

## Family trip Burkina Faso

### sample journey

*Have you ever heard of Burkina Faso?*

*It is a country in Africa. The country of the honest people.*

*The sun shines almost every day in Burkina Faso!*



*The people speak languages we do not understand. And almost everybody has a dark skin. They laugh a lot and they very much like to party. Especially because a lot of food is being prepared for a party. And because of the music and dancing.*

*The Burkinabé, that is the name for the people of Burkina Faso, often ride bicycles. Girls like to have their hair braided and the boys go wild over football. Some of them play it almost every day, not on a field, but just in the streets.*

*The people live in houses made of clay, which looks like brown mud. Every year they need to repair the walls, because the rain washes away part of the mud. That is a lot of work, so everybody in the family helps with it and they all have their own tasks. The women mix the mud with a kind of butter and dried crops. And when it is well mixed, the men smear it on the walls with their hands. Not just the walls of the house, but also the wall surrounding the garden. Well, actually you cannot really call it a garden. It is more of a courtyard with a lot of small buildings. There's always a lot going on at the courtyard: cooking, working, washing the laundry and when it is too hot inside, they even sleep outside. Just like that under the stars. With a mosquito net of course, because they don't want to be bitten. It is a pity that they need to close their eyes to sleep, because the starry heaven is so beautiful.*

*Oh, I almost forgot to tell you: they also have lots of animals in Burkina Faso. The kind of animals you would only see in a zoo at home, such as crocodiles and hippos and even elephants!*

*Let's go and explore Burkina Faso!*

### In short

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## Day to day itinerary

### Day 1 (Wednesday): journey to Ouagadougou

We are going on an airplane, one of those big ones, that can take a lot of people. All the way to Africa! It's quite a long journey. We need to get to the airport first. With all our bags. It is so exciting!

At the airport of Ouagadougou - that is the capital of Burkina Faso - our guide and our driver will be waiting for us. With them we will explore the country. Luckily they do speak the language and they also know their way around. They will take good care of us now that we are here in their country. And they will explain everything to us, so we will know a lot about Burkina Faso when we go back home. And of course we will be doing a lot of fun things while we're here.

*night in: Ouagadougou*

### Day 2 (Thursday): Ouagadougou

Today we can adjust a bit to being here. Everything is different here. There are a lot of sand roads and they play music everywhere. And every day is market day. They sell all kinds of things in the market. Vegetables and fruits and huge bags of rice. Even footballs!

To buy something we need CFA's. That is the name of the money in Burkina Faso. You will get about 650 of them for one Euro. They even have bills of 10,000 CFA. We are very rich here!

A lot of people are looking at us. They do not often see children with a white skin, so they are very curious, just like we are. They all have dark brown eyes and almost black hair. And their skin is tougher than ours. Maybe I can touch someone to see how their skin feels?

We are going to the museum too. They say it is one of the most beautiful in the country and that we can learn a lot there.

*night in: Ouagadougou*

### Day 3 (Friday): Ouagadougou - Parc Deux Balé

If we get up early today we can experience something special at Moro Naba's palace. Moro Naba is the ruler of the Mossi. That is the largest ethnic group in the country. Every Friday morning a lot of people come to the palace. Those are nobles and citizens and people like us, who want to know more about life in Burkina Faso. We are not allowed to take any pictures, because what is going to happen is very official.



The King comes out of the gate on his horse. He is wearing a battle-dress, he wants to leave the Palace and leave behind his Kingdom. His people do not all like that. They want him to stay! Wise men are asked for help. They need

to talk to the King and make sure he will stay. Do you think they will be able to calm down the King and make him return to the Palace?

When the King goes back to the Palace, we are going to Boromo. To a big forest, a wildlife park and the name is Deux Balé. We are going to look for elephants there. Sometimes the elephants come really close to the people.



Did you know that elephants do not like red and white clothes? And that they don't like smells such as from perfume, soap and shampoo? If they smell that they know there are people around. And they will prefer to stay away, because they know that some people kill elephants. We will never do that of

course, but the elephants do not yet know that. Luckily I have not washed my hairs this morning! In the park we are going to the terrace. Often the elephants can be seen there. And if they don't come, we will drive into the park with a car. We take a guide of the park. Because he knows all the places the elephants like. It is not sure that we will find them, but it is cool to look for them. And if we do not see them, then maybe we can hear them tonight when we are in bed.

*night in: Parc Deux Balé*

#### Day 4 (Saturday): Parc Deux Balé - Banfora

If we did not see any elephants yesterday, we can visit the park again this morning, before we leave for Banfora. We pass by Houndé and maybe we can visit the mask maker. Masks are very important in Africa. Not only in Burkina Faso, but in a lot of African countries. They are used for special dances when they have parties and ceremonies. It is not easy to make a mask, not everybody knows how to do it. Let's hope the mask maker in Houndé is at work today, so we can see how he makes them.

In Banfora we will be staying in a hotel with a swimming pool. I am already looking forward to go swimming, because it is warm here.

*night in: Banfora*

#### Day 5 (Sunday): Banfora and surroundings

Every Sunday it is market day in Banfora. A lot of people come to town from the villages. They walk, ride their bicycles, sit on donkey carts and in minibuses. There may be more than 20 people in one minibus. And lots of bags on the roof and people will even climb on top of the bags. It looks like they think it is normal.



The streets are very crowded today. A lot of people see each other only on Sunday, so they have a lot to talk about.

The market is not only in the streets, but also in the market building. Inside are a lot of small shops. There are tailors. People go there with the fabric they bought on the market and the tailor will make clothes of it.

Men sometimes wear something that looks like a long dress. Always with trousers. Those are the clothes they wear on special days. Like when there is a party or when they go on a journey. Maybe the women have a party every day. They wear long skirts with tops and scarfs around their head. And on their back they carry a baby in a cloth. They do not have strollers here.



In the late morning we go for a ride and a walk. We are going to see a waterfall. We take our swimming gear and towels, because there is a little lake on the top, in between the rocks where we can go bathing. And we will do a picnic there too.



Later on we will walk a bit more to some very special rocks. It looks like they have a round top. There are only a very few places in the world where you can see that. Only here and in Australia, they say. Those in Australia are very famous. But not a lot of people know about these.

When the sun sets the colours of the rocks are even more pretty. They turn almost orange and red.

*night in: Banfora*

#### Day 6 (Monday): Banfora - Sindou

It's very early when the alarm goes off. It is still dark outside. The car takes us to Lake Tengréla. That is where we will take a boat tour on the lake in a wooden dug-out. The boatman is a fisherman. He emptied his nets really early this morning. So now he has time to take us out on the lake. He pushes the boat through the water with a long wooden stick and sometimes he peddles. Together with him we are going to look for the hippos, who live here. People say that hippos are dangerous, but we don't need to be afraid with the fisherman at our side. That is because the local people and the hippos know each other. The people will never get really close to the hippos when they know that one of them is ill or when a baby hippo was born. That is because the hippo mom and the hippo dad will be scared that someone will hurt their baby and they would want to protect it. Just like people do.



It is a bit exciting. But it is also very calm on the lake and the colors are really pretty. The boat sails along a lot of flowers. These are called water lilies. And there are birds with blue legs. They walk on the leafs of the flowers. The people here call this bird the yacana.

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When we have seen the hippos, we will go to visit a very special tree. It is called a baobab. In English it is also called a monkey bread (tree). It looks like its roots are growing into the air. This one is very old and it is hollow. We are even allowed to go inside!

I have to say that we got quite hungry. It's time to return to the hotel for breakfast.

Later on we will move on, by car. It's a big four-wheel drive that can drive through the sand also. We will be going to a village, where we will be sleeping in huts with straw rooftops. The toilets are outside. Luckily we brought real good torches, so we will be able to find it during the night too. There are a lot of mango trees in the camp. And hammocks. Behind our huts there are more huts. A lot of children live there. They are orphans and children of families that have very little money. The kids live here, get food, clothes and they go to school. All of that is paid for by other people. Also part of the money they earn because we are here, is being used for that. So we actually help them a bit. We can visit the children at their courtyard and play with them. The boys probably also like soccer.

In the afternoon we will visit the village. It is market day today. But the market in Sindou is a lot smaller than yesterday in Banfora.

*night in: Sindou*

### **Day 7 (Tuesday): Sindou and surroundings**

This morning we will be visiting those big rocks that we saw yesterday on our way here. The shapes of some rocks are really amazing. They say people lived here a long time ago. So I bet there will be caves too. It would be fun to have lunch in a cave. I guess that is what they did in the past too?

Then we can go to a village in the afternoon to take a look at a courtyard and some of the mud-houses. It's not just a village like all other villages. It is a pottery village. The women are potters. And we can take a look when they make the pots. Maybe we can give it a try too. It almost looks like this clay is the same kind of stuff as the mud they use for their houses. That's weird!

*night in: Sindou*



### **Day 8 (Wednesday): Sindou - Bobo Dioulasso**

Today we are leaving Sindou. We are going to say goodbye to our friends.

We will be driving on a real sand road this morning. Almost to the end of the country. No worries, the world does not end there. It is just that you can see the next country from there. That country



is called Mali. It is even bigger than Burkina Faso.

We are going to a village called Niansogoni. Actually it's two villages. The new village is on the foot of the mountain and that is where the people live now.

The old village is on the mountain. That is where people used to live centuries ago, but their mud-houses are still there. That is because the rocks and trees

have protected them against the rain and the wind. To get there we will climb the mountain.

Luckily there is a guide who will show us the way. When we get to the village we can see the houses and take a look inside. Life was really very different than at our home. They had to get water from the well all the way down the mountain. And they had no toys. Maybe the children did not play that much or maybe they made their own toys and games from pieces of wood and stones. They may still do that. Toys are expensive and many in Burkina do not have a lot of money.

It is quite exciting to enter the houses through the small doors. Mom and dad have to bend or they will hit their heads. Doors used to be that low so enemies could not easily run in. The people had all kind of signals to inform each other that enemies were coming. They used tooters. Luckily it is no more like that now.

After the visit we will be driving to Bobo Dioulasso. It's also called the second capital. Because it is the second largest city of the country. We are going to stay at a place with a swimming pool.

*night in: Bobo Dioulasso*

**Day 9 (Thursday): Bobo Dioulasso**

Today we have a day off. That means we can choose whatever we want to do. Swim in the pool or go into town or to a lake somewhere near town or go explore with our guide and driver. Maybe we can discover something they did not yet know..!

*night in: Bobo-Dioulasso*

**Day 10 (Friday): Bobo Dioulasso - Bazoulé**

There is an old mosque in Bobo Dioulasso. A mosque is a church of the Muslims. Sticks are pointing out of the walls. What would that be for? I need to ask our guide to explain it to me. Maybe we can take a look inside. That would be really special, because in most of the Muslim-churches only Muslims are allowed to enter. Today is Friday. A special day for Muslims. Like Sunday for Christians.



If we are allowed in, we need to take off our shoes and talk quietly, to make sure we will not disturb the praying people.

Near the mosque is the oldest part of the town. Our guide knows his way around the small alleys.

Later on we will be driving back in the direction of Ouagadougou. Do you actually know how to pronounce that?

We are not going all the way to Ouagadougou, but to a village called Bazoulé.

But, before we get there, we pass by Kokolongho to see if the new King has been installed. The old King died in 2011 and it takes a long time before a new one is crowned. It is not the King who is the head of the country. There are a lot of Kings in Burkina Faso. And they all have their own Kingdom. Often it has to do with their ethnic group. They are all Burkinabé and they all have the same president. But they all have their own tribe. Maybe it is a bit like people from different regions or states. Or like Chinese and Japanese. They look the same, but they are not the same.

The Mossi are the largest ethnic group in Burkina, and this is a Mossi King, living in a mud-castle.

Come on let's go and see if he's home!

After the visit of Kokolongho it is just a little bit further to Bazoulé. That is where we will spend



the night. Near that village is a big lake and that is where crocodiles live.

Those crocodiles are sacred, so it is not allowed to kill them. They say that the people are not at all afraid of the crocodiles and that the children even swim in the lake. Sometimes a crocodile goes for a walk and visits the courtyard of a family in the village. That family will be really happy and take good care of the animal, because it brings good luck. They will feed the

crocodile. Chicken or a goat or even a sheep if they have enough money.

Today (or tomorrow morning if we arrive late today) we are going to the lake to visit the crocodiles. We will be doing that with someone from the village. Someone who knows the crocodiles really well, because it is exciting and a bit scary to see them up close.

*night in: Bazoulé*

**Day 11 (Saturday): Bazoulé - Tiébélé****Day 12 (Sunday): Tiébélé**

Today we will be driving to the South of the country. If you look at the map, it looks like going down. There is a village named Tiébélé. It sounds a bit funny. We will be staying there for a couple of days, because there's lots to see and do. They have really cool houses and not too far from the village people are searching for gold.

The road to get there has a lot of holes in it. When it rains they fill up with water. Then it will be a real adventure and the driver has to be careful.

The houses in this villages are made of mud and after that they are painted by the women in the village. They use signs and motifs and only a few colors.

Today and tomorrow we will be here to see all these new things. But we need to ask our guide for the programme. Because there is a real big market near the border with Ghana, which is another



neighboring country. And that market is once every three days. I hope we can visit it!

For sure we will be visiting the Royal courtyard. Yes, they have a King here too! He does not always come out when there are visitors, but we can go see the courtyard, where he lives with his family. And maybe his son, the prince, will show us around. The King has a large family, so there are a lot of small

houses. And they have different shapes. The shape tells something about the people living in it. A house of a married man has a different shape than the house of a women.

We are also going to visit the gold diggers. You would think those people are really rich, but it does not look like that at all. I don't think they find a lot of gold. Maybe they just hope that one day they will find a large piece and become rich. But then, they will have to share a bit of their money with their family, that is how it works here. People have no insurances and there is no social welfare. So if someone gets ill, everybody helps to pay for the doctor and the medicines. So when someone gets rich, the family likes to have a bit, so they too can have a better life.



Of course we will also be visiting the village itself. It is really close to where we stay, just a short walk away. The huts where we are staying are nice. They have also been painted. They are a bit like the huts in Sindou. Only we had showers in Sindou and here we have to wash just like the local people do: With a bucket and a bowl. First we pour some water on ourselves, so our skin is wet. Then we add soap and after that we use bowls of water to get rid of the soap. We do help one another, because it is not that easy at all in the beginning!

*nights in: Tiébélé*

### **Day 13 (Monday): Tiébélé - Kaya**


We are going to travel all the way to Kaya North of Ouagadougou, to stay in a special hotel. The young boys and girls learn a job by working in the hotel. They have had a difficult life. Before Monique (the Dutch woman, who lives here and helps the children) met them, they lived in the streets. They slept between the market stalls or in a ditch. And they begged for money and food. And yes, sometimes they would steal some food too. If they were caught, the police would put them in prison. It is of course not good that they were stealing, but if you have no family and you are really hungry, you may not see another option. That is why Monique helps these children to learn a profession, so that they can take care of themselves and later on have their own family. Maybe we can ask Monique if we can take a look at the workshops she has created. And we can eat in her restaurant to help her.



*night in: Kaya*

### **Day 14 (Tuesday): Kaya**

We have a day off. So we can choose whatever we want to do. Or just do nothing. There are a lot of villages near Kaya. The people in these villages have all kinds of professions. Like weavers and blacksmiths. And a lot of people work with leather. Kaya is known for it. They make bags and other things from leather. Did you know that they use the skin of cows, sheep and goats? When the animals have been slaughtered, they buy the skins. First they clean them very well and they shave off all the fur. Then they make them flexible and color them. Only after all that work has been done, they will make something out of it. The courtyard of a family working with leather is always a bit different. It smells funny and skins will be drying on the floor or on lines and they



have big pots with all kinds of dye.

And there are Fulani villages. The Fulani are the herdsmen. The men take care of the animals and the women sell the milk. They carry the milk in big calabashes on their heads. And they pour milk in little plastic bags. Just as much as someone would like to buy.

*night in: Kaya*

#### **Day 15 (Wednesday): Kaya - Loubila**

It is almost our last day in Burkina Faso and that is why we are going to have a fun day. Our guide does not yet want to tell us what we are going to do, but he told us to have our swimsuits at hand. Our driver knows where we are going. They say the local people would love to take their children there. I guess that means it's a cool place! I am curious! And we will be sleeping there tonight.

*night in: Loubila*

#### **Day 16 (Thursday): Loubila - Ouagadougou - departure**

When we arrived in Burkina Faso I thought this was going to be a long journey, but it's our last day already. We will pack our bags and if we have place left we can maybe go and buy some gifts and souvenirs when we are back in Ouagadougou. There are handicraft markets with lots of beautiful things.

Tonight we will be brought to the airport. Then it is time to say goodbye to our guide and driver and go back home.

*night in: -*

#### **Day 17 (Friday): home coming**

We landed early this morning. We are almost home. Soon we can tell our friends about everything we have seen and done!