**INFORMATION ON TRAVELLING TO THE GAMBIA FOR MBOKA FESTIVAL FOR ARTS CUTURE AND SPORT**

This is probably the best portal for Gambia that is fairly up to date and independent of government and corporations.

<http://www.accessgambia.com/>

**Details for a complete Gambia experience**

What is there to do pre and post bookfair?

•     The festival is on for two weeks, (6-20 January 2018) so there are festival activities for 7 days before the bookfair and litfest starts. There are also independent land tour operators, good ones that we can recommend.

The two easiest/cheapest ways to travel to The Gambia

Option 1

VIA EUROPE

* Via UK (direct flight to London, preferably into London Gatwick)

and then a package deal from London Gatwick to The Gambia.
Flights usually depart early in the morning from London, therefore this is likely to entail a stopover in London.

Best package deals:

The Gambia Experience: This is the premier company that travels to The Gambia and so everything on there site is always up to date.

<https://www.gambia.co.uk/>

This is their Gambia Guide (if used in conjunction with Access Gambia, it’s fairly comprehensive, informative and reliable for all needs)

<https://www.gambia.co.uk/guide/>

Thomas Cook:

<https://www.thomascook.com/>

Probably the cheapest from the UK. It is a charter so travelling light is key!

Other travel options via Europe:

* Via Spain: The journey can be broken at no extra cost in Barcelona before travelling on to Banjul on independent airline, Vueling.

Tips: If you have a long layover, paying a small additional amount (in advance or at the airport) to use their lounge is recommended. There is a time difference between Banjul and Barcelona. Be careful not to muss your flight

It is easy to travel into Barcelona for the day and a nice day trip (or longer – outbound and /or inbound)

[www.vueling.com/en](http://www.vueling.com/en)

* Via Amsterdam to Banjul on Tui

[www.tui.nl](http://www.tui.nl)

(This is the Dutch partner of Thomsons) so you have to check their Dutch site. it’s fairly straightforward to check details even in Dutch (as there is a Table) but they can be called to confirm the details). There is a US site, but it may not show the flights to Banjul

* SN Brussels - Scheduled airline. (sometimes some great deals to be had)
* Tips: They offer the best deal for luggage – 2 x 23 kg per person luggage allowance.

IMPORTANT: Because of heightened security checks, going through the security gates as soon as possible is advised. If you miss your flight, The ‘next flight’ to Banjul is likely to be the ‘next week.’

Option 2

VIA AFRICA

* Royal Air Maroc via Casablanca – Scheduled airline.

[http://www.royalairmaroc.com](http://www.royalairmaroc.com/)

(fares may be cheaper via an agent.
Tip: Check for a free stopover. If the connecting flight entails a one night stopover, there is no charge for the hotel)

* Option 2 via Dakar. There are direct flights from NY to Dakar and Toronto to Dakar.

Travel from Dakar can be by flight or by road.

Flights: There are daily flights from Dakar to Banjul (about 90 mins).
Road: It is about 7 hours from Dakar to Banjul by road that includes a ferry crossing of about 45 mins).

**Mboka Festival 2018**

**Mboka Festival of Arts, Culture and Sports : 2017 Highlights & 2018 dates**

<http://conta.cc/2p8Tex7>

<http://www.sablelitmag.org/kadijasesay/mboka-festival-of-arts-culture-sport-2018/>

The festival events happen across various venues. The litfest/bookfair/art exhibition will take place at Senegambia Hotel.(4 star). There is a hotel opposite called Kairaba Hotel, (4 star).

I have been recommending people on a budget but who still want something nice to stay at Djeliba Hotel\*\*\* which is walking distance to Senegambia Hotel. They are all beach front.

The Gambia has a wide range of different styles of accommodation to suit pocket and client that can either be booked as a package or independently. There are lots of apartments both self catering with various levels of amenities as well as houses and villas to rent. (Most of these are not beach front but often you can get some that are a short walking distance).

The more upmarket hotels than the ones that I have mentioned are Coral Reef ( used to be a Sheraton) and Cocoa Ocean which is a Resort and Spa hotel 5 star (or higher rated). (For those who likes spa’s Cocoa Ocean is highly recommended).But you don’t have to stay there to use the spa.

Ngala Lodge : On the cliff, overlooking the Atlantic. Book early.

The Gambia is a great destination for people to have a mixed experience, to both chill out and check out the cultural opportunities.

Experiences

include

* Bird watching (for amateurs and professionals)
* Stone Circles of Wassau
* Juffure – birth place of Alex Haley (Members of the original cast of Roots still occasionally visit The Gambia).

Side trips to neighbouring countries are possible
Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Dakar

A new airline that started in May 2017 flys between Banjul to Accra, Lagos and Freetown.