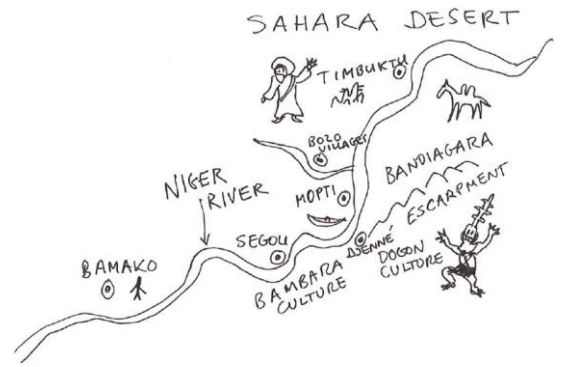


# MALI

## PIROGUING ALL ALONG THE NIGER RIVER

(15 DAYS)

Mali's history has always been a story of its deserts and rivers. The lucrative trade routes of the Sahara once made the region among the world's richest, and the Niger, one of the grand old rivers of Africa, is still the lifeblood of the country; to journey along the Niger River route (preferably on a slow boat to Timbuktu) is one of the continent's great adventures. Not far from the riverbank, the extraordinary Falaise de Bandiagara rises up from the plains, and shelters one of West Africa's most intriguing peoples – the Dogon, whose villages and complex cultural rituals still cling to the edge of rocky cliffs.



Required fitness level: basic to intermediate

### DAY 1:

Arrival in Bamako in the evening

### DAY 2:

Bamako – Segou (Mali's former colonial administrative center; admire the beautiful Sudanese-style colonial architecture, visit the port, the pottery market on the river bank)

### DAY 3:

Segou – Mopti (Drive through the heartland of Mali, to Mopti, the "melting pot" of Mali; visit the Komoguel mosque, the fishing port (see pirogues being made by hand), and the bustling market where many of Mali's ethnic groups come to trade)

### DAY 4:

Mopti – Niger River (early morning embark on your river pirogue and begin sailing the Niger River to Timbuktu; overnight camping on the river bank)

### DAY 5:

Niger River – Bozo villages (Full day of sailing; visit Bozo fishermen's villages and nomadic Fulani camps along the way; you will also see Mali's varied birdlife along the shore, and very likely see hippos in the river; camping on the riverbank)

### DAY 6:

Niger River -Timbuktu (Final day of sailing to take in the tranquil sights and sounds of the Niger River, and arrive in Timbuktu by day's end)

### DAY 7:

Timbuktu – Sahara Desert (Visit the legendary city of Timbuktu, see the ancient mosques, the museum with ancient Islamic manuscripts, the explorers' houses, and the market which receives the azalaïs, the salt caravans from the desert; in the afternoon visit a Tuareg camp; enjoy dinner and tea on the dunes, and overnight camping)

### DAY 8:

Sahara Desert - Timbuktu (Goodbye to your Tuareg hosts and return to Timbuktu; rest of the day at leisure to further explore this ancient city)

### DAY 9:

Timbuktu – Mopti (Depart Timbuktu; interesting drive across the Sahel ecosystem, visit nomadic Fulani settlements, arrival to Mopti in the late afternoon)

### DAY 10:

Mopti – Bandiagara Escarpment (Onward drive to Mali's fascinating Dogon country; visit Songo village, renowned for its circumcision grotto with rock paintings; continue to Sangha; walking tour of Sangha, where you will see many examples of traditional Dogon architecture; option to witness a traditional Dogon mask dance)

### DAY 11:

Dogon Country (Visit beautiful Dogon villages along the Bandiagara escarpment: Banani, Ireli, and Amani, see the sanctuary of sacred crocodiles, bivouac under the stars on the roof of a Dogon house)

### DAY 12:

Dogon Country - Mopti

### DAY 13:

Mopti – Djenne – Bamako (drive to Djenne: see the magnificent Great Mosque, the world's largest adobe structure -UNESCO's World Heritage site-, walk around this medieval town, after lunch continue to Mali's capital)

### DAY 14:

Bamako (city tour: visit the National Museum, the city market, the artisans' village, and the fetish market for traditional medicine) In the evening: final departure

### DAY 15:

Arrival to European airport in the evening (if travelling with Royal Air Maroc one can visit Casablanca City Centre)

Recommended Period: all year round  
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