



Volunteer / Visitor Guidebook



Updated - 2013

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A Personal Note from Marta & Deme for Visitors and Volunteers

Beloved Friends:

On behalf of the Project Mercy Board and staff, we want to express our deep gratitude for your interest in volunteering with Project Mercy. We recognize that there are many places and organizations where you could give of your time and gifts, and we feel blessed that you are considering us.

It is our goal to ensure that Project Mercy volunteers have a richly rewarding experience— personally and professionally. We want your stay to be a happy and productive one, and we will do all that we can to assist you in that endeavor. Through the years, we have been fortunate to have many caring individuals donate their time to build schools, roads, medical facilities, housing, gardens and farms.

Some have helped in our hospital and cared for patients. Other volunteers have taught in our schools and trained adults in various trades. Still others have shared their faith through preaching, Bible study, music and theatre. Each has brought a unique gift and worked as a part of our team to serve and to enrich the quality of life in the local communities.

As you consider joining the ranks of our volunteers, we want to say thank you for considering Project Mercy as an organization where you may want to serve. If, after going through the initial process of information sharing with us, you have determined that Project Mercy is the mission where you would like to serve, we would be most happy to review a timeline for your trip.

Again, thank you for your interest. God bless you!

Sincerely,

Marta Gabre-Tsadick

Demeke Tekle-Wold

Travel Arrangements

Flights

Several different carriers fly from the United States to Ethiopia, including Lufthansa, KLM, Ethiopian Airlines, and British Airways. If you wish, you can book directly through the airline's websites listed below.

Ethiopian Airlines: www.ethiopianairlines.com

KLM: www.klm.com

Lufthansa: www.lufthansa.com

British Airways: www.britishairways.com

Comparable prices for fares can also be found on various travel websites such as Expedia (www.expedia.com) and SideStep (www.sidestep.com). Flights are generally the most expensive in the peak summer vacation months and during the weekends. To find the lowest price, try adjusting the travel dates midweek to find cheaper fares.

If you prefer arranging your flights through travel agencies familiar with Ethiopia, we recommend the follow three:

1. Fana Travel

2407 18th St NW Ste 200A

Washington, DC 20009

Phone: (800) 6003262

- Fana has agreed to pass on better rates for people traveling on behalf of Project Mercy

2. Menno Travel Service

210 South Main Street

Goshen, IN 46526-3723

Phone: 574-534-1521 Toll free: 800-635-0963

- Menno Travel also has good rates for Project Mercy volunteers

3. SIAMA World Mission Travel

Pieterskerkhof 38

2311 ST LEIDEN

The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 71 516 35 35

Fax: +31 71 516 35 35

membersupport@siamanl.nl / www.SIAMA.nl

Expense Estimates

Airfare

Depending on the season and the price of fuel, flight prices can vary. The prices below are only *approximate fare prices*.

From the East Coast to Addis Ababa: \$1400 - \$3000

From the West Coast to Addis Ababa: \$1500 - \$2800

Hotels in Addis Ababa

Some travelers are quite tired after the travel time of more than 20 hours. Also, some international flights often arrive very late in the evening. Thus, many of our visitors choose to stay in Addis Ababa for their first night. If you choose to stay in Addis Ababa, the hotels we recommend are listed below due to location, safety, and quality. All of the hotels listed below also have restaurants.

The Hilton

Menelik II and Empress Zewditu Avenues, Addis Ababa

Phone: +251 (0) 11 151 8400

http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/ADDHITWHiltonAddisAbabahotel/index.do

The Sheraton

Taitu Street · P.O. Box 6002 · Addis Ababa · Ethiopia

Phone: +251 (0) 11 517 1717

<http://www.starwoodhotels.com/luxury/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=149>

The Sadula Hotel – Single Rm-\$63.25 / Double Rm-\$76 / Suite-\$101 (as of 2/6/2012)

PO Box 119 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Phone: +251 (0) 11 618 8519 / 87 / 89

Fax: +251 (0) 11 618 8538

<http://www.sadulahotellodge.com>

Email: Reservation@sadulahotellodge.com

The room rates vary by season and demand. *Please check the websites or call the hotels for the most current rates.*

Meals in Addis Ababa

Please allot \$15 to \$30 USD per day for meals in Addis Ababa.

Transportation to Yetebon

Please be aware that there is a two to three hour ride from Addis Ababa to Yetebon. You will be driven by a Project Mercy vehicle. Be sure to have sunglasses and a full water bottle for the ride. Please also be aware that there are no restroom facilities between Addis Ababa and Yetebon, so please plan ahead.

Four Passenger Vehicle: \$175 - RT

Twelve Passenger Vehicle: \$250 - RT

Twenty Passenger Vehicle: \$325.00 - RT

3.5 ton truck (group luggage): \$135 per trip

Overseas Travelers Insurance

Especially for long-term volunteers, it would be good to inquire if you have coverage within your health insurance policy. If not, one option of a company who does provide health insurance coverage while you would be overseas is Brotherhood Mutual Insurance. They refer to it as “Passport to Ministry” coverage. Their phone number is 1-800-876-4994 and you can also access it via their website:

<http://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/insPrograms/passporttoMinistry/programHighlights.htm>

Room and Board in Ytebon

Room and board fees cover the cost of staying in our guest housing and meals while in Ytebon.

Room & Board: \$40 USD per day

Laundry expense: \$7 per group load – (commercial size washers / dryers are used)

Please Note: There are no ATM machines in Ethiopia. Most places do not accept credit cards, so it is best to carry dollars and have some changed into Birr at the airport or at the Hilton Hotel when you arrive in Addis Ababa. The only places that accept traveler’s checks are the Hilton and Sheraton Hotels in Addis Ababa. Only banks can cash traveler’s checks and this process is very time consuming—we do not recommend it. Most local businesses only accept Birr.

Personal Internet Communications;

If you plan to be in Ethiopia for an extended period of time and desire to access the internet whether in Addis or Ytebon, the following are how to acquire your internet stick and activation time for usage.

Internet: (the ration of Birr to the dollar will vary, but it is approximately 18 Birr to \$1.00)

1. Buy at ZTE brand EV-DO internet stick from a computer store in Friendship mall, Bole. It should cost 1,800 birr. This is the best brand that works in Ytebon. Only get the black and red one because there are other ZTE knock-offs.
2. Go to a Ethio Telecommunications branch in Addis (can only be done in Addis) and activate your stick. They will assign a phone number and plan to your stick.

The plans for usage are as follows:

700 birr 4gb a month

500 birr 2 gb a month

300 birr 1 gb a month

Fundraising for Mission Trip

Volunteers may need to fundraise to help offset the costs of serving with Project Mercy in Ethiopia. As a 501(c)3 charitable organization, Project Mercy can be the receiving site for the volunteer's fundraising income. The fundraising letter will need to be reviewed by Project Mercy prior to the volunteer mailing it to their contact list. An insert sheet will be provided by Project Mercy to the volunteer to include with their fundraising letter. It is important that all checks are written to Project Mercy and that the donor includes the insert sheet in the envelope. In order for the gift to be tax deductible, please note that it is important that the donor **not** write the volunteer's name on the check memo line.

As support funds arrive, Project Mercy will use the information from the insert sheet to process the funds into the volunteer's support account for mission expenses. For reimbursement, the volunteer will need to provide Project Mercy with receipts of incurred mission expenses. Once receipts and their request are received, funds will then be dispersed for items such as:

- Air fare, transportation, room and board, and miscellaneous expenses such as health care and ministry supplies;
 - We have determined up to \$100 per month is a reasonable volunteer "allowance" with no receipts required. Therefore, so long as their fundraising is successful and volunteer account balances will permit, the volunteer may request up to \$100 per month to be transferred from their individual volunteer account set up by Project Mercy without receipts or expense reports. We simply need an email request from the volunteer.
 - For mission expenses that exceed \$100 in any given month, the volunteer will need to send us a description of specific ministry needs and provide accompanying receipts.
- Funds in excess of the above mission expenses will be used to cover Project Mercy's hosting expense for the volunteer;
- Any remaining funds will be applied toward program needs in the area where the volunteer served.

Passport, Visa, and Registration

Passport

Passports are necessary to enter and exit foreign countries. You can obtain one by following the directions on the US State Department website - http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. Before applying, you will need to have passport photos taken. It would be wise to have four to six copies, as they will be necessary for your visa application. Please be aware that receiving your passport can take up to ten weeks.

Visa Type

Visas obtained upon arrival at Bole Airport in Addis Ababa are normally valid from thirty (30) to ninety (90) days. Visas obtained at Ethiopian embassies and consulates abroad can be valid for as long as two (2) years. Business Visas are for a 6 month period and must be obtained before entry to Ethiopia at an Ethiopian Embassy or consulate abroad. Visitors who arrive in Ethiopia on a Tourist Visa may not change from a Tourist Visa to a Business Visa. To convert the visa type, visitors who are already in Ethiopia must exit the country and reenter with a new Business Visa.

You must have a Business Visa in order to volunteer in Ethiopia. Oftentimes pro bono or volunteer work, including University research, is considered work by the Ethiopian government. Please check with your employer or sponsoring organization to insure that you have the correct type of visa. These requirements are strictly enforced by Ethiopian Customs.

Applying for a Visa

The necessary information and application can be downloaded from

<http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/ConsularServices/ConsularService.php?Page=VisaRequirement.htm>

VISA APPLICATION PACKET SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING:

- All Business Visa applicants should attach a letter addressed to Ethiopian Embassy from his /her organization (PROJECT MERCY) explaining the purpose of his/her travels.
- Your passport - The passport must be valid for at least six months.
- One recent passport-size photograph.
- A completed Visa Application Form
- Service fees will be paid in money order or Cashier's Check or Certified bank check made payable to Embassy of Ethiopia
- A self addressed return envelope which has a tracking number **(FEDEX, UPS, or USPS EXPRESS MAIL)** with it.
- If all the necessary requirements are fulfilled, the visa can be issued on the next two or three business day.

Registration with the U.S. State Department

American visitors should register with the American Embassy before leaving for Ethiopia. Due to internet scarcity/expense in Ethiopia, this should be done while still in the United States. You can register by following the link: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/> If you don't have an account, you will need to create one before registering.

While registering, you will need the address of Project Mercy in Ethiopia. Please use the following:

Contact: Project Mercy / Marta Gabre-Tsadick

Address: Subcity Yeka/ Keble 02/ House #511

Woreda/Region: Shewa

City: Addis Ababa

Country: Ethiopia / **Telephone:** 011-646-3798 (hm) / 011-645-8693 (PM office)

Work Permit Instructions

Volunteers who will be teaching or caring for the Ethiopians are required by Ethiopian law to have a Work Permit. In order to obtain a Work Permit you must follow the following procedure:

- A. **An authenticated copy of all of the following documents as they pertain to you:** – (from **local, state, and federal levels**) *Local level begins the process with a notary and then proceeding to the state and federal levels for proper authentication of your documents.*
- **University Diploma(s)** – all copies to be authenticated
 - **Medical License(s)** – all copies to be authenticated
 - **Specialty Certification(s)** – all copies to be authenticated
 - **Employment Confirmation Letters** (on company's letterhead signed by employer) confirming present and past employment *as it is similar to the line of volunteer work you will be doing with Project Mercy*. Employer will need to include your employment date and your job responsibilities. These letters need to also be signed by each of the employers. - all copies to be authenticated
 - **Marital status** – a copy of marriage license (if traveling together; otherwise, not needed) – to be authenticated
 - **Original copy of the physician signed Health Certificate** – on physician's letterhead, a signed and dated letter stating he (physician) examined you and that you are in good health and would be able to fulfill your volunteer responsibilities. – to be authenticated

When going through the notarizing and authentication process, **please follow these steps in this order -**

1. **Local level: Notary Public**
 - Have each document copy notarized on your local level by a Notary Public.
2. **State level: Secretary of State** –
 - Have each document copy authenticated by the Secretary of State where you are practicing.
 - ***Check the website for your Secretary of State in your state*** to find out the cost, forms to complete and where to send the documents.

At this point, you have the option of using Kia Travel Service (Wash, DC) to be your courier in personally getting your documents authenticated on the Federal level and with the Ethiopian Embassy. There is a small charge but they have proven to be a reliable source in saving time and stress. Their contact info is: 202-518-8940 or flykia@aol.com. Otherwise, continue to Steps 3 & 4.

3. **Federal level: U.S. Department of State** – <http://www.state.gov/m/a/auth/>
 - Have each document copy authenticated on the Federal level

Include in your packet to mail:

 1. Completed Authentication Cover Letter – (from website above, click link Requesting Authentication Services)
 2. The Notarized and Authenticated Documents you received back from your State Department stapled together as one document.
 3. Completed US State Dept form: <http://eforms.state.gov/editdocument.aspx?documentid=1>
 4. A check made payable to U.S. Department of State (check website for details and the amount)

- **If you want the U.S. Department of State to forward your documents onto the ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY in Washington, DC, please also include in the package for the US Dept. of State an additional envelope stamped and addressed to the Ethiopian Embassy. Please read through Step 4 to know what additional items to have included in the Ethiopian Embassy envelope.**
4. **Federal level: Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, DC** - <http://www.ethiopianembassy.org>
- Have each document copy authenticated by the Ethiopian Embassy
- Procedure:**
- A. From Ethiopian Embassy website, click link: *Consular Services / Authentication and Legalization*
- B. **Include the following into this packet for the Ethiopian Embassy:**
- A completed Ethiopian Embassy Authentication Request Form
 - A money order/ cashier's check / or certified bank check made out to Embassy of Ethiopia. (Check their website for charge)
 - Copy of your valid passport
 - **An additional self-addressed, stamped envelope with a tracking number** so they can return your authenticated documents. (If you do not have a tracking number on this envelope, they will not process the documents).
5. Once you receive your authenticated documents from the Ethiopian Embassy, you will need to add the following to the document packet:
- A completed Addis Credential Application Form and the Charities and Societies Form – Project Mercy will provide you with these forms.
 - Your Resume
 - Two passport photos
6. **Applying for the Work Permit:** Teacher volunteers and medical volunteers are handled differently by the Ministry in Ethiopia; therefore, proceed accordingly:
- **Teacher volunteers:** You will bring your authenticated documents and items above with you to Ethiopia to give to Project Mercy Addis office (Ato Getachew) who will assist you in applying for the Work Permit. He will present your documents to the Societies and Charities Organization who will then apply for your Work Permit.
 - **Medical volunteers:** You will need to mail your document packet to our Addis office. The office will need your packet *six weeks prior to your visit*. Please be sure your packet includes the following items:
 - A copy of your passport photo page
 - Copy of Business Visa (stamped on a page within your passport)
 - Two passport photos
 - ALL authenticated documents
 - Completed Work Permit Application (received from the stateside PM office)
 - Completed Addis Credential Application (received from the stateside PM office)
 - Your Resume

There is a charge for an approved Work Permit – once approved, that fee will be relayed to you, the perspective volunteer.

(Medical volunteers) Please mail document packet to the following address:

(Land mail)

Project Mercy

Attn: Ato Getachew Getahune

PO Box 29516

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

(Over night mail via UPS)

Project Mercy

Attn: Ato Getachew Getahune

Subcity - Yeka; Keble - 02; House - #511

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ITEMS TO PACK

Appropriate Clothing

Ethiopians are very conservative (modest) people - *Modesty equates in the following types of clothing:*

- Necklines no lower than the collar bone (no V necklines)
- No sleeveless tops unless they are worn with an overshirt
- No pictures or sayings on shirts that “could be” offensive
- No pants (shorts) above the knee
- No skirts above the knee
- All clothing is to be loose fitting (no “skinny jeans” or tight fitting tops)

Modesty in action: Loud and boisterous personalities are offensive to the Ethiopian culture and can also be misinterpreted as flirting. (For the most part, Ethiopian culture is a quiet, respectful culture.)

Shoes

Comfortable, athletic shoes are essential for walking outside the compound, jogging, playing sports. Sandals (not flip flops) are acceptable to wear around the compound. Since the floors of the guest housing are concrete, you may want to pack slippers.

ETC

- You may also want to bring bandanas or scarves for bad hair days and a hat to protect your head from the sun. Due to the strong sun, sunglasses are a must.
- If you are coming in the rainy season, it is advisable to bring a raincoat, umbrella, and rubber boots or shoe covers. It gets VERY muddy.
- You should bring plenty of socks and underwear. Also, remember to pack pajamas.

Toiletries

- Individual antibacterial wet wipes. Keep one with you at all times. There is a lot of handshaking in Ytebon and washing your hands afterwards (when you are by yourself) is advisable.
 - Basic medical kit: Band Aids, moleskin (for blisters), ibuprofen or Tylenol, hydrocortisone cream, anti-Diarrheal (such as Pepto Bismol tabs), and a small bottle of peroxide (or antiseptic wipes). The hospital can take care of more major medical needs
 - Feminine supplies, if needed
 - Small packets of Kleenex. These are good to keep in your pocket or fanny pack, as most restrooms outside the compound will not have toilet tissue.
 - A small mirror
 - A variety of sizes of Ziploc bags. These are immensely useful and take up little space
 - Multivitamins (with Vitamin C) and any medications you routinely take
 - Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, and any other toiletries you regularly use. Hand soap is provided.
- Comb or brush. You are able to use a hairdryer that it is compatible with 220V and 50 htz. All appliances should be rated for use at 50 htz. If you do not have an appliance that complies, there are various vendors on the internet which sell these appliances.
- Malaria prophylaxis pills sufficient for your entire stay may be difficult to obtain in Ethiopia
 - Sunscreen, 30 SPF or stronger and Insect repellent - 35% DEET

Other Items

- Sewing kit with small scissors (pack in checked baggage)
- Swiss Army knife (pack in checked baggage)
- **An electrical converter (converting 110V to 220V) and a European type plug adapter usable in Ethiopia. The current in Ethiopia is 220V and outlets are European. It is wise to check the wattage of your appliance to ensure you have the proper converter and adapter. All of your appliances must operate on 220V and 50 htz. If your appliance is not compliant, such products can be found by searching the internet.**
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries for any of your electrical items
- Camera (bring plenty of film if it is nondigital, as it is difficult to find in Ethiopia)
- Pens, paper, pencil, writing paper, and scotch tape
- A journal to record impressions and experiences
- A few rubber bands and twist ties can be very handy
- Airmail envelopes or U.S. stamps (for stays longer than a month, you may want to have another departing American volunteer/visitor hand carry your letters back to the US to mail, as it is faster than mailing from Ethiopia)
- Tac or adhesive tabs to hold up items on concrete walls
- Plastic hangers for clothes
- A laundry bag
- Clothesline and clothespins for your hand washed laundry
- Water bottle with cap to keep flies off the drinking spout. A small water cup for the bathroom is also handy.

Optional Items

- Liquid laundry detergent.
- Duct tape
- CD/MP3 player
- Books to read in the evenings
- Amharic phrasebook/dictionary (Lonely Planet publishes a small one)
- Shower caddy for your shampoo, soap, etc
- Your pillow, if you are particular about this. There are a variety pillow types in the guest quarters.

What Not To Bring

- Dry clean only items
- Gum for the children - anything you bring for the children or staff, please first discuss with Marta, Deme, or your designated Project Mercy staff member
- Cigarettes/Tobacco
- Alcohol

Health Information

Altitude Sickness

Addis Ababa & Yetebon are both at about 7900 ft. (2700 m) elevation.

If you live in an area of significantly lower elevation, you may experience some symptoms of altitude sickness during your first week in Ethiopia. This could include headache, dizziness, shortness of breath, and mild nausea. Drinking adequate water each day helps to alleviate the symptoms. You may consider taking a medication to reduce these symptoms. Discuss this with your physician.

Individuals with chronic asthma, COPD, or heart disease should obtain clearance from their physicians before considering a trip to Ethiopia, as the altitude could cause severe respiratory problems.

Immunizations and Medications

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has certain health recommendations for people planning to visit Ethiopia. The CDC website contains an up to date list of necessary and recommended immunizations and medications for travelers. After reviewing the CDC website, we urge you to speak with your healthcare provider to best determine the medications/vaccinations you will need, depending on factors such as your health and immunization history, areas of the country you will be visiting, and planned activities. Be sure to contact your health care provider far enough in advance to complete the immunizations/medications before traveling!

The CDC information on Ethiopia can be found at <http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/destinations/africa/ethiopia.php>

Malaria

Ethiopia is an area with chloroquineresistant Plasmodium falciparum malaria, and cases DO occur every year in Yetebon, usually during the rainy season. While the CDC and WHO claim that locations at altitudes greater than 2000 meters are not at risk for malaria, this is not correct for Ethiopia. Please review the CDC website for up-to-date malaria information and recommended antimalarial medications. We urge you to speak with your health care provider when deciding which antimalarial medications to take, as there can be serious side effects with certain malaria drugs.

Detailed information about malaria drugs can be found on the CDC website at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/malariadrugpublic.aspx>

Your Arrival

Passport Control

On arrival, you will be asked to complete a short Immigration Form. The forms may be distributed on the airplane or may be at the airport in front of the Passport Control area. The form includes a space to list your address while in Ethiopia. *You should write:*

Host Name: **Project Mercy (You are not staying in a hotel, so this is what you would answer)**

Contact Person: **Marta Gabre-Tsadick**

Address: Subcity (Keteme) - **Yeka**; Keble - **02**; House - **#511**

Zone/Region: **Shewa**

City: **Addis Ababa**

Phone: **011-646-3798 (hm)/011-645-8693 (office)**

The purpose of your visit: (If you are going “only” to visit) - "Tourist"

(If you are going to volunteer) – “Volunteer”

The form is turned into the Immigration Office, along with your Passport and Visa. Be sure to have your International Health Card available with the documentation of your Yellow Fever Immunization. They will probably not ask to see it if you are flying in from Europe or the U.S., but be prepared nonetheless.

Money Exchange

There is a Money Exchange window at the airport that is usually open when flights arrive. It is in the Baggage Claim area. The banks in Addis Ababa are open for changing money from 8 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday and 8 am to 12 pm on Saturdays. The Hilton Hotel has a convenient and quick currency exchange and that exchange rate is the same as the bank. You can determine the current exchange rate for US Dollars to Ethiopian Birr at

<http://finance.yahoo.com/currency/convert?amt=1&from=USD&to=ETB>

Baggage

Once you have cleared Passport Control, you will enter the Baggage Claim area. If needed, there are free luggage carts provided for your bags.

Meeting at the Airport

Unless you make other arrangements with Project Mercy, a driver will meet you at the airport to take you to your hotel or to Yetebon. They will be waiting for you *just outside of the terminal* in the parking lot. Look for the crowd of people and for someone with a “Project Mercy” sign for identification.

You will be driving to Yetebon in a Project Mercy vehicle. It is about a two to three hour drive. It is important to remember that you are in a third world country and the sites you will see will be reflective of this. Be sure to have a full water bottle and sunglasses for the trip. Be aware that there are no restroom facilities between Addis Ababa and Yetebon, so please plan accordingly. Also, upon arrival, expect jet lag for up to 23 days.

Volunteer Accommodations

Housing

Volunteers are housed, for the most part, in small two bedroom round houses (tukuls). They are sparsely furnished, but adequately, with twin beds, a closet rod, a small bedside table.



Blankets, sheets, and towels are provided. We do not provide washcloths. Laundry for guests is done on Wednesdays and needs to be dropped off outside the office at Yetebon compound in pillowcases or basket. The process may be rough on delicate items, so you may want to hand wash these items yourself. Do not pack clothes that require dry cleaning.



Ethiopians are quite sensitive to proprieties. Accommodations are arranged strictly by gender with the exception of married couples.

Meals

Meals for volunteers and staff are served family style in a common dining room. Breakfast is usually served at 7:30 am. Lunch is served from 12:00 until 12:30 pm and dinner from 6:30 to 7:00 pm. Sunday breakfast and lunch are usually served a bit later than other days. It is important to notify a Project Mercy staff member if you will not be present at a meal. All beverages are served at room temperature or hot, as there is limited refrigeration capabilities and no ice. There is rarely soda pop available in Yetebon.

Church Services

Nondenominational Christian church services are held in the Worship Center every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. They are entirely in Amharic, but anyone is more than welcome to attend. For those who desire to have the service translated into English, a translator can be arranged, but prior notice is necessary.

Local Customs

Greetings in Ethiopia are much more involved than in the United States and Europe. It is considered rude not to greet each person you encounter. Greetings could include handshaking (right hand only) or nodding your head to say "hello." Saying "Hello" and "How are you," especially in Amharic, to everyone you meet is greatly appreciated.

Eating in Ethiopia is traditionally done with the right hand, especially with finger foods, Ethiopian injera, and wat. Be sure to wash your hands before every meal, for hygienic reasons. Napkins are rarely used, but a wash room is available close to the dining hall where you can wash your hands at the end of the meal, if you so desire.

Practices to Avoid

Beckoning someone to come to you using the motion of an index finger is considered rude and should not be done. Also, interrupting a conversation is viewed as rude. One should never walk between two individuals carrying on a conversation.

Climate

Due to the elevation of Yetebon, the climate is generally very moderate. The rainy season is from June-August. Please refer to the chart below for Fahrenheit averages.

Month	Highs	Lows	Precipitation
January	70°	41°	☔
February	71°	44°	☔
March	72°	46°	☔☔☔
April	71°	47°	☔☔☔
May	70°	48°	☔☔☔☔
June	66°	47°	☔☔☔☔☔☔
July	64°	48°	☔☔☔☔☔☔☔☔☔☔
August	63°	47°	☔☔☔☔☔☔☔☔☔☔
September	64°	46°	☔☔☔☔☔☔
October	68°	44°	☔☔
November	68°	42°	
December	69°	40°	

Guidelines for Project Mercy Volunteers/Visitors

Welcome to Ethiopia! All of us here at Project Mercy thankfully accept your generous offer of service and are excited about serving together. As you prepare for your time with us, it is important that you learn a bit about the people and culture that you will be serving. There are many cultural differences that may not be readily apparent, so please take the time to read this document.

Although you may not understand the reason behind some of our rules and guidelines, they are compiled as a result of the experiences we have had over the years of working within the Ethiopian culture. If you have any questions during your time with us about the culture, languages, and background of the Yetebon area, please feel comfortable to ask your Project Mercy host.

To ensure that your mission experience is mutually beneficial to you, Project Mercy, and the Yetebon people, and that your wellbeing and the work of Project Mercy is not jeopardized in any way, we ask you to remember and respect the guidelines listed below:

1. Walking outside of the compound

- There are areas to walk inside and around the compound. If walking outside the compound, there is a dirt path around the compound wall and also a road to the hospital that is 1.5 miles one way. If you desire to walk outside of the compound, please let the designated host know (Ato Beagdalene) so that your safety is ensured.
- If you wish to explore some of the trails up the mountain, notify the Project Mercy host (Ato Beagdalene) know of your desire to go. It is good for one or more of our older students to accompany our volunteers on their hikes. They can share information, point out items of interest and translate the language making your hike a more enjoyable and safe experience. Exercise caution during the rainy season if you are permitted to hike the mountains as flash flooding can occur and cause dangerous travel situations while hiking.

2. Treats/gifts for the children, community or PM staff

- Please do not give out money or gifts to the children, community or PM staff. This can cause offense as other people will be wondering why they didn't get a gift too. It will also begin a trend of them asking future visitors for money or gifts and create the expectation that they will continue to receive the same treatment from others. If you want to give gifts, please give them to your Project Mercy host, so we can use them to benefit the greatest number of people and ensure that they are distributed equally. If you want to leave CD players, CDs, cameras and other electronics items behind, please discuss that with your Project Mercy host (Ato Beagdalene).

3. When talking with Ethiopians

- Please do not encourage the people to believe that America is a land of easy opportunity and plenty. It can breed discontent with their lifestyle and their country.
- FYI if you give out your address (land or email) we have had complaints from some of our previous visitors/volunteers who have received numerous requests for money for various reasons.
- Although a bubbly personality is embraced in the US, in Ethiopia it can be misunderstood as flirtatious so being conscientious of the very modest and subdued culture is important.

4. Promises

- Please do not give the staff or children false hope. Unfortunately, we have had guests that have made various promises to the staff and children of Yetebon, and once they returned home, did not follow through. This makes it more challenging for us to gain and keep the staff's and children's trust.

5. Visitors may not drive Project Mercy vehicles

- Visitors/volunteers may not drive any of Project Mercy vehicles. It is an insurance liability for Project Mercy and could result in financial and legal issues which would detain you in the country until resolved.

6. Laundry and trash disposal

- On Wednesday before breakfast, please place your personal laundry in a bag outside the Yetebon office. After your clothes are laundered, they will be put in the Guest Dining Hall for your pickup a day or two later.
- Please burn your garbage in the incinerator at the end of the path behind Assembly Hall.

7. Visiting Teaching or Medical Staff in their homes

- *If asked, please do not visit staff members in their homes for meals or tea.* We have a wonderful staff, and they will desire to get to know you better; however, as your friendship develops, it can become tempting for them to ask for money or items you may have brought with you. We want to shield our staff from this temptation and keep our volunteers from being put in an uncomfortable position.

8. Transportation

- Garies are buggies pulled by horses or donkeys. We ask that you *do not ride* in them due to their poor construction, inexperienced drivers, loose harnesses and overcrowding that has caused accidents and serious injury to riders. As your host, we also ask that you do not ride in the three wheeled cars or use any public transportation due to a safety issue. Transportation, aside from Project Mercy, should be secured from a private taxi company

9. Going to Butajira

- Butajira is located about 7 miles from the compound. In Butajira, you will find stores where you can buy food and clothing, a few internet cafes, and some restaurants. If you desire to go there, please make arrangements with the Project Mercy host (Ato Beagdalene) to be driven there at a mutually convenient time.

10. Meals

- The kitchen staff works hard to prepare meals and make sure there is enough for everyone. Please notify the Project Mercy host (Ato Beagdalene) if you will not be there for a meal.

11. Sick / Diarrhea

- If your stomach becomes upset and/or diarrhea occurs, let the Project Mercy host or kitchen staff know so tea and special diet can be prepared for you. Dehydration can occur quickly so do not be shy in notifying your Project Mercy host, Ato Beagdalene.

14. Eating/drinking in local food establishments or homes outside of the compound

- *It is advised that you do not eat in community homes or in the local food establishments in the Yetebon area. If, however, you should choose to do so, please exercise caution. Particularly avoid raw vegetables and chopped raw meat (kitfo) eating these items can lead to serious health problems. Water that the vegetables are washed with and the preparation of the meat will likely make you ill because your system is*

not used to the same bacteria's the community is used to. Water is often drawn from a common water source that is also used for bathing, washing, and for animals. Check with Project Mercy host for suggestions of restaurants in the Yetebon/Butajira area. For your wellbeing, please only drink bottled water when outside the compound.

15. At dawn and dusk, when outside, wear long pants/ long sleeved shirt, socks and shoes

- Malaria is prevalent in this area and the mosquitoes hide in the grass. Please cover all skin areas to help prevent mosquito bites.

We realize there are a lot of precautionary points to remember, but please remember that they are mentioned to ensure that your mission experience is mutually beneficial to you, Project Mercy, and the Yetebon people, and that your wellbeing and the work of Project Mercy is not jeopardized in any way.

PROJECT MERCY ADMINISTRATION

To learn more about the Ethiopian Culture or gain more insight in volunteering overseas, we have provided the following for further reading:

African Friends and Money Matters, by David Maranz

Cross Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry, by Duane Elmer

Missional Church: A Theological Vision for the Sending Church in North America, by Darrell Guder

Working with the Poor: New Insights and Learnings from Development Practitioners, by Bryant Myers

Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War, by Mary Anderson

Contact Information

Mailing address

In Ethiopia (It takes about 2 weeks for US mail to reach Addis and longer for packages.)

Project Mercy
P.O. Box 29516
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In the U.S.

Project Mercy
7011 Ardmere Ave.
Fort Wayne, IN 46809

Web Site

www.projectmercy.org

Email

pminfo@projectmercy.org (Office in United States)

projectmercyeth@gmail.com (Office in Addis Ababa)

Phone

When calling Ethiopia, please remember the time difference when calling. Ethiopia is 7 hours later than Eastern Standard Time.

011-251-11-645-8693 (PM Addis Office)

While in Ethiopia, you can make outgoing phone calls from Butajira (7 miles from Yetebon), but it is expensive (\$10.00 US for 3 minutes).

In the United States

(260) 747-2559 Project Mercy Headquarters phone

(260) 478-1361 Project Mercy Fax

FAQS

How much money will I need for personal expenses while in Yetebon?

Room and board expenses are \$40 per day. If you plan to go into Butajira (the nearest town) to shop or eat, you need to plan for a little extra cash. Please have it safely stowed as *pick-pocketing* does occur.

Do I need to take linens, towels, etc.?

No, they will be provided.

Should I take mosquito netting?

No, we have this on hand if needed. It is usually not necessary except in rainy season.

When is the rainy season?

June, July, and August, which are considered "winter" here.

Can you catch Malaria in Yetebon?

YES, but risk is mainly during the rainy season. If you will be here during those months, or if you are staying longer than 23 weeks, you should take malaria prophylaxis (see Health Information).

Is the food and water safe?

Yes, water and all food served in the compound at Yetebon are safe. We boil and filter our water, and wash all produce and it is grown organically. *Outside of the Project Mercy compound, you should drink ONLY bottled or boiled filtered water, and eat only cooked meat and vegetables.* All fruit should be washed and peeled before eating.

Can I wear sandals?

Yes, around the compound, but bring COMFORTABLE walking shoes or tennis shoes for walking outside the compound, jogging, or playing sports.

Can I wear slacks or shorts?

You can wear slacks or jeans, but bring a dress for Sunday Services, if you plan to attend. *Shorts are NOT worn, except while playing sports within the compound and should be at least knee length.* Ethiopians are conservative about dress, and legs and arms are usually covered, however short sleeves are acceptable.

What about laundry?

Laundry will be done for you on Wednesdays but should be left outside the Yetebon PM office in a bag and will be returned to the Guest Dining hall in the evening or next day. There is a charge of \$7.00 per commercial load. You

will want to hand wash your own delicate items, so bring Woolite or the equivalent.

What kind of food is served at Yetebon?

Food is a mixture of American & Ethiopian, with vegetables, potatoes, lentils, homemade bread, rice or spaghetti, chicken, injera (traditional fermented Ethiopian flat bread), and wat (a spicy stew with lamb, beef, or lentils, spooned on the injera & scooped up by hand to eat).

Breakfasts usually consist of porridge or pancakes and bread and on occasion fruit and eggs. Tea and coffee are served with breakfast and after lunch and dinner. Water is served with all meals. Hot milk is available upon request, but not cold milk. Other than fruit bread or British biscuits, desserts are extremely rare. It is helpful to bring peanut butter and jam for those meals you may want to revert to a PB&J sandwich.

What types of souvenirs are available?

The Women's Skill Center at Project Mercy makes lovely colorful, traditional baskets and embroidered placemats and napkins that are excellent gifts. The proceeds of the sales provide direct income to the needy families of the Yetebon area. If you are interested in purchasing any of the items, please let Marta or the Yetebon Project Manager (Ato Beagdalene) know in advance.

There are also numerous craft items available in the cities. Various NGOs of Ethiopia hold a craft market monthly in Addis Ababa. The proceeds of these sales also go to worthy causes. Inquire in Addis Ababa for exact dates.

Ethiopia is famous for its coffee. Coffee can be purchased in a variety of roasts from several coffee companies in Addis Ababa. If you would like to take coffee back with you, be sure to make arrangements with a Project Mercy staff member