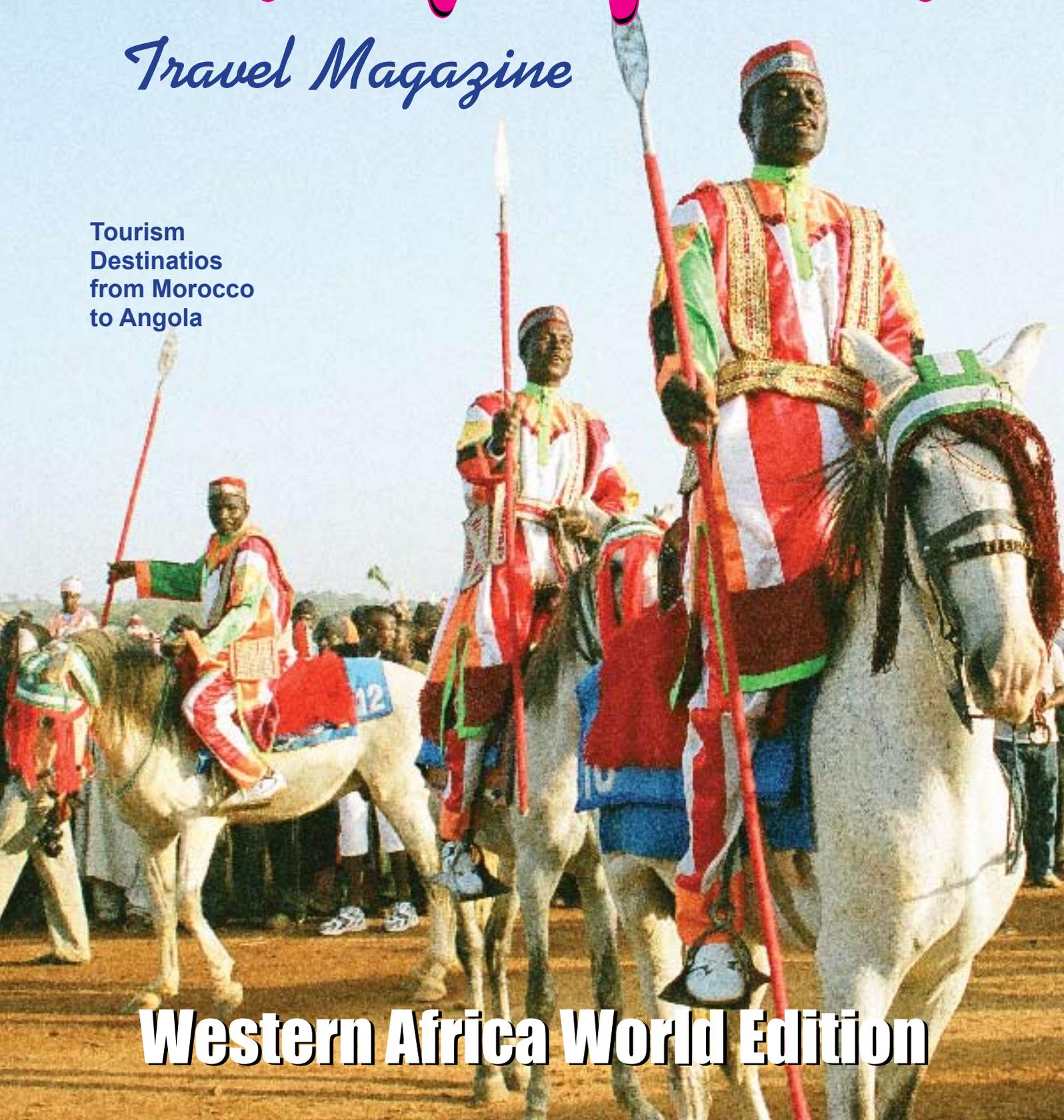


AFRICA

Travel Magazine

Tourism
Destinations
from Morocco
to Angola



Western Africa World Edition



Western Africa World Edition



Western Africa: A Tourism Destination for the times”

Additional sections will be added to this Electronic edition featuring Western Africa and its coastal areas from Morocco to Namibia. We expect the sequence of pages (below) will change as the issue expands

With the Togolese Republic hosting the Africa Travel Association's 12th Cultural and Ecotourism Symposium, this electronic edition will encourage attendance and bookings for pre or post tour of Togo and its neighbors. While many of these pages will appear in print later, this version may be downloaded from www.africa-ata.org/download.htm

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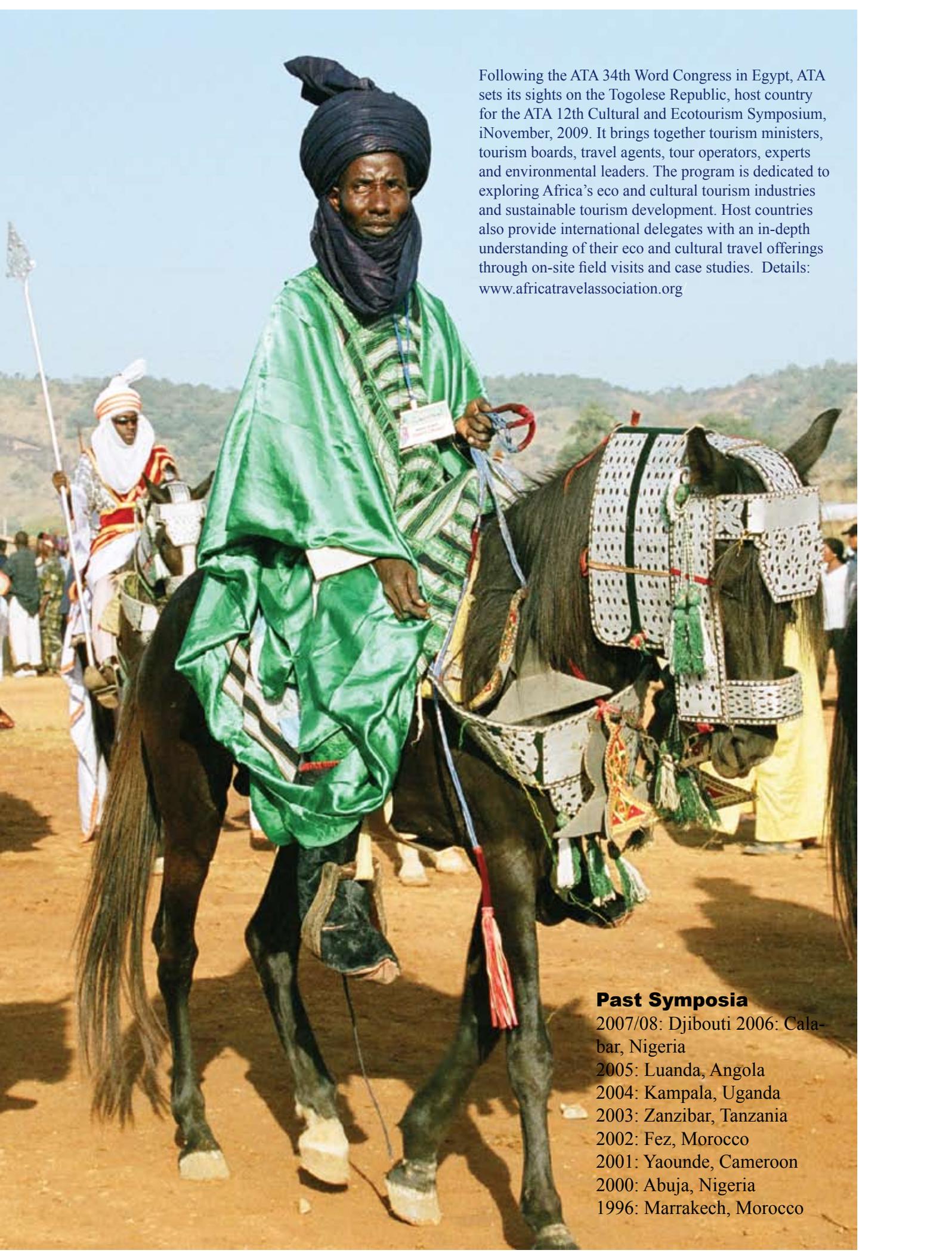
Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire

and other destinations

to come in this issue.

*Ghana royalty during ATA
Congress tour.. Cape Coast.*

Following the ATA 34th World Congress in Egypt, ATA sets its sights on the Togolese Republic, host country for the ATA 12th Cultural and Ecotourism Symposium, in November, 2009. It brings together tourism ministers, tourism boards, travel agents, tour operators, experts and environmental leaders. The program is dedicated to exploring Africa's eco and cultural tourism industries and sustainable tourism development. Host countries also provide international delegates with an in-depth understanding of their eco and cultural travel offerings through on-site field visits and case studies. Details: www.africatraselassociation.org



Past Symposia

2007/08: Djibouti
2006: Calabar, Nigeria
2005: Luanda, Angola
2004: Kampala, Uganda
2003: Zanzibar, Tanzania
2002: Fez, Morocco
2001: Yaounde, Cameroon
2000: Abuja, Nigeria
1996: Marrakech, Morocco

Togo to host ATA 12th Cultural & Ecotourism Symposium

by Muguette Goufrani



Where do many West Africans go for an extended holiday or weekend fun?

Chances are better than average that Togo tops many of their agendas.

While we were living in West Africa, my family and I will never forget the Togolese hospitality we enjoyed during our visits to that friendly country. Some say, should a popularity contest be held today, amongst all West African countries, Togo- "Pearl of West Africa" would come first. Lome, the capital city, with several five star hotels and acres of sandy, sun-drenched beaches, has become a highly popular vacation center for Europeans. For most Americans and Canadians, it's still a well kept secret. Visitors hardly need to leave their hotel area; the Atlantic ocean is one block from the heart of the city. ...Map of Togo.

Lome's central market, where we bargained for many of my favorite keepsakes and wardrobe items, rates as one of the five best shopping sites in Africa. At Maison Royale, my friends and I were dazzled by an elegant gold Mercedes-Benz, parked at the entrance, gleaming in the mid-day sun. A symbol of wealth and success in North America, these upscale autos are commonplace in Lome, many being owned by "Nana Benz"—women traders, so named because they all appear to be Mercedes Benz owners. Most taxicabs are owned by this enterprising group. Mini buses are another popular means of transport, and the prices are fair. To insure the safety of its visitors, Togo has the most police checkpoints of any democratic West African country. Photos: Muguette Goufrani during her early visits to Togo, and in West Africa at the 1999 ATA Congress. More about Togo

Vin du Palm et Sauce des Legumes
If you enjoy the delights of dining, each Togolese

district has its own culinary specialties. One of my favorites is 'sauce des legumes' (vegetable sauce), with crab and foutou (mashed yams). Or how about something completely different? Try snails cooked like a brochette, or sit down to a dinner of smoked goat meat. Many visitors top off their meal with a glass of 'vin du palme' (palm wine), a popular, clear-colored drink that will knock your socks off. A big surprise on my first visit to Togo was 'Chateau Viale,' an astonishing, medieval style stone fortress. Perched high on a hill, this African castle was created by a visionary Frenchman in 1944 as a retreat for his wife. For some reason unknown to me -- she spent three days in palatial grandeur, then split for France. Today, Chateau Viale serves as the Togolese President's weekend retreat.

Togolese Fishing Village

For a change of venue, make a trip to Aneho, where you will experience life in a typical Togolese fishing village. You'll see fisher folk on the beach, hauling in their long nets, accompanied by an enchanting rhythm and singing. It's like an epic Hollywood movie scene. French is the official language of Togo, which has a population of 5 million. Ethnic Groups
The two largest ethnic groups are the Ewe and the Kabye. Ewe consider the birth of twins a great blessing, while the Bassari consider twins a misfortune. This same contrast is seen in their eating habits; the Ewe eat cats, and consider anyone who eats dog meat to be barbarians. The Kabye enjoy dog meat, but refuse to eat cats.



Voodoo and fetish cults: While in Haiti (1997) as part of a media video production team, comprised of Africa Travel Magazine, National Geographic and Radio Lumiere, I advised my colleagues on how Voodoo culture came to the Caribbean from Togo and other parts of West Africa. While in Togo, we spent a full day at Akodessewas, the world's largest fetish market, with its array of sorcerers' potions; roots, bark, monkey skulls, wart hog teeth, porcupine skins, leopard hides,

antelope horns, bones of crocodiles, horses, pigs and monkeys, plus various parts of human anatomy. Such concoctions are used to cure everything from diarrhea and the flu, to cuts, impotence and rheumatism.

I tried on a gris gris (necklace), which is said to work its magic when blessed by a fetish priest. Part doctor, part psychic, the priest relies on herbal medicines, charms and a healthy dose of positive thinking. They believe that the spirits are everywhere -- in the air, the trees, the water - even buildings. A priest calls on his favorite god to predict future events, and keep evil forces at bay. He sits on a stool in his colorful robe, holding a regal staff, receiving gifts of gin, which he sips as a troupe performs ritual chanting and dancing. A sacrificial offering is made as a show of loyalty and respect to the spirits, and to gain special favors, such as the birth of twins.

Muguette Goufrani

Africa Travel Magazine's Francophone Editor covers West African destinations in detail. Born in Casablanca, her native language is French and she has worked in five West African countries, with Air Afrique, Royal Air Maroc and Citroen.

As a Travel Agent, she began in Morocco, where her family operates an inbound tour company, and later in Cambodia. Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Tahiti, New Caledonia, Canada and USA.. E-mail Muguette with items on your travel experiences in Africa. *More news, more reports. Contact : info@republicoftogo.com*

Photo: Muguette Goufrani with magazine Editor Jerry W. Bird.



The Devil's Elbow at Obudu Ranch, Nigeria



In travel and tourism as in life, there are more than one ways to get to the top! In Cross River State, Nigeria there's the long and winding way up the Devils's Elbow. Then there's the high speed gondola - and for the high

and mighty there's a helicopter pad near the conference center. You can also land at a nearby airfield. My first visit to Nigeria was in the fall of 2006, and as luck would have it, the city that won the opportunity to host our ATA Eco Cultural Symposium was Calabar in Cross River State. What is so unique about Calabar? For one thing it is an example of good management, zero tolerance in some key areas and a spirit of optimism far ahead of most destinations we have visited. Credit must go to our host for the event, Governor Donald Duke, who introduced and championed a number of creative ideas. One of them is pictured on this page - a state-of-the-art gondola lift that whisks visitors up to the high

plateau where the Obudu Cattle Ranch, established decades ago, has been transformed into a spectacular tourism and world class attraction for important meetings and summits. The lodge operated by South Africa's Protea Hotels group has been resorted and, as expected, the hospitality is outstanding. More information? Please visit <http://crossriverstate.com/obudu.htm> - or www.africa-ata.org/nigeria.htm

Tinapa - Birth of a Super Oasis

In fall of 2006, our magazine's editorial team was part of an ATA group that was privileged to visit and inspect Calabar's exciting Tinapa project that was in its final stages at the time. Our current mandate is to make sure Africa Travel Magazine's readers and internet viewers in North America and around the world know the true facts about Nigeria's newest treasure of cooperative enterprise. Tinapa is a resort that means business - the business of combining business, pleasure and leisure! Tinapa is the resort that means business - the business of combining business, pleasure and leisure! This will be the first time that anything

like this has been experienced in West Africa. No longer will you need to go to Europe, the Far East or America to enjoy the best entertainment, shopping and leisure facilities the world has to offer!

The total Tinapa complex is massive - 80 000 m2 of retail and wholesale emporiums alone. The emporiums feature a borderless, seamless shopping environment - a unique concept that unfolds a new dimension in retailing for the first time in Africa's history! These massive 21st century shopping emporiums will be supported by a vast array of retailers offering everything from exclusive bookshops, specialty CD and DVD outlets, pharmacies to beauty salons, banks and jewellery stores! Plus an incredible entertainment centre including cinemas, food court, internet cafe and games arcade! There will be a dazzling range of six hotels to choose from - accommodation to suit a variety of lifestyles and budgets. The magnificent waterfront development incor-

CREATIVE CONCEPTS DESIGNED TO ENHA

porating a Fisherman's Wharf, will showcase even more restaurants, bars and tourist kiosks. Imagine, after an endless night of fun, enjoying a champagne breakfast whilst watching a beautiful sunrise over the azure waters of the Calabar River! And as if that's not enough entertainment there'll be added attractions to indulge in, including a golfer's paradise with driving range and putting green, a jungle carting track, quad biking route, plus a clay pigeon and archery course! Water activities, including water-skiing, parasailing, rowing and canoeing will take place in a luxurious oasis environment! Agri and eco tourism attractions will include a sizeable exotic bird sanctuary, a crocodile farm, a tropical fish farm, a primate rehabilitation centre and much,

much more in the sun-drenched waterways of Tinapa! It is the ultimate shop and party till-you-drop leisure centre - a world that is alive twenty-fours a day with a never-ending choice of activities to choose from. Tinapa will provide visitors with a unique tourism experience and the development will fast track growth of the tourism sector in Calabar, Cross River State and Nigeria.

"Tinapa will Regenerate Lost Trading History of Old Calabar," President Olusegun Obasanjo.

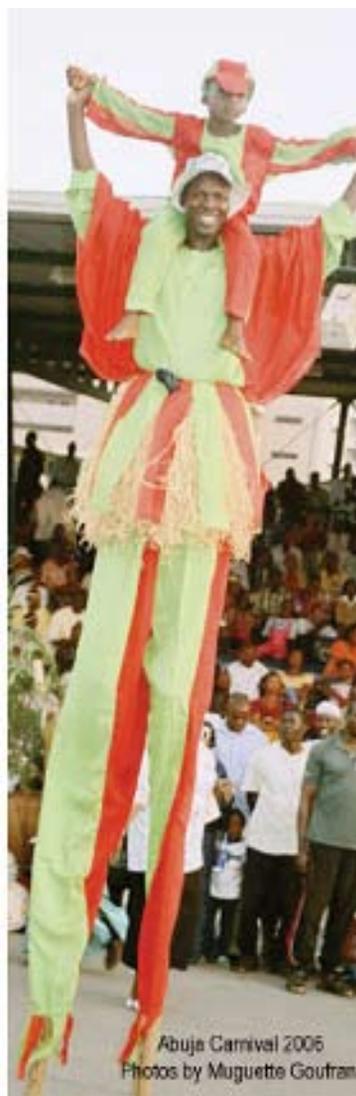
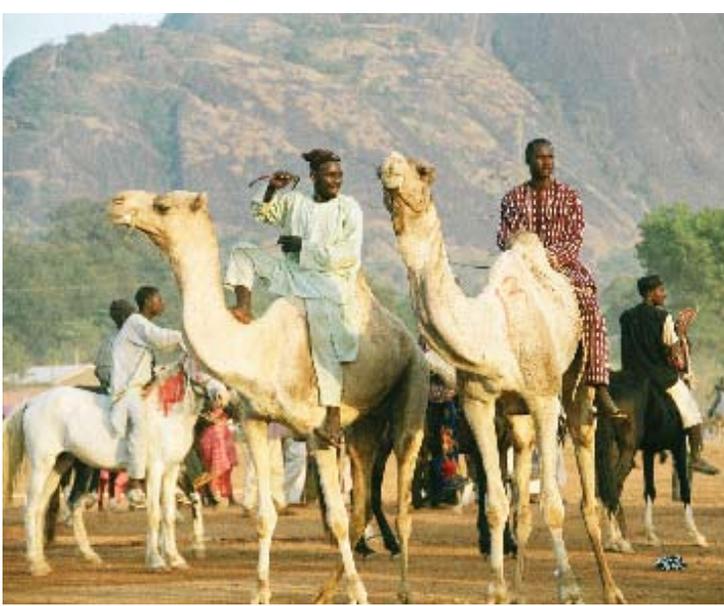
Governor Donald Duke

We thank our host from the ATA Eco and Cultural Tourism Symposium, Governor Donald Duke for a week of surprising and delightful experiences - and for welcoming us to the Governor's mansion for a wind up dinner.



Recent Events: Nigerian Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode (San), invited ATA delegates to participate in the launch of the country's Tourism Master Plan October, 2007 in Abuja, the capital city. The plan aims to position Nigeria as the continent's leading cultural, historical and business tourist destination. Minister Kayode said the plan "was borne out of the Government's firm conviction on the opportunities offered by the sector for sustainable development, especially at the grass roots level, its high potential for enhanced foreign exchange earnings and the environment friendly nature of tourism programmes". He emphasized that tourism provides a variety of new opportunities for improving socio-economic conditions, diversifying the economy, and achieving stability. For more information fax 604 681 6595 or visit our web site: <http://www.africa-ata.org/nigeria.htm>

ANCE AFRICA'S TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE



ABUJA CARNIVAL: NIGERIA'S CAPITAL 'SWINGS' AROUND

By Jerry W. Bird

I am Abuja, capital of Nigeria, which is Africa's most populous country. I am confident about my future as a world center and a magnet for cultural, adventure, culinary, educational and leisure tourism. My broad, well maintained paved streets, attractively landscaped boulevards and modern overpasses keep the traffic flowing smoothly, morning, noon and night. With my wide, cinematic vistas in every direction, you won't feel hemmed in by gridlock. Being in Nigeria's heartland, I am adjacent to Kogi, Niger, Kaduna and Nassarawa states. Carnival week in late November showcases the culture of all 36 states, with rhythmic, pulsating music, exotic tribal dances, durbars on horseback and camels from the far Sahara. It's an unending kaleidoscope of colorful regalia, fun activities, parade floats, tribal masks and costumes unique to vari-

ous states. Born in 1976, I am considered a model city for all of Africa, and one of the world's handful of totally planned cities.

I am proud of my position as a magnet for world class meetings and events. For example I just finished receiving visitors from over 60 countries, including heads of state, at the Africa- Latin America Summit.

Visitors Comments

Here are some current comments about my lifestyle and attractions from a variety of U.S. visitors and residents from other countries: "Originally from France, I have lived and taught school in Abuja for five years, and appreciate the easy go-

ing lifestyle and friendliness of the people. Here, we enjoy a comfortable year round climate and really appreciate the absence of mosquitoes and similar insect pests. It's good to know that this city is virtually malaria free."

"I was very impressed by the recent renovations that were being made at Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport and was pleased to learn that the Nigerian government was really serious about improving the infrastructure of its airports for incoming tourists and business people."
 "Your exciting Abuja Carnival rivals those in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Mardi Gras in New Orleans." Many say, Latin America's carnivals and music originated here in Nigeria."





THE CLOCK IN A ROLICKING WEEK OF FESTIVITIES

“My impression of Abuja was that it is truly a ‘City of the Future’ set in a scenic environment.” “ Located approximately one hour by air from Lagos, Abuja has excellent conference and accommodation facilities.” “Throughout Abuja there is much construction going on and the people truly exhibit an excitement about living in what is perhaps the most modern city in Africa.”

“We were quite surprised at the relative ease in our processing through immigration and customs. Much to our pleasure, we were told that both the Ministry of Aviation and the Ministry of Tourism have done an excellent job in alleviating the extreme bottlenecks that travelers were accustomed to experience upon arriving in Nigeria.”

Excerpts from The Guardian (Nigeria) by Andrew Iro Okungbowa and Stella Agbala *“Here in this country where we have well over 350 ethnic and linguistic groups, diversity of culture, diversity of language, diversity of foods, and unity in diversity. We owe it a duty to ourselves, the*

rest of Africans and to African in Diaspora to showcase what is authentically Africa and what is authentically ours.”

Former President Obasanjo comments on Abuja Carnival

“In the next four days, you will see the different forms of art, dances, different aspects of our way of life, boat regatta, masquerades, that would be breathtaking in one spot.”

Referring to the unique nature of the carnival, he added; *“We have come together, all as Nigerians, in one spot; we have brought together what will take anybody who has to go over Nigeria days and even months in a space of few days.”*

Dream Becomes Reality

The Carnival debuted in 2005 as part of the Government’s dream to promote Nigeria as a tourist destination and to expose Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to the world as a promoter of tourism as well as showcase to the world the cultural beauty

and business opportunities that abound in the country. Last year’s celebration was almost marred by outcries and criticisms by some Nigerians, especially religious organizations, which saw the event as fetid and profane. But the President addressed these charges when he informed the nation that among others, it was meant to promote Nigeria and her people to the global community. With nothing short of joy and excitement, the President said the carnival is to be entrenched as a yearly celebration that would give people room to explore Nigeria.

We plan to expand on this feature in coming editions of Africa Travel Magazine, in both its formats - printed and electronic (pdf). Keep up to date daily by visiting our website: www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm



TRAVEL AGENDA

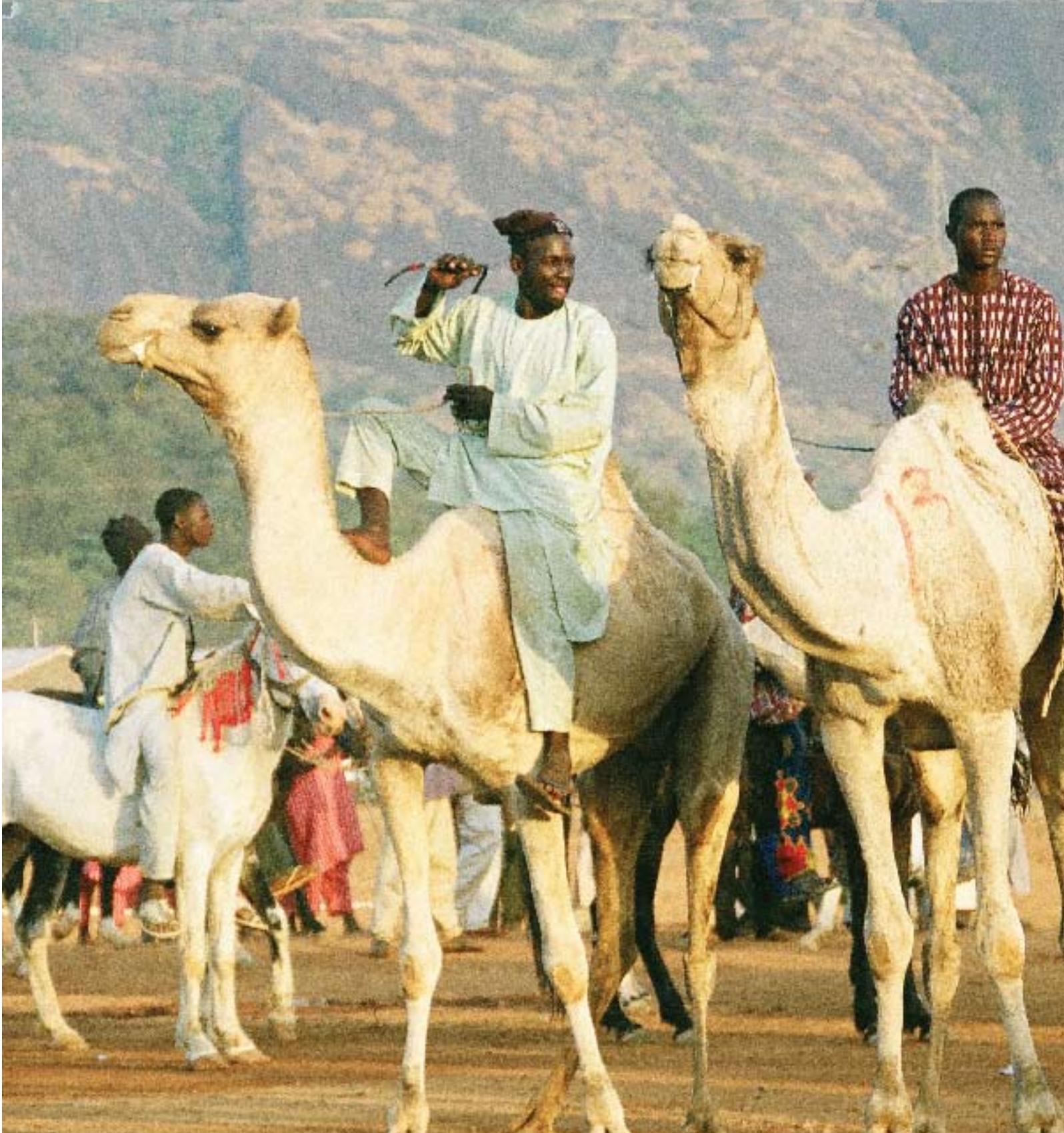
(1) Black History Month (BHM)

February 26, 2009 - March 8, 2009

(2) Black History Week Convention

Expo & Osun Festival, August 2009

Photo: Muguette Goufrani.



Discover the Slave Route in Nigeria

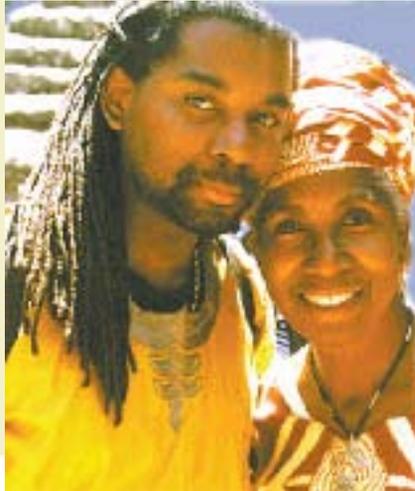
By Dr. Beryl Dorsett

A darker historical era saw many people of West Africa leave their shores for plantations in Europe, North and South America and the Caribbean. The infamous slave trade in Nigeria is not known to many people like the slave trade in Ghana, Senegal, Togo and Benin. Nigeria and Ghana were former British colonies. Senegal, Togo and Benin were former French colonies.

In December 2000, I attended the Fourth Eco-tourism Symposium in Nigeria as a delegate of the Africa Travel Association. The Lagos State Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation invited conference delegates to a two-day pre-symposium tour of Lagos States. On the first day, we toured the city of Lagos. On the second day, we toured the town of Badagry and learned that Badagry was an important slave route in West Africa. Badagry is one of five divisions created in Lagos State in 1968. This ancient town of Badagry was founded around 1425 A.D. Before its existence, people lived along the Coast of Gberefu and this area later gave birth to the town of Badagry. It is the second largest commercial town in Lagos State, located an hour from Lagos and half hour from the Republic du Benin. The Town of Badgry is bordered on the south by the Gulf of Guinea and surrounded by creeks, islands and a lake. The ancient town served mainly the Oyo Empire which was comprised of Yoruba and Ogu people. Today, the Aworis and Egun are mainly the people who reside in the town of Badagry as well as in Ogun State in Nigeria and in the neighboring Republic du Benin.

In the early 1500's, slaves were transported from West Africa to America through Badagry. It is reported that Badagry

exported no fewer than 550,000 African slaves to America during the period of the American Independence in 1787. In addition, slaves were transported to Europe, South America and the Caribbean. The slaves came mainly from West Africa and the neighboring countries of Benin and Togo as well as others parts of Nigeria. The slave trade became the



major source of income for the Europeans in Badagry. Today, Badagry is an historic site because of the significant role it played as a major slave port in Nigeria. The town of Badagry is

promoting an African Heritage Festival in May, 2001 to enlighten the world to its historic sites, landscapes, cultural artifacts and relics of human slavery. Badagry wants to share this world heritage site with others. They are preserving buildings, sites and memories of this iniquitous period so those tourists can unearth the dark impact of this era. Places of interest include the Palace of the Akran of Badagry and its mini ethnographic museum, the early missionaries cemetery, the District Officer's Office and Residence, the First Storey Building in Nigeria constructed by the Anglican missionaries, relics of slave chains in the mini museum of slave trade, cannons of war, the Vlekte slave Market, and the Slave Port established for the shipment of slaves before the 16th century. The Lagos State Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation is sponsoring the African Heritage Festival, May 2001, in collaboration with Nigerian Tourist Development Corporation, Badagry Local Government and some NGOs. Chief Moses Hungbo Owolabani is the Execu-

tive Chairman of Badagry Local Government Council. The tentative program of events encompasses initiation into Nigerian tribes, boat regatta, educational and economic forums, music and dance festivals, and numerous recreational activities and picnicking on miles of beach front property. For further information, contact Lagos State Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation, 3B Itinrin Court, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel. 234- 1-774-1886 or 234-1-775-4192.

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Guinea: Switzerland of Africa

by Muguette Goufrani



The story of my journey from the Gulf of Guinea on Africa's Atlantic Coast to historic Mali Ville in the northern highlands appears in both English and French

in coming editions of Africa Travel Magazine. With that in mind, please consider this on-line version as an hors d'oeuvre - the main banquet will come when you visit Guinea. I guarantee that your experience will be like one of Nat King Cole's most famous hit songs ... Unforgettable! Or as the immortal Maurice Chevalier would say ... C'est Magnifique!

Some call Guinea the "Switzerland of Africa" and one of your first pleasant surprises when visiting the Republic of Guinea is that it is uncrowded. Big in size, yet small in population. A nation of 7.5 million, Guinea is also described as the land of contrasts. Those apt comparisons became evident to me a few days into our journey. The route selected by our gracious hosts Hon. Sylla H. K. Diakite, Guinea's Minister of Tourism and General Manager Ibrahima Diallo, began close to Conakry.

Here we visited several sites along the "Slave Route," which I will describe more fully my next instalment. The main journey covered a vast expanse of geography, stretching northeast by highway via Kindia, Dalaba, Pita and Labé, to our final destination at Mali Ville near the Senegal border. Photo ops abounded, capturing the spirit and flavor of the country Guinea's history, culture, cuisine, colorful costumes, lifestyles and breathtaking scenery.

Jewels, Ballet and Malinke Music to Charm the Soul

Several jewels in Guinea's abundant treasure chest make it a highly attractive tourist destination; one that's loaded with potential. A key facet is the rich vibrancy of the culture, echoing the ATA Congress theme, "Nature, Culture and Hospitality." Another charming jewel in Guinea's tourism crown is the romantic, captivating Malinke music heard literally everywhere you go. Its rhythmic style gives inspiration to many West African artists, even "Les Ballets Africains,"



Guinea's musical goodwill ambassadors to the world and Africa's foremost touring dance company. What a sight they are on stage! Hon. Sylla Diakite (right), justly proud of her country's world class musical attraction, joined us for the two hour spectacular. Our applause rocked the auditorium in Conakry following this group's energy-filled command performance.

Before leaving Guinea, I purchased several albums of West African Malinke music for our library. It will be beamed to the waiting world on our Web Radio Station and Africa Travel Theater at major trade shows.

Bridal Veils , Smoking Dogs and Mountain Maidens

Following the Congress in Conakry, which literally burst with African flavor and color, we began the long-awaited media tour of Guinea's plateaus and northern highlands. Lamine Diallo, a professional tour guide and his driver Karim welcomed me aboard the Ministry of Tourism bus and we headed east, making our first stop at Coyah, home of Guinea's bottled water plant. Naturally

we had to load up for the journey ahead.

Close to Coyah is Dubreka Ville, which we visited several days previously. It is the home of "Les Cascades de la Soumba," which features a spectacular waterfall, water sports and a resort complex with dining room



and comfortable cabins. Tel. (224) 45 32 44.

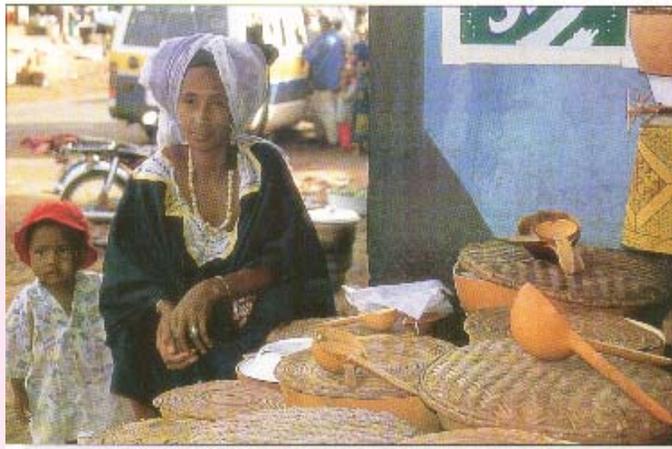
Beyond Coyah a side road, Route de Fria, leads to one of the country's better known tourist sites, Mount Kaloulima, which in French we call "Le Chien Qui Fume," or the Smoking Dog. Look closely at the mountain side and you will see the strange resemblance. At certain times, like when a thick fog hugs the mountain side, a wispy smoke seems to rise from the animal's mouth. Our first overnight stop was at the town of Kindia, (140 km from Conakry) where we visited the spectacular Bridal Veil Falls or "Le Voile de la Mariée." The falls are at their most appealing during the rainy season, when the flowing water resembles a delicate bridal veil.

Follow your Dream

Here in the heart of West Africa, Guineans offer all the ingredients of a "Dream Vacation," if you long for an uncrowded, unspoiled, visitor-friendly country. In a class by itself is Guinea's unending selection of spectacular landscapes, which unfolded around each bend, like a cinemascope movie, as we motored through the hilly 'Fouta Djallon' region. Many travelers say that the Fouta Djallon offers the most striking vistas in all of West Africa. Put this fact together with the charming, hospitable people I met along the way, and you have a winning combination. Our gracious hosts from the Guinea Ministry of Tourism, working in close harmony with the Africa Travel Association and ourselves as its media arm, hope to make these dream vacations a reality for travelers from around the world.

Guinea's Tropical Paradise

We plan to feature a trip to Loos Islands,



an archipelago located near Conakry. The key islands are Kassa, Room and Fotoba. There is also Tortoise Island (where giant tortoises are protected), Snake and Kid Islands. With easy access by boat, these islands offer beautiful white sand beaches for relaxation and nautical sports.

Did you know?

- Guinea's major ethnic group the Malinke also reside in parts of Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, and at an earlier time ruled one West Africa's great empires. Malinke are also know to have originated the best kora musicians in West Africa. The kora is a popular street dance.
- Guinea is called the Switzerland of Africa, with its lofty mountains and high plateaus, plus a temperate climate. The highest peaks are Mount Loura at Mali Ville (1515 m) and Mount Tinka near Dalaba (1425m). They also call Guinea the Water Tower of Western Africa because many rivers take their origin (River Gambie, Sen-

egal, Niger, etc.) from it. These rivers and churning rapids, hurtling down the mountains create beautiful waterfalls.

- Financial development: According to a recent financial report, the Gulf of Guinea has become one of the world's most promising areas for new petroleum development. This income source in itself will help expand the infrastructure on which tourism depends.
- Many Africans call the

country 'Guinea Conakry,' to avoid any possible confusion with Guinea Bissau, its northern neighbor.

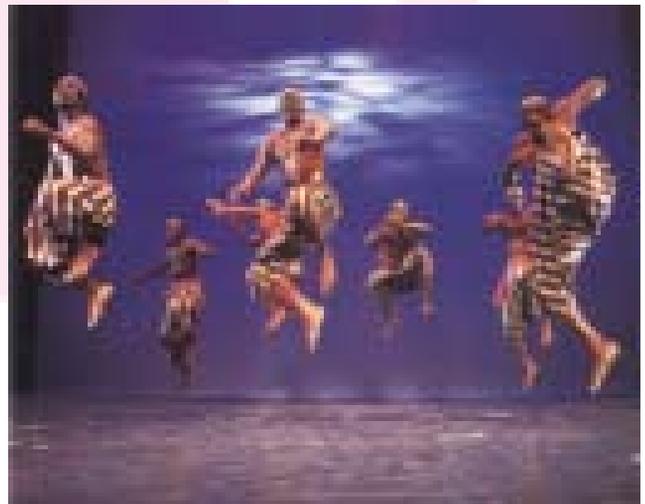
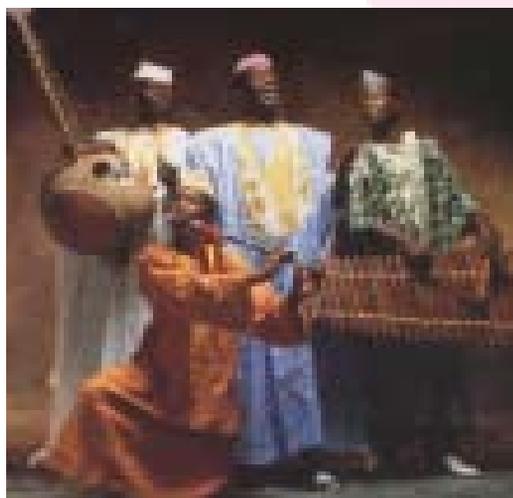
- The language of business and commerce is French and the currency is the Guinea Franc.

If you are interested in a tour covering the same route, contact Dunia Voyages of Conakry, who have a page on this web site.

Thanks to our Host Country

We thank the Hon. Sylla Hadja Koumba Diakite, Guinea's former Minister of Tourism, Hotels and Handicraft and Mr. Ibrahima Diallo, General Manager of Tourism. A special bouquet goes out to members of "Les Ballet Africains" for a performance that was unique, awe-inspiring and definitely of the world class variety. One of my fondest wishes is to bring this group to Canada to perform at one of our Travel-Trade Shows.

For more information on this topic visit: www.africa-ata.org/guinea.htm



Elmina Castle, a reminder of the
salve trade on Ghana's Atlantic Coast.

Photo by Muguette Goufrani



I am Ghana ...

I am Ghana. Many travelers call me "the smile of the face of Africa." Ghanains living, working and traveling overseas have been my warm and friendly ambassadors, spreading the good word about my many charms. In case you were unaware, once again I have had the pleasure of hosting the Africa Travel Association delegates from the USA, Canada and Africa. My tourism community awaits your happy return in May, 2006- and its members will roll out the welcome mat, woven in traditional Kente cloth, naturally. My blessings, beauty and bounty are well known to members of ATA who

have visited my sunny shores, but for others an exciting surprise awaits. Here's are some interesting and complimentary comments the editors have to say about me:

Friendships Blossom

Years before we set foot in West Africa, we had met many Ghanians and found them to be one of the most outgoing, friendly races of people on the planet. During the historic ATA-WTO World Congress in 1999, we were impressed by the way Accra prepared for the millennium, with an infrastructure of wide highways, overpasses and boulevards, plus buildings, a new sports stadium and convention facilities of which any nation would be proud. Stories of the sights we saw and folks we met would fill volumes,

so be prepared for our next few issues, where we can expand.

Colorful Festival, Enchanting Vistas

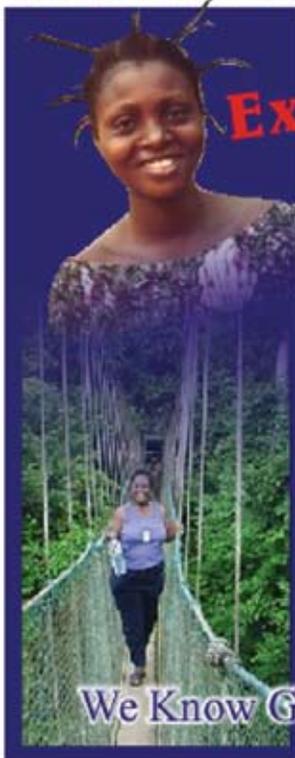
Here are a few of my most memorable experiences: (1) Koforidua and the colorful Durbar ceremonies. (2) Our motor coach trip along the Cape Coast. (3) Kakum National Forest, with its six swinging bridges. (4) Historic Kumasi with its king's palace and weavers of famous Kente cloth. Among our many purchases in Ghana were multicolored Kente caps, which attract attention at home or away, especially at the travel trade shows we exhibit in across North

America. We could have sold those Kente caps and shirts many times. What we saw en route, on the highways and byways was a story in itself. Small wonder we kept running out of film for the cameras.

Looking Back with Pride

Here's a capsule profile of Ghana, courtesy of Joe Nyarko of Sagrenti Tours: A darker era saw many of our people, and those of other African lands, leave our shores for the plantations of America and the Caribbean, creating the biggest Diaspora the world has ever seen. Today, citizens

of many states around the world still acknowledge and treasure their family links with Ghana, returning to explore those links and to experience the soul of their motherland. Today, come home to Ghana, the gateway to that African Heritage. Our celebrations, with great durbars of chiefs in full regalia, full of dancing and drumming, reverberate with images of our rich cultural traditions and reflect the passage of nature's calendar, so important in the preservation of our culture. Throughout the year and throughout the Country, our people love to celebrate, and the great sights and scenes reflected in these festivals. *For more information visit www.africa-ata.org/ghana.htm*



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The above cover is from *Africa Travel Magazine's* edition for the *Africa Travel Association 31st World Congress*, which was held in Accra. Following that exciting event our editors made a circle tour of Ghana's most popular attractions, including historic Kumasi, the furniture capital of West Africa. We are very anxious to return.

Historical Ghana

Formerly the Gold Coast, Ghana is a young republic which became independent from Britain on March 6, 1957, the first black African colony to achieve its independence. Ghana occupies the pinnacle spot in Pan-African history having hit the torch for African Emancipation and became home for famous Pan-Africanist such as W.E. B Du Bois and George Padmore. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah whose mausoleum adds to Accra's

Remember when? The Africa Travel Association 24th International Congress in Accra, Ghana was truly a standout affair. ATA expects next year's event to attract even more delegates and trade show visitors from 22 ATA African host countries (since 1976) and 23 ATA chapters in the USA, Canada and Africa.

landscape was Ghana's first President. European power struggle between the 15th and 19th centuries started with the Portuguese who built Elmina Castle in 1482. They were followed by the Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Prussians and the British looking for fortunes in gold and ivory. This intense commercial rivalry ended with the growth of the tragic trade in silvery - all 42 European castles and fortifications were used as dungeons for the millions most of whom lost their lives or whose descendants compose the African diaspora today. Over 42 forts and castles in-

cluding Elmina and Cape Coast Castles are recognized by UNESCO as the World No. 1 Heritage Monuments.

Sites of wars between the British and indigenous population especially the Ashanti peoples. Ancient artistry in fabrics with the colorful and popular Ashanti Bonwire Kente Cloth now adopted as a focus of identity by many people of African descent the world over. An antique collector's haven for ancient terra-cotta work. Traditional gold jewelry, Krobo beads, northern leather and straw product, woodcarving of Ahwiaa-Ashanti.

The practice of ancient herbal and alternative medicine side by side with orthodox medical practice throughout the country; herbariums preserve the ancient medical heritage, colorful traditional festivals full of pomp and pageantry with Chiefs and Queen Mothers riding on lushly gilded palanquins. Colorful traditional open markets and lorry parks provide the sounds and sights of the African bazaar.

GHANA TOURIST BOARD

The Ghana Tourist Board was set up by Legislative Instrument (NRC Degree) 224 in 1973. It is the sole government agency set up to implement government's tourism policies. It is purely a Research, Marketing and regulatory body under the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations. Contact gtb@africaonline.com.

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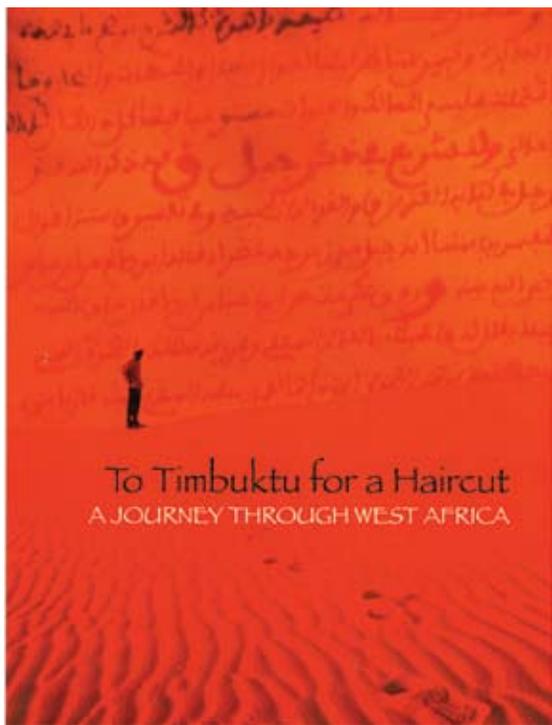
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Africa Travel Magazine

This two page spread is reserved for a continuation of the Ghana Section.

This two page spread is reserved for a continuation of the Ghana Section.



TO TIMBUKTU FOR A HAIRCUT AND



Author and tourism executive, Rick Antonson (left) sets out on an unforgettable journey to Africa, and chronicles his adventures in *TO TIMBUKTU FOR A HAIRCUT: A Journey Through West Africa.*, published by Dundurn Press on June 7, 2008. "To Timbuktu for a Haircut is a great read - a little bit of Bill Bryson, a little bit of Michael Palin, and quite a lot of Bob Hope on the road to Timbuktu." - Professor Geoffrey Lipman, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Historically rich, remote, and once unimaginably dangerous for travellers, Timbuktu still teases with "Find me if you can." Rick Antonson's encounters with entertaining train companions Ebou and Ussegnou, a mysterious cook called Nema, and intrepid guide Zak will make you want to pack up and leave for Timbuktu tomorrow. As Antonson travels in Senegal and Mali by train, four-wheel drive, river pinasse, camel, and foot, he tells of fourteenth-century legends, eighteenth-century explorers, and today's endangered existence of Timbuktu's 700,000 ancient manuscripts in what scholars have described as the most important archaeological discovery since the Dead Sea Scrolls.

TO TIMBUKTU FOR A HAIRCUT combines wry humour with shrewd observation to deliver an armchair experience that will linger in the mind long after the last page is read. "I left Africa personally changed by the gentle harshness I found and a disquieting splendour that found me. Mali was the journey I needed, if not the one I envisioned. And I learned that there's a little of Timbuktu in every traveller: the over-anticipated experience, the clash of dreams with reality." - Rick Antonson

Rick Antonson is the president and CEO of Tourism Vancouver and a director of the Pacific Asia Travel Association. He has had adven-

tures in Tibet and Nepal, and in Libya and North Korea, among others. The co-author of *SLUMACH'S GOLD: In Search of a Legend*, he lives in Vancouver.

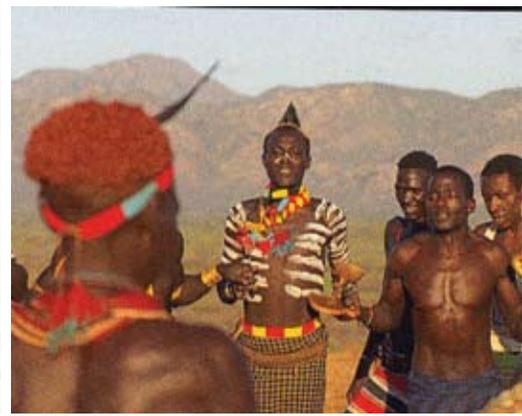
From the Vancouver Sun

It may seem counterintuitive, but the appeal of travel literature often has less to do with the destination in question than with the character of the traveller. Thus, while there may be significant geographical overlap, there is a vast difference, for example, between Frances Mayes's *Tuscany* (in the best-selling *Under the Tuscan Sun*) and Ferenc Máté's *Tuscany* (in the equally impressive but less commercially successful *The Hills of Tuscany*). In each book, the milieu serves as a backdrop for the revelation and development of the author's persona. The reader responds not to the locale but to the locale as experienced by the narrator.

This may seem a minor distinction, but it's crucial, especially when you consider both the number of new travel accounts published each year and the fact that the world is a finite place with, sadly, few remaining mysteries. The age of strict geographic exploration is long gone, but the potential for personal explorations through geography is practically limitless.

Two new books from B.C. writers nicely





OTHER HAIR-RAISING ADVENTURES

underscore this point, to varying degrees of effect. In exploring two of the world's less-travelled places, Rick Antonson and Martin Mitchinson also explore themselves.

About Rick Antonson

Tourism Vancouver president and CEO Rick Antonson travels for a living, "flying a hundred thousand kilometres each year for two decades," moving from conference to air-conditioned hotel room with seasoned thoughtlessness.

When it came time for him to take a month-long solo expedition, however, he decided almost on a whim to journey to one of the most fabled -- and forbidding -- destinations in the world: Timbuktu.

Few places are quite as evocative and mysterious. A centre of Islamic scholarship and culture during the 15th and 16th centuries, Timbuktu has long been a beacon for travellers. Once thought of as a source of unimaginable riches, the city today is impoverished, threatened by the encroaching Sahara Desert.

For this trip, Antonson decided against his usual air travel and instead made the journey on the ground: by train, boat, car, camel and foot. The result, as recounted in his impressive new book, *To Timbuktu for a Haircut*, is a quixotic quest, alternately funny and thought-provoking.

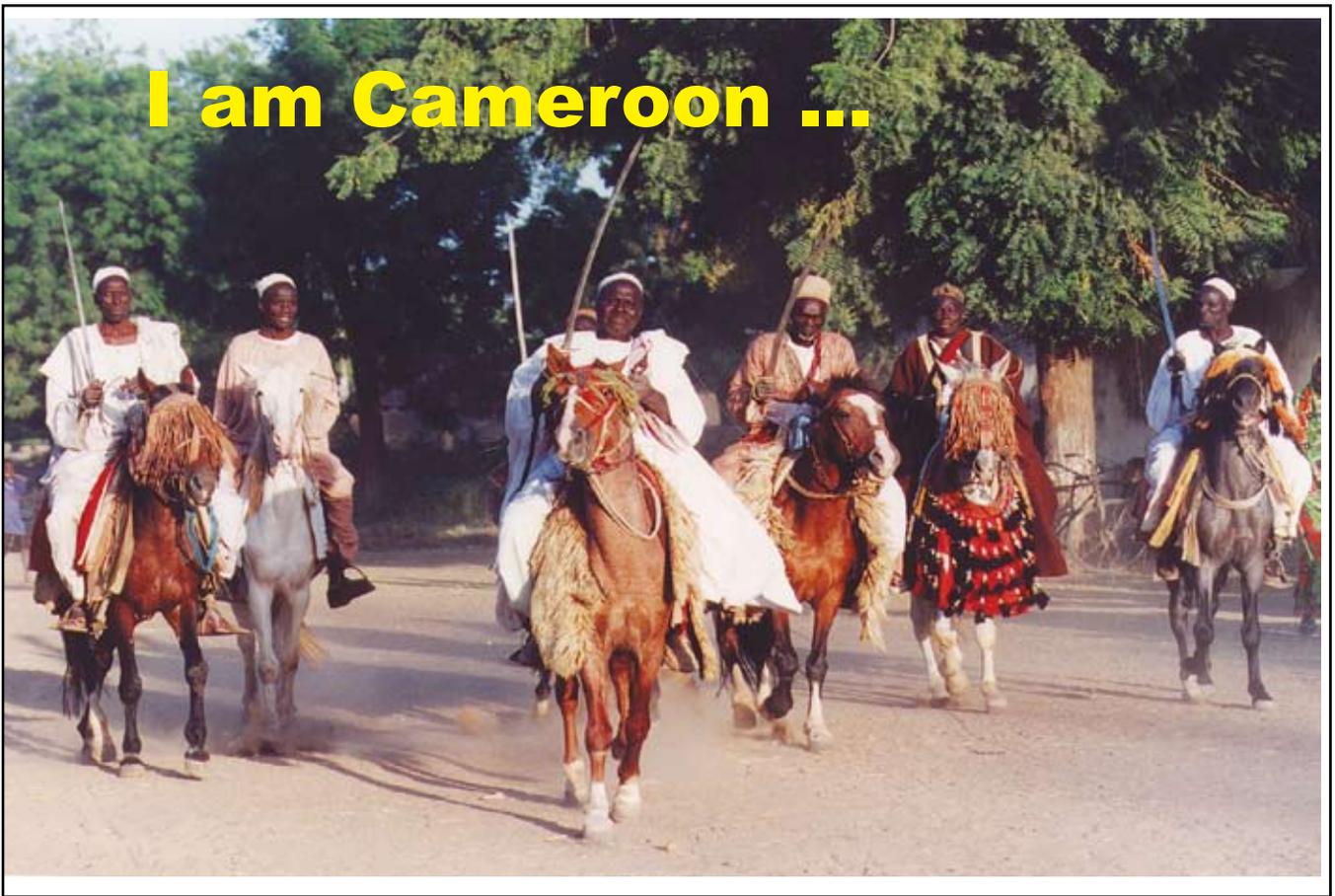
Readers follow his journey chronologically as he moves toward the city and then as it recedes behind him. His account is threaded through with historical and cultural information. Curiously, his encounter with the city itself is almost anticlimactic. He clearly relishes the journey, and his fellow travellers, more than the destination.

From a ride up the River Niger to an open-air music festival in the desert, from the sudden close friendships that bloom during such travel to the machinations of an unscrupulous tour coordinator who seems intent on foiling his travel goals at every juncture, Antonson handles the joys and occasional frustrations of his trip in vivid, straightforward prose and with a wry sense of humour.

Pearl of the Desert

Timbuktu was formerly a great commercial trading city and an international center of Islamic learning. The city was probably founded in the late 11th century AD by Tuareg nomads. Timbuktu was a leading terminus of trans-Saharan caravans and a distribution point for trade along the upper Niger. Merchants from northern African cities traded salt and cloth for gold and for black African slaves in the markets of Timbuktu. The visitors will discover the ancient mosques including the famous Sankore whose reputation spanned all across north Africa and Europe as a leading Islamic academy for centuries. Most of the ancient books (some dating from the 14th century AD) are still preserved at the Ahmed Baba Center. Tuareg formed one of the most ancient tribal people of the Sahara. They speak a Berber language, Tamacheq, and have their own alphabet. In ancient times, the Tuareg controlled the trans-Saharan routes and substantially contributed in the expansion of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa even though they retained however some of their older rites. Today, the Tuareg symbolize the mysteries of the Sahara and Masters of the Desert. The city of Mopti is known as the "Venice of Mali". Mopti is situated at the confluence of the Bani and Niger rivers, and is built on several interconnected islands. It is from the river that one can best observe the commercial and social activities of the town. Mopti is literally teeming with traditional traders offering a variety of locally-produced commodities and beautiful artifacts.

I am Cameroon ...



I am Cameroon, Africa in One Country, famous for festivals such as Ngondo. Douala, my largest city with over 2 million inhabitants, has hosted two major events sponsored by the Africa Travel Association since 2001. During post tours, ATA members had many opportunities to sample the hospitality and feel the true spirit of the people. Nowhere was this feeling more evident than in Douala during the Ngondo Festival, a spectacle unlike anything you have ever seen in Africa.

Annual festivals and gala events abound throughout West Africa, but this one tops them all as a simply outstanding spectacle that has deep spiritual significance. Having read Wilbur Smith's great book "The River God," concerning life on the Nile and Blue Nile in ancient times, I have been keenly interested in the rivers of Central Africa and the mysteries they hold. In this case, the Wouri River, focal point of the Ngondo Festival in Douala, has its own River Gods, it's a ceremony involving the "water spirits," who communicate their message in an unusual way.

Ngondo Festival River God

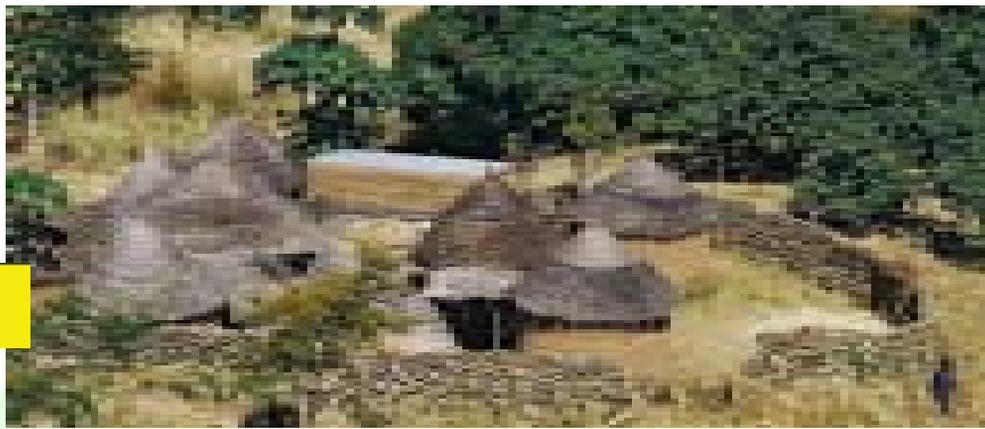
For starters, one could not have asked for a nicer day, as our delegates de-

scended from the Ministry's tour buses and the ATA members took their seats in a specially reserved, tented area. Speaking of the weather, this occasion was typical of most days during our month long stay in Cameroon, deep blue skies, puffy cotton candy clouds, and just the right measure of sun shine to make it comfortable. This was one of my biggest surprises, perhaps being located on the Wouri River, 24 km (15 miles) from the Atlantic Coast is the reason. In a coming edition we will write at length about this great event and why its story is so significant in the local customs and culture. There are many more other reasons to visit Douala, and from here, you will enjoy good transportation links to all of Cameroon. Contact us anytime: <mailto:africa@dowco.com>. Douala, Cameroon's largest city, main hub for air travel and industrial center is located on the Wouri River, a few miles from the Atlantic Coast, with its tourist attractions such as Kribi and Limbe. Mount Cameroon, Africa's second highest peak, is also within a few hours' drive from Douala. The landmark Hôtel Akwa Palace, located in the city center, is an ideal meeting place with its popular terrace.

Nearby is the Musée de Douala, located in the hôtel de ville (town hall), featuring Bamoun and Bamiléké craftwork. Visitors can purchase artifacts at Artisanal Camerounais, an open-air crafts market. The city is 120 miles west of Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital. While Douala is not the capital of Cameroon, it is the most significant city in terms of population, and the economic role it plays in the overall economy. It is said to be named after the Douala, a black African ethnic group that originally settled in the area. The chief commercial center, Douala has an airport and extensive docks, and is a terminus for two railway lines extending into the interior. Industries include the manufacture of aluminum products, beer, soft drinks, textiles, and the processing of timber and cacao beans. Douala's port handles some 95 percent of the country's maritime traffic. *This article is continued on www.africa-ata.org/cm_douala.htm*

Above photo by Muguette Goufrani. Africa Travel Magazine.





Cameroon - Africa in One Country

“If you dance, you vibrate - and he who vibrates lives.”

Mount Cameroon, West Africa’s highest peak, stands like a giant sentinel, gazing out over the Gulf of Guinea on Africa’s Atlantic Coast. Among it’s legendary names is “Throne of Thunder,” a fitting tribute to the powerful gods that are said to inhabit the mountain’s inner core. Our group of ATA members and journalists approached the ‘throne’ shortly after one of its frequent volcanic eruptions, and the ribbons of cooled lava resembled grey frosting oozing from an enormous layer cake. The lava beds are evident from the main highway to Kribi and a hiking trail winds up and over them. The warning signs advised us to pay respect and to tread gently in this eco- sensitive area.

Mount Cameroon is the crown jewel of a chain of volcanic mountains strung like a giant pearl necklace along the shoulders of the Cameroon Nigeria border. This vast range stretches from the seacoast to the northern plains at Maroua, gateway to Waza National Park. Each February the popular ‘ Course of Hope.’ attracts aspiring climbers to the area and we’re told that, while the ascent is challenging, it’s not dangerous or overly strenuous. Many other sights would amaze and impress us that day and in the week to follow.

So much to see and do

Speaking personally, this trip was by far the most complete tour of any ATA- African host country I had experienced to date. At its conclusion most travelers in our group were tired - and somewhat bedazzled - yet I enjoyed a feeling of solid accomplishment. As a result I will never forget Cameroon and always hunger for more. Cameroon’s Minister of Tourism , Hon. Pierre Helé, puts “ecology first” in his country’s efforts to win an impor-

tant share of the tourist trade from North America and other markets we hope to target for his ministry. **Road to Economic Success**

But its not Mile Zero on the road to economic success - this progressive country is already high on the preferred list in terms of business travel. Scan the financial pages, or dig a little deeper in the Internet, and you’ll see what I mean - the country is rich with potential in terms of agriculture, forestry, marine life, minerals and natural resources. And a word to the wise, “Where business goes, tourism flows” - and vice versa. Europeans discovered long ago what most North Americans have yet to learn - that Cameroon is a Tourism Mecca in the raw. Ministry officials such as our tour leader Ebenezer Elimbi agree with with the popular expression that their land is Africa in One country.” In other words Cameroon is a little bit of everything, or as my Grade 9 Spanish textbook said in its title, “de todo un poco.”

Cruising the Countryside

Our escorted bus trip through the hills, plains, valleys and coastline of Cameroon was quite similar to taking a small ship cruise or a personal rail tour. Why?- it provided whistle stops, combined with extended visits, photo opportunities and overnight moorings.

Ports of call on this ‘amazing land cruise’ from Yaounde and Douala, included Edea, Kribi, Limbe, Buea, Bafang, Bandjoun, Bafoussam, Bamenda, Bangangte, Bafia, Bafut, Foumban, Bafia, Maroua, Pouss, Mokolo, Rhumsiki, Mora and Waza National Game Park. Sounds like a heavy duty schedule - right? Well, the surprising thing was the fact that in spite of all the cities, towns and villages mentioned, nothing was the same. In other words, when they say “Africa in One country” they mean exactly that, as we discovered

in a way that you could never do by flying . **Africa’s Doors of Hospitality**

Whether the roads were smooth and broad or rough and dusty, there was always something new and interesting to look forward to. Our overnight stays on the North-South tour were at Yaounde - Kribi - Douala - Limbe - Bamenda - Maroua and Waza, and while the accommodation was varied I would recommend all the hotels selected to our tour operator friends.

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Africa in One Country: Cultural Mosaic and Ecotourism Paradise

Cameroon's theme, "Africa in One Country," says it all - cultural variety, pageantry, panoramic scenery, and wildlife in its natural habitat. Serendipity brings a pleasant surprise around every corner, from Mount Cameroon and the balmy beaches of Kribi and Limbe, to Waza National Park and Lake Chad in the far north, on the doorstep of Africa's Great Sahara desert. Cameroon is the home of colorful festivals year round. The Ngondo Festival in Douala, Cameroon's largest city, is held annually for ten days, ending on the first Sunday in December. In the photo (left) two tribal experts collect and read a message from the water spirits. The scene opposite features a 65 man dugout race canoe, 30m in length. The canoe portrayed is the winning entrant from 2005. The smaller dugout carries divers, about to descend into the Wouri river waters to retrieve a message from the spirits. The spirit message, after being interpreted by the experts, is then delivered to a group of chieftains from Douala and area, sitting under a special canopy.



The Ngoun Festival is held every second year in December. The Sultan-King of Bamoun is sitting on his ornate throne, framed by huge elephant tusks. On the page opposite (lower row) the guard's shield features a double headed serpent, which depicts the kingdom's continuing vigilance in keeping its enemies at bay in a two front war. The next photo is of local officials in their colorful regalia. The final photo shows the guards and guests in line with the Bamoun palace in the background.

Venez découvrir le Cameroun: Toute l'Afrique dans un pays - une mosaïque culturelle et un paradis écotouristique

Yaoundé et Douala, deux principales villes du Cameroun, ont déjà abrité les rencontres de l'Africa Travel Association; et le slogan du Cameroun "Toute l'Afrique dans un pays," en dit long. Ce slogan décrit la diversité culturelle, l'apparat, les paysages panoramiques et la faune dans son habitat naturel. Le don de faire des trouvailles vous gratifie d'un plaisir agréable d'un coin du pays à un autre; du Mont Cameroun et des plages douces de Kribi et de Limbé au Parc National de Waza, ainsi qu'au Lac Tchad dans l'Extrême-Nord, aux portes du grand désert africain du Sahara. Notre équipe de rédaction prépare actuellement un tiré-à-part de Africa Travel Magazine, qui présentera la culture camerounaise ainsi qu'un ensemble de photographies sur le festival du Ngoun et sur d'autres manifestations pittoresques qui se déroulent annuellement - c'est une raison suffisante pour laquelle cette édition aura un aspect conservateur.

MOST SPECTACULAR CULTURAL FESTIVALS

Ngondo Festival Douala
The Ilimbe Ilimbe Canoe Race
Pirogue de Course Ilimbe Ilimbe
Photo- Koffi Joseph





*I am Angola
I am proud
to welcome
members
of the Af-
rica Travel
Association
to this land
which holds*

*such promise in the many avenues of travel,
tourism and hospitality - growth industries
that will employ and involve more and more
of my citizens as time marches on. I greet
you and invite you to explore all corners of
the land where you will meet a cross section
of my people, whose warmth and friend-
ship will stay with you for a lifetime. We
look forward so much to the bonds that can
be created in this fall season of your 30th
Jubilee year.*

ANGOLA,"GETTING BACK ON TOURISM PATH"

by Helen C. Broadus

Angola is rapidly becoming a must see tourism destination with the advent of peace and stability returning to this African country. This beautiful country is located on the west coast of sub-Saharan Africa, between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer. Its neighbors are the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, Zambia to the east and Namibia to the south. Angola is believed to have derived its current name from the kingdom of Ndongo which was ruled by chiefs known as , "úngola,". Since its independence from Portuguese in 1975 it had suffered severe social and politi-

cal unrest as a result of a prolonged civil war. Despite its past history, it is very good to know that Angola has managed to regroup and is well on its way towards getting back on the tourism trail.

A Climate for Growth

Rich in oil and diamonds and other natural resources, Angola is a sparsely populated country roughly the combined size of Texas and California. Most of the country is bisected with heavily-wooded hilly and mountainous terrain situated in the north and dry bush and desert terrain situated in the south. The country has a tropical climate, a rich and varied wildlife and most of all warm and friendly people. Portuguese is the official business language as well as international language. There are an additional six other national languages spoken: Kikongo, Kimbundo, Umbundu, Chokwe, Mbunda and Oxikuanyama. The population of Angola is an estimated 12 million of which the Bantu-speaking people are in the majority with fifty-three percent of the population.

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Ten Best Reasons to visit Angola

- a) the capital city of Luanda which is a vibrant tourist venue;
- (b) historic reminders of the colonial past;
- (c) a thriving tribal culture with many traditions;
- (d) a tropical climate with year-round pleasant weather;
- e) the opportunity to view wildlife in unique and unfrequented national parks;
- (f) splendid landscapes including rivers, jungles and mountains;
- (g) a unique heritage of traditional art;
- (h) plenty of water sports in Luanda and nearby towns;
- i) the erotic, Angolan "masemba," dance performed by local dancers; and
- (j) traditional Angolan cuisine with a strong Portuguese influence.

In addition, local arts and crafts can be purchased in many marketplaces in Angola. Items made from ebony, rosewood, straw, malachite, bronze and pottery are all available. A wide variety of wooden masks and traditional instruments such as marimbas, kissanges, xingufos, ankle rattles and drums can also be purchased.

Interesting places to visit

Luanda the capital city of Angola, which was founded in 1575 by the Portuguese explorer Paulo Dias de Novais, retains its heritage as a Portuguese colonial city and there are several interesting buildings of historical significance and a number of churches that date back to the 17th century. Luanda is divided into two parts, the "baxia," or old part and the "cidade alta," or new part.

One of the city's most famous landmarks is the Armed Forces Museum, which is housed in the St. Miguel Fort. The National Bank of Angola building, a large pink colonial building overlooking the palm fringed bay, which is another example of the legacy of Portuguese architecture as is the Kinaxixi market building. Ilha de Luanda, originally an island, has been joined to the mainland by a causeway. There, one will find many discotheques, bars and casinos, as well as restaurants where national dishes such as palm oil beans, fish calulu, dried meat, corn funge, chicken muamba and mufete de cacuso (tilapia) farofa can be truly savored.





I am Angola ,,,"



Other attractions:

These include the Mussulo Peninsula with its three islets, the largest of which is called the Island of Priest. Further south, tourist can



visit the Slavery Museum, housed at the site where slaves were kept while waiting to be taken to Brazil in the Americas. The Kwanza River mouth nearby is a beautiful spot for picnics and fishing.



Kuando Kubango Province, situated in the far southeastern area of Angola, bordering Zambia and Namibia, it is the country's second largest province. Blessed with two great rivers, the Kuando and the Kubango, the province forms the gateway to the rest of southern Africa and certainly has tremendous potential to become the hub for cross-border trade and tourism opportunities. The climate is pleasantly tropical and dry and the land is rich in many untapped resources such as timber, diamonds, gold and copper.



Namibe Province: Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and Namibia to the south, this province is the land of the *Welwitschia mirabilis*, an astonishing desert plant that resembles a giant octopus! This plant, which spans 2m to 3m in diameter, is unique to the region and is carnivorous! The Namib Desert itself offers excellent hunting and attracts game hunters from southern Africa and overseas. With the third largest port in the country, Namibe Province is one of the main centers of fishing.

The province also has very beautiful beaches, with facilities for water sports and other activities. One of the most attractive spots is Bibala Beach, where the water is said to have healing properties. Kwanza Norte, which is well known for its mighty rivers, it is covered by dense tropical forest in the north and savannah in the south. The Capanda Dam, situated in the middle of the Kwanza River, is a hydro-electric power source and one of the largest civil engineering projects in the country.





Kwanza Sul Province, which is bordered by the Bengo, Kwanza Norte and Malange Provinces in the north, Brie to the east, Benguela and Huambo to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The main tourist attractions in the province include the waterfalls, thermal springs and caves. The port, Porto Amboim, is the major access by sea.

Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul: this province is famous for its art and vast reserves of diamonds and was once part of a powerful ancient kingdom known as Tchokwe. The kingdom straddled what are now northeast Angola and the southwestern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Today, Tchokwe sculptures are still popular with art collectors; one of the most famous being O Pensador, a graceful sculpture of a philosopher resting his head in his hands. Benguela Province, whose main attraction is the city of Benguela, known locally as Crimson Acacia. The province has superb beaches, including Kaota, Katinha, Baia, Azul and Baia Farta. Scuba diving and deep sea fishing are very popular pastimes.

Huambo Province, with its stunning colonial style buildings has long been the center of Angolan history. This province has a pleasant climate and rich, fertile soil that lends itself to much cultivation.

Zaire Province, along with its neighboring province of Uige, Zaire was once part of the Kongo Kingdom. The

heartland of the kingdom encompassed Mbanza Kongo, the present day capital of the province. The royal court was based in the town, which was the center for trade and other political and economic activities. The province has vast offshore oil reserves and plays host to a large number of oil companies.

The place where the Congo River meets the sea is one of the most moving sights in the country and a trip to the "Point," will take one to the site where the great explorer, Sir Henry Morton Stanley started his historic trip into the heart of Africa in search of the famous Dr. David Livingstone.

Cabinda Province: The Cabindans have a very rich cultural tradition and still practice Bantu rituals, such as initiation ceremonies. The province's most impressive attraction is the Maiombe Rainforest, which is especially famous for its butterflies. There are hundreds of species of butterflies to be found in the forest, many of which are unique to the area. Prized by collectors, specimens of these butterflies can be found in natural history museums throughout the world.

Travel Details:

The climate in Angola varies depending on the altitude. The dry season is between May and October with the rain beginning from November and December until April. The warmest months are September and October, while July and August are the

coolest. Lightweight casual wear is appropriate throughout the year, although jackets and jerseys are advisable for the evenings as it can get cold at night. Rainwear is definitely recommended during the rainy season. It is generally advisable to consult with your health care practitioner for precautionary measures against tropical disease before traveling to Angola. Medication against malaria is strongly recommended and it is also advisable to have a yellow fever vaccination.

The local currency is the Kwanza (Kzr) which is named after one of the larger rivers in Angola and U.S. dollars are widely accepted. Visas are required for American citizens and all visitors must have a valid passport and proof of return tickets. While most European airlines provide transport to Angola you should always consult with your travel agent for specific travel and tourism assistance as many hotels have recently undergone refurbishments in Luanda.

For more information about visiting Angola, please contact the Embassy of Angola in Washington, D.C. at telephone: (202) 785-1156 or facsimile at (202) 822-9049 and the mailing address is 2108 Sixteenth Street, Washington, D.C. 20009. You can also visit the following website: <http://www.angola.org>.



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THE GAMBIA

Country Profile: The Republic of The Gambia is named after one of Africa's most navigable rivers, the Gambia and is located in West Africa. The Gambia is roughly twice the size of the state of Delaware in the United States and occupies a narrow area on either side of the Gambia River, forming an enclave in Senegal surrounded on its north, east and south borders by Senegal. A former British colony, the Republic of The Gambia became independent on February 18, 1965. In 1994, The Gambia began a transformation from military to civilian rule and liberalized its economy and initiated a Vision 2020 Plan "The Gambia Incorporated" with the aim of transforming the smallest country in Africa into a middle income country by offering a stable investment environment, efficient banking sector, and competitive private sector.

Pristine Beaches and Coastline

The Gambia is known for its beautiful beaches and warm coastal waters which are a haven for tourists with a tropical climate that is relatively hot and humid throughout the year. The main ethnic groups are the Mande, including the rural Mandinka, and the Atlantic peoples including the Wolof and Fulani. English is the official language but Wolof and Fulani are spoken in the towns and Mandinka in the rural areas. The population of The Gambia is approximately 1.5 million inhabitants with about 85% of the population that are Muslim and a sizable Christian minority. The capital of The Gambia is Banjul, with about 300,000 inhabitants, is also the main port and main commercial center along the River Gambia.

The people of The Gambia live harmoniously in mixed communities, freely exercising their religious and cultural traditions. Gambians are also widely recognized for their genuine friendliness and hospitality. The main resources of foreign exchange are agriculture and tourism with agriculture accounting for 23% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and employing 75% of the workforce. Groundnuts, covering 60% of The Gambia's arable land are the main export crop. The Gambia also has had considerable success in developing and promoting its tourist industry, which contributes about 16% of GDP. In 2000, approximately 100,000 tourists visited The Gambia which earned the country an estimated \$35 million and provided an estimated 10,000 Gambians with stable employment in this sector.

Home of Kunta Kinte of Roots

Perhaps most Americans know about The Gambia as a result of Alex Haley's bestseller and epic television docudrama "Roots" which focused on Kunta Kinte and his ancestral homeland of Juffureh. The Gambia also has tremendous potential in the fishing industry which has yet to be fully developed as well as a small manufacturing industry with plastic goods and confectionaries as the main products. The Gambia is also an important entry point for goods that are distributed to its neighboring countries in West Africa and has specifically targeted itself as the most logical "gateway" into West Africa for the trans-shipment (re-export market) of imports and exports. To learn more about The Gambia please check out www.visitthegambia.com.

World Heritage Committee Inscribes 24 New Sites on the World Heritage List New

sites include, for the first time, sites in Gambia
The inscriptions were carried out by the World Heritage Committee at its 27th session.

For more information visit www.africa-ata.org/gambia.htm

Gambia: James Island and Related Sites
James Island and Related Sites present a testimony to the main periods and facets of the encounter between Africa and Europe along the River Gambia, a continuum that stretched from pre-colonial and pre-slavery times to independence. The site is particularly significant for its relation to the beginning and the abolition of the slave trade. It also documents early access to the interior of Africa.

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The Benin Story: Welcome to West Africa

by Jerry W. Bird

Being part of the Africa Travel Association brings rewards throughout the year, the very pinnacle of which is the privilege of attending an ATA Congress and experiencing the delights of a different African country every year. Nothing could have prepared me for the pleasant surprise I received on the eve of ATA's 22nd Congress in Cotonou. In fact, the entire fortnight in Benin was a whirlwind affair... one that has become a permanent bookmark in a lifetime of surprises and serendipity. Our group from North America stepped right off the Air Afrique jet into the heat of the night and what seemed like an exotic Arabian Nights style movie set. Imagine the scene in cinemascope and high fidelity, wraparound sound; an exotic garden party on the spacious patio of the Benin Sheraton in Cotonou (now under new management).

The scene was lit by a big tropical "paper moon, that seemed to hang in the sky for our personal benefit. ATA's opening gala was a riot of colorful costumes - a whirling dervish with high energy dance routines, leaping and spinning to the ever present beat of African drums. How's that for an introduction to Africa?

Jet-Setters Meet

While strolling through the Medina in Marrakech, Morocco in December, 2002, we had the pleasure of a chance meeting with a familiar friend, Marie-Elyse Gbedo, former Tourism Minister of Benin. Later that day we visited with her at the

Imperial Borj hotel for an interview session regarding her visions for West Africa in the coming decade. This meeting was timely, since Ms. Gbedo was in the Marrakech for the African Professional Women's Association (details to come Conference. Watch for her comments and a description of the Imperial Borj hotel later in this section.

Ganvie - Village on stilts - Benin, West Africa.

Benin, West Africa offers many delights
By the late Eunice Rawlings

If you're looking for an unusual, affordable vacation, be sure to put Benin on your "Agenda Africa" for the coming year. Benin is an enchanting West African nation roughly the size of Pennsylvania, yet it is a complete destination with enough variety to fill a two-week vacation. From the drier northern elevations, to the lower lying south, this hospitable country is a safe and a friendly place to explore. After gaining independence from France in 1960 Benin went through some difficult times. Today Benin is a multi-party democracy made up of six provinces. The president, who is the head of the government and chief of state, is elected for a five year term. In 1999, voters went to the polls and elected members of parliament, reinforcing the stable political atmosphere. Benin Memories

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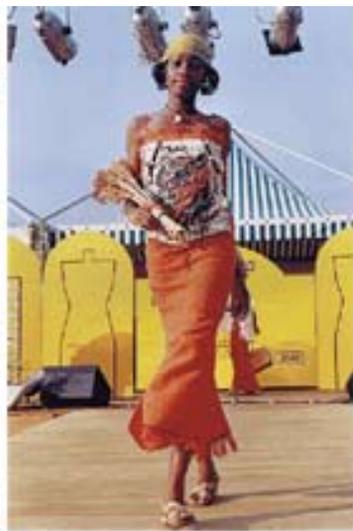
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Hats are an African Tradition

Just like in the song, "Easter Parade," the hat one wears to church represents a celebration of style, grace and poise. In Africa, a hat may reflect ancient customs and rituals of ancient empires. Many hats and head wraps worn by African women tell a story about the person wearing them, including colors and pattern of their tribe or clan. When many ladies enter a hat shop, it is like they had just entered the gates of heaven. This can be readily defined as a positive *hattitude*. African designers, such as Alphadi, Chief Margaret Fabiyi, Esterella, Chrystalix, Gigi and Farouk Abdela create clothes and head wear using traditional African fabrics. Follow our regular reports by Muguette on Africa fashion in Africa Travel Magazine and on www.africa-ata.org/affas.htm

African Fashion

by Muguette Goufrani



Bright, bold splashes of color seen in the clothing worn by Africans, have important and historical meanings. The Akan in West Africa use dark colors, such as red, black and brown for funerals, as a union

with one's ancestors. White is for joyous occasions, such as weddings and naming ceremonies. Kente cloth woven by the Ashanti of Ghana is available in a full spectrum of colors; gold is for status and serenity; green signifies the renewal seen in nature's plants, representing the cycle of birth and decay; blue is for God's presence and the omnipotence of a bright summer sky. Red is for passion, strong will, determination and struggle.

The African World Influence

In the book "Jubilee" traces the many and varied contributions Africans have made on the North American scene. Today African Fashion is coming on strong and is influencing other cultures. Matisse was greatly inspired by Rafia designs. African fashion has been widely adopted in the Diaspora. Caribbeans are fond of straw hats, matched by an appropriate scarf for an African flair. The scarf and hat band represent the various islands with their own national colors. When many ladies try on dresses, it often brings out an insecurity with their bodies and they're inclined to become self critical. However, when trying on hats, those ladies are likely to show a more positive side of their personality.

African Designers Shine



During our travels we have had the privilege of meeting many superstars of Africa's fashion world, such as Esterella (right,) and Chrystalix, two of Cameroon's top designers, Farouque Abdela of Zanzibar and Seidnaly Alphadi of Niger, whose African-inspired creations are taking Europe by storm. Heading for Paris from Cameroon, it seemed like half the aircraft was filled with models from a fashion show Aphadi had just staged.

The March of Time

Even during the sixties and seventies, when wearing hats took second place to full wigs and mod hairdos, many African and North American women never stopped wearing hats and tie-wraps. Those I met at church in Africa explained how wearing hats and tie-wraps merges faith and fashion. Adorning the head is a retention of African tradition in the diaspora.

People have an automatic reflex and reaction to hats. The art of head wrapping was more of a common practice for the woman who used these wraps as statement of spirituality, modesty and beauty, they also provided protection from the sun in many African countries. Head wraps were important to women who often carried baskets and various other items on their heads, as the wrap provided cushioning. In Harlem, our long time friend Elyse White, now well into her 90s, took me to Sunday church services. She was all decked out in a sexy red hat that I will never forget, and believes in wearing hats of all styles to complete an outfit, especially for church.

Today, African coiffure and dress has a major influence around the world. From London to Paris and beyond, events illustrate the dynamic nature of African fashion in hats and dresses. Women are wearing bubas (tops) soras (wrap skirts) and geles (head ties). Different styles of African fashions have evolved from the mixture of African and western cultures. One might see a sora (wrapped skirt), made from denim, with accents of bogolanfini (mud cloth). African coiffure and fashion will follow in our next edition.

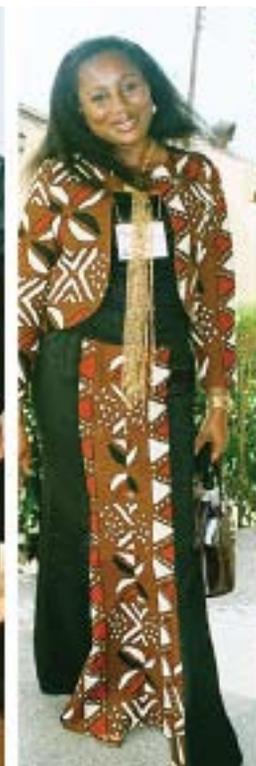
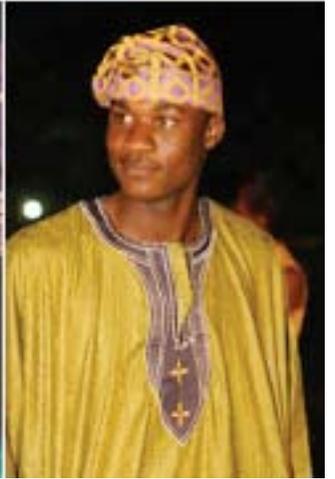


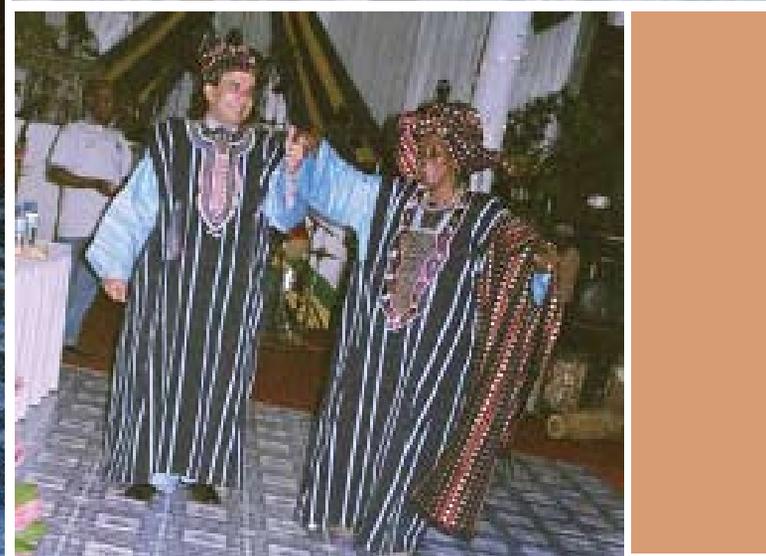
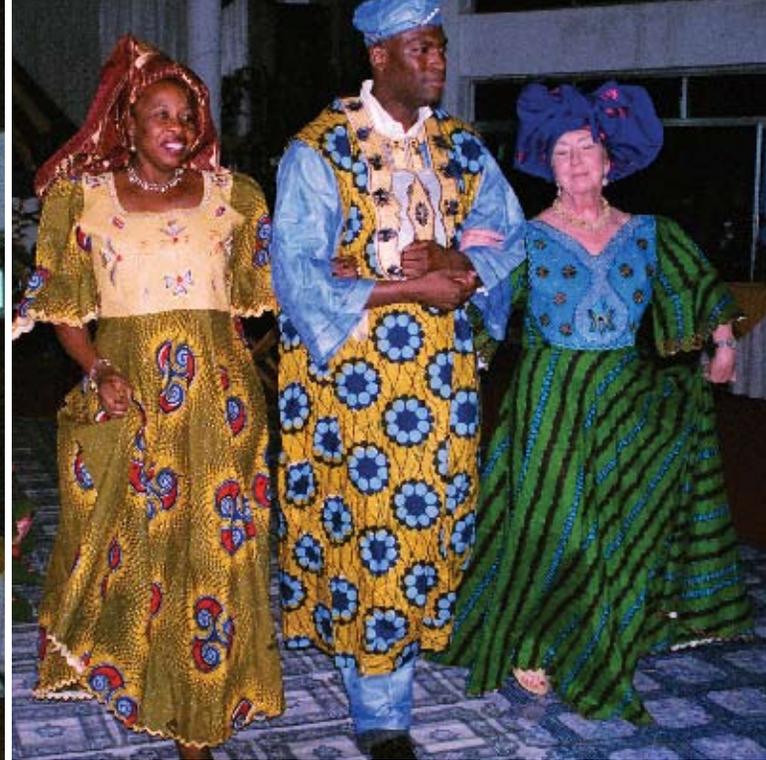
Above photos illustrate how African headwear compliments the wardrobe.

More features on Africa fashion and designers like those featured in this electronic World Edition of Africa Travel Magazine will appear in our print editions. For additional information on fashion visit: www.africa-ata.org/affas.htm



WEST AFRICAN FASHIONS, LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE HAVE BEEN AN ALL STAR ATTRACTION AT AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION EVENTS FOR 34 GLORIOUS YEARS





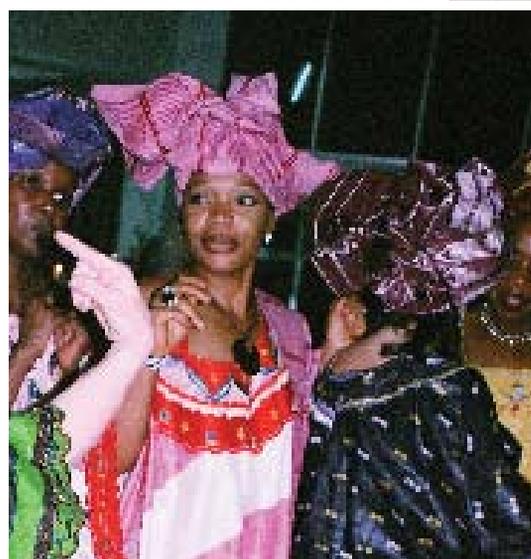
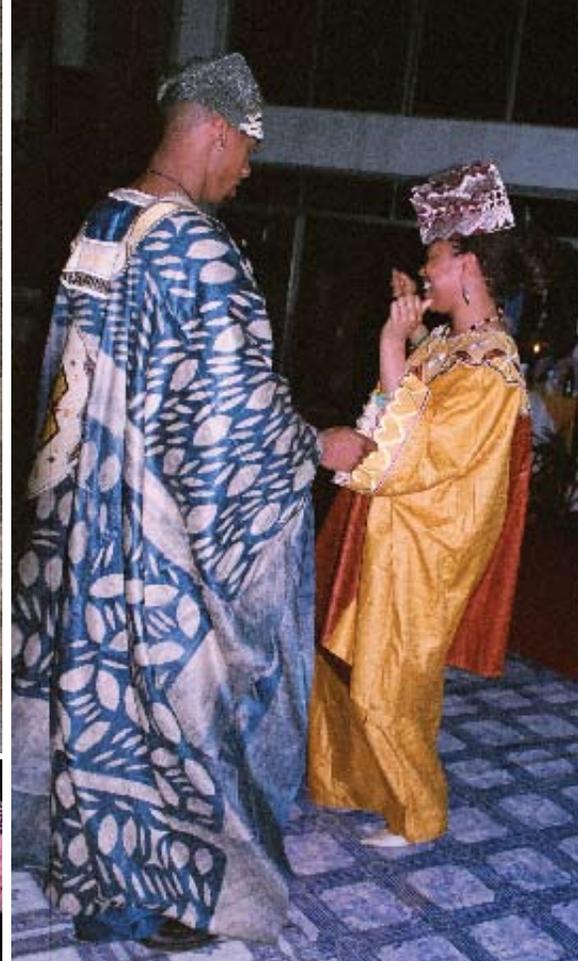
WEBISCO NIGERIAN FASHIONS MAKE AN OUTSTANDING STATEMENT AT

Nigeria's Chief of Fashion

We first met Chief Margaret Bolanie Fabiyi in 1997 at the Africa Travel Association World Congress, a year after our partnership with ATA was confirmed. The location was in Cotonou, Benin, West Africa. At the next congress in Arusha, Tanzania, we were treated to the first of a series of fashion shows this talented lady has organized for Africa Travel Association events. While enjoying luncheon at Arusha's Impala Hotel, it was suddenly announced that a fashion show was about to take place. To everyone's surprise, the models turned out to be our own delegates - and the variety of fashions for men and women, large and petit, young and not so young - was superb. Chief

Margaret has staged encore presentations at ATA venues in various locations ever since, including the event in Arusha, Tanzania (above) in which our editor, Jerry W. Bird, modeled a flaming red costume. In addition to being an accomplished fashion designer, Chief Margaret is active in ATA and ASTA in Nigeria and is a tour organizer, well known for her annual BLACK HISTORY MONTH TOURS. For times, dates and booking arrangements check the e-mail address and website on the opposite page or visit the Africa Travel Magazine website - www.africa-ata.org/bulletins.htm





THE ATA 33TH WORLD CONGRESS FASHION SHOW, ARUSHA, TANZANIA



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P. O. Box 4313, Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria.



What's Your Hattitude?

By Muguette Goufrani

Coiffure and Fashion Wear is an Expression of Individuality and Pride for African Women. Throughout the years, African people struggled to keep their tradition and culture in the midst of outside domination from Arabs and Europeans. Yet, one of the few features that remained was the African head wrap, from generation to generation it symbolized strength and pride. Hats and tie-wraps have not symbolized pride, but we also viewed as a vital part of ultimate portrayal of femininity and etiquette. Personal grooming was equally important and hair styles among West African women mirrored social status. Slave women have unkempt hair. African hats, head wraps and clothing are known for their colorful fabrics and distinctive designs. But I will have to inform that few people take the time to examine the cultural significance of African fashion.

African Textiles

The colorful African textiles became a sign of wealth during the period of the trans Saharan trade when traders used strip cloth as a form of currency. As a result, African textiles and hats became known worldwide, and their quality and color became an expression of wealth and knowledge in society and it became an indication of social hierar-

chy. The development of Kente cloth in the Ashanti tells how the use of cloth and hats differentiates people by status as fine Kente cloth. In addition, hats symbolize leadership.

Colors in the cloths and coiffure of African people poses important meanings. Meanings vary from people to people, cloth, and hats to cloth and hats. For example, the Akan people in West Africa use dark colors such as red, black and brown for funerals, while the Akon use white for joyous occasions, such as naming ceremonies. In Kente made by the Ashanti people of Ghana, who are also Akan,



Gold represents status and serenity. Yellow represents fertility and vitality. Green signifies the renewal and growth seen in plants and represents the cycle of birth and decay. Blue represents the presence of God and the omnipotence of the blue sky. Blue also refers to a pure spirit one which rests in harmony. Red connotes passion, the passion of political determination, struggle, and defense. Finally, black denotes seriousness and a union with ancestors. It implies spiritual awareness.

Cultural Influence

African fashion has influenced and has been influenced by other cultures. Rafia designs were a source of inspiration to Matisse, who hungs a large part of

his collection on the wall of his studio. African designers create clothes and head wrap of western design using traditional African cloth. Clothes of traditional African cut are fashioned using a combination of western and African cloth. Women are by far more than men, the biggest hat fans. They seek all styles, colors and levels of extravagances.

Today African dress and coiffure influences fashion throughout the world. From London, Paris and beyond, women are wearing bubbas (tops) soras (wrap skirts) and geles (head ties). African fashion has been adopted and adopted by African of the Diaspora. When women in our culture try on dresses it frequently brings out their insecurity about their bodies and they become very critical of themselves. However, while trying on hats, they show many sides of their personalities, they are mysterious, spunky but rarely self-critical.

African Fashion Shows

Fashion shows throughout Europe now celebrate African culture, traditional and non-traditional African Hattitude and dress, further illustrating the dynamic nature of African Fashion. My publisher and I were influenced by African fashion since we launched the magazine in 1995, and each hat and costume we are wearing almost day to day at home, promote the country of original - and we feel proud to show them to our neighbors.

If you want to feel upbeat about yourself, you should definitely wear a hat. You don't have to buy a whole new wardrobe by any means. The habit of African women wearing hats as a form of self-expression is almost old. Hats or ties-wraps have been around



for centuries. In an earlier era, the hat shop was as important to fashionable women as the shoe store is today. Few women will be caught dead in public without their requisite hat and gloves.

Of faith and fashion

By the 1960, wigs hairdressers and informality usurped the hat's appeal. Hair was teased and back-combed into designs that rivaled the most elaborate headgear. However, African and African American women of a certain age never stopped wearing hats and ties-wraps at church. The women that I met in my trips in Africa and the USA explain how wearing hats and tie-wraps merges faith and fashion.

One thing adorning the head is a retention of African tradition; even in Europe, North America and Asia are part of us. Put on a church and ceremony hat and I had instant class, a bunch of class. The hats don't have to be skyscrapers, but they have to have a personality.

People have an automatic reflex and reaction to hats. They enter a hat shops and it's as if they stepped into heaven. I saw many ladies posing with their hands on their hips - a gesture that is defined as 'hat-titude' There stands a woman with a confident pose and an aura radiating pride.

The art of head wrapping was more of a common practice for the woman said Nissiabi Akin of Endaikeio, a neo culture and lifestyle Magazine. Women use these wraps as a statement of spirituality, modesty and beauty, but also as shelter from the sun in many African countries. Head wraps were important to women who often carried baskets and various other items on their heads, as the wrap provided cushioning.

In New York City, our charming friend, the late Elyse White, invited me to her church in Harlem, and was wearing a sexy red hat that I will not forget. She told me that African American women are known for wearing hats of all styles to complete and complement an outfit - specifically for churches services. To many women, these 'toppers' are much more than a fashion accessory; the hat represents style, grace and poise, reflecting historic customs and rituals dating back to the 1600s, with head wraps telling a story of the woman who wears it. *Learn more about the appeal of African fashion on our website- www.africa-ata.org/fashion1.htm*



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Seattle's Washington State Convention Center

Africa Travel Magazine editors and ATA Chapter members continued their support of the Adventures in Travel Expos, this time in the heart of downtown Seattle, September 13 to 14, 2008. Our magazine editons were a top attraction at the ATA booth, which anchored the Africa Section. Supported by the Seattle Times, the Adventures in Travel Expo targeted one of America's largest, most affluent markets, famous as the home of industry giants Boeing Aircraft Company and Microsoft. The area is America's gateway to Asia Pacific markets, Alaska and Western Canada. We expect more North American travelers to consider the Pacific route to Africa, with connections in China and Japan when planning future trips.

2009 Series Starts Early

The 2009 series begins in January with Adventures in Travel Expos in New York and Chicago, followed by Los Angeles, Washington, DC and the next Seattle event.. "Seattle represents a market that research shows will be very receptive to our show - an exciting arena filled with a wealth of interactive exhibits from around the globe. We look forward to experiencing the same success as we have in other markets," said John Golicz, CEO Unicom LLC.

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ADVENTURES IN TRAVEL EXPO SERIES FOR 2009"



Africa Photos on this two page spread:

- (1) Elephant from Adventures in Travel website.
- (2) Scuba diver meets a Whale Shark near Djibouti.
- (3) Fantasia in Northern Cameroon.
- (4-5) Scenes from Tanzania's Swahili Coast.
- (6) Herd of zebras at the Ngorongoro Crater near Arusha, Tanzania.
- (7) Drill Ranch at Calabar, Nigeria.
- (8) Lions at Queen Elizabeth Park, Uganda.
- (9) Maasai ladies welcome visiting delegates to their village on the Massai Mara, Kenya.
- (10) Stone Town, Zanzibar.
- (11) Snows of Mount Kilimanjaro. (
- (12) Elephant at Ngorongoro Crater.
- (13) Octopus drying in the sun, Zanzibar.
- (14) Crater lake at Ngorongoro.
- (15) View the spectacular annual migration of wildlife herds from the comfort of a baloon when you visit the Serengeti.
- (16) Zebras running, Northern Tanzania.
- (17) Africa section group at the ATA booth, Adventures in Travel Expo, Seattle.
- (18) Visitors attending the Adventures in Travel Expo at the Jacob Javits Center, New York City, NY.



A BERBER WEDDING FAIR PLUS OTHER

By Muguette Goufrani

My father, who owned and operated a tour company in Casablanca, Morocco and France for many years, took me along with a group of German tourists to visit a traditional “Wedding Fair” at Hadiddou Imilchil, a Berber village in southern Morocco. While I knew that many Berber Fairs combine a local Saint’s Day with a regional market event, only at September’s ‘moussem’ (pilgrimage) of Imilchil, have I seen such a colorful pageant, with instant engagement, and a mass exchange of marriage vows. Berbers have inhabited North Africa for centuries, some being of Caucasian ancestry, with fair complexions and blue eyes. Visitors may think of Berbers as exotic outsiders, yet they preceded the Arabs in settling Morocco, and they remain the country’s main culture. This is expressed by the phrase, “Morocco is Berber - the roots and the leaves of freedom.”

A unique experience

While the Wedding Fair is key part of Berber marital custom, families usually arrange marriages in their home village. Women are free to divorce and remarry. At the moussem, divorced and widowed women form the majority, and are identified by their pointed headdress. The courtship is a family affair as I learned after accepting an invitation



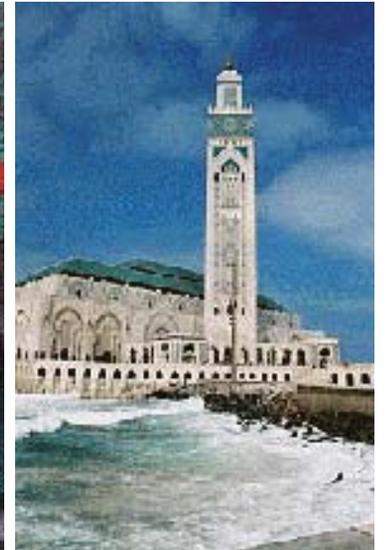
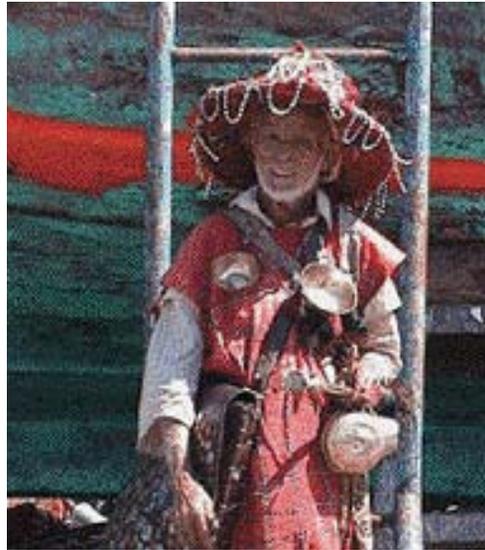
to drink mint tea in the goat hair tent of a Berber elder. His oldest daughter Malika, prettied up her divorced 18 year old sister Yasmina with traditional beauty aids - rubbing saffron colored powder into her sister’s eyebrows, applying kohl to outline her eyes and carmine rouged to her cheeks. A wool cape, striped in tribal colors, covered her white dress; then a cone shaped headdress was assembled, held on by loops of spangled wool.

I gave Yasmina a silver chain as a wedding gift, since silver brings good luck. Many Westerners think that Moroccans purchase their wives at the fair, but in truth, marriage depends on mutual consent and family approval.

Friends get involved

The language of gesture is as clearly understood by these people as the spoken word. By having a friend help him choose a bride (with often no more than a silhouette and two dark eyes as a clue) the groom gets overcomes his shyness. All day long, in pairs, these men weave in and out amongst a cluster of anxious brides. Then, welcomed by a shy glance or a quick nod, the suitor will stop to speak to the lady, encouraged by a signal from his friend’s reassuring hand.

Once this happens, the newly acquainted boy and girl unite, holding hands as a sign of intent. Male relatives who accompany the



MOROCCAN CULTURAL TREASURES

bride-to-be lend advice, often making snap judgment calls at first sight. If rejection is signaled by a broken handclasp, it's time to look elsewhere.

When a bride does give consent, she may speak the magic phrase, "You have captured my liver." Since a healthy liver aids digestion and promotes well-being, in Berber culture it's the liver, not the heart that's considered the location of true love. Might one say, "Darling, my liver pines for you?" Often snowbound behind village walls for up to six months a year, the new couples must learn to live in harmony. Despite those old Foreign Legion movies from the 50s, which showed Berbers as being fierce, hot tempered and warlike, they believe in "paix chez eux" (peace at home).

Moroccan food

Who wouldn't enjoy steamed semolina, topped with a meat and vegetable sauce called couscous? Or tajines, a vegetable stew that contains rabbit, lamb, goat or chicken meat, combined with prunes, apricots or raisins. Pastilla (baked

pigeon pie) is made of layered filo pastry, with nuts and spices, and coated with sugar. With your morning coffee, try a light deep fried Spanish doughnut, we call sfinj, or cornes de gazelle pastries.

Berber history and culture

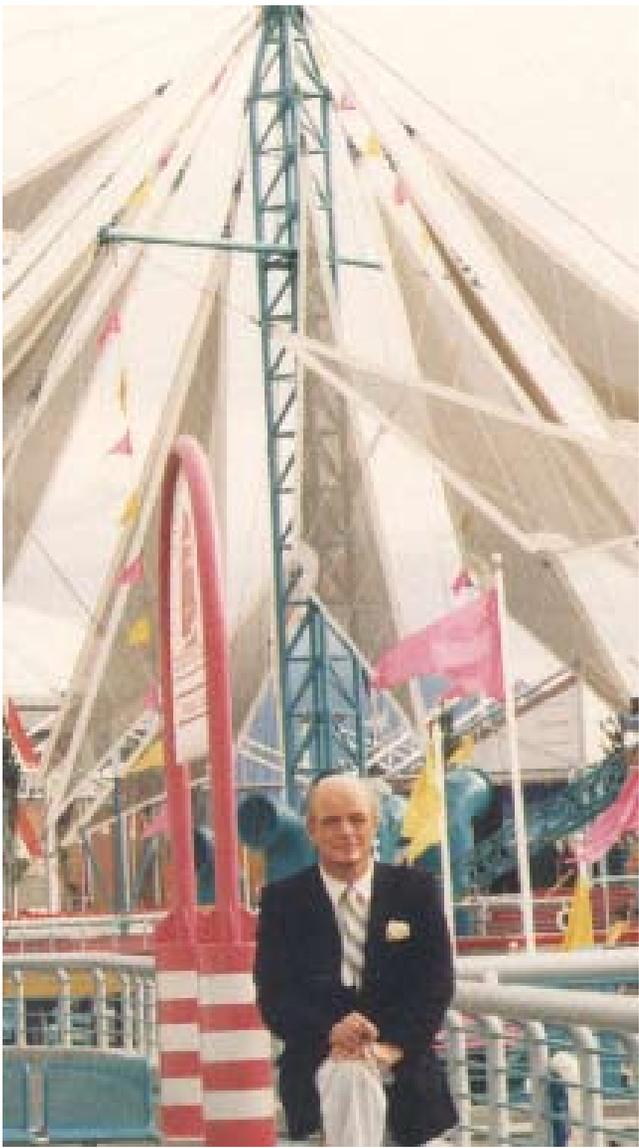
Most of the 27 million Moroccans are Berbers, Arabs or Moors (people of mixed Berber and Arab descent), whose ancestors built the mighty Moorish empire that once ruled Spain, Portugal and most of Northern Africa. Most Berbers dwell in the mountains, while the Arabs and Moors live on the plain and desert. Most cities have a European section a Jewish enclave, and a Medina (Arab-Moorish section). Over the past 3,000 years, its geographic location has given Morocco a strategic importance far beyond its small size. The country has taken the best from the Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Berbers, Portuguese, Spanish and French.

For more information visit: www.africa-ata.org/morocco.htm

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Africa Travel Magazine



OUR BEST OF AFRICA SERIES SALUTES THE 14TH

The Best of Africa Magazine Series now available for downloads from the internet in advance of publication, owes its success to a program that began years ago.

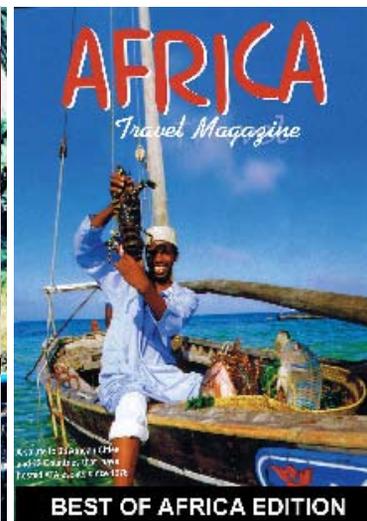
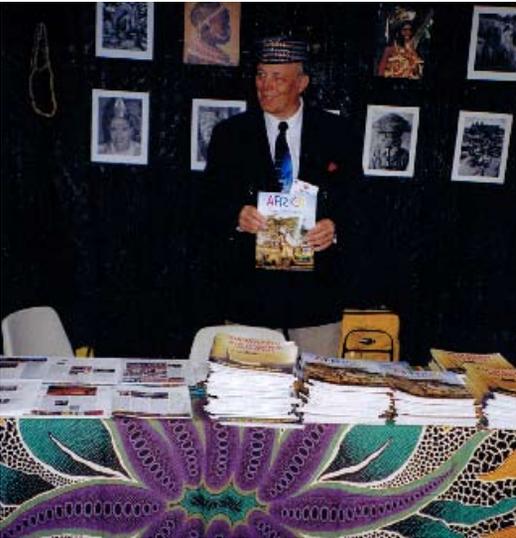
Did you know that our Best of Africa premiere occurred in 1995? It was the first event of its kind ever held in Canada, and launched a long and successful partnership with the Africa Travel Association. ATA is based in New York, and is represented by chapters in North America and Africa. Staged in Vancouver, BC, our show was honor of ATA's Our first Best of Africa Road Show by a visiting delegation from Ghana; our second included a group of safari and tour operators from Kenya, led by Peter Muiruri. We have returned the compliment several times since, when the Ministry of Tourism from both of those member countries hosted the ATA's International Congress. In the first venue, on short notice we prepared an outstanding agenda, and were thrilled with



the turnout of travel agents, media, local dignitaries and members of Western Canada's African Diaspora. Entertainment included a Ghanaian band and Egyptian belly dancers.

Land, Sea and Air

Later we hosted our first Air and Marine Tourism Conference, plus Air Highway Days, with a full roster of top speakers and exhibitors, travel trade seminars, films and awards. One of our main speakers at the time, Rick Antonson, Tourism Vancouver CEO, has just completed an exciting travel book called, "To Timbuktu for a Haircut - Journey Through West Africa." Copies of Rick's book will be among many prizes at our Best of Africa Awards Night. Chapter Building



ANNIVERSARY OF AFRICA TRAVEL MAGAZINE

In Print, Online and On Air

One of our duties as publishers of Africa Travel Magazine is to develop regional chapters of the Africa Travel Association, which we represent for Canada, and have recruited members in Vancouver, Toronto and Montréal. Another key responsibility is the ATA Website, which has been developed into a full scale magazine of the internet, with 4,000 pages and photo galleries representing many of Africa's 54 countries. We update this huge website daily thanks to hundreds of press releases we receive by e-mail and a wealth of stories from our regular trips to Africa in which we tour the host country and often its neighbors. This page presents a brief capsule of our experience learning about and enjoying the Best of Africa. Thanks to Corporate Press Display, we will make copies of the Best of Africa Series and the Africa Travel Business Library available to an even more mass audience. Their powerful site is the World's Largest Magazine and Newspaper kiosk, representing USA Today, among others. Regular users of Press Display are many Fortune 500 companies and libraries across the USA.

Photos from top left: (1) Editor Jerry W. Bird visiting the tall ships, an inspiration for the Air and Marine Tourism event. (2) Main auditorium at the UN World Forum in Vancouver, where we met

many African mayors and initiated our "Great Cities of Africa" magazine series, now part of the Best of Africa Awards. (3) Scale model of famous rock-hewn church at Lalibela in Northern Ethiopia. We were special guests at the Houston International Festival and worked closely with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism, Ethiopian Airlines and other delegation members during this exciting event.

(4) Editor (left) with Karen Hoffman and former ATA Executive Director Mira Berman at a gala event in Africa. (5) Mr. Bird and Ms. Muguette Goufrani, Editors of Africa Travel Magazine receive ATA Founders Award in Cape Town, SA. (6) Park Rangers near Arusha, Tanzania receive copies of our 1998 edition saluting their country. The next will be Best of Africa Tanzania Edition. (7) Africa Travel Magazine exhibit at travel show in Orlando, Florida. We have since participated in many travel trade and consumer events across the USA, Canada and Africa. There's much more to come with the new Best of Africa series. (8) Participation at Karibu Fair 2008 in Arusha, with Amant Macha of TTB. (9) Muguette Goufrani at Out of Africa Show, Houston, Texas. (10) Cover of coming issue in Best of Africa series.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ELECTION SPARKS GREATER INTEREST IN TOURISM TO AFRICA FROM USA

*Africa Travel Association (ATA)
Second Annual U.S.-Africa Tourism
Seminar in Washington, D.C. from
February 19-20, 2009*

WASHINGTON, D.C. The recent inauguration of President Barack Obama is more than a landmark in America's political history, it is also an opportunity for the travel and tourism industry to take a more focused approach to increasing visitors and investment in Africa from the U.S.

"All over Africa, we can see how excited everyone is about President Obama's connection to the continent," said **Edward Bergman**, ATA Executive Director. "We have already seen a surge in interest about travel specials to Africa not only to Kenya, where President Obama traces his roots, but also throughout East Africa."

Surge of Interest

ATA, the world's leading global travel trade organization, is gearing up for its Second Annual U.S.-Africa Tourism Seminar. The two-day event takes place at the Washington Convention Center from February 19-20, immediately prior to the Adventures in Travel Expo (ATE). The seminar's timing and location affords ATA an opportunity to build on the recent historic events, including President Obama's commitment to service.

With travel to Africa on the rise and an emerging interest in Africa as a culture and heritage destination, Africa is garnering more and more attention from American tourists as one of the world's premier travel destinations

Sports, Adventure, Diaspora

Focusing on sports, adventure and diaspora travel and tourism, the seminar will showcase Africa as a top tourism destination from the U.S., as well as a site for investment and business opportunity in one of the world's fastest growing tourism markets. **Manute Bol**, former NBA star and Ethiopian Airlines official spokesperson, will speak about different possibilities for responsible tourism and sports tourism in Africa.

Stephen Hayes, President of the Corporate Council on Africa, and **Edward Bergman**, among other travel professionals, will speak about tourism policy choices at the opening plenary session.

Sthu Zungu, President of South African Tourism-USA, will speak about travel trends, relating to who is traveling to Africa, why they are going, and what can be improved on the travel front to increase



tourism to the continent. Alongside experts in sports tourism in Africa, she will also address how mega sporting events, such as 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa, can be leveraged to increase tourism to and within Africa.

Greater Responsibility

The timely topic of responsible tourism and how the industry and the individual tourist can make a difference in local communities will be explored by senior representatives from the Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, Africare, and the African Wildlife Foundation.

Senior representatives from the World Bank, IFC (International Finance Corporation), and US Department of Commerce's Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, will explore entrepreneurship, finance and investment opportunities, as well as travel trends in separate workshops.

SAA Workshop

South African Airways representatives will participate in a workshop on the growth and modernization of travel to Africa and the growth and modernization of intra-Africa air service. Representatives from other airlines serving Africa and Boeing will also participate in the seminar.

Another workshop on African diaspora tourism will examine the role of the diaspora in changing perceptions of Africa in the US market and emerging African diaspora tourism products, such as cultural and heritage tours. Panelists will also explore how the African diaspora and immigrant

communities can serve as Africa's tourism ambassadors in the U.S. tourism markets.

Branding Africa

Panelists will also speak about branding and marketing Destination Africa and Africa's newest travel products, particularly in the areas of sports tourism, and adventure travel.

Tourism experts and industry professionals from the U.S. and Africa, particularly travel agents and tour operators who market, sell and specialize in Africa, are expected to attend the seminar, as well as ministers of tourism, representatives from Washington D.C.'s diplomatic community, and Africa's national tourism offices.

African American Family

Representatives of the Spring Bank, **Virginia Quanders** family (1684), referred to as 'America's oldest documented African American family' by *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, will attend the event. *Henderson Travel Services*, the first African American travel agency in the U.S. to specialize in sending visitors to Africa, will also participate.

Public relations firms specializing in marketing Africa destinations, such as the *Bradford Group*, will participate in the seminar, alongside faculty and students from *George Washington University*. ATA welcomes travel industry professionals to participate in the ATE expo immediately following the seminar. ATA members should contact ATA for discounts to exhibit.

To register and to find more information on the seminar, as well as sponsorship opportunities, visit <http://www.africatravelassociation.org/ata/events/uats.html>.

About the Africa Travel

Association (ATA) The Africa Travel Association, a U.S.-based non-profit, is the world's premier travel industry trade association promoting tourism to Africa and intra-Africa travel and partnership since 1975. ATA members include ministries of tourism and culture, national tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public relations firms, NGOs, and SME's. For more on ATA, visit www.africatravelassociation.org.

Africa Travel Magazine's "Venues Edition" which covers major events promoting Africa Tourism, is produced in both Printed and Electronic formats. This allows us to reach the greatest number of people worldwide. Many of the pages and topics you will see in the Electronic format will also appear in print. For advertising rates on both options, please contact the Editor africa@smartt.com or visit www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm



Coming Editions for 2009

* Indicates a printed edition. Others are electronic for download from our website and affiliates.

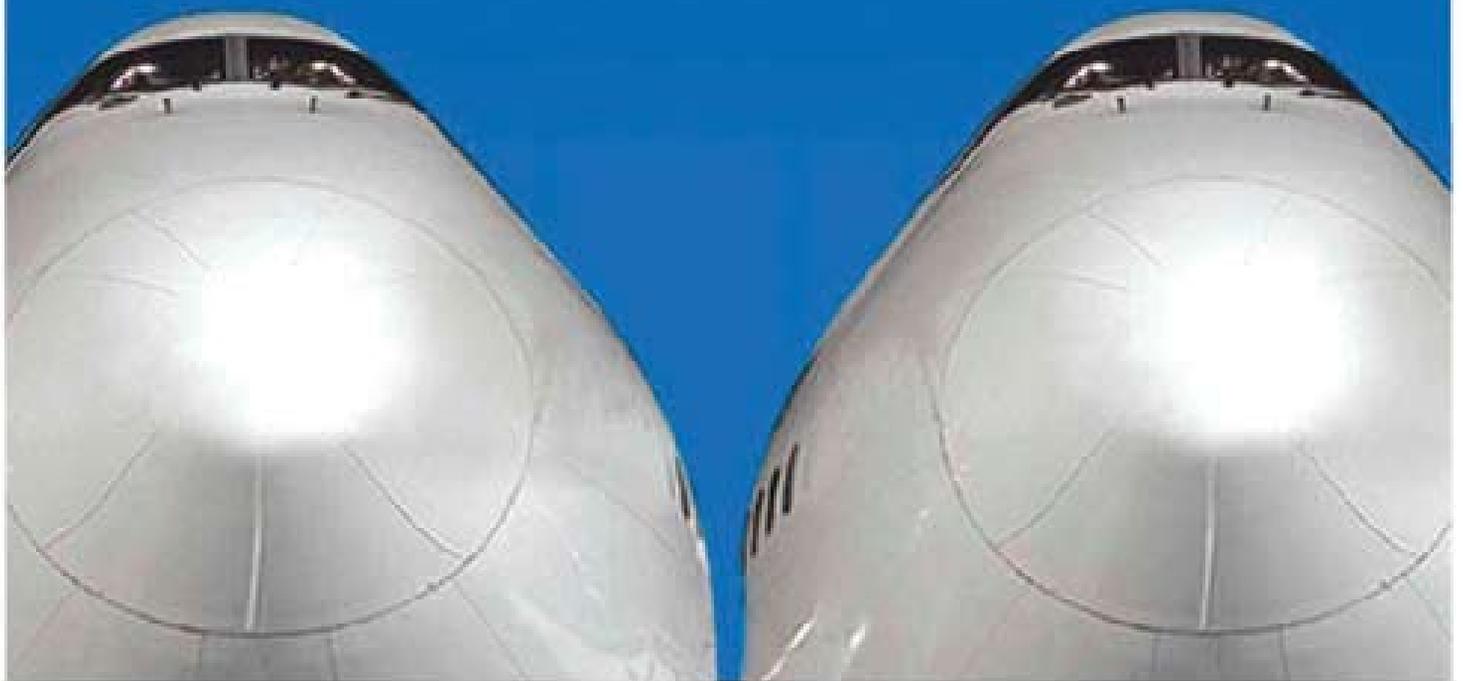
- February 25** **ATA 34th World Congress Early Edition ***
For bookings and pre-Congress tours.
- March 1** **Ethiopia World Edition ***
Update to our Millennium Edition
- March 15** **Venues World Edition**
Success through promotion at events
- April 15** **ATA 34th World Congress Final Edition ***
Includes host country Egypt insert
- May 15** **Eastern Africa World Edition**
- June 15** **Western Africa World Edition**
Includes preview of ATA Symposium
- July 15** **Southern Africa World Edition**
Our second issue on SADC Member Countries
- August 15** **ATA Cultural- Ecotourism Early Edition ***
For bookings and pre-Congress tours.
- September 15** **Northern Africa World Edition**
- October 15** **ATA Cultural- Ecotourism Final Edition***
Includes host country Togo insert
- November 15** **Africa's Air Highways World Edition***
Airlines, airports, land and sea transport
- December 15** **African Culinary Tours World Edition***
Chefs from Africa's leading hotels.

Additional Sections will be added to this Electronic World Edition Yearbook of Western Africa and Coastal Area from Morocco to Namibia.

Watch for features on Senegal, Cape Verde and other destinations on the Western Coast and Islands.

*To book space or provide editorial material:
e-mail: africa@smartt.com . www.africa-ata.org/advert.htm*

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