

Ghana – Ashanti Kingdom (Festivals Tour)

Tour Code GH

From its lush rainforests to its golden sandy beaches, Ghana is a land of immense natural beauty. On this journey through one of Africa's friendliest nations we experience its diverse and rich culture, visiting vibrant markets, traditional tribal villages and the striking mud-stick mosques. We also visit the impressive Gold Coast Portugese forts. The tour is timed to coincide with two of Ghana's most significant festivals; the Millet Festival; which happens every year during the harvest period and the Awukudae festival; that offers a unique opportunity to attend a highly colorful royal ceremony in one of the last African kingdom to have kept unchanged all of its rituals.

*Awukudae Festival Celebrations,
Kumasi*



ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly from London to Accra

Early morning flight with Turkish Airlines from London Gatwick via Istanbul, arriving into Accra in the early evening. Transfer to the Novotel hotel.

Day 2 In Accra. Drive to Akossombo

Accra has maintained its unique identity despite the fast paced development currently underway in this intriguing African city. We visit the National Museum and explore the old quarter of James Town, an area of colonial architecture topped by a 30m lighthouse and inhabited by the autochthonous population known as the Ga. Later we drive inland to the town of Akossombo our base for the next two nights at the Afrikiko Resort with dinner (B,D)

Day 3 Attend Millet festival

We drive into the Krobo region today to witness the colorful Millet festival, celebrated over seven days with religious and social events that enables renewal of love, unity, solidarity and gratitude to God for his blessings manifested in good harvest, riches, good health and protection. The festival unites the people as one cultural entity and the youth are provided with the opportunity to learn the culture of their people and to make friends and choose spouses. Traditional chiefs turn up in their most beautiful dress and are surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd. Along with their entire court, the chiefs parade following the rhythm of the drums (B,L,D)

Day 4 Boat ride on the Volta. Witness Voodoo ceremony

This morning we have boat journey along the Volta and visit some small fishing villages. Later we head south to Sogakope and reach a remote hidden village where we will join a Voodoo ceremony to get an insight of how such traditions are still deeply rooted in the African soul. The frenetic rhythm of the drums and chants of the chief help to call the voodoo spirit which takes possession of some of the dancers who fall into a deep trance. Overnight at Cisneros Villa Hotel or similar with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 5 Drive along Gold coast to Elmina

Today we move west to the coastline of the former Golden Coast Colony. We drive along the scenic coastline, where the main attractions are the many European forts and castles built during the era of the slave and gold trade. Between these ancient forts are beaches lined with coconut palms and the unspoiled fishing villages of the Fante people. Two nights at the Coconut Grove Beach Resort (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Elmina Fort and Kakum National Park

Elmina Fort is the oldest European building in Africa, built by the Portuguese in the 15th century. At different times the fort has been used as a warehouse to trade gold, ivory, and eventually slaves. We visit the fort and the nearby fishing village with its lively atmosphere and colourful boats before we discover the Kakum NP, observing incredible views of the forest from above by way of a canopy rope bridge (B,L,D)

Day 7 Drive to Kumasi. Visit Ashanti Kingdom

Kumasi is the historical and spiritual capital of the old Ashanti Kingdom. The Ashanti people were one of the most powerful nations in Africa until the end of the 19th century, when the British annexed the Ashanti country to their Gold Coast colony. We visit the Cultural centre, which has a rich collection of Ashanti artifacts housed in a stunning

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Ashanti house, one of Africa's largest markets and to hopefully witness a traditional Ashanti funeral attended by mourners wearing beautifully red or black togas. Overnight at Noble House hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 8 In Kumasi. Attend Awukudae festival

We visit the Royal Palace Museum displaying its unique collection of Ashanti souvenirs before attending the Royal Festival known as the Awukudae. The Ashanti King is carried on a palanquin through the procession of Ashanti people who have come to pay homage to him followed by a celebration which parades colourful canopies and umbrellas amongst drummers, dancers, horn blowers and singers who perform in honour of their ancestral spirits. At the end of the ceremony we continue north to Techiman. Overnight at Okubi Hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 9 Visit Sacred Monkeys and Dagomba Tribe

We walk in the Brong Afo forest home to Monas and Colobus monkeys which are seen as sacred by the population who live nearby. We continue north into the savannah where we visit the Dagomba tribe. They build round clay huts with thatched roof. The village chief's house is characterised by being a large hut with a central pole supporting the roof where the council's elder meet. Overnight at Gariba Lodge with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 10 Exploring the Bolgatanga region

A short walking excursion on the high-plateau of the Tongo Hills with magical views where we see a bizarre set of neatly stacked rock pinnacles seen locally as old houses of the Gods. We view a deep fissure on the side of a highest mountain said to host an oracle. In the Navrongo region, we meet the Kassena people who live in fortified houses decorated in colourful frescoes by the women. Overnight at Christal Ex Tee Hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 11 Visit Lobi Peoples

We spend much of the day visiting Lobi villages. The Lobi comprise a number of ethnic groups in both Ghana and Burkina Faso whose name translates as Children of the Forest. They still adhere to many of their traditional customs and animist practices, worshipping distinctive wooden fetishes and continuing to uphold their age-old beliefs in the spirit world. Residing in fortified mudbrick compounds in family groups, much like their Dagarti neighbours, the men still carry bows as their ancestors have for generations: the Lobi still have a fearsome reputation as hunters and warriors. Overnight at Upland Hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 12 Visit Dagarti Peoples. Drive Kumasi

A long but interesting drive back to Kumasi today. We stop to visit the Dagarti peoples who like the Lobi, have always kept strong ties to the invisible world of spirits, represented by fetishes, shrines and sacred sites. They build fortified houses to protect their family as well as all their belongings. We follow the ancient caravan road through which goods, people and their goods traveled for centuries. Gold dust and cola nuts were brought from the forest and exchanged for salt, cloth and spices coming from the North. We see mosques of a Sudanese architectural style imported from Mali's river Niger delta region. We arrive in Kumasi in the late afternoon and overnight at the Noble House Hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 13/14 Drive to Accra. Fly to London via Istanbul

We drive back to the capital with a final opportunity to visit of the cultural centre and artisan market and time for some final souvenir hunting. We check into the Novotel hotel where some day-use rooms will be available until 18h00 when we transfer to the airport for our Turkish Airline flight via Istanbul arriving into London Heathrow the following morning (B)

Cost £2195.00 per person in a twin room (excluding international flights) Single supplement charge £375

Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ National guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ All transportation by a/c bus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Comfortable four star standard category hotels on B+B basis
- ▶ All meals except Accra (hotel dinners and picnic lunches daily)
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Bottled water daily
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities
- ▶ Small group size kept strictly between 6 – 12 participants

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, visa fee, beverages, guide and driver gratuities, and international flights to Ghana are not included in the land tour cost



Sudanese style mosque of mud and brick near Wa