

Senegal: The Land of Baobabs

Come with us to discover the pearl of the Sahel. This 18-day trip through Senegal will take you to all the country's tourist highlights, including seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The lively "Île de Gorée" surprises with its terracotta-coloured colonial architecture. Let yourself drift in the charming historic lagoon city of Saint-Louis and the marvel at the mystical stone circles of Saloum, which are mentioned in the same breath as Stonehenge. Learn about the rich culture and manners of the Bassari, Fula and Bedik in the east of the country. The three national parks Niokolo Koba, Djoudj and Saloum offer an immense wealth of bird species and African mammals. If lucky discover the last wild lions in Senegal! In addition to these UNESCO highlights learn more about the country's history from colonial times to independence while visiting the capital city Dakar. Magnificent landscapes such as the Pink Lake, the largely unknown Casamance and the sea of dunes of the Lompoul desert as well as a spectacular mask dance and an audience with a real king make every day of this trip an extraordinary experience.

Tour Highlights

- **Pink Lake:** Stunning blaze of colour
- **Dakar:** Modern capital
- **Isle de Goree:** Slave history
- **Ziguinchor:** River dolphins and mask dance
- **Cap Skirring:** Stunning beaches
- **Oussouyé:** Meeting with a king
- **Niokolo Koba:** In search of lions
- **Kédougou:** Meeting the Bassari and Bedik, Senegal's highest waterfall
- **Sine Saloum:** Boat ride in the NP and Senegal's Stonehenge
- **Joal Fadiouth:** Unique island built on shells
- **Bandia:** Wildlife viewing
- **Touba:** Great Mosque of the Mourides
- **Lompoul:** Fascinating ocean of dunes
- **Gandiol:** Boat ride in Langue de Barbarie NP
- **Gueumbeul:** Rare antelopes
- **St. Louis:** The jewel of West Africa
- **Djoudj:** Bird paradise in the Senegal Delta

Day 1: Arrival at Dakar - Pink Lake

Meet and greet with your tour leader at the new Blaise Diagne Airport and transfer to the hotel (approx. 40 km)

(-/-), overnight on Pink Lake, Hotel Palal or similar

Day 2: Dakar - Pink Lake

After this morning's welcome meeting, we'll spend the morning exploring Dakar, Senegal's vibrant capital. Dakar was founded in 1857 by the French as a military post on the lands of the Lebou community. Due to its fast development it became the capital of French West Africa in 1902. Today the city has more than two million inhabitants. This morning we'll drive to the Monument de la Renaissance Africaine, a 49-metre-high bronze statue commissioned by former Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade. We'll climb up the stairs to the foot of the statue, where in clear weather you'll have a magnificent view of the city. A lift can take you to the top of the statue (optional), inside there are also information rooms about its construction. After a short detour to the westernmost point of continental Africa, Pointe des Almadies, we'll drive to the centre of Dakar, visiting the I.F.A.N. Museum, the Cathedral and the craft market „Village Artisanal“ in Soumbédioune. We'll stroll over Independence Square and through Kermel Market, which is well-known for the women who sell flowers there. This afternoon, you will return to the Pink Lake. (approx. 80 km)

(B/D), overnight on Lac Rose, Hotel Palal or similar

Day 3: Lac Rose - Ile de Gorée - Dakar

The Pink Lake is also known as Lake Retba. It has got its name because of its unique pink colour, which is particularly visible in the dry season, depending on the sun's rays and wind conditions, which are particularly visible in the dry season. The lake is very salty, comparable to the Dead Sea and it is internationally well-known for the Paris-Dakar Rally, as here was the finishing line. Later today we'll drive to the ferry terminal to take a ferry to Isle de Goree. The ferry crossing takes around 20 minutes. The Europeans were the first to settle in the 15th century. We'll take a walking tour across the island which was a center of the Atlantic slave trade for 300 years. In the Slave house, "Maison d'Esclaves" we'll see the „Door of no return“. On our walk we'll also discover the church of St. Charles Boramee, the Historical Museum of Senegal and many other interesting sites. The island was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. In the afternoon you'll return to the mainland and you'll check in for the ferry to Ziguinchor. (approx. 40 km)

(B/D), overnight on the ferry

Day 4: Ziguinchor

In the late morning you reach Ziguinchor. Founded in the 16th century by the Portuguese, the city is now the provincial capital of Casamance with more than 200,000 inhabitants. Take a rest after checking into your beautifully situated hotel on the river. In the afternoon you will drive to the small village of Baila, where you will experience a traditional mask dance. Masks that look like dancing haystacks whirl acrobatically across the village square. An unforgettable experience also for the women and children of the village attending the dance in large numbers. You'll return to your hotel in Ziguinchor In the early evening. (approx. 100 km)

(B/D), overnight at Ziguinchor, Hotel Kadiandoumagne or similar

Day 5: Ziguinchor - Cap Skirring

In the morning, you will take a boat trip on the Casamance River, where you may be lucky enough to see river dolphins. Numerous bird species also inhabit the riverbanks and the mangrove landscape. Later this morning, the local king of Oussouye will welcome you to an audience in his village near Ziguinchor. Afterwards, visit the village of Mlomp, famous for its multi-storey architecture and its museum, which informs about the culture of the Diola. From there, continue to Cap Skirring. End the day with a fantastic sunset on the beautiful beach of Cap Skirring. (approx. 100 km)

(B/D), overnight at Cap Skirring, Hotel Kaloa Les Palétuviers or similar

Day 6: Cap Skirring - Kolda

Enjoy the morning on the palm-fringed dream beach. In the early afternoon continue to Kolda, located in the heart of Casamance.

(approx. 260 km)

(B/D), overnight at Kolda, Hotel Relais de Kolda or similar

Day 7: Kolda - Tambacounda - Niokolo Koba NP

A full day's drive today takes us east through the dry savannah, characterized by a few acacias, via Tambacounda to the Niokolo Koba National Park. The 9,130 km² national park has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1981. In search of the first antelopes, you will drive through the park to the centrally located Simenti Hotel, where you will spend the night on the banks of the Gambia River. With a bit of luck, you can observe hippos in their natural habitat here. (approx. 340 km)

(B/D), overnight in Niokolo-Koba NP, Hotel Simenti or similar (simple)

Day 8: Niokolo Koba NP - Kédougou

This morning Der heutige Vormittag ist ganz den Tierbeobachtungen im Niokolo-Koba-Nationalpark gewidmet. Mit ein wenig Glück sichten Sie hier Westafrikanische Schimpansen, Löwen, Paviane oder Antilopen wie die Pferdantilope oder Kobantilopen. Am Nachmittag Weiterfahrt nach Kédougou, im Dreiländereck mit Mali und Guinea gelegen. Diese verträumte Ortschaft, eingebettet in bergige Landschaft, ist ein idealer Ausgangspunkt für Ausflüge ins Land der Bassari und Bédik. Am Nachmittag besichtigen Sie den lebendigen lokalen Markt. (approx. 180 km)

(B/D), overnight at Kédougou, Hotel Le Bédik or similar

Day 9: Kédougou - Iwol - Dindéfelo - Kédougou

Nach dem Frühstück Fahrt zum Dorf Iwol, wo die Bedik leben. Dieses kleine Volk, von dem es nur noch wenige Tausend Angehörige gibt, lebt seit Jahrhunderten isoliert in den Bergen bei Kédougou. Sie werden vom Dorfoberhaupt begrüßt, treffen die Einwohner, lernen deren Traditionen und Handwerk kennen und erleben einen traditionellen Tanz. Auf dem Rückweg nach Kédougou machen Sie einen Abstecher zum Wasserfall von Dindéfelo, mit circa 100 Metern Höhe Senegals höchster Wasserfall. Ein erfrischendes Bad bietet eine willkommene Gelegenheit, den Staub des Tages abzuspuhlen! Gegen Abend Rückkehr ins Hotel. (approx. 100 km)

(B/D), overnight at Kédougou, Hotel Le Bédik or similar

Day 10: Kédougou - Ethiolo

Heute besichtigen Sie einige Dörfer der Bassari. Die kleine Ortschaft Ethiolo gilt als das religiöse Zentrum dieser kleinen Ethnie, die nur hier gefunden werden kann. Sie besuchen den Dorfplatz und die Initiationsgrotte, in der alljährlich im Mai die Initiation der jungen Männer stattfindet. Dieses Fest dauert eine ganze Woche und wird begleitet von rituellen Tänzen und Trommelrhythmen. Sie kommen in Kontakt mit der Bevölkerung und lernen ihren animistischen Glauben und traditionelle Lebensweise kennen. Gegen Abend werden Sie einem unvergesslichen Ritualtanz beiwohnen. (approx. 100 km)

(B/D), overnight at Ethiolo In a simple campement

Day 11: Ethiolo - Tambacounda

Heute verlassen Sie Ethiolo und fahren über Kédougou nach Tambacounda. Unterwegs besuchen Sie einige Peulh-Dörfer. Die Peulh, auch Fula und Fulbe genannt, sind ein nomadisierendes Volk, das in ganz Westafrika anzutreffen ist. Sie leben über-wiegend von der Viehzucht und ziehen mit ihren Herden zu den saftigen Weiden des Subkonti-nents. Nach einer erholsamen Mittagspause in Kédougou erreichen Sie gegen Abend Tambacounda. (approx. 360 km)

(B/D), overnight at Tambacounda, Hotel Relais de Tambacounda or similar

Day 12: Tambacounda - Toubacouta

Am Morgen verlassen Sie Tambacounda und erreichen zur Mittagszeit Kaolack, die Pforte zum Sine-Saloum-Delta. Hier legen wir eine Pause ein. Nach einer weiteren Stunde Fahrzeit erreichen Sie Ihr heutiges Ziel: Toubacouta. Bis zum späten Nachmittag können Sie sich am Flussufer oder im Pool Ihres Hotels erholen. Dann unternehmen Sie einen Bootsausflug, um den Sonnenuntergang auf dem Fluss zu erleben. Sie fahren durch Flussarme, an deren Ufer dichte Mangrovenhaine wachsen. Senegals zweitgrößter Nationalpark Delta du Saloum wurde 1976 gegründet und wurde 2011 in die Liste des UNESCO Weltnaturerbes aufgenommen. Vom Boot aus können wir zahlreiche Wasservögel und mit etwas Glück Affen beobachten. Wir machen eine Pause auf einer Muschelinsel, auf der ein riesiger heiliger Baobab steht. Höhepunkt ist eine Insel, auf der sich je nach Jahreszeit viele verschiedene Vogelarten versammeln. Mit der untergehenden Sonne hinter den bizarren Baobabs fahren Sie zurück in Ihr Hotel. (approx. 250 km)

(B/D), overnight at Toubacouta, Hotel Keur Saloum or similar

Day 13: Toubacouta - N'dangane

Am Vormittag haben Sie die Gelegenheit, ein besonderes Abenteuer zu erleben (optional): In dem privaten Park Fathala leben Löwen, mit denen Sie spazieren gehen können. Anschließend geht Ihre Reise weiter zu einer außergewöhnlichen Sehenswürdigkeit: Sie besuchen die geheimnisvollen Megalithen des Sine-Saloum in Sine Ngayène. Die Megalithen sind eine UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe. Archäologische Funde beweisen, dass innerhalb der Steinkreise Könige und wichtige Würdenträger mit aufwändigen Grabbeigaben bestattet wurden. Ein kleines Museum gibt Auskunft über die Ausgrabungen. Weiterfahrt nach N'Dagane im nördlichen Teil des Saloum Deltas. (approx. 220 km)

(B/D), overnight at N'dangane, Hotel Les Cordons Bleus or similar

Day 14: N'dangane - Joal Fadiouth - Sindia

Today our journey takes us to Joal Fadiouth, birthplace of the country's first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor. Joal is an important center of the Senegalese fishing industry. Here we'll visit the unique village of Fadiouth, entirely built on an island artificially made of oyster and clam shells. The village can only be reached by a solid wooden bridge. Another bridge leads to an unusual cemetery, where both Muslims and Christians are buried in the same place. The granaries for millet and groundnuts built on stilts in the water are also worth a visit. Later today you'll drive to Saly, where you'll have time to have lunch. This afternoon you'll visit Bandia Reserve where you'll go on an exciting game drive in search of different animals such as monkeys, gazelles, giraffes, antelopes and rhinos. The German forester Christian Dehring founded the park in 1997 with the aim of restoring the original savannah landscape. Some animal species were imported from South Africa such as impalas, zebras, ostriches, and giraffes. In the evening you'll reach your hotel in Sindia. (approx. 90 km)

(B/D), overnight at Sindia, Hotel Baobab Soleil or similar

Day 15: Sindia - Touba- Lompoul

This morning sees us heading to Lompoul. En route we'll visit the holy town of Touba, stronghold of Senegal's most famous Mouride Sufi brotherhood. Touba is a sacred place and the Mourides have strict rules indicating that the consumption of alcohol and tobacco is prohibited and respectful behaviour is demanded. There is no police in town and nobody needs to pay taxes. We'll explore the Great Mosque with the tomb of Cheick Amadou Bamba, founder and spiritual leader of the Mourides. Later this afternoon we'll continue our journey to Lompoul desert. Enjoy a beautiful sunset during a short camel ride across the dunes stretching from the ocean far inland. Lompoul is well-known in the whole world thanks to the rallye Paris– Dakar (optional).(approx. 350 km)

(B/D), overnight in a desert camp (beautifully furnished Moorish tents with bathroom en suite)

Day 16: Lompoul - Saint Louis

Today's journey first takes you to Gandiol to visit the Langue de la Barbarie National Park. Here we board a motorised pirogue to explore this bird paradise in the estuary of the Senegal River, home to many different species of water birds. You'll also learn about the ecological challenges, that the villagers living on the banks of the river face in their daily life. Later this morning we'll head to the nearby Gueumbeul Reserve, It covers an area of 720 hectares where we'll spend two hours of game viewing. The park is home to some endangered species and is also the center for reintroduction programs of the Dorcas gazelle, Addax antelope and the scimitar oryx. The reserve is also inhabited by wild boars, monkeys and African spurred tortoises. This afternoon we'll continue north to St. Louis, former capital of the French colony of „Afrique occidentale française“ and considered by many as the jewel of West Africa. Despite population growth to estimated 175.000 inhabitants Saint-Louis has retained its charme. This afternoon we will explore the beautiful old town with its well-preserved and restored colonial buildings by a typical horse-drawn carriage. The old quarters on the Island of Saint-Louis at the mouth of the Senegal River were inscribed a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2004. We'll also discover the thriving fishing community of Guet N'Dar situated on the Langue de Barbarie peninsula. (approx. 100 km)

(B/D), overnight at Saint -Louis, Hotel Mermoz or similar

Day 17: St. Louis: Excursion to Djoudj NP

Near Saint-Louis the Senegal River pours into the ocean forming a large delta. In this wetland, about 60 km from the town's center, lies the world's third-largest bird sanctuary, the Djoudj National Park designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1981. This morning we will board a motorised pirogue to explore the waterways of this natural paradise in search for aquatic birds and other birds belonging to the 400 species living in the park. We return to Saint-Louis. The afternoon is left free for you to relax on the beach or stroll on your own through this bustling town. (approx. 140 km).

(B/D), overnight at Saint -Louis, Hotel Mermoz or similar

Day 18: St. Louis - End of Tour

This morning transfer from Saint Louis to Sindia. Day use rooms in a hotel in Sindia will be at your disposal until the departure to the airport. (approx. 225 km)

(B), day use rooms

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