

GHANA

THE COMPLETE COUNTRY GUIDE

History • Culture • Visas & Entry • Relocation • Cost of Living • Safety • Places to Go



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Africa is one continent. Moving across it should be easier.

— Ria's Colony

01 · About Ria's Colony

Ria's Colony is a trade and tourism company that helps people understand other African countries, travel between them, and do business across their markets — because right now, all three are often harder than they should be.

There are businesses that could be selling into markets they've never considered. Travellers who could be visiting places they know almost nothing about. Destinations and hospitality businesses that could be reaching people who would genuinely value what they have to offer. The opportunities are there — finding the right information, people and way in is often the harder part. Ria's Colony works across those gaps, using media, travel information, learning, research, business development and connections to make it easier for people and organisations to move across African countries with better understanding.

What We Commit To

- **Reflect (Style Mirror).** We tell original stories that help people understand Africa's countries, cultures, economies and the issues that matter there — this guide is part of that work.
- **Explore (Aerial View).** We provide travel information, destination stories and selected experiences that help people know what to expect before they go, and find useful local support when they arrive.
- **Connect (Aerial Connect).** We help businesses enter and expand across African markets, connecting them with the customers, partners and local knowledge they need before they invest heavily.
- **Equip (Style Vault).** We create practical courses and resources that help people build useful skills and participate more confidently in opportunities across Africa.

What We Are Not

- We are not a general travel agency — we don't book flights or hotels. We help you understand a place well enough to act on it with confidence.
- We are not only a media company, and not only a business consultancy — our work spans trade, tourism, media, learning and cross-border connections.
- We are not here to tell Africa's story from the outside. We work with the people, communities and organisations shaping its future every day.

Source: [Ria's Colony — About](#)

02 • How To Use This Guide

This guide was built to be read start to finish, or dipped into section by section — whichever way you need it. If you are planning a trip, jump to Sections 7, 11, 12 and 13. If you are exploring a move, start with Sections 9 and 10. If you simply want to understand Ghana properly before you land — read it all.

A note on facts, fees and figures: every visa fee, cost-of-living figure, and government detail in this guide changes over time — sometimes quickly. We've sourced everything to the most current, most credible information available at the time of writing (September 2026) and linked every source so you can verify it yourself and check for the latest update before you rely on it for a trip, an application or a move. Where figures conflict across sources — which happens often with Ghana's newly digitised e-Visa system — we've shown the range and told you so, rather than picking one number and presenting it as certain.

Make zero assumptions. Verify everything. That is the whole point of this guide.

03 • Ghana At A Glance

Official name	Republic of Ghana
Capital	Accra
Independence	6 March 1957 — the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from European colonial rule
Government	Unitary presidential republic, Fourth Republic (since 1992/93)
Head of State & Government	President John Dramani Mahama (in office since 7 January 2025)
Legislature	Unicameral Parliament, 276 seats, Accra
Population	Roughly 34 million (2021 census base, growing)
Official language	English
Widely spoken languages	Twi (Akan), Ga, Ewe, Dagbani, Hausa and others
Major religions	Christian 71.3%, Muslim 19.9%, Traditional 3.2% (2021 census)
Currency	Ghanaian Cedi (GH¢ / GHS)
Regional bloc	ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)
Main international airport	Kotoka International Airport (ACC), Accra
Time zone	GMT (UTC+0), no daylight saving
Driving side	Right-hand side
US travel advisory (as of Jul 2026)	Level 2 — Exercise Increased Caution

Source: [2021 Population and Housing Census, Ghana Statistical Service \(via Ria's Colony reporting\)](#)

Source: [Parliament of Ghana — Wikipedia \(structure, seat count\)](#)

Source: [CountryReports — Ghana Government](#)

04 · History: Gold, Kingdoms, and the First Independence

Long before the name "Ghana" was attached to this part of West Africa, the region was home to powerful Akan states whose wealth was closely tied to gold. When European traders began arriving on the coast in the 15th century, the abundance of gold quickly became one of the defining features of their encounters with the region — Europeans came to call the coastline the Gold Coast, a name that eventually became the British colonial designation for the territory.

By the late 17th century, the Asante kingdom was emerging as the dominant power in the interior. According to Asante tradition, its political foundation began with Okomfo Anokye, a spiritual leader who caused the Golden Stool to descend from the sky onto the lap of Osei Tutu, the first Asantehene. The stool was never understood as the king's personal possession — it came to represent the spirit, unity and sovereignty of the Asante people as a whole, which is why it is never sat upon, even today.

Along the coast, a very different history was unfolding. In 1482, the Portuguese built São Jorge da Mina — now Elmina Castle — to secure access to the region's gold, and it became one of the oldest surviving European buildings outside Europe. Over the centuries that followed, Dutch, British, Danish and Swedish traders built forts and castles along the coastline. Many of these same sites later became deeply involved in the transatlantic slave trade — captured Africans were confined in dungeons beneath the castles before being transported across the Atlantic through what became known as the "Door of No Return." Today, Elmina and Cape Coast Castle are places of remembrance as much as heritage attractions, visited both by Ghanaians learning their own history and by members of the African diaspora confronting the history that connects Africa to the Caribbean and the Americas.

British power expanded across the region through the 19th century, repeatedly met with Asante resistance. British forces captured and burned Kumasi in 1874, and the Asante kingdom was eventually annexed as a British Crown Colony in 1902 — following the War of the Golden Stool in 1900, when Governor Frederick Hodgson demanded access to the sacred stool itself. Resistance was organised in part under Yaa Asantewaa, the Queen Mother of Ejisu, one of the most enduring figures of Asante resistance to British rule.

Independence, 6 March 1957

Ghana became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from European colonial rule. Under Kwame Nkrumah, independence was framed as more than a transfer of power from Britain to a new national government — Nkrumah treated Ghana's freedom as evidence that colonial rule across Africa could be dismantled, and as a platform to support liberation elsewhere on the continent.

"The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent."

— Kwame Nkrumah

Nkrumah's government was overthrown in a military coup in 1966, and Ghana moved through decades of military and civilian rule before returning to constitutional multiparty government in 1992. Since then, Ghana has built a strong record of competitive elections and peaceful transfers of presidential power — while the chiefs still hold their stools, Akwasidae is still observed at Manhyia Palace roughly every six

weeks, and the Golden Stool remains a living symbol of Asante unity. Ghana's modern political system is constitutional and democratic, and it exists alongside institutions that are centuries older. The past here is not simply remembered — it is still being practiced.

Source: [*Ria's Colony — Ghana: History, Culture, Traditions and the Story of Independence*](#)

05 · People, Languages & Religion

Ethnic Groups

Ghana is home to many peoples whose identities are older than the country itself. The Akan are the largest broad ethnolinguistic grouping — 45.7% of the population in the 2021 census — including the Asante, Fante, Akuapem and Akyem, concentrated largely across central and southern Ghana. The Ga maintain a distinct identity around Greater Accra, with deep ties to the coast, fishing and trade. The Ewe are concentrated in the southeast, part of a wider Ewe-speaking world extending into Togo and Benin. Further north, the Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja developed their own kingdoms, and Islam became particularly influential through centuries of trade with the Sahel.

Language

English is Ghana's official language, inherited from British colonial rule, and serves as the common language of institutions, education, business and public life. Twi (Akan) is also widely spoken beyond Akan communities, prominent in markets, music and media. A person can identify strongly as Ga, Ewe, Dagomba, Asante or Fante while fully participating in a broader Ghanaian national culture.

Religion

According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, 71.3% of Ghanaians identify as Christian, 19.9% as Muslim, and 3.2% as followers of traditional African religions. Christianity grew through centuries of missionary activity and later expanded through Pentecostal and charismatic churches with large congregations and sophisticated media reach. Islam has a much longer history in parts of the country than the national statistics alone suggest, particularly in the north. Traditional Akan belief — centred on Nyame as supreme creator, and on ancestors as central to the relationship between the living and the dead — continues to shape festivals, funerals and everyday life alongside both Christianity and Islam.

Source: [*Ria's Colony — Ghana: History, Culture, Traditions and the Story of Independence*](#)

06 · Culture: Food, Music, Textiles & Festivals

Food

Ghanaian food is built around a simple idea: staples are rarely eaten alone. Fufu — pounded cassava and plantain (or yam) — is served alongside light soup or groundnut soup. Banku, made from fermented corn and cassava dough, pairs naturally with grilled tilapia and pepper sauce. Kelewele is spiced fried plantain, one of the country's best-known street foods. Waakye — rice and beans cooked together — is an everyday breakfast and lunch staple in Accra, usually served with shito, boiled egg, fried plantain and more. And then there is jollof rice, Ghana's entry into one of West Africa's favourite culinary arguments with Nigeria and Senegal.

Music, Dance & Storytelling

Highlife, which emerged in the early 20th century from local musical traditions meeting brass-band and guitar influences from coastal trade, became one of the earliest major modern African popular music genres. E.T. Mensah, the "King of Highlife," defined its golden era in the 1950s and 60s. Its rhythms fed into hiplife, and in the 2010s, the dance style azonto spread rapidly across Africa and the diaspora. Traditional drumming — including the fontomfrom, played at royal and chieftaincy occasions — remains closely tied to ceremony and political life, while Anansi, the trickster spider of Akan storytelling, remains part of the country's cultural memory.

Textiles & Craft

Kente, woven on narrow looms and joined into larger cloth, is the textile most associated with Ghana worldwide — particularly with the Asante and weaving communities such as Bonwire. Its colours and patterns are a visual language connected to proverbs, values and status. Adinkra cloth is decorated with stamped symbols representing ideas and proverbs — Gye Nyame ("except for God") is the best known, appearing on cloth, buildings and contemporary design far beyond its original context.

Festivals & Rites of Passage

- Homowo (Ga people, Greater Accra) — a harvest festival that begins with a period of ritual silence before public drumming, dancing and feasting, commemorating survival of a historic famine.
- Akwasidae (Asante) — observed roughly every six weeks at Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, where the Asantehene sits in state and receives homage from chiefs.
- Adaye Kese — a larger, less frequent Asante royal and religious observance within the same ceremonial tradition.
- Ghanaian funerals — among the most elaborate social gatherings in the country; families may take weeks to prepare, and specially printed funeral cloth, drumming, and large multi-day gatherings mark a person's transition toward ancestorhood.

07 · Entry Requirements & Visa Routes

Ghana overhauled its visa system in 2026, moving to a fully digital e-Visa model. Because the system is new, fees and even the official portal address are reported inconsistently across secondary sources — treat every figure below as indicative, and confirm the live fee and your own eligibility directly on the Ghana Immigration Service's official channel before you pay anything or use a third-party agent.

Who Can Enter Without A Visa

- **ECOWAS nationals** — citizens of the 15 ECOWAS member states (including Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Burkina Faso, Mali, and others) can enter Ghana visa-free for up to 90 days with a valid passport or ECOWAS Travel Certificate, under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons.
- **Free ETA for other African nationals** — alongside the 2026 e-Visa relaunch, Ghana introduced a free Electronic Travel Authorization for African Union passport holders outside ECOWAS. Confirm current eligibility on the official portal, as this is a recent and evolving policy.

Everyone Else: The e-Visa

Most other nationalities — including US, UK, EU, Australian and most Asian passport holders — need to apply for a visa in advance. Ghana's new e-Visa system, run by the Ghana Immigration Service, launched in stages around May 2026. Reported official portal addresses include evisa.immigration.gov.gh and evisa.gis.gov.gh — both are attributed to the Ghana Immigration Service in current reporting, so always cross-check against the Ghana Immigration Service's own site (gis.gov.gh) before submitting an application or payment, and be wary of third-party "visa agent" sites that charge a mark-up for the same free-to-apply form.

Visa Type	Typical Duration	Reported Fee Range (USD)	Processing Time
Tourist e-Visa (single entry)	Up to 60–90 days	\$60 – \$260 depending on source/nationality	72 hours – 10 working days
Tourist e-Visa (multiple entry)	Up to 90 days, multiple trips	\$150 – \$468	72 hours – 10 working days
Business Visa	Up to 60 days	\$100 – \$200+	Similar to tourist, plus invitation letter review
Transit Visa	48 hours	\$30 – \$50	Fast-track
Student Visa	Duration of study	\$60 – \$100 (application) + permit fees	Varies; apply early
Priority / Express e-Visa	Same as standard, faster issue	Meaningfully higher than standard — reported up to ~\$440–\$800 for express/multiple-entry	As fast as 5 hours

Note on the fee table above: three different independent reports in 2026 quote three different fee structures for the same new e-Visa system — likely reflecting the portal still being finalised, different nationalities being charged different rates, and third-party sites inflating prices. Treat the low end as the most likely baseline cost and the high end as what express or multiple-entry processing can run to, and always get your final number from the official government portal on the day you apply.

What You'll Be Asked For, Regardless Of Route

- Passport valid at least 6 months beyond your entry date, with at least 2 blank pages
- Recent passport-style photograph (white background)
- Proof of accommodation (hotel booking or a host's invitation letter)
- A return or onward flight ticket
- Proof of sufficient funds (often bank statements from the last 3 months)
- **A Yellow Fever vaccination certificate — this is mandatory, not optional**, and is checked at Kotoka International Airport on arrival. Get vaccinated well before you travel; it is a single dose, valid for life.
- For business travel: an invitation letter from a Ghanaian host/company, a mission letter, and possibly company registration documents.

A Route Specifically For The Diaspora: Right of Abode

Ghana's Right of Abode programme — championed through the Year of Return (2019) and the ongoing Beyond the Return initiative — allows persons of African descent to live and work in Ghana on a renewable long-term basis. It is commonly reported as a 10-year renewable residency permit, requiring documentation such as a birth certificate, passport and proof of African heritage, applied for through the Ghana Immigration Service or selected embassies, with a reported cost in the region of \$150 USD / roughly GH¢1,500 — again, confirm the live figure with Ghana Immigration Service directly, as fees are periodically revised.

In 2019 alone, Ghana recorded roughly 1.1 million international visitor arrivals under the Year of Return, and in November 2019, 126 members of the African diaspora were granted Ghanaian citizenship as part of the programme.

Source: [Ghana Immigration Service — official site](#)

Source: [Ghana Immigration Service — Fees and Charges](#)

Source: [Ghana e-Visa portal](#)

Source: [VisasNews — Ghana unveils new e-Visa portal](#)

Source: [Ghana Embassy Info — Visa Requirements 2026](#)

Source: [Ria's Colony — Ghana history/culture piece \(Year of Return figures\)](#)

08 · Government & Political System

Ghana is a unitary presidential republic under its Fourth Republic constitution, adopted in 1992. The President is both Head of State and Head of Government, directly elected on a joint ticket with the Vice-President by absolute-majority popular vote (with a second round if needed) for a four-year term, renewable once. John Dramani Mahama has served as President since 7 January 2025.

Parliament is unicameral, currently seating 276 members elected by first-past-the-post in single-member constituencies for four-year terms. Ghanaian politics has been dominated since 1992 by two parties — the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) — and the country has an established record of peaceful transfers of power between them, which is relatively rare in the region and part of why Ghana is often described as a model of democratic governance in West Africa.

The Supreme Court sits at the top of an independent judiciary with the power to review the constitutionality of legislation. Ghana also retains a decentralised system of elected District Assemblies, and — as covered in Section 04 — a parallel system of traditional authority: chiefs, stools and the Asantehene continue to hold real social and cultural authority alongside the constitutional state.

Head of State & Government	President John Dramani Mahama (since 7 January 2025)
Legislature	Unicameral Parliament, 276 seats, Accra
Constitution	Fourth Republic, adopted 1992, in force since 7 January 1993
Dominant parties	National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP)
Judiciary	Independent; Supreme Court has constitutional review power
Last general election	7 December 2024 · Next: 7 December 2028

Source: [Wikipedia — Parliament of Ghana](#)

Source: [CountryReports — Ghana Government](#)

Source: [BTI 2026 Ghana Country Report](#)

09 · Relocating To Ghana: Residency, Fees & The Right of Abode

Ghana is one of the most actively promoted relocation and diaspora-return destinations in Africa, largely because of the Year of Return and Beyond the Return initiatives — but "relocating" covers several different legal routes, and picking the right one matters as much as picking the right city.

The Main Routes In

- **Right of Abode** — for persons of African descent in the diaspora; a renewable long-term residency route (commonly reported as 10 years, renewable), requiring proof of African heritage. This is the route most associated with the Year of Return.
- **Work & Residence Permit** — for foreign employees of a Ghanaian or international company operating in Ghana. This typically requires the employer to obtain an immigrant quota / work permit, alongside a residence permit for the individual, and is tied to your employment.
- **Investor / Business Residence Permit** — for people setting up or investing in a Ghanaian business, tied to registering that business with the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) and meeting its minimum capital requirements for foreign-owned enterprises.
- **Student route** — enrolment at a Ghanaian institution, with a student visa/permit tied to that enrolment.
- **Family / Dependant route** — for spouses and dependants of Ghanaian citizens or of permit-holders already resident in Ghana.

Reported Residence & Permit Fees

The Ghana Immigration Service publishes an official fee schedule that is revised periodically; the figures below reflect the most recent published schedule found at the time of writing, denominated partly in GH¢ and partly in USD as GIS itself lists them — always check the live GIS fee schedule before budgeting, since these are revised and the cedi has moved significantly against the dollar in recent years.

Permit / Service	Ghanaian-with-foreign-passport	ECOWAS nationals	Other nationals
Residence Permit (Immigrant Quota)	≈ \$194	≈ \$500 (GH¢ equiv.)	≈ \$647
Residence Permit (Dependant)	GH¢194	GH¢259	GH¢388
Residence/Work Permit (Companies)	≈ \$194	≈ \$647	≈ \$1,293
Aliens' Identity Card	GH¢39	≈ \$40	≈ \$40

Because immigration fee schedules are legal instruments (Ghana's are set by Legislative Instrument, most recently LI 2228), they are not something to estimate casually — request the current schedule directly from Ghana Immigration Service, or work with a licensed immigration attorney or relocation service in Ghana, before committing to a route.

What A Real Relocation Involves, Beyond The Permit

- Housing: most Accra landlords require 1–2 years of rent paid upfront (see Section 10), which is the single biggest up-front cost most newcomers underestimate.
- Ghana Card: the national ID; foreigners with residence permits are increasingly expected to register for one, which is required for many local services, from mobile money to opening bank accounts.
- Banking: opening a local account typically requires your residence permit, passport and proof of address; some banks allow non-resident accounts with more limited functionality.
- Healthcare: private health insurance is strongly advised, especially outside Accra — see Section 11 for details on medical infrastructure.
- Driving: a foreign licence combined with an International Driving Permit is usable short-term; longer stays generally require converting to a Ghanaian licence.

Source: [*Ghana Immigration Service — Fees and Charges*](#)

Source: [*Ghana Embassy Info — Visa Requirements \(Right of Abode\)*](#)

10 • Cost Of Living & Money

Ghana's currency is the Ghanaian Cedi (GH¢ / GHS). Cost-of-living reporting for Accra in 2026 varies widely depending on lifestyle and which neighbourhood you're in — the ranges below are drawn from multiple independent trackers and should be read as a spread, not a single number.

Lifestyle Tier	Reported Monthly Budget (single person, incl. rent)
Local / modest, shared or basic housing	≈ \$250 – \$415 (GH¢4,000 – 6,500)
Young professional / mid-range	≈ \$700 – \$1,200
Comfortable expat / diaspora lifestyle	≈ \$1,100 – \$1,500
International-standard / premium (furnished, East Legon-type areas)	≈ \$1,500 – \$2,750+

Housing — The Biggest Line Item

Rent is quoted differently across sources depending on neighbourhood tier: a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre averages roughly \$530 a month by one major cost-tracking source, while more local, mid-range areas (Haatso, Achimota) run closer to \$150–\$300, and premium diaspora-favoured areas (East Legon, Cantonments, Airport Residential) run \$500–\$1,000+. The bigger shock for most newcomers isn't the monthly rate — it's that Ghanaian landlords commonly require 6 months to 2 years of rent paid upfront, all at once, before handing over the keys. Budget for this specifically and understand your rights under Ghana's Rent Act before signing anything.

Everyday Prices (Accra, reported 2026)

- Inexpensive local restaurant meal: roughly \$6
- Three-course meal for two at a mid-range restaurant: roughly \$45
- Fast-food staple (e.g. Big Mac): roughly \$4.50
- Short Uber/Bolt ride (around 5km): roughly \$2.50

Source: [Wise — Cost of Living in Accra](#)

Source: [World Cost of Living — Accra Cost of Living 2026](#)

Source: [ExpatriateLife.ai — Living in Accra](#)

Source: [Ownkey — Cost of Living in Accra, Ghana 2026](#)

11 · Safety, Health & Travel Advisories

As of the most recent U.S. Embassy update (7 July 2026), the United States rates Ghana Level 2 — Exercise Increased Caution — citing crime, poor health infrastructure, violence against women, and violence against LGBTQ+ travellers. The advisory specifically recommends reconsidering travel to the northern border areas of the Upper East Region, the Northeast Region, the Upper West Region, and areas west of the N12 highway in the Savannah Region, due to crime. The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office similarly advises against all but essential travel to the Bawku Municipal area in the Upper East Region. The vast majority of visitor itineraries — Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi, Elmina, and the Volta Region — sit outside these flagged zones.

Health

- **Yellow Fever — mandatory.** You must carry your International Certificate of Vaccination ("yellow card") and it is checked on arrival at Kotoka International Airport.
- **Malaria risk exists nationwide.** Speak to a travel clinic about antimalarial prophylaxis before you go.
- **Medical infrastructure is concentrated in Accra.** Emergency medical services outside the capital are limited, and the U.S. Embassy advisory notes that serious medical emergencies may require evacuation. Comprehensive travel insurance with medical evacuation cover is strongly recommended for any trip.

Everyday Safety

Violent crime against tourists is uncommon and largely avoidable with ordinary precautions: use ride-hailing apps (Uber/Bolt) rather than unlicensed taxis at night, stay aware in crowded markets, and avoid displaying valuables. Multiple advisories flag a specific rise in incidents affecting women travelling alone, including reports of spiked drinks in nightlife venues — travelling with others and using verified transport apps is the standard, sensible precaution.

- **LGBTQ+ travellers:** same-sex sexual activity remains illegal under Ghanaian law, and Ghana's parliament has pursued anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in recent years. Both the FCDO and the U.S. State Department flag this explicitly. LGBTQ+ visitors should exercise real discretion; public displays of same-sex affection carry both legal and social risk.

Source: [U.S. Embassy Ghana — Travel Advisory \(updated 7 July 2026\)](#)

Source: [UK Government — Ghana travel advice \(FCDO\)](#)

12 · Getting There & Getting Around

Getting There

Kotoka International Airport (ACC) in Accra is Ghana's main gateway, with direct connections to major hubs in Europe, the Middle East, North America and across West Africa. Overland entry is straightforward for ECOWAS nationals through neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Burkina Faso, subject to standard border checks and, for the latter, awareness of the elevated-risk zones flagged in Section 11.

Getting Around

- **Ride-hailing apps (Uber, Bolt)** are widely available in Accra and Kumasi and are the recommended option for visitors over unlicensed taxis.
- **Trotros** (shared minibuses) are the everyday transport of ordinary Ghanaians — cheap and extensive, but best used once you're comfortable with the routes.
- **Domestic flights** connect Accra with Kumasi, Tamale and other regional hubs for longer internal journeys.
- **Driving yourself** is possible with an International Driving Permit for visitors; Ghana drives on the right, and traffic in Accra — especially Spintex Road and the N1 motorway — is often heavily congested at peak times.

Source: [ExpatLife.ai — Living in Accra \(transport notes\)](#)

13 • Best Time To Visit & Top Places To Go

When To Go

November through March is Ghana's dry season and the most popular window for visitors — cooler, less humid, and coinciding with the country's biggest festival season, including the high-energy "December in Ghana" period around Christmas and New Year, when the diaspora crowd swells and events fill the calendar in Accra.

Where To Go

- **Accra** — the capital: Jamestown's old lighthouse and fishing harbour, Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, Makola Market, Osu's restaurant and nightlife strip, and the National Museum.
- **Cape Coast & Elmina** — Cape Coast Castle and Elmina Castle, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites central to the history of the transatlantic slave trade and now sites of remembrance — the "Door of No Return" is among the most affecting stops in the country, particularly for diaspora visitors.
- **Kumasi** — the Asante cultural capital: Manhyia Palace, home to the Asantehene and the (never-sat-upon) Golden Stool, plus Kejetia Market, one of West Africa's largest, and the nearby weaving town of Bonwire, source of authentic kente cloth.
- **Kakum National Park** — the canopy walkway strung high above the rainforest, near Cape Coast, one of Ghana's signature nature experiences.
- **Volta Region** — Wli Waterfalls (the tallest in West Africa), Mount Afadjato, and Ewe cultural towns, for travellers who want Ghana's greener, quieter side.
- **Ada & the Volta estuary** — beach towns and river-meets-ocean scenery east of Accra, popular for weekend trips.

Estimated Trip Costs

- Backpacker/budget itinerary (10 days, hostels, local food, trotros): roughly \$500–\$900 excluding international flights and visa fees
- Mid-range trip (10 days, hotels, private transport, guided tours): roughly \$1,500–\$2,800 excluding flights
- Comfortable/premium trip: \$3,000+ depending on accommodation and private guiding

Treat these trip-cost estimates as directional planning figures built from the accommodation, food and transport ranges elsewhere in this guide rather than a quoted tour price — get an actual quote from a tour operator or Ria's Colony for a firm number.

14 · The Good, The Bad & The Ugly — Honest Remarks

The Good

- English as the official language removes a real barrier for anglophone visitors and remote workers from day one.
- A genuinely stable, peaceful, multiparty democracy with a strong regional reputation — rare and valuable in West Africa.
- A warm, well-documented culture of hospitality, and a diaspora-return infrastructure (Year of Return / Beyond the Return) that few African countries match.
- Rich, accessible culture — festivals, food, music, textiles and history that are genuinely lived, not staged for tourists.
- Comparatively affordable cost of living outside the most premium Accra neighbourhoods.

The Bad

- Housing's upfront-rent culture (6 months to 2 years paid at once) is a real financial shock most newcomers don't plan for.
- Traffic in Accra, especially around Spintex Road and the N1, can consume hours of your day.
- Medical infrastructure thins out fast once you leave Accra — serious care means travelling to the capital or being evacuated.
- The new 2026 e-Visa system is still settling in, and fee/portal information across sources is genuinely inconsistent — expect to double-check things officially rather than trust the first website you find.

The Ugly

- Same-sex relationships remain illegal, and LGBTQ+ travellers and residents face real legal and social risk — this is not a footnote, it is a hard constraint for some travellers.
- The northern border regions (Upper East, Upper West, Northeast, parts of Savannah Region) carry a genuinely elevated security risk and sit under "reconsider travel" advisories from the U.S. and UK governments.
- Reported rises in crime targeting women, including drink-spiking incidents in nightlife venues, mean solo female travellers need to take specific, deliberate precautions rather than relying on Ghana's generally low reputation for violent crime.

None of this should be read as a reason to avoid Ghana — it is one of the more visitor-friendly, welcoming and historically important countries on the continent. It is a reason to plan with your eyes open, which is the entire purpose of this guide.

15 · Sources & Further Reading

Every factual claim in this guide is drawn from the sources below, current as of September 2026. Figures involving fees, advisories and cost of living change — always click through and check the live page before you rely on a number.

History & Culture

- Ria's Colony — Ghana: History, Culture, Traditions and the Story of Independence — riascolony.org/blog/ghana-history-culture-traditions-independence
- Ria's Colony — About — riascolony.org/about
- Ria's Colony — Africa Culture Series (54 Countries) — riascolony.org/blog/series/africa-culture-series-54-countries

Government & Political System

- Wikipedia — Parliament of Ghana — en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_Ghana
- CountryReports — Ghana Government — countryreports.org/country/Ghana/government.htm
- BTI 2026 Ghana Country Report — bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/GHA

Visas, Entry & Immigration

- Ghana Immigration Service (official) — gis.gov.gh
- Ghana Immigration Service — Fees and Charges — gis.gov.gh/fees-and-charges/
- Ghana e-Visa Portal — evisa.immigration.gov.gh
- VisasNews — Ghana unveils new e-Visa portal — visasnews.com/en/ghana-unveils-new-e-visa-portal/
- Ghana Embassy Info — Visa Requirements 2026 — ghanaembassyinfo.com/visa-requirements

Cost of Living

- Wise — Cost of Living in Accra — wise.com/us/cost-of-living/ghana/accra
- World Cost of Living — Accra 2026 — worldcostofliving.com/city/accra-ghana
- ExpatLife.ai — Living in Accra — expatlife.ai/ghana/cities/accra
- Ownkey — Cost of Living in Accra, Ghana 2026 — ownkey.com/blog/cost-of-living-accra-ghana

Safety & Health

- U.S. Embassy Ghana — Travel Advisory (7 July 2026) — gh.usembassy.gov/ghana-level-2-exercise-increased-caution-2/
- UK Government — Ghana travel advice (FCDO) — gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ghana

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