

RIA'S COLONY

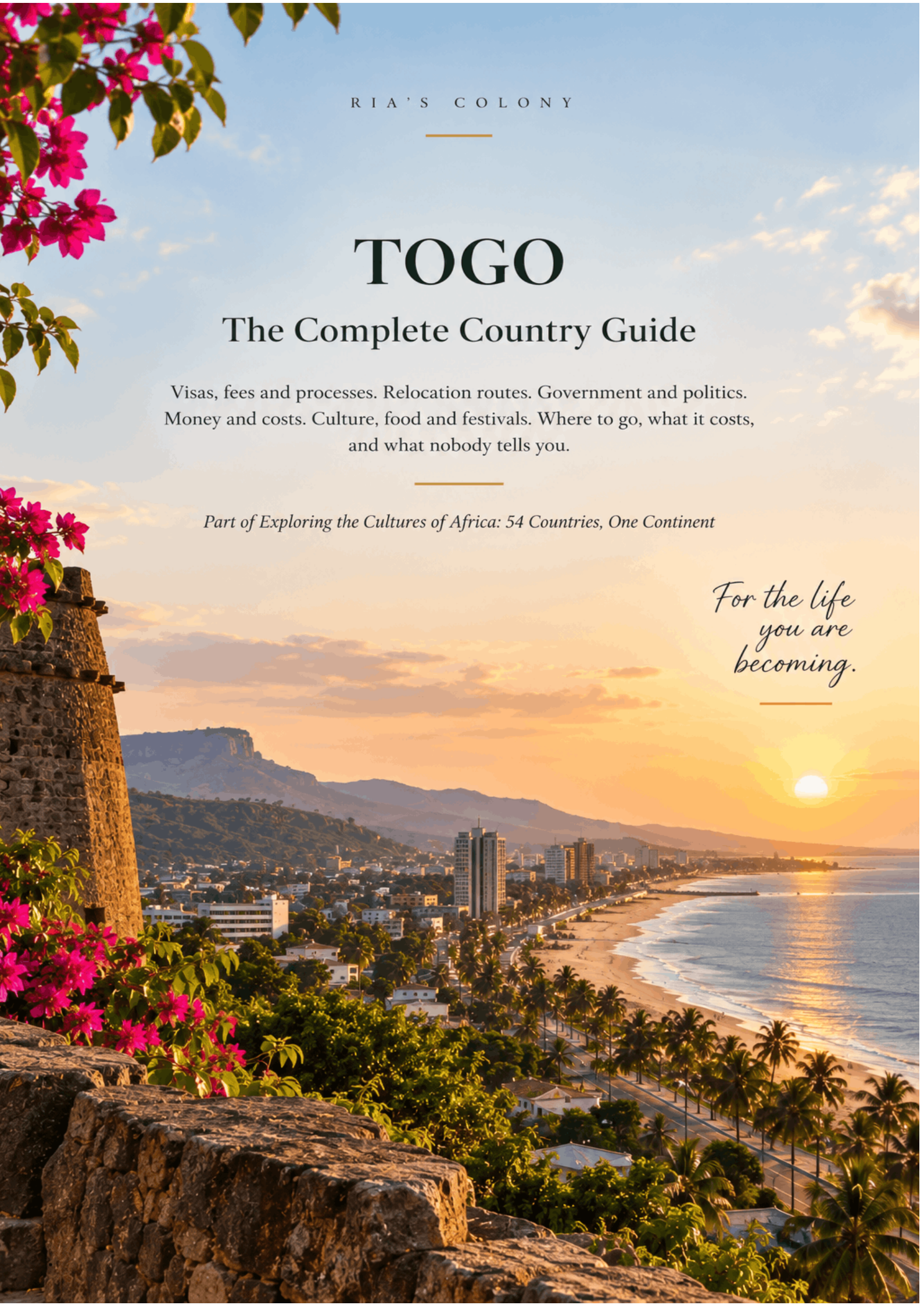
TOGO

The Complete Country Guide

Visas, fees and processes. Relocation routes. Government and politics.
Money and costs. Culture, food and festivals. Where to go, what it costs,
and what nobody tells you.

Part of Exploring the Cultures of Africa: 54 Countries, One Continent

*For the life
you are
becoming.*



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Country	Togolese Republic (Republique togolaise)
Capital	Lome, on the Gulf of Guinea, right against the Ghana border
Currency	West African CFA franc (XOF), pegged to the euro
Official language	French. Ewe and Mina in the south, Kabye and Tem in the north
Head of government	Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Council, since 3 May 2025
Head of state	Jean-Lucien Kwassi Lanyo Savi de Tove, President of the Republic
Entry for Africans	Visa free for up to 30 days since 18 May 2026, online declaration still required
Guide current as of	12 September 2026

Read this bit first

Every fact in this guide is sourced. Where the source is an official Togolese government site, an official travel advisory or a multilateral body, we say so and we link it. Where a number comes from a crowd sourced or commercial site, we say that too, because those numbers move and sometimes they are simply wrong.

We have not invented a single figure. Where we could not verify something, we tell you it is unverified instead of guessing.

Rules change. Visa policy in Togo changed twice in the last four years and again in May 2026. Always check the primary link before you book anything.

For the life you are becoming.

How to use this guide

This is not a brochure. It is a working document. Read it once end to end to get the shape of the country, then come back to the section you need when you are actually doing the thing.

There are three kinds of reader we wrote this for, and the guide is built so each of you can skip around.

- The traveller. You want to know if it is safe, what it costs, what to see and how to get a visa. Go to sections 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11.
- The person thinking about moving. You want residence permits, rent, healthcare, schools and the honest downsides. Go to sections 5, 6, 7 and 12.
- The trader or business builder. You want company registration, the port, the trade blocs and the cost of doing business. Go to sections 6 and 7.

The boxes you will keep seeing

- **Do this now.** A short action you can take while you are reading, usually a link to open and a form to check.
- **Watch out.** Something that catches people out, costs money or gets you turned away at a border.
- **Your turn.** A prompt with space to write. Print the guide or fill it in on screen. These are the bits that turn reading into a plan.
- **How solid is this.** Where we grade the evidence, because not all facts are equally firm.

Your turn

Before you read another page, write down what you actually want from Togo. One sentence. Be specific, because "visit West Africa" and "spend six months building a business in Lome" need completely different pages of this guide.

I want to

by (month and year) My budget is about

The short version

Togo is a narrow country. It runs roughly 600 kilometres from the Gulf of Guinea in the south up towards Burkina Faso in the north, and for most of that run it is only about 50 to 100 kilometres wide. Ghana is on the west side, Benin on the east. You can drive the length of the country in a long day.

Source: United Nations Digital Library country profile <https://digitallibrary.un.org/>

Inside that narrow strip sits a surprising amount of difference. The south is coastal, Ewe and Mina speaking, humid, and built around Lome and its port. The middle is hills, cocoa, coffee, waterfalls and cool air around Kpalime. The north is drier, Kabye and Tem speaking, and holds Koutammakou, the UNESCO listed landscape of mud tower houses that has become the visual shorthand for Togo.

Three things make Togo unusual for its size.

- **The port.** Lome has one of the few natural deep water harbours on the West African coast and has turned into the region's main transshipment hub, serving Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and northern Nigeria.
- **The traditions are alive.** Ewala wrestling in July and the sacred stone rites at Glidji in September are not reconstructions for tourists. People are still doing them, this year.
- **It just opened its doors.** Since 18 May 2026, every African passport holder can enter Togo without a visa for up to 30 days.

And two things you should not gloss over. The far north is under a state of emergency because of armed groups crossing from Burkina Faso, and foreigners need written permission to go there. And the political settlement is contested: the constitutional change of 2024 and 2025 moved the country to a parliamentary system, and opposition groups call it a way to keep the same family in power. Protests in June 2025 ended with deaths and arrests.

How solid is this

The geography, the port figures and the visa change are all documented by official or well established sources and we link every one of them. The protest death toll comes from a press freedom organisation rather than an official count, and we flag it again when we get there.

The country: land, people, language

Regions and the shape of the place

Togo is divided into five administrative regions. From the coast going north they are Maritime, Plateaux, Centrale, Kara and Savanes. Almost everything a first time visitor does happens in the first two, and almost everything that worries a travel advisory happens in the last one.

Region	Main towns	What it is for
Maritime	Lome, Aneho, Tsevie, Vogan	The capital, the port, the beaches, Lake Togo, the Guin sacred stone rites at Glidji
Plateaux	Kpalime, Atakpame, Badou, Notse	Hills, waterfalls, Mount Agou, coffee and cocoa, butterflies, cooler air
Centrale	Sokode, Bassar, Tchamba	Togo's second city, the crossroads, the southern gate to Fazao-Malfakassa
Kara	Kara, Kande, Niamtougou	Kabye country, Evala wrestling in July, the gateway to Koutammakou
Savanes	Dapaong, Mango, Cinkasse	Under a state of emergency. Foreigners need written authorisation. See section 11.

People

Togo has a population of roughly nine million and it is a young country: about four in ten people are under fifteen.

Source: World Bank country data for Togo <https://data.worldbank.org/country/togo>

There is no single Togolese ethnicity. One published estimate groups Adja, Ewe and Mina peoples at 42.4 percent of the population and Kabye and Tem at 25.9 percent, with Para-Gourma and Akan peoples, Akposso and Akebu communities, Ana-lfe and others making up the rest. Those categories flatten identities that are much more detailed on the ground, but they give you the rough picture.

Source: CIA World Factbook, Togo <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/togo/>

The Kabye are concentrated in and around the Kara region. Their political weight grew under Gnassingbe Eyadema, who was Kabye, as is his son Faure Gnassingbe. Northern groups, and the Kabye in particular, became heavily represented in the military and security services during Eyadema's rule.

Language: the thing that will decide your experience

French is the official language and it runs government, administration, formal education, banking and every official form you will ever fill in. English is not widely spoken outside a few hotels, airline desks and businesses that trade with Ghana and Nigeria.

If you speak no French at all, Togo is workable as a short holiday with a guide and quite hard as a place to live or do business. If you speak even basic French, the country opens up immediately.

In the south you will hear Ewe and Mina constantly. In the north, Kabyle and Tem. Lome sits right against the Ghanaian border inside a wider Ewe speaking area that spreads across both countries, so the border divides two states but it does not divide language or family.

Do this now

Learn four phrases before you land. Bonjour (good morning), s'il vous plait (please), merci (thank you), combien ca coute (how much does it cost). Greetings are not optional politeness in Togo, they are the opening move of every interaction including commercial ones. Walking up to a market trader and leading with a price is rude.

Religion

One published estimate puts Christians at 42.3 percent of the population, followers of folk or traditional religions at 36.9 percent, Muslims at 14 percent and people with no religious affiliation at 6.2 percent. Those numbers describe what people say they are, not always what they practise.

Source: CIA World Factbook, Togo <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/togo/>

Identities overlap. Someone who identifies as Christian may still take part in family ceremonies tied to ancestral belief or Vodun. Vodun, sometimes written Vodou, is a family of religious traditions with deep roots in this part of West Africa, involving divinities, ancestors, priests, ritual specialists and sacred places. Related traditions are practised across the border in Benin.

One correction worth carrying with you, because visitors get it wrong constantly: 10 January is Benin's national Vodun day, not Togo's. Togo has its own Vodun ceremonies, communities and sacred sites, and its own calendar.

Who runs Togo, and why it is contested

The current structure

Togo changed its constitutional system in 2024 and 2025 and moved towards a parliamentary arrangement the government calls the Fifth Republic. The practical result is that the two top job titles no longer mean what an outsider would assume.

Office	Holder	What it actually is
President of the Council	Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, since 3 May 2025	Head of government and the country's principal executive authority. Elected by parliament. No term limit, re-electable indefinitely for six year terms.
President of the Republic	Jean-Lucien Kwassi Lanyo Savi de Tove	A separate office with far more limited powers under the new parliamentary system. Elected by parliament on the same day.
Ruling party	UNIR	Holds the parliamentary majority that elects both offices.

Source: Presidency of the Council of Togo <https://presidenceduconseil.gouv.tg/>

How it got here, briefly

Germany established a protectorate in 1884 after a treaty signed at Togoville and gradually pushed inland. Germany lost Togoland in the First World War and the territory was split between Britain and France under League of Nations mandates. British Togoland joined the Gold Coast, which became Ghana in 1957. French administered Togo became independent on 27 April 1960.

Source: US State Department Office of the Historian <https://history.state.gov/countries/togo>

Sylvanus Olympio, the first president, was assassinated in a military coup in January 1963, one of the earliest military seizures of power in postcolonial Africa. Gnassingbe Eyadema took power in another coup in 1967 and stayed president until his death in 2005, thirty eight years. His son Faure Gnassingbe succeeded him in a disputed transition and was President of the Republic until the system changed in 2025.

Why people are angry about it

Opposition parties and civil society groups describe the constitutional change as a way for Gnassingbe to stay in power without the presidential term limits that applied under the old system. Some called it a constitutional coup. The government frames it as a modernising move to a parliamentary republic.

Source: ConstitutionNet coverage of the transition

<https://constitutionnet.org/news/after-constitutional-change-togos-parliament-appoints-countrys-leader-top-position>

Protests followed. Demonstrations in Lome on 5 and 6 June 2025 led to arrests, and larger protests from 26 to 28 June 2025 were dispersed with force. The Media Foundation for West Africa reported seven deaths and more than sixty arrests across those days.

Source: Media Foundation for West Africa via AllAfrica <https://allafrica.com/stories/202507020038.html>

How solid is this

The offices, holders and dates are confirmed by the Togolese government's own sites. The casualty figure is from a press freedom organisation, not an official count, and official Togolese figures differ. Treat it as a credible report rather than a settled number.

What this means for you in practice

- **Protests can happen with little notice.** The US State Department notes that police may use tear gas or other force to break up protests that block traffic in city centres and along National Route 1, and that protesters have been arrested.
- **The internet has been cut before.** The same advisory records that security forces have shut down internet and mobile service during unrest. Download offline maps, keep some cash, and do not depend on a single online payment method.
- **Do not join.** Foreign nationals taking part in political demonstrations is a fast way to end a trip badly, and in most countries it is grounds for deportation.
- **Normal life continues.** None of the above means Lome is a war zone. It means you keep an eye on local news and you do not walk into a crowd to see what is happening.

Source: US Department of State travel advisory for Togo, 9 March 2026

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/togo-travel-advisory.html>

Getting in: visas, fees and the exact process

This is the section people came for, so we have made it as literal as possible. Everything here comes from the Togolese government's own travel platform unless we say otherwise.

One rule above all others

Every single traveller entering or leaving Togo must complete immigration formalities online at voyage.gouv.tg, whether or not you need a visa. Being visa exempt does not exempt you from the online form. Airlines check for the registration certificate at boarding, both on the way in and on the way out.

The one link you need: <https://voyage.gouv.tg>

4.1 Which route applies to you

There are now three doors into Togo. Find yours before you read anything else.

Who you are	What you need	How long you get
Citizen of an ECOWAS member state	No visa. Online immigration formalities still required.	Per ECOWAS free movement rules
Citizen of any other African Union state	No visa since 18 May 2026. Valid national passport plus an online travel declaration at least 24 hours before arrival, which produces a travel slip to show at the border.	Up to 30 days
Everyone else	An e-visa obtained before you travel, through voyage.gouv.tg	15, 30, 90 or 365 days depending on visa type
Holders of a Togolese residence card, a Togolese consular card, or a long duration courtesy visa	No visa. Online immigration formalities still required.	Per the document held

The ECOWAS list, as published by the Togolese platform

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone.

Source: Togo Voyage, official e-visa information page <https://voyage.gouv.tg/about>

The May 2026 opening, in detail

On 18 May 2026 the Minister of Security, Colonel Calixte Batossie Madjoulba, published a statement announcing that the President of the Council had granted an entry visa exemption to all nationals of African states holding a valid national passport, effective the same day, at all land, air and sea entry points, for stays of up to 30 days.

The statement is explicit that the exemption does not remove immigration, security or public health requirements. Travellers must still make a travel declaration on voyage.gouv.tg at least 24 hours before arrival in order to obtain the travel slip to present at the border.

Confirmed by the Embassy of Togo in Switzerland: [ambassadedutogo.ch announcement](https://ambassadedutogo.ch/announcement)

And reported with the full communique text by: [Ouestaf News](https://www.ouestafnews.com)

Watch out

The official e-visa information page on voyage.gouv.tg still shows older country tables that list many African countries as visa required. As of 12 September 2026 the site had not been fully rewritten to reflect the May 2026 exemption. Do not panic if you see your country in that old table. Use the platform's own Visa Assistant tool, which is the live check, and keep a copy of the Ministry of Security statement with your travel documents.

4.2 The e-visa, if you need one

Togo runs four visa categories. The price depends on how long you are staying, not on your nationality.

Tourist visa

For visiting Togo, or attending meetings, trade shows, seminars or conferences on invitation.

Length of stay	Entries	Fee
1 to 15 days	Single	25,000 XOF
1 to 15 days	Multiple	35,000 XOF
16 to 30 days	Multiple	45,000 XOF
31 to 90 days	Multiple	65,000 XOF

Professional visa

For practising certain professions or activities such as journalism, reporting or trade, or responding to partners established in Togo for time limited professional work such as public works or expert assignments. Normally up to 90 days, but it can be granted for one year to a foreigner who promotes a Togolese registered company, or to a foreign professional who does not live in Togo but runs significant activities there needing regular follow up.

Length of stay	Entries	Fee
1 to 15 days	Single	25,000 XOF
1 to 15 days	Multiple	35,000 XOF
16 to 30 days	Multiple	45,000 XOF
31 to 90 days	Multiple	65,000 XOF
91 to 365 days	Multiple	100,000 XOF

Immigration visa

This is the one you want if you are actually moving. It lets you settle in Togo on a durable basis for work, study or family reunification. There are three sub types: study or internship, family, and professional.

Length of stay	Entries	Fee	Notes
31 to 90 days	Multiple	65,000 XOF	Maximum 90 days. Renewable once. You are required to start your residence card formalities as soon as you are on Togolese soil.

Courtesy visa

Free, multiple entry, issued to officials such as members of government, state officials and administration executives for official missions and visits, for the duration of the stay. It needs a note verbale signed by the ministry of foreign affairs and sent to the Minister of Security.

Source: All four tables above: Togo Voyage, official e-visa page <https://voyage.gouv.tg/about>

4.3 Documents you must upload

These are the official lists. Items marked required are non negotiable, the rest are described by the platform as strongly recommended but optional, which in practice means they strengthen a weak application.

Tourist and business

- ☐ The online visa application form, fully completed. Required.
- ☐ A scan of the first three pages of your passport. Its validity must exceed the validity of the visa you are asking for by at least three months. Required.
- ☐ One recent passport photograph. Required.
- ☐ A flight reservation confirmation or a photocopy of the ticket. Required if you arrive by air.
- ☐ Travel insurance. Optional but strongly recommended.
- ☐ A hotel booking, or a certificate of accommodation issued by the town hall or prefecture. Optional but strongly recommended.
- ☐ A letter of invitation from the person or organisation hosting you. Optional but strongly recommended.
- ☐ A bank attestation or account statement showing you can support yourself. Optional but strongly recommended.

Immigration visa, extra items on top of the above

- ☐ For study or internship: a certificate of enrolment at an approved Togolese educational institution, or an internship attestation from a company or association properly registered in Togo. Required.
- ☐ For family reunification: a letter of invitation plus a copy of the residence permit of the relative, if that relative is a foreign national. Required.
- ☐ For professional purposes: an entry authorisation issued by the Ministry of Security. Required.

Professional visa, extra items

- ☐ Proof of profession, in particular a professional card and an accreditation issued by the supervising ministry or the body you will work with. Required.
- ☐ A letter of invitation from the person or organisation inviting you. Required.
- ☐ A hotel booking or certificate of accommodation. Required.

Source: Togo Voyage, official e-visa page <https://voyage.gouv.tg/about>

4.4 Timing, payment and the surcharge nobody expects

Item	What the government says
Processing time	Up to five working days maximum
When to apply	At least six working days before you arrive in Togo. A notice on the platform states that, until further notice, applications must be made at least five days before arrival.
Late application surcharge	Since 31 December 2023, a visa application made less than six days before arrival is charged at an increased rate
How to pay	Bank card (Visa, Mastercard) or mobile money (Flooz, TMoney)
How you get the visa	By email to the address you used on the application, once approved. Notifications are sent at receipt, processing, approval or rejection.
COVID-19 documents	No longer required for entry or exit

Watch out

Visa on arrival is no longer the normal route. The government's own text says the point of the online visa is that there are no more long queues at border posts to ask for a visa on arrival, and no more trips to the DGDN offices seven days after arrival to extend it. Assume you must have your visa before you board. Airlines check.

4.5 Yellow fever: the document that gets people turned around

Under the International Health Regulations, a yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from all travellers over nine months of age entering Togo. There is a risk of yellow fever transmission throughout the country.

Since 11 July 2016 the certificate is valid for the life of the person vaccinated, so an older certificate cannot be rejected on the grounds that more than ten years have passed. The vaccine needs about ten days to be considered valid, so do not leave it to the week before you fly.

Source: NaTHNaC TravelHealthPro country page for Togo <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/222/togo>

Source: NHS Fit for Travel, Togo <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/togo>

4.6 The five mistakes that cost people their trip

1. **Skipping the online immigration form because you do not need a visa.** Different thing. Everyone fills it in.
2. **Passport validity maths.** It is not "six months from arrival" in the Togolese wording. It is three months beyond the end of the visa you asked for. If you want a 90 day visa starting in December, count from the end of that 90 days, then add three months, and check your passport clears it.
3. **Applying four days before the flight.** You get a surcharge, and possibly no visa.
4. **Assuming transit is free.** If you are visa required and you pass through Togo, you need a visa. If you have a long layover at Lome, ask your airline in writing whether you clear immigration.
5. **No yellow fever card.** It is a health regulation, not a suggestion, and it is checked.

Staying longer: the residence card

If you are going to be in Togo for more than three months, you need a *carte de sejour*, a residence card. It is compulsory, it is issued by the Direction Generale de la Documentation Nationale (DGDN), and you start the application online.

5.1 What it costs and how long it lasts

Card type	Who it is for	Valid for	Cost
Temporary, student	Students whose stay is for study	1 year	100,000 XOF
Ordinary, student	Students whose stay is for study	3 years	250,000 XOF
Temporary	All other foreign nationals	1 year	200,000 XOF
Ordinary	All other foreign nationals	3 years	500,000 XOF
Privileged	All other foreign nationals	5 years	800,000 XOF

Processing time: 30 to 45 days. The government notes prices and validity periods can change with the regulations, so check the page before you budget.

Source: Service Public de l'administration togolaise, residence card procedure

<https://service-public.gouv.tg/service/62a3b6e4c07b617d9d1b9bd9/papiers-citoyennete/demande-de-carte-de-sejour>

5.2 Documents every applicant provides

- ☐ A residence card application form, completed online.
- ☐ The first three pages of your passport, with validity at least three months longer than the card you are asking for.
- ☐ A recent identity photograph.
- ☐ A police record or its equivalent from your country of origin, less than three months old, for a first application.
- ☐ An attestation of non-conviction less than three months old, issued by Togolese justice or by the justice system of your last country of residence.

- ☐ A medical certificate less than three months old, issued by a sworn doctor.
- ☐ Proof of sufficient financial resources to support yourself during your stay.
- ☐ Your previous residence card, if you are renewing.

If you are a student or intern, add

- ☐ A certificate of enrolment at an approved Togolese institution, or an internship attestation from a properly registered Togolese company or association.

If you are self employed or setting up your own thing, add

- ☐ Your carte unique de creation d'entreprise (the single business registration card, see section 6).
- ☐ A tax clearance certificate for your business.
- ☐ A personal tax clearance certificate.
- ☐ A social security clearance certificate.

If you are employed by someone else, add

- ☐ A hiring authorisation issued by the competent administration.
- ☐ Your employment contract.
- ☐ A work attestation from your employer.
- ☐ Your employer's carte unique de creation d'entreprise.
- ☐ A personal tax clearance certificate.
- ☐ A scan of your employer's valid residence card if they are foreign, or the first three pages of their passport or national ID if they are Togolese.

Spouses and children

Spouses and descendants of a foreign national eligible for the residence card face the same obligations. Minor children are exempt from producing a bank attestation, an account statement or a credit card, and from the tax clearance certificates.

5.3 The actual sequence

6. Fill in the form online on the Service Public platform, stating whether or not you are a student.
7. DGDN checks your data. If something is wrong or non-compliant they send the form back to your account with the error flagged, you correct it and resubmit.
8. When the data is clean, DGDN sends a payment request to your user account.
9. Pay online by mobile money (Flooz, TMoney) or card (Visa, Mastercard).
10. Download and print the application form summarising everything you submitted.
11. Go to DGDN in person on a deposit day with the printed form and every document on the list above.
12. Wait for the SMS and email notifications telling you the card is ready.
13. Collect it in person on a collection day.

	Days	Hours
Depositing your file	Monday, Wednesday, Friday	07:30 to 12:00 and 14:30 to 17:00
Collecting your card	Tuesday and Thursday	07:30 to 12:00 and 14:30 to 17:00
Collecting your card	Saturday	08:00 to 12:00

DGDN contact details

Direction Generale de la Documentation Nationale, GTA, 322 R.P.T., Lome. Telephone +228 22 50 78 56, fax +228 22 50 78 57. Website dgdn.gouv.tg. There is also a national administration helpline on 8988.

Your turn

Work out your document runway. Three of the items above expire: the police record, the non-conviction attestation and the medical certificate must all be less than three months old when you file. Count backwards from your intended filing date.

I plan to file on So I must not request my police record before

Medical certificate booked for Non-conviction attestation requested on

Working, trading and building a business

6.1 Registering a company

Togo runs a one stop shop for company formation called the Centre de Formalites des Entreprises, the CFE. It sits inside the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Lome and it advertises company creation in under four hours.

What you walk away with is a carte unique de creation d'entreprise, a single business card carrying three numbers at once: your RCCM (commercial register number), your NIF (tax identification number) and your CNSS (social security) number.

Official fees

Entity type	Togolese nationals and ECOWAS citizens	Outside the ECOWAS zone
Sole trader (entreprise individuelle)	25,400 XOF	30,400 XOF
Company (societe)	28,250 XOF	33,250 XOF

Stamp duties have been abolished for company creation. You can pay by TMoney, Flooz, Mastercard or Visa.

Source: Centre de Formalites des Entreprises, Togo <https://cfetogo.tg/>

CFE address

Angle Avenue de la Presidence and Avenue Georges Pompidou, at the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie du Togo. BP 3210, Lome. Telephone +228 22 20 63 60. Email cfe@cfetogo.tg.

Legal forms

Togo is a member of OHADA, the organisation that harmonises business law across seventeen African countries, so the company forms will look familiar to anyone who has registered a business in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon or Benin. The common forms are the entreprenant status, the entreprise individuelle, the SARL and SARLU, the SAS and SASU, and the SA.

The CFE publishes model articles of association for SARL and SARLU on its site, which saves you a lot of drafting.

How solid is this

The fee table and the four hour claim come straight from the CFE's own site, so they are solid. Minimum capital requirements are a different matter: OHADA sets defaults but member states can and do vary them, and the figures you will see quoted online for Togo (often one million XOF for a SARL and ten million for an SA) come from law firm and consultant blogs rather than a government page. Confirm your capital requirement with the CFE or a Togolese notary before you transfer money.

Practitioners also report that the official four hours describes the processing step, and that the full cycle from online filing to holding a printed RCCM more realistically takes one to three working days. Plan for three.

6.2 Why anyone builds a business here: the port

The Port of Lome is the practical reason Togo matters commercially far beyond its size. It sits on one of the few natural deep water harbours between Abidjan and Lagos.

Metric	Figure
Draft	16.6 metres, deep enough for the largest container vessels
Main container quay	1,050 metres of straight dock at the Lome Container Terminal
Equipment	Nine ship to shore gantry cranes and 24 terminal cranes across a 50 hectare terminal
Throughput	Around 2.06 million TEU in 2024
Operator	Lome Container Terminal, developed by Terminal Investment Limited (the terminal arm of MSC) under a 35 year concession
Serves	Togo plus the landlocked markets of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, and northern Nigeria

Source: Terminal Investment Limited, Lome Container Terminal <https://tilgroup.com/our-terminals/lome.html>

Source: Port Autonome de Lome profile, AIVP <https://www.aivp.org/en/aivp/our-members/directory/port-autonome-de-lome/>

The strategic point behind the numbers: as political relations between Sahelian states and some coastal neighbours have frayed, cargo has rerouted. Corridors that used to be routine logistics choices have become political ones, and Togo has positioned itself as the least contentious option. That is good business and it is also delicate business.

6.3 The economic picture

Indicator	Latest position
Real GDP growth	Estimated 5.9 percent in 2025, projected to ease to 5.0 percent in 2026, then average 6.0 percent across 2027 and 2028
Public debt	Projected to reach 64.8 percent of GDP in 2026, with debt distress risk assessed as moderate
Structural constraint	Poverty reduction has been slow, held back by limited fiscal space, uneven access to basic services between regions, barriers to investment and formalisation, and a fast growing young population needing jobs
Main industries	Phosphate mining, agricultural processing, cement, handicrafts, textiles, beverages
Trade blocs	African Union, AfCFTA, ECOWAS, WAEMU (UEMOA), WTO, OHADA

Source: World Bank country overview for Togo <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/togo>

Watch out

Several travel advisories note that land in Togo belongs to local communities rather than the state, and report that foreign nationals need high level authorisation to buy land. We could not verify the current text of that rule from a Togolese government source, so treat it as a reason to involve a Togolese notary early rather than as a settled fact. Do not buy land in Togo on the strength of a handshake, a photocopied deed or a blog post, including this one.

Money: currency, costs and how people actually pay

7.1 The currency

Togo uses the West African CFA franc, code XOF, shared with Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger and Senegal. It is issued by the BCEAO, the Central Bank of West African States.

The important structural fact is that the XOF is pegged to the euro at a fixed rate of one euro to 655.957 CFA francs. That peg has held since 1999. It means your euro costs in Togo are predictable, and your dollar, naira, cedi or rand costs move with whatever your currency is doing against the euro, not against Togo.

Notes come in 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000 and 10,000 francs. The Central African CFA franc, XAF, has the same face value but is a different currency and is not accepted here.

Source: BCEAO and West African CFA franc reference <https://www.bceao.int/>

Do this now

Memorise one anchor number. 10,000 XOF is about 15 euros. Once that sits in your head you can price anything on a market stall in your own currency in about two seconds, and you stop overpaying.

7.2 How to pay for things

- **Cash rules.** Most day to day transactions in Togo are cash. Markets, motorbike taxis, small restaurants, guesthouses outside the capital.
- **Mobile money is everywhere.** TMoney (Togocom) and Flooz (Moov Africa) are the two systems. The government itself accepts them for visa fees, residence card fees and company registration fees, which tells you how normal they are. You need a locally registered SIM to open a wallet, which is why an eSIM alone will not get you mobile money.
- **Cards work in Lome, patchily.** Visa is the safer card to carry. Mastercard acceptance is growing. American Express is largely limited to high end establishments. ATMs are concentrated in Lome and thin outside it.
- **Carry a cash buffer when you leave Lome.** Assume Kpalime, Sokode, Kara and anywhere rural are cash towns and plan accordingly.

Source: Banking and payments detail from an expatriate guide to Togo (secondary source, verify locally)

<https://www.iarniascyril.com/expatriation/settling-in-togo-expat-complete-guide/>

7.3 What things cost

How solid is this

Everything in section 7.3 comes from crowd sourced or commercial cost of living sites, not from a government statistics office. These figures are directional, not authoritative. They vary by neighbourhood, by season, by how well you negotiate and by whether the person quoting you thinks you just arrived. Use them to build a budget, then verify on the ground in your first week.

Housing in Lome, monthly

Area	Studio or one bedroom	Character
Centre-Ville	150,000 to 250,000 XOF	Central and convenient, noisier and more crowded, higher petty theft risk
Adidogome	200,000 to 400,000 XOF	The middle option where a lot of mid-range residents land
Tokoin and Kodjoviakope	300,000 to 600,000 XOF	Quieter streets, more reliable power, the premium most long stayers say is worth it

Outside Lome, rents drop by roughly 30 to 50 percent. In medium sized towns and rural areas, decent houses are reported in the 20,000 to 50,000 XOF a month range, with less reliable water, electricity and internet.

The lease terms you should expect

- Deposit of two to three months of rent, sometimes with quarterly or half yearly rent paid in advance.
- Standard lease of one year, renewable, with three months notice to leave.

Running costs and food

Item	Reported range
Utilities for an 85 square metre apartment (water, electricity, rubbish)	70,000 to 125,000 XOF a month, electricity being the variable one, far higher if air conditioning runs constantly
Unlimited fixed internet, advertised at 50 to 60 Mbps	15,000 to 30,000 XOF a month

Item	Reported range
Street food: brochettes, grilled fish at a night market	2,000 to 4,000 XOF
A sit down meal at a maquis	5,000 to 10,000 XOF
Upscale Lebanese or Italian in Kodjoviakope	Above 15,000 XOF
Short taxi ride within Lome	Around 500 XOF, up to about 2,500 XOF to the northern edges of the city

Source: Cost ranges compiled from Stamped Nomad Lome city guide <https://www.stampednomad.com/cities/lome>

Source: and an expatriate settling-in guide to Togo <https://www.jarniascyril.com/expatriation/settling-in-togo-expat-complete-guide/>

Three sample monthly budgets

Built from the ranges above. These assume you are not paying for international schooling, a car with a driver or regular flights home.

	Lean	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Rent	150,000	350,000	600,000
Utilities and internet	60,000	110,000	155,000
Food and household	90,000	180,000	300,000
Transport	25,000	60,000	150,000
Health cover and buffer	40,000	80,000	150,000
Rough monthly total (XOF)	365,000	780,000	1,355,000
Rough monthly total (EUR, at the peg)	about 557	about 1,189	about 2,065

We did the euro conversion using the fixed peg of 655.957 XOF to one euro, so those figures are arithmetic rather than estimate. The XOF column is the estimate.

Your turn

Copy the column that matches the life you actually want, then change three lines to match your reality. Most people get this wrong on transport and on the health buffer.

My rent Utilities Food

Transport Health Total

Getting there and getting around

8.1 Flying in

Everything international arrives at Gnassingbe Eyadema International Airport in Lome, code LFW, also called Lome-Tokoin. It is close to the centre of the city, which is one of the quiet pleasures of arriving here. A new terminal opened in early 2016 with capacity for up to two million passengers a year.

The airport is the hub of ASKY Airlines, a pan-African carrier headquartered in Lome. ASKY's whole model is connecting secondary and capital cities that lack direct links, funnelling them through Lome. Its network reaches around thirty cities. In July 2026 it took delivery of two new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft, and it launched a direct Lome to Kano service on 5 August 2026.

Source: ASKY Airlines newsroom <https://www.flyasky.com/tg/en/>

Airline	Where it flies from Lome
ASKY	Around 30 cities across West and Central Africa. Frequent routes include Dakar, Accra, Abidjan, Douala, Abuja and Kano
Ethiopian Airlines	Addis Ababa, plus North American services
Air France	Paris
Royal Air Maroc	Casablanca
Air Cote d'Ivoire	Abidjan
Brussels Airlines	Brussels

8.2 Arriving overland

Togo is narrow, which makes it one of the easier countries in West Africa to reach by road. You are never far from a border.

Crossing	Connects	Notes
Aflao / Kodjoviakope	Ghana and Lome	By far the busiest. Aflao sits in Ghana's Volta Region, Kodjoviakope is the Togolese town directly opposite, and the crossing itself is a short walk. Around three to four hours by road from Accra.
Hillacondji / Sanvee Condji	Benin and the Togolese coast	The eastern coastal crossing. Cotonou to Lome is roughly three hours.
Cinkasse	Burkina Faso and northern Togo	In the Savanes region. See section 11 before you even consider this route.

Watch out

Land border opening hours are shorter than you expect and are commonly reported as roughly 06:00 to 18:00 at Aflao. Arrive in the morning, not at dusk. Expect police checkpoints on the roads either side, expect to show your passport several times, and keep your online travel slip or visa printed on paper as well as on your phone.

8.3 Moving around inside Togo

Option	What to know
Zemidjan (motorbike taxi)	The default for short city trips. The name comes from Fon and means roughly "take me there fast". Fares are entirely negotiable and you agree them before you get on. No helmet is usually offered. This is the cheapest and the riskiest way to move.
Yellow taxis	Identifiable by yellow roof and yellow plates with the registration painted on the front doors. The better choice with luggage. Shared by default, so say if you want it to yourself and expect to pay more.
Minibuses	Cheap, crowded, slow, and how most of the country actually travels between towns.
Long distance coaches	Operate the north to south corridor along the N1. Book ahead in festival season.

Option	What to know
Hire car with driver	The sensible option for Kpalime, Kara and Koutammakou if you are not confident driving. A driver also absorbs the checkpoint conversations.
Self drive	Possible but not relaxing. Road conditions vary sharply once you leave the main highway, and there are frequent checkpoints.

Watch out

The US State Department advises avoiding travel at night outside Lome because of insecurity and poor road conditions, and notes limited infrastructure, limited emergency response capability and limited quality medical care. Take that seriously and plan to arrive before dark. On a long north-south drive that means starting earlier than feels necessary.

Source: US Department of State travel advisory for Togo

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/togo-travel-advisory.html>

Staying connected and keeping the lights on

9.1 SIM cards and data

Two operators matter: Togocom, the former state operator, and Moov Africa Togo, part of the Maroc Telecom group. Togocom generally has the broader rural footprint along the north to south corridor through Atakpame, Sokode and Kara, which makes it the safer choice if you are heading inland or up to Koutammakou. Moov Africa is competitive in Lome and along the coast.

SIM registration has been mandatory in Togo since 2011, so take your passport. The agent scans it and the SIM is usually live within half an hour. The country code is +228, mobile numbers start with 9.

Both operators have kiosks at Lome airport, past the baggage carousels, and stores in Lome, Kara, Sokode and other towns. Buying from an official store rather than a street vendor avoids the risk of an unregistered SIM being cut off later.

eSIM versus local SIM

An eSIM works the minute you land and saves you the registration queue, which is genuinely nice after a long flight. But it does not give you a Togolese number, and without a Togolese number you cannot open a TMoney or Flooz mobile money wallet, which is how a lot of Togo pays for things. If you are staying more than a week, or doing anything commercial, get the local SIM.

9.2 Realistic expectations

- 4G in Lome is usable. Reported real world speeds sit in the region of 10 to 25 Mbps on a good day.
- Coverage thins once you leave the main corridors. The Plateaux and Savanes regions are the weakest.
- 5G has been trialled in Lome. Do not build a plan around it.
- Power cuts happen without warning. If you work online, a power bank and a plan B matter more here than a faster tariff.
- Internet and mobile service have been shut down during periods of unrest. Keep offline maps, a downloaded copy of your documents, and cash.

Do this now

Download offline maps of Lome, Kpalime and Kara before you fly. Save your visa or travel slip, passport page, yellow fever certificate and insurance policy as files on your phone and print one paper set. Paper survives a network shutdown and a dead battery.

Health

This is general travel health information, not medical advice.

Vaccination needs depend on your age, health history, medication and itinerary. See a travel health clinic or your doctor at least six to eight weeks before you fly, because some vaccines need time to work and some need more than one dose.

10.1 Vaccines

Vaccine	Status for Togo
Yellow fever	Certificate required for all travellers aged nine months and over. Risk of transmission throughout the country.
Hepatitis A, tetanus	Usually advised
Typhoid	Recommended for most travellers, particularly people visiting friends and relatives, longer stays, and anywhere food and water hygiene may be poor
Diphtheria, hepatitis B, meningococcal meningitis, rabies	To consider, depending on your itinerary and activities
Polio	An additional adult booster is commonly recommended given the global increase in cases
Cholera	Selectively advised, only for those at highest risk

Source: NHS Fit for Travel, Togo <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/togo>

Source: NaTHNaC TravelHealthPro, Togo <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/222/togo>

10.2 Malaria

Malaria risk is high throughout Togo, in all areas, all year. There is no vaccine you can rely on for this, so prevention is behavioural plus tablets.

- Cover up after sunset with long sleeves and long trousers.
- Use insect repellent on exposed skin.
- Sleep under a mosquito net where one is provided or needed.
- Talk to a travel health professional about antimalarial tablets. Malaria in Togo is chloroquine resistant, so the choice of tablet matters.
- If you get a fever during or after your trip, say where you have been. Malaria can appear weeks later.

10.3 Medical care and insurance

The honest position is that serious medical care outside Lome is limited. The US State Department explicitly notes a lack of infrastructure, emergency response capability and quality medical care outside the capital, and says its own government has limited ability to offer emergency services to its citizens outside Lome.

What this means practically: buy travel insurance that includes medical evacuation, not just treatment. Check the policy actually covers Togo, covers motorbike travel if you plan to use zemidjans, and covers whatever adventure activity you have in mind.

Emergency numbers

Police 117. Fire and ambulance 118. These are widely published for Togo but we could not confirm them from an official Togolese government page, so confirm them with your hotel or host on arrival and save your embassy number alongside them.

10.4 Everyday things that actually make people ill

- Water. Stick to sealed bottled water or properly treated water, including for brushing teeth if your stomach is sensitive.
- Heat. Lome is hot and humid almost all year. Drink more than you think, and build a slow first day.
- Food. Street food is one of the best things about Togo. Choose busy stalls with high turnover and food that is cooked hot in front of you.
- Roads. Statistically, the highest risk on this whole list. A helmet on a zemidjan, a seatbelt in a car, and no night driving outside the city.

Safety, honestly

We are going to be blunt in this section, because a guide that soft pedals this is useless to you.

11.1 The north is a genuine no-go, and it is not optional

The Savanes region is under a state of emergency.

Foreigners must have special authorisation from the Government of Togo to travel in the Savanes region. Canada's advisory specifies written travel authorisation issued by the Ministry of Armed Forces of the Togolese Republic. This is not a formality you can talk your way past at a checkpoint.

The state of emergency was first declared in June 2022 and was most recently renewed in March 2026, alongside a 2026 to 2027 response plan for populations affected by insecurity and displacement.

What the major advisories say

Government	Position as of 2026
United States	Level 2, exercise increased caution, for Togo overall as of 9 March 2026. Level 4, do not travel, for the northern border region near Burkina Faso and for areas north of Kande, both due to terrorism and kidnapping. US government employees need special authorisation to travel north of Dapaong, on highways N24 and N28, and in Kpendjal and Kpendjal-Ouest districts.
United Kingdom	Against all travel to within 30 km of the border with Burkina Faso, except the city of Dapaong and the N1 highway leading to it from the south. Against all but essential travel to the rest of the Savanes region.
Canada	Exercise a high degree of caution in Togo overall due to social unrest, politically motivated demonstrations and violent crime. Avoid all travel within 30 km of the Burkina Faso border. Avoid non-essential travel to the Savanes region.

Source: US Department of State <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/togo-travel-advisory.html>

Source: Government of Canada travel advice for Togo <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/togo>

Source: State of emergency renewal, World Bank country overview <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/togo>

Armed groups operating out of southwest Burkina Faso have crossed into Togo and carried out attacks and kidnappings. Attacks can happen with little or no warning. Criminal and terrorist groups have kidnapped foreigners in Togo, and armed groups use extortion and kidnapping for ransom to fund themselves.

11.2 Everyday risk in Lome and the south

- **Petty theft.** Pickpocketing and vehicle break-ins happen, particularly in large market areas. The Grand Marche is the obvious example. Carry what you need and nothing you would mourn.
- **Protests.** Infrequent but real, and police response can be forceful. Avoid crowds, avoid Route Nationale 1 during announced demonstrations, and do not film security forces.
- **Night movement.** Walking around downtown Lome and along the beach road is fine in daylight and early evening. Late at night, take a taxi.
- **Online fraud.** Advisories specifically flag economic and romantic internet scams originating in the region as frequent and sophisticated. Never send money or financial details to someone you have not met.
- **Photography.** Do not photograph military installations, security forces, checkpoints, airports or government buildings. Ask before photographing people, and at the Akodessewa fetish market expect photography to be restricted or charged.

11.3 A legal fact that matters for some travellers

Same-sex sexual activity is criminalised in Togo. Article 392 of the 2015 Penal Code treats an indecent or unnatural act committed with a person of the same sex as an offence against public decency, and Article 393 sets the penalty at one to three years imprisonment and a fine of one to three million CFA francs. It applies to both men and women. Article 394 also penalises public expression and dissemination judged contrary to public decency.

Prosecutions specifically under Article 392 are reported to be rare, with arrests more often made on other grounds, and there is documented discrimination and violence against LGBT people. We state this plainly, without comment, because travellers have a right to know the legal position of the country they are entering.

Source: Human Dignity Trust country profile for Togo <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/togo/>

11.4 Before you go: the five minute safety routine

- ☐ Register with your embassy or its equivalent travel registration programme.
- ☐ Read your own government's current advisory, not just this guide. They update; printed guides do not.
- ☐ Share your itinerary and a daily check-in time with someone at home.
- ☐ Save your embassy number, your insurer's emergency line and your accommodation address in French, offline.
- ☐ Agree a plan for leaving the country in an emergency that does not depend on your embassy being able to help.

Culture, etiquette and not being the worst person in the room

12.1 How people relate

- Greet first, always. Bonjour, then ask how someone is, then get to the point. Skipping this reads as aggressive, including in shops and offices.
- Handshakes are normal. Use your right hand for giving, receiving and eating.
- Dress modestly away from the beach. Lome is relaxed but not casual about appearance, and formality helps in any official building.
- Bargaining is expected in markets and with zemidjans, and not expected in supermarkets, hotels or restaurants with printed prices. Agree the price before the service, not after.
- Tipping is not obligatory. Rounding up, or 5 to 10 percent for good service in a restaurant, is appreciated.
- Patience is a currency. Administrative processes take the time they take, and being visibly irritated makes them take longer.

12.2 Vodun and sacred sites

Vodun is a living religion practised by a large share of the population, not folklore and not an attraction. The Akodessewa fetish market in Lome sells plants, animal materials, statuettes, amulets and other ritual objects used in divination, healing, protection and ritual practice. It serves practitioners. It is not primarily a tourist stop, even though tourists go.

If you visit: go with a guide, ask before photographing anything, expect a fee for photography, do not touch objects, and do not treat a shrine like a photo backdrop.

12.3 The two big traditions, and how to be a good guest

Evala, Kara region, every July

Evala is the wrestling phase of the Kabye initiation system. Initiation generally begins around the age of eighteen and unfolds over a three year cycle. A young male initiate is called an Evalou, and he normally goes through three years before moving into later stages of the age-grade system such as Waah and Kondona. The Kabye also practise Akpema, a female initiation tradition.

Preparation traditionally includes eating dog meat, associated in Kabye explanations with strength and endurance, and recent reporting has documented three small ceremonial scarifications made near each ear. The wrestling is accompanied by songs, dances and encouragement from relatives around the arena.

In 2026 the wrestling opened at Pya on 11 July, with matches continuing across the region in the days after. Faure Gnassingbe attended the opening and the closing matches.

Etiquette: this is a rite of passage, not a sporting fixture laid on for visitors. Ask permission, do not get between initiates and their families, and take your cue from local guides on where you may stand.

A correction worth knowing

Evala is promoted inside Togo as important Kabye heritage, but as of September 2026 it is not on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Plenty of travel sites say otherwise. They are wrong.

Epe-Ekpe and the sacred stone, Glidji, around September

In 2025 UNESCO inscribed "The bearing of the sacred stone or the rites of the New Year in the Guin country in Togo" on its intangible heritage list. The tradition involves around twenty rituals carried out by the Guin people over several months to honour divinities and ancestors and mark the traditional New Year.

The best known moment is Epe-Ekpe at Glidji-Kpodji, near Aneho, when the sacred stone, Kpessosso, is taken or revealed. Its colour is read as a message about the year ahead. On 3 September 2026 the Guin-Mina community celebrated the 363rd edition. The stone revealed was white, which traditional authorities interpreted as a symbol of peace.

One thing people confuse: Gbagba is a different Togolese festival associated with other communities, not the sacred stone ceremony at Glidji.

Source: UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage lists <https://ich.unesco.org/>

12.4 Music, cloth and craft

Among Ewe speaking communities, Agbadza and Bobobo combine singing, percussion and dance. Bobobo developed as a social dance and spread among Ewe communities in Ghana and Togo through the twentieth century. Agbadza has older roots in Ewe war-dance traditions and is now performed in a wide range of settings.

Two names to know. Bella Bellow, born Georgette Nafiatou Adjoavi Bellow, became one of the leading figures in Togolese popular music in the 1960s and early 1970s, performed internationally, worked with musicians including

Manu Dibango, and died in a road accident in 1973 aged 28. The Togolese government marked the fiftieth anniversary of her death in 2023. King Mensah belongs to a later generation, combining contemporary music with Ewe styles such as Agbadza and Akpesse, and with Kabye dance and percussion, singing in Ewe, Mina and French.

On cloth: Lome's Grand Marche became known for the sale of pagne, the printed cloth used for clothing across West Africa. The trade is inseparable from the Nana Benz, Togolese women traders who built powerful textile businesses and became some of the most successful merchants in the region. If you care about African trade history, and about women in it, this market is the single most important thing you will see in Togo.

12.5 Food

Togolese food varies by region and household, and shares ingredients and methods with Ghana, Benin and the wider region, because these food traditions developed across communities that existed before the borders did.

Dish	What it is
Pate	A thick dough-like staple eaten with different sauces. Official Togolese tourism material lists versions with spinach sauce, with ademe (made from jute leaves) and with kodoro (made with baobab leaves).
Fufu	Starchy food boiled and pounded until smooth and elastic. Yam and cassava are both used in Togo. Often served with peanut sauce or other soups.
Ablo	A steamed fermented dough, usually eaten with a sauce.
Gaou	Bean fritters, commonly served with pepper.
Grilled fish and brochettes	The default street and beach food along the coast, best eaten where the charcoal smoke is thickest.

Source: Togo Tourisme, official tourism site <https://togotourisme.tg/>

Where to go, region by region

13.1 Lome and the coast

Place	Why go	Practical note
Grand Marche, Lome	The centre of the pagne cloth trade and the legacy of the Nana Benz women traders	Go early. Watch your pockets. Ask before photographing traders.
Akodessewa fetish market	Materials for traditional medicine and Vodun practice, still serving practitioners	Go with a guide. Photography restricted or charged.
Independence Monument and central Lome	The civic heart of the city and its colonial-era architecture	Easy on foot in the morning.
The beach road and Lome beaches	Palm-lined Atlantic coast right on the edge of the capital	Currents can be strong. Ask locally before swimming.
Aneho	Former colonial capital, faded and atmospheric, on the lagoon near the Benin border	About an hour east of Lome.
Glidji-Kpodji	The sacred stone rites of the Guin New Year, UNESCO inscribed in 2025	Near Aneho. Around September, check dates locally.
Togoville	Where the 1884 German protectorate treaty was signed, reached across Lake Togo	Traditional pirogue crossing from Agbodrafo.
Agbodrafo and Lake Togo	Lagoon town with a slave-trade era house, water sports on the lake	A common half-day out of Lome.

13.2 The Plateaux: hills, water and cooler air

Place	Why go	Practical note
Kpalime	The most pleasant highland town in the country, set in the foothills with coffee and cocoa around it, German colonial buildings, batik, pottery and wood carving	About 120 km northwest of Lome.
Mount Agou	Togo's highest point at 986 metres, reachable by tarred road, with panoramic views and villages on the slopes	The climb is sometimes organised as a group event with singing and dancing.
Kloto and Klouto	Butterflies in enormous variety, a draw for enthusiasts every year	Guided walks from Kpalime.
Wome waterfalls	Waterfalls reached on a walk through forest near Kpalime	Best after the rains.
Atakpame and Badou	Hill town and the route to further waterfalls deeper in the Plateaux	Longer day, hire a driver.

13.3 Centrale and Kara: the middle and the north

Place	Why go	Practical note
Sokode	Togo's second largest city, a genuine crossroads with its own ceremonial traditions	Good base for Fazao-Malfakassa.
Fazao-Malfakassa National Park	The largest protected area in Togo, roughly 2,000 square kilometres of wooded hills, plateaus and granite outcrops between the Centrale and Kara regions. Classified an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International, with several hundred bird species recorded.	Elephant numbers collapsed after poaching in the 1990s and only a few dozen are thought to remain in the region. Go for landscape and birds, not a big-five experience.
Aledjo fault	A dramatic rock formation where the road passes through a narrow cut in the mountain	On the N1, worth the stop.
Kara	The northern city, Kabye heartland, markets and festivals	The base for Evala in July and for Koutammakou.
Koutammakou	UNESCO World Heritage cultural landscape and the land of the Batammariba, whose takienta mud tower houses	The buildings are grouped in villages that also include

Place	Why go	Practical note
	have become the visual symbol of Togo. Inscribed in 2004 on the Togolese side and extended into Benin in 2023.	ceremonial spaces, springs, sacred rocks and initiation sites. People live here. Behave accordingly.
Keran National Park and Fosse aux Lions	Savannah landscapes and smaller wildlife populations in the north	Check current access and security before planning.

Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Koutammakou <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1140/>

Watch out

Dapaong and the far north sit in the Savanes region. Do not build an itinerary through there without reading section 11 first and obtaining written authorisation. Several of the most beautiful parts of northern Togo currently carry a do-not-travel rating from multiple governments.

When to go

The dry season from November to March is the easiest window for the whole country. Roads are more reliable, the Koutammakou landscape is most accessible and Lome is at its most comfortable. The rains, broadly April to June and again September to October, bring greener landscapes and harder northern roads. Heavy rain between April and October can cause flash flooding in Lome and low lying river valleys.

Window	What it is good for	The trade-off
November to March	Everything. Best roads, best access to the north, most comfortable coastal weather.	The busiest window, and harmattan haze can dull the northern views from December to February.
July	Evala wrestling in the Kara region. A genuine, living initiation cycle.	Rainy period, and accommodation in Kara fills up.
Around September	Epe-Ekpe and the sacred stone rites at Glidji-Kpodji, UNESCO inscribed in 2025.	End of the second rains. Dates are set by tradition, so confirm locally.
April to June	Green landscapes, fewer visitors, lower prices.	Rain, humidity, and northern tracks that turn difficult.

Public holidays

Offices, banks and many businesses close. Two of the dates below are specifically political and worth knowing about before you land.

Date	Holiday
1 January	New Year's Day
13 January	Liberation Day
Moveable, March or April	Easter Monday
27 April	Independence Day, from France, 1960
1 May	Labour Day
Moveable, 40 days after Easter	Ascension Day

Date	Holiday
Moveable, Monday after Pentecost	Whit Monday
21 June	Martyrs' Day, marked with military parades
Moveable, Islamic calendar	Korite (Eid al-Fitr) and Tabaski (Eid al-Adha)
15 August	Assumption Day
1 November	All Saints' Day
25 December	Christmas Day

Islamic holidays move each year against the Gregorian calendar and are confirmed locally, so check dates close to travel.

Three itineraries you can actually run

These stay entirely outside the restricted areas in section 11. Distances in Togo are short but road time is longer than the map suggests, so we have kept the days realistic.

Three days: Lome and the coast

Day	Plan
1	Land at LFW. Settle, get a SIM, walk central Lome in the late afternoon, eat grilled fish on the beach road.
2	Grand Marche in the morning with a guide. Akodessewa fetish market late morning. Independence Monument and the National Museum. Evening in a maquis.
3	Day trip east: Agbodrafo, pirogue across Lake Togo to Togoville, and on to Aneho. Back to Lome for dinner.

Seven days: coast, hills and the north

Day	Plan
1	Arrive Lome. Orientation and the beach road.
2	Lome: Grand Marche, Akodessewa, museum. Arrange a driver for the rest of the week.
3	Drive to Kpalime, around 120 km. Afternoon in the artisan workshops and the German colonial buildings.
4	Mount Agou for the views, then Wome waterfalls and the butterflies at Kloto.
5	Long drive north to Kara via Atakpame and Sokode. Stop at the Aledjo fault. Arrive before dark.
6	Koutammakou. A full day with a local guide among the takienta tower houses.
7	Fly or drive back south. If flying, check domestic schedules well in advance.

Fourteen days: the slow version

Take the seven day route and add: two extra nights in Kpalime for walking and coffee farms, two nights at Sokode with a day in Fazao-Malfakassa for birds and landscape, an extra full day in Koutammakou so you are not rushing

people's homes, and a final two nights back on the coast at Lake Togo doing nothing at all. If your dates fall in July, build the Kara stop around Evala. If they fall around early September, build the coastal end around Glidji.

Your turn

Sketch your own. Write the three things you would be sad to miss, then build the route around those instead of trying to see everything.

1.
2.
3.

The good, the bad and the ugly

No country deserves a guide that only lists the good parts. Here is our honest reckoning.

The good

- It just got far easier to enter. Any African passport holder can now come for 30 days without a visa, and ECOWAS citizens were already exempt.
- It is small and legible. You can see coast, hills and northern savannah inside a week without internal flights.
- The traditions are real. Evala and the Glidji sacred stone rites are happening because communities are doing them, not because a tourism board commissioned them.
- It is cheap by global standards, especially outside Lome.
- Lome is a genuine regional hub. An ASKY network reaching around thirty cities, and the busiest transshipment port in West Africa, make it a serious base for trade across the region.
- Setting up a business is unusually quick and cheap by regional standards, with a real one-stop shop and published fees.
- Koutammakou is world class and almost nobody outside West Africa has heard of it.

The bad

- French is not optional. Without it, living or trading here is genuinely hard.
- Infrastructure is uneven. Power cuts, patchy rural internet, and roads that deteriorate quickly off the main corridors.
- Healthcare outside Lome is limited, which is why evacuation cover is not a luxury.
- Tourism infrastructure is thin. Fewer good guides, fewer mid-range hotels and less online booking than Ghana or Senegal, so you do more of the work yourself.
- Cards and ATMs cluster in Lome. Plan cash for everywhere else.
- The heat and humidity on the coast are relentless for most of the year.
- Cost of living data for Togo is poor. Almost every number online is crowd sourced, so budgeting takes real legwork.

The ugly

- The far north carries a genuine terrorism and kidnapping risk. A state of emergency has run in the Savanes region since June 2022, renewed as recently as March 2026, and foreigners need written military authorisation to go there.
- The politics are contested and the state has used force. Protests in June 2025 were dispersed violently, with seven deaths and more than sixty arrests reported by the Media Foundation for West Africa.
- Internet and mobile shutdowns have been used during unrest.
- The constitutional change that made Faure Gnassingbe President of the Council removed presidential term limits from the top executive job. Opposition groups call it a constitutional coup. Whatever your view, it is the live political question in the country and it is not settled.
- Same-sex sexual activity is criminalised, with penalties of one to three years imprisonment and a fine.
- Road safety is poor, and night driving outside Lome is actively advised against.

Our position

Togo is a rewarding country for a curious traveller and a credible base for a regional business. It is not a country to visit carelessly, and the far north is not a country to visit at all right now. Both of those things are true at once, and anyone telling you only one of them is selling you something.

Should you actually move here? A worksheet

Answer these honestly. If you answer no to more than three, you are not ready yet, and that is useful information rather than a failure.

- ☐ I can hold a conversation in French, or I have a funded plan to get there within six months.
- ☐ I have income that does not depend on finding work locally, or I have a written job offer and my employer will handle the hiring authorisation.
- ☐ I can fund the residence card up front: 200,000 XOF for a one year card or 500,000 XOF for a three year card, on top of the visa.
- ☐ I can wait 30 to 45 days for the residence card without my status lapsing.
- ☐ I have health insurance that covers Togo and includes medical evacuation.
- ☐ I have seen where I would live, or I have a trusted person who has.
- ☐ I have a plan for power cuts and internet outages that does not break my income.
- ☐ I understand the political situation and I am comfortable with the risk of unrest and service shutdowns.
- ☐ If I am setting up a business, I have spoken to a Togolese notary or the CFE directly rather than relying on blogs.
- ☐ I have visited for at least two weeks first.

A realistic first-year sequence

- 14.** Visit for two weeks. Test neighbourhoods, internet, heat, food and your own patience.
- 15.** Decide your legal basis: employment, study, family or your own company. That decision drives everything else.
- 16.** Collect the expiring documents last: police record, non-conviction attestation, medical certificate. All must be under three months old when you file.
- 17.** Apply for the immigration visa (31 to 90 days, 65,000 XOF, renewable once) via voyage.gouv.tg.
- 18.** Land, get a SIM, open mobile money, open a bank account.
- 19.** If self-employed: register the company at the CFE and get the carte unique, tax clearances and social clearance.

- 20. File the residence card application online, pay, then attend DGDN on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday morning.
- 21. Collect the card on a Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday, 30 to 45 days later.

Your turn

Your three biggest unknowns right now, and who you will ask about each one. Naming the person is the part people skip.

Unknown 1 I will ask

Unknown 2 I will ask

Unknown 3 I will ask

Pre-departure checklist

Eight weeks out

- ☐ Travel health appointment booked. Yellow fever needs about ten days to be valid, and other vaccines may need more than one dose.
- ☐ Passport checked against the three-months-beyond-visa-validity rule.
- ☐ Decide which entry route applies to you: ECOWAS, African passport exemption, or e-visa.

Three weeks out

- ☐ E-visa application submitted, if you need one. At least six working days before arrival, ideally far more.
- ☐ Travel insurance bought, including medical evacuation and motorbike cover if relevant.
- ☐ Accommodation booked, at least for the first nights.
- ☐ Your own government's travel advisory read, not just this guide.

The week before

- ☐ Online immigration formalities completed at voyage.gouv.tg. Everyone, visa or not.
- ☐ African passport holders: travel declaration filed at least 24 hours before arrival, and the travel slip printed.
- ☐ Offline maps downloaded. Documents saved offline and printed on paper.
- ☐ Some euros or dollars to change, plus a plan for your first cash.
- ☐ Embassy registration done. Itinerary shared with someone at home.

In your bag

- ☐ Yellow fever certificate, in the original.
- ☐ Printed visa or travel slip, plus printed insurance details.
- ☐ Insect repellent, antimalarials, rehydration salts, basic first aid.
- ☐ Power bank, universal adapter, a torch.
- ☐ Modest clothing for towns and official buildings, light layers for Kpalime and the north.

Questions people actually ask

Do I need a visa if I hold a Nigerian, Kenyan or South African passport?

No, not for a short stay. Since 18 May 2026 all African passport holders can enter visa free for up to 30 days. You still complete a travel declaration on voyage.gouv.tg at least 24 hours before arrival and carry the travel slip. Nigerians were already exempt as ECOWAS citizens.

Can I get a visa when I land?

Plan on no. Togo moved to an online system precisely to remove the arrival queue, and airlines check for your visa or registration before boarding. Some third party sites still describe visa on arrival as available. Do not build a trip on that.

What does a tourist visa cost?

25,000 XOF for a single entry up to 15 days, 35,000 for multiple entries up to 15 days, 45,000 for up to 30 days multiple, and 65,000 for 31 to 90 days multiple.

How long does the e-visa take?

Up to five working days. Apply at least six working days ahead, or you pay a surcharge and risk missing your flight.

Is Togo safe?

The south and the centre are broadly manageable with normal precautions. The Savanes region in the far north is under a state of emergency and carries do-not-travel ratings from multiple governments because of terrorism and kidnapping. Read section 11 properly.

Is English enough?

For a guided holiday, just about. For living, working or trading, no. French runs everything official.

What is the money situation?

West African CFA franc, pegged at 655.957 to the euro. Cash and mobile money dominate. Visa cards work in Lome, less so elsewhere.

How much do I need per month to live in Lome?

Reported ranges put a lean single life around 365,000 XOF a month and a comfortable one around 780,000 XOF. Those come from crowd sourced data, so verify in your first weeks.

Can I drink the tap water?

Use sealed bottled or properly treated water, including for brushing teeth if your stomach is sensitive.

Do I need a yellow fever certificate?

Yes. It is required for all travellers aged nine months and over. Since 2016 it is valid for life.

When is Evala?

July, in the Kara region. In 2026 the wrestling opened at Pya on 11 July. It is an initiation cycle, not a show, so go with a guide and behave like a guest.

How fast can I register a company?

The CFE advertises under four hours for a complete file, at 28,250 XOF for a company if you are Togolese or an ECOWAS citizen, or 33,250 XOF otherwise. Practitioners report one to three working days for the full cycle including the printed certificate.

Can I buy land as a foreigner?

Do not assume so. Land in Togo largely belongs to local communities rather than the state, and several advisories report that foreign purchase requires high level authorisation. We could not verify the current rule from a Togolese government source. Use a notary.

Is there anything I should absolutely not photograph?

Military installations, security forces, checkpoints, airports and government buildings. And ask before photographing people or sacred objects.

Every source, with links

Checked on 12 September 2026. Government and multilateral sources first, then reference and health, then the secondary sources we used for cost and practical detail and which we flagged as such in the text.

Togolese government

- Togo Voyage, the official travel and e-visa platform. <https://voyage.gouv.tg>
- Togo Voyage, e-visa types, fees, documents and country lists. <https://voyage.gouv.tg/about>
- Togo Voyage, travel procedures. <https://voyage.gouv.tg/about/procedures>
- Service Public togolais, residence card procedure, costs and steps.
<https://service-public.gouv.tg/service/62a3b6e4c07b617d9d1b9bd9/papiers-citoyennete/demande-de-carte-de-sejour>
- Direction Generale de la Documentation Nationale (DGDN). <https://dgdn.gouv.tg>
- Centre de Formalites des Entreprises, company registration fees and forms. <https://cfetogo.tg/>
- Presidency of the Council of Togo. <https://presidenceduconseil.gouv.tg/>
- Republique Togolaise, official government news portal. <https://www.republiquetogolaise.com/>
- Togo Tourisme, the official tourism site. <https://togotourisme.tg/>
- Embassy of Togo in Switzerland, May 2026 visa exemption announcement.
<https://www.ambassadedutogo.ch/singlepost-togo-exemption-de-visa-pour-tous-les-ressortissants-africains--effective-des-le-18-mai-2026-385>

Governments and multilateral bodies

- US Department of State travel advisory for Togo.
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/togo-travel-advisory.html>
- Government of Canada travel advice for Togo. <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/togo>
- US State Department Office of the Historian, Togo. <https://history.state.gov/countries/togo>
- World Bank country overview for Togo. <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/togo>
- World Bank open data for Togo. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/togo>
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Koutammakou. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1140/>
- UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage lists. <https://ich.unesco.org/>

- CIA World Factbook, Togo. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/togo/>
- BCEAO, Central Bank of West African States. <https://www.bceao.int/>

Health

- NaTHNaC TravelHealthPro country page for Togo. <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/222/togo>
- NHS Fit for Travel, Togo. <https://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/togo>

Industry, press and secondary sources

These informed the cost estimates, transport detail and business practice notes. We have flagged them in the text wherever they carry a number.

- ASKY Airlines newsroom, fleet and route announcements. <https://www.flyasky.com/tg/en/>
- Terminal Investment Limited, Lome Container Terminal. <https://tilgroup.com/our-terminals/lome.html>
- AIVP profile of Port Autonome de Lome.
<https://www.aivp.org/en/aivp/our-members/directory/port-autonome-de-lome/>
- Ouestaf News on the May 2026 visa exemption.
<https://www.ouestaf.com/togo-integration-africaine-lome-exempte-les-ressortissants-africains-de-visa-dentree/>
- ConstitutionNet on the 2025 constitutional transition.
<https://constitutionnet.org/news/after-constitutional-change-togos-parliament-appoints-countrys-leader-top-position>
- Media Foundation for West Africa via AllAfrica on the June 2025 protests.
<https://allafrica.com/stories/202507020038.html>
- Human Dignity Trust country profile for Togo. <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/togo/>
- Togo First, business and public services coverage. <https://www.togofirst.com/>
- Stamped Nomad, Lome city guide (crowd sourced cost data). <https://www.stampednomad.com/cities/lome>
- Expatriate settling-in guide to Togo (secondary cost and banking detail).
<https://www.jarniascyril.com/expatriation/settling-in-togo-expat-complete-guide/>
- Saiga Tours guide to Togo's land borders. <https://www.saigatours.com/article/a-guide-to-togos-land-borders>

What we could not verify

Three things in this guide are deliberately marked as unconfirmed rather than presented as fact. First, the emergency numbers 117 and 118, which are widely published but which we could not confirm from an official Togolese page. Second, the rule on foreign land ownership, which appears in foreign travel advisories but which we could not trace to a current Togolese legal text. Third, minimum share capital for a SARL or SA in Togo, which is quoted consistently by law firms but not published on a government page we could find.

If you find a primary source for any of these, tell us and we will update the guide and credit you.

ABOUT

Ria's Colony

For the life you are becoming.

Ria's Colony exists to promote trade and tourism for women and countries across Africa.

We do that through teachings and training that help women speak up and communicate their value for trade and partnership. Through travel, both for events and for rest, because seeing another place changes what you believe is possible. Through trade expos and partnerships with governments and destinations. And through storytelling, telling trade stories properly so that the wider picture of African commerce is visible to the people who need to see it.

This country guide belongs to that last part. It sits alongside our blog series Exploring the Cultures of Africa: 54 Countries, One Continent, and it is written to be used, not admired.

How we work: Learn. Feel. Go. Connect.

Product and step	What it does
Style Vault Learn	Equip. The teaching side of the Colony, where you build the knowledge and the language to move.
Style Mirror Feel	Reflect. The work of seeing yourself clearly enough to show up with confidence and value.
Aerial View Go	Move. Travel, destinations and tourism partnerships, including our work with tourism boards and destination partners.
Aerial Connect Connect	Connect. Business development: market entry strategy, partnership introductions, market representation and trade missions.

What we commit to

Our brand values are curiosity, courage, care, integrity, belonging, joy, excellence and roots. In a document like this one, integrity mostly looks like refusing to make a number up. If we could not verify it, we told you.

Find us

- Website. <https://riascolony.org/>
- About Ria's Colony. <https://riascolony.org/about>
- The blog. <https://riascolony.org/blog>
- The series: Exploring the Cultures of Africa.
<https://riascolony.org/blog/series/africa-culture-series-54-countries>
- The Togo culture story that goes with this guide.
<https://riascolony.org/blog/togo-culture-traditions-evala-wrestling>
- African Country Guides resource collection.
<https://riascolony.org/resources/collections/african-country-guides>
- African ETA Tracker. <https://riascolony.org/eta-tracker>
- Aerial View, for travellers. <https://riascolony.org/products/aerial-view/travellers>
- Aerial Connect, for businesses entering African markets. <https://riascolony.org/products/aerial-connect>
- Join the Colony. <https://riascolony.org/join>
- Get in touch. <https://riascolony.org/inquire>

One last thing

Rules change and prices move. This guide was accurate on 12 September 2026 and every primary link is in section 20 so you can check it yourself. If you find something out of date, or something we got wrong, write to us at support@riascolony.org. We would rather be corrected than be confidently wrong in someone's hand luggage.

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