

Top 10 best things to do in The Gambia

1. Crafts markets

Several hustling and bustling markets can be found in the Gambia, all of which offer a fascinating glimpse into everyday Gambian life as well as the opportunity to purchase mementoes to take home.

Serrekunda and the Royal Albert Market in Banjul's city are the most well-known markets. Both towns offer extensive markets with everything under the sun, as well as a tourist artisan market.

Kololi, Kotu, Fajara, and Bakau are among the numerous additional craft markets in the area. While most people are glad to have their photograph taken in tourist craft markets, many people do not enjoy it or expect to be compensated in local artisan markets. Hiring a local guide is the most convenient option. Bakau is one of the best craft markets, where you may get magnificent woodcarvings for your living room.



2. Fishing villages

Bakau, Tanji, and Sanyang all have fish markets. These are lively, colourful spots in which you can watch the pirogues (fishing boats) arrive and offload the catch of the day. Men and women go into the river and return with buckets full of fish on their heads. Women buy and sell the fish, while birds squawk overhead, hoping for a scrap of food.



3. Relaxing on an unspoilt beach

While many tourists rush to the Canary Islands or the Caribbean for a beach vacation, The Gambia provides unrivalled access to the sun, sand, and sea, often just steps from your accommodation. Most of those beaches are isolated and unspoilt, with no overcrowding and some with no one else around. Many people choose Sanyang, often known as Paradise Beach. There is a tiny bar, a café, and a few craft vendors here.

A little distance away, you'll see rows of brightly coloured pirogues, with the fish being prepped, cured, and smoked behind them. Traditional wrestling contests are held on Sundays during the peak tourist season and are quite exciting.



4. Meet the Gambian wildlife

Those who have brought their binoculars on vacation to The Gambia will have plenty of possibilities to spot animals.

The Sacred Crocodile Pool of Kachikally is located in Bakau, but there are other others throughout The Gambia, some with crocodiles and some without. The waters are reputed to have magical properties, especially in regard to fertility, and women travel great distances to bathe in them. It only costs D50 (about £1 GBP) to enter, and there is also a small yet intriguing museum. The crocodiles have become so accustomed to visitors that you can approach them and stroke them, but only with the guides' permission.



5. The monkeys at Bijilo Forest Park

A little reserve and communal forest, only a short distance from Senegambia, provides a welcome respite from the heat and activity.

You'll be escorted through lush foliage and forest on almost 4 km of well-maintained pathways to the coastal sand dunes. There's a nice walk through the trees where you can see cheeky green vervet, red colobus, and patas monkeys, monitor lizards, and a variety of birds.



6. Bird watching at the Tanji Bird Reserve

The Gambia is a birdwatcher's dream. With over 540 species, you won't have to leave your resort's garden to witness unique and colourful birds.

Hiring an official guide is the best method to go birdwatching. However, many of the hotels have excellent grounds where you may observe a variety of birds, and it's worth asking whether they have a bird guide book or perhaps binoculars you can borrow.

Half-day or full-day tours are easily organised, alternatively, check out the Tanji Bird Reserve if you want to encounter a few more species in their native habitat.



7. Visit the Wassu Stone Circles

While not as impressive as Stonehenge, the site provides significant evidence of ancient African civilisation. Wassu has 11 circles, the tallest of which is nearly 3 metres.

It is thought to be the ancient burial site of monarchs and chiefs dating back over 1200 years. According to local mythology, anyone who disturbs those buried there will be cursed, which is possibly why they are still intact.



8. Visit Kunta Kinteh Island

It is located at the mouth of the Gambia River and was previously known as James Island. The ruins of a historic castle and prison that previously belonged to colonial Britain; many African slaves were transported to America from here.

It is a popular tourist site nowadays, however, this was the final sight of the African continent that slaves saw before being confined to the lowest decks of ships that transported them to their life of slavery in America.



9. Traditional drumming and dancing shows

Many hotels and restaurants provide entertainment. This varies in quality and style, but there are a few excellent traditional groups that play the hotel circuit, and you may enjoy them while dining.

A drumming session under a palm tree on the beach is a terrific way of spending an hour or two while hearing about the local culture.

Some of the greatest lessons are available at the Kombo Beach Hotel, but regardless of where you stay, any of the local hotels can put you in touch with a group or private session.



10. Feed the vultures

The sky is filled with vultures, swooping and squawking for a piece of the feast. It's a beautiful sight to see vultures being fed.

Every morning, you can see them in the gardens of the Senegambia Hotel in Kololi or beside the Kotu Bridge. While vultures are plentiful in the Gambia, the hooded vulture is a critically endangered species worldwide. In addition, vulture feeding in Kotu promotes the services of several bird viewing guides.

