



Senegal Guidebook

Welcome to Mercy Ships! We're grateful you'll be serving alongside us, joining our mission to bring hope and healing to those who need it most. After more than a year, we are thrilled to return to Senegal in 2022!

This guide is a complimentary addendum to the primary **Volunteer Guidebook**, with Senegal-specific details. Within *this* guide, you'll find all the details you need to prepare for your time with us in Senegal. We're so excited for you to join, and we hope you are, too!





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meet Bernard, our
Managing Director!

Senegal Country Information

Senegal is located at the westernmost point of the African continent and is referred to as the “Gateway to Africa”. It is known for its ecological diversity and key trade routes in addition to its warm hospitality!

The region was once a part of the Kingdom of Ghana, but was colonized by the French in the late 19th century. In 1960, Senegal gained independence as a wholly sovereign state.

While the Senegalese are a tolerant people, it is also a fairly conservative nation, and the way we dress and act should show respect to our host country.

Key Details:

Capital City:	Dakar
Region:	Sub-Saharan Africa
Currency:	West African CFA franc
Population:	15.8 million
Population under age 30:	70.4%
Primary religions:	Muslim (96.1%), Christian (3.6%), indigenous/other beliefs (0.3%)
Primary languages:	French (official), Wolof, Pular, Jola, Mandinka, Serer, Soninke
Physicians per 1,000 people:	0.07



Field Service Plans

Mercy Ships plans to be in Senegal from February to December 2022.

We’ve planned to reduce surgical and medical capacity building output due to COVID-19 precautions.

Planned programmatic specialties:

- Orthopedic
- General
- Women’s Health
- Maxillofacial & ENT
- Pediatrics
- Reconstructive Plastics

Planned capacity building training:

- Mentoring
- Agriculture (Food For Life program)
- Palliative Care
- Biomedical
- Primary Trauma Care
- Safe Surgery
- Safe Obstetric Anesthesia
- Mental Health

What to Expect in Senegal

Local Laws

Taking photos of some buildings such as embassies, government institutions, and police stations is not allowed. Always ask if you're not sure!

Travelers must carry identification at all times; while you are crew, your Mercy Ships crew ID will satisfy this requirement.

Security

The port is guarded by security, and also have a security team onboard. 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.

COVID-19 in Senegal

Senegal has taken COVID-19 very seriously since the announcement of the global pandemic, instituting physical distancing measures, mask/PPE mandates, curfews, and travel restrictions. The country has had fairly low infection rates for the disease compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, thanks to these measures and their advanced testing capabilities and vaccine roll-out.

Harmattan

During the "dry season" (Harmattan) between November and May every year, the region is often susceptible to strong dust storms. Those with respiratory concerns such as asthma should bring proper medications, inhalers, etc. to treat their conditions, which can be exacerbated during this time.

For any health concern, you can also speak to the Medical Review team if you have specific questions (medical.review.facil@mercyships.org).

Temperatures

Weather in Senegal is fairly warm year-round. Average temperatures for our time in Dakar, Senegal:

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
High Temp.	25.5° C	25° C	25.5° C	25° C	26° C	29° C	30° C	30.5° C	30.5° C	31° C	30° C	28° C
Low Temp.	18° C	17.7° C	18.3° C	18.8° C	20.5° C	23.3° C	25° C	25° C	25° C	25° C	22.7° C	20.5° C
High Temp.	78° F	77° F	78° F	77° F	79° F	84° F	86° F	87° F	87° F	88° F	86° F	82° F
Low Temp.	65° F	64° F	65° F	66° F	69° F	74° F	77° F	77° F	77° F	77° F	73° F	69° F

While it's warm outside, it can get quite chilly onboard! You'll want to bring some warmer clothes to wear onboard (like a hoodie or a jumper).

Fun, Games, and Time Off

Mercy Ships volunteers are both hard-working and ready to have fun! While COVID has changed some things about getting together, be sure you're ready to play games, grab meals together, or explore Senegal with your new friends. Bring your favorite game and have fun!

Crew Clinic

As usual, the Crew Clinic will be available to support crew who are feeling poorly. This team will also be facilitating many of our COVID-19 protocols and support testing alongside our COVID Facilitators.



What to Expect Upon Arrival

...At the Airport

Upon arrival at Blaise Diagne International Airport in Dakar, you will go through immigration. Join the “visa” queue (if counter is open - otherwise go to any counter); hand the officer your passport and other travel documentation provided by Mercy Ships. Based on these documents, the immigration officer should grant a thirty(30) day visa in your passport and return it to you with the other documents. Alternatively, you may be directed to the Police Immigration Office to get your passport stamped. You must request a 30-day visa when you go through the immigration process. If your commitment is longer than 30 days, the Purser onboard will arrange a visa extension for you.

Due to concerns regarding COVID-19, you may also undergo a brief medical screening upon entry. This is conducted by airport officials or medical personnel and consists of a quick, non-invasive thermal scan to check your temperature.

Immediately before exiting Dakar airport, there are several kiosks, including a currency exchange counter and kiosk for Senecartours taxi service. You will stop at this kiosk and provide your surname and will be connected with your pre-arranged taxi, which will take you directly to the Ibis Hotel in Dakar. Drivers and passengers must wear a face mask during this journey. This taxi trip takes about an hour, depending on traffic.

...At the Hotel

Hotel security guards will inspect the vehicle before entry into the hotel parking area. Once cleared for entry, you will stop at reception, where our Hotel Liaison will help facilitate your check-in experience. All crew will have a single room unless coming with their spouse.

After check-in, you must go directly to your room to minimize contact with others until you have a rapid antigen COVID-19 test on the second day of your quarantine.

- All rooms are non-smoking.
- The Ibis Hotel has introduced elevated hygiene and prevention measures to ensure the safety of all guests.
- Meals will be brought to guests on a tray, placed outside of the door.*
- Bottled water will be provided daily.
- Sheets and towels will be provided.

**Some dietary requirements can be accommodated if known in advance. You will be asked to provide this information shortly before your arrival in Dakar.*

Mercy Ships covers the cost of the hotel and meals. Any incidentals ordered (beverages, snacks, etc.) will be at the individual's expense. Payments can be made to the hotel in the local currency (CFA/XOF Franc), Euros, US Dollars, British Pounds, or by credit card.

meet Hospital Director, Keren!

What to Bring

Clothing

Clothing onboard is conservative and casual. You may want to bring some nicer clothing for special occasions and/or church. A good rule of thumb is to pack enough clothing for 7-10 days. All clothing must be aligned with the Mercy Ships Dress Code, found in the Volunteer Guidebook.

Shoes

When onboard, closed-toed shoes are encouraged (trainers, boots, etc.).

Consider also bringing a pair of dress shoes, “flats”/casual shoes, and sandals. What you bring depends on your preferences, role onboard, and length of service.

You may want to bring a pair of sandals to wear at the pool or beach.

Toiletries

The shop onboard carries toiletries for sale, but the selection may not be what you’re used to. If you have preferred brands, you may want to bring these with you.

Remember nail polish, polish remover, hair color, and perfumes cannot be shipped in the post due to hazardous materials regulations - so you might want to pack these in your suitcase if you use them.

Luggage

Duffel bags or collapsable luggage are preferred as they’re easier to store.

Packing List

You must bring...

- 7+ washable, cloth face masks - must be 2+ layers and fastens over the ears or around the head
- Personal medical thermometer

Don’t bring...

- Large suitcases
- Large musical instruments
- Firearms or any sort of weapons
- Candles
- Cordless appliances using butane-fuel
- Products containing bleach
- Expensive jewellery and electronics
- Medical supplies for donation
- Gifts for patients

We provide...

- One bath towel
- One fitted sheet
- One duvet with a cover
- One pillow
- One pillowcase

Consider bringing...

- Laundry bag
- Small flashlight / head torch
- Sunglasses
- Mosquito spray*
- Sunscreen / Sunblock*
- Travel mug*
- Glass or plastic take-away containers
- Phone card* or SIM card
- Electrical adaptor for the British plugs onboard*
- Electrical adaptor for the EU plugs at the hotel
- Non-prescription/over-the-counter medications*
- Backpack or secure bag
- Beach / travel towel
- Ear plugs
- Magnets or sticky tack*
- Battery-powered alarm clock
- Throw blanket
- A favorite game
- Personal photos, etc. with which you may want to personalize your bunk-space or cabin

- Hanging bedside pocket
- Hair-wrap / drying towel
- Hoodie or jumper
- Raincoat and/or umbrella

**Denotes items also sold in the shop or Pharmacy onboard*

Parlez-vous français?

French is the official language of Senegal, and it's certainly helpful to know the basics before you arrive!

Apps for your smart phone or tablet such as Duolingo, Babbel, Memrise, and others can kick-start the language learning process in a fun way before your travel. Practicing just 10 minutes a day can make a difference!

Here are some common phrases to know.

Hello

How are you?

Thank you

You're welcome

Please

Sorry/Excuse me

Goodbye

Yes

No

What is your name?

My name is...

How much does that cost?

I don't speak French very well

Where is the bathroom?

Bonjour

Comment allez-vous?

Merci

Je vous en prie

S'il vous plaît

Excusez-moi

Au revoir

Oui

Non

Comment vous appelez-vous?

Je m'appelle...

Combien ça coûte?

Je ne parle pas très bien le français

Où sont les toilettes?

Travel to Senegal

Arranging your travel

Once your Volunteer Coordinator 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, arriving between 7 AM - 10 PM and departing between 8 AM and midnight.

Ticket refund policy

Flexibility is key!

Because the ships' schedules can change, and with so many things up in the air due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 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.

Travel agents

Mercy Ships recommends **Safe Harbors Travel** as our partnering travel agent. They can help secure seaman or humanitarian fares. By booking with Safe Harbors, you will also be granted access to SafeToGo, a travel risk management app.

SAFE HARBORS TRAVEL

[safeharbors.com](https://www.safeharbors.com)

mercyships@safeharbors.com

+1 443 619 7104

+1 833 232 5001



Arrival by plane

Flights should be booked in/out of the international airport in Dakar - **Blaise Diagne International Airport** (code DSS).

Acceptable Flights

for **arrival** in Senegal

- Air Cote d'Ivoire 700
- Air France 718
- Air Senegal 210, 404, 418
- ASKY 53, 54
- Brussels Airlines 203, 204
- Delta 216
- Emirates 795, 797
- Ethiopian Airlines 909
- Iberia 3328
- Tunisair 841
- Turkish Airlines 583

for **departure** from Senegal

- Air Cote d'Ivoire 701
- Air France 719
- Air Senegal 203, 205, 207, 209, 301, 403, 417
- ASKY 53
- Brussels Airlines 203, 204
- Delta 217
- Emirates 795, 797
- Ethiopian Airlines 908
- Iberia 3329
- Tunisair 841
- Turkish Airlines 583, 584

Questions?

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

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 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. [Click here](#) to see documented programs available.

Tips to Avoid Jet-lag

While quarantine-upon-arrival is a hassle, it does offer crew a chance to shake some jet-lag after traveling! 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.
- Don't eat a lot of food (overeat/snack).
- 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 are traveling:

- **+1 954 538 6110** (satellite, answered 24/7)
- **+221 77 644 72 22** (local number)

Required Documentation for Travel

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

- Senegal Protocol*
- Mercy Ships Crew Verification Letter*
- Letter from Air and Border Police*
- 'OK to Board' letter*
- WHO Yellow Fever vaccination booklet
- Proof of COVID-19 vaccine
- Proof of negative COVID-19 PCR test from no more than 72 hours prior
- Printed offer letter/acceptance letter from Mercy Ships (recommended)

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

COVID-19 Information

As we all know, COVID-19 safeguarding has intensified an already complex world. Bringing international travel into that mix is intimidating - but we're here to help you understand what you need to do and what to expect. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at covid.readiness.fac.afm@mercyships.org.

COVID-19 Vaccination & Booster

We **require** all joining crew to receive a WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccination series prior to joining. All crew must be fully-vaccinated (14+ days past their final dose) and must bring their official proof of vaccination. All crew are encouraged to receive the COVID-19 booster dose, depending on their eligibility and its availability in their home nations.

Face Masks

All crew on ship must wear face masks at all times, unless eating or in their room/cabin. We also expect crew to wear face masks when in indoor public spaces off-ship, such as shops and restaurants. Crew are required to follow any local ordinances in force at the time of their stay.

Physical Distancing

Crew are expected to promote physical distancing as much as possible, and give others 1.5 meters' distance.

Temperature Tracking

Crew staying in the hotel should check their temperature each morning and report any elevated temperature.

Pre-Travel Testing

All arriving crew must be tested (PCR only) no more than 72 hours prior to their arrival in Senegal and must travel with proof of a negative result.

Arrival Testing

All crew arriving in Dakar must quarantine for at least two nights in the Ibis Hotel and will be given a rapid antigen COVID-19 test on the second morning of their stay.

- If negative, crew will be transferred to the vessel.
- If positive, crew must remain in quarantine until the Crew Clinic conducts further assessment.

Symptomatic Testing

The Crew Clinic will conduct testing on any crew exhibiting symptoms, as well as any others known to be in close contact with any crew who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Surveillance Testing

Mercy Ships will conduct periodic surveillance testing with antigen tests for crew.

Arrival Quarantine

Crew will complete a two-night quarantine at the hotel, and will have all meals catered & delivered outside the room.

Note: Incoming families will quarantine onboard, in their family cabins. Specific information will be provided by the Family Coordinator.

Arrival Restrictions

After the negative test result from the arrival quarantine, crew will be transferred to the vessel, with restricted shore leave (restricted to the vessel and dock area only) until day seven after arrival.

Isolation Due to Illness

Any crew testing positive for COVID-19 at any point during their service, or who have been identified at risk of illness from contact tracing must self-isolate.

- Crew testing positive must isolate for 10 days.
- Crew in contact with someone who has tested positive will isolate for up to seven days.

Definitions

WHO-approved vaccine

The following are considered WHO-approved vaccines:

- Pfizer/BioNTech 'BNT162b2'
- Oxford/AstraZeneca 'AZD1222'
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) 'Ad26.COV2.S'
- Moderna 'mRNA-1273'
- Sinopharm 'BBIBP-CorV (Vero Cells)'
- Sinovac 'CoronaVac'
- Bharat Biotech 'Covaxin'
- Serum Institute of India 'Covishield'
- Serum Institute of India 'COVOVAX'
- Novavax 'NVX-CoV2373'

Fully-vaccinated:

- 14 days after the final dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine

Senegal Guidebook

We can't wait to continue the 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!



Houleye