

BURKINA FASO AT A GLANCE

POPULATION: 20,393,230 (July 2019 est.)

LANGUAGES: French, local languages

PREDOMINANT RELIGIONS: Islam, Roman Catholicism

TIME ZONE: Four hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (New York City)

TELEPHONE CODE: 226, country code

Burkina Faso is, without a doubt, one of the most beautiful countries in West Africa and a great place to experience African culture. A vibrant center of music and the arts, Burkina Faso hosts several internationally known events, including an annual jazz festival and the bi-annual Pan-African Film Festival. The bi-annual International Arts and Handicrafts Trade Show, the largest on the continent, attracts hundreds of artisans and more than 100,000 visitors from around the world to the capital city of Ouagadougou.

An impoverished, landlocked country, Burkina Faso also experiences many challenges, including high population density, recurring drought, chronic food insecurity and limited natural resources. Yet, despite the obstacles they face, the Burkinabé are a resilient people who always have a warm smile and a warm welcome for visitors.

COMPASSION IN BURKINA FASO

Compassion's ministry in Burkina Faso began in 2004. Today, more than 94,700 children are served by more than 340 Compassion-assisted child development centers throughout the country. Compassion's church-based child development centers are places of hope for impoverished children in Burkina Faso. Under the guidance of caring Christian adults, children's



pressing needs for nutrition and medical attention are met. Children also receive tutoring to help with their academics. Health and hygiene lessons teach them to care for their own physical well-being, and positive social skills are modeled and encouraged.

CURRENCY

The local currency is the *CFA Franc (XOF)*, used throughout French West Africa. Burkina Faso society operates predominantly with cash. Money can be changed at major banks in the big cities, but you may have problems changing anything other than euros in smaller towns. ATMs do not always accept foreign cards.

SHOPPING

Shop for fabrics, leather goods, bronze, embroidery, beaded items and other handicrafts. Bargaining is the name of the game in Burkina Faso. But don't ask the price unless you want to buy an item, and if you agree on a price, don't change your mind — you are obligated to buy.

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Voltage used in Bukina Faso is 220V, and most outlets accept plug types C or E. (For up-to-date plug and outlet information, check [whatplug.info](#) and click on your destination country.) You may wish to take a universal plug adaptor, available in the luggage/travel sections of most big-box stores.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Do** go to the markets and talk to the merchants about their wares. Enjoy the experience and the haggling over price.
- **Don't** hold hands or kiss someone in public. It is considered obscene for couples to display affection openly.
- **Do** learn some French before you travel to Burkina Faso. French is the official language used for all business. However, in many small villages it is difficult to find anyone who can speak French fluently enough to carry on a conversation.
- **Do** be careful about taking pictures. Always ask permission before photographing people, and don't be surprised if someone objects to your taking any photographs. Never photograph transportation centers or government or military buildings or personnel.
- **Don't** offer to shake hands with locals in the Islamic (northern) part of the country if you're a woman.
- **Don't** wear shorts. Showing anything above the knee is considered improper by the Burkinabé.



- **Do** be prepared for the large number of flies and mosquitoes found indoors as well as outside.
- **Do** avoid using your left hand for handling food or for passing money or other goods to people.

DRESS

Loose, lightweight cotton clothes are generally best, not only for comfort, but also for a degree of culturally sensitive modesty. Covering the legs above the knee will also avoid giving unnecessary offense. Long sleeves and trousers (especially in the evenings) provide some protection from mosquitoes.

Women: Modest, loose-fitting tops (nothing form-fitting) are recommended; sleeveless tops are acceptable, but please cover your shoulders in places of worship; pants, capris, longer skirts and loose-fitting, casual dresses are recommended for women.

Men: Button shirts and polo shirts are recommended. T-shirts are allowed in casual settings. Long, non-denim pants are recommended for center visits and church services.

Both: Shorts are highly discouraged outside of beachside locations. A light jacket is recommended for cool evenings or rainy days.

Shoes: Closed-toe shoes are recommended during the day due to potential unsanitary or uneven terrain.

GENERAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, Social Security card, library cards and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet. Carry items in front pockets, not back pockets. Do not display large sums of money in public; make visible only the amount of money that approximates your purchase. Never leave items with cash in them (purse, wallet, backpack, etc.) on a bus, car or any other location. Stay alert and be cautious at all times. Don't take safety and security for granted.

U.S. EMBASSY INFORMATION

Website: bf.usembassy.gov

General Phone: (226) 25-49-53-00

Email: amembouaga@state.gov

Address: Secteur 15, Ouaga 2000, Rue 15.873, Ouagadougou,
Burkina Faso

We strongly advise you to contact the CDC (www.cdc.gov) or check with your personal physician for more information about your specific health needs while traveling, including any recommendations for immunizations.

All information taken from the World Factbook, World Population Review and Compassion International.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

The official language of Burkina Faso is French. The country's secondary language is Mossi. Some common Burkinabé greetings include:

Hello	Bonjour
Nice to meet you	Enchanté
How are you?	Ça va?
What is your name?	Vous vous appelez comment?
My name is.....	Je m'appelle (name)
How old are you?	Quel âge avez-vous?
Yes	Oui
No	Non
Please	S'il vous plaît
Thank you	Merci
You're welcome	Je vous en prie
I do not speak French	Je ne parle pas français
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais?
I don't understand	Je ne comprends pas
You can do it!	Vous pouvez le faire!
I love you	Je t'aime
I am praying for you	Je prie pour vous

Jesus loves you	Jésus vous aime
You are precious to God	Vous êtes précieux à Dieu
God bless you	Que Dieu vous bénisse
I believe in you	Je crois en vous
Tell me about your family	Parlez-moi de votre famille
Good/OK	Bon
I need	J'ai besoin de
How much?	Combien?
Too expensive	Trop cher
Cheaper	Moins cher
Where is the bathroom?	Où sont les toilettes?
Where is the church?	Où est l'église?
Where is the bank?	Où est la banque?
Where is the hotel?	Où se trouve l'hôtel?