

Lower Casamance Route

Senegal

Duration: 6 days

Itinerary

DAY 1. Ziguinchor



Ziguinchor is the capital of Casamance. Founded in 1645 by the Portuguese, the name of the city is derived from the Portuguese phrase «Cheguei e choram» ("I came and they cried"), due to its primitive role dedicated to slave trading. Handed over to France in 1888, under French rule, Ziguinchor became an important commercial port, known for the intensive cultivation of peanuts promoted by the French colony in the inland areas of the region.

From Ziguinchor, we travel by canoe to the Bird's Island, to enjoy the spectacular landscape of mangroves, islands and fluvial channels of the Cassamance river. In the journey down the river we will most likely be able to observe a great variety of birds from the region, including pelicans, grey herons, flamingos or cormorants.

Upon finalizing the visit to the island we will return to Ziguinchor to walk through the colonial centre of the city. The Saint Maur market is the centre of commercial activity. Nearby we will find the Artisan Center, where one can see how young artisans carve wood and create masks and figures of the Djola people.

DAY 2. Enampor, Seleki. The kingdom of the Bandial



Enampor lies a little over 20 kilometres from Ziguinchor. This small Djola population located at the heart of the old kingdom of the Bandial, in an area dense with forests and mangroves. Dedicated mainly to rice and millet farming, fishing and palm wine harvesting, extracted from the sap of palm trees, the community of Enampor is known for the traditional architecture of the "Impluvium" style houses, round buildings made from adobe with surrounding rooms and a central patio with an opening to allow for the entrance of rainwater.

In Enampore the first of the integrated rural camps was built or *campement villageois*, which later spread to different communities of the Casamance. Currently, two of the three impluvium cabins from the village they serve as lodging for travelers that cross the Casamance.

In Seleki, a town close to Enampor, the Seleki Camp is located. Constructed based on an agreement between the Spanish Association for Active Ecotourism "Solidarity Camps" (www.campamentos-solidarios.org), and managed by the Djola community of Seleki, this

accommodation is an "impluvium" house with ten bedrooms surrounded by a sacred forest of baobabs, kapoks and palm trees alongside a canal of the river Casamance.

Solidarity Camps is a non-profit entity that aims to contribute toward the sustainable development of areas of extreme poverty. For this purpose, ecological-tourist camps are promoted which act as job-creators. These are jointly constructed and managed with the local communities in areas with scarce economic resources and with a high ecological, ethnological and artistic value.

The actions of Solidarity Camps in the area are mainly based on the maintenance and conservation of their architectonic and cultural patrimony, and in the generation of work opportunities, mainly for women.

DAY 3. Oussouyé



From Seleki, we travel to Oussouye, a very placid city, located at the heart of Lower Casamance.

The Oussouye kingdom dates back to at least the end of the 17th century. The king, based in the forests of Oussouye, together with a royal council, integrated by people of the Djola nobility, still decide today on aspects affecting the community, while preserving the rites and cultural values of their people.

The Kalaamissoo Women's cooperative, created within a job placement program for women with reduced mobility, integrates a group of artisan women who use traditional methods while working on palm leaves. These women often teach visitors how to make a simple piece of decoration using some kind of traditional handcrafted technique.

We will visit the unit for the transformation of mango and of wild berries to learn about the process of transformation and the production of jams and natural juices undertaken by the Jinaben Yo Afeo Women's Cooperative of Oussouye, and to enjoy tastings of their best products,

Campement Emanaye, in Oussouye, is the property of Elisabeth Diouf. In her mother tongue, «emanaye» means 'the rice'. In 2000, when she was at the edge of the rice camps on the road to Oussouye, Elisabeth decided to open a tourist accommodation together with her husband, which she immediately named after the cereal. From the rooms in the upper floor of the camp, and from the dining hall, the view of ample golden and green plains of rice fully justifies the choice of name. On the other side of the camp, beyond the well-kept garden, the imposing view of the kapok forests stands out, with its sacred centenary trees. We will stop at Elisabeth's camp to enjoy a pleasant lunch.

DAY 4. Carabane Island



Carabane Island features white sand coves and palm trees bobbing in the banks of the Casamance river mouth, and encompassing an area of 57 square kilometres. The mangroves that surround the island, with intricate roots, with its long branches and its drooping tree-tops, are home to a rich marine fauna.

With warm waters, typically at 26 degrees throughout the whole year, the island almost in the Atlantic Ocean enjoys a mild climate which does not surpass 28 degrees maximum in the summer nor go lower than 24 degrees in January and February.

The island is a paradise for bird watching lovers, with large populations of herons, turtle-doves, waders, kingfishers or vultures, among other varieties of birds that stop at Carabane during their migratory cycles.

Carabane, which the Portuguese had named 'the Island of the mosquitos', experienced its darkest period towards the entire 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when it was a clandestine nucleus of a thriving slave trading business which was declared illegal in 1848. It was also the first French port of the region and the first administrative capital of Cassamance, until 1904. The cemetery, the church and the slave house form part of the must-see tourist route of the island.

In 2005, for the first time, Carabane Island was proposed to be declared World Heritage site by UNESCO.

On one of the beaches in the north of the island, hanging from a tree and written in black and red letters, a sign says «Campament Hélléna. Bar-Restaurant». M^a Hélléne Mendy created this accommodation in her own home. It was not easy. The floor of the island is sandy, barely reinforced by the shells of the shellfish which become tangled in the roots of the mangroves, and in the proximities of Chez Hélléna a stream of subterranean waters flows, which constantly threatens to weaken its foundations.

DAY 5. Cap Skirring



Cap Skirring, the main tourist reference of Southern Senegal, due to the quality and beauty of its beaches, surrounded by palm trees and tropical forest, is located on the Atlantic coast, 70 kilometres from Ziguinchor. Originally a fishing town, located at a small distance from the cape with the same name, after the 1960s began to give way to a new population, mainly cantered on tourism.

Very close to Cap Skirring, no more than 2 kilometres from the border of Senegal with Guinea Bissau, we find Kabrouse. This town is known for being the birth town of the Senegalese heroine Aline Sitoe Diatta, a female symbol of resistance and opposition of the country to French colonialism. Highly estimated and valued in Senegal, especially in Casamance, in 2008 a non-official currency was issued from the "Kingdom of Kabrouse" in honour of "Queen Aline Sitoé Diatta". The coin used to bear the inscription "the woman who was more than a man".

Cap Skirring is located at Camp Mussuwam, a pleasant eco-lodge located next to the beach, facing the sea and currently managed by the Spanish NGO, "Cineastas en Acción" (Cinematographers in Action).

DAY 6. Djembering



In Djembering, a population located on the coast, 15 kilometres to the north of Cap Skirring, dedicated to traditional agriculture, rice harvesting and tourism, we can enjoy a pleasant stroll through the village and along the beach.

The route among adobe houses and sandy streets will take us to the large sacred kapok in the central square and to the clue for the celebration of Senegalese wrestling matches. A stop in the Catholic church of Djembering will offer us the opportunity, as long as days and hours coincide, of attending one of the few masses pronounced in Djola language of the region.

Very close to Djembering, Bouyouye is a small and magic town hidden in a kapok forest, the giant trees of the region.

Upon ending the visit, from Cap Skirring, we can begin the return trip to Ziguinchor to begin the return to Dakar or Banjul.

Activities

GIE Kalaamisso

Basket Weavers Association of Women with Reduced Mobility of Osussouye
Oussouye (Casamance), Senegal
Tels.: +221 781 82 25 / 70 631 498

Active Ecotourism Association "Solidarity Camps"

C/ Santa Engracia, 17
28010 Madrid, Spain
Tels.: 91 447 49 32 / 691 758 112
www.campamentos-solidarios.org

GIE Jinaben Yo Afeo

Unit of Transformation of Mango and Wild Berries
Oussouye (Casamance), Senegal
Tel.: +221 77 743 49 34

Fédération des Campements Villageois (FECAV)

Avenue Édouard Diatta
Service Régional du Tourisme
Ziguinchor (Casamance), Senegal
Tels.: +221 77 556 40 96 / 70 857 35 42
E-mail: fecav2012@gmail.com
www.village-casamance.com

Accomodation

Campement Emanaye

Oussouye (Casamance), Senegal
Tels.: +221 77 573 63 34 / 77 605 97 76
E-mail: contat@campement-emanaye.com
www.campement-emanaye.com

Campement Séléki

Séléki (Casamance), Senegal
Tels.: +221 77 731 68 30 / +34 691 75 81 12
E-mail: asociacion@campamentos-solidarios.org
www.campamentos-solidarios.org

Campement Mussuwam

Plage de Cap Randoulaine
Cap Skirring (Casamance), Senegal
Tels.: +221 33 993 51 84 / 77 522 63 07 / 77 927 67 99

Campement ASSEB

Diémbéring Haloudia (Kabrousse), Senegal
Tels: +221 77 424 71 47 / 77 541 34 72
E-mail: sembesene@yahoo.fr
<http://campementasseb.com/>

Useful information

Language

French.

Currency

West African CFA Franc (CFA).

Entry to the country

Passport with over 6-months validity. Spanish citizens with a valid passport, with at least 6 months 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.