

Going to Ghana, Africa in November 2020

The following are a lot of the details about our tour to Ghana, Africa next November. Please review the information and decide if this is a tour you would like to join.

Bikes to Bring

You have three options about bringing or using a bike for the tour. Because of the occasional rough roads your bike should be good for gravel roads. Hybrid "gravel bikes" with 32mm or 40mm tires would work. Mountain bikes with 26 x 1.75 tires and street tread would be good also. The roads are not any worse than our Route 66 Tours where we use 32mm tires but you might want wider tires for the added comfort.

Option #1

Bring your own good bike and take it home. Store your bike case at the start. Pay \$150.00 each way to take your bike on the airplane.

Option #2

Bring a used bike to donate after the tour. There are several cycling projects and riders we support in Ghana who can use better bikes. Pay \$150.00 to take your bike to Ghana. PAC Tour has several nice used bikes we will ship to you before the tour. You can take one of these bikes to Ghana and leave it there.

Option #3

Buy a used bike from the market bike shops in Ghana and donate it after the tour. They have refurbished bikes for about \$150 to \$200. Sometimes they have name brand such as Trek or Specialized bikes. The problem is we would need to go bike shopping the day before the bike tour starts and we are not 100% sure of what is available.

Airline Flights

Flights to the capital city Accra are available as direct flights from New York. I have made this trip five times and it is better to take the most direct flight with as few of layovers as possible. It is also possible to take flights from the United States to make one connection in London, Amsterdam or Paris before continuing to Accra, Ghana.. The problem with multiple connections is that if one flight is delayed there will be problems making your next flight and

getting your bike and luggage on the next plane. Allowing extra time between multiple connections makes a very long trip to Ghana.

For example Delta Flight #156 departs New York at 11:40 PM (4:40 AM Ghana time) and arrives in Accra at 2:40 PM in the afternoon (Ghana time). This is a 10 hour flight and better than waiting at the airport for connections. My last flight to Ghana from Chicago had connections through New York and Paris before going to Ghana. I had about 17 hours of flying time and 10 hours of airport waiting time. Total travel time was 27 hours between airports and even longer if I count the travel time to the Chicago airport and waiting to get on my first flight. Next time I am going to take the most direct flight possible even if it cost \$200 more.

Currently round trip Delta flights from Los Angeles or Chicago to New York and then to Ghana and back cost about \$1,222.00. Not all flight options are available every day from New York so you might consider connections from American Airlines, Air France or British Airways. Flight times can change so we suggest buying tickets about 90 days in advance.

Getting a Visa for Ghana

You are required to get a Visa to enter Ghana. The Visa is good for 90 days from the date issued so you cannot buy it 4 months before the tour. Of course you need a current passport. You can buy a Visa from the Ghana Embassy in Washington DC for \$60 two months in advance after you have your round trip airline ticket to prove you are returning home. You can get an expedited Visa for \$100 within 3 weeks of departure. You need to send in your passport to the Washington DC Embassy along with forms that list your purpose for traveling and some places where you will be staying. (We will send you a hotel list). If you don't want to mess around sending in your passport and filling out paperwork you can buy a Visa at the Ghana Airport for \$150 cash when you arrive in Ghana. I will be sending you many more updates about arriving at customs in Accra and getting your luggage.

Yellow Fever Vaccination

Ever since the Ebola disease scare five years ago in western Africa the country of Ghana has been checking for Yellow Fever even though Yellow Fever is not Ebola. You will need a proof of Yellow Fever card from your doctor and carry it with your passport when you arrive in Ghana. The customs agent will also take your temperature with a digital scanner to make sure your temperature is not over 100 degrees.

Meals and Snacks

During the tour a buffet breakfast is included each morning at the hotel. Choices are usually omelettes, oatmeal, toast and jam, coffee, tea or Milo hot chocolate drink. We will bring some extra items such as granola cereal, canned milk, instant coffee and hot water maker. Many riders like to bring their own supply of instant Quaker oatmeal packets to mix with hot water each morning. It is also handy to bring your own coffee cup, cereal bowl and spoon.

Snack stops will be provided at our support van every 25 KM. We will have an assortment of cookies, potato chips and snacks that hold up well in the heat. We will also have ice water, electrolyte powder and some bottled drinks. There will be many roadside vendors listed on your route card selling snacks every 10 KM. You should carry some pocket change to buy something if you have any cravings.

Lunch is on your own at roadside restaurants. We sometimes take preorders and then regroup at a specific restaurant. Sometime lunch will be at our final hotel if we arrive before 2:00 PM. Food is relatively cheap and generous plates of rice, chicken and fish are available for under \$8. The local food tends to be spicy for Americans so a little stew over the top of a plate of rice is filling, fast, cheap and tasty.

Dinners will usually be at the hotel restaurant. A buffet dinner at the start and end of the tour is included. Other dinners will be on your own and ordered off the menu. Sometime we take preorders at 6:00 PM so our meals are ready at 7:00 PM. Meals are cheap and usually under \$10. You might spend more including beer and drinks.

Cultural Side Trips

In addition to our cycling we will have the opportunity to experience many interesting cultural and historic places in Ghana. When we arrive in Accra we will visit several museums and cultural centers that will give you some background about the history of Ghana. The jungle walk to Wli (Willie) Falls and wading in the pools is a nice way to spend a hot afternoon. The climb up Afadjato Mountain is a strenuous 3 hour round trip but the views from the top are worth it. Our final two days we will visit the forts and castles along Cape Coast which were notorious for promoting the slave trade in the 1600 and 1700s. We end the tour with a jungle walk on the canopy walk in the

National Park. All these experiences will make the tour more than a bike ride.

Local Riders

During the tour we will be joined by several full time local cyclists. These riders have been on past tours with us and will help manage the tour. We will also meet several local riders from bike clubs from cities along the route who will ride with us for part of the day. These riders all speak English and it is a good way for you to learn more about the local area. It is also a big deal for them to ride with you so they are really looking forward to this tour.

In future updates I will introduce you to many of the riders who will travel with us. We have had similar experiences with local riders traveling with us on our tours across Peru. After the tour our riders said meeting the locals was one of the best parts of the trip. I expect you will have similar experiences meeting Deborah, Toka and Frank.

What is included:

Hotels

Breakfasts

Snack stops

Support van gear shuttle

Mechanical support

Shuttles to and from the Accra Airport

Commemorative Jersey, T-shirt, hat

Route sheets and maps

Monthly Update mailings

Entry fees to forts, museums and side tours

What is Not Included

Airfare to Ghana from the United States

Extra airline fees for bikes and luggage

Visa and passport fees

Yellow Fever or other medical needs

Lunches

Dinners

Beer, Wine or additional drinks

Costs and Payment Schedule

8 riders = \$2,495

12 riders = \$2,195

15 riders = \$1,995

Final costs will be determined on August 1st depending on how many riders are signed up. Final payments are due at that time.

Riders can bring their remaining \$1,000 in cash to Ghana for tour fees. We need to pay cash for most of the hotels so it is better if we spread the cash around between members of our group.