



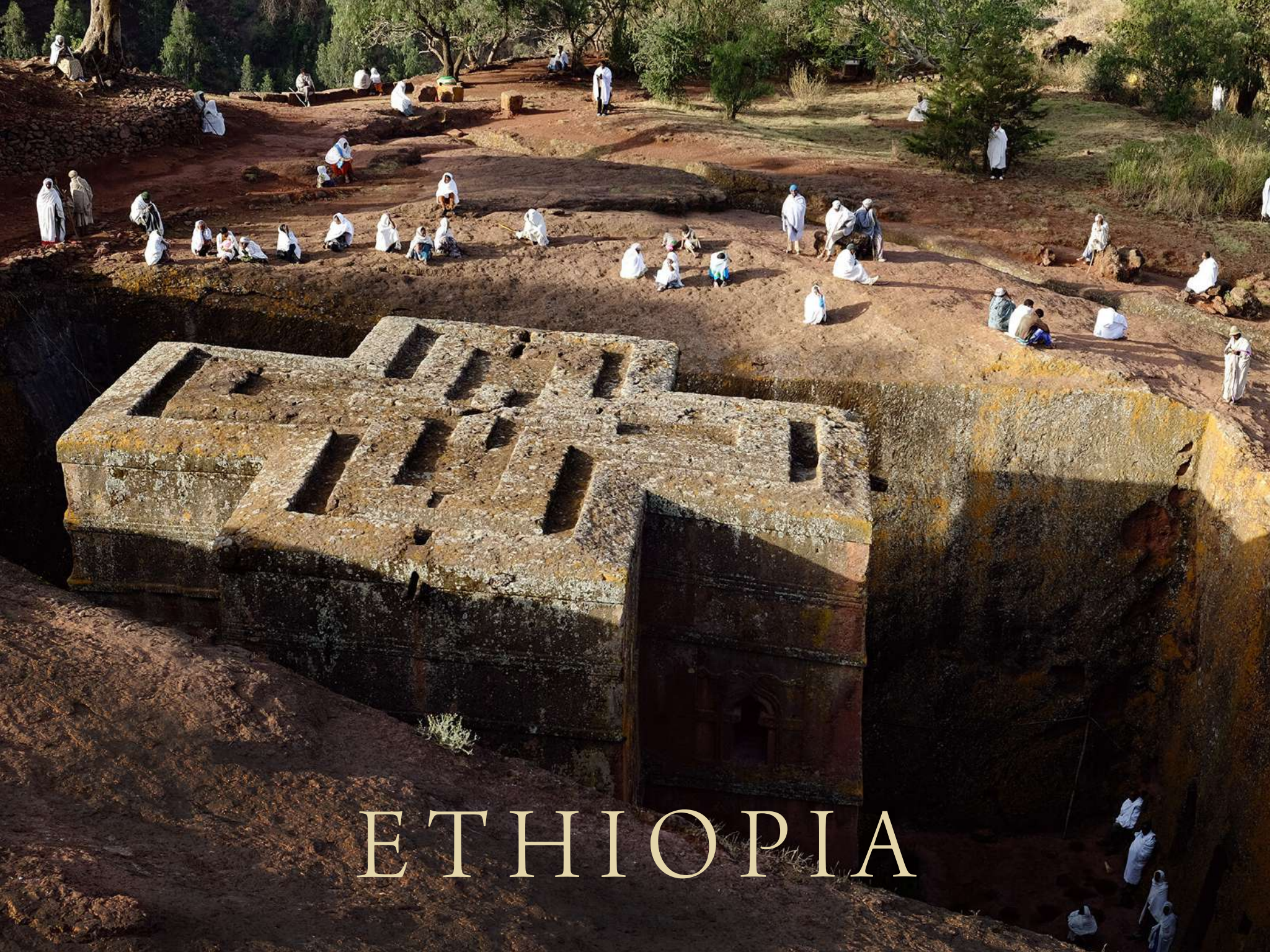
ROBERTS

SAFARIS

EST. 1976



EXPERIENCE ETHIOPIA



ETHIOPIA

# INSPIRATION

Ethiopia stands in a class of its own for breathtaking countryside, a proud and ancient culture, and rare endemic wildlife found nowhere else on the planet. Ethiopia is extraordinary for its otherworldly high-altitude vistas alone; add to that some sulphurous lava volcanoes and countless ancient churches carved into hillsides housing monks who have spent their lives there in spiritual isolation - and a journey to this stunning country makes for a life-changingly diverse destination that will inspire even the most experienced traveller. Best time to travel: October through April is the optimal period for visiting Ethiopian adventuring.

Situated in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia boasts extraordinary natural features, a vast range of wildlife, and a captivating historical and cultural heritage. An increasing number of visitors are frequenting this treasure trove filled with unique attractions. Popular attractions include: the medieval castles of Gondar; the walled city of Harar; and Lalibela, a pilgrimage site known for its ancient monolithic churches, hewn into the area's steep rocky hillsides. Ethiopia's stunning natural landscapes are the real tourist drawcard. From the lush Simien Mountains to the sulphur vents of the Danakil Depression, the country's outstanding natural environment is unforgettable. Bahir Dar, located on Lake Tana, is popular as a base from which to explore the fascinating monasteries situated on the numerous islands dotted around the lake, as well as the Blue Nile Falls, which are arguably the most spectacular falls in North Africa.

Ethiopia has many festivals throughout the year and coinciding your travel with one of these certainly adds to the experience:

Gena (Christmas) 7 & 8th January 2020

Timket (Epiphany) 19 & 20th January 2020

New Year 11th September 2020

Meskel 27 & 28th September 2020





# ITINERARY ETHIOPIA

## DAY 1: KORKOR LODGE, Gheralta

Fly from Addis Ababa to Diyadib and transfer you to Korkor Lodge, stopping en route at some of Tigray's extraordinary rock churches. The jutting rocks and cliffs of Tigrey region are striking formations in themselves, made even more remarkable by the churches cut into many of their peaks. Some of these churches are dated to even earlier than those of Lalibela, possibly from the 8th century AD. Overnight Korkor Lodge, Booked B&B

## DAY 2: KORKOR LODGE, Gheralta

Today with your guide will be the opportunity to explore the remarkable churches of the Gheralta Area. We would recommend a visit to the famous Maryam Korkor, a rock-hewn church in Tigray, Ethiopia, notable for its cross-shape and architectural features that include cruciforms, pillars, cupolas and arches. It is one of the largest churches in the area and is home to 17th-century fresco paintings and other church treasures.

Access is via the road just Southeast of Megab and it involves quite a steep climb which takes about an hour to get to the church. Overnight Korkor Lodge, Booked B&B

## DAY 3: SABEEN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL, Axum

Today you will drive from Gheralta to Axum, en route visiting the Great Temple of the Moon at Yeha. On arrival in Axum, visit the Stelae Park and the Ruins of the Queen of Sheba's Palace. Once the capital of the Axumite Empire, Axum, also known as Aksum, was once a major trading centre with ties to Persia, Arabia, India and Rome.

The Empire's heyday was from the 1st to the 7th centuries AD. The Stelae Park, or field of obelisks, is Axum's most famous site, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight Sabeen International Hotel, Booked B&B

## DAY 4: LIMALIMO LODGE, Debark

Drive from Axum through the lovely Tezeke Valley into the Simien Mountains. The drive is long yet beautiful, and your driver will be happy to stop at viewpoints along the route.

Formed before the formation of the Rift Valley, the Simian Mountains were created by an outpouring of lava after a volcanic eruption between 40 and 25 million years ago, while the dramatic escarpment was created by an extended up-thrust that could have happened as much as 75 million years ago. The mountains are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight Limalimo Lodge, Booked B&B



# ITINERARY ETHIOPIA

## DAY 5: LIMALIMO LODGE, Debarq

Full day in Simien Mountains National Park. Options include trekking to the peaks, game watching, bird spotting, walking to the waterfall and hopefully seeing the famous Gelada baboons. The highest peak, Ras Dashen, stands at around 4,500m and several of the surrounding peaks are over 4,000m, making the Simien Mountains the highest mountain range in Ethiopia. The stunning scenery includes summits, cliffs, waterfalls and rivers, and has several jaw-dropping viewpoints. Rare species include the Walya Ibex, the Ethiopian wolf and the Gelada baboon.. Overnight Limalimo Lodge, Booked B&B

## DAY 6: GONDAR HILLS RESORT, Gondar

You will have a morning at leisure in the Simien Mountains where you can enjoy the views from the lodge or for those that would prefer there are some beautiful walking in the area.

After lunch you will return to Gondar. Overnight Gondar Hills Resort B&B

## DAY 7: GONDAR HILLS RESORT, Gondar

Spend the day exploring the ancient and atmospheric castles of Gondar.

Established as the capital by Emperor Fasiladas in 1636, Gondar was the Royal Capital of Ethiopia until the 1860s. The castles and palaces built during these years have led Gondar to be referred to as the Camelot of Africa and to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Overnight Gondar Hills Resort, Booked B&B

## DAY 8: KURIFTU RESORT & SPA, Bahir Bar

Drive from Gondar to Bahir Dar, en route stopping at the remarkable village of Awra Amba.

The people of Awra Amba have established their own community, which operates as a cooperative. They work for the good of all, believe in gender equality and take care of their sick and elderly. Most people either farm or work in the weaving factory. The founder of the village will speak about its history, and you're welcome to explore the village and buy their exquisite woven goods. Overnight Kuriftu Resort & Spa, Booked B&B

# ITINERARY ETHIOPIA

## DAY 9: KURIFTU RESORT & SPA, Bahir Bar

Take a boat across Lake Tana, Ethiopia's largest lake and source of the Blue Nile.

Lake Tana is dotted with islands, some of which have monasteries containing the remains of ancient Ethiopian emperors and treasures of the Ethiopian church. The artwork inside the monasteries is remarkable for having been created from paints made from local plants and natural items, and on the walk to the monasteries – a gentle shaded climb of less than 1km through coffee plantations – locals demonstrate the making of these natural paints. Overnight Kuriftu Resort & Spa, Booked B&B

## DAY 10: MEZEWA LODGE, Lalibela

Fly from Bahir Dar to Lalibela and visit some of the extraordinary rock-hewn churches of Lalibela.

The most famous site in Ethiopia, and the one that arguably no visitor should miss, is Lalibela. Sometimes called the Eighth Wonder of the World and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this is one of Ethiopia's holiest cities, visited as a pilgrimage site by many Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The 11 churches that make up the group are linked by a maze of tunnels and passageways. All the churches are said to have been built in the reign of Emperor Lalibela, in the 12th century. Overnight Mezewa Lodge, Lalibela, Booked B&B

## DAY 11: MEZEWA LODGE, Lalibela

In the morning, visit some of the churches in the outlying villages including Yemrehana Krestos. In the afternoon, see the rest of the churches in Lalibela.

The Yemrehana Krestos Church is situated 12 miles Northeast of Lalibela. It is built into a cave on the west side of Mount Abuna Yosef and erected from stone and wood. The church is home to some of the most elaborate artwork in the region and includes mural paintings that are considered to be the oldest surviving murals in Ethiopia. Overnight Mezewa Lodge, Lalibela, booked B&B.

DAY 12: Departure - Fly Lalibela to Addis Ababa and onward International flights  
- OR - Fly Lalibela to Jinka and continue with the Omo Valley Itinerary.

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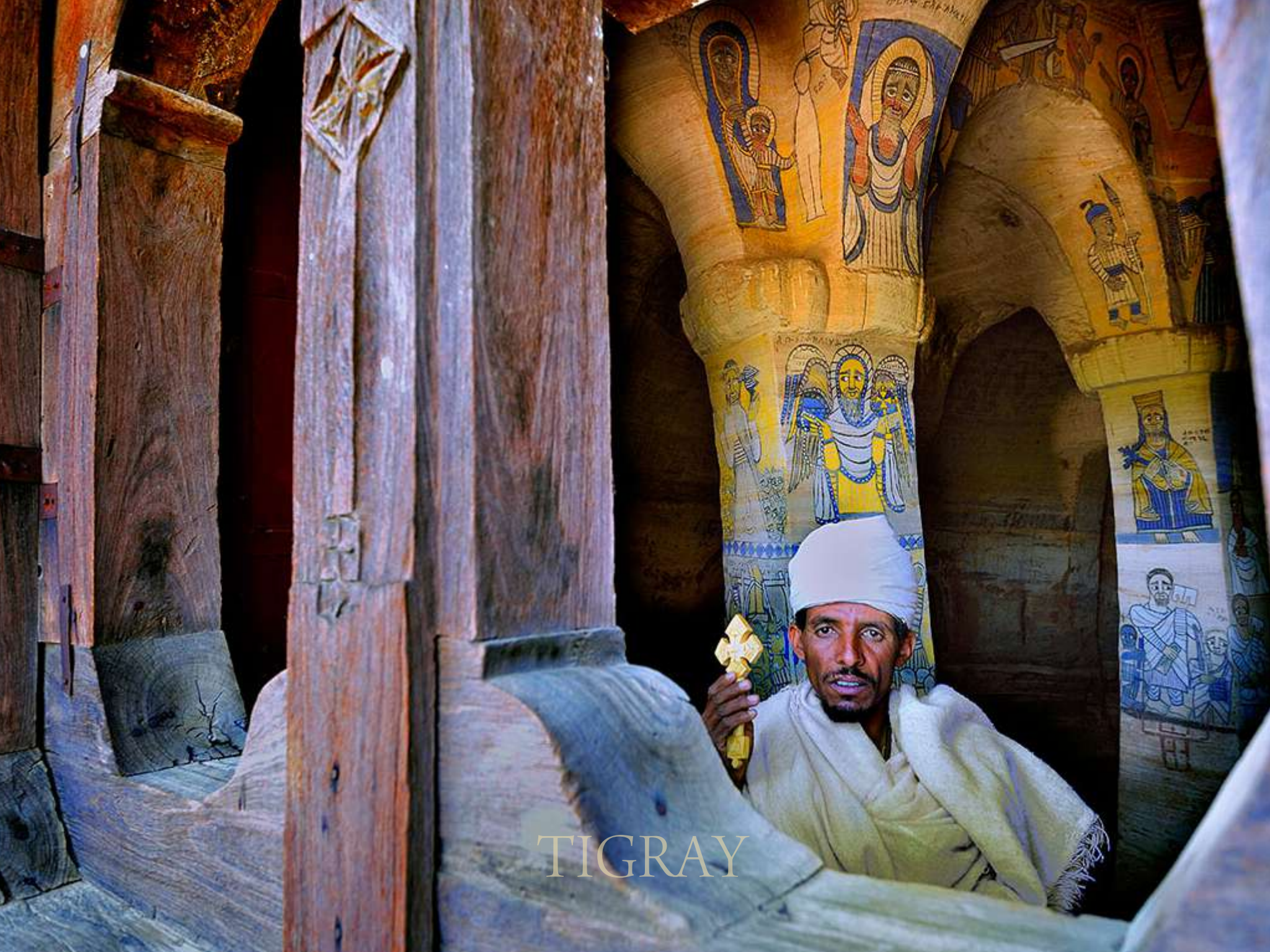
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TIGRAY



TIGRAY



# KORKOR LODGE

TIGRAY



In the heart of Tigray - Korkor is a newly established charming eco-lodge in the picturesque Eastern Tigray region of Ethiopia. Situated next to the village of Megab, the Lodge is surrounded by the stunning natural beauty of the Gheralta Mountains. Within close range are many sites of historical, archaeological, cultural and biblical interest.

The bungalows at the Lodge have been designed in such a manner as to mimic the Tigrinia building style. The stones which were used to build the walls have been mined from the surrounding countryside. Stonemasons shape them into the required size and the walls are then built, following an age-old craft handed down over the centuries. The bungalows are surrounded by a large private garden that provides great privacy, accommodation comprises of a spacious combined living and sleeping room (48m<sup>2</sup>) King-size or twin beds depending on requirements, large private bathroom and panoramic views over the area. High quality meals are provided by the restaurant which offer both ethnic and continental options

# EXPERIENCE TIGRAY

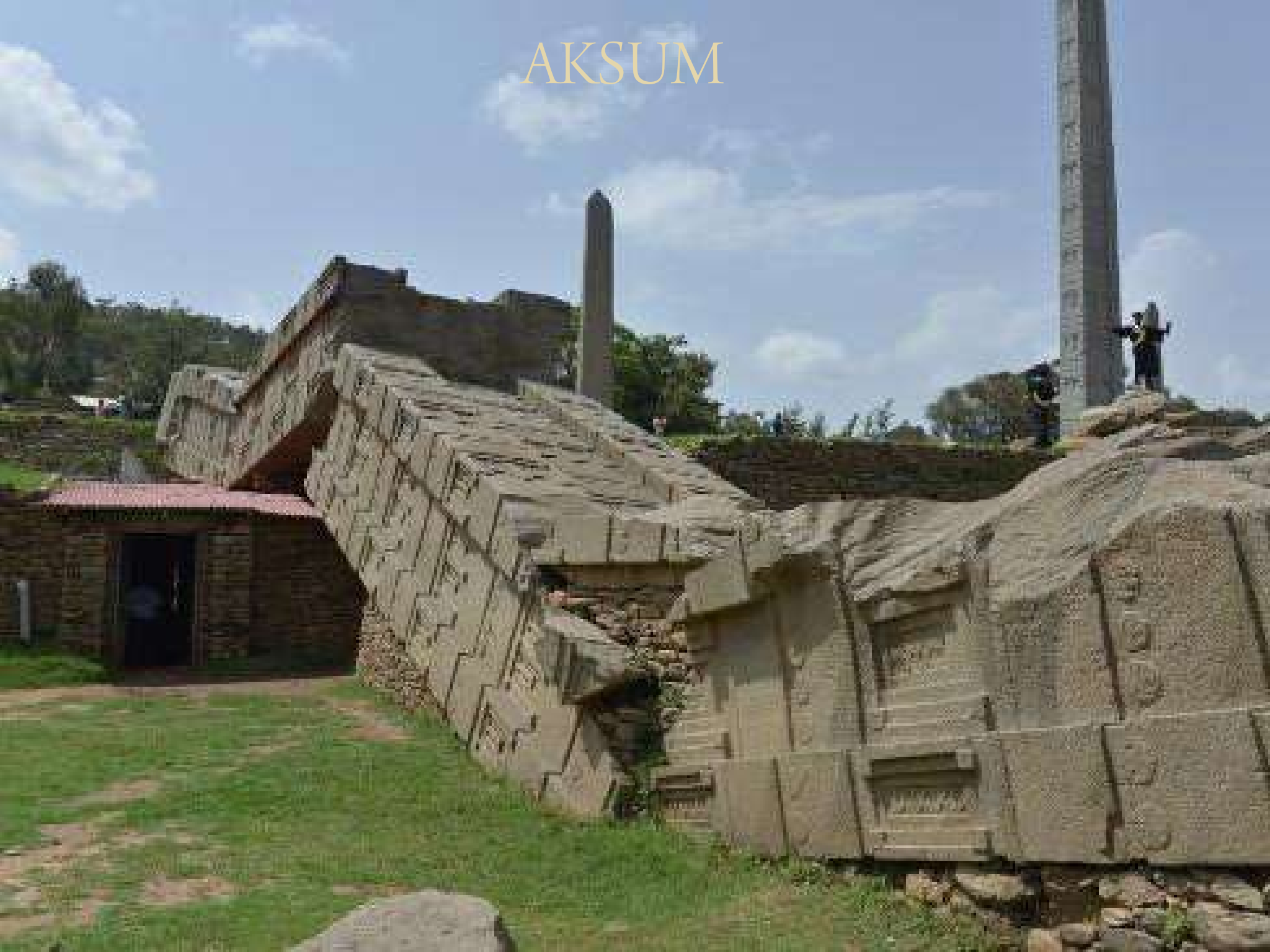


A distinctive feature of Tigray are its rock-hewn churches. Similar in design to those of Lalibela in the Amhara Region, these churches are found in four or five clusters – Gheralta, Teka-Tesfay, Atsbi and Tembien – with Wukro sometimes included. Some of the churches are considered earlier than those of Lalibela, perhaps dating from the eighth century. Mostly monolithic, with designs partly inspired by classical architecture, they are often located at the top of cliffs or steep hills, for security. For example, Tigray's ancient Debre Damo monastery is accessible only by climbing a rope 25 meters up a sheer cliff.

Looting has become a major issue in the Tigray Region, as archaeological sites have become sources for construction materials and ancient artefacts used for everyday purposes by local populations.

The area is famous for a single rock sculptured 23 meter long obelisk in Axum as well as for other fallen obelisks. The Axum treasure site of ancient Tigrayan history is a major landmark. Yeha is another important local landmark that is little-known outside the region.

# AKSUM

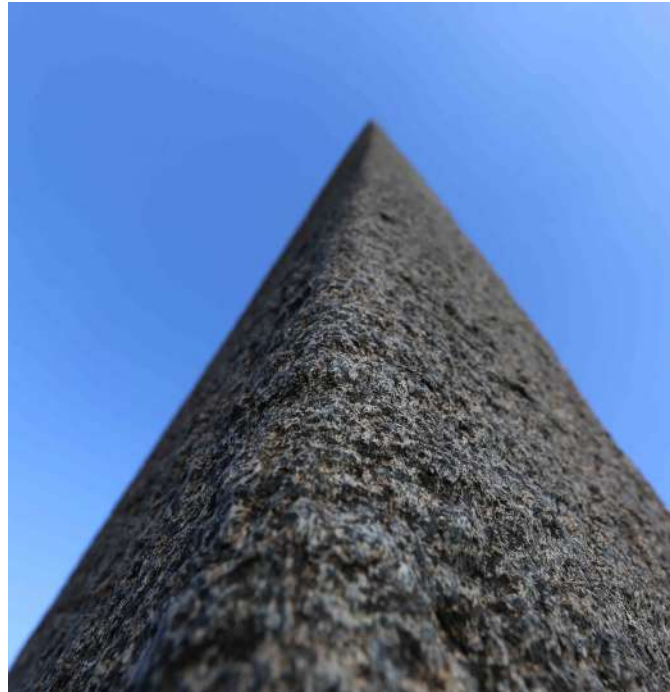


AKSUM



# SABEAN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

Aksum



Axum's Sabean Hotel, widely recognised as the city's finest, is the perfect base from which to explore the ancient cultural and archaeological wonders so abundant here. A major trading centre from the fourth century BC until more than a millennium later, the city is a truly historic landmark. The Sabean International Hotel is very centrally located on the main street of what is by modern standards a very small town. For such a small conurbation, the hotel itself is surprisingly large and modern-looking, and though accommodation is offered on a bed-and-breakfast basis, there is a restaurant serving lunch and dinner; there is also a comfortable bar.

The staff at Sabean International Hotel are very friendly and helpful. Though guests will not mistake the standards here for those of a luxury western hotel, the Sabean is generally regarded as the best available in the area, and because of its central location does offer the opportunity to venture out and sample even more authentic local cuisine and culture. The hotel offers more than 40 rooms and suites: four suites, 28 rooms and 12 double rooms. Each has en-suite facilities (though no bath), and though there is no air-conditioning, fans are available and there are satellite televisions throughout, plus Wi-Fi in the reception area.

# EXPERIENCE AKSUM



Aksum symbolises the wealth and importance of the civilisation of the ancient Aksumite kingdom, which lasted from the 1st to the 8th centuries AD. The kingdom was at the crossroads of the three continents: Africa, Arabia and the Greco-Roman World, and was the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia. In command of the ivory trade with Sudan, its fleets controlled the Red Sea trade through the port of Adulis and the inland routes of north eastern Africa. The ruins of the ancient Aksumite Civilization covered a wide area in the Tigray Plateau.

The most impressive monuments are the monolithic obelisks, royal tombs and the palace ruins dating to the 6th and 7th centuries AD. Several stelae survive in the town of Aksum dating between the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. The largest standing obelisk rises to a height of over 23 meters and is exquisitely carved to represent a nine-storey building of the Aksumites. It stands at the entrance of the main stela area. The largest obelisk of some 33 meters long lies where it fell, perhaps during the process of erection. It is possibly the largest monolithic stele that ancient human beings ever attempted to erect. A series of inscription on stone tablets have proved to be of immense importance to historians of the ancient world. Some of them include trilingual text in Greek, Sabaean and Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopian), inscribed by King Ezana in the 4th century AD. The introduction of Christianity in the 4th century AD resulted in the building of churches, such as Saint Mary of Zion, rebuilt in the Gondarian period, in the 17th century AD, which is believed to hold the Ark of the Covenant.

SIMEIN MOUNTAINS



# SIMEIN MOUNTAINS





# LIMALIMO LODGE

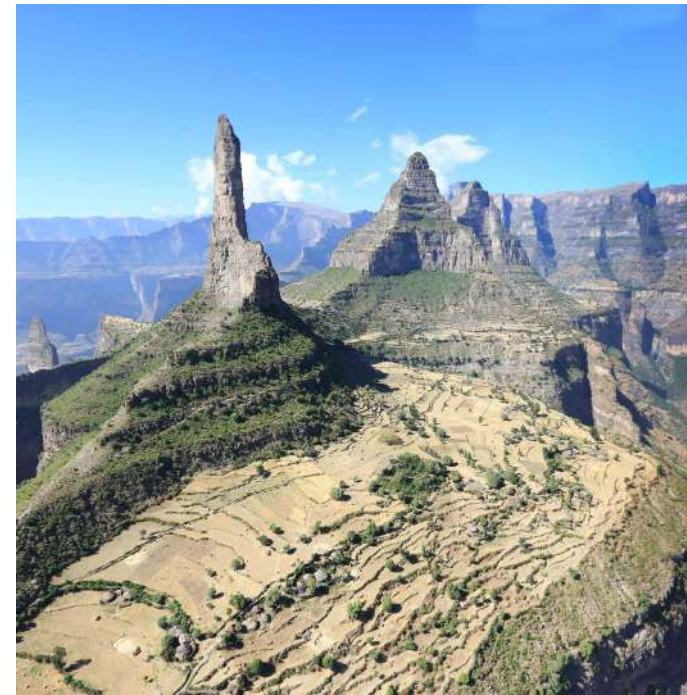
## SIMIEN MOUNTAINS



Established in 2016, Limalimo Lodge is the result of Shiferaw Asrat and Meles Yemata's vision to bring sustainable and community focused tourism to Ethiopia's Simien Mountains National Park. Shiferaw and Meles both grew up in Debarq, the gateway to the Simien Mountains. As mountain guides who in turn both set up their own trekking companies, supporting hundreds of visitors to see the beauty of the national park, they wanted to find a way to open up the benefits of tourism to households and communities within the park boundaries, as well as offer visitors an alternative way of experiencing the UNESCO listed site. And so the concept of Limalimo Lodge was born. With support from African Wildlife Capital and in partnership with the National Park, a sustainable boutique lodge that would offer guests a natural and beautifully designed environment in which to explore the Simiens, opened up tourism to a new corner of the national park, and benefit the surrounding communities.

The lodge has been built using locally sensitive green technology wherever possible and operates with minimal environmental impact. Buildings were constructed using earth, wood and thatch. The earth for the rammed earth was all collected from the site and has produced beautiful walls that blend into the surroundings. Waste is minimized as much as possible and managed in a responsible manner. Greywater is used to water the grounds and kitchen waste is composted wherever possible. Electricity is provided as much as possible through renewable sources and solar is used to supplement hot water heating.

# EXPERIENCE SIMIEN

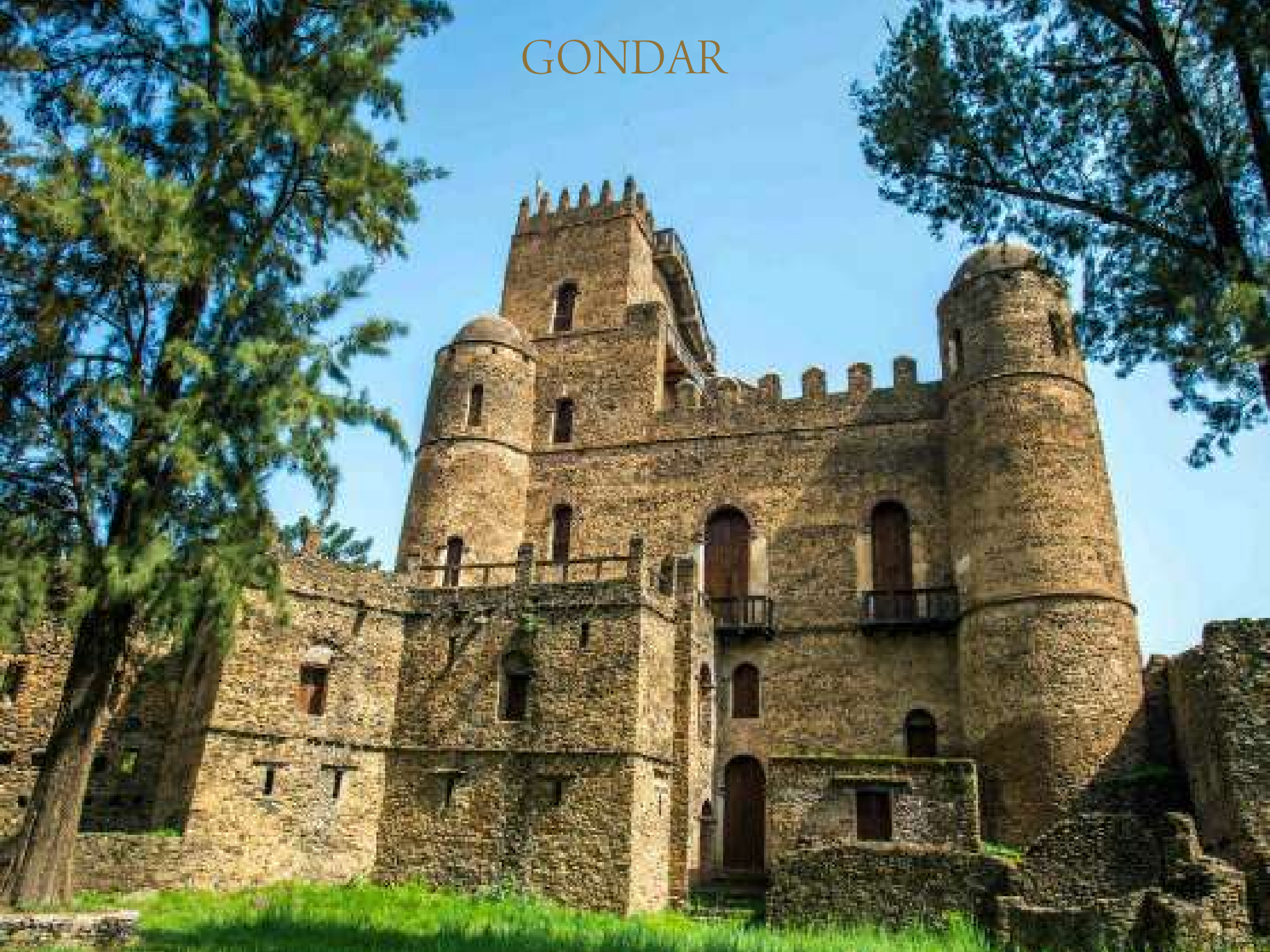


Simien Mountains National Park is one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world. Massive erosion has created jagged mountain peaks, deep valleys at the bottom of sharp precipices and a dramatic escarpment that stretches for miles with breathtaking views over the rugged lowlands below. The park has several peaks above 4,000m including Ras Dejen, Ethiopia's highest mountain at 4,542m.

The park was listed by UNESCO in 1978 as the second ever site of outstanding beauty. The Simien Mountains are a nature lovers dream, rich in wildlife and offering sightings of mammals you'll only glimpse in Ethiopia. The park is home to the largest population of the Gelada monkey, which live in large groups of up to 200 individuals, the Walia Ibex (a horned mountain goat) and the Ethiopian wolf - all endemic to Ethiopia - as well as leopards, various antelopes, hyenas and more.

With the varied habitats of the high plateaus and the warmer lowlands within the park there is rich birdlife including lammergeier vultures, tawny eagles and thick billed ravens. There are over 180 species of birds found within the national park – five of which are seen nowhere else.

# GONDAR



# GONDAR



# GONDAR. HILLS

## GONDAR



Set on a mountain top overlooking these medieval castles, Gondar Hills is a new up market eco friendly property set to continue the architectural style of the castles with fascinating traditional stonework, green roof and breath taking views of the royal enclosure, urban and country side views.

The property has 78 Deluxe Rooms, Restaurants, Bars, Swimming Pool, Wellness centre, Curio shops, Conference centre & other facilities. The restaurants serve traditional dishes and different cuisines with our renowned world class international chef. In addition, the property provides butler services in the rooms. You will have the chance to experience the different local drinks in addition to our full fledged international bar selection.

A fully stocked Spa and Wellness Centre compliments this property with running routes planned in advance for those that would like to take advantage of some altitude training! This proves to be the perfect spot to explore all that the Royal City of Gondar. Established as the capital by Emperor Fasiladas in 1636, Gondar was the Royal Capital of Ethiopia until the 1860s. The castles and palaces built during these years have led Gondar to be referred to as the Camelot of Africa, and to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

# EXPERIENCE GONDAR

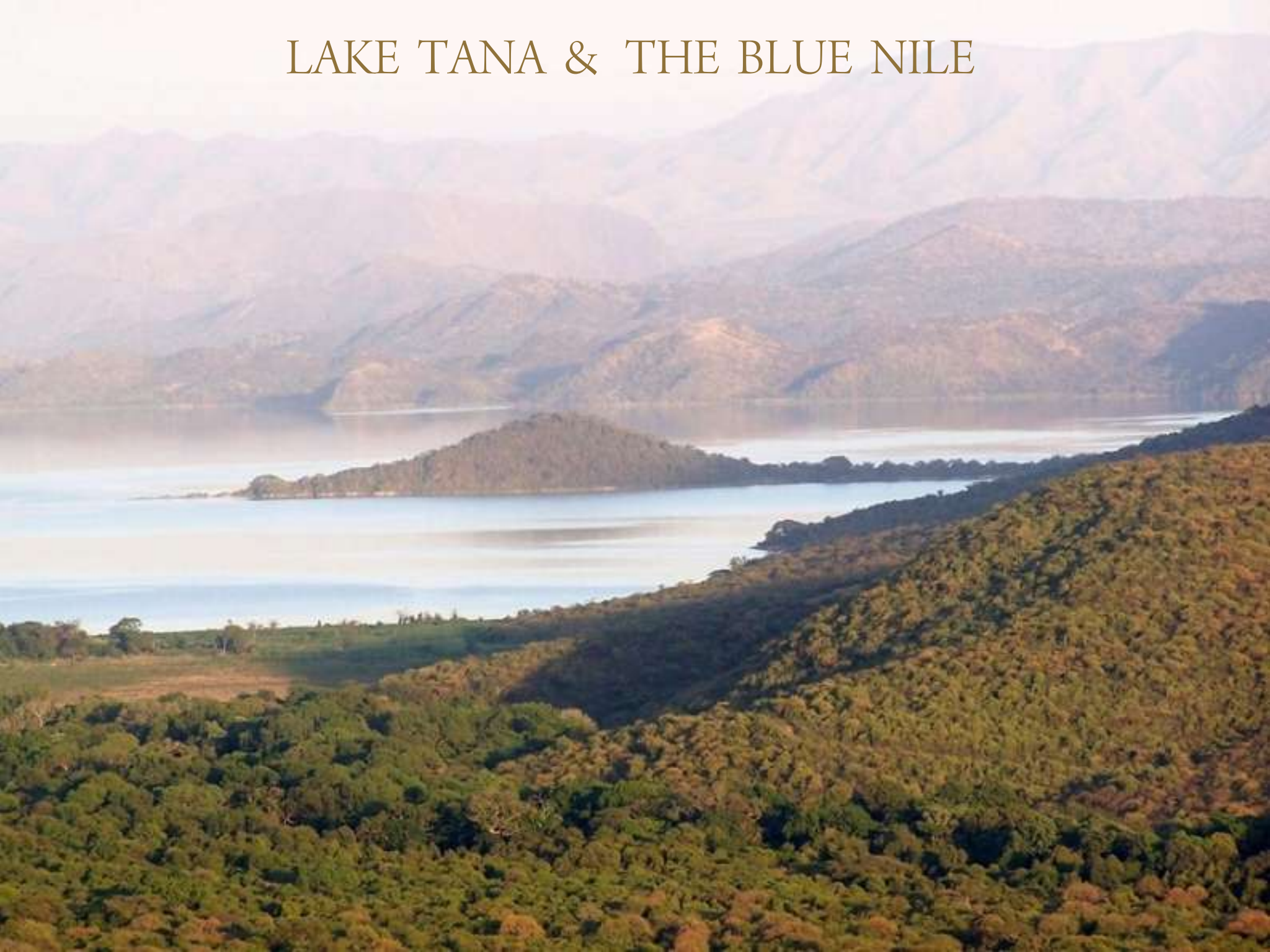


Situated southwest of the Simien Mountains, north of Lake Tana, Gondar once served as the royal capital of the ancient Ethiopian Empire. Known as the 'Camelot of Africa', Gondar is home to the World Heritage Site of Fasil Ghebbi, a fortress-city previously inhabited by the Ethiopian emperor Fasilides. Visitors can enjoy a wide selection of wonderful activities including: discovering the ancient Gondar Castle, a medieval castle and palace complex, exploring the 17th century Church of Debre Sina, featuring biblical murals on every wall and visiting the nearby Simien Mountains National Park. Don't miss a visit to Ras Dashen, the highest mountain in Ethiopia.

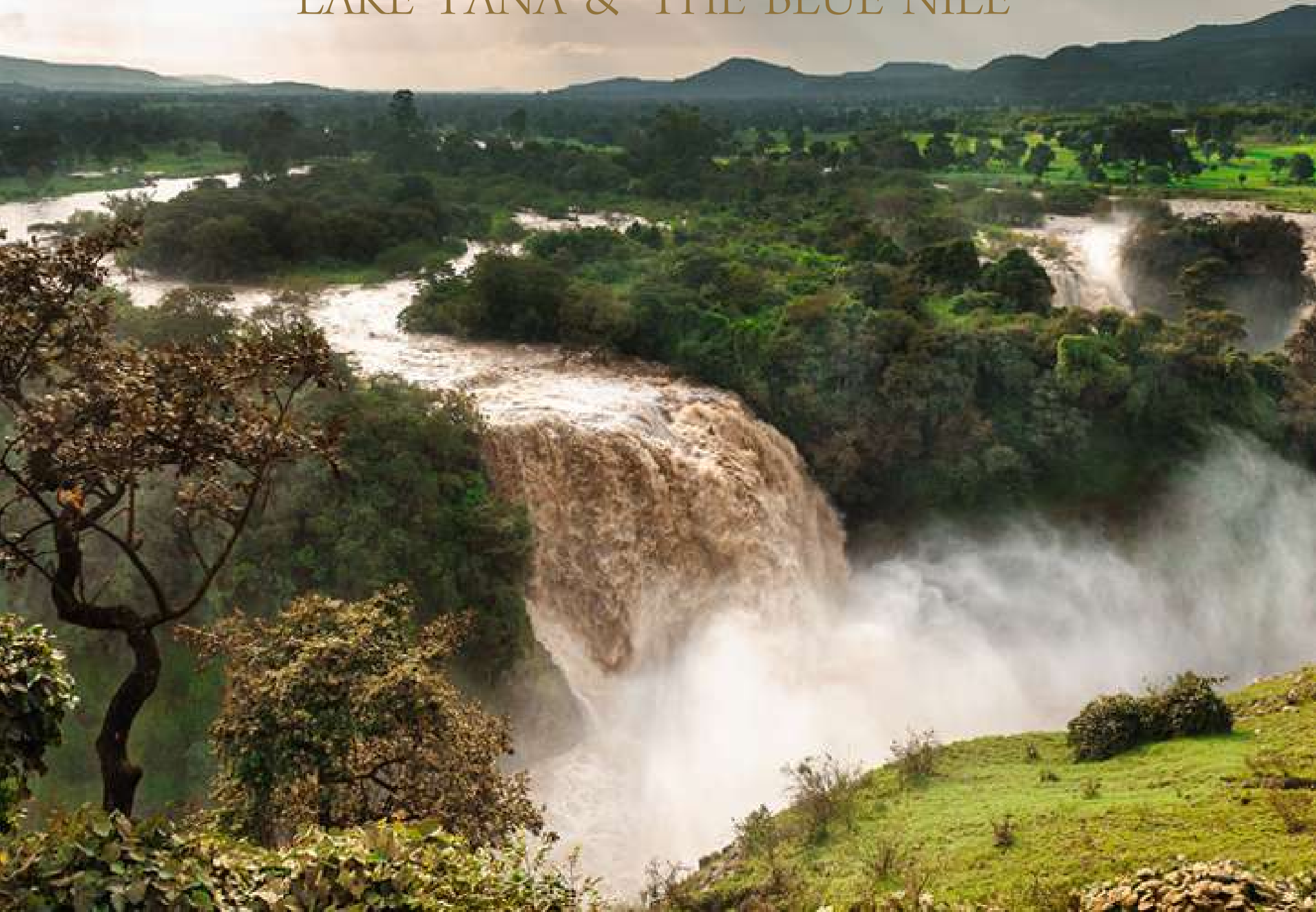
Fasil Ghebbi in Gondar is a heritage site featuring the remains of a castle-like fortress city and was once the residence of the Ethiopian emperor Fasilides and his successors. Founded in the 16th and 17th century, many palaces and temples were built in the city, with some of them surviving to the present day. The city was surrounded by a 900m long wall, and it includes, amongst others, buildings such as Fasilides Castle, Empress Metwab's Castle, a library, a banqueting hall and three churches.

Fasilides' Bath in Gondar, Ethiopia, was the bathing place of the 17th century Emperor Fasilides. The baths are filled only once a year for the Timkat festival and are used for the baptism of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who celebrate the Epiphany on 19 January every year. The baths are enclosed by a rock wall and towered gates.

# LAKE TANA & THE BLUE NILE



# LAKE TANA & THE BLUE NILE





# KURIFTU RESORT

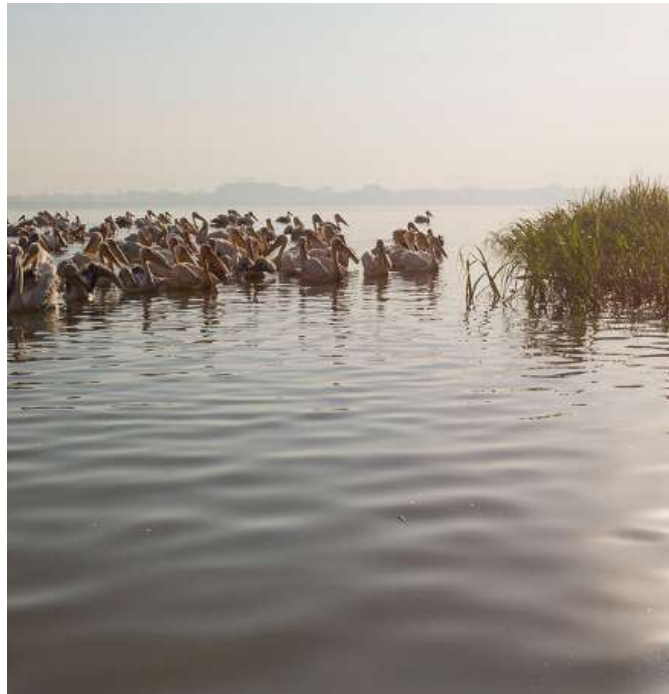
## LAKE TANA



Situated on the shores of Lake Tana, the Kuriftu Resort & Spa is just 1 kilometre from the Marine Authority Boat and Ferry Launch. The spacious accommodation includes private bathrooms, complimentary toiletries, fireplaces, sofas and TVs. Some units have views of the lake or pool. The resort serves a complimentary breakfast daily, and an on-site restaurant is available for lunch and dinner. Guests can have a splash in the pool and relax with drinks at the on-site bar. The hotel also features a gift shop and a free shuttle service.

Situated on the southern shores of Lake Tana in northern Ethiopia, Bahir Dar serves as the capital city of the Amhara region. The city features palm-lined avenues and was awarded the 'UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize' in 2002, for addressing the challenges of rapid urbanisation. Bahir Dar is a popular tourist destination in Ethiopia offering a wonderful selection of attractions in the surrounding area. Visitors can enjoy a wide selection of interesting sites including: visiting some of the world's oldest medieval monasteries and churches on the islands scattered within the Lake Tana, and discovering the spectacular Blue Nile Falls, featuring a 45-metre drop, an impressive 400-metre width and an array of misty rainbows.

# EXPERIENCE BAHIR DAR



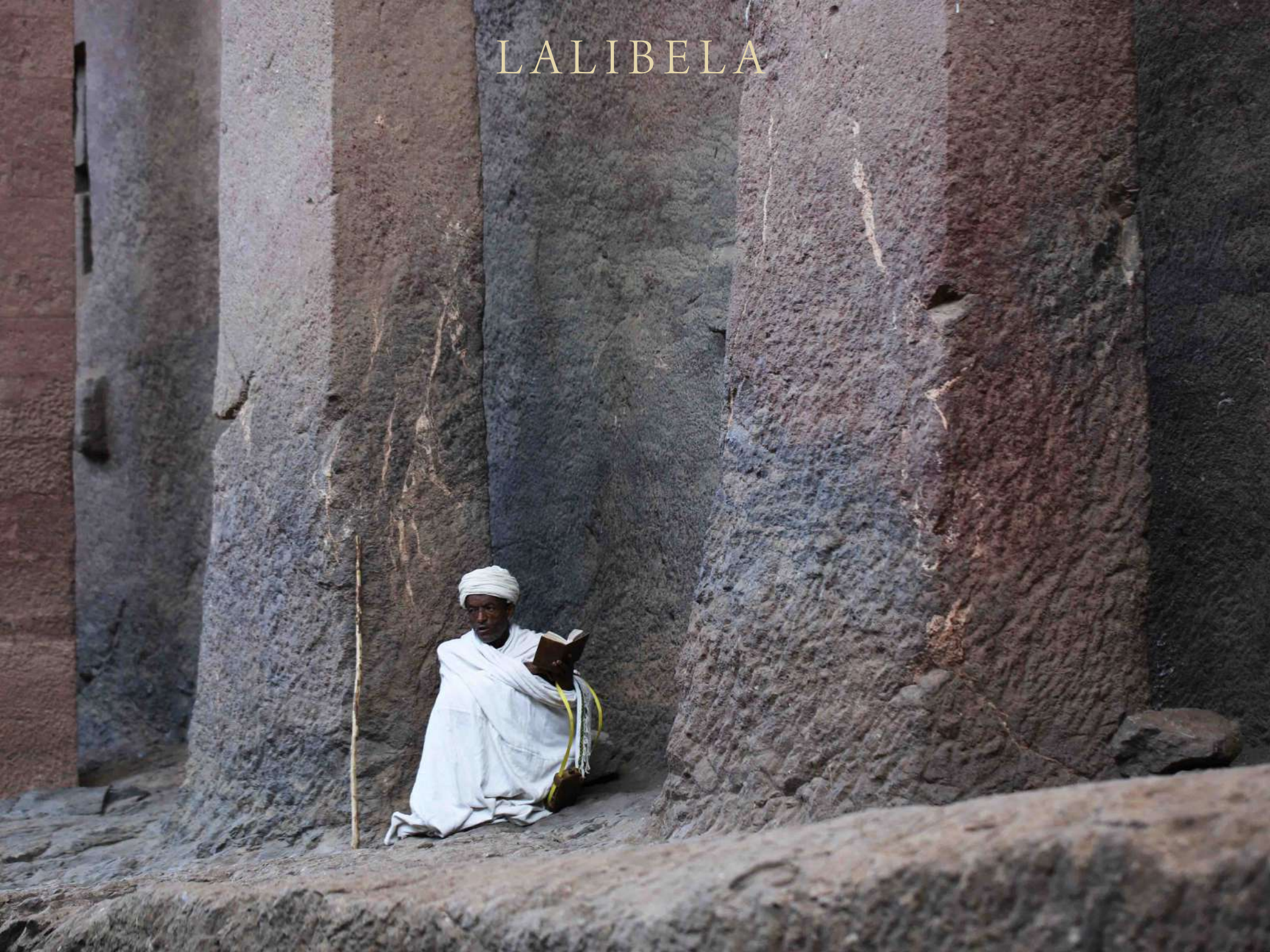
Visits out to Lake Tana's island monasteries – and to the Blue Nile falls – form the focus of activities here. The town is like any other Ethiopian place, but has some wonderfully quaint streets lined with palms and drying fish. In their funerary texts, the Pharaohs referred to Lake Tana as Lake Karou of the Country of the Happy. In the Middle Ages, churches sought refuge on the islands of Lake Tana. Ethiopian illuminated manuscripts, religious paintings and other treasures are still to be found in the area – isolation and difficulty of access ensuring their survival. A trip to the nearby Blue Nile falls is a truly memorable experience. The falls have diminished in size since the hydro dam was built, but plunging over a sheer 45-meter precipice that is about 400 meters wide, they remain an impressive sight. Further upriver, at Lake Tana, lies the source of the Blue Nile.

After centuries of trying – by Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and Romans – it was eventually discovered by Father Paez, a Portuguese missionary. 150 years later, in 1770, the Scottish traveller James Bruce was to describe it as, “one of the most stupendous sights of the Creation.” There is still a large amount of water going over the falls (more so in June – September). Almost as impressive is the 17th century bridge, which in the wet season gives access to the opposite bank. There's also plenty to do. The local markets in Bahir Dar are always well worth a visit. Here you can spend a few good hours among everything from spices to prayer blankets. Extremely welcoming and under the expert tutelage of our guides, you are free to browse and shop for as long you like. Another excellent early evening option is to head up Bezite Hill to the former palace of Haile Selassie and enjoy the stunning lake views. Busy but perfectly manageable, Bahir Dar is full of fascinating cultural traditions, one of which is the boys only church school, where



LALIBELA

# LALIBELA



# MEZENA LODGE

LALIBELA



Sitting outside the main tourist trail of Lalibela, Mezena Lodge is the town's most promising lodge, and is owned and run by local Ethiopian, Yohannes Assefa.

Mezena Lodge sits among a grove of trees, possesses extraordinary views across the valley towards the town of Lalibela, and consists of 30 bungalows and a main lodge. The main lodge includes two restaurants, a large bar, a coffee ceremony room, gift shop, and a spa – sauna, steam room, massage service, gym and a large terrace with a swimming pool. Please note that gym is yet to be completed (2018), and that services are basic. The lodge was designed with the classic Ethiopian and modern architecture in mind, with each part being built using local rock and thatched roof, large windows and French doors. Wi-Fi is available throughout the lodge, though susceptible to occasional country-wide restrictions.

With two restaurants and a bar, Mezena Lodge is of average international standard and offers limited culinary choice. The first restaurant is an all-day dining outfit serving international food. The second serves traditional Ethiopian food, including classics such as tibs, injera and wat.

Spotted across the hill overlooking the town, Mezena Lodge's 30 bungalows are located in front of the main building. Each of the bungalows is almost identical in design aside from being available as either a king or a twin and includes a large TV, WiFi access and a bathroom with a shower, toilet and two wash basins mounted on a marble-design vanity unit, and private veranda.

# EXPERIENCE LALIBELA



At the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, King Lalibela of the Zaghwe dynasty built a series of rock hewn churches – the New Jerusalem as he called it – which are now rightly acknowledged to be one of the wonders of the world. There are 11 churches in the town named after him, with others in the surrounding countryside. 10 of these are still in use today.

Set on the side of a large barren hill, the town of Lalibela is as close to a scene from the bible as it gets. In amongst the donkeys and ancient housing, lie three great clusters of rock churches. Two enormous rocks house a massive 5 separate churches each, hewn from the rock itself, and joined by a warren of underground passages. The surrounding area contains up to 1000 churches – all in varying states of preservation, each offering something different, and some requiring a higher level of fitness in order to access.

Good examples include Asheten Mariam – which lies high on the hill above Lalibela – and Cristos, which lies some 42 kilometers down a very rough and washed out road. Well worth the journey, Cristos is set in a fantastically peaceful part of the countryside. As a prominent indicator of their vital historic value, the churches were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978.



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