

## GHANA, TOGO AND BENIN— A CULTURAL MOSAIC

### OVERVIEW:

*Discover the remarkable cultures of three countries as you travel through Ghana, Togo and Benin. Visit ancient slave forts, learn about the Voodoo religion, explore fascinating markets and take a boat ride to a village built on water.*

### DAY 1 ARRIVAL



Welcome to Ghana! ... *Akwaaba!*

Meet and greet at the airport and transfer to your hotel.

Settle in, a brief orientation and a welcome dinner.

Overnight: Hotel in Accra

Meal: D

### DAY 2 ACCRA CITY TOUR



Breakfast

Tour Accra, the 130-year-old capital of Ghana with a blend of colonial and modern architecture.

Visit the National Museum, W. E. B. Dubois Center for Pan African Culture, the Black Star Square and Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum.

**Lunch** in a local restaurant

End your tour at the Arts Center and try your bargaining skills at the open-air market for Ghanaian and West African artifacts.

Overnight: Hotel in Accra

Meals: B/D

**DAY 3 ACCRA – CAPE COAST****Breakfast**

Depart for Kakum National Park, one of West Africa's surviving tropical rain forests. Take a walk on the canopy walkway, suspended at 30 meters (100ft) above the forest floor.

**Lunch:** savor African cuisine at Hans Cottage Motel and feast your eyes on the resident crocodiles and busy weaverbirds.

Visit the Cape Coast Castle built by the Swedes in 1652 and later taken over by the British. See the West African Historical Museum established by the Smithsonian Institute in collaboration with Ghana in 1994. Learn the history of the infamous slave trade whose impact continues to be felt beyond the shores of Africa.

Return to the hotel in late afternoon and relax.

**Dinner**

Overnight: Beach Resort in Elmina

Meals: B/D

**DAY 4 CAPE COAST - KUMASI**

Breakfast and check-out.

Drive through forest zone to Kumasi, the seat of the Ashanti Empire.

Stop en route at Assin Manso to visit the burial site of two former slaves exhumed from New York's Wall Street and re-interred on Emancipation Day 1998.

See the Slave River, the last rest stop for slaves on their one-way trek to the coast for incarceration at the slave dungeons and shipment into slavery.

Arrive in Kumasi.

**Lunch**

Visit Manhyia Palace Museum to learn about the rich history of the Ashanti Kingdom (dating back 1700AD) through relics and artifacts. Discover more history in town with significant memorial monuments of the great Ashanti people. End the day's tour at the National Cultural Center, featuring the Prempeh II Jubilee Museum, bronze smiths, potters and batik makers.

Overnight: Hotel in Kumasi

Meals: B/D

## **DAY 5 ASHANTI CRAFT VILLAGES**



Breakfast

Visit the three famous craft villages in the Ashanti kingdom: Anhwiaa, the woodcarvers' village; Ntonso, the home of Adinkra; and Bonwire, the kente weaving village. You will have the opportunity to see how African crafts are made and to buy directly from the artisans.

### **Lunch**

Depart for a scenic drive through the forest zone to Accra.

Overnight: Hotel in Accra

Meals: B/D

## **DAY 6 ACCRA - LOME**

Journey from Accra to Lomé, the capital of Togo.

Check into your hotel.

**Lunch** at a local restaurant.

Visit the Grand Marché; Marché des Feticheurs (Fetish market); Musée National and the Place de l'Indépendance.

Overnight: Hotel in Lome

Meals: B/L

## **DAY 7            LOME - COTONOU**



Breakfast.

Depart for Benin (former Dahomey Empire)

See Ouidah, the cradle of voodoo, (African traditional religion). Visit the historical Museum of Ouidah in the old 1721 Portuguese fort and learn about Benin's role in the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Tour the temple of the sacred Python, (giver of vitality and protection); visit sacred forest with shrines dedicated to various deities; see the "Point of No Return", a monument in memory of the Africans taken into slavery from the Dahomey Empire.

Continue the journey east to Cotonou.

Transfer to Novotel Cotonou Orisha, located downtown Cotonou near the Palace of Congress and the International Convention Center.

Overnight: Hotel in Cotonou

Meals: B/L

## **DAY 8            VISIT TO VILLAGE ON STILTS**

Ganvie Village on Stilts



Breakfast.

Visit Ganvie (the Venice of West Africa), the exotic 300-year-old village built on water. Partake in the daily routines of the natives and enjoy the thrill of shopping in the floating open air market from dugout canoe "shops" piled high with various wares. Take a relaxing canoe ride on the waterways.

### **Lunch**

Travel on to Porto Novo, the actual capital of Benin. This is the realm of the Yoruba people,

whose culture spreads across eastern Benin and western Nigeria. Visit the Ethnographic Museum, the Brazilian Church and the 300 year-old Palace of King Toffa.

Enjoy a performance of the “Guardians of the Night” spirit dancers.

Overnight: Hotel in Cotonou

Meals: B/D

## **DAY 9: ROYAL PALACE MUSEUM**



Travel north to Abomey, the ancient capital of the Fon Dynasty of the Dahomey Empire. See the Royal Palace Museum (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and pay a courtesy call on the King of Abomey. Travel to Aladja, the birthplace of Toussaint Louverture, the liberator of Haiti.

### **Lunch**

Return to Cotonou.

Overnight: Hotel in Cotonou

Meals: B/D

## **DAY 10 COTONOU CITY TOUR**

Breakfast

Take a short city tour of Cotonou, visit the sprawling Dantokpa Market and the Artisans Center. Depart for the leisurely drive back to Accra, stopping for lunch at either Grand Popo, a beautiful beach in Benin or in Lomé, Togo.

Arrive in Accra and transfer to hotel.

Overnight: Hotel in Accra

Meals: B/D

## **DAY 11 LEISURE/DEPARTURE**

Spend a leisurely last day in West Africa at the beach, or go shopping for last-minute souvenirs. Transfer to the airport for departure.

Meals: B

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## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Meet and greet and transfer to hotel with brief orientation and welcome dinner
- Accra city tour with shopping at the arts and craft market
- Take a walk on the canopy walkway and visit the Cape Coast Castle.
- Drive to the seat of the Ashanti Empire with a stop at the slave river and a tour of the Palace of the Ashanti King
- Visit and buy directly from the artisans at the three famous craft villages in Kumasi
- Journey from Accra to Lome, capital of Togo
- Historical sites visits at Cotonou
- Visit of the village on stilts, the museum and enjoy a performance of the “Guardians of the Night” spirit dancers.
- Royal Palace Museum; a UNESCO World heritage site and pay a courtesy call on the King of Abomey
- Shopping at Cotonou and drive back to Accra for departure.