

Addis Ababa

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On first observing Ethiopia's capital over a century ago, one foreigner called it 'noisy, dusty, sprawling and shambolic'. Over the next century the tented camp morphed into a modern African business centre and the continent's fourth-largest city, yet travellers still utter the same phrase. If that isn't reason enough to discount first impressions, we don't know what is!

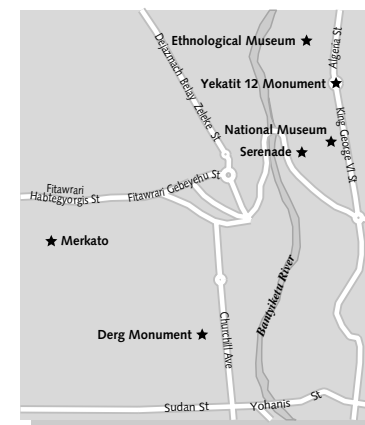
If you give 'Addis' a few days you'll come to appreciate its bizarre blend of past and present: old imperial statues and emblems alongside hammer-and-sickle placards of the former Marxist regime; wattle-and-daub huts with austere Italian Fascist buildings and luxurious high-rise hotels. Lift the city's skin and the same contrasts apply: *tej* *beats* still serve traditional golden honey wine and *azmaris* (wandering minstrels) sing centuries-old songs, while a few blocks on, martinis glow and modern beats rain down in hip new bars and nightclubs. On the wide boulevards, priests in medieval-looking robes mix with African bureaucrats, Western aid workers, young Ethiopian women with mobile phones, and the odd herd of goats.

The capital contains Africa's most important museums, vibrantly painted cathedrals and cosmopolitan cuisine unseen elsewhere in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa also boats the nation's best Ethiopian restaurants, many of which host traditional shows of music and dance.

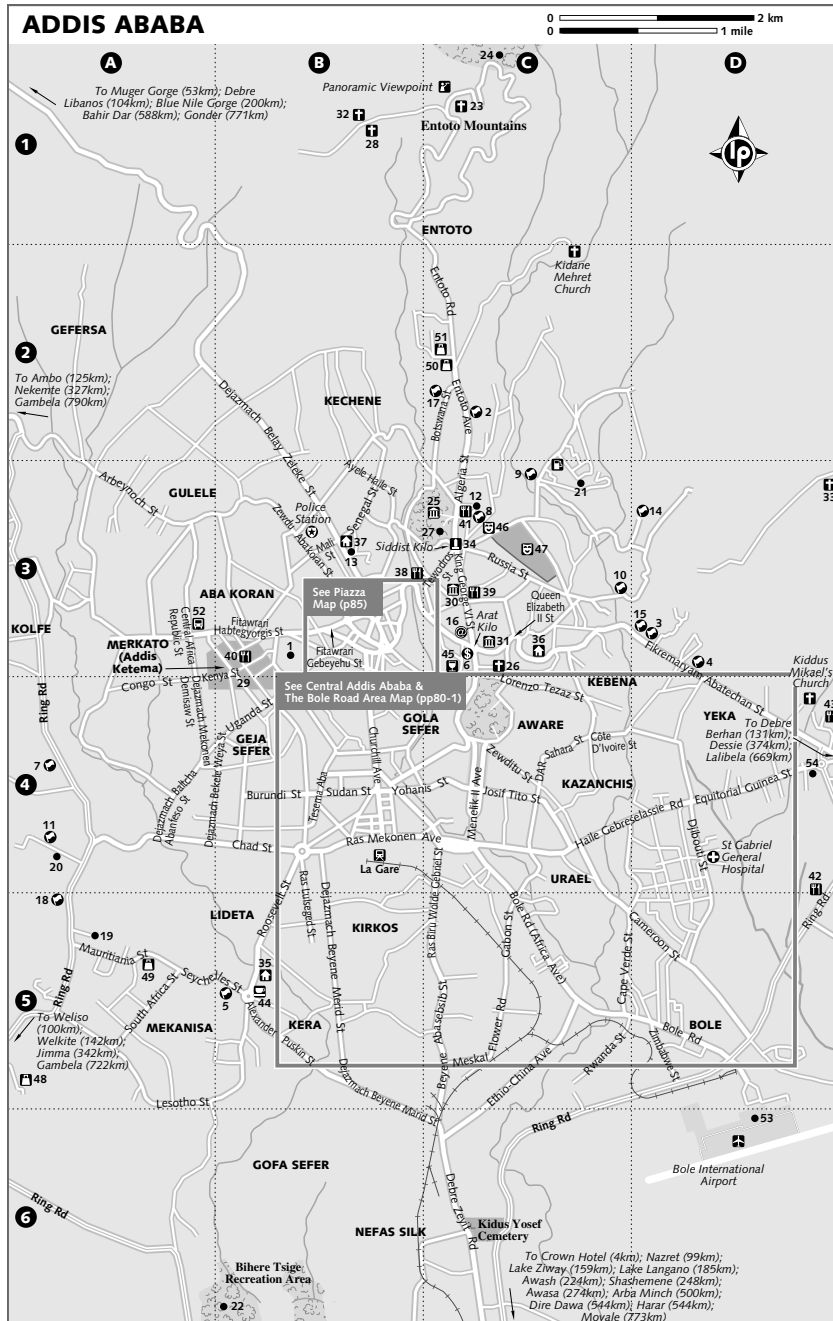
For such a large city, Addis Ababa is remarkably friendly and laid-back. And compared with other African (and Western) capitals, it's remarkably safe too. Surprised? You shouldn't be. We've already told you to ignore your initial inklings! Addis Ababa is no ordinary African capital – dig in and enjoy.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Catch a quiet kip in the gardens outside the **Ethnological Museum** (p84), before the exhibits inside really open your eyes
- Bend your head down and look up to Lucy, our pint-sized ancient ancestor at the **National Museum** (p85)
- Indulge your tongue and tummy with a range of cuisine types in Ethiopia's best **restaurants** (p94)
- See snapshots of Addis' brief but bloody history at the monuments **Yekatit 12** (p87) and **Derg** (p87)
- Dodge dung and pilfering pickpockets and claim a prize to call your own at the massive **Merkato** (p87)



■ POPULATION: 2.8 MILLION

**INFORMATION**

Alliance-Ethio Français.....	1 B3
American Embassy.....	2 C2
Belgian Embassy.....	3 D3
British Embassy.....	4 D3
Canadian Embassy.....	5 B5
Commercial Bank.....	6 C3
Commercial Bank.....(see 53)	
Dutch Embassy.....	7 A4
Egyptian Embassy.....	8 C3
German Embassy.....	9 C3
German Embassy.....	10 C3
Ghanian Embassy.....	11 A4
Goethe Institut.....	12 C3
Institute of Ethiopian Studies.....(see 25)	
Istituto Italiano di Cultura.....	13 B3
Italian Embassy.....	14 D3
Kenyan Embassy.....	15 D3
Kibsol.....	16 C3
Spanish Embassy.....	17 C2
Swiss Embassy.....	18 A5

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Addis Ababa Golf Club.....	19 A5
Afewerk Tekle's Home & Studio.....	20 A4
Asni Gallery.....	21 C3

Bihere Tsige Recreation Centre.....	22 B6
Entoto Maryam Church.....	23 C1
Entoto Natural Park.....	24 C1
Ethnological Museum.....	25 C3
Holy Trinity Cathedral.....	26 C3
Institute of Language Studies.....	27 C3
Kiddus Raguel Church.....	28 B1
Merkato.....	29 A3
National Museum.....	30 C3
Natural History Museum.....	31 C3
Rock-hewn Kiddus Raguel Church.....	32 B1
Wusha Mikael Church.....	33 D3
Yekatit 12 Monument.....	34 C3

SLEEPING

Addis Ababa Golf Club.....(see 19)	
King's Hotel.....	35 B5
Ras Amba Hotel.....	36 C3
Semien Hotel.....	37 B3

EATING

Addis Ababa Golf Club.....(see 19)	
Armenian Sporting Association.....	38 B3
Asni Gallery.....(see 21)	
Blue Tops Restaurant.....	39 C3
Central Pastry.....	40 B3

Dibab Recreation Services.....	41 C3
Hill Belt.....	42 D4
Novis Supermarket.....(see 35)	
Top View.....	43 D4

DRINKING

Kaldi's Coffee.....	44 B5
Semien Hotel.....	(see 37)
Yegebawal Tej Beat.....	45 C3

ENTERTAINMENT

Coffee House.....	46 C3
Jan Meda Sports Ground.....	47 C3

SHOPPING

Alert Handicraft Shop.....	48 A5
Ato Basket Shop.....	49 A5
Entoto Market.....	50 C2
Former Women's Fuelwood Carriers Project.....	51 C2

TRANSPORT

Autobus Terra (Long-distance Bus Station).....	52 A3
Kenya Airways Office.....	53 D6
KLM Office.....(see 53)	
Transport & Communications Bureau.....	54 D4

HISTORY

Unlike Addis Ababa's numerous predecessors, the locations of which were chosen according to the political, economic and strategic demands of the days' rulers, Addis Ababa was chosen for its beauty, hot springs and agreeable climate. Why the drastic (and pleasant) change of convention in the late 19th century? Perhaps it was the first time a woman had any say in the matter! Yes, it was the actions of Taitu, the consort of Menelik II, which led to the birth of Addis Ababa.

Menelik's previous capital, Entoto, was in the mountains just north of present-day Addis Ababa and held strategic importance, as it was easily defended. However, it was unattractive and sterile, leading Taitu to request a house be built for her in the beautiful foothills below in an area she named Addis Ababa (New Flower). In the following decade, after Menelik's power increased and his need for defence waned, he moved his court down to Taitu and Addis Ababa.

A lack of firewood for the rapidly growing population threatened the future of Addis Ababa in 1896 and Menelik even started construction of a new capital, Addis Alem (New World), 50km to the west. In the end, it was the suggestion of a foreigner (thought to be French) to introduce the rapidly growing eucalyptus tree that saved the new capital.

Since 1958 Addis Ababa has been the headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and, since 1963, the secretariat of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Many regard the city as 'Africa's diplomatic capital'.

ORIENTATION

Addis Ababa is massive and incoherent. It could be likened to a sprawling 250-sq-km *injera* adorned with sporadic piles of *tibs*, spaghetti, *mahabarouli* and Sichuan noodles! To navigate the city, it's best to break it down into these distinct dishes/districts.

The mound of smoking *tibs*, representing the central (or meaty) part of the city, is at the southern end of Churchill Ave, now named Gambia St. Here you'll find many government and commercial buildings.

The steaming heap of spaghetti would symbolise Piazza, a district whose legacy and architecture is owed to the Italian occupation. Piazza is found atop the hill at Churchill Ave's north end and houses budget hotels, as well as many cafés and bars.

To the east of Piazza is Addis Ababa University, several museums and the landmark roundabouts of Arat Kilo and Siddist Kilo. South from there is Menelik II Ave, which boasts National Palace, Africa Hall, a series of new urban parks and at its southern end, the huge and ugly Meskal Sq. This melange

of attributes must be likened to a meal of this, that and everything (*mahabaroui*).

Thanks to the new ring road built by the Chinese, the southeast of the city, on and around Bole Rd between Meskal Sq and the airport, is thriving with exciting development that contrasts sharply with the rest of the city. You guessed it – the Sichuan noodles!

Maps

No new maps (besides ours!) have been produced since the radical renaming of streets in 2005. If names aren't important to you, the most accurate map of Addis Ababa's convoluted street layout is the *City Map of Addis Ababa* (2003, scale 1:25,000) produced by the **Ethiopian Mapping Authority** (Map pp80-1; Menelik II Ave; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 8.30-11.30am & 1.30-4.30pm Fri). The EMA charge a paltry Birr23.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

The big hotels such as the Ghion, Hilton and Sheraton all sell a good, but pretty pricey selection of books, magazines and newspapers.

Africans Bookshop (Map p85; Hailesilase St; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2.30-7pm Mon-Sat) The best place for secondhand books on Ethiopia, particularly those out of print. Selection is very limited.

Bookworld Friendship City Center (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 11am-8pm Sun); Haile Gebreselassie Rd (Map pp80-1; Haile Gebreselassie Rd; ☎ 8am-9pm); Lime Tree Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; ☎ 7am-11pm); Piazza (Map p85; Wavel St; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) The best place for books in English (as well as some in French). There's also a small section on Ethiopia and some European and US magazines. Prices are more than you'd pay at home, but much cheaper than the hotels.

STRANGE STREET SPELLINGS

Prior to 2005, finding a street sign in Addis was truly an art form. Today, finding a street sign is easy...it's finding one spelled correctly that's an art form!

Rumour has it that the shiny new signs were bequeathed by the Chinese contractors after they finished the ring road. Who's responsible for the misspellings is anyone's guess. Some of the many gaffes include Haile Selassie becoming Hailesilase, Joseph Tito becoming Josif Tito, Ras Makonnen becoming Ras Mekonen and Meskel Sq becoming Meskal Sq.

It's not all bad news though, the new naming concept involved the removal of many colonial names and the introduction of many correctly spelt African ones, including each member state of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

To stay consistent and limit confusion, we're using the creative new spellings on the actual street signs for our maps and text.

Cultural Centres

Alliance-Ethio Français (Map p76; ☎ 0111 550213; www.allianceaddis.org; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri) Besides having Internet facilities and a library, this centre has pleasant gardens and a café. Check its website for concerts and cultural events. It's off Dejazmach Ummar Semeter St.

British Council (Map p85; ☎ 0111 115496; bc.addisababa@britishcouncil.org; Hailesilase St; ☎ 2-7.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) The library has English newspapers and 21 Internet stations.

Goethe Institut (Map p76; ☎ 0111 242345; www.goethe.de/af/add; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) This German cultural centre houses a library, Internet café and exhibition hall. It's off Algeria St.

Instituto Italiano di Cultura (Map p76; ☎ 0111 553427; icc.addisababa@ethionet.et; Dejazmach Belay Zeleke St; ☎ 8.30am-2pm Mon-Fri, 3.30-6.30pm Tue & Thu) Occasionally hosts live performances. The Sofia Philharmonic orchestra were playing when we were in town.

Emergency

Emergency 24-hour numbers:

Fire brigade (☎ 993)

Police (☎ 991)

Red Cross Ambulance service (☎ 992)

Internet Access

Although Internet is everywhere, fast connections are still elusive. Some convenient outlets are listed here.

Cyber Easy Internet Cafe (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; per hr Birr21; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat) The quickest connections on Bole Rd.

Internet Cafe (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; per hr Birr15) It's an ADSL broadband connection, though not as fast as you'd wish. One of the few open on Sunday (8.30am to 9pm).

Kibsol (Map p76; Adwa Ave; per hr Birr12) One of many Internet options on this stretch of street near Arat Kilo.

ADDIS ABABA IN...

Two Days

Start in Piazza with a steaming *macchiato* (espresso with a dash of milk) at **Tomoca** (p100), before visiting **St George Cathedral & Museum** (p86). Next, extract yourself from a minibus at Arat Kilo and meet legendary Lucy in the **National Museum** (p85). From there, stroll north and absorb the magnitude of the **Yekatit 12 Monument** (p87).

After lunch and ice cream at **Blue Tops Restaurant** (p97), marvel at the brilliant **Ethnological Museum** (p84). Finish the day dining and drinking *tej* (honey wine) at a **traditional Ethiopian restaurant** (p94), while enjoying a show of song and dance.

After spending the first day viewing things you can't have, fill your second day with spending! Meander **Entoto Market** (p103) before diving inside Churchill Ave's shops; don't miss **Hope Enterprises** (see the boxed text, p84). Lastly, explore the massive **Merkato** (p87), before escaping for a sunset drink and meal at **Top View** (p98).

Four Days

With four days, you could complete the two-day itinerary at a slower pace (more *macchiatos!*), squeezing in extra sights like the **Holy Trinity Cathedral** (p86) and **Natural History Museum** (p87), both near Arat Kilo. Art-lovers should visit **Asni Gallery** (p89) and **Afewerk Tekle's home and studio** (p89), while food-lovers simply must savour **Serenade** (p99) and **Ristorante Castelli** (p97).

Megel Internet Service (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St; per hr Birr15) Central, but on the slow side.

Nina Internet Service (Map p85; Mundy St; per hr Birr15) Of the several Internet cafés around here, Nina is the most comfortable and images can be burnt to CD with USB connections (Birr4). A new CD is Birr5.

Sheraton Business Center (Map pp80-1; Itegue Taitu St; per hr Birr180) Extortionate, but furiously fast connections.

Internet Resources

WhatsUp! Addis (www.whatsupaddis.com) A great site highlighting upcoming cultural events and the entertainment scene in Addis.

Laundry

Every hotel does laundry and their service is inevitably cheaper and quicker than the laundries that line Bole Rd.

Libraries

Institute of Ethiopian Studies (Map p76; ☎ 0111 239740; www.ies-ethiopia.org; Addis Ababa University, Algeria St) This institute boasts the world's best collection of books in English on Ethiopia. It's free for a half-day's casual use.

National Archives & Library of Ethiopia (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 516532; ☎ closed morning Mon) Shelves moan under the weight of 20,000 books on Ethiopia. The English-language section is quite good. It is located off Sudan St.

Media

Several English-language publications can be of use, especially *Time Out Addis* and the monthly *What's Up!* These list restaurants, shopping venues, nightclubs and events. They're available (haphazardly) at large hotels, smart restaurants and art galleries.

Medical Services

Bethzatha Hospital (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 514141; ☎ 24hr) This quality private hospital, off Ras Mekonen Ave, is recommended by most embassies.

Ethio-Swe Dental Clinic (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 614932; Bole Rd) Likely the city's most respected dental office.

Ghion Pharmacy (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St) Central and well stocked.

Hayat Hospital (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 624488; Ring Rd; ☎ 24hr) A reliable option near the airport. A consultation will set you back Birr40.

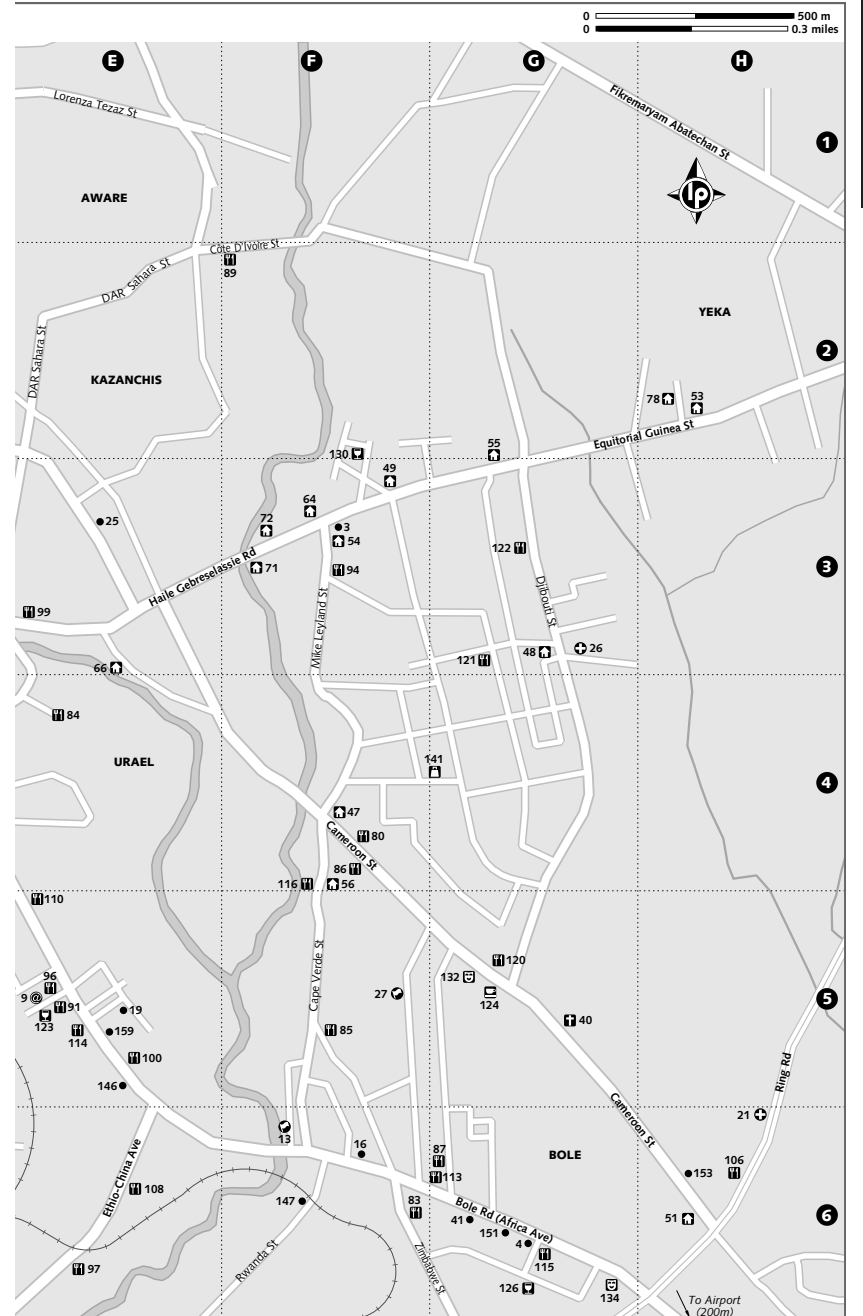
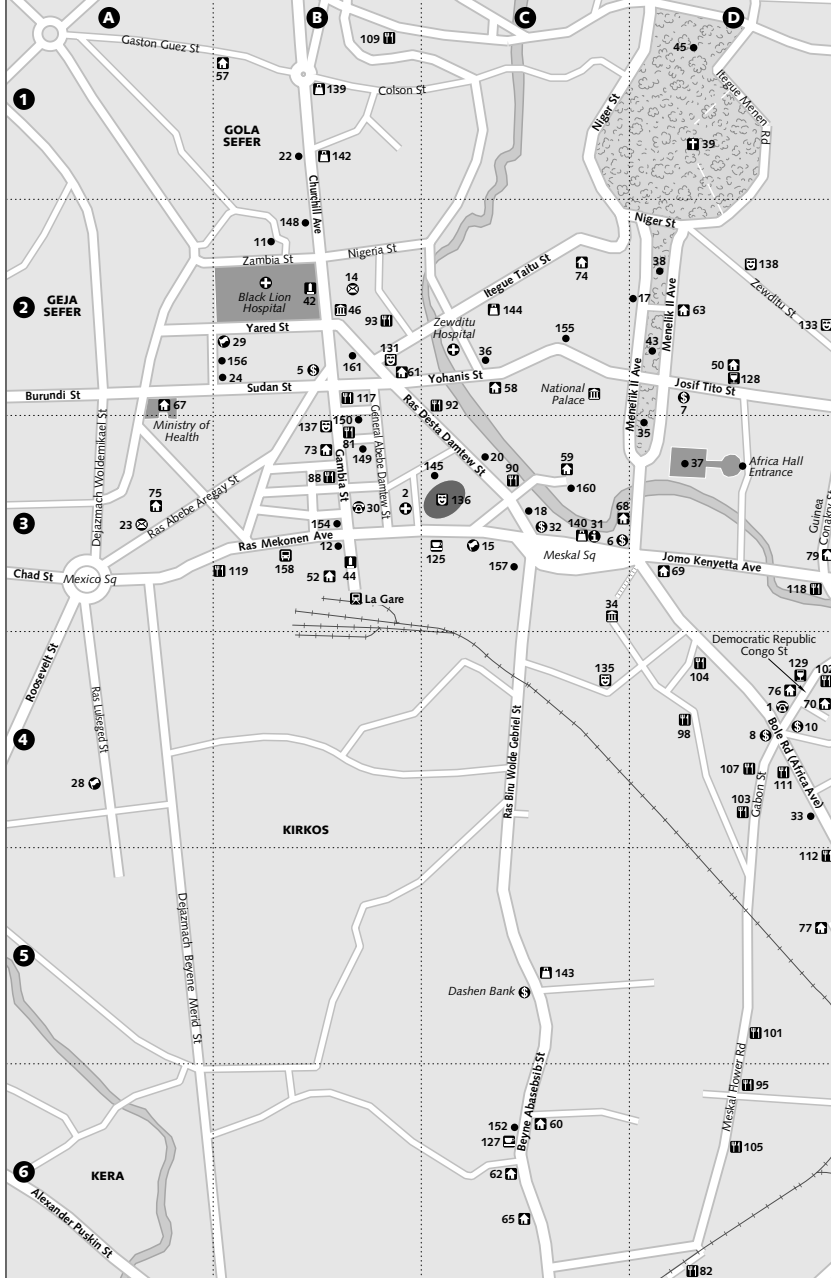
St Gabriel Hospital (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 613622; Djibouti St; ☎ 24hr) This private hospital has good X-ray, dental, surgery and laboratory facilities. A consultation only costs Birr50.

Zogdom Pharmacy (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd) Convenient for Bole-goers.

Money

You will have no trouble at all finding a bank to change cash or travellers cheques. However, being able to find an ATM that

CENTRAL ADDIS ABABA & THE BOLE ROAD AREA



INFORMATION		Telecommunications		Ghion Hotel.....59 C3	
Air's Business Center.....1 D4	Office.....30 B3	Global Hotel.....60 C6	Harambee Hotel.....61 B2	Hawi Hotel.....62 C6	Hilton Hotel.....63 D2
Bethzatha Hospital.....2 B3	Tourist Information Centre.....31 C3	Bookworld.....3 F3	United Bank.....(see 63)	Holiday Hotel.....64 F3	Hotel Concorde.....65 C6
Bookworld.....4 G6	Wegagen Bank.....32 C3	Bookworld.....(see 41)	Wegagen Bank.....(see 8)	Hotel De Leopold International.....66 E3	Leah's House.....(see 106)
Commercial Bank.....5 B2	Zogdom Pharmacy.....33 D4	Commercial Bank.....6 C3	SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	Lido Hotel.....67 A2	Meridian Hotel.....(see 16)
Commercial Bank.....7 D2	Addis Ababa Museum.....34 C3	Commercial Bank.....(see 75)	Addis Ababa Park.....35 D3	National Hotel.....68 C3	Novotel/Ibis Hotel Development.....69 D3
Cyber Easy Internet Cafe.....9 E5	Addisu Fiwloha Hotel & Hot Springs.....36 C2	Dashen Bank.....10 D4	Africa Hall.....37 D3	Novotel/Ibis Hotel Development.....69 D3	Pension Rita.....70 D4
Dashen Bank.....(see 74)	Beta Maryam Mausoleum.....39 D1	Department of Immigration.....11 B2	Bole Medhane Alem Cathedral.....40 G5	Plaza Hotel.....71 F3	Queen of Sheba Hotel.....72 F3
DHL.....12 B3	Fole Medhane Alem Boston Day Spa.....41 G6	Djibouti Embassy.....13 F6	Derg Monument.....42 B2	Ras Hotel.....73 B3	Sheraton Hotel.....74 C2
EMS.....14 B2	Desalegn Hotel.....(see 56)	Eritrean Embassy (closed).....15 C3	Desalegn Hotel.....(see 56)	Wabe Shebelle Hotel.....75 A3	Wanza Hotel.....76 D4
Ethio-Swe Dental Clinic.....16 F6	Ethiopia Park.....43 D2	Ethiopian Mapping Authority.....17 D2	Ethiopia Park.....(see 59)	Wegoss Guest House.....77 D5	Yonnas Hotel.....78 H2
Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Department.....18 C3	Hilton Hotel.....(see 63)	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association.....19 E5	Lion of Judah Monument.....44 B3	Yordanos Hotel.....79 D3	EATING
Ghion Pharmacy.....20 C3	Menelik Imperial Palace.....45 D1	Hayat Hospital.....21 H6	National Postal Museum.....46 B2	17 17.....80 F4	Addisu Pastry.....81 B3
Hope Enterprises.....22 B1	Sheraton Hotel.....(see 74)	Internet Cafe.....(see 113)	SLEEPING	Agelgil.....82 D6	Aladdin.....83 F6
Junior Post Office.....23 A3	Atlas Hotel.....47 F4	Junior Post Office.....(see 6)	Awrraris Hotel.....48 G3	Almendi Restaurant.....84 E4	Antica Restaurant.....85 F5
Lime Tree.....(see 41)	Axum Hotel.....49 F3	Main Post Office.....(see 14)	B & G.....50 D2	Blue Drops Restaurant.....86 F4	Bombay Brasserie.....87 G6
Megel Internet Service.....(see 20)	Bole International Hotel.....51 H6	Ministry of Culture & Tourism.....24 B2	Bole International Hotel.....51 H6	Café Miru.....88 B3	Canapé International Restaurant.....89 F2
Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs.....25 E3	Central Shoa Hotel.....53 H2	Sheraton Business Center.....(see 74)	Classic Hotel.....54 F3	China Bar & Restaurant.....90 C3	China Paradise Restaurant.....(see 65)
St Gabriel Hospital.....26 G3	Debre Damo Hotel.....55 G2	St Gabriel Hospital.....26 G3	Desalegn Hotel.....56 F4	City Café & Pastry.....91 E5	Cottage Restaurant & Pub.....92 C2
Somaliland Representation.....27 F5	Extreme Hotel.....57 B1	Sudanese Embassy.....28 A4	Finfine Adarash Hotel & Restaurant.....58 C2		
Swedish Embassy.....29 B2					

accepts foreign cards is a totally different matter – there are none! We've denoted those with nonstandard hours (see p257 for standard hours).

Commercial Bank Arat Kitlo (Map p76; Adwa St; ☎ open through lunch); Bole International Airport (Map p76; Bole Rd; ☎ 24hr); Bole Rd (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd); Churchill Ave (Map pp80-1; Churchill Ave); Josif Tito St (Map pp80-1; Josif Tito St); Lower Piazza (Map p85); General Wingate St; ☎ open through lunch); Meskal Sq (Map pp80-1; cnr Menelik II Ave & Meskal Sq); Mexico (Map pp80-1; Ras Abebe Aregay St); Upper Piazza (Map p85); Hailesilase St; ☎ open through lunch) All these branches change travellers cheques and cash (US dollars and euros). **Dashen Bank** Bole Rd (Map pp80-1); Sheraton Hotel (Map pp80-1; Itegue Taitu St; ☎ 7-11am, noon-7pm & 8-11pm) Offers Visa and MasterCard cash advances of up to US\$500 for a 5.5% commission (minimum charge of US\$12.50). Also changes travellers cheques and cash. The Bole Rd branch is just off Bole Rd.

United Bank (Map pp80-1; Hilton Hotel, Menelik II Ave; ☎ 6am-10.30pm) Convenient hours and changes travellers cheques and cash. **Wegagen Bank** Bole Rd (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd); Meskal Sq (Map pp80-1; Meskal Sq) This private bank changes travellers cheques (slightly higher commissions) and cash.

Post

DHL (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 526220; Ras Mekonen Ave) Speedy and reliable international courier service. **Express Mail Service** (EMS; Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 512999; ems@ethionet.et; Ras Desta Damtew St) A reasonably priced government-run courier service. **Junior post offices** Meskal Sq (Map pp80-1; cnr Menelik II Ave & Meskal Sq); Mexico (Map pp80-1; Ras Abebe Aregay St); Piazza (Map p85; Cunningham St) Offers postal services for postcards and letters only. **Main post office** (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St) The only post office to offer poste restante and interna-

Dashen Traditional Restaurant.....93 B2	Zebra Grill.....122 G3	TRANSPORT
Elsa Restaurant.....94 F3	Enset.....95 D6	Abyssinian Tours & Travel.....(see 108)
Ethio Supermarket.....96 E5	DRINKING	Bicycle Hire.....145 C3
Family Restaurant.....97 E6	Black Rose.....(see 41)	British Airways.....(see 63)
Fasika Restaurant.....98 D4	Bole Milk House.....123 E5	Daallo Airlines (Abadir Travel & Tours).....146 E5
Finfine Adarash Hotel & Restaurant.....(see 58)	Friendship Café.....(see 4)	Djibouti Airlines.....147 F6
Ghion Hotel.....(see 59)	Kaldi's Coffee.....124 G5	EgyptAir.....148 B2
Girma Kitfo Beat.....99 E3	La Madeline.....125 C3	Ethio-Fauna Safaris.....149 B3
Habesha Restaurant.....100 E5	Lime Tree.....(see 41)	Ethiopian Airlines.....150 B3
Hamlet Steak House.....101 D5	Mask Bar.....126 G6	Ethiopian Airlines.....151 G6
Hassy Restaurant.....102 D4	Millie Foglie Pastry.....127 C6	Ethiopian Airlines.....152 C6
Jewel of India.....103 D4	Old Milk House.....128 D2	Ethiopian Airlines.....(see 63)
Kal Kitfo.....104 D4	Ras Hotel.....(see 73)	Four Seasons Travel & Tours.....(see 16)
Le Jardin.....105 D6	Temptation Lounge & Bar.....129 D4	Galaxy Express Services.....(see 73)
Leah's House British Restaurant.....106 H6	Topia Tej Beat.....130 F2	Green Land Tours & Travels.....153 H6
Les Arcades.....(see 74)	Virgo Lounge.....(see 124)	Hess Travel Ethiopia.....(see 110)
Lime Tree.....(see 41)	ENTERTAINMENT	Kenya Airways.....(see 63)
Little Italy.....107 D4	Addis Live.....(see 140)	KLM.....(see 63)
Loti Restaurant.....108 E6	Ambassador Cinema.....131 B2	Lufthansa.....154 B3
Makush Art Gallery & Restaurant.....(see 96)	Club Illusion.....(see 131)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Protocol Service Division).....155 C2
Novis Supermarket.....(see 16)	D-Cave Club.....(see 60)	National Archives & Library of Ethiopia.....156 B2
Orosco.....109 B1	Divine.....132 G5	NTO.....(see 20)
Pasticceria Gelateria – Roby's Pastry.....110 E5	Fendika Azmari Beat.....133 D2	NTO.....(see 63)
Purple Café.....111 D4	Gaslight.....(see 74)	Rainbow Travel.....157 C3
Rico's Restaurant, Pizzeria & Bar.....112 D5	Harlem Jazz.....134 G6	Rainbow Travel.....(see 74)
Saay Pastry.....113 G6	La Gazelle Piano Bar.....(see 16)	Rainbow Travel.....(see 16)
Sangam Restaurant.....114 E5	Memo Club.....135 C4	Rocky Valley Safaris.....(see 73)
Satellite Restaurant.....115 G6	National Stadium.....136 C3	Saudi Arabian Airlines.....(see 131)
Shaheen.....(see 74)	National Theatre.....137 B3	Short-distance Bus Station.....158 B3
Shangri-la Restaurant.....116 F4	Yewedale.....138 D2	Sudan Airways.....(see 61)
Shi Solomon Hanulé Supermarket.....117 B2	SHOPPING	T-Tam Travel & Tour.....159 E5
Street Café & Grill.....118 D3	Gallery 21.....139 B1	Tour Ethiopia.....160 C3
Summerfields.....(see 74)	Gift Shop.....140 C3	Travel Ethiopia.....(see 59)
Sunrise Restaurant.....119 B3	Goshu Art Gallery.....141 G4	Travel Ethiopia.....(see 68)
Tenshwa Bet.....120 G5	Haileselassie Alemayehu.....142 B1	Village Ethiopia.....(see 68)
Yohannis Gurage Kitfo Beat.....121 G3	K Design.....143 C5	Yemenia.....161 B2
	Makush Art Gallery & Restaurant.....(see 96)	Yumo Tours.....(see 125)
	St George Interior Decoration & Gallery.....144 C2	

national parcel services (see p265 for international shipping rates).

Telephone & Fax

The yellow public phone boxes around town take Birr0.10 coins; many also accept phonecards.

Air's Business Center (Map pp80-1; Democratic Republic Congo St) Offers cheap international calls of decent quality over the Internet. Calls to landlines/mobiles cost Birr4/5 per minute. **Telecommunications office** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 514977; Gambia St) International calls at standard rates (see p267).

Tourist Information

Tourist Information Centre (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 512310; Meskal Sq; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 8.30-11.30am & 1.30-5.30pm Fri) This helpful office does its best to provide information about the city

and itineraries elsewhere. It also has some informative brochures about the rest of Ethiopia.

Travel Agencies

For information on travel agencies in Addis Ababa, see Tours (p282).

Visa Extensions

Department of Immigration (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0111 553899; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Issues single-/multiple-entry extensions for US\$20/30.50. Multiple-entry extensions are for those on business or for travellers with exceptional circumstances (ie making a return air trip to Tanzania where there is no Ethiopian diplomatic representation). The process takes 24 hours. The office is off Zambia St.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Violent crime in Addis Ababa is fortunately rare, particularly where visitors are

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Wanting to help Addis Ababa's many street children is natural. However, giving them money or food (which in most cases is quickly exchanged for money) isn't recommended, as it invariably leads to more problems for them and their community. To solve this dilemma, **Hope Enterprises** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0111 560345; Churchill Ave) was created. It sells meal tickets (eight for Birr4) that you can distribute to needy children. Each day an average of 660 children redeem the tickets for a 'simple but nourishing meal' at the centre.

concerned. However, petty theft and confidence tricks are problematic.

The Merkato has the worst reputation, as pickpockets abound – targeting not just *faranjis* (foreigners, especially Western ones) but Ethiopians as we. An old ploy is for someone to step blindly into you, while another gently lifts your belongings in the subsequent confusion. A less subtle tactic now being used involves someone diving at your feet and holding your legs while another pilfers your pockets.

Both times this latest manoeuvre was tried on us (once at Merkato, the other near the national stadium), the perpetrators were sent scurrying by us fighting back a little and shouting *leba!* (thief!). You are advised to leave hand luggage and jewellery in your hotel if you plan on visiting the Merkato.

Other spots where you should be vigilant include the Piazza, Meskal Sq, minibus stands, outside larger hotels, and Churchill

Ave, where adult gangs have been known to hang around the National Theatre. Common gang ploys are to feign a fight or argument and, when one man appeals to you for help, the other helps himself to your pockets.

SIGHTS

Most sights are pretty scattered throughout the city centre and Piazza, though there is a concentration of major museums and other sights in the vicinity of Arat Kilo and Sidist Kilo, which sit east of Piazza and north of the city centre.

Ethnological Museum

Set within Haile Selassie's former palace and surrounded by the beautiful gardens and fountains of Addis Ababa University's main campus is the enthralling **Ethnological Museum** (Map p76; Algeria St; adult/student Birr20/10; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun).

The show starts before you even get inside: look for the intriguing set of stairs spiralling precariously skyward near the palace's main entrance. Each step was placed by the Italians as a symbol of Fascist domination, one for every year Mussolini held power (starting from his march to Rome in 1922). A small Lion of Judah (symbol of Ethiopian monarchy) sits victoriously atop the final step, like a jubilant punctuation mark at the end of a painfully long sentence.

Within the entrance hall you'll find a small exhibition dedicated to the history of the palace, and the doorway to the Institute of Ethiopian Studies Library (p79).

This contemporary museum truly comes into its own on the 1st floor, where superb

artefacts and handicrafts from Ethiopia's peoples are distinctively displayed. Instead of following the typical static and geographical layout that most museums fall into, these displays are based upon the life cycle. First comes Childhood, with birth, games, rites of passage and traditional tales. We particularly enjoyed the 'Yem Tale', a story of selfishness, dead leopards and sore tails! Adulthood probes into beliefs, nomadism, traditional medicine, war, pilgrimages, hunting, body culture and handicrafts. The last topic is Death and Beyond, with burial structures, stelae and tombs. The exhibition gives a great insight into Ethiopia's many rich cultures.

Other rooms on this floor show the preserved bedroom, bathroom and exorbitant changing room of Emperor Haile Selassie, complete with a bullet hole in his mirror courtesy of the 1960 coup d'état.

The 2nd floor plays home to two drastically different, but equally delightful displays. The vibrant hall focuses on religious art, with an exceptional series of diptychs, triptychs, icons, crosses and magic scrolls.

Magic scrolls, like the Roman lead scrolls, were used to cast curses on people or to appeal to the gods for divine assistance. The collection of icons is the largest and most representative in the world. Senses of another sort are indulged in the small cavelike corridor that sits next to the hall. Inside, traditional music gently fills the air and the black surrounds leave you nothing to look at besides the instruments – brilliant.

National Museum ብሔራዊ ሙዝየየም

Although slightly less visually stimulating than the Ethnological Museum, the **National Museum** (Map p76; ☎ 0111 117150; King George VI St; admission Birr10; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is no less thought provoking. Its collection is ranked among the most important in sub-Saharan Africa.

The palaeontology exhibit on the basement level contains fossilised evidence of some amazing extinct creatures, like the massive sabre-toothed feline *Homotherium* and the gargantuan savannah pig *Notochloerus*. However, the stars of the exhibit are

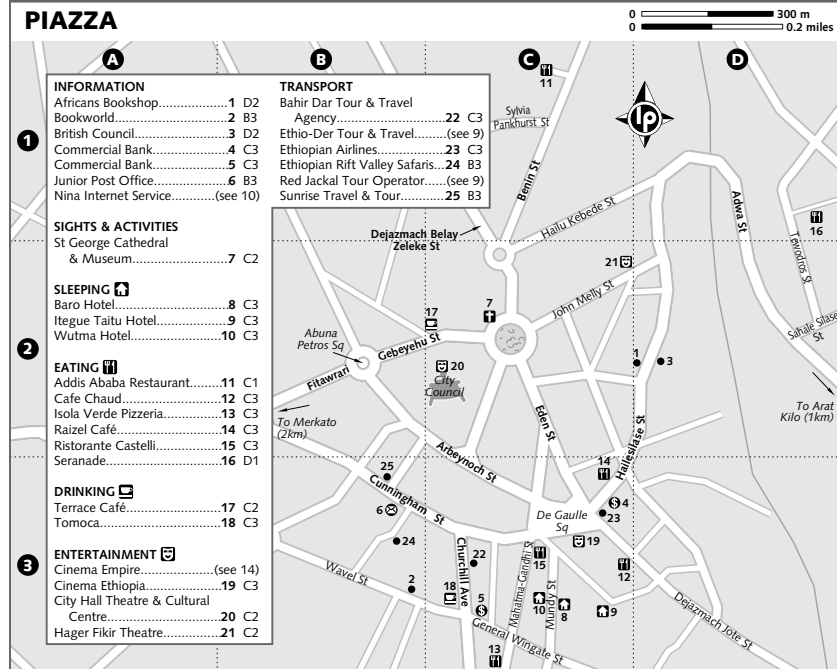
SIREN SCAM

One scam that still seems to be snagging tourists is the 'siren scam'. It takes various forms, including offering you a 'cultural show' or a traditional coffee ceremony.

The venue is usually somebody's living room, where a hostess will promptly dish copious quantities of *tej* (honey wine) and, perhaps, traditional dancers and musicians will perform.

Suddenly the 'entertainment' comes to an end and between Birr700 and Birr1000 is demanded. Approaches are made to couples or groups as well as to single males. Most commonly, the person approaching you is a young, well-dressed Ethiopian male, often claiming to be a student.

If you end up in a situation like this, offer to pay for anything you've consumed (a litre of quality *tej* shouldn't be more than Birr12), and if it's not accepted, threaten to call the police. The area around the hotels in the Piazza and Churchill Ave seem to be prime hunting grounds for potential victims.



two remarkable casts of **Lucy** (see p26), a fossilised hominid discovered in 1974. One lays prone, while the other stands much like she did some 3.2 million years ago, truly hitting home how small our ancient ancestors were. The real bones are preserved in the archives of the museum.

The periphery of the ground floor focuses on the pre-Aksumite, Aksumite, Solomonic and Gonder periods, with a wide array of artefacts, including an elaborate pre-1st-century-AD bronze oil lamp showing a dog chasing an ibex, a fascinating 4th-century-BC rock-hewn chair emblazoned with mythical ibexes, and ancient Sabeian inscriptions. The middle of the room hosts a collection of lavish royal paraphernalia, including Emperor Haile Selassie's enormous and rather hideous carved wooden throne.

On the 1st floor, there's a vivid display of Ethiopian art ranging from early (possibly 14th-century) parchment, to 20th-century canvas oil paintings by leading modern artists. Afewerk Tekle's massive *African Heritage* and Abebe Zelelew's *Genital Mutilation* are some of the most moving pieces.

The 2nd floor contains a collection of secular arts and crafts including traditional weapons, jewellery, utensils, clothing and musical instruments.

English-speaking guides are available and worthwhile.

Holy Trinity Cathedral ቅዱስ ስላሴ ቤተ ክርስቲያን

Off Niger St, this massive and ornate **cathedral** (Map p76; ☎ 0111 564619; admission Birr25; 🕒 7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) is believed to be the second-most important place of worship in Ethiopia, ranking behind only the Old Church of St Mary of Zion in Axum (p135). It's also the celebrated final resting place of Emperor Haile Selassie and his wife Empress Menen Asfaw. Their massive Aksumite-style granite tombs, complete with lions' feet, sit inside and are a sight indeed.

The exterior, with its large copper dome, spindly pinnacles, numerous statues and flamboyant mixture of international styles provides an interesting and sometimes poignant glimpse into many historical episodes of Ethiopia's history.

Inside, there are some grand murals, the most notable being Afewerk Tekle's depiction

of the Holy Trinity, with Matthew (man), Mark (lion), Luke (cow) and John (dove) peering through the clouds. There are also some brilliant stained-glass windows and two beautifully carved imperial thrones, each made of white ebony, ivory and marble.

To the south of the cathedral is the memorial and graves of the ministers killed by the Derg (p37) in 1974. Due to the prime minister's compound being behind this memorial, photographs are strictly forbidden.

The churchyard also hosts the graves of many patriots who died fighting the Italian occupation, including the great Resistance fighter Ras Imru. West of the cathedral is the tomb of the famous British suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst. Sylvia was one of the very few people outside Ethiopia who protested Italy's occupation; she moved to Addis Ababa in 1956.

Tickets can be bought at the administration office 20m west of the main gate. Self-appointed guides charge Birr10 per person.

St George Cathedral & Museum ቅዱስ ጊዮርጊስ ቤተ ክርስቲያንና መ-ዝዮም

Commissioned by Emperor Menelik to commemorate his stunning 1896 defeat of the Italians in Adwa, and dedicated to St George (Ethiopia's patron saint), whose icon was carried into the battle, this Piazza **cathedral** (Map p85; Fitawrari Gebeyeu St) was completed in 1911 with the help of Greek, Armenian and Indian artists. The Empress Zewditu (in 1916) and Emperor Haile Selassie (in 1930) were both crowned here.

Thanks to its traditional octagonal form and severe neoclassical style, the grey stone exterior is easily outdone by the interior's flashes of colour and art. Sections of ceiling glow sky-blue and boast gilded golden stars, while the outer walls of the Holy of Holies are covered in paintings and mosaics by artists such as the renowned Afewerk Tekle.

In the grounds just north of the cathedral is the **museum** (admission Birr20; 🕒 9am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun). It's well presented and contains probably the best collection of ecclesiastical paraphernalia in the country outside St Mary of Zion in Aksum. Items include beautiful crowns, hand crosses, prayer sticks, holy scrolls, ceremonial umbrellas and the coronation garb of Zewditu and Haile Selassie. The free tour, which includes the cathedral,

is interesting and helpful in demystifying the peculiarities of the Orthodox church.

Yekatit 12 Monument የካቲት 12 ሐውልት

Rising dramatically from Siddist Kilo is this moving **monument** (Map p76; Siddist Kilo) to the thousands of innocent Ethiopians killed by the Italians as retribution for the attempt on Viceroy Graziani's life on 19 February 1937. Graphic depictions of the three-day massacre are captured in bronze and envelop the lower half of the marble obelisk.

Derg Monument ድላችን

Nothing in the capital is as poignant a reminder of the country's painful communist rule as the towering **Derg Monument** (Map pp80-1; Churchill Ave). Topped by a massive red star and emblazoned with a golden hammer and sickle, the cement obelisklike structure climbs skyward in front of Black Lion Hospital.

Merkato መርካቶ

Wading into the market chaos just west of the centre known as **Merkato** (Map p76; 🕒 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat) can be as rewarding as it can be exasperating. You may find the most eloquent aroma wafting from precious incense. You may also find your wallet has been stolen and that you've got stinky shit on your shoe.

Some people say it's the largest market in Africa, but as its exact boundaries are as shady as some of its characters, we'll refrain from adding our name to that list – let's just say it's mighty, mighty huge.

The mass of stalls, produce and people may seem impenetrable, but on closer inspection the market reveals a careful organisation with different sections for different products. If you search long enough, you can find everything from Kalashnikovs to camels for sale. Not interested in leaving Merkato on the back of your own humped, frothy-mouthed beast while firing live rounds into the air? Well, you can spend your birr on pungent spices, silver jewellery or anything else that takes your fancy. There's even a 'recycling market', where sandals (old tires), coffee pots (old Italian olive tins) and other interesting paraphernalia can be found.

We could tell you that bargaining is the order of the day and that you should be vigilant with your valuables, but you're

seasoned travellers and you already know that!

To find what you're looking for while avoiding *delallas* (surreptitious commission agents), simply ask shopkeepers for directions; there's little risk they'll follow you to collect commissions.

Merkato is at its liveliest on Saturday, when people from all over the country (including tourists) flock in.

Natural History Museum የተፈጥሮ ታሪክ መ-ዝዮም

Go eye to eye with a bloated leopard in this **zoological museum** (Map p76; ☎ 0111 571677; Queen Elizabeth II St; admission Birr10; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun). Yes, sometimes the stuffers just don't know when to stop stuffing! Don't let the poor leopard scare you off; most animal specimens here are rather remarkable and there's no better way to spot nature's amazing intricacies. Besides magically iridescent butterflies, you'll see an impressive wallia ibex, numerous antelopes and an astounding bird collection comprising 450 species common to Ethiopia.

Addis Ababa Museum አዲስ አበባ መ-ዝዮም

Despite only being founded on the centenary of the city in 1986, the **Addis Ababa Museum** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 153180; Bole Rd; admission Birr10; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) is the town's scruffiest museum. That said, perusing candid portraits of the redoubtable Empress Taitu, rakish Lej Iyassu, and the very beautiful Empress Zewditu, along with pictures of the capital in its infancy, is still worth an hour or so. It's unbelievable that the raucous city outside was nothing more than tents on a hill just over a century ago.

There's also a 'first-in-Ethiopia room' with a picture of the first telephone in Ethiopia and another of Menelik with Bede Bentley in Addis Ababa's first motor car (1907).

And we'd be remiss if we didn't mention the chummy (and over-inflated) lion and leopard near the entrance. Will somebody let the Natural History Museum know they've escaped?!

Africa Hall አፍሪካ አዳራሽ

Built in 1961 by Emperor Haile Selassie, **Africa Hall** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 445098; Menelik II Ave), near Meskal Sq, is the seat of the UN's

ECA. The Italian-designed building isn't very interesting, apart from the friezelike motifs that represent traditional Ethiopian *shamma* (shawl) borders.

Far more interesting is *Africa: Past, Present and Future*, a monumental stained-glass window inside by the artist Afewerk Tekle. Measuring 150 sq metres, it fills one entire wall and is one of the biggest stained-glass windows in the world. During some hours of the day, the white marble floor of the foyer is flooded with colour. It's well worth a visit (by appointment only). See the boxed text, below for some intriguing interpretations and anecdotes.

National Postal Museum ብሔራዊ የፖስታ መ-ዝያዎ

Stamps don't usually float our boat, but the collection within the **postal museum** (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St; admission Birr5; ☎ 9-10.30am & 2-4.30pm Mon-Fri) held us here

longer than we had expected. Trace Ethiopia's modern history through its colourful and international award-winning stamps, which date back to 1894, or get lost looking for historic stamps from your own country in many well-lit displays hosting beautiful examples from around the globe. Some of the Russian stamps are particularly lovely.

Beta Maryam Mausoleum ቤተ ማርያም መታብር

Also known as Menelik's Mausoleum, the **Beta Maryam Mausoleum** (Map pp80-1; Itegue Menen Rd; ☎ 8am-5pm) is located just south of Menelik's palace and offers an enchantingly eerie experience. After the priest has rolled up the carpet and pried open the large metal door in the floor, you will descend into the thick air of the creepy crypt. There you will find the four elaborate marble tombs of Empress Taitu, Emperor

Menelik, Empress Zewditu and Princess Tsehai Haile Selassie.

A self-appointed guide should set you back about Birr10 per person.

Asni Gallery

አስኒ ጋሎ (የሰኔ አዳራሽ)

Housed in the 1912 villa of Lej Iyasu's minister of justice, the **Asni Gallery** (Map p76; ☎ 0111 238796; admission free; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sat, closed Jul & Aug) annually hosts six or seven splendid contemporary art exhibitions of emerging and established Ethiopian artists. Other events include workshops and lectures; look for announcements in the *Addis Tribune*.

For details of the Saturday vegetarian buffet, see p95.

The turn-off is about 4km northeast of town centre, just north of the French embassy. Take a minibus from Arat Kilo heading to 'Francey' and get off at the Total petrol station. It's a short walk from there.

Afewerk Tekle's Home & Studio

የአፈወርቅ ተክሌ ቤት ና ስቲዲዮ

A member of several international academies and with a drawer full of international decorations – about 100 at last count, including the British Order of Merit – Afewerk Tekle is considered among Africa's greatest artists.

A 90-minute tour of **Villa Alpha** (Map p76; ☎ 0113 715941; www.afewerktekle.org; admission per person US\$25; ☎ closed 1 Jul-15 Sep), Afewerk's home and studio, is offered by the artist himself (by appointment only). Besides gazing at his most famous paintings, *The Meskel Flower*, *Mother Ethiopia* and *The Simien Mountains*, you'll also see striking works like *The Chalice and Cross* and hear stories about his life and Villa Alpha itself – all quite fascinating.

If you're thinking of souvenirs, signed and numbered reproductions on canvas are a snip at US\$200 to US\$350, while vivid tapestries climb into the thousands. The artist is particular about being addressed by his formal title 'Maître Artiste World Laureat', though 'Maître' will do for short!

Photography is permitted in the compound, but not in the house.

The house and studio is west of the centre in a side street off the Ring Rd, 200m from the Ghanaian embassy.

For more information on Afewerk Tekle see the boxed texts, p51 and opposite.

Lion of Judah Monument ብቁር አንበሳ

Long the symbol of Ethiopia's monarchy, the Lion of Judah is ubiquitous throughout the country. Although images of the almighty animal abound in Addis Ababa, it's the storied history of the **Lion of Judah Monument** (Map pp80-1; Gambia St) that makes this statue significant.

After being erected on the eve of Haile Selassie's coronation in 1930, it was looted by Italians in 1935 and placed in Rome next to the massive Vittorio Emanuele Monument. In 1938, during anniversary celebrations of the proclamation of the Italian Empire, Zerai Deress, a young Eritrean, spotted the statue and defiantly interrupted proceedings to kneel and pray before it. After police verbally and physically attempted to stop his prayers, he rose and attacked the armed Italians with his sword whilst screaming 'the Lion of Judah is avenged!'. He seriously injured several officers (some reports say he killed five) before he was shot. Although he died seven years later in Italian prison, his legend lives on in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Lion of Judah Monument was eventually returned to Addis Ababa in the 1960s.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia & Africa Parks

Straddled by Menelik II Ave and climbing sequentially northwards from Africa Hall, these three new **urban parks** (Map pp80-1; Menelik II Ave) opened in early 2006. Lovely landscaping, with winding walkways, churning channels of cascading water, tidy trees and green grass, unite the three parks and make a pleasant respite in the city centre. It looks like outdoor cafés may join the fun soon.

Bole Medhane Alem Cathedral

ቦሌ መድኃኒአለም ቤተክርስቲያን

When this massive **cathedral** (Map pp80-1; Cameroon St) was completed in 2005 it surpassed the Holy Trinity Cathedral as Ethiopia's largest church. The only reason to wade through the throng of worshippers is to see the vibrant mural in the massive central dome.

Menelik Imperial Palace

የምኒልክ ቤተ መንግስት

South of Holy Trinity Cathedral, and surrounded by a stone wall, is the old **Menelik**

A KEY TO 'AFRICA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE'

Inside Africa Hall is a monumental stained-glass window by Afewerk Tekle. The following interpretation of the work comes from two interviews with the artist.

The first panel represents 'Africa: Past'. Red is the predominant colour, symbolic of Africa's struggle against both ignorance (symbolised by the heavy shadow) and colonialism (the smug-looking dragon). The disintegrating state of Africa is represented by the disunited family and the lost child. The skeleton with the whip shows evil driving the African continent – carried by a group of Africans – further and further into backwardness. The black chain framing the picture symbolises slavery.

The panel on the right represents 'Africa: Present'. The predominant colour is green, and Africa, symbolised by the man wielding a heavy double-handed sword, is struggling to slay the dragon of colonialism. In the background, a new sun rises; from it emerges all the peoples, religions and races of Africa. Above, the powers of evil, represented again by the skeleton, are taking flight, banished at last.

The middle panel shows 'Africa: Future'. Yellow is the predominant colour. In the foreground a family advances bearing torches, symbolic of a reawakening and the illumination brought by knowledge. Rallying behind are the other African countries, united and resolute in their aim for advancement. On the left, the knight in armour represents the UN holding out the scale of justice. In the background, a more serene landscape depicts an African Arcadia, in which peace and harmony reign on the continent at last.

Besides using artistic flare and hard work, Afewerk required masterful diplomatic skills to complete his vision. On one side, he faced harsh criticism from within the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) over his decision to make the torch-bearing family in 'Africa: Future' Ethiopian (note the clothing). And on the other, he had the emperor's advisors demanding the father of the Ethiopian family be depicted as Haile Selassie himself. He defused the ECA by asking them to pick a replacement nation that represented African freedom more than Ethiopia, the only African country to have fought off colonisation. To outmanoeuvre the emperor's advisors, he simply concurred, then continued with his original plan using an anonymous face. How did he get away with it? He ensured the glass pane bearing the much-debated face was placed just before the unveiling, thus denying the emperor any chance to protest. While Afewerk Tekle won the battle of artistic license, the emperor had the last laugh – he was the one who decided what the artist's final fee would be!

Imperial Palace (Map pp80-1; Lorenzo Tezaz St), which is now the government's main headquarters. Beneath the toilet in the president's personal office was where the body of Haile Selassie was discovered buried in 1992! This fascinating building is currently closed to visitors.

ACTIVITIES

Thanks to hosting the UN's ECA, activities are more catered to businesspeople than backpackers. Though, after returning from a tough slog out on the Ethiopian roads, many travellers indulge in a heavenly massage, steam bath or sauna. Cooling swims are also justifiably popular.

Massage, Steam Bath & Sauna

The new **Boston Day Spa** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 636557; Bole Rd; ☎ 8am-7pm) has already gained a great reputation. A 30-/60-minute massage costs Birr75/100. A session in the sauna, steam bath and Jacuzzi is Birr100 and includes a free hand and foot massage.

A sublime half-/full-body massage at the **Sheraton Hotel** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 171717; Itegue Taitu St; ☎ 5am-11pm) will set you back Birr120/200. Use of the sauna and Jacuzzi is a steep Birr185.

Sliding into the sauna, steam bath and Jacuzzi at the **Hilton Hotel** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 518400; Menelik II Ave; ☎ 5am-9pm) will leave you Birr99 lighter. Your sore muscles will sing/scream to the tune of Birr90 per 45 minutes of massage.

While not as sophisticated as the previous three options, the **Addisu Filwoha Hotel & Hot Springs** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 510902; ☎ 6am-8pm) complex is powered by Addis Ababa's original *raison d'être*, its natural hot springs. A public bath in the steaming mineral water is only Birr6 to Birr12, while a sauna is Birr24. A full-body oil massage and oddly exhilarating jet-wash is Birr60. The complex is off Yohanis St.

Readers recommend the steam baths (Birr50) and massages (Birr50 for 45 minutes) at **Desalegn Hotel** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 624524; Cape Verde St).

Swimming

Beat the heat with some underwater action. The sweetest swims in town are to be had at the **Sheraton Hotel** (Map pp80-1; Itegue Taitu St; nonguest admission weekday/weekend Birr85/145) and **Hilton Hotel** (Map pp80-1; nonguest admission

weekday/weekend Birr75/90; Menelik II Ave). A dozen laps back in the posh pool parade is the **Ghion Hotel** (Map pp80-1; nonguest admission Birr20), off Ras Desta Damtew St. The Ghion is cheap but gets overcrowded on weekends.

Golf

The **Addis Ababa Golf Club** (Map p76; ☎ 0113 201893) has a nine-hole course in the town's southwest. Weekday/weekend green fees are Birr140/180, plus Bir50 for club rental. A thwack on the driving range costs Birr20 plus Birr20/35 for 50/100 balls. It's off Ring Rd.

Other Sports

The **Hilton Hotel** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 518400; Menelik II Ave) offers up everything from table tennis, tennis, squash, minigolf, aerobics and weightlifting. Costs range from Birr16 to Birr75 per day.

COURSES

Institute of Language Studies (Map p76; ☎ 0111 239702; Addis Ababa University, Algeria St) teaches three Ethiopian languages (Amharic, Tigrinya and Orominya). Classes start in early December and early April, lasting three to four months (48 hours of lectures). There's a one-time application fee of US\$50 and each subsequent course costs US\$300.

Head immediately left after entering the main university gates. The office is on the 2nd floor, room 210.

TOURS

There are no scheduled tours of Addis Ababa itself, but if you contact one of Addis Ababa's many travel agencies (see p282), most can usually arrange something.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Although Addis doesn't boast any major festivals of its own, it's a great place to catch some of the national festivals. For Leddet and Timkat head to Jan Meda Sports Ground where the most exuberant celebrations take place. During Leddet the festivities also include a traditional game of *genna* (hockey without boundaries). When the festival of Meskel is underway, Meskal Sq is one of the best places to be in the country. For more details on these festivals see p261.

Inaugurated in 2001, the 10km **Great Ethiopian Run** (www.ethiopianrun.org) is now the biggest mass participation race on the continent. It

takes over the city on the last Sunday of November, and attracts over 20,000 runners. Whether spectating or running, it's a fun time and it's a great chance to see some of East Africa's elite athletes in action.

For minor festivals and upcoming cultural events check out www.whatsupaddis.com.

SLEEPING

Accommodation runs the gamut in Addis – brandish your flip flop and do battle with almighty insects, or sink into your sumptuous suite at the Sheraton. It's all up to you, your budget and the strength of your flip flops.

Budget hotels (and the best nightlife) are concentrated around Bole Rd and Piazza, whereas the best top-end options are found in the city centre. The midrange hotels in the north and southwest tend to offer the greatest value. Nightlife apart, sights are pretty spread out so there's no right or wrong area to stay.

All hotels listed here have parking facilities unless mentioned otherwise.

Budget

CENTRE

Lido Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 533247; lido@ethionet.et; Sudan St; s Birr144-213, d Birr161) Set behind some doum palms and cactus plants off Sudan St, this pleasant and clean hotel has 11 reasonably priced rooms. Rooms 8 and 9 (Birr161) are the brightest of the bunch. Room 9 has the only double bed, though couples can get cosy in the single rooms for no extra cost.

Buffet de la Gare (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 536288; s/tw Birr90/160) Thanks to being hosted in an old colonial building near the railway station, rooms have some character. They're pretty simple and small, with blue linoleum floors and soft springy mattresses. On the downside, it can be noisy and we've had complaints about the manager's temper.

B & G (Map pp80-1; d Birr80) Just north of Josif Tito St, behind the famous Old Milk House (p101), is this simple and cleanish spot. The rooms are quite stark, but the floors are carpeted, the sheets are nice, and hot water is plentiful. The only things lacking are sinks in the bathrooms.

BOLE RD AREA

Wanza Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 504893; Democratic Republic Congo St; d Birr70) Despite sporadic

flowing hot water and the continued presence of the odd crawly insect hiding behind the boilers (they're getting smaller though!), this place, with cosy rooms, comfortable beds, clean bathrooms and helpful owner is one of Addis Ababa's best budget options.

Pension Rita (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 530979; pen@ethionet.et; d Birr90-120) Set down a dirt lane off Democratic Republic Congo St, this option has spick-and-span rooms surrounding its quiet compound. Rooms and beds vary in size and some options have satellite TV, so check out a few. Although nobody seems to be in charge, it runs smoothly enough.

Leah's House (Map pp80-1; Ring Rd; s with shared bathroom Birr100) Known more for her restaurant's pies and Cornish pasties (see p98), Leah now has 12 simple smallish rooms for rent. Leah's House is a friendly Rastafarian joint, with each room symbolising one of Israel's 12 tribes.

PIAZZA & NORTH

Itegue Taitu Hotel (Map p85; ☎ 0111 560787; exod 2005@yahoo.com; tw with shared bathroom Birr46-115, tw Birr115-167) Just south of De Gaulle Sq is the country's first government hotel, built by Empress Taitu in 1907. Rooms range from small, stark and skanky in the rear annex to large and historic, with high ceilings and satellite TVs, in the original building. It's charming but well worn.

Wutma Hotel (Map p85; ☎ 0111 562878; wutma@yahoo.com; Mundy St; d Birr60) Perhaps it's our fault that Wutma always played second fiddle to Baro Hotel, but we say NO LONGER! No, it doesn't have Baro's garden atmosphere or cosy nook to watch satellite TV, but its smallish grey-walled rooms outshine all but a few of Baro's. There are no parking facilities.

Baro Hotel (Map p85; ☎ 0111 551447; barohotel@ethionet.et; Mundy St; s/tw Birr65/75) Across from Wutma, Baro has a wide assortment of grubby rooms. Yes, there are some reasonable options, but they're easily outnumbered by dimly lit cubicles, with stained walls, saggy mattresses, grimy carpets and ever-gurgling toilets.

SOUTHWEST

Hawi Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0114 654499; Beyene Abasebsib St; d Birr100) Although offering less value than the top Bole Rd options, this low-key place isn't a bad choice. The rooms and loos are a bit of a squeeze, but they're clean

and that's what really matters. If same-sex couples want to share a room, prices will rise. There's also no secured parking.

EAST

Yonnas Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 633988; fax 0116 632027; d/tw Birr151/181; 📍) With squeaky clean loos, new linoleum floors (no grotty carpet here!), satellite TVs and Juliet balconies, this is a midrange option with a budget price. It's found up a dirt lane 50m north of Equatorial Guinea St.

Debre Damo Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 612630; fax 0116 622920; s/d with shared bathroom Birr76/97, d Birr115-150; 📍) Debre Damo's rooms, all boasting baby blue walls, are clean but on the dark side. Most have aged carpet floors, with the exception of the Birr150 rooms, which have laminate tiling to go with their tiny TVs. The shared bathrooms are decent. It's off Haile Gebreselassie Rd.

Midrange

CENTRE

Ras Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 517060; fax 0115 517327; Gambia St; s/tw incl breakfast Birr178/200) Set squarely in the town centre, this place is government-run and tidy but has as much character as a newly paved footpath. Rooms possess green carpets, low ceilings, decent mattresses and satellite TVs. Its best asset is the terrace café.

National Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 515166; Mene-lik II Ave; s US\$29-36, d US\$38-44; 📍) The greyish Soviet-style exterior is downright depressing, but its swinging '70s orange carpets and naff wall coverings add some humour to the big bright rooms. Some upper-floor rooms have views.

Harambee Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 514000; Ras Desta Damtew St; s/tw Birr140/200) This well-positioned and somewhat tacky hotel offers some nice views. The carpeting is passable and tiny TVs spurt out BBC. Some bathrooms are brilliant, some are losing the mildew battle.

Wabe Shebelle Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 517187; washo.et@ethionet.et; Ras Abebe Aregay St; s/tw US\$45/54, ste US\$76; 📍) A towering building west of the centre. It's fairly overpriced but the rooms are well furnished and clean, with balcony, satellite TV and telephone.

Finfine Adarash Hotel & Restaurant (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 514711; fax 0015 524344; Yohannis St; d incl breakfast Birr260) Sitting atop the hot springs that led

to the founding of Addis Ababa, this hotel is a classic among Ethiopia tourists. However, unless you're really into history or frilly bedspreads, it's seriously overpriced.

Yordanos Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 515711; Guinea Conakry St; d US\$26-36, ste US\$42-46; 📍) This place has been a perennial favourite of tour groups, but its popularity won't last much longer unless it pulls its socks up. The midrange rooms are bright and some have balconies, but it's hard to overlook the dog-eared state and the decaying carpets.

BOLE RD AREA

Weygoss Guest House (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 512205; www.weygoss.com; s/d/tw incl breakfast US\$26/35/43) Lacking a sign and hidden up an alley just north of Ethio Supermarket, this five-storey guesthouse represents great value and is perfect for families. The bright doubles have parquet floors, balconies, satellite TVs and a separate kitchen. It's off Bole Rd.

Meridian Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 615050; meridian-hotel@ethionet.et; Zimbabwe St; d incl breakfast US\$48, ste incl breakfast US\$58-78) Sure, this place is well located and has bright, comfortable and spacious rooms, but the posted rates are outrageous. Fortunately, discounts of up to 40% are offered. It's one of the few with queen-sized beds.

Bole International Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 633000; fax 0116 627880; Cameroon St; s/d/tw incl breakfast US\$35/40/50) It's old but clean and a stone's throw from the airport. Rooms have decent carpet, Juliet balconies and satellite TVs.

PIAZZA & NORTH

Semien Hotel (Map p76; ☎ 0111 550067; semien.hotel@ethionet.et; Dejazmach Belay Zeleke St; s/d/tw incl breakfast US\$32/38/43, ste US\$54-60) Thanks to its lofty location above Piazza, this multistorey hotel offers some sweet vistas. The cosily compact rooms don't have much character, but they boast balconies, satellite TVs and spotless surrounds. The suites are size large and very comfortable. Throw in a 7th-floor lounge with a panoramic view and you have one of Addis Ababa's best-value midrange options.

Extreme Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0111 553777; epis.touch@ethionet.et; Gostomes St; s US\$20-29, tw US\$28-35) A hotel of extremes it is. Great 1st-floor rooms have shiny tile floors, contemporary furnishings, satellite TVs, free breakfasts and are utterly spotless. Cheaper 2nd- and

3rd-floor rooms have stained carpets and none of the 1st floor's modern charm; they also don't include breakfast.

SOUTHWEST

King's Hotel (Map p76; ☎ 0113 711300; kingshotel@ethionet.et; Roosevelt St; d incl breakfast US\$37) With great service and large, bright rooms hosting vibrant coloured walls, balconies and satellite TVs, this hotel is a perfect pick. The furniture, like the bathrooms, is nowhere near new but perfectly preserved.

Addis Ababa Golf Club (Map p76; ☎ 0113 201893; s/d/ste incl breakfast US\$35/41/47) Surrounded by lawns, these contemporary rooms, with telephones, hair dryers, satellite TVs and marble bathrooms, are excellent value, comfortable and very quiet... 'FORE!!' OK, pretty quiet. It's off Ring Rd.

Hotel Concorde (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0114 654959; hotelconcorde@ethionet.et; Beyene Abasebsib St; d US\$22-29) Offering better value than most budget hotels in eastern Addis Ababa, this place offers sizeable clean rooms, with balconies, satellite TVs and shiny bathrooms. Downstairs there's a good Chinese restaurant and piano bar.

EAST

Holiday Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 612081; holiday.hotel@ethionet.et; Haile Gebreselassie Rd; s/d/tw incl breakfast for 1 person Birr144/175/198) Sitting at the bottom end of the midrange bracket, this hotel is good value. It has simple but bright and tidy rooms with satellite TVs (CNN and movie channel) and small balconies.

Classic Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 613598; fax 0116 610946; Mike Leyland St; d/tw incl breakfast Birr155/185) It's a tough call between this hotel and the nearby Holiday Hotel. Classic's rooms are quieter and have more character, but they're a little more rundown. Angle for an upstairs room here, as flowering vegetation darkens the ground floor.

Plaza Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 612200; plaza.hotel@ethionet.et; Haile Gebreselassie Rd; d US\$30-35) Not an architectural gem, but it's clean, well run and has comfortable rooms with satellite TV and telephone. It's in good shape and is the most central option in eastern Addis Ababa, though it lacks balconies.

Atlas Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 611610; fax 0116 613661; Cameroon St; s/tw incl breakfast Birr298/317) Possessing frilly bedspreads that will curl most men's toes, The rooms are best described

as clean and cosy. They host satellite TVs, telephones, tiny toilets and, if you're facing the road, balconies.

Axum Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 613916; fax 0116 614265; Haile Gebreselassie Rd; s/d/tw incl breakfast US\$30/34/38, ste US\$45-67) Similar specs to Plaza Hotel, with dated bathrooms, satellite TV and clean, carpeted rooms. The suites offer more room and balconies. A new more deluxe wing should be finished by the time you read this. Credit cards are accepted for a 6% commission.

Arwaris Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 614933; Djibouti St; d/tw Birr170/220) New carpets, large sunny surroundings and satellite TVs make rooms here a downright decent option. Its location east of the centre and away from convenient minibus routes is its only real downfall.

Central Shoa Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 611454; fax 0116 610063; Equatorial Guinea St; d/tw Birr165/196; 📍) Rooms here are on the small side, but they're bright and have communal balconies (not so good if you want to keep your curtains open!). The bathrooms are aged, but clean.

Top End

Most of the following hotels tack on a 15% VAT and 10% service charge to the bill. That's an extra US\$2020.25 per night if you're staying in a Sheraton villa – ante up cowboy!

CENTRE

Sheraton Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 171717; www.sheraton.com/addis; Itegue Taitu St; s/d from US\$265/313, deluxe ste US\$3817, villa US\$8081; 📍) One of the Africa's most elite hotels, the Sheraton is astounding and the epitome of class. Neoclassical in style, it incorporates lots

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Ras Amba Hotel (Map p76; ☎ 0111 228088; rahot@ethionet.et; Queen Elizabeth II St; s/d/ste US\$36/48/60; 📍) Tucked quietly away east of Piazza and affording superb views over much of the city is this charming choice. There's a gorgeous rooftop terrace and rooms are relatively modern and comfortable. Most have balconies and all have satellite TVs. If there's a downside, some rooms are a little too pretty in pink.

of Ethiopian traditional designs, architectural features and tonnes – yes tonnes! – of Ethiopian marble. No expense has been spared: from Persian carpets and original Ethiopian paintings to furnishings played with 24-carat Ethiopian gold. DVD players, satellite TVs, personal safes and three phones (at desk, bed and toilet!) are found in each of its 392 rooms. Four rooms are wheelchair accessible. It also boasts half a dozen restaurants, posh shops, a swish pool, a modern nightclub and a spectacular fountain light show each Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 7pm. Prices even include daily golfing for up to four people!

Hilton Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 518400; hilton.addis@ethionet.et; Menelik II Ave; s/d from US\$130/145; 🏠 🚗 🚻) Although lacking the Sheraton's panache, the high-rise Hilton still makes a splendid stay and won't break the bank. With banks, travel agencies, airline offices, restaurants, pool, health club, spa (p90) and numerous sports facilities (see Other Sports, p90 for more details), it's almost a clubhouse for the expat business community and is always alive with action. The 402 rooms each have a balcony (some with grand views) and are very comfortable, though they do show their age in places. Some rooms are wheelchair accessible.

Ghion Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 513222; ghion@ethionet.et; s US\$55-81, tw US\$68-95, ste US\$110; 🏠 🚗 🚻) Set in serene gardens smack dab in Addis Ababa's centre, off Ras Desta Damtew St, Ghion is something of an Ethiopian institution and is usually full. Though the surroundings can't be beat, the old but well-kept rooms, with slightly shaggy carpet, satellite TV and telephone, are overpriced. Credit cards are accepted.

A new Novotel/Ibis Hotel development was underway next to Meskal Sq during our visit, so check their respective websites (www.novotel.com and www.ibishotel.com) for details.

SOUTHWEST

Global Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0114 664766; global.hotel@ethionet.et; Beyene Abasebsib St; d incl breakfast, sauna & steam bath US\$58-66, ste incl breakfast, sauna & steam bath US\$120; 🏠) If there's anything wrong with this high-rise hotel, it's that the rooms are too big. Bright windows and balconies offer views aplenty, and prices include saunas and steam baths downstairs.

EAST

Desalegn Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 624524; desalegne@ethionet.et; Cape Verde St; s/d/ste incl breakfast US\$55/60/65; 🏠) Despite being at the low end of the top-end spectrum, service here is first class. The bathrooms are more modern than most and rooms are spotless and large, though they're stretched at the seams with furniture, satellite TVs and fridges. Balconies come complete with lounge chairs and, if you're on the upper floors, views. There's a terrace bar with panoramic views, a free gym and reasonably priced steam baths (Birr50) and massages (Birr50 per 45 minutes).

Queen of Sheba Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 180000; queenshebahotel@ethionet.et; Haile Gebreselassie Rd; d/ste US\$69/79) Although a little impersonal, this hotel is pretty good value. The beds are queen-sized and each room has a sitting area with a sofa and satellite TV. The modern bathrooms are spotless and suites contain a small kitchen with fridge. Ask for a room facing north; they have views of the Entoto Mountains.

Hotel De Leopold International (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 507777; www.hoteldeleopolint.com; s US\$55-75, d US\$85-120, ste US\$160; 🏠) This high-rise has a wide range of rooms and all boast satellite TVs, spotless bathrooms, kitschy leopard-print duvet covers and balconies with views. It's located off Jomo Kenyatta Ave.

EATING

You lucky lucky souls...you've either just stepped off a plane (Welcome to Ethiopia! Lucky you!) and can indulge in a feast of gastronomic pleasures for a fraction of what it would cost at home, or you've just arrived from several weeks in Ethiopia's wilds (How amazing was that?! Lucky you!) and now have what looks like Manhattan's menu on your doorstep. Italian or Indian? Middle Eastern or Mexican? French or Ethiopian? Eat what you choose and enjoy.

Many restaurants, particularly the smarter ones, add a 15% tax and 10% service charge to their bills; check before you order.

Ethiopian

Many places offer a 'traditional experience': traditional food (called 'national food') in traditional surroundings with traditional music in the evening. You sit in short traditional Ethiopian chairs, eating from a communal plate, on a *mesob* (Ethiopian table).

If you feel more adventurous, try the *kitfo beats* (pronounced 'kitfo bet'), which are typically ignored by tourists. These restaurants usually serve little other than *kitfo* (minced beef or lamb like the French steak tartare, usually served warmed – but not cooked – in butter, *berbere* and sometimes thyme).

If meat isn't your thing, you'll love Wednesday and Friday because fasting food (a variety of vegetarian dishes) is served by all Ethiopian restaurants.

Check out Food & Drink (p68) for more information about Ethiopian cuisine and eating etiquette.

CENTRE

Dashen Traditional Restaurant (Map pp80-1; mains Birr15-40; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) From the outside, this Ethiopian eatery doesn't look promising. However, if you venture in past the courtyard, you'll find a lovely low-key dining area, with stone walls, local art and bamboo furniture. The soft lighting and intimate surrounds are perfect for your first awkward attempts at *injera* (large Ethiopian version of a pancake/plate). It saved us from embarrassment after accidentally inhaling *berbere* – don't ask! Its fasting food is particularly good (it's also available with fish). The restaurant is off Itegue Taitu St.

Ghion Hotel (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 513222; meals Birr28; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-11pm) Sitting behind this hotel's boring Western restaurant is a popular and attractive traditional restaurant. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday there's traditional music between 8pm and 11pm; order some *tej* (honey wine) and enjoy the action. It's off Ras Desta Damtew St.

Finfine Adarash Hotel & Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Yohannis St; mains Birr11-24; ☎ noon-11pm) Housed in the former home of a nobleman, this traditional restaurant is known for its vegetarian or 'fasting food' buffet (Birr20) on Wednesday and Friday. The meaty dishes, like *minchet abesh* (a thick minced-meat stew topped with a hard-boiled egg), are also well prepared. Eat inside or within little niches in the garden.

Girma Kitfo Beat (Map pp80-1; Jomo Kenyatta Ave; kitfo Birr20; ☎ noon-midnight) Just east of Guinea Conakry St, this *kitfo beat*, with cowskin chairs and private booths, is more comfortable than most – no plastic chairs to be seen! The *kitfo* is slightly above average.

BOLE RD AREA

Habesha Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr20-27; ☎ noon-3pm & 6pm-2am) For an Ethiopian meal that looks as good as it tastes, come to this fashionable Bole eatery where serving seems to be an art form. After a flurry of fast handwork, our *injera* was beautifully laden with everything from *gored gored* (raw beef cubes with *awazi*, a kind of mustard and chilli sauce) to vegetarian fasting food. There's also live music and traditional dancing every night at 8pm. This is the perfect place for your first taste of Ethiopia.

Fasika Restaurant (Map pp80-1; mains Birr35-38; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6pm-midnight Mon-Sat) Although less sophisticated than Habesha, Fasika also has a great atmosphere, with an exotic interior and live music most nights from 8pm. Its kitchen is equally apt and produces fine Ethiopian fare. It's located 150m up a dirt lane off Bole Rd's north end.

Kal Kitfo (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr12-20; ☎ 6.30am-8.30pm) Although it scores a zero in traditional ambience, this modern *kitfo beat* is a safe and pleasant place to try *kitfo*.

PIAZZA & NORTH

Addis Ababa Restaurant (Map p85; mains Birr11-22; ☎ noon-10pm) With sloping plank floors, weathered furniture and aged memorabilia on the walls, this former aristocrat's residence feels more like a neglected museum. It's a long-standing favourite and continues to churn out great Ethiopian dishes and quality *tej* (it has its own brewery). Partial proceeds benefit Ethiopia Women's Development Fund. There's live music Thursday and Saturday at 8pm. It's off Benin St.

Asni Gallery (Map p76; veg buffet Birr50; ☎ 1pm Sat, closed Jul & Aug) This great art gallery (p89) serves a large vegetarian buffet of Ethiopian fasting food each Saturday. Afterwards coffee and biscuits are served in the garden.

SOUTHWEST

Agelgil (Map pp80-1; mains Birr22-55; ☎ 11am-midnight) Off Meskal Flower Rd, tucked down a dirt track next to the railway tracks, is this great option. It's famous for *agelgil* (go figure!), which is a combination of *doro wat* (chicken drumstick or wing accompanied by a hard-boiled egg served in a hot sauce of butter, onion, chilli, cardamom and *berbere*), *gomen besiga* (boiled greens with beef and seasonings), *alocha fit fit* (tender

lamb pieces sautéed with ginger and curry and mixed with *injera*) and *bozena shiro* (organic pea flour mixed with diced beef). There's live dancing and music every night, except Wednesday, at 7pm.

Enset (Map pp80-1; Meskal Flower Rd; mains Birr14-35; ☎ 5pm-midnight) Despite its namesake dish, *enset* (false-banana 'bread', looking much like a fibrous carpet liner), this new restaurant and bar manages to produce some decent traditional food. Don't worry, *enset* always looks like that! It's best served with *kitfo*.

EAST

Shangri-la Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Cape Verde St; mains Birr17-50; ☎ noon-2pm & 6pm-midnight) Shangri-la has quickly earned a reputation as an atmospheric place for great Ethiopian food, especially *tere sega* (raw meat), which is available on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. There's an outdoor dining area with an open fire, and a cosy bar serving quality *tej*.

Yohannis Gurage Kitfo Beat (Map pp80-1; kitfo Birr19; ☎ noon-10pm) Hidden down an alley off a dirt road between Mike Leyland St and Djibouti St, this place is likely Addis Ababa's best *kitfo beat*. It's large and unpretentious with seating indoors and outdoors.

17 17 (Map pp80-1; Cameroon St; mains Birr8-12; ☎ noon-midnight) Come dinner and lunch, this local option is alive with action. Tables spill from inside out to a large courtyard topped with flowering vegetation. The food isn't the best, but it's filling and cheap and the atmosphere is enjoyable. There's no sign by the gate, so look for a string of lights in a tree next to a well-lit butcher.

Tenshwa Bet (Map pp80-1; Cameroon St; mains Birr30-50; ☎ 6pm-midnight) You wouldn't know it from the street, but the interior of this eatery is pretty plush. Beneath the cloth canopy, colourful cushions line benches and sheer fabric hangs between wee wood tables. There's no proper menu, so just ask what's in store for the evening.

Elsa Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Mike Leyland St; mains Birr10-30; ☎ noon-10pm) This simple outdoor restaurant has received high marks from expats for its quality fare. The *yet-som beyaynetu* (variety of fasting foods) is perfect for vegetarians, while *yedoro arosto* (roasted chicken) and *gored gored* assuage carnivorous cravings.

Italian

Due to il Duce's imperial ambitions and many an Italian immigrant, Addis Ababa boasts some extraordinary Italian cuisine.

CENTRE

Stagion (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 171717; Sheraton Hotel, Itegue Taitu St; mains Birr59-280; ☎ noon-3pm & 7-11pm) If *risotto alle vongole e verdurine fresche dell'orto* (rice simmered with clams and garden vegetables) or *cartuccio di pesce persico del Nilo con patate e pinoli* (fillet of Nile perch with pine seeds and potatoes) makes your stomach quiver with excitement, slide into this great Italian restaurant.

Central Pastry (Map p76; Merkato; meals Birr10-15; ☎ 8am-7pm) The perfect place to slaughter mid-Merkato shopping-spree hunger. It pumps out Ethiopian eats as well as spicy vegetarian pizza bread. The lasagne and pasta are filling, but taste like the stuff you get from a can at home. It can be hard to locate, so ask at the local bus station in Merkato.

BOLE RD AREA

Makush Art Gallery & Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr28-48; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) Surrounded by vivid paintings, woodcarvings, candlelit tables, attentive waiters and elevator music (hey, nothing's perfect!), the ambience of this restaurant almost outdoes the food. Italian ingredients pervade the menu; most meals hit the spot. The ravioli receives rave reviews from expats. It's in an office tower above Ethio Supermarket.

Antica Restaurant (Map pp80-1; mains Birr30-40; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 6-10pm) Watch chefs manoeuvre airborne dough while you wait for your delectable thin-crust pizza at this upscale Italian option. There are two-dozen varieties and toppings range from anchovies and capers to prosciutto and Italian sausage. It's off Cape Verde St.

Little Italy (Map pp80-1; Gabon St; mains Birr28-40; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 7-10pm, closed lunch Sun) This smart Italian restaurant has a more imaginative menu than some places, mixing in various delicacies from across Europe. The quality is consistent and pleasing.

Hassy Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Democratic Republic Congo St; mains Birr10-22; ☎ 8.30am-9pm) If you want Italian on the cheap and are tired of typical spag and tomato sauce, this is your place. Choose from four pastas and eight different sauces. Birr16 landed us salad, warm buns

and *tortellini* oozing with Gorgonzola. It wasn't great, but it was far from bad.

PIAZZA & NORTH

Ristorante Castelli (Map p85; ☎ 0115171757; Mahatma-Gandhi St; mains Birr50-80; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 7-10.30pm Mon-Sat) Hung behind the imposing and friendly Italian owner are the mugs of Swedish royalty, Bob Geldoff, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie and ex-US presidents, some of the more famous people who've come here for Addis' best Italian food. The pasta is homemade and excellent. We devoured the divine *fettuccine al tartufo* (fettuccini in truffle sauce). The gleaming woodwork gives the place a historic nautical feel. Reservations are wise.

Blue Tops Restaurant (Map p76; King George VI St; mains Birr24-50; ☎ 8.30am-10pm Tue-Sun) Opposite the National Museum and a favourite haunt of expats, this bright and airy restaurant serves flavourful pastas (some vegetarian options), calzones and heavenly ice-cream sundaes. Two-dozen varieties of pizza join the parade during the evenings and at lunch Sunday.

Orosco (Map pp80-1; General Wingate St; mains Birr14-22; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) The cheap bill, smiley staff and tasty Italian selections will have you forgetting about your cholesterol counts – yes, it's a little greasy at times.

Isola Verde Pizzeria (Map p85; Mahatma-Gandhi St; pizzas Birr13-22; ☎ noon-8pm) This tiny place serves 17 varieties of pizza. The quality isn't earth shattering, but neither is the bill.

SOUTHWEST

Le Jardin (Map pp80-1; Meskal Flower Rd; mains Birr25-43; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-10pm) As you'd imagine from the name, this restaurant has some nice garden seating. Our friends at the Canadian embassy swear it makes Addis Ababa's best pizza, and we won't argue. If pizza and pasta aren't doing it for you, delve into Greek treats like moussaka and dolmades.

EAST

Canapé International Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Côte D'Ivoire St; mains Birr25-55; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-9pm Mon-Sat) Northeast of the centre, in a brick house, is this popular Italian place serving a long list of selections like antipasto, pasta, risotto, meat dishes and fish. It's not the best you'll find in town, but prices are reasonable.

Blue Drops Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Cameroon St; mains Birr12-35; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) This simple

place is popular with locals because it's particularly cheap, offers a wide range of pastas and sauces, and shows European football games on the TV. The *putanisca* [sic] sauce (tomatoes, black olives and capers) is a pretty good choice.

Other Western

CENTRE

Les Arcades (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 171717; Sheraton Hotel, Itegue Taitu St; mains Birr47-158; ☎ 7-11pm Mon-Sat) If fine French fare tickles your fancy, you can't do better than Les Arcades. Let the pastry coating the baked tilapia melt in your mouth, or sink your teeth into the gorgeous pan-seared duck. A serious selection of wines stands at your beck and call.

Kaffa House (Map pp80-1; Hilton Hotel, Menelik II Ave; meals Birr26-70; ☎ 6-10.30am, noon-2.30pm & 6.30-10.30pm) There are burgers that pass for burgers in Addis and then there are burgers anywhere. Kaffa House burgers will bring a smile to the most disgruntled Texan tourist and take him back to a happy place, a place he wasn't dragged by his adventuresome wife. Oh, there are also some healthy options for his wife, like the grilled chicken with eggplant and roasted pepper caviar.

Cottage Restaurant & Pub (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St; mains Birr21-36; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) This cosy cottage is an expat favourite for a smart lunch. While the menu is varied, ranging from Madras chicken curry and pizza to veal medallions in a *morille* (mushroom) sauce, its speciality is the beef fondue (Birr105 for two). Few leave disappointed.

Summerfields (Map pp80-1; Sheraton Hotel, Itegue Taitu St; mains Birr47-158; ☎ 7am-11pm) Tuck into Wiener schnitzel, tender beef sirloin or a fine burger, or just dive face first into their massive buffets.

Sunrise Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Ras Mekonen Ave; mains Birr15-32; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) Dine on Nile perch, veal cutlet and other Western fare at this popular restaurant. Sit in the garden or climb the colonial steps and dine inside.

BOLE RD AREA

Lime Tree (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr17-34; ☎ 7am-11pm) This casual, bright and open-plan eatery is great for its atmosphere and fresh food. Tuck into a pita stuffed with *tabouleh* or falafel, or savour a chicken

coconut curry. It's also well known for its creative and healthy juices.

Leah's House British Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Ring Rd; mains Birr15-20; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat) Wield your fork like a Brit possessed and massacre a Cornish pasty, a full English breakfast or a steak-and-kidney pie. It's the real deal – enjoy!

Family Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Ethio-China Ave; mains Birr18-45; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Sat, 9am-10pm Sun) Run by the US embassy's former cook, this restaurant produces gargantuan servings of great Tex-Mex fare. To test our shrunken stomach's capacity, we overlooked the fajitas, *quesadillas*, burgers and steaks and chose a bean-and-cheese burrito, complete with rice, salsa and guacamole, off the 'Vegetarian Corner' – it fit, but barely!

Street Café & Grill (Map pp80-1; Jomo Kenyatta Ave; mains Birr15-28; ☎ 7am-8pm) This cute little place is perfect for a hot breakfast. Options include omelettes, pancakes, bacon and eggs and hash browns. We dove into the French toast with syrup – it was spot on.

Loti Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Ethio-China Ave; mains Birr19-43; ☎ 11.30am-2pm & 6.30-10pm) This new French restaurant hasn't reached its stride yet, but it's slowly building a reputation with fine dishes like *lapin à la moutarde* (rabbit in mustard) and fried tofu with vegetables. Its location sucks, hidden three floors up the back of large brick shopping centre.

Rico's Restaurant, Pizzeria & Bar (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr22-34; ☎ noon-10pm) A stylish, brightly lit new place serving everything from Moroccan kebabs to blackened Cajun fish and buffalo wings dripping with Texan BBQ sauce.

Satellite Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr30-95; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) Despite being housed rather incongruously in a plane fuselage jutting from the front of a building and having waitresses in air hostesses' garb, this restaurant is actually an upmarket joint offering international food. The fillet of fish in white wine or the ravioli Genoa style are worth a try.

PIAZZA & NORTH

Raizel Café (Map p85; Hailesilase St; meals Birr9-18; ☎ 7am-9.30pm) The mezzanine section of this slick modern café speedily serves tasty cheese burgers, tuna melts, French fries and breakfast omelettes. Despite always being

chock-full, waiters craftily (and rapidly) find seats for you.

SOUTHWEST

Hamlet Steak House (Map pp80-1; Meskal Flower Rd; mains Birr17-45; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Fri, 9am-midnight Sat & Sun) Perhaps the best place in Addis Ababa to get a quality steak for a reasonable price. Cuts include New York, top sirloin and T-bone. During pre-meal festivities, lube the stomach with South African, Spanish, Portuguese or Italian wine. On weekend mornings, French toast, waffles, pancakes and the all-important syrup enter the mix.

Addis Ababa Golf Club (Map p76; mains Birr17-44; ☎ 7am-10pm) Known for its weekend BBQs and serene surrounds, this is a decent pick for a long lunch (service is slow). Choose from homemade pasta, steak and pizzas. It's off Ring Rd.

EAST

Top View (mains Birr24-52; ☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sun) We could talk about the cannelloni stuffed with cottage cheese and spinach, or the Parma ham and fresh seafood, but we'd prefer to talk about the gorgeous view. Perched on a hill above the Ring Rd's junction with Equatorial Guinea St, it offers an unspoilt panorama of Addis Ababa, truly spectacular at sunset. Sit sheltered behind its glass walls or take a seat out on the spacious deck.

Zebra Grill (Map pp80-1; Djibouti St; mains Birr16-33; ☎ 8am-midnight) An aberration in eastern Addis, Zebra Grill is known for grilled food, with imaginative and well-prepared dishes such as chicken Montego Bay or Jamaican-style chicken. Less creative but equally tasty are the chicken wings, masala chips and Mexican burritos. The atmospheric and thatched pavilions inside hide behind an ugly tin roof and zebra-striped exterior.

Hill Belt (Map p76; Ring Rd; mains Birr15-32; ☎ 8am-midnight) Award-winning restaurant serving a variety of reasonably priced dishes, from beef stroganoff to a mixed fruit kebab with honey and mint sauce. The only downside is its loud Ring Rd location.

Indian

The Bole Rd area is king (or should we say maharajah) when it comes to Indian, with three of Addis Ababa's top four Indian restaurants.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Serenade (Map p85; ☎ 0911 200072; mains Birr45-75; ☎ 7pm-midnight Wed-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun) Just east of Piazza, off Tewodros St, and tucked up a dark cobblestone alley is this magnificent Mediterranean eatery. It's a vibrant place, with lush walls, hardwood floors, great service and food that will leave you and your stomach in a heavenly daze. Peruse the creative menu, laden with succulent treats like braised lamb with caramelised onions, lentils, lemon and *raison orange* couscous. The carrot cumin soup seasoned with ginger (lovely!) and Tuscan Skillet (zucchini, onion, celery, bell pepper, tomato, mozzarella and spinach cooked with olive oil, fresh oregano and thyme) are just two of several vegetarian options that any meat-lover would equally devour. Full or not, you'll end up ordering dessert after you see the selections. The cardamom and saffron ice cream is oh so divine.

Shaheen (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 171717; Sheraton Hotel, Itegue Taitu St; mains Birr43-160; ☎ noon-3pm & 7-11pm) Set within the Sheraton's confines, Shaheen is Addis Ababa's most sophisticated Indian restaurant. The décor in the restaurant is grand and the melange of Indian curries and tandooris is vast. The *hadhrabi muchhi* (south Indian fish curry) is particularly lovely.

Sangam Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; mains Birr20-40; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6.30-10pm) If you have developed a craving for a cracking curry, try this atmospheric eatery. Here you can wrap your lips around *mughali biryani* (fragrant rice), tandoori dishes or, as we did, some butter chicken masala – absolutely delicious! There are also great lunchtime *thalis* (mixed meals) available for Birr40 every day but Sunday.

Jewel of India (Map pp80-1; Gabon St; mains Birr25-72; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6.30pm-midnight) This place is above average, and offers a menu featuring more than 150 dishes. It focuses on traditional Indian specialities, including vegetarian delicacies like *paneer tikka masala* (barbecued cottage cheese in spicy gravy). If roasted chicken stuffed with minced lamb takes your fancy, ask for a *Kerala kebab*. There's a good-value express set menu at lunchtime from Monday to Friday (Birr45).

Bombay Brasserie (Map pp80-1; mains Birr18-48; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6.30-11pm) With friendly service and divine dishes like *reshmi chicken kebab* (boneless chicken marinated in cashew paste and spices) and Mohan's special mutton curry, it is very easy to see why we have received readers' letters boasting about Bombay Brasserie. There are plenty of vegetarian options. The restaurant is found off Bole Rd.

Middle Eastern

Aladdin (Map pp80-1; Zimbabwe St; mains Birr18-42; ☎ noon-3pm & 7-10pm) An upmarket Armenian restaurant that serves mouth-watering hummus, *tabouleh*, *foul medames* (fava beans flavoured with lemon and garlic), *kuefteh* (spicy meatballs) and kebabs. Sit beneath the canopied ceiling or on the attractive lawn.

Almendi Restaurant (Map pp80-1; mains Birr15-75; ☎ 7-10pm) You'll leave this excellent Arabian-style eatery as full as an egg. We ordered a simple shish kebab and it arrived with flat bread, soup, salad and various meats in sauces – all tasty and very filling! The *mendi* (sheep) is also great and the *fetira* (bread with honey) makes a perfect accompaniment. It's 100m down a dirt lane leading off Democratic Republic Congo St.

Armenian Sporting Association (Map p76; Welete Johanis St; mains Birr15-30; ☎ 7-11pm Mon-Sat) This simple clubhouse northeast of the Piazza is a friendly place for some savoury Armenian dishes such as mint soup, *basturma* (pressed beef, preserved in spices), *derevi dolma* (vine leaves stuffed with meat and bulgur wheat), shish kebab and delicious homemade *madzoun* (yogurt). Nonmembers pay a 20% surcharge.

Asian

China Bar & Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St; mains Birr15-60; ☎ 11.30am-10.30pm) Some say nay. Some say yay. No that's not phonetic Chinese 101, rather it's expats' opinions of this restaurant and its large selection of seafood, meat and vegetarian dishes. The décor is quite attractive, with a remarkable relief ceiling.

China Paradise Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Beyene Abasebsib St; mains Birr15-80; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) While less flashy than China Bar &

Restaurant, this place consistently produces decent Chinese fare. It's southwest of the centre, below the Hotel Concorde.

Cafés & Pastry Shops

Cafés and pastry shops are omnipresent in Addis and you'll find them perfect for an afternoon or early morning pick-me-up. Places that stand out for their drinks are found right, while those that make the grade in the edible end of the spectrum are found here.

CENTRE

Café Miru (Map pp80-1; Gambia St; meals Birr11-17) Besides having great pastries, cakes and coffee, the upper section of this café serves some decent burgers, pastas and Ethiopian dishes.

Addisu Pastry (Map pp80-1; Gambia St; cakes Birr2-3) This place looks dead from the outside, but step in and it's standing room only. Locals love the pastries, cakes and coffee.

BOLE RD AREA

City Café & Pastry (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; pastries Birr2-4; ☎ 7.30am-9pm) Educated in the art of apple strudel and other delicious delicacies while in the States, this café's owner produces some of the town's best pastries.

Pasticceria Gelateria – Roby's Pastry (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; desserts Birr4-7; ☎ 7am-8pm) Doles out refreshing homemade ice cream and mouth-watering cakes.

Purple Café (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; desserts Birr3-5; ☎ 8am-8pm) Unmistakably purple and usually packed with students, this café is known for its delicious *millefeuilles* (layered pastry).

Saay Pastry (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; desserts Birr3-5; ☎ 8am-8pm) Saay has a tempting selection of treats, including freshly baked croissants and doughnuts, as well as ice creams and fruit juices. It also does a wonderful *macchiato*.

PIAZZA & NORTH

Dibab Recreation Services (Map p76; Algeria St; meals Birr3-10; ☎ 7am-8pm) Did the Ethnological Museum make your tummy rumble? Head for this quaint little place in the middle of a small square, just across from the university entrance. It's an ideal place to unwind in the sun over a pastry and a cup of coffee. It also serves simple Ethiopian fare.

Café Chaud (Map p85; Dejazmach Jote St; dishes Birr3-8; ☎ 8am-8pm) Sweet teeth will be satisfied at this spot. It doesn't really impress from the outside, but you'll be surprised to

discover the trendy interior. Besides cakes and coffee, there's savoury pizza bread.

Self-Catering

Novis Supermarket (Bole Rd area Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat, 9am-9pm Sun; southwest Map p76; Roosevelt St; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun) Boasting the likes of Brie, Taleggio, Gorgonzola and Gouda, this supermarket is heaven for cheese-lovers. There's also a great selection of Italian prosciutto, wine and chocolate.

Shi Solomon Hailu Supermarket (Map pp80-1; Gambia St; ☎ 8am-8pm) Well stocked with Western faves, ranging from cereals and biscuits to mineral water and tomato sauce.

Ethio Supermarket (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; ☎ 24hr) It never closes and is well stocked – enough said.

DRINKING

You won't go thirsty in Addis Ababa. Sip some of the world's best (and cheapest) coffee, down a healthy juice or simply sway home after swallowing your share of *tej*.

Cafés

There are hundreds of cafés serving great coffee in Addis; following are a few that caught our attention.

Tomoca (Map p85; Wavel St; coffees Birr2) Coffee is serious business at this great old Italian café in Piazza. The beans are roasted on site and Tomoca serves what's likely the capital's best coffee. Beans are also sold by the kilo (Birr38).

Kaldi's Coffee (coffees Birr3-14; southwest Map p76; Roosevelt St; east Map pp80-1; Cameroon St) While corporate lawyers may eventually kibosh Kaldi's Starbucks-like sign, logo, interior, uniforms and menu, thirsty expats willing to drop Birr14 for a fabulous frappuccino will ensure Kaldi's contagious coffee lives on in Addis Ababa.

La Madeline (Map pp80-1; Ras Mekonen Ave; coffees Birr1.50-2) This new city-centre café, splashed with lime green and decorated with rod iron and glass furniture, is extremely popular. The coffee is great and the treats aren't bad either.

Ras Hotel (Map pp80-1; Gambia St; coffees Birr4-5) This central hotel's terrace is a perfect place for a late afternoon coffee.

Friendship Café (Map pp80-1; 3rd fl, Friendship City Center, Bole Rd; coffees Birr1.50-3) Although new

and fairly sterile, it has a great terrace overlooking town.

Terrace Café (Map p85; Fitawrari Gebeyehu St; coffees Birr1.50-3) West of St George Cathedral, this café's elevated terrace is a pleasant spot to take in Addis Ababa.

Mille Foglie Pastry (Map pp80-1; Beyene Abasebsib St; coffees Birr1.50-2.50; ☎ 7am-8pm) With a large streetside terrace and great coffees and juices, it's little wonder this place in southwestern Addis Ababa is usually packed.

Juice Bars

Most of Addis Ababa's cafés also serve freshly squeezed juices or slushy blends of everything from strawberries to avocado (Birr3 to Birr6).

Lime Tree (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; juices Birr6-10; ☎ 7am-11pm) With luscious *lassies* and creative juices, Lime Tree is the premier place to indulge in liquid treats of the chilly variety. We downed a lime juice with mint and it refreshingly pummelled our thirst.

Pubs & Bars

With the recent addition of several chic bars that would feel at home in London or Paris, Addis Ababa's bar scene is more diverse than ever. The Bole Rd area boasts most of the new arrivals and major players, and targets well-to-do locals and expats, while Piazza oozes with dozens of smaller unnamed places that cater to locals just wanting to let loose. The area of Kazanchis, east of the centre, is much like Piazza, with down-to-earth but authentic bars often turning to impromptu dance floors late in the evening. The key to Piazza and Kazanchis is to simply let your ear do the walking.

Small local drinking holes charge Birr3 for a bottle of beer, while established bars can charge up to Birr12. Most places are open until 2am during the week, and 5am on the weekend.

Virgo Lounge (Map pp80-1; Cameroon St; ☎ closed Mon) This hip new drinking den sits above Kaldi's Coffee in southeastern Addis Ababa. With colourful contemporary furniture, modern lighting and mellow music, this is an ideal place to kick back and chill out.

Black Rose (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd; ☎ closed Mon) Hiding in a modern building above the Boston Day Spa, this plush bar possesses a cool vibe and a refined clientele. Candles, lush fabric, artwork and some traditional

furniture call it home. Music ranges from Ethiopian to Western and Indian.

Temptation Lounge & Bar (Map pp80-1; Democratic Republic Congo St) This slick, new, lined-with-leather place was reverberating with UB40 when we were here. Its colour scheme will have you seeing red.

Mask Bar (Map pp80-1) This tiny bar is as gaudy as it is cool. Above the glowing green beer bottles that comprise the bar hang masks of all sorts; some historical, some clearly not. The crowd ranges from expats to well-heeled locals. It's well signposted off Bole Rd.

Old Milk House (Map pp80-1; Josif Tito St) Moving house has done nothing to dampen the crowds at this popular Dutch-owned bar, which sits just east of Menelik II Ave. If you don't want to mingle with the expat men chatting with local ladies, there are usually chairs around the courtyard campfire.

Top View (☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sun) Enjoying a sunset drink on this remarkable restaurant's deck in eastern Addis is escapism at its best. The views west over Addis Ababa are astounding.

Semien Hotel (Map p76; Dejazmach Belay Zeleke St) The panoramic 7th-floor bar in this hotel north of Piazza is another sweet spot for a sunset beverage.

Bole Milk House (Map pp80-1) Off Bole Rd, behind City Pastry, this new venue is a perfect place to warm up for an evening on the town. There's a campfire by the outdoor bar and inside there's artwork, a pool table and decent Western music that you don't have to scream over.

17 17 (Map pp80-1; Cameroon St) This local restaurant and bar, with its large outdoor courtyard, is a pleasant place to enjoy a very cheap beer and meet locals.

Tej Beats

If authentic experiences are what you're after, there's no better place than a *tej beat* (pronounced 'tedj bet') to down the famed golden elixir (honey wine). Most are open from 10am to around 10pm, but are busiest in the evening. They're the traditional haunt of men, so women should try and keep a low profile. They never have signs, so you'll have to ask locals to point them out.

Topia Tej Beat (Map pp80-1) Off Haile Gebreselassie Rd, tucked up an alley behind the Axum Hotel, this is Addis' top *tej beat* and the only one to serve pure honey *tej*.

A small flask (Birr3.50) on an empty stomach had our head spinning. A half-/full-litre bottle is Birr12/24. It's a congenial place with tables surrounding a tiny garden.

Yegebawal Tej Beat (Map p76) For a more rough-and-ready experience, head for this place east of Piazza, off Lorenzo Tezaz St. The *tej* is dirt-cheap (Birr2 per litre), but it's not pure as sugar has been added.

While not *tej beats* per se, these options produce pure *tej*: Shangri-la Restaurant (p96) and Addis Ababa Restaurant (p95).

ENTERTAINMENT

We could blow hot air up your tail pipe, like some guides do, and tell you Addis Ababa's entertainment scene is astounding and the options are endless, but we won't. What we will tell you is that there's enough going on to keep you entertained and a few things that will leave you smiling.

The publication *What's Up!* and its website (www.whatsupaddis.com) highlight upcoming events on Addis Ababa's entertainment scene.

Jazz Clubs

These clubs don't have a cover charge, but do ask a hefty Birr12 to Birr15 for a beer.

Coffee House (Map p76; Madagascar St) Located opposite the Egyptian embassy northeast of Siddist Kilo is this fancy club. Every Thursday great live jazz performances start at 10pm.

Harlem Jazz (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd) This large and mellow venue just north of the airport hosts live jazz Sunday, Tuesday and Friday from 10pm.

La Gazelle Piano Bar (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd) Head down into this dark and moody bar for live jazz every night.

Nightclubs

Nightlife in Addis Ababa is slowly starting to mature with some modern clubs joining the circuit and music almost gaining prominence over prostitution. While most nightclubs open at 11pm, there's no point in arriving before midnight. Those open during the week close around 2am; things wrap up nearer to 5am on weekends. Cover charges vary between Birr15 and Birr30 at most venues, depending on the day (but are sometimes free). Expect to drop about Birr15 for a beer and Birr20 for a cocktail.

Male travellers beware, most single Ethiopian women encountered are still prostitutes.

Divine (Map pp80-1; 2nd fl, Sheger Bldg, Cameroon St) Slip into a sleek leather lounge, sip a cocktail and groove to heavy hip-hop and rap in this sleek new nightclub.

Club Illusion (Map pp80-1; cnr Ras Desta Damtew & Itegue Taitu St; ☎ Thu-Sat) This is Addis Ababa's most raucous club. It's in the basement of the Ambassador Theatre.

D-Cave Club (Map pp80-1; Beyene Abasebsib St; ☎ Thu-Sat) This new nightclub, which lurks beneath the Global Hotel in southwest Addis Ababa, hosts well-known DJs most weekends. Music ranges from Ethiopian to hip-hop and drum and base.

Gaslight (Map pp80-1; Sheraton Hotel, Itegue Taitu St; ☎ Thu-Sat) As you'd expect at the Sheraton, the décor is lavish, the music is loud and the dance floor is large. However, thanks to a Birr40 cover charge (Birr60 for couples) and dress code (you must look reasonably smart), the atmosphere is often lacking.

Memo Club (Map pp80-1) About 200m west of Bole Rd, this is another of Addis Ababa's hot spots. Cosy seats, red lights and the odd full-length mirror surround the circular dance floor, which usually reverberates with African and Western tunes. Sadly, it's also popular with expats shopping for prostitutes.

Addis Live (Map pp80-1; Cape Verde St) Attracts a younger crowd (mainly Ethiopian) and plays a good mix of hip-hop and reggae. It's pretty quiet during the week.

Azmari Beats

What in the world is an *azmari beat*? Check out Minstrels & Masenkos, p53.

Yewedale (Map pp80-1; Zewditu St) Thanks to some of the city's best *azmaris* performing here, it's resoundingly popular and you may have trouble finding a seat. There's no sign, so just look for the thatched twin-peaked roof above its entrance.

Fendika Azmari Beat (Map pp80-1; Zewditu St) This *azmari beat* rivals Yewedale and is only a few minutes' walk down the street. It's littered with Ethiopian cultural items and is always home to a good time.

Traditional Music, Dance & Theatre

Amharic theatre is hard to come by these days, with venues only hosting shows once or twice a week. Traditional music and dance

is much more accessible, with many restaurants putting on traditional shows in the evenings. *Azmari beats* (see previous section) are also atmospheric places to catch both. For general information on Ethiopian theatre, music and dance see p58.

National Theatre (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 514577; Gambia St; tickets Birr10) This impressive but ageing building, with its massive marble and bronze entrance hall (and odd pigeon), hosts theatre at 5pm on Saturday and Sunday.

City Hall Theatre & Cultural Centre (Map p85; ☎ 0111 112516; Fitawrari Gebeyehu St; tickets Birr15) A plush 1000-seat place in the Piazza, which shows productions Tuesday and Friday. Sometimes there's traditional Ethiopian music during public holidays.

Hager Fikir Theatre (Map p85; ☎ 0111 111268; John Melly St; tickets Birr15) Hager Fikir occasionally stages theatre, musicals and dancing.

Crown Hotel (☎ 0114 341444; Debre Zeyit Rd) This hotel's restaurant is renowned for its excellent traditional shows in its giant *tukul* (traditional cone-shaped hut with thatched roof; like South Africa's rondavel). Dancing from as many as 13 different ethnic groups takes place each night at 7pm, though it's better on weekends. Crown Hotel is located south of the city.

Other restaurants that are well known for their traditional shows: Agelgil (p95); Habesha Restaurant (p95); Fasika Restaurant (p95); Ghion Hotel (p95); and Addis Ababa Restaurant (p95).

Cinema

Cinema is more popular than ever; even pushing theatre out of most theatres! Most films are in English or have English subtitles (some have both!).

Ambassador Cinema (Map pp80-1; Ras Desta Damtew St; admission Birr5) An institution, this central cinema puts on the usual diet of action-packed and slightly passé Hollywood movies. Films are shown daily in three sessions.

Cinema Empire (Map p85; Hailesilase St; admission Birr4) Evening screenings at this Piazza cinema are Western favourites, while matinees are Amharic productions (Birr15).

Cinema Ethiopia (Map p85; De Gaulle Sq; admission Birr3) This Piazza cinema has evening viewings and shows everything from Hollywood to Bollywood.

Sport

Besides gawking at the fitness level of budding long-distance runners zooming back and forth on Meskal Sq's steps in the evenings and up and down Menelik II Ave in the early mornings, there aren't many opportunities for watching sports in Addis Ababa.

National stadium (Map pp80-1; Ras Mekonen Ave; tickets Birr7-20) This 27,000-seat stadium hosts national league football games most Sundays at 4pm. Sometimes athletics, cycling and boxing events are held here. Events are advertised in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

Jan Meda Sports Ground (Map p76) With the bed of the horse-race track in bad shape, few races still take place here. However, every second weekend the **Ethiopian Equestrian Association** (☎ 0111 232204) holds either polo, show jumping or dressage competitions; admission is free. It's off Russia St.

See Festivals & Events (p90) for information about the Great Ethiopian Run.

SHOPPING

Spend some spare change, spend your kid's college fund; the spectrum of prices and quality of goods for sale in the capital is simply that vast. You'll find most of the cheap souvenir stalls along or around Churchill Ave and in Piazza – haggling is always the way of the day!

Haileselassie Alemayehu (Map pp80-1; Churchill Ave) Although known for its silver jewellery and mix-and-match bead counter, this shop sells a wide array of items, like paintings, baskets, icons, woodcarvings and traditional clothing. Thanks to fixed (and fair) prices, there's no hassle here. It's also a good place to get your bearings on what items should cost elsewhere.

Entoto Market (Map p76; Entoto Ave) If you're interested in blankets or traditional clothing like a *shamma*, head to this group of stalls lining Entoto Ave a few hundred metres north of Botswana St and the Spanish embassy. Unlike Churchill Ave or Piazza, this is where locals do their shopping.

Ato Basket shop (Map p76; Mauritania St) Southwest of the centre, just on the side of the road, is the best place in town for baskets. This shop sells everything from hats and pots to *mesob* (woven Ethiopian tables), chairs and huge laundry baskets.

Gallery 21 (Map pp80-1; Churchill Ave) Of all the shops/stalls north of Haileselassie Alemayehu

on Churchill Ave, this has the biggest selection (if you ask to see the back room) and the best-quality pieces, though the prices are higher than most.

K Design (Map pp80-1; Beyene Abasesib St) If fine fabrics are what you're after, head no further. This place also sells elegant shawls and custom makes clothing with the cloth of your choice.

St George Interior Decoration & Art Gallery (Map pp80-1; Itegue Taitu St) This is located near the Sheraton for one obvious reason, nobody staying elsewhere can afford to shop here! However, the artwork and traditionally inspired modern furniture are exquisite and it's worth a wander.

Goshu Art Gallery (Map pp80-1) Southeast of the city centre, off Mike Leyland St, Goshu has some more unusual items including *washint* (traditional flutes), as well as skin and canvas paintings (from Birr3000).

Makush Art Gallery & Restaurant (Map pp80-1; Bole Rd) Has an excellent, carefully selected collection of high-quality furniture and paintings from various Ethiopian artists.

Gift Shop (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 150371; Meskal Sq) Beside the Tourist Information Centre, the Gift Shop is particularly good for books on Ethiopia and usually sells the old Ethiopian Tourism Commission map of the country (1987, 1:2,000,000). The map is often sold out, so call ahead.

Shopping for a Cause

These shops are a great way to support the city's hard-working less fortunate.

Alert handicraft shop (Map p76; ☎ 0113 211518; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) Here, the Berhan Taye Leprosy Disabled Persons Work Group produces and sells beautiful handbags, pillow covers and wall

THE FIREWOOD CARRIERS

An all-too-familiar sight in and around Addis Ababa is the firewood carrier. Many of these women walk up to 30km to gather bundles that weigh an average of 35kg – close to some of their own body weights. Bent like question marks under their loads, the majority of these women earn less than US\$12 a month. Yet their work is their only means of survival; usually they're the only income earners in the family.

hangings, each emblazoned with vibrant embroidery. The items are so Ethiopian, yet they wouldn't feel out of place in a Kathmandu or Bangkok market. The shop is off Ring Rd, southwest of the city centre in the Alert Hospital compound; follow the signs to the canteen.

Former Women's Fuelwood Carriers Project (Map p76; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Sat) This modest shop found off Entoto Ave sells colourful hand-woven shawls (Birr40) and supports former women firewood carriers. It's tucked in a back street about 300m west of Entoto Market; look for the signs. For more information on firewood carriers, see the boxed text, left.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

All domestic flights are operated by **Ethiopian Airlines** (www.flyethiopian.com; Bole Rd Map pp80-1; ☎ 0116 633163; Bole Rd; Gambia St Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 517000; off Gambia St; Hilton Hotel Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 511540; Menelik II Ave; ☎ 8am-8.45pm Mon-Sat, 8am-noon Sun; Piazza Map p85; ☎ 0111 569247; Hailesilase St). All of these offices are open daily from 8am to 6pm unless stated otherwise. There are several more offices scattered across the city.

Schedules change quite frequently and flight durations vary depending on which stopovers the plane is making en route.

Flights leaving from Addis Ababa are listed in the following table.

Destination	Fare (US\$)	Duration (hours)	Frequency
Aksum	131	2-3½	daily
Arba Minch	81	2½	Tue, Sun
Bahir Dar	78	½	2 daily
Dessie	61	1	Tue, Sun
Dire Dawa	99	1	daily
Gambela	100	2	Wed, Fri, Sat
Gonder	102	1½	daily
Jijiga	144	1¾	Tue, Fri, Sat
Jimma	63	1	daily
Jinka	94	2¼	Wed, Sat
Lalibela	102	2-2½	2 daily
Mekele	125	1½	daily
Mizan Tefari	91	1¾	Thu
Shire	141	2½	Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri
Tepi	91	2¼	Thu

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

For information regarding international flights and international airlines serving Addis Ababa, see the Getting There & Away section on p271.

Bus

Buses to Debre Zeyit (Birr4, 45 minutes), Lake Langano (Birr23, 4½ hours), Nazret (Birr11, two hours), Shashemene (Birr26, five hours) and Ziway (Birr17, three hours) leave from the **short-distance bus station** (Map pp80-1; Ras Mekonen Ave). Shashemene is also serviced from the long-distance bus station.

Long-distance buses depart from **Autobus Terra** (Map p76; Central African Republic St), north-west of Merkato. Buses for the following destinations leave officially at 6.30am.

Destination	Fare (Birr)	Duration
Aksum	109.70	2½ days
Arba Minch	51.50	12 hours
Awasa	28.75	6 hours
Bahir Dar via Dangala	60.75	1½ days
Bahir Dar via Mota	56.35	12 hours
Dessie	41	9 hours
Dire Dawa	52.65	11 hours
Gambela	85.55	2 days
Goba	49.85	13 hours
Gonder	82.50	2 days
Jijiga	66.35	2 days
Jimma	35.25	9 hours
Jinka	84.35	2 days
Lalibela	75	2 days
Mekele	82	2 days
Moyale	79	1½ days
Robe	48	12 hours
Shashemene	26.85	5 hours

There are several services to Shashemene and Awasa after the first 6.30am departure, though they all leave before noon.

Car & 4WD

Although it's possible to hire a self-drive car (see Getting Around, p106), you're usually restricted to the capital. Hiring a chauffeured 4WD, although expensive, removes most limits on where you can travel. Four-wheel drives are rented by almost all of Addis' travel agents (see p282). For more details on hiring, licence requirements and such, see p276.

Minibus

With sealed roads now all but connecting Addis Ababa with Bahir Dar and Gonder, private minibus services are starting to crop up. They're very fast (not always a good thing!) and cut journey times down to six hours for Bahir Dar and 10 hours for Gonder. There's no station per se, but commission agents tend to patrol for customers near the Wutma Hotel in Piazza. Prices are negotiable; note locals pay Birr120 to Birr150 for Bahir Dar and Birr150 to Birr180 for Gonder.

Train

Addis Ababa's train station, Chemin de Fer Djibouto-Ethiopian, is simply known as **La Gare** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 517250; Gambia St). The only railway line in Ethiopia runs from Addis Ababa to Djibouti City via Dire Dawa.

Trains used to be scheduled to depart for Dire Dawa (Birr75/55/41 in 1st/2nd/3rd class) at 3pm Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, though they rarely ever left on time – now they're not leaving at all. Currently only the Dire Dawa–Djibouti City section is operating. If it gets going again, tickets go on sale two hours prior to departure. For details about crossing the border by train see p274.

GETTING AROUND

Though a sprawling city, Addis Ababa is fairly easy to get around. The most useful option for travellers is the cheap and efficient minibuses. Taxis abound and are another possibility, especially in the evening.

To/From the Airport

Bole International Airport lies 5km south-east of the city centre; both international and domestic flights depart from here.

Minibuses from Piazza, Mexico Sq and Meskal Sq serve the airport daily from 6am to 8pm (Birr1.20). Some charge an additional Birr2 or Birr3 for excess luggage.

Blue city taxis to the airport should cost Birr25 from anywhere south of Meskal Sq to around Birr40 if leaving from Piazza; add Birr15 at night or early in the morning. From the airport, prices should be similar, though you'll be asked for at least double or triple this (see p258). A taxi association has a booth at the airport's exit and charges a 'fixed rate' (negotiable) of Birr45 (Birr50 at night). Taxi drivers belonging to this association have yellow taxis.

NTO (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 151722; Hilton Hotel, Menelik II Ave) offers airport pick-ups and drop-offs in a Mercedes-Benz for a reasonable Birr44 (Birr55 after midnight).

Bicycle

Bicycles can be hired informally from beside the national stadium for around Birr10 per hour or Birr30/50 per half/full day. Make sure you get one with a lock.

Bus

Buses in Addis Ababa are considered poor man's transport. They're cheap but slow, run less regularly than the minibuses and are notoriously targeted by pickpockets; the minibuses are a much better bet.

Car

Rainbow Travel (p283) and Galaxy Express Services (p282) are the only travel agencies in Addis that rent self-drive cars.

Parking isn't usually too much of a problem in Addis Ababa. Most of the larger hotels and restaurants have guarded parking spaces and don't usually mind you leaving your car there. In other places, it's worth paying for a guard.

Minibus

Addis Ababa is served by an extensive network of little blue and white minibuses, which are fast, efficient, cheap and a great way of getting around.

Minibuses operate from 5.30am to around 9pm (till 8pm Sunday). Journeys cost from Birr0.55 to Birr1.25 depending on distance.

Minibus stops can be found near almost every major intersection. Major ones include Arat Kilo, De Gaulle Sq in Piazza, Meskal Sq, Ras Mekonen Ave near La Gare and in front of the main post office on Churchill Ave.

To catch the right minibus, listen to the destinations screamed by the *woyala* (attendants) hanging out the windows. 'Bole!', 'Piazza!' and 'Arat Kilo!' are the most useful to travellers. If confused, ask and someone will point you in the right direction.

Taxi

Most taxis operate from 6am to 11pm. Short journeys (up to 3km) usually cost foreigners Birr20 (more at night). Medium/long journeys cost Birr30/50. If you share a

taxi, the normal fare is split between each person.

If you want to visit a lot of places in Addis Ababa, negotiate with a driver for a half- or full-day fare (Birr250 for a full day is pretty reasonable). A 'city tour' lasting a couple of hours should cost around Birr100.

Taxis can be found outside larger hotels, as well as the National Theatre, national stadium, and on De Gaulle Sq in the Piazza. At night, many line up outside the nightclubs.

NTO (Map pp80-1; ☎ 0115 151722; Hilton Hotel, Menelik II Ave) has a fleet of yellow Mercedes-Benz that charge Birr74 for the first hour (maximum 15km) and Birr58 for each additional hour. They're great for trips to the airport (see p105).

AROUND ADDIS ABABA

The cacophonous sounds of traffic can chase the most ardent Addis Ababa adorer into the hills occasionally. Lucky for them, the hills contain some historic churches (one hewn from rock in the 12th century) and some remote wilderness. For those too tired to tackle the hills, there's always an escape southward to the verdant Bihere Tsige Recreation Centre.

As well as the places listed here, sights further afield outside Addis Ababa that can still make good day trips include the crater lakes of Debre Zeyit (p214), Menagesha National Forest (p237), Ambo (p237), Mt Wenchi (p238) and the stelae field at Tiya (p171).

ENTOTO MOUNTAINS

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North of town are the Entoto Mountains, the site of Menelik's former capital. There's a terrific but windy panoramic view of Addis Ababa below. Near the summit is the octagonal **Entoto Maryam Church** (Map p76; ☎ 5am), which hosted Menelik's coronation in 1882. Inside are some mural paintings. Next to the church is a **museum** (admission Birr20; ☎ 9am-12.45pm & 2.30-5.30pm), which contains a large collection of religious garb mostly dating from Emperor Menelik's time.

Behind the Entoto Maryam complex stretches the newly minted 130-sq-km **Entoto Natural Park** (Map p76; admission free). Although it's said to boast everything from spotted hyenas to soaring lammergeyers,

it has absolutely no infrastructure yet, meaning people spend most of their time looking for the park instead of looking for animals!

About 1km west of Entoto Maryam Church is **Kiddus Raguel Church** (Map p76; admission Birr20). Nearby is the old **rock-hewn Kiddus Raguel Church** (Map p76; admission Birr20). In theory, these sites should be open daily, but they usually only open on St Raguel Day. Check with the Tourist Information Centre (p83) in Meskal Sq for details.

To get to Entoto, take a taxi or minibus to the terminus of Entoto Ave from Arat Kilo. From there another minibus will take you to Entoto Maryam Church.

WUSHA MIKAEL CHURCH

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The **Wusha Mikael Church** (Map p76; admission Birr30) is a 30-minute walk up a hill behind the Kiddus Mikael's church, which is a couple of kilometres east of the town centre.

Though local priests date it back to the 3rd century AD, it most probably dates back to the 12th century. If you're not planning to visit the churches at Lalibela or Tigray in the north, it's definitely worth a peek as an example of this extraordinary building tradition. Unfortunately, from July to October it's usually flooded with rainwater.

The church is tricky to find, so ask locals en route (most know it as Tekle Haymanot).

BIHERE TSIGE RECREATION CENTRE

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The large and wooded **Bihere Tsige Recreation Centre** (Map p76; admission Birr1; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) covers a large area of over 400 sq km. Its gardens contain 6000 varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees. It's a very pleasant place for a late afternoon walk or picnic. It lies 5km southwest of the centre off the Debre Zeyit road. A minibus from Meskal Sq will drop you off around a 20-minute walk from the entrance.

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