



# Danakil with volcano expert

ETHIOPIA



12 days

27 December 2024 - 07 January 2025

English speaking tour leader (Luca Lupi)

## The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- The encounter with our ancestor Lucy in **Addis Ababa**
- The markets of **Sembete, Bati** and **Asayta**, where you can meet Afar, Oromo, Wollo and Amhara
- Trekking on the **Erta Ale volcano**, admiring its lava lake
- The **Afar nomads** and the salt caravans, a millenary tradition unchanged
- The Dante-esque landscapes of **The Dallol**, 116 metres below sea level
- A regenerating bath in **Lake Afdera** and its hot springs
- The sighting of oryx and kudu in the **Awash Park**



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### **Day 1 - Friday 27 December**

#### **Outward flight/Addis Ababa (ADD)**

Evening flight to Addis Ababa, overnight by plane.

### **Day 2 - Saturday 28 December**

#### **Addis Ababa**

On arrival meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tours staff who will arrange transfer to Hotel Nexus International or similar. Assistance for the exchange of Euros and possible purchase of a local phone card. A day dedicated to visiting ADDIS ABEBA, the 'new flower', a colourful, chaotic and boisterous African capital, reflecting the contrasts between ongoing modernisation and tradition, and showing signs of an ancient beauty in which the atmosphere of Italian Abyssinia can still be discerned. We will visit the National Museum, which houses important Sabaeen artefacts and the fossil remains of Australopithecus Afarensis, including the famous Lucy, a hominid who lived in the Awash Valley three and a half million years ago, among the oldest remains found on Earth. We continue with a visit to the Ethnographic Museum, which houses a splendid collection of musical instruments and Coptic crosses in the rooms with the furnishings where Emperor Haile Selassie lived. Lunch and dinner in restaurants or hotels, overnight stay in hotels in double rooms with services.

### **Day 3 - Sunday 29 December**

#### **Addis Ababa/Sembete/Kombolcha**

Breakfast at the hotel and departure to the north following the route from Shoa to the Wollo region. The road - which is partly asphalted - crosses environments of unimaginable beauty amidst ups and downs that allow sudden glimpses of intense green among eucalyptus groves and small country villages, where the inhabitants move around on foot wrapped in their typical white cotton robes that make them look like "biblical" figures. We will climb up to the 3100 metres altitude of the Terma Bèr pass, pass the 'Mussolini Tunnel' built by the Italians in 1937/38, reach the Robit plain and the village of SEMBETE, where every Sunday its market sees the influx of Afar nomads who exchange their typical products with the mountain peoples, the Amhara and Oromo. Lunch in a local restaurant or picnic. It is interesting to compare the customs of these peoples: some of the men of the high plateau wear a waya, a kind of dress that is smeared with grease to make it waterproof, over their trousers, while the women wear long-sleeved tunics. Among the Afar there are those who wear a white cotton skirt and a drape that they let fall over their shoulder, and even today it happens to meet women 'to be married' who go bare-breasted, while the married ones cover it with a transparent black veil. Continuation to Kombolcha, accommodation at Hotel Yogofe or similar, dinner and overnight at the hotel in double rooms with services.



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### Day 4 - Monday 30 December

#### Kombolcha/Bati/Asayta

After breakfast, depart east towards Dancalia, visiting along the way the large weekly market of BATI, a meeting place for the Wollo, Afar and Oromo peoples who exchange vegetables, spices, salt and butter here in an explosion of colours and smells. Lunch in a local restaurant or picnic. Continue to Asayta, the former capital of the Afar sultanate of Aussa, the starting point of explorations in Dancalia. Accommodation at the Basha Amare Hotel or similar, a very modest establishment, where small rooms or, alternatively, pleasant terraces on which beds are placed, all covered with large mosquito nets. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

### Day 5 - Tuesday 31 December

#### Asayta/Erta Ale

After breakfast, visit the old mosque and the ASAYTA market, where many nomads gather to sell salt, multi-coloured fabrics, baskets and mats to cover their huts: this is the first real encounter with the peoples of Dancalia. Departure to the heart of the DANAKIL region, a territory considered to be among the most hostile to life, but where a people have nonetheless managed to find the means to survive with great resilience. Dancalia is in fact the land of the Afar, also called Dancali or Danakili, people with black skin but with the sharp features of the Arabs, dromedary breeders or dedicated to a poor shepherding, nomads on the move, salt merchants. Proud, jealous of their independence, they live in family camps made up of a few huts, which they dismantle and reassemble during their wanderings, carrying their looms and mats on the backs of dromedaries. They are also characterised by tattoos and scarifications indicating the clan and tribe to which they belong. Continue along a track winding between sand and lava, passing several AFAR VILLAGES in the direction of the ERTA ALE VOLCANO - the 'smoking mountain' -, the last of a chain of volcanoes in the central part of the Dancala depression. Picnic lunch. In the afternoon, when the sun begins to set, we start the ascent to the top of the caldera: the difference in altitude is only 500 metres, but it takes about two hours on a path cut into the lava to reach the top. The camp will be equipped for the night on top of the volcano with mats and mattresses. In the dark, only illuminated by the vivid glow of the volcano, we reach the edge of the caldera: the spectacle of the lava in constant movement and the magma that seems to emerge from the bowels of the earth is extraordinary and one of the unforgettable moments of the trip. Picnic dinner and overnight stay at the camp.





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### Day 6 - Wednesday 01 January

#### Erta Ale/Ahmed Ela

Early in the morning, after further exploration of the area, we start our descent in the direction of base camp. Breakfast and departure for Amedila (Ahmed Ela). After leaving the immense lava expanse, the track passes through an alluvial plain with a chain of volcanoes, which in the rainy season turns into a succession of green pastures. We continue to the village of Waideddo and the SALT FLOOR, which, almost at the northern end of the Danakil Depression, extends to the border with Eritrea. With a bit of luck, we may be able to observe the salt being extracted and the last dromedary caravans transporting it across the plateau. Accommodation on wooden beds (hangareb) en plain air at the edge of Afar huts. Picnic lunch and dinner, overnight at the camp.

### Day 7 - Thursday 02 January

#### Ahmed Ela/Dallol/Ahmed Ela

Early in the morning, after breakfast at the camp, we head for DALLOL, the 'spirit hill', some fifty metres high: here the earth bubbles, geysers are active, crystal formations have bizarre geometries. Sulphurous springs, salt cones, and fairy chimneys create a most evocative landscape. Wounds of fire emit red-hot stones, swirls of smoke and vapours, underground bubbling generates multicoloured saline waterfalls, inlays and embroideries of iron and sulphur. Walking along a path, one reaches an expanse of surprising colours: red, green, yellow, alternating without apparent logic. Return to camp at Ahmed Ela and picnic lunch. In the afternoon, exploration of the salt quarry area, where the last diggers extract rectangular blocks with the help of sticks used as levers, and cut them to a size that can be transported on dromedaries. Continue to the small magnesium salt mountain called Assa Ale, the 'red mountain', an island formed by a few magnesium sulphate outcrops rising in Lake Assale, 116 metres below sea level. Picnic lunch and dinner, overnight at the camp.



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### **Day 8 - Friday 03 January**

#### **Ahmed Ela/Afdera**

After breakfast, departure for LAKE AFDERA (Afrera), located 112 metres below sea level in the heart of the Danakil Depression. On arrival, set up camp near the lake, formerly known as Lake Giulietti, and enjoy a picnic lunch. In the afternoon, we can observe the Tigrinos intent on extracting salt, once traded in the highland markets for gold. Possibility of an invigorating bath in the salt lake and neighbouring hot springs. Picnic dinner and overnight stay in igloo tents.

### **Day 9 - Saturday 04 January**

#### **Afdera/Allalobad/Semera**

Breakfast at the camp and departure for ALLALOBAD, picnic lunch en route. Here, active geysers erupt hot water and steam at a height of about 1 metre and occasionally even higher, creating a true geological 'theatre'. Late afternoon departure for Semera, for a well-deserved shower at the hotel. Accommodation at the Ruftana Hotel or similar, dinner and overnight in double rooms with services.

### **Day 10 - Sunday 05 January**

#### **Semera/Awash N.P.**

After breakfast, depart for the town of Awash, passing through the YANGUIDI RASSA park where, with a bit of luck, we may encounter monkeys, oryx, ostriches and gazelles. Picnic lunch en route. In the afternoon, we will go on safari to discover the different animal species that inhabit AWASH NATIONAL PARK: oryx, kudu, baboons and some hard-to-see predators, including lions, leopards and hyenas. Accommodation at Doho Lodge or similar, dinner and overnight in double rooms with en-suite facilities.

### **Day 11 - Monday 06 January**

#### **Awash N.P./Addis Ababa**

After breakfast, transfer to the capital, stopping in Debre Zeit for lunch in a restaurant. Arrival in ADDIS ABABA and, on request, visit some handicraft shops. Some day use rooms at the Hotel Nexus International or similar. Possibility of a typical dinner with live music and local dances. Transfer to the airport in time for your return flight. End of services.

### **Day 12 - Tuesday 07 January**

#### **Addis Ababa (ADD)/Return flight**

Arrival at the destination airport.



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ETHIOPIA (ETI03PS241227)

12 days

27 December 2024 - 07 January 2025  
English speaking tour leader (Luca Lupi)

**Individual participation fee in double room/tent (min. 6/max. 16 pax)**

**3,190 €/pax**

**in promotion at € 3,090  
for booking before 27/09/2024**

**in promotion at € 2,990  
for booking before 27/06/2024**

## Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free!**
- Single room/tent: **180 €**
- Extra airport transfer: **30 €/person/transfer**
- Buffet dinner with show: **30 €/pax**
- Extra overnight stay Addis: **100 Euro/room**
- Possible extensions: **Lalibela, Harar, Somaliland, Mogadishu, whale sharks**

## The fee includes:

- English-speaking local guide;
- English speaking tour leader (from 9 pax);
- Visits and excursions as scheduled;
- All transfers in 4x4 Toyota or similar (max. 3 clients/car), including drivers, fuel and tolls;
- Transfers to/from the airport (flight operating recommended);
- Full board meals from lunch in D2 to lunch in D11;
- Mineral water (1.5 litres/pax/day);
- Scouts and military escorts where necessary;
- Field equipment, cook and kitchen;
- 9 overnight stays in double rooms as mentioned in the itinerary (5 at the hotel, 4 at the camp);
- Day use in Addis Ababa (1 room per 4 pax).

## The fee does not include:

- The visa for Ethiopia (incoming \$50);
- Insurance for cancellation, health, luggage;
- Air flights;
- Drinks and mineral water extra;
- Meals not included in the itinerary;
- Airport/hotel transfers and vice versa with different flight operating than those recommended;
- Sleeping bag and pillow;
- Photo and video tips;
- Tips and expenses of a personal nature;
- Everything mentioned in 'Supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned in "the fee includes".