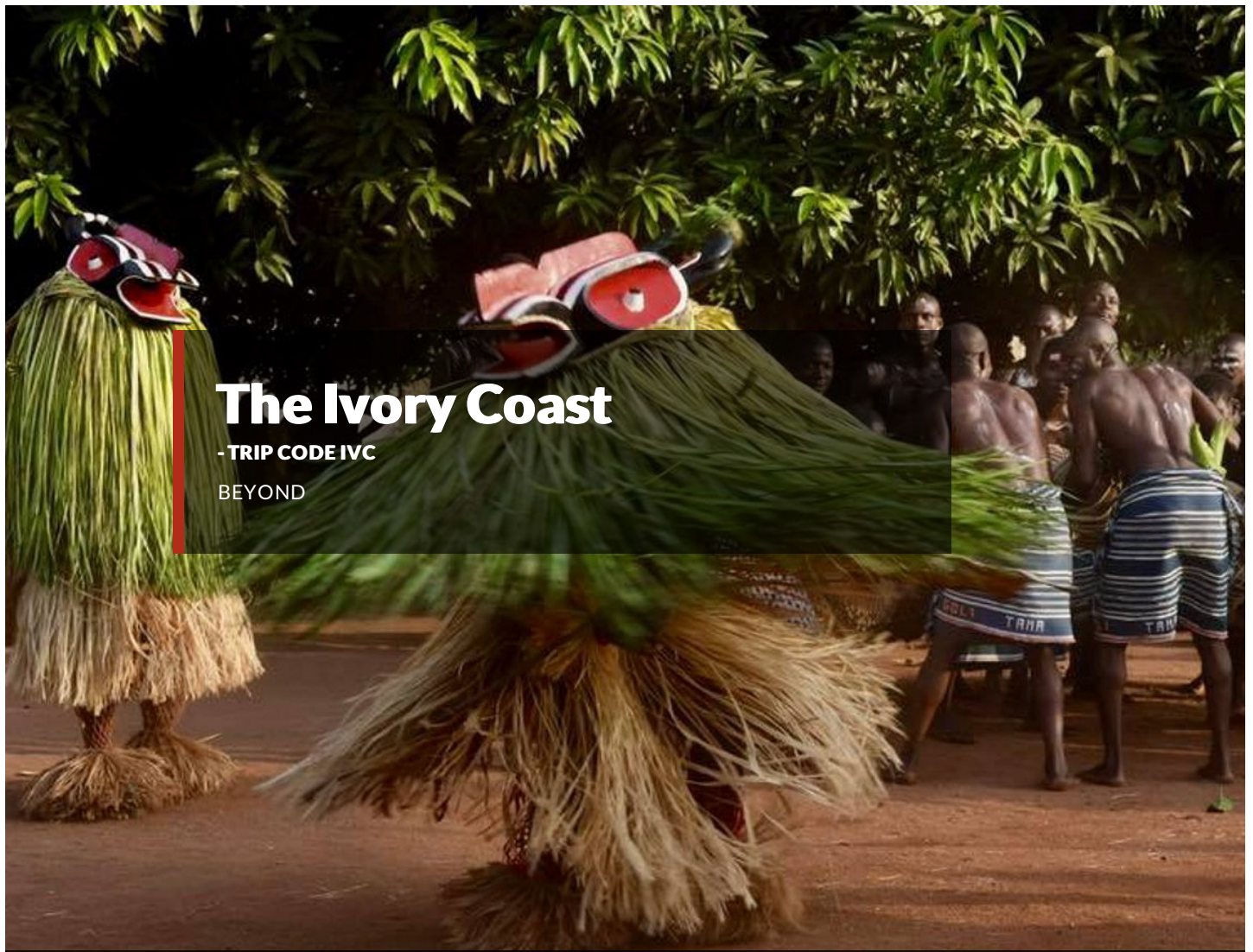


EXPLORE!



The Ivory Coast
- TRIP CODE IVC
BEYOND

DAYS	DEPOSIT FROM	PRICE FROM	FLIGHTS INCLUSIVE
13	£315	£3149	

Why book this trip?

After years of isolation, Ivory Coast is finally opening up to travellers and on this trip we will be exploring remote villages; untouched by the western world where the spirit gods and ancestral traditions are king. We will visit bustling markets in Abidjan, cross liana bridges in the rainforest, meet hunter-gatherer tribesman and explore a national park on the Atlantic. Ivory Coast has a wealth of different cultures and we aim to embrace the colours, songs and secrets that make up this fascinating country. Due to local customs, most hotels will not allow travellers of the same sex to share a room, so all customers who would normally book on a twin share will automatically receive a single room, with no additional

charge.

					
INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 12	TRIP STAFF Explore Tour Leader Driver(s) Local Guide(s)	TRANSPORT Bus	ACCOMMODATION 12 nights standard hotel	TRIP PACE: Moderate	GROUP SIZE: 8 - 14

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Abidjan

Our trip starts in Abidjan this evening. As some group members will be arriving on different flights, we will have our introduction briefing tomorrow morning, however our Leader will be around this evening to recommend somewhere to eat dinner locally.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Detente (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Explore Abidjan on foot and by ferry, and sample attieke

This morning we will have our group briefing before heading out on a city tour of Abidjan. We start by taking a ferry across the lagoon; popular with the locals, the journey will give us our first taste of the people of the Ivory Coast. We will see colourfully clad women in traditional dress and businessmen in dapper suits on their daily commute to different parts of the city. We will take in views of the city's skyscrapers and the modernity of Abidjan, ever growing and always buzzing with life. After disembarking we'll visit the lively market of Treichville, this is one of the main markets in the city where locals come to barter, hawk and catch up on local gossip. Our next stop is the peaceful neighbourhood of Cocody, a residential area which houses the Prime Minister's office and many old French colonial buildings. For lunch today we will have a local speciality called attieké, a kind of cassava couscous that is generally accompanied by grilled meat or meat with sauces and greens. We stop off at the National Museum before visiting the Youpugon neighbourhood, famous locally for the birth of Coupé-Décalé, which is the Ivory Coast's contribution to global music.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Detente (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Explore villages of the Baule people

Leaving Abidjan behind we head out into the country. We drive to Bouaké which is partially on a major road punctuated by small villages and settlements and populated by the Baulé people. The Baulé are known for the fine production of handicrafts and cloths. After spending the day meeting local villagers and learning about their customs and beliefs we continue on to Bouake, the Ivory Coast's second largest city.



ACCOMMODATION:
Mon Afrik (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Drive to Korhogo and meet the arctic Senoufo people

This morning we have a long drive of around six hours, heading north along bumpy roads as we make our way to Korhogo, the main city of the north. Along the way our Explore Leader will provide local information and make stops at any particular points of interest. After arriving in Korhogo we will spend the afternoon visiting villages of the Senoufo, local people who are renowned for their art and sculpture work. The villages have sacred houses decorated with bas-reliefs and large clay granaries that we can explore. We will be some of the first westerners to visit these villages so can expect a warm but sometimes wary welcome, as they are just not used to foreign visitors. However hospitality is an integral part of their culture and they are proud to share their stories and show off their artistic skills. We will spend two nights here.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Olympe (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Discover Senoufo villages and watch the 'panther' dance

We will spend the whole day exploring more Senoufo villages, learning more about their art culture and rituals. The Senoufo have a complex and secretive initiation ritual called Poro, which involves their young men spending time in a sacred forest. This secret sect of the Senoufo has allowed their culture to flourish, even in times of war and persecution. After the young men have spent time in the forest they emerge as men and have to perform traditional mask ceremonies, known locally as the panther dance. We plan to see a panther dance this afternoon in one of the villages, however this cannot be guaranteed as these rituals are connected with the spirit world and the local shamans might decide that the signs are not perfect for a ceremony.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Olympe (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Walk to a sacred shrine and meet the Fulani nomads

This morning we will take a walk to a sacred shrine just outside of Korhogo. The walk will be around two hours in total, and apart from the humidity should be relatively easy. For those not wanting to participate, it is possible to wander around Korhogo or just relax in the hotel. We will then board our bus and drive to Boundiali, a small town two hours away. After lunch we will meet the Fulani people, a pastoral nomadic society who are easily recognised by their conical straw hats. When we visit their villages we will mainly meet women and children as the men are out with their cattle. The ladies here are very welcoming and colourful in their dress. We will spend part of the afternoon in their houses, learning about their life and seeing their family heirlooms. Later this afternoon we attend the dance of the virgin girls. This is called Ngoro and performed by the Senoufo and part of the Poro Initiation. The young initiates spend months together in secluded sacred groves where they learn the social and religious secrets that turn a man into a genuine Senoufo. After seven years there is a big celebration for those who have undergone all stages of initiation, in particular the dance of the virgin girls is performed at the end of the first stage of initiation.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel le Paysan (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Drive to Odienne and meet a community of Dozon (malinke hunters)

From Boundiali we drive for around four hours to the small town of Odienne, in the north-west of the

country. This region is populated by the Malinké people, descendants of the former empire of Mali and in this community there are the Dozo, a hunter-gatherer sect who are feared and respected for their courage on the battlefield. We will spend the afternoon with the Dozo, as they take us on a walk through the bush and teach us about plants and their importance for medicine in local culture. After our walk we will witness a fire ceremony, which will involve hunters dancing to the beat of the drum, known locally as the tam-tam, as certain warriors show their immunity to fire and pain.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel les Frontieres (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Visit the Yacouba villages and watch a mask dance performance

Today is a long drive of around seven hours to the town of Man, our home for two nights. On the drive we will travel through the lands of the Yacouba people, often known as the Dan. The area is fertile with green rolling hills and we will visit villages built on the slopes, characterised by big round mud huts with thatched roofs. During our trip here we will witness a mask dance. In these villages the mask dancers are called from the forest by the beat of the tam-tam. As they approach, the whole village starts to sing traditional songs. The dancers enter the circle on long stilts and spend the next few minutes entertaining us with incredible acrobatics, all the time spinning to the sound of the tam-tam. Each mask has its own dance and song, steeped in local culture and this promises to be a highlight of the trip.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel les Cascades (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



DAY 9 - Cross a liana bridge and see a Guéré mask dance

This morning we take a drive to Danane to find some of the famous liana bridges that are found in the forest that stretch from the Ivory Coast to Liberia. The bridges, like many things in the country are shrouded in mystery and secrecy, as they are built by young men who are being initiated in the ways of the forest, similar to Poro. The initiates create these river spanning bridges in one night and we may be able to cross one, providing the spirits are happy! This afternoon we will meet the Guéré people and hope to see one of their ceremonies. They believe that their god communicates to them through only a couple of humans - the masquerades; we will watch the dance where the masquerades interact with their god.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel les Cascades (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Take in the impressive city sights of Yamoussoukro

We leave Man and make our way to Yamoussoukro, the capital city and one of the most surreal urban areas in Africa. The first post-independence President of the Ivory Coast was Houphouët-Boigny and he was from Yamoussoukro. His dream was to create a city that could rival the best in Europe and as we arrive in the city after our five hour drive, we see the remnants of his vision. Our first stop will be the Basilica of the Virgin of Peace, an exact replica of St Peter's in Rome. It is really hard to believe that you are in West Africa as we walk around this mind boggling building; the basilica has 7000 seats and space for over 11,000 standing worshippers, though it only attracts a few hundred on most Sundays. We will see the other excesses of the former President, including huge government offices, 14 storey hotels and an artificial lake with crocodiles. Though this is an unmissable stop of any trip to the Ivory Coast, it is hard not to feel utter sadness at the incalculable waste of money, given the country's current level of poverty.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Residence Aho (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Drive down to the Atlantic, stopping at a cocoa plantation

Our drive today takes us to the south of the country and back to the Atlantic Ocean, as we make our way to Grand Lahou, a small fishing village and our base for the next two nights. The Ivory Coast once built its economy on the exportation of cocoa and we will stop at a plantation en route, to learn about the cultivation of the crop and its importance today. Depending on the driving times today, we hope to stop at a local 'maquis', an open air restaurant which serves Ivorian stew, consisting of chunks of meat or fish served in an aubergine, peanut or okra sauce.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel le Ravin (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Pirogue trip and walk in Assagny National Park, free time on the beach

Today we explore Assagny National Park. Starting with a trip on a local pirogue (long wooden canoe) through the forest. We then continue on foot and take a three hour guided walk through the dense forest which makes up the park. Assagny contains a small population of forest elephants and a large range of birds. Our guide will help us to spot these however they are very shy animals and not always easy to see. This afternoon we will spend time relaxing on a beautiful sandy beach. This evening will be our last dinner together which will hopefully involve some fish, freshly caught by a local fisherman.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel le Ravin (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Abidjan

This morning is at leisure before we head back on the road to Abidjan where the trip ends at approximately 2 pm. There should be time for some last minute shopping at a cultural centre not far from the airport.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Country information

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight but a warm jumper is also advisable, as nights can be cool. Don't forget your swim gear as some of the hotels may have a swimming pool. A scarf is also recommended as protection against dust whilst driving in the drier areas.

Footwear

Lightweight walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, plus trainers or sandals for relaxing and travelling in.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

Take a tough soft bag or holdall (or rucksack with detachable frame) suitable to be carried by 4WD vehicle. Also take a day sack for items needed during any walks (20- 30 litre). The limit does not include your camera equipment.

Equipment

A torch, sunhat, sun cream and insect repellent are essential. Bottled water is readily available throughout the tour. Binoculars are useful for bird watching. We recommend bringing a malaria net as we cannot be 100% confident that the nets provided at the hotels are competent.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your 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 approx. £40.00 per person for gratuities for local staff.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Tourism is very much in its infancy in the Ivory Coast so it is recommended to travel with an open mind and not to expect European standards of accommodation. That being said, the majority of the hotels on this trip have a swimming pool, air conditioning and a restaurant on site. Due to local customs, most hotels will not allow travellers of the same sex to share a room, so all customers who would normally book on a twin share will automatically receive a single room, with no additional charge.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Ivory Coast - Visas are required for British, Australian, American and Canadian passport holders. These can be obtained from the Cote d'Ivoire Consulate in London, or via an e-visa service which must be requested online prior to arrival in the Ivory Coast.

An invitation letter is necessary to obtain your visa / e-visa. Passport details for each client are required by Explore 9 weeks prior to the tour start date. Our local partners then proceed to process the invitation from the Ivory Coast and provide a letter of invitation which takes a minimum of 10 working days to obtain. Once the letter has been obtained, UK citizens can apply for their visa via:

www.snedai.com/services-en-ligne/

You will be provided with a confirmation document upon approval of your application that permits you to travel and to obtain your visa on arrival at Abidjan International Airport. Alternatively visa can be obtained from the Cote d'Ivoire Consulate in London for UK residents.

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 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.



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