



Best Of West Africa Overland (STM)

Dakar to Douala 69 days, departing 06 Oct 2012

Comfort Zone: Basic Luxury

Physical Challenge: Easy Hard

Trip Style: Overlanding

Route: Dakar to Douala

Length: 69 days

Transport: Overland expedition vehicle.

Accommodation: Small local hotels, mainly campsites and wildcamps. (80% camping, 20% hotels)



Ratings for this trip

Comfort Zone: Very basic / challenging

Very Basic comfort levels: You'll have to miss out on many of the comforts of home - but you'll be experiencing adventure travel at its purest. On OVERLAND TRIPS be prepared to camp in rough conditions, live with local nomads and travel along poor roads. There may be a number of nights wild camping as we could be travelling long distances to get you off the beaten track. On ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS you can expect tremendous variety, from local budget hotels, local guesthouses to homestays with a predominance of local transport. If we are trekking you may have some nights camping. On ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS you can expect tremendous variety, from local hotels to homestays with a predominance of local transport mixed with some private. If we are trekking you may have some nights camping.

Physical Challenge: Strenuous in parts

STRENUOUS IN PARTS: These are physical tours; we may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through hot and steamy tropical countries. Physically it can be quite tough, but not necessarily all the time and there will be plenty of rest days and time to relax as well. The fitter you are the more you will enjoy the trip.

Countries Visited

Benin

If there is a lost treasure of West Africa, then Benin is it.

Benin is probably most famous for voodoo culture, an annual celebration of the tradition is marked with prayers, libations and sacrifices. The country is host to some amazing market stalls, which sell animal heads and skins, which shows how passionate the country is about the Voodoo religion.

A country full of traditional culture, Tata Somba mudhuts, built by the local Somba people, still stand tall today, with thousands of people living in these.



Benin is not only a country of culture, but full of history too. The Route d'Esclaves is found in Ouidah, which was the last walk on African soil for slaves on their way to Brazil and the Caribbean. Some of Benin's amazing history, can be found in the museums in the capital of Porto Novo.

The food in Benin is diverse. In the northern part of the country, yam is a primary meal whereas in the south, rice and corn is the main part of a meal.

If you're heading to West Africa to unearth lost treasure, look no further than Benin.

Cameroon

Cameroon is a much-underestimated destination and not one to be found in many tour brochures. However, with beautiful rain forests, beaches, wildlife, stunning scenery ranging from tropical to virtual deserts and some of Africa's most scenic mountains, it is definitely a place to visit if you intend going to West Africa. It is a country of transition, climatically, topographically and culturally. The south is deeply Christian and the north Islamic. The people vary from forest Pygmies in the south through to the Fulani, semi-nomadic cattle herders of the Sahel and semi-deserts in the north.

Mount Cameroon can take you to the highest point in West Africa, where you can see some of the most inspiring views of the country.



The rainforest of Cameroon is high in bio diversity and is also home to the Pygmy people. It has also become one of the legendary routes of the overland map, a challenge for even the most hardy overland driver to get the truck out of the infamous 'mud holes'.

Culture is important in Cameroon, and in the east of the region, visitors are greeted by local Baka dancers, which shows how warm a reception can be. The capital, Yaoundé has a vibrant history, having grown rich of the back of the ivory trade.

The national dish Ndolé, consists of a wonderful stew of vegetables, nuts, and fish or goats meat. One taste of this is all you need to make you realise what a glorious country Cameroon is.

Côte d'Ivoire

Ivory Coast is wonderfully rich in culture and natural attractions. The national anthem describes the country as a land of hope which is indicative of the positive attitude of its people. Always friendly and welcoming, the good nature of the Ivorians will be encountered wherever you go.

It's really the modernity that sets Côte d'Ivoire apart from other West African nations. Abidjan is one of the most modern cities in West Africa, and its shimmering skyscrapers will astound. Yamoussoukro in the centre of the country is famous for its basilica, an astonishing replica of Rome's St Peter's, which epitomises the Houphouët-Boigny era, as does the Presidential palace not far away. The north is decidedly less developed, a region where you can experience a more traditional way of life and the customs that go with it, set amongst the beautiful landscapes that dominate this part of the country.



Security note: Ivory Coast is moving on from its recently troubled past with the election of a new President. We will be monitoring the Foreign & Commonwealth Office advice before we set off and when we are on the road. We also have contacts on the ground who will let us know if the situation changes further ahead and we can re-route accordingly. We are happy to say that there have been no travel restrictions in place for any of our route through Ivory Coast for some time now.

Ghana

Ghana was the first African country to gain independence from Britain, today it is a proud and friendly place. It has had a chequered post colonial history, but certainly now appears to be forging ahead both economically and politically. It is a very friendly country, which surprisingly has close ties to its French speaking northern neighbour, Burkina Faso. Its beaches are the envy of all West African nations, its Ashanti culture is fascinating and it has one or two excellent national parks. Internationally Ghana is acclaimed for its music, with Ghanaian artists such as Kofi Ghanaba giving concerts across the western world.

The capital of Ghana is Accra, and is on the coast. It is home to some of the most amazing museums in the country and is the place to learn about Ghana from the prehistoric times to the present day.



The music is ever present in Ghana, with many of the regions have their own personal sound. All over Ghana, the local communities want people to hear their sounds, and love welcoming visitors to join in their celebrations. Dance is the same. If there is a chance to dance, then the Ghanaians will dance. From celebrations, to funerals and even storytelling. Ghana is a country to try new experiences. The food has to be experienced and each region like to give dishes their own personal touch. The variety of flavours all over the country, make the range of dishes so diverse. Many dishes are usually served with a stew or a soup and a lot are rice based. With many exotic tastes available, it is clear to see Ghanaians like to express their culture through food.

The textiles in Ghana are extremely important as cloths are used to make different clothes. The different colours and patterns have different meanings and are usually worn for important social and religious occasions. A written language and history is represented through the beautiful Kente cloth. This is yet another area in which the Ghanaians are very proud of.

Ghana has a welcoming feeling, and with the chances to join in with the amazing culture, it is the country to visit if you want to experience West African hospitality.

Guinea

Guinea, a country few travellers ever get to visit, can boast of some of the most beautiful landscapes in the whole of West Africa, a strong musical tradition, and friendly peoples.

You will be awed by the expansive savannahs, stunning highlands in the Fouta Djallon region, numerous waterfalls, and the jungles of the forest region, noted for its resident populations of forest elephants and chimps. Vine bridges over rivers and canyons are a particular highlight in parts of Guinea.

Guinea is diverse with more than 300km of flat coastline that becomes even more spectacular with mountainous landscapes as you move inland. Due to this majestic beauty, Guinea is often called the 'Switzerland of Africa.' Lower Guinea is covered with undulating plains, which provides some of the best trekking terrain in West Africa. Rich in culture and tradition, Guinea offers the traveller a wonderful insight into everyday life of the various ethnic groups which make up the country.



Guinea Bissau

Guinea-Bissau, a former Portuguese colony, is one of the smallest nations in continental Africa. The country has had a turbulent past, but in recent years relative stability has returned and the number of travellers visiting this little known country is growing. Whilst lacking the quantity of 'attractions' that neighbouring countries can boast of - Guinea-Bissau will charm you with its off the beaten track feel and welcoming people.

The capital city of Bissau is like a city suspended in time, with its crumbling colonial architecture, pastel coloured buildings, and narrow alleyways which take you to numerous cafes and artisans. Moving further inland, the mangrove lined rivers and tropical vegetation kicks in, signalling a return to the more typical landscapes so associated with West Africa.



Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the most colourful countries in West Africa. It is full of life and perfect for discovering the many treasures it has to offer. Nigeria grew rich very quickly in the oil boom of the seventies. Hospitals, schools, public buildings and excellent roads were built all over the country. Although it's not on most people's travel list, it's a fantastic for overlanding for that very reason.

There are many national parks and forests across the country and these are home to some of the amazing wildlife of Nigeria. Most gather at the Gaji river and these range from elephants and lions to buffaloes and baboons. In the Yankari National Park has large herds of elephant, as well as giraffe, ostrich, lion, hippo and antelope so there is certainly a chance of sighting some of these. The main draw here is the Wiki Warm Springs. With a beautiful temperature of around 30 degrees, these glistening clear waters are an experience not to miss out on.



Night life in Nigeria is lively and not to be missed on a visit. You can discover all types of music in the bars and clubs. Music is important in Nigeria and with over 250 ethnicities, there is always different sounds to discover. The folk music played can bring communities together and playing instruments together is a popular factor of the music. Drum beats are well known across the ethnic groups, but the styles which are played are quite diverse. Nigeria is also one of the places where the xylophone is originally from. Music festivals are popular in Nigeria and are a chance to hear music from all over the country.

Nigerian food is typical of West Africa. There are many dishes to choose from, whether it contains rice, beans, meat, there are delicacies available all over the country. The popular meal of Suya is a kebab style meat that is barbecued, infused with spices from across the nation and skewered.

Nigeria offers a new challenge everyday, and it is a chance to experience the animated life of West Africa.

Senegal

Senegal is a fascinating place to visit in West Africa. Long sandy White-beaches, a traditional music scene, a crumbling colonial heritage, wildlife and incredibly friendly people make this a superb place for those who want to explore West African culture, or just kick back and get into the vibe of the real Africa.

Senegal is bordered by Guinea Republic and Guinea-Bissau to the south, Mali to the east and Mauritania to the north, and encloses the confederated state of The Gambia. To the west lies the Atlantic Ocean. On the coast between Dakar and St Louis is a strip of shifting dunes. South of Dakar there are shallow estuaries along the coastline, which is fringed by palm trees. In the northern part of the country, south of the Senegal Basin, lies the arid Fouta Ferlo, a hot dry Sahelian plain with little vegetation.



The cosmopolitan capital city of Dakar with its coastal location, temperate climate and vibrant atmosphere reflects this country's modern and diverse outlook. You can spend time browsing around the museums, the colourful markets, or just relaxing on the stunning beaches.

Whether you want to mingle with the trendsetters of urban Africa, or be alone with your thoughts and the sounds of nature - Senegal is the place to be.

The Gambia

The Gambia with its magnificent coast invites visitors to laze and linger, tempting with luxurious beach resorts and bustling fishing villages. But there's more to Africa's smallest country than sun and surf. Stunning nature reserves, such as Kiang West National Park and River Gambia National Park and the historical slaving stations of St James Island and Jufureh offer peaceful breaks from the clamour of the nearby coast.

The Gambia coast offers miles of superb golden beaches and the vibrancy of Bakau, Serrekunda and the capital, Banjul, is as colourfully African as you might imagine. During the day, fish for Barracuda on the Atlantic Ocean, strike a bargain in one of the many markets and in the evening, sample the wide variety of Gambian cuisine.

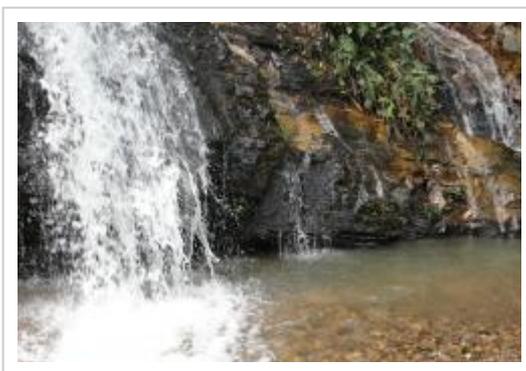


The Gambia's idyllic cocktail of sunny days, warm welcomes and relaxing Atlantic beaches makes this a place you will not want to miss.

Togo

Tucked between Ghana and Benin, Togo is one of the most vibrant countries in West Africa and home to the voodoo religion. Towards the south of the country is the coast and the capital, Lomé. With sneaking boulevards and a rural landscape, Founded in the 18th century, Lomé has an age-old feel to it.

Ganvie is inhabited by more than 10,000 people even though it is built entirely on stilts in the middle of a lagoon and can only be reached by pirogue (dug out canoe). The ancestors of the Toffinu people used the lake as a refuge from the slave traders, and the Toffinu have lived on the lagoons ever since.



Feel drum beats and you will know a celebration is about. Across the country, drums are used to celebrate key events in peoples lives. They are popular too at music festivals. These bring the country together and traditional folk music can be heard. The sounds of flutes and bows can accompany many different dances which are an important part in Togolese culture.

The food in Togo is simple, yet delightful. Maize based dishes are infused with different sauces and spices to create many different tastes. One popular dish consists of smoked fish in a vegetable stew. The maize is the base and when mixed with these ingredients, it begins to create a true taste of Togo.

Daily Itinerary

Day 1: Dakar

Sat 06 Oct 2012

Border information: If you are starting at Dakar, you will enter Senegal at Dakar Airport. Today is an arrival day with a pre departure meeting at 10:00hrs. There are no activities planned so you can arrive at any time. Your leader will leave a note in reception telling you where this important meeting will take place. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport and insurance details at this meeting. The afternoon will be free to explore the cosmopolitan city of Dakar and Ile de Goree.

Tonight we stay in a comfortable hotel with good facilities.

Hotel for the night: Hotel Al Baraka

Hotel Al Baraka
35 Rue A. Karim Bourgi
Dakar
Senegal
+ 221 33 8225532

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the atmospheric Island of Goree	USD 10

Dakar

You know when you've arrived in Dakar. Senegal's bustling, cosmopolitan capital bursts with life. This is a city of busy streets, noisy markets, noisy, colourful markets and vibrant nightlife; at first it can



seem chaotic but embrace the rhythms of Dakar life and you'll come to appreciate it just as much as the passionate people who live here. In terms of conventional sightseeing, the beautiful Ile de Goree is certainly worth a visit, the bustling centre of the slave trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If you're interested in West Africa culture you should also seek out the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noir (IFAN) Museum, which has some great displays of show masks and traditional dress from all across the region. Or you may prefer to just wander the streets, browsing the markets and soaking up the atmosphere. Dakar also has a lively arts scene and you should be able to find some great live music here, there are venues all over the city and regular music and film festivals.

Day 2: Kaolack, Touba, Toubakouta

Sun 07 Oct 2012

Today we start our overland journey as we head south from Dakar to the small town of Toubakouta situated close to the Sine-Saloum Delta. On our journey today we will stop to see the Great Mosque at Touba and also the the Medina Baay Mosque in Kaolack one of the largest and best known mosques in Senegal.

Tonight we will aim to stay in a small local run hotel or campsite in Toubakouta.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the Great Mosque at Touba, the holy city of Mouridism	Included in tour
Visit to the Kaolacks Medina Baay Mosque, one of the largest and best known in Senegal	Included in tour

Kaolack

Kaolack is situated on the Saloum River about 100 kilometres from its mouth. It is the capital of the Kaolack Region and is an important regional market town. Kaolack is Senegal's main peanut trading and processing centre and also a major centre of Islamic education. The Medina Baay mosque in Kaolack is one of the largest and best known in Senegal.

Toubakouta

Situated amongst a maze of mangroves this tiny town is one of the most beautiful spots of the Sine-Saloum Delta. Toubakouta is a great place in which to

base ourselves for excursions into the Parc National du Delta du Saloum which is teeming with wildlife.

Day 3: Toubakouta, Sine-Saloum Delta

Mon 08 Oct 2012

We head out today to the Sine-Saloum Delta for a pirogue trip in search of the stunning array of birdlife that the Delta area hosts.

Tonight we will stay again in the small local run hotel or campsite in Toubakouta.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Pirogue trip through the Sine-Saloum Delta	Included in tour

Sine-Saloum Delta

The Sine-Saloum Delta is an 180,000-hectare area that encompasses the Saloum Delta National Park, and is a truly stunning part of Senegal.

Formed where two rivers converge on the mighty Atlantic Ocean, it's a region of great diversity consisting of a unique estuarine environment, glorious beaches, mangrove swamps, sand islands and ever-shifting dunes.

The region is a pleasure to explore; by navigating the lush greenery of the labyrinthine waterways in a pirogue you're sure to absorb the region's gentle magic. Thanks to its ecological diversity it is also rich in animal life, and for birdwatchers, the Delta will also not disappoint; home to a stunning variety of birds, such as flamingos, pelicans, herons, gulls, terns, egrets and avocets. Many of the hotels will arrange special birding trips to view them in their natural habitats.

Day 4 to 5: Tendaba Camp, Kiang West National Park

Tue 09 Oct to Wed 10 Oct 2012

Border information: Enter The Gambia at Farafenni.

We head across the border from Senegal to The Gambia and head to the Tendaba Camp on the Gambia River.

Tendaba camp is located opposite the Baobolong Wetlands and The Kiang West National Park. The accommodation at the Camp is simple round huts in the so called African rondavel-style, and they are completely made out of natural materials from the bush. We will stay here for 2 nights where we will take an included pirogue trip into Kiang West National Park.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Pirogue trip through Kiang West National Park	Included in tour

Kiang West National Park

Established as a national park in 1987, Kiang West is now the largest national park in the Gambia. Situated on the south bank of the river it encompasses dry deciduous woodland, savannah, mangrove creeks and tidal flats.



Over 300 species of birds have been sighted in the area, including 21 raptors: vultures, harrier eagles, sand grouse, Blue-breasted, Kingfisher hawks, White-shouldered Black Tit and falcons. An ideal spot to watch birds is Tubabkollon Point. This protected reserve of mangroves boasts an outstanding wealth of birdlife, impressive enough to excite even the non-bird watcher! The West African Manatee, otters, sitatunga and roan antelopes can also be seen, plus rarer sightings of animals such as hyenas, leopards and dolphins.

Day 6 to 7: Bintang Bolong

Thu 11 Oct to Fri 12 Oct 2012

From the Gambia River we head southwest to the Bintang Bolong Eco lodge situated on the Bintang Bolong River near the village of Bintang.

We stay here for 2 nights in huts allowing you time for the array of optional activities on offer in this area.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Excursions on foot or by boat through mangrove forests and the natural surrounds of the lodge	USD 10
Visits to the nearby local village of Bintang	USD 10
Visit to the Crocodile Pond	USD 5

Bintang Bolong

Bintang Bolong is a large tributary of the Gambia River. The banks of the tidal river are lined with mangroves. Tucked away among the maze of shrubs lining the shores is the stunning Bintang Bolong Lodge, an ecofriendly camp made almost entirely from local mangrove woods and clay bricks.



Bintang village has at present 700 inhabitants, whose main sources of livelihood include rice, peanuts and vegetable farming. The village is divided into three Kabilos (zones): Ceesay kunda, Manneh kunda and Jobateh kunda. Each Kabilo is alternatively responsible for the entertainment of the guests of the Bintang Bolong

Lodge and provides an equal amount of employees. Their earnings are spent on development of the zones.

The lodge consists of stunning huts that sit on stilts by the river. If the tide is high, you can almost leap from your bedroom into a canoe and go bird-watching or fishing in the mangroves. The lodge offers plenty of activities such as boat trips, visits to the local crocodile pool, where you can get close-up views of baby crocs are a favourite and guided walks - a great place to explore the natural surroundings of central Gambia, and catch a glimpse of rural life - the camp is closely integrated with the local community, employing villagers and investing in schools and hospitals.

Bintang is also famous for its popular "Kankurang" dance. The Kankurang dancers wears a costume made of leaves and upon their head they sport a mask of red cloth with piercing horns. Women, singing and clapping, supply the rhythm and beat for the Kankurang dancers.

Day 8 to 9: Ziguinchor

Sat 13 Oct to Sun 14 Oct 2012

Border information: Enter Senegal at Senoba

We journey back into Senegal to the town of Ziguinchor where we base ourselves for 2 nights in a small local run hotel. Whilst in Ziguinchor if you have not already you will obtain your visas for Guinea Bissau. The rest of your time here is free for you to explore.

Day 10 to 11: Cap Skirring

Mon 15 Oct to Tue 16 Oct 2012

From the town of Ziguinchor we have a short journey to the Atlantic coastal town and village of Cap Skirring whereby you will have a free afternoon to explore.

Whilst in Cap Skirring we aim to stay in rooms in a local Campement.

Due to the nature of this itinerary there has been a "flexible day" added here to be used at the discretion of the leader.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Free time to explore and relax on the beaches	Included in tour

Cap Skirring

Cap Skirring is a town on the Atlantic Ocean coast of the Basse Casamance region of Senegal. It is a popular seaside resort with miles of palm-fringed sandy beaches with perfect ocean temperatures. The town itself was first occupied by fishermen and it was discovered by the French of Ziguinchor as a balneal zone in the 1960s.

Day 12: Cap Skiring to Bissau (v.v) wild camp Wed 17 Oct 2012

Border information: Enter Guinea Bissau at Sao Domingo

Today is a full drive day as we journey from Senegal to Guinea Bissau. We will aim to wild camp this night.

Day 13 to 14: Bissau Thu 18 Oct to Fri 19 Oct 2012

Leaving our wild camp early we set off on another long drive to reach our destination of Bissau.

During your stay in Bissau you have time to explore Bissau Velho the old Portuguese centre of Bissau.

We stay in Bissau for 2 nights in a small locally run hotel

Activity	Approximate Cost
Absorb yourself in the old colonial port city of Bissau and experience the buzzing arts and handicrafts scene.	Included in tour

Day 15 to 16: Mampata, Koundara Sat 20 Oct to Sun 21 Oct 2012

Border information: Enter Guinea at Kandika

From Bissau we journey through Guinea Bissau to Guinea stopping en route for wild camps near Mampata, the Bafata region of central Guinea Bissau and also at Koundara a town located in north-western Guinea.

Day 17 to 19: Fouta Djallon highland region Mon 22 Oct to Wed 24 Oct 2012

Our journey from Koundara takes us into the highland region of Fouta Djallon in the centre of Guinea.

We base ourselves for 3 nights in a small local run hotel in one of the small towns in this region. From here you free time for the option to take guided walks, visits to beautiful waterfalls or hire bicycles in this stunning part of Guinea.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Time for guided walks and cycling in Guineas stunning highland region of Fouta Djallon	USD 5

Fouta Djallon highland region

The Fouta Djallon Plateau is one of the most scenic areas of Guinea and the heartland of the country's Peul population. It is also one of the best trekking areas in West Africa. This Stunning highland region of Guinea offers waterfalls, rolling grasslands jungle canyons and valleys excellent for cycling, walking and hiking. Due to the few tourists that pass through this

area it will seem like you have full reign of this beautiful region of Guinea.

Day 20 to 21: Mamou, Kissidougou Thu 25 Oct to Fri 26 Oct 2012

Leaving the Fouta Djallon region behind us we head south east through Guinea stopping en route for 2 nights. We aim to stay one of these nights in a local guesthouse and one wild camping.

Day 22 to 23: Forested Guinea Sat 27 Oct to Sun 28 Oct 2012

Reaching the Forested mountainous region in south-eastern Guinea we base ourselves for 2 in the surrounding area. We aim to camp here however we may stay in a local guesthouse depending on the facilities in the area. During our time here you have the option of visiting nearby villages to see their famous vine bridges or exploring the surrounding area.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Time to explore the forested region of Guinea on foot	Included in tour
Visit the famous vine bridges in the forested region of Guinea	

Forested Guinea

Forested Guinea, or otherwise known as Guinée Forestière, is a forested mountainous region in southeastern Guinea, extending into northeastern Sierra Leone.

It is one of four natural regions into which Guinea is divided and covers 23% of the country.

It is known for its diverse ethnic population, including the Toma and Lissi groups, and also shelters a large number of refugees from the Sierra Leone Civil War, the Liberian Civil Wars and the Côte d'Ivoire Civil War.

We take the opportunity to trek and explore the Forested Region on foot and learn about the fascinating culture and peoples of the region. The area also has rich fauna and flora making beautiful walking trails to waterfalls.

Day 24 to 25: Forested Guinea to Odienne (v.v) wild camp, Odienne Mon 29 Oct to Tue 30 Oct 2012

Border information: Enter Core d'Ivoire at Sirana

The next couple of days are spent driving from the forested region of Guinea crossing over the border into Cote d'Ivoire. One night will be spent wild camping en route and the other we aim to either camp or stay in a small local hotel in Odienne depending on the facilities available.

Odienne

Odienné is the chief town of Odienné Department of Côte d'Ivoire, lying in the northwestern part of the country. Sites in Odienné include a large mosque and nearby gold mines. The Deng Kele Massif is a solitary granite mountain, 600 metres above sea level, about 15 kilometres to the west of, and visible from, Odienné.

Day 26: Korhogo

Wed 31 Oct 2012

Heading directly east to the north-central region of Core d'Ivoire we travel to the town of Korhogo famed for its cloth weaving as this region produces cotton.

Tonight we stay in a small local hotel

Activity	Approximate Cost
Guided tour of the local cloth weaving in and around the area	Included in tour

Korhogo

The northern town of Korhogo is famed for cloth weaving, jewellery and antiques. Visiting the surrounding area will give you a fascinating insight into the life of the Senoufo people. Le quartier des sculpteurs in Korhogo is definitely worth a good look around for souvenirs - be prepared to haggle!



French Roman Catholic missionaries established a church and school in the town in the late 19th century. Korhogo's Senufo wood sculptors, practitioners of a traditional art utilized by the Poro secret society, also create artifacts for the tourist market in Abidjan.

Day 27 to 28: Yamoussoukro

Thu 01 Nov to Fri 02 Nov 2012

After a fairly long drive we arrive into the capital of the Cote d'Ivoire.

We stay here for 2 nights in a local hotel allowing time for you free time to explore the sites on offer.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit Le Basilique De Notre Dame De la Paix - The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro, consecrated by Pope John Paul II	USD 5

Yamoussoukro

The capital of Ivory Coast in name alone; Yamoussoukro was the hometown of long serving post-independence President, Felix Houphouet-Boigny who spent exorbitant amounts of money to make it the new spectacular capital.



Marvel at the Presidential Palace (where the late President was buried), and his showpiece, the Basilique De Notre Dame De la Paix.

Despite such a low percentage of the population actually being Catholic, the President spent hundreds of millions of dollars on a grand Basilica, almost an exact replica of St Peter's in Rome! The town itself also boasts 6 lane highways that lead nowhere, grand hotels and monuments on a par with any other capital city of the world but all in a relatively small settlement of 250,000 people. A surreal place that has to be seen to be believed!

Day 29 to 31: Grand Bassam

Sat 03 Nov to Mon 05 Nov 2012

Leaving the Capital behind us we head south to the old French colonial capital city of Grand Bassam situated east of Abidjan.

We stay here for 2 nights in a local hotel allowing time for you to explore the old colonial town.

Due to the nature of this itinerary there has been a "flexible day" added here to be used at the discretion of the leader.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the sites of Grand Bassam, the original French capital of Ivory Coast.	

Grand Bassam

This town was the original French capital in Ivory Coast before being moved due to outbreaks of disease. Grand Bassam allows for time to explore the old colonial town, watch local artists at work, or simply kick back and relax on the serene beaches



Day 32 to 33: Elmina (Brenu Akynin)

Tue 06 Nov to Wed 07 Nov 2012

Border information: Enter Ghana at Elubo

Today is a rather long day as we cross into Ghana and head east to the Atlantic coast of Ghana to Bren Akynin near to Elmina.

We camp here for 2 nights at a beach resort allowing to time to visit Elmina castle and also to get involved with a local community project.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Help out at the Sabre Trust School project	Included in tour
Visit and explore the historic Elmina Castle	Included in tour

Elmina (Brenu Akynin)

Brenu Akynin is a small village right on the beach just outside the town of Elmina. The local people here rely heavily on fishing and cultivating coconuts, pineapples and groundnuts to make a living. The one small school here is located just a few metres from Brenu Beach, a stunning location for tourists, but far from ideal for the school children. They are distracted from their studies by the vehicles that pass through the school to access the beach, and often cut class in order to sell goods to the tourists or assist their parents with the farming and fishing.



Over the last few years, Dragoman have got involved with a local grass-roots charity, the Sabre Trust, which is working to improve education for all of the children here. Originally the school here was in a terrible state of disrepair and extremely under-resourced, but gradually this is beginning to improve.

On Dragoman overland trips we stay in Brenu, allowing us time to get involved in a variety of projects at the school. Depending on your groups skills and the school's needs, you could be getting your hands dirty helping out with small building projects, participating in educational workshops, or even helping with the teaching. Getting involved at the school is a great opportunity to lend a hand and give something back to the local people here, albeit in a small way. It's also a great chance to experience everyday Ghanaian life at first hand, getting to know the local children and their families.

Day 34: Kakum National Park

Thu 08 Nov 2012

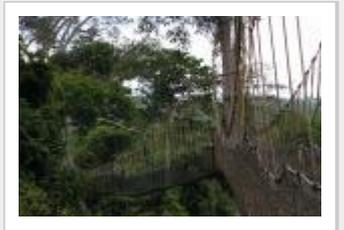
We journey north to visit Kakum National Park. The park has a long series of hanging bridges at the forest canopy level known as the canopy walkway giving us a close up experience of the park.

We will camp tonight in the national park.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit to the stunning jungles of Kakum Nat. Park including an amazing canopy trek	Included in tour

Kakum National Park

Kakum National Park is in southern Ghana; 350 square kilometres of tropical rainforest protecting the very rare and endangered Mona-meercat, as well as pygmy elephants, forest buffalo and an incredible array of birdlife. In the park we walk along towering canopy walkways through the tops of the trees, offering a unique and unobtrusive way for travellers to experience the forest. The park is also an important habitat for a variety of rare tropical plants, including many that are used by local people for medicinal purposes.



Day 35: Accra

Fri 09 Nov 2012

The final journey of this section brings us to the capital of Ghana, Accra. We will most likely head out for a final group meal together tonight in Accra.

Tonight we stay in a comfortable hotel with good facilities.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the capital city of Accra	Included in tour

Accra

Accra, Ghana's sprawling capital, is a bustling coastal city with a whole load of beaches that would please even the most discerning sun worshipper. Some of the beaches are more touristy than others and they can all get very busy on Saturdays and Sundays; and whenever you go you should expect to be entertained by an endless stream of musicians and acrobats and pursued by souvenir sellers. Away from the beach, the Perpetual Flame at the Cenotaph in Revolution Square is worth a look, plus the National Museum houses one of the best collections in all of West Africa. Next to the museum you will also find a good craft market, perfect for a bit of souvenir shopping. In the evening you can sample Accra's lively nightlife, heading out to one of the many bars and restaurants that can be found all over this surprising city.

Day 36: Accra

Sat 10 Nov 2012

Border information: If you are starting at Accra, enter Ghana at Accra Airport.

Today there will be a group meeting at 10.00 hrs. The rest of the day will be free to explore the beautiful coastal city of Accra and we spend the night in a friendly, comfortable hotel.

Hotel for the night: Niagara Hotel
 Niagara Hotel
 Kojo Thompson Road
 P.O. Box 4079
 Accra
 +233-302-230118

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore the capital city of Accra	

Day 37 to 38: Keta

Sun 11 Nov to Mon 12 Nov 2012

A 200kms morning drive brings us to the beach at Keta where we can relax for a couple of days on the beautiful beaches and perhaps check out the remains of Fort-Prinzenstein, the slave den, built by Danes 300 years ago as a transit point for transporting slaves to the Americas. We stay at a hotel here for a couple of nights

Activity	Approximate Cost
Relax on the beach at Keta	Included in tour

Keta

Keta is part of the Volta estuary region, comprising several small islands and a complex of lagoons. The area is abundant with bird, fish and butterfly species and also the endangered waterbuck.

The Keta Lagoon Complex is the largest wetlands site in Ghana covering 1,200 sq. km. from the eastern shores of the Volta River to the international border with the Republic of Togo.

Day 39: Lake Volta

Tue 13 Nov 2012

We drive some 250kms drive north takes us to Akosombo by Lake Volta where we stay in a campsite.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Visit Akosombo Dam	USD 2

Lake Volta

Lake Volta in Ghana spreads over a massive 3275 square miles and runs for over 320 miles from the most northern point, to the most southern point. The White Volta River and The Black Volta River combine to form the Volta River which eventually flows into the Atlantic Ocean. There are tropical temperatures most the year round, which has created the opportunity to find many local fisheries.

Day 40 to 41: Mont Klouto

Wed 14 Nov to Thu 15 Nov 2012

Full day 350kms drive brings us to the spectacular Mt Klouto, crossing the border into Togo. We stay here for 2 nights in dorm accommodation and enjoy an evening of drumming and voodoo! Dorm accommodation.

Border information: Exit Ghana at Denu, enter Togo at Clouto.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Discover voodoo, a religion firmly embedded in local culture, amongst the jungle-clad hills of Mount Klouto	Included in tour
Day's guided butterfly walking safari through forests of Mont Klouto	USD 20

Mont Klouto

Hidden away in mountains of Togo, Mont Klouto is a couple of hours north of Lome, a welcome relief from the heat of the coast. The mountains here are covered in dense forest, punctuated by gently cascading streams and waterfalls. A nature reserve has been established in the area because Klouto is an important habitat for butterflies, over five hundred different species can be found here, many of them incredibly beautiful. It's an ideal place for hiking and you can take a guided walking butterfly safari through the forests with a local naturalist guide.



Day 42: Agbodrafo

Fri 16 Nov 2012

150kms drive to Agbodrafo, a quiet small town on the shores of Lake Togo. We will either camp or stay in cottages.

Activity	Approximate Cost
R&R and watersports on the stunning lagoon of Lac Togo at Agbodrafo	Included in tour

Agbodrafo

One half hour drive from Lome we visit Agbodrafo, the old Portuguese city formerly known as Porto Seguri. It is a quiet small town on the shore of Lake Togo. The real draw here is the lake itself, a 13 square kilometres. This is a really idyllic place to relax and do some watersports. There are a number of water resorts, which are very popular with the Togolese from Lome. The lake is surrounded by a number of small villages and fishermen ply the waters in dug-out canoes. It is possible to get a ride across the Lake to Togoville in a dug out canoe with the local fishermen. These 'pirogues' ply the lake between Agbodrafo and

Togoville and if you wish to travel by pirogue, the truck will be driving around to Togoville.

Day 43: Agbodrafo, Togoville

Sat 17 Nov 2012

In the morning we take a pirogue trip to Togoville, the centre of the voodoo culture. We have a guided city tour and church visit, returning to Agbodrafo for the night.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Local pirogue dugout trip across Lac Togo to Togoville	Included in tour
Guided city tour of the voodoo centre of Togoville	Included in tour

Togoville

Togoville is a small town on the shores of Lake Togo, renowned as the historic centre of voodoo culture. Many practitioners of voodoo were taken from here to Haiti as slaves, which is why there is also a strong



voodoo culture in Haiti even though it's thousands of miles away. There are still a few voodoo shrines and fetishes around the area today. Interestingly, there is also a German church here, dating back to 1910. Chief Mlapa III signed a treaty with German explorer Nachtigal in 1884, giving Germany the rights over all of Togoland. The church sits on a large terrace, dominating the lake with the village spread out in a semi-circle below, decorated with painting of African Saints and a statue of Our Lady of Lake Togo.

Day 44: Grand Popo

Sun 18 Nov 2012

A short 100kms drive takes us to the beach at Grand Popo, crossing the border into Benin. Tonight we camp at an auberge.

Border information: Exit Togo at Hilla-Condji, enter Benin at Hilla-Condji.

Activity	Approximate Cost
2 nights to relax on Benin's Grand Popo Atlantic beaches, meeting the local fishermen	Included in tour

Grand Popo

Grand Popo, located in south west Benin is a great place for a bit of rest and relaxation on the beach, West African style. The town originally was great as a port servicing the slave trade, although coastal erosion



has destroyed most of the old buildings. The Finno-African culture centre Villa Karo has been situated in Grand-Popo since 1999. The town is now a centre for voodoo and home to a Finnish - African cultural centre, Villa Karo. The town's main industry is fishing.

Day 45: Grand Popo

Mon 19 Nov 2012

Today is free for you to enjoy time at the beach at Grand Popo. We spend a second night camping

Day 46: Cotonou, Ouidah

Tue 20 Nov 2012

We drive 120kms via Cotonou to arrive in Ouidah and an optional visit to the museum. We stay in a camp at an auberge

Activity	Approximate Cost
Discover the history of slavery at the Ouidah 'Route des Esclaves'	USD 3
Visit Ouidah's museums	USD 4
'Snake' your way round the Temple des Serpents in Ouidah	USD 1

Ouidah

Benin is a country that takes Voodoo very seriously, so much so that it is recognised as an official religion and is practiced by over 60% of the population. It all centres around the small town of Ouidah, which is



the centre of voodoo, culture in Benin; voodoo is part of everyday life here and Ouidah hosts many voodoo festivals and celebrations throughout the year. The Musée d'histoire d'Ouidah gives an interesting insight into voodoo history and culture in the area.

The town also has a fascinating and colourful history having been an important centre during the slave trade. . The Slave Route or "Route des Escalves" the 4 km road between the Ouidah Museum of History and the beach is probably the same road thousands of slaves travelled along on their way to board the slaving ships for the New World.

The Portuguese, English and French all constructed

forts here to protect their trading interests, one of which now houses a museum that gives you a unique glimpse into the terror and destruction that the slave trade wreaked on this part of the world.

The Temple of the Python.

The serpent deity Dangbé has been revered in the Ouidah area for centuries. The temple is maintained by the priests of Dangbé, and dozens of the sacred python are housed within.

The Maison de Brasil, also known as the Casa do Brazil, is a museum displaying works showcasing Vodun culture and the African diaspora. The house was the former residence of the Brazilian governor and is located near the civil prison.

Day 47: Ganvie

Wed 21 Nov 2012

In the morning there will be a visit to a Fetish market then in the afternoon we drive 70kms before jumping aboard pirogues to Ganvie, a town built entirely on stilts in the middle of a lagoon. We will stay in the village overnight

Activity

Approximate Cost

Afternoon visit to Ganvie, where fishermen live in stilt houses on a marine lagoon

Included in tour

Ganvie

Ganvie is home to more than 10,000 people, even though it is built entirely on stilts in the middle of a lagoon and can only be reached by pirogue (dug out canoe). The ancestors of the Toffinu people used the lake as a refuge from the slave traders, and the Toffinu have lived on the lagoons ever since. Possibly the largest lake village in the whole of Africa, the local people here depend on fishing and fish farming for their livelihoods.



Day 48 to 49: Abomey

Thu 22 Nov to Fri 23 Nov 2012

A short morning drive leads us to Abomey, the ancient capital of the Dan Homey kingdom. We stay in a campsite for the next 2 nights with free time in Abomey and a guided tour of the palace and museum

Activity

Approximate Cost

2 nights in Abomey, capital of the Dahomey Kingdom with guided tour of Palace and Museum

Included in tour

Abomey

Abomey is the ancient capital of the Dahomey kingdom, once one of the most powerful empires in Africa. You can still see some of the original Dahomeyan palaces and temples here, and the Musée Historique d'Abomey is a good place to learn about the history of the region. The palace is full of gold, silver, thrones, tapestries of bloody battles, testament to the proud wealth of this once great kingdom.

Day 50: Abeokuta

Sat 24 Nov 2012

A full day 170kms drive takes us across the border into Nigeria where we overnight at Abeokuta, camping at the golf club.

Border crossing: Exit Benin at Ketou, enter Nigeria at Meko.

Abeokuta

The town of Abeokuta lies upon the banks of the Ogun River and has some fascinating sites in caves and shrines across the town. Communities preserve the traditional customs, religious rites and sometimes the names of their original village. The main trade in Abeokuta is palm oil, timber, rubber, yams and Shea butter. Explore the markets and you can find some of these local products.

Day 51 to 53: Oshogbo, Abuja

Sun 25 Nov to Tue 27 Nov 2012

We will cover 640kms over the next 3 days, visiting Oshogbo and the site of the Osun Sacred Forest en route. We will bushcamp for the first night and camp at the Sheraton in Abuja for the third night

Abuja

Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria and it has many places of interest. One of the most popular is Millennium Park. Fountains line the path way and there are many grassy areas to lie back and relax. The peaceful areas are great if you have been exploring all morning and the many attractions including the Zuma Rock and the Ladi Kwali are perfect if you want to carry on discovering Abuja.

Day 54: Jos

Wed 28 Nov 2012

We head 270kms towards Jos where there is an optional guided visit of the museum. We will find somewhere secure and bush camp for the night.

Day 55 to 56: Yankari

Thu 29 Nov to Fri 30 Nov 2012

240kms drive to the remote Yankari Game Reserve where we camp at a lodge. We enjoy game drives and a visit to the hot springs.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Big game safari in Yankari National Park, Nigeria's best wildlife reserve. Stay at the beautiful hot springs	Included in tour

Yankari

Yankari is home to one of Nigeria's finest national parks. The Yankari Game Reserve is quite remote and rarely visited; but those who make the journey here are more than rewarded by the incredible wildlife and beautiful landscape. The area is home to more than 50 different species of mammal, including buffaloes, waterbucks, bushbucks and baboons. There are also large herds of elephant, as well as giraffe, ostrich, lion, hippo and antelope here; so there is certainly a chance of seeing some big game. Amazing though the wildlife is, most people's favourite memory of a trip to Yankari is a visit to the Wikki Warm Springs. These crystal clear hot springs are a constant 31 degrees Celsius, which makes them the perfect place to relax after a day of safari - or you may prefer to spend the entire day immersed in the warm waters.



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Day 57: Afi Mountains

Sat 01 Dec 2012

Today is a full day 600kms drive day en route to the Afi Mountains. We will find somewhere safe to bush camp

Afi Mountains

The Afi Mountains in Nigeria are an important habitat for wildlife, particularly primates. There is a fantastic wildlife sanctuary here that protects a number of threatened and endangered species, including the rare Cross River Gorilla and Drill Monkey. A number of NGO's are working here in conjunction with the local communities to protect these unique animals, for example protection patrols and educational initiatives have been established to discourage shooting and trapping by local hunters. 17 local communities are involved in total, the first time a common interest group like this has been formed; and all of the communities are now benefitting from the income that eco-tourism is beginning to generate through the work of the wildlife sanctuary. As well as it's conservation work, the project also provides a home to 22 rescued chimpanzees. Visitors to Afi can walk in the forest and may even be able to participate in some conservation work.



For further information on the Afi Mountain Wildlife sanctuary please visit <http://www.pandrillus.org/projects/afi-mountain-wildlife-sanctuary/>

Day 58 to 60: Afi Mountains, Calabar

Sun 02 Dec to Tue 04 Dec 2012

We drive 180kms enabling us to spend two or three days at the Afi Mountain sanctuary home of a project to help the highly endangered drill monkeys, either walking in the forests or helping around the sanctuary. This is a beautiful place to stay. We may on the final night head to stay in Calabar in order to obtain our visas for Cameroon.

Activity	Approximate Cost
3 night stay at the Drill Ranch Monkey Conservation Project in the Afi Mountains	Included in tour

Day 61 to 63: Cameroon Rainforest Drive

Wed 05 Dec to Fri 07 Dec 2012

We cross the border into Cameroon and travel some 400kms through remote tropical rainforest. We will be wild camping on the way and travelling on very poor roads. This is overlanding at its original best and be prepared to get stuck in!

Border crossing: Exit Nigeria on the first day at Mfum, enter Cameroon at Ekok.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Overland through some of the continent's most challenging roads in the jungles of Cameroon.	Included in tour

Cameroon Rainforest Drive

Cameroon has some of the most amazing tropical rain forest in Africa; infact the scenery here was used as the backdrop for Greystoke, the Tarzan movie. Travelling through this area gives us a real insight into how quickly the rainforests of the world are being destroyed - deforestation is happening faster here than in the Amazon Jungle. The roads in this area can be very difficult and travelling through the region is slow; mud holes, obstacles and poorly maintained dirt roads make the journey through these remote forest areas a real adventure.



Day 64 to 65: Limbe

Sat 08 Dec to Sun 09 Dec 2012

150kms driving brings us to a campsite and the chance for some R&R on the beautiful black sand beaches of Limbe.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Time for some R&R on the black sand of the Atlantic beaches at Limbe	Included in tour
Visit the Limbe wildlife centre to see the Drill monkeys and gorillas	USD 3

Limbe

Limbe is a small, scenic seaside town in Cameroon, it's black sand beaches sandwiched between the nearby mountains and the Atlantic ocean. It's a good place to kick-back and relax on the beach and sample the local seafood.

Day 66 to 67: Kribi Beach

Mon 10 Dec to Tue 11 Dec 2012

A 300kms drive brings us to the yellow sands of Kribi Beach, on the Atlantic shore. The days are free to explore or go on an optional trip to see the pygmies at Lolodorf. We stay at a camping at an auberge

Activity	Approximate Cost
More R&R on the white sands of Kribi Beach	Included in tour

Kribi Beach

Similar to Limbe, Kribi is Cameroon's other main beach resort - but unlike the black volcanic sands of Limbe, Kribi has a beautiful white sand beach surrounded by palm trees. The area is rapidly developing and has recently become something of a

playground for wealthy Cameroonians and foreign tourists, with a number of hotels and resorts springing up along the coast. Nevertheless it's a pleasant town and a good place to relax before or after a journey into the jungles of West Africa.

Day 68: Douala

Wed 12 Dec 2012

160 km drive to the lively and cosmopolitan Douala, arriving late in the afternoon. We stay in a comfortable hotel with a pool.

Activity	Approximate Cost
Explore Douala, Cameroon's most lively city.	Included in tour

Douala

Douala is the largest city in Cameroon and the capital of Littoral Province. The town lies on the banks of the Wouri River and has a bustling, tropical ambiance. Leafy, colonial decay rubs shoulders with the modern, marble facades of banks, five-star hotels and business houses. It's a lively and cosmopolitan city with a brilliant nightlife, so despite the hot and sticky climate, it makes for an interesting stop.

Day 69: Douala

Thu 13 Dec 2012

The trip ends this morning and no accommodation is provided.

Border information: If you are leaving in Douala, exit Cameroon at Douala airport.

Visa Information:

Important Notes

The routes, activities and places visited described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

We intend following the planned route but exact night stops cannot be guaranteed. It sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our basic planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. By their very nature overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often in areas without western infrastructure. You should expect that some these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

Contingency Emergency Fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond our control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternative transport or even flying the whole group over an area. Although Overlanding West Africa will help organise travel arrangements, you should be prepared to contribute towards the costs and therefore we ask that you bring along a contingency fund of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit card with a decent limit in case of emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Nigeria Contingency

You may already be aware that the British Foreign and Commonwealth office (FCO) are currently advising against all but essential travel to certain regions in Nigeria. This advice unfortunately includes Yankari National Park and Jos so for that reason we have therefore decided to not visit these places on this itinerary.

Please visit <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/sub-saharan-africa/nigeria> for full advice on Nigeria.

Instead the itinerary will visit Pendjari National Park and the surrounding region in North Western Benin, known for its wildlife and is home to some of the last populations of big game like elephants, West African lions, hippopotamuses, buffalo and various antelopes in West Africa. The Park is also famous for its richness in birds.

If however in the meantime if the FCO advice changes its advice to all clear on travel to this region our itinerary will of course follow the scheduled route.

Exploratory notes

This is very much an exploratory route and due to the unpredictable nature of this expedition it is not always possible to follow the exact itinerary as set out below. By their very nature overland itineraries are flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are unpredictable. We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, often in areas without western infrastructure. You should expect that some these areas do not adhere to western safety standards.

We will always endeavour to visit all the places listed, and often more that are not. All the information regarding the itinerary is given in good faith and is subject to change, dependant on visas, local political or country instabilities, weather, security & road conditions etc. Any major itinerary changes will be decided by the crew & company directors and will be discussed with the group beforehand whenever possible.

Physical Preparation

Physical preparation for West Africa Itineraries

Roads in these parts of Africa can be very rough which makes for long travel days. You may be travelling across deserts, through Jungles and through wild Africa savannah lands. . It is however all worth it for the spectacular scenery and for travelling through regions that very few other westerners go (OK, Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman perhaps, but we were there first)! Where there are public camp sites the bathroom facilities can be very basic and may be non existent in the case of many of the bush camps on this itinerary. There is never toilet paper provided and shower facilities, if existing are often a hose pipe spurting out cold water. Once again, the spectacular serenity and chance to sleep so close to nature makes a little inconvenience all worthwhile and part of the African overlanding experience. Note that not all campsites are as basic as this description; it's just to make sure there are no surprises for you. There will be plenty of nice surprises along the way! Lastly, the step up into the overland vehicle, while not overly high can become tiring and you need to judge yourself to be physically fit enough to haul yourself up and down at least 8-10 times a day, as can the constant setting and packing up of camp.

Visa Information

Most countries we visit on our travels will require visas. Some are best obtained before you leave home and others can be obtained en-route. Whilst the ultimate responsibility for obtaining visas is yours, we will endeavour to assist you wherever possible.

The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. The information provided is given in good faith and we do try to keep the visa information as up to date as possible. Please be aware though that rules do change, often without prior warning, which is why it is important that you check for yourself.

For visas that are needed in advance you can choose to submit the applications directly to the relevant embassy /consulate. However our recommendation is that you use a visa agent to assist you with your applications. While this does increase the cost it will make the process much easier for you. Dragoman have teamed up with 'The Visa Machine' to create a safe, secure, hassle-free way of obtaining visas and visa advice. Our unique link within their website is designed to make the visa process as straightforward as possible. Simply go to <https://dragoman.thevisamachine.com> and click on your region of travel followed by your trip route and 'The Visa Machine' will advise you about not only the required visas but also the dates by which you should apply. 'The Visa Machine' can then assist you in the actual visa application thus taking all the worry and hassle out of the process. This should apply for ALL nationalities and countries of residence.

As you will need to submit your passport together with your applications, we recommend that you avoid making any travel plans in the weeks leading up to your departure. However if you do need to travel in this period please let us know as soon as possible so that we can help you work out the options for your visa application process.

Senegal

No visas are required for American, British and Canadian passport holders for stays up to 3 months.

For those nationalities that do require a visa for Senegal you must obtain a **double entry visa** and this should be obtained prior to your arrival and you may require a guarantee letter from Dragoman as part of your visa application.

Australians and New Zealanders currently do require a visa for Senegal and should use the Senegalese embassy in Malaysia as their closest option.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required to enter Senegal.

Togo

Visa will be obtained en route at the border. You must have 3 passport photos and the visa costs approx. \$200USD.

The Gambia

Australian, New Zealand and UK passport holders do not require a visa for stays up to 90 days.

Other nationalities may need a visa to enter The Gambia; we recommend that you check with your respective embassy, consulate or visa agency for the latest information. It may be possible to obtain a visa for The Gambia on arrival at a land border but again we ask you to check this information before travel.

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required to enter The Gambia.

Benin

Until September 2011 visas were obtained en route at the border however recent rules surrounding the issuance of Nigerian visas means that this visa must now be obtained in Advance.

However if you have already obtained your Nigerian visa without already having to obtain the Benin visa then you can obtain your Benin visa in Accra. To be able to do this you must arrive before your trips starts to go to allow time to go the embassy. The process takes 1-2 days.

Nigeria

The visa needs to be obtained in advance.

The Nigerian Tourist visa needs to be obtained in advance.

For all Overland trip you must have already obtained your Cameroon and Benin visa before you can apply for the Nigerian visa.

Nigerian tourist visas for most nationalities can now be applied for on-line at www.immigration.gov.ng OR British Nationals can go to Travcour (UK) <http://www.travcour.com>

You must provide the following:-

1 passport photograph(s)

Travel invoice confirming booked travel & accommodation paid in full or copy of tickets

Bank statement or \$60 for each day of stay in traveller's cheques

Letter from employer confirming employment & return

Passport

Copy of the vehicle carnet.

Payment

You **MUST KEEP** the receipt as you will need to also show this at the border on entry.

PLEASE NOTE:- For some nationalities you may be asked to provide a letter of invitation and letter from host from a company in Nigeria. These are not required for Tourist visa applications. In this instance it may be required that you apply for the visa in person at the embassy or consulate where you are applying. Please check this before commencing the application process and make sure you allow plenty of time for any delays that may occur.

Guinea

Most nationalities require a visa for Guinea. We recommend that you check with your respective embassy, consulate or visa agency for the latest information.

It is recommended that you obtain this visa **in advance**.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are on an trip that continues to Accra, you must obtain a **double entry visa** to Guinea.

Guinea Bissau Southbound

Visas for Guinea Bissau will be obtained en route in Senegal (either Dakar or Ziguinchor).

Ghana

We recommend you obtain your visa **in advance**. These allow for a stay of up to 60 days and can be a single or multiple entries.

You may be asked to provide references for your visa application of which you can use the following:-

The Stumble Inn

Elmina

Ghana

+23541462733

And

Aubrey Malcolm Green

Sabre Trust Project

Elmina

Ghana

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required to enter Ghana.

If you flying into Ghana you can only obtain a single entry visa on arrival in Ghana if you have received pre-approval from the director of Ghana immigration at least 48 hours beforehand. You must hold a letter of pre-approval, which should contain the visa number and passport number to check in for your flight. If you don't hold a visa or pre-approval, you will not be allowed on your flight. The visa costs USD100 on arrival and you will need to present your return flight tickets.

Cameroon

Please organise your Cameroon visa before arrival.

The procedure and cost will vary depending on your nationality but it is common to require quite a lot of paperwork for this visa. This may well include a copy of our vehicle carnet (licence to travel through Cameroon in our truck), guarantee letter with full itinerary and a reservation letter from a hotel in Cameroon confirming your first nights' accommodation and stamped by the local police of which we can provide for you.

Cote d'Ivoire

You must apply directly to your closest embassy or consulate for this visa. For British Nationals please go to <http://www.snedai.com> for information on how to apply for the visa. Citizens of Australia can use a visa agency for this visa.

Visas for Cote d'Ivoire require quite a lot of documentation.

Generally 2 visa application forms, 2 passport photos, employment letter, proof of departure showing round trip travel and onward travel (e.g. travel itinerary), plus a copy of confirmed hotel reservation.

Dragoman will be applying for the hotel reservation letter for you approx. 3 months in advance of the trip and once received will forward this to you. In order for us to be able to do this you must provide Dragoman with your passport details in advance. The

application for this letter can only be made once we have received passport details from everyone in the group so any delay in us receiving these details will delay when this letter is received.

Please note that this letter can take some time to issue and Dragoman cannot guarantee a specific date for receiving this letter. We therefore recommend that you wait until you have received this letter before making any appointments at the Cote d'Ivoire Embassy or consulate.

Personal Spending

Based on the range that previous travellers have spent on this trip, we recommend you allow between a minimum of US\$10 and a maximum of US\$20 per day.

This will cover expenses such as your optional activities, drinks, meals whilst out and also when staying in hotels, souvenirs, tips and personal permits.

What else you need to know

Currencies & Cash

Euros not Dollars - In North and West Africa (Morocco, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo & The DRC) we use Euros and not US Dollars. Please note that although we do quote kitties, personal spending and other items in US Dollars (because we operate globally), for trips passing through these countries, you will want to use Euros and NOT dollars for the kitty, tipping and for personal spending. As the exchange rate is variable, the trip leader will confirm the exact exchange rate between Dollar and Euros to be used for the kitty at the pre departure meeting.

In terms of local money it is not really worth trying to buy local currencies before you travel. Do also bear in mind that many countries have strict regulations about the amount of their own local currency you are allowed to import - if you are found with amounts in excess of the allowed amounts, it may well be confiscated!

For obvious security reasons we hesitate to recommend you bring lots of cash with you, but in West Africa travellers cheques are almost impossible to change so for that reason we recommend a mix of cash and ATM cards. Please note that most ATMs only take Visa cards NOT Mastercard.

You should take a mixture of denomination notes. Banks and moneychangers in most countries will now only accept bills with a metallic strip running top to bottom of the bill and which are dated from 2003 or later. You should not take worn or damaged notes, or any that have been written on. Cash machines are readily available in most areas but are not always reliable therefore we recommend that you do not rely on them as your only source of cash. Credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are the most commonly accepted, but be prepared for very high commission charges. Please do not rely on cards for daily use, as they are not always accepted outside of larger towns and cities. Please bring a mixture of small and large denominations as in more remote areas it can be hard to change amounts over \$50.

Pre and post trip accommodation and connecting flights

At Dragoman we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of your joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay. Dragoman can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on.

While Dragoman is happy to assist with booking your pre and post trip accommodation, it is important that you understand you may be able to book your own room at a cheaper rate directly through the hotel or on the internet.

Our additional accommodation prices are based on the hotel's rate plus an administration fee. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival, however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer as not all hotels offer this service.

Accommodation on tour

Dragoman overland trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether camping or staying in hotels and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip, in accommodation ranging from twin to multi-share. The type and variety of accommodation is determined by

conditions on each of our routes. The campsites will range from rather basic to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars. In some cases it may also be possible to upgrade locally to bungalows, lodges or even tree-houses. One of the highlights of overlanding is that in more remote areas we will wild camp. This allows us to get far away from the tourist crowds to some beautiful, secluded spots. We will also arrange as many village or local homestays as possible, allowing us to get close to indigenous populations and ensures our money stays within local communities.

Group size?

The maximum group size we take on our overland journeys ranges from 19 to 22 depending on the geographical location, however the average number of passengers is more likely to be around 16.

Please note that there is an overlap of 2 trips in Zanzibar. This means a group starting a trip in Nairobi for example will visit Zanzibar at the same time as groups starting their trips in Dar es Salaam. In practical terms this means there could be up to 44 group members in Zanzibar at the same time.

Who travels with Dragoman?

Our passengers come from around the world and are always an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that overlanding should be open to as many people as possible and so although we have a minimum age limit of 18, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you, whatever your age is. One of the beauties of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

Our Community

At any time before or after you book you can join our community - Dragoland. This is a great place to ask questions before you travel and catch up with your fellow travellers once your trip has finished. You can share photos, videos and stories You can also download a selection of free travel apps. See the home page to sign in, it's free and easy.

We also have a Facebook page where travellers regularly swap info with each other - you can [join here](#)

Our crew and guides

Our crew are passionate about travel and always up for adventure. It takes someone special to become a Dragoman leader. Our crew undergo the most intensive training program of all overland companies, spending 10 weeks learning the ropes at our base in Suffolk, UK and then up to six months on the road as a trainee. On all Dragoman overlanding trips two western crew who are responsible for the group and the overall organisation will accompany you. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad knowledge of the places visited and to offer suggestions of things to do and see. In East and Southern Africa we will also have an African camp master/cook who is in charge of running the camp and organising all of the meals. Their knowledge of the local produce makes shopping at the markets great fun and you will learn how to prepare and cook some unusual dishes. In the rest of Africa, South America and the majority of Central Asia and China we use local guides who may stay with us for just a few hours or will actually travel with us for some or all of the journey. In these cases they become a third crew member and are able to offer their local knowledge as well as a real insight into the lives of the local people.

(If travelling in East & Southern Africa, also please see the note about our code-share crew)

Your tour leader has a duty of care to all of their passengers and therefore they have the authority to ask passengers to leave the trip if they require medical assistance, are behaving in an anti-social manner or refuse to comply with local laws and customs. In all matters relating to the trip, the leader's decision will be final and we appreciate your respect of this.

Medical conditions

We ask all of our passengers to declare any pre-existing medical conditions and in some cases you will be asked to complete one of our medical questionnaires. For trips that travel to areas of high altitude we also require all passengers to complete an altitude questionnaire. The ratings for each trip are a good indication of how challenging they are and in some cases passengers should be prepared for some long driving days and possible limited facilities. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns.

Vaccinations

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to region and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in. It is essential that you check with either your doctor or a travel clinic in good time before you travel.

In the UK we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive, up to date vaccination and health information. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at [Nomad Travel clinics](#).

A good source of up to date information is the World Health Organisation - <http://www.who.int/en/>

Malaria

Get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your vaccination centre for the most up-to-date requirements

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wear long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, tent doors or, if sleeping out, use a mosquito net. Wear repellent applied directly to the skin or soaked into clothing.

Treating clothes and mosquito nets with a Permetherin solution provides significant protection. It should be available at most travel stores. Mosquito coils are useful on still nights, in hotel rooms but cannot be used inside the tents.

Meals and group participation

On an overland journey you are more than just a passenger, you're part of the crew, pitching in to set up camp, shop for food, cook and generally help out. We operate a rota system, dividing the group into smaller units of 5 or 6 people, so that these duties are shared equally amongst the group. These jobs will include things like collecting water and firewood, loading the back locker, supervising the kitty and food stores etc. While camping on overland journeys, all meals will be included in the kitty and this means that you will be working as a group to prepare meals and cook for your group. (On trips south of Nairobi we have a cook on board the truck, however you will still be required to help prepare meals). If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your crew at your welcome meeting. A typical camp breakfast might be toast with spreads, cereal and something hot such as eggs or pancakes as well as tea and coffee. Lunch is almost always a sandwich heaped high with healthy salad and assorted fillings, with fruit to follow. Dinner might be a BBQ, risotto, pasta dish and there is always the chance to try some local cooking. Generally our passengers find the more they put into a trip, the more they benefit from it.

Responsible tourism & code of conduct

Dragoman is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We are dedicated to making sure that we adopt a responsible attitude to the areas through which we travel and believe that our trips should benefit the local people and their environment. Dragoman recognises that we are guests of local communities and strive to make these communities our partners, so that they benefit directly from our visit.

You can find full details of Dragoman's responsible tourism policy linked from the home page. All passengers are required to obey all laws of the countries through which we pass. This particularly applies to the smuggling of contraband and possession of narcotic drugs, firearms, antiquities and ivory. Any passenger found contravening such laws or customs may be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Overland travel and security

One of the real advantages of overland travel is that the vehicle provides a very real level of security when travelling. There is no doubt that a properly equipped overland vehicle, with safes, fully lockable doors and windows is an obvious advantage when travelling in much of the world. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt whilst travelling for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items (although most of these can be locked in the safe whilst you are on the trip) and advise passengers to leave any valuable jewellery, watches etc at home. Generally speaking, you will not be travelling on local public transport and will have the added security of travelling in a group with experienced crew on hand to offer advice.

Please note: Any personal effects that are left on the truck, even if they are stored in the safe, are left at your own risk and Dragoman cannot be held responsible for any damage or theft that may occur.

The safety of our passengers, leaders and operators is a major priority of Dragoman. With this in mind we monitor world events very closely. By the very nature of the adventure travel that we take, there are risks and hazards that are inherent in our itineraries. Dragoman makes operational decisions based on informed advice from a number of sources:

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice

Reports from other travel companies and local suppliers

Leaders reports from off the road

Local contacts we have built up over 29 years of experience

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. You should always make yourself aware of the travel advice before you book and again before you travel. Below are links to some of the websites

Britain. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country>

Australia. <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

New Zealand. <http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>

United States. http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Canada. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

Dragoman has comprehensive passenger liability protection and tour operator insurance. These policies have total indemnities of £3,000,000 and £10,000,000 respectively. This is in addition to local vehicle insurance and your personal travel insurance.

Emergency contact

We have a dedicated 24 hour telephone number which should only be used once you have left the UK and in the event of a real emergency. Should you need to call the number, we will do what we can to help but please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours.

If your flight is delayed or cancelled, please let us know and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in these trip notes. If you cannot get through leave a message and a contact number as these will be regularly checked and the crew informed if necessary.

Emergency Number: +44 (0) 7985106564.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip.

Whatever policy you choose, you must ensure that it is designed for adventure/overland travel. As such it must cover you for adventure activities such as white water rafting, trekking, horse-riding and that the 24 Hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries - for example they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or if you were trekking in the Andes. Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not able to cope with adventure travel to remote areas. We recommend that any policy has the following minimum levels of cover: Medical (incl. repatriation) £5,000,000 Personal Liability £5,000,000 Cancellation and Curtailment £5,000 Loss of Baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice.

Issues on the trip

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on customer_relations@dragoman.co.uk. You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

Passports

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or "visitor's" passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

Luggage & Kit List

Although you will not have to carry your main bag long distances you will need to help load and unload them onto the truck. For this reason we recommend that you use a backpack or soft bag rather than a heavy suitcase. During your trip

your main luggage will be kept in the back locker so you will also need a small daypack. This can be used to carry your camera, water bottle and other personal effects for daily use.

The size of baggage that can be brought on this tour is limited by the locker space on the truck. Different trucks have different-sized lockers however to be safe we recommend that your bag be no larger than 66cm deep, 30cm wide, and 30cm high. The weight limit for luggage on all trucks is maximum 20kg. Backpacks should not have an external frame unless it can be easily removed and stored separately to avoid damaging other people's luggage.

Your clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats (except on routes between Nairobi and Cape Town where ground mats are provided).

The clothes and equipment should be appropriate for the conditions you are travelling in, which will vary depending on which part of the world you're heading to. On overland trips Dragoman will provide all camping equipment apart from sleeping bags and ground mats*, so you'll need to bring those with you. Think about the climate and altitude of the areas you'll be travelling to, there's nothing worse than being cold at night so it's worth investing in a decent sleeping bag if it's likely to get cold. And remember even when it's warm during the day, it can often get cold at night, particularly in desert regions.

**Ground mats are provided on our non "in-depth" overland trips that run in South and East Africa, between Nairobi and Cape Town.*

For a general idea of what you need this list provides a guide:

- Sleeping bag - Check the expected climate en route. Nights in desert and mountain regions can be very cold in winter months
- Mattress or compressed foam
- A day pack is useful for short hikes in the countryside, wandering around cities, etc and also for keeping inside the vehicle for items used during the day
- 2 sets of comfortable travelling clothes (light, easily washable cotton clothes are best)
- 1 set of casual but smart clothes for evenings out. Women should bring a skirt that covers their knees and a scarf for visiting places of worship
- 2 pairs of shorts
- Sun hat or warm hat if trekking
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Warm sweater/fleeces
- 1 waterproof jacket with hood
- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes/boots (or ankle height canvas jungle boots)
- 1 pair of sandals or flip-flops
- Underwear and socks (thermals are also a good idea if you are travelling to altitude or to the desert as it can get very cold at night)
- Swimwear
- 2 small towels
- Washing kit, including a small mirror
- Clothes washing detergent, small scrubbing brush & washing line (just a length of cord)
- Head torch/flashlight with spare batteries & bulbs (only the 3 standard sizes of round 1.5v batteries are widely available en route)
- Passport photos (average of 2 per country for which visas will be applied for en route)
- Good water bottle at least 1 litre
- A pouch or money belt worn inside your clothing, or unobtrusive pocket sewn into the inside of a pair of loose fitting trousers, is a must.
- Alarm clock
- Pocket calculator (useful when exchanging money)
- Writing materials & notebook/diary
- Multi purpose knife
- Cotton sheet sleeping bag (or sheet folded and sewn up on 2 sides). It will help keep your sleeping bag clean, and can be used on its own on warm nights.
- Mosquito net - The tents supplied by us have mosquito netting and you will only need a net if you think you will sleep out under the stars a lot of the time.
- "Wet Ones" (moistened tissues) and hand gel
- Toilet paper - this can be purchased almost everywhere en-route but one roll is worth packing
- Assorted sized plastic bags - protects clothing and equipment from dust and damp

For a comprehensive kit lists take a look at the Dragoman kit list that Nomad Travel have created. Dragoman customers will receive a 10% discount on all equipment purchased either online or in store. Click to see the kit lists www.nomadtravel.co.uk/kitlist/overlanders-kit-list

Water

The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. In addition to the water in bottles, the production of a 1 litre plastic bottle takes 2 liters of water and 200ml of oil. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.

Please avoid the purchase of bottled water by using the chemically sterilized water stored in the purpose built storage tank or in water jerry cans in your Overland vehicle. You are free to refill your bottle as many times a day as you like. You are helping the environment and your hip pocket!

Personal medical kit

All of our trucks have a fully stocked medical kit onboard for use in emergency situations only. Therefore in addition to this we recommend that you purchase your own personal medical kit. In the UK we have teamed up with Nomad Travel Stores and Clinics to produce the Dragoman Travel Medical Kit. It has been designed in conjunction with the truck kits and contains everything you would need for any minor accidents. For more details please visit their website:

nomadtravel.co.uk/catalog/view/dragoman-medical-kit

Electrical equipment

Your vehicle will be equipped with a 12 volt socket so to charge your iPod, MP3 player, camera, laptop and mobile phone you will need a DC 12 volt adapter - the type that can be used from a cigarette lighter in your car. Please be aware that only one piece of equipment can be charged at a time and it will not be allowed if there is a risk of running the vehicle's batteries low. Batteries may also be recharged from hotel room wall sockets and the majority of the campsites we stay at have electricity points so please bring along your normal charging adapters as well. You will need to ensure that you have the correct country adaptor for your specific charger.

The kitty

The Kitty is a group fund paid separately from the trip price at the start of your trip which covers all things that the whole group does, such as:

- Hotel accommodation and campsite fees
- Meals whilst camping (not in hotels)
- Activities listed as included (e.g. National Park entrances, excursions and local guides).

It is an amount that each passenger puts into a central fund and is monitored by the Dragoman crew. It's payable in full at the start of your trip, and in instalments at the start of each individual trip on combination trips

The kitty system is very unique to over landing as it allows us to have flexibility on the road. You can see exactly how your money is being spent and ensure that you are getting the best value by buying locally.

The kitty advertised in the brochure is an estimate at the time of printing. Local inflation and costs vary throughout the year and so we review kitties on a monthly basis. Once you book your trip it is very important that you check our website on a regular basis and just before departure for any changes to the kitty amount.

Your kitty can be paid in a mixture of US Dollar cash and local currency and most of our travellers choose to bring a cash passport with them for withdrawing local currency (you can visit www.cashpassport.com for further information on these). This is a very secure way of carrying your money whilst travelling. You treat them exactly like an ATM card and draw out local currency from an ATM to give to your leader within each country.

Travellers cheques have become increasingly difficult to change around the world with passengers and our leaders experiencing huge frustration and numerous hours spent trying to find a bank which will change travellers cheques. For this reason we no longer accept them on our trips.

Continuing your trip

Having an amazing trip and met a great group of people? Having too much fun to go home yet? If on your trip you decide you would like to continue, then why not speak to your trip leader who can advise you of the cost and availability of continuing your journey.

Contingency emergency fund

Sometimes, civil or political unrest, or reasons beyond Dragoman's control (e.g. a natural disaster), can mean that an itinerary is disrupted and we have to make a contingency plan. This may involve hiring alternate transport or even the whole group flying over an area. Although Dragoman will help organise travel arrangements, in circumstances outside Dragoman's control you should be prepared to contribute towards the costs and therefore we ask you to bring along a 'Contingency Fund' of USD400. In almost all cases trips run smoothly and this fund is therefore never used. We also recommend that you take along an internationally recognised credit or charge card with a decent limit in case of

emergencies, such as medical treatment en route, or even the need to be repatriated; though these occurrences are rare. Remember that travel insurance policies usually only refund you for expenses after you have already paid out.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely voluntary. The Dragoman crew may be travelling with you for many weeks and usually they become good friends with most members of the group. It is sometimes easy to forget that they do work hard to ensure that you do have a great trip. If you feel you would like to tip them, they certainly would appreciate it. On a number of our trips, we also use a local guide as well as our own Dragoman crew. These guides live and travel with you through their home country and it is usual to tip them when they leave. We recommend USD10 to USD15 per person.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey, once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, information and kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these Trip Notes

These trip notes were printed on 21/05/2013