



# Addis Ababa

Photo: Gift Habeshaw/unsplash.com



Dereje/Shutterstock.com

Capital of one the world's fastest-growing economies, Addis Ababa (also spelled Addis Abeba) is a city in motion, catching up to Ethiopia's zooming commercial development in stride. At times gauche and somewhat rough around the edges, it is nonetheless worth more than a single night in transit, if only for the country's finest dining, shopping and of-the-moment urban developments.



Martchan/Shutterstock.com



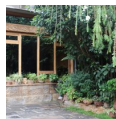
Hiren Ranpara/Shutterstock.com

## Featured



### Merkato

It takes heart to venture into the chaotic-looking, sprawling marketplace of...



### Zoma Museum

The Zoma Museum is an environmentally conscious artist in residency project....



### Lion of Judah & Churchill ...

The Lion of Judah marks the beginning of Churchill Avenue, one of the city's...



### Bata Mariam Mausoleum

A hidden door inside leads into the crypt, where several Ethiopian royals ar...



### Holy Trinity Cathedral

The second in importance house of worship in Ethiopia — the Holy Trinity Cat...

## Top 5



### Ethnological Museum

The capital's Ethnological Museum is considered to be one of the finest on t...



### National Museum of Ethiopia

The National Museum of Ethiopia contains a plethora of cultural artefacts. I...



### Red Terror Martyrs' Memori...

The chilling, heartbreaking exhibits of the Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Mus...



### Entoto Hills

A steep climb (or car ride) up Mount Entoto is worth the time if only for th...



### St George Cathedral & Museum

Typically octagonal, the stern-looking, neoclassical St George Cathedral was...

## THE CITY



*Dereje/Shutterstock.com*

The modern Addis Ababa descended from its original founding spot atop the close-by Entoto Hill. Back in the day, the city used to shift seasonally between its elevated and low-lying locations until the late 19th century. Addis Ababa has long taken root in the heart of Ethiopia, and grown to become not just the country's official capital, but the entire continent's diplomatic epicentre. An abundance of important international organisations based here, including United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union.

The sprawling city's two neighbourhoods to keep on your radar are the Mercato and the Piazza. The Mercato is home to an enormous market selling everything under the sun, while the Piazza is the backpackers' favourite. Bole, the area in immediate vicinity of the airport, is an upper-class neighbourhood where the country's most affluent reside, along with a significant expat population. Outside of Addis, the natural wonderland of Menagesha forest, Debre Libanos monastery, archaeological site of Tiya and scenic crater lakes of Bishoftu make for excellent day trips.

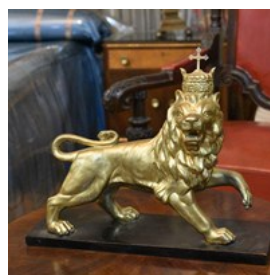
## DO & SEE



*hecke61/Shutterstock.com*

Although most visitors to Ethiopia enter the country through Addis, few choose to linger for more than just a night or two before heading further inland to explore some of the country's ancient relics, and very unjustly so. There is an urban vibrancy of a distinct kind within the busy Mercato and Piazza neighbourhoods, scented with the aromas of excellent coffee served at nearly every corner. A handful of worthy museums are waiting for you should you decide to stay longer.

### Ethnological Museum



The capital's Ethnological Museum is considered to be one of the finest on the continent. Intricately arranged exhibits narrate the story of Ethiopia and its peoples. The museum spans two floors of the former residence of Emperor Haile Selassie, whose rooms are preserved in nearly their original state and open to visitors. Detailed written explanations are provided.

Photo: Richard Mortel/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

Address: Algeria Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 8:30am-5:30pm

Phone: +251 11 123 1068



### National Museum of Ethiopia



The National Museum of Ethiopia contains a plethora of cultural artefacts. Its most notable exhibit, however, is the cast of Lucy — a female skeleton of the *Australopithecus afarensis* species, discovered in Ethiopia in 1974 and dating back as far as 3.2 million years. Art lovers will appreciate the museum's collection of Ethiopian art from the 14th to the 20th centuries.

Photo: Sailko/cc by 3.0/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)  
Address: King George VI Street, Addis Ababa  
Opening hours: Tue-Sun 9am-5pm, Mon closed  
Phone: +251 11 111 7150

### Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Museum



The chilling, heartbreaking exhibits of the Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Museum are guaranteed to leave no visitor indifferent.

Atrocities committed during Mengistu's Derg regime are laid bare, to be processed at your own pace or with an English-speaking guide. The museum operates on donations alone; entry is free of charge.

Photo: Insights Unspoken/cc by-sa 2.0/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)  
Address: Africa Ave, Addis Ababa  
Opening hours: Daily 8:30am-6:30pm  
Phone: +251 11 515 6197  
Internet: [www.cipdh.gob.et/memorias-situadas/en/lugar-de-memoria/museo-memorial-de-los-martires-del-terror-rojo](http://www.cipdh.gob.et/memorias-situadas/en/lugar-de-memoria/museo-memorial-de-los-martires-del-terror-rojo)

### Entoto Hills



A steep climb (or car ride) up Mount Entoto is worth the time if only for the spectacular views over sprawling Addis Ababa unfolding from the top. On Sunday, the hilltop Maryam Church is open for mass (closed other days of the week), and the Entoto Maryam Museum showcases artefacts and personal belongings of Emperor Menelik, whose humble palace still stands not too far away.

Photo: imageoptimist/Shutterstock.com

### St George Cathedral & Museum



Typically octagonal, the stern-looking, neoclassical St George Cathedral was where Ethiopian rulers were inaugurated ever since its construction by the order of Emperor Menelik II, who dedicated the church to Ethiopia's patron saint, St George. Adjacent to the church is a museum with religious paraphernalia.

Photo: Ondřej Žváček/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)  
Address: Fitawrari Gebeyehu Street, Addis Ababa  
Phone: +251 92 205 2209  
More Info: The cathedral belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox church

### Merkato



It takes heart to venture into the chaotic-looking, sprawling marketplace of Addis Ababa. Despite the first impression, the market is very much organised, subdivided into "quarters" dedicated

to a specific kind of wares. Definitely come with a guide to help you navigate. Many vendors keep goods inside their permanent stalls, so what is being sold might not be apparent at first glance. Items worth browsing for are leather goods, silver jewellery, spices, and more.

Photo: Alex Sinclair Lack/Shutterstock.com

Address: Addis Mercato, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 6am-7pm, Sun closed

Internet: It is important to stress that Mercato is not a quaint and cute market for tourists

### Holy Trinity Cathedral



The second in importance house of worship in Ethiopia — the Holy Trinity Cathedral — contains the tombs of the Former Emperor Haile

Selassie and his wife. Many more prominent figures of the country's history are buried on its compounds. The building itself is a curious mix of international styles.

Photo: Sailko/cc by 3.0/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

Address: Niger Street, Addis Ababa

Internet: [www.htc.org.et](http://www.htc.org.et)

More Info: Belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

### Piazza



The capital's atmospheric "old town" is known as the Piazza. The name gestures towards the brief period of the Italian presence in the country.

The area still has hints of Italian in its vibe today, and there are a few landmarks remaining from the first half of the 20th century. This is the go-to neighbourhood for good places to eat and budget accommodation.

Photo: Cameron Whitman/Shutterstock.com

### Lion of Judah & Churchill Avenue



The Lion of Judah marks the beginning of Churchill Avenue, one of the city's main shopping streets, which runs from the railway stations

straight into the popular Piazza neighbourhood. The statue is the symbol of Ethiopian monarchy. Its original, executed in gilded bronze, was relocated back to Ethiopia from Rome in the 60s and now in the collection of the National Museum of Ethiopia.

Photo: Francisco Anzola/cc by 2.0/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

### Bata Mariam Mausoleum



A hidden door inside leads into the crypt, where several Ethiopian royals are buried, along with Emperor Menelik himself. The marble

tombs are a stunning discovery in themselves, but the real kicker is an original painting by Michelangelo also on display here. Come with a guide to get the full experience.

Photo: Insights Unspoken/cc by-sa 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

Address: Itegue Menen Road, Addis Ababa

More Info: Also known as Bete Maryam Mausoleum, Menelik's Mausoleum and Te'eka Negist Mausoleum

### Menelik Palace & Unity Park



The Menelik Palace is a palatial compound that was the seat of the power of Emperors of Ethiopia. Today, the compound is called Unity Park and contains several residences, halls, chapels, and working buildings. Visit the Gibr Adarash banquet hall, the Zufan Adarash throne room, the mausoleum that is Emperor Menelik II's last resting place, and the Shengo Hall event hall. The Prime Minister's Office and residence is located here, too, which means that security is pretty strict — bring an ID.

Photo: kynakwado/cc by-sa 2.0/Flickr

Phone: +251 857 8718

Internet: [www.unitypark.et](http://www.unitypark.et)

More Info: Also known as the Imperial Palace or Great Ghebbi

### Zoma Museum



The Zoma Museum is an environmentally conscious artist in residency project. The museum has been influential in the

contemporary Ethiopian visual art sector and as a conduit for Ethiopian artists to be featured internationally. Zoma is also a good place to see local plants and explore traditional house making styles made of mud. There's a cafe and a restaurant, too.

Photo: Public Domain/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

Address: Mekanisa, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 10am–6:30pm, Mon closed

Phone: +251 94 216 9189

Internet: [www.zomamuseum.org](http://www.zomamuseum.org)

Email: [zomaschool@zomamuseum.org](mailto:zomaschool@zomamuseum.org)

More Info: Formerly known as the Zoma Contemporary Art Center (ZCAC)

### DINING



*Dereje/Shutterstock.com*

At the heart of Ethiopian dining sprawls the injera — a large savoury pancake with a porous surface made from teff, a grain native to Ethiopia and Eritrea. Teff flour is often replaced in the West for rice flour, often at the cost of authentic flavour and consistency. The injera is then topped with a variety of "wot", which are essentially different varieties of curries and stews with an amazing depth of flavour.

Go for the vegetarian options on Wednesdays and Fridays, which are fasting days. Many locals abstain from consuming animal foods on these days, so you are likely to get reheated meat from the day before.

### Yod Abyssinia



A stone's throw away from the airport is Yod Abyssinia, an experience restaurant known equally for its culinary offerings and traditional

performances. The performances start at 7:30 pm and gather a sizeable audience. The menu is illustrated to help guide you to the desired dish.

Photo: Dereje/Shutterstock.com

Address: Cameroon Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Open late

Phone: +251 11 661 2985



### La Mandoline



French dining doesn't get any better than this in Addis Ababa. The high standards are carefully maintained by the restaurant's skilled

French chef and owner. The menu lists everything from beef carpaccio to crepe suzette to specialities like beef fondue. If you are lucky, you'll get live entertainment from an accordion player.

Photo: Elisabeth Perotin/Shutterstock.com

Address: Off Mickey Leland Street, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 92 132 8507

More Info: Credit cards not accepted

### Kategna



Excellent Ethiopian cuisine is the prime reason of Kategna's success with both locals and tourists. The menu lists a plethora of local

specialities, including the ubiquitous injera and kitfo — a local take on tartar. They also do full traditional coffee ceremonies.

Photo: Vlad Karavaev/Shutterstock.com

Address: Cameroon Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 7am-10:30pm

Phone: +251 93 032 9121

Internet: [www.kategnaaddis.com](http://www.kategnaaddis.com)

More Info: Kategna has four venues in the city

### 2000 Habesha Cultural Restaurant



The treat of Habesha is doubled if you pay a visit for dinner (from 8pm onward), for it is then that the incredibly entertaining Ethiopian

culture show starts, complete with music and performers clad in traditional local clothing dancing on stage. It is enjoyed by both locals and guests alike, and is an absolute must for first-time visitors.

Photo: rweisswald/Shutterstock.com

Address: Namibia Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 10am-11pm

Phone: +251 11 618 2253

### Lucy Lounge & Restaurant



This lush garden restaurant is a favourite for visitors concluding their tour of the National Museum, located only steps away. The breezy,

refreshing setting is one of the restaurant's main draws, along with a wide selection of local and international dishes.

Photo: Homo Cosmicos/Shutterstock.com

Address: Saint George Street, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 91 194 7115

More Info: Next to the National Museum

### Sichuan Chinese Restaurant



The restaurant continuously receives rave reviews from patrons, and for good reason. Dishes served here might not exactly

replicate ones from their country of origin, but are an exciting break from the ubiquitous injera, and service is commendable.

Photo: momo2050/Shutterstock.com

Address: Tito Street, Kassanchis, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 91 160 3926

Email: [nebiyusichuan@gmail.com](mailto:nebiyusichuan@gmail.com)

## CAFES



Rafal Cichawa/Shutterstock.com

Some of the world's most revered coffee beans, along with remnants of an Italian presence in the country, make for a spectacular coffee culture, one upheld by locals who have firmly embraced coffee-drinking as an essential part of daily living. Coffee shops are aplenty, with many popular haunts in and around the busy Piazza area. Most cafes also sell beans by the bag.

Do try and attend a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony, wherein the beans are first roasted, then ground, followed by the invigorating drink being brewed in a jebena (a special clay pot) and poured into ornate cups.

### Tomoca



Ethiopian coffee is world-renowned, and Tomoca, in the popular Piazza area, is the place to have it. Try a fresh brew and brush shoulders

with locals at the standing tables, or pick up some beans to bring back home. Beans are roasted on-site.

Photo: rweisswald/Shutterstock.com

Address: Wawel Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 6:30am-8:30pm

Phone: +251 91 172 3482

Email: [info@tomocacoffee.com](mailto:info@tomocacoffee.com)

More Info: Tomoca has numerous locations in Addis Ababa

### Lime Tree



The international make-up of the cafe's clientele is reflected in its eclectic menu, featuring casual classics of Mexican, Middle Eastern and pan-Asian cuisine. Lime Tree has long been an expats' favourite, frequented especially for business lunches.

Photo: Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

Address: Guinea Conackry Street, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 91 120 0072

Email: [limetree@serenaeethiopia.com](mailto:limetree@serenaeethiopia.com)

### Galani Coffee — Jackross



The stylish space that is Galani has long enjoyed a reputation of being one of the capital's coolest cafes, complete with an art gallery and boutique in the floor above. At ground level, great breakfasts and lunches (and weekend brunches) are served, along with a whole list of specialty coffees.

Photo: skymeemee/Shutterstock.com

Address: Jacros — Salite Mehret Road, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Tue-Sun 8am-7pm, Mon closed

Phone: +251 92 923 6043

Internet: [www.galanicoffee.com](http://www.galanicoffee.com)

### Five Loaves



Five Loaves is one of the capital's most attractive cafes: the deli display lets you see exactly what you're getting if it's just a quick meal or breakfast

you're after (including freshly-baked pastries and cake); the second floor is reserved for slightly more formal dining, with an a la carte menu.

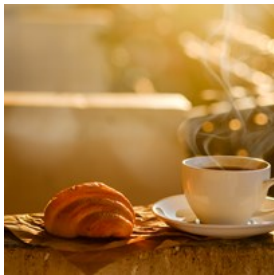
Photo: Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

Address: Adwa Bridge, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Wed–Mon 7:30am–9:30pm, Tue closed

Phone: +251 91 357 6818

### La Parisienne



A long-established Bole breakfast spot, La Parisienne is one you can rely on for uncomplicated fare, good coffee, and pastries to go along.

Although its connection to the French capital are rather ambitious, it still remains a solid choice of cafe is Addis' Bole.

Photo: mirtmirt/Shutterstock.com

Address: Gabon Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 8am–9pm

### Mokarar



Known to locals as "Harar" (its name in Arabic), this genuine coffee shop is a no-frills establishment that is all about coffee. Only coffee, as a matter of fact, which is roasted on-site and served as part of different caffeine-loaded varieties.

Photo: Fabio Lamanna/Shutterstock.com

Address: Behind Bole Printing Press, Africa Avenue, Addis Ababa

### Chocha Coffee



The green oasis next to the busy La Gare is the courtyard of Choche Coffee — a small and very welcoming establishment, serving brews deemed to

be some of the best in the capital. Meet the friendly team and pick up some beans to bring home at the adjacent shop.

Photo: Martchan/Shutterstock.com

Address: La Gare, Addis Ababa

More Info: Next to Lion of Judah

### BARS & NIGHTLIFE



Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

Nightlife in the Ethiopian capital can be either very low-key or borderline raucous, depending on where you go. The country has a jazz tradition going back to the 60s, which was, sadly, temporarily suspended during the years of communist regime. Along with other kinds of live music, the jazz scene is now back up and ready to be thoroughly enjoyed at venues across town. Don't miss "tej" — a murky honey wine served in bulb-shaped glass containers at designated "tej houses" (tej bet), and not only.



### Black Rose Bar



One of the classiest evening venues in Addis, Black Rose bar sits above the well-regarded Diplomat Restaurant, inviting diners to

continue their night in the dimly lit space of the Black Rose. Here, locals mingle with visitors, and happy hour is a great time to go for drinks.

Photo: Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock.com

Address: Africa Avenue, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Tue-Sun 6pm-3am, Mon closed

Phone: +251 91 573 7983

More Info: Shares the building with Kuriftu Resort & Spa (Boston Building)

### AV Nightclub



The roomy night club at the Friendship International Hotel is one of the places frequented by both local party-goers and visiting guests. It is a

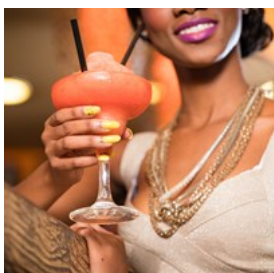
two-level space, with comfortable seating in the top floor overlooking the dance floor below.

Photo: ARENA Creative/Shutterstock.com

Address: Africa Avenue, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 91 265 5233

### Flirt Lounge



Having earned its great reputation with excellent live music nights on weekends, Flirt continues to gather patrons, even after changing its new

location. It is a very pleasant evening hangout location, and vibes heat up as the night progresses. Mondays are reserved for "Arabian Nights" with Middle Eastern music.

Photo: Kzenon/Shutterstock.com

Address: Cameroon Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 5pm-3am

Phone: +251 96 104 0506

### Tobia Teje House



Although plenty of watering holes around Addis serve the murky, thick honey wine known as "tej" (tej bet = wine house), this one stands out for its breezy garden seating and very good quality kitfo. Menu is available in English.

Photo: Ji-Elle/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

Address: Haile Gebreselassie Road, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Daily 10am-9:30pm

More Info: Entrance in an alley behind the Axum Hotel

### Fendika Azmari Bet



Azmaris are Ethiopian poet-musicians, skilled in the art of puns, double-entendre and music. Fendika Azmari Bet is hands down the

best place for Ethiopian live jazz music and traditional dance. You will hear the masenqo (a single-stringed lute played with a bow) and the krar (a multi-stringed harp lute). Start your evening with a glass of surprisingly strong tej (honey wine) and get ready for vigorous dancing and swaying to emotional ballads.

Photo: Ninara/cc by 2.0/Wikimedia Commons(image cropped)

Address: Zewditu Street, Kazanchis, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 91 154 7577

Internet: [www.fendika.org](http://www.fendika.org)

More Info: See event schedule on the official website. Most performances start around 8 pm

### Club Illusion



This outrageous club is the most raucous nightlife venue in Addis. Located in the basement of the Ambassador Cinema, the space has a definite VIP vibe. Dance the night away, but keep your wits about you — the place can get quite wild.

Photo: Manu/unsplash.com

Address: Ras Desta Damtew Street, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 90 310 4504

## SHOPPING



Andrii Kobryn/Shutterstock.com

There are plenty of locally-made crafts to shop for, which range from Ethiopian fabrics turned clothing and linens, to artisan jewellery and footwear (there are a few designers to keep on your radar), to various local edibles and spices. The place to be for all of these and more is the bustling Mercato, a sprawling market with entire sections dedicated to individual types of product. It's best you go with a guide if there is the option: vendors often keep their goods inside stalls, making it not immediately apparent what it is that is being sold. A smaller, more manageable market offering a comparable experience is the Sholla, while the Shiro Meda is one dedicated to clothing and textiles only.

### soleRebels



SoleRebels was the first footwear producer to receive certification from the World Fair Trade Organisation. Their cause is to provide its workers with honest compensation and contribute to sustainable development by using recycled car tires and natural fabrics in shoe production. And it's not just shoes, but clothing and accessories too.

Photo: dreamsfolklore/Shutterstock.com

Address: Roosevelt Street, Addis Ababa

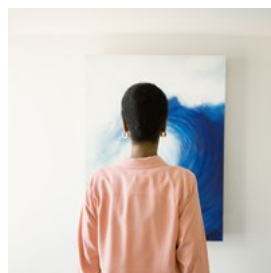
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-7pm, Sun closed

Phone: +251 91 302 4775

Internet: [www.solerebels.com](http://www.solerebels.com)

More Info: 2nd Floor, Adams Pavilion

### St George Gallery



The art gallery and shop hybrid, St George is definitely not for travellers on a budget, but those looking to purchase Ethiopian antiques or artworks. Anything from scarves and bed linens to paintings by celebrated artists. Also stocks jewellery and books.

Photo: Blend Images/Shutterstock.com

Address: Taitu Street, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-1pm / 2:30pm-6:30pm, Sun closed

Phone: +251 11 551 0983

Internet: [www.stgeorgeofethiopia.com](http://www.stgeorgeofethiopia.com)

### Shiro Meda Market



Much more modest in size, but with that also a lot more manageable, the Shiro Meda Market (also spelled "Chiromeda") sells Ethiopian textiles in all their forms, from Ethiopian wedding dresses to various types of clothing, linens, and fabrics. Make use of a guide if you can.

Photo: Mollie Wilson/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Entoto Avenue, Addis Ababa

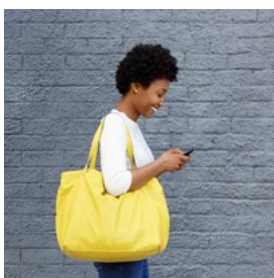
### Salem's Ethiopia



This quiet oasis of a workshop, only a stone's throw away from the Addis Ababa airport, is a great place to shop if the Mercato proves to be a tad overwhelming. Salem's is a much more relaxed experience that allows you to browse at your own leisure, selecting from fabrics, clothing, jewellery, woven items, and other crafts produced directly on site.

Photo: Sarine Arslanian/Shutterstock.com  
Address: Menhame Allen, Addis Ababa  
Phone: +251 911 52 96 82  
Internet: [www.salemethiopia.com](http://www.salemethiopia.com)

### Zaaf Collection



The remarkably stylish bags of this Ethiopian label are a treat one really shouldn't deny themselves when in Addis. Functional and modern, the brand's pieces all contain a slither of traditional ornament, giving the items individual character.

Photo: mimagephotography/Shutterstock.com

Address: Shalla Park, Addis Ababa

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 9am-6:30pm, Sun closed

Internet: [www.zaafcollection.com](http://www.zaafcollection.com)

### Anbar Marketplace



The bi-annual happening that is Anbar Marketplace (locations vary) gathers the best of local producers, many without brick-and-mortar shops, to showcase and sell their wares, from clothing and jewellery to all manner of edibles. There is a small entrance fee; live music plays and dining options are abundant.

Photo: Daniel M Ernst/Shutterstock.com  
Email: [anbarmarketplace@gmail.com](mailto:anbarmarketplace@gmail.com)

## TOURIST INFORMATION



*John Wollwerth/Shutterstock.com*

### Travel Advice



Addis Ababa is a rather safe city where violent crime is uncommon, but travellers are advised to exercise vigilance and be weary of pick-pocketing and muggings which occur fairly frequently, and are not exclusively targeted at tourists (these



have been especially common along Churchill Avenue, in Piazza and Meskal Square).

If invited for an unsolicited "culture show" decline politely but firmly, and continue on your way. This is one scam to which tourists have often fallen prey. Avoid talking to anyone approaching to sell you things in the street.

Homosexuality remains both illegal (with punishments of up to 10 years imprisonment if convicted) and severely morally condemned in Ethiopia. So strong is the sentiment, that some hotels may refuse business to clients suspected of being in a same-sex relationship. It is strongly advised that same-sex couples keep a very low profile and avoid any form of public displays of affection.

Photo: Yousef Alfuhigi/unsplash

### Passport / Visa



Entry visas to Ethiopia are necessary for citizens of all countries with the exception of Djibouti and Kenya. Travellers must apply for visas in

advance, but visas on arrival are issued at the Addis Ababa International Airport to nationals of 40 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Macau, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Korea, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States. As of 2017, nationals of most countries eligible for visa on arrival can also

apply for eVisa (first point of entry for eVisa holders must be Addis Ababa Bole International Airport).

Photo: ConvertKit/unsplash

### Best Time to Visit



Although the sun shines nearly all year in Addis Ababa, the absolute best time to visit is during the dry season, roughly from September to March. This period is also when two of Ethiopia's major festivals (Meskel and Timkat) are celebrated, which is done with great swing and accompanied by major processions. The summer months (June to August, the "rainy season") aren't the most favourable, especially for trips to elsewhere in the country.

Photo: Yohannes Minas/unsplash

### Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (ADD)



Although the Bole International Airport is only a few kilometres away from the city centre, it can get quite costly to reach Addis Ababa if no prior transfer arrangements are made. It is strongly recommended to inquire with your hotel about possible pick-up/transfer service (these are offered by most lodgings).

There are two types of taxis in Addis Ababa Bole Airport: private taxis, which are blue and white, and government taxis, which are yellow/cream in colour and run by the National Tour Operation (NTO). Yellow taxis can be hired at the airport arrivals area. Make sure the fare is agreed upon before departure.

Photo: Vob08/cc by 3.0/Wikimedia(image cropped)

Phone: +251 11 665 6666

Internet: [www.boleairport.com](http://www.boleairport.com)

### Mealtime Etiquette



Ethiopian food is usually eaten without any cutlery. There will always be a way to wash your hands before your meal: either a handwashing station or a basin and a pitcher of water at your table. If you arrive at the table after everyone has washed their hands, do not give a handshake. Instead, lightly grasp the person's wrist when they offer it to you. Just touching wrists is fine, too.

Traditional meals are served on a communal plate and everyone at the table eats together. Don't reach across the table — just have what's close to you. You are expected to tear off a piece of injera, scoop some food with it and send it directly into your mouth. Do so with your right hand, since the left hand is considered unclean.

When someone offers to place a small bite of food into your mouth — it's called the "gursha". Accept it graciously, as it is a sign of respect.

Some people take their shoes inside the house. Follow your host's example of this. You must greet everyone personally, starting with the eldest person present. The eldest person in the room is the one who starts the meal. It would be impolite to start eating before them.

On Wednesday and Friday, Orthodox Christians in Ethiopia fast. They do not eat or drink until 3 pm and eat only vegan food the rest of the day. Perhaps paradoxically, fish is allowed.

Photo: Tim Evanson/cc by-sa 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)

Internet: [www.awazetours.com/ethiopia-food](http://www.awazetours.com/ethiopia-food)

### Public Transport



Public busses aren't the most efficient way of getting around. Instead, most locals use the smaller, faster blue-and-white

mini-busses. Fares in these are very moderate and normally fixed. Destinations will often be yelled out by staff on board the mini bus at major intersections/hubs.

Addis Ababa now also has a light rail system, with lines connecting north and south (stops at Merkato, Meskal Square, and Menelik II Square), and east and west (stops at Meskal Square and Mexico Square). Tickets may be purchased at stations.

Photo: Francisco Anzola/cc by 2.0/Wikimedia(image cropped)

### Taxi



Most taxis in Addis operate from 6 am to 11 pm. If you share a taxi with strangers, the normal fare is split between the group. If you

want to visit a lot of places in Addis Ababa, negotiate with a driver for a half- or full-day fare.

Taxis can be found outside larger hotels, as well as the National Theatre, national stadium and on De Gaulle Square in the Piazza. At night, many line up outside the nightclubs.

You can use the RIDE app to get a car Uber-style, too.

Photo: A.Savin/Wikimedia(image cropped)

## Pharmacy



You can find Gishen Pharmacy close to the airport.

Photo: Tara Winstead/pexels

Address: Ras Desta Damtew Street, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251930106448

## Postal Service



There are several post offices around Addis Ababa, the main branch being on Churchill Avenue, next to the Derg Monument. Parcels can

only be sent from this post office location. Post boxes are yellow. Stamps and post cards may be bought at post offices.

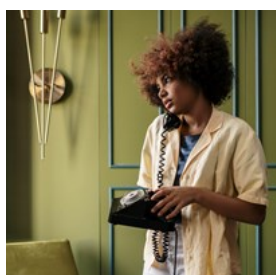
Photo: A.Savin/Wikimedia(image cropped)

Address: Gola Sefer, Addis Ababa

Internet: [www.ethipostal.com](http://www.ethipostal.com)

More Info: The head office is in front of Ethio-Cuban park

## Telephone



For calls within the country: area code + 10-digit number. To call abroad dial 00 + number  
For calls to Ethiopia from abroad: +251 (country

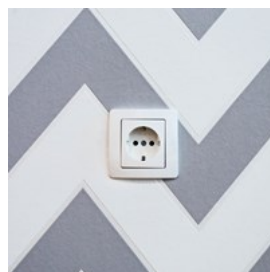
code for Ethiopia) followed by a 9-digit number (drop the zero)

Mobile phones are more popular than landlines. Mobile numbers all start with 09. The only provider is Ethio Telecom. You can buy cheap local SIM-cards at its stores in Addis Ababa and

elsewhere.

Photo: cottonbro/pexels

## Electricity



Electricity is 220 volts at 50Hz. Power cuts are frequent, but the largest hotels and restaurants usually have generators. Bring a small LED-torch

in case you end up on the street at night, or if you are planning to visit remote areas of the country.

Most common power sockets in Ethiopia are the type C (two round prongs, common in Europe) and type L (three round pins in a row, common in Italy).

Photo: Neven Krcmarek/unsplash

## Population

5 million (metro area, 2021)

## Currency

1 Ethiopian birr (ETB or Br) = 100 santim

## Opening hours

Shop opening hours are quite flexible, but most places tend to stay open from around 8 am until 5 pm Monday through Saturday. Some businesses stay open until as late as 9 pm or even 10 pm. Many also open on Sundays and public holidays.

## Internet

[www.visitethiopia.travel](http://www.visitethiopia.travel)

## Newspapers

Capital Ethiopia – [www.capitalethiopia.com](http://www.capitalethiopia.com)

Addis Standard – [www.addisstandard.com](http://www.addisstandard.com)

Addis Fortune – [www.addisfortune.news](http://www.addisfortune.news)

Ethiopia Insight – [www.ethiopia-insight.com](http://www.ethiopia-insight.com)

## Emergency numbers

Universal number: 911

Police: 991

Ambulance: 907

Fire: 939

Traffic police: 945.