

EXPLORE!

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The Ivory Coast

- TRIP CODE IVC

DISCOVERY

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.

- **Mask Ceremonies** - See the stilt dancers from the hill villages of the Yacouba
- **Rainforest** - Explore the country's pristine rainforests in search of monkeys, baboons and birdlife
- **Traditional life** - Visit bustling markets, meet hunter-gatherer tribesman and embrace the colours, songs and secrets that make up this fascinating country



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 12



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat
Ferry



ACCOMMODATION
12 nights
comfortable 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 - Join trip in Abidjan

Arrive in the former French colonial city of Abidjan. The shining skyscrapers reflect in the waters along the Atlantic coast surrounded by smaller, humble neighbourhood.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Abidjan at any time. For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 6pm for the welcome meeting. Should you miss the meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Félix Houphouët Boigny Airport (ABJ), which is around 45 minutes' drive.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Detente (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Meet the Baule people and see a Goli Masquerade

Leaving Abidjan behind we head out into the country towards Bouake. The morning will be spent driving along the highway before we reach more rural roads where your Leader will decide where to stop in the small villages populated by the Baule people.

The Baule are known for their fine wooden handicrafts and Goli masks. The Goli masks, often made from cow, antelope and crocodile, can be quiet intimidating to look at and we hope to see a Goli Masquerade today. A ceremony where two unidentified villagers wear different types of masks; one representing a human face known as kpan and disc-faced masks known as kple kple. The women start to dance and sing begging the masks to arrive and then proceed to welcome the masks as beloved personages, fanning them with scarves and dancing joyously behind them. Kple Kple masks are called to villages in times of danger or during funeral ceremonies. They are believed to connect people with supernatural powers and gods.

After spending the day learning about Baule customs and belief systems we continue on to Bouake, the Ivory Coast's second largest city, arriving in the early evening.



ACCOMMODATION:
Mon Afrik (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Drive to Korhogo and meet the Senoufo people

We'll depart early after breakfast and begin the long drive north along bumpy roads as we make our way to Korhogo, the main city in the north of the country.

On the journey your Leader will tell tales about the local tribes and communities that live in the area and may stop along the way at points of interest. After arriving in Korhogo we will spend the afternoon visiting villages of the Senoufo, who are renowned for their art and sculpture work. The villages have sacred houses decorated with bas-relief carvings and large clay granaries, and as these areas are generally untouched by western visitors expect a warm but sometimes wary welcome. However, hospitality is an integral part of their culture and they are proud to share their stories and show off their artistic skills.

We'll return to the hotel in the early evening.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Olympe (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Discover Senoufo villages and see the traditional Poro 'panther' dance

After breakfast this morning we depart for a day of exploring surrounding Senoufo villages, to get an in depth understanding of their art culture, daily lives and spiritual rituals.

We'll learn about the Senoufo's secret society called the Poro which has a complex, seven year long initiation ritual involving their young men, called colobele, spending up to 3 months in seclusion in the forest. One job of a colobele is to perform traditional mask ceremonies, known locally as the panther dance. Although this task is not the most important of a Poro member it certainly is one of the spectacular to see. We hope to see a panther dance this afternoon, however, this cannot be guaranteed as the right conditions for these rituals will be decided by the local shamans.

We'll return to our hotel in Korhogo in the early evening.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Olympe (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Countryside walk through to a sacred shrine; afternoon meeting 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, it should be relatively easy along flat terrain. For those not wanting to participate, it is possible to wander around Korhogo or just relax in the hotel.

Later this morning, we will drive to Boundiali, a small town two hours away. We'll have lunch in town, before visiting surrounding areas home to the Fulani nomads. A nomadic society who are easily recognised by their conical straw hats, the Fulani live in villages and graze cattle on the nearby land. The ladies here are very welcoming and colourful in their dress and our Leader will arrange for us to spend some time with the women in their homes, learning about their daily life and getting an insight into their culture. Late in the afternoon, we attend a Senufo village to see the dance of the virgin girls - called Ngoro, 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 girl 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.

We'll return to Boundiali in the evening.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Paysan Boundiali (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - 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. The drive is along very poor roads so it can be slow-going but in this region its part of the adventure. The Odienne region is populated by the Malinke people, descendants of the former empire of Mali and this community include the Dozo, a hunter-gatherer sect who are feared and respected for their courage on the battlefield.

After the drive we'll have lunch in Odienne, and around mid-afternoon after the heat has subsided we will walk to meet with the Dozo. The two-hour walk is on flat but slightly rocky terrain and we will be accompanied by the Dozon hunters who will teach us about their way of life, hunting in the bush, about the plants and their importance for traditional medicine.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Les Frontieres Odienne (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Full day journey to Man visiting Yacouba villages en route and opportunity to watch a masked dance

Today is a long drive of around seven hours to the town of Man, which sits at the foot of the Toura Mountains in a greener part of the country. 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. Hopefully we'll have the chance to witness a mask dance, as the villagers call the dancers from the forest by the beat of the tam-tam drum. As they approach, the people begin to sing traditional songs and the dancers enter the circle on long stilts entertaining the crowd with incredible acrobatics to the sound of the tam-tam. Each mask has its own dance and song, steeped in local culture.

Along the way we'll stop for a picnic lunch and hope to arrive in Man at our accommodation around 6pm.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Les Cascades (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Walk to La Cascade Waterfall, visit nearby villages and watch a Gba mask dance

This morning we will walk to La Cascade Waterfall on the outskirts of Man. There are a couple of options of paths to the waterfall and the Leader will choose a route best suited to the group but either option takes around 90 minute's roundtrip. This natural attraction's close proximity to the town attracts locals and visitors alike for a refreshing dip in the waterfall's pools that are surrounded by lush, green vegetation.

There will be free time for lunch in Man; due to the French influence within the country there is choice of traditional West Africa cuisine such as attieke - a couscous like dish made with cassava - or something more familiar such a French baguettes. Later this afternoon we will meet the Guere people - also known as Gere, Ngere and Wee - and we hope to see one of their mask 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: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - City tour of Man before afternoon journey to Daloa

We'll start this morning for a tour around Man. Man is an energetic, colourful little town with a buzzing market selling all sorts of produce along a dusty street packed with pedestrians, trolleys, vans and cars, and not many tourists!

After a break for lunch we will begin the four hour journey to Daloa. Our leader will ensure there are plenty of breaks along the way to stretch the legs or at points of interest. As one of the world's largest cocoa exporters, our leader will look for an opportunity to stop at a cooperative cocoa farm for the chance to learn about the country's biggest agriculture.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel La Grace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Take in the impressive city sights of Yamoussoukro

An early departure from Daloa this morning to make our way to Yamoussoukro, the capital city and one of the most surreal urban areas in Africa. First though we will stop to visit a nearby village to see the traditional Zaouli dance. The dancer is always male but the mask itself honours a legendary goddess Djela Lou Zaouli which translates as The Lion's Daughter. It's thought the male that wears the mask takes on a spirit as he dances for the drums.

We'll arrive into Yamoussoukro around mid-afternoon. The first post-independence President of the Ivory Coast was Houphouet-Boigny from Yamoussoukro and he had big dreams to create a city that could rival the best in Europe and as we drive into the city it's possible to see the remnants of his vision. We'll visit the Basilica of our Lady of Peace, inspired by Saint Peter's in Rome this giant church complex was finished in 1990 and stood as the largest church in the world. 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. Though this is an unmissable stop of any trip to the Ivory Coast, the church is shrouded in controversy as many feel anger and sadness at the incalculable waste of money, given the country's current level of poverty.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Residence Aho (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Guided tour of Abidjan before driving to Grand Bassam for some time to relax on the Atlantic Coast

We'll have an early breakfast this morning so we can depart first thing for Abidjan, the country's economic capital set on the Ebrie Lagoon. The drive will take whole morning but we'll arrive into the city just in time for lunch and after we've eaten our leader will show us the highlights. We will take a ferry across the lagoon; popular with commuters, it's a chance to see where traditional meets new, with colourfully dressed women in traditional clothes and businessmen in dapper suits go side-by-side about their daily lives.

The short ferry ride also offers a chance to see the city's skyscrapers and modern skyline which ever growing and always buzzing with life. After disembarking we'll visit the National Museum and the Cathedral. We will drive across the peaceful neighbourhood of Cocody, a residential area which houses the Prime Minister's office and many old French colonial buildings. We will visit the lively market of Treichville, one of the city's bustling markets where people come to barter, hawk and catch up on gossip. There will be a short amount of free time for shopping at the craft centre Kava before departing.

We'll travel about one hour to Grand Bassam which is sat on the coast and over a lagoon, laidback Grand Bassam is full of faded French colonial charm and it's an ideal place to enjoy a sundowner on the beach.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Etoile du Sud (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Explore colonial Grand Bassam before a free afternoon to relax

There is no rush at all this morning as we wind down for our last day of discovering the Ivory Coast. Our leader will take us on foot around UNESCO-listed Grand Bassam this morning to experience the slower pace of life. Once a French colonial capital, Grand Bassam was all but deserted after a yellow fever epidemic broke out in the late 1800s but has since built itself up again as a modest seaside town set upon golden beaches. We'll also visit the craft centre which brings together culture from all over the Ivory Coast and the museum.

This afternoon will be free to carry on wandering around taking in the atmosphere. Although swimming in the sea is not advised because of the strong Atlantic current. There are plenty of places to have a drink and just take in the view, or alternatively relax by the hotel's pool to wrap up your Ivory Coast adventure.

Grand Bassam is quiet in the evenings but there are a few places to choose from for the last night's meal including international and African food. A number of simple marquis that serve rustic Ivoirian food on little wooden terraces by the sea.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Etoile du Sud (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Trip ends in Grand Bassam

The trip ends this morning after breakfast at our hotel in Grand Bassam.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Grand Bassam at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you need to depart from Felix Houphouët Boigny Airport, which is around one hour's drive.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and 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. 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. We advise taking a water bottle for day to day use.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly you should allow £40.00 per person for group tipping.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Ferry

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

Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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.comervices-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 be able to apply 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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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

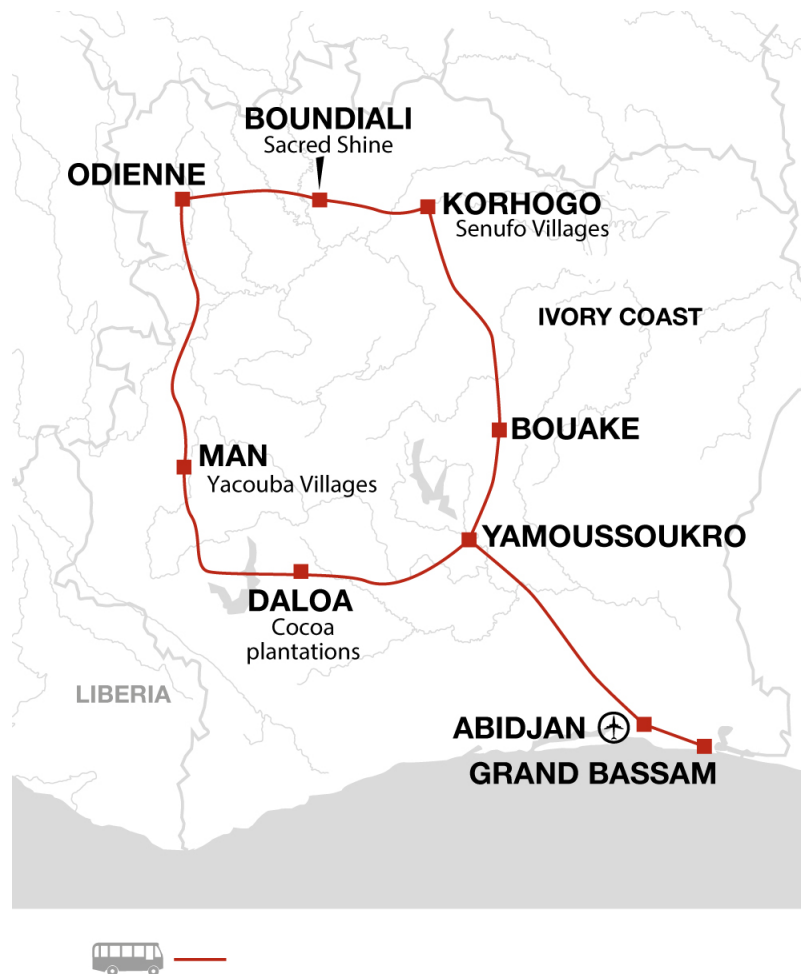
You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

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.

Additional Information



Why book this trip

- An intrepid journey across an untouched country
- Attend sacred masquerades in small tribal villages
- Discover the everchanging landscapes of the Ivory Coast

Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**