

## **Ghana declares 2019 as “Year of Return for Diasporans”**

President Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has officially proclaimed 2019 as the year that all diasporan descendants of Africans who were captured and transported into the Americas as slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries are invited to return to Ghana. The President declared that it is his national priority to extend a hand of welcome back home to Africans in the Diaspora.

Titled, ‘Year of Return, Ghana 2019’, a celebratory program of activities marking the 400-year anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to English North America in 1619 have been planned. President Akufo-Addo affirmed Ghana’s sensitivity to showcasing the resilience and achievements of African descendants through the ages to the present and into the future.

Noting Ghana’s unique position as the location for 75 per cent of the slave dungeons built on the west coast of Africa and the fact that “Ghana has more African Americans living in the country than any other African country”, the President stressed his desire for Ghana to become “the beacon for African people living on the continent and the Diaspora.”

President Akufo-Addo declared his commitment to “open our arms even wider to welcome home our brothers and sisters in what will become a birthright journey home for the global African family.”

During the launch of his initiative, President Akufo-Addo eulogized the role played by the late Otanka Obetsebi Lamptey, who, as Tourism Minister in the Kufuor administration, launched the ‘Joseph Project’, symbolizing an arm of brotherhood inviting back home, descendants of Africans who were enslaved and therefore, find themselves in North, Central and South America. Mr Akwasi Agyemang, Chief Executive of Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), placed the ‘Right of Return’ within the context of the Christian bible in which the people of biblical Israel were promised a return to their rightful land after 400 years in exile.

African Loom and Africa Works Project has been selected as one of the private partners to work with Mr. Agyeman and Committee, under the umbrella of “The Year Of Return”, to provide events, marketing and tour services for the President’s initiative during the month of August, 2019.

**TRAVEL ITINERARY**  
**THE YEAR OF RETURN, 2019**  
**FROM JULY 30 TO AUGUST 8**

**DAY 1 (Tuesday, Jul 30) TRAVEL DAY**

Depart Dulles International Airport (Washington DC) for the City of Accra, Ghana. Departure time is at 5:30pm via South Africa Airways. Passengers must be at airport counter 3 hours before departure.

**DAY 2 (Wednesday, Jul 31) AKWAABA CELEBRATION/INVESTMENT FORUM**

**ARRIVAL IN ACCRA, GHANA**

Ghana is the home of the Asantes, once identified by Europeans as the Gold Coast and the resting place of African-American Scholar/Educator and Civil Rights Activist W.E.B. DuBois. This is the land of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the great Pan-Africanist and co-founder of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

**INVESTMENT FORUM – (Optional)**

After hotel check in, we get ready for a brief orientation followed by an optional event - Ghana investment forum and information on Right of Abode/Dual Citizenship. Ghana Government officials will talk about different investment opportunities in Ghana and expound on “Right of Abode” which grants residency and visa-free travel to Ghana to African Diasporans.

OR

**FOCOS HOSPITAL – (Optional)**

After the brief orientation, we visit FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital a non-profit organization dedicated to providing surgical and conservation orthopedic and spine care to underserved communities in Africa and Caribbean. Since opening in 2012, the hospital has been visited by over 20,000 patients and more than 1,500 corrective spine and joint procedures have been performed. We will get a chance to interact with the children as we go bearing gifts.

**AKWAABA CELEBRATION**

We end the day with an official welcome by Ghana Government Officials with an “Akwaaba Celebration” which is a typical Ghanaian welcome celebration accorded dignitaries with Traditional Drumming and Dancing, Fashion Show and Authentic Ghanaian Cuisine. After the fashion show, there will be an opportunity to be fitted and to purchase authentic custom made clothing.

**Hotel: AFRICA REGENT HOTEL**

**DAY 3 (Thursday, Aug 1) CAPE COAST/EMANCIPATION DAY DURBAR**

BREAKFAST

TRAVEL TO CAPE COAST

After breakfast at the hotel, we embark on a 3-hour journey from Accra through a number of coastal fishing villages to Cape Coast, the capital of Central Region of Ghana.

After our hotel check in, we take another 30 minute drive northwards to Assin Manso. Assin Manso is the burial site of 2 former slaves (a Jamaican, Lady Crystal who dedicated her life fighting racism and Samuel Carson, an African American Naval Officer) whose remains were re-interred in August 1998 during the first Emancipation Day.

EMANCIPATION DAY CELEBRATION

The Emancipation Day Celebration is opened with a grand durbar which is an official reception held by Traditional Chiefs and the people of Central Region. Witness the grand colorful and spectacular event that showcases the pomp and pageantry of Ghana's traditional rulers. Emancipation Day provides us an opportunity to go back into history and find out more about one of human history's most cruel activity and whose effect has been with the World ever since and been the subject of intense universal debates, especially in recent times. We need to learn more about the slave trade, find out the roles of our ancestors in its perpetration, use it as a basis to understand our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora, and find out how to turn that tragedy into something more positive for the African continent, the Black Community universally and the world at large.

DONKO NSUO- SLAVE RIVER

We will visit the 'Donko Nsuo' Slave River in which slaves had their last bath before being sent into confinement at the slave castles to await shipment to the Americas.

**Hotel: COCONUT GROVE BEACH HOTEL**

**DAY 4 (Friday, Aug 2) ELMINA SLAVE DUNGEON/THE DOOR OF NO RETURN**

BREAKFAST

ELMINA CASTLE DUNGEON

After breakfast we visit Elmina Castle Dungeon. It was built by the Portuguese in 1482 as an outpost called 'Sao Jorge da Mina' (Saint George's of the mine) or simply Elmina (the

Mine). It was the first permanent structure south of the Sahara built by Europeans and for centuries, it was the largest. It was also the first to be converted into a Slave Dungeon and had the distinction of exporting the most captured Africans to be enslaved in the Americas. Elmina Castle saw several owners during the course of the Slave Trade. The Dutch seized the castle from the Portuguese in 1637. The Slave Trade continued under the Dutch until 1872 when the castle became a possession of the British. The most significant memory from Elmina Castle is 'The Door of No Return'. This was where millions of our ancestors passed during the slave trade era to awaiting slave ships to be transported across the Atlantic to the so-called New World. Today, Elmina Castle is designated as one of World's Heritage Sites.

#### **KAKUM NATIONAL PARK**

After lunch on your own, you have an option of free time on the hotel private beach or for the nature enthusiast, visit Kakum National Park in the rainforest for a thrilling adventure with an exciting canopy walkway suspended about 200 feet from the forest ground. Experience a panoramic view of the flora and fauna of one of the remaining vestiges of the rainforest in Africa.

**Hotel: COCONUT GROVE BEACH HOTEL**

#### **DAY 5 (Sat., Aug 3) TRAVEL BACK TO ACCRA/HEALING AND PRAISE CONCERT**

##### **BREAKFAST**

##### **TRAVEL TO ACCRA**

After breakfast, check out of hotel for a drive back to Accra. Upon arrival at the hotel in Accra, the rest of the day is at leisure to relax and refresh for our evening concert event.

##### **HEALING AND PRAISE CONCERT**

It will be an evening of praise and worship that will signal the new beginning – being able to rectify a terrible injustice and being able to get something positive out of a negative experience. This act of healing will begin the process of reconciliation. The concert will feature widely acclaimed gospel artists from Africa and the Diaspora and will be produced by African Loom, Inc.

**Hotel: AFRICA REGENT HOTEL**

#### **DAY 6 (Sunday, Aug 4) CHURCH SERVICE/GHANA NATURAL HAIR SHOW**

##### **BREAKFAST**

##### **CHURCH/NATURAL HAIR EXPO**

After breakfast you have an option of experiencing Ghanaian church service or head to the Trade Fair grounds for the Natural Hair Expo. The bus leaves the hotel at 9:30am to a church service at the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) at Abossey Okai, Accra. ICGC is an evangelical, charismatic church which is considered to be one of the fastest growing charismatic churches in Ghana, having a church attendance of about 20,000. The head pastor is Dr. Mensa Otabil. After church, we join the other group at the Trade Fair for the Natural Hair Expo. The Expo is a whole day fun filled activities of live entertainment, educational workshops, panel discussions, hair braiding techniques, food, local and international vendors. The day is climaxed with a Natural Hair and Fashion Show.

**Hotel: AFRICA REGENT HOTEL**

## **DAY 7 (Monday, Aug 5) TRAVEL TO THE ASANTE KINGDOM**

### **BREAKFAST**

### **ASANTE KINGDOM**

After breakfast, we take a 4-hour drive northward through a lush green tropical forest to Kumasi, the capital city of Asante. The Twi spelling of Ashanti is **ASANTE** (which means: BECAUSE OF WAR). The Asante Region is blessed with rich culture and home to much pomp and pageantry. Kumasi has served for three centuries as the royal capital of the Asante State and also the home to the Golden Stool.

### **MANHYIA PALACE MUSEUM**

We will visit Manhyia Palace Museum, a regal history that dates back to 16<sup>th</sup> century is told with relics and artifacts of the Asantes. This is the seat and official residence of the Asantehene built in 1926 on the return from exile of the Asantehene Nana Prempeh 1.

### **CRAFT VILLAGES**

We will also visit the three famous craft villages of the Asantes, Bonwire, Ntonso and Ahwiaa. We will have the opportunity to see how their crafts are made and to buy directly from the artisans.

**Bonwire** is the village where the Ghana national cloth 'Kente' weaving started.

**Ntonso** is the center for the manufacture of Adinkra cloth with ancient symbols that convey messages of gallantry, unity, hope and the greatness of the Supreme Being.

**Ahwiaa** is where we find the master wood-carvers who carve Asante stools, statues and masks.

**Hotel: GOLDEN TULIP HOTEL OR YEGUAA HOTEL**

## **DAY 8 (Tuesday, Aug 6) TRAVEL BACK TO ACCRA**

## BREAKFAST

### CITY TOUR OF KUMASI/TRAVEL TO ACCRA

After breakfast, we check out of the hotel and depart on a scenic drive back to Accra. Before then we will visit some attractions in Kumasi such as the Kejetia Market, reputed to be the largest and busiest open market in West Africa, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the National Cultural Center, created to reinforce the Asante Culture.

**Hotel: AFRICA REGENT HOTEL**

## DAY 9 (Wednesday, Aug 7) CITY TOUR OF ACCRA/DEPARTURE

### BREAKFAST

#### ACCRA CITY TOUR

After breakfast, we proceed to Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum and Memorial Park, the final resting place of one of the founding fathers and the first president of Ghana. We will drive past the Black Star Square, the Independent Arch and the Parliament House to W.E.B. Dubois Center for Pan Africanism dedicated in 1985. This is the place for Pan African culture, a source of inspiration to many and also the resting place of Dr. Dubois and his wife Shirley.

### SHOPPING

Last minute shopping at Accra Arts and Craft Center where you will find authentic hand-made traditional craft and colorful African fabrics.

### FAREWELL DINNER/DEPARTURE

After hotel check out we will enjoy an early farewell dinner, where we will have the opportunity to dress up in our custom made outfits. After dinner, transfer to airport for your flight home.

**NANTE YIE ONUA (farewell brother/sister)**

## DAY 10 (Thursday, Aug 8) ARRIVAL AT DULLES AIRPORT AT 6:15am