

House of Slaves by Day, a Pink Lake at Sunset

A 7-Day Senegal Itinerary

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

November – May

Senegal's dry season runs November through May: sunny days, almost no rain, and highs around 80-90°F cooled by Atlantic trade winds. June through October is hot and humid with most of the year's rainfall, though the coast stays milder than the interior.

FROM

\$1,850 USD / person

for 2 people, mid-range, flights + hotel + activities

Senegal rarely makes the first page of a West Africa bucket list, which is exactly why Dakar's ferry docks and beach roads stay unhurried. This seven-day loop starts in the capital with the sobering memorial on Île de Gorée and Africa's tallest statue, then heads north to a saltwater lake tinted bubblegum-pink, south to the resort beaches of the Petite Côte, and finally into the Sine-Saloum Delta's mangrove channels by motorized pirogue.

DAY 1 Arrival & Dakar's Monument to Freedom

Clear customs at Blaise Diagne International Airport and head into Dakar for an afternoon at Africa's tallest statue before settling in on the Corniche.

Arrival — Blaise Diagne International Airport (AIBD)

On arrival · AIBD airport

Senegal's main gateway sits about 45km southeast of central Dakar; direct flights run from New York, Paris, Brussels, Madrid, and several West African hubs. US, Canadian, UK, and EU passport holders can enter visa-free for tourist stays up to 90 days.

Private Transfer to Dakar — Safari Sénégal

45-60 min · from \$45 USD

A private air-conditioned transfer into central Dakar, arranged in advance with a local driver-guide rather than an airport taxi queue.

Safari Sénégal · +221 76 406 21 31 · safarisenegal.com

African Renaissance Monument

Afternoon · ~\$7 USD to the viewing platform

At 49 meters, this bronze statue overlooking the Mamelles headland stands taller than the Statue of Liberty and was unveiled in 2010 for Senegal's 50th year of independence. An interior lift climbs partway up the figure to a platform with a panorama over the Atlantic and the city.

Check-In — Radisson Blu Dakar Sea Plaza

Check-in 3pm · from \$182 USD/night

A high-rise hotel directly on the Corniche with its own stretch of rocky shoreline, an infinity pool, and the closest full-service base to the Plateau district's restaurants and embassies.

Radisson Blu Dakar Sea Plaza · +221 33 869 3333 · radissonhotels.com

DAY 2 Île de Gorée & the House of Slaves

A short ferry ride across the harbor reaches one of the Atlantic slave trade's most sobering memorials, now a quiet, car-free island of ochre buildings and bougainvillea.

Ferry to Île de Gorée

25 min crossing · ~5,200 CFA (~\$9 USD) round trip

Ferries leave the Dakar terminal near Place de l'Indépendance roughly every 1-2 hours from 6:15am; arrive at least 45 minutes early, since lines for the midday departures can be long.

House of Slaves (Maison des Esclaves)

30-45 min self-guided · ~500 CFA (~\$1 USD)

A UNESCO World Heritage site since 1978, this 18th-century merchant house's "Door of No Return" is one of the most visited — and most debated among historians — memorials to the Atlantic slave trade on the West African coast.

Island Walk & Artists' Quarter

1-2 hours · free

Car-free sand lanes wind past the old colonial fort, a small shell-and-sand-art gallery district, and hilltop Fort d'Estrées with harbor views — easily covered on foot in an afternoon.

Lunch — Chez Thio Depuis 1974

Lunch · ~\$10-15 USD/person

A family-run spot by the ferry dock serving grilled fish, yassa, and thiebou dieune on a shaded terrace — reliably the busiest lunch table on the island.

Chez Thio Depuis 1974 · +221 77 657 00 87

DAY 3 Lac Rose & Transfer to the Petite Côte

A morning at Senegal's famous pink lake, then a drive south along the coast to trade Dakar's city pace for the beach resorts of Saly.

Lac Rose (Lake Retba) Tour — Safari Sénégal

Half day · from \$60 USD/person

A saltwater lake 35km northeast of Dakar, tinted pink by salt-loving algae that's most vivid under strong midday sun. Salt harvesters still wade out with hand tools and wooden boats, in water so dense with salt that swimmers float without effort.

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Dune Buggy Ride Along the Niayes

30-45 min add-on · ~\$25-35 USD/person

The sand dunes separating the lake from the ocean are a popular quad-bike and buggy circuit, easily arranged on the spot from operators clustered at the lake's main viewpoint.

Transfer to Saly

~2 hours by road

The drive south along the Petite Côte passes Rufisque and Mbour's fishing port before reaching Saly, Senegal's main purpose-built beach resort strip.

Check-In — Mövenpick Resort Lamantin Saly

Check-in 3pm · from \$256 USD/night

An Accor-managed beachfront resort on Saly's main strip with several pools, a spa, and direct beach access — a comfortable base for the back half of the trip.

Mövenpick Resort Lamantin Saly · Saly Nord, Mbour · movenpick.com

DAY 4 Saly Beach & the Somone Lagoon

A slower day: a free morning on the beach, then an afternoon pirogue ride through a lagoon known for its birdlife.

Free Morning — Saly Beach

Morning · free

A long stretch of golden sand right in front of the resort strip, with calm swimming and a line of beach bars for a midday break.

Somone Lagoon Pirogue Trip

1-1.5 hours · ~\$20-30 USD/person, arranged lakeside

Local boatmen run flat-bottomed pirogues into this tidal lagoon just south of Saly, a protected wetland where pelicans, herons, and migratory waders gather among the mangroves. Boats are arranged on the spot at the lagoon's edge rather than booked in advance.

Dinner on Your Own — Saly Resort Strip

Dinner · \$15-25 USD/person

The main road through Saly is lined with restaurants serving everything from grilled Senegalese seafood to French and Lebanese menus — no reservation needed outside peak holiday weeks.

DAY 5 Bandia Wildlife Reserve Safari

A full day in a private reserve where rhinos, giraffes, and giant tortoises roam savanna scrub that once held none of them.

Bandia Wildlife Reserve Safari — Safari Sénégal

Full day · from \$135 USD/person, reserve entry included

A 3,500-hectare private reserve 65km from Dakar where white rhinos, giraffes, zebras, elands, and some of Africa's largest crocodiles were reintroduced starting in the 1990s; guides also point out a centuries-old baobab reputed to have once served as a griots' burial tree.

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Lunch at the Reserve

Included on most packages · otherwise ~\$15 USD/person

A simple open-air restaurant inside the reserve serves lunch between game drives, with tables overlooking a waterhole where antelope often pass through.

Free Evening — Saly

Evening · free

Back at the resort in time for sunset drinks on the beach before dinner.

DAY 6 Sine-Saloum Delta by Pirogue

A full day south to one of West Africa's great wetlands, a UNESCO-listed maze of mangrove channels, shell islands, and fishing villages.

Sine-Saloum Delta Excursion — Sahel Découverte

Full day · from €100 (~\$108 USD)/person for 2 travelers

A 4x4 transfer to the delta followed by a motorized pirogue through mangrove channels to Dionewar or Mar Lodj, two of the delta's island villages, with lunch served in the village. The delta has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2011 for both its ecology and its shell-mound burial sites.

Sahel Découverte · +221 33 961 56 89 · saheldecouverte.com

Bird Watching in the Mangroves

During the pirogue leg · included

The delta is one of West Africa's most important wetlands for migratory birds, with flamingos, pelicans, and ospreys regularly spotted from the boat between November and April.

Village Lunch — Dionewar or Mar Lodj

Included in tour

A home-style lunch of fresh-caught fish and rice served in one of the delta's Serer fishing villages, typically the midday highlight of the excursion.

DAY 7 Departure

A last beach morning before the transfer back to the airport.

Free Morning — Saly Beach

Morning · free

One more swim or a walk along the beach before checkout.

Private Transfer to AIBD — Safari Sénégal

~1.5-2 hours from Saly · from \$70 USD

The drive back to Blaise Diagne International Airport takes longer from Saly than from Dakar, so build in extra time; the same private-driver service used earlier in the trip can be booked for the return leg.

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