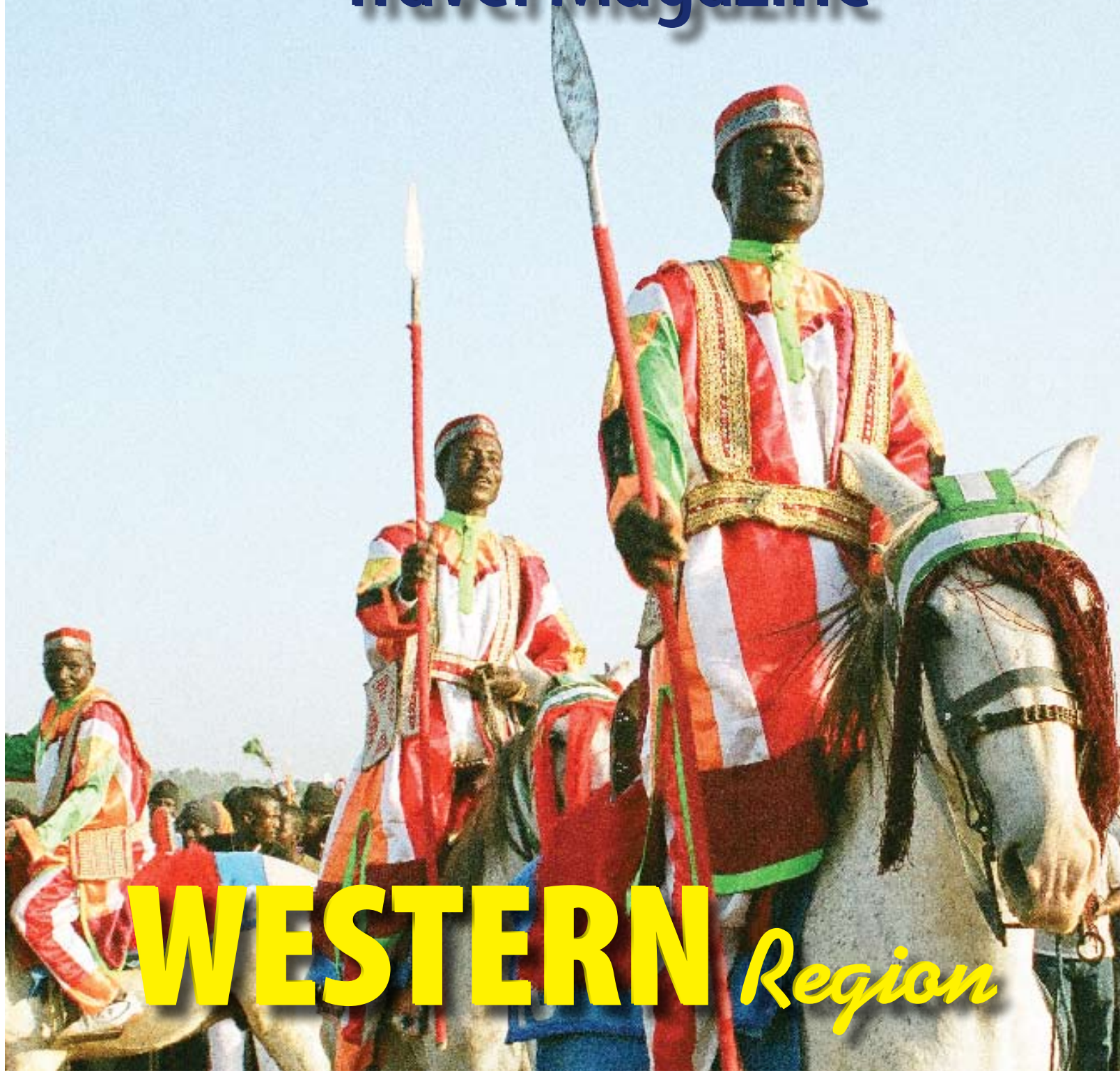


# AFRICA

Travel Magazine



**WESTERN** *Region*



# Western Africa

THIS EDITION IS IN A WORK IN PROGRESS. Until we begin our full subscription program, this version is available for preview at no charge. Before any pages from this edition appears in print, all photos and advertisements appearing in this preview that are not of highest resolution will be replaced. Before our final editing, several new pages and supplements will be added.

*“The western media needs to focus more on success stories in Africa. We are doing so many good things out here which do not get enough publicity.”* President Kikwete, Tanzania,

Testimonials from our supporters in Africa, the UK, USA and around the world are solid proof that we have heeded President Kikwete’s request by providing positive publicity for the past 15 years. The results are showing up in meaningful, measurable ways, as we move ahead in building a library of books and magazines that showcase the Best of Africa. Our “Faces of Africa” are smiling for good reason - their stories in print, online and on air are many, varied and well received. For over 100 examples visit: [www.africa-ata.org/faces1.htm](http://www.africa-ata.org/faces1.htm)

## INDEX

Inserts:	24 Page Supplement on The Gambia and ATA 35th Annual Congress
	Africa’s Culinary Tourism Opportunities
3.	Introduction to Western Africa Edition
4-5	ATA 35th Annual Congress
6-11.	Ghana and the Gold Coast
12-13	Nigeria- Obudu Ranch, Calabar
14-15	Nigeria - Abuja Carnival
16-17	Nigeria - The Slave Route
18-19	Guinea - The Switzerland of Africa
20-21	Mali- To Timbuktu
22	Senegal
23	Cote d’Ivoire
24	Liberia
26-31	African Fashion Section
32-	Benin
33	World Travel Awards
34-35	African Airlines Contacts
36	TV5 Monde
37	President Obama and Africa
38-39	Africa Travel Magazine Anniversary
40-41	Togo Profile
42-64	More features to come





# I AM THE GAMBIA, HOST COUNTRY FOR THE AFRICA TRAVEL



I am the West African Republic of The Gambia, proud host country for the Africa Travel Association 35th Annual Congress in May,

2010. I was named for one the continent's most navigable rivers. I occupy a narrow area on the Gambia River, surrounded by Senegal to the north, east and south. My western boundary along the Atlantic Coast offers visitors some of Africa's most beautiful beaches with warm coastal waters and a tropical climate that is warm and humid year round.

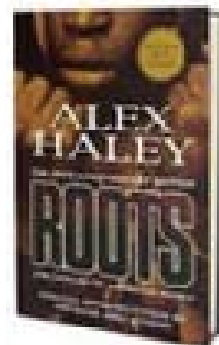
## My Vision 2020 Plan

A former British colony, I became independent on February

18, 1965y. My President, H.E. Yaya A.J.J. Jammeh instituted "The Gambia Incorporated" a vision 2020 plan that aims to transform me into middle income status by offering a stable investment environment, an efficient banking sector, and a competitive private sector.

## My Ethnic Roots

Many Americans know about me thanks to Alex Haley's bestseller and epic television docudrama "Roots," which tells the story of Kunta Kinte and his ancestral homeland of Jufureh. My population of 1.5 million includes the Mande, rural Mandinka and Atlantic peoples - Wolof and



Fulani. They live harmoniously in mixed communities, freely exercising their religious and cultural traditions. My people are also widely recognized for their genuine friendliness and hospitality. While English is the official language, Wolof and Fulani are spoken in towns and Mandinka in rural areas. About 85% of my population is Muslim, with a fairly large Christian minority. My capital, main port and commercial center along the

River Gambia is Banjul ( 300,000 population).

## My Economy

Tourism and Agriculture account for 23% of my gross domestic product and employ 75% of my



# ASSOCIATION 35TH ANNUAL CONGRESS, MAY 17-20, 2010

workforce. In 2000, around 100,000 tourists visited me, providing an estimated 10,000 Gambians with stable employment.

## Gateway to Success

Fishing and manufacturing industries offer opportunities for expansion, with plastics and confectionaries as key products. I am an important entry point for goods to be distributed to neighboring coun-

tries - the logical "gateway" into West Africa for the trans-shipment of imports and exports.

## My Rich Heritage

The World Heritage Committee Inscribes 24 New Sites on the World Heritage List, including the West African Republic of The Gambia. New natural sites include James

Island and related locations, which present a testimony to the main periods and facets of the encounter between Africans and Europeans 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.

*Photos from top left: Coastal resorts, Map of the Gambia, Arch 22 at the entrance to Banjul, Banjul International Airport, Albert Market, Banjul King Fahad Mosque. Sources - Wikipedia, Sheraton, The Gambia. To learn more about me check out [www.visitthegambia](http://www.visitthegambia)*

*More to come in this edition*





# ABOUT THE AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION 35TH ANNUAL CONGRESS

NEW YORK,  
NY: Honorable  
Nancy Seedy

Njie, The Gambia's Minister of Tourism and Culture, and Edward Bergman, Executive Director of the Africa Travel Association (ATA), today announced that the Republic of The Gambia will host ATA's 35th Annual Congress in the capital city of Banjul in May 2010.

"It is with great pride that we are once again partnering with ATA to invite the world to visit and explore The Gambia," said Minister Njie. "The Gambian government places great priority on tourism, which has contributed significantly to our country's growth and stability. We hope that the ATA Congress will help us continue to promote our country in new marketplaces and attract new investment in the sector."

## Smiling Coast

The Gambia, known as the "Smiling Coast of Africa," is famous for its luxurious beach resorts, quaint fishing villages and magnificent coastline, but there is much more to the affordable and safe West African country, including peaceful and friendly peo-

ple, eco-tourism, sports fishing, bird watching and safaris, music, dancing and traditional wrestling matches, and visiting trans-Atlantic slave trade sites.

"The Gambia has made amazing progress with its travel and tourism industry by building public and private-sector partnerships, where the government creates the conditions for the private sector to invest in the industry," said Bergman. "By combining The Gambia's ability to attract tourist arrivals, particularly from Europe, with ATA's ability to engage diverse travel professionals from around the world, particularly in North America and across Africa, the congress holds tremendous promise for turning tourism into a continental economic driver."

ATA's hallmark international event will be attended by African tourism ministers and industry experts representing tourism

boards, travel agencies, ground operator companies, airlines, and hotels. Many participants from the travel trade media and the corporate, non profit and academic sectors are also expected to attend.

The four-day event will engage delegates in discussions on a range of industry topics, such as public-private sector partnership, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure development, industry trends, and social media. ATA member countries will organize a few evening networking receptions and ATA's Young Professionals Network will meet with local hospitality professionals and students. For the second year, the congress will also include a marketplace for buyers and sellers specializing in Destination Africa.

Delegates will also have the opportunity to explore the country

on pre or post congress trips, as well as on the **Host Country Day**

The Gambia, the smallest country on the African continent, has an estimated population of 1,600,000. With the



exception of a small shoreline, the English-speaking country is surrounded by Senegal. Approximately 120,000 charter tourists, mainly from Europe, arrive annually. The Ministry plans to attract 500,000 arrivals by 2012, by targeting the US marketplace and “up-market” tourists, and to lengthen the tourist season to all year round. Public-private sector plans to increase the accommodation stock and to build a conference center are currently underway. The travel and tourism economy accounts for sixteen percent of Gambia’s GDP.

### **Encore from 1984**

The 2010 Congress builds on the success of the West African country’s longstanding ties with ATA. In 1984, ATA held its ninth congress in Banjul, immediately following the association’s eighth congress in Cairo, Egypt.

“ATA is excited to return to Gambia and anticipates that the 2010 congress will help Gambia reach its goal of bringing in more tourists and industry investment,” said Bergman. “We are especially grateful to our private sector partners, particularly Starwood Hotels, who have been instrumental in bringing the Ministry and ATA together to organize this important continental event.”

To prepare for the annual event, ATA will send a delegation to Banjul in November for a site inspection. During the visit, the team will meet with representatives from the public and private

sectors and ATA-Banjul chapter members, as well as visit the proposed conference, lodging and entertainment venues.

ATA, in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and the Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA), organized the 2009 congress at the Conrad Cairo Hotel in Egypt in May 2009. Under the banner “Connecting Destination Africa,” the event brought travel specialists and experts to Egypt to help shape Africa’s tourism agenda during the global economic downturn. EgyptAir served as the official congress carrier.

### **About the Africa Travel Association (ATA)**

The Africa Travel Association (ATA) was established as an international travel industry trade association in 1975. ATA’s mission is to promote travel, tourism and transport to and within Africa, and to strengthen intra-Africa partnerships. As the world’s premier travel industry trade association, ATA provides services to a broad range of members including: tourism, diaspora, culture, and sports ministers, tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public

relations firms, consulting companies, non-profit organizations, businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises, and other organizations engaged in tourism promotion. For more information, visit ATA online at [www.africatravelassociation.org](http://www.africatravelassociation.org) or call +1.212.447.1357.

*For more information on Gambia, visit the Gambia Tourist Authority (GTA) website at <http://www.visitthegambia.gm/>.*

**SAVE THE DATE** to meet, network, hear and learn to navigate thru the current economic storm. If you sell or buy FIT, group or bulk travel and hospitality of Africa, you should plan to attend!

**AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION**

# **35th ANNUAL** All-Africa/International **CONGRESS**

**BANJUL, THE GAMBIA**  
**MAY 17-20, 2010**

*Hosted by the*  
**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**  
**OF THE GAMBIA**



**FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:**  
E-mail: [info@AfricaTravelAssociation.org](mailto:info@AfricaTravelAssociation.org)

Tel: +1-212-447-1357  
Fax: +1-212-213-4890

**OR VISIT ON LINE:**  
[www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org](http://www.AfricaTravelAssociation.org)

# VISIT FRIENDLY GHANA "THE SMILE

Elmina Castle, a reminder of the Slave Trade on  
Ghana's Atlantic Coast.

*Photo by Muguette Goufrani*



# ON THE FACE OF AFRICA."



Ghana Tourist Board: [gtb@africaonline.com.gh](mailto:gtb@africaonline.com.gh) .  
<http://www.ghana.gov.gh/tourists/>  
*Africa Travel Magazine*

# I am Ghana ...



*I am Ghana. Many travelers call me "the smile of the face of Africa." Ghanains that are 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, I have had the pleasure of hosting Africa Travel Association delegates from the USA, Canada and Africa at its Annual Congress in 1994, 1999 and 2006. My tourism community awaits your happy return on any occasion 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 are some interesting, complimentary comments the editors have to say about me:*

## **Warm Friendships Blossom**

Years before we set foot in West Africa, we had met many Ghanaians and found them to be one of the most outgoing, friendly races of people on the planet. During the combined ATA- WTO World Congress, 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](http://www.africa-ata.org/ghana.htm)*



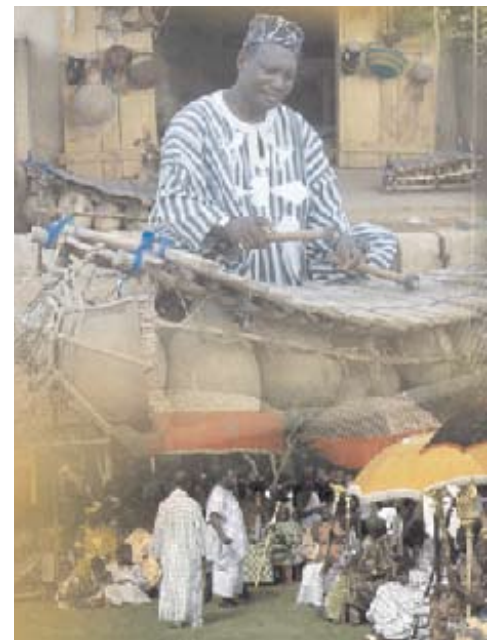
**Land Tours Ghana Limited**  
 Visit our website: [www.landtours.com](http://www.landtours.com)  
[landtours@afriatourism.com.gh](mailto:landtours@afriatourism.com.gh) / [loveafrica@afriatourism.com](mailto:loveafrica@afriatourism.com)  
 T: 00 233 21 781 752 F: 00 233 21 781 751



**Exotic Culture  
Exciting Nature**

We invite you to join us on an unforgettable journey to West Africa, a region rich in history, tradition and culture - a region whose people are noted for their warmth, friendliness and hospitality from the legendary Ashanti Kingdoms of gold to the vibrant people of Accra, Ghana's capital. You'll see unspoilt virgin beaches, natural sites, amazing wildlife parks and forest reserves. You'll experience cultural drumming and dancing that will touch your very soul. Come, relax, enjoy and participate in our exciting tour.

**We Know Ghana and West Africa Best**



*The above photo is from the Africa Travel Association World Congress of 1999, which was held in Accra,*

*Ghana. Our last Ghana Congress was in 2006, after which our editors made a circle tour of the country, hosted by the Ghana Tourist Board. Our highly capable, knowledgeable guide was Yao Dzide, with whom we stay in touch.*

### **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 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 including 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](mailto:gtb@africaonline.com).



**Golden Tulip Kumasi City** . Rain Tree Street, P.O. Box KS 5191, Kumasi, Ghana  
 Tel. +233 51 83777 . +233 51 83711 . E-mail: [jackie.senoo@goldentulipkumasicity.com](mailto:jackie.senoo@goldentulipkumasicity.com)  
[www.goldentulipkumasicity.com](http://www.goldentulipkumasicity.com) . [www.goldentulip.com/rss](http://www.goldentulip.com/rss)

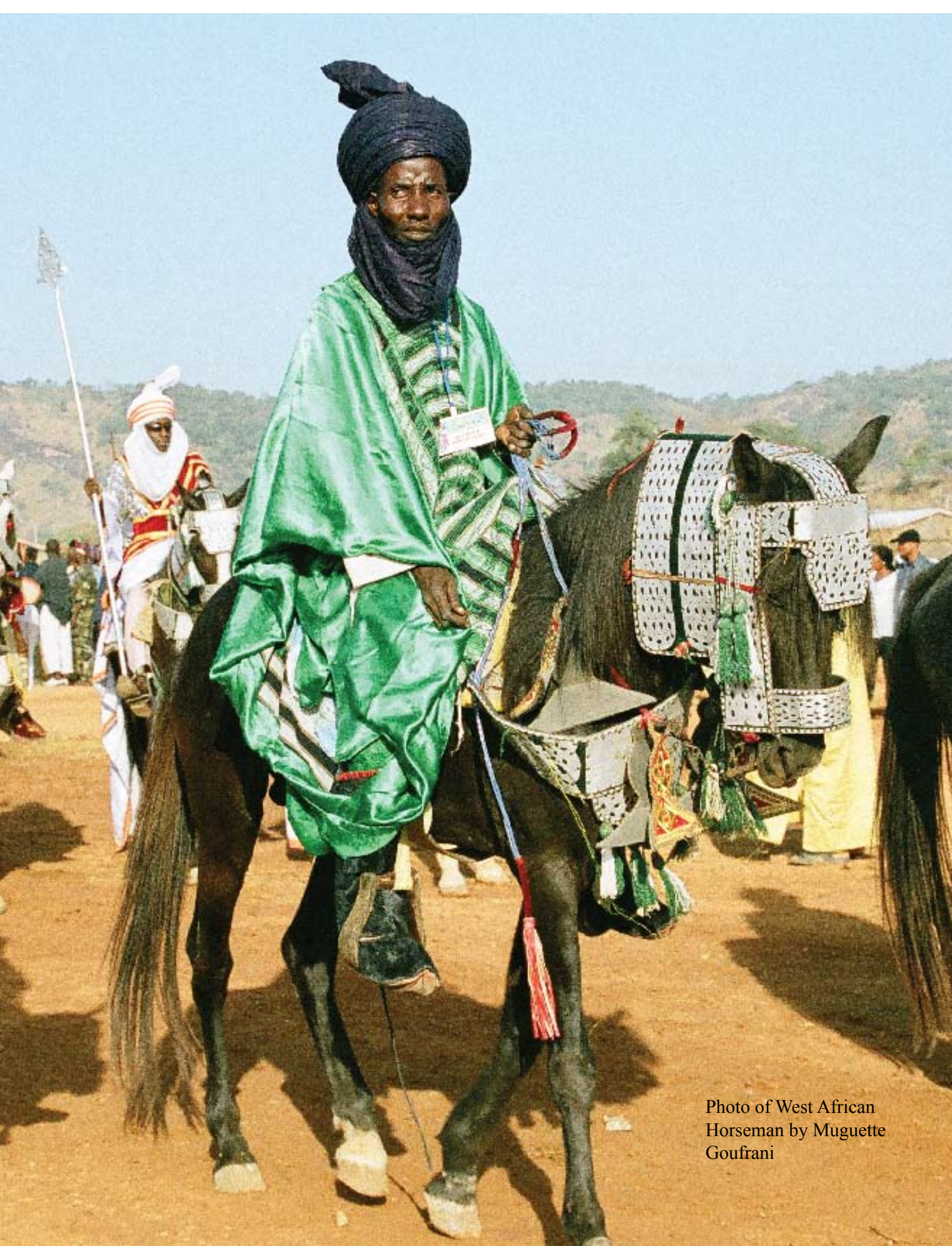


Photo of West African  
Horseman by Muguette  
Goufrani



# GOLDEN TULIP

ACCRA

"One Step Ahead Everywhere"

## Hotel & Room Facilities

Wireless Internet in rooms and public areas  
IDD Telephone  
20 hour room service  
Modern key card system  
Multi-channel TV  
& inhouse movies  
Mini bar  
Trouser Press  
Safe  
Tea/Coffee making facilities  
Business Centre  
206 Standard & Executive air-conditioned rooms  
2 Executive & 4 Junior Suites  
6 Executive Board Rooms  
5 Conference Rooms  
Swimming pool  
Golf Practice  
Tennis Courts  
Fitness Centre  
Forex Bureau  
Car Rental  
Giftshop  
& Casino

The Leading **4 Star**  
Superior first class hotel in Ghana

offers total quality, professional service  
and comfort to every guest



Liberation Road, P.O. Box 18033, Airport - Accra, Ghana Tel. No. 233-21-775360,  
Fax No. 233-21-775361 Email: info@gt-accra.com Vat. Reg. No. 521V000045

[www.goldentulipaccra.com](http://www.goldentulipaccra.com)

+++

GOLDEN TULIP HOTELS AND ROOMS. COMPANIONS IN TRAVEL

## 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 hospital-

ity is outstanding. More information? Please visit <http://crossriverstate.com/obudu.htm> - or [www.africa-ata.org/nigeria.htm](http://www.africa-ata.org/nigeria.htm)

## Tinapa - Birth of a Super Oasis in Nigeria

In fall the 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 combing business, pleasure and leisure! Tinapa is the resort that means business - the business of combing 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 devel-

**CREATIVE CONCEPTS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE**

opment incorporating 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.

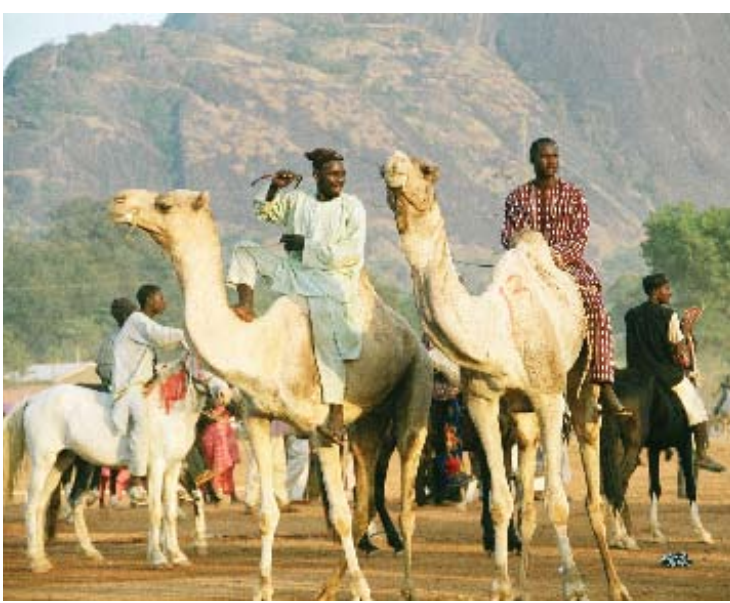
#### **Governor Donald Duke**

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>

# **NIGERIA'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 various 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 going 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





# THE CLOCK IN A ROLICKING WEEK OF FESTIVITIES

say, Latin America's carnivals and music originated here in Nigeria."

"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 fetish 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](http://www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm)*



**NIGERIA EVENTS**

**Black History Month (BHM)**

February 26, 2009 - March 8, 2009

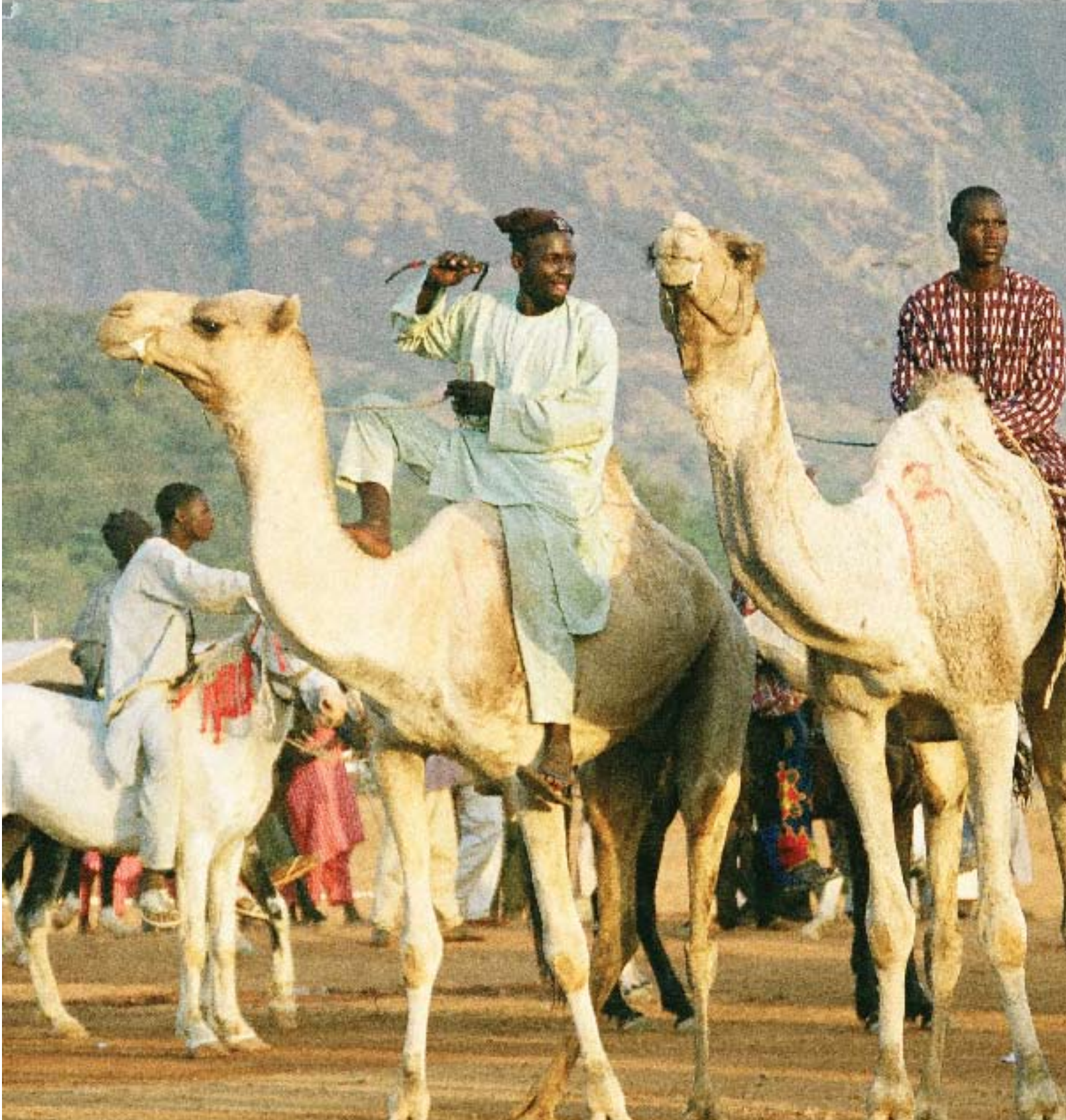
**Black History Week Convention**

**Expo & Osun Festival**, August 2009

**Abuja Carnival** January 2010

Photo of Abuja 2008 Carnival

byMuguette 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 transport-

ed 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 Executive 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.

**Ask about our World Edition on Culinary Tours and Travel in Western Africa**  
africa@smartt.com

**Over 50 Species of Wildlife**

**In Words & Water-colors**


**Awesome African Wildlife**



*"I'm very favorably impressed with the writings...entertaining!"*  
Richard D. Estes, *The Behavior Guide To African Mammals*

**Awesome African Wildlife**  
www.PERPUBLISHER.com  
(303) 431-5867

\$24.95 sec.  
Call for discount.  
244 pp  
8" x 8"  
paperback



# 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 former 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



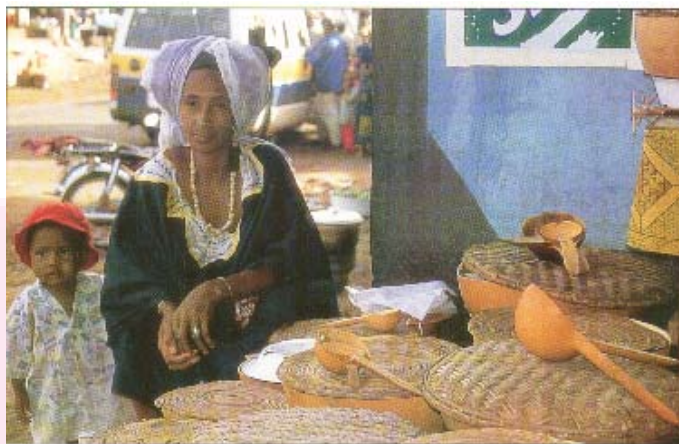
will see the strange resemblance. At certain times, like when a thick fog hugs the mountain side, a wispy smoke seems to rise from the animal's mouth. Our first overnight stop was at the town of Kindia, (140 km from Conakry) where we visited the spectacular Bridal Veil Falls or "Le Voile de la Mariée." 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, Senegal, 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.

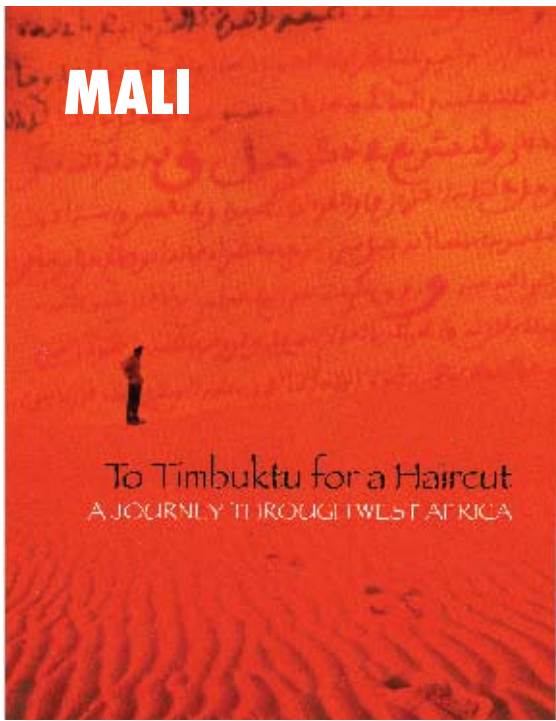
### Thanks to our Host Country

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](http://www.africa-ata.org/guinea.htm)

*Photos: (below) Minstrels and Dance troupe of Les Ballets Africains, Conakry, Guinea. Photos provided by the Tourism Ministry. (page opposite) Youngsters surround early Portuguese cannon during our visit to the Gulf of Guinea Slave Route. Photo by Mugette Goufrani.*





# 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

