



## Senegal-Mauritania | Practical Information

### Accommodation

On our trip through Senegal 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. Some hotels have clean swimming pools. In Mauritania we have two overnights in traditional Moorish tents and we stay mainly in simple, but clean guesthouses.

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

[www.sokhamon.hotelsdakar.com/](http://www.sokhamon.hotelsdakar.com/)

[www.lac-rose-palal.com](http://www.lac-rose-palal.com)

[www.hotelmermoz.com](http://www.hotelmermoz.com)

[www.facebook.com/le.k.nouakchott/](https://www.facebook.com/le.k.nouakchott/)

[www.facebook.com/haljazira/](https://www.facebook.com/haljazira/)

### Airlines

Airlines with scheduled flights from Europe to Dakar and Nouakchott include Turkish Airlines, Air France and Tunis Air.

For more information please consult the following websites: [www.turkishairlines.com](http://www.turkishairlines.com), [www.airfrance.de](http://www.airfrance.de), [www.tunisair.com](http://www.tunisair.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 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 pair of sandals. Thongs are useful in shower and pool areas. Don't forget your swimwear! You will have the opportunity to 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.

### **Mauritania**

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 Mauritania 00222. As in many other African countries, the mobile industry in Mauritania 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“. Please note that most of the time in Mauritania you will be in the desert where telephone communication and internet access are very limited.

## **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.

### **Mauritania**

In Mauritania there is also 220 V. Please note that there may be frequent power cuts or that there is no electricity at all. Batteries should be recharged at all possible opportunities. 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 Mauretania 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.

- **Mauritania**

Moorish kitchen is similar to that of Arab countries. The staple food is couscous, which is originated from Berbers and Arabs. Due to the extremely dry climate and the barren soil of Mauritania, vegetables are very expensive. It is grown only on the banks of the Senegal River, reason why vegetables are mainly imported from neighbouring countries. Dishes made from camel, goat and mutton are very popular. In coastal regions, fish and seafood are often on the menu. Dried fish and meat can be found almost everywhere in the country. Mechoui is one of the national dishes: a whole lamb fried in one piece. Other typical dishes in Mauritania include Maru we-Ilham, made from rice and meat, and Al Mechwi, meat cooked in strongly heated sand.

Tap water should be boiled or filtered before you drink it. In all bigger cities you can buy mineral water in bottles. The main drink of the Mauritians is Zrigh, camel milk containing a lot of vitamin C. The popular tea ritual is also celebrated everywhere. The strong and bitter mint tea is brewed and served mildly and strongly sugared at the end. Mauritians are banned from drinking; alcohol is only available in a few hotel bars and a few restaurants.

## Health

A Yellow Fever vaccination and certificate is not longer a compulsory requirement for entry into Senegal and Mauritania, 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 Senegal. Exchange rates are \$1 = 538 CFA, £1 = 763 CFA, 1 CAD = 445 CFA (as of May 2021), €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.

### Mauritania

The official currency in Mauritania is the Ouguiya (MRU), each Ouguiya consists of 5 Khoum. The currency was introduced in 2018, replacing the old Ouguiya (MRO) at a ratio of 1 MRU : 10 MRO. Denominations are notes of 1000, 500, 200, 100 and 50 MRU; coins come in denominations of 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 MRU. Exchange rates are \$1 = 35,75 MRU, £1 = 49,50 MRU, 1 CAD = 28,15 MRU, 1 AUD = 27,75 MRU, 1.000 CFA = 66 MRU (as of February 2021). The euro is equivalent to 43.3 MRU (as of February 2021). You can find out the current value using a currency converter, e.g. Oanda: [www1.oanda.com](http://www1.oanda.com).

Bank opening hours vary, but the banks open Monday - Thursday 8.00 a.m. 4.00 p.m. Fridays 8.00 am - 1.30 p.m, on Saturdays 09.00 to 1.30pm. You can change cash money in banks, some hotels and foreign exchange bureaus. The most widely accepted currencies to be exchanged are euro and dollar. 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 Mauritania 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, the bustling fishing port of Saint-Louis, the Mediterranean style architecture on Gorée Island the ancient adobe towns of Chinguetti and Ouadane or the charming desert landscapes: 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](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov), [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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/](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/senegal/)

**Mauritania**

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

**For UK citizens:**

There is no consular office in British Embassy Nouakchott. For consular assistance to UK nationals living in and visiting Mauritania, contact British Embassy in Rabat or if you're in Mauritania and you need urgent help (for example, you've been attacked, arrested or someone has died), call +212 (0) 537 633 333.

- **British Embassy Rabat**

28 Avenue S.A.R. Sidi Mohammed

Souissi 10105 (BP 45), Rabat

Morocco

Telephone: +212 (0) 537 633 333

Fax: +212 (0) 537 758 709

E-Mail: UKinMorocco.enquiries@fcdo.gov.uk

For further information click here: [www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-rabat](http://www.gov.uk/contact-consulate-rabat)

**For US citizens:**

- **American Embassy Nouakchott**

U.S. Embassy Nouakchott

Nouadhibou Road, Avenue Al Quds, NOT PRTZ.

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: 222-4525-2660

Fax: 222-4525-1592

E-mail: consularnkc@state.gov

For further information click here: [www.mr.usembassy.gov](http://www.mr.usembassy.gov)

**For Canadian citizens:**

- **Consulate of Canada in Nouakchott**

Al Khayma city center

10 Mamadou Konaté street, 3rd floor,

Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: 222 45-29-26-97

Fax: 222 45-29-26-98

E-Mail: nouakchott@international.gc.ca

For further information click here: [www.travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/mauritania](http://www.travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/mauritania)

For emergency consular assistance, call the Embassy of Canada to Morocco in Rabat and follow the instructions.

- **Embassy of Canada in Rabat**

Phone: 212 (0) 537 54 49 49

Fax: 212 (0) 537 54 48 53

Email: [rabat@international.gc.ca](mailto:rabat@international.gc.ca)

## Time Zone Difference

Senegal's and Mauritania'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 - 300 CFA for one piece in Senegal, about 20 MRU for one piece in Mauritania, for housekeeping 300 - 500 CFA per person per night, in Mauritania about 25 - 30 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 Mauritania, 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

Phone: +44 20 7937 7237 or :+44 20 7938 4048

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7938 2546

For further information click here: [www.senegal.embassyhomepage.com](http://www.senegal.embassyhomepage.com)

### For US citizens:

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

2215 M street, NW,

Washington DC 20037

Phone: (202) 234-0540

Fax: (202) 629-2961

Email: [contact@ambasenegal-us.org](mailto:contact@ambasenegal-us.org)

For further information click here: [www.ambasenegal-us.org](http://www.ambasenegal-us.org)

**For Canadian citizens:**

- **Embassy of Senegal in Ottawa**

57 Marlborough Avenue

Ottawa, ON K1N 8E8, Canada

Phone : +1 613-238-6392

Fax : +1 613- 238- 2695

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

**Mauritania**

When you are travelling to Mauritania with a U.S. or UK 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 Mauritanian representation or upon arrival at the airport or border. 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 Islamic Republic of Mauritania in London:

Carlyle House, 235 - 237 Vauxhall Bridge Road

London SW1V 1EJ

UK

Phone: (+44) 20 7233 6158

E-mail: [info@mauritanianembassy.uk](mailto:info@mauritanianembassy.uk)

For further information click here: [www.mauritanianembassy.uk](http://www.mauritanianembassy.uk)

**For US citizens:**

- **Embassy of Mauritania in US**

2129 Leroy Place, Washington DC 20008

USA

Phone: +1 (202) 232-5700

Fax: +1 (202) 319-2623

For further information click here: [www.mauritaniaembassy.us](http://www.mauritaniaembassy.us)

**For Canadian citizens:**

- **Embassy of Mauritania in Canada**

121, Sherwood Drive, (Ontario) K1Y 3V1

Ottawa

Canada

Phone: (+1) (613) 237-3283,-3284,-3285

Fax: (+1) (613) 237-3287

**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.

**Mauritania** has a predominantly hot and dry desert climate. The country can be divided into three different climate zones: the somewhat milder coastal climate north of Nouakchott with average temperatures of about 30°C in September and 20°C in December/January and very little rainfall. Here, the cold Canary Current brings cooling and fog. The second climate zone is the coastal climate south of Nouakchott and along the Senegal River with hotter temperatures and values averaging about 34°C in July and 24°C in January, and with a rainy season from July to October that brings up to 400 mm of rainfall. The interior of the country has a desert climate with high temperature fluctuations between day and night. The thermometer here can climb to 50°C during the day and drop to 10°C at night. There is hardly any rainfall.

**Best period for this trip:** from November to April

## What you should know before you go

... Senegal and Mauritania 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.