

# From the Imperial Cities to the Gold & Ivory Coasts

*Exploring West Africa's Cultural and Natural Treasures*

Aboard the All, Suite 114-Guest *Corinthian II*

November 30 – December 19, 2010 & March 16 – April 6, 2011



THE REGION OF AFRICA EXPLORED IN THIS ITINERARY COMPRISES OF A MOSAIC THAT IS VARIED, RICH, AND DIVERSE.

Some of the continent's ancient kingdoms flourished in these lands, and these seldom-visited countries are also home to some of the last remaining primeval rain forests in West Africa. Beyond the scenic delights, we have fashioned this voyage to focus on the countries' culture and peoples as well as its rich biodiversity. Morocco beckons with Marrakech's Djemaa el-Fna Square, where there is a cacophony of oral storytellers, jugglers, and snake charmers. Explore the natural wonders of Arrecife on the Canary Islands, enchanting Laayoune, and the wild-life of Abuko Nature Reserve in The Gambia. We continue our voyage of discovery in Dakar, Senegal's beautiful capital city. In Monrovia, Liberia's capital founded in 1822 and named after U.S. President James Monroe, we will sail along the country's coast. Among the highlights of our voyage is our exploration of Ghana's famed "Castle Coast" and Kakum National Park, where an aerial walkway rises 100 feet above the forest floor allowing us to view life in the rain forest canopy as well as the many special events we have arranged, including meeting with local government officials, private visits, and musical performances.



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# ITINERARY

Day 1  
**FLY FROM USA**

Day 2  
**CASABLANCA, MOROCCO | EMBARK**

Arrive in cosmopolitan Casablanca. Board *Corinthian II* and spend the night aboard docked in port.

Day 3  
**CASABLANCA | RABAT | CASABLANCA**

From Casablanca, drive to Rabat, Morocco's elegant capital to explore its main sites, including the Medina. Within the Medina are colorful souks, the Kasbah des Oudaias, the evocative quarter of the old Almohad, the Chellah Citadel, and Merenid and Andalusian towns.

Day 4  
**SAFI | MARRAKECH | SAFI**

From Safi, drive to fabled Marrakech, one of Morocco's four Imperial Capitals, founded in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and set among gardens and palm groves. Our exploration includes the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Koutoubia Minaret, the Bahia Palace,



Laayoune

the Ben Youssef Medressa, the Jewish Quarter, and Djemaa el-Fna, the city's central square at the heart of the Medina.

Day 5  
**AGADIR | TAROUANNT OR IMOUZZER | AGADIR**

Built around a sweeping bay, Agadir was first colonized by the Portuguese in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was captured by the Saadians in the 1500s. Drive through the fertile Souss Valley southeast of Agadir to reach the imperial city of Taroudannt, once the capital of the Saadian dynasty and now famous for its stately red ochre ramparts. Ascend the city walls and walk through the city's medina, including the souks around As-sarag and Tamaklotte Squares. Alternatively, visit Imouzzer des Ida Oudatane, an extremely scenic area of the Atlas Mountains northeast of Agadir. The surrounding valleys harbor several Berber villages, nestled deep in picturesque gorges and accessible only by jeep.

Day 6  
**ARRECIFE, LANZAROTE, CANARY ISLANDS, SPAIN**

Call at Lanzarote, one of the seven islands of the Canary Archipelago. Explore the National Park of Timanfaya, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve whose landscape has been shaped by volcanic activity and which is renowned for



Sierra Leone

its distinctive plant species. En route to the Park, pass small villages of red-tiled houses that exist in bright contrast to the ash-covered mountains.

**Day 7**  
**LAAYOUNE, WESTERN SAHARA, MOROCCO**  
From the port of El Marsa, drive inland across Saharan dunes to reach Laayoune, the main city in Morocco's Western Sahara. Explore the Spanish-Saharan architecture of the city's old district, the Museum of Traditional Arts, and the Artisans Center's craft workshops. After visiting a nearby oasis, where you will enjoy an elaborate Saharan tea show, end the day with a drive in the dunes.

**Day 8**  
**DAKHLA**  
Dakhla is the southernmost town of Western Sahara, located on a long peninsula jutting into the Atlantic. Whitewashed houses characterize this easygoing and friendly town. Discover the city and then drive north through the scenic peninsula, which is flanked on one side by the Atlantic and by a tranquil bay on the other.

**Day 9**  
**AT SEA**

**Days 10 & 11**  
**DAKAR, SENEGAL**  
Senegal's beautiful capital city, Dakar, with its strong French influence, is also a center of African arts and culture. Experience both at the Museum of African Art, one of the continent's best, and the artisan market. A short ferry ride brings you to Gorée, a UNESCO-protected island, with narrow alleyways and characteristic pastel mansions.

**Day 12**  
**BANJUL | ABUKO NATURE RESERVE | MAKASUTU CULTURE FOREST | BANJUL, THE GAMBIA**  
Founded by the British early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Banjul is the capital and commercial center of The Gambia. Drive to the Abuko Nature Reserve, one of the last surviving examples of tropical riverine forests in the country. Within its confines are about 300 species of birds, as well as red colobus and callithrix monkeys. Continue to the Makasutu Culture Forest, a private nature habitat with beautiful woodland and waterways.

**Day 13**  
**AT SEA**

**Day 14**  
**FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE**  
With its lush forests, nature reserves, and white-sand beaches, Sierra Leone is one of West Africa's most attractive destinations. Explore Freetown, the country's capital, including the Sierra Leone Museum, St. George's Cathedral (1828), and the city's colorful markets. Also visit the picturesque Regent Village, with its early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Krio-style houses tucked into the lush hills above the city.

**Day 15**  
**MONROVIA, LIBERIA**  
Arrive in Monrovia, Liberia's capital. Inhabited at least since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Republic of Liberia was founded in 1847 by African Americans. Elected as president in 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, an American-educated economist, is Africa's first female head of state. Explore Monrovia, named after U.S. President James Monroe, built on a hilly peninsula

between a river and the sea, including the National Museum, displaying masks (for which Liberia is famed) and other objects, and the Waterside Market, where colorful textiles and other artifacts are sold. Also, meet with government officials and learn about the country's recent history and development plans.

**Day 16**  
**AT SEA**

**Day 17**  
**TAKORADI | KAKUM NATIONAL PARK | TAKORADI, GHANA**  
From Ghana's Takoradi, travel to Kakum National Park, one of the most extensive rain forest habitats in Ghana and home to elephants, colobus monkeys, antelopes, 300 species of birds, 600 varieties of butterfly, and an abundance of plants. Kakum's highlight is the 1,000-foot aerial walkway through the rain forest canopy, 100 feet above the forest floor. Return to Takoradi to spend the night aboard docked in port.

## POST-CRUISE CHRISTMAS EXTENSION TO MALI INCLUDING TIMBUKTU

DECEMBER 19 – 26, 2010

Fly from Accra to Bamako, the capital of Mali, for a 7-night extension that will include the country's celebrated sites. In addition to Bamako, we will also explore Mopti, built on the confluence of the Niger and Bani rivers; Djenné, with its famed Grand Mosque, the world's largest mud-brick building (dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century); the villages of the Dogon Region, with their unique architecture and elaborate art forms; and fabled Timbuktu, once one of the wealthiest cities in Africa and a center of scholarship.





Forest elephants

Day 18

**TAKORADI | THE CASTLE COAST | TAKORADI**

The stretch of coastline around Takoradi is known as the “Castle Coast” for the string of imposing forts built by various European powers, starting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, to protect their commercial interest. Explore the two most important forts, Cape Coast Castle and St. George Castle, both UNESCO World Heritage sites. Built by the Dutch in 1637, Cape Coast Castle was later captured by the British, who held it for 200 years. St. George’s Castle, in the picturesque small town of Elmina, was constructed in 1482 by the Portuguese and is the oldest European structure still standing in sub-Saharan Africa.

Day 19

**TEMA | ACCRA | TEMA**

Arrive in Tema, the port of Accra, Ghana’s capital and a city that vibrates with energy and an air of excitement and industry. Visit the excellent crafts market, which showcases the best of local artisans throughout the region, as well as the National Museum of Ghana and the Center for National Culture with its

exhibits by local painters and sculptors. Return to *Corinthian II* to spend the night aboard docked in Tema.

Day 20

**TEMA | DISEMBARK | ACCRA | USA**

Disembark in the morning and transfer to the airport for return flights to the U.S.

*The March 16 departure operates in the reverse direction, from Accra to Seville.*

**PROGRAM INCLUSIONS**

- 18-night cruise aboard the all-suite, 114-guest *Corinthian II*
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard ship
- All meals aboard ship, including house wine, beer, and soft drinks with lunch and dinner
- Open bar aboard ship throughout the cruise
- Complete program of tours and excursions
- Educational program of lectures and discussions by accompanying guest lecturers
- Professional Travel Dynamics International tour staff
- Complete pre-departure materials
- Baggage handling and transfers abroad on the designated program arrival and departure dates
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