



Casamance, Bijagos Islands and Carnival

SENEGAL, GAMBIA, GUINEA BISSAU

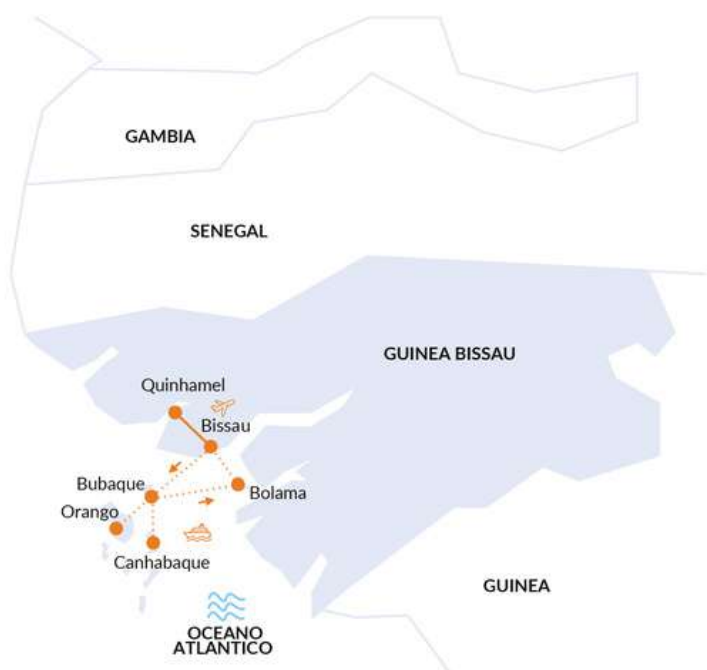
Photo by L. Menesini



16 days

27 January - 11 February 2027

English speaking tour leader



The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- The **Pink Lake**, the final stage of the legendary Paris-Dakar Rally
- The lush landscapes of **Lower Casamance**
- **Banjul**, the capital of Africa's smallest state
- 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**



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Day 1: Wednesday 27 January

Outward flight/Dakar (DSS)/Pink Lake

Flight to Dakar. Arrival scheduled for the evening, followed by a meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tours staff, who will arrange your transfer to the Pink Lake. Accommodation at the Hotel Chez Salim or similar. Overnight stay in a double room with bathroom.



Pink Lake

Day 2: Thursday 28 January

Pink Lake/Toubacouta

After breakfast, we'll explore the PINK LAKE*, a lagoon surrounded by dunes whose waters take on a curious pinkish hue due to the mineral salts present, famous for having been the final stage of the Paris-Dakar rally. We'll visit the salt flats by pirogue. We'll then continue to TOUBACOUTA, in the Siné-Saloum region, stopping for lunch en route. In the late afternoon, we'll take a boat trip to admire the mangrove habitat, offering the chance to spot numerous species of birds such as cormorants and kingfishers. With a bit of luck, you may also spot the rare dolphins and manatees that inhabit this area or meet the women who harvest oysters. Accommodation at the Hotel Keur Saloum or similar and overnight stay in a double room with bathroom.



Landscapes of the Siné-Saloum

** Lake Retba, or 'Pink Lake', is currently flooded at the time of writing; consequently, it is not possible to appreciate either its pink hue or the work of the salt workers.*



Encounters on the River

Day 3: Friday 29 January

Toubacouta/Banjul/Serekunda

After breakfast, we continue towards the BORDER WITH THE GAMBIA, complete the formalities and cross the river by barge**. Lunch (packed lunch). Visit to the capital, BANJUL, including the Arco 22 monument and the colourful Albert Market. Check-in at the Ocean Bay Resort or similar in Serekunda, with direct access to the beach. Overnight stay in a double room with bathroom.



Serekunda Beach

*** It is not possible to estimate the waiting times for the ferry; you may have to wait between 1 and 3 hours, depending on the volume of traffic and the frequency of crossings.*



Pink Lake



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Day 4: Saturday 30 January

Serekunda/Ziguinchor

Breakfast at the hotel, followed by a visit to the fishing village of TANJIL, where you can watch the canoes, laden with fish, returning to shore, as well as the fish market and the fish-smoking process. This is followed by a visit to KACHIKALLY: the sacred caiman pond, the small museum and the craft market. Lunch and transfer to the BORDER WITH SENEGAL, completion of formalities and continuation of the journey to Ziguinchor. Accommodation at the Hotel Kadiandoumagne or similar and overnight stay in a double room with bathroom.



Fishermen in Tanji



Caiman in Kachikally



Casamance

Day 5: Sunday 31 January

Ziguinchor/Carabane/Ziguinchor

After breakfast, a visit to the bustling fish market in ZIGUINCHOR, where both seafood and river specialities are sold. We then set off for Elinkine, where we'll take a motorised pirogue to CARABANE ISLAND, a former Portuguese and later French colonial outpost, where remains such as the cemetery and the church are still preserved. We'll tour the island, an important hub for the trade of local produce and for the transit of passengers to the various branches of the Casamance River delta. Lunch at a restaurant. In the afternoon, return to the mainland and continue to OUSSOUYE, where we will explore the traditional villages. We will be able to observe scenes of daily life such as the preparation of palm wine, work in the fields, the repair of a thatched roof on a traditional house, the processing of cashew nuts, and more. Meeting with the King of Bobedioum in the sacred forest (subject to availability). Opportunity to watch a DIOLA MASK DANCE. Return to Ziguinchor and overnight stay at the hotel.



King of Bobedioum

Day 6: Monday 01 February

Zinguinchor/Bissau

Breakfast at the hotel and transfer to the BORDER WITH GUINEA-BISSAU, completion of formalities and onward journey. Packed lunch. On the way to the capital, we'll be able to admire the cashew forests (usually laden with fruit at this time of year), rice paddies and cultivated fields, villages and markets. Expected arrival in the late afternoon; check-in at the Hotel Bissau Royal or similar. Overnight stay in a double room with bathroom.



Interior of a impluvium house



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Day 7: Tuesday 02 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 bathroom.



Bijagos Archipelago



Bijago Girl

Day 8: Wednesday 03 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.



Wild beaches



Hippopotamus in Orango



Bijagos Island



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Day 9: Thursday 04 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 10: Friday 05 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 and relaxation. Return to Bubaque, afternoon to explore the village on foot or to relax at the beach. Overnight stay at the hotel.



Bijagos girls



Carnival in Bubaque

Day 11: Saturday 06 February

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



Between the forest and the sea



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Day 12: Sunday 07 February

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 bathroom.



Colonial building in Bolama

Days 13-14: from Monday 08 February To Tuesday 09 February

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. Lunch in a restaurant on both days. In the afternoon of each day, 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



Carnival in Bissau

Day 15: Wednesday 10 February

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 16: Thursday 11 February

Bissau (OXB)/Return flight

Arrival at the destination airport.



Carnival in Bissau



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Individual participation fee in double room
(min. 4/max. 12 pax)

4,190 €/pax

in promotion at € 3,990
for bookings before 27/07/2026

Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free!**
- Single room: **510 €**
- Day use in single occupancy: **on request**
- Extra airport transfer: **60 Euro/pax**
- Guinea Bissau visa service: **50 €/pax**

The fee includes:

- English speaking tour leader (for groups of 6 or more);
- Italian/English/French speaking main guide;
- Local guides speaking Portuguese where necessary;
- Visits and excursions as per the itinerary;
- Entry fees for the Bubaque Carnival and the Bissau Carnival;
- All transfers by minibus and private boat, including driver/skipper, fuel and tolls;
- Half-board meals as specified in the itinerary;
- 14 nights' accommodation in a double room with breakfast as mentioned in the itinerary;
- Day use in Bissau (1 room for every 4 passengers).

The fee does not include:

- A visa for Senegal (currently not required) and Guinea-Bissau (visa service + consular fees on arrival, currently 85 euros);
- Cancellation, health and luggage insurance;
- Airfares;
- Meals not included in the itinerary;
- Drinks and mineral water;
- Photography and video permits;
- Tips and personal expenses;
- Everything listed under 'supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned under 'the price 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.