

Voodoo in Benin & Togo
Gone With The Wynd Expedition Number IV
14th – 22nd March 2020
€2000 excluding international flights

Join anthropologist Professor Lucciano Riggio, Collector Viktor Wynd & a small group on a trip to the Cradle of Voodoo – Benin & Togo, take part in and watch ceremonies, masquerades & sacrifices, visit shrines, temples and meet priests and a tribal king. Shop in traditional and Fetish Markets.

Highlights

We will attempt to see the Zangbeto Masquerade, where the Guardian of The Night, a tall masked figure possessed by the original pre-human Spirits of the nature and the night, appears spinning, dancing and crawling like a snake to protect the village from evil and dispense justice, we will visit Fetish Shrines, The Python Temple and perhaps see sacrifices and experience divination. Witness a Egungun Ceremony where the masked Spirits of The Ancestors appear amid much pomp, pageantry, drumming and celebration, Observe The Tem People's Fire Ceremony where they walk on, touch and eat fire to scare evil away. We will meet with Vodon priests and Professor Riggio will explain all. Viktor Wynd will also be actively looking for new wonders for his museum and we will be visiting several markets and looking to buy carvings, Fetishes and other magical objects

Day 1 - Saturday 14th March – Arrival into Cotonou

Fly into Cotonou Airport, be met and transferred to Hotel Chez Clarisse. Meet the team and a welcome dinner.

Day 2 – Sunday 15th March Cotonou/Ganvié/Possotomé

Breakfast at the hotel -Assistance for exchanging money and by a local SIM card - Departure to Calavi for a boat excursion to the stilt village of GANVIE - Benin's Venice where over 20,000 people live on the water, the town was originally founded to protect it's inhabitants from capture by The Fon Tribe to be sold as slaves to the Portuguese, as The Fon's religion prevented them fighting on water. Back to Calavi and transfer to POSSOTOME', for lunch before exploring by foot some of the villages on the beautiful LAKE AHHEME shores, including the holy wood of OKOME' and the small market of SEHOMI -Check in at Village Club Ahémé for dinner and the night

Day 3 – Monday 16th March - Possotomé/Abomey

Breakfast and departure for Abomey – magnificent former capital of The Dahomey kingdom & a visit to the Royal Palace.

In the afternoon/evening we hope to be able to watch an Egungun ceremony – Yoruba Masquerade where ancestral spirits may appear. Check in at the Hotel Guedevy.

Day 4 Tuesday 17th March - Abomey/Pays Taneka/Natitingou

Breakfast at the hotel, head North to visit the fabled Dankoli Festish Shrine – by repute Africa’s most powerful and a place of pilgrimage for followers the world over & the site of numerous animal sacrifices. Picnic lunch. A visit to a Taneka village to meet the King & notables. Spending the night & dinner at Hotel Tata Somba, Natitingou..

Day 5 Wednesday 18th March Natitingou/Somba and Tamberma/Sokodé

-Breakfast at the hotel . Visit Somba & Tamberna country, stopping of at Koussokoingou to visit the Tata (mud fortress) and the beautiful landscape of the Atakora mountains. Then crossing the boarder into Togo to visit Nadoba market and hopefully buy some fetishes, visit to Koutammakou village with its fortress like mud houses, guarded by fetishes. Ending the day at Hotel Central in Sokode and hopefully visit to a Fire Ceremony by the Tem people.

Day 6 Thursday 19th March

Sokodé/Atakpamé/Lomé

Breakfast at the hotel, then travelling South to The Grand Marche of Lome for some serious fetish shopping before checking in at Hotel Coco Beach

Day 7 Friday 20th March

Lomé/Togoville/Vogan/Grand Popo

-Breakfast at the hotel -Departure to Agbodrafo across LAKE TOGO by boat to visit TOGOVILLE, where we will see many fetish shrines and we will meet a fetish woman (we should be half naked to enter the temple) -Transfer to VOGAN for shopping at the weekly market -picnic lunch on the way -Border crossing into Benin - Near GRAND POPO we will attempt a ZANGBETO, the Guardian of Night, spirit ceremony

-Check in at Hotel Awale

Day 8 Saturday 21st March

Grand Popo/Ouidah/Cotonou

-Breakfast at the hotel -Transfer to OUIDAH to learn the history of slave trade and see “Door of no return”, see the pythons voodoo temple and the sacred forest -Lunch in a restaurant -Transfer to COTONOU and visit the artisanal market dinner and transfer to the airport

All meals and 3 litres of drinking water per day are included.

All accommodation in double/twin rooms

Single room supplement €200

The Team

Anthropologist Professor Luciano Riggio, from the African Museum of Verona, a specialist in the traditional societies of Benin, Togo, Ghana & The Ivory Coast

Leonardo Francesco Paluzzi, in charge of Logistics, an Italian resident of Mali who over many years has guided people across over 23 African Countries, both independently and through his company Kanaga Adventure Tours.

Viktor Wynd, Chancellor of The Last Tuesday Society, author & artist will be collecting items for his eponymous Museum of Curiosities, Fine Art & UnNatural History

To Book

- email info@thelasttuesdaysociety.org, a 50% deposit will be required to confirm your place, with the balance due by the beginning of February.
- €2000 – this is an expensive trip as the cost includes not only all transport, accommodation and food on the ground but also access to the various ceremonies.
- All travellers must have travel insurance

Exclusions

The price does not include - international flights, visas for Benin & Togo, insurance, photo permits, tips, personal expenses, drinks (other than water).

Please note

Even on the best of days things don't always go to plan. The itinerary shows what we are hoping to do and when, but is subject to change according to conditions on the ground and it may not always be possible or advisable to do everything. Indeed something more exciting might present itself when we are there.

Advice

We recommend flying with Air France via Paris, leaving London 11:30am on the 14th arriving at 21:30 departing at 23:55 on the 21st returning to London at 8am cost approx. £400

A yellow visa vaccination certificate or exemption is needed. Please get advise from a healthcare professional about what other vaccinations you will need (your GP's

Surgery will have a dedicated travel nurse).

Visa's to Benin & Togo must be obtained by travellers before departure

Bring Euros as these can be exchanged everywhere (fixed exchange rate with the CFA), other currencies will need to be exchanged at a bank

Whilst this is a collecting expedition all members are politely requested not to purchase any items containing natural history (monkey skulls etc) as these may be endangered species & very strong laws govern their import and export. Lets leave them the animals in the jungle where they belong.

Reading

Vodon – Secrecy & The Search for The Divine Power
Timothy R.Landry

VODON – African Voodoo
Fondation Cartier

The Viceroy of Ouidah
Bruce Chatwin