



Benin

📍 229 / POP 9.6 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Parc National de la Pendjari	50

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Chez Delphano (p49)
- ➔ Saveurs d'Afrique (p47)
- ➔ L'Atelier (p41)
- ➔ Bab's Dock (p44)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ La Guesthouse (p40)
- ➔ Maison Rouge (p40)
- ➔ Auberge Le Jardin Secret – Chez Pascal (p46)
- ➔ Pendjari Lodge (p50)
- ➔ Hôtel Chez Théo (p48)

Why Go?

The birthplace of voodoo and a pivotal platform of the slave trade for nearly three centuries, Benin is steeped in a rich and complex history still very much in evidence today.

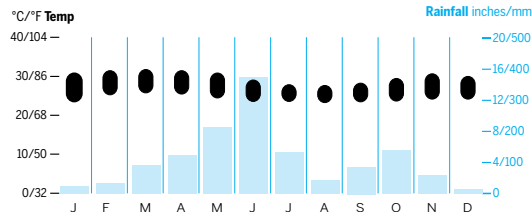
A visit to this small, club-shaped nation could therefore not be complete without learning about spirits and fetishes and the Afro-Brazilian heritage of Ouidah, Abomey and Porto Novo.

But Benin will also wow visitors with its palm-fringed beach idyll of the Atlantic coast, the rugged scenery of the north and the Parc National de la Pendjari, one of the best wildlife parks in West Africa. Lions, cheetahs, leopards, elephants and hundreds of other species thrive here.

In fact, Benin is wonderfully tourist friendly. There are good roads, a wide range of accommodation options and ecotourism initiatives that offer the chance to delve into Beninese life. Now is an ideal time to go: the country sits on the cusp of discovery.

When to Go

Cotonou



Nov–Feb
Warm and dry.
Wildlife-watching at its prime.
Ouidah Voodoo Festival in January.

Mar–May The hottest period, after the harmattan lifts. Some rains in the south.

Jun–Oct Usually wet and uncomfortably humid; dry spell mid-July to mid-September in the south.



Benin Highlights

- 1 Ganvié (p45)**
Spending a night at this lakeside stilt village while peering out over sublime lake life.
- 2 Lake Ahémé (p48)**
Learning traditional fishing techniques and taking a dip at lake's shores.
- 3 Parc National de la Pendjari (p50)**
Spotting lions, cheetahs, elephants and more in one of West Africa's best wildlife parks.
- 4 Zinzou Foundation Museum (p46)**
Pondering contemporary African Art at this remarkable museum.
- 5 Porto Novo (p44)**
Discovering Benin's mellow capital, with its Afro-Brazilian heritage.
- 6 Abomey (p48)**
Visiting the ruined palaces and temples of the kings of Dahomey.
- 7 Grand Popo (p47)**
Putting your bags down at this lovely beach town and relaxing on Benin's beautiful palm-fringed coast.