

Ghana Rediscovered – A Tourism Narrative

Divine Matey*

General Manager, Department of Administration, Accra City Hotel, Accra, Ghana

Abstract: This article provides an overview of Ghana, a nation situated in West Africa with a unique blend of rich cultural heritage, linguistic diversity, and abundant natural resources. The text explores Ghana's historical significance as the first black African republic to gain independence from colonial rule and its enduring legacy as a custodian of cultural heritage. It delves into the linguistic diversity of over 80 languages spoken in Ghana, highlighting the importance of English and indigenous languages. The hierarchical societal structure and customs, such as matrilineal clan membership and traditional greetings, are also discussed. Additionally, the article touches on Ghanaian cuisine, emphasizing the role of soups and their accompaniments. Finally, it presents a comprehensive list of popular tourism sites, categorized into ecotourism, adventure, nature, and heritage, underscoring Ghana's potential for economic growth through tourism with the need for continued investment and sustainable practices.

Keywords: Ghana, culture, linguistic diversity, cuisine, tourism, ecotourism.

1. Introduction

Ghana is a nation located in the western region of Africa, positioned along the coastline of the Gulf of Guinea. Ghana, despite its modest size in terms of both land area and population, holds a prominent position among African nations. This can be attributed to its substantial endowment of natural resources, as well as its historical distinction as the inaugural black African republic south of the Sahara to attain independence from colonial governance. Ghana is renowned for its abundant woods, varied fauna, and extensive sandy coastlines that offer scenic beauty. Furthermore, Ghana is esteemed for its profound historical significance, with evidence suggesting human presence as early as 10,000 CE, and for its role as a captivating custodian of cultural legacy. The nation derives its appellation from the prominent mediaeval mercantile realm situated in the northwestern vicinity of the contemporary state, until its dissolution in the 13th century. The construction of forts and castles along the Ghanaian coast, a significant number of which remain intact to this day, was undertaken by European powers with the primary objective of safeguarding their commercial pursuits. (Britannica student encyclopedia, 2012)

2. Tribes in Ghana

Ghana is a nation characterized by linguistic diversity, since it is home to over 80 distinct languages that are spoken inside

its borders. English is the designated official language of Ghana, a linguistic legacy retained from the colonial period. Akan is the predominant indigenous language in Ghana, notably in the southern region, with the highest degree of linguistic prevalence. Dagbanli is the predominant language spoken in Northern Ghana. Ghana encompasses a total of eight distinct ethnic groupings and over seventy tribal groups, each characterized by its unique linguistic heritage. Mutually intelligible languages are often observed among ethnic groups. The Dagbanli and Mampelle languages spoken in the Northern Region exhibit mutual intelligibility with the Frafra and Waali languages spoken in Ghana's Upper West Region. The Mole-Dagbani ethnicity is linguistically represented by a group of four distinct languages. There are three Akan ethnic languages, namely Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, and Fante, which have been designated as government-sponsored languages. Additionally, two Mole-Dagbani ethnic languages, Dagaare and Dagbanli, also enjoy this status. In addition to the aforementioned ethnic groups, there are also the Ewe, Dangme, Ga, Nzema, Gonja, and Kasem communities. (Robert, 2022)

3. Culture

The Ghanaian society exhibits a hierarchical structure. Individuals are held in high regard due to factors such as their advanced age, extensive expertise, significant income, and/or elevated social status. Elderly individuals are commonly perceived as possessing wisdom and are accorded a certain level of reverence. Within a group setting, it is often observable that there exists a tendency to exhibit preferential treatment towards the one who has the status of being the eldest person present. The transmission of customs frequently occurs inside the extended familial network, whereby the customary leaders or chiefs assume a position of historical legitimacy in areas pertaining to social dynamics, familial affairs, and land-related issues. One intriguing cultural divergence observed among the Akan community, specifically the Ashanti and Fanti subgroups, is to the manner in which clan membership is determined, namely by matrilineal affinity. Mothers hold a position of elevated social standing, as they perceive themselves as the primary source of one's lineage and biological heritage. Handshakes are often regarded as the prevailing method of salutation. The diversity of ethnic groupings results in a range of traditional or native greetings. In the context of interpersonal greetings, Ghanaians typically engage in a handshake ritual whereby the right hand is conventionally grasped in a

*Corresponding author: divine.matey@live.com

customary manner, followed by a further action including the twisting and clicking of each other's middle finger. (Umassmed.edu, 2019)

4. Cuisine

Soups serve as the fundamental element within Ghanaian gastronomy and are commonly consumed alongside fufu, which can be prepared using pounded plantain and cassava or yam, kokonte, a paste made from cooked cassava meal, banku, fermented maize dough, boiled yam, rice, bread, plantain or cassava. The three most prevalent types of soups include light soup, palmnut soup, and groundnut (peanut) soup. (Umassmed.edu, 2019)

5. Popular Tourism Sites

The accompanying locations are noteworthy attractions to consider seeing during your trip to Ghana. These categories encompass Ecotourism, Adventure, Nature, and Heritage.

A. Ecotourism

Kakum National Park, Mole National Park, Shai Hills Resource Reserve, Bui National Park, Bia National Park, Ankasa Resource Reserve, Kogyae Resource Reserve, Bomfobiri Resource Reserve, Owabi Wildlife Sanctuary, Buabeng Fiema Monkey Sanctuary and Lake Bosomtwi.

B. Adventure

Paragliding Festival, Mountain Afadja, Dodi World, Legon Botanical Gardens and Bunso Eco Park.

C. Nature

Boti Falls, Nzulezu Village on Stilt, Wli Waterfalls, Bobiri Forest and Butterfly Sanctuary, Paga Crocodile Pond and Wechiau Hippopotamus Sanctuary.

D. Heritage

Cape Coast Castle, Elmina St. George's Castle, Bono Manso Slave Market, Wassa Domana Rock Shrine, Cape St. Paul Light House, Fort Saint Anthony, Christianborg Castle, Fort Orange, Independence Arch, Fort Appolonia, Bisa Aberwa Museum, Manhyia Palace Museum, Pikworo Slave Camp, Larabanga Mosque, Kpetoe Agotime Kente Village, Bonwire Kente Village, Sirigu Pottery and Art, Daboya Fugu, Ntonso Adinkra, Komfo Anokye Sword Site, Assin Manso Slave River and Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park. (Visit Ghana, 2018).

6. Conclusion

Tourism in Ghana holds immense potential for economic growth and development. With its rich cultural heritage, diverse natural landscapes, and welcoming people, Ghana has become an increasingly popular destination for travelers from around the world. However, to fully harness the benefits of tourism, it is crucial for the government and stakeholders to continue investing in infrastructure development, sustainable practices, and marketing efforts to attract even more visitors and ensure a positive and long-lasting impact on the country's economy.

References

- [1] Britannica student encyclopedia. (2012). Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.
- [2] Robert, K. (2022). *Ethnic Groups in Ghana and Their Languages*. [online] Available at: <https://www.successafrica.info/ethnic-groups-in-ghana-and-their-languages/> [Accessed 22 Sep. 2023].
- [3] Umassmed.edu. (2019). *Resource Guides: Cultural Approaches to Pediatric Palliative Care in Central Massachusetts: Ghanaian*. [online] Available at: https://libraryguides.umassmed.edu/diversity_guide/ghanaian
- [4] Visit Ghana. (2018). *Visit Ghana*. [online] Available at: <https://visitghana.com/>