

Volunteer Travel Guide Ghana - Volunteering Abroad Ghana - www.abroaderview.org

By A Broader View Volunteers Corp

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Formerly a British colony known as the Gold Coast, Ghana was the first black African nation to achieve independence in 1957. It is a relatively small country on the West coast of Africa situated between Togo and Côte d'Ivoire and remains a somewhat unexplored tropical gem, an untapped destination that abounds in history, culture, wildlife and scenery with a wide variety of tourist attractions. And throughout its 10 regions visitors will be greeted with the warm-hearted smiles of its welcoming people.

Nature has been extremely generous to Ghana with its national parks and reserves providing a sanctuary for the native flora and fauna; the grasslands of Mole National Park in the north are home to a variety of large animals, while birds and butterflies are particularly numerous in Ghana's forests.

The diverse ethnic groups of Ghana and the ancient traditions of its people have shaped one of the richest cultural environments in Africa that boasts festivals, dance and music as well as a colorful dress and a wide variety of arts and crafts.

<http://www.abroaderview.org/ghana.php>

The Basics

Time:

Local time is GMT.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 220 volts, 50 Hz. Both round and flat three-pronged plugs are most commonly used.

Language:

English is the official language, but many other African languages are spoken including Twi, Fante, Ga, Ewe, Hausa and Dagbani.

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Health:

Visitors must be in possession of a current medical vaccination certificate for yellow fever. Prophylactics against malaria are recommended and waterborne diseases are prevalent, including outbreaks of cholera during the rainy season. Visitors are advised to buy bottled drinking water, which is widely available. Bird flu has been confirmed in Ghana, but the risk to visitors is considered to be very low; as a precaution it is advisable to avoid close contact with live birds and ensure all poultry products are well cooked. Good medical facilities are found in all the cities and major towns, but facilities outside urban areas are poor and emergency services are limited. Medical insurance is advised and should cover medical evacuation.

Safety:

Most visits to Ghana are trouble-free, but it is wise to be vigilant in public areas particularly in and around Accra and to avoid travelling in taxis alone after dark if possible. Visitors should avoid carrying large sums of cash or valuables on them and to be vigilant when drawing money from ATMs in central Accra. Theft of luggage and travel documents has occurred at Kotoka International Airport. Visitors should also be vigilant in and around Tamale and Kumasi where there has been an increase in crime including muggings and attacks on foreigners. There is a potential for outbreaks of violence between rival political factions, fighting between inter-ethnic groups and civil unrest; travellers are advised to stay up to date with daily developments. Visitors to the Northern Region should be alert to the possibility of renewed outbreaks of inter-ethnic fighting.

Customs:

Ghanaian are generally a conservative people and visitors should respect local customs, traditional courtesies and dress codes, particularly in the villages. Ghanaian do most things with their right hand; eating, touching food, taking and receiving things, waving, shaking hands etc.

The left hand is used for 'dirty things' and it is regarded as rude to use the left hand for the aforementioned things. If in doubt, use the right hand. Homosexuality is illegal. Greeting is an important social function and handshakes are common. No civilian may wear camouflage clothing as it is reserved for the military. Visitors to remote villages, shrines or palaces should visit the local elder or priest and take a small gift such as a bottle of local schnapps, gin or money. Always seek permission before taking photographs of people; it is not permitted to take photographs of military institutions or the airport.

Communications:

The international dialing code for Ghana is +233. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0027 for South Africa). Accra's city code is 21. The telephone system is relatively reliable, but most people use mobile phones. Telephone, fax and telex services are available in all main towns, and hotels. Most major hotels also have business centers, which provide secretarial and courier services. Internet cafes are on the increase throughout the country, but connection speeds are usually slow. There are several GSM cell phone operations across Ghana that have roaming agreements with most international networks, and phones can be rented in Accra.

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Contacts

Visa Agencies

Travel Visa Pro, San Francisco, USA. 1-888-470-8472 or www.TravelVisaPro.com

Tourism

Ghana Tourist Board, Accra: +233 21 222 153 or www.ghanatourism.gov.gh

Ghana Embassies

Embassy of Ghana, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 686 4520.

Ghana High Commissioner, London, United Kingdom (also responsible for Ireland): +44 (0)20 7201 5900.

Ghana High Commissioner, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 236 0871.

Ghana High Commission, ACT, Australia: +61 (0)2 6290 2110.

Ghana High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 342 5847.

Foreign Embassies in Ghana

United States Embassy, Accra: +233 21 741 000.

British High Commission, Accra: +233 21 221 665.

Canadian High Commission, Accra: +233 21 211 521.

Australian High Commission, Accra: +233 21 701 2961.

South African High Commission, Accra: +233 21 762 380.

Honorary Consul of Ireland, Accra: +233 21 518 112.

Ghana Emergency Numbers

Emergencies: 999.

Airports

Kotoka International Airport (ACC)

Location:

The airport is situated seven miles (12km) from Accra city center.

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Time:

Local time is GMT.

Contacts:

Tel: +233 21 776 171.

Facilities:

Facilities include shops and duty-free shopping, snack bars, restaurant and bar, a business center, post office and information desk. A bureau de change and 24-hour ATM are located in the arrivals hall. There are also 24-hour medical care and immunization services available.

Departure Tax:

US\$50 (international), 1,000 cedis (domestic).

Website:

www.gcaa.com.gh

Climate

Ghana is a tropical country lying just north of the equator. The rainy season lasts from April to October in northern Ghana and from April to June and again from September to October in the south. Temperatures range from about 70°F to 90°F (21°C to 32°C) and the humidity is relatively high. The rest of the year is hot and dry with temperatures reaching up to 100°F (38°C). In most areas the temperatures are highest in March and lowest in August, after the rains. Variations between day and night temperatures are small.

Passport & Visa

Visa Agencies:

Avoid the stress and queues, get a visa agency to arrange your visa.

Travel Visa Pro, San Francisco, USA. 1-888-470-8472 or www.TravelVisaPro.com
Global Visas, London, UK. 0207 190 3903 or www.globalvisas.com

Entry requirements for Americans: US citizens must have a passport and visa.
Entry requirements for UK nationals: UK nationals must have a passport and visa.
Entry requirements for Canadians: Canadians must have a passport and visa.
Entry requirements for Australians: Australians must have a passport and visa.
Entry requirements for South Africans: South Africans must have a passport and visa.
Entry requirements for New Zealanders: New Zealand nationals must have a passport and visa.
Entry requirements for Irish nationals: Irish citizens must have a passport and visa.

Note: Passport and visa requirements are liable to change at short notice. Travelers are advised to check their entry requirements with their embassy or consulate.

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