



Sounds of Addis and the Glories of the Highlands

Ethiopia

4 days – March 18-21 2010 (ex-Addis Ababa)

10 days – March 18-27 2010 (ex-Addis Ababa)

You've seen the Éthiopiennes musicians on tour, or heard the amazing recordings. These trips give you a taste of the music scene in Addis during the festival organised by Mr Éthiopiennes himself, Francis Falseto. The Ethiopian Music Festival includes great local performers plus foreign guests. There's time too for a trip out of town to the Blue Nile Gorge – Africa's Grand Canyon. Great music and a taste of one of Africa's most beautiful and dramatic countries.

Ethiopia is home to some of the world's oldest civilisations. The country is literally packed with spectacular geographical, historical and cultural highlights. We combine some of these with the vibrant music scene in Addis that the world has recently discovered thanks to the fantastic Éthiopiennes recordings and concerts. There's nothing like seeing veteran singer Mahmoud Ahmed singing on his home ground.

During our long weekend, we'll discover the traditional

and current sounds of the capital, explore the city on a half-day tour and take an optional full day trip out of the city to the amazing Blue Nile Gorge – 'the Grand Canyon of Africa' – to see some of the dramatic scenery outside the capital.

For those with more time, there is the chance to stay on for another week, to explore the spectacular northern highlands. We will visit Lake Tana, and the nearby Tissisat Falls, on the Blue Nile, then travel on to Gondar with its dramatic castles, before ending up at the small mountain village of Lalibela. This is where we can trek into the mountains for a day and visit the stunning rock churches, literally hewn out of the mountainside. These are amongst the architectural wonders of the world.

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Ethiopia – 4 days

Itinerary

Day 1 Thurs Today we will meet our Travel Leader in the early evening at the hotel in Addis. The day is free to explore or rest after the overnight flight. After a briefing from our Travel Leader we can head out to discover the music of Addis – concerts, nightclubs and the distinctly Ethiopian tradition of the *azmaribet* (traditional music house).

Day 2 Fri After breakfast we are joined by our local guide, for a morning tour of Addis, including the wonderful market. The rest of the day is free. In the evening it's back to the clubs and the music, with our Travel Leader suggesting the best places to head for.

Day 3 Sat A day free to explore the city at your own pace. For those who want to see beyond Addis, there is the option of a full day trip to the Blue Nile Gorge. Lying a couple of hour's drive to the north of the city the gorge is a dramatic site, about one mile wide and one mile deep, taking about 45 minutes drive to reach the riverbed. The view from the lip of the gorge is awe-inspiring and unforgettable. We return to Addis in the late afternoon, with time to chill out at the hotel before heading to enjoy the music scheduled for tonight.

Day 4 Sun After breakfast our tour ends. Time to transfer to the airport and the flight home.

Ethiopia – 10 days

Days 1-3 Thurs-Sat As above.

Day 4 Sun This morning we transfer to the airport for our short flight north, to Bahar Dar, on the southern shores of Lake Tana. After checking in at our hotel we sail out to visit the islands in the lake. We can visit one or two of the monasteries that still exist on the islands, with the few remaining monks the guardians of some quite outstanding frescoes. We return to Bahar Dar in the late afternoon, and the rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 5 Mon After breakfast we'll drive some 20 miles to the small village of Tississat, from where we walk the short distance to the Blue Nile Falls. With a drop of some 150 feet, and a width of around 400 feet in full flood, the falls throw up a continuous fine spray of water droplets that can be seen for miles – a dramatic and noisy sight. In the afternoon we return to Bahar Dar.

Day 6 Tues After breakfast we return to the small airport, for our onward flight across Lake Tana to Gondar. Once the capital of Ethiopia, Gondar was home to the 'falasha' people, the Black Jews, as well as a royal city of the Solomonic Kings of Ethiopia. In the afternoon we will be joined by a local guide for a tour of some of the castles and magnificent remains here.

Day 7 Wed Leaving Gondar we take a short flight to the airstrip at Lalibela. Once checked into our hotel we begin a walking tour of the village's famous rock-carved churches. Hewn from the distinctive pink sandstone, each has its own style. They were carved in the 13th century, at the behest of King Lalibela, the whole enterprise taking some 45 years to complete. After our morning tour we will take a break for lunch before continuing the tour in the afternoon.

Day 8 Thurs After an early breakfast, we walk out of the village to join our mules to carry us on a trek to a remarkable church on a ridge high over Lalibela. We pass through small mountain villages on the way before reaching a monastery, clinging precariously to the cliff face. Dating from the 12th century, the carved and decorated interior is justly famous. This quiet, remote part of the Ethiopian highlands, with its breathtaking views over the mountains, is the complete antithesis of the bustle of Addis. We return to Lalibela in the late afternoon.

Day 9 Fri Today we take a short flight from Lalibela back to Addis, and the modern world. After checking into our hotel the rest of the day is free. In the evening, we enjoy Friday night's music in the city.

Day 10 Sat After breakfast our tour ends. Time to transfer to the airport and the flight home.

Pricing details

4-day tour (ex-Addis Ababa) March 18-21 2010

Tour Price £379 per person

Tour includes:

- 3 nights accommodation on twin-share basis at a three star hotel in Addis Ababa on a bed and breakfast basis
- entry to selected events during the music festival
- transfers and sightseeing as detailed
- the services of your *Songlines Music Travel* leader

5-day tour (ex-London) March 17-21 2010

Flights from London are available from £570 per person in conjunction with this tour. Overnight flights from the UK make this a 5 day tour. Transfers from and to the airport in Addis Ababa are included with flights purchased through *Songlines Music Travel*.

Items not included: Single room supplement, visas, travel insurance, all meals with the exception of breakfast, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

Single supplement: £99 per person.

10-day tour (ex-Addis Ababa) March 18-27 2010

Tour Price £1,125 per person

Tour includes:

- 9 nights accommodation on twin-share basis at three star hotels in Addis Ababa, Bahar Dar, Gondar and Lalibela on bed and breakfast basis
- entry to selected events during the music festival
- transfers and sightseeing as detailed
- the services of your *Songlines* Travel Leader whilst in Addis Ababa, and local representatives outside Addis Ababa and on return to Addis Ababa

11-day tour (ex-London) March 17-27 2010

Flights from London are available from £610 per person in conjunction with this tour. Overnight flights from the UK make this an 11 day tour. Transfers from and to the airport in Addis Ababa are included with flights purchased through *Songlines Music Travel*.

Items not included: Single room supplement, visas, travel insurance, all meals with the exception of breakfast, internal flights, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

Single supplement: £449 per person.

To reserve your place

Please read the booking conditions on the website and contact the reservations office on:

+44 (0)20 8505 2582

or email: songlines@thegroupscompany.com

