

GHANA TRAVELER'S GUIDE

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Easy Track Ghana, Ltd.
Dome-Pillar2 Kwasi Oppong St.
Box WY-1160 Kwabenya, Ghana
Phone: 027 665-7036
U.S.: (202) 239-8851
U.K.: (808) 189-5161
Digital Address: GE-345-7165
info@easytrackghana.com
www.easytrackghana.com

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS and VISAS

- A passport that does not expire for at least 6 months after your arrival date is required.
- Your passport must have at least two blank visa pages for immigration stamps.
- Please make two copies of your Passport (the photo page only), leave one at home and carry the other copy separately from the passport.
- Carry two extra passport photos with you in case you lose your passport.
- Non-ECOWAS citizens need an entry visa for Ghana.
- You must carry evidence of yellow fever inoculation.
- For students, bring your Student ID to obtain discounts.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

- Vaccination against Yellow fever is required.
- It is highly recommended that you get a prescription for malaria prophylactics, which your physician or pharmacist will advise you how to take.
- The final decision regarding health requirements must be made by your personal physician or health care provider.
- Use of bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth is recommended.
- The US Centers for Disease Control recommend other preventative actions, including current
 - Hepatitis A and B
 - Typhoid
 - Flu
 - Measles
 - DPT
 - Polio
 - Chickenpox
 - Use of insect repellent
- Travel insurance to cover unexpected medical problems is required.



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WEATHER CONDITIONS

The climate of Ghana is tropical, but temperatures vary with season and elevation. There are three major conditions

- Heat
 - Varies with elevation, so the Eastern Region and Volta Region and other highlands tend to be cooler.
 - Hottest in February-March
 - Coolest in July-September
- Rain season
 - Southern Ghana April-July and September-November
 - Northern Ghana April-September
 - Annual rainfall ranges from about 1,100 mm (about 43 in) in the north to about 2,100 mm (about 83 in) in the southwest.
- Harmattan
 - This is a dry desert wind that blows from the northeast from December to March, lowering the humidity and creating hot days and cool nights in the north. In the south the effects of the Harmattan are felt in December-January, with a noticeable haze that softens the sun.

You can find climate information at

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/climate.php>

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

- The official language of Ghana is English. This is used in official settings like school or business. While most people can speak English, it is not unusual to meet a person that does not, especially older citizens or when in rural areas.
- There are several widely spoken languages such as Twi, Ga, and Ewe in the southern half of Ghana, and Dagbani and Hausa in the north. The local languages are used in informal settings like at home or among friends.



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TIME ZONE

- Ghana is at Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) all year.
- Ghana does not have daylight savings time.
- Ghana is just 4 degrees above the equator, so sunrise is at 6:00 AM and sunset at 6:00 PM every day of the year.
- Calculating the current time in Ghana depends on the time of the year due to daylight savings:

	October - April	May - September
London	Same time as Ghana	Subtract 1 hour
New York	Add 4 hours	Add 5 hours
San Francisco	Add 7 hours	Add 8 hours
Sydney	Subtract 11 hours	Subtract 10 hours

- To verify the local time in Ghana you can check the current conditions:
www.easytrackghana.com/travel-information-ghana-current-conditions.php

PHONES

- If you need a phone that functions in Ghana, both for text messages as well as for receiving/placing phone calls, you can purchase an inexpensive phone for about \$30.
- When your family/friends dial from outside Ghana, use your international access code plus the country code 233. For example, to call Ghana from the U.S., dial: 011 - 233 - Number.
- All local phone numbers start with a "0", but drop this leading "0" when calling from a location outside Ghana.
- Network coverage in Ghana is usually unreliable with calls frequently dropping before your conversation has completed. In many places during your tour you may not get a signal on your phone. Keep your calls brief when connected.



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INTERNET SERVICE

- An increasing number of hotels are offering Wi-Fi. Some hotels provide free Internet, but if you are asked to pay for internet service in your hotel it can be quite expensive, so inquire.
- Smartphones are widely used in major cities and towns to browse the Internet. You can get a local SIM or portable modem, along with internet data, for your smartphone upon your arrival in Accra. This makes it easy to access the internet during your tour.
- Internet service will generally be slow and unreliable compared to what you are accustomed. WhatsApp calls may be possible, but uploading of videos may not be achievable in some areas.
- Be cautious when entering your passwords and ensure that you properly sign out of all sites.
- Your internet banking and commerce will be restricted due to fraud detection software that rejects transactions initiated from an Internet provider located in West Africa.
 - Notify your bank that you will be traveling if you wish to access your Internet banking
 - Your PayPal account will be frozen if you log into your account.
 - You may not be able to make purchases over the Internet using a credit card. The location of the computer making the purchase is determined and the vendor will simply ignore the purchase request. The purchase may be voided without notice to you even if you have received a confirmation of the purchase from the vendor.



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ELECTRICITY

There are several issues about electricity.

Voltage: The Ghana electricity is 220 volts/50 cycles. This is different than in North America, so you cannot directly use an U.S. or Canadian electrical appliance unless it is dual voltage. To see if your appliance is dual voltage look on the plug or power box to see if it reads only 110 volts or if there is a range of 110-220v (or something very close).

Converter: If your appliance accepts 220v you can use the appliance without a converter. If your appliance is only good for 110v, you must have a converter. There are different types of converters, depending on the wattage of the appliance. Be sure to get the right kind.

Adapter Plug: Regardless of what voltage your appliance is, you may not be able to plug it directly into the wall due to the style of outlet. You will need an adapter plug. Depending on whether your appliance is a two-prong or three-prong item, you need an adapter plug that works with your appliance. You may need two adapters - one with two prongs and one with three. There are different outlets that are equally encountered in Ghana:



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MONEY & CURRENCY

- The Ghanaian Cedi is the currency in Ghana (GHS). The symbol can be written as ¢. The Ghanaian Cedi is divided into 100 pesewas.
- Foreign exchange bureaus (forex) are easy to find in cities and towns in southern Ghana.
- Use or re-convert all your cedis before departing Ghana because you will not be able to convert them back home.
- US \$100 bills must be new bills with the blue stripe that are in good condition. Euros and British Pounds are also easy to exchange.
- Higher denominations get better exchange rates.
- Weekday transactions get a better exchange rate.
- South of Techiman gets a better exchange rate.

Credit Cards:

- Most transactions are conducted with cash. Market vendors do not accept credit or debit cards.
- Some shops and restaurants in large cities accept debit and credit cards, but be aware of any “foreign transaction” fees that your bank may apply. Check first!
- Visa is the most widely accepted.
- You must notify your credit card company in advance that you are traveling to Ghana or your card will be frozen when you attempt to use it in Ghana.
- Can be used for taking cash advances at an ATM.



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ATM:

- Bring your ATM card to obtain local currency. ATMs are widely available in cities and large towns in the southern half of Ghana, including at the airport.
- Notify your bank that you are traveling to Ghana or you will find your ATM card frozen if you attempt to use it while in Ghana.

Internet Banking:

- Internet banking and commerce may be restricted due to fraud detection software that rejects transactions initiated from an Internet provider located in West Africa. Contact your financial institution or vendor for further information if you will possibly utilize such service while traveling in Ghana.

Keeping your Money Safe:

- Always have a small amount of local currency money available in a pocket or close at hand. You do not want to pull out a stack of money for a small purchase.
- Hotels provide safety deposit boxes behind the counter and more upscale hotels have room safes. Find out who, if anyone, has access to your safety deposit box and if you feel comfortable with the security, then leave the majority of your money and valuables there.
- Another option is to tape \$100 bills inside a boring-looking newspaper or magazine. It can lay in plain view for months and never be touched. (Don't share this secret with people you meet in Ghana)
- The small disguised hiding safes, such as false beverage cans, shaving cream cans and the like are actually quite dangerous. It is tiny things like this that can attract thieves, who unknowingly would be taking your hidden stash!



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How much extra to bring:

- Additional expenses will be bottled water, alcoholic drinks, souvenirs, tips to your guide, and items not inclusive in your plan. Here are some estimates, but these can vary widely depending on your personal habits.
 - \$5 US/day for water. Drinks and bottled water at a hotel are more expensive.
 - About \$26 a day for lunch and dinner. Local food at local establishments is much less.
 - Souvenirs & gift purchases will vary considerably depending on your wishes.
 - Bead bracelets start at about \$2
 - A Djembe drum starts at about \$40
 - A full size Kente cloth starts at about \$200
 - Fuel is currently \$1.00 per liter, or \$3.79 per gallon.
 - Remember to tip your Easy Track Ghana guide and driver if he or she has provided excellent service.

TIPS/GRATUITY

As in all other areas of the hospitality industry, tips are a major part of service for employees' income. It is expected that your guide(s) will be tipped at the end of their service. Somewhere in the range of \$15-\$25 per day will make them happy, or for groups, a minimum of \$5 per person per day. Tips are performance-based and should be provided in exchange for excellent service. These tips should be collected by someone on behalf of your group at the end and given directly to the guide(s) and driver.

Your trip cost already includes tips for guides and drivers at sites you visit. If meals are included in your tour, then tips to your servers are also included. Of course, if anyone is exceptional or goes beyond expectations to make your stay comfortable, it is acceptable for you to provide additional tips.



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BARGAINING/BARTERING

Bargaining is a way of life in many countries – it is a great way to break the ice and can be a lot of fun. But here is some advice that you should take into account:

- Always be polite but firm.
- Deal only with people you are comfortable with.
- Do speak a little of the seller's language. In any transaction in a foreign country, the effort you make to use a little of the local language will be warmly received.
- Don't be rude. Under no circumstances should you be rude, or question the validity of any price the seller names--no matter how absurd it seems to you. Your attitude should be apologetic and a little self-effacing:
 "I'm sorry, but I can't pay that much."
- You should just enjoy the whole process and have fun. Feel free to laugh at an outrageous price, make friends, and enjoy the relationship.
- If you feel the seller is really trying to rip you off, just apologize for taking his time and leave. There is no need to bargain further with him or her. Rather you should seek the item elsewhere.
- When bargaining to buy an item, bear in mind that a small amount to you could be extremely important to the seller. Don't waste time bartering over a few cents. Feel good about helping a fellow human being.



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CARRY-ON LUGGAGE

- Be sure to check the size/weight limit of carry-on luggage with the airline you are flying.
- The size of the carry-on bag must not exceed 45 linear inches.
- Your carry-on luggage should have at least one complete change of clothes so that in the unfortunate situation that your checked luggage is delayed you will not be overly inconvenienced.
- The security regulations prohibit taking certain items in your carry-on luggage. To double check current restrictions, read these procedures: <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items>

PACKING

- Be sure to check with the airlines that you are flying regarding their allowances for checked baggage. It's important to note if your flights are all on one ticket, or if you have separate tickets. The international rules of checked baggage allowance are different if your international domestic flights are part of the same ticket as your flights to/from the United States or if they are on separate tickets.
- On most airlines you can check two bags, each usually 50 pounds from US/Canada or 23 or 30 kilos elsewhere. Each bag may total no more than 62 linear inches. Verify these limits with your airline.
- You may want to use your second bag as part of our "One Extra Bag" program if you don't need your two-bag limit. Bring something to leave behind for a school or clinic. You may find yourself purchasing clothing, fabric, carvings, and other souvenirs which will require the extra space when returning home.



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- If traveling via public transit, your bags must be appropriate. You must pack lightly in a backpack or a soft-sided duffel bag. A hard-sided suitcase, even with wheels, will not be appropriate for a tour via public transit.
- If you lock your luggage be sure to use a TSA-approved lock. Those are the ones with a diamond hole so that the TSA staff can open them without breaking the lock.
- Make a list of everything in your suitcase in case it's lost and you need to file a claim. For the same reason, take a photo of your suitcases so you can identify them to the airlines.
- Put a copy of your itinerary with hotel names and contact information in your suitcase (such in an outside pocket). Also list your personal contact information. This way if your suitcase is lost the airlines can catch up with you when it's found.
- A suggested packing list can be found on the following two pages.



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Suggested Packing List

Bags

- Soft hold-all bag for excursions
- Smaller travel/overnight bag or day pack for traveling
- Lightweight backpack if traveling via public transit

Clothing

White clothing is not recommended because it is impossible to keep clean. Ghana is a very dusty place.

- Smart-casual outfit - 1 set
- Outdoor summer clothing in natural fibres - 3 sets
- Light-weight cotton long pants - 2 pair

For cool evenings, use as sun screen and prevent insect bites.

- Comfortable walking shoes / sandals - 1 pair each
- Undershirt / singlet

Not to keep you warm, but to keep the sweat from showing so much.

- Underwear - 4 to 6 sets
- Swimwear

Only wear this at beach or poolside.

- Sarong or multi-purpose cotton wrap-around
Useful also as sun screen or dust cover for cameras.
- Towel / face cloth / bandana / handkerchief
- Hat in neutral tones that shades your neck and forehead
- Sunglasses

Hardware

- Small torch (flash light) or head lamp / 2 sets of batteries
- Camera equipment / extra memory & lithium batteries
- Electrical adapter plugs, and converter if needed
- Dust-free camera bag (Zip-lock bag is fine)
- Extra battery, solar charger for phone



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Toiletries

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, razor deodorant (*not* antiperspirant), brush & comb, moisturizing cream
- Sunscreen lotion/sun block, lip-aid, floss and insect repellent (containing DEET is best)
These are particularly difficult to obtain in Ghana.
- Small private medical kit
pain killers, Band-Aids, plasters, anti-septic spray, contraceptives, tampons, decongestant, anti-fungal
- Contact lenses / lens fluid / spare glasses
- Malaria tablets
- Prescription medications

Are there items you can leave behind at the end of your trip?

Papers

- Passport / visas / travel documents
- Pen / notebook / travel diary
- Books / reference books / magazines / games to use during long siesta hours or delays
- Cash in cedis for personal expenses or tips & gratuities must be obtained in Ghana.

Optional

- Neck pillow for long drives
- Duct tape - highly versatile!
- Plastic raincoat or poncho
- Items for bartering at markets or tips for good service
 - Bandanas, hats, anything with a logo
 - T/shirts, old clothes or stationery
 - Mp3 players, cameras & flash drives have high value
- [One Extra Bag](#) of supplies to donate to a school or clinic



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AIRPORT ARRIVAL

- Upon disembarking the airplane, you will be required to show your yellow fever vaccination card and then queue for Immigration. After Immigration, you will collect your luggage and pass through Customs where your bags will probably be inspected. After this, there is another security checkpoint where your bags may again be inspected. Finally you will pass down a long ramp and another checkpoint will verify the luggage you have collected is yours.
- At all these checkpoints and along the way, you may be asked for “something”. Simply tell these people that you have just arrived in Ghana and have no money yet. If you feel the need to move along more quickly, some extra tip can speed the process.
- Your Easy Track guide(s) will be waiting for you outside the airport as you exit the airport lobby at the bottom of the ramp, after you have picked your luggage and passed through the aforementioned checkpoints. They will be easy to see in their bright Kente shirts, holding an Easy Track Ghana placard.
- While you are inside the airport waiting for your luggage, there is a foreign exchange and an ATM machine near the baggage claim carousel. The forex has a decent rate, so it makes sense to change enough to get through a couple days while you are waiting for your luggage. Especially if arriving on a weekend or holiday, or if immediately departing Accra.



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DO'S & DON'TS

- Do spend some time learning about Ghana - you will get a far better reception if you take an interest in the people, respect their culture, learn their social etiquettes and at least a basic greeting in the local language.
- Do show respect for local cultures, traditions and holy places and **always dress modestly.**
- Do carry tissues/toilet paper and hand sanitizer with you every day. Outside of your hotel room you may not find comfortable or sanitary toilet facilities.
- Do use sun screen liberally.
- Do use water sparingly - it is precious in many countries and the local people may not have sufficient clean water.
- Do be prepared for "chancers" — locals, generally young men, who have a sad story that requires you to part with your money.
- Do be careful with your belongings, particularly in crowded areas.
- Do watch out for thieves among other travelers – they can be worse than the locals!
- Do support the local economy by buying local fabric, clothing and crafts. Do look out for quality products--there is a lot of junk waiting for the unsuspecting traveler.
- Don't discard litter randomly; dispose of it in a proper place. Waste disposal is a major expense in poorer countries.
- Don't be so worried about crime or mosquitos that you forget to enjoy your trip. Don't fall into a habit of worrying so much that the pleasures of your trip pass you by. Ghana is a very safe country.
- Don't display your wealth. Don't wear expensive jewelry.
- Don't be surprised if things happen less quickly or efficiently as they do at home.
- Do expect that measurement will be in the metric system, so distances are in kilometers, temperature is in Celsius, etc. North Americans should be prepared to be able to do approximate conversions in your head.
- Don't take people's pictures without asking.



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- Don't take photos of military bases, police offices, or airports.
- Don't smoke in public. It is against the law in Ghana.
- Don't be surprised if you encounter police checkpoints or traffic police. These are common throughout Africa and are used to look for stolen or overweight vehicles, robbery suspects and other law enforcement procedures.
- Do carry your passport with you, but in a secure method, protected from pickpockets.
- Do expect a culture shock in very many ways. You may be surprised at:
 - Traffic and road conditions
 - sanitation, poverty and living conditions
 - lack of order
 - availability of water, electricity and fuel
 - different cultural expectations
 - educational settings
 - and many other things taken for granted in a comfortable lifestyle. You may experience many emotions, including guilt, despair, etc. Understand that people do their best with what they have the world over. Accept people for who they are, even if their cultural practices seem antiquated or foreign to you. You don't have to want to live in a place to enjoy being there.
- Do remember - you are your country's representative. You may be one of the few foreigners that someone you interact with has met. You affect how that person thinks about all non-African people.
- Read our Rules for Visitors and Cultural Overview at <https://www.easytrackghana.com/cultural-overview-ghana.php> for important tips on how to best interact with Ghanaians.
- Do ask your guide for anything you need!



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