



Addis Abeba Cultural & Historical Sites

Overview of Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa is the capital and largest city of Ethiopia. Being home to the African Union, having important United Nations branches, and with nearly every foreign embassy from around the world represented, Addis Ababa is often referred to as the capital of Africa.

Located in the beautiful Ethiopian highlands, Addis Ababa is positioned at 2,665 meters in elevation, making the weather extremely pleasant, if not a bit on the cool side.

From the marvelous array of local and international food, some of the best coffee you'll ever have in your life, to ancient churches, and fascinating museums, there are plenty of things to keep you occupied and satisfied in Addis Ababa.



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Addis Mercato

It's crowded, it's chaotic, but the Addis Mercato is so incredibly entertaining and full of life and character, that walking around is one of the best things to do in Addis Ababa.

The Mercato, coming from the Italian word for market, claims to be the largest open air market in Africa. There are so many different sections of the market and you can buy everything from souvenirs to clothes to food. That being said, it's also a great place to buy nothing and just go to watch the crowds of people and observe the incredible loads being carried from place to place.

Do be careful, just like any busy place in the world, don't carry an unnecessary amount of belongings, and take care of your pockets.

St. George's Cathedral and Museum

One of the most well recognized places of worship and icons of Addis Ababa is St. George's Cathedral. The compound is located on the top of a hill, overlooking the Menelik II square.

To the side of the cathedral is a museum which is worth a quick stroll. It's filled with memorabilia from the ancient church and a collection of religious writings, Ethiopian crosses, and clothing.

Inside the church you can walk in a circle around the cathedral, observing an incredible set of paintings portraying both scenes from the Bible and from Ethiopian history.



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Meskel Square and Museum

Meskel Square in Addis Ababa is sort of the central gathering place in the city, especially important during festivals and political demonstrations. Meskel Square also is a good point of reference for local transportation and for getting into the center of the city.

Unless there's an event taking place at Meskel Square, there's not a whole lot to do there. However, there is the official Ethiopian Tourism office across the street and there are two museums adjacent to the square, just off Bole Road.

National Museum of Ethiopia

In my opinion, this is one of the best museums in Addis Ababa. The facility is home to many of the most significant relics and pieces of artwork from around the country. I also enjoyed the variety of different art and displays.

First of all, the National Museum of Ethiopia has a good collection of archaeology, like precious stelae and statues from Axum. You'll also find skeletal remains from early hominids, and a model of the famous "Lucy."



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Holy Trinity Cathedral (Kidist Selassie) and Museum

While St. George's Cathedral is one of the most famous in Addis Ababa, the Holy Trinity Cathedral is the most sacred Ethiopian Orthodox church in the city, and one of the most sacred sites of worship in Ethiopia after the churches of Lalibela.

The Holy Trinity Cathedral has a real medieval feel to it, the grounds surrounded by weeping pine trees and the cathedral decorated with statues and carvings.

At the back of the cathedral is another museum, where you can see more Ethiopian historical memorabilia, crowns of former Ethiopian Emperors, and a selection incredibly well preserved Amharic Bibles and religious writings.

At the front of the cathedral, if you ask the priest to open the gate, you can see the tomb of Emperor Haile Selassie.

The Red Terror Martyrs Memorial Museum

Is a small and modern museum showing and explaining the period of "Red Terror" (from 1978-1987) in Ethiopia when countless innocent people suffered. The museum is free entrance. Also next to Meskel Square is the Addis Ababa Museum.



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