

Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana: Gold, Cocoa and Pristine Beaches

On this journey across Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana we discover tropical sandy beaches, lush rainforests and traditional rituals and lifestyles of fishermen, farmers and craftsmen. We observe monkeys, track elephants and make a walk through the forest canopy. Visiting the slave castles along the coast we learn more about the slave history and gold trade. We also discover the large forest trees of the Azagny and Kakum National Parks, beautiful bays and lagoons, mangrove swamps, cocoa plantations and savannahs. Five nights we stay at Ankobra Beach

Tour Highlights

- Grand Bassam: UNESCO site
- Stilt villages of Tiagba and Nzulezo
- Grand Lahou: Azagny NP and fishing village
- Sassandra: Hippo viewing
- Drewen: Beautiful, palm-lined beach
- Yamoussoukro: awesome basilica
- Abidjan: Modern city skyline
- Ankasa NP: Ecotourism destination
- Five nights at the beautiful Ankobra Beach Resort
- Ghana's most picturesque fishing villages
- Elmina and Cape Coast: Slave castles
- Kakum National Park: Exciting canopy walk
- Accra: Between tradition and modern

Day 1: Arrival at Abidjan - Grand Bassam

Meet and greet with your local tour guide and transfer to the hotel at Grand Bassam (30 km).

(-/-), overnight at Grand Bassam, Hotel La Madrague or similar

Day 2: Grand Bassam - Tiagba - Grand Lahou

Grand Bassam, some 30 km east of Abidjan, was the first Ivorian capital under French rule. Since 2012, it has been enlisted as World Heritage site as a typical colonial town with separate quarters for commerce, administration, housing for Europeans and housing for Africans. Your guide will show you the colonial-era buildings, most of them in different stages of decay, as well as the Governor's Palace, now housing the National Costume Museum. A quite interesting collection of traditional clothing, models of Ivorian architecture, fascinating old photographs and a quality selection of masks will provide you a good overview of the rich culture in the region you will visit. Later today we head west to Grand Lahou. En route, visit of Tiégbba, a lagoon village built on stilts and accessible only by pirogue. The village's 6,000 people are followers of six religions who live in peaceful co-existence. Attend a dance performed by the local Ahizy people before continuing to our hotel in Grand Lahou (230 km).

(BF/D), overnight at Grand Lahou, Hotel Le Ravin or similar

Day 3: Grand Lahou - Azagny NP - Sassandra

After breakfast, take on a beautiful boat ride to the mouth of River Bandama, the country's largest watercourse. Visit the fishing village of Ancien Lahou and the Assagny National Park, whose western entrance is only accessible by waterway. Accompanied by a park ranger, we will set off for a two hours walk through the forest and savannah reserve, home to a small population of forest elephants and a large variety of birds. This afternoon, our drive takes us to Sassandra. (180 km).

(BF/D), overnight at Sassandra, Hotel Le Pollet or similar

Day 4: Sassandra

This morning, we embark on a 2-hour hippo-tracking boat trip on the pristine Sassandra River, flanked by thick gallery forest. Later in the day, we visit a plant for the production of red palm oil. Founded by the Portuguese on a river estuary, Sassandra was an important outlet of timber until the construction of the modern port at San Pedro. Today Sassandra is a bustling fishing village, with scores of rainbow-coloured boats lined up on the beach. This afternoon we have free time on the beautiful beach of Drewen.

(BF/D), overnight at Sassandra, Hotel Le Pollet or similar

Day 5: Sassandra - Yamoussoukro

Our drive today takes us north through remote areas and through the town of Gagnoa. En route, we visit a cocoa plantation. Ivory Coast is the world's largest producer of cocoa beans. This afternoon we arrive at Yamoussoukro, the administrative capital of Côte d'Ivoire. Being the birthplace of former president Félix Houphouët-Boigny, this small agricultural town became the country's capital in 1983 and was rebuilt according to a master plan to glorify the president and his family and ancestors. Today, Yamoussoukro boasts a population of more than 250,000 and high-profile vanity projects like the stunning *Basilique de Notre Dame de la Paix* (bearing a deliberate resemblance to St. Peter's Basilica), six-lane highways bordered by more than 10,000 street lights

or the seat of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation. On our city tour, we soak up the special atmosphere of these places - the basilica, the conference halls and the stunning views over the surrounding urban landscape (320 km)

(BF/D), overnight at Yamoussoukro, Hotel Le Rocher or similar

Day 6: Yamoussoukro - Abidjan - Grand Bassam

After breakfast, we depart on a new journey taking us to the economic capital Abidjan, for a long time the most modern and cosmopolitan city of the whole region. Passing the famous skyline of Le Plateau, Abidjan's financial district, and after a visit to the modern, elephant-shaped St. Paul's Cathedral, we cross the lagoon into the popular districts and southern outskirts of town. This afternoon we return to Grand Bassam. (260 km)

(BF/D), overnight at Grand Bassam, Hotel La Madrague or similar

Day 7: Grand Bassam - Ankasa NP - Ankobra Beach

We cross the Ghana border in the morning. Then we head east to Ankasa National Park located close to the Côte d'Ivoire border. This exciting ecotourism destination offers a number of natural attractions such as the Bamboo Cathedral, the Big Tree and wild creeks and waterfalls. (230 km)

(BF/D), overnight at Ankobra Beach Resort

Day 8: Ankobra: Excursion Busua - Butre - Dixcove

Today sees us making a day trip to the dreamy villages of Busua, Butre and Dixcove, where we find some of Ghana's most beautiful beaches. We'll visit the small fishing village of Butre. The main point of historical interest is Fort Battensteyn, the ruin of an old Dutch fortress. Climbing the steep hill to the castle is rewarding: the views from the fortifications are stunning. Later today we take a boat ride on Butre River through mangrove forests. Continuing to Busua there is the opportunity to walk to the close-by fishing community of Dixcove with Fort Metal Cross overlooking the picturesque fishing harbour. The former British castle, built in 1696, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979. Later this afternoon we'll return to Ankobra. (125 km).

(BF/D), overnight at Ankobra Beach Resort

Tag 9: Ankobra: Exkursion Nzulezo

An excursion takes us to the stilt village of Nzulezo, situated on the freshwater Lake Amansule. It can only be reached by canoe from Beyin. The village, supporting a population of 500 people is entirely constructed of wood and raffia palms. We explore Nzulezo walking on a central walkway and meeting the local people, learn more about the history of the village. In the afternoon we will return to Ankobra. (100 km)

(BF/D), overnight at Ankobra Beach Resort

Day 10: Ankobra: Excursion Princess Town - Axim

Today we will visit the Brandenburg-Prussian Fort Gross-Friedrichsburg overlooking the picturesque fishing village of Prince's Town, also known as Princess Town and called Prisi in the Akan language. This settlement lies near the southernmost tip of Ghana, Cape Three Points. We have a fantastic view to one of the three points from the beach. Prince's Town is situated on a picturesque lagoon surrounded by lush mangrove forests and an estuary. The impressive castle, one of two German fortresses in Ghana, is overlooking the settlement. It was built in 1683 as a trading post of the Brandenburg-Prussian Society which was active on the Gold Coast between 1682 and 1732. When the Brandenburgers, who meantime had become a part of Prussia, retired from the Gold Coast in 1717 the fortress was occupied by the local chief John Konneh who established the Gold Coast's crossroads for smuggling at Prince's Town. In 1724 the Dutch conquered the castle. The caretaker will show us around the ruined fortress and tell us interesting stories about its history. On our way back, we will visit the town of Axim and its well-preserved Fort San Antonio (100 km).

(BF/D), overnight at Ankobra Beach Resort

Day 11: Ankobra

Day 11 is at leisure with free time to relax on the tropical beach. Alternatively an optional boat trip on the Ankobra River or a visit to local projects can be arranged.

(BF/D), overnight at Ankobra Beach Resort

Day 12: Ankobra - Elmina - Biriwa

After breakfast we will leave the resort and head to Elmina where we will visit Elmina Castle, the oldest fortress on the Gold Coast and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our tour also takes in the fishing harbour and a Posuban shrine. (185 km)

(BF/D), overnight at Biriwa Beach Hotel

Day 13: Biriwa: Exkursion Kakum NP - Cape Coast

After breakfast we'll take you on an excursion to Kakum National Park where those with a good head for heights can experience the unique canopy walkway. Seven narrow bridges are suspended between

seven huge trees offering breath-taking views of the lush forest at the canopy level. The afternoon is spent at Cape Coast. Until 1876 it was the capital of the British Gold Coast colony. Today Cape Coast is still the main town of the Central Region and has developed to a centre of education. We visit Cape Coast Castle, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. After the construction of the fortress Cape Coast developed to a main trading centre for slaves. Before they were transported to the vessels the captives were held in dungeons inside the castle. Cape Coast Castle Museum is housed in one of its wings including exhibits on the history of slave trade. (100 km).

(BF/D), overnight at Biriwa Beach Hotel

Day 14: Biriwa - Accra - end of tour

This morning we make our way to Accra. (140 km). Our trip ends with a sightseeing tour in Ghana's vibrant capital. We will visit Independence Square and Kwame Nkrumah Memorial. We'll drive through James Town and see Ussher Fort. We have a last chance to visit the National Craft Centre. Our tour ends this evening. Transfer to the airport. (BF)

Please note that from time to time our itineraries may be amended.