



Stuttford Van Lines Country Guide for

Ghana



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: West Africa.

Time: GMT.

Ministry of Tourism

PO Box 4386, Accra, Ghana Tel: (21) 666 701. Website: www.ghanatourism.gov.gh

Ghana High Commission (Education, Visas and Trade) in the UK

104 Highgate Hill, London N6 5HE, UK Tel: (020) 8342 7500 or 7580; (020) 8342 7580 or 7558 or 7501 (Visa section). Website: www.ghana-com.co.uk Consulate opening hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1300 (visa collection).

Ghana High Commission (Information and Administration) in the UK

13 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PN, UK Tel: (020) 7201 5900. Website: www.ghana-com.co.uk Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1730.

Embassy of the Republic of Ghana in the USA

3512 International Drive, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel: (202) 686 4520. Website: www.ghanaembassy.org

Consulate General of Ghana (Visas and Tourist Information) in the USA

19 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017, USA Tel: (212) 832 1300. Website: www.ghanaweb.com

2 OVERVIEW

Country Overview:

Ghana is situated in West Africa and is bounded by Burkina Faso, Togo, the Atlantic Ocean and Côte d'Ivoire. A narrow grassy plain stretches inland from the coast, widening in the east, while the south and west are covered by dense rainforest. To the north are forested hills beyond which is dry savannah and open woodland. Ghana's coastline is dotted with sandy palm-fringed beaches and lagoons. The capital, Accra, features the Makola Market, a large and busy open-air market. Kumasi is the historic capital of the Ashanti civilisation, where ruins of the Manhyia Palace and the Royal Mausoleum burnt down by Lord Baden-Powell may be examined. In the northeast, the Boufom Wildlife Sanctuary contains the spectacular Banfabiri Falls. Mole National Park is recommended. Species of antelope, monkeys, lions and elephants can all be seen on guided excursions. Local dishes include traditional soups (palmnut, groundnut), Kontomere and Okro stews that are normally accompanied by fufu (pounded cassava), kenkey or gari. In Accra and other major centres there are nightclubs combining a selection of Western pop music and spectacular Ghanaian music and dancing.



3 GENERAL INFORMATION

Area: 238,537 sq km (92,100 sq miles).

Population: 21.8 million (UN, 2005).

Population Density: 91.39 per sq km.

Capital: Accra. Population: 2.2 million (World Bank estimate).

GEOGRAPHY: Ghana is situated in West Africa and is a rectangular-shaped country bordered to the north by Burkina Faso, the east by Togo, the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the west by Côte d'Ivoire. A narrow grassy plain stretches inland from the coast, widening in the east, while the south and west are covered by dense rainforest. To the north are forested hills, beyond which is dry savannah and open woodland. In the far north is a plateau averaging 500m (1600ft) in height. In the east the Akuapim Togo hills run inland from the coast along the Togo border. The Black and White Volta rivers enter Ghana from Burkina Faso, merging into the largest manmade lake in the world, Lake Volta. Ghana's coastline is dotted with sandy palm-fringed beaches and lagoons.

Government: Republic. Gained independence from the UK in 1957. Head of State: President John Agyekum Kufour. Recent history: Mr Kufour won a closely-fought election in December 2000 against John Atta Mills, former deputy of long-time leader Jerry John Rawlings. Kufour's party, the New Patriotic Party, also replaced Rawlings' National Democratic Congress as the largest party in the Ghanaian Parliament. With most of the senior echelons of the government and security forces occupied by long-term Rawlings loyalists, Kufour was obliged to move cautiously at first. But, growing in confidence, he has since set up a 'reconciliation commission' to investigate human rights abuses during military rule. The Kufour government has also had to deal with inter-communal violence and land disputes in the north of the country. The greatest controversy, however, has concerned its decision to sell the country's largest and most important company, Ashanti Goldfields (see Business). Since coming to power, economic growth has been Kufour's priority. The country has seen drops in inflation and borrowing costs. Kufour was re-elected in 2004.

Language: The official language is English. Local Ghanaian languages are widely spoken, including Akan, Ewe, Fante, Ga, Dagomba and Twi.

Religion: Christian (69 per cent), Muslim and traditional beliefs. All forms of religion have a strong influence on Ghanaian life.

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50Hz; usually three-pin plugs. Single phase three-pin plugs are used in larger buildings. Older buildings have two-pin plugs. Light bulbs are of the bayonet type.

SOCIAL CONVENTIONS: Ghanaians should always be addressed by their formal titles unless they specifically request otherwise. Handshaking is the usual form of greeting. It is customary in much of West Africa not to use the left hand for touching food. Photography: Permission should be sought before photographing military installations, government buildings or airports.

Passport/Visa



	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	Yes	Yes
Australian	Yes	Yes	Yes
Canadian	Yes	Yes	Yes
USA	Yes	Yes	Yes
OtherEU	Yes	Yes	Yes
Japanese	Yes	Yes	Yes

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for six months required by all except nationals of ECOWAS countries who will be allowed entry with a valid travel certificate.

VISAS: Required by all except the following for stays of up to three months: (a) nationals of ECOWAS countries; (b) nationals of Egypt, Hong Kong (SAR), Kenya, Mauritius and Singapore; (c) those in transit to a third country travelling within 24 hours, as long as they hold onward tickets with reserved seats and do not leave the airport.

Note: The following nationals may obtain visas upon arrival at the port of entry: Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Types of visa and cost: Tourist/Business: £30 (single-entry); £40 (multiple-entry; six months); £60 (multiple-entry; one year); £70 (multiple-entry; two years); Transit: £10.

Validity: Valid for three months from the date of issue. However, length of stay is at the discretion of airport officials and only one month is guaranteed. Visas may be extended when in Ghana. Visas for one year may be granted for specific purposes.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy or High Commission); postal applications are accepted; see Passport/Visa Information for details. A visa can be issued on arrival to nationals of countries without a Ghanaian Mission or Consulate, but only if prior notice is given to the Director of Immigration by the traveller or their sponsor prior to arrival; see Passport/Visa Information.

Application requirements: (a) Valid passport. (b) Completed entry permit application form (two copies, or four if making a postal application). (c) Two passport-size photos, or four if making a postal application. (d) For postal applications, registered or recorded self-addressed envelope. (e) Fee (payable by cash, postal order or bankers' draft made payable to the High Commission; cash is not valid for postal applications). (f) Evidence of onward/return ticket. (g) Evidence of sufficient funds. (h) If travelling at invitation of host in Ghana, a letter of invitation should be submitted. (i) Valid certificate of inoculation against Yellow Fever, if applicable. Business: (a)-(i) and, (j) Letter of guarantee from a company in support of the application (the letter should explain the nature of business the applicant will be conducting in Ghana).

Working days required: Four for personal, a minimum of 10 for postal applications.

Temporary residence: Application with sufficient notice to be made to High Commission or Embassy.

Note: Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should note that some countries require documentary evidence of parental responsibility before allowing lone parents to



enter the country or in some cases before permitting the children to leave the country. For exact requirements contact the Ghana High Commission or Embassy (see Passport/Visa Information).

Passport/Visa Information: Ghana High Commission (Education, Visas and Trade) in the UK104 Highgate Hill, London N6 5HE, UK Tel: (020) 8342 7500 or 7580; (020) 8342 7580 or 7558 or 7501 (Visa section).Website: www.ghana-com.co.ukConsulate opening hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1300 (visa collection). Embassy of the Republic of Ghana in the USA3512 International Drive, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel: (202) 686 4520. Website: www.ghanaembassy.org

4 MONEY

Currency: Cedi (GHC) = 100 pesewas. Notes are in denominations of GHC20,000, 10,000, 5000, 2000 and 1000. Coins are in denominations of 500, 200, 100 and 50 pesewas. The Cedi is pegged to the US\$ at an adjustable rate.

Currency exchange: The exchange rate system has been liberalised and foreign currency is freely available through authorised dealers including banks and foreign exchange bureaux. Cash is exchanged at a more preferential rate than traveller's cheques.

Credit & debit cards: Credit cards (mainly American Express, Diners Club and Visa) are accepted by leading hotels, restaurants, banks, businesses and some shops. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available. Some banks may give cash advances against leading cards. However, those using credit cards should be aware that credit card fraud is common. In large urban areas such as Accra and Kumasi ATMs are commonplace.

Traveller's cheques: To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling. Traveller's cheques can be exchanged in large hotels, banks and foreign exchange bureaux.

Currency restrictions: The import of local currency is limited to amounts which have previously been permitted to be taken out of the country and this must be noted in the passport/travel documents; it must also be declared. Unused local currency can be re-exchanged on proof of authorised exchange, and visitors are advised to retain all currency exchange receipts. The export of local currency is limited to GHC5000. The import of foreign currency is unlimited, subject to declaration (on exchange control form T5 which must be retained to record transactions). The export of foreign currency is limited to US\$5000.

Exchange rate indicators

DateAt time of publishing£1.00=GHC15,904.00\$1.00=GHC9135.00Note: The Cedi is pegged to the US Dollar at an adjustable rate.

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0830-1500.



5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Ghana by persons aged 16 and over without incurring **customs duty**: 400 cigarettes or 100 cigars or 454g of tobacco; 1.1l of spirits or 1.1l of wine; 284ml of perfume.

Note: Duty must be paid on gifts. Those wishing to export handicrafts and antiques not exempt, must obtain a certificate from the Museums and Monuments Board, these are available from the main craft centre or the National Museum.

Restricted items: Animals, firearms, ammunition and explosives.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2006-June 2007 period. Jan 1 2006 New Year's Day. Jan 10 Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice). Mar 6 Independence Day. Apr 14 Good Friday. Apr 17 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 25 Africa Day. Jun 4 Anniversary of the 1979 Coup. Jul 1 Republic Day. Oct 22-24 Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan). Dec 1 National Farmers' Day. Dec 25-26 Christmas. Dec 31 Revolution Day; Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice). Jan 1 2005 New Year's Day. Mar 6 Independence Day. Apr 6 Good Friday. Apr 9 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 25 Africa Day. Jun 4 Anniversary of the 1979 Coup.

Note: Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Many restaurants are closed during the day and there may be restrictions on smoking and drinking. Some disruption may continue into Eid al-Fitr itself. Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha may last anything from two to 10 days, depending on the region. For more information, see the World of Islam appendix.

7 HEALTH

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required
Yellow Fever	Yes	1
Cholera	Yes	2
Typhoid and Polio	3	N/A
Malaria	4	N/A

1: A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required by all nationals entering the country.

2: Following WHO guidelines issued in 1973, a cholera vaccination certificate is no longer a condition of entry to Ghana. However, cholera is a serious risk in this country and precautions are essential. During the rainy seasons (May to Jul and Sep to Oct) there are seasonal outbreaks of cholera. Recent outbreaks have occurred in parts of Accra and Kumasi. Up-to-date advice should



be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness; see the Health appendix.

3: Immunisation against typhoid is usually advised. An outbreak of poliomyelitis occurred in 2003.

4: Malaria risk, predominantly in the malignant falciparum form, exists all year throughout the country.

Food & drink: According to the Ghanaian High Commission in London, tap water in cities is safe to drink. Other water sources should be regarded as being potentially contaminated, and water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilised. Milk is unpasteurised and should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Pork, salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Other risks: Diarrhoeal diseases, including giardiasis, and typhoid fevers are common. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water; swimming pools that are well chlorinated and maintained are safe. Hepatitis A and E are widespread. Hepatitis B is endemic. Hepatitis C occurs, as do dengue fever and TB. Epidemics of meningitis and meningococcal disease may occur throughout tropical Africa, particularly in the savannah areas and during the dry season. Immunisation against diphtheria is sometimes recommended. Those visiting beaches should be aware that swimming can be dangerous due to riptides. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. For more information, consult the Health appendix.

Health care: Health insurance is essential, preferably with cover for emergency evacuation. Medical facilities exist in all the regional capitals as well as in most towns and villages. Emergency medical facilities are extremely limited.

Travel - International

AIR: The national airline is Ghana International Airlines (website: www.fly-ghana.com). Commercial operations began in October 2005, flying from London to Accra daily.

Approximate flight times: From London to Accra is six hours 30 minutes (direct) or eight hours 25 minutes (with stopover in Kano). From New York is nine hours 30 minutes (direct).

Main airports: Accra (ACC) (Kotoka) is 10km (6 miles) north of Accra (travel time 20 minutes). To/from the airport: Taxis to the city are available. Facilities: Banks/bureaux de change, car hire, duty free shops, restaurants and tourist information.

Departure Tax: GHC22,000 for international departures and GHC500 for domestic departures. Rates are subject to change without warning.

SEA: Main ports: Takoradi and Tema. Ships run between Tema and Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and South Africa.

ROAD: A coast road links Lagos (Nigeria), Cotonou (Benin) and Lomé (Togo) to Accra. The best internal road from Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) runs inland through Kumasi. The main northsouth route is also in good condition. Buses and taxis run between Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo



and Ghana. The road from Burkina Faso crosses the border at Navrongo. Long-distance taxis operate between Ghana and neighbouring countries. See Travel Internal for information on documentation.

Travel - Internal

AIR: There are domestic services between Accra, Kumasi and Tamale.

Departure tax: GHC500.

LAKE: The Yapei Queen, a lake steamer, runs twice weekly across Lake Volta between Akosombo and Yeji. Ferries connect at Yeji for Buipe and Makongo, both from which it is possible to arrange onward transportation to Tamale. Booking is advised and can be organised from the Ministry of Tourism (see Top Things To Do).

RAIL: The rail network is limited to a 1000km- (600 mile-) loop by the coast connecting the cities of Accra, Takoradi and Kumasi and several intervening towns. There is also a rail link between the two main ports of Tema and Takoradi. Trains run at least twice a day on all three legs of this single-track triangle. There are two classes of ticket. Passenger cars are not air conditioned. Children under three years of age travel free; half-fare is charged for children aged three to 11.

ROAD: There are 38,940km (24,196 miles) of roads, generally in good condition, but roads outside of the towns are in poor condition. Traffic drives on the right. Car hire: Available but extremely expensive, with or without driver. Coach: State-run and private coach services connect all major towns. The most popular national coach line is the Intercity STC. Vansel STC and Neoplans Buses shuttle hourly between Kumasi and Accra. Other regional capitals and major towns can be reached by bus or by tro tros from Kumasi. Documentation: An International Driving Permit is required. A British driving licence is valid for 90 days.

URBAN: Roads in the major towns have undergone massive renovation to improve traffic flow. Accra has extensive bus and taxi services operated by the private sector. There is an abundance of taxis in the towns. Prices are reasonable. Drivers do not generally expect tips. Other ways of getting around, for the more adventurous traveller, are tro-tros (minibuses) and mammy wagons (converted pick-up trucks).

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS: There are a few international chain hotels in Ghana, all located in the capital. In addition to these there are international-standard hotels, hostels, park lodges and guest houses throughout the country, although they are mainly concentrated in the urban centres. Budget accommodation is available at university campuses in Accra, Cape Coast and Kumasi during the student holidays (Christmas, Easter and summer; June to September). Grading: Hotels, hostels and guest houses are star-graded and licensed by the Ministry of Tourism.

CAMPING: Camping in national parks is possible, but only for the very adventurous, as it can be dangerous. In game reserves, visitors must be accompanied by an armed guide. Camping is also available on the beach in many of the fishing villages but permission must be granted first from the local authorities.



BEACH HUTS: Ghana offers some basic beach hut accommodation, made from local materials, in popular beach resorts. For a list of such accommodation, contact the Ministry of Tourism (see Top Things To Do) or Ghanaweb (website: www.ghanaweb.com).

Introduction

Ghana is divided into 10 regions (Accra, Central Region, Western Region, Volta Region, Ashanti Region, Eastern Region, Brong Ahafo Region, Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region), but for the purpose of this guide, the country has been split into just four regions. This does not necessarily reflect administrative or tribal boundaries. For further details of tours within Ghana, contact the Ghana High Commission (see Contact Addresses section).

Greater Accra Region

Accra: The National Museum has a large collection of Ghanaian art. The Makola Market, a large and busy open-air market, is located on Kojo Thompson Road. Traders from surrounding villages bring their wares every day. The Centre for National Culture is an arts centre and crafts market, where crafts, kente and other traditional cloths can be purchased. The Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum on the High Street is a magnificent monument to the first President of Ghana. The National Theatre is a Chinese showpiece and the venue for musical shows, plays, dances and conferences.

Aburi: Located 38km (24 miles) to the north of Accra, Aburi is in the Akwapim Hills. The Sanatorium (now a rest house), built there in the 19th century, is indicative of the refreshing climate. The Botanical Gardens, planted by British naturalists in colonial days, has a comprehensive array of subtropical plants and trees.

Ada: A popular resort at the mouth of the Volta, this is where Ghanaians and tourists go for watersports. A luxury hotel has been built here. Swimming is safe in the river mouth. Anglers have the opportunity to catch barracuda and Nile perch. Nearby are the salt marshes of the Songor Lagoon, famous for their birdlife.

Shai Hills Game Reserve: A comparatively small reserve some 50km (30 miles) by road from Accra. Horses may be hired here to explore the park.

Central and Western Region

The central region of Ghana borders the Gulf of Guinea and is home to ancient castles and forts that were often used during the slave trade as holding areas for human cargo. Cape Coast Castle, built in the 16th-century and later reconstructed and enlarged, served as the seat of British administration in the then Gold Coast until 1877 (when administration moved to Christiansborg Castle in Accra). Further west is the Castle of Elmina ('the mine'). Elmina was the first Portuguese settlement in Ghana. This huge 15th-century fort, that largely remains intact, is the location of one of the first Catholic churches in sub-Saharan Africa. Fort St Jago was primarily used as a military base and stands on a hill commanding fabulous views of both Elmina and the Atlantic Ocean. Cultural shows are often performed at the castles and guided tours are available. Fort St Jago and Cape Coast Castle have both been declared World Heritage Monuments by UNESCO.

Kakum National Park: Located 20km from Cape Coast, the park is a protected conservation area, following governmental concerns to promote ecotourism. Wildlife that can be seen includes



elephants, bongo antelopes, monkeys, over 800 species of rare birds, butterflies, amphibians and reptiles. Visitors can view wildlife at tree canopy level from the 333m tree-top walkway.

West Coast: There are many popular beach resorts along the western coast. At Dixcove there is a fish market and a 17th-century British fort. Nearby Busua is a tropical beach with palms and spectacular Atlantic breakers. However, as with much of the Ghanaian coast, swimming is unsafe due to the treacherous undertow of the waves. In this area there are to be found small rocky inlets that are safe for swimming.

Volta and Ashanti Region

The Volta region is dominated by Volta Lake, the largest manmade lake on earth. The waterway stretches for two-thirds of the length of the country. A round trip on the car ferry to Kete-Krachi takes one day; alternatively, take the three-day trip to the northern capital of New Tamale at the head of the lake. There are facilities for sailing, water-skiing and other watersports. Ferry links across the lake now make the region more accessible (see Travel Internal section). Akosombo, centre to the important Akosombo irrigation dam, is developing as a holiday resort, particularly for watersports.

Kumasi: This is the historic capital of the Ashanti civilisation, where ruins of the Manhyia Palace and the Royal Mausoleum burnt down by Lord Baden-Powell may be examined. The Cultural Centre is a complex comprising a museum, library and outdoor auditorium largely devoted to the Ashanti. There is also a 'Living Museum', a farm and reconstituted village, where craftspeople such as potters, goldsmiths and sculptors can be seen at work using traditional methods. Of particular interest are weavers making the vividly coloured kente cloth, the ceremonial dress of the region.

Owabi Wildlife Sanctuary: Located to the west, close to Kumasi. Further to the northeast is the Boufom Wildlife Sanctuary, containing the spectacular Banfabiri Falls. To the south is the pleasant gold-mining city of Obuasi.

Northern Region

The northern region is characterised by high plains and a central plateau rising between 150m and 300m. West of the region's main town, Tamale, lies Mole National Park, which is one of the best-equipped nature reserves in Ghana. Visitors can go either on foot or hire a 4-wheel drive vehicle, but must always be accompanied by a guide. Routes are planned to take in species of antelope, monkeys, buffalo, warthog and - more rarely - lions and elephants which have been introduced into the region. Unlike in many other African game reserves, visitors are allowed to camp and explore the area at will rather than being confined to a car on a set route. Tourist facilities exist at the entrance to the park; these include a motel with restaurant. Situated five miles north of Mole National Park, the Larabanga Mosque is well worth visiting. Built in the style of former Western Sudanese Empires, it houses a holy Koran and is believed by locals to be a 'God-built mosque'.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Wildlife: Compared to other African countries, Ghana's national parks and game reserves are small, and relatively few tourists visit them. The country's newest national park is the Kakum Nature Reserve which, in addition to animal species such as monkeys, antelopes and water



buffalo, has an aerial walkway built through the rainforest canopy offering treetop views. Guided tours leave twice daily. Safaris are available in all of Ghana's game reserves, including the Owabi Wildlife Sanctuary, the Bia National Park, the Bui National Park and the Mole Game Reserve, all of which are also good options for hiking and exploring the savannah and rainforest. For further information, see the Resorts & Excursions section.

Watersports: Although Ghana's coast offers miles of sandy beaches, strong currents and tides can make bathing quite dangerous. Near Accra there are three swimming pools within yards of the surf. Ada, at the mouth of the River Volta, also offers safe swimming, although it is not advisable to swim upstream. Visitors should also make enquiries locally as there may be some risk of bilharzia. For those in search of sailing or water-skiing, there are numerous centres with good facilities, particularly on Lake Volta, which has a yacht club at Akosombo, and at Ada. Another exhilarating experience is to be taken out over the surf in a local fishing boat. Sport fishing for barracuda is popular. The best spots for surfing are at Fete, Dixcove (both west of Accra) and Kokrobite (16km/10 miles from Accra).

Other: Ghanaians are keen footballers, tennis players and boxers. Another popular sport is horse racing, which takes place at the Accra racecourse every Saturday. There are golf courses at Accra, Achimota, Kumasi and Tema.

Entertainment

Food & Drink: International food is available in most large hotels and many restaurants serve a range of local traditional foods. In Accra there are also restaurants serving Middle Eastern, Chinese, French and other European cuisine. National specialities: Kenkey (hot peppers and fried fish, eaten mostly in the Accra region). On the coast, prawns and other seafood are popular. Akyeke (cassava couscous served with avocado). Fufu (pounded cassava beans, yam, plantain or rice, usually accompanying traditional soups (palmnut, groundnut), kontomere and okro (stews)). Fante fante (a palm oil stew with small fish, popular in the central regions). Akrantee (bushmeat). Green green snails. Nkontomire (yam leaf soup). National drinks: Pito is a beer brewed in the Northern region made from millet. Zom koom (toasted millet flour in water). Palm wine. Coconut juice. Tipping: Tipping is permitted, it is not usually included in the bill.

Nightlife: In Accra and other major centres, there are nightclubs with Western popular music and Afro beat. Concerts can be seen at the national theatre in Accra. The School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon often hosts drama, poetry and cultural dancing shows. Foreign and Ghanaian films can be seen at the Ghana Film Theatre and Executive Film House in Accra.

Shopping: Almost all commodities, including luxury items, can be found in the shops and markets. Artefacts from the Ashanti region and northern Ghana can be bought along with attractive handmade gold and silver jewellery. Modern and old African art is also available (although prices are high), in particular, Ashanti stools and brass weights formerly used to measure gold. In all the northern markets, earthenware pots, leatherwork, locally woven shirts and Bolgatanga baskets woven from multi-coloured raffia are sold. Ghana is home to the traditional Kente cloth. Shopping day trips are organised by the Ministry of Tourism (see Top Things To Do). Shopping hours: Mon-Tue, Thurs-Fri 0800-1200 and 1400-1730, Wed and Sat 0800-1300.

Business



GDP: US\$7.5 billion (2003). Main exports: Gold, cocoa, timber, tuna, bauxite, aluminium, manganese ore and diamonds. Main imports: Capital equipment, petroleum and foodstuffs. Main trade partners: Mexico, Nigeria, China, UK, USA, France and The Netherlands.

Economy: Agriculture occupies most of the working population, producing both subsistence and cash crops. The most important of the latter is cocoa, of which Ghana is one of the world's major producers. Coffee and various fruit are the other main crops. Fishing has grown in importance since the acquisition of modern vessels. The country's main industry is mining, particularly for diamonds and gold (produced at the famous Ashanti gold field), and this is both a major employer and an important foreign currency earner. Although recent mineral exploration failed to discover anticipated oil and gas deposits, new bauxite and manganese deposits have been identified. Manufacturing is concentrated in food processing, textiles, vehicles and chemicals. The country's energy needs are met by hydroelectric projects; these produce a surplus which Ghana sells to its neighbours. As a primary commodity producer, Ghana has suffered from consistently low-world prices for its main products throughout much of the last 20 years. Since the late 1980s, Ghana has been something of a laboratory for a new regime for less developed countries devised by the International Monetary Fund and known as a Structural Adjustment programme. Customised for each state, the IMF, in conjunction with the World Bank, offers steady financial support to the national exchequer in exchange for government undertakings to implement agreed economic policies. The latter are based on liberalisation of the economy, the removal of trade barriers, privatisation of state-owned assets and firm budgetary control (leading invariably to cuts in social and welfare spending). The Government is now aiming to improve social services to its citizens. Despite the notable lack of tangible benefits to the population as a whole, the Ghana programme has been judged a qualified success and the country has since been regularly cited as role models for the developing world. Receipts from the Gold sector helped sustain GDP growth in 2004, however inflation remains a major internal problem. Ghana is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Business Etiquette: Appointments are customary and visitors should always be punctual for meetings. Best time for business visits is from September to April. Office hours: Mon-Fri 0800-1200 and 1400-1700, Sat 0830-1200.

Commercial Information: Ghana National Chamber of Commerce PO Box 2325, Accra, Ghana
Tel: (21) 662 427. Website: www.g77tin.org/gncchp.html

10 CLIMATE

A tropical climate, hot and humid in the north and in the forest land of Ashanti and southwest **plains. There are two rainy seasons in Ghana:** from March to July and from September to October.

Required clothing: Tropical lightweight clothing. Sunglasses are advisable.

11 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Ghana, until independence from British colonial rule on 6 March 1957, was known as the Gold Coast. The country is named after one of the ancient Sudanese Empires which flourished between the fourth and 10th centuries. Subsequently, the area was divided among



several kingdoms, of which the most important were the Fanti, who occupied the coastal region, and the Ashanti, whose territory was further inland. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in the late 15th century. During the next 300 years, the Gold Coast became a major trading centre, mainly in gold and slaves. All the main European colonial powers were engaged in this type of commerce. From the beginning of the 19th century, an increasingly assertive Ashanti kingdom drove out many of the European colonists. The important exception was the British who, allied with the rival Fanti kingdom, defeated the Ashanti in 1874 and took control of the whole of the Gold Coast. The Ashanti-controlled interior was subjugated over the next 15 years and converted into 'protectorates', locally ruled under British supervision. The colony's lands were supplemented in 1917 by parts of neighbouring Togoland which was formerly under German control. Together, these formed what in 1957 became the independent state of Ghana the first British territory in Africa to be decolonised. Three years after independence (1960) Ghana became a Republic with Dr Kwame Nkrumah, leader of the Convention People's Party (CPP) as the first President. Under Dr Nkrumah, Ghana made rapid and remarkable progress in education, industrial and infrastructure development and in the provision of social services. At the same time, the country played a leading role in international affairs especially the United Nations and Commonwealth in the struggle for the liberation of other African countries, most of which were still under colonial rule. However, Nkrumah's growing dictatorial tendencies at home disaffected many, especially in the armed forces, and in the end it was they who in February 1966 overthrew the CPP Government in a coup led by Colonel Emmanuel Kotoka. A pattern of fledgling civilian governments aborted by the intervention of the armed forces has dogged Ghana for much of the time since then. The most prominent figure in recent Ghanaian politics is Jerry John Rawlings, a former Air Force Flight Lieutenant, who first came to prominence as the leader of coups in 1979 and 1981. Rawlings initially promoted radical socialist economic and social policies but, as Ghana's fiscal problems worsened during the 1980s, the Government was forced to turn to the IMF. The scheme devised by the IMF subsequently became the blueprint for the Structural Adjustment Programmes which have since been widely adopted throughout the developing world on the insistence of the IMF and World Bank. (see Economy). Ghana was the original test-bed. On the political front, President Rawlings and the ruling party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) introduced a new constitution in 1992 before submitting themselves to the verdict of the electorate and winning both the presidency and a huge majority of legislature seats (although most opposition parties boycotted the elections claiming widespread irregularities). Both Rawlings and the NDC were re-elected in 1996. By 2000, as these terms of office drew to a close, the government became afflicted by growing mismanagement and corruption. In December 2000, a closely-fought election pitted Rawlings' former deputy John Atta Mills, standing for the NDC, against John Kufour, leader of the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) and several minor candidates. The contest was dubbed 'the battle of the bores', acknowledging the failure of either main candidate to match the charisma of the outgoing Rawlings. However, charisma is not an essential qualification for governing a country and Kufour won the run-off against Mills and took office at the beginning of 2001. The NPP also replaced the NDC as the largest party in the Ghanaian Parliament. With most of the senior echelons of the government and security forces occupied by long-term Rawlings loyalists, Kufour was obliged to move cautiously at first. But, growing in confidence, he has since set up a 'reconciliation commission' to investigate human rights abuses during military rule. The Kufour government has also had to deal with inter-communal violence and land disputes in the north of the country. The greatest controversy, however, has concerned its decision to sell the country's largest and most important company, Ashanti Goldfields (see Economy).

Government: Under the provisions of a new constitution accepted by referendum in April 1992, the President and a new National Assembly are elected by universal suffrage. The President can be elected for a maximum of two four-year terms. The unicameral legislature, the National Assembly, has 200 seats and is also elected for four years.



Travel Advice

While most visits to Ghana are trouble-free, violent crime can occur at any time. Travellers are advised to exercise a high level of vigilance in public areas, and when travelling by road. Localised outbreaks of civil unrest can occur at short notice due to ongoing local chieftancy and land disputes. You should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate terrorist attacks, which could be against civilian targets, including places frequented by foreigners. This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change rapidly, visitors are advised to contact the following **organisations for the latest travel advice**: British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Tel: (0845) 850 2829. Website: www.fco.gov.uk US Department of State Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>

Top Things To See

See a large collection of Ghanaian art in Accra's National Museum. The Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum on the High Street is a magnificent monument to the first President of Ghana. Independence Square, dominated by the Independence Arch and the Memorial of the Unknown Soldier, is the venue for many national celebrations. Funerals are an important occasion when Ashantis celebrate life and bid farewell to the dead. Just outside Accra at Nungua are the carpentry workshops of the world famous Fantasy Coffins of Paa Joe and Paa Willie. Among the Ga people it is fashionable to be laid to rest in a coffin that bears a relationship to what the deceased did in life. The coffins come in all shapes from vegetables to animals and birds. On the western coast, the historic towns of Duakwa and Mensa Krom are home to some of the region's best woodcarvers. The central region of Ghana borders the Gulf of Guinea and is home to ancient castles and forts that were often used during the slave trade as holding areas for human cargo. Go to the Cape Coast Castle, built in the 16th century and later reconstructed and enlarged, which served as the seat of British administration in the then Gold Coast until 1877 (when administration moved to Christiansborg Castle in Accra). Head further west to the Castle of Elmina ('the mine'). Elmina was the first Portuguese settlement in Ghana. This huge 15th-century fort, that largely remains intact, is the location of one of the first Catholic churches in sub-Saharan Africa. Fort St Jago was primarily used as a military base and stands on a hill commanding fabulous views of both Elmina and the Atlantic Ocean. Cultural shows are often performed at the castles and guided tours are available. All Ghana's castles and forts have been declared World Heritage Monuments by UNESCO. In Kumasi, the historic capital of the Ashanti civilisation, examine the ruins of the Manhyia Palace and the Royal Mausoleum burnt down by Lord Baden-Powell. The Cultural Centre is a complex comprising a museum, library and outdoor auditorium largely devoted to the Ashanti. There is also a 'Living Museum', a farm and reconstituted village, where craftspeople such as potters, goldsmiths and sculptors can be seen at work using traditional methods. Of particular interest are weavers making the vividly coloured kente cloth, the ceremonial dress of the region. In the north, the Larabanga Mosque, situated 8km (5 miles) north of Mole National Park, is well worth visiting. Built in the style of former Western Sudanese Empires, it houses a holy Koran and is believed by locals to be a 'God-built mosque'. Pay a visit to the Witches' settlements, located at Ngani in the Yendi district, Gamaga in the east Mamprusi district and Kpatinga in the Fushegu district. These are sanctuaries for people, mostly women, accused of witchcraft.

Tourist Information: Ministry of Tourism PO Box 4386, Accra, Ghana Tel: (21) 666 701. Website: www.ghanatourism.gov.gh Consulate General of Ghana (Visas and Tourist Information) in the USA 19 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017, USA Tel: (212) 832 1300. Website: www.ghanaweb.com



Top Things To Do

In Accra, purchase crafts, kente and other traditional cloths at the Centre for National Culture, which is an arts centre and crafts market. Alternatively, go to the Makola Market, which is amongst the most famous markets of Accra, a large and busy open-air market located on Kojo Thompson Road. Traders from surrounding villages bring their wares every day. There is also the Osu Night Market, where hundreds of lanterns and candles illuminate the stalls. Watch a musical show, play or dance at Accra's National Theatre, which is a Chinese showpiece. Attend a Ghanaian festival and enjoy drumming, dancing and feasting. Every part of the country has its own annual festivals for the affirmation of tribal values, the remembrance of ancestors and past leaders, and the purification of the state in preparation for another year (for example, the Kente Festival, Bonwire, Ejisu Juaben district in January, which commemorates the origin of the kente cloth, or the Kobine Festival in September). Arrange a surface visit to the pleasant gold-mining city of Obuasi in the Ashanti region. Located 38km (24 miles) to the north of Accra, Aburi is in the Akwapim Hills. The Sanatorium (now a rest house), built there in the 19th century, is indicative of the refreshing climate. Walk through the Botanical Gardens, planted by British naturalists in colonial days, which have a comprehensive array of subtropical plants and trees. View wildlife in Ghana's national parks. The country's newest national park is the Kakum Nature Reserve, a protected conservation area 20km (12 miles) from Cape Coast which has monkeys, antelopes and water buffalo. Visitors can view wildlife at tree canopy level from the 333m (1093ft) tree-top walkway and it is possible to stay in the Kakum Conservation Area Tree House, 12m (40 feet) above the forest floor; contact the Ministry of Tourism for details (see Tourist Information). Safaris are available in all of Ghana's game reserves, including the Owabi Wildlife Sanctuary, the Bia National Park, the Bui National Park, the Mole Game Reserve and Kakum Nature Reserve all of which are also good options for hiking and exploring the savannah and rainforest. Visitors can also explore the Shai Hills Game Reserve, on horseback. West of the northern region's main town, Tamale, lies Mole National Park, which is the largest and one of the best-equipped nature reserves in Ghana. Visitors can go either on foot or hire a 4-wheel drive vehicle, but must always be accompanied by a guide. Routes are planned to take in species of antelope, monkeys, buffalo, warhog and - more rarely - lions and elephants which have been introduced into the region. Visitors are allowed to camp and explore the area at will rather than being confined to a car on a set route. Tourist facilities exist at the entrance to the park; these include a motel which overlooks an elephant bath, with restaurant. There is also a small landing strip for light aircraft. Bird enthusiasts should go to the Owabi Forest Reserve and Bird Sanctuary, located to the west, close to Kumasi. Further to the northeast is the Bomfobiri Wildlife Sanctuary, containing the spectacular Bomfobiri Falls. Relax on the beaches of the Atlantic coast. Labadi Pleasure beach and Kokrobite beach are just 25km west of Accra. The new Coco Beach Resort located at Teshie-Nungua, east of Accra has excellent accommodation and a serene atmosphere. Although Ghana's coast offers miles of sandy beaches, strong currents and tides can make bathing quite dangerous. There are many popular beach resorts along the western coast. At Dixcove, there is a fish market and the 17th-century British Fort Metal Cross. Nearby Busua is a tropical beach with palms and spectacular Atlantic breakers. In this area, there are small rocky inlets that are safe for swimming. A popular resort at the mouth of the Volta, Ada is where Ghanaians and tourists go for watersports. Swimming is safe in the river mouth, but it is not advisable to swim upstream. Anglers have the opportunity to catch barracuda and Nile perch. Nearby are the salt marshes of the Songow Lagoon, famous for their birdlife. The Volta region is dominated by Volta Lake, the largest manmade lake on earth. The waterway stretches for two-thirds of the length of the country. Enjoy a round trip on the car ferry to Kete-Krachi which takes one day; alternatively, take the three-day trip to the northern capital of New Tamale at the head of the lake. There are facilities for sailing, water-skiing and other watersports. Ferry links across the lake now make the region more accessible (see Travel Internal). Lake Bosomtwi is also great



for diving, swimming and mountaineering. Canoe trips through the mangrove jungle of the Ankobra River lasting eight days are organised by Continental Africa Tours. Contact the Ministry of Tourism for further details (see Tourist Information). Another exhilarating experience is to be taken out over the surf in a local fishing boat. Sport fishing for barracuda is popular. The best spots for surfing are at Fete, Dixcove (both west of Accra) and Kokrobite (16km/10 miles from Accra). Akosombo, centre to the important Akosombo irrigation dam, is developing as a holiday resort, particularly for watersports. Visitors can take part in several traditions such as funerals and naming ceremonies. Funerals are normally held on Saturdays and members of the public are expected to participate. Mourners adorn themselves in black and red 'Adinkra' cloths. Village Exchange Ghana offers internships and volunteer opportunities in the area, and also runs excursions in this region (**website:** www.villageexchangeinternational.org). Aduklu Mountain hike tours are available through the Ministry of Tourism, and Afadjato Mountain in the Volta region attracts climbers of all ages. Mount Afadjato and Togbo Falls at Liati Wote are excellent for hiking.

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Overview II

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Communications



Telephone: Country code: 233. IDD service is available in most parts of the country. Payphones can be found in main towns.

Mobile telephone: Coverage is good around main towns and patchy to non-existent elsewhere.

Internet: Internet facilities can be found throughout the country in most towns but connection is usually very slow (56K). Hotels have faster access.

Post: Airmail letters to Europe may take two weeks or more to arrive.

MEDIA: A free press operates in Ghana. There are no major restrictions on private press and broadcasters, who are regularly critical of government policy. Lively radio phone-in programmes are common and popular. Numerous private radio stations compete for limited advertising revenue in Accra and elsewhere. The state-run Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) runs national TV and radio networks. Press: Daily and weekly newspapers are available in English and include Daily Graphic, The Ghanaian Times (both daily) and The Mirror (weekly).TV: Ghana TV (GTV) is run by the GBC. Metro TV is part public, part private. Other channels include TV3 (privately owned) and cable operator Multichoice.Radio: GBC operates Radio 1 (programmes in English and local languages), Radio 2 and local Accra station Unique FM. Among the plethora of private stations are Adom FM, Happy FM, Space FM and Vibe FM. BBC World Service and Radio France Internationale are available on FM in Accra.