

# EXPLORE!

## Kingdom of the Ashanti

14 days

Ghana - Trip code GN

## Kingdom of the Ashanti

From its lush rainforests to its golden sandy beaches, Ghana is a land of immense natural beauty. On this journey through one of Africa's friendliest nations we experience its diverse and rich culture, visiting vibrant markets, traditional Lobi villages and the striking mud-stick mosques. We also observe monkeys, track wild elephants and visit the impressive Gold Coast castles.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Kakum N.P.** - A walk in the lush rainforest and the chance to join an optional exhilarating canopy tour.
- ★ **Bolgatanga and the Far North** - Lobi Villages, distinctive local architecture and painted houses in the Wa region.
- ★ **Mole** - A walking safari in the park to look for elephants.
- ★ **Kumasi** - The vibrant colours of the largest market in West Africa.
- ★ **Gold Coast Castles** - The impressive 18th Century castle of Elmina, a UNESCO World Heritage Site

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

#### TRIP PACE:

##### Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

#### GROUP SIZE:

##### 10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join tour Accra

Join your tour in Accra today. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to explore the city independently before meeting the rest of the group, who will arrive from London on day 2 in the early morning.

 Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Explore the old town of Accra and drive to Koforidua

This morning we will have some free time to recover from the flight. In the afternoon we will head into Accra for some sightseeing. Although records of Accra date back to the 15th century, the capital of Ghana is a modern city with independence monuments and countless back streets. We'll take a tour later today to see The Kwame Nkrumah circle and Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum. We'll drive through James Town, an area of colonial architecture topped with a 30m lighthouse, and pause at Fort Ussher where Kwame Nkrumah was imprisoned (an un-developed Alcatraz). Independence square is a Pseudo-soviet curiosity in a city that is otherwise so overflowing with chaotic life. There may be time this afternoon to visit the National Museum and the National Craft Centre before we drive to Koforidua.



**Accommodation: Capital View Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

### DAY 3 - Visit an Ashanti Shrine and cocoa plantation

This morning we visit a cocoa research institute and walk through a secondary forest, we will be find indigenous trees, fruit nuts and some species introduced to Ghana during the colonial times. The forest also features a myriad of birds, butterflies and scented herbs. Later today we head north to our overnight stop at Techiman.



**Accommodation: Encom Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - To Mole National Park via Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary

Our drive today takes us first to Boabeng-Fiema village and monkey sanctuary, home to several families of Colobus and Mona monkeys, considered sacred in Ghana. Close by are the 25m high Kintampo Falls, an area also home to a variety of birds, butterflies, indigenous flowers and trees. Before finally reaching Mole National Park we will also stop to visit the Larabanga mosque which is reputedly the oldest building in Ghana, but no-one can quite agree on its age! Some sources date it to the 13th century, which is highly improbable since Islam had barely reached the region at that time. The origins of the mosque relate to a traveller who found a mystic stone, threw his spear and then slept on it. He dreamt about a mosque and when he awoke, the foundations had mysteriously been laid around him. Whatever its origins, it is a striking mudtick building, with minarets and painted walls. We finally enter Mole National Park, the largest park in Ghana. Established in 1958, Mole National Park is mostly flat savannah broken by a high escarpment. Its 4840 square km are home to over 90 species of mammals and 300 species of birds.



**Accommodation: Mole Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Foot safaris in Mole National Park

A highlight of our trip - we make foot safaris with National Park rangers in both the morning and afternoon in search of some of the wildlife which lives here. Species commonly seen include elephant, several kinds of antelope, and monkey (including the Green Vervet and Red Patas monkeys). Up to 150 migratory bird species may also be seen in the Park, depending on the time of our visit.



**Accommodation: Mole Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Exploring the Bolgatanga region

Heading north via Gondja and Dagomba villages we reach Ghana's far north, close to the border with Burkina Faso. Close by our route is Togo, its nearby hills venerated for their many sacred ancestral shrines, and we should have time to visit a local oracle.



**Accommodation: Crystal Ex Tee Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Visit a Bolgatanga market and traditional houses

We spend a full day in the Bolgatanga region, visiting the town's vibrant market, nearby Gurunsi communities with their unique architecture.



**Accommodation: Crystal Ex Tee Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Navrongo Cathedrale with Gurunsi paintings and Dagarti village

Our exploration continues as we turn west toward Wa, capital of the Upper West region. Our journey takes us through the rustic town of Navrongo. In an otherwise mostly Muslim area, Navrongo's predominantly Christian feel reflects its claim as the home of Catholicism in northern Ghana. We will visit the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, a traditionally constructed building notable for its frescos and Gurunsi paintings. We will also pass through Dagarti villages on our route.



**Accommodation: Upland Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Explore the Wa region, visit Lobi villages and meet a tribal chief

We spend much of today exploring Lobi villages. The Lobi comprise a number of ethnic groups in both Ghana and Burkina Faso whose name translates as Children of the Forest. Naturally shy and mistrustful, for years the Lobi had to endure constant attacks from the Guiriko and Kenedougou, as well as the less than sympathetic attentions of the French. Fiercely independent, they still adhere to many of their traditional customs and animist practices, worshipping distinctive wooden fetishes and continuing to uphold their age-old beliefs in the spirit world. Residing in fortified mudbrick compounds in family groups, much like their Dagarti neighbours, the men still carry bows as their ancestors have for generations: the Lobi still have a fearsome reputation as hunters and warriors.



**Accommodation: Upland Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Visit an old Sudanese mosque and head to Techiman

Our drive today takes us south through remote areas of Ghana's far west through the small settlements of Mawule, Banda Nkwanta, and then to Bole where we will pause to see the beautiful mud and stick mosque.



**Accommodation: Encom Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Possibly find an Ashanti funeral to visit in Kumasi

Kumasi is the capital of the Ashanti Kingdom. In the 18th century it was the terminus for the slave trading routes but in the 19th century hostilities between the British colonists and Ashanti culminated in the city being burnt. Now it is Ghana's second largest city. This afternoon we have time to visit the Museum in the Cultural Center. Here we see replicas of the Golden Stool, a sacred object to the Ashanti, for the original stool contains the 'sumsum' or the spirit of the entire Ashanti kingdom. Stools are an important part of Ghana's culture and are considered as an extension of an individual both in life and in death. We attend -if available- a traditional Ashanti funeral attended by mourners wearing beautifully red or black togas. We say "funerals" but in fact we mean a "festive" celebration: the deceased is considered being still present in his family. The relatives and friends gather, socialize and celebrate his memory. The chief arrives surrounded by his court in the shade of large umbrellas as drums give rhythm to the dancers whose intricate moves are highly symbolic.



**Accommodation: Okubi Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Visit the King's Palace, central market and the Jubilee Museum

This morning we explore more of Kumasi including Manhyia Palace and Kejetia, the largest open air market in West Africa. Here some 10,000 traders haggle and barter amongst the hectic array of exotic herbs and spices, colourful pots and utensils and unusual foods, such as giant snails (sold either alive or roasted!). We then drive down to Anomabu on the Atlantic coast.



**Accommodation: Anomabu Beach Resort** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 13 - Explore Kakum National Park and visit Elmina Castle

This morning we head inland today to visit Kakum National Park. Here the rainforest is one of the most extensive in Ghana, and for those with a good head for heights, there is a canopy walkway some 40m high (optional). This walkway is unique in Africa and offers a rare opportunity to see the forest at the canopy level. This afternoon we visit Elmina Castle. The castles here were built along the entire Ghana coast by the colonial powers of the 15th century to protect merchants and their vested interests, and to create safe anchorages for their ships from the ferocity of the Atlantic Ocean. The castles were also used for 'storing' slaves before they were shipped abroad and so in effect were dungeons as well. Built on the profits of the then lucrative gold and slave trade, the castles became important symbols of European power in the region. With the eventual abolition of the slave trade emphasis changed to the more accepted forms of commerce - coffee, wood and spices. Here we'll visit Elmina Castle.



**Accommodation: Anomabu Beach Resort** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 14 - Free time in Anomabu; drive to Accra where tour ends

This morning we have free time on the beach in Anomabu, a last chance for a swim and to enjoy the ocean. We make our way to Accra at lunch time and have a last chance to visit the artisan market.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 13



## Transport

Bus  
Boat



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)



## Accommodation

12 nights standard hotel

# Trip information

## Country information

### Ghana Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

Ghana has a mostly tropical climate with more rain falling inland. Central and Southern Ghana have two rainy seasons from May-June and mid-Sept to early October. Rain usually falls in short bursts in the afternoon or early evening. Travel is generally unaffected by the rains except on some of the less wellmaintained roads. Temperatures are usually in the high 20's °C all year round, but can reach the mid 30s from December though to April. Humidity is high. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

3 Pin Flat

#### Religion

Christian

#### Language

English

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

Mole NP - Game Drive US\$30 per person (dependent on numbers) Cape Coast castle - Guided tour US\$15 per person.

### Clothing

Temperatures are warm and humidity is high year round, but warm clothing may be needed for early morning starts. Lightweight waterproofs are recommended. Brightly coloured clothing should be avoided for game walks. Bring swimwear and a sunhat (or buy one locally). Women may feel more comfortable with their legs covered in the northern Muslim region. Please note: wearing military apparel such as camouflage clothing by civilians is prohibited.

## Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes and sandals for relaxing/travelling.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack.

## Equipment

Water bottle, towel, insect repellent, and a torch (head torch) are essential. Binoculars are useful for bird watching.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 25 for tipping local staff. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Country Information

### Ghana Holidays & Tours

#### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

##### Lunch price

£6

##### Dinner price

£10

##### Beer price

£2.5

##### Water price

£1

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Cedi.

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

You should take the majority of your spending money in U.S Dollars, or Sterling, mixed denomination bills in good condition. Higher rates of exchange are available for larger US\$ bills.

##### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

##### ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn at ATMs in major towns but these should not be relied upon.

##### Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants.

##### Travellers Cheques

Dollar or Sterling Travellers Cheques (Thomas Cook or American Express) can be exchanged in major towns but this can be time consuming and should not be relied upon. Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currencyexpress.com/explore/>



## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Boat

### Accommodation notes

#### Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Ghana's infrastructure for tourism is still very much developing. You must come prepared for some basic accommodation.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa Information

Ghana: Visas are required by UK, US, Canadian, New Zealand and Australian citizens and should be obtained before departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

### Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

#### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Ghana Holidays & Tours**

### **Vaccinations**

A valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for entry into Ghana. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid and polio. Although the risk is low you may also consider immunisation against rabies and meningococcal meningitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against Malaria. We also recommend that you take your vaccination certificates with you as they may be requested on entry to Ghana. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

---