West Africa

Ghana, Togo, Benin and Senegal



November 2027 | 24 Days

$17,350 per person, twin share
Solo Supplement: $3,490



Tour Highlights

- UNESCO World Heritage-listed Portuguese Elmina Castle and Cape Coast castles
- The Akosombo dam, Africa's largest man-made lake
- Voodoo ceremony in Benin
- Koutammakou World Heritage-listed mini fortified castles
- Ganvie's stilted houses and fish market
- Cruising the Gambia River
- Djoudi National Park bird sanctuary



Blue Dot Travel
Go somewhere different

West Africa - Ghana, Togo, Benin and Senegal







Tour overview

The Republic of Ghana is an economic success and the most politically stable country in the region. It was the first Sub-Saharan country to gain independence from a European power, gaining independence from Britain in 1957, and UNESCO-listed buildings from that period remain. About the same size as Victoria's, Ghana's population is around 23 million. More than 100 languages are spoken. Fortunately for us, English is the official language and the most widely used.

Togo is a tiny country, smaller than Tasmania, with a population of around 6 million. The capital, Lomé, sits on the coast and is home to almost 20% of the population. Togoland was originally part of Ghana; however, the Germans colonised it in the late 1800s. In the 1920s, the League of Nations partitioned the region between France and the U.K., with France taking what is now called Togo. Despite its colonial history, ancient traditions remain, making it a fascinating cultural melting pot. Bordering Togo to the East is Benin, also located on the Gulf of Guinea. It was known as the Kingdom of Dahomey until the late 1800s.

The French colonised Benin in the early 1900s, becoming independent in 1960. Benin is the ideal travel destination, with its world heritage-listed mini-fortified castles and fascinating Voodoo history.

Senegal is a land of contrast and one of West Africa's most culturally diverse countries. Its combination of African and French cultures provides a mix of sophistication and rawness. Its slave past is evident, with many monuments dotting the nation. The locals love their music, as evidenced by the bars on nearly every corner of the capital, Dakar. If you're a birdwatcher, it's one of Africa's best places to visit, sitting on the migration path between Africa and Europe.

This fascinating itinerary takes you to diverse countries that showcase the best of West Africa. So grab your camera and your sense of adventure!



Activity rating: Moderate

You should be able to maintain a steady walking pace, manage flights of stairs, stand at attractions for periods of time, and board and disembark transport independently

Sunday 7th November 2027 DEPARTURE
Depart for your flight to Accra, Ghana's capital (all flights to be confirmed).

Day 1, Monday 8th November ARRIVE ACCRA
Welcome to Ghana!
Akwaaba (Welcome) to Ghana! On arrival at Kotoka International Airport, we'll meet our guide and transfer to the hotel. After check-in, we'll be briefed on what to expect during our stay in Ghana. Celebrate the start of the journey with a welcome dinner. Overnight: Accra **D**

Day 2, Tuesday 9th November ACCRA
Our first full day in Accra will be spent immersing ourselves in the history and day-to-day life of the local people. The local Ga Tribes were the original custodians of the current modernised city of Accra, and our first visit takes us to Jamestown, one of Accra's most historic neighbourhoods. Visit the lighthouse, where we will have a panoramic view of the Jamestown fishing community. We'll continue to Makola Market, Accra's largest open market and a fascinating reflection of Ghanaian culture. Take in this important trading hub's frenetic mix of sights and smells. Then, visit the newly renovated Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, celebrating the first president's life. Our day tour ends at La Township, where we learn about the uniquely designed special caskets in the Teshie-Nungua area, which reflect people's beliefs about life after death. Overnight: Accra **B/D**



Day 3, Wednesday 10th November ACCRA — CAPE COAST — ELMINA
Today, we depart for the coastal lands of Ghana - Elmina and Cape Coast (approximately 150km). En route, explore the old quarter (Mankessim) with its unique Posuban shrines, made by the traditional 'Asafo' societies once responsible for local defence. Upon arrival in Elmina, we will visit Elmina Castle (also known as St. George's Castle), built by the Portuguese in 1482. The castle was the first European structure built in Sub-Saharan Africa and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the afternoon, enjoy the sights of the many colourful fishing boats bringing their daily catch into the harbour and take the opportunity to mix with the locals. A short distance from the market, we'll visit the boat builders, still building colourful fishing boats using traditional tools and methods spanning centuries. You'll have time to stroll through the markets. Overnight:Elmina **B/D**



Day 4, Thursday 11th November ELMINA — CAPE COAST
After breakfast, we will head to the fish markets to walk amongst the locals, see their catch, and watch them bargain. It's loud, colourful and chaotic but not to be missed! Then, we will visit Cape Coast Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The castle is a thought-provoking monument to a harrowing period in the region's history. We will take an emotional journey through the castle, which held more enslaved Africans than any other in the region. A significant history museum inside explains the castle's heritage and the history of Cape Coast. Stop off next door for refreshments, coffee, or souvenirs, then return to the hotel for some downtime before dinner. Overnight: Elima **B/D**

Day 5, Friday 12th November ELMINA — ASSIN MANSO — KUMASI
After breakfast, drive through the forest zone to Kumasi, the seat of the Ashanti Empire, to explore the legends of the famous Ashantis, whose legacies are still evident today, with a stop at Assin Manso. We'll visit the "Donkor Nsuo" site, the former Slave River and market and the final transit point for many enslaved Africans. Kumasi may surprise you: it is the most dynamic marketplace in West Africa and Ghana's second-largest city, with a population of almost three million. It is a vibrant commercial centre visited by traders from all over. Kumasi has a rich collection of British colonial buildings and is the heart of Ashanti culture. We will enjoy a drive through the city with monuments dedicated to the memory of the great Ashanti people. End the day at the National Cultural Centre, which features the Prempeh II Jubilee Museum and studios for brass makers, potters, and batik artists. Overnight: Kumasi **B/D**



Day 6, Saturday 13th November KUMASI AND SURROUNDS
We 'll spend the day in and around Kumasi, including a visit to the Manhyia Palace Museum to gain insight into the Ashanti kingdom ' s legacy. A regal history from 1700 is told with relics and artefacts. We will end our day of exploration by visiting some of the surrounding, lush countryside craft villages. We'll see the weaving of the famous Kente cloth, the making of the Adinkra, a type of fabric worn at funerals and prized for its intricate hand-printed symbols, and the work of woodcarvers - stools, fertility figures, drums, etc. We will also have the opportunity to visit the ancient Ejisu Ashanti Shrine, a World Heritage Site. In the afternoon, if available, we'll participate in a traditional Ashanti funeral, attended by mourners wearing beautifully red or black togas. We say "funerals", but it means a "festive" celebration. Through this ceremony, after years, the spirit of the deceased returns as an ancestor and protects his family. Relatives and friends gather, socialise, and celebrate his/her memory. The chief arrives, surrounded by his court under the shade of large umbrellas, while drums give rhythm to the dancers whose intricate moves are highly symbolic of war and erotic meanings. Overnight: Kumasi **B/D**



Day 7, Sunday 14th November KUMASI — AKOSOMBO (6-7 hour drive)
We'll depart early this morning for a scenic drive to a beautiful village on the splendid Volta River. Dinner and overnight at the hotel, where we stay for two nights. There is a boat ride on the Volta River planned for the afternoon. The Volta Lake was formed with the construction of the hydroelectric dam and is the largest man-made lake in Africa. Overnight: Akosombo **B/D**

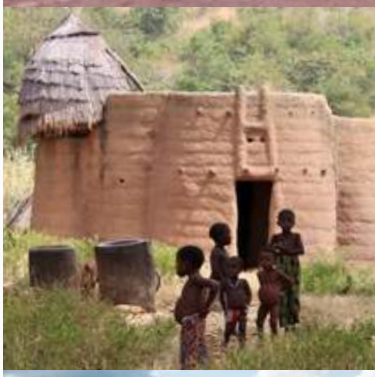
Day 8, Monday 15th November AKOSOMBO — KROBO ODUMASE - TORGOME — AKOSOMBO
After breakfast, we will drive to Torgome to visit the paramount chief and elders, accompanied by traditional drumming and dancing by the villagers. We will watch a pottery-making demonstration, the main occupation of the village's women, and experience the traditional Kente weaving process. Today we take part in the Naming ceremony and will be honoured with a traditional African name. We visit a small village called Krobo Odumase to experience bead-making with specially crafted glass. We can design beads using the traditional Krobo technique. Bead-making has a long history in Ghana. Beads have been used in birth, coming-of-age, marriage, and death ceremonies for the past 400 years. We will watch and participate in the entire bead-making process from start to finish. Overnight: Akosombo **B/D**



Day 9, Tuesday 16th November AKOSOMBO — LOME (170 km, 4 hrs)
Welcome to Togo!
Today, we'll depart for Lome, following the coast dotted with villages. Lomé, with an urban population of around 840,000, is Togo's capital and largest city. Located on the Gulf of Guinea, Lomé is the country's administrative and industrial centre. The city exports coffee, cocoa, copra, and palm kernels. It also has an oil refinery. The city was founded in the 19th century by German, British, and African traders and became the capital of Togoland in 1897. Upon arrival, we will take a scenic drive through Lome, including the ocean drive, the market area, public buildings, main boulevards, and the new International Museum of the Gulf of Guinea (if open). We'll tour the city, including the Museum of the Gulf of Guinea. Dinner at the hotel. Overnight: Lome **B/D**



Day 10, Wednesday 17th November LOME — ATAKPAME — SOKODE (320 km, 6 hrs)
Today, we head north to Sokode, with a stopover in Davedi village for a typical rural experience. We'll learn about the Bobo, an energetic local dance style performed by women. Here. We'll also witness the twin doll ceremony, where two elderly women who still uphold local "twin culture" traditions will care for their wooden dolls. They will bathe, dress, and feed them according to local tradition. Then, we'll drive to the town of Atakpame, built amongst picturesque hills. The town is synonymous with weaving; we will see brightly coloured Kente fabric everywhere. On arrival in Sokode, we will be transferred to the hotel for dinner before heading out for a demonstration of the fire dance. See how the local men dance and work themselves into a hypnotic state, touching and even placing burning coals in their mouths without showing any sign of pain. Truly hard to explain! Your hotel is basic, but fine for a one-night stay. Overnight: Sokode **B/D**



Day 11, Thursday 18th November SOKODE — KABYE MOUNTAINS — KARA (200 km, 5 hr)
After breakfast, we will cross into Benin and visit the Tamberma people's home. The Tamberma people are an ethnic group who primarily reside in the mountainous Tamberma Valley and neighbouring Atakora region. We'll visit Tata Somba, which straddles the border between Togo and Benin, where the locals are known for their unique, fortified, two-story mud houses called Tata Somba or Takienta, which serve as homes, livestock shelters, and granaries, reflecting a strong cultural connection to their land and ancestral beliefs. We'll visit a traditional village to see these fortress-like mud houses. We will have time to visit several of these magical and enchanting structures and to meet the Tamberma people, some of whom still wear headgear made from gazelle horns. Their miniature fortified castles are UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the Koutammakou. Their distinctive architecture, built by individual builders who 'sign' their work, is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Koutammakou. We will also see potters who use prehistoric methods that require no ovens to produce baked ceramic goods. We'll continue towards Kara, stopping along the way at village Tchare, a blacksmith community nestled in the valley of Mount Kabye. We will also see potters who use prehistoric methods and have no ovens, but produce ceramic goods covered with straw that are baked. Check into our basic but comfortable hotel for one night. Overnight: Kara **B/D**



Day 12, Friday 19th November KARA — BENIN
Welcome to Benin
Today is a long transfer day, with a full day of driving, heading south through Benin (approximately 340 km). Check into the basic but charming Chez Sabine (or similar) at the end of the afternoon. We will stay here for two nights. We may be able to find a voodoo event this evening. Overnight: Abomey **B/D**



Day 13, Saturday 20th November ABOMEY
Our journey today continues in Abomey, the ancient capital of the Dahomey Kingdom. This area was known as the "Slave Coast" in history, alongside the "Ivory Coast" and "Gold Coast". We will visit the intriguing Fetish Temple and meet one of the officiating priests. Hopefully, the villagers will also perform a Gelede mask for us. This is a spectacular part of the voodoo culture. Upon arrival, visit the Royal Palaces of Abomey, a historic museum listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985. Then proceed to Allada, the birthplace of Toussaint Louverture's parents. Toussaint Louverture led the Haitian Revolution and is considered the greatest man in Haitian history. Return to the hotel for dinner. Overnight: Abomey **B/D**



Day 14, Sunday 21st November ABOMEY — OUIDAH
After breakfast, we'll further explore the Abomey-Calavi fetish market, the most authentic in the region. Then, on to Ganvie, "the African Venice", one of the highlights of any trip to West Africa. In ancient times, people took refuge on Lake Nokoué from attacks by the feared Dahomey warriors, who, because of a deep belief, were forbidden to fight on water. Over time, the Ganvie people developed this unique lake culture and way of life, making them famous. Our boat cruise takes us along tranquil waterways and fish farms to the Ganvie lake community. Discover these curious stilt-built dwellings, small floating markets, and other aspects of local daily life. Drive to Ouidah. The Dahomey Kingdom conquered Ouidah in the 18th century, making it one of the main slave ports. Today, Ouidah features unique Afro-Brazilian architecture and a syncretic culture, with the Python Temple facing the Catholic Cathedral. The laid-back attitude of the locals blends in harmoniously with the thunder of the distant waves and the rhythm of the drums – a timeless atmosphere well described by Bruce Chatwin in his book "The Vice-Roy of Ouidah". We visit the Python Temple. In Ouidah, the existence of a living python cult (Dangbé) - a particular form of voodoo - has been documented since the late 17th century. We end the visit following the "slave road" to the beach, the door of "no return" where slaves were shipped to the "new world". Hotel Casa del Papa or similar, oceanfront comfortable bungalows, wild beaches, swimming pool, open-air restaurant and bar. Overnight: Ouidah **B/D**



Day 15, Monday 22nd November OUIDAH — PORTO NOVO — COTONOU
After breakfast, we travel to Porto Novo, Benin's official capital and second-largest city. Named by the Portuguese in the 1500s, Porto Novo still shows significant Portuguese influence today. The group will visit the market and the old colonial town, home to its ancient mosque. The Great Mosque of Porto Novo is a unique and perhaps the most colourful building in West Africa- the 19th-century Brazilian-style church has now been converted into a mosque. We also visit Palais Royal du Roi Toffa. This former residence of King Toffa is now officially called Musée Home. This well-maintained, rather simple palace offers a good look at how African royalty really lived. In 1883, King Toffa signed the treaty with the French, agreeing to hand over land. The kingdom of Porto Novo was one of the longest-lasting in Africa, lasting up until 1976. After lunch (at your own expense), we return to Cotonou and enjoy a city tour before checking in at the hotel. We will visit the following sites: The 'Esplanade des Amazones', a public square home to the 'Amazon', a 30-metre-high statue built in homage to the world's only all-female army. These Amazons belonged to the Kingdom of Dahomey, a West African empire from 1625 to 1894. Remembrance Square reveals the city's splendour and fascinating history. We will also visit the Wassangari warrior statue in Bio Guéra, which demonstrates the bravery with which the warriors fought to stop the colonial invasion. Overnight: Cotonou **B/D**



Day 16, Tuesday 23rd November COTONOU — DAKAR — SALY
Welcome to Senegal
After breakfast, we will be transferred from our hotel to the airport for the flight to Dakar (flights to be confirmed). Upon arrival, we'll drive to Saly (about an hour's drive from the airport), check in at the Hotel Neptune (or similar), where we will stay for three nights. Upon arrival, drive to Saly and check in at the Hotel. Overnight: Saly **B/D**

Day 17, Wednesday 24th November SALY — JOAL FADIOUTH — SALY
After breakfast, visit the oldest baobab tree in West Africa, believed to be 1,500 years old. We then continue to the twin villages of Joal/Fadiouth, where we will visit the traditional Serere village and observe the cathedral, the marketplace, and the famous multi-religious cemetery. Joal Fadiouth is a sleepy twin village, with Joal on the mainland and Fadiouth, linked by a narrow 400-metre wooden bridge, on an island built entirely of seashells. We will visit the shell islands of Fadiouth, a symbol of tolerance, where Muslims, Christians and animists are living together and buried side by side in an unusual mixed cemetery. Return to your hotel in the afternoon for downtime. Overnight: Saly **B/D**



Day 18, Thursday 25th November SALY – BANDIA PARK – SOMONE – SALY
This morning, drive to Bandia for a short safari. This reserve is a real ecological jewel in Senegal. It has reintroduced much of the marvellous native flora and some of Africa's best-loved animals: buffalo, antelopes, impala, gazelles, monkeys, tortoises, and crocodiles, as well as white rhinoceros, kudu, elands, cape buffalo, giraffes, ostriches, and zebras. Stop by the crocodile pool where animals come to drink, and buffalo wallow in the mud. We'll then drive to lunch at one of the restaurants at "La Lagune de Somone" (own cost) before taking a motorised canoe trip amongst the mangroves to admire nature and to spot some river birds. Return to your hotel later in the afternoon. Overnight: Saly **B/D**



Day 19, Friday 26th November SALY – TOUBA – ST. LOUIS
After breakfast, drive to Touba, the holy city. Visit the Grand Mosque, the largest and most magnificent structure in West Africa. Learn about Cheikh Ahmadou Mbacke, the founder of Mouridism, and the history of Touba, one of West Africa's most significant cities. Touba is an autonomous city, much like the Vatican in Italy. Continue on to St. Louis, stopping in Fulani and Wolof villages along the way. Arrive in the island city of St. Louis late in the afternoon. The island is distinguished by its colonial houses with verandas and wrought-iron balconies, which are among the tour's highlights. Transfer to the hotel La Residence, where you'll stay for two nights. Freshen up and meet for dinner. Overnight: St Louis **B/D**

Day 20, Saturday 27th November ST. LOUIS – DJUODJ NATIONAL PARK – ST. LOUIS
After breakfast, we'll visit the Djoudj National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage site), one of the world's most important bird sanctuaries. This park is a paradise for bird enthusiasts on a major Palearctic migratory route. Some of the world's greatest concentrations of white pelicans and flamingos can be seen here. Enjoy a pirogue ride for better views of the many species of cormorants, pelicans, ducks, flamingos, various songbirds, and more. You may also see crocodiles, boats and other wildlife. When you return from the sanctuary, you'll complete your city tour of Saint Louis with a guided walk around town. Overnight: St Louis **B/D**



Day 21, Sunday 28th November ST. LOUIS — PINK LAKE — DAKAR
After breakfast, depart to Dakar, the capital of Senegal. This is a long day's drive, so you'll be on the road for about 6 hours. En route, stop at the Pink Lake, a rare natural phenomenon caused by a unique combination of microorganisms and high salt concentrations that gives the lake its pink hue. We'll meet the women working in the salt harvest. Next, we will visit the Fulani village and then continue to Dakar, where we will stay for two nights. Overnight: Dakar **B/D**

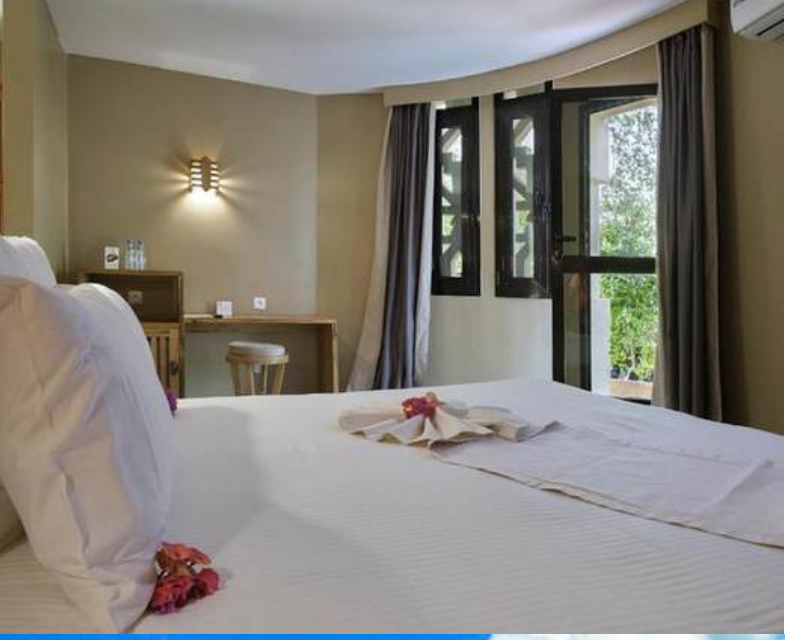


Day 22, Monday 29th November DAKAR
After breakfast, the group will take a city tour of Dakar and its surroundings. From Independence Place, the city's heart, we will pass the presidential palace and the main cathedral before continuing by the seafront drive towards Soumbedioune market and the Mosque de la Révélation. The tour of Dakar will show you the contrasts between upscale residential areas and popular neighbourhoods. We will also visit popular hotspots such as Kermel or Tilem Market. Next, we'll visit the Renaissance Monument, a 164-foot-high monument overlooking Dakar that is taller than the Statue of Liberty. The once-controversial bronze statue is a popular attraction among locals and visitors. Then to Africa's most modern museum, the Museum of African Civilisations, a massive four-story complex that fulfilled the dream of Senegal's first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor. Late in the afternoon, we'll drive to the suburb of Almadies, where there are some nice shops and a concept store. You'll then have the chance to walk out to the causeway to see where the small boats cross to Il de Ngor (if allowed). Tonight, we'll celebrate our tour with a farewell dinner to trace our journey and discuss the highlights. Overnight: Dakar **B/D**



Day 23, Tuesday 30th November DAKAR — GOREE — DAKAR
After breakfast, we'll drive to the port and board the ferry for a 20-minute ride to visit the charming yet infamous Goree Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the usually quiet streets lined with pastel- coloured colonial-era buildings. Among the most famous buildings is the House of Slaves, which documents Goree's history. Grab some lunch at one of the many cafes and restaurants. You'll be back in the afternoon and transferred directly to the airport for your flight home. **B/D**

Day 24, Wednesday 1st December
In transit. Arrive home.









Accommodation

Our hotels are carefully chosen to capture the local atmosphere and set you up in an ideal location. You can expect accommodation ranging from standard hotels to boutique-style hotels and smaller, independently owned establishments. Below are some of the hotels on this tour. As hotels may change, a complete list will be shared with you prior to departure.

Labadi Beach Hotel, Accra
www.labadibeachhotelgh.com

Hotel Djolof, Dakar
www.hoteldjoloff.fr

Lancaster Hotel, Kumasi
www.lancasterkumasicity.com

Anomansa Beach Resort, Elmina
https://anomansabeachresort.com

Why Blue Dot?

Travel is more than just moving from one place to another; it is an opportunity to explore this vast planet, connect with its people and marvel at its beauty. We have established a group of loyal, like-minded travellers who share this feeling and have taken multiple tours with us. With Blue Dot, you'll experience

- Thoughtfully designed itineraries with unique experiences
- Small, inclusive groups with a maximum of 16 travellers
- The support of both an Australian tour leader* and experienced local guides
- Programs designed to meet the needs of mature-age travellers
- Hands on, personalised service including customised flight bookings
- Tipping included in your tour cost

*Australian leaders accompany groups with more than 10 travellers.

Blue Dot welcomes solo travellers

In fact, over half of our clients are solo travellers. We understand it can be daunting to travel on your own, and we'll ensure your travel is safe, inclusive and enjoyable. You can confidently join our groups, knowing that we bring solo travellers together to share the camaraderie of an unforgettable adventure.

Enquiries and bookings

A $500 deposit is required to secure your booking.

For more information:

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