

TRAVEL WITH AN ANTHROPOLOGIST



GHANA: HEADING TO MODERNITY WITHOUT LOSING THE TRADITIONS

(Special Events: Dipo initiation rite, Aboakyer festival &
Akwasidae Festival)

10 DAYS / 9 NIGHTS

Scheduled departure date

From Accra

April 25th 2020

Minimum 2 – Maximum 16 participants

A special trip together with an anthropologist to discover how tradition and modernity goes hand in hand in a country which ongoing development remains underestimated within Western countries.

We will witness how ethnic-cultural rites and traditions are still celebrated and strongly hold their cultural power. Thus, we will attend three important festivals celebrated by three different cultural groups: a religious, an institutional and a cultural-societal one.

Every year, Fanti thank the God of Winneba through the Aboakyer: the “deer hunting festival”. Ashanti people are proud of their cultural origins and very much attached to their king. Indeed, every six weeks, they celebrate the Akwasidae to show respect to their king. Every year, Krobo people gather together in the “capital” of Krobo-land: Akosombo to celebrate the female initiation rite, the rite to become a real Krobo woman.

During the trip, we will try to understand how people still define themselves through their cultural-ethnic origins while claiming and living as Ghanaian citizens. Thus, we will dive into the lively and modern capital: Accra, strolling around art galleries, pubs with live music and the poor district of James Towns, the original settlement of Accra.

Ghana will give us the best scenario to understand why tradition and modernity cannot live one without another.



ITINERARY

Day 1, 25th April

Accra In

Arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel

Meals: free

Overnight: Villa boutique 4* or similar (all rooms en-suite and with A/C, swimming pool)

Day 2 & 3, 26th & 27th April

Dipo female initiation rite (Accra – Krobo: 100 km – 2 hrs; then drives in the region)



Drive to Krobo land to attend the **Dipo Festival**, the greatest legacy of this region located approximately 80 kilometers north of Accra.

Dipo is a female initiation rite which aims at turning a girl into a woman. The entrance into womanhood will be led according to the tradition and girls who successfully go through this rite can become (good wives. The girls undergo a series of rituals, tests and tasks to prove both their chastity and their being ready for adult life.

During the final steps of the rite, the girls are elegantly decorated: colorful assorted beads adorn their exposed upper parts while from waist to knee they are covered in beautiful fabrics. Their breasts are bare for everyone to see.

During the ceremony, the girls appear in public in their ceremonial dress and then their heads are shaved leaving only a small portion of hair on the head; a piece of raffia is tied around their neck to indicate they are Dipo-yi. On the next morning, the girls are given a ritual bath in a river and then are required to taste foods like sugar cane and peanuts. They will learn women's tasks and once the rite is over they will return

from a secret place adorned with glass beads necklaces and wrapped in beautiful textiles: it is the time of the celebration: they are the new born! The day after they will dance for the community asking for money...

The Krobo are very good at making glass beads and the festival provides an excellent opportunity to exhibit their precious beautiful handmade craftwork to the general public. This century-old tradition is so well reputed that glass beads of Ghana are generally referred to as Krobo beads. The process involves different stages: scrap glass is first ground into a fine powder then it is meticulously made into patterns and placed into hand-made clay molds covered in kaolin in order to be baked. We will have the time to learn and to produce our own beads!

During this stay we will also attend a **voodoo ceremony**.

In a remote hidden village we will join a Voodoo ceremony: the frenetic rhythm of the drums and chants of the followers help to call the voodoo spirit who takes possession of some of the dancers who in turn fall into a deep trance: eyes rolling back, grimaces, convulsions, insensitivity to fire or pain. Sakpata, Heviesso, Mami Water and other voodoos show their presence by taking possession of their followers. In this narrow village, surrounded by the magic atmosphere of a voodoo ceremony, we will finally understand how deeply-rooted traditions still are in African soul.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Afrikiko Resort or similar (all rooms en-suite and with aircon, swimming pool)

Day 4, 28th April

Akosombo – Accra (100KM, 2H)

It is time to leave Krobo-land to head to the metropolis of Africa: Accra!

Today we will focus on James Town: the original settlement of the city inhabited by Ga people. Other than enjoying the atmosphere we will visit the reminiscences of the time of the slave trade and the old lighthouse. We will try to visit one of the many boxing gyms: the popular sport among the youngsters and lastly, we will see **JamesTown Cafe** to see what they are doing to foster community, the exhibit at **ArchiAfrika**, and the **graffiti space across the way**.

We end the day with a visit to an atelier specialized in “fantasy coffins”. These unique handcrafted coffins can reflect any shape: fruits, animals, fish, cars, airplanes.... Imagination is the only key! Started in Accra, these flamboyant coffin designs are by now collected worldwide and exhibited in museums.

Optional: evening with live music

Meals: B – L - D

Overnight: Villa Boutique 4* or similar (all rooms en-suite with A/C, swimming pool)

Day 5, 29th April

Accra: West End

Today we focus on the very modern soul of Accra.

We will visit some **art galleries** like Artists Alliance Gallery, Wild Gecko Handicrafts, Gallery 1957 etc.

It won't be surprising that Accra is the set of the show "an African city" the equivalent of "Sex and the city" created by a Ghanaian woman. We will stroll around the **design and cloths shops** form the show, hopefully having the chance to meet some designers who could explain us their works.

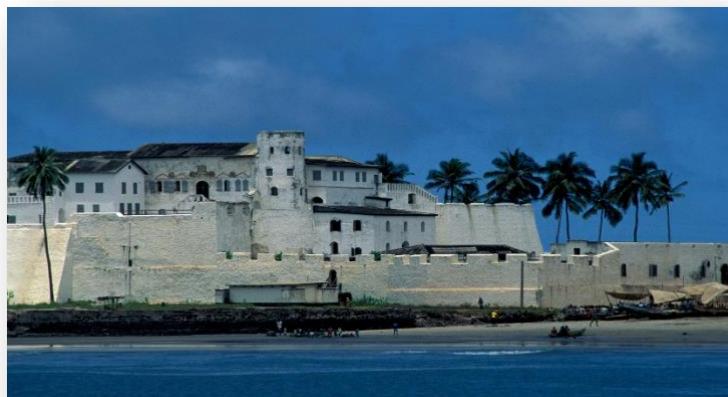
In the evening we will enjoy dinner with live music.

Meals: B – L -D

Overnight: Villa Boutique 4* or similar (all rooms en-suite and with A/C, swimming pool)

Day 6, 30th April

Accra – Elmina (157Km, 3.30h): Slaves' Castles



Drive to the coast.

Elmina Castle, the oldest European building in Africa, erected by the Portuguese in the 15th century. At different times the castle has been used as a warehouse to trade gold, ivory, and eventually slaves. The castle we visit today is the result of successive extension works and is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The old Dutch

Cemetery in Elmina goes back to 1806. Outside the castle, there is a spectacular fishing village with lots of large colourful fishing boats - every day these wooden large pirogues conducted by skilled fishermen across strong ocean waves and currents, "fighting" to earn a living. In the old town we will see the Posuban, the shrines of the ancient "Asafo companies" - the warriors who used to put their offerings on the large colourful statues. The alleys in the old town have a very lively atmosphere, bringing us back to a time when Elmina was a busy colonial town.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Anomabu Beach Resort or similar, Ocean front resort with comfortable bungalows on the beach. (all bungalows ensuite and with aircon)

Day 7, 1st May

Elmina – Winneba (2h)

The day starts with the visit of **Cape Coast** castle was built by the Swedish in 1653. From 1657 to 1664 it changed hands many times as it was conquered by the Danes, the Dutch, the Fanti (a local tribe), the Swedes and finally the British. Today, it hosts a museum on the history of slave trade.

In the afternoon transfer to Winneba where the **atmosphere will be joyful**, people are getting ready for the **next day festival**. We will walk around taking the opportunity to join the excitement. Fetish priests and worshippers pour libations to the shrines and then walk across the town with their fetish.

Meals: B – L – D

Overnight Blue Diamond Beach Resort or similar (all rooms en-suite and with A/C, swimming pool). Standard Bungalows

Day 8, 2nd May

Aboakyer festival, Winneba

Winneba – Kumasi (250Km, 5h)

Our trip between modernity and tradition continues with the **Aboakyer Festival**.

Aboakyer, also known as the ‘deer hunting festival’, is organized to honor the tribal God of the town. In this festival, God Penkye Otu receives the sacrifice of a deer. The festival originated about three hundred years ago, when Winneba was first settled. People believed they managed to establish their homes here only thanks to the help of their God and they are still under its protection. This festival is the expression of their gratitude. Aboakyer Festival involves two groups of people in Winneba, the Tuafuo and the Dentsifo. They compete with one another to go into the bush and be the first to catch a deer. Armed with only clubs, the group which first catches the animal rushes back home singing war and victory songs. The deer is then presented to the Omanhene who places his bare right foot three times on it. After completing this ritual, the deer is lifted up and carried through the town streets by singing and dancing men to the shrine of Penkye Otu. In the final act of the festival the Tuafuo and the Dentsifo come together before their God and sacrifice the deer.

In the afternoon transfer to Kumasi

Meals B – L - D

Overnight: Miklin or similar (all rooms en-suite and with aircon)

Day 9, 3rd May

Kumasi: Akwasidae festival



Today we will attend the last festival of our journey: **the Akwasidae**. Each year, in the Ashanti calendar certain days are dedicated to a very special celebration at the Royal Palace in Kumasi and this traditional ceremony takes place in one of the last African Kingdoms which has maintained its ancient rituals still alive.

During this celebration, the King sits under a spectacular colourful umbrella, is adorned in vivid cloth and massive centuries old jewellery (Ashanti gold jewellery and masks are considered masterpieces of African art) and he is surrounded by the Ashanti elders and advisors, all under the authority of the Royal Speaker who holds in his hands the symbols of power. In front of the King a narrow

passage of dignitaries is also formed, representing all roles and positions of power within the kingdom: sword and knife bearers, armed guards, carriers of beautiful ostrich feathers fans etc. The ceremony is then made up of a procession of royal court attendants bringing gifts, storytellers reciting the history of the Ashanti Kings, drummers & trumpeters playing horns of ivory. Corpulent dancers dressed in vivid red costumes perform an erotic dance. The mother queen also joins the ceremony accompanied by her attendants. We will witness and experience the splendour, the flavour and the atmosphere of one of last great African monarchs.

Depending on the time, we will visit the **Ashanti cultural centre**, a rich collection of Ashanti artefacts in a wonderful reproduction of an Ashanti house.

Meals: B – L -D

Overnight: Miklin hotel or similar (all rooms en-suite and with A/C, swimming pool)

Day 10, 4th May

Kumasi – Accra (250km, 5h)

Transfer to Accra and time for the last shower.

Transfer to the airport

End of services

Meals: B – L

Overnight: Rooms in day-use till h. 18.00

Technical Sheet

Due to the characteristic of the trip, the itinerary might be modified in order to match with the traditional events

Twin rooms (two beds apart) are very limited. Please check the availability with TransAfrica when booking

- **VISAS:** Ghana- single entry visa to be obtained before the departure
- **VACCINATIONS:** Yellow fever – compulsory; malaria prophylaxis - highly recommended.
- **MEALS:** lunch, picnic or at local restaurants (pre-selected menus); dinner at the hotel restaurant (pre-selected menu)
- **LUGGAGE:** due to the itinerary please contain the weight in 20 kg (45 Lbs), preferable use duffle bags
- **TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Not included. Mandatory for medical assistance, repatriation, material and physical damages. We are not responsible for any material and physical damage during the tour
- **TRANSPORT:** microbus or minibus or 4x4 vehicles
- **DRIVING HOURS:** The driving hours do not include time for stops and visits
- All our trips are designed to be flexible so that we can adapt it to weather conditions, focus on the group's interests and take advantage of opportunities that arise once there.
- Considering the special nature of the journey, some parts may be modified due to unpredictable factors and are based on unarguable decisions of the local guide. Costs originating from such variations will be sole responsibility of the participants. Of course, the guide will do his/her utmost to adhere to the original program.
- Prices could change in case of major changes in services costs, beyond the organizer's will

Rates per person in a shared double

Validity 2020

All departures are confirmed with minimum 2 people, when booking occurs at least 60 days prior to departure.

Number of Participants	Published Rates (Recommended selling rates)
Based on 6+ guests	2.769 Euro
Based on 2/5 guests	3.448 Euro
Single Supplement	548 Euro

Included:

- Assistance at airport upon arrival (day 1) and departure (day 10)
- Transfers and tour in minibuses/microbuses and/or 4WD vehicles
- Anthropologist
- Tours and visits as per the programme
- Accommodation in standard rooms, as per itinerary
- All meals as described: B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner
- Mineral water in the bus/car during the visits one bottle per day
- Entrance fees to parks, concessions, protected areas and cultural sites
- First Aid box
- All service charges and taxes

Not included:

- International flights
- Earlier (prior day 1) and/or later (after day 10) transfers from and to airport
- Visa fees and any airport departure taxes
- Any meal or sightseeing tour other than those specified
- Mineral water and drinks at meals
- Porterage
- Fees for personal photos and videos
- Personal and holiday insurance (compulsory)
- Tips for drivers, guides and hotel staff
- Costs relating to delayed or lost luggage
- Any item of personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.
- Whatever is not mentioned as included

Terms of payment

Payment policy

A deposit of 30% is required at the time of confirmation and the balance is due no less than 14 days before the arrival of guests at the destination.