



Birding Ecotours

LALIBELA HISTORICAL EXTENSION

09 - 12 APRIL 2024



Bet Giyorgis is the most famous of the rock churches at Lalibela.

This short historical extension to Lalibela, one of Ethiopia's most sacred sites, is a perfect complement to our **21-day Complete Abyssinia** tour, where you would have had an amazing diversity of birds and animals. Lalibela's impressive, monolithic churches are carved out of a massive bedrock of basalt and will leave you in awe of the incredible attention to detail and size. The cave church of Yemrehana Krestos will also be visited, which offers something different from the monolithic churches of Lalibela. Of course we will never be too far from our binoculars while enjoying the rich history of the area, and while exploring the churches we are likely to find a number of special birds, including **Bearded Vulture, White-winged Cliff Chat, White-billed Starling**, and many Palearctic migrants making their way back north.

This extension to our **21-day Complete Abyssinia** tour can also be booked as a stand-alone tour.



A typical scene inside one of Lalibela's many rock-hewn churches.

Itinerary (4 days/3 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Addis Ababa

For those guests on our Complete Abyssinia tour today will be the day the main tour ends, while for those arriving specifically for the Lalibela tour it will be your arrival day in Addis Ababa. Wandering around the gardens of the Ghion Hotel is a great way to get familiar with the common birds of the area, and the gardens also harbor a few important Ethiopian endemics. You may find **Wattled Ibis, Hooded Vulture** (overhead), **Dusky Turtle Dove, Banded Barbet, Abyssinian** and **Eastern Grey Woodpeckers, White-backed Black Tit, Brown Parisoma,**

Abyssinian Slaty Flycatcher, Tacazze Sunbird, Streaky and Brown-rumped Seedaters, and African Silverbill.

Overnight: Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa, or similar



Abyssinian Woodpecker may be seen in Addis Ababa.

Day 2. Flight to Lalibela, visiting the northwestern cluster of churches

We will catch the mid-morning flight from Addis Ababa to Lalibela Airport, where we'll be picked up and transferred to the small, ancient town of Lalibela. After a bite to eat we'll start the tour of the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, visiting the northwestern cluster of churches - Bet Medhane Alem, Bet Maryam, Bet Meskel, Bet Danaghel, Bet Mikael, and Bet Golgotha (to Bet Golgotha entry is not permitted for women, unfortunately).

While enjoying the churches we will also keep an eye out for birds in the area, such as **Bearded Vulture, White-collared Pigeon, White-winged Cliff Chat, White-billed Starling**, and many others.

Overnight: Mezena Lodge, Lalibela, or similar



Bearded Vultures circle above while we are exploring the churches of Lalibela.

Day 3. Southeastern cluster of churches, Yemrehana Krestos, and Bet Giyorgis

After breakfast we leave Lalibela and take a drive to Yemrehana Krestos for another ancient rock-hewn church. The drive to Yemrehana will also give you the opportunity to view the rural countryside and villages of the Ethiopian highlands. Most people neglect to visit Yemrehana Krestos; however, it is considered one of Ethiopia's best-preserved Late-Aksumite buildings. The church is different because it is built in a cave rather than excavated. Seeing the stepped exterior facade, created from alternating wood and stone layers, will help you understand the design of Lalibela's rock-hewn churches. Interestingly, Yemrehana Krestos is thought to predate Lalibela's churches by up to 80 years!

In the afternoon we will visit the southeastern cluster of churches, which includes Bet Gabriel-Rufael, Bet Merkorios, Bet Amanuel, Bet Lehem, and Bet Abba Libanos. The day will be ended by visiting the most famous of all the Lalibela churches – Bet Giyorgis, constructed in honor of Saint George, the patron saint of Ethiopia.

After we have finished our historical tour we can take a walk around town, which usually has good birds such as **Black-winged Lovebird**, **Bruce's Green Pigeon**, **Hemprich's Hornbill**, **Blue-breasted Bee-eater**, **Thick-billed Raven**, **White-rumped Babbler**, and **African Citril**.

Overnight: Mezena Lodge, Lalibela, or similar



Yemrehana Krestos

Day 4. Flight back to Addis Ababa and tour ends

After some final exploration of the Lalibela area, where we will bird some of the woodland just outside of town for **White-fronted Black Chat** and other species, we will fly back to Addis Ababa, where the tour ends with a drop-off at Bole International Airport.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration:	4 days
Limit:	4 - 8
Dates:	09 - 12 April 2024
Start:	Addis Ababa
End:	Addis Ababa
Prices:	US\$2,135 per person sharing (2024)
Single supplements:	US\$194 (2024)

Price includes:

Addis Ababa - Lalibela flights (return) if any of your flights into or out of Ethiopia are aboard Ethiopian Airlines, in which case you will apply for an Ethiopian Airlines discount and the Lalibela flights are included in the tour price. If you don't fly on Ethiopian Airlines, the Lalibela flights are an extra US\$150 per person.

Meals

Accommodation

Transport

Guiding fees

Entrance fees

Airport transfers

Price excludes:

Visa

International flights

Personal insurance

Alcoholic beverages

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

Laundry service

Personal expenses such as gifts