

2014 GHANA TRIP: TIPS & INFO

Ghana

Ghanaians can be disarmingly friendly and open hearted. I feel safe and alive there. There are bright colors everywhere and people carrying large things on their heads: bowls of food, furniture, water. Accra, the capitol, is a modern city with lots of western accoutrements, such as internet cafes and sushi restaurants.

Once you leave Accra, things slow down a little bit. Beaches become tranquil, pleasant places. You see more palm trees, at least on the coast. Foreigners will hear "obruni!" called to them frequently. This means "from beyond the horizon" and will be your new name. I wouldn't be surprised if you all came home with African "day names" as well, based on what day of the week you are born on. Find out, so that when you get there you will be prepared for this inevitable question. I am Awura Abena Dufie, (Ewr-ah-ben-ah Doo-fee-ay) which directly translates to Lady-Tuesday-Born-of-the-Great-House. Don't ask.

The Weather

It's hot. Down in the south the weather is more humid. We will be there during the rainy season, which helps cool things down. There are mosquitoes there in the evening, and malaria does exist there.

Health Factors

If your family is insured by Kaiser Permanente, call the Travel Clinic (619) 528-3184 and make an appointment for your shots. They have a voice mail at which you will leave the information about the country where you are going, and the dates of travel. They will call you back, with an appointment date to get your shots and present you with all the information and medication needed to travel. You will need a yellow fever vaccination to get into the country.

It is mandatory (for our group) that you are taking some kind of malaria prophylaxis such as Larium (Methoquine), Malarone, or Doxycycline. You should discuss this when you go to the doctor to get whatever inoculations you might need. For the WHO (World Health Organization) card confirming your yellow fever inoculation, which you need in addition to your passport with visa, you must get a yellow fever shot.

Passport Requirement

There is a detailed document attached. The information has been gathered from the US Department of State website:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1124.html

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A passport and a visa are required, as is evidence of a yellow fever vaccination. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of Ghana, 3512 International Drive NW, Washington, DC 20008; telephone (202) 686-4520. Consular services are also available at the Ghana Permanent Mission to the United Nations at 19 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017, telephone (212) 832-1300; and the Honorary Consulate of Ghana, 3434 Locke Lane, Houston, TX, telephone (713) 960-8833. Overseas, inquiries should be made at the nearest Ghanaian embassy or consulate.

Cultural Protocol

Small Gifts: this is a gift giving culture, and if you make friends, you'll be happy that you brought along a small arsenal of gifts that you think people might appreciate. Ideas include inexpensive electronic things (led flashlight, digital watch, battery charger (with rechargeable batteries), pen drives (some people are quite computer savvy there). If anyone has an old laptop that they want to donate, I KNOW that it would be greatly appreciated, and you would get to decide out whom to give it to. I am available for advice of course. Also very popular are T-shirts, hats (Bob Marley, President Obama (especially him!), and 50-cent are especially beloved.) Scarves, necklaces, purses from Target are appreciated by ladies. Just bring along a few things and you'll be glad you did! CD walkmen are a really nice gift. I get the \$20 ones from Fry's as super nice presents for my loved ones.

What to wear/bring

Lightweight, cotton clothing. No short shorts, below the knee skirts are good. Light pants, Capri pants, long (past the knee!) shorts and skirts are acceptable. You can wear tank tops but not skimpy, strappy ones.

I feel that you should be representing your country in a way that is befitting what passes as respectable. I wear jeans there, but I got used to the heat after living there so long. Khaki pants and skirts are good. You may want to bring lightweight clothing will dry quickly. Swimsuit: boys, board shorts, girls: one piece

I feel that having a headlight is indispensable. It's an LED flashlight that straps onto your head. Get one online or at REI and be glad you did.

While at REI, you should get a passport/money belt to go under your pants for your valuables. While Ghana is a safe place, you don't want to risk theft, which is a huge pain in the @\$\$\$. You could bring one to use there, and give as an extra special gift for someone.

Bring a couple of items that you don't mind getting dirty in. Bring a sunhat and lots of sunscreen. My favorite shoes to wear there are Chakos, they strap on and can get sweaty and dirty but you can wash them off. Sunglasses are a must as well. If you bring

climbing shoes, you can participate in our bouldering outings, which are really fun! Also bring comfortable clothes for yoga if that's something you'd like to do.

Long pants and long sleeves for the evening, to keep mosquitoes off. Mosquito repellent. You could get DEET, or I prefer a more natural type.

Sunblock: bring a bunch, you'll need it. Get sweat proof, 30SPF.

I hope that you'll have some African clothes tailor made while you are there. There are lots of stalls selling amazing African tie-dye, batik and other printed fabrics. You can buy whatever you want, and then pay a seamstress or tailor to make you custom clothing. You can design whatever you want, provided that the tailor is talented. Bring money for that. Fabric is between \$2 and \$10/yard, and the tailor might cost between \$5-\$15/item to sew.

Sickness/injury

If you are a good traveler and take your malaria medicine, and are judicious of what you eat, you should be fine in the health department. There is a big hospital in Accra if anything should happen. I recommend you get travel health insurance if your insurance doesn't cover you when you are abroad.

Food

Ghanaian food is great, especially if you like fish and spicy food. Most Ghanaian food consists of some kind of starch, usually a ball of rice, or mixed corn and cassava or just corn along with a soup. There are several types of soup there, the most popular being groundnut soup (peanut soup) and palm nut soup. There are rice dishes and cooked greens. Tropical fruit is everywhere, including mangoes, papayas, pineapples, coconuts, bananas. I eat a lot of fruit there. I will be a good cuisine guide, and steer you in the right direction so that you get the best of Ghanaian eats while during your visit. There are beans and meat and fish and chicken, but the meat there is not factory produced and is different from the meat here. It is more "real" somehow.

I don't care for fish, and am a vegetarian. I will be arranging for myself, Ryan and whoever else wants to join me to have home-cooked vegetarian food. We can also arrange for other types of food, and sometimes even western food. We will have home cooked food every day.

Bring extra money for food that you want to eat that is not included in this package. We will be making sure that you get breakfast, lunch and dinner. Bring chocolate if you must be warned that it WILL melt.

PACKING LIST

- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- bug spray (deet or citronella based, both seem to work fine and one isn't poisonous!)
- hat (for sun exposure)
- toiletries
 - shampoo/conditioner/comb/hair accessories
 - deodorant
 - girly products
 - unscented lotion (mosquitoes are attracted to fragrance)
 - don't bother with make up, it melts off.
- lightweight cotton clothes
 - no short shorts or skirts: to the knees!
 - avoid red and black clothing (funeral dress in Ghana)
 - shorts/Capri pants
 - pants (jeans or khakis: jeans can be kind of sweaty but a lot of people wear them)
 - t-shirts/conservative tank tops
 - something a little nicer like a sundress or skirt in case we need to look sharp for some reason. (church, ceremony, etc)
 - Unmentionables: cotton!
 - Lounging clothes for relaxing in: people come by to visit, so nothing revealing!
 - 2-3 pairs lightweight socks
 - long sleeved shirt
 - light jacket: rain jacket would be ideal as it will be rainy season
 - conservative one piece swimsuit (trunks for boys)
 - 3-4 bandanas. These are infinitely useful! Seriously
 - tennis shoes
 - yoga mat (optional)
 - climbing shoes (optional)
- sturdy sandals like Tevas or Chakos. Leather sandals don't do so well here.
- you should buy plastic flip flops when you get here, so you can blend in! ☺
- small first aid kit
 - any meds you need
 - upset stomach/pain killers
 - band aids etc.
- LED headlamp
- computer/ipod/camera etc
- rechargeable batteries & battery charger
- You don't need to bring a towel (don't waste your baggage space). We'll use African fabric. It will be waiting for you when you arrive. Towels get stinky fast there.
- They sell really cool hats in Bolga so you can get one there.
- Snacks
 - Granola bars
 - Fruit rollups

- Vitamins
- Don't bother bringing chocolate, it will melt.
- passport holder that goes under your pants or shirt

TRAVEL CLINICS...you must have a yellow fever vaccination to get into Ghana along with your visa and current passport.

Traveler's Health & Vaccination Clinic

4136 Bachman Place, San Diego, CA 92103-2028

(619) 298-7577

visit \$72
YF \$119
tdp \$63
polio \$57
hep A \$114

**recommended by clinic but not required.*

Passport Health USA

<http://www.passporthealthusa.com/san-diego/>

San Diego

2525 Camino Del Rio South

Suite 325

San Diego, CA 92108

Phone: 619-293-3963

Fax: 619-293-3936

visit \$50
YF \$125
tdp \$75
polio \$70
hep A \$85

TRAVEL INSURANCE

You should have insurance to cover a disaster, evacuation or major health issue. Minor health problems will be dealt with locally. Health Care professionals in Ghana are just that: professional (and competent) and the services are very affordable.

There are various different companies. Perhaps we all agree on one policy. I recommend AAA.

Ghana 2014: Travel & Medical Authorization

I (we) _____ authorize guardianship of my (our) son/daughter _____ to Kirstin Green, Ryan Allmandinger, and Andrea Fiore during the determined travel dates on a trip to Ghana, West Africa. I (we) also give Kirstin Green, Ryan Allmandinger, and Andrea Fiore permission to authorize medical treatment of my (our) son/daughter in the case of illness or accident.

parent signature(s)

parent name(s) printed

date

Medical Information

Health Insurance company and policy number: _____

Any allergies to medicine? _____

Any special medical needs? _____

Agreement and Release

Reminder on alcohol, supervision and student responsibilities: Alcoholic beverages are an available and rather integral element of Ghanaian culture, and unlike many ideas surrounding alcohol in the U.S., it is not viewed as taboo. It is available and served most everywhere – in the cafés, drinking spots and other eateries, and it is sometimes offered by host families with meals. Cultural libations are sometimes taken at the start of a meal or when meeting a chief or other important figure.

Your son/daughter will often have free time in the afternoons and evenings if no excursions or activities are planned for our group, during which time, he/she may not be with the trip organizers. In these instances and also during those occasions when we are all together as a group, it will always be the responsibility of your son/daughter to make responsible decisions regarding alcohol use and personal behavior. It is not the responsibility of the trip organizers (Kirstin Green, Ryan Allmandinger and Andrea Fiore) to police or control your son's/daughter's individual behavior or decision-making.

I (we) _____ have read, understand and agree with the above-written reminder on alcohol, supervision and student responsibilities. I (we) understand that my son/daughter will not always be supervised and I (we) acknowledge and agree that it is the responsibility of my (our) son/daughter to exercise caution and common sense and to make appropriate decisions at all times, including those decisions concerning alcohol. I (We) additionally understand that there are inherent risks with any travel, including but not limited to bodily injury, sickness, kidnapping, and even loss of life. I (we) agree to not hold Kirstin Green, Ryan Allmandinger or Andrea Fiore liable for anything that may happen to my (our) son or daughter while on this trip.

parent signature(s)

parent name(s) printed

date

Ghana 2014: Student Contract

I _____, understand that the primary goals of this trip are to learn about the people, history and culture of Ghana, while contributing a philanthropic hand to the community in which I will be staying. I realize that the conditions of total immersion will be necessary to achieve these goals. I, therefore, make the promise to Kirstin, Ryan and to all of the other student travelers in the group that: 1) I will learn and I will teach; 2) I will participate in the group effort as well as work on my own project; 3) I will follow the rules that my parent(s) has (have) set for me; 4) I will respect and honor the guidelines and requests of the trip organizers; 5) I will be willing to try new foods and see new things, 6) I will exercise caution and common sense and will make appropriate decisions at all times, including decisions concerning alcohol; and **7) I will make a sincere effort to maintain a positive, adventurous attitude for the duration of this trip.**

student signature

date