

ACCRA TO FREETOWN



A 42 day trip between Accra, Ghana and Freetown, Sierra Leone. Experience incredible West African culture, dance ceremonies, trekking, vine bridges, wildlife, beaches, traditional architecture and great music on this off the beaten track adventure!

Trip: Accra to Freetown (ACC-FTN)
Start Date: 20 February 2023 (at 09:00 am)
Finish Date: 03 April 2023 (at 08:00 am)
Joining Instructions: Meet at 09:00 am on 20 February 2023

NB: All trip itineraries are subject to change!

Summary & Key Highlights

- Spend time around Lake Volta in Ghana, with options to visit Wli waterfalls, the Akosombo dam, Ote waterfalls, climb Mt Gemi, see Kente cloth weavers ply their trade, or visit a sacred monkey sanctuary
- Free time for trekking in the Mount Nimba reserve in Liberia
- Overnight at a beautiful traditional village in Ivory Coast and see a stilt dancer in action!
- Visit the slave forts along Ghana's Cape Coast with a chance to relax on the beaches
- Trek in Guinee Forestiere to find the vine bridges the area is famed for
- Visit the intriguing capital of Ivory Coast – Yamoussoukro – and marvel at the Basilica
- Spend 2 nights at Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary – with the chance to see some of the best wildlife Sierra Leone has to offer including the rare Pygmy Hippo
- Walk high above the rainforest on the canopy walkways at Kakum National Park
- Spot wildlife on guided walking safaris in Mole National Park in northern Ghana
- Trek to see wild chimpanzees in Guinea Forestiere (optional extra)
- Soak up the beaches, nightlife & music of Freetown, the capital of 'Salone'
- The Ashanti stronghold of Kumasi and Kejeita Market, one of the biggest in West Africa
- Overnight stay at the beautiful Kintampo Waterfalls
- Watch the artisans ply their trades in Korhogo, Ivory Coast
- Visit and overnight stay at the beautiful Kpatawee waterfalls in northern Liberia
- Explore the crumbling grandeur of Monrovia
- Stay at a Liberian surf retreat in Robertsport and see the crumbling architecture of the early settlers
- Overnight in a village in eastern Sierra Leone learning about the people's culture, traditions, and everyday life, topped off with storytelling from the village elders and music and dance performances!

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Challenges: Is This Trip For Me?

This unique trip is perhaps our most exciting - and we're proud to be the first overland truck-based company to take groups into Sierra Leone in 2012 and Liberia in 2013!

This is truly off the beaten track overlanding - travelling through a stunning part of West Africa few others get to see. This trip will therefore, at times, be exploratory in nature with a flexible itinerary to take into account any unforeseen challenges we may be presented with en route.



Road conditions will at times slow us down so we have built extra time into the itinerary to account for this. It will be tough going for short stretches as we journey between Ivory Coast, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. **At times we'll be driving through remote areas where there simply is no tourist infrastructure** – so we'll be bush camping off the truck for a few days at a time. Team work is the key to keeping the truck moving and group morale high!

Delays at borders and checkpoints are commonplace. It can be tiresome but also quite comical sometimes – you just have to play the game!

Week 1: Lake Volta Region, Ghana

The trip starts in the Ghanaian capital **Accra** where we'll obtain visas for later on in the trip. Whilst here you could explore the famous fishing harbour, Osu castle, the lighthouse and colonial fort in historic **Jamestown** or take a guided tour of one of Accra's vibrant neighbourhoods.

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It's well worth visiting the world-famous **coffin makers** just outside of the city, where men chisel timber into all kinds of objects to give people a final send off in style (cars, animals, rockets, you name it!) In addition, the **artisans market** has a superb array of masks, statues, clothing, jewellery, chess boards and chairs for sale if you feel the urge for some early-on souvenir hunting!

With visas in hand we'll drive north east towards the stunning **Lake Volta region**, where we'll spend the rest of this first week of the trip. Arguably the most picturesque part of Ghana, we'll travel short distances over the next 4 or 5 days along the south eastern edge of the lake, basing ourselves between **Aylos Bay, Rootsyard, Amedzofe** and **Wli**, before heading to the northern town of Yendi.

We'll leave it up to you to decide what you want to do on these days, but some highlights include the chance to climb **Mount Gemi**, trek to both **Wli Waterfalls** and **Ote Waterfalls**, visit a sacred **monkey sanctuary**, take a tour of the **Akosombo dam**, visit a **drumming workshop**, watch **Kente cloth weavers** at work or simply kick back and relax taking in the views of Lake Volta.

By the end of the first week we'll be somewhere en route in the northern Volta region, where you'll notice the change in the scenery and landscapes.

Week 2: Northern Ghana To The Coast

Making for the northern city of Tamale where we'll stop to do some shopping for supplies, before continuing to the beautiful **Mole National Park**. The road into the park is in varied condition so it can be quite a bumpy ride at times - strap yourselves in!

We have a whole day at Mole for guided walks through the park. The camp site we stay at is located above a watering hole where many of the animals congregate, making it an ideal spot for **game viewing**. The camp site also has a swimming pool, offering a refreshing afternoon dip after a long walk through the park looking for wildlife.

Leaving the park we'll stop at the famous **adobe mosque** at **Larabanga**, built in a West Sudanese style similar to those found in parts of Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. Picking up the main highway south we'll spend the night at the enchanting **Kintampo Falls** for the chance to have a refreshing swim to cool off.

The journey south continues to the **Ashanti** stronghold of **Kumasi** where there are a number of things to see and do, including:

- Explore the sprawling **Kejetia market** - one of the biggest in West Africa
- Look around **Manhyia Palace museum** to admire the exhibits and learn about the history of the Ashanti royal family
- Stroll around the grounds of the national cultural centre and witness the crafts people at work making everything from drums to weaving textiles and crafting jewellery
- Take a day trip out to the sacred **Lake Bosumtwi**

Our next stop is Ghana's beautiful **Atlantic Coastline**. Here we will visit a number of sites including **Cape Coast Castle**, once the residence of the British governor until

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Accra became the capital of Ghana. Further west we will also visit **St George's Castle** in **Elmina**. Originally built by the Portuguese as a trading post, it later turned into a holding fort to ship slaves across the Atlantic - a beautiful place yet one with such a disturbing and tragic history. Whilst on the coast we'll camp at a beautiful golden sand beach.

Whilst on the coast we'll also visit **Kakum National Park**, where we'll have a chance to walk on the famous canopy walkways above the rainforest and hopefully see some of the wildlife within the reserve.

Next we'll drive towards the Ivory Coast border, stopping off en route for the night to break the journey.

Weeks 3-4: Ivory Coast Into Guinea

A drive day and busy border town sees us cross into French speaking Cote d'Ivoire and the next stage of our overland adventure. We'll first head for Grand Bassam, the former French colonial capital in Ivory Coast. This sleepy town feels a world away from the hustle and bustle of the close by capital of Abidjan, where you can wander around the grand old colonial buildings, visit local artisans at work or simply kick back and relax on the golden sand beach.

Depending on how we're doing for time, we may include a nightstop in Ivory Coast's bustling economic capital, **Abidjan** (or 'Babi' as the local people call it). With its stunning skyline and modern architecture, it's a complete contrast to where we'll be visiting over the next few weeks! In 'Babi' there are some interesting buildings and museums to visit as well as the chance to stock up on luxuries. Abidjan really comes to life at night, and we will spend a night here to sample some of the great local music, including Ivorian reggae and *coupé-décalé*.

We now head north and make for the capital of Ivory Coast in name alone, **Yamoussoukro**, the hometown of long serving post-independence **President Felix Houphouet-Boigny**, who spent huge amounts of money to make it the new spectacular capital. Here we'll stay just outside of town - giving you a chance to marvel at the **Basilique de Notre Dame de la Paix** and the grand hotel with sweeping panoramic views over the cities dramatic skyline.

Despite such a low percentage of the population actually being Catholic, the President spent hundreds of millions of dollars on a grand Basilica, almost an exact replica of **St Peter's** in **Rome!** The town itself also boasts 6 lane highways that lead nowhere, grand hotels and various monuments, but all in a relatively small settlement of approximately 250,000 people. **A surreal place that has to be seen to be believed!**

The northern town of **Korhogo** is next, famed for cloth weaving, jewellery and antiques. Visiting the surrounding area will give you a fascinating insight into the life of the **Senoufo** people. It's worth hiring a guide for the day and exploring the villages around Korhogo to see the craftspeople at work. **Le Quartier des Sculpteurs** in Korhogo is definitely worth a good look around for souvenirs - be prepared to haggle!

A real highlight now awaits us as we journey west on bad roads to Odienne. We'll break the journey on the way as it's slow going in places, but once on the tar again we turn south towards Man. All being well we'll turn off the highway and spend a night in a beautiful village in the west of Ivory Coast, where we'll have the chance to watch a traditional dance ceremony with a **stilt dancer**! At the top of this page you can see a video Jeremy Hubbard made for us highlighting this **stilt dance ceremony** - a real privilege to get to see in such a stunning setting.

Stopping in the town of **Man** to get supplies, we'll turn onto the dirt roads and towards the border with **Guinea**. This is perhaps the most beautiful part of Ivory Coast, situated near the borders with Guinea and Liberia. The surrounding mountains and tropical vegetation make for a spectacular back drop, a really beautiful drive in places!

Weeks 4-5: Guinea Into Liberia

This week's itinerary is left deliberately vague due to the nature of the area we will be travelling through. Parts of Guinea Forestiere (Forest Region) and northern Liberia are quite **remote**, and receive far fewer visitors than other parts of the region. It's one of the most naturally beautiful parts of West Africa, but travel in the region is somewhat challenging due to varied road conditions.

As a very rough guide, we hope to do some or all of the following during this part of the trip:

- Walking in the Guinea Forestiere to find one of the vine bridges the area is famed for – walking on them is at your own discretion!
- Optional trekking to visit the wild chimpanzees the area is famous for
- Trekking in the beautiful Mount Nimba Nature Reserve in northern Liberia
- Explore the bustling markets of Nzerekore and perhaps look around the Musee Ethnographique, home to a selection of masks and fetishes

We will stop in small towns and villages to stock up on food and water as we journey between Guinea and Liberia. The roads can be very narrow, sometimes with deep ruts and corrugations, and we will have to ford rivers if the bridges are not strong enough for the truck.

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To reiterate - this section of the trip is totally flexible. Whilst we hope to see some of the above, no guarantees can be made, and we may have to adapt the itinerary depending upon conditions when we arrive.

Either way, by around the middle of week 5 of the trip, we will have driven from the Ivory Coast-Guinea border and arrived onto the coast of Liberia. **A true overland adventure you will never forget!**

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Week 5-6: Liberia Into Sierra Leone

Liberia is relatively new to travellers after being closed for so long. **We will take it as it comes!** The roads are in a varying state of repair, and can sometimes slow us down, so we have built spare days into the itineraries to account for this. We will visit **Kpatawee waterfalls** en route, one of Liberia's most beautiful spots, where if you wish you can spend a few hours trekking up the river to see a number of falls rising up the hillside.

You will be travelling through a **remote** part of West Africa, an area not accustomed to seeing a large group of overlanders before, so expect quite a **welcome** as we journey through this beautiful part of **Liberia!**

Arriving onto the Atlantic coastline of Liberia we will spend time in and around the capital **Monrovia**. The city is in a varying state of repair after so many years of trouble, but is very much moving on from a tragic past. The people in Monrovia are particularly welcoming and always pleased to see tourists coming to their city! Marvel at what remains of the **Masonic Lodge**, the crumbling and abandoned **Ducor Hotel**, as well as other reminders of Monrovia's most intriguing history.

We will spend time at a surf retreat in the sleepy coastal town of **Robertsport**. Here you will have the chance to enjoy the beaches, or explore the interesting architecture from some of Liberia's early settlers.

Leaving Monrovia we journey west towards the border with **Sierra Leone**. The road on the Sierra Leone side is pretty awful, so progress will be slow and we will have to find a bush camp in the **tropical rainforest** en route. Another hard days drive will bring us into the diamond dealing town of **Kenema** in the east of Sierra Leone. We will spend some time here to recharge and clean up after the drive through the forest from the border with Liberia.

Our next stop is the [Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary](#). This unique reserve is an adventure to reach involving some dirt roads and a boat ride to the island. Once there, we'll have the chance to see some of the best wildlife Sierra Leone has to offer, including 11 species of primate and, with luck, the rare **Pygmy Hippo!**

Leaving Tiwai Island, we head west towards the capital city of **Freetown**, where you'll have an opportunity to explore and soak up the atmosphere in Sierra Leone's dazzling metropolis. You could take a speedboat to **Banana Island** with its breathtaking views of the coastline, visit **Charlotte Falls**, the [Tacaquma Chimpanzee Sanctuary](#) or simply beach hop along the peninsula. Sierra Leone has some of the best beaches in the world - one of the famous 1980's adverts for the Bounty chocolate bar entitled "A Taste of Paradise" was filmed here!

When the sun goes down Freetowners' like to party - so if that's your thing you'll find plenty of street parades, beach bars and nightclubs to dance in until dawn, a great way to end our adventure from Ghana to Sierra Leone!

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To experience the many incredible sights on our Accra to Freetown trip, watch this video from made by Jamie Noel who joined us on a trip in 2013. This short film accompanied by an awesome soundtrack highlights the pristine beaches, friendly people, and stunning landscapes these countries are so famous for!

Please Note: This trip can be combined with our [Freetown to Dakar](#) trip for the ultimate **West Africa Overland** adventure!

