



Population: 114 million - 2nd most populous country in Africa after Nigeria with over 80 ethnic groups



Languages: Amharic



Size: 1,126,829 km²; roughly twice the size of France or Texas



Time Zone: 00:00 | GMT/ UTC +3. Follows the Julian calendar.



Currency: Local: Ethiopian Birr
International: USD and GBP



National Bird: Not specified but National Animal is a Lion.



Inbound Airlines: Emirates | Ethiopian Airlines | Egyptair | Lufthansa | British Airways | Qantas | Singapore Airlines | Air India | Kuwait Airways | Asiana Airlines | Air China | Rwandair | Turkish Airlines | Qatar | Iberia

CLIMATE

Being close to the equator, there is almost a constant twelve hours of daylight. In Addis Ababa, on average, the sunrise & sunset occur at c.6:30am & c.6:45pm. October & November are wonderful months to travel as the countryside is green with lots of wildflowers in bloom. December - May are drier months, offering great visibility for photographing landscapes – especially mountains. Harvesting takes place in December - January when the landscapes becomes barer. Average temperature from September to June is 20°C - 28°C.



Temperatures vary from the mountainous North to the Omo Valley in the South.

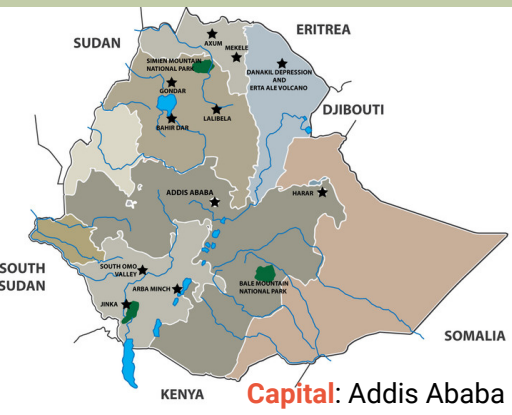
The hottest months are:

Greater Ethiopia: April, May & June
Southern Ethiopia: July & August

Dry season: Greater Ethiopia:
September - May
Southern Ethiopia: June - Feb
July & August are excellent for visiting the south whilst it is wet in the north.



Greater Ethiopia: June - mid Sept
Southern Ethiopia: Sept - May
Short rains in Omo Valley from March - May.



Capital: Addis Ababa

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Timket Festival (Epiphany)

January | Annual | Nationwide

Celebrating the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. One of the most important festivals in Ethiopia. Gondar & Lalibela are two of the most popular places to experience these colourful celebrations.

Palm Sunday

April | Annual | Nationwide

Marking the last week of lent, it's common to see laity wearing a cube shaped palm ring & wearing a palm stripe on the head. Aksum enjoy traditional colourful parades

Easter

April | Annual | Nationwide

Fasika (Easter) follows 8 weeks of fasting from meat & dairy. On Easter's Eve, Ethiopian Christians participate in an hours-long church service, ending around 3 a.m. They then break their fast & celebrate the risen Christ. The Holy Trinity Cathedral in Addis Ababa is the most important place of worship in Addis Ababa

Eid al-Fitr

June | Annual | National

Marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Ethiopia has the 2nd most populous Muslim community in Sub-Saharan Africa

Eid al-Adha "Feast of Sacrifice"

September | Annual | Nationwide

Commemorating Ibrahim (Abraham) following Allah's (God's) command to sacrifice his son. Marked by communal prayers, large social gatherings & the slaughtering of livestock to give meat to the needy.

Enkutatash - Ethiopian New Year

11 September | Annual

Celebrations can last many days with feasting, dancing & singing.

Best time for....

- **Birdwatching:** November in the Smlen & Bale Mountains.
- Visit the **Blue Nile Falls:** October
- Visit **Danakhal Depression:** December

Meskel (Finding of the True Cross)

27 / 28 September | Annual | Lalibela
Celebrated with the burning of a large bonfire, or Demera. It is believed that Queen Eleni was told in a dream to make a bonfire and the smoke would show her where the True Cross was buried.