

## Landscapes worth appreciation

Written by michael asefaw

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Eritrea is endowed with a variety of spectacular topographic landscapes. This allows not only three seasons in two hours but also diverse landscapes within a few hours' distance. This includes the highlands, eastern escarpments, eastern and western lowlands, coastal areas and islands. It is endowed with rivers and river beds and natural harbours. The vibrant landforms offer the most distinctive destination for tourists. It's natural topography which is composed of volcanic mountains, flat topped hills, wide plateaus, marvelous escarpments, rugged topography, undulating plains, unspoiled and spectacular coasts and pleasing islands provide great potential for tourism industry.

Eritrea's landscape is naturally decorated with various rock types, fogs and mists and varied climate. It has a breathtaking beauty accommodated by clean, cool fresh air. There are volcanic landforms which include unmodified lava sheets, created lava cones, old dykes and volcanic mountains in different corners of the country. There are also numerous mountain features which are natural reservoirs of resources as they are made of rocks of several mineral deposits. Eritrea's mountains provide ample opportunity for hiking, photographic tourism and landscape appreciation. In addition, they are very good grounds for sport-based tourism like mountain athletics and biking. Furthermore, they are prominently mentioned for their historical importance during the armed struggle for independence.

One of Eritrea's natural attraction, the Eastern Escarpment, is found to the east of the central plateau, eastern highlands and upper Anseba highlands. The eastern escarpment is characterized by two rainy seasons and is thus inhabited by the Green Belt whose scenery is stunningly beautiful. It is ever-green and provides excellent scenes for bio-diversity based tourism and bird watching. The ever-green tones of the Green Belt vegetation overshadow the earth colors on the steep slope platforms of the eastern escarpments. The play of light and shade on the landscape etches the shapes in relief, enhancing their coloration and making the escarpment landforms look somehow even more grand and monumental.

The other main attraction of Eritrea is its coastal area bordered by flawless and unspoiled beaches. It is defined by the presence of extensive visible corals and shells. Consequently it is a perfect venue for snorkelers. It is endowed with all the essential properties for serenity beautiful holiday destination. Parallel to this are the naturally beautiful and striking group of islands that are dispersed along the Red Sea. The Eritrean islands offer a convenient environment for the scuba diving, snorkeling, yachting, itinerating, and fishing. Thus, the Red

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Sea remains as “the



world’s unspoiled tropical paradise”.

The Danakil Depression is also the other prominent feature of Eritrean landscape wherein the lowest point on earth is found. There are various landform features along the Danakil Depression such as headlands of lava rocks and crater of an extinct volcano.

Eritrea’s terrain features provide a great potential for the tourism sector. It offers plenty of opportunity for appreciative experiences for tourists due to the fact that it is highly convenient for ecotourism, hiking, bird watching, wildlife enthusiasm and terrain appreciation.

Landform scenery of Eritrea is, therefore, among the most powerful potential for tourism. The breath-taking mountains and coastal configuration exerts a great fascination for tourists. It creates pleasure and happiness. The magnificent topography provides an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. The landform belongs to its owners but the beauty of landscape belongs to those who behold it and appreciate it.

Source: Tourism special edition 2012.