



Bijagos Islands and Carnival

GUINEA BISSAU

Photo by L.F. Paoluzzi



11 days

24 February - 6 March 2025
English speaking tour leader



The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- The **Bijagos Archipelago**, the 'Polynesia' of West Africa
- The saltwater **hippos** of **Orango Island**
- The **paradise beaches** of **Canhabaque** and **Bruce**
- **Bijago's animist traditions**, amidst stirring dances and rhythms
- The decadent colonial buildings of **Bolama** and the *Ciudad Vieja* of **Bissau**
- The masks and parades of the exuberant Caribbean-style **Bissau Carnival**
- An encounter with a *feticheur* from the **Pepel** ethnic group in **Quinhamel**



Kanaga Africa Tours - info@kanaga-at.com
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Day 1: Monday 24 February

Outward flight/Bissau (OXB)

Flight to Bissau. Expected arrival in the evening, meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tours staff who will arrange transfer to the Hotel Royal Bissau or similar. Overnight stay in a double room with bathroom.



Bijagos Archipelago

Day 2: Tuesday 25 February

Bissau/Bubaque Island

Breakfast at the hotel and departure by motor boat for the BIJAGOS ARCHIPELAGO, located off the coast of Guinea Bissau and consisting of 88 islands and islets (of which only 20 are inhabited), considered the 'Polynesia' of the Atlantic Ocean. On these islands dotted with beaches and covered with lush, dense mangrove vegetation, animist traditions and ancestral customs are still respected and kept intact for centuries. The entire population of the Bijagos belongs to four main clans that follow the matriarchal line and are grouped into villages governed by a king, his priestess and a council of elders. In BUBAQUE, the capital and main island of the archipelago, accommodation at the Hotel Kasa Afrikana or similar, lunch and afternoon to be spent exploring the village on foot or relaxing at the beach. Overnight stay in double rooms with services.



Bijago Girl



Wild beaches

Day 3: Wednesday 26 February

Bubaque/Orango Island/Bubaque

Breakfast at the hotel and departure for the boat excursion to ORANGO ISLAND, a natural park famous for its rare saltwater hippos and for being the burial place of Bijagos kings and queens. Walk (approx. 3 hours round trip) between traditional fishing villages to the viewing point of these huge mammals. Picnic lunch. Return to Bubaque, time to explore the village on foot or to relax at the beach. Overnight stay at the hotel.



Hippopotamus in Orango



Bijagos Island



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Day 4: Thursday 27 February

Bubaque/Soga Island/Bubaque

Breakfast at the hotel and departure for the boat excursion to SOGA ISLAND where, after a short walk and carrying a gift of local rum, we will take part in an authentic animist ceremony, where dozens of young Bijagos girls parade and dance incessantly with bare breasts wearing only the saia, a small skirt made of straw or natural fibre. Return to Bubaque, lunch at the hotel. Afternoon to be spent exploring the village on foot or relaxing at the beach. Overnight stay at the hotel.



Animist ceremony

Day 5: Friday 28 February

Bubaque/Canhabaque Island/Bubaque

Breakfast at the hotel and departure by motor boat to CANHABAQUE ISLAND (also known as ROXA), covered in lush vegetation, where several traditional villages are hidden, still linked to animist rituals and a matrilineal organisation of society. Crossing the island (about 2 hours on foot) with stops at villages to watch the production of red palm oil and the processing of oysters, until arriving at a beautiful fine sandy beach. Picnic lunch and time at leisure for bathing relaxation. Return to Bubaque, afternoon to explore the village on foot or to relax at the beach. Overnight stay at the hotel.



Bijagos girls

Day 6: Saturday 01 March

Bubaque/Bruce/Bubaque (Carnival)

Breakfast at the hotel and transfer by land (approx. 15 kilometres) to the beautiful BRUCE BEACH, a wild corner at the end of the island, ideal for bathing relaxation, on a magnificent white sand beach lapped by forest. Picnic lunch. We return to the village where we participate in the BUBAQUE CARNIVAL, where hundreds of young girls and Bijagos 'queens' parade and dance incessantly wearing only the saia, a small skirt made of straw or natural fibre. Overnight stay in the hotel.



Carnival in Bubaque



Carnival in Bubaque



Between the forest and the sea



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Day 7: Sunday 02 March

Bubaque/Bolama Island/Bissau

Breakfast and departure for the island of BOLAMA, which was an important centre for the ivory and peanut trade and the capital of Guinea Bissau from 1870 to 1942, as evidenced by its decadent colonial-era buildings. Lunch box and continuation to Bissau, accommodation at Hotel Royal Bissau or similar, time at leisure to relax by the pool. Overnight stay in a double room with services.



Colonial building in Bolama

Days 8-9: from Monday 03 March To Tuesday 04 March

Bissau (Carnival)

Breakfast at the hotel. The morning is dedicated to visiting BISSAU: the Bissau Velho neighbourhood, the cathedral, the Palais de la Poste and the Amura fortress, the national heroes' square, the port, where multicoloured pirogues dock with their overloaded nets, the fish market and the craft centre. Lunches in restaurants. In the afternoons, we will participate in the preparation and events of the BISSAU CARNIVAL: swirls of oiled and painted bodies, parades of groups of dancers, giant papier-mâché masks... Overnight stays in hotel.



Carnival in Bissau

Day 10: Wednesday 05 March

Bissau/Quinhamel/Bissau

Breakfast and departure for QUINHAMEL, through beautiful landscapes of mangroves, rice paddies and cashew forests. Here we will meet the Pepel, discover animist shrines and the role of the feticheur (animist priest), admire the work of the weavers and learn about the techniques of distilling cana, a rum-like liquor obtained from processing sugar cane. Lunch in a restaurant. Return to BISSAU, some rooms in day use. Transfer to the airport. End of services.



Carnival in Bissau

Day 11: Thursday 06 March

Bissau (OXB)/Return flight

Arrival at the destination airport.



Carnival in Bissau



Carnival in Bissau



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11 days

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English speaking tour leader

Individual participation fee in double room (min. 4/max. 16 pax)

2,490 €/pax

in promotion at € 2,390
for bookings before 24/11/2024

in promotion at € 2,290
for bookings before 24/08/2024

Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free!**
- Single room: **320 €**
- Day use in single occupancy: **on request**
- Extra airport transfer: **30 Euro/pax**
- Guinea Bissau visa service: **50 €/pax**

The fee includes:

- English speaking tour leader (from 6 pax);
- English-speaking local guide (4/5 pax);
- Local Portuguese or English-speaking guides where necessary;
- Visits and excursions as scheduled;
- Admission to the Bubaque Carnival and the Bissau Carnival;
- All transfers by minibus and private boat, including driver/driver, petrol and tolls;
- Half-board meals as specified in the itinerary;
- 9 nights in a double room with breakfast as mentioned in the itinerary;
- Day use in Bissau (1 room per 4 pax).

The fee does not include:

- The visa for Guinea Bissau (visa service + consular costs on arrival currently 85 Euro);
- The cancellation/health/baggage/covid. insurance;
- Any PCR tests required;
- Air flights;
- Meals not included in the itinerary;
- Drinks and mineral water;
- Photographic and video permits;
- Tips and expenses of a personal nature;
- Everything mentioned in 'supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned in 'the fee includes'.

* The order of visits could be reversed as boat trips are dependent on the tides.

* Meals could be picnic or lunch box meals for better execution of tidal boat trips.

* Orango hippos are generally visible from October to the end of February.

* The Carnival programme is decided at short notice, so visits may be rescheduled accordingly.