



Reef & Rainforest



Special Itinerary

The Photogenic Wildlife & Landscapes of Ethiopia – with Oliver Smart

12 - Day Escorted Group Tour - Led by Oliver Smart and
Daniel Million

25 October – 06 November 2021



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A Brief Description of the Group Itinerary

This expert-led small group tour concentrates on the unique, unusual and photogenic wildlife and landscapes that set Ethiopia apart from the rest of Africa. Ethiopia is truly a photographer's dream destination with many of its highlight mammal and bird species, surprisingly tolerant of people. There will be an emphasis in this group tour on photography and tuition in addition to observing Ethiopia's magnificent and varied wildlife including its mammals, birds, reptiles and other fauna and flora. The tour is suitable for those interested in observing wildlife at a leisurely pace as well as keen photographers.



It will be jointly led by award-winning wildlife photographer, ornithologist and naturalist Oliver Smart and local wildlife expert Daniel Million who will both help you make the most of the many photographic opportunities. Most of the pictures in this itinerary were taken by Oliver on his 2019 tour, which will give you some idea of his abilities and the sightings that are possible. His humour, knowledge and experience will help you gain maximum enjoyment and results from this exciting adventure.

We begin our holiday in the Great Rift Valley, with Lake of Awassa where we can enjoy excellent photography with the confiding water birds and givet and colobus monkeys.

Next comes the Bale Mountains, inhabited by the world's rarest canid and Africa's most endangered carnivore; the beautiful Ethiopian wolf. Seeing this elegant predator hunting giant mole rats on the moonlike Sanetti Plateau is an experience to savour. The Afro-alpine moorlands and lush lichen-clad cloud forests of the Bale Mountains are also home to many other endemic species including the mountain nyala, Bale monkey, crowned eagle, blue-winged goose and the curious Bale horned chameleon to name just a few.

We then travel north to the ancient city of Gondar and the spectacular Simien mountain range. Our highlight here will be sitting among the "herds" of geladas (sometimes only a few feet away) as they feed and chatter on the montane grasslands. We should also see the impressive Walia ibex, agile klipspringer, soaring lammergeiers and croaking thick-billed ravens all against a backdrop of jaw-dropping scenery.

Ethiopia's fascinating ancient and more recent history and unique cultures also combine with its wildlife to make for an unforgettable adventure in one of Africa's most diverse countries.

With the majority of the key wildlife species that could be encountered there should be good opportunities for photography, although please note that some patience, perseverance and luck will always be a factor with any photography. For most of the wildlife on this trip a full-frame DSLR or mirrorless camera with a telephoto lens between 300-600 mm or a powerful zoom or bridge camera will produce the best results. Ethiopia has some superb panoramic landscapes so a wide-angle lens is also ideal and there will also be some smaller wildlife for macro lenses. A tripod can also be very useful in some situations. The tour will use transportation in either three or four 4WD Hardtop Toyota Landcruiser's depending on the numbers.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 25 Oct Morning arrival into Addis Ababa and transfer to nearby hotel for breakfast. Return to the airport. Take flight to AWASSA and transfer to our hotel on the edge of **LAKE AWASSA**. Afternoon bird and monkey watching. O/n AWASSA HAILE RESORT, B, L, D.
- 26 Oct Morning visit to the Lake Awassa fish market. Rest of the day for wildlife viewing and photography around **LAKE AWASSA**. O/n AWASSA HAILE RESORT, B, L, D.
- 27 Oct A last morning of more bird and wildlife viewing and photography around **LAKE AWASSA**. Later we transfer to the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. On arrival transfer across the **SANETTI PLATEAU** viewing wildlife on the way to the lodge. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 28 Oct Excursion to the **SANETTI PLATEAU** to see its special wildlife. Afternoon to explore the **HARENNA FOREST**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 29 Oct Another full day to explore the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. Today we visit the forests at **DINSHO** and the **GAYSAY GRASSLANDS**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 30 Oct Excursion to the **SANETTI PLATEAU** to see its special wildlife. Afternoon to explore the **HARENNA FOREST**. O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 31 Oct A last morning to explore the **BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. We then drive to the Goba airport to fly back to Addis Ababa. In the afternoon we visit the fascinating **Addis Ababa Museum**. Tonight, we have a special traditional dinner and experience some typical Ethiopian song and dance. O/n SWISS INN NEXUS HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 01 Nov Morning flight to Gondar and transfer on to the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**. Afternoon exploring some of the park. O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 02 Nov We enjoy a full day exploring the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS** including the Chennek Valley in search of its special wildlife. O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 03 Nov Another full day exploring the **SIMIEN MOUNTAINS**. O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.
- 04 Nov We return to **GONDAR** for lunch. In the afternoon we will visit **GONDAR CASTLE** and the **FASILIDES BATH**. O/n GOHA HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 05 Nov Morning visit to **DEBRE BIRHAN SELASSIE CHURCH** and some birdwatching. Transfer to the airport and fly back to Addis Ababa. We have day use of a room at the hotel and then a late evening transfer to the airport for international flights. (Overnight at hotel can be arranged)



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Joint Leader: Oliver Smart

An alumnus of the University of Birmingham, Oliver is an acclaimed wildlife photographer and ornithologist. His clear passion for the natural world and significant experience of wildlife photography will be a valuable asset to the group members. Oliver has won awards from the Zoological Society of London and The Bird Photographer of the Year and has been published and highly



commended in numerous magazines, national newspapers, nature books and wildlife guides. Oliver's deep understanding of wildlife behaviour and experience photographing a range of habitats throughout Ethiopia will help you to capture some fantastic images of that country's extra-special wildlife, landscapes and culture. His friendly and outgoing personality, sense of humour and immense knowledge of wildlife and photography will ensure you gain the very best possible enjoyment and photographic results from this exceptional tour. Oliver will also offer Lightroom tuition during downtime to encourage you to achieve the best results from your images. He'll also stay up late in the evening to assist you in photographing the bright stars and Milky Way visible in the dark, unpolluted skies of Ethiopia.

Joint Leader: Daniel Million

After completing studies in tourism, wildlife and history, Daniel began leading tours all over Ethiopia for a number of special interest clients. He now has well over a decade's worth of experience in tour leading in Ethiopia and is one of the country's eminent experts in wildlife and birding, having extensively studied ornithology and natural history. He has travelled to all corners of his country, assisting National Geographic



photographers and film crews and leading hundreds of wildlife and cultural tours. He has an outstanding knowledge of wildlife behavior and has observed an exceptional range of Ethiopia's wildlife: he knows where to find even the most elusive species. Daniel's studies and interest in history and culture are also very evident and his fluency in English, French, Amharic and Oromiffa combined with his great sense of humor and warm personality make him a perfect joint leader for this group.



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THE PHOTOGENIC WILDLIFE & LANDSCAPES OF ETHIOPIA

Mon 25 Oct **(International flights are not included, but our recommended carrier is Ethiopian Airlines)** Met on arrival at the ADDIS ABABA airport and transfer to the Swiss Inn Nexus Hotel for breakfast, and use of a room to freshen up after your international flight. If required, excess luggage can also be stored in Addis to be collected later in the trip.

Later we will return to the airport to take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 175 at 1145 to AWASSA arriving 1225. On arrival we will transfer 30 minutes to our hotel for lunch and some at leisure. We have the afternoon to gently explore the grounds of our hotel or rest.

The hotel borders the shores of mighty lake Awassa and the flower rich gardens are full of colourful birdlife including sunbirds, hornbills, glossy starlings and waterbirds such as kingfishers and black crakes can be found around the lake.

O/n HAILE RESORT AWASSA, B, L, D. The flagship property in the chain owned by the legendary Ethiopian athlete Haile Gebrselassie. Located on the shores of Lake Awassa, with wonderful sunset views and excellent amenities and accommodation, the hotel is one of the best in the country.



Accommodation is in 126 rooms all with comfortable beds, smart and modern private bathrooms and feature LCD TV's and minibars, air-conditioning and balconies in most room categories. The hotel is very popular with families and features a large outdoor swimming pool, children's pool and play area, indoor tennis court and lakeside beach bar and seating.

There are four restaurants serving western and Ethiopian cuisine and there is free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel although the Wi-Fi is time limited. Insects can be an issue in the early mornings and evenings by the lake shore, but the rooms are very well screened. The gardens have been planted with many nectar rich species and attract many sunbirds and also waders and pin-tailed whydahs along the shoreline.

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Tue 26 Oct

This morning we will visit the Awassa fish market where the fishermen haul in their catches, process them and sell them on to the gathering locals.



Although not the most attractive of sights, the experience offers an insight into everyday life. It is also an excellent opportunity for bird photography as hundreds of attendant marabou storks gather on the lake shore looking for scraps and handouts from the fishermen.



The storks are joined by African fish eagles, hamerkops, African jacanas, black-winged stilts, little stilts and a variety of other water birds all allowing exceptionally close approaches.

After some time spent enjoying and photographing the birds here, we can explore more of Lake Awassa. The reed-fringed edges of the lake can provide sightings of malachite, giant, African pygmy and pied kingfishers, black crakes, African pygmy goose, hottentot teal and white-backed duck.



Later we walk through some nearby forest patches where we can encounter grivet and colobus monkeys and a range of different birdlife.

The colourful sunbirds, bee-eaters, starlings and barbets will make for particularly photogenic subjects and local specialities include the spotted creeper and red-throated wryneck. (All meals are included today) O/n HAILE RESORT AWASSA, B, L, D.

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Wed 27 Oct This morning we revisit the Awassa fish market for more close encounters with the birdlife. We could perhaps also enjoy some of the many colourful birds in the grounds of the hotel too.



We will then set off for our long transfer (approximately 6 hours in total) through ever changing and scenic landscapes to the Bale Mountain Lodge.



Approximately 2 hours of the journey to the lodge will be crossing the Bale Mountains' Sanetti Plateau on the way and looking for a range of wildlife on the journey. This could include our first Ethiopian wolves, highland (Stark's) hares, giant mole rats and a plethora of mountain birds.



We should arrive at the lodge in the late afternoon and perhaps have time for a short walk in the forest next to the lodge. (All meals and selected alcoholic and soft drinks at the lodge are included today).

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O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D. Built with sustainability in mind, the comfortable Bale Mountain Lodge is located at 2,600 metres above sea level in a remote forest setting in the heart of the Bale Mountains National

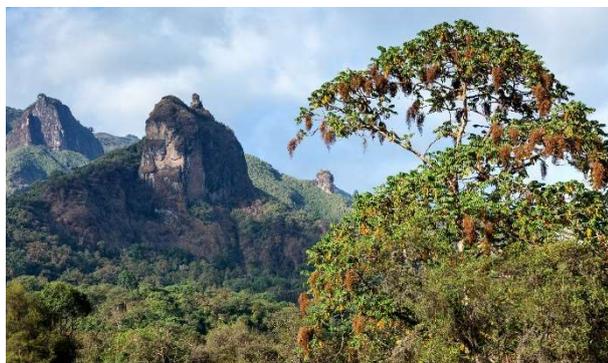


Park. The lodge's location in the Katcha forest clearing within the lush Haremma Forest is the perfect setting for exploring both the high-altitude moorlands of the Sanetti Plateau and the cool cloud forest habitat below. The lodge is perhaps the best in the country, with a stunning design, superb friendly service and high quality, traditionally inspired accommodation. There are four chalets spaced next to the main building for those with more limited mobility and twelve newer lodges and treehouses scattered around the forested grounds.

Each room offers comfortable beds, modern toilets with hot water showers, safety deposit box, luggage racks and a cosy wood burning stove for guests to use on the cooler evenings. Each room also has a small veranda from which to watch birds and soak up the surroundings. The treehouse rooms feature outdoor showers and greater privacy, but the trails to them can be slippery after rainfall.



The main lodge is built from local slate and stone and features a homely living area with a bar and plenty of coffee table books and Wi-Fi. The dining area is joined to the main lodge and built within a traditional tukual. Meals are tasty



and utilise local produce wherever possible. The lodge has a very strong environmental ethos with water sourced from the local stream, a mini hydro plant to provide electricity, and a biogas unit and waste reduction scheme.

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Thu 28 Oct Today we will take a morning excursion with packed lunch up to the montane landscapes of the SANETTI PLATEAU. It takes around 50 minutes to drive from the lodge on to the magnificent Afro-alpine landscapes of Bale's highest plateau.



Most of the Sanetti Plateau sits at an altitude around 3,800 - 4,000 metres above sea level. This treeless big-sky landscape is dominated by low heath, giant lobelias and rocky moonlike escarpments.



During the day, we can explore this unique habitat on safari style drives along the highest all-weather road in Africa, where we can stop at any point to view and photograph wildlife. This is the best spot in the country to see Ethiopia's most iconic carnivore



species; the beautiful Ethiopian wolf. These striking ginger and white canids are most genetically similar to the European wolf but have evolved their own specialism for hunting the abundant rodents found in Ethiopia's highland plateaus. They live together as a pack but split up each morning to hunt individually during the day, making them relatively easy to find.

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These wonderful canids are sadly threatened with extinction and their total global population is around just 450 individuals, with around 160 found in the Bale Mountains.

Encroachment of livestock has

degraded their natural habitat and the increase in domestic dogs in these areas has also passed on dangerous diseases such as canine distemper and rabies to the wolf populations. The wolf's favourite prey is another endemic species, the bizarre giant mole rat which can often be spotted with just its head poking out of a burrow.



The huge numbers of rodents (mostly Blick's grass and black-clawed and brush-furred rats) on the plateau occur at densities which have been estimated at 4,000 kg of rodents per hectare.



This abundance of small mammals attracts many other predators including numerous augur buzzards, lanner falcons, and tawny, steppe, imperial and golden eagles. Another endemic animal to look for is the Ethiopian highland or Stark's hare which favours the rockier areas where it can be well very camouflaged.

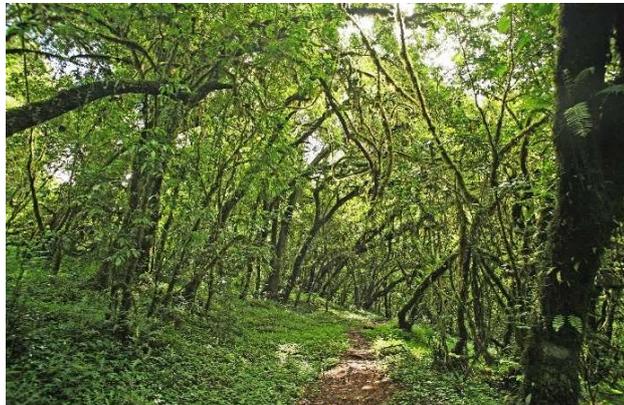


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The Sanetti Plateau is also one of the most important areas in Africa for endemic birds which include the spot-breasted lapwing, black-hooded siskin, Rouget's rail and the chestnut-naped francolin. The numerous moorland pools on the plateau support the only population of ruddy shelduck in Africa and also attract blue-winged geese and many other migrant and wintering waders and waterfowl.



In the afternoon we can descend back into the Haremma Forest passing through some wonderfully tangled and stunted Ericaceous and juniper forest.



After perhaps a drink and some time to rest back at the lodge, we could take a walk or an evening drive into the Haremma Forest. There is only one road through this dense forest so many of its secretive inhabitants such as giant forest hog and bush pig use this road as a corridor. Please note sightings and photography of mammals in this dense forest environment though is difficult and any views tend to be fleeting, without much photography opportunities. The endemic Bale monkey and the Guereza colobus monkey are more approachable and likely to be spotted. (All meals and selected drinks are included today) O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.



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Fri 29 Oct

Today we can enjoy another full day of exploration of the Bale Mountains. Each day's activities are reasonably flexible and can be discussed amongst the group the night before. Today we could perhaps start with



an early morning walk-through the moss- and lichen-clad woodland near the lodge's hydro plant. This trail is mostly flat and easy going and passes giants bamboo where the localised Bale monkey, a relative of the vervet monkey, can often be found. These monkeys can be shy at first, but with patience they can sometimes be approached for some closer views.

Colobus monkeys are also often in the same area which attracts the attention of birds of prey such as the African crowned eagle.

Along the clear stream, small endemic frogs are occasionally spotted. We will also look out for the endemic Bale two-horned chameleon.



We could then return to the Sanetti Plateau for more wolf sightings before the mid-day heat haze sets in up here.



Today we will continue the drive all the way down the plateau into the stunted juniper forests and wet gaysay grasslands at Dinsho.

Here the wet meadows support good numbers of animals, many no longer afraid of people which allows us a remarkably close approach. This is the best location to see the magnificent mountain nyala, another endemic mammal, alongside small herds of Bohor reedbuck, Menelik's bushbuck, warthog, olive baboon and a few bush duikers. The grasslands also support a high density of rodents which in turn attract predators such as serval, but these beautiful cats are rare to see during the day.

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We will also make a stop at the park headquarters to experience the lush juniper forests, home to the rare Abyssinian long-eared owl and African wood owl.



With the assistance of our local guide we can usually locate these nocturnal owls in their daytime roosts. Other bird species we may encounter here include the white-backed black tit and golden-backed woodpecker.



We will then return to the lodge hopefully enjoying more wolf sightings on the journey back. (All meals and selected drinks are included today) O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.

Sat 30 Oct

We have another day to enjoy the magnificent wildlife of the Bale Mountains. We could return to the plateau for more wolf watching or concentrate on the forests or grasslands.



(All meals and selected drinks are included today) O/n BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE, B, L, D.

Sun 31 Oct

After perhaps a last morning walk, we say farewell to newfound friends at the lodge and depart for the journey (2 hours) to Goba Airport. We take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 175 at 1410 to Addis Ababa arriving 1500. On arrival back in Addis we will make a short visit to the to the National Museum which houses the famous Lucy exhibit and some of the earliest hominid remains ever discovered.

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This evening dinner will be at the wonderful Yod Abyssinia Cultural Restaurant, where energetic traditional dance performances and live music from around the country complement a tasty and memorable dinner.

O/n SWISS INN NEXUS HOTEL, B, L, D. Conveniently located 15 minutes' drive the airport, this modern hotel offers comfortable accommodation in its 151 guest rooms.

Each room features a comfortable bed with modern amenities including flat screen LED TV, direct dial telephone, minibar, and tea and coffee facilities. There is a restaurant serving international and traditional Ethiopian dishes, and 24-hour room service is also available. On the top floor is a fabulous bar with 360-degree views over Addis Ababa and the hills in the distance. Other facilities include an indoor swimming pool, gym, sauna and free Wi-Fi.

Mon 01 Nov This morning we transfer early to the airport. We take ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 122 at 0820 to GONDAR (GDQ) arriving 0930. (Flight duration: 1 hour, 10 minutes). (Economy Class with one piece of checked luggage at 20kg per person, plus 1 piece of hand luggage weighing 7kg per person). Excess luggage can be stored in Addis.

On arrival in Gondar, we will transfer north to Debank, the gateway to the stunning Simien Mountains National Park. The journey takes around 3-4 hours and passes interesting upland landscapes including the mountains of Kosoye where Queen Elizabeth camped in 1965 on her journey to Axum. We will arrive at the lodge in time for a late lunch. In the afternoon we will explore some the Simien Mountains National Park close to our lodge. There are often herds of geladas close to the lodge itself. (All meals are included today)

O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D. Simien Lodge is the self-proclaimed highest lodge in Africa, sitting at 3,300 meters above sea level. Located on the edge of an escarpment just inside the boundary of the Simien Mountains National



Park, the lodge boasts incredible scenic views as well as easy access into the Park. Herds of geladas and thick-billed ravens often frequent the lodge grounds and can be very approachable here.

Rooms are in traditional Ethiopian style Tukels – meaning house.

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The round buildings have thatched roofs, and each contain two rooms and two ensuite bathrooms. Main rooms can be arranged with double or twin beds and have enough space for an extra bed if required. Being at high altitude, temperatures can be quite cold at times.



Therefore, the Tukels have solar powered underfloor heating to take the edge off the cold and hot water bottles can be provided. Extra blankets are also available to ensure guests comfort as there are often power cuts up here.

The restaurant in the main building serves mostly international dishes in buffet format during busy times and as a set menu at quieter times. Traditional Ethiopian cuisine can also be requested and there is a wide selection of wines and other



drinks, although the stocks are not always available. Packed lunches can be prepared for guests embarking on a day's trekking or visits to other parts of the park such as the Chennek Valley as well. The bar is proud to be the highest place to get a drink in Africa and is comfortably furnished for a warm and inviting atmosphere.

They remain open until the last guests have left, and there will often be some sort of evening entertainment occurring, such as a film about the local area or wildlife. Please note that electricity supply can be very hit and miss at this location and torches are very useful to have for the evenings. Please also be aware that the paths between the Tukels can be a little uneven and you will likely feel the effects of the altitude. The lodge has also been long involved with the local community and supports many projects such as school initiatives, monastery restoration, transportation for the local village and mostly recently a community health centre.

Tue 02 Nov Today we can enjoy a full day exploring the Simien Mountains National Park perhaps with a packed lunch to travel further into the Park with.

Established in 1969, The National Park was subsequently designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978 for its remarkable mountain landscapes and importance as a refuge for a unique range of species.

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Millions of years of erosion on the volcanic Ethiopian Plateau have resulted in the dramatic highland landscapes that can be seen today. These jagged mountains with their craggy peaks and pinnacles, deep valleys and sheer cliff faces make for some superb landscape photography, especially early and late in the day when rays of sunshine illuminate the valleys.



The park is also of great importance for its populations of endangered and endemic wildlife. Many of the animal and plant species here are dependent on the rare Afro-alpine moorland habitat found here and in the Bale Mountains. One of the most iconic species to thrive here is the magnificent gelada (or bleeding heart) baboon. These impressive primates are the only living species of an ancient family of primates that almost exclusively feed on grass.

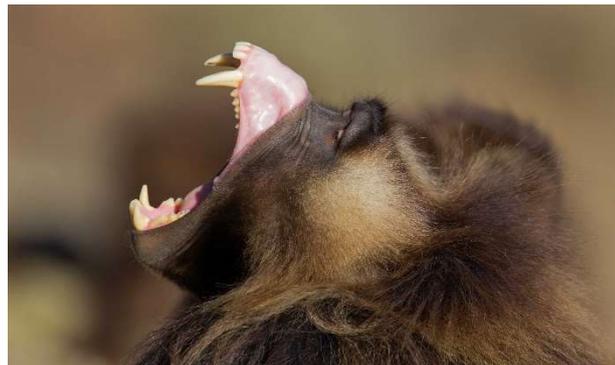


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The geladas graze the high-altitude grasslands on the mountain tops in huge groups, known as herds, sometimes numbering 200 or 300 individuals. These herds are made up of numerous smaller family units controlled by the matriarchs, rather than the powerful looking males. Due to there being no persecution within the National Park itself, the geladas here have become habituated to people and will allow you to sit with them as they graze, groom and chatter amongst themselves. The large males are particularly photogenic with their fluffy manes, long expressive faces and bright red chests.



Sitting amongst these surprisingly gentle animals while they go about their daily business is one of the most intimate and memorable wildlife experiences to be had anywhere. By spending time with and photographing a herd we hope to observe interesting behaviour such as the expressive lip and eyelid flashes of the males.



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Noisy clashes between the males and curious youngsters investigating us are likely highlights of our time spent with these fascinating primates.



During the day we will see various habitats and visit the beautiful Chennek Valley, where the locally endemic Walia ibex can usually be found grazing on the high grasslands and cliff faces. These sure-footed members of the



goat family were once hunted to near extinction but thanks to increased protection and education their numbers are now slowly recovering.



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This is also an excellent area of the park to see and photograph the majestic lammergeier, also known as the bearded vulture or bone breaker for its habit of smashing open bones to feed on the marrow inside. With some patience and luck these magnificent vultures with their awesome 2.5 metre wingspans can be seen gliding by at eye level at certain locations. (All meals are included today) O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.



Wed 03 Nov Today we will enjoy another full day exploring the Simien Mountains National Park viewing and photographing its spectacular wildlife and landscapes.

Other wildlife to look for during the day includes the agile Ethiopian klipspringer and a wide range of birds including the aptly named thick-billed raven, tawny and steppe eagles, Ruppell's, white-backed and Egyptian vultures, Erckel's francolin, greater blue-eared starling, Abyssinian Longclaw moorland chat and Abyssinian wheatear.



Throughout the day we will also experience the three vegetation zones of the park; the afro-montane forests, higher elevation Ericaceous bush, and afro-alpine moorlands found at the highest



altitudes of around 3,700 meters above sea level. This evening we could perhaps also try a sky at night photography session to capture the stunning milky way. (All meals are included today) O/n SIMIEN LODGE, B, L, D.

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Thu 04 Nov

This morning we can enjoy some final photography of the geladas, hopefully in beautiful early morning light. Or we could perhaps focus on the landscapes or other wildlife. We will then head back Gondar for a tasty lunch at a traditional Ethiopian restaurant.



In the late afternoon we will visit the historic Fasil Ghebbi Royal Enclosure and its castles, dating back to the 17th Century.

The original castle was built by Emperor Fasilides as his home after he founded Gondar (Gonder) as the capital city of then Empire of Abyssinia. Various members of his family then went on to build their own impressive castles within the enclosure.



A short drive from these castles is the Fasilides Bath, which is filled with water once a year and celebrated by the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The site is also a good location to spot many endemic birds and is used as a roost site by a greyish eagle owl, which we will hope to find. (All meals are included today)

O/n GOHA HOTEL, B, L, D. Located atop a hill overlooking the city of Gondar and mountains in the distance, the Goha Hotel is one of the best and oldest in town. All 82 rooms feature traditional colours and artworks and offer comfortable beds, cable TVs and private bathrooms.



There is a large restaurant on the ground floor with an outside dining area and there is often live music on weekend evenings. There is a good range of international and local cuisine as well as Rift Valley wines available in the restaurant plus free Wi-Fi. There is also a small outdoor swimming pool and sunset deck.

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Fri 05 Nov

This morning we will make a visit to the impressive Debre Birhan Selassie Church. Also built in the 17th Century by King Iyasu, this famous church offers some of the best examples of Ethiopian Orthodox artwork with almost every inch of the interior walls and ceiling being intricately painted with religious events.



The Church was one of the few spared during the Mahdist War of the 1880s, apparently due to a swarm of bees chasing off the soldiers who were just about to burn it. We will also have some time for bird photography in the greener areas of the city. We will hope to find special birds such as the greyish eagle owl.



Later we transfer back to the Gondar airport to take our ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES flight ET 123 at 1420 to ADDIS ABABA arriving 1530.

On arrival back in Addis we will transfer to the Swiss Inn Nexus Hotel for day use of a room and a last farewell dinner. (All meals are included today)

Later in the evening we will transfer to the airport to check in for onward international flights. If an overnight at the hotel is required for a flight the next day, please let us know.

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Minimum group size is 6, maximum 9 people, plus the two tour leaders.

<i>Start Date in Addis</i>	<i>Adult Price</i>	<i>Single Supplement</i>
Monday 25 October 2021	£5,671 GBP	£470 GBP

*Prices are based on your international flights being with Ethiopian Airlines which results in discounted domestic flights. Should your international flights into Addis Ababa be with a different carrier then please add £266 per person to the tour cost.

Included in the above: All domestic (Economy Class with one piece of checked luggage at 20kg per person) flights with Ethiopian Airlines; all private ground transportation in either three or four Toyota Land Cruiser Hardtop 4WD with a window for each client and with the guides in walkie talkie communication and a convoy system; all accommodation as stated; all meals as indicated; (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner), all selected alcoholic and soft drinks at Bale Mountain Lodge, bottled water on car journeys; all guided excursions and photographic and lightroom tuition, applicable local National Park scout fees, all Park and Monument entrance fees and protection through ATOL.

Not included: International flights to Addis Ababa with Ethiopian Airlines (approximately £600 per person from London but subject to change); any activities marked as OPTIONAL, tips; other meals not indicated; other drinks (except 1 litres of mineral water per person per day in the vehicle and those included at the lodges); items of a personal nature; and travel insurance.

Please call **01803 866965** if you have any queries, would like to secure your place on the tour, and/or if you would like to extend the tour to include other locations in Ethiopia. **NB:** Extensions are available to the Rock Hewn Churches of Lalibela, the Omo Valley, Awash National Park and other areas of the country: please ask for details.

Please note: The wildlife viewing on the Sanetti Plateau will mostly be from vehicles and will be at an altitude of around 3,800–4,000 metres above sea level. You will therefore need to be aware of the altitude which can affect people in different ways regardless of age and fitness. Even with gentle acclimatising, you will likely still feel the effects of altitude on this trip and should be prepared, although most people have no serious problems as the walking is minimal and you will sleep at much lower altitudes. Please inform us if you think the altitude might be problematic for you

Please Note: This itinerary involves a couple of quite long overland transfers (maximum 6 hours), some of which will be over rough, bumpy and unsurfaced roads. However, these transfers take us through interesting scenery and give a good insight into the country.

Please Note: This itinerary involves walking along some forest trails in the Bale Mountains which could be slippery in places, especially after rainfall as well as some short and gentle walks at altitude in the Simien Mountains Although all walks will be taken at a very leisurely pace, the tour is not suitable for those with mobility problems.

Please Note: The exact day to day activities and timings in the itinerary may change slightly to take into account local conditions such as weather, traffic and recent wildlife activity. But any changes will be discussed with the group and will be suggested in order to maximize the wildlife sightings, photography and overall experience.

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IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY

NB: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers, some of which will be over rough bumpy and unsurfaced roads. Clients will travel in either three or four 4WD hardtop land Cruisers with a window each. The vehicles will travel in a convoy system and the guides will rotate around the vehicles and always been in communication.

NB: With any trip involving wildlife it is impossible to guarantee a sighting, but each trip is designed around known habitats. Every effort will be made to ensure a sighting, but cannot be held responsible if no sighting is made due to the wildlife itself, weather, or any other elements beyond our control.

NB: The above itinerary and its quoted price are based on specific hotels and lodges. Should there be insufficient availability at the time of booking or if the lodges over-book their rooms alternative hotels and lodges of a similar standard may have to be booked instead, in which case the itinerary and/or price may change.

NB: Prices are based on specific airlines and specific seating classes. The price may change if those are not available at the time of booking. We strongly advise booking early to secure the prices quoted, particularly as the seating classes quoted for are usually the first to be filled.

NB: The quoted price for the above itinerary is based on current domestic airline fares, fuel surcharges and flight taxes. These (and other tour costs) may be subject to unanticipated increases beyond our control at short notice, either before or after you have booked the tour, in which case the price would need to be revised accordingly.

NB: Prices are based on standard rooms unless otherwise stated in the itinerary. Should you wish to upgrade please let us know.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change without notice to take into account possible airline flight schedule changes, weather conditions, recent sightings and other local conditions which can take place before the departure date or during the tour, and other operational factors.

NB: Once the tour has been booked and a deposit paid, any further changes initiated by the client may be subject to additional charges.

NB: Inclusive tours and excursions as stated in the itinerary will have been pre-paid. Once full payment has been made and/or clients are actually at their destination, should clients be disinclined to partake of any inclusive tour or excursion, no refunds will be possible.

NB: Some service providers may require that guests sign an indemnity waiver form and may refuse services if these forms are not signed. Reef and Rainforest Tours cannot give refunds for services not provided due to a refusal to sign such forms.

NB: Excursions marked as 'Optional' are not included in the price.

NB: This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife experience. However, due to terrain, weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of some activities may need to be changed or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.

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NB: Despite recent improvements, Ethiopia still has some accommodation of a lower standard than that normally expected by western travelers, and a precarious infrastructure including unreliable domestic flights, poor telecommunications and bad roads. Many of our tours visit areas well off the beaten track, and therefore far from medical and other services. Trails can often be arduous and slippery, and campsites are usually very basic. Bookings will only be accepted on the understanding that the client accepts Reef and Rainforest Tours has done everything in its power to ensure there are no difficulties, but has no control over standards of some equipment, available accommodation and services, airline reservation policies, flight schedule changes or possible breakdowns in communication in Ethiopia.

NB: Before and after booking, clients must familiarise themselves with current UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advisories so as to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the destination(s) to be visited in this itinerary. All decisions relating to the tour will be based on UK FCO advisories, and not those of any other countries' governments. In the event of any emergency or other problem encountered in the destination, it is advisable if appropriate to contact the local UK Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for assistance. The FCO in London also has dedicated telephone call centres: Crisis Management Dept - 0207 008 5335 (during UK office hours), and Global Response Centre - 0207 008 1500 (out of UK office hours).

NB: It is a condition of booking that full travel insurance including Emergency Medical Repatriation is taken out by each person travelling. Your insurance cover must also include Missed Departure and/or Missed Flight Connection for both outbound and return flight sectors (such cover might be subject to a small additional premium – please confirm with your insurers). We ask that you send us a photo/fax/electronic copy of your policy document together with the 24hr medical assistance telephone number issued by your insurer.

NB: Flight timings are subject to change. Ethiopian Airlines domestic flight schedules can change and affect itineraries and connections.

NB: Visas are now easily obtainable on arrival or online for EU residents (\$52 USD per person at time of writing but subject to change without notice). PLEASE CHECK THE LATEST INFORMATION WITH YOUR LOCAL EMBASSY/CONSULATE.

NB: Tips/gratuities are payable locally.

NB: In some hotels and lodges, English will be spoken either badly or not at all.

Reef and Rainforest Tours Ltd.

A7 Dart Marine Park, Steamer Quay, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5AL, UK

Tel: ++ 44 (0)1803 866965 Fax: ++ 44 (0)1803 865916

Websites: www.reefandrainforest.co.uk

E-mail: mail@reefandrainforest.co.uk

