

Tour Guiding

Level – II

Based on October, 2021 Curriculum version-I



Module Title: Sourcing and Providing Ethiopian Destinations Information.

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Acronyms

- **UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- **ZNHM**- The Zoological Natural History Museum
- **GMT**- Greenwich Mean Time
- **TOP**- Tourism Oriented Products
- **ROP**- Resident Oriented Products
- **ATM**. Automated Teller Machine
- **NGO**- None Government Organization
- **FDRE**- Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia

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Introduction to the Module

Tour guiding provides information about Ethiopian destinations, including general product information such as what types or styles of product a destination offers. The unit requires the ability to identify appropriate information sources and research destinations in order to develop, and a breadth and depth of regional and location-specific knowledge, highlighting the need for ongoing research to update and expand the guide's knowledge.

This module is designed to meet the industry requirement under the Tour Guiding occupational standard, particularly for the unit of competency: Source and Provide Ethiopian Destinations Information.

Module units

- Developing knowledge of Ethiopian destinations
- Preparing information for guiding activities
- Updating knowledge of Ethiopian destinations
- Providing information on Ethiopian Destinations

Learning objectives of the Module

At the end of this session, the students will be able to:

- develop and update Ethiopian destinations
- obtain information for guiding activities
- Provide information on Ethiopian Destinations

Module Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Read the information written in the information Sheets.
3. Accomplish the Self-checks.
4. Check reference material for further information.

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Unit one: Developing knowledge of Ethiopian destinations.

This learning unit is developed to provide the trainees the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Identifying and accessing information sources.
- Identifying Tourism Products
- Features of Ethiopian destination
- Geographical features of Ethiopian destinations
- Health And Safety Features Of Ethiopia

This unit will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Identify and access information sources.
- Identify Tourism Products
- Know Features of Ethiopian destination
- Know Geographical features of Ethiopian destinations
- Refer Health And Safety Features Of Ethiopia

1.1. Identifying and accessing information sources

In this section we will look at the important area of identifying tourism information sources there are endless sources of destination information that can be collected, analyzed and used by a travel and tourism organization for the benefit of the organization itself or to assist customers with potential travel plans. We will see that there are many places we can locate the information we need, including:

- National tourism authorities
- regional tourism authorities
- local councils
- local tour operators
- accommodation properties/associations
- industry associations
- guide books and destination publications
- trade press
- the internet
- library
- attending seminars or conferences
- local press or news
- local associations
- consulting with industry colleagues
- direct contact with customers media
- Other sources of information.

Whatever type of organization you work in within the tourism industry field, it is your responsibility to be able to provide your customers with many different types of tourism information. The more information you have and the more accurate it is, the more confident you will be and the more valuable your service will be to your customers.

National tourism authorities

National tourism commissions' main responsibilities are:

- to manage the funding they receive from Government
- To make sure there are sufficient attractions, accommodation and tours to satisfy Different types of tourists. This is called product development

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- to promote and sell tourism in their state
- to provide strategic direction
- To provide market research and statistics.

Regional tourism authorities

These boards are usually made up of representatives from the local industry and government departments, whose areas of responsibility impact on the local tourism industry, e.g.: Departments of Local Government, Environment, Heritage, National Parks and Wildlife. These boards often rely on industry members and local government making a contribution towards cooperative marketing and government grants to subsidize their operation. Some associations also fund and operate regional tourist information centers. Typically, a regional tourist board's role in:

- marketing and promotion of the local region
- literature production
- product development
- media promotions
- agent/media familiarizations
- training and awareness
- membership and fundraising
- lobbying and submissions
- Administration.

Local Chambers of Commerce

Some Local Chambers of Commerce provide the funds to support local information booths and offices. They often store a lot of tourism information and can direct you to your local information Centre. They can also provide you with information about local commerce and industry.

Local tour operators

Local tour operators include any organizations that operate tours in the area. These operators include city bus tour groups, scenic trekking operators, national park groups, walking tours and horseback tour operators. Local tour operators are a wonderful source of tourism information. Their main aim is to provide services or products to incoming tourists. To do this effectively, they need to have a wealth of up-to-date information.

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Accommodation properties or associations

All accommodation properties have information about themselves. Generally, this is included in a brochure listing the facilities, their location, a picture of the rooms they have or the reception area, and sometimes the prices for accommodation. Any business that provides accommodation to visitors must attempt to meet all of their customers' needs, including the need for information about the area and where to find local attractions.

Guide books and destination publications

There are many books available that have been written on the history, attractions, and culture of an area, and there are other books which simply provide general information. The information found in atlases includes maps of the different parts of the world as well as specific maps of countries and information on their geography, geology, climate and population. They give facts and figures and an idea of the physical make up of different places around Ethiopia and the world. They are a great place to go for basic information about an area. General reference books may include a brief description of the following:

- climate
- population
- religion
- language
- history
- government
- economy
- communication
- Education.

Trade press

There are several magazines or publications designed to provide information for people working in the tourism industry. These provide information on:

- current events in tourism
- personnel
- resort developments
- changes to airline prices or rules
- visa information

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- advertising
- Destinations.

The internet

Another valuable source of information is the internet or the World Wide Web. Information from all corners of the globe can be found on the internet if you look in the right places. Therefore, it is important that you learn how to properly search for specific items on the internet. It could prove to be one of the most valuable and convenient ways of finding information.

Library

Your local library will have many different books on your local area, which can provide information on architecture, history, population, industry and attractions. You can borrow these books free of charge for a set period of time. If you need to find information on a particular site or region, talk to the librarian about what information is available and how to find the particular books you need. Once you know how to use the library you can use it any time to research an area.

Your local library may also have copies of old magazines and newspapers which can be a good source of general information about your local area. You may discover that your library has a photocopier, which will be handy if you need to copy specific articles.

Attending seminars and conferences

Anyone in the tourism industry has the opportunity to attend:

- training seminars
- product launches
- familiarizations (educational trips to experience travel products first-hand)
- Industry travel shows or trade shows (to keep abreast of latest products).

Sales representatives from wholesale companies and principals also conduct sales visits specifically to update educate and motivate the agents to recommend their product. Seminars and conferences are regularly organized by tourism operators, tourism associations and tourism authorities. These would be ideal for anyone in the tourism industry to attend, as it would provide the opportunity to source a great amount of up to date information, which could help you better serve your customers.

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Local press

Your local area will probably have a local paper. Local papers give you stories about what is going on in your local area. Therefore, you should make a special point of reading each edition of your local paper. You may find it very useful in developing your knowledge of the local area

Local associations

Local associations include sporting groups, historic societies, church groups, cycling clubs and many more groups. Often these associations have information about their general area. These associations are formed in the local area and their members are local people who have an interest in the region or the particular activity they represent.

Consulting with industry colleagues

Building good relationships with industry colleagues is important, as having regular reliable contacts will ensure the information you include is always relevant and up to date. Keeping in touch with your local Visitor Information Centre will also mean you are informed of new attractions and events in which your customers may be interested.

Direct contact with customers

A successful business needs to keep in contact with their customers and actively seek customer feedback. Feedback could include:

A simple question and answer session at the end of a tour could generate some valuable ideas, eg: ‘What did you find most interesting?’ or ‘was there anything else you would like to have had included?’ Of course, when asking for feedback face-to-face, it is important that you ask in a friendly, open manner so that the participants feel able to answer honestly.

A short questionnaire, where by the guests at a hotel are asked to answer a few basic questions. This can be an effective way of receiving feedback, as it is not as threatening as asking face-to-face and can be anonymous if they have any major changes they would like to see! A good manager will encourage feedback, as it helps them to keep their ideas fresh and contemporary. Each tourism business must continue to be current, relevant, interesting, and meet, or exceed, the expectations of all of their customers.

Finding out information about your clients is important in a successful business. Registration or contact detail form provides a good source of client information. Client booking and/or enquiry

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forms provide information to the organization to enable matching of products and services to client needs and wants.

Media

Just reading newspapers and magazines on an informal basis can give you information on a variety of destinations. Newspapers and magazines often have a special travel section in each edition or will have features on certain destinations occasionally.

Other sources of information

There are many other ways to locate specific information about your local area. Awareness of the relationship between tourism and other industries will help you to generate ideas for possible information sources. Tourism-related industries include those relating to:

- events
- hospitality
- entertainment
- arts
- sports
- agriculture
- conservation
- science and research
- Retail.

1.2. Identifying Tourism Products

The tourism industry as a whole survives because of various tourism products and services. Tourism industry is flexible. The products of tourism cannot be easily standardized as they are created for the customers of varied interests and demands. As the tourism products are mainly the tourists' experience, they can be stored only in the tourists' memories. A general product is anything offered in a marketplace for purchase by a consumer. A tourism product is therefore something that can be offered to visitors or tourists visiting a destination that is not their primary place of residence. A tourism product is often developed and established to meet the needs of tourists interested in the specific destination in which it is offered.

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A tourism product also leads to the overall establishment of a tourism destination. If a destination has adequate tourism products, it can successfully market itself as a viable destination to potential tourists. Tourism products include all services or experiences that are offered primarily to tourists in the destination they are visiting, such as accommodations, restaurants, fishing trips, hunting excursions, aurora tours, sightseeing trips, museums, cultural centers, arts and crafts stores, or Indigenous cultural experiences. To learn more about tourism products please review the Tourism Product Development Workbook.

Tourists travel to destinations for multiple reasons. They might be traveling for business and not have a choice in the destination, or they might be traveling to see or experience a specific attraction or fulfill a specific desire. In the case that a tourist is interested in experiencing a specific attraction they will require tourism products to fulfill that desire and satisfy that need. They will first research destinations that offer tourism products that satisfy their leisure, pleasure or business needs. The tourism products they find will factor into their choice of destination. In this case, the tourism products available are a large part of what determines the destination. In a situation where a tourist has no choice in the destination they are visiting, such as a predetermined business trip, they will seek out tourism products to fill their leisure time while at that specific destination. Therefore, the destination determines the tourism products they might experience and consume. Some broad examples of why tourists purchase tourism products are as follows:

- To go to unique places for variety and novelty,
- To learn about cultural and natural history,
- To learn about the lifestyles of others,
- To view wildlife and wilderness areas,
- To be active/outdoors and with family and friends,
- To sketch/paint/photograph in unique settings,
- To meet like-minded people, or
- To help protect wildlife values and wilderness.

1.2.1. Types of Tourism Products

- Natural Tourism Product
- Man-Made Tourism Product

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- Symbiotic Tourism Product
- Event Based Tourism
- Site Based Tourism Product

Natural Tourism Product: These are the products connected to the natural environment. Natural Tourism constitutes a natural resource which is related to area, climate and its settings, and the landscapes. These natural resources are the most important elements in a destination's attraction. Such as countryside, climate, natural beauty, water, flora and fauna, wildlife, beaches, deserts, islands or any scenic attraction.

Man-Made Tourism Product: Something which is not natural, found in the destinations to attract the tourists. These are man-made creations. As per the tourism point of view they are made for pleasure, leisure or business. Man-made tourism products are further divided into three sub types:

1. Cultural: aspects include those man-made products which depict the culture of the people, civilization and are related to history. Such as

- Sites and areas of archaeological interest
- Historical buildings and monuments
- Places of historical significance l museums and art galleries
- Political and educational institutions
- Religious institutions

2. Traditional: aspects are related to traditions. Basically, it reflects the activities, beliefs and life of people of any particular region. Such as

- Fairs and festivals
- Arts and handicrafts
- Dance
- Music
- Folklore

3. Entertaining aspects are those which provide some amusements, thrills or enjoyable feel to the tourists. These include:

- Amusement and recreation parks
- Sporting events
- Zoos and ocean arums

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- Cinemas and theatres
- Night life l cuisines

Symbiotic Tourism Product: This type of tourism product does not fall in any particular category because they are a blend of nature and man but the core attraction is nature. These are the natural resource that has been converted into a tourism product by maintaining and managing them.

In other words man has taken initiative to preserve the natural aspects of earth and also managed in a way to provide best possible services to the tourists who come for the visit, for example, accommodation, parking facilities, etc. Some examples are National Park or Wildlife Sanctuaries, Flower Festival, Marine Park, Aero and Water Sports, Botanical Garden etc.

Event Based Tourism product: Product Here event is the main source of attraction. Tourist comes to observe and participate in the events. Events are temporary in nature and are often mounted in order to increase the number of tourists to a particular destination. Some events are for short time scales while other last for longer days. Sometimes events are mounted in those places where the tourist's eye usually doesn't reach such as unusual exhibitions.

Site Based Tourism Product: It is a particular site or a place, permanent in nature which is the main source of attraction for the tourists.

1.2.2. Characteristics of Tourism Product

Following are the main characteristics of tourism products:

- Intangibility
- Inseparability
- Perishability
- Heterogeneity
- Essentially of Users Presence
- Complexity in Marketing
- Absence of Ownership

Intangibility: Tourism products are actually the services that are being sold to the tourists, and it's not the goods. Services can't be seen, smelled, felt or touched, it can only be experienced. What can be seen is their effect. For example, a guide's comments can be heard. A travel agent books a ticket from place A to B. The ticket is just a piece of paper, an entry pass for using the service. An airline provides the service of transportation, comfort and leisure. A thorough

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evaluation of the service before buying it is therefore impossible and leads customers to use other cues to help them assess the service like the interior of the restaurant, the appearance of the hotel entrance or the behavior of the receptionist.

Inseparability: A service of a tourism product cannot be separated from the provider of the service. For most services, the producer and the seller are the same people. Services are manufactured and consumed at the same time. In the case of products, consumption takes place after production and often far away from the factory. In the case of tourism products for example a guide has to be present to explain the attraction. A pilot has to be present to fly a plane. Both service providers and the service user have to be physically present for mutually satisfying the exchange of service. The visitor to a national park cannot experience counter service if the receptionist is not present, nor can the receptionist render the service if the visitor is absent.

Perishability: The tourism product is highly perishable, which means it cannot be stored. For example, a hotel room or an airplane seat that is not sold on a particular day, is a lost sale. If the tourists don't visit a particular place, the opportunity is lost. If the opportunity is lost, the moment is lost. This adversely affects the tourism business. The demand has to be managed by the marketer in such a way as to ensure that as little capacity as possible is lost. The problem is unique for the tourism industry. Due to these reasons sometimes heavy discount is offered by hotels or transport generating organization.

Heterogeneity: Services offered by most people are never the same. There is some degree of variability present in almost all types of services. This may be due to the extensive involvement of people in the production of service. This issue is not present when a machine dominates. Depending on the mood, behavior, working style, efficiency and knowledge of the people variability exist.

For example, all air hostesses cannot provide the same quality service like the other. Yet again the same individual air hostess may not perform the same uniform service both in the morning as well as in the evening. Even the tour package and the aircraft can't be consistent of equal standards because an aircraft can de-shape the travelling pleasure into a nightmare and a holiday seaside is ruined by the prolonged rainy spell. Another reason for variability of service is the

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involvement of customers in the process of product delivery and consumption system. For example, a musician performing at a program may not perform with uniformity. His performance will depend on the response and appreciation of the audience. Hence service varies from person to person, time to time and from situation to situation. In travel and tourism businesses, service quality depends on uncontrollable factors and there is no sure way of knowing whether the service delivered matched what was planned or promoted, or what was expected by the customer.

Essentially of Users Presence: Presence of the user is necessary to avail the service. The customer or the guest has to be personally present on the spot. It can't be brought to the user. As in the case of other tangible goods, the buyer can avail the service from anywhere or from his home. But in the case of tourism products, it is not at all possible. The tourist has to go to the tourist attraction to experience the tour. However the marketers here need an in-depth study of users behavior, tastes, preferences, likes and dislikes so that expectations and realities coincide and satisfaction is made possible.

Complexity in Marketing: Tourism product involves complexity in marketing. It requires a lot of effort to convince a buyer. As in the case of travel agents, In order to sell their tour package they need to convince the customer by introducing various facilities, discounts and services. Product demonstration is bit difficult in the case of tourism product.

Absence of Ownership: As in the case of tangible goods like television, As soon as we buy it, we become the owner of it. But this is not the case with tourism products. A tourism product when sold to the customer or tourist, he can only avail the service but can't be its owner. For example, while buying a hotel room, while buying a seat in an aircraft or a luxurious train, you can only take the facilities of the service for a certain time. You can't be its owner for lifelong.

1.2.3. Group of Tourism Products

The tourism products are grouped into the following types –

Tourism Oriented Products (TOP): These are the products and services created primarily for the tourists and also for the locals. These products need a great share of investments in private sector. A few of them are –

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- Accommodations; For example, Taj, ITC Hotels.
- Transportation; For example, Owning taxis, luxury buses, and boats.
- Retail Travel Agents
- Tour Operators
- Shopping Centers such as malls
- Cinema Theatres such as PVR
- Restaurants for Food and Beverages
- Tourism Information Centers
- Souvenirs Outlets
- Museums, Temples, Gardens, and Theme parks

Residents Oriented Products (ROP): Here, the products and services are created mainly for the local residents staying at a particular tourist destination. This category requires investment in public sectors more. Some of them are –

- Hospitals
- Public Parks
- Banks and ATMs
- Petrol Pumps
- Postal Service

Intangible Products of Tourism They include –

- Bookings of accommodations, theatres, and at various sites.
- Tourists' experience by visiting a destination, eating at a restaurant, or performing an activity.
- Tourists' memory which is created by storing the details of events and experience on the tour. The high degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is often stored as a long term memory.
- Transportation of tourists and their luggage from one place to another.

Tour Operator's Products and Services

To realize the facilities and experience a tourism product offers, service is required by skilled and qualified staff. The tour operator provides the following typical products and services –

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Accommodations: The tourist destinations are equipped with different types of accommodations. They cater for tourists' stay at the destination.

- **Serviced** – this type of accommodation is supported by skilled staff such as housekeepers, drivers, guides, and cooks.
- **Self-catering** – this accommodation offers staying facilities but dining is required to be self-catered. It is equipped with cooking, fuel and facility, some basic supplies such as tea/coffee/sugar sachets, and a drinking water source.
- **Hotels** – Budget rooms to 7* hotels with classy amenities. The hotels contribute a major share of imparting the experience to the tourists by providing best services and amenities.
- **Guest Houses** – Owned by business or government organizations, which can be used by its staff and staff relatives.
- **Camping Sites** – they are open sites often located in areas of lush greenery. They are equipped with clean place to pitch the personal tent, a water supply, and electric supply. Camp sites have common rest rooms.

Reservations: The tour operator is responsible for making reservations for special events or activities the tourists are interested in. At some places, the reservations are required to be done well in advance to avoid last minute hassles. The events or activities such as a music concert or a theatre show, visiting a theme park or a zoo, require people to secure seats or avail entry with prior reservations.

Guided Tours: The tour operators can arrange guided tours, some qualified staff who can get access to the place, explain the importance of the place, support, and guide the participants through the entire visit. The guide is arranged to accompany the tour participants as a part of tour.

Transport Facilities: These facilities are for travelling from one place to another.

- **Surface Transport** – It includes support of transport by road or water.
- **Air Transport** – this is the support of transport by air, generally given for long distance travel. Many times the tours include a halt of a couple of hours at transit destinations. Today the airports are built and maintained as engaging tourist terminals by providing amenities such as spas, lounges, food joints, bars, and book shops, retail shops for selling

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authentic local food, clothes, and souvenirs. Today the Airlines are no more backstage when it comes to caring for their customers. They offer loyalty programs to their customers under Frequent Flyer Program to encourage the customers to travel more and accumulate points and redeem them against travel or rewards.

Dining Facilities: The tour operators can book accommodation that provides dining facilities or it can tie up with the local restaurants which are ready to entertain groups. If the tour package is all inclusive, the tour operator pays for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If not, the tourists need to pay from their own pocket.

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1.3. Features of Ethiopian destination

Government, Politics and Economy

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is still very young: it was founded in 1995. The republic's principle is 'ethnic federalism'. There are ten regional states (including the city-state of Harar) and two metropolitan regions: Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The states and regions have their own autonomous councils and hold their own elections. Five of Ethiopia's largest ethnic groups have their own regional states: the Amhara, Oromo, Tigrayans, Afar and Somali.

The ruling party FDRE holds 90% of the Council of People's Representatives (CPR) seats and dominates all the major regional state councils and principal state institutions. The main ministries are also lead by leading FDRE loyalists, but cabinet members are – as should be done in a democracy - drawn from the main ethnic groups. Nevertheless, Ethiopia is a multicultural and multi-ethnic society and this is acknowledged, which makes Ethiopia stand almost alone in Africa.

Economy

The Ethiopian economy suffers from two major and very persistent weaknesses: food insecurity and an almost total dependency on coffee for foreign exchange earnings. Agriculture provides the livelihood of 85% of the population, but droughts, pests and severe soil erosion are causing the earnings from agriculture to be very low.

Ethiopia's per capita income is estimated at around US\$ 670, making the country one of the poorest in the world. Even though there is so much agriculture-production in the country, during the 1980's and 1990's, food imports to feed the population sometimes exceeded 1 million tons per year. There have been recent measures to improve agriculture-productivity, including the use of fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation systems.

Coming back to the subject of famine, in a way it is very strange that so many millions of Ethiopians are suffering from hunger. Ethiopia has abundant natural resources! It has more to do with economic mismanagement, leading to soil erosion and inefficient production methods. It happens yearly that there are food-surpluses in one part of the country, and shortages and famine in another area. But these surpluses are not or cannot be brought to the drought-affected areas, because of insufficient infrastructure. The country becomes dependent on foreign food aid. Many

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measures have to be taken to make Ethiopia self-sufficient. In the meantime, the image of Ethiopia as a dry land, wracked by drought and famine, has widespread economic repercussions. It is a great obstacle to the development of a tourism- industry – the one sector that could earn the country millions of birr. Although not officially promoted, the chat plant has proven to be very lucrative. It is the second largest export earner! Most of it is exported to Djibouti and Somalia. Many farmers have switched from coffee to chat, because it brings more money. As mentioned before, a very large part of Ethiopia’s export is coffee. However, the world coffee price has dropped dramatically the last five years (62% price drop) and this has made the economy very vulnerable.

1.3.1. Facts to Visitors for Preparing the Trip

Planning: when to go and how to travel: When tourists have decided which places they want to visit in Ethiopia – historic route in the north, mountain hiking in the Simiens or Bale Mountains or visit the different ethnic groups in the south – they will need to decide when is the best time to travel. This much depends on their main purpose of travel – for example: it is better to avoid trekking in the national parks during the rainy season – but there are a number of general suggestions to give.

Late September: just after the rainy season is a very good time for travelling. The country is wonderfully green; there are many beautiful wild flowers and few tourists. If people are planning a trip to the Omo Valley, they should know that in that area the main rains occur from March to June and the separate month of November. Many parts of that region become impassable during those months. It is also very interesting for visitors to be present during one of the fascinating festivals, like Meskel in September or Timkat in January. Especially December and January can be considered as _high season in Ethiopia. Visitors also need to think about how they want to travel – by road or by air. In the north, Ethiopian airlines have regular and affordable services between the _historic route highlights: Axum – Lalibela – Bahir Dar – Gondar. But something can also be said for travelling by road: one sees so much more of the countryside and of the way Ethiopian people live. South of Addis Ababa, almost all tourist attractions can only be visited by road, by 4-wheel drive vehicle.

Tourist need to consider the following things before making a decision:

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- the time they have for the trip: 10 days, two weeks, three weeks
- the budget they can spend: 4 wheel drive travel is more expensive than flying and local transportation
- Which way of travelling they find most interesting and comfortable.

Map: The traveller likes to know what the destination to visit looks like in order to plan his trip. Maps of Ethiopia can be purchased in the tourists 'country of origin, but also in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Tourism Commission has produced a fairly good map of the country, but it is not updated very regularly. At the time of writing of this syllabus (2004), the latest E.T.C. map dates from 1987 – it is 18 years old. Many roads change during such a long period.

Tourist offices: Unfortunately, there is no Ethiopian Tourist Office in other countries, where potential tourists can go to receive information about Ethiopia. Countries have their own national tourist office in the various countries their visitors come from. For promotion-purposes, this is very important. Tourists have a big range of destinations to choose from, so it is important to be visible amongst these _competitors'. The Ethiopian embassies and consulates try to fill the gap, but generally they do little more than just hand out brochures. Here lies a big task for future tourism professionals to promote Ethiopia abroad! The Ethiopian Tourism Commission in Addis Ababa does make and distribute promotional materials, but these are mostly collected by tourists who are already in the country.

Passport: all foreign visitors to Ethiopia must have a valid passport.

Visas: A visa is a permit which allows visitors to stay for a certain period of time in a country. Visa regulations vary for different nationalities and they can also change in time. At the time of writing (2004), all visitors except Kenyan and Djiboutian nationals need a visa to come into Ethiopia, but visa regulations are currently being revised. Nationals of 33 countries can obtain a tourist visa on arrival at Bole International Airport. These include most of Europe, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. However, this visa has to be arranged and ordered in advance. Tour Operators are permitted to organize visas on arrival for their groups. Some travellers may prefer to get a visa in advance from the Ethiopian embassy in their home country. This is because the process upon arrival in the country takes long and many international flights arrive late at night. Furthermore, the visa can only be paid in birr, so people have to change

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money first. Presently, Ethiopian law allows multiple-entry visas to be issued only to those visitors who have a business purpose, those working for NGO's or those working for the government. The exceptions to this rule are USA citizens: they can benefit from a multiple-entry tourist/business visa valid for up to 24 months. Tourist visas have a different price for different nationalities (for example: 315 birr for European Union nationals and 140 birr for African nationals) and are valid for 1-3 months.

All tourists are strongly advised to arrange travel insurance. With travel insurance, travellers are covered against theft and loss of valuables and also against medical problems. It is an essential part of the preparation of travellers. People can insure themselves in different ways: cheap – average – expensive. When travellers do not carry many valuables, they will probably buy cheap travel insurance, but when a tourist has very expensive photo- or video cameras with him, he might be willing to pay more for his insurance. In the case of theft, he will then get all his money back. Other documents: international driver's license, vaccination and passport.

Customs: Each country, including Ethiopia, has certain custom-procedures. By means of these procedures, it is regulated what products are brought into the country. In the case of Ethiopia: visitors may be requested to register laptop computers and video-cameras into their passports. This is to discourage black market trading. Two liters of alcoholic spirits may be imported, just as 200 cigarettes (or 100 cigars) duty free. More than these amounts have to be paid for.

Permits: Should tourists buy souvenirs that are (or look) antique, they need a clearance permit from the Department of Inventory and Inspection. This is a department of the Centre for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage, based at the National Museum in Addis Ababa. Many souvenirs can be taken out of the country, except for the following:

- Animal and plant fossils, or prehistoric items (stone tools, pottery, bones)
- Anything of outstanding anthropological or ethnographical interest
- Anything with an ancient inscription on it
- Old processional or hand crosses that bear the names of kings or religious leaders, or any currently in use at churches or monasteries
- Any item currently serving in churches (manuscripts, books, crosses, etcetera)

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- Any old wooden items
- Coins and paper money not currently in circulation
- Wildlife products, for example: ivory, tortoiseshell, leopard skin
- Any items of exceptional artistic interest, whether old or modern
- Art with outstanding historical value
- Any items formerly belonging to the emperor or his family or to Ethiopian nobles.

Thousands of valuable historical items (like religious crosses or manuscripts) have left Ethiopia as souvenirs. Many have been sold by Ethiopians who either don't realize the full value of the items or simply want to make a lot of money. Tourists, antique dealers, professional thieves and sometimes even diplomats have been responsible for the demand for such works of art. Ethiopia's treasures urgently need to be registered. In the meantime, basic controls are imposed. Knowing this, tourists should be encouraged to get a permit for their valuable souvenirs. If they do not get one and undeclared souvenirs are found at the airport, they will most likely be confiscated.

Currency: Upon arrival in Ethiopia, visitors must declare foreign currency. There is no limit to the amount of currency that can be brought in, but no more than 100 birr can be exported or imported.

Money Matters

The exchange rate of the birr versus other currencies varies. For the latest exchange rates, the following website (among others) can be checked on: www.lonelyplanet.com/subwwway.

Exchanging money: Tourists are advised to bring US dollars these are still the best currency to carry, both in cheques or in traveller's cheques. The euro is also making its entry, but is mostly accepted in Addis Ababa, and not (yet) outside of the capital.

Traveller's Cheques: These are cheques usually written out in dollars people can exchange for money. The difference with cash is that traveller's cheques are insured against theft or loss. Outside of Addis Ababa, traveller's cheques are not accepted very much at the time of writing. If they are, the bank usually charges a high commission for the service. (When a bank does not have the use of computers, even a _cable charge_ of 50 birr is charged for calling Addis, to establish the day's exchange rate!) In the capital, a few major hotels and travel agencies also

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accept traveller's cheques. Banks: The state owned Commercial Bank offers foreign exchange facilities in major towns and even tourist sites throughout the country. More and more private banks are opening both in and outside of Addis.

Credit cards: In most countries in the world, people can pay almost anything with their credit card. Ethiopia is not yet ready for this. Only Ethiopian Airlines, a small number of hotels in Addis Ababa and a few travel agents accept international credit cards.

Costs: Ethiopia is a very inexpensive country for foreigners to travel in, in their own country, the cost of living is much higher. The Ethiopian price-level is very low for day-to-day things: in restaurants, hotels and shops. But other travel-costs are relatively high: guides, entrance fees of national parks and attractions and domestic flights. Four wheel drive rental costs can be considered as expensive. The tours that involve travel by vehicle are usually tailor-made and are more expensive accordingly: these services need to be paid for.

Tipping: Tourists who visit Ethiopia are told that tipping is considered a part of everyday life and helps supplement the low wages. Tipping is a important source of revenue for the nation's poor. It is advisable to give: little amounts, but often. Tourists are correctly advised that it is a mistake to over-tip. Tips that are too high unfairly raise the expectations of the locals and undermine the social traditions of the country. The value of money then loses its right proportions and people are encouraged to ask money from foreigners and this is not good. People should be encouraged to work themselves and make a living not hold up their hand. Tipping should also be viewed correctly: a client gives a tip when he is satisfied with the service given not as a rule. If he is not satisfied or if the service was average, then it cannot be expected of a tourist to give a tip.

Post: Ethiopia has quite an efficient and reliable postal service for postcards, letters and parcels. All mail in Ethiopia is delivered to Post Office boxes only. This is different in most other countries, where mail is delivered to people's houses. Should people want to send packages urgently this can be done via Express Mail Service in Addis Ababa only.

Telephone and Fax: Telecommunications networks are fairly basic in Ethiopia – around three/four main lines per 1000 people – but visitors are usually able to phone home without a problem. When calling Ethiopia from abroad, the caller should use the Ethiopian country code:

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251. When calling abroad from Ethiopia, the caller should call 00 + appropriate country code. International calls and faxes are best made from the Telecommunication offices, found in most towns. Mobile telephones are making their entry into Ethiopia.

E-mail and Internet Access: The Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation retains a monopoly over Internet provision. Currently there is only one server for the whole country: www.telecom.net.et. This leads to very slow connections. Internet access is still underdeveloped and expensive. Useful internet sites about Ethiopia and tourism:

- www.addistribune.com – this site is good for the latest news on current affairs, culture, the economy, sport and other goings-on, particularly in Addis.
- www.flyethiopian.com – this is the site of Ethiopian Airlines, with the latest news on domestic and international flights, schedules, reservation options and so on.
- www.ethio.com – a comprehensive ‘web’-guide to Ethiopia, with daily news, cultural information and upcoming events
- www.tourethio.com – the Ethiopian tourism net. What are the country’s main attractions? Also contains practical tips for the visitor.
- www.waltainfo.com – the site of Walta Information Centre, with news about Ethiopia, cultural and tourism events.

Books: There are many books about Ethiopia: about its history, about travelling in Ethiopia, about Ethiopian art, about wildlife, etcetera.

- You are encouraged to read as much about Ethiopia as you can.
- Tourism professionals have to be experts on their own country.

Newspapers: In Addis Ababa, there is a reasonable supply of newspapers. Outside of Addis, the supply is very limited. Newspapers in Ethiopia do not report very much on what goes on in the world. The focus of attention is on Ethiopia and its neighboring countries. Of interest to travellers would be the Addis Tribune: it is a good source of information of forthcoming entertainment and cultural events in the capital.

Radio and Television: The government controls television and radio. Radio Ethiopia broadcasts in six local languages plus English, French and Arabic. Ethiopia’s single television channel

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broadcasts in Amharic and other local languages, and late in the evening in English. Some of the larger hotels, bars and restaurants have satellite dishes, which enable them to receive other channels, like CNN.

Time: Ethiopia is three hours ahead of GMT: Greenwich Mean Time. Internationally, there is an agreement that time starts at a certain meridian on the globe, which goes through England. So when it is 06.00 o'clock in England, one adds 3 hours for Ethiopian time: 09.00 o'clock. You all know that Ethiopian time is different from _western 'time. Ethiopian time starts counting at daybreak. Western time starts counting at midnight. When it is 07.00 o'clock in the morning, western time, it is 01.00 o'clock Ethiopian time. Another aspect of time is the calendar, In Ethiopia, the Julian calendar is used. In the rest of the world, the Gregorian calendar is used. When it is 1996 according to the Julian calendar, it is 2004 according to the Gregorian calendar. There is a difference of 7.5 years. A good promotional slogan that is used in tourism is —Visit Ethiopia and be 7 years younger!! The first day of the Ethiopian new year starts on September 11 (more than halfway the year) of the Gregorian calendar. The Julian calendar has 12 months of 30 days and a 13th month of 5-6 days. Another attractive tourism slogan that is used by the Ethiopian Tourism Commission is: Ethiopia – 13 months of sunshine! The Gregorian calendar has 11 months with 30-31 days, and a 12th month, February, with 28-29 days. The reason for the difference lies in a dispute over the exact date of the birth of Christ.

1.4. Geographical features of Ethiopian

In fact, Ethiopia has 20 mountains peaking above 4000 meters. But the country is also home to one of the lowest points on the Earth's surface: the inhospitable Danakil Depression, which lies at more than 100 meters below sea level. The mountains are also the source of four large river systems, the most famous of which is the Blue Nile. This river has its' source in Lake Tana and goes down from the mountains into the lowlands of Sudan, where it joins the White Nile. Together these two rivers form the important Nile River, going further to Egypt and the fertile Nile valley.

The other principal rivers are Awash River, Omo River, and Wabe Shebelle River. Southern Ethiopia is 'divided' diagonally by the Rift Valley. This valley is on average 50 kilometres wide and runs all the way down to Mozambique. Several lakes can be found as a 'chain' on the valley floor. These lakes are much loved by bird-lovers. The northern end of the East African Rift

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Valley opens into the Danakil Depression, one of the hottest places on earth. Ethiopia's climate reflects its' topography. The highlands have a very different climate than the lowlands.

In the highlands, the average daytime temperature is considered as 'moderate'. Most of the year, temperatures will be just over 20 degrees Celsius, slowly getting hotter as the rainy season is approaching. The rains start in June and usually end in September. Rainstorms can be very strong. In the north-east of the country, where there are often droughts, one can rely less on the rains. Rainfall in the lowlands is around half that of the highlands, but some areas also experience small rains in March and April. The southern Rift Valley is classified as moderate to hot and shares a similar rainfall pattern to the highlands.

In the Bale Mountains in the south, snow sometimes falls. At the other end of the scale, temperatures in the Danakil Depression can go up to 50 degrees Celsius and the rainfall here is almost zero. The far south and eastern lowlands are hot and dry. The western lowlands on the other hand, are hot and humid.

Nature, Ecology and Environment

A. Flora and fauna

Even though Ethiopia does not have the large wildlife numbers of neighbouring country Kenya, it nonetheless has a very remarkable flora and fauna. Many animals and birds are unique to Ethiopia. Ethiopia is especially well-known for its wonderful and unique birdlife – it is a paradise for bird-lovers. Birds are numerous, diverse (862 different species), very colourful and – very important for 'birders': easy to spot, because Ethiopia's natural areas are very unspoilt and quiet. Biodiversity and Endemism – the diversity of Ethiopia's geography is reflected in the diversity of the country's many ecosystems. The highlands in particular are an unusual habitat. The Ethiopian central plateau is home to a unique gathering of plants and animals. Much highland wildlife has evolved on its own, because the mountain-environment is so isolated from the rest of the country – almost like a fortress. Many species are found nowhere else in the world. In the whole country, there are 277 mammal species: 31 of those are endemic, meaning: they only exist in Ethiopia. There are also many endemic birds (17 species) and some reptiles, amphibians (eg. frogs), insects and fish. Among the endemic mammals are: the mountain nyala, the walia ibex, Menelik bushbuck and the gelada baboon all living in the mountains. Ethiopia's highland flora is also very exceptional between 600 and 1400 plant species are thought to be endemic: that's 10-20% of all Ethiopia's flora. There is no country in Africa that has more

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unique species of flora. An example is the exotic Abyssinian Rose: commonly found in both the Bale Mountains and the Simien Mountains.

B. Major habitats

Tent major habitats can be found in Ethiopia.

Desert and semi-desert scrubland – the Dankalia region, Omo Delta and Ogaden Desert all fall into this category. Vegetation is characterised by highly drought-resistant plants, such as small trees, shrubs and grasses.

Small leaved deciduous forest – woodlands that can be found all over the country (except the West) at an altitude of 900-1900 meters, Vegetation consists of drought-tolerant shrubs, but also trees, like various types of acacia.

Broad leaved deciduous forest – these forests occur mainly in the western and north-western parts of the country. Bamboo can also be found here in the western valleys. Elephants, buffalos and common elands exist here.

Moist evergreen forest – in the south-western and western parts of the country, they are forests consisting of tall and medium-sized trees. Since it is more tropical, the birdlife here is very colourful and abundant.

Lowland semi-evergreen forest – it situated around Gambela, Vegetation consists of semi-evergreen trees and shrubs and also grasses. Wildlife includes elephants, giraffes and lions.

Dry evergreen montane forest and grassland – covering much of the highlands in the north, northwest, central and southern parts of the country, this habitat is home to a large number of endemic plants. Africa's only rose, the Rosa Abyssinica is found here.

Afro-Alpine vegetation –this habitat is found in the national parks of the Bale and Simien Mountains. Very special here is the heather, growing into large trees of up to 10 meters (instead of growing close to the ground)

Wetlands – these can occur along the Baro River and around Gambela in the west, but also in highlands and the northwest. Here fig-trees and tamarind trees grow along riverbanks. Crocodiles and hippos inhabit many rivers and the birdlife is particularly abundant here.

Endangered species – According to the stories of early travellers, Ethiopia was once the home of incredibly large numbers of animals. In the year 525 AD, there are reports about tame giraffes and elephants held in Axum for the amusement of the court. Even around 1900, foreign game hunters reported big herds of elephant (of more than 100 animals) in the Middle Awash area.

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Flora and fauna today is much reduced. 21 Mammal species, 17 species of bird and 151 flowers are officially classified as being endangered. Among them are the Ethiopian wolf, the African wild ass, Swayne's and Tora hartebeest.

National Park and Sanctuary

It's a large area of public land chosen by a government for its scenic, recreational, scientific, or historical importance and usually given special protection.

Semen Mountains National Park: It is situated on the Simen mountains massif with an altitudinal range from 1900 to 4543m asl. Major wildlife species: 23 mammals, 182 birds and about 500 plant species and endemic mammals: Gelada Baboon, Walia Ibex, Ethiopian Wolf, Menelik s' bushback and about five rodent species. Endemic birds: seven, Abyssinian cat bird, Abyssinian long-claw, Spot-breasted plover, Black-headed forest Oriol, Abyssinia Catbird & Black-headed siskin. The major physical/geological features: spectacular mountain scenery and escarpments consist of dark Trapp basalts and bright, soft tuff.

Awash National Park: the park is located in the northern part of the Great Rift Valley. Its altitude ranges between 750-2007m. Major wildlife species: 81 mammals & 453 birds species and the dominant mammals: Beisa oryx, Greater kudu, Soemmerring's gazelle, lesser kudu, dikdik, Reedbuck. Endemic bird species: five endemic species include Golden-backed woodpecker, White-winged cliff-chat, White-billed starling, Vegetation types: grassland, thorn-bush-woodland, vegetation on steep slopes and lav. Major physical features are Fantalle Crater, Hot springs and Awash River with its waterfall and gorges are scenic features of the park.

Abijata-Shalla National Park: the park is located within an altitude range of 1540-2075 m asl. Vegetation types: Acacia-Euphorbia woodlands savanna and Major wildlife species: 76 mammals and 436 Birds. Waterfowls: the Great White Pelicans, Storks, Flamingoes, Egrets and Herons, Cormorants and Plovers. Mammals: Grant's gazelle, Colobus monkey, Grivet monkey, Warthog, Greater kudu, Klipspringer, Oribi and Jackals. Endemic mammals: about 5 small mammals including Scott's Hairy Bat, White-toothed Shrew, White-toothed Rat: Endemic birds: six including Yellow-fronted Parrot: Major physical: Lakes Abijata and Shalla, hot springs, lava caves and four islands.

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Bale Mountains National Park: the park is located Bale Zone within an altitude range of 1500-4377 m asl. Vegetation types: Afro-alpine heather, woodland, Gaysay grassland, and Herenna forest. Major wildlife species: 77 mammals & 260 birds and accepted as center for endemism and Endemic mammals: include Mountain nyala, Statck's hare, Ethiopian wolf, Bale monkey, and few other rodents and Endemic birds: about 7 (i.e. Abyssinian catbird, Abyssinian longclaw, Yellow-fronted parrot, Spot-breasted plover, Black-headed siskin and Golden-backed woodpecker) and the Flora: most notable are Giant lobelias, Kniphofia, Helichrysum sp. Hypericum, Hagenia abyssinica and Juniperus procera. Major physical: pronounced by mountain formations, extensive plateau, valley and mountains.

Yangudi-Rassa National Park: the park is found on the north-eastern part of the country with altitudinal ranges between 400-1460m asl. Vegetation types: semi-desert trees and succulent scrub, semi-arid grass and plains, shrub-steppe, bushland and acacia-wooded grassland. Major wildlife species: 36 mammals & 230 birds Mammals: Soemmerring's Gazelle, Hamadryas Baboon, Cheetah, Leopard, Lion, Kudu, Salt's Dikdik. Wild Ass is world endangered species and Endemic: wild ass:Major physical features: Awash River, active volcanoes, archeological sites, extensive arid-desert ecosystem & Dallol depression.

Nechisar National Park: the park is located near Arbaminch town in Gamogofa zone. Vegetation type: Savanna characteristics (grassland, forest, wetlands and bush land). Endemic mammals: including Swayne's Hartebeest, Scott's hairy Bat, White-footed Rat, Ethiopian grass Rat and Hinde's Bat. ndemic birds: Nechisar nightjar Major physical features: lakes Abaya and Chamo, Rift valley escarpment, Kulfo ground water forest and Filwoha hot spring. Major wildlife species: 84 mammals and 342 bird species include Burchell's Zebra, Swayne's Hartebeest, Hippopotamus, and crocodile, African hunting Dog, Lion and Leopard.

Mago National Park: the park is situated in South Omo Zone. Its altitude ranges between 450-2,528m asl. Vegetation type: Savanna (predominantly patchy grasslands, woodland, bush land and riverine forests).Major wildlife species: about 81 and 257 bird species & three endemic birds. Large mammals include Buffalo, Elephant, Burchell's Zebra, Greater Kudu, African hunting Dog, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, Major physical/geological features: Mago Mountain and Omo River.

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Omo National Park: the park is situated in South Omo Zone, some 870km south of Addis Ababa. Its altitude ranges between 440-1,183m asl. Vegetation type: Savanna predominantly plains, deciduous woodland, bushland and riparian formations. Major wildlife species: 75 mammals and 325 bird species & endemic birds Mammals: include Common Eland, Buffalo, Elephant, Burchell's Zebra, Greater Kudu, African hunting Dog, Lion, Leopard, Cheetah, and Ostrich. Major physical features: the plain land, Omo River and Kuma hot springs.

Gambela National Park: the park is situated in Gambella Region. The altitude of the park ranges from 400-768 asl. Vegetation type: Savanna characteristics predominantly swamp deciduous woodland and riparian formations. Major wildlife species: 41 mammals and 154 birds Dominant Mammals, Nile Lechwe, A. Buffalo, Elephant, White Eared Cob, Roan Antelope Major physical features: extensive swamps and wetlands.

Alatish National Park: the park is situated in southwester of North Gondar. Its altitude ranges between 450-2528m asl. Vegetation type: Savanna, combretum-Terminalia woodland, woody grass land and riverine forests. Major wildlife species: about 37 mammals and 204 bird species Dominant mammals: African Elephant, Greater Kudu, Lesser Kudu, Aubis Baboon, and monkey, Jackal, Warthog, Lion, Caracal, striped Hyena and Serval Cat. Major physical features: almost 97% of the area is plain and few small peaks and Ayema and Alatish River.

Geralli National Park: Located in Somalia Region and Oromia around Borena., Established in 2005 with a total area of the National Park is 3858 Km²: Significant species: Beisa Oryx. Grant's gazelle: Large mammal.

Kafta Sheraro National park: Located in Tigray Region, north Ethiopia and Lies in the lowlands of the Tekezze Valley, south of the Tekezze River. Area 5,000 km², bordered by southern Eritrea and the ground cover is mostly open savannah with thorny bushes and grass, typical of Combretum-Terminalia woodland type. The park supports about 100 elephants (Shoshani ,2004), The elephants in this population seasonally migrate between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and possibly to eastern Sudan (Yirmed 1997)

Chebera-churchura: Established: 2005, Area: 1215Km² and significant species: African, Elephant, Lion, Leopard Mammals: 37 Vegetation: Grass land, woodland.

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Maze National Park: Established: 2005, Area 210km² and Significant species: swayne's Hartebeest, Oribi, Guereza, Lion and: Vegetation: Acacia woodland, open grassland.

Borena Saynt National Park : Established in 2009: Total area of the National Park is 43.75km² and 174 plants (e.g. Dombeya, Hagenia, Hypericum, Juniperus procera, Olea europaea, Podocarpus f, Erica, Festuca spp) and 11 endemic plants (e.g. Erythrina brucei, Kniphofia foliosa, Lobelia rhynchopetalum, Acacia abyssinica) and 23 large mammals Klipspringer, caracal, Colombus gureza, Canis aureus Common bushbuck, Leopard etc 4 endemic species Minilik's bush back, Gelada baboon, Ethiopian wolf and Stark's hare 57 birds (e.g. White-collared Pigeon, Thick-billed Raven, Slender-billed Starling, Augur Buzzard) and 4 endemic birds Abyssinian cat bird, Abyssinian woodpecker, Black headed siskin, Harwood's Francolin : Ecosystem: Afro alpine, Sub Afro alpine and Montane Vegetation Type: Afro alpine grassland complex and dry evergreen montane forest.

Bahir Dar Blue Nile Millennium Park: The Amhara region has 16 priority forest reserves and 1 community conservation area (Menze Guassa), and 11 important bird Areas.

Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife sanctuary is a place of land or water body where wildlife is protected from predators and from being destroyed or hunted by human beings.

Babille Elephant Sanctuary: the sanctuary is situated 570km east of Addis Ababa with the altitude ranges 1000-2000m asl. Vegetation type: semi-arid bush and woodland. Major wildlife species: 22 mammals, many bird species Mammals include the African Elephant, near endemic Hamadryas Baboon. nSenkelle Swayne's Hartebeest Sanctuary Location: the sanctuary is situated 300km south of Addis Ababa, with the altitude ranges 1500-2,300m asl. Vegetation type: Savanna grassland and bush land and Major wildlife species: 37 mammals and 91 bird species and Endemic species: Swayne's Hartebeest:

Yabello Sanctuary

Location: it is located in Borena Zone, some 550 km south-east of Addis Ababa with altitude ranges between 1000-1,500m asl. Vegetation type: Savanna grassland and bush land and Major

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wildlife species: 43 mammal and 194 bird species, Endemic birds: Prince Ruspoli's Touraco, Abyssinian Bushcrow, White-tailed Swallow, Degodi Lark and Sidamo Lark.

Kuni Muktar Sanctuary: Located in Asebe Teferi kuni Mountains and Wildlife species: 20 mammals and 24 birds specie, Endemic species: 1 mammal & 4 birds are endemic and Physical feature: Mountains range/chains.

Wildlife Reserves

A large area of land where birds or animals are kept in protected conditions in the wild, either for conservation purposes or to be hunted for sport. Hunting is not permitted in a controlled hunting area without first obtaining a controlled hunting area permit.

Biosphere Reserves

It is protected area managed primarily to preserve natural ecological processes. Each reserve must contain a diverse, natural ecosystem large enough to be an effective conservation unit.

Kafa: More than 700,000 ha containing more than 50% of Ethiopia's remaining Afromontane evergreen forests ecosystems,

- The site is a scientific, economic, aesthetic and cultural treasure house
- fertile valleys and lowlands linking the mountains and ridges,
- A number of majestic waterfalls, including the Barta & Woshi falls,
- Origin of the rare and critically endangered coffee Arabica.

Yayu: Is part of the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot, One of the world's 34 vital yet threatened areas for biodiversity conservation, managed for the production of coffee, spices, honey and wood, important ecosystem services such as watershed protection in the Nile Basin, Yayu found in the south-western Illubabor Zone of the Oromiya.

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Bird Watching Site

No	Name of the site	No	Name of the site
1	Gefersa Reservoir	9	Lake Ziway
2	Sululta Plains,	10	Ankober, Melka Jebdu
3	Jzemma plateau, Jzemma escarpment and Valley	11	Fantalle Crater, Debre Zeit
4	Ankober to Awash via Melka Jebdhu	12	Lake Langano, Abijatta-Shala National Park
5	Awash National Park	13	Wondo Genet forest
6	Genale River	14	Lake Awasa, Fish Market
7	Fogera wetland, & Ethiopian Highland	15	Wetland around Gorgora

1.5. Current Health and Safety Features of Ethiopia

Health and safety aspects

While on holidays, your customers will be concerned about health and safety. A holiday often takes years of planning and saving money and can be easily ruined by sickness or an accident.

You may need to advise your customers that Ethiopian motorists drive on the right hand side of the road. As people from many other countries drive on the left hand side of the road, customers from these countries could easily walk out in front of a car because they have looked the wrong way. It is important for you to continually think ahead. You need to make sure that your customers are aware of any risks or any areas that may be hazardous or dangerous to them. Be careful that you don't frighten or upset your customers when you advise them. Make sure you choose your words carefully.

Local authorities usually introduce rules, regulations and physical structures to increase the safety of the area. Physical structures include fences on bridges to prevent people from falling off, or warning signs forbidding people to ride their bikes on the footpath. Information about local safety rules and regulations will help your customers to avoid getting injured.

Health-Matters

Tourists have to prepare themselves very well for a trip to the Horn of Africa. Many tropical diseases exist here, that are not common in northern countries. Tourists have to take a considerable amount of immunizations (against: yellow fever, hepatitis A & B, meningitis,

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rabies, typhoid, TBC) to protect themselves from becoming ill while travelling.

Hospital visits are to be avoided. Doctors in Ethiopia are well trained, but supplies and modern equipment is (very) limited outside Addis Ababa. When travellers require a particular medication, they are advised to take their own medicines.

Travellers are also advised to take precautions against malaria. In Ethiopia, there are large areas where malaria exists. In general, one can say that roughly everywhere under 1800 meters altitude the disease exists, especially just before and after the rainy season. That means that in the lowlands, in the south (around the Rift Valley Lakes), but also in places like Bahir Dar (around Lake Tana) and the southern parts of Gondar, malaria can occur.

Malaria exists particularly in habitats where mosquitos like to live: especially in hot and humid areas. There are several medicines against malaria: medicines to prevent one from catching malaria and medicines to cure malaria once one has been infected. All medicines have different light or heavy side-effects and a doctor should advise people well on what medicines are advisable to take.

Basic Rules Food and Water: There is an old colonial saying, which can be read in the tourist guidebooks: —If you can cook it, boil it or peel it, you can eat it....otherwise: forget it. Water from the tap can be dangerous to drink – especially to foreigners, whose bodies are not used to the bacteria that are in it. The level of hygiene in Ethiopia – and many others African, Latin American & Asian countries for that matter – is different to that of European and North American countries.

In their home countries: people, objects, food, cutlery, pots & pans, clothes, streets, etcetera are spotlessly clean. So the minute travellers get into contact with bacteria's their bodies are unfamiliar with: they get sick.

Guide books advise tourists to wash vegetables and fruit with purified or boiled water and to visit those restaurants where many local people go to not necessarily the better looking places. They are told not to drink tap-water and to be careful with fruit-juices, to which water might have been added.

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Medical Problems: In case of medical problems, tourists are firstly advised to seek help in a private clinic, and secondly to go to a hospital. Below is an overview of the most common diseases, infections and inconveniences.

Altitude sickness – travellers who go trekking in the Simien or Bale Mountains might suffer from this, newly arrived people in Ethiopia, who start their journey in Addis Ababa, sometimes experience mild symptoms for the first 48 hours or so. Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) has mild symptoms such as: headache, dizziness, difficulty sleeping or loss of appetite. Severe symptoms include breathlessness, a dry cough, severe headache, lack of coordination & balance, confusion, vomiting or unconsciousness. AMS can be fatal. The patient should not climb any further: either stay at the same altitude or go down.

Heat exhaustion & heatstroke : Being in the hot sun for long periods, which travellers are often not used to in their daily life, and being very close to the Equator can, together with not drinking enough liquids and losing too much salt, cause heat exhaustion and heatstroke. The latter can be fatal. Reduced sweating, together with high body temperature and a red, flushed skin, fatigue, very severe headaches, confusedness and lack of coordination can be a sign that someone is suffering from heatstroke. Hospitalization is essential, but in the meantime, the victim should be taken out of the sun, covered with a wet sheet or towel and fanned continuously. Give fluids when the victim is conscious.

Diarrhea: Simple things like a change of water, food or climate can all cause some diarrhea most travellers suffer from it sooner or later - but it does not necessarily mean that there has to be a major problem. However, dehydration is a possible result and danger if not well treated. When the inconvenience continues for too long, a rehydrating solution should be drunk, in order to replace lost minerals and salts.

Hepatitis: This is a general term for inflammation of the liver. Most travellers will have been vaccinated against Hepatitis A & B. Hepatitis diseases are common in Ethiopia and caused by several different viruses. Symptoms include: fever, chills, headache, fatigue & weakness, aches

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and pains, loss of appetite, vomiting, nausea, abdominal pain and yellow skin and yellow eyes. These last two symptoms indicate that it is the liver that is infected. Hepatitis are transmitted by contaminated food or drinking water. Hepatitis B is more serious and chronic – it is transmitted via blood or body fluids.

HIV & AIDS: Infection with the HIV virus may lead to AIDS, which is a fatal disease. It means that the body cannot cure itself anymore – there is an immune deficiency. In normal cases, the human body can cure itself for a large part. But when a person with AIDS becomes ill, he will not get better again. Wounds do not heal by themselves anymore and sicknesses will not pass. A flu might become pneumonia and the patient is likely to die from this. HIV is spread through blood and body fluids but is mostly passed on from one person to the other via sexual contact. But also syringes in hospitals may be infected. Travellers are encouraged to always demand a clean syringe whenever they should need one. Many people even bring their own blood-plasma. Ethiopia has a large number of prostitutes who are infected. However, a large part of the population in general has been infected – as previously indicated in this syllabus. Condoms are widely available and cheap, but clearly not used enough, because the number of HIV/AIDS infected people is rising fast.

Worms: Are relatively common in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Tapeworms may be caused by eating undercooked or raw meat (kitfo).

Meningococcal Meningitis: This serious disease can be fatal and recurring epidemics are reported in Sub-Saharan Africa. Fever, severe headache, sensitivity to light and neck stiffness are the first symptoms. Death can occur within a few hours, so urgent medical treatment is required.

Bilharzia or Schistosomiasis: This disease is transmitted by very small worms that find their way into the skin. One can come in contact with it via fresh water: rivers, lakes, streams especially still standing water. There is a high risk of bilharzias in much of Ethiopia's fresh water. Symptoms are only shown until the disease is well established, often weeks or sometimes even years after the moment of infection). They are: high fever, abdominal pain and blood in the urine. Damage will be done to internal organs. Travellers are advised to avoid swimming or bathing in fresh water.

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Typhoid-: Typhoid fever is a dangerous gut infection, caused by contaminated water and food. It requires immediate medical attention. Early symptoms are a high fever and body aches. The victim's pulse is often slow. There may also be abdominal pains, diarrhea or constipation. In the second week, pink spots might appear on the bodies, trembling, delirium, weakness and dehydration may occur.

Sexually Transmitted Infections: of which there are many. One can protect oneself by using condoms. Many STI's can be treated with antibiotics, but there is no cure for HIV and Herpes.

Malaria: This potentially fatal disease is spread by a mosquito, which breeds in permanent or temporary pools of still water. Malaria is a major public health problem in Ethiopia, with between one and two million clinical cases reported each year. As said before, the highlands are considered to be safe, but not 100% risk-free. Malaria symptoms range from fever, chills and sweating, headache, abdominal pains and a vague feeling of ill health. Medical help needs to be sought immediately if malaria is suspected – the disease can be fatal.

Dengue Fever: This viral disease is transmitted by mosquitoes and is becoming a big problem in the regions. Unlike the malaria-mosquito, the mosquito that transmits dengue fever is active during the day, in urban areas and around human settlements. The symptoms are similar to malaria and influenza, but after a few days, a rash of small red spots sometime appears. There is no specific treatment and no vaccine, so it is very important to try not to get bitten by mosquitoes.

Bedbugs, fleas and lice: These are quite common in cheap hotels and in rural areas. But people also get bitten in line-taxis for example. To tourists, it is almost considered shameful to get bites from bugs or fleas, since in their own country; it is a case of bad hygiene. But in Ethiopia, it can hardly be avoided. Bites can cause itching, but nothing serious. Tick-bites however, can cause skin infections or even typhus.

Dangers and Annoyances

Compared with many African countries, Ethiopia is a remarkably safe place. Serious or violent crime is rare. Outside Addis Ababa, the risk of crime is even smaller. The following list may

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seem long – in reality, the chance of encountering any serious difficulties is low.

Theft: Pickpocketing is the biggest concern – a problem mainly in Addis Ababa and other large towns, particularly Shashemene, Nazret and Dessie. Often, pickpockets work in teams of two or more. While one distracts the victim, the other will target his/her pocket. Distraction techniques range from bumping into a person & apologizing to offering to brush off a deposit left on the shoulder by a bird.

Scams & rip-offs: Compared to other African countries, Ethiopia does not have very many scams. The majority involves fairly harmless confidence tricks, but tourists should nonetheless be aware of them. Common methods are the ‘bad luck’ stories, of those soliciting sponsorship for education. There are also fake antiques for sale in the shops.

Ferengi-frenzy’: The most common annoyance in Ethiopia is the ‘ferengi-frenzy’. It may be the screaming, giggling, shouting ‘you!’, plain greeting or asking the same questions over and over and over again of both children and teenagers and it happens about every 10 meters!

- Hello – Mister (male/female) – where are you go?!!
- Give me money – give me pen!!
- Birr!!

For both newcomers as much as for old-timers, it never stops and it is often funny, but also very often – and for some tourists: always – irritating, upsetting and exhausting. When the tourist is for example waiting for the bus, he may feel like a zoo-attraction: there will be 10-20 children staring at him from a few meters distance. The best advice is for the tourist to make some conversation and find out that the children can be very sweet and shy. But coming from countries where you can be anonymous if you so choose, this experience is very new and awkward for many tourists.

The tourist should keep in mind that tourism is still very new to Ethiopia and much attention is because children are by nature curious. The attention may be too much and irritating, but it is almost never aggressive.

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Begging: Many travellers find that begging on the streets they encounter is one of the most distressing aspects of travel in Third World Countries. Ethiopia has its fair share of beggars. Some travellers find it very upsetting to be specifically _targeted ‘by beggars just because they are foreign. But foreigners have usually been involved in aid-organizations and they are often seen as the dispensers of charity. The old Ethiopian pride and self-reliance has been undermined. Travellers find it difficult to know how much to give and to whom. An advice is to give to those who cannot earn a living, such as the disabled, the ill or the elderly. Tourists should be avoided to hand out pens or candies to children: it unfairly raises their expectations and teaches them to beg. A much better idea is to donate to local charities, like churches, orphanages or street-children organizations.

Bureaucracy: Bureaucracy may frustrate travellers, especially where state-related activities are concerned. Procuring visa extensions, money exchange in government banks or telephone calls from telecommunications offices require a degree of utmost patience. In their own countries, these things take no longer than a few minutes, so if activities like these take hours – as is often the case in Ethiopia – it can be very frustrating

At the airport: Taxi drivers and guides can be a problem, both in Addis Ababa and along the historical route. Their mission is to steer you to cars or hotels and in doing so, earn a commission for themselves and a higher rate for the tourist.

Self-appointed and ‘nonprofessional’ official guides: There are many self-appointed and unofficial guides. These people are unemployed and are trying to earn some money this way. But it is very annoying to tourists. Tourists are approached, accompanied, given unasked information and are then charged for it. Few official guides exist in Ethiopia and even fewer are subject to regulation. There are many good, but also quite a few _bad examples’. Some guides become aggressive, hysterical are start sulking to extract extra money from tourists. Others try _bad luck ‘stories or ask for sponsorship. Some travellers find their trip ruined by the guides they have had.

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A very serious problem

Hassle from Ethiopian men to woman travellers: white women are sometimes seen as ‘easy’ by Ethiopian men. The individual and free lifestyle of tourists sometimes gives the idea that women are ‘available’ - for example when a woman drinks alcohol or smokes. In their home countries, this is very normal and has nothing to do with ‘availability’. But in Ethiopia these things are less common for decent women – so the men draw the wrong conclusions. As a result, western females sometimes have to shake off a lot of unwelcome Ethiopian men.

Land mines: Years of war are responsible for this problem. Despite the governments good job of defusing more than 5000 mines, many still litter the countryside and continue to kill and wound the population. Most travellers have nothing to fear from mines. Trekkers and drivers in remote areas should take care. The Ogaden and Tigray are known mined areas.

Shiftas: In some of the remoter areas, such as the Ogaden Desert in the southeast, along the Awash-Mille road at night and in the far west, shiftas (bandits) are sometimes reported. Most of these places lie far from the main tourist trails and tourists are very rarely directly targeted.

Dangerous animals: On rivers and riverbanks, hippos and crocodiles can pose a danger. Hippos are by nature not aggressive, but they feel uncomfortable if there are people (or anything ‘threatening’ to them) between themselves and the water or near their young – and they might attack. The spotted hyena is common in rural areas. They will not come inside tents.

Bad roads: especially an annoyance for senior travellers, who might have bad backs or cannot sit in one position for a long period.

Self-Check 1	WRITTEN TEST
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Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I: choose the best answers for each question from the given alternatives.

1, which one of the following is not characteristics service product?

- A. Seasonality
- B. Perishability
- C. Tangibility
- D. Heterogeneity
- E. All of the above

2, -----does not included under Dangers and Annoyances in Ethiopia.

- A. Begging
- B. Ferengi-frenzy
- C. Theft
- D. Bureaucracy
- E. None of the above

Part II: Directions: For each source of destination information listed below, provide examples of actual organizations in which you would request information from.

Sources of destination information

Names of organizations

- national tourism authorities.....
- regional tourism authorities.....
- local councils.....
- local tour operators.....
- accommodation
properties/associations.....
- industry associations.....
- guide books and destination
publications.....
- trade press.....

Unit Two: Prepare information for guiding activities

This learning unit is developed to provide the trainees the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Creating & updating personal reference materials
- Providing information for customers and Colleagues

This unit will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page.

Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Create & update personal reference materials
- Provide information for customers and colleagues

2.1. Creating & updating Personal reference materials

Access information for Personal reference materials from different sources: once you have found out where you can get assistance and support, you need to find out how to access them. There are many ways to access tourism information available to you. You need to find the best method for accessing this information. You could do this by:

- writing a letter or email of request
- telephoning organizations for information
- Visiting organizations
- Using map.
- Taking note

When you are accessing assistance or support, you should let the person or organization know why you are contacting them. People are always more helpful when they know exactly what you want to know and why. You also need to gather your information appropriately, taking into account cultural and Environmental considerations.

1. Writing a letter of request

If you decide to write a letter of request to an organization you must ensure that your letter is clear, concise and professional. Email is also an effective and quick communication tool. When writing a letter, or email, always:

- address and date the correspondence correctly
- state who you are
- explain why you are requesting the information
- include an outline of what information you require
- Thank them for their assistance.

2. Telephoning for information

Telephoning for information can be a quick and efficient way of getting the assistance and support you need. If you need a lot of information, it is best to talk to the person face-to-face rather than use the telephone, because it is very difficult to record a lot of information while you are talking on the telephone. If you ask for too much information over the telephone you tend to forget most of it by the time you hang up.

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Your aim is to make one telephone call to the person in question, not several. It does not look very professional if you have to call back five minutes later because you forgot to ask a question or because you have forgotten a vital piece of information they gave you during the conversation.

To avoid this, make a list of the information you need before you telephone the person. Make sure you have room on the same piece of paper for your notes. (Sometimes it is best to have an exercise book so that you do not lose any of your notes.) If you decide to telephone for information, you must remember your communication skills. Remember to:

- speak clearly and slowly
- explain who you are and why you want the information
- be friendly – it is you that needs the help
- be patient if they need to look for the information
- prepare a list of questions you need to ask
- have a pen and some paper ready to write down the answers
- Thank the person for their time.

During your telephone conversation, the person you are speaking with may offer to send you the information. If this happens, make sure you get the name of the person you are talking to and send a letter of thanks once you have received the information.

3. Visiting organizations

Sometimes it is easier to visit a person or organization to get assistance and support. If you do visit a place frequently, the staff may get to know you and develop a better understanding of what you are doing. This will encourage them to remember information that could help you.

If you need to speak with someone in particular, you must telephone, email or write a letter to make an appointment with that person before you visit the organization. If you do not need to speak to anyone in particular, you will not need to make an appointment. Remember that when you visit an organization without an appointment, you may not be attended to straight away, so be patient.

When you decide to visit an organization, make sure you are dressed for the occasion, especially if it is your first visit or you have an appointment with someone. Treat this visit like a job interview. Make sure your clothes are neat and tidy and that you are well groomed in general.

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Wear a big smile to show that you enjoy your work. People are more likely to help you if you are happy and they will be more likely to remember you when you visit next time.

When you are dealing with people, remember to:

- listen to what they say
- treat them with respect
- look at them when they speak, if culturally correct, but don't stare
- take into account cultural differences, e.g.: if you are a woman and you know the person you are about to visit is a Muslim man, you would not wear revealing clothing
- Thank them for their help and their time.

4. Taking notes

The best way to make sure that your information is accurate is to see it, hear it, or read it for yourself. If you watch a television program or read a pamphlet, you are more likely to remember the information. If you rely on other people to relay this information to you, you will not concentrate as much and won't absorb the information as well. Not to mention the fact that you will be absorbing their observations and perceptions rather than your own.

It is important for you to read as many books, magazines and newspapers as you can in order to collect information. When you see something interesting in a magazine or newspaper, cut it out and keep the article for your resource portfolio.

There will be times when you can't cut an article out and keep it or even photocopy it, so you have to take notes instead. By reading an article and taking notes you can create a brief outline of the information. You will never remember all of the information in the article so it is important for you to take relevant and accurate notes. Relevant notes relate to the facts. If you are reading an article, note the following information:

- Title, author and publisher of the article and the date the article was published.
- Points of interest.
- Important historic dates.
- Location and how to get there.
- Opening times.

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- When you are recording information in note form, make sure that you also record where you got the information, just in case you need to follow it up later.

By collecting information in note form, you can build-up your own knowledge which then allows you to provide your customers with interesting, educational and entertaining commentary on sites and attractions.

5. Using a map

By reading the brochures you have collected, you will have learnt that there are several tourist attractions in the area you have chosen. To help your clients, you need to know where each of these attractions is located on a map and how to get to each of them. You must know your local area very well. Tourist attractions are often marked on a tourist map, but your clients may be working from a street directory or general map. To help your clients, you need to know the address of their destination, how to get there and when it is open.

You will need to sit down and look at the map of the area or region you have chosen as often as possible to learn the location of all of the places of interest. You may even ask someone at home to test you by asking you to locate different places.

2.2. Organizing information for customers and colleagues

Information is knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact, circumstance or news. It is also knowledge gained through study, communication, research, instruction, etc.; Visitor information is an idea which is important for tourists in order to prepare and plans their trip in advance and undertakes their trip without any problem. This information may include area's attractions such as a landmark, national park, national forest, or state park, built attractions, cultural attractions lodging and food beverage facilities, maps, entry requirements and transportation.

2.2.1. Identifying customer type and special needs

Before you can even look at identifying a customer's needs and preferences you will need to look at what type of customer they are. Customers will vary in many ways. They will all look different and will all have different expectations. Your customers may vary according to their:

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- nationality (the country they come from)
- cultural background (the culture they come from)
- age
- personality (aggressive, relaxed, uptight, nervous, friendly)
- socioeconomic background
- gender

Now that you know you will have lots of different types of customers, you need to realize that the customers 'needs and expectations will also vary. To provide good customer service and satisfaction you have to be able to work out the different needs of your customers and adjust to these needs accordingly. The needs of the customer will depend on the industry in which you work, what product or service the customer is utilizing or buying and any special needs resulting from the individual context of the customer. The types and needs of your organization's customers will depend on the industry in which you operate, and on the specific products and services your business offers. Customers may require help with:

- buying souvenirs
- collecting pamphlets and brochures
- easy to follow directions
- suitability of certain attractions for families
- availability of local wheelchair accessible accommodation

At a basic level, you may need to place types of customers into categories or groups; however, be careful not to have preconceived ideas about people. Sometimes customers belonging to the same general categories have different interests, or different reasons for selecting your product/service in the first place.

Let's take a look at types, needs and motivations of customers within the tourism industry. Typically, customers travel for the following reasons:

- visiting friends and relatives
- business or attending conferences and seminars
- holidaying

Often customers combine their trips. A conference in one destination may also be the opportunity to catch up with friends and relatives over the previous weekend. Obviously, people travelling for different reasons have different requirements. A business traveler will want time

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efficient travel, have little regard for cost, require central accommodation and possibly to rent a car. The same customer travelling on holiday will probably want lower cost travel and comfortable accommodation. He or she is probably open to suggestions to what to do during a holiday. We will now take a look at different reasons that people have to travel and their requirements so we can deliver the appropriate service.

Visiting friends and relatives: Even though the main reason for your customer wanting to visit a certain destination is to spend time with friends and/or relatives, they will probably want to do some sightseeing or shopping in the area. They may also require car hire and accommodation. You need to ask and not assume anything.

Conferences and business: These include customers who are visiting an area for the purpose of attending a conference or having a meeting. While most of these visitors will spend time at the conference or meeting, there is often free time in the evening and perhaps for a day or two after the business is finished. Time is, however, a constraint. Alternatively they may require air fare with flexibility to be able to change travel arrangements at short notice.

Holidaying: There are many different types of holidays – packaged tours, cruises, 4WDs, coach trips, self-drive, caravans, short stopovers for people travelling by air. Some holiday tourists spend a short time in a region and want to fill up the days and nights by seeing as much as they can whilst they are there. Others spend a longer time and want to relax and enjoy the environment on some days, as well as being a tourist on other days, such as a holiday on a beach resort.

New customers or client groups: Customers come in all shapes and sizes. While an attraction may appeal to one particular type of person more than others, e.g.: young children or families, they are still all individuals and expect to be treated as such.

Customers with special needs: As mentioned previously, customers may have special needs relating to their individual context. Those with specific needs may include:

- people with a disability
- the elderly

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- people from different cultures
- unaccompanied children
- parents with young children
- single women
- business people
- conference organizers/attendants
- non-English speaking customers

People with a disability: Needs of people with disabilities was varying according to the type and level of disability. When dealing with people with disabilities you may need to:

- ensure special dietary requirements are provided for on flights, hotels or tours that you recommend
- use questioning techniques to find out all relevant details, e.g. guide dogs/hearing dogs
- be aware of appropriate facilities in your own and other establishments,
- e.g. wheelchair access, elevators
- avoid the temptation to treat people as being ‘slow’ just because they have some level of disability
- assist someone with impaired vision to choose a souvenir

For people with visual and hearing impairments, you should:

- face the customer square-on
- use active listening techniques
- encourage open communication
- use large and bold styles of print for itineraries and other messages
- have signs at eye level
- use color for emphasis
- ensure environment is clear of obstacles
- Use appropriate touch to gain attention.

The elderly, when dealing with the elderly:

- greet them warmly(sincerely)
- smile and offer assistance
- show patience, do not hurry them

- explain details carefully and reassure them assistance is available
- speak slowly and clearly and never raise your voice
- maintain eye contact if culturally appropriate
- do not treat them like children

People from different cultures, when dealing with customers from different cultures:

- speak clearly and slowly
- avoid slang or jargon
- write down information in diagram form
- be aware of cultural customs so as to avoid giving offence

There are many ways in which cultures may differ from one another, including customs and conventions relating to:

- body language, particularly gestures
- eye contact
- bodily contact
- gender roles
- Diet – dietary requirements are often related to religious beliefs and values.

Example: Jewish people may request information on where they might find ‘acceptable food’ outlets – this means they cannot eat meat from pigs, fish that doesn’t have scales, prawns, oysters, lobsters and calamari. It also means that milk and meat products must be kept separate when preparing food.

People from different cultures may also have language difficulties. It is important to remember that even if a person can speak English they may not understand slang words, so be careful that a conventional (normal) form of English is used.

If a person can speak English, but not very well, it is important to speak clearly, and make sure that the person has understood what you said. If the person cannot speak English at all, you may need an interpreter to help you.

Unaccompanied children: In your work role, you may or may not be required to deal with unaccompanied children. If you are required to do so, keep in mind the following points:

- do not use big words or expect children to understand complicated concepts
- use language that will keep them interested
- do not speak to them about the same thing for a long period of time

The specifics of dealing with unaccompanied children will depend on your industry, the types of products and services your organization offers, and your organization's policies and procedures.

Example: In the tourism industry, specific needs of unaccompanied children usually relate to airlines. If a child is travelling by plane on their own, the airline staff will need to be informed so they can keep an eye on them, ensuring they are well looked after and do not feel afraid. Staff will also escort the children off the plane and make sure that they are collected at the airport by the appropriate person.

Parents with young children: Specific needs of parents with young children will vary according to the type of product or service they have chosen.

Example: You may provide a place (play area) where parents can put young children whilst they look around the Visitor Information Centre. You may have a specific area or folder where you keep all the family friendly activities and local accommodation that you can easily showcase to families.

Business people: Business people may be from any region within Ethiopia or from another country. They will all have different levels of business commitments.

Example: Some business travellers may decide to take a tour or do some sightseeing between business commitments, or they may have arranged to stay on at the end of their business to see the sights and relax; however, they are usually on a very tight schedule. Business customers have a lot of commitments and their first priority is work. Before you give any advice or information, you must know their time frames and interests. Once you have this information you can recommend suitable sites, attractions and activities.

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Conference organizers/attendants: Conferences occur when a large group of people come together to discuss their business. The people attending may be from the same company or industry. The conference schedule details the core agenda and optional events.

Example: Optional events are often tours of the local area and tourist activities. For example, a conference organizer may contact your Visitor Information Centre to ask for some advice in regards to what location in your region could accommodate a certain size conference and accommodation and pre and post- tours. You will need to make sure all information you give them fits with all their needs.

Non-English speaking customers: When dealing with non-English speaking customers:

- speak slowly and clearly
- avoid slang or jargon
- avoid the temptation to raise your voice
- use appropriate body language to support your spoken words, e.g. facial expressions and gestures
- maintain eye contact (remember that this is not appropriate in some cultures)
- if necessary, obtain the services of an interpreter

Identifying the needs of customers

In order to give the highest level of service to customers and provide them with appropriate information and assistance, different customer types need to be identified. One way of identifying customer types is by recording customer details.

In the tourism industry, it is very important to keep records of:

- where visitors come from
- why they visited
- how they came to know about the destination or product
- What they thought of their experience.

This vital information assists the company in planning its marketing program and working out where to spend advertising budget. It is part of the important process of ‘knowing your customer’ which allows you to plan your product or service specifically to please the customer, ensuring repeat visitation/patronage and/or positive word of mouth publicity.

You may gather this information in the form of a questionnaire or you may be required to

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verbally collect this information from customers.

This can answer questions such as:

- Is our marketing program working?
- Are customers satisfied with the product and service we offer?
- Where are our customers coming from?
- What is the demographic profile of our customers?
- Are we attracting international tourists?

Your role in this process is simple:

- Follow the process in place in your workplace.
- Make sure you record information accurately.
- Pass on the information to the relevant person.

Be friendly to customers and be aware of why you are gathering this information. Some customers may ask why you need to know this data. Some needs and expectations will be shared by the majority of customers. Remember, all customers to any attraction expect:

- polite friendly service
- good product knowledge
- efficient service
- well groomed and appropriately attired staff
- clean facilities
- Good fun and the opportunity to take away some memorable experiences with them.

Other customer needs and expectations will vary. Although it is important not to stereotype people, what a person is interested in will depend largely on their age and background. When approached by a customer you may need to make a quick judgment about what general categories they belong to, in order to provide efficient and relevant information/assistance.

Advising customers based on your initial observations, will become easier with experience. If in doubt, it is best to err on the side of caution, i.e. to avoid making assumptions about people's preferences. If someone asks for information or assistance, always make sure you listen to what they are saying and do not be afraid to ask further questions to get a better idea of what they need.

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Provide onsite information and assistance: Customers will generally ask questions about the following:

- general information about the location
- times of activities/events
- directions
- facilities for those with special needs

General information about the location: Regardless of your position, you will need to know all you can about the region in which you work such as:

- opening times of various attractions and businesses
- what facilities are available
- a general idea of what things cost
- an idea of where things are

Times of activities/events: Knowing the times and dates of activities and events is essential if you wish to give excellent customer service. You should familiarize yourself with times and dates by looking at timetables and brochures. If there are too many times/dates to remember, you should make sure that this information is always at your fingertips so that when someone asks you for information, you can quickly access the answer to their query.

Directions: Having some general knowledge of where things are in your region is really important. Customers will not place very much trust in someone who says something like, ‘I’m not quite sure, I think the post office is on High Street, but I couldn’t be sure...’. If you don’t know where everything is, do some research? Have a walk around and make a mental note of where things are. You may want to sketch a quick map and keep it in your pocket or maps may already be drawn up for customers. If you are asked for directions, you should be able to give clear, concise directions and be able to use the map competently.

Facilities for those with special needs: You should be able to provide people with special needs with information about facilities in your region, such as:

- wheelchair slope
- interpreters
- disabled toilets
- wheelchairs and baby pushchair for hire

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Regardless of what you are asked by customers you should endeavor to answer their questions as best you can. Hopefully, if your training manager has done his/her job well, your induction will have covered most ‘need to know’ information. However, if this is not the case, then it is your job to find out. Ask your manager, ask your colleagues, and check company brochures to find out the answers to the most commonly asked questions.

If you don’t know the answer to a question, find out or refer the customer on to another person. Do not make it up and do not say, ‘I don’t know’, shrug your shoulders and continue working. Treat the person as you would want to be treated and do your best to find out what they need to know.

You also need to treat all customers with courtesy and respect. Act professionally at all times, regardless of how silly you think the question may be or if you are in a bad mood. If customers encounter friendly, helpful people, they leave with a positive opinion of the place. They will then tell their friends what good quality service they received and this is excellent ‘word-of-mouth’ advertising!

Remember, quality is all about doing a good job, every time, on time. It is about being consistent in your work practices and ensuring that your performance is consistently good. It means meeting and exceeding the expectations of your customers. It is about continuous improvement.

2.2.2. Promoting product and service with customer service skill

Today’s work environment is very competitive. In order to be able to compete effectively in the marketplace, organizations need to ensure they are delivering a quality service. You can be sure that if they are not, they will not exist for long. That is why it is so important that you have customer service standards in place so that service is always of high quality.

Quality service means repeat customers. The most important marketing tool, ‘word-of mouth’, cannot be bought with money. Quality service equals satisfied customers which equals positive word-of-mouth. Quality service means you get to keep your job. A well-run business which delivers consistent high quality experiences will profit. From this profit jobs are created and maintained. Quality service means safety for workers and customers. Poor quality service may mean poor safety measures. Customers define quality in terms of the following:

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- **Reliability** – this means performing consistently and being dependable. Customers want to be certain that if a tourism attraction has a performance scheduled for 2.pm then it will go ahead on time.
- **Responsiveness** – this concerns the willingness of the employee to perform the service. It means timely responses to customer enquiries.
- **Competence** – this means having the skills required to do the job. Customers should be confident you know what you are doing.
- **Accessibility** – customers like staffs that are visible and approachable.
- **Courtesy** – common courtesy should be paramount in all staff who are in contact with customers. This includes politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness.
- **Communication** – this means being able to communicate with all customers to some degree, including international guests. It means adjusting communication to suit the customer. You would use different words when describing a platypus to a small child then to an adult.
- **Understanding the customer** – this means knowing what the customer’s needs are, providing individual attention and recognizing the customer. Always use the customer’s name if you can.

Therefore, commercial operations should have these methods of servicing customers written down and distributed to all staff so that they know what is expected of them and can deliver high quality service in respect to enterprise standards. On a personal level it is important that you deliver quality customer service by:

- being polite, friendly and professional
- knowing your products
- putting yourself in your customer’s shoes and going that extra mile
- making sure you are well groomed and well presented
- being consistent with your high quality service – you cannot afford to have bad days
- Avoiding being over-familiar – always maintain a level of professionalism. It is okay to be friendly, but not to be over-familiar
- Always remember you are the service provider and they are the guest

These are fundamental concepts of customer service that need to be followed by all employees, regardless of whether they are spelled out in the enterprise standards of their organization.

Promoting services: Even though your customers have actually come to this region through the effects of good advertising or favorable word-of-mouth, your responsibility to sell is not over! After they arrived, there are many other ways of making sure that they make good use of the facilities on offer by promoting the services within your region. You can do this by:

- leaving professional brochures on different facilities in important locations
- making sure that they are aware that staff are available for questions
- having a large information board or even an information desk in a prominent location

When a customer asks you for information about something, you should do your best to assist them. You should also seize this opportunity to promote further services within the region.

You can see how important it is to provide information and assistance in accordance with customer needs. Knowing what type of customer you are dealing with means that you will have a better idea of what their needs are. This enables you to give them better service. Customers will ask for information on many different things so it is important that you have a good general knowledge about the attraction, the times of activities or events, where things are and the facilities available for people with special needs. If you do not know this information you should be able to access the information they require quickly and easily.

2.2.3. Provide information for Colleagues

Once you have gathered the relevant knowledge relating to your work situation, it is important that all people in your organization affected by this new information are informed.

This may be best done via a variety of means including:

- Newsletters
- Staff meeting
- Memos
- Email
- Reports

The medium you choose to communicate this new information will be dependent on the urgency of the information and/or the size of the organization.

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Health, Safety and Security issues: People working in the tourism industry must always be aware of information relating to risk management (health, safety and security). Procedures relating to risk management should be constantly reviewed and updated to ensure the safety and security of both staff and customers. To make the business operation efficient, this information then needs to be shared with colleagues.

Risk management issues can refer to:

- faulty and/or dangerous equipment
- fire
- flood
- bomb threat
- armed hold-up
- breaches in security
- Potential hazards, e.g.: slippery floors, low door frames.

Risk management procedures can refer to:

- regular equipment checks
- evacuation policies
- bomb threat procedures
- armed hold-up procedures
- How to report safety and security hazards to supervisors.

Maintaining equipment, presentation and safety of the environment and staff: Safety for both staff and visitors is an important part of maintaining efficient operations. All businesses have a legal obligation to both customers and staff in terms of liability. The tourism industry therefore has to provide particular services and facilities that are appropriate for the purposes of that particular business.

E.g. A visitor information Centre would need to provide and perform:

- maintenance of equipment, such as computers, photocopiers, faxes
- appropriate desks, seating, heating and cooling for workers
- cleaning of areas, including toilets
- landscaping and maintenance of grounds
- first aid and kitchen facilities according to health and safety regulations
- Emergency procedures.

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It is also important, as part of the orientation process, that information on health and safety is given to new staff, and so they are aware of the issues that face them right from the beginning. Giving health and safety information to customers is a little more difficult. Customers are there for a good time and do not want to read through pages of information on health and safety. Therefore, signage informing of dangers regulations should be placed in important places and in writing that draws the attention of the customer. The safety of customers and staff needs to be guaranteed to avoid the potentially enormous costs associated with accidents. These costs can be directly or indirectly related to the accident. Other less direct costs will be associated with the ensuing poor reputation which could see the business close or suffer huge profit losses. There may also be a psychological cost associated affecting the injured person or witnesses/helpers at the scene. Also take time to consider the indirect costs of staff wellbeing.

All businesses need to ensure they provide a healthy and safe environment for all staff and visitors. This can be achieved through safe operation and maintenance of equipment, attention to environmental factors such as cleanliness and good hygiene practices. To ensure all employees are aware of how to do this, all staff need to know where to find information and how to share it with others.

Accessing and updating information: There are many ways that information can be accessed and updated by staff. It will vary according to organizational procedures used for distributing information. You may access information through:

- staff notice boards
- leaflets and brochures
- team meetings
- internal newsletters
- Discussions with colleagues.

The methods used to access and update information will vary depending on the type and size of the business you are working in.

Staff notice boards: Reading information on staff notice boards is an excellent way of accessing information on things that are of general interest to staff, e.g.:

- new activities/events
- Promotional activities.

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However, notice boards are not always suitable for accessing information on:

- new procedures/systems
- changes within the operation of the business
- new customers/client groups
- risk management issues/procedures

These are important and sometimes confidential pieces of information. They need to be properly explained to the appropriate people.

Team meetings: Having regular team meetings is a great opportunity for everyone in the team to catch up on any new information. Any issues, changes or new activities/events should be discussed at these meetings so that all staff will know and understand what is going on. It also means that staff can discuss any changes that need to take place within the organization as well as putting forward ideas for new activities/events or promotional activities. Meetings are a good way of accessing and updating information as everyone is told the same thing and can follow up with questions if required,

Internal newsletters: Internal newsletters should be circulated to all staff. Internal newsletters are not intended for the general public as they will not only outline any new activities/events or promotions, but will also more importantly report on issues relating directly to staff. It is important that staffs are encouraged to thoroughly read internal newsletters as this is an excellent source of information.

Discussions with colleagues: Discussions with colleagues can take place in both informal ways, eg: between two work colleagues who share the same office and formal ways, eg: at team meetings. Talking with colleagues about work related issues are one of the most important ways of finding out about what is going on in an organization.

Keeping track of information you have gathered: In order to provide up-to-date and relevant information to your customers and have it on hand for co-workers, you need to have systems in place that allow you to easily access the information you have. You also need to keep abreast of changes to any information you may have so you can update it regularly. The best way of

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making your information easily accessible is to file it. Whether a business is large or small, it is important to have processes in place to ensure that information can be easily retrieved and kept up-to-date. A filing system can be set up in many ways but, in the case of a filing system for information on the business, it is probably most useful to file information alphabetically by subject title. When filing new information you should mark it with the date it was filed. You will then know how old each piece of information is and you can update it as you gain new information.

Informing: It is no use having important information if you do not pass it on. You have a legal obligation, or ‘duty of care’, to pass on any safety concerns immediately. When commencing a new position it is worthwhile to ensure you know who you need to speak to in regards to helping keep a safe workplace. If confronted with an issue you are not certain about, discuss this with your manager or supervisor as soon as possible. Ensuring a safe workplace involves being able to identify issues requiring attention and referring them to the designated person/s.

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Self-Check 2	Written Test
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Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I: say true or false for the following questions

- 1, Telephoning for information can be a quick and efficient way of getting the assistance and support you need.
- 2, The methods used to access and update information will vary depending on the type and size of the business you are working in.
- 3, Responsiveness does not concerns the willingness of the employee to perform the service.
- 4, The medium you choose to communicate new information will be dependent on the urgency of the information and/or the size of the organization.

Part II: fill in the blank space

- 1, means performing consistently and being dependable
- 2, concerns the willingness of the employee to perform the service
- 3, the skills required to do the job.
- 4, Customers like staffs that are visible and approachable.
- 5, should be paramount in all staff who are in contact with customers

Part III: give short answers for the following statements

- 1, list source of personal referencing materials
- 2, list Facilities for those with special needs

Unit Three: Updating knowledge of Ethiopian destinations

This learning unit is developed to provide the trainees the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Research destination information
- Updating knowledge of local area

This unit will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page.

Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Identify Formal And Informal Research
- Update knowledge of local area

3.1. Research destination information

Now that you have identified different types of destination information that may suit the needs of clients, it is now time to start the research process. The aim of the research process is to collect accurate and relevant destination information to meet the needs of the client and any requests they have made. Steps in researching destination information:

This section will explore the different ways in which destination information may be gathered.

It will focus on:

- Identify the research points
- Identify types of formal and informal research techniques
- Recollection of personal observations
- Accessing internal information
- Accessing external sources of information
- Visits sources of information
- Establishing industry networks.

Each of these different channels of information have their own benefits and is vital in building a solid base of information, that whilst can meet the needs of current individual requests, can certainly be used in future enquiries.

Identify the research points: The first step is to try to identify exactly where the focus of research and information collection should be concentrated on. As seen earlier in this module, there are a number of ways in which client needs can be identified. Naturally the use of a quotation planner is the most advantageous tool in identifying all the needs clients may have. By identifying the research points, the process of undertaking research will be able to be performed in a methodical and efficient manner.

Identify types of formal and informal research techniques

There is a number of formal and informal research techniques used to collect destination information, including:

- Talking and listening to local experts
- Talking and listening to local communities
- Personal on-site observation and exploration
- Organizing information from own memory and experiences
- Watching television, videos and films
- Listening to radio

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- Reading newspapers, books and other references
- Industry association membership
- Attending seminars or conference
- Informal discussions with colleagues and clients
- Formal study, including study undertaken on-the-job provided by employers or vocational training undertaken in personal time and at personal expense
- Reading literature, including brochures, magazines, media articles, trade journals, guide books and destination material
- Attending relevant information sessions and events, including destination launches, updates, seminars, trade conferences and exhibitions
- Visiting destinations, venues, attractions and sites, including familiarisations
- Direct contact with organisations from the targeted destination
- Accessing the internet and targeted destination websites

Research can be undertaken by contacting people within organizations such as:

- Hire car and coach companies
- Local councils or tourism associations, eg: chamber of commerce and tourism
- Accommodation venues
- Tour operation companies
- Tourism organizations
- Tourism boards
- Tour guiding companies
- Attractions
- Restaurants/cafes
- Conference venues. Either by: Email Website searches Telephone Personal experience known as ‘famils’.

3.2. Updating knowledge of local area

You will gain new pieces of knowledge and information every day in both a formal and informal manner. What you do with this knowledge is up to you. You may decide that additional knowledge you have obtained is extremely useful and would be of great interest to the majority of your customers. Other knowledge may only be of interest to specific types of customers; you

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should tuck this information away in your resource portfolio (if it is in a written form) or write down notes and put these in with your resources.

Other material you may gather may be culturally sensitive. This means that although some information may be interesting, it may not be culturally appropriate to tell everyone about it. It would be useful to get a map of your local area or region to update your knowledge of the local area. The more information you have about the tourist attractions and features of your local area, the better you can service your customers. Features may include:

- the physical geography
- climate and local weather conditions
- distinctive flora and fauna
- history
- local economy
- cultural features
- local entertainment
- local customs
- regional features
- health and safety aspects
- local time
- Distances and travelling time.

Each of your customers will be interested in different things. Some will want to know about the history of the local area or region, others about buildings and many will want to know about native flora and fauna. It is your job to provide them with this information and direct them to sites and attractions that will interest them.

Physical geography: You must know the physical geography of your local area. The physical geography includes the natural features or the general land forms in your area. You will need to know where to find the nearest mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, caves, waterfalls, rock formations and national parks. You have to know what features exist, where they are and how to get there. Your customers may have other reasons for wanting information relating to the physical geography of your local area or region.

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Climate and local weather conditions: It is important that you understand the local weather conditions and patterns. Your customers will have come from different areas and will be very interested in this information. Customers will also be interested in what the weather will do during their stay (weather patterns). It is important that you listen to the weather forecast every day so that you can pass on accurate and up-to-date information. Customers can have a depressed day if they are not prepared for hot or rainy weather.

Customers who have just arrived in your local area will need to plan what they will do while they are staying in your town. They will not know what the weather is expected to do and will need your help so that they can plan their holiday. If it was expected to rain later in the week they should see the features and attractions that are outdoors early in the week. Later in the week they could visit museums and historic buildings. Be careful when giving weather information, as weather forecasts are not always accurate and can change.

Distinctive flora and fauna: Many tourists visit Ethiopia specifically to see natural flora and fauna. Flora is all of the plant life in your area. Fauna is the wildlife or animals in your area. It is important that you know about the plants or animals that are distinctive to your area. You must be able to recognize plant and animal life and point them out to your customers. You will also need to know how the plants grow, what they look like and what sort of flowers they have. In regards to fauna, you may need to know what the animals eat, their life cycle, where they like to live and their daily habits. Most importantly, if you have customers that want to see specific flora and fauna, you need to know where your customers should go to find what they are looking for.

History: Many people are interested in history. History adds color and life to a place. Knowing what has happened in the past will give an insight into the area as it is today. It is essential that you know the indigenous history, the first non- indigenous explorer and why a town developed in that location. If the town were centered on a railway, you could research the history of the trains and the making of the railway.

Local Economy: It is also important for you to know the major sources of income in your area and the general economy of the country. Customers, particularly those from abroad, will be interested in the lifestyles and daily work of Ethiopians. It may be interesting for customers to

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see a farming community. Your customers will also ask questions about the economy in general. They will want to know how much the average person will spend on a house, weekly shopping costs, and the price of general items. Often customers want this information so that they can make a direct comparison with the situation in their hometown. Many of your customers will also want to know about the unemployment rate, inflation and the average wage. It is important that you keep up with current affairs and read local papers so that your information is always up-to-date.

Cultural features: Every region has many cultural features. A cultural feature may be a town that has become a tourist attraction due to its specific cultural history. Cultural features include major festivals or events celebrating cultures throughout the year. Make sure you know what will be happening in your area on Days of events and let your customers know attractions may be closed on a public holiday. For each event happening in your local area, you must know the dates, opening times and activities that will be offered. If possible, explain a cultural event that will be occurring in your local area or region in the coming year. Remember to include the dates or months.

Local entertainment: Tourists often visit an area to learn about the culture and lifestyle of the local people, often by enjoying the local entertainment. Therefore, you must know bars, nightclubs; markets or fairs and regular activities make sure that you only recommend entertainment that is suitable to your customers. Don't think about your own likes and dislikes, think about your customers. You may like a particular pub because your friends go there. This doesn't mean that your customers will enjoy the same place. Art and craft fairs are important local entertainment. Make sure you know where and when these are held, as many customers like to buy gifts to take home and want to learn about the local art and craft of the area.

Local customs: Every town and area has local customs specific to their area that will be of interest to tourists. To recognize local customs in your area, you need to think like a tourist. You need to think about the things people in your area do and then decide if these things are common in other countries. Examples of local customs are things like family gatherings or barbecues in the park, riding a horse along the road, social drinking and playing sport. Your customers may find many of these things interesting and entertaining. However, people from other cultures may

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also be offended by some of our customs. You must clearly outline that these forms of behavior are fully accepted in your local area.

Regional features: You have already learnt that there are many features in your region. These features can be divided into those made by manmade and natural features.

Health and safety aspects: While on holidays, your customers will be concerned about health and safety. A holiday often takes years of planning and saving money and can be easily ruined by sickness or an accident. You may need to advise your customers that Ethiopian motorists drive on the right hand side of the road. As people from many other countries drive on the left hand side of the road, customers from these countries could easily walk out in front of a car because they have looked the wrong way. It is important for you to continually think ahead. You need to make sure that your customers are aware of any risks or any areas that may be hazardous or dangerous to them. Be careful that you don't frighten or upset your customers when you advise them. Make sure you choose your words carefully. Local authorities usually introduce rules, regulations and physical structures to increase the safety of the area. Physical structures include fences on bridges to prevent people from falling off, or warning signs forbidding people to ride their bikes on the footpath. Information about local safety rules and regulations will help your customers to avoid getting injured.

Distances and travelling time: Travelling time is very relevant information. When visitors come to your area, they will want to see a lot of things. You have to help them to priorities their list of sites and attractions so that they can see as many things as possible in the time they have available. Some tourists won't be able to visit everything on their list, especially if they are only there for a short time. In this case, help your customers choose the most important sites or attractions. Always remember that tourists don't know the area like you do and therefore it takes them longer to get from A to B. They may drive slower, or walk more slowly, they may get lost, or they may stop along their journey to look at a particular feature. You must tell your customers how long it will take for them to get from one place to another. When you are advising them of times, always add a little extra time in case they get lost. This way they can still have a relaxed journey.

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Transport: It is also important that you know about transport to and from your region and also within your region. You will need to know how your visitors got to your region. This will give you a good introduction to a conversation so that you can discuss their flight, bus trip or car journey. Visitors like it when you take an interest in their holiday. If you use this information, you will be showing an interest. If you are outside of your region and you meet visitors who want to visit your region, you must be able to advise them of the best methods of transport. They may have the choice of a flight, bus trip, train trip, and hire car or their own car. You will need to know how long the journey will take and the best route to travel.

Once visitors are in your region, you must also be able to explain how to get from your region to another region. Many of your visitors will have come to the region by bus, train or plane. They may not have access to a car and will need to know how to use public transport in order to enjoy the region. Using public transport in a foreign place can be quite frightening for many people, especially those who have difficulty with local language or English. It is important that you help visitors with public transport. You will need to know where they can catch a bus, how they catch the bus, the route the buses take, how much the trip will cost and the method of paying. These things are very important to someone who doesn't know the system. It would be wise for you to keep a stock of information on local bus routes that may be of use to your visitors.

Tours: Often the best way for your visitors to see the area or region is to go on a tour. You must be able to advise your visitors on the different tours available in your region. You will need to know what tours are available, how much they cost, where they begin and end, how long they are and what times they depart. The type of tour may include:

- bus tours (around town or to destinations)
- walking tours
- special interest tours (such as historical wildlife tours)
- cycling tours

Extended tours: Visitors who have more time will often want to see a region in depth. The best way for them to do this is to go on an extended tour. An extended tour allows visitors to meet local people, discover the region and the culture of the area. They will experience different

accommodation, food and attractions. It is important that you know what extended tours are available, their length, cost, where they go to and the days of departure. Your visitors will need this information if they want to include an extended tour in their holiday.

Accommodation venues: All visitors will need somewhere to stay and may ask your advice on selecting a place. You must know the details of the accommodation venues in the area, including:

- hotels
- motels
- camping grounds
- bed and breakfasts
- resorts
- holiday apartments, etc

Different visitors will want different levels of comfort from their accommodation, therefore it is important to know the price range and comfort range of each venue. It is also important to know where the venues are located and be able to mark them out on a map. If your visitors are in your town specifically to spend two days shopping, you should recommend a venue near the shopping area. When discussing accommodation you must talk to your visitors about what they want to do, what sort of price they are willing to pay and what style of accommodation they want. Once you have this information, it will be easier to recommend a suitable accommodation venue.

Food and beverage facilities: All visitors will need to eat and many will want to enjoy the local beers of the region. Eating and drinking is a large part of every person's holidays. It is wonderful to enjoy the different tastes, styles of cooking and local beverages. You will need information on the restaurants and bars in your area, so that you can help your visitors choose where they would like to go. You may find that some visitors want to enjoy Ethiopian traditional food and Ethiopian coffee with its traditional serving system.

You will need to know what type of food the different restaurants offer and the average price that visitors will expect to pay. It is important that you also know the range of drinks that may be available in certain restaurants or bars. Sometimes visitors may wish to have a beer that comes from their own country or state, other visitors may wish to sample a variety of beers or wines.

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The atmosphere of a bar or restaurant is very important to visitors. Often they want to sit in comfort in a popular place where they will meet others with their own age.

Recreational facilities: Your region will have numerous recreational facilities available to the public. Many visitors want to make use of these facilities for either fitness or enjoyment. You must know what facilities are available in the region, where they are located, when they are open, how much they cost and how to get to them. These facilities may include:

- a swimming center
- gymnasium
- a sports field.

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Self-Check 3

Written test

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part One: Write true if the statement is correct and false if it is incorrect.

- 1, Physical geography does not include natural features of the area.
- 2, history adds color and life to a place.
- 3, updating knowledge of local area will help to gain new knowledge and information.

Part two: Choose the best answer among the given alternatives

- 1, which one of the following is considered a type of tour?
 - A. Bus tours
 - B. Cycling tours
 - C. Walking tours
 - D. Special interest tours
 - E. All of the above
- 2, which one of the following Research can be under taken by contacting people within organization?
 - A. Hire car and coach companies
 - B. Accommodation venues
 - C. Local councils
 - D. Tourism associations
 - E. All of the above
 - F. None of the above
- 3, which one of the following is not considered research techniques that used to collect destination information?
 - A. Brochures
 - B. Magazines
 - C. visiting Destination
 - D. All of the above
 - F. None

Part I: Give short answers for the following statements

- 1, list formal and informal research techniques used to collect destination information
- 2, what are the information that provided by you to update local area?
- 3, list Recreational facilities.
- 4, write Steps in researching destination information.

Unit Four: Providing information on Ethiopian destinations

This learning unit is developed to provide the trainees the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Specific information on Ethiopian destination
- Travelling around the country

This unit will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page.

Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Gain Travel Information about Ethiopia
- Obtain Current general information about Ethiopia

4.1 Specific information on Ethiopian destination

With the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites than any other African country (including Egypt), Ethiopia is a hidden gem that is overlooked by many travellers. With such cultural diversity, archaeological pedigree and natural beauty, there's a good reason why it's so high on the Wild Frontiers travel list.

4.1.1. Attraction in and Around Addis Ababa

Background of Addis Ababa

The establishment of Addis Ababa marked a decisive new era in Ethiopia's history. Though it was not at first certain that the town would be anything other than a temporary headquarters of the sovereign, it was destined to become the greatest of all Ethiopian capitals, as well as the largest, most populous city in Eastern Africa between Cairo and Johannesburg. Addis Ababa owed its existence to the innovating genius of Menelik II who, imbued with the desire to rebuild the former greatness of Ethiopia, wanted to found his capital on the site occupied by his forebears (before the invasion of Leban Denegal's old capital, the exact location of which had been forgotten, though there were numerous ancient remains in the area). Sahle Sellasie, King of Shewa, had earlier been filled with the same ambition: This monarch had discovered a ruined church in 1843 at Addis Abeba, some ten minutes' ride from the warm springs of Felwaha, and had discussed with the clergy the advisability of establishing his camp there. It had apparently been prophesied that Menelik II would build a city at Entoto (about 8 kilometers north of Felwaha).

In 1881 the ruins of an old city believed to have been built by Emperor Lebna Dengel were discovered some 15 kilometers to the north-east at a place then known as Sululta. Menelik at once visited the spot and exclaimed: -God has caused us to find the remains of the Emperor Dawit's city of Entoto. Since this discovery has been made in our time it is incumbent on us to resurrect this city. He settled there, and returned to it after his various campaigns. Strategic considerations doubtless also played their part in the selection of the site which, like Ankobar; was in an imposing position overlooking plains for miles around. Another advantage of Entoto was that it was on the watershed of the Blue Nile and A wash basins and therefore enjoyed quick and easy access to most of the central provinces.

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In 1883-1884 Queen Taytu asked her husband's permission to build a church at Entoto in honor of the Holy Virgin. Menelik consented, but expressed the fear that she would not find the necessary masons. A master craftsman and nine assistants, however, arrived from Gondar; which had retained its building tradition. Taytu asked if she might employ the Gondarians to build her church but as they had already been put to work on the royal residence Menelik said she would wait until this was completed. In the meantime the Queen ordered wood to be cut and stones collected, after which construction commenced. In the following year Menelik gave orders for the construction of the church of Raguel. He frequently took personal charge of the operations and assisted the workers in cutting the stone; at other times he entrusted the supervision to one of the courtiers, Azaj Walda Giyorgis.

The sovereign's interest in mechanization was apparent in the building of this church, for he had the timber from Mount Menagesha transported on ox carts. Five or six such wagons were manufactured to the specification of the Germany missionary, John Mayer. The stones for the church were transported by wheel borrow-also an innovation. Much of the material had, however, to be carried by hand; the church was completed by 1887 except for the exterior gallery and its pillars, which were added in 1905. There were, however, few other solid edifices at Entoto, the capital at this stage being still composed of tents and other temporary constructions.

Entoto was not destined to enjoy a long history, for its location, though suitable as a temporary camp, was not satisfactory for a capital in more peaceful times. It was poorly supplied with wood and water, and being situated on a mountain 3,000 meters above sea level, was often very cold and windy and was prone to thunderstorms on the mountain top. The place could only be reached after an exhausting climb, food was frequently in short supply, despite the fact that wheat, tef, tobacco, onions, pepper, butter, peas, honey wine, cattle and poultry were brought as taxes from the surrounding countryside. Wood and water were also very scarce.

The configuration of the land was such, however, that storms were markedly less severe just a relatively short distance from Menelik's camp. Thus Ras Makonnen and several other chiefs encamped on lower spurs of the mountain, perhaps only an hour's mule ride away, enjoyed a much milder climate.

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Menelik and his consort meanwhile were being attracted southwards by the hot-springs of Felwaha where they often spent many days, accompanied by their entire court, and soon decided on making this area of lower elevation their capital. By this time Menelik was also interested in southward expansion as well as the need to improve his communications with the Gulf of Aden while he increased supply of firearms rendered it less important to be situated on a mountain fortress.

The houses at Entoto, though well-constructed were cold and at the end of the rainy season of 1886, Menelik and Taytu, accompanied by their retinue, went down for the second time to Felwaha where a large number of tents were erected. Taytu, admiring the beauty of the scenery from the door of her tent and remarking on the softness of the climate, asked Menelik to give her land on which to build a house and, not long afterwards, a beautiful edifice was erected.

In the following year, 1887, Taytu once more left Entoto to live in her new house above the hot springs. Then began the building of the town all the chiefs were offered land around the royal area, and began individually to build their own dwellings. The army loved staying there and Taytu was so struck, it is said, by the beauty of the flowering Mimosa trees in the area that she ordered that the town should be given the name of Addis Ababa (—new flower in Amharic). It seems that Menelik and his court made several visits to Felwaha, returning his palace at Entoto after each one, but gradually Felwaha gained favor with him and by 1889 a building programme of ‘magnificent works’ began at the new Addis Ababa, among them a house ‘worthy of administration for the government’.

Parks and other Attractions in Addis Ababa

Currently, there are some 14 city parks providing services for wedding ceremonies and other recreational purposes. The major ones are described below.

Bihere Tsighe Flower Garden

As the name —Addis Ababa (New Flower) denotes, the city is rich with a variety of species of flowers, shrubs and other vegetation. Bihere Tsighe Flower Garden is a horticultural wonder, featuring more than 6,000 varieties of flowers, shrubs, and trees. At about ten kilometers south of Piazza, the park extends over an area of 400,000 square meters.

Lion Zoo Park

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Established in 1948, the park is located within Arada locality, close to the Martyr's Memorial Square at Sidist Kilo. Prior to the establishment of the park, several lions were hunted in the southern and southwestern parts of Ethiopia and presented to Emperor Haile Selassie as gifts. The lions were kept at the Emperor's Palace, known as Genete Le'ul, now located within the present University of Addis Ababa. The lions were subsequently transferred to the Lion Zoo Park.

Lions kept in the zoo are among the rare and endemic species in Ethiopia: *Leopantels Abyssinia*. The park accommodates lions with cubs, tortoises, baboons, monkeys, apes, rabbits, ducks and some fish.

Yeka Park

This park was established by the Municipality of Addis Ababa in 1985. Located in Yeka locality, the Park covers 22,081 square meters, featuring indigenous trees such as *Hagenia Abyssinica*, *Olea Africana*, *Millettia Ferruginea*, *Juniperus Procea*, *Cortum Macrostachis* and *Ficus Vasta*.

Ferensay Park

This park is located near the French Embassy in Yeka locality with a total area of 54,201 square meters. It was once the private residence of Dejazmach Gebre Selassie Bariya Gabr a high ranking official in the reign of Empress Zewditu (1908-1921) and inherited by his son Dejazmach Zewdie Gebre Selassie who owned it until 1975. The old house inside the park is registered as one of the heritage sites of the city. Like many other parks of Addis Ababa, Ferensay Park has some indigenous trees, such as *Brunus Africana*, *Olea Africana*, *Olea Africana*, *Acacia Abyssinica*, *Cordia Africana*, *uniperus Procea* and *Ficus vasta*.

Peacock Park

Peacock Park is in bole locality and covers an area of 364,014 square meters. It is used for wedding ceremonies and other recreational purposes. Among the indigenous plants or trees found here, *Olea Africana*, *Acacia Abyssinica*, *Millettia Ferruginea*, and *Cordia Africana* are the major ones.

Africa Park

The park is found in Kirkos locality in front of UNECA and the Hilton Addis Ababa, covering an area of 45,703 square meters. It is arguably the best city park of all, run by a private company, with recreational facilities for all to enjoy during the daytime.

Hamle 19 Park

Hamle 19 Park covers a wide area with green shade trees. It is located on the way to Entoto

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behind the USA Embassy.

Bole Park

Bole Park is situated behind Peacock Restaurant on the road to Bole International Airport. Like Hamle 19 Park, Bole Park is popular for hosting wedding ceremonies which are usually held on weekends. Musicians playing local instruments such as the Kirar, Kbero and Masinko present various national songs and dances with the participation of the invited guests.

Emperor Menelik's Elfign and the Reception Hall at Entoto Hall

In 1878, Emperor Menelik moved southwards from his old capital, Ankober, and established camp on Wechecha Mountain, a strategic position to the west of Addis Ababa. Three year later, the Emperor transferred the camp to Entoto, a place at the northern part of the present Addis. Initially, Entoto was no different from a military camp. The settlement consisted mainly of tents but very soon erection of some fine buildings began. With the help of a master craftsman and nine assistants from Gondar, the Emperor erected his palace _Elfign' (reception) as precursors to the big _Gibbi' (palace) and the two churches, St. Mary and Archangel Raguel. Menelik's Swiss Advisor and craftsman, Alfred Ilg, and two other Swiss workmen were employed in the work.

The palace and the two churches were built using wooden beams brought from the state forest of Menagesha Mountain, where the Emperor and his consort Taytu went together with the soldiers to superintend the cutting of the timber for the roofs. Visitors today can enjoy the Palace-Elfign of the Emperor on Entoto behind St. Mary Church, just outside the compound. The building was designed with some windows looking out down to Addis Ababa and others in different directions so that the royal personalities could survey the surroundings. The first floor was used as bedroom while the ground floor is said to have been for multi-purpose storage.

Nearby is the reception hall with its different sections of dining rooms for high-ranked officials during banqueting ceremonies, entrances for particular court officials, and the special large hall of Menelik and Taytu where they received guests and superintended the banquet. The structure of this reception hall is highly ingenious and contains a thatched roof supported by many wooden beams assembled with leather fastenings.

Genete leul Palace

After the establishment of Emperor Menelik's palace at what is now Gibbi, land was allocated to

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some important state personalities. Among them was Emperor Menelik cousin, Ras Makeonnen, who received the estate which is now the main campus of Addis Ababa University. When the palace was erected in the 1890s, several round thatched houses were built around the Palace of Genete Le‘ul. Of those houses, one served as the headquarters of the Bank of Abyssinia in 1905. As the heir to his father’s estate, the late Emperor Haile Selassie renovated the old home and also built a new palace named Amsale Genet as well as other structures, one of them housing a printing press. The impressive stone palace (the present faculty of Law) was erected after 1924. After the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930, the thatched roofs in the compound were replaced by corrugated iron and access roads were asphalted.

The principal palace building, the Genete Le‘ul or ‘princely paradise’, now the Addis Ababa University’s administrative centre and institute of Ethiopian studies, was completed in eight months by 800 workers, in time for the visit of the Swedish Crown Prince in early 1935. The ground floor housed a banqueting hall. The bedrooms and the Emperor’s study were on the second floor. The furniture, decorated with royal lions, was supplied by the British firm of Waring and Gillow, for half a million pounds.

Other buildings behind the palace housed the Imperial Bodyguard and the kitchens. There was a hostel for visiting clergy, a field for equestrian displays, a dairy, lion cages, kennels, stables, stores, a temporary prison and an air-raid shelter (created after the Italian invasion). However, the main palace was looted and the Amsale Genet Palace was burnt down after invasion of the fascist Italian forces in 1936. The invaders quartered troops in the palace compound and the lions, symbols of the Ethiopian royalty, were destroyed.

Viceroy Rodolfo Graziani made the Genete Le‘ul his administration centre and erected a number of small temporary buildings nearby. To facilitate the palace for the residence of the Duke of Aosta, the third fascist Viceroy, the open verandah above the front door was enclosed to form a hall, part of the present Institute of Ethiopian Studies, while the curtains between the bedrooms were replaced by walls. The Amsale Genet palace and some lesser structures were rebuilt; cement steps were erected by the flagpole, one step for each year of fascist power, starting from Mussolini’s march on Rome in 1922. It was in this palace that on 19 February 1937, during a celebration, that two Ethiopian boys, Abraha Deboch and Moges Asgodom, hurled hand-

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grenades at the Italian officials and wounded thirty of them including Viceroy Graziani. Because of that action the Italian armed police fired on the crowd, in what is now the Genete Le‘ul palace, and officials ordered three days of severe reprisals. Several thousand innocent men, women, and children were massacred and many houses torched.

After the defeat of the fascist Italians, Emperor Haile Selassie returned home on 5 may 1941 and used the Genete Le‘ul Palace again as a residence and administration centre for his government. Then the palace’s western wing was expanded, giving the Emperor a new office and bathroom. A much enlarged banqueting hall was erected east of the palace. It was known as Christmas Hall, because students were invited there for the festival and this tended to replace Menelik’s old Banquet Hall for state banquets. The palace gardens were laid out around a pool with a central fountain.

The Genete Le‘ul Palace was the site of an abortive coup d’etat led by Mengestu Neway, commander of the Imperial Bodyguard and his brother Germame Neway. The coup d’etat was attempted during the Emperor’s absence on a state visit to Brazil on 13 December 1960. After the coup attempt the emperor donated Genete Le‘ul Palace to the university. Today the Palace is the Institute of Ethiopian Studies and the Ethnographic Museum which incorporates both the palace heritage and the ethnic way of life are a popular site for visiting tourists.

Monuments and Status

The major historical events, which mainly started in Addis but also took place in other parts of Ethiopia, were often commemorated in the form of statues of monuments erected on major squares of the capital. These symbolize both the events and personalities. Most of them are related to external invasions, particularly that of the fascist Italian forces. Among the monuments in the city are:

- Abune Petros
- Menelik II
- Ras Makonnen
- Freedom (Miazia 28)
- Menelik II (in Menelik Hospital)
- Ethio China Square (Ethiopian Airlines)

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- Yekatit 12 (Sidist Kilo)
- Dilachen (Black Lion)
- Sebastopol (Tewodros Square)
- Pushkin (Sar Bet)
- Lion of Judah (Railway Station)
- Kagnev Memorial Korea (Afincho Ber) and
- The Lion of Judah (National Theatre)

The Equestrian Statue of Emperor Menelik II

This monument is erected on the square of Emperor Menelik near St. George Church and is a standing testimony of the Famous Battle of Adwa 1896 witnessing Africa's triumph over European colonialism. The statue of Emperor Menelik is one of the monuments erected many years after the foundation of Addis Ababa. A German architect, Hartel Spengler cast it in bronze on the orders of Queen Zewditu, the daughter of Emperor Menelik II, in memory of her father. The statue symbolizes the anti-colonial struggle of Emperor Menelik who waged the Battle of Adwa, the climactic battle of the First Italo-Ethiopian War. The statue portrays Emperor Menelik in his coronation robes riding gloriously on Abba Dagnev, his horse which is depicted with both forelegs raised, looking to the north where the victorious Battle of Adwa took place. Sadly, before the statue could be erected, Queen Zewditu died in 1930. Thus, the then crown prince (later Emperor Haile Selassie) attended the inauguration ceremony on the even of his coronation day in the same year.

In the 1936 fascist invasion, Benito Mussolini gave his personal order that this statue should be pulled down and hidden somewhere so that the humiliating defeat of the Italians at Menelik's hand in the Battle of Adwa could be forgotten. However, in 1941 when the invaders were ousted by the patriots and allied forces, the statue was restored to its original place.

The Statue of the Lion of Judah

The Lion of Judah was erected in the square of the Addis Ababa railway station, portraying the devotion of Emperor Menelik to link Ethiopia with the outside world by means of the railway line (with the help of his Swiss advisor, then foreign minister, Engineer Alfred Ilg). The bronze statue can be seen immediately in front of the railway station, which was built by the French and

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inaugurated in 1929.

On the Lion of Judah statue are carved in relief the effigies or faces of four high ranking personalities: Emperor Menelik II in his coronation robes and crown surrounded by patterns of maize and coffee plants (north), Queen Zewditu in circular relief and with a golden crown on her head (south), Ras Mekonnen with golden crown in a patterned relief, and Negus Teferi in his robe and crown prince hood with patterned decoration.

Similarly to the Equestrian Statue of Emperor Menelik II, the Statue of the Lion of Judah was pulled down in the 1936 fascist Italian invasion and taken to Rome where it stayed for 30 years. It was returned after lengthy negotiations and was re-erected on the original site on the same month and day it was first inaugurated. The lion of Judah itself faces to the south with opened mouth, raised left foreleg and carries the Ethiopian flag on a crossbar resting on its shoulder.

Freedom Monument

The monument is located on the intersection of Adwa, Queen Elizabeth and Development through Cooperation Avenues at Arat Kilo, and commemorates that victory of the Ethiopians over the Italians in 1941, as well as those gallant Ethiopians who perished resisting the invading fascist forces during the 1928-1933 war. The official name of the square where the monument located is Miazia 27, i.e. the day of the liberation of the country and the arrival of the Emperor together with his patriotic troops in Addis Ababa.

Emperor Haile Selassie inaugurated the Freedom Monument in 1944. The 15-metre monument symbolizing the obelisks of Axum is supported by pillars and has six entrances. The history of the five year struggle is narrated by writings carved on stone tablets around the monument. On the other western entrance is the discourse of Emperor Haile Selassie at the time of his arrival and the day of liberation in 1941.

On the remaining three entrances to the monument are written on the stones the following:

- Northwest: this commemorates the patriots of the five-year struggle and shows a woman in bas-relief holding a sword. On the stone is written the contribution of those who fought the enemy secretly at home submitting information to the patriots.

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- Northeast: this side invokes the memory of the patriots who perished in the five-years war and is again depicted by a woman with a sword in her hands, while on the stone is narrated the role they played.
- Southeast: depicts Emperor Haile Selassie holding the Ethiopian flag in his hands and the relief of the Lion of Judah under him, while the stone writings at that part narrate the great political and diplomatic role played by the Emperor to liberate the country during his exile.
- Southwest: this part is left for the memory of those Ethiopians who emigrated from their country and fought wherever they were against the fascist Italians' occupation. Here also is depicted a woman holding a spear in her left hand and shield in the other, and on her head a wreath of anguish, while on the stone under her is described the life of those emigrant Ethiopians who suffered in alien countries.
- The top of the monument reveals the Lion of Judah holding the Ethiopian flag in its foreleg and facing north. On the western side is a clock with its short hand indicating one o'clock: the time of arrival of the patriots in Addis Ababa.

The Statue of the Lion of Judah

This black stone carved monument is erected near the National Theatre on the western side at Unity Square and commemorates the Silver Jubilee of Emperor Haile Selassie, celebrated in 1955. The monument is the work of a French sculptor, Morris Calka, the winner of Grand Prix of Rome Henry Shomet, the Architect of the Addis Ababa City Hall, selected him for this task.

Museums

It is possible to say that nearly all the historical, cultural and natural heritage of Ethiopia is exhibited in Addis Ababa, which is very well served with museums. Tourists/visitors can find here the highlights of regional or local destinations and sites prior their departure of specific itineraries.

In terms of ownership and administration, museums in Addis Ababa fall into various categories: government, religious institutions and private. They can also be grouped as Zoological, Natural, History, Archaeological, Ethnological, Historical/Cultural, and Religious. Including the newly-inaugurated museum in the premises of Trinity Cathedral, the total number of officially visited museums in Addis Ababa is now nine.

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Entoto Museum

At the top of the rising slope of Entoto mountain range is the site where Menelik II established his capital. The visitor to this place can easily get there by taxi, drive a car or even walk up the steep hill to reach its summit at 3000 meters above sea level. The fresh and cool air, the exuberant flora and the pungent aroma of the eucalyptus trees alongside the road make the trip delightful. Further excitement is waiting in Entoto Museum, which contains articles of great quality and historical significance. The drum that announced the march of Adwa against the Italian invasion, the bed Menelik II used while in Ankober, a crown and a Persian carpet are just a few of the many exhibits depicting Entoto's glorious past.

The panoramic view of the city and the surrounding areas, the beautiful architectural style of Archangel Raguel and St. Mary Churches, and a visit to Menelik's old palace add to an experience the visitor will cherish.

Ethnographic Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies

The Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) was established in 1963 with three major components: a research and publications unit, a library, and a museum. The aim of the institute is to collect documents, analyze and disseminate knowledge about languages, cultures and the history of Ethiopia. As Ethiopia is a cradle of mankind, a crossroads of cultures and civilizations, it is known as —a museum of nationalities. This museum, therefore, shoulders the responsibility of capturing the heritage of the past and presenting it for posterity. The main focus of the museum is traditional art and material culture of nationalities.

The IES Museum brings the many diverse ethnic groups of Ethiopia under one roof. The layout follows the story of life from birth to death, and beyond, and how the different stages of life are viewed and experienced by different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Appropriately, the museum is in the old palace, Genete Le'ul, of the late Emperor Haile Selassie, a building that welcomes all visitors with dignity and grace. The museum is accommodated on two floors, comprising the bedroom of the late Emperor and ethnographic section on the lower floor and the art gallery on the upper floor.

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The bedroom reminds us that the building was once a palace in the formative period of modern Ethiopia. It is the first modern palace imitating European style. We see here the bed, which Emperor Haile Selassie used for more than ten years, and some personal gifts received by the late Emperor. The reception hall now hosts ethnographic items of more than 80 language groups. It is divided into two parts. The first introduces the general socio-economic conditions of the country and displays production tools and some techniques of craftsmen.

The second part provides a quick visit through Ethiopia. Here, assorted items from each region in the country are represented. Although the space is not large enough to show all the beauty and diversity of the culture of Ethiopia, it creates a strong urge to know more about it.

The second floor is a gallery where the ‘high art’ of the country is displayed. The exhibit concentrates on the history of sacred, and a few examples of the secular, art of Ethiopia. The time span of some items could go as far back as the 14th century.

The National Museum of Ethiopia

The first measure taken in Ethiopia towards safeguarding the nation’s historical and cultural heritage was when archaeological research began in collaboration with a French team of scientists. Due to the continuing research, there arose the need to organize an institution to preserve and exhibit the collections.

The National Museum of Ethiopia was established in 1944 and began its activities by exhibiting a few archaeological collections as well as some ceremonial costumes and ethnographic objects. The museum gradually improved and developed, in the course of which it transferred to the building where it is located today. One of the major objectives of the museum is to present selected artifacts worthy of exhibition using the best display techniques available as a means of both education and enjoyment for the general public. Exhibits of the National Museum are presented under the following four main sections:

- **Paleontology and pre-history:** Lucy and other fossils including stone tools;
- Historical and archaeological findings that depict the early history from the pre-Axumite times to the 16th century AD;

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- **Ethnography;** traditional and ceremonial costumes, jewellery, etc. reflecting the diverse cultures of the various ethnic groups; and
- **Modern Art:** selected paintings and sculptures from different Ethiopian Artists, such as Maitre Artist Laureate Afework Tekle.

Almost every object has a written description so that visitors can learn about the nation's rich history. Besides its regular services, the museum organizes special tour programmes for students and interested groups on request. The museum also controls the export of historical and cultural relics abroad, i.e. it investigates the souvenirs purchased by tourists and other visitors in order to protect the heritage from being exported. A special section of the museum is authorized to manage and examine the historical value and purity of the objects to be exported.

The Zoological Natural History Museum (ZNHM)

Many wild animals are endemic to Ethiopia. For example, 30 species of mammals, 28 species of birds, 30 species of amphibians and 10% of its fish species have been identified as native to Ethiopia. The ZNHM is the only one of its kind in Ethiopia where samples of the rich Ethiopian wildlife are on display. The collection includes more than 1,100 species and the number of specimens is more than 3,500. The following list is a rough breakdown of the collection in the ZNHM.

- Red Sea corals
- 200 species of marine and fresh water mollusks
- Many species of insects, mostly moths and butterflies
- 35 species of amphibians
- 52 species of rodents
- 36 species of bats
- 22 species of hoofed mammals (ungulates)
- 20 species of carnivores
- Species of primates
- 450 species of birds
- 50 species of snakes
- 35 species of lizards, frogs and toads
- 52 species of fish, and a diverse collection of invertebrates

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Be'ata Museum

Taaka Negest Be'ata Maryam Church is simply called Be'ata. It lies at the east of Menelik's Palace and covers an area of about 2400 square meters. In this compound and under the shade of thick eucalyptus forest stands the church. It is a grey, four-sided, two-storey building known to tourists as Menelik's mausoleum. However, in the underground crypt and buried not only Menelik, but also Etege Taytu and Queen Zewditu, the Emperor's consort and daughter, respectively.

Queen Zewditu ordered the construction of Be'ata in 1911. Originally, she intended its modification as a church as well. The building is frequented by visitors, not only for its invigorating environment but also for its museum on the upper floor. At the doors of eight of the 12 entrances, the sculptures of lions constructed from aluminum sheet give an enticing welcome. When entering the building one can be almost overwhelmed by the breathtaking wall paintings of the famous Ethiopian artist, Aleka Mezmur. Many of these paintings are in remembrance of some of the major and unforgettable events in Ethiopian history. On the top story the museum exhibits various important articles such as the chair Menelik used while attending mass in the church, a golden cross that belonged to Abune Kerlos of Alexandria, a prayer stick of Queen Zewditu, and palm leaves made out of iron sheet and sent by the French president in condolence of Menelik's death.

A visit to the museum is further rewarded by a glance in another site of historical significance, St. Gabriel Church. This church, formerly called Gibi Gabriel, because it was placed in a temporary shelter in Menelik's compound, is located south-east of the compound of Be'ata. Here too, development of a museum is in progress.

Addis Ababa Museum

On the road to Bole International Airport, just behind the Ethiopian Trade Union building is the Addis Ababa Museum. It was established in October 1986 on the centenary of the foundation of Addis Ababa as the capital city. The objectives of the establishment were to collect and display the heritage that depicts the development of the city since its foundation; to record the future

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progress of the capital in the social, political and economic spheres; and to assist researchers in their studies about Addis Ababa.

The museum is housed in one of the oldest buildings of the city. The house belonged to one of the warlords during the reign of Emperor Menelik II. The fine quality of the building and the unique architectural style are impressive and give the visitor a double satisfaction.

The museum has eight sections, each exhibiting materials of significance at different stages of the city's development. At Finfine Hall, for example, photographs that depict the progress of the city are shown; and at Adwa Hall weapons used during the battle of Adwa are displayed.

The Trinity Cathedral Museum

The Cathedral has been a point of interest for the city's visitors for many years. It is one of the most magnificent churches in Addis Ababa and its large dome and slender pinnacles are a landmark of the city. A handsome crystal chandelier, many notable paintings, murals and beautiful stained-glass windows adorn the interior. The church contains the tombs of Emperor Haile Selassie I and his consort Empress Menen, and the churchyard is the burial ground of many patriots who lost their lives during the five year invasion of Ethiopia.

The Trinity Cathedral administration has preserved a variety of ecclesiastical articles in the crypt under the church where they can be seen by tourists. Adding to these attractions, in January 2006 His Holiness Abune Pawlos, Patriarch of Ethiopia, inaugurated a museum in a new building behind the cathedral. This is now popular with visitors. The collections of the new museum include:

- Icons of various sizes;
- Parchments with various decorative patterns and paintings;
- Hand and processional crosses made of gold, silver, brass, bronze and wood;
- Spiritual musical instruments: systra, drums, praying sticks, small bells etc;
- Crowns of various sizes made of different metals;
- Chalices and other articles for mass celebration and many other sacred items.

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The National Library

The library has a collection of more than 100,000 volumes and contains the most comprehensive collection of Ethiopian literature in the country. Its Ethiopian collection of manuscripts, rare books, limited editions and fine bindings, ancient maps and engravings and books relating to Ethiopia published abroad. Among the most valuable are the four Gospels an early 14th century illuminated manuscript-probably the oldest still surviving in the country and the Pauline epistles, a 15th century manuscript found at the monastery of Lake Haiq in the Wollo region. Other interesting manuscripts include an Old and New Testament Bible. It took five calligraphers five years and 500 sheepskins to produce this. A silver-plated prayer books belonging to a member of the royal family, and the first book published in Amharic abroad are in the collection.

Theatres

The Hager Fikir Theatre in Addis Ababa is not the only theater with the greatest tradition in Ethiopia but it is also the oldest indigenous theatre in Africa. For more than 70 years it has been the centre of cultural life in Addis Ababa, a legendary playhouse where modern Ethiopian music and drama were born and nurtured. Many local stars began their careers on the stage of Hager Fikir Theatre. As well as traditional Ethiopian plays translations of European classics by William Shakespeare, Friedrich Schiller, Henrik Ibsen and Moliere have been produced at Hager Fikir Theatre in recent times.

Hager Fikir Theatre was founded in 1935, when the people of Addis Ababa founded —Hager Fikir Maheberl (Association for the love of the motherland) to stand against the upcoming Italian invasion. The founder, Mekonnen Habtewold, wanted to mobilize the Ethiopian people and galvanize their patriotism. The first open-air productions took place at Menelik Square, the city centre of Addis Ababa. Although the Italain occupation could not be prevented, Hager Fikir Theatre survived.

After the withdrawal of the Italian troops in 1941 the theatre crew moved to the present location in the Piazza-District. An anceitn Italian nightclub was reconstructed as a theatre hall. At the 25th anniversary of Haile Selassie's emperorship in 1955 the main entrance of the hall was enlarged and an imperial balcony and lounge was built.

During the rule of Haile Selassie the Hager Fikir Theatre grew, although the Emperor established the Haile Selassie Theatre (today the National Theatre) as an additional venue in Addis Ababa.

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The Hager Fikir Theatre continued as a popular theatre for the ordinary people of the city whereas the Haile Selassie Theatre was mainly patronized by high class society. Municipality Theatre, Ras Theatre and Mega Amphi-theatre are also popular amongst theatre lovers. Besides regular performances the Hager Fikir Theatre also provided radio shows on Ethiopian radio which were broadcast live from the theatre. The troop also went on tour regularly, so that people from rural Ethiopia also could have access to the productions of Hager Fikir. Nowadays, more than 100 people work for the theatre, of which about 40 are actors and singers. Movie performances are shown on most days. Live plays are performed on weekends and musical shows are staged during public holidays.

Cinemas

Cinemas have been very popular in Addis Ababa for many years, with the Addis Ababa Cinema in Piazza district leading the way from Alem Cinema, the Ambassador and Cinema Enterprise, all catering principally for local tastes. In 2007 cinema going took a big step forward with the opening of the first Multiplex cinema in Addis-in Edna Mall in Bole district. This has enabled Addis to show major international standard movies at the same time as in the US and Europe.

The Movie Theatre complex has three separate screens, Dolby digital and surrounds sound technology, and bucket seats for comfort to provide a high quality movie viewing experience. The cinema's policy is to show the best Hollywood movies, but with an eye on what is best suited to Ethiopian audiences.

Sport

Sporting activities are becoming increasingly popular, and the private sector has been encouraged to invest in gyms, fitness centers and sports clubs. By far the most popular sport is football, played in schoolyards, streets, or rural pastures with balls ranging from leather or plastic ones to home-made spherical bundles of old rags. At the pinnacle of the local game, inter-club and international matches draw full crowds of enthusiastic partisans to Addis Ababa Stadium which has a capacity to seat 35,000 people. Other sports played by Ethiopians include basketball, volleyball and table tennis.

The greatest Ethiopian sports heroes and heroines have won their laurels in long-distance running, in which both men and women have excelled at the highest levels of the sport. From

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Abebe Bikila to Kenenisa Bekele, Ethiopian athletics has a proud history of producing world-class distance running talent. Abebe Bikila is regarded as the pioneer of Ethiopian distance running, a man who set the example for today's generation of young runners. He was Africa's first Olympic gold medalist and the only man to have won back-to-back Olympic marathon gold medals. Greatest of them all is Haile Gebreselassie, arguably the finest distance runner of all time. Visitors with an inclination for jogging may find it most pleasant early in the morning, to run when the streets are empty, or to go to Meskal Square. In recent years large numbers of local amateur runners (and a fair number of visitors) have competed with the top Ethiopian stars to take part in the annual Great Ethiopian Run. Held for the first time in 2001, this 10 kilometers race has now become a major event on the roads of Addis Ababa every November.

The Hilton Addis Ababa has some excellent tennis courts where visitors and local residents can enjoy a game. When taking part in any sports or other activities, however, visitors will find the altitude a limiting factor and they should pace themselves accordingly.

Churches

Ethiopian Orthodox church buildings, places with religious character or liturgical objects and handicrafts are often considered to be among the highlights of Addis Ababa's tourist attractions. As in other parts of Ethiopia, the churches in the capital city have beautiful liturgies, which are especially striking during major religious holidays today; some 127 churches exist in Addis Ababa. Of these, 108 belong to Orthodox, nine to Catholic and ten to Protestant Christian faiths. The main ancient churches are:

- St. Raguel and St. Mary on Entoto Mountain;
- Keraniyo Medihaniyalem (Savour);
- St. George Church in the Centre of Arada;
- The Trinity Cathedral;
- Be'ata Mariam Church where Menelik's Mausoleum is located;
- Ghibbi Gebriel and Kidane Mehret; and
- Wascha Mikael.

In addition to the many Ethiopian Orthodox churches in Addis Ababa, foreign visitors will find churches for Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, Protestants and other where they may wish to worship.

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Mosques

Ethiopia believes in freedom of worship and there are more than 146 mosques in the capital. However, historical mosques are very few in number, these being the Grand Anwar, the Nur and the Wele Mohammed Mosques.

Religious Festivals of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Church ceremonies are a major feature of Ethiopian life. There are many church festivals, for Ethiopians celebrate some 150 saint's days a year. However, the most important ones to be cited as tourist attractions in the capital city are the festivals of Timket, Meskel, Fasika or Easter, buhe, and Ethiopian new year day. Most of religious festivals, such as the following two take place in the open.

Timket

Timket, or Epiphany, is observed by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church on 19 January (of the Gregorian calendar) and it is probably the biggest festival of the year. On the eve of Timket, with great ceremony, the sacred _tabot', a tablet of wood or stone replica of those contained in the Ark of the Covenant, is taken from each church and held overhead by a priest up to the central area where the ceremony takes place. Then, with more ceremony, it is returned to its consecrated resting place.

During these colorful occasions, priests are bedecked in dazzling brocade robes, carry ornate hand crosses, and move under decorated brocade umbrellas. They chant to the accompaniment of solemn drums and the rhythmic clink of the systrum. In Addis Ababa, many churches are involved. The day before Timket a whole field is taken over by the ceremony.

Meskel

Meskel is another major religious celebration/festival, in memory of the finding of the True Cross by the Byzantine Empress Eleni (Helena). This is an colorful an occasion as Timket. However, instead of water, the focus of celebration is a bonfire topped with an image of a cross to which flowers are tied. Priests in full regalia bless the bonfire before it is lit. This festival, which takes place on 27 September, coincides with the mass blooming of the golden yellow

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‘Meskel daisies’ called ‘Adey Abeba’ in Amharic. Should you arrive on the festival of Meskel you will find people of all ages in the streets carrying fresh bunches of daisies. Many are dressed in traditional white consumes and the jubilant atmospheres is everywhere.

By the middle of the afternoon the celebrations are well underway and in Addis Ababa’s Central Square, near the Church of St. George, a colorful procession of priests, deacons, choir boys and girls wearing embroidered robes walk around a huge pyre carrying ceremonial crosses and wooden torches decorated with olive leaves. As the sunset approaches the torchbearers set light to the pyramid-shaped pyre, topped with a Cross woven from Meskel daisies.

Markets and Shopping Centers

Markets play dual roles in the tourism industry. In the first place, they serve the industry as excellent attractions, which take place as regular social gatherings and interactions as well as for the exchange of goods and services. It is normal to seen traditional costumes being worn by the different Ethiopian ethnic groups in the markets of Addis Ababa, Harar, Bati and elsewhere.

In the markets of Ethiopia, the various buying and selling ethnic groups intermingle in white robes, although in Addis Ababa the clothes tend to be more colorful-often stylish and glamorous. The colorful, noisy mix of people and their goods provides a fascinating attraction for tourists.

Mercato

Originally the Mercato (the old Arada Gebeya) was located south of St. George Church at the City Hall area as an open market with informally employed street vendors where grain, spices, coffee, cotton, home-made garments, salt, jewelry, arms, farm implements, saddles etc. were exposed for sale. Around the time of the fascist Italian invasion in 1936 the old indigenous market was relocated to the present Addis Ketema area, Mercato. Today, Mercato is estimated to have an area of 114 hectares and in this market operate over 13,000 employees, 7,100 business entities, some 2,500 retail shops, most in open stalls, 1,500 service businesses, and 80 wholesale operators: 14,800 formal businesses in total.

People arrive by regional buses, city buses, taxis, their own transport or on foot, and the numbers can rise to more than 200,000 in a single day.

As the largest open-air market in Africa, Mercato is a vibrant, fascinating attraction for tourists and visitors. It is said that no visit is complete in Addis Ababa without making a trip to Mercato.

The market fascinates tourists with its endless array of goods on display in the 50 trading

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sections or _Teras‘.

On Saturdays, the busiest day, the vast city market provides a snapshot of Ethiopia: Amhara farmers rub shoulders with Gurage businessmen: Tigrayan women from the north with their distinctive braided hair stand alongside Dorze traditional weavers from the south; Somali traders from the east bring in their electronic goods, and wandering nomads display their livestock.

Operating six days a week (it is closed on Sundays), there is seemingly little logic to Mercato, whose small shops, stalls and market halls spin off chaotically into labyrinthine alleyways. But after a while the disorder does make some sort of sense. The market’s winding lanes are arranged according to the various products so that you’ll find mounds of colorful plastic goods grouped together, blaring music will lead you to the electronics section, while the pungent aroma of deep red berbere (chilli pepper) draws you to a heady display of spices.

Across the way, the market hall housing multitudinous traditional crafts, silver jewellery and woven cloth is a magnet for tourists. Flecks of floating grain indicate that the vast cereal and vegetable section is nearby. Exotic arrays of coffee beans, the country’s biggest export, tantalize the senses as merchants offer tiny cups of powerful Ethiopian buna (coffee) or delicately spiced shai (tea). In the —recycling area, old tyres are turned into sandals tin cans are hammered into trinkets and rusty old metal transformed into gleaming buckets and bowls. Everywhere, children scamper around carrying goats, urging on stubborn donkeys, offering to shine shoes or selling mastica (gum). It takes several visits to work it all out so it’s not a bad idea to have a trusty guide, preferably attained beforehand.

Mercato is an appropriate area in which to expose the handicrafts and artworks of all Ethiopian people. One area in Mercato specializes in arts and crafts and other objects assembled as tourist attractions. In Mercato are located around 60 souvenir shops. In these shops can be found:

- Traditional paintings on canvas, goat skin, comic strips of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, representation of St. George and the dragon etc.
- Musical instruments, (Krar, Washint, Atamo, Kebero, Systrum, Embilta, Qachil, Dewel, prayer stick, Turunba etc.);
- Pottery (both modern and traditional);
- Various colorful baskets, especially from Harar;

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- Lovely embroidered costumes and materials;
- Intricate and less orthodox crosses worked in silver, bronze, wood etc.
- Ear picks and ear-rings, and other decorations or jewellery;
- Shields, traditional knives, spears, swords, and many other tourist articles.

Here, tourists will find examples from all over the country, and as tradition says —one can bargain here, even for a new soul!! The Mercato experience isn't just about shopping, however. It also provides a fascinating insight into aspects of daily life in Addis. The district, known as Addis Ketema (New Town), is one of the most diverse and densely populated parts of the city.

Shopping For Jewellery

Ethiopia is well-known for its gold and silver jewellery. The traditional Ethiopian jewellery keeps alive the country's rich culture and history and most of the tourist sites have markets where one can see an impressive menu of handicrafts and silver jewellery.

In Addis, the Piazza district, with its numerous shops and endless varieties is the ideal place to go jewellery shopping.

It is conveniently located close to the city centre, just a short taxi ride from many of the major tourist hotels. Many visitors will be surprised to see gold and silver jewellery being openly displayed with apparent lack of security, but this is a testament to the low level of crime in the country. Most of the shops are family businesses where the skill is transferred from one generation to another. There are also jewellery shops in Mercato but, for the less adventurous, the major hotels and new shopping centers provide ideal opportunities for jewellery shopping in comfortable surroundings.

Shopping Centers

In recent years a number of modern shopping centers have appeared in Addis Ababa, catering for the 21st century Ethiopian, or the international visitor. Here fashionable jewellery shops vie with designer clothes outlets, electrical stores, and other western goods, book and music shops, hairdressing and beauty salons, travel agents, restaurants and coffee shops, and much more. Visitors pressed for time who are unable to browse through the more ethnic markets may find

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what they want in these malls. Places to look out for include the Dembel Center and Friendship City Center, both en route to Bole International Airport, and Adams Pavilion, located in the Sar Bet area. Finally, for visitors who are still looking for that last-minute souvenir or present when they depart, Bole International Airport is well equipped with souvenir shops and duty-free stores.

Massage

In today's fast-paced, stressful world, massage is no longer seen as a pleasurable indulgence for the wealthy. It's now widely recognized as a means of uplifting the mind and body, and practitioners are heavily in demand.

Addis Ababa is fast emerging as the massage capital of Africa, offering a huge array of techniques ranging from ancient Ayurveda to the more modern Swedish, or skillfully devised combinations. The burgeoning massage business in Addis Ababa reflects its increasingly diverse expatriate population-Thai, Chinese, Indian-and the dead created by Ethiopian and foreign residents. There's no shortage of weary workers waiting for sybaritic soothing.

4.1.2. Axum and its Surroundings Tourist Attraction

Historical Background

The Axumite Kingdom was one of the great civilizations of the ancient world and has left us spectacular reminders of its former glory with the fields of stelae (obelisks), ruins of palaces, burial chambers and stone inscriptions at Axum. It was one of the ancient world's most powerful kingdoms, controlling the trade routes through the Red Sea between the 4th and 6th centuries. Through its port at Adulis, a huge variety of African commodities such as gold, ivory, animal skins and aromatic gums etc were shipped to Egypt, Italy, India, and Sri Lanka. The most important reminders of this ancient civilization are a set of stelae, each carved from a single piece of granite, the site of the palace of the Queen of Sheba and the Ethiopian equivalent of the Rosetta Stone with inscriptions reporting the military achievements of the Axumites over their enemies in three ancient languages. Axum was the center of early Christianity in Ethiopia (the oldest church was founded in the 4th Century A.D.) and it is believed that the church of Tsion Mariam is the resting place of the Arc of the Covenant.

Queen of Sheba's Bath (The Mai'shum Reservoir)

It is situated on the northern outskirts of Axum, to the track leading to the tombs of Kalb and

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Gebre Meskel, is the huge reservoir traditionally known as the bath of the legendary Queen of Sheba of the first millennium BC. It is also known as Mai Shum, which translates to _water of chief. Access to same dam is through the cut-steps from the mai Qoho cliffs which probably date to the Axumite civilization of the first millennium AD. In fact dams were the common practices of the Axumites in the first millennium AD. At the time of Timkat January 6th church dignitaries attired in traditional customs, which a display of the Ark, come down to water's edge together with the priests, who bless the water and sprinkle it up on the surrounding crowd.

King Bazen's Tomb

This tomb is found on the eastern stelae filed at the south-western slop of Mai Qoho hill. There are two sites dotted with dressed blocks and a tomb, hewn out of the slid rock, belonging to King Bazen who is thought to have ruled at the time of Christ. Near the tomb entrance there's a rock-cut rectangular pit containing a row of smaller burial chambers (include some of them unfinished).

Judging from the number of tombs and stele found rear by, the burial site may once have been quite large and important.

King Ezana Garden

At the southern edge of the Old Town, the road Adwa divides, with the right-hand branch leading to the main square and on to the stelae park, while the route Shire tends to the left. This Trilingual text inscription of king Ezana was erected in 4th century to record the victories of king Ezana. It is written in three scripts: Sabaean, Ge'ez and Greek and records of honorary titles and military Victories of the King over his enemies and rebels'. One section of scripts thanks the God of war, thus placing the stone's age before Ezana's conversion to Christianity. It was moved to its present location from eastern Axumite by the Italians in the 1930s because of all things, it stood in the way of their plan to widen the road. .

King Ezana's Inscription

This important discovery was made during cultivation in 1982 immediately to the west of the road to Kaleb and Gebre Meskel and 100m down slope southwards from the kinde Mihret. The inscription dating from king Ezana's time bears essentially the same text in three different versions: one in Greek, one in Ge'ez using the south Arabian script, and one in Ge'ez using un vocalized Ethiopic script and giving thanks to God for conquests in Saudi Arabia. The inscription contains a curse: _the person who should dare to move the tablet will meet an

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untimely death'. The tablet remains exactly where it was found!.

Tombs in Main Stelae Field

The main stele field was used a cemetery area of the Axumite elites at least from the beginning the third up to the fifth centuries AD. The steles that are found in the same place were erected as tomb markers of the Axumite. The underground tombs include such as the rock-cut, shaft-tombs, brick structured tombs, mausoleum, & megalithic tomb (Nefas Mewcha). Bring a torch for the lowdown.

The Tombs of False Door

This tomb which is located to the west of mausoleum was excavated in 1974 by a British archeologist, chit tick, and dates to the late 4th or the early 5th centuries AD. It is made up of massive dressed granite slabs in the form of house structure. More complex in structure; its stone blocks are also larger and more finely dressed than those found in other tombs. Comprising an ante- chamber and inner chamber, it is surrounded on three sides by a passage. Above the tomb, at ground level, a rectangular, probably flat-roofed building would once have stood (measuring some 12 sq meters by 2.8m high). Above the stairs descending into the tomb's chamber was a stone slab carved with a false door almost identical to those found on the stele. Look for the iron clamps fixing blocks of stone together like a giant staples.

The Tomb of Nefas Mewcha

Dating between the third & fourth centuries AD is found to north east of stele one. Covering a total area of 23mx16m. This monument comprised a rectangular central chamber surrounded on three sides by passage. The tomb is unusual for its large size, the sophistication of the structure & the size of the stones used for its construction the stone which roofs the central chamber measures 17.5m by 6.4m & up to 1.2 thick weighing about 360 tons which makes it the second largest stone to be employed by the Axumite & early humans. The capstone is supported by large blocks of stones that are joined together with the same by metal clamps. It was cleared & investigated in the 1906 by the German Axum research expedition lead by Enno Littman.

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The Mausoleum

The mausoleum was a royal tomb of the Axumite dating to the fourth century AD. Such a structure is an underground tomb with an area of 17.6 m by 18.8m. It is entered through the main entrance in the eastern direction near stele 1 through monumental portray (hewn from a single slab of granite) carved from a monolithic stone. Such a tomb have stone built courtyard facing to the east tomb. The central chamber of the same tomb is 16.7 m long & 1.9m wide. The roof of this chamber is covered by massive dressed granite stone with three square shafts leading to central chamber. The Mausoleum also has another entrance from the west where there is a broken & fallen portal carved from the massive dressed granite stone with three square shafts leading to the central chamber. The mausoleum also has another entrance from the west where there is a broken & portal carved from a single monolithic block of stone. There are a total of ten side chambers beside the central chamber. Each side chamber measures 6.6 m long & 1.7m wide. The entrance of the side chambers were Brick-Arched shaped like that of the tomb of Brick Arches.

Ta'akha Maryam

Ta'akha Maryam, the largest building of old Axum and royal palace, lies beneath the south western outskirts of modern town. Unfortunately Ta'akha Maryam was as good as obliterated during the Italian occupation, when a road was cut straight through it. Nevertheless, the requirement and sophistication of the building is still very evident from the ruins. Ta'akha Maryam was undoubtedly a magnification palace, dating from the 4th or 5th AD. The palace, which covered a vast area of 120m by 80m, was for larger then medieval European palaces, and contained at least 50 rooms. It also benefited from a very sophisticated drainage system. The building was approached by ground monumental stairs on the north and south sides, and the whole complex was enclosed by huge walls and towers in the corners. The ruins stand or the out script of town on the Gronder road.

The Main Stelae Park

A tour normally starts at the main stele field located at the church of Enda Yesus church yard, along the Mai Hija River and the former main stelae park laid in early 1960s by Ras Mengesha Syoum, the then governor of Tigray. This park consists of round, pointed and monkey head like tops. Besides, seven largest & sophisticated decorated stelae of Axumite are found in the park.

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Fig 4.1. Axume Stelae

The Great Stele (Stele One)

The largest of Axum's stele, credited by tradition to the 3rd century king Romhai, is the largest monolithic stele that human attempted to erect in the world. It measures over 33m and weighs 520 tone. It was brought by human being from the hill of Gobo Dura, 4km to the west of Axum. Fell at some remote period in the past and now lies in broken segments on the ground close to the standing stelae. Its collapse is linked by tradition to Queen Judith who destroyed many Axum's finest buildings, but scholarly opinion is that it fell either during the attempt to erect or soon after wards, probably because the base of the stele was too small support it. Romhai's stele still lies where it fell. It decorated on its all sides depict 13 Axumite storeys, windows and doors dating to the middle of 4th century to king Ezana.

The Second Largest Stele (Stele Tow)

The second stele measures 24.6m high and 170 tons ever produced at Axum and the largest to have ever been successfully raised like the great stelae as tomb mark of Axumite king in 4th AD. However, its associated is not discovered. It seems that the stelae fell down & broken down into five pieces in antiquity probably at the end of the 7th century AD when Axum was at war from internal & external war. It is decorated on all its sides depicting 11 storeys, windows and doors of Axumite. It was physically removed by the Italians during the unsuccessful attempt to colonize Ethiopia in 1937 and was erected in Rome for many years in front of the head quarters of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).Returned back to its home after 68 years in April 24, 2005 after a series of efforts by successive Ethiopian scholars, government and the peoples and erected at the original historical place on September 4, 2008 with colorful celebration.

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King Ezana's Stele (Stele Three)

The view of the stele field is dominated by the towering stele accredited to king Ezana. It weighs 160 tons & measures 23m high above its base plate. The stele is carved on three faces to represent a tower-house of 10 Axumite storeys, windows and doors. The back is undecorated except for a circle carved in relief near the apex. There is a stone platform with bowl shaped cavities and border of vine leaves around the base.

The Tomb of the Brick Arches

A further fourth-century tomb, probably slightly later than Nafas Mewcha and the mausoleum, serves to emphasis the extraordinary Variety of elite burials at this period of Axumite history. The roofs of the entrance were covered by monumental stones lentils of which some of them are still found in their original position. The same tomb has four rock-cut tombs which are found 10 meters below modern ground surface level. The tomb of the Brick Arches is remarkable because many of its original contents remained including abundant pottery, glass ware, beads, metal work & carved ivory. Three of its chamber was each divided into a pair of Loculi; in the one fully excavated chamber each locus had a stone –build bench.

Archaeological Museum

The new Axum archeological museum site is locates at the back of the former main stele field in the palace of Dejazmach Gebresilssie Bariya Gabir who was the Governor and Nebure'd of Axum in the early 20th century AD. The circular building with one floor found in the same time was built by him in the early 20th century AD. This museum is an exemplary and it deserves thorough investigation. The first display is a selection of ancient rock tablets, which are inscribed in a variety of languages including a form of Sabaeen that preceded the Ge'ez of Christian Axum.

This early Sabaeen writing consisted consonant only, but it is similar enough to the modern Amharinga or Tigrigna script that the letters (through obviously not to the meaning of the words) are intelligible to a group of Ethiopians today. There are also an interesting variety of objects found in tombs, running from ordinary household objects such as driving caps, lamps, and incense burners to quite sophisticated glass ware including perfume bottles. There is a collection of Axumite crosses and coins, the latter dating from 4th - 6th centuries AD. A more

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recent artifact is a 700year-old leather Bible written in Ge‘ez and decorated with illuminations. You will also see beautiful lion gargoyles and the charming pot shaped like a three-legged bird much of the pottery was produced in ancient Axum and the tradition continues today. An ancient amphoral from Turkey or Cyprus also provides evidence of ancient trading routs. The museum is opened from the 7 am-6 pm daily and the guiding service is given by official guide.

Ancient Quarries of Axum

Near the lioness of Gobedra, at site on Gobeder Hill known as Wuchate Golo, are the Ancient Quarries of Axum, the birth place of the famous stele. Mystery still surrounds the tools that were used by the master craftsmen of Axum, but you can see clearly, in one area, the process by which they cut the head stone from the rock. After the intended break was mapped out, arrow of rectangular sockets were cut. Wooden wedges were next ingested in to the sockets and made to expand either by the use of water, by percussion or by hammering in metal wedges, which caused the rock to fracture. In other place, you will see a stelea almost completely freed from the rock, but strangely abandoned.

Dungur (Queen of Sheba’s Palace)

The palace is situated on the western out skirts of Axum, immediately north of the main shire road. It can be reached about 15-20 minutes’ walk from the town center on the northern edge of the Gonder road. The structure at Dungur, popularly known as ‘Queen of Sheba’s Palace’ is similarly to Teka‘aka Maryam. Covering of an area of nearly 3000sqm, consisting at least 50 rooms, while a number of stairwells hint at the existence of at least one upper storey. Visitors to this impressive site can see a well preserved flagstone floor is thought to have been a throne room, and two well preserved brick ovens in what must have been the kitchen. It is also where many of the more unusual relics now housed in Axum’s archaeological museum were found. You will need your ticket from the tourist ticket office to enter the site.

The Gudit Stele Field

To the south of the shire road, immediately opposite Dungur, is extensive burial area known as the Gudit Stelae Field. It covers an area of 500m x200m sloping slightly down ward to the south, despite being built up behind a low terrace which has been shown by excavated to have been faced with a stone wall. The continuing cultivation of the site has resulted in much modification

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but traces remain of several stela, mostly small and undressed, only about a score of which are still upright. The fallen stela include a few larger, dressed examples with rectangular crossed-sections and rounded tops, otherwise undecorated.

Enda Kaleb (The Tombs of Kaleb and Gebre Meskel)

These two monumental tombs are located side by side beneath a shared superstructure about 2km to the north of Axum on the hill of Aba Likanos. The site on a saddle between low hills, offers spectacular views southwards over Axum to the fertile plains beyond, northwards the Mareb valley and what is now Eritrea, and eastwards to the spectacular mountains around Adwa. Each tomb is approached by stepped adit roofed by massive dressed basalt slabs. The first tomb in the north is believed to be that of Axumite king Kaleb of the six century AD. And consists of there chambers. The second tomb to the south of the first one is attributed to King Gebre Meskel of the same rooms to the east with three sarcophagi. There are also two rooms which extended to the west.

The three rooms are extended through portals that are vertically cut monolithic slabs. The superstructure has a central raised courtyard reached by a12 flight steps which is 12m wide. These tombs were visited in the sixteenth century AD by a Portuguese traveler Francisco Alvarez and excavated in 1906 by the German Axum research expedition led by Littman. There are at least two underground tombs about 100m to the north-east of these double tomb indicating that front hill of Aba Likano was a huge Axumite Cemetery place at least between the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

The Church Compound

The walled cathedral precinct occupies a large area of the old town of Axum. The principal building within it is the remains of the base of the original church, the old rectangular and the new circular churches, the Ark Sanctuary and the Treasure house. It is best approached adjacent to the New Cathedral facing the stela parks, or to the west facing the great fig tree Daro Ella beneath which religious assemblies are held.

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The Original Church (The Old Cathedral)

Dedicated to Saint Mary, its construction is dated back to the 4th century, during the reign of Ezana. It is believed to be the first church in Ethiopia, constructed by Abba Freminatos, the first bishop of the Ethiopia Orthodox church. Perhaps, it was the oldest church in Africa south of the Sahara. It was also the first church in Ethiopia where the Ark of the Covenant is believed to have been resided. The original one is said to be destroyed first by the legendary Queen Judith in 9th century and latter by the devastating wars of Mohammed Gagn the left-handed in the 1535. It is described in the accounts of Francisco Alvarez (leader of the Portuguese Mission in 1520 who came to Ethiopia before Ahmed Gagn destructed the church).

The Old Rectangular Church

The rectangular old church is a remarkable example of traditional architecture and was built by the Emperor Fasiladas, the founder of Gonder in 1665 as a replacement of the original church. Thus; it has the same style as the castle of Fasiledes in Gonder. Inside there are fine murals, including a painting of the nine saints and a collection of ceremonial musical instruments.

The Ark Sanctuary

It is a small building located between the old and new church of St. Mary. Emperor Haile Selassie sponsored its construction in 1964. It houses the Ark of the Covenant. According to the Ethiopia tradition, king Menelik I, the legendary son of king Solomon of Israel and the Queen of Sheba brought the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Axum. No one is allowed enter in to it except a monk who is responsible to take care of it throughout his life. The monk (guardian) remains in seclusion in the sacred enclosure until his death.

The Treasure House (The Little Church Museum)

The castle like church is situated beneath the Ark of sanctuary. The new cathedral is a large domed structure designed by Greek architects commissioned by the late Emperor Haile Selassie I and formally opened on the occasion of state visit by Queen Elizabeth II of Greet Britain in 1964. The treasures include imperial crown, cloaks crosses and many other religious icons. Because of the importance of the church of St. Mary Tsion, it had been received gifts from various rulers and important personalities throughout the country. Neither the chapel nor the museum is opened to women, but some of the crowns can be brought out by obliging priests.

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The New Circular Church

The new cathedral, inaugurated in 1964 by Emperor Haile Selassie with Queen Elizabeth II as his guest, has just been equipped with a copper covering over the dome.

Arbatu Ensessa (The Church Of Four Animals)

The church is located on the edge of the cathedral precinct and is reached by the road which leads southeast from the Daro Ella fig tree: the entrance is marked by an unusual bell tower. This church is a rich mixture. The Axumite podium is still in position, underneath which two shaft tombs have been excavated out side the early 19th century built church various carved stones from Axumite times have recently been erected.

This include a roughly-hewn floriated capital on its shaft column, a square-cut stone, once part of a door tomb similar to those similar too those sound on the original maryam Tsion site and excavated by the French and more recently at Endo Sem'on, Addi kilte, some have both columns and capitals still attached. The rectangular built church typically has pleasant mid-19th century paintings on the western wall, alas being renovated with garish colors. In the church yard, to the north, are many square cut tombs in the rock and beyond the northern wall are some pleasantly build church buildings, which contain the church treasure.

Debre Liqans Monastery

The church of Abba Liqanos is a pilgrimage set on the hill reached by a clear path to your right after 20-30 minutes' gentle walk from Kaleb's palace. From the church hill to the view of Adwa mountains of Abba Pantalewon church on its high hill a little further east, and of the pointed mountain of Damo Gelila. From the church hill to the view in all directions is remarkable, as it is also from nearby Enda Kaleb further west. The church was founded by Abba Liqanos, a Constantinople-born member of the Nine Saints who evangelized in the vicinity of present day Adwa in the 6th century. The original Axumite church, thought to have been converted by Abba Liqanos and his followers from an older non-Christian temple, was replaced several centuries been seen. Women enter the monastery compound and look at various holy crosses and books, but the church interior is accessible to men only. Many people feel this walk is worthwhile just for the scenery. Instead of returning to Axum the way came, a steep short cut leads down the hill to bring you out on the road between Basen's Tomb and Mariam Zion.

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Abba Pentalewon

This attractive monastery situated on around 2km from king Kaleb's palace, boasts one of the oldest historically important churches in the country. The church was founded in the early 6th century by a Byzantine noble man who entered the monastic life as a child and later became one of the 'Nine Saints' who fled to Ethiopia when the monastic doctrine was proclaimed to be heretical. Local tradition has it that Pentalewon spent the last 45 years of his life praying and healing the sick. Pentlewon was the advisor to king Kaleb, who joined the monastery after he abdicated in favor of his son Gebre Meskel in roughly Ad 550. Another plausible local tradition claims that Abba Yared, the contemporary of Gebre Meskel who invented the notation of Ethiopian ecclesiastical music and compiled the Mezgaba Dugwa (Treasury of Hymns), spent much of his life at Pentalwon.

Attractions along the Axum to Mekelle via Adigrat Town

If you want, the 126Km trip between Axum and Adigrat, Tigray's second largest town, can be done as a straight forward four-hour bus ride. There are, however, several places of interest along the way. Most notably the walls at Yeha, the ancient cliff top monastery of Debre Damo, and the town of Adwa. The road between Axum and Adewa passes through sealed asphalt road. This is one of the most scenic and spectacular between Biset and Adigrat, where it climbs above 3000m, filled with beautiful views over terraced slopes and the cliffs of the Hista river gorge, and then snakes down a mountain pass to Adigrat 600m below.

Adwa

It is situated only 25Km east of Axum. The town of Adwa has several historic churches, Enda Giorges, a classic north Ethiopian rectangular church now painted in the national colors, stands on a hill to the north of the town. Emperor Menelik and Empress Taytu prayed for victory here the morning of the battle of Adwa on 1 march. Italian forces had advanced deep in to the mountains after conquering a large area to the east and were confident of victory over the Ethiopian after having defeated them in several other encounters. Menelik's prayers were answered. His soldiers decisively defeated the Italians. Thousands of Italian soldiers were taken prisoners. It was the greatest setback any European power ever suffered from Africans. Ethiopian independence was preserved.

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The country was henceforth respected by European powers. The great battle has become legendary. The victory is celebrated each year as a national holiday. The area is endowed with various tourist attractions including historical sites of the well-known battle of Adwa that culminated with decisive defeat of the invading Italian army in 1896. This was an impressive historical event, which is the pride of all Ethiopians in particular, and Africa in general. A large area of land with science beauty can be of interest to mountain climbers, trekkers, explorers, bird watchers, scientists. Besides the Selassie church are worth a look. The most likely reason why you may want to overnight in Adwa is to get a head start visiting the Yeha ruins the next morning.

Abba Gerima Monastery & Ras Alula Abba Nega Burial Sites

The site is situated on about 13Km to the east of Adwa is the monastery of Abba Gerima, said to have been founded one of the Nine Saints in the first of the 6th century AD. The selection of the site of the monastery is ideal for ascetic life being surrounded by a very steep mountain to its west, and east and a small hill to the north and south. The monastery still preserves a few and impressive religious paints of ancient and later periods. On the exterior eastern side of the wall of the monastery there is a grave yard of the great Ethiopian and African hero Ras Alula Abba Nega who sacrifice his life time in the last quarter of in the 19th century fighting against Egyptians, Italians and Mahadist Sudan to preserve the independent of Ethiopia. In the monastery of Abba Gerima one can find, among others, a manuscript of one of the Four New Testament Gospels written in Ge-ez by Abba Gerima himself in the first half of the 6th century AD.

The Gospel was first written in Syriac and translated to Ge-ez by Abba Gerima. In confirmation of this, the monk of the monastery shows where exactly saint used to site while working on the translation. This is the oldest available manuscript written on parchment in Ethiopia. The monastery has been one of the most well-known centers of traditional or church education under the supervision of Abba Gerima in the same Abba Gerima monastery. Yared is associated with the creation of the Ethiopian church music and church musical instrument still in use in Christian Ethiopia.

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The Temple of Yeha

The turn-off to Yeha is 27km past Adwa on the Enticho road, and marked by a sign post. It is situated on 5km north east of the main road. If you reach at the gate of the site, you will see the imposing ruins of Yeha's Temple of the moon that is where a shadow of the past culture still waves. Yeha is famous for its huge and remarkable temple. The temple is believed to date back to the 5th century BC. However, according to the 19th century German scholar Heinrich Miller, the temple is thought to date back to about seven or eight hundred years before the birth of Christ. The imposing ruins of Yeha's temple though roofless still stand. It was a large pre-Christian temple consisting of a single oblong chamber.

The area of the remains of the temple measures 18.5m by 15m and its height stands at 12 meters. The temple is believed to be the oldest standing building in the country. The town of Yeha is considered by archaeologists and historians to be the prime capital of the pre-Axumite period. It holds many archaeological mysteries. The surrounding area has yet to be fully excavated. No doubt, many archaeological mysteries are still hiding deep under the earth here waiting to be unraveled. Now Yeha seems to be archaeologists' paradise.

The Church of Abba Aftse

Close by is the church of Abba Aftse, named one of the nine saints of the eastern Roman empire who came to Ethiopia from Syria founded the original church in the 6th century. However, the legendary Queen Judith destroyed it in the 10th century. The present rectangular church dates from the Middle Ages, and replaced the original church on the site. It is notable for its Ibex-kopfen heads, which possibly came from the original building, set into the front wall. The Ibex was a sacred animal in pre-Christian southern Arabia. Adjacent to the church is an Iqa-bet, a stone storage building, which contains religious artifacts.

The beautiful cross of Abba Aftse, the founder of the church, can be seen here. There are some stone blocks with raised inscriptions in Sabba'ean, the ancient language of the southern Arabia, as well as religious robes and fine silk umbrellas. The church museum also houses many beautifully illustrated manuscripts, drums, rattles with discs (sistra); and wooden objects (meqwomeya).

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The Monastery of Debre Damo

Perched 11km north of the Axum- Adigrat zigzagging road, along a turn off sign posted 6km west of the village of Biset and 37km from Adigrat. Debre Damo (admission Birr 50, men only) is thought to date back 6th -century reign of King Gebre Meskel. It boasts what's likely the oldest standing church in the country (10th or 11th century AD), which also a great example of an Axumite-style building. The flat- topped —Imbal (plateau) measures about 1000 meters from northeast to southwest and 500 meters from northwest to southeast and is surrounded by sheer cliffs. Ascent to the mountaintop is only possible by using the 15 meter plaited leather rope (the —Jendel) that is hanging down from the summit.

According to local tradition, Abune Aregawi is believed to have been taken to the top of the Imba with the help of a serpent that was commanded to do so by God. Today the —Jende symbolizes the miraculous serpent. Visitors need to be tightly tied up around their waists by the supplementary rope as a means of additional safety.

The remarkable Abune Aregawi church is an almost typical example of Axumite style of construction; layers of stone alternated with layers of wood. The walls are constructed of stones and strengthened with longitudinal beams which are themselves fixed to the walls with projecting woods otherwise known as —monkey heads. The walls of the church show resemblance to the decorative styles displayed on the obelisks of Axum. The monolithic pillars, the walls, the beams, the wooden doors, and windows depict Axumite architecture. On the ceiling of the sanctuary one can observe wooden carvings of Ethiopian wild animals such as elephants, lions, gazelles, rhinos, giraffes & snakes. Ancient stone pillars can also be inspected in the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies.

Other ancient buildings include a secondary church, built on the spot where Abune Aregawi is said to have vanished into thin air at the end of his mortal existence, hence —Misiwarom (literally a place where he vanished from). It possesses many treasures including ancient manuscripts, crosses, etc. Visiting the monastery emotionally takes you back to the distant past of Ethiopian religious life, or as professor Richard Pankurst rightly concludes, — It takes today's traveler into a past age and leaves him with a deeper understanding of Ethiopia's age – old and unique civilization than mere words can give. The top of the Imba also commands

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magnificent views towards Hazemo in Eritrea to the far north and the —fantastic shapes‡ of the Adwa Mountains to the west.

Rock Hewn Churches of Tigray

In the north most part there are more than 120 rock hewn churches among thus Gheralta, Tsaeda Imba, Atsbidera, Haramat, Ganta, afeshurn, (Gheralta by itself has the following churches: Abune Yemata(Guh), Mariam Korkor, Debretsion (Abune Abraham), Yohannes Maequddi) and others.

4.1.3. Tourist Attraction in and Around Lalibela

History of Zagwe Dynasty

The Agew, a Hamitic people inhabiting the high central plateaux of Ethiopia, had remained under the power and influence of the Axumites. It was from these people that the new Zagwe Dynasty arose at the start of the 12th century, with its heartlands in the mountains of Lasta, south of Axum. When the Zagwe Dynasty stepped onto the stage of Ethiopian history, its lands were already imbued with Axumite culture and partially Christianized. The new dynasty established a feudal-like socio-political structure. Regions had a certain amount of authority, similar to a vassalage organized for the benefit of the central power (21). Meanwhile, the Arab coastal trading bases were the foundations from which Arab traders established Sultanates or Muslim states inland, on the fringes of the Christian Kingdom. The Sultanates guaranteed trade, mostly north-south, seeking access to the sea at the port of Massawa. The economic policy of the Zagwe seemed to be based primarily on agricultural production and on levying taxes from Arab traders, particularly those of the Muslim Sultanate of Shoa. This supported the local lords, who in turn supported the sovereigns in a perpetual —legal robbery‡ established by the feudal order.

For the Ethiopia of the Solomonic tradition, the new Zagwe Dynasty usurped legal power by breaking the Solomonic Axumite continuity. One tradition links the Zagwe Dynasty to Queen Judith, while another surprises us with its ingenuity in —legitimizing‡ the historical changes through art. In any crafts shop in Addis Ababa nowadays, you can find brightly colored popular art prints on goatskin. They depict King Solomon sitting on a majestic throne accompanied by two women, each with a child on her lap. One of the women, in royal attire, represents the Queen of Sheba with her son Menelik, the Semitic Solomonic Dynasty of the Axumite sovereigns. The other woman represents her main maidservant, a Hamitic Agew woman clothed in the traditional dress of Tigray and holding another child, also the son of Solomon, in her lap.

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This child represents the forefather of the Zagwe. Through his veins runs the Hamitic blood of his mother, but also the Semitic Solomonic blood of his father. This legend reconciles the two peoples and legitimizes Solomonic continuity in the Zagwe kings.

However, this dubious legitimacy aside, it is evident that over the course of 130 years, seven Zagwe kings, and one of them in particular, left a mark not to be forgotten in Ethiopia. The Zagwe probably did not convince part of the clergy and the Axumite peoples of their —historical legitimacy,¹¹ but they left an amazing artistic heritage – Lalibela. Therein lies their —artistic legitimacy¹² for history.

In the second half of the 12th century, a prince was born into the heart of the Zagwe Dynasty. He was the youngest of the ruling dynasty and the son of Zan-Siyum. According to legend, his mother observed one day that his cradle was covered by a swarm of bees. Seeing this as a sign of his future greatness, she exclaimed, —Lalibela!¹³ which in *agew* means —the bees recognize his sovereignty.¹⁴ Henceforth he was known by this name (22).

Tradition has it that as a boy, Lalibela was poisoned by his step-brother Harbe, who was the reigning king at that time and envious of Lalibela’s promising future. While Lalibela was fighting for his life, angels took him up to heaven, where God revealed that he would live and become king. In return Lalibela would build, according to God’s plan, ten churches of a greatness never before seen.

Lalibela spent his youth devoted to the monastic life. He set out on a pilgrimage of Jerusalem, which legend claims was assisted by some angels who transported him to the Holy City. Upon his return, and with the support of the clergy, he claimed power with the name of Gebre Maskal, (Slave of the Cross). Although the Zagwe Dynasty arose and settled at Lasta, the high plateaux south of Axum, Axum continued to be recognized as the centre of the Christian faith. While *Agew* was the dominant language, *Ge’ez* remained the language of religion.

King Lalibela established his capital, Roha, in the mountains of Lasta and began to expand his kingdom. For 20 years, the amount of time it took Solomon to build the Temple in Jerusalem, Lalibela quarried the red volcanic rock at Roha to build ten churches. Legend says that angels came down from heaven either at night or at dawn to assist with the immense task. These legends overlapping the historical events were compiled two centuries later into the Acts of Lalibela.

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Around the same time, the Acts of Abuna Gebre Menfes Qiddus appeared, describing King Lalibela's final days. Reportedly, Gebre Menfes Qiddus arrived at Lalibela's court from Egypt, preceded by a halo of Holiness.

After a while, the king and the saint began a journey to the southern lands. While near the mountain of Zuqualla, the monk asked the king to build him a church there, like the churches he had built at Roha. He would have to build quickly, however, as his life was prophesied to end soon. Lalibela agreed and the monolithic church Adadi Maryam was built, which can still be visited just under 60 kilometres (40 miles) south of Addis Ababa. The saintly king returned to Roha and died shortly afterwards, in 1220. He was buried in Beta Golgotha, one of the churches he built. When he died, Roha took the name of Lalibela, which has remained its name to this day. Despite the shift in power from the Solomonic tradition to the Zagwe Dynasty, the Zagwe kings were still linked to the Church. Lilibela, his wife Maskal Kebra, and another two kings of the dynasty, Yemrehanna Krestos and Naakuto Laab, were sanctified by the Ethiopian Church. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church only has eight female saints, one of whom is Saint Maskal Kebra. She is credited with building Beta Abba Libanos, the eleventh church of Lalibela.

Aside from the legends of religious tradition, it seems that King Lalibela sought to leave his kingdom's legacy by building the monolithic churches in Roha. Several factors likely influenced him, one being his probable journey to Jerusalem. In those days, the pilgrimage to the Holy City was risky for Christian Ethiopian pilgrims because of the major Muslim presence in lands through which they had to travel. Therefore Lalibela sought to —legitimizes himself before the Church and the people with his extravagant religious creativity, building an imitation of Jerusalem making a safe replacement for pilgrims.

During the years prior to the Zagwe Dynasty, anarchy and war resulted in the looting and destruction of many churches. Perhaps Lalibela sought to restore the devastated places of worship and pilgrimage at the same time as perpetuating his memory. What remains beyond doubt, however, is the strong identification that exists between Jerusalem and Lalibela, and the fact that this identification is deeply rooted in the Ethiopian Christian tradition.

There are eleven churches in Lalibela's Jerusalem, although a small cave is currently being considered as a twelfth church. These churches are separated by a small stream that carries only rainwater and whose name, the Jordan (Yordanos), is immediately reminiscent of the Holy Land.

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The Jordan separates the churches into two groups-six churches to the north and four to the south. The eleventh church is that of Saint George, and is separated from both groups on the northern shore. A solid monolithic cross over the Jordan marks the beginning of the pilgrimage to the eleven churches. Apart from the Jordan River, names such as Calvary Hill, the Tomb of Adam, Bethlehem, and Mount Tabor further exemplify Lalibela's identification with Jerusalem. There is evidence to suggest that the churches identify themselves as much with the Holy Places of Earthly Jerusalem (Gethsemane, Holy Sepulchre) as those that symbolize the Heavenly Jerusalem (hell, purgatory, heaven). A complicated system of tunnels and narrow passageways with caves, crypts, and galleries create an underground Lalibela, connecting more than half of the churches. Some tunnels have been closed off for safety reasons. There has also been some debate over the probable existence of tunnels linking the two groups of churches with the church of Saint George.

Only four of the eleven churches are properly monolithic, meaning joined to the volcanic rock only by their base. The others are more or less underground or excavated from rock. Some are even multi-floored. Influences on the craftwork and creativity of these constructions have ranged from Egyptian, and Armenian, to Indian. One global bestseller claims that the Templars in search of the Ark of the Covenant even intervened. Regardless of the influences, Lalibela is essentially Ethiopian in style. The style can be found across the centuries in edifices created from the Axum period onward. Lalibela clearly contains the finest examples of this architecture; however some hundred others exist in Ethiopia. No other country has produced excavations of this type.

Ethiopia is home to more World Heritage sites than most countries in Africa. The churches at Lalibela are perhaps the most prominent of all. The churches that make up the group north of the Jordan River, the Earthly Jerusalem, comprise:

Beta Medhane Alem (*The House of the Savior of the World*)

Symbolizing the tabernacle of the Covenant, this is Lalibela's biggest church. It is an immense monolithic work reproducing a rectangular basilica with five naves. It has no interior decoration or paint. However, the exterior was once painted red according to the wishes of Empress Zauditu in the early 19th century. Of its exterior columns, only those on the eastern side are the originals. Its sloped double roof is decorated with rows of crosses. Inside, its five naves are each separated by four rows of seven pillars carved in the shape of a cross.

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Tradition has it that the three tombs on the left of it symbolize the tombs of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the outside courtyard, several niches and small caves have been carved into the walls of the mountain from which the church emerges. Monks live in the caves, though in ancient times they were probably tombs. The monks, carrying small prayer books, are typically immersed in prayer and quite removed from the physical world. The monks long-handled crosses, black umbrellas, and bright yellow garments break the reds of the stark, vertical walls.

Beta Maryam (*The House of Mary*)

This church, rich with interior frescoes and paintings, symbolizes the garden of Gethsemane. Unique of Lalibela architecture, this church possesses a single central pillar. According to one tradition, the commandments are recorded on the pillar in three languages: Greek, Ge'ez and Sabaean. A cloth with a small image of the Virgin Mary in the centre completely veils the mystery of its contents. Legend has it that if somebody dares to lift the cloth, the inscriptions will disappear. It is known as the Amd, The Pillar of the Unity of Faith. Jesus Christ is said to have appeared before King Lalibela in this Place.

In the outside walls, different windows beautifully and simply form a whole series of crosses including Latin, Greek, Maltese, and the Swastika. Some windows are blind and for decorative purposes alone, showing only the cross on the exterior. However, most windows open to the interior, projecting the Christian symbol into the darkness of the church. Sometimes the arms of the cross block the outside light, which comes in through the holes on either side, and sometimes the arms of the cross are open spaces through which the light can pass. With the testimonial and functional art of its windows, the shadowy interior is only lit by weak beams of light.

According to legend, the small cistern dug into the rocky earth outside grants fertility to women who submerge themselves in its waters for an entire night. The church has three entrance porches, and in the western porch two equestrian figures can be seen in bas-relief, one of which represents Saint George fighting a dragon.

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Beta Maskal (*House of the Cross*) and Beta Danaghel (*House of the Virgin*)

These two church-caves are located on either side of Beta Maryam. The former has two naves with a very ancient wooden altar. The latter, which is smaller, is in memory of the virgins Martyred during the Reign of the Roman Emperor Julian.

Beta Debre Sina (House of Mount Sinai) Also Known As Beta Mikael, And Beta Golgoth (House of Golgotha)

To symbolize the union between the covenant of the Law given at Sinai and the new covenant of Christ, redeeming us with his death at Golgotha, these churches are carved together. Beta Debre Sina is semi-monolithic and consists of three naves separated by cross-shaped pillars whose tops are decorated with Greek crosses. Inside the church-cave Beta Golgotha, legend has it that the remains of King Lalibela lie in a chamber separated from its two naves. Saints carved into the church walls are among the few religious images carved in stone that can be found in Ethiopia. They are surprising since the Ethiopian Orthodox Church follows the Biblical precept of not depicting sculpted figures, only painted images. The chapel of Sellassie (The Holy Trinity) holds even more mystery, as visits are prohibited. In the west face of Beta Golgotha, on what is known as Calvary Hill, a monolith represents the tomb of Adam. The following churches are located south of the Jordan River in an area known as the Heavenly Jerusalem:

Beta Emmanuel (*The House of Emmanuel*)

This monolithic church symbolizes the Seven Heavens. It has a basilica-like floor and is a definitive example of Axumite architecture and decoration. On the third level there are seven windows representing the seven heavens – one to the west, and three on both of its north and south faces.

Beta Merkorios and Beta Gabriel-Rapheal

These two halls were probably used originally for lay purposes. It is believed that the palace of Lalibela was located on the second floor of Beta Merkorios. In addition, the church closely guards a wooden processional cross that tradition says was brought from Jerusalem by King Lalibela. One version of the tale says that the king brought the wood of the cross, while another claims he brought the entire cross. Next to Beta Gabriel-Raphael, a small track carved into the rock symbolizes Paradise, so named because of the extreme difficulty one has in reaching it.

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Beta Abba Libanos

According to tradition, this monolithic church was carved in a single night by Lalibela's wife Maskal Kebra and some angels.

On the north shore of the Jordan River, this masterpiece of monolithic church construction is separate from the two other groups of churches. According to legend, after the nine churches were completed, Saint George reproached King Lalibela for not having built one in his honor. Lalibela promised to build him the most beautiful of all the churches. Saint George himself oversaw the great work.

Beta Giorgis

This impressive church is notable for several unique features. It is in the form of a Greek cross. Its excavation is an impressive 12 meters deep (40 feet), and three concentric Greek crosses are carved into its roof, which is at ground level. A staircase of seven steps leads to the main entrance porch. There are two more entrances in the same direction, but they do not have a porch. The bottom windows are in the traditional style of the doors, while the top ones are the most ornate windows in all of Labella. Three concentric modular arches and the crosses crowning these windows combine the beauty of art with the sober message of faith. In the interior there are no free columns: the four arches of the four sectors that make up the cross shape rest on angular supports or buttresses that emerge from the walls themselves. The overall sensation is one of simplicity and austere solidity.



Figure4.2. Beta Giorgis (House of Saint George)

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Three churches not far from Lalibela are easy to reach and worth a visit: The church of **Naakuto Laab** (a ruler prior to Lalibela) is a church-cave with rich interior decoration and objects of major artistic value. Its crowns, manuscripts, icons, crosses and so forth are solemnly placed on the grass for viewing.

Genneta Maryam: The Paradise of Mary: This monolithic church has exterior columns similar to Greek temples, and was probably built in the 13th century. Inside, there is a single central nave and two lateral wings. Its arches, column heads, and part of its time-worn walls still depict floral and geometric patterns and the remains of Biblical paintings. Art experts have classified it as a unique example of —archaic art.¶

Yemrehanna Krestos: Christ will show the way. This church is located in the mountains northeast of Lalibela. It was founded in the first half of the 12th century by Yemrehanna Krestos, a priest king prior to King Lalibela. Built within a cave in wood and stone following the Axumite tradition, its inside carvings and geometrically patterned decorations are exceptional. Although you can get there by car, traveling by mule from Lalibela is a nice experience. Lalibela’s art lies not only in the incredible monolithic constructions but also in the carefully-protected treasures housed within. The beauty of the processional crosses, manuscripts, canvases, icons, crowns and so forth form a wealth of artistic creativity.

Tenuous light within the churches creates an atmosphere of shadows that takes us back to the origin of the Christian community of faith. Candles reveal painted images and manuscripts. Vivid yellow and blue priestly vestments contrast with the harsh severity of walls and columns. Narrow beams of light illuminate the bronze of marvelous processional crosses. Here lies a religious world bathed in shadow while the sun shines blindingly outside, unable to penetrate the spirituality within the churches and caves. Red shadows embrace firm hands clutched in murmured prayer, oblivious to the world that surrounds them. They are in a place very close to God: their blessed Jerusalem.

4.1.4. Churches and Monasteries of Lake Tana (Around Bahirdar)

Background to Lake Tana and the Island Monasteries

Set at an altitude of 1830m, Lake Tana is the largest lake in Ethiopia, with a surface area of 3673 km2, and it is also the source of the Blue Nile, a Connection that explains many of Ethiopian’s

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links with the ancient world. Tana was known to the ancient Greeks as Pseboe, and to the Ancient Egyptians as Coloe; it was described by 5th-century Greek dramatist as the — Copper-tinted lake... that is the jewel of Ethiopial. Even today, the papayrus tankwa that said the lake bear a striking resemblance to the boats of ancient Egypt.

Aside from the Southern Spur from which the Nile flows on which Bahir Dar is situated, Tana has broadly circular shape measuring some 65km in diameter. It was formed at least 20million years ago, by an ancient lava extrusion that effectively functions as a natural dam. Averaging some 14m in depth, and dotted with more than three-dozen islands, many of which are inhabited, Tana harbors at least 26 different fish species of which 17 are endemic to the lake. Tana is also renowned for its varied birdlife –flotillas of white pelican being a particularly common sight while the hallow support small pods of hippos.

The Tana area is the traditional home of Amhara, a Christian people whose language was for many years the national language of Ethiopia. Tana was also the homeland of the Falashia who although they are ethnically identical to the Amhara and speak the same language, practice a form of Judaism that appears to have been several from the Jewish mainstream before 650BC. There are now very few Falasha people left in the Tana Region; after centuries of prosecution, most of them were airlifted to Israel in 1991.

Between the collapse of the Zagwe dynasty in the late 13th century and the establishment of Gonder as a permanent capital in the early 17th- Century, Tana was the political and spiritual focus of the Christian empire. Several temporary capitals were established on /near the lakes shore, and it is here where the Portuguese force led by Christopher Da Gama spent most of its time in Ethiopia. Many of the Island monasteries which dot Lake Tana date to this time; though some are older the monastery at Tana Cherkos, for one, appears to have served as a spiritual retreat long before Christianity was established in the region.

The Islands and Monasteries

The Islands and peninsulas of Lake Tana collectively house more than 20 monastery churches, many of which were founded during the 14th century rule of Amda Tsion, though some are

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possibly older and at least two (Narga, Sellassie and Metseli Fasiledas) date to the Gonderian period. A popular local legend has it that seven of the most important 14th century monasteries were founded by a loosely allied group of monks known as the seven Stars. These are Daga Istifanos (founded by Hirute Amlak), Kibran Gebriel (Abuna Yohannis), Ura Kidane Mihret (Abuna Betre Maryam), Bahir Galila Zacharias (Abuna Zacharias), Mandaba Medhane Alem (Ras Asai), Gugubie (Afkerene Egzi) and Debre Maryam (Tadews Tselaleh).

Many of the lake Tana Monasteries remained practically unknown to outsiders prior to major Robert Chessman's pioneering 1930s expedition during which he became the first European to visit all the islands on lake Tana, as documented in his definitive (but out of print and maddeningly difficult to locate) book lake Tana and the Blue Nile: An Abyssinian Quest. Architecturally, none stands comparison to the rock-hewn and Axumite churches of Tigray and Lasta, but several are beautifully decorated, no more so than the relatively accessible Ura Kidane Mihret on the Zege Peninsula, covered from top to bottom with paintings that collectively serve as a visual encyclopedia of Ethiopian ecclesiastical concerns.

Also highly impressive in this regard is the more remote and modern, Gonderian Era churches of Narga Sellassie. Many of Lake Tana's monasteries have fascinating treasure houses. For bibliophiles, Kibran Gebriel, the closest true island monastery to Bahir Dar, is of particular interest for its library of almost 200 old books. At Daga Istifanos, visitors can be taken to see the mummified remains of five former emperors of Ethiopia, notably Fasildas (the founder of Gonder), while on Tana Cherikos, there stand three Judaic Sacrificial pillars, claimed by the author Graham Hancock to support a legend that this island was for 800 years used to store the Ark of the Covenant. Steeped in mystery and legend the old churches of Lake Tana form peaceful retreats for their monastic residents and visiting tourists alike. As in so many parts of Ethiopia, the strong conservationist element in Orthodox Christianity has ensured that the monasteries practically double as nature sanctuaries.

The Zege peninsula, which supports by far the largest remaining tract of natural forest on Lake Tana, still harbors monkeys and various forest birds, while most of the monastic islands, considering their dense population, remain remarkably undisturbed in environmental terms.

Combined with the romance attached to being a float in a beautiful tropic a lake that is not only the largest in Ethiopia, but also the source of the world's longest river, a day trip to at least one

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of these monasteries will be a highlight of any stay in Bahir Dar.

Here it should be noted that women are not and have never been permitted to enter most of the monasteries- a nugget of information that local tour operators have been known to divulge only once a trip is paid up and in progress. Many female travelers find this ruling offensive, but it does date back several centuries and as well meaning brochure produced by the monks of Daga Istifanos notes, — It is not meant to be little women.

To elaborate —the reason why women and all domestic animals are not allowed is the thinking that creatures of the opposite sex could be bad examples for the monks, especially those young at age. These young Virgin hermits should subdue their body to the service of their God, and the devil should not attack them with the spear of adultery like the Apostle Saint Paul said, —Younger widows may not be placed on the roll. The exceptions to the men-only rule are less isolated monasteries that lie on peninsulas or islands where the monks routinely interact with secular communities, i.e: Debre Maryam, Narga Sellassie and the Monasteries on the Zege Peninsula.

Southern Monasteries

The most accessible monasteries from Bahir Dar are those on the Southern Part on the Lake. All of the Monasteries mentioned below could be visited over the course of a long half-day by boat, though generally speaking Debre Maryam is visited only by independent travelers with limited time or money, while package tours tend to aim for Ura Kindane Mihret on the Zege Peninsula.

Debre Maryam

Founded by Abune Tadewos Tselaleh near the Nile outlet during the 14th century reign of Amde Tsion, Debre Maryam is the only Monastery that can easily be visited independently without significant effort or expense. The temple is reputedly very ancient; the rest of the church rather plain in appearance is little more than a century old, having been rebuilt during the rule of Emperor Tewodros. In terms of treasures, the church is also relatively impoverished, though there are at least three ancient Geez goat skin manuscripts stored inside.

It is said that the monastery grounds are inhabited by many invisible saints. The priest here is very friendly used to budget travelers, and evidently enjoys modeling for photographs while by no means the finest of the monasteries, Debre Maryam is agreed by all to be a good day outing.

The cheapest way to visit Debre Maryam is to follow the Gonder road out of the town for about

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20minutes, turning left on to a clear track just before the bridge across the Nile. From here, it's a five to ten minute walk to a stretch of shore where you will find a few boat men and their papyrus tankwa boats ready and willing to take you across the water to the monastery a five to ten minute boat ride which should cost no more than birr 10 for the return trip. It's advisable to head out early in the day, before the wind starts up, or the water might be too choppy for a tankwa to cross. Debre Maryam can also be visited relatively cheaply from town by motorboat, in conjunction with a spot close to the outlet of the Nile where hippopotami are resident

Kibran Gebriel

The closest monastery to Bahir Dar and visible from the town, Kibran Gebriel lies on a tiny, forested crescent-presumably part of the rim of an extinct Volcano which somewhat incredibly provides sanctuary to as many as 40 monks. It was founded in the 13th century by a hermit called Abuna Yohannis, who named it after the married couple Gebriel and Kibran who rowed him out to the island and later returned there to check on his health. The church on the highest point of the island was rebuild in the 17th century by king Dawit II to a similar design to the better known Ura Kidane Mihret on Zege. Kibran Gebriel boasts no paintings of note, it houses the largest library of ancient books of any church in the region almost 200 volumes in total including a beautifully illustrated 15th century life of Christ.

The island can easily be visited in conjunction with the monasteries on the Zege peninsula, and is no more than 30 minutes by boat from Bahir Dar. Women are forbidden once visited it, but declined to enter the church when she realized she was menstruating, would suggest that this has not always been the case. The smaller forested island of Entons immediately south of Kibran used to be a nunnery but was abandoned some years ago. However a recent report from a traveler who was offered to be shown the —Women's monastery adjacent to Kibran Gebriel suggests that the discussed church might still be worth a look.

Ura Kidane Mihret and the Zege Peninsula

The forested Zege Peninsula is studied with medieval churches, of which Ura Kidane Mihret ranks not only as the most impressive of the Southern monasteries but also possibly the most beautiful church anywhere in the Tana region. This combined with its relative proximity to Bahir Dar, has made it the most frequently visited church on the lake. Set with in bleak stone walls, the monastery was founded in the 14th century by a saint called Betre Maryam, who hailed from the

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Muger river in Showa and started training as a priest after being visited by two angels at the age of seven (Betre Maryam literally means —Rod of Maryll, and is a reference to the saint’s steeliness when it came to beating off the devil & other demons).

The circular church was built in the 16th century. The walls are covered in an incredible jumble of murals, painted between 100 and 250 years ago (the most recent were executed by an artist called ‘Engida’ during the dying years of the reign of Menelik II, and many of which have been restored in the last few decades. These paintings are positively Chaucerian in their physicality, ribaldry and gore, and it is no hyperbole to say that they offer a genuinely revealing glimpse into medieval Ethiopia. So do give yourself time to look at them closely.

There are also some intriguing line drawings on one of the doors and the museum has few old crowns of Ethiopian kings, leather-bound Bibles and other ancient treasures. Reachable from Ura Kidane Mihret by boat, or by following a 2km foot path through thick forest, stand the discussed churches of Mehal Giyorgis and Bete Maryam. Mehal Giyorgis is little more than a shell but there are some 18th century murals on the standing walls.

There are several antiquites locked away in Bete Maryam. Another interesting church on the peninsula is Azuwa Maryam which lies closer to Ura Kindane Mihret and also boasts several animated 18th century paintings. The most normal way to visit Ura Kidane Mihret is by charter boat direct from Bahir Dar which takes about an hour terminating at a jetty five-to-ten minutes easy walk from the monastery itself. It is also now quite easy to visit the peninsula by a recently renovated road from Bahir Dar, whether by private vehicle or public transport.

Central Monasteries

Although less easily accessible from Bahir Dar than the Zege peninsula, the string of monasteries that runs from east to west across the center of lake Tana is arguably more intriguing. These monasteries fall into two main clusters: one close to the eastern lakeshore of which Tana Cherkos with its mysterious sacrificial stones is without doubt the most important and the other dead central of which the beautifully decorated Narga Selassie on Dek Island, and Daga Istifanos housing the mummified remains of five former emperors are the highlight. With a very early start from Bahir Dar it is possible to visit the three monasteries mentioned above (but no others) in one long day.

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Tana Chirkos

This small island monastery separated from the eastern shore by a narrow marshy corridor is dominated by a striking spine of rock perhaps 30m high, and fringed by riparian forest supporting several pairs of fish eagle. It has acquired some approaching cult status since the publication of Graham Hancock's book *The sign and the Seal*, which attempts to substantiate an ancient tradition that the Ark of the covenant was stowed on the island for some 600 years before it was transferred to Axum in the 4th century AD by King Ezana.

One tradition has it that the Christian monastery was founded on the site of an older temple during the 6th century reign of Gebre Meskel by Saint Yared and Abuna Aregawi. Another tradition holds that the monastery was founded two centuries earlier by Frementius, the first Bishop of Axum, who was buried there. Other sources suggest that the island converted to Christianity a mere 540 years ago.

Whenever the monastery was founded, the architecturally undistinguished church, which was build about 100 years ago with funding from Ras Gugsu of Debre Tabor looks more time worn than it does ancient and none of the paintings that adorn it looks significantly more than a decade old. Far more interesting than the monastery it is a trio of hollowed-out sacrificial pillars that stand alongside it testifying to the island's importance as a Judaic religious Shrine in Pre-Christian times.

The local priests say that the pillars date from King Solomon's time and were used to make dyes. Given the Ethiopian predilection for mythologizing one local tradition has it that the Virgin Mary rested here on her (presumably somewhat circuitous) return from Egypt to Israel and a foot print on one of the islands rocks is claimed to be that of none other than her immaculately conceived first born son it s stretching a point of conclude as Hancock does that these pillars provide circumstantial support for the Ark once having resided on the island.

Tana Chirkos lies some three hours from Bahir Dar by boat, the walk from the jetty to the monastery takes no more than five minute.

On the way to the island (or coming back), it is possible to look at two further monasteries, both on small forested islands about 30 minutes from Tana Cherkos.

These are Rama Medhane Alem, a recently rebuilt church in which are stored a few interesting

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old paintings and Mitsele Fasiledas founded during the rule of the Emperor after whom it is named and architecturally undistinguished though the surrounding forest is rich in birdlife.

Daga Istifanos

The largest monastery on the Lake, home to as many as 200 Monks, Daga Istifanos lies on a small wedge-shaped island immediately east of the much larger Dek Island. A reliable (and for once apparently uncontested) tradition states that the monastery was founded in the late 13th century by Hirute Amlak, a nephew of Emperor Yikuno Amlak who served his apprenticeship under Iyasu Moa at Hayk Istifanos at the same time as the future Archbishop Tekle Haymanot.

A somewhat less probable tradition has it that Hirute Amlak was guided to the shores of lake Tanan by Istifanos from Hayk and was then ferried from mainland to island on a pair of divine stones that can still be seen in the grounds of the monastery he founded. The church on the island's conical peak is relatively uninteresting and not especially old. It was rebuilt after the original burnt to the grounds in the 19th century. Although there is a rather unusual monochrome painting of an angel on one of the inner doors, tradition has it that Daga Istifanos is where the Ark of the Covenant was hidden during Ahmed Gragn's 16th Century occupation of Axum.

The main point of interest at Daga Istifanos today is the mouseum, which contains the mummified remains of at least five Ethiopian emperors: Yikuno Amlak (1268-93), Dawit I(1428-30), Zara Yakob (1434-68), Susneyos (1607-32) and Fasiledes (1632-76). The glass coffins in which the mummies now lie are recent acquisitions, donated by Hile Sellassie after he visited the monastery in 1951.

The mummy of Fasildes is the best preserved of the five and his facial features are still eerily discernible. A tiny Skeleton next to this is said to be the remains of Fasiledas favorite son, who was crowned as his father's successor but collapsed and died under the weight of the crown. It is something of a mystery as to when, why and how the mummies ended up on this remote island; some say during the Mahadist invasion of Gonder in the late 19th century, others during the Italian occupation but there also seems to be good reason to believe that the dead kings were brought here for mummification shortly after they died. Certainly, Daga Istifanos was a popular retreat for several of the above mentioned kings and its tranquility was reputedly also favored by Tewodros II, who took communion there on several occasions.

Several other treasures associated with these kings are stored in the mausoleum: old crowns, a

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goatskin book with some line drawings dating from the 14th century and two immaculately preserved 15th century paintings of the Madonna with uncharacteristically detailed and non-stylish facial features. Daga Istifanos lies about three hours by boat from Bahir Dar, 90 minutes from Tana Chirkos and an hour from Narga Sellassie. The walk from the Jetty to the church is quite steep and takes about 15 minutes with a chance of encountering the odd monkey along the way. It can be visited in conjunction with the nearby monastery of Metseli Fasiledes which was founded by Emperor Fasiladas of Gondar and reputedly contains an interesting collection of old books and manuscripts

Narga Sellassie

Situated on the western shore of Dek, the largest island on Lake Tanan, Narga Sellassie is with the possible exception of the much older Ura Kidane Mihret, the most ornately decorated of all the lake monasteries. Built in the 18th century for princes Mentewab (regent for Emperor Iyasu II), the stone walls surrounding the compound with their domed turrets are typically Gonderian and not dissimilar in appearance to the walls surrounding the church next to Mentewab's Palace at Kuskum outside Gondar.

The compound's old grey towers forgotten on this lonely island, looked somewhat neglected when chessman visited it in the 1930s, but the church was restored with funding by Haile Sellassie I in 1951 and roof was renovated again in 2001. The main church is circular in shape and surrounded by stone pillars (one of which is decorated by an etching of the pipe-puffing explorer James Bruce, a close associate of Mentewab). As with Ura Kidane Mihret, the inner walls are covered from top to bottom with ritous and absorbing collection of paintings, most thought to date from the 17th century.

In addition to the usual pictures of saints and their exploits, there is a painting of the church's founder lying prostrate before St. Mary and the Baby Jesus probably the only contemporaneous portrait of Mentewab to survive. Another interesting one shows a church on a fish, the latter about to be speared by an angel interviewed. Narga Selassie lies some three hours from Bahir Dar by Boat, and an hour from Daga Istifanos. The monastery is practically next to the jetty. There are two other monasteries on Dek Island, St. Arsema Semaet and Mota Maryam but neither is regularly visited by tourists.

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Northern Monasteries

Probably the most venerated of the Northern Monasteries is Mandoba Medhane Alem which lies about 30minutes from Gorgora by motor boat. The monastery was founded in the 14th century by Ras Asai, the ascetic son of Emperor Amda Tsion and its monks among the most devout and virtuous in Ethiopia are considered to be angels made flesh. The church is of greatest interest for its superb collection of old manuscripts, painting and other antiquated treasures. The church itself underwent major reconstruction in the 1950's but parts of the interior, including the painted door frame are very old.

Much the same goes for Brigida Maryam built by Amda Tsion in the 14th century but reconstructed three times since owing to fire damage the church is of limited architectural interest but it does host some genuine treasures most notably perhaps a superb 16th century painting of St. Mary. Nearby Angara Tekle Haymanot has few treasures and the present day church dates to the Haile Selassie era.

Somewhat further afield about an hour by boat from Gorgora, Bahir Galila Zacharias has the oldest church of the northern island monasteries possibly dating to the 14th century, though it is currently under scaffolding. Bahir Galila is Amharic for —Sea of Galilee and it was founded in the 14th century by a monk called Zacharies who could reputedly walk on water. The monastery is remembered for the massacre of most of its monks by Ahmed Gragn in the 16th century.

Gorgora

The little visited town of Gorgora, situated on the northern shore of Lake Tana is today dominated by the large, leafy Lake Tana transport authority compound and attractive spot that will prove highly rewarding to bird watchers.

Founded in medieval times, when it served as one of the many temporary capitals of the period, Gorgora has strong historical associations with Gonder 60km to its north and even today it doesn't really seem to belong in the standard. Lake Tana tourist circuit but feels more like a lake shore satellite to Fasiledas former capital to which it is linked by regular road transport. Gorgora was an important port during the Italian occupation, the most obvious relic of which is the so called Mussolini pillar. So far as I can ascertain a lighthouse like construction that helped guide ships towards the harbor that stands on a hill above the town and is clearly visible on the road from Gondar.

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A highlight of any visit to Gorgora will be a visit to the Monastery of Debre Sina Maryam which lies along a motorable track five-minutes' walk from the town center and permits women visitors. Entrance costs birr 25 per person. As it's so often the case, the history of this church varies with the telling but most likely it was founded circa 1334 by a monk called Hesteus who hailed from the town of Debre Sina further southeast. The present building, a fine example of a thatched circular church probably dates to the 16th century, though the carved Axumite windows and frames might well have been lifted from an earlier building.

The murals on Debre Sina Maryam rank with the most complex and vivid to be seen in the Tana region. Local tradition claims them to be medieval in origin but the greater probability is that they were executed in the early Gonderian period under the patronage of the noble woman Melekotawit, who is depicted on one mural. According to the priests, the woman in question was the elder sister of Emperor Fasiledes but more likely perhaps she was the wife of Iyasu I. Evidently, both women had the same name either way, the most older than their counterparts at Ura Kidane Mihret or Narga Sellassie. What's more, the lowest row of paintings does look significantly older than the one that includes the portraits of St. Mary on the wall as you enter. So it could be that some paintings are older than others.

Two of the churches most striking wall panels depict the devil rolling about in laughter as Adam and Eve sample the forbidden fruit and a decidedly smug looking King Herod and Cronies making bloodthirsty work of the newly born children of Israel. The churches greatest treasure is a glass-covered portrait known as the —Egyptian Saint Mary‡ and utterly implausible legend has it that this painting was made when Mary was exiled to Egypt and the local priests claim that it lights up spontaneously from time to time and has the capacity to revive dead children.

Also of interest in the Gorgora area is the Portuguese Cathedral built during Suseneyos' period but abandoned after Fasiledes booted out the Catholic Settlers.

To reach the Cathedral, you either walk east along the lake shore for several hours or head out of Gorgora for 8km along the Gondar road, then turn left at a small village and follow a track back towards the lake for about 15km-the track is not very clear so keep asking directions. The cathedral is now an overgrown ruin but what do remain tall walls, pillars and archways engraved with flowers and crosses is sufficient to hint at its former grandeur. There is talk of restoring the church with UNESCO help.

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On a peninsula roughly 10km west of Gorgora stands ‘old Gorgora’ and the ruined palace constructed by Emperor Susuneyos between 1625 and 1630 with Portuguese assistance. The building isn’t in the greatest shape but it is of some interest architecturally as an immediate precursor to the more renowned palaces of Gondar. Old Gorgora can only be visited by boat—these can be chartered through the Lake Tana Transport Authority for around Birr 500 or more cheaply through a private operator and the excursion can be combined with stops en route at some of northern monasteries’.

4.1.5. Tourist Attraction in and Around Gondar

History of Gondar

For some two hundred years, Gondar was the center of the Ethiopia of the Neguse Nagaste. The construction of the castles baths and churches that remain to this day bear witness to almost a century of splendor. This grandeur was to wane over the next hundred years, victim of the intrigues and dynastic struggles of puppet rulers whose strings were pulled by the royal —favorites and whose power over the empire was nominal.

Gondar enjoyed a privileged position not only for its natural resources, forests, and water, but also for its strategic location at the crossroads of flourishing trade routes. Goods arrived from the Nile Valley (gold and slaves) and from the rich southern regions (coffee) on their way to other countries via the Red Sea. Meanwhile a trade route to the west, linking Ethiopia with Egypt via Sudan, was becoming increasingly important.

Gondar was probably established on the site of an existing settlement with its own people, but the call of trade, construction, and the arts soon attracted Armenians, Greeks, Persians, Portuguese, Indians, Oromos, and Falashas.

Three emperors, Fasilidas, Yohannes I and Iyasu I marked the splendor of the age of Gondar. Their concerns, successes, and failures revolved around trade, the arts, construction, the defense of the orthodox faith, the threat of the encroaching Oromo, and the pressure of the increasing autonomy of its vassal lords.

Defending the Monophysitic doctrine before the theological arguments of the Jesuits had led the Ethiopian Church to a series of thoughts that were not exempt from doubt. A division eventually formed two major schools of thought based mostly on the interpretation of the Christological

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doctrine. Emperor Fasilidas devoted a lot of time to this religious controversy within the Orthodox Church between the —unionists‖ whose influence was strongest in the regions of Gondar and Shoa, and the —unctionists,‖ mostly from the regions of Gojam and Tigray. Hence the controversy was of major political and religious importance, as it divided not only the Ethiopian Orthodox Church but the Empire itself.

The Oromo, meanwhile, had reached the heart of Christian Ethiopia and occupied the regions of Wollo, Yejju, and Raya in the northeastern highlands. Over time, they began to gain power and produce leaders who formed their own —local dynasties‖ that became involved in Gondar politics. As previously mentioned, it is curious that the succession to the throne was not based on the firstborn son, so there were many —legitimate candidates‖ and conspiracies were rife. The dangerous question was settled by removing all the probable hopefuls to gilded cages on isolated ambas that were difficult to enter and leave.

Following the death of Emperor Fasilidas in 1667, the throne passed to one of his sons, Yohannes I or John the Pious. Alarmed by the progress of Islam, he called a council at Gondar to decide what measures should be taken to resolve the religious confusion. As a result of the council, Yohannes I pronounced a series of royal edicts, which immediately led to the formation of ghettos both for the Muslim community and the Judaizing Falashas who were beginning to gain group consciousness: the Beta-Israel (The House of Israel). Both communities were able to maintain their faith, but in —marked‖ neighborhoods and with a series of restrictions on their possessions and rights. The decree aimed at the Catholic descendants of the Portuguese was more severe, leaving them only two options: conversion to the Orthodox Church or exile.

Paradoxically, the actual effect of these decrees was a growth in Islam, increasing the threats to the —Solomonic order.‖ Peoples such as the Oromo and Sidama populations used their conversion to Islam to express their rejection of the domination of Amhara and Christian faith and power. The decrees only favored the already solid position of the Armenian traders, who had Monophysitic Christian beliefs. With Iyasu I —The Great‖ (1682), who was probably the prime example of Gondar rulers, the city experienced a golden age, profiting from socio-economic measures and military victories, repelling the southern incursions of the Oromo.

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Suffering from a severe skin condition, Iyasu I was seen by a French doctor, Charles Jacques Poncet, who later described the court of Gondar. Poncet tells us how Iyasu had great qualities, a quick and piercing wit, and a sweet and affable humor. He was also brave and undaunted in battle, always at the head of his troops. The emperor's strong sense of justice and his extreme religious piety was noted.

The first three rulers of Gondar wrote the city's history by building an imperial city, a city far removed in space and time from the European Renaissance but that was capable, through the dreams of its rulers, of creating its own renaissance. The imperial city of Gondar took its name from the Cushitic word gon (great) and the Semitic word dar (city), to form Great City. One tradition suggests that its name was derived from gon eder, whose translation is —sleep on your side. This arises from the story that after a long fight between two brothers, one of them exclaimed to the other: Gon eder! —Sleep on your side, on your ears, i.e. in peace.

The city was built on a volcanic plain surrounded by forests and crossed by two rivers, which form a gateway to the south, to Lake Tana. The peculiar architecture of Gondar began with the castle-palace of Fasilidas, which was built on a large area surrounded by twelve gates that formed the imperial city enclave within Gondar itself. This structure inspired successive rulers to build palaces, churches, libraries, and so on. There is an unquestionable Portuguese influence, which has probably been overrated by some authors. The overall structure is actually an accumulation of several influences, though ultimately it has its own style.

Royal Enclosure

Gondar's Royal enclosure covers an area of 75,000 Sq. m. The enclosure is surrounded by the high stone walls and connected by a series of tunnels and raised walkways. It is not still certain who built the castles. However, it is supposed as there is influence of Indian, Portuguese and Moorish.

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Figure 4.3 Gonder castle

There are six graceful castles in the palace compound built by the successive Gondarine kings of the 17th and 18th c.

1. **Fasiladas castle:** It is the oldest, largest and the most impressive of the castles. It stands two- storey high and it is topped by four small domed towers. The palace is made up of roughly hewn brown basalt, and it shows unusual synthesis of Indian, Portuguese, Moorish as well as Aksumite influences. It has dinning room and reception area, prayer room with four windows which give the view of one of the many churches (1st floor), and bedroom (2nd floor).
2. **Palace of Yohannes I:** which was once decorated with ivory and was built by the son and successor of Fasiledes; Yohannes. It is commonly known as the **-Library of Yohannes**.
3. **Palace of Iyasu I (Iyasu the Great):** It was built by Iyasu I and looks like a saddle shaped castle. In the former times, it was well decorated. Visitors described it as _it is more beautiful than the others. But later on, it was damaged by the earthquake of 1704 and British bombing of 1940s.
4. **Castle of emperor Dawit III:** used for religious, plentiful entertainments and lion house- Abyssinian lions. It is locally known as the **-house of song**.
5. **Castle of emperor Bekaffa:** it is a long V-shaped storied castle, located at the extreme north of the compound to the left side. It has two long towers; one of them was served as a banqueting and receptionist hall.

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6. **Mentewab castle-** two- storied structure now used as the house of souvenir products and public library. Empress Mentewab (wife of emperor Bekaffa and mother of Iyasu II) built it. There are also different attractions outside the royal enclosure:

Fasiladas Bath: Around 2km northwest of the city center, the bath is attributed to Emperor Fasiladas and Iyasu. It is large, shady, beautiful and rectangular sunken pool that is overlooked by two storied tower surrounded by stone wall. It is known as bathing palace and constructed for important religious celebrations, like Timket ceremony. Once a year, Fasiladas bath is filled with water for important Timket ceremony. After being blessed by a priest, the pool becomes the riot of spraying water, shouts and laughter as the crowd jump in. The celebration replicates the baptism of CHRIST in the Jordan River.

Kuskuam Complex: Lying in the hills about 3.5km northwest of the town centre and it was built by Empress Mentewab. This royal compound is less preserved than Fasiladas royal enclosure; it is made up of series of buildings including a long two-storied castellated palace used for state reception and for housing the royal garrison. The church of Kuskuam contains paintings that show many religious subjects of Orthodox Church. The first floor of the church also contains mummified bodies of Mentewab herself and her son Iyasu II grandson, Iyoas. Within the church there is a room that contains many royal treasures.

Debrebrhan Selasie: Lying around 2km to the north east of the royal enclosure and it is one of the country's most famous churches and one of highlights of Gondar and Ethiopia. The founder of the church is Iyasu I and Debrebrhan Selasie, means 'Trinity at the mount of light'. It shows about 80 Ethiopian cherubs; the TRINITY, angels and other's paintings. The paintings on the wall depict different saints and the life of Christ from his conception to resurrection or ascension. All those impressive paintings were by artist Haile Meskel. Full of the colour, life, wit and humanity of Ethiopian art at its best they provide practically a compendium of Ethiopian saints, martyrs and wisdom. The building by itself is rectangular in shape. It is the only Gondarine church that survived the attack of the Mahdists in 1880s. According to the local tradition, the church was saved from the sacking of the dervishes by swarm of bees.

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Falasha Village (Wolleka): around 6km north of Gonder is the village of Wolleka, which was the home of population of Falasha or Ethiopian Jews or Bête Israelis. Judaism was the dominant religion in the northern Ethiopia before introduction of Christianity. But after introduction of Christianity, Judaism became nominal in the country. Falasha's are famous craftsmen and good in pottery. Crafts, synagogue (their church) and their homes are worthwhile to visit. Currently the number of Falasha's is decreased due to war, persecution and emigration. Many of them have been air lifted to Israel from 1985 to 1991.

Gorgora: the little town of Gorgora, 67km south of Gonder on the northern shore of Lake Tana, makes a pleasant excursion from Gonder for those with time, particularly for travelers interested in birds. The most attractive relic of Gorgora's former days as a capital is the attractive round church of Debre Sina built in 1608 by emperor Susenyos; it is decorated with fine paintings like Murals of Saint Mary. Other places to visit are Susenyos' old palace, church of Birgida Maryam, and monastery of Mendaba Medhanealem.

Another good time to visit Gondar is during the major festivals of Ethiopia like Timket and Ledet.

4.1.6. Tourist Attraction in and around walled City of Harar

Background to City Of Harar

In 1856, explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton managed to enter the city where only Muslims were allowed to enter. One day in January 1854, the fascinating explorer entered by the Argob (Erer) gate, disguised as an Arab businessman with a caravan packed full of books and gifts. He was the first European to pass through the gates. Harar has been referred to as the Timbuktu of the East. Though it would be just as correct to refer to Timbuktu as the Harar of the West, in both cases their grandeur is to be found in their faith and their trade.

Situated on the side of a hill which gently falls from west to east, Harar is bordered on the east by a succession of cultivated fields and to the west by a terraced pass where orchards grow. To the north, a rise is covered in tombs and to the south is a valley interested by a stream. (60)Harar is considered one of the first holy cities of the Islamic world. Good reason for this claim can be found in its ninety-nine mosques and its glorious past as a centre for the spreading of Islam. The

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irregularly walled interior hosted a wide range of commercial traffic for over three hundred years, monopolizing caravans that headed for the ports of Zeila and Berbera. To the west, the gate of Asmadin Ber or Shoa gate connected the city with central and southern Ethiopia.

To the north, the gate of Falana or Axum Ber saw caravans come and go from this direction in search of the large ports, to the northwest (Massawa) or the northeast (Zeila). The commercial network was completed at the gate of Argob Ber or Erer that connected the city with the port of Berbera. Two more gates faced south, the gate of Sukotal Ber or Bisidimo and that of Badro Ber, the latter providing access to the blacksmiths' and potters' quarter, the reason why the gate is also known as Buda Ber. These trades have superstitiously been linked with magic and the feared evil eye (buda).

The keys of these five doors were laid at the feet of the city's sultan every night. The gate of Harar was added as recently as 1970. This gate was constructed to allow vehicle access to the city centre and Feres Magala Square. In this square, whose name means —horse market,¹ is the Orthodox Christian church of Medhane Alem, built by Menelik II in 1887. A few years after Burton left the city, it opened up its gates to non-Muslims. Since then, several Europeans tried to set up business connections. One of them, Alfred Bardley, a French businessman based in Aden, established a commercial point in Harar which, at the time, was under pressure from all sides. European colonial interests were at stake and the constant threat of imminent confrontation between the Neguse Nagaste Yohannes IV and Negus Menelik. Besides the traditional trading of coffee, cloth, ivory, and slaves, arms dealing flourished. In 1880, Bradley sent a young Frenchman to take care of his business interests in Harar. The young poet Arthur Rimbaud thus arrived in the legendary city and established himself there, first as Bardley's agent and then, due to his restless spirit, independently.

Rimbaud's business worries swung between hope and failure. His letters and photographs are witness to the harshness and, at the same time, the power this land had over him. A land that put an end to his health, as he died in a Marseilles hospital in 1891, still vividly dreaming of a return to Harar. A period home is attributed to his stay there, although the Harari point to a colorful bar in the middle of Feres Magala Square as his real home, beside which were Bardley's warehouses and the multicolored chat market.

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The ancient walled city is not spectacular in itself, the walls being quite modest and more for defense than anything else. Its mosques, excluding the Great Mosque built in the 13th century, are small and simple. The mausoleum of the great Emir Nur ibn al-wazir Mujahid, as well as the sanctuary of the patron of the city, Sheik Abu Abadir al-Bakri, are minimalist, simple and white. Even the palaces of Menelik II and Ras Tafari would go unnoticed.

Its grandeur penetrates the heat more than the sight. Harar gazes towards the Orient, and therein lies the simple beauty of its ambience. Its narrow and winding cobbled alleyways, immaculate whites, Islamic greens, sky blues, ochre, the slow harmonic rhythm, draw in the eye. The silence broken by pure voices, strong and untiringly repetitive, verses soaring into the air through the walls of the Koran schools attract the ear. Time is at the service of daily life. The atmosphere is clear, the sun bright, blessing the conversations of the inhabitants within the shade. This peaceful ambience is shattered by the Magala Guddo market, where color, movement, and sound submerge us in an anarchy of beauty that blurs the mind. Its elusive and fascinating essence is the East. This city is reminiscent of a world lost in childhood dreams, dreams that would carry us to far off lands full of mystery.

In the simple Koran schools found in every neighborhood a master stands at the front of the room, reciting verses from the Koran, as the children repeat his words. The verses of the Koran are on their tables, and the children are always attentive to the small inoffensive whip that is more a symbol of power than force. The children, bored by the monotonous repetition, find their enthusiasm waning, but the whip and the master's gaze revives all the strength of their young voices. It is not only the great market of Magala Guddo that enlivens all the senses. Other small markets, such as the chat market, full of women vendors, and the livestock market on the other side of the Falana gate, possess their own charm. The market in the new part of the city, found at the base of the walled area also holds color and interest.

The intrepid R. Burton related to us that Harar has its own indigenous language, unintelligible to anyone who is not a habitual resident. The population is small (8,000 people) and made up of a much differentiated ethnic group. Time has melded this city into 150,000 inhabitants, 40,000 of which live in the old city. The Harari language, with Semitic roots, is still alive in some of the

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population who no longer wear the colorful dress of the past, but maintain their culture in their homes and traditions. Today, young Harari people, mostly girls, without renouncing their culture, are steadfast, half covering their stylish jeans with their long pastel shirts and carrying books under their arms. The heart of dynamic and cultural Harar opens itself to the future.

Wall of Harar (Jegol)

The wall of Harar is locally known as the Jegol, The old city cramped within its ancient walls, the new extending freely. The walls are believed to have commenced by Ibn al Wazir Mujahid Nur, a nephew of Ahmed Gragn, who is said to have dug a defensive trench around the town. The wall is pierced by six gateways, five of them derived from ancient times, though the original gates are no more. Two other were added by Ethiopian Government, but one of the later was destroyed by the Italians.



Figure 4.4. Jegol wall

The walls of Harar were pierced in early times by five gates, a number supposed to symbolize the Five Pillars of Islam. These gates, known to the Hararis as bari, were situated respectively to the north, east, south-east, south, and west of the city. Each had its own distinctive name, and provided entry and egress to caravans traveling to and from different stretches of the surrounding country. Each of these gates thus played a different role in the economy of the city and of neighboring lands. The northern gate, for example, was known as the Assum Bari, because it was used by traders importing assu, or pepper and salt, from the Gulf of Aden coast of Africa; while the eastern gate was called the Argob Bari because it served merchants handling the lucrative

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trade from Argobba, one of Ethiopia's inland regions.

The gates of Harar in olden days were strongly guarded, and were strictly closed at night - for no one was allowed to enter or leave the city during the long hours of darkness. Strangers wishing to enter Harar in daytime had first to deposit their spears, guns and other arms with the city's guards, who would look after them scrupulously, and return them when their owners were ready to leave. The walls had, however, a number of holes placed to allow the drainage of water and sewage and to enable hyenas, who constituted the principal garbage collectors, to enter the settlement at night and leave it before the break of dawn.

The subsequent integration of Harar into the greater Ethiopian realm led to the construction, in the twentieth century, of two additional gates. To the west, the Shewa gate, so called because it afforded access to the important Ethiopian province of that name; and also the Berbere Bari, called after Ethiopia's hot peppery spice which seems to have been handled in the area. The first of these gates is today by far the most used, for it links the Old and New Towns, while the Berbere Bari has long since been closed.

According to UNESCO, to be one of World Heritage, the wall of Jugol has got the following Criteria.

The historic town of Harar Jugol exhibits an important interchange of values of original Islamic culture, expressed in the social and cultural development of the city enclosed within the otherwise Christian region. Such influences have been merged with traditions that relate to the inland of Africa and particularly to southern Ethiopia, giving a particular characteristic form to its architecture and urban plan.

Harar Jugol bears exceptional testimony to cultural traditions related to Islamic and African roots. It is considered "the fourth holy city" of Islam, having been founded by a holy missionary from the Arabic Peninsula. Though a trading place and thus a melting pot of various influences, Harar has been in relative isolation in its region, contributing to a cultural specificity, expressed in its characteristic community structure and traditions, which are still alive. Harar Jugol is an outstanding example of a type of architectural and urban ensemble which illustrates the impact of African and Islamic traditions on the development of specific building types. The building types and the entire urban layout reflect these traditions, which give a particular character and even uniqueness to Harar Jugol.

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Harar Jugol with its surrounding landscape is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, representative of cultural interaction with the environment. The social and spatial structure (afocha) and the language of the people all reflect a particular and even unique relationship that there developed with the environment. The cultural and physical relationships with the territory have survived till today, but they are also vulnerable to irreversible change under the impact of modern globalizing world. One important attraction in Harar is the market place. Just outside of the Shoa gate of the wall of Harar, is a large sloping area devoted to daily marketing. People come from all around Harar to participate in the market.

The vibrant market place is regarded as one of the most colourful in all Ethiopia. Off the road from the Shoa Gate to the main market lies Ras Mekonin's house where Haile Selassie spent most of his childhood. Much of the trading in the market places is carried on by women, who like to dress their hair in twin buns back of each ear and who are addicted to wearing shawls of brilliant orange or red. The men prefer to wear sarong-like skirts.

The Hyena Men

Harar is the only city in the world where hyenas are fed by human hand. There is a place in Harar along the wall of the old city where at night one can see —Hyena Men" who have their pets among these scavengers and call them forth to be fed by hand and even with his mouth in the early evening). As darkness falls over the ancient walled city of Harar, local people and tourists make their way to the outskirts of the city to see a bizarre spectacle. The hyena man calls out to the 30 or 40 wild hyenas which inhabit the forests surrounding the city.

Within minutes, seven or eight pairs of luminous eyes appear in the dark. The hyena man intensifies his calls and the wild animals draw closer. In short bursts, he loudly makes sounds in a combination of his own "hyena dialect," English and the local language of Afaan Oromo. Spectators clutch one another and gasps can be heard amongst them, as the presence of the wild beasts is felt in the darkness. He starts calling out to the hyenas by name.

Harari Home and Its Handicrafts

Harari homes are unique and reminiscent of coastal Arab architecture. Every house in Harar has almost the same inside partitions and all are colorfully decorated with traditional utensils. Bowls, dishes, and basketry are hung in stylized fashion on the wall, but all are functional. The city is

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also well known for its superb handicrafts that include woven textiles, basket ware, silverware and handsomely bound books.

Rimbaud House: A fine traditional building was dating from the period when the French poet Rimbaud lived in Harar. Arthur Rimbaud was a famous 19th century French Poet who abandoned poetry at the age of 19, and then after 7 footloose years in Europe, moved to Harar in 1880. He came and settled at the historical place after the fall of the Harari kingdom and remained in Harar until his death in 1891. It was built by a French missionary. The house later converted to a French school then a museum.

This place was built by a French missionary (Arthur Rainbow) who came and settled at the historical place after the fall of the Harari kingdom. He built Arthur Rainbow place which was later converted to a French school.

Medhane Alem Church

Built at the end of the 19th century, is in the town centre and contains excellent examples of traditional regional art. Though Harar is essentially a Muslim town, it also boasts a fine Christian Church, the Church of Medhanie Alem, or Savior of the World. This place of worship was erected during the reign of Emperor Menilek, who occupied Harar in 1887. Like many structures erected in his day, it is octagonal in plan, and stands on a plinth of four steps.

The churches two roofs are also octagonal. The lower one covers an outer ambulatory or verandah, while the upper roof, divided from the lower by a narrow band of windows, rises to a central point; surmounted by an elaborate octagonal structure supporting a ten-pointed cross or star, decorated, as so often in Ethiopian churches, with ostrich eggs. The reason why these eggs are placed over church roofs is a matter of debate. Some authorities claim that they are used in recognition of the fact that the ostrich always guards its eggs most solicitously, and their eggs, it is hoped, will similarly at all times protect the faithful.

The eaves of the churches two roofs and of the upper-most structure are decorated with fine lacelike ornament. Twenty-four slender, rectangular stone columns surround the verandah, and are topped by wooden brackets with carved tracery curving outwards on either side.

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The Community Museum

Found in the town centre, has displays relating to the way of life in earlier times. Harars two museums provide remarkable visual insights into Ethiopia's unique history, as well as Harar's distinct, but still insufficiently studied civilization. The many historical exhibits include old coinage of the city and the clothes and pistol of the Harar patriot Dejazmach Teferra. In the Harar Cultural Museum you can not only see fabulous jewelry, manuscripts and baskets - but you can also sip the quti, with or without salt.

The 16th century Grand Mosque (Jami mosque), with its beautiful twin towers and slender minaret lies on the road to the Erer Gate. Women are not permitted inside the mosque.

The palaces of Emperor Menelik, Ras Mekonnen's Mausoleum and palace, are some of the attractions worth visit. In addition there are a number of caves in Harar area these caves are dated back to prehistory and are known for their paintings.

4.1.7. Other Important Historical Attractions of Ethiopia

Tiya and Other Stelae Fields

An estimated 10,000 stelae (obelisks) are scattered across the south of Ethiopia, extending in a rough belt from Tiya southeast to the vicinity of Negele Borena. Little is known about the origin of these stelae or the societies that erected them. Local tradition attributes the stelae to the 15th-century Muslim leader Ahmed Gagn, but the formative findings of Professor Roger Joussaume, the only archaeologist to have worked the sites, indicates that they were erected centuries before Gagn was born, over a 400-500-year period starting in the 9th century.

Approximately 50 stele fields are known in Gedeo zone, and two broad styles of stele are recognized. The older of these, probably dating to the 9th century, are the phallic stele, which are typically cylindrical in shape, and rounded at the top, with incisions that leave little room for ambiguity about what they are meant to represent. The steles appear to have marked graves, and the bodies beneath them were buried in a fetal position. The two largest stele fields in Gedeo are Tutu Fela and Tututi, both of which lie within 45 minutes' drive of Dilla. The Tututi field is made up almost exclusively of phallic stele, whereas anthropomorphic steles dominate at Tutu Fela. There are some parallels between the later stele found around Dilla and the anthropomorphic wooden grave markers of the Konso-who, interestingly, retain an oral tradition suggesting

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that they might have migrated to their present homeland from the eastern Rift Valley Escarpment.

Debre Libanos Monastery

Debre Libanos monastery founded in the 13th century by Abune Tekle Haymanot. Overlooking Jema River Gorge, a tributary of the Blue Nile, the Monastery owns ecclesiastical, cultural and historical relics, and boasts a rare grove of trees that have disappeared from elsewhere in the region. Walk across a 16th Century Bridge said to have been built by Portuguese to a spectacular viewpoint overlooking the gorge. Here you may see gelada monkeys—a unique grass eating primate found only in Ethiopia.

Melka Kunture

Melka Kunture is a Paleolithic site in Ethiopia. It is located 50 kilometers south of Addis Ababa by road, across the Awash River from the village of Melka Awash. Three waterfalls lie downstream of the bridge across the Awash here, which provides access south to Butajira.

Jimma Town

This is the biggest and most modern town of the west with a green and friendly atmosphere. It was the capital of the kingdom of Jimma (founded in the 14th century) which became powerful by the trade of coffee and reached the summit of its wealth in the 19th century. The last king of Jimma was the powerful King Abba Jiffar (1878-1932) who built a palace in Jiren, 8 km. from Jimma. This palace is recently restored and can be visited daily. The museum has an interesting collection of traditional arts and crafts, fine woodwork and musical instruments.

4.1.8. Accommodation, Food and Drinks and Entertainment

Accommodation

Since tourism is still relatively underdeveloped in Ethiopia, so is the choice of and quality of accommodation. Outside of Addis Ababa and the main cities, accommodation can be very limited in range. Even in the capital, the choice tourists have in different types of accommodation is small. There is one 5***** hotel, one or two 4**** hotels, many 3*** hotels and below that standard: many cheap & dirty places one would not recommend to anybody. There are no: hostels, B&B accommodations, homestays or apartments for rent.

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Camping: This is useful when one goes trekking or wants to explore remote regions. In theory, campers may put up their tent anywhere. On the grounds of established hotels, you can often see tents of travellers. There are even official camping grounds in the National Parks, but most lack any kind of facilities – no toilets, no taps. In the last couple of years, a few privately owned, upmarket camping grounds have been established around the country: near Lake Langano, in the Omo Valley, Arba Minch and the Afar region. Tents can be hired there. Even though these camping grounds are comparatively expensive, they are well designed and friendly to the environment. They also offer good outdoor experiences.

Hotels: Foreigners are usually charged a different rate than Ethiopians. Something which is quite confusing is that in Ethiopia, a room with a double bed is called a ‘_single’. In other countries, a room with a double bed is called a ‘_double’ and a room for one person is called a ‘_single’. In Ethiopia, a room with two beds is called a ‘_double’, and in other countries, such a room would be called a ‘_twin’.

Top End Hotels: The very luxurious and comfortable 5***** Sheraton Hotel is Addis Ababa’s ‘_pride and joy’. It has many facilities: an enormous swimming pool, an even larger garden, conference facilities, many shops, banks, an Ethiopian Airlines office, several restaurants, several bars, air conditioned rooms with minibar, bath and shower, hairdryer, television and much more. A second hotel, belonging to an international hotel chain, is the Hilton Hotel, also in Addis Ababa, a very good 4**** hotel. Besides these two very good hotels, slowly – privately owned – top-end hotels are appearing, particularly along the historical route. Also to be considered as top end accommodations are a small number of eco-lodges in the country. These lodges (for example Bishangari Lodge at Lake Langano or Bilen Lodge in the Afar region) are very ‘_natural’ looking, made with local materials and by local inhabitants of the region.

All facilities the traveller needs are there: comfortable, attractive accommodation; local, charming atmosphere; good food and most importantly: good, personalized service. These lodges may not be ‘_luxurious’, but they are certainly special and the staff is committed to making the guests feel welcome. Some people might argue that these lodges should be placed under Mid-Range hotels.

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Mid-Range Hotels: There are a number of state-owned hotel chains, like the Ras Hotel Group, the Wabe Shebele Group, Ethiopia Hotel Group and Ghion Hotel Group. The government is currently trying to sell many of these hotels off to the private sector. But many investments need to be made. The state of maintenance of these hotels is insufficient and the service of the staff is not outstanding. These hotels lack good ‘customer care’. They are usually clean, but the majority looks a bit run-down. One asset these hotels usually have is their location – especially the ones belonging to the Ghion Hotel Group! The Ghion Hotel in Bahir Dar is wonderfully located along Lake Tana, on beautiful garden grounds, and the Goha Hotel in Gondar has a stunning location on a hilltop, providing fantastic views over the city.

Budget Hotels: Cheap hotels make up around 90% of hotels in Ethiopia – they cater to local demand and not to tourists. Rooms are very basic and (cold) shower and toilet are usually shared. Many cheap hotels also serve as brothels. In rural area’s ‘hotels’ sometimes consist in a hut on a dirt floor, without running water or electricity.

Food and Drinks

To foreigners, Ethiopian food is very different from what they know – many travellers have to get used to it and do not like it from the beginning.

Injera: Ethiopia’s national dish has a sour and ‘different’ taste to foreigners. Some people never start liking it others do, after a while. In general, the majority of travellers do not like to eat injera and traditional food every day.

Addis Ababa has a wide selection of international food: there are Indian restaurants, Italian restaurants, Chinese restaurants, many pastry-shops etcetera. These places cater to the large expatriate community from a large number of countries, and the standard of these restaurants is often high. In Addis, restaurant-prices are quite high, compared to the rest of the country.

Outside of the capital, tourists do not have a large choice of ‘ferengi’ food. Furthermore, restaurants usually offer the same dishes everywhere. There is little variation and not much imagination is used. The client can choose between pasta, soup, meat-dishes and fish dishes – mostly prepared the same way, wherever one goes.

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Most restaurants serve local food. After some time in Ethiopia, travellers will discover that there are many traditional dishes available. Tourists will like the pastry shops, where one can buy pastries and cakes and fresh fruit juices.

In tourist guidebooks, traditional dishes like injera, different types of wots, tere sega and kitfo are described in detail, explaining what they look and taste like. Chapters about food & drink also include the rules of eating – which are different in Ethiopia and quite specific. For example: the fact that one big injera, with different wots & dishes, is eaten together with others from a mesob is different. The fact that it is eaten with the right hand is different – most foreigners use knives, forks & spoons. The tradition of gursha really needs to be explained to tourists, otherwise they would be staring at the person offering the food in astonishment.

Vegetarians: tourists who do not like to eat meat (or animal-products, like eggs, milk) can choose from a reasonable amount of vegetables, injera, bread, pasta or rice – especially on Wednesdays and Fridays and other fasting-periods, when many Ethiopians are fasting.

Coffee: Ethiopia claims to be the original home of coffee, and this could very well be true. The famous coffee-ceremony is a very important part of Ethiopian culture and etiquette. Besides the traditional bunna, one can order macchiato or bunna be wattet, both remnants of the Italian presence in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, hot drinks, but also fruit juices are served with lots of sugar, which tourists probably won't be used to. In their own country, sugar is served separately.

Water: Although water from the tap is said to be safe to drink in Addis Ababa, many tourists will not (and should not) take the risk and prefer to drink bottled water, like Highland, Dessie Springs, AquaAddis or Ambo.

Beer & Wine: There is a fairly large variety of beer-brands in Ethiopia, each with its slightly specific taste. Wine lovers will have to wait until they are back in their home-country. There are not many different types of wine and only a few are good enough to really enjoy. Red Guder and Dukam are the best. In Addis Ababa supermarkets, one can buy European and South African wines.

Tej: Of course, tej is described as an Ethiopian alcoholic drink.

Entertainment

Dance: Ethiopians love to dance and in bars, especially in the cities, tourists have plenty of chances to see dancing. To foreigners, traditional dancing is very unique in style, with the different variations of shaking body parts.

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A few of the larger hotels in Addis Ababa stage traditional dance and music shows for tourists, but these are often also popular amongst Ethiopians.

Nightclubs: one can find these mostly in Addis Ababa and they tend to be more ‘westernised’ in ambiance and music. By Ethiopian standards, nightclubs are expensive.

Sports Running: Ethiopia is known for its many outstanding long-distance runners. Haile Gebreselassie is one of the most famous athletes. He has 2 Olympic and 4 World gold medals and 15 world records on his name. He is probably the best long-distance runners in the world and one of the greatest of all time. In fact, many foreigners know Ethiopia only through this man – via television & interviews.

Sports football/soccer: as in almost all other countries in the world, football is very popular in Ethiopia and a great topic of conversation.

- **Traditional sports:** like: *Genna*: a variety of hockey, traditionally played at Christmas, and *Gugs*: a (sometimes fairly violent) game of tag on horseback, played at Ethiopian New Year and Meskel.

Religious festivals: many tourists plan their trip to Ethiopia in such a way that it will include one of the colorful Christian Orthodox festivals.

- **Meskel (Finding of the True Cross):** 27 September, is a two-day, very colorful festival. Bonfires are built topped by a cross, to which flowers (Meskel daisy) are tied. After the bonfires are blessed, which takes place during a long ceremony, they are set on fire and dancing and singing begins around them. Addis Ababa, Gondar and Aksum are good places to experience Meskel.
- **Timkat (Epiphany, celebrating Christ’s baptism):** 19 January. This three-day festival is the most colourful of the year. The church tabots (replicas of the Ark of the Covenant) are taken to a nearby body of water on the afternoon of the eve of Timkat. During the night, the priests and the faithful guard the tabots. The following morning, the crowds gather around the water, which is blessed and then splashed onto them. Religious vows are renewed. The tabot is then paraded back to the church, accompanied by much singing and dancing. Gondar is considered to be the best place to be for Timkat. Addis Ababa is also good.
- **Fasika (Orthodox Easter):** March/April. Fasika marks the end of a long vegetarian fast of 56 days. When the fasting is over, Ethiopians enjoy good food with family and

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friends.

- **Leddēt (Christmas):** 6-7 January. Ethiopian Christmas is not celebrated on 25-26 December, like elsewhere in the world, but two weeks later. During this festival, the faithful attend all-night church services, often moving from one church to another. On Christmas day, the traditional games of genna of gugs (see above) are played. Lalibela and Addis Ababa are the best places to experience Leddet.
- **Kiddus Yohannes (New Year's Day):** 11 September. This is an important family and social event. New clothes are bought for the occasion and friends and relatives are visited.
- **Festival of Maryam Zion:** 30 November. This festival is exclusive to Aksum. There is much singing and dancing, celebrating the church of St. Maryam of Zion, in which the Ark of the Covenant is said to house in.
- **Kulubi Gabriel:** 28 December. Large numbers of Ethiopians make a pilgrimage to the Kulubi Gabriel church near Dire Dawa in the east.

4.2. Travelling Around the Country

Travelling to the Country

By Air: Travellers can enter Ethiopia by air via Bole International Airport, in Addis Ababa. It is a new, modern and comfortable airport building – it was opened in January 2003. Bole International airport contains banks that are open 24 hrs a day, a post office, souvenir and duty free shops, cafés and restaurants and a business center with internet and fax-access. There is an Ethiopian Tourism Commission office where tourists can make hotel-reservations free of charge. Besides the international airport, there are just over 20 regional airports. Some of these are main regional airports, frequented by tourists – especially in the North of Ethiopia: Mekele, Lalibela, Axum, Gondar, and Bahir Dar. Other airports, mainly in the south and a few in the east, have limited flight-scheduled and do not (or hardly) serve tourism purposes. Travellers can buy their air-tickets at travel agencies in their own countries, but nowadays, many flights are booked and paid via the internet. In the case of the latter, payment is made by credit card.

A busy time for travelling to Ethiopia is around Ethiopian New Year and the month of August, the weeks around Easter and Christmas. Not only tourists are attracted by the festivals, but also

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Ethiopians living abroad visit their relatives during these periods.

Ethiopia has only one international and national airline: Ethiopian Airlines. It is one of the largest African carriers, with a modern fleet of Boeing 737's, 757's and 767's. There are more than 50 offices of Ethiopian Airlines all over the world. Other major airlines serving Ethiopia are (in 2003-2004) Kenya Airways (in conjunction with KLM) Egypt Air, Lufthansa (Germany), Saudi Arabian Airlines, British Airways and Djibouti Airlines.

Advantages of flying internationally with Ethiopian airlines is (1) the generous baggage allowance, which is 40 kg (instead of the standard 20 kg) (2) the option of changing one's return date without extra cost, and (3) discounted fares on domestic Ethiopian Airlines flights.

By Land: There are six official points of entry by land into Ethiopia from neighboring countries.

- coming from Eritrea: border crossings at Rama and Zela Anbessa (currently closed)
- Coming from Djibouti: border crossings at Galafi and Doualé (train crossing)
- Coming from Kenya: border crossing at Moyale
- Coming from Sudan: border crossings at Metema and Humera (closed at the time of writing) All border crossings have full customs and immigration checks.

A very small minority of tourists who come with * their own vehicle * by bus or truck * by bicycle or * by train (Djibouti) are the ones entering into Ethiopia at these border posts. The overland route from South Africa, via Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan, Egypt _From Cape Town to Cairo_ is a popular and challenging route. Especially daredevils travelling by motorbike or bicycle take on this challenge, which takes a few months to complete and requires a lot of preparation. There are not many international bus-routes. People who want to travel by bus would have to go to a border town. And take another bus from the border town in the other country.

Travelling Within the Country

By Air: As mentioned before, Ethiopian Airlines is the national carrier and the only provider of domestic air services amongst the 22 regional airports.

Most domestic flights are from Addis, but some towns are also connected with each other, for example: Addis Ababa – Bahir Dar – Gondar – Axum – Lalibela.

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Tourists are encouraged to travel both by air, as well as by road. Travel by air is fast and quite affordable. Travel by road provides the opportunity to see Ethiopia's landscape, drive through villages and see how Ethiopians live in their own environment.

Safety checks are thorough in Ethiopia. Items as knives, cigarette lighters or even matches are prohibited in hand luggage and will be taken into the cockpit and given back at the destination. The baggage limit is 20 kg on domestic flights. The domestic departure tax is 10 birr.

In theory, one can buy a ticket and fly on the same day. This is often possible, but travellers are advised to buy their domestic flights well in advance – especially in the high-season periods. It is essential to reconfirm all flights – domestic (24 hours in advance) as well as international (72-48 hours in advance) Visitors should be aware that schedules do occasionally change, or that flights are sometimes cancelled at the last minutes, because of mechanical problems or weather conditions.

To tourists, domestic flights are good value for money. Currently, only the Addis Ababa and Gondar offices of Ethiopian airlines are known to accept credit cards. The other offices accept only cash birr or dollars (sometimes traveller's cheques). For traveller's, paying by credit card is a very accepted and convenient way of paying.

By Land: Travelling by land in Ethiopia is far from perfect: there are not many asphalted roads; roads are dusty and bumpy and often in bad condition. In 2002, the road density was only 27 km per 1000 square kilometer – one of the lowest in the world, even by African standards. But since the 1990's, road building is one of the top priorities of the government. In 1997, a huge investment project, the Road Sector Development Program, was launched, in partnership with 13 international developers and donors. As a result, roads are appearing at a tremendous pace all around the country. By 2007, good surfaced roads are expected to go from Addis Ababa all the way to Adigrat in the north, to Gondar in the northwest and to Jijiga in the east. For the traveller, this project means three things:

- Journey times are getting shorter
- Previously inaccessible areas are now opening up
- Travel is becoming more comfortable.

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Bus: A good network of buses connects all the major towns of Ethiopia. Buses are cheap and slow. Especially during the rainy season, travel by bus can become very slow.

Standing in the aisle is illegal everybody must have a seat. On longer journeys, there is usually time built in the journey for breakfast and lunch. Most long-distance buses leave very early in the morning. Some buses leave when it is the scheduled time, other will only depart when the bus has filled up with people.

There is one government bus association and more than 10 private companies in Ethiopia. The private bus companies are less bureaucratic, but they are also less ordered. Seats are not assigned, whereas in the government buses, they are. For transportation to smaller towns, people can use minibuses, 4-Wheeldrives or pick-up trucks.

Within towns: White & blue minibuses provide a quick, convenient and cheap way of going from one place to another in town, for just a small amount of money. In many of the larger towns, there are also taxis. Prices are much more expensive than minibuses, but reasonable. However, foreigners are usually charged more than Ethiopians.

Gari's: are a popular local means of getting around in town. They are cheap and usually do not operate on the main roads, but on the back roads.

Car rental: 4-Wheeldrives are easily hired from agencies in Addis Ababa, but they are not cheap – not even by Western standards. Outside Addis Ababa, a 4-Wheeldrive is the only type of car that is able to drive on the rough Ethiopian roads. Vehicles can only be rented in the capital and in a number of cities. Tourists should be aware of the risks of renting from private individuals, particularly regarding insurance and the condition of the car.

For people to hire a car and drive themselves a valid international driver's licence is compulsory and the person driving must be 25-70 years old. Almost all rented 4-Wheeldrives are provided with a local driver. He can be very useful as guide/interpreter/mechanic. The price for a 4- Wheel drive usually includes rent, driver, unlimited kilometres, all fuel and insurances. It is expensive, but very much worth it. Prices vary greatly, according on the period of rental, the season and negotiation-skills.

Bicycle: Ethiopia's irregular terrain and rough (but improving) roads are not very good for cycling. However, each year, there are a number of adventurous cyclists who travel across the

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country. If they are totally self-sufficient with plenty of spare parts, a good repair kit and the capacity to carry sufficient amounts of water, it can be done.

Hitching: a ride is not very accepted in Ethiopia. It is something very poor people (used to) do. But sometimes, in remote areas, where there is no scheduled public transport service, hitching is the only thing to do. Travellers have to pay a fare, to be negotiated in advance. The best place to look for lifts is at hotels and cafés in the center of town.

Train: Some tourists are interested in travelling by train, which, in the case of Ethiopia, can be done between Addis Ababa and Djibouti, via Dire Dawa and stopping also at various small towns. It is an old railway line, however, and not particularly comfortable.

Boat: The only boat service available is on Lake Tana, where a ferry service operates.

Organized tours: These could be:

- Fully organized tours: from arrival in Ethiopia - covering all accommodation, transportation, tours, guides, activities - until the moment the tourist leaves, or:
- Part of an individual holiday, for example: a white-water adventure on the Omo River.

Organized tours are useful in a number of situations:

- When one is interested in specialized activities (white water rafting, bird-safaris)
- When one wants to visit remote areas, with limited public transport (Lower Omo Valley, Danakil Depression)
- When one wants to make a ‘_themed-trip’ with expert guides
- When one wants to see and do as much as possible, but has limited time.

There are various agencies, offering all sorts of trips – fixed trips or tailor made itineraries. Most of these tour operators have websites, where one can compare prices. A number of more competitive private tour operators have established themselves on the market; all are based in Addis Ababa.

Agencies all offer all or some of the following:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * Guides | * car hire |
| * Historical route tours | * camping equipment hire |
| * Bird-watching & wildlife viewing | * white water rafting |
| * fishing | * Omo Valley touris |
| * Photo-safaris | * Simien and Bale Mountains trekking |

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* Rift Valley lake trips

* Danakil & Afar excursions

Some agencies also have very attractive _eco-friendly‘lodges and campsites. These can be found in the Omo Valley, Lake Langano, Bale Mountains, and Lalibela and near Awash.

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Self-Check 4	Written Test
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Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I Part two: Choose the best answer among the given alternatives

1, ----- Established in 1948, the park is located within Arada locality, close to the Martyr's Memorial Square at Sidist Kilo.

- A. Yeka Park
- B. Lion Zoo Park
- C. Peacock ParK
- D. Ferensay Park**

2, which one of the following is not Religious Festivals of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church?

- A. Epiphany
- B. Finding of the True Cross
- C. Crist mass
- D. Irreccha**

3, which one the following tourist attraction in Ethiopia is commonly regarded the “Camelot of Africa”.

- A. Axum
- B. Lalibela
- C. Gondar
- D. Jimma**

4, which one the following tourist attraction in Ethiopia is commonly regarded the “African Petra”.

- A. Axum
- B. Lalibela
- C. Gondar
- D. Jimma**

Part II: give short answers for the following statements.

1. Outline different cultural tourism attraction which is found in and around Lalibela?
2. What are the two international names used for Lalibela?

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3. Outline some of touristic place in bahir dar and its surrounding area?
4. Outline some of historical attraction which is found inside the royal enclosure.
5. What are different tourist attractions that founds outside the royal enclosure.
6. Discuss how the churches of Lake Tana area are important.
7. Outline some of the most important tourist attraction in and around welled city of Harar?

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