Tigris’ Open Air Museum: Wukro-Gheralta Region & the Rock-Hewn Churches

Tigris is Ethiopia’s northernmost state, bordering on Eritrea to the north and Sudan to the west. Tigrai is known as “the cradle of Ethiopian mapping” and is rich in history, culture, and natural beauty. Tigrai is home to several rock-hewn churches, many of which are located in the Wukro-Gheralta region.

Getting to the Gheralta Region

There are many ways to reach Tigrai to start your rock-hewn church pilgrimage. From Addis Ababa, it is recommended to take a regional Ethiopian Airlines flight to Mekele, a 3-hour flight. From Mekele, you may then take a public minibus to Wukro (1 hour) or Hawzen (2.5 hours). Alternatively, a car and driver can be hired through travel agencies. If you are staying in Hawzen, the drive to Abune Yemata is approximately 4 hours (and an additional half-hour to reach the Gheralta Valley). For budget travelers, a number of accommodation options and day travel are available near the Igresa, Wegayn, Debre Tabor, and Hawzen.

Tourist Map of Tigris Region

There are also a number of tour operators running tours to the Gheralta region, including:

- Two Hearts Tours
- TigraPoint
- Tigra Tours
- Wukro Tours

Entry Fees & Tipping

Each church is privately owned and is maintained by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Generally, you will need to pay a small entry fee to visit each church. Some churches may charge a small amount for photography. It is customary to tip the guides who lead you to each church. The amount is negotiable but typically ranges from 500 to 1000 Ethiopian birr per church. Tipping is not required, but it is appreciated.

The Ethiopian Calendar & Events

Visiting Ethiopia is like stepping back in time – a beautiful Passage of Time. The Ethiopian calendar is 11.5 months long and is based on the ancient calendar of the ancient Ethiopian Empire. The calendar is measured in the ancient Ethiopian era or “Ethiopian year,” which begins on the first day of the month of March in the Gregorian calendar. Each year has 13 months, with the last month consisting of 13 days. The Ethiopian calendar is also used to mark the start of the year, which begins on the first day of March in the Gregorian calendar.

Important Cultural Events

If you are planning to visit Ethiopia, it is important to know that there are several cultural events that you might want to attend. Each region of Ethiopia has its own unique cultural traditions and festivals. One of the most popular events is the Ethiopian Orthodox Church’s celebration of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church’s annual churches, which is celebrated on the appointed date and time expressed according to the Ethiopian calendar.

The Theological Calendar & Events

While the Ethiopian calendar is used to mark the start of the year, it is also used to mark important events in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has a rich history and is the oldest Christian church in the world. The church is known for its beautiful architecture, its rich heritage, and its deep cultural traditions. Many of the churches in the Wukro-Gheralta region are located in the town of Tigrai and are home to some of the most beautiful and oldest churches in the country. The churches are open to visitors and are a beautiful place to explore. Many of the churches in the region are located in the town of Tigrai and are open to visitors. The churches are open to visitors and are a beautiful place to explore. Many of the churches in the region are located in the town of Tigrai and are open to visitors. The churches are open to visitors and are a beautiful place to explore.
Highlights of the WUKRO-GERHALTA REGION

Abraha We Atsbeha (1)

The only rock-hewn church on the route, Abraha We Atsbeha is marked by its size. The church is located on the outskirts of Wukro, built in the 16th century to commemorate the victory of Emperor Abraha We Atsbeha over the Byzantine troops at the Battle of Adua. The church is a rare example of the early Christian church architecture of the region.

Gisorgi Maikadhi (6)

Just below the entrance of the church is a small oven, which was used to bake the bread for the Eucharist. The church itself is simple in design, with a single nave and small apse.

Degum Selassie (2)

Degum Selassie is located high on the hill at the north end of Degum village. It was built in the 16th century and is one of the best-preserved examples of the region's rock-hewn church architecture. The church is cruciform in shape and has a small apse. Visitors may also find the remains of a rock-cut cistern nearby.

Mariam Papaseiti (7)

Mariam Papaseiti is located near Degum village. The church is cruciform in shape and was built in the 15th century. It is one of the most well-preserved churches in the area.

Abune Yemata (Guh) (3)

Abune Yemata (Guh) is located 15km from Wukro, are believed to be the 4th century. The church is located on a cliff overlooking a valley and is one of the most picturesque in the region. Visitors may climb the rocks to reach the entrance of the church.

Tolle Haimanst Haroni (4)

Tolle Haimanst Haroni is one of the best-preserved churches in the region. It is located on a hillside and is cruciform in shape. The church is believed to have been built in the 16th century.

Delve Tzion Abune Abraham (8)

Delve Tzion Abune Abraham is located near Degum village. The church is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. It is one of the most well-preserved churches in the area.

Yohannes Masqelili (5)

Yohannes Masqelili is located near Debub Abune Aregel. The church is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. The church is one of the most well-preserved churches in the area.

Daniel and Maryam Korkor (9)

Located on the south of Medhani Alem, Maryam and Daniel Korkor is one of the best-preserved churches in the region. The church is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. The church is one of the most well-preserved churches in the area.

Abune Gozes Mikael Koronas (10)

Abune Gozes Mikael Koronas is located high on the hill at the north end of Abuna Gozes village. The church is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. The church is one of the most well-preserved churches in the area.

Wukro Church (11)

Wukro Church is located near the center of Wukro. The church is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. The church is one of the most well-preserved churches in the area.

Hawzen Market (12)

Hawzen Market is located near the center of Hawzen. The market is one of the best-preserved in the region. The market is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. The market is one of the most well-preserved markets in the area.

Wukro Museum (13)

Wukro Museum is located near the center of Wukro. The museum is cruciform in shape and was built in the 16th century. The museum is one of the most well-preserved museums in the area.