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ETHIOPIA BY HELICOPTER

8 DAYS THROUGH AFRICA'S MOST DRAMATIC LANDSCAPES

HELICOPTER SAFARI ROUTE through Ethiopia

DAY 1

Addis Ababa
Sheraton Hotel

DAY 2 & 3

Via the Blue Nile Gorge, to
Lalibela
Mountain View

DAY 4 & 5

Simien Mountains, Game
drive, & visit to Aksum
Korkor Lodge

DAY 6

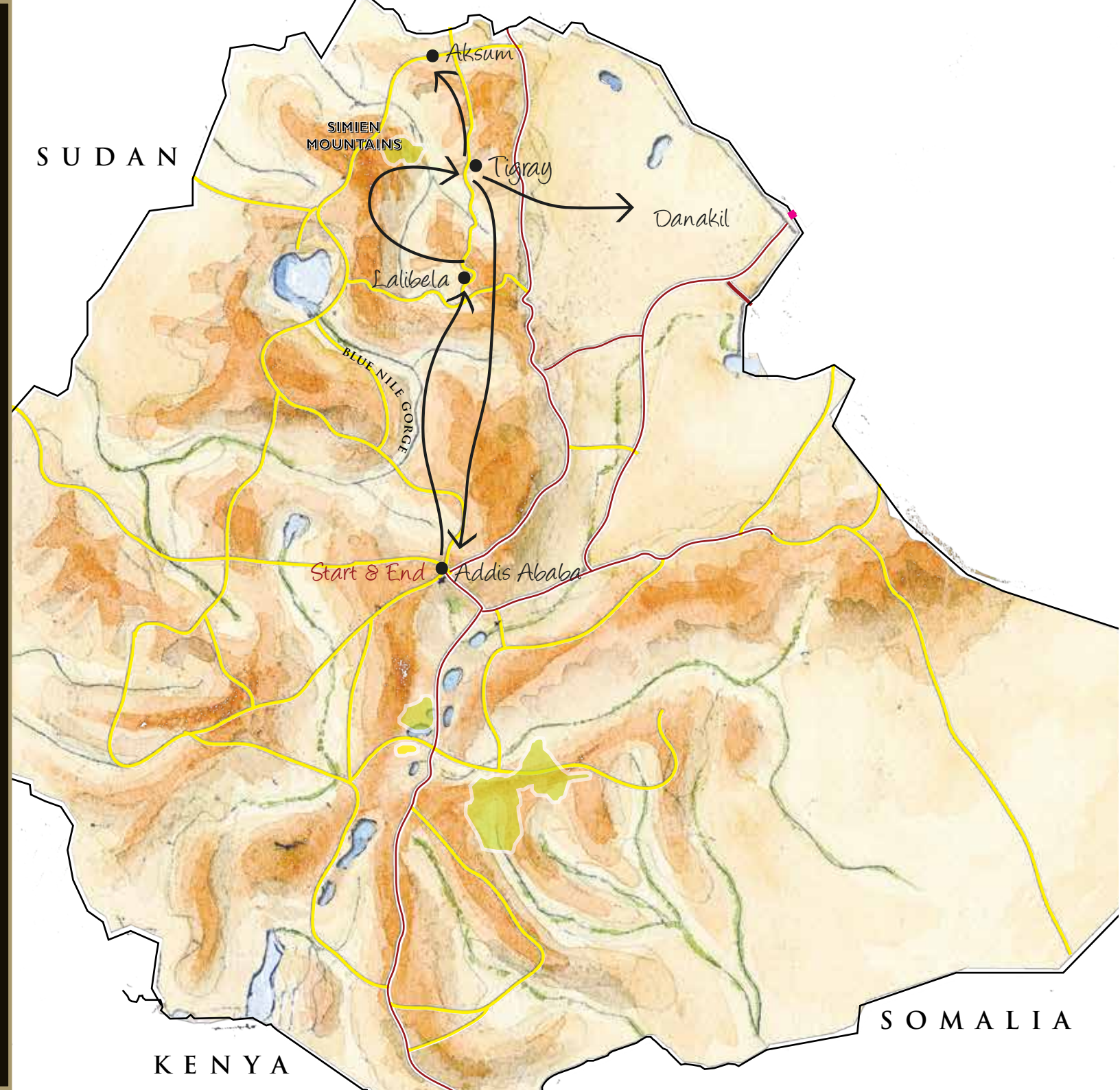
Danakil Depression & Irta Ale
Korkor Lodge

DAY 7

Tigray, explore the rock-hewn
churches
Korkor Lodge

DAY 8

Return to Addis Ababa
Sheraton Hotel



HELICOPTER SAFARI ITINERARY

at a glance

DAY 1

Your expedition begins in the Ethiopian capital – Addis Ababa. Here you will meet your pilot and helicopter.

Depending on your arrival time, there is plenty to do during the day with options to enjoy a city tour and go to the National Museum, which houses the 3.5 million year-old skeleton of 'Lucy' - the oldest hominid ever found.

Traditional song houses and local markets can also be visited. The Ristorante Castelli restaurant is a great option for dinner - serving excellent Italian cuisine.

Sheraton Hotel

DAY 2 & 3

Today we depart for Lalibela, following the Blue Nile Gorge through astonishing landscapes. In the company of an expert guide, we will visit some of the famous 12th century rock-hewn churches.

Accommodation is at Mountain View located on the edge of the Lasta Mountain.

Mountain View



DAY 4

This morning we leave for the Simien Mountains, enjoying a spectacular flight following the course of the Tekeze River.

At 4,543m, the Simiens are Ethiopia's highest range, home to the fascinating Gelada baboon, elusive Ethiopian Wolf and the endemic Walia Ibex. A vehicle will meet us, and we will spend time enjoying the unique life in these remote mountains.

Accommodation for the next 4 nights will be at Korkor Lodge in the Tigray region.

Korkor Lodge

DAY 5

With a picnic breakfast on board, we embark on a dawn flight to the Simiens.

With the sun behind us, the spires and pinnacles are an impressive sight. Lammergerie vultures are found exclusively in mountainous terrain, and we often have great sightings of them soaring overhead.

After a picnic breakfast, we continue onto the fascinating town of Aksum - famous for Stellae (granite monuments).

In the afternoon we will explore the Tigray region and its incredible rock-hewn churches, believed to date back to the 6th or 7th Century.

Korkor Lodge



DAY 6

This morning we head to the Danakil Depression - a place of acid lakes, volcanoes and giant salt pans.

On route we'll hopefully have sightings of the camel trains belonging to the Afar nomadic people. We will visit Irta Ale, an active volcano of bubbling molten lava. In the evening we return to Korkor.

Korkor Lodge

DAY 7

Today we will explore the Tigray region.

The amazing rock-hewn churches are perched on top of steep hills, or carved into cliff faces only accessible by narrow foot paths which scale up the edge of the hills.

Korkor Lodge

DAY 8

Today we leave for Addis Ababa - the final journey of our adventure follows the western wall of the Great Rift Valley.

Sheraton Hotel



ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa means "new flower" - its a symbol of hope in a country that has fought through famine, mass deportations, and depression.



ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa is the fourth largest city in Africa - a melting pot of cultures and a bizarre combination of past and present - Italian Fascist buildings sit alongside luxurious high rise hotels; priests in medieval robes mix with African bureaucrats and wandering minstrels singing songs that are centuries-old.

Around the corner, neon signs light up modern bars and discotheques beat with the latest global hits.

Addis Ababa was chosen for its beauty, hot springs and agreeable climate by Taitu, the consort of Menelik II.

Today, you can get one of Africa's finest tasting coffees in Addis, visit the St George Cathedral and Museum, see the legendary 'Lucy' in the National Museum, and dine on the legacy of Italy's colonisation - pizza.



BLUE NILE GORGE

Spectacular flight to Lalibela, through astonishing landscapes, as we follow the course of the Blue Nile Gorge.



LALIBELA

Ethiopia's holiest city & center of pilgrimage, with 12th and 13th century monolithic churches.



LALIBELA

We arrive in Lalibela mid morning. In the company of a local guide, we will visit some of the famous 12th century rock-hewn churches.

Intended to be a 'new Jerusalem' following the capture of the Holy lands by Muslims, the rural town of Lalibela is an ancient world with medieval rock-hewn churches, hidden crypts and dimly lit passageways, carved from solid granite, a millennia ago.

Today, it is not only the physical structures that remain frozen in time, but a place of pilgrimage for many of Ethiopia's Orthodox Christians.

Accommodation is at Mountain View located on the edge of the Lasta Mountain.



TEKEZE RIVER

*The Tekezé River has created
one of the world's deepest
canyons – over 2000 feet in
places.*



TEKEZE RIVER
Sensational landscape



SIMIEN MOUNTAINS

Thousands of years of erosion has worn down the Ethiopian plateau and created one of the most spectacular landscapes in the world. At 4,543m, the Simiens are Ethiopia's highest range.



SIMIEN MOUNTAINS

The jagged peaks and deep valleys are home to rare and endemic wildlife including the Ethiopian wolf, Gelada Baboon, and the Walia Ibex - a wild goat found nowhere else in the world.

Also found here is the lammergerie (bearded vulture) - a massive vulture with a wingspan of up to 3 metres, with a distinctive diamond-shaped tail and black moustache.

Its old name of ossifrage (or bone-breaker) relates to its habit of dropping bones from great heights onto rocks beneath - bone marrow is its favoured source of food.



AKSUM

The ruins of the ancient city of Aksum mark the heart of ancient Ethiopia, when the Kingdom of Aksum was the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire & Persia



AKSUM

A morning spent in the fascinating town of Aksum - famous for Stellae and stone monuments.

One of the most important ancient sites in sub-Saharan Africa, Aksum is now something of a rural modern town. Scattered around this World Heritage Site are ruins of palaces, underground tombs and inscriptions that rival the Rosetta Stone.

Pilgrims still journey to Aksum and the majority of Ethiopians passionately believe that the Ark of the Covenant resides here.



DANAKIL
DEPRESSION



DANAKIL DEPRESSION

More than 100 metres below sea level, the Danakil Depression is peppered with colourful sulphurous springs, acid lakes, active volcanoes and giant salt pans.

Some of the hottest temperatures known to man are found here in the Danakil Depression. Unlike anything else on this planet, this extraordinary place is located on a geographical fault within the Great Rift Valley, at the Horn of Africa.



IRTA ALE

Danakil Depression

There is something magical about this radical attraction – the ‘smoking mountain’ - as referred to by the Afar people.

Irta Ale - in a state of continuous eruption since 1967 - is the most famous of the Danakil Depression's volcanoes.

Its small southerly crater holds the only permanent lava lake on the planet. Temperatures plummet as night falls, and anyone lucky enough to camp here, will witness some amazing sights.



SALT PLAINS & THE AFAR PEOPLE

The nomadic Afar people inhabit this region and are 'belligerent and proud' as portrayed by Wilfrid Thesiger. Today, you are most likely to see the Afar with their huge trains of camels, gently snaking their way across this inhospitable land to collect salt, believed to be following ancient salt routes.



TIGRAY

*Historical treasures & ancient
places of worship*

The Tigray Region of northern
Ethiopia has particularly
spectacular landscape - stratified
mountains and sharp peaks that
rise from the plains.



TIGRAY'S ROCK HEWN CHURCHES

Very little is known about the origin of the 120, or so, rock churches or their architectural history. Local tradition attributes most of the churches to the 4th century Aksumite Kings, Abreha and Atsbeha.

Access to the churches involves some interesting hikes up the steep (and sometimes sheer) cliff faces. Inside many of the churches are colourful frescoes - hundreds of years old.

The priests who live on these mountains follow a simple life that revolves around the Orthodox Christian calendar.



HELICOPTER SAFARI ENDS

The final journey of our adventure
follows the western wall of the
Great Rift Valley, back to Addis
Ababa.



WHAT TO WEAR

Clothing recommendation

Safaris are informal and comfort should be considered above all else.

Durable, loose fitting, lightweight cotton clothes are recommended in neutral colours, so as not to alarm wildlife whilst in the bush.

Something warm is essential for early morning and evening activities. Footwear should not be heavy. A pair of comfortable walking shoes, trainers or desert boots is best.

The following is a guideline for the maximum clothing you need to bring. Due to the limited space in the helicopters personal luggage is limited to a maximum of 15kgs per person that MUST be packed in a soft duffel bag (No rigid bags or bags with wheels). Guests should also carry a small backpack for carrying personal items.



WHAT TO BRING

The following is a guideline for the maximum clothing you need to bring. There will only be limited laundry service available.

Good quality sunglasses

Sun Hat

Comfortable walking shoes

Sandals or flip flops

4 cotton shirts, 2 long sleeved

2 pairs long trousers / jeans

3 pairs of shorts / skirts

Underwear and socks

Swimsuit

Sweater / Fleece

Zip lock bags are useful for anything that might leak while travelling – Sun Cream, shampoo, creams etc.

Good quality torch

Tissues / wet wipes

Any prescribed medication

Insect repellent

Binoculars not essential but useful

Camera

*Ben Simpson & Jamie Roberts
founders of Tropic Air Helicopters
adventures & safaris throughout sub-Saharan Africa*



Private helicopter and pilot / guides are provided by Tropic Air - a leading air charter company based in East Africa, specialising in heli-safaris and adventures, with more than 10 years of experience in this field.

The Eurocopter AS 350 B3's are perfectly adapted to fly in East Africa's hot and high environments.

Aircraft are fitted with satellite tracking software, pilots are trained in 'first person on scene' first aid, and all precautions are carried out to ensure maximum safety and comfort.

Tropic Air

Nanyuki, Kenya

