

DISCOVER THE WONDERS

SPIEKERMANN

TRAVEL SERVICE



NIGERIA HIGHLIGHTS

February 03 - February 12, 2025
Led by Tour Manager, Nancy Weber

Can be combined with Niger tour (January 22 - February 03, 2025) **AND** Ivory Coast tour (February 12 - February 22, 2025)

Discover one of Africa's most vibrant ancient kingdoms on a journey that will challenge any preconceived ideas about Nigeria. This multinational state boasts an array of ethnic groups including the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo just to name a few. The country is rich in stunning natural wonders comprising of rain forests, savannahs, waterfalls, and other natural attractions.

Begin in the capital city of Abuja, surrounded by hills and the enormous monolith, Aso Rock, dominating its skyline. From here, take a short flight to Ilorin, the last site of the Odudwa Dynasty, conquered by Fulani Jihadists in the early 18th century. This is where Islamic life fused with Yoruba culture. In Osogbo, learn the intricacies of Yoruba religion from revered priestesses and in the old city of Abeokuta, admire its grand Afro-Brazilian buildings, and climb the sacred Olumo Rock. The tour ends in Lagos, one of the liveliest cities on earth, full of grime and grit, and includes the coastal town of Badagry, which holds secrets connected to the 17th century slave trade.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Monday, February 03
Arrive in Abuja (**NIGERIA**)



Upon arrival in **Abuja**, meet the local representative and transfer to *Envoy Suites Hotel or similar* for check-in. There will be a tour briefing from the tour director then enjoy dinner and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(D)**

Note: Check-in time is 3:00 pm. If you arrive on February 02 or in the early morning of February 03, an extra hotel night will need to be reserved.

Dinner will be provided for those arriving prior to 10:00 pm.

Tuesday, February 04
Abuja (Ushafa & Tribes)



Begin the day with an excursion to the **pottery** making village of **Ushafa**, known as the "**Bill Clinton Village**" after the American President paid a visit in 2000 as part of his Nigerian journey. See firsthand how pottery is made using traditional methods and perhaps even purchase a few of these masterpieces. Next, visit the **Fulani** and **Gwari** tribes in their villages on the outskirts of Abuja for a chance to learn about their ways of life. Enjoy lunch at the *Cilantro Restaurant* featuring Indian and Asian cuisine. Head to visit the **National Mosque** and then return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: Women should consider bringing a scarf to cover their heads as a show of respect.

Wednesday, February 05
Abuja - Ilorin



After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight to **Ilorin**, first settled by the Yoruba ethnic group in the mid-1400s. Once we arrive, begin exploring the **Aro traditional weaving** quarters, where Ilorin's renowned weavers plan their trade. Visit the **Palace of the Emir**, which houses some historical artifacts, then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant offering a variety of choices. Transfer to *Noktel Hotel or similar* for check-in, then have the rest of the day free at leisure. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: The maximum weight limit for hand luggage is 6 kg/13 lb. and the rule is strictly enforced.

Thursday, February 06
Ilorin - Esie - Osogbo



Begin the day with a drive to **Esie**, stopping at the **Esie Museum**, to see its large collection of soapstone sculptures believed to have been excavated in 1775 AD. Continue the drive to the city of **Osogbo**, and have lunch at a quick service restaurant. In the afternoon, visit the **Nike Arts & Cultural Center**, to learn the production of Adire (tie-dye) fabrics and perhaps purchase some of the fabrics. Transfer to *Ideal Nest Hotel* for check-in, rest of the day is free at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, February 07
Osogbo



Spend the day exploring the city of Osogbo, home to one of Nigeria's few UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Visit the **Sacred Grove of Osun**, where extraordinary sculptures of Yoruba deities are nestled among the trees, and monkeys run amok. After lunch at a quick service restaurant, visit a traditional **Orisha temple**, where Ife priestesses explain the intricacies of their religion; a truly fascinating experience, and one not to be missed. Time permitting, visit the home of **Adunni Olorisa -Suzanne Wenger** to learn about her life and works in the Nigerian Yoruba cultures and traditions. Return to the *Hotel* for some free time, a buffet dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: For today's approx. 3.5-hour walk through the forest with exposure to the sun, we highly recommend bringing along a hat, sunscreen, good walking shoes, and a walking stick.

Saturday, February 08
Osogbo - Ile Ife - Abeokuta



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Abeokuta**, stopping en route at **Ile-Ife**, home of **Oduduwa** (the legendary father of the Yoruba race). Visit the **Palace of the Ooni of Ife**, the traditional head of the kingdom and spiritual leader of the Yoruba. See the **Oranmiyan Staff**, a 16-foot-tall granite obelisk believed to represent the staff that Oranmiyan, the grandson of Oduduwa, carried to war. From **Oranmiyan Grove**, visit the **Moremi Shrine** and then continue to **Abeokuta**, upon our arrival in the evening, transfer to *Park Inn by Radisson or similar* for check-in then head out for dinner at a local restaurant, then back to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, February 09

Abeokuta - Lagos



Begin the day with a visit to **Olumo Rock**, the place where the Egba clan supposedly hid during the Yoruba Wars in the 19th century and establishing a powerful kingdom. The rock is 300-foot high equipped with both stairs and elevator. **Caves** in the rock include remains of a settlement with a small shrine where a donation/offering may be expected. Explore Abeokuta, known for its **Afro-Brazilian architecture** - impressive buildings made for local merchants by freed slaves who returned from Brazil. Though some facades are in disrepair, the pastel colors and ornate designs make it a charming historical scene. Explore the colorful **Adire Mall**, a cloth and textile market. There is also a **fetish market** and sites where local voodoo items and herbs, or animal remains are used for traditional medicines or offerings; both fascinating and disturbing for some visitors. From the voodoo market, visit the **Kuti Heritage Museum**, the former home of the Kuti family, including famous Afrobeat musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti. After lunch at a local restaurant, continue the drive to **Lagos** and upon arrival transfer to *Radisson Hotel Ikeja or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: When visiting Olumo Rock, it's worth noting that the elevator service is frequently unavailable. To fully enjoy your experience, we highly recommend bringing along a hat, sunscreen, good walking shoes, and a walking stick.

Monday, February 10

Lagos (Badagry)



From the mainland, transfer to **Lagos Island** to visit the **National Museum**, which houses an array of artifacts and antiquities from all over Nigeria. Then, travel by boat through the **lagoon** to the coastal town of **Badagry**, a major port for the export of African slaves to the Americas. Explore some of its most interesting historical sites and learn about slave trade in this region. Visits include the **Velekete Slave Market**, the **family home of Seriki Williams Abass**, a famous slave turned slave-merchant during the 19th century, and the **Badagry Heritage Museum** containing collections from the slave trade including relics used to restrain slaves such as leg locks, neck chains, and mouth padlocks. After lunch, enjoy a lively **cultural performance** by the Zangbeto, traditional voodoo guardians of the night for the Egun people. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: We highly recommend bringing a hat and sunscreen, as temperatures can exceed 100° F.

Tuesday, February 11

Lagos



Begin the day with a visit to the **Kalakuta Museum** to learn more about the life and career of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, founder of the Afrobeat music genre. Visit the **Lekki Conservation Center**, a nature lovers' haven followed by the **Nike Art Gallery** to savor some of the country's most impressive African traditional and contemporary arts

collection. We will have a chance to do some last minute souvenir shopping at the **Elegushi International Art Market** and then return to the *Hotel* in the late afternoon rest of the day will be free at leisure, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, February 12

Lagos - USA



Enjoy breakfast and then transfer to the airport for your onward flight back to the US. **(B)**

Note: standard check-out time is 11:00 am. Any late check-outs past this time will be subject to an additional charge for a day-use room.

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".

Special tour Remarks:

- **Tourist infrastructure and facilities outside the cities are very limited & often quite primitive.**
- **Hotels may change at the last minute without prior notice due to reasons beyond our control.**
- **Hotels do not offer TWIN bedded rooms - double occupancy is in a room with a Queen size bed.**
- **Air-conditioners in this part of the world do not cool a room to American standards of comfort.**
- **In the more remote areas, hotels may be basic with few amenities, poor service, and possible equipment failure such as no hot water, broken faucets, clogged drains, etc.**
- **Mosquito-borne illnesses such as malaria are prevalent in Nigeria. Documentation of yellow fever immunization is required for travel to Nigeria if coming from a country at risk.**
- **Brownouts or blackouts may occur or there may be limited electricity available.**
- **Domestic flights may change without prior notice that may necessitate amending the itinerary.**
- **This trip involves long drives in hot weather over poorly maintained and very bumpy roads. Those with bad spines, knees or other medical conditions may find the drives uncomfortable.**
- **There are a lack of modern medical facilities and chronic health problems should be discussed with your physician before joining this tour.**
- **A high level of flexibility, tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, sense of adventure, and willingness to go with the flow if things change is expected while visiting this country.**

Tour Cost (Land Only): \$5,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$795.00

Price based on group size minimum of 6 participants and maximum of 12 participants

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: ***

About your Tour Manager, Nancy Weber... Nancy loves to travel, learn languages, people, and sparkling wines! Nancy worked in the chemical industry in the US and Canada, and she lived in Jordan and Iraq for eight years, working as a training consultant and as Iraq's Country Director for an NGO. She speaks Arabic and a few other languages. Moreover, she loves the Middle East and genuinely appreciates the people and culture in that part of the world. Nancy also lived and worked in Russia for four years as a business training consultant. She speaks Russian, is passionate about Russia, and adores the people living there. She traveled on our first

STS North Caucasus adventure in 2017 - she was so happy to see and experience Chechnya and Dagestan finally! Nancy has been managing a few of our tours, and she enjoys visiting off-the-beaten-track places the most, especially those countries that see very few tourists/travelers. She is thrilled to lead our groups to these beautiful parts of the world and is excited to introduce their fascinating culture, people, and unmatched hospitality. She has been rated so highly by our travelers as a kind and efficient coordinator and does a superb job ensuring the smoothness of these programs.

Tour Includes:

- Airport/hotel/airport transfers.
- Accommodation at *Hotels* mentioned or similar (3-4*).
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: breakfast, L: lunch, D: dinner).
- Abuja - Ilorin Flight.
- Transportation in a minibus with A/C.
- All activities described in the tour and entrance fees to all sites mentioned unless listed as optional.
- English-speaking guide and local guides in various villages.
- Bottled water on vehicles during touring days.
- Escort of tour manager (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade:

II Active: Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides.

Lodging Level:

***** Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars).

Tour does not include:

- International air USA - Abuja / Lagos - USA.
- **Nigerian visa** (obtainable on arrival - approx. \$400.00 - **subject to change & will be added to your invoice**).
- Air from Niamey to Lagos or Niamey to Abidjan (if combining with Niger and Ivory Coast tours).
- Vaccinations - yellow fever immunization is required.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance (**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**).

