



Senegal-Gambia | Practical Information

Accommodation

On our trip through Senegal and The Gambia we stay in clean thoroughly selected 2-3-stars-hotels. The rooms have en suite facilities, electricity and water supply, hot water and air condition or fan. In Lompoul we have an overnight in traditional Moorish tents. Tendaba camp in The Gambia has simple huts with mosquito nets, shower, toilet and fan. Most of the hotels have clean swimming pools.

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

www.campdudesert.com

www.hotelmermoz.com

Airlines

Airlines with scheduled flights from Europe to Dakar include Turkish Airlines, Air France, Brussels Airlines, British Airways, TAP Portugal and Ethiopian Airlines.

For more information please consult the following websites:

www.turkishairlines.com, www.brusselsairlines.com, www.airfrance.com, www.britishairways.com,
www.flyethiopian.com, www.flytap.co

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 and face the cooler temperatures in the winter months from November to February. Although both countries are very tolerant, shorts and short skirts are ill-advised for women. It is also unusual for men to wear shorts. In the rainy season you need a waterproof jacket and/or an umbrella. (see chapter "when to go"). In some 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, relax on beautiful beaches and bathe in the pools of your hotels.

Communication

Senegal

International and national calls can be made from post offices and hotels. The prefix for UK is 0044, for USA and Canada 001, for Senegal 00221. In major cities you can make phone calls with your mobile phone. As in many other African countries, the mobile industry in Senegal 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 4 US-\$ and buy top-ups.

A number of cyber cafés are located in the capital, Dakar, and other cities and prices are not expensive, Please note that most of your hotels have internet access.

The Gambia

The coverage in urban and business areas is good but upcountry it has not been very well developed, yet. The prefix for UK is 0044, for USA and Canada 001, for The Gambia 00220. As in many other African countries, the mobile industry in The Gambia is booming and roaming services are available. 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 2 – 3 US-\$ and buy top-ups. There are four providers in The Gambia: Africell, Gamcel, Comium and Qcell.

Internet access has been improved in major cities, and prices are not expensive. Internet cafes are providing limited access to the rural area.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Senegal

220 volts alternating current. Generally, you can recharge your batteries in your hotel room without a problem. Senegal uses two-pin continental-style plugs, so you will probably need an adapter. Remember to charge your batteries wherever you have the opportunity. Please note that power cuts are frequent. You will need to bring a good torch with you.

The Gambia

220-240V AC, 50 Hz. The Gambia mostly uses British-style three-pin plugs of "Type G " (British BS-1363 type). If you're plugging in an appliance that was built for 220-240 volt electrical input, or that is compatible with multiple voltages, then an adapter is all you need. North Americans need to check if whether or not their appliances are compatible with 220-240 volts. Remember to charge your batteries wherever you have the opportunity. If you need an adapter it is best to bring a travel adapter with you. You will need to bring a good torch with you

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.

- **Senegal**

Among West African cuisines, Senegalese cuisine is considered to be the most influenced by foreign cultures. North-African, French, Portuguese and lebanese influences can be seen in many of the country's dishes. Senegal's main staple food is made of millet, rice, couscous and plantain served with groundnut or onion sauces. Dubbed as the national dish of Senegal, *Thieboudienne*, a rice dish, consisting of flavoursome fish and tomato paste, is served primarily on festive occasions. Another traditional dish is *Yassa Poulet* or *Poisson*, a chicken or fish dish characterized by its spicy marinade made from oil, lemon juice, onions, garlic and mustard. *Mafe*, a lamb or beef stew cooked with a sauce based on groundnuts, is very likely to be found on the menus. There are several variations of this stew including chicken, fish or guinea-fowl recipes. The popular couscous-type millet dish *Chere* originates from the Sérèr people but it is also common to Mauretanién and Gambian cooking. Due to Senegal's location on the ocean, seafood and fish are a diet mainstay. Sole, tuna, bream, barracuda, and also prawns, shellfish, lobster and crayfish are very popular. In

the interior of the country, freshwater fish like perch is commonly eaten.

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. Or try other tasty juices such as tamarind or ginger juice and depending on the season baobab juice. Soft drinks like Coca cola, Sprite and Fanta are available throughout the country. Tea is very important in the Senegalese culture, but also beer is produced, the most popular brand is La Gazelle.

- **Gambia**

There are only a few typical Gambian dishes, as Gambia's cuisine is primarily influenced by Senegal and North African countries. Most Gambian cooking consists of rice served with a hot spicy sauce. Given the country's abundant marine life, the typical Gambian cuisine is rich in fish and seafood, including barracuda, mullet, sole and coral fish dishes served with rice, cassava or plantain. Groundnuts are a key ingredient, used for sauces and commonly eaten as a snack. One of Gambia's national dishes is *Domoda*, a rich groundnut-based stew made with meat or fish and vegetables. Another popular dish is *Sisay Yassa*, chicken marinated with lemon juice and onions.

Benachin, also known as jollof rice throughout West Africa, is cooked in one pot with dried fish and vegetables. *Fish Cakes*, filled dumplings, are commonly eaten as a little snack between meals.

Tap water should be boiled or filtered before you drink it. In all bigger cities you can buy mineral water in bottles. Gambia's main beverage and a favourite pastime of Gambians is *Ataya*, a Chinese green tea called Gunpowder. Juices you're likely to encounter the most in The Gambia are bissap and various fruit juices. In rural areas palm wine is very popular. Soft drinks like Coca cola, Sprite and Fanta are available throughout the country. Most hotels and bars serve a selection of local and internationally branded beers. The local brand is called Julbrew, there is also Flag and Castel.

Health

A Yellow Fever vaccination and certificate is no longer a compulsory requirement for entry into Senegal and The Gambia, unless you have come from a yellow fever infected country within six days of your arrival (see visa requirements).

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.

Literature

Travel guides:

- West Africa, Lonely Planet, 9th edition, published September 2017
- The Gambia & Senegal, Lonely Planet, 4th edition, published October 2009
- Senegal, Bradt Travel Guide, 2nd edition, published February 2019

- Gambia, Bradt Travel Guide, 2nd edition, published November 2017
- The Rough Guide to West Africa, 5th edition, published June 2009

For those, who speak French:

- Senegal, Le Petit Futé, edition 2020

Novels and biographies:

- So Long a Letter, Mariama Ba, Pearson Education Limited, 2008
- The Beggar's Strike, Aminata Sow Fall, Longman edition 1986
- God's Bits of Wood, Sembene Ousmane, Pearson Education Limited, edition 1995

Money

Senegal

The CFA franc (Communauté Financière Africaine) represented on international banking systems by XOF, is the common currency of 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.

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.

You can change cash money in banks, some hotels and foreign exchange bureaus in Dakar and other major cities. Banking hours in Senegal vary according to the bank and its location. The main banks like Ecobank, SGBS, BICIS and others are open from 08.00 am to 04.00 pm Mondays through Fridays, and from 09.00 am to 12.00 pm on Saturdays. Some of them close for a lunch break and reopen in the afternoon. However, banks exchange money usually at a lower rate than foreign exchange bureaus. In foreign exchange bureaus all widely used currencies like euro, US dollar, Swiss franc, British Pound Sterling are easy to be exchanged. 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 Senegal it is practically impossible to use the credit card as a means of payment, only some international hotels, shops and large restaurants it is possible to pay with credit card. EC Maestro card is an absolute no-go everywhere in Senegal. Travellers' cheques are accepted, but only in banks. Commission is extremely 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.

Gambia

Gambia's currency is the Dalasi (GMD). Exchange rates are \$1 = 53,29 GMD, £1 = 69,46 GMD, €1 = 58,00 GMD, 1 CAD = 41,78 GMD, 1 AUD = 38,84 GMD, 1.000 CFA = 88,60 GMD (as of March 2022). The Dalasi is divided into 100 butut. Notes are in denominations of 100, 50, 25, 10 and 5 GMD, coins come in 50, 25, 10 and 5. 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.

Bank opening hours vary, but the Banks open Monday - Thursday 8.00 a.m. 4.00 p.m. Fridays 8.00am - 1.30 p.m, on Saturdays 09.00 to 1.30pm. You can change cash money in banks, some hotels, foreign exchange bureaus, at the border and at the Barra ferry jetty. The most widely accepted currencies to be exchanged are euro and dollar, please note that the franc CFA of neighbouring Senegal are accepted by

taxi drivers and many shopkeepers. International credit cards are practically not accepted, you can use them as a means of payment only in some midrange and top-end hotels and restaurants. There are some international ATMs in Gambia to withdraw money, whereas Visa is the most widely accepted. EC Maestro card is an absolute no-go everywhere in the country. Cashpoints are often not working or malfunctioning, so do not count on them. 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. The cheques have to be issued in euros, pounds sterling or dollars.

Photography

Both countries are real treasure troves for passionate photographers. Whether the magnificent bird sanctuaries of Djoudj, Langue de Barbarie and Saloum, the bustling fishing port of Saint-Louis, the Mediterranean style architecture on Gorée Island or the Great Mosque in Touba: 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. 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

Senegal

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

For UK citizens:

- **British Embassy in Dakar**
20, rue Docteur Guillet
BP 6025
Dakar, Senegal
Tel: +221 33 823 26 66 or +221 33 823 73 92
Fax: Fax +221 33 823 27 66
Emergency Consular assistance (24 hour) Tel: + 44 (0) 207 008 1500 or +221 33 823 73 92,
e-mail: britembe@orange.sn
For further information click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/senegal>

For US-citizens :

- **Embassy of the United States of America, Consular Section**

Route des Almadies
Dakar, Senegal
Telephone: (221) 33-879-4000
e-mail: DakarACS@state.gov
For further information click here: <http://dakar.usembassy.gov/>

For Canadian citizens :

- **Embassy of Canada to Senegal**
Rue Galliéni x Amadou Cissé Dia
P.O. Box 3373
Dakar, Senegal
Telephone: +221-33-889-4700
Fax: + 221-33-889-4720
E-Mail: dakar@international.gc.ca
For further information click here: www.canadainternational.gc.ca/senegal/

The Gambia

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

For UK citizens:

- **British Embassy Banjul**
48 Atlantic Road
Fajara
PO Box 507
Banjul, The Gambia
Tel.: +220 4494508/4495134/4495133 or + 44 (0) 207 008 1500 consular assistance (24 hour)
E-Mail: UKinTheGambia@fco.gov.uk
For further information click here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-high-commission-banjul>

For US citizens:

- **American Embassy Banjul**
92 Kairaba Avenue
Fajara
The Gambia
Tel: (220) 439-2856 or 437-6169 ext. 2130
Fax: (220) 439-2475
Emergency assistance: +220 437 5270
E-mail: ConsularBanjul@state.gov
For further information click here: www.banjul.usembassy.gov

For Canadian citizens:

There is no resident Canadian government office in Gambia. You can obtain consular assistance and further consular information from the Embassy of Canada to Senegal in Dakar.

- **Embassy of Canada to Senegal**
Rue Galliéni x Amadou Cissé Dia
P.O. Box 3373

Dakar, Senegal

Telephone: +221-33-889-4700

Fax: + 221-33-889-4720

E-Mail: dakar@international.gc.ca

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

Time Zone Difference

Senegal's and Gambia's time zone is UTC/GMT + 0. As they do not observe daylight saving time they are one hour behind in summertime

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 Senegal, about 25 GMD for one piece in Gambia, for housekeeping 300-400 CFA per person per night, in Gambia about 30 - 50 GMD 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

Please note that an international Certificate of Vaccination is no longer compulsory for visitors to Senegal and The Gambia, unless you have come from a yellow fever infected country within six days of your arrival (see chapter "Health").

Senegal

Visas are not required by UK, US and Canadian citizens. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure with at least 1 blank page for the stamp are required by all. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant embassy or consulate prior to departure.

For UK citizens:

- **Senegalese Embassy in London UK**

39 Marloes Rd,

London W8 6LA

Tel.: +44 20 7937 7237 or :+44 20 7938 4048

fax: +44 (0) 20 7938 2546

For further information click here: www.senegal.embassyhomepage.com

For US citizens:

- **Embassy of Senegal in the United States**

2215 M street, NW,

Washington DC 20037

Telephone: (202) 234-0540

Fax: (202) 629-2961

Email: contact@ambasenegal-us.org

For further information click here: www.ambasenegal-us.org

For Canadian citizens:

- **Embassy of Senegal in Ottawa**

57 Marlborough Avenue

Ottawa, ON K1N 8E8, Canada

Téléphone : +1 613-238-6392

Fax : +1 613- 238- 2695

For further information click here: <http://www.ambsecanada.org/>.

Gambia

Citizens of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and other nations with a reciprocal visa abolition agreement with the Gambia do not require a visa to enter the country. When you are travelling to Gambia with a U.S. passport, a tourist visa is required. Passports valid for a minimum of six months beyond date of departure with at least 1 blank page for the stamp are required by all. Visas are issued in countries with Gambian 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 UK citizens:

- **Embassy of the Republic of The Gambia**

92 Ledbury Road, Notting Hill,

London, W11 2AH

Telephone: +44 (020) 7229 8066

info@gambiaembassy.org.uk

For further information click here: <http://www.gambiaembassy.org.uk/>

For US citizens:

- **Gambia Embassy in Washington D.C.**

NW Georgetown Plaza, 2233 Wisconsin Ave #240,

Washington, DC 20007, USA

Tel: +1 202-785-1379

Fax: +1 202 986 4800

Email: info@gambiaembassy.us

For further information click here: www.gambiaembassy.us

For Canadian citizens:

The Embassy of The Gambia in Washington, DC, United States of America, represents the country in Canada. The Gambia also has Honorary Consuls in Toronto and Montreal.

- **Gambian General Consulate in Canada**

18 Old Yonge Street

Toronto

Ontario M2P 1P7, Canada

Telephone: (+1) (416) 440-0777

For further information click here: www.gambiaembassy.us

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

Senegal has a primarily tropical climate with two alternating seasons: In the north of the country a long dry season from November to May influenced by the harmattan, a desert wind bringing dust from the Sahara alternates with a short rainy season from June to October dominated by strong southeast winds. Average annual rainfall measures around 350mm, whereas the rainy season continues longer in the South receiving an annual rainfall of about 1.500 mm. Winter temperatures from December to February range from 22-27°C on the coast, interior temperatures can reach as high as 40 °C. Temperatures in Dakar are usually mild, moderated by sea breezes, ranging between 18 - 26 °C in January and 24 - 32 °C in July.

The climate in **Gambia** is also tropical with a single wet season from June to October and one dry season from November to May. During the dry season the harmattan winds arrive full of Saharan dust. Average annual rainfall measures around 1.600 mm on the coast and up to 1.000 mm in the interior of the country. In the dry season is relatively mild, with temperatures from 21° to 27° C with a relative humidity ranging from 30 to 60 %. During the wet season between June and October temperatures may rise as high as 40° C or more with a relative humidity reaching up to 80%.

Best period for this trip: from November to April

What you should know before you go

... Senegal and Gambia 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.