



Gems of West Africa – Ghana, Togo, Benin

July 28 – August 10, 2016

Day 01: DEPART THE US FROM JFK, NY

Depart the US for Accra, Ghana to begin your exciting journey in three countries in West Africa.

DAY 02: ~ACCRA ARRIVAL

On arrival at the airport in Accra, you will be met after you have cleared immigration and customs. You will be transferred to your hotel. We'll check in at this beautiful beachfront hotel. Rest and take in the fresh breeze in Accra. A local seamstress will come to the hotel to take measurements of those who desire custom made traditional clothing. This evening we'll enjoy our welcome dinner. D

DAY 03: ~ACCRA / CITY ORIENTATION

After breakfast you will begin your city tour visiting the **Fantasy Coffin Carvers and Omanyeh House**. Then you will proceed to the **Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park** that is dedicated to the memory of Ghana's first president and the **W.E.B Dubois Centre for Pan-African Culture**. You will spend time at the **Arts and Crafts** bazaar shopping for handicrafts before returning to your hotel. B/L

DAY 04: ~ACCRA / KUMASI CRAFT VILLAGES

You will depart Accra for Kumasi and visit enroute **Ejisu** Besease and the craft villages of Ashantis to **Bonwire** where the world famous kente cloth is woven, **Ntonso** that is home to the traditional Adinkra clothing. You can stand your own Adinkra stole as you learn from the artists. From here proceed to **Ahwiaa** where you will observe woodcarvers creating fertility dolls and royal Ashanti stools from large pieces of wood. B/L

DAY 05: ~KUMASI CULTURAL ORIENTATION

After breakfast this morning, you will embark on a tour of Kumasi visiting the **Manhyia Palace** where you will see replicas of old kings and royal stools of the Ashantis. You will also visit **King Prempeh II Museum** to learn about the Ashanti kingdom. Further tours will take you to the **Cultural Center** where you will see artists at work. You will observe artists at work while also having the opportunity to purchase reasonably priced art to bring home. B/L

DAY 06: ~KUMASI / ELMINA / ASSIN MANSO-LAST BATH FOR SLAVES

You will depart Kumasi for Elmina. You will make a stop at the Slave River in Assin Manso. This is believed to be the last place the captured Africans had the opportunity to take their last bath before reaching the coast where they were sold into slavery. Upon arrival in Elmina you will visit the **Elmina Castle** that was built by the Portuguese in 1482. You will be guided through the slave dungeons, see the Auction Block and Door of No Return. B/L

DAY 07: ~KAKUM NATIONAL PARK / ACCRA

After breakfast, depart for **Kakum National Park**. You will have the choice between walking the trails with a guide to explore the cultural and medicinal uses of the plants in the forest or for the more adventuresome the canopy walkway. Enjoy lunch amidst the pleasant sound of hundreds of weaverbirds preparing their nests. B/L

Day 08: ACCRA / LOME.

After an early breakfast, we depart Accra and drive to the Accra-Togo. We arrive at the Aflao border at 10.00 am. Our Guide will meet, and assist us through Immigration and customs then we proceed to Lome, the capital city of Togo. Lunch at a local restaurant then we embark on a city tour including Independence Square, symbolic for the struggle of the people of Togo to achieve independence from France in 1960. Tour continues to the National museum; Artisans' Village and famous fetish market, the traditional drugstore for the locals.

Check-in at Hotel Palm Beach or similar B/L

Day 09: LOME / AGBODRAFO / GLIDJI / COTONOU

Breakfast at the hotel and then proceed through the coconut grove to Agbodrafo, pompously named Porto-Seguro by the Portuguese. We'll visit the Wood Home slave dungeons and the fishing village nearby. Continue to Glidji, a Voodoo stronghold in southern Togo passing Aneho, the first capital city of Togo. At Glidji, encounter with priests of the sacred forest and to know about some of the deities and important ceremonies held here. Continue to Grand Popo in Benin crossing at Hilla Condji border post. Lunch at a local restaurant and then we drive to your hotel in Cotonou for Check-in and overnight at Hotel Azalai. B/L

Day 10: COTONOU / ABOMEY / ALLADA / COTONOU

Breakfast at the hotel and then we drive through the Oueme valley for Abomey, centre to once an important African kingdom. On arrival, we pay a courtesy on King Agoli Agbo in his palace and then continue to the historic museum, office of the king featuring the palaces of the 9th and 10th monarchs of Houegbadja dynasty, also a World Heritage site. Visit the museum and then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. After a brief stop at Goho historical square, we continue to Allada. Visit memorial of the Black Napoleon, Toussaint Louverture and proceed to Cotonou arriving in the late afternoon. Overnight at Hotel Azalai B/L

Day 11: COTONOU / GANVIE / OUIDAH / LOME

Breakfast at hotel and then we drive to Ouidah, the voodoo capital city of Benin. On arrival, visit Kpasse sacred forest dotted with sculptures of many voodoo deities. Here you will find the tree believed to be the deification of the second king of Ouidah, Kpasse. Visit the museum of History, a former Portuguese slave fort. Walk the slave Route to the Door of No Return on the beach where a memorial has been erected in honor of our ancestors who were born free but sold into slavery. Lunch at a local restaurant and then proceed road to Lome. Witness the Zangbeto, the traditional guardians' ritual dance in a village. Arrive in Lome in the late afternoon after border formalities at Sanvee Condji. Overnight at Hotel Palm Beach B/L

Day 12: Lome-Accra. Overnight

After breakfast at hotel and transfer to Aflao, the Togo-Ghana border at 10.00 am. Meet with driver and Guide from Ghana who will drive us back to Accra, Ghana. We'll enjoy our farewell dinner today and process our experiences in the Ghana, Togo and Benin. B/D

Day 13: Depart Accra

Today we depart Accra, Ghana for the US after experiencing and learning about Ghana, a former British colony, and Togo and Benin that were French colonies. It would also become obvious to you as to how Benin influenced Haiti, Brazil and Cuba in terms of dance, religion and culture. Togo has also given us words we use generously in the English language. Ghana, being the first black African nation to gain independence, had an influence on blacks in the diaspora as well.

Day 14: Arrive at NY's JFK International Airport

Arrival in the US with a wealth of knowledge and memories from West Africa

Price per person based on double occupancy

Land package

Double occupancy - \$2559

Single occupancy - \$3528

Estimated Flights from JFK

\$1400

Meet Your Tour Leader

Georgina Lorencz, President



Holding a Master of Arts in Speech Communication with an emphasis in Broadcasting and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Georgina brings with her over 20 years experience assisting both domestic and international organizations with program development. Georgina has travelled through parts of Europe, Central and South America, the Middle East and Africa. Georgina's travels have included teaching and leading graduate and undergraduate students to Africa for research.

Prior to African Travel Seminars, Georgina directed international Programs at Hamline University for eight years. This included working with incoming international students and scholars from over forty countries and managing the study abroad programs.

Georgina is an experienced award winning Tour Operator. In 2012 Black Meetings and Tourism presented the Apex award for Distinguished Contributions to Heritage Tourism to Georgina. Then in 2013, Africa Diaspora Tourism recognized her for Outstanding Cultural Heritage Educational tours. She's also originally from Ghana, West Africa.

Georgina is a life-long learner who has a strong belief that every culture has something special that each of us can learn from. Combining her travel experience, photography skills, and belief that everyone must practice responsible tourism, she provides opportunities for program participants to learn about their destination through Pre-Departure orientation in preparation for the visit so that each program participant is knowledgeable about the country. While overseas, there are opportunities to meet and learn from the locals. Finally, visits are arranged to Self-help development projects to allow each participant to make a meaningful impact on the lives of economically disadvantaged peoples by donating books and other needed supplies.

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