

# GLOBAL

## DESTINATIONS

*A Guide to the world of Hospitality, MICE and Tourism*

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Readers: Our Most Precious Asset



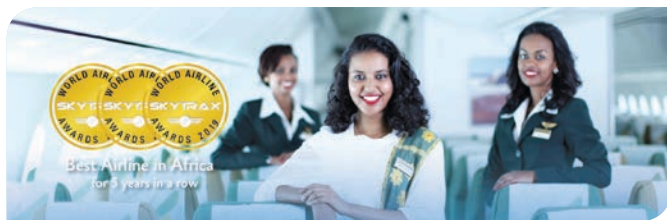
## “We are all set to launch flights from Addis Ababa to Chennai”

It was at a glittering function hosted by Ethiopian Airlines to award and recognize top performing passengers and cargo agents in India that Tadesse Tilahun (the outgoing Regional Director, Indian Subcontinent) introduced me to the incoming RD Tigist Eshetu. I was informed that she was the first lady RD in India since Ethiopian Airlines began its Indian operation in 1966. With nearly 20 years of experience she has served the Airline in various positions in Operations, Cargo, Manager Pricing and Area Manager Zambia before arriving into India. After Graduation and various Management Degrees, she completed her MBA in Business Administration from Lincoln University, USA. Her rich, varied and long standing experience will certainly help towards elevating Ethiopian Airlines operation in the Indian Sub-Continent. In an exclusive Interview with Global Destinations **Tigist Eshetu, Ethiopian Airlines, Regional Director, India Sub-Continent.** Excerpts

**Firstly congrats on becoming the RD of Indian sub-continent. How is the feeling?**

Thanks. I am all excited to come to India. It is a very challenging assignment - Route expansion in terms of both cargo and passenger service will be on priority. Within a few months of my joining we are all set to launch flights from Addis Ababa to Chennai. The first flight is scheduled for April 1, 2020. This will be our fourth destination after Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore. Last October we launched flights from Addis Ababa to Bengaluru.

From Chennai our esteemed guests will get a chance to experience our Dreamliner aircraft. Within Africa - if you are connecting to Nairobi, South Africa, Mount Kilimanjaro, Dar es Salaam – we will give you the fastest connections at a reasonable price.



**How do you look at the Indian market?**

Full of potential. We will aggressively promote digitalization, we will also try to further enhance quality of our customer services - over all we will do more to maintain our competitive position. Creating awareness about Ethiopia, conducting workshops, giving presentations and also educating the MICE traveller to make Ethiopia a business cum pleasure destination.

**What will be your strategy for filling up your business class seats?**

We have several corporate tie ups/agreements and most of them are business class travellers who are accustomed to our Inflight service, ambience, cuisine and comfortable seat pitch. We will continue to target this market and constantly upgrade our services. From feedback received, the personalized Inflight attention by our crew are praiseworthy.

**How do you look at MICE?**

Last year we organized several MICE groups from the Rotary, Medical tourism and some cargo groups who hopefully will



consider having their big gathering in Addis Ababa this year as well.

The Indian textile group is also holding an exhibition in Addis next month.

**What about the F&B offerings?**

My overall take is that our Indian guests are very sociable and food plays an important role. I found it unique that several Indians travelled as a family and most of them do not like to deviate from the Indian cuisine and are particular about vegetarian cuisine and Ethiopia is well equipped to cater to their needs. We have an Indian Chef positioned in our Catering facility in Addis Ababa who oversees the Indian cooking personally. Besides, on board our flights there are several varieties of vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals including Jain meals if specifically ordered in advance.

**Ethiopia and beyond - what is the potential?**

Given Addis Ababa is not only the capital city of Ethiopia, it is one of the major business centres in Africa with large number of important regional institutions like the Africa Union, UN agencies, the world bank as well as corporate businesses companies. This presents excellent prospects to our esteemed customers and business travellers to expand their network.

**Ethiopia as a stopover?**

The country is an excellent stopover hub since the airline gives free hotel accommodation if your stopover is over 8 hours. Besides, for shorter stopovers, we arrange free city sightseeing tours and coffee ceremonies. Passengers will have very productive time while enjoying the beautiful scenery of Addis Ababa. The Bole International Airport is bustling with activity and even offers spa services. For Business Class and Frequent fliers, the lounges at Addis Ababa airport are quite enticing.

**How do you define - The New Spirit of Africa?**

In keeping with our motto, the airline is constantly involved with the changing environment in Africa including setting up of a multi-billion dollar new airport in the capital.