

# Ghana

Hailed as West Africa's golden child, Ghana deserves its place in the sun. Its beaches are buttered with thick white sand and its savannahs are blessed with the footprints of elephants – no wonder travellers can't get enough.

Often labelled Africa's greatest success story, Ghana's green-gold-and-red has been flying high since 1957. The country has long stood proud, a beacon of hope on a rocky West African coastline. The wind of change that once swept through Ghana is now a soft, salty breeze; it cools the air and kisses a coastline still haunted by the legacy of the slave trade.

Accra, Ghana's dancefloor, is where the music comes alive. Laced with laughter, hip-life permeates cocktail bars, swish clubs and restaurants. Let the hot sun hug you and the beat get under your skin; follow it as it draws you into its relentless rhythm, linking the dry dusty north with the spectacular seascape of the south.

Let it take you to the crashing waterfalls of the east and the world-class waves of the west, past mud-and-stick mosques and crumbling colonial architecture. Don't miss Mole National Park, where sunburnt savannahs host populations of elephants, antelopes and monkeys. At the end of a long, hot day, slip into the night and take a peek at the inky sky: we bet you the stars will be out.

There's a good reason they call Ghana 'Africa for beginners': you'll never want your trip to end.

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 231,000 sq km
- **Capital** Accra
- **Country code** ☎ 233
- **Famous for** Castles and forts, beaches, democracy
- **Languages** English, Twi, Dagbani
- **Money** Cedi (C); US\$1 = C1.50; €1 = C2.40
- **Population** 23 million
- **Visa** Arrange in advance, US\$80



## HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Coast** (p348) Dance and drum lessons on the beaches of Kokrobite and Anomabu; surf and sea turtles at Busua, Akwidaa Beach and Axim.
- **Ghosts of the slave trade** The forts of Cape Coast (p352) and Elmina (p357) are filled with the history of slavery.
- **Mole National Park** (p380) The world's most inexpensive safari.
- **The East** (p365) Hiking, boat trips and waterfall climbs in former German Togoland.
- **Wa** (p364) Hippos and Islamic architecture in a seldom-visited corner of Ghana.

## ITINERARIES

- **Two Weeks** Two weeks is just about long enough to lock eyes with an elephant at Mole and pay a visit to the Ashanti villages around Kumasi, ending your trip on the beaches close to Accra. Begin in Accra (p335; two days), then fly up north (you could travel by road but it will rob you of a night) to Tamale (p377; two nights), then on to Mole (p380; two nights) and Larabanga (p381; one night) before heading down south to Kumasi (p369; two nights) and back to Accra (p335; one night). Then head out to Anomabu (p351; two nights) or Kokrobite (p348), before returning to the capital to catch your flight home.
- If you can bear to miss Mole, an alternative is to head to Kumasi (p369; two nights) first, then Cape Coast (p352; three nights) to explore Kakum and the surrounding area. You could then move further west to Busua (p360; two nights) and Akwidaa Beach (p362; three nights) before returning to Accra.
- **One Month** With a month, you can do all of the above plus throw in visits to the east and, if bus routes are on your side, to Wa (p382). If possible fly from Accra (p335) to Tamale (p377; one night) – if not take your time bussing it to Kumasi (p369) and then further north – and on to Mole National Park (p380) and Larabanga (p381). Continue west to Wa (p382) and the hippo sanctuary at Wechiau (p383), if time permits, and return to Kumasi. From there you can head south to Accra

and go on to visit the east: Akosombo (p365), on to Ho (p366) and Hohoe (p367) and back to Accra. Alternatively, head directly to the coastal resorts of your choice from Kumasi.

## CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Ghana has a tropical equatorial climate, which means that it's hot year-round with seasonal rains. In the humid southern coastal region, the rainy seasons are from April to June, and during September and October; the dry months, November to March or July and August, are easier for travelling.

Throughout the year, maximum temperatures are around 30°C, dropping three or four degrees during the brief respite between rainy seasons. The humidity is constantly high, at about 80%. In the central region, the rains are heavier and last longer. In the hotter and drier north, there is one rainy season, lasting from April to October. Midday temperatures rarely fall below 30°C, rising to 35°C and higher from December to March when the rasping harmattan wind blows in from the Sahara. At this time, dust particles hang heavily in the air, making it constantly hazy, and temperatures plummet at night. Many Ghanaians come down with colds and coughs at this time of year. See also Climate Charts, p810.

The tourist high season is from June to August, but Ghana draws travellers year-round.

### HOW MUCH?

- **Purse made from recycled water sachets** C5
- **Elephant safari** C0.75
- **Short taxi ride through Accra** C2
- **Hip-life album** C6
- **Barbecued bat** C1

### LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **1L of petrol** C0.75
- **1.5L of bottled water** C1.50
- **Bottle of Star beer** C2
- **Souvenir football shirt** C8
- **Plate of jollof rice** C2