

elevate destinations

GHANA

COUNTRY GUIDE

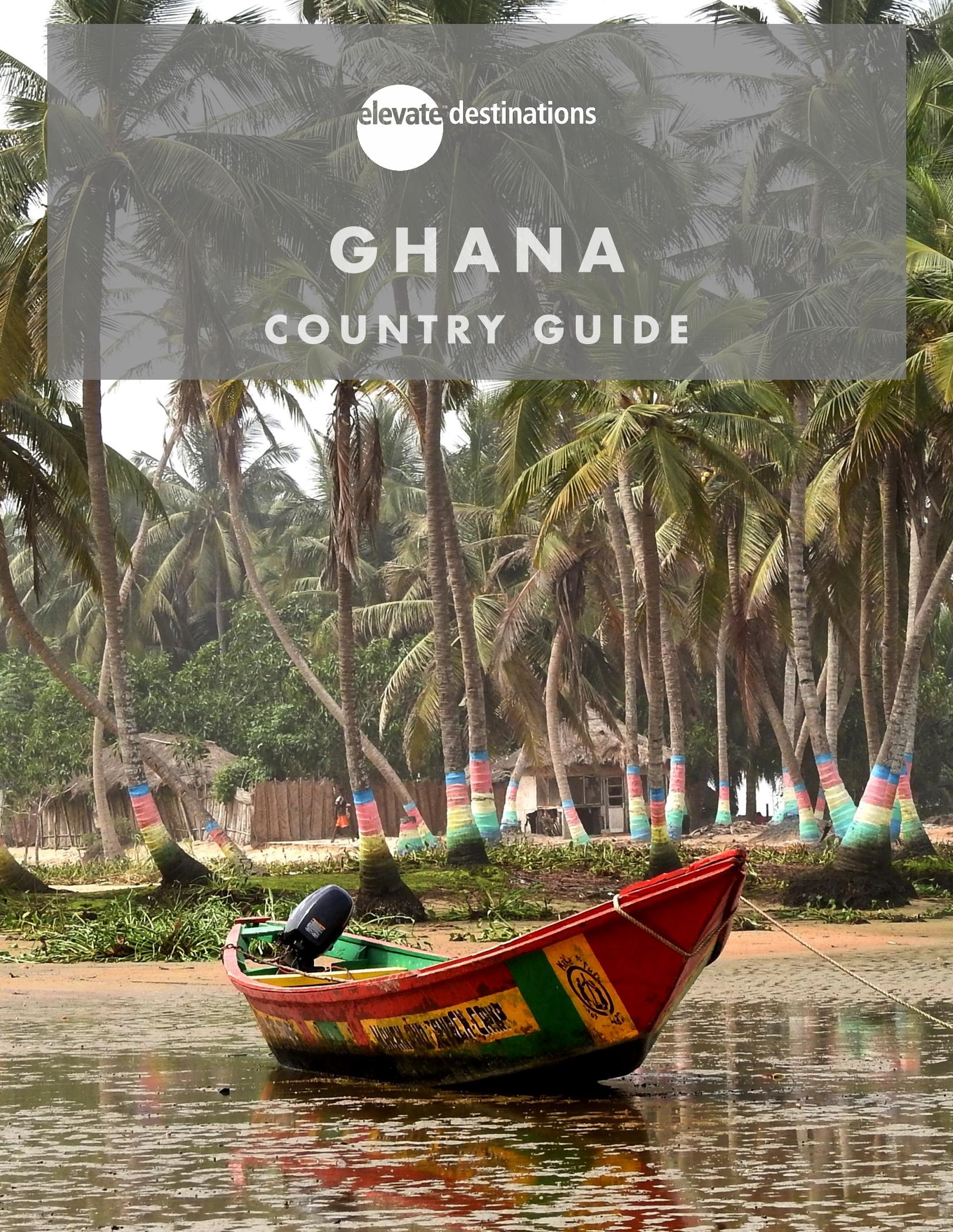


TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE	3
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO	3
Passport	3
Visa	3
Covid Protocols.....	4
Immunizations.....	5
Other Health Considerations.....	5
Communications.....	6
Essential Travel Documents	7
Money	7
IN-COUNTRY INFO	8
Time	8
Electricity.....	9
Toilet Paper	9
Waste Disposal	9
Local Cuisine & Drink	10
Weather Conditions	11
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS	11
Language	12
Human Trafficking in Travel	13
Responsible Travel Tips	13

PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

In this document you will find a plethora of information that will be useful during your journey to Ghana. The information listed in this guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight recommendations, etc. is listed in your Online Trip Portal. For any questions unanswered by either the country guide or the online portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate Destinations staff member. We hope that this document proves to be helpful and that you are getting excited for your journey to Ghana!

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Passport

Travelers to Ghana should ensure that the validity of their passports extends at least 6 months beyond the end of their intended stay, and should have at least 2 blank (unstamped) visa pages in their passport to enter the country. The last 2 amendment pages are unacceptable for visas and immigration stamps. Note that you will need to renew your passport if you are out of visa pages, as the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If you need to renew your passport, please do so as soon as possible. We recommend travelers scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourself. This way you always have a copy if something happens to it while traveling.

Visa

Citizens from the United States and most other countries need a tourist visa to enter Ghana. Please check if you require a visa by checking the bottom of this [webpage](#). **Please note:** you will be required to mail your passport and visa application into the Embassy to obtain the visa. Processing times are listed below. We recommend applying for your visa between January 16 and February 6. Make copies of **all** documents you send into the embassy as part of your application for your personal records.

How to apply:

1. Fill out Ghana's [Visa Application Form](#)
2. After completion, download and print the application
3. Mail your passport with the printed copy of the visa application, one current passport size photograph and all the required supporting documents to the Embassy.

Processing Times		
Single Entry Visa (Regular)	\$60	15-20 business days (excluding mailing)
Single Entry Visa (Expedited)	\$100	7 business days (excluding mailing)

Mail To:	
Regular	Embassy of Ghana Consular Section (Regular) 3512 International Dr. NW Washington, DC 20008
Expedited	Embassy of Ghana Consular Section (Expedited) 3512 International Dr. NW Washington, DC 20008

If you would like to acquire your visa for Ghana with a visa-processing center, Elevate Destinations recommends [A1 Passport and Visa](#) in Washington DC. For questions regarding the visa application, you can reach A1 Passport directly at (202) 639-1500.

Travel & Medical Insurance

Elevate Destinations requires travel and medical insurance that covers Covid-related medical expenses and costs associated with quarantine. Proof of your travel and medical insurance is required to enter Ghana and is required to participate in this program.

Below are two insurance brokers that Elevate Destinations recommends:

- Yonder Travel Insurance
Email: hello@insureyonder.com
Phone Number: 855-358-6433 (M-F 8:30-5:00 CT)
- Travel Insurance Center (Dan Drennan)
Email: dan@travelinsurancecenter.com
Phone Number: 1-866-979-6753 (extension 3621)

Guests may acquire travel insurance through Yonder Travel Insurance, Travel Insurance Center, or any other travel insurance company of their choosing. Elevate Destinations recommends that travelers evaluate the insurance options available for their needs, and inquire with providers about insurance that will cover them for all Covid-related expenses including quarantine costs while abroad.

Covid Protocols

Covid Vaccination: Elevate Destinations requires that all travelers are fully vaccinated and up to date on any doses of the the Covid-19 vaccine they are legally eligible for. This means many travelers will need a booster.

Entry Requirements and Updates: As Covid is continually evolving, please check your Online Trip Portal for the most up to date information regarding entry requirements and health and safety precautions.

Immunizations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Ghana. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots. *Please note:* Yellow Fever is required to enter Ghana.
- b) Visit the [CDC Website for Ghana](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

Other Health Considerations

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program.

Travel in Ghana can be physically demanding. You must be able to enter and exit a wide variety of vehicles including jeeps and vans. Dust and other air impurities may be present in heavy concentrations, and colds, nasal congestion and sore throat may occur. Air travel may be scheduled to reduce travel times, and some extended road journeys may be required.

We recommend a medium level of physical agility, as some of the drives may have sections of unpaved, or bumpy roads. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty
- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle on unpaved, bumpy roads for extended periods of time

Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all time. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.

- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns.

Communications

The country code for Ghana is +233. To call numbers in Ghana from the U.S. dial 011 + 233 + area code + seven-digit local number

Wifi: At most accommodation providers you will visit in Ghana, wifi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability will likely be less reliable than you are used to. Oftentimes, connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in individual rooms.

International Calls: If you are in Ghana and trying to reach a number in the US, dial 011 before dialing the country code and local number.

Staying connected: Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber (when Wifi is available). We recommend that travelers download and create a [WhatsApp](#) account prior to their travel.
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone / SIM card:** SIM cards are recommended for international travelers as for making calls within Ghana as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please let your guide know if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone. To purchase a local SIM card, you will need to provide a copy of your passport.

Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the U.S. sign-up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits in case of an emergency while abroad:

- You will receive information from the U.S. Embassy about safety conditions in Ghana
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in Ghana know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

Essential Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to make photocopies of your important documents and leave a few copies in your luggage, your money belt, and with relatives or friends at home. Also email a scanned copy to yourself or take a screenshot or photo of the document and save it in an “Important Travel Documents” folder in your photo app on your phone.

These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:

- A photocopy of your passport
- Covid Vaccination Card; both the original, a photocopy and a digital copy, which can be obtained through ClearApp (click [here](#)) on your mobile phone
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Visa
- Address and phone numbers of the hotels where you are staying
- Emergency Contact List - provided by Elevate Destinations
- Travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers etc.

Money

The local currency in Ghana is the Ghanaian Cedi (GH¢). The Ghanaian Cedi comes in the following denominations:

Banknotes: Gh¢ 200, Gh¢ 100, Gh¢ 50, Gh¢ 20, Gh¢ 10, Gh¢ 5, Gh¢ 2, Gh¢ 1

Coins: GH¢1, 50 Gp, 20 Gp, 10 Gp, 5 Gp, 1 Gp

Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.

For extra personal costs and shopping, bringing USD \$30-\$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in Ghana can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMS, hotels and banks).

Cash & Exchanging Money: Ghana is a primarily cash economy, so you will need to have cash in the local currency throughout your journey. Local currency is recommended for most places, especially smaller stores and markets. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash or change as some smaller vendors may not carry change for bigger bills.

If you exchange money, do so only at authorized outlets such as banks and hotels, and exchange only what you think you will spend in-country. Reconversion on departure may be difficult. Coins cannot be reconverted. To see what the current exchange rate is, check online at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

We recommend bringing \$200 - \$300 in USD cash in case of emergency and for personal spending. If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last 5 years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)

Banks, and ATMs are available in most major cities, and your guide can generally help with withdrawing cash throughout your trip. There is usually a small fee per transaction on top of what your own bank charges for withdrawing cash at an ATM.

*Note: You will need your passport to exchange money at a bank or Bureau.

Credit Cards: Credit cards (mainly Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in larger establishments and hotels. Cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants will typically charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction.

ATM/Debit Cards: You can use your debit card to withdraw money from ATMs.

Note: ATMs in remote areas can be finicky, and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 2 or 3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged in the case that ATMs are not working for you.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Consider downloading a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like:
Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

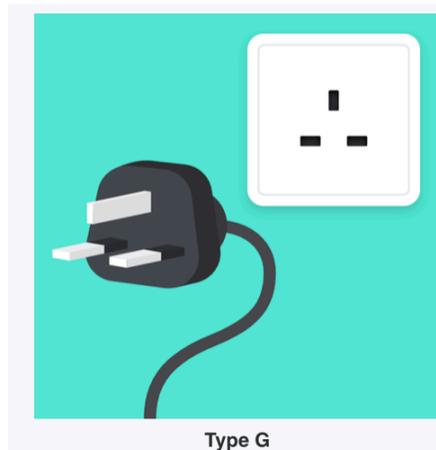
IN-COUNTRY INFO

Time

Ghana follows GMT + 0:00. Therefore, time in the locations of your visit will be 5 hours ahead of East Coast time, and 8 hours ahead of West Coast time.

Electricity

Ghana uses a standard of 230V, 50Hz, and plug G. The following image show the type of plug and socket you can use while traveling in Ghana. To keep your electronics up and running, we suggest purchasing a universal plug.



Water & Food Safety

Tap water is not safe to drink in Ghana. We strongly recommend not drinking tap water anywhere in Ghana unless boiled. Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill up with clean drinking water. Some people also choose to brush their teeth with bottled water, but this is up to personal preference based on how hardy you feel your stomach is. Do not use ice unless you know it was made from bottled water. Clean drinking water and soft drinks will be supplied at all meals and water will be available in the van. Be wary of fruits and vegetables that may have been washed in tap water.

Similarly, we recommend travelers eat foods that have been cooked well. Fresh vegetables and fruits bear the risk of having been washed in contaminated water. Fruits you can peel are usually safe (e.g. bananas).

Toilet Paper

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as some bathrooms, especially in more remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember that in remote parts of the country, you may be encouraged to throw the toilet paper into the bin provided and not into the toilet itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.

Waste Disposal

Keep in mind that other parts of the world, waste disposal systems are not as advanced as you might be used to. Oftentimes, landfills are adjacent to conservation land or trash is burned. Recycling is often

unavailable. To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you.
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)
- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

Local Cuisine & Drink

Ghanaians enjoy a rather simple, but flavorful cuisine. The majority of meals consist of thick, well-seasoned stews, usually accompanied by a staple food such as rice or boiled yams. Stews come in a variety of flavors, the most popular being okra, fish, bean leaf (or other greens), *forowe* (a fishy tomato stew), *plava* sauce (spinach stew with either fish or chicken), and groundnut (peanut), one of the country's national dishes.

Many spices are used to prepare stews and other popular dishes. Cayenne, curry, ginger, garlic, onions, and chili peppers are the most widely used seasonings. Onions and chili peppers (along with tomatoes, palm nuts, and broth) help to make up the basis for most stews.

Below are many common dishes you will find in Ghana:

Jollof Rice: Jollof is a pot dish of rice prepared with tomato sauce and served with meat or fish. The rice soaks up the juicy flavors and turns orange when cooking. Jollof Rice is a national favorite that can be found in most restaurants or dished out by street vendors at affordable prices.

Waakye: Waakye is a medley of beans and rice. Originally a Northern dish, it can now be found almost everywhere on the streets of Accra. This main dish is served with other sides such as fried plantain, garri (grated cassava), spaghetti and avocado.

Banku and Tilapia: Tilapia is the most common fish you will see being grilled in Ghana. It is often paired with Banku, southern mix of fermented corn and cassava dough, hot pepper and diced tomatoes and onions.

Red-red: Red-red is a filling traditional dish that consists of cowpea beans boiled to make a broth, served with palm oil and soft, fried plantains. It is one of the Ghanaian dishes that doesn't use a lot of spice because the main taste comes from the ingredients it's served with – it can also be dished up with garri to make it even more hearty. Red-red is also a perfect choice for vegetarians as no animal products are used.

Fufu: Fufu is a staple food across West Africa but in Ghana, it is made by pounding a mixture of boiled cassava and plantains into a soft sticky paste to go along with aromatic soups and stews. Fufu can also be found in Northern Ghana, although it is made with yam in this region.

Weather Conditions

The climate of Ghana is tropical. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry, the south-west corner of Ghana is hot and humid, and the north of Ghana is hot and dry. Ghana is located on the Gulf of Guinea, only a few degrees north of the Equator, giving it a warm climate.

The climate of Ghana is tropical and there are two main seasons: the wet and the dry seasons. North Ghana experiences its rainy season from April to mid-October while South Ghana experiences its rainy season from March to mid-November. The tropical climate of Ghana is relatively mild for its latitude. The harmattan, a dry desert wind, blows in north-east Ghana from December to March, lowering the humidity and causing hotter days and cooler nights in northern part of Ghana.

Average daily temperatures range from 30°C (86°F) during the day to 24°C (75°F) at night with a relative humidity between 77 percent and 85 percent. In the southern part of Ghana, there is a bi-modal rainy season: April through June and September through November. Squalls occur in the northern part of Ghana during March and April, followed by occasional rain until August and September, when the rainfall reaches its peak. Rainfall ranges from 78 to 216 centimeters (31 to 85 inches) a year.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in Ghana.

- In Ghana, people tend to dress more conservatively than in western cultures. Please note that sleeveless or low-cut shirts and short shorts or skirts for women can be inappropriate, especially in more rural settings.
- Greetings are important. Whenever one passes a group of people, especially the elderly, it is expected to always greet them. When walking up to a group of people, it is polite to always greet and shake hands if possible. Time is always made for greeting and it is not seen as interference or waste of time.
- It is considered respectful to use formal titles when addressing someone. Anyone older than oneself can be addressed as “brother” or “sister”. Elderly people should be addressed with titles of respect, as Ghanaian culture is hierarchical, such as “father, mother, grandfather, sir, or madam.”
- Ghanaians are more indirect communicators. This means they take care not to relay information in any way that could cause issues, whether that be giving someone bad news, turning down an invitation, refusing a request or any other such matter.
- Showing affection in public between men and women is not common, even husband and wives. Men may hold hands or even hug, but male/female relationships are strictly controlled. Hugging is not commonly done except by very dear friends, especially between men and women. Loud, boisterous behavior is also considered poor taste, especially for women. In public, it is best to display a quiet, careful, and friendly attitude.

Language

In Ghana, the official language is English. However, there are over 50 indigenous languages, Akan being the most widely used indigenous language.

Although many of the locals you will be interacting with will speak English, it's always considerate and may be helpful to learn a few phrases in Akan. Below are some examples to get you started:

<i>English</i>	<i>Akan</i>
Hello	Helo
How are you? (informal)	Wo ho te sen?
I'm fine	Me ho ye.
See you later	Akyire yebehya
Goodbye	Akyire
Sorry	Kafra
Thank you	Meda wo ase
Welcome or you're welcome	Akwaaba
Please	Mesre wo
Yes	Aane
No	Daabi
Excuse me	Ma me kwan
My name is ____.	Me din de ____.
Nice to meet you	Eye se mahyia wo
Have a good journey!	Nya akwantuo pa
Good morning / afternoon /evening	Mema wo akye / Mema wo aha / Mema wo adwo
I don't understand	Mente asee
What is your name?	Wo din de sen?
Where are the restrooms?	Ehe na agwaree ahorow no wa?

Photography

Ghana is a beautiful destination, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect. You can do this with gestures or ask your

guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, [“Nine questions to help decolonize your photography”](#).

Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email protect@ecpat.net to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate’s values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at www.elevatedestinations.com. Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [Native Energy's Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Bargaining is acceptable on this trip and a great way to engage with locals. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive in bargaining for souvenirs

- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!
- **Don't feel pressured to give away money or material items:** You will likely encounter instances of poverty and people asking for donations. We try to discourage giving away money or items as it

Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.

can actually accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals. Additionally, children that receive money, gifts, and sweets from you are encouraged to stick around for more, rather than to be in school. As difficult as it can be to turn down direct requests, sometimes giving your friendship and respect to locals can be the best gift of all. If you want to help, consider giving to a trustworthy charity, non-profit, or local school.

- **Tip your housekeeping staff:** Many of the the staff cleaning hotel rooms are on the bottom of the economic pyramid. Please consider leaving a tip before you checkout. The equivalent of \$2 dollars a day is appropriate. This is an easy way to ensure some of your money reaches the hands that need it the most.