



The
Gambia
Experience



Group *Trips*

WITH THE GAMBIA EXPERIENCE

Welcome to our

Group *brochure...*

...dedicated to teachers, charities and wildlife groups wishing to travel to The Gambia. Despite being the smallest country in Africa, The Gambia provides a unique and exciting experience to those who visit, as well as a warm welcome, it is affectionately known as 'the smiling coast of West Africa'.

Boasting amazing geography, warm climates, unique culture, delicious cuisine and friendly English-speaking locals, The Gambia is just a six-hour direct flight from the UK and in the same time zone, so there are no issues with jet lag, allowing you to jump straight into your itinerary with ease.



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Why book with The **Gambia Experience?**

There are plenty of reasons to partner with us for your next group visit. We have been operating in The Gambia for over 35 years, and in this time have supported many charities and schools, along with birdwatching groups and more, offering expert advice, dedicated group coordinators and competitive pricing. Whether you require flights, single or multi-centre itineraries or tailor-made trips including excursions and unique experiences, we can help to plan the ideal itinerary. The Gambia is just a six hour flight from the UK and in the same time zone, a convenient choice for a group trip.

We also offer:

- Dedicated UK support team, with first-hand knowledge of The Gambia.
- Dedicated 24-hour local support in resort.
- Separate groups flight check-in and pre-booked seating on aircraft from Gatwick.
- Digital Gambia guidebook, plus bird checklist for wildlife groups.
- No arrangement fees.
- Competitive prices.
- Low deposits and flexibility on name changes.
- Subsidised pre-inspection visits.



Education *group trips*

Whether a school, college, university or scout/guide groups, there are plenty of opportunities for educational visits to The Gambia.

Why book an educational trip with **The Gambia Experience?**

- We are the destination experts with long-term local contacts; we can provide insight and first-hand knowledge on hotels and excursions throughout the planning process.
- Our dedicated groups team can help with tailored group itineraries.
- We have no wait time on our phone lines.
- We can provide flexibility with name changes.
- We have a fantastic in-resort team to assist you when in the country, 24/7.
- We are ATOL protected for financial security and peace of mind.
- We have Public Liability insurance up to £5 million.



RECOMMENDED HOTELS FOR *educational visits*



Palma Rima Hotel



KOTU, THE GAMBIA

A popular, friendly hotel that is perfect for groups looking for an action-packed trip, with a large swimming pool (one of the largest in The Gambia) and a wide array of activities. Each bungalow sleeps up to four guests, making it a great option for groups.



Kombo Beach Hotel



KOTU, THE GAMBIA

Benefiting from a fantastic renovation in 2023, Kombo Beach Hotel is the ideal base for educational groups, with a great atmosphere, comfortable rooms and activities for down time during your itinerary. Kombo Beach is set in the heart of Kotu and boasts a fantastic location on the beachfront. Both half board and all-inclusive upgrade options are available.



Senegambia Beach Hotel



KOLOLI, THE GAMBIA

As the largest and best-known hotel in The Gambia, Senegambia has plenty to offer school groups. Set in the heart of Kololi resort, it has the added advantage of being next door to our resort office. With its own animation team and extensive tropical gardens full of wildlife, from vultures to monkeys, it remains a popular choice amongst our group guests.

Curriculum & *volunteering*

There are many connections between the curriculum and an educational group trip to The Gambia. Students will benefit from an insight into the culture and ways of life in the country, or they may choose to focus on beautiful African art or the fascinating religious culture of this secular state. Look to understand the impact that climate change has on the environment, from coastal regions to the River Gambia, and explore wetland mangrove planting projects.

With The Gambia's main industry being tourism, students can gain insight into how the country is developing this sustainably. Music is also an important part of culture in The Gambia, offering great appeal for students who may be studying music.

Through a local school visit, students will gain an understanding of early years education and witness first-hand the striking differences between a UK and Gambian school.

Volunteering

There are many individuals and charities assisting school, wildlife conservation and social welfare projects in The Gambia. If your school group is looking to get involved with a charity or project, our team can assist with getting this organised.



Partnered *schools*

The Gambia Experience has assisted with several links between schools, colleges and universities in the UK and The Gambia. Our team can provide support to teachers looking to develop a partnership with a Gambian school.

Partnering with a school in The Gambia is a great way for students to learn about education in a developing country, as well as to have a charitable project to support. It can also help to establish strong ties and years of continuing exchange visits.

If carried out correctly, partnerships can have great impact on both schools involved with the partnership, it is highly regarded as a way of promoting student development and global understanding.



Day *excursions*

There are plenty of day excursions available, from a safari in Senegal to cultural and historical trips. We can also offer day trips to Makasutu, where groups can take part in guided forest walks and pirogue trips on the creeks to learn about the natural habitat.

Home cooking and traditional crafting experiences are available and will hold great value for students looking to understand local arts and culture. Safari truck excursions can also be arranged as a great introduction to the destination, visiting a range of localities including a local market, traditional fishing village, crocodile pool and cultural museum.

School cultural *exchange*

Itineraries can be tailor-made for your group, here is an example of a 7-night itinerary to help inspire you:

DAY 1

After arrival in The Gambia, students will go on an orientation walk and enjoy dinner at the hotel.

DAY 2

A cultural excursion that is an off-the-beaten-track day out, following the coast and uncovering The Gambian way of life. Students will visit a local compound, craft market and crocodile pond, as well as a local fishing village.

DAY 3

Students will enjoy a full day with their partner school and pay courtesy to the local village Chief and Alkalo to learn about village hierarchy.

DAY 4

This is an exciting day spent at the Makasutu Cultural Forest, a palm forest on the tributary of the River Gambia. The morning is spent in a dug-out canoe, where students may catch glimpses of the local wildlife. Lunch is then provided, as well as cultural dance demonstration from the local tribe, Jola.

DAY 5

Today students will support their local partner school. This could be anything from planting a vegetable patch to painting a mural on the school wall.

DAY 6

Spend the day with inspirational Gambian businesswoman, Ida Cham, learning how to cook Gambian style. Start by visiting the local market to source fresh ingredients then dress up in Gambian dress for an authentic experience, a great photo opportunity!

DAY 7

Students can enjoy a day at leisure at the hotel or do some final souvenir shopping.

DAY 8

Departure day.



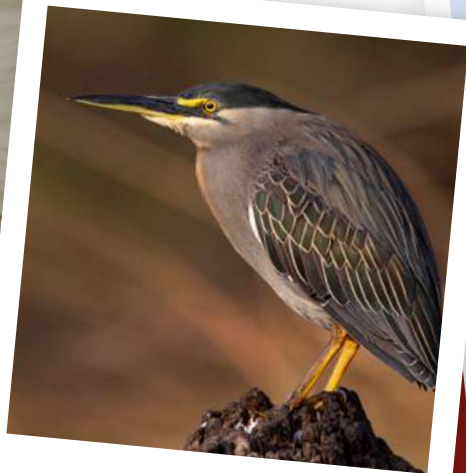
Birdwatching *group trips*

The Gambia is a birdwatching paradise that provides the opportunity to spot 600+ species in a relatively small area so is very well suited to birding groups. The unique landscape provides a multitude of habitats for fascinating birds, such as a variety of rollers, herons and kingfishers, and even the Egyptian Plover.

With a birdwatching tour you will have the opportunity to spot some captivating species and enjoy beautiful local landscapes, accompanied by a specialist bird guide throughout the itinerary. There are cool boxes with water on the bus for your refreshment, and upon request, your hotel can also prepare a packed breakfast or lunch for the group when required.



Egyptian Plover



Little Heron



Abyssinian Roller



Malachite Kingfisher

Guided birding *excursions*

Upriver TOURS

The Gambia offers fantastic birding opportunities for groups wishing to travel away from the coastal region and your specialist guide will ensure you visit the best spots along the way. Staying in a selection of simple lodges, choose from pre-set itineraries from two to five nights, or let us help plan a tailor-made trip to explore the north and south bank regions of the River Gambia.

From Kiang West National Park and the Baobolong Wetland Reserve to Janjangbureh far upriver, you will discover a multitude of species to satisfy even the most avid birders in your group.



Malick Suso & HIS TEAM

We are delighted to be able to offer a range of birding excursions with some fabulous local guides, including Malick Suso, our resident award-winning guide in The Gambia!

Malick's knowledge and passion shines through in his tours, providing each group he guides with a unique experience. With over 20 years of birdwatching expertise, Malick was awarded the Wanderlust Best Wildlife and Safari Guide in 2023. We are delighted to work with Malick and his personally trained team to provide exceptional birdwatching half and full-day excursions in The Gambia.

RECOMMENDED HOTELS FOR *birdwatching groups*



Bakotu Hotel



KOTU, THE GAMBIA

A charming family-run hotel in the Kotu area, Bakotu is a haven for birding enthusiasts, with plenty of chances to spot birds in the hotel's lush grounds. The on-site bird deck overlooks the Kotu stream, a fantastic place to spend time birding during down time, without leaving the hotel.



Senegambia Beach Hotel



KOLOLI, THE GAMBIA

A tropical oasis in Kololi, a bustling resort area with a wide choice of restaurants and bars. Enjoy two swimming pools, large tropical gardens, daily vulture feeding demonstrations and direct access to the beach. The gardens teem with birdlife and other wildlife, including monkeys, the perfect base from which to enjoy a birdwatching trip.



Mandina Lodges

✦ UNIQUE

MAKASUTU, THE GAMBIA

A hidden gem, tucked away on a mangrove-lined tributary of the River Gambia in the heart of the Makasutu Forest. A small group stay at Mandina offers the perfect opportunity to immerse in the local wildlife and variety of birdlife, either by dugout canoe or on foot. The resident guides at Mandina boast extensive knowledge of local birds and wildlife.

Birdwatching *itineraries*

Our team can create tailor-made itineraries for your group, based on your interests. Our 7-night sample itinerary includes visits to a range of different habitats from wetlands to woodland, coastal regions and mangrove creeks.

DAY 1

Fly to Banjul and settle into your hotel.

DAY 2

Spend the morning at Camelou Corner and Tambi Wetlands, with refreshments at the Crocodile Pond, also a haven for birdlife. Later you can explore the Kotu area, renowned for its fantastic birdwatching around the stream and beyond, sightings may include the striking Pied Kingfisher and Bee-eater.

DAY 3

Early morning visit to Tujering with a stop for lunch at Tanji Bird Reserve. Spend the afternoon in Brufut Forest, home to the Verreaux Eagle Owl and Long-tailed Nightjar. You will then continue to Tanji Village to watch the seabirds congregating as the fishermen bring in their catch on the shore.

DAY 4

A day at leisure - maybe take an optional canoe excursion at Tanji creek to spot at close quarters a myriad of bird species that reside there. Alternatively, delve into Gambian culture with a 6-in-1 excursion or a Gambian cookery experience.

DAY 5

An exciting day awaits! Embark on a river cruise from Denton Bridge to witness at close quarters the variety of birdlife in the mangroves lining the tranquil River Gambia. This trip includes breakfast and the opportunity to fish from the boat too.

DAY 6

Start the day by exploring Mandina Ba, the mangrove creeks here are home to heron, osprey and much more. In the afternoon visit Farasutu, a diverse habitat of woodlands, fields and freshwater ponds, providing a great chance to spot a multitude of species.

DAY 7

Explore Lamin rice fields and Tambi wetlands, as well as Abuko Forest for your final full day of birdwatching. Sightings may include the Western Bluebill, Green Turacao and Pearl-spotted Owlet and many more!

DAY 8

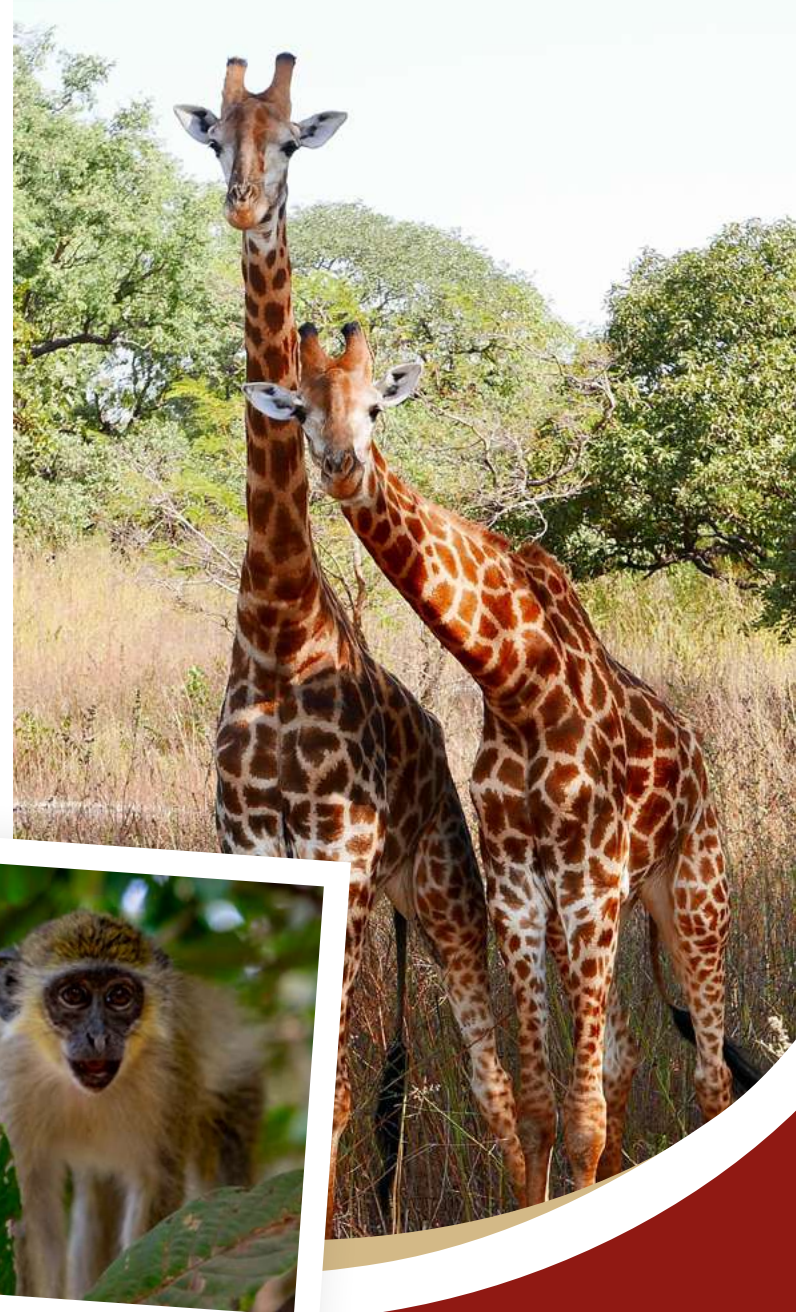
Depart for UK or extend in a hotel of your choice.



Wildlife *group trips*

The wildlife in The Gambia is exceptional and our team can help to create an itinerary tailored to your group's needs. There is a wide array of species to see and some of our unique accommodation is perfectly located to maximise possible sightings.

When on a wildlife trip in The Gambia, you could expect to see different types of monkeys, crocodiles, monitor lizards and a plethora of birdlife. Whilst The Gambia does not have any big game, it is easy to combine a stay with a visit to neighbouring Senegal with its private safari lodge, Fathala Wildlife Reserve.



West African Crocodile



Burchell's Zebra

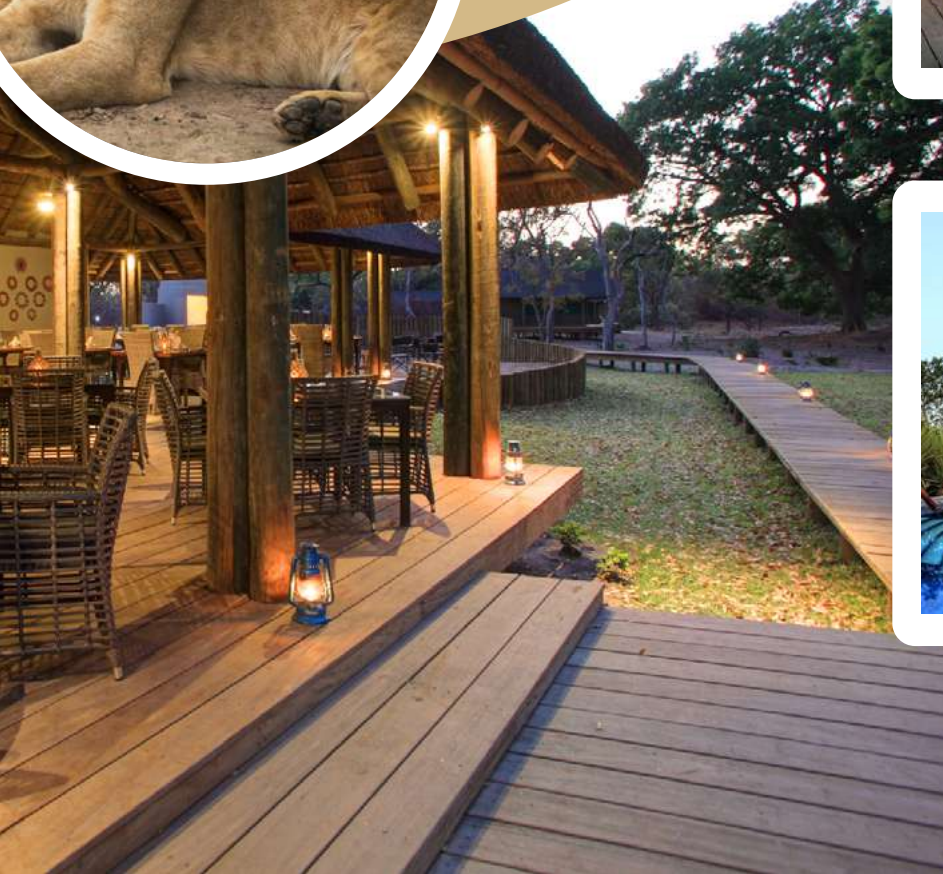


Saddle-billed Stork



Green Monkey

RECOMMENDED HOTELS FOR *wildlife group trips*



Fathala Wildlife Reserve

✦ UNIQUE

KARANG, SENEGAL

In Senegal, across the River Gambia, Fathala provides groups with the opportunity to head out on safari, accompanied by knowledgeable guides and explore the 5,000 acres of bushland. Luxury safari tents are available with private bathrooms and air-conditioning, and some even have a Jacuzzi. There is a refreshing pool available for guests to use as well as a firepit area where groups can get together in the evening to observe animals at the nearby watering hole.



Mandina Lodges

✦ UNIQUE

MAKASUTU, THE GAMBIA

A fantastic property for wildlife, from multiple species of primate including baboons to hundreds of bird species. Each group will have their own dedicated guide during the nature walks through the Makasutu Forest, providing groups with a wealth of knowledge of the local wildlife and a fantastic opportunity to explore. There are many room types to choose from, such as floating lodges or jungle lodges. The communal dining and pool area is perfect for groups to be able to gather at the end of the day.

Wildlife *excursions*

Day trips to

FATHALA WILDLIFE RESERVE

Safari day trips in Senegal can be organised with our team and included as part of your tailor-made itinerary. After a short journey to Banjul, embark on a 45-minute ferry ride to the north bank of the River Gambia in Barra, a fantastic opportunity to witness African life. You will then cross the border into Senegal before continuing to the wildlife reserve for a day exploring the bush and spotting the local wildlife, including giraffe, zebra, rhino, buffalo and more. Lunch and drinks are served within the park before heading back home.



Six tours IN ONE

This is a great cultural tour that combines some wildlife spotting too. There are plenty of amazing highlights that are squeezed into this tour, from a visit to the Kachikally Crocodile Pond to seeing monkeys at Lamin Lodge. You will also have the chance to visit Serrekunda market and Tanji Fishing Village.



The
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BOOK YOUR TRIP
with the experts

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