

**SPECIAL EVENT :
BISSAU CARNIVAL**



**THE AFRICAN WEST COAST
SENEGAL GAMBIA AND GUINEA BISSAU**

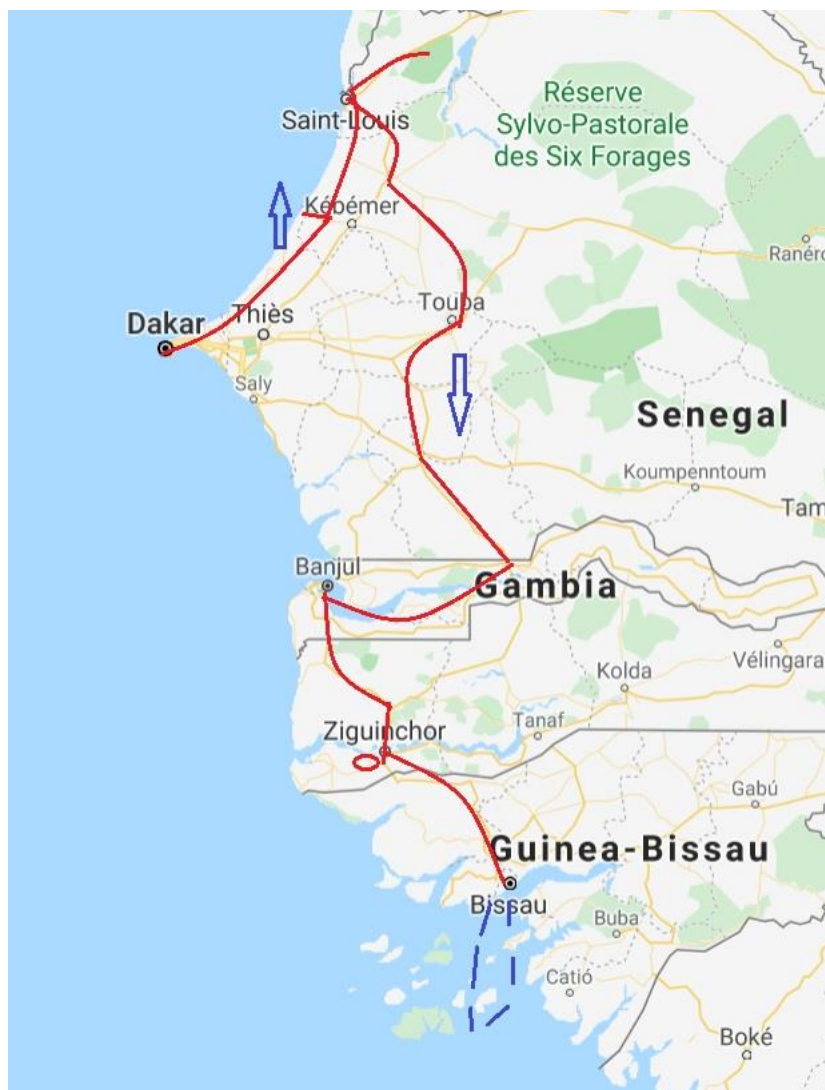
14 days to experience:

CARNIVAL PARADE

Scheduled departure dates from Dakar:

- Feb 16th, 2022

Minimum 2 – Maximum 16 participants



PRESENTATION

A unique itinerary crossing three countries “north to south” to experience a continuous change of climatic ecosystems and human environments.

NATURE

Following the “uncertain border” between land and water we move across an incredible variety of natural environments such as desert dunes, savannah, estuaries, forest, mangrove swamps, ending with an exciting ocean navigation to discover and enjoy the Bijagos Archipelago. Birds will be a constant presence along the whole journey. Djoudj National Sanctuary in Senegal is one of the main migratory bird sanctuaries on earth and Gambia is a well-known birding destination.

HISTORY, PREHISTORY & TIMELESS VILLAGES

We will discover historical sites as:

Dakar, contemporary metropolis, large capital and African intellectual center since the time before the independence. Gorée, ancient slave-trade island;

Saint Louis, the first colonial capital of “French West Africa”;

Bolama, the Portuguese Guinea capital, today forgotten in a remote island; We will experience the encounter with “timeless” people as herders and remote villages. We will discover the largest monoliths site on earth.

ART, CULTURE & MUSIC

In the northern Savannah we will be invited at the camp of nomadic herders and we will meet the largest religious and peaceful brotherhood that practices an African form of Islam that rejects fundamentalism and violence.

In the south, we will be introduced to animistic traditional religions, tribal kings, dancing masks and remote tribes who still worship ancestor statues: a unique chance to enjoy **tribal art** in its original context. In the animistic Casamance region we will witness at the celebrations of Diola mask, the incarnation of mythical spirits... Masquerade is a unique experience that involves the participation of the entire village in an intense mix of magic, music, and dances.

We will focus also on **contemporary music**: during the weekend nights in Gambia and Casamance we will vibe at the rhythm of music in the hot African clubs.

TRANSPORTS

We will travel in different kinds of vehicles; each one chosen to optimize the different geographical and cultural environments and have fun. On the land we will travel mainly on comfortable air-conditioned minibus and for short rides we will experience 4WD vehicles, traditional calash, as in option donkey chariot and local taxi.

On the ocean, to the Bijagos archipelago, we will sail on modern speedboats.

UNIQUE EVENT

Carnival is the main festivity in **Guinea Bissau**. Carnival is an incredible mix of African and Portuguese traditions. Carnival goes wild in the afternoon, colorful masks from different areas and neighborhoods start their parade: sacred traditional masks, warriors dressed in a crocodile skin and armed with arrows, modern masks made of papier-mâché, all surrounded by girls wearing only strings of glass beads around their waist. Hours of lively parades turn this carnival into an unforgettable experience, a real “fiesta popular” combining cheerful African spirit with Portuguese and Brazilian influences.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Dakar, the capital - **SENEGAL**

Arrival in **Dakar** and transfer to the hotel.

Meals Free

Overnight Hotel Djoloff, hotel de *charme* with fine traditional architecture and comfort, or similar (air-conditioned, en-suite rooms).

DAY 2: Dakar contemporary metropolis & Gorée, from Dakar to Gorée (transfers in town and ferry) - **SENEGAL**

Dakar, the large and vibrant African metropolis that was the cultural and intellectual capital of French West Africa. Reflecting that period, the Presidential Palace and the IFAN Museum (Institut Français d’Afrique Noire), hosting an important collection of African art objects. When it opened, the museum was directed by Theodor Monod, a celebrated Africanist and one of the greatest Sahara scholars. The museum is currently under reconstruction and so the visit will take place if it is open.

We will visit the Musée des Civilisations Noires. Opened in December 2018, it is the realisation of Léopold Sédar Senghor’s vision (the first president of independent Senegal, a poet, and Nobel Prize winner). The

museum represents the historical and contemporary worldwide cultures, art and soul of Black people, which he called Negritude.

We will also see the Cathédrale Notre Dame des Victoires & Place de Souvenirs. The cathedral dates from 1936 and was built in Neo-Sudanese style, a style inspired by the Sahara and Sub-Saharan adobe mosque architecture.

Arrival at Dakar port to board a ferry and spend a night in Gorée, the island where slaves used to be crammed before being shipped to the Americas. Some restored buildings remain to bear witness of those times.

The Portuguese were the first to establish a presence on Gorée in 1450, where they built a small stone chapel. After the decline of the slave trade from Senegal in the 1770s and 1780s, the island became an important port for the shipment of peanuts, Arabic gum, ivory, and other products of legitimate trade. Thanks to the nice breeze, and the many restaurants and shops, Gorée today has become a pleasant and trendy location. In late afternoon and evening, when the other tourists are gone, we will experience the real feeling of this special island.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Hotel "*de charme*", capacity of hotels in Gorée is limited. The group may be split in different locations, close each other (air-conditioned, en-suite rooms).

DAY 3: Lac Rose and fisherman villages, from Gorée to Lompoul (ferry and drive 170 km – 6 hrs) - **SENEGAL**

Waking up in Gorée before the crowd arrives is a pleasure, as strolling in the tiny stone paved alleys of this historical settlement.



historical settlement.

Ferry to Dakar and drive to **Lac Rose**, a shallow saltwater lake surrounded by dunes, also known as Lac Retba. The water is ten times saltier than in the ocean and thanks to this high concentration the lake often shimmers into pink. Workers here collect salt in the traditional way.

Miles of exciting drive on the beach by 4x4 will bring us to discover the largest fisherman village in Senegal. More than 4500 wooden painted pirogues come to the shore with the catch of the day... We will leave our vehicles for a less intrusive, but fun, donkey chariot to approach the fisherman selling to the local market

women, to meet the artisans carving the large pirogues, the painters decorating them with bright colors and if we are lucky the "local saint" for final blessing before sailing...

Drive by minibus to the north. At the edge of Lompoul Desert, some 4WD vehicles will be waiting to cross the dunes and take us at our fix camp.

The Lompoul orange sand dunes landscape anticipate the neighbouring Sahara.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Permanent tented camp (comfortable tents with beds and en-suite).

DAY 4: Saint Louis, from Lompoul to St. Louis (100 km – 2 hrs)– **SENEGAL**

Saint Louis, known to locals as Ndar, is a charming ancient town which was a French territory from 1673 until 1895 and the capital of all French West Africa colonies from 1895 until 1902, when the capital was moved to Dakar. From 1920 to 1957, it also served as the capital of the neighboring colony of Mauritania.

It has been the former base of the "Aeropostale" airmail pioneer operation between Europe, Africa and South America. Saint Exupéry, the famous writer, author of "The Little Prince", was one of Aeropostale pilot following this route.

Located on two islands between Senegal river and the ocean at the southern edge of the Sahara, rich in three centuries of history, cultural background, geography, architecture, Saint-Louis is a "bridge" between the savanna and the desert, the ocean, the river, and the inland, between tradition and modernity, Islam and Christianity, Europe and Africa.

Home to a society with a distinctive lifestyle, Saint-Louis has retained its unique identity. "No one comes without falling in love with the city," proudly say its people who consider Saint-Louis as the birthplace of Senegalese Teranga, the Wolof word for hospitality

The best way to visit the narrow lanes of **Saint Louis** is by calash, just as locals do, and walk in the fisherman quarters. Time to stroll in the tiny avenues and enjoy the unique atmosphere of this old town.

We will spend the night at the historic hotel of the town - built in 1895 and now fully renovated - it was here that all Aeropostale pilots use to stay.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Hotel de la Poste or similar (air-conditioned, en-suite rooms).

DAY 5: Bird sanctuary & Nomadic tribes, from St. Louis to Ferlo desert (150 km – 4 hrs) – **SENEGAL**



Early morning departure northwards to discover **Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary** (Parc National des Oiseaux du Djoudj), a natural oasis formed by hundreds of miles of partially flooded lands which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This "humid paradise" between the Sahara and Ferlo desert, is the best habitat and nesting site for over a million of migratory and resident birds - lies on the southeastern bank of the Senegal River and offers a range of wetland habitats that are attended by many migrating birds, some getting here after crossing the Sahara. Out of more than 400 species, pelicans and flamingos are the most common, whereas aquatic warblers are a bit less conspicuous - migrating here from Europe, this park is their single most important wintering

site yet discovered. Apart from birds there is also a wide range of wildlife such as warthog and crocodiles. Motorboat excursion led by a local guide-ornithologist.

Depending on the season, considering time of migrations and level of water, the visit to Djoudj may be replaced by similar experience in L'Île de la Langue de Barbarie, a thin, sandy peninsula, adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean, located in western Senegal, in the neighborhoods of the city of Saint-Louis. The peninsula separates the ocean from the final section of the Senegal River. The L'Île de la Langue de Barbarie National Park is home to an abundant variety of bird species and three species of turtle, including the critically endangered hawksbill sea turtle.

In the afternoon continuation to the **Ferlo Desert** to discover the arid region where nomadic Fulani tribe herds large droves of zebu. The **Fulani** (also called Peul) are the largest nomadic tribe roaming West African Savannahs, living in a vast area from Senegal to Chad. Their origins are still covered with mystery. They all share a common and aristocratic cult for beauty and elegance. In the afternoon a local guide will join us for a visit to the neighboring villages and shelters. When the herds come back, we might even be invited to witness the milking process.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Camp made up of simple grass huts, managed by a local entrepreneur (all rooms with beds, mosquito nets and en-suite).

DAY 6: Tuba Brotherhood, from Ferlo desert to Kabacoto (240 km – 5 hrs)- **SENEGAL**

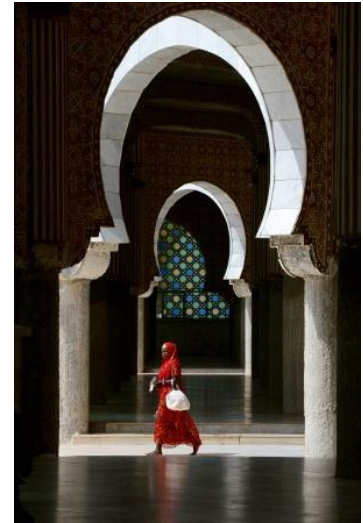
The rarely visited holy town of **Tuba** (Touba) is the right place to appreciate the hospitality of an African brotherhood. Tuba inhabitants follow *Mouridism* and the town itself is a sort of theocratic "state within the state", ruled by a Caliph. The founder of Mouridi brotherhood was a Sufi named Amhadou Bàmba Mbake.

Amhadou Bàmba founded Touba in 1887. The holy site remained a tiny, isolated place in the wilderness until his death and burial at the site of the Great Mosque, 40 years later. The Great Mosque was finally completed in 1963 and since its inauguration the city has grown at a rapid pace: from under 5,000 inhabitants in 1964, the population was officially estimated at 529,000 in 2007

The Mourides have a large social and economic impact in Senegal: thanks to their peaceful (and African) vision of Islam, Mouridism, with other brotherhoods following the cult of Marabouts, has become the bastion that protects Senegal from radical Islam.

During the Grand Magal, annual pilgrimage, the town is visited by four million pilgrims.

Mourides welcome any interest in their traditions. Yet since Tuba is a sacred town, all visitors should accept traditional rules. Therefore, we must apply a considerate dress code: not smoke, not drink alcohol and not listen to music during the visit. If we follow these rules, we will be welcomed. A *Baye Fall*, a member of a colorful branch of Mouridism, will accompany us during the visit.



Meals B – L - D

Overnight Kabacoto Safari Hotel or Relais de Kaolak; air-conditioned bungalows, swimming pool.

DAY 7: Stone circles, from Kabacoto to Banjul (240 km – 6 hrs) – [SENEGAL-GAMBIA](#)

Early departure, we will leave the main road to discover the unique **megalithic site of Sine Ngayene**, as part of the Senegambian stone circles, which lies in The Gambia and in central Senegal.

According to UNESCO, the Senegambian stone circles are "the largest concentration of stone circles seen anywhere in the world." These sites represent an extraordinary concentration of more than 1,100 stone and related tumuli spread over a territory of 100 km wide and 350 km in length, in Gambia River north bank.

After The Gambia border formalities, we will drive to Banjul area.

Our hotel is located in the Kololi district, famous for its bars, restaurants, night clubs and busy craft markets.

In the evening we enjoy a live concert if available. The music of the Gambia is closely linked musically with that of its neighbours, Senegal. Mbalax is a widely known popular dance music. It fuses popular Western music and dance, with sabar, the traditional drumming and dance music of the Wolof and Serer people.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Kairaba Beach hotel, separate buildings in a tropical forest vegetation, private beach facing the ocean.

DAY 8: Gambian birds and sacred masks from Banjul to Ziguinchor (160 km – 4 hrs) – [GAMBIA-SENEGAL](#)



Gambia is renowned as birdwatching destinations. With an ornithological guide we will discover different species of African birds in their habitat.

Drive to the southern border with Casamance region of Senegal.

We will leave the main track to join a remote village. We have lunch in the village, prepared by a local family to enjoy the Senegalese gastronomy and improve local community economy.

In the afternoon masks leave the sacred forest to dance for an enthusiastic local crowd. Masks are part of the animistic Diola culture, people fear and respect masks, consider them spirits who play an important role in solving conflicts between villagers.

Evening arrival to our comfortable hotel on the banks of Casamance River where that will be our base for two days dedicated to discover Casamance.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Kadiandoumange Hotel on the banks of the river or similar (air-conditioned, en-suite rooms).

DAY 9: Sacred kings, Casamance (150 km aprox – 4 hrs) – [SENEGAL](#)

We will leave the main road to visit an adobe-fortified building still inhabited by a large patriarchal Diola family, an interesting example of traditional African sculptural architecture. These large clay and wooden fortified houses, where light comes from a central hole in the roof, are known as “impluvium houses” and had the function to protect its dwellers from outside attacks.

In a hidden village we will be received by the **king** of a Diola Kingdom. After the protocol salutations the king, that is also the high priest holding both political and mystical power, will answer our questions on the traditional rules in Diola society.

Late afternoon, return to **Ziguinchor**.



Meals B – L - D

Overnight Kadiandoumange Hotel on the banks of the river or similar (air-conditioned, en-suite rooms).

DAY 10: Ancestors' cult, from Ziguinchor to Bissau (250 km – 7 hrs)– [SENEGAL - GUINEA BISSAU](#)

Early departure for a long but interesting day.

After crossing the border with Guinea Bissau, we will leave the main road for a track. We will reach a unique landscape of streams, salt swamps, flooded lands, clay dams and paddy fields. In this remote environment, some gigantic and isolated Kapok and Baobab trees give shade to tiny human settlements of Felupes and Baites tribes. These people live in an isolated and flooded ecosystem where they farm rice thanks to a complex “tribal technology” to desalinate the soil. People live in adobe large patriarchal huts built in a unique African architectural style: clay “buildings” surrounded by a shady veranda and covered with large and tall thatch roofs with opening trapdoors for the aeration. The whole building is supported by a complex structure of palm tree poles.

Back to main road and stop at Bula to meet a Manjaco king and learn about the culture of his tribe.

This ethnic group calls their traditions “Gendiman” and keeps them still alive. They worship wooden poles and statues called “Pecab” representing the spirits of their ancestors; they are kept in sanctuaries known as “Cab Balugun”.

Evening arrival to Bissau, late dinner.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Hotel Azalai or similar (air-conditioned, en suite rooms).

DAY 11: From the ghost capital to the Bijagos Archipelago, from Bissau to Rubane (speed boat)- GUINEA BISSAU

Aboard a speedboat, we start 4 days of sailing to discover the Bijagos Archipelago with its remote islands and isolated human settlements. **The Bijagos Archipelago** is located approximately 40 miles off-shore and, with its 88 islands (of which only 21 are permanently inhabited), is the largest archipelago in Africa. With its wild and pristine landscapes, its genuine tribal culture and its unique fauna, Bijagos is a "geographical jewel". Due to the remoteness of the destination, the lack of transportation and the deep attachment to the local traditions, the Bijagos inhabitants have been little influenced by the external world: during ceremonies women still wear the *saiya* - a traditional skirt made of straw - and the rhythm of life in villages is given by initiations and secret ceremonies – for example young men have to go through a seven-year initiation rite during which they live in a "convent" without any contact with women..



Our first stop will be **Bolama Island**, the former capital of Portuguese Guinea from 1871 to 1941, before it was moved to Bissau. This transfer was needed due to the shortage of fresh water in Bolama.

When the Portuguese left, native people came to live in the town which is now falling apart and is partly invaded by tropical vegetation. It was originally built following the plans of a «Castrum Romanum» (roman citadel) so today we can witness its large sunny lethargic avenues, its empty squares, its dry fountains, its bush-like gardens and its large administrative buildings in neo Palladian style. In the Governor's Palace we

can still admire columns in the classic style ... where now goats graze! The Bissau-Guinean government is aiming for it to be designated the nation's first World Heritage Site.

Bolama, although inhabited, is plunged in the fairy-tale atmosphere of a still inhabited ghost town.

Arrival on Rubane / Bubaque Islands in the at the comfortable lodge that will be our base for three days of discovering Bijagos Archipelago.

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Hotel Ponta Anchaca or Lodge les Dauphins or similar (ocean front comfortable bungalows en-suite).

DAY 12: Islander life (speed boat) – GUINEA BISSAU

Day to enjoy the archipelago way of life: relax at the wild beach, walking to explore villages and luxuriant vegetation, excursion to the neighbor Soga Island.

Optional not included: day excursion to Orango island to watch hippos (*actual seeing the hippos is not guaranteed*)

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Hotel Ponta Anchaca or Lodge les Dauphins or similar (ocean front comfortable bungalows en-suite).

DAY 13: to Bissau, from Rubane to Bissau (speed boat) – GUINEA BISSAU

Late afternoon arrival by speedboat in **Bissau**, the tiny capital of the country. A vehicle will be waiting us for a brief tour of this tiny and intriguing capital.

We start walking by Bissau Vehlo, the old Portuguese quartier, where the atmosphere reminds us of Portugal back in the days. Here you can experience the mix of African and Portuguese souls. Old wooden café where to drink Portuguese wine and watch Portuguese news. We continue to the Presidential Palace, the Catholic Cathedral, Fortaleza Amura, Independence Monument, Che Guevara Square to end in an open-air bar known for the best mojito in town...

Meals B – L - D

Overnight Hotel Azalai or similar (air-conditioned, en suite rooms)

DAY 14: Carnival, Bissau out (transfers in town) – [GUINEA BISSAU](#)

Morning relax.

We get ready for the spectacular parade which will going in the late afternoon.

In the evening, transfer to the airport for the flight out.

Meals B – L

Day-use Rooms in day-use (air-conditioning, en-suite rooms)

Recommended Extension:



At the end of this intense journey, we can recommend a few extra days in the Bijagos Archipelago. On request, we can arrange for some extra days in Ponta Anchaca Hotel on Rubane Island, in a comfortable ocean-front bungalow enjoying fine French and tropical cuisine. At the hotel you can relax at the pool, go for walks on the wild beach, discover the island lush vegetation or do some sport fishing - all in the natural paradise of The Bijagos Archipelago. **Bijagos Archipelago is known for top game fishing.**

TECHNICAL SHEET

- **Due to the limited quantity of available rooms, please book in advance.**
- **VISAS:** Senegal – not required for EU, USA and Canada citizen (ask complete list) For other nationalities a visa can be obtained at Dakar airport. If you apply visa upon arrival require double entry. Gambia: please, check; for most nationalities not needed or available at the border; Guinea Bissau - single entry visa required and obtainable during the tour (please advise if we have to arrange for it).
- **VACCINATIONS:** Yellow fever – compulsory; malaria prophylaxis - highly recommended; cholera not necessary at the moment but to be checked upon departure.
- **MEALS:** lunch - restaurants (pre-selected menus) or cold picnic; dinner - at the hotel restaurant (pre-selected menus).
- **LUGGAGE:** please contain the weight in 20 kg (45 lb) water-proof duffle bags are suggested, when on the speedboat, passengers may get splashed by water or foam, we advise to protect any camera equipment. We suggest to bring mosquito repellent.
- **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:** on roads and tracks by Minibus or 4x4, speedboat fitted for ocean crossing to the Bijagos Archipelago.
- **TIDES and WEATHER:** With each departure, visits could be re-scheduled as per the tides; all will be visited but maybe in a different order. Bad weather condition can oblige to change, cancel, reschedule or delay the itinerary, the organizer cannot be hold as responsible for any change and delay.

- **ACCOMMODATIONS:** Hotels and lodges are always chosen with maximum care, however due to possible lack of availability in some hotels, the Tour Leader may have to replace some hotels during the tour itself with others of similar standard. In some hotels single rooms are not always granted.
- All our trips are designed to be flexible so that we can adapt to external conditions 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 our Tour Leader. Costs originating from such variations will be sole responsibility of the participants. Of course, the Leader 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 SHARING DOUBLE VALIDITY 2021

*All departures are confirmed with minimum 2 people,
when first two bookings occur at least 60 days prior to departure.
For FIT departures, rates are on request.*

Number of Participants	Published Rate Per person
Based on 6+ guests	3 858 Euro
Based on 2 / 5 guests	4 321 Euro
Single supplement	478 Euro

Extension at Rubane: Ponta Anchaca

(rates 2021 to be announced)

Present cost:

Full board:

standard: dbl 310 euro

sgl 198 euro

private transfers from Rubane to Bissau

by boat, 1-2 guests: 431 euro per person

by plane (plane for 3), 420 euro per person

if guest is travelling alone on the plane, he pays for two people.

The scheduled tour is sold by an international pool of tour operators.

A departure can also be booked privately by a tour operator.

Included:

- Assistance at Dakar airport upon arrival and Bissau airport upon departure

- Transfers and tour in a great variety of different transports, each fitting the different geographical environment, allowing maximum interaction with the local peoples, comfort and fun: minibuses/microbuses, 4WD vehicles, local calash (private use), local bush taxi called "taxi brousse" (private use), donkey chariot, speedboat fitted for ocean crossing to the Bijagos Archipelago
- Tour Leader (languages spoken English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese as available)
- Tours and visits as per the programme
- Accommodation in standard rooms/bungalows/permanent tents as per itinerary
- All meals as described, from breakfast of day 2 to lunch of day 14
- One bottle of Mineral water in the bus/car each day during the visits
- Entrance fees to parks, concessions, protected areas and cultural sites, festival and events as in the program
- Carnival pass for photo
- First Aid box
- All service charges and taxes

Not included:

- International flights to Dakar and from Bissau
- Visa fees
- Mineral water and drinks at restaurants and hotels.
- Portage
- Fees for personal photos and videos
- Personal insurance (compulsory)
- Tips for drivers, guides and hotel staff
- 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 not less than 60 days before the arrival of guests at the destination.

You must have trip cancel insurance to protect your investment for unforeseen circumstances. This is good for North America only.

[AgencyLink Home \(travelinsured.com\)](http://travelinsured.com)