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# Discover Asmara – The Hidden Gem of Africa

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## About Asmara

### Welcome to Asmara Heritage

Nestled in the heart of Eritrea, Asmara stands as a testament to both the country's rich past and its vibrant present. Often referred to as "La Piccola Roma" or "Little Rome," Asmara showcases a stunning array of Italian colonial architecture that transports visitors back in time. Walking through its streets feels like flipping through the pages of a living history book, where art deco buildings, grand boulevards, and charming cafes tell tales of bygone eras.

Asmara's history is deeply intertwined with its architecture and urban planning. During the Italian colonization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the city was meticulously designed to mirror European aesthetics and urban functionality. This resulted in a unique blend of Eritrean and Italian influences, making Asmara a cultural mosaic unlike any other.

For tourists, Asmara offers a treasure trove of experiences. Start your journey at the Fiat Tagliero Building, an emblematic art deco masterpiece designed to resemble an airplane. Stroll along Harnet Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare, where you can sip coffee in historic cafes, shop at local markets, and admire the eclectic mix of architectural styles. Don't miss the Asmara Cathedral, a striking Romanesque structure that stands as a symbol of the city's spiritual and cultural identity.

### Join us as we delve into the history of Asmara

Asmara's allure extends beyond its architecture. The city boasts a vibrant arts scene, with numerous galleries and theaters showcasing local talent and traditional performances. The bustling markets, such as Medeber Market, offer a sensory overload of sights, sounds, and flavors, providing a glimpse into the daily lives of its residents.

In essence, Asmara is not just a destination; it's a journey through time and culture, where every corner reveals a story and every building whispers a secret from the past. Whether you're a history buff, an architecture enthusiast, or simply a curious traveler, Asmara promises an unforgettable experience that will leave you enchanted and inspired.

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## The History of Asmara

Asmara, the capital city of Eritrea, is a city with a rich and diverse history, blending indigenous African cultures with colonial influences and modern urban development. The history of Asmara can be divided into several key periods: ancient roots, Islamic influence, Italian colonization, World War II, and post-independence developments.

### Pre-Colonial and Ancient Periods

The area was part of the Kingdom of Aksum, one of the most powerful and influential empires of ancient Africa, which existed from around 100 CE to 940 CE.

### The Rise of Asmara in the 19th Century

In the late 1800s, the area that would become Asmara came under the control of various regional powers, including the Egyptian Khedive and the Kingdom of Ethiopia. By the 1860s, the region was annexed by the Kingdom of Italy as part of its ambitions to establish a colonial presence in the Horn of Africa. This led to a shift from a small village to a more strategic urban center.

### Italian Colonization (1890-1941)

The most significant transformation of Asmara occurred during the Italian colonization of Eritrea, which began in 1890. Italy formally established the colony of Eritrea, and Asmara became its capital in 1897. The Italians were determined to create a modern European-style city in Asmara, and they invested heavily in infrastructure, urban planning, and architecture.

### World War II and British Administration (1941-1951)

During World War II, Italian East Africa, which included Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, became a theater of conflict. The British forces, who had control over the British Somaliland and Sudan, launched military operations against the Italian forces in the Horn of Africa. Asmara fell to the British in 1941 after fierce fighting.

### Eritrean Federation with Ethiopia (1952-1962)

Asmara's status as a colonial city began to diminish during this time, as the Ethiopians instituted policies aimed at suppressing Eritrean identity and independence.

### Eritrean War of Independence (1961-1991)

The city of Asmara played a central role in the Eritrean War of Independence, both as a site of strategic importance and as a center of resistance. The city was heavily bombed by Ethiopian forces, and large parts of its population were displaced during the course of the war.

### Post-Independence Era (1991-Present)

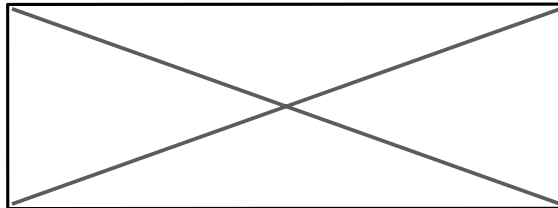
After independence, Asmara's colonial-era buildings, which had been neglected during the war, were seen as both a symbol of resilience and a heritage to be preserved. In the 21st century, Asmara gained international recognition for its well-preserved Italian colonial architecture, and in 2017, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. The city's unique architectural blend of Italian modernism and African influences continues to attract attention from architects and historians.

## Significance of Asmara

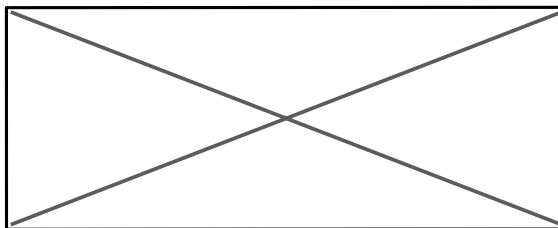
Asmara, known as the "City of Dreams," is a city with a rich past that merges tradition with modernity. Established in the 12th century, Asmara has developed a unique blend of Italian colonial architecture, making it one of the few cities in Africa with such a comprehensive Art Deco style. In 2017, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, solidifying its status as a cultural and architectural treasure.

Asmara's architectural heritage is a testament to its historical importance. It stands as a vibrant reminder of Eritrea's cultural resilience, offering a window into the past while maintaining a dynamic presence in modern-day Eritrea.

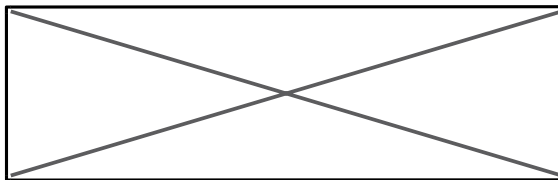
Recognized by UNESCO for its preserved architecture and urban planning, Asmara's nomination as a World Heritage site honors its unique cultural fusion of African and European influences, setting it apart as a global historical site.



Cinema Impero



the Fiat Tagliero



Asmara Opera House.

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## Why Visit Asmara?

Asmara is a city where history, culture, and modernity meet. Its unique Art Deco architecture, historical landmarks, and vibrant local culture make it a must-visit destination for travelers seeking a blend of tradition and modernity. Experience the charm of Asmara's streets, savor local cuisine, and enjoy the hospitality of its people.

### When to Visit

The best time to visit Asmara is during the cooler months, from October to March, when temperatures are mild and pleasant. During this time, the weather is ideal for exploring the city on foot and enjoying outdoor activities.

## Travel Tips

**Currency:** The Eritrean Nakfa (ERN) is the local currency. Foreign currencies can generally be exchanged at major hotels and banks.

**Language:** Tigrinya, Arabic, and English are commonly spoken, so English-speaking visitors can navigate fairly easily.

**Safety:** Asmara is known to be a safe city for tourists, but, as with any travel, it's wise to stay aware of your surroundings and follow local guidelines.

## Popular Accommodation

### Hotel Asmara Palace

A luxury hotel with modern amenities, close to the airport, offering a pool, spa, and international dining options.

### Crystal Hotel

A mid-range hotel with comfortable rooms and easy access to the city center. Known for its excellent customer service.

### Africa Pension

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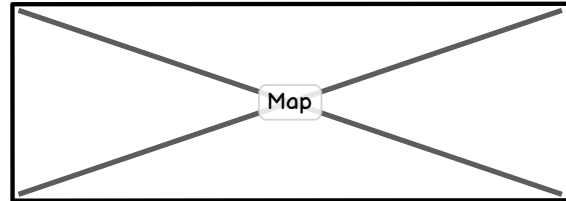
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After independence, Asmara's colonial-era buildings, which had been neglected during the war, were seen as both a symbol of resilience and a heritage to be preserved. In the 21st century, Asmara gained international

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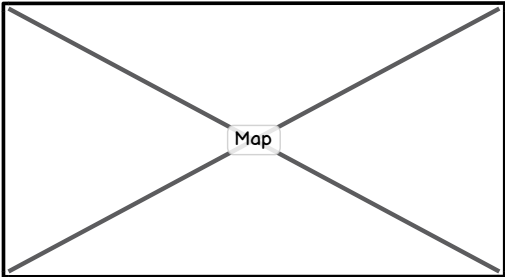
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