

## Debre Libanos

Debre Libanos is one of the most famous monastic complexes in Ethiopia. The monastery was probably founded by Abune Tekle Haimanot, who was the first monk to establish the monastery in the 1260s.

The monastery houses interesting church museums. In addition to the usual ecclesiastical objects, there are Italian rifles, giant cooking pots, crowns of former emperors and their wives, musical instruments, and an old wooden shackle. Fifteen minutes uphill from the monastery is the cave of Tekla Haimanot (the founder of the monastery), This is also where the famous holy water of Debre Libanos springs. A memorial in front of the church commemorates the hundreds of innocent priests, deacons, and believers who were massacred here by the Italians in 1937 following an assassination attempt on the notoriously brutal Viceroy Graziani (he was later imprisoned by the Italians as a war criminal for crimes against humanity).

Although no trace remains of the 13th-century monastery (it fell victim to the Muslim-Christian Wars), the modern site sits impressively below a waterfall-filled cliff (many of the monks live in caves up there) on the edge of the great Jemma River Gorge and is a peaceful place for hiking.

Today, the monastery consists of villages of male and female monks, the original monastery, and the modern church with its beautiful architecture. The monastery welcomes numerous visitors every week, both for religious reasons and as tourists.

Emperor Haile Selassie built the present church in 1961 against the wishes of the local priests after hearing a prophecy that a new church would ensure a long reign.

### Portuguese bridge

The true history of the so-called Portuguese Bridge is disputed. Local guidebooks claim that the small Portuguese stone arch bridge at Debre Libanos was built by the Portuguese in the 16th century. Others claim it was built in the 19th century by Ras Darge (Emperor Menelik's uncle), albeit in the Old Portuguese style. Despite all the controversy, it is a historical fact that the Portuguese army supported the Christian forces of the central

government in the historic 16th-century war against the Muslim invaders supported by the Ottoman Empire.

### Itinerary

\* You will be warmly welcomed early in the morning and picked up from your hotel or guesthouse by our tour guides.

\* Drive 115 km north of the city to the monastery and visit the cloister and museum in the church.

\* After visiting the monastery, we head straight to the controversial Portuguese Bridge.

\* We cross the bridge and walk along the river until we reach a large rock from which we can see the 600 m high waterfall. The narrow section offers a beautiful view, and the rushing waterfall directly below (during the rainy season) is even more impressive. The best time to see it is during the Ethiopian rainy season (July-September).

\* You will likely see Galada baboons, which are endemic to Ethiopia.

\* Lunch at the Ethiopian-German Park Hotel with spectacular views of the Jemma river gorge.

Lunch can be served as a picnic.

Vegetarian and vegan options available.

Departure to Addis at 4:00 PM.

All-Inclusive Debre Libanos- Portuguese bridge Full-Day City Tour

Total: \$ 586 (individual price)

\* Group of 2: \$439 per person

\* Group of 3: \$373 per person

\* Group of 4-9: \$317 per person

\* Group of 10 or more: \$293 per person

From 25% to 50% discount for group tours