

# EXPLORE!

**BIG 15 SALE**

**Senegal and The Gambia**  
13 days

Senegal, The Gambia - Trip code SE



## Senegal and The Gambia

On this African adventure discover tropical Anglo-influenced Gambia and exotic Francophile Senegal, and compare the colonial imprints in this beautiful region. Walk through French colonial towns, see prolific birdlife and visit the megalithic stone circles at Wassu. Explore some of the region's finest national parks, spend the night sleeping under the stars whilst travelling down the Gambia River and venture into the channels and mangroves of the Saloum Delta.

### 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)

Join the tour this evening and, depending on your flight arrival time, have a chance to meet your fellow group members and soak up the 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

After a welcome meeting this morning with our Explore Leader, we will drive to the ferry terminal to take a ferry to Isle de Goree, a small and peaceful island without any traffic. On arrival, we'll drop off our luggage before a guided tour of Isle de Goree on foot. Once a busy trading centre during the 18th and 19th centuries, the island 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 we'll also explore the old Slave House originally built in 1786. This evening will be free to relax.



**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'll have a 30 minute walk around the lake followed by free time for a lunchbreak, before we continue north to St. Louis. Tonight we'll be free to explore this colourful area which is now also a UNESCO World Heritage.



**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.

Early this afternoon we return back to St. Louis in time for lunch and some free time before exploring this marvellous old town by calesh (horse-drawn carriage) with a local guide. 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'll start early for our visit the Langue de Barbarie National Park, located on a thin sandspit in the estuary of the Senegal

River, and home to water birds such as flamingos, pelicans, cormorants, herons, egrets and ducks. During the months from November to April, the national park also fills with many more migratory birds from Europe. We'll take a motorised pirogue across the river to access the national park.

After a morning of exploration, the afternoon is at leisure for you to follow your own interests or perhaps try the national meal of thiebou dieune, a spiced fish and rice dish.



**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 begin our journey to The Gambia and much of the day will be spent in the bus travelling. We will break up the first leg of this journey with a visit to an 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, and as we pass through on a Friday 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.



**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.

Today we will visit the Wassu 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)

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Simple Boat

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 8 - Cruise to Tendaba

This morning we continue our gentle cruise downstream enjoying the flora and wildlife of the river banks. We'll enjoy lunch on the boat before arriving in the small settlement of Tendaba on the Gambia's south bank in the late afternoon.

On arrival we leave our boat and check in to our rondavel style accommodation, home for the next two nights, on the shores of the Gambia River. The next couple of days will be a break from the hustle and bustle of normal life, as our accommodation is set on the river bank, it's a great chance to enjoy the natural surroundings, take a swim in the pool and spot the resident birdlife.



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

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Standard Rondavels

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Swimming pool available

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## 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. We'll be looking for baboons, colobus monkeys, warthog, marsh mongoose and bushbuck. Later this afternoon we make another excursion by boat to explore the woodland, salt marshes and mangrove forests of nearby Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve. 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)

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Standard Rondavels

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Swimming pool available

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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

Today we cross the river once more to Farafenni before crossing the border to return to Senegal. We'll then continue via Keur Saloum to Toubakouta where we'll check into our rondavel style 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 - Saolum Delta National Park; pirogue trip north through the Delta to Ndangane

This morning we cross the Sine-Saloum Delta by motorised fibre boat 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. After a packed lunch onboard, the afternoon is free to enjoy the slow pace of Ndangane, 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


Today we depart Saloum Delta National Park to begin our journey back to Dakar. Our first stop, just a short time away is to see a giant Baobab tree. Baobab trees are the national symbol of Senegal, some trees dating back 6,000 years and can only be found in a few places around the world. En-route we will also visit Fadiout, a fishing village. Built on a small island, many buildings are composed of oyster and clam shells, and the inhabitants are both Muslim and Christian who all 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

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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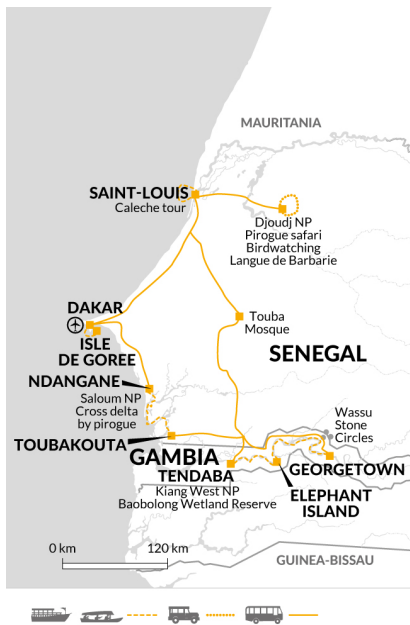
## DAY 13 - Tour ends in Dakar

The tour ends today in Dakar after breakfast.

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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# 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

#### Climate

Senegal's tropical climate is split into two periods: The dry season features temperatures in the mid-20s centigrade which can rise to 35 degrees between November to April. The Harmattan is a dry wind which blows from the north, usually from December-February, and evening can feel much cooler during this time. The green (rainy) season of the African monsoon is between June to October, with more rainfall in the south as it heads northwards. Days can alternate between hot and dry and wet and damp, with average temperatures between high-20s to low-30s. Humidity is higher and temperatures lower along the coastal areas, while temperatures inland fall at night. Average sunshine hours per day ranges from 8-10 hours between October to May.

#### Time difference to GMT

0

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Islam, Christian

#### Language

French

### The Gambia

#### Climate

The Gambia has a tropical climate which features the green and dry seasons. The green season between mid-June to mid-October sees the annual rains which transforms the dry land into lush green areas. Average temperatures during the green season are in the low-30s with high humidity and more rainfall in the south. The dry season between late-October to May has average temperatures of between high-20s to mid-30s centigrade with sunny days. Humidity is higher though the temperatures are lower on the coast, and temperatures inland fall at night. Average daily sunshine hours between October to May ranges from 6 to 10 hours. The Harmattan is a dry wind which blows from the north, usually from December to February.

#### Time difference to GMT



0

### Plugs

3 Pin Flat

### Religion

Islam

### Language

English

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

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

## 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

## 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**

Pounds Sterling 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.

### 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

Senegal: Visas are not required for holders of UK passports. 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 passport holders when arriving into an international airport or crossing land borders from Senegal to The Gambia. Passport must be valid for the entire duration of your visit.

Visas are not required for Canadian, Australian & New Zealand passport holders when arriving into an international airport. Passports must have a minimum validity of 6 months and at least 1 blank page at time of time.

Visas are required by US 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.

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.

# Senegal

## 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, but you must travel with your Yellow Fever vaccination card. 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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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# The Gambia

## 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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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