



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Ghana - Kingdoms of Gold – Akwasidae Festival

Tour Duration – 14 Days



Tour Rating

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

Tour Rating

Busy

Tour Highlights

- ✓ The chance to mingle with the fascinating tribal peoples and observe their enduring cultures
- ✓ Kumasi, the intriguing historical and spiritual centre of the Ashanti Kingdom
- ✓ The atmospheric Cape Coast and Elmina areas with their mixed history
- ✓ Experience Akwasidae Festival and traditional Ashanti ceremonies
- ✓ Attend a voodoo ceremony in a remote village

Tour Map



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Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Comfortable hotel accommodation
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum group size 16 (you are likely to be joined by travellers from companies other than Undiscovered Destinations, with a mix of nationalities).
Start Point: Accra
End Point: Accra
Transport: 4WD or minibuses
Countries: Ghana

Ghana - Kingdoms of Gold

Stretching from the dusty borderlands of the north to the tropical coast in the south, Ghana encapsulates all that is special about West Africa, with great scenery and wildlife complemented by a joyous and exuberant people who will make you feel welcome from the moment you arrive. Ghana is vibrant and seductive, and it's no wonder that it's many people's introduction to West Africa. Ghana is the sort of place that remains in your soul long after you have visited.





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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.

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. Depending on the mix of nationalities in the group, and the group size, the guiding may be conducted in English plus additional languages, and there may be more than one guide with the group.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Accra

Arrive in Accra and transfer to your hotel. Depending on your time of arrival, there may be time to explore this vibrant African capital. Overnight at La Villa Boutique or similar.

Accra

Ghana's capital is one of Africa's biggest cities, with the inevitable traffic, noise and mayhem. Despite being a fast growing, lively city, the people are friendly and welcoming and maintain many aspects of their tribal African roots. The National Museum houses one of West Africa's best ethnographic, historical and art collections, which gives a good introduction to Ghana and surrounding areas. The old quarter of Jamestown is the heart of the old colonial town (British protected area) and was inhabited by the Ga people, who founded Accra in the 16th century. There are numerous bustling markets to explore where you can discover everything from food, clothing and household goods to traditional crafts. There is even an area for the fabrication of special coffins that take the forms of fish, fruit, animals, or your favourite car, traditionally based on the occupation of the deceased, but customisable by prior request.

Day 2 – Accra – Anomabu (160km – 4 hours driving approx.)

Explore Accra, taking in its main sights including the atmospheric old quarter of Jamestown, the National Museum (if open – currently undergoing renovations) and something unique to Ghana – the coffin makers. These craftsmen build elaborate coffins in many weird and wonderful shapes including fish, cars, animals and aeroplanes! We then drive west to Anomabu on the coast. Overnight at Anomabu Beach Resort or similar (BLD)

Day 3 – Anomabu – Kakum - Elmina - Anomabu (170km – 3 hours driving approx.)

This morning we take a canopy walk in the deep forest of Kakum National Park. We then visit the fishing town of Elmina, best known for St George's Castle, the oldest European building in Africa and once used as a holding centre for slaves. We explore the old quarter with its unique Posuban shrines, made by the traditional 'asafo' societies which were once responsible for local defence. From here we drive back to Anomabu. Overnight at Abomabu Beach Resort or similar (BLD)



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Kakum National Park,

Covers a surface of 357 sq. km of mostly undisturbed virgin rainforest. It is found at the easternmost extent of the Guinean Forest of West Africa and reputed to be one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the African continent. Park rangers are here specifically trained in the medical and cultural significance of the local plants.

Elmina

Elmina is best known for its Castle of St George, built in 1482 by the Portuguese and occupied by the Dutch and British in the following centuries. The Castle and its museum are of considerable interest and the town is now a colourful thriving fishing port where hundreds of colourfully painted wooden fishing canoes are anchored. The best time to see the port is in the morning when fishermen arrive back with their catches, and traders crowd the area. In addition to the Castle of St George Elmina boasts another – the smaller Fort St Jago, situated on top of a hill as a protective measure against the castle being bombarded from above. There are also numerous animistic shrines throughout the town built by Posuban societies to protect the fishermen.

Day 4 – Anomabu – Kumasi (250km – 5 hours driving approx.)

We travel to the centre of the Ashanti kingdom, Kumasi where we arrive late morning. We visit traditional Ashanti houses, recently renovated and famous for their unique decorations. We may also be lucky enough to witness an Ashanti funeral – a colourful and exuberant affair which gives a great insight into the complex culture of this once powerful kingdom. Overnight at Noble Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Kumasi

Kumasi is the historical and spiritual capital of the Ashanti Kingdom. With its population of nearly one million, Kumasi is a sprawling city with a fantastic central market where traders from all over Africa come to sell their wares. Every kind of Ashanti craft (leather goods, pottery, Kente cloth) is found here, along with just about every kind of tropical fruit and vegetable. We visit the Ghana National Cultural Centre, which has a rich collection of Ashanti artefacts, housed in a reproduction of a traditional Ashanti royal house.

Ashanti

The Ashanti people were one of the most powerful nations in Africa until the end of the 19th century, when the British annexed Ashanti country, bringing it into their Gold Coast colony. Originally from the northern savannah regions, the Ashanti people migrated south, carving farms out of the wild rainforest. The region was rich in gold, and trade in this precious metal developed quickly, with small tribal states developing and vying for control of resources. In the late 17th century the Ashanti ruler brought these states together in a loose confederation and the Ashanti Kingdom was born. Their social organisation is centred on the Ashantehene figure, the king of all the Ashanti. The Ashanti are the lords of the gold, so they adorn themselves in it during ceremonies. The Ashanti Kingdom was famed for its gold, royalty, ceremony and the development of a bureaucratic judicial system.

Day 5 – Kumasi – Techiman (130km – 3 hours driving approx.)

Continue our exploration of Kumasi by visiting the Royal Palace Museum, with its unique collection of golden jewellery. A highlight of the trip this morning will also be to experience the traditional Akwasidae Festival, a special celebration on the Ashanti calendar. From here we drive to Techiman. Overnight at Encom Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Akwasidae Festival

This special celebration takes place in the Royal Palace in Kumasi and is a traditional ceremony maintaining ancient rituals in one of the last remaining African Kingdoms. During the celebration the King is adorned in vivid clothing and centuries old jewellery and is surrounded by the Ashanti elders and advisors, all under the authority of the Royal Speaker. In front of the King a narrow passage of dignitaries is formed, representing all roles and positions of power within the kingdom, including sword and knife bearers, armed guards, carriers of



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beautiful ostrich feathers and more. The ceremony continues with a procession of royal court attendants bringing gifts, storytellers reciting the history of the Ashanti Kings, drummers and other musical instruments accompanied by dancers dressed in spectacular costumes. The mother queen also joins the ceremony accompanied by her attendants.

Day 6 – Techiman – Mole (330km – 6 hours driving approx.)

Today we travel to Mole, the largest, oldest and most developed park in Ghana. En route we stop and visit some local villages. Overnight Mole Motel or similar (BLD)

Mole National Park

Mole is the largest, oldest and most developed park in Ghana, covering an area of 4,912sq.km. The vegetation is savannah woodland with gallery forest along watercourses. 734 species of flowering plants have been recorded in the park, as well as 90 mammalian species including elephant, buffalo, roan, kob, hartebeest, water buck, reed buck and other antelopes. Among the estimated 500 elephants found at the Mole National Park are three relatively “tame” individuals. Because of the good protection given to animals in the Park, the elephant have generally become used to visitors and allow them to get close during the guided tours of the Park.

Day 7 – Mole

Today we take a walking safari in Mole National Park. The vegetation is savannah woodland with gallery forest along watercourses. 734 species of flowering plants have been recorded in the park. 90 mammalian species including elephant, buffalo, roan, kob, hartebeest, water buck, reed buck and other antelopes. Among the estimated 500 elephants found at the Mole National Park are three relatively “tame” individuals. Because of the good protection given to animals in the park, the elephant have generally become used to visitors and allow them to get close during the guided tours. Overnight Mole Motel or similar (BLD)

Day 8 – Mole – Yendi (250km – 5 hours driving approx.)

Today we visit the Dagomba villages, a tribe that represents one eighth of the Ghanaian population. Their villages are made of round huts covered with high thatch roofs. Overnight Kamil Legacy Hotel or similar (BLD)

Day 9 – Yendi – Nkwanta (180km – 4 hours driving approx.)

Today we have a stop in a Kokomba village where we will be welcomed by women who bear the burden of being considered ‘witches’. Overnight at Gateway Hotel or similar (BLD)

Day 10 – Nkwanta – Wli (180km – 4 hours driving approx.)

Today we travel from savannah to tropical forests, stopping off along the way and passing by the numerous coffee and cocoa plantations. We visit the Wli waterfalls, the most amazing in the area, located on the border between Togo and Ghana. Overnight at Wli Water Highs Hotel or similar (BLD)

The walk to Wli waterfalls is approx. 45 minutes following a flat path.

Day 11 - Wli – Akosombo (140km – 4 hours driving approx.)

Today we drive to the Volta region of Ghana and visit the Monkey Sanctuary of Tafi Atome. We take a walk in the forest to see the Monas and Colobus monkeys. We then follow a winding road to the village of Akosombo. Overnight Afrikiko Resort or similar (BLD)

Day 12 – Akosombo – Voodoo

Today we attend a Voodoo ceremony at the heart of a remote village. During the ceremony some of the adepts may become possessed giving rise to amazing trances. Overnight Afrikiko Resort or similar (BLD)

Day 13 – Akosombo - Accra (100km, 2 hours driving approx.)



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This morning travel to Krobo, famous for its beads, where we visit a factory specialised in the production of the beads. We then drive to Accra for an overnight stay. Overnight La Villa Boutique or similar (BLD)

Day 14 – Accra Departure

Today we focus on the very modern soul of Accra. We will visit some art galleries like Artists Alliance Gallery, Wild Gecko Handicrafts and Gallery 1957. Stroll around the design and cloths shops hopefully having the chance to meet some designers who could explain us their works. You will then be transferred to the airport for your departure flight. Day use rooms available until 1800hrs. (BL)

Inclusions and Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure airport transfers – please see notes

All accommodation

Transport throughout

Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader (there may be more than one guide with the group and the explanations may be in additional languages)

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

Tips (Discretionary)

Notes

Airport Transfers

We include airport transfers in the price of your tour if you are arriving on the first day and leaving on the last day of the advertised itinerary. These will be provided by our local representative or on occasions by the hotel used for the first and last nights of the tour. When the transfer is provided by the hotel this will often be via a shared shuttle bus operated by the hotel. If you are planning to arrive before the start date, and/or leave after the end date of the tour, Undiscovered Destinations can arrange private transfers at an additional cost. Please check with us at the time of booking.

Please note that if you have arranged extra pre and/or post tour accommodation, either through Undiscovered Destinations or directly with the hotel or an agent, airport transfers are not included in the price of your tour. Please contact us if you would like Undiscovered Destinations to arrange private airport transfers at an additional cost.

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel



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to Ghana. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or 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.

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

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation. With a few exceptions you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary air-conditioning 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 & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch 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.



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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 £10
Dinner £10

Drinks

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
Bottled water £0.40

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is commonly recognised as a way of rewarding guides and drivers for good service. If you are happy with your guide and driver, please consider leaving a tip for them.

Tipping is generally only common in the better restaurants, rather than the smaller streetside ones.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: Present in most of the cities

Credit & Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are not widely accepted

Local Currency: Cedi

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollars or UK Sterling

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



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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

Visitors from most countries, including UK, EU and US visitors require a visa for entering Ghana. This needs to be obtained in advance, in the country of your residency. Visa regulations can frequently change and therefore we recommend that you check with your nearest embassy for the most up to date details.

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 the UK. 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 Africa, 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. You will also need to also need to take anti-malarial medication.

It is mandatory for entry to Ghana to travel with a valid Yellow Fever Certificate. If you fail to do so you will be made to receive an injection on arrival.

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 region experiences two distinct seasons and travel is possible all year. The dry season runs from October until April, and the wet season from May until September – these can change by a few weeks either side depending on climate variations. The rains, although heavy, usually take the form of short sharp bursts.



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Clothing

Ghana is very warm and so light cotton clothes are generally a good idea. You should also bring a hat – the sun is very strong here, even in the winter. It might be a good idea to bring a fleece in case of cooler evenings in the north but this is usually not a problem.

In general, shorts are acceptable, although there may be occasions when it is appropriate to wear long trousers for example at an Ashanti funerals and the Akwasidae festival). Long trousers also provide better protection against insects and are recommended for nature walks.

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.

Environmental Responsibility

We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment. On this tour single-use plastic bottles of water will not be given. Water will be provided from a large container. Please bring your own water bottles/flask with you on this trip.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended, as well as a pair of sandals.

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/50 Hz and plugs have three square pins as in the United Kingdom.

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 updated 8 January 2020

