



Ghana Guidebook





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Welcome to Mercy Ships! We are grateful you will be serving alongside us, joining our mission to bring hope and healing to those who need it most. We are thrilled to return to Ghana for the 5th time!

This guidebook is your addendum to the primary [Volunteer Guidebook](#), with Ghana specific details. Within this guidebook, you will find all the details you need to prepare for your time with us in Ghana. We are so excited for you to join us in this transformational work.

*Meet Matthew, our
Managing Director*

Ghana Country Information

Ghana, officially known as the Republic of Ghana, is a West African country situated on the Gulf of Guinea. Ghana shares borders with Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, and Togo. Ghana's history is rich and complex, spanning ancient empires, colonial rule, and a significant role in modern African politics, making it a key player in West Africa's development.

Ghana covers 239,567 km² with diverse ecologies, from coastal savannas to tropical rainforests. Ghana is the 13th most populous country in West Africa.

Key Details

Capital City: Accra

Currency: Ghanaian cedi

Population: over 35 million

Population under age 25: 42.4%

Primary religions: 71.3% Christian
1/5 Muslim
1/10 practice traditional faiths or no religion

Primary languages: English (official)

Physicians per 1,000 people: 0.27



Field Service Plans

Mercy Ships plans to be in Ghana until June 2027.

Planned Programmatic Specialties:

- Maxillofacial & Ear Nose and Throat
- Pediatrics
- Pediatric Orthopedics
- Reconstructive Plastics
- Women's Health
- Ophthalmology
- Selected General Surgery
- Dental

What to Expect in Ghana

Cultural Awareness

- Ghanaians like to talk about their first president building Tema.
- Strong Christian culture: it isn't uncommon to have a prayer at a government meeting and have Christian music playing in the hotel lobby, supermarket, or restaurant.
- Melcom Supermarket stores have most necessities with pricing vs. informal markets, where any sign of wealth may increase the price.

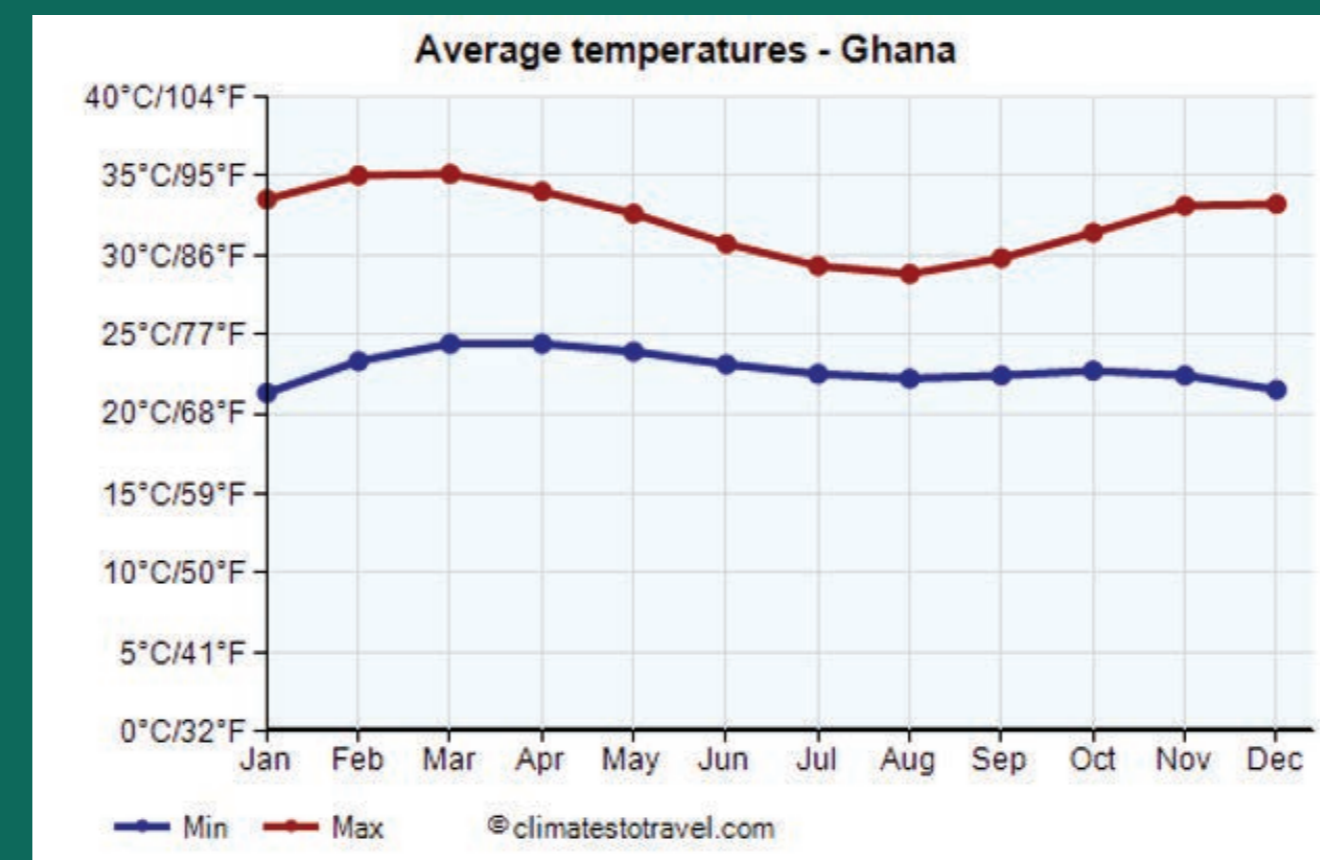
Security

The port is guarded by security, and we also have our security team on board. When ashore, it is important to practice safe habits – travel in groups of two or more, obey the curfew, and utilize common sense in terms of where and with whom you go.

Weather

Despite regional variations, Ghana experiences high temperatures and significant rainfall throughout the year, with an average annual temperature of 26.6°C (79.9°F). The country is characterized by two main seasons: the wet and the dry season. However, rainfall patterns vary considerably from the coast to the north. The south typically has two rainy seasons, from April to June and from September to November, while the north has one, usually from April to October.

Weather in Ghana is fairly warm year-round, however, we advise you to bring a sweater or light jacket to wear on board as the air conditioning can get chilly.



Shore Leave

Our crew are welcomed (and encouraged!) to explore our host country. Shore leave may be restricted at times during the field service, depending on local epidemiology or safety concerns. This is always a dynamic situation, so any restrictions or changes will be communicated to the crew by the Captain.

Crew Clinic

The Crew Clinic provides primary healthcare and urgent healthcare for all Crew on board. The Crew Clinic is staffed by a doctor and nurse that are available to support crew who are feeling poorly. The Crew Clinic functions similarly to a general practitioner or family practice.

Language Phrases

Ghana is a multilingual nation with about 80 native languages spoken! English is the official language. However, Akan (Twi) is the local language spoken.

Here are some Twi phrases to learn.

Welcome (hello) Akwaaba

Thank you Meda wo ase; medaase

How are you? Ete sen?

I am well Me ho ye

Please Mepa wo kyew; mepaakyew

Sorry Kose;kafra

Farewell Nante yie

Yes Aane

No dabi

Where is the toilet? Agyananbea no wo he?



Dress Code

	Appropriate to Wear	Inappropriate to Wear	More Information
Business/office wear (for non-uniform, internal-facing roles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart-casual trousers, skirts, and dresses • Smart-casual blouses and shirts, including polo shirts • Suit jackets • Smart-causal shoes. Smart sandals are appropriate for women. Smart trainers/sneakers can be worn during normal office work. • Jeans • Flip-flops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorts • Casual T-shirts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knees should be covered when standing and sitting for both men and women. Dresses and skirts should be mid-thigh or longer. Skirts that fall between mid-thigh and knee should be worn with leggings or opaque tights/hose underneath. • Sleeveless tops with wide straps are fine. • Men are not required to wear business suits and/or neckties but they can be worn if preferred.
Official meetings and functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart trousers, skirts, and dresses • Smart blouses and shirts • Suit jackets • Smart shoes. • Smart sandals are appropriate for women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorts • Flip-flops • Jeans • Casual T-shirts • Trainers/sneakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men should wear a shirt and necktie if the meeting is formal. • Women should generally wear dresses or skirts, rather than trousers. • If African fabrics/styles are worn, they must be suitable for a business environment. Get advice from a local crew member if unsure.
In the Hospital, in Reception, and during patient interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart-casual trousers, skirts, and dresses • Smart-casual blouses and shirts, including polo shirts • T-shirts • Flip-flops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorts (of any length) • Leggings • Sportswear 	
Casual wear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeans • T-shirts • Flip-flops and trainers/sneakers • Shorts should be loose-fitting and knee-length or longer • Leggings where worn with a tunic-style top to mid-thigh or lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very tight or high-cut shorts ('running' shorts) • Spaghetti-strap tops 	
Exercising in the on board gym and on crew-only decks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lycra/Spandex leggings and tops • Exercise shirts • Basketball jersey-style tops • Short 'running' shorts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compression wear worn without any covering • Sports bras worn without any covering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight-fitting exercise gear should be covered up when walking through the ship.

Travel to Ghana

Arranging your travel

Once your Onboarding Specialist has given you clearance to do so, use the service dates in your offer letter as your date of arrival and departure for your transport. We recommend flights take place on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays.

No Monday/Tuesday arrival/departure flights for first time crew.

When booking flights, please note that transportation services provided by the Purser's office are available after 0900.

*Do not book flights arriving between 2130-0800

*Do not book flights departing between 0001-1130

If you book flights within the time frames above, you will have an extended wait time at the airport or will have to fund your own 45-60 minute transport or stay at a local hotel.

Ticket refund policy

Flexibility is key! Please do not book an arrival or departure flight on a date other than what is stated in your offer letter without first receiving approval from your Onboarding Specialist. Because the ships' schedules can change, we strongly recommend that all crew purchase changeable and/or refundable tickets.

Mercy Ships cannot offer refunds or financial assistance with extra costs incurred for changing or cancelling airline tickets when caused by a change in the ships' schedules or from unexpected travel restrictions - unless conditions pre-defined by our funded Crew Travel Policy are met. Contact your Onboarding Specialist for details.



Arrival by Plane

All flights will arrive in and depart from Accra International Airport (ACC). Then you will be driven to the port in Tema.

Questions?

We know arranging travel can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be - our travel team is here to help. Reach out to our team at travel@mercyships.org.

What to Expect Upon Arrival

Arriving at Accra International Airport

Upon arrival at Accra International Airport (ACC), depending on your airline, you will either walk or take a bus to the terminal where you will go through immigration. Be sure to have any immigration documents provided to you by Mercy Ships, along with your passport, ready for presentation to the immigration officer. Your passport will be stamped (check for correct dates!).

After Immigration, you'll head to the baggage area. Collect your bags from the belt and proceed to Customs and place your bags through the scanner. Following the scanner, an official may ask you questions they have the right to inspect your luggage if they wish.

- After leaving the aircraft, follow signs for Customs/ Immigration
- At the first booth on the lower level, you may be asked for your Yellow Fever immunization booklet (Yellow Fever immunization is required to enter Ghana)
- The next booth is for immigration – look for “Other Nationalities,” “ECOWAS,” and “Ghanaian,” whichever applies to you.
- Then follow signs to baggage claim. *Free luggage carts are available if needed that you can take out to the parking lot

- Once you have your baggage, proceed to Customs
 - RED if you have something to declare
 - GREEN if you have nothing to declare
 - You may be asked questions and the officials have the right to inspect your luggage if they wish. Be polite and answer their inquiries. You will not have to confirm your luggage claim checks with your actual luggage.

Transportation

- Then proceed out the big doors – this outside area is covered from the sun and rain.
- A Mercy Ships representative will be there to meet you in the arrivals area and transport you to the ship. They will be holding a sign with the Mercy Ships logo, so you won't miss them!

Useful tips:

- Free WiFi is available in Terminal 3 “KIA FREE WIFI,” which may require watching a short advertisement. WiFi coverage outside the terminal might not be available.
- Before departing, purchase a SIM or similar communication plan. You can exchange currency in the airport.



Travel Resources

Registering with Foreign Affairs

Many countries allow travelers to register with the foreign affairs office (or national equivalent) and include the following types of benefits: Receive the latest safety and security information for your destination country, helping you make informed decisions regarding your travel plans. Allows your nation's embassy to contact you in an emergency situation - be it a natural disaster, civil unrest, pandemic, or family emergency.

We encourage all volunteers to take this step for additional protection and peace of mind while away.

Tips to Avoid Jet-lag

Here are some tricks to reduce the effect it might have on you:

- Prepare at home before your departure - set your watch to match your new time zone and customize your sleep-wake rhythm. Ghana is on GMT.
- Don't eat a lot of food (overeat/snack).
- Do drink a lot of water and avoid other beverages.
- Go out in the sun or move around if you get sleepy during the day.

- Make your room as dark as possible if you have trouble sleeping at night (and remove other distractions - phones, television, etc.).
- Try taking a melatonin tablet before bed during your first week after travel, as it will help induce natural sleep as you adjust to the new time zone.

Emergency Contacts

Save these phone numbers in case you need to contact the ship while you're traveling:

+1 430 235 4535 - Primary WhatsApp number for Global Mercy. Crew and travelers are encouraged to use this as the go-to number

+1 954 932 9800 - satellite, answered 24/7

Required Documentation for Travel

Crew must travel with the following documentation in order get on most flights to Ghana and to enter the country:

- Individual Invitation Letter* (issued by Mercy Ships)
- WHO Yellow Fever vaccination booklet
- Printed offer letter/acceptance letter from Mercy Ships (recommended)

**Will be sent to you by your Coordinator prior to travel.*





Thank you!

We can't wait to continue Mercy Ships legacy, bringing hope and healing to people just like Houleye! Years of blessing, sacrifice, smiles, hard work, and hope are ahead of us. Thank you for your part!

Looking for more info?

The following information can be found in the General Volunteer Guidebook. To view, click the button below.

- Code of Conduct
- Community Life and Expectations
- Staying in Touch
- Dress Code
- Uniform Guidelines
- Crew Bank
- Packing Lists

[CLICK HERE](#)



meet Houleye