

simien mountain trek, ethiopia



The Simien Mountains are one of the major highlands of Africa, rising to their highest point in Ethiopia, Ras Dejen (4,620m), the fourth highest peak in the African continent.

Your trekking route is far from the regular tourist trails. It will take you to beautiful lowland valleys and high escarpments, where Amhara villages can be found. The summit is tough but rewarding, and is followed by a challenging ridge route, topping several 4,000m peaks en route.

The trek from Arkwasyie will offer one of the toughest days on the challenge as you leave the higher plateau, cross several substantial ridges and valleys and climb down the near vertical Devil's Staircase with a 900m descent to reach Lamo, one of the most beautiful locations in the Simiens.

With time in Addis Ababa, the capital, and also in historic Gondar, you will see a little of the sensational ancient culture of this unique and fascinating African country.

Day 1: International Departure

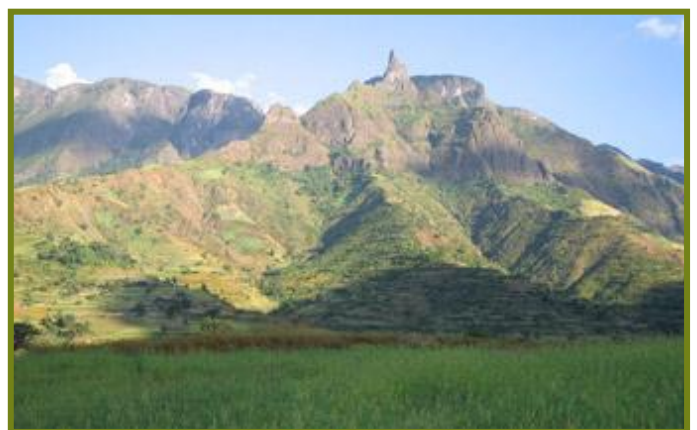
You will leave London Heathrow for the night flight to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, our Charity Challenge representative will be there to assist you with the check-in and any last minute questions.

Day 2: Addis Ababa to Gondar

The flight arrives in Addis and connects with the local flight to Gondar, which takes about 2 hours. On arrival in Gondar, you will be met at the airport by a Charity Challenge local agent who will take you on a brief tour of the 17th century castles of Emperor Fasilidas and his descendants, built when Gondar was the capital (altitude approx 2,175m). Dinner and overnight at the Goha Hotel.

Day 3: Debarq to Sankaber (3,230m)

This morning you will drive about 4 hours & 110kms north to the gateway and market town of Debarq, passing through beautiful mountain scenery en route. At Debarq (approx altitude 2600m), the HQ of the Simien Mountains National Park, guides & armed scouts arrive to accompany you on your trek. Firstly your support team will check your provisions and load the mules. You will then take lunch in the towns' local hotel and trek past the market on the trail to the first camp – Sankaber. As you leave Debarq, the route is buzzing with people and life, a testament to its location on the ancient caravan route between Gondar and Axum. You then follow an undulating path up and down spurs, across the Lamma Wenz River and past welcoming villages. You round Aman Amba and keep close to the edge of the escarpment looking down on Adarmaz Camp in the valley below, before seeing the spectacular views from Sankaber, altitude 3,230m. Overnight & dinner at Adarmaz Camp.



Day 4: Sankaber to Chenek – (3,600m)

Today you will trek from Sankaber to Chenek Camp. The terrain is varied; fertile in parts and harsh elsewhere. At first you will descend to the escarpment, near the head of the Wazla Wenz, where there is a dramatic view of the Jinbar Wenz waterfall cascading down the Geech Abyss. Then you will trek up again to Argin and Ambaras, through the woods where the views

are spectacular. When overlooking Dirwara, a gap in the cliff wall reveals a view to Inatyie and along the escarpment to Emietgogo, 4,000m, before you reach camp at Chenek. The camp itself has caves, sometimes the unusual rock hyrax and offers great views over the escarpment, notably from the outcrop above. However it is notoriously damp and misty. Chenek altitude 3,600m. Overall altitude gain 370m. Today you will trek for 6-7hrs.



Day 5: Chenek to Mizma (4,300m)

Today is a long but interesting walk from Chenek at 3,600m to Mizma at 3,500m. You are now leaving the boundaries of the Simien Mountains National Park. This is primarily a wildlife sanctuary, formed in 1969 to protect endangered species such as the Walia Ibex, the Simien Wolf, and the Gelada Baboon. You may also see some of Ethiopia's 30 endemic bird species, about 9 of which can be seen in the Simiens. Unfortunately, the Simien Wolf has disappeared from this area, and the other species are continually being pushed away from their usual habitat. This is a sensitive area and on environmental grounds we are conscious that support mules should be reserved for emergencies. Tonight you will have dinner & camp at Mizma at low altitude, 3,500m, before summit day. Undulating altitude +700m - 1400m +600m; Overall altitude loss 100m. Today you will hike for 7-8 hrs.

Day 6: Mizma to Ras Deshen and Metelal (4,620m)

This morning is an early start from Mizma to Ras Deshen summit (4,620m) and then down to Metelal, camping at lower altitude. At first, you will ascend in a loop to the southeast, through the gully, then north to the summit. Scrambling up, you will notice that there are 2 distinct hog-back rock summits, the first being the highest. This is Africa's fourth highest mountain and the highest in Ethiopia. This is it! This is your challenge! You will then continue along the edge of the cliff, past the dry-stone circles, to Analu 4,473m. Rocky scrambles then take you along the ridge to Tefew Leser 4,449m, and down to Metelal 3,900m for your dinner and camp overnight. Today is a tough day and you should trek for 8hrs. Altitude change is +1120m -720m.

Day 7: Metelal to Arkwasiye (3,600m)

Today you follow the tough ridge route from Metelal and top several 4,000m peaks en route. Or, take the easier contour line route with the luggage mules to Arkwasiye. This is one of the most important days trekking -

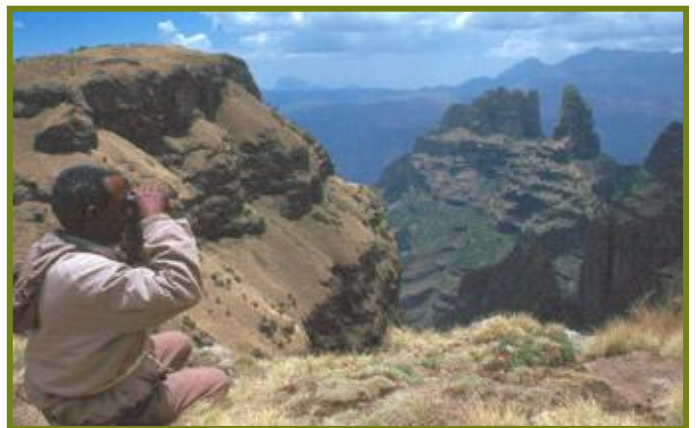
exhausting but very memorable because of the wonderful scenery, not only the peaks but also Metelal Pass 3,800m. On the ridge are Kidis Yared 4,453m, Abba Yared 4,409m, Silki 4,420m, and Beroch Wuha 4,272m. Tonight you will have dinner and camp at altitude at Arkwasiye (approx 3,600m). Altitude change today is +600m -900m. Overall altitude loss 300m. You will be trekking for approximately 8 hrs.

Day 8: Arkwasiye to Lamo (2,000m)

Today you trek for about 10hrs as you have to leave the higher plateau and village of Arkwasiye, cross several substantial ridges and valleys, then climb down the near vertical Devil's staircase with a 900m descent. The reward for this effort is Lamo, one of the most beautiful locations in the Simiens. Overnight dinner and camp in Lamo (approx 2,00m). Your overall altitude loss will be around 1,600m.

Day 9: Lamo to Awaza (2,000m)

Lamo is also known as Mekarebya. If you look northeast across the valley to the circle of mountains around Amba Ton you will see the view illustrated on Ethiopian Airlines tickets. Today you have a day of ridge and valley treks through some spectacularly beautiful scenery to Awaza, where you camp at much the same altitude as Lamo. Altitude undulating approx 2,000m. Today you will trekking for about 8hrs



Day 10: Awaza to Gondar(1,700m)

This morning you will walk from Awaza located at around 2,000m to the market town of Adi Arkay 1,700m with wonderful views to Amba Ton and the high escarpments of the Simiens Plateau. The trekking time is approximately 3hrs. After a stroll around the market, say goodbye to your muleteers and camp staff and meet the vehicles for the 4-5 hour drive to Gondar, for welcome showers, dinner and overnight at the Goha Hotel (altitude approx 2,175m).

Day 11: Gondar to Addis Ababa

Today you will fly to Addis Ababa and transfer to the Ghion Hotel for celebration dinner & to freshen up before your journey home. The hotel has beautiful gardens, terrace annexe, tennis courts, a large thermal-water swimming pool with diving boards, and a smaller learners' pool with naturally warm poolside showers and cool poolside cafe. The thermal water is said to be great for aches and pains. This evening you will transfer back to Addis Ababa airport for your overnight flight home.



Day 12: International Departure

Your flight to the UK arrives at London Heathrow today.

N.B. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

Should you suffer from vertigo, it is worth considering that on most mountain treks there will be occasional exposure to sheer drops. Therefore you should discuss the particular itinerary of your choice with a member of our team. Please note that this itinerary is tough, and you may encounter poor weather. The itinerary is not for the unfit or the faint hearted.

ETHIOPIAID

optional Ethiopiaid extension

In Addis Ababa, there is an estimated 60,000 children living rough on the dangerous streets of an impoverished city. Often without parents, they spend every waking hour desperately looking for food and shelter. Many are forced to beg, steal or prostitute themselves simply to get money for their next meal. For these children, education is a luxury they simply cannot afford.

In 2000, Ethiopiaid proposed the idea of a Street Children's breakfast in Addis Ababa. This has since become a reality and every day Ethiopiaid help to feed and school 630 street children who are rounded up by the dedicated project staff from doorways, bus stations and derelict hovels. The breakfast provides an incentive for attending informal classes in basic literacy and numeracy which are held afterwards. The Street Children's breakfast is just one of the many Ethiopiaid projects that you'll be able to visit.

Day 12: Project Visit

After breakfast you will be transferred to an Ethiopiaid project where you will get the chance to see firsthand Ethiopiaid's work. Overnight and dinner at Addis Ababa Hotel.

Day 13: International Departure

Your flight to the UK arrives at London Heathrow today.

Extension includes:

- Accommodation on twin occupancy basis
- all transfers
- all meals

Cost: £115 per person sharing (NB: there must be a minimum of 4 persons for this extension to run)

If you would like to book the above extension or have any extension enquiries please call the Charity Challenge office on 020 8557 0000 or email flights@charitychallenge.com. All bookings are subject to availability and group booking limitations. We therefore ask you to consider your travel plans as soon as possible and if you want to extend your challenge, please put in your request immediately.

This extension must be requested at the time of booking your expedition otherwise we cannot guarantee availability.