



Facts and Statistics

Location: Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo

Capital: Accra

Climate: tropical along coast, becoming cooler inland at higher elevations; tropical in Amazonian jungle lowlands

Population: 23,382,848 (July 2008 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Akan 45.3%, Mole-Dagbon 15.2%, Ewe 11.7%, Ga-Dangme 7.3%, Guan 4%, Gurma 3.6%, Grusi 2.6%, Mande-Busanga 1%, other tribes 1.4%, other 7.8% (2000 census)

Religions: Christian 68.8% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 24.1%, Protestant 18.6%, Catholic 15.1%, other 11%), Muslim 15.9%, traditional 8.5%, other 0.7%, none 6.1% (2000 census)

Government: constitutional democracy

Language in Ghana

Different sources give different figures for the number of languages of Ghana. This is because of different classifications of varieties as either languages or dialects.

As with many ex-colonies in Africa, the official language of Ghana is the colonial language, English. Nine languages have the status of government-sponsored languages: Akan, Dagaare/Wale, Dagbane, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem, Nzema. However, two dialects of Akan, Twi and Fante, although not government-sponsored, are also widely-spoken in Ghana.

Hausa is widely used as a lingua franca by Muslims in Ghana.

Society and Culture

The People

There are over 100 ethnic groups living in Ghana. The largest are Akan, Moshi-Dagbani, Ewe, and Ga. The Ashanti tribe of the Akan are the largest tribe and one of the few societies in West Africa where lineage is traced through the mother and maternal ancestors. Once famous for the luxury and wealth of their rulers, they are now more well known for their craftwork such as hand-carved stools, fertility dolls, and 'kente' cloth. Kente cloth is made cotton and is woven in bright, narrow strips with complex patterns.

The Family

Family is a very strong bond in Ghana and is the primary source of identity, loyalty and responsibility. Family obligations take precedence over pretty much everything else in life. Individuals achieve recognition and social standing through their extended family.

An interesting cultural variation among the Akan, or Ashanti and Fanti people, is that affiliation within the clan is through women. Mothers have a higher status as in their point of view people get their blood from mothers.

It is important for Ghanaians to maintain dignity, honour, and a good reputation. The entire family shares any loss of honour, which makes the culture a collective one. In order to protect this sense of face there is a need to maintain a sense of harmony; people will act with decorum at all times to ensure they do not cause anyone embarrassment.

Hierarchy

Ghanaian society is hierarchical. People are respected because of their age, experience, wealth and/or position. Older people are viewed as wise and are granted respect. In a group one can always see preferential treatment for the eldest member present. With respect comes responsibility and people expect the most senior person to make decisions that are in the best interest of the group.



Meeting Etiquette

- Traditional or native greetings vary among the various ethnic groups.
- With foreigners the most common greeting is the handshake with a smile.
- When shaking hands between themselves Ghanaians will hold the right hand in the normal manner but will then twist and click each other's middle finger.
- Unless you are experienced it is best to stick to a normal handshake!
- Christians will generally shake hands between the sexes; practising Muslims often will not shake hands with people of the opposite sex.
- Address Ghanaians by their academic, professional, or honorific title and their surname.
- As a sign of respect, males over the age of 30 may be addressed as "pah-pah" while women of the same age may be called "mah-mee". People over the age of 50 may be referred to as "nah-nah".

Gift Giving Etiquette

- **Gifts need not be expensive; the thought is more important than the value.**
- **If invited to dinner at a Ghanaian's home, you are not expected to bring a gift.**
- **However, a gift for the children is always a nice touch as it shows a concern for family.**
- **Gifts should be given using the right hand only or both hands. Never use the left hand.**
- **Gifts should be wrapped, although there are no cultural taboos concerning paper colour.**
- **Gifts are not always opened when received.**

Dining Etiquette

- Ghanaians enjoy entertaining in their homes and you should accept any invitation as a sign of friendship.
- Dress well; Ghanaians place a lot of emphasis on how people dress. You may need to remove your shoes.
- Greet elders or heads of family first.
- Ghanaians table manners are relatively formal.
- Wait to be told where to sit.
- A washing basin will be brought out before the meal is served; use it to wash your hands.
- Food is generally served from a communal bowl.
- Do not begin eating until the eldest male does.
- Eat from the section of the bowl that is in front of you. Never reach across the bowl to get something from the other side.
- If you do not want to eat with your hands then ask for utensils.
- If you use your hands then scoop the food with the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand. Do not use your left hand.

Meeting and Greeting

- **Handshakes are the most common means of greeting.**
- **It's generally common to wait for a woman to extend her hand first.**
- **Take time to enquire about people's health, family and jobs. To rush a greeting is extremely rude.**
- **Maintain eye contact during the greeting.**
- **Titles are important. Use the honorific title plus any academic or professional title and the surname.**
- **Wait until invited before moving to a first-name basis. The younger generation will tend to do so rapidly.**

- **Business cards are exchanged without formal ritual.**
- **Present and receive business cards with two hands or the right hand, never with the left.**

Communication Style

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. Ghanaians always want to protect their own and others' face as well as maintain harmonious relationships.

As a result they tend to use proverbs, wise sayings, analogies readily. This allows ideas or messages to be conveyed in a manner that does not seem so blatant. In fact people who are viewed as wise frequently speak in proverbs.

Silence is a common means of communication. If someone is uncomfortable with a question or do not think the asker will appreciate response, they will say nothing rather than make the other person uncomfortable.

Business Meetings

Initial meetings are really all about finding out about one another and if a personality fit allows for future, more business specific meetings. One should therefore expect to spend quite a good deal of time in relationship and rapport building. Do not be surprised if business is not really discussed much at all.

First meetings may also tend to be a little more stiff and formal although once a rapport has been built this will soon dissipate. It is important to maintain a polite and somewhat reserved demeanour.

Hierarchy is respected so the most senior person is greeted first. He/she may be the spokesperson for the group or may deputise key stakeholders to speak.

Ghanaians have a keen sense of humour and enjoy telling jokes. However until you have understood their sense of humour it is best to refrain from telling jokes yourself. If a Ghanaian teases you take it good-naturedly. For the most part, this shows they are becoming more relaxed with you.

Links and Resources about Ghana

* **Currency** - the currency of Ghana is the Cedi (GHC). Use the [free currency converter](#) to compare to USD, GBP or Euro.

* **Weather** - visit Yahoo!'s up to date [Weather for Ghana](#).

* **Dialling Code** - the international dialling code is +233.

* **Time** - Ghana is the same as GMT.

* **Management** - for information about being a manager in Ghana visit the free [Management in Ghana](#) guide.



Ghana

Complete Study





Building the Culturally Competent Organization™

©2008 TRAINING MANAGEMENT CORPORATION. All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by: **TRAINING MANAGEMENT CORPORATION** 12 Roszel Road, Suite B-102 Princeton, New Jersey 08540-6011 USA
Tel: +1-609-514-3152 Fax: +1 609-951-0395
Web: <http://www.tmc corp.com> Email: info@tmc corp.com

Get To Know...

Introduction

Basic Facts Ghana

If an award were given for the country with the friendliest people in West Africa, Ghana would be a strong contender. Spend a few hours in the breezy capital at Accra, and you'll swear the wind and waves off the Gulf of Guinea have infused the land and people alike with equatorial

warmth.

Government President: John Atta Mills, Head of state and government **Area** 238540 sq km **People**

Akan (44%), Mole-Dagbane (16%), Ewé (13%), Ga (8%), Guan, Gurma, Gonja, Dagomba

Population 21 000 000 **Languages** English (official) Ewe (other) Ga (other) Twi (other) **Religion**

Christian (70%), Muslim (15%), traditional African religions (15%)

Currency Ghana Cedi (GHC) **Daylight Savings Start** not in use **Daylight Savings End** not in use

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

Weather

The refreshing Gulf of Guinea breezes keep the coast a bit cooler than in the north with year-round high 20°C (low 70°F) temperatures the norm. Unless the slightly wetter months of May and June deter you, any time of the year is a good time to visit. In Northern Ghana, May to October sees the most rainfall while the other months have plenty of sun and high 30°C (high 90°F) days to cook under.

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

Travel

Before You Go

There really is no 'best' time to visit Ghana, as the temperature is always Africa-hot and if rainfall doesn't soak you, then the humid air will. If you prefer your soaking tropical in nature, stick close to the beaches. Whatever the season, the weather gets more arid the farther inland you go. Village-specific festivals and events occur throughout the year.

The tourist high season is from June to August, which coincides with the summer vacation in the US. The country sees few tourists from September to December.

Visas

All visitors are required to have a visa, except for citizens of countries belonging to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Weights & Measures: Metric **Electricity** 220V/240V, 50Hz



British-style plug with two flat blades and one flat grounding blade



South African/Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular grounding pin

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

Health

Cholera

Due to heavy flooding in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions, there was an outbreak of cholera with 1500 cases reported in late 1999.

Malaria

If you are travelling in endemic areas it is extremely important to avoid mosquito bites and to take tablets to prevent this disease. Symptoms range from fever, chills and sweating, headache, diarrhoea and abdominal pains to a vague feeling of ill-health. Seek medical help immediately if malaria is suspected. Without treatment malaria can rapidly become more serious and can be fatal. If medical care is not available, malaria tablets can be used for treatment. You should seek medical advice, before you travel, on the right medication and dosage for you. If you do contract malaria, be sure to be re-tested for malaria once you return home as you can harbour malaria parasites in your body even if you are symptom free. Travellers are advised to prevent mosquito bites at all times. The main messages are: wear light-coloured clothing; wear long trousers and long-sleeved shirts; use mosquito repellents containing the compound DEET on exposed areas (prolonged overuse of DEET may be harmful, especially to children, but its use is considered preferable to being bitten by disease-transmitting mosquitoes); avoid perfumes and aftershave; use a mosquito net impregnated

with mosquito repellent (permethrin) - it may be worth taking your own, and impregnating clothes with permethrin effectively deters mosquitoes and other insects.

Yellow fever

You'll need to present a yellow fever certificate when entering the country.

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

TransportGetting There

Ghana International Airlines took over from the now defunct Ghana Airways in late 2005 and flies between Accra and London. The airport is also served by several other African carriers and major Western airlines. The 35.00 departure tax is included in the ticket price.

Ships connect Tema, 25km (16mi) east of Accra, with ports in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and South Africa. By land, there are buses, taxis, tro-tros (minibuses) and pickup trucks that run between Ghana and Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo. Border formalities for travellers with visas are usually minimal; greasing a palm or two may speed things up. Watch your pockets at crowded border posts.

Getting Around

The oh-so-adventurous (read: unreliable and uncomfortable!) *Yapei Queen* makes 24-hour passenger runs across Lake Volta from Akosombo, 104km (65mi) northeast of Accra at the base of Lake Volta, to Yeji, more than 200km (125mi) away on the lake's northwestern shore. The steamer stops at many villages on the way. From Yeji, ferries continue to Buipe, 100km (62mi) farther northwest, and Makongo, 15km (10mi) east; you can arrange ground transport to Tamale from either destination.

Ghana's road network is in decent shape, though there are some badly potholed stretches between Kumasi and Tamale, and on the coastal road between Accra and Aflaoand. You're bound to run into an occasional police checkpoint, though they're usually just angling for a 'dash' (the ubiquitous kickback). Car rental is expensive but available in Accra. Otherwise, most Ghanaians get around in taxis, tro-tros (minibuses) and mammy wagons (generally some sort of converted pickup truck). Traffic accidents are common and care should be taken if driving.

The Greyhound buses connect most major towns and some smaller ones, but their service isn't fantastic and you may find some routes better serviced by tro-tros and share taxis. The comfortable but slow railway service connecting Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi in a single-track

triangle is once again operating but, again, you may find road transport a less frustrating alternative.

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

Events

The 42 day cycle of the Ashanti religious calendar culminates in Kumasi - the 'City of the Golden Stool' - with **Akwasidee**, a public ceremony at the palace involving the main chiefs and priests. The **Aboakyer**, or Deer Hunt Festival, is held in May in Winnebah. Elmina's **Bakatue Festival**, celebrating the beginning of the fishing season, is held the first Tuesday of July, with local chiefs parading through town in full regalia, followed by singers, dancers and stilt walkers. On the first Saturday in September, a raucous carnival called the **Fetu Festival** takes place in Cape Coast, featuring an all-day parade of local chiefs. The **Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival** (Panafest) - a spectacle-heavy cross-cultural dramafest - is held across Ghana in December of even-numbered years. National holidays include **Independence Day** on 6 March, **Republic Day** on 1 July and **Revolution Day** on 31 December.

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

HistoryPre-20th Century History

Evidence of settlements along the Ghanaian coast dates back some 40,000 years, but it wasn't until the late 15th century, with the arrival of the Portuguese, that a written history of the area came into being. The Portuguese came in search of gold, which they found in abundance adorning the powerful Ashanti kings of the Akan people. The Portuguese soon began construction of several forts along what came to be known as the Gold Coast, where their plundered gold was shipped back to Europe as ingots. The real money, however, turned out to be in the slave trade, and the Portuguese traders' fortunes attracted the Dutch, British and Danes in the late 16th century. During the next 250 years, all four nations competed fiercely to control the trade, building forts and capturing those of rivals. The average yearly 'take' in slaves was 10,000, and by the 19th century, when the slave trade was outlawed, there were 76 forts dotting the coast, an average of one every 6km (4mi).

After the demise of slavery, the British took over the forts to use as customs posts, signing treaties with many of the local chiefs. The Ashanti profited handsomely from the arrangements, and their capital, Kumasi, began to take on all the trappings of a European city. The British grew increasingly uneasy with the tribe's wealth and influence, and when in 1873 the Ashanti refused to give up Kumasi, the British sacked the city and declared the Gold Coast a crown colony. Violent Ashanti resistance continued until 1900, when the tribe attacked the British fort at

Kumasi, losing the battle but almost entirely destroying the city in the process.

Modern History

The British set out to make the Gold Coast a showcase African nation, allowing few Europeans to settle or even be employed there. Cocoa exports became the backbone of the economy, followed by gold, timber, manganese, bauxite and diamonds. By WWI, the Gold Coast was the most prosperous colony in Africa, with the best schools and civil service, a cadre of enlightened lawyers and a thriving press. Still, anti-British sentiments ran deep.

In the late 1920s, a number of political parties dedicated to regaining African independence began to emerge. In 1947, Kwame Nkrumah, the American-educated secretary general of the country's leading party, broke away from the group to form the Convention People's Party (CPP), aimed at the common person and pushing the slogan 'Self Government Now'. The CPP was an overnight sensation, and in 1949 Nkrumah brought the country to a halt by calling a national strike. The British responded by throwing him in prison, only to release him two years later after his party had won three general elections in his absence.

Independence finally came in 1957, making Ghana - the name chosen by Nkrumah after the first great empire in West Africa - the first black African nation to win freedom from its colonisers. For Ghana, it was the beginning of almost 25 years of economic decline. Nkrumah borrowed heavily to finance the country. His most grandiose project, the Akosombo Dam on the Volta River, didn't bring the electrification and irrigation programs it promised for more than a decade. By 1966, Ghana was 1000000000.00 in debt. Nkrumah's excesses and the rampant corruption among his officials led to a popular army coup that same year.

Between 1966 and 1981, Ghana suffered through six corrupt and incompetent governments, five of them military and each fostering resentment among Ghanaians. In May 1979, in the midst of serious food shortages, a group of young military officers led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings staged another coup and began a series of 'house cleaning' operations that resulted in the sentencing and execution of several senior officers and former heads of state. Three months later, Rawlings' Armed Forces Revolutionary Council passed the reins to a civilian government following general elections, only to forcibly retake control two years later. Rawlings has been the head of state ever since. Military rule was formally brought to an end with the inauguration of the Fourth Republic on 9 January 1993, which was preceded by the adoption of a new constitution allowing political parties the freedom to organise.

Recent History

Popularly re-elected in 1996, President Rawlings oversaw Ghana's still-shaky economy move increasingly toward stabilisation and the country itself solidify its commitment to democracy. In 2000, having reached the end of his two term limit, Rawlings stepped down as NDC leader. His deputy, John Atta Mills, was defeated at the polls by John Kufuor, leader of the New Patriotic

Party (NPP). Kufuor, a mild-mannered, Oxford-educated lawyer known as the 'Gentle Giant', implemented a more liberal approach to Rawlings' state-centered policies, accepting a debt-relief scheme designed by the IMF. The subsequent removal of fuel subsidies sent petrol prices rocketing by 60%.

In 2002 the president inaugurated a South Africa-style truth and reconciliation commission to look into human rights abuses committed mainly under Rawlings' military rule. It is alleged that some 300 people 'disappeared' under that regime.

Kufuor and NDC won again in 2004; observers say that the 2008 election will be the true test of the country's political maturity. Of particular controversy is a recent large scale mining contract signed with industry giant Newmont - past and current projects have failed to significantly improve the lot of the average Ghanaian, particularly in the mining towns and areas.

© 2010 Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Disclaimer: We and our content providers ('we') have tried to make the information on this website as accurate as possible, but it is provided 'as is' and we accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience resulting from this information. You should verify critical information (like visas, health and safety) before you travel.

Links

Country Info

[The CIA World Factbook 2008-Ghana](#)

[WIPO Intellectual Property Protection Information - Ghana](#)

[Embassy Listings for Ghana](#)

[Map of Ghana & Cities](#)

[Major Companies in Ghana](#)

[Ghana-Public Holidays](#)

Travel Info

[Columbus World Travel Guide-Ghana](#)

[Lonely Planet World Guide-Ghana](#)

[Ghana-Culture & Events](#)

Newspapers

[Ghanaian Chronicle](#)

[Ghana Review](#)

Health & Security Info

[Ghana-Health & Security Information](#)