

Year of Return, Ghana 2019: 400-Year Anniversary



Back2Africa Group from DC at Flagstaff House in Ghana
Photo Credit: Loves Life Photography

Following a successful launch of the inaugural Back2Africa Festival in February 2018 and The Ghana Tourism US East Coast visit in March 2018 with The Adinkra Group (www.theadinkragroup.com) to promote Ghana as a prime tourism destination, The Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) [<http://www.ghana.travel/places-to-visit/>] continue to bolster their efforts to promote Ghana as a prime tourist, business and investment destination for African Americans. In late August 2018, GTA partnered with The Adinkra Group and Sunseekers Tours to host a team of writers and photographers from the iconic *EBONY* magazine in Ghana documenting lifestyle, culture and tourism which will be prominently featured in *EBONY*'s Power 100 issue in print and online later this year. The editorial will serve as an introduction to what people can look forward in 2019. The “Year of Return, Ghana 2019” is an initiative aimed to celebrate the resilience of African people, market Ghana as both a high profile tourism and business destination in an effort to build stronger bonds between Ghana and African people in the Diaspora.

Underscored by The United States Congress' recently passed Act, H.R. 1242 - 400 Years of African-American Experience, the launch of The Year of Return, Ghana 2019 was held September 28, 2018.

The Year of Return, Ghana 2019 is the only centrally organized public-private partnership with an African nation commemorating the quatercentenary of the arrival of African people in the United States. The Office of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President of the Republic of Ghana leads the steering committee, which is coordinated by The Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) under the Auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture in collaboration with the PANAFEST Foundation, Cultural Heritage African Tours, and The Adinkra Group.

The year 2019 marks exactly 400 years since 1619 when the first documented enslaved African population came to Jamestown, Virginia aboard a Portuguese ship that had been captured in the West Indies and brought to the Jamestown region. This is widely recognized as the start of the trans Atlantic enslavement enterprise or 'Middle passage' where millions of African people were kidnapped from their villages and brought to America as free labor.

The history of Ghana stretches back almost 2000 years to the riches of the ancient Ghana Empire, where trade in gold, ivory, salt and kola nuts created one of the most wealthy nations in Africa, and attracted people from all over the continent. Europeans, drawn by an abundance of land came to trade, and left behind their legacy of the many forts and castles that are found along Ghana's coast. Until its independence from British colonial rule on March 6, 1957, Ghana was called the "Gold Coast", a name given to it by early Portuguese explorers who first set foot on the shores of the country in the fifteenth century. The name aptly described the country's wealth in gold and natural resources, which include to the present day.

Ghana is situated on the southern coast of the West African bulge and is bordered to the east by Togo, to the west by the Ivory Coast, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the north and northwest by Burkina Faso.