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## ADVENTURES & CULTURES

A CULTURAL TOUR DIVISION OF  
"TDI - TRAVEL DIMENSIONS"

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#212-1200 Burrard St., Vancouver, BC, V6Z 2C7, CANADA

Tel: 1(604)685-8636 | Toll Free: 1(877)838-6888 | Fax: 1(604)685-8616

Web: [www.adventures-cultures.com](http://www.adventures-cultures.com) | Email: [tours@adventures-cultures.com](mailto:tours@adventures-cultures.com)

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### Africa's historic Slave Route

An exotic and challenging Cultural Journey along the West African coastline, visiting Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Ghana, Togo and Benin

Our trip through West Africa starts along Senegal's 'smiling coast' as we travel overland past villages full of cows, chickens, round, thatched-roof huts and local farmers hard at work. When the road edges the shores of the Gambia River, travel east, up-river through The Gambia's hot dry countryside, to rejoin Senegal. Then move south again along the Atlantic coast, into "Portuguese" Guinea Bissau where tropical rain forests, cool breezes and sandy beaches await you. From here we'll drive into the rugged, green mountains of Guinea's Fouta Djallon and to the bustling port city of Conakry. Following the UNESCO's historic "Slave Route", we tour the infamous Forts, Castles and Slave Dungeons of Ghana, Togo and Benin. This is a truly eye-opening adventure, an intimate look and interpretation of some of West Africa's most intriguing peoples. Travel in this part of the world can be quite rugged, so bring along a spirit of adventure and a flexible attitude.

#### ***Day 01: Arrive Dakar, Senegal***

After our International flight arrives in Dakar, we are met, assisted and transferred by our local guide to the hotel.

**Overnight: Novotel, Dakar (1 night)**

#### ***Day 02: Dakar / Pink Lake***

Situated in the westernmost tip of the African continent, Dakar is Senegal's largest city and its administrative and economic center. The city is the busiest port in West Africa, serving Mali and Mauritania as well as Senegal. Dakar grew up around a French fort built in 1857 by the Ocean and the first major pier was completed in 1866. Dakar's importance increased significantly after 1855, when a railroad linked it with the Senegal River. Dakar replaced Saint-Louis as the

capital of French West Africa in 1902 and since the city has expanded greatly. After breakfast we take a Dakar city tour including the colorful Kermel market, the Roman Catholic Cathedral (inaugurated 1929), which is currently the seat of an Archbishop, the University of Dakar (1949). Later we will board the ferry for Gorée Island, to visit a 300 years old slavery depot, the House of Slaves and the Historical Museum. After Lunch on Gorée Island, we will return by ferry and drive to Pink Lake.

**Overnight: Hotel in Pink Lake (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 03: Pink Lake / Saint Louis (drive)***

We leave after Breakfast and head out to the dunes (site of the Paris-Dakar Rally). En route we'll visit villages where the locals' livelihood is salt gathering. After few other stops we arrive late in the afternoon to Saint Louis.

**Overnight: Residence Hotel, Saint Louis (2 nights) (B)**

***Day 04: Saint Louis***

Founded in 1659, on an island with a strategic position at the mouth of the Senegal River, between the continent and the 'Langue de Barbarie' (Barbarian Tongue), a narrow strip of land that sinks into the Atlantic Ocean, Saint-Louis is a town full of history. Saint-Louis became the capital of Senegal at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century up until 1958, even after Dakar was promoted to the rank of capital of the French Africa. Today the town extends from the Langue of Barbarie to the Continent. The Faidherbe Bridge, a real work of art, hangs over the Senegal river for a length of 500 meters and connects the island with the mainland and it is on the list of the UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. We start our day with an excursion to the 'Parc Djoudj', the National Bird Sanctuary, one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, declared as the richest in birds in the World. We'll enjoy a pirogue ride to better view the many species of cormorants, pelicans, ducks, flamingos, various songbirds and thousands of more. Beside birds we may also spot crocodiles, boas, and wild boars. In the afternoon we'll visit old colonial city of Saint Louis. Among the sites and monuments we'll see, we can cite the Governor's Palace, a Fortress built in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century across from the Faidherbe Place, the name of the famous colonial governor whose statue is erected in the center. To the north and to the south of that place, the houses dating back to the colonial period, with their wrought iron balconies and verandas, which remain intact. (B)

***Day 05: Saint Louis / Saly (drive)***

We depart from St. Louis after breakfast and drive south to Saly via Touba, the holy city of Mouride Islamic Brotherhood. Here we visit the beautiful mosque, with its giant 87-meter tall tower, visible from miles across the plain. Later we'll be in Thies for Lunch and continue to Saly beach resort.

**Overnight: Espadon Charme Resort, Saly (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 06: Saly / Toubacouta (drive)***

Will have a leisurely Breakfast at our beach hotel, before we start our visit in the morning to the traditional villages in the 'small coast' area. There will be wonderful opportunities to interact with the villagers, with their chiefs and notables. We visit Kaolack, a typical market rich in medicinal herbs and plants, all processed by old traditional 'recipes', which are not forgotten. In the afternoon, we'll be also visiting nearby Mandingo Villages. By the end of the day, we take a motor canoe tour on the Saloum River to discover its wonderful ornithological entity. We then drive to Toubacouta.

**Overnight: Paletuvier Lodge, Toubacouta (1 night) (B,D)**

***Day 07: Toubacouta / Banjul (drive)***

After our Breakfast and a short tour in Toubacouta, we drive to the border of Senegal and Gambia. Past border formalities, we'll proceed to Juffureh to visit the mythic village of Alex Haley's ancestors. It's been over 30 years since Alex Haley's *Roots* became a cultural touchstone, a book, which chronicles the life of Haley's ancestor Kunta Kinteh who was captured here in Gambia and sold into slavery. From here we continue our trip to Banjul, the Capital city of Gambia and arrive early in the afternoon. After we check-in into Kairaba Hotel, we will visit the city of Banjul. This half-day tour of The Gambia's capital city and will be starting with a photo stop at Arch 22, which was built to commemorate The Gambia's independence. Our next stop is at the National Museum where the collection traces African Culture and European Colonialism. A short drive through the city streets leads up to Albert Market to experience the hustle and bustle of a market, where you can buy anything from live chicken to fresh vegetables and false hair! From here, and after stopping briefly at the largest mosque in the city, we'll also visit one of the three main Christian Churches, the Roman Catholic, Anglican or Methodist. For Dinner, we'll stop by one of the famous local Restaurants.

**Overnight: Kairaba Hotel (1 night) (B,D)**

***Day 08: Banjul / Bakau (drive)***

This morning we take a boat-trip on the Gambia River, visiting the bird sanctuaries the crocodile pool in Bakau and some native villages nestled in the creeks of the river. In the afternoon visit the Mandingo villages near the border of The Gambia with southern Senegal. Here will be shown what a naming ceremony consists of, while having the chance to mingle with the local people. Later have Dinner in a typical restaurant in Bakau.

**Overnight: Hotel Sun Beach, Bakau (1 night) (B,D)**

***Day 09: Bakau / Ziguinchor (drive)***

After breakfast we leave Bakau and following border formalities back to Senegal, we continue drive to Ziguinchor. Upon arrival, and after few stops at points of interests, we tour Ziguinchor. First we visit the St. Maur Market and the handicraft village, two popular districts so colorful and alive. We will have lunch at 'Le Bombolong' restaurant and enjoy the traditional food of Casamance. In the afternoon will visit Seleti and Enampore, two villages

famous for their architectural style. This will also be an opportunity to meet the Diola ethnic group.

**Overnight: Hotel Aubert, Ziguinchor (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 10: Ziguinchor / Bissau / Quin Hamel (drive)***

After breakfast and crossing the border into Guinea-Bissau, we continue to travel toward the city of Bissau, including en route stops at many points of interest. The land now known as Guinea-Bissau was once the kingdom of Gabú, which was part of the larger Mali Empire. The first European to encounter Guinea-Bissau was the Portuguese explorer Nuño Tristão in 1446 and the colonists in the Cape Verde Islands obtained trading rights in the territory and it became a center of the Portuguese slave trade. In 1879, the connection with the islands was broken, but it remained under Portuguese dependency until 1974. The military coup in Portugal in April 1974 brightened the prospects for freedom and in August the Lisbon government signed an agreement granting independence to the province. The new republic took the name Guinea-Bissau. After arriving in Bissau, we'll visit the National Museum, where the fold art and handcrafted items are found, the Mercado (Central Market) for its vibrant atmosphere and fruits and vegetables and the 'Centro Artistico Juvenil', where young artists exhibit their wares. Later in the afternoon will travel to Quin Hamel, 50 km from Bissau and stay for overnight there.

**Overnight: Hotel Mar Azul, Quin Hamel (2 nights) (B,L,D)**

***Day 11: Quin Hamel / Bissau (drive)***

After our Breakfast we take on a cruise to Orango to visit fishing villages, observe the fishermen at work and the fauna, sail to the Islands of Bijagos, said to be the most beautiful islands in the World. This archipelago is a group of small islands, most of them uninhabited and not often frequented by foreigners. The ones easily accessible are Bolama and Bubaque. Bolama, the former capital of Guinea-Bissau and has great beaches, while Bubaque is a picturesque island easily accessible from Bissau. In the afternoon we will return to Bissau for dinner and overnight.

**Overnight: Malaika Hotel, Bissau (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 12: Bissau / Koundara (Guinea Conakry) (drive)***

We leave early in the morning and drive East to the border of the two Guineas, with several stops en route. After entering to Guinea Conakry, we drive to Koundara, the town on the road from Labé to Senegal and at the intersection of roads from Guinea-Bissau to Youkounkoun. Koundara has replaced Youkounkoun, 15 miles (24 km) northeast, as the chief trading centre for cattle, chickens, rice, peanuts (groundnuts), millet, and corn (maize). The surrounding area is mostly savanna, mainly inhabited by friendly farmers. We spend our night here in tents and with the dinner served by the campfire.

**Overnight: Camping in Koundara (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 13: Koundara / Dalaba (drive)***

In the morning we continue with our West-African journey and travel to Dalaba, the so-called African Switzerland, well known for its favorable geographic location and excellent climate. En route we'll visit 'Les Chutes des Kinkon' in Pita, a nice waterfall. Upon arrival in Dalaba, we visit the market and craft center. This city has the highest elevation in Guinea, reason why was home to a sanatorium in the past, but mainly known these days only for its strawberries.

**Overnight: Hotel Tangama, Dalaba (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 14: Dalaba / Conakry (drive)***

After Breakfast we will travel to Conakry, via the scenic route to Mamou and Kindia, where we will stop and have short visits. Late in the afternoon we arrive in Conakry, the Capital city of Guinea (Conakry).

**Overnight: Novotel Hotel, Conakry (2 nights) (B,L,D)**

***Day 15: Conakry***

Conakry, the Capital City of Guinea with a population of slightly over one million, is a bustling port city on the Atlantic Ocean full of sights and sounds for both the curious and the adventurous. Part of UNESCO's historic "Slave Route", Guinea was the first African country to benefit from the program of rebuilding the historic sites on the slave route. Will have here the unique opportunity to discover Guinea's "Unspoiled Africa". In the morning we take a sightseeing tour in Conakry and visit the National Museum, the Market Place and will later take a 30-minute cruise to the Island of Loos. Today will have an unique opportunity to understand Guinea, truly renowned for its artistic and cultural diversity exemplified by songs, dances and traditions. (B,L,D)

***Day 16: Conakry / Accra - Ghana (flight)***

We leave this morning the westernmost African Coastline as we are taken to Conakry Airport, in time to reach our International flight to Accra, Republic of Ghana. Upon arrival in Accra, we meet our local guide and taken to our hotel. After we check in, we start a short city tour of Accra to see the Kwame Nkrumah Memorial, the Independence Arch, the National Theater and the W.E.B. Dubois Pan African Center. We'll end our tour at the craft market, Makola market and other interesting market places in the area.

**Overnight: Novotel Accra (2 nights) (B,D)**

***Day 17: Accra / Cape Coast (drive)***

Ghana celebrates in 2007 50 years of Independence and 200 years from the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Various celebrations will take place throughout the country and in its Capital city Accra. Accra, is a fast growing metropolis with a blend of Victorian and modern architecture. Accra stretches along the Atlantic Coast and north into the interior. It was originally built around the port and its architecture ranges from large and elegant 19<sup>th</sup> Century colonial buildings to skyscrapers and apartment blocks made of concrete, glass and steel in the 1970's. This morning we drive through the Castle Road for a view of Ghana's Parliament House and the only International Conference

Center in the country. The tour continues through Independence Avenue to see landmark buildings, and the President's house, the British settlement, the Later Day Saints and the Mormons Church. In the afternoon we depart to the Central Region to tour the infamous Forts, Castles and Slave Dungeons of Ghana. History will unfold the story of the slave trade, which impact is still felt beyond the shores of Africa today. We'll also visit the Cape Coast Castle built by the Swedes in 1653 and later taken over by the British. This castle also houses the West African Historical Museum established by the Smithsonian Institute in collaboration with the Ghanaian Government in 1994.

**Overnight: Hotel in Cape Coast (1 night) (B,L,D)**

***Day 18: Cape Coast / Accra / Lome (Togo) (drive)***

We return today from Cape Coast to Accra and we continue drive toward Lome, the Capital city of Togo. En route we'll stop at Shai Hills Game Reserve. At present, the reserve supports 31 species of mammals, more than 175 species of birds and 13 reptile species. The principal mammal species presently found in the reserve and which are of importance to all visitors include western kob oribi (not very common), grey duiker, bushbuck, serval, civet, genet, anubis baboon, vervet monkey and spot-nosed monkey. We will continue from here to Lome.

**Overnight: Corinthia 2 Fevrier Hotel, Lome (1 night) (B,D)**

***Day 19: Lome / Cotonou (Benin) (drive)***

Togo seems to be squashed in between neighboring Ghana, Burkina Faso and Benin. Yet this tiny sliver of a country manages to squeeze in dense forests, savannah, coastal lagoons, long sandy beaches and swampy plains. Togo formed part of the Slave Coast, from where captives were shipped abroad by European slavers during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Its capital city Lome is the country's administrative, communications, and industrial center, and the chief port, handling such items as coffee, cocoa, copra, and palm nuts. We'll visit here the National Museum, the market and the artisans' village. After our morning city tour of Lome, we will continue on to Cotonou, the most important city of Benin, along the coastline, via the Kpasse sacred forest and city of Ouidah. According to the legend, centuries ago King Kpasse fled his enemies by escaping into the forest and turned himself into a tree. The tree still exists growing up amidst ruins of a house that was once built around it. Perhaps we will witness here a traditional voodoo ceremony, featuring the spirits of departed ancestors. Later we enter Ouidah, an important traditional-religious center and ancient slave depot, which had sent thousands of slaves to the New World. Here we visit the Museum in the Old Portuguese Fort. The Portuguese began trading African slaves in Europe in the 1440's, and by the early 1500's ships filled with slaves captured in Africa began sailing across the Atlantic to the New World. During the four centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, an estimated 12 million Africans were taken from their continent and brought to the New World and Europe. We continue with the Temple of Pythons, the Cathedral of Notre Dame arriving in the evening in Cotonou.

**Overnight: Hotel du Lac, Cotonou (2 nights)**

**(B,D)**

***Day 20: Cotonou / Abomey / Cotonou (drive)***

After a short city tour of Cotonou, which includes the fish market and the international Dan Tokpa market and handicraft center, we drive to Ganvie, "the Venice of Africa", a village build on stakes in the lake, a few kilometers north of Cotonou where we may take a 'pirogue' excursion over the lagoon. From here we drive to Abomey. The city of Abomey is widely considered the historic capital of Benin. It was the center of the Dahomey Kingdom that controlled the area before colonization by the French, and the ruins of the royal palaces, one of which has been restored and houses Abomey's history museum, are the city's most popular attractions. Here we'll start with the Royal Palace Museum (listed UNESCO World Heritage Site), site of these ancient palaces of the twelve kings of Abomey, who reigned from 1620 through 1900. This museum tells the story of the Kingdom of Dahomey before the French colonization. Abomey was once one of the most important sites in West Africa, as important as Kano and Benin City in Nigeria and the Dogon Country in Mali. This museum explains how the area evolved from a tribal kingdom to what it is today. Mid-afternoon we travel to Aladja to see the birthplace of Toussaint Louverture, the liberator of Haiti. Late in the evening we return to Cotonou.

**(B,D)**

***Day 21: Cotonou / Homebound***

Our last morning is reserved for last minute souvenir shopping and packing. After our check out, later in the evening, we are taken to the International Airport for our flight back home. After an unparalleled Cultural experience, we leave this unspoiled part of the African continent with soul-enchanting and mind-bending memories.

**(B)**

**End of Tour and our Services**

**Tour details for 'Unspoiled Africa' tour**

**Tour price includes:**

- Hotel accommodation as mentioned (or similar category)
- Meeting and assistance upon arrival and departure at Airports
- Private ground transportation by AC (where available) cars or minivans
- Experienced English-speaking guide
- Airport-Hotel-Airport transfers and luggage handling
- All hotel taxes and local tourism taxes
- All tours and sightseeing with entry fees included
- Meals as indicated (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)

**Tour price does not include:**

- International airfare to/from Africa
- Travel insurance (highly recommended)
- Regional airfare: Conakry / Accra (approx. USD: 290 per person)

- Visa fees (if applicable)
- Gratuities, tips and other such costs
- Drinks/Beverages and any personal expenses
- Meals not specified and Mineral water

Tour will operate with **minimum 02 and maximum 12** participants

**Tour dates for 2007**

Jan 05, Feb 02, Mar 02, Jul 06, Aug 03, Sep 07, Oct 05, Nov 02 & Dec 07.

Tour price is USD: 6,045.00 / CAD: 7,250.00 - per person in double occupancy.  
Single supplement is USD: 955.00 / CAD: 1,150.00

**Tour highlights and World Heritage Sites (WHS):**

- Gorée Island, Dakar - Senegal (WHS)
- Island of Saint Louis (WHS)
- Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (WHS)
- The traditional villages in the 'small coast', Saly and Toubacouta area
- Juffureh and Kunta Kinteh Memorial
- Banjul city and Gambia River & and some native villages nestled in the area
- Seleti and Enampore, two villages with Diola ethnic group, Senegal
- The National Museum, Bissau
- The Islands of Bijagos
- Dalaba, the so-called African Switzerland, Guinea Conakry
- Conakry National Museum and the Island of Loos, part of UNESCO's historic "Slave Route"
- City tour of Accra, Rep. of Ghana
- Forts and Castles of Ghana (WHS)
- Royal Palaces of Abomey (WHS)
- Ganvie, "the Venice of Africa"
- Ouidah, and its ancient slave depot
- Lome city