

Addis Ababa—A Vibrant City that Infused Me with Courage! My Experience was Life-Changing!

(Level B1-B2)

Discover Addis Ababa—a vigorous city where hospitality meets courage

It's been almost three weeks since I came back from Addis Ababa, the largest and capital city of Ethiopia. I only stayed in this country for eight days, yet I still feel the amazing effects of this unexpected trip.

Addis Ababa means 'New Flower' in Amharic, one of Ethiopia's 80 languages. The city is also dubbed the political capital of Africa as it houses the headquarters of the African Union.

Ethiopia is considered to be one of the oldest countries in the world. It is also home to [Lucy](#) and [Ardi](#), famous hominid skeletons who are believed to be the earliest ancestors of modern humans.

Lastly, Ethiopia is also the [birthplace](#) of Pan-Africanism. Under the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ethiopia was instrumental in founding the Organisation of African Unity ([OAU](#)), which later became the current African Union.

If someone had told me that I would come back to Poland as a changed person after visiting Ethiopia, I would not have believed this person. Yet, the truth is that I have been transformed. The transformation is barely physical. The change has occurred inwards.

Let's turn back the hands of time

When I was growing up in Blantyre, Malawi, Ethiopia was synonymous with war, poverty and hunger. We listened to the radio and heard spine-chilling stories about children like us dying because they did not have enough food to eat. At that time, one would never have dreamed of visiting this country for pleasure let alone live there!

Then came Ethiopian Airlines and the story of its staggering success. We started to see Ethiopia in a different light. We boarded its Boeings and cast fleeting and admiring glances at Addis Ababa as we transited to Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. Ethiopia was on par with Kenya and those images of hungry children were obliterated.

I, too, knew that Ethiopia had changed for the better since those terrible times. What I did not know was to what great extent it had developed and was still developing. Previously, I had only thrown hasty

glances at the sprawling city of Addis Ababa . This time, I was able to experience this amazing city from within.

And what an experience!

Addis Ababa—A Dynamic and Welcoming City!

I lived a thousand lives in Addis Ababa. This city is incredible and its inhabitants are friendly and hospitable. I cannot count the number of times I was made to feel welcome and helped by strangers.

The staff at the hotel often went out of their way to make us feel good and I will never forget their acts of kindness.

I enjoyed using the Ride App to move around the city. My favourite activity was to walk on Bole Road with my husband. Bole Road is like an open-air fashion show. I loved looking at Ethiopian women who are incredibly beautiful and dress wonderfully. It was also amazing to observe how people went about their business hurriedly and with a sense of purpose.

Another favourite activity was to drink Ethiopian coffee which is prepared in a ceremonious way. On Meskel Square, the coffee tasted divine and the lady who prepared it for us was very kind and friendly.

Another highlight of our visit was when we visited Saint George's Church on the first day we arrived in Addis Ababa. This is an Orthodox Church and it harbours the mausoleum of Emperor Menelik II who was instrumental in defeating the Italians in the Battle of Adwa. He then founded modern-day Ethiopia and is a revered figure in the country.

I also enjoyed visiting the National Museum of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Ethnological Museum. Both places are worth the detour. One learns a lot, not only about the country's history, but also about the history of mankind.

What impressed me the most was how drivers and pedestrians navigated on the busy Addis Ababa roads with very few traffic lights. For me, driving in Poland has become easy-peasy after I saw how Ethiopians hustled their way in the city.

I was inspired by their non-aggressive go-getter attitude. Most of the times, I saw hard-working people who did their business with a lot of healthy pride, professionalism and kindness. No wonder they have never been colonised!

Addis Ababa is a city of many contrasts where one is drawn by the fast-paced rhythm of the city. My trip was eye-opening and I will never see Ethiopia and Ethiopians the same away again. The latter have infused me with their grace and the first has restored my faith in the ability of humans to transform their fates for the better. My life will certainly never be the same again. Thank you Ethiopia!



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