

For tours departing beyond 2010, itineraries may be subject to change. This will be confirmed by the publication of the 2011 brochure (issued in Oct 10).

2010  
Tour Dossier

# EXPLORE!

**BURKINA FASO** Dossier Ref. BF

## Tribal Lands of Burkina Faso

Issued 12 Aug 2010. Valid from 01 Oct 2009 to 01 Apr 2010  
Since first issue this dossier has been updated with amendments to the following sections: special highlights & itinerary days 2 - 10.

As our itineraries may be amended from time to time, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers, please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel. You can download the dossier from our website, [www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk). Of course we will notify you of any significant changes, but sometimes minor changes may simply be added to the tour dossier.

### JOINING TOUR ABROAD

**10 days/9 nights Land Only Ouagadougou to Ouagadougou**

Join Ouagadougou (day 1)

End Ouagadougou (day 10)

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point in Ouagadougou. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for name and address of hotel and time of rendezvous with tour leader.

### GROUP TRAVEL FROM LONDON

**11 days/10 nights Tour including Connecting Group Flights London-Ouagadougou-London**

Depart from London Gatwick Airport, arriving in Ouagadougou the same day (day 1 of land only itinerary)

Return from Ouagadougou (day 11), arriving London Gatwick the same day.

Passengers with non-group flights booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

### SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Among the many highlights featured on this tour, we particularly mention:

- \* **OUAGADOUGOU** Exploring Burkina Faso's eclectic capital.

#### Earth Matters

##### The Travel Foundation

Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website [www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk](http://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk)

##### Tourism Concern

Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)  
• For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

- \* **BOBO-DIOULASSO** Soaking up the rich colonial heritage and native history of one of the most captivating cities in West Africa.
- \* **BANFORA** Sacred lakes, cascading falls and the 'Domes' of Fabledougou.
- \* **GAOUA** Discovering the fascinating tribal cultures of the Gan, Lobi and Dagarti.
- \* **TRIBAL HEARTLANDS** A chance to take in the cultures, customs and tribal dances of some of the most diverse tribes of West Africa.

Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries on earth, but with a diverse wealth of human history. With some 60 different ethnic groups the country is one of the most densely populated in the Sahel region and this fascinating journey takes us through the homelands of the Mossi, the Gan and the Lobi on an odyssey that is quite staggering in its cultural mix. Beginning in its eclectic capital of Ouagadougou, we have an opportunity to ouagadougou something of the city before we venture into the landscapes of the country's majestic lake district. Passing the remarkable sculpture park at Laongo we journey through the tribal heartlands of the majority Mossi tribes, descendants of warriors who crossed here from Ghana centuries ago. We also visit the craft markets of Ouri and watch the tribal dancers of Boni en route to the lovely city of Bobo-Dioulasso, where its rich colonial history and traditional tribal architecture presents a quite enchanting fusion of the clash of cultures. In Banfora we have an opportunity to enjoy the scenic diversity of Lac Tengrela and the Kerfiughela Falls and the intriguing rock formations around Fabledougou, before crossing the lands of the Gan and the Senoufo to Gaoua, our gateway to the traditional village societies of the Lobi and the Dagarti. With a local guide we discover more of these fascinating people, meeting with the king of the Gan at Obire and learning something of the spiritual beliefs of the Lobi, before turning north, towards the Gourounsi regions around Pouni. Taking the opportunity to enjoy a tribal mask dance in a Gourounsi village, we then head back towards the capital and the end of this incredible journey.

### LAND ONLY ITINERARY

**Be Prepared:** While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary. Places visited and routes may vary depending on local road and weather conditions. Infrastructure in Burkina Faso is basic - roads can be rough, pot-holed and bumpy leading to delays and while distances are not large, drives might be long; hotel

#### Carbon Offsets Included

As part of our responsible tourism policy we offset carbon emissions from all customer and staff flights booked by Explore. Our carbon offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to offset your carbon emissions through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.



accommodation is also basic in the more remote areas. Bush camps will be basic with minimal facilities and everyone is expected to put up and take down their own tent. You are welcome to assist with the preparation of camp meals and camp chores should you wish to and, please, come with an open frame-of-mind to fully appreciate what will be a truly memorable adventure.

**Accommodation and Included Meals:** Please find the key to our accommodation ratings overleaf, and note that included meals are indicated in the itinerary below and are shown on the day they are provided (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner).

#### Day 1. Join tour Faso

Our journey begins in the Burkina capital of Ouagadougou, surely one of the most enticing sounding cities in West Africa. Traditionally the centre of the Mossi empire, its streets are a hotch potch of cultures, sights and sounds; an eclectic fusion of the old and the new, where taxis and scooters vie for space next to braying donkeys, goats and chickens, and where local barbers shave clients beneath the welcoming shade of a mango tree. **Overnight Hotel H+.**

#### Day 2. AM city tour; PM drive to Tenkodogo via Laongo

This morning we make a tour of the city, taking in the unique ambience and fascinating charms of its colourful markets and even more colourful characters. Later today we depart the capital and head northeast. We travel to the remarkable 'Sculpture Garden of Laongo', a project begun by a local artist in 1989, when he invited fellow artists from across the globe to come and work amongst the granite formations that make up this captivating outdoor venue. The original invitation saw some 18 sculptors from 13 different countries descend on the park, but since then their numbers have been swelled by a new influx every two years, making this incredible gallery an ongoing work of art. Our final destination for today is the town of Tenkodogo, birthplace of the Mossi empire. **Overnight Hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

#### Day 3. Drive to Ouagadougou via Mossi villages

In Tenkodogo we meet, if available, the local Moro Naba. We are in the tribal heartlands of the Mossi, who make up about 50% of the

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entire population of Burkina Faso. Claiming descent from the warrior clans that migrated here from Ghana, many of the Mossi are primarily farmers, raising a mix of crops, including millet, maize, sorghum and peanuts and they have a hierarchical system of government unique in the country. The ruling classes (the Nakomse) claim direct descent from the original invaders of the 15th century and they head up a political system that is overseen by the emperor (Moro Naba), who still resides in the capital and has a significant role in the social fabric of the country. Below them are the nabas, the chiefs who rule each region, presiding over a feudal system of local officials who raise armies, collect taxes and generally oversee the day to day running of the nyonyose, the descendants of the original inhabitants conquered by the invading Mossi over 500 years ago. Back in Ouagadougou we spend time in the Village Artisanal, a perfect place to see how local crafts are made. **Overnight Hotel H+ (included meals: B, L).**

**Day 4. Drive to Houde Region via Ouri**  
Departing Ouagadougou once more, our journey takes us west today, towards the cooler and more fertile landscapes that are home to the Bwaba people. We make a stop in Ouri to visit a village of carvers and blacksmiths: all working and producing masks and different tools. In Ouahabou we find ourselves at the centre of what was once of the most important Muslim enclaves in the country, part of a Wahabi state whose influence stretched across the lands of the indigenous Winye and Bwaba. We will have an opportunity to visit the town's mosque, a superb mud brick structure of Sudanese design, built in 1830 by El Hadji Karanto Mahamadou, the original founder of the village in the early years of the 19th century. **Overnight bush camp C (included meals: B, L, D).**

**Day 5. To Gaoua via Boni**  
Today we attend a Bwaba masks performance and then we move to Gaoua through Dagarti region. The Bwa wooden masks represent a number of characters in the myths of their families and clans. Some masks represents animals, other represent bush spirits. With stylized faces surmounted by a tall, rectangular plank, the masks tend to be two-dimensional with impressive geometrical patterns and, like all masks of the Volta basin region, they tend to be chromatic with the predominance of white, red and black. On the day of a dance, everything is cleaned, the housework done and everyone is dressed in their best outfit. Now, in the middle of the village, people are impatient. The masks are coming and it is the event. Masks are the Spirits of the village. They accompany the life of human beings and of nature. People depend on the fields to survive and fields depend on the Spirits for

their production, Spirits depend of the cult offered by the adepts. Masks are the symbols relating human beings, nature and Spirits. Suddenly drums announce the dances. The Spirits arrive in shape of wooden owls, butterflies, antelopes, buffaloes, and hyenas. The movements are fast, on the rhythm of drums accompanied by flutes. Onlookers participate with songs, comments and laughs. It is a form of street theatre that melts sacred, traditions and enjoyment. The heat of midday will end the celebration after which it is time to rest and to share the emotions of this special morning. Later today we visit Dagarti villages. They share the same environments with the Lobi and learned from them how to build fortified houses. Today they keep strong ties to the invisible world of Spirits, represented by fetishes, altars and sacred sites. **Overnight Hotel H+ (included meals: B, L).**

**Day 6. Visit Lobi Villages around Gaoua**  
We will spend the day visiting local Lobi villages with a Lobi guide, making the most of the opportunity to learn a little something about these usually reclusive people. The Lobi make up less than 10% of Burkina's population, comprising a collection of ethnic groups whose name translates as Children of the Forest. Naturally shy and mistrustful, for years the Lobi had to endure constant attacks from the Guiriko and Kenedougou, as well as the less than sympathetic attentions of the French. Fiercely independent they still adhere to many of their traditional customs and animist practices, worshipping distinctive wooden fetishes and continuing to uphold their age-old beliefs in the spirit world. Residing in fortified mud brick compounds in family groups, much like their Dagarti neighbours, the men still carry bows much as their ancestors have for generations and the Lobi, even today, still have a fearsome reputation as hunters and warriors. The famed Lobi statues, known as bouthiba, act as conduits between the material and spirit worlds and this afternoon we will have an opportunity to discover more of their remarkable history and significance at the museum in Gaoua. Set within the confines of a French colonial edifice dating from the 1920s, the museum contains a wealth of artefacts, statues, musical instruments and photographs, which allow us to explore another facet of these truly exceptional people. **Overnight Hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

**Day 7. To Banfora via Senoufo and Gan villages**  
Our journey takes us next onto the homelands of the Gan, passing through the villages of Poni, Loropeni and Obire, where we hope to meet with the local king. The Gan are believed to be the original inhabitants of these southern regions, arriving from Accra centuries ago and bringing with them their

unique form of government. The Gan are ruled over by alternating dynasties, regal succession switching between Karangasso and Obire (the capital of the Gan region and the current location of its ruling king). Little more than a village, Obire is a fascinating collection of tombs and monuments to former kings, and an opportunity to wander the village and hear some of the tales and legends of its past rulers affords a unique insight into the cultural heritage of these remarkable people. Later we head across the tribal heartlands of the Senoufo, a people who, even amongst the local tribes evoke an aura of mystery and intrigue. Famed for their hunting prowess and abiding in the belief of a supreme being, the Senoufo are spread across the landscapes of western Burkina, Mali and Ivory Coast. **Overnight Hotel H+ (included meals: B, L).**

**Day 8. To Bobo-Dioulasso**  
We first explore the captivating town of Banfora, occupying a lush landscape of sugar cane fields and forested hills besides the flowing waters of the Comoe River. Banfora is famous for its markets and the town attracts Gouin, Karaboro and Turkla from around the region to its vibrant streets. Close by we aim to visit nearby Karfiguela Falls taking in the tumbling cascades before we head to the lakeside village of Tengrela, famed for its hippos and Senoufo dancers. Then it's onto the remarkable geological formations of the Fabledougou 'Domes', giant, egg-shaped rocks that are believed to date back some 2 billion years, to a time when this entire region was under the ocean. Finally we reach Bobo-Dioulasso where there's the chance to experience some local music later in the evening. **Overnight Hotel H+ (included meals: B, L).**

**Day 9. To Pouni via Boni**  
This morning we explore Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina's laid back second city and regarded by many as one of the most attractive in West Africa. Old colonial mansions line sweeping avenues, in part shaded by mango trees, and there is certainly a relaxed feel to the place that provides more than just a hint of its French colonial past. We then travel via the village of Boni, where we will hope to see a traditional plank mask ceremony, which has long been a way of combining the creation

## Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room for each night of the tour.

**EXPLORE ACCOMMODATION RATINGS** : An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round.

To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning.

### Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

**H++** : Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

**H+** : Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

**H** : Basic hotels, lodges or guesthouses (also village houses, mountain huts, hotels etc often come into this category). Accommodation may be communal or dorm-style, and WC / washing facilities are usually shared. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable or even unavailable. These can be the most rewarding and memorable places to stay, but comfort levels are low.

### Camping

**C++** : Comfortable, full service camping generally in permanent, fixed camps with walk-in tents, proper beds and often with en-suite facilities and other amenities such as dining area, bar, gardens and a swimming pool. Your bed-linen is provided.

**C+** : Standard camping in private or public campsites, usually with WC and washing / showering facilities in a shared ablutions building. Typically in two person tents, and some level of participation is often required. Generally bed linen or sleeping bags are not provided.

**C** : Basic camping in wild camps where facilities / amenities may be limited or non-existent. Generally there is no running water, and we dig a temporary bush toilet. Two person tents are often used, but occasionally we sleep under the stars. Participation normally required and sleeping bags usually not provided.

**Note:** other accommodation, for example, aboard boats or on overnight sleeper trains is described individually at the appropriate point in the tour itinerary above.

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myths of the clans with the cycle of life amongst the villages. Covered in geometric patterns, predominantly of black, red and white, these ceremonial rituals fuse tradition, the spiritual world and good old fashioned fun into a dazzling street theatre of drums, dance and song. Later today we transfer to the Gourounsi region. **Overnight bush camp (included meals: B, D).**

#### Day 10. To Ouagadougou via Gourounsi region

This morning we will be treated to a display of a tribal mask dance. These beautifully made and ornately decorated wooden masks represent the bush spirits and often take animal forms, affording us a glimpse of the wild colour and vibrant energy of a display that is steeped in magical traditions that are so essentially Africa. From here we drive back to Ouagadougou, arriving later this afternoon, where the tour ends. The group flying back to London early the following morning will have the use of day rooms until the late evening transfer back to the airport for the flight home. **(included meals: B).**

### PERSONAL EXPENSES

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

#### Foreign Exchange

**Local Currency:** Communauté Financière Africaine Franc (commonly known as CFA). The responsible authority is the Central Bank of the West African States.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** We suggest you take the majority of your spending money in mainly Euros cash. Take mixed denomination bills in good condition.

**Where to Exchange:** Banks in Ouagadougou - your Tour leader will advise you.

**ATM Availability:** Very Limited.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Credit cards are hardly accepted anywhere in Burkina Faso.

**Travellers Cheques:** Travellers cheques are hard to exchange even in Ouagadougou and we recommend you rely on Euros cash.

**Additional Information:** Do not attempt to change money on the black market.

Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currency-express.com/explore/>

#### Meal Plan

**Local Food and Drink:** 9 breakfasts, 5 lunches and 2 dinners are included on this trip; please be prepared to pay for all other meals. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as an average guide only.

	UK	Burkina Faso
Tea/Coffee	£1.20	€0.90
Soft Drink	0.80	1.20
Bottle of Beer	2.50	1.85
Bottle of Water	0.80	1.25
2 Course Meal*	10.00	7.00
3 Course Meal**	18.00	10.00

\*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

\*\*Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

#### Tipping

**Local Staff:** Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly you should allow approx. €15 for gratuities for local staff.

**Tour Leader:** At your discretion you might also consider tipping your tour leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

#### Other Sightseeing

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

**BOBO** Drumming lessons €4.50.

**GAOUA** Lobi dancing €8.

**LAKE TENGRELA** Boat trip €3.

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

#### Seasonal Climate

In Burkina Faso the dry season lasts from November to May, during which the Harmattan winds can cause travel to be very dry and dusty. Daytime temperatures range in the mid to high 30s Centigrade, but nights can be chilly, with the temperature dropping down to the mid teens.

Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

#### Visa Requirements

A single entry visa is required by all nationalities. Although visas are available on arrival we strongly recommend you obtain your visa prior to your visit, as airlines may refuse boarding, queues on arrival can be long, processing slow and passport may be held with immigration for up to 48 hours. Visas are available through the embassy or you may choose to use Explore's recommended visa service.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

#### Vaccinations & Protection

A Yellow Fever vaccination and certificate is a compulsory requirement for entry into Burkina Faso. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, diphtheria, tetanus, typhoid and polio. You may also want to take immunisation against meningococcal meningitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Take all your vaccination certificates with you as they may be requested on entry.

**Special Note:** Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

The above is not an exhaustive list.

Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

#### Electric Supply and Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

#### Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. You must take your policy document with you on tour, as your tour leader will ask to see this at the start of the trip. Your documentation must state in writing

that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for your period of travel. Your policy document must also indicate that you have medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover and a 24-hour contact telephone number for your Insurance Company must be shown on your documentation in case of emergency.

**If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip.** If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

#### Know Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs, including advice re: the legality of and local attitudes towards same-sex relationships. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

### PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

A complete list of clothing and personal gear is contained in Explore's '**General Information Booklet**', available only after a booking has been accepted. Here we make a few specific recommendations with regard to your tour.

**Luggage:** Take a tough soft bag or holdall (or rucksack with detachable frame) suitable to be carried by 4WD vehicle. Total allowance: **33lbs/15kg maximum** (due to weight restrictions on our vehicle). Also take a day sack for items needed during any short walks (20-30 litre). The limit does not include your camera equipment.

**Clothing:** Pack essentially for '**All Tours**' plus '**Hot Conditions**'. Clothing should be lightweight but a warm sweater is also advisable, as nights can be cold in Burkina Faso. A scarf is also recommended as protection against dust whilst driving in the drier areas.

*Burkina Faso is a Muslim country and it is important to dress with respect for local customs. People may be offended by shorts or revealing dresses, which can attract unwelcome attention. We advise that in general both men and women should cover shoulders, upper arms and knees. Transparent, plunging necklines and tight-fitting clothes should be avoided. Women should also cover their heads when entering a sanctuary, though in general, mosques are forbidden to non-Muslims.*

**Footwear:** Lightweight walking/hiking boots with good ankle support, plus trainers or sandals for relaxing and travelling in.

#### RAMADAN 2010 11th August – 9th September

**Please note** that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. There may be some limitations to services and disruptions to schedules during Ramadan, but generally our tours still operate effectively during this period and food is available to non-Muslims throughout the day in most countries.

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