

T WITH THE WORLD VIA WORDS AND PICTURES

Ethiopia Millennium Edition

What can our readers expect in further updates of this edition? Here's a clue:

Journeys into History: Virtual tour of Ethiopia's museums, monasteries and monuments. Lucy display generates raves across America. Following the Queen of Sheba's footsteps, from Axum to Lalibela, Gondar, Bahir Dar and beyond. Discovering the Omo Valley and the overland route to Djibouti by road and rail.

Portraits of Ethiopia: Our widest selection of African cultural photo images by a variety of key contributors.

Mama Ethiopia: A heartwarming story of achievement and dedication.

Marketing Ethiopia to the World: How we market Ethiopia Tourism at trade shows and media opportunities in North America and worldwide. Profile of Ethiopia's Tourism Ministry and Tour Operators Association.

Who's Who? Interviews with leaders in travel, trade, tourism and transportation. Goodwill ambassadors we have met.

Ethiopia Online: Tips on Web Building, Networking and E-Commerce with an African flavor. Why our web site remains #1 on Google for Marketing Ethiopia Travel and Tourism.

New Database Directory of key contacts for Ethiopia travel, trade and tourism - in country and its target markets.

Events Calendar; Millennium activities, public holidays and regional festivals.

Ethiopian Business Scene: A special full color supplement features Midroc Ethiopia Technology Group. Checklist of investment opportunities, banks and foundations.

USA- Canada- Ethiopia Trade Missions. Success of www.eatic.org in Texas, an example for the Ethiopian global diaspora.

Excerpts from "Africa: Continent of Opportunity"

This treasured book by David Fick is a gold mine for those who are interested in the financial and growth potential of Ethiopia.



The Hospitality Scene: How new luxury hotels are changing the face of Ethiopia Tourism. Profile of the Ras Hotel, an historic landmark in Addis Ababa and the upscale Sheraton Addis. Above photo - newly expanded Axum Hotel.

Air Highways to Ethiopia: Getting here via Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean routes - with exotic Oriental and Middle East stopovers. Profile of Ethiopian Airlines and regional flight options. Airport commerce and development.

Homecoming Tours: An invitation to the Ethiopian Diaspora worldwide using our new Millennium Database.

Ethiopia's Historic Towns and Cities: Presenting Addis Ababa, the first profile in our "Great Cities of Africa" series. Mayors and Community Leaders speak on issues addressed at the UN World Urban **Africa in Bloom** - a community beautification initiative we recommend.

The Birth of Coffee:

There is an old Ethiopian legend that says that a young goatherd noticed his herd becoming unusually frisky after eating some bright red berries. After trying some himself, he found that they had the same stimulating effect on him. A monk from a neighboring monastery also tried these berries after he found the young goat herd in this state, and to his amazement, he also found that the berries helped keep him and others stay alert during their night prayers. Thus spread the use of coffee. Coffee has always been Ethiopia's most important cash crop and largest export commodity. A writer by the name of Harris wrote in 1844 that coffee trade from Ethiopia started five hundred years earlier when it was transported from Ethiopia to Arabia by a trader. An Ethiopian monk known as Brother Thomas corroborated this story and described the exact route taken when the coffee was traded with Arabia.

Tour d'Afrique Crosses Ethiopia

The world's longest, most spectacular bicycle race and expedition has attracted riders from all over the world for the annual 12 000 km event down the length of Africa. They enter Ethiopia from Sudan at Matema, travel through Gondar, Bahir Dar, the Blue Nile Gorge, Addis Ababa, Lake Lagano and Yabello before leaving Ethiopia at the Kenya border post of Moyale.

<http://www.tourdafrique.com>

Quick Now! Have we forgotten anything?

If so our editors will be pleased to consider your recommended interview or topic in one of our updates. That's the beauty of our Yearbook concept where every issue of the magazine is a keeper. *E-mail: africa@dowco.com, fax 1-604 681 0718.*



"FROM ADDIS ABABA WE JOURNEY SOUTH TO THE OMO VALLEY"



I am Ethiopia. Long before the Queen of Sheba, King Lalibela and other icons from the pages of history walked my sacred land, an area many call the "Cradle of Civilization," visitors from near and far arrived to sample my diverse culture and mingle with over 80 ethnic groups that form a unique mosaic. Most Ethiopians speak Amharic, my official language, however many are very much at ease in English, Italian and Arabic when doing business. Friendly and fiercely proud of their ancient heritage, my indigenous people are an exotic blend of African, Judaic and Egyptian influences.

I am Ethiopia, land of many rivers. The culture of my Omo people is steeped in rich tradition and colorful history. Many of them live along the Omo River. To those who love adventure the Omo is famous for white water rafting, as it tumbles its way through a steep valley before entering Lake Turkana. From the water, varied scenery, with forests of tamarind, alive with Colobus monkeys and flocks of colorful birds confronts the visitor. On the savannah slopes against a brilliantly lit

mountain backdrop, you will find waterbucks and bushbuck. At a riverside camp, you will encounter water fowl, hippos, antelope, baboons and even lions. Such a river adventure also provides an opportunity to visit indigenous tribes along the way, at places such as Tumele, one of the larger Karo villages. The Karo people are outstanding in face and body painting, a com-

mon practice in preparation for dances and ceremonies. They combine pulverized white chalk and yellow rock, reddish iron ore and black charcoal to decorate their bodies. You can boat to visit the Muguji tribal area for an immersion in Muguji culture. The Muguji trap small game and collect honey and wild fruits. Great fishermen, one of the Muguji specialties is hunting crocodiles. The Mursi tribe is famous worldwide for the clay lip dishes, originally worn by the women, as a means of avoiding capture as slaves. Just so you know, they remove the clay plates at meal time. Surrounded by mountains and three rivers, the Mursi homeland is one of my most isolated regions. Like the Maasai of neighboring Kenya, the Mursi have a fierce reputation as guardians of their precious grazing lands. The men often wore light scars on their shoulders after killing an enemy and shave geometric patterns on their heads. For dances and ceremonies they adorn their bodies with white chalk. The Nyagatom live on the Omo River's western banks near the Kenya border. Numbering over 7,000, they have a war-like history. Small groups

living along the Omo specialize in hunting crocodiles, usually from a light dugout canoes, using harpoons. The men wear a blue and ochre clay hair bun with ostrich feathers. The elders of both sexes wear a plug on their lower lip - the female version is made from copper.

Hamar Mountain Country

The final chapter of an ideal river adventure would be a visit to the Hamar Mountains, home of my Hamar Koke people. Numbering around 30,000, the Hamar Koke are well known for their attractive body adornment and the practice of wearing an abundance of colorful beads. Women adorn their necks with heavy polished iron jewelry. Getting to know and understand my indigenous people is a life-enriching experience, that if combined with an adventure safari along the mighty Omo River, will be a double blessing. You can learn much more about my people and their traditions at various web sites listed in this magazine starting with <http://www.africa-ata.org/ethiopia.htm>.

Overland Journey to Omo Valley

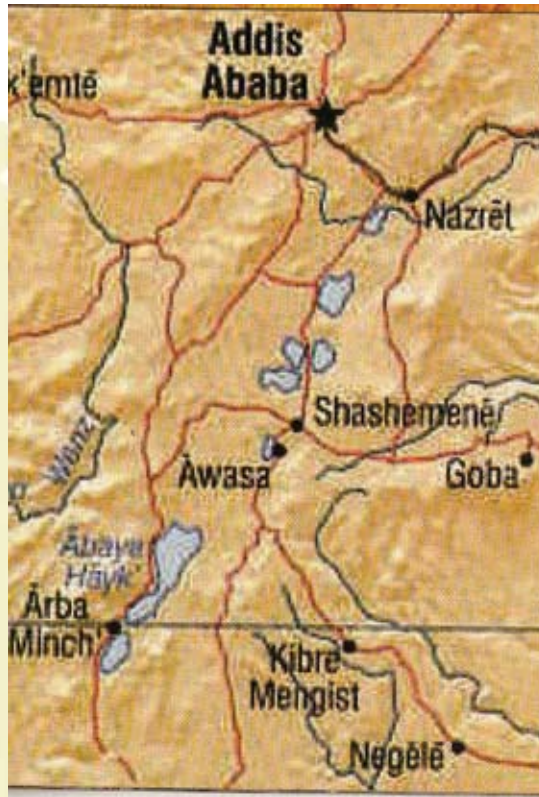
by Muguette Goufrani

Ethiopia's lower Omo Valley near the Kenya border is home to a remarkable blend of ethnic groups. With lifestyles as varied as the tribes themselves, each finds unique ways in which to develop and express its own artistic flair. Our journalist team of Ogo Sow, Mary Ellen Schultz and Sylvia Mracky from the USA and myself representing Canada, had been anticipating this trip for months. As a reward we were amazed by the fascinating ethnic treasures discovered and friendships formed during this week long tour arranged by Her Excellency Tadelech Dalacho State Minister for Tourism, our gracious host. Heading south from Addis Ababa, one of



OMO VALLEY, A PLACE WHERE TIME STANDS STILL"

the first attractions on our tour agenda was a visit to the Crater Lakes at Debre Zeit and the three Rift Valley Lakes of Shala, Abyata and Langano, teeming with bird life - a colorful array from pelicans and flamingos to storks and assorted waterfowl. Later on we were impressed by the homes and cultural displays presented by the Sidamo tribe. Another popular attraction was Arba Minch, which means 40 springs in Amharic, a tribute to the bubbling streams that spring up amid the undergrowth of a luxuriant groundwater forest. Here the Wolayta people welcomed us to their village, where they cultivate cereal crops, cotton and tobacco. Their large, beehive-shaped huts are adorned with one or more large ostrich eggs perched near the roof as fertility symbols. In the afternoon we entered the town of Chenchä for a friendly visit with the Dorze people. This well known tribe is famous for weaving and for their bamboo homes, each with its own small garden surrounded by beds of spices and cabbage and tobacco sorghum and the false banana. Should their dwellings begin to rot or become attacked by an army of termites, the villagers dig them up and sew bamboo struts around the base to preserve the shape. The Dorze name is synonymous with the best in woven cotton cloth, a good reason why Chenchä is famous for its fine cotton gabbis or shawls. Our tour group enjoyed dinner at Swaynes Hotel, with spectacular views of the Chamo and Abaya lakes and the Netch Sar Park. Owned and operated by the Greenland Group, this attractive hotel offers 40 guest rooms, each furnished with artistically designed Dorze furniture. The exterior of each bungalow is constructed of bamboo and patterned after the Dorze tribal homes with their high roofs. Each unit is covered with bamboo and the roof is thatched with leaves from the false banana tree. The design in front resembles an elephant trunk, as typical Dorze



style. We were impressed with the interiors which reflect the richest elements of Ethiopian Culture. Materials used are all ecological, natural and originate entirely from the surrounding area. There is also a naturalist pathway to the underground springs, ideal for bird watching and scenic views. The lake shores and islands of Abaya and Chamo are populated by farming communities of the Ganjule and Guji, both of whom also have developed ancient traditions for hunting hippos. The Guji ply the waters of Lake Abaya in the curved high prowed ambatch boats, similar to those craft depicted on the tombs of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs. Surprisingly, an ambatch is capable of transporting several full sized cattle at one time and sturdy enough to withstand attack by large crocodiles, which are present

in both lakes. Lake Chamo is a good place to view crocodiles lounging in the sandy beaches and sun with clear blue water of its northern shores. Lake Abaya waters are reddish-brown in color due to heavy mineral deposits. As we soon discovered, the rainy season can bring sudden flash flooding at low spots on the highway and side roads. Our media team had a minor incident when one of the Awassa Ministry of Tourism vehicles was swept away by the swift water. Fortunately a small group of Hamar villagers arrived in time to retrieve the vehicle from the rushing current and help carry our luggage across the river. These colorful young men and women were fantastic, friendly and attractive. It was a memorable moment. Next morning's visit to Netch Sar Park provided spectacular views of the lake, with its variety of wildlife such as Swaynes Hartebeest, Zebras, Kudu, Burchil's Zebra and various species of birds. Lunch was served in Arba Minch. We also enjoyed a visit with the Erbo people, noted for their extensive use of jewelry. In our afternoon boat trip on Lake Chamo we had a close encounter with hippos, and had a wary look at the local crocodiles, which are among the longest in Africa, over 6 meters. We enjoyed dinner and a comfortable night's sleep as guests of the Swaynes Hotel. My special thanks to our driver Teshome Kebede, guide Abdi Tenna Awassa, Green Land Tours and the Swaynes Hotel.

This article will be continued in the next update of this edition and on our powerful web site: www.africa-ata.org/ethiopia.htm! You can download this complete issue and others in the new series of Yearbook

