



IVORY COAST

A HERITAGE OF TRIBES, DANCES & MASKS

February 12 - February 22, 2025
Led by Tour Manager, Nancy Weber

Can be combined with Nigeria Highlights tour (February 03 - February 12, 2025) **AND**
The Atlantic Coast tour (February 23 - March 13, 2025) **OR** Northern Morocco & The Spanish
Enclaves tour (February 23 - March 02, 2025)

Situated on the Atlantic coast of West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire - or Ivory Coast as some may call it, has a fascinating cultural heritage and some of the greatest mask dances in the world. On this overland journey, discover villages that have had little interaction with foreign visitors and spend time with different ethnic tribes such as the talented Baulé, a group known for their unrivaled masks and human sculptures, and the Senoufo another artistic group whose highly prized sculptures an inspiration for Pablo Picasso's were "African Period." Notice each tribe's own style of music when taking part in colorful tribal festivals, rituals, initiations, and amazing mask dances such as the mesmerizing "Dance of Goli Masks" and the energetic Boloy Mask Dance, also known as the "Panther Dance."

This trip is an exceptional program for those looking to dive deep into African culture with a strong interest in unique mask dances virtually unknown to the western world.

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Wednesday, February 12

Arrive in Abidjan (IVORY COAST)

Upon arrival in **Abidjan**, former Atchan fishing village turned capital, meet and transfer to the *Famille Mondiale Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight.

Note: Standard check-in time is 3:00 pm. If you arrive on February 11 or in the early morning of February 12, an extra hotel night needs to be booked.

Thursday, February 13

Abidjan - Aniassué Village - Abengourou (5 hrs.)

After breakfast, begin the drive to **Abengourou**, the capital of the Indenié Kingdom in the eastern region of the Ivory Coast. On the way, stop at **Aniassué Village** to visit a **fetish school** and **sanctuary**. A **fetish dance** will be performed by the Komian, priestess who have the power to prevent misfortune and, if necessary, healing. This power is exercised through a divinatory and therapeutic art which allows the Komian to indicate the remedies to be taken and sacrifices to make. Pay a visit to the Aniassué King then continue to Abengourou and transfer to *Le Royaume Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, February 14

Abengourou - Kondeyaokro - Yamoussoukro (5 hrs.)

In the morning, make the estimated five-hour drive to **Kondeyaokro** for a chance to meet the **Baulé tribe**, whose cultural traditions and rich heritage is revealed in their intricate craftsmanship of fine statues representing the world of spirits and striking masks. Attend the **Dance of Goli Masks**, a traditional dance performed at important occasions such as a funeral or for entertainment. These wooden masks are round with two horns attached at the top that represent an animal such as an antelope. While celebrating peace and joy, participants will sing, dance, and drink palm wine. can be performed both for entertainment and for the funeral of a person of high rank. Continue to Yamoussoukro and upon arrival, transfer to *Gnoupale Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, February 15

Yamoussoukro - Korhogo (5-6 hrs.)

The drive to **Korhogo** is long, but the stunning countryside scenery and bustling **villages** along the way will provide entertainment to help pass the time. There will also be

regular stops before arriving in Korhogo, a fascinating town with a history dating back to the 13th century. Today, it is the capital of the **Senoufo**, a tribe that produces remarkable works of art including wooden sculptures, paintings, weavings, and metalwork. This evening, witness the spectacular initiate dance of fire-eaters known as "**Djinangoro**." Transfer to *Mont Korhogo Hotel or similar*, for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, February 16

Korhogo

Begin the day exploring **Senoufo villages** and meeting the friendly people. The Senoufo are renowned for their complex initiations including **Poro**, the rite of passage that begins in childhood and teaches the initiates social and religious secrets that shape them into a genuine Senoufo man. A highlight of the day is witnessing the spectacular and energetic **Boloy Mask Dance**, known as the "**panther dance**." Unlike most African masks that are made of wood, the masks of the Boloy are made of cloth and designed to look like the face of a panther. The dancer performs a variety of moves such as pirouettes and back-flips and crawls on his back and belly. While in Korhogo, there may be the rare opportunity to witness a traditional **Senoufo funeral**. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, February 17

Korhogo - Bonudiali (4-5 hrs.)

After an early breakfast, leave the main road to discover **villages** of the **Fulani nomads**, constantly in search of pastures for their herds of zebus. They can be easily recognized by their conical straw huts, machetes and walking sticks they carry, and proud posture. Next, visit a **village** mostly inhabited by women and children for a close look into their lives and a peek into their huts. The women wear beautifully colored fabrics and special tribal jewelry made of amber, pearls, buttons, and stones around their neck and in their hair. Afterwards, attend the "**Dance of the Virgin girls**" known as **Ngoro**, performed only by virgin girls after they return from the sacred groves as part of their initiation. This afternoon, continue east to the region of **Odienne** to meet the **Dozo**, descendants of the old Mali Empire and a subgroup of the Malinké. The Dozo are traditional hunters known for their courage and "ancestral powers." Transfer to *Les Frontières Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, February 18

Odienne - Man (5 hrs)



The day will be dedicated to the encounters with the **Yacouba**, a Mande ethnic group. Explore the **villages** built along hillsides and characterized by large round huts with thatched roofs. Some of the homes are decorated with frescos made by the women during ceremonial periods. Amid the scented branches of a **coffee plantation**, visit a large **pond** inhabited by venerated catfish said to be “custodians of the ancestors.” Soon after, the echoes of tam-tams and the shouts of the initiated draw the masks out from the sacred forest to perform the unique **Yacouba Mask Dance**, which involves an acrobatic performance on stilts. Afterwards, continue south towards **Mount Tonkpi** to the city of **Man**, an important market town situated at the foot of the lush, green mountains. Transfer to *Amoitrin Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner & overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, February 19

Man



Spend the morning exploring the rainforest around Man, famous for its long **liana bridges**. Shrouded in mystery, traditions suggest these bridges made of liana vines, are secretly built by young, initiated men over the course of one night. In a nearby tiny **village**, masks will emerge from the forest and perform an energizing **mask dance** of the **Guéré** people. They believe there is a creator that communicates with the people through the masks. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, February 20

Man - Yamoussoukro



Travel through the beautiful African landscape dotted with tiny **villages** back to **Yamoussoukro**. A stop at a cacao or coffee **plantation** will provide insight into the cultivation, harvesting, and processing techniques while taking in the pleasant aromas of the fragrant trees. At the village of **Bouaffle**, witness the exciting **Zaouli Mask Dance**, a traditional dance of the **Guro** people. This is probably one of the most unique dances in the world, using rapid leg movements while the upper body appears motionless. Continue to Yamoussoukro, the native village of Felix Houphouet-Boigny, the first president of **Côte d'Ivoire** and one of the greatest independence leaders in the country. Notice the huge **government buildings** and the lofty 14-story high hotels, typical of any capital city, yet there is an eerie feeling of emptiness of what was once the dream of a grand capital. Visit the **Basilica of Notre Dame de la Paix** (Our Lady of Peace), one of the largest Christian religious structures in the world featuring around 90,000 square feet of stained-glass windows. Transfer to *Gnoupale Hotel* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, February 21

Yamoussoukro - Grand Bassam - Abidjan



After breakfast, travel south to explore the historic **Grand Bassam**, a historic town built on a sand bank between the lagoon and ocean. Its calm avenues shaded by tall trees, large bougainvillea vines, and well-preserved colonial buildings, give it a magical feel. See the old **Post Office**, a jewel of French colonial architecture, and visit the

Costume Museum, located in the former governor's palace. The museum contains a unique collection of tribal costumes, masks, ornaments, and ethnographic photos provide a remarkable perception of the country's history and culture. Continue on to **Abidjan** and transfer to *Famille Mondiale Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Saturday, February 22

Abidjan - USA

OR Continue to LIBERIA



Begin the day exploring the modern **City District** including **Saint Paul's Cathedral**, the mother church for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Abidjan. Also, visit the **National Museum**, which has an impressive display of tribal art collection of masks and statues from various Ivory Coast ethnic groups. At the new quarter of **Youpugon**, not far from the Banco River forest, there will be an opportunity to watch the famous “**Fanico**,” men who wash clothes in the river and dry them on the surrounding grass hill. Rest in your room for a couple of hours then transfer to the airport for an onward flight back to the U.S. **(B,L)**

OR join us on the exciting journey to the **ATLANTIC COAST**. **Note: Standard check-out time is 11:00am. If you wish to extend your stay beyond this time or require a late check-out, an additional cost will be incurred.**

“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 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.
- In the more remote areas, hotels will 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.
- 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 –Some vehicles may be in poor condition. 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: \$895.00

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

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: **-*****

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 as mentioned from best available to superior 3-5* (*twin rooms may not be available at some hotels*).
- A/C transportation in 4x4 vehicles and minibuses throughout the tour.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: breakfast, L: lunch, and D: dinner).
- Professional English-speaking guide throughout and local guides at various villages.
- All activities described in the tour and entrance fees to all sites mentioned.
- Bottled water while on drives.
- Escort of a 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. Roads throughout this part of Africa are often poorly maintained and driving distances are long.

Lodging Level:

****-**** Basic to Deluxe** - Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards (2 to 4 stars).

Tour does not include:

- International air USA - Abidjan - USA.
- Ivory Coast Visa (currently an e-visa - approx. \$90 - subject to change).
- Beverages, with or without meals and meals not mentioned.
- 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).

