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Ghana: Asantehene To
Grace Pirelli Annual Calendar In 2024,
Set To Become FIRST African King To Feature

**How Côte
d'Ivoire Is
Positioning
Itself As A
Tourism
Destination**










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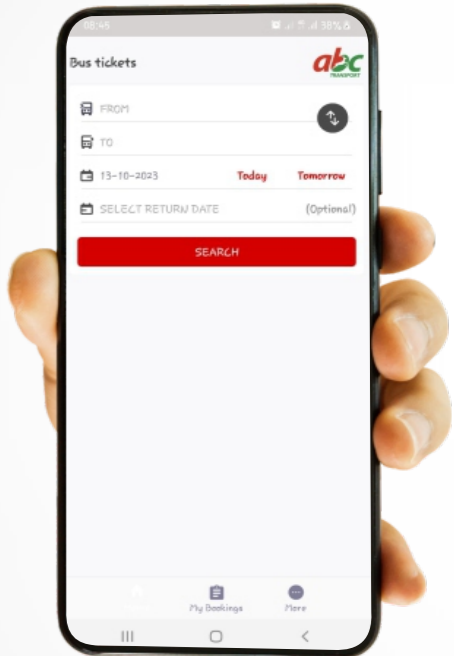


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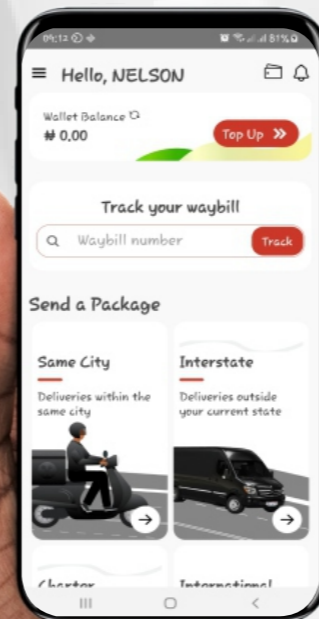
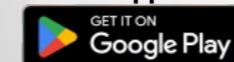
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Visitors at Ogba Zoo, Benin

Who Saves Benin-Ogba Zoo And Nature Park From NPDC's Violations?

For the past eight years, there had been more stealthy threats to the Benin-Ogba Zoo and Nature Park; now worsened by the seemingly nonchalance to addressing it by the Edo State Government, who holds it as a trustee of the Edo public whose failure to act and solve the threats seems to encourage the ceaseless violations by the violators.

In today's world, where the Climate Change scourge prevalently distresses all and corporate bodies are committed to supporting humanity to roll back the blight, in order to save mankind, it is disheartening and appalling that there exists a Nigeria's National Petroleum Development Company [NPDC] Ltd., that tends to display a deliberate reversal policy to dishonour very simple corporate social responsibility [CSR] and environmental sustainability standards,

upon which NPDC was supposedly established as a sub-national corporation.

NPDC, a subsidiary of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation [NNPC], had established on the once pristine rainforest land of BENZOPA, a luxurious and sprawling edifice, which serves as its national headquarters.

The NPDC complex, located opposite BENZOPA, exposes the nature park and its unique diverse biological and nature forms to the manacles of direct sunlight and other environmental hazards. In other words, BENZOPA is thus at the mercy of NPDC.

According to sources, BENZOPA had written series of letters directly to NPDC and its parent organization NNPC, to no avail nor did it live up to the obligations demanded from it.

In an earlier report by one environmentalist, Ako

Amadi noted that On 23rd October, 2013, when the whopping N20 billion complex was still being constructed, BENZOPA's Management wrote to the NNPC Group General Manager through the then Project Manager of the NPDC Headquarters, the letter, signed by Andy Osa Ehanire, BENZOPA's Director and Chief Executive Officer, sought for the corporation's involvement in some key areas of the park and its nature protection.

"It called for the recognition of the environmental status of the global conservation enclave, from which the gigantic NPDC's land was carved out. Until now, NNPC and its subsidiary NPDC were silent on the veracity of the mandatory procurement of Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA] feasibility, for the gigantic project".

The letter, according to

Amadi called on both to unveil the EIA plan, pronto, or conduct one that should duly involve all the stakeholders.

Amadi also stated further that that such E.I.A. studies and synergy, if carried out, with NNPC/NPDC and BENZOPA, would have reenacted the similarity of the nexus between the Nigerian Conservation Foundation [NCF] and Chevron Nigeria Limited.

This was a reference to the good corporate example of Chevron to nature conservation, as the multinational company had built the famous Lekki Conservation and supports the conservation activities of NCF.

In its momentous inception as a frontline Nigeria's zoo and nature park [a protected area] in 1971 by the defunct Mid-West State government, BENZOPA's original acres of 750 and other extended land, had increasingly

shrank or grabbed by poachers and grabbers. But the state government had failed to confirm or categorize what is left of its size.

Although the Obaseki's government can't be wholly blamed for the dissipation of the enclave, since the problem had protracted, it cannot altogether be exonerated from a vicarious responsibility, as it had been worst under its official watch.

BENZOPA, in the conservationists' and world view, is the last remnant of the rarest and rich Guinea Lowland Rainforest, which is situated within the city centre, for which BENZOPA is perhaps one of the last in Africa.

The Edo State government should live up to its responsibility as a trustee of the nature park, by addressing immediately, the problems that beset it, such as valuating its physical and ecological assets and to determine its remaining land area, which must be strictly protected.

It should also constantly de-silt the Ogba River and the effluents that flow freely into and through it. The expired floras should be regrown, while the old growths of trees and lianas are strictly protected, with adequate landscaping of its turfs.

Needed to be proper fencing is the remaining designated land, whose terms of an industrial arbitration must be respected.

BENZOPA, the nature's masterpiece, a haven for conservation education and awareness, research, and eco-tourism visits must be protected for the cross generation of picnickers, which include the children and workers of NPDC.

And Edo State government has no option, but to prevail on the NNPC and NPDC to live up to their responsibilities on BENZOPA.

By Tony Erha



Festus Keyamo, Minister of Aviation and Aerospace.

'Ghana Must Go' Bags: Ethiopian Airlines Bans The Well-Known Luggage

The 'Ghana Must Go' bags are popular, under different names, across Africa

Ethiopian Airlines in

Nigeria has banned the famously nicknamed "Ghana Must Go" bags from their flights there.

The luggage got the nickname in Nigeria in the 1980s, when hundreds of thousands

of undocumented immigrants, many of whom were Ghanaian, were expelled.

People fled with the red-and-blue checked bags on their backs.

Now, the airline

says, the ubiquitous carriers, a favourite of traders, can badly affect airport equipment.

In a statement Ethiopia Airlines said the ban was introduced because of "the frequent occurrence of damages to the conveyor belts at various airports, resulting in significant costs incurred by the airlines involved".

There is an exception. The bags could be used if they were "adequately packed in a carton or hardcover rectangular container".

Ethiopia Airlines operates several domestic and regional routes out of Nigeria's commercial hub, Lagos.

Turning an iconic plastic bag into high fashion

The bags are very popular across Africa, and much of the rest of the world, and can be seen in many airports.

They also go by different names. In Kenya, for example, they are known as Nigeria bags, and Zimbabweans call them Botswana bags.

In 2017 KLM and Air France, imposed a ban because they said the bags could unravel and clog up baggage delivery systems.

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Mrs. Abiola Adelana, Head, Tourism and Creative Art Sector, Sterling Bank.

Culture Ministry Destination 2023: Sterling Bank Canvasses Private Sector Involvement

Cultural stakeholders in the country have expressed optimism of a better tomorrow following the recent roundtable hosted by the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy in Abuja. They said they could position culture and the creative industries so that the sector will be able to contribute immensely to the nation's economy. There was hope when Culture Minister, Hajiya Hannatu Musawa, gave an overview of the ministry's vision and agenda for the creative

sector during the event held at the Presidential Villa where she addressed key players in the industries.

With the theme, "Destination 2023, Nigeria Everywhere Initiative," the minister said she projected to have N100 billion revenue from the creative sector. The roadmap include giving accurate data which will foster economic growth. Musawa was quoted to have said "We want to position Nigeria as the world's culture, creativity and entertainment capital of

the world."

Head, Tourism and Creative Art Sector, Sterling Bank, Mrs. Abiola Adelana, said they are committed to making it a reality. "We (Sterling Bank) truly believe that Nigeria's cultural influence should transcend borders," she said. Adding: "Collaboration between government and stakeholders is necessary for the growth of the arts, culture and creative industry in the country."

Adelana urged government to leverage financial expertise of banks in collaboration in

order to propel the growth and sustainability of Nigeria arts, culture, and creative economy. In the same vein, she wants stakeholders to lend their support to government.

"Each one of us, with our creativity and passion, is an indispensable part of this narrative," she said.

Everybody was concerned about the contribution of the culture sector to the nation's economy which is insignificant. The National Bureau of Statistics put the GDP of culture and tourism to

the economy at about two per cent day for many years. Generally, the culture practitioners said the new drive will have to change the perception of Nigeria culture and entertainment. It is important Vice President Kashim Shettima is backing the ministry to foster public-private sector involvement.

Shettima said the Bola Tinubu administration is set to make real its promise to turn the "Nigerian creative industry into a critical segment of the global economy."

A Lagos-based artist, Mr. Seun Babalola said it makes sense pointing out that already the perception of culture is changing.

"People used to see culture as mere music and dance. Dancers come together and entertain people during festivals, they clap and go. Not anymore," he said.

Adelana expressed her satisfaction on the ministry's effort saying that during her visit to the Minister (Art, Culture and Creative Economy) after the event she understood that since she assumed office some months ago, "she and her dedicated team have been working relentlessly on a multitude of initiatives across various work streams."

What the ministry is doing, it is believed, aligns with the Federal Government's Destination 2030 plans to create inclusive, sustainable jobs, especially for youths in the Nigerian creative sector.



Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II.

Ghana: Asantehene To Grace Pirelli Annual Calendar In 2024, Set To Become FIRST African King To Feature

The Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, is set to be featured on the prestigious annual trade calendar published by the United Kingdom subsidiary of the Italian tyre manufacturing company, Pirelli.

The occasion will coincide with the King's silver jubilee, making it a significant milestone in his reign.

His appearance on the Pirelli Calendar will also mark a historic moment, as he becomes the first African and the first Black monarch to grace its pages.

The news was conveyed to Otumfuo during a visit by executives from Pirelli to the Manhyia Palace in July. The visit took place during the fifth Akwasidae celebration of the year, adding to the grandeur of the occasion.

"Asantehene to

appear on Prestigious Pirelli Calendar in 2024. "The Monarch of the Asante Kingdom, His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II will feature in the prestigious annual trade calendar published by the United Kingdom subsidiary of the Italian tyre #manufacturing company Pirelli," The #AsanteNation posted on Twitter on July 28, 2023.

In addition to the honor of being featured on the calendar, Pirelli demonstrated their

commitment to social responsibility by donating \$10,000 to the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Foundation [OOTIIF].

The Foundation, established by the #Asante King, focuses on various charitable and developmental projects aimed at empowering communities and individuals in #Ghana.

Since its inception in 1964, the Pirelli Calendar, often referred to as "The Cal," has become a symbol of artistic excellence and

sophistication.

Each year, the calendar is produced in limited quantities of 20,000 printed copies, and it is highly sought-after by art enthusiasts and collectors alike.

Unlike typical calendars available for purchase, the Pirelli Calendar is not sold to the public. Instead, it is exclusively distributed as corporate gifts to celebrities and select Pirelli customers, making it an exclusive and coveted item.

SAUDIA & Riyadh Air: One Kingdom, Two Hubs, One 2030 Vision

By Juergen Steinmetz

Saudia and Riyadh Air are not competitors but are complimenting each other. This was made clear at the Dubai Air Show last week.

SAUDIA, known as Saudi Arabian Airlines, the Jeddah-based flag carrier for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will no longer serve the capital city of the Kingdom, Riyadh in 2030.

Instead, Riyadh Air will take the floor, and both carriers interact with each other's network through codeshare agreements.

This apparently is being coordinated with the second and new official national carrier for the Kingdom Riyadh Air.

Riyadh Air will concentrate on its hub in Riyadh (RUH), while Saudia will increase its operation in Jeddah [JED].

Riyadh Air is getting ready for a 300-aircraft operation connecting the world from its hub in Riyadh, concentrating on business and leisure travel.

The two airlines signed an extensive codeshare agreement at the just concluded Dubai Air Show, securing both hubs Jeddah and Riyadh to maintain strong and enormous growth potential, possibly strongly competing with other regional airlines, such as Emirates, Etihad, or Qatar Airways.,

In an interview with "Airways" publication, Peter Bellew, Chief Operating Officer of Riyadh Air, said: "Saudia has more business than it can handle with the current fleet down in Jeddah."

An exciting new time is on the horizon for Saudi tourism, following the Crown Prince Vision 2030. The development confirms how important it is for the Kingdom to welcome the world in 2030 for World EXPO 2030.



Ahmed Al Khateeb, Saudi Minister of Tourism



Ekene Nnabuihe, Chief Executive Officer, Boulevard Hotel Group.

Cont'd from Page 16 Parkview Astoria, a prestigious property managed by Boulevard Hotel Group. With a proven track record in hotel management and a commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences, Kenneth will lead the team at Parkview Astoria to new heights, further solidifying the property's reputation as a premier destination.

Tokunbo Owolabi - Director of Preopening Services:

Tokunbo Owolabi assumes the role of Director of Preopening Services, overseeing the successful launch of new properties within the Boulevard Hotel Group portfolio. Tokunbo brings a wealth of expertise in preopening strategies, ensuring that each new venture is positioned for success from day one. His meticulous planning and execution will be instrumental in the group's expansion efforts.

forward for Boulevard Hotel Group as it positions itself for strategic expansion and continued success in the competitive hospitality landscape.

The new leadership team is poised to uphold the group's commitment to delivering unparalleled service and unforgettable experiences for guests.

We are delighted to welcome these seasoned professionals to Boulevard Hotel Group. Their collective expertise will undoubtedly strengthen our leadership team and contribute to the realization of our ambitious expansion goals, said Ekene Nnabuihe CEO of Boulevard Hotel Group.

About STAAH:

STAAH Ltd is a New Zealand-based technology company specializing in cloud-based channel management and booking engine solutions. With a presence in over 90 countries, STAAH's innovative technology is trusted by thousands of properties, from boutique hotels to large hotel chains.

Isioma Ezeokafor - Operations Coordinator:

Isioma Ezeokafor joins Boulevard Hotel Group as Operations Coordinator, bringing a dynamic and detail-oriented approach to the organization. In this role, Isioma will collaborate across various departments to streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and contribute to the overall success of the group's diverse portfolio.

These appointments mark a significant step

served in leadership roles in the hospitality industry for over two decades. His extensive experience will play a crucial role in driving operational efficiency and ensuring the highest standards of guest satisfaction across the group's portfolio.

Kenneth Mabakwe - General Manager, Parkview Astoria Ikoyi Lagos:

Kenneth Mabakwe has been appointed as the General Manager of

technology, luxury, and service excellence. As both entities strive for innovation and customer satisfaction, this collaboration marks the beginning of a transformative journey that will elevate the guest experience and position Boulevard Hotel Group as a trailblazer in the ever-evolving world of hospitality.

Meanwhile, Boulevard Hotel Group announces appointments of key executives as part of its strategic expansion plan.

These appointments bring a wealth of experience, talent, and leadership to the team as Boulevard Hotel Group embarks on its journey of growth and excellence.

Morteen Ebertseen - Chief Operating Officer [COO]:

Boulevard Hotel Group is thrilled to welcome Morteen Ebertseen as the newly appointed COO. Morteen brings a rich background in hotel operations, having



Statue of Liberty

US, Japan Signs Tourism Memorandum Of Understanding

The United States and Japan formally launched the 2024 U.S. – Japan Tourism Year with the signing of a memorandum of cooperation today between the U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel and the Japanese Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism Tetsuo Saito.

I was honored to host the signing ceremony reception at the U.S. Ambassador's residence, which was attended by U.S. and Japanese colleagues and three cabinet ministers and also featured a video address from Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo as well as the announcement of enhanced access to Global Entry for Japanese travellers. Led by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Japan Tourism Agency,

the Tourism Year will bring together the government and private sector to enhance two-way travel between our two nations.

Brand USA is a key partner of this initiative, and we will be rolling out high-impact programs throughout 2024. These will include a week-long sales mission to Japan to facilitate stronger B2B relationships and expanded product offerings, as well as the latest iteration of our consumer campaign, "Experience It All," created to inspire travellers to feel themselves in the USA—from our vibrant landscapes to our bustling cities and diverse communities.

Even got a head start on the #USJapan Tourism Year by conducting interviews with three national publications (Kyodo News, The Yomiuri

Shimbun, Jiji Press), recruiting an expanded set of target Japanese buyers to #IPW2024, and engaging in planning meetings with public and private partners from both countries.

While Japan has been relatively slow to resume long-haul travel, it remains a critical market for the international visitor economy. Around 3.8 million Japanese travelers visited the United States in 2019 and spent nearly \$13 billion exploring the country making it our fourth-largest global market after Canada, Mexico, and the U.K. Yet in 2022, Japan ranked 13th in international arrivals to the United States. Brand USA's role is to regain the Japanese traveler's confidence post-pandemic and reignite excitement and curiosity about America to help the United States achieve the National Travel and Tourism Strategy's goal of welcoming 90 million visitors who will spend \$279 billion annually by 2027.



Wura-Ola Adepoju, Comptroller General, Nigerian Immigration Service [NIS].

Adepoju Confirmed As Substantive Comptroller General Of Immigration

President Bola Tinubu has confirmed the appointment of Wura-Ola Adepoju as the substantive Comptroller General [CG] of the Nigerian Immigration Service [NIS].

She reportedly made the disclosure while addressing men and officers of the service at a routine parade on Wednesday, adding that her decoration would soon be made public.

"You may also wish to know that, through the grace of God and the benevolence of the present government, I have been confirmed as a substantive Comptroller General of

Immigration," a statement by the Public Relations Unit of the Service quoted her as saying."

After the expiration of the tenure of the former CG, Isah Jere, whose tenure expired on May 29, 2023, Mrs Adepoju as the most senior deputy comptroller general [DCG] was appointed as acting CG to lead the NIS.

The CG further announced that some members of the top management team who took part in a promotion examination recently have been elevated to the ranks of deputy Comptrollers-general [DCGs].



MO FARAH

Athlete and IOM
Goodwill Ambassador

Mo Farah CBE, Athlete and IOM Goodwill Ambassador.

Sir Mo Farah Is Announced As IOM's First Global Goodwill Ambassador By Director General Amy Pope.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is pleased to announce today the appointment of four-time Olympic champion long distance runner Sir Mo Farah CBE as its first ever global Goodwill Ambassador.

The announcement was made in Geneva at the 114th Session of the IOM Council, which includes all of IOM's Governing Bodies, and representatives of its 175 member states.

Farah, 40, retired from running in September after a long and celebrated career. In 2022, he revealed to the world that he had been trafficked as a child from Somalia to the UK.

"No child should ever go through what I did; victims of child trafficking are just children. They deserve to be children. They deserve to play and to be kids," said Farah.

"Becoming a global Goodwill Ambassador for IOM gives me a chance to help people, people like me, and make changes. To help people know we can all make a difference in our lives."

Farah intends to use his new platform as Goodwill Ambassador to raise awareness of issues affecting people on the move, including protection and trafficking, and advocate for the transformative power of sport, especially for women and girls.

"Migration is so important for all of us, including me. I was able to take the opportunity sport offered me to overcome my experiences as a young boy and show that no matter what we look like or what we sound like, we can achieve and overcome great things," he said.

IOM Director General

Amy Pope said, "IOM is honoured to have Sir Mo Farah as our inaugural global Goodwill Ambassador. A champion on and off the track, and a survivor of human trafficking, he brings true dedication, commitment and drive to IOM's work, helping millions of people on the move and inspiring us all."

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM joined the United Nations system as a related organization in 2016.

Farah's new role as IOM's global Goodwill Ambassador is a meaningful step, highlighting IOM's commitment to impactful advocacy.

European Travel Commission Celebrates 75th Anniversary As New Members Join



Eduardo Santander, Executive Director European Travel Commission.

ETC marks 75 years of promoting and representing European tourism at General Meeting #106, hosted by Spain

Go Türkiye rejoins Europe's association of national tourism boards from 2024

ETC welcomes new associate members from the private sector – the Hilton Group, Mastercard, Miles Partnership and Queer Destinations

This week, the European Travel Commission (ETC) marked 75 years of promoting and representing European tourism at its General Meeting #106 in Tenerife, hosted by Spain's National Tourism Organisation, Turespaña. The event saw record participation, bringing together leaders from thirty-three European national tourism organisations, as well as private sector ETC associate members.

ETC was first established in 1948 to promote Europe as a destination and advocate for tourism as a crucial sector for maintaining peace and prosperity. 75 years later, ETC and its 35 members continue to collaborate to jointly promote Europe overseas and drive the transition towards a more

resilient and regenerative travel ecosystem.

To mark this milestone, ETC invited its members and partners to reflect on the future of European tourism. Discussions brought together experts from the European Commission, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the European Tourism Association (ETOA), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Turespaña, and Turismo de Tenerife to share insights and best practices on how to build a green and prosperous future for the travel sector.

ETC President Miguel Sanz commented, 'This General Meeting has been an excellent opportunity for ETC to celebrate its 75th anniversary alongside so many of our valued members and partners. After three-quarters of a century promoting European tourism, it is wonderful to see that ETC is still growing, as Go Türkiye returns to our organisation. We are also excited to welcome the Hilton Group, Mastercard, Miles Partnership, and Queer Destinations as new associate members. Such strong collaboration and clarity of vision puts us in an excellent position to steer the industry towards a prosperous, resilient, and sustainable future.'



Morten Ebbesen, Chief Operating Officer, Boulevard Hotel Group.

STAAH, Boulevard Hotel Group Forge Strategic Partnership To Elevate Guest Experience And Drive Innovation

A Leading global hospitality technology provider, STAAH, and esteemed hospitality brand, Boulevard Hotel Group, have joined forces in a strategic partnership aimed at enhancing guest experience, optimizing

operations, and fostering innovation within the hospitality sector.

The collaboration between STAAH and Boulevard Hotel Group marks a significant milestone in the pursuit of excellence within the industry. STAAH, renowned for its cutting-

edge technology solutions, will empower Boulevard Hotel Group with a suite of tools designed to streamline operations, boost online visibility, and elevate guest satisfaction.

Boulevard Hotel Group, known for its commitment to delivering unparalleled service and luxury

experiences, will leverage STAAH's comprehensive suite of solutions, including cloud-based booking engines, channel management, and insightful analytics.

This strategic alliance will enable Boulevard Hotel Group to seamlessly manage room inventory, optimize

pricing strategies, and effortlessly connect with a global network of online travel agencies, ensuring maximum reach and exposure in the digital marketplace.

"We are thrilled to announce our partnership with Boulevard Hotel Group, a distinguished player in the hospitality industry.

This collaboration underscores our commitment to empowering hotels with innovative technology solutions that drive operational efficiency and enhance the guest journey," said Aishwarya Naik, Business head, Africa at STAAH.

The integration of STAAH's technology will not only streamline internal processes for Boulevard Hotel Group but will also enhance the overall guest experience. By leveraging STAAH's advanced booking engine, Boulevard Hotel Group can provide guests with a seamless and user-friendly booking process, ensuring a hassle-free reservation experience.

"With STAAH as our technology partner, we are confident in our ability to stay at the forefront of innovation in the hospitality industry. This partnership aligns perfectly with our commitment to delivering exceptional service and experiences to our guests," said Ekene Nnabuihe, CEO of Boulevard Hotel Group.

The partnership between STAAH and Boulevard Hotel Group is poised to set new benchmarks in the hospitality industry, creating a synergy that combines



Mount Kilimanjaro

Funding Mobilized For Communities In Eastern And Southern Africa Fuels Resilience And Conservation Efforts.

The Platform's goal is to mobilize at least \$15 million to support tourism-reliant communities with pandemic recovery efforts and build longer-term resilience.

The African Nature-Based Tourism Platform (<https://NatureBasedTourism.m.Africa>) has released a report showcasing the impact of funding mobilized for community-based organizations in eastern and southern Africa following the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. This analysis highlights the impact of the pandemic on the nature-based tourism industry as well as the communities and conservation efforts that rely on this sector. The report also showcases the importance of funding locally led initiatives in building community resilience to future shocks and stressors.

The African Nature-Based Tourism Platform, made possible through funding from the Global

Environment Facility (GEF), has been instrumental in connecting funders to community-based organizations involved in conservation and tourism. Operating in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, the Platform's goal is to mobilize at least \$15 million to support tourism-reliant communities with pandemic recovery efforts and build longer-term resilience.

"There has been a growing demand from donors expressing a strong desire to fund community-led initiatives. However, the gap between this expressed intent and the actual flow of funding to these organizations remains a significant challenge. The African Nature-Based Tourism Platform is working to address this gap by connecting these donors with local organizations addressing the real needs on the ground." - Rachael Axelrod, Senior Program

Officer, the African Nature-Based Tourism Platform.

Africa is home to one-third of the world's biological diversity, with eastern and southern Africa boasting over 2.1 million square kilometers of protected areas and seven biodiversity hotspots. Maintaining effective management of this biodiversity requires sustained funding, a large portion of which comes from nature-based tourism. The shock to the tourism sector caused by the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the weaknesses of a conservation funding model based primarily on tourism and exacerbated the vulnerability of the communities and landscapes dependent on this industry. The global pandemic intersected with the existing climate change and biodiversity crises in the region compounding the impacts on the most vulnerable.

To address these challenges, the Platform worked with partners in 11 countries to conduct surveys

assessing the impact of COVID-19 on local communities and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) within the nature-based tourism sector. To date, the Platform has conducted 687 surveys across its 11 target countries.

Leveraging this survey data, the Platform has collaborated with partners to develop community-led and designed grant proposals. This collaborative approach has resulted in the mobilization of significant funding going directly to community-based organizations.

"Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association has participated in proposal development opportunities provided by the African Nature-Based Tourism Platform that have increased our organization's capacity to fundraise. This enabled KWCA to successfully secure funding from IUCN BIOPAMA to improve effective management and equitable governance of one of our member conservancies" - Vincent Oluoch, Senior Program Officer, KWCA.

Funding mobilized to date includes:

In Malawi, a \$186,000

grant from IUCN BIOPAMA is supporting climate-resilient alternative livelihoods near Kasungu National Park.

In South Africa, a \$14,000 grant from the South Africa National Lotteries Commission to help promote indigenous craft development for communities near Kruger National Park.

In Botswana, an \$87,000 grant from the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) is addressing food and water security for farmers near the Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park.

In Zimbabwe, \$135,000 in funding is improving community resilience to climate change in the Binga and Tsholotsho districts.

In Namibia, \$159,000 is supporting climate adaptation projects near Bwabwata National Park and surrounding conservancies.

In Kenya, a \$208,000 grant from IUCN BIOPAMA is addressing governance challenges in Lumo Community Conservancy.

In Tanzania, a grant of \$1.4 million from the European Union is addressing governance issues in 12 community-owned Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

These projects will help build the resilience of communities to future shocks and stressors, including the impacts of climate change.

*These seven projects could not be possible without the Platform's partners who include Kasungu Wildlife Conservation for Community Development Association (KAWICCODA) and Resource Africa in Malawi, Nourish in South Africa, Ngamiland Council of NGOs (NCONGO) in Botswana, WWF Zimbabwe, WWF Namibia, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) and the Community Wildlife Management Area Consortium (CWMAC) and Honeyguide Foundation in Tanzania.

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Central hotel is definitely your venue of choice, whether you are hosting a conference or here on a business trip or in Accra for leisure and sightseeing reasons, we can cater for your needs. Central Hotel has two (2) branches; The Osu branch and Ridge branch.

The Osu branch is located on the 16th Lane Oxford Street. It's made of 26 comfortable rooms and a restaurant. The hotel is surrendered by Shops, restaurants, Mall and prefect place to enjoy night life.

The Ridge branch is located on the #10 Julius Nyerere Road, near British High Commission and the Ghana Institute of Journalism. The hotel prides itself with a comfortable 56rooms, a restaurant, a pool and a conference hall.

Tune in to Central Hotel's robust social media accounts - [Facebook: CentralHotels Gh](#) [Twitter: @CentralhotelsGh](#) [Instagram: @centralhotels_gh](#)

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THE BUSINESS HAVEN



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
From well spaced modern conference rooms conducive for business meetings & conferences to comfortable, relaxing rooms that open to breathtaking city views, the hotel guarantees nothing short of Ghanaian excellence.

Climax your stay with a taste of their diverse local & continental dishes!

A TRUE GHANAIAN EXPERIENCE

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Radisson Blu Hotel, Edo, Benin

Radisson Hotel Group, In Partnership With Edo State Government (EDSG), Further Expands Its Portfolio In Nigeria With Its Debut In Benin City, Edo State.

The hotel's array of Scandinavian inspired accommodation will range from contemporary standard rooms to expansive executive suites, including a presidential suite. Creating a social hub for delectable cuisine, the hotel's gastronomic offering will include a lobby bar and café, an all-day dining restaurant as well as a pool bar and grill. To provide a harmonious stay, guests can also unwind in the hotel's gym and spa.

Radisson Hotel Group (www.RadissonHotels.com), in partnership with the Edo State Government, is proud to announce its progressed expansion in Nigeria with the signing of Radisson Hotel Benin City. The 169-room hotel, scheduled to open within the next 12 months is the Group's 12th hotel in Nigeria and officially marks their debut in Benin City.

The hotel's array of Scandinavian inspired accommodation will range from contemporary standard rooms to

expansive executive suites, including a presidential suite. Creating a social hub for delectable cuisine, the hotel's gastronomic offering will include a lobby bar and café, an all-day dining restaurant as well as a pool bar and grill. To provide a harmonious stay, guests can also unwind in the hotel's gym and spa.

"With our ongoing commitment to expand in Nigeria, a key market in Africa for our scaled growth and Sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy, the debut in Benin City, a key state capital, is perfectly aligned with our growth strategy for the country. As our first Radisson branded hotel outside of Lagos and Abuja, the Radisson Hotel Benin City will continue to reinforce our brand

awareness in Nigeria, especially for the Radisson brand which enables guests to find more harmony in their travel experience. As a new, upscale, internationally branded hotel, we believe the hotel will play a significant role in promoting tourism and business activities within Benin City and the broader Edo State," said Erwan Garnier, Senior Director, Development for Africa at Radisson Hotel Group.

Located in Benin City, in Edo State, one of the nine oil producing states of Nigeria, Radisson Hotel Benin City is situated in the prime Government Reserved Area (GRA). Conveniently accessible via the airport and Benin-Sapele roads, the two main arteries of the city, the hotel is just five minutes' drive from the Benin Airport and

is also within close proximity to various security offices, such as the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian Police Force, providing an additional security presence in the vicinity of the hotel.

on the doorstep of the Benin Golf Course and the city's commercial center.

"Today marks a significant milestone in our collective vision for progress and development in our beloved State. The Edo State Radisson Hotel Project represents a symbol of our commitment to fostering economic growth and transforming the landscape of our State. The Hospitality and tourism sectors have long been recognized as powerful catalysts for economic prosperity, creating opportunities for employment, investments, and socio-cultural exchange. By embarking on this ambitious venture, we are signaling our firm belief in the potential of our State as a vibrant and thriving destination," His Excellency Mr. Godwin Obaseki, the governor of Edo State, said. The Radisson Hotel Benin City

The hotel's meetings and events spaces will comprise of a 507 sqm sub-divisible ballroom, three meeting rooms and a pre-function area for a wide range of tailored events.

"We are sculpting the landscape of our State by creating a new landmark that will shape the perception of Edo State in the eyes of the world. We envision a future where our State is synonymous with warm hospitality, unrivaled natural beauty, and a rich cultural heritage. The hotel will serve as a gateway for visitors to experience the unique people, culture and treasures that Edo State holds. The Edo Radisson Hotel Project will position Edo State as a destination for capital. We are pleased to partner with the Radisson Hotel Group on this laudable project," the Honourable Commissioner for Finance, Mrs. Adaze Kalu noted.

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up both tasty local dishes and international cuisine; hence tourists can choose the one that best suits their taste.

If you visit Abidjan, you should make sure that St. Paul's Cathedral is included in your itinerary. The church of St. Paul was designed by the Italian architect Aldo Spirito and is unique. The panoramic stained-glass windows are the highlights of the church, making it more attractive. Visiting St. Paul church, tourists can find artistic and modern mosaics which depict Catholic Stations of the Cross.

Since Abidjan is in the equatorial region of Africa, its climate differs from that of the rest of the world. The best time to visit this attraction is from November to January when the weather is drier than the other humid months of the year.

Yamoussoukro

Yamoussoukro is the political capital of the Ivory Coast and home to the country's largest mosque, the Grande Mosquée de Yamoussoukro. Visitors can explore the city's historic sites or visit the nearby Akouédo National Park. Yamoussoukro is also known for its vibrant nightlife scene and is a popular destination for travelers looking to experience the best of Ivory Coast's culture.

When it comes to some of the most popular tourist destinations in Yamoussoukro, the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro should be on the list. It is the largest Christian church in the world, surpassing St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

The Basilica's interior is decorated with marble that was entirely imported from Italy and illuminated by thousands of lights.

The Grand Mosque of Yamoussoukro is another tourist destination that you should not miss on your Ivory Coast trip. The massive mosque in the heart of Yamoussoukro, one of the Ivory Coast's

within the mosque were imported from Morocco, whereas the casted iron for the mosque's giant doors was made in France. When visiting The Grand Mosque of Yamoussoukro, please be aware that tourists must take off their shoes before entering the mosque, and ladies must also cover their heads with veils.

World Heritage site since 1982. Visiting Tai National Park, tourists will have the opportunity to encounter some incredible things, including birdwatching and wildlife spotting, in a place with spectacular scenic beauty. Additionally, must-try experiences for tourists consist of hiking treks

Therefore, it is recommended that you visit this attraction in the dry season to have an authentic adventure.

Assinie-Mafia

Assinie-Mafia is a coastal resort town in the south-eastern Ivory Coast. For beach lovers who are searching for a place to evade the urban stresses, and noises from the nearby mega-city of Abidjan, there is no better place than Assinie-Mafia. Assinie-Mafia is now equipped with numerous luxurious hotels, bars, and high-end restaurants, which best suits a romantic honeymoon.

A beach holiday here offers you a perfect mixture of relaxation and sightseeing, the beaches are beautiful and clean, and the waters are warm and inviting.

Ivory Coast is an African nation filled with incredible tourist spots. Whether you're looking for historical sites, natural wonders, or vibrant nightlife, Ivory Coast has something for you. So, if you're looking to explore the best of what Africa has to offer, make sure to add Ivory Coast to your list of must-visit destinations.

Outlook

According to Oxford Economics Africa, the number of jobs created by tourism will exceed 2019 levels by 2024, while visitor arrivals are set to eclipse pre-pandemic levels by 2025 especially with Africa's Nations Cup holding across six venues and 5 major cities across the country that sure attracts thousands of football fans, tourists, and media from around the world.

through the rainforest and witnessing the park's enormous biodiversity.

The road to Tai National Park is a dirt track, and it becomes impassable during rainy weather. Djouroutou is the village for Tai National Park entry, approximately 215 km from San Pedro.

First published by Oxford Business Group with Additional report by African Travel Times

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Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro Basilica, Cote d'Ivoire.

How Côte d'Ivoire Is Positioning Itself As A Tourism Destination

Côte d'Ivoire aims to establish tourism as the third pillar of its economy with a target of attracting 5m foreign tourists per year and creating 700,000 jobs in the sector by 2025. These targets seek to build on the substantial gains the sector has made since the political and security situation stabilised in 2012. In the subsequent years tourism grew steadily, with international tourist arrivals rising 10-fold in 2011-19. The sector's contribution to GDP increased from 0.6% to 8.5% over that same period, indicating robust recovery.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and the imposition of global travel restrictions in early 2020, the government is forging ahead with investment plans to establish Côte d'Ivoire as a regional

tourist destination. “Domestic tourism is a niche that could be further developed in the future, reducing reliance on foreign tourists while diversifying the client base,” Monique Philippe, general director of Ivoire Voyages Tourisme, told OBG.

Structure & Oversight

Responsibility for oversight and development of tourism falls under the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), and the sector is regulated by the Tourism Code. The National Tourism Board (Office National du Tourisme, ONT) implements the government's tourism policy and promotes the country as a tourism destination. There are 12 separate Regional Tourism Directorates which are supported by 20

departmental directorates under the ONT. In addition, 11 foreign representative agencies are charged with promoting Côte d'Ivoire abroad.

Tourism operators, hotels, guides and other sector players are represented by two key umbrella organisations: the National Federation of Tourism of Côte d'Ivoire (Fédération Nationale de l'Industrie Touristique de Côte d'Ivoire, FENITOURCI) and the National Federation of Hospitality of Côte d'Ivoire (Fédération Nationale de l'Industrie Hôtelière de Côte d'Ivoire, FNIH-CI). FENITOURCI represents around 200 members and works to enhance their professional training and contributes to structuring the sector's legal framework more broadly. FNIH-CI provides similar representation and services

to its members and recently became an official member of the African Tourism Board. This continent-wide organisation fosters tourism through collaboration, marketing and investment promotion.

At the national level, the government's tourism strategy is guided by an eight-year policy for the 2018-25 period known as Sublime Côte d'Ivoire. Comprising nine reforms, the policy is a CFA3.2trn (\$5.5bn) development blueprint for overhauling the tourism landscape by strengthening the Tourism Code, upgrading transport and infrastructure, developing new attractions, and improving administrative procedures. Its principal goal is to position the country among the top-five tourism destinations on the continent.

Diverse Landscapes

Côte d'Ivoire has a wide array of tourist attractions, including cultural, religious and leisure sites, and underexploited niche segments such as sport or ecotourism. With four main cultural identities, over 60 ethnic groups and almost as many languages, Côte d'Ivoire is a culturally diverse country of 27m inhabitants well known for being receptive and hospitable towards foreigners. The country's diversity is reflected in the various festivals celebrated throughout the year, with the Abissa festival in Grand-Bassam among the nation's oldest and most popular events. The festival typically attracts thousands of visitors each year. Other festivals on offer include the Popo Carnival in Bonoua and the Igname festival celebrated in the country's east. With a substantial proportion of its natural environment relatively intact and undeveloped, as well as several large national parks, ecotourism is one of the industry's high-potential segments.

Performance & Size

Following the launch of Sublime Côte d'Ivoire, the travel sector's contribution to GDP increased from 6.3% in 2018 to 7.3% in 2019. The government also secured investment commitments worth more than \$11.4bn. However, as with many countries around the world, the growth of the country's tourism sector has stalled due to the pandemic. According to a study by FNIH-CI, turnover for the tourism and leisure sector fell by 73% in 2020. While the government offered financial

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Sassandra Beach, Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire.

Cont'd from Page 9 support to the industry, only four of FENITOURCI's 200 affiliated companies were able to access it due to stringent eligibility requirements. As a result of these disruptions, the sector's contribution to GDP fell to 4.8% in 2020, the last year for which data is available.

According to figures from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the tourism sector contributed \$2.1bn to the economy in 2020, a 44% decline from 2019. The industry also shed more than 218,000 jobs, bringing the sector headcount to around 492,000 people, or 5.9% of the workforce.

The sector continues to be driven by business tourism, representing 67% of travel and tourism spending in 2020, while leisure spending accounted for the remaining 33%. However, leisure spending as a share of tourism inflows continues to grow, having risen from 28% in 2017. Domestic spending is still the dominant source

of tourism receipts, accounting for 89% of spending compared to 11% for international spending. In 2020 total tourism receipts fell to \$900m compared to almost \$2bn in 2019.

Prior to the pandemic, the WTTC had forecast an increase in business travel spending of 7.6% in 2019, with leisure spending expected to increase by 5.9% the same year. With Côte d'Ivoire hosting a series of major international events in 2022 and 2023, including the COP15 to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the Africa Cup of Nations and the third Intra-African Trade Fair, the government is hoping to attract more international business and leisure travellers.

Visitor Numbers & Source Markets

The number of international visitors rose sharply from 300,000 in 2012 to 2.1m in 2019; however, it fell to 668,000

in 2020 due to the pandemic. French nationals accounted for 24% of inbound arrivals in 2020, followed by residents of Guinea (13%), Burkina Faso (9%), Mali (8%) and Senegal (7%). This marked a slight decrease in French tourists. US visitors declined significantly, from 7% of total foreign arrivals in 2019 to virtually zero in 2020. Domestic tourism fell sharply, with slightly less than half the number of trips taken in 2020 compared to 2019.

Cote d'Ivoire 2022 - Tourism - Ivoire Voyages Tourisme

Apart from the pandemic, Côte d'Ivoire is also working to tackle issues that undermine its competitiveness as a regional and global tourism destination. In the 2019 World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, Côte d'Ivoire ranked 119th out of 140 countries, with poor road and port

infrastructure cited as one of the principal challenges. In recent years, the government has implemented visa liberalisation policies while also investing in road and national park infrastructure in an effort to attract more foreign tourists. Developing infrastructure is one of the nine priority reforms outlined in Sublime Côte d'Ivoire.

Hotel Infrastructure

The hotel industry in the country is highly competitive. However, there are a limited number of quality establishments, and this presents an opportunity for both luxury and niche hotel operators.

There are approximately 2000 hotels in the country, with a total capacity of 38,000 rooms. Most are in Abidjan, where several leading international hotel chains, including Sofitel, Pullman, Ibis and Radisson, have entered the market in recent years and plan to expand their

portfolio in the country. Others such as Novotel, Adagio, Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons and Sheraton are also set to launch hotels.

According to the “2021 Hotel Chain Development Pipelines in Africa” report published by the W Hospitality Group, Côte d'Ivoire ranks in the top-10 African countries in terms of its hotel chain development pipeline. There are 15 hotels currently planned or under construction, which will add an additional 2337 rooms to the hotel portfolio.

Business Tourism

Côte d'Ivoire ranks third on the continent for business tourism, behind Nigeria and Morocco. Business travel accounts for more than two-thirds of tourist spending, mostly from regional conferences and exhibitions. Despite this, the country's potential to become a regional destination for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions remains largely untapped. There is currently no major conference centre able to accommodate more than 5000 people. The Abidjan Conference Centre, which spans approximately 2000 sq metres, is the only large venue and is located outside of the city centre. To address this issue, the MoT is focusing on expanding conference facility infrastructure.

One of the projects in the pipeline is the Abidjan Business City, a scheme to create a central location for hosting meetings and conferences, which will include a 5000-person-capacity conference centre and hall. The WTTC forecasts that business tourism spending will double from the CFA1.5trn (\$ 2 . 6 b n)

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Cont'd from Page 10 registered in 2018 to nearly CFA3trn (\$5.2bn) in 2029.

Niche Markets

Tourism segments like ecotourism, agro-tourism and cruises also hold immense potential. Côte d'Ivoire is a major producer of high-quality cocoa and coffee. Building tourism experiences around these plantations could attract more visitors. This model of tourism has already seen some success in other African countries such as Ghana and Rwanda.

Since 2016 the government has also accelerated efforts to promote ecotourism through the conservation of parks and national reserves. The West African country is also a signatory of the first African Charter on Sustainable and Responsible Tourism.

Several initiatives have already enjoyed success, including an ecotourism project in Taï National Park that invests in the conservation of animals like chimpanzees through sustainable tourism initiatives. The government also has an agreement with Le Vertendre, a Canadian specialist in sustainable development, to build eco-lodges in the country. Under Sublime Côte d'Ivoire, and with the support of regional bodies such as ECOWAS, efforts are also under way to promote cruise tourism across the region. Luxury cruise line companies already operate tours that stopover in Abidjan.

The MoT has identified creating an effective marketing strategy as key to revitalising the tourism sector. Following its successful hosting of World Tourism Day 2021 celebrations in Abidjan, a

rebranding was conducted as part of a new marketing campaign for 2022. The director-general of Côte d'Ivoire Tourism, Malékah Mourad-Condé, also unveiled a new logo, song and slogan – “Ivory Coast, inspiring land of hospitality” – to promote tourism in the country in early 2022. A website showcasing the country's diverse tourism offerings is also in the pipeline as part of the strategy.

Sport Tourism

For decades, Cote d'Ivoire was a football mecca for so many West African and African footballers before the country itself largely went on to developed and produced some of the best players on the continent.

The tournament kicks off on 13th of January and will end on 11th of February 2024 featuring 24 Teams with matched expected to be played in six venues in five cities across the country.

Stadiums Alassane Ouattara Stadium

Commonly known as the Olympic Stadium of Ebimpé and formerly as the National Stadium of the Ivory Coast, is a multi-purpose stadium in Ebimpé and Anyama, in northern Abidjan. It opened in 2020 and it's a 60, 000 capacity stadium

The Felix Houphouet Boigny Stadium

Nicknamed Le Félicia, is a multi-purpose stadium, which can host football, rugby union and athletics, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. It is the former national stadium of the Ivory Coast national football team. It is named after the first president of the country, Félix Houphouët-Boigny,

and is in the commune of Le Plateau. The stadium has a capacity of 33,000 and the home ground of the ASEC Mimosas football club.

Stade de la Paix is a multi-use stadium.

Based in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire. It is currently used mostly for football matches. The stadium holds 40,000 people. Along with Stade Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

Laurent Pokou Stadium

Is located in San-Pédro is a city in southwestern and it is the nation's second largest port and the seat of Bas-Sassandra District and San-Pédro Region. It is also a commune and the seat of and a sub-prefecture of San-Pédro Department. It has a capacity for 20,000 people.



Alassane Ouattara Stadium in Abidjan

Charles Konan Banny Stadium

Yamoussoukro is the de jure capital of Ivory Coast and an autonomous district. As of the 2014 census, Yamoussoukro is the fifth most populous city in Ivory Coast with a population of 212,670. It

has a capacity for 20,000 people.

A m a d o u G o n Coulibaly Stadium

Is a football stadium in Korhogo, Ivory Coast. The stadium has a capacity of 20,000 seats.

It is a new stadium named after Amadou Gon Coulibaly, who was Prime Minister from 2017 to his death in 2020.

Best Tourist Places In Ivory Coast To Visit

Ivory Coast is known for its vibrant nightlife, as well as its thriving arts and culture. Visitors can explore the bustling markets, sample the delicious food and even try a bit of traditional music. Let's check out the top 5 best tourist places in Ivory Coast and get the most fantastic experiences on

When traveling to the historic town of Grand-Bassam, don't miss out on some famous tourist attractions in Ivory Coast, such as Grand Bassam Beach, Grand Bassam Museum, Grand Bassam Library, and Colonial Buildings.

Among them, Grand Bassam contributes significantly to the development of beach tourism since it draws many tourists seeking serenity to the beach. Additionally, there are restaurants and resorts lining this very long beach, which may persuade you to remain longer than you had initially intended.

Abidjan [Nightlife]

Abidjan is the largest city as well as the country's commercial and cultural hub. It is home to some of the best nightlife in Africa,



with a variety of trendy cafes and restaurants as well as a multitude of markets and shopping centers. That's why Abidjan has been known as one of the top tourist attractions on the Ivory Coast for years. The restaurants in Abidjan serve

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