

January 15 – 28, 2007

## Uncommon Journeys, LLC

# Ethiopia: Journey into the Medieval Past

Between the shoulder of Kenya and the belly of Eritrea, lies the ancient kingdom of Abyssinia, known today as Ethiopia. In the Historic North, churches and palaces reflect the architectural genius of history's masters, and speak softly of a bygone era. They are enduring monuments to Christianity and kings, emperors and legends, their grandeur undiminished after so many years. These epic sites shelter priceless relics from a powerful and religious ancient civilization. But that's not all! The tour is scheduled to coincide with the Timket (Epiphany) processions and ceremonies of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith. This tour is a must for anyone interested in medieval history, timeless cultures and religious pageantry.

### Tour Highlights

- Witness splendid processions of the Timkat (Epiphany) ceremonies
- Journey through Axum, legendary home of the Lost Ark of the Covenant
- Explore hand-carved rock churches of Lalibela
- Discover medieval monasteries of Lake Tana, source of the Blue Nile
- Visit salt-trading nomads of the Afar region

**Tour price: \$3300    Single supplement: \$435**

Note: Combine this tour with **Ethiopia: Journey into the Stone Ages** and **save \$500**.

The tour price, based on a minimum of 6 participants, **includes** 12 nights of accommodations, all meals, domestic airfare, ground transportation, airport transfers, entrance fees, tips of a group nature and the services of an English speaking and photographic guide. The tour price **does not include** international airfare, visa (currently \$60), tip to local guide, airport departure tax (currently \$20), beverages and expenses of a personal nature.

A deposit of \$500 is required to register and secure a place on the tour. The deposit is fully refundable if notice is given 60 days prior to departure. The balance of the tour cost is due 60 days prior to departure. If you also sign up for **Ethiopia: Journey into the Stone Ages**, only one \$500 deposit is required.

## **Passport and Visa Requirements**

A passport with six months validity and visa are required to enter Ethiopia.

## **Tour Leader**

Debbie Jefkin-Elnkave is a travel photographer and tour leader who specializes in remote and exotic cultures. Her interests include history, architecture and landscapes, but she finds the greatest rewards in discovering, visiting and photographing indigenous cultures. Debbie's knowledge of Ethiopia, profound appreciation for the people, and desire to share this amazing country, ensure a very rewarding journey.

## **Waiver of Liability**

Uncommon Journeys, LLC assumes no responsibility for accidents or injury to tour participants. You will be required to read, accept and sign an agreement which releases Uncommon Journeys, LLC from any responsibility of liability.

**Uncommon Journeys, LLC**  
**Ethiopia: Journey into the Medieval Past**  
**2007 Itinerary**

**Day 1: Sunday, January 14 or Monday, January 15 Travel to Addis Ababa**

**Day 2: Tuesday, January 16 Addis Ababa**  
Arrive in Addis Ababa.

**Day 3: Wednesday, January 17 Addis Ababa → Lalibela**  
Fly to Lalibela, the former capital of a 12<sup>th</sup> century dynasty. We visit several rock-hewn churches built during that period, which still stand in testimony to the power of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith, which is practiced by half of Ethiopians.

**Day 4: Thursday, January 18 Lalibela**  
The Ketra celebration marks the beginning of the eve of the Timket, or Epiphany celebrations. The festivities begin with a procession of priests bearing sacred icons, manuscripts and crosses. They converge onto the ceremonial grounds for several hours of holy mass, kinetic dancing, chanting, drumming and trilling ululations.

**Day 5: Friday, January 19 Lalibela → Axum**  
The ceremonial grounds are filled to capacity on Timket morning, and yesterday's chaos is tamed as if someone has waved a magic wand over the town. Following the mass, icons and followers are anointed with holy water to commemorate Christ's baptism, and the precious icons are returned to the churches. This afternoon we fly to Axum.

**Day 6: Saturday, January 20 Axum**  
If you thought the Timket processions were fantastic, wait until you see the pageantry of the Feast of Saint Michael! The priests themselves, resplendent in fine brocade vestments, carrying crosses and leaning against prayer sticks, are like icons from a medieval past. This afternoon we visit historic sites of Axum, an important stop on caravan routes dating back 2000 years. Our stops include several 10<sup>th</sup> century obelisks, each carved from a single piece of stone, and the ruins of the Queen of Sheba's palace. Her son, Menelik I, reputedly brought the Ark of the Covenant to Axum from his father, King Solomon of Jerusalem, and it is said to be sheltered here, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Cathedral of St. Mary of Zion.

**Day 7: Sunday, January 21 Axum → Bahir Dar**  
Fly to Bahir Dar.

**Day 8: Monday, January 22 Bahir Dar**  
This morning we explore the villages around Bahir Dar and visit the Blue Nile Falls. Dropping over a ¼ mile wide and 150 foot deep chasm, it is a miracle of nature and vision of grandeur. Note: if the dam is closed, we will not be able to view the falls.

**Day 9: Tuesday, January 23 Bahir Dar**

We cross Lake Tana, source of the Blue Nile, stopping to explore several small islands which shelter medieval churches and monasteries.

**Day 10: Wednesday, January 24 Bahir Dar → Addis Ababa**

Fly to Addis Ababa for a traditional Ethiopian dinner.

**Day 11: Thursday, January 25 Addis Ababa → Afar**

We fly to Dessie, then drive to Afar.

**Day 12: Friday, January 26 Afar**

We explore the Afar region, which is home to the Afar nomads, who wrest a living from salt mines, using camels as beasts of burden.

**Day 13: Saturday, January 27 Afar → Addis Ababa**

**Day 14: Sunday, January 28 Departure**