



Senegal

POP 13.8 MILLION

Includes ➔

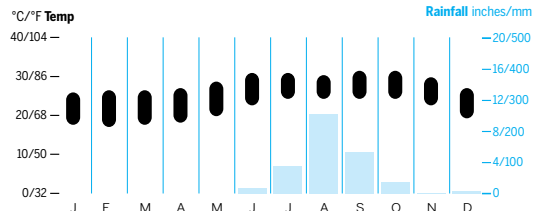
Dakar	413
Île de Gorée	425
Petite Côte & Siné-Saloum Delta	426
Mbour & Saly	427
Joal-Fadiout	427
Ndangane & Mar Ladj	427
Toubakouta & Missirah	428
Saint-Louis	429
Tambacounda	432
Parc National de Niokolo-Koba	432
Casamance	432
Ziguinchor	433
Cap Skiring	435

Why Go?

One of West Africa's most stable countries is definitely not dull: the capital, Dakar, is a dizzying, street-hustler-rich introduction to the country. Perched on the tip of a peninsula, elegance meets chaos, noise, vibrant markets and glittering nightlife while nearby Île de Gorée and the beaches of Yoff and N'Gor tap to slow, lazy beats. In northern Senegal, the enigmatic capital of Saint-Louis, a Unesco World Heritage Site, tempts with colonial architecture and proximity to luscious national parks. Along the Petite Côte and Cap Skiring, wide strips of beaches beckon and the broad deltas of the Casamance River reveal hundreds of bird species, from the gleaming wings of tiny kingfishers to the proud poise of pink flamingos. Whether you want to mingle with the trendsetters of urban Africa or be alone with your thoughts and the sounds of nature, you'll find your place in Senegal.

When to Go

Dakar



Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Chez Agnes (p431)
- ➔ Le Patio du Mar y Sol (p427)
- ➔ Cabane des Pêcheurs (p421)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Chez Valerie (p425)
- ➔ Lodge des Collines de Niassam (p427)
- ➔ La Maison Rose (p429)

Nov–Feb Senegal's main tourist season is dry and cool.

Dec & Mar–Jun When most music festivals are on, including the Saint-Louis Jazz Festival (p429).

Jul–late Sep Rainy, humid season, but hotels reduce prices by up to 40%.

DAKAR

POP 2.9 MILLION

Once a tiny settlement in the south of the Cap Vert peninsula, Dakar now spreads almost across its entire triangle, and keeps growing. This is a city of contrasts, where horse-cart drivers chug over swish highways and gleaming SUVs squeeze through tiny sand roads, where elegant ladies dig skinny heels into dusty walkways and suit-clad businessmen kneel down for prayer in the middle of the street. A fascinating place – once you've learned how to beat its scamsters, hustlers and traders at their own game.

Sights

Place de l'Indépendance

SQUARE

(Map p418) Dakar's central Place de l'Indépendance is the beating heart of the city. Symmetrically laid out and home to countless cars, crooks and 1960s concrete blocks, the square also contains majestic colonial buildings, including the Gouvernance (governor's office) and the Chambre de commerce (chamber of commerce).

Palais Présidentiel

HISTORIC BUILDING

(Map p418; Ave Léopold Senghor) Surrounded by sumptuous gardens and guards in colonial-style uniforms, the presidential palace was originally built for the governors but now serves as the residence of the current sitting president. You can't go inside, but it's a popular spot to take photos of the stately 1907 structure and its regal guards.

Musée Théodore Monod

MUSEUM

(Musée IFAN; Map p418; ☎ 33 823 9268; Pl de Soweto; adult/child CFA2300/200; ☀ 9am–6pm Tue–Sun) The Musée Théodore Monod is one of the best museums in West Africa. The museum is a testament to African art and culture with over 9000 objects on display. Lively exhibits show masks and traditional dress across the region (including Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Benin and Nigeria) and provide an excellent overview of styles, without bombarding you with more than you can take in.

You can also see beautiful fabrics and carvings, drums, musical instruments and agricultural tools. A gallery behind the main building often houses excellent exhibitions of contemporary art.

Medina

NEIGHBOURHOOD

A bustling popular quartier with tiny tailor's shops, a busy Marché Tilène and streets brimming with life, the Medina was built as a



SET YOUR BUDGET

Budget

- Hotel room CFA25,000
- Sandwich or *shwarma* (kebab) CFA1000
- Soft drink CFA40
- Local bus ride CFA50

Midrange

- Hotel room CFA50,000
- Two-course dinner CFA6000
- Bottle of beer CFA50
- Short bush-taxi ride CFA500

Top End

- Hotel room CFA85000
- Two-course dinner CFA8000
- Glass of wine CFA100
- Short *sept-place* taxi ride CFA800

township for the local populace by the French during colonial days and is the birthplace of Senegalese superstar and current minister of culture Youssou N'Dour. Besides being a very real neighbourhood, where creative ideas and new trends grow between crammed, make-shift homes, it's also home to Dakar's 1664 **Grande Mosquée** (Map p416), impressive for its sheer size and landmark minaret.

★ Village des Arts

ARTS CENTRE

(Map p422; ☎ 33 835 7160; www.levillagedesarts.com; Rte de Yoff) An arts tour around Dakar is simply not complete with a visit to this famous art complex, where some of Senegal's most promising and established photographers, painters and sculptors create, shape and display their works in a large garden space. The on-site gallery shows a selection of their work and it's easy to grab a drink and chat to the friendly artists at the nearby restaurants.

Layen Mausoleum

MONUMENT

(Map p422; Mbenguene & the beach; ☀ 10am–6pm Sun–Thu) In Yoff village, take a look at the Layen Mausoleum, a shrine to the founder of the Layen Muslim brotherhood. Residents of Yoff are noted for their strong Islamic culture: smoking and drinking are not allowed and visitors should be appropriately dressed (meaning long skirts or trousers). It's right on the beach and its floors are made of sand.