



Ouidah Voodoo Festival

BENIN, TOGO

Photo by A. Gagliardo



9 days

03 - 11 January 2026

English speaking tour leader

The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- The charming **Ganvié**, a village built entirely on stilts
- The Afro-Brazilian architecture, museums and voodoo temples of **Porto Novo**
- The **Pays Taneka**, stronghold of animism and ancestral cults
- The **Somba and Tamberma tatas**, fortress-houses built from straw and mud
- The magical **fire ceremony of the Tem** in Sokodé
- The **Lomé fetish market** and the mysterious **Togoville**
- The Python Temple and the Sacred Forest of **Ouidah**
- The singing and dancing of priests and believers at the **voodoo festival**
- The **Gelede masks**, the ceremony with the **Egungun** and **Zangbeto spirits**



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In Benin, voodoo is the invisible lintel of society, a granitic faith centred on devotion to hundreds of invisible deities, which gives meaning and order to the lives of the local population. Every year, on 10 January, the Ouidah region celebrates the Vudu Festival, the main event dedicated to this religion.

Voodoo was formally recognised as the official religion of Benin on 10 January 1996, a date that has since been considered a national holiday. On this occasion, ceremonies, sacrifices, songs, dances and large banquets are held in the presence of the most influential personalities in the country's religious and political life. Faith, magic and the supernatural are revealed through complex rituals and spectacular performances, amidst adepts who fall into a state of trance and juju priests in mediumistic connection with ancestral spirits. For those travelling to Benin, a stay in Ouidah during the Festival is certainly an opportunity not to be missed!



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Day 1: Saturday 03 January

Outward flight/Cotonou (COO)

Flight to Cotonou, meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tours staff who will arrange transfer to Hotel du Lac or similar. Overnight stay in a double room with services.

Day 2: Sunday 04 January

Cotonou/Ganvié/Porto Novo/Cotonou

After breakfast, assistance in exchanging euros and the possible purchase of a local phone card. Departure for Calavi, where we take a boat excursion to the lakeside village of GANVIE, where the Tofinu live in bamboo huts built on stilts and subsist exclusively on artisanal fishing. Lunch in a 'floating' restaurant. On the way back, we may encounter the bustle of pirogues containing goods and people shuttling between the mainland and the villages on the water. We continue on to PORTO NOVO, the peaceful capital of the country, and city tour: we admire the Afro-Brazilian architecture, including the colourful mosque, a UNESCO heritage site, which traces the style of the cathedrals of Salvador de Bahia; we visit the Honmé museum, the former royal palace; we are enchanted by the GELEDE MASKS DANCE and the Zangbeto temple of the spirit. Return to Cotonou and overnight at the hotel.

Day 3: Monday 05 January

Cotonou/Abomey/Dassa Zoumé

After breakfast, departure for ABOMEY, where we will visit the royal palace declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a place steeped in history that will allow us to learn more about the ancient and bloody kingdom of Dahomey. This is followed by a visit to some voodoo temples, including the impressive 'chameleon'. Lunch in a restaurant. Continuation to Dassa Zoumé, accommodation at Hotel Jeko or similar and overnight stay in a double room with services.



Ganvié water market



Ganvié water market



Porto Novo Mosque



Gelede Mask



Chameleon Temple in Abomey



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Day 4: Tuesday 06 January

Dassa Zoumé/Pays Taneka/Natitingou

After breakfast departure to SAVALOU to visit the Dankoli fetish, where it is common to witness animist sacrifices. Transfer north and lunch in a restaurant in Djougou. Early afternoon departure for Kopargo, from where we will take a dirt track towards the hills of the TANEKA VILLAGES, in an environment where time seems to have stood still. Here we will explore the four districts of Taneka Beri, each governed by its own king and his notables, wise old men dressed according to tradition, with a leather loincloth and a long pipe for smoking tobacco. Continuation to Natitingou, accommodation at Hotel Tata Somba or similar and overnight stay in a double room with services.



Elder Taneka



Traditional Tata Somba

Day 5: Wednesday 07 January

Cotonou/Ganvié/Porto Novo/Cotonou

Breakfast and exploration of PAYS SOMBA and PAYS TAMBERMA, two ethnic groups living in fortified thatched and mud constructions (called tatas) scattered in the cassava fields. We will pass through the tiny traditional villages and come into contact with the rituals of the animist religion, which is very much alive and heartfelt. In KOUSSOKOINGOU, a traditional Otammari (or Somba) village, we will taste traditional sorghum beer, enter the tatas to understand their complex architecture, and ascend to the viewpoint, where there is a magnificent view of the ATAKORA MOUNTAINS. Lunch box (sandwiches and fruit). Then, after crossing the BORDER WITH TOGO, we will travel to SOKODÉ. Accommodation at Hotel Central or similar, dinner at leisure. In the evening, we move to a small Tem village to watch the FIRE DANCE, during which the initiates, following the rhythm of the djembé, sprinkle their bodies with embers without suffering any burns or injuries. Overnight stay at the hotel in double bungalows with services.



Otammari Village



Fire dance of the Tem

Day 6: Thursday 08 January

Sokodé/Lomé/Agbodrafo

Early in the morning, after breakfast, departure TO THE SOUTH towards Lomé, a transfer that will give us the opportunity to admire the variety of Togo's landscape: the cassava, yam and millet fields typical of the north will gradually give way to cocoa, coffee, banana and pineapple plantations. Lunch in a restaurant. Arrive in LOME' and visit the Grand Marché, famous for its pagnes cloth and handicrafts, and the incredible fetish market, where bones and skins of all sorts of animals, amulets and statuettes stuck with nails are sold. Continuation to Agbodrafo and accommodation at the Hotel du Lac or similar and overnight stay in a double room with services.



Lomé fetish market



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Day 7: Friday 09 January

Agbodrafo/Togoville/Possotomé

After breakfast, excursion by dugout canoe on TOGO LAKE to reach TOGOVILLE. Visit some voodoo temples and the majestic cathedral, erected to commemorate the apparition of the Virgin Mary on the lake. Meeting with a voodoo priestess in the temple, after stripping off western clothes to wear the traditional outfit. Departure for the BORDER WITH BENIN, clearance of formalities and onwards to POSSOTOME'. Lunch box (sandwiches and fruit). Afterwards, we stroll along the shores of the lake, passing through traditional villages such as OKOME', where we can visit voodoo temples and the sacred forest, and SEHOMI, where we can admire the work of the artisans and the market where women gather to make purchases using the ancient form of bartering. Accommodation at the Hotel Chez Thèò or similar and overnight stay in a double room with services.



Adepta voodoo in Togoville



Zangbeto Ceremony

Day 8: Saturday 10 January

Possotomé/Ouidah (Festival)/Cotonou

After breakfast, the whole day is devoted to attending the VUDU' FESTIVAL events and visiting the city of OUIDAH. We will see the priests, dignitaries and followers, often in a trance, facing deities such as Ogou, the god of iron, Sakpata, the god of earth, Khèvioso, the god of lightning, ... We will retrace the route des esclaves, a route that led slaves to the port where they would be embarked for the Americas through the 'gate of no return'. We will visit the temple of the pythons, where we will learn about the beliefs of this cult, the sacred forest, a place dotted with voodoo deities, and participate in CEREMONIES with the EGUNGUN and the ZANGBETO spirits. Lunch in a restaurant. In the evening, departure for Cotonou and transfer to the airport, end of services.



Door of no return

Day 9: Sunday 11 January

Cotonou (COO)/Return flight

Arrival at the destination airport.



Python Temple in Ouidah



Egungun at the Voodoo Festival



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

2,390 €/pax

in promotion at € 2,290
for bookings before 03/10/2025

in promotion at € 2,190
for bookings before 03/07/2025

Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free!**
- Single room: **330 €**
- Extra airport transfer: **30 €/transfer/pax**
- Day Use in Cotonou: **80 €/room (max 2 pax)**
- Ext. Cotonou (1 day): **on request**
- eVisa Benin service: **120 €/passport**
- Visa Togo service: **100 €/passport**

The fee includes:

- French/English speaking guide;
- English speaking tour leader (from 6 pax);
- Visits and excursions as scheduled;
- Tips and entrance fees to attend the Ouidah Voodoo Festival events;
- All transfers by minibus, including drivers, diesel and tolls;
- Half-board meals as specified in the itinerary;
- 7 nights in a double room as specified in the itinerary.

The fee does not include:

- The visa for Benin and Togo;
- Cancellation, health, covid, baggage insurance;
- Air flights;
- Drinks and mineral water;
- Photographic tips;
- Participation in the Gelede mask dance;
- Airport/hotel transfers and vice versa with companies/days other than the recommended one - **TURKISH AIRLINES**;
- Tips and expenses of a personal nature;
- Everything mentioned in 'supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned in 'the fee includes'.