



# Pre-Departure Information

LOST WORLDS OF ETHIOPIA



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## WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

## PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.
- Passport Photocopy:** Scan\* a COLOR copy of your passport photo page and email it to us as a JPG or PDF attachment, or send us a high quality photocopy by mail (immediately upon reserving your trip).
- Vaccination Card:** Please send us a photo or scanned copy of your completed Covid-19 Vaccination Card if you have not already done so. Just the front side of the card is sufficient.

*\*If you are scanning documents to email, we suggest a maximum resolution of 300 dpi.*

## PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

## QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** ([www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com)) or e-mail us at: [info@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:info@wildernesstravel.com).

# Travel Information

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## PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Ethiopia. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. The service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** (<http://www.passportvisasexpress.com/?affId=2120>). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

## VISAS

US citizens need a visa for Ethiopia. While US citizens can obtain a visa upon arrival in Addis (the consular fee is currently \$70 per visa, subject to change), we recommend you get your visa in advance. The Ethiopia tourist visa is typically valid for 2 years from the date of issue for multiple entry with a duration of stay not to exceed 90 days per entry. You may apply for a visa online at **www.evisa.gov.et**(<https://www.evisa.gov.et/>).

You may also contact a local consulate to purchase your visa, or you may contact our recommended passport and visa processing service, **Passport Visas Express**(<http://www.passportvisasexpress.com/?affId=2120>) (PVE). Let them know you are booked on a Wilderness Travel trip.

If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

Here are some answers for questions on the visa application form:

Address in Ethiopia Hotel: Sheraton Hotel, Taitu St, Addis Ababa

Hotel Telephone number: (+251) 115-171-717

Contact Person in Ethiopia: Dawit, Ethiopian Rift Valley Safaris, Addis

Telephone Number: (+251) 111-552-128

Family Accommodation - write "not applicable"

## MONEY

The currency in Ethiopia is the Birr. Make sure you get a currency declaration form on arrival as you need to hand it back in on departure. You can change money at the Sheraton in Addis. If you bring your funds in US cash, it is important that your bills be clean and crisp and dated 2006 or newer; old, faded, ripped, or soiled bills will be rejected. Travelers' checks are not recommended. Credit cards are accepted only at major establishments in Addis. You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, for meals listed as "on your own" in the trip itinerary, and for personal items such as beverages.

To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards abroad, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card in a foreign country.

## TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. A range of reference would be \$170-190 USD per trip member for the Trip Leader and \$70-80 USD per trip member for the drivers in the south. Tips can be given in US dollars or local currency, though US dollars (\$20, \$50, \$100 bills) are preferred. The Trip Leader will tip the local guides in the north.

## SPECIAL DIETS

We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **Telephone**

The international dialing code for Ethiopia is 251. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use. At some of the lodges and hotels on the trip, there are no telephones. Radio contact is the only source of communication with the outside world in some parts of Ethiopia and it is reserved for emergencies.

### **Email & Internet Access**

Internet access is available at the Sheraton in Addis and is limited or not available at our other accommodations.

## ELECTRICITY

Ethiopia has 220-volt current. There are a variety of plug types, so it's a good idea to bring a plug adapter kit for appliance use.

# Medical Information

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The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>) Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** (<http://www.travmed.com>) and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**. (<http://www.magellans.com>)

## INOCULATIONS

Entry requirements are subject to change; check with the Centers for Disease Control for updates. All shots should be entered on your International Health Card (yellow card), which is provided by the facility giving the shots. Keep it with your passport while traveling. This provides an important personal record for you to refer to when making future travel plans. We recommend you discuss the following with your physician:

### **Yellow Fever**

Yellow Fever inoculation is currently NOT required for entry to Ethiopia **unless you are traveling from a country with a risk of yellow fever**. The shot is good for 10 years. If needed, have proof of the shot recorded in your International Health Card.

### **Polio**

People who have received the primary series of at least three doses of polio vaccine are considered fully immunized. People who are unsure of their status should receive the vaccine (three doses spaced at intervals).

### **Hepatitis**

The vaccines HAVRIX and VAQTA (two injections, six to 18 months apart) give long-term protection against Hepatitis A and are worthwhile if you travel regularly to developing countries.

### **Tetanus Booster**

A booster is strongly recommended (effective for 10 years).

### **Typhoid**

The CDC recommends the shot or the oral vaccine, Vivotif Berna. You may not be able to take the oral vaccine simultaneously with mefloquine (for malaria prevention).

## INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CARD

The government of Ethiopia requires proof of yellow fever vaccination if you are traveling from a country with risk of yellow fever (this does not include the US). For a complete list, go to the specific Center for Disease Control **website**(<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2014/chapter-3-infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/yellow-fever#1948>).

## MALARIA PREVENTION

Malaria is a serious but preventable disease spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. All travelers are urged to take antimalarial medications, available only by prescription. Please discuss antimalarial medication with your doctor, who will explain various antimalarials and their side effects and recommend a regimen for you. In addition to medication, a further precaution against malaria is to wear long sleeves and long pants at dusk. Thin clothing should be sprayed with insect repellent, especially around the elbows and ankles. Use repellent containing DEET.

If, after returning from your trip, you have a persistent fever with chills, muscle aches, and headache, report to your doctor the possibility of exposure to malaria.

For further malaria information, consult your doctor or the **CDC Malaria Hotline**(<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/malinfo.htm>): 888-232-3228.

## STAYING HEALTHY

Drink only bottled water. Don't brush your teeth with tap water; use bottled water. Don't use ice in your drinks unless you are sure it was made with treated water. The Sheraton in Addis does have a water treatment plant using ultra-violet water sterilization so should be fine to drink. When in doubt, ask your Trip Leader for guidelines.

# Helpful Information

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

For most people, a compact digital camera or even a cell phone with a fixed zoom lens works well, and newer point-and-shoots and phones can produce excellent quality pictures. For higher quality images, especially for printing, and the ability to use longer telephoto lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a digital SLR is well worthwhile, though heavier. Lenses of 200mm or 300mm, with image stabilization, allow you to hand-hold the camera with minimal camera shake. A polarizing filter is useful, especially to reduce reflection on water surfaces and to deepen the blue of the sky. Pack your equipment well and use plastic bags to protect it from dust or moisture. Bring wipes and a dust blower to keep your lenses clean. Most digital cameras and phones now have video options, and you may even want to consider bringing a GoPro. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. You may want to consider insuring your equipment. Camera equipment is available for rent from Borrow Lenses with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients.

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards. If you take a lot of pictures and save them at a high resolution, it can be helpful to bring a digital storage unit or laptop so you can download your pictures and free up your memory cards for reuse on a regular basis. Bring a backup battery or set of batteries so one is always charged and ready to use, and bring your battery charger (and appropriate plug adapter). If your camera uses replaceable batteries, bring spares with you. Note: for trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger.

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate, and always use gestures or simple phrases to ask permission. If people do not wish to be photographed, please honor their requests. Wilderness Travel normally suggests that travelers avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities. However, when you are in the Omo region in the south, the local people will expect to be paid for any photos since they consider picture taking a form of commerce. The act of negotiating for photos can be a little daunting to travelers so please ask your guide if you need assistance. We will try to negotiate a group photo fee for the Mursi, but this may not be possible and doesn't work for the other tribes (which lack a central authority to coordinate this type of exchange). The typical fee is 5 Ethiopian Birr (approximately 20 cents). Your trip leader will assist you in exchanging money to local currency.

Omo Child Visit: We will visit the Omo Child Project Center after you visit the Mursi. The goal for the center is to stop Mingi, the ritualistic killing of infants and children in the Omo River region of Southwest Ethiopia by providing education and safe, nurturing shelter for rescued tribal mingi children.

We find that our clients create wonderful images that really define the unique aspects of our adventures. We would love to make use of your images in our marketing materials and our photoblog, and request that you send us a small sample of your best images and a simple email giving us permission to use the photos. Please email your photos to [wtphtoblog@gmail.com](mailto:wtphtoblog@gmail.com). We look forward to receiving them!



## **BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER**

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

## **GIFTS TO CHILDREN**

We suggest that you do not give anything to children, including candy, balloons, or pens. It encourages begging, which has become a problem as tourism has increased. If you feel you would like to help the local people, you can bring small items such as school supplies (crayons, maps, postcards, pens, notepads) to be given to the Trip Leader to donate to a local school.

# Packing List

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## THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Ethiopia Visa
- International Health Card ("Yellow Card") with proof of Yellow Fever inoculation within the last 10 years.
- Expense money

## WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** (<http://wildernesstravel.newheadings.com>).

## LUGGAGE

- Duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase, with small padlock (must be unlocked for air travel). Due to limited space in vehicles, all your clothing and gear must fit into this bag, without exception.
- Daypack for camera gear, water bottle, and personal items needed during the day
- Small roll-up duffel if you are an avid shopper

## WEIGHT LIMITS

A 44-lb. weight limit applies on domestic flights in Ethiopia, with one carry-on item allowed in the main cabin. For our charter flight, we ask that you separate out non-essential items. You can store extra luggage at the Sheraton in Addis during the trip. Be sure to label your bag and lock it.

## NOTES ON CLOTHING

In the highlands, evenings are cool—a fleece jacket is necessary, and a warm hat and gloves could prove useful. In the lowlands, trip members usually wear light cotton pants or nylon "travel" pants and a short-sleeved shirt during the day and long-sleeved shirts for mosquito protection in the evening. For city and hotel attire, we suggest skirts or slacks for women, slacks and shirts for men. No jackets are required for men. Ethiopians dress modestly and visitors should also take care to dress modestly. Shoes must be removed before entering mosques and churches. There will be limited opportunities to do laundry on the trip.

## CLOTHING

This list is meant as a guideline only; we encourage you to pack as lightly as possible.

- Lightweight rain jacket
- Fleece jacket for cool evenings
- Lightweight long pants or long skirt. Synthetic “travel” fabrics dry easily; jeans are slow drying and not recommended
- Walking shorts
- T-shirts
- Lightweight hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes; boots with Vibram-type soles offer better ankle support on uneven ground.
- Running or tennis shoes for city/buses
- Tevas, sandals, or rubber thongs
- Shade hat with wide brim
- Scarf (for women to cover their heads in churches)
- Underwear/ socks; synthetics dry faster
- Bathing suit
- Sleepwear (or a set of lightweight long underwear)

## EQUIPMENT

- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair is invaluable.
- Personal toiletries
- Flashlight, extra batteries
- Plastic bags to sort items in your duffel
- Insect repellent (for hotels outside Addis)

## PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member must bring a small kit for personal use.

- Sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher. We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol, Tylenol PM for sleeping
- Topical antibiotic (such as Neosporin) for cuts, bites, or sores
- Insect repellent. Repellents with DEET are recommended. DEET content of about 30-35% is ideal (higher DEET content is not recommended). Wipe DEET off your hands before touching plastic surfaces (such as binoculars) because it can damage plastic. Aerosol repellents are useful for spraying on clothes or in some of the hotel rooms if necessary.
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. "Liquid band-aids," such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Anti-bacterial gel for hand washing (at least 60% to be effective)
- Post-insect bite cream (antihistamine)
- Antihistamine such as Benadryl and cold remedy such as Sudafed
- Pepto-Bismol tablets for diarrhea, heartburn, indigestion
- Imodium for diarrhea. If you wish to bring an antibiotic for diarrhea prophylaxis, please consult your physician.
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Gore-Tex jacket and/or extra sweater if you really feel the cold.
- Lightweight long underwear
- Camera, spare batteries or charger, spare memory cards
- Reading/writing material
- Tape recorder to record singing or other sounds
- Converter/plug adapter for appliance use in hotels. Ethiopia has 220-volt current.
- Collapsible walking stick
- Binoculars
- Travel clock
- Shower shoes/slippers
- Cough drops (to help ease irritation from dusty roads)
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.
- Travel sheet or sleeping bag liner for hotels outside Addis.

# Reading List

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## ESSENTIAL READING

### **Bradt Guide Ethiopia**

*Philip Briggs*

2018, 672 PAGES

A region-by-region overview of the country with brief introductory chapters on wildlife, culture and history for the traveler. Includes 65 maps and a section of color photographs.

### **Notes from the Hyena's Belly, An Ethiopian Boyhood**

*Nega Mezlekia*

2002, 351 PAGES

A memoir of childhood in Ethiopia after the downfall of Emperor Haile Selassie. Mezlekia, who was born in Jigiga in 1958, chronicles his early childhood, youthful political activism and conscription into a guerilla army.

### **Ethiopia Map**

*ITMB*

2011

A full-color, shaded relief map of Ethiopia at a scale of 1:2,000,000, featuring an inset of central Addis Ababa and an index of place names.

### **Culture Smart! Ethiopia**

*Sarah Howard*

2009, 168 PAGES

A concise, well-illustrated and practical guide to local customs, etiquette and culture, equally of interest to the traveler and business person.

### **The Emperor, Downfall of an Autocrat**

*Ryszard Kapuscinski*

1989, 180 PAGES

In 1975, Kapuscinski traveled throughout Ethiopia and listened to stories about the Supreme Emperor Haile Selassie told by the servants and associates that surrounded him while Ethiopia collapsed around him. Kapuscinski transformed the interviews into a powerful narrative of the high living and unimaginable abuse within the ancient regime

## ALSO RECOMMENDED

### **Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals**

*Jonathan Kingdon*

2005, 272 PAGES

A conveniently compact edition of Kingdon's gloriously illustrated Field Guide to African Mammals. The guide includes abbreviated information on identification, distribution, ecology and conservation status and 480 outstanding color illustrations and maps.

### **The Blue Nile**

*Alan Moorehead*

2000, 320 PAGES

In this grand history of exploration and events on the great river from 1798 to 1869, Moorehead follows the course of the Blue Nile from the Ethiopian highlands through Sudan and Egypt to the Mediterranean.

### **Lonely Planet Ethiopia Djibouti & Somaliland**

*Jean-Bernard Carillet*

2013, 352 PAGES

A comprehensive guide in the Lonely Planet style featuring maps, background detail on the country and culture -- and practical information for the traveler.

### **A History of Ethiopia**

*Harold Marcus*

2002, 300 PAGES

A challenging, in-depth survey of Africa's oldest nation, ranging from prehistory to 1991; organized chronologically, it features three chapters on the long reign of Haile Sellassie -- his rise to power and eventual overthrow.

### **The Ethiopians**

*Richard Pankhurst*

2001, 320 PAGES

An outstanding survey of Ethiopian political history and culture from pre-history to 1991 by a leading scholar.

### **Lucy, The Beginnings of Humankind**

*Donald Johanson*

1990, 409 PAGES

The original, influential account of the thrilling discovery of Lucy in 1974 and the impact of the discovery on ideas about human evolution.

### **The Sign and the Seal, The Quest for the Lost Arc of the Covenant**

*Graham Hancock*

1993, 600 PAGES

A page-turning yarn of adventure, amazing persistence, and scholarship, which follows Hancock's 1983 visit to Axum, Ethiopia, the legendary resting place of the Ark of the Covenant.

### **Lonely Planet Ethiopian Amharic Phrasebook and Dictionary**

*Daniel Aboye Aberra*

2017, 240 PAGES

A handy phrasebook for Amharic basics. This guide focuses on pronunciation, basic grammar and essential vocabulary for the traveler.

### **Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia**

*Paul Henze*

2001, 287 PAGES

A concise history of Ethiopia by a U.S. government officer in Addis Ababa in the 1960s. Henze has remained involved in Ethiopian affairs as a writer, consultant and frequent visitor.

### **Ancient Churches of Ethiopia**

*David W. Phillipson*

2009, 230 PAGES

A gorgeously illustrated portrait of Ethiopian Christian civilization and its churches from the Aksumite period to the 13th century.

### **Chameleon Days, An American Boyhood in Ethiopia**

*Tim Bascom*

2006, 240 PAGES

Bascom looks back in this absorbing memoir, winner of the Breadloaf and Bakeless Prize, at the Ethiopia of his childhood, his missionary doctor parents, siblings, friends and acquaintances, boarding school in Addis Ababa and the cabin on the slopes of Lake Bishoftu.

### **Cutting for Stone**

*Abraham Verghese*

2010, 667 PAGES

Verghese's powerful tale of the coming-of-age of orphaned twin brothers, sons of an Indian nun and a British surgeon, moves from Addis Ababa on the brink of revolution to New York and back again.

**Flashman on the March**

*George MacDonald Fraser*

2006, 378 PAGES

In this 12th outing in the series, our reluctant hero finds himself at the center of General Robert Napier's Abyssinian campaign. It's another excellent opportunity to comment on the folly of the British Empire, a rollicking entertainment and painless dose of history.

**Birds of Africa South of the Sahara**

*Peter Ryan*

2011, 768 PAGES

This compact field guide, the first to describe and illustrate all of the birds of sub-Saharan Africa, features 359 color plates and 2,100 range maps.

**Visiting Ethiopian Churches**

*Dawit Teferi*

2019, 186 PAGES

An analysis of paintings in eight churches that are frequently visited on a cultural itinerary.

Revised: January 23, 2020

**The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia**

*J.P. Hardy*

2009, 157 PAGES

Johnson drew upon the journals of a Jesuit priest to weave this ironic tale of earthly paradise in the "happy valley of Abyssinia," originally published in 1759.

**Hidden Treasures of Ethiopia: A Guide to the Remote Churches of an Ancient Land**

*Marie-Jose Friedlander*

2019, 352 PAGES

A guide to the churches, their architecture, and decoration, including descriptions of the colorful murals. With color photographs.