



RIVERS OF WEST AFRICA

EMBARKATION BANJUL
SHORE EXCURSION PROGRAM

Winter season 2026





DAY 1 (EMBARKATION DAY) BANJUL

BANJUL & BAKAU EXCURSION (MORNING TOUR)

**NOTE: THIS TOUR NEEDS A PRE-BOOKING PRIOR CRUISE
GUESTS NEED TO ARRIVE ON BOARD AT 08.15HRS**

- Duration approx. 4,5hrs
- Half day morning tour including refreshments
- Per Person: **Euro 62**

This is an orientation tour for the visitor seeking to get an overview of the main points of interest in the capital of The Gambia, Banjul, and the Greater Banjul area. Following a short drive from the port to the heart of Banjul, we begin our tour by visiting the Royal Albert Market, the central, lively and colorful daily local market, where your first opportunity to shop for souvenirs in one of the many stalls selling handicrafts awaits. We continue our tour by visiting the National Museum, where we get a better insight into the history of The Gambia, and shortly after, before leaving Banjul and driving to Bakau village, we make a photo-stop at "Arch 22", a neoclassical-style triumphal arch commemorating the coup d'état from 1994.

Once arriving in Bakau a visit of the main attraction is on the program: "Katchikally", the sacred crocodile pool. It is home of approximately 70 West African crocodiles (Crocodylus suchus) and is, traditionally, considered to be a sacred place for women trying to conceive, who used to perform fertility rituals and bathe in the pool water to overcome their difficulties.

Another notable attraction in Bakau is the Botanic Garden (which is, sadly, currently closed for visitors) a small, peaceful park next to the residence of the British High Commissioner in the Gambia.



DAY 2

TENDABA

TENDABA - KIANG WEST NATIONAL PARK

- Duration approx. 4hrs
- Half day morning tour, incl. refreshments
- Per Person: **Euro 58**

From the ship we take simple motor pirogues in order to reach Tendaba, located on the South Bank in the Lower River Division. It is a small fishing village of mainly Muslim faith with approximately 600 inhabitants whose main occupation is fishing.

There we meet with the open safari trucks that will bring us to the outskirts of the national park we will be exploring. Once we arrive, start with an approx. 5 km easy walk/drive over uneven ground through savannah bush with destination Batelling, a small village at the entrance to Kiang West National Park. The area boasts of over 250 species of birds; many of which are difficult to observe anywhere else. Other residents include Guinea baboons, bushbuck, warthogs, Senegal bush baby and marsh mongoose. Your local guide will point out to you the species we see along the way!

Once we arrive in Batelling a refreshment drink is served before boarding an open safari truck which brings us back to Tendaba. On the way we pass again local villages where you get an impression of local life in The Gambia.

Please be aware that you have to walk for approx. 5 km over relatively uneven terrain.

This tour can be somewhat strenuous, not suitable for guests with mobility issues. Remember to bring plenty of water, a repellent, sun tan lotion, a hat and if needed, an extra dry T-shirt.

Protect your phone or cameras during motor pirogue trips!



DAY 2

TENDABA

TENDABA - BAOBOLONG RESERVE

- Duration approx.3hrs
- Half day **afternoon** tour – easy
- Per Person: **Euro 58**

We are picked-up from the ship by motor pirogues for a trip to the Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve. This reserve, lying across the river from Kiang West National Park features six major Bolongs (creeks) that provide great birding and boating opportunities. Numerous rare and migratory birds also reside here including the Pel's fishing owl, African fin foot and brown-necked parrot. Sightings of Nile crocodiles and African clawless otter are possible, while baboons could be seen in the dry areas.

Remember to bring plenty of water, a repellent, suntan lotion, a hat and if needed, a dry T-shirt .

Protect your phone or cameras during motor pirogue trips!

Please be aware that we are approx. 3 hours on a basic motor pirogue and there are no toilet facilities available!



DAY 3

KUNTAUR

KUNTAUR - GAMBIA NATIONAL PARK EXCURSION

- Duration approx. 4hrs
- Half day tour
- Per Person: **Euro 116**

Today we will board a large motor pirogue for a 3 hours cruise on The Gambia River. First we head to the southernmost tip of Baboon Island, one of the five islands of The Gambia National Park. There we will be joined by a local national park ranger is joining us onboard in order to give more information about the park and its fauna & flora. Then we turn, the motor pirogue slows down and sails slowly back to Kuntaur following closely the shores of Baboon Island. This island is home of the Chimpanzee Rehabilitation Project. If we are lucky from our motor pirogue we can closely observe the chimps with minimal intrusion. There is also the possibility of seeing hippos, crocodiles, Red Colobus, Green Vervet monkeys and also The Gambia's famous birdlife.

After the local ranger disembarks at the northernmost tip of Baboon Island we continue to Kuntaur. Before boarding the ship again we meet the "Kankurang" and a local dance group on the pier. The "Kankurang" refers to the family of Mandinka masquerades that are covered from head to toe by leaves or bark and comes out e.g. on graduation days of initiates. Believed to have spiritual powers the "Kankurang" dispenses justice and wards off evil spirits.

Remember to bring plenty of water, a repellent, suntan lotion, a hat and if needed, a dry T-shirt.
Protect your phone or cameras during motor pirogue trips!



DAY 4

KUNTAUR

KUNTAUR - JANJANBUREH & WASSU STONES

- Duration approx. 5hrs
- A long half day tour
- Per Person: **Euro 134**

From the pier in Kuntaur the bus takes us to the ferry station of Janjanbureh. There we board the local ferry to cross The Gambia River to Janjanbureh. We continue our excursion with a visit of one of the oldest towns of The Gambia, formerly called Georgetown. During the walk you get an impression of this laidback town and see the residence of the governor, the market and the Methodist church with its school. Afterwards we take the ferry back and board the bus. After 10 minutes drive we reach the **local school of Lamin Koto**. There we will visit the new school building which was built with the help of the guests of M/Y Pegasos, Harmony G and the Management of VARIETY CRUISES!

Before returning to the ship we stop at the mysterious stone circles in Wassu, a megalithic site believed to be a burial ground thousands of years ago. Once there on the program is an interesting guided tour in the little museum and a visit of the archaeological site, which is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site.

Remember to bring plenty of water, a repellent, suntan lotion, a hat and if needed, a dry T-shirt.

For the local school visit during our tour guests are welcome to bring from home pencils (rather than pens) notebooks, sharpeners, erasers, or any other school supplies they might deem helpful. Feel free to ask your booking agent if interested. Thank you!



DAY 5

JAMES ISLAND

JAMES ISLAND - KUNTA KINTEH EXCURSION

- A short morning tour
- Per Person: **Euro 25**

James Island, located in The Gambia River mouth was discovered by the Portuguese in 1455. The first settlers on the island were from the Duchy of Courland & Semigallia (nowadays Latvia) which arrived in 1651. The Courlanders built a fort but only a couple of years later the Dutch took over. Throughout the following centuries the French and the English occupied the island, and, with each succession, the fortifications were gradually extended.

Under the British rule the island became an important slave trading post in The Gambia. Around 1780 the French took over again James Island and demolished the majority of the fortifications. The British, once the island was once reclaimed, did not rebuild, and instead, after the abolition of slave trade, founded Banjul at the entrance of The Gambia River to the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1976 James island became famous thanks to the author Alex Haley, after his book, Roots, was published and quickly became famous around the world. In it, a family history of a slave, Kunta Kinteh, is told. The work of Alex Haley became the reason the island was renamed in early 2011 to Kunta Kinteh Island. Nowadays it is a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site.

After disembarking by tender your local guide will tell you more about the history of James Island, and afterward, you will have an opportunity to explore this tiny island by yourself.

Remember to bring plenty of water, a repellent, suntan lotion, a hat and if needed, an extra dry T-shirt.

Protect your phone or cameras during tender or motor pirogue trips!



DAY 6

DAKAR

3 OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM / **BOOKINGS ARE POSSIBLE UNTIL DAY 2 OF CRUISE**

DAKAR CITY & GOREE ISLAND (full day tour – lunch included)

- A full day tour
- Lunch included
- Per Person: min. 2 guests EURO 230 / 3or4 guests EURO 188 / 5-8 guests EURO 155

Dakar is the center of political, economic and cultural reunification of western Africa. Visit of the “plateau” district; the railway station, the City Hall, the Independence Square the Presidential Palace. Our tour to Dakar city will also include typical and craft markets with stopover on request. At the end of the city tour, we cross by ferry to **join Goree Island** where lunch will be served at a local tavern. The island offers a harbor of peace and gentleness, Narrow and peaceful lanes and red ochre houses adorned with bougainvillea impact indisputable charm on the town. Listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Goree is a veritable place of memory and contemplation; millions of people have passed before being taken to America to become slaves. Visit of the slaves’ house, the St. Charles church, the historical museum and walk into the alley for a visit to the workshops’ painters.

Or alternatively a morning half day tour of DAKAR (3-3,5hrs duration)

Per Person : min.2 guests EURO 130 pp / 3or4 guests EURO 104 pp / 5-8 guests EURO 95 pp

Or alternatively a morning half day tour of GOREE island (4-4,5hrs approx.)

Per Person: min.2 guests EURO 140 pp / 3or4 guests EURO 123 pp / 5-8 guests EURO 106 pp

NOTE: Passengers embarking in Banjul are requested to book their Dakar tours latest on day 2 (Tuesday)



DAY 7

DJIFFER, SENEGAL

DJIFFER, SENEGAL – JOAL FADIOUTH EXCURSION

- Duration approx. 7hrs
- A full day tour including lunch
- Per Person: **Euro 146**

This tour requires a pre-booking ahead of the cruise !!

We reach the Saloum River Delta and Djiffer. Disembarkation takes place by local tenders, called motor pirogues. Then we board a bus and drive to the village of Joal. During the 1.5 hours journey you can enjoy spectacular panoramic views, watch local every-day-life and might observe various species of birds.

After reaching Joal, a quaint fishing village, small pirogues are boarded for a 20 minutes row across the shallow bay to the granary huts on stilts; then on for another 10 minutes to the sea-shell cemetery. There we continue on foot over the wooden bridge to the small village of Fadiouth, located on an island made entirely out of sea-shells, and explore the settlement with our guide. We then cross another bridge connecting the shell island with the mainland back to Joal to have our lunch in a quaint local restaurant by the shore of the lagoon.

After lunch we take the same road back following the coast, stop shortly at a giant Baobab tree, and upon reaching Djiffer, we return to the ship by motor pirogues.

Our tour is private; A local guide is leading the tour with at times simple narration or strong accent. Protect your valuable items during tender or pirogue trips as they might get wet; carry water, repellent, sun tan lotion, a hat and if needed an extra Tshirt, due to hot and humid weather.

Special note: In case of extreme bad sea conditions the motor pirogues might not operate the tour.



IMPORTANT NOTE:

In these remote areas, logistics and facilities are limited, **therefore, we kindly ask you to pre-book your tours marked with “prebooking required” at least 10 days before your cruise.** No prepayment is required, but please note that pre-bookings will be binding. Prices are valid for a minimum of 12 guests or as mentioned next to each tour.

Cancellation fees apply for cancellations received less than 48hrs before each tour.

REMARKS:

The tours are exclusively run for our Variety Cruises small groups. Operation and prices require a minimum of 12 guests. All tours while in Gambia are escorted by our local guide naturalist while most tours are led by licensed local guides in English language; In some remote places basic narration is expected by the local escorts.

The tours are subject to changes due to sudden maintenance closures or restorations, weather, heavy traffic or other conditions. Alternative visits will be offered instead.

The length of the tours and the time spent on the sites is given as an indication as it may vary depending on weather, tendering, port and traffic conditions or also on the pacing of each group.

Most excursions are quite active and **require good physical condition.** Due to slippery or some relatively uneven roads we recommend comfortable shoes; bring plenty of water, mosquito repellent, suntan lotion, a hat and if needed, an extra dry T-shirt.

Climate can be hot and humid. Bird and animal lovers may wish to bring their own **binoculars.**

Gratuities for drivers and guides are not included.

For the local school visit during the Wassu tour, guests are welcome to bring pencils (rather than pens) notebooks, sharpeners, erasers, or any other school items they deem helpful. Feel free to ask your booking agent if interested.

Many thanks!

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