

Dakar, Senegal

Tourist information

Dakar is a major West African hub, so there are lots of flights coming from and going to Europe, North America and other African cities. Be prepared to arrive and leave at anytime of the night or day - many flights come in at around 2^{AM} and leave at around 4 AM.

TRANSPORTATION

By plane

From South Africa: SAA (Johannesburg)

From Dubai: _____ Emirates

From Europe: _____ Air France (Paris-CDG), TAP Air Portugal (Lisbon), Alitalia (Milan), Iberia (Madrid, Las Palmas), Brussels Airlines (Brussels), Turkish Airlines (Istanbul)

From Africa: _____ TACV Cabo Verde (Praia and Bissau), Royal Air Maroc (Casablanca), Air Ivoire (Abidjan), Ethiopian (Addis Ababa via Lomé and Abidjan or via Ndjamena), Kenya Airways (Nairobi via Bamako), Virgin Nigeria (Lagos), Brussels Airlines (Banjul), Tunisair (Tunis), Air Algérie (Algiers), Air Mali International (Bamako), Air Mauritanie (Nouakchott), Bellview Airlines (Lagos), Delta Airlines (Luanda)

From North America: SAA (Washington-Dulles and New York-JFK), Delta (Atlanta), Delta (New York-JFK)

From Asia: _____ Emirates (Dubai)

By road: The main method of travel around the country is by *sept places* (from French, "seven seats," literally questionable station wagons in which they will pack seven people so that you are basically sitting on the next person's lap throughout the journey). You can also come with a group and rent out an entire *sept place*, but this will be expensive. If you are obviously a tourist, they WILL try to rip you off, so make sure to set a price before you agree to a driver. There are set prices to often-travelled locations. The main *sept place* station in Dakar is Gare Routières de Pompier. Watch out for pickpockets!

Get around



Place de l'Indépendance



Door of the Millennium



 houses

By Bus: The Dakar bus system, known as Dakar DemmDikk (Dakar coming and going), is fairly dependable. Fares are 150 CFA, and there are no transfers. Unfortunately, for newcomers, there's not much in the way of a map of the bus system, so you'll have to figure it out on your own. The number 10 bus runs along the Corniche de l'Ouest and turns into the suburbs at Rue AimeCesaire. The number 1 bus runs along the VDN.

Cars Rapides. These are the usually blue, yellow or white mini-buses that careen through Dakar and some of Senegal's other cities. There are somewhat fixed rates for certain distances, but you need to check with a Senegalese beforehand. As of 2011 150 CFA would cover most destinations. To find out where one is going, flag it down and shout out your destination at the apprenti, the boy in charge of collecting fares who hangs out the back. If he shouts back at you the destination you want, signal it to stop and hop aboard. To stop, bang loudly on the side of the bus, on the roof or signal to the apprenti you want off. Apprenti's don't always speak French, so be prepared to communicate otherwise if you do not speak Wolof.

By Taxi: Cheap and safe and everywhere. Just don't mind the broken windshields. All taxi fares are negotiated beforehand and will require bargaining. If you're not from Senegal, you will probably have an outrageous price proposed, so check with locals before to get an idea of what they pay, in order to know what you will be

able to get. Even if you have negotiated a price, once you arrive your taxi driver will pretend he has no change on him, even if he previously assured you he had.

To See



Goree Island

- **African Renaissance Monument.** Opening its doors in December 2010, this colossal monument is dedicated to Africa's emergence from the oppressive European regimes that once ruled the continent and the end of slavery. It is also meant as a display of African pride to shirk foreign perceptions of Africans as lesser people. The monument is rather controversial, with some Africans feeling the sense of pride it is meant to evoke while others criticizing it as a foreign (it was made by [North Korea](#)), completely un-African Stalinist statue. From base to the top, it reaches taller than the Statue of Liberty. [edit](#)
- **IFAN Museum of African Arts** (*MuséeThéodore Monod d'ArtAfricain*). [edit](#)
- **Ile de Goree.** Goree Island in English, it was named by the Dutch after taking over the island from the Portuguese in the late 1600s. Goree was a minor location used for the transport of slaves headed to the Americas, though its prominence is often overplayed. The island has interesting colonial architecture, mostly in ruins, including the landmark "House of Slaves" museum. This is a place with a great atmosphere, because it gives you kind of an pirate-island (with friendly folks all-over kind of feeling). Just walk around and explore. It's a small island, so you can easily stroll around it in an hour. You can buy cheap beer and lounge on the beach when you're done, or stroll some more and buy art-work from the locals. [edit](#)
- **Les Almadies** (*Les pointes des Almadies*). The Western tip of the African continent where plenty of seafood restaurants are located. [edit](#)
- **Dakar Grand Mosque.** Built in 1964. [edit](#)
- **Dakar Cathedral.** [edit](#)

- **Hann Park and Zoo**, ☎832.38.75. Tues-Sun 10AM-12:30PM and 3PM-6:30PM. The public gardens were built in 1903 and the arboretum was built in 1947. The gardens feature a wide variety of Senegalese plantlife and the zoo contains over 130 animals. [edit](#)

Do:

- Check out the incredibly rich musical scene.
- **Lake Retba** (*Lac Rose*). Also called the "Pink Lake", the high concentration of cyanobacteria indeed gives the lake a pink tone. During the dry season and when the sun is brightest the color is said to be especially vivid. The lake has a high concentration of salt, so while you admire the beauty of the lake, you can also observe the salt harvesters who still gather salt in the traditional way. [edit](#)

Buy

- **Islam Couture/ Embroidery** Dakar has some amazing (and amazingly expensive) stores specialised in haute-couture, embroidered traditional west African Muslim clothes.
- **Marche Sandaga** Madness. A decrepit concrete structure that has - despite appearance - three levels of activity: meat and vegetable stalls on the main floor, fish in the basement dungeon and - surprise - restaurant stalls on the roof. You will need to brave the crumpled stairs and step around guys cleaning dead chicken to make it up. Around the market building a sprawling network of stalls offer everything from copied music CDs, Manchester United shirts, electronic gadgets and islamic books - but be aware the hawkers can be very aggressive. The place is also famous for [pickpockets](#), so take only the amount of money you need and keep it in a safe place.
- **Marche HLM** A smaller market geared primarily towards fabric vendors, Marche HLM is slightly less crazy than Sandaga. Hundreds of options for fabric that you can buy and then get tailored into perfectly fitting traditional Senegalese wear (if you will be in Dakar for awhile, ask a Senegalese person who his or her tailor is, and go there. A little less convenient for travellers who will only be staying a week). Most vendors won't sell less than 3 to 6 metres of fabric. A reasonable price is 1000CFA/metre.
- **Marche Kermel**, near the city centre.
- **Soumbédioune**, a popular evening fish market. There is also a "Village Artisanal" nearby where especially tourists can buy hand-made African jewellery, wooden decoration elements and much more. Be prepared to bargain.

Eat

- **Ali Baba**: Greasy Spoon where you can get cheap Lebanese food. Good falafel sandwiches with french fries and lots of tahina sauce, shwarma, kebab and all sorts of other delicious (also western) snacks. Find it halfway up Ave. Pompidou.
- **Centre Culturel Français** [\[1\]](#) Ask for the local food they serve for lunch (not on the menu) during the week. On weekends you must ask nicely to convince them to let you try what they prepare for the staff.

- **Café de Rome** (City center) Welcome to Cafe du Rome, authentic French food (as a matter of fact, you ARE in France), from oysters to steak tartar, and the famous Sole Meuniere. It is pricey by Dakar standards, but the food is great.
- **Chez Ndeye / Ker Ndeye** (On a street parallel to Ponty) Overpriced (4000 CFA per meal, 2000 CFA for a bissap drink). Mediocre Senegalese food. Besides the lovely ThiebouDien, the place features home-made Tamarind juice. Try to catch the excellent Kora player. For that price, there are much better options in Dakar.
- **Glacier/ Nice Cream:** City centre: Over 30 flavours of good ice cream.
- **Hotel de l'Indépendance** Eat here for the magnificent views from the restaurant on 16th floor.
- **Hotel Farid/ Lebanese Restaurant** Drink a gigantic Arrak (made from anis) as an aperitif and then order the 20 Mezze.
- **La Fourchette** Stylish place serving international cuisine (Mexican, Japanese, Moroccan, etc.) at moderate prices. Next to Marche Kermel.
- **Lalibela** Little Ethiopian restaurant with a fantastic rooftop dining area. The ambiance alone would be worth coming here, but luckily the food is great too. A little difficult to find -- between the VDN and Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop at the intersection with the Mobil-On-The-Run and la Poste Fann.
- **Le JardinThailandais** Huge menu of delicious Thai food, great atmosphere. A little pricey, but worth it. Across the street from UCAD (UniversiteCheikh Anta Diop) off of Avenue Cheikh Anta Diop/Rue de Ouakam. There is a jazz club across the street.
- **L'Ozi** Italian cuisine. 33 823 87 87
- **Patisserie Laetitia** Located along the street of Cafe du Rome towards La Corniche (the sea) - away from the centre - two blocks up on your right hand side. Serves fresh, warm croissants, pain au chocolate and pain ain au raisins. The coffee is good and the fruit juices freshly squeezed. You will be surrounded by locals in beautiful Muslim outfits, reading the paper and discussing the latest news.
- **Peanuts:** The roasted peanuts you can buy on the street or get with your order of beer in any bar are delicious. These nuts are not greasy at all and have just the right amount of salt - and sometimes they are still slightly warm from being roasted.
- **Other Street Food:** You can find all sorts of street food practically anywhere in Dakar. Apart from peanuts, there are other nuts, lots of fruit, and other special Senegalese treats and snacks. There are also plenty of sandwich shops and little bread stands, where you can get egg sandwiches or quick and cheap food.
- **Chez Loutcha**, 101 rue MousséDiop, ☎338210302. Chez Lutchcha is a Cape Verdian restaurant that serves huge portions of excellent food. Cape Verdian (Portuguese inspired) dishes, Senegalese food and international cuisine. Cozy courtyard or AC dining room. Excellent service. [edit](#)
- **Zaika** Nicely located on Cornish road serve good India food. Reasonable price. Sea View from terrace is excellent
- **Indiana** Located near Place de Independance offer Indian food. Monday to Friday they offer buffet lunch just at 4500 F CFA. Food not very good but good for change.

Drink

- **Gazelle:** is the local favourite beer - it comes in serious bottles, or Flag, which is stronger and more expensive.
- **Le Hanoi:** You can't go wrong with a bar that has palm trees painted on one wall, a French military guy (opinions differ if he was secret service or just a regular drunk) behind the bar who insists the black waitress is his "little sister".
- **Le Viking:** On the Ponty, in the midst of Sandaga madness, Le Viking is a popular spot for expats and tourists. Pricey drinks, but great atmosphere. Live music on weekend nights!
- **Zaika:** Nicely located on Cornish road serve good India food. Reasonable price. Sea View from terrace is excellent
- **Indiana:** Located near Place de Independance offer Indian food. Monday to Friday they offer buffet lunch just at 4500 F CFA. Food not very good but good for change.

Sleep: There is a wide selection of hotels, from the basic to the best 4* chains. Many first time visitors stay at the expensive King Fahd Palace. There are however, some good and reasonably priced places to stay.

Stay safe: Petty crime in Dakar is relatively high; crime against tourists is common, even around Place de l'Independance. There are many different scams to get money from tourists, so be wary. Use common sense, not walking around alone after dark. Don't leave your belongings unattended, especially in crowded places, such as Sandaga. **Avoid the beaches at night.** The African favourite 'I work at your hotel and have run out of fuel, please can I borrow €10' etc are common, so don't be fooled.

Crime around the airport is extremely high. Con artists wait inside the arrival terminal by the baggage carousel – don't allow anyone to handle your luggage. Furthermore, do not seek assistance as regards accommodation, places to eat, or transport at the time of arrival – it is imperative that you have your hotel bookings and airport transfers arranged prior to arrival. Try not to wear any outwardly expensive items of clothing or jewelery. Generally, the Senegalese are not violent. Some people turn to stealing so that they can drink and eat. Overall, though, the Senegalese are an incredibly friendly and hospitable people and you will meet many people who are interested in talking to you.

Senegal is one of the most politically stable countries in Africa. The police force is useless for your safety, although they all speak French hence are good to ask directions.

Cope: There are many beggars in Dakar, and so this can be an uncomfortable situation. One way to handle it is with a simple, polite "ba BEN-eenyohn" ("next time" in Wolof). They may be persistent, but be firm without being rude. Another option is to give the talibes food. Also, keep in mind the Islamic tradition of giving daily - after you've given once, you can say, "sah-RAHK-sah AH-gah-nah," which means "charity has already been done."

Foreign Exchange:

Do not change money at the airport.

Climate: Senegal's main tourist season is from November to February, mostly during the dry, 'cool' season, when Dakar's average daytime maximums are around 24°C (75°F). Most music festivals take place in December and between March and June.

During the wet months from July to late September some national parks are inaccessible or even closed, but it's also the time everything is green and beautiful, and many hotels reduce their prices by up to 50%

Visa Requirements:

Further information on visa requirements can be found at:

<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/senegal/passport-visa>