



HERITAGE PREPARATION
SERIES · NO. 01

BEFORE THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

Your Heritage Preparation *Pack*

*Prepare your heart, your mind, and your maps for the most
meaningful journey you will ever take.*

This is not a travel guide. *It is a homecoming guide.*

Most travel guides tell you where to eat, what to pack, and how to get from the airport to your hotel. This document does something different. It prepares you for what no itinerary can — the emotional weight of standing on the soil your ancestors were taken from, the cultural intelligence to show up with respect, and the practical knowledge to move safely and confidently.

You may cry. You may feel rage. You may feel a joy so overwhelming it has no name. You may feel nothing at all — and then feel guilty for feeling nothing. All of it is valid. All of it is part of the journey.

This pack follows the same six-stage arc of a heritage journey — from the first stirring of the call, to the integration of what it means once you return home.



READ IT END TO END FIRST

Then return to each stage as a reference in the weeks and days before you depart.



SAVE IT TO YOUR PHONE

Every contact number and resource link inside is live and tappable when you need it most.



SIX STAGES, ONE ARC

Emotional, cultural, and logistical — each stage builds on the one before it.



BEYOND GHANA

The final section carries these principles to five more ancestral homelands across Africa.

Six Stages. *One Journey.*



-
- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 01 | Emotional Preparation
Managing expectations · processing grief · the DNA result · holding the weight | p.04 |
|----|--|------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 02 | Cultural Intelligence
Greetings · hierarchy · Twi phrases · market etiquette · what locals wish you knew | p.09 |
|----|--|------|
-
- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 03 | Logistical Preparation
Visas · embassies · health · insurance · money · SIM cards · transport | p.15 |
|----|---|------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 04 | Arrival Orientation
Airport guide · emergency numbers · neighbourhoods · the Day Name ceremony | p.22 |
|----|--|------|
-
- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 05 | Heritage Journey Experience
Cape Coast · Elmina · somatic grounding · the identity question | p.28 |
|----|---|------|
-
- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 06 | Post-Journey Integration
Reverse culture shock · micro-practices · your commitment to action | p.34 |
|----|--|------|
-



Beyond Ghana — Heritage Across Africa

Senegal · The Gambia · Benin · Nigeria · Sierra Leone — five more doors home

p.40



STAGE ONE OF SIX

01

STAGE 01

Emotional Preparation

*Before you pack a bag, you must prepare your heart.
This stage holds the grief, the joy, the confusion — and
the expectations that can make or break the experience.*



Most people are not prepared for what they feel.

Heritage travel to West Africa is unlike any other trip you will take. It is not a holiday. It is not tourism. It is a reckoning. The single biggest reason people come home feeling lost or emotionally broken is that they arrived with expectations no destination could meet.

“
If I'm going to know who I am and who are my people, I have to go to the continent of Africa.

— Mother Atum Azzahir, Cultural Awareness Center · CBS News

The Four Emotional Traps

Research in the *Annals of Tourism Research* (2025) and thousands of traveller accounts identify four recurring traps heritage travellers fall into.

TRAP 01 · THE HOMECOMING FANTASY

Expecting an instant, overwhelming sense of belonging the moment you land. When it doesn't come, you grieve both your ancestors and the loss of the fantasy.

TRAP 02 · THE DNA CERTAINTY ILLUSION

A DNA result tells you percentages, not identity. "84% Ghanaian" does not mean you know how to be Ghanaian. It is a starting point, not an arrival.

TRAP 03 · THE GUILT SPIRAL

Guilt for not feeling enough — or feeling too much. Guilt for having money when locals don't. Guilt for leaving. All of it is normal.

TRAP 04 · THE ISOLATION ON RETURN

Coming home with no one to talk to. Your coworkers ask how your "vacation" was, and you cannot find the words.

Build the capacity to hold it — not to avoid it.

Emotional preparation is not about eliminating these feelings. It is about creating the internal capacity to hold them without being destroyed by them. This is the work that begins before you board.

PRE-TRIP EMOTIONAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Write a letter to your ancestors.** You need not know their names. Address it to "the ones who came before me." Say what you are coming to do.
- ☐ **Set a realistic intention.** Not "I want to feel whole," but "I want to be present for whatever comes up."
- ☐ **Brief one trusted person at home.** "I may need to talk about things that are hard to explain." Ask them to hold space for your return.
- ☐ **Research the region beyond the slave trade.** The kingdoms, the art, the resistance, the culture that thrived before and after.
- ☐ **Begin a reflection journal.** In the weeks before you travel, write nightly to a simple prompt: *what am I hoping to find, and what am I afraid of?*
- ☐ **Accept that two weeks will not resolve 400 years.** That is not the goal. The goal is to begin.



ADINKRA OF THIS STAGE · AKOMA — THE HEART

The Akoma symbol represents patience, goodwill, faithfulness and love. In Akan thought, to say "*nya akoma*" — take heart — is to counsel endurance. Let patience be your companion as you prepare to feel.



STAGE TWO OF SIX

02

STAGE 02

Cultural Intelligence

Showing up with cultural intelligence is an act of respect — and the surest way to be welcomed rather than merely tolerated.



What locals wish diaspora visitors knew.

The tension between diaspora visitors and local communities is real, documented, and largely preventable. It stems not from malice on either side, but from a gap in cultural understanding — one that a little preparation closes entirely.

“ One returnee credits a local cousin with teaching her how to navigate the markets, hail a *trotro*, and greet elders properly — and never to gesture at anyone with the left hand. Without that guidance, she says, she might have left and never returned.

— Reported in Al Jazeera, 2025

The Greeting Hierarchy

In Ghanaian culture — and across much of West Africa — greetings are not optional pleasantries. They are the foundation of every interaction. Greeting an elder before a younger person is mandatory.

PERSON	HOW TO GREET	WHAT IT SIGNALS
Elder (60+)	Slight bow, two hands extended. "Maakye"(good morning) or "Maaha"(good afternoon).	Deep respect for age and wisdom
Chief / Traditional Leader	Never approach directly. Wait to be introduced. Do not extend your hand first.	Acknowledgement of authority
Market Trader	Greet before asking the price. "Ete sen?"(how are you?) first.	You are a person, not a wallet
Peer / Friend	Right-hand handshake with a finger-snap at the end.	Brotherhood & sisterhood
Child	Smile, use their name if known, crouch to their level.	Warmth and community

Eight phrases that change how you are received.

Even attempting a few words of Twi will transform your welcome. Locals will laugh *with* you, not at you — and the warmth that follows is immediate.

Maakye

maa-CHEH

Good morning

Maaha

maa-HAH

Good afternoon

Ete sɛn?

eh-teh-SEN

How are you?

Medaase

meh-DAH-seh

Thank you

Mepaakyɛw

meh-PAH-chew

Please / Excuse me

Wo ho te sɛn?

woh-hoh-teh-SEN

How is your health?

Yɛfrɛ me...

yeh-FREH-meh

My name is...

Me fi Amerika

meh-fee-ah-MEH-ri-kah

I am from America



A little goes a long way. You will mispronounce these. That is the point — the effort is the gift. Practise *Maakye* and *Medaase* until they are reflex, and you will never need the others to be forgiven for trying.

The bargaining framework.

Bargaining is expected in markets — *not* bargaining can read as disrespectful, suggesting you do not value the interaction. But there is a right way and a wrong way.

THE RULE

Never start below 60% of the asking price.

Starting at 30-40% is insulting. Open at 60-65%, expect to settle around 75-80%. Always smile, always greet first, and walk away slowly if needed — they will often call you back.

DO NOT BARGAIN AT A CHOP BAR

Roadside food stalls — *chop bars* — have fixed prices. Bargaining there is offensive. Pay what is asked, and tip generously. Hospitality is not a negotiation.

Cultural Do's & Don'ts

DO

Dress modestly at villages, churches, and traditional sites.

Accept food and drink when offered — refusing is rude.

Ask permission before photographing people.

Remove your shoes entering a home if others have.

Compliment a child indirectly — "God has blessed you."

DON'T

Wear revealing clothing to a chief's palace or a funeral.

Eat or gesture with your left hand — it is considered unclean.

Point at people with your index finger.

Step over someone's legs — walk around them.

Say "your child is so beautiful" directly — it can invite envy.



ADINKRA OF THIS STAGE · DWENNIMMEN — STRENGTH & HUMILITY

The ram's horns. Even the strongest ram submits when it must. True cultural intelligence asks for both — the strength to show up fully, and the humility to learn.



STAGE THREE OF SIX

03

STAGE 03

Logistical Preparation

Logistics are an act of wisdom: go back and fetch what you need before you move forward. Visas, health, insurance, money, connectivity — verified and ready.

Know before you go. Every time.

⚠️ Visa rules change without notice. Always verify directly with the embassy or official government portal within **four weeks** of travel. The table below was verified **June 2026**.

COUNTRY	US PASSPORT	UK	CANADA	AUSTRALIA
Ghana	Visa required · ghanaimmigration.org	Required	Required	Required
Senegal	Visa-free · 90 days	90 days	90 days	90 days
Nigeria	Visa required · immigration.gov.ng	Required	Required	Required
Benin	e-Visa · evisa.gouv.bj	e-Visa	e-Visa	e-Visa

Ghana Missions Abroad — verified June 2026

WASHINGTON D.C. · US

+1 (202) 686-5700

3512 International Dr NW,
Washington, D.C. 20008
washington.mfa.gov.gh

LONDON · UK

+44 (0)20 7201 5900

13 Belgrave Square, London
SW1X 8PR
ghanahighcommissionuk.com

CANBERRA · AU

+61 2 6290 2110

36 Endeavour St, Red Hill ACT
2603
ghanahighcom.org.au

The one certificate you cannot board without.



YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE — MANDATORY FOR GHANA

You will not be allowed to board your flight or enter Ghana without a valid Yellow Fever certificate (*Carte Jaune*). Book at least **10 days** before travel. It is valid for life.

Malaria Prevention

Consult your doctor — Malarone, Doxycycline or Lariam. Start before travel.

Hepatitis A & B

Strongly recommended for all travellers.

Typhoid

Recommended — especially if eating local food (you should be).

Routine & Consultation

MMR, Tdap, Flu, COVID-19 current. Book a travel-medicine visit 6–8 weeks out.

Travel Insurance



Do not travel without comprehensive cover. Medical evacuation from West Africa can cost USD \$50,000–\$150,000 out of pocket. This is not optional.

World Nomads

GLOBAL

Adventure activities, medevac, cancellation.
worldnomads.com

SafetyWing

LONG STAYS

Monthly subscription, good for extended trips.
safetywing.com

Allianz Travel

US

24/7 assistance & medevac cover.
allianztravelinsurance.com

Cover-More

AU

Australia's leading insurer, covers Africa & medevac.
covermore.com.au

Handling money in Ghana.



The Ghanaian Cedi (GHS) is the local currency.

The cedi moves quickly against major currencies — we deliberately do not print a rate that will be stale by the time you travel. Check the live rate at [xe.com](https://www.xe.com) the week you depart, and again on arrival.

Carry clean USD cash

Widely accepted at forex bureaux. Bring unfolded notes printed after 2013 — torn or old notes are often refused.

Use forex bureaux

Far better rates than airport or hotel exchanges. Reputable chains operate around Osu and the major malls.

Mobile Money (MoMo)

MTN Mobile Money is ubiquitous. Ask your guide to help set up a temporary MoMo wallet for local payments.

Notify your bank · Wise / Revolut

Tell your bank your dates to prevent card blocks. Use wise.com or revolut.com for low-fee transfers.

SIM Cards & Connectivity

Buy a local SIM in the Kotoka Airport arrivals hall (bring your passport for registration), or activate an eSIM before you land.

MTN Ghana

Best coverage nationwide. Top up via MoMo or scratch cards.

Telecel Ghana (formerly Vodafone)

Strong in Accra and major cities, good data speeds.

AirtelTigo

Budget option, useful in some rural regions.

eSIM · Airalo

Activate a Ghana eSIM before you land. airalo.com



ADINKRA OF THIS STAGE · SANKOFA — GO BACK AND FETCH IT

Logistical preparation is Sankofa in practice: you go back and gather everything you need — visas, vaccines, insurance, cash — before you move forward into the journey.



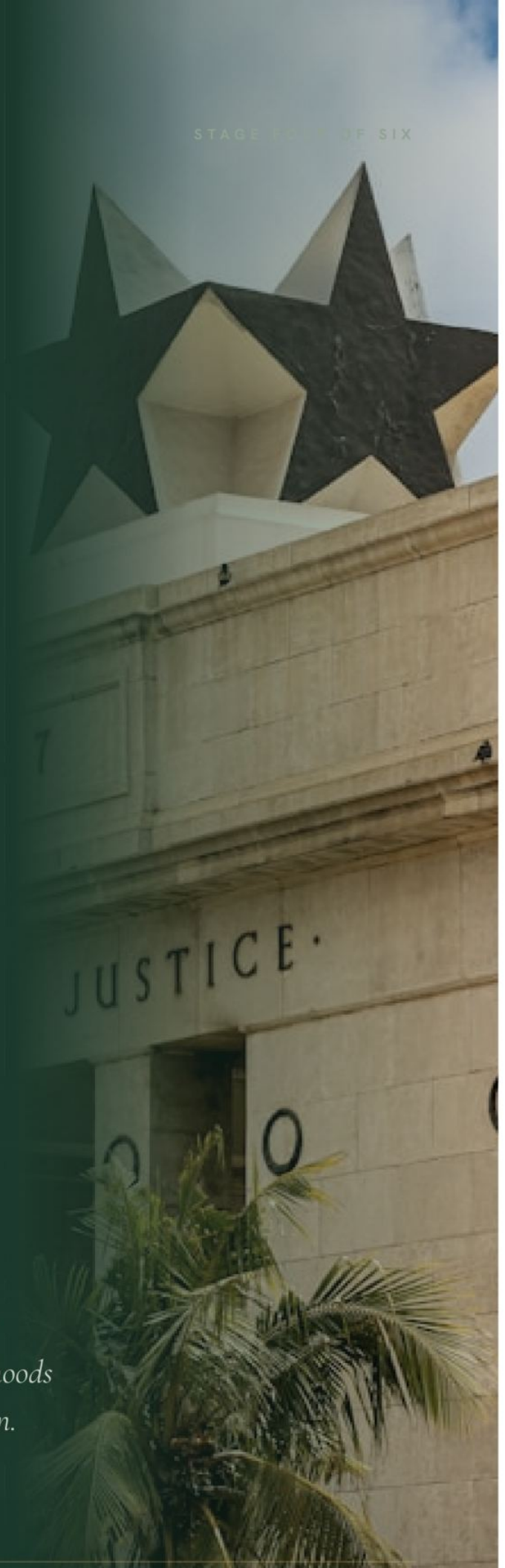
STAGE FOUR OF SIX

04

STAGE 04

Arrival Orientation

The first twenty-four hours will test everything you prepared for. The airport, the streets, the neighbourhoods — and the moments that define your first impression.



From the plane to your accommodation.

 **The airport is where the scams begin.** Unofficial "helpers" will offer to carry bags, find taxis, or change money the moment you clear customs. Politely decline everything. Use only official taxis from the designated rank, or a pre-booked Uber / Bolt.

- 1 Immigration.** Passport, Yellow Fever certificate and completed arrival card ready. Queue at the "All Passports" lane.
- 2 Baggage claim.** Keep your baggage receipt. Porters are available (tip GHS 20–30). Keep your bags in sight at all times.
- 3 Customs.** Declare any cash over USD \$10,000. Undeclared amounts can be confiscated.
- 4 SIM card.** MTN and Telecel booths are in the arrivals hall. Buy and register your SIM here before exiting.
- 5 Transport.** Use Uber or Bolt (download before you land). Official taxis from the rank charge GHS 150–250 to central Accra — agree the price before you get in.

Emergency Numbers — Ghana

Verified June 2026 · save this page to your phone

POLICE

191

AMBULANCE

193

FIRE

192

TOURIST POLICE

+233 30 266 6990

US EMBASSY

+233 30 274 1000

UK HIGH COMM.

+233 30 221 3250

AU HIGH COMM.

+233 30 221 6400

KORLE BU HOSPITAL

+233 30 267 4212

AREA	CHARACTER	BEST FOR
Osu	Lively, cosmopolitan, safe at night	Restaurants, nightlife, Oxford Street shopping
Labone	Quiet, residential, expat-friendly	Mid-range stays, local cafés
Airport Res.	Upscale, secure, near the airport	First-night stays, international hotels
Jamestown	Historic, vibrant, authentic	Heritage walks, fishing harbour, colonial architecture
Labadi	Beachside, relaxed	Labadi Beach, weekend markets

The Day Name Ceremony

In Akan tradition every person carries a name based on the day of the week they were born. Knowing your Akan day name is one of the most powerful ways to connect — it signals you have done your homework, and that you see yourself as family.

DAY	MALE	FEMALE	MEANING
Sunday	Kwasi / Akwasi	Akosua / Esi	<i>Born of the sun</i>
Monday	Kwadwo / Kojo	Adwoa / Adjoa	<i>Born of peace</i>
Tuesday	Kwabena / Kobi	Abena / Araba	<i>Born of the ocean</i>
Wednesday	Kwaku / Kweku	Akua / Ekua	<i>Born of the spider</i>
Thursday	Yaw / Yao	Yaa / Aba	<i>Born of the earth</i>
Friday	Kofi	Efua / Afua	<i>Born of love</i>
Saturday	Kwame / Kwami	Ama / Amba	<i>Born of God</i>



ADINKRA OF THIS STAGE · MATE MASIE — I HAVE HEARD AND KEPT IT

Introduce yourself with both names — "I'm Marcus, but my Akan name is Kofi; I was born on a Friday." The warmth is immediate. Mate Masie honours the traveller who arrives ready to listen before they speak.



STAGE FIVE OF SIX

05
STAGE 05

Heritage Journey Experience

You are standing on the ground your ancestors walked. This stage prepares you for the sites themselves — how to hold yourself, and what to do when the weight becomes unbearable.

Cape Coast & Elmina: what to expect.

The castles are not museums. They are the last place on African soil that millions of your ancestors stood before they were loaded onto ships and never returned.

No amount of preparation fully readies you for that reality. But knowing what to expect helps you stay present rather than shut down. Two short, real visitor reflections:

"You get emotional at some point, pondering over the effects of the slave trade and its impact."

— Visitor review, Cape Coast Castle

"The castle is gorgeous, and so is the ocean below it — but its history is nothing close to its beauty."

— Visitor review, Cape Coast Castle, 2024



Cape Coast Castle

Tel +233 33 213 2307

Web ghanamuseums.org

Loc Victoria Rd, Cape Coast, Central Region

Hrs Daily 9am–5pm · book ahead Nov–Jan

Fee ~USD \$15 diaspora · guided \$30–50



Elmina Castle

Tel +233 33 209 0730

Web ghanamuseums.org

Loc Elmina, Central Region (15 min from Cape Coast)

Hrs Daily 9am–5pm

Tip Elmina morning · Cape Coast at 4pm light

When the past becomes overwhelming, return to the body.

These are evidence-based techniques used by trauma therapists. They work. Practise them *before* you go, so they are available to you the moment you need them.

01 The 5-4-3-2-1 Ground

Name **5** things you can see · **4** you can touch · **3** you can hear · **2** you can smell · **1** you can taste.
This anchors you in the present when the past floods in.

02 The Breath Anchor

Inhale for 4 counts · hold for 4 · exhale for 6. The extended exhale calms the nervous system. Do this *before* entering the dungeon.

03 The Witness Statement

When overwhelmed, say silently: "*I am witnessing this. I am here. I am safe. They are not forgotten.*" It separates your present self from the trauma without dismissing it.

GHANA TOURISM AUTHORITY · OFFICIAL BODY

Tel +233 30 268 5446

Web touringghana.com

Email info@touringghana.com

Accra, Ghana — licensed tour-guide referrals and complaints about operators. Always book guided tours through licensed guides.

At some point, someone will ask you — *"Are you African, or are you American?"*

"Too American to be in Ghanaian spaces. But too Ghanaian for America."

— A returnee, quoted in Al Jazeera · 2025

You do not have to choose. The Sankofa bird faces backward while flying forward. You can hold both.

You are the living bridge between what was taken and what was built from what survived. That is not a contradiction. *That is your inheritance.*



ADINKRA OF THIS STAGE · NYAME NTI — BY GOD'S GRACE

Nyame Nti honours the courage it takes to stand in the place of your ancestors' greatest suffering — and to choose gratitude over despair.



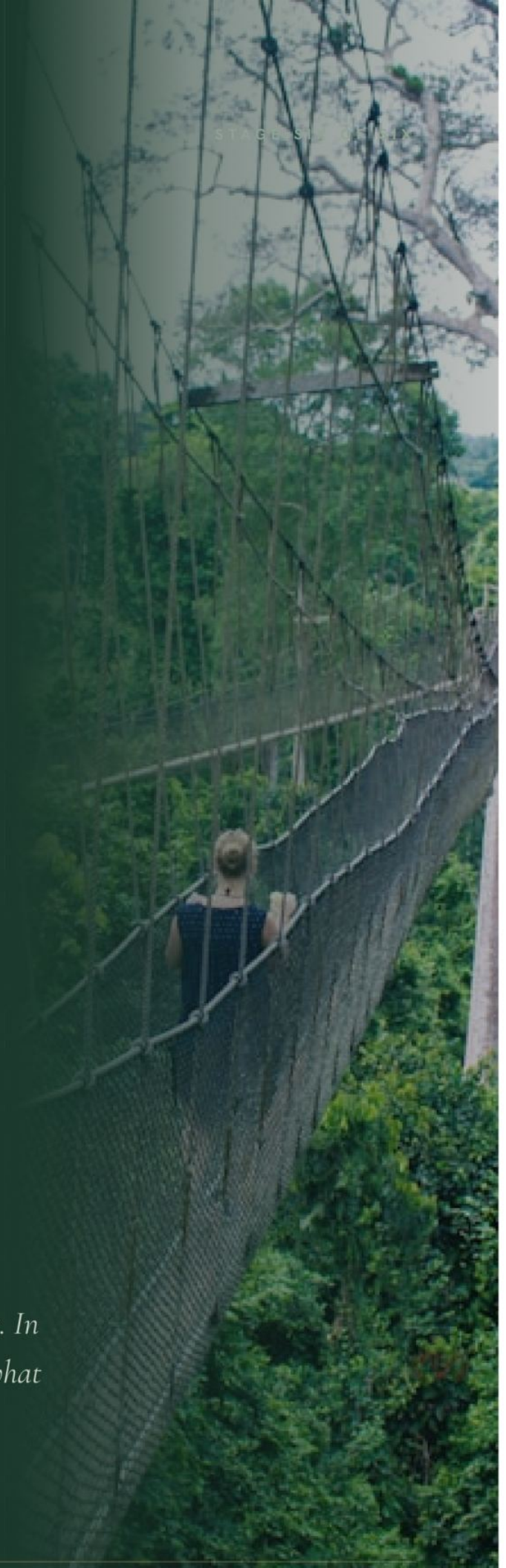
STAGE SIX

06

STAGE 06

Post-Journey Integration

The journey does not end when you land back home. In many ways, it begins. This stage is about weaving what you found into a life that honours it.



Nobody warned me about coming home.

“*Home no longer felt like home, and nobody seemed to understand. I was "in-between" — not quite in Ghana, not quite Diaspora.*

— Jemila Abdulai · Circumspecte

Reverse culture shock is real, documented, and almost universal among heritage travellers. It is not a sign that something went wrong. It is a sign that something went *right* — that you allowed yourself to be changed.

What it looks like

- Feeling irritable, disconnected, or numb in the first week home
- Crying unexpectedly — in the shower, the car, the grocery store
- Anger at the materialism and individualism of home
- Guilt for having left — and for being glad to be home
- Struggling to explain it to people who weren't there
- A deep desire to go back, sometimes immediately



This is normal. This is integration.

Give yourself at least two weeks before any major decision. Do not book another trip in the first 48 hours home — even though you will want to. Let the experience settle.

Roots grow through repetition.

Integration is not a single grand gesture. It is small, sustainable acts repeated until they become who you are. Choose practices you can actually keep.



The Daily Witness Journal

For 21 days after your return, each morning answer one question: *"What did I bring home from Africa today?"* Not what you bought — what you carry inside. This externalises the inner shift and makes it real.



The Community Anchor

Find or create a community of people who have made the same journey — diaspora forums, local groups, or fellow travellers you met on the road. Share your story. Hear theirs. You are not alone in what you are feeling.



The Commitment to Action

Choose one concrete thing you will do differently. Not a grand gesture — one small, sustainable act. Learn three more Twi phrases. Cook one Ghanaian meal a month. Teach one person what you learned.

YOUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

Write it. Sign it. Date it.

Because of this journey, I commit to...

Write your commitment here.

SIGNATURE

DATE



ADINKRA OF THIS STAGE · SANKOFA — THE RETURNEE

You went back. You fetched it. Now you carry it forward. To return home changed — and to let that change become a life — is the quiet honour at the end of every heritage journey.

BEYOND GHANA

Heritage Across Africa

Ghana is one door home. It is not the only one. The same six stages — heart, cultural intelligence, logistics, arrival, the sites, integration — carry to every ancestral coast.

Five focused profiles follow. Treat each as a starting point: visa rules, currencies and emergency numbers change — always verify with the official portal within four weeks of travel.

WEST AFRICA · NO. 01

Senegal

Capital: Dakar · Gorée Island, the House of Slaves

THE DOOR HOME · GORÉE ISLAND

A twenty-minute ferry from Dakar, Gorée's *Maison des Esclaves* and its Door of No Return have stood since the 18th century — a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1978, and one of the most visited memorials of the Atlantic slave trade. Approach it the way you would Cape Coast: prepared, grounded, unhurried.

Quick Facts

Languages	French · Wolof
Currency	West African CFA (XOF)
Visa	Visa-free · 90 days
Emergency	Police 17 · Fire 18 · SAMU 1515

A Few Words of Wolof

Na nga def? How are you?

Jërëjër Thank you

Salaam aleekum Peace be with you



Apply the same six stages before you stand at this door — prepare your heart, your cultural intelligence, and your logistics first.

WEST AFRICA · NO. 02

The Gambia

Capital: Banjul · Kunta Kinteh Island & Juffureh

THE DOOR HOME · KUNTA KINTEH ISLAND

Upriver from Banjul lies the island once called James Island, and the village of Juffureh — the ancestral home Alex Haley traced in *Roots*. A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2003, it draws diaspora travellers seeking the specific thread of their own lineage. The ferry and village visit are best done with a licensed local guide.

Quick Facts

Languages	English · Mandinka · Wolof
Currency	Dalasi (GMD)
Visa	Check by nationality
Emergency	Police 117 · Amb. 116 · Fire 118

A Few Words of Mandinka

I be ñaadi? How are you?

Abaraka Thank you

Salaam aleekum Peace be with you



If you are tracing a specific lineage, begin Stage 01 early — the emotional weight of a named ancestral village is uniquely intense.

WEST AFRICA · NO. 03

Benin

Capital: Porto-Novo · Ouidah & the Door of No Return

THE DOOR HOME · OUIDAH

In Ouidah, the *Route des Esclaves* runs nearly four kilometres from the old auction square to the beach, ending at the *Porte du Non-Retour* — the Door of No Return. Benin is also the cradle of Vodun; its annual Vodun Festival each 10 January is among the most powerful living-culture events on the continent.

Quick Facts

Languages	French · Fon · Yoruba
Currency	West African CFA (XOF)
Visa	e-Visa · evisa.gouv.bj
Emergency	Police 117 · Fire 118

A Few Words of Fon

A **fɔn** ganjia?

Good morning?

Awanou

Thank you

Kudo

Hello / well done



Vodun is a living faith, not a spectacle. Bring Stage 02's cultural intelligence — ask before photographing, and follow your guide's lead at every shrine.

WEST AFRICA · NO. 04

Nigeria

Capital: Abuja · Badagry & the Point of No Return

THE DOOR HOME · BADAGRY

An hour west of Lagos, Badagry holds the Slave Route, the Point of No Return on Gberefu Island, the Badagry Heritage Museum and the Brazilian Barracoon — where enslaved people were held before the crossing. It is less visited than Ghana's castles, which makes a knowledgeable guide essential.

Quick Facts

Languages **English · Yoruba · Igbo · Hausa**

Currency **Naira (NGN)**

Visa **Required · immigration.gov.ng**

Emergency **National 112 · Police 199**

A Few Words of Yoruba

Ẹ káàárò Good morning

Ẹ sẹ́ Thank you

Báwo ni? How are you?



Lagos traffic is its own logistics challenge — build Stage 03's buffer time generously, and pre-book transport between the city and Badagry.

WEST AFRICA · NO. 05

Sierra Leone

Capital: Freetown · Bunce Island & the Gullah connection

THE DOOR HOME · BUNCE ISLAND

In the Sierra Leone River sits Bunce Island, a British slave castle with a singular bond to the rice-growing Gullah / Geechee people of South Carolina and Georgia. Freetown itself was founded in 1792 by formerly enslaved people; its Krio culture is their living legacy. For Gullah descendants, no door home is more direct.

Quick Facts

Languages	English · Krio
Currency	Leone (SLE)
Visa	Required · e-Visa available
Emergency	999

A Few Words of Krio

Kushɛ Hello

Aw di bɔdi? How are you?

Tɛnki Thank you



Bunce Island has limited facilities and no fixed schedule — arrange the boat and a heritage guide through a reputable Freetown operator well in advance.

One continent, six thresholds.

A side-by-side reference for planning. Verify every visa rule, currency and emergency number with the official portal within four weeks of travel — details below were compiled June 2026.

COUNTRY	HERITAGE DOOR	CURRENCY	VISA (US)	EMERGENCY
Ghana 	Cape Coast & Elmina Castles	Cedi (GHS)	Required	191 · 193
Senegal 	Gorée Island · House of Slaves	CFA (XOF)	Visa-free 90d	17 · 1515
The Gambia 	Kunta Kinteh Island · Juffureh	Dalasi (GMD)	Check	117 · 116
Benin 	Ouidah · Door of No Return	CFA (XOF)	e-Visa	117 · 118
Nigeria 	Badagry · Point of No Return	Naira (NGN)	Required	112 · 199
Sierra Leone 	Bunce Island · Gullah ties	Leone (SLE)	Required	999

Yellow Fever — universal

A Yellow Fever certificate is required or strongly advised across all six countries. Carry your *Carte Jaune* everywhere — and never pack it in checked luggage.

One framework, every door

Wherever you go, the six stages hold: prepare your heart, your cultural intelligence and your logistics; arrive with humility; stand at the site grounded; and integrate what you carry home.

Save this page to your phone.

Verified June 2026 · screenshot it before you travel

POLICE EMERGENCY

191

AMBULANCE

193

FIRE SERVICE

192

US EMBASSY · ACCRA
24-hour citizen services

+233 30 274 1000

UK HIGH COMMISSION
Accra · 24-hour

+233 30 221 3250

KORLE BU HOSPITAL
Accra · main hospital

+233 30 267 4212

TOURIST POLICE UNIT
Ghana Police Service

+233 30 266 6990

CAPE COAST CASTLE
Bookings & info

+233 33 213 2307

GHANA TOURISM AUTHORITY
Official body

+233 30 268 5446



For more on each destination — culture, history, and planning notes — read the heritage articles at ourrootsafrica.com.



SAFE TRAVELS, RETURNEE

Go back and fetch it. *Then carry it forward.*

You have prepared your heart, your cultural intelligence, and your logistics. You know the doors, the words, the numbers. What remains cannot be packed — only carried. Travel gently. Listen first. And let whatever you find become a part of how you live.

"It feels like we've come full circle. We learned so much about the history here and how it connects to our ancestors — it just seemed right to come back."

— Robert Faison, who returned to take Ghanaian citizenship · AFP, 2025

FURTHER READING

Heritage articles, destination notes and returnee stories — ourrootsafrica.com