



About the Ethiopian New year: Time, Dates and Years in Ethiopia

Enkutatash or Ethiopian New Year is celebrated on September 11th. Ethiopia follows the Orthodox Julian calendar which consists of 12 months of 30 days and a 13th month, Pagume, of five or six days, depending on whether or not it is a leap year. There is a seven years and eight months difference between the Ethiopian and the Gregorian calendar, so 11 September 2013 is 1 Meskerem 2006 in Ethiopia. This is because the Ethiopian Orthodox Church believes that Ethiopia has been counting the years starting right after the birth of Christ.

The way Ethiopians measure time is also different from the West. The clock starts at 6am western time and runs until 6pm. Therefore 8o'clock in western time would be 2o'clock Ethiopian time. Because Ethiopia is close to the Equator the sun rises at around 00:30 Ethiopian time and sets at around 12:45 in the evening (6:45 western equivalent) all year round. Ethiopia is 3 hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).

The years run in a four year cycle bearing the names of the Gospels with the year of John or Yohannes (Amharic) is being the leap year.

Meskerem : 11th September

Tikimt : 11th October

Hidar : 10th November

KefAlemu

Tahsas : 10th December

Tir : 9th January

Yakatit : 8th February

Maggabit : 10th March

Miyazya : 9th April

Ginbot : 9th May

Sene : 8th June

Hamle : 8th July

Nehasa : 7th August

Pagume : 7th September

Enkutatash is an important festival in the lives of Ethiopians. After three months of heavy rains the sun comes out creating a beautiful clear fresh atmosphere, all main and tributary rivers become cleaner from the heavy flooding and flow slower with a medium water level. The highland fields turn to gold and mountains and fields will be decorated by the colourful Maskal Flowers. When Makeda (the Queen of Sheba), returned to Ethiopia after her famous visit to King Solomon, her People welcomed her by giving her "enku" or jewels. Enkutatash which means "gift of jewels" has been celebrated ever since in spring. Meskerem is seen as a month of transition from the old year to the new. It is a time to express hopes and dreams for the future.

We wish all Ethiopians and the rest of the international community a happy and democratic Ethiopian New Year!!

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Thanks