

# Togo

While many African countries move slowly forward, Togo seems to be stumbling backwards. Once regarded as the pearl of West Africa for its tranquil beaches, exotic markets and friendly people, the tiny nation was overwhelmed by riots and human rights abuses in the 1990s, and sadly the saga continues. When the despotic president Gnassingbé Eyadéma died in February 2005, and his son Faure Gnassingbé seized power, hundreds were killed in street battles and thousands fled the country.

But with the new president gradually winning over the Togolese population, it's a great time to check out Togo's hilly landscape, warm people, diverse cultures, conquering football team and yam-based dishes.

Lomé, the capital, is one of the most beautiful cities in West Africa, with the grand Blvd du 13 Janvier sweeping away from the beach and into the heart of a ribald city, heaving with nightspots. To the east, past the resorts on Lake Togo and the Atlantic beaches, Aného exudes crumbling colonial charm and has a fetish market. Voodoo is also practised across the lake in Togoville, a fishing village with fetishes in the streets.

Inland, Kpalimé is the gateway to coffee country, where ruined chateaus, butterflies and mountain villages hide in the forests. Northern cities like Sokodé and Kara are appealingly slow-paced spots to take in rural Africa and, near the former, the animals are returning to Parc National de Fazao-Malfakassa. Close to Kara, the famous fortresslike mud-brick houses in the Tamberma Valley and the weekly markets in the Kabyé region show life being lived as it has been for centuries.

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 56,790 sq km
- **Capital** Lomé
- **Country code** ☎ 228
- **Famous for** Emmanuel Adebayor; Prince Albert of Monaco's love child; political instability
- **Languages** French (official); Ewe; Mina; Kabyé
- **Money** West African CFA franc; US\$1 = CFA544.89; €1 = CFA655.96
- **Population** 5.1 million
- **Visa** CFA10,000 at border; 30-day extension CFA10,000



## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Lomé** (p778) Hit the bars and boulevards to see the coastal capital in all its decaying glory.
- **Kpalimé** (p788) Hike in the surrounding hills, where exotic butterflies flutter in the lush forests.
- **Lake Togo** (p787) Stay at the tranquil resorts here and discover the area's voodoo culture.
- **Tamberma Valley** (p799) Seek out northern Togo's remote clay-and-straw fortresses: the *tata* compounds in Tamberma Valley and the cliffside silos south of Dapaong.
- **Lomé Grand Marché** (p785) Haggle with the formidable Mama Benz, female marketeers named after their favourite motors.

## ITINERARIES

- **One Week** Allow at least a week for exploring **Lomé** (p778) and its surrounds. Within easy reach of the coastal capital, the Friday market in **Vogan** (p787) is particularly interesting. Combine this trip with one to **Aného** (p787) and **Lake Togo** (p787).
- **Two Weeks** After investigating all that Lomé has to offer, head for the area around **Kpalimé** (p788) – a great place to go hiking – and the central towns north of the capital. From there, you could head to the Akloa waterfalls outside **Badou** (p793), then to **Sokodé** (p794) and as far as the vibrant Kabyé town of **Kara** (p796).
- **Three Weeks** For those with more time on their hands, the **Tamberma Valley** (p799) in the far north, home to the fascinating Tamberma people, is well worth a visit. Also worth short trips are Togo's two main national parks: **Fazao-Malfakassa** (p793) and **Kéran** (p800). If the fortified compounds in the Tamberma Valley have tweaked your interest in unusual indigenous architecture, head to the cliffside silos on **Mount Semoo** (p802). Nearby, **Dapaong** (p800) is a mellow market town not far from the Burkina border.

## CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

This long, thin country stretches across six geographic zones and its climate ranges from tropical in the south to savanna in the north. Rain falls from May to October. In the south there's a dry spell from mid-July

## HOW MUCH?

- **Pagne Ewe kente cloth** CFA8000
- **Butterfly walk** CFA5000
- **Tata access** CFA2000
- **Taxi-moto** CFA100
- **National park entry** CFA13000

## LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **11 of gas/petrol** CFA300–600
- **11 of bottled water** CFA500
- **Bottle of flag beer** CFA250
- **Souvenir T-shirt** CFA2500
- **Street treat (cake)** CFA100

to mid-September. In the north there is no such interlude, but on the whole the north is more arid than the south, which is fairly dry itself. Mid-February (after the harmattan wind lifts) to mid-April is the hottest period throughout the country, while November to February is the driest.

The two dry seasons are the best time to visit, although the July–September season coincides with the harmattan and is a rotten time for photographers. Major roads are dependable throughout the year, but unsealed roads, such as those in the national parks, can be unpassable during and after the rains. See climate charts p813.

## HISTORY

Togo's name comes from *togodo*, which means 'behind the lake' in Ewe – a reference to the body of water now called Lake Togo. The region was once at the edge of several empires, including the Dahomey and Akan–Ashanti kingdoms in present-day Benin and Ghana respectively. It played a few bit parts in the Dahomey story: the Al-ladahanou from Tado, southeast of Sokodé, established kingdoms in what would become known as Dahomey; and Togo was the toppled Dahomeyan kings' refuge of choice.

With the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century, the power vacuum in Togo allowed the slave-traders to use the country as a conduit. The Mina – who had immigrated from the west along with the Guin (while



the Ewe had arrived from the east) – became ruthless agents for the slave-traders.

### Germans in Togoland

With the abolition of slavery, the Europeans turned their attention to trade in commodities – palm and coconut oil, cacao, coffee and cotton. In 1884, Germany surprised its colonial rivals Britain and France, when it signed a treaty in Togoville with the local king, Mlapa, agreeing to ‘protect’ the inhabitants in return for German sovereignty.

Togoland, as the Germans called the area, underwent considerable economic development before WWI. The Togolese, however, didn’t appreciate the Germans’ forced labour, direct taxes and ‘pacification’ campaigns, in which thousands of locals were killed, and so they welcomed British forces in WWI. Encircled by British and French troops, the Germans surrendered at Kamina – the Allies’ first victory in the war.

After the war, the League of Nations split Togoland, with France acquiring the eastern two-thirds of the country and Britain the remainder. This controversial move divided the populous Ewe, and political groups were still agitating for reunification following WWII.

### Independence & the Coup

Following a 1956 plebiscite, hopes of reunification were dashed, when British Togoland was incorporated into the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana). The division is still a source of discontent.

French Togoland became an autonomous republic and in 1960 gained full independence under the leadership of Sylvanus Olympio, who became the first president.

In 1963, Togo became the first African country to have a military coup after independence. Sylvanus Olympio, a Ewe from the south, disregarded the northerners, whom he called *petits nordiques* (small northerners), when he refused to integrate into his army 600 soldiers returning from the Algerian War (predominantly Kabyé northerners) they rebelled. Olympio was killed at the gates of the US embassy as he sought refuge.

His replacement, Nicolas Grunitzky, was deposed in turn – in a bloodless coup led by Kabyé sergeant Gnassingbé Eyadéma. The new leader set out to unify the country’s tribal groups, insisting on one trade union

and one political party, the Rassemblement du Peuple Togolaise (RPT). He established a cult of personality, surrounding himself with sycophantic staff and a chorus of cheering women in traditional dress.

When Eyadéma’s private plane crashed near Sarakawa in 1974, he was convinced he had survived an assassination attempt and became increasingly irrational and unpredictable.

### Struggling for a Multiparty System

In 1990, France began pressuring Eyadéma to adopt a multiparty system. He resisted, and portrayed African multiparty systems negatively through TV broadcasts of scenes of violence and unrest in nearby countries. Early 1991 saw riots and strikes by pro-democracy forces, many of whom were killed in clashes with the army. In April 1991, 28 bodies were dragged out of Lomé-Bé Lagoon and dumped on the steps of the US embassy, drawing attention to the repressive nature of Eyadéma’s dictatorship.

Finally bowing to international pressure, Eyadéma agreed to a conference in 1991, to decide the country’s future. Delegates there stripped him of his powers and installed an interim government, headed by Joseph Koffigoh, pending democratic elections. Months later, however, troops loyal to Eyadéma attacked Koffigoh’s residence and detained him, leaving Eyadéma, once again, in full control of the government.

Eyadéma now postponed the promised elections, prompting the trade unions to call a general strike in November 1992. This continued for months, paralysing Togo’s economy – banks and businesses closed, exports lay stranded in Lomé port, tourism collapsed. In the ensuing violence, some 250,000 southerners fled the country.

In a contest boycotted by the opposition and denounced by international observers, Eyadéma won the August 1993 presidential elections. A coalition of opposition parties – the Committee for Renewed Action (CAR) and the Union Togolaise Démocratique (UTD) – won the 1994 parliamentary elections, which were boycotted by the Union des Forces du Changement (UFC) and marred by the killing of three opposition members.

Eyadéma reached a deal with UTD leader Edem Kodjo, and appointed him prime minister. This split the coalition, with CAR

leader Yao Agboyibo denied the role of prime minister and key posts going to Eyadéma supporters rather than CAR. Kodjo resigned in 1996 following a succession of opposition defeats in by-elections.

In the 1998 presidential elections Eyadéma triumphed again, although international observers criticised the conduct of the election. Fearing government manipulation, the opposition then boycotted the 1999 legislative elections, allowing the RPT to win 77 of the 81 seats in the national assembly.

### Togo Today

International pressure on Eyadéma increased at the same rate as aid from donors decreased. Amnesty International made allegations about executions and torture which had allegedly taken place around the 1998 elections, and Eyadéma responded by suing the organisation. He consistently reneged on promises, such as assuring Jacques Chirac he would step down before the 2003 elections, before changing the constitution to enable him to seek a third term.

Eyadéma finally left office the way many suspected he would – in a coffin. Following his death at 69 in February 2005, his son, Faure Gnassingbé, seized power in a military coup, then relented and held presidential elections, which he won. Amid allegations of fixing, some 500 people were killed in riots in Lomé, and thousands of refugees fled to Benin and Ghana.

Gnassingbé has appointed Edem Kodjo as prime minister and held talks with UFC leader Gilchrist Olympio. Although many Togolese see him as a perpetuation of the old regime, they accept that he is an improvement on his father and are willing to listen to his ideas.

## THE CULTURE

### The National Psyche

The Togolese ego corresponds to the country’s small size and the dearth of tourists it sees as a result of its political problems. With the exception of the odd official and hustler in Lomé, Togolese people are friendly and easy to deal with.

Of course, visitors do encounter *yovo* (white person) surcharges, but these are negligible compared to those in other West African countries. The Togolese generally show foreigners great respect, and you will

often be offered the front seat in bush taxis. They are proud and hospitable people – knowing a few words of their native languages is hugely appreciated.

Given the police state they have lived in for decades, Togolese people are understandably wary of political discussions. Although some pessimism remains about the country's political situation, the Togolese are as outgoing and vibrant as their Ghanaian and Beninese neighbours.

### Daily Life

Togo's Muslims are its keenest traders, particularly the Kotokoli, while the Mina produce the country's major exports. Overall, the Togolese population has an average age of 18 and a life expectancy at birth of 57. Literacy rates are 60% and over 100,000 people live with AIDS.

Most of the country's ethnic groups are culturally distinct, and are controlled by patrilineal heredity. Communities, which are headed by a chief, are well structured within a social, political and economic framework, with family at its heart and social-minded values encouraged.

Customs, rites and superstitions play a large part in everyday life, with milestones such as births, puberty, marriage and death celebrated through ceremonies. If you are invited to a ceremony, dress conservatively and be respectful of local customs.

Everyday conversations are often loud and animated, and minor disagreements can quickly escalate into heated arguments, then subside as quickly as they began. While such behaviour is quite common, it is unacceptable and ill-advised for visitors to emulate it.

John M. Chernoff's *Hustling is not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar Girl* is a must-read book on daily life in the societal underbelly of Togo and Ghana (see p802).

### Population

With about 40 ethnic groups in a population of some 5½ million people, Togo has one of Africa's more heterogeneous populations. The two largest groups are the southern Ewe and the northern Kabyé; the latter court President Gnassingbé among their number and are concentrated around Kara. Other significant groups include the Kotokoli, who live around Bassar and Bafilo,

### EWÉ & THE AFTERLIFE

Togo's diverse cultural composition has given rise to a rich array of traditional practices. Many of the Ewe's funeral rites and conceptions of afterlife and death have a strong animist element.

According to the Ewe, once a person dies their *djoto* (reincarnated soul) will come back in the next child born into the same lineage, while their *luvo* (death soul) may linger with those still living, seeking attention and creating havoc. Funerals are thus one of the most important events in Ewe society, involving several nights of drumming and dancing followed by rituals to free the soul of the deceased and encourage reincarnation.

and the Kabyé-related Tamberma, who live in fortified compounds east of Kara.

The Ewe-related people – including the Mina, Guin, Anlo, Adja and Pla-Peda – are concentrated on the plantations in the southwest. Although they call themselves Ewe, some of these groups are not ethnic Ewe. The Mina and the Guin are Fanti and Ga people respectively, both from the Ghanaian coast.

### ECONOMY

Togo's economy is reliant on agriculture, which contributes 42% of the GDP and is the livelihood of 65% of the population. Cocoa, coffee, and cotton form 40% of exports, with the industrial sector dominated by phosphate mining – Togo is the world's fourth-largest producer of phosphate.

Severely damaged in the 1990s by the 50% devaluation of the CFA and political unrest, the economy is now growing. The international donors and businesses that deserted Togo are returning; the country bagged a multimillion-dollar oil contract in 2001, when China also cancelled two-thirds of Togo's debt (some CFA18,800 million).

### SPORT

Togo's football team, Les Eperviers (the Sparrow Hawks), has been phenomenally successful given Togo's tiny size, having qualified for the 2006 World Cup at the time of writing. Striker Emmanuel Adébayer (who currently plays for the English

team Arsenal) is a national icon, and the team's victories prompt street parties and public holidays.

### RELIGION

Christianity and Islam are the most evident religions in Togo – in the south and north respectively. However, about 59% of the population have animist beliefs, which are harder to spot. Voodoo is strongest in the southeast but there are traces of it throughout the country.

### ARTS Architecture

The country is well known for its French and German colonial buildings, and the fortified compounds in the Tamberma Valley are some of the most striking structures in West Africa.

### Arts & Craftwork

Togo's traditional arts and crafts are as varied as its people. Ironwork, pottery and weaving predominate in the northeast, while decorative wood burning (marking wood or calabashes with intricate geometric designs) is common in the northwest.

Batik and wax printing is popular throughout Togo, but the most well-known textile is the Ewe kente cloth, which is less brilliantly coloured than the Ashanti version. Cloth is sold by the *pagne* (2m strip).

### Music & Dance

Music and dance play an important part in Togolese daily life. Dances revolve around traditional life, incorporating subjects such as hunting, fishing, warfare, harvesting and love.

While drums play a pivotal role in all festivities, there are diverse musical styles. In the south you'll find percussion instruments, such as bells and gongs; in the central region, *lithophones* (stone percussion instruments); and in the north, flutes and the musical bow – played while holding an arrow.

Today, traditional music has fused with contemporary West African, Caribbean and South American sounds, creating a hybrid that includes highlife, reggae and soukous. Togo's most famous singing export was Bella Bellow, who, before her death in 1973, ruled the local music scene, toured internationally and released an album, *Album Souvenir*.

### Literature

The country's best-known author is Tété-Michel Kpomassie. His unlikely sounding autobiography, *An African in Greenland*, contains his unique perspective on life in the chilly land.

### ENVIRONMENT The Land

Togo's coastline measures only 56km, but the country stretches inland for over 600km. Lagoons stretch intermittently along the sandy coast, and further inland are rolling hills covered with forest, yielding to savanna plains in the north.

### National Parks

Togo's national parks are disappointing because the larger mammals have largely been killed or scared off. The country's remaining mammals, which include monkeys, buffaloes and antelopes, are limited to the north, while crocodiles and hippos are found in the rivers.

Since 1995, the Swiss Fondation Franz Weber has been working, with some success, to resurrect Parc National de Fazao-Malfakassa (see p793), but the other parks are in a dire condition, with deforestation and poaching continuing unhindered.

### Environmental Issues

Pressure for land, combined with lack of government commitment to conservation, lack of financial resources, and traditional practices such as slash-and-burn agriculture, have taken their toll on the environment.

Forestry managers are now attempting to involve communities in the care of reforested areas. In return for access to forests to get fruit and firewood, local farmers are asked to help prevent forest fires – in the past they started fires to show their resentment at being denied access to protected areas.

The coastline is also in a precarious state. Since the construction of a second pier at Lomé's port, several beaches have disappeared. Pollution compounds the situation.

### FOOD & DRINK

Togolese dishes, some of the best in West Africa, are typically based, as in much of the region, on a starch staple such as *pâte* (a dough-like substance made of millet, corn, plantains, manioc or yams) accompanied

by sauce. Sauces include *arachide* (groundnut), *épinards* (spinach) and *aglan* (crab). Some Togolese specialities are *abobo* (snails cooked on a skewer) and *koliko* (fried yams). *Pintade* (guinea fowl) is a popular meat.

Togo has its fair share of local brews. *Tchoukoutou* (fermented millet) is the preferred tittle in the north, often found in the market areas. Elsewhere, beware of *sodabe*, a terrifyingly potent, clear-coloured moonshine distilled from palm wine, another popular southern tittle.

## LOMÉ

pop 675,000

Lomé was once one of the cities that claimed to be the Paris of West Africa, and, unlike many of the other claimants, it is easy to see how attractive the city was in its heyday. Although an air of desperation hovers over its decaying buildings, corrupt policemen and disoriented inhabitants, there is real charm to its broad boulevards, palm-fringed beaches, craft markets and full-on nightlife.

The city's name comes from *alomé* – the Ewe name for the trees that produce chewing sticks, which once grew in abundance here.

### ORIENTATION

Orientating yourself is fairly easy in Lomé. Most places of interest are in the D-shaped central area within the coastal highway and the semicircular Blvd du 13 Janvier (often called Blvd Circulaire).

The heart of town is around the intersection of Rue de la Gare and Rue du Commerce, which becomes Rue du Lac Togo east of the market. The Grand Marché is a few blocks to the east of the intersection. About six blocks north of the market is Ave du 24 Janvier, which runs east–west. Ave Maman N'Danida leads north from the centre to meet Blvd de la Paix – which runs northeast to the airport – and turn into Blvd Gnassingbé Eyadéma. Having passed the university, the road changes its name again – to Route de Atakpamé, which heads north out of the city.

### Maps

The best map of Lomé is the *Lomé* city map (1998), available at most bookshops from CFA3000. The Direction de la Promotion

Touristique also offers the pocket-sized fold-up *Plan de Lomé*.

The excellent *Guide Lomé*, found at most bookshops from CFA8000, has a detailed street directory, and is written in English and French.

### INFORMATION

#### Bookshops

**Librairie Bon Pasteur** (☎ 221 36 28; cnr Rue du Commerce & Ave de la Libération; ☎ 8am–12.15pm & 3–6pm Mon–Fri) Lomé's best bookshop, a block west of the cathedral. It sells maps and, occasionally, English publications like the *International Herald Tribune* and *Time*.

#### Cultural Centres

**American Cultural Center** (☎ 220 68 91; Rue du Lac Togo; ☎ 9am–12.30pm & 3–6pm, 9am–noon Sat) Located in the same complex as the US Embassy. Has a library and screens American TV and films.

**Centre Culturel Français** (☎ 221 02 32; www.ccf.tg.refer.org; 19 Ave du 24 Janvier) Offers regular films, concerts and exhibitions, and has a good selection of books and up-to-date newspapers.

#### Emergency

**Centre Hospitalier Regional** (☎ 221 23 11; Blvd Notre Dame)

**Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Tokoin** (☎ 221 25 01; Route de Kpalimé) The main hospital, 1.5km northwest of the city.

#### Internet Access

There are numerous Internet cafés in Lomé. Expect to pay CFA400 to CFA500 per hour.

**La Pointe Cybercafé** (Blvd du 13 Janvier; per hr CFA400; ☎ 7.30am–2pm)

**Sunny-West Internet** (☎ 221 74 29; sunnyw@ifrance.com; 42 Ave du 24 Janvier; per hr CFA400)

#### Media

Newspaper racks at major road intersections stock newspapers.

#### Medical Services

If you need a doctor or a dentist, contact your embassy for a list of recommended practitioners.

**Dr Noel Akouvi** (☎ 221 32 46; Cabinet Dentaire NIFA 10, Rue Amouzou) For dental emergencies.

**Pharmacie Bel Air** (☎ 221 03 21; Rue du Commerce; ☎ 8am–7pm) Next to Hôtel du Golfe.

### Money

The major banks listed below are conveniently clustered in the centre, at or near the corner of Rue de la Gare and Rue du Commerce. All change cash and travellers cheques. Opening hours vary, but BTCI's are typical: 7.45am to 11.30am and 2.30pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

Moneychangers congregate near Diaby Fast-Food on Rue du Commerce, but there is a good chance of being ripped off.

**BIA** (☎ 221 32 86; 13 Rue du Commerce; ☎ 8–11am & 2.30–4pm Mon–Fri)

**BTCI** (☎ 221 46 45; Rue du Commerce) Has an ATM, which issues up to CFA400,000 per transaction.

**BTCI Head Office** (☎ 221 46 41; Blvd du 13 Janvier) The best option. It gives cash advances on Visa over the counter and has an ATM, which issues up to CFA400,000 per transaction.

**Ecobank** (☎ 7.45am–4pm Mon–Fri & 9am–2pm Sat) Rue de Chemin de Fer (☎ 222 65 74; 1 Rue de Chemin de Fer); Rue du Commerce (☎ 221 71 14; 20 Rue du Commerce)

**SDV Togo Voyages** (☎ 221 26 11; fax 221 26 12; 2 Rue du Commerce) The American Express representative.

**UTB** (☎ 221 50 02; Rue du la Gare; ☎ 7.45–11.30am & 2.45–4.30pm Mon–Fri)

### Post

**Post office** (☎ 221 31 95; Ave de la Libération;

☎ 7.30am–noon & 2.30–5pm Mon–Fri, 7.30am–12.30pm Sat) Between Blvd du 13 Janvier and Ave du 24 Janvier; has an efficient poste restante service.

### Telephone

Local and international calls can be made from any of the multitude of private telephone agencies around the city.

**Telecom building** (☎ 7am–6pm Mon–Fri, 8am–noon Sat) Just behind the post office.

### Tourist Information

**Direction de la Promotion Touristique** (☎ 221 43 13; www.togo-tourisme.com; Rue du Lac Togo) Located in a dilapidated building near Marox Supermarché. Staff are helpful, if surprised to see tourists, and can give you a reasonable road map of Togo, which is more useful than their outdated Lomé maps.

### Travel Agencies

Lomé's many travel agencies are mostly in and around the Immeuble Tabo on Ave Georges Pompidou. Many offer excursions to the interior, and to Ghana and Benin.

**Nouvelles Frontières-Corsair** (☎ 221 08 03; fax 221 07 83; 20 Rue de la Gare)

**SDV Togo Voyages** (☎ 221 26 11; fax 221 26 12; 2 Rue du Commerce) One of the best.

**Semper Travel** (☎ 221 73 33; fax 221 74 03; Immeuble Tabo)

**Togo Voyages** (☎ 221 12 77; Rue du Grand Marché)

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

There are pickpockets around the Grand Marché and along Rue du Commerce, and muggings are frequent, some at knife-point. The worst thing you could do is walk on the beach alone, especially at night. Indeed, walking anywhere in the city at night is dangerous – take a taxi, also a safer option than the accident-prone *taxi-motos* (scooter taxis).

Avoid police roadblocks, as they act as an unofficial revenue-collection exercise.

There are occasionally violent riots in Lomé. If this happens, locals will generally suggest that you avoid certain districts – sound advice. Even in a street party, carry as little as possible with you, as muggers may take advantage of the general chaos.

If swimming, be aware of a very dangerous undertow (see p780).

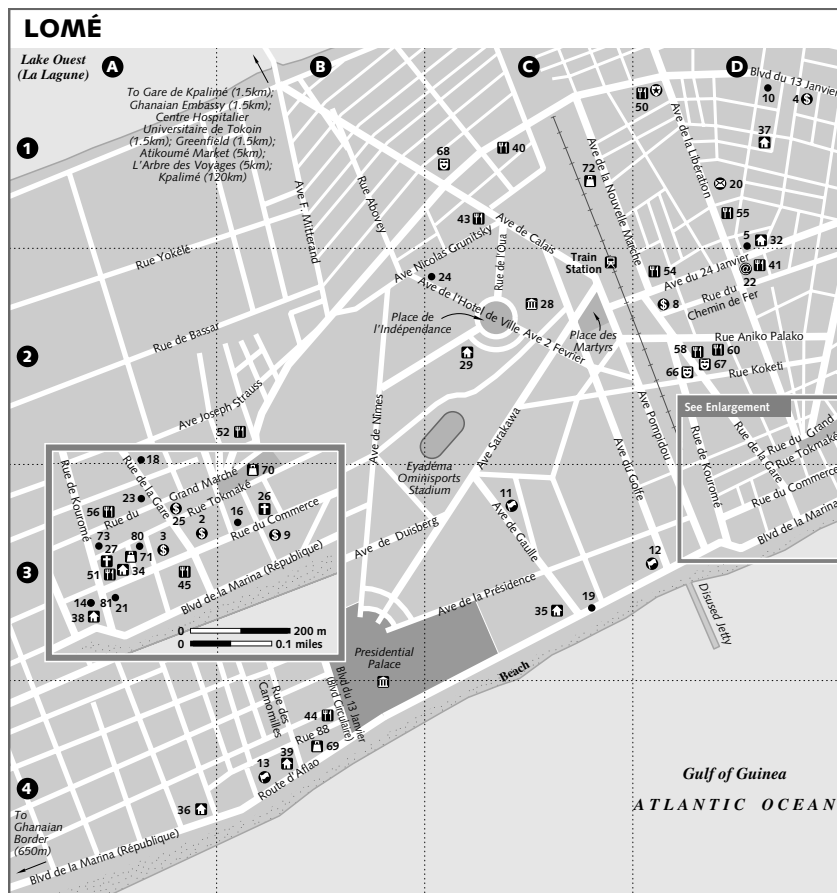
### SIGHTS

The gilded bronze statue of President Eyadéma – and the one of his mother – were taken down from Place de l'Indépendance in 1991, during the civil disturbances. To the square's east is Palais du Congrès, previously Eyadéma's RPT headquarters.

To the square's southwest, the Presidential Palace is not worth taking a close look at because the fearsome guards will likely interrogate you (see p804). It's so decrepit that they are building a new one anyway.

The entrance to the **Musée National** (National Museum; ☎ 221 68 07; admission CFA1000; ☎ 7am–noon & 2.30–5.30pm Mon–Fri, hours vary Sat & Sun) is at the back of the Palais du Congrès in Place de l'Indépendance. It has historical artefacts, pottery, costumes, woodcarvings and traditional medicines, plus 'thunderstones' (large rocks shaped like eggs) and cowrie shells, both formerly used as legal tender.

The **Marché des Féticheurs** (fetish market; ☎ 227 20 96; Quartier Akodessewa; admission & guide CFA5000, plus per camera/video CFA5000/10,000; ☎ 6.30am–6pm), 4km northeast of the centre, stocks all the ingredients for traditional tonics and fetishes – porcupine skin, warthog teeth, donkey skull, serpent head, horse hair, parakeet tail, thunderstones and chameleons. You



can also buy ready-made grigri charms, such as the lovers' fetish and the 'telephone' fetish for travellers. Stock is sourced all over Africa and some visitors may feel uncomfortable buying the parts of lions, panthers, antelopes and buffalo, or rare species.

The market is an overpriced tourist trap, but is still worth a visit. To get there charter a taxi (CFA1000) or a *taxi-moto* (CFA500).

## ACTIVITIES

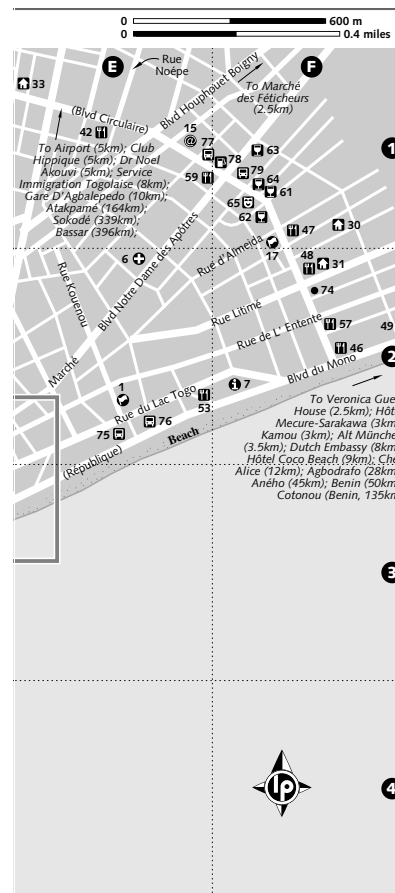
The surf in Lomé is very dangerous because of a strong undertow, and drownings are common – be careful. Many of the beaches are also used as the local toilet. The beaches east of Lomé are better and more secluded (see p786).

Nonguests can use the swimming pools at **Hôtel 2 Février** (☎ 221 00 03; fax 221 62 66; Place de l'Indépendance; CFA3500) and – bigger and better – **Hôtel Mecure-Sarakawa** (☎ 227 65 90; www.accor-hotels.com; Route de Aného; CFA3000).

There are tennis courts at the large hotels and horse riding can be organised through **Club Hippique** (☎ 226 94 50; Route de l'Aéroport), located near the airport, or through **Hôtel Mecure-Sarakawa**.

For a bird's eye view of Lomé, go up with **Aeroclub Lomé** (☎ 226 21 01; Blvd de la Paix) in its two-seater plane (per hour CFA60,000) or four-seater (CFA75,000).

Keen cyclists can pick up a (poor quality) bike at the discouragingly named **Abattoir Bicycles** (☎ 911 48 51; Rue du Lac Togo; ☎ 7am-5.30pm



Mon-Sat), in front of Marox Supermarché, for about CFA40,000.

## COURSES

There is a **Pranic healing school** (☎ 220 58 64) near the town hall.

## LOMÉ FOR CHILDREN

Greenfield restaurant (p783) screens kids' films in its outdoor cinema on Saturdays at 3.30pm (CFA2500).

## TOURS

French biologist and lover of the *piste* (rough trails) **Henry Loïc** (☎ 927 52 03; africatoy@hotmail.com) offers 4WD tours to secluded local sights such as turtle beaches, and further

afield (€45 per person per day, or €150 for four people).

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Lomé grabs any excuse to take a day off and *faire la fête* (party). The street parties which take over Blvd du 13 Janvier are awesomely anarchistic events, but embassies normally advise against attending them. The parties see many accidents from dangerous driving, and pickpockets and muggers often use them to their advantage.

## SLEEPING

The following entries are accommodation options within 5km of the centre of town.

## Budget

**Hôtel le Galion** (☎ 222 00 30; togogalion@yahoo.fr; 12 Rue des Camomilles; s/d with fan CFA7000/8000, with air-con CFA12,000/14,000; ☎) This Swiss-owned hotel near the beach has an excellent restaurant – (meals CFA2000 to CFA3800) with fondue on the menu of course. There's a lounge upstairs with relaxing armchairs and shelves full of books, and the bar is popular with locals and travellers.

**Hôtel du Boulevard** (☎ 221 15 91; 204 Blvd du 13 Janvier; s with shared/private bathroom CFA5000/6000, d CFA10,000) The Boulevard is overpriced and run down, but in a great location, with views from the roof – though this noisy roadside position seems less of a boon in the middle of the night.

**Hôtel Mawuli** (☎ 222 12 75; 21 Rue Maoussas; r CFA4300-6000; ☎) The Mawuli has 25 rooms with fans or air-con. All are grotty but bearable, with the bathrooms veering towards the former. It's the pink building, two blocks south of the enormous Ecowas building and within ear-splitting distance of a mosque.

**Hôtel Lilly** (Blvd de la Marina; r with shared bathroom & fan CFA3000, r with private bathroom & fan/air-con CFA5000/10,000; ☎) A good fallback within walking distance of the Ghanaian border, this basic option has a loud and lascivious bar, but the rooms are respectable. Meals are available for CFA3000.

## Midrange

**L'Arbre des Voyages** (☎ 933 62 64; r with fan/air-con incl breakfast CFA10,000/15,000; ☎) Just off Route de Kpalimé, this large, comfortable guesthouse, run by a friendly young French-Togolese couple, has nine rooms

INFORMATION	SLEEPING	ENTERTAINMENT
American Cultural Center.....(see 1)	Hôtel 2 Février.....29 C2	Byblos.....65 F1
American Embassy.....1 E2	Hôtel Avenida.....30 F1	Chess Nightclub.....(see 29)
BIA-Togo Bank.....2 A3	Hotel Copacabana.....31 F2	Cinéma Concorde.....(see 29)
BTCI Bank.....3 A3	Hôtel Digbawa.....32 D1	Cinéma Opera.....(see 34)
BTCI Bank (Head Office).....4 D1	Hôtel du Boulevard.....33 E1	Domino.....66 D2
Centre Culturel Français.....5 D1	Hôtel du Golfe.....34 A3	L'Abreuvoir.....67 D2
Centre Hospitalier Régional.....6 E2	Hôtel Ibis-le Bénin.....35 C3	Millennium Nightclub.....(see 68)
Direction de la Promotion	Hôtel Lilly.....36 A4	Sunset Bar.....68 C1
Touristique.....7 F2	Hôtel Mawuli.....37 D1	Z Nightclub.....(see 66)
Ecobank.....8 D2	Hôtel Palm Beach.....38 A3	
Ecobank.....9 B3	Le Maxime Hôtel.....39 B4	
Ecowas Building.....10 D1		
French Consulate.....11 C3	<b>EATING</b>	
French Embassy.....12 D3	Al Donald's.....40 C1	
German Embassy.....13 B4	Bena Grill.....(see 53)	
Immeuble Taba.....14 A3	Boston Maquis.....41 D2	
La Pointe Cybercafe.....15 E1	Brochettes sur la Capital.....42 E1	<b>SHOPPING</b>
Librairie Bon Pasteur.....16 B3	Brussels Café.....43 C1	Bric à Brac.....69 B4
Moneychangers.....(see 45)	China Town.....44 B4	Grand Marché.....70 B3
Nigerian Embassy.....17 F1	Diaby Fast-Food.....45 A3	Rue des Artisans.....71 A3
Nouvelles Frontières-Corsair.....18 A2	Golden Crown.....46 F2	Village Artisanal.....72 C1
Occasional Police Roadblock.....19 C3	Keur Rama.....47 F1	
Pharmacie Bel Air.....(see 34)	La Cigale.....48 F2	<b>TRANSPORT</b>
Post Office.....20 D1	La Savane.....49 F2	Air France.....(see 14)
Prannic Healing	L'Abéille d'Or.....(see 14)	Air Gabon.....(see 14)
School.....(see 24)	Le Privilège.....(see 38)	Air Ivoire.....(see 14)
SDV Togo Voyages	Le Shanghai.....50 D1	Allitalia.....73 A3
(AmEx).....21 A3	Leader Price Supermarché.....51 A3	American Airlines.....(see 14)
Semper Travel.....(see 14)	L'Okavango.....52 B2	Avis.....74 F2
Sunny-West Internet.....22 D2	Marox Supermarché.....53 E2	Cathay Pacific.....(see 14)
Telecom Building.....(see 20)	Ramco Supermarché.....54 D2	Ethiopian Airways.....(see 14)
Togo Voyages.....23 A3	Relais de la Poste.....55 D1	Gare de Cotonou.....75 E2
Town Hall.....24 C2	Restaurant de l'Amitié.....56 A3	Gare de STIF.....76 E2
UTB Bank.....25 A3	Restaurant la Pirogue.....57 F2	Ghana Airways.....(see 14)
	Restaurant	KLM.....(see 14)
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	Mini-Brasserie.....58 D2	SKV Buses.....77 E1
Abattoir Bicycles.....(see 53)	Ristorante Da-Claudio.....59 E1	SNTV.....(see 76)
Cathédrale du Sacré-Cœur de	Vingt Sur Vins.....60 D2	Sogabef.....(see 76)
Jesus Lomé.....26 B3		Total Garage.....78 F1
Church.....27 A3	<b>DRINKING</b>	TST Buses.....79 F1
Musée National.....28 C2	Bar Agou.....(see 29)	Virgin Nigeria
Palais du Congrès.....(see 28)	Bar d'Ambiance.....(see 66)	Airways.....80 A3

with balconies and DVD which are popular with students from IAEC (the international business school next door). Located 5km north of town, near Atikoumé market, it's a breezy retreat from central Lomé.

**Hôtel Digbawa** (☎ 221 14 88; Rue de Paris; r with air-con CFA12,300-13,000, with air-con & hot water CFA16,000; 🏠) This hotel is Riad-like with its tiled floors, rooftop bar and balconies. The quiet rooms are of a good standard and the restaurant (meals CFA1500 to CFA3000) serves generous helpings of African and European food.

**Hôtel du Golfe** (☎ 221 02 78; fax 221 49 03; Rue du Commerce; r with fan CFA9500, s/d with air-con CFA18,500/23,500; 🏠) This comfortable central hotel with a courtyard bar is a little dilapidated, but not unattractively so. It's one of the best-value midrange places.

**Le Maxime Hôtel** (☎ 221 74 48; Route d'Alfao; r with fan CFA8300-9300, with air-con CFA13,300-14,300, ste

CFA19,300; 🏠) This long-standing place has respectable rooms, only let down by their poor bathrooms. There's a terrace restaurant (meals from CFA3800) open from 10am to 10pm for lunch and dinner, serving delicious European fish and chicken dishes.

**Hôtel Avenida** (☎ 221 46 72; avenida@café.tg; 30 Rue d'Almeida; r CFA16,500-30,000; 🏠) Despite its unattractive exterior, the 23-year-old Avenida, a block east of the Nigerian embassy, has good, clean rooms with TV and hot water, and a decent restaurant (meals from CFA1500 to CFA3000). Guests are asked to pay in advance.

**Hôtel Copacabana** (☎ 221 64 57; Rue Litimé; r with fan CFA7000, with air-con & hot water CFA9000-18,000; 🏠) You'll find quiet, compact rooms with a faint whiff of polish, and an uninspiring restaurant (meals CFA500 to CFA2000) decorated with bad Futurist art, in this

anonymous but well-located hotel east of Blvd du 13 Janvier.

## Top End

**Hôtel Mercure-Sarakawa** (☎ 227 65 90; www.accor-hotels.com; Route de Aného; r with city/sea view CFA71,000/79,000, deluxe r CFA85,000, ste CFA121,000; 🏠 🏠 🏠) The 164-room hotel, 3km east of the centre on the way to Benin, is one of the classiest in West Africa. It has an Olympic-sized pool (nonguests over/under 13 CFA3000/1500), horse riding (per 30 minutes adults/children CFA2500/1500), tennis courts, nightclub (entry CFA4500) and a hairdresser.

**Veronica Guest House** (☎ 222 69 07; veronica.gh@bibway.com; Route de Aného; r CFA30,000-39,000; 🏠 🏠) This charming 10-room hotel with a pint-sized pool is a more Togolese alternative to the chain hotels. Although it is on the busy highway, the rooms have thick double-glazing and views across the road to the beach. Meals are available for CFA4000.

**Hôtel Ibis-le Bénin** (☎ 221 24 85; fax 221 61 25; Blvd de la Marina; r with city/sea view CFA42,500/49,500; 🏠 🏠) Colonised by Ibis in 2003, the independence-era Hôtel le Bénin still represents the best value among the top-end hotels, even if the comfortable rooms now look a little bland.

**Hôtel 2 Février** (☎ 221 00 03; www.corinthiathotels.com; Place de l'Indépendance; r from CFA70,000, ste CFA101,000-151,000; 🏠 🏠) Once Lomé's best hotel, the 30-year-old Hôtel 2 Février has some 500 top-notch rooms, but is devoid of guests unless there's a political party meeting or a business conference. The swimming pool, with its attendant snack bar (meals from CFA6500), is CFA3500 for nonguests.

**Hôtel Palm Beach** (☎ 221 85 11; fax 221 87 11; 1 Blvd de la Marina; s/tw CFA46,000/53,500, ste CFA66,000-131,000; 🏠 🏠) This well-located high-rise hotel is not as smooth as Hôtel 2 Février but has better facilities, which include a rooftop swimming pool, a massage service and a nightclub. Meals are available from CFA5800 to CFA7000. Ask for an ocean-facing room for sweeping views down the beach.

## EATING

Blvd du 13 Janvier is bristling with restaurants of all descriptions.

## Restaurants

### AFRICAN

**L'Okavango** (☎ 221 05 75; Blvd du 13 Janvier; meals CFA5500-12,000; 🕒 12-2.30pm & 6.30-11pm, closed Mon)

Opposite UTB bank, not far from the beach, L'Okavango is a regular pleasure garden, with animals frolicking in the garden and a good selection of dishes and obscure beers.

**Restaurant la Pirogue** (☎ 221 40 97; cnr Blvd du 13 Janvier & Rue de l'Entente; meals CFA2000-4500; 🕒 8am-10.30pm) In the words of the head waiter at this friendly restaurant near the ocean, the food comes from Togo, from Vietnam, and from the sea. Try the agouti – a rodent called 'grasscutter' in English.

**Keur Rama** (☎ 221 54 62; Blvd du 13 Janvier; meals CFA2000-3000) This restaurant, on the eastern side of town near the Nigerian embassy, offers Senegalese and Togolese cuisine. Try the delicious *chep boudjen* (fish cooked with cabbage, eggplant and carrots).

**Restaurant de l'Amitié** (17 Rue du Grand Marché; meals from CFA1200; 🕒 8pm) This popular place offers huge, inexpensive servings of dishes from both the West and across West Africa.

## ASIAN

The best Chinese restaurants are on Blvd du 13 Janvier.

**China Town** (☎ 222 30 06; 67 Blvd du 13 Janvier; meals CFA1800-4500; 🕒 11.30am-2pm & 6-10.30pm) This surprisingly unkitsch, air-conditioned Chinese restaurant, with a well-stocked bar, is at the southwest end of the boulevard.

**Golden Crown** (☎ 221 03 36; cnr Blvd du 13 Janvier & Route d'Aného; meals CFA4300-4900; 🕒 12-2pm & 7-11pm) This long-standing place offers dishes such as crab and lobster cooked with lashings of ginger and garlic.

**Le Shanghai** (☎ 222 26 28; Blvd du 13 Janvier; meals CFA2000-4000; 🕒 Thu-Tue) Halfway along the boulevard is Le Shanghai, one of Lomé's best and most popular Chinese restaurants.

## EUROPEAN

There is an abundance of European restaurants in Lomé, most with a distinctly French flavour.

**Brochettes sur la Capital** (Blvd du 13 Janvier; meals CFA2500-3400) This Lomé institution is the city at its best – enjoy sitting outside eating lip-smacking kebabs and watching the boulevard hustle by.

**Greenfield** (☎ 222 21 55; Rue Akati; meals CFA3200-4500, pizza & tortillas from CFA2000; 🕒 6-11pm) Tucked away off Route de Kpalimé, near Tokoin Hospital, this funky French-owned garden bar-restaurant is decorated with dancing Keith Haring figures and colourful lanterns.

It is family-friendly, with a menu for children and teenagers, and films screened for youngsters on Saturdays, in addition to the adult films on Tuesdays and live jazz.

**La Savane** (☎ 906 17 48; Blvd du Mono; meals CFA3000-4500; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6pm-midnight) This Italian-owned garden restaurant has cool African art on the walls, and serves African food as well as European dishes such as pizza.

**Vingt Sur Vins** (☎ 221 08 82; Rue Aniko Palako; meals CFA5000; ☎ Mon-Sat) Near L'Aubrevoir disco, this French restaurant serves up fine dishes made from top local produce, winning plaudits from among Lomé's expat community.

**La Cigale** (☎ 221 99 30; lacigale\_lomé@hotmail.com; 198 Blvd du 13 Janvier; meals CFA3800-7500; ☎ 10am-2pm & 6-11pm Mon-Sat) Salmon and T-bone steak are on the menu in this swish Tunisian-owned garden restaurant that, confusingly, specialises in Chinese and Italian food.

**Ristorante Da-Claudio** (☎ 222 26 65; Blvd du 13 Janvier; pizzas CFA3000, pasta CFA2000; ☎ 6pm-12am Mon-Sat) This restaurant, owned by an Italian-Togolese couple, is a great place to sample traditional Italian fare, with both air-con dining and a relaxing terrace.

**Alt München** (☎ 227 63 21; Route d'Aného; meals CFA3000-7500; ☎ 11am-2.30pm & 7-11pm Thu-Tue) A Bavarian restaurant just east of Hôtel Mercure-Sarakawa, offering a good selection of German beers and hearty European dishes such as goulash and knuckle of pork.

**Relais de la Poste** (☎ 221 46 78; 6 Ave de la Libération; meals CFA3000-3500) This charming restaurant, specialising in seafood and set in a quiet shaded courtyard, has long been a mainstay of locals and expats alike.

**Bena Grill** (☎ 222 41 38; Rue du Lac Togo; meals CFA2000-4700; ☎ 7.30am-10pm) This is basically a supermarket restaurant, attached to Marox Supermarché, but it serves hefty German dishes in a pleasant outdoor setting.

**Restaurant Mini-Brasserie** (☎ 221 32 34; 44 Rue de la Gare; mains CFA3000-6000) This enduring favourite is a good spot to meet other travellers and have an ice-cold beer.

## LEBANESE

**L'Abeille d'Or** (☎ 904 07 77; Rue de Kouroumé; meals from CFA2500) This air-conditioned patisserie and restaurant, on the 1st floor of the Immeuble Taba, behind Hôtel Palm Beach, is popular with the Lebanese community.

## Quick Eats

Lomé is awash with cafeterias: good places to grab a cheap coffee with an omelette or spaghetti. They're typically open from 7am until midnight, and Rue de la Gare and Ave du 24 Janvier are good places to sniff them out.

**Al Donald's** (Blvd du 13 Janvier) Just for fun try the cheeky rip-off of the American fast-food giant.

**Brunsis Café** (☎ 221 46 63; 8 Ave Nicolas Grunitsky; ice cream CFA800-2000; ☎ evenings) For ice cream this is the best place to go. Its upstairs restaurant stocks Belgian beers.

**Boston Maquis** (☎ 222 26 06; Ave du 24 Janvier; meals CFA1500) You can get good, cheap food at this friendly restaurant opposite Centre Culturel Français.

**Diaby Fast Food** (☎ 221 75 12; Rue du Commerce; meals CFA750-2000) Head to this air-conditioned snack bar for nibbles such as shwarma, felfel, burgers and sandwiches, as well as a good choice of vegetarian dishes.

## Self-Catering

Local vendors sell a wide array of fresh fruit and vegetables outside the small **Marox Supermarché** (Rue du Lac Togo; ☎ 8am-12pm), which itself is your best bet for meat products. Other supermarkets include the following: **Leader Price Supermarché** (Rue du Commerce; ☎ 8.30am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun)

**Ramco Supermarché** (☎ 221 46 10; cnr Ave du 24 Janvier & Ave de la Nouvelle Marche; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun)

## DRINKING

**Café Panini** (☎ 904 00 56; Blvd du 13 Janvier; ☎ from 6pm) In the words of one French drinker we encountered here, Panini is 'the arse of the chicken' – the gloriously sleazy epicentre of Lomé's nightlife. Avoid if you object to being hustled by multilingual prostitutes.

**Bronco City** (Blvd du 13 Janvier; ☎ from 6pm) One of the unmarked bars across the boulevard from Café Panini, where you can watch the action from a safe distance.

**Cristal Palace** (☎ 920 20 00; cnr Blvd du 13 Janvier & Route de Kpalimé) Part of the popular Sunset Bar and Millennium nightclub complex, this beer garden is a good spot for a game of pool to a soundtrack of Togolese hip-hop.

**Bar Agou** (☎ 221 00 03; Hôtel 2 Février, Place de l'Indépendance; beer CFA1550) Appropriately named after Togo's highest mountain, this hotel bar has an unequalled view of Place

de l'Indépendance and the city. Meals available from CFA6500.

**Restaurant la Terrasse** (☎ 906 60 66; Blvd du 13 Janvier; ☎ 9am-midnight, from 5pm Mon) This small bar, with pool tables and fruit machines, is a less hectic haunt than many of its rivals nearby on the boulevard. Meals available from CFA1800 to CFA3800.

**Le Palmiers** (☎ 220 66 22; Blvd Notre Dame; beer CFA400; ☎ 11am-10.30pm) The food here is nothing special (meals CFA1000 to CFA3200), but it's a great place to have a beer in view of the *taxi-motos* swarming down the boulevard like angry wasps.

**Bar d'Ambiance** (Rue de la Gare) A good place for a tipple before heading to the nearby Z Nightclub; also shows European football matches.

## ENTERTAINMENT Nightclubs

The European-style, discolike nightclubs are pricey and have cover charges, typically CFA3000. The area bounded by Restaurant Mini-Brasserie, Domino and L'Aubrevoir is known as the Bermuda Triangle – once you get inside you lose all bearings!

**Byblos** (Blvd du 13 Janvier; admission CFA5000; ☎ from 10pm Wed-Sun) Next to Café Panini is Byblos, a trendy nightclub that is a favourite haunt of rich young Togolese.

**Millennium Nightclub** (☎ 920 20 00; Ave de Calais) This hip hangout has a few different areas, including a beer garden with a barbecue and, often, live music.

**Z Nightclub** (Rue de la Gare; ☎ from 11pm) This jazzy nightclub, owned by Frenchman Philip, is next to Bar d'Ambiance.

**Kamou** (☎ 227 65 90; Hôtel Mercure-Sarakawa, Route de Aného) Beers are CFA1500 in the basement of the swanky Sarakawa.

**Chess** (☎ 221 00 03; Hôtel du 2 Février, Place de l'Indépendance; admission CFA3000 for nonguests; ☎ from 10pm) The Togolese football team went to this classy club to celebrate when they trounced the Congo and qualified for the World Cup.

**L'Aubrevoir** (Rue de la Gare) One of the hottest and best-known discos. Small beers are CFA2000, and there's a snack bar.

**Domino** (665 Rue de la Gare) Another popular bar-nightclub, this infamous pick-up joint plays rock and jazz from 10.30pm on Friday and Saturday.

**Le Privilège** (☎ 221 85 11; Hôtel Palm Beach, Rue de Kouroumé; admission CFA4000; ☎ 10pm-4am) A barn-

like place with expensive drinks that is popular with teenagers.

## Live Music

Hôtel le Galion (p781) and Greenfield (p783) put on live music from time to time.

**Chez Alice** (☎ /fax 227 91 72; chezalicetogo@hotmail.com; admission CFA6000) To party long into the night, take a bush taxi to Chez Alice in the village of Avéposo, about 12km from the heart of Lomé on the coastal highway to Aného. This German-owned joint, popular with overlanders, hosts barbecues or fondue feasts with traditional music and dancing on Wednesday from 8pm. Meals are available for CFA1500 to CFA3800.

## Cinemas

**Cinéma Concorde** (☎ 221 00 03; Hôtel 2 Février) Has air-conditioning and shows French-dubbed Hollywood films.

**Cinéma Opera** (☎ 221 85 12; Rue du Commerce; tickets CFA250-600) Opposite Hôtel du Golfe, shows Western blockbusters in French at 2pm, 6.30pm and 9pm.

**Cinéma Elysees** (Immeuble Taba, Rue de Kouroumé; tickets CFA500-1000; ☎ Wed & Fri-Sun) Shows films at 3.30pm, 6.30pm and 9pm.

**Greenfield** (☎ 222 21 55; Rue Akati) Has an open-air cinema on Tuesday at 7.30pm, screening Western films in French with English subtitles. The CFA2500 entry fee includes a drink and a medium Margherita pizza.

## SHOPPING

**Grand Marché** (Rue de Grand Marché; ☎ to 4pm Mon-Sat) This is the place to pick up everything from Togolese football tops to wax cloth (sold by the 2m *pagne* – the amount needed for a complete outfit – traders sometimes refuse to sell less than this as it's not always easy to shift the rest).

**Rue des Artisans** (☎ 7.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) Close to Grand Marché is this relatively low-pressure place to buy woodcarvings and brasswork – including some fetching malachite jewellery – from Burkinabé, Senegalese, Nigerian and Malian traders. The short street is east of Hôtel du Golfe, with some private art galleries at the north end. Come with your gaggling cap firmly on.

**Village Artisanal** (☎ 221 68 07; Ave du Nouveau Marché; ☎ 7.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) At this centre you'll see Togolese artisans weaving cloth, carving statues, making baskets, lampshades,

cane chairs and tables, sewing leather shoes – all for sale at reasonable fixed prices. Lomé is famous for leather sandals; they were originally all made at the Village Artisanal, but you can also buy them around the Grand Marché for about CFA3000.

**Bric à Brac** (☎ 221 02 45; messie@bibway.com; 71 Blvd de la Marina) Your best bet for high-quality art. The friendly owner has a showroom of good-quality West African pieces, and her fixed prices are very reasonable.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

The international airport is 5km northeast of central Lomé. For details on flights to and from Lomé see p805.

### Bus, Bush Taxi & Minibus

Bush taxis and minibuses travelling east to Aného (CFA800, one hour), Cotonou (CFA3000, three hours) and Lake Togo/Agbodrafo (CFA500, 45 minutes) leave from **Gare de Cotonou** (Rue Holland), just west of the STIF bus station.

If you're going to Ghana it's best to catch a taxi (CFA500 shared, CFA1000 chartered) or *taxi-moto* (CFA500) to the border and cross on foot. Buses for Accra leave from just across the Ghanaian border in Aflao.

**Gare d'Agbalepedo** (Quartier Agbalepedo), 10km north of central Lomé, serves all northern destinations. Services include: Atakpamé (CFA2000, three hours), Bassar (CFA4000), Dapaong (CFA6000, 14 hours), Kara (CFA4000, seven hours), Sokodé (CFA3600, six hours) and Ouagadougou (CFA16,000, 24 hours). A few bush taxis and minibuses leave daily for these places, mostly in the morning. The earlier you get to a *gare* (station), the more chance you stand of finding a bush taxi without too long a wait and of reaching your destination in reasonable time.

Minibuses to Kpalimé (CFA1500 plus CFA500 baggage charge, three hours) leave from **Gare de Kpalimé** (Rue Moyana), 1.5km north of the centre on Route de Kpalimé.

Coaches run between Lomé and many other major West African cities – see p806.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

To the airport the taxi fare is about CFA1000 (but count on CFA1500 from the airport into the city).

## Car

**Avis** (☎ 221 05 82; 252 Blvd du 13 Janvier) Also has branches at Hôtel Mecure-Sarakawa. Among the garages in the city centre is the **Total Garage** (cnr Blvd du 13 Janvier & Blvd Notre Dame des Apotres).

## Taxi & Taxi-Moto

Taxis are abundant, even at night, and have no meters. Fares are CFA200 for a shared taxi (CFA300 after 6pm, more to the outlying areas) and CFA700 nonshared. A taxi by the hour should cost CFA2500 if you bargain well.

Zippy little *taxi-motos* are also popular, if rather dangerous. You should be able to go anywhere in the centre for CFA200.

# AROUND LOMÉ

## BEACHES

Past the Nioto oil plant, and the port and customs east of Lomé, is another world – a mellow land of beachfront auberges which are far preferable to similarly priced hotels in the city centre.

The first one you come to, 9km from the city centre on the highway to Aného, is Hôtel Coco Beach. The well-marked turn-off is 1km east of the large roundabout at the port. Taxis from the Gare de Cotonou cost about CFA1700.

**Hôtel Coco Beach** (☎ 271 49 35; cocobeachtogo@hotmail.com; d with air-con CFA28,000, d with air-con & sea view CFA32,000, 5-person bungalow CFA77,000; ☎) is the swishest hotel on this part of the coast, with boardwalks leading to a restaurant (meals CFA2500 to CFA4800) brimming with fish dishes, a seafood bar, and a private beach with deckchairs and *paillotes* (shaded seats) for hire. Rooms have hot water and funky blue-and-yellow colour schemes.

**Chez Alice** (☎ /fax 227 91 72; chezalicetogo@hotmail.com; camping per person CFA750, d/tr with fan & shared bucket shower CFA3500/4500, beachfront apt CFA7000) is a sleepy, slightly rundown place, featuring overlayers poring over maps in the shade and monkeys peering through the bars of their cage. This German-run auberge in the village of Avéposo is three minutes' walk from the beach and hosts a barbecue or fondue with traditional music and dancing on Wednesday from 8pm (CFA6000). Meals are available for CFA1500 to CFA3800.

## AGBODRAFO & LAKE TOGO

On the southern shores of this disease-free lake – part of the inland lagoon that stretches all the way from Lomé to Aného – Agbodrafo is a popular getaway for water sports fans and an easy place to find a pirogue to Togoville.

**Auberge du Lac** (☎ 904 72 29; bungalow with fan/air-con CFA7600/12,600; ☎) is a few kilometres west of Agbodrafo, a secluded cluster of thatched bungalows among palms on the lake shore. A guided pirogue trip from here to Togoville costs CFA2500 return. There is also jet skiing, pedal-boating and windsurfing. Meals are available from CFA3500 to CFA5500.

**Hôtel le Lac** (☎ /fax 331 60 19/09; d/tr with air-con CFA41,000/56,000; meals from CFA4200; ☎) is an old but pleasant establishment several kilometres east of Agbodrafo. It played host to Pope John Paul II when he visited Togoville, and has 22 sweetly scented rooms with lake-side patios. Facilities include jet skis (per 10 minutes CFA12000), pedal-boats (per 30 minutes CFA4000 to CFA6000), tennis, table tennis, guided pirogue trips to Togoville (CFA1500 return), a pool (CFA1000 for nonguests) and, separately, some crocodiles. Meals are available from CFA4200.

From the Gare de Cotonou in Lomé, bush taxis frequently travel along the coastal road to Aného, via Agbodrafo (CFA500).

## TOGOVILLE

On Lake Togo's northern shore is Togoville, the historical centre of voodoo in Togo. It was from here that voodoo practitioners were taken as slaves to Haiti, now a major centre for voodoo. And it was here in 1884 that Chief Mlapa III signed a peace treaty with the German explorer Gustav Nachtigal that gave the Germans rights over all of Togoland.

Having disembarked at the jetty, you'll come to the **Centre Artisanal** and the German-built **cathedral**. A shrine to the Virgin commemorates her reported appearance on the lake, which attracted Pope John Paul II to visit. Fetishes in the streets attest to the practice of voodoo here.

Inside the **Maison Royale**, 100m west of the church, a one-room museum houses the now-topped Mlapa dynasty's throne and some interesting old photos of the former chiefs. A *cadeau* (gift) is expected

**Hôtel Nachtigal** (☎ 333 70 76; fax 221 64 82; r with fan/air-con CFA7000/11,500; ☎ ☎ ☎), a surprisingly good hotel 100m west of the market

has clean, pleasant rooms and bungalows. There's also a tennis court, a pool and a large *paillote* bar-restaurant, where you can get breakfast (CFA2000) or a decent meal: 3-course meals are CFA3000.

Getting here from Lomé is a bit of a hassle. By road, catch a bush taxi to Aného (CFA800) then another along the back roads to Togoville (CFA700). A better option is to take a pirogue (CFA2000 return) from Agbodrafo, about 10km before Aného (see left), although this will deliver you to the guide-covered jetty.

## VOGAN & AGOÉGAN

The Friday market at Vogan is a must-see. It's one of the largest and most colourful markets in Togo, with a well-stocked fetish section featuring an impressive array of dead turtles and other essential fetish ingredients. There's also a vibrant Monday market in the untouched town of Agoégan, on the intercoastal canal dividing Togo and Benin – 30 minutes by taxi from Aného.

The small **Hôtel Medius** (☎ 333 10 00; r with fan/air-con CFA4300/7300; ☎), near Vogan market, has clean rooms and a bar-restaurant serving good-sized meals for about CFA2000.

The trip from Lomé takes one hour and costs about CFA1500 by bush taxi. If you're driving, go to Aného and turn left, circling around the lake. From Togoville, bush taxis to Vogan (CFA800) leave on Friday morning.

# THE SOUTH

The cocoa and coffee triangle between Kpalimé, Badou and Atakpamé is an alluring area in this part of West Africa. Its hilly, forest-covered terrain is a hiker's paradise and feels far from the hectic cities and dusty savanna nearby. If you only have time to visit one place outside Lomé, head to chilled-out Kpalimé, a beautiful town that's sure to become a tourist hotspot when Togo issues more visitor visas. Aného is an intriguing Togolese town, where a sense of a murky past hangs in the silences between the cries of the mixed-race fetish marketers hawking animal parts.

## ANÉHO

pop 28,100

Aného is a unique town within Togo and a taste of what's in store for travellers heading



across the Beninese border, 2km away. The colonial capital until 1920, the town is overshadowed by crumbling buildings in peeling pastels, seemingly sliding into an ocean once used to ship slaves. The Afro-Brazilian heritage which resulted from this grisly trade can be seen in the relatively pale-skinned people drifting around Aného market.

Voodoo is strong here. The back of the market, which is busiest on Tuesdays, is packed with wooden dolls and snakes' heads, their blank eyes gazing towards the epicentre of voodoo in southeast Benin.

## Sleeping

**Hôtel de l'Oasis** (☎ 331 01 25; oasisaneh@hotmail.com; Route de Lomé-Cotonou; d with fan/air-con CFA8800/12,300, r with air-con CFA15,300; 🏠) An unbeatable location east of the bridge, looking across the lagoon and the beach to the sea. The seven rooms are well maintained, the management is friendly, and the terrace is a prime place for a sunset drink. Meals are available for CFA4800.

**First Hôtel Night-Club** (☎ /fax 331 10 04; Route de Lomé-Cotonou; r with fan & shared bathroom CFA9500, with fan/air-con & private bathroom CFA11,500/21,500; 🏠 🍷) The most upmarket hotel in town, with clean, modern rooms, tennis courts, a magnificent swimming pool (CFA500 for nonguests) and a trendy nightclub.

**La Becca Hôtel** (☎ 331 05 13; Route de Lomé-Cotonou; r with/without fan CFA7000/6000) The cheap and cheerful La Becca, southwest of the market, is not as smart as its exterior suggests, but is Aného's best budget option nonetheless.

## Eating

On the southwestern side of the bridge, the market and SGGG supermarket are the places to find vendors and *buvettes* (small bars or drinks stalls) such as Anastasia, opposite the market. At night they sell omelettes, chicken, stews, brochettes, and *pâte* with sauce. Opposite Buvette Fontaine, 200m east of the *gare routière* (bus and taxi station), there's a food hut with cheap, simple fare.

**Hôtel de l'Oasis** (☎ 331 01 25; oasisaneh@hotmail.com; Route de Lomé-Cotonou; meals CFA4800) The hotel's restaurant above the lagoon is recommended, but you do pay for the view.

## Drinking

Les Trois Paillotes, next to the old market at the southwest end of town, is good for a drink in an outdoor setting. Near the new

market, Bar Amite de la Gare is covered by a paillote.

Other bars are Buvette Fontaine and Pago Pago, both near the *gare routière*, and Bar 620, off Rue de l'Hôpital in the northeast.

But, **Hôtel Night-Club** (☎ /fax 331 10 04; admission CFA3000; 🏠 Saturday only) is the place to be in Aného on Saturday nights.

## Getting There & Away

From the *gare routière*, at the northeastern end of town, bush taxis and minibuses head to Lomé (CFA800, one hour) as well as to the Beninese border and Cotonou (CFA1500, 2½ hours).

## KPALIMÉ

pop 48,300

Kpalimé (pah-lee-may) is only 120km from Lomé, but feels like another world, hidden among the forested hills of the cocoa and coffee region, which offer some of Togo's best scenery and hiking (p790). Noted for its mild climate, Grand Marché, Centre Artisanal and political symposium in August, Kpalimé is Togo's most alluring town.

Although many of Kpalimé's hotels are outside the centre, most commercial activity takes place between the Grand Marché and Rond-point Texaco. There are four major sealed roads out of town: northwest to Klouto, northeast to Atakpamé, southwest to Ho (Ghana) and southeast to Lomé.

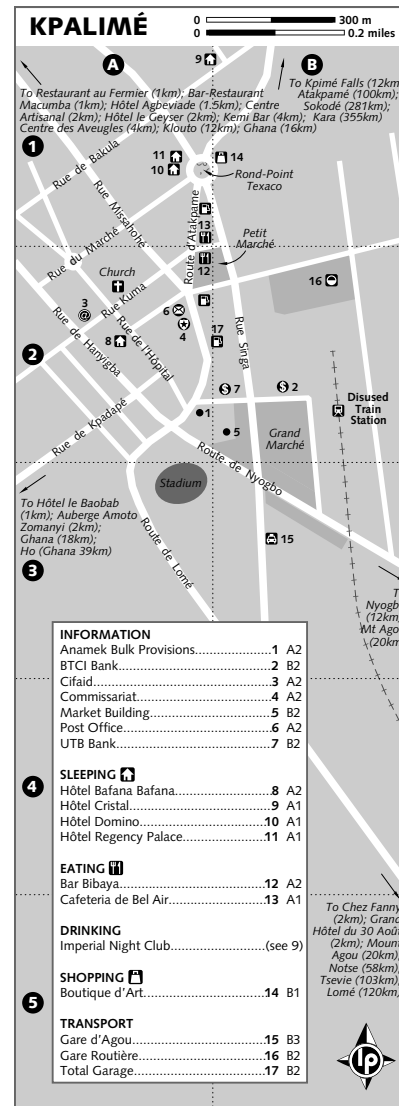
## Information

There is Web access at **Centre Artisanal** (☎ 441 00 77; per hr CFA350; 🏠 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 3-8pm Sun), 2km north on the road to Klouto, and **Cifaïd** (☎ 441 07 38; Rue Kuma; per hr CFA400; 🏠 8am-9pm Mon-Sat), southwest of the church.

There are two banks, **UTB** (☎ 441 01 84) and **BTCl** (☎ 441 01 27), north of the market. UTB is better for changing money and neither has an ATM. If you want to buy or sell Ghanaian Cedis, money-changers can be found at the *gare routière* – but make sure you get an idea of the going rate first.

## Sights

Nearby attractions include Klouto, home to a wonderful variety of butterflies, and Mt Agou, Togo's highest peak at 986m. **Kpimé Falls** (admission CFA500), about 12km northeast of Kpalimé, are a good spot for a swim. Taxis are roughly the same to visit all the attractions:



CFA2000, or CFA300 shared, and CFA1500 for a *taxi-moto*. For more details, see p790.

## Sleeping BUDGET

**Hôtel Bafana Bafana** (Rue de l'Hôpital; s with shared/private bathroom CFA4000/5000) The terminally laid-back Bafana Bafana, near the church,

offers cool, bare rooms with fan and a whitewashed courtyard bar.

**Auberge Amoto Zomanyi** (☎ 441 06 02; Rue de Kpadapé; r with fan & shared/private bathroom CFA4000/5500) A friendly place, 2km southwest of the centre, with clean spacious rooms, and the feel of a quiet colonial outpost. Meals are CFA2800.

**Hôtel Domino** (☎ 441 01 87; Rond-point Texaco; r with fan/air-con CFA4300/7800; 🏠) This long-standing establishment has small, fairly grubby rooms around a ramshackle courtyard.

## MIDRANGE

**Chez Fanny** (☎ /fax 441 00 99; hotelchezfanny@yahoo.fr; Route de Lomé; r CFA14,000; 🏠 🍷 🍷) Run by a welcoming French-Togolese couple, this guesthouse in the countryside 2km south of town is a homely retreat. Meals are available for CFA3000 to CFA5000.

**Hôtel le Geysier** (☎ 441 04 67; hotellegeysier@hotmail.com; r CFA8500-15,000; 🏠 🍷) The tranquil Hôtel le Geysier, 2km from the centre on the road to Klouto, has seven rooms, some with fan, air-con, hot water and TV. Set in a flowery garden, it also has a pool and an excellent restaurant. Meals from CFA2700 to CFA3500.

**Hôtel Cristal** (☎ /fax 441 05 79; hotelcristal2002@yahoo.fr; Rue de Bakula; s/d with air-con CFA9800/13,800; 🏠 🍷) Behind its brutal grey façade, this hotel, signposted from Rond-point Texaco, is the best central accommodation. The well-kept rooms are reasonably priced and there's a pool with a restaurant – though nonguests must pay CFA1500 for a dip. Meals are CFA5000.

**Hôtel Regency Palace** (☎ 441 12 12; Rue Singa; r CFA10,000; 🏠) This pink building next to Hôtel Domino has quiet rooms in bungalows at the back of its attractive garden restaurant. Meals are available from CFA2000 to CFA3000.

**Hôtel Agbeviade** (☎ 441 05 11; r with fan/air-con/air-con & balcony CFA7000/12,500/15,500; 🏠) Signposted off the road to Klouto 1.5km northwest of town, the Agbeviade is a friendly, comfy and pebble-dashed option, with views of the surrounding hills. Meals are CFA2500.

## Eating

The Lebanese and Italian food at Hôtel Regency Palace and Chez Fanny's French restaurant are very good. Or head to the Grand Marché and Rue Singa, south of Rond-point Texaco, for street food.

**Bar Bibaya** (Petit Marché) This is among the great *buvettes* in the shacks around Cafeteria de Bel Air.

## HIKING IN THE KPALIMÉ AREA

Kpalimé is surrounded by mountain villages and cascades, reached by footpaths through the lush forests.

The heartiest walk is up **Mt Agou** (986m), 20km southeast of Kpalimé. Catch a taxi from Kpalimé to Nyogbo, and get out at Hôpital Bethesda. The offer of a few cold drinks should tempt a local lad to guide you to the top.

The path climbs through backyards with cocoa trees, then into a forest heaving with fruit. You finally come to terraced mountain villages, where tiny schools erupt into waves. The panoramic view from the village of **Akibo**, one hour from the peak, is as good as the view from the top.

It is possible to see Lake Volta in Ghana from the peak, but the view can be disappointing, especially during harmattan season. The summit is scattered with fences and guards, who will likely demand to see your papers and mutter about authorisation before showing you the view.

The walk takes four hours return. Or, take a taxi to the top and walk back down – either to the village or to the Kpalimé–Lomé highway.

**Klouto**, 12km northwest of Kpalimé, offers forested hills and a relatively cool climate, but it's the butterflies that make it unique. Early morning is the best time to search for butterflies. Net-touting local guys will offer to guide you, or you can ask at one of the auberges (see opposite).

For views of Ghana, head up to **Mt Klouto** (741m) via Campement de Klouto (670m). On the other side of the village is **Château Viale**, a medieval-style stone castle built by a Frenchman in 1944.

Another option is to go to **Kpimé Falls**, 12km from Kpalimé in the direction of Atakpamé. The falls are signposted from the village of Kpimé-Séva. There's no need for a guide; just walk westward down the main track for 30 minutes to a closed gate, where a guardian will request CFA500.

The waterfalls are spectacular during the wet season, but almost dry the rest of the year. It takes about 90 minutes to carry on to the top of the falls, where there's a dam and a panoramic view.

At Adéta, 9km north of Kpimé-Séva, turn left onto a tar road for the **Danyi Plateau**. A few kilometres beyond the village of N'Digbé is **Abbaye de l'Ascension** (abz0g@caf.ig), a Benedictine convent and monastery where you can buy jams made by the monks, and stay overnight in a simple room with a shower and shared toilets for CFA5000. It is best to book ahead as the monastery is often full.

**Restaurant au Fermier** (☎ 9029830; meals CFA2500-3000; ☒ Tue-Sun) For excellent European and African food, try this low-roofed, intimate spot on the northwestern outskirts of town.

**Bar-Restaurant Macumba** (☎ 441 09 68; meals from CFA2200; ☒ 8am-10pm) For an upmarket restaurant serving Togolese fare, you can't beat the open-air Macumba on the northern outskirts of town, signposted from the road to Klouto.

**Cafeteria de Bel Air** (☎ 441 03 61; Route de Lomé; meals CFA250-2000) This central eatery, where you sit at an outdoor counter, is overpriced but open 24 hours.

## Drinking

Restaurant au Fermier and the *buvettes* near the Petit Marché are good for drinking.

**Imperial Night Club** (Rue de Bakula; ☒ Fri & Sat; admission CFA3000) In Hôtel Cristal, this place is popular.

**Kemi Bar** (☎ 441 04 02; ☒ 9am-10pm Wed-Mon) Popular late in the week and at weekends,

this funky rooftop bar and cultural space is located on the same lane as Hôtel Agbeviade.

## Shopping

Kpalimé has a large and lively Grand Marché, which really gets going on Tuesday and Saturday. A good selection of Ghanaian kente cloth is sold here, but prices are higher than in Kumasi.

**Centre Artisanal** (☎ 441 00 77; ☒ 9am-noon & 3-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & holidays, 1-5pm Sun) Touristy but tasteful, this place has a vast array of woodcarvings, including chiefs' chairs and tables carved out of solid blocks of wood, as well as pottery, macramé and batiks.

**Centre des Aveugles** (☎ 441 01 72; ☒ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) Some 4km from Kpalimé, on the road climbing towards Klouto, this centre for blind artisans has a shop selling crafts made by residents.

**Boutique d'Art** (Rond-point Texaco; ☒ 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) This small place

has a wide selection of arts and craftwork, such as djembe drums, masks and statues.

## Getting There & Away

The *gare routière* is in the heart of town, two blocks east of the Shell petrol station. North-bound bush taxis leave from Rond-point Texaco. Regular services include Atakpamé (CFA1200, two hours), Sokodé (CFA3500, four hours), Kara (CFA4200, seven hours) and Lomé (CFA1500, three hours).

You can also get minibuses direct to Notsé (CFA1200, 1½ hours), Tsévié (CFA1700, two hours), to the Ghanaian border (CFA700, 30 minutes) and to Ho in Ghana (CFA1400, 1½ hours).

## KLOUTO

The village of Klouto, 12km northwest of Kpalimé, is at the heart of the forested Kouma-Konda region.

## Sights & Activities

Some 7km from Kpalimé, the winding road passes the mineral-water spring **Kamalo Falls**.

The **Dzawuwu-Za harvest festival** takes place in Klouto in early August, featuring markets, feasts, traditional Apkese music and dancing.

In addition to the ruined **Château Viale**, the big attraction in Klouto are the masses of colourful butterflies in the surrounding forests. **Guided butterfly walks** can be arranged at the following places:

**Adetop** (☎ 441 08 17; per half day/day CFA6000/12,000) Also offers evening lessons in singing, drumming and traditional medicine for CFA10,000.

**Auberge des Papillons** (☎ 441 00 97) The best option. Tours from 9am to 3pm, with a picnic, cost CFA7500, or shorter trips without a picnic CFA5000.

**Campement de Klouto** (☎ 441 00 97; per hr CFA1250)

## Sleeping & Eating

**Auberge Papillons** (☎ 441 00 99; prosnyanu@yahoo.fr; d CFA3000) This friendly auberge is run by the inimitable Monsieur Prosper – the 'Butterfly Man' – an entomologist whose finds adorn the walls. It has clean, colourful rooms with shared facilities, and a restaurant serving excellent local coffee and specialities. Meals are available from CFA2500 to CFA3000.

**Campement de Klouto** (☎ 441 00 97; s/d CFA6000/8000; ☒) This former German hospital will appeal to hermits and bank robbers. It's up a mountain, 30 minutes' walk from Klouto

at the start of the paths to Mount Klouto and the falls. The 16 large, breezy rooms have mozzie nets but no fans and there's a restaurant. Meals are around CFA4000.

**Adetop** (☎ 441 08 17; dm CFA3000) The basic rooms here have balconies with forest views, outside toilets and a bucket shower. There are no fans as it is cold here at night. The evening entertainment (singing, lessons on traditional medicine etc) is CFA10,000 – though guests can listen for free. Meals are available from CFA2500 to CFA3500.

## Getting There & Away

Taxis from Kpalimé to Klouto are about CFA300 (see p788). From the Kouma–Konda checkpoint it's an easy walk to Klouto, and an uphill hike to Campement de Klouto or Château Viale. To return to Kpalimé, go to the checkpoint and wait for a taxi.

## ATAKPAMÉ

pop 41,300

Once the favourite residence of the German colonial administrators, Atakpamé today is a commercial centre that lacks the charm of other parts of the coffee country. However, the mountain town, which is famous for its stilt dancers, does have a colourful Friday market and is a handy stopover between Lomé or Kpalimé and the north.

The southern entrance to town is marked by a T-junction, the eastern leg of which continues on to Kara. The north-south leg is the highway from Lomé that continues into the centre of town.

## Information

There is Web access at the two branches of **Cib-Inta** (☎ 440 03 07; Rue de la Station de Lomé; per hr CFA300; ☒ 8am-10pm).

There are three banks in the town centre, **UTB** (☎ 440 13 33; Rue du Grand Marché), **BTCI** (☎ 440 01 74; Rue du Commerce) and **BIA-Togo** (☎ 440 01 92; Rue du Commerce), and one south of the centre – **BTD** (☎ 440 01 17; Rue du Grand Marché). They don't have ATMs but can change money. There is a basic **hospital** (☎ 440 01 91; Rue de l'Hôpital) uphill northwest of the centre.

## Sleeping

**Hôtel Le Sahelien** (☎ 440 12 44; htelsahlien@yahoo.fr; Route Internationale; r CFA8800, with hot water CFA10,800, deluxe CFA14,300; ☒ ☒) The swish Hôtel Le Sahelien, one of the most professionally run hotels

in Togo, has guarded parking, two restaurants, a terrace bar, mod cons in the rooms, a shop, a barbecue and even a booth selling CDs. Meals are available for CFA2800.

**Hôtel Roc** (☎ 440 02 37; fax 440 00 33; r with fan/air-con CFA11,000/13,000/20,000; 🚻) The government-owned Hôtel Roc has been here 30 years – and looks like it – but it's still one of the best places in Atakpamé. On a hill off the main road, its clean rooms have good bathrooms and balconies with views of green hills and rusty roofs. Meals are CFA4000.

**Hôtel de l'Amitié** (☎ 440 06 25; Agnonou; r with fan/air-con CFA3800/6300; 🚻) With the sunny feel of an Andalusian guesthouse, l'Amitié's only drawback is its location, out of town up a dirt track from the Route Internationale. Meals are available for CFA1500 to CFA2000.

**Hôtel Delices des Retraites** (☎ 440 04 37; Rue de la Station de Lomé; r CFA3500) Despite the basic facilities (no fans) and the large wasps buzzing in and out of the communal bathroom, the former Hôtel Miva is a great budget option with a reasonable restaurant (meals CFA1500).

**Hôtel Kapokier** (☎ 440 02 84; Rue de l'Hôpital; r with fan/air-con CFA5300/6300; 🚻) Kapokier's bare blue

rooms are no better than those in cheaper hotels, but it's in a great location – it's the large building overlooking the schoolyard, just up from the post office. The terrace bar-restaurant has views of the hills, and meals are available from CFA1900.

## Eating

**Hôtel Le Sahelien** (☎ 440 12 44; htelsahelien@yahoo.fr; Route Internationale; meals CFA2800) This hotel has two good restaurants.

**Le Pentagone** (☎ 440 09 06; Rue de Grand Marché; meals CFA2200-2500; 🕒 8am-10pm) Pleasant first-floor restaurant serving tasty fare such as stir fries (laden with onion and garlic).

**Kfete** (☎ 440 03 61) This good 24-hour stop for omelettes and snacks is off Rue de Grand Marché, near the church

Near Kfete, Le Saint Louis, where you can eat and drink on the terrace, is a good example of Atakpamé's many *buvettes* and food stalls.

## Entertainment

**Hôtel Roc** (☎ 440 02 37; fax 440 00 33; off Rue de la Station de Lomé) The hotel's bar, a highly '70s

hangout complete with mirrorball, has dancing at the weekends.

**A La Soeur** (off Rue de la Station de Lomé) Has seen better days, but draws the punters nonetheless.

**Apollon Nightclub & Bar** (☎ 440 00 99; Route de Kpalimé; 🕒 9am-11pm) This rough and ready courtyard bar is announced by a mountain of Bonne Pierre crates at the entrance.

**Atakpamé Soir: The Best of the Best** (☎ 440 07 11; Rue de la Station de Lomé; 🕒 8am-10pm) With its ultraviolet lights and psychedelic décor, this cavernous place near the Shell garage has the feel of a hangar awaiting an illegal rave.

**Wadjo** (☎ 440 06 21; Rue de Grand Marché; admission CFA1000) This nightclub and restaurant near the BTD bank is a plush and popular hangout.

## Getting There & Away

The T-junction about 200m south of Hôtel Delices des Retraites serves as the unofficial terminal for all public transport. Wait south of the junction for taxis to Lomé (CFA2000, three hours); and east of the junction on Route Internationale, outside Hôtel Le Sahelien, for taxis to Sokodé (CFA2250, four hours), Kara (CFA3000, five hours) and Dapaong (CFA5900, eight hours).

Taxis to Badou (CFA1300, 2½ hours) and Kpalimé (CFA1200, 2½ hours) leave from Station de Kpalimé, just south of the market, and from northeast of the market.

## BADOU

Badou is lost somewhere in the northwest of coffee country, 88km west of Atakpamé on roads with a penchant for hairpin bends. The major attraction is **Akloa Falls** (also spelt Akrowa), 11km southeast of Badou, but the town itself has a pleasantly sleepy atmosphere and an unfeasible number of bars.

Access to the falls is 9km south of Badou at Tomagbé. You have to pay CFA500 to the villagers at Tomagbé, which includes a guide if you want one.

The hike up the hill from Tomagbé to the waterfalls takes 40 minutes. It's a pleasant walk and not too strenuous, except in the wet season. The trip is worth it as the falls are beautiful and you can swim beneath them.

**Hôtel Abuta** (☎ 993 85 25; r CFA6500-16,500; 🚻) is past the post office on the road to Ghana, with 15 surprisingly plush rooms. The friendly staff can organise trips to the

falls and traditional dancing displays. Meals are from CFA2500 to CFA3500.

Popular bar **Au Carrefour 2000** (☎ 926 39 09; r with fan CFA2000-2500) has some uncomfortable beds and meals (CFA1500).

**Cascade Plus** (☎ 443 00 71; r with fan CFA2500) has basic but homely rooms, and meals are available from CFA500 to CFA1500.

Bush taxis head to Badou (CFA1300, 2½ hours) from the market area in Atakpamé. There are many on Thursday, Badou market day. Taxis (shared/hired CFA3500/1000) and *taxi-motos* (CFA500) go from Badou to the waterfalls, but the walk there is pleasant.

## PARC NATIONAL DE FAZAO-MALFAKASSA

This 192,000-hectare **national park** (🕒 Nov-May), in central Togo's beautiful Malfakassa Mountains, is one of the most diverse West African parks in terms of landscape – with forest, savanna, rocky cliffs and waterfalls.

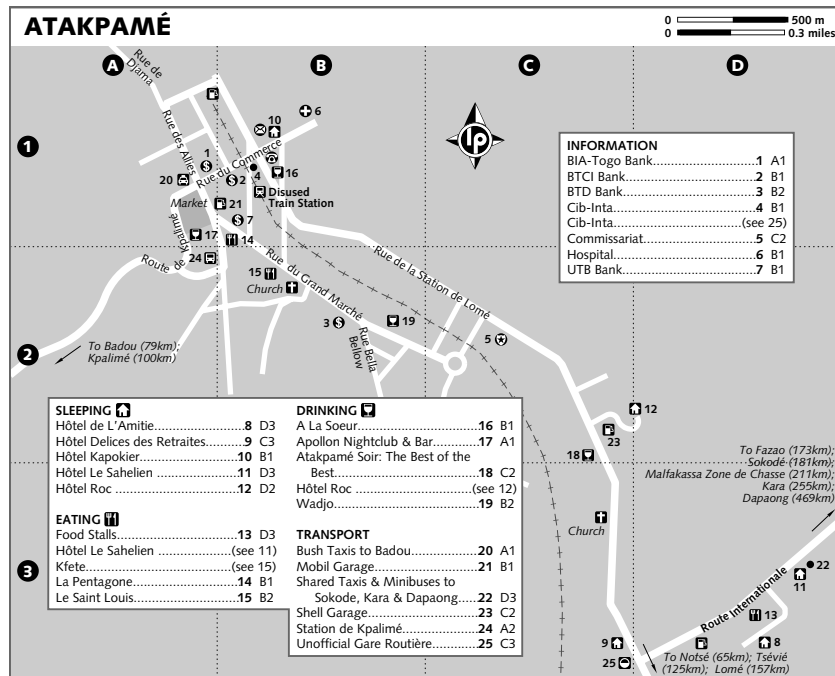
The Swiss **Fondation Franz Weber** (☎ 550 02 96; www.ffw.ch; 🕒 7.30am-12pm & 2.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 7.30-12pm Sat), which has an office in Sokodé, is working to repopulate the park with animals, which were scared into neighbouring countries by rioters. This task has seen military personnel crack down on poachers, Peul (Fula) nomads and villagers, encouraging them to find alternative sources of agriculture and energy, such as solar power.

The park now boasts 30 species of bird and 91 species of mammal – including monkeys, antelopes and 60 elusive elephants.

Entry for private vehicles is CFA10,000, and CFA3000 per person. Four-hour **guided drives** (1 person CFA18,000, 2-3 people per person CFA13,000, 4-6 people per person CFA9000; 7-10 people per person CFA8000; 11 people & over per person CFA6000), leave Hôtel Parc Fazao at 5.30am and 2.30pm – contact the foundation 24 hours in advance.

Adjoining Fazao is Malfakassa Zone de Chasse, an excellent area for hiking with great views. If you want to hike, ask the foundation for permission and bring water. The park occasionally opens late if the tracks have suffered badly during the rainy season.

Malfakassa has many good animal trails; the best go along the mountain tops and south into the park. Orientation is easy, even when you're hiking off trails due to the broad views from the mountains. In the wet season, walking up the slopes through the tall grass takes considerable effort.



Camping is not allowed in the park. **Hôtel Parc Fazao** (☎ 550 02 96; fax 550 01 75; ffw.fazao@rdd.tg) was closed for renovation at the time of research but planned to reopen – check with the foundation.

There is a marked turn-off for the park in Adjengré, 38km south of Sokodé on the main highway. The trip takes 45 minutes and costs CFA600 shared. You may have to wait in Fazao for a ride to Hôtel Parc Fazao. There is also a northern entrance at Binako, 40km from Sokodé on the highway to Bassar.

To get to the Malfakassa Zone de Chasse, turn off the Sokodé–Bassar highway at Malfakassa – a semiabandoned village in a pass near the highest point of the small mountains – and hike south into the park.

## THE NORTH

As you head north, the pace of life slows down in the heat, Islam takes over from Christianity as the dominant religion, and the Kabyé replace the Ewe as the main ethnic group. Sokodé, Kara and Dapaong are short on sights but are good spots to watch the world splutter past on a dysfunctional *taxi-moto*. If you're searching for something more challenging, head to the Tamberma Valley on the Beninese border. Standing guard in front of the animist Tamberma people's castellated clay compounds, the skull-topped shrines are a mystery for the Western imagination.

## SOKODÉ

pop 120,400

Sokodé is Togo's second-biggest city but it doesn't feel like it, with no major sites beyond the odd colonial building. But, the people are friendly and the town has a relaxed atmosphere. In addition to dozing in the shade of a mango tree, it's worth checking out the markets: the Petit Marché, for squawking chickens and fetish stalls; and the less traditional Grand Marché, the province of *wagassi* cheese, plastic sandals and intestines.

The heart of town is the T-junction just south of the Grand Marché. This is the site of the **Adoss ceremony**, which takes place on the second day after the Prophet's birthday (for details see p818). During this spectacle, men engage in a series of violent, knife-flashing dances after drinking a special potion that supposedly makes their skin impenetrable.

## Information

There is a **cyber café** (☎ 550 02 69; Rue de Leara; per hr CFA300; ☎ 7.30am–8pm Mon–Sat) on the first floor of the Ets Tchakala Papeterie et Informatique building, opposite the post office.

**UTB** (☎ 550 01 62) and **BTCI** (☎ 550 01 07) banks change money and UTB has Western Union.

## Sleeping

### BUDGET

**Hôtel Cercle de l'Amitié** (☎ 550 09 06; Route de Kara; r with fan & shared/private bathroom CFA4000/4500, d CFA5500, s with air-con CFA7500; ☎) One of the most attractive hotels we saw, with colonial rooms, an outdoor bar-restaurant and snack bar. Ask for a room between 28 and 31.

**Campement Tchaoudjo** (☎ 550 15 17; Rue de la Préfecture; r with fan & shared/private bathroom CFA3500/4500; ☎) The tranquil Campement is up the hill from the *douane* (customs post) on the southern edge of town, a walk from the centre. Its austere but spacious rooms have sheets and fans, and some have private bathrooms.

**New Hôtel Tchaoudjo** (☎ 925 89 94; Route de Bassar; r with fan CFA3500, with air-con CFA6000–7000, with air-con & TV CFA8500; ☎) This cheap hotel is in a great central location, but there is an institutional feel to its gloomy rooms and crumbling corridors.

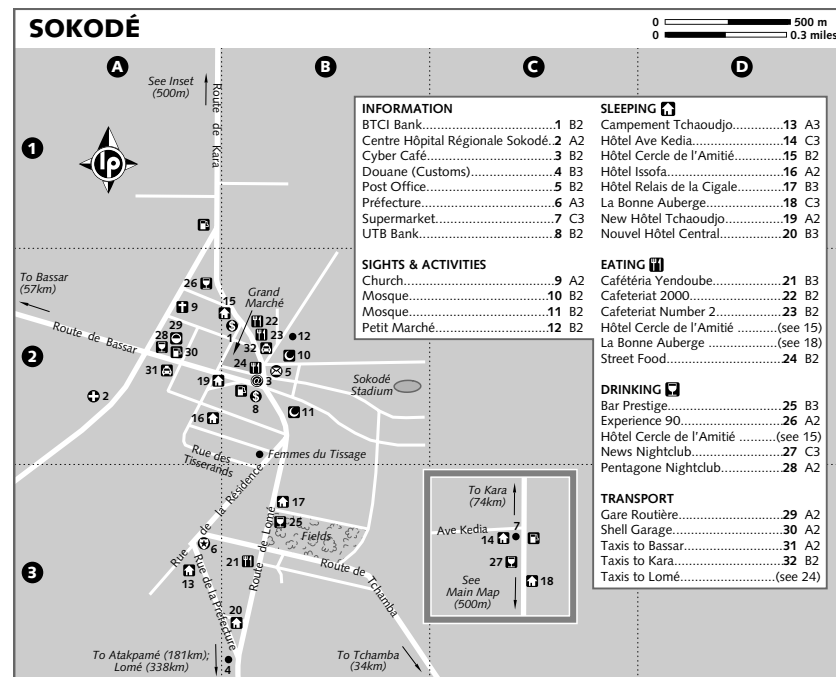
**Hôtel Relais de la Cigale** (☎ 914 72 50; Route de Lomé; r CFA2500–3000) An improvement on some nearby budget options, the Relais de la Cigale has spartan rooms with fans and shared bathrooms.

### MIDRANGE

**Hôtel Issofa** (☎ 550 09 89; off Route de Bassar; r with fan & shared/private bathroom CFA3800/4800, with air-con & bathroom CFA8800; ☎) Popular with European travellers and workers for its pleasant bar and restaurant, the Issofa is tucked away down a quiet street. The rooms are clean and comfortable and those with air-con are carpeted, but the shared bathrooms leave a little to be desired. Meals are available from CFA1600.

**La Bonne Auberge** (☎ 550 02 35; Route de Kara; r with fan/air-con CFA3500/6500; ☎) About 2km north of the centre, this friendly auberge has reasonable rooms and an attractive bar-restaurant (meals are from CFA1600 to CFA3000).

**Hôtel Ave Kedia** (☎ 550 05 34; Ave Kedia; r with fan & shared bathroom CFA4000, with air-con, private bathroom & TV CFA7500–12,000; meals CFA1900–3000; ☎) This well-run place north of town is a good midrange



option, with a bar-restaurant (meals from CFA1900 to CFA3000) and tidy rooms.

**Nouvel Hôtel Central** (☎ 550 01 23; Route de Lomé; s/d/bungalow/ste CFA11,000/13,000/16,000/22,000; meals CFA1700–3000; ☎) Set in unkempt gardens at the quiet southern end of town, this large place has clean spacious rooms with air-con and tiled bathrooms with hot water. Meals are available for CFA1700 to CFA3000.

## Eating

For street food, try the area around the Grand Marché. Just north of the market are the no-frills 24-hour cafés **Cafeteriat Number 2** (off Route de Kara) and – behind a German colonial building – **Cafeteriat 2000** (off Route de Kara).

Nearby, **Hôtel Cercle de l'Amitié** (☎ 550 09 06; Route de Kara) has a small snack bar serving kebabs, sandwiches and roast guinea fowl (CFA200 to CFA750). The restaurant at **La Bonne Auberge** (☎ 550 02 35; Route de Kara) is also worth checking out.

**Cafétéria Yendoube** (☎ 550 17 69; Route de Lomé; meals CFA1000), a cheap, friendly café on the main road, serves mountains of guinea fowl and spaghetti at most hours.

There's a small **supermarket** (Ave Kedia; ☎ 8am–1pm & 3–11pm) near Hôtel Ave Kedia.

## Drinking

**Bar Prestige** (☎ 550 03 52; Route de Lomé) This lively open-air place, on the main drag south of the central area, has loud African music and CFA250 beers.

**News Nightclub** (☎ 550 11 30; Route de Kara) The former Riviera Club has an open-air bar and snack bar, and is the place to boogie at weekends.

**Pentagone Nightclub** (☎ 550 05 34; Route de Bassar; ☎ 10pm–midnight, until late Fri & Sat) In addition to loud music, Pentagone Nightclub, on the western side of town near the *gare routière*, has an outdoor café.

Other watering holes include the bar at **Hôtel Cercle de l'Amitié** (☎ 550 09 06; Route de Kara) and nearby **Experience 90** (Route de Kara).

## Getting There & Away

From the *gare routière* – one block west of the market, behind the Shell garage on Route de Bassar – minibuses go regularly to Bassar (CFA950, one hour), Kara (CFA1200,

1½ hours), Atakpamé (CFA2200, 2½ hours), Tchamba (CFA500, one hour) and Lomé (CFA4000, six hours). In front of the market on Route de Kara/Lomé is also a good place to pick up taxis headed north and south.

## BASSAR

Renowned for its hunters and iron smelters, Bassar is 57km northwest of Sokodé. It is the site of the Igname (yam) fire-dancing festival, which occurs in September, although there may be smaller versions of it at other times.

The best place to stay is the hilltop **Hôtel de Bassar** (☎ 663 00 81; bungalows from CFA6000; 🏠), a dreary place with a disco and an unapetising restaurant.

There are lots of food stalls in and around the market, and a number of friendly bars.

Bassar is easily reached by bush taxi from Sokodé (CFA950, one hour).

## BAFILO

The predominantly Muslim town of Bafilo is a friendly and smoky little spot, with a stall on every corner. In the dense forest 10km south of town is a Togolese icon, the **Aledjo Fault**, where the Route Internationale passes through an imposing break in the cliff.

Visit the **Bafilo falls**, 5km east of town, for a panoramic view of the surrounds. Swimming in the plunge pool is forbidden, but there's a wonderful 30-minute walk there, through fields, over streams and up overgrown stairs. Visit the chief in his compound, past the mosque, to get permission (CFA500).

At the **Groupeement Artisanal Tisserands** (☎ 660 02 26; 🕒 7am-5pm Mon-Fri), you can see weavers in action and buy *pagnes* of cloth.

The 15-room **Hôtel Maza Esso** (☎ 660 02 54; Route de Kara; r with shared bathroom & fan/air-con CFA3500/6500; 🏠) is a popular, eccentric hotel with woeful facilities. Meals cost CFA1000 to CFA2000. Ask the manager, Abel, to take you to his sister's *sodabe* den next door – see p777 for appropriate health warnings!

## KARA

pop 34,900

Laid out by the Germans on a spacious scale, Kara is the capital of northern Togo and a good base for trips to the Tamberma Valley and Mt Kabyé (see p798). Because President Eyadéma came from Pya, a Kabyé village about 20km to the north, he pumped a lot of money into Kara.

The Kabyé region is famous for the **Evala coming-of-age festival** in July. This involves rituals such as walking on hot coals, but the main event is *la lutte* (wrestling), in which greased-up men try to topple each other.

The Shell intersection, 500m east of town on Route Internationale, is where the sealed road east to Benin and west to Ghana begins.

## Information

**BIA-Togo** (☎ 660 61 45; Ave du 13 Janvier) Changes money – you can also try Hôtel de Kara.

**BTCL** (Ave Eyadéma; 🕒 7.30-11.30am & 2.30-4pm Mon-Fri, 7am-1pm Sat) Has an ATM.

**BTD** (☎ 660 61 06; Rue de l'Hôtel Kara).

**Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kara** North of the centre on Ave Eyadéma, just past the BTCL and UTB banks.

**Cyber Café Agri-Info** (☎ 661 02 16; per hr CFA300)

The best web café and it's open 24 hours a day.

**UTB** (☎ 660 60 10; Ave Eyadéma) Also changes money.

## Sleeping

### BUDGET

West of the market towards Hôtel Kara are several cheap hotels.

**La Détente** (☎ 660 14 22; s/d with fan CFA2300/3300, r with air-con CFA8000; 🏠) Just south of Ave du 13 Janvier is this proudly run auberge with quiet rooms and a lively bar. Reception is round the back.

**Hôtel le Relais** (☎ 660 01 88; r with fan/air-con CFA4500/10,500; 🏠) It's worth tracking down this hotel, north of Hôtel la Providence on dirt roads, for its clean comfortable rooms and bar-restaurant (meals CFA1900 to CFA2500) set around a lush garden. Despite what it says on the sign, there is no camping.

**Hôtel le Sourire** (☎ 926 13 55; Rue de l'Hôtel Kara; r with fan/air-con from CFA3000/6500, bungalow CFA12,000; 🏠) The best of the budget choices between the market and Hôtel Kara, le Sourire has homely rooms set around a leafy courtyard.

**Auberge la Lumiere** (☎ 660 03 25; Rue de l'Hôtel Kara; r CFA4000-6000) With its turquoise walls, la Lumiere is a basic, but quiet and breezy, hotel in a good location near Hôtel Kara.

**Hôtel Mini-Riz** (☎ 660 17 44; Ave Eyadéma; r with shared toilet & fan/air-con CFA5600/7600; 🏠) This central hotel, opposite Togotelecom, has musty rooms and a popular bar-restaurant where meals cost CFA1200 to CFA3500.

**Hôtel la Providence** (☎ 660 17 42; r with fan & shared toilet CFA5000, with air-con & private toilet CFA7000; 🏠) The former Hôtel Tombé, just off Route

de Maman N'Danida, is a little moth-eaten, but has clean, quiet rooms.

**Centre Communautaire des Affaires Sociales** (☎ 660 61 18; Route de Maman N'Danida; s/d/tr with fan CFA2500/3500/5000, dm shared/alone CFA1500/2000, d with air-con CFA4500, bungalow CFA5500; 🏠) This large centre has a ghostly feel and is a little far from the centre, but the rooms are clean, the staff are friendly, and there's a popular bar-restaurant (meals CFA1500 to CFA3000).

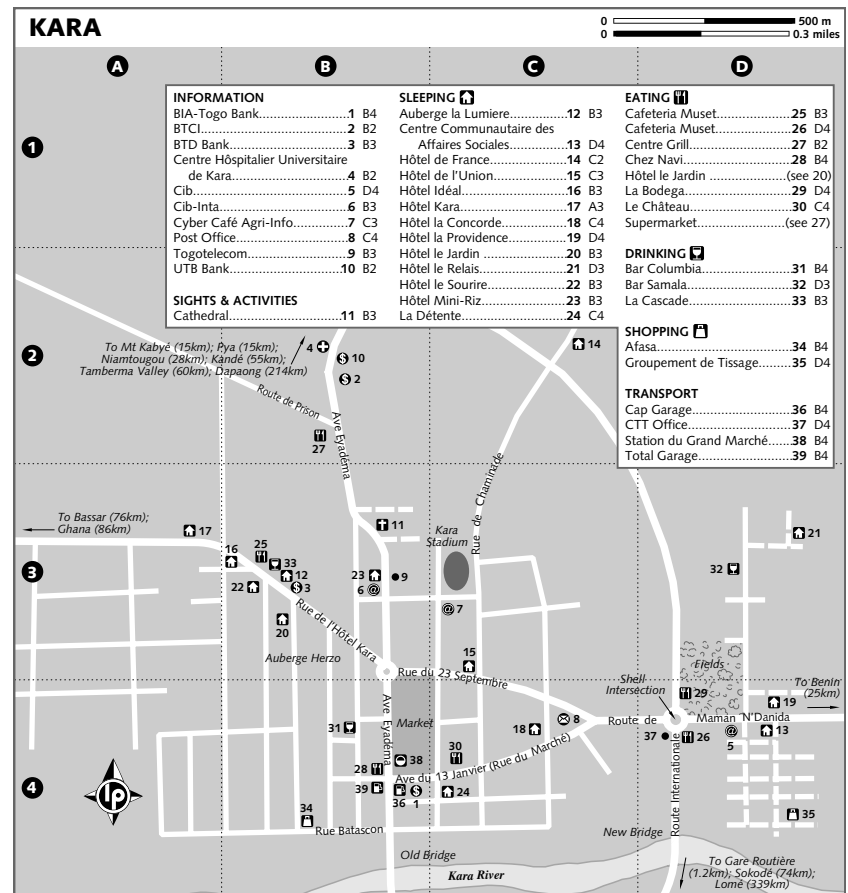
## MIDRANGE

**Hôtel le Jardin** (☎ 660 01 34; r CFA9500; 🏠) This delightful hotel, off Rue de l'Hôtel Kara, has a pleasant garden and small but very attractive rooms, as well as Kara's top restaurant, where meals are CFA1750 to CFA3000.

**Hôtel la Concorde** (☎ 660 19 00; off Ave du 13 Janvier; r with fan/air-con CFA6000/12,000; 🏠) One of the slickest operations in town, with TVs and black and white furniture in the air-con-equipped rooms, a rooftop bar, pricey European dishes in the restaurant (meals from CFA1900) and a central location near the post office.

**Hôtel de France** (☎ 660 03 42; off Rue de Chaminate; r with fan CFA3800, r with air-con CFA7800, r with air-con & bath CFA10,800; 🏠 P) The quiet Hôtel de France, north of town, has large, attractive rooms and a rooftop terrace where you can watch the sun set over the town and the hills. Meals are available for CFA900 to CFA2500.

**Hôtel de l'Union** (☎ 660 14 88; Rue du 23 Septembre; r with/without air-con & hot water 15,300/CFA12,300; 🏠) This classy hotel offers small but



modern rooms and group discounts. Meals are CFA1500 to CFA3000.

#### TOP END

**Hôtel Kara** (☎ 660 05 16; fax 660 62 42; Rue de l'Hôtel Kara; s/d from CFA18,500/21,500, s/d bungalow CFA24,000/26,000; meals CFA6000; ♿ ♿ ♿) Kara's best and largest hotel, although it has seen better days. The stone bungalows are the most appealing, with TVs and minibars. Hôtel Kara has volleyball and tennis courts, shops, a nightclub and a swimming pool, which nonguests can use for CFA1000. Meals are CFA600.

#### Eating

**Le Château** (☎ 660 60 27; Ave du 13 Janvier; meals CFA775-1975; ☎ Tue-Sun) Le Château, an attractive bar-restaurant with a terrace, is a perennial favourite. It serves ice-cold beers for CFA250 and has a large menu with everything from pepper steak to yam chips.

**La Bodega** (☎ 919 54 47; la-bodega@hotmail.com; Route Internationale; meals CFA700-3250; ☎ 10am-11pm, from 5pm Sat) The brainchild of an ex-Peace Corp worker, this is north Togo's café par excellence for Western faves such as cinnamon rolls, sandwiches, fries, onion rings and pizza. The shop sells Nutella and other vital supplies.

**Chez Navi** (☎ 660 19 02; Ave Eyadéma; meals CFA500) A traditional Togolese eatery, with yams stacked up the wall and sauce and *pâte* slopped out of metal cauldrons.

**Centre Grill** (Route de Prison; meals CFA975-1500) Popular with expats, this place has a menu including Western dishes like pizzas, hot-dogs and hamburgers, and Togolese dishes.

**Cafeteria Muset** (Rue de l'Hôtel Kara) Good for cheap, filling meals. Another branch is found just south of the Shell roundabout.

Also worth investigating are the bar-restaurants at **Hôtel Mini-Riz** (☎ 660 17 44; Ave Eyadéma) and, the best in town, **Hotel le Jardin** (☎ 660 01 34; off Rue de l'Hôtel Kara).

In addition to the large Tuesday market, there is a well-stocked **supermarket** (Route de Prison) next to Centre Grill.

#### Drinking

The small, tumbledown Bar Columbia is a laid-back hangout, as is Bar Samala near Hôtel le Relais. **La Bodega** (☎ 919 54 47) is a good source of cold beer and real coffee.

One of the hottest African nightclubs in town is at La Détente (see p796). The disco

at **Hôtel Kara** (admission CFA1000; ☎ Sat & holidays) is the best place to dance.

Nearby, the open-air **Cascade** (Rue de l'Hôtel de Kara) is a lively local haunt.

#### Shopping

**Groupement de Tissage** (☎ 660 12 92; ☎ 7am-12.30pm & 2.30-5pm) Sells high-quality fabrics and costumes made by local women. To get there, turn right at the sign, just east of Centre Communautaire des Affaires Sociales, and head south 250m on a dirt road.

**Afasa** (Rue Batascon; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 2.30-5pm Mon-Fri) At the other end of town, this women's group sells great bags, blankets and batiks made of off-cuts from others. They send the money back to their local villages and prices are about CFA1500 for bags and blankets; batiks are CFA25,000 to CFA30,000.

#### Getting There & Away

From the main *gare routière*, about 2km south of the town centre on Route Internationale, minibuses go regularly to Dapaong (CFA3800, four hours), Sokodé (CFA1200 1½ hours) and Lomé (CFA4600, seven hours).

For buses to Lomé and Sokodé, ask at the office of **CTT** (☎ 661 03 03) near the Shell roundabout; a good place to pick up bush taxis.

To get to the border with Ghana or Benin, and to local towns such as Bassar (CFA900, 1½ hours), Niamtougou (CFA550, 45 minutes) and Kandé (CFA900, 1½ hours), get a minibus or bush taxi from **Station du Grand Marché** (Ave Eyadéma) next to the market.

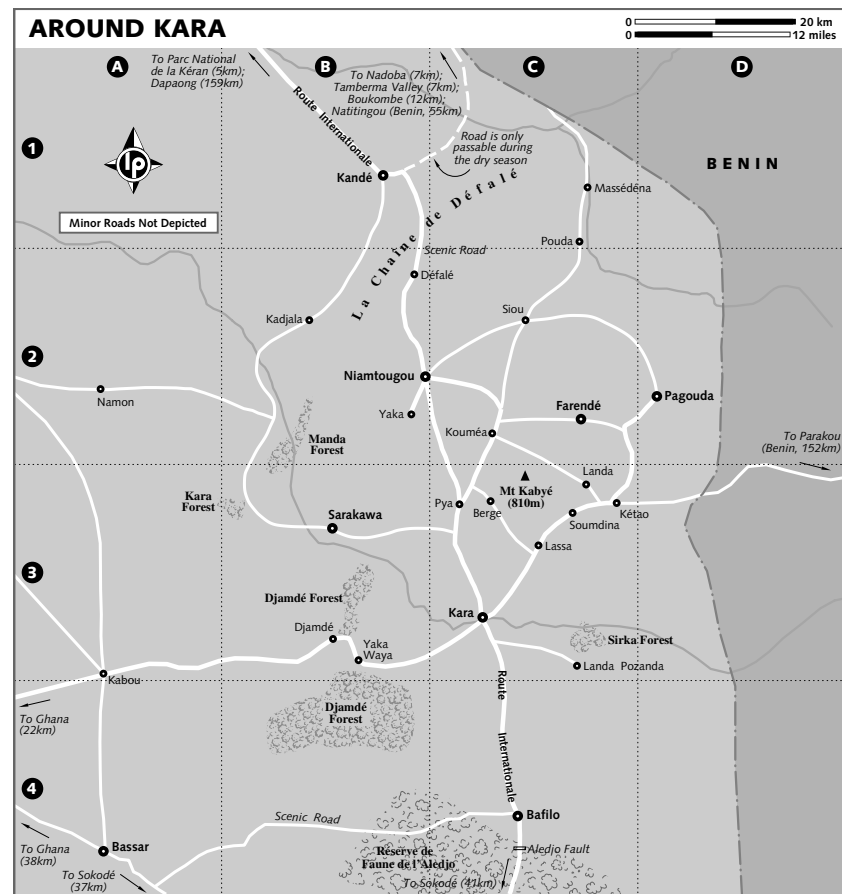
#### AROUND KARA

##### Mt Kabyé & Around

Mt Kabyé (810m) is 15km north of Kara, in a scenic area of Togo. Landa, 15km north-east of Kara, has a market brimming with local produce and textiles. Some 4km east, on the road to Benin, Kétao's Wednesday market has *tchoukoutou* stands, fetich stalls and even a meat and dog section.

About 20km north is Pagouda, where you will find the run-down **Hôtel de Pagouda** (chalets CFA5000; ♿). There is no restaurant so bring your own supplies or, better, stay overnight in Kara.

From Pagouda, head west into an area renowned for its *forgerons* (blacksmiths) and on to Pya, Gnassingbé Eyadéma's birthplace, on Route Internationale 14km north of Kara.



#### NIAMTOUGOU

This sleepy town, 28km north of Kara on Route Internationale, has a Sunday market, where you'll find a selection of baskets and ceramic bowls, and **Codhani** (☎ 665 02 36; ☎ 8am-1pm & 3-5.30pm, from 8.30am Sat & 9am Sun). This centre, 2km south, sells everything from T-shirts (CFA2500) to tablecloths (CFA8000) made by artisans with a disability. You can tour the workshop and watch them weaving, hammering, painting and boiling up wax.

Codhani has five attractive bungalows (shared bathroom CFA2500, or private bathroom CFA4000) and a bar-restaurant serving Togolese grub (CFA500 to CFA2400). A short walk south of Codhani, **Motel de Niamtougou** (☎ 665 02 41; s/d with air-con

CFA5400/6700; ♿) has surprisingly plush, spacious rooms and meals are CFA2000.

#### TAMBERMA VALLEY

The Tamberma Valley has a unique collection of fortified villages, founded in the 17th century by people fleeing the slave-grabbing forays of Benin's Dahomeyan kings (see the boxed text, p800).

To get to Nadoba – the region's capital, located on the Benin border – turn off the highway near the garage in Kandé, 27km north of Niamtougou, and head northeast for the same distance. If you have a 4WD, off-piste tracks into Benin pass through some of the most stunning mountain scenery in this part of West Africa.

## TAMBERMA COMPOUNDS

A typical Tamberma compound, called a *tata*, consists of a series of towers connected by a thick wall with a single entrance chamber, used to trap an enemy so he can be showered with arrows. The castle-like nature of these extraordinary structures helped ward off invasions by neighbouring tribes and, in the late 19th century, the Germans. As in the Somba people's *tata somba* nearby in Benin (see the boxed text, p117), life in a *tata* revolves around an elevated terrace of clay-covered logs, where the inhabitants cook, dry their millet and corn, and spend most of their leisure time.

Skilled builders, the Tamberma use only use clay, wood and straw – and no tools. The walls are banco, a mixture of unfired clay and straw, which is used as a binder. The towers, capped by picturesque conical roofs, are used for storing corn and millet. The other rooms are used for sleeping, bathing and, during the rainy season, cooking. The animals are kept under the terrace, protected from the rain.

There may be a fetish shrine in front of the compound, as well as animal skulls on the walls inside. You may see a man and his son going off to hunt with bows and arrows. Traditionally, when a man is old enough to start his own family, he shoots an arrow and, where it lands, builds his own *tata*.

The area is the closest thing northern Togo has to a tourist hotspot, with the overzealous guides. There is also the tourist organisation **Ajvdc** (☎ 667 20 11), which can show you around *tata* houses in Nadoba and the less touristic villages of Bassamba, Warengo and Pimini, and runs a *tata*-style **auberge** (r CFA2000) in Nadoba, with meals from CFA1500.

Nadoba's Wednesday market, as much a *tchoukoutou*-fuelled gathering as a commercial event, is worth a visit in itself. Visitors must buy tickets (CFA1500) from the **police post** (☎ 909 08 14; ☎ 7am–4pm), 2km from Kandé on the Nadoba road.

On the southern outskirts of Kandé, the 18-room **Auberge Oxygene** (☎/fax 667 01 19; r with fan/air-con CFA4500/6000; ☎), is a passable auberge with a lively bar. Meals are CFA1500.

Small shops and food stalls cluster opposite Kandé *gare routière*, and 300m north

is web café **Cib-Inta** (☎ 667 01 31; per hr CFA400; ☎ 7.30am–11.30pm Mon–Sat).

Minibuses shuttle between Nadoba and Kandé on Wednesday and Friday, the towns' market days (CFA500). A chartered taxi for the day from Kara to visit a number of the villages costs about CFA15,000 (after much haggling). Alternatively, you could hike 20km northeast of Kandé to Warengo, then another 8km to Nadoba. Be sure to take plenty of water.

## PARC NATIONAL DE LA KÉRAN

A visit to what remains of this park, which has been colonised by farmland, is worthwhile during the dry season.

The highway from Kandé to Dapaong goes through the park. You probably won't see many animals, but there are a number of good tracks through the park, marked on the map at the now-defunct Motel de Naboulgou, on the highway 32km north of Kandé. The main track, which heads southwest from Naboulgou, is the best to follow during the wet season because it remains dry for the most part.

To see hippos less than 50m away, hire a *taxi-moto* for about CFA1800 in Sansanné-Mango, on the highway at the northern edge of the park, 71km south of Dapaong. The best times to spot them are dawn and dusk, and the best places are through the fields north of town at the new dam, and 2km south of town at the River Oti.

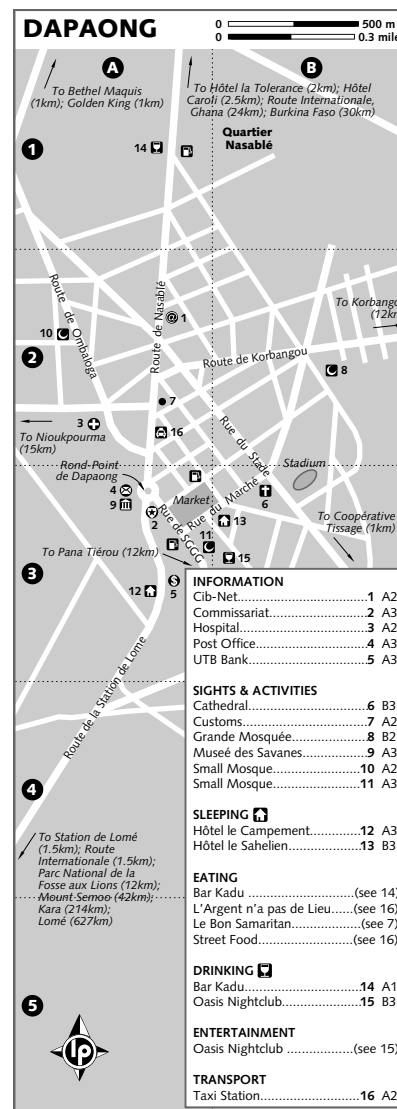
**Campement de Mango** (r with fan & shared bathroom CFA3000), next to the prefecture north of town, is clean and friendly. There is no restaurant but there are two *buvettes* opposite the *gare routière*.

## DAPAONG

pop 31,800

This lively little town is a West African melting pot, with the Burkinabé and Ghanaian borders both within 30km. Its attractive, hilly setting provides a welcome break in the otherwise flat landscape.

The Saturday market and the small **Musée des Savanes** (admission CFA1000; ☎ 9am–12.30pm & 3–6.30pm Tue–Fri) are worth a look, as is the **Coopérative Tissage** (☎ 770 86 05; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Sat) next to Radio Maria. It sells distinctive batiks, made by handicapped local women using Burkinabé and Beninese cotton.



Nearby hiking opportunities include the tiny **Parc National de la Fosse aux Lions**, 12km south of town, and the remarkable **cliffside fortress** (see the boxed text, p802).

For Western goods, go to Hope store at the market. **UTB** (☎ 770 81 46; Route de la Station de Lomé) has Western Union facilities; banks close on Monday and open Saturday morning.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hôtel le Campement** (☎ 770 80 55; Route de la Station de Lomé; r with fan/air-con CFA8600/13,800; ☎) Dapaong's best accommodation. Rooms are pleasant and spacious, if rather '70s looking, with interior bathrooms and shared toilets. The excellent but pricey French bar-restaurant boasts a generous selection of extravagant desserts; meals are from CFA3500 to CFA4000.

**Hôtel le Sahélien** (☎ 770 81 84; Rue du Marché; s/d with fan CFA3700/4700, with air-con CFA5600/6600; ☎) Next to the market in the centre of town, the Sahélien has reasonable rooms and a bar. A woman at the gate sells cheap fish and rice.

**Hôtel la Tolerance** (☎ 770 89 48; r with fan/air-con CFA3800/5800; ☎) This quiet place, 3km north of town, has 13 rooms with a stylish blue colour scheme and a terrace bar-restaurant.

**Hôtel Caroli** (☎ 770 81 61; r with fan/air-con from CFA4500/6500; ☎) This quiet place, among the trees near Hôtel la Tolerance has laundry and car washing services, and rooms with balconies, hot water and satellite TV. Meals are available for CFA1500 to CFA3500.

**Bethel Maquis** (☎ 770 88 38) Behind Auberge Idriss north of the centre, this place serves delicious Western food (meals from CFA1500) in a tranquil garden.

Among the cafeterias and stalls on Route de Nasabé around the taxi station, **L'Argent n'a pas de Lieu** (Route de Nasabé) serves a fine omelette. **Mama Cap** (Route de Nasabé) runs a cracking street stall at the Cap garage.

## Drinking

Near the Cap garage, the rough-and-ready **Bar Kadu** (Route de Nasabé) also has cheap Togolese and European food. Otherwise, head to **Le Bon Samaritan** (Route de Nasabé), near customs, or the market area.

To dance, get down to the glitzy **Golden King** (☎ Fri & Sat), near Bethel Maquis, or **Oasis Nightclub** (☎ 770 82 22; off Rue de Marché; admission CFA500; ☎ from 10pm Sat).

## Getting There & Away

Taxis leave the station on Route de Nasabé for Sinkasse on the Burkinabé border (CFA750), from where transport heads to Ouagadougou.

From Station de Lomé on Route Internationale, 2km south of the centre, bush taxis head to Kara (CFA3800, four hours) and Lomé (CFA8000, 12 hours).

### CASTLE IN THE CLIFF

Halfway up a cliff in the remote mountain ranges 42km southwest of Dapaong is an amazing minifortress.

During the 19th century the Chokossi Empire, centred around Sansanné-Mango, established a feudal empire over much of northern Togo. The Moba people, who lived on and around the plateau, resented this, and built cliffside stores on **Mt Semoo** to hide their possessions – and themselves – from Chokossi soldiers and tax collectors. The cliff's ledge provided perfect natural protection.

While the Moba people had to scale the cliff using tree roots and rocky ledges, there is now a protected steel ladder. At the long-since abandoned site you'll find a series of large conical clay containers, which were used to store food supplies, as well as the sleeping and cooking areas.

To reach the escarpment, follow Route Internationale south of Dapaong for about 16km. At the signs for Prefecture de Tanjouare and Aide et Action, turn right onto a dirt road and follow it 6km west to the village of Goundoga, where you can hire a guide (CFA2000). The hike to Chateau Semoo takes three hours return – bring plenty of water.

If you have a 4WD, it is possible to drive the 16km to the top of the escarpment along rough tracks from Nano (4km beyond Goundoga), where the chief will ask you to buy a ticket for the site (CFA2000). Visitors must also pay about the same amount to the chief of Nagou, near the site.

It's possible to find a shared taxi to Goundoga or Nano on Thursday, market day, but it's easier to hire a taxi to take you, wait while you walk, and then drive you back to Dapaong (CFA8000).

In Bogou, about 1km before Goundoga, is **Auberge Mont Djabir** (r without fan CFA2000), a friendly auberge where there are six rooms (with no electricity) and food is available.

## TOGO DIRECTORY

### ACCOMMODATION

Owing perhaps to its undeveloped tourist industry, Togolese accommodation is cheap even by West African standards. Expect to pay CFA3000 to CFA6000 for single or double budget rooms, CFA7000 to CFA13,000 for midrange and CFA15,000 to CFA25,000 for top end. In Lomé, prices are generally higher, with budget rooms costing up to CFA10,000, and the top end hotels, owned by international chains, charging Western rates – CFA70,000 to CFA120,000.

Top-end hotels with swimming pools and other amenities can be found in Lomé, at Lake Togo and in Kara.

### ACTIVITIES

There are plenty of hiking opportunities in Togo, particularly in the Kpalimé region (see the boxed text, p790) and around the national parks.

For swimming, there are some good beaches near Lomé and at Aného, but the currents can be dangerous (see p786). Several of the top-end hotels have swimming pools and tennis courts. Water sports can be arranged at Lake Togo, and horse riding can be organised in Lomé (see p780).

### BOOKS

*The Village of Waiting*, by George Packer, is an interesting observation on life in Togo. It is one of the best books yet on the Peace Corps experience, covering a volunteer's two years in Lavié, and it's quite candid about the country's autocratic politics.

*Do They Hear You When You Cry?* is Fauziya Kassindja's harrowing account of her flight from Togo, where she was facing female circumcision, to more Western forms of brutality in detention centres and prisons in Germany and the USA.

*Hustling is not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar Girl* follows the adventures of Hawa, a feisty hustler and 'pay-as-you-go wife', whose tales of Togo and Ghana were transcribed by musicologist John M Chernoff in the late '70s.

### BUSINESS HOURS

In general, you will find that information places are open from 7am to noon and from 2.30pm to 5.30pm Monday to Friday. Eating out is normally possible for lunch (12.30pm to 2.30pm) and dinner (6pm to 9pm), Monday to Sunday, while you can usually get a drink between 11am and midnight Monday to Saturday. Nightclubs are commonly open from 10pm until late Friday and Saturday. As a rule shops keep the following hours: 8am to

12.30pm and 2.30 to 7pm Monday through to Friday, and until 12.30pm Saturday.

### CHILDREN

In Lomé, activities such as horse riding are available through the top-end hotels, and Greenfield restaurant screens children's films in its outdoor cinema (see p783).

### COURSES

There is a Prannic healing school in Lomé (p781), and classes in singing, drumming and traditional medicine in Klouto (see p791).

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Petty theft and muggings, sometimes violent, are rife in Lomé, especially on the beach and near the Grand Marché (see p779). *Taximotos* in the city may be convenient, but they are dangerous. Avoid large groups of people, and seek advice if you're planning to attend a street party. If you have to walk around Lomé after dark, stick to well-lit thoroughfares.

Police roadblocks in the countryside are common and tiresome, but generally harmless. Carry your passport with you. Togo's roads are a hair-raising experience, particularly north of Kara and at night.

### EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

#### Togolese Embassies & Consulates

In West Africa, Togo has embassies in Ghana (p396) and Nigeria (p666).

Outside West Africa, Togolese embassies and consulates include the following:

#### PRACTICALITIES

- The government daily *Togo Presse* is in French, with some Kabyé and Ewe articles. Opposition weeklies include *Le Combat du Peuple*. Newspapers can be found in the racks at major road intersections in Lomé. Cultural centres and big hotels may have old international newspapers and magazines.
- Radio Lomé and Radio Kara are the state stations. Commercial stations include Radio Nostalgie and Radio Zephyr.
- The pay TV provider is Media Plus, and the state channel is TV Togolaise (TVT).
- The electricity supply is temperamental outside the main towns.

**Belgium** (☎ 32 770 17 91; 264 Ave de Tervuren, Brussels)  
**Canada** (☎ 1 613 238 59 16; fax 1 613 235 64 25; 12 Chemin Range, Ottawa)

**Denmark** (☎ 45 33 93 84 74; fax 45 33 33 09 18, Nyhaun 31k, 1051 Copenhagen)

**Finland** (☎ 358 941 333 200; fax 358 941 333 222; Kanavaranta 7D, 00100 Helsinki)

**France** (☎ 33 1 43 80 12 13; fax 33 1 56 26 65 10; 8 Rue Alfred Roll, 75017 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 49 30 49 31 34 43; Grabbealle 43, 13156 Berlin)

**Holland** (☎ /fax 31 36 5378 981; Reine Claudestraat 6, 1326 JE Almere)

**Sweden** (☎ 46 31 13 95 54; fax 46 31 13 48 23; Karl Gustavsgatan 4, 41125 Göteborg)

**Switzerland** (☎ 41 62 751 50 00; fax 41 62 751 60 00; Breitbachstrasse 8, 4802 Strengebach)

**USA** (☎ 1 202 234 42 12; fax 1 202 232 31 90; 2208 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008)

In Africa, Togo also has representation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Libya. Visit [www.republicoftogo.com](http://www.republicoftogo.com) for more details.

### Embassies & Consulates in Togo

Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Libya and Senegal have representation in Lomé. For more details, check out [www.republicoftogo.com](http://www.republicoftogo.com).

**France** Consulate (☎ 221 25 76; [www.consulfrance-lome.org](http://www.consulfrance-lome.org); Ave General de Gaulle; ☎ 8am-12pm); Embassy (☎ 221 25 71; [www.ambafrance-tg.org](http://www.ambafrance-tg.org); 13 Ave du Golfe, BP 337)

**Germany** (☎ 221 23 38; fax 222 18 88; Blvd de la Marina)

**Ghana** (☎ 221 31 94; 8 Rue Paulin Eklou, Tokoin; ☎ 8am-2pm)

**Nigeria** (☎ 221 34 55; 311 Blvd du 13 Janvier)

**UK** British Nationals should contact the British High Commission in Accra (p396).

**USA** (☎ 221 29 91; fax 221 79 52; cnr Rue Kouenou & Tokmake; ☎ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-12.30pm Fri)

### FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Special events include Evala, the coming-of-age and wrestling festival in the Kabyé region around Kara, in July (p796); the political symposium in Kpalimé (p788) and the country's harvest festivals, notably Dzawuwu-Za in Klouto (p791) and Ayiza in Tsévié, in August; and the Igname (yam) festival in Bassar in September (p796). There are many others; contact the tourist office in Lomé for details. International



Women's Day (8 March) and World Aids Day (1 December) also see events taking place.

## HOLIDAYS

Public holidays include the following:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Meditation Day** 13 January

**Easter March/April**

**National Day** 27 April

**Labour Day** 1 May

**Day of the Martyrs** 21 June

**Christmas Day** 25 December

See p818 for a table of dates of Islamic holidays.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Republic of Togo** ([www.republicoftogo.com](http://www.republicoftogo.com)) The best site, with plenty of country information as well as news and travel links.

**Togo Globe** ([www.togodaily.com](http://www.togodaily.com)) A useful English language newspaper online.

## LANGUAGE

French is the official language. The main African languages are Ewe, Mina and Kabyé; the latter being the language of the current president.

## MAPS

The 1:500,000 *Carte Générale du Togo* (1991, L'Institut Géographique National) is the best and most recent country map; it's available at bookshops in Lomé for about CFA7500. The Direction de la Promotion Touristique in Lomé gives out an old-but-reasonable road map.

## MONEY

The unit of currency is the West African CFA franc.

Travellers cheques can be exchanged in Lomé and most major cities, but rates are about 3% to 5% lower than for cash. The main branch of BTCL, on Blvd du 13 Janvier in Lomé, offers cash advances on Visa, but it is quicker to use its ATM, which accepts Visa only. Nowhere accepts MasterCard. BTCL's branches in Lomé and the other cities generally have ATMs.

Money-changers can be found in most border towns. The black marketeers on Rue du Commerce in Lomé will likely short-change you.

## PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Do not photograph or film government buildings – travellers have been beaten by the police for photographing the presidential palace. See also p823.

## POST

Postcards and letters cost CFA550 to Europe, CFA650 to Australasia and CFA660 to North America. The poste restante service at the main post office in Lomé is reliable.

## SOLO TRAVELLERS

Lone travellers should be on their guard in Lomé as they may be more susceptible to muggings than groups.

## TELEPHONE & FAX

Make international calls (and faxes) at telecom offices, or the private telephone agencies in every town. The latter charge from CFA200 per minute to North America and Europe, and CFA300 to Australasia.

The Togocel and Telecel networks, owned by the same company, cover 80% of Togo. It is CFA12,000 to get an account and CFA5000 for a recharge. Other networks also work here. It costs CFA40 to send a local SMS, and CFA150 to send one internationally.

There are no telephone area codes in Togo.

## TIME

Togo is on GMT – one hour behind Benin, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon, and the same as the rest of mainland West Africa.

## VISAS

Visas are required for everyone except nationals of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) countries. Currently one-week extendable visas (CFA10,000) are issued at major border crossings with Ghana (Aflao/Lomé), Benin (Hilakondji) and Burkina Faso (Sinkasse).

Of these three countries, only Ghana has a Togolese embassy (p396), which issues visas for up to one year within hours, starting at CFA20,000 for one month; payment must be in CFAs or US Dollars. In Benin and Burkina Faso, it is easier obtaining a visa at the border than via the French embassy.

The **Service Immigration Togolaise** (☎ 250 78 56; Route d'Atakpamé; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 2.30-6pm), near the GTA building 8km north of Lomé centre,

issues 30-day visa extensions in three days, though it may be possible to speed up this process. They cost about CFA10,000 (depending on the length and type of visa) and four photos are required. It's worth having a certified photocopy of your passport while your application is being processed, in case you encounter any awkward policemen.

Inquire at the French consulate in Lomé (see p803) about the five-country Visa Touristique Entente, which covers one entry to each of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Togo. The consulate also issues visas for Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire.

There is no Beninese embassy in Lomé, but 48-hour transit visas (CFA10,000) are issued at the Hillakondji border. The Direction Emigration Immigration in Cotonou issues 30-day extensions (CFA12,000), which take 48 hours to issue (see p123).

The Ghanaian embassy in Lomé (see p803) issues one-month visas within 48 hours for CFA12,000 (less for Commonwealth citizens); four photos are needed.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

In the predominantly Muslim northern towns of Sokodé, Bafilo and Kara, long dresses and sleeves are recommended. As in most countries, avoid spots such as *tchoukoutou* bars if you don't take kindly to lewd offers of marriage and the like. For more information and advice, see p828.

# TRANSPORT IN TOGO

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Entering Togo

Getting into Togo is a breeze. You can pick up seven-day visas on the border, and embassies issue 30-day visas within 24 hours. Border guards and embassy officials are relatively friendly and communicative. Officially you need a Yellow Fever certificate, but it's rarely asked for. The only problem is that Togolese embassies are thin on the ground (p803).

### Air

Togo's international airport is 7km north-east of the centre of Lomé.

**Air France** (AF; ☎ 223 23 23; [www.airfrance.com/tg](http://www.airfrance.com/tg); hub Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris) has the most frequent and reliable services between Togo and Europe.

For confirming flights or ticket sales the following airlines have offices in Lomé:

**Air France** (AF; ☎ 223 23 23; Immeuble Taba) Also represents KLM.

**Air Gabon International** (GN; ☎ 221 05 73; Immeuble Taba) Hub: Libreville.

**Air Ivoire** (VU; ☎ 221 67 15; Immeuble Taba) Hub: Abidjan.

**Alitalia** (AZ; ☎ 222 01 08; cnr Rues de Kouromé & Tokmake) Hubs: Milan and Rome. Also represents Delta Air, Korean Air, Aeromexico and Czech Air.

**American Airlines** (AA; ☎ 221 10 16; Immeuble Taba) Hub: Fort Worth.

**Cathay Pacific** (CX; ☎ 221 67 15; Immeuble Taba) Hub: Hong Kong.

**Ethiopian Airlines** (ET; ☎ 221 70 74; Immeuble Taba) Hub: Addis Ababa.

**Ghana International Airlines** (GH; ☎ 221 56 91; Immeuble Taba) Hub: Accra.

**Point-Afrique** (6V/DR; ☎ 220 57 47; [www.point-afrique.com](http://www.point-afrique.com)) Hub: Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris. This is a budget alternative, a charter service that is opening up West Africa to European travellers. Flights are operated by Axis Airways and Air Mediterranee.

**Virgin Nigeria Airways** (VK; ☎ 221 58 26; Rue Tomaké) Hub: Lagos.

## Land

### BORDER CROSSINGS

#### Benin

Bush taxis regularly ply the road between Gare de Cotonou in Lomé and Cotonou (CFA3000, three hours) via Hilakondji (CFA800, one hour), while **STIF** (☎ 221 38 48; Gare de STIF) has daily buses to Cotonou (CFA3000, three hours). Beninese border officials are more bureaucratic and less approachable than their Togolese counterparts.

There are also border crossings at Tohoum (east of Notsé), Kétao (northeast of Kara) and Nadoba (in the Tamberma Valley), but public transport is infrequent and Beninese visas are not readily available at the borders.

#### Burkina Faso

The best way to get to Ouagadougou from Lomé is by bus. With four companies making the journey – and continuing to Bobo-Dioulasso and Bamako – there's a service leaving every day (see p170).

Minibuses and bush taxis to Ouagadougou go daily from Gare d'Agbalépedo in northern Lomé (CFA15,000, 24 hours). Given that it's 627km from Lomé to Dapaong, Benin's northern-most town, you may want to break

up the journey. From Dapaong, it's cheapest and easiest to get a taxi to Sinkasse, 40km away on the border, or Bitou, 40km into Burkina Faso. From there it's CFA5000 to Ouagadougou by taxi. Sinkasse's market day, Sunday, is a good time to find taxis.

The border, open from 6am to 6pm, is beset on both sides by frequent police check points.

### Ghana

From central Lomé it is only 2km – CFA1000 in a hired taxi – to the border (open 6am to 10pm), where you cross to Aflao and can pick up *tro-tros* (minibuses) to Accra. STIF's Lomé–Abidjan buses go via Accra (CFA5000, three hours). In addition to the black marketeers, Global Forex in Aflao buys and sells Cedis and CFA.

There is a quieter crossing at Klouto, northwest of Kpalimé. A dearth of public transport and bad roads make the crossing difficult, but not impossible, at Badou, Nat-chamba (accessible from Sokodé and Kara) and northwest of Dapaong at Sinkasse.

### BUS

Many companies ply the route between Lomé and Bamako (from CFA20,000, 48 hours) via Ouagadougou (from CFA12,500, 18 hours) and Bobo-Dioulasso (from CFA15,000). These include the following:

**SKV** (☎ 220 03 01; 241 Blvd du 13 Janvier)

**SNTV** (☎ 220 81 21; Gare de STIF; Blvd de la Marina)

Also goes to Niamey (CFA23200, 23 hours).

**Sogabef** (☎ 924 23 88; Gare de STIF; Blvd de la Marina)

**STIF** (☎ 221 38 48; Gare de STIF; Blvd de la Marina) Also has services to Cotonou (CFA3000, three hours) and Abidjan (CFA24,000, 15 hours), with an armed escort in the Côte d'Ivoire.

**TST** (☎ 929 01 90; Blvd du 13 Janvier)

## GETTING AROUND

### Bicycle

Abattoir Bicycles in Lomé sells bog-standard bikes (see p780).

### Bush Taxi & Minibus

Togo has an extensive network of six-, nine- and 15-place bush taxis and minibuses held together with rope. Travel is often agonisingly slow, less because of the police checkpoints and the poor roads than the drivers' inability to pass anyone without giving them a lift. During fee negotiations,

drivers often cite rising fuel prices – this is a genuine problem for Togo (see below).

Paying for two places gives you the front seat to yourself, as well as shortening the time you have to wait for the taxi to fill. The quickest and most comfortable, although most expensive, option are the 'express' taxis that travel between the major towns, leaving early in the morning.

There is occasionally a surcharge for luggage, based on size. From Lomé to Kpalimé, for example, a 65-litre rucksack is CFA500.

### Car & Motorcycle

The sealed Route Internationale is in quite good condition as far north as Kara, but thereafter it disintegrates. The roads linking Kpalimé, Badou and Bassar with the Route Internationale are sealed. Road safety is not one of Togo's strong points, so be alert behind the wheel – especially at night, when you may meet vehicles without headlights.

Cars can be rented from Avis in Lomé (p786). If you're driving, you need an International Driving Permit. There are frequent police checkpoints.

Petrol stations are plentiful in the major towns. Unfortunately fuel prices are on the rise, thanks to the political turmoil in Togo's major supplier, Nigeria.

### Local Transport

#### TAXI

Taxis are abundant in Lomé, even at night, and have no meters. Fares in the city centre are CFA200 for a shared taxi and CFA700 nonshared (more after 6pm). A taxi by the hour should cost CFA2500.

#### TAXI-MOTOS

*Taxi-motos*, also called *zemi-johns*, are everywhere. A journey across town costs about CFA100 – more in Lomé. They are also a handy way to get to remote locations in the bush, but tell your driver to go slow – particularly in busy Lomé, where there are daily *taxi-moto* crashes.

#### Tours

Lomé-based **Henry Loïc** (☎ 927 52 03; africotoy@hotmail.com), an enthusiastic French biologist and off-roader, offers 4WD 'raids' of the surrounding countryside and countries (€45 per person per day, or €150 for four people per day).

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