



GHANA 2016

Yale Alumni Service Corps, Association of Yale Alumni, P.O. Box 209010, New Haven, CT 06520-9010

Welcome – Akwaaba!

We are delighted that you have chosen to participate in YASC’s third large service trip to the community of Yamoransa, Ghana. For those of you returning to Yamoransa, welcome back! For those of you joining us for the first time, get prepared for an exciting adventure. We will see many old friends and meet new, exciting ground partners and collaborators on this summer’s trip.

Our group will include about 80 YASC volunteers, two dozen AFS Ghana members, collaborators from GhanaThink, and advisors from the University of Cape Coast. Of course, our focus will be on the Yamoransa community, young and old! Our trip is being supported by our new ground partner, Ashanti Tours, who will handle transportation, housing, meals, and other logistics.

We will be sending newsletters and email updates over the next few months, but please feel free to contact us if you need any information!

Trudie Agbozo, Bob and Lisa Unsworth

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Welcome	1
Who We Are	1
Travel to Ghana	2
Visas	3
Immunizations and other medical information	3
Our Partners	4
Orientation Plans	5
About Ghana	6
Ghanaian Food	7
Coconut Grove Hotel	8
What You Need to Do Next	9



Who we are

TRIP PRODUCER

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Travel to Ghana

YASC does not arrange travel to and from Ghana. You must book your own flights!

Arrival and departure

You must arrive at Kotoka International airport in Accra, Ghana no later than 12PM Friday August 5th. **Note: If you are not on the pre-trip you will need to leave from the U.S. on August 4th, 2016 to arrive in Accra by the 5th.**

Our group will travel on private buses, from Accra to the Coconut Grove Hotel, on the Cape Coast where we will be staying for the duration of our trip. Note that the buses will board at 10AM and will depart as they fill-up. The last bus will depart by 2 PM if flights demand it. Please meet us in the arrival hall at the Accra airport. Look for a YASC banner and staff in Ashanti African Tours t-shirts. The ride from Accra to Cape Coast is approximately 3-4 hours. Water and a small snack will be available during the bus ride. We will make a bathroom stop along the way. We plan to arrive at Coconut Grove in time for a late lunch.

If you come in a day or two earlier, you will need to find your own accommodations in Accra. Note that the pre-trip group will be staying at the Holiday Inn near the airport. The Labadi Beach hotel is also very nice, if a bit more expensive, and not far from the airport.

NOTE FOR FOLKS GOING ON THE PRE-TRIP TO BENIN AND TOGO: Ashanti Tours will transfer you to the Accra airport on August 5th to join the rest of the YASC volunteers for the bus trip to Cape Coast. Trudie will be in the lobby of the Holiday Inn on August 5th starting at 7:30 AM for anyone who has questions.

The program finishes on Sunday, August 14th. We will leave Coconut Grove for Accra by bus after breakfast on Sunday morning. Lunch and a tour of the city will be provided for those who are interested, with a return to the airport in time for most PM international flights. If you plan to stay until Monday or later in the week, you will need to make your own hotel reservations.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN ACCOMODATION BEFORE August 5st and AFTER August 14th



Visas

YES. You need to obtain a visa in advance of the trip. While Ghana offers a visa on arrival at the airport, we strongly encourage you to get one in advance. Visas are offered by Ghana no more than 90 days in advance of travel.

- If you live in the US apply, by mail, to the embassy in Washington, D.C.
- Visit this page for more information and for a list of documents:
<http://www.ghanaembassy.org/index.php?page=visas>
- Download the application form and **complete it in duplicate**
- List the purpose of your visit as **"Tourism"**
- Use the following hotel address and phone numbers
Coconut Grove Hotel
P.O. Box 175, Elmina-Ghana, West Africa
Elmina, Central Region, Ghana
beachresort@coconugrovehotels.com.gh
+233 +233(289) 40100-5 / +233(289) 91213/4
- The form asks for a second address, you may use the following:
AFS Intercultural Exchange Program, Private Mail Bag, GPO, Accra, Ghana



Other tips for submitting your application

- Do not forget to include a self-addressed pre-paid envelope (UPS/FedEx is recommended)
- Make sure to include 2 passport size photographs
- You must be vaccinated against Yellow Fever and include a copy of your "yellow card"
- Include a copy of your return air ticket
- You must also include "Evidence of Financial Support". You may include a copy of our itinerary.
- You can apply without including a "letter of invitation", we are not able to provide one.
- Include your passport. Your passport must not expire less than 6 months after the time of submission. If your passport is expiring soon, renew it NOW.
- **BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE WE SUGGEST APPLYING AT LEAST ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE OF YOUR DEPARTURE**

NOTE FOR FOLKS GOING ON PRE-TRIP TO BENIN AND TOGO: You will need two additional visas for each of these countries. Please see the email from Trudie sent to you on April 10 for directions.

Immunizations and Information

Check with your doctor and the CDC website

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/ghana.htm#vaccines>



We cannot give you medical advice but here are some tips based on experience:

- A Yellow Fever vaccine (or an exemption) is required to get a visa and to enter Ghana! Bring your yellow card with you!
- Malaria is common in Ghana. Check with your doctor about taking anti-malarials.

Upcoming newsletters will contain additional tips on avoiding typical traveler's health issues while in Ghana.

Our Partners

AFS Ghana

Led by the tireless Kwame Ochere, AFS Ghana has been a partner with YASC for all of our past service trips to Yamoransa. Their members provide invaluable support to our teams, act as translators, participate in our projects, and patiently answer our many questions about life and culture in Ghana. This year the volunteers from AFS will be staying with us at Coconut Grove, expanding the opportunities for collaboration and conversation.

Ghana Think

This year we will be joined by GhanaThink, a Ghana based think tank focused on the mobilization and organization of talent for the benefit of Ghana. Our hope is that GhanaThink will bring experience, energy, and ideas to our work in Yamoransa, and will continue to serve a partner to the community after we leave. Joining us will be GhanaThink's Director, Ato Ulzen-Appiah, originally, from Elmina on the Cape Coast and educated at both MIT and Stanford.

University of Cape Coast

UCC has served as a source of volunteers and intellectual leadership to our efforts in Yamoransa from the beginning. Led by Professor Kofi Awusabo-Asare, UCC will continue to provide thought-leadership, connections to the regional medical community, and will serve as an ongoing source of support to the community after we leave.

And of course...The Yamoransa Community

Led by Nana Akwa, Assemblywoman Comfort Garbrah, Father Arkroful, Peter Adzakey (the manager of the ICTC building construction project) and many others, the Yamoransa Community is our most important collaborator. We will be working alongside teachers, business people, construction workers, and many others during our week in Yamoransa.



Some of our friends and collaborators, during a planning visit last Fall, including Comfort, Nana, Kwame, and Dr. Kofi.



Orientation Plans

Orientation this year will be done in the course of 3 conference calls, rather than an in-person meeting in New Haven. Our first orientation call is scheduled for **11:00am EDT on Sunday, May 1st!**

Please allow for 90 minutes for each of these calls.

The agenda for the first call will be:

- an introduction to our ground partners AFS Ghana, GhanaThink, and University of Cape Coast (UCC)
- cultural overview of Ghana and history of the area
- YASC's activities in Yamoransa to-date (dial in information and details to follow)

All of our calls will utilize the online meeting site, Shindig. Please check your inbox for the Shindig invitation from João C. Aleixo joao.aleixo@yale.edu.

The other two orientation calls will be:

- Wednesday, May 18th @12:00pm EDT on projects and,
- Wednesday, June 8th @7:00pm EDT on cultural competence.

You will receive an email reminder before each call with the Shindig link.



Construction in summer 2012. YASC works with community on the foundation of the ICTC



The inside of the ICTC Library (nearly finished) taken this past fall.

Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior

Plan to wear clean, comfortable, casual summer clothing that is not too revealing while you are in Yamoransa. While some Ghanaians may dress in seemingly worn or old clothes, this is due to economics rather than by choice. The likelihood is that they are wearing their "best." A foreigner wearing ragged, un-mended clothing is likely to be considered an affront. Ghanaians are very meticulous about their dress in the workplace and wear their good clothes. They are particular about their personal hygiene (a real accomplishment in some communities of mudbrick houses and no running water), and cleanliness is a sign of respect. Short Shorts are acceptable around the resort, but volunteers should avoid wearing them in the community (particularly females). Above-the-knee length skirts are seen in the cities, but not in small communities. For Ghanaians, tops with "spaghetti-string" straps are only appropriate at the beach. Remember that we are guests in the Yamoransa community. As such, your best bet is to respect local norms and dress conservatively!

About Ghana

Courtesy of Wikipedia

Ghana, officially the Republic of Ghana, is a country in West Africa. It is bordered by Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south.

Ghana was inhabited in pre-colonial times by a number of ancient predominantly Akan kingdoms, including the inland Ashanti Empire, the Akwamu, the Akyem, the Bonomon, the Denkyira, and the Fante among others. Non-Akan states created by the Ga also existed as did states by the Dagomba. Prior to contact with Europeans trade between the Akan and various African states flourished due to Akan gold wealth. Trade with European states began after contact with the Portuguese in the 15th century, and the British established the Gold Coast Crown colony in 1874 over parts but not all of the country. The Gold Coast achieved independence from the United Kingdom's colonial rule in 1957, becoming the first Sub-Saharan African nation to do so. A global poll in 2012 found that Ghana was the most religious country in the world.

Ghana is a member of the the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States.



Ghana in 1957 at Independence: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=wOEdJDdz690>

Did you know...

- The word "Ghana" means warrior king
- It is a constitutional democracy
- It is around the size of Great Britain or the state of Oregon
- It is home to Lake Volta, the largest artificial lake in the world by surface area
- A global poll in 2012 found Ghana was the most religious country in the world
- It is one of the largest cocoa producers in the world – yet it's hard to find chocolate!
- The official language is English but a total of 79 languages are spoken
- The language common in the area we will be in is Akan, also known as Fante and Twi
- The national football team, known as the *Black Stars* (look at the flag!) has qualified for five straight Olympic Games Football Tournaments and has won the Africa Cup four times!



Ghanaian Food

These are some common Ghanaian dishes -

Kenkey:

A Yamoransa specialty! It is a sourdough-like dumpling made with fermented maize.



Shito Sauce

Shito means pepper. Has a salsa-like consistency, made from peppers, garlic, tomatoes and spices.



Waakye

Ghanaian "Rice and Beans" with spaghetti



Kelewele

Fried, sweet plantains - highly addictive!



Red Red

Bean stew made with palm oil



And more ...

Look up these other food/drinks:

- Fufu
- Banku
- Jollof Rice
- Kontomire
- Gari
- Koobi
- Palm Wine

Coconut Grove Hotel

During our time in Ghana, we will be staying at the Coconut Grove Hotel in Elmina. In our emails and newsletters, we will refer to it as "CGH". CGH is a 3-4 hour drive from Accra and is located on the beach.

Coconut Grove is a lovely setting with both conferences rooms and an open air dining room that serves as a hub for our community while we are there.

Some information about CGH:

- Wireless is available but it can be spotty, especially when there are 80 Yale volunteers trying to get on at the same time to let their friends and family know what a great time they are having.
- There is a swimming pool, a ping pong table, a crocodile pond (yes, a crocodile pond), rabbit cages, horse stables, a restaurant (you will eat most of your meals here), and a bar.
- Your room may have a hot water heater; you will need to turn on the switch for the hot water heater about 20-30 minutes before you shower (see picture below).
- All rooms have electric outlets. You will need a plug adaptor for most cell phones, tablet and laptop plugs. Do not expect the phones in your room to work!
- **Bring your own shampoo, it is not provided!**
- You may want to bring an extra towel.
- Laundry service is available for a fee.



The African Village



Button on the left is the water heater switch



Single Beds



Shower

Double Bed



What You Need To Do Next

- We need your indemnity release form and your picture ASAP. Please by email to joao.aleixo@yale.edu (see April 14 email from Joao for the indemnity release form)
- If you don't send a photo, your picture will look like this:



- Be on the lookout for an email from your project leader(s) in the next two weeks!
- Watch for more newsletters for additional information on our trip.
- Book flights.
- Check with your travel doctor.
- Take care of your VISA.
- Make sure you have an up-to-date passport (must not expire for 6 months from your travel dates).

We look forward to reuniting with old friends and meeting new ones!
Be in touch if you have questions.

Medaase! This means Thank You.

Trudie, Bob, Lisa and Joao