



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Ghana, Togo and Benin – Spirits of West Africa
Akwasidae Festival

Tour Duration – 13 Days



Tour Rating

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

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

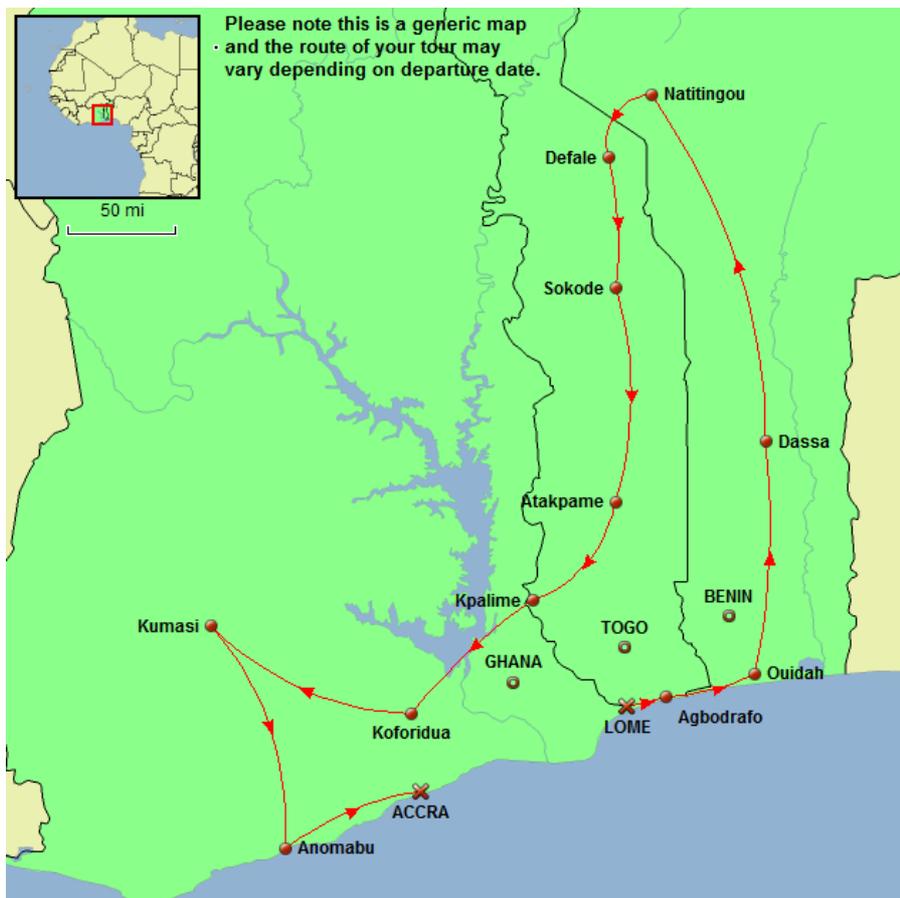
- ✓ Amazing diversity of traditional cultures
- ✓ Witness a traditional voodoo ceremony
- ✓ Visit the fiercely traditional Tamberma with their extraordinary fortress style houses
- ✓ The fishing village of Elmina, home to an imposing slave castle
- ✓ Witness the Akwasidae festival of the Ashanti in Ghana





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Tour Map Ghana, Togo and Benin – Spirits of West Africa



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Simple but 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 – On this tour you are likely to be joined by travellers from companies other than Undiscovered Destinations, with a mix of nationalities.
Start Point: Lome – you can arrive any time on this day
End Point: Accra – you can depart anytime after 21:00hrs
Transport: Minibus or 4WD
Countries Visited: Ghana, Togo, Benin

Group Size – Important Information

The maximum group size for this tour is 16. The group will be led by an experienced local guide and dedicated transport will be provided. As tourism facilities in West Africa are limited and some tours including those that include a festival can be popular, it should be noted that on occasions other tour groups will be travelling in the region and may be following the same or a similar itinerary. They may also be staying at the same hotels.



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Ghana, Togo and Benin – Spirits of West Africa

Ghana, Togo and Benin are home to an amazing diversity of traditional cultures, from the once mighty kingdom of the Ashanti to smaller groups living in isolation in the bush. This tour explores all three, starting in Accra, one of West Africa's liveliest cities before crossing into Togo to witness a traditional voodoo ceremony deep within the swamps. We explore stilt villages and ancient kingdoms, and visit the fiercely traditional Tamberma people, with extraordinary fortress style houses designed to protect them from invaders. In Ghana we look for sacred monkeys in the forest and travel through the lands of the Dagomba, as well as visiting the fishing village of Elmina, home to an imposing slave castle dating back more than five hundred years. On this tour you will have the opportunity to witness the Akwasidae festival of the Ashanti, a glittering showcase of traditional culture honouring the Ashanti kin.

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

[Togo] Day 1: Arrival in Lome

Arrive in Lome and transfer to your hotel. For those arriving early in the day, the rest of the day is at leisure to explore. Overnight Hotel Sarakawa or similar. No meals nor guided excursions are included today.

Lome

Togo's capital is a vibrant city situated on the coast, sitting right on the international border with Ghana and with a population of just under a million. Slightly dishevelled, it is quite an atmospheric little city and is now recovering from the civil disturbances suffered by the country in the 1990s. Its origins date back to the 18th century, when it was settled by the Ewe people, one of Togo's largest ethnic groups. Like many African cities it doesn't have too much in the way of formal sightseeing but there are a few things worth exploring - the Grand Marche with its exuberant businesswomen known as 'Nana Benz' who monopolise the sale of cloth in Togo. Not to be missed is the fetish market, where animal parts are sold for use in traditional medicines. This is not a great place for animal lovers, with heads and body parts of everything from sharks and crocodiles to gorillas on sale, but offers a fascinating insight into a belief system very different from our own. Lome has a number of buildings which date from the German occupation, most noticeable of which is a rather bizarre looking 19th century Gothic style cathedral which looks rather out of place in a West African city.



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[Togo] Day 2: Lome – Agbodrafo (100km; Driving time today: approx. 3 hours)

Lome is the only African city to have been colonised by the French, British and Germans. This morning we will begin a city tour with a visit to Independence Square, before continuing to the lively and colourful market, with the Sacred Heart Cathedral in its midst. We then head to the fascinating- if rather gruesome- fetish market, where animal parts are sold for use in traditional medicines; Vodou healers and practitioners are on hand for consultations- (please see the Notes section for more information). We travel to a remote hidden village where we will join a Vodou ceremony. The frenetic rhythm of the drums and the chants of the adepts help to call the voodoo spirits who take possession of the dancers who fall into a deep trance: eyes rolling back, grimaces, convulsions, insensitivity to fire or pain. An amazing experience and a highlight of this trip. Overnight Hotel du Lac or similar (BLD)

[Togo & Benin] Day 3: Agbodrafo – Ouidah (70km; Driving time today: approx. 2 hours)

Today we meet with the celestial church, an interesting example of religious syncretism mixing voodoo and Christianity. We then cross the border into Benin and drive to the coastal town of Ouidah, a stronghold of voodoo and once an important slave port. We visit the python temple, where snakes are venerated as representations of gods, the old Portuguese fort and finally head to the beach and the sombre 'Gate of No Return', the point from which slaves left Africa for the New World. Overnight Hotel Casa del Papa or similar. (BLD)

Voodoo

Voodoo, or Vodoun as it is known here, is one of the most important religions in this part of West Africa. Forget what you may have seen on TV about it being a form of black magic – here it has the same legitimacy as any other belief system and has been adopted as an official religion by Benin. Voodoo is a complex and intricate way of seeing of the world, with literally hundreds of different gods responsible for various areas of daily life – some are benevolent, some less so, and in order to communicate with them and ask for favours local people will seek the assistance of followers, or adepts. There are numerous voodoo temples scattered around the coastal regions of both Benin and Togo, each headed by a priest who for a suitable donation will intercede on your behalf. Voodoo is not limited to the temples though and travelling around the region it is not unlikely that you will see some ceremony being carried out. Also worth looking out for are the Egunguns – earthly manifestations of the dead who roam the streets in outlandish costumes, striking fear into the heart of local people. Sacrifice and blood are important within voodoo rituals, and any ceremony worth its salt is likely to involve a chicken being killed, its blood spilled onto a shrine in order to seal the pact. You're also likely to see fetishes dotted around villages – these are inanimate objects such as rocks or trees in which a spirit is believed to reside, often covered in candle wax, feathers and blood where sacrifices have been made. Gaining some understanding of voodoo allows you a glimpse into a magical world where nothing is quite as it seems, and is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of travelling here.

Ouidah

Founded in the fifteenth century and made famous by Bruce Chatwin's novel, 'The Viceroy of Ouidah', Ouidah was once a centre for the slave trade in this part of West Africa and many of its buildings bear witness to a strong European influence. As well as a rather imposing and out of place cathedral, Afro-Brazilian architecture and crumbling colonial buildings, the Portuguese fort holds an interesting history museum which gives an insight into the past life of the town. Of equal interest is the Python Temple, where a collection of snakes are venerated as earthly representations of voodoo gods. A thought provoking excursion is the 3km walk along the 'Slave Route', where those boarding the boats across the Atlantic were herded like cattle to the shore. At the end on the beach lies the modern 'Gate of No Return', built in memory of the thousands who never made it back.

[Benin] Day 4: Ouidah – Dassa (250km; Driving time today: approx. 5 hours)

Today we cross Lake Nokwe by boat to Ganvie and the Tofinou ethnic group, who build their huts on teak stilts, and cover the roofs with a thick layer of leaves.



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Fishing is their main activity and you will see the canoes that men, women and children lead with ease using brightly coloured poles. It is with these canoes that the men fish, women deliver goods to the market and children go to school and play. We continue to Abomey where we visit the Royal Palace. The walls of the palace are decorated with bas-reliefs representing symbols of the ancient Dahomey kings. Now a museum listed on the World Heritage by the UNESCO, the palace displays the items belonging to the ancient kings: thrones, ancient cult alters, statues, costumes and weapons. Learn about this Kingdom whose economy was for a long time based on the slave trade. A permanent state of war made it possible for the Kings to capture thousands of prisoners that they then sold as slaves. In the middle of the royal courtyard is found a temple built with a mixture of clay and human blood. Overnight Hotel Jeko or similar (BLD)

Ganvie

On Lake Nokwe lies the stilt village of Ganvie, a settlement of 25,000 people isolated from the land and only accessible by boat. Legend has it that the Tofinou people fled here in the 18th century to escape the depredation of the more powerful Dahomeyans on the lookout for slaves, and that they were transported to their new home by crocodiles. Whatever the truth behind it, Ganvie is an interesting place to drift through in a boat, watching how people go about their daily lives on the water, stopping at local markets watching the fishermen casting their nets, and is far removed from the busy towns making this a real delight to explore. The market on the mainland is also worth a look, if only for the rather gruesome section dedicated to voodoo.

Abomey

Once the capital of the powerful kingdom of Dahomey, Abomey gained a notorious reputation as the centre of a fierce civilisation, whose rulers preyed mercilessly on the surrounding tribes as they conquered neighbouring lands and captured slaves. During the 'Scramble for Africa' Dahomey put up strong resistance against the French colonial armies but in the end were no match for modern weapons, and the kingdom fell in 1892, its king Gbehanzin setting fire to the city. Abomey had been renowned for its palaces, and although many were lost, two still remain which give the visitor a fascinating insight into this once mighty nation. Now museums, they contain a number of interesting exhibits from earlier times, the most impressive of which is a throne which sits on top of human skulls. Also worth a look is the nearby temple whose walls are said to have been made with the blood of enemies.

[Benin] Day 5: Dassa - Natitingou (350km; Driving time today: approx. 8 hours)

Today we will stop at the Dankoli fetish, an important place of the Voodoo cult. Here, thousands of little sticks are pushed in to the fetish as witnesses of the countless prayers made to the local god. Once the prayers are answered, people return to sacrifice what they promised to the fetish, be that a goat, a chicken or a cow according to the nature of the prayer. Traces of blood, palm alcohol and palm oil on the fetish prove that a lot of pilgrims had their prayers answered. This afternoon we discover old Taneka villages and we will spend time wandering in amongst the villages. Overnight Hotel Tata Somba or similar (BLD)

[Benin & Togo] Day 6: Natitingou – Defale (100km; Driving time today: 3 hours)

Today we enter the land of the Somba and Tamberma who live in fortified dwellings. Similar in form to medieval castles, they are truly one of the most beautiful examples of African architecture. Their style impressed Le Corbusier vanguard architect that describe it as «sculptural architecture». In fact, the houses are built by hand, layer of clay after layer, adding round mud balls and shaping them as per the plan of the house. A kind of sensual gesture mixing strength, care and beauty. Large shrines- of phallic form - at the entrance of their homes show their animistic believes. With the permission granted to us by the elders we enter their homes to better understand their way of life. Overnight Hotel Defalé or similar (BLD)

The Tamberma people

The Tamberma are one of the region's most intriguing and traditional groups. Straddling the border between Togo and Benin (where they are known as Somba), they live deep in the bush in fortress style houses which are utterly unlike anything else.



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Rather than settling in villages each family has its own compound, an arrow's flight from anyone else, and the mud-built dwellings, known as 'tatas' are built for defence, with strong walls and traditionally only accessed via a ladder which would be withdrawn in times of trouble. Inside the tatas are separate areas for people, livestock and grain, and some contain wells, meaning that the inhabitants could hole up for days when slave raiders came, making attacks on the Tamberma a far less attractive proposition than weaker, less defensive peoples.

[Togo] Day 7: Defale - Sokode (120km; Driving time today: approx. 3 hours)

This morning we take an easy walk through Kabye and Moba villages and then continue our journey in the mountains to meet the Kabye ethnic group. Kabye dwellings called «Soukala» are composed by several adobe huts joined by a wall - each dwelling is the domain of a patriarchal family. In the villages located at the top of the mountains, women are potters using an ancestral technique without the wheel while men are blacksmiths still working iron with heavy stones instead of hammers and anvil as in the early dawn of Iron Age. We follow the process of shaping a hoe. This evening get to witness a fire dance. In the centre of the village a large fire lights up the faces of the participants, who dance to the hypnotic beat of the drums eventually leaping into the glowing embers. They pick up burning coals and pass them over their bodies and even put them in their mouths without injuring themselves or showing any sign of pain. It's difficult to explain such a performance. Maybe it really is the fetishes that protect them from the fire. Overnight Hotel Central or similar. (BLD)

[Togo] Day 8: Sokode – Kpalime (290km; Driving time today: approx. 5 hours)

Today we head south stopping in the typical African town of Atakpame built in amongst picturesque hills. The town is synonymous with weaving and you will see brightly coloured fabric everywhere called Kente. From Atakpame we move to the tropical forests surrounding Kpalime, a town with a rich colonial past and now an important trading centre. This afternoon we will enjoy a walk in the forest to discover its mysterious world and enjoy the sounds of nature. Under the guidance of a local entomologist we will learn about endemic butterflies and insects. Overnight Hotel Gess or similar (BLD)

[Togo & Ghana] Day 9: Kpalime – Koforidua (220km; Driving time: approx. 5 hours)

Today we cross the border into Ghana and continue to the Volta Region. We visit the area of Krobo famous the world over for its beads. They are produced and used for cults and aesthetic purposes and we shall visit a factory and follow the process of production of the beads. From here we continue to Koforidua for the night. Overnight New Capital View or similar (BLD)

[Ghana] Day 10: Koforidua - Kumasi (200km; Driving time: approx. 5 hours)

Continue to Kumasi, Ghana's second city and home of the old Ashanti Kingdom. Explore the city including the Ashanti Cultural Centre, which gives a great insight into what once was one of the most powerful kingdoms in the region. If possible, we will be able to see a traditional Ashanti funeral, quite a spectacle at which visitors are welcome. Overnight Miklin 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, vegetable, and provision. We visit the Ashanti Cultural Centre, which has a rich collection of Ashanti artefacts, housed in a reproduction of a traditional Ashanti royal house.

Ashanti people

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.



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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 dress themselves with it during ceremonies. The Ashanti Kingdom was famed for its gold, royalty, ceremony and the development of a bureaucratic judicial system.

[Ghana] Day 11: Kumasi – Akwasidae Festival

Continue our exploration of Kumasi by visiting the Royal Palace Museum, with its unique collection of golden jewellery. Today we shall witness this flamboyant ceremony honouring the Ashantehene, the traditional ruler of the Ashanti people. Overnight Miklin Hotel or similar. (BLD)

Akwasiidae 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 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.

[Ghana] Day 12: Kumasi – Anomabu (250km; Driving time: approx. 4 hours)

Today we drive to Anomabu on the coast. We visit the fishing town of Elmina, best known for St George's Castle, the oldest European building in Africa and once used as 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. Overnight Anomabu Beach Resort or similar. (BLD)

[Ghana] Day 13: Anomabu – Accra (180km; Driving time: approx. 3 hours)

We drive back to Accra, where we explore the city, visiting the National Museum and the old quarter of Jamestown, as well as the quarter where craftsmen design flamboyant coffins for the deceased – a uniquely Ghanaian experience. Day use rooms are available to freshen up before your evening flight. You can depart any time after 21:00 – please contact us if you are in doubt before to book your flights. Transfer to the airport for your flight home. (BL)

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 and is 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. Most interesting is the area where coffins are made - here they make them with the most outlandish designs, in the shape of fish, aeroplanes, or just about anything else you can think of.

Please note that this tour is operated and sold in conjunction with our local partner, and so you are likely be travelling with people of different nationalities and from companies other than Undiscovered Destinations.



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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. The maximum group size on this tour is 16.

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers – please see notes below

All accommodation

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

Bottled water in the vehicle

Visa support documentation if required

Transport throughout

Excluded:

International flights

Any airport taxes

Travel Insurance

Visas

Drinks

Items of a personal nature

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.





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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 to Ghana, Togo or Benin. 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

On this tour you can expect your room to have a 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 (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.



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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 £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

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 expected in the higher end restaurants, rather than the smaller local ones.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: ATM's are available in most towns in the region

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are not widely accepted except in high end hotels

Local Currency: Ghana is the cedi. Togo and Benin is the CFA.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Euro or US Dollar are easily exchanged

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.



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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

Ghana - Single entry visa required

Visitors from most countries, including UK, EU and US require a visa to enter Ghana, which is issued in their country of residence. This needs to be obtained in advance and should be a single-entry visa. Multiple entry visas are also available should travel plans require this. You will need a Letter of Invitation which we will arrange for you.

Benin - Single entry visa required

Visitors from most countries, including UK, EU and US visitors require a visa for entering Benin. This can be obtained by completing an online e-visa application: <https://evisa.gouv.bj/en/>

Togo - Multiple Entry visa required

British passport holders need a visa to enter Togo. You are advised by the FCO to obtain your multiple entry visa before travel.

Visas for most nationalities can also be issued on arrival however they are limited to 7 days and getting an extension to cover the 8th day of the tour can be time consuming as it will be done locally. The fee for the visa on arrival is currently 20 Euros or CFA 10,000. You are also required to provide 3 passport photos and an additional cost for the extension may be applied. For more information please contact the Embassy of Togo in London, <http://togembassylondon.com/consulate/>

All visa requirements can change so we do recommend that you check with your nearest embassy and foreign office for the most up to date advice and 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. We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages per country visited, 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 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.



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Vaccination against yellow fever is a compulsory requirement for entry into Ghana, and you must bring your certificate with you. This may or may not be checked when you enter the country, but we strongly advise that you do not risk being denied entry. You should also seek advice about malaria prophylactics.

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.

The Fetish Market in Lome

This is an authentic market for local people and is an important part of the Voodoo culture, but tourists are allowed to visit. However, some people may find it upsetting as there are the remains of many animals and birds on display, including some that are under threat. The animals are all said to have died of natural causes.

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.

Clothing

West Africa 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 light 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. 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 immunised, 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. We also recommend bringing a torch or a head torch for use in dimly lit areas or for any electricity outages which can occur from time to time.

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.

Footwear

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



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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 in Ghana. On the other hand, In Togo and Benin is European continental type. We advise bringing a travel adaptor.

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 6th July 2020.

