

Overseas Adventure Travel[®]

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide[®]



West Africa Cruise: Cape Verde Islands,
Senegal & The Gambia

2026

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you join us, you will enjoy the thrill of off-the-beaten-path discovery coupled with the convenience of unpacking just once. Aboard our privately owned small ship, you will visit lesser-known ports that larger vessels cannot access—and enjoy intimate interactions with local people in your small group of no more than 25 travelers. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation.

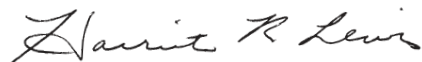
But your personal connections are not limited to your time on land—while onboard, you will enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, as well as the camaraderie of your fellow American travelers. Whether you travel with a partner, sister, friend, or independently, you will feel welcomed and included throughout your journey. And if you do choose to travel solo, you will enjoy an unmatched value, with our FREE or low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis

Chair

Overseas Adventure Travel

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Pico de Fogo, Cape Verde Islands

West Africa Cruise: Cape Verde Islands, Senegal & The Gambia

Small Ship Adventure

Senegal: Dakar | **Cape Verde:** Santiago Island, Sal, Porto Novo, São Vicente, São Felipe | **The Gambia:** Banjul

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

19 days starting from \$10,095

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **\$1,995**

For departure dates & prices, visit www.oattravel.com/cwa2026pricing

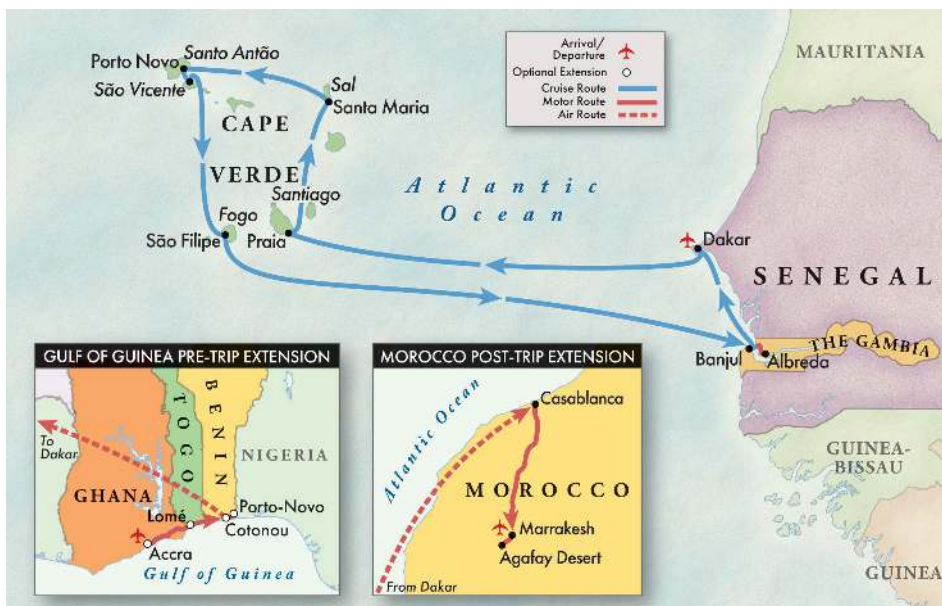
Be among the first to discover the rugged beauty, unspoiled beaches, and friendly locals of West Africa on this NEW Small Ship Adventure. From the Senegalese capital of Dakar, you'll sail for 14 nights aboard the **98-passenger M/V Corinthian** with ports of call in the volcanic islands of Cape Verde and Banjul, the coastal capital of tiny The Gambia. Throughout it all, experience the local culture during plantation visits, musical demonstrations, and explorations of the colonial past.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 17 nights accommodation, including 14 nights aboard our privately owned, 98-passenger M/V *Corinthian*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 49 meals: 17 breakfasts, 15 lunches, 17 dinners—including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- 22 guided tours (with personal headsets) and cultural experiences
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.

West Africa Cruise: Cape Verde Islands, Senegal & The Gambia



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Dakar, Senegal
2-5	Dakar, Senegal
6	At sea
7	Boa Vista Island, Cape Verde
8	Sal Island
9-10	Porto Novo Island
11	São Vicente Island
12-13	Fogo Island
14-15	At sea
16-18	Banjul, The Gambia
19	Dakar, Senegal • Return to U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Strenuous

Pacing: 18 days, with 14 nights aboard the M/V *Corinthian* and one three-night hotel stay

Physical Requirements: Walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 6-8 hours of physical activities each day, including activities with several sets of stairs and days with possible rough seas requiring good agility, balance, and strength

Flight time: Travel time will be 12-19 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/cwa

WEST AFRICA: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

Unbeatable Value: Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

People-to-People Experiences: Learn about local traditions during intimate cultural encounters. Meet with descendants of Kunta Kinteh, the main character in the book *Roots*, to learn about the slave trade's effects on West Africa; visit a coffee plantation on the Cape Verdean island of Fogo for a coffee tasting; and learn to prepare a traditional West African meal during a hands-on cooking lesson in Banjul.

O.A.T. Exclusives: Enjoy a **Home-Hosted Dinner** in Dakar for an evening of authentic West African cuisine and Senegalese hospitality.

PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

The Gulf of Guinea: Ghana, Togo & Benin

PRE-TRIP: 7 nights from **\$3,995**

Senegal & Morocco: Dakar, Casablanca & Marrakesh

POST-TRIP: 8 nights from **\$2,495**

ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Accra** before your The Gulf of Guinea pre-trip extension from **\$400** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Dakar** before your main adventure from **\$370** per room, per night

West Africa Cruise: Cape Verde Islands, Senegal & The Gambia

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

7 nights in *The Gulf of Guinea: Ghana, Togo & Benin*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive in Accra, Ghana

Day 3 Explore Accra • Visit Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum

Day 4 Accra • Visit Tetteh Quarshie Cocoa Farm • Explore Aburi Botanical Garden

Day 5 Overland to Lomé, Togo

Day 6 Explore Lomé • Visit Togoville • Lake Togo

Day 7 Overland to Cotonou, Benin • Ouidah • Visit Pythons Temple • Foundation Zinsou

Day 8 Cotonou • Explore the Great Mosque of Porto-Novo • Visit Lake Village Ganvie

Day 9 Join main adventure

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on an overnight flight bound for Dakar, Senegal.

Day 2 Arrive in Dakar, Senegal

- Destination: Dakar
- Accommodations: Pullman Dakar Teranga

Activity Note: As the capital with 3 million inhabitants, anticipate chaotic traffic and a vibrant city stimulating all the senses.

This itinerary offers an off the beaten path experience. Expect coaches and hotels with lower standards than what we are used to in the U.S. and Europe. If you choose to join, a sense of adventure and a willingness to embrace cultural differences is essential.

Morning/Afternoon: Depending on your individual flight arrangements, you'll arrive in Dakar, Senegal some time today. An O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to the hotel, where you'll meet your fellow travelers—including those who took our *The Gulf of Guinea: Ghana, Togo & Benin* pre-trip extension.

There, check in and enjoy some free time to relax and settle in. You may choose to join your Trip Experience Leader later for an optional orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity.

Dinner: On your own. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like. Head out to begin exploring Dakar on your own, or retire early after your day of traveling.

Day 3 Explore Dakar

- Destination: Dakar
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Pullman Dakar Teranga

Activity Note: Expect encounters with beggars, particularly children, on the streets throughout your trip. It's not advisable to give anything individually, as it may create challenges when unable to provide for all. Consider alternative ways to support local communities, such as donating supplies to local organizations who offer aid to these communities, or ask your Trip Experience Leader where you can volunteer during free time.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast we'll gather for a Welcome Briefing at the hotel to go over the itinerary in detail, including any changes that may need to occur. Your Trip Experience Leader will also discuss logistics, safety procedures, and answer any questions you may have. Then, our Trip Experience Leader will take us for an orientation walk to gain familiarity with our surroundings and enjoy our first glimpse of local culture.

Lunch: On your own. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

Afternoon: Your afternoon is free to begin exploring Dakar on your own. Or, you may want to join your Trip Experience Leader on a short bus ride to visit the IFAN Museum of African Arts. This prestigious museum houses one of the oldest and most noteworthy collections of West African art and artefacts, including ritual masks, clothing, weapons, and more. After returning to our hotel, you'll have a little time to relax before dinner.

Dinner: Sit down with your fellow travelers to enjoy a Welcome Dinner.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like. Perhaps you'll continue getting to know your fellow travelers over a nightcap in the hotel bar.

Day 4 Explore Dakar • Home-Hosted Dinner

- Destination: Dakar
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Pullman Dakar Teranga

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Following breakfast, we'll set out to explore Dakar, Senegal's vibrant capital city, with a local guide. Today's panoramic city tour will take you through bustling open-air markets and down streets where the vestiges of French colonial influence can still be seen in the architecture. As we'll see, Dakar is a city of contrasts, at once holding on to its history and traditions and boldly looking forward to meet the future.

We'll visit Independence Square, the central hub of the city. Then we'll pay our respects at the African Renaissance Monument, which was built in 2010 to commemorate 50 years of Senegalese Independence from France. At more than 160 feet in height, the monument is taller than both the Statue of Liberty and Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer.

We'll cap off our morning with a stop for *bissap*, a tea made from hibiscus and sugar that's a favorite among locals.

Lunch: On your own. You might like to try *ceebu jën*, a fish and rice dish that's a staple in Senegal.

Afternoon: Your afternoon is free to explore on your own.

Dinner: This evening, we'll divide into smaller groups and drive to the homes of local families for a **Home-Hosted Dinner** to enjoy an authentic cultural exchange over a traditional Senegalese meal. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know the local people and learn about Senegalese culture. Ask your hosts any questions you may have about life in Dakar, the country's customs, or what employment and education opportunities are like.

Evening: We'll bid a fond farewell to our host families and return to the hotel, where the rest of the evening is yours to do as you'd like.

Day 5 Visit Gorée Island • Embark ship • Captain's Welcome Dinner

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll board a bus to Dakar Harbor and take a ferry ride to Gorée Island. A major slave-trading center between the 15th and 19th centuries, this UNESCO World Heritage Site reminds visitors of the opulence and cruelty of the slave trade with its preserved colonial homes and slave quarters, where Africans were held before being shipped to the New World as slaves.

Here, we'll view Saint Charles Church, as well as the poignant House of Slaves, where world leaders and popular figures like John Paul II, Bill Clinton, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, and the Jackson 5 have visited. We'll see the Door of No Return, which marks the slaves' final stop before leaving Africa.

Lunch: On your own in Gorée Island. You might like to try *ceebu jën*, a fish and rice dish that's a staple in Senegal.

Afternoon: After returning to Dakar, we'll regroup and make our way to the docks, where we'll embark our home for the next 14 nights: the M/V *Corinthian*. This privately owned, 98-passenger vessel is staffed by a friendly, English-speaking crew who will be eager to welcome you aboard and show you to your room. Each of the ship's outside-facing cabins features a window or balcony, flat-screen TV, air-conditioning, and its own private bath.

You'll have some time to settle in to your cabin and explore the ship's amenities before we participate in a safety briefing and a ship's welcome briefing. Then, gather with your Trip Experience Leader for the first of your nightly Port Talks.

Dinner: Sit down to a Captain's Welcome Dinner in the ship's dining room and toast to the voyage ahead. As with all the dinners during your cruise, the atmosphere is relaxed and the dress code is smart casual. You'll be offered a choice of appetizer, soup, entrée, and dessert—including American favorites—and complimentary house beer, house wine, and soft drinks. (Half-portions are available upon request.) But at this special welcome reception, you'll also enjoy more elaborate dishes and a special cocktail. While the dress code at mealtimes is always relaxed and smart casual, some travelers opt to wear a day dress or slacks for the first dinner.

Evening: As our ship sets sail for the Cape Verde Islands, you're free to relax and spend the evening how you wish.

Day 6 At sea

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: We continue to sail towards the Cape Verde Islands. During our full day at sea, enjoy the ship's amenities: Relax in one of two lounges, spend time on the Sun Deck, or perhaps take a soak in the hot tub.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Continue enjoying the ship's amenities. You might spend time with fellow travelers in one of the lounges, or retire to the Sun Deck with a good book.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like.

Day 7 Explore Santiago Island, Cape Verde

• Visit the Plateau

- Destination: Santiago Island
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Activity Note: The Cape Verde Islands offer motorcoaches with less room and lower standards than we are used to in the U.S. or Europe.

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Step ashore on Santiago Island, the largest island of Cape Verde. Ringed by golden sands, gently lapping azure waters, and mountainous terrain, Santiago Island is home to some of the most diverse landscapes in all of Cape Verde.

We'll set out on a walking tour to explore the Plateau, the historic center of Santiago's capital city of Praia, featuring some of the most preserved buildings, including the Presidential Palace. Then, we'll visit Praia's market, a bustling market boasting colorful produce, handmade crafts, friendly locals, and more.

Next, we'll drive to Cidade Velha, one of Santiago's oldest settlements and Cape Verde's former capital. Here, we'll visit the fortress of São Filipe, built in the 16th century as part of the defense system for the city. Then, we'll go to the small village of Cidade Velha, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that was formerly known as the town of Ribeira Grande, Europe's first colonial outpost in the tropics.

Following our Santiago explorations, we'll return to the ship.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Your afternoon is free to continue exploring on your own. There will be shuttle buses available for those who would like to return to the Plateau for their own discoveries.

Later this afternoon, enjoy a Port Talk onboard.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to spend as you please.

Day 8 Sal • Explore salt mine • Visit Shark Bay • Botanical Garden

- Destination: Sal
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Today's discoveries take us to Sal, an island whose name means "salt." And as we'll see during our time on Sal today, the island certainly lives up to its name.

Our first destination is the Pedra de Lume salt mine, which is located in the crater of an extinct volcano. Here, you'll have a chance to go for a swim in Lake Salinas, the second saltiest body of water (after the Dead Sea). The water's high salinity will allow you to float—and will leave your skin soft from the salt's scrubbing effect.

Next, we'll visit Buracona, a natural bay formed by the ocean and lava rocks.

Finally, we'll conclude our morning with a visit to Shark Bay, where you can spot small lemon sharks in the shallow waters.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Cap off your Sal discoveries with a visit to a botanical garden and eco-park. As you stroll through the garden, you can admire local and exotic flora and fauna, including colorful parrots. The park also places an emphasis on recycling and environmental stewardship.

Back aboard your ship, enjoy a Port Talk before dinner.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like.

Day 9 Santo Antão • Visit village of Janela

- Destination: Santo Antão
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Activity Note: Today's visit to a local Janela village involves uneven paths, going up and down the hill, and many high and uneven steps (up to 330 steps). Please keep in mind that this activity will be rigorous during some points.

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Arrive in Santo Antão, the westernmost island of Cape Verde that's known for its lush interior and verdant mountains.

We'll begin our day driving to Janela, Portuguese for "window." As one of the most scenic drives in all of Cape Verde, you'll see many villages nestled in the valley of the river Ribeira da Janela as we reach our next destination. Today, we'll visit one of these villages and meet with a local farmers community to learn about the irrigation

systems that have been used for decades here, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of their way of life on the land.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: The afternoon is at your leisure. You might use the opportunity to discover Porto Novo on your own. Or, perhaps you'll read a book on the Sun Deck, or relax in your room before joining your Trip Experience Leader for tonight's Port Talk.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to make your own discoveries.

Day 10 Santo Antão • Estrada A Corda scenic drive

- Destination: Santo Antão
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: We'll depart Santo Antão today on the Estrada A Corda, a scenic mountain road running through the island that offers the most beautiful views of Cape Verde. The further you drive, you'll notice how the landscapes change from rocky mountains to verdant hills.

Then, we'll continue our drive as we cross Cova National Park, filled with rugged mountains. But perhaps the biggest draw is Cova de Paúl, the largest volcanic crater in all of Cape Verde. We'll enjoy a panoramic view from the crater's edge looking into the wide, grassy plain below; the interior of the crater is now used by farmers to grow crops. We'll stop along the way at a lookout point to view the lush landscapes from above.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: You have the afternoon free to relax onboard or perhaps you'll visit one of the local beaches with your fellow travelers.

Later this afternoon, enjoy a Port Talk onboard.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries.

Day 11 São Vicente • Scenic hike

- Destination: São Vicente
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Activity Note: Today's afternoon excursion includes a 3-hour scenic hike. Some pathways may be uneven and sloped; agility and balance are required.

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Step ashore on São Vicente, a island known for its dramatic mountains. In the company of a local guide, we'll spend the morning exploring Mindelo, one of the best-preserved colonial cities in Cape Verde and São Vicente's capital. Mindelo is also considered the cultural epicenter of the island nation, and during a city walking tour, we'll admire its local markets and art galleries.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After a morning of cultural discovery, we'll turn our attention this afternoon to São Vicente's natural beauty with a hike.

Back on ship, enjoy your nightly Port Talk before dinner.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: As our ship sails for our final destination in Cape Verde, your evening is free to do as you'd like.

Day 12 São Vicente

- Destination: São Vicente
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Today, we leave Mindelo behind and head to Monte Verde, the island's highest peak and one of the greenest areas in São Vicente. After, we'll depart Monte Verde and explore the alluring charm of Bías das Gatas, a natural bay and popular venue for music festivals.

Later, we'll head back to the ship.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Choose to spend your afternoon how you'd like. Perhaps you'll visit one of the vibrant beaches near the port of Mindelo, including Praia Laginha, Praia de Tarrafal, and Praia de São Pedro.

There will be a Port Talk later this afternoon.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You're free to relax and spend the evening how you wish onboard.

Day 13 Fogo • Visit São Filipe • Chã das Caldeiras visit

- Destination: Fogo
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Activity Note: Fogo Island is only accessible by Zodiac craft. Conditions for such travel may vary depending on the visit.

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Arrive by Zodiac crafts to explore the volcanic island of Fogo, whose name means "fire" in Portuguese. We'll begin our morning discovering the colorful architecture and colonial houses of São Filipe. Fogo was first

discovered by Portuguese explorers during the 15th century, and you'll see evidence of their continued legacy in the town's architecture.

Then, we'll drive to Chã das Caldeiras, a small community located inside the Pico de Fogo volcanic crater. While Pico de Fogo is technically considered an active volcano, its last eruption was more than 400 years ago. But the island is also home to another, more active volcano that erupted in 2014. As we explore Chã das Caldeiras, we'll have the opportunity to admire the views from inside the crater during a walk in the volcano's secondary caldera. We will learn more about the island's geology on a walk that takes us over a lava field. The village's agricultural community in Chã is famous for its production of volcanic wine, and is the only area in Cape Verde that grows grapes and produces export-quality wine. We'll have the opportunity to tour one of the wine cellars.

Lunch: At the Chã das Caldeiras village.

Afternoon: Free to continue exploring Fogo on your own. You might like to revisit Ponta da Salina and relax in the nearby natural rock coves, perfect for calm swimming waters.

Return to the ship by Zodiac in the late afternoon for your Port Talk.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy a free evening onboard as our ship set sail for our next destination.

Day 14 At sea

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: We cruise to Banjul, the capital city of The Gambia. It will take us two full days of cruising to reach Banjul, during which time you can enjoy the ship's amenities and the company of your fellow travelers.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Continue relaxing onboard. If you haven't yet, this is a great opportunity to spend some time in the hot tub.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like, whether that's enjoying a cocktail in the lounge or retiring early with a good book.

Day 15 At sea

- Destination: At sea
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Continue sailing to The Gambia.

Lunch: Served in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: As we get closer, you may be able to take in views of the West African coastline from the ship's Sun Deck.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: This evening, our ship drops anchor in The Gambia. Spend time topside to watch as we sail into port.

Day 16 Banjul, The Gambia • Explore Tanji Fishing Center • Yabouy Home Cooking Class • Visit crocodile pool

- Destination: Banjul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Activity Note: As the capital with over 400,000 inhabitants, expect chaotic traffic and a busy city. When we visit the Tanji Fishing Center, anticipate an intense fish smell.

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Today we'll explore Banjul, the capital city of the tiny West African nation of The Gambia. Banjul is also the least populated of any African capital, giving it a laidback feel that's amplified by its dusty red roads and colorful, if fading, colonial architecture.

We'll kick off our discoveries with a visit to the Tanji Fishing Center, where locals come to buy, sell, and smoke fish caught in the nearby waters. It's thought that more than 2,000 people participate in fishing-related activities here each day.

After watching the preparation of smoked fish, we'll enjoy a cooking class at Yabouy Home Cooking, home of Ida Cham Njai and have the opportunity to learn how to prepare a traditional Gambian meal.

Lunch: Sit down with Ida to enjoy the fruits of your labor: an authentic West African meal.

Afternoon: We'll continue our drive inland to reach Kachikally, a crocodile-infested pool that's traditionally used for sacred fertility rituals. More than 100 crocodiles are said to have made their home in Kachikally's waters. While here, we'll learn more about the native Bakau people and their spiritual belief system.

We'll return to ship by mid-afternoon. You'll have a few hours to settle in and relax before your nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to do whatever you'd like.

Day 17 Banjul • Kunta Kinteh Island • Visit Museum of Slavery

- Destination: Banjul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: We'll take a ferry in Banjul followed by a bus drive to get to Albreda, where we'll first visit the Museum of Slavery for a harrowing look into the past of the slave trade in The Gambia. Then, we'll walk to the village of Juffureh, the ancestral home of Kunta Kinteh, the main character on the television show *Roots*. Then, we'll take another piroque ride to nearby Kunta Kinteh Island (St. James Island), a UNESCO World Heritage Site and former base of the African slave trade.

Lunch: We'll enjoy a light lunch at a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll return to Banjul by boat.

Then, we'll return to the ship for a Port Talk.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Free to do as you'd like.

Day 18 Banjul • Visit the Makasuto Culture Forest

- Destination: Banjul
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Corinthian*

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Drive to Makasuto Culture Forest, a beautiful and diverse woodland reserve with several ecosystems, including an expansive riverine, palm and hardwood forests, mangrove creeks, savannas, and salt-flats. Here, we'll go on a nature walk in the company of a local guide who will point out various tree species, such as mahogany, rhun palms, and baobab. We may even see different species of birds, monkeys, and lizards along the way.

Lunch: Enjoy a light buffet lunch at Makasuto.

Afternoon: Return to the ship before your nightly Port Talk.

Dinner: Served in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Your ship departs Banjul this evening and sails for our final destination: Dakar.

Day 19 Disembark ship in Dakar, Senegal • Return to U.S. or begin post-trip extension

• Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Breakfast: Served in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Disembark the ship in Dakar, Senegal.

Most international flights will leave in the afternoon or evening, so you will have a day room at a nearby hotel available for you to use. You may spend the morning making any final discoveries in Dakar, or perhaps visiting the hotel's spa.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Depending on your individual flight arrangements, catch your return flight home to the U.S. Or, begin your *Senegal & Morocco: Dakar, Marrakesh & Casablanca* post-trip extension.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

8 nights in Senegal & Morocco: Dakar, Casablanca & Marrakesh

Day 1 Dakar • Visit Museum of Black Civilization

Day 2 Dakar • Game drive in Bandia Wildlife Reserve

Day 3 Fly to Casablanca, Morocco

Day 4 Casablanca • Visit the Hassan II Mosque • Explore Casablanca

Day 5 Transfer to Marrakesh • Discovery walk

Day 6 Explore Marrakesh • Horse-drawn calèche ride

Day 7 Marrakesh • Visit a permaculture farm • Farewell Dinner

Day 8 Marrakesh • Return to U.S.

PRE-TRIP

The Gulf of Guinea: Ghana, Togo & Benin

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Air transportation from Dakar to Accra
- » 7 nights accommodation
- » 17 meals—7 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 5 dinner
- » 11 guided tours with personal headsets
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

Please note: Travelers purchasing their own international flights will be responsible for additional internal flight costs.

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Set off on a journey along Africa's little-known Gulf of Guinea. From the capital city of Accra and its lush landscapes to West Africa's rich history in Benin and the capital Porto-Novo.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

- Destination: Accra

Depart for your flight to Accra, Ghana.

Day 2 Arrive in Accra, Ghana

- Destination: Accra
- Accommodations: Movenpick Ambassador Hotel Accra

Morning/Afternoon: You'll arrive in Accra sometime this morning or afternoon, depending on your flight. An O.A.T. representative greets you at the airport and assists with the transfer to your hotel. After settling in, you'll get acquainted with your surroundings during an orientation walk led by your Trip Experience Leader.

Dinner: On your own. You can sample local specialties—from seafood and grilled chicken to hearty stews. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Evening: Relax at a nearby café and linger over a glass of port or local wine.

Day 3 Explore Accra • Visit Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum

- Destination: Accra
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Movenpick Ambassador Hotel Accra

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After a Welcome Briefing, you'll embark on a city tour of Accra, Ghana's famously frenetic seaside capital, in the company of a local guide. Along the way, you'll visit the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park and

Mausoleum, located in downtown Accra. The mausoleum is the final resting place of Ghana's first president and Africanist, Kwame Nkrumah. The museum is home to a vast collection of rare artifacts relating to Ghana's independence and offers tours that give visitors an in-depth history of the sub-Saharan struggle for freedom. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to make your own discoveries.

Lunch: On your own.

Afternoon: You'll have some free time to explore before we depart for the hotel.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Enjoy a free evening to make any last-minute discoveries.

Day 4 Accra • Visit Tetteh Quarshie Cocoa Farm • Explore Aburi Botanical Garden

- Destination: Accra
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Movenpick Ambassador Hotel Accra

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You'll depart for the Tetteh Quarshie Cocoa Farm this morning, where you'll learn more about Ghanaian agriculturalist, Tetteh Quarshie, who was directly responsible for introducing cocoa crops to Ghana. Cocoa crops constitute one of the major exports of the Ghanaian economy.

Lunch: Enjoy an included lunch.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll depart for the Aburi Botanical Garden, located in the eastern region of Ghana. These breathtaking gardens are situated between the lush Akwapim Hills and are abundant in native and imported trees and plants. Keep your eyes peeled for many native bird and butterfly species. After our tour concludes, we'll depart for our hotel.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local recommendations.

Evening: You're free to make your own discoveries.

Day 5 Overland to Lomé, Togo

- Destination: Lomé
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel 2 Février Lome

Breakfast: In the hotel.

Morning: Today we depart for Togo's capital, Lomé.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll drive across the border into Togo, a sliver of a nation nestled between Ghana and Benin. When we arrive, we'll embark on a panoramic tour of the area, including a visit to the Independence Monument, a towering sculpture of a human silhouette surrounded by manicured gardens. After, we'll check into our hotel where you'll have some free time to settle in, relax, or make your own discoveries.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You're free to relax or explore the city.

Day 6 Explore Lomé • Visit Togoville • Lake Togo

- Destination: Lomé
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel 2 Février Lome

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll meet the locals and learn about voodoo traditions in Togo. We'll depart by boat and sail across Lake Togo to Togoville, where we'll learn more about how voodoo still

has a profound influence on the locals' daily lives. Later, we'll pay a visit to a local arts village.

Lunch: We will enjoy a picnic lunch in Togoville.

Afternoon: Next, we'll make our way back to our hotel in Lomé. We'll stop along the way at the Akodessewa Fetish Market, the largest voodoo market in the world. As voodoo is the dominant religion of western Africa, the market serves as a mecca to the locals and is often viewed as a medical facility when traditional treatment is unattainable, or not believed in. The market hosts a surplus of supplies that are used in traditional voodoo rituals, such as talismans, charms, and even living and dead creatures. In voodoo, every single being is deemed divine and powerful—whether it is dead or alive.

You'll have a few hours at leisure to make your own discoveries.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You're free to explore the city or perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap in the hotel bar with your fellow travelers.

Day 7 Overland to Cotonou, Benin **• Ouidah • Visit Python's Temple •** **Foundation Zinsou**

- Destination: Cotonou
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Novotel Cotonou Orisha

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll depart for Benin this morning, crossing back over the border. We'll make our first stop in Ouidah, which was one of the most active slave trading ports in Africa.

We'll then drive to Foundation Zinsou, a private institution that provides contemporary African artists a platform to exhibit their artwork. The mission of the foundation is to connect with all populations and share the cultural creations of Africa.

Lunch: At Foundation Zinsou.

Afternoon: Following lunch, we'll have time to explore the foundation's museum. Then, we'll head to Python's Temple, a voodoo shrine sacred to the locals of Ouidah.

Later, we'll continue our drive to Benin. Our final destination is Cotonou, the country's largest city, to check in to our hotel. Upon arrival, you're free to spend a couple hours at your leisure.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: The rest of the evening is yours to make your own discoveries, or settle into your room.

Day 8 Cotonou • Explore the Great Mosque of Porto-Novo • Visit Lake Village Ganvie

- Destination: Cotonou
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Novotel Cotonou Orisha

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll see the Great Mosque of Porto-Novo. Built at the turn of the 20th century by freed slaves who had returned to their native Benin from Brazil, the mosque features a unique Afro-Brazilian architectural style, resembling a chapel.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Next, we'll visit Lake Village Ganvie. Lake Village Ganvie is home to more than 20,000 people who live in houses built on stilts in the middle of Lake Nokoue. As we'll

see, life here revolves around the water: fishing is a local mainstay, and the villagers travel almost exclusively by boat to complete their daily chores.

We'll spend some time exploring the village and visiting its floating market. We'll board one of the boats to see more of this floating village built as an escape from the slave trade. We will discover how the village evolved and thrived even long after the threat of slavery.

Here, you'll see not just seafood for sale, but also fruits and vegetables, medicinal plants, soaps, and more. Our time at the market will give us the chance to interact with the locals and see what their daily lives are like.

Afterwards, we'll return to Cotonou for time on your own.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Enjoy a free evening to make any final discoveries.

Day 9 Join main adventure

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After checking out of our hotel this morning, we'll drive to the airport where we'll board our flight to Dakar and join our main adventure.

POST-TRIP

Senegal & Morocco: Dakar, Casablanca & Marrakesh

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Air transportation from Dakar to Casablanca
- » 7 nights accommodation
- » 16 meals—7 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 3 dinner
- » 11 guided tours with personal headsets
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

Please note: Travelers purchasing their own international flights will be responsible for additional internal flight costs.

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Experience the labyrinthine medinas, imposing mosques, and lively wildlife of north Africa. Explore Dakar, visit Senegal's Bandia Wildlife Reserve, and marvel at the abundant architecture in Casablanca, Morocco. Conclude your discoveries in the historic imperial city of Marrakesh.

Day 1 Dakar • Visit Museum of Black Civilization

- Destination: Dakar
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Pullman Dakar Teranga

Afternoon: Begin your post-trip extension in Morocco with a visit to the Museum of Black Civilization, a renowned institution highlighting Africa's myriad cultural and scientific contributions throughout history. Peruse collections of traditional clothing, sculptures, and more during your time here.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Return to the hotel, and enjoy free time to explore or rest before the next day's discoveries.

Day 2 Dakar • Game drive in Bandia Wildlife Reserve

- Destination: Dakar
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Pullman Dakar Teranga

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Head to Bandia Wildlife Reserve, situated just 40 miles southeast of Dakar. Upon arrival, embark on a game drive through the rugged terrain dotted with baobab and acacia trees. The reserve is home to abundant populations of giraffe, zebras, oryx, ostrich, and more.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Enjoy free time to explore this afternoon. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide suggestions.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for dining ideas.

Evening: Free to rest or explore on your own.

Day 3 Fly to Casablanca, Morocco

- Destination: Casablanca
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Gray Boutique Hotel Casablanca

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Free for your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll explore a nearby market, or peruse the art on display at a local gallery.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Transfer to the airport for our flight to Casablanca, Morocco.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide ideas.

Evening: Free to settle in to your room or explore on your own.

Day 4 Casablanca • Visit the Hassan II Mosque • Explore Casablanca

- Destination: Casablanca
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Gray Boutique Hotel Casablanca

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Witness the towering Hassan II Mosque. This mosque is the largest in Morocco, with a striking minaret, eye-catching marble columns, an intricately designed dome, and mosaic tiles. While here, you may even hear the call to prayer emanating from the towering minaret.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll enjoy a walking tour this afternoon. Our first stop will be the central market, where we'll peruse colorful wares for sale and meet locals as they barter for goods. Next, we'll witness some examples of Casablanca's art deco architecture, a style characterized by ornate wrought-iron features, carved facades, and rounded exterior corners. We'll conclude our discoveries this afternoon with a visit to the Museum of Moroccan Judaism, the only one of its kind in the Arab world. Here, we'll explore the history and culture of this minority group against the backdrop of a predominantly Muslim society.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Perhaps you'll experience Casablanca nightlife, or retire to your room.

Day 5 Transfer to Marrakesh • Discovery walk

- Destination: Marrakesh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Es Saadi Marrakech Resort

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast, we'll transfer to the city of Marrakesh.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Upon arrival, we'll check in to our hotel and have some time to settle in before joining our Trip Experience Leader on a discovery walk.

Dinner: On your own. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for dining suggestions.

Evening: You might like to venture to a local bar for a nightcap, or rest for the evening.

Day 6 Explore Marrakesh • Horse-drawn calèche ride

- Destination: Marrakesh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Es Saadi Marrakech Resort

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Our day begins with a walking tour of the legendary city of Marrakesh, led by our expert Trip Experience Leader. First we'll stop by the opulent Bahia Palace. This 19th-century palace houses 150 council rooms with large fireplaces and intricately painted cedar work lining the floor and walls. The open air Court of Honor is lined with vibrant tiles and flowing fountains.

Next, we'll see the Koutoubia minaret, which houses the largest mosque in Marrakesh with its minaret standing at 70 meters—the tallest structure in the city. In fact, local laws forbid any new structures from exceeding the height of the minaret. We'll also explore the famous medina of Marrakesh, one of the ancient crossroads of North Africa and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: You'll have some free time to explore independently before our Trip Experience Leader leads us on a deeper exploration of Marrakesh in a traditional horse-drawn calèche. Throughout our ride, you'll admire the bustling streets of the city.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide options.

Evening: Tonight is yours to explore Marrakesh and enjoy the city by night. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide recommendations of nighttime activities in the area.

Day 7 Marrakesh • Visit a permaculture farm • Farewell Dinner

- Destination: Marrakesh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Es Saadi Marrakech Resort

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we'll journey to the Desert of Agafay, a barren landscape of rolling dunes and whispering sands. Here, we'll visit a permaculture farm, where we'll see how local people have learned to live sustainably off of the harsh landscape. Take this unique opportunity to ask any questions you might have about their efforts.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Enjoy time to explore independently this afternoon. You might like to stroll through the *medina* one last time.

Dinner: We'll gather for a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: Perhaps you'll clink glasses with fellow travelers over your shared discoveries, or head back to the hotel to rest before your flight.

Day 8 Marrakesh • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport and catch your return flight home.

YOUR M/V CORINTHIAN SMALL SHIP

Explore aboard our privately owned, 98-passenger small ship

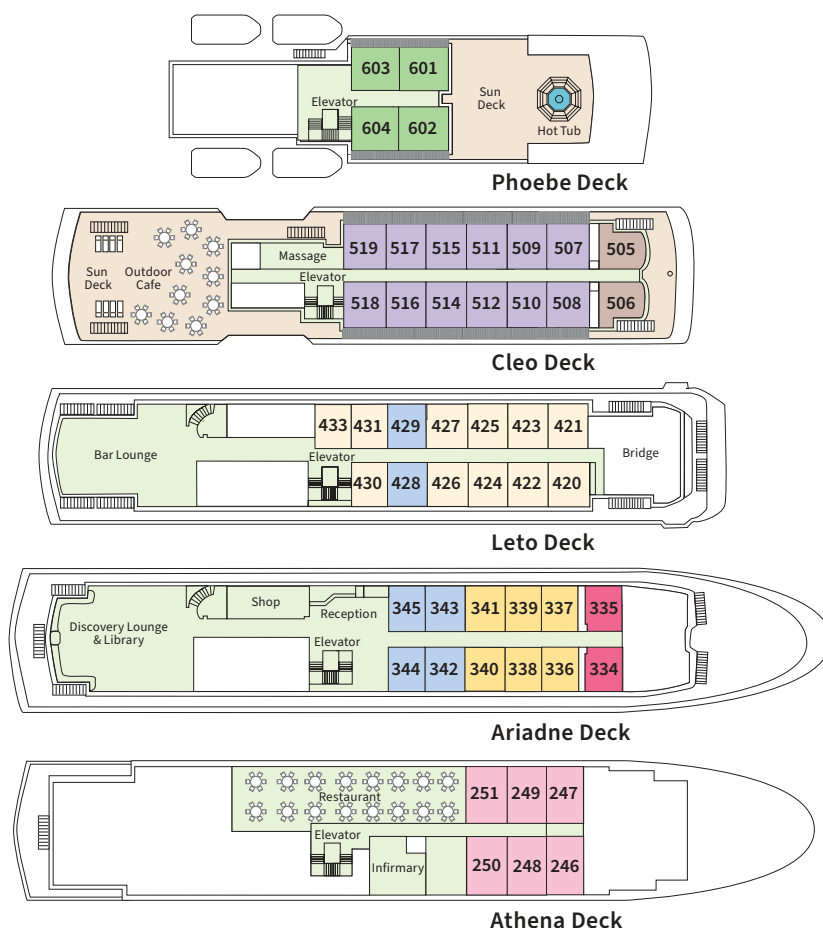
Discover the coastal wonders of the world aboard the M/V *Corinthian*. This ocean cruising vessel—which 95% of travelers rated excellent—was acquired in 2014 and refurbished in 2015 with your tastes in mind. The ship holds four groups of 20–25 travelers (with an average of 22), each with its own local Trip Experience Leader, and charts courses throughout Europe—including the British Isles, Spain, Portugal, and France—and Antarctica.



SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Restaurant with single, open seating:** Savor regionally inspired dishes or American favorites during all buffets and table-service meals.
- **Two lounges:** Relax with old friends and new, and participate in onboard discussions and lectures.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas.
Please note: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.
- **Outdoor common areas:** Relish coastal views from your seat in the outdoor café, Sun Deck, or hot tub.
- **English-speaking crew:** Enjoy dedicated attention from our international staff throughout your voyage. Plus, all shipboard announcements are made in English for your convenience.
- **Zodiac crafts:** These onboard crafts are available to take you to shore in the most remote ports.
- **Elevator service:** An elevator serves all five passenger decks.

M/V CORINTHIAN



CABIN CATEGORIES	
PHS	Penthouse cabin with private balcony – 305 sq. ft.
VS	Cabin with private balcony – 255-270 sq. ft.
AA	Cabin with forward windows – 250 sq. ft.
A	Cabin with window – 215-225 sq. ft.
B	Cabin with window – 215 sq. ft.
C	Cabin with window – 215-250 sq. ft.
D	Cabin with porthole – 250 sq. ft.
E	Cabin with window (partially obstructed) – 225 sq. ft.
F	Cabin with window (partially obstructed) – 215 sq. ft.
G	Cabin with porthole – 250 sq. ft.

Registry: Malta

Length: 290 ft.

Beam: 50 ft.

Draft: 12 ft.

Cabin Size: 215 sq ft. minimum

Number of Cabins: 50

Passenger Capacity: 98

Entered Service: 1990

Refurbished in: 2015

International crew: 55-65

Passenger Decks: 5

Group Size: 25 travelers, maximum, with 1 Trip Experience Leader

Elevator service to all passenger decks

This ship complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology. It has retractable fin stabilizers to help reduce discomfort during rough seas.

CABIN FEATURES

- Each of the ship's 49 cabins is at least 215 sq. ft.
- All outside-facing with portholes, a window (some with partially obstructed views), or a balcony
- Queen-size bed (convertible to two twins)
- Complimentary wireless Internet access, sitting area, closet, flat-screen TV, DVD/CD player, telephone, mini-refrigerator, safe
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, and toiletries



Cabin on the Ariadne deck

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 3 blank passport pages
- **Pre-trip extension to West Africa:** You will need 3 additional pages.
- **Post trip extension to Morocco:** You will need an additional page.

Visas Required

We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This information is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Cabo Verde:** No visa needed for U.S. citizens for stays of less than 30 days.
- **Senegal:** No visa needed for U.S. citizens for stays of less than 30 days.
- **The Gambia: Visa required.** This can be obtained in advance or upon arrival.
- **Ghana (pre-trip extension): Visa required.** Must be obtained in advance.
- **Togo (pre-trip extension): Visa required.** This must be obtained in advance.

- **Benin (pre-trip extension): Visa required.** Must be obtained in advance.
- **Morocco (post trip extension):** No visa needed for U.S. citizens for stays of less than 90 days.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Travel Protection Required:

For new bookings starting 1/1/25, Overseas Adventure Travel requires all travelers purchase travel protection with Medical Evacuation coverage of at least \$200,000 and Medical Expense coverage of at least \$50,000, due to the remote nature of your adventure.

O.A.T. Travel Protection:

If you **purchase your Travel Protection Plan** through O.A.T., no further action will be needed, as the Medical Evacuation coverage and Medical Expense coverage meets these requirements.

Your Own Travel Protection:

If you purchase your own travel protection, we recommend you review the plan to ensure Medical Evacuation coverage of at least \$200,000 and Medical Expense coverage of at least \$50,000 is included. Once you confirm your plan meets the requirements, you will need to email the following information to **TravelCoverage@oattravel.com**:

- Traveler Name(s)
- Reservation Number
- Trip Protection Provider
- Policy Number
- Date of Purchase
- Copy of your Policy Documents

You can also contact our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814** to review this policy. You will be required to provide proof of coverage by 60 days prior to departure at the latest.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has a maximum group size of 25 travelers with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

PACING

- 18 days, with 14 nights aboard a small ship, and one three-night hotel stay

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 6–8 hours of physical activities each day, including walks of up to 3 hours
- Good agility, balance, and strength are required for possible rough seas
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters; travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids may be unable to participate in several activities
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, and stairs; rough terrain and uneven stairs at moderate altitudes during some hikes
- Travel over bumpy, unpaved roads and sometimes go off-road
- Gangway incline can be steep when docked at a pier
- At some ports, the use of Zodiac crafts will be used to transfer from ship to port; good agility is required for getting in and out of Zodiacs
- Travel by 98-passenger small ship and 20-seat coaches
- You must be cleared by a country's local port authorities before disembarking

- Weather conditions and tides may require adjustments to your itinerary

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 52–95°F during cruising season; November–February are warmest months

FLEXIBILITY IS KEY

- Occasionally sailing conditions may cause us to make adjustments to your cruise while it is in progress. For example, we may need change our port of call or stay docked somewhere longer than originally planned. Your Trip Experience Leader will keep you up to date as decision are made. We ask that you be flexible and understanding should any such changes occur on your departure.
- In addition, we may make improvements to the itinerary in order to give you a more authentic experience. Again, we ask for your understanding and flexibility.

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **www.cdc.gov/travel** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

Vaccines Required

Yellow Fever

All travelers will need to bring EITHER proof of a yellow fever vaccination OR an official vaccination waiver in order to meet Cape Verde, Senegal, and Gambia's entry requirements. You will also need a yellow fever vaccination for Togo and Ghana on the pre-trip extension.

While the CDC offers a wide range of vaccination and medication suggestions, there is one in particular that we'd like to draw your attention to—the yellow fever vaccine. For some countries, the yellow fever vaccination is a legal entry requirement, like a passport. For other countries, it is a health recommendation to protect you from getting sick. On this adventure, this vaccination is a legal entry requirement for Cape Verde, Senegal, and Gambia—but fortunately, authorities will accept a doctor's waiver in place of getting the actual shot.

You should discuss the vaccine with your doctor to see if he or she recommends it and if your health allows for it. (He or she can offer a suggestion tailored to your personal medical history.) If you and your doctor decide the vaccination is right for you, then he or she will issue you a Yellow Fever Card, also called an International Certificate of Vaccination. This is your proof of vaccination; you should bring it with you on the trip.

If you and your doctor decide the vaccination isn't right for you, then have your doctor issue an official vaccination waiver. An official waiver is a letter that meets these requirements:

- It must be on business letterhead paper.
- It must be signed by a doctor.
- It must be stamped using the same stamp that the doctor uses on a Yellow Fever Card.
- It must give the medical reason why you cannot get the vaccine, say how high the risk is, and cite an authority. (For example: Mr. Smith cannot receive the yellow fever vaccine due to a high risk of side effects as outlined in the Center for Disease Control's guidelines for people over the age of 65.)

Whether you receive a Yellow Fever Card or an official vaccination waiver, keep it on your person (in your backpack or purse) so it is easy to find when you arrive or when you cross the border. You may not be asked to show anything at all when you cross the border—it all depends on the local official. But if you are asked, you must be able to produce your Yellow Fever Card OR your waiver.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.

- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Tap water is not safe to drink in Senegal
- Tap water is not safe to drink in Ghana, Togo, and Benin (pre-trip extension)
- If you prefer bottled water is usually for sale in hotels, food shops, and restaurants.
- Another alternative is to bring a reusable water bottle from home, which you can fill up on the ship before you set out for the day. We do not recommend refilling your water bottle at any hotel.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** At many locations, it is not possible to exchange your traveler's checks.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Senegal: CFA Franc (F.CFA)

Cape Verde: Cape Verdean Escudo (CVE). Euros are also commonly accepted.

The Gambia: Gambian Dalasi (D)

Ghana: Ghanaian Cedi (GH¢)

Togo: West African Franc (CFA)

Benin: West African Franc (CFA)

Morocco: Moroccan Dirham (DH)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

In many of the countries you'll visit on this trip, there will be limited access to an ATM. You may considering bring enough cash to cover most expenses.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2014) are best.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We

recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

Senegal: ATMs may be found in large cities such as Dakar, but are otherwise rare and can be difficult to find. ATMs are not always reliable. You may consider bringing enough cash to cover your time in Senegal in case there are ATMs are unavailable or out of service.

The Gambia: ATMs are not available everywhere in the country, but are found at banks in Banjul and Serekunda, and in the airports.

Ghana: ATMs are widely available in larger cities such as Accra for major international networks, but you may be charged a withdrawal fee.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

Senegal: Senegal is mainly a cash economy so credit card use is rare. You should plan to bring enough cash for your time in Senegal instead of relying on credit/debit cards.

Cape Verde: Only Visa and Mastercard are accepted in Cape Verde.

The Gambia: Visa and Mastercards are accepted at some hotels and restaurants. Many shops and restaurants will only accept cash.

Ghana: Credit cards are widely accepted in Ghana. Visa Cards have larger acceptance, followed by Mastercard and American Express.

Morocco: Credit cards are accepted at many locations in tourist cities and for major purchases, but may incur a surcharge (usually about 5%). Most locations, especially smaller “Mom & Pop” shops or restaurants, are cash only.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

On Board Ship: Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.). This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars or Euros (on itineraries in Europe). For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, or American Express are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. This bill is paid with your Trip Experience Leader (they will have you fill out a form) by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

Please note: Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Exchange Services

Due to international banking laws, we are not able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard:** We recommend a flat tip of \$16–\$18 per traveler, per day. You'll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. **Policy Update:** *Due to international banking laws, we are no longer able to process crew tips on a credit card; crew tips can only be in the form of cash.*
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure: When you are exploring on your own, it's useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** The practice of tipping taxi drivers in Western Africa varies from country to country, in some cities 10% is expected and in others, tipping is uncommon. Your Trip Experience Leader can advise you what the practice is in each area that you visit.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** In Western Africa, restaurants do not normally include service charges on bills. In Senegal, it is customary to leave a 20% tip. In the Gambia, 10% is more common. In Cabo Verde, there is no set expectation, but 10%–18% is common.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is

“unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Senegal: +221

Togo: +228

The Gambia: +220

Morocco: +212

Ghana: +233

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Same as the main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person. Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.	

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light.** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. We recommend you pick pack color-coordinated separates that can be mixed to create different outfits. Keep in mind that laundry service is available onboard for a fee, or you can hand wash clothes in your cabin.
- **Pack casual clothes.** Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. You would only need nicer dress if you plan to dine at a deluxe city restaurant on your own.
- **Good walking shoes are essential:** For your comfort, you'll need supportive walking shoes that offer good traction. Water-resistant shoes can be handy in case of a heavy downpour.

Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using **www.weather.com** and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don't forget a reusable water bottle—you'll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Shorts: Cut long for modesty.
- ☐ Shoes and socks: Comfortable walking/ running shoes or low-cut hiking shoes, with arch support. Light hiking boots will suffice; there is no heavy hiking during the trip, but hiking boots should offer better support and traction than shoes. We also recommend you bring a pair of rubberized sandals (i.e., Tevas) for showering and general warm weather use. Bring plenty of socks, you may find yourself wishing to change a couple times a day.
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor for sun protection

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, sunscreen, body soap, etc. (Body soap is not a standard amenity in Spanish hotels)
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Travel neck wallet or money belt
- ☐ Swimsuit
- ☐ Compact umbrella
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial "water-free" hand cleanser
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ☐ Written prescriptions for your medicines

- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards
- ☐ Plug adapters & electrical transformer
- ☐ Washcloth
- ☐ Optional: Hair dyers. Hair dryers are provided on your ship. During land stays, many hotels will provide hair dryers, but not all. If a hair dryer is essential to you consider a travel-size version.

Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Travel first aid kit: Band-Aids, headache and pain relief, laxatives and anti-diarrhea tablets, something for upset stomach. Maybe a cold remedy, moleskin foot pads, antibiotic cream, or allergy medication.
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Motion sickness medicine, such as Dramamine

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity in Senegal, The Gambia, and Cape Verde is 230 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 230. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet; this outlet is only for low-voltage appliances, like electric shavers. (Your bathroom also comes equipped with a hair dryer).

Plugs

Aboard ship, the plugs are standard American plugs.

In hotels, the shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you'll need

multiple adapters on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Senegal: C, D, and E

Cape Verde: C and F

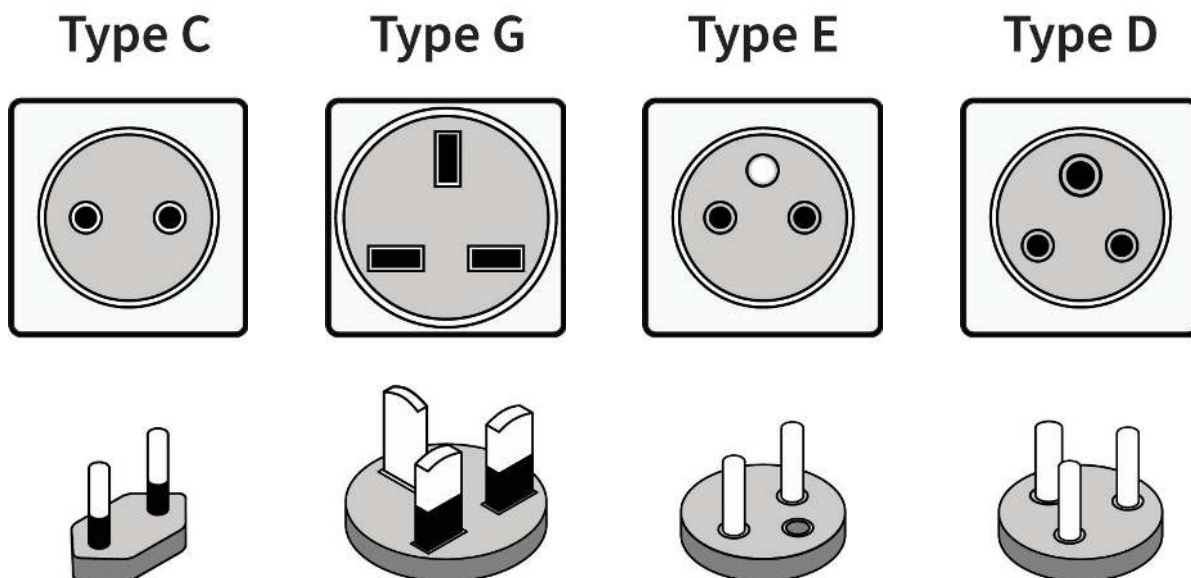
The Gambia: G

Ghana: D and G

Togo: C

Benin: C

Morocco: C or E



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Senegal: Senegal has a tropical climate with a distinct dry season from about mid-October to mid-May and a rainy season from late-May to early October. The country is divided into two climate zones with the south experiencing heavier rainfall and a semi-desert climate in the north. The dry season brings northeastern winds and the coolest temperatures (December-January). Inland areas bring much warmer temperatures, averaging about 90-93 degrees even during the coolest time of year and reaching over 100 degrees during the warmer months. Dakar and cities along the coast enjoy cooler and more temperate weather, averaging around 77 degrees, dropping to around 58-59 degrees at night but reaching highs around 95 degrees during the day.

Cape Verde: Cape Verde is hot year round. The wet seasons are overcast while the dry season consist of partly cloudy skies. Throughout the year, the temperature typically varies from 75°F to 90°F and is rarely below 70°F or above 92°F. In some areas of the interior and in the mountains, temperatures are known to drop.

Accra, Ghana: In Accra, it is hot all year round. The wet season is mostly cloudy while the dry season has partly cloudy skies. Throughout the year, temperature typically varies from 74°F to 91°F and is rarely below 73°F or above 93°F.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	DAKAR, SENEGAL			PORTO NOVO, CAPE VERDE		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Rainy Days
JAN	75 to 65	78 to 54	0.4	82 to 71	74.3	1
FEB	75 to 64	87 to 58	0.4	80 to 70	74.6	1
MAR	75 to 65	89 to 62	0.4	81 to 70	74.3	0
APR	75 to 66	91 to 68	0.4	83 to 72	74.1	0
MAY	77 to 69	89 to 69	0.4	85 to 74	75.7	0
JUN	82 to 74	87 to 70	0.8	86 to 75	77.2	0
JUL	84 to 77	85 to 70	2.0	87 to 77	76.9	2
AUG	85 to 78	87 to 73	5.9	90 to 79	76.6	4
SEP	86 to 78	89 to 74	5.9	91 to 80	78.2	5
OCT	86 to 77	87 to 67	0.8	91 to 79	77.2	2
NOV	83 to 73	80 to 58	0.4	87 to 76	76.1	1
DEC	79 to 69	74 to 53	0.4	84 to 79	74.4	1

MONTH	ACCRA, GHANA			LOME, TOGO		
	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High- Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Rainy Days
JAN	90 to 76	87	3.7	90 to 75	92	1
FEB	91 to 78	91	6.1	91 to 77	94	2
MAR	91 to 78	91	8.7	91 to 78	94	4
APR	90 to 78	92	10.1	91 to 78	94	6
MAY	89 to 77	93	13.4	89 to 76	96	10
JUN	85 to 75	95	28.1	86 to 75	97	13
JUL	83 to 74	93	14.6	84 to 74	95	10
AUG	83 to 73	93	4.7	83 to 73	95	10
SEP	85 to 74	94	8.9	85 to 74	95	10
OCT	87 to 75	94	9.1	88 to 75	96	8
NOV	89 to 77	95	5.4	90 to 96	97	2
DEC	90 to 96	92	5.3	90 to 75	95	1

MONTH	MARRAKESH, MOROCCO		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	64 to 43	80 to 44	1.1
FEB	67 to 47	82 to 45	1.2
MAR	72 to 50	80 to 40	1.4
APR	74 to 53	80 to 40	1.3
MAY	80 to 57	79 to 38	0.7
JUN	87 to 62	78 to 35	0.3
JUL	97 to 69	69 to 28	0.1
AUG	97 to 69	69 to 28	0.1
SEP	90 to 66	71 to 32	0.3
OCT	80 to 59	76 to 39	0.8
NOV	72 to 52	77 to 42	1.5
DEC	66 to 45	79 to 45	1.1

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

M/V Corinthian

Cabin Amenities

Your cabin amenities include a private bathroom with shower, hairdryer, TV, in room heating, internal telephones and a mini-refrigerator. Each cabin is appointed with a sitting area, plus the decks and dining rooms are spacious and attractively decorated, providing welcoming locations for relaxing with your traveling companions.

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at **www.oattravel.com/myplanner**. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many small ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

Dining

All meals are taken in the onboard restaurant, which acts as the ship's dining room. Meals will be a mix of regional specialties and familiar American standards, and will feature a variety of entrée options including vegetarian. Complimentary beer, wine and soft drinks are served with lunch and dinner. A selection of fine wines is also available for purchase, starting at approximately \$20-30 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

If you require a special diet, please request this in advance, you may do so by contacting one of our Travel Counselors. Dining times will vary according to the scheduled daily activities. In keeping with regional custom, dinner may be served at a later hour (around 7:00 pm) than Americans may be accustomed to.

Electricity

Cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets that are designed to fit American plugs. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet, for use with electric shavers. While your bathroom does come equipped with a hairdryer, please do not use any other appliances that heat up, such as hair irons or curlers—they tend to short out.

Getting Ashore

Getting from ship to shore during an ocean-going voyage is not the same experience as on a river cruise—it requires more balance and agility. We will use the ship's own fleet of Zodiacs—which are small but sturdy open-air boats holding 8-10 people each—to reach the shore. To get into one

of the Zodiacs, you'll need to go down a steep staircase, and then crew members will assist you as you step from the M/V *Corinthian* into the Zodiac. Because the Zodiacs are open-air boats, they are more susceptible to splashing.

Internet Access and Email

Limited wireless Internet service (WiFi) is available for free onboard. If you want to use it, you'll need to bring your own device—a laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.—because the ship does not rent or loan these devices. Instructions on how to connect will be available at Reception. Please keep in mind that our WiFi access onboard is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume onboard will affect connectivity and speed. You should expect that there will be times when the Internet is either slow or not available, and that these disruptions can be brief or longer lasting.

Laundry Services

There is laundry service available on board, but no dry cleaning. Prices are per piece of clothing and will be provided to you on board.

Medical Services

There is always a doctor onboard, as well as all of the basic First Aid supplies. All physician's fees will be payable directly to the doctor. All specific medicines are the responsibility of each traveler.

Recreational Facilities

Our ship features a library, a lounge with a bar, a dining room, and a sun deck. The bar is open from approximately 11 am to 11 pm, and features both complimentary drinks (soft drinks, house beer, house wine, and non-alcoholic cocktails/beer) and drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines).

Shipboard Payments

Payment for shipboard expenses can be made using major credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard. You will not need a PIN to use your credit card onboard. Personal checks, Discover and American Express are not accepted onboard.

Ship-to-Shore Communications

The ship has satellite telephone connections which allows you to call anywhere in accordance with the current local tariffs. You can purchase phone cards at the reception desk for \$10, which will give you 15-30 minutes' worth call time to the U.S. (depending on which state you are calling).

Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited on board, with the exception of a designated outdoor deck area reserved for smokers.

Wheelchairs

The ship is not built to accommodate wheelchairs.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications

M/V Corinthian

- **History:** Built in 1990; purchased in 2014
- **Size:** 290x50 ft
- **Capacity:** 96 passengers, 56 crew members
- **Layout:** 48 cabins, 5 decks; Elevator-yes

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

West African Culture

The culture of West Africa is as diverse as its climate, with each country being an amalgamation of local tribes and customs. Due to West Africa being a primary location of the slave trade, the United States has been influenced heavily by the folklore, music, and traditions the enslaved West Africans brought over with them. One example being the roots and rhythm of what is now known as "jazz".

Music, history, and traditions are principal elements of West African culture, with *griots*, poet-musicians who tell the stories of their society through music and dance, serving as one of the most highly respected positions in a village. *Griots* are the history-keepers and the story-tellers - essentially living libraries who know every battle, every birth, every death. A good *griot* can spend days speaking, and never once repeat themselves.

A common proverb in West Africa states 'every time an old man dies, it is as if a library has burned down'.

This adventure offers an off the beaten path experience. Expect coaches and hotels with lower standards than what we are used to in the U.S. and Europe. A sense of adventure and a willingness to embrace cultural differences is essential.

Religion & Ramadan Festival

Islam is the predominant religion in West Africa, barring Cape Verde which is predominantly Catholic, so an understanding of the religion will assist your discoveries. Practicing Muslims are expected to pray five times daily: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening. The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day. The call to prayer, called the *ezan*, is sung or broadcast from minaret towers to remind the faithful that it is time to pray. Friday is the Muslim Sabbath day, so some businesses will be closed or have limited hours.

When visiting a mosque, it is polite to be modestly dressed (no bare shoulders, no short skirts or shorts). You will be asked to remove your shoes before entering. In most mosques, women visitors are not required to cover their hair, but in others you may be asked to do so. Typically, a mosque that requires special dress for female visitors will have pieces to lend or rent.

The biggest religious holiday is Ramadan, a month-long celebration that is meant to teach the values of restraint and charity. To participate, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. The fast is strict and includes no eating, drinking alcohol, cigarette-smoking, or gum-chewing during daylight hours. But as the sun starts to set, everyone rushes home so they can celebrate iftar—the joyous breaking of the fast. Suddenly the evening comes alive with music, eating, and shopping. The festivities often continue well into the night. The mosques and some streets are decorated with lanterns, special meals are prepared, and nighttime social events and festivals are planned.

If you'll be visiting West Africa during Ramadan, what does this mean for you? Visitors are not required to fast, but out of respect you shouldn't eat, drink, or smoke openly. (It is OK to eat indoors, but you wouldn't sit outside with food.) Expect that some restaurants will be closed and others may not serve alcohol, but your Trip Experience Leader will be on hand to advise you of places to eat. Also, it is important to keep in mind that many of the people you meet will be participating in the fast, so they might not be their usual selves. It helps to have a bit of patience.

Ramadan follows a lunar calendar, so its dates change significantly from year to year, but is usually between the beginning of March and the end of June.

Taking Photographs

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

Senegalese Cuisine

Much like the culture of Western Africa, the cuisine of Senegal is an amalgamation of the many tribes and cultures that have called the land home. While it was influenced by the invading France, North Africa, and Portugal, Senegalese cuisine at its roots is heavily Wolof, an ethnic group found in Northern Senegal. Common staples of the cuisine include fish (due to the nearby shore), peanuts, couscous, sweet potatoes, lentils, and black-eyed peas. Due to the large Muslim population, it is uncommon to see pork on the menu. When in Senegal, try some of the popular dishes:

- **Chebu jen:** The national dish of Senegal, where fish, rice, and tomato sauce are cooked in one pot. This dish is usually also cooked with onions, carrots, cabbage, hot pepper, peanut oil, lime, and cassava. It can also be cooked with chicken (*chebu ginaar*) or meat (*chebu yap*).

Cape Verdean Cuisine

As a former colony of Portugal, Cape Verdean Cuisine has been heavily influenced by Portuguese as well as Western European and West African cuisine. Corn and beans are staple ingredients along with rice, potatoes, and fish. In Cape Verde, you will find common dishes such as:

- **Cachupa:** The national dish—it is a slow cooked stew made with beans, corn, kernels, vegetables, and a fish or meat.
- **Pastel:** A pastry filled with savory tuna and deep fried until golden brown.
- **Cuscus:** A breakfast food that is made mainly of corn flour or mandioca (yuca) flour. It is steamed on a stove top and served with butter, honey or milk.
- **Canja:** A delicious chicken soup made from rice and chicken. Some versions may contain carrots and potatoes that are diced very small.
- **Feijoada:** A dish made of stewed beans, cured meat, and vegetables. It is mainly served with rice but can be eaten on its own.

Gambian Cuisine

Common staples used in Gambian cuisine include fish, rice, peanuts, tomatoes, black-eyed peas, lemons, cassava, and cabbages. Oysters are also prominent in the cuisine of the Gambia, as they are harvested from the Gambia river. Popular dishes to try while visiting the Gambia are:

- **Benachin:** A dish cooked in one pot, with a protein (usually meat or fish), then seasoned with herbs, lemon juice, basil, eggplant, onion, chili, tomato, cabbage, and pumpkin.
- **Domoda:** A Mandinka dish, consisting of concentrated peanut paste, meat or fish, onions, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, and lemon juice. This dish is also known as “Peanut Stew” or *maafe*, and is often served with rice.
- **Mbahal:** A smoked and salted fish dish, prepared with locust bean, groundnuts, or black-eyed peas, spring onions, chili, and bitter tomatoes. This dish is often served with rice.
- **Nyambenh nyebbeh:** A cassava and bean dish made with onions, chili, soup stock, and fried snapper.
- **Thiakry:** A sweet dish made from couscous, milk, and spices. Some times also served with dried fruits like raisins or grated coconut.

Ghanaian Cuisine

With an abundance of tropical foods such as cassava, plantains, bean, peppers, and tomatoes, many of these ingredients are used in Ghanaian cuisine. Some dishes include:

- **Jollof Rice:** A pot dish of rice cooked in a tomato stew. Typically paired with salad or meat such as chicken or goat.
- **Fufu:** A mixture of cassava, plantain, or yams that is pounded into a sticky paste and served with a mild soup.
- **Kelewele:** A side dish of fried plantains seasoned with spices. It can be served on its own or paired with a stew.
- **Waakye:** Rice and beans, usually black-eyed peas or cow beans, that are cooked together with sorghum leaves. It can be served with a stew or fish.

Togolese Cuisine

Major foods in Togolese Cuisine include nuts, rice, cassava, plantains, and beans. Fish is a common source of proteins as well as chicken and beef. Some traditional dishes include:

- **Ayimolou:** Rice and beans cooked together with spices and tomato sauce added to the top. It is generally shared on one big plate.
- **Gboma Desi:** Spinach that is cooked in a tomato stew. It can be served with rice as well as chicken, beef, or fish.
- **Groundnut Soup:** Made from groundnuts that are ground into a paste-like peanut butter and cooked with uziza seeds (similar to black pepper) and bitter leaf (similar to spinach).
- **Akpan:** A fermented maize yogurt dessert made from combining fermented corn kernels with condensed milk that is refrigerated or cooled in an ice bowl.

Benin Cuisine

Common staple foods in Benin cuisine include rice, beans, yams, and corn. Some traditional dishes include:

- **Kuli-Kuli:** The national dish of Benin. Prepared with ground smashed peanuts that are wrapped in biscuits and deep fried in oil.
- **Aloko:** A fried plantain cooked with spices. It can be eaten on its own or alongside peanuts and other dishes.
- **Yovo doko:** A popular street food and dessert. It is a sweet fritter made from flour, water, yeast, and sugar that is deep fried into a golden crust.
- **Dahomey Fish Stew:** A dish consisting of fillets that are rolled into flour and then fried. It is served typically with rice.

Moroccan Cuisine

Moroccan cooking blends Berber, Arabic, African, Spanish, and French traditions to create a culinary canon that is at once complex and delicate. Sweet and sour dishes were introduced by the Arabs, who borrowed them from Persia. Many breads were introduced by sub-Saharan African cultures. And there is a strong tradition of preserving and pickling fruits and vegetables, a contribution of Morocco's Jewish communities. Some dishes you might find while exploring Morocco include:

- **B'ssara:** A rich soup of dried broad beans swirled with olive oil, sprinkled with cumin, and enjoyed with warm bread.
- **Briouats:** A vegetarian option, **briouats** are crunchy, triangular pockets of **warqa** (phyllo dough) filled with meat, cheese, or vegetables. (There are also sweet varieties.)
- **Bstilla:** A sweet dinner consisting of a flaky casserole of phyllo pastry layered with pigeon or chicken; and flavored with almonds scented with orange flower water, saffron, and cinnamon and dusted with confectioners' sugar.
- **Kefta:** A dish of spiced beef or lamb meatballs simmered with tomatoes and poached eggs.
- **Chermoula:** A popular street food, **chermoula** is a sauce stuffed into grilled sardines and vegetables. The sauce contains a mix of spices, olive oil, fresh coriander, and lemon juice.
- **Babbouche:** A soup of snails in the shell swimming in a garlicky broth.
- **Kaab el ghazal:** Or Gazelle's ankles, a dessert of thin, sugary crescents filled with almonds and orange blossom water.
- **Roze bil heleeb:** A dessert of creamy rice custard topped with shredded coconut and almonds or pistachios, flavored with cinnamon and orange blossom.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Senegal

Senegal is known for its quality fabrics, which can be purchased by the meter or custom-made into clothing at specialty tailor shops. Also be on the lookout for jewelry, masks, and sculptures.

Bargaining: Some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change.

The Gambia

If you are looking for a souvenir to take home with you, keep on the look out for wood carvings; straw, leather, or cloth handicrafts; sand paintings; silver jewelry (only from recommended sellers), batik pictures, and African music cassettes.

Bargaining: Few shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets, prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Make sure to carry a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change.

Morocco

Morocco offers many fine craft items at good prices. Traditional souvenirs include gold and silver jewelry, wood carvings, cotton goods, tapestries, carpets, leather goods, pottery, copperware, brassware, basketry, fine inlaid woodwork, and spices.

Bargaining: Some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change. Moroccans enjoy negotiating over prices, and they expect it of their customers.

Many shops in Morocco are closed on Fridays. If they are open, they may close from mid-day prayer until early afternoon.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your

responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.

- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Senegal

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 75,955 square miles
- **Capital:** Dakar
- **Languages:** French (official), Wolof, Pular, Jola, Mandinka, Serer, and Soninke
- **Location:** Senegal is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the West, Mauritania to the North, Mali to the East, and Guinea and Guinea-Bassau to the South. Senegal completely surrounds The Gambia.
- **Geography:** Senegal is composed of low, rolling plains.
- **Population:** 15,020,945 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 95.9%, Christian 4.1%
- **Time zone:** Senegal is on GMT, five hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Dakar.

National Holidays: Senegal

In addition to the holidays listed below, Senegal celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter, Ascension Day, and Korite. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

04/04 Independence Day

05/01 May Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/25 Christmas Day

Senegal: A Brief History

Early History

The region of modern Senegal was a part of the larger region called Upper Guinea by European traders. Before the arrival of European settlers, the history of the Saharan region is mainly characterized by the consolidation of settlements in large state entities – the Ghana Empire, the Mali Empire and the Songhai Empire. The cores of these great empires were located on the territory of the current Republic of Mali, so current-day Senegal occupied a peripheral position.

The earliest of these empires is that of Ghana, probably founded in the first millennium by Soninke and whose animist populations subsisted by agriculture and trade across the Sahara, including gold, salt and cloth. Its area of influence slowly spread to regions between the river valleys of the Senegal and Niger.

A contemporary empire of Ghana, but less extensive, the kingdom of Tekrur was its vassal. Ghana and Tekrur were the only organized populations before Islamization. The Kingdom imported wool, copper and pearls and exported gold and slaves. Indeed, the growth of a vast empire by Arab-Muslim Jihads is not devoid of economic and political issues and brought in its wake the first real growth of the slave trade. This trade called the Arab slave trade provided North Africa and Saharan Africa with slave labor. The Tekrur were among the first converts to Islam, certainly before 1040.

The arrival of Europeans engendered autonomy of small kingdoms which were under the influence of Djolof. Less dependent on trans-Saharan trade with the new shipping lanes, they turn more readily to trade with the New World. The decline of these kingdoms can be explained by internal rivalries, then by the arrival of Europeans, who organized the mass exodus of young Africans to the New World. Ghazis, wars, epidemics and famine afflicted the people, along with the Atlantic slave trade, in exchange for weapons and manufactured goods. Under the influence of Islam, these kingdoms were transformed and marabouts played an increasing role.

European Colonialism

The first French settlement in Senegal dates back to the Dieppe Mariners in the 14th century. In the mid-15th century, several European nations reached the coast of West Africa, vested successively or simultaneously by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and French. Europeans first settled along the coasts, on islands in the mouths of rivers and then a little further upstream and opened trading posts.

The “trade” and the slave trade intensified in the 17th century. In Senegal, the French and English competed mainly on two issues, the island of Gorée and St. Louis. On 10 February 1763 the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Years’ War and reconciled, after three years of negotiations, France, Great Britain and Spain. Great Britain returned the island of Gorée to France. As the premier colonial power, it then acquired, among many other territories, “the river of Senegal, with forts & trading posts St. Louis, Podor, and Galam and all rights & dependencies of the said River of Senegal.”

Under Louis XIII and especially Louis XIV, the privileges were quite extensively granted to certain French shipping lines, which still faced many difficulties. In 1626 Richelieu founded the Norman Company, an association of Dieppe and Rouen merchants responsible for the operation in Senegal and the Gambia. It was dissolved in 1658 and its assets were acquired by the Company of Cape Vert and Senegal, itself expropriated following the creation by Colbert in 1664 of the French West India Company.

The Company of Senegal was in turn founded by Colbert in 1673. It became the major tool of French colonialism in Senegal, but saddled with debt, it was dissolved 1681 and replaced by another that lasted until 1694, the date of creation of the Royal Company of Senegal, whose

director, Andre Brue, would be captured by the Damel of Cay and released against ransom in 1701. A third Company of Senegal was founded in 1709 and lasted until 1718. On the British side, the monopoly of trade with Africa was granted to the Royal African Company in 1698.

Grand Master of the naval war of Louis XIV, Admiral Jean Estrées seized Gorée on November 1, 1677. The island was taken up by the English on 4 February 1693 before being again occupied by the French four months later. In 1698 the Director of the Company of Senegal, Andre Brue, restored the fortifications. But Gorée became English once again in the middle of the 18th century.

The excellent location of St. Louis caught the attention of the English, who occupied it three times for a few months in 1693, then during the Seven Years' War of 1758 until it was taken by the Duc de Lauzun in 1779, and lastly 1809 in 1816. In 1783 the Treaty of Versailles returned Senegal to France. Appointed governor in 1785, Knight Boufflers focuses for two years to enhance the colony, while engaged in the smuggling of gum arabic and gold with signares. In 1789 people of St. Louis write a List of Complaints. The same year the French were driven out of Fort St. Joseph in Galam and kingdom of Galam.

The Europeans were sometimes disappointed because they hoped to find more gold in West Africa, but when the development of plantations in the Americas, mainly in the Caribbean, in Brazil and in the south of the United States raised a great need for cheap labor, the area received more attention. Politico-military instability in the region was compounded by the slave trade.

The Black Code, enacted in 1685, regulated the trafficking of slaves in the American colonies.

Slavery was abolished by the National Convention in 1794, then reinstated by Bonaparte in 1802. The British Empire abolished slavery in 1833; in France it was finally abolished in the Second Republic in 1848, under the leadership of Victor Schoelcher.

The Four Communes of Saint-Louis, Dakar, Gorée, and Rufisque were the oldest colonial towns in French controlled west Africa. In 1848, the French Second Republic extended the rights of full French citizenship to their inhabitants. While those who were born in these towns could technically enjoy all the rights of native French citizens, substantial legal and social barriers prevented the full exercise of these rights, especially by those seen by authorities as full blooded Africans.

Most of the African population of these towns were termed *originaires*: those Africans born into the commune, but who retained recourse to African and/or Islamic law (the so-called "personal status"). Those few Africans from the four communes who were able to pursue higher education and were willing to renounce their legal protections could "rise" to be termed *Évolué* ("Evolved") and were nominally granted full French citizenship, including the vote. Despite this legal framework, *Évolués* still faced substantial discrimination in Africa and the Metropole alike.

On 27 April 1848, following the February revolution in France, a law was passed in Paris enabling the Four Quarters to elect a Deputy to the French Parliament for the first time. On 2 April 1852 the parliamentary seat for Senegal was abolished by Napoleon III. Following the downfall of the French Second Empire, the Four Quarters was again allowed a parliamentary seat which was granted by law on 1 February 1871. On 30 December 1875 this seat was again abolished, but

only for a few years as it was reinstated on 8 April 1879, and remained the single parliamentary representation from sub-Saharan Africa anywhere in a European legislature until the fall of the third republic in 1940.

It was only in 1916 that originaires were granted full voting rights while maintaining legal protections. Blaise Diagne, who was the prime advocate behind the change, was in 1914 the first African deputy elected to the French National Assembly. From that time until independence in 1960, the deputies of the Four Communes were always African, and were at the forefront of the decolonisation struggle.

Independence

In January 1959, Senegal and the French Sudan merged to form the Mali Federation, which became fully independent on 20 June 1960. The transfer of power agreement with France was signed on 4 April 1960. Due to internal political difficulties, the Federation broke up on 20 August 1960. Senegal and Soudan (renamed the Republic of Mali) proclaimed independence. Léopold Senghor, internationally known poet, politician, and statesman, was elected Senegal's first president in August 1960.

The 1960s and early 1970s saw the continued and persistent violating of Senegal's borders by the Portuguese military from Portuguese Guinea. In response, Senegal petitioned the United Nations Security Council in 1963, 1965, 1969 (in response to shelling by Portuguese artillery), 1971 and finally in 1972.

After the breakup of the Mali Federation, President Senghor and Prime Minister Mamadou Dia governed together under a parliamentary system. In December 1962, their political rivalry led to an attempted coup by Prime Minister Dia. The coup was put down without bloodshed and Dia was arrested and imprisoned. Senegal adopted a new constitution that consolidated the President's power.

Senghor was considerably more tolerant of opposition than most African leaders became in the 1960s. Nonetheless, political activity was somewhat restricted for a time. Senghor's party, the Senegalese Progressive Union (now the Socialist Party of Senegal), was the only legally permitted party from 1965 until 1975. In the latter year, Senghor allowed the formation of two opposition parties that began operation in 1976—a Marxist party (the African Independence Party) and a liberal party (the Senegalese Democratic Party).

In 1980, President Senghor retired from politics, and handed power over to his handpicked successor, Prime Minister Abdou Diouf, in 1981.

Senegal joined with The Gambia to form the nominal confederation of Senegambia on 1 February 1982. However, the envisaged integration of the two countries was never carried out and the union was dissolved in 1989. Despite peace talks, a southern separatist group in the Casamance region has clashed sporadically with government forces since 1982. Senegal has a long history of participating in international peacekeeping.

Abdou Diouf was president between 1981 and 2000. Diouf served four terms as President. In the presidential election of 2000, he was defeated in a free and fair election by opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade. Senegal experienced its second peaceful transition of power and its first from one political party to another.

On 30 December 2004, President Abdoulaye Wade announced that he would sign a peace treaty with two separatist factions of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) in the Casamance region. This will end West Africa's longest-running civil conflict. As of late 2006, it seemed the peace treaty was holding, as both factions and the Senegalese military appeared to honor the treaty. With recognized prospects for peace, refugees began returning home from neighboring Guinea-Bissau. However, at the beginning of 2007, refugees began fleeing again as the sight of Senegalese troops rekindled fears of a new outbreak of violence between the separatists and the government.

Abdoulaye Wade conceded defeat to Macky Sall in the election of 2012. Sall served two terms as the President of Senegal, and was succeeded by Bassirou Diomaye Faye in 2024.

Cape Verde

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 1,557 square miles
- **Capital:** Praia
- **Language:** Portuguese is the official language. Cape Verdean Creole is also spoken.
- **Geography:** Cape Verde is a group of islands in the mid-Atlantic ocean, approximately 570 kilometers off the coast of West Africa.
- **Population:** 555,988
- **Religion:** 77% Roman Catholic, 10% Protestant, 2% Muslim, 11% No Religion.
- **Time Zone:** Cape Verde is three hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time

National Holidays: Cape Verde

In addition to the holidays listed below, Cape Verde celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/13 Freedom and Democracy Day

01/20 National Hero's Day

5/1 Labor Day

7/5 Independence Day

11/1 All Saints Day

12/25 Christmas Day

Cape Verde: A Brief History

The Islands of Cape Verde was first discovered by the Portuguese in the 15th century, establishing the archipelago as the first European settlement in the tropics. Although there is no conclusive evidence if the islands were inhabited prior, cases can be made for visits by the Phoenicians, Moors, and Africans in previous centuries. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Cape Verde economy thrived off its convenient location in the Atlantic Slave Trade, inviting merchants, privateers, and pirates. Cape Verde became the central hub for manufactured items such as rum and cloth, which were traded in exchange for slaves, ivory, and gold. Pano cloth, a fabric that was made from cotton and dyed in dark Indigo, was especially coveted and used as a form of currency.

As the Atlantic Slave Trade dwindled in the 19th century, Portuguese rulers and merchants abandoned the industry all together. At the loss of the Atlantic Slave Trade, the islands of Cape Verde suffered great economic hardships. Eventually, Cape Verde would recover as it reestablished itself a site of great port activity, becoming a commercial center and stopover point ideal for fleets and re-supplying sea vessels.

During the decolonization of Africa, the status of Cape Verde had been changed from colony to "overseas province" in 1951, with residents being able to receive official Portuguese citizenship in 1961. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was founded in 1956 and was created with the purpose to achieve independence by means of peaceful protest. This was responded with violence and arrests by Portuguese authority, which led the PAIGC to enter a period of military training and political preparation. In 1963, the PAIGC launched an armed military campaign that which resulted in steady progress. Cape Verde gained full independence on July 5th, 1975. Pedro Pires, a military commander, became the first president and prime minister.

The Gambia

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 4,127 square miles
- **Capital:** Banjul
- **Languages:** English (official), Mandinka, Pulaar, Wolof, Serer, Jola, and Arabic

- **Location:** The Gambia is surrounded by Senegal to the north, east, and south. The Atlantic Ocean borders the Gambia to the west.
- **Geography:** The Gambia is a narrow country that follows the flow of the Gambia river. While it is the smallest country on main land Africa, it consists of three distinct eco-regions: the Guinean forest-savanna mosaic in the west, the West Sudanian savanna to the east, and the Guinean mangroves along the mouth of the Gambia river.
- **Population:** 2,413,403 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 96.4%, Christian 3.5%, Other 0.1%
- **Time zone:** The Gambia is on GMT, five hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Banjul. (In the case of daylight savings, please be aware that many countries in Africa do not observe daylight savings. The time change may differ by an hour depending on when you visit).

National Holidays: The Gambia

In addition to the holidays listed below, The Gambia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter, Ascension Day, and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

02/18 Independence Day

05/01 Labour Day

05/25 Africa Day

07/22 Revolution Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

09/27 Prophet's Birthday

12/25 Christmas Day

The Gambia: A Brief History

Much of the Gambia's early history mirrors that of Senegal, as the two were referred to as Senegambia until the late 19th century, when the Gambia and Senegal were recognized as two separate countries. Like Senegal, region that will be known as the Gambia existed as settlements under the power of larger empires – the Mali Empire and the Songhai Empire. It wasn't until the 15th century that European powers set foot in the Gambia, when the Portuguese attempted to set up settlements on the banks of the Gambia river. They were eventually followed by the English in the late 16th century and the French in the 17th century.

In 1651, Jacob Kettler, the Duke of Courland (present day Latvia) was granted control of a portion of Gambia, including St Andrew's Island, Banyon Point, Juffure and Gassan, in a bid to levy taxes on anyone who used the Gambia river and use St. Andrew's Island as a an access point to sell slaves to the colonized Tobago. Instead, Kettler was arrested during the war between Sweden and Poland, forcing him to hand over possession of the forts to the Dutch West India Company due to a lack of funds. Kettler quickly regained control of the fort on St. Andrew's Island in 1660, after it was abandoned following an attack from a Swedish-paid French privateer. The victory was short

lived however, as the English had regained interest in the Gambia and, in 1661, when faced with threat of a bombardment from the English ships, Kettler's men surrendered St. Andrew's Island to the English, to be renamed James Island.

Over the next century, James Island suffered from pirates and disease, with the fort having been captured by the French in 1665, 1702, 1704, and 1708, then by pirates in 1719 before the garrison of 30 men once reduced down to 8 by common sickness 1749.

In 1766, James Island and the nearby settlements were integrated into the Senegambia colony of the British Empire. The English held Senegambia for 18 years, before Senegal was returned to the French in 1783. The English still held the Gambia, but limited to minor trading settlements on the Gambia river. When slavery was abolished by British monarchy in 1807, the English-operated forts and settlements worked to drive out the Spanish and American slavers operating on the Gambia river.

While England settled around the mouth of the Gambia river, native kingdoms still held power in the northern regions, including Barra, Boor Salum, Yani and Woolli. Following the end of the war with the French, the British Empire started to spread its influence over more of West Africa, bargaining land from the native kingdoms, including MacCarthy Island in 1823, Georgetown in 1826, the Ceded Mile on the north banks of the Gambia river in 1826, and Fattadenta in 1829.

The French, unhappy with just controlling Senegal, reached out to England in the late 1800s to negotiate for the Gambia region in exchange for other territories in West Africa. This was heavily opposed by the native Gambian people as well as merchant bodies in England and the Parliament.

The Gambia moved towards self-governance in 1901, with the formation of their own executive and legislative council. The Gambia also formed their first colonial military unit, the Gambia Company, which served alongside the British during World War I and World War II.

In the years following World War II, the Gambia moved towards self-government, establishing a constitution in 1960 and its first successful election in 1962, where the first Prime Minister of the Gambia, Dawda Jawara was elected.

The Gambia achieved independence from England after an agreement with Queen Elizabeth at the Marlborough House constitutional conference in June 1964. It was agreed that the Gambia would become an independent country on February 18th, 1965, as long as Queen Elizabeth was still recognized as the head of state and Queen of Gambia.

In 1970, Dawda Jawara, the former Prime Minister of Gambia, was elected as the President of Gambia. During Jawara's time as President, having been elected into office six times, Gambia established a treaty with Senegal called the Senegambia Confederation that would combine the two countries armies, currencies, and economies. The Gambia later withdrew from this confederation in 1989.

Jawara served as the President of Gambia until July 1994, when he was overthrown in a coup that ended with Yahya Jemmah in power, where he ruled first as the head of the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council until 1996, then as President of Gambia until 2016. Having lost the vote to Adama Barrow, Jemmah refused to accept the election and declared a state of emergency

and had to be forcibly removed from office by the UN after Barrow fled to Senegal and was sworn into office as the President of Gambia at the Gambian embassy in Dakar. Jemmah, having been forced to step down, went into exile in Equatorial Guinea in 2017.

Barrow was voted in as the President of Gambia again in 2021.

Ghana

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 92,098 square miles
- **Capital:** Accra
- **Languages:** English is the official language of Ghana.
- **Location:** Ghana borders Côte d'Ivoire to the West and Togo to the East. To the South is the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean.
- **Geography:** Ghana is mainly flat, with small mountains located in the northern part of the country.
- **Population:** 31,072,945
- **Religions:** 71% Christian, 18% Muslim, 5% Indigenous
- **Time Zone:** Ghana is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), four hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 2am in Washington D.C., it is 6am locally.

National Holidays: Ghana

In addition to the holidays listed below, Ghana celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Eid ul-Fir. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/07 Constitution Day

03/03 Independence Day

8/04 Founders Day

09/21 Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/31 New Year's Eve

Ghana: A Brief History

Ghana is praised for its rich history, with the first signs of inhabitancy dating almost as far back as 10,000 B.CE. The country's name is derivative of the medieval trading empire founded by the Soninke people, titled after its emperor, the Ghana, which is translated as "Warrior King" in the Soninke language. Around the 11th century, the Dagomba people founded the warrior kingdom of Dagbon in Northern Ghana while the Akan people founded state of Bono in the South. Sea trade with Europe began in the 15th century, as the Akan people controlled most of the gold in Ghana.

With this gold they actively traded with the Portuguese, British, as well as other Europeans and neighboring Akan tribes. Due the vast amount of gold found in Ghana, it was given the name and referred often to as the “Gold Coast”.

Many forts and castles were built in order to protect the trade interests of Europeans, some of which still stand on the Ghanaian coastline to this day. For many centuries, trading with European powers centered heavily around gold. However, the trade revolving around gold would eventually give way to the lucrative slave trade in the 17th century. In 1807, the Slave Trade Act, which advocated for the abolition of the slave trade, was signed by British parliament.

Slavery itself however, continued in Ghana until 1874, when the country was officially declared a British colony. As a British colony, Ghana’s economy would continue on to grow by exporting gold, coca, as well as coffee. As the accumulation of wealth went on to further develop the nation, the people of Ghana yearned to rule over themselves. Many nationalist movements, namely the Convention People’s Party, were established with this aim in mind. By 1957, Ghana became the first African nation to achieve independence from colonial rule under Kwame Nkrumah, who led the fight for independence and became Ghana’s first president. Inspired by Ghana, many African countries sought and declared independence in the following decade. Ghana today has a medium level of human development and is set to improve further.

Togo

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 21,925 square miles
- **Capitol:** Lomé
- **Location:** Togo is bordered by Burkina in the North, Ghana to the West, and Benin to the East. To the South is the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean.
- **Geography:** Togo is a narrow strip of land distinguished by a rolling savanna in the North, woodland plateau and forests in the Central region, and coastal plains to the South.
- **Language:** French is the official language; Ewe and Kabiyé are also spoken
- **Population:** 8,278,737
- **Religions:** 43.7% Christian, 35.6% Traditional Animist, 14% Sunni Muslim, 5% Other
- **Time Zone:** Togo is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), four hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 2am in Washington D.C., it is 6am locally.

National Holidays: Togo

In addition to the holidays listed below, Togo celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Eid al-Fitr. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day
05/25 Africa Day
05/26 Ascension Day
7/9 Tabaski
12/25 Christmas Day

Togo: A Brief History

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 15th and 16th centuries, little is known about the history of Togo. However, archeological finds indicate that various tribes who migrated from nearby areas populated the region and settled in nearby coastal areas. In the late 15th century, the Portuguese were the first to set foot in the country followed by other European powers soon after. Until the 19th century, the coast of West Africa had become the central hub of the slave trade, thus naming Togo and the surrounding area "The Slave Coast". Towards the end of the 19th century, many European powers in a desperate attempt to demonstrate strength and international power, divided the remaining regions of the African continent that had not yet been colonized. In 1884, Germany declared a protectorate, in which Togo would go on to become the Germany colony of Togoland for the next 30 years.

During the First World War, the German colony was invaded by the British and French, resulting in the unconditional surrender of German sovereignty. By 1920, Togoland was divided amongst the Allied Forces, with western Togoland under the administration of the British known as "British Togoland" and the east under the control of the French. In 1946, both the British and France placed their regions in Togoland in the United Nations Trusteeship, designed to supervise the government of trust territories and lead them to self-government or independence. Under the United Nations Trusteeship, British Togoland rapidly advanced to self-government, with the northern part of the British colony joining the Gold Coast. Together, the Gold Coast and British Togoland would be renamed the independent nation of Ghana in 1957. The area of Togoland ruled by the French would go on to become an autonomous republic within the French Union in 1956. This was short lived as by 1960, the country declared independence. The country's first president was unfortunately assassinated within three years by military coup leader Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who would be president for the next 38 years. Following his death in 2005, he was immediately succeeded by his son Faure Gnassingbé, who remains the current president of Togo.

Benin

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 44,310 square miles
- **Capital:** Porto- Novo
- **Language:** French is the official language.

- **Ethnicity:** 38.4% Fon, 15.1% Adja & Mina, 12% Yoruba, 8.6% Fula, 6.1% Ottamari, 4.3% Yoa-Lokpa, 2.9% Dendi, 2.8% Other
- **Location:** Benin Borders Togo to the West and Nigeria to the East. To the South is the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean
- **Geography:** Benin is flat with a coastal region that is low, flat, and sandy with tidal marshes and lagoons.
- **Population:** 12,123,198
- **Religion:** 48.5% Christian, 27.7% Muslim, 2.6% Indigenous
- **Time zone:** Benin is on West Africa Standard Time (GMT+1), five hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 2am in Washington D.C, it is 7am locally.

National Holidays: Benin

In addition to the holidays listed below, Benin celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01- New Year's Day

01/10- Voudoun Festival

05/01- Labor Day

06/29- Tabaski

8/01- Independence Day

11/01- All Saints Day

12/25- Christmas Day

Benin: A Brief History

The historical kingdom of Benin was formed by the Edo people and prospered from the 13th to 19th century, making it one of the oldest and highly developed kingdoms in West Africa. The capital, also known as Benin, was the center of a network of trade that was controlled by the *oba*, or king. Artists who belonged to prominent family guilds worked exclusively for the king and became well known for using materials such as brass, wood, and ivory. The first European power to arrive in Benin were the Portuguese in the 15th century. A strong trading relationship would be formed, as the Portuguese sought after gold, artwork, and eventually slaves. Between the 15th and 16th centuries, the rulers of Benin captured many of their neighbors and sold them as slaves in return for European goods such as brass and guns.

Like many countries in West Africa, Benin was a central hub for the slave trade and became part of what was known as the "Slave Coast". During the 1800s, the power of Benin began to dwindle as a result from multiple civil wars. During this time, the British sought to expand their own trade in the area. This was forbidden by the ruling Oba which resulted in the execution of British envoys by the Benin people. In 1897, the capital of Benin was overtaken and burned to the ground by British forces in retaliation. By the late 19th century, Benin was colonized by the French and became part of French West Africa. However, at the height of decolonization Benin had become

a self-governing state in 1958 and reached full independence by 1960. The political system in Benin today is democracy with a president as head of government. The economy of Benin remains underdeveloped, with a large portion of the population living in poverty.

Morocco

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 172,414 square miles
- **Capital:** Rabat
- **Languages:** Arabic and Berber are the official languages; French and Spanish are also spoken.
- **Location:** Morocco is bordered by Algeria in the east, Mauritania in the south, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and Spain in the north.
- **Geography:** Morocco's landscape varies from coastal lands near the Atlantic Ocean to mountainous regions to the Sahara Desert.
- **Population:** 37,984,655 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Muslim 99%, Other 1%
- **Time zone:** Morocco is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 5am in Washington D.C., it is 11am in Rabat. Morocco does not observe Daylight Savings, therefore Morocco is only 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time when Daylight Savings is in effect.

National Holidays: Morocco

In addition to the holidays listed below, Morocco celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/11 Anniversary of the Independence Manifesto

05/01 Labour Day/May Day

07/30 Feast of the Throne

08/14 Anniversary of the Recovery
Oued Ed-Dahab

08/20 Anniversary of the Revolution of the
King and the People

08/21 Youth Day

11/06 Anniversary of the Green March

11/18 Independence Day

Morocco: A Brief History

Morocco is unique for having been occupied by one group of people for all of its recorded history—people who have rarely been subjugated by outside forces. The Berbers or Imazighen (men of the land) have endured for millennia. They are not a homogenous group, but comprise various tribes who share some ethnic lineage. Nor were all Berbers nomads despite the stereotype. Most Berbers were farmers, but connected to fellow Berber traders and horsemen who developed semi-permanent encampments as they forged trade routes.

The Berbers often frustrated Roman attempts to govern them, though their rebellion was not always violent but often based on shrewd alliances and gamesmanship. Most Berbers continued to practice their traditional, animist religions. They also borrowed from other African and Egyptian religions, and as the millennium turned, many Berbers were Christian or Jewish.

In the 7th century AD, the Ummayyad Arabs conquered the Middle East in less than a decade, but needed 70 years to subdue Morocco's Berbers. They brought the Arab language, architecture, civil codes, and mostly, the new religion of Islam. Its ideals resonated with traditional Berber values and its adoption was widespread, rapid, and willing. But the Arabs were never able to unify the region politically. Though they enlisted Berber vassals to lead their conquest of Iberia, the sprawling caliphate proved difficult to manage, paving the way for Arab-Berber dynasties such as the Almoravids, Almohads, and Nasrids, who presided over Moorish Iberia, called al-Andalus. These dynasties have ruled Morocco continuously from the 8th century to the present.

When the Moors were expelled from al-Andalus in 1492, Muslim and Jewish refugees brought their cultures back to Morocco, enriching the Imperial Cities of Fez, Marrakesh, Rabat, and Meknes. Rulers rose and fell for 140 years and in the 1630s, the Alaouite family overthrew the Saadis, establishing a line that rules to this day. In the late 1800s, Morocco's strategic location and natural resources attracted France, which took control by 1912. Spain hung onto a small protectorate on the coast, Tangier was made an international zone, and Rabat became the capital. When Berbers rebelled in 1926, it took 25,000 Spanish-French troops to subdue them.

During WWII, Morocco was ruled by Vichy France, which was a Nazi puppet. But independent-minded Casablanca provided crucial support for the Allied North African campaign. *After the war in 1944*, Morocco demanded freedom, and France was eventually pressured to grant it. Mohammed V returned from exile in 1955; Morocco won its independence in 1956; Mohammed V crowned himself king in 1957; and handed power to his son, Hassan II, in 1961. Hassan II earned the people's affection in 1975 when he led the Green March into the Western Sahara to force Spain to hand over the province. More than 350,000 volunteers marched that day, but the dispute between Morocco and the western separatist Polisario Front still simmers.

Mohammed VI took the throne in 1999, and advanced many liberal policies including women's rights. In 2002, he married Salma Bennani, a computer science engineer, and many believed it symbolized the acceptance of modern roles. In 2004, the government imposed changes to family law geared toward lifting the gender inequality and protecting children. During the Arab Spring of 2011, Mohammed VI reacted with a deftness that eluded other leaders, announcing constitutional reforms, ceding more power to parliament, and making Berber an official state language. But Mohammed VI has increasingly been criticized for repressing freedom of speech, and the nation still struggles with poverty, unemployment, and corruption in the justice system.

Events that Shaped the 20th Century:

Morocco's Battle Against Colonialism

Situated at the entrance of the Mediterranean, with the Atlantic to the west and the Strait of Gibraltar to the north, Morocco has historically been a strategic location to control.

France had always shown an interest in fully conquering Morocco for centuries, interested in the land for its access to the Atlantic and Mediterranean, as well as its border with French-controlled Algeria. While France had slowly been taking over Morocco from the Algerian border and had their increasing military influence recognized by most world powers following the signing of the Treaty of Algeciras, France wanted more. And, on March 19, 1907, the assassination of Émile Mauchamp, a French doctor, in Marrakesh by an anti-French occupation mob, was just the reason they needed.

After snapping up more towns along the Algerian border, including Bechar and Oujda, France began their assault in earnest. The Moroccan people, incensed by the encroachment of the French and the disregard for their own sovereignty, responded by killing nine European laborers. Surprising the French, the Moroccans then managed to take back Casablanca. On August 5th, 1907, France retaliated and bombed Casablanca, destroying the city and killing thousands of Moroccans. France pushed into the region of Chaouia, a campaign that lasted 7 years, ending in France's control over the region. France also encroached from the east, using their Algerian border to facilitate their invasion.

The tribes of Morocco, instead of banding together against France, split their allegiance, with the sultan of Morocco, Abd al-Aziz bin Hassan, doing little to oppose France. The people of Fez however, called for war and instead supported the sultan's older brother, Abd al-Hafid. This devolved into a brief civil war, with Sultan al-Aziz gathering an army before marching to

Marrakesh to confront his older brother's forces. The Sultan's army was ambushed in the Battle of Marrakesh, and Sultan al-Aziz was forced to flee back behind French lines in Casablanca, where he later announced his abdication.

Sultan al-Hafid took power and nothing changed. The French were still encroaching on Moroccan sovereignty, with their campaign in the region of Chaouia. By 1911, a rebellion broke out against Sultan al-Hafid and he was besieged at his palace in Fez, forcing him to call upon the French to protect him. The French forces used this opportunity to take Fez.

Following the rebellion, Sultan al-Hafid, under duress, signed the Treaty of Fez, recognizing French control of certain areas of Morocco and giving the French Resident-General absolute power over both internal and external affairs. In the aftermath of the failed rebellion in Fez, France had managed to maneuver themselves into the position of power they had wanted from the start.

The Moroccan people reacted violently in a series of riots that became known later as the Bloody Days of Fez. During the riots, many Moroccan soldiers, under French commanders, joined the riots, attacking their commanders before moving to the European and Jewish quarters of Fez. Believing the Jewish populace to be helping the rioters, the French commander ordered the Jewish quarter be shelled. According to the Moroccan historian, Mohammed Kenbib, 66 Europeans, 42 Moroccan Jews and some 600 Moroccan Muslims were killed over the course of the two days of rioting.

After signing the treaty and retreating to Rabat, Sultan al-Hafid abdicated in favor of his youngest brother, Yusef.

The French Colonial Administrator, Hubert Lyautey, worked to maintain Morocco's independent culture, focusing instead on colonial education and urbanization, rather than the traditional assimilation route taken by France in Algeria and Tunisia. He worked closely with the Sultan, allowing the sovereign to retain cultural, practical, and religious power in Morocco.

When World War I and World War II swept through Europe, France recruited from the Moroccan infantry, with thousands of Moroccans making up the Moroccan Brigade, fighting for the French with little to no recognition.

Following World War II, Sultan Mohammed V, who succeeded his father, Sultan Yusef, in 1927, called for Moroccan Independence. Becoming the face of Morocco's independence movement, Sultan Mohammed V aligned himself with a series of nationalist movements and call for Morocco to join the Arab League. Demonstrating in front of huge crowds, he appealed for independence in several momentous speeches, including the Tangier Speech.

On August 20th, 1953, Sultan Mohammed V was forced out of Morocco by French authorities, exiled to Corsica, and later Madagascar, with his immediate family. In his place, France installed Mohammed Ben Aarafa, Sultan Mohammed V's first cousin once removed. The "French Sultan" was not recognized by the Moroccan people, and, in response, the nationalist movement bombed the central market in Casablanca on Christmas Eve 1953.

Supported by Libya, the National Liberation Front in Algeria, and Egypt, the nationalist movement managed to put pressure on the French and forced them to renegotiate Sultan Mohammed V's exile in 1955. Upon the Sultan's return, he managed to negotiate Morocco's independence and French Morocco became the Kingdom of Morocco with Mohammed V established as King on August 14th, 1957.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Senegal

Three Strong Women by Marie NDiaye (2009, Literature) The story of three women, two Senegalese women who journey to France and a French-born woman who travels to Senegal to aid a relative, whose lives become intertwined as they discover their own strength.

So Long a Letter by Mariama Ba (1979, Memoir) An award-winning narrative by a Senegalese woman struggling with the tradition of polygamy and the difficulties faced by well-educated Muslim women in West Africa. Translated from the original French, *Une Si Longue Lettre*.

God's Bits of Wood by Sembene Ousmane (1960, Literature) This story follows a strike staged by workers on the Dakar-Niger railway in the late 1940s.

Cape Verde

The Madwoman of Serrano by Dina Salústio (2019, Fiction) A magical tale about the isolated village of Serrano where a madwoman roams. It is the first novel to be published by a woman in Cape Verde that explores themes of urban ambition and female empowerment.

By Night the Mountain Burns by Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel (2009, Autobiography) A recount of the author's life on Cape Verde, living with his mysterious grandfather, several mothers, and no father.

A History of the Upper Guinea Coast: 1545–1800 by Walter Rodney (1970, History) Written by renowned author Walter Rodney who is considered a hero and martyr, whose book remains the foremost work on the region.

The Gambia

The Light of Darkness: The Story of the Griots' Son by Alhassan Susso (Memoir, 2016). Alhassan Susso immigrated from the Gambia to the United States as a nearly blind teenager. The son of a *griot* (West African story-tellers who teach about tribal histories and genealogies through their performances), Susso struggled with the differences in culture and how to be African in America. The novel follows his journey as he learns to settle the different parts of himself and come to terms with his past and the future he is creating for himself, while staying true to the family and traditions that raised him.

The Gambia: The Untold Dictator Yahya Jammeh's Story by Pa Nderry M'Bai (Nonfiction, 2012). Originally having taken control of the Gambia in a coup in July 1994, Yahya Jammeh led the Gambia first as the Chairman of the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council then the 2nd President of the Gambia until January 2017. Pa Nderry M'Bai interviewed multiple sources, including members of Jammeh's administration, to compile an account of the torture,

disappearances, and human rights violations that occurred under Jammeh's reign, including the 2000 Gambian student massacre, the 2005 Ghanaian migrant torture and execution, 2009 witch hunt, as well as multiple mysterious disappearances and rape accusations.

Roots: The Saga of an American Family by Alex Haley (Historical Fiction, 1976). Later adapted into a T.V. show, *Roots* follows the story of Kunta Kinte, stolen away from the Gambia and sold into slavery at 18-years old. The book traces the lives of Kunta Kinte to the author, Alex Haley, who was told the story of his ancestor through his family's oral traditions.

Ghana

Remote Control by Nnedi Okorafor (2021, Science Fiction) An alien artifact turns a young girl into Death's adopted daughter in this sci-fi tale of community and female empowerment.

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi (2016, Historical Fiction) In 18th century Ghana, two half-sisters are born in separate villages, unaware of each other. One is married off to an Englishman and the other is captured during a raid in her village and sold into slavery.

Wife of the Gods by Kwei Quartey (2009, Mystery) Darko Dawson, a Ghanaian-American Detective, is ordered by his cantankerous boss to leave behind his loving wife and young son in Ghana's capital city to lead a murder investigation.

The History of Ghana by Roger Gocking (2005, History) An overview of Ghana from the emergence of precolonial states through increasing contact with Europeans that led to the establishment of formal colonial rule by Great Britain at the end of the 19th century.

Togo

Tales of Togo: A Young Woman's Search for Home in West Africa by Meredith Pike-Baky (2020, Biography) A story about an idealistic woman who sets off in 1971 to live and work in a remote community in sub-Saharan Africa.

Faure Must Go by Dwayne Wong-Omowale (2018, Political Science) *Faure Must Go* explores the history of the Togolese Republic and the struggle against the oppressive and brutal dictatorship of Faure Gnassingbé.

Do They Hear You When You Cry by Fauziya Kassindja (1998, autobiography) This true story chronicles the life of Fauziya Kassindja, who fled her African homeland to escape female genital mutilation.

Benin

Dawn to Dusk: Folk Tales from Benin by Iro Eweka (1966, Fiction) A recorded collection of oral Edo (Benin) folktales.

Snares without End by Olympe Bhely-Quenum (1960, Fiction) A psychological tale in which fate ensnares the life of an innocent protagonist who is wrongfully accused of adultery.

A Short History of Benin by Jacob Egharevba (1936, History) Egharevba opens with a brief History of Benin and discusses various titles, title societies, and associated guilds.

Morocco

In the Country of Others by Leïla Slimani (2020, Historical Fiction). Set in French-colonized Morocco following World War II, Mathilde settles into life in Morocco with her husband, Amine. Mathilde, a proud Frenchwoman, struggles with the unfamiliar sociality expectations as her husband, a soldier turned farmer, faces opposition as a Moroccan man married to a French woman. This award-winning novel views an interracial love story through the lenses of Morocco's fight for independence from French colonialism.

The Last Storytellers by Richard Hamilton (2011, Anthology) Wander through Marrakech's legendary Jmaa el Fna square, and among the snake charmers, musicians, jugglers and hawkers, you may occasionally notice a storyteller holding court. As the tradition of publicly recounting folktales or fables slowly dies, Hamilton has here collected the best of these engaging stories.

Horses of God by Mahi Binebine (2010, Literary Fiction). On May 16th, 2003, Casablanca suffered the deadliest attack in Morocco's history with fourteen suicide bombers killing forty-three people and over a hundred people were injured in the attacks. *Horses of God* views the attacks, perpetuated by young adults from the shantytowns of Sidi Moumen, from one of the suicide bombers looking back on his life after death. Starting from childhood, Binebine raises four young boys through poverty and violence to a desperate bid for purpose in religious extremism.

The Caliph's House, A Year in Casablanca by Tahir Shah (2006, Memoir). An entertaining account of the transformation of a ruined palace in Casablanca. Shah is a marvelous storyteller, interweaving Moroccan customs, history, black humor, and portraits of neighbors into one work.

Dreams of Trespass, Tales of a Harem Girlhood by Fatima Mernissi (1994, Memoir). This memoir captures the true story of Mernissi's life growing up in a Fez harem during World War II. The harem was not an exotic seraglio of concubines but rather a part of the house where all the women of a family are secluded.) A coming of age story with vivid and often hilarious detail.

Suggested Films & Videos

The Gambia

Home Again (2022, Documentary). Migration to Europe in the Gambia is a goal for many citizens due to the better job opportunities and higher quality of life. In *Home Again*, you meet Paabi, a 23-year old who has been deported back to the Gambia twice. The first time, his reintegration funds were misused by his uncle. Even with no funds, Paabi tried once more, only to be returned home again. Left with no further opportunities, Paabi is forced to try and eek out a living in the Gambia.

Gambia: Take Me to Learn My Roots (2019, Documentary). Bacary Bax and his brother, Lans Lister, return to the Gambia, where their single white mother used take them, determined to allow her children the opportunity to learn about their West African roots.

Jaha's Promise (2017, Documentary Drama). Jaha Dukureh is a Gambian anti-female multination activist who returns home to the Gambia to campaign against the practice that has harmed her and over 200 million young girls world-wide.

Welcome to the Smiling Coast: Living in the Gambian Ghetto (2016, Documentary). Follow 15 young adults as they work within the burgeoning tourist industry of the Gambia, where tourists are only interested in sunny beach days, safari drives, and sex. Living in one of poorest countries in Africa, the young adults are desperate for the chance for a better life in Europe and are willing to try their luck.

Hand of Fate (2013, Drama). In 2016, Yahya Jammeh announced that child and forced marriages were banned. Prior to this, it was legal for a father to force his 13-year old daughter to marry an older man. *Hand of Fate* outlines the impact of these marriages, how the girls are forced into a marriage without their knowledge or consent and how they have to leave their lives behind.

Morocco

Changing Times (2004, Comedy/Drama) A French engineer (Gérard Depardieu) contrives a job in Tangier in order to reconnect with a lost lover of thirty years (Catherine Deneuve.) Various other characters and subplots cast an interesting light on modern urban Moroccan life.

Le Grand Voyage (2004, Drama). Driving his dad to Mecca for the Islamic pilgrimage is not what Reda, a French-Moroccan teenager, had planned. But plans change in this emotional road trip that explores the generational and cultural divide experienced by the many Moroccan immigrants. In French and Arabic with subtitles.

Ali Zaoua: Prince of the Streets (2000, Crime Drama). Four homeless young boys in Casablanca dream of a better life. When their leader is killed by a rival gang, the three remaining boys are determined to give him a proper funeral, but are faced with the rival gang and their own uncertainties as they try to gather the resources needed.

Hideous Kinky (1999, Drama) Kate Winslet plays a free-spirited, single British mother who decamps with her daughters to Morocco to find herself. Optimistic despite financial and personal setbacks, she remains dangerously oblivious to the needs of her children. A thoughtful look at Morocco's 1970s hippie mystique, and its reality.

The Sheltering Sky (1990, Adventure/Drama) An unhappy American couple ventures deep into the North African desert in the hopes of rekindling their relationship. The farther they go, the more the chasm between them widens. Directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, starring Debra Winger and John Malkovich, and featuring Paul Bowles, who wrote the book.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps or Maps.me

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber or Bolt or Grab

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App or Skype or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

TripWhistle

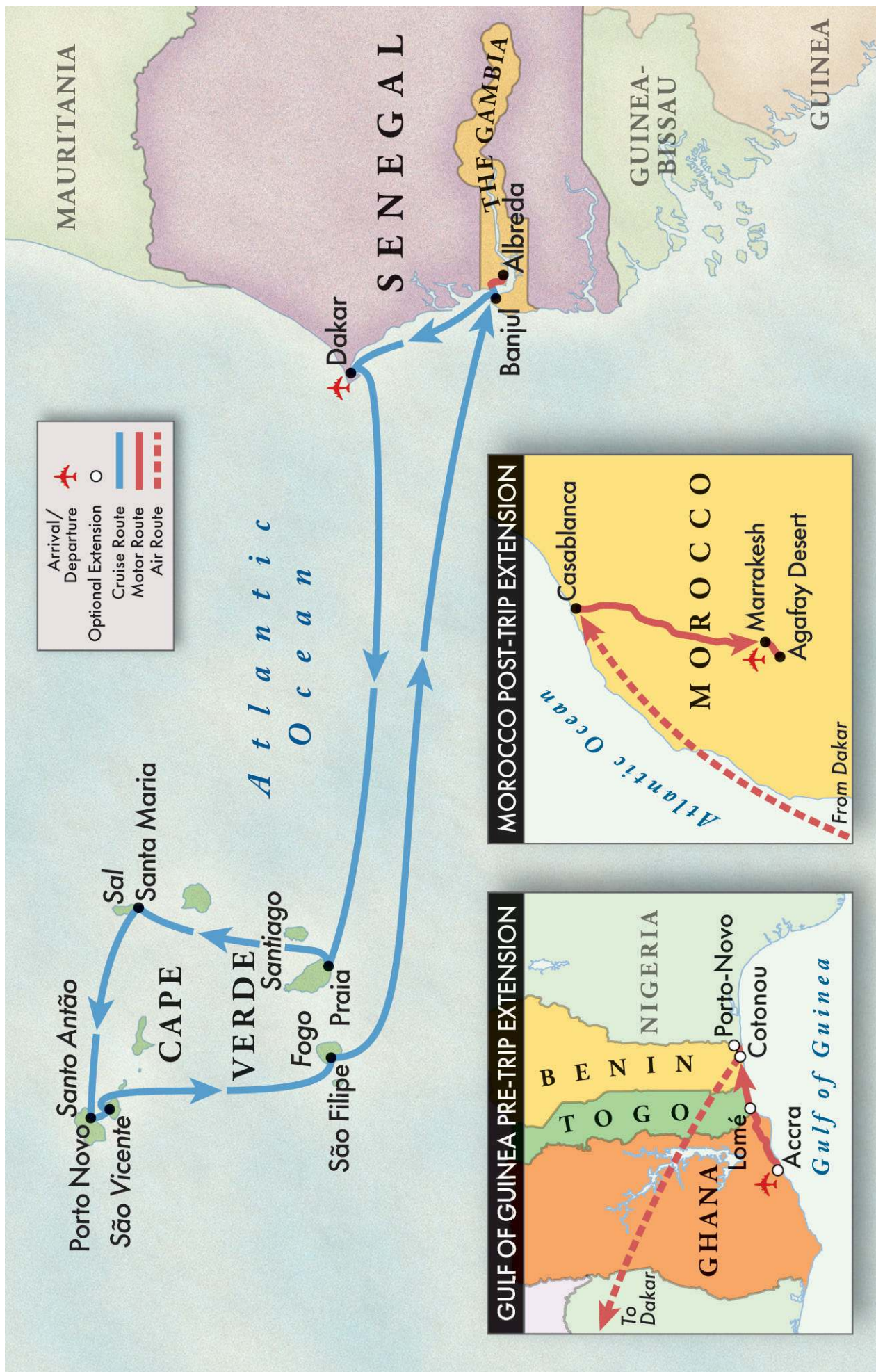
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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