

**WELCOME  
PACK**

**A NEW  
VISITOR'S  
GUIDE TO  
WV ETHIOPIA**

**2015**  
**WELCOME TO WORLD VISION ETHIOPIA**

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## I. About Ethiopia

### I.1 Geography

Ethiopia is situated in the heart of the Horn of Africa. It shares borders with Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, the Sudan and South Sudan. The total area is about 1,127,127 square km; of which, 7,444 square km is water. Ethiopia has ample arable land, estimated at about 66 per cent of the total area.

Ethiopia has wide topographic variation. The terrain is rough, predominantly high plateau with central mountain range divided by the Great Rift Valley. The altitude ranges from the lowest Denakil Depression 150 meter below sea level to the highest Ras Dashen Mountain 4620 meters above sea level. The western boundary of Ethiopia follows roughly the western escarpment of the central plateau. Ethiopia's largest lake, Lake Tana, is the source of the Blue Nile River.

Addis Ababa, the capital, is the national crossroads. This 127 years old city lies on the central plateau at an average altitude of 2400 m above sea level. It has a population of nearly four million with area of 54,000km<sup>2</sup>. This has various advantages: there are no mosquitoes and few other diseases or insects.

### I.2 Language

There are over 80 different languages with up to 200 dialects spoken in Ethiopia. The official language is Amharic. And English is also widely practiced.

### 1.3 Climate

Ethiopia's climate is that of tropical monsoon with wide topographic variation. The lowlands are hot and arid. One semi-desert region, the Somali, covers the entire south-eastern section of the country. The year round climate is generally mild and pleasant, but at many times through the year night times can get very cold.

#### Seasons

- ☞ Summer (June to August) - heavy rainy season
- ☞ Spring (September to November) - Harvest season
- ☞ Winter (December to February) - dry season but with frost in morning
- ☞ Autumn (March to May) - with occasional shower but May is the hottest month

### 1.4 Government

Ethiopia is a Federal Democratic Republic state with nine regional states (Afar; Amhara; Benishangul Gumuz; Gambela; Harar; Oromiya; Somali; Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples'; and Tigray) and two chartered cities (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa).

The country's flag description is three equal horizontal bands of green (top), yellow (middle), and red (bottom) with a yellow pentagram and single yellow rays emanating from the angles between the points on a light blue disk centered on the three bands.

### 1.5 Population

The total population of the country is estimated over 85 million. The population is composed of multiple ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups are Oromo, Amhara and Tigre constituting about 70% of the total population.

## 1.6 Religion

Religion in Ethiopia consists of a number of faiths including indigenous beliefs, with Christianity and Islam as the major ones.

## 1.7 Public Holidays

☞ September 11	-	Ethiopian New Year
☞ September 27	-	The finding of the True Cross (Meskel)
☞ October 15	-	Id Al Adaha*
☞ January 7	-	Ethiopian Christmas
☞ January 13	-	Moulid (Birthday of the Prophet Mohamed)
☞ January 19	-	Ethiopian Epiphany
☞ March 2	-	Victory of Adwa
☞ April 18	-	Ethiopian Good Friday*
☞ April 20	-	Ethiopian Easter*
☞ May 1	-	International Labour Day
☞ May 5	-	Ethiopian Patriots' victory day
☞ May 28	-	Downfall of the Dergue Regime
☞ July 28	-	Id Al Fater*

*\* The holidays of Id Al Fater, Id Al Adaha, Ethiopian Good Friday and Ethiopian Easter have no fixed dates/have movable dates.*

## 1.8 Economy

The country's economy is based on subsistence, rain fed farming. The main crops produced are teff, wheat, barely, sorghum, millet and maize. Main export is coffee. Leather and leather products, live animals and meat, oilseeds and gold are also exported. Ethiopia has untapped mineral resources which can be a potential source of foreign exchange earnings. The country also has immense livestock resources which are believed to be one of the highest in Africa. The renowned tourist attractions can also serve as major source to complement the country's foreign exchange earnings.

## 1.9 Key Facts

- ✚ A landlocked country
- ✚ Area – about 1.1 million sq. km.
- ✚ Population size: more than 90 million with an estimated increase of 2 million people per year
- ✚ Life expectancy: 60 years
- ✚ Fertility rate: 4.6 children born/woman
- ✚ 85% live in rural areas
- ✚ Literacy rate: 42.7%
- ✚ Time zone: GMT +3
- ✚ Capital city: Addis Ababa
- ✚ Government structure: Federal Parliamentary Republic
- ✚ Head of State: H.E Dr. Mulatu Teshome (President)
- ✚ Official Language: Amharic
- ✚ GDP (USD): 68,770,000,000 (79 of 1)
- ✚ Currency: Ethiopian birr (ETB)
- ✚ Exchange Rate: ETB ~ USD 20.2913
- ✚ International dialing code : +251
- ✚ Electricity supply: 220 V and 50 Hz

## II. Tips

### 2.1 Health Advice

Before you leave,

- ✚ Give yourself time to talk to a travel health consultant, and get a good first aid kit, including drugs. This is particularly important if you are planning to go out of Addis Ababa. Remember mosquito repellent, sunscreen, and a hat.
- ✚ A Malaria prophylaxis is recommended for all areas, except Addis Ababa and altitudes above 2000m (6561 ft).
- ✚ Yellow Fever, Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Diphtheria, Meningococcal, polio and tetanus vaccinations are also highly recommended.
- ✚ Vaccination against cholera is also required for any person who has visited or transited a cholera infected area within six days prior to arrival in Ethiopia.

Main health risks are,

- ✚ Malaria is highly endemic in the country in areas below 1800 meters, except in Addis Ababa. Strains are highly resistant to chloroquine.
- ✚ The prevalence of HIV is significant; avoid blood transfusions except in case of absolute necessity.
- ✚ There has been no recent outbreak of yellow fever but the risk remains.
- ✚ An Acute Watery Diarrhoea outbreak occurred in 2006 and has killed several hundreds since. Risks are higher when the country is subject to floods.
- ✚ There are cases of animal rabies in the country.

### 2.2 Food Safety

- ✚ Gastric diseases are common among visitors who are not accustomed to local food or who do not take precautions

- ✚ Do not drink tap water but use bottled mineral water
- ✚ Avoid eating raw or undercooked dishes, especially meat or fish. If possible, order hot dishes
- ✚ Bring anti-diarrhea medication with you
- ✚ Wash your hands thoroughly before each meal

## 2.3 Electrical Goods

The electricity supply is 220 V and 50 Hz. The sockets are European type, two round pins insure that you have these before you leave (you can buy here, but you will get better quality at home). The electric supply is not always reliable so bring a flashlight.

## 2.4 Things to Bring

You can buy most things in Addis film, camera batteries, personal hygiene supplies, etc. If you are traveling out of town, bring water sterilizing tablets in case you are unable to buy bottled water. The climate in Addis is mild all the year round. You will definitely need a warm top or fleece for the evenings. Also, bring light colored clothes to discourage mosquito. June to August is the rainy season so bring an umbrella or water proof clothing and expect to walk through a lot of mud walking boots are advised.

## 2.5 Safety and Security Information

Traveling in Ethiopia is safe for the most part, but you should take some precautions:

- ❶ Take time to read the Country Security Guidelines
- ❶ Avoid all border areas (with Somalia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti the Sudan and South Sudan) for there is still political unrest
- ❶ Make a copy of your passport and keep it in your luggage
- ❶ Don't walk alone between 6PM – 6AM
- ❶ Avoid travel in evenings and night times

- ① Keep an eye on your luggage and watch out for pickpockets specially in major cities
- ① Don't wear expensive jewelry
- ① Don't carry too much cash with you
- ① Don't carry a lot of camera equipment especially in major cities
- ① Always keep your mobile phone in safe place
- ① Keep valuables and cash in safe box provided by the hotel



## **III. Arriving in Addis**

### **3.1 Ethiopian Airlines**

If you are flying Ethiopian Airlines it is worthwhile joining Sheba Miles, their frequent flyer program. This is free, and offers a number of advantages, eg. shorter queues, increased baggage allowance etc. with advance notice to the airline that baggage allowance can be increased to 20 kg without a fee being paid.

### **3.2 Baggage**

Baggage takes a while to arrive on the carousel. Fill in time by going to one of the forex desks to change money if you need to.

### **3.3 Customs**

Customs may ask to search your baggage, and may list electrical goods in your passport. Any electrical equipment listed in your passport (i.e. laptop) must be brought out of the country with you when you leave.

If you are traveling with professional camera equipment (video and photo cameras), you must declare the equipment to Customs and obtain filming permission from the concerned government body. To cut off the process and avoid unnecessary stranding at the airport, it is advisable to inform our Guest Relations Department in good time/prior from departure the interest to bring professional camera(s) into Ethiopia along with details of the equipment and the Department will facilitate the filming permit. See 3.5 for further detail.

### **3.4 Visas**

Visitors should get an entry business visa from the nearest Ethiopian embassies (by issuing an invitation letter from WV Ethiopia) before leaving. No visa is issued in Ethiopia upon arrival except countries where there is no Ethiopian Embassy and for tourist purpose. And no World Vision staff and guests, without

exception, wishing to travel to Ethiopia use tourist visas. Some nationals like Kenyans do not need visa to enter Ethiopia.

### 3.5 Visa Application and Custom for Film Crew/Media Visit

Journalists and WV staff who wish to film in Ethiopia should submit a letter of assignment on official letter head duly signed by the publisher assignment Editor or Bureau chief (for journalists) or from respective WV office (for WV staff) addressed to Embassy of your respective country. The application letter should contain:

- ① name of the company/media outlet
- ① names, passport numbers and the nationality of the filming crew
- ① purpose and title of the film (if any)
- ① duration of the shooting and exact location where it takes place (list all Regions/Woredas)
- ① supporting letter from the Woreda where shooting will take place
- ① name and telephone number of the contact person with in WV Ethiopia
- ① list of equipment with their brand and serial number

Moreover, on arrival the crew should apply in person to the Foreign Media Accreditation Department at the Government Communications Affairs office with their passport, passport size photograph in order to get the filming permit in Ethiopia. The permit letter will be issued immediately when the film crew members appear in person but a letter to customs for equipment clearance will be issued in advance.

WV Ethiopia's Government Relations and Communications team will facilitate to get a letter to Bole Airport Customs. However, visitors should send

- ① names, passport numbers and the nationality of the filming crew (scanned copy of passport)
- ① list of equipment with their brand and serial number

- ① scanned copy of confirmation letter from the Embassy (the respective Ethiopian Embassy or consular offices will send a letter to Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the head of the film crew must make sure that he/she obtains the copy of the message and also follows with the Embassy that the letter is sent in a timely manner).
- ① The scanned of confirmation letter should reach WV Ethiopia Government Relations team at least 5 working days before the arrival date of visitors.
- ① Foreigners applying for shooting film in Ethiopia shall pay a permit fee to the Foreign Media Accreditation Department.
- ① Where an applicant wishes to use an aircraft for shooting a film, they should obtain a flight permit from Ethiopian Civil Aviation Authority. (Which needs addition time 2-4 days).

#### **Contact Persons:**

Government Relations Manager: [Noah\\_Degu@wvi.org](mailto:Noah_Degu@wvi.org)

Communications Manager: [Meron\\_Abera@wvi.org](mailto:Meron_Abera@wvi.org)

### **3.6 Currency**

Visitors may import an unlimited amount of foreign currency but this must be declared on arrival to the customs authorities. Foreign currency may only be exchanged at authorized banks and hotels and forex bureaus, and a receipt must be obtained. The currency declaration form must be retained, as this will be required by customs on departure. Visitors may change back any surplus Ethiopian birr to cash at the airport before departure. In addition to any Ethiopian birr, along with the currency exchange form you must bring with you all receipts for exchange transactions.

Major credit cards can be used to pay for flights with Ethiopian Airlines and some big hotels in Addis Ababa. One of the private banks, Dashen Bank, has






ATMs connected with Cirrus, Master card, and Visa. It has many branches in Addis and other cities around the country.

### 3.7 Getting out of the Airport

The Bole International Airport is found 8km southeast of the city center. In case your hotel does not receive you at the airport, call your contact person or there are two types of taxis at the airport, one is blue and one is yellow. The yellow one is more expensive but safe to use.

### 3.8 Accommodation

All staff arriving in Addis Ababa for work related reasons are recommended to stay at

-  Nexus Hotel: Tel. 251-11-6670067 (2min walking distance from WV Ethiopia Head Office)
-  SaroMaria Hotel: Tel. 251 -11-6672170 (10-15 min drive from WV Ethiopia Head Office)
-  Harmony Hotel: Tel. 251-11-6183100 (10-15 min drive from WV Ethiopia Head Office)
-  Kaleb Hotel: Tel. 251-11-6622200/10 or 251-11-6670202 (10-15 min drive from WV Ethiopia Head Office)
-  Amanaya Guest House: Tel. 251-11-6450138 or 251-911-252414

However, if visitors have their own choices and communicate to the WV Ethiopia Head Office in advance, hotel-booking arrangement could be made accordingly.

### 3.9 Telephones

The country code is +251. For those who choose to have mobile connectivity, WV Ethiopia's National Office will make Ethiopian SIM cards available for you and you can buy airtime as you need it (prepaid). You can receive calls without having credit. Please also check with your network provider if you might be able

to be on roaming. If you happen to receive Ethiopian SIM card from W V Ethiopia's National Office, please don't forget to return it back to the National Office's reception desk when you leave the country.

### **3.10 Internet Service**

There is cheap and easily available internet access in most cities and towns in the country (around 12 birr per hour). Often times, internet connection is quite good in Addis but slowdown in other parts of the country. You can connect your lap top or other Wi-Fi enabled devices to the internet through a Wi-Fi connection in good hotels and internet cafes.

### **3.11 Photography**

If you are taking photographs, avoid anything that could be considered of strategic value e.g. bridges, railway stations, or connected with the military or police. Do not take photographs of people without permission.

### **3.12 Money**

The currency in Ethiopia is birr. Presently, the US is worth nearly 20.2913 Birr. Exchanging money is easy and straightforward. The denominations of the bills are 100, 50, 10, 5, and 1.

### **3.13 Briefing/Induction**

When you arrive in Addis Ababa you will find that a number of meetings will have been arranged for you, who you meet will depend on your position. If there are outstanding questions not covered in your briefing, be sure to ask your contact person before you go to the field.

### **3.14 Identification**

It is always advisable to have your WV ID (for staff) or passport.

### 3.15 Driving

The International Driving license is not valid in Ethiopia. To get an Ethiopian Drivers' license you will need to come with your home country drivers' license. Your license will need to be verified by your home country Embassy here in Addis, by putting the Embassy stamp on a paper copy of the license. Some Embassies do this free, others charge a fee. This paper must then be taken to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Protocol, Privileges, and Immunities Division to verify the Embassy's verification. You can get assistance of the office to process this as long as you fulfill the requirements.

### 3.16 Health

There are numerous hospitals and clinics in Ethiopia. WV Ethiopia's Head Office and field bases have nearby hospitals or health centers. Drugs (antibiotics, malaria treatment, etc.) are also easily available. Our first points of reference in Addis Ababa are:

 Bethzatha Hospital

Phone: + 251-11-5514141 or + 251-11-5514141

 Saint Yared General Hospital

Phone: + 251-11-6454697/53 or 251-11-6454718

 Hayat Hospital

Phone: +251-11-6624488 or +251-11-6614250

 Kadisco Hospital

Phone: +251-11-629-8902/03/04

### 3.17 Greetings

It is usual to greet people properly every time you meet them. You should make the effort to say hello, shake hands, and ask after people's health.

### 3.18 Eating Etiquette

Ethiopian food is based around flat bread (injera), and a variety of sauces. Wednesdays and Fridays (and some other nominated holidays) are "fasting" days when most people do not eat any animal products. When eating Ethiopian food it is usual to use your right hand. The left hand is either not used at all to touch the food, or used only to hold a roll of injera from which finger full are pulled off with the right hand. Watch and learn!

### 3.19 Time and Date

Ethiopia follows Julian calendar and is seven years behind the Gregorian Calendar, in Ethiopia it is presently 2006. The calendar contains 12 months of 30 days and one month of five days (six days in a leap year). Ethiopia also operates on Ethiopian time, which is six hours behind. So, at noon it is 6:00am.

### 3.20 A Note on Ethiopian Names

There is no tradition in Ethiopia of family names. A person is known primarily by his or her "first" name; the second of the two names is a patronymic their father's first name, used to distinguish a person from others of the same principal name.

In some cases, usually for legal purposes, the grandfather's name may also be used. The Ethiopian equivalents to the honorifics "Mr.", "Miss", and "Mrs." are, respectively, Ato, Weyzirít, and Weyziro. As with their English equivalents, these are used only in relation to a name, though in this case to a "first" name. These honorifics are very widely and consistently used by Ethiopians when addressing or referring to anyone outside their most intimate circle, especially for persons older than the speaker.

## 3.21 Quick Guide to Addis Ababa

### 3.21.1 Getting Around

Even though streets have names in Addis Ababa, it is not well known/practiced. It is best to navigate by using landmarks like the Post Office, Meskal square, the station (lagare) and areas like Piazza and Merkato, which are shopping areas. Some roads have more than one name. For example Africa Avenue is known as Bole Road, and Ras Birru Avenue as Debre Zeit Road. There are a large number of blue and white minibuses which cover the town.

### 3.21.2 Restaurants and Cafe

In Addis, there is a wide choice of restaurants catering for different tastes in a reasonable price. To mention but a few,

- 📞 Yod Abyssinia Traditional Food, for traditional Ethiopian food and Music (Phone: 251-11-6612985)
- 📞 Kategna Restaurant – traditional Ethiopian food (Phone: 251 118 960292)
- 📞 Weyin Ethiopia Cultural Club, for traditional Ethiopian food (Phone: 251-911-637634 or 251-911-434738)
- 📞 Habesha Restaurant, for traditional Ethiopian food (Phone: 251-911-518358)
- 📞 Totot Restaurant, for traditional Ethiopian food an Music (Phone: 251-0911-236212)
- 📞 Kuriftu Diplomat Restaurant, global cuisine (Phone: 251-920-959697)
- 📞 China Bar and Restaurant (Phone: 251-911-513772)
- 📞 The Food Court, for Mexican food, salad, and Italian food (Phone: 251-11 6180334) In addition, cakes, pastries and ice creams are available throughout the city including,
- 📞 Avanti Restaurant, Italian food (Phone: 251-11-251 11 860 20 26)
- 📞 Bilo's Pastry, which has many branches in the city (Phone: 251-11-4169667/6)
- 📞 Kaldi's Coffee, which has many branches in the city (Phone: 251-11-6638455)



### **3.21.3 Entertainment**

There are regular exhibitions, films and concerts. The most popular cinemas are the Ambassador, the Alem cinema in the Alem building on Bole Road and Edena Cinema in Edena Mall, around Bole Medhanyalem Church. The quality and subject matter varies. Prices range from 25 – 70 birr.

#### ***Main Attractions in Addis Ababa***

##### **Ethnological Museum**

Set within Haile Selassie's former palace and surrounded by the beautiful gardens and fountains of Addis Ababa University's main campus is the enthralling Ethnological Museum.

##### **National Museum**

The collection of this museum is considered among the most important in sub-Saharan Africa. The paleontology exhibit on the basement level contains fossilized evidence of some amazing extinct creatures.

##### **Addis Ababa Museum**

Founded in 1986, the Addis Ababa Museum displays portraits of Empress Taitu, Lij Iyasu and Empress Zewditu, along with pictures of the capital in its infancy.

##### **Holy Trinity Cathedral**

It is the second most important place of worship in Ethiopia and celebrated as final resting place of Emperor Haile Selassie and his wife Empress Menen Asfaw.

##### **Merkato**

It is the biggest open air market in Africa.

### 3.22 Useful Phone Numbers

In case of emergency or urgent query, you can reach the WV Ethiopia's front desk at 251-6293350 or **Staff and Organizational Safety and Security Manager, Mr. Wondwosen Ayalew, at 251-911-146018** and **Administration Manager, Mrs. Hiwot Tsegaye, at 251 -911 -429707**. The Country Security Guidelines also give you an idea of what potential risks are in the country, but they also contain a large number of useful contact information.

Important phone numbers in Ethiopia that you might need prior or during visit (24 hour emergency numbers) are:

N.O	Name	Telephone
1	Emergency	911
2	Federal Police	+251-11-5512744 or +251-11-5512744 FREE
3	Addis Ababa Police	+251-11-1559122 or +251-11-1559122 FREE
4	Traffic Police	+251-11-5528222 or +251-11-5528222 FREE
5	Police	991