



Sierra Leone

📍 232 / POP 6 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Franco's (p472)
- ➔ Oasis (p469)
- ➔ Mamba Point Lagoonda (p470)
- ➔ Tessa's (p469)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Freetown Oasis (p468)
- ➔ Tacugama Sanctuary Lodge (p471)
- ➔ Rogbonko Village (p473)
- ➔ Ategbah Garden (p471)
- ➔ Cockle Point (p472)

Why Go?

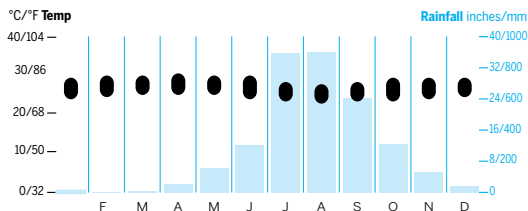
For the traveller, Sierra Leone is still West Africa's secret beach destination. Sweet sands rise from the soft waters of the Atlantic, with the backdrop dressed in sun-stained hues, rainforest green and the red, red roads of the north.

In Freetown, colourful stilted houses remember the days when freed slaves from the Caribbean were resettled upon these shores. In the north, the Loma Mountains form the highest point west of Cameroon. Further east national parks and rainforest shelter endangered species like the black-and-white colobus monkey and the elusive pygmy hippo.

The scars of Sierra Leone's civil wars had just healed when the 2014–15 Ebola outbreak knocked the country off its feet once again. Tourism can play an important role in helping its recovery, so join the island-hoppers and adventurers, camp in little-visited rainforests and crack open fresh lobster in the shade of skinny palms and rope-strung hammocks.

When to Go

Freetown



Nov–Jun The dry season is marked by mild, dusty harmattan winds in December, January and February.

April The average daytime temperature is 32°C.

Jun–Nov In the rainy season, spectacular coastal storms mean up to 3200mm of precipitation.



Sierra Leone Highlights

- 1 Tiwai Island** (p475)
Joining a nighttime hike through the forest in search of the elusive pygmy hippo.
- 2 Freetown Peninsula** (p471)
Eating barbecued lobster pulled fresh from the sea at one of the peninsula's stunning beaches.

- 3 Outamba-Kilimi National Park** (p474)
Gliding down the river by dugout canoe while monkeys and birds chatter in the surrounding forest.
- 4 Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary** (p471)
Learning about conservation efforts

and viewing chimps playing in their sanctuary home.

- 5 Freetown** (p465)
Soaking up the atmosphere: spotting colourful Krio houses, strolling the beach and dancing till dawn at one of the city's energetic clubs.

FREETOWN

📍 022 / POP 1.1 MILLION

Strung between the mountains and the sea, Sierra Leone's capital is a cheeky, quicksilver city bubbling with energy, colour and charm. One minute it's calm, offering up quiet beaches, friendly Krio chat and warm plates of soup and rice. The next it's frenzied and playing dirty, throwing you into the

back of a shared taxi and hurtling you up and down its pretty little hills.

And it might just be the only capital in the world where when you emerge from the airport, blinking after an overnight flight, you find yourself standing on the wooden deck of a port flanked by a backdrop of mountains, beaches and palm trees so idyllic you wonder if it's real. Well it's real, all of it – the chatter and the chaos and the colour and