

Traveling to Ethiopia *Know Before You Go*

Ethiopia is a remarkable country with rich history, surprising diversity, and unique landscapes. This document was created to help prepare travelers, especially travelers from Colorado State University, who might be heading to Ethiopia. This document is not comprehensive and should only be used as a guide. For more information, please see the ‘Travel Books’.

Location

Ethiopia is a land-locked country about 1.5x the size of Texas located in the horn of East Africa.



Travel information on Travel.State.Gov

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/ethiopia.html>

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Health Information

Required Vaccinations

Yellow Fever	Recommended for all travelers
Typhoid (oral)	Recommended for all travelers
Hepatitis A	Recommended for all travelers
Hepatitis B	Recommended for all travelers
Meningococcus	Recommended for all travelers
Polio	One-time adult booster
Malaria (e.g. Malarone)	Optional, depending on the elevation and geographic area
Rabies	Optional, if working around animals
Influenza	Optional

**Make sure all other vaccinations are up to date (MMR, Tdap, etc.)*

Additional information may be found on-line at:

<http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/destinations/africa/ethiopia.php>

Consult with your doctor or a local health department. CSU students may visit the Hartshorn Health Center. Additional health and/or emergency Evacuation Insurance may be considered.

Fort Collins Health Department:

1525 Blue Spruce Dr.
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 498-6700

<http://www.larimer.org/health/>

CSU Health and Medical Center

151 W. Lake Street
Fort Collins, CO 80523-8031
(970) 491-7121

<https://health.colostate.edu/travel-medicine/>

Travel Tip- Dysentery and diarrhea are the most common ailments for travelers, so bring plenty of Pepto-Bismol and/or Imodium to “slow” things up. Bananas are plentiful in Ethiopia and are a great natural alternative.

Flights/Travel Info

For CSU travel, please see the ‘**CSU Travel Procedures**’ section below.

Flights

Flights can be found through most travel websites, such as <http://www.travelocity.com>. Tickets can fluctuate from season to season and from day to day. If possible, avoid traveling near holidays and try to leave and come back on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Travel insurance is recommended. Here are some common Airlines and connections

Airlines from Denver

United
United
United
Delta

Layover/Connection

Washington/Rome
London Heathrow
Frankfurt
Amsterdam

Airlines into Addis Ababa

Ethiopian Air
British Air
Luftanza
KLM

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Passport

Passports must not expire within 3 months. To be safe, its best to have more than 6 months before your passport expires. Also be sure you have enough blank pages for your trip.

Visa

Visas can be purchased for \$50 USD for one month and \$70 USD for three months on arrival at the Addis Ababa International Airport. Remember that US dollars must be new un-torn bills issued no later than 2004. It is highly recommended that you get multiple \$20 bills from a bank and ask for the newest bills they have before you leave.

Currency

Ethiopia uses the Birr. The exchange rate fluctuates quite a bit, but it's usually around 28birr/1USD. You can exchange money at the airport once you arrive or any bank and some hotels. Most towns throughout the country have banks that can exchange money. Note that you cannot exchange Ethiopian Birr back into US dollars or Euros in Ethiopia or outside of the country. Traveler's checks are the most secure way to travel with money; however, many banks in the US no longer issue them. Credit cards are only accepted at a few places in Addis Ababa and some of the larger cities, mostly at the larger hotels. Debit cards cannot be used in place of a credit card and only used at a few newly introduced ATM machines.

Hotels and lodging in Addis Ababa:

Our Recommendations

The Hilton	\$\$\$\$
Jupiter International Hotel	\$\$\$
Churchill	\$\$\$
Addis Regency	\$\$\$
Queen of Sheba	\$\$\$
The Auxum	\$\$
Taitu	\$

Travel Tip- Scan copies of your passport, airline information, emergency contacts, traveler's checks and other important documents and email them to yourself for a quick accessible record.

Most higher end hotels also provide free airport shuttles and also often are able to accept credit cards.

What to Expect When You Arrive

Addis Ababa – Bole International Airport

One you arrive at the airport, follow the signs to the baggage which will take you down an escalator. You no longer have to fill out an immigration form and can go directly to the visas on arrival area. This is a very confusing set up they have, so if it's your first time to Ethiopia just watch others. You will provide your passport at one window and then they will send you around the corner to pay for your visa and provide you with a receipt. Once you exit this area, you will need to stand in line to have your documents checked. Next, you can go collect your baggage at one of the carousels. There are free luggage carts in the baggage claim area. Finally, you will go through the last check where your luggage will be x-rayed. Now you will come out to the public area where the hotel booths are located or you can go outside where you can get a taxi or where your driver might be waiting (if you have made arrangements). The airport is no longer allowing people to come into the terminal so your driver may be outside.

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Airport Tips

When you get your checked bags at the airport, you may have somebody help take your bags to the airport lobby or to the airport parking lot. They will be expecting a tip therefore it is helpful to have some small bills of Ethiopian birr when you arrive. Ask others you know that have been to Ethiopia to see if they have some birr that you could buy back from them. The general price to tip is 10-20 birr/bag.

Language

English is commonly spoken throughout Addis Ababa and in most cities and large towns. In Addis, the most common language spoken is Amharic or English. Outside Addis, the language is dependent on the local region.

Taxis

Taxis from the airport are much more expensive than in the city. Be sure to negotiate a price before letting them take your bags or getting into the vehicle. Expect to pay \$80-100 Ethiopian birr from the airport. Around town, look for the blue taxis (as the yellow ones are much more expensive) which may charge \$40 to \$60 birr to get you around town. This may vary with the distance you need to travel, the number of people, and the cost of fuel. The blue mini-busses costs \$1 to \$3 birr and go along a route. It's best to only ride these with somebody familiar with the system (but it can be a fun experience). Tips are not expected, but a \$5 birr tip will be greatly appreciated if the driver and service was good. You may also be able to get the driver's cell phone number and use him on other occasions.

Jet lag

Ethiopia is generally 9-10 hours ahead of Colorado. This equates to an almost opposite sleep schedule. The first couple days you will likely be very tired in the afternoon and may not sleep well during the nights. It may be helpful to take Ambien or melatonin to get you back on a normal sleep schedule. Try to stay up until 9 or 10 PM before going to sleep. Most travelers will wake up around 3-4 AM, which is why a sleep aid may be helpful. Try not to schedule any important meetings in the afternoons the first couple days. Activity and sunlight can help decrease the afternoon tiredness and get you on a regular sleep schedule quicker.

Water

Water is generally unsafe for drinking in Addis and throughout Ethiopia. Be careful not to order drinks with ice, brushing your teeth and taking showers. Bottled water is now commonly found. It is recommended that you buy some bottled water before you leave the airport or upon checking in to your hotel. Note that "ambo" is bottled sparkling water, so you may need to clarify.

Cell phones

Having a local (Ethiopian network) cell phone can be a great way to communicate with colleagues in country. To acquire a cell phone you need three things:

- 1) Cell phone
NREL has some cell phones that can be loaned out or these can be purchased in Ethiopia if needed. These are transferrable.
- 2) Sim Card
A sim card is needed to create an account on the Ethiopian network. These are fairly common and can usually be purchased at the major hotels or any phone suk (shop). Sim

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cards expire after one year of inactivity. They coast about 30-40 birr. To obtain a sim card you will need:

- A copy of your passport
- A passport-type photo of yourself

3) Charge Card

Mobile (charge) cards contain blocks of network minutes. They come in bundles of 10, 50, or 100 bir and are a scratch card with instructions on how to activate them. These can be found at hotels and phone suks.

Weather

The rainy seasons in Ethiopia are dependent upon location, but mostly bimodal having two rainy seasons and two dry seasons. It is better and easier to travel during the dry season.

Two rainy seasons

June – September: called the “Big Rains” or *kirmet*
Late February – May: called the “Little Rains” or *belg*

Two dry seasons

2-4 weeks in May/June
October – February (January and February are extra dry)

CSU Travel Procedures

General procedure:

Check warning and alerts → Identify dates → Identify approximate lodging → Get in-country service quotes and submit appropriate purchase request → Estimate costs (Flights, lodging, per-diem, airport transportation) and submit NREL pre-travel form and obtain approval (Risk Management application will be completed with this submission) → Reserve airline tickets → Secure travel health insurance (only for students).

U.S. Travel warnings and alerts

Check the U.S. Department of State Alerts and Warnings for international travel. If there are any notifications for Ethiopia you will need to get additional approval to travel. This may be in the form of a wavier.

In-country transportation or other services >\$3000

Obtain a quote from the vendor. Try to have the vendor overestimate their cost to avoid delays in payment post-trip. There are price breaks that require different levels of approval at \$3K, \$5K, \$10K etc. with the time required to get approval increasing with the quote. These purchase requests must go through Karen Adleman or Jessica Hunter (Karen.Adleman@colostate.edu, Jessica.hunter@colostate.edu) and cannot be submitted through the WCNR business portal. Be sure to leave plenty of time for the request to get approved (4+ weeks ahead of departure date).

Risk Management

All CSU faculty or employees traveling internationally on CSU business must register with Environmental Health Services. This is now accomplished concurrently with your NREL pre-travel submission. Once you have been approved you will receive an email from Risk Management. You

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will then need to send this confirmation to NREL travel so that they can attach it to your travel application. When you submit your NREL pre-travel, you will need to provide the following in the comment section to facilitate the submission of your risk management application:

- Dates of trip
- Names, dates and contact information for all accommodations (hotels)

If there are no travel restrictions, you should be approved immediately following your submission. The Risk Management website can be found at:

<http://www.ehs.colostate.edu/WRisk/travelHome.aspx>.

CSU students will also need to get approval from the Office of International Programs

Office of International programs forms

Complete Faculty-Led/Staff Education Abroad Program Proposal [form](#) (one per group per trip) found on the Education Abroad [website](#) for Faculty and staff. We have previous versions of these that you can work from.

Complete the Health & Safety preparations [form](#) also found the Education Abroad [website](#) for Faculty and staff. Again, we have previous version of these that you can use as a template.

Complete other forms on the Education Abroad website as the needed base on the activities of the trip.

NREL Pre-Travel Form

A pre-travel and post-travel form must be filed with your department before you leave and upon return. Before submitting a pre-travel form, you will need to have estimates of how much expenses will be for the trip including flights, lodging, per-diem, and airport transportation. Include per diem rates and location per day in the comments section. Airline tickets must be acquired through an approved travel agency. We recommend:

Trish Hayward
New Horizon's Travel
(970)-223-7400

The NREL pre-travel form can be found on-line at:

<https://taurus.cnr.colostate.edu/apps/cnrbo/travel.cfm>

To complete the form, you will need to know:

- Dates of your trip
- Account/project number for the trip
- Airfare quote
- Lodging expenses (estimate)
- Number of per diem days
- Per diem rate(s)
- Purpose of the trip

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For more information on NREL travel procedures, see NREL internal resources:

<https://www.nrel.colostate.edu/internal/>

Worker's Compensation

For university employees, even if the trip is not being funded by the university, you will need to fill out a pre-travel form.

Travel Health Insurance

CSU students are not eligible for travel health insurance through the university. Students can obtain temporary health insurance from HTH Worldwide (via the instructions on the OIP website)

Example Gear List (for multiple weeks with field work)

To bring from home

2 pairs of pants

1 pair of shorts

4 pairs of socks

5 pairs of underwear

Pajamas

Rain jacket

Rain pants

Warming layers: Fleece jacket or sweatshirt, down jacket, etc.

Gloves

Hat

Ball cap

Sunscreen

Sunglasses

Water bottles

Steri pen or some sort of water treatment (Water filter, aqua mira, iodine, bottled water, etc.)

2 bandanas for dishes, etc.

Stove and fuel bottle

Tent

Sleeping bag

Sleeping pad

Shoes: boots/closed toed shoes and sandals

Snacks: Granola bars, etc.

To buy in Addis Ababa

Kerosene for stove

Fruits, vegetable and cheese

Any other trip food

Contacts

ERVS (<http://www.ethiopianriftvalleysafaris.com/>)

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Mr. Nico Loannou (011) 251 911 411173 (from USA)
911 411173 (from Ethiopia)

US Embassy (<http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov/index.html>)
011-130-6000 (emergency only)

Travel Books

Ethiopia, 5th Ed (Bradt Travel Guide Ethiopia) by Philip Briggs, 2009

Lonely Planet Ethiopia & Eritrea (Country Travel Guide) by Jean-Benard Carillet, Stuart Butler,
David Lukas and Dean Starnes, 2009