

AFRICA Travel

MAGAZINE



Western Africa World Edition



Western Africa

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

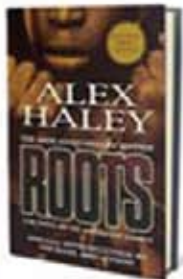
"The western media needs to focus more on success stories in Africa. We are doing so many good things out here which do not get enough publicity." President Kikwete, Tanzania,

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

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THE GAMBIA TO HOST AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION 35TH ANNUAL CONGRESS

Country Profile: The Republic of The Gambia is named after one of Africa's most navigable rivers, the Gambia and is located in West Africa. The Gambia is roughly twice the size of the state of Delaware in the United States and occupies a narrow area on either side of the Gambia River, forming an enclave in Senegal surrounded on its north, east and south borders by Senegal. A former British colony, the Republic of The Gambia became independent on February 18, 1965. In 1994, The Gambia began a transformation from military to civilian rule and liberalized its economy. The President of The Gambia, H.E. Yaya A.J.J. Jammeh has instituted a Vision 2020 Plan "The Gambia Incorporated" with the aim of transforming the smallest country in Africa into a middle income country by offering a stable investment environment, efficient banking sector, and competitive private sector.

Ideal Climate

The Gambia is known for its beautiful beaches and warm coastal waters which are a haven for tourists with a tropical climate that is relatively hot and humid throughout the year. The main ethnic groups are the Mande, including the rural Mandinka, and the Atlantic peoples including the Wolof and Fulani. English is the official language but Wolof and Fulani are spoken in the towns and Mandinka in the rural areas. The population of The Gambia is approximately 1.5 million inhabitants with about 85% of the population that are Muslim and a sizable Christian minority. The capital of The Gambia is Banjul, with about 300,000 inhabitants, is also the main port and main commercial center along the River Gambia. The people of The Gambia live

harmoniously in mixed communities, freely exercising their religious and cultural traditions. Gambians are also widely recognized for their genuine friendliness and hospitality.

Roots in Africa

The main resources of foreign exchange are agriculture and tourism with agriculture accounting for 23% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and employing 75% of the workforce. Groundnuts, covering 60% of The Gambia's arable land are the main export crop. The Gambia also has had considerable success in developing and promoting its tourist industry, which contributes about 16% of GDP. In 2000, approximately 100,000 tourists visited The Gambia which earned the country an estimated \$35 million and provided an estimated 10,000 Gambians with stable employment in this sector. Perhaps most Americans know about The Gambia as a result of Alex Haley's bestseller and epic television docudrama "Roots" which focused on Kunta Kinte and his ancestral homeland of Juffureh. The Gambia also has tremendous potential in the fishing industry which has yet to be fully developed as well as a small manufacturing industry with plastic goods and confectionaries as the main products. The Gambia is also an important entry point for goods that are distributed to its neighboring countries in West Africa and has specifically targeted itself as the most logical "gateway" into West Africa for the trans-shipment (re-export market) of imports and exports. To learn more about The Gambia please check out www.visitthegambia.com.

Heritage

World Heritage Committee inscribes 24 New Sites on the World Heritage List New sites include, for the first time, sites in Gambia. The inscriptions were carried out by the World Heritage Committee, which has been holding its 27th session, under the chair of Vera Lacoeylle (Sainte-Lucie) at UNESCO Headquarters since June 30. The World Heritage List now numbers 754 sites, including 149 natural, and 582 cultural and 23 mixed sites "of outstanding universal value." The new natural sites include: James Island and Related Sites present a testimony to the main periods and facets of the encounter between Africa and Europe along the River Gambia, a continuum that stretched from pre-colonial and pre-slavery times to independence. The site is particularly significant for its relation to the beginning and the abolition of the slave trade. It also documents early access to the interior of Africa.

VISIT FRIENDLY GHANA "THE SMILE

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

Photo by Muguette Goufrani



World Tourism Day
27 September

Tourism - Celebrating Diversity

Ghana



ON THE FACE OF AFRICA."



Ghana Tourist Board: gtb@africaonline.com.gh .
<http://www.ghana.gov.gh/tourists/>
Africa Travel Magazine

I am Ghana ...



I am Ghana. Many travelers call me "the smile of the face of Africa." Ghanains that are living, working and

traveling overseas have been my warm and friendly ambassadors, spreading the good word about my many charms. In case you were unaware, I have had the pleasure of hosting Africa Travel Association delegates from the USA, Canada and Africa at its Annual Congress in 1994, 1999 and 2006. My tourism community awaits your happy return on any occasion and its members will roll out the welcome mat, woven in traditional Kente cloth, naturally. My blessings, beauty and bounty are well known to members of ATA who have visited my sunny shores, but for others an exciting surprise awaits. Here are some interesting, complimentary comments the editors have to say about me:

Warm Friendships Blossom

Years before we set foot in West Africa, we had met many Ghanaians and found them to be one of the most outgoing, friendly races of people on the planet. During the combined ATA- WTO World Congress, we were impressed by the way Accra prepared for the millennium, with an infrastructure of wide highways, overpasses and boulevards, plus buildings, a new sports stadium and convention facilities, of which any nation would be proud. Stories of the sights we saw and folks we met would fill volumes, so be prepared

for our next few issues, where we can expand.

Colorful Festival, Enchanting Vistas

Here are a few of my most memorable experiences: (1) Koforidua and the colorful Durbar ceremonies. (2) Our motor coach trip along the Cape Coast. (3) Kakum National Forest, with its six swinging bridges. (4) Historic Kumasi with its king's palace and weavers of famous Kente cloth. Among our many purchases in Ghana were multicolored Kente caps, which attract attention at home or away, especially at the travel trade shows we exhibit in across North America. We could have sold those

Kente caps and shirts many times. What we saw en route, on the highways and byways was a story in itself. Small wonder we kept running out of film for the cameras.

Looking Back with Pride

Here's a capsule profile of Ghana, courtesy of Joe Nyarko of Sagrenti Tours: A darker era saw many of our people, and those of other African lands, leave our shores for the plantations of America and the Caribbean, creating the biggest Diaspora the world has ever seen. Today, citizens of many states around the world still acknowledge and treasure their family

links with Ghana, returning to explore those links and to experience the soul of their motherland. Today, come home to Ghana, the gateway to that African Heritage. Our celebrations, with great durbars of chiefs in full regalia, full of dancing and drumming, reverberate with images of our rich cultural traditions and reflect the passage of nature's calendar, so important in the preservation of our culture. Throughout the year and throughout the Country, our people love to celebrate, and the great sights and scenes reflected in these festivals. *For more information visit www.africa-ata.org/ghana.htm*



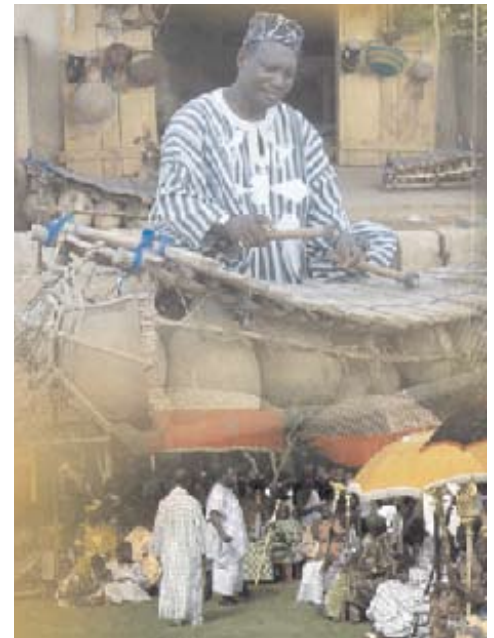
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**Exotic Culture
Exciting Nature**

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

We Know Ghana and West Africa Best



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

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

Historical Ghana

Formerly the Gold Coast, Ghana is a young republic which became independent from Britain on March 6, 1957, the first black African colony to achieve its independence. Ghana occupies the pinnacle spot in Pan-African history having hit the torch for African Emancipation and became home for famous Pan-Africanist such as W.E. B Du Bois and George Pad more. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah whose mausoleum adds to Accra's landscape was Ghana's first President. European power struggle between the 15th

and 19th centuries started with the Portuguese who built Elmina Castle in 1482. They were followed by the Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Prussians and the British looking for fortunes in gold and ivory. This intense commercial rivalry ended with the growth of the tragic trade in silvery - all 42 European castles and fortifications were used as dungeons for the millions most of whom lost their lives or whose descendants compose the African diaspora today. Over 42 forts and castles including Elmina and Cape Coast Castles are recognized by UNESCO as the World No. 1 Heritage Monuments. Sites of wars between the British and indigenous population especially the Ashanti peoples. Ancient artistry in fabrics with the colorful and popular Ashanti Bonwire Kente Cloth now adopted as a focus of identity by many people of African descent the world over. An antique collector's haven for ancient terra-cotta work. Traditional

gold jewelry, Krobo beads, northern leather and straw product, woodcarving of Ahwiaa-Ashanti.

The practice of ancient herbal and alternative medicine side by side with orthodox medical practice throughout the country; herbariums preserve the ancient medical heritage, colorful traditional festivals full of pomp and pageantry with Chiefs and Queen Mothers riding on lushly gilded palanquins. Colorful traditional open markets and lorry parks provide the sounds and sights of the African bazaar.

GHANA TOURIST BOARD

The Ghana Tourist Board was set up by Legislative Instrument (NRC Degree) 224 in 1973. It is the sole government agency set up to implement government's tourism policies. It is purely a Research, Marketing and regulatory body under the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations. Contact gtb@africaonline.com.



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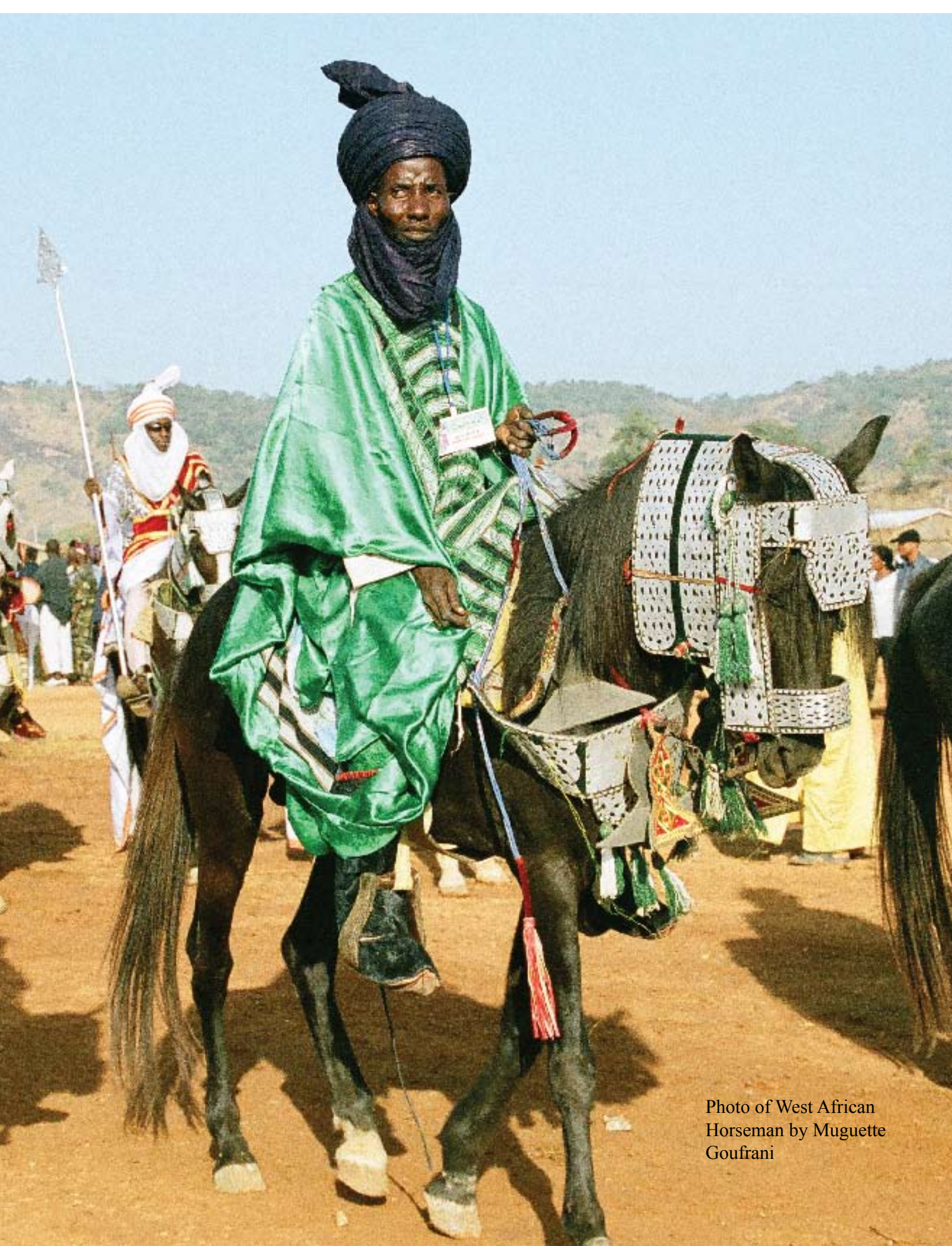


Photo of West African
Horseman by Muguette
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The Devil's Elbow at Obudu Ranch, Nigeria



In travel and tourism as in life, there are more than one ways to get to the top! In Cross River State, Nigeria there's the long and winding way up the Devils's Elbow. Then there's the high speed gondola - and for the high and mighty there's a helicopter pad near the conference center. You can also land at a nearby airfield. My first visit to Nigeria was in the fall of 2006, and as luck would have it, the city that won the opportunity to host our ATA Eco Cultural Symposium was Calabar in Cross River State. What is so unique about Calabar? For one thing it is an example of good management, zero tolerance in some key areas and a spirit of optimism far ahead of most destinations we have visited. Credit must go to our host for the event, Governor Donald Duke, who introduced and championed a number of creative ideas. One of them is pictured on this page - a state-of-the-art gondola lift that whisks visitors up to the high plateau where the Obudu Cattle Ranch, established decades ago, has been transformed into a spectacular tourism and world class attraction for important meetings and summits. The lodge operated by South Africa's Protea Hotels group has been resorted and, as expected, the hospital-

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

Tinapa - Birth of a Super Oasis in Nigeria

In fall the of 2006, our magazine's editorial team was part of an ATA group that was privileged to visit and inspect Calabar's exciting Tinapa project that was in its final stages at the time. Our current mandate is to make sure Africa Travel Magazine's readers and internet viewers in North America and around the world know the true facts about Nigeria's newest treasure of cooperative enterprise. Tinapa is a resort that means business - the business of combing business, pleasure and leisure! Tinapa is the resort that means business - the business of combing business, pleasure and leisure! This will be the first time that anything like this has been experienced in West Africa. No longer will you need to go to Europe, the Far East



or America to enjoy the best entertainment, shopping and leisure facilities the world has to offer! The total Tinapa complex is massive - 80 000 m2 of retail and wholesale emporiums alone. The emporiums feature a borderless, seamless shopping environment - a unique concept that unfolds a new dimension in retailing for the first time in Africa's history!

These massive 21st century shopping emporiums will be supported by a vast array of retailers offering everything from exclusive bookshops, specialty CD and DVD outlets, pharmacies to beauty salons, banks and jewellery stores! Plus an incredible entertainment centre including cinemas, food court, internet cafe and games arcade! There will be a dazzling range of six hotels to choose from - accommodation to suit a variety of lifestyles and budgets. The magnificent waterfront devel-

CREATIVE CONCEPTS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE

opment incorporating a Fisherman's Wharf, will showcase even more restaurants, bars and tourist kiosks. Imagine, after an endless night of fun, enjoying a champagne breakfast whilst watching a beautiful sunrise over the azure waters of the Calabar River! And as if that's not enough entertainment there'll be added attractions to indulge in, including a golfer's paradise with driving range and putting green, a jungle carting track, quad biking route, plus a clay pigeon and archery course! Water activities, including water-skiing, parasailing, rowing and canoeing will take place in a luxurious oasis environment! Agri and eco tourism attractions will include a sizeable exotic bird sanctuary, a crocodile farm, a tropical fish farm, a primate rehabilitation centre and much,

much more in the sun-drenched waterways of Tinapa! It is the ultimate shop and party till-you-drop leisure centre - a world that is alive twenty-fours a day with a never-ending choice of activities to choose from. Tinapa will provide visitors with a unique tourism experience and the development will fast track growth of the tourism sector in Calabar, Cross River State and Nigeria.

"Tinapa will Regenerate Lost Trading History of Old Calabar," President Olusegun Obasanjo.

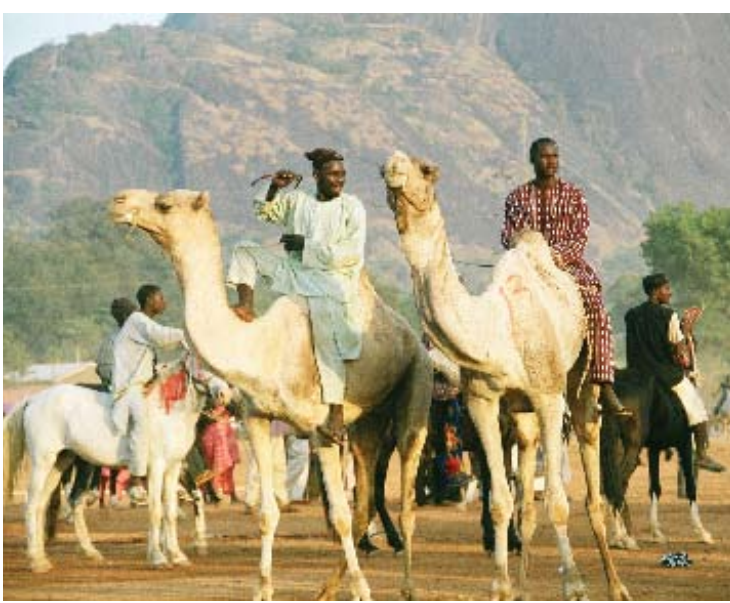
Governor Donald Duke

We thank our host from the ATA Eco and Cultural Tourism Symposium, Governor Donald Duke for a week of surprising and delightful experiences - and for welcoming us to the Governor's mansion for a wind up dinner.



Recent Events: Nigerian Minister of Tourism, Culture and National Orientation, Prince Adetokunbo Kayode (San), invited ATA delegates to participate in the launch of the country's Tourism Master Plan October, 2007 in Abuja, the capital city. The plan aims to position Nigeria as the continent's leading cultural, historical and business tourist destination. Minister Kayode said the plan "was borne out of the Government's firm conviction on the opportunities offered by the sector for sustainable development, especially at the grass roots level, its high potential for enhanced foreign exchange earnings and the environment friendly nature of tourism programmes". He emphasized that tourism provides a variety of new opportunities for improving socio-economic conditions, diversifying the economy, and achieving stability. For more information fax 604 681 6595 or visit our web site: <http://www.africa-ata.org/nigeria.htm>

NIGERIA'S TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE



ABUJA CARNIVAL: NIGERIA'S CAPITAL 'SWINGS' AROUND

By Jerry W. Bird

I am Abuja, capital of Nigeria, which is Africa's most populous country. I am confident about my future as a world center and a magnet for cultural, adventure, culinary, educational and leisure tourism. My broad, well maintained paved streets, attractively landscaped boulevards and modern overpasses keep the traffic flowing smoothly, morning, noon and night. With my wide, cinematic vistas in every direction, you won't feel hemmed in by gridlock. Being in Nigeria's heartland, I am adjacent to Kogi, Niger, Kaduna and Nassarawa states. Carnival week in late November showcases the culture of all 36 states, with rhythmic, pulsating music, exotic tribal dances, durbars on horseback and camels from the far Sahara. It's an unending kaleidoscope of colorful regalia, fun

activities, parade floats, tribal masks and costumes unique to various states. Born in 1976, I am considered a model city for all of Africa, and one of the world's handful of totally planned cities.

I am proud of my position as a magnet for world class meetings and events. For example I just finished receiving visitors from over 60 countries, including heads of state, at the Africa- Latin America Summit.

Visitors Comments

Here are some current comments about my lifestyle and attractions from a variety of U.S. visitors and residents from other countries: "Originally from

France, I have lived and taught school in Abuja for five years, and appreciate the easy going lifestyle and friendliness of the people. Here, we enjoy a comfortable year round climate and really appreciate the absence of mosquitoes and similar insect pests. It's good to know that this city is virtually malaria free."

"I was very impressed by the recent renovations that were being made at Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport and was pleased to learn that the Nigerian government was really serious about improving the infrastructure of its airports for incoming tourists and business people."

"Your exciting Abuja Carnival rivals those in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Mardi Gras in New Orleans." Many





THE CLOCK IN A ROLICKING WEEK OF FESTIVITIES

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

"My impression of Abuja was that it is truly a 'City of the Future' set in a scenic environment." "Located approximately one hour by air from Lagos, Abuja has excellent conference and accommodation facilities." "Throughout Abuja there is much construction going on and the people truly exhibit an excitement about living in what is perhaps the most modern city in Africa."

"We were quite surprised at the relative ease in our processing through immigration and customs. Much to our pleasure, we were told that both the Ministry of Aviation and the Ministry of Tourism have done an excellent job in alleviating the extreme bottlenecks that travelers were accustomed to experience upon arriving in Nigeria."

Excerpts from The Guardian

(Nigeria) by Andrew Iro Okungbowa and Stella Agbala "Here in this country where we have well over 350 ethnic and linguistic groups, diversity of culture, diversity of

language, diversity of foods, and unity in diversity. We owe it a duty to ourselves, the rest of Africans and to African in Diaspora to showcase what is authentically Africa and what is authentically ours."

Former President Obasanjo comments on Abuja Carnival

"In the next four days, you will see the different forms of art, dances, different aspects of our way of life, boat regatta, masquerades, that would be breathtaking in one spot."

Referring to the unique nature of the carnival, he added;

"We have come together, all as Nigerians, in one spot; we have brought together what will take anybody who has to go over Nigeria days and even months in a space of few days."

Dream Becomes Reality

The Carnival debuted in 2005 as part of the Government's dream to promote Nigeria as a tourist destination and to expose Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to the

world as a promoter of tourism as well as showcase to the world the cultural beauty and business opportunities that abound in the country. Last year's celebration was almost marred by outcries and criticisms by some Nigerians, especially religious organizations, which saw the event as fetish and profane. But the President addressed these charges when he informed the nation that among others, it was meant to promote Nigeria and her people to the global community. With nothing short of joy and excitement, the President said the carnival is to be entrenched as a yearly celebration that would give people room to explore Nigeria.

We plan to expand on this feature in coming editions of Africa Travel Magazine, in both its formats - printed and electronic (pdf). Keep up to date daily by visiting our website: www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm



NIGERIA EVENTS

Black History Month (BHM)

February 26, 2009 - March 8, 2009

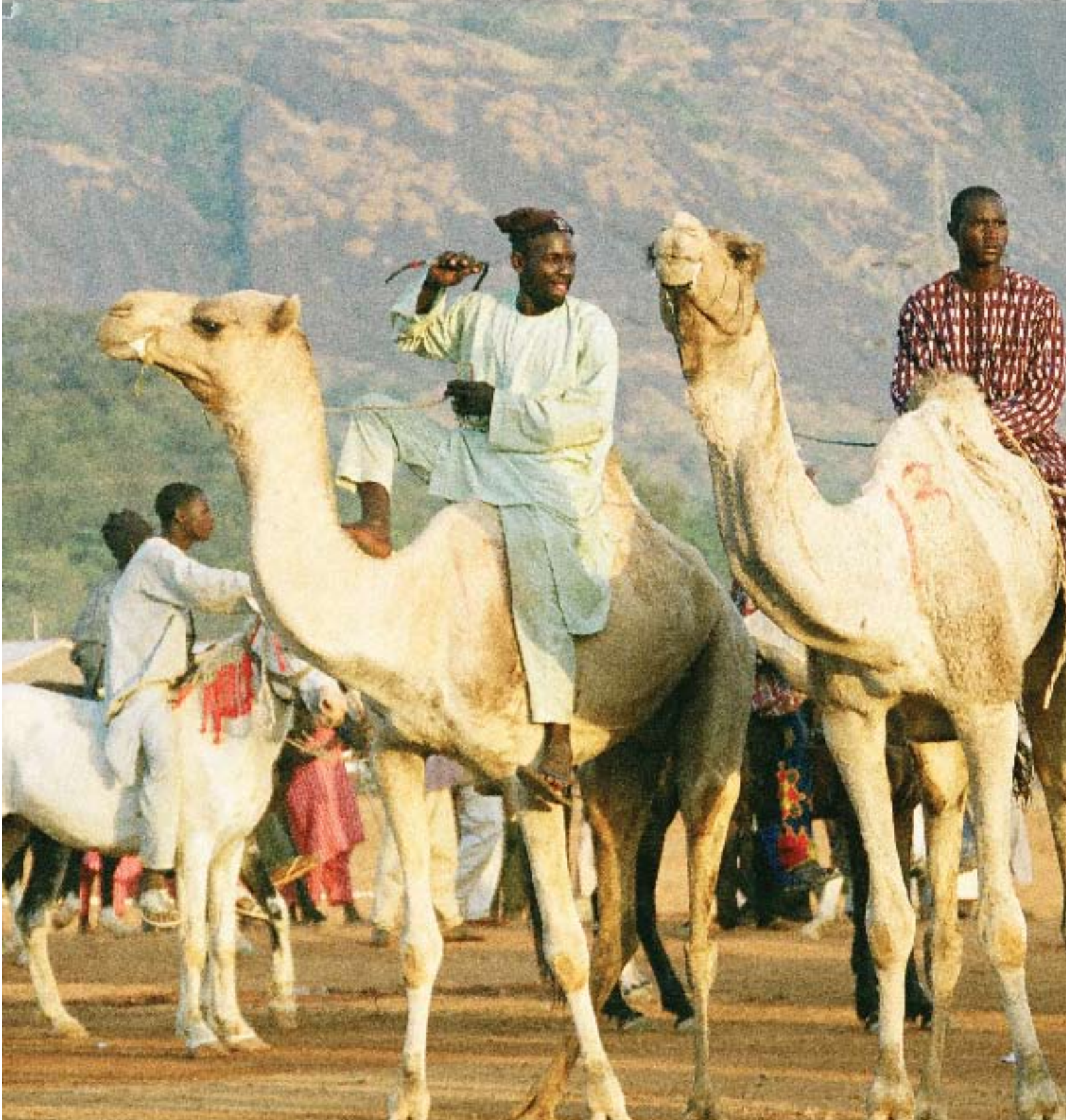
Black History Week Convention

Expo & Osun Festival, August 2009

Abuja Carnival January 2010

Photo of Abuja 2008 Carnival

byMuguette Goufrani.



Discover the Slave Route in Nigeria

By Dr. Beryl Dorsett

A darker historical era saw many people of West Africa leave their shores for plantations

in Europe, North and South America and the Caribbean. The infamous slave trade in Nigeria is not known to many people like the slave trade in Ghana, Senegal, Togo and Benin. Nigeria and Ghana were former British colonies. Senegal, Togo and Benin were former French colonies. In December 2000, I attended the Fourth Eco-tourism Symposium in Nigeria as a delegate of the Africa Travel

Association. The Lagos State Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation invited conference delegates to a two-day pre-symposium tour of Lagos States. On the first day, we toured the city of Lagos. On the second day, we toured the town of Badagry and learned that Badagry was an important slave route in West Africa. Badagry is one of five divisions created in Lagos State in 1968

This ancient town of Badagry was founded around 1425 A.D. Before its existence, people lived along the Coast of Gberefu and this area later gave birth to the town of Badagry. It is the second largest commercial town in Lagos State, located an hour from Lagos and half hour from the Republic du Benin. The Town of Badgry is bordered on the south by the Gulf of Guinea and surrounded by creeks, islands and a lake. The ancient town served mainly the Oyo Empire which was comprised of Yoruba and Ogu people. Today, the Aworis and Egun are mainly the people who reside in the town of Badagry as well as in Ogun State in Nigeria and in the neighboring Republic du Benin.

In the early 1500's, slaves were transport-

ed from West Africa to America through Badagry. It is reported that Badagry exported no fewer than 550,000 African slaves to America during the period of the American Independence in 1787.

In addition, slaves were transported to Europe, South America and the Caribbean. The slaves came mainly from West Africa and the neighboring countries of

Benin and Togo as well as others parts of Nigeria. The slave trade became the major source of income for the Europeans in Badagry. Today, Badagry is an historic site because of the significant



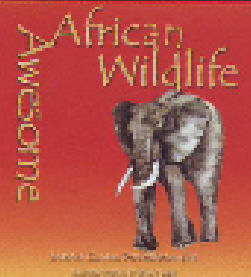
role it played as a major slave port in Nigeria. The town of Badagry is promoting an African Heritage Festival in May, 2001 to enlighten the world to its historic sites, landscapes, cultural artifacts and relics of human slavery. Badagry wants to share this world heritage site with others. They are preserving buildings, sites and memories of this iniquitous period so those tourists can unearth the dark impact of this era. Places of interest include the Palace of the Akran of Badagry and its mini ethnographic museum, the early missionaries cemetery, the District Officer's Office and Residence, the First Storey Building in Nigeria constructed by the Anglican missionaries, relics of slave chains in the mini museum of slave trade, cannons of war, the Vlekte slave Market, and the Slave Port established for the shipment of slaves before the 16th century.

The Lagos State Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation is sponsoring the African Heritage Festival, May 2001, in collaboration with Nigerian Tourist Development Corporation, Badagry

Local Government and some NGOs. Chief Moses Hungbo Owolabani is the Executive Chairman of Badagry Local Government Council. The tentative program of events encompasses initiation into Nigerian tribes, boat regatta, educational and economic forums, music and dance festivals, and numerous recreational activities and picnicking on miles of beach front property. For further information, contact Lagos State Waterfront and Tourism Development Corporation, 3B Itinrin Court, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. Tel. 234- 1-774-1886 or 234-1-775-4192.

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Guinea: Switzerland of Africa

by Muguette Goufrani



The story of my journey from the Gulf of Guinea on Africa's Atlantic Coast to historic Mali Ville in the northern highlands appears in both English and French

in coming editions of Africa Travel Magazine. With that in mind, please consider this on-line version as an hors d'oeuvre - the main banquet will come when you visit Guinea. I guarantee that your experience will be like one of Nat King Cole's most famous hit songs ... Unforgettable! Or as the immortal Maurice Chevalier would say ... C'est Magnifique! Some call Guinea the "Switzerland of Africa" and one of your first pleasant surprises when visiting the Republic of Guinea is that it is uncrowded. Big in size, yet small in population. A nation of 7.5 million, Guinea is also described as the land of contrasts. Those apt comparisons became evident to me a few days into our journey. The route selected by our gracious hosts Hon. Sylla H. K. Diakite, Guinea's former Minister of Tourism and General Manager Ibrahima Diallo, began close to Conakry. Here we visited several sites

along the "Slave Route," which I will describe more fully my next instalment. The main journey covered a vast expanse of geography, stretching northeast by highway via Kindia, Dalaba, Pita and Labé, to our final destination at Mali Ville near the Senegal border. Photo ops abounded, capturing the spirit and flavor of the country Guinea's history, culture, cuisine, colorful costumes, lifestyles and breathtaking scenery.

Jewels, Ballet and Malinke Music to Charm the Soul

Several jewels in Guinea's abundant treasure chest make it a highly attractive tourist destination; one that's loaded with potential. A key facet is the rich vibrancy of the culture, echoing the ATA Congress theme, "Nature, Culture and Hospitality." Another charming jewel in Guinea's tourism crown is the romantic, captivating Malinke music heard literally everywhere you go. Its rhythmic style gives inspiration to many West African artists, even "Les Ballets Africains," Guinea's musical goodwill ambassadors to the world and Africa's foremost touring dance company. What a sight they are



on stage! Hon. Sylla Diakite (right), justly proud of her country's world class musical attraction, joined us for the two hour spectacular. Our applause rocked the auditorium in Conakry following this group's energy-filled command performance. Before leaving Guinea, I purchased several albums of West African Malinke music for our library. It will be beamed to

the waiting world on our Web Radio Station and Africa Travel Theater at major trade shows.

Bridal Veils , Smoking Dogs and Mountain Maidens

Following the Congress in Conakry, which literally burst with African flavor and color, we began the long-awaited media tour of Guinea's plateaus and northern highlands. Lamine Diallo, a professional tour guide and his driver Karim welcomed me aboard the Ministry of Tourism bus and we headed east, making our first stop at Coyah, home of Guinea's bottled water plant. Naturally we had to load up for the journey ahead.

Close to Coyah is Dubreka Ville, which we visited several days previously. It is the home of "Les Cascades de la

Soumba," which features a spectacular waterfall, water sports and a resort complex with dining room and comfortable cabins. Tel. (224) 45 32 44.

Beyond Coyah a side road, Route de Fria, leads to one of the country's better known tourist sites, Mount Kaloulima, which in French we call "Le Chien Qui Fume," or the Smoking Dog. Look closely at the mountain side and you



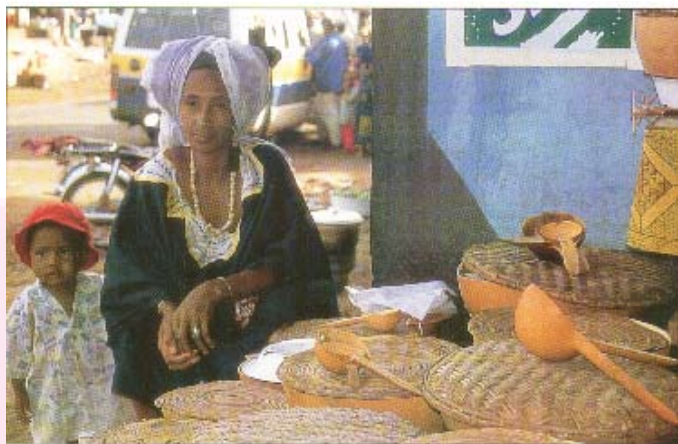
will see the strange resemblance. At certain times, like when a thick fog hugs the mountain side, a wispy smoke seems to rise from the animal's mouth. Our first overnight stop was at the town of Kindia, (140 km from Conakry) where we visited the spectacular Bridal Veil Falls or "Le Voile de la Mariée." The falls are at their most appealing during the rainy season, when the flowing water resembles a delicate bridal veil.

Follow your Dream

Here in the heart of West Africa, Guineans offer all the ingredients of a "Dream Vacation," if you long for an uncrowded, unspoiled, visitor-friendly country. In a class by itself is Guinea's unending selection of spectacular landscapes, which unfolded around each bend, like a cinemascope movie, as we motored through the hilly 'Fouta Djalon' region. Many travelers say that the Fouta Djalon offers the most striking vistas in all of West Africa. Put this fact together with the charming, hospitable people I met along the way, and you have a winning combination. Our gracious hosts from the Guinea Ministry of Tourism, working in close harmony with the Africa Travel Association and ourselves as its media arm, hope to make these dream vacations a reality for travelers from around the world.

Guinea's Tropical Paradise

We plan to feature a trip to Loos Islands, an archipelago located near Conakry. The key islands are Kassa, Room and Fotoba. There is also Tortoise Island (where giant tortoises are protected), Snake and Kid Islands. With easy access by boat, these islands offer beautiful white sand beaches for relaxation and nautical sports.



Did you know?

- Guinea's major ethnic group the Malinke also reside in parts of Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, and at an earlier time ruled one West Africa's great empires. Malinke are also known to have originated the best kora musicians in West Africa. The kora is a popular street dance.
- Guinea is called the Switzerland of Africa, with its lofty mountains and high plateaus, plus a temperate climate. The highest peaks are Mount Loura at Mali Ville (1515 m) and Mount Tinka near Dalaba (1425m). They also call Guinea the Water Tower of Western Africa because many rivers take their origin (River Gambie, Senegal, Niger, etc.) from it. These rivers and churning rapids, hurtling down the mountains create beautiful waterfalls.
- Financial development: According to a recent financial report, the Gulf of Guinea has become one of the world's most promising areas for new petroleum development. This

income source in itself will help expand the infrastructure on which tourism depends.

- Many Africans call the country 'Guinea Conakry,' to avoid any possible confusion with Guinea Bissau, its northern neighbor.
- The language of business and commerce is French and the currency is the Guinea Franc.

If you are interested in a tour covering the same route, contact Dunia Voyages of Conakry, who have a page on this web site.

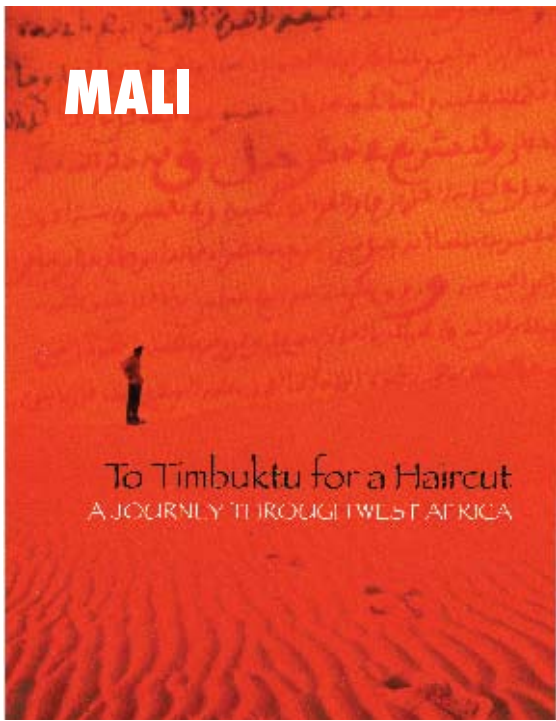
Thanks to our Host Country

We thank the Hon. Sylla Hadja Koumba Diakite, Guinea's former Minister of Tourism, Hotels and Handicraft and Mr. Ibrahima Diallo, General Manager of Tourism. A special bouquet goes out to members of "Les Ballet Africains" for a performance that was unique, awe-inspiring and definitely of the world class variety. One of my fondest wishes is to bring this group to Canada to perform at one of our Travel-Trade Shows.

For more information on this topic visit: www.africa-ata.org/guinea.htm

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





TO TIMBUKTU FOR A HAIRCUT AND



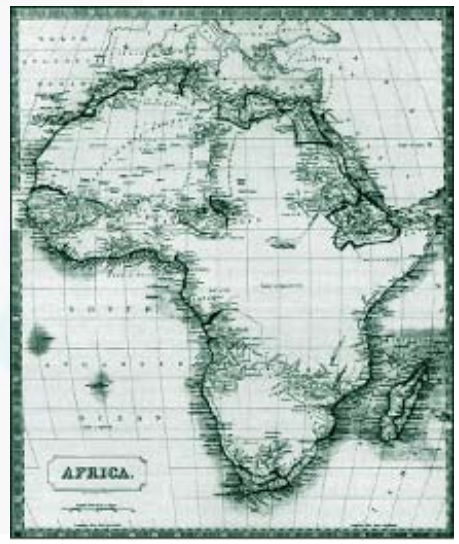
Author and tourism executive, Rick Antonson (left) sets out on an unforgettable journey to Africa, and chronicles his adventures in *TO TIMBUKTU FOR A HAIRCUT: A Journey Through West Africa*, published by Dundurn Press on June 7, 2008. "To Timbuktu for a Haircut is a great read - a little bit of Bill Bryson, a little bit of Michael Palin, and quite a lot of Bob Hope on the road to Timbuktu." - Professor Geoffrey Lipman, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations World Tourism Organization.

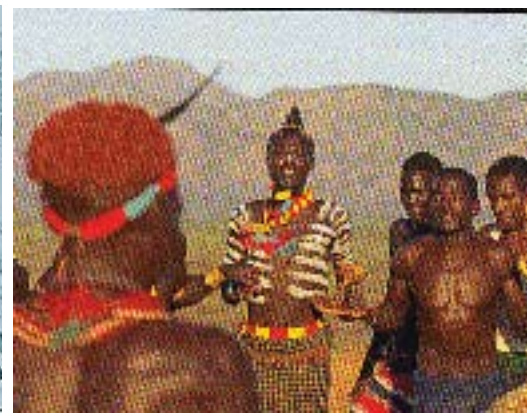
Historically rich, remote, and once unimaginably dangerous for travellers, Timbuktu still teases with "Find me if you can." Rick Antonson's encounters with entertaining train companions Ebou and Ussegnou, a mysterious cook called Nema, and intrepid guide Zak will make you want to pack up and leave for Timbuktu tomorrow. As Antonson travels in Senegal and Mali by train, four-wheel drive, river pinasse, camel, and foot, he tells of fourteenth-century legends, eighteenth-century explorers, and today's endangered existence of Timbuktu's 700,000 ancient manuscripts in what scholars have described as the most important archaeological discovery since the Dead Sea Scrolls. *TO TIMBUKTU FOR A HAIRCUT* combines wry humour with shrewd observation to deliver an armchair experience that will linger in the mind long after the last page is read. "I left Africa personally changed by the gentle harshness I found and a disquieting splendour that found me. Mali was the journey I needed, if not the one I envisioned. And I learned that there's a little of Timbuktu in every traveller: the over-anticipated experience, the clash of dreams with reality." - Rick Antonson
Rick Antonson is the president and CEO of Tourism Vancouver and a director of the Pacific Asia Travel Association. He has had adventures

in Tibet and Nepal, and in Libya and North Korea, among others. The co-author of *SLUMACH'S GOLD: In Search of a Legend*, he lives in Vancouver.

From the Vancouver Sun

It may seem counterintuitive, but the appeal of travel literature often has less to do with the destination in question than with the character of the traveller. Thus, while there may be significant geographical overlap, there is a vast difference, for example, between Frances Mayes's *Tuscany* (in the best-selling *Under the Tuscan Sun*) and Ferenc Máté's *Tuscany* (in the equally impressive but less commercially successful *The Hills of Tuscany*). In each book, the milieu serves as a backdrop for the revelation and development of the author's persona. The reader responds not to the locale but to the locale as experienced by the narrator. This may seem a minor distinction, but it's crucial, especially when you consider both the number of new travel accounts published each year and the fact that the world is a finite place with, sadly, few remaining mysteries. The age of strict geographic exploration is long gone, but the potential for personal explorations through geography is practically limitless. Two new books from B.C. writers nicely





OTHER HAIR-RAISING ADVENTURES

underscore this point, to varying degrees of effect. In exploring two of the world's less-travelled places, Rick Antonson and Martin Mitchinson also explore themselves.

About Rick Antonson

Tourism Vancouver president and CEO Rick Antonson travels for a living, "flying a hundred thousand kilometres each year for two decades," moving from conference to air-conditioned hotel room with seasoned thoughtlessness.

When it came time for him to take a month-long solo expedition, however, he decided almost on a whim to journey to one of the most fabled -- and forbidding -- destinations in the world: Timbuktu.

Few places are quite as evocative and mysterious. A centre of Islamic scholarship and culture during the 15th and 16th centuries, Timbuktu has long been a beacon for travellers. Once thought of as a source of unimaginable riches, the city today is impoverished, threatened by the encroaching Sahara Desert.

For this trip, Antonson decided against his usual air travel and instead made the journey on the ground: by train, boat, car, camel and foot. The result, as recounted in his impressive new book, *To Timbuktu for a Haircut*, is a quixotic quest, alternately funny and thought-provoking.

Readers follow his journey chronologically as he moves toward the city and then as it recedes behind him. His account is threaded through with historical and cultural information. Curiously, his encounter with the city itself is almost anticlimactic. He clearly relishes the journey, and his fellow travellers, more than the destination.

From a ride up the River Niger to an open-air music festival in the desert, from the sudden close friendships that bloom during such travel to the machinations of an unscrupulous tour coordinator who seems intent on foiling his travel goals at every juncture, Antonson handles the joys and occasional frustrations of his trip in vivid, straightforward prose and with a wry sense of humour.

Pearl of the Desert

Timbuktu was formerly a great commercial trading city and an international center of Islamic learning. The city was probably founded in the late 11th century AD by Tuareg nomads. Timbuktu was a leading terminus of trans-Saharan caravans and a distribution point for trade along the upper Niger. Merchants from northern African cities traded salt and cloth for gold and for black African slaves in the markets of Timbuktu. The visitors will discover the ancient mosques including the famous Sankore whose reputation spanned all across north Africa and Europe as a leading Islamic academy for centuries. Most of the ancient books (some dating from the 14th century AD) are still preserved at the Ahmed Baba Center. Tuareg formed one of the most ancient tribal people of the Sahara. They speak a Berber language, Tamacheq, and have their own alphabet. In ancient times, the Tuareg controlled the trans-Sahara routes and substantially contributed in the expansion of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa even though they retained however some of their older rites. Today, the Tuareg symbolize the mysteries of the Sahara and Masters of the Desert. The city of Mopti is known as the "Venice of Mali". Mopti is situated at the confluence of the Bani and Niger rivers, and is built on several interconnected islands. It is from the river that one can best observe the commercial and social activities of the town. Mopti is literally teeming with traditional traders offering a variety of locally-produced commodities and beautiful artifacts.

Reasons to Visit and Invest in Senegal



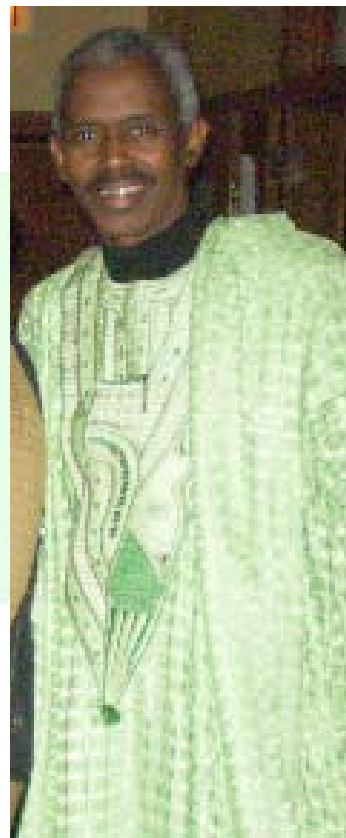
One of Senegal's best known sons in North America and the Caribbean is Ogo Sow (right), better known as "Mister

Africa" to his thousands of radio listeners. Ogo is a long-time friend and constant contributor to our magazine and website. He is also playing a huge part in the global awareness of the Africa Travel Association as its Director of Diaspora Affairs. He and his family live in Atlanta, GA. The following is a brief profile of Mr. Africa's native land.

About Senegal

Senegal was the first African Country our Editor Jerry W. Bird visited after founding the magazine - and it also became the first country to host the Africa Travel Association (ATA) Ecotourism Symposium. The prestige event took place at Saly/Dakar, 1992. A large share of the thanks should go to our good friend and loyal ATA member from California, the late Eunice Rawlings. Eunice lived and worked in Senegal for several years and remained devoted to West

Africa and to the Africa Travel Association. We miss her warm smile and wonderful companionship. Travel and Tourism in Senegal Senegal has been developing its tourism since the early 1970s and is now receiving some half a million tourists a year. There a WTO project, financed by UNDP, aimed at studying tourism's impact on the country's economy. "We will be assessing what new opportunities there are, and how to improve management to increase the benefits from tourism said Mr. Ndiaye. With most of the travel industry run by foreigners, one objective will be to seek ways for easing bank lending facilities to enable the Senegalese themselves to play a greater role. He hopes that cooperatives can be set up to promote



num capacity, announced President Abdoulaye Wade the Head of the Republic of Senegal. According President Wade who is the originator of the establishment, the students will come from all countries without distinction of origin. They will receive, at the beginning, a teaching on public administration, management, New Information Technologies. The University of Future for Africa will allow, thanks to inter-academics agreements, African students to follow by satellite in real time the same courses as the students of the university institutions with which it will have to sign these agreements.

For President Abdoulaye Wade that will make it possible for African students of the UFA to obtain not equivalent diplomas, always prone to discussion, but instead identical

diplomas. The diplomas are co-signed by the foreign university chosen and the UFA. The students will have access to affordable housing, as an option, Wade underlined whose article was illustrated by several photographs showing the model of the university establishment in its various facets.

(Source: APS) Here is a brief outline of the country and its benefits to visitors:

A stable and open country

A healthy and competitive economy

Human resources of quality

Modern and performance infrastructures

A lawful framework and fiscal renovated

A privileged access to the regional and international markets

A life quality exceptional

Contacts:

Ministry of Tourism, Senegal

<http://www.tourisme.gouv.sn/>

Senegal Tourism Office USA

<http://www.senegal-tourism.com/>

Senegal Embassy USA

The Embassy of Senegal in Washington, D.C. has jurisdiction in United States, Mexico, Jamaica, Haiti and others.

For more information visit www.africa-ata.org/senegal.htm



cultural tourism, giving visitors a change to stay in villages and join in everyday rural activities.

The University of the Future African will receive between 2500 and 5000 students

The University of Future for Africa (UFA) will have a capacity of 2500 students in the first three years of its opening and 5000 students in the long term, for his maxi-

Cote d'Ivoire

From the Paris of Africa to its Roman Basilica

by Jerry W. Bird

Lobster Man of Abidjan

Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire: Having heard our Associate Editor Mugnette Goufrani sing the praises of her life and times in Cote d'Ivoire and other West African countries, I was full of anticipation as we boarded the Air Afrique jet at the Cotonou, Benin Airport, bound for the legendary Ivory Coast. As serendipity plays a big part in many of my African journeys, the first Ivorian we chanced to meet en route was a Mr. Gakpo, "The Lobster Man of Abidjan" (a possible song title), who kindly invited us to stay at his seaside inn the following week. That opportunity was a special treat for several reasons, one being that the Inter Continental Hotel Ivoire was full to the rafters and rooftops, due to an Africa-wide financial summit. I'll never forget Mr. Gakpo's stadium sized outdoor dining area, open to the moist Atlantic breezes, and topped by a traditional West African thatched roof. While wining, dining and cracking red lobster shells, one can watch the ever-present fishing boats bobbing up and down in the waves, in search of fresh seafood for tomorrow's table.

Photo of the Atlantic coast, courtesy of Best of Africa Hotel. Photo below courtesy of Haurly Tours < Abidjan.

What's more, the place never seems to close - allowing us to visit well into the wee hours. Thus, Abidjan's "Lobster Villa" became our staging point for one of the most event-filled weeks in my lifetime. At the time there was a major renovation and expansion of Mr. Gakpo's Beach Hotel in progress. For reservations and information phone (011) 225-27-40-86, fax 225-211-08 Meeting Therese Haurly was another milestone. Like Mother Teresa of another era, this travel agent extraordinaire is dedicated to helping Ivorian villagers equip and supply local health clinics. Her souvenir-filled residence overlooks Abidjan, the Paris of West Africa. I plan to devote an issue to the elegant new homes and modern lifestyle I saw emerging, as this young giant of a city, the Paris of Africa, enters the new millennium.

We visited every district by taxi, which proved to be a relatively low cost mode



of travel. Haurly Tours operates two travel agency offices - one in the central lobby of Abidjan's 750-room Inter *Continental Hotel Ivoire (below right).

During my first visit to the hotel, Manager Peter Janssen suggested we visit the 'basilica' at Yamoussoukro (the capital). Air Afrique showcased this 'wonder of the world' on Africa Travel Magazine's back cover in 1996, the same year as our trip. "You've come this far," I told myself, "why not go all the way?" So, when the sun rose over the coconut palms at Lobster Village the next morning, I decided, rather than fly or drive, we'd 'go native' and purchase tickets on the local bus.

Indiana Jones in Abidjan: A taxi took us to the bus station at Adjame, which was like something out of a Bogart or Indiana Jones movie - mingling crowds, a cacophony of sounds, street vendors everywhere - even a special room for the Muslim population to perform its ritual prayers. I didn't know it then, but there are several classes of buses available, and we chose the bargain version, a half day milk run, with countless stops and some unexpected adventures, which in retrospect made the journey more memorable.

Yamoussoukro the Capital Arriving at Yamoussoukro, the elegant Hotel President, another Inter *Continental, became our center for a taxi tour of the city. After a refreshing lunch of aloco (bananas, onions and grilled fish), foutou (yams) topped by an icy cold, long-necked bottle of Flag beer at a local 'maquis,' (open air restaurant) we drove by the walled Houphouet-Boigny residential palace. Its version of a moat is a series of ponds occupied by a horde of hungry crocodiles. What a fantastic setting for the next James Bond or Indiana Jones movie. Speaking of classic, grandiose settings, Yamoussoukro's basilica, a replica of

St. Paul's Cathedral in Rome, lived up to its billings in the Air Afrique advertisement. Palatial grounds and marble columns gave it a regal presence - and 36 giant stained-glass windows, splashed a kaleidoscope of colors across the interior, in changing patterns. We vowed to spend at least one Christmas week in Cote d'Ivoire, to hear the choir and enjoy the blend of traditional Euro-

pean and exotic West African music. I congratulated myself for turning over my camera to a local volunteer who stayed by our side for almost two hours. That way, for \$30 US, we were free to take in the atmosphere, and visit every corner of one of Christianity's most awesome sites, while he recorded the occasion for posterity and future publication such as this. From these 36 treasured photographs, we have enough images to produce a fine coffee table style book. With much more to see and do in Abidjan, we chose a speedy bus for the return trip. E-mail Mugnette with your travel experiences in Cote d'Ivoire and other West African destinations africa@smarrt.net or visit www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm

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Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia

Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Biography in Brief

Internationally known as Africa's "Iron Lady," President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a leading promoter of peace, justice and democratic rule. She grew up in the Liberian capital of Monrovia where she married and had four sons. President Johnson Sirleaf later moved to the United States where she earned an accounting degree from the Madison College of Business and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

In her efforts to bring justice to her people in Liberia, she has spent more than a year in jail at the hands of the military dictatorship of General Samuel Doe and had her life threatened by former President Charles Taylor. She campaigned relentlessly for Taylor's removal from office and played an active and supportive role in the Transitional Government of Liberia as the country prepared for elections in October of 2005. President Johnson Sirleaf was a presidential candidate in the 1997 Liberia general election where she finished second in the field of 13. Before that, she served for five years as Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Program as Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and was the first woman to lead the United Nations Development Project for Africa.

She served as the Chairperson of the Governance Reform Commission of the National Transitional Government of Liberia until she resigned in March 2004 to accept the nomination of the Unity Party of Liberia as its Standard Bearer.

In November 2005, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected President of Liberia and became the first woman to lead an African nation. The Harvard educated and former World Bank economist defeated popular World Class soccer star George Weah with an impressive 59.4 percent of the vote.

Professional career at a glance

- Liberia's first Woman Minister of Finance
- President of Liberia Bank for Development and Investment.
- Vice President of Citicorp.
- Vice President of HSBC Equator Bank .
- Senior Loan Officer of the World Bank.

- Board Member and Regional Representative for West Africa for the Modern Africa Growth and Investment Co.
- Founder and CEO of Kormah Development Corp.
- Founder of Measuagoon, a nonprofit that supports community development and girls education.

President Johnson Sirleaf has served as Governor representing her Liberia for several financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank and the World Bank. In the later capacity, she was chair and spokeswoman of the African Caucus for the 1979 Annual Meeting.

Notable advisory boards and committees:

- The International Crisis Group (USA).
- Songhai Financial Holdings Ltd (Ghana).
- Center for Africa's International Relations, University of Witwatersrand (South Africa) and Women Waging Peace (USA).

Special honors:

- Commander de l'Ordre du Mono of Togo. (1996)
- Ralph Bunche International Leadership Award of USA (1995 and 1996).
- The Franklin D. Roosevelt Freedom Of Speech Award of USA (1988).
- Grand Commander of the Star of African Redemption of Liberia (1980)

Activities:

- One of seven international eminent persons designated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1999 to investigate the Rwanda genocide
- One of the five Commission Chairs for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (2002)
- One of the two international experts selected by UNIFEM to investigate and report (2002) on the effect of conflict of women and women's roles in peace building.
- Served as the initial chairperson (2000–2003) of the Open Society Initiative for West Africa..
- Member of Soros Foundation Network.
- Visiting professor of Governance at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration .

• Selected as an independent board member of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International.

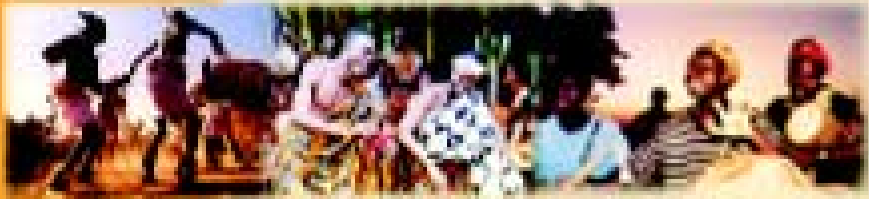
President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has four sons and nine grandchildren.



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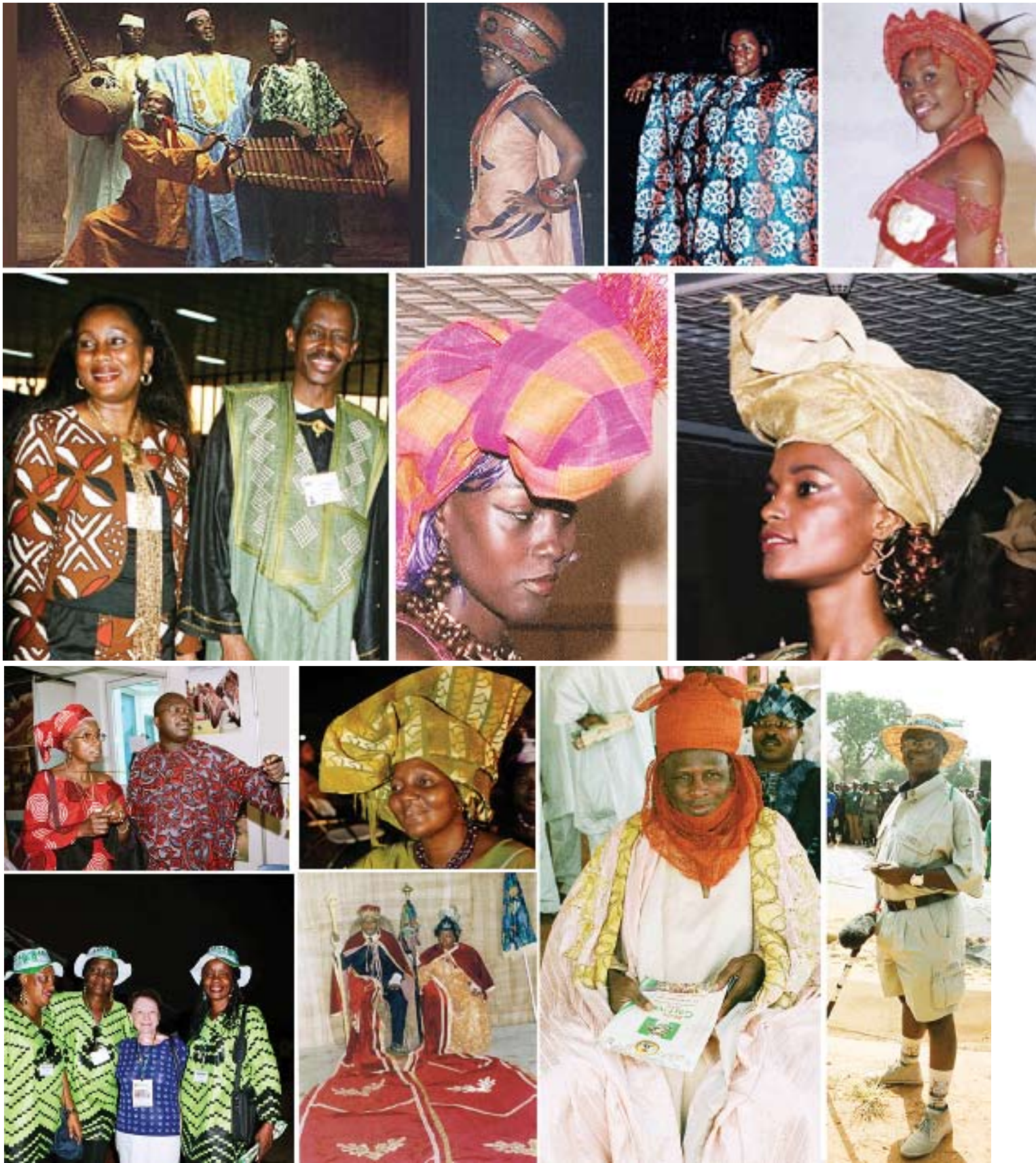
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WEST AFRICAN FASHIONS, LIFESTYLE AND CULTURE HAVE BEEN AN ALL STAR ATTRACTION AT AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION EVENTS FOR 34 GLORIOUS YEARS



What's Your Hattitude?

By Muguette Goufrani

Coiffure and Fashion Wear is an Expression of Individuality and Pride for African Women. Throughout the years, African people struggled to keep their tradition and culture in the midst of outside domination from Arabs and Europeans. Yet, one of the few features that remained was the African head wrap, from generation to generation it symbolized strength and pride. Hats and tie-wraps have not symbolized pride, but we also viewed as a vital part of ultimate portrayal of femininity and etiquette. Personal grooming was equally important and hair styles among West African women mirrored social status. Slave women have unkempt hair. African hats, head wraps and clothing are known for their colorful fabrics and distinctive designs. But I will have to inform that few people take the time to examine the cultural significance of African fashion.

African Textiles

The colorful African textiles became a sign of wealth during the period of the trans Saharan trade when traders used strip cloth as a form of currency. As a result, African textiles and hats became known worldwide, and their quality and color became an expression of wealth and knowledge in society and it became an indication of social hierar-

chy. The development of Kente cloth in the Ashanti tells how the use of cloth and hats differentiates people by status as fine Kente cloth. In addition, hats symbolize leadership.

Colors in the cloths and coiffure of

African people poses important meanings. Meanings vary from people to people, cloth, and hats to cloth and hats. For example, the Akan people in West Africa use dark colors such as red, black and brown for funerals, while the Akon use white for joyous occasions, such as naming ceremonies. In Kente made by the Ashanti people of Ghana, who are also Akan,

Gold represents status and serenity. Yellow represents fertility and vitality.

Green signifies the renewal and growth seen in plants and represents the cycle of birth and decay. Blue represents the presence of God and the omnipotence of the blue sky. Blue also refers to a pure spirit one which rests in harmony. Red connotes passion, the passion of political determination, struggle, and defense. Finally, black denotes seriousness and a union with ancestors. It implies spiritual awareness.

Cultural Influence

African fashion has influenced and has been influenced by other cultures. Raffia designs were a source of inspiration to Matisse, who hung a large part of



his collection on the wall of his studio. African designers create clothes and head wrap of western design using traditional African cloth. Clothes of traditional African cut are fashioned using a combination of western and African cloth. Women are by far more than men, the biggest hat fans. They seek all styles, colors and levels of extravagances.

Today African dress and coiffure influences fashion throughout the world. From London, Paris and beyond, women are wearing bubbas (tops) soras (wrap skirts) and geles (head ties). African fashion has been adopted and adopted by African of the Diaspora. When women in our culture try on dresses it frequently brings out their insecurity about their bodies and they become very critical of themselves. However, while trying on hats, they show many sides of their personalities, they are mysterious, spunky but rarely self-critical.

African Fashion Shows

Fashion shows throughout Europe now celebrate African culture, traditional and non-traditional African Hattitude and dress, further illustrating the dynamic nature of African Fashion.

My publisher and I were influenced by African fashion since we launched the magazine in 1995, and each hat and costume we are wearing almost day to day at home, promote the country of original - and we feel proud to show them to our neighbors.

If you want to feel upbeat about yourself, you should definitely wear a hat. You don't have to buy a whole new wardrobe by any means. The habit of African women wearing hats as a form of self-expression is almost old.

Hats or ties-wraps have been around



for centuries. In an earlier era, the hat shop was as important to fashionable women as the shoe store is today. Few women will be caught dead in public without their requisite hat and gloves.

Of faith and fashion

By the 1960, wigs hairdressers and informality usurped the hat's appeal. Hair was teased and back-combed into designs that rivaled the most elaborate headgear. However, African and African American women of a certain age never stopped wearing hats and ties-wraps at church. The women that I met in my trips in Africa and the USA explain how wearing hats and tie-wraps merges faith and fashion.

One thing adorning the head is a retention of African tradition; even in Europe, North America and Asia are part of us. Put on a church and ceremony hat and I had instant class, a bunch of class. The hats don't have to be skyscrapers, but they have to have a personality.

People have an automatic reflex and reaction to hats. They enter a hat shops and it's as if they stepped into heaven. I saw many ladies posing with their hands on their hips - a gesture that is defined as 'hat-titude' There stands a woman with a confident pose and an aura radiating pride.

The art of head wrapping was more of a common practice for the woman said Nissiabi Akin of Endaikeio, a neo culture and lifestyle Magazine. Women use these wraps as a statement of spirituality, modesty and beauty, but also as shelter from the sun in many African countries. Head wraps were important to women who often carried baskets and various other items on their heads, as the wrap provided cushioning.

In New York City, our charming friend, the late Elyse White, invited me to her church in Harlem, and was wearing a sexy red hat that I will not forget. She told me that African American women are known for wearing hats of all styles to complete and complement an outfit - specifically for churches services. To many women, these 'toppers' are much more than a fashion accessory; the hat represents style, grace and poise, reflecting historic customs and rituals dating back to the 1600s, with head wraps telling a story of the woman who wears it.

Learn more about the appeal of African fashion on our website- www.africa-ata.org/fashion1.htm



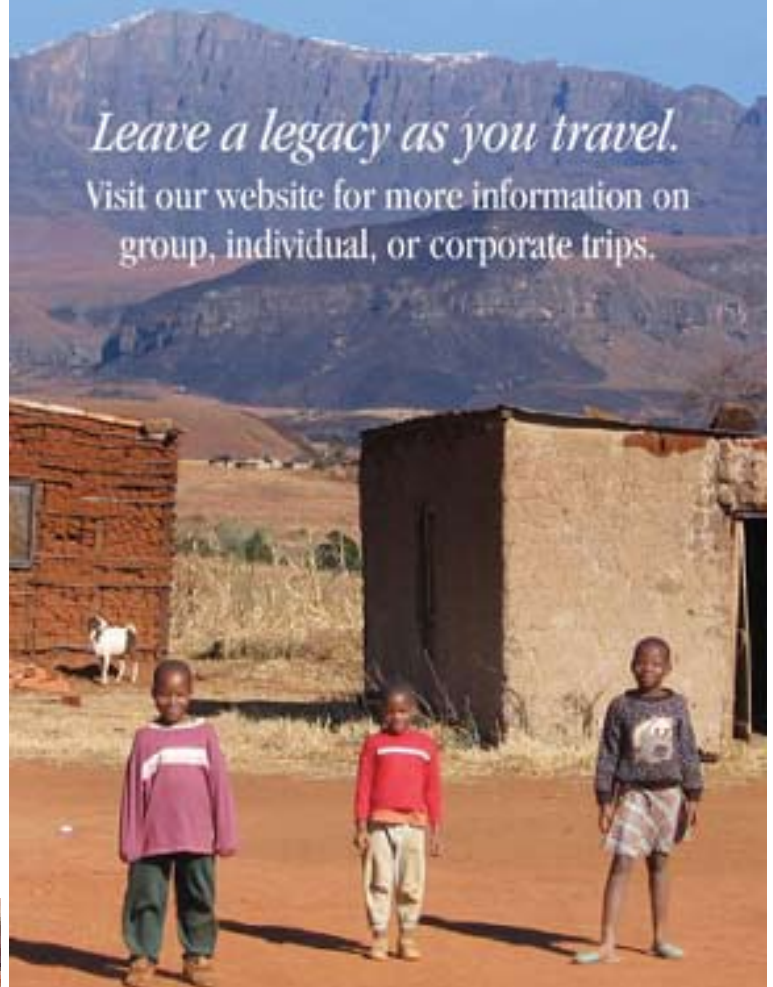
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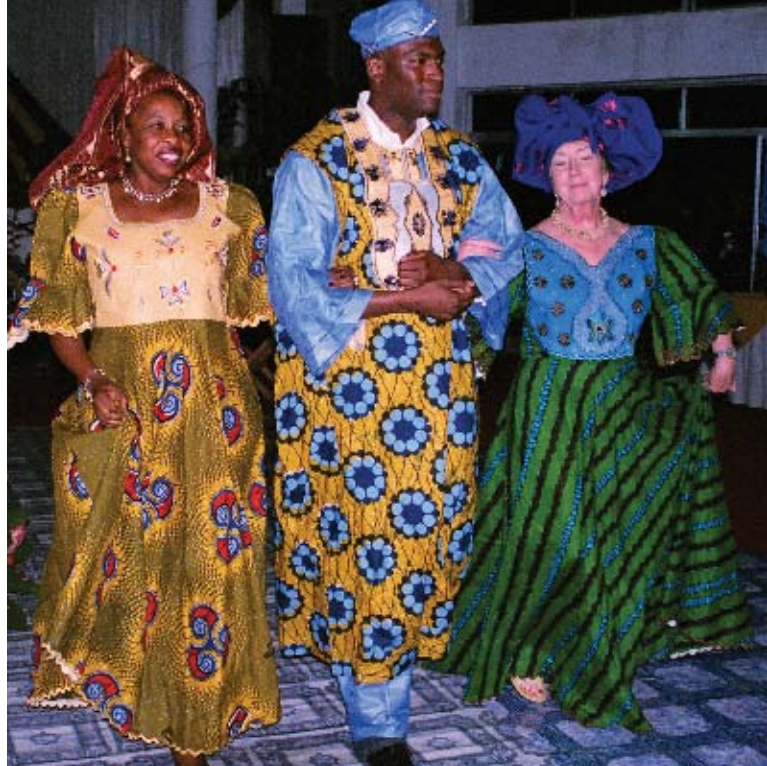


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Nigeria's Chief of Fashion

We first met Chief Margaret Bolanie Fabiyi in 1997 at the Africa Travel Association World Congress, a year after our partnership with ATA was confirmed. The location was in Cotonou, Benin, West Africa. At the next congress in Arusha, Tanzania, we were treated to the first of a series of fashion shows this talented lady has organized for Africa Travel Association events. While enjoying luncheon at Arusha's Impala Hotel, it was suddenly announced that a fashion show was about to take place. To everyone's surprise, the models turned out to be our own delegates - and the variety of fashions for men and women, large and petit, young and not so young - was superb. Chief Margaret has staged

Africa Travel Magazine

encore presentations at ATA venues in various locations ever since, including the event in Arusha, Tanzania (above) in which our editor, Jerry W. Bird, modeled a flaming red costume. In addition to being an accomplished fashion designer, Chief Margaret is active in ATA and ASTA in Nigeria and is a tour organizer, well known for her annual BLACK HISTORY MONTH TOURS. For times, dates and booking arrangements check the e-mail address and website on the opposite page or visit the Africa Travel Magazine website - www.africa-ata.org/bulletins.htm





THE ATA WORLD CONGRESS FASHION SHOW, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

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(1) Black History Month (BHM)
 February - March

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to project Blacks of integrity in Nigeria.

Chief Mrs Margaret Bolanle Fabiyi
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 P. O. Box 4313, Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria.

WEBISCO NIGERIAN FASHIONS MAKE AN OUTSTANDING STATEMENT AT THE ATA 33TH WORLD CONGRESS FASHION SHOW IN TANZANIA



The Benin Story:

Welcome to West Africa

by Jerry W. Bird

Being part of the Africa Travel Association brings rewards throughout the year, the very pinnacle of which is the privilege of attending an ATA Congress and experiencing the delights of a different African country every year. Nothing could have prepared me for the pleasant surprise I received on the eve of ATA's 22nd Congress in Cotonou. In fact, the entire fortnight in Benin was a whirlwind affair... one that has become a permanent bookmark in a lifetime of surprises and serendipity. Our group from North America stepped right off the Air Afrique jet into the heat of the night and what seemed like an exotic Arabian Nights style movie set. Imagine the scene in cinemascope and high fidelity, wrap-around sound; an exotic garden party on the spacious patio of the Benin Sheraton in Cotonou (now under new management). The scene was lit by a big tropical "paper moon, that seemed to hang in the sky for our personal benefit. ATA's opening gala was a riot of colorful costumes - a whirling dervish with high energy dance routines, leaping and spinning to the ever present beat of African drums. How's that for an introduction to Africa?

Jet-Setters Meet

While strolling through the Medina in Marrakech, Morocco in December, 2002, we had the pleasure of a chance meeting with a familiar friend, **Marie-Elyse Gbedo**, former Tourism Minister of Benin. Later that day we visited with her at the Imperial Borj hotel for an interview session regarding her visions for West Africa.

If you're looking for an unusual, affordable vacation, be sure to put Benin on your "Agenda Africa" for the coming year. Benin is an enchanting West African nation roughly the size of Pennsylvania, yet it is a complete destination with enough variety to fill a two-week vacation. From the drier northern elevations, to the lower lying south, this hospitable country is a safe and a friendly place to explore. *Visit www.africa-ata.org/benin.htm*



Dubai World Africa's Beachfront Development in Benin

Dubai World has entered negotiations with the Government of Benin to develop large-scale tourist attractions in the West African country, including a 32 km beachfront development, which will be masterplanned, as well as an international hotel in the capital city of Porto Novo. The leading global holding company chose Benin for major investments during the West African tour by Chairman Mr. **Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem** and a team of senior officials from various group companies, including James Wilson, Chief Executive Officer of Dubai World Africa, the group's investment arm in the continent.

The Dubai World executive team met President of Benin **H.E. Boni Yayi** and discussed potential business partnership opportunities. Commenting on the visit Mr. Bin Sulayem said: "The steadily growing trade relations between Dubai and Benin are encouraging. This gives confidence to Dubai World to engage in business ventures with Benin, which has high growth potential in West Africa. He commended President Yayi's efforts to give a new focus for the

country's economy with farsighted plans for overall development.

"Benin has made impressive economic recovery in recent years and is now poised for a future that holds huge promise. The

government's policy on clear governance, liberalization and privatisation has provided the economy the much needed vigour for growth. This is the kind of investment atmosphere that Dubai World is searching for," he noted.

Mr. James Wilson said that the MOU with the government of Benin will provide Dubai World Africa with another opportunity to shape eco-tourism in the continent. "The involvement of Dubai World Africa in the masterplanning of the beachfront and the development of game parks, will not only boost the country's tourism industry, but will also preserve the unique qualities of Benin's natural beauty," Mr. Wilson added.

"Dubai World Africa will be sending wildlife and ecology experts from its existing game reserves in South Africa to Benin to evaluate its national parks. This is in keeping with the group's strategy to rehabilitate, develop and manage high-end game reserves across the African continent, demand for Eco tourism and adventure tourism has shown a 90% growth over the past 5 years and is growing by 20% per annum" he said.

Port of Cotonou

Dubai World has also shown interest in the international port of Cotonou on the Atlantic coast, which has modern facilities and is a key trade gateway to the West African market. DP World, the group's flagship marine terminal operator, is looking at the prospect of investing in port management and a possible free zone, areas where the group has stamped its seal of excellence across the world. The port handles trade in cotton, crude oil and palm products among other things. According to the Statistics Department of Dubai World, non oil trade between Dubai and Benin amounted to AED225.565 million in 2007, which included import, export and re-export.

Other DWA Projects

Dubai World Africa's major projects in the continent include the world-class Shamwari Game Reserve, Sanbona Wildlife Reserve and Jock Safari Lodge in South Africa, which are members of the Mantis Collection. The company also owns other prime African properties, such as the iconic Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and the Pearl Valley Signature Golf Estate and Spa, both in Cape Town, South Africa, the Comoros Kempinski Luxury Beach Resort in the Comoros, One & Only Zanzibar, Djibouti Palace Kempinski and Nyungwe, Akagera National Park and Gorilla's Nest Lodge all in Rwanda, among others. *More information is available from online bulletins - www.africa-ata.org/bulletins.htm*



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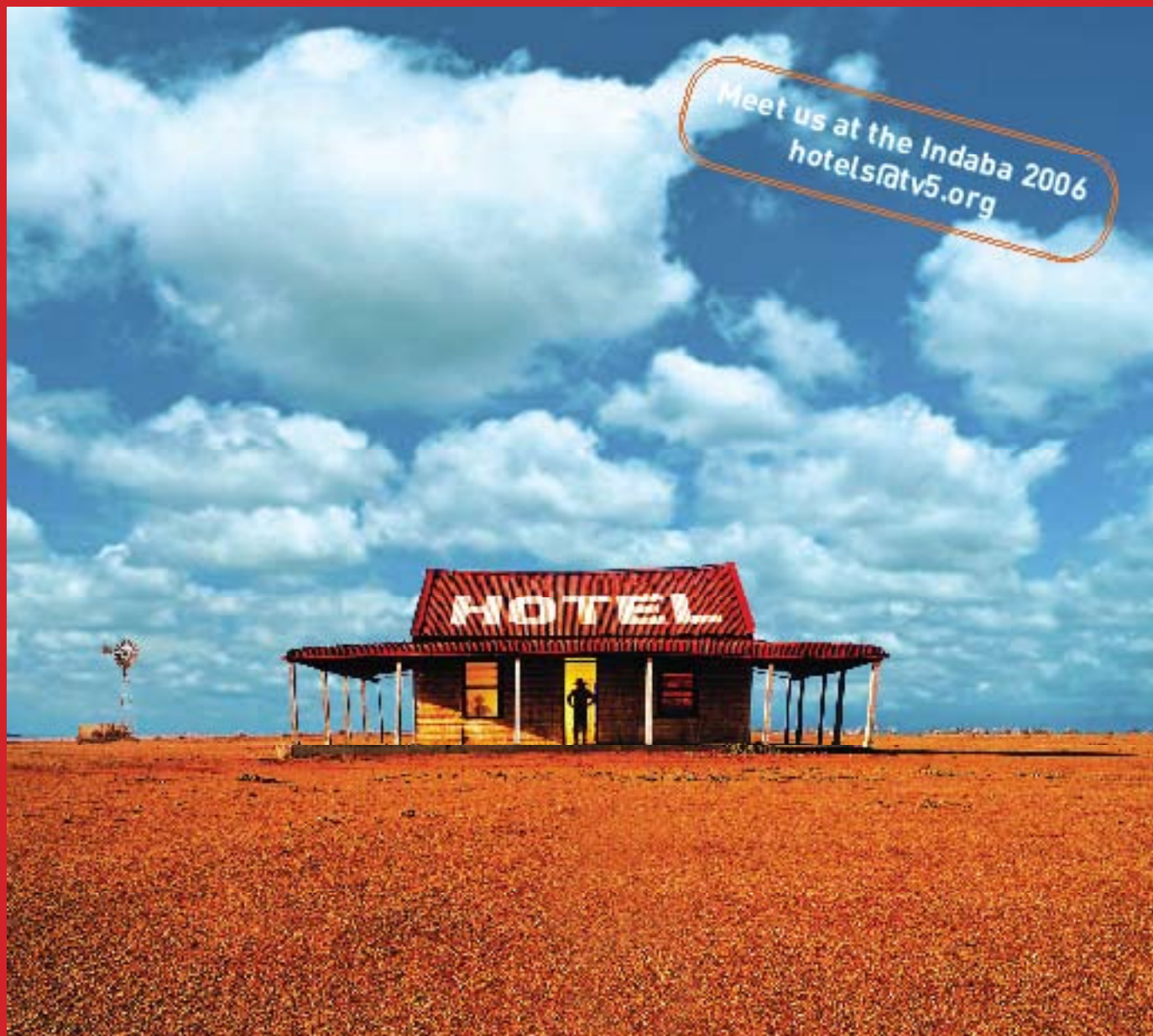
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PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ELECTION SPARKS GREATER INTEREST IN TOURISM TO AFRICA FROM USA

*Africa Travel Association (ATA)
Second Annual U.S.-Africa Tourism
Seminar in Washington, D.C. from
February 19-20, 2009*

WASHINGTON, D.C. The recent inauguration of President Barack Obama is more than a landmark in America's political history, it is also an opportunity for the travel and tourism industry to take a more focused approach to increasing visitors and investment in Africa from the U.S.

"All over Africa, we can see how excited everyone is about President Obama's connection to the continent," said **Edward Bergman**, ATA Executive Director. "We have already seen a surge in interest about travel specials to Africa not only to Kenya, where President Obama traces his roots, but also throughout East Africa."

Surge of Interest

ATA, the world's leading global travel trade organization, is gearing up for its Second Annual U.S.-Africa Tourism Seminar. The two-day event takes place at the Washington Convention Center from February 19-20, immediately prior to the Adventures in Travel Expo (ATE). The seminar's timing and location affords ATA an opportunity to build on the recent historic events, including President Obama's commitment to service.

With travel to Africa on the rise and an emerging interest in Africa as a culture and heritage destination, Africa is garnering more and more attention from American tourists as one of the world's premier travel destinations

Sports, Adventure, Diaspora

Focusing on sports, adventure and diaspora travel and tourism, the seminar will showcase Africa as a top tourism destination from the U.S., as well as a site for investment and business opportunity in one of the world's fastest growing tourism markets. **Manute Bol**, former NBA star and Ethiopian Airlines official spokesperson, will speak about different possibilities for responsible tourism and sports tourism in Africa.

Stephen Hayes, President of the Corporate Council on Africa, and **Edward Bergman**, among other travel professionals, will speak about tourism policy choices at the opening plenary session.

Sthu Zungu, President of South African Tourism-USA, will speak about travel trends, relating to who is traveling to Africa, why they are going, and what can be improved on the travel front to increase



tourism to the continent. Alongside experts in sports tourism in Africa, she will also address how mega sporting events, such as 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa, can be leveraged to increase tourism to and within Africa.

Greater Responsibility

The timely topic of responsible tourism and how the industry and the individual tourist can make a difference in local communities will be explored by senior representatives from the Center for Ecotourism and Sustainable Development, Africare, and the African Wildlife Foundation.

Senior representatives from the World Bank, IFC (International Finance Corporation), and US Department of Commerce's Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, will explore entrepreneurship, finance and investment opportunities, as well as travel trends in separate workshops.

SAA Workshop

South African Airways representatives will participate in a workshop on the growth and modernization of travel to Africa and the growth and modernization of intra-Africa air service. Representatives from other airlines serving Africa and Boeing will also participate in the seminar.

Another workshop on African diaspora tourism will examine the role of the diaspora in changing perceptions of Africa in the US market and emerging African diaspora tourism products, such as cultural and heritage tours. Panelists will also explore how the African diaspora and immigrant

communities can serve as Africa's tourism ambassadors in the U.S. tourism markets.

Branding Africa

Panelists will also speak about branding and marketing Destination Africa and Africa's newest travel products, particularly in the areas of sports tourism, and adventure travel.

Tourism experts and industry professionals from the U.S. and Africa, particularly travel agents and tour operators who market, sell and specialize in Africa, are expected to attend the seminar, as well as ministers of tourism, representatives from Washington D.C.'s diplomatic community, and Africa's national tourism offices.

African American Family

Representatives of the Spring Bank, **Virginia Quanders** family (1684), referred to as 'America's oldest documented African American family' by *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, will attend the event. *Henderson Travel Services*, the first African American travel agency in the U.S. to specialize in sending visitors to Africa, will also participate.

Public relations firms specializing in marketing Africa destinations, such as the *Bradford Group*, will participate in the seminar, alongside faculty and students from *George Washington University*. ATA welcomes travel industry professionals to participate in the ATE expo immediately following the seminar. ATA members should contact ATA for discounts to exhibit.

To register and to find more information on the seminar, as well as sponsorship opportunities, visit <http://www.africatravelassociation.org/ata/events/uats.html>.

About the Africa Travel

Association (ATA) The Africa Travel Association, a U.S.-based non-profit, is the world's premier travel industry trade association promoting tourism to Africa and intra-Africa travel and partnership since 1975. ATA members include ministries of tourism and culture, national tourism boards, airlines, hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, travel trade media, public relations firms, NGOs, and SME's. For more on ATA, visit www.africatravelassociation.org.

Africa Travel Magazine's "Venues Edition" which covers major events promoting Africa Tourism, is produced in both Printed and Electronic formats. This allows us

to reach the greatest number of people worldwide. Many of the pages and topics you will see in the Electronic format will also appear in print. For advertising rates on both options, please contact the Editor africa@smart.com or visit www.africa-ata.org/mag.htm





OUR BEST OF AFRICA SERIES SALUTES THE 14TH

The Africa Travel Library World Edition Magazines are now available for downloads from the internet in advance of publication. The series owes its success to a program that began years ago.

A First for Canada

Did you know that our first “Best of Africa” event took place in 1995 at the Simon Fraser University Downtown Campus in Vancouver, BC? It was the first ATA travel show ever held in Canada, and launched our long and successful partnership with the Africa Travel Association. Our newly formed Canada Chapter hosted a delegation from Africa, led by Ghana. A few years later we put on a similar event for the Kenyans with a another large, enthusiastic turnout of travel agents, media, dignitaries and members of Western Canada’s African Diaspora. Our readers will be surprised to learn just

how well established the African Canadian community is and how big a role Africans have played historically.

Land, Sea and Air

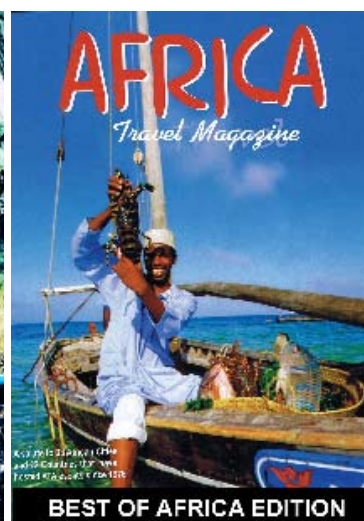
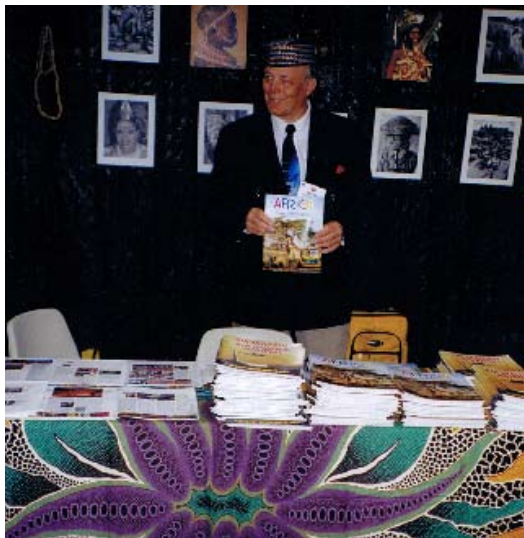
In 1997 we hosted our first Air and Marine Tourism Conference, plus Air Highway Days, with a full roster of top speakers and exhibitors, travel trade seminars, films and awards. One of our most popular speakers at the time, Rick Antonson, Tourism Vancouver CEO, has just launched an exciting travel book called, “To Timbuktu for a Haircut - Journey Through West Africa.” Copies of Rick’s book will be among many

prizes at our Best of Africa Awards. Mister Africa, Ogo Sow and our editor Jerry W. Bird had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Antonson on several radio broadcasts, and asaplan to continue this year.

In Print, Online and On Air

One of our duties as publishers of Africa Travel Magazine is to develop regional chapters of the Africa Travel Association, which we represent for Canada, and have recruited members in Vancouver, Toronto and Montréal. Another key responsibility is the ATA Website, which has been developed into a full scale magazine of the internet, with over 4,000 pages and photo galleries. We update this website daily thanks





ANNIVERSARY OF AFRICA TRAVEL MAGAZINE

to hundreds of press releases and a treasury of first-person stories from our semi annual trips to Africa. While on the continent, we tour the host country and often some of its neighbors.

World's Largest Kiosk

This page presents a brief capsule of our experience learning about and enjoying the Best of Africa. Thanks to Corporate Press Display, we will make copies of the Best of Africa Series and the Africa Travel Business Library available to an even more mass audience. Their powerful site is the World's Largest Magazine and Newspaper kiosk, representing USA Today, among others. Regular users of Press Display are many Fortune 500 companies and libraries across the USA.

Photos from top left:

(1) Editor Jerry W. Bird visiting the tall ships, an inspiration for the Air and Marine Tourism event. (2) Main auditorium at the UN World Forum in Vancouver, where we met many African mayors and initiated our "Great Cities of Africa" magazine series, now part of the Best of Africa Awards. (3) Scale model of famous rock-hewn church at Lalibela in Northern Ethiopia. We were special guests at the Houston International Festival and worked closely with the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism, Ethiopian Airlines and other delegation members during this exciting event.

(4) Editor (left) with Associate Editor, Karen Hoffman and former ATA Executive Director Mira Berman at a gala event in Africa. (5) Mr. Bird and Ms. Muguette Goufrani, Editors of Africa Travel Magazine receive ATA Founders Award in Cape Town, SA. (6) Park Rangers near Arusha, Tanzania receive copies of our edition saluting their country.

(7) Africa Travel Magazine exhibit at travel show in Orlando, Florida. We have since participated in many travel trade and consumer events across the USA, Canada and Africa.

(8) Participation at Karibu Fair 2008 in Arusha, with Amant Macha of TTB. (9) Muguette Goufrani at Out of Africa Show, Houston, Texas. (10) Cover of coming issue in Best of Africa World Edition Library.

Get more information

Visit Africa Travel Magazine - www.africa-ata.org/preview.htm - where you will view of pages and two page spreads from various countries featured in our Best of Africa series. You can download and print material from 5 regional editions to use as handouts at your own seminars, chapter events, road shows and meetings. To participate in the program as a sponsor, attendee, exhibitor, volunteer or awards judge, please e-mail us at airhwy@smartt.com





IN WEST AFRICA LOME, TOGO'S CAPITAL AS A FUTURE SITE



ATA members look to November 2009 in Togo as a happy return to Western Africa, having enjoyed events in Calabar, and Abuja, Nigeria, Accra, Ghana and Conakry, Guinea in the last few years.

ATA's Annual Eco and Cultural Tourism Symposium brings together tourism ministers, tourism board heads, travel agents, tour operators, travel experts, environmental leaders and organizations, heritage and cultural tourism experts, media, NGO's and investors for a 3 to 4-day program dedicated to exploring Africa's growing eco and cultural tourism industries and sustainable tourism development. Host countries also provide international delegates with an in-depth understanding of their eco and cultural travel offerings through on-site field visits and case studies. For information on coming events, visit the ATA website - www.africatravelassociation.org or download our Western Africa World Edition magazine - www.africa-ata.org/westaf.pdf

Togo: Pearl of West Africa by Muguette Goufrani

Where do many West Africans go for an extended holiday or weekend fun? Chances are better than average that Togo tops many of their agendas. While we were living in West Africa, my family and I will never forget the Togolese hospitality we enjoyed during our visits to that friendly country. Some say, should a popularity contest be held today, amongst all West African countries, Togo - "Pearl of West Africa" would come first. Lome, the capital city, with several five star hotels and acres of sandy, sun-drenched beaches, has become a highly popular vacation center for Europeans. For most Americans and Canadians, it's still a well kept secret. Visitors hardly need to leave their hotel area; the Atlantic ocean is one block from the heart of the city. ...Map of Togo. Lome's central market, where we bargained for many of my favorite keepsakes and wardrobe items, rates as one of the five best shopping sites in Africa. At Maison Royale, my friends and I were dazzled by an elegant gold Mercedes-Benz, parked at the entrance, gleaming in the mid-day sun. A symbol of wealth and success in North America, these upscale autos are commonplace in Lome, many being owned by "Nana Benz" — women traders, so named because they all appear to be Mercedes Benz owners. Most taxicabs are owned by this enterprising group.

Mini buses are another popular means of transport, and the prices are fair. To insure the safety of its visitors, Togo has the most police checkpoints of any democratic West African country.

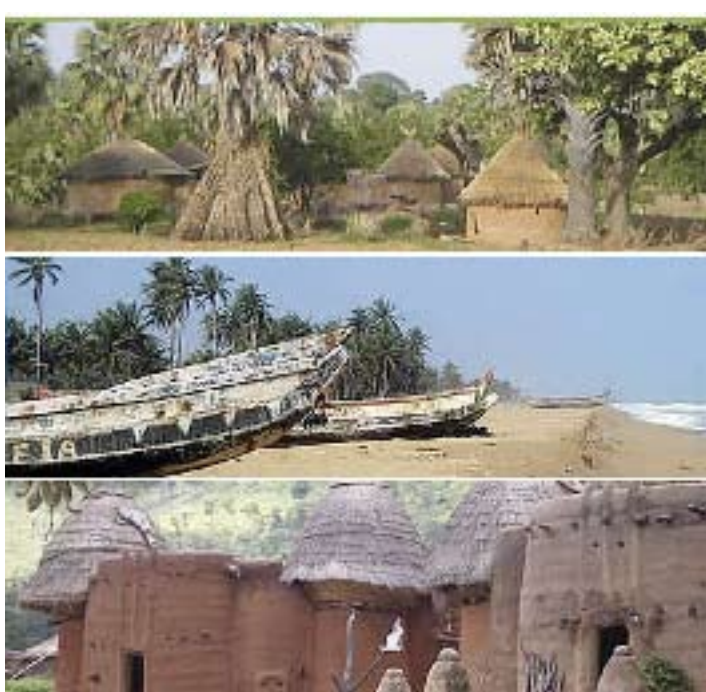
Vin du Palm et Sauce des Legumes

If you enjoy the delights of dining, each Togolese district has its own culinary specialties. One of my favorites is 'sauce des legumes' (vegetable sauce), with crab and foutou (mashed yams). Or how about something completely different? Try snails cooked like a brochette, or sit down to a dinner of smoked goat meat. Many visitors top off their meal with a glass of 'vin du palme' (palm wine), a popular, clear-colored drink that will knock your socks off. A big surprise on my first visit to Togo was 'Chateau Viale,' an astonishing, medieval style stone fortress. Perched high on a hill, this African castle was created by a visionary Frenchman in 1944 as a retreat for his wife. For some reason unknown to me -- she spent three days in palatial grandeur, then split for France. Today, Chateau Viale serves as the Togolese President's weekend retreat.

Information: www.republicoftogo.com
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Aneho

For a change of venue, make a trip to Aneho, where you will experience life in a typical Togolese fishing village. You'll see fisher folk on the beach, hauling in their



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long nets, accompanied by an enchanting rhythm and singing. It's like an epic Hollywood movie scene. French is the official language of Togo, which has a population of 5 million. The two largest ethnic groups are the Ewe and the Kabye. Ewe consider the birth of twins a great blessing, while the Bassari consider twins a misfortune. This same contrast is seen in their eating habits; the Ewe eat cats, and consider anyone who eats dog meat to be barbarians. The Kabye

enjoy dog meat, but refuse to eat cats. Voodoo and fetish cults: While in Haiti (1997) as part of a media video production team, comprised of Africa Travel Magazine, National Geographic and Radio Lumiere, I advised my colleagues on how Voodoo culture came to the Caribbean from Togo and other parts of West Africa. While in Togo, we spent a full day at Akodessewas, the world's largest fetish market, with its array of sorcerers' potions; roots, bark, monkey skulls, wart hog teeth, porcupine skins, leopard hides, antelope horns, bones of crocodiles, horses, pigs and monkeys, plus various parts of human anatomy. Such concoctions are used to cure everything from diarrhea and the flu, to cuts, impotence and rheumatism.

I tried on a gris gris (necklace), which is said to work its magic when blessed by a fetish priest. Part doctor, part psychic, the priest relies on herbal medicines, charms and a healthy dose of positive thinking. They believe that the spirits are everywhere -- in the air, the trees, the water - even buildings. A priest calls on his favorite god to predict future events, and keep evil forces at bay. He sits on a stool in his colorful

robe, holding a regal staff, receiving gifts of gin, which he sips as a troupe performs ritual chanting and dancing. A sacrificial offering is made as a show of loyalty and respect to the spirits, and to gain special favors, such as the birth of twins.

Muguette Goufrani

Africa Travel Magazine's Francophone Editor covers West African destinations and events in detail. Her native language is French and she has lived in five West African countries, working for Air Afrique, Royal Air Maroc and Citroen. As a Travel Agent, she worked in North Africa, where her family operates an inbound tour company, and later in Tahiti and Cambodia. Muguette has been a partner in the magazine since it was founded in 1995. E-mail Muguette with your travel experiences in Cote d'Ivoire and other West African destinations. We welcome your input. E-mail Muguette with your travel experiences in West Africa.

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