

Federal Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia

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Ityop'iya Federalawi Demokrasiyawi Ripeblik



Land and Climate

Ethiopia is a landlocked country on the *Horn of Africa* (the horn-shaped area on the eastern side of the continent). It is around the same size as Colombia and almost three times as big as Montana. It shares a border with five other countries: Eritrea in the north, Djibouti and Somalia in the east, Kenya in the south, and Sudan in the west. Many people imagine Ethiopia to be a dry, rugged land, but it is also home to a wide variety of plant and animal life. The Great Rift Valley, where two plates of the earth's crust meet, divides the country in half. High mountains on both sides give Ethiopia the nickname "the roof of Africa." Most of the country's lakes are located along the Great Rift Valley, including the largest, Lake Tana, which is also the source of the Blue Nile. Temperatures stay mild at such high elevations, but the dry weather can bring droughts that cause the deaths of thousands. The rainy season lasts from mid-June to mid-September in the highlands, and the period from October to February is extremely dry. Rainfall can be fairly unpredictable, however, which causes problems for farmers who rely on their crops and animals for their livelihood. Most people live in rural areas far from cities.

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