

# Ghana

POP 25 MILLION

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Buka (p177)
- ➔ El Gaucho (p192)
- ➔ Khana Khazana (p177)
- ➔ Okorye Tree (p188)
- ➔ Nik's Pizza (p192)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Lake Point Guesthouse (p193)
- ➔ Green Turtle Lodge (p189)
- ➔ Four Villages Inn (p191)
- ➔ Mountain Paradise (p182)
- ➔ Aylos Bay (p181)

## Why Go?

Hailed as West Africa's golden child, Ghana deserves its place in the sun. One of Africa's great success stories, the country is reaping the benefits of a stable democracy in the form of fast-paced development. And it shows: Ghana is suffused with the most incredible energy.

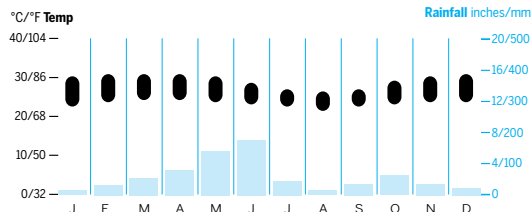
With its welcoming beaches, gorgeous hinterland, rich culture, vibrant cities, diverse wildlife, easy transport and affable inhabitants, it's no wonder Ghana is sometimes labelled 'Africa for beginners'.

It's easy to come here for a week or a month, but no trip can be complete without a visit to Ghana's coastal forts, poignant reminders of a page of history that defined our modern world.

Travel north and you'll feel like you've arrived in a different country, with a different religion, geography and cultural practices. The beauty is that this diversity exists so harmoniously, a joy to experience and a wonder to behold in uncertain times.

## When to Go

### Accra



**Apr–Jun** The heaviest of the two rainy seasons (autumn can also be wet).

**Nov–Mar** The dry and easiest season to travel.

**Dec–Apr** Best for wildlife viewing, with good visibility and animals congregating at water holes.

## ACCRA

POP 2.29 MILLION

Ghana's beating heart probably won't inspire love letters, but you might just grow to like it. The capital's hot, sticky streets are perfumed with sweat, fumes and yesterday's cooking oil. Like balloons waiting to be burst, clouds of dirty humidity linger above stalls selling mangoes, *banku* (fermented maize meal) and rice. The city's tendrils reach out towards the beach, the centre and the west, each one a different Ghanaian experience.

The city doesn't have any heavy-hitting sights like Cape Coast or Elmina, but it does have good shopping, excellent nightlife and definitely the best selection of eating options in Ghana.

### Sights & Activities

**Osu Castle** (Map p174) is currently the seat of government and is off-limits to visitors, but at the time of research the government was scheduled to move to the brand-new **Flagstaff House** (Map p174) on Liberation Rd and for Osu Castle to open to the public.

#### Jamestown

NEIGHBOURHOOD

(Map p174) Jamestown originated as a community that emerged around the 17th century British James Fort, merging with Accra as the city grew. These days, Jamestown is one of the poorer neighbourhoods of Accra but it remains vibrant. For a great view of the city and the busy and colourful fishing harbour (haze and pollution permitting), climb to the top of the whitewashed **lighthouse** (admission C5).

There are several boxing gyms in Jamestown that have nurtured a long line of local kids into champions. You'll see plenty of posters around.

#### Kwame Nkrumah Park

MEMORIAL

(Map p178; High St; park & museum admission adult/C6/1; ☺10am-5pm) It's all bronze statues and choreographed fountains at the Kwame Nkrumah park, dedicated in the early 1990s to Ghana's first president. The park **museum** houses a curious collection of Nkrumah's personal belongings, including his presidential desk, bookcase, jacket and student sofa, as well as numerous photos of him and various world leaders.

#### Independence Square

MONUMENT

(Map p174) Independence Sq is a vast, empty expanse of concrete overlooked by spectator stands of Stalinesque grace. The square is dominated by an enormous McDonald's-like

### SET YOUR BUDGET

#### Budget

- Dorm bed C10
- Fried rice in chop bar C2
- Star beer C3
- Accra–Tamale by bus C40

#### Midrange

- Hotel room with bathroom & air-con C80
- Pizza C15
- Drink in a bar C6
- Flight Accra–Tamale C100

#### Top End

- Room in a lodge US\$100
- Two-course meal C30
- Cocktail C10
- 4WD with driver, per day US\$110

arch, beneath which the Eternal Flame of African Liberation, lit by Kwame Nkrumah, still flickers. It stands empty for most of the year, except for special commemorations. Super churches sometimes get the authorisation to preach here.

Across the street stands **Black Star Square** (Map p174), with an angular arch, crowned by a large black star; Ghana's national symbol. Note: taking photos is forbidden.

#### Makola Market

MARKET

(Map p178; ☺8am-6pm) There is no front door or welcoming sign to the Makola Market. Before you know it, you've been sucked by the human undertow from the usual pavements clogged with vendors hawking food, secondhand clothes and shoes to the market itself. For new arrivals to Africa, it can be an intense experience, but it's a fun – though perhaps a slightly masochistic – Ghanaian initiation rite.

#### Labadi Beach

BEACH

This is where Accra residents love to congregate and party at weekends. It does get extremely crowded, and the pumping music, food smells and heat can all become a bit too much, but there is no denying that this is typical Ghana-style partying. Labadi is about 8km east of Accra; to come here, take a *tro-tro* (minibus) at Nkrumah Circle in Central Accra or along the Ring Rd.