

Tamale Culture Kit

Online Version



Republic of Ghana



Welcome to Tamale!

Tamale was founded in the early 1907 by the British as an administrative center for the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. The city is now the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana and serves as a commercial capital for the three northern regions. It is made up of many villages, in which many people live in mud brick houses with thatched roofs. Many of these houses have electricity and television service, and cell phones and the internet are becoming widely available. The city center is also marked by architecture that is more modern. English is the official language, but in their daily life, most people speak Dagbani, the language of the majority Dagomba people.

Facts about Tamale:

- Tamale has a population of about 350,000.
- Tamale is one of the fastest growing cities in western Africa and Ghana's center for cereal, yam, and meat production.
- Because of Tamale's closer location to the Sahara, a semi-tropical climate exists in the northern part of the city, with extremely cold mornings and hot afternoons.
- Most residents earn a living by raising cattle, farming, and growing cotton.
- Ghana is also home to the only university in northern Ghana as well as the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy, and Bible Translation.

Sister City Relationship:

Tamale's relationship with Louisville was established by a group of African-Americans. It became an official sister city in 1979. The Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky has also established a "companion diocese" in Tamale, which has aided in the growth of the Sister City relationship. The Tamale Education Committee established a formal exchange agreement with Tamale's University for Development Studies in 1996. In 2004-2004, the Tamale Committee participated in the Millennium Development Goals City-to-City Challenge program to work together to ensure environmental sustainability and brought together many organizations in both cities. Economic development has taken place since 1995, and in 2001, the private economic development company Econ Village Group LLC established its first international headquarters in Tamale.

Snapshots of Culture

People and Places:

Life Experiences and Needs:

Extended family networks are very strong and vital to the people. Three generations may live and work together in a 'compound' (house built around an open courtyard). Among traditional practices are polygamy (more than one wife), strong sex division of labor, and 'bridal tokens' paid by the groom to the bride's family to seal a marriage. Ghanaians traditionally eat with their right hands, washing their hands in a bowl of water before and after meals. Staples of the diet include yams, cassava, millet, maize (corn), plantains, and rice. School attendance is required of children, both boys and girls.

Aesthetics and Language:

Both traditional and modern dress can be seen everywhere. For special occasions, both men and women may wear the beautiful hand-woven *kente* cloth once restricted to rulers of the Ashanti Kingdom. Women's dresses tend to be long, with fitted skirts and over blouses made from colorful locally produced cotton fabrics. Traditional dances and music are performed at festivals and funerals. English is the language of schools and national media, but there are more than 50 distinct languages spoken in everyday life. Language is one of the main features in determining ethnic group.

Past, Present, and Future Cultures:

The culture of modern Ghana is rooted in both a long history of development under indigenous kings and village elders, and a short (ca.1874-1957) under British colonial rule. The British joined several older kingdoms into one country and introduced English language, law, education, medicine, trade, and administration. British and other foreign influence were strongly shaped by deeply entrenched African cultural, political, economic, and social practices, and norms; for example, chiefs (the general name in English for local rulers) are very important among Ghana's diverse peoples today.

Rules, Leaders, and Institutions:

Ghana is a multi-party democracy. The elected President is both Head of State and of Government. The country is divided administratively into 10 regions, which are sub-divided into more than 100 districts. Tamale is a metropolitan district and is the capital of the Northern Region. Since gaining its independence in 1957, Ghana has experienced many shifts in government, both civilian and military. Since the adoption of a new Constitution in 1992, there have been two peaceful elections and one peaceful change of government.

Recreation and Celebration:

Ghanaians love football (played similar to soccer). It is the national sport. They also like boxing, basketball, volleyball, and track and field. They enjoy theater, movies, TV, videos (many made in either Ghana or Nigeria), dances, and festivals. National public holidays include Independence Day (from Britain, March 6, 1957); Republic Day (July 1); Christmas, Easter Monday, and Eid el-Fitr (Muslim). The most common social occasions are celebrations of 'outdoorings' (naming a newborn), weddings, and funerals.

Values and Services:

Ghanaians tend to take life at a relaxed pace. People are more important than schedules. Generally, elders, chiefs and other leaders, and educated people are well respected. In southern and far northern Ghana, Christians predominate, while the Northern Region is strongly Muslim. Some people, particularly in more rural areas, practice only traditional religions; historic practices and values also influence Christians and Muslims.

Producers, Consumers and Transporters:

The Ghanaian economy is primarily based in agriculture, with more than half of the people classed as farmers. Cacao (from which cocoa is made) is the most important cash crop (44 percent of exports). Other exports include gold, timber, bauxite, and diamonds. National highways are generally paved, as are main streets in larger towns and cities. Ghana is a major trucking route for landlocked countries to its north. Telecommunications networks are developing very rapidly, including cell phones and Internet cafes. Private FM stations are numerous in the cities, and there are both locally and internationally produced television programs.

Snapshots of Culture cont.

Interdependence and Connections:

Tourism is the fastest growing sector of the Ghanaian economy. In particular, government and private partnerships are developing historical sites (particularly connected with Pan Africanism, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the historic kingdoms); eco-tourism; and beach resorts. Like all other countries, Ghana is a part of the global village. It is a net exporter of educated people—there are more Ghanaian doctors practicing on the east coast of the United States than in Ghana itself.



When In Tamale



Additional Information

The following is an annotated list of links to webpages relating to the nine global universal themes as outlined in the Sister Cities Culture Kit.

People and Place

Wikipedia Encyclopedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghana>

Encarta Encyclopedia - http://encarta.msn.com/text_761570799_0/Ghana.html

CIA World Factbook - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gh.html>

Contains the most up-to-date statistics on Ghana compiled by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Ghana Statistics - <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/gh>

Ghana Homepage - <http://www.ghanaweb.com/>

A comprehensive resource on the country Ghana.

Life Experiences and Needs

Recipes from Ghana - http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Miscellany/Recipes_from_12913.html

Traditional recipes from various cookbooks.

Ghana Recipes - <http://www.elca.org/countrypackets/ghana/recipes.html>

Some recipes and information on all areas of Ghanaian cuisine.

About Living in Ghana - <http://www.travellersworldwide.com/04-ghana/04-ghana-living.htm>

A page about daily life in Ghana from a volunteer agency.

Aesthetics and Languages

Past, Present, and Future Cultures

Guide to Ghana Culture - <http://www.africaguide.com/country/ghana/culture.htm>

Thorough guide to the people and culture of Ghana.

Ghana's Culture - <http://www.globalvolunteers.org/1main/ghana/ghanaculture.htm>

Website by Global Volunteers featuring extensive information on Ghana's culture.

Rules, Roles, and Leaders

Biography of John Kufuor - <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/people/person.php?ID=140>

Biography of the current president of Ghana.

Biography of Kofi Annan - http://www.un.org/News/ossg/sg/pages/sg_biography.html

Biography of the Secretary-General of the United Nation, a native of Ghana.

Recreation and Celebration

Public Holidays in Ghana - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Holidays_in_Ghana

Values and Service

University of Development Studies - http://www.ghanauniversities.com/university_for_development_stud.htm

A major university located in Tamale.

Producers, Consumers, and Transporters

Major Agriculture Producers - <http://www.fao.org/es/ess/top/country.jsp?lang=EN&country=81>

Ranking of Ghana's top agricultural products.

Global Connections and Interdependence

Official Ghana Tourism Site - <http://www.ghanatourism.gov.gh/main/index.asp>

Contains information on all aspects of traveling to Ghana

SISTER



CITIES
OF LOUISVILLE, INC.

Sister Cities of Louisville

SCL Mission: Sister Cities of Louisville, Inc. (SCL) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to global friendship, multicultural understanding, and economic growth by developing lasting relationships between the Louisville area and its Sister Cities around the world. To that end, SCL promotes, fosters, and publicizes local, state, and national programs of international municipal cooperation.

Sister Cities honors the following values to pursue its mission of peace and friendship:

- To create opportunities for Louisville citizens and citizens of Sister Cities to work together in creating international community partnerships.
- To develop municipal partnerships between Louisville and its Sister Cities.
- To stimulate exchanges and projects in the areas of professional economic development, education, community initiatives, arts and culture, medicine, tourism, and technology.
- To promote public awareness of our Sister Cities through community outreach and people-to-people relationships.
- To collaborate with local international organizations with similar goals.

History of SCL: Sister Cities of Louisville, Inc. became one of the first of many Sister City organizations to develop after World War II, when President Dwight Eisenhower proposed his “People-to-People” idea in 1956. President Eisenhower’s intention was to involve individuals and organize groups at all levels of society in citizen diplomacy, with the hope that personal relationships, fostered through Sister City, county and state affiliations, would lessen the chance of future world conflicts.

Sister Cities of Louisville:

Montpellier, France - 1954
Quito, Ecuador - 1962
Mainz, Germany - 1977
Tamale, Ghana - 1979
La Plata, Argentina - 1994
Perm, Russia - 1994
Jiujang, China - 2004
Leeds, England - 2006

www.sclou.org