

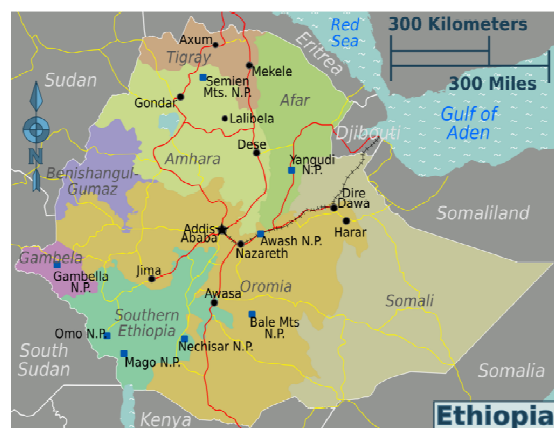
## ETHIOPIA: A COUNTRY OF MYSTIC BEAUTY

Ethiopia officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, is one of the oldest independent nations in the world. It has long been an intersection between the civilizations of North Africa, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Unique among African countries, Ethiopia was never colonized, maintaining its independence throughout, except for five years (1936-41) when it was under Italian military occupation. During this period, the Italians occupied only a few key cities and major routes, and faced continuing native resistance until they were finally defeated during the Second World War by a joint Ethiopian-British alliance. Ethiopia has long been a member of international organizations: it became a member of the League of Nations, signed the Declaration by United Nations in 1942, founded the UN headquarters in Africa, was one of the 51 original members of the UN, and is the headquarters for and one of the founding members of the former OAU and current African Union. In 1974, its monarchist government of Haile Selassie I was deposed, and replaced with a pro-Soviet military junta, which ruled Ethiopia for 17 years until the end of the Cold War.

Ethiopia has often been called the original home of mankind due to various humanoid fossil discoveries here like the famous *Australopithecine* fossil 'Lucy'. Historically, Ethiopia was called 'Abyssinia' and it is the place where coffee first originated. It is bordered by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, Sudan and South Sudan to the west, and Kenya to the south. It is the most populous landlocked country in the world and the second-most populated nation on the African continent. It occupies a total area of 1,100,000 square kilometres, and its capital city is Addis Ababa. Tracing its roots to the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, Ethiopia was a monarchy for most of its history. Alongside Rome, Persia, China and India, the Kingdom of Aksum was one of the great world powers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, it was the first major empire in the world to officially adopt Christianity as a state religion. The majority of the population in Ethiopia is Christian and a third is Muslim. This country is the site of the first *Hijra* in Islamic history and the oldest Muslim settlement in Africa at Negash. Ethiopia is a multilingual society with around eighty ethnic groups speaking 80 different languages, out of which two largest being



Ethiopian National Flag



Geographic Map of Ethiopia

the Oromo and the Amhara. The official state language is Amharic and the currency used here is called Birr. Ethiopia's ancient Ge'ez script, also known as *Ethiopic*, is one of the oldest alphabets still in use in the world. The Ethiopian calendar, which is seven years and about three months behind the Gregorian calendar, co-exists alongside the Oromo calendar. There is 13 months in an Ethiopian calendar. The local time is typically 6 hours behind the 'International Standard Time.' Morning 06.00 AM is 00.00 AM in Ethiopia. Despite being the main source of the Nile, the

longest river on earth, Ethiopia underwent a series of famines in the 1980s, exacerbated by civil wars and adverse geopolitics. The country has begun to recover recently, and it now has the largest economy by GDP in East Africa and Central Africa. Ethiopia is also home for a number of long distance runners. Ethiopian runners now virtually dominate any marathon run globally. Apart from coffee, Ethiopia is also the leading exporter of 'Chat or Khat' an amphetamine-like stimulant plant causing euphoria when consumed.



Addis Ababa



Traditional Dress of Ethiopia

### **MAJOR CITIES OF ETHIOPIA**

Addis Ababa, Axum, Arba Minch, Adama, Awasa, Asella, Bahir Dar, Dire Dawa, Dila, Dessie, Debra Birhan, Debra Markos, Debra Zeyit, Gondar, Harar, Hosaena, Jimma, Jigjiga, Mekele, Nekemte, Shashamane and Sodo.

### **MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS**

Ethiopia is an ecologically diverse country and considered to a place of tourist paradise. Ethiopia is a land of natural contrasts and has the most 'UNESCO World Heritage Sites' in Africa. Ethiopia is a vast highland complex of mountains and is situated in the heart of the 'Rift Valley', which virtually dissects the country into two halves. This unique country of natural beauty has vast continuous mountain ranges, tropical forests, numerous rivers & lakes and deserts. The World's hottest settlement is in its north, where we have an active lava lake. In south of Ethiopia the largest cave in Africa is situated at Sof Omar. The Ethiopian Highlands cover most of the country and have a climate which is generally considerably cooler than other regions at similar proximity to the Equator. Most of the country's major cities are located at elevations of around 2,000–2,500 m (6,562–8,202 ft) above sea level.

### **AXUM: Ethiopia's most ancient city**

The city of Axum situated at the northern part of the country is one of the most ancient cities of Ethiopia. Axum has a history that goes back more than 2,000 (possibly 3,000) years. It is renowned for the world's tallest monoliths, or obelisks, which experts say were erected to mark the passing of some ancient royal personages. Each monolithic obelisks is curved from a single huge piece of granite rock. The biggest monolithic stones ever transported and erected on earth the biggest is 500 tones and 34 m high. The three most important are chiselled to represent multi-storeyed buildings with false doors and windows which reflects its outstanding technological advancement in building technology. In its peak days, Axum was a great commercial and trading centre. Evidences for this come from the thousands of ancient Axumite gold, silver, and bronze coins that are still been excavated in this region.

Axum's greatest significance, however, is as the epicentre of the Queen of Sheba dynasty, upon which rests the notion of the sacred kingship of the Semitic peoples of Ethiopia - a notion that

links the recent past to ancient times in a most unambiguous fashion. Christianity came to the Axumite Kingdom early in the 4th century; it was the first centre to adopt Christianity as a state religion. The oldest church in Africa, south of the Sahara, is the first St. Mary of Zion Church, originally built around the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Emperor Fasilidas replaced it with a newer church around 1635 AD which is



Axum obelisks



St. Mary of Zion Church

still a place of active worship, notable for its crenellated, fortress-like walls. The modern Chapel next to St Mary of Zion church is said to contain the sacred '**Ark of the Covenant,**' but no one except the Orthodox priest who serves as the chapel's custodian is allowed to enter the building. Remains of an early Axum palace popularly tend to have belonged to the legendary queen of Sheba, the elegant architectural buildings or tombs of several ancient Axumite rulers, the local archeological museum rich in findings of different coins stone inscription, house equipments, the temple of Yeha dated back to 2700 years and the monastery of Deberedamo are worthy visiting places.

### LALIBELA: City of rock churches



Church of Saint George



Church of Bete Amanuel

Powerful Christian rulers of the Zagwe Dynasty in the 10th century who followed the foot steps of the Axum religious and cultural tradition was the founders of the town around mid 12th century. Lalibela is named after one of the famous kings of the dynasty who carved out the 11 churches from the living rock. There have been many legends mythologies and scholarly written documents regarding the astonishing architectural and technical perfection of these 11 rock hewn church which are still in active church service after 900 years of construction. The churches were carved out using primitive tools like chisels and axes. The main reason why these churches were built was because during those days' pilgrims was travelling a long distance to go to Jerusalem,



hence, pilgrims were suffering as the result of this extended journey. Therefore, king Lalibela build here the second Jerusalem. It took 24 years to complete all the churches, which is no less than any wonders of the world. Lalibela is a place worth visiting.

### **HARAR: the walled city**



The Gate of the Walled City



The Harar City

Titled as "the city of saints" ("madinat al-awilya"), is an eastern city of Ethiopia. The city is located on a hilltop, in the eastern extension of the Ethiopian highlands with an elevation of 1,885 meters. Founded in the 7th century by Arab immigrants from Yemen, it was chosen as the capital of the Adal Sultanate from 1554 to 1557. Harar saw a political decline during the Sultanate of Harar, only regaining some significance in the Khedivate of Egypt period. Harar has a history of constant turmoil; muslim sultans used Harar as base to launch their jihad and raids against the Ethiopian Christian Empire which resulted in frequent bloodshed. However, for centuries, Harar remained a major commercial centre, linked by the trade routes with the rest of Ethiopia and the outside world through its nearby port. After Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, Harar is "considered 'the fourth holy city' of Islam" with over 100 mosques and shrines, three of which date from the 10th century. The old City Wall of Harar is the main attraction and symbol of Islamic architecture. Other notable buildings in the city include Medhane Alem Cathedral, the house of Ras Mekonnen, the house of Arthur Rimbaud, and the sixteenth century Jami Mosque. One of Harar's main tourist attractions is the hyena feeding on the outskirts of the town every night.

### **GONDER: city of castles**

Founded by Emperor Fasilidas (1632 - 67), Gondar was capital of Ethiopia for almost two centuries and home to a number of emperors and warlords, courtiers and kings. Apart from his own castle king Fasilidas constructed many buildings and bridges in the city, his



Fasilidas Palace



King Fasilidas Pool

successor Emperor Yohannes (1667-1682), and his grandson, Iyasu I (1682-1706), both built more palaces. The Royal enclosure, a walled compound has 6 different castles built from 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century by different kings. Iyasu's most lasting achievement was the church of Debre Berhan Selassie (or light of Trinity), which stands surrounded by a high wall. The inside the church is remarkable ceiling painting with great scenes from religious history.

The pool of King Fasilidas still serves as a baptismal pool during Ethiopian Epiphany. Another worth visiting place is the ruins of the palace and abbey of 18<sup>th</sup> century Empress Mentewab at Quesquam overlooking Gondar. Gondar is also a major handicraft centre; religious themes dominate all art forms which are mainly expressed through church murals, icons, illuminated manuscripts and scrolls.

### **Addis Ababa: The capital**



Meskal Square



HQ of the African Union

Addis Ababa (meaning new flower) is the capital city of Ethiopia. The site of Addis Ababa was chosen by Empress Taytu Betul and the city was founded in 1886 by her husband, Emperor Menelik II. Addis Ababa is situated at the foot of Mount Entoto an altitude of 7,546 feet (2,300 metres). It is the biggest city in Ethiopia and home to the African Union and its predecessor the OAU. It also has the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and numerous other continental and international organizations. Addis Ababa is therefore often referred to as "the political capital of Africa" due to its historical, diplomatic and political significance for the continent. Recent DNA evidence suggested origins of modern humans was from south central Ethiopian regions like present-day Addis Ababa. After analysing the DNA of almost 1,000 people around the world, geneticists and other scientists claimed modern humans spread around the globe from what is now Addis Ababa 100,000 years ago. The city is home to the Ethiopian National Library, the Ethiopian Ethnological Museum (and former Guenete Leul Palace), the Addis Ababa Museum, the Ethiopian Natural History Museum, the Ethiopian Railway Museum and the National Postal Museum. Other notable buildings include St George's Cathedral (founded in 1896 and also home to a museum), Holy Trinity Cathedral (once the largest Ethiopian Orthodox Cathedral and the location of Sylvia Pankhurst's tomb) as well as the burial place of Emperor Haile Selassie and the Imperial family, and those who fought the Italians during the war.

### **Lake Tana & Blue Nile falls**

Located in Amhara Region in the north-western Ethiopian Highlands, the lake is approximately 84 kilometers long and 66 kilometers wide, with a maximum depth of 15 meters, and an elevation of 1,840 meters. Lake Tana is fed by the Lesser Abay, Reb and Gumara Rivers. Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia is the source of the Blue Nile, the main tributary of the river





Lake Tana



Blue Nile Falls

Nile. There lake is having over 21 island, seven to eight of which had monasteries on them. The most interesting islands are: Birgida Mariam, Dega Estefanous, Dek, Narga, Tana Cherkos, Mitsele Fasiledes, Kebran and Debre Maryam. Remains of ancient Ethiopian emperors and treasures of the Ethiopian Church are kept in the isolated island monasteries. The body of King Yekuno Amlak is interred in the monastery of St. Stephen on Daga Island; other Emperors whose tombs are on Daga include Dawit I, Zara Yaqob, Za Dengel and Fasilides. The monasteries are believed to rest on earlier religious sites and include the fourteenth century Debre Maryam, the eighteenth century Narga Selassie, Tana Qirqos said to have housed the Ark of the Covenant before it was moved to Axum. The city of Bahir Dar is situated on the bank of Lake Tana. A sail or cruise on Lake Tana is one of the most pleasant excursions for visitors to this region, particularly in the heart of the summer. Boats can be hired from the Marine Transport Authority in Bahir Dar. The Blue Nile Falls is a waterfall on the Blue Nile River situated 30 km downstream from the town of Bahir Dar and Lake Tana. The falls are considered one of Ethiopia's best known tourist attractions. It is known as 'Tis Abay' in Amharic, meaning 'smoking water'. The falls are estimated to be between 40 and 45 metres high, consisting of four streams that originally varied from a trickle in the dry season to over 400 metres wide in the rainy season.

### **Sof Omar Caves**

This is the longest cave in Ethiopia at 15.1 kilometres (9.4 miles) long; it is claimed that it is the longest system of caves in Africa. Sof Omar is one of the most spectacular and extensive underground cave systems in the world. This cave is formed by the Wayib River as it changed its course in the distant past and carved out a new channel through limestone foothills. It is situated



Sof Omar Caves



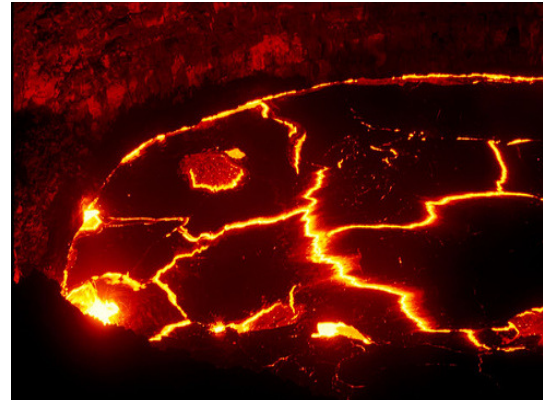
Chamber of Columns

to the east of Robe, in the Bale Zone of the Oromia Region in south-eastern Ethiopia through which the Weyib River flows. The river disappears at the Ayiew Maco entrance of the cave, but reappears at the Holuca resurgence 1 kilometre away. The caves are known for their many pillars, particularly in the "Chamber of Columns". The cave is formed along a network of joints: one set runs approximately north to south and the other east to west. This zig-zag of passages runs in an approximate south-easterly direction. Sof Omar has 42 entrances, but generally only four are useful. This cave has religious significance and is sacred both to Islam and the local Oromo traditional religion. Although the area is not easily accessible and remotely situated, never the less, a quite adventurous place to visit.

### **Arta Ale Volcano**



Arta Ale Volcano



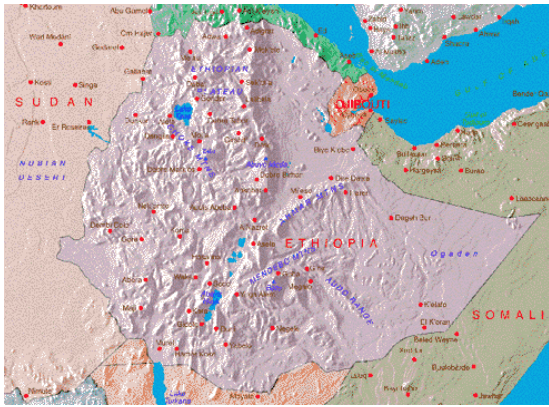
Arta Ale – Lava lake

Erta Ale means "Smoking Mountain" in the local Afar language. It is a continuously active basaltic shield volcano in the Afar Region of north-eastern Ethiopia, the most active volcano in Ethiopia. It is in the Afar Depression, a bad land desert area spanning the border with Eritrea, and the volcano itself is surrounded completely by an area below sea level, making it a relatively low-elevation volcano. Erta Ale is 613 metres (2,011 ft) high, with one or sometimes two active lava lakes at the summit which occasionally overflow on the south side of the volcano. It is notable for being the longest-existing lava lake. Volcanoes with lava lakes are very rare: there are only four in the world. Not much is known about Erta Ale, as the surrounding terrain is some of the most inhospitable on earth and the native Afar people have a legendary reputation for viciousness towards outsiders. On January 16, 2012, a group of German, Austrian and Hungarian scientists/tourists was attacked on their way to Erta Ale. Five scientists/tourists were executed on site, some taken as hostages and others were injured while trying to escape. However, Erta Ale still remains one of the most dangerous and adventurous tourist spots in Ethiopia.

### **The Ethiopian Rift Valley**

The Ethiopian Rift Valley, which is part of the famous East African Rift Valley, comprises vast continuous mountain ranges, tropical forests, numerous rivers, numerous hot springs, beautiful lakes and a variety of wildlife. The Ethiopia rift valley is about 80 km (50 miles) wide. The valley is the result of two parallel faults in the earth's surface, between which in distant geological time, the crust was weakened and the land subsided. Ethiopia is often referred to as the 'water tower' of Eastern Africa because of the many rivers that pour off the high tableland. The Great Rift Valley's passage through Ethiopia is marked by a chain of eight lakes: Lake Abaya, Lake Chamo, Lake Zway, Lake Shala, Lake Koka, Lake Langano, Lake Abijatta and Lake Awasa. Each of these lakes has its own special life and character and provides ideal habitats for the exuberant variety of flora and fauna that make the region a beautiful and exotic destination for tourists.





Ethiopian Rift Valley



Simien Mountains

## OTHERS PLACES OF INTEREST

### The Awash National Park

Lying in the lowlands at the east of Addis Ababa and striding the Awash River, the Awash National Park is one of the finest reserves in Ethiopia. Awash national park, surrounding the dormant volcano of Fantale, is a reserve of arid and semi-arid woodland and savannah, with riverain forests along the Awash river. Forty six species of animals have been identified here, including *beisa oryx* and Swayne's heartbeest. The bird life is prolific especially along the river and in the nearby lake Basaka and there are fine endemic amongst the 392 species recorded. A special attraction is the beautiful clear pools of the Filwoha hot springs.

### The Omo National Park

One of the most beautiful national parks in Ethiopia, its 4068 km of wilderness bordered by the Omo river, is home to an amazing range of wildlife. 306 species of birds have been identified here, while large herds of eland, some buffalo, elephants, giraffe, cheetah, lion, leopard, Burchell's zebra are not uncommon. The park is not easily accessible, as the current means of access is via Omorate and the ferry to the north bank of the river. The park HQ is 75 km from Kibish settlement. However, a new airstrip is available close to the HQ and a pleasant campsite on the Mui River – plans are in hand.

### The Mago National Park

Covering an area of 2162 km on the banks of the Omo River, the Mago National Park is relatively undeveloped for tourists. The broad grasslands teem with herds of buffalo, giraffe, elephants and kudu, while sometimes it is possible to find lions, leopards and Burchell's zebra. The abundant bird life here is typical of dry grasslands and river banks.

### The Gambala National Park

In these areas many interesting species of animals and birds can often be seen by the visitor. According to the wild life information office, Dowsett Forbs has identified 813 species of birds, 596 residents and 224 regular seasonal migrants in Ethiopia.

### The Danakil Depression

The Danakil Depression is a desert basin which lies in the Danakil Desert in north-eastern Ethiopia and southern Eritrea. It belongs to the homeland of the Afar people. It lies up to 100 m below sea level as a result of tectonic activity caused by plate movements. The presence of many volcanoes in the region, including Erta Ale and the Dabbahu Volcano in the middle of the depression is because of these plate movements.



## Hot Water Springs

The two most important hot water springs of Ethiopia is situated at Sodere and Wondo Genet. Sodere is a spa town in central Ethiopia located approximately 25 kilometres south of Adama. Sodere lies alongside the Awash River. The hot springs resort, popular for its therapeutic effects, is located outside the town. An Olympic size swimming pool, reportedly empty during the week, is a popular draw for weekenders and tourists. Wondo Genet on the other hand is located southeast of Shashemene in the Sidama Zone. Wondo Genet is covered with thick Ethiopia forest. The spa centre is having two big natural hot water swimming pools, a body massage place and a beautifully maintained garden.

## WORLD HERITAGES SITES

There are 8 places in Ethiopia that have been registered by UNESCO as ‘World Heritage Sites.’ The places are as follows:

- The **Aksum's archaeological sites** were included to its list of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 1980 due to their historical value.
- **Fasil Ghebbi** is a fortress-enclosure located in Gondar, which served as the home of Ethiopia's emperors in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.
- The fortified historic town of **Harar Jugol** has been included in the World Heritage List in 2006 by UNESCO in recognition of its cultural heritage.
- **Rock-Hewn Churches** of Lalibela.
- **The lower Awash valley** is one of the last refugees for the African wild ass. It is extinct now in Yangudi Rassa National Park but still found in the adjacent Mile-Serdo Wild Ass Reserve. Other large animals' native to the area includes *Beisa Oryx*, Soemmering's gazelle, Dorcas gazelle, gerenuk and Grevy's zebra.
- **Lower Valley of the Omo** is currently believed by some to have been a crossroads for thousands of years as various cultures and ethnic groups migrated around the region. To this day, the people of the Lower Valley of the Omo, including the Mursi, Suri, Nyangatom, Dizi and Me'en, are studied for their diversity.
- **Simien National Park** Located in the Semien (North) Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region, its territory covers the Simien Mountains and includes Ras Dashan, the highest point in Ethiopia. It is home to a number of endangered species, including the Ethiopian wolf and the *Walia ibex*, a wild goat found nowhere else in the world. The gelada baboon and the caracal, a cat, also occur within the Simien Mountains. More than 50 species of birds inhabit the park, including the impressive bearded vulture, or lammergeier, with its 10-foot (3m) wingspan.
- **Tiya** is an archeological site, which is distinguished by 36 standing stones or stelae, "32 of which are engraved with enigmatic symbols, notably swords," marking a large, prehistoric burial complex.

**Some Interesting Pictures of Ethiopia are given in the next page.**



Fossilized Remains of Lucy



Debre Berhan Church



Debre Berhan Roof Paintings



Bearded Vulture



*Walia ibex*



Hyena feeding at Harar



Lake Tana Island Monastery



Religious Treasures



Emperor's Skeletal Remains



Coffee tree



Chat Cultivation



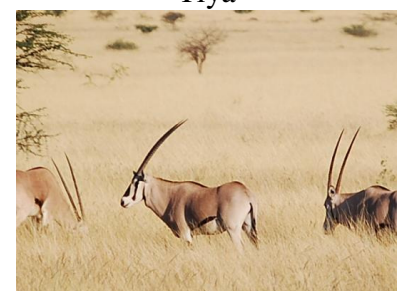
Tiya



Swimming Pool of Sodere



Musri Tribe



Gambala National Park



Ras Dashen



Danakil Desert



Lake Lango



## TEN COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ETHIOPIA

- 1. It is poor country:** The first misconception among all the Indian is that this country is very poor. I too had the same view before I came to this country. When I was in college I saw the pictures of famine that flashed on TV in the mid 80s. What I have seen made a long lasting impression in my mind. However, after I came and staying here for 3 years, I have now changed my opinion completely. Thought the economy of the country cannot be compared with that of India. But, I was surprised to note that 1 Ethiopian Birr is equal to Rs. 3/-. That means that the currency of this country is three times stronger than India. One cannot classify a person rich or poor on basis of money he/she have. In spite being rich with money one can be poor in many other things. Exactly, the same way we just cannot say a country to be rich or poor on the basis what we see on the TV. To understand the point I am making one have to see the movie 'Aguntuk', this was the last movie of Mr. Satyajit Ray, I rate this movie amongst the best of Ray's films. The theme is about literacy, education and wisdom. You may be literate but can be still remain uneducated about many matters. And how can one be sure what every one knows is absolutely right? The movie also discussed the issue of 'Kupmanduk' i.e. the frog of the well, who life revolves around a small place; he knows nothing about the outer world. Ethiopia has a rich cultural heritage; the mineral wealth of this country is immense. The people over here are still pure & honest. They can be considered as primitive as they still did not master the art of cheating others. Ethiopia is now investing heavily on education. So far 33 universities have been opened to educate the coming generation. Considering long term investment, I think the most promising step. The country is progressing at a steady pace and will soon catch up with other so called developing country.
- 2. Here you can only see hunger:** After coming here I did not see anybody dying of hunger. Here people may not earn much but they have good wisdom to donate food to needy. Here people live in harmony and with an open mind of sharing. In Harar, the place I stay, I did not see any beggars initially, however, after the Libya war, I now see some children begging on the street. However, there is no concept of organized begging syndicate here. However, one disturbing thing that I discovered here is the wastage of food. I see in cafeteria during lunch that my Ethiopia friends never completely finish their meals. There is lot of leftover that is really very unusual for an Indian to visually digest. When I asked the reason they replied that it is in their tradition to leave something on the plate and not finish everything. But, people are dying over here; it is not because of food, it is primarily because of HIV/AIDS. Here sex is not a taboo like India; hence, unsafe sex among young people is very common. Also the medical facilities are not that developed.
- 3. Bad Communication:** There are many movies on Africa viz. Hotel Rwanda, The Last King of Scotland, Mississippi Masala etc. In all these movies the road conditions shown is not very good. However, on contrary Ethiopian roads are very good. All the highways here are of international standards and neatly maintained. These roads are made by the Chinese and one must praise their efforts. The Government here pay lot of attention towards the roads. Moreover, all the major cities are connected with air service. The Ethiopian Airlines is one of the best service providers in Africa. Another very important thing over here is the internet connectivity. All the major cities across the country have broad band internet connectivity. Within the city we have Indian 'Bajaj' service, so you can go anywhere within the city when ever you like.
- 4. Very harsh climate:** As the country is near to the equator; hence, anybody may think that it will be very hot here. On the contrary Ethiopia can be considered as paradise as far climate is



considered. As the major cities are situated in highland so the temperature is very cool through the year. Except, for the deserted northern part of the country, the other places are really very pleasant. In Harar one has to use warm clothes through the year. More importantly, there are no mosquitoes. As there is less pollution producing industries here; the ambience of Harar is fascinating.

5. **People here are dark black:** Another wrong concept is that we will see Negro very dark skinned people over here. On the contrary the people over here are dark brown coloured. Like we have in peoples of south India. As the country is not very hot and in past have receive gene flow from the Arab world, Italy and India. Hence, one can see quite fairer coloured people over here also. However, in the south western regions bordering Kenya and Sudan one can see the classic Negro peoples.
6. **Law & order problem:** These days the television is full of violent news from the Middle East. Also, some interesting stories of Somalian pirates. It is our general concept that law & order situation in all African countries are bad. On the contrary the general law & order situation is really good in Ethiopia. So far, I have not seen anything too bad; I think we have more law & order problems in India than here. Here the federal police are given absolute power to act, so they don't need any order from top to stop anything that could be harmful. This power keeps every thing in control. This may seem brutal to a foreigner like me, but it is essential here. However, pick pocketing and mobile snatching is not uncommon in big cities.
7. **Bad place for foreigners:** This country is paradise for foreigners especially for Indian. Here the local people adore Indians, as majority of Indian expatriates here are teachers. The locals respect teacher very much. Moreover, because of the Bollywood movies, the people here have very high regards for India and Indian movie stars. Many here have also started to speak Hindi just by watching movies. Here Indian teachers are real star people. Moreover, as university teachers earn huge in terms of local money, they are considered top be elite class here. They can enjoy villas and luxurious life that they cannot even dream in India. Moreover, the Government have not imposed any exit visa for Indian expatriates working in universities here. So one can go to India when ever he/she likes. There is absolute freedom over here. Also you can send all the money to India that you earn here, there is no local tax. The banks over here have e-banking facilities and your money can reach India within 3-4 days.
8. **Bad power situation:** The power situation here is quite good. I don't know about other places, but in Harar power cut is very rare. When I came to Ethiopia I brought a torch light, because it was not used the battery got damaged after 2 years. I have to throw the torch, now I don't keep torch with me. If sometime I require emergency light, my mobile phone is enough. However, some power cut is reported from other parts of the country. A new dam is coming up on the river Blue Nile, once completed; the country will have surplus power.
9. **No religious freedom:** The country has a large population of Christians and Muslims. I have not seen any clash within these communities. Riots that I have seen in India or small clashes that take places in cities on religious ground are uncommon here. Both the religious communities live in harmony and peace. Christians here are Orthodox & Protestant and the Muslims are from Sunni sect. Even inter religious marriages are not very uncommon. Another interesting thing is that 10% of the total population do not have any specific religion here. Also, there is a large population of Indian expatriates working in Ethiopia in various universities, pharmaceutical companies, Indian embassy, NGOs and various business organizations. Every year the Indian community celebrate Durga Puja in Addis Ababa.

Typical pandal is made and 5 days of puja is done. For a Bengali person like me it is a great thing. Picture of this year's puja is posted.



**10. Bad place for girls:** There is a proverb that you cannot rape an Elephant or Hyena. As the leader of the elephant or hyena pack is a female and you just cannot mess with them. Ethiopia is country of Hyenas and the society here is matriarchal. Here girls and ladies enjoy a very esteem status. After the death the property of father passes to daughters and not to sons like we have in India. Here in order to marry the groom has to arrange money for his own wedding. There is absolutely no pressure on bride's side. The ladies are quite dominant and play a key role in decision making in family. I have never heard that any girl got raped here. On the contrary my Ethiopia friends here were shocked to hear about the gruesome Delhi gang rape case that happened recently. Even in market they don't slaughter any female animals for eating. I wishes, in India we also had the same opinion like the Ethiopians.

### For more information on Ethiopia visit:

Ethiopia [Wikipedia]: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopia>

Ethiopia Treasures: <http://www.ethiopian treasures.co.uk/pages/harar.htm>

Major Tourist Attraction: <http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/tourism/contents/attractions.htm>

Tourism Ethiopia: <http://www.tourismethiopia.gov.et/English/Pages/Home.aspx>

### Videos on YouTube about Ethiopia:

The Lost Kingdom of Africa: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivy91iqHtKY>

African's Wild Heart- The Great Rift [BBC]: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bU-9CIRYeus>

Ethiopian Orthodox church has Ark of Covenant: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOqLpT6HKzY>

Ethiopia The Omo Valley Tribes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq7K-VUwxoQ>

Discovery Ethiopia Mythical Volcanoes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hpLlt0agt8>

Blue Nile Falls: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtN\\_rzhYP9A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtN_rzhYP9A)

The Tana Lake Monasteries: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwEJMOGyc0s>

The Gambela National Park: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dD3pCe8h7EU>

Ethiopia- Keepers of the Lost Ark: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hha8gxbmKZE>

Ark of Covenants: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-BRtlHVNUE>

Ethiopian Ancient Architecture: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhdV6kiwZ1w>

Hyena Feeding: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEfkT\\_xcGEo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEfkT_xcGEo)