

Ethiopia



Information

Language: Amharic

Capital: Addis Ababa

Population: 78,254,090

Currency: Birr (ETB)

(*Good*) [Rate!]

Current rating: 4/5 (4 votes)

Your rating:

Hitchability: Excellent Good Average Bad Almost impossible

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Waiting for the right lift, South of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is listed as one of the world poorest countries, and very few people have cars there. Nevertheless, hitchhiking there is possible and completely doable, although it might require some patience of yours. Ethiopians probably see a hitcher as having a robbery or banditry motive since hitchhiking is an unknown concept there, however, white guys might have a bonus. Taxis might stop for you if you use a wrong hitchhiking technique. In rural areas, *faranji* might do hitchhiking when public transport is absent although payment can be expected in a matter of contribution to the high cost of fuel (*according to the Lonely Planet*). Nevertheless, it is possible to catch some free rides but it may require patience. Just tell the driver clearly you won't pay when boarding a vehicle.

Ethiopia is a fairly safe country, however the *faranji* frenzy will definitely quickly become an annoyance as you travel throughout the country. Along some rural main roads, it has been commonly heard that white foreigner (cyclist or 4WD) were thrown rock at them as part of an attention seeking game.



Having a free lift (in this case with people from an NGO).

The country's car license plate system is very specific: the colour states the status of the ownership (*Blue* for Private Ownership/ *Black* for Government / *Orange* for Businesses or NGOs / *Red* for Taxis). The NGOs plate always starts with a number (*generally 35, other numbers simply specify the origins of the local organisation*) while *CD* (*in White/Yellow/Black*) represents embassies and diplomatic cars with the first number specifying the country of origin. The 2 letters of the region of registration also appears on the license plate, both in Latin alphabet and local Amharic; As example, *AA* stands for Addis Ababa.

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Experiences

In the summer of 2010, [Gerben](#) hitchhiked through **Ethiopia**, from the [Sudanese](#) border crossing near [Gonder](#) to the [Kenyan](#) border at [Moyale](#). His experience was very positive, and even though little children and also adults were very curious whenever he passed through a village, he experienced none of the rock throwing mentioned in other reports. Waiting time was generally short.

In February 2012, KiwiAoraki hitchhiked in some areas of Ethiopia. Locals, especially away from tourist areas can either be very curious or a real annoyance. It can be difficult to get a lift if you have a mob of 8 children following you. When he hitched from Harar to Addis Ababa he was picked up by an NGO vehicle and given a lift for 70 km without charge. A ute then picked him up going all the way to Addis, but the driver got angry upon dropping him off due to not having any birr. Drivers usually expect payment from hitchhikers, especially foreigners.

Borders

According to the Lonely Planet, the border with [Djibouti](#) through [Galafi](#) is accessible only by hitching for its last length with the load of truckers doing the road between [Djibouti](#) Harbour and [Awash](#) where a payment of about 150-200Birr (from [Logiya](#)) can be expected.

Ethiopia

Note that hitching along that road could reveal extremely harsh and dangerous due to local banditry and more especially due to the harshness of this desertic environment (along the Awash-Djibouti Road).

There are borders with:

- Eritrea: Border crossing is currently closed since the 1998 war
- Djibouti: via Logiya and Galafi

or via Dire Dawa and Gelille

- Somalia/Somaliland: via Jijiga (to Somaliland)
- Kenya: via Moyale
- Sudan: via Metemat, note that visa is required in advance which takes up to one month to obtain.
- South Sudan

Cities

- Addis Ababa
- Bahir Dar
- Dire Dawa
- Awassa
- Jijiga

Caution

- Beware of Landmines at the border regions to Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea and Kenya!
- Some Regions are simply closed for Foreigner, either due to the risk of attack, local tension or banditry. These usually includes the Ethiopian Somali Region (*Werder*) and the border with Eritrea. Other region such as the southwestern border with Sudan and Kenya as well as the Afar region can be volatile, so inquire before you go.
- Refrain from giving to beggars or children, be it small changes, pencils or any goods whatsoever as these raises their dependency and expectation on tourist.

Links

- My time in Ethiopia, August 19, 2005 by Hologram
- Ethiopia at Wikitravel
- Ethiopia on digihitch
- Articles on abgefahren-ev.de/blogs about Ethiopia (de)