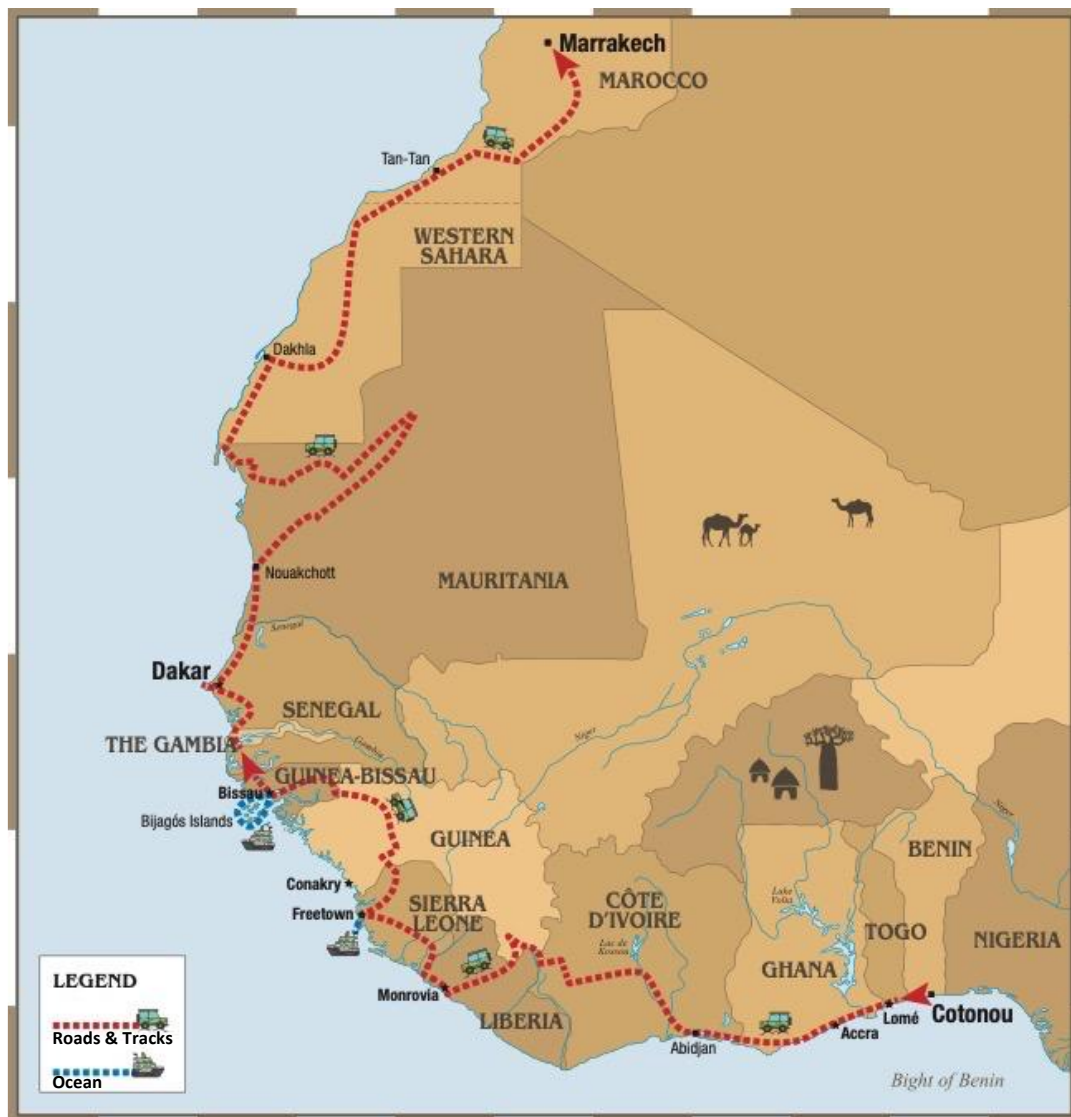


COTONOU-DAKAR-MARRAKECH

## 55 DAYS GRAND EXPEDITION: from Cotonou to Marrakech “A once-in-a-lifetime experience”

Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau and the Bijagos Archipelago, The Gambia, Senegal and Casamance, Mauritania, Morocco and the Western Sahara Province



### TRIP SUMMARY

**EXPERIENCE.** Be at the forefront of a "Great Expedition" that starts from the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, crosses forests and savannahs to reach and cross the Sahara from south to north. The itinerary traverses the main natural, cultural and religious environments of the African continent.

In Benin and Togo, the itinerary focuses on the African origins of Voodoo to witness ceremonies, drums, dances and trance states. In Ghana we discover the Ashanti ethnic group at the time of traditional rituals, enjoy wild beaches and ancient slave trade castles. Along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, we travel between pristine coastlines and wild islands. We will cross remote forests and mountains where the arrival of foreigners is a rare event. In the lesser-known corners of Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, we will walk on liana bridges to isolated villages, discover sacred forests, be greeted by traditional chiefs, sit in council with notables and elders, and meet diamond seekers in action. In Guinea Bissau, we will attend a "tribal concert" performed by the Griot: descendants of musicians and storytellers dating back to the 12th century. We will enjoy three days of sailing exploring the Bijagos Archipelago. Driving north, the landscape will change from forest to savannah. After the sacred dancing masks of Casamance, the silhouette of the mosques will be a sign that as the natural environment has changed, so has the cultural and religious environment, from traditional animism to a peaceful and local version of Islam. In Senegal, Cap d'Almadine is the westernmost point on the African continent. In Mauritania, the landscape and environment will change again, moving from savannah to desert. While crossing the Sahara, we discover the oases of Chinguetti and Ouadane, dating back to the 13th century. Driving north toward the Tropic of Cancer we reach Western Sahara (now Morocco's Saharan Provinces) and its virgin sands. A region forbidden to travellers for decades, where we are proud to be the first. Several references will enrich the expedition that follows the routes of birds migrating to Europe after wintering in Africa. Crossing the Sahara, we will partly retrace an ancient caravan route to rediscover the same stone architecture thousands of miles north, on the other side of the desert. Graffiti will also be a reference, from present-day urban graffiti to prehistoric rock art.

A once-in-a-lifetime experience: during this multifaceted expedition we will also interact with "contemporary Africa." Walking through the intense city life of Accra, Abidjan, Freetown or Dakar. Feel the exciting mix of urban culture, live music, meet young and urban artists, experience fusion cuisine.

The right terminal to end this expedition from the Gulf of Guinea to North Africa will be Marrakech, an ancient crossroads and caravanserai and now a modern, traditional cosmopolitan city.

**CLIMATE.** The departure dates have been chosen to enjoy the best climate. Late autumn (and spring) are the perfect seasons to travel through the Sahara: temperatures are mild and pleasant; nights are cool but not cold and the days are warm but not hot. Winter (and early spring) are the coolest times of the dry season in Sub-Saharan West Africa.

**COMFORT** is a must to fully enjoy a long travel experience off the beaten path.

**Transports:** modern, air-conditioned 4x4 vehicles will be the main means of transport on rugged routes, while on main roads, modern, comfortable air-conditioned minibuses will be used.

**Overnights:** in comfortable hotels, four stars (\*\*\*\*) in the capitals. Recent hotels with air-conditioned rooms and private facilities in the rest of the itinerary. The accommodations have been chosen prioritizing comfort, quality of food, friendly service, typical architectural style, and scenic locations. In the remote areas of the Sahara, we will enjoy two nights at our mobile camp with large Bedouin tents, carpets, mattresses and chairs. In case of sand wind, a comfortable restaurant-tent will be set for dinner. A well-organized camp experience under the stars of the desert is a must for the “Sahara experience”.

**SAFETY** is our main concern. The expedition is based on our long experience of the area and is led by knowledgeable expedition leaders. The itinerary is safe, our local network constantly monitors it thanks to a permanent presence in the field providing updated information.

## ITINERARY



### Day 1: COTONOU - Benin

Arrival at Airport and transfer the hotel.

Dinner and overnight stay at Hotel Azalai, four stars, international standard.

### Day 2: THE STILTS VILLAGE - Benin

We will leave our vehicles and cross Lake Nokwe on a motorized boat to reach Ganvié, the largest and most beautiful African village on stilts. The approximately 25,000 inhabitants are part of the Tofinou ethnic group and build their wooden houses on teak stilts. Breeding fish with an ancient tribal technology is their main activity. Ganvié has managed to preserve its traditions and environment despite the long-lasting human presence in a closed setting; and the lake is not over-fished. Daily life unfolds in the dugout canoes that adults and children row with ease using brightly coloured paddles. From these canoes, men fishing, women expose goods at the “floating market”, children go to school and play, in Ganvié children are said to learn to swim first than to walk.

Travelling miles on the fishermen's track between endless yellow beaches, tall palm trees, thatched huts and colourful dugouts, we arrive in Ouidah. Dinner and overnight stay t Hotel Casa del Papa, a 4-star international resort or similar, with wild beaches, swimming pool, air-conditioned and self-contained oceanfront bungalows).

### Day 3: OUIDAH, AFRO-BRASILIAN CULTURE - Benin

The small town of Ouidah was conquered by the Dahomey Kingdom during the 18th century and became a main slave shipping port. We start the visit following the “slave road” to the shore, “the door of no return” where slaves were shipped to the Americas. Ouidah enjoys a rare Afro-Brazilian architecture, as a unique mix of cultures, where the python temple faces the Catholic Cathedral. The laid-back attitude of the locals blends with the thunder of the distant waves and the rhythm of the drums seem to bring back the murmuring echo of the columns of slaves embarked from these beaches - a timeless atmosphere described by Bruce Chatwin in his novel "The Vice-Roy of Ouidah". On foot we visit the Python Temple and the Portuguese Fort (currently under renovation), now a small but interesting museum on the history of Ouidah, the transatlantic slave trade and the links that the trade has created between West African costal countries and the Caribbean Voodoo culture.

Between lagoons and ocean, we will discover the Zangbeto cult. The Zangbeto Mask is very tall and covered with coloured straw. It represents wild, non-human spirits (the forces of nature and of the night that inhabited the Earth before humans). The mask wearers belong to a secret society and keep their identity hidden because the non-initiated cannot know who they are. When Zangbeto dances is an event for the village. Its performance guarantees protection against bad spirits and witchcraft. The spinning movement of the mask symbolizes the spiritual purification of the village and Zangbeto also performs « miracles » to prove its powers.

Arrival to the tiny town of Grand Popo. Dinner and overnight stay in comfortable, air-conditioned and self-contained bungalows. Or similar.



#### Day 4: VOODO - Benin - Togo

Border with Togo.

Voodoo is the main religion in the coastal area of Togo and Benin and authentic ceremonies are common: the frenetic rhythm of drums and the chants of the followers “call” the Voodoo spirits who take possession of some participants. The possessed fall into a deep trance: eyes rolling back, grimaces, convulsions, insensitivity to fire or pain. Sakpata, Heviosso, Mami Water are just some of the voodoo divinities who can manifest... Surrounded by the magic atmosphere of the ceremony, we will understand what people mean when they say: “In your Churches you pray God; in our Voodoo shrine we become Gods!”.

Overnight stay at the recent and comfortable Onomo Hotel, international standard, or similar.

#### Day 5: LOME: COSMOPOLITAN AND STYLISH CAPITAL - Togo - Ghana

Lome, the vibrant capital of Togo, is the only African city which had been ruled by Germans, British and French and had attracted traders from different African countries. It is also one of the rare capitals in the world bordering another nation. These elements have developed a unique lifestyle of its inhabitants, its multifaceted cuisine, and its architecture. Lome is a meeting point of people, trade and cultures, a cosmopolitan but still human-scale capital. We will visit: the central market with its famous “Nana Benz”, women who control the market of the expensive “pagne” (colourful cloths) sold all over West Africa, the colonial buildings and the largest “fetish market” in whole Africa, where we can find an eclectic assortment of all the necessary ingredients for love potions and magical concoctions. Afternoon drive to Ghana border and to Accra.

Dinner and overnight stay in the town central district at Villa Boutique, 4-star Boutique Hotel, air-conditioned and self-contained rooms, or similar.

Optional, Accra night tour.

#### Day 6: ACCRA “THE CAPITAL” - Ghana

Morning dedicated to visit Accra. Ghana capital has maintained its special identity despite the fast-paced development currently underway. We explore the old neighbourhood of James Town, inhabited by the local people known as Ga. Our tour ends with the visit of a workshop specialized in building fantasy coffins. These unique handcrafted coffins can take any shape: fruit, animals, fish, cars, airplanes.... the only limit is imagination! Drive to Kumasi.

Dinner and overnight stay at Miklin hotel or similar, that will be our base for two nights. Air-conditioned and self-contained rooms.

#### Day 7: ASHANTI - Ghana

**Kumasi**, the historical and spiritual capital of the old Ashanti Kingdom. The Ashanti were one of the most



powerful nations in Africa until the end of 19th century, when the British annexed Ashanti Kingdom to the Gold Coast colony. With more than three million inhabitants, Kumasi is a sprawling city with a fantastic central market, one of the largest in Africa. All kinds of Ashanti handicrafts (leather goods, pottery, Kente cloth) and virtually every kind of tropical fruit and vegetable can be found here.

The visit includes the Ashanti Cultural Centre, a rich collection of Ashanti artifacts housed in an interesting

reproduction of an Ashanti ancient house. Participation to a meeting or traditional event of Ashanti culture.

Dinner and overnight return to our base at Miklin Hotel, air-conditioned self-contained rooms.

#### **Day 8: ELMINA UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE - Ghana**

Morning departure to Elmina to discover the ancient slave trade castles. The oldest European building in



Africa. “Sao Jorge da Mina” was erected by the Portuguese in 1482. At different times the castle has been used as a warehouse to trade gold, ivory, and eventually slaves.

The castle we visit today is the result of successive extension works and is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Facing the castle, the fishing harbour with hundreds of

colourful and large fishing wooden canoes. Dinner and overnight stay at the ocean front Anomabu Beach resort, large and comfortable air-conditioned bungalows. Or similar.

#### **Day 9: FROM GOLD TO IVORY - Ghana - Ivory Coast**

Early departure. In an ancient village, we will discover the Posuban, shrines of the “Asafo companies” where the Asafo “warriors” still pour libations. The alleys of the old city have a unique atmosphere, taking us back to the time before colonial times, when this region was the first place of fixed trade between Europeans and sub-Saharan Africa. At Axim we will visit the San Antonio Fort built by the the Portuguese in 1515 near the estuary of the Ankobra River, in a region extremely rich in gold. Heavily fortified and built on a naturally protected site, by a rock facing the ocean, this fort was the main gold trading point of the former Gold Coast. From Axim we will drive to the country that took name from the ivory trade. Border with Ivory Coast and arrive to the town of Aboisso on the Bia River.

Dinner at the open air and animated local restaurants in the central square, a safe and tasty experience of African street food.

Overnight stay at Hotel Le Rochè, self-contained airc-onditioned rooms, or similar (**no twin rooms available**).

#### **Day 10: GRAND BASSAM - Ivory Coast**

Arrive to Grand Bassam: an old town built on a sand bank between the lagoon and the ocean. It was the former capital of the French Ivory Coast colony and now a maritime leisure resort for the Abidjanese. Thanks to its calm avenues shaded by tall trees, large bougainvillea and well-preserved colonial buildings, Grand Bassam has a magic atmosphere. The old post office is a jewel of colonial architecture. The Costume Museum, at the former governor's palace, with its grand outdoor staircase is an architectural gem and its unique collection of tribal costumes, masks, ornaments and ethnographic photographs offers an interesting insight into the country's history and culture. We continue in a westerly direction to Abidjan.

Overnight stay at the comfortable and new Azalai hotel, four stars, international standard, or similar.

### Day 11: ABIDJAN, SKYSCRAPERS AND LAGOONS - Ivory Coast

Beyond the lagoon, the “plateau” (the City District) is growing very fast, not horizontally as in most African towns but vertically, with its large modern buildings and skyscrapers. Not much land is available and the little available must be continually recovered from the waters of the Ebrié Lagoon. The modern City District is defined to the west by the harbour and its endless queues of people waiting for a public boat, and to the east by the silhouette of Saints Peter & Paul Cathedral. The chaotic traffic is the negative result of the country's rapid economic development, which has reached 6% of GDP since the civil war. Afternoon, Motorway departure for Yamoussoukro. Dinner and overnight stay at the comfortable Royal Hotel, swimming pool, air-conditioned self-contained rooms, or similar (**no twin rooms available**).

### Day 12: CATHEDRAL IN THE SAVANNAH - Ivory Coast

Yamoussoukro is the country's formal capital since 1983 and native village of Houphouët-Boigny, the first President of independent Ivory Coast. Here the Ivorian dream of the 1970s and 1980s has come true, the dream of a country that, despite its shortage of major natural resources, has created the largest economy in French speaking West Africa. We visit the Basilica of the Virgin of Peace, inspired by St Peter's in Rome, the largest Christian building on earth, with unique high colourful glass windows. We see wide boulevards where the few cars try to avoid the big potholes, zebus and chickens. The huge government buildings, large hotels up to 14 storeys high and even an artificial lake inhabited by crocodiles give a feeling of abandonment.

In a village we attend the Zaouli dancing masks. **Zaouli** is a traditional dance of the Guro tribe. The Zaouli mask, created in the 1950s, was probably inspired by a girl named "Djela Lou Zaouli". However, origin stories are varied and each mask may have its own symbolic story. The uniqueness of the Zaouli dance is the fine and sophisticated movement of the legs and feet.

Daloa, dinner and overnight stay at Hotel La Grace, self-contained air-conditioned rooms, or similar (**no twin rooms available**).

### Day 13: MAGIC TRADITIONS - Ivory Coast

We start our journey across coffee and cocoa plantations, dotted only by small villages. Ivory Coast is the world's main cocoa producer, the second is Ghana and together, they represent more than half of the world production.

Leaving the main road, only 4x4 vehicles can drive to remote villages in the forest, where the arrival of foreigners is a rare event to encounter, the Guere ethnic group. We will discover the powerful Guéré Mask that leave the sacred forest to dance in the village when important guests arrive.

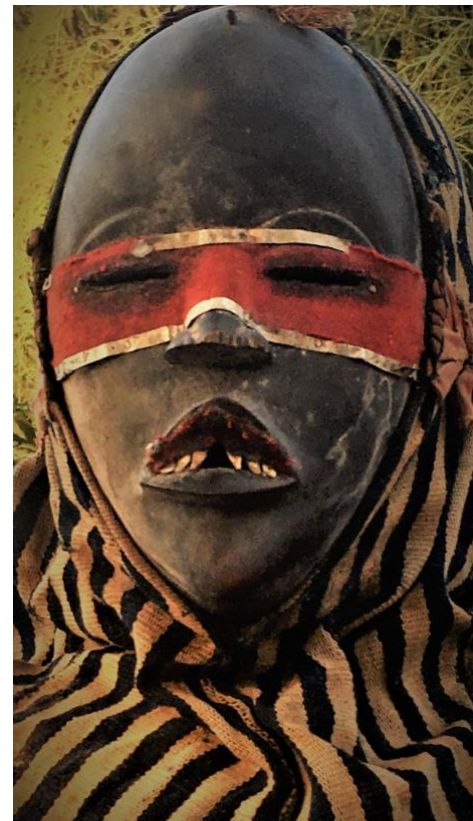
(If we are lucky) the rare “Jugglers” will perform: girls initiatory Juggling is an ancient tradition now vanishing. We have discovered one of the last villages where it is still practiced.

Dan and Guéré ethnic groups known for their masks considered among the masterpiece of African Art.

Arrive in the evening at the small town of Man, surrounded by 18 green mountains, the capital of this forest region.

We will spend two nights at a comfortable hotel in Man.

Dinner and overnight stay at hotel Amoitrin, air-conditioned self-contained rooms, swimming pool. Or Similar



#### Day 14: MASKS OF BEAUTY - Ivory Coast



Entire day dedicated to the region of Man. If the Guéré masks are known for their powerful and rough appearance, the Dan masks are one of the most beautiful tribal masks due to the delicate balance of shapes symbolising beauty. In a small village nearby, masks emerge from the forest towards us. In the cosmogony of the Dan people there is a creator god who communicates with human beings only through its intermediaries, the masks. During the mask dance the distance between the human and the spirit worlds disappears, the cosmic and the social orders are restored, and gratitude is expressed to the gods and the ancestors.

The Man market is an important trading point with villagers coming from the region and from the forests of the neighbouring countries. It will be possible to find a wild choice of handicraft and, with some luck, authentic tribal masks and ritual objects. Dinner and overnight stay: return to the Amoitrin hotel, air-conditioned self-contained rooms, swimming-pool. Or similar.

#### Day 15: LIANA BRIDGES - Ivory Coast - Liberia

A road in the lush vegetation will bring us to a remote village and a short walk to a spectacular liana bridge that crosses a large river in the jungle. Liana bridges are masterpieces of a genuine "tribal technology". They are built exclusively with vegetal materials, as wood and lianas without the use of nails or rope nor other materials foreign to the forest. Only the initiated can harvest the lianas and the wood, leaving them in the forest. It is believed that a powerful spirit will build the bridge in one night.

During the preparation of a new bridge neither women nor not-initiated are allowed in the forest, to guarantee the secrecy of this "magic technology".

After many formalities we will cross the border with Liberia in a hilly and luxuriant landscape. Evening arrival at Gbarnga. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel Passion 2, air-conditioned self-contained rooms (***no twin rooms available***).

#### Day 16: LIBERIA: THE LAND OF FREEMEN - Liberia

Arrival in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, the only African country which has never been either a colony or a protectorate. Liberia was founded by the Krio, freed slaves brought back from America to Africa. Krio represent 5% of the population. They are considered the creators of the Nation and the main actors of modern economy and politics. 80% of the population speaks Krio a sort of American English "Pidgin".

Our ocean-view hotel is the best starting point to visit town. Freemasonry has a great impact on the history of Liberia and Krio culture. Visit of the Grand Masonic Temple imposing building. A symbol of Monrovia is what left of the Ducor Palace, inaugurated in 1960 was one of the first five stars hotels in Africa. Located on a rocky hill in the highest point of Monrovia, dominate the whole town and the bay. The hotel hosted events and parties of the African elite at the time of independences. In the large pool facing the ocean Idi Amin used to swim caring his pistol at the belt while his friend Miriam Makeba was

singing. During and after the civil war the building was looted several times, the hotel is now abandoned and closed, but seeking the right permission, we may be able to visit it. In 2008 the government made a deal with Ghaddafi to rebuild this hotel, however the project, as many other Libyan development projects, never came to conclusion thanks to the war that Europe and America started to overthrow Ghaddafi.

The building of the National Museum is a display of Krio architecture. In the museum we discover a large collection of ancient masks and ritual objects and a photographic show about the long civil wars which took place between 1989 and 2003. Old colonial buildings, stone Krio churches will be also part of this intriguing town visit. Dinner and overnight stay at the comfortable Cape Hotel, four stars, international standard, situated at Mamba Point, the best area of Monrovia. Or similar



#### **Day 17: BUNDO: FEMALE MASKS - Liberia - Sierra Leone**

In most parts of Africa, the masks are male's prerogative, however among the Mende people and neighbouring populations the Bundo masks are a female's domain, and have a crucial role in the girl initiation rites. We reach a village to attend the exit of the masks, an event that calls a colourful crowd.



Mano river is a natural border between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

After the border formalities we will continue a spectacular new road in the forest to the town of Bo. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel Dohas, self-contained rooms with A/C, or similar.

### Day 18: DIAMONDS - Sierra Leone

Diamond seeking is as addictive as gambling at least, the possibility of finding a “fortune” can become true, just for few most lucky. Diamonds have played an important role in the recent troubled history of the country. The quantity and quality of “stones” still to be find is important. We reach a village. After asking permission to the chief some villagers will take us to the site where we can meet the diamond seekers. A local person explains us the technics of artisanal mining and “sand washing”.



Drive to the Atlantic coast, at the village of Kent we will leave our vehicles to board on a boat for a brief navigation to Banana Island.

Dinner and overnight stay at the cozy Bafa Lodge that will be our base for two nights: fix tents hidden in the forest facing the sea. Fine cuisine based on the catch of the day (other meals available, ask in advance).

### Day 19: BANANA ISLAND - Sierra Leone

Full day circumnavigating, exploring and walking to discover a pristine paradise such as mountains, primary forests, villages and remote tiny beaches. For the most active travellers a 2-hour hike in the forest or continue the circumnavigation of the island. Lunch picnic, dinner and overnight stay: return to our base Bafa Lodge fix camp.

### Day 20: FREETOWN PENINSULA - Sierra Leone

A local boat will bring us back to the continent. Drive along the coast at the slopes of the Freetown peninsula mountains... only the yellow of the beaches divide the green of the lush vegetation from the blue of the ocean. The country has been named after these mountains, the mountains (Sierra) of the lions. Freetown origins: in 1786 the first three hundred and eighty freed African slaves arrived in Sierra Leone from America where they have fought in the independence war on the side of the British. After having lost the war, the British sent them to Sierra Leone and created the first freed slave settlements. Few months after their arrival, the newcomers were starving, got new and unknown diseases and fought with the locals, who could hardly stand them. A few years after, during the Napoleonic war, Freetown was displaying the British flag and had been attacked by seven vessels of the French navy and destroyed. Few survivors escaped on the pirogues sent by... the slave's traders. From 1807, due to the abolition of the slave trade by the British Empire, the ships of the slave's traders caught by the British Navy freed the slaves in Sierra Leone. In 1808 Freetown became the capital of the first British colony in tropical Africa. At that time the Krio peoples, or ex slaves, were more than 50,000, creating an elite who put pressure on the administration for better education. In 1845 "Fourah Bay" the first University in West Africa was built. During Colonial time Freetown was known as the “Athens of West Africa”.

Dinner and overnight stay at the comfortable Swiss Hotel, four stars, international standard (**no twin rooms available**).

### Day 21: THE NATIONAL BALLET - Sierra Leone - Guinea

Departure in a north-westerly direction. After crossing the border into Guinea, we arrive at the rocky town of Kindia. The National Ballet was one of the flagships of the old socialist regime at the time of independence and was called the African Bolshoi. A tradition of acrobats and dancers remains from that era in Kindia. Visit the colourful market. In the evening, to the sound of drums, we will attend an acrobatic dance show. Dinner and overnight stay at Moringa Hotel, air-conditioned, self-contained bungalows. Or similar (**no twin rooms available**).

## Day 22: AFRICAN BAS-RELIEF - Guinea

Mamou is the door of the Fouta Djallon massif.

A panoramic road will bring us on the southern slope to Dalaba, at an altitude of 3 900 Ft. (1200 m.).

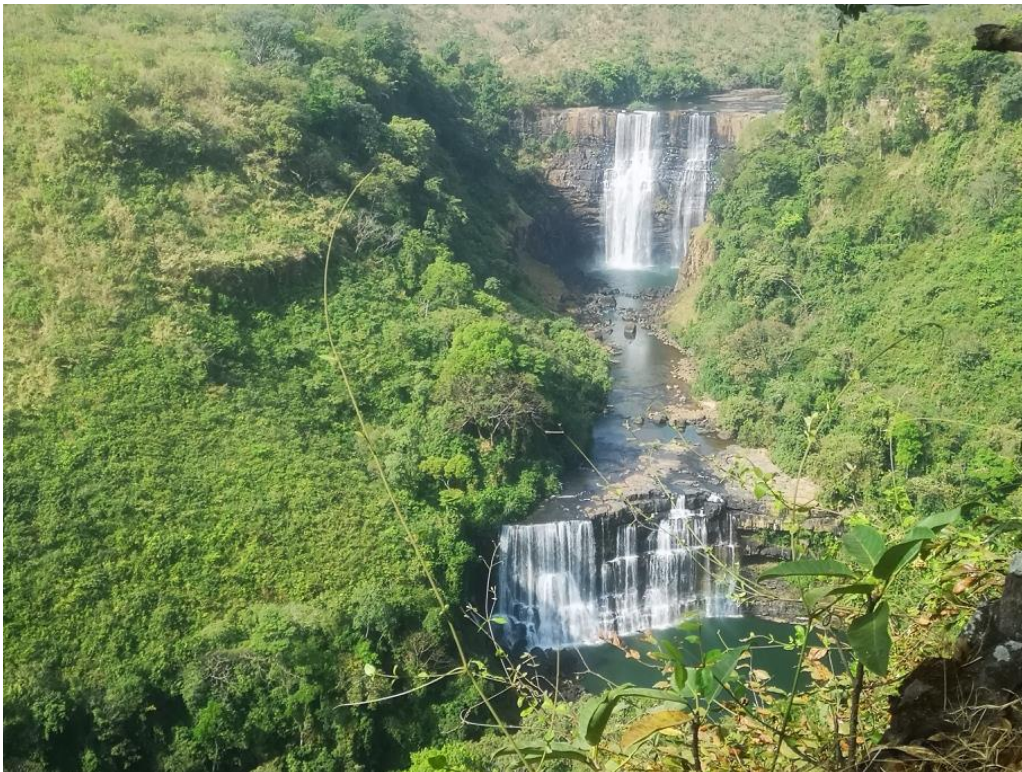
Fouta Djallon: thanks to its cool and healthy climate, it was a favourite place for the French to holiday during colonial times. The coniferous forests have remained as a reminder of that era. Considered the most spectacular area of Guinea: mountains, plateau and savannah alternate with deep wet valleys. This great mountain massif is the 'water reservoir' of West Africa, from Guinea flow three rivers that give their names to four nations: Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Gambia. This territory is home to the Fulani (also called Fulla or Peul), who are famous for their beauty and are considered the greatest zebu breeders south of the Sahara.

We will visit Dalaba, a small and quiet town. Of an interest is the "casa a palabra" (the house of words) with fine bas-relief in a pure Fulla (Peul) architectural style. Here the chiefs used to meet with the colonial administration. Visit to the villa built by the colonial governor and later used by the first president of independent Guinea. The leader of the independence was Sekou Touré, one of the most radical anti-colonial African President; he refused any cooperation with the French and created strong ties with the Soviet Union and a personal friendship with Ceausescu. Some villas used by the ministers and by the guests of Sekou Touré are reminiscences of that time. In a today ruined villa, Miriam Makeba met and married Stokely Carmichael, an exile from the US who was among the inspirators of Black Panthers armed wing

Dinner and overnight stay at hotel, Safitel. Air-conditioned self-contained rooms (***no twin rooms available***).

## Day 23: FOUTA DJALON - Guinea

Full day dedicated to discovering Fouta Djallon, where mountains meet savannah, deep valleys, towering



waterfalls framed by forest make the landscape of pristine beauty. The Peul ethnic group (also called Fulla or Fulani) hails from this area. The Peul are known for their beauty and for being the best zebu herders in West Africa. In the 17th century, the Jihad of the Fulla (Peul) started from these mountains, leading the Peul to conquer most of the savannah as far as Cameroon, and they are the largest group in the sub-Saharan savannahs.

A large round clay hut with an ornate grass roof is where the main council meets and where traditional chiefs from all over Fouta Djallon are appointed; thanks to our connections we will ask to be received by the chiefs and dignitaries who sit on the council....

Evening arrival in Labe, called the "capital" of the Fouta Djallon region.

Dinner and overnight stay at the simple but clean Hotel Tata, self-contained air-conditioned bungalows.

#### **Day 24: A REMOTE CORE OF AFRICA - Guinea - Guinea Bissau**

Early departure for a long day of drive. Experiencing a region with wild empty spaces, spectacular mountains covered with a wooded savannah, tropical dry forests and isolated Fulla (Peul) settlements. At a remote border we will cross into Guinea Bissau. Evening arrival in Gabu. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel Karsa, air-conditioned self-contained rooms.

#### **Day 25 GRIOT: THE AFRICAN TROBADORS - Guinea Bissau**

Morning departure. We leave the main road for a small village in the Malinké region.

The Malinké are the descendants of the ancient Mali Empire and are widespread in the current territories of Mali, Guinea Conakry, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau. Griots are a group of musician-narrators dating back to the 13th century Mali Empire. The village we visit is known for griot families who have been passing on these traditions for generations since the days of the Empire. Well-known also for their skills in producing musical instruments, they will perform a concert for us. Lunch and visit of Bafata to discover the old Portuguese colonial architecture. Evening arrival in Bissau, the capital of the country. Overnight stay at Dunia hotel, four stars, international standard.

#### **Day 26: BIJAGOS SACRED ARCHIPELAGO: THE GHOST CAPITAL - Guinea Bissau**

Experience a three-day spectacular navigation on a speedboat to discover the Bijagos Archipelago, its fascinating nature and isolated tribes. The Archipelago, composed by 88 islands and islets, is located at an average of 40 miles from the coastline. Bijagos is a “geographical jewel” for natural and cultural richness. Bolama was the former capital of Portuguese Guinea from 1871 to 1941, when it was moved to Bissau. When the Portuguese left, native people came to squat this town. The town is now falling apart, partly invaded by tropical vegetation. Bolama, which has been built according to the model of a «Castrum Romanum» (roman citadel), is now a mix of straight large avenues, sunny and lethargic empty squares, dry fountains, bush-like gardens and falling apart Neo-Palladian administrative buildings. In the shade of the columns of the former governor palace, goats graze peacefully; although inhabited, this town enjoys a fairy-tale atmosphere of a ghost town.

Dinner and overnight stay at Ponta Anchaca, international standard 4-star resort, the best address in the archipelago. Comfortable air-conditioned wooden bungalows hidden by the vegetation, facing the ocean. Restaurant on stilts with refined French and tropical cuisine. This lodge will be our base for two nights.

#### **Day 27: VACA BRUTO DANCING CEREMONY - Guinea Bissau**

Morning at leisure to relax between the pool and the wild beach or walk around the island exploring the lush vegetation. Lunch in our resort's restaurant on stilts, with a choice of "catch of the day" straight from the ocean (presence of other dishes, including vegetarian).

In the afternoon a short navigation to Bubaque island, the tiny “capital” of the Bijagos Archipelago, with its small but colorful market. Due to the remoteness, the lack of transports and the deep attachment of the locals to their traditions, the Bijagos tribes have been little influenced by the



external world. Life in the villages is characterized by initiation rites and secret ceremonies. In some villages, the young men must go through a seven-year initiation rite living in a “convent” without contact with women. In the Bijagos Archipelago life is still ruled by the “cycle of seasons”. During the long dry season, when harvest is over, the main ceremonies take place. Vaca Bruto (wild bull) is the most spectacular mask in the islands, the dancers convey the mask a realistic presence by bowing and facing the ground. With eyes of frosted glass, real horns, leather ears and a rope through the nostril, all conveys the idea of a real untamed animal. Vaca Bruto represents a young man in full possession of his physical strength but still with an immature behaviour as he has not yet undergone the final initiations. All the villagers attend this fascinating ceremony.

Back to our comfortable Ponta Anchaca Resort, 4-star air-conditioned wooden bungalows, hidden by the vegetation, facing the ocean.

### **Day 28: ISLANDER LIFE - Guinea Bissau**

Morning relax at Ponta Anchaca wild beaches and swimming pool.

***On request (not included)** Early morning departure for an excursion to Orango Island in search of a residual fauna of Hippos that has acclimatised to the life on the islands. Mainly living in fresh-water swamps, sometimes they swim in the ocean. Local guide will lead the visitors, the encounter with the hippos is not always granted.*

Afternoon navigation to Bissau.

A vehicle will be waiting us for a brief city tour. Bissau is a tiny but intriguing capital, with old Portuguese architecture and atmosphere and a huge fort, a reminder of the slave trade era.

Dinner and overnight at Dunia Hotel, for stars, international standard. Or similar

### **Day 29: BETWEEN WATER AND LAND - Guinea Bissau - Senegal**

The road will bring us north in a unique eco-system where Bolon (sea arms) penetrate the land for more than a hundred miles creating a large temporary flooding area. The borders between salt water, land and fresh water are uncertain and changes with the tides. 23% of Guinea Bissau territory is under the water during the high tide and emerges during the low tide. After crossing Senegal border, we arrive to Ziguinchor the capital of the Casamance region. Ziguinchor is a charming small town with interesting French colonial architecture and a large market.

Dinner and overnight stay at the hotel that will be our base for two nights.

Kadiandoumange hotel: buildings and gardens in traditional colonial style, facing the large Casamance river. Air-conditioned self-contained rooms that joint modern comfort to stylish African furniture and a gastronomic restaurant on a terrace over the river. Or similar.

### **Day 30: CASAMANCE: KINGS AND MASKS - Senegal**

The road will cross a spectacular landscape of lagunes, mangroves and tiny islands created by the estuary of Casamance river. In a remote village we will be received by the Monarch in one of the oldest Diola (Jula) Kingdoms. In ancient African traditions, the King is also the High Priest concentrating in his person political and mystical powers. After the traditional offering of libations at the limit of the sacred forest, his Majesty will be happy to answer our questions about the history of his people, the rules of a traditional chief, and the complicate taboos and mystical meanings of being King in Diola culture.

In the afternoon we will join the ritual dances of the sacred masks of Diola. The masks belong to a secret society and the identity of the dancers is not revealed; the mask is said to be animated by spirits. Drums, dances and a colorful crowd will enliven the small village under the shade of large kapok trees.

Return to our base in Ziguinchor.

Kadiandoumange hotel, buildings and gardens in traditional colonial style facing the large Casamance river, offers air-conditioned, self-contained rooms that joint modern comfort to stylish African furniture and a gastronomic restaurant on a terrace over the river. Or similar.

### **Day 31: GAMBIAN BIRDS - Senegal - Gambia**

Cross the Gambian border and arrive in Banjul, the country's capital. Visit to the ethnographic museum. Afternoon brief but intense bird watching, led by an expert in different natural environments. Gambia is a known birding destination.

Dinner and overnight at the recently renewed Atlantic hotel, swimming pool. Or similar.

### **Day 32: STONE CIRCLES - Gambia - Senegal**

"Very local" and colourful ferry crossing of the large Gambia River estuary to reach the north bank.

The region between the north bank of the Gambia River and Senegal has been home to one of the largest megalithic civilizations on the planet. Just after the border with Senegal we will leave the main road for a small track. Sine Ngayene is the richest megalithic site on the planet, with 1102 erected stones.

Dinner and overnight at the comfortable air-conditioned bungalows of Kabacoto Safari Lodge or Relais de Kaolak, swimming pool, facing a lake and lagoons, or similar.

### **Day 33: GOREE ISLAND - Senegal**

Arrive in Dakar for lunch at a fishing port restaurant, specialized in the catch of the day (different meals are available). A ferry will take us to Gorée Island, opposite Dakar. The island of Gorée was crammed with slaves waiting to be shipped to the Americas. Totally restored it remains as a testament to those times. Today its breezy climate, history and ancient architecture, together with restaurants and boutiques, make Gorée an interesting and trendy destination for local and foreign visitors. The right time to enjoy Gorée atmosphere is from the sunset when the crowd of day-visitors and tourists leave the island.

Dinner in a typical restaurant and overnight at "Maison Municipal" or similar. A guest-house in an ancient, restored building, air-conditioned self-contained large rooms. Or similar.

### **Day 34: DAKAR METROPOLIS: WORLD CUISINE - Senegal**

Ferry to Dakar the capital that became an important centre of political, artistic, and intellectual "renouveau" during the independence time, still the liveliest metropolis in French speaking West Africa. Visit of the "Musée des Civilisations Noires" including great collections of Tribal Art, textiles, and contemporary local artists. The "Plateau" district, the Presidential Palace, a typical market, the totally restored Dakar-Bamako railway station, a great example of colonial architecture.

Drive to Lac Rose. Lac Rose or Lac Retba (meaning Pink Lake) is a saltwater lake surrounded by dunes. The water is ten times saltier than the ocean and due to the high concentration of minerals, the lake often shimmers into pink; swimming in the lake gives the sensation of floating.

Dinner and overnight at Trarza Hotel, just renewed, comfortable, facing the lake. Air-conditioned self-contained rooms.

### **Day 35: THE LARGEST FISHING VILLAGE - Senegal**

Kayar is the largest fisherman village in Senegal. More than 4500 wooden painted pirogues come to the shore with the catch of the day... On the beach the fishermen sell their catch to the local market women. We will, then, meet the artisans carving the large pirogues, the painters decorating them with bright colours, and if we are lucky the "local saint" for final blessing before sailing...

If available, we will be received by the Marabout in his large house where he will introduce us to some ancient Geomantic and Cabalistic divinization techniques.

Drive to Saint Louis, late lunch in a restaurant to enjoy Senegalese cuisine, the best known in West Africa. Evening arrival to the hotel that will be our base for two nights.

Hotel de la Poste is an historical hotel built in 1850 which used to be the base of the "Aeropostale" pilots (airmail pioneer operation). Totally restored, it has conserved the best "old colonial atmosphere" in town. Dinner in its charming open-air restaurant facing the calm Senegal River.

### Day 36: SAINT LOUIS - Senegal

Full day dedicated to Saint Louis, a charming old citadel which was the first capital of the French colonies in West Africa. The old town built on two long islands between Senegal River and the ocean has a breezy climate. An island has been the administrative colonial capital of the French West Africa until 1902, when the administration was transferred to Dakar. Old French and Portuguese building, restaurants, bars, art galleries give a unique charm to this small island town. Interesting the photography museum, sub-Saharan West Africa has expressed some great photographers.

The second island, close to the ocean, is inhabited by a large community of local fishermen. The best way to get around the narrow streets of St. Louis is on a calash (horse-drawn buggy), as the locals do.

Dinner and overnight: return to our base at "Hotel Poste", historical hotel built in 1850 which used to be the base of the "Aeropostale" (airmail pioneer operation) pilots. Totally restored, it has conserved the best "old colonial atmosphere" in town, charming restaurant facing Senegal river.



### Day 37: DJOUDJ ORNITOLOGICAL SANCTUARY - Senegal - Mauritania

Early morning departure to Djoudj National Park, a unique environment composed by hundreds of miles of partially flooded lands between the Sahara and the arid Sahel. This "humid paradise" is the best habitat and nesting site for over a million migratory and sedentary birds. Djoudj National Park is one of the three major migratory bird sanctuaries on earth and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The protected wetland habitats attract more than 400 species of migratory birds that live temporarily in this special environment. We will enjoy a boat excursion to discover an island with an astonishing concentration of pelicans.

Continue to Mauritanian border. The landscape will dramatically change from flooded plans to a dry savannah and to the Sahara with ranges of dunes. Evening arrival in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, a recent town surrounded by the desert. Dinner and overnight at the international standard four stars, hotel Azalai, comfortable airconditioned rooms with private facilities.

#### **Day 38: NOUAKCHOTT - Mauritania**

From the desert to the ocean, from black Africa to Sahara.

As resume of Mauritanian history and culture, visit of the interesting National Museum which displays archeology, artifacts, costumes and textiles from prehistory to the present days. Unique pictures taken during the excavations of Aoudaghost, the northern trading town and better conserved site of the legendary Ghana Empire. Ghana was the oldest Empire and Kingdom known in Black Africa. Dated from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the empire was in the southern east of Mauritania. At that time the caravan transporting gold to North Africa departs from Aoudaghost and passes through Ouadane and Assa, which we will discover during our Sahara crossing. Lunch in a restaurant managed by Ivorian women to taste their specialities. Afternoon driving along the road going north into the Sahara Desert in a spectacular dune landscape to the mining town of Akjoujt. Hotel du Sahara, recent, full air-conditioned hotel with self-contained rooms.



#### **Day 39: DUNES AND MOUNTAINS Mauritania**

Early departure. Full day dedicated to traversing one of Mauritania's most scenic landscapes: valleys, high mountains, yellow sand dunes, peaks of dark brown and red rocks hiding adobe villages.

Out of the tracks we will cross Erg Amatlich, a vast dune basin trapped among the Adrar mountains. In addition to endless dunes, the region gathers a great variety of Saharan landscapes such as canyons, tiny cultivable oasis and palm groves.

Discover prehistoric stone arrowheads, earthenware shards, silent witness of people living on these sites long time ago, when this region was a green land crossed by large rivers.



Voices, joyful cries of women and children welcome us to remote nomadic camps and hidden adobe villages to experience intense human encounters surrounded by the immense silence of the Sahara.

The Tifoujar pass overlooks a vast and steep gorge, a remnant of an ancient river that ends in the Oued el Abiod or White Valley. The dark brown of the mountains will make even more of a color contrast with the deep yellow of the dunes that fill the valleys as far as the eye can see.

Evening arrival in Chinguetti, which will be our base for three days dedicated to discovering one of the most fascinating regions of the Sahara, amid virgin dunes and ancient oases.

Dinner and overnight stay at La Gueila, cozy guest house built in traditional Mauritanian style, (or private comfortable residence). Air-conditioned rooms, hot water, Wi-Fi. Fine restaurant, local specialties with a French touch will be our base for three nights.

#### **Day 40: CHINGUETTI, THE OASIS - Mauritania**

The stone citadel of Chinguetti dates back to the 13th century and is a crossing point of several trans-Saharan routes connecting the Mediterranean coast to black Africa. The atmosphere of the old stone town, the architecture, some ancient manuscript collections from the Middle-ages and the oasis with their “green miracles” of palm trees and gardens surrounded by the immensity of the Sahara are the special highlights of Chinguetti. Large chains of yellow dunes are the western boundary of the town that “fights” not to be covered by the sand.

The main Mosque and the stone minaret: Chinguetti mosque is the second oldest still operating in the entire Muslim world.

We will spend the whole day in the magical atmosphere of this desert citadel, which is considered the jewel of Mauritanian oasis, discovering two ancient manuscript collection, including Ould Habott, the largest in Mauritania. Return to our cozy guest house.



#### **Day 41: OUADANE: THE REMOTEST - Mauritania**

We will join Ouadane in an absolute “out of any tracks” itinerary that follows the Ouadi (dry creek), discovering remote tiny oasis hidden in the high dunes. Ouadane is the remotest oasis in Mauritania, an outpost in the emptiest part of the Sahara. Founded in 1147. Mainly in ruin, some of his stone-houses perched on a rocky hill surrounded by the immensity of the desert are still inhabited. In the ancient days this town was an important caravan trading point between Maghreb and black Africa. Trading was so flourishing that in 1487 Portuguese built a fortified trading counter in the region. The stone architecture of Chinguetti and Ouadane will be a refrain of our Sahara crossing and we will discover it again a thousand miles north, on the other side of the Sahara, next important caravan terminal on the way to Marrakech.



After this fascinating day we will return to our cosy guest-house in Chinguetti. Dinner and overnight stay at “La Gueila” (or private residence).

### **Days 42 and 43: LUSH OASIS - Mauritania**

The landscape never ceases to amaze us. Leaving the main track, we will reach a region of spectacular mountains, gorges and canyons. Infinite space dominated by the ochre of the earth and the blue sky. At the horizon we will see the ruins of Fort Saganne, built to set the namesake film: Fort Saganne. The Agour site, located at the top of the Amogjar pass, hides cave paintings featuring bovinds, hunters and herders.

Terjit, is one of the most particular and lush oases of Mauritania.

After walking through a dense palm grove protected by a gorge and following a tiny stream, we discover a vast rock shelter where spring water flows. An unexpected atmosphere disconnected from time and from the harshness of the desert. Drive between roads and tracks to the main way to Nouadhibou on the Gulf du Levrier. Nouadhibou is a modern little town, with an important international fishing harbour and the terminal of a railway built to evacuate the iron with the longest known train.

Day 42 Arrival in Akjoujt. Dinner and overnight stay at hotel du Sahara or similar (new hotel with air-conditioned self-contained rooms).

Day 43 Nouadhibou, comfortable, international standard El Medina hotel \*\*\*\*.



### **Day 44: TROPIC OF CANCER - Mauritania - Morocco**

Drive north. After the formalities, we will cross a few miles of “no-man land”. The border is a theoretical line in the desert that “divides the sand from the sand”. On the other side, the military post of Morocco, a real sensible place, the only open border between Black Africa and the Magreb. This region was part of the former Spanish Sahara territories. It was the site of a long war between the Polisario Armed Front and the Moroccan army. Nowadays it is part of Morocco.

A signboard in the immensity of the desert will indicate that we are crossing the “Tropic of Cancer” line. The last part of the itinerary runs along a spectacular cliff that separates the dunes from the wave of the ocean. Arrival at the hotel in Dakhla that will be our “base” for two nights.

Overnight stay at an international standard, 4-star hotel: Buena Vista facing the ocean, air-conditioned rooms with private facilities, or similar (it will be our base for two nights).

### **Day 45: RIO DE ORO - Morocco**

The Rio de Oro (River of Gold) is a 25-mile-long sea loch situated between cliffs and dunes. Different colours paint the scenery: the intense blue of the ocean, banks of white sand, green seaweed fields and yellow dunes. The exceptional beauty of this landscape makes Dakhla peninsula a special place.

The small town of Dakhla was founded by Spanish navigators in 1502 and called “Villa Cisneros” until recent times. Excursion to the colourful fishing harbour. Along the shore we discover a unique changing shoreline between



ocean and desert, between dunes and waves: with the high tide sand dunes and a rocky hill will become temporary islands.

Our preferred restaurant will be in an oyster farm, fish, oysters and many other shellfish directly from the ocean, grilled vegetables and more (vegetarian meals available on request).

Overnight return to our 4-star, international standard hotel: Hotel Buena Vista facing the ocean, air-conditioned rooms with private facilities.

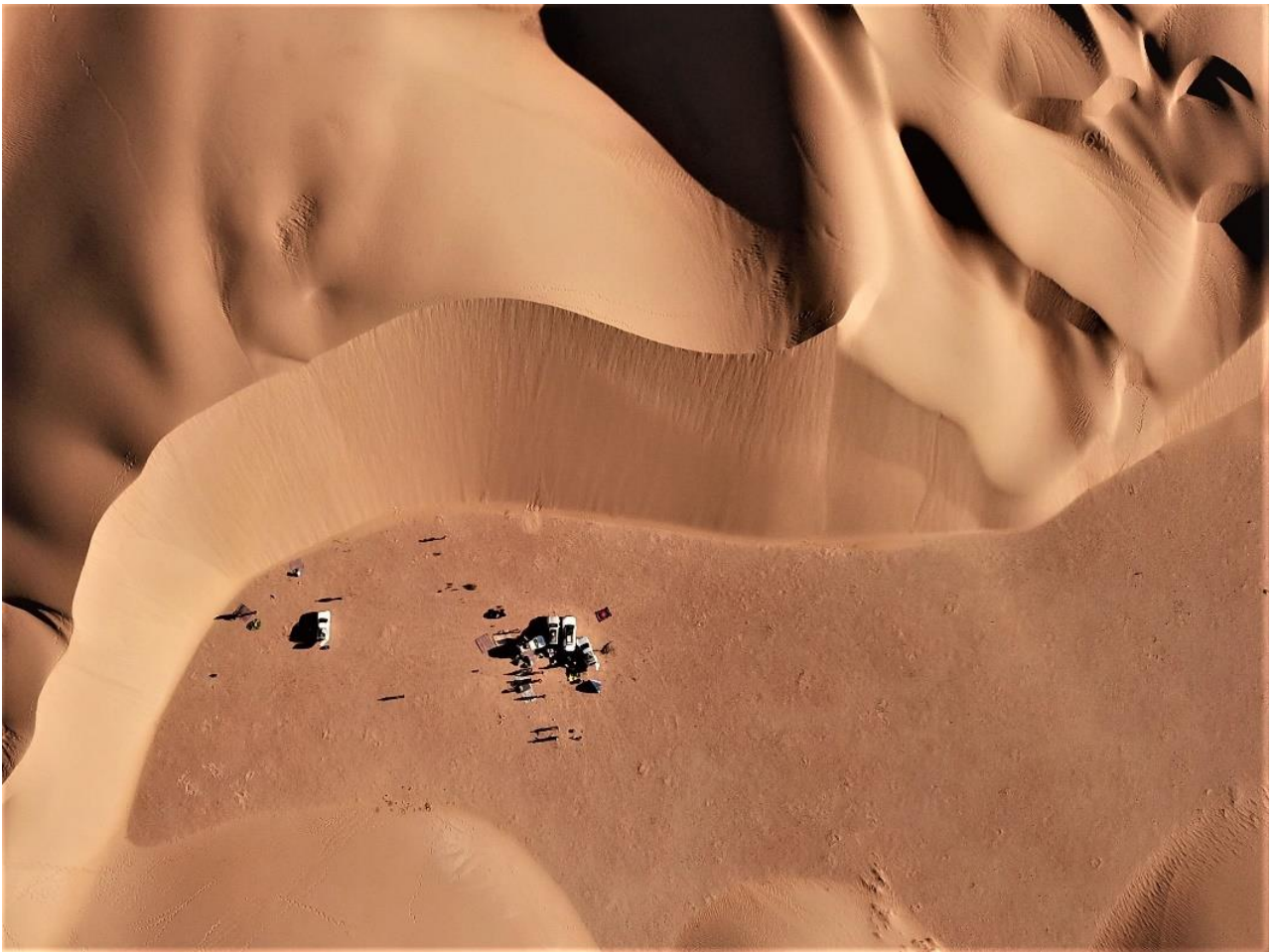
#### **Days 46 & 47: WESTERN SAHARA: THE FORBIDDEN TRACK - Morocco**

We will meet our local guide, a nomad from a Sahrawi tribe who will lead us during three days through a real desert crossing in the Western Sahara, now Sahara Province of Morocco.

Since the second half of the seventies, due to the long “sand war,” this region has been off-limits to travellers. Until today no peace treaty has been signed, but a cease-fire is respected. We are proud to be the “first” to take intrepid travellers to discover the vast desert regions of Tiris and Zemmour.

During this extreme Saharan expedition, we will cross large dunes and get off the tracks to discover wells frequented by long lines of camels belonging to the legendary Reguibat nomads.

Days 46 and 47, camping on the virgin sand of the Sahara. Comfortable large tents, including mattresses, carpet and chairs. Dinner at the table under the stars: local specialities and a choice between red wine, white wine, beers and sodas.



#### **Day 48: FROM THE DESERT TO THE OCEAN - Morocco**

After crossing the world's longest automated conveyor belt, which transports phosphate to the Atlantic (phosphate is the region's main resource), we arrive in Laayoune, the main base of Morocco's economic development in the Sahara provinces.

Late afternoon arrival in Tarfaya, on Cape Juby (opposite the Canary Islands, which are less than 100 km away). Tarfaya is a former base of Aeropostale, a pioneer of air mail transport from Europe to Africa and

Latin America. Interesting museum about Aeropostale and Saint Exupéry, the writer-pilot. Hotel Casamar, air-conditioned rooms with private facilities.

#### **Day 49: DUNES AND LAGOONS - Morocco**

The Naila Lagoon is a unique inland arm of the sea, separated from the ocean only by rows of dunes that create a special ecosystem inhabited by migratory and resident birds. With a local fishing boat, we explore the remote shores.

After lunch in a local restaurant, we will visit a ghost military fort, which still “guards” the former borders between the French protectorate of Morocco and the Spanish Sahara. We will feel like we were on the set of an old Foreign Legion movie.

Evening arrival at the comfortable Ksar Tifnidilt, Or similar. Air-conditioned rooms with private facilities that will be our base for two nights. The hotel is built using local materials in a perfect Saharan style.



#### **Day 50: ESTUARIES AND FISHERMEN - Morocco**

Early morning leaving Tifnidit to cross steep range of dunes...

The Dra estuary region and Cape Dra are visited only by brave travellers.

Between the cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean there are not paved roads. We will discover tiny temporary settlements of fishermen, ghost colonial military posts, dunes, and camels...

For lunch we will be guests of the fishermen, a pleasant way to contribute to the local economy by enjoying super-fresh grilled fish (vegetarian also available).

A steep descent will take us to a river bed in a canyon, the only access to the ocean for an exciting drive on the 'white beach' between sand, waves and sea eagles.

Return to Ksar Tifnidilt.



#### **Day 51: CAMEL MARKET AND CARAVAN TERMINAL - Morocco**

Guelmim was an important trans-Saharan terminal and in the souk we can still find remnants of the caravan trade.

Our arrival is scheduled to coincide with the camel market day, which is attended by camel traders from different regions, including Mauritania.



In the rarely visited Assa region, we discovered the same Arab-Berber stone architecture that we have already seen more than a thousand kilometres to the south, on the other edge of the Sahara, in the oases of Chinguetti and Ouadane. In ancient times, these citadels were connected to Marrakech by Assa as part of a caravan route for gold, ivory and slaves that we are now retracing.

Dinner and overnight stay at Borji Biramane, the best hotel in the region. Air-conditioned self-contained bungalows, swimming pool, and Wi-Fi. Or similar.

#### **Day 52: THE OASIS TRAIL - Morocco**

We cross a region of spectacular landscapes, rocky mountains and large oases.

We leave the road to discover prehistoric rock art: an ancient graffito depicting a rhinoceros, an animal long extinct here, remnants of a time when the present Sahara was green grassland. Walk through the oasis to experience a green miracle surrounded by an arid environment. Lunch in a local restaurant.

Dinner and overnight stay at the super comfortable Bab Rimal. Air-conditioned self-contained bungalows, Moroccan style furniture,

swimming pool, and Wi-Fi. Or similar.

#### **Day 53: DUNES AND FOSSILS - Morocco**

Off-road itinerary to cross the spectacular landscape of the Iriki dry Lake through a flat, salty plane. Discover an ancient seabed: rocky hills where, just looking attentively, we will find some fossils.

The tall dune ranges of Erg Chegaga will bar our way, only the expertise of our driver will lead us through sand labyrinths in an unforgettable itinerary, finding our way across steep dunes in the northern edge of the Sahara, the wildest desert on earth.

Dinner and overnight stay at the comfortable hotel Pacha in the oasis, air-conditioned self-contained rooms, Wi-Fi. Or similar.



#### **Day 54: ROCK ART - Morocco**

Morning departure following the spectacular road that crosses the Dra Valley and Berber villages.

Visit to an ancient rock art site. Hundreds of fine graffiti dating back thousands of years, silent testimony to the peoples who lived in these regions before desertification.



Arrival in Ouarzazate, a large oasis at the edge of the desert. Dinner and overnight stay at Ibis, an international hotel built in local architecture. Comfortable air-conditioned self-contained rooms with Wi-Fi. Swimming-pool (*no twin rooms available*).

**Day 55: MARRAKECH – Morocco** Wednesday March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Departure in the morning, Ait Benhaddou is located along the ancient caravan route connecting Marrakech to the Sahara. Over the years, many

famous films have been filmed in this Ksar, such as Lawrence of Arabia, Sodom and Gomorrah, Oedipus Rex, The Sheltering Sky, The Jewels of the Nile, Jesus of Nazareth, Alexander, Gladiator, and more... Heading north to cross the spectacular High Atlas range on a panoramic route that will take us through the Tin Tichka pass (2,260 m). Meet local gems seekers in quest of Amethyst, Tourmaline.... With a bit of luck, we will be able to find our own gems. Arrival in Marrakech in the early evening. Marrakech, traditional caravan terminal is the ideal end of our modern caravan. Dayrooms will be available in a hotel for a last shower before the final transfer to the airport.

### EXTENSIONS on request

#### MOROCCO: IMPERIAL CITIES AND BEYOND

8 days to enjoy the classic must of Morocco plus some unique discoveries, with the special touch of TransAfrica.

## Technical sheet

**EXPEDITION LEADERS:** with long experience of leading out of the beaten track of West Africa and Sahara, and excellent understanding of African culture and traditions.

**EXPLORATORY ITINERARY:** This itinerary is an expedition; participants must be flexible and ready to enjoy the unique encounters but also some unexpected situations that are part of the African Experience.

#### VISAS:

**Benin,** E-Visa: [www.evisa.gouv.bj/en/](http://www.evisa.gouv.bj/en/)

**Togo,** E-Visa: <https://voyage.gouv.tg/>

**Ghana:** Single entry visa required; the visa is issued only at the embassy competent with the country of residence.

**Liberia,** single entry visa required.

**Ivory Coast,** single entry visa is request. The Ivory Coast E-Visa is not valid for entry by land borders, needed visa from the embassy competent with the country of residence.

**Guinea Bissau:** single entry visa require, to be obtained at any consulate of Guinea Bissau. The visa is also issued at the border at the cost of approximately 100 Euro.

**Guinee Conakry:** Visa is mandatory and can be obtained in two ways:

1- applying on the official platform

[https://www.paf.gov.gn/dnpaf/?page\\_id=335&lang=en](https://www.paf.gov.gn/dnpaf/?page_id=335&lang=en)

We recommend to upload all these documents even if they don't seem to be all required: copy of passport front page, passport size photo (white background, low definition), full flight coupon (even if you do not land/leave from the country), yellow fever vaccination, covid vaccination card, invitation letter (we will provide this last document). Please be sure all documents will not exceed the maximum pixel size required and check that they will appear in your upload session at the moment of your application. In case of no answer / failure we are sorry but we will not be able to assist and you will be obliged to apply and pay again restarting all the process. The E-visa cost is 80 USD.

Some travelers have complained, after payment, that they have received neither the visa nor a notice of refusal, for this reason we are proposing also a second option.

2 - applying through our correspondents in Conakry.

You send us all the listed documents and our correspondent will apply directly to the Immigration Office in Conakry following all the steps till obtaining the e-visa we will send to you by E-mail. The cost is 130 euro in total. if you choose the second option, we will put this cost on your final invoice.

**Sierra Leone:** visa available at the border (cost 100 USD).

**Senegal:** A visa is not required for most nationalities, including the United States, Canada and the European Union. For other nationalities **a 2-entry visa is required**, please check. Visa is not issued at land borders. Please contact us.

**The Gambia:** For some nationality visa is not request, for other visa obtainable at the border, for others invitation letter require. Please ask us.

**Mauritania:** Visa required, we obtain the visa at the border, cost 55 Euro.

**Morocco:** Visa not required for EU, UK, US, Canada, and most other nationalities, please check.

**IMPORTANT NOTE ON VISAS:** Please, after booking, contact us and we will send our advice and suggestions how to obtain the E-Visas and when the Invitation Letters are needed, also if not clearly requested.

**VACCINATIONS:** Yellow fever – compulsory; malaria prophylaxis highly recommended. Cholera now not request, please check prior departure.

**LUGGAGE:** due to the exploratory itinerary, please to be contained in approximately 20 kg (45 Lbs.).

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Not included. Mandatory for medical assistance, repatriation, material and physical damages.

**TRANSPORT:** 4x4 vehicles and minibus. All vehicles are fitted for African conditions, have air-conditioning and each participant is granted with a window Seat. Speed boats on the ocean, local boats to Banana Island and Naila Lagunes.

**MEALS:** lunches: cold meals, picnics or at restaurants (pre-select menu). Dinners: at the hotel restaurants (pre-select menu). It is included one bottle of water each day during the visits.

**NOTICE:** The itinerary is designed to discover fascinating places, where often the visit of a foreigner remains an exceptional event. Participants need to be cooperative, tolerant and flexible to fully enjoy the expedition and appreciate the unique nature, as well as the spontaneous hospitality of the local

populations, African magic and mystery, its metaphysics, ceremonies, life philosophies, beliefs that people are willing to share with us.

Itineraries, visits and overnight accommodations can be modified or adapted to local conditions or to force majeure Only the organizers and the Tour Leader can decide any changes.

## Or join us for one of the 25 legs of the expedition:

- 1) **WEST AFRICA:** 16 options, from 6 to 34 days itineraries. Savannahs and forests, unknown rituals, tribes and cultures in the most intriguing Sub-Saharan regions.
- 2) **WEST AFRICA & SAHARA:** 6 options, from 14 to 51 days itineraries. From the forests to savannahs and to the Sahara crossing. Experiencing a great variety of landscapes, peoples and tribal cultures from animistic villages and masks to desert nomads, oasis and camel caravans.
- 3) **THE SAHARA:** 3 options, from 12 to 19 days itineraries crossing the largest desert on earth, experiencing wild ranges of dunes, oasis, nomadic herders, and camel caravans.

## 1) WEST AFRICA

16 options: from 6 days to 34 days itineraries

### **34 Days FROM COTONOU TO DAKAR. The West Africa Expedition.** **Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Bijagos Archipelago, The Gambia and Senegal.**

From day 1 to day 34 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Ganvié the largest village on stilts in Africa, to the African origins of Voodoo and trance, ancient Portuguese citadels, Zangbeto a spirit of nature. 15<sup>th</sup> century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiations and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the "Council of the Elders" in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (also called Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join a tribal concert. Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dance. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music, galleries, young talents of the contemporary artistic scene.

### **28 Days COTONOU - BIJAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - BISSAU**

**Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Bijagos Archipelago**

From day 1 to day 28 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Ganvié the largest stilts village in Africa, to the African origins of Voodoo and trance, ancient Portuguese citadels, Zangbeto a spirit from the wild, 15th century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies,

women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the “Council of the Elders” in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert. Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music...

## **25 days FROM COTONOU TO BISSAU**

**Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau.**

From day 1 to day 25 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Ganvié the largest stilts village in Africa, to the African origins of Voodoo and trance, 15<sup>th</sup> century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest, initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Join an authentic tribal concert. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the “Council of the Elders” in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert. Experience remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music...

## **20 Days FROM COTONOU TO FREETOWN**

**Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone.**

From day 1 to day 20 of the program

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Ganvié the largest stilts village in Africa, to the African origins of Voodoo and trance. Ouidah, a Portuguese citadel, and Zangbeto, the spirit from the forest.

The coast of 15<sup>th</sup> century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Lome, Accra and Abidjan: capitals between tradition and modernity. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise, untouched beaches. Kriol culture: architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music...

## **11 Days FROM COTONOU TO ABIDJAN**

### **Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast.**

From day 1 to day 11 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Ganvié the largest stilts village in Africa. The African origins of Voodoo, drumming and trance ceremonies. Fisherman villages, colourful dugout large canoes and endless beaches.

Ouidah, old Portuguese citadel, and Zangbeto the spirit from the Wild.

A unique coastline with the largest concentration of slave trade castles dating back to the 15th century. Grand Bassam and its colonial architecture.

Enjoy remote villages, but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in Lome, Accra and Abidjan is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music...

## **16 Days FROM ACCRA TO FREETOWN**

### **Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone.**

From day 5 to day 20 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The coast of 15<sup>th</sup> century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Accra, Abidjan and Freetown: capitals between tradition and modernity, live music and fusion cuisine. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise, untouched beaches. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Enjoy remote villages, but also modern Africa: metropolitan life is vibrant.

## **13 Days FROM ACCRA TO MONROVIA**

### **Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia.**

From day 5 to day 17 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The coast of 15<sup>th</sup> century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Lome, Accra and Freetown: capital between tradition and modernity. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, end in Monrovia and his Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Enjoy remote villages, but also modern Africa: metropolitan life is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music...

## **26 days ABIDJAN - DAKAR**

### **Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Senegal.**

Arrival day 9. End day 34 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the futuristic capital of Ivory Coast, mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the "Council of the Elders" in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert- Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dances. Gore slave island to end in Dakar African metropolis.

## **20 Days FROM ABIDJAN TO BIJAGOS ARCHIPELAGO AND BISSAU** **Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Bijagos Archipelago.**

From day 8 to day 28 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the futuristic capital of Ivory Coast, mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the “Council of the Elders” in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert. Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks.

## **17 Days FROM ABIDJAN TO BISSAU** **Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea Bissau.**

From day 8 to day 25 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from Abidjan, the futuristic capital of Ivory coast, mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiations and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the “Council of the Elders” in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert.

## 12 Days FROM ABIDJAN TO FREETOWN

### Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone.

From day 9 to day 20 of the program

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from Abidjan, the futuristic capital of Ivory coast, mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise, untamed beaches. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Ending in Freetown a real intriguing African town.

## 20 days FROM MONROVIA TO DAKAR

### Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Senegal.

Arrival day 15. End day 34 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the capital of Liberia. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves, animistic mask dances in the forest. Women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise, untamed beaches. Be accepted at the "Council of the Elders" in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Crossing rivers on barges to join a tribal concert. Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dances. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: galleries, young talents of the contemporary artistic scene, street art and graffiti. The itinerary will end in Dakar at the western point of African continent.

## **14 Days FROM MONROVIA TO BIJAGOS ARCHIPELAGO AND BISSAU.** **Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau and Bijagos** **Arcipelago.**

From day 15 to day 28 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the capital of Liberia. Kriol culture, architecture and symbols of power in the country of the freed slaves, animistic mask dances in the forest. Women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise, wild beaches. Be accepted at the “Council of the Elders” in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Crossing rivers on barges to join a tribal concert. Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks.

## **11 Days FROM MONROVIA TO BISSAU (no Bijagos Archipelago)** **Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea Bissau**

From day 15 to day 25 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the capital of Liberia. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves, animistic mask dances in the forest. Women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise and wild beaches. Be accepted at the “Council of the Elders” in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Crossing rivers on barges to join a tribal concert.

## 6 Days FROM MONROVIA TO FREETOWN

### Liberia, Sierra Leone.

From day 15 to day 20 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the capital of Liberia. Kriol culture, architecture and symbols of power in the nation created by the freed slaves. Animistic mask dances in the forest. Women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise and the wild beaches of Freetown peninsula.

## 2) WEST AFRICA & SAHARA

6 options: from 14 days to 51 days itineraries

### 51 days FROM ACCRA TO MARRAKECH

Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Bijagos Archipelago, The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Morocco and the Western Sahara Province.

From day 5 to day 55 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Ganvié the largest stilts village in Africa, at the African origins of Voodoo and trance, ancient Portuguese citadels, Zangbeto a spirit from the wild, 15<sup>th</sup> century slave trade castles, fisherman villages. Mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture, and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the "Council of the Elders" in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert.

Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dances. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music.

Experience crossing the Sahara, the largest desert on earth. Drive off any track over chains of virgin sand dunes. Discover remote stone oasis dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods in the desert: escarpments and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands. Western Sahara in where other travellers don't arrive. Nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night myriads of stars will frame this "once in a lifetime experience".

## **47 days FROM ABIDJAN TO MARRAKECH**

**Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Bijagos Archipelago, The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Morocco and the Western Sahara Province.**

From day 9 to day 55 of the itinerary.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the futuristic capital of Ivory Coast, mask dances and liana bridges in the forest. Initiation and animistic ceremonies, women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves. Be accepted at the "Council of the Elders" in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula (Peul) tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Join an authentic tribal concert- Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dances. Enjoy remote villages, but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music, galleries and young talents of the contemporary artistic scene.

Experience crossing the Sahara, the largest desert on earth. Drive off any track over chains of virgin sand dunes. Discover remote stone oasis dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods in the desert: escarpments and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands. Western Sahara in where other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night myriads of stars will frame this once in a lifetime experience that will end in the mythical Marrakech

## **41 days FROM MONROVIA TO MARRAKECH**

**Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Western Sahara province and Morocco.**

From day 15<sup>th</sup> to day 55 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Starting from the capital of Liberia. Kriol culture, architecture and power in the country of the freed slaves, animistic mask dances in the forest. Women secret society and rare female masks. Sacred drumming and diamond seekers. Banana Island pristine paradise, untamed beaches. Be accepted at the "Council of the Elders" in a large clay palace on the Fouta Djallon, the main mountain massif in West Africa. Fula tribe: the zebu herders, adobe architecture and African bas-reliefs. Crossing rivers on barges to join a tribal concert. Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago and discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dance. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa: metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music, galleries, young talents of the contemporary artistic scene.

Experience crossing the Sahara, the largest desert on earth. Drive off any track over chains of virgin sand dunes. Discover remote stone oasis dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods the desert: escarpments and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands.

Western Sahara in where other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night myriads of stars will frame this once in a lifetime experience.

## **31 Days FROM BISSAU-BIJAGOS TO MARRAKECH.**

**Guinea Bissau and Bijagos Archipelago, The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Western Sahara Province of Morocco.**

From day 25<sup>th</sup> to day 55<sup>th</sup> of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Sails to the remote Bijagos Archipelago to discover animistic cultures and sacred bull masks. Kumpo the spirit that dances. Enjoy remote villages but also modern Africa. Metropolitan life in the capitals is vibrant: fusion cuisine, live music, galleries, young talents of the contemporary artistic scene. Experience crossing the Sahara, the largest desert on earth. Drive off any track over chains of virgin sand dunes. Discover remote stone oasis dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where during the high tide the ocean floods the desert and dunes becomes temporary islands. In the Western Sahara other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels caravans, wells, ... and in the night myriads of stars will frame this once in a lifetime experience that will end in the mythical Marrakech.

## **23/24 DAYS FROM DAKAR TO MARRAKECH.**

### **Senegal, Mauritania, Western Sahara Province of Morocco.**

**From day 32 to day 55 of the itinerary.**

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Trans-Sahara: starting from the savannah and crossing from south to north the Sahara, the largest desert on earth. Off the beaten track, over chains of virgin sand dunes. Discover remote stone oasis like Chinguetti and Ouadane, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods in the desert: escarpments and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands. Western Sahara in where other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night myriads of stars will frame this once in a lifetime experience.

## **14/13 days FROM DAKAR TO DAKHLA**

### **Senegal, Mauritania, Moroccan Rio de Oro**

**From day 32 to day 45 of the itinerary**

**HIGHLIGHTS:** From the savannah to the largest desert on earth. Out of any track on dune ranges of virgin sand. Discover remote stone oasis as Chinguetti and Ouadane, dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods desert: dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands.

### 3) SAHARA

3 options: from 12 days to 19 days itineraries

#### 19 days FROM NOUAKCHOTT TO MARRAKECH

##### Mauritania and Western Sahara Province of Morocco

From day 37 to day 55 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Experience the north-south crossing of the Sahara, the largest desert on earth, driving off the beaten track over chains of virgin sand dunes. Discover remote stone oasis as Chinguetti and Ouadane dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods in the desert: escarpments and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands. Western Sahara is where other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night myriads of stars will frame this great adventure ending in the mythical Marrakech.

#### 15/14 days FROM NOUAKCHOTT TO TAN TAN

##### Mauritania, Western Sahara Province of Morocco

From day 37 to day 50 of the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The extreme Sahara Itinerary. In the core of the largest desert on earth. Virgin sand out of any track, crossing dune ranges and mountains. Discover remote stone oasis as Chinguetti and Ouadane, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro between waves and sand to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods the desert: escarpments and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands. Western Sahara is where other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night myriads of stars.

## **12 days FROM DAKHLA TO MARRAKECH**

From day 44 to day 55 of the itinerary

**COUNTRIES:** Rio de Oro, Western Sahara Provence, Morocco

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Drive on the endless beaches of Rio de Oro to discover an astonishing landscape where the ocean floods in the desert and dunes, during the high tide, becomes temporary islands. Western Sahara is where other travellers don't arrive: nomads, camels, caravans, wells... and in the night, myriads of stars will frame this unique itinerary that ends in the mythical Marrakech.

- **Ask for the detailed programs.**
- **You can request a different leg of your choice.**