

## Sof-Omar shrine cave

Ethiopia's Tentative List for inscription on the World Heritage List.

**Sof Omar Cave:** It is one of the most spectacular and extensive underground caves in the world. Located in the East Bale Zone, it is an absolute must-see for tourists. Sof Omar Cave is one of the largest caves in Africa.

The cave area is typically characterized by a flat topography and a deep gorge carved out by the Web River. The Ayyo Makko Cave Gate, which forms the river entrance on the right edge of the gorge cliff, and the Huluqa, the cave's water source, are particularly striking, even from the outside. As one of the world's most extensive underground caves, it owes its beauty to the pristine and wild appearance of its vast main passages, with 42 interior entrances and a total length of 15.6 km. There is a 2-kilometer hiking trail that crosses the river seven times and takes visitors approximately two hours to complete.

According to tradition, Sof Omar was a Muslim saint who lived in the area and used the caves as a mosque. The cave is a revered historical Islamic heritage site and is dedicated to the Sufi Sheikh Safiy Ullah Umar (Sof Umar for short), after whom the cave is named. The sheikh is said to have been the nephew and disciple of Sheikh Hussein. He lived and worshipped Allah in the cave and taught Islam to his followers many centuries ago. The natural cave system, carved into the limestone cliffs, features many chambers and pillars, the main attraction being the Pillar Chamber with its numerous, meticulously crafted pillars.

The caves are of great importance due to their classic subterranean geomorphology and bear witness to a million-year-old evolutionary history. Caves and craters are important relics of past climates, vegetation, fauna, and human cultures, and this also applies to the Sof-Omar Cave System. It is estimated that the Sof-Omar Cave System was formed between 23 and 5.3 million years ago during the Miocene Epoch.

Bats and fish live in the cave, while the surrounding landscape provides a home to wildlife such as Dik-diks, kudus, Servals, Rock hyraxes, Snakes, lizards and more than fifty species of birds.

## Itinerary

**Day 1-** Upon arrival at Bole International Airport, you will be greeted by our tour guides and transferred to your booked hotel. Most flights to Addis Ababa arrive in the morning, leaving the remaining hours of the day available for a city tour of Addis Ababa. Full- and half-day tours are available on our website. Learn more about our city tours there.

If you arrive at night, the next day will be reserved for a full-day city tour of Addis Ababa.

**Day 2-** Fly to Bale Robe early in the morning. Upon arrival, drive 97 km directly from the airport to Sof Omar Cave. Stop for lunch at Sof Omar Lodge (lunch time may vary).

Visit the cave and return to Goba, near Bale Mountain National Park. And stay the night in Goba.

**Day 3-** we travel to Bale Robe Airport according to our flight schedule and fly back to Addis Ababa.

**Farwell Night:** After arriving in the city, we'll have lunch (if we arrived early), rest a bit, relax at the hotel, and enjoy an early dinner in one of Ethiopia's best jazz or (reggae optional) lounges, or in one of the most beautiful dance and folklore houses, with a traditional coffee ceremony. This concludes the four-day trip.

### *NOTE 1*

*This trip can be extended by several days to the Bale Mountain National Parks and with camping trekking. Our Bale Mountain National Park itinerary can be found on our website.*

### *Note 2*

*This trip can also be personalized or customized, with price adjustments; this may result in reduced payments.*

## What does the 3 days tour include?

- \*Hotel and lodge fees
- \* Air fair for domestic flights
- \*Pick up and drop off service.
- \*Cooking team
- \*Transportation, including fuel and driving.
- \*Entrance fees, at all listed places.
- \*Professional English speaking tour-guide.
- \*Lunch, dinner, birr, wine, hot drinks and bottled water.

## What's not included?

- \* Alcoholic beverages not listed on the package
- \*Tips and Gratitude

## All-Inclusive Sof-Omar cave tours

Total: \$ 2039 (individual price)

- \*Group of 2: \$1529per person
- \*Group of 3: \$1376 per person
- \*Group of 4-9: \$1238 per person
- \*Group of 10 or more: \$1121per person

From 25% to 45 % discount for group tours