

Ride the Rift: Special Offers for September-October 2021 Tours *from 24th September to 8th October 2021*

Ride the Rift presents a biking adventure followed by a tour taking you to some of most stunning and memorable places for tourists in Ethiopia: biking in the Gurage Highlands, exploring Lalibela's labyrinth of churches, trekking in the Meket Highlands among local farmers, paddling kayaks on Ethiopia's largest lake and touring the majestic Simien Mountains ending your tour in Gondar and its romantic castles.

Ride the Rift is a collaboration of four tour operators who have unique outdoor adventure experience as tour operators in Ethiopia. Over the last 12 months we have staged three spectacular tours for local residents and are now expanding our tours with tours tailor-made for international tourists.

SimienEcoTours is a proud member of this initiative and happy to present some of the upcoming adventure tour offers.



Meskel Gurage Tour 24 to 27 September 2021

Your adventure starts in the beautiful but less visited Gurage highlands for their biggest festival of the year - Meskel. This holiday is celebrated across the country in Orthodox communities, marking the finding of the True Cross, but with the Gurage people it is a multi day celebration that clearly has its roots in much more ancient times. We will celebrate with the villagers - enjoying big bonfires, dancing and traditional food. During the day we will cycle through the quiet villages with green spaces running through the centre and their unique style of building on each side. This area affords some of the most exhilarating mountain biking we have done in Ethiopia. We will also offer runs and hiking for those who have had enough biking. We will be camping, and have a professional team of cooks and camp staff looking after us.

from US\$ 430



Northern Explorer Trek 27 September to 8 October 2021

After a night in Addis we will whisk you off to Lalibela, where in the 13th century a King - Lalibela - had a vision and proceeded to excavate a remarkable labyrinth of 11 churches out of the bedrock, connected with passageways and tunnels. From here we will take you up onto the Meket plateau at around 3,000m and you will spend the next 4 days at a much slower pace, walking through the countryside sleeping in guesthouses built and owned by the local farmers. There are basalt cliffs, fields of wheat and barley and meadows of hay. There are a variety of birds including the mighty lammergeyer, and even Gelada Baboons in small troops (but the farmers keep them away from their crops).

After a local lunch we will pick you and drive you west along the escarpment with views to the north and south, passing volcanic plugs that testify to the tectonic activity that created these highlands. We will drive down into the Lake Tana basin and spend a few days on the shores of the lake - Ethiopia's largest lake. Stay at the simple guesthouses on the edge of the lake where you will spend a few days kayaking, trekking and with a beautiful historical church to see in the 'village'.



From Gorgora you will head up to the Simien Mountains National Park and trek through the core area seeing the most stunning views and the unique wildlife. You will get the chance to climb Mnt Bwahit at the end - the 4th highest mountain in Ethiopia (behind Ras Dashen & 2 adjacent peaks) at 4,430m. Once again we will look after you on this camping trip with our expert cooks and quality tents.

You will end the trip with a day in Gondar to see the romantic castles from the 16th and 17th centuries, and magical ceremonial bathing structure and one of the most beautiful painted churches in the country, before flying back to Addis in time to get a COVID test (should you need one) and do a bit of shopping / sightseeing, take a final dinner and board your night flight home.

from US\$ 1,710

Any questions? Then contact us at info@simienecotours.com

Detailed information on day to day itineraries, pricing, booking terms see below.

For booking fill out our [registration form](#).

DETAILED ITINERARIES FOR ALL PACKAGES

Choose from our options below to combine highlights that best fit your dates and preferences.

DATE	DAY	ITINERARY	LOCATION	HOTEL
24/9/2021	Fri	<p>Meskel Gurage Tour (3-night tour) Arrive in Addis Ababa. Early arrivals (before 9am) can join the first group of cyclists to Gurage for their first mountain biking trip in the afternoon from Welkite to the Ride the Rift camp close to Hawariat in the heart of the Gurage region. Overnight is at our community camp and our cook will make your evening with delicious foods. Meals: -/-/D</p>	Hawariat	camp 1 in Gurage
		<p>Alternative for later international arrivals Later arrivals can book their hotel with us in Addis Ababa to join the second group of guests leaving for Gurage on Saturday morning. See hotel prices and airport pick up below. There will also be an opportunity for you to get a city tour in Addis Ababa. <i>Price for add. city tour in Addis Ababa incl. guide and private minivan 100 USD per group (excl. entrances to sights and meals)</i> Meals: -/-/-</p>	Addis Ababa	extra overnight in Addis in Caravan Hotel Single: 60 USD pp Twin: 40 USD pp
25/9/2021	Sat	<p>Meskel Gurage Tour (2-night tour) This Ride the Rift experience brings you to the lush green highlands of the Gurage region, another of Ethiopia's hidden gems within a four-hour drive from Addis. This specially-designed tour allows you to enjoy some exhilarating cycling, running and walking in landscapes that in any other country would be considered as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The beauty of the scenery is matched by the warmth and hospitality of the local people. This tour gives you the chance to visit the homes of these people whose only complaint when we visited was "Why didn't you tell us in advance so that we could prepare a ceremony for you?!"</p>	Hawariat	camp 2 in Gurage
26/9/2021	Sun	<p>During your days in Gurage we offer you fully catered camps. We provide tents, mattresses, toilet and shower facilities, tasty meals and clean drinking water. Camps are situated in safe and sheltered areas. Groups have an average size of 20 to max. 50 participants, but during activities you will be split into</p>	Hawariat	camp 2 in Gurage

		<p>smaller groups with your individual guides. Every morning you can choose from a wide range of activities for the day. Our experienced guides offer you a wide range of different level cycling and hiking opportunities where you can join. All of our cycling, hiking & running routes allow you to marvel at the beauty of landscapes as you pass through local villages and explore quiet scenic trails. Ride through juniper and eucalyptus forests. Saunter through local villages. Fly down grassy strips to the sound of nearby streams and waterfalls. We reckon outdoor activity in Ethiopia doesn't come much better than this!</p> <p>Families benefit from our kids' activities such as treasure hunt, arts & crafts and much more. One of the highlights on this trip will be the colorful religious Meskel celebrations that we will join in with the locals on each evening culminating in the big bonfire on Monday night.</p> <p>Meals: B/L/D</p>		
27/9/2021	Mon	<p>After breakfast we break camp and make our way home to Addis. On some trails and partly asphalt roads you will be able to cycle some part of the way. A breathtaking downhill ride into the Great African Rift Valley will be a spectacular finish of a perfect outdoor holiday. After some lunch near Butajira we will drive back to Addis Ababa (3 hrs.) where either the tour ends for you or you join us for the upcoming Northern Explorer Trip.</p> <p>Meals: B/L/-</p>	Addis Ababa	Caravan Hotel
28/9/2021	Tue	<p>Northern Explorer Trek (11-night tour)</p> <p>You will take an early flight from Addis Ababa to Lalibela. You will be welcomed by your guide at Lalibela airport and transferred to your hotel. After a quick lunch you will spend the afternoon visiting the labyrinth of rock-hewn churches which were excavated out of the bedrock in the late 13th century. This is one of the most remarkable cultural sites in the world, something not to miss. In the evening why not go to Ben Abeba with its extraordinary architecture perched on the edge of the ridge, and its different menu? It's quite nice to get there at sunset to enjoy its views.</p> <p>Meals: B/-/-</p>	Lalibela	Tabor Hotel
29/9/2021	Wed	<p>Wake up early and explore the remaining churches - more atmospheric in the early morning. There will be a special mass at Gabriel church. After lunch meet your trekking guide and drive for around 90 mins south to the Meket Plateau from where your community trekking will start. From the road you will have a 90 min walk through fields with acacia trees dotted around and over the top of a waterfall before climbing up a short but steep paths to your overnight community guesthouse in Aterow right</p>	Meket	Aterow Community Guesthouse

		<p>at the edge of the plateau from where you can enjoy the sunset. The guesthouses are located near the village which has a simple church dedicated to St. Aragawi. It can be a bit cold up here in the evening and early morning when the wind blows off the plateau to the east - the altitude is about 3,000 meters.</p> <p>Meals: B/-/D (3,000 m)</p>		
30/9/2021	Thu	<p>Today your hike is more or less on the flat (5 hrs.), walking mostly along the escarpment. There are great views to the north where the Tekeze river and its tributaries flow west and northwards and with views of the villages below where there is a thickly wooded land around a church dedicated to Abuna Gebre Menfes Kidus and several old churches in the rock. A simple lunch of enjara and vegetable sauces is served by the community beside the attractively located church of Ras Dejen Giyorgis. The afternoon walk again follows the basalt escarpment edge westwards with more great views. A path takes you down the escarpment into the bucolic village of Wajela. There is an acacia woodland around a new church, just before you come to the attractive tukuls nestled under the higher escarpment and above another escarpment which leads to a Juniper woodland around an older church - Werketa mariam and a partially collapsed cave church.</p> <p>Meals: B/L/D (2,800 m)</p>	Meket	Wajela Community Guesthouse
1/10/2021	Fri	<p>The next morning after a wholesome breakfast head back up the ridge to the top of the escarpment and cross the plateau from the north to the south side. Near the church of Kura Anbessa giyorgis, you will meet the southern escarpment with lovely views to the Bashilo river - itself a major tributary into the Blue Nile. Soon after you will reach Meskal Mikael where a simple lunch awaits. This is another cluster of tukuls on the escarpment edge. There is a small waterfall nearby which attracts a lot of birds. From here it is another 3h30m walk across the meadows and along the escarpment to Mequat Mariam. This is one of the most delightful walks on the trek. One of our favourite spots is Sar Dingay (Grass Rock) - a glade of trees used as the resting place for the tabot (sacred replica of the tablets of stone kept in each church) when it is processed out for Timkat). As at all guesthouses snacks and tea await you on arrival, there are also beers (cooled by the cold air at altitude). But here you have a rocky ledge - the Mequat Rock Bar - from which to enjoy the most incredible views at sunset. Mequat is also home to a small troop of Gelada baboons (kept away from the crops at this time of the year), there are also Vervet Monkeys and the rodent like Rock Hyrax in the area, and a regular Lammergeyer flies overhead. A large flock of white-billed starlings, endemic to Ethiopia, also nest in the cliffs here.</p>	Meket	Mequat Mariam Community Guesthouse

		Meals: B/L/D 2,800m		
2/10/2021	Sat	<p>The trek out from Mequat takes you through villages and past schools descending through a juniper woodland to passing by the church of Werkhaye Mariam. Just beyond the woods facing the meadows you will be served a simple lunch by the community before meeting up with your transport for your journey back down to lower altitude.</p> <p>The journey takes you through breathtaking mountainous landscapes with drop offs and volcanic plugs, before you descend into the Lake Tana basin. It is time for a change, as we drop in altitude to the subtropical Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve (Lake Tana is Ethiopia's largest lake, and has a deep history of Christian and Judaic settlement). Your overnight stay will be in a simple lodge with views from Lake Tana's Northern shore.</p> <p>Meals: B/L/D</p>	Gorgora	Tim & Kim Village
3/10/2021	Sun	<p>With the lodge kayaks you can go on a peaceful early morning boat trip to nearby monastery islands and soak up the nature. Lake Tana is a haven for water birds: egrets, cormorants, pelicans, herons, fish eagles, cranes and much more. Possibly even a large monitor lizard</p> <p>Gorgora is also the home of the 17th century Debre Sina Mariam church. Surrounded by an old forest the church lies right at the lake shore and its impressively painted interior makes this a very special place to visit. Take your time here to get in touch with Ethiopia's religious history before heading back to the lodge to relax in the afternoon.</p> <p>Meals: B/-/D</p>	Gorgora	Tim & Kim Village
4/10/2021	Mon	<p>After breakfast you start your journey to Simien Mountains National Park for a 4 days trekking adventure. You will drive up through Gondar, and on up to the Simien mountains. You will stop in the town of Debark where the park HQ is for lunch and coffee- before driving into the park. We will drop you off to trek the last few kilometers to Sankaber camp (2,800 m). This area has some of the most lush vegetation and is the best area to see bushbuck and klipspringer. Dinner will be from our camp kitchen.</p> <p>Hike: 3 hrs., 8 km</p> <p>Meals: B/-/D</p>	Simien Mountains NP	Sankaber camp
5/10/2021	Tue	<p>Trekking day from Sankaber to Geech. In Sankaber you will meet your mules and mulemen. You will hike along the steep slope before you descend to enjoy some impressive views, notably the Jinbar waterfalls which cascade into the geech Abyss as a thin ribbon of water, with vultures circling on the thermals. From here, you will ascend up along the road and turn off to go down to the Jinbar river</p>	Simien Mountains NP	Geech camp

		<p>itself. This soon after the rains it might be a little deep crossing - but refreshing for your feet! You ascend out of the river by passing the former village of Geech (now resettled in Debark) and continue to your camp at 3,600 m. In the evening you have the possibility to climb Mt. Kedadit just north of the camp and experience an unforgettable sunset.</p> <p>Hike 6-7 hours, 13 km, 1000 m ascent, 700 m descent</p> <p>Meals: B/L/D</p>		
6/10/2021	Wed	<p>Trek Geech to Chennek. The path leads over the Geech plateau to Imet Gogo, a rocky promontory at 3,926 meters that juts out above the lowlands with one of Ethiopia's most dramatic views - spires and pinnacles of rock thrust up from the lowlands, and the edge of the highlands can be seen twisting away to the south like the edge of a cake that has been cut away with a knife. After enjoying this view, you head down to crossing the upper Jinbar valley and up through a giant heather forest (Erica Arboreal) to the highest peak around - Inatye (4,010 m) for a picnic lunch. From here it is a dramatic trail that often clings to the escarpment edge (those with a fear of heights can keep a distance) as it winds down to join the road that links Sankober and Chenek. A few more hundred meters uphill takes you to the campground in Chennek (3,600 m). This campsite is probably the most dramatic of them all - if you walk down to the scout huts at the front of the camp you can enjoy the staggering views both at sunset and sunrise.</p> <p>Hike 7-8 hours, 17 km, 900 m ascent, 900 m descent</p> <p>Meals: B/L/D</p>	Simien Mountains NP	Chennek camp
7/10/2021	Thu	<p>For those who like to bag a peak - you can make an early start and climb Bwahit this morning. There is an excellent chance to see the rare Walia Ibex on the north eastern flanks of the mountain. The peak is at 4,430 meters - and after Ras Dashen and its 2 immediate neighbours on the other side of the chasm before you - it is the next highest peak in Ethiopia. On a fine day the views are very impressive. Hurry back down to meet your vehicle to Gondar. The cooks will have prepared a picnic lunch for you. You will drop your team in Debark and carry on to Gondar.</p> <p>Dinner at Four Sisters Restaurant is a nice spot to end your day.</p> <p>Meals: B/-/-</p>	Gondar	Inn of the Four Sisters
8/10/2021	Fri	<p>Wake up early to breakfast before your tour of Gondar, sometimes called the Camelot of Africa, because of the old castles built here by former emperors. Perhaps you will first visit Debre Birhan Selassie Church, with its splendid paintings covering the walls and ceiling of this lovely church. From</p>	Addis Ababa	Transfer out extra per person

		<p>here go on to see the castles - each emperor built his own in park-like grounds where you can escape from the present day and go back to the Ethiopian 17th century. There were stables for horses when dignitaries came for feasts and much more to see. Finally head down into town to the ceremonial baths that the first Emperor Fasidias built to celebrate Timkat (which commemorates Jesus' baptism in the Jordan river.) Take a quick lunch - before heading back to Gondar airport for your domestic flight to Addis. We will pick you at the domestic airport, if COVID tests are needed we will assist (excluded in the price) and include a chance to buy a few last minute souvenirs and have dinner before beginning your journey home.</p> <p>Meals: B/-/D</p>		<p>overnight in Addis in Caravan Hotel Single: 60 USD Twin: 40 USD</p>
09/10/2021	Sat	<p>Option for later international departures (COVID testing or other plans) [FYI Currently there is a 6 hour COVID PCR test which operates H24]</p> <p>If you want to spend another night in Addis Ababa, you can book your hotel with us in Addis Ababa for an extra night. See hotel prices and airport drop off below. We are happy to assist you with the COVID testing which might give you the extra time to do a tour of the sites in Addis Ababa. <i>Price for add. city tour in Addis Ababa incl. guide and private minivan 100 USD per group (excl. fees for COVID PCR testing, entrances to sights and meals)</i></p> <p>Meals: B/-/-</p>	Addis Ababa	Transfer out

PRICING & CONDITIONS

	FOR THE MESKEL GURAGE TOUR	FOR THE NORTHERN EXPLORER TREK
INCLUSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 or 3 camping nights in tents for 2 persons incl. rental tent & mattress; - all transfers and travels with private vehicles; - transport for bikes (from/to Addis & during the rides); - all meals as per itinerary (incl. water, coffee/tea, alcoholic drinks excluded); - refreshments & sandwiches for the rides & other activities; - guides for rides and hiking; - first aid support; - technician support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 domestic flights in Ethiopia with Ethiopian Airlines in tourist class (Addis Ababa - Lalibela, Gondar - Addis Ababa) (extra fee of 180 USD if the international flight is not performed with Ethiopian Airlines); - 5x hotel accommodation in double/twin rooms with private toilet/shower in hotels or lodges, 3x accommodation in community guesthouses on the Meket Plateau, 3 camping nights in tents for 2 persons in Simien National Park; - supplement for single room/tent (only applicable in camps, hotels/lodges, but not during community trekking) 200 USD; - all transfers and travels in Ethiopia with private vehicles; - 1 guided kayak trip on Lake Tana; - all breakfasts, other meals as per itinerary (1 drink per meal included, alcoholic drinks excluded); - farewell dinner - all entrance fees and permissions at tourist attractions, churches, museums and national parks; - for the trekkings: entrance and camping fees, guide, scouts and rangers, mules/dromedaries and mulemen, cook, cooking assistant, cooking and camping equipment (it's recommended to bring your own sleeping bag); - all persons for safety and security (when mandatory); - all (mandatory) local guides in the single destinations; - 24/7 emergency assistance; - 4 experienced tour guides (1 guide for Addis Ababa, 1 for Lalibela churches, 1 for community trekking in Meket, 1 for Gorgora, Gondar & Simiens) (fluently English & Amharic speaking).

		** Please bring a water purification kit - we try not to use water in plastic bottles - this will save you money too!!
EXCLUSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international flights; - COVID tests or other requirements linked to COVID travel measures; - travel insurance; - visa in Ethiopia; - sleeping bag; - fee for horse-riding or other not mentioned activities; - alcoholic drinks; - tipping; - all extras and personal expenditures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international flights; - lunch & dinner as per itinerary; - COVID tests or other requirements linked to COVID travel measures; - travel insurance; - visa in Ethiopia; - sleeping bag; - alcoholic drinks; - tipping; - photo and video fees (if any); - all extras and personal expenditures.
OPTIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supplement for single tent 25 USD; - good quality mountain bikes can be rented for the whole tour for 55 USD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - city tour in Addis Ababa incl. guide and private minivan 110 USD per group (excl. entrances and meals).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional overnight in Addis Ababa at Caravan Hotel (incl. airport shuttle, room & breakfast) 60 USD per person/night/single room; - additional overnight in Addis Ababa at Caravan Hotel (incl. airport shuttle, room & breakfast) 40 USD per person/night/twin room; 	
PRICE	<p>3-night tour: 430 USD per person with departure on Friday 24/09/2021.</p> <p>2-night tour: 340 USD per person with departure on Saturday 25/09/2021.</p> <p>min. 20 to max. 50 pax</p>	<p>11-night tour: 1,710 USD per person</p> <p>min. 4 to max. 8 pax</p>

BOOKING TERMS

<p>BOOKING TERMS</p>	<p>If not agreed differently, the following payment and cancellation terms apply for bookings with Ride the Rift: At registration: 10% registration fee of total trip costs (non refundable) By Friday 10 September 2021: remaining payment</p> <p>We will send you all the necessary information for the payment and advise you to settle the payment as soon as possible to secure your place in the tours.</p>	
<p>CANCELATION POLICY</p>	<p>FOR THE MESKEL GURAGE TOUR</p> <p>Your booking will only be confirmed with payment of the registration fee. A cancellation must be reported to the organizers in written form and the following conditions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - before Friday 10 September 2021: registration fee (non-refundable), further payments made will be refunded - there will be no refund in the case of cancellation after Friday 10 September 2021 - if for some unforeseen reason this tour does not happen, full refund will be given 	<p>FOR THE NORTHERN EXPLORER TREK</p> <p>Your booking will only be confirmed with payment of the registration fee. A cancellation must be reported to the organizers in written form and the following conditions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - before Friday 10 September 2021: cancelation for free, advance payment made will be refunded - there will be 80% refund in the case of cancellation after Friday 10 September 2021 - there will be no refund in the case of cancellation after Thursday 23 September 2021 - if for some unforeseen reason this tour does not happen, full refund will be given