

ETHIOPIA AT A GLANCE

POPULATION: 105,350,020 (July 2017 est.)

LANGUAGES: Amharic (official), Tigrigna, Oromo, Arabic.
English is the most widely used international language.

PREDOMINANT RELIGIONS: Christian (Ethiopian Orthodox),
Islam, Animist

TIME ZONE: Seven hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (New
York City)

TELEPHONE CODES: 251, country code; 1, Addis Ababa city
code; 5, Dire Dawa city code

Ethiopia is home to some of the most remarkable ancient civilizations in the world. The country's mountainous landscape is covered with old ruins, remains and wonders — ancient sculpted obelisks, walled Islamic towns and thousand-year-old churches carved out of solid rock. It also has its share of wild places — with lions and hippos and untamed rivers. As English novelist Evelyn Waugh once observed, Ethiopia is a country of “crazy enchantment.” The country is still recovering from its border war with Eritrea. Most of the population is desperately poor, and parts of Ethiopia are prone to periodic droughts and famines.

COMPASSION IN ETHIOPIA

Compassion's ministry in Ethiopia began in 1993. Today, more than 89,800 children are served by more than 390 Compassion-assisted child development centers throughout the country. Compassion's church-based child development centers are places of hope for impoverished children in Ethiopia. Under the guidance of caring Christian adults, children's pressing needs for nutrition and medical attention are met. Children



also receive tutoring to help with their academics. Health and hygiene lessons teach them to care for their own physical well-being, and positive social skills are modeled and encouraged.

WEATHER

The best time to visit the highlands (Addis Ababa) is October through June. From July through September, it's hotter by about 10 degrees F / 5 degrees C and can rain in strong (though infrequent) downpours called “the big rains.” Around Addis, it can also rain February through June (“the little rains”). Temperatures range 55-77 degrees F / 15-25 degrees C.

CURRENCY

The Ethiopian unit of currency is the *birr* (ETB). Tourists must declare foreign currency brought into the country. Foreign currency can be exchanged at the airport, banks and at your hotel. Some hotels accept credit cards. Be sure to break large bills at the hotel or bank, as small establishments might not be able to make change.

FOOD

Most hot, freshly cooked food should be safe, but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating, choose meat that is cooked thoroughly, avoid local dairy products, and assume the water is unsafe (stick with prepackaged or boiled drinks).

SHOPPING

Shop for amber, carved ebony animals, silver, coffee, Coptic crosses and items made from soft, hand-woven cotton. Be prepared to negotiate but be aware that a permit may be needed to get antiques (including old Ethiopian crosses) out of the country. Beware of “old” coins. Millions of Austrian Maria Theresa thalers, all minted with a date of 1780, were produced during the Italian occupation between 1935 and 1937. Coins with this date are generally worth less than \$10.

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Voltage used in Ethiopia is 220V, and most outlets accept plug types D, J or L. (For up-to-date plug and outlet information, check [whatplug.info](#) and click on your destination country.) You may wish to take a universal plug adaptor, available in the luggage/travel sections of most big-box stores.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Do** address people by using Mr., Mrs. or Miss preceding their first name. Ethiopians, like many Islamic cultures, don't have hereditary surnames but use the given name of their father as a second name.
- **Do** take cash. Credit and debit cards are rarely accepted.
- **Do** be prepared to haggle for everything.



- **Do** be patient and friendly with officials, and you're more likely to get what you need.
- **Don't** give beggars money, as it encourages children to quit school to earn what seems to be a profitable income. Do expect beggars to thrust their hands inside your taxi if a window is open.
- **Do** learn some useful phrases. The official language is Amharic, but there are many local dialects spoken throughout the country. Say *selam* (peace) or *tadias* (hello) when greeting somebody, and *amahseh genahlu* to thank someone.
- **Don't** take photos indiscriminately: Ask permission before taking photographs of people, and pay them a modest tip. Don't take pictures of military installations, airports or bridges.

DRESS

Even during the hot season, expect mild temperatures — short sleeves and pants or long skirts are a safe bet. Tank tops and shorts are not commonly worn, so expect some stares if you wear them in public. Collared shirts and pants for men and long skirts and covered shoulders for women are not required, but you'll blend in better with the conservative Ethiopian culture. Layering is a good idea, in case it gets chilly or buggy. Bring a sweater.

Women: Modest, loose-fitting tops (nothing form-fitting) are recommended; sleeveless tops are acceptable, but please cover your shoulders in places of worship; pants, capris, longer skirts and loose-fitting, casual dresses are recommended for women.

Men: Button shirts and polo shirts are recommended. T-shirts are allowed in casual settings. Long, non-denim pants are recommended for center visits and church services.

Both: Shorts are highly discouraged outside of beachside locations. A light jacket is recommended for cool evenings or rainy days.

Shoes: Closed-toe shoes are recommended during the day due to potential unsanitary or uneven terrain.

GENERAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, Social Security card, library cards and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet. Carry items in front pockets, not back pockets. Do not display large sums of money in public; make visible only the amount of money that approximates your purchase. Never leave items with cash in them (purse, wallet, backpack, etc.) on a bus, car or any other location. Stay alert and be cautious at all times. Don't take safety and security for granted.

We strongly advise you to contact the CDC (www.cdc.gov) or check with your personal physician for more information about your specific health needs while traveling, including any recommendations for immunizations.

U.S. EMBASSY INFORMATION

Website: et.usembassy.gov

Phone: (251) 111-30-60-00

Address: Entoto Street (P.O. Box 1014), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

*All information taken from the World Factbook and
Compassion International.*

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

The official language of Ethiopia is Amharic. The country's secondary language is English. Some common Ethiopian greetings include:

(M) = phrase used when addressing males

(F) = phrase used when addressing females

Hello	Halo
How are you?	Endemin-neh? (M) Endemin-nesh? (F)
I'm fine	Dehna negn
What's your name?	Simeh man naw? (M) Simesh man naw? (F)
My name is...	Yane sem (name) naw (M) Seme (name) naw (F)
Please	Ebakih (M) Ebakish (F)
Thank you	Ahmesugenalew
You're welcome	Minem aydelem
I love you	Efaqresallah (M) Efacrehallah (F)
Yes	Awo
Yes (OK)	Eshi

No

Goodbye

Excuse me

Do you speak English?

I don't speak Amharic

Aydelem

Dehna hun (M)

Dehna hugni (F)

Yikirta

Englizegna tichilaleh? (M)

Englizegna tichilalesh? (F)

Amarinya alchillim Amharic