

GHANA AT A GLANCE

POPULATION: 27,499,924 (July 2017 est.)

LANGUAGES: English; more than 50 tribal languages, including Asante, Ewe, Fante, Boron and Dagomba

PREDOMINANT RELIGIONS: Christian, Islam, traditional

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

TELEPHONE CODES: 233, country code; 21, Accra city code

Ghana, called West Africa's Gold Coast during the colonial era, is better known for its lovely beaches, lively nightlife, good roads, variety of landscapes and friendly people than for dramatic scenery or wild animals. However, these assets make Ghana a safe and fascinating introduction to West Africa.

Although it was once a center of the slave trade, Ghana became the first modern African country to win its independence — giving it a head start in nation-building. Ghana's people are well-educated, and it has good schools, a thriving journalistic press and one of the highest economic growth rates on the continent. Moreover, Ghana has managed not merely to retain a strong sense of national identity and pride but actually to boost its economy and infrastructure.

Ghana is home to a fascinating variety of historical and cultural sites, the best known of which — ironically — are the European-built castles and forts along the coast. Other notable sights include Boabeng-Fiema, with its troops of colobus and mona monkeys, and the sacred crocodiles of Paga, whose caretakers feed them by hand.



COMPASSION IN GHANA

Compassion's ministry in Ghana began in 2004. Today, more than 52,000 children are served by more than 250 Compassion-assisted child development centers throughout the country. Compassion's church-based child development centers are places of hope for impoverished children in Ghana. 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.

WEATHER

Since Ghana is only a few degrees north of the equator, the only seasonal changes are distinct wet and dry seasons. December through February is the dry season, when day temperatures are in the 80s-90s F / 27-36 C and nights in the 70s F / 18-26 C. (Another dry season occurs in July and August, but it's hotter.) April through June is the rainiest period.

A dry northeast wind, known as the Harmattan, blows almost continuously in January and February. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry, the southwest corner has the highest humidity and rainfall, and the north is frequently hot and dry. Bring an umbrella or windbreaker during the rainy season.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency is the *Ghanaian cedi* (GHS). Cash can be exchanged at most banks and hotels but may be difficult to exchange elsewhere. Visa cards can be used to make cash withdrawals at some ATMs

FOOD

Most hot, freshly cooked food should be safe, but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating, choose meat that is cooked thoroughly, avoid local dairy products, and assume the water is unsafe (stick with prepackaged or boiled drinks).

SHOPPING

Kente cloth is an expensive material worn on ceremonial occasions. The colorful geometric patterns have historical meanings, which salespeople can explain. Also look for *Adinkra* cloth (colorful hand-stamped material), wooden stools, real or simulated gold weights, wood carvings, ceramics and brassware. Be prepared to bargain in the local markets.



ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Voltage used in Ghana is 230V, and most outlets in Ghana accept plug type D or G. (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** greet people properly. In Ghana, “Morning” is the standard greeting in the early part of the day. The local reply is “Morning, morning,” which is answered by “Fine morning.”
- **Don't** wear any military clothing or sportswear with a camouflage design — it's illegal.
- **Don't** wear shorts except at sporting events, beach resorts or other places that are used to Western clothing.
- **Do** take your own toilet paper, as it is not always available at local hotels (but is sold in shops all around Ghana).
- **Don't** photograph sensitive areas (that is, bridges, airports, any government structure and so forth), and always ask before taking someone's photograph.
- **Do** shake hands when greeting and leaving people.
- **Don't** expect everything to be open on Sunday.
- **Do** take off your hat in the company of any elder.

DRESS

Ghana has a warm climate year-round, so light clothing is ideal in most circumstances. But do bear in mind that dress codes tend toward the conservative, so casual clothes should not be too skimpy. One windbreaker or sweater should be adequate for the rare chilly (or, more likely on the coast, windy) night. Wear long sleeves, pants and socks after sunset to guard against mosquito bites, and spread repellent on any exposed parts of your body. A hat and sunscreen is recommended as a defense against sunburn.

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: gh.usembassy.gov

Phone: +233 (0) 30 274 1000

Address: No. 24, Fourth Circular Road (P.O. Box GP 2288), Cantonments, Accra, Ghana

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 and
Compassion International.*

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

While the official language of Ghana is English, the African language Twi is also widely spoken. Here are some common Twi greetings:

Welcome	Akwaaba
Please	Mepaa kyew
Thank you	Medasse
How are you?	Ete sen?
I'm fine	Me ho ye
Good morning	Maakye
Good afternoon	Maaha
Good evening	Maadwo
What's your name?	Wo din de sen?
My name is ...	Me din de (name)
How old are you?	Woadi mfee sen?
Yes	Aane
No	Dabi
Goodbye	Nante Yie
I love you	Medo wo