

Senegal

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Travel time: November 2000

It's hard to walk around here without one, two or more so-called guides glued to your feet how knows better than you what to buy, what you need and where you to go.

If your given name is "Cadeau" you will have a lot of unknown young friends here.



Dakar

Hotel Provençal on Rue Malenfant 17, BP: 1375, Tel./Fax: (221) 8221069, E-mail: hotelprovençal@yahoo.fr , has clean rooms with fan, own shower and toilet for 9.400 / 11.800 / 16.500 CFA for 1,2,3 persons or with aircon for 13.400 single and 15.800 double. It's in walking distance to the railway station and the ferry to the lil de Goree. A bank and good restaurants / bars are close by. The staff could be very helpful. Ask for Ibou-Ba if you have any problems. Around the left-hand corner is local breakfast available between 500 and 700 CFA for a filled sandwich and coffee.

Close by the hotel is the restaurant and cyber-cafe Cafe Pontry on Av. Georges Pompidou 13, Tel: 8224366, where foreigners and rental girls are and Internet is available for 2.000 per hour.

If you want to relax at the beach you should stay at one of the expensive hotels located direct on the shore or pay an entrance fee to use their location for the day. Other possibility is to share the small public shore with few locals and a garbage dump.

Left side of the railway station is a scenic market with local products.

Close by the peer to Goree is right-hand side a bus terminal where you can find on the south side the Club Etudiant Musician. It's a relaxing garden area with nice music and cheap drinks.

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Train to Mali

By the time of writing there was only one train per week available because the second was "on maintenance service". The train we took was leaving Dakar on schedule at Saturday 10 am. The sleeper compartment has had two lower bunks and two upper with fan on the ceiling and was 51.000 CFA to Bamako each. When the train is fully booked (sleeper or 1st class) you can try to get a reserved ticket for a "rebooking fee" of 10.000 CFA at the railway station. 2nd class will never be sold out ! We reached Bamako on Monday at 4 am and had to leave the train immediately.

Between sleeper and 1st class is a restaurant wagon with tasty meals for 1.500, little beer 500 and soft drink 350 CFA. Every 4 to 6 hours the train stop somewhere in the desert where a lot of traders are waiting to sell fresh fruits, bread, nuts, tapwater, tea, fish and meat for reasonable prices.

Hours before you reach the border at Kidira your passport will be collected by a custom officer how will tell you to pick up your passport at the police station in Kidira. In our case it was 5 hours and two stops left at night to reach Kidira. At Kidira the train stops for one hour at least and a lot of passengers will leave to pick up their ID's at the police station which is located 200 meters left-hand down the unpaved main road. Follow the main stream. No control after the Senegal border and the track is getting better too.

The train travel was one of the major highlights of our journey from Banjul to Ouagadougou. The track is in very poor condition, the wagons are badly shaken but the landscape is great and every stop is a bazaar. Don't miss it.

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