

15-day roundtrip Mali with Festival sur le Niger On the rhythm of the drums

Spend the night under the star-spangled sky in Dogon Country, enjoy masks dancing on the rhythm of the sacred drums, see the crème de la crème of the Malian music scene perform, experience Mali from the Niger river and get an impression of daily life.

This round-trip through Mali takes you along the highlights in the southern regions of the country and off the beaten tourist tracks, while connecting with the local people, their daily lives and their culture. You visit the ancient town of Djenné, known for its mud-culture, hike through mysterious Dogon Country, attend the famous music Festival sur le Niger and make a multiple day trip on the Niger river. You're immersed in Malian's rich culture, meet the local people and get an insight in their daily lives.

Welcome to Mali!

In short

- Day 1: (late) arrival in Bamako
- Day 2: Bamako-Djenné
- Day 3: Djenné & surroundings
- Day 4: Djenné-Dogon Country
- Day 5: Dogon Country
- Day 6: Dogon Country
- Day 7: Dogon Country-Ségou
- Day 8: Festival sur le Niger
- Day 9: Festival sur le Niger
- Day 10: Festival sur le Niger
- Day 11: Ségou-Niger river trip
- Day 12: Niger river trip
- Day 13: Niger river trip-Koulikoro
- Day 14: Koulikoro-Siby
- Day 15: Siby-Bamako-departure



Day to day

day 1

The day is dedicated to your journey to Mali. Arrival time at Bamako airport depending on the airline chosen. The warmth of the African continent welcomes you. After the necessary customs formalities, your guide takes care of the transfer to your accommodation.

day 2

An early start of the day to travel to the capital of mud: Djenné. Today's travel is by public transport instantly immersing you in daily life. The journey of about 550km provides time to connect with your fellow-travelers and the guide, while enjoying the first impression of Mali's towns, villages, daily life and Savannah landscapes. Lunch is eaten en route. With a bit of luck there's a direct bus to Djenné. If not the remaining distance from the Djenné Crossing is covered by bush taxi. After having crossed the river by ferry, you arrive to Djenné, which built on an island in the Bani river. The old town of Djenné is one of Mali's four UNESCO world heritage sites. It is famous for its mud-culture & architecture with Moorish influences. Eye catcher is the world's largest mud-built structure: Djenné's Grande Mosquée.

Depending on the time of arrival a short city walk is done in the late afternoon.

day 3

The morning is used for a walk through Djenné's little alleys, taking you along the town's architecture. The guide explains about the history of the town and the landmarks. Djenné's museum, its sacred well, Tapama's tomb and a manuscript library are visited.

After lunch you're taken on a horse cart tour through the Djenné surroundings to visit several villages. The area around Djenné is mainly inhabited by Fulani, the herders, Bozo, the fishermen and Bambara, the farmers. The village visits provide an insight in daily life & culture of the different ethnic groups.

**day 4**

On Mondays Djenné turns into a bustling town. Villagers arrive on horse carts, by boat, on foot and in/on packed trucks and minibuses. It's market day and soon the square in front of the mosque turns into a colorful market scene, where all the region's produce is for sale. Your guide takes you on a short market tour. Around 9am you travel to the ferry. On the other side of the river private transport is awaiting you for the trip to Dogon Country.

En route a stop is made in Songo, a Dogon village, known for its rock paintings.

These paintings were made (and are regularly renewed) by the village elders and used to teach the village boys when preparing them for their circumcision. A cave protects the instruments the boys are allowed to play after their initiation.

The journey continues to Sanga for lunch and a visit. Continue to Koundou in the late afternoon; starting point of your trek through Dogon Country.

day 5 and 6

The sounds of wood touching wood, produced by the village women pounding millet for their family's breakfast may have woken you up after a night in the quiet surroundings. In Dogon Country life is still being lived by the rhythm of the seasons and days. Electricity and running water are still barely available in the villages and it may look like time stood still in this special part of Mali. The people of the cliffs are known for onion farming (you may even smell it) and for their rich culture, stemming from their animist background.

This trekking takes you through the northern part of the Dogon and includes visits to multiple villages. You're guided along breath taking sceneries and your efforts are rewarded with stunning views and great experiences.

In the morning a beautiful, though slightly tiring, hike is made up to Koundou Da, which is passed by, by most who visit Dogon Country. We grab the chance to take you up to the ancient village and to the onion fields, where you're more than welcome to help the locals watering the crops, using the traditional waterers.

After lunch in Koundou, the hike continues via Ibi to Banani, where the night is spent in a camp.

On day 6 you walk from Banani via Ireli and Amani to Tiréli. Toguna's, guina's and the typical Dogon granaries cross your path and along the way you meet the Dogon people. The sacred crocodiles pond is visited in Amani.

The afternoon is dedicated to visiting the different neighborhoods of Tiréli.

You spend the nights on rooftops under the impressive star-spangled sky and learn about the beauty, history and culture of the people of the cliff.

day 7

Time has come to move on to other amazing experiences. But, before doing so, you're offered the chance to enjoy early morning mask dances. Mask dances are part of Dogon's rich culture and today a selection of these amazing masks perform especially for you. Your guide explains the meaning of the different types of mask, while you enjoy the colorful performance on the beats of the traditional (sacred) drums.

When the sounds of the drums come to an end and the masks are being returned to their cave, it is time to start today's journey. Private transport takes you from Dogon Country to Sévaré, from where the journey is continued by public transport after lunch. Arrival in

Ségou is foreseen for the evening.

day 8 - 10

Music, culture and music culture, it's festival time!

The Ségou river quay has been turned into a festival site with the crème de la crème of the Malian music scene climbing the stage. The evenings are filled with music, the days with culture, local groups and raging talents. A colorful market, bars and restaurants add to the festival atmosphere. Ségou is bustling!

In between enjoying the performances you're taken on side trips in Ségou and its

surroundings. You learn about mud-cloth making, visit a hamlet where the locals master the art of decorating calabashes, set out on a river trip to a nearby pottery village, where with a bit of luck the weekly baking is taking place, do a donkey cart tour, taste of traditionally brewed millet beer and stroll the ancient neighborhoods of Ségou.

Above all you're immersed in the vibrant atmosphere.

**day 11 - 13**

The time in Ségou has come to an end. After breakfast and a glimpse of the Monday market you're boarding a pinasse, a traditional wooden river boat, which is your home for the next three days. From Ségou the journey goes westward in the direction of Bamako.

It is time to relax, enjoy the natural surroundings, and experience life from the water. Bird lovers have the chance to spot dozens of species living on the shores and isles.

During the days the guide takes you on village visits, starting with Segoukoro, about 14ks from Ségou, which in former times used to be the capital of the Bambara Kingdom and where history has been well-preserved.

The boat crew takes care of the meals. Fresh ingredients are bought in villages and with the local fishermen. The nights are spent in tents on the riverbank or on isles.

Arrival in Koulikoro is expected in the late afternoon of the third day. The night is spent in a waterfront hotel.

**day 14**

From Koulikoro the journey goes - by private transport - to Siby at only 45ks from Bamako, set in beautiful rocky surroundings.



After lunch the well-known Arche de Kamandjan is visited with a local guide who explains about the history of the rocks and who takes you on a short hike/climb to the top of the arc. Depending on the road conditions the trip continues to the falls, where you can enjoy a refreshing bath.

The night is spent in Siby.

day 15

The last day of this journey through Mali has arrived. Filled with experiences and memories, the car takes you back to Bamako in the morning. The last souvenirs can be bought at a handicraft market, and there's time to stroll the streets of Mali's capital, before attending the farewell dinner. Depending on the departure time of your flight you're transferred to the airport.

Take a look in this journey's [photo album](#) on Papillon Reizen's website.

price & dates

Take a look in our [travel calendar](#) for the foreseen departure dates & price.

Individual extensions of this journey are possible.
Available as a Tailor-made journey.

included

All accommodations (hotels, B&B's and tents), full board in Dogon Country and during the pinasse trip, English and French spoken travel guides, all costs related to excursions and transport as mentioned in the itinerary, ticket Festival sur le Niger, airport transfers, tourist taxes, a fair payment for products and services, contributions to the Papillon emergency fund and the Papillon project fund.

excluded

(Air) fare to Bamako v.v., visa, vaccinations, personal insurances (such as travel, health and cancellation), drinks, other meals, souvenirs, personal expenses, upgrade of accommodation and/or transport, optional side trips and activities on days off.

transport

A combination of private and public transport. Private transport is used for Djenné-Dogon Country, Dogon Country-Sévaré and from Koulikoro via Siby to Bamako.

accommodation

Rooms (where possible with fan) and tents based on double occupancy. During this journey nights will be spent in hotels, B&B's and in basic facilities such as camps (Dogon Country) and tents (pinasse trip).
The single supplement gives the right to a single room & tent. Based upon availability.

group size

4 to 8 people

comfort level of the journey

A good shape and flexible attitude are required for this journey, in which facilities will be simple in Dogon Country and during the Niger river trip. Also there will be some long days on the road.

[book this journey](#)