



THE GOLD COAST & BEYOND, (AFA)

Accra to Freetown 48 Days, departing 25th January 2021



TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Style: Overlanding
Route: Accra to Freetown
Duration: 48 Days
Transport: Overland Expedition Vehicle, Pirogue
Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel 3 nights
 Camping 20 nights
 Camping without facilities 4 nights
 Basic Hotel 14 nights
 Guesthouse 4 nights
Meals: Breakfasts x 44, Lunches x 25, Dinners x 24

Physical Challenge: ● ● ○ ○ ○

Your itinerary may include easy-paced day walks, bike rides, and other activities that are not too strenuous.

Lifestyle Challenge: ● ● ● ● ○

This is a fairly challenging trip; you may well be travelling at high altitudes, across deserts or through cold and windy or hot and steamy areas. The terrain and roads may be rough and the facilities can be very basic or non-existent. There may be some long drive days followed by wild camps, and physically and mentally it can be tough, but there will be some rest days and time to relax as well.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1 - Accra (25th January 2021)

Border information: if you are joining in Accra, then you will most likely enter Ghana at Accra Kotoka International Airport (IATA code: ACC).

There will be an important group meeting at 10:00am at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport, visas, and insurance details at this meeting.

The afternoon will be free to explore the city of Accra.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Accra before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Accra.

Accommodation: Roots Hotel Apartment

Day 2 - Akosombo (26th January 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, we will apply for Togo visas at the Togolese Embassy in Accra. Once they are issued, we will leave Accra and head north to the village of Akosombo.

Day 3 - Akosombo (27th January 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will have an included visit to the nearby Akosombo Dam, a major project built in the 1960s to provide almost all of Ghana's energy needs. The rest of the day will be free to relax at our campsite in Akosombo.

Day 4 - Mont Klouto (28th January 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Border information: Exit Ghana at Klouto, enter Togo at Klouto.

Today we will have a full day's drive to the spectacular Mont Klouto, crossing the border into Togo.

Day 5 - Mont Klouto (29th January 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will have a free day around the beautiful Mont Klouto region, with the opportunity to head out on optional forest walks or to visit Kpalimé town nearby.

In the evening, we will head to the village centre to see a spectacular show of drumming and dancing from the local villagers.

Day 6 - Central Togo (30th January 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Over the next 2 days we will drive up the length of Togo, all the way through the remote northern border with Benin. We will wild camp for 1 night en route.

Day 7 - Tanguieta (31st January 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: Exit Togo at Ketao, enter Benin at Ouaké.

Today we will cross the border into Benin, before continuing our journey to the Tata Somba region close to the town of Tanguiéta.

Day 8 - Tanguieta (1st February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

This morning we will go on an included walking tour of the nearby Tata Somba villages with some of the local villagers. This is a fascinating visit to an area rarely visited by tourists, where we will learn a lot about the local traditional way of life and explore the famous two-storey mud huts of the area.

In the afternoon, there is the option to walk through the stunning area to some nearby waterfalls.

Day 9 - Pendjari NP (2nd February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

From the Tata Somba region we have a short journey north to the beautiful Pendjari NP.

We will stay for two nights wild camping in the NP, where we will have freedom to explore and head out on game drives in the truck in search of wildlife.

Day 10 - Pendjari NP (3rd February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have the entire day to enjoy this national park. One of the only places left in West Africa where wildlife continues to thrive. A lot of work is put into maintaining this park by African Parks who are responsible for many of the lesser known national parks in Africa.

Day 11 - Central Benin (4th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have a full day's drive heading south through Benin. We will wild camp somewhere en route between the towns of Natitingou and Abomey.

Day 12 - Abomey (5th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Our journey today continues to Abomey, the ancient capital of the Dahomey kingdom. On arrival we will take an included tour of the Dahomey Palace and Museum.

Day 13 - Abomey (6th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have a day off from the road and have the time to enjoy the sights and sounds of beautiful Abomey.

Day 14 - Ganvie (7th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

This morning we will drive to Abomey-Calavi (a port on the outskirts of Cotonou), where we say goodbye to the truck for the night and jump aboard motorised pirogues to Ganvie, a fascinating town built entirely on stilts in the middle of Lake Nokoué.

In Ganvie we will stay in the stilt village itself!

Day 15 - Ganvie (8th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will start with an included tour of the stilt town of Ganvie, exploring deeper on our pirogues and soaking up the unique way of life in the floating village. Following this, we will head back to land to re-join the truck and drive along the coastal road to Ouidah, where we may hopefully see many of the local fishermen bringing their catch in.

Day 16 - Grand Popo (9th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will take a very interesting half-day tour of the sites in Ouidah, including the Voodoo Python Temple, the "Route des Esclaves" (Slave Route), La Maison du Brésil art gallery and the Ouidah Museum of History in the old Portuguese Fort of São João Baptista de Ajudá.

After this, a short drive from Ouidah brings us to Grand Popo, where we have 2 nights of well deserved relaxation on the beaches!

Day 17 - Grand Popo (10th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will have a free day at Grand Popo for relaxing on the beach or taking a pirogue trip around the nearby ocean and mangroves.

There is also an option this evening to visit an incredible local vodun (voodoo) ceremony in the nearby village, complete with very energetic dancing and incredible magic tricks! It may also be possible to take a night walk in search of Atlantic turtles, which lay their eggs on the beaches between November and March.

Day 18 - Agbodrafo (11th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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

Leaving the beach behind, our journey continues over the border from Benin and back into Togo. We will head to the small quiet town of Agbodrafo on the southern shores of Lake Togo.

This afternoon we will take an included pirogue trip to Togoville, the centre of Vodun culture, where you will have a guided city tour and church visit.

Day 19 - Keta (12th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: exit Togo at Lomé, enter Ghana at Aflao.

Today we will cross back into Ghana and head for Keta, where we will visit the very atmospheric and evocative ruins of the abandoned Fort Prinzenstein, built by the Danes 300 years ago as a transit point for transporting slaves to the Americas.

Day 20 - Accra (13th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

The final drive of this trip takes us back to Accra, the chaotic capital of Ghana!

Day 21 - Accra (14th February 2021)

Border information: if you are joining in Accra, then you will most likely enter Ghana at Accra Kotoka International Airport (IATA code: ACC).

There will be an important group meeting at 10:00am at the joining hotel - please look out at the hotel reception for a note from your leader with more details about this important meeting. Your leader will collect your kitty and check your passport, visas, and insurance details at this meeting.

The afternoon will be free to explore the city of Accra.

Please note that many of the options listed below will only be possible for those with extra time in Accra before the start of your trip with us - please contact the Sales team if you would like to book pre-tour accommodation with us to have extra time exploring Accra.

Day 22 - Kumasi (15th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Leaving Accra behind us, we journey north through Ghana's interior to the historic town of Kumasi.

Day 23 - Kumasi (16th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today, we will have lots of time for free exploration of the fascinating town and its museums. Kumasi is the home of West Africa's largest market and was the centre of the Ashanti Kingdom.

Day 24 - Kakum NP (17th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will drive south to the rainforests of Kakum NP. On arrival we will head out on an included evening walk through the forests in search of wildlife, bugs and snakes! We may also have the chance to visit a small animal sanctuary en route.

Day 25 - Elmina (18th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have an early start with an included morning visit to the Kakum NP canopy walkways. These are a long series of hanging bridges at the forest canopy level that gives us a unique perspective of the rainforest - and at that time of the morning we will have the place to ourselves!

We will then head back south to the Atlantic coast and into Cape Coast for a fascinating and moving tour of the old slave fort there.

We will then move to our stunning beach resort in Brenu Akynin near the town of Elmina.

Day 26 - Elmina (19th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, we will get involved with community projects currently being run in the Elmina area by the SABRE Charitable Trust. The Trust does very valuable work in developing educational projects across Ghana, with a focus on providing early-years education - we have been visiting their projects and providing a day of help and a donation for many years, allowing us to give a little back and to experience a wonderful bit of community interaction. The exact experience will depend on what the Trust has a need for at the time, but we could be asked to help to paint a classroom, do a bit of gardening in one of the schools, or simply come and play some games with the children!

We will also have time for an optional visit to Elmina Castle and to relax on the beautiful beaches on Ghana's Atlantic Coast.

Day 27 - Grand Bassam (20th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: Exit Ghana at Elubo, enter Côte d'Ivoire at Elubo.

Today we will follow the Atlantic coast and cross into Côte d'Ivoire, arriving at the old French colonial capital of Grand Bassam situated east of Abidjan.

Day 28 - Grand Bassam (21st February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have free time to explore the old colonial town.

Day 29 - Grand Bassam (22nd February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Our final day in Grand Bassam is the perfect day to relax on the beautiful beaches around our hotel.

Day 30 - Yamoussoukro (23rd February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive to Yamoussoukro, the tiny and bizarre capital of Côte d'Ivoire. Yamoussoukro was the birthplace of Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the first president of independent Côte d'Ivoire, and is also the unusual location of the colossal and breathtaking Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, the largest Christian church in the world.

In the afternoon we will have an included visit to the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace, and then have free time to further explore the small city.

Day 31 - Korhogo (24th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will drive through the lush countryside to the northern Ivorian town of Korhogo, famed for the multitude of crafts that are made there.

Day 32 - Korhogo (25th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today, we will head out on an included tour around many of the handicraft workshops in the area, visiting painters, bead makers, wood carvers and cloth weavers. We will also have time to freely explore the town and its surroundings.

Day 33 - Western Côte d'Ivoire (26th February 2021)

Over the next 2 days, we will drive through central Côte d'Ivoire and then cross its western border into Guinea. This journey will take us through some very remote areas and some very poor-quality dirt roads, so a great deal of flexibility is needed as our progress will largely be determined by the state of the roads.

Day 34 - Western Côte d'Ivoire (27th February 2021)

Today we continue our journey through the wilds of Cote d'Ivoire. It is on days like this when you get to see just how untamed this area is and appreciate how lucky you are to get a taste of life here.

Day 35 - Nzekore (28th February 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: Exit Côte d'Ivoire at Gbapleu, enter Guinea at Gbakoré.

Today we will cross the border into Guinea arriving in the small far-eastern town of Nzerekoré in the heart of Guinea's Forest Region.

Day 36 - Nzekore (1st March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today, we will have free time to relax after our journey and explore the town, the nearby villages, and the surrounding forests.

Day 37 - Faranah (2nd March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Over the next 2 days we will travel through the central region of Guinea, stopping for a night in one of the towns en route (depending on how the drive goes, this may be Macenta or Guéckédou), and then arriving at Faranah near the Sierra Leonean border. En route we will stop to visit one of the region's famous vine bridges (Pont de Liana).

Day 38 - Faranah (3rd March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

We will arrive at the small Guinean town of Faranah today.

The road conditions in this area can be pretty tough going and unpredictable, and progress can be greatly affected by the weather conditions, so flexibility is very important over these days.

Day 39 - Kabala (4th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Border information: Exit Guinea and enter Sierra Leone at Gberia-Fotombu.

The next 2 days are spent travelling from Guinea over to Sierra Leone through the remote border near Kabala, driving through scenic areas very rarely visited by tourists.

The road conditions in this area can be pretty tough going and unpredictable, and progress can be greatly affected by the weather conditions, so flexibility is very important over these days.

Kabala is famous for being an oasis of cool air in the hills of northern Sierra Leone, and for its traditional Ronko-dyed clothes - shirts or gowns made of strips of cloth, typically dyed a rusty reddish-brown using local pigments. We will have free time to explore the area on arrival.

Day 40 - Kabala (5th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we will reach Kabala and should have the afternoon free to wander the town or climb the famous Gbawuria Hill.

Day 41 - Makeni (6th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we start our journey south through Sierra Leone towards the Tiwai Wildlife Sanctuary.

Day 42 - Tiwai Island (7th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we will arrive at the Tiwai Island Sanctuary, one of Sierra Leone's largest inland islands.

Day 43 - Tiwai Island (8th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, we will enjoy various nature walks through the web of trails that weave through the Tiwai forest. We'll be in search of the rare and colourful primates that inhabit the sanctuary, and if we're very lucky we may spot a very rare pygmy hippo!

Day 44 - Freetown Peninsula (9th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we have a full day drive across Sierra Leone to the stunning beaches of the Freetown Peninsula, where we will spend 3 nights.

There are a few different options for which beaches we could choose to visit, our favourites being Bureh Beach at the south of the peninsula and River Number 2 Beach in the western part.

On the beaches there will be the chance to go fishing, take a boat to explore the Banana Islands, get to know the local communities, and of course relax on the beautiful beaches!

Day 45 - Freetown Peninsula (10th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We will have 2 full days for optional activities on the wonderful beaches - we could go fishing, take a boat to explore the Banana Islands, get to know the local communities, and of course relax on the beautiful beaches!

Day 46 - Freetown Peninsula (11th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Our final day on this beautiful beach we make the most of this time to relax before the journey continues.

Day 47 - Freetown (12th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Today we will have a short drive up the western side of the Freetown Peninsula to arrive in the Aberdeen district of the city of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.

We will have plenty of time to head out and explore the sites in and around Freetown, before heading out for a final group meal together!

Day 48 - Freetown (13th March 2021)

Meals: Breakfast

Border information: if you are leaving in Freetown, you will most likely exit Sierra Leone at Freetown Lungi International Airport (IATA code: FNA).

Today is the end day for passengers finishing their trip in Freetown. Please note there is no accommodation included on the trip tonight - please contact the Sales Team if you are interested in booking extra nights of accommodation in order to fully explore and take part in some of the optional activities listed below.

Airport information - the fastest and most reliable way to the airport from Freetown is by water-taxi, as Lungi is across a bay from the city. Our hotel in Freetown is a 200m walk to the jetty where the water-taxis depart from - the departure times for the water-taxis are linked to every flight in and out of Lungi airport (usually around 4 hours before the time of the flight). We advise that when the trip arrives in Freetown, you go to the jetty to check the timetable for the water-taxis for your flight and purchase a ticket in advance (USD40 or EUR35) - your trip leader will be able to assist with this. The ticket counter at the jetty is open 24 hours a day.

You should arrive at the jetty 30 minutes before the departure time, as you have to check in your large bags and take a luggage ticket. The water-taxi takes approximately 30 minutes, then you take a minibus for another 15 minutes to arrive at Lungi airport. Your large bags will be waiting for you at the water-taxi office on the left-hand-side of the airport entrance, just hand in your luggage ticket to get them back.

Accommodation:

ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

The routes, activities and places visited described in these notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only. By their very nature, overland itineraries need to be flexible and the regions that we are travelling through are often unpredictable. We intend to follow the planned route but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed and it sometimes happens that we decide to make a change to our planned itinerary. This may be for a variety of reasons; climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions may demand it. Changes to the itinerary may occur with little notice so please be prepared for modifications to your trip.

Drive Times

Drive times are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. These are the approximate number of hours that the vehicle will be in motion, and does not include any time taken for coffee or lunch stops, border crossings, photo stops, activities en route, comfort breaks, shopping stops, toilet stops, etc. The times given are approximate estimates only and whilst given with the best of intentions, the drive times are heavily dependent on traffic, road conditions, weather, police roadblocks, and many other factors.

Accommodation and Meals Included

The type of accommodation and included meals are listed for each day of the itinerary. These listings show our intention and on most departures the listings will be accurate. However due to the flexible nature of overland itineraries, climatic, bureaucratic or road conditions may demand changes to our listed intentions or groups may simply decide to amend the plans from time to time.

Optional Activities

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Certain activities may not be available on your particular visit and it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination. It is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there. Prices listed are for entrance only and do not include transport costs to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. The prices are displayed according to our latest information and in the best faith, but prices do fluctuate due to exchange rates, season, numbers of participants, and simple increases from the operator, and therefore any prices listed are a guide only and cannot be guaranteed. If you partake in any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities. For more information around activity safety and insurance, please see the Essential Information document.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In the event of a real emergency once you have left your home country, please contact us on our out of office hours number. If you cannot get through on the phone, please leave a message with your name, reference number, contact details and a message with the help that you need and we will get back to you. Please bear in mind that real progress or action may not be possible until normal office hours, depending on the issue.

If your flight is delayed, please inform us as soon as you can and then make your way to the joining hotel as instructed in the Joining Point section of these notes.

Out of hours Number: +44 (0) 7985 106564

A FEW RULES

We expect all group members to act respectfully towards our staff and other group members. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Engaging in commercial or exploitative sexual activities, committing acts of violence or threatening violence towards local people, other group members or any member of our staff is not allowed. Any customer engaging in such activities will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

You must at all times comply with the laws, customs, foreign exchange and drug regulations of all countries visited and conduct yourself in accordance with our responsible travel policy. Any customer found contravening such laws or regulations will be required to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price.

Although we are aware that in some parts of the world taking, carrying or selling drugs, or carrying weapons may be legal, it is not acceptable for Dragoman customers and our tour leaders have the right to ask you to leave the trip immediately with no refund of the trip price if you are found to be engaging in such activities.

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.

IMPORTANT NOTES

OVERLANDING LIFESTYLE

Dragoman was founded in 1981, and has had many years of experience of leading overland trips across 4 continents. Overlanding is all about sharing a great travelling experience with like-minded people. On your trip you'll travel in one of Dragoman's purpose-built iconic expedition vehicles on an off-the-beaten-track adventure along rugged roads, experiencing the sights, sounds and smells of the world up-close. Your journey will be overland, sometimes across vast distances, so some long days spent driving are inevitable - but these will be interspersed with breaks of a day or two at a destination or activity.

On an overland journey, you are more than just a passenger and everyone gets involved setting up camp - we supply the tent but it's up to you to pitch it! As part of your trip, you will be assigned a truck job which could be collecting firewood or water, luggage loading, organising food, stores, etc. Like all great adventures, the more you put in the more you'll get out! For more details of how an overlanding trip works, please see the Essential Information document.

SAFETY STANDARDS

We run adventure journeys in off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure. You should expect that some of these areas do not adhere to 'Western' safety standards. For more information, please see the Essential Information document

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN REMOTE AREAS

We will be travelling to areas in remote locations where medical assistance will not be available, and communications may be sparse. We do not carry satellite phones on our regular trips. Therefore, if you have a medical condition such as a heart condition that would put you at risk, we would suggest that this is not the trip for you. Also, please be aware that should an emergency occur, there is likely to be a considerable delay in accessing medical care, and by joining our trip you accept this risk.

VISAS, HEALTH, INSURANCE & MONEY

Before you travel there are vital things to consider such as:

- Any visas needed for your trip
- Any vaccinations needed (please consult your GP or travel clinic)
- Organising your local payment (the kitty)
- Buying travel insurance (insurance is compulsory to be allowed to join our trips)

For more information on these topics, please see the Essential Information Document.

GHANA NOTES

TOGO NOTES

BENIN NOTES

SIERRA LEONE NOTES

CÔTE D'IVOIRE NOTES

CÔTE D'IVOIRE NOTE

This trip travels to areas of Côte d'Ivoire bordering Liberia, where there has been recent political tension.

The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently advises against all but essential travel to parts of Côte d'Ivoire, including the western region of Dix-Huit Montagnes, through which our trips in the country pass when coming to or from eastern Guinea. Our route passes by the town of Man and the border of Danané.

Please see the link below for more details:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cote-d-ivoire>

Our trip is scheduled to pass through this region for one day. From all the advice given to us from the FCO and also from our local ground agents, we have decided to continue to travel through this area on this itinerary. The majority of the problems occur a large distance to the south of where we travel, and any alternative routes that avoid this area are not currently an option due to the condition of the roads.

It's important to understand that your travel insurance may be affected by travelling through this region, so please seek advice from your travel insurance company to check your coverage for travel in these regions. We recommend taking insurance through an insurer who will cover you for this travel. Should you choose to embark on your travel without appropriate travel insurance cover, please understand that you undertake this at your own personal risk.

Non-UK clients should check the travel advice of their own governments, as this may be different to the British FCO advice. Some relevant links are provided below:

Australian Government travel warning

http://smartraveller.gov.au/countries/ivory_coast

Canadian Government travel warning

<http://travel.gc.ca/destinations/cote-d-ivoire-ivory-coast?>

New Zealand travel warning

<https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/cote-divoireivory-coast>

GUINEA NOTES

Please ensure you have an up to date version of these notes. **These notes were printed on the 27th May 2020**