

SIMIEN MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK – TREKKING & WILDLIFE

OVERVIEW

The Simien Mountains rise to Ras Dashen (4,550 m), among Africa's highest peaks. The park protects dramatic escarpments and endemic wildlife. It is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Classic treks follow the escarpment north of Debark through Sankaber, Geech, and Chennek camps with far-reaching views and close encounters with gelada monkeys.

WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

- Gelada: High-plateau grass specialist often seen in large, photogenic groups near cliffs and meadows.
- Walia Ibex: Cliff-dwelling wild goat endemic to the Simien; most likely around the Chennek area.
- Ethiopian Wolf: Africa's rarest canid; ranges mainly in high-altitude Afro-alpine zones in Ethiopia (most commonly associated with Bale, but individuals have been recorded historically in the Simien).
- Raptors & Endemics: Lammergeier (bearded vulture) and other highland birds are regular.

CLASSIC 1–3 DAY PLANS

- One Day: Debark → park gate → Sankaber area viewpoints; short cliff-edge walks among geladas.
- Two Days: Overnight at Geech (or lodge near Sankaber); sunrise at Imet Gogo viewpoint; return via Jinbar waterfall outlook.
- Three Days: Extend to Chennek for Walia ibex viewing; vehicle drop/pickup possible to optimize time.

TREKKING PRACTICALS

- Access & Permits: Park entry, local guide, and armed scout are required; arrangements are made in Debark at the park office or via tour operators.
- Altitude: Camps are 3,200–3,600 m; pace yourself, hydrate, and consider acclimatization nights.
- Seasons: Clearest trekking is generally Oct–May; June–Sept can be misty/rainy with lush scenery and slippery trails.
- Gear: Warm layers, rain shell, sturdy boots, sun protection; nights are cold even in the dry season.

SAMPLE RAG-READY ITINERARIES

- “Weekend Escarpment”: Day 1 Sankaber trails, Day 2 sunrise at Imet Gogo.
- “Ibex Focus”: Drive to Chennek with short walks near the camp to maximize wildlife time.
- “Photography Circuit”: Golden-hour meadows around Geech, cliff lines at Imet Gogo, lammergeier scans at viewpoints.

SOURCES SUMMARY

Key protected-area facts and wildlife highlights align with UNESCO documentation and long-standing park guidance from Ethiopian conservation bodies and trekking literature.