

# Ultimate Sierra Leone

Trip Code: PXSL

Version:



PIONEER



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Ascend to the upper reaches of Mount Bintumani (1,945m), the highest mountain in West Africa.
- Trek through the rainforest to Tiwai Island reserve on the banks of the river Moa, home to the elusive pygmy hippo, chimps and endangered monkeys.
- Pay a visit to the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary and stay on site in chalets within the rainforest.
- Relax on some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, including River No.2 beach at Tokeh and

camp under the stars on the Banana Islands.

## AT A GLANCE

- 14 days touring and sightseeing with some short rainforest walks and four hill walking days
- Max altitude 1945m
- Join at Freetown (Lungi) International Airport

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

We'll spend two weeks discovering the real Sierra Leone, far beyond the news headlines that have hampered the progress of this beautiful country in the past. We'll discover how the vibrant and bustling capital city of Freetown got its name, and spend some time uncovering its fascinating history. The true heart of this trip is during our time spent inland where we'll get to meet village chiefs and join in with daily life activities of the villagers, including weaving, cooking, dancing and other rituals. A real highlight of this authentic adventure experience.

We'll be guided on a hike to the higher reaches of West Africa's highest peak, Mt. Bintumani, and we'll climb a hill in the Wara Wara Mountains to admire the views of the many and varied shapely hills that are typical of this region. There is a dark colonial past here too, that we aim to face head on, with visits to the once fortified British slave islands of Bunce and Tasso.

## Is this holiday for you?

This is an active discovery tour. Most days will include a walk, with a few days more strenuous exercise including four days in hilly and occasionally mountainous terrain. There will be considerable time spent in a bus and 4x4s as we travel between destinations and we have four different boat rides built into the tour too. We won't be sitting still for long. This holiday will be packed full of new discoveries and fascinating West African culture, spending much of our time off the beaten track in functional accommodation, including hotels and guesthouses in built up areas, to campsites and tents in the interior, and on Banana island. Naturally, being a tropical destination, we'll be surrounded by exotic flora and fauna most days, so if you're comfortable with a few bugs and bats and would love to spend time amongst the charismatic chimpanzees in their natural habitat, then this is the adventure for you.

# Itinerary

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Version:

## Holiday Information

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### What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- A single timed airport transfer on arrival & departure
- All accommodation as described, including tents and sleeping mats
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transfers required by the itinerary on private vehicle or boat
- Visits to all attractions and accompanying tips including villages / reserves / museums / islands and the chimpanzee sanctuary.

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas
- Airport transfers other than group transfers
- Bedding and/or sleeping bags on camping nights
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional
- Tips for guides / porters etc Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Meal Plan

All meals included throughout.

## Food & Water

Expect lots of rice. Sierra Leonians often report that a meal isn't complete without it. Jollof rice, a stewed rice dish with meat, and various tomatoes, onions, spices and vegetables, is common. As is cassava, and when compounded into a meal with cocoyam and plantains is known as 'fufu.' You may also find Gari, a kind of West African tapioca pudding. Other common staples include peanuts, palm oil, and a wide range of tropical fruit: bananas, papaya, lemons, avocado, guava, watermelon, mangoes and pineapples. Meat dishes are often centred around goat, chicken or beef.

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

## Accommodation

The accommodation on this trip ranges greatly from the comfortable and functional hotels within the cities and towns along the way, to the tents and permanent campsites found elsewhere.

In Freetown, Bo and Tokeh Beach you will be in comfortable, independently run hotels with pools, wifi and air conditioning among other conveniences. In more remote locations, services become more limited. At Makeni, the Royal Hotel is more basic, but clean and comfortable. Tacugama Eco-lodge is a very basic collection of characterful and comfortable thatched or tin-roof chalets within the rainforest. Weindays Guesthouse at Kabala, is again comfortable and basic, with minimal amenities. Many accommodations, particularly away from Freetown, rely on generators for electricity, usually at night, as power surges are frequent and therefore make the mains electricity unreliable. These usually run through the night between 7pm and 7am, but sometimes for some of the time during the day also.

At Sinikoro and Tiwai, we will camp in a permanent campsite, with tents on a concrete platform and underneath a permanent shelter. At banana Island we will be in permanent safari tents, most of which are on the fringe between forest and beach, in secluded locations within the site. On our two day trek on Mount Bintumani, we will sleep in lightweight tents and on sleeping mats which will be carried by porters, sleeping bags/bedding is not provided. Ablutions within all of these campsites, permanent or otherwise will be very basic.

## Spending Money

The Leone is the currency of Sierra Leone and is used as cash in most places. USD are also accepted in most places, but you should carry the local currency as first option. Most tips have been taken care of and should therefore be paid by the guide whilst you are on trip, but approximately £200 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) in Leones, should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs and optional activities are additional so you may wish to budget for these.

## Guidance on Tipping

On this trip we have taken care of the majority of tips required to visit the villages, reserves, museums, islands and the chimpanzee sanctuary, however it is still considered regular practice to tip your local guides and drivers if you are happy with the services provided. You will be expected to do this at the end of your trip, but also be aware there will likely be supplementary drivers of 4x4s to reach the village prior to Mt. Bintumani climb, and then again to return to Bo.

We suggest you co-ordinate these tips as a group and as a rough guide we recommend each group member contributes around US\$80-100 per person. The exact amount should be determined by the group and the guide will give advice on the appropriate levels.

## Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft bag such as the KE kit bag, and a daypack. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

## Joining instructions

The group will meet at the hotel in Freetown.

There will be a single group transfer from Lungi International Airport (Freetown).

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

**VACCINATIONS** You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you specifically require any vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. Malarial prophylaxis are required. There is risk of yellow fever and you must carry a current vaccination certificate. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The unit of currency in Sierra Leone is the Sierra Leonean Leone.

## Preparing for your Holiday

You should be aerobically fit and comfortable with walking 3 to 6 hours for consecutive days. Hill walking, with a good amount of ascent and descent, is the best training. Running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

## Climate

The climate is tropical and during our departure in late November, early December, the weather should be fairly stable, dry and warm particularly near the coast, although the forests of the interior will remain wet throughout. The main wet season is around August/September, and we may still experience a lingering shower. In the forests of the interior, expect humid and regularly wet conditions, although it will remain warm even during showers. As you climb to altitude on Mt Bintumani expect a cooler breeze, bring layers to protect from this particularly for our trekking and camping days.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

Sierra Leone, A Political History - David Harris (2020)

Free Slaves, Freetown, and the Sierra Leonean Civil War - Joseph Kaifala (2017)

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

### You should bring the following items:

- Lightweight hiking boots
- Trainers or sandals
- Underwear
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof jacket

- Lightweight waterproof overtrousers
- Wicking base layer shirts
- Loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts
- T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Bedding and/or 1-2 season sleeping bag for camping nights
- Sunhat (wide brimmed)
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Water bottles 1 litre x2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets or filter water bottle such as Water to Go
- Antibacterial handwash
- Washbag and toiletries
- Basic First Aid Kit ; insect repellent (DEET); antiseptic cream; throat lozenges; diarrhoea treatment (Diocalm or Immodium); painkillers; plasters and blister treatment; and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

**The following items are optional:**

- Binoculars



- Swimwear
- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- Camera
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Umbrella and/or Poncho
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Freetown. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Freetown (Lungi) International Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London Heathrow to Freetown (Lungi) International Airport with Brussels Air via Brussels. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning arriving in the early evening of day 1 of the itinerary. Return flights will depart Freetown (Lungi) International Airport in the evening of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK Brussels the following morning, before a connecting flight back to Heathrow for mid morning. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers may be available on request.

Please be aware that there are often only a limited number of seats available at the advertised price. To avoid paying flight supplements, we recommend that you book as early as possible, especially during peak times. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures, we will contact you with an alternative quote. Please note that you may be asked to pay for your flights in advance of your final holiday balance. Note that if you book a package including flights with KE you will benefit from full financial protection.

# Why Choose KE

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## Why KE

Trust KE to bring you new and exciting destinations for you to discover. Our trip takes you further than the beaches and islands that surround Freetown, into the heart of the country. We'll meet village chiefs, climb the country's highest mountain and delve deep into the rainforests of this intriguing country in search of playful primates and elusive hippos. In true KE spirit, we'll push further and higher than other operators, to give you the best impression of this emerging adventure travel destination, and leave you with indelible memories of this incredible place for years to come.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 23/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change