



Pre-trip Planning, Preparation and What to Expect for a Stay at Selamta

Welcome! We are very excited to have you serve our Selamta Families.

This document is intended to be a step-by-step guide to help you prepare for your travel and stay with us.

Upon receiving this guide, you should have already:

- Filled out our Volunteer Application
- Received your travel budget tool

Before traveling to Selamta you will need to:

- Sign our Medical and Release forms
- Sign our Volunteer Code of Conduct Form

You will need the following information to complete steps 4, 5 and 10.

Destination and Place of Residence:

Selamta Community Center
Phone Number: 0113-499-054

Physical Address:

City: Addis Ababa
Region: 14
Zone: Unknown
K. Ketema (Woreda): Kolfe Keranyo 07
Kebele: Anfo Meda, Bethel Neighborhood
House Number: New

Primary Contact:

Tamrat Kebede, Ethiopian Director
251-911-607-922

Step 1 – Passport

If you do not have a valid passport, this is your first step. Start this process as soon as possible, as the time frame to receive it may vary.

If you do have a valid Passport, check the expiration date, as it should not expire within 6 months of your return date.

Visit <http://travel.state.gov> for more information about passports.

Step 2 – Medical Clearance

Traveling halfway around the world is a big deal and can take a toll on your body. We recommend that you visit your primary care physician before purchasing tickets to make sure that you are medically cleared to travel.

You may need additional vaccinations for this trip. Your doctor should be able to provide this information for you, or you can visit the Centers for Disease Control website for specific information about traveling to Ethiopia.

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/clinician/none/ethiopia>

Malaria – Addis Ababa is not in a malarial zone due to its high elevation. However, if you are traveling outside the city, please consult your physician.

Suggested Medication:

- We recommend obtaining Ciprofloxacin (a strong antibiotic) from your doctor in case of any intestinal infection/traveler's upset stomach.
- Get enough of any personal prescription medications to last the duration of your trip. Make sure to keep a copy of your original prescription with the medication during travel.
- If you are prone to altitude sickness, it may benefit you to talk with your doctor. Addis Ababa is 7,500 feet above sea level. (Most visitors will find that they adjust within a day or two, without any serious symptoms.)

You may also look into getting travel and international health insurance. This can be done through a 3rd party insurance company, or with a travel agent when you book your plane tickets.

Step 3 – Book Your Flight

You are welcome to book travel however you choose – online or through an agent. We've had good luck with the following travel agency.

Golden Rule Travel

Eldon Wagler – wagler@goldrule.net
Goldenruletravel.com

****We will refer you to a travel agent - please let us know your flight plans before booking

Please Note: if you are traveling for Selamta Summer Camp or a team Vision Trip, please consult Margaret before booking flights. We prefer to have teams travel together, for safety and transport purposes.

After booking is complete, please forward your travel confirmation to:
margaret@selamtafamilyproject.org

Step 4 – Travel Visa

All visitors must have a visa to enter Ethiopia. You have two options for obtaining one.

- 30-day Travel Visa: This is available upon arrival at Bole International Airport in Ethiopia for \$50. Pay with clean, newer bills.
- 2 year Travel Visa: If you are staying longer than 30 days or plan on returning frequently, this may be a better choice for you. You can apply through the Ethiopian Embassy for \$70. Please consider that this process needs to be completed before departing the U.S. Please plan accordingly, as your passport will need to be processed at the Ethiopian Embassy in D.C., and that may take time.
 - Border of Entry: Addis Ababa
 - Purpose of Travel: Tourism/Family Visit
 - Entries: Multiple
 - Ethiopian Contact and Family Address found on page 1.
- Visit the [Ethiopian Embassy](#) for more details.
- We've pre-filled Selamta information in this [visa application form](#).

Step 5 – Register Your Trip with the US State Department

In the unlikely event of an emergency, the State Department will make sure you get home safely. Registration is a simple process that you can complete online.

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

Step 6 – Money, Cash, Moolah....Birr

Whenever you plan to leave the country, notify your bank of where you are going and how long you're going to be there. Your bank will ensure your card isn't suspected of fraud, as well as activate your credit/debit/ATM card to allow international transactions.

When in Ethiopia, plan to use cash as your primary method of payment. Debit/credit cards, although gaining traction, are not widely accepted.

Ethiopian Birr is the local currency – the exchange rates update daily, but are currently just over 28 Birr to 1 USD.

- Cash can be exchanged at the airport, hotels, or local banks.
- Please note that it is very difficult to exchange Birr back to USD at the end of your trip. We recommend exchanging money in incremental amounts, as needed.
- It is a good idea to have two ways to access money. ATMs are accessible at the local hotels. Please note that not every credit card company will be accepted. Visa and Mastercard are your best bets. International ATM fees may be higher than average, ranging from \$5 - \$10 per transaction.

If you bring a lot of cash, please be very aware and careful with your money. We work hard to keep the house secure, but there are a lot of folks, including volunteers, kids, and Selamta community members that go in and out of the building. You will have a locked room and locked closet for storing personal items. There is also a safe available upon request.

Step 7 – The Packing List

Check with your airline for specific weight and size requirements for both checked and carry-on bags. They vary by airline and update frequently.

Donated items are greatly appreciated by Selamta. Please plan on reserving one of your 50 lb. bags for donations. This is a huge help for us.

Weather:

- The weather in Addis is consistent for most of the year – highs in the upper 70's/low 80's and lows in the low 50's/high 40's.

- The summer months are considered the rainy season in Ethiopia. During this time, you will find the temps to be on the lower end, feeling very cold, and you should plan accordingly for the rain and mud....lots of mud.
- The rest of the year is generally very sunny and pleasant, with occasional afternoon showers and muddy days.

Below is a suggested packing list, but we recommend you modify it based on your needs. Less is more when preparing for Ethiopia. You will be able to do laundry by hand if necessary.

Clothing – It's a little more modest, but similar to home.

- Versatile pants and jeans – shorts are not worn much in Ethiopia
- Long sleeve and short sleeve shirts – tank tops are not recommended
- Knee length or longer skirts or dresses (optional)
- Underwear
- Socks (wool and/or cotton)
- Shoes – The terrain in Bethel is uneven. Sneakers, crocs, or something similar are the best bet for getting around the neighborhood. Flip-flops can work as long as they are sturdy. They are also better for days/nights spent in downtown Addis. If traveling during the summer rainy season, mud boots or shoes that can be easily washed off are recommended.
- Slip on shoes to wear around the inn or to carry with you to the houses. At family homes, they may urge you to keep your shoes on, as they're tremendously worried about your comfort, regardless of mud you may track in.
- Rain jacket
- Lightweight sweatshirts or sweaters - nights are cool in Addis. As soon as the sun goes down, you'll want something to cover your arms.
- Fleece/heavier sweatshirts
- Warm sweatpants/pajama pants for the evenings
- Wraps and scarves – they are super versatile, and you will see them all over Ethiopia.
- A handbag or small backpack to carry daily essentials – sturdy and cross body bags are much safer than smaller handbags.

Health and Cosmetics

- Dental care – toothbrush, toothpaste, floss
- Prescription medications with copy of prescription
- Vision care – glasses, extra contacts, and contact solution
- Insect repellent (optional – may be beneficial for summer trips)
- Sunscreen (optional)
- Deodorant, lotion razors, etc.
- Chapstick
- Tampons/pads – you can buy maxi pads in Addis. However, Tampons are harder to find. We recommend bringing everything you need.

- Pre-moistened wipes – can be used to freshen up if there is no water for a short time. You cannot flush paper products down the toilet so wet wipes are nice to have for toilet use as well.
- Hair supplies – shampoo and conditioner for your stay, brush/comb, hair ties, etc.
- Bath towel and washcloth for showers
- Over the counter medicines (optional) – these may be available in our Nurse's office, although it will not be available 24/7.
 - Imodium or another anti-diarrheal
 - Fiber pills if you have a tender tummy (LOTS of carbs)
 - Pain medicine
 - Antacid (food can be spicy)
 - Cold medicine, cough drops and/or allergy medicine (if you're prone to allergies)
 - Multivitamin (optional; must stop taking any multivitamins if you begin taking Cipro)
 - Sleep aid
- Hand sanitizer
- Snacks – it is nice to have an easy portable snack. Granola/protein bars, nuts, dried fruit, candy, your favorite treat from home, canned chicken or tuna, etc. make great snacks or meal replacements.

Miscellaneous:

- Photocopies of your passport (distributed throughout bags), driver's license or other identification and health insurance card
- Earplugs or headphones – prayers are broadcast over loudspeakers starting at 4 or 5 a.m. and again in the evening. The dogs at night can be quite loud as well.
- Books
- DVD's – the Community Center has a DVD player and you can watch movies in the evening. Please write your name on the DVD and keep in your room.
- A journal – your stay at Selamta will probably be emotional. Journaling is often a good way to express these emotions and remember your experiences.
- Photos of your family and friends – the kids will love to see who is important in your life back home.
- Portable electronics – just be aware of the risks.
- Camera, charger or batteries, extra memory – our youth will want to take pictures with you and of you...be mindful.
- Electrical adaptor for Ethiopia/Africa
- Small flashlight or head-lamp
- Refillable water bottle
- Alarm clock/watch/cell phone with time
- Playing cards or other games to bring to family homes - creates fast friendships with kids.

- Lock for suitcase (optional)

Step 8 - Donations Needed

As mentioned above, volunteers should plan to bring at least one 50 lb. bag of donations with them as they travel.

While you are collecting donations and packing, remember that quality is very important. If it's not something you would consider a gift to receive, we should not be giving it to others. Every item should be in new condition and very clean.

Some items that we can always use include:

Clothing. Keep in mind who we're clothing. Primarily mothers and children. However, most of our children are older teenagers, of which the majority are very small framed.

- Boys and girls' sizes 8 and up
- Men's sizes: No larger than a 32 waist and size Medium shirt. Most boys are very thin.
- Women's sizes: 0 through 10. Shirts up to size Large; most of our girls are smaller framed though.
- Clothing items we specifically DO need:
 - Jeans
 - Soccer cleats and sneakers (New condition)
 - Athletic gear, male and female (Examples: gym shorts, synthetic t-shirts, athletic socks, sports bras, etc.)
 - Womens bras (New)
 - Underwear (New)
- Clothing items we don't need:
 - T-shirts
 - Clothing that is obviously worn
 - Clothing of very large sizes

Other donation items:

- Medical and Sanitation Supplies
 - Bandages
 - Antibiotic ointment
 - Pain and cold medicine
 - Anti-diarrheals
 - Toothbrushes and toothpaste
 - Women's sanitary pads (Not tampons)

- Books – fun and interesting reads. (Example: Magic Tree House, Captain Underpants, etc.)
- Prizes for teenagers (personal hygiene items: deodorant, cologne, body lotion,
- Colored pencils, quality markers, art supplies

Step 9 - Communication in Ethiopia

Calling Ethiopia by phone: The U.S. exit code is 011 and Ethiopia's country code is 251

If you are interested in talking to people at home by phone, visit www.callethiopia.com. It is an online calling card system that you can add minutes to and it is much less expensive than calling long distance. The person in the U.S. initiates the call to Ethiopia.

Email, online texting, messaging, and Facebook are generally a better option for communication, opposed to a phone call. The Selamta Community Center is wired with wifi and Ethernet cable for computer, tablet and smartphone use. Internet is not always consistent, and has often gone multiple days/weeks without working.

The wifi password will be provided upon arrival.

Viber is also an easy-to-use online calling app. FaceTime, Skype, and FB video are options as well.

We recommend you keep your smart phone in airplane mode to avoid undesirable cell phone charges.

You will have access to a volunteer cell phone for in-country calls if you're out in the neighborhood or in Addis. You can also bring your own cell phone that has a sim-card slot and use that if you prefer. Our staff will help make sure you have minutes, as they can be bought at many local shops.

Step 10: Arrival!

At the airport:

- Once you deplane, head to baggage claim.
- Come down the escalator and get in line for your "visa on arrival" if you do not yet have your visa.
- Once you have your visa, you will move through the immigration line.

- Once through the immigration line, head to your baggage carousel to gather your checked luggage.
- YOU WILL NEED TO SHOW YOUR LUGGAGE CLAIM TICKET. The ticket agent at your departing airport should have given it to you when you checked your luggage.
- You may or may not have a bag scan and search at customs on your way out to the main lobby.
- There are many friendly people who may ask if you need help with your bags both inside and outside the airport. We recommend that you do not accept their help, as they will be looking for a tip. Our drivers WILL NOT be looking for a tip, nor should you offer one.
- One of our drivers will be at the airport to meet you. You will get a confirmation of who is picking you up, including his phone number, the week of your departure.
- Drivers cannot come inside the airport terminal. Once you have your bags, make your way to the outside of the terminal using the exit doors in the middle of the terminal. Walk your bags down the middle ramp to the parking lot waiting area. One of our staff members will be waiting for you with a sign that has Selamta's logo and your name.
- If you do not see our driver, please call him to determine his location. If you do not have a working cell phone with you, someone near you or an airport employee will most likely let you borrow their phone; Ethiopians are very hospitable and welcoming to visitors.

Selamta Community Center

What you can expect upon arrival at the Selamta Community Center:

It is located centrally to all 10 Forever Family Homes, with no more than a 15 minute walk to any house.

- 1st Floor: Selamta family gathering space, including computer lab, library, clinic, and kitchen
- 2nd Floor: offices and counseling rooms, ¾ bath with shower
- 3rd Floor: accommodations
 - Comfortable and clean bunk-style rooms
 - 2 ½ fully functioning baths, with toilet, sink, and tubs
- A kitchen that you are welcome to use, with gas stove and small fridge
- Filtered tap water from select first floor faucets, provided by Splash.org
- Breakfast and lunch items will be provided in the kitchen for you to prepare
- Daily items can be bought at local storefronts or Shoa supermarket
- WiFi is available, but due to power outages, is often unreliable
- A guard will always be on duty, rotating 24 hour shifts.



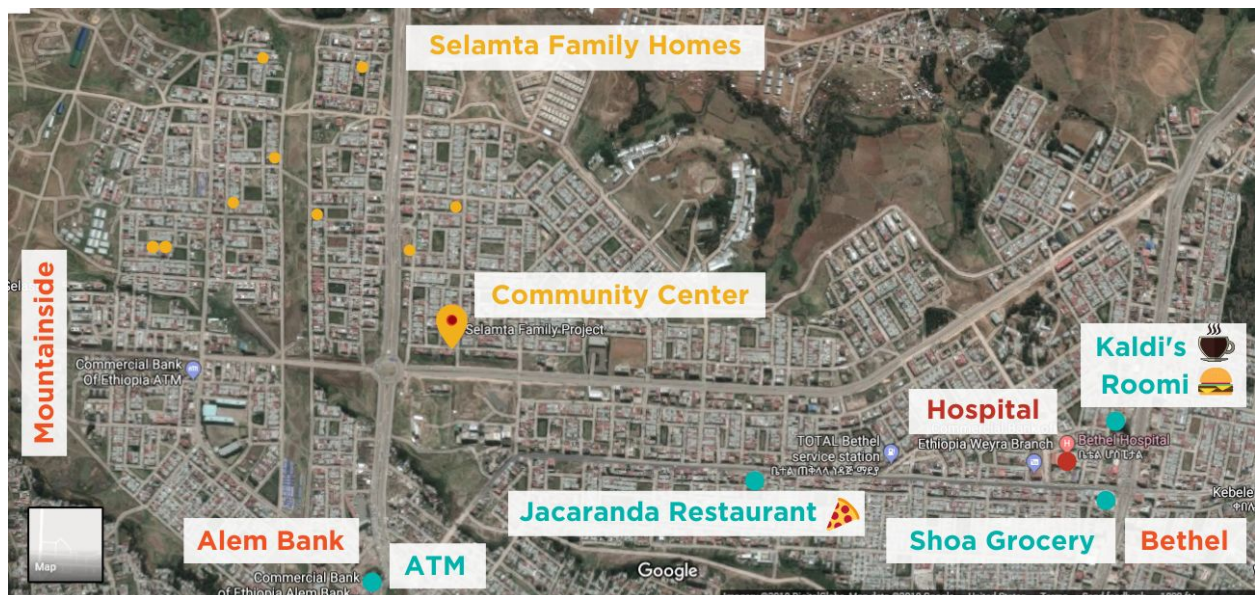
***** Please note that the power in Ethiopia goes out on occasion and could affect the Selamta facility



Step 11: At Selamta

Traveling around the community

- After the day's responsibilities are complete there will be time to travel through the community
- Please let Selamta staff know where you are going in the community
- Never travel by yourself



Extended travel before or after Serving at Selamta

- After you leave Selamta, or before your arrival, you may want to take a day excursion or longer trip
- Things to do in Addis
 - National Museum of Ethiopia (has the remains of Lucy)

- Mount Entoto (Has a museum and church)
- Mercato (The largest outdoor market in Africa, be warned, pickpocketing is rampant and a guide is suggested)
- Day Trips from Addis
 - Debre Libanos Monastery (Features the ruins of a 13th century monastery as well as great views)
 - Menagesha Forest (Has monkeys and birds and great views)
 - Wenchi Crater Lake (A beautiful lake with a monastery)
 - Debre Zeit (Features a lake with great views and relaxing atmosphere)
- Longer Trips from Addis (There are several guide companies that will lead you on these trips)
 - Harar (An ancient city in the east that has many museums and an opportunity to see hyenas)
 - Gondor and Lalibela (Both located in the north and feature ancient stone churches)
 - Simien Mountains (A UNESCO world heritage site, in the north, features indigenous wildlife and stunning views)
 - Awash Park (A wildlife park about 3 hours drive east of Addis. Features many animals such as antelope, dikdik, baboons and wild boar)
 - Hawassa (In the south, features a lake, stunning views and animals such as hippos)

Below are current photos of our staff, so you will find familiar faces upon arrival. Our staff will be more than happy to answer questions or help you in any way. We hope that your time in Ethiopia is remarkable and unforgettable, and we are thrilled to have you become a part of the Selamta family. Welcome!

US Contacts:

Marisa Stam – Executive Director
863-840-1719
marisa@selamtafamilyproject.org

Margaret Hoffer - Volunteer Coordinator
443-833-0158
margaret@selamtafamilyproject.org

Abby Morrow - Projects and Systems Team Leader
863-840-0725
abby@selamtafamilyproject.org

Jim Wasz – Board President
860-840-1719
jwasz1979@gmail.com

Ethiopian Staff and Contact info:

Our full professional staff list can be found [on our website](#).

	
<p>Tamrat Kebede Ethiopian Director tamrat@selamtafamilyproject.org Cell: 251-911-607-922</p>	<p>Habtie Mulushewa Ethiopian Assistant Director habtie@selamtafamilyproject.org Cell: 251-911-535-446</p>
	
<p>Zelalem Hailu Education Manager zelalemhailu2014@gmail.com Cell: 251-927-172-993</p>	<p>Etsegenet Mulugeta Psychologist Cell: 0911-978-819 etsegenet@selamtafamilyproject.org</p>

	
Demeke Abey Selamta Community Center Guard	Eshetie Asfaw Selamta Community Center Guard
	
Wondi Argaw Selamta Driver 251-973-940-243	Shishige Community Center House Keeper

Pre-Trip Planning Checklist

- ☐ Check and Update Your Passport
- ☐ Get necessary vaccines and medications
- ☐ Book your flight
- ☐ Register your Trip with the State Department
- ☐ Apply for Travelers Insurance (if applicable)

- ☐ **Apply for a Visa (If applicable)**
- ☐ **Notify your bank of your travel**
- ☐ **Pack**