



Ivory Coast - Ghana - Togo - Benin | Practical Infos

Accommodation

On our trip through Togo, Benin and Ghana we stay in clean thoroughly selected 2-3-stars-hotels. The rooms have en suite facilities, electricity and water supply and air condition or fan. The hotels at Grand Bassam, Korhogo, Man, Abengourou, Kumasi, Lomé and Ouidah have clean swimming pools.

Here is a selection of the hotels used on our tour:

<http://hoteletoiledusud.org/>

<https://complexeolympic.ci/>

<https://hotel-lescascades.com/fr/>

<http://sunsethotel.com.gh/>

www.palomahotel.com

www.hotel-togo-cocobeach.com

www.bda2.com

Airlines

Airlines with scheduled flights from Europe to Abidjan and Cotonou include Air France, Brussels Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Ethiopian Airlines.

For more information please consult the following websites:

KLM: www.klm.com, Turkish Airlines: www.turkishairlines.com, Ethiopian Airlines: www.flyethiopian.com, Brussels Airlines: www.brusselsairlines.com, Air France: www.airfrance.com

If you book a tailor-made trip with us you can fly the airline of your choice and we can coordinate your flight arrangement with the land itinerary. We will be pleased to provide you with our consultation and support.

Clothing

Light short-sleeved cotton clothing is recommended for the days and a long-sleeved shirt and trousers for the evenings which will help you to fend off mosquitoes. In the rainy season you need a waterproof jacket and/or an umbrella. (see chapter "when to go"). In many hotels there is a laundry service on offer, so you can get your washing done. As for footwear, you should carry with you a good pair of walking shoes for our hiking tours and a pair of sandals. Thongs are useful in shower and pool areas. Don't forget your swimwear! You will have the opportunity to swim in the sea, and some of our hotels have clean swimming pools.

Communication

Ivory Coast

International and national calls can be made from post offices and hotels. The prefix for UK is 0044, for USA and Canada 001, for Ivory Coast 00225. As in many other African countries, Ivory Coast has a booming mobile industry, and coverage is excellent across the country. For detailed information please contact your provider prior to departure. If you have an unlocked GSM phone, it is possible to buy a local SIM card like Orange, Comium or Moov for about 5 - 6 \$ and buy top-ups. International calls to the UK and USA cost about 400 to 500 CFA per minute.

Internet access is widely available in Abidjan and other cities of the country and prices not expensive, although connections are often slow. Many hotels offer free WIFI.

Ghana

In major towns cheapest is to use a telephone booth that takes phone cards available from post offices, gas stations, street vendors or small stalls. There are 25, 50, 100 or 150-unit cards. One minute to Europe costs around 1 US dollar. The booths offer International Direct Dialling. The prefix for UK is 0044, for USA and Canada 001, for Ghana 00233. There are also small stalls in the streets offering phone service. You can also make phone calls at upmarket hotels but this option is quite expensive. As in many other African countries, the mobile industry in Ghana is booming, and coverage is excellent across the country. For detailed information please contact your provider prior to departure.

Internet access is widely available in major towns and prices not expensive, although connections are often slow.

Togo

International and national calls can be made from post offices and hotels. The prefix for UK is 0044, for USA and Canada 001, for Togo 00228. As in many other African countries, the mobile industry in Togo is booming, and coverage is excellent across the country. For detailed information please contact your provider prior to departure.

Internet access is widely available in all big cities and prices not expensive, although connections are often slow. The best connections are found in Lomé.

Benin

International and national calls can be made from post offices and hotels. The prefix for UK is 0044, for USA and Canada 001, for Benin 00229. As in many other African countries, the mobile industry in Benin is booming, and coverage is excellent across the country. For detailed information please contact your provider prior to departure. If you have a GSM phone and it has been „unlocked“, it is possible to buy a local SIM card for about 7\$ and buy top-ups. The coverage of all national providers is constantly increasing. For cheap phone calls to Europe and USA you also can buy prepaid phone cards (for example Nasuba).

Internet access is widely available in all big cities and prices not expensive, although connections are often slow. The best connections are found in Cotonou.

Electric Supply & Plugs

220 volts alternating current. Generally, you can recharge your batteries in your hotel room without a problem. Ivory Coast, Benin and Togo use two-pin continental-style plugs, so you will probably need an adapter. In Ghana they use sockets of type D and G, old British BS-546 5 amp "small" and British BS-1363. In case if you need an adapter it can be purchased from street vendors or supermarkets for about 3 GHC. US citizens may also need a voltage converter. Please note that power cuts are frequent.

Food and Drinks

In the itinerary we state which meals are included on each day.

Food included in the breakfast varies according to hotel standard. Most hotels serve bread, butter, jam, sometimes honey and processed cheese or omelette for breakfast. It also includes tea or coffee. Upmarket hotels usually serve buffet breakfast. Dinner we usually take in the restaurants of our hotels or in clean, thoroughly selected restaurants in town. In many places international cuisine is served.

Ivory Coast

Ivorian cuisine is based on grains and tubers, fish and seafood, chicken, fresh fruits, vegetables and spices, and is very similar to that of neighbouring countries in West Africa. Plantains and cassava are important staple crops. Grated cassava is used to make *attiéké*, a popular side dish very similar in taste and consistency to couscous. A type of corn paste called *aitiu* is used to prepare corn balls, and peanuts are widely used in many dishes. A common street-vended food is *allico*, which is ripe banana fried in palm oil, spiced with a hot sauce made of onions and chili. It can be eaten alone as a snack or often with a hard-boiled egg, as well as a side dish. Grilled fish and grilled chicken are the most popular non-vegetarian foods. Lean, low-fat Guinea Fowl, is commonly referred as *poulet bicyclette*. Seafood includes shrimp, tuna, sardines and bonito, which are similar to tuna. *Mafé* is a dish consisting of meat in a peanut sauce. Slow-simmered stews with various ingredients are another common food staple in Côte d'Ivoire. *Kedjenou* is a type of spicy stew consisting of chicken and vegetables that are slow-cooked in a sealed terracotta pot called a *canary* with little or no added liquid.

The *maquis* is Côte d'Ivoire's great contribution to eating in West Africa. A typical maquis is a reasonably priced open-air restaurant where you eat under a thatched pailote. Maquis normally feature braised or grilled chicken and fish served with onions and tomatoes, *attiéké*, and/or *kedjenou*.

Fizzy drinks are widely available. The standard beer is Bock Solibra, which locals order by asking for a *soixante-six* - a 660-ml-bottle, or even a *grosse bière*, a hefty 1L-bottle. *Bandji* is the local palm wine, which is especially palatable when it's freshly tapped.

Ghana

Ghanaian main staple food is made of yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, millet, maize and rice. Plantains are very popular, too. The traditional dishes are served with vegetables such as tomato, onion, egg-plant, okra or beans as well as tasty sauces and soups. Food is generally very spicy; ten different kinds of pepper and chilli occur in the country and are used abundantly. However, there is a number of hotels and restaurants serving European-style food.

Ghanaians love meat, they particularly appreciate bush-meat. Grasscutter also known as cane rat, a large rodent, is also very popular. But you will also find beef, mutton, chicken and goat meat on the menus. Pork meat is rarely served but it is eaten in areas with a Christian population.

The coast is great for delicious fish and seafood dishes. But not only the sea provides the Ghanaians with fish, Lake Volta is also very rich in fish.

There is a large variety of fruit in Ghana. Along with pineapple, citrus fruits, papaya, mango, banana and melon, there is cherimoya, star fruit and guava on offer. Vendors walk around the cities with carts piled high with young, green coconuts.. They open the coconut so that you can drink the clear refreshing water. If you'd like to eat the flesh they also split it open for you.

Ghana's national dish is fufu, made of cassava, plantain or yams, mashed until the starch breaks down and it becomes a gooey ball. Usually it is served with a tasty soup. Jollof rice is found throughout West Africa, it is served with beef, mutton or chicken. Dumplings made of cassava or maize are found throughout the country. The dishes are called banku, obenku, kokonte or akpie depending on the region. The most popular soups in Ghana are abenkwan, made of palm kernel, ntaketwan made of groundnut or nkrakra, a clear soup.

Tap water should be boiled or filtered before you drink it. In all bigger cities you can buy mineral water in bottles. Although there are many species of fruit grown in the country fresh exotic fruit juice is difficult to find. Soft drinks including Coca cola, Fanta and Sprite are widely available. Ghanaians are known for being enthusiastic beer drinkers, and there are several local and international brands to buy, the most

popular being Star, Gulder and Club. In the south homemade palm wine is very popular; in the north people prefer millet beer.

Benin

Benin is renowned throughout West Africa for having the best food in the region. The secret of its cuisine lies in the delicious spicy sauces the dishes are served with. The Beninese sauces often include meat and vegetables, other ingredients are ladies' fingers and groundnut. They are served with rice or couscous or other popular staples like akassa which is made of fermented maize; amiowo cooked with maize and palm-oil which gives it the red colour; piron made of yam or atieke, a typical dish made of mashed cassava. Agouti, a kind of rat-like rodent also known as grasscutter or cane rat, is very likely to be found on the menus as it is Benin's most popular bush-meat.

The coast is great for delicious fish and seafood dishes.

Tap water should be boiled or filtered before you drink it In all bigger cities you can buy mineral water in bottles. There is a huge variety of exotic fruits in Benin which are used to make delicious juices.

Togo

One of Togo's most popular dishes is Fufu made of mashed yam served with a spicy sauce made with red palm oil or groundnut oil. Some yam tubers that are used weigh over 5kg. A porridge called pate which is made of maize is very popular and usually combined with a sauce made of okra or dried fish. Meat is an important food in Togo, though very expensive. Therefore most people eat the cheaper goat meat or chicken. Other popular dishes are rice with beans and beans with gari (roasted cassava), chilli and palm kernel oil.

There is a large variety of fruit in Togo, including pineapple, papaya, mango, banana and coconut.

Tap water should be boiled or filtered before you drink it In all bigger cities you can buy mineral water in bottles. A typical thirst-quenching drink is bissap, a tea-like drink made of hibiscus petals which is usually served cold. Soft drinks like Coca cola and Fanta are available throughout the country. Togo is a renowned beer producer offering a variety of different brands. Along the coast and in the hinterland there are a lot of illicit distilleries where the popular sodabe, a clear-coloured moonshine distilled from palm wine is made.

Health

A Yellow Fever vaccination and certificate is a compulsory requirement for entry into Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo and Ghana (see visa requirements). You should always carry the certificate with you while being in Africa.

Immunisations against tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A are recommended by the World Health Organization, regardless of your destination. For other vaccinations and prophylactic measures please consult your doctor, travel clinic or tropical medical bureau before departure. For further information please consult our Infoportal.

To prevent traveller's diarrhoea, peel fresh fruits before eating them and avoid fresh salads and ice cubes in basic restaurants. Be careful and very selective when eating or drinking in street stalls and make sure that meat is always well cooked and plates and serving utensils are clean. Don't drink hastily ice-cold drinks. Consult your doctor before departure for appropriate medication and rehydration mixtures.

The best prevention of malaria is to avoid being bitten. The evening wear clothes covering your entire body and use mosquito repellent. Sleep under a mosquito net and/or turn AC or fan on. For further prophylactic measures consult a specialist for tropical diseases.

Keep away from street dogs, monkeys and other mammals that could carry rabies. Avoid bathing in standing bodies of water because they are high-risk areas for bilharzia. Be careful while bathing in the sea because undercurrents and breaking waves are very dangerous even for strong swimmers the seas off Benin, Togo and Ghana being particularly risky.

Literature

Travel guides:

West Africa, Lonely Planet, 9th edition, published September 2017
Benin, Bradt Travel Guide, 2nd edition May 2019
Ghana, Bradt Travel Guide, 8th edition, published August 2019
Côte d'Ivoire, Bradt Travel Guide, 1st edition, published 2016
The Rough Guide to West Africa, 5th edition, published June 2009

Novels and biographies:

Bruce Chatwin, The Viceroy of Ouidah, Vintage, 1998

Money

The CFA franc (Communauté Financière Africaine) represented on international banking systems by XOF, is the common currency of Ivory Coast, Benin and Togo. Exchange rates are \$1 = 602 CFA, £1 = 789 CFA, 1 CAD = 468 CFA (as of March 2022), €1 = 655.95 CFA. The CFA franc is pegged directly to the Euro. Notes are in denominations of CFA 10,000, 5,000, 2,000 and 1,000, coins come in CFA500, 250, 200, 100, 50 and 25. Coins of CFA 10 or 5 exist, but they are extremely rare. Ghana's currency is the Cedi (GHS). Exchange rates are 1 € = 7,66 GHS, 1 \$ = 7,03 GHS and 1£ = 9,22 GHS, 1 CAD = 5,48 GHS (as of March 2022).

Please note that finding change can be very difficult at times, particularly in small shops, restaurants, taxis and street stalls, so you should always have a good supply of cash money in small denominations or coins.

Ivory Coast

You can change cash money in banks and some larger hotels. Normal banking hours are from 08.00 to 14.00 Uhr or 15.00 Uhr Monday to Friday. Some banks give you cash advance on your credit card. You don't need your PIN code but will need your passport. However, this procedure is time consuming, and commission is very high. The easiest way to change money is to change cash. Changing euros, dollars or pound sterling in foreign exchange bureaus (Bureau de change) is less time consuming and cheaper than in banks. In all larger cities banks are equipped with ATM machines, allowing you can withdraw money using your Visa card. Please note, that most banks and cashpoints only accept Visa card. Mastercard, American Express or other credit cards are generally not accepted. Cashpoints may not be working or may be malfunctioning, so do not count on them. In Ivory Coast it's practically impossible to use your credit card as a means of payment. EC Maestro card is an absolute no-go everywhere in Ivory Coast. Some banks in the larger cities offer travellers' cheques services. While travellers' cheques offer a greater security, changing them can be time consuming and commission is very high. You will be asked to produce both your passport and the receipt you get from your bank when purchasing them.

Ghana

You can change cash money in banks, some hotels and foreign exchange bureaus (Forex bureau) in Accra and major cities. Normal banking hours are from 08.30 to 14.00 Monday to Thursday and 8.30 to 15.00 on Friday. The best banks to exchange money are Barclay's and Standard Chartered Bank. However, the exchange rates in banks are often lower than in the foreign exchange bureaus. All widely used currencies like euro, US dollar, Swiss franc, British Pound Sterling are easy to be exchanged. The CFA franc from the neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo can also be changed without a problem. North of Kumasi there may be problems to exchange hard currency cash. In Accra and all major cities banks are equipped with ATM machines, allowing you can withdraw money using your Visa card. Cashpoints are sometimes not working or malfunctioning, so do not count on them. Please note,

that most banks and cashpoints only accept Visa card. Mastercard, American Express or other credit cards are rarely accepted. Only very few big hotels, restaurants or supermarkets accept payment with credit card. EC Maestro card you can only use with the Ghana Commercial Bank on High Street in Accra. It is not accepted as a means of payment. While travellers' cheques offer a greater security, changing them can be time consuming, and commission is very high and you will get a low exchange rate. You will be asked to produce both your passport and the receipt you get from your bank when purchasing them. Standard Chartered Bank has the best exchange rate for travellers' cheques. Forex Bureaus rarely change travellers' cheques. **Benin**

You can change cash money in banks and some bigger hotels. Normal banking hours are from 09.00 to 12.30 and 15.00 to 17.00, Mondays through Fridays. The easiest way to change money is to change cash in euros. Some banks also give you cash advance on your Visa card (SGBBE at Cotonou). Changing euros in foreign exchange bureaus (Bureau de change) is less time consuming and cheaper than in banks. In all larger cities there are banks equipped with ATM machines, allowing you to withdraw money using your Visa card. Cashpoints are often not working or malfunctioning, so do not count on them. Please note, that most banks and cashpoints only accept Visa card. Mastercard, American Express or other credit cards are generally not accepted. In Benin it is practically impossible to use the credit card as a means of payment EC Maestro card is an absolute no-go everywhere in Benin. While travellers' cheques offer a greater security, changing them can be time consuming and commission is very high. You will be asked to produce both your passport and the receipt you get from your bank when purchasing them. Travellers' cheques can only be reliably changed in Cotonou.

Togo

You can change cash money in banks, some hotels and foreign exchange bureaus (Bureau de change) in Lomé and other bigger cities. Normal banking hours are from 07.30 to 12.00 Uhr and from 14.30 to 17.00, Mondays through Fridays The easiest way to change money is to change cash in euros. Changing euros in foreign exchange bureaus (Bureau de change) is less time consuming and cheaper than in banks. Some banks in Lomé and in the larger cities are equipped with ATM machines, allowing you can withdraw money using your Visa card. But with cashpoints being often malfunctioning, you should not count on them. Please note, that most banks and cashpoints only accept Visa card. Mastercard, American Express or other credit cards are generally not accepted. In Togo it's practically impossible to use your credit card as a means of payment. EC Maestro card is an absolute no-go everywhere in Togo. Some banks in the larger cities offer travellers' cheques services. While travellers' cheques offer a greater security, changing them can be time consuming and commission is very high. You will be asked to produce both your passport and the receipt you get from your bank when purchasing them.

Photography

All four countries are real treasure troves for passionate photographers. Whether the spectacular mask dances in Ivory Coast, the Ashanti Festival in Ghana, the impressive basilica in Yamoussoukro or the picturesque stilt village of Ganvié, there are countless photographic subjects.

Before you snap people please ask permission. A small friendly conversation can help you to break the ice and win your subject's sympathy. Particularly in the animistic parts of the countries there are sacred places where photography is not allowed. Please follow your local guide's instructions. Some places charge a photo fee (e.g. the Python temple and Sacred Forest in Ouidah, the fetish market in Lomé) Taking pictures is not allowed inside the museums. It is strictly forbidden to take pictures of military buildings and people wearing uniforms, airports, dams, bridges, power plants, police stations, control posts along the roads and border posts!

Safety

The danger most likely to affect a tourist is pick-pocketing, particularly in busy markets, bus stations, in crowds in the streets or in shared taxis. Bag snatchers are few, but can occasionally strike, speeding past on mopeds. Do not wear expensive jewellery or carry large amounts of cash or expensive items such as cameras. You should keep belongings close when walking down streets. We recommend you to keep your documents, cash money, credit card and cheques in a skin-hugging hidden money-belt or a button-up chest pocket. Always travel with photocopies of your documents and keep them in a separate bag. Avoid walking around the streets at night, especially alone. During late evening or around/after midnight, we recommend you to use a taxi.

For up-to-date information and safety and security advice about your destination please check your government's travel advisory: www.fco.gov.uk, www.travel.state.gov, www.voyage.gc.ca

Ivory Coast

Since the end of the civil war and Alassane Ouattara's election for president in 2011 the security situation has largely improved in the past couple of years. The elections on October 25, 2015 were carried out peacefully.

In case of emergency please contact your embassy or representation in Ivory Coast:

For UK citizens:

- **British Embassy**

Quartier Ambassades

Rue l'Impasse du Belier, Rue A 58, Abidjan 01

01 B.P 2581

Phone: +225 2244 2669.

Fax: +225 2248 9548

For further information click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/cote-d-ivoire>

Opening hours: Monday - Thursday: 09:00 to 16:30, Friday 09:00 to 14:30.

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the United States**

Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

01 B.P. 1712

Tel: (+225) 22-49-40-00

Tel. Consular Section: (+225) 22 49 45 94

Fax: (+225) 22 49 42 02

E-mail for American citizens: abjamcit@state.gov

For further information click here: <http://abidjan.usembassy.gov/>

For Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of Canada to Côte d'Ivoire**

23 Noguès Ave., Plateau, Abidjan 01

Trade Centre Building, 6th and 7th floors

01 B.P. 4104

Tel: +225 20 30 07 00

Fax: +225 29 30 07 20

E-mail: abidjn@international.gc.ca

<http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/cotedivoire/>

Office hours: Monday to Thursday: 07:30 – 12:30 and 13:30 – 16:30, Friday: 07:30 – 13:00

Ghana

Ghana is a rather safe country. There is very little crime. Please follow the above mentioned general security advice.

In case of emergency please contact your embassy or representation in Ghana:

For citizens of the UK:

- **British High Commission in Accra**

Osu Link

Off Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue

P.O. Box 296

Tel.: +233 302 213 250; fax: +233 302 213 200

For further information click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-high-commission-accra>

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the United States, Accra Ghana**

Consular Section

Cantonments

Accra, Ghana

If you are an American Citizen with an emergency, you may contact us at the following number and request to speak with the U.S. Embassy Duty Officer: +233-30-274-1000.

For further information click here: <http://ghana.usembassy.gov/>

For Canadian citizens :

- **High Commission of Canada**

42 Independence Avenue, Accra, Ghana

P.O. Box 1639, Accra, Ghana

Telephone: +233 (302) 21 15 21 or 22 85 55

Fax: +233 (302) 21 15 23 or 77 37 92

E-Mail: accra@international.gc.ca

For further information click here: www.canadainternational.gc.ca/ghana/

Benin

Benin is a rather safe country. There is very little crime.

In case of emergency you can contact your embassy or representation in Benin:

For citizens of the UK:

There is no formal British representation in Benin. In case of an emergency British Nationals should contact the British High Commission in Accra

- **British High Commission in Accra**

Osu Link

Off Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue

P.O. Box 296

Tel.: +233 302 213 250; fax: +233 302 213 200

For further information click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-high-commission-accra>

There is a Community Liaison Officer in Benin who may be able to help in an emergency.

- Pauline Collins
The English International School
Haie Vive, 08 BP 0430, Cotonou, Benin
Telephone: +229 2130 0976/1274; Mobile: +229 95353494; Fax: +229 30 61 95;
e-mail: paulinemcollins@eis-benin.org or paulinemariemcollins@gmail.com

For US citizens:

- **American Embassy**
01BP 2012
Cotonou Benin
Tel. (229) 21 30 06 50
Fax: (229)21 30 03 84
For further information click here: <http://cotonou.usembassy.gov/>

For Canadian citizens:

There is no Embassy of Canada in Benin. In case of emergency Canadian citizens should contact the embassy in Burkina Faso

- **Embassy of Canada**
316 Professeur Ki-Zerbo Street, P.O. Box 548, Ouagadougou, 01
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Telephone: +226 25 49 08 00 / +226 25 31 18 94
Fax: +226 25 49 08 10 / +226 25 31 19 00
E-Mail: ouaga@international.gc.ca
For further information click here: www.burkinafaso.gc.ca

Togo

Unfortunately the crime rate has increased in the past few years, particularly in the area of Lomé, so travellers should be vigilant.

In case of emergency you can contact your embassy or representation in Togo:

For citizens of the UK:

There's no formal British diplomatic representation in Togo. In case of an emergency you should contact the British High Commission in Accra, Ghana.

- **British High Commission in Accra**
Osu Link
Off Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue
P.O. Box 296
Tel.: +233 302 213 250; fax: +233 302 213 200

For further information click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-high-commission-accra>

There is an Honorary Consul in Togo, but he can only offer limited consular assistance.

- **Honorary Consulate of the UK**

Mr. Rodney Wade
45 Rue Canaris Be Chateau
Lomé, BP 13956
Togo
Telephone: +228 2222714 or +228 9001 0801
Email: rodney129@yahoo.co.uk

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the United States, Lome Togo**

Boulevard Eyadema B.P. 852, Lomé
Phone: (+228) 2261 5470
Fax: (+228) 2261 5501
For further information click here: <http://togo.usembassy.gov/>

For Canadian citizens:

There is no resident Canadian government office in Togo. You can obtain consular assistance and further consular information from the High Commission of Canada in Accra, Ghana.

- **High Commission of Canada**

42 Independence Avenue, Accra, Ghana
P.O. Box 1639, Accra, Ghana
Telephone: +233 (302) 21 15 21 or 22 85 55
Fax: +233 (302) 21 15 23 or 77 37 92
E-Mail: accra@international.gc.ca
For further information click here: www.canadainternational.gc.ca/ghana/

Time Zone Difference

Ghana's and Togo's time zone is UTC/GMT + 0. As they do not observe daylight saving time they are one hour behind in summertime. Benin's time zone is UTC/GMT + 1. As Benin observes UTC Standard year round in summertime there is no time difference.

Tipping

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in Africa. In the more well-to-do restaurants you can tip 5 – 10% if you were satisfied. For hotel tipping guidelines are as follows: for porters 200 CFA for one piece in Benin and Togo, about 4 GHS for one piece in Ghana, for housekeeping 300 - 500 CFA per person per night, in Ghana about 5 GHS per person per night. At your discretion you might also consider tipping your driver, tour guide and local guides in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Visa Requirements

You may choose to use a visa service or send your application to the representations listed below. Please note, that for this trip you need to have 6 empty pages in your passport.

Please note that a Yellow Fever vaccination and certificate is a compulsory requirement for entry into all three countries (see chapter "Health"). The certificate is often checked upon arrival. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant embassy or consulate prior to departure.

Benin

Visas are required by all nationalities. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Beninese representation or online: www.evisa.gouv.bj

For citizens of the UK:

- **Republic of Benin UK Consulate**

Millennium Business Centre
Humber Road
London NW2 6DW
Tel.: +44 (0)20 88 30 86 12
Fax: +44 (0)20 88 30 89 25
beninconsulate@hotmail.co.uk
For further information click here: www.beninconsulate.co.uk

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Benin in Washington, DC**

2124 Kalorama Road NW
20008 Washington DC
Tel. +1 202 232 66 56; fax: +1 202 265 1996
Consular Section:
Tel/fax.: +1 202 232 26 11
email: info@beninembassy.us
For further information click here: www.beninembassy.us

For Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Benin in Canada**

58 Glebe Av
Ottawa
Ontario K1S 2C3
Tel. +1 613 233 4429; fax: +1 613 233 8952
amba.benin@yahoo.ca
For further information click here: www.benin.ca

Togo

Visas are required by all nationalities. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Togolese representation. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant embassy or consulate prior to departure.

For citizens of the UK:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Togo**

83 Baker Street, London, W1U 6LA
Telephone: 020 7034 7986
Fax 020 7034 7985

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Togo**
2208 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC, 20008
Tel.: +1 202 234 42 12, fax: +1 202 232 31 90
email: info@togoembassy.us
For further information click here: www.togoembassy.us

For Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Togo**
12 Range Road
Ottawa
Ontario K1N 8J3
Tel.: +1 613 238 5916 or 5917, fax: +1 613 235 6425
- **Consulate of the Republic of Togo**
285, rue St-Paul,
Québec (Québec)- CANADA- G1K 3W6
Cell: 418-930-4921
Fax : 418-529-4094
Email : info@togoquebec.ca
For further information click here: www.togoquebec.ca

Ghana

Visas are required by all nationalities. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Ghana representation.

For citizens of the UK:

- **Ghana High Commission**
104 Highgate Hill
London N6 5HE
Telephone: 08453 133 399
For further information click here: www.ghanahighcommissionuk.com/

The High Commission operates two office sites in London and Honorary Consulates in Glasgow and Dublin.

- **Ghana Consulate, Dublin**
Republic of Ghana
74 Haddington Road
Dublin 4
Tel:+353 1667 3849
Fax: 00353 1 6677 622
Email:info@ghanaconsulateireland.com
- **The Honorary Consulate-General**

Republic of Ghana
Swalaba
17 Bellevue Road
Ayr
KA7 2SA
Visa Section: 08453 133 399
Email: hcgscotland@ghc-uk.org

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of Ghana in USA**

3512 International Dr., N.W.
Washington D.C., 20008
Tel: +1 202 686 4520, fax: +1 202 686 4527
Consular@ghanaembassy.org
For further information click here: www.ghanaembassy.org

For Canadian citizens:

- **Consular Section of the Ghana High Commission**

1 Glemow Avenue (The Glebe)
Ottawa, Ontario
K1S 2A9, Canada
Tel.: +1 613 236 0871, fax: +1 613 236 0874
email: ghanacom@ghc-ca.com
For further information click here:www.ghc-ca.com

Time Zone Difference

Ivory Coast's, Ghana's and Togo's time zone is UTC/GMT + 0. As they do not observe daylight saving time they are one hour behind in summertime. Benin's time zone is UTC/GMT + 1. As Benin observes UTC Standard year round in summertime there is no time difference.

Tipping

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in Africa. In the more well-to-do restaurants you can tip 5 – 10% if you were satisfied. For hotel tipping guidelines are as follows: for porters 200 CFA for one piece in Ivory Coast, Benin and Togo, about 3 GHS for one piece in Ghana, for housekeeping 500 CFA per person per night, in Ghana about 3 - 4 GHS per person per night. At your discretion you might also consider tipping your driver, tour guide and local guides in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Visa Requirements

You may choose to use a visa service or send your application to the representations listed below.

Please note, that for this trip you need to have 8 empty pages in your passport.

Please note that a Yellow Fever vaccination and certificate is a compulsory requirement for entry into all four countries (see chapter "Health"). The certificate is often checked upon arrival.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant embassy or consulate prior to departure.

Ivory Coast

Passports valid for a minimum of six months after the intended length of stay as well as visas are required by all EU, US, Australian and Canadian nationals. Other nationals are advised to contact the embassy to check their individual requirements. Tourists require a confirmed accommodation booking or proof of sufficient funds to cover their stay. Similarly, a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required by all travellers. Short-stay tourist visa up to 3 months cost €50 (if collected from the embassy) or €70 (if collected at the airport), long-stay visa of six months to one year €130. Nationals of most countries can apply online (www.snedai.com/en) and then either collect the visa either from the embassy or at the airport in Abidjan. It's advisable to check with the embassy whether you're eligible for the airport visa pick-up.

UK citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**
2 Upper Belgrave St
Belgravia, London SW1X 8BJ
Phone: 020 7235 6991 and 020 7235 6992
Fax: 020 7259 5320

US citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**
2424 Massachusetts Avenue NW
20008 Washington DC
Phone: +1-202-559-0317
Fax: +1-202-204-3967
Mail contact: <http://ambaciusa.org/contact/>
Web: <http://ambaciusa.org/Site/>
Visa application: <http://ambaciusa.org/fr/?id=31>

Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**
9, Avenue Marlborough
Ottawa (Ontario) - Canada K1N 8E6
Phone: (1613) 236 9919
Fax : (1613) 563-8287
Email: info@canada.diplomatie.gouv.ci / ambci.info@rogers.com
Web: <http://www.canada.diplomatie.gouv.ci/>

Ghana

Visas are required by all nationalities. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Ghana representation.

For citizens of the UK:

- **Ghana High Commission**
104 Highgate Hill
London N6 5HE
Telephone: 08453 133 399

For further information click here: www.ghanahighcommissionuk.com/
The High Commission operates two office sites in London and Honorary Consulates in Glasgow and Dublin.

- **Ghana Consulate, Dublin**
Republic of Ghana
74 Haddington Road
Dublin 4
Tel:+353 1667 3849
Fax: 00353 1 6677 622
Email:info@ghanaconsulateireland.com
- **The Honorary Consulate-General**
Republic of Ghana
Swalaba
17 Bellevue Road
Ayr
KA7 2SA
Visa Section: 08453 133 399
Email: hcgscotland@ghc-uk.org

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of Ghana in USA**
3512 International Dr., N.W.
Washington D.C., 20008
Tel: +1 202 686 4520, fax: +1 202 686 4527
Consular@ghanaembassy.org
For further information click here: www.ghanaembassy.org

For Canadian citizens:

Consular Section of the Ghana High Commission

1 Glemow Avenue (The Glebe)
Ottawa, Ontario
K1S 2A9, Canada
Tel.: +1 613 236 0871, fax: +1 613 236 0874
email: ghanacom@ghc-ca.com
For further information click here:www.ghc-ca.com

Benin

Visas are required by all nationalities. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Beninese representation.

For citizens of the UK:

- **Republic of Benin UK Consulate**
Millennium Business Centre
Humber Road
London NW2 6DW
Tel.: +44 (0)20 88 30 86 12
Fax: +44 (0)20 88 30 89 25

beninconsulate@hotmail.co.uk

For further information click here: www.beninconsulate.co.uk

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Benin in Washington, DC**
2124 Kalorama Road NW
20008 Washington DC
Tel. +1 202 232 66 56; fax: +1 202 265 1996
Consular Section:
Tel/fax.: +1 202 232 26 11
email: info@beninembassy.us
For further information click here: www.beninembassy.us

For Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Benin in Canada**
58 Glebe Av
Ottawa
Ontario K1S 2C3
Tel. +1 613 233 4429; fax: +1 613 233 8952
amba.benin@yahoo.ca
For further information click here: www.benin.ca

Togo

Visas are required by all nationalities. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Togolese representation.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant embassy or consulate prior to departure.

For citizens of the UK:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Togo**
83 Baker Street, London, W1U 6LA
Telephone: 020 7034 7986
Fax 020 7034 7985

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Togo**
2208 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC, 20008
Tel.: +1 202 234 42 12, fax: +1 202 232 31 90
email: info@togoembassy.us
For further information click here: www.togoembassy.us

For Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of Togo**
12 Range Road

Ottawa
Ontario K1N 8J3
Tel.: +1 613 238 5916 or 5917, fax: +1 613 235 6425

- **Consulate of the Republic of Togo**

285, rue St-Paul,
Québec (Québec)- CANADA- G1K 3W6
Cell: 418-930-4921
Fax : 418-529-4094
Email : info@togoquebec.ca
For further information click here: www.togoquebec.ca

What to take

- Passport
- Air ticket
- International yellow vaccination card
- Photocopies of your documents (it's good to keep them in a separate bag)
- Cash money, credit card
- Hard top suitcase or tear resistant travel bag + day bag
- Protective cover for your suitcase
- Swimwear
- A pair of flip flops (for shower and pool etc.)
- A pair of sandals
- Comfortable footwear, non-slip hiking boots
- Long lightweight trousers, shorts, long-sleeved shirt for the evening, light thin cotton clothing
- Sunhat and sunglasses
- Suncream
- Umbrella and/or waterproof jacket
- Towel
- Toilet paper, tissues, wet wipes
- Torch with spare bulb and batteries
- Swiss knife
- Personal first-aid kit
- Insect repellent
- Photographic equipment, memory cards/film rolls, batteries
- Binoculars

When to go

Climate

Ivory Coast

The climate is tropical along the Ivorian coast and semi arid in the far north. The best time to discover the region is between November and April. However, during this season the harmattan winds blow, bringing dust from the Sahara.

In spite of high humidity, the climate of is fairly agreeable, especially in the drier winter months. There are three main seasons - warm and dry from November to March, hot and dry from March to May, hot and

wet from June to October. Average temperatures in the summer vary between 27° and 30 °C. Southern Côte d'Ivoire receives especially heavy rainfall between May and October.

Benin

There are two climatic zones in Benin. The south has a typically equatorial climate with two rainy seasons and two dry seasons a year. The rainy seasons occur from April/May to July and from October to November. In August and September the rains are interrupted by a short dry season. There is a long dry season between December and April. The annual temperature averages 30°C (day temperature) and 23°C (night temperature). The relative humidity is high, it reaches up to 90%. A dry wind from the Sahara called the harmattan blows from December to April. The area receives an annual rainfall of about 2,000mm.

Northern Benin has only one wet season from June to September, with most rain in August and a dry season from October to May in which the harmattan blows for three or four months, bringing cooler temperatures and less humidity. During this period there is a lot of dust in the air and the sun often becomes completely obscured. Temperatures range between 29°C – 38°C at day and drop at night to 16°C to 26°C. This part of the country has an annual rainfall of 1,000 to 1,200mm and relative humidity is between 30 and 70 %.

Togo

The climate in Togo is tropical and wet all year round with an average temperature of 30°C in the north and 27°C along the coast. The hottest temperatures occur in February and March. In December and January the harmattan blows from the northeast.

In the north of the country there is one rainy season from May to October with most rain in August. This is also the coolest month of the year. The driest month is January, that's when the relative humidity is roughly over 20%.

In the south two rainy seasons occur, the principal one from April to June and a shorter one in October and November. The wettest months are June and October, when the relative humidity reaches 80 %. The driest month is December and the hottest month is March when temperature averages about 32°C. The coolest month is August with an average temperature of about 27°C.

Ghana

In the south of Ghana the climate is tropical and wet all year round. Two rainy seasons occur in the south, the principal one from April to June and a shorter one in October and November. In July, August and September the rains are interrupted by a short dry season. There is a long dry season between December and end of March. The annual temperatures average 28 to 32°C. The coolest months of the year are July and August. Ghana's rainforest area in the southwest of the country receives an annual rainfall of about 2,000mm. The relative humidity is high in the southern areas, it reaches up to 90%. A dry wind from the Sahara called the harmattan blows from January to March, and a veil of dust hangs over the country. In this time of the year temperatures can drop to 15°C at night.

Generally speaking, the north of Ghana is drier than the south. It has only one rainy season that runs from April/May to October. In the northern areas savannah is the predominant vegetation zone. The average temperature at day is higher in the north than in the south, but at night temperature can drop considerably. The harmattan winds start blowing already in November.

Best period for this trip: November - April

What you should know before you go

... Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin and Togo are wonderful countries to visit, but remember that Africans have a different perception of time. A trip through West Africa requires a high degree of flexibility, patience and

tolerance, western standards regarding service, punctuality, comfort and hygiene cannot be applied here. Although we thoroughly choose our vehicles and use only vehicles in good condition, flat tires or other car breakdowns can happen. The road conditions in African countries can change unexpectedly due to heavy rainfalls requiring a detour or bridges can suddenly become impassable. We do our utmost best to ensure a smooth journey but please understand that delays may occur. Technical defects or service inconveniences in the hotels such as the lack of towels can often be rectified within a few minutes. In case of any inconvenience please contact your tour guide!

All information, opinions and advice contained on our Website are provided without any guarantees, conditions or warranties as to its accuracy and for general information only.