

**The Peoples of Omo Valley****12 days – 11 nights****Addis Ababa, Melka Kunture, Arba Minch, Lake Chamo, Dorze, Key Afer, Jinka, Mago NP, Turmi, Dimeka, Konso, Yabello, Yergalem, Sidama, Awasa, Langano, Abijata Shala  
Heritage, Ecology, Culture, History**

**This program may be operated for individuals or for groups  
This is a suggested itinerary**

This 12-day trip will take you to the discovery of the last Ethiopian tribes which, a few decades ago, were unknown to the rest of the world, and sometimes even to the central government. Our guides will make you discover the traditions, cultures and lifestyles of the Hamar, Karo, Mursi, and Konso, who will surprise you and sometimes, during an initiation party, will share with you their most secret and surprising rites. Total immersion in the heart of Ethiopia, one of the cradles of humanity. This tour is only possible in 4x4 and represents the best in African Heritage!

**Day 1: Addis Ababa**

Early arrival at Addis Ababa airport where you'll be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. Some time to get settled before you start your city tour. Visit the Entoto Mountain that offers a panoramic view of the city and proceed to visit the museum and palace of Menelik II. Enjoy a relaxed lunch in town. In the afternoon, Visit the national museum, that hosts Lucy's skeleton, the fossilized bones of a 3,200,000-year old hominid found in Ethiopia in 1974. Afterwards, visit the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Mausoleum, memorial, museum and gardens that complete an astonishing architecture. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [L/D]

**Day 2: Addis Ababa, Melka Kunture, Arba Minch**

After breakfast at the hotel we leave for extended morning dedicated to archeology that can be one of the most interesting days of your trip. Head to the Adadi Mariam church, located 40 miles from the capital, an underground monolithic church, carved out of rock over 500 years ago, now restored on the initiative of the Swiss National Commission for UNESCO. It is an important place of pilgrimage and meeting for the Orthodox Christians of the region who, on January 29, Mary's day, come to collect themselves in their thousands. A little further south is the paleolithic site of Melka Kunturé that documents a Stone Age civilization predecessor to the Ethiopian population. A short drive south to visit Tiya, one of the most important of over 150 archaeological sites discovered so far in the region south of Addis Ababa. It includes 36 monuments of which 32 stelae present enigmatic sculpted figurations made of swords and symbols. These stelae bear witness to a proto-historic culture of Ethiopia that has not yet been precisely dated. Continue to Arba Minch for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

**Day 3: Arba Minch (Lake Chamo, Dorze)**

Take a boat trip on the Lake Chamo, to see African crocodiles and navigating among peaceful hippos, but do not trust their peaceful appearance. They are with their families and can become quite defensive. It's important to observe them from afar. Return to Arba Minch for lunch. In the afternoon, Visit the Dorzé village nearby. Dorze had 29,000 people speaking Dorze, an Omotic language, and about one third is monolingual. They live mainly in the southern regions of the country, although some have migrated to Addis Ababa and other regions. Many, live in villages nearby like Chenchu and Arba Minch. Weaving is a primary profession for a number of Dorze. Their multi-part polyphonic vocal music features sophisticated use of hiccups. Rest of the afternoon in Arba Minch. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

**Day 4: Arba Minch, Key Afer, Jinka**

This morning, visit the Key Afer market in a small village on the road between Jinka and Turmi (1h 35 drive from Jinka) on the track which passes along the Mago National Park. Every Thursday, the Key Afer market is the ideal place for a natural exchange with several ethnic groups in the Omo Valley.

Hamer, Tsemay and Bena meet there to exchange all kinds of things: food, tools, livestock, fruits and vegetables are bought in a cheerful and colorful atmosphere. A word of advice, don't show your camera so you go unnoticed and better enjoy the show. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and, in the afternoon, meet the Tsemay tribe composed of about 10,000 people that are part of the Coushtic family of the eastern lowlands. They are a people of agro-pastoralists, who live as much from livestock farming as from their crops, such as sorghum, millet and cotton. On your way back to town visit the local ethnographic museum. Continue to your hotel for Dinner and overnight at the at Jinka Resort hotel. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 5: Jinka, Mago NP, Turmi**

After breakfast we visit Mago National Park that covers 535,000 acres and consists mostly of savannah plains and deserts that extend beyond the boundaries of the park to Lake Turkana. The vegetation is mainly scrub, savannah acacia, figs and Indian tamarinds throughout the river. Wildlife in the park includes elephants, leopards, lions, buffalo, hartebeest, zebra and giraffes. Many bird populations as, among others, the Dusky Babbler. The park rivers are full of crocodile, hippo and fish. Enjoy a picnic lunch in the park and meet the Mursi, a tribe of agro-pastoralists, who live in the park itself. One of their rituals involves the piercing of Mursi women's lips, carried out using a point reddened with fire, and accompanied by the removal of the lower incisor teeth. They coat the area with butter to hasten healing and ensure the elasticity of the flesh. The lip will receive larger and larger lip-rings to the most imposing up to a 7-inch diameter. On your way to Turmi visit the ethnographic museum. On arrival in Turmi check-in at your hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 6: Turmi (Dimeka)**

This morning we'll meet the Gngangatoms tribe, who follow the original Nyangatom culture consisting of classifying individuals into categories according to the elements of their status and recognizing themselves as Elephant or Ostrich, although there is no family name but only a birth name and a territorial affiliation (for example that of the Storks, the Flamingos, the Ibis, etc.), guaranteeing the rights of access to resources. Without a centralized political system or a dominant-dominated relationship with their neighbors, but sensitive to charismatic power, their system is generational. The generation is subdivided into age classes and these into local groups. After the meeting we cross the Omo river towards the Diméka village to visit its weekly market where a wide range of products is offered for sale: decorated calabashes, traditional musical instruments, jewelry, plastic objects used in everyday life (buckets, brooms and bowls), all kinds of grains, various types of soil for hair coloring, etc. In short, it is the perfect stopover to buy vacation memories. After lunch in the village we meet the Bana people who count about 40,000 individuals. They practice agriculture and supplement their food needs by hunting. The Bana share their customs, beliefs and language with their Hamer cousins, but with a different emphasis. They indulge in ritual dances and songs, and celebrate the "jumping of the bulls" or Ukuli ceremony. Bana men often wear a clay headdress with feathers. As for women, they coat their hair with butter and decorate it with pearls. During ritual festivals, both men and women adorn their bodies with clay or lime paint. Return to Turmi for dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 7: Turmi, Konso**

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel before driving south to meet with the Hamer tribe an Omotic community living in the fertile part of the Omo river valley. They are largely herders, so their culture places great value on livestock. The Hamer are known for their unique custom of "bull jumping", which initiates a boy into adulthood. First, the female parents dance and invite the tribe to whip men who have recently been launched; this shows their support for the initiative, and their scars give them the right to ask for help when needed. The boy has to run back twice in the back of a row of castrated bulls or oxen, and is ridiculed if he fails. After the meeting have lunch on the way to meet the Konso tribe. The Konso people, is known for its religious traditions, Waga carvings, and nearby fossil beds, which is an archaeological site of the earliest hominids. The site was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List on September 30, 1997 due to its presumed universal cultural significance and made an official World Heritage site in 2011. The Konso economy is mainly agricultural and involves

irrigation and mountain slope terraces. The staple crops include sorghum and maize, with cash crops, including cotton and coffee. Cattle, sheep and goats are raised for food and milk. The members of the group also draw sculptures (Wagas), which are created in memory of a dead man who killed an enemy or an animal. The statues are often arranged in groups, with some representing the man, his women and his opponents present. We complete the visit with a tour of the village and market. Then, we continue to Konso for dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 8: Konso, Yabello**

In the middle of the desert, on the track between Konso and Yabello, you'll meet many Borana shepherdesses. Where are they going? All converge on the singing well, a paradise in the middle of the desert! Water springing from the bowels of the earth to the surface! The shepherds pass buckets of water to each other, and to give themselves courage, chant in rhythm ancestral melodies. The Well Master, elected for eight years, manages the order of passage of the different clans and herds and indicates who will use it first. This example of democracy has been around for thousands of years. The women wash on the spot, then load their camels, which belong personally to Borana women, with cans of pure water, essential to their daily life. Head 25 miles north to visit the El Sod Crater and a village of adobe houses and people dressed in cheerful Somali colors and features. A few steps away is a large crater, very vertical on its slopes with a dark lake almost black at the bottom, surely because it's not "pure" water but a mix with minerals that give it that black color. The water swims to the bottom of this stew and leaves loaded with a very impure salt (dark gray), which is apparently used to feed the animals. The villagers extract with incredible efforts the blocks of salt which constitute for them a considerable wealth. After lunch visit a traditional home and mingle with local people. Then continue to Yabello for dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 9: Yabello, Yergalem**

Near Yabello, we will visit a village of the Borana ethnic group of semi-nomadic pastoralists who have managed to survive and resist their harsh environment by obtaining water from wells up to 30 meters deep. Traditional well management methods are still in effect. They invaded their northern neighbor around the 16th century but have always lacked cohesion: divided into clans and rival tribes, they are also divided for religious reasons ... The life of a young Boran is divided into four cycles of initiation of eight years each. After that, he is accepted into the generation of fathers of families. Young girls are cut but without special ceremonies. After meeting with the tribe, we enjoy lunch on the way to our next meeting. The Guji tribe belongs to the Oromo tribe, speak Oromo and practice the original Oromo culture. They are even considered as having maintained the original Oromo tradition. Guji Oromo seems to be different from Oromos in other parts of the country, except the Borana Oromo, in their way of life and dialect. In Borana Oromo, they share some lifestyles and speak relatively similar dialects. The Gada institution of the Guji people involves a system of age-set and generation-set that form and enforce the social, political and cultural norms by which individuals and their collective lives are governed creating sets of ritual status based on age and generation. It serves as a ritual through which each member of the Guji society is supposed to pass. After this interesting meeting we continue to the Aregash Lodge for a dinner, with hyenas roaming around the lodge, and a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony. Overnight at the lodge. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 10: Yergalem, Sidama, Awasa, Langan**

This morning we drive to Sidama territory for a tour of the village, meet local people and discover the forest which is home to various species of birds and mammals. The region is celebrated for its coffee plantations that produce one of the most famous coffees of Ethiopia with a particular profile and a strong marker. The Sidama region owes its name to an ethnic group: the Sidamas, a people living in south-western Ethiopia. Ethiopian coffees are called "Moka" because they were once exported from the port of Mocha in Yemen, on the Arabian Peninsula. Continue to Awassa for a visit of its very typical fish market and lunch in town. Awassa and its magnificent lake are our afternoon stop on this trip to the south of Ethiopia. Continue to Langan check-in at the hotel with free time to relax until dinner time. Overnight in Langan. [B/L/D]

**Day 11: Langano, Abijata Shala, Addis Ababa**

A short drive, this morning, will bring you to Abijata Shalla Nat'l Park, natural home to ostriches, gazelles, flamingos, pelicans and other species all living in this idyllic place dotted by natural hot springs to give, even, a better feeling of paradise on Earth! Lunch a local restaurant and return to Addis Ababa. Check-in at the hotel and, in the evening, spend some time at the Mercato, the largest open-air market in Africa, a place that presents enumerable opportunities for shopping. We end the day with a farewell dinner at a traditional restaurant and discover the typical Ethiopian songs and dances. [B/L/D]

**Day 12: Addis Ababa, USA**

Breakfast at the hotel and free time to continue exploring Addis Ababa on your own depending on your flight schedule. At the appointed time you'll be picked-up at your hotel and transferred to the airport to board your flight back to the USA. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [D] = Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner



**Tour includes:**

- Arrival and departure private transfers
- 11 nights' accommodation:
  - Addis Ababa 2 nights
  - Arba Minch 2 nights
  - Jinka 1 night
  - Turmi 2 nights
  - Konso 1 night
  - Yarbello 1 night
  - Yargalem 1 night
  - Langano 1 night
- Meals
  - Breakfast daily
  - 11 lunches
  - 11 dinners
- The famous Lucy a turning point in humanity
- Adadi Mariam church.
- Paleolithic site of Melka Kunturé
- Tiya archaeological site
- Boat trip on Chamo Lake
- Meeting the Dorze people
- The Key Afer market
- Meeting the Tsemay People
- Visit Mago Nat'l Park
- Meeting the Morsi people
- Meeting the Gnangatom people
- The Diméka village and market
- Meeting the Bana people
- Meeting the Konso people

- The Borama's "singing well"
- Visit El Sod crater and salt mine
- Visit the Borana village
- Meeting the Gudji people
- Visit the Sidama coffee region
- Discover the Abijata Shalla Nat'l Park
- Awasa fishermen
- Shop at the Mercato the largest open-air market in Africa
- All entrance fees for included sightseeing
- Land transportation as described
- English speaking driver-guide

**Tour does not Include:**

- International or Domestic airfares
- Any taxes and surcharges relating to airfares
- Travel insurance
- Entry Visa and visa fees
- Wi-Fi at hotels except as indicated
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Other meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Extras and gratuities
- Early check-in, late check-out (Most hotels begin check-in around 2:00pm).
- Expenses of personal nature
- Porterage at airport and hotels
- Optional tours and activities
- Any service not specifically listed under "included"

**Recommended Hotels in your tour**

City	Hotel Name	Tripadvisor
<b>First Class</b>		
Addis Ababa	Addissinia	4.5
Arba Minch	Emerald Resort	4
Jinka	Eyob Pension & Campsite	3
Turmi	Emerald Resorts & Lodge	4
Konso	Kanta Lodge	3.5
Yabello	Borano Lodge	3
Yergalem	Aregash Lodge	5
Langano	Hara Langano Eco Lodge	4
<b>Deluxe</b>		
Addis Ababa	Hyatt Regency	4.5
Arba Minch	Emerald Resort	4
Jinka	Jinka Resort	3
Turmi	Emerald Resorts & Lodge	4
Konso	Kanta Lodge	3.5
Yabello	Borano Lodge	3
Yergalem	Aregash Lodge	5
Langano	Hara Langano Eco Lodge	4

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

Note: Some of the hotels in list are the best and most comfortable existing on the route but may not be up to your expected standards

**Tour Prices:**

These programs can be customized for individuals and groups.

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

- **Program**

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

- **Other options**

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

**Tour Code:** ET02ADD20ST

**Options:**

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

**Group Quotations**

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the lad journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.