

# The Gambia

THE SMILING COAST OF AFRICA

## VISITORS GUIDE



*only 6hrs flight...*



# *Inside The Gambia*

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[www.visitthegambia.gm](http://www.visitthegambia.gm)

# Forward



It gives me immense pleasure as Secretary of State for Tourism and Culture to welcome you to yet another edition of the visitors guide. The publication is the flagship in terms of showcasing the best of Gambian tourism.

The guide highlights the best that The Gambia has to offer in terms of diverse tourist attractions with the added emphasis on ecotourism and the active promotion of sustainable tourism development initiatives. We have pristine sandy beaches, glorious sunshine and the beautiful sea, the Atlantic Ocean in addition, we have a cultural heritage second to none crowned with the friendliest peace loving people you are ever likely to come across in the whole wide world.

The Gambia remained an unspoiled tropical paradise and we have carefully blended our tourism infrastructure with our retained and traditional patrimony to create a unique tourism product. The tourism sector is still poised to grow to higher heights, with ample room for innovation. There is scope for investments in exclusive accommodation, exquisite lodges and leisure acts, as well as operation of the river cruise. The River Gambia is one of the most navigable waterways in Africa and it offers great opportunities for sport fishing and cruising.

For the first time visitor seeking exotic holiday to the seasoned traveler looking for out of the way thrills alike, The Gambia is your destination. With more than 500 species of birds as well as a very wide variety of fish The Gambia is now a must visit destination for Bird Watchers and fishing enthusiasts. The Roots Festival which takes place every two years celebrates the epic story of Kunta Kinteh, the slave whose roots were traced back to The Gambia by Alex Hailey in the acclaimed book and film Roots.

Our proximity to the European Mainland coupled with the all year round sun ensures you a great visit at any time of the year. Visit us to experience, discover and appreciate the products and services showcased in this guide.

We look forward to welcoming you to the wonderful Smiling Coast of Africa!!

**Ms Nancy Njie**

*Honourable Secretary of State for Tourism and Culture.*

# Message

## from the Director General's Desk



Tourism in the Gambia has come a long way since its humble beginnings. Today, the Industry has assumed strategic importance and more and more Gambians are proud to be associated with the sector. The ultimate objective is to ensure total guest satisfaction and the high rate of repeat visitors is a clear indication of success in this regard.

The product is the whole country and its people in this smiling coast of Africa. Our primary attraction is the River Gambia apart from our traditional Sun, Sand and Sea. The river is easily navigable and safe. Bird watching, dolphin watching, sport fishing and mangrove exploration are among the main excursions to be exploited. As a 'One River Country', nature lovers can cruise along the river Gambia, visit river villages, sites and towns. Eco-tourism has been embraced and we encourage investors to fund eco-tourism up-country and up river tourism ventures.

In terms of cultural heritage, The Gambia has a high degree of ethnic diversity, religious tolerance, Peace and tranquility and offers a wide range of visitor experience within its limited land area. These attractions include performing arts-dance, music, which are highly developed while Gambian cuisine is diverse and attractive. The Gambia has a range of historical buildings, monuments and archaeological sites some of which are now listed in the world heritage sites of UNESCO.

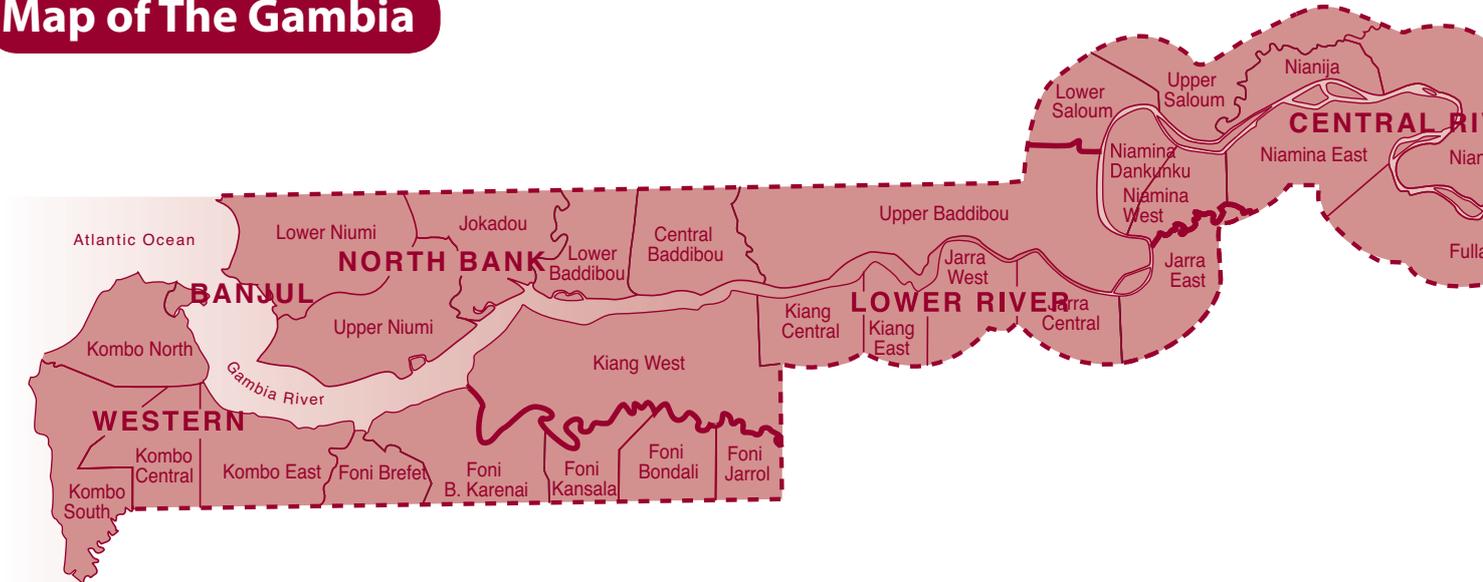
The guide offers invaluable information for anyone planning to visit the Gambia as well as expose investors to the wonderful possibilities that await them.

**Alieu Mboge**

*Director General, Gambia Tourism Authority*

# The Gambia | COUNTRY INFORMATION

## Map of The Gambia



### Location

West Africa – The smallest country on mainland Africa

### Area

11,295 Sq.km (4361 Sq. Miles)

### Capital

Banjul

### Currency

Dalasi (GMD)  
Pronounced (DA-LA-SI)

### Time Zone

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)

### Climate

Pleasant sub-tropical climate with two distinct seasons:

Dry savannah winds November to June, (Harmattan) and (heavy showers) wet, and lushly green from July-October.

### Average Mid-day

Temperatures about 27° C (80° F) (with a cooling light breeze).

### Night Time Temperatures

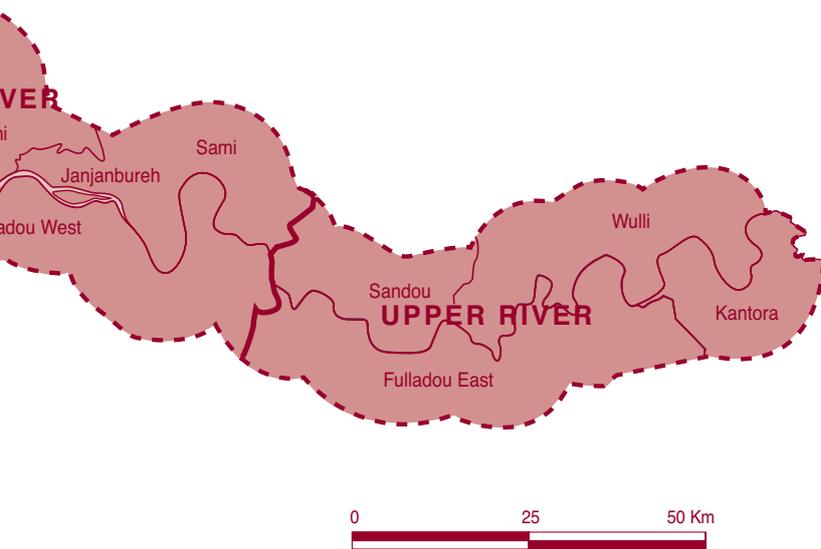
Considerably cooler, between 10° C-16° C (50°- 60° F).

### Population

1.3 million

### Ethnic Diversity

Official Language: English



**The Gambia has unique qualities over many other destinations. The facts are that it is only six hours away from major European destinations, there is no jet lag, and it is a popular and affordable all year round destination attracting tourists in search of sun, sea, sand and cultural experience of which this unique country has plenty.**

Other Languages: Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola, Sarahule, Serere, Manjago, Cerole (Aku or pigeon English). French is taught in some secondary and high schools.

Some of the staff in hotels, restaurants and excursion agencies speak other European languages such as German, Italian, Dutch, French and Scandinavian languages.

### **Religious Tolerance**

The Gambia is one of the most religiously tolerant nation in the world. Most people are inter-related, regardless of their religious backgrounds. It is not uncommon to find Muslims and Christians in wedlock, or closely connected. In fact, in many instances it is the norm. Religious days and feasts are celebrated nationally. This has been since time immemorial, and still continues today.

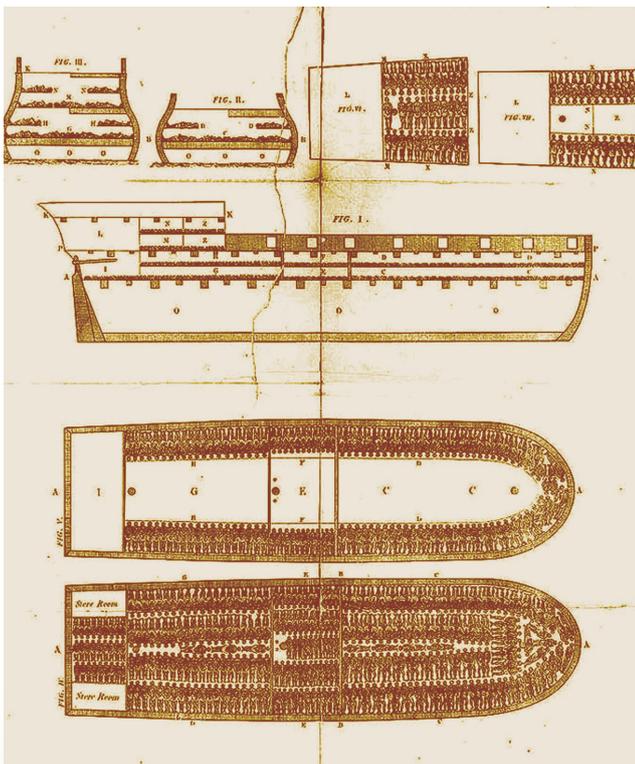
### **Religious Diversity**

Islam: 85 % of the population  
Christianity and Other African Traditional Religions (ATR): 15%

### **Vibrant Economy**

Tourism is a major industry in the Gambia, however, there are others: Agriculture, agro-processing, fisheries, livestock and manufacturing.

# History...



## Historical Dates and Personalities

The first written accounts of the region came from records of Arab traders in the 9th and 10th centuries AD, who established the trans-Saharan trade route for slaves, gold, and ivory. The Portuguese took over this trade using maritime routes in the 15th century. At that time, The Gambia was part of the Mali Empire. Between 1651 and 1661 part of Gambia was (indirectly) a colony of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Courlanders settled on James Island, which they called St. Andrews Island and used as a trade base from 1651 until its capture by the English in 1661.

The 1783 Treaty of Paris gave Great Britain possession of The Gambia, but the French retained a tiny enclave at Albreda on the north bank of the river, which was finally ceded to the United Kingdom in 1857.

It is believed that as many as three million slaves may have been taken from the region during the three centuries that the transatlantic slave trade operated. Slaves were initially sent to Europe to work as servants until the market for more labour was expanded in the West Indies and North America in the 18th century. In 1807, slave trading was abolished throughout the British Empire and the British tried unsuccessfully to end the slave trade in The Gambia. They established the military post of Bathurst (now the capital city, Banjul) in 1816.

In 1888, The Gambia became a separate colonial entity. A year later an agreement with France established the present boundaries, and The Gambia became a British Crown Colony, divided for administrative purposes into the colony (city of Banjul and the surrounding area) and the protectorate (remainder of the territory).

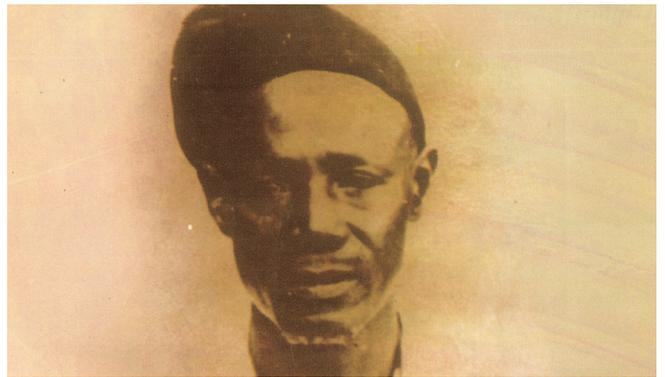
During World War II, Gambian troops fought with the Allies in Burma. Banjul served as an air stop for the U.S. Army Air Corps and a port of call for Allied naval convoys. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt stopped overnight in Banjul en route to and from



the Casablanca Conference in 1943, marking the first and only visit to the African Continent by an American president while in office.

The Gambia achieved independence on 18 February, 1965, as a constitutional monarchy within the Commonwealth. Five years later, on 24 April, 1970, The Gambia became a Republic within the Commonwealth, with Prime Minister Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, as head of state.

On 22 July 1994, the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) seized power in a military coup d'état. After a strong showing at the polls in 1996, retired colonel Yahya AJJ Jammeh was sworn into office as first President of the Second Republic of The Gambia on 6 November, 1996. He has steered the ship of state since, winning another two consecutive elections; in 2001 and 2006 respectively. Today, The Gambia remains a stable and democratic state.



# What to expect

## Resorts and Accommodation

There are nine main resort areas in what is referred to as the Tourism Development Area- the palm-fringed coastline, and virgin golden sands, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Outside this area, there are exotic camps mainly situated on the banks of the beautiful River Gambia, a meandering flow situated at the heart of this tiny nation.

## Activities

We can make your holiday a memorable one from river cruising, fishing, village tours, to African wrestling, bird watching, trekking, horse and camel riding, and adventure trips. Musical events, family visits, evening entertainment, cultural orientation, and sporting events. The choice is yours!

## Nature

Nature lovers will derive pleasure visiting Abuko Nature Reserve and other varied bird and wildlife sanctuaries as well as cruising on the River Gambia. The Gambia is a Birdwatchers Paradise! Visitors can also see a variety of tropical plants as well as monkeys, crocodiles and other wildlife. Dolphins and hippos are spotted on the river.

## People and Culture

Hospitality is second to none!

The Gambia has a population of over 1.3 million people belonging to eight ethnic groups as well as fairly large communities from neighbouring West African countries, and Lebanon. We are an open and inviting society. Our hospitality is second to none. The people live harmoniously in communities, freely exercising their religious and cultural traditions. Gambians are recognized all over the world for their spontaneous warm smile, their peace-loving nature and their hospitality.





### Cuisine

Hotels and restaurants in The Gambia serve various international and African cuisines. Gambians have a variety of delicious dishes, which are mainly prepared with rice (staple food of the country), millet and maize.



### Arts and Craft

*The fun is the conversation and bargaining*

The craft markets outside the main hotels offer a large variety of antique masks, carvings, batik products, hand woven fabrics, leather work and jewelry. Prices for these products are affordable, and the whole process of picking what you like for the right price is an experience not to be missed. The fun is in the conversation. Locals often engage visitors in conversation whilst negotiations go on. In the end both buyer and seller come out acquainted through a healthy dialogue of a cultural exchange-this is typical of Gambian hospitality and warmth, embrace it.



### Music

Like other African countries, The Gambia has a variety of traditional musical instruments and the most famous of them is the Kora - a 21 - string harp. The drum is also popular, because it plays a major part of the culture in most of the ethnic groups; whether it is a wedding, or a naming ceremony, the drum has kept communities informed and entertained for many centuries.





# *What to do ...*

**"As far as the time of Hannon the Carthaginian in 470 BC and Mungo Park the explorer, The River Gambia has attracted visitors to its magnificent estuary, and its meandering waterways. It is no different today."**

# What to do ...

## For the laid-back you...

### Casino

For those of you willing to try your luck, there are casinos in the Senegambia and Palma Rima area. Few others scattered in the TDA. Check with the hotel receptionist.

### Massage

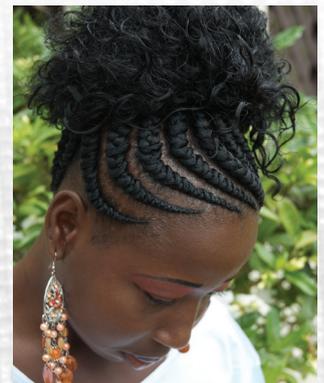
More and more hotels in The Gambia are setting up their own massage facilities. If you are in a hotel without one, please ask for the nearest facility.

### Salons

Most hotels have beauty and hair dressing salons. There are many more outside the hotels, throughout the country.

### Hair Braiding

Many female tourists and some males have their hair braided African style by women and girls offering this service. Some add colourful beads to the tip of the strands. Please ask for the fee before you start. It might take a few hours.





# For the sporty you...

## Golf

The Fajara Club has an 18-hole course, which is close to most of the resorts. The Club offers a variety of sporting activities including squash. Temporary membership is also available.

## Cycling

Bicycles are available for hire outside most of the resort hotels or in the Tourism Development Area (TDA). The hire rates are half-hourly, half day and full day at reasonable prices.

## Swimming

The beaches in front of most hotels are generally safe for swimming but please look out for the flag before you dip in. Never swim when the red flag is flying. Nude bathing is forbidden in the Gambia.

## Table Tennis

Available in most hotels and generally free of charge.

## Tennis

Available at almost all the hotels, and at the Fajara Club, by prior arrangement. Racquets and tennis balls are also available at hotels where tennis is advertised.

## Horse Riding

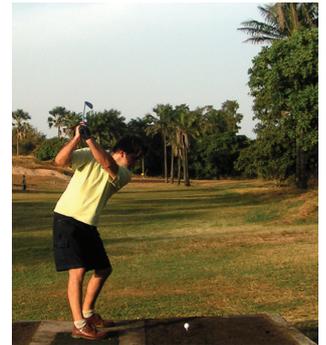
A couple of stables in the country have a good set of horses. Rides can be booked through your agent.

## Jet Skiing

This is generally available at the Corinthia Atlantic Hotel, Sunbeach Hotel and Resort and at Denton Bridge. Please ask your tour rep or hotel receptionist for other places where it is available.

## Windsurfing

Equipment can be hired at some hotels but it should be noted that only strong swimmers should venture beyond their knees.

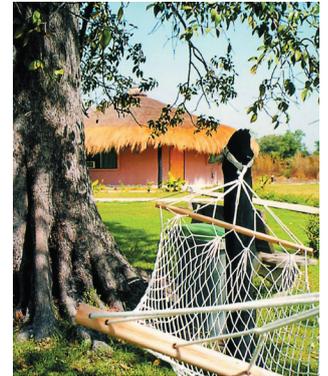
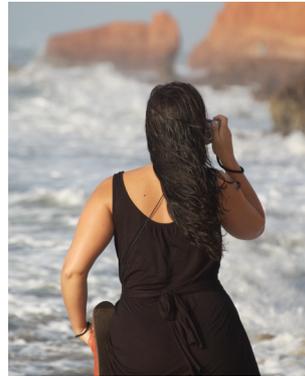


# What to do ...

## For the artful you...

### Photography

Visitors with cameras will find a lot of sights to capture during organized excursions or while visiting the towns and villages of The Gambia. Gambian children are normally very keen to smile for the camera. However, some Gambians have certain beliefs about their pictures being taken particularly by a stranger, you should first seek their consent before taking a picture of anyone. Your guide will come in handy in situations like this. Guides can speak the language, and can therefore be an invaluable resource when photos of people are being taken. Not all types of film are available in The Gambia so you would be wise to bring along what you need.



### Art Galleries

The Gambia has several art galleries that have works of Gambian contemporary painters on display, some of these are usually for sale. If you are really interested owners can facilitate you meeting the painters at their studios.



## For the cultural you...

### Entertainment (in the Hotels)

All the hotels and upriver camps organize nightly entertainment programmes. The most popular are African ballet, with the powerful Djembe drums, fire-eaters, Kora and Balafon (traditional instruments) performances, karaoke music playbacks, fashion shows and beauty contests. "Dance along with the locals".



# "Roots"

This is a popular excursion, inspired by the historic epic, based on the classic novel of the tragedy of the slave trade and triumph of freedom, a full circle, inspired by Alex Haley bestseller and movie "Roots". The long and drawn out saga commenced in rural Gambia, in a village called Juffureh, and tracks almost five generations across the mighty Atlantic Ocean to the USA, and back.

The Gambia's little known continuation is steeped in this true story of survival, love of country, people and freedom immersed in strong linkages of tradition and culture still seen today. And, although slavery has long been abolished, the ancestors and direct descendants of the hero of many extracted Africans in the Diaspora, Kunta Kinteh's trail can still be followed from his birthplace in rural Gambia.

A converted yacht takes you on a three and a half hour journey to Albreda – a former French trading post. Then a 15 minute walk to the village of Juffureh – Haley's ancestral home where you will meet a descendant of the Kinteh family. You will see a slavery exhibition in the museum before re boarding your boat and the continuing journey to the former slave fortress of James Island. On the return journey, you may be allowed to swim with the dolphins!



# What to do ...

## For the cool in you...

### Outside Entertainment

Some restaurants in the resort area use their spacious gardens to organize live musical performances. Some tourists also venture out to attend local ceremonies in the towns and villages. Thoroughly enjoyable and fascinating. Nightclubs and discos are open most evenings in the winter season. Please check with your receptionist for details of local opening hours.



### Eating Out

In addition to the facilities in your hotel there are many outside restaurants and fast food in the resort areas and in the towns. Some offer international cuisine whilst others specialize in Gambian, Lebanese, Indian, Italian, Mexican and Asian cooking. The drivers of the Tourist Taxis outside your hotel know the locations of most restaurants. They charge for waiting time and this should be negotiated, prior to your venturing out.





## For the business you...

### Conferences

Most of the hotels have conference rooms for hosting seminars and workshops. The bigger conference and banqueting hall, can host up to 800 people, as well as several smaller committee rooms.

# What to do ...

## For the natural you...

### **The Abuko Nature Reserve & Brikama Wood Carving Centre**

Walk through the jungle of Abuko Nature Reserve to see the hyenas and other animals in the nursery, crocodiles in the pond and the monkeys and birds in the trees. You will need at least two hours for a visit.

Then proceed to the Brikama Wood Carving Centre to observe craftsmen at work. Lunch may be at the picturesque Lamin Lodge.

### **Jinack / Treasure Island / North Bank**

This is a whole day trip, which starts with a crossing on the Banjul/Barra ferry. You then spend the rest of the day on the unspoilt island of Jinack, which is part of the Nuimi National Park. The island has some of the loveliest stretches of beach in The Gambia.

The friendly people there still live very much like their ancestors many decades ago. There are no vehicles on the island, no supermarkets, and few television sets. It is the ideal place to get away from it all, where the silence and the rolling waves of the sea echo for miles around you.





## Bird Watching

There are 500 different species of birds in The Gambia living within six protected areas aggregating about 40,000 hectares nationwide, under the protection of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The Gambia has remained committed to the Wildlife Act, which was signed into law as far back as 1977. This political commitment to ensure that the environment is protected as a natural resource is still at the heart of the national policy. Eco-tourism has massive potential in The Gambia and plans are further afoot to guarantee that every major habitat within the country is covered. If this is fully implemented, five percent of the land within tiny Gambia will be protected.

The Abuko Nature Reserve, which was established as far back as 1968, is still home to many of the birds that fly Gambian skies. There are other bird reserves in Tanji, a coastal village in the western area of the country, as well as the Kiang West National Park and the Ginack Island National Park in the Niumis.

One of the most expansive and accurate testimonies recently recorded on The Gambia's huge variety of birds that flock to the tiny pin strip was unveiled a decade ago. The authors, Clive Barlow and Tim Wacher, not only placed the country on the world map, but found themselves being recipients of the award for, "The best book of the year", given annually by the British Birds Magazine. The book, "A Field Guide to Birds of The Gambia and Senegal", illustrates the variety that The Gambia has, in its numbers, colors, types, as well as emphasizes the true potential to do great things with such a rare resource.

There are daily trips for bird watchers and visitors whose passion for bird watching never ceases. Gambia's abundance in diversity of birds is ranked as one of the highest in the world, coupled with the fact that it is the most accessible destination on the continent. Visitors can book tours nationwide for bird watching, or even spend a few days at the many resorts and lodges in rural Gambia where the choirs of feathered friends sing continuously; whether it is in the early dawn, or under the midday sun, or even the cool evening, when the sun melts into the horizon, and the moon peeps out of the sparkling skies littered with stars, there are always sights and sounds of birds everywhere. The Gambia is a

paradise for many things, most of all it is certainly a dreamland for birds and those who love watching them. Come join us so that we can listen, look and learn with the bliss of being in the country where beautiful birds of very different feathers actually flock together!



# 500 different species





# What to do ...

## Fishing

The river, which meanders within The Gambia from the west on the Atlantic into the east, cutting the country into two halves, carries with it a rich variety of fish, as does the vast ocean of the Atlantic which surrounds the capital city Banjul. The Gambia is renowned for its sport fishing, and both experts and amateurs can enjoy the chances of catching the 'Big One', on either the river or the salty waters of the Atlantic.

There are a variety of options available: beach-casting is popular and the best area is in the western part of the country, (Sanyang, Gunjur or Kartung), the creek fishing, also very popular, attracts visitors who sight see, bird watch, sun bathe and catch fish all on the same trip! There is also the deep sea fishing for those that are still looking for the biggest catch of the lot, where variety is the name of the game.

Visitors often bring their own gear, however for those that prefer to travel light, there is plenty of gear in The Gambia for hire. The cost is often included in the trip. For about £30-£60, full fishing gear plus the trip on the boat is assured. The Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA) licensed boats are very safe, with all standard safety equipment: life jackets, VHF radios mobiles etc.

The Gambia has many different fish, and it is reckoned that between November and April a barracuda catch is virtually guaranteed! So get hooked onto the fish that awaits you, whether it is on the banks of Denton Bridge, or the golden sands of Gunjur, the wandering water of the river or the roaring surfs of the Atlantic. Where ever you chose to go, there is bound to be a catch!



# What to do ...



## Makasutu ("Holy Forest")

Makasutu Cultural Forest, the name Makasutu is a Mandinka word, which translates into English, as "Holy Forest". There is a history to this dwelling. Legend has it that tribal wars took place in this forest centuries ago. A particular King was also killed here, and his head, crown and throne were all buried in the forest.

The local community avoided the area, for another reason: the legend also states that the devil lived in this forest! Nevertheless, the owners of this beautiful resort forged ahead and began a venture that would, after almost fifteen years, earn them a reputation as having The Best New Eco Lodge in The World, according to Sunday Times in 2002. Another award was bestowed on the serene lodge two years later with the capping of the prestigious "Guild of British Travel Writers Award." This comes as no surprise. Surrounded by six villages, Makasutu Cultural Forest is an all-in-one excursion and is all that the international media, and the world travel body have described it. A safari drive, a guided forest walk, a boat ride, bird watching, and cultural entertainment galore are all at 'Makasutu'.

There is a craft area where local artists show their talent and skill in wood carving, design ware and other traditional African artifacts. The fantastically high-class floating and stilted lodges, make this place unique. The beach-based holiday has strong



competition with Makasutu where nature, beauty and the calm ambience of ancient Africa captured in time resonate in its every part. The Makasutu Cultural Forest once called the 'holy forest' is still blessed in all its beauty, grace and natural preserve.

## Eco Path

Aware of the need to cater to the needs of our diverse visitors, GTA has just completed a project that would create a more conducive environment for our visitors to move off the beaten tracks in the Tourism Development Area (TDA) to enjoy scenic environments. If you are into eco-tourism, or bird watching, the footpath is worth the walk.



# Eco-Tourism in The Gambia

The Gambia offers several eco-tourism lodges and tourism sites within the country, each unique in its way .

## Bijilo Forest Park

A small reserve on the edge of the beach within easy walking distance of the Senegambia area. The park offers a haven for Birds and Monkeys. Ideal for an early morning walk.

## Lamin Lodge

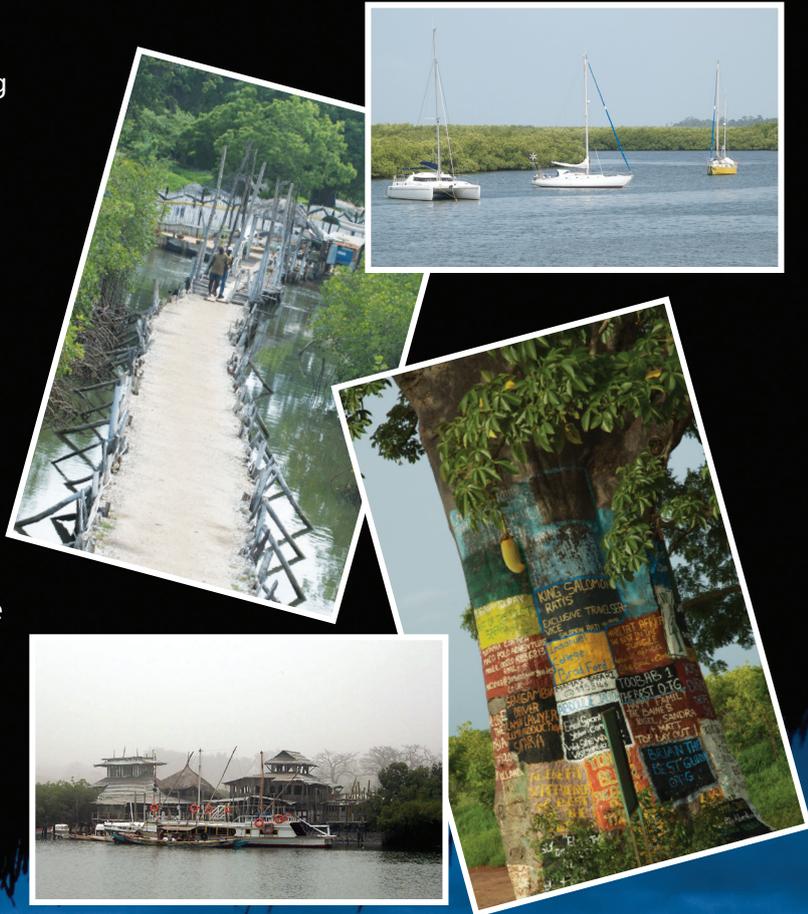
Situated on the edge of the creeks, this huge tree house style Lodge offers a wonderful view over the Mangrove Swamps and is an ideal spot for Bird Watching. Small boats can also be hired from here.

## Makasutu Culture Forest

Created to ensure the survival and better understanding of Traditions, Myths and History. Set in a thousand acres of Forest, this beautiful Park is a Jewel of Eco Tourism in The Gambia. Winners of the Eco Tourism Award 2005

## Abuko Nature Reserve

An all time favourite for Wildlife and Birdwatching. Walk the 3km path, which leads you to the Bamba Pool where Crocodiles live. See some of the most colourful birds in the world.





Outdoors are fun in The Gambia

# What to do ...

## For the adventurous you...

### Creek Tours / River Trips / Fishing Trips

A peaceful and relaxing day out on the creek or around bolongs (river tributaries) of the River Gambia is not to be missed. Most creek tours and fishing trips start off from Denton Bridge or Lamin Lodge, but local camps in the rural areas along the river also organize such tours. The sundeck of your pirogue will give you a good view of the mangrove swamps; the birds and the women who are often seen harvesting oyster from their dug-out canoes. You may also catch fish large enough to be listed in the Guinness Book of Records! Enjoy the sun and the tranquil waters of this great and historic river.

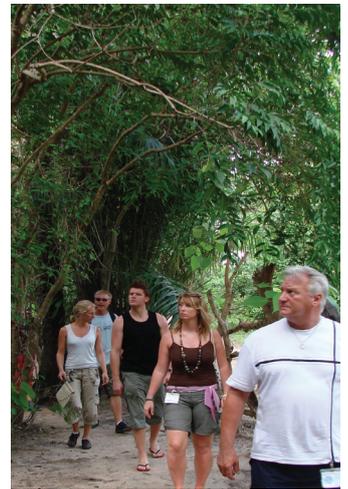
### Bush and Beach Safari / South Gambia

Different operators have different names for this full day tour using 4-wheel drive Landrovers or mini-trucks. You will visit small fishing villages and experience life in the rural areas. This is a good opportunity to see monkeys and the rich bird life of The Gambia. Several hours are spent on the beach where a picnic lunch is taken before returning to your hotel. You may drive back and track the stunning African sunset.

### Rural Excursions

#### Tendaba Camp

This safari style camp located nearly 165 kilometres from Banjul is one of the first tourist camps in rural Gambia. It is situated on the banks of the river that meanders in front of woodlands, which have plenty of birds, bush hogs and other wildlife. Tendaba offers bush safaris, river trips, village tours and entertainment. Rooms are comfortable with cooling fans, a generator, two bars and a restaurant.



# What to do ...

There is also a swimming pool within the camp and conference facilities for meetings. There is even a crocodile pit, where one can see these ancient animals in their slumber. Do not miss the Bamboo Bar at night.

## Janjangbureh

Formerly called 'Georgetown', this is one of the oldest towns of The Gambia. The old 'second' city of colonial days is the administrative headquarters of the Central River Region; it is situated on the island of Janjangbureh, which still has relics of The Gambia's colonial past. There are a number of camps around the island and visits normally include a trip to the prehistoric Wassu Stone Circles – a megalithic site believed to be a burial ground thousands of years ago. The trip sometimes includes a journey by river from Sapu or Kudang to Janjangbureh where hippos can be seen wallowing in the river and on the muddy banks. Basse and Bansang, two towns further up the River Gambia can also be visited.

## Excursions

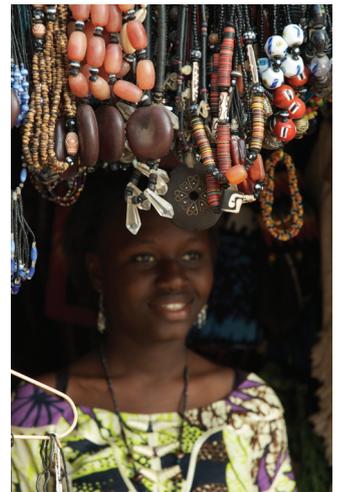
There are many different excursions designed to give the tourist a good feel of The Gambia. There are land – based tours, river trips and mixed excursions. Many of the excursions are conducted in the coastal area but others take place in rural Gambia. Check with your tour rep on how to join any of these trips. Please remember to take plenty of camera film, sun tan lotion and insect repellent.

## Coastal Excursions

### Half-day Orientation Tours

There are many variations of this trip but it is generally a half day tour of Banjul and surrounding area, covering visits to the National Museum, Banjul Market, Arch 22, Serrekunda Market, Bakau Craft Markets and the legendary Katchikally Crocodile Pool.





# Everyday life...

## Banks



### Central Bank of The Gambia

Headquarters: Banjul.



### Standard Chartered Bank

Headquarters: Banjul  
Branches: Kairaba Avenue, Senegambia,  
Westfield Junction and Basse.



### Trust Bank Limited

Headquarters: Banjul  
Branches: Bakau, Westfield Junction,  
Senegambia, Brikama, Barra, Bakoteh,  
Basse and Farafenni.



### Bank PHB

Headquarters: Banjul  
Branches: Bakau, Kanifing and Serrekunda



### Arab-Gambian Islamic

Headquarters: Banjul  
Branches: Westfield Junction.



### Access Bank

Headquarters: Kairaba Avenue.  
Branches: Banjul, Serrekunda, Barra and  
Brusubi.



### First International Bank

Headquarters: Kairaba Avenue  
Branches: Serrekunda, Brikama,  
Latrikunda and Kanilai.



### Guaranty Trust Bank

Headquarters: Kairaba Avenue  
Branches: Banjul, Senegambia, Jimpex  
Kanifing, Serrekunda and Brikama.



### International Commercial Bank

GIPFZA House, Kairaba Avenue.  
Branches: Banjul, Serrekunda and  
Latrikunda



### Banque Sahelo-Saharienne pour L'Investissement et commerce

Headquarters: Kairaba Avenue.

### ECOBANK Eccobank

Headquarters: Kairaba Avenue  
Branches: Banjul, Westfield and Kanifing.



### Oceanic Bank

Headquarters: Senegambia Highway





## Business Hours

### **Offices**

Monday to Thursday	8.00am-4.00pm	Friday	8.00am-12.30pm
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### **Banks in Banjul**

Monday to Thursday	8.00am-1.30pm	Friday	8.00am-1.00am
<i>Closed on Saturday and Public Holidays</i>			

### **Branches of all Banks elsewhere**

Monday to Friday:	8.00am-1.00pm 4.00pm-6.00pm	Saturday	8.00am-11.00am or 12 noon
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*On Saturday except some Branches of Standard Chartered Bank which are open from 4.00pm to 6.00 on Saturday.*

# Everyday life...

## ATM (Cash machines)

Available at most banks around around the Kombo area and the Tourism Development Area (TDA)

## Cheques

Standard Chartered Bank will also cash UK cheques on production of a passport. Euro cheques are also accepted but must be paid into an account.

## Credit Cards

Most hotels and many of the restaurants in The Gambia accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express cards but please confirm with management before making a transaction.

## Churches

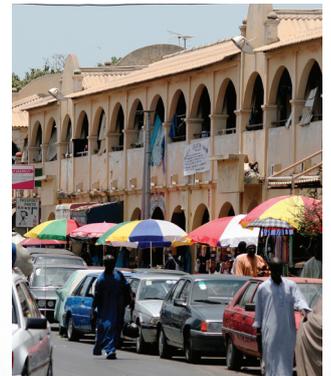
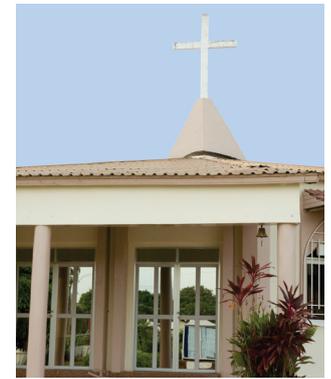
There are three main Christian denominations - Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist. Recently, other churches (mainly "born again") have established missions in The Gambia. Churches are located in various parts of Greater Banjul and in the provinces.

## Hospitals

Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (Banjul); Medical Research Council (MRC) Fajara; Ahmadiyya Hospital (Tallinding Kunjang); Jemus Junkung Hospital (Bwiam); Bansang Hospital, AFPRC Hospital (Farafenni).

## Clinics

Polyclinic and Leman Street Clinic (Banjul); Westfield Clinic (Serrekunda); Ndeban Clinic (Bakau); Lamtoro Clinic (Kololi); Jammeh Foundation for Peace Hospital (Bundung); Africmed (Senegambia Junction) and Bijilo Medical Centre (Bijilo).



## Health Centres

Bakau, Serrekunda, Fajikunda, Sukuta, Brikama, Gunjur, Sibanor, Mansakonko, Janjanbureh, Basse; MRC (Farafenni, Basse). Patient visiting hours in most hospitals and clinics is between 2.00pm and 5.00pm.

## Supermarkets

There are well stocked supermarkets in Banjul, Bakau, Serrekunda and along the mixed business and residential area of Kairaba Avenue. The main supermarkets are St.Mary's, Harry's, Maroun's, GSC, Right Choice, Kairaba, Happiness, Stop Step and Shop, Sony's and A-Z. Most stores are open from 9.00am. Some close at 5.00pm and others up to 12 midnight. Most are closed on Sunday.

## Shopping

The craft market outside the hotels in the main resort areas offer a variety of items and the most popular are tie and dye materials, batik, antique masks and other wood carvings, leather goods, jewelry, sand painting and basketry. Buy with caution and use the African practice of bargaining for a fair price using your own judgment.

The main markets in Banjul, Serrekunda, Bakau and Brikama are also interesting to visit. Shop and stall owners literally sell everything under the sun.

**Please remember:** *It is illegal to export from The Gambia any article made from wild animal skins, ivory or feathers of any protected creature. Offenders will have goods confiscated and heavy fines imposed.*

## Dress Code

In the resort areas and during excursions, most tourists wear light casual clothing. During the months of November to February, lightweight woollen jumpers or a jacket are needed for the cooler evenings. If you travel in the summer season, take a light raincoat. Although dress in the beach hotels is very informal, ladies should avoid wearing bikinis or go about topless outside the hotel grounds or beaches. Generally, light cotton materials, T-Shirts, shirts and baggy trousers are recommended. Dresses can be made to measure locally at very low prices.

## Local Customs

It is recommended to greet a person before starting a conversation. A handshake is widely used together with the words 'Assalamu Aleikum' meaning Peace Be Upon You. The Majority of Gambians are Muslims and their religious belief should be respected by visitors. The right hand should always be used to give or receive things. Gambians are a very friendly people and visitors should not be afraid to accept their hospitality.

## Drinking Water

In most of the Greater Banjul Area, the water supply system is fed from deep bore holes which is adequately chlorinated and considered safe for drinking. However, bottled mineral water is available from all hotels, stores and supermarkets.

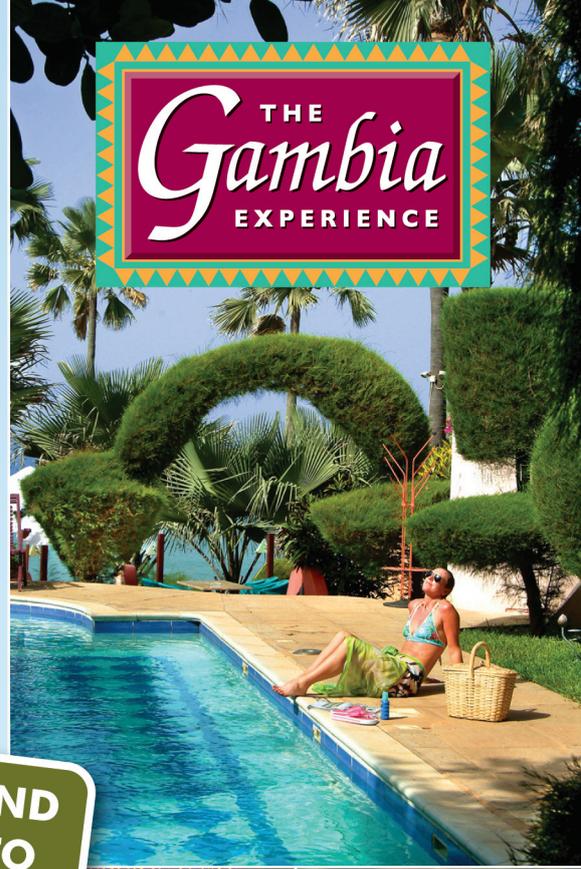
## Crime

The crime rate in The Gambia is generally lower than in most countries in this subregion. The main offences are petty thefts and break-ins. Some drug-related cases are also handled by the police.



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# The Gambia...

Your ideal location for investments in Africa



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- A stable and peaceful country
- Easy and quick investment approval procedures
- Liberal and free market economy with no ownership restrictions
- Functional and efficient banking services with foreign currency denominated account facilities to ease international trade
- Free repatriation of capital and profits
- Efficient port, airport and telecommunications services
- Close proximity to EU and USA markets
- Attractive investment incentive packages for investors
- Adaptable and competitive labour force
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Constitutional guarantees and safeguards against nationalization and expropriation of investments.
- Member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
- Member of the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
- Wide Market Access
- English speaking
- Friendly and hospitable people

By the sheer efficiency of our systems and structures, coupled with our strategic positioning, The Gambia has become the vantage point to access the sub regional market of over 250million people.

## **The Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency (GIPFZA).**

To encourage Investments into The Gambia, the Government established The Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency (GIPFZA). GIPFZA is the focal point of all investment related matters in The Gambia and potential investors are encouraged to consult the Agency even though they are not required by law to register with the Agency.

### **GIPFZA is responsible for:**

- Fostering local and foreign direct investment
- Promoting the export of local and value added products from The Gambia
- Development and regulation of free zones and business parks
- Providing all necessary assistance and information to potential investor

### **Services to Investors:**

- Assistance in securing permissions, exemptions, authorization, licenses, land or any other requirements for establishing and operating a business enterprise
- Administration of incentive packages
- Advise on the preparation of project proposals
- Assistance in the identification of partnerships, joint ventures and financing sources for viable investment projects
- After care services to ensure sustainability of businesses
- Site Visit Services to Potential Investors
- Identify and prepare sites for business park development

**We invite investors to take a closer look at The Gambia,  
West Africa's Premier Investment Enclave!!!**

For more information on investing in The Gambia, Contact:  
The Chief Executive

The Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency (GIPFZA)  
GIPFZA HOUSE, 48A Kairaba Avenue, Serre Kunda P. O. Box 757, Banjul, The Gambia  
Tel: (220) 4377377/8, 4377616/4377615/4377618 Fax: (220) 4377379  
Email: info.gipfza@qanet.gm or dipm.gipfza@qanet.gm Website: www.gipfza.gm

# Your journey...

Now that you have decided to come to The Gambia, here are some important things you need to know as you prepare for the Journey:

## Entry Requirements

Citizens of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other nations with a reciprocal visa abolition agreement with The Gambia do not require a visa to enter the country; whether on holiday or on a business trip not exceeding 90 days. All other nationalities should possess a visa, which is available from any of the Gambian embassies and consulates: London, Paris, Washington DC, Brussels, Taipei, Rabat, Jeddah, Havana, Dakar, Lagos, Freetown and Guinea Bissau. However, tourists and others travelling on last minute bookings will be allowed entry but will be required to submit their passport to the Department of Immigration in Banjul within 48 hours to be issued a proper visa.

## For Further Inquires Please Contact The Following:



### United Kingdom

#### The Gambia Tourism Authority

57 Kensington Court, London W8 5DG UK  
Tel: +44(0) 207 376 0093, Fax: + 44(0) 207 9383644  
e-mail: ukgta@ukonline.co.uk

#### The High Commission of The Republic of The Gambia

57 Kensington Court, London, W8 5DG UK  
Tel: +44(0) 207 9376361 Fax: +44(0) 207 9379095  
e-mail: gambiahighcomuk@aol.com



### USA

#### Embassy of The Gambia

1155 15th Street, NW,  
Suite 1000, Washington DC 20005  
Telephone: (202) 785-1399 Fax: (202) 785-1430  
E-mail: info@gambiaembassy.us



### Sweden

#### Gambia Tourism Authority

Drottninggatan 35, 411 14 Goteborg, Sweden  
Tel: + 46 (0) 31 13 66 50 Fax: + 46(0)13 68 03  
e-mail: infor@gambiainfo.com



## Health Requirements

An International Certificate of Vaccination is no longer compulsory for visitors to The Gambia. However, a yellow fever vaccination will be required for visitors from Europe and North America.

The last outbreak of yellow fever in The Gambia was in 1978 and there is no immediate danger to visitors. Anti-malaria medicine is however recommended and visitors should consult their doctors on which pills to take.

Visitors are also advised to bring along insect repellents, sunburn, anti-fungal creams and disinfectant. They may prove expensive or unobtainable in certain parts of the country.

There are several hospitals and clinics operated by the Government as well as by private practitioners which provide both therapeutic and preventative healthcare.



## **Travel Insurance**

Visitors are advised to take a comprehensive travel insurance covering the following:

- Injury
- Death
- Illness
- Personal belongings
- Baggage damage / loss or delay

## **Duty Free**

The following goods and quantities may be imported into The Gambia duty free:

- Cigarettes – 200 sticks
- Cigars – 50 sticks
- Tobacco – 250 grams
- Spirit – 1 litre Beer or wine 1 litre.
- Other goods – up to a value of D1000.00.

For further information on duty free, please contact the Director General of Customs and Excise in Banjul.

## **By Air**

There are a number of tour operator chartered flights to The Gambia. Most of these operate only in the winter months of November to April. Some charters operate throughout the year as do some scheduled airlines serving Banjul International Airport.

### **From UK**

The Gambia Experience Thomson Holidays, My Travel (Airtours, Panorama, Direct) Cosmos, First Choice, JMC, Unijet.

### **From Holland**

Sunair, Sunrise, Arkefly

### **From Spain**

Spanair

### **From Belgium**

SN Brussels Airlines (scheduled) Thomas Cook / Neckermann / Sunsnacks.

### **From the United States**

Connecting flights available from Europe.

### **From Dakar**

Air Senegal International, Slok Air

## **By Sea**

Banjul has a deep-sea port, which receives several cruise ships a year. Container ships and other freighters call into Banjul Port from all over the world as well.

## **By Road**

If you are already in the West African sub-region, you can travel to The Gambia by road. There is a road link between Dakar and Banjul and the journey will take between five and six hours. There is also a road link with Ziguinchor, in Southern Senegal, and Bissau. However, a four-wheel drive vehicle is highly recommended.



# Tourism info...

## **Gambia Hotel Association**

This is the umbrella organisation for most of the hotels in the country. The association plays a leading role in the promotion of tourism in The Gambia. The association finances its activities through an annual membership subscription based on the number of rooms and other special contributions when necessary. Meetings are held every month to review matters affecting its members or the tourism sector in general. The Chairman of the association is elected every year with the possibility of re-election.

**[www.gambiahotels.gm](http://www.gambiahotels.gm)**

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## **Tourism and Travel Association of The Gambia**

The Tourism and Travel Association of The Gambia (TTAG) was originally formed as the Association of Ground Tour Operators to ensure safe passage of Visitors in the Gambia. The TTAG has since opened its doors to other sectors of the Tourist Industry such as Restaurants, Bars, Car Hire and Shops.

The members of the TTAG aim to offer a unique service and comfort to guests coming to The Gambia. As members we are committed to following the Code of Conduct which has been set out by the Gambian Government in order to protect and ensure the safety of all Citizens and tourists alike.

For Link: **[www.visitthegambia.gm](http://www.visitthegambia.gm)**

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## **Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism**

The Association of Small Scale Enterprises in Tourism (ASSET) was established in April 2000 in order to bring together, advocate for, and promote a large number of small enterprises that were active in the tourism industry in The Gambia.

These businesses include craft market vendors, tourist taxi drivers, official tourist guides, juice pressers and fruit sellers as well as a number of small hotels, guest houses and ground tour operators etc.

Within six years ASSET has attracted more than eighty organisations into membership, has hosted an international conference on Fair Trade in Tourism, has been recognised by the Gambia Tourism Authority (GTA) as an important voice for the previously voiceless and has become a leading player in the Gambian Responsible Tourism Partnership programme that is being led by the GTA. This programme brings together the principal stakeholders in the tourism industry (government, tour operators, ground handlers, hoteliers and small scale businesses) in order to ensure that the adverse impacts of tourism are minimised and that maximum benefits are gained by local people and their communities

ASSET's future goals include the training of large numbers of personnel working in tourism, the development and implementation of industry wide standards and the marketing of the diverse and excellent services that are provided by ASSET members.

ASSET won the Best for Poverty Reduction award during the First Choice Responsible Tourism Awards 2005 held at the World Travel Market in London. The event was sponsored by First Choice Holidays PLC in association with [responsibletavel.com](http://responsibletavel.com), The Times, World Travel Market and Geographical Magazine.

**[Info@asset-gambia.com](mailto:Info@asset-gambia.com) ; [www.asset-gambia.com](http://www.asset-gambia.com)**

## Thanks

**The Gambia Tourism Authority wishes to acknowledge the contribution of the following:**

National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC)

Discovery Tours

The Gambia Experience

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Makasutu Cultural Resort

Sheraton Gambia Spa and Resort

Gambia Tours

West African Tours

Dunes Resort

Africa Adventures Tours

Gambia National Museum

Corinthia Atlantic Hotel

Coconut Residence

Bakau Craft Market

Senegambia Craft Market

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Jeggan Grey-Johnson

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