

West African Kingdoms: The Ultimate Tour
Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Gambia, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone

January 7- February 7, 2022
with Voodoo Festival & Masked Dance Ceremony



TOGO

Jan. 7 Day 1: Arrive Lomé / Mercury Sarakawa (B)

You will be met at the airport by our tour leader and transferred to the hotel.

Jan 8, Day 2: Lomé / Mercury Sarakawa (B,L)

Morning at leisure to recover from the long flight.

We will depart at 12 noon for lunch at a local restaurant.

Afterwards, we embark on an insightful city tour of Lomé, a city where tradition and modernism overlap. Discover this metropolis with its Musee National, Place de l' Independence, fishing harbor, and the Grand Marche - the realm of the famous "Nana Benz. "

Visit the Art Street with its craft vendors, the Artisans' Village and climax the morning tour at the Marche des Feticheurs (fetish market) - the heart of voodoo cult.

The evening at leisure; dinner on your own.

BENIN

Jan 9, Day 3: Lomé - Ouidah / Casa del Papa Beach Hotel and Spa (B, L)

This morning an excursion to Togoville, located on the north shore of Lake Togo. We drive 30 min to Aneho, where you embark on a local paddle boat to cross lake Togo into Togoville (a boatman paddles the boat). Visit the old German built cathedral, the colonial area and the traditional quarter of the town.

Lunch at a local restaurant and then we drive two hours to Ouidah, considered the capital of voodoo (UNESCO Cultural Site, 1996). Transfer to hotel.

The rest of the afternoon and evening are independent.

Jan. 10, Day 4: Ouidah - Annual Voodoo Festival / Casa del Papa Beach Hotel & Spa (B,L)

Depart at 9:00 a.m. to tour the Temple of the Python, which is believed to give vitality and protection. You may attend morning worship prayers with locals of the village. You will also visit The Sacred Forest of Ouidah, which houses many shrines dedicated to many deities.

Visit the historical Museum of Ouidah located in an old Portuguese fort built in 1721. This museum portrays Benin's role in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Next, visit the Port of No Return, a monument built by the Benin government to commemorate the Africans who were taken from the Dahomey Empire during the slave trade.

Here we attend the Annual Voodoo Festival which takes place at the monument every year where people come from all over the world to dance, sacrifice animals to offer their blood to the spirits. In 1996, the government of Benin decreed that Voodoo was an official religion, practiced by more than 60% of Benin's over 10 million residents. For millions of Beninese, voodoo is an integral part of everyday life. You cannot avoid the many voodoo dolls riddles with pins and nails. Quidah is the spiritual capital of voodoo and once a major slave-trading post. Every year on January 10 ceremonies take place on the beach near the Place of No Return. Thousands of voodoo believers gather to receive blessings from Quidah's voodoo chief.

This is one of Benin's most colorful and revered events. The celebrations begin when the supreme voodoo priest slaughters an animal, usually a goat, to honor the spirits. This is followed by singing, chanting, dancing, beating of drums and drinking of various spirits, generally gin. We will see followers of the various voodoo gods including the masked dances of the elaborately costumed Zangbetos and the trance dances of the Kokou (highly feared warrior undergods). Around the edges of the main performance area, groups from various voodoo temples perform their own rituals.

Lunch at the hotel (7 km from the festival).

Afterwards we have the option to return to the Voodoo Festival.

Jan. 11, Day 5: Ouidah - Ganvie- Cotonou / Golden Tulip Le Diplomat (B,L)

Visit Ganvie, West Africa's largest stilt village.

This morning we drive 30 minutes to Abomey Calavi, where we will cross Lake Nokoué by motorized covered boat (20 minutes), to visit Ganvie (the second largest stilt village in West Africa), commonly referred to as the Venice of West Africa.

The residents here are members of the Tofinou ethnic group. They live in huts built on teak stilts and get around in dugout canoes. We will observe the people of Ganvie going about their daily routine as vendors in dugout canoes make transactions with one another and with tourists. Try shopping amongst the local vendors in the floating market while enjoying a relaxing canoe ride on the waterways of this exotic 300-year-old village.

After the visit, we return to Abomey Calavi again by boat and drive one hour to Cotonou. We shall stop at Cotonou's famous market, "Dan Togba" for a short visit.

Jan. 12, Day 6: Excursion to Abomey / Golden Tulip Le Diplomat (B,L)

Depart at 7:30 am this morning for a 2 hour drive to visit the ancient Kingdom of Abomey (different village from Abomey Calavi). Here we visit the Royal Palace Museum and the traditional juju market.

We enjoy lunch at the Auberge Abomey restaurant.

Afterwards, drive a half hour to Coveh village, where we will attend a traditional Geleden mask dance of the FON Tribe. Dance is part of voodoo tradition. Performers wearing masks as well as marionettes will perform, dancing to traditional drums rhythms for almost 2 hours.

The name 'Gelede' (or female power) derives from the name of a secret society of Yoruba origin, the largest ethnic group in West Africa, scattered between southern Nigeria and southern Benin. People attending the mask ceremony pay tribute to Yami the main deity of the village, the source of every good thing.

The Gelede masks are used to ward off evil spirits which manifest themselves through calamities, or to solve ethnic conflicts, to moralize behaviors and to reassert important events among the community. The Gelede masks are also a way to send messages of compassion, solidarity, insult or joke.

The man and the woman who distinguished themselves by their wisdom and loyalty to the group are the custodians of the masks. The Gelede masks are in fact female masks worn by men, implying that the ceremony and its meaning involves both the women and the men of the community.

After dance, we return to Cotonou, 2 hours drive.

BURKINA FASO

Jan. 13, Day 7: Cotonou-Ouagadougou / Laico Ouaga 2000 (B,D)

After breakfast, we check out of the hotel and visit the city of Cotonou, discovering its art galleries, markets and neighborhoods.

Afterwards, we transfer to the airport for flight Air Burkina 558, departing at 2:45 p.m. and arriving in Ouagadougou at 3:15 p.m.

You can get lunch/snacks at the airport lounge (pay direct)

Upon arrival, transfer to our hotel. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure. Dinner at a local restaurant..

Jan. 14, Day 8: Ouagadougou / Laico Ouaga 2000 (B,L)

This morning we'll visit the Grand Market and the crafts markets at the Artisans' Center, where you will find basketry, batik fabrics, wooden statues and masks, jewelry, leatherwork and bronze castings; and a short walk around the city.

We'll have lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon visit the National Museum. Rest of afternoon and evening at leisure.

SENEGAL

Jan. 15, Day 9: Fly to Dakar / Lamantine Resort & Spa 5* (B,L,D)

This morning visit Ouagadougou including Sankariare cattle market, Cathedral of Ouagadougou, Central Mosque, the giant bronze statue of Ousmane Sembene-founder of Ouagadougou film festival, Monument of National Heroes and the Monument of Cineaste built in 1987 in honor of African filmmakers who come to FESPACO, the pan-African festival of cinema and television of Ouagadougou.

Enjoy a hearty lunch in a local restaurant as dinner will be late. Transfer to the airport for the flight Air Burkina 514, dep 4:35 pm, arriving Dakar 7:25 pm.

Upon arrival at the new Dakar airport transfer to hotel in Saly Portugul (45 min drive). Buffet dinner at the hotel restaurant, open til 10:30 pm. **Note:** the drive from the airport all the way into Dakar city would take 1.5 hrs and pass thru 3 toll booths. Lamantin Beach Hotel is a beautiful location and the dinner always gets rave reviews from our clients.

Jan. 16, Day 10: Dakar Full Day Tour / Radisson Blu Resort 5* (B, L)

We depart our hotel and drive into Dakar city, approx. 45 minutes, to start our tour with visits of the various markets: Kermel, Sandaga, and the handicraft market of Soumbédioune and the Tilen market famous for its medicinal herbs and its traditional healers.

Lunch at a local restaurant.

Next, visit the National Museum, the President's Palace and the Parliament House.

A short tour of the Central Market, French Cathedral, Monument of African Renaissance and the Great Mosque.

Transfer to hotel Radisson Blu. Evening at leisure. Dinner on your own.

Jan. 17, Day 11: Goree Island / Radisson Blu Resort 5* (B, L)

We depart the hotel early this morning to embark on a cruise to the historic island of Goree.

Just twenty minutes from Dakar Port, the ferryboat that arrives at Goree Island carries the heavy burden of 300 years slave trading in West Africa. The island ranks today among the classified monuments of the World Patrimony. We will visit the House of Slaves (Maison des Esclaves) and its "Door of No Return," a former prison for slave trade and said to be the final exit point of the slaves from Africa, now a museum and memorial.

We will also see the canons built by Portuguese navigators. Lunch at a restaurant on the island.

Return to Dakar and enjoy a drive through the picturesque district of Medina and the residential district of Fann.

Transfer to hotel. Evening at leisure; dinner on your own.

Jan. 18, Day 12: Drive to St. Louis / Hotel de la Residence (B, L)

Depart at 8:00 am, heading north through the Sahel to the old colonial city of St. Louis, which was formerly the capital of French West Africa.

After a one-hour drive we stop at Lake Retba, also known as the “Pink Lake” located 30 km northeast of Dakar, north of Cap Vert Peninsula. This lake is considered an anomaly as it boasts one of the most rare natural phenomena in the world. The lake's pinkish hue is a result of the excessive amount of *Dunaliella salina* algae in the water that produces a red pigment used to absorb light, which in turn provides the algae with life-energy. The pink color is particularly visible during the dry season. The lake is also known for its abundantly high salt content.

You will see the “salt harvesters” with their colorful tackle, and interact with the Fulani ethnic groups living in the surrounding villages.

Next we stop at the Norflaye Turtle Conservation Farm, en-route (155 miles north of Dakar).

Saint-Louis was founded in 1659 and named after the French King Louis XIV in the 1700s, it is the oldest city to be created by Europeans on the western coast of Africa and served as the capital of Senegal from 1872 to 1957. It played an important cultural and economic role in the whole of West Africa, a stroll around the Ville (as the cab drivers know it) quickly reveals the French colonial influence. Many of the buildings hold their old character with many brightly colored buildings and beautiful balconies to be seen all around the Island. The Island was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000.

On arrival, check in to the hotel and lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon, we visit the Langue de Barbarie Peninsula. It is a short walk to Guet Ndar, the fishing village that is located on the Langue de Barbarie and watch the fisherman bring in their catch. Local people carry the fish in baskets on their neck and on their heads. Women can be found smoking and drying fish next to the beach in vast cauldrons. Nearby very colorful pirogues are always under construction. It is possible to see nearly every stage from the first carvings to the final painting.

This evening, explore the colonial quarters of St. Louis.

Jan. 19, Day 13: Excursion to Djoudj National Park / Hotel de la Residence (B, L)

We depart at 7:00 a.m. for the 1.5-hour drive to Djoudj National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site), the third largest pelican sanctuary in the world. It is known for its' large pelican migration and many other species of birds. We shall cruise in a spacious motorized open-air boat, for a 1.5-hour trip through the mangroves of the river to see where the pelicans hatch their eggs each year. After the visit, we return to St. Louis for lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, a one hour horse & buggy ride to visit the fishing community of Nguet Dar in St. Louis.

Transfer to hotel. Evening at leisure.

THE GAMBIA

Jan. 20 Day 14: Drive to Banjul / Kairaba Beach Resort (B,L)

We depart at 7 am and drive towards the Gambia border. Border formalities may take about an hour on each side. You will step out of the vehicle and walk about five minutes across. After 3 hours drive we stop in the town of Touba to visit the holy mosque of Mouride Islamic brotherhood.

After the visit, we drive 1.5 hr to Kaolack for lunch in a local restaurant.

From Kaolack it is 1.5 hr drive to the Gambian border. Border formalities may take about an hour on each side. After crossing the border, we take a ferry for 1 hour and then drive 30 minutes to our hotel in Banjul.

Jan. 21, Day 15: Makasutu Forest & Banjul / Kairba Resort (B,L)

Departing at 8 am, we drive one hour south to Brikama where we turn to the east coast and continue 7 km into the Makasutu Forest.

Makasutu Forest, on an island facing the south bank of the Gambia River, is a tropical 1000-acre reserve encompassing five different eco systems, including gallery forest, savannah, mangroves, palm forest and wetland. Wildlife is plentiful with many bird species, baboons, vervet and red colobus monkeys and even the occasional odd mongoose.

On arrival, we begin with a nice stroll to the Baobab Restaurant, where we are greeted and given a brief history of the area. On the way, we will see some tree stumps carved into by sculptors. These are the remnants from the time when locals were chopping down trees.

After the talk, we hop aboard a pirogue, a traditional wooden boat, to experience nature as we cruise on the Gambia River through the mangroves lined with oyster shells. The boat ride will last a little over 1 hour. When we return, we'll then enjoy lunch at the Baobab Restaurant followed by some traditional entertainment.

Afterwards, we drive 30 minutes to Banjul for a city tour.

Banjul is one of the best examples of urban Africa. The sand-blown streets play host to colorful markets and fading colonial buildings, and a sense of history permeates every district. The Gambian capital may be one of Africa's smallest cities, but it has a big personality too soon forgotten by travelers.

Built in celebration of the 1992 military coup, a commemorative arch, Arch 22, is the country's tallest building. The Senegalese-designed gateway contains a small museum about the coup d'état and a cozy café. The real draw of the Arch is the view from the top-floor balconies.

The Royal Albert Market is the bustling heart of Banjul. Named after the husband of Queen Victoria, the market is an extensive emporium that comes alive with pungent aromas, lively scenes and the hum of shoppers and sellers haggling over prices on everything from vivid, shimmering fabrics and shining silver jewelry to fresh produce and the latest electronics. Packed to the brim, the market's labyrinth of alleys are a great place to immerse yourself in Gambian culture. Visitors should not hesitate to bargain; most goods can be purchased for just half the asking price!

Drive 30 minutes to Kairaba Beach Resort. Evening at leisure.

SENEGAL

Jan. 22, Day 16: Juffureh-James Island-Toubacouta / Hotel Keur Saloum (B,L)

Depart at 7:00 am and drive 30 min to board the ferry to Juffureh and James Island. It is a one hour ferry ride and one hour drive to the historic village of Juffureh where we have a short tour.

Juffureh became famous in the 1970s following the film release of the bestselling book, "Roots" written by the African-American author Alex Haley, a descendant of Kunta Kinte. The film told the story of Kunta Kinte's capture in Juffureh by slave traders and his subsequent enslavement in America approximately 200 years ago.

Afterwards, it is a 30 minute motorized boat ride from Juffureh to James Island (aka Kunte Kinteh Island), the colonial period ruins of a slavery station and the 'Portuguese chapel' of San Domingo,

which later came to be known as Sandi Munko Joyo. The boat is an open top (no awning or cabin), with an outboard engine. Nearby there are also the old ruins of Maurel Freres and the CFAO trading post. Visit the island.

After the visit, we return to Juffreh for lunch and drive one hour to the Gambia/Senegal border. Border formalities may take about an hour on each side. You will step out of the vehicle and walk about five minutes across.

After crossing into Senegal, it is a 30 minute drive to Toubacouta. Upon arrival we embark on a motorized boat ride to explore Sine Saloum Delta (UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Evening is at leisure. Optional visit to the nearby Mbour Fishing Harbor, the largest in Senegal.

Jan. 23, Day 17: Toubacoutta-Jawal Fadiouth-Saly / Lamantin Beach Hotel (B, L, D)

Depart at 8 am for drive to Saly (3 hrs). We will stop after two hours and have a walking tour of Joal village, crossing its 900 mt long wooden bridge into the village. We will have lunch at a local restaurant.

Continue to Saly Portugal, just outside Dakar and closer to the airport. Transfer to hotel.

Rest of afternoon and evening at leisure. Dinner at hotel restaurant.

GHANA

Jan. 24, Day 18: Saly/Dakar-Lome-Accra/ Kapinski Gold Coast Accre 5* (B)

Early breakfast at the hotel will be arranged. At 5:30 AM, we transfer to the airport (one hour drive) to board flight Asky KP 053, departing 8:05 am, arriving Lomé 11:30 am, connect to flight to Accra Asky KP 022, dep 1250, arrive 13:30.

The rest of the afternoon/evening is at leisure; lunch and dinner on your own.

Jan 25, Day 19: Accra/ Kapinski Gold Coast Accre 5* (B, L)

This morning we tour Accra, the capital city of Ghana, including National Museum, Osu Castle, Coffin builders at Teshi township.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Afternoon at leisure to enjoy hotel facilities.

Jan 26, Day 20: Kumasi / Golden Bean Hotel (B, L, D)

This morning we depart at 9 am driving three hours to Kumasi. On arrival, we check in and have lunch at a local restaurant.

This afternoon we visit the Kejetia Market, one of the largest markets in Africa.

Jan 27, Day 21: Kumasi / Golden Bean Hotel (B, L, D)

This morning, we visit the Royal Palace Museum of the Ashanti Kingdom.

Afterwards, we drive one hour/ 30 km south-east of Kumasi to Bosumtwi Lake and enjoy lunch at a lakeside restaurant. Lake Bosumtwi is the only natural lake in Ghana. It is situated within an ancient impact crater that is about 10.5 kilometres in diameter.

Afterwards, we drive 1.5 hr to Bonwireh town where local weavers make Ashanti traditional "kente cloth" for Asanti dignitaries. Then a 30 minute drive to Ntonso Adinka village where they make funeral clothes stamped with wax to maintain their color.

Return to Kumasi (1-2 hours drive depending on traffic) for overnight.

Jan. 28, Day 22: Elmina / Coconut Grove Resort (B, L)

We depart at 730 am for the 4 hour drive to Elmina. Today we shall tour the infamous Forts, Castles and Slave Dungeons of Ghana and learn about the slave trade in West Africa.

After 3 hours driving, we stop to tour Assin Manso, the site of the "last bath" where slaves were taken for bathing before being shipped to the new world. It is also the burial place of two former slaves whose remains were returned to Ghana from the US and Jamaica.

Afterwards, a 1 hour drive to visit the Cape Coast Castle. First, we have lunch at an ocean view restaurant here.

The largest of its kind, the Cape Coast Castle was built by the Swedes in 1653 and was later taken over by the British. Walk the path of slaves as your guide takes you through each section. This castle also houses the West African Historical Museum established by the Smithsonian Institute in collaboration with the Ghanaian Government in 1994. It is filled with artifacts, stories, photos and more.

Afterwards, a 15 minute drive to Elmina. Then we visit the busy fish harbor and see the town's pursubans--Asafo tribal shrines (an idol used for traditional worship by the fishermen) located along the road to the fish harbor.

Transfer to hotel (approx. 15 min).

Jan. 29, Day 23: Kakoum National Park & Cape Coast Castle / Maha Beach Resort (B, L)

Today is a full day with several interesting stops along the way and then 2 nights at a very nice hotel!

We depart at 8:00 am driving 1.5 hours to visit Kokoum National Park which is famous for its amazing canopy walkway. We will walk 2 hours in total including the climb up to the canopy 30 minutes on steps; not steep.

Afterwards, we drive 1 hour and have lunch at the Hans Cottage & Motel. Then we drive 30 minutes to visit Elmina Castle. Built by the Portuguese in 1482, it is also known as St. George's Castle. This castle was the first European structure built in Sub-Saharan Africa and is the oldest castle in Ghana on the West African slave trade route. The colorful harbor nestled below the Elmina Castle, full of pirogues preparing to go to sea offers one of West Africa's greatest photo opportunities.

Continue 3 hours drive to Beyin and transfer to our 5* hotel in Anokyi village.

Evening at leisure; dinner on your own.

Jan. 30, Day 24: Excursion: Nzulezu Stilt Village / Maha Beach Resort (B, L)

We depart at 9 am driving about 15 minutes to the Beyin Visitors Center and walk approx. 5 min to the wooden pier, where we take a one-hour motorized boat trip to Nzulezu stilt village passing through a pristine series of marshes, swamp forest (the largest stand left in Ghana) and open pools rich with wildlife, including crocodiles, egret, heron and kingfishers. This natural area has been designated as an Important Bird Area based on criteria from Birdlife International. The ride is safe and lifejackets are available.

Nzulezu, located at the far western side of Ghana, near the border with Cote d'Ivoire, is one part of the Amasuri Wetland, a Ramsar site and the largest inland swamp forest in Ghana. Spectacular scenery of the 400-year old stilt propped water settlement of Nzulezu, a unique village built on stilts in Lake Tadane, which is home to hundreds of people in the Western Region.

Nzulezu is a Nzema word meaning 'surface of water.' The inhabitants of the village are said to have migrated from Walata, a city in the ancient Ghana Empire, the earliest of the Western Sudanese

States. According to tradition, ancestors of the village were brought to their present place by a snail. The serene ambiance of the surrounding landscape, coupled with the general activities of life on stilts points to a dynamic relationship between man and nature. It is essentially one long pier, called Main Street by the locals, with buildings constructed on both sides. One side of the 'street' are living quarters while the other side of the street has businesses, the school, a community center and other commercial ventures. Village life is adapted to the unique environmental conditions, and all activities such as the pounding of fufu (a traditional meal), schooling, worship, baptisms and burials are carried out on the lake. It is said that the lake averts possible disasters such as fire outbreaks.

The people of Nzulezu still adhere to traditional norms and taboos. For instance, Thursday is a sacred day on the lake, and on this day, the villagers do not engage in any strenuous activity.

The Nzulezu stilt village is not connected to electricity, but there are a significant number of television poles attached to almost every home in the village. These are powered by car batteries. For source of light in the night villages use lantern, flash light or rechargeable lamps to move about. To the amazement of visitors, villagers carry on daily life as if they don't live on stilts.

Note: The beach adjacent to the visitor center was once the site of a sea turtle conservation project in cooperation with the Ghana Wildlife Society. The project's goal was to protect three endangered turtle species that nest on the beach. However, it is no longer in existence.

Lunch at a local beach front restaurant. Then visit Apolonia Fort, one of the smaller of Ghana's many historic coastal forts. Located in a picturesque setting on the beach, it is newly restored.

Afterwards, drive 15 minutes to our 5* resort and enjoy the rest of the afternoon/evening at leisure.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Jan 31, Day 25: Beyin-Grand Bassam- Abidjan / Azalai Marcory Estate Hotel (B, L)

This morning we depart at 7:30 am and drive one hour to the Ghana/Ivorian Coast border. Then cross the border (approx. 1 hour for border formalities) and drive another two hours reach Grand Bassam.

Grand Bassam is the first capital of Cote d'Ivoire and remains an important seaside resort. The first trading houses were built here.

This afternoon we enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and visit the old quarter built by the French during time of colonization and tour the Museum of Costumes, the Wickerwork Center, the Ceramics/Crafts Center.

Drive 30 minutes to Abidjan and check-in to hotel.

Feb 1, Day 26: Abidjan / Azalai Marcory Estate Hotel (B, L)

Departing at 8:00 am, we drive 30 minutes to the north-western part of town, Abobo, where Africa's largest outdoor launderette (laundry) is located. Here you will witness an unforgettable spectacle, hundreds of Fanicos (washer men, no women), jam together in the middle of a stream to wash clothes. They work all day every day, frantically rubbing garments on huge stones held in place by old car vehicle tires then spreading the clothes over rocks and grass in a large drying area. Despite the look of confusion, they never get their clients clothes mixed or missing.

Afterwards 45 minutes or so depending on traffic to visit metropolitan Abidjan including Treichville, one of the areas where the masses live. We pass by a few colorful markets; then over one of the major bridges to Le Plateau, the high-rise commercial area where we stop for a visit to the National

Museum of Abidjan. The museum focuses on Ivorian art showcasing statues, masks, jewelry, tools, carved doors, tom-toms and musical instruments from every region of the country.

Lunch at a local restaurant around Le Plateau. We can stop in Cocody, the upscale residential section and browse the Cocody arts and crafts market after lunch. Transfer to the hotel, approx. 1 hr.

Feb. 2, Day 27: Day Excursion to Yamoussouko / Azalai Marcory Estate Hotel (B,L)

We depart at 7:30 am for a 3 hour drive to Yamoussoukoro, the second capital city of Cote d'Ivoire. We drive on a well-maintained roads and pass through villages where we see local vendors selling fruit and meats. Three hours is the drive each way without stops, but we do have time to stop as the group wishes for photos, bathroom etc.

Yamoussoukro owes its good fortune as the birth place of Cote d'Ivoire's first president, Houphouët-Boigny who spent lavishly on his native village. Virtually no traditional African houses are left; Houphouët-Boigny replaced them with concrete middle class structures.

Félix Houphouët-Boigny, affectionately called Papa Houphouët or Le Vieux, was the first President of Ivory Coast, serving for more than three decades until his death. A tribal chief, he worked as a medical aide, union leader and planter before being elected to the French Parliament.

Upon arrival, we will visit the dazzling Basilica of Notre Dame de la Paix, the second largest cathedral in the world. Then enjoy lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch, view the Palace of the former president (exterior view only, government no longer permits tourists to enter) and see the sacred crocodiles in the palace moat.

Next, a visit to "Foundation Felix Houphouet Boigny," a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Created in 1973 under the name of Foundation Félix Houphouët-Boigny, in 1997 it became the Foundation Félix Houphouët-Boigny for the search for peace. He is at the origin of the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men in 1989 and of the Yamoussoukro Declaration for Peace in 1997, both placed and organized under the auspices of UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization.

On December 5, 1997 in Yamoussoukro, the keys to the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for the search for peace were handed over to Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO. This project is the culmination of ten years of work orchestrated by the architect Olivier-Clément Cacoub, for a budget of 35 billion CFA francs.

An effort has been made for access to current or historical information, to improve the efficiency of researchers. Thus, 8,800 square meters are devoted to equipment for the collection, storage and consultation of documents, books, computers and museums. The paper documents occupy one floor of the central building over 5,200 square meters of library including reading room, storage and meetings, administration, workshop for the restoration of works. IT occupies the 3,600 square meters of the lower floor. The Foundation, connected to the Internet, can organize discussions between researchers and distribute the digital documents of its collection; collect documents of interest to the Foundation, - physical or digital - then collect and manage the various donations. Permanent or temporary exhibitions are planned in the Peace Museum and, on the second floor of the main building, an exhibition hall of 530 square meters.

Return to Abidjan at approx. 5:30 pm. Evening at leisure. Dinner on your own.

GUINEA

Feb. 3, Day 28: Fly to Conakry / hotel Palme Camayenne (B)

We depart at 8 am and transfer to the airport to board flight Air Cote d'Ivoire departing Abidjan at 12:25 pm and arriving Conakry at 2:25 pm.

Upon arrival, transfer to hotel. The Guinea airport is very slow and Conakry is one of the more traffic congested cities. We anticipate reaching the hotel at about 3:30-4 pm.

Enjoy an evening at leisure at our 5* hotel.

Feb. 4, Day 29: Conakry / hotel Palme Camayenne (B,L)

This morning we embark on a city tour of Conakry visiting the Central Mosque, Sekou Toure's Mosoleum, fish market of Bolobineh, French Cathedral.

Lunch in a local restaurant. This afternoon at leisure.

SIERRA LEONE

Feb. 5, Day 30: Drive to Freetown / Radisson Blu Hotel Mammy Yoko (B,L)

We depart at 8 am for the 5.5 hr drive to Freetown. We will take a packed lunch as there are no decent restaurants along the way. There will be stops for bathroom breaks and we will find a spot to eat our lunch in one of the villages.

Sandwiched between the Atlantic Ocean and the mountains, Freetown is the lively capital of Sierra Leone, steeped in history and culture. A British colony in the late 1700s, Freetown became the principal base for the suppression of the slave trade and 1200 freed slaves from Canada came here in 1792 to join the original settlers. With its rich history, stunning scenery and vibrant city center, Sierra Leone's charismatic capital is perfect to explore on foot.

There are countless beautiful beaches within a short drive from the city centre, and a journey to the hilltops that surround the city provides truly breathtaking views.

On arrival check into the hotel.

Feb. 6, Day 31: Taccugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary/Radisson Blu Hotel Mammy Yoko (B, L,D)

Depart at 7:30 am to visit one of the few chimpanzee villages in the region and drive around the Freetown peninsular beaches of John Obey, Black Johnson, York, Kent. The drive is 3 hours rnd trip.

Return to Freetown at about 12:30 pm and lunch in a local restaurant.

This afternoon we embark on a half day tour to visit Freetown city center. We will visit: Victoria Park Market, Law Court building, the cotton tree (emblem of the city; more than 550 years old), Parliament Building, State House building, King Jimmy Market and the Arts Market at Big Wharf. Enjoy our last meal together at a local restaurant.

Feb. 7, Day 32: Depart Freetown (B)

Transfer to Lungi International Airport by Sea Coach Express: It is a 10 minute drive from hotel to sea coach embarkation, one hour ferry crossing and 15 minutes from disembarkation to airport.

Price: \$12,260 per person based on min 10 people, Single Room Supplement: \$2575

Extra night Lomé, privilege sea view: \$145 per person twin share; Single Room: \$235

Transfer if not on day 1: \$35 per car

Tour Includes:

Accommodations with daily breakfast:

Lomé: Mercury Sarakawa 5* privilege sea-view room <http://www.sarakawa-hotel.com/fr/hotel-togo>

Ouidah: Casa Del Papa Resort & Spa 4* lagoon-facing rooms <http://casadelpapa.com/>
Cotonou: Golden Tulip Le Diplomat 4* <https://diplomate-cotonou.goldentulip.com/en-us>
Ougadougou: Hotel Laico Ouaga 2000 5* <https://laicoouaga2000.com-hotel.website/>
Saly: Lamantin Beach Resort & Spa 5* <http://www.leramantin.com/en/>
Dakar : Radisson Blu Resort 5* <https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-dakar>
St. Louis: Hotel de la Residence 3* colonial style renovated by French owners
<http://www.hoteldelaresidence.com/>
The Gambia, Banjul: Kairaba Hotel 5*standard room garden view <http://kairabahotel.com/>
Toubakouta: Hotel Keur Saloum 3* superior river front bungalow room <http://keursaloum.com/>
Saly: Lamantin Beach Resort & Spa 5* <http://www.leramantin.com/en/>
Accra: Kapinski Gold Coast Accre 5* <https://www.kempinski.com/en/accra/hotel-gold-coast-city/>
Kumasi: Golden Bean Hotel 4* <http://www.goldenbeanhotel.com/>
Elmina: Coconut Grove Resort 4* <http://coconutgrovehotelsghana.com/beachhotel/>
Beyin: Maha Beach Resort 5* standard sea view rooms <https://maaharesort.com/>
Abidjan: Azalai Hotel Marcory 4* <https://www.azalai.com/azalahotelabidjan/>
Conakry: hotel Palme Camayenne 5* <http://www.palmcamayenne.com/en/hotel-overview.html>
Freetown: Radisson Blu Hotel Mammy Yoko 5* <https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-freetown>

Meals: 27 Lunches, 5 Dinners. Bottled water 3 litres per day per person during drives & sightseeing.

Our Tour Leader: Mr Mohammed Traore (Momo). Momo is from Bamako and has 24 years experience as a guide and tour logistics organizer. Besides being experienced and knowledgeable, he is a wonderful warm personality that our clients will enjoy getting to know.

Local guides: There will be local guides in certain cities as required by regulations. Momo will be giving enhanced talks before the group reaches a site and handles all arrangements to ensure a smooth trip.

Vehicle: Toyota or Nissan Coaster, 25 seats for 8-12 people

Two Toyota Land Cruisers Prado for excursions to Taccugama village/Freetown and Conakry.

Entrance fees: All entrance fees for sites listed; and all activities listed

Airfares: Cotonou-Ougadougou, Dakar-Lomé-Accra; Abidjan-Conakry.

Does Not Include: Visas fees, PCR test fees, tips to driver, guide, hotel porters, meals not listed, personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls, drinks even when meals are included.

Sequence of activities and time schedule subject to change.

Drive time stated do not include time spent touring en-route, bathroom stops or time at border crossings which are unpredictable. Security check points can take an extra 1-1.5 hours.

Flight schedules are subject to change.

Festival dates subject to cancellation or date reschedule by the local government

Do not book your international flights before checking with us.