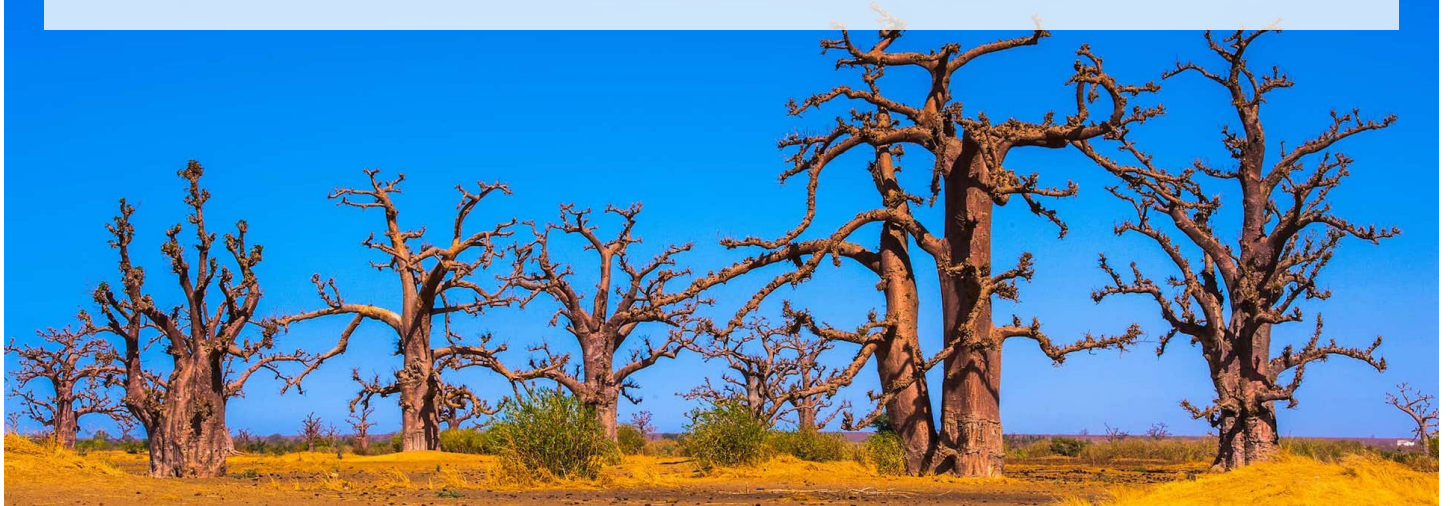


# EXPLORE!

## Senegal and Gambia River Cruise

13 days

Senegal, The Gambia - Trip code SE



## Senegal and Gambia River Cruise

On African adventure we discover two different nations: tropical Gambia and exotic Senegal. We walk through French colonial towns, see prolific birdlife and visit the megalithic stone circles at Wassu. We also explore some of the region's finest wildlife parks, cruise down the Gambia River and venture into the Saloum Delta by traditional pirogue canoe.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Djoudj** - One of the most important bird sanctuaries in the world.
- ★ **Gambia River** - A two day cruise on the mighty Gambia River through tropical forest, bamboo groves, rice paddies and mangroves.
- ★ **Saloum Delta** - Explore the river delta by traditional pirogue through mangroves and aquatic birds.
- ★ **Isle de Goree** - A tranquil island rich in history and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- ★ **Fadiout** - A charming fishing village entirely constructed with shells.
- ★ **Saint Louis** - Visit a 19th century French colonial town by caleche.
- ★ **Wassu Stone Circles** - Ancient burial sites and megalithic circles.

#### 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:

##### Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

#### 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 Dakar (Senegal)

Land only customers will join the tour this evening and have a chance to meet your fellow group members and relax while soaking up the local Senegalese ambience.



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



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Ferry to the Island of Goree; Visit this UNESCO World Heritage Site

We begin our tour by taking a ferry to Isle de Goree, a small and peaceful island without any traffic. We will take a walking tour of Isle de Goree, a busy trading centre during the 18th and 19th centuries, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town's architecture may make you feel you have been transported in time to an old-world Mediterranean district, due to the island's charming colonial-style houses, wrought-iron balconies, narrow streets and brightly coloured bougainvillea. Le Castel is situated on a rocky plateau with its fortifications dating back to different periods, and offers good views across to Dakar. Also worth visiting is the Slave House originally built in 1786.



**Accommodation: Hotel Le Bouffler** (or similar)



Simple Guesthouse



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Visit the Pink Lake then transfer to St. Louis

This morning we return to the mainland by ferry and drive to Lac Rose - the Pink Lake. This large shallow lagoon is extremely salty and is also renowned for its pink tinge, caused by the high concentrations of minerals in the water. We continue north to St. Louis, a UNESCO World Heritage site for an evening at leisure in this quaint town.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Djoudj bird reserve and St Louis;- Visit a charming french colonial town

An early start to visit Djoudj National Park, regarded as one of the most important bird reserves in the world. This national park provides the first major water source for migratory birds after their long and gruelling flight over the Sahara desert. We travel by motorised boat along the complex network of channels which lead off the Senegal River. The bird count reaches millions, some species are prevalent such as pelicans - there are as many as 15,000 in the park. We may see them performing an amazing display of synchronised diving for fish and will see a breeding colony. Around three million birds pass through the park annually which includes 400 different species - including herons, white-breasted cormorants, spoonbills, jacanas, Egyptian geese, West African fish eagles and flamingos to name but a few. You may also see crocodile, wild hog, monitor lizard and water python. We return back to St. Louis early afternoon in time for a break. Then mid-afternoon we will explore this marvellous old town by calesh (horse-drawn carriage). Full of 19th century French colonial buildings, this was the first French settlement in Africa and the Headquarters of Senegambia (the term used to describe the whole region). By the late 18th century St Louis was a busy port and trading centre and was inscribed a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Explore the Langue de Barbarie by motorised pirogue

Today we plan to visit the Langue de Barbarie National Park, home to water birds such as flamingos, pelicans, cormorants, herons, egrets and ducks. From November to April they are joined by many more migratory birds from Europe. The afternoon is left free for you to follow your own interests.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Drive to Georgetown (Gambia) via Touba Mosque

Early this morning we head to the Gambia. En route we stop to view the astounding mosque in Touba, the sacred focus of the Mouride Islamic brotherhood. Their founder Amadou Bamba, Senegal's most famous and influential 'marabout' (holy man), is buried here and pilgrims visit the town all year round. We try to pass through here on a Friday when the Mosque is busy with worshippers. Continuing through the town of Kaolack we enter the Gambia and head east following the route of the river to our night's accommodation near Georgetown which was an important administrative centre during the colonial period. It may be possible to experience local traditional dancing after dinner.



**Accommodation: Laminkoto Camp** (or similar)



Simple Rondavels



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 7 - Cruise along the Gambia River; visit to Wassau Stone Circles

The Gambia River flows along the entire length of the country for 300 miles from east to west into the Atlantic Ocean. The banks of the river have been inhabited since 2000 BC and slave ships once travelled along its course exporting slaves. We spend the next two days on this mighty waterway, cruising downstream in a converted groundnut boat, passing tropical forest, bamboo groves, rice paddies and mangrove swamps. Amongst the varied fauna present in this area are monkeys, hippos, crocodiles and of course a great number of bird species. During this day we will visit the Wassau Stone Circles by bush taxi. There are several circles each consisting of about 10 to 24, reddish-brown stones between one and 2.5m high and weighing several tons. These were once burial sites dating back to 500 to 1000 AD, however very little is known about the people who were buried here and the stones still present a mystery to archaeologists. We will stay 1 night on board a motor cruiser. Facilities on board are simple with a western-style WC, a small kitchen and bar. At night we sleep on the upper deck on mattresses, whilst during the day you can relax on the upper deck in the sun or on the lower deck with seating under the shade.



**Accommodation: Gambia Motorcruiser** (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 8 - Cruise to Tendaba

Today we continue our gentle cruise downstream enjoying the flora and wildlife of the river banks as we go. We will arrive in the small settlement of Tendaba on the Gambia's south bank at the end of our cruise. On arrival we leave our boat and check in to our accommodation for the next two nights on the shores of the Gambia River. Whilst staying at Tendaba you may have the opportunity to visit a local school in a nearby village.



**Accommodation: Tendaba Camp** (or similar)



Standard Rondavels



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 9 - At Tendaba; visits to Kiang West and Bao Bolong Wetland Reserves

This morning we take a game drive in Kiang West National Park. One of the largest protected areas in Gambia it boasts the largest and most diverse animal population in the country among is mangrove, grass and woodland. During our time here we look out for baboons, colobus monkeys, warthog, marsh mongoose and bushbuck. Later this afternoon we make another excursion to nearby Boa Bolong Wetland Reserve by boat. A tributary of the Gambia River, the Bao Bolong is most famous for its birdlife with more than 250 species in the area, including the impressive martial eagle and the bateleur.



**Accommodation: Tendaba Camp** (or similar)



Standard Rondavels



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 10 - Drive to Saloum Delta (Senegal)

Today we cross the river once more to Farafenni and return to Senegal. Continuing via Kerewan and Keur Saloum we arrive in Toubakouta to check into our accommodation. The afternoon is at your leisure to relax or explore the local area. This evening you may wish to join other guests to visit the park on an optional boat excursion.



**Accommodation: Keur Saloum Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Rondavels



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 11 - Saoum Delta National Park; pirogue trip north through the Delta to Ndagane

This morning we cross the Sine-Saloum Delta by traditional pirogues (motorised canoe) for approximately 4-5 hours. We weave our way through the maze of wide channels, past mangroves, open forests, sand islands and villages built on islands constructed with oyster shells. We may also chance upon pelicans and flamingos. The afternoon is free for relaxation at Ndagane, our destination for tonight.



**Accommodation: Le Pelican Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Rondavels



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 12 - Drive via Fadiout to Dakar

Leaving Saloum Delta National Park this morning, we finally make our way back to Dakar. En-route we visit Fadiout, a fishing village. Built on a small island, many buildings are composed of oyster and clam shells, whilst the inhabitants are both Muslim and Christian and live together peacefully. The Christian and Muslim cemeteries are built on a huge ancient shell mound, and are worth a visit. On arrival in Dakar there should be time to explore this vibrant city



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



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



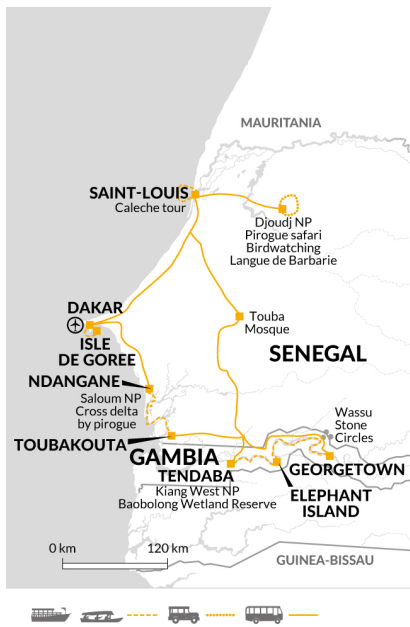
Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 13 - Tour ends in Dakar

The tour ends today in Dakar after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 12  
Lunch: 5  
Dinner: 6



### Transport

Bus  
4WD  
Boat



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Boat Crew  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)



### Accommodation

1 nights simple boat  
1 nights simple guesthouse  
5 nights standard hotel  
1 nights simple rondavels  
4 nights standard rondavels

## Trip information

### Country information

### Senegal Trips

#### Climate

Senegal has a tropical climate with a rainy season between June-October, with more rainfall in the south. Temperatures are in the mid 20s centigrade from November- April and can rise to 35. Humidity is higher and temperatures lower on the coast. Temperatures inland fall at night. Average sunshine hours per day between November- April ranges from 8-10 hrs. The Harmattan is a dry wind which blows from the north, usually from December-February

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

**Religion**

Islam, Christian

**Language**

French

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## The Gambia Trips

**Climate**

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**Time difference to GMT**

0

**Plugs**

3 Pin Flat

**Religion**

Islam

**Language**

English

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

Saloum Delta N.P. - Bird watching trip £12. Ndangane - Calesh Ride £10.

### Clothing

Pack essentially for hot conditions. Light cotton clothing is recommended plus protective headgear in case of strong winds. A light fleece is advisable for cool nights. Long sleeved shirt and trousers help give protection against mosquitoes try avoiding dark colours. A wide-brimmed sun hat is useful for protection during boat trips and sunglasses. Please note: Senegambia is predominantly Muslim and women will need a headscarf plus a full length skirt or sarong for visiting the mosque in Touba.

### Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage (a soft bag/holdall or rucksack) and a daysac , total allowance: 44lb/20kg. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage in and out of hotels - so we recommend you pack light.

### Equipment

Take a sleeping sheet for the Gambia accommodation as it is basic. Sheets and blankets are provided for the river cruise. Binoculars for bird watching and game viewing, a small torch, insect repellent, water bottle and swimwear. A mosquito net may come in useful - many hotels are close to water and although hotels have nets on the windows and over the beds, these are not always 100% effective.

### 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 recognized 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. 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. Accordingly, you should allow £25-30 for tipping.

## Country Information

### Senegal Trips

#### 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**

£11

**Dinner price**

£22

**Beer price**

£1.1

**Water price**

£1.6

#### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

CFA Franc.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

Euros cash.

**Where To Exchange**

Your Tour leader will advise you

**ATM Availability**

Only usually days 1, 3 and 4.

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Very limited and cannot be relied on.

**Travellers Cheques**

Although still the safest way to carry money, travellers cheques are difficult to exchange and therefore not recommended.

### The Gambia Trips

#### 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**

£3

**Dinner price**

£7

**Beer price**

£2

**Water price**

£0.8

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency

Dalasi

### Recommended Currency For Exchange

Euros cash.

### ATM Availability

Only usually days 1, 3 and 4.

### Credit Card Acceptance

Very limited and cannot be relied on.

### Travellers Cheques

Although still the safest way to carry money, travellers cheques are difficult to exchange and therefore not recommended.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, 4WD, 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.

Be prepared for some basic accommodation in the Gambia with limited availability of electricity and hot water. Please note that some of the roads are in a poor state of repair making journey times unreliable (day 5).

## 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

Senegal: Visas are not required for holders of UK passports from 1st May 2015. If travelling on a one way ticket you need to have a minimum of 3 months validity on your passport. If you are travelling on a return ticket your passport must be valid for the proposed

duration of your stay. All other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. The Gambia: Visas are not required for UK when arriving into an international airport or crossing land borders from Senegal to The Gambia. Visas are not required for AUS, & NZ passport holders when arriving into an international airport. Visas are required by US and Canadian citizens and should be obtained before departure. When crossing land borders from Senegal to Gambia an entry stamp is required by some nationalities (unless you already have a valid Gambian visa) and maybe chargeable at approximately GMD3,000 (£60-65). We advise for all passengers to travel with the entry stamp fee in case this charge becomes applicable to other nationalities at short notice. All other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

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.

## Senegal Trips

### Vaccinations

Although not compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid, polio and yellow fever. You may also want to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis. Yellow fever is only compulsory if arriving from an endemic area. Malaria is present in the region so consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available

against malaria. You must travel with your current vaccinations card/booklet as this will be requested by the Senegalese border authorities.

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## **The Gambia Trips**

### **Vaccinations**

Although not compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid, polio and yellow fever. You may also want to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis. Yellow fever is only compulsory if arriving from an endemic area. Malaria is present in the region so consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

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