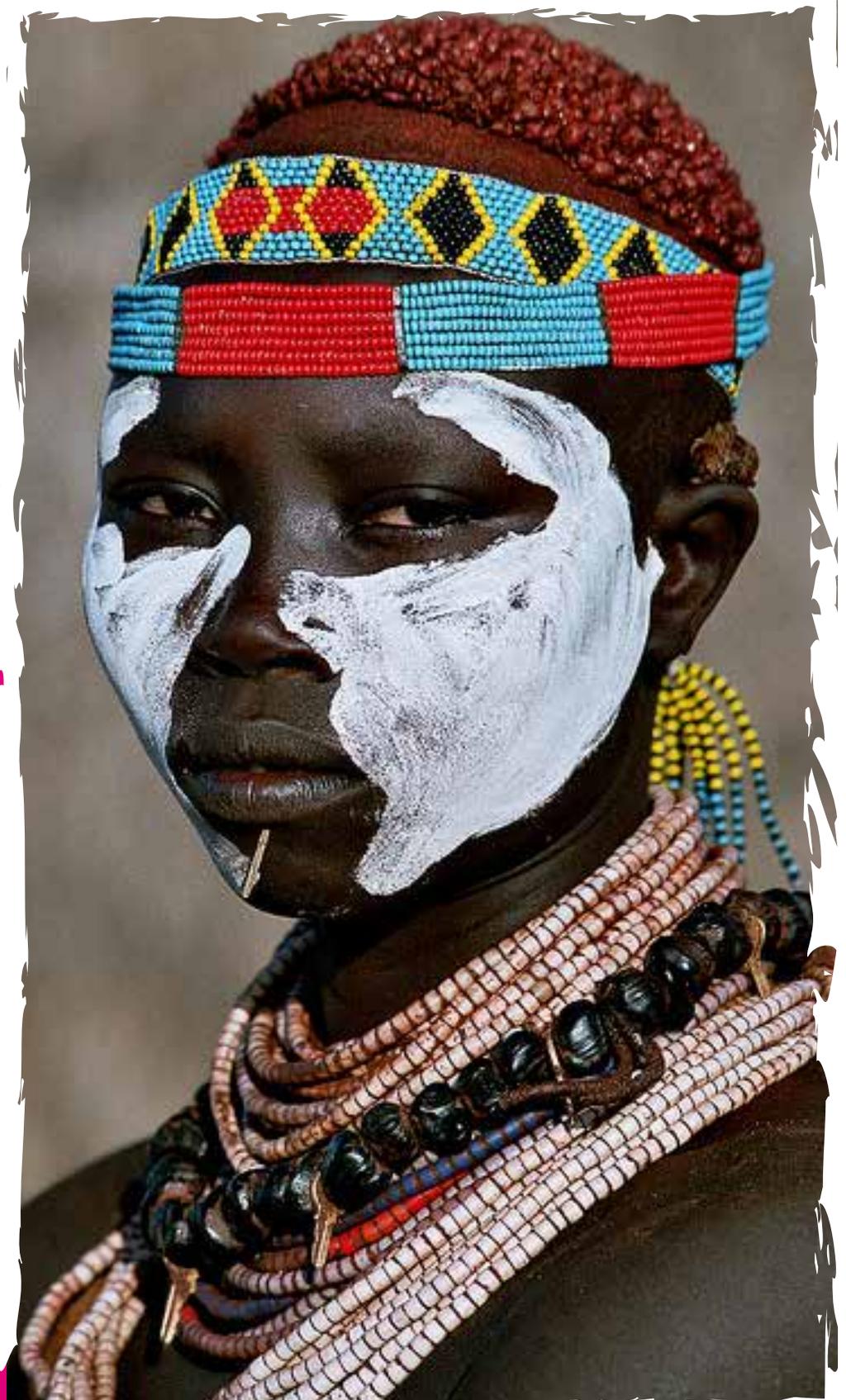
They use animal dung from their cattle to fertilize the grounds on which they mainly grow sorghum. They use the sorghum as a flour for their meals and to also brew local beer. They also grow grains such as beans and maize.

GENERATION POLES

According to Konso tradition, they have erect stone walls and poles around their communal villages in a traditional ceremony that is marked every 18 years.

This is the ceremony that also marks the start of a new generation within their tribal community. By counting the number of generation poles in any Konso village, one is able to determine the age of the said village. The erection of stones and poles is part of the Konso tradition.

The Konso mark their graves by placing carved wooden statues on top of the grave. They call these wooden markers Waga.



THE AFAR

The Afar people who are also known as the Danakil, are an ethnic group found in the Horn of Africa region, but primarily live within the Afar Region in northern Ethiopia. They are known as the Adal in Amharic. Adal was the name of an ancient Muslim empire that almost defeated the old Abyssinian Empire at one time. However, the Afar call themselves The Afar people with the title Afar meaning The Best or The First in the Afar Language.

The Afar are also found across the border in northern Djibouti and in Eritrea. However, larger populations of the Afar are found in Ethiopia.

The Afar people speak the Afar language which is an eastern Cushitic version of the Afro-Asiatic family. The Afar language is closely related to Saho in Ethiopia and Eritrea, and more distantly related to the Somali and Oromo groups of languages.

ARABIAN ROOTS

The Afar are neighbours with other communities that include the Esa Somali, Ittu, and Enia Galla to the south; the Wallo, Yaju, and Raya Galla to the west; and the Saho to the northwest.

The Afar are believed to have Arabian roots and the name "Danakil" which first appeared in the writings of 13th Century Arab geographers is derived from the Ankala tribe from the Buri Peninsula.

The land inhabited by the Afar is extremely arid and barren, consisting of stone and sand desert interspersed with salt lakes and lava streams. The Danakil Depression, said to be the hottest and lowest point on earth is found within

this area. The Afar are traditionally nomadic pastoralists, although some coastal Afar are fishermen.

Traditionally, the Afar were divided into two classes, the Asayahamara (the red ones) or nobles, and the Adoyahmara (the white ones) or the commoners. The colour designations are thought to have come from the reddish soil deserts inland from where the Asayahamara came from and the white saline coastal areas where the where the Adoyahmara habited.

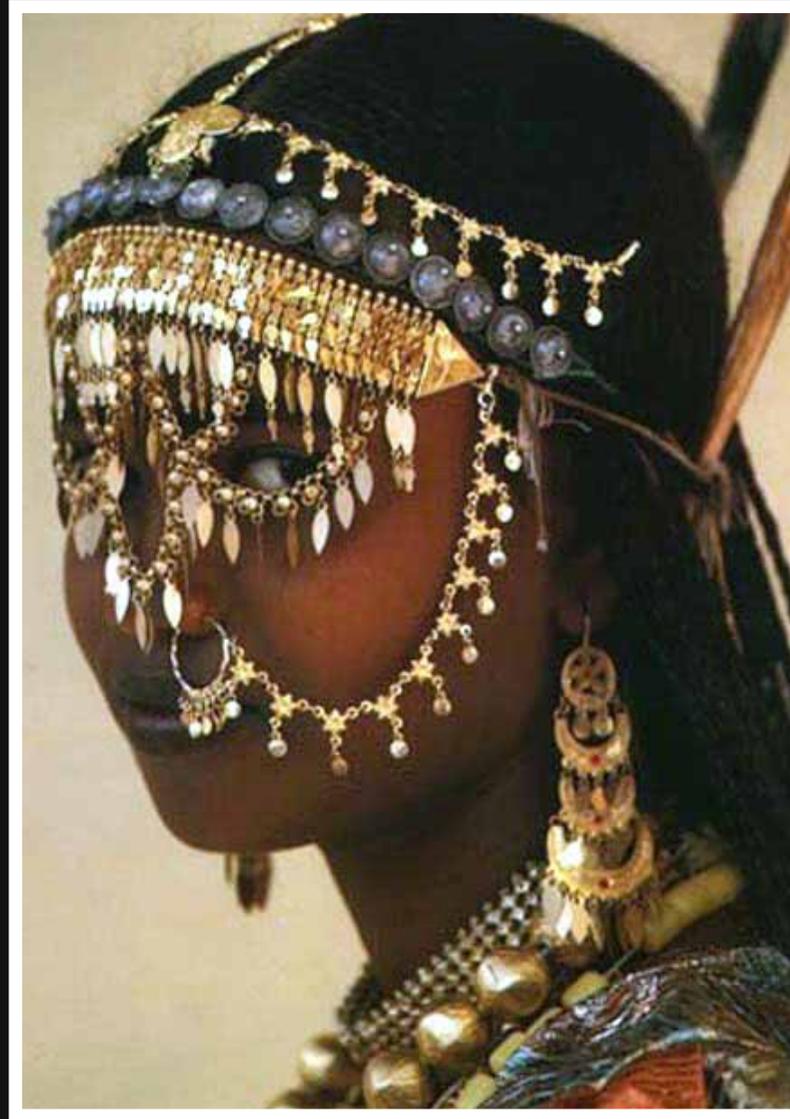
CUSTOMS

Afar women run the home and settlement and set up the houses, which they carry on camels when they move. Women milk the goats and make butter or ghee. They are also the musicians in the tribe.

Marriage in this community has a preference of first cousin, as is also common amongst Semitic peoples.

The women are usually bare-breasted, which is an unusual tradition for professed Muslim peoples. The Afar also practice infibulation, a form of female genital mutilation (FGM) that is mainly practiced by other Cushitic and some Bantu communities across the region. Infibulation is a tradition that involves the sewing together of the female vulva. The Afar boys undergo male circumcision upon coming of age.

The major economic activity in the region aside from nomadism is salt mining in the Danakil Depression. The Afar trade the salt with the Yemenis across the Red Sea Strait or with other Ethiopian communities for grain.





FEEL THE BEAT AT JAZZAMBA

As the tropical sun sets in the horizon and day gives way to night, it makes the dawn of yet another fun evening full of entertainment and merry in the bustling Piassa District in Addis Ababa.

The Taitu Hotel just down the road from the main Piassa thoroughfare comes to life as patrons gather around the tables of the restaurant getting ready not only for dinner but also for an eventful night life.

The Jazzamba Lounge situated at the Taitu Hotel is the venue for the evening entertainment. It comes to life as live music plays every night of the week at the lounge. For many, Jazzamba Lounge is the premiere music venue in Addis as it offers a wide range of musical performances both from local and international music artists.

MUSIC GENRES

Here, various music genres are played. These include popular Ethiopian traditional music even though most of the music gravitates towards jazz that also includes the now popular Ethio-jazz which is a blend of contemporary jazz synched with traditional Ethiopian percussion beats.

Jazzamba is quite literally the hallowed ground of Ethiopian music. It features different genres of music

including traditional Ethiopian music, but the tilt is towards all forms of Jazz including Ethio-Jazz. The name Jazzamba means Jazz fortress – and jazz music, and more so Ethio-jazz, could call Jazzamba a safe sanctuary.

The jazz scene in Addis Ababa is vibrant and is continuously evolving as it is punctuated by numerous acts by many local and international artists who perform on a regular basis.

Aside from the Jazzamba, there are numerous other spots scattered all across Addis where equally entertaining jazz performances can be sampled. However, Jazzamba remains one of the premier locations to enjoy an entertaining evening in the old town centre of Addis Ababa. This is where the music scene in Addis took root and flourished between the 1950s and the 1970s.



THE GODFATHER OF ETHIO-JAZZ

Mulatu Astatke is a musician par excellence. Apart from performing at sell-out venues, Mulatu has no doubt been able to achieve what most musicians can only dream of – inventing what has now become and iconic music genre popularly known as Ethio-Jazz.

Ethio-Jazz was born in the 1970s when Mulatu created a fusion of western jazz music with the traditional sounds and instruments of Ethiopia. For those who have watched him perform or listened to his music, they appreciate not only the originality of the music, but also the rich, deep beats that come with Ethio-Jazz.

Though he is now in his 70s, Mulatu has not been sitting on his laurels. He recently released a new album titled: Sketches of Ethiopia. The album is released under the international label Jazz Village.

SKETCHES OF ETHIOPIA

In *Sketches of Ethiopia*, Mulatu leads a 12-piece team of London-based jazz musicians through the sounds of his signature Ethio-jazz music, a blend of sounds, spaces and moods. A number of Ethiopian traditional instruments such as the *masinko*, *krar*, and *washint* jam and blend splendidly well with the traditional western jazz instruments such as the piano, bass and the saxophone.

Azmari is the first track in this new album. It quite literally kicks off with an intense energy that is echoed in jazz melodies coming from various musical instruments in the assembly. The melodies play, crescendo and

break perfectly well.

The track fades into the second titled *Gamo*. The track is little bit more upbeat and incorporates a stellar performance from Tesfaye, an upcoming artist with an Ethiopian background.

Surma is a favourite. Its performance includes Fatoumata Diawara, a singer from the West-African nation of Mali, whose beautiful voice seamlessly rides the Afro-funk beats that give the song, especially, a fresh but unique Eastern Africa-West African sync that is so pleasing to the ear.

THE BIRTH OF ETHIO JAZZ

Mulatu became the first African student to join the prestigious Berklee College in Boston, Massachusetts in 1963. Returning to his native Ethiopia in 1969, Mulatu had already gained a wealth of experience and knowledge in music.

He found a vibrant night-life scene in Addis Ababa and decided to experiment by blending local music, which had a heavy, mystical middle-eastern sounding of the Ethiopian pentatonic scale, with western music. This was the birth of Ethio Jazz.

With the spread of his across the world, Mulatu has gone on to receive a number of accolades and awards from various institutions. Today, younger audiences and musicians have taken to him too. His his music can be found as samples on tracks from various hip-hop artists such as K'naan and Nas.

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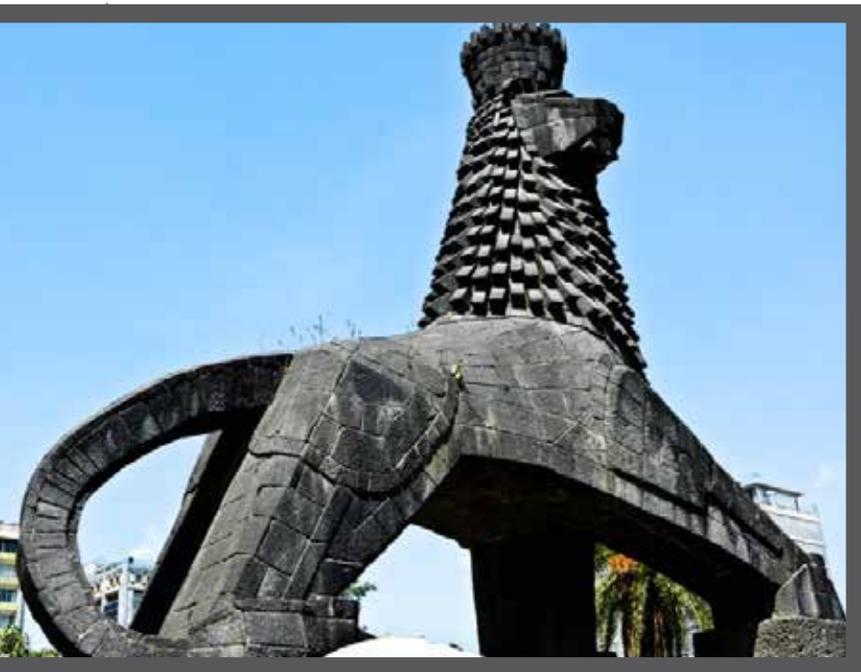
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POSTCARDS

SPECTACULAR SHOT: A young boy strikes a pose for the overhead camera as he ploughs the fertile grounds using an ox-drawn plough

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POSTCARDS

PRETTY PELICANS: These pelicans stand out from the dark background created at the shallow end of the Lake Chamo in Ethiopia



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