



# **West Africa Discovery**

## **Ghana, Togo, Benin**

*Embark on a fascinating journey through a region brimming with history, culture, and tradition. As we travel to rural villages and coastal cities, we learn about rich artistic tradition and voodoo religion, about modern life and the shameful history of the slave trade.*

### **Itinerary**

Created on Oct 16, 2024

# West Africa Discovery

## Day-by-Day Itinerary

### **DAY 1: Depart U.S. for Accra, Ghana**

### **DAY 2: Arrive Accra**

Upon arrival in Ghana's capital, we transfer to our hotel. As guests' arrival times vary, we have no group activities or meals planned.

### **DAY 3: Accra**

We get our first taste of this colorful and pulsating Atlantic Coast city on our full-day tour. Highlights include the historic Jamestown neighborhood, where we visit a workshop specializing in "fantasy coffins" – unique handcrafted coffins that are collected and displayed in museums worldwide; the W.E.B. Dubois Center for Pan Africanism, where the American sociologist spent his last years; and fountain- and statue-filled Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, dedicated to the memory of Ghana's first president. Tonight, we gather for a welcome dinner.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 4: Accra/Lomé, Togo**

This morning we travel by coach to Lomé, capital and largest city of Togo, the tiny nation known especially for the friendliness of its people, the beauty of its landscapes, and formerly as the Slave Coast for its role as the heart of the slave trade. On this afternoon's city tour, we stop to visit the Palais de Lomé, the one-time colonial headquarters then government building that fell into disrepair and now has been reborn as an African arts and culture center. We dine together tonight at a local restaurant.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 5: Lomé**

One of the few world capitals that borders another country, Lomé today reflects its German, British, and French colonial past, as we see on our tour of this port city. We visit the Grand Marché, the vast and colorful central market with goods of all kinds, including the famed "Nana Benz" and their textiles. We also see the neoclassical buildings of the colonial period as well as modern architecture. Later we enjoy a small group highlight: participating in a cooking class at a local restaurant, as we learn about and savor traditional Togolese cooking.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Lomé/Ouidah, Benin**

Our day overflows with a bounty of West Africa's rich cultural traditions, beginning with the living religion of voodoo (Vodun), practiced particularly along the coasts of Togo and Benin. In a remote Togolese village, we attend a voodoo ceremony where we observe rhythmic drumming and chanting that evoke the different spirits that guide practitioners. After this fascinating experience, we visit another village to meet with a traditional healer and watch as he treats several patients with time-honored methods. Then we cross the border into Benin, where we stop at a rural settlement to attend a Zangbeto mask dance performance, with singing, dancing and special demonstrations. Afterwards, we head to our coastal retreat, where we dine together tonight.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Ouidah/Ganvié**

Once an active slave trading port, Ouidah today memorializes its ignoble past with monuments along the Slave Road to the Door of No Return memorial arch, where more than one million Africans were taken to the ships that would bring them in bondage across the Atlantic. We travel this road ourselves on this morning's enlightening tour. We also visit the Temple of Pythons, housing the snakes important to the voodoo religion. This afternoon, we cross Lake Nokwe by motorboat to the floating village of Ganvié, with its colorful stilt houses. Here, members of the Tofinou ethnic group live much as they did when their ancestors fled to escape the slave trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 8: Ouidah/Togo/Akosombo, Ghana**

It's a travel day as we drive from Ouidah via Togo to Ghana. En route we stop in Aného with a scenic setting between the ocean and Lake Togo. A former slave trading town and capital of German Togoland from 1885-1887 and of the French Occupation from 1914-1920, Aného now is a fishing port known for its churches and architecture. We continue on our journey, crossing the border into Ghana and reaching our hotel late this afternoon.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 9: Akosombo/Volta Region**

We witness some of Ghana's remarkable scenic beauty on today's boat excursion on the Volta River past rolling hills and valleys, stopping along the way to meet people in local fishing villages. Then we return to our hotel for a late lunch and an afternoon at leisure.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 10: Akosombo**

We visit a Krobo tribe artisan community today, known for crafting traditional handmade glass beads. While here, we have the opportunity to try our hand at making these ornaments ourselves. Once known as "trade beads" for their use as currency during the slave trade, the beads today are valued for their beauty and artistry.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 11: Akosombo/Kumasi**

A six-hour drive today brings us to Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city, historical and spiritual capital of the powerful Ashanti Empire (1670-1957), and modern home of the Asante people. Upon arrival we begin our exploration of this sprawling city, visiting the National Cultural Centre with its rich collection of Ashanti artifacts, including colorful kente cloths, set in an authentic reproduction of an Ashanti house.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 12: Kumasi**

We continue our discovery of the "Garden City of West Africa" today with a tour of the Royal Palace Museum, housing a collection of gold jewels worn by the Ashanti court. After lunch at a local restaurant, we visit an Ashanti village where we learn about traditional clothing and carvings. Later, we engage in a fascinating cultural outing to meet with local Akan people who will bestow on us our African names at a time-honored ceremony.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 13: Kumasi/Elmina**

Our enlightening odyssey continues as we drive today to coastal Ghana, the former Gold Coast where enslaved Africans from across the continent were held in forts and castles before being forced onto the ships that would take them to the Americas. Upon arrival in the picturesque fishing village of Elmina, we tour the Cape Coast Castle where more than 500,000 slaves were held between 1662-1867. Today the castle is a UNESCO site that houses a museum documenting the slave trade.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 14: Elmina**

On this morning's excursion to Kakum National Park, we have the opportunity to experience the rainforest from above on the world's longest and highest canopy walkway. Then we visit 15<sup>th</sup>-century Elmina Castle, a trade settlement whose dungeons held tens of thousands of enslaved persons and today is a UNESCO site and Ghanaian national museum. We also see Elmina's Posuban Shrines, with their unusual statues with historic roots in Fante tribal culture. Tonight, we celebrate our journey through West Africa at a farewell dinner.

*Meals:* Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 15: Elmina/Accra/Depart for U.S.**

We return to Accra today, where our day rooms are available to us. This evening, we depart for the airport for our flights to the U.S.

*Meals:* Breakfast

### **DAY 16: Arrive U.S.**

We arrive in the U.S. today and connect with our return flights home.

This tour itinerary was generated for West Africa Discovery on Oct 16, 2024. Please visit the West Africa Discovery page at <https://www.odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/africa-the-middle-east/west-africa-discovery/> for the latest and most accurate information.