

TIM | BEST | TRAVEL

Mali The Festival in the Desert Departure January 2009



www.victoriaupton.com

Fri 2 Jan	Depart London Heathrow 1720 on Royal Air Maroc Economy AT801 flight. Arrive Casablanca 2025. Depart Casablanca 2300 on AT523.
Sat 3 Jan	Arrive Bamako 0235 where you will be met by your guide and assisted through customs and then driven to your hotel to get some sleep! Visit a project set up by Kader Keita with the assistance of the British Museum and WOMAD, to get children off the streets and to teach them how to make mud cloth designs. In the afternoon visit the National Museum. We highly recommend this as a way to access all sorts of information about the different ethnic groups and traditional belief systems across Mali. 1 night in the Olympe Hotel.
Sun 4 Jan	Depart for Djenne 0730 (7 hours) arriving in time for a late lunch. 1 night in the Campement in Djenne. The Grande Mosque is the largest mud structure in the world built in 1905 on a site that dates back to 1280. Each year during the rainy season the Mosque is re-covered.
Mon 5 Jan	You have the morning to explore the Djenne Monday morning market which is quite a spectacular sight. Depart Djenne at 1100 for the Dogon Country (5hrs). Arrive in Sangha late afternoon. 1 night in the Campement at Sangha.
Tue 6 Jan	An early start. The day will be spent exploring and walking the sandstone escarpment (20km) that dominates the desert plains. The Dogon rituals, traditions and healing methods stretch back centuries and you have the chance to explore the fascinating villages with Dogon guides and to witness a Dogon masked dance. 1 night in the Kambari Hotel.
Wed 7 Jan	Early departure at 0700 and a full day's drive (10-12 hours) to Timbuktu, including queuing for the car ferry across the Niger. 1 night in Hotel Bouctou.
Thur 8, Fri 9 & Sat 10 Jan	In the morning explore Timbuktu. Early afternoon you will be driven out to Essakane to the Festival in the Desert (2-4 hours driving over the dunes). 3 nights camping at the Festival in the Desert. Tuareg caravans from all corners of the Sahara desert including Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania will reunite near Timbuktu for the 8 th annual festival. As the stage is lit by the setting sun the evening performances begin. Past performers include Tinariwen, Oumou Sangare, Desert Blues, Bassekou Kouyate, Tartit & the Wodaabe of Niger. During the day there is camel racing, ad hoc musical performances take place in tents around the festival site and there is the opportunity to buy local crafts.

Sun 11 Jan	Early departure 0700 from the festival site to Mopti (10-12 hours). 1 night in Kanaga Hotel.
Mon 12 Jan	Mopti is a hubbub of river activity at the confluence of the Niger and Bani rivers. It also has a very impressive mosque (second only to Djenne) and lively markets. Explore the waterways by pirogue. 1 night in Kanaga Hotel.
Tues 13 Jan	0800 depart to Segou (6hrs) arriving in time for lunch. Explore this interesting town on the Niger River. Once occupied by the French, Segou's colonial architecture sits side by side with the Bamana architecture. Pottery factories can be visited across the Niger river. 1 night in the Auberge.
Wed 14 Jan	After lunch return to Bamako (4hrs). Arrive late afternoon. You will have access to a couple of rooms to wash and change before dinner. There is the option to go out to a music venue enroute to the airport. Check-in is 0130.
Thur 15 Jan	Depart on AT522 @0330 to Casablanca. Arrive Casablanca @0655. Depart Casablanca on AT800 @1240. Arrive London Heathrow @1550.

Tim Best Travel's set departure explores the diverse landscape, architecture, culture and music of Mali. During this fully inclusive departure you will be looked after by our Tuareg partners and the very best guides and drivers in 4WD vehicles.

Mali is an exciting destination but the infrastructure is poor. The trip can be tiring but if you have the spirit for adventure and an open mind it will be an exhilarating journey.

Please be flexible to changes that may occur before or during the departure.

Includes

Royal Air Maroc economy flights and departure tax from the UK – subject to availability at the time of booking

Visas, visa arrangements and documentation (for most nationalities *please check with us*)

4WD vehicle and driver throughout with a head Tuareg guide

Accommodation throughout (hotels and camping at the Festival)

3 meals a day and 3 litres of drinking water a day

Specialist guide in Bamako, visit to the mud cloth project & the National Museum

Local English speaking guides in Djenne, Dogon Country & Timbuktu, additional staff whilst camping

Tips for porters, local guides and drivers

Festival passes

Please contact us for further details

The Festivals we arrange travel to include:

Saint Louis Jazz Festival **Senegal** June 2008; Inti Raymi/Festival of the Sun **Peru** June 2008

Meskal Festival **Ethiopia** September 2008; The Cure Salee /Gerewol Festival **Niger** September 2008

Ghadames Festival **Libya** October 2008; Rajesthan International Folk Festival Jodphur **India** October 2008

St Mary of Axum Festival **Ethiopia** November 2008; Pushkar **India** November 2008; Ghat Festival **Libya** December 2008; Festival in the Desert **Mali** January 2009; Festival on the Niger **Mali** February 2009

Sauti Za Busara **Zanzibar** February 2009; Nagaur Fair **India** February 2009; Habanos Cigar Festival **Cuba** February 2009; Tapati **Easter Island** February 2009; Barunga Festival Northern Territory **Australia** June 2009