

West African Wanders

Part 1 Glorious Ghana 20 Aug-3 Sept 2019

Extension- New Year's Festivals in Togo- 3-9 Sept 2019

Group leaders Fiona Wright and Praveen Nayak Ghana, home to the mighty Ashanti Kingdom and fought over by Colonial Powers for its many riches is now a shining light in Africa; a stable nation moving forward in the modern world.

One of Ghana's many riches is its textile and bead-making traditions that still prosper to this very day. We'll travel this fascinating country from the dry grasslands of the north down to the tropical beaches of the south observing traditional methods in textiles and bead making as well as participating in workshops to make treasures to take home.

Weaving, Batik, Indigo, Beads...there are many small artisan workshops to visit [in the West we would name these Fairtrade type ventures- dealing directly with the makers at reasonable prices]

Enlarge your stash for back home projects and take time to learn how it is done [bring an apron you will be getting your hands dirty!]

Warning: Ghanaian fabric from handmade batik to African wax print is completely addictive.

Togo will offer a very exciting visit to New Year's Festivals- wild beats, much dancing and rejoicing.

Creative Arts Safaris tours are - art and culture based with a hands-on, get out and about type attitude.

-we utilise good quality mid-range accommodation and search out good places to eat - "Ghana is not really known for flash accommodation often 70's revival springs to mind..." as one guide book points out; the places we use are always the best available- very clean, always western-style bathrooms, friendly service and comfortable rooms.

- 2 homestays- the privilege of being in someone's home and so warmly welcomed
- most meals included- see itinerary.

- Drinks separate.
- groups of 8-14 participants

These trips are not traditional package tours, rather it is hoped we can travel as a group of friends;

Creative Arts Safaris have done the research, our tutor handles the artistic side and a host makes sure it runs smoothly; we all share our observations and knowledge along the way. [any info you pick up in preparation is easy to share with the group via the internet and helps

Part 1

Day 1-Tues, 20 Aug 2019 Accra, Ghana

Arrivals to Kotaka International Airport in Accra, where you'll be met and transferred to our hotel.

Day 2-Wed, 21 Aug 2019 Accra

Bring your apron, we are straight into a batik workshop with Esther. Batik; rich, multi-layered batik is a highly desired dress material in Ghana

Cost - US\$4990- Part 1 twin share

Extension- US\$1690 twin

Single supplement ...US \$850 [Ext- US\$350]

Deposit to book today US\$2200

Deposit Deadline 20 May, 2019

Full payment due 20 May, 2019

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and our teacher's business produces some of the best around.

By the end of the day you'll have worked up 2 metres to take home with you and had a wonderful home cooked lunch. Artisan's Alliance and coffin viewing in the afternoon- these are not just any coffins but works of art!

[Includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 3-Thurs, 22 Aug 2019 Korfuidua /Atimpoku

This morning we are heading to the Koforidua bead market. Held weekly it is a treasure trove for the bead addicted and the centre of the bead trade in West Africa and increasingly international clients as well.

In the afternoon we are heading to Atimpoku and a beautiful spot on the Volta River for the evening.

[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 4-Fri, 23 Aug 2019 Atimpoku/Atsiekpoe /Accra

A bit of an adventure today- crossing the Volta River to the small village of Atsiekpoe to poke around and experience village life.

[Includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 5-Sat, 24 Aug 2019 Atimpoku /Accra, Ghana

Back to Accra this morning and the afternoon will find us wandering around to see what's on at the Chale Wote.

WE are trying to pin down the exact date of the festival so fingers crossed- will keep you updated.

www.vogue.com/article/accra-ghana-chale-wote-festival-street-style-2018

Day 6-Sun, 25 Aug 2019 Accra/ Tamale/Bolgatanga/ Karimenga

After an early start and short flight we are heading to the far north of Ghana and the evocative painted village of Sirigu, then check out the Navrongo Cathedral, on the UNESCO tentative list. This area is renowned for its arts, crafts and traditional architecture.

Smock market and Basket makers to visit along the way and then we are staying in a beautiful eco-tourism grass hut style guesthouse tonight- we'll book the whole place and have a range of rooms or the option to sleep on the roof, local style.

[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 7- Mon, 26 Aug 2019 Karimenga/Tamale

Working with local women we will start the day learning how to make shea butter- a fabulous moisturizer it literally grows on trees in this area.

This community has also pooled their resources to make a village library- if you have a spare spot in your bag you might like to bring a children's book to donate. In the afternoon we are heading south to Tamale for the night.

[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 8- Tues, 27 Aug 2019 Tamale- Daboya

Today is a real adventure: we'll visit the isolated village of Daboya, west of Tamale, after we cross the White Volta River by dug-out canoe. We'll need dash to gift the chief

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and then wander the village to view strip weaving and indigo dyeing. "Daboya strips" are used throughout northern Ghana to make the distinctive smock worn by the men of the region. Definitely off the tourist trail, Daboya feels like we are stepping into the past as we cross savannah where the shea trees grow.

[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 9- Wed, 28 Aug 2019 Tamale/Kumasi

Starting south today we go to Kumasi, a big drive watching the scenery change from the semi-arid north to the more fertile Kumasi region and a lovely waterfall along the way. *[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]*

Day 10-Thurs, 29 Aug 2019 Kumasi

Kumasi, home to the legendary Ashanti kingdom and heart of traditional crafts and culture of Ghana. This is a base for a few days to explore the region.

An early visit to a weaving village to see Ashanti Kente weaving— this village is special also for the responsible approach to tourism— a well-informed info centre and a village that believes tourists should be able to wander around in peace and appreciate their village.

In the afternoon- Adinkra Printing with Gabriel [Gabriel says Adinkra means talking and each symbol associated with this style has a clear meaning, so your choice of symbols imparts a lot of information]. Gabriel and his family still source bark from up towards the Sahara to make the traditional inks.

[includes breakfast, lunch]

Day 11-Fri, 30 Aug 2019 Kumasi

Today is all about Ashanti culture and history, crafts and stories as well.

[includes breakfast, lunch]

Day 12-Sat, 31 Aug 2019 Kumasi/ Cape Coast

Major Market Meander Day this morning ...delve into the enormous Central Market at the heart of Kumasi [it boasts to be biggest in West Africa!] ...it seems literally anything is possible in this market even things you never dreamed could be there...textiles, food, second hand goods, the odd fetish item or 100– parrot wings, dried bats, vulture heads all those things to stock the cupboard back home!

A guided tour of the market in the morning then we head off to Cape Coast today.

[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 13-Sun, 1 Sept 2019 Cape Coast

Today is about African time...taking it easy at a beach side resort, we will check out the history of the area, this coast was once the centre of the nefarious slave trade. Cape Coast and its castle has been possessed by many European nations in its history and is a now a world Heritage site-lots to explore.

This area is famous for its Fante Flags- appliqued flags of various warrior groups, last visit we were lucky enough to be invited to a flag viewing and hope we can repeat it, it depends on the honourable, elderly gentleman responsible for his troupes' flags- we will try.

Afternoon visit to the beauty parlour and learning

Creative Arts Safaris tours include:

- pickups from the airport for arrivals
- departures last day of tour
- accommodation from check in time of Day 1 up to and including the night of our Farewell Dinner

Our accommodation is generally mid-range. All places are clean, friendly and have western bathrooms! It is ambiance and friendliness we are looking for, accommodation tends to be on the simple side in Ghana but always friendly and spotlessly clean.

- all transportation, road taxes and fuel costs for the tour
- Internal flight to Tamale
- all breakfasts and many other meals

Food is a reflection of the culture, we tend to favour local cuisine but western style food is also available in the large towns.

- sightseeing entrance fees
- all tuition fees

You need to cover:

- a few meals
- all drinks
- laundry
- the one expense that we can't guestimate' for you is shopping! *[this is not a shopping expedition but you will see some amazing things and you will probably want to indulge!]*
- **airfares**
- **travel insurance**
- **visa** [where necessary]

- We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organisations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category. Don't worry there are also lots of other markets we can visit too!

Notes

Accommodation— is not so fancy in Ghana, we go for the best we can find, clean and friendly and AC if available [everywhere except grass hut].

Food— In Ghana, food is plentiful and fresh, local diet is based on a starch— rice or other things such as fou-fou and a sauce/soup on top that can include chicken, guinea fowl, meat or vegetables...sometimes a peanut sauce. Sometimes spicy...excellent fish along the coast. Perhaps a little repetitive but tasty.

Weather — At this time of year is warm to hot and humid closer to the coast— loose layers a good idea. It is also the end of the Harmattan season, when a dusty wind blows in off the Sahara...cold by local standards... around 32°C + in day time.

Clothing — light weight layers of clothing is good. Light, loose layers work well with the climate. Generally I find 3 or 4 outfits sufficient, there is always the opportunity to pick up things along the way. Sun hat is a good idea.

Shoes — sensible walking shoes such as sneakers or strapped on sandals are the best options. Surfaces are often rough and you really want your footing stable so you can focus on all the wonderful things everywhere to look at!

Money — ATMs are in all towns- so you can use a Visa based travel card, **VISA** debit or credit advance easily Note Visa not Mastercard etc. If you plan to use a card overseas DO warn your bank to expect overseas activity — some will freeze the card wondering what is happening. Forex Bureaux Money Changers to change currency, very limited possibilities to change traveller's cheques.

Power — 240 volts, UK style power points.

Tipping — not a big issue in Ghana, usually 10 % in a flash restaurant.

Step lightly on our environment, be frugal in water use, turn off power switches, take rubbish with you where possible.

Say NO to Plastic! Please bring a cloth carry bag.

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how to put on the amazing headwraps all women wear.
[includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day14- Mon, 2 Sept 2019 Cape Coast/ Elmina/Accra
Picturesque Elmina today just down the coast and then up to Accra for last minute shopping and a farewell dinner [includes breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day15- Tues, 3 Sept 2019 Departures Accra/Home
[breakfast]

Extention- Togo and New Year Festivals

Fully escorted, with transport, accommodation, English/French various local languages guide, breakfast each day.

You will need to get a visa on arrival as we enter Togo-current cost US\$30

Day1- Tues, 3 Sept 2019 Accra

don't jump on a plane, put your feet up instead

Day 2 to 5- Wed to Sat, 4 to 7 Sept 2019 Lome, Togo
This is an add on to the original itinerary, it is New Year in West Africa, the harvest after the summer rains is in and lots of festivals happen.

We will travel to Lome in Togo as our base and can go out and visit events over the next few days.

The Ekpe Ekpe Voodoo festival of The Ge people is confirmed, associated with that in the area are Puberty Rites and Twin Doll Ceremonies.

Usually the Agbogboza Festival of the Ewe People follows the next day.... But African politics or just simply African time means it sometimes follows by a week. At the moment we can't get a clear confirmation, should come soon.

Either way there is so much going on, amazing markets and villages we will have an exciting few days.

We will visit the Vogan Friday market, the biggest markets in Togo, truly the best place for fetish items [No not leather and whips! Voodoo fetish supplies- Dried creatures, special bones and such]

Day 6- Sun, 8 Sept 2019 Lome/Accra

Return to Accra or fly out of Lome. See what works best for you, I find more flights and better deals out of Accra

Day 7- Mon, 9 Sept 2019 Accra/home

Cost is roughly US\$1690 – depends on numbers joining us and would decrease a little if more than 5 of us go.

If you are joining us, please consider filling that extra space in your suitcase with empty glass bottles. Especially in blue– it will make the perfect present for the re-cycled glass bead makers. Bombay Sapphire Gin is especially desired because the bottle makes the most beautiful blue beads!

Children's books are great gifts for various village libraries we will visit along the way.

Getting in the Zone

Fiction can be a great way to pick up details and insight.

I particularly enjoyed

- **Cloth Girl-** by Marilyn Heward Mills- lovely story set in the period of transition from colonial times to independence ... I enjoyed the insights into Ga culture [the dominant group along the coast around Accra] and was reminded of lovely home cooked food I had experienced during visits. Notice the name, when you are in Ghana you will start to see the importance of cloth to the culture. MHM is a writer to follow– great story teller.
- **Ama – A story of the Atlantic Slave Trade** -Manu Herrnstein a much sadder story
- **Roots** is the mini series is being re-made? It would be interesting to look out for
- **John Gillows African Textiles** Good reference, Great images
- **Asafo African Flags of the Fanti** -so quirky, might be inspiration for a little hand stitched piece made on the trip.
- **African Wax Print -Magie Relph and Robert Irwin.** Good insight into a remarkable vibrant fabric design genre - lovingly researched, each detail discovered a precious morsel.

When travelling always good to seek advice from a trusted travel doctor.

**NOTE for Ghana Yellow Fever
Vaccination and Certificate
MANDATORY**

