

Language

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ETHIOPIAN AMHARIC

Amharic is Ethiopia's national language. It belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family, in the Semitic language sub-group, which includes Arabic, Hebrew and Assyrian.

While regional languages such as Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya are also important, Amharic is the most widely used and understood language throughout the country. It is the mother tongue of the 12 million or so Amhara people in the country's central and northwestern regions, and a second language for about one third of the total population.

Amharic word endings vary according to the gender and number of people you're speaking to. Gender is indicated in this guide by the abbreviations 'm' (to a male), 'f' (to a female) and 'pl' (to more than one

THE ETHIOPIAN SYLLABARY

The unique Ethiopic script is the basis for the alphabets of Amharic, Tigrinya and Tigré. The basic Ethiopic syllabary has 26 characters; Amharic includes another seven, and Tigrinya another five characters to cover sounds that are specific to those languages.

The alphabet is made up of root characters representing consonants. By adding lines or circles (representing the vowel sounds) to these characters, seven different syllables can be generated for each consonant (eg **ha, he, hē, heu, hi, ho, hu**). As with Roman script, the characters are written from left to right on a page.

person, regardless of gender). There are also general modes of address that can be either informal or polite, indicated by the abbreviations 'inf' and 'pol' respectively.

For a more comprehensive guide to the language, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Ethiopian Amharic Phrasebook*. It has useful introductory sections on pronunciation and grammar, and includes Amharic script throughout.

PRONUNCIATION

While many of the sounds of Amharic will be familiar to you, there are some sounds for which there are no English equivalents. Keep your ears tuned to the way Ethiopians pronounce their language – this will be a good start in mastering pronunciation.

In general, stress falls equally on each syllable. Like English, a raised tone at the end of a sentence signifies a question.

Vowels

a	as in 'mamma'
e	as in 'let'
ē	as the 'a' in 'ago'; shorter and flatter than eu below
eu	as the 'e' in 'her', with no 'r' sound
i	as in 'bit'
o	as in 'hot'
ō	a cross between the 'oa' in 'coat' and the 'au' in 'haul'

u	as in 'flute' but shorter
ay	as the 'ai' in 'bait'
ai	as in 'aisle'

Consonants

ch	as in 'church'
g	as in 'get'
gw	as in 'Gwen'
h	as in 'hit'; at the end of a sentence it's like a short puff of breath
kw	as the 'q' in 'queen'
j	as in 'jump'
s	as in 'plus' (never a 'z' sound)
sh	as in 'shirt'
z	as in 'zoo'
ny	as the 'ni' in 'onion'
r	a rolled 'r'
'	a glottal stop, ie a momentary closing of the throat, like the 'tt' in the Cockney pronunciation of 'bottle'

You should also be aware of the Amharic consonant sounds that have no English equivalents – 'glottalic' or 'explosive' variants of some consonants, made by tightening and releasing the vocal chords. To explain these sounds in any depth would take more space than we have here so they haven't been included in this guide. Instead, their nearest English equivalents have been used.

ACCOMMODATION

Where is a ...?	... <i>yet nō?</i>
hotel	<i>hotel</i>
good hotel	<i>tēru hotel</i>
cheap hotel	<i>rēkash hotel</i>
alga	<i>alga</i>
room	<i>kēfēl</i>

Do you have ...?/ Is there ...?	... <i>alleu?</i>
a room/bed	<i>alga</i>
a single room	<i>and alga</i>
a room with two beds	<i>baleu huleutt alga</i>
a quiet room	<i>seut yaleu kēfēl</i>
showers	<i>shaweur</i>
water for bathing	<i>meutateubiya wuha</i>
hot water	<i>muk wuha</i>

How much is the room/bed for ...?	<i>alga leu ... sēntē nō?</i>
one night	<i>and mata</i>
one week	<i>and samēt</i>

Does it include breakfast?	<i>kursēnēm yicheumēra?</i>
I'd like to see the room.	<i>kēflun mayet ēfeullēgallō</i>
Can I see a different room?	<i>lela kēfēl mayet ēchēlallō?</i>
I leave tomorrow.	<i>neugeu ēhedallō</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello/Greetings.	<i>tenastēllēn</i> (lit: 'may you be given health')
Hello.	<i>seulam</i> (lit: 'peace be with you')
Hello.	<i>tadiyass</i> (inf)
How are you?	<i>deuhna neuh?</i> (m)
	<i>deuhna neush?</i> (f)
	<i>deuhna not?</i> (pol)
	<i>deuhna nachu?</i> (pl)

I'm fine.	<i>deuhna</i>
Good night.	<i>deuhna deur</i> (m)
	<i>deuhna deuri</i> (f)
	<i>deuhna yideuru</i> (pol)
	<i>deuhna deuru</i> (pl)
Goodbye.	<i>deuhna seunbēt</i> (m)
	<i>deuhna seunbēch</i> (f)
	<i>deuhna yiseunbētu</i> (pol)
	<i>deuhna seunbētu</i> (pl)
Goodbye/See you.	<i>chow</i> (inf, as in Italian <i>ciao</i>)
Have a nice trip.	<i>meulkam guzo</i>
Yes.	<i>awo</i>
OK.	<i>ēshi</i>
No. (not the case/not so)	<i>ai</i> (pronounced 'eye')
No. (not there/not available)	<i>yeulleum</i>

Maybe.	<i>mēnalbut</i>
Please.	<i>ēbakēh</i> (m)
	<i>ēbakēsh</i> (f)
	<i>ēbakon</i> (pol)
	<i>ēbakachu</i> (pl)
	<i>ameuseugēnallō</i>
Thank you.	<i>beutam ameuseugēnallō</i>

Thank you very much.	
Don't mention it.	<i>mēnēm aideuleuhm</i>
Excuse me.	<i>yikērta</i>
Sorry.	<i>aznallō</i>
What's your name?	<i>sēmēh man nō?</i> (m)
	<i>sēmēsh man nō?</i> (f)
	<i>sēmēwot man nō?</i> (pol)

My name is ...	<i>sēme ... nō</i>
What country are you from?	<i>keu yet ageur neuh?</i> (m)
	<i>keu yet ageur neush?</i> (f)
	<i>keu yet ageur not?</i> (pol)
	<i>keu ...</i>
I'm from ...	
Are you married?	<i>ageubtēhal?</i> (m)
	<i>ageubtēshal?</i> (f)

I'm married. agëbëchallô
I'm not married. alagebahum
May I take your photograph? (anteun/anchën/ërswôn) foto mansat yichalal? (m/f/pol)

DIRECTIONS

Where is ...? ... yet nô?
I want to go to ... weudeu ... meuhed ëfeullëgallô
How do I get to ...? weudeu ... ëndet ëhedallô?
Is it near/far? kërb/ruk nô?
Can I walk there? beugër yaskedal?
Can you show me on the map? kartaw lai yasayunyal? (pol)
Turn ... beu ... beukul tateuf/tateufi (m/f)
Go straight ahead. beukeutëta hid (m)/hij (f)
on the (left/right) at the next corner to the north beu (gra/keuny) beukul yeumikeutëllô meutateufiya
to the south weudeu seumen
to the east weudeu deubub
to the west weudeu mësrak
in front of/behind weudeu më'ërab
highway fit leu fit/beuholla
main road awra godana
street wanna meungeud
village meungeud meuneudeur

SIGNS – ETHIOPIAN

Open ከፍት ነው
Closed ተዘግቷል
Entrance መግቢያ
Exit መውጫ
Information ግንኙነት ይገኛል
Danger አደገኛ
No Smoking ግጭት ከልክል ነው
Toilets ሽንት ቤት
Men የወንዶች
Women የሴቶች

HEALTH

I'm sick. amonyal
I need a doctor. hakim ëfeullëgallô
doctor hakim
hospital hospital
medical centre yeu hëkëmëna tabiya

I'm allergic to ais-mamanyëm
antibiotics antibiotiks
penicillin peunisillin

I have alleubëny
diabetes sëkwar beushëta
nausea/vomiting yasmeulëseunyal
stomachache hoden yameunyal

EMERGENCIES – AMHARIC

Help! ërduny!
It's an emergency! aschëkwai nô!
There's been an accident! adeuga neubbeur!
Thief! leba!
Go away!/Leave me alone! teumeulleuss!
I'm lost. meungeud teuftobënyal
Where is the toilet? shënt betu yeuht nô?

Call ...! ... tëra/tëri! (m/f)
the police polis
an ambulance ambulans

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak ...? ... tëchëllalleuh? (m)
 ... tëchëyalleush? (f)
 ... yichëllallu? (pol)
English ënglizënyya
Amharic amarënyya

Yes, I speak (English). aow, (ënglizënyya) ëchëllallô
I don't speak (Amharic). (amarënyya) alchëllëm

Do you understand? geubbah? (m)
 geubbash? (f)
 geubbawot? (pol)
I don't understand. algeubanyëm
I understand. geubëtonyal
Do you have/Is there a translator? asteurgwami alleu?

Does anyone here speak English? ënglizënyya yeumichëll alleu?
Please speak slowly. ëbakëh keuss bëleuh
 teunageur (m)
 ëbakësh keuss bëleush
 teunageuri (f)
 ëbakon keuss bëlö
 yinageuru (pol)
 ëbakon beu ënglizënyyaalfabet
 yisafuliny

Please write it in Roman script.

NUMBERS

Although there are Amharic script numerals, Arabic numerals (ie those used in English) are now commonly used throughout Ethiopia. Amharic is used when referring to numbers in speech.

½ gëmach
 1 and
 2 huleutt

3
 4 arat
 5 amëst
 6 sädëst
 7 seubat
 8 sëmënt
 9 zeuteunyy
 10 assër
 11 assra and
 12 assra huleutt
 13 assra sost
 14 assra arat
 15 assra amëst
 16 assra sädëst
 17 assra seubat
 18 assra sëmënt
 19 assra zeuteunyy
 20 haya
 21 haya and
 22 seulassa
 30 seulassa and
 31 arba
 40 hamsa
 50 sëlssa
 60 seuba
 70 seumanya
 80 zeuteuna
 90 meuto
 100 meuto and
 101 huleutt meuto
 200 and shi
 1000 huleutt shi
 2000 meuto shi
 100,000

SHOPPING & SERVICES

Where is a/the ...? ... yet nô?
bank bank
church beteu kërëstëyan
city centre meuhal keuteuma
... embassy yeu ... embassi
market geubeuya
mosque meusgid
pharmacy farmasi/meudhanit bet
police station polis tabiya
post office posta bet
public toilet shënt bet
restaurant mëgëb bet
tourist office yeu turist biro
university yuniveursiti

What time does it open/close?

sënt seu'at yikeufeutal/yizzeugal?

I want to change money/travellers cheques. geunzeub/travleurs cheks meukeuyeur ëfeullëgallô

I want to make a (local/international) call.

(ageur wëst/wëch ageur) sëlk meudeuweul ëfeullëgallô

Where is a/an ...? ... yet nô?
bakery dabbo bet
bookshop meusëhaf bet
clothes shop yeu lëbs suk
general store sheukeuta sheukeut meudeubër
market geubeuya
stationers stesheunari
shop suk

Where can I buy ...? ... yet yigeunyal?
I'm just looking. ëyayo nô
I want a (larger/smaller) ... (tëllëk yaleu/anneus yaleu) ... ëfeullëgallô
How much is it? sëntë nô?
That's (very) expensive. (beutam) wëdd nô
Do you have anything cheaper? rëkash alleu?

TIME & DAYS

When? meuche?
What time is it? sënt seu'at nô?
It's (one) o'clock. (and) seu'at nô
It's a quarter past (one). (and) seu'at keurub nô
It's half past (one). (and) seu'at teukul nô
the morning tëwatu
the evening mëshëtü
the night lelitu

now ahun
today zare
tonight zare mata
tomorrow neugeu
yesterday tënantëna

Monday seunyo
Tuesday makseunyo
Wednesday rob
Thursday hamus
Friday arb
Saturday këdame
Sunday ëhud

TRANSPORT

Where is the ...? yet ... nô?
airport awroplan mareufiyaw
bus station avtobës tabiyaw
bus stop awtobës makomiyaw
taxi stand taksi makomiyaw
ticket office tiket biro/tiket meushchaw
train station babur tabiyaw

Which bus goes to ...?	<i>yetenyaw awtobēs weudeu ... yihedal?</i>
Does it go to ...?	<i>weudeu ... yihedal?</i>
Please tell me when we get to ...?	<i>ēbakon ... sēñēdeurss yinēgeuruny?</i>
I want to get off here.	<i>ēzzih mōreud ēfeullēgallō</i>

What time does the ... arrive/leave? ... *meuche yideursal/yineusal?*

boat	<i>jeulba</i>
bus	<i>awtobēs</i>
car	<i>meukina</i>
minibus	<i>wēyēyēt</i>
plane	<i>awroplan</i>
train	<i>babur</i>
truck	<i>yeu chēneut meukina</i>

next	<i>yemikeutēllō</i>
How much is it to ...?	<i>weudeu ... sēt(ē) nō?</i>
I'd like to reserve a ticket to ...	<i>weudeu ... tiket beukēd miya meugzat ēfeullēgallō</i>
I'd like a one way ticket to ...	<i>weudeu ... meuheja tiket ēfeullēgallō</i>
I'd like a return ticket to ...	<i>weudeu ... deurso meuls tiket ēfeullēgallō</i>

I want to rent a ... bicycle	<i>... meukeurayeut ēfeullēgallō bēsklet</i>
car	<i>meukina</i>

TIGRINYA

Tigrinya is the principal language of Eritrea and is also widely spoken in Tigray province in Ethiopia. It belongs to the Ethiopic branch of the Semitic language family. Like Amharic, it uses the syllabic alphabet of classical Ethiopic or Ge'ez (see The Ethiopic Syllabary on p378).

Tigrinya word endings vary according to the gender of the person you are speaking to; this is indicated in this guide where relevant by the abbreviations 'm' (to a male) and 'f' (to a female).

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

a	as in 'mamma'
e	as in 'men'
ee	as in 'heed'
i	as in 'bit'
o	as in 'or', with no 'r' sound
oo	as in 'cool'

u	as in 'put'
ay	as in 'bait'
ai	as in 'aisle'
ō	a cross between the 'oa' in 'coat' and the 'au' in 'haul'

Consonants

Most consonants are pronounced as per their English counterparts but, like Amharic, there are some consonant sounds not found in English. The transliterations in this guide are designed for ease of use and are not meant as a detailed phonetic representation of all the consonant sounds of Tigrinya. By pronouncing the words and phrases clearly you should be able to make yourself understood. Listening to the everyday speech of the people is the best way to master some of the more complex sounds of the language.

ch	as in 'church'
g	as in 'get'
h	as in 'him'
j	as in 'jump'
ny	as the 'ni' in 'onion'
q	like a 'k' from far back in the throat
r	as in 'run'
s	as in 'plus' (never a 'z' sound)
sh	as in 'shirt'
ts	as the 'ts' in 'its'
z	as in 'zoo'

ACCOMMODATION

hotel	<i>hotel</i>
guesthouse	<i>maerēf agaysh/albeirgo</i>
youth hostel	<i>nay mena-esey hostel</i>
camping ground	<i>metkel dinqan/teinda bota</i>

Do you have any rooms available?	<i>medekesi kiflee alekado?</i>
How much is it per night/person?	<i>neha-de leiti/seb kenday yikifel?</i>
Is breakfast included?	<i>kursi mesoo hisub d'yu?</i>

single bed	<i>kelete arat</i>
double bed	<i>hadde arat</i>
for one/two people	<i>neha-de/kelete seb</i>
for one/two nights	<i>neha-de/kelete leiti</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>selam</i>
Welcome.	<i>merhaba</i>

Good morning.	<i>dehaanda hadirka/hadirkee (m/f)</i>
Good afternoon.	<i>dehaando weelka/weelkee (m/f)</i>
Good evening.	<i>dehaando amsika/amsikee (m/f)</i>
Good night.	<i>dehaan hideru</i>
Goodbye.	<i>dehaan kun (also Italian ciao)</i>
Yes.	<i>u-we</i>
No.	<i>aykonen</i>
Please.	<i>bejaka/bejakee (m/f)</i>
Thank you.	<i>yekanyeley/yemesgin</i>
That's fine, you're welcome.	<i>genzebka/genzebkee (m/f)</i>

Excuse me.	<i>yikrai-ta</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>aytehazeley</i>
How are you?	<i>kemay aleka/alekee? (m/f)</i>
I'm fine, thanks.	<i>tsebuk, yekenyeyeley</i>
Pleased to meet you.	<i>tsebuk afleto/leila yigberelna</i>
What's your name?	<i>men semka/semkee? (m/f)</i>
My name is ...	<i>shemey ... iyu</i>
Where are you from?	<i>kabey metsika/metsikee? (m/f)</i>
I'm from ...	<i>a-nne kab ... iye</i>
Are you married?	<i>temereka dikha? (m)</i> <i>temerekee dikhee? (f)</i>

How many children do you have?	<i>kenday kolu-oot (deki) alowuka/alowukee? (m/f)</i>
I don't have any children.	<i>deki yebeleyn.</i>
I have a son.	<i>wedi aloni</i>
I have a daughter.	<i>gual alatni</i>
May I take your photograph?	<i>kese-alekado?</i>

DIRECTIONS

Where is ...?	<i>abey alo ...?</i>
I want to go to ...	<i>nab ... kikeid delye</i>
How do I get to ...?	<i>kemey geire naboo ... yikeid?</i>
Is it far/near?	<i>rehoog/kereba dlyu?</i>
Can I walk there?	<i>baegrey kikedo yikealdo?</i>
Can you show me the direction?	<i>ket-hebreni tikealdo?</i>

Go straight ahead.	<i>ket elka kid</i>
Turn left/right.	<i>netsegam/neyeman tetewe</i>

HEALTH

I need a doctor.	<i>a-nne hakim/doctor yedliyeni a-lo</i>
Where is the hospital?	<i>hospital/beit hikimina abey alo?</i>
I have a stomachache.	<i>a-nne kirtset aloni</i>
I'm diabetic.	<i>a-nne shikor/shikoria himam aloni</i>

I'm allergic to penicillin.	<i>a-nne nay pencillin kute-at aloni</i>
diarrhoea	<i>witse-at</i>
medicine	<i>medhanit/fewsi</i>
nausea	<i>egirgir/segedged</i>

EMERGENCIES – TIGRINYA

Help!	<i>hagez/redi-at!</i>
Leave me alone!	<i>hidegeni/kid bejakha!</i>
Go away!	
I'm lost.	<i>a-nne tefi-a aloku</i>
Call ...!	<i>... tsewe-a!</i>
a doctor	<i>hakim/doctor</i>
the police	<i>police</i>

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak (English)?	<i>(engiliznya) tezarebdo/tezarebido? (m/f)</i>
I don't speak Tigrinya.	<i>a-nne tigrinya ayzareben</i>
I understand.	<i>yirede-anee iyu/teredioonne</i>
I don't understand.	<i>ayeterede-anen</i>

NUMBERS

1	<i>hadde</i>
2	<i>kelete</i>
3	<i>seleste</i>
4	<i>arba-ate</i>
5	<i>hamushte</i>
6	<i>shedushte</i>
7	<i>shewate</i>
8	<i>shemonte</i>
9	<i>tesh-ate</i>
10	<i>aserte</i>
20	<i>isra</i>
30	<i>selasa</i>
40	<i>arba-a</i>
50	<i>hamsa</i>
60	<i>susa</i>
70	<i>sebe-a</i>
80	<i>semanya</i>
90	<i>tese-a</i>
100	<i>mi-eeete</i>
1000	<i>sheh</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'm looking for ...	<i>ne ... yenadi alekoo</i>
a bank	<i>bank</i>
the hospital	<i>hospital/ beit hikmena</i>
the market	<i>idaga/shooq</i>
a pharmacy	<i>farmacha/beit medhanit</i>
the post office	<i>beit busta</i>
a public telephone	<i>nay hizbi telefon</i>
the tourist office	<i>nay turist haberaita beit tsihfet</i>

What time does it open?	<i>saat kenday yikifet?</i>
What time does it close?	<i>saat kenday yi-ets'o?</i>
Do you have ...?	<i>... alekado?</i>

How many/much?	<i>kenday?</i>
this/that	<i>eizee/etee</i>
How much is it?	<i>kenday iyu waga-oo?</i>
I'm just looking.	<i>nikeree tirah iye</i>
That's too expensive.	<i>aziyu kebiruni</i>
bookshop	<i>mesheta metsahifti</i>
clothes shop	<i>mesheta kidawenti</i>
market	<i>idaga/shouq</i>
local products	<i>nay kebabii etot/firyat</i>

TIME & DAYS

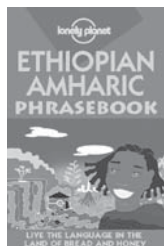
What time is it?	<i>saat kenday koynoo?</i>
today	<i>lomee/lomee me-altee</i>
tomorrow	<i>tsebah</i>
yesterday	<i>timalee</i>
morning	<i>niguho</i>
afternoon	<i>dehri ketri</i>
night	<i>leytee</i>
Monday	<i>senui</i>

Tuesday	<i>selus</i>
Wednesday	<i>reboo</i>
Thursday	<i>hamus</i>
Friday	<i>arbi</i>
Saturday	<i>kedam</i>
Sunday	<i>senbet</i>

TRANSPORT

Where is the ...?	<i>abey alo ...?</i>
airport	<i>aryaporto/maerefi nefarit</i>
bus station	<i>maerefi autobus</i>
bus stop	<i>autobus tetew tiblelu</i>

When does the next ... leave/arrive?	<i>tikitsil ... saat kenday</i>
boat	<i>tinkel/te-atu?</i>
plane	<i>jelba</i>
bus (city)	<i>autobus (ketema)</i>
train	<i>auroplan/nefarit</i>
taxi	<i>taksi</i>
train	<i>babur</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Ethiopian Amharic Phrasebook

Glossary

Ethiopian and Eritrean culinary terms are found under Eat Your Words on p73.

For information on the languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea, see p378.

abba – a prefix used by a priest before his name; means ‘father’

abuna – archbishop of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox church, from the *Ge’ez* meaning ‘our father’

adaï – evergreen shrub used as toothbrush

agelgil – round, leather-bound ‘lunch boxes’ carried by locals

amba (also *emba*) – flat-topped mountain

Ato – literally ‘sir’; equivalent of ‘Mr’

azmari – itinerant minstrel (Ethiopia)

beat – Amharic word meaning ‘place’, which is attached to the end of other words, eg *buna beat*, *shint beat* (Ethiopia)

buluko – heaviest type of *shamma*, used in cold areas such as the Bale Mountains (Ethiopia)

buna – coffee (Ethiopia)

chat – mildly intoxicating leaf that’s consumed primarily in eastern Ethiopia; it’s illegal in Eritrea

contract taxi – private, or nonshared, taxi

dejzmach – title (usually of nobility though given to any outstanding male) equivalent to duke or prince; lower ranking than *ras*

Derg – Socialist military junta that governed Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991; derived from the *Ge’ez* word for ‘committee’

dhow – see *sambuk*

dula – wooden staff carried by many Ethiopian highlanders

emba – see *amba*

enset – false-banana tree found in much of southern Ethiopia, used to produce a breadlike staple also known as *enset*

EPLF – Eritrean People’s Liberation Front; victorious guerrilla army in the ‘Struggle for Independence’

Falasha – Ethiopian Jew

faranji – foreigner, especially Western ones (Ethiopia)

gabeta – ancient board game

gabi – slightly thicker version of the *shamma*, worn by men

gada – age system of male hierarchy among the Oromo

gari – horse-drawn cart used for transporting passengers and goods in the towns

Ge’ez – a forerunner of modern Amharic

gegar – a rectangular, two-storey structure with a flat roof

gommista – tyre repair shop (Italian)

gotera – granary with a little thatched roof (Ethiopia)

injera – a unique pancake upon which sits anything from spicy meat stews to colourful dollops of boiled veg and cubes of raw beef; see p68 for more details

jellabia – hooded cloak with wide sleeves (Eritrea)

jile – the curved knife that is carried by Afar nomads

kemis – white cotton dress worn by Ethiopian highland women

Kiddus – Saint, eg Kiddus Mikael translates to St Michael

maqdas – inner sanctuary of a church (Holy of Holies)

mesob – hourglass-shaped woven table from which traditional food is served (Ethiopia)

mies – see *tej*

natala – women’s equivalent of a *shamma*, but with a decorated border (*tibeb*)

negus – king (Ethiopia)

negus negast – king of kings; the traditional and official title of Ethiopian emperors

ras – title (usually of nobility but given to any outstanding male) similar to duke or prince

sambuk – traditional Arab vessel (or *dhow*) rigged with a lateen (triangular) sail, plying the Red Sea and Indian Ocean (Eritrea)

sewa – see *tella*

shamma – a white, light cotton toga; see also *gabi*, *natala* and *buluko*

shifta – traditionally a rebel or outlaw; today a bandit or roadside robber

shint beat – toilet (Ethiopia)

shirit – saronglike wrap worn by men in Eritrea and Ethiopia’s eastern lowlands

tabot – replica of the Ark of the Covenant, kept in the *maqdas* of every Orthodox church

tankwa – traditional papyrus boat used on Lake Tana and elsewhere (Ethiopia)

tef – an indigenous grass cultivated as a cereal grain; the key ingredient of *injera* (p68)

tej – wine made from honey, popular in Ethiopia; known in Eritrea as *mies*

tella – home-brewed beer made from finger millet, maize or barley, popular in Ethiopia; known in Eritrea as *sewa*

tibeb – the decorative border of a woman's shawl (Ethiopia)

tukul – traditional cone-shaped hut with thatched roof; like South Africa's rondavel

wadi – a river that is usually dry except in the rainy season

Weizerit – equivalent of 'Miss' (Ethiopia)

Weizero – literally 'lady', now equivalent of 'Mrs' (Ethiopia)

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