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meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Guinea-Bissau – Archipelago Adventure

Tour Duration – 8 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●○○ | Wildlife ●○○○○

Tour Pace

Moderate

Tour Highlights

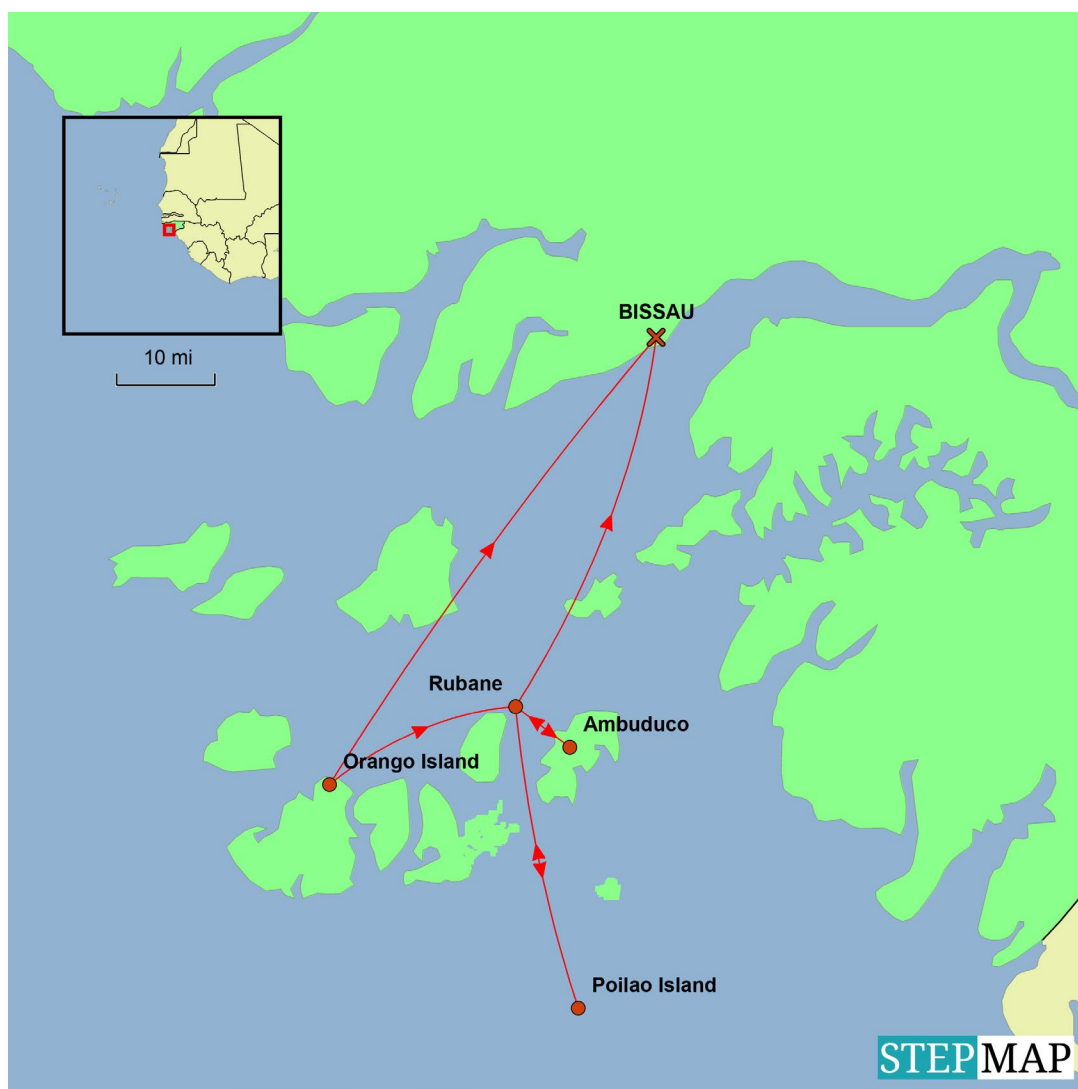
- ✓ Discover tiny Guinea Bissau, one of the world's least visited nations
- ✓ Visit an almost untouched corner of Africa; expect truly genuine encounters with local people and feel privileged to be one of the very few to have travelled here
- ✓ Discover the stunning Bijagos Archipelago and look for the unique saltwater hippo, which swim between some of the islands





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Tour Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Tourist class hotels, which although comfortable can be quite basic
- Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
- Group Size:** Maximum of 12
- Start Point:** Bissau
- End Point:** Bissau
- Transport:** Minibus and/or 4WD, private speed motorboats
- Country Visited:** Guinea-Bissau



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Guinea-Bissau – Archipelago Adventure

Guinea-Bissau is one of the smallest, and least visited, countries in Africa – few western travellers make it to this former Portuguese colony, but those that do return full of incredible experiences and memories of a stunning part of the continent. Starting in Bissau, we travel by boat to the magnificent Bijagos Islands – a group of islands where traditional culture is at its strongest and ancient customs still hold sway. We visit local communities to learn about their lifestyles, some of the most traditional on the continent. The joy of this trip is the fact that you will be visiting an almost untouched corner of Africa; expect truly genuine encounters with local people and feel privileged to be one of the very few to have travelled here.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used. Please note that the itinerary is subject to changes due to sea and weather conditions.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Bissau (14 km / approx. 30m)

Arrive into Bissau and transfer to your hotel. Overnight Dunia Hotel or similar (D)

Bissau

Guinea-Bissau's capital is a small and fairly unassuming place, with old colonial buildings and a generally easy-going pace – although that changes at the time of the annual carnival. It's a pleasant place to wander around to witness everyday scenes of life but doesn't offer much in the way of traditional sightseeing – rather the attraction is to experience a slice of urban Africa that is much easier to deal with than some other African capitals. Some of the traditional crafts to be found here are particularly excellent.

Day 2: Bissau – Orango National Park by boat (approx. 3hrs)

This morning take a short city tour of Bissau before departing by boat for Orango National Park in the heart of the Bijagos Archipelago. Overnight at Orango Parque Hotel or similar (BLD)

Bijagos Islands

The Bijagos Archipelago is made up of around forty different islands and has been declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve due to their ecological importance and rare and endangered species including turtles and the unique saltwater hippo, which swim between some of the islands. Their distance from the mainland has meant that local culture here has remained far less affected by modern influences than elsewhere, and most islanders live a very traditional life, with a different language, Bijago, spoken here.





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Day 3: Orango – Village of Eticoga (5km / approx. 3hrs walk)

Take a walk in the forest with a local eco-guide to the village of Eticoga, known for its sanctuary where Queen Okinka Pampa and her family rests. As a place of veneration, it regularly hosts rituals in the company of her descendants and villagers. We visit the women's association and their handicraft and horticultural work. Overnight at Orango Parque Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Day 4: Orango – Lake Anor (20km / 2hr boat and approx. 2hr of walking)

Beach to beach boat trip in the presence of eco guides then continue by foot through the mangrove and savannah to Anor Lake and its freshwater pockets. Spend some time at the lake with a picnic lunch before returning to our hotel. Overnight Orango Parque Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Day 5: The sacred village of Ambuduco (4hr boat and walking)

A large palm grove announces the arrival at the oldest part of the National Park, where the most important ceremonies on the island take place. Enjoy the traditional dance "Canhocan", characteristic of the young bijagós warriors, in a perfect combination of their culture with nature where these people live their everyday life. After lunch we head to Ponta Anchaca Lodge. Overnight Ponta Anchaca Lodge or similar. (BLD)

Day 6: Joao Viera and Poilao Islands National Park (October to January)

Excursion to Joao Vieira, the island of orchids. During the crossing, we may be lucky to spot some dolphins. Continue to the uninhabited Island of Poilao, the first nesting site for green turtles on the entire West African coast. Overnight at Ponta Anchaca Lodge or similar. (BLD)

Day 7: Ponta Anchaca – Bissau (approx. 2hrs by boat) (October to January)

After a leisurely morning, we transfer back to Bissau by boat. Overnight Dunia Hotel or similar. (BD)

Day 6: Ponta Anchaca to Ilha sul de Canhabaque (February to September)

After breakfast leave the Ponta Anchaca Lodge by boat for the Anchaca Sud Lodge on the island of Ilha sul de Canhabaque. After check-in enjoy the fine location, on a 22km stretch of beach. Dinner and overnight at the lodge. (BD)

Day 7: Inhoda Village and return to Bissau (February to September)

After breakfast we leave the Anchaca Sud Lodge and visit some local rice paddies and hope to see some migratory birds. We also visit the small village of Inhoda before travelling back to Bissau by boat. Overnight Dunia Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Day 8: Bissau Departure

You will be transferred to the airport for your departure flight. (B)

End of services.





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Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure airport transfers
All accommodation
Transport as indicated
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks
Expenses of personal nature

Important Information

Foreign Travel Advice Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing the FCDO has no travel warnings in place for Guinea-Bissau. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or if you would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.



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It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis, please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you can expect to stay in simple but comfortable small-scale accommodation. With a few exceptions you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary, air-conditioning or a fan will be provided. In general, you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Service Standards

Please note that standards of service in much of Africa are not comparable to those of more developed countries, especially in the more off the beaten track locations. Service is often slow and lacks the same attention to detail, and your patience and understanding will be appreciated.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements, you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs, and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £8 / Dinner £12

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £1 / Water £1



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Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise throughout the region. If your local guide has been helpful, then you could think about tipping. This amount can obviously be left to you. When tipping a driver, a guide or hotel staff a few dollars will always be gratefully received.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: Very limited and very unreliable

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards will be accepted in very few places, and you should travel with cash

Local Currency: CFA

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Euros

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on the advertised start and end dates of the tour. In addition, arrival and/or departure transfers will be provided in conjunction with any pre and/or post tour accommodation that has been booked through Undiscovered Destinations. In all other cases charges may apply for airport transfers.

Please advise the date, time, and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

With the exception of West African states, all nationalities require a visa to enter Guinea-Bissau. Visitors to Guinea-Bissau must obtain a visa on arrival. Regulations can and do change and so we recommend that you check with your nearest embassy or consulate for the most up to date information.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of the developing world, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice, and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication will also be required, and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

You will also need to have a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate to enter Guinea-Bissau.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The best time to visit the region is between November and May – outside of this time it can be very hot. From June to September / October the region experiences most of its rainfall.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day and warmer ones at night, although you shouldn't expect it to be cold here. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun. Guinea-Bissau is fairly relaxed in terms of clothing. Shorts are generally acceptable for men but not worn by local men. You should make sure that you have sufficient long-sleeved tops and trousers for entering any mosques. There are lots of opportunities for swimming so please bring a swimming costume. You may also find a waterproof jacket to be useful for the journeys made by speedboats.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Sun cream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. If you are bringing a digital camera, it is also advisable to bring a spare battery, as there will be occasions when electricity is not available. It is advisable to bring plastic bags or water-proof bags to protect expensive equipment during the boat journeys.



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Environmental Responsibility

We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment. On this tour single-use plastic bottles of water will not be handed out. Water will be provided from a large container. We kindly ask you to bring your own water bottles/flask with you on this trip. If you have any concerns, please contact us.

Wildlife Expectations

On this tour there may be an opportunity to see some wildlife. However, these animals are wild. We cannot guarantee sightings and access is dependent on weather conditions.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V and plugs usually have two round pins.

Tides

With each departure, visits can be rescheduled according to the tides. Visits may be carried out in a different order.

Itinerary Changes

The itinerary is subject to changes due to sea and weather conditions.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour, but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared 26 February 2024.