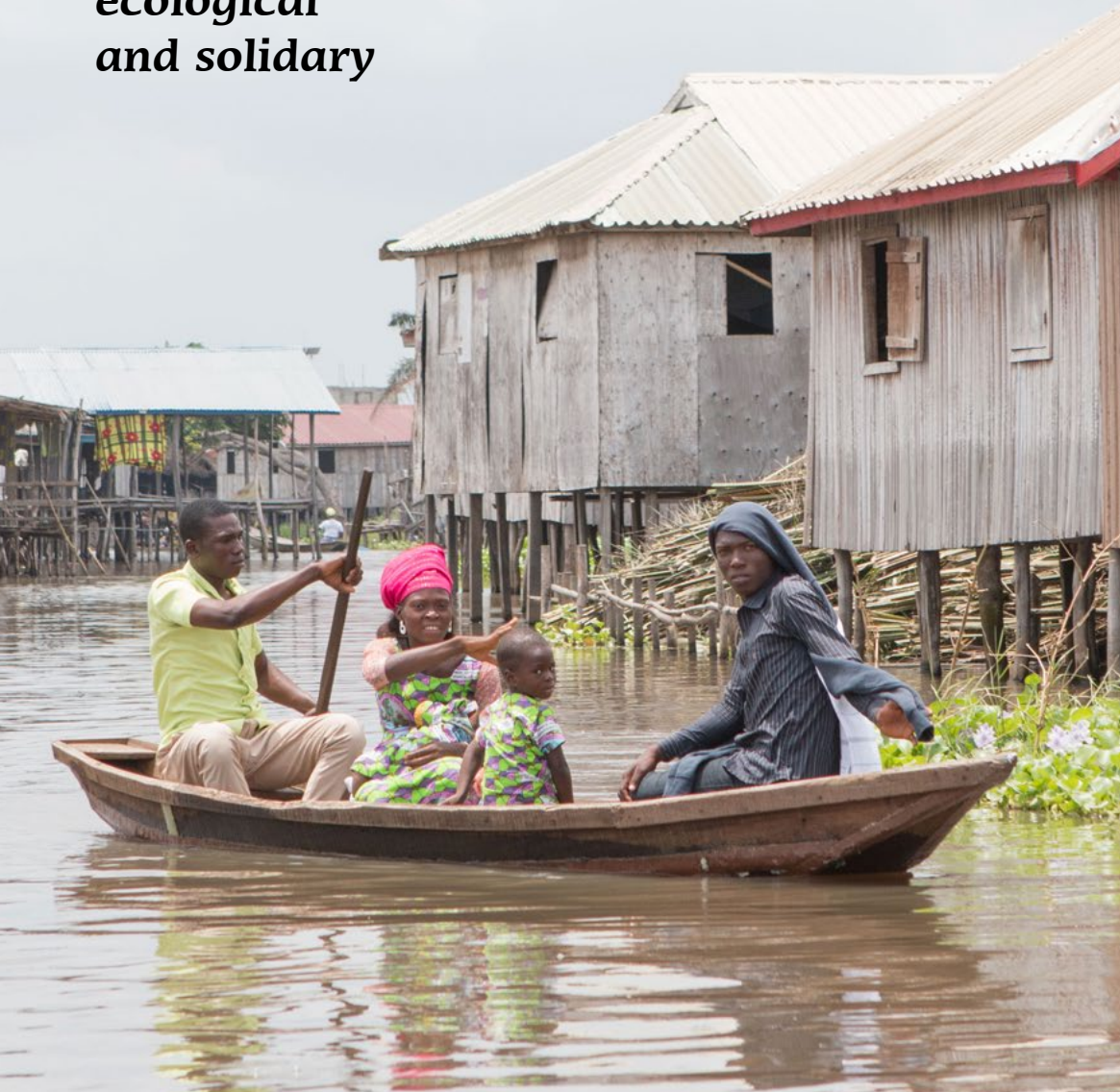


# BÉNIN

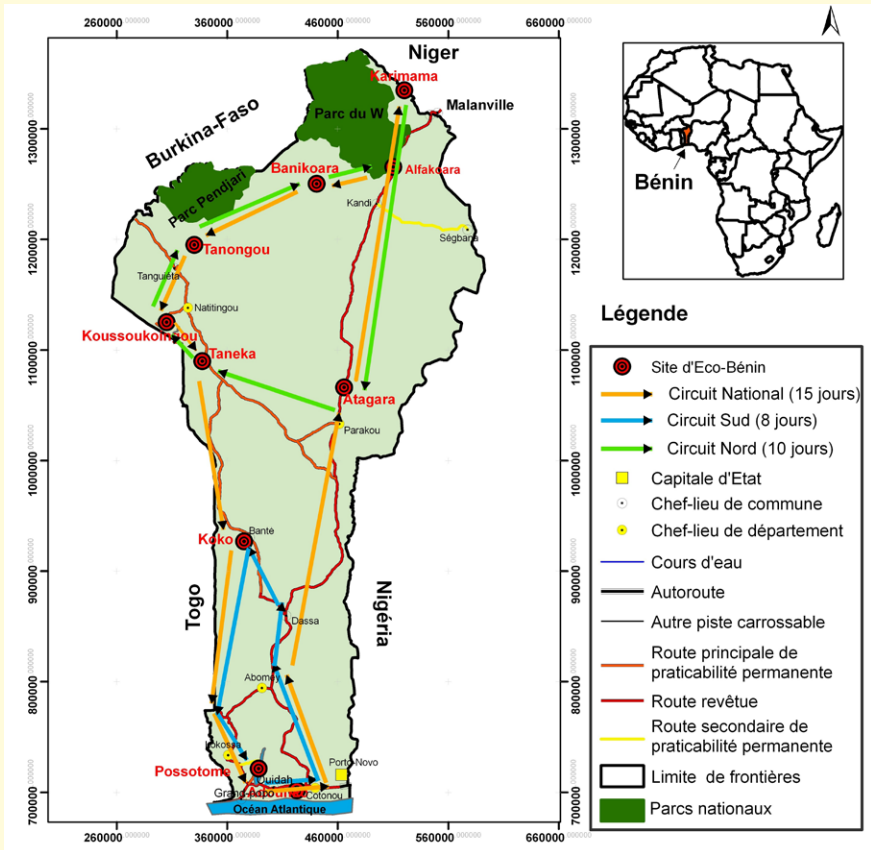
2018/2020



**Travel responsible,  
ecological  
and solidary**



## Our sites and community ecotourism trips



## Welcome to Benin

Benin, a true melting-pot of ethnic groups, is a destination to be discovered, a country attached to its traditions and ancient beliefs such as voodoo. Its typical tropical flora and fauna and its warm hospitality await you. Benin is a peaceful democratic country since 1990 and has a periodic change of power. Freedom of movement and of press are complete. Local as well as national administrations have good relations with foreign and international institutions.

## Organization Eco-Benin

Eco-Benin is the pioneer of ecological and fair tourism of West Africa, and has a 18 years experience in offering ecotouristic itineraries to encounter the country and its inhabitants, combined with local development and preservation of biodiversity. Eco-Benin uses ecotourism as a lever for economical development of the local communities that manage themselves. It offers technical collaboration, from the start-up of projects to their extension, with the help of about 20 professionals of diverse disciplines. Eco-Benin assure the coordination of the International Organization of social and fair tourism (OITS) in Africa and is also active member of the International Society of Ecotourism (TIES). In each of these villages from the South to the North, people give us a warm welcome, and assure lodging, food, guided tours services. These activities complement their income. The amount paid by travelers is share between local associations et the district, which use it for community actions as : well construction, lighting of schools, natural and cultural Heritage keeping, helping for local production, for every body. Besides ecotourism, Eco-Benin work with local communities on several projects of environnement



### Highlights

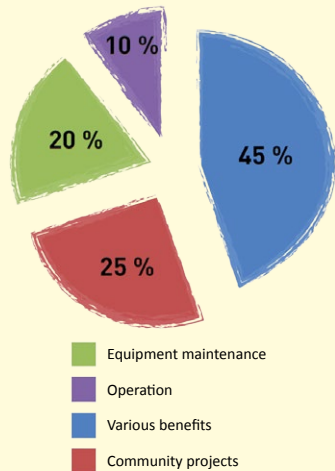
- A legendary welcome
- A 100% natural destination
- Life of music and rhythm of festivals
- Traditions and beliefs are alive
- Renowned historic sites
- Pleasant temperatures
- A feast of colours, aromas, tastes
- Unforgettable experiences
- Choice for biodiversity and fairness

protection. In the South, we have the planting of mangroves, the creation of the natural reserve of "La Bouche du Roy" in the Delta of Mono and in the North, the production of fuel-saving 'Wanrou' cooking stoves, the promotion of agroforestry and agroecology. To travel responsibly and in solidarity with Eco-Benin is to discover the country that welcomes us and its inhabitants in respect of its nature and culture. An unforgettable human experience.

## Ecological and solidarity travel, what is it?



Fair distribution of revenue from circuit sales :



The ecological journey is not the humanitarian. It is the pleasure of discovering a fascinating country, with its population and its environment. A dive into another culture, another daily, with contacts and cultural exchanges.

## The ten commandments of ecotourism

1 - Only leave footprints, take only pictures.

2 - Respect the fragile environment and realise that both residents and visitors must participate for its conservation.

3 - Enrich your travel by taking time to get informed about habits, language, behaviour and culture of the region; during your stay ask many questions, take the opportunity to discuss and exchange with local people, get home with some words and stories that represent the local atmosphere.

4 - Be friendly and patient with the guides, the servants and other tourists assistants and maintain a quiet and warm atmosphere.

5-Respect and support the indigenous cultures (religion, tradition, artisans, gastronomy, tourist services) and

the private life and dignity of all. Always ask permission before taking pictures.

6 - Don't throw your garbage anywhere. Take a small garbage bag with you. Leave your place behind properly.

7 - Do not buy artefacts made from protected or endangered animals or plants.

8 - Cooperate with the ecoguides and always follow their instructions and recommended itineraries. Conserve wildlife and vegetation.

9 - Support the nature conservation programmes initiated by Government, NGO's and environmental protection agencies.

10 - Walk, or use public transport as much as possible. Encourage drivers to stop the engine when standing still.



## What travel option ?

**Itineraries, standard or tailor-made,** accessible for all, with accompaniment from airport to airport and local guides.

**Accommodation :** unpretentious hotels, inns, ecolodges, guesthouses, houseguest, bivouac ...

**Transport :** public transport, private car, fourwheeldrive in the parks, canoe, bicycle, hiking.

**Food :** made from local products (rice, maize, cassava, fonio, avocado, yam ...) accompanied by greens, meat, local cheese, fish, eggs, and seasonal fruit (pineapple, orange, banana, mango, coconut, pawpaw ...).

**Beverages :** 2 bottles of mineral water per day per person included in the price; beer, softdrink, "tchouk" or sorghum beer, "sodabi" or palm wine spirit are not included.

**Included in the price :** local transport, meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner), accommodation, visits and excursions listed in the programme, 'carbon action' (reforestation of mangrove or production of fuel-saving stoves), guide and accompanist.

**Not included :** air ticket, personal expenses, beverages (other than mineral water), excursions not mentioned in the programme, supplementary meals.

### Useful information

1 Euro = 655.954 franc CFA

Local time = GMT + 1

Passport and visa

Yellow fever vaccination required

Profylaxis anti-malaria and protection against

mosquitos indispensable

Electricity 220 V



## Travel and carbon action

Travelling with Eco-Benin means meeting the local people and admiring the splendour of the scenery and the riches of the African cultural heritage, and also to act for the climate! In all itineraries, Eco-Benin suggests your participation (included in the price) in a 'carbon action' to compensate the CO<sub>2</sub> emission caused by the travel.

# Colours of South of Benin



With this tour, we will share the daily life of Beninese families of South of Benin, to discover their life style and the local cultural wealth. Between the fishermen and the immersion in Benin history, a week that teaches us every day !

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to BTA center accommodation.

## Day 2 : Cotonou – Ganvié – Cotonou

Introduction into the culture and exchange transaction in bank, and transfer by car and

canoe to the marshlands of Sô Ava and Ganvié, the ‘Venice of Africa’. Discover the local bird life. Lunch and return to Cotonou. Dinner and night at BTA center.

## Day 3 : Cotonou – Bohicon

We are heading towards Abomey, the town of Kings, and we will visit the surprising underground village of Agongouinto which served as a hiding place for warriors. Dinner and accommodation at the hotel.

## Day 4 : Abomey – Possotomé

Guided tour of the ancient royal palace of Abomey listed as a UNESCO world cultural heritage. Transfer to the shore of lake Ahémé. After the lunch at Possotomé beach, we discover the traditional use of plants for medicinal and food purposes. Evening programme with legends, stories, and accommodation at the eco-guesthouse.

## Day 5 : Possotomé

We make a boat trip on lake Ahémé with its changing colours, to take part in the daily life of fishermen and to practise throwing a net

during the voodoo hike, we will learn about the divinities of the village. Evening with music, and accommodation at the eco-guesthouse.

#### Day 6 : Possotomè – Kpétou – Possotomè

We will track the Mona monkeys in the sacred forest of Kpétou. Homestay lunch. we share women's activities, such as matweaving and market gardening. Return to Possotomè. Dinner and night.

#### Day 7 : Possotomè – Avlo

Travel to Avlo, magnificent fishing village enclosed between the river Mono and the Atlantic ocean. Boat ride to the "boca del rio", where the river meets the ocean. Enjoy a swim. Afternoon village tour. You are invited to participate in replanting mangroves, a "carbon action" that contributes to the fight against global warming and facilitates the reproduction of fish. Night at the ecolodge at Avlo beach.

#### Day 8 : Avlo – Ouidah – Cotonou

We make our way to the famous town of Ouidah, where captured slaves started their journey to the New World. Turned into a museum, the old Portuguese fort plunges us into one of the most memorable moments in history. We will follow the slave road that was walked by chained men, women and children to the "Gate of No Return". Continuation to Cotonou, visit the enormous market of Dantokpa and the Center of Promotion of Artisan work. Transfer to the airport and good bye.

**8 days/7 nights - 580 €/Person**  
Half board. From 4 persons





# Nature and Culture



A trip that takes us through Benin from north to south and allows us to enjoy the varied landscapes of the country, but not only! As we cross, we discover the traditions and cultures of Beninese people as well as the local biodiversity. This is how we set out to meet the African fauna at Pendjari Park before setting foot in the water at Ahémé lake and Avlo. Benin in all its diversity!

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to BTA center, dinner and night at BTA center.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Dassa

Breakfast. Departure for Dassa, the town of 41 hills. Lunch. Stop at OKUTA, a natural site of granite offering a great place where artists from Africa and beyond



express themselves on the local rock. Transfer to CPN (nature study and protection center) 'Les Papillons'. Created in 1995, this association aims at public environmental education with special reference to ecotourism. Dinner and night at CPN.

### Day 3 : Dassa - Natitingou

Breakfast. Depart for Natitingou; in local language meaning 'the village of Nanto'. Lunch along the way. Arrival and check in. Visit of the regional museum of Natitingou. Dinner and night at the hôtel "Palais Somba".

### Day 4 : Natitingou - Pendjari Park

Early departure towards Tanguiéta. We discover the local fauna and cross many species of antelopes, elephants, buffaloes, and for the lucky ones, lions or cheetahs. Lunch in the park. Lunch in the park. Following the visit to the park. Night at the hotel in the park.

### Day 5 : Park - Tanongou - Koussoukoingou

Breakfast. Transfer to Tanongou, visit waterfalls and bathing and lunch at home made by one of TINFI restorers. Transfer to Koussoukoingou. Circuit „secret des tata“. These small castles are a harmonious marriage of esthetics and functionality. The small fortified huts, called „tata“, are the ingenious habitat of Bètammaribè, an incomparable builders' people, overnight at the otammari lodge.

### Day 6 : Koussoukoingou

Breakfast. Three hours hike to discover the hidden beauties in the valley near Koussou: the river where women come to fetch water, granary of the ancestor people, tata's scattered on the savanna. Lunch made from local ingredients by the caterers of the local association 'Pearl of Atacora'. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner and night at the Otammari lodge or in the tata.



### Day 7 : Koussoukoingou - Natitingou - Abomey

Early breakfast and departure to Abomey, the city of Kings and the hotspot of the voodoo culture. Lunch along the way. In the space of 300 years, 12 palaces were built in the capital of the kingdom of Abomey. Visit of Abomey historical museum, the former royal palace listed as UNESCO world cultural heritage. Conquest of the earth, resistance, colonization, cults and traditions, will be approached to better understand what is today. Return to Bohicon. Night at the hotel.

### Day 8 : Bohicon - Possotomè

Breakfast. Visit the underground village of Agongouinto at Bohicon. This open air museum has 56 of the 1600 underground houses that have been recorded on the Abomey plateau.



Travel to Possotomé to meet the Adja and Sahouè people. Lunch along the way. Arrival and check in at the guesthouse of Possotomé. Dinner at the campsite “Prefet’s place” a restaurant at the shores of lake Ahémé. Night at the guesthouse of Possotomé.

#### **Day 9 : Possotomé**

Breakfast. We will make an excursion “way of the water”. During this boat trip on the Ahémé lake, the guide will explain the different fishing techniques used by the villagers and the kind of fish they can catch with it. He will also explain about the voodoo water spirits and the function of the protected places that are consecrated to the fetish Avlékété, and will tell also the history of the lonely hippo of the lake. A swim is possible. Lunch at Prefet’s place. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at Prefet’s place and night at the guesthouse.

#### **Day 10 : Possotomé**

During the hike ‘bestowal of the senses’ we discover the use of medicinal plants in community life. Lunch. In the afternoon

we will make a walk ‘tradition and culture’ through Possotomé and the villages Okomé and Séhomi. Highlights are the explanations of the voodoo deities and their shrines, the role of the Tolegba, the rituals and ceremonies, and the importance of the sacred forest. We will also see the bartering market of Séhomi, where the women meet at the end of the afternoon to exchange their products. Dinner Prefet’s place. Sleep at the eco-guesthouse.

#### **Day 11 : Possotomé - Kpétou - Possotomé**

Breakfast and transfer to Kpétou. We spend the morning in the sacred forest to find the colony of Mona monkeys. Lunch in a village house. Return to Possotomé. Dance around the fire or dance party at the bar „la Boussole“. Night at the guesthouse.

#### **Day 12 : Possotomé - Avlo ( Grand Popo )**

Breakfast. Transfer to Avlo beach, a village situated between the river Mono and the Atlantic ocean. Lunch. We make a 1-hour walk to discover the village, the history, the traditions, cultures and characteristic voodoo cult of the Plah and Pédah people. Carbon action to compensate for our gas emission. Dinner and night at the Avlo beach ecolodge.





### Day 13 : Avlo

Departure for “La bouche du Roy”, the place where the river meets the ocean. Lunch under the sunshades of the ecolodge. Afternoon at leisure at the beach. Dinner and night at the Avlo ecolodge.

### Day 14 : Avlo - Ouidah - Cotonou

Departure to Ouidah lest we forget. Ouidah was one of the most important slave trade centers during the 18th century. We will visit the museum in the old Portuguese fort and we will walk the Slave Road to the Gate of No Return, a monument that is on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. Lunch and return to Cotonou. Visit the Zinsou foundation of contemporary African art, or the Center of Artisan Promotion to get some last souvenirs. Dinner and transfer to the airport.



**14 days/13 nights - 1 165 €/Person**  
Half board. From 4 persons



# To the rhythm of the waves



In the middle of villages and beaches of the West-Beninese coast we will discover the way of life and the daily chores of fishermen. From the lagoon village Ganvié to Avlo, via lake Ahémé we will appreciate the ingenuity of the people, and the natural and cultural richness.

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to the hotel.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Possotomé

Leave for Possotomé at the shores of lake Ahémé. After having experienced

the gastronomy at 'Prefet's Place', we will go around some picturesque lake-side villages and meet fishermen, farmers or cattle herders and voodoo practitioners. Accommodation at the eco-guesthouse.

## Day 3 : Possotomé

At the lake we throw the casting net and discover the role of the deity Avlékété in the protection of areas where fish reproduces. During the afternoon we discover the use of medicinal plants and this will be topped by a fortifying drink. Accommodation at the eco-guesthouse.

## Day 4 : Possotomé - Kpétou - Avlo

At Kpétou, we will observe the Mona monkeys in the sacred forest. We will go to the mythologic island Mitogbodji with tropical birds and participate in a 'carbon action': we will assist in planting mangroves as part of the fight against the global warming. Transfer to Avlo beach, a village situated between the lagoon and the Atlantic ocean.

### Day 5 : Avlo

A hike towards the 'bouche du Roy' where the river Mono meets the Atlantic ocean, on the rhythm of birdsong and lapping waves. We can swim in the lagoon and have a picnic lunch on the beach. Return to the ecolodge for a rest and night.

### Day 6 : Avlo - Ouidah

We go to Ouidah, once the starting point for slaves transported to the New World. Now a museum, the old Portuguese slave fort brings back the striking moments in that history. We follow the famous Slave Road to the Gate of No Return, listed as a world cultural heritage by UNESCO. Next we will participate in the making of salt by the villagers. Accommodation at the hotel.

### Day 7 : Ouidah - Adouanko

The Fishermen's Road brings us to Adouanko where we enter the mangroves that are essential for biodiversity but are fragile, too! Silence is broken only by bird calls. The hike 'tradition and culture' lifts a little the veil around the voodoo, its deities and shrines. Dinner and night in a village home.

### Day 8 : Adouanko - Zinvié

Travel to the natural reserve of Sitatunga at Zinvié, a wetland that shelters rare animals and plants. We will discover an animal farm (rabbits, ducks, chicken), fish pond, research in the middle of the swamp, Sitatunga antelopes that are on the verge of extinction, dwarf crocodiles, and we visit the 'green museum'. From the top of 350-year old trees we can admire the luxurious vegetation. Accommodation in bungalow or bivouac.

### Day 9 : Zinvié - Ganvié - Cotonou

Discover the famous "Venice of Africa" where we visit the market on the lagoon. We go round the village with its houses,



schools and religious monuments built on stilt, and sailing canoes. In Cotonou we plunge into the Dantokpa market with its lively colours and activities. Accommodation at the hotel.

### Day 10 : Cotonou

Morning free. Lunch and city trip with a stop at the Artisan Promotion center. Transfer to the airport and end of journey.

**10 days/9 nights - 700 €/Person**  
**Half board. From 4 persons**

# Meet the birds of Benin



During two weeks, we go to the research of bird of Benin. From the South to the North we watch a diversity of bird that charm our soul as naturalists.

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to the hotel.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Ganvié - Cotonou

After an introduction into the culture, a transfer by car and canoe to the marshlands of Sô Ava and Ganvié, the 'Venice of Africa'. Discover the local bird life. Lunch and return to Cotonou. Dinner and night at the hotel.

## Day 3 : Cotonou - Parakou

Departure for Parakou, check-in, and afternoon walk to view some birds of prey (goshawk, black-winged kite, black kite). Dinner and night at the hotel.

## Day 4 : Parakou - Tanongou

We will rise early to witness the awakening of the mountain birds. Departure for Tanongou and visit of the splendid waterfalls of this village. Dinner and night in a village home.

## Day 5 : Tanongou - Pendjari Park

Departure for the luxuriant Pendjari Park. We will discover the local wildlife including several species of antelopes, elephants, buffaloes, African marabout storks, crowned cranes, Abyssinian ground hornbills, giant kingfishers and many passerines. Dinner and night in the park.

## Day 6 : Pendjari Park

We will spend the day discovering the regional birds. Dinner and night in the park.

## Day 7 : Pendjari Park - Koussoukoingou

Goto Koussoukoingou for a cultural excursion: we will discover the famous Tata Somba, fortified clay castles of the Bètammaribè.



Dinner and night at the Otammari Lodge or in a tata, a real 1000 star hotel!

### Day 8 : Koussoukoingou - Dassa

After having enjoyed the morning chant of the birds, we will have our breakfast. We will depart for Dassa, the town of 41 hills. Afternoon hike amidst the hills around the CPN (nature study center) to discover some other aspects of nature and exchange knowledge with the enthusiastic local guides. Dinner and night at the CPN.

### Day 9 : Dassa - Possotomé

Morning observation of the birds in the hills and on our way to Possotomé, situated at the shore of Ahémé lake. Along the way we will stop frequently to direct our binoculars and identify the diverse birds. Lunch. Walk along the shore of the lake: enjoy the preening by the cormorants sitting on the branches.

### Day 10 : Possotomé - Kpétou

We will enjoy the excursion on the water; during the boat ride on lake Ahémé the ecoguide will explain the fishing techniques used by the villagers. Lunch and departure for Kpétou where we will plant mangroves to contribute to the reproduction of fish and the fight against global warming. Dinner and night at a village home.

### Day 11 : Kpétou- Avlo (Grand Popo)

We will rise early to follow a bird viewing hike at Kpétou. Breakfast and departure for Avlo, a village nestled between the river Mono and the Atlantic ocean. Dinner and night at the ecolodge where we will sleep at the sound of the surf.

### Day 12 : Avlo

At sunrise, we depart for the 'bouche du Roy', the place where the sweet water of the river Mono meets the salty water of the Atlantic ocean. A unique opportunity



to observe the birds of this wet zone. Lunch. The afternoon will focus on 'tradition and culture'. Dinner and night at the ecolodge.

### Day 13 : Avlo - Ouidah

A very early departure by hiking in a silent boat moved with a paddle to view the birds in the mangrove, an exceptional environment. Lunch and then travel to Ouidah. We will visit the museum in the old Portuguese fort and we will walk the Slave Road to the Gate of No Return, a monument that is on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. Lunch. The walk of Djessinou brings us to the center of the salt village of Djègbadi, where we will learn how salt is made. Dinner and night at the hotel.

### Day 14 : Ouidah - Adounko - Cotonou

Departure to Cotonou along 'fisheries road' with a stop at Adounko where we have the opportunity to see several bird species. In Cotonou, visit the Dantokpa market. Lunch and visit the artisan promotion center. Dinner and transfer to the airport.

**14 days/13 nights - 1 270 €/Person**  
Half board. From 4 persons

# Safari to Somba land



Between its rich history, its preserved nature and its warm population, Benin opens its doors to you for an amazing stay, rich in emotion, the discovery of a culture which varies from one region to another and the splendor of a wild nature.

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to the hotel.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Bohicon

Introduction into the culture. Departure for Abomey, Lunch along the way. Visit of the museum of Abomey, listed as UNESCO world cultural heritage. Return to Bohicon for dinner and night at the hotel.

## Day 3 : Bohicon - Tanéka Béri-Natingou

Travel to the North to Nati (Natingou), nestled between the hills of the Atacora. The stop at Tanéka Béri is special: this village with huts nestled under baobab

trees is still authentic: the traditional healers are clad in animal skins and smoke a 'holy' pipe. Continuation to Nati, dinner and night at the hotel.

## Day 4 : Natingou - Pendjari Park

Departure for the National Pendjari Park for a safari with the likelihood of photographing elephants, antilopes, lions, cheetahs, baboons, buffaloes, hippos, warthogs, exotic birds... Picnic lunch and swim in the pool before continuing the safari. Night at the hotel in the park.

## Day 5 : Pendjari Park - Tanongou

A final ride through the savanna, and you continue to Tanongou, a mountain village known for its magnificent waterfalls that ask for a swim or dive... it is spectacular. Next, we will witness some traditional dances related to fishing or hunting. Certainly you will be invited to participate. Night in a village home.

### Day 6 : Tanongou - Koussoukoingou

We will help with making improved Erythrean cooking stoves that are cheaper and environment-friendly. Less firewood is needed and less smoke reduces smokerelated respiratory diseases. We discover Koussoukoingou, an Atacora village reputed for its tata's, fortified clay castles. Accommodation at the Otammari Lodge or on the roof of a tata, and that really is a 1000-star hotel!

### Day 7 : Koussoukoingou

Hike to the river and the granaries where ancestors had their hiding place during invasions. Discover the lifestyle of the Bètammaribè people and their surprising know-how of constructing tata's, which are remarkable fusions of esthetics and functionality. Night at Otammari Lodge or at the tata-roof.

### Day 8 : Koussoukoingou - Dassa

Near Dassa, we will hike towards the summit of Kamaté Shakaloké to view the landscape of granite hills and learn about the history of the Shakaloké, a people of traditional healers. Accommodation at the CPN (nature study and protection center) guesthouse, dinner under the grass roof and night at the cabin.

### Day 9 : Dassa - Cotonou

Discover traditions and local life, the deities, the tree-fetish and medicinal plants. We will observe women making soap, breaking stones, working the field ... Return to Cotonou, night at the hotel.

### Day 10 : Cotonou

City tour of the economic capital of Benin, with a visit to the Zinsou foundation of contemporary African art. We will lunch in Beninese style at a 'maquis' (local restaurant) and discover the enormous market of Dantokpa, and the Center of Artisan Promotion. Transfer to the airport and see you next time!



**10 days/9 nights - 795 €/Person**  
**Half board. From 4 persons**



# Trekking on the road of Tata



During a dozen of days, we hike through the country somba, in the mountains of northern Benin. We discover crafts, landscape, colonial history, traditional medicine, religion, the tradition of scarification, the history of the names of villages, the particular architecture of the Tata.

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to the Business and Tourism Academy Center (BTA) at Calavi, dinner and night at the place.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Dassa (by car)

Breakfast in the center, cultural immersion session, exchange transaction at the bank. Departure for Dassa, the town of 41 hills. Lunch on the road. Arrival and check-in at CPN (nature study and protection center)



‘Les Papillons’. The local guide explains us the history of the Shakaloké, a people of traditional healers, he will take us to the top of the hill to see remains of their existence and a splendid view. Dinner and night at CPN.

### **Day 3 : Dassa - Natitingou (by car)**

Breakfast. Departure for Natitingou (Nati), nestled between the hills of the Atacora. Lunch on the road. Arrival and visit of the regional museum whose exhibits help to understand the past and the architecture of the peoples of this region. Dinner and night at hôtel.

### **Day 4 : Natitingou – Didompé (by car)**

Breakfast. Transfer to Didompé. Lunch. Discovery of the first step and meeting with a storyteller woman. Dinner cooked by the cook of the village. Night under tent at Didompé village.

### **Day 5 : Didompé – Kouwètakouangou (walk)**

Breakfast. Departure at 7 AM in direction of Koukouankouangou. Visit to « the man of scarifications », these scars that constitute the traditional identity card. Meeting with the pearl craftsman. Lunch. Visit of gardening and breeding exploitation at Kouwètakouangou. Dinner and night at the place in traditional Tata or camping.

### **Day 6 : Kouwètakouangou – Koussoukoingou (walk)**

Breakfast in the village. Departure at 7 AM for climbing the cliffs of the Atacora range (highest point 658 M). Passage through by Koutagou, discovery of Tata Otchaou, Kougnangou’s healer. Lunch during the walk. Passage on the German colonial way and history of gorillas. Stop at Bèlvedère of Koussoukoingou. We go for 2 hours of visit to discover





the village and learn about the lifestyle of the Bètamaribè and their exceptional knowhow of Tata Construction. Dinner cooked by the restorative women of “La perle de l’Atacora” and night in Otammari lodge or on the terrace of a tata, hotel.... thousand stars!

**Day 7 : Koussoukoingou (walk)**

Breakfast. Three hours hike to discover the hidden beauties in the valley near Koussou: the river where women come to fetch water, granary of the ancestor people, tata’s scattered on the savanna. Lunch made from local ingredients by the caterers of the local association ‘Pearl of Atacora’. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner and overnight at the Otammari lodge or in the tata.

**Day 8 : Koussoukoingou – Kouaba (Laufen)**

Breakfast. Departure at 7 AM from Koussoukoingou in the direction of Takouanta’s valley. Vew of Atacora chain. Discovery of the flora and fauna (monkey, squirrel, chicken and guinea fowl of bush etc.)

and the local history of the various villages and spaces crossed. Passage through the camp peulh of Tedonté. Picnic break to take from Koussoukoingou, rest in the mountains. Walk to the direction of Kouaba village, to discover the architectural diversity of Otammari’s Tata. Visit of Kouaba village and installation in traditional Tata for the night.

**Day 9: Kouaba – Natitingou (walk)**

Breakfast at Félix’s hostel. Departure at 7 AM to cross the valley that connects Kouaba to Natitingou going through many marogots. we go to meet the craftsmen of the village and the Ossori Tata. Break at Dikouan, meal and rest under a baobab tree. Afternoon, climb to the viewpoint revealing the valley of Natitingou and its beautiful landscapes. Arrival at Natitingou in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight at hotel.

**Day 10: Natitingou – Abomey – Bohicon (by car)**

Breakfast. Departure to Abomey, the Kings city. Lunch on the road. In the space of 300 years, 12 palaces were built





in the capital of the Abomey kingdom : the new sovereign had to build a new palace next to that of his predecessor. A gigantic royal city has been formed on more than 40 hectares. We visit the historical museum of Abomey, former royal palace listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Return to Bohicon, dinner and overnight at the hotel.

**Day 11: Bohicon – Cotonou (by car)**

Breakfast. Return trip to Cotonou. Lunch. Visit the Zinsou Foundation, a contemporary art museum, and the Center for the Promotion of Crafts (CPA) to buy the last memories of our trip to Benin. Dinner and then transfer to the airport.



**11 days/10 nights - 840 €/Person**  
 Half board. From 4 persons  
 Extension option at Pendjari Park  
 (115 € From 4 persons)

# Benin, cradle of Voodoo



deep in a wet valley (valley of the Sitatunga) at Kpotomey. This center organizes training, demonstrations and various activities. It is managed in an integrated manner involving the population. Our programme consists of a canoe ride in the marsh, and watching wildlife and vegetation. Return to Cotonou, dinner and night at the hotel.

**Admire the dances, the music and the colorful clothes of the followers of vodoun. We participate in the customary atmosphere of Ouidah.**

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to the hotel.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Zinvié - Cotonou

Breakfast. Transfer to Zinvié where we visit the Pantodon aquaculture farm situated

## Day 3 : Cotonou - Ouidah

Breakfast. Transfer to Ouidah, the capital of voodoo. Visit to the history museum in the ancient Portuguese fort. Lunch. We will follow the Slave Road to the Gate of No Return, a monument that is on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. The hike of Djessinou brings us to the center of the salt village of Djègbadi, where we will learn how salt is made. Dinner and night at the hotel.

## Day 4 : Ouidah

After breakfast, we participate with the



preparations of the traditional celebration of religions and cults. Visit to the hall of the superior chief of cults and indigenous traditions (Daagbo Hounon), visit the python temple and the sacred forest of Kpassè. Dinner and night at the hotel.

#### **Day 5 : Ouidah : Voodoo Feier**

Breakfast. Day of the celebrations. The day will be devoted to discovering voodoo traditions and culture. January 10th is a public holiday in Bénin since 1992 as decreed by former President Nicéphore Soglo. This is to support the rehabilitation of the voodoo cult, a traditional religion for the majority of the Beninese and for many emigrated African people. We will take part in the dances and rituals at Ouidah beach. Return to the hotel in the evening for dinner and night.

#### **Day 6 : Ouidah - Possotomé**

Breakfast and departure for Possotomé at the shore of lake Ahémé. Lunch. In the afternoon a walk focused on 'tradition and culture' will bring us to picturesque villages, a sacred forest and the barter market of Séhomi. Dinner at the campsite of "Prefet's Place" and night at the ecoguesthouse of Possotomé.

#### **Day 7 : Possotomé**

Breakfast prepared by Léon. A boat ride 'way of the water' brings us to the calm waters of lake Ahémé where the ecoguide explains the different fishing techniques and may tell us the legend of the lonely hippo of the lake. Lunch. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at "Prefet's Place" and night at the ecoguesthouse.

#### **Day 8 : Possotomé - Avlo**

Breakfast, and we go to Avlo situated



between the river Mono and the Atlantic ocean. Lunch. We will hike to the center of the village of Avlo-beach for more 'tradition and culture' to learn how voodoo determined the history of this place. Dinner and night at the ecolodge.

#### **Day 9 : Avlo**

Depart for the 'bouche du Roy', the place where the river meets the ocean. You can swim here. Lunch under the sunshade of the lodge. Leisure at the sea side. Dinner and night at the ecolodge.

#### **Day 10 : Avlo - Cotonou**

After breakfast, we participate in the ritual of the return of the fishermen. Lunch and return to Cotonou. Visit the Zinsou Foundation and the Artisan Promotion Center to buy some souvenirs. A hotel room is available to take a shower if you wish. Dinner and transfer to the airport.

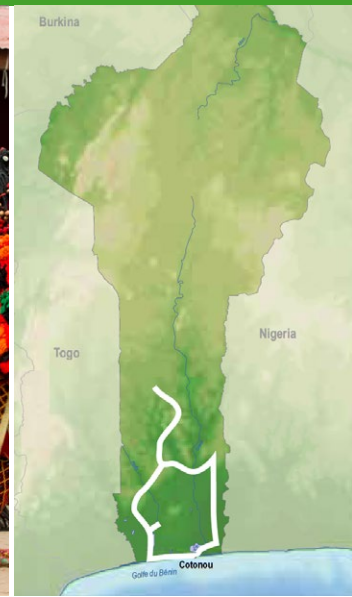
**From 6 to 15 January 2018 & 2019**

**745 €/Person**

**Half board. From 4 persons**



# Yam Festival



This tour brings us to the heart of the yam kingdom, discovering this multi-faceted culture. We are immersed in the customs and lifestyle of the people of central and southern Benin.

## Day 1 : Cotonou

Evening arrival at the airport of Cotonou and welcome by staff of Eco-Benin. Transfer to the hotel. Dinner and night at the hotel.

## Day 2 : Cotonou - Porto Novo

After breakfast, an introduction of the culture before we depart to Porto Novo, where we visit the Ethnographic Museum Alexandre Adandé where cultural artifacts are exhibited (weapons, tools, musical instruments) from all over Bénin. Exhibitions on childbirth, life and death. After lunch, we will visit the Songhai centre just outside Porto Novo, well-reputed for vocational training, production and extension in integrated agriculture. Dinner and sleep at the Songhai center.

## Day 3 : Porto Novo - Kétou - Abomey

Breakfast. Departure to Kétou, the legendary

Yoruba kingdom of Benin. We visit the history museum of Kétou, a living witness of the past and of mystics of the present. Lunch. Departure to Abomey, the city of kings. Visit the center of dried tropical fruits. Dinner and night at the hotel in Abomey.

## Day 4 : Abomey - Dassa

Breakfast. Meet the history of the kingdom of Danxomè founded in 1645 during the visit to the history museum of Abomey, former royal palace and nowadays listed as a UNESCO world cultural heritage. Lunch and departure to Kamaté Shakaloké. Check-in the CPN (nature study center) guesthouse and visit a farm of yams to discover this tuber that is widely grown in the central and northern regions of Benin. Dinner and night at the guesthouse.

## Day 5 : Kamaté Shakaloké - Savalou

Breakfast. Hike to the hills of Kamaté Shakaloké to learn more about the past of the Shakaloké. Lunch and departure to 'Savalou the Beautiful'. Visit the palm tree with 7 trunks, more than 70 years old.

The local guide will tell us more about the yam festival. Dinner and night at the hotel at Savalou.

### Day 6 : Savalou

Breakfast. Visit the pantheon, a monument to remember that Savalou was a central location during the period of slave trade. We leave to meet high officials of Savalou to witness the preparation of the yam festival. At lunch we will taste yam in all its variations. Continuance of the festivities. Return to the hotel in the evening. Dinner and night at the hotel.

### Day 7 : Savalou - Bohicon - Possotomé

Breakfast. Transfer to Bohicon and visit of the underground village Agongouinto. This open air museum has 56 of the 1600 underground houses that have been recorded on the Abomey plateau. Travel to Possotomé at the shores of lake Ahémé. Lunch along the way. Dinner at the campsite 'Prefet's place' a restaurant at the shores of lake Ahémé. Night at the guesthouse of Possotomé.

### Day 8 : Possotomé

Breakfast. We will make an excursion 'way of the water'. During this boat trip on the Ahémé lake, the guide will explain the different fishing techniques used by the villagers and which types of fish they can catch with it. Lunch at Prefet's place. In the afternoon, we will make a hike 'tradition and voodoo culture'. Highlights are the explanations of the voodoo gods and their shrines, the role of the Tolegba, the rituals and ceremonies, and the importance of the sacred forest. Dinner at Prefet's place and night at the eco-guesthouse of Possotomé.

### Day 9 : Possotomé - Avlo

Breakfast. Departure for Avlo, a village situated between the river Mono and the Atlantic ocean. We will go by motor boat



to the 'bouche du Roy' the place where the Mono river meets the ocean. Lunch. We will make a 1-hour hike to discover the village and its history marked by the voodoo cult, the way of life of the Plah and Pédah peoples, their tradition and culture. Dinner and night at the ecolodge.

### Day 10 : Avlo - Ouidah - Cotonou

Breakfast. Departure for Ouidah lest we forget. We will visit the museum in the old Portuguese fort and we will walk the Slave Road to the Gate of No Return, a monument that is also on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. Lunch. Return to Cotonou along the fisheries road. Visit the promotional center of the artisans at Cotonou to get some souvenirs. Stop at the hotel to shower and change. Dinner and transfer to the airport.

**From 9 to 18 August 2018 & 2019**

**790 €/Person**

**Half board. From 4 persons**

# Benin - Togo, without borders



**Benin and Togo, located in the Gulf of Guinea, can be considered as the successors of the great kingdom of Danxomè. During this cross-border travel, we will dive deep in the history of these two countries and their famous and forever lasting culture.**

## **Day 1 : Cotonou**

Evening arrival at the airport in Cotonou and welcome by Eco-Benin. Transfer and accommodation in the hotel.

## **Day 2 : Cotonou - Ouidah**

Breakfast. Introduction to the culture of Benin and illustrative art and contemporary craft at the Zinsou Foundation in Cotonou. We continue to Ouidah - lest we forget (on that we may never forget): one of the places from which slaves were shipped to America. The Museum located in an old Portuguese Fort has much to offer. Next, we follow the slave route in the direction of the gate of no return (gate without return), a monument listed as a UNESCO world cultural heritage.

Immersion in Beninese culture, contemporary African art and crafts at the Zinsou foundation. Night in the hotel with beach and swimming pool.

## **Day 3 : Ouidah - Possotomé**

It pulls us to Possotomé, located to shore Lake Ahémé, to the ADJA and Houéda to meet people. A local guide will us tell about the Voodoo gods, writeback, and rituals of the village and present us the artists and the exchange market. Dinner in the „Prefet’s place“ of a real chef his own calls, and night at the Ecolodge.

## **Day 4 : Possotomé**

We take a boat trip on Lake Ahémé to meet the fishing techniques of the village people and get closer to the deity Avlékété, which protects the areas where fish reproduce. And maybe we encounter the lonely hippopotamus of the Lake. It is possible to swim. Lunch in a house in the village. Leisure at the lake or at the hot springs. Dinner and overnight stay at the Ecolodge.



### Day 5 : Possotomé - Kpétou - Possotomé

Breakfast. Transfer to Kpétou. We spend the morning exploring thus the Holy forest and the resident Mona monkeys. Lunch. Participate in a „carbon action“, we plant mangroves to counteract climate change. Return to Possotomé, dinner and overnight stay.

### Day 6 : Possotomé - Grand Popo

By car to Avlo Beach. Passing through the mangroves we arrive at „Bouche du Roy“, where the river Mono meets the Atlantic Ocean. Lunch under the thatched roof of the Ecolodge. A hike to Avlo Village gives us an insight into family life, income-generating activities and the voodoo cult. Night in the Ecolodge.

### Day 7 : Avlo - Togoville - Lomé (Togo)

Breakfast. Depart for Lomé. Stop in Togoville, a village rich in traditions and the (mystical) history of rural areas. Visit to the palace of King Mlapa. Lunch on the way. Arrival, check-in, dinner and overnight at the hotel in Lomé.

### Day 8 : Lomé - Kpalimè

Breakfast. Departure to Kpalimè, which means „crossing“ in the local Ewé language and is known for its naturally green surroundings, as well as for the artists and craftsmen working there. Kpalimè is a small, cozy, and active place that welcomes us. Lunch on the way. Arrival, check-in, dinner and overnight at the hotel in Kpalimè.

### Day 9 : Kpalimè - Kouma Konda - Kpalimè

This day is dedicated to the introduction of painting with vegetable dyes: a science of its own, which consists of drawing on cotton fabrics after a series of preparations. Accompanied by a specialist we will go into the jungle



to discover the plants whose natural composition serves as the base color. The workshop will take place around a small waterfall. A picnic will be provided during the course. Return to Kpalimè in the evening, overnight at the hotel.

### Day 10 : Kpalimè - Lomé

After breakfast visit the mountain Agou and return to Lomé. Lunch on the way. Arrival and retrieval. Night in the hotel.

### Day 11 : Lomé

Breakfast. Visit of the Fetish Market and the big market of Lomé (Assiganmè), also called „Market of Nana Brenz“ (Market of the rich Togolese businesswomen). Lunch and city tour. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

**11 days/10 nights - 995 €/Person**  
Half board. From 4 persons

# Free travellers



Have you always dreamed of traveling to an unknown country? Do you want to surprise your friends with your holiday ideas? Big cities like London, New York or Sydney do not interest you? Then our round trip is guaranteed something for you! Discover Benin for yourself and embark on a completely independent adventure.

We offer 4 poles in 4 regions. You can choose a pole and continue with another one. Extraordinary encounters, incredible experiences and a total immersion in the culture of Benin are the key words of this journey. Do not wait any longer!

**The price include :** Local transport (taxi, zem), food in full Board (breakfast, lunch and dinner), accommodation in a single room, listed excursions, mineral water.

**The price doesn't include :** Airline tickets, personal expenses, guide, drinks (except water), not listed excursions, additional meals.





**1st pole/Nature and adventure**  
**5 Days/4 Nights - Price : 375 €/Person**

**Day 1 : Cotonou - Natitingou**

Travel to the North to Natitingou (Nati) which is located in the heart of the Atacora hills. Visit the local museum where you people get to know the culture of the Somba, and marvel at the archaeological remains and various types of traditional habitats. Accommodation at Somba Palace Hotel.

**Day 2 : Natitingou - Pendjari Park**

Get on in the famous Pendjari National Park, where you can see cheetahs, antelopes, elephants and other animals of the savanna. Night in the hotel in the Park.

**Day 3 : Park - Tanongou - Koussoukoingou**

Last expedition in the park before it goes after Tanongou, a village known for its spectacular waterfalls, which are among the most beautiful of Benin. Swimming is possible! Continuing in the charming village of Koussoukoingou. Accommodation in Otammari lodge or in a Tata Somba.

**Day 4 : Koussoukoingou**

Exotic walking through the village, to become acquainted with the way of life of the Bêtamaribe and their Tata, brilliantly built little castle. Overnight at Koussoukoingou.

**Day 5 : Koussoukoingou - Nächster Drehpunkt**

Breakfast and discovery of a new center of rotation!



**2nd pole - Thousand kingdoms**  
**3 Days/2 Nights - Price : 270 €/Person**

**Day 1 : Cotonou - Abomey**

Departure for Abomey, the city of the Kings. Lunch. Visit one of the palaces of the ancient kings of Dahomey, listed as a UNESCO world cultural heritage. The Museum sets out the history of the country. Accommodation in the hostel.

**Day 2 : Abomey - Bohicon**

Look at the center of dried tropical fruits. Discover then the mysterious village of Agongointo, which 56 of the 1600 is on the Abomey plateau located underground houses houses. Why just this design? Accommodation in the hotel.

**Day 3 : Abomey - Ganvié - Nächster Drehpunkt**

Also known as „The Venice of West Africa“ (the Venice West Africa), is a village with thousands of wooden houses on stilts Ganvié. Life here takes place on the water. Lunch and discovery of a new center of rotation!





**3rd pole/Cultures and traditions**  
3 Days/2 Nights - Price : 140 €/Person

**Day 1 : Cotonou - Porto Novo**

Departure to Porto Novo, Benin's political capital city. Visit the magnificent ethnographic museum Alexandre Adandé, which represents various aspects of traditional life with his cultural and religious objects. Lunch and visit of the Songhai Center, an African model for integrated agriculture. Accommodation at the Songhai Center.

**Day 2 : Porto Novo**

Walk through the city of the three names, which is famous for its colonial architecture. We tour the Bayol square, where we hear the story of Xogbonou over the statue of King Toffa first, to the Botanical Garden (JNP), where we will find the Mona monkey. Ancient trees, medicinal plants, aromatic spices and the Honmè Museum, which is an architectural jewel of astonishing originality cross our path. We will be fascinated by the many facets of this city! Overnight spot.

**Day 3 : Porto Novo - Nächster Drehpunkt**

Breakfast and on the adventures of a new center of rotation!



**4th pole/Bio and zen**  
3 Days/2 Nights - Price : 170 €/Person

**Day 1 : Cotonou - Possotomé**

Departure to Possotomé, located on the banks of Lake of Ahémé. We take a walk dedicated to phytotherapy, to discover the healing secrets of plants and to make all our senses vibrate. Overnight stay at the Ecolodge in Possotomé.

**Day 2 : Possotomé**

We spend three hours in a boat and the fishing techniques of the fishermen in the presence of Voodoo deities. In addition, we discover the lifestyle and the customs of the people live „Tradition and culture“ at the Lake during the walk. Overnight spot.

**Day 3 : Possotomé - Avlo (Grand Popo)**

Lunch and departure to Grand Popo to the charm of the Atlantic Ocean. Here we discover the traditions and the culture of the village Avlo. Dinner and accommodation in the Avlo Beach Lodge.

**Day 4 : Avlo - Nächster Drehpunkt**

Boat trip on the „Bouche you Roy“ where the river flows Mono in the Atlantic Ocean. Afternoon at leisure. Let's go to a new pivot point!

# Support the sea turtle breeding Center of the nature reserve of «la Bouche du Roy»



The community area of conservation of the biodiversity of “Bouche you Roy” covers Grand-Popo and Comè commune in the South West of Benin (9 678 hectares). This area was the UNESCO MAB \* recognized. Developed management research and development plan aims at the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity from (especially fish, birds, mangroves, manatees and turtles) to promote fishing, sustainable tourism and environmental education.

In this context, eco-Benin has set up three small hatcheries to improve the monitoring and protection of sea turtles. So, already 12 trained and equipped environmentalists on the grounds are active. Sea turtles to extinction are threatened on a global scale. The main threats to this species are:

- The reduction of nest sites due to human activities (urbanisation, egg harvesting, tourism, sand extraction);
- Voluntary or incidental fisheries (craft and industrial).

## What behaviors are to take over ?

- Do not disturb the females when they lay eggs; do not trample the nests ;
- Avoid light on the beaches during egg laying and hatching;
- Refuse any purchase of derivatives of the turtle (handicrafts, food, eggs, tanks, etc.).

## On the spot, how could I help?

The nesting places of the olive Ridley and leatherback turtles should be monitored from August until November. I can help the environmentalists:

- To raise awareness among the local population;
- Regularly patrol;
- Deter potential offenders;
- Pick up the eggs of turtles on the coast;
- Bring eggs in incubation and keep up to hatching;
- That until the release feed baby turtles and maintain;
- Which organize release of the baby turtles and guard;
- Fill out a turtle monitoring issue and send to eco-Benin.

\* Programm für Mensch und Biodiversität.

For a volunteer or sponsor of the release of the baby turtles:  
ecobenin@yahoo.fr - Mob : +229 95 28 52 20 - www.ecobenin.org



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Photos : Eco-Bénin, Parc Pendjari, Catherine Piret, Constant Houétichénou, Julien Gérard

