



Senegal: Never mind the Mbalax

17th-26th November 2017

Songlines Music Travel, in association with Master Travel, invites music lovers and travellers alike to explore the sights and sounds of Senegal. Situated on the most Western tip of Africa, on the Atlantic coast, Senegal boasts a fascinating history, wonderful dance music, beautiful beaches, great cuisine and an abundance of wildlife.

On this trip, we will visit Dakar, a city pulsating with music, culture and nightlife, as well as the more laid-back coastal town of Saint Louis. With the help of our knowledgeable Songlines Travel Leaders, Corinna Fiora and Ken Aicha Sy, we

will visit the best music venues, have the unique opportunity to meet some of the local musicians, as well as enjoy some live sessions.

Highlights include:

- Getting to know the very best mbalax and hip hop music around the capital
- Meeting with local musicians and communities
- Thoroughly exploring Dakar and Saint Louis, including excursions to the Pink Lake, Djoudj National Park and Bird Sanctuary and the historic Gorée Island

All Songlines Music Travellers will receive an information sheet about the local music plus recommended recordings and DVDs.



What to expect

Dakar is one of the hottest music capitals of Africa, and is a truly exciting and lively city. It is renowned for its high energy *mbalax* music, the rhythmic dance style that was pioneered by Youssou N'Dour, and its hip-hop scene, one of the most vibrant in Africa and an important medium for social transformation in the communities.

Dakar: alive with music

Music is part of the fabric of the city, and every street in Dakar comes with its own soundtrack – from live music to car stereos or home radios pouring music onto the streets. Dakar's nightspots are infamous, including Youssou's Thioissane, Thione Seck's Penc-me, the fashionable Just4U and the youthful Yengoulène. Bands like the legendary Orchestra Baobab, the super-cool, Sufi-inspired performer Cheikh Lô and the young singing star Carlou D often play on the weekends. With such a fantastic selection of artists, every weekend offers different acts and ever changing headliners.

I really think these Songlines Music Travel trips are excellent value. You go to a part of the globe that is just so rich in musical culture and you're guided to all the best music places by someone who has lived there, speaks the language and loves the music. You can't get better than that.

Maureen Ni Fann, SLMT trip to Senegal

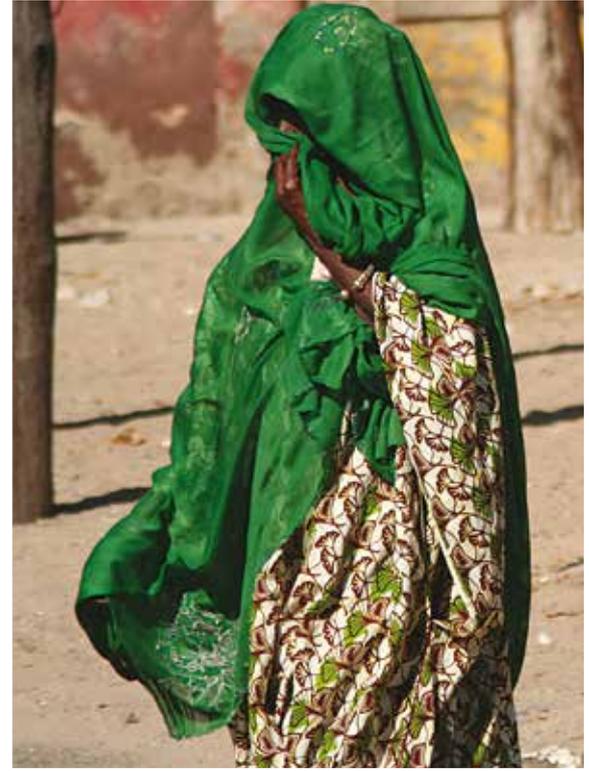
Upon arrival in Dakar, our Travel Leader will provide an introduction to the group about what to expect for the days ahead. We will have a guided city tour to get to know the bustling streets of the capital, including the main sights such as the Presidential Palace, cathedral, mosque, coastal lookouts, galleries and arts and crafts workshops. In the evening we will get a taste of music on a Saturday night with visits to the best venues in the city. Music starts late in Dakar as most concerts get going at 1am, so be prepared!

After a busy start to the trip, we will get time to relax on the idyllic Ngor island, a hidden gem, just off the coast of the bustling Capital.

Colonial charm of Saint Louis

Our next destination will be the beautiful old colonial capital of Saint Louis. We will drive to Saint Louis up the Atlantic coast, stopping at a forest of baobab trees along the way, as well as visiting the artisanal fishing village of Kayar. Here we will get a feel for the life of these fishing communities and we will also be able to see the beautiful Lac Rose (pink lake), where the warm, salty water turns from pink to purple depending on the sunlight.

Once we reach Saint Louis, we will have time to relax on the beach or by the pool before we have dinner and spend the night. Our first full day in Saint Louis will allow us to fully explore the colonial town which has been compared to Havana in Cuba, the French Quarter of New Orleans or Bahia in Brazil. Saint Louis was West Africa's first French settlement and it has a unique historical charm which has been recognised by



UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. After our tour of the old town, we will get the chance to learn some Djembe rhythms during a specially organised class on the beach with local drummers. Whilst in Saint Louis, we will have a day trip to the Djoudj National Park, a World Heritage Site which is home to a huge range of birds including flamingos and pelicans. A ride in a pirogue (wooden boat) along the waterways will allow us to see the majesty of this wildlife. After spending 3 nights in Saint Louis, we will head back to Dakar,

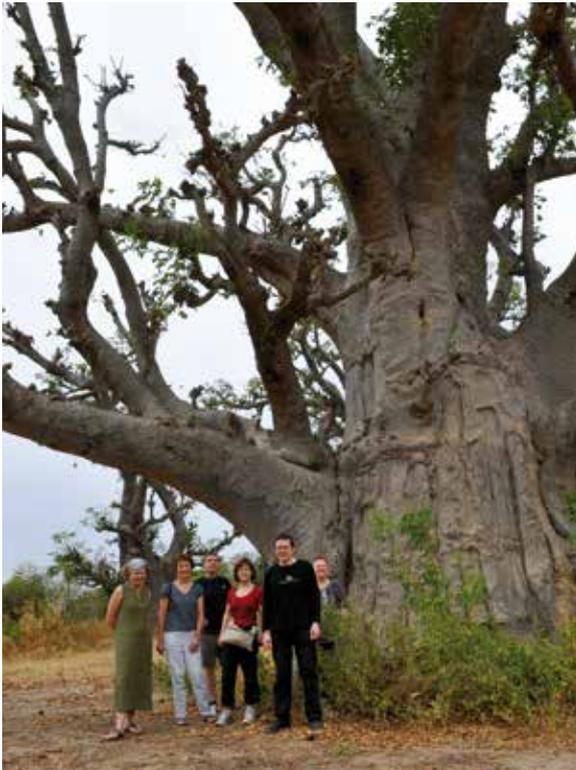
stopping en-route to visit the famed tapestry workshops at the Senegalese Manufacturers of Decorative Arts, where workshop artisans reproduce original paintings by Senegalese artists onto decorative weavings, ceramics, mosaics and wall hangings.

A weekend to remember

Once back in Dakar, we will take a ferry to the historical island of Gorée. From the 15th to the 19th centuries, this island was the largest slave-trading centre on the African coast, ruled in

Top facts about Senegal and its music

- Senegal is situated on the westernmost tip of West Africa's bulge. It covers an area the same size as England and Wales but with a relatively small population of around 13 million.
- Senegal is one of the musical powerhouses of Africa. It boasts several internationally-known artists including Youssou N'Dour, Baaba Maal, Cheikh Lô, Orchestra Baobab and salsa group Africando. Rappers include Daara J and Didier Awadi. Yela, one of the traditional forms of singing while pounding grain, can still be heard in some of the contemporary bands and was an influence on the sound of reggae in the Caribbean
- Mbalax, the most popular music in Senegal, was developed in Dakar in the late 70s and 80s by Youssou N'Dour and Super Étoile de Dakar. They overturned the strong Cuban influence and created music that was much more African in its sound and message. It features complex cross-rhythms played on sabar drums and tama, the famous talking drum. The style has become widely popular in West Africa and beyond, although nobody can master it like the Senegalese.
- Traditional instruments still commonly heard in Senegal are the *xalam* lute (the Wolof version of the Malian ngoni), the one-stringed *riti* fiddle, the *tama* talking drum and the 21-string *kora*, which is found mainly in the southern region of Casamance, where the leading kora player Seckou Keita was born.
- Wrestling is a national sport in Senegal. It is very popular as an indication of male athletic strength and ability and is often accompanied by music.



This was an absolutely fantastic and inspirational trip. It was eye-opening, mind-blowing and constantly surprising.

Andy Stanton, SLMT trip to Senegal

succession by the Portuguese, Dutch, English and French. Here we will be able to gain an insight into the contrasts between the solemn slave quarters and the elegant houses of the slave traders. We will be able to visit the museum as well as wander around the fortresses, streets, squares and beaches.

Our last full day in Dakar will be spent exploring the markets, visiting the Artist's Village to meet local painters and sculptors and visiting the local CD markets. We will also be able to meet some local musicians and be treated to some private jam sessions. In the evening our Travel Leader will seek out the best sounds in the city to enjoy throughout the night.

Our memorable trip will finish on the Sunday morning, when it will be time to say goodbye to the group and head to the airport for the flight home.

Songlines Travel Leader



Corinna Fiora

Communication expert and freelance copywriter during the day and soulful singer at night (I-Science lead vocalist), I have been living in Senegal for the past 11 years. During my time here I have had the opportunity to expand and develop my creative skills and pan-african network. I am currently working on my band's second album and developing a series of jazz-fusion improvisation events at the brand new jazz venue La Cave du Djoloff. I also have a number of on-going collaborations with other local musicians and visual artists.



Front cover: Performance by Just4U. Itinerary page: Saint Louis waterfront. Back cover clockwise from left: Cheikh Lô dancing; Car Rapide, Boats in the Saint Louis harbour

Photographs, clockwise from top left: Cheikh Lo performing; Wrestling match; Local in traditional dress; Herding; Percussion workshop (Photographs © Robin Ball and Rose Skelton)



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Key:

b Breakfast **l** Lunch **d** Dinner

Please note that this is a provisional itinerary only. The final itinerary will be confirmed in your pre-departure pack which will be sent to you 2 weeks before departure.

Friday 17th November: Dakar **b**

AM/PM: Arrive in Dakar and transfer to the hotel. Time at leisure to relax after your flight.

EVE: Meet the tour leader and the rest of your group in the hotel lobby, before heading out for your first night in Dakar.

Saturday 18th November: Dakar **b**

AM/PM: Explore the city on a guided tour, including a visit to the IFAN Museum of African Arts.

EVE: Following dinner in the city centre, discover some of the city's best music venues.

Sunday 19th November: Ngor Island **b**

AM/PM: After a late night, take a day trip to the paradise of Ngor Island for a day of relaxation, exploration and swimming or surfing.

EVE: Head back to Dakar for dinner and more music.

Monday 20th November: Dakar – Saint Louis **b**

AM: Drive approx 200 miles to Saint Louis. Along the way, stop at a forest of baobab trees, and visit the fishing port of Kayar and Lac Rose – the pink lake of Senegal.

PM: Check into the hotel and have a walk on the beach or swim in the pool before dinner.

Tuesday 21st November: Saint Louis **b**

AM: Explore Saint Louis on a guided walking tour.

PM: Take part in a specially organised djembe class on the beach.

Wednesday 22nd November: Saint Louis **b**

AM/PM: Day trip to the Djoudj National Park and Bird Sanctuary.

EVE: Check out the sounds of St Louis at some local bars.

Thursday 23rd November: Saint Louis – Dakar **b**

AM: Morning at leisure to relax at the beach or to have a final wander around the streets of Saint Louis.

PM: Drive back to Dakar, visiting a tapestry workshop along the way.

EVE: Head out for dinner and to check out some more local bands.

Friday 24th November: Gorée **b**

AM/PM: Take a ferry to Gorée Island to explore and learn about its slave trade history.

Saturday 25th November: Dakar **b**

AM/PM: Spend the day exploring the markets of Dakar, meeting local painters and sculptors in the Artists village.

EVE: Saturday is the best night of the week for music, so we will visit the best music venues in the city.

Sunday 26th November: Dakar **b**

AM: After breakfast our tour ends, so we will say farewell and head off on our onwards journey.

Tour price excluding flights to/from Dakar: £1,895 per person

Secure your place with a £190 deposit, with the remainder payable in instalments

Single travellers: A single supplement of £375 is payable if you wish to guarantee a single room. This does not apply if you opt to share a twin room with a fellow participant.

The cost includes:

- Accommodation: Nine nights' accommodation on a twin share basis, with breakfast included. Single rooms available upon payment of a supplement
- Airport transfers
- All ground transportation

- All visits and live music as per the itinerary
- The services of two *Songlines Music Travel* Leaders
- Pre-departure information

The cost excludes:

- International flights to/from Dakar
- Travel insurance. Please ensure you purchase adequate insurance cover before you leave home
- Any necessary visas. Please note British passport holders do not need a visa to enter Senegal for up to 3 months

Early Bird
 booking: £1,750 per person
 valid only until
 31st July 2017

*After 31st July the tour price will be fixed at £1,895 for all travellers

- All meals with the exception of breakfast
- Drinks, snacks or any purchases of a personal nature
- Tips to hotel staff, drivers and guides
- Anything not specified in the inclusions and itinerary above

International flights to/from Dakar

We would be delighted to arrange your flights to and from Dakar if you wish. Please contact the Master Travel office on +44 (0)20 7501 6741 or tours@mastertravel.co.uk for current prices and availability.

Please note that all itineraries in Senegal are subject to change according to local conditions. Due to the nature of the tour, places are limited. Please be aware that live music performances and events in Senegal often start late at night and can continue into the early hours of the morning. Please be prepared for late nights to experience the true essence of Senegalese music.

