



Ghana Fast Facts

Population:

21,029,853 (July 2005 est.)

Capital:

Accra

Currency:

cedi (GHC)

Religion(s):

Traditional religions 40%,
Christian 40%, Muslim 12%

Language(s):

English (official), African languages
(including Akan, Moshi-Dagomba,
Ewe, and Ga)

Major Events:

Independence Day, 6 March (1957)
Religious holidays

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Online Resources

The Republic of Ghana

<http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php>

Embassy of Ghana

<http://www.ghana-embassy.org/>

Universities of Ghana Overseas Office

<http://www.ghanauniversities.com/>

University of Ghana

<http://www.ug.edu.gh/>

New York University

<http://www.nyu.edu/studyabroad/ghana/>

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International Scholarship Program

<http://www.iie.org/gilman>

NSEP – National Security Education Program

<http://www.iie.org/nsep>

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Ghana at a Glance...

If you're looking for a country with welcoming people in a beautiful setting, a fascinating and progressive political environment and a varied culture in which to study, you need look no further than Ghana.



Located in Western Africa, Ghana shares borders with Togo, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast with the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Ghana is roughly the size of Oregon, with a tropical climate that ranges from 70 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. In the eastern portion of the country lies the largest reservoir in the world, Lake Volta. Interestingly, this man-made lake provides the electricity for all of Ghana and some of its neighbors.

Electricity is only one aspect of Ghana's far reaching influence in Western Africa. As the first black nation in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve its independence from colonial rule, Ghana leads the region in many ways. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah led the country to independence from the British on March 6, 1957. Today, Ghana is a progressive and stable nation with a multi-party political system led by President John Kufor. It also boasts one of the strongest economies in Western Africa, with its wealth of natural resources and major exports including gold, timber, and cocoa products.

The country's first and largest university is the University of Ghana. In its early days, it was closely partnered with the University of London, and today boasts over 10,000 students and an extensive selection of programs. Due to its status as

the region's first university, it has become a major center for research and dissemination of information regarding African history, politics, culture, languages, and art. In addition, Ghana's higher education system is built on 21 training colleges, 18 technical institutions, 2 diploma-awarding institutions, and 4 other universities: the University of Cape Coast, University for Development Studies, University College of Education, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Ghana's capital, Accra, is one of the largest commercial and administrative centers in the region. The sprawling city is a testament to the country's personality, with its jumble of distinctive neighborhoods. NYU's website describes Accra and its people as part of an "intriguing blend of successful modernity and rich colonial history. Ghanaians are generally thought to be among the most intellectually curious, friendly, and culturally tolerant people in the region." Accra is also home to a world-renowned community of dancers, artisans, and other musicians. Many of these artists are supported through the University of Ghana's Institute of African Studies and School of Performing Arts.



The arts community in Accra is only the beginning of Ghana's rich traditional culture. The country's second largest city, Kumasi, is the seat of the Ashanti kingdom and is surrounded by smaller villages specializing in traditional crafts including wood carving, goldsmithing, pottery, cloth printing, and Kente weaving. Other well-known crafts include wooden stools, bronze casts, batik cloth, and glass beads. Kumasi is also

home to the Manhyia Palace, home to the kings and queens of the Ashanti state. Students in Kumasi will quickly discover that the people of Ghana are committed to combining the best of their traditions into contemporary life. This fusion gives strength and vibrancy to Ghana's traditions as they are expressed in a modern and developing nation.

Ghana is also renowned for its music, boasting several musicians who are famous worldwide. Ghana's music frequently combines dance, song, and drama, and the influence of Ghanaian forms extends over most of Western Africa. Music also relates to many of the traditional festivals and ceremonies that are still very much a part of Ghana's modern existence.

In addition to the cultural treasures and diversity of the country, you'll be delighted to discover Ghana's natural wonders. From the country's pristine beaches to its tropical rainforests, Ghana is extraordinarily beautiful. Students enjoy visiting Kakum National Park and trying to catch a glimpse of the rare primates there while teetering along the "canopy walk" through the tops of the rainforest's trees.

Ghana also offers a key location for students interested in exploring the past and its effect on the present. Ghana is home to numerous forts, castles, and palaces, a legacy of colonial occupation by the British, Portuguese, Swedes, and many others. During the colonial era, Ghana became a center for the Atlantic slave trade. It was a major nexus of the African Diaspora, which would eventually see millions of West Africans dispersed around the world, both voluntarily and involuntarily through slave trade. Students visiting Ghana's modern cities such as Cape Coast can study the implications of the wide-ranging influence that West African culture has had through this massive migration.



Whether you're interested in Ghana for its influence on world culture and its key position in Western Africa, its beauty and natural wonders, or its tropical climate and welcoming people, you're sure to be impressed with this vibrant and multi-faceted nation.

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