

Route of the Sine-Saloum Delta Senegal

Duration: 6 days

Itinerary

DAY 1. Somone, Petite-Côte



The Somone Natural Reserve was created in 1999 from a local initiative led by women who, concerned about the degradation of the mangroves, their main source of livelihood, decided to join forces for the protection of the environment.

The Somone reserve includes a saltwater lagoon, a mangrove area and an area of sandy beaches that separate the water from the mainland. The nature reserve is a perfect place for birdwatching, boasting numerous bird species, including flamingos, cormorants, sea swallows, pelicans or herons. The best way to appreciate the beauty of the landscape and the richness of its biodiversity is by taking a boat trip through the nature reserve.

No more than 20 kilometres from Somone, in Popenguine, is the Keur Cupaam Camp, managed by the Popenguine Women's Group for the Protection of Nature. In 1988, this initiative, led by Oulimata Thiaw, mobilised 129 women committed to the protection of the natural environment, increasingly degraded by deforestation and over-exploitation of its natural resources. Since its foundation, the organisation has participated in different initiatives aimed at the sustainable generation of income linked to the conservation of the Popenguine natural reserve, a protected area of about 10 square kilometres, consisting of an area of hills and low forest and a marine strip of beach and rocks that extends about 2.5 kilometres along the coast.

After a pleasant walk through the nature reserve, we head south-east to Faoye, in the province of Fatick, in the Sine-Saloum Delta region. The Faoye Solidarity Camp, managed by the Serere community of Faoye under an agreement with the Spanish Ecotourism Association, "Campamentos Solidarios" (Solidarity Camps - www.campamentos-solidarios.org), is located on the shores of a saltwater lagoon, very close to the community of Faoye.

Campamentos Solidarios is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to contribute to the sustainable development of areas of extreme poverty. To this end, it promotes ecological and tourist camps that serve as generators of employment. They are built and managed jointly with local communities in areas with scarce economic resources and high ecological, ethnological or artistic value.

DAY 2. Faoye



Faoye's camp has eight traditional cabins with capacity for 24 people, equipped with individual toilets, a porch overlooking the Delta and a bar-restaurant with a beach. From there, pirogue trips are organized to visit some of the nearby towns and to observe the mangroves and the beautiful calm water landscapes that host a considerable number of African and European waterbirds on their annual migratory route each year. A good option is a visit to the Serere village of Sakjor. If you prefer to stay in town, another possibility is to attend a Senegalese wrestling match, the country's national sport, at Faoye's own camp.

Due to its proximity to salt water from the sea, the scarcity of rain and the absence of humidity, salt exploitation is a widespread activity in Faoye. Every year, salt is collected from February to June and exported to the large urban centres of Senegal or even Mali. The Diam Bougoum association, which represents approximately 60 women, is responsible for exploiting and commercialising the salt in Faoye. The women of the association offer explanations to interested travellers regarding the entire process associated with the extraction and iodisation of salt carried out by the women of the community.

DAY 3. Ndangane



This small tourist town is a former fishing village from which pirogue trips are organized to different islands of the Sine-Saloum Delta.

One of the best places for bird watching is the so-called Birds Island, an uninhabited sandy island which is a breeding site for numerous species of water birds. The route through the arms of the sea, marshes, meanders and mangroves of the delta ends in an island with an area of approximately 210 hectares where we can see, among other species of birds, pelicans, cormorants, herons, swallows or terns and hundreds of waders that nest in the delta of the Sine - Saloum. The marine mammals, dolphins or African manatees are more difficult to see, the latter being in danger of extinction, or the land mammals, including warthogs, antelopes or red colobus.

DAY 4. Mar Lodj Island



Mar Lodj is a small island located in the Sine-Saloum Delta, very close to Ndangane. The economy of this town was traditionally based on agriculture and fishing. However, in recent years, both activities have been affected by the effects of climate change: the continuous advance of the sea and the salinization of arable land have led to the abandonment of agricultural activities and the reduction of fishing activities. However, the island has a great tourist potential: the saltwater arms, the river and sea channels, the mangrove forests and the numerous species of birds that visit the delta attract many travellers to Mar Lodj.

In the tourist information office, young volunteers from the community are willing to offer information or accompany the traveller on a guided tour that will help visitors fully appreciate the wealth of the natural and cultural heritage of Mar Lodj.

The island's "Women's" federation brings together women involved in the processing of fruit, cereals, fish and dye products. The artisan women are grouped into independent Economic Interest Groups (GIE). All of them have work spaces where they can explain to visitors the aspects involved in the practice of their activity. The guided tour of Mar Lodj can be completed by a visit to the mangroves and other reforestation areas.

DAY 5. Toubacouta



Located 20 kilometres from Senegal's border with Gambia, between Sokone and Karang, just over an hour's drive from Kaolack, the most populous town in the Fatick region, Toubacouta is a quiet and welcoming town in the Sine-Saloum Delta.

The interpretation centre of the Saloum delta at Toubacouta, set up to enhance the natural and cultural heritage and support the development of sustainable tourism in the region, houses a simple community museum and organises activities aimed at discovering and understanding the environmental richness and the customs and traditions of the communities living in the Delta.

In 2003, thanks to a project led by Oceanium de Dakar, a Senegalese association dedicated to the protection of marine environments, the Bamboung Bolong was declared a marine protected area by the Senegalese government. The Bolong is a Diomboss tributary, one of the three main arms of the complex system of channels and mangroves that make up the wetland. With shallow waters, Bamboung is an ideal breeding site for birds, fish and marine mammals and therefore a key place for the conservation of the entire ecosystem. The land

surface area of the Bamboung protected area includes a mangrove area and a mainland area of wooded savannah which covers about 15% of the reserve.

To ensure the economic sustainability of the protected area, Oceanium set up Keur Bamboung, an ecotourism camp, managed by members of the communities closest to the reserve, with a restaurant and capacity to accommodate about thirty guests. Built with traditional materials and located on the banks of the Bamboung, the camp allows visitors to appreciate the natural wealth of the Sine-Saloum Delta in all its dimensions.

DAY 6. Return to Dakar, Joal Fadiouth and Mbour



On the way back to Dakar, we stop at Joal Fadiouth and Mbour.

Joal was the birthplace of Senegal's first president, the poet, essayist and politician Léopold Sédar Senghor, who developed the concepts of négritude and métissage, playing a key part in the process of decolonization in West Africa.

The town of Joal is linked by a wooden bridge to Fadiouth, known as the island of shells, an artificial island made up of countless clam shells piled up over the years by the fishermen and shellfish gatherers of this area off the coast of Senegal.

Very close to Joal-Fadiouth, In Mbour, we will visit the craft market and watch the arrival of the fishermen in the city at sunset. The boats approach a beach where a large crowd of men and women are waiting to start unloading the daily catch for shipment to other destinations or for sale at the countless stalls in the town's fish market.

Activities

Oceanium de Dakar

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Centre d'interprétation du Delta du Saloum

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Tel.: +221 33 945 86 28
<https://www.facebook.com/Centre-Dinterpr%C3%A9tation-Du-Delta-Du-Saloum-Toubacouta-646741168746080>

Keur Cupaam

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Accomodation

Hotel Keur Yakaar

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Faoye Camp

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La Source aux Lamantins

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Useful information

Language

French.

Currency

West African CFA Franc (CFA).

Entry to the country

Passport with over six-months validity. Spanish citizens with a valid passport, with at least 6 months of validity, do not require a visa to enter and stay in Senegal for stays of less than 90 days.

Mandatory vaccines

The yellow fever vaccine is mandatory for travellers over the age of 9 years old, who enter Senegal from a country where the risk of transmission of yellow fever exists as well as for travellers who have travelled through the airport of a country where there is a risk of acquiring yellow fever.

Recommended vaccines

Yellow fever, hepatitis A and B, tetanus and treatment against malaria, which is endemic in Senegal.

Climate

Subtropical with two distinct seasons. November to May is the dry season, with temperatures that can go as low as 7°C. Between the months of June and October is the rainy season. During this period, the temperatures can soar to over 40°C.