



ATLANTIC COAST LIBERIA, SIERRA LEONE, GUINEA AND GUINEA BISSAU

February 23 - March 13, 2025

Led by Professional Tour Manager, David William

Can be combined with Ivory Coast tour (February 12 - February 22, 2025) **OR** Rivers of West Africa (February 15 - February 23, 2025) **AND** Senegal & The Gambia Extension (March 13 - March 17, 2025)

This once-in-a-lifetime overland journey travels to some of the best cultural, natural, and religious environments of West Africa's Atlantic Coast. Traverse across an incredible variety of landscapes – from beaches and inland lagoons, along savannas and grassy plains to dense tropical forests and lush green mountains. During this multifaceted expedition, meet and interact with various ethnic groups including the Dan, Fula, and Guéré, a tribe well known for their masks that are considered a masterpiece of African art by many.

*Begin in Freetown, **Sierra Leone**, a city that was founded by African Americans as a settlement for liberated slaves, to acquire a deep understanding of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. From the attractive Tokeh Beach, take a boat ride to the Banana Islands, inhabited by descendants of freed slaves from the Americas that settled here in the 18th and 19th centuries. Next, travel through stunning scenery to Bo, one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse cities in the country.*

*Travel along a scenic route through lush forests across the border into **Liberia**, founded by the Krio, freed slaves from the Americas that return to Africa. Spend some time in the capital city of Monrovia, founded in 1822 when it was settled by emancipated slaves from America and learn more about the history of the slave trade.*

*From Liberia's northern border, venture off the tourist path and cross into **Guinea** through mountains and thick tropical forests to N'zerekore, a market town known for its silverwork. Visit a remote village for a rare chance to witness the sacred "Dance of the Bird Men." This secret society of warriors believed to have powers of invisibility, paint their faces in Kaolin and wear costumes made of feathers. Another exciting dance is the Toma initiation dance, which celebrates a woman's transition into adulthood. Explore the markets and villages of the Fouta Djallon, a region mostly inhabited by Muslim Fulani people. Meet the chief of a village and learn about the origins and traditions of his tribe.*

*Continue across the Guinea border into **Guinea Bissau**, West Africa's only Portuguese-speaking country. Pass through tropical savannas and interesting villages on the way to Gabu and stop at a village known for its musical talents. Navigate the Bijagos Archipelago, a stunning treasure comprising of 88 islands and inlets, and explore its lush tropical forests, coastal savannas, pristine beaches, and turquoise waters. The ethnic groups that inhabit these islands have been shielded from outside influences and have managed to maintain their unique traditions including the Vaca Bruto dance, the most spectacular mask ceremony in the archipelago. End in the bustling capital city of Bissau to discover the strong Portuguese influence in the architecture and wander the city's colorful main market.*

For those who would like to experience more Atlantic Coast culture, consider adding on the extension that continues overland into Senegal and The Gambia, ending in Dakar.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Sunday, February 23

Arrive in Freetown (SIERRA LEONE)

Upon arrival in **Freetown**, Sierra Leone's capital and largest city which was founded in 1787 as a settlement for former slaves from America, meet the local representative and transfer to the *Swiss Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight.

Monday, February 24

Freetown - Tokeh Beach



After breakfast, begin a walking tour with a visit to the city's exciting **museum**, which contains masks and objects from the different ethnical groups in Sierra Leone. In the center of the town is the famous 500-year-old **Cotton Tree**, a historic symbol of Sierra Leone. Pass by **St. George's Cathedral**, the **King's Gate**, and **Fourah Bay College**, the first of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa. Explore the **market**, then stop for lunch at a local restaurant. Before traveling to **Tokeh Beach**, one of the most extensive and most attractive beaches in West Africa. Transfer to *Palace Beach Resort or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, February 25

Tokeh Beach (Banana Island)



Take a local boat to **Banana Island** and spend half a day **circumnavigating, exploring, & walking** to discover a pristine paradise of mountains, primary forests, **villages**, and remote tiny **beaches**. A picnic lunch will be provided at a prime location on the island. Return to the *Resort* for a free afternoon at leisure, dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, February 26

Tokeh Beach - Bo



Begin the day with a drive past the lush green landscapes and traditional villages to **Bo**, a friendly town with colorful **markets** and "**Diamond shops**" where purchasing all the necessary equipment to dig for diamonds is possible. Stop en route at a **village** to learn more about the **Bundo masks** that the women wear, a unique element in a male-dominated event. Once we arrive in Bo, transfer to *Dohas Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, February 27

Bo - Monrovia (LIBERIA) (3 hrs.)



Diamonds have played an essential role in the recent troubled history of Sierra Leone, and seeking these gems is as addictive as gambling when the possibility of finding a “fortune” is a reality only for a lucky few. There may be a chance to meet some **diamond seekers** at a nearby village with permission from the chief. A local will explain the technics of artisanal mining and “sand washing.” Head out on a scenic new road through the lush forest across the border into **Liberia**, the only country that has never been a colony or protectorate. The Krio founded it and freed enslaved people who came back to Africa from the USA. Upon arrival in **Monrovia**, Liberia's capital city, transfer to *Cape Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. (B,L,D)

Friday, February 28

Monrovia (City Tour)



After breakfast, begin the day exploring the city of Monrovia, named after U.S. President James Monroe, a leading supporter of the colonization of Liberia. Begin with a visit to the 19th-century **Grand Masonic Temple**, then stop at the **Ducor Hotel**, a former grand hotel damaged by the Civil War. While the Hotel is now abandoned and closed, we can visit with the proper permission. Visit the **National Museum**, housed in the old Supreme Court building, to learn about the history and cultures of Liberia. Drive past the **Presidential Palace & Centennial Pavilion**, where political commemorations are held every July 26th, Liberia's national holiday, and back to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)

Saturday, March 01

Monrovia - Ganta (4 hrs. 35 min.)



Begin the day with a drive crossing the heavy traffic of Monrovia towards Liberia's northern border, which will be an unforgettable experience. Today will be a long but rewarding drive past villages and lush green forests. Drive to **Ganta**, a market town just across the Guinea border, and transfer to *Alvino Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, & overnight. (B,L,D)

Sunday, March 02

Ganta - N'zerekore (GUINEA)



Begin the drive to the borders crossing into **Guinea**. After border formalities, continue the drive towards **N'zerekore**, the second largest city in Guinea and once the center of an uprising against French rule in 1911. Today, it is a market town known for its silverwork. The road will be rough but through spectacular forests. Stop

en route at a large **hevea plantation** to learn how the latex from the hevea tree, commonly known as the “rubber tree,” is harvested and collected. Also, stop at local **villages** and **markets** for a visit then continue to **N'zerekore** and discover the largest **market** in the forest region of Guinea. We may get the opportunity to visit the small **ethnographic museum** (if opened). Transfer to *Bethanie Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. (B,L,D)

Monday, March 03

N'zerekore - Macenta



Travel along a small track through lush vegetation to a remote **village** to see a natural **liana bridge** that crosses a large river deep in the jungle. Liana bridges are a masterpiece of “tribal technology” and can measure over 200 feet long. Only the initiated can collect the materials needed for the bridge and leave it in the forest to be “built” by powerful spirits overnight. At the village, witness the most spectacular and lesser-known sacred dance of West Africa – the **Dance of the Bird Men**. This secret society paints their faces in Kaolin and wears costumes covered in feathers. Believed to have magical powers that make them invisible, these warriors can cross enemy lines during tribal wars, making them the best messengers. Witness and participate in this spectacular dance alongside the villagers. Continue the drive to **Macenta**, a small town founded by the Toma people, and transfer to *Macenta Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, March 04

Macenta - Kissidougou (2 hrs.)



After breakfast, witness the **Toma initiation dance**, which celebrates the end of puberty when a girl is considered an adult woman ready for marriage. Then, we begin the journey past the coffee plantations and through the forests to **Kissidougou**, where the Kouranko, Kissi, and Fula comprise the largest ethnic groups. A small but interesting **museum** displays ritual objects from the region that will be visited. Also, see the **stone gods** known as “pomo,” which are mysteriously found in the forest and worshipped by the Kissi people. Once we arrive, transfer to *Rama Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, March 05

Kissidougou - Faranah - Mamou (8 hrs.)



Begin the day with a drive over rough roads to a region full of markets, including the **Guekedou Market**, where thousands of people from neighboring villages come to trade every day. Situated at the borders of Guinea, Sierra

Leone, and Liberia, it is considered one of the largest markets in Africa. Along the way, stop at the town of **Faranah**, founded in the 1890s as a French outpost in the campaign against Samory Touré, the Malinke warrior. Upon arrival in **Mamou**, a significant trading center for rice, cattle, and fruits, transfer to *Balys Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, March 06

Mamou - Dalaba



Begin the day with a scenic drive to **Dalaba**, a favorite holiday retreat of former French diplomats. The town is located on the southern slope of the **Fouta Djallon** massif, considered by some to be the most spectacular area in Guinea. It is home to the Peul ethnic group (Fula), known for their beauty and being the best zebu breeders south of the Sahara. Visit the town's most exciting sites, including the old **meeting hall** known as "casa a palabra" (house of words), which features fine bas-reliefs in Peul design and where the chiefs used to gather to meet colonial administrators. See the **villa** built by the colonial governor and later used by the first president of independent Guinea. Also, see the **villa ruins** where Miriam Makeba met and married Stokely Carmichael, an exile from the US who was a key leader for the Black Panther Party. Transfer to *Safitel Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, March 07

Dalaba (Fouta Djallon) - Labé (2 hrs. 30 min.)



After breakfast, walk through the forest to see the beautiful **Ditin Waterfall**, the highest in the region. Next, drive to an exciting **village** to meet with the elders and be received by the chief garbed in his traditional clothing. Gather at a large clay **round hut** covered with a grass roof for a chance to hear them tell the story of their people, the origins of their tribe, and the traditional rules still practiced. Continue to **Labé**, the second largest city in Guinea, and transfer to *Tata Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, March 08

Labé - Gabu (GUINEA BISSAU) (10 hrs.)



Begin the drive across the **Buruntuma** border to **Guinea Bissau**. Experience a region with wild empty spaces, spectacular mountains covered in a wooded savannah, tropical dry forests, and isolated Fula (Peul) settlements. After border formalities, continue the drive to **Gabu**, a former colonial outpost and now a major market town. Transfer to *Karsa Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: With an anticipated 10-hour drive over rugged and uneven terrain, we have carefully planned regular

stops along the way to provide you with opportunities to stretch your legs, refresh, & enjoy the surrounding scenery.

Sunday, March 09

Gabu - Bissau City



Embark on a long journey to the capital city of Guinea Bissau, **Bissau City**. Along the way, leave the main road to visit a **Malinké village** known for its family of Griots, a group of musician-narrators that have been passing on the tradition since the 13th century. They are recognized for their skill in producing musical instruments and will entertain the group with a performance. Enjoy lunch in the exciting town of **Bafata** and admire its old Portuguese colonial architecture. Upon arrival in Bissau, transfer to *Dunia Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, March 10

Bissau - Bijagos Archipelago



After breakfast, embark on a private speed boat bound for the **Bijagos Archipelago** to discover fascinating tropical forests, coastal savannahs, and isolated tribes. This "geographical jewel" comprises 88 islands and inlets with some of the most pristine beaches and turquoise waters in Western Africa. The islands have been virtually untouched by colonial rule, preserving the islanders' traditions and cultures. The archipelago's remote location and ecological function have provided an excellent environment for all types of wildlife, including endemic and migratory birds, monkeys, wild pigs, pygmy cows, manatees, and the rare saltwater hippo. Stop at **Bolama**, the former capital of Portuguese Guinea, from 1871 to 1941 until it was moved to Bissau. Although inhabited, the town feels like a ghost town with lethargic empty squares, dry fountains, overgrown gardens, and crumbling Neo-Palladian administrative buildings. In the shade of the former governor's palace, goats graze peacefully. Once we arrive at the island of Rubane, transfer to *Ponta Anchaca Resort or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, March 11

Bijagos Archipelago (Bubaque Island)



Spend the morning relaxing by the pool, the white sandy beach, or walking around the island among the lush vegetation. Lunch will be at an open-air restaurant with a choice between the "catch of the day" straight from the ocean and other dishes. In the afternoon, take a short boat ride to **Bubaque Island**, the "tiny capital" of the Bijagos Archipelago, with its small but colorful **market**. Due to the remoteness, the lack of transport, and the deep

attachment of the locals to their traditions, the Bijagos tribes have had little influence from the external world. Life in the **villages** is characterized by initiations, rites, and secret ceremonies and is still ruled by the “cycle of seasons,” and ceremonies occur after harvest. In some villages, young men must go through a seven-year initiation rite living in a “convent” without contact with women. Alongside the local villagers, attend the **Vaca Bruto** (wild bull), the most spectacular mask ceremony on the islands, where the dancers realistically convey an untamed animal by bowing and facing the ground. Return to the *Resort* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, March 12

Bijagos Archipelago - Bissau City - USA

OR Continue to **SENEGAL & THE GAMBIA** 

After breakfast, take the boat back to **Bissau**, a tiny but intriguing capital town with an old Portuguese atmosphere. Enjoy a brief afternoon tour of the city to admire the **Portuguese architecture** and the huge **Amura Fort**, a reminder of the slave trade era. Transfer to *Dunia Hotel or similar* for check-in and some rest before the transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B,L)**

OR continue to **Senegal and The Gambia extension**.

Note: For those embarking on the exciting extension, please note that you will be required to spend the night in the vibrant city of Bissau.

“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”.



IMPORTANT Trip 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.*
- ❖ *In the more remote areas, hotels may be very basic with poor service, few amenities, and possible equipment failure such as no hot water, broken faucets, clogged drains, etc. Typically, they will be the best in the region.*
- ❖ *Twin rooms may not be available at some hotels.*
- ❖ *Air-conditioners in this part of the world do not cool a room to American standards of comfort.*
- ❖ *Brownouts or blackouts may occur or there may be limited electricity available.*
- ❖ *This trip involves long drives in hot weather over poorly maintained and very bumpy roads – usually along the only operational road in the country. Some vehicles may be in poor condition without adequate a/c. 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 these countries.*



Tour Cost (Land Only)

6 - 9 travelers \$11,795.00

10 - 12 travelers \$10,795.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$1,295.00

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

Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: *-***

Mediterranean. Leading groups and experiencing their excitement as we travel together is the best part of my job. This path has given me the opportunity to visit 50 States and over 160 countries on all seven continents. My passion for travel and my tour leading skills and my love for Africa are the perfect mix that equips me to share this special tour with you. I look forward to meeting you!

About your Tour Manager, David William... for as long as I can remember, I always had a deep-rooted need to travel. After graduating from university with a degree in hospitality & tourism management that included two years abroad, one in Oxford, England and the other at École Hôtelière in Lausanne, Switzerland my career as a hôtelier was on a successful track, but I longed to get away. Twenty years ago, I finally found my niche as a travel consultant and tour leader. During the last two decades, I have had the opportunity to organize and lead groups worldwide. I have organized every imaginable tour from remote, rugged expeditions to overland African journeys to luxury yachts in the



Tour Includes:

- Airport/Hotel/Airport transfers.
- A/C transportation in 4x4 vehicles and minibuses throughout the tour.
- Accommodation at mentioned Hotels (best available to superior 3-4* **(twin rooms may not be available at some hotels)**).
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: breakfast, L: lunch, and D: dinner).
- All activities described in the tour and entrance fees to all sites mentioned unless listed as optional.
- Bottled water during tours & meals plus 1 soft drink with meals.
- Professional English-speaking guide throughout and local guides at various villages.
- Escort of a Tour Manager (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade:

III Challenging: Parts of the trip are physically challenging, involve hiking on rough terrain or in sand or at high altitudes. There may be very long drives on rough roads, weather conditions with high heat or humidity, and the presence of insects. You may have simple picnic lunches, primitive bathroom facilities along the road and remoteness from modern towns or cities.

Lodging Level:

★ **Simple** - One or more properties on the trip are very basic, rustic, primitive, with shared bathroom facilities (1 or 2 stars).

★★★ **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-Monrovia / Guinea Bissau-USA.
- Visa Fees: **Liberia** (Obtainable in Washington DC - \$180), **Sierra Leone** (E-visa or through Washington DC - \$160), **Guinea** (Obtainable in Washington DC - \$160), and **Guinea Bissau** (Obtainable on arrival - \$90) - all subject to change.
- Alcoholic beverages and any drinks with or without meals and meals not mentioned.
- **Yellow Fever** or any other required vaccines.
- 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)**.

