

Language

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West Africa's myriad ethnic groups speak several hundred local languages, many subdivided into numerous distinct dialects. The people of Nigeria – West Africa's most populous country – speak at least 350 languages and dialects, while even tiny Guinea-Bissau (population just over one million) has around 20 languages.

Consequently, common languages are absolutely essential, and several are used. These may be the language of the largest group in a particular area or country. For

example, Hausa has spread out from its northern Nigerian heartland to become widely understood as a trading language in the eastern parts of West Africa. Similarly, Dioula has become a common tongue in markets over much of the western part of the region. Also widespread are the former colonial languages of French, English and Portuguese. In some areas, the common tongue is a creole – a combination of native African and imported European languages.

COLONIAL LANGUAGES

FRENCH

Though we've generally only included the polite form of address with the following phrases – *vous* (you) – the informal mode *tu* is used much more commonly in West Africa; you'll hear less *s'il vous plaît* and more *s'il te plaît* (which may be considered impolite in France unless spoken between good friends). If in doubt in Africa (when dealing with border officials or any older people) it's always safer to use the polite *vous* form. The pronunciation guides included with each French phrase should help you in getting your message across.

If you fancy getting stuck into your *français* to a greater extent than is possible with what we include here, Lonely Planet's compact *French Phrasebook* offers a handy, pocket-sized guide to the language that will cover all your travel needs and more.

Accommodation

I'm looking for a ...	<i>Je cherche ...</i>	<i>zher shersh ...</i>
campground	<i>un camping</i>	<i>un kom-peeng</i>
hotel	<i>un hôtel</i>	<i>un o-tel</i>

Where is a cheap hotel?

Où est-ce qu'on peut trouver un hôtel pas cher?
oo es-kon per troo-vay un o-tel pa shair

Could you write the address, please?

Est-ce que vous pourriez écrire l'adresse, s'il vous plaît?
e-sker voo poo-ryay ay-kreer la-dres seel voo play

Do you have any rooms available?

Est-ce que vous avez des chambres libres?
e-sker voo-za-vay day shom-brer lee-brer

How much is it per night/person?

Quel est le prix par nuit/personne?
 kel e ler pree par nwee/par per-son

May I see it?

Est-ce que je peux voir la chambre?
 es-ker zher per vwa la shom-brer

I'd like (a) ...

<i>Je voudrais ...</i>	zher voo-dray ...
single room	
<i>une chambre à un lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a un lee
double-bed room	
<i>une chambre avec un grand lit</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek un gron lee
room with two beds	
<i>une chambre avec des lits jumeaux</i>	ewn shom-brer a-vek day lee zhe-w-mo

Where is the bathroom?

Où est la salle de bains? oo e la sal der bun

air-conditioning

climatisation klee-ma-tee-za-syon

hot water

eau chaude leeo shod

key

clef/clé klef/klay

sheet

drap drap

shower

douche doosh

toilet

les toilettes lay twa-let

Conversation & Essentials

Hello.	<i>Bonjour.</i>	bon-zhour
Hi.	<i>Salut. (inf)</i>	sa-loo
Goodbye.	<i>Au revoir.</i>	o-rer-vwa
Yes.	<i>Oui.</i>	wee
No.	<i>Non.</i>	no
Please.	<i>S'il vous plaît.</i>	seel voo play
	<i>S'il te plaît. (inf)</i>	seel ter play
Thank you.	<i>Merci.</i>	mair-see
You're welcome.	<i>Je vous en prie.</i>	zher voo-zon pree
	<i>De rien. (inf)</i>	der ree-en
Excuse me.	<i>Excusez-moi.</i>	ek-skew-zay-mwa
Sorry. (forgive me)	<i>Pardon.</i>	par-don

(Have a) good evening.

Bonne soirée. bon swa-ray

What's your name?

Comment vous appelez-vous? ko-mon voo-za-pay-lay voo

Comment tu t'appelles? (inf) ko-mon tew ta-pel

My name is ...

Je m'appelle ... zher ma-pel ...

Where are you from?

De quel pays êtes-vous? der kel pay-ee et-voo

De quel pays es-tu? (inf) der kel pay-ee e-tew

I'm from ...

Je viens de ... zher vyen der ...

I like ...

J'aime ... zhem ...

I don't like ...

Je n'aime pas ... zher nem pa ...

Directions**Where is ...?**

Où est ...? oo e ...

Go straight ahead.

Continuez tout droit. kon-teen-way too drwa

Turn left.

Tournez à gauche. toor-nay a gosh

Turn right.

Tournez à droite. toor-nay a drwat

How many kilometres is ...?

À combien de kilomètres est ...? a kom-byun der kee-lo-me-trer e ...

EMERGENCIES**Help!**

Au secours! o skoor

There's been an accident!

Il y a eu un accident! eel ya ew un ak-see-don

I'm lost.

Je me suis égaré/e. (m/f) zhe me swee-zay-ga-ray

Leave me alone!

Fichez-moi la paix! fee-shay-mwa la pay

Call ...!

Appelez ...! a-play ...

a doctor

un médecin un mayd-sun

the police

la police la po-lees

Health

I'm ill.	<i>Je suis malade.</i>	zher swee ma-lad
antiseptic	<i>l'antiseptique</i>	lon-tee-sep-teek
condoms	<i>des préservatifs</i>	day pray-zair-va-teef
contraceptive	<i>le contraceptif</i>	ler kon-tra-sep-teef
diarrhoea	<i>la diarrhée</i>	la dya-ray
medicine	<i>le médicament</i>	ler may-dee-ka-mon
nausea	<i>la nausée</i>	la no-zay
sunblock cream	<i>la crème solaire</i>	la krem so-lair
tampons	<i>des tampons hygiéniques</i>	day tom-pon ee-zhen-eek

I'm ...

asthmatic	<i>asthmatique</i>	(z)as-ma-teek
diabetic	<i>diabétique</i>	dee-a-bay-teek
epileptic	<i>épileptique</i>	(z)ay-pee-lep-teek

I'm allergic

to ...	<i>Je suis allergique ...</i>	zher swee za-lair-zheek ...
antibiotics	<i>aux antibiotiques</i>	o zon-tee-byo-teek
nuts	<i>aux noix</i>	o nwa
peanuts	<i>aux cacahuètes</i>	o ka-ka-wet

Language Difficulties**Do you speak English?**

Parlez-vous anglais?

par-lay-voo zong-lay

Does anyone here speak English?

Y a-t-il quelqu'un qui parle anglais?
 ya-teel kel-kung kee par long-glay

I don't understand.

Je ne comprends pas.
 zher ner kom-pron pa

Could you write it down, please?

Est-ce que vous pourriez l'écrire, s'il vous plaît?
 es-ker voo poo-ryay lay-kreer seel voo play

Can you show me (on the map)?

Pouvez-vous m'indiquer (sur la carte)?
 poo-vay-voo mun-dee-kay (sew la kart)

Numbers

0	<i>zero</i>	zay-ro
1	<i>un</i>	un
2	<i>deux</i>	der
3	<i>trois</i>	trwa
4	<i>quatre</i>	ka-trer
5	<i>cinq</i>	sungk
6	<i>six</i>	sees
7	<i>sept</i>	set
8	<i>huit</i>	weet
9	<i>neuf</i>	nerf
10	<i>dix</i>	dees
11	<i>onze</i>	onz
12	<i>douze</i>	dooz
13	<i>treize</i>	trez
14	<i>quatorze</i>	ka-torz
15	<i>quinze</i>	kunz
16	<i>seize</i>	sez
17	<i>dix-sept</i>	dee-set
18	<i>dix-huit</i>	dee-zweet
19	<i>dix-neuf</i>	deez-nerf
20	<i>vingt</i>	vung
21	<i>vingt et un</i>	vung tay un
22	<i>vingt-deux</i>	vung-der
30	<i>trente</i>	tront
40	<i>quarante</i>	ka-ront
50	<i>cinquante</i>	sung-kont
60	<i>soixante</i>	swa-son
70	<i>soixante-dix</i>	swa-son-dees
80	<i>quatre-vingts</i>	ka-trer-vung
90	<i>quatre-vingt-dix</i>	ka-trer-vung-dees
100	<i>cent</i>	son
1000	<i>mille</i>	meel

Shopping & Services**I'd like to buy ...**

Je voudrais acheter ... zher voo-dray ash-tay ...

How much is it?

C'est combien? say kom-byun

May I look at it?

Est-ce que je peux le voir? es-ker zher per ler vwar

DON'T BE LOST FOR WORDS IN ...!

Country	Official Language	Principal African Languages (in this guide)
Benin	French	Fon, Hausa, Yoruba
Burkina Faso	French	Dioula, Fon, Hausa, Moré, Senoufo
Cape Verde	Portuguese	Crioulo
Côte d'Ivoire	French	Dan (Yacouba), Dioula, Hausa, Senoufo
Gambia	English	Diola (Jola), Mandinka, Wolof
Ghana	English	Ewe, Ga, Hausa, Twi
Guinea	French	Fula (Futa Djallon), Malinké, Susu
Guinea-Bissau	Portuguese	Crioulo
Liberia	English	Dan (Yacouba)
Mali	French	Bambara, Malinké, Sangha dialect, Senoufo, Tamashek
Mauritania	Arabic (French also still in common use)	Dioula, Fula (Fulfulde), Hassaniya, Wolof
Niger	French	Djerma, Fon, Hausa, Tamashek
Nigeria	English	Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba
Senegal	French	Crioulo, Diola, Fula (Fulfulde), Malinké, Mandinka, Wolof
Sierra Leone	English	Krio
Togo	French	Ewe, Fon, Kabyé, Mina

I'm just looking.*Je regarde.* zher rer-gard**It's cheap.***Ce n'est pas cher.* ser nay pa shair**It's too expensive.***C'est trop cher.* say tro shair**Can I pay by ...?** *Est-ce que je peux payer avec ...?* es-ker zher per pay-yay a-vek ...**credit card** *ma carte de crédit* ma kart der kray-dee
travellers cheques *des chèques de voyage* day shek der vva-yazh**I want to change ... (cash) money** *Je voudrais changer ... de l'argent* zher voo-dray shon-zhay ... der lar-zhon
travellers cheques *des chèques de voyage* day shek der vva-yazh**more** *plus* plew
less *moins* mwa
smaller *plus petit* plew per-tee
bigger *plus grand* plew gron**I'm looking for ...** *Je cherche ...* zhe shersh ...
a bank *une banque* ewn bonk
the ... embassy *l'ambassade de ...* lam-ba-sahd der ...**the hospital** *l'hôpital* lo-pee-tal
the market *le marché* ler mar-shay
the police *la police* la po-lees
the post office *le bureau de poste* ler bew-ro der post**a public phone** *une cabine téléphonique* ewn ka-been tay-lay-fo-neek
a public toilet *les toilettes* lay twa-let
the telephone centre *la centrale téléphonique* la san-tral tay-lay-fo-neek
the tourist office *l'office de tourisme* lo-fees der too-rees-mer**What time does it open/close?***Quelle est l'heure d'ouverture/de fermeture?*
kel ay lur doo-veer-tewr/der fair-mer-tewr**Time & Dates****What time is it?***Quelle heure est-il?* kel er e til**It's (8) o'clock.***Il est (huit) heures.* il e (weet) er**It's half past ...***Il est (...) heures et demie.* il e (...) er e day-mee**When?** *Quand?* kon
in the morning *du matin* dew ma-tun
in the afternoon *de l'après-midi* der la-pray-mee-dee
in the evening *du soir* dew swar
today *aujourd'hui* o-zhoor-dwee
tomorrow *demain* der-mun
yesterday *hier* yair**Monday** *lundi* lun-dee
Tuesday *mardi* mar-dee
Wednesday *mercredi* mair-krer-dee
Thursday *jeudi* zher-dee
Friday *vendredi* von-drer-dee
Saturday *samedi* sam-dee
Sunday *dimanche* dee-monsh**January** *janvier* zhon-vyay
February *février* fayv-ryay
March *mars* mars
April *avril* a-vreel
May *mai* may
June *juin* zhulun
July *juillet* zhwee-yay
August *août* oot
September *septembre* sep-tom-brer
October *octobre* ok-to-brer
November *novembre* no-vom-brer
December *décembre* day-som-brer**Transport****What time does ... leave/arrive?***À quelle heure part/arrive ...?*

a kel er par/a-reev ...

boat *le bateau* ler ba-to
bus *le bus* ler bews
train *le train* ler trun**I want to go to ...***Je voudrais aller à ...*
zher voo-dray a-lay a ...**Which bus goes to ...?***Quel autobus/car part pour ...?*
kel o-to-boos/ka par poor ...**Does this bus go to ...?***Ce car-là va-t-il à ...?*
ser ka-la va-til a ...**Please tell me when we arrive in ...***Dites-moi quand on arrive à ... s'il vous plaît.*
deet-mwa kon-don a-reev a ... seel voo play**Stop here, please.***Arrêtez ici, s'il vous plaît.*
a-ray-tay ee-see seel voo play**the first** *le premier (m)* ler prer-myay
la première (f) la prer-myair
the last *le dernier (m)* ler dair-nyay
la dernière (f) la dair-nyair
ticket *billet* bee-yay
ticket office *le guichet* ler gee-shay
timetable *l'horaire* lo-rair
train station *la gare* la gar
daily *chaque jour* shak zhoor
early *tôt* to
late *tard* tar**I'd like to hire a/an ...** *Je voudrais louer ...* zher voo-dray loo-way ...
car *une voiture* ewn vva-tewr
4WD *un quatre-quatre* un kat-kat
motorbike *une moto* ewn mo-to
bicycle *un vélo* un vay-lo**petrol/gas** *essence* ay-sons
diesel *diesel* dyay-zel**Is this the road to ...?***C'est la route pour ...?* say la root poor ...**Where's a service station?***Où est-ce qu'il y a une station-service?* oo es-keel ya ewn sta-syon-ser-vees**Please fill it up.***Le plein, s'il vous plaît.* ler plun seel voo play**I need a mechanic.***J'ai besoin d'un mécanicien.* zhay ber-zwun dun may-ka-nee-syun**PORTUGUESE**

Like French, Portuguese is a Romance language (ie one closely derived from Latin). In West Africa it's the official language in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

Note that Portuguese uses masculine and feminine word endings, usually '-o' and '-a' respectively – to say 'thank you', a man will therefore say *obrigado*, a woman, *obrigada*.

Accommodation**I'm looking for a ...****Procuo ...** proo-koo-roo-...
campground *um parque de campismo* oong park-de kang-peezh-moo
hotel *um hotel* oong oo-tel**I'd like a ... room.****Quería um quarto de ...** kree-a oong kwarr-too de ...
double *casal* ka-zal**single** *individual* ing-dee-vee-dwal
twin *duplo* doo-ploo**How much is it per ...?***Quanto custa por ...?* kwang-too koos-ta porr ...**night** *uma noite* oo-ma noyt
person *essoa* pso-a**Conversation & Essentials****Hello.** *Bom dia.* bong dee-a
Hi. *Olá/Chao.* o-la/chow
Good day. *Bom dia.* bong dee-a
Goodbye. *Adeus/Chao.* a-dyoos/chow
See you later. *Até logo.* a-te lo-goo
How are you? *Como está?* ko-moo shta
Fine, and you? *Tudo bem, e tu?* too-doo beng e too
Yes. *Sim.* seeng
No. *Não.* nowng
Please. *Faz favor.* fash fa-vorr
Thank you (very much). *(Muito) Obrigado/a. (m/f)* (mweeng-too) o-bree-ga-doo/da
You're welcome. *De nada.* de-na-da
Excuse me. *Desculpe.* des-koop
(before asking a question/making a request)**What's your name?** *Como se chama?* ko-moo se sha-ma**My name is ...** *Chamo-me ...* sha-moo-me ...**Where are you from?** *De onde é?* de ong-de e**I'm from ...** *Sou (da/do/de) ...* so (da/do/de) ...**Directions****Where is ...?** *Onde fica ...?* ong-d fee-ka ...**Can you show me (on the map)?** *Pode mostrar-me (no mapa)?* pod moos-trarrm (noo ma-pa)**How far is it?** *Qual a distância daqui?* kwal a dees-tan-see-a da-kee**Turn ...** *Vire ...* veer ...
left *à esquerda* a skerr-da
right *à direita* a dee-ray-ta**straight ahead** *em frente* eng frengt
north *norte* nort
south *sul* sool
east *este* esht
west *oeste* oo-esht

EMERGENCIES**Help!***Socorro!* soo-ko-rroo**I'm lost.***Estou perdido/a.* (m/f) shto perr-dee-doo/da**Where are the toilets?***Onde ficam os lavabos?* ong-de fee-kam oos la-va-boos**Go away!***Vai-te embora!* vai-te eng-bo-ra**Call ...!***Chame ...!* sham ...**a doctor***um médico* oong me-dee-koo**the police***a polícia* a poo-lee-see-a**Health****I'm ill.***Estou doente.* shto doo-engt**I need a doctor (who speaks English).***Preciso de um médico (que fale inglês).* pre-see-zoo de oong me-dee-koo (ke fal eeng-glesh)

antiseptic	<i>antisséptico</i>	an-tee-sep-tee-koo
asthma	<i>asma</i>	azh-ma
condoms	<i>preservativo</i>	pre-zer-va-tee-voov
diarrhea	<i>diarréia</i>	dee-a-ray-a
fever	<i>febre</i>	febr
painkillers	<i>analgésicos</i>	a-nal-zhe-zee-koos
sanitary napkins	<i>panos higiênicos</i>	peng-soosh ee-zhee-e-nee-koosh
tampons	<i>tampões</i>	tang-poyngsh

I'm allergic to ...*Sou alérgico/a à ...* so a-lerr-zhee-koo/ka a ...**antibiotics***antibióticos* ang-tee-byo-tee-kooos**peanuts***amendoins* a-meng-doyngs**penicillin***penicilina* pnee-see-lee-na**Language Difficulties****Do you speak English?***Fala inglês?* fa-la eeng-glesh**Does anyone here speak English?***Alguém aqui fala inglês?* al-geng a-kee fa-la eeng-glesh**I (don't) understand.***(Não) Entendo.* (nowng) eng-teng-doo**Could you please write it down?***Pode por favor escrever num papel?* po-de-porr fa-vorr es-kre-verr noom pa-pel**Numbers**

0	<i>zero</i>	ze-roo
1	<i>um/uma</i> (m/f)	oong/oo-ma
2	<i>dois/duas</i> (m/f)	doys/dwash
3	<i>três</i>	tresh
4	<i>quatro</i>	kwa-troo
5	<i>cinco</i>	seeng-koo
6	<i>seis</i>	saysh
7	<i>sete</i>	set
8	<i>oito</i>	oy-too
9	<i>nove</i>	nov
10	<i>dez</i>	desh
11	<i>onze</i>	ongz
12	<i>doze</i>	doz
13	<i>treze</i>	trez
14	<i>quatorze</i>	ka-torrz
15	<i>quinze</i>	keengz
16	<i>dezesseis</i>	dze-saysh
17	<i>dezessete</i>	dze-set
18	<i>dezoito</i>	dzooy-too
19	<i>dezenove</i>	dze-nov
20	<i>vinte</i>	veengt
21	<i>vinte e um</i>	veengt e oong
22	<i>vinte e dois</i>	veengt e doysh
30	<i>trinta</i>	treeng-ta
40	<i>quarenta</i>	kwa-reng-ta
50	<i>cinquenta</i>	seeng-kweng-ta
60	<i>sessenta</i>	se-seng-ta
70	<i>setenta</i>	steng-ta
80	<i>oitenta</i>	oy-teng-ta
90	<i>noventa</i>	noo-veng-ta
100	<i>cem</i>	sang
200	<i>duzentos</i>	doo-zeng-toosh
1000	<i>mil</i>	meel

Shopping & Services**What time does ... open?***A que horas abre ...?* a ke o-ras abr ...**I'd like to buy ...***Quería comprar ...* kree-rya kom-prarr ...**How much is it?***Quanto é?* kwang-too e**That's too expensive.***É muito caro.* e mweeng-too ka-roo**Where is ...?***Onde fica ...?* ong-de fee-ka ...**a bank***o banco* oo ban-koo**the ... embassy***a embaixada do/da ...* a eng-bai-sha-da doo/da ...**a market***o mercado* oo merr-ka-doo**a pharmacy/chemist***uma farmácia* oo-ma far-ma-sya**the police station***o posto de polícia* oo pos-too-de poo-lee-see-a**the post office***o correio* oo coo-ray-oo**Can I pay ...?***Posso pagar com ...?* po-soo pa-garr kom ...**by credit card***cartão de crédito* karr-towng de kre-dee-too**by travellers cheque***traveler cheque* tra-ve-ler she-kee**less***menos* me-noos**more***mais* maizh**big***grande* grangd**small***pequeno/a* (m/f) pke-noo/na**Where can I ...?***Onde posso ...?* on-de po-soo ...**change a travellers cheque***trocar traveler cheques* troo-karr tra-ve-ler she-kes**change money***trocar dinheiro* troo-kar dee-nyay-roo**Time & Dates****What time is it?***Que horas são?* ke o-ras sowng**It's (ten) o'clock.***São (dez) horas.* sowng (desh) o-ras**When?***Quando?* kwang-doo**now***agora* a-go-ra**today***hoje* ozh**tomorrow***amanhã* a-ma-nyang**Monday***segunda-feira* sgoon-da-fay-ra**Tuesday***terça-feira* terr-sa-fay-ra**Wednesday***quarta-feira* kwarr-ta-fay-ra**Thursday***quinta-feira* keeng-ta-fay-ra**Friday***sexta-feira* saysh-ta-fay-ra**Saturday***sábado* sa-ba-doo**Sunday***domingo* doo-meeng-goo**Transport****Which ... goes***Qual o ... que vai para ...?* kwal oo ... ke vai pa-ra ...**boat***barco* barr-koo**local bus***autocarro* ow-too-ka-rroo**train***comboio* kom-boy-oo**Is this the (bus) to ...?***Este (autocarro)* esht (ow-to-ka-rroo)*vai para ...?* vai pa-ra ...?**What time does it leave?***Que horas sai?* ke o-ras sai**What time does it get to ...?***Que horas chega a ...?* ke o-ras she-ga a ...**A ticket to ...***Um bilhete para ...* oong bee-lyet pa-ra ...**I'd like to hire a/an ...***Quería alugar ...**ke-rya a-loo-garr ...***4WD***um quatro por quatro* oom kwa-troo por kwa-troo**bicycle***uma bicicleta* oo-ma bee-see-kle-ta**car***um carro* oong ka-rroo**motorbike***uma motocicleta* oo-ma mo-too-see-kle-ta**Is this the road to ...?***Esta é a estrada para ...?**esh-ta e a es-tra-da pa-ra ...***Where's a gas/petrol station?***Onde fica um posto de gasolina?**on-de fee-ka oong pos-too de ga-zoo-lee-na***Please fill it up.***Enche o depósito, por favor.**en-she oo de-po-see-too porr fa-vorr***I need a mechanic.***Preciso de um mecânico.**pre-see-soo de oong me-ka-nee-koo***diesel***diesel* dee-sel**petrol/gas***gasolina* ga-zoo-lee-na

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Representing many African languages in the Roman alphabet is a difficult task, as many of Africa's languages don't have an official written form. In our written representations, italics indicates which syllable takes the stress within a word. Syllables themselves are separated by dots.

BAMBARA & DIOULA

Differences between Bambara and Dioula (also known as Julia) are relatively minor and the two languages share much of their vocabulary, eg 'Goodbye' in Bambara is *kan-bay*, in Dioula it is *an-bay*.

Bambara (called *bamanakan* in Bambara) is the predominant indigenous language of Mali, while Dioula is widely spoken as a

first language in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. Dioula is one of West Africa's major lingua francas (a common language used for communication between groups with different mother tongues) so the words and phrases included following can be used not only in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali but also in southeastern Mauritania (Néma and south), eastern Senegal, and parts of Gambia. In addition there are distinct similarities between Bambara/Dioula and the Mandinka of northern Gambia and parts of southern Senegal, and most Senoufo speakers in southern Mali (Sikasso region), southwestern Burkina Faso, and northern Côte d'Ivoire (Korhogo region) can speak Bambara/Dioula. It's not hard to see that some knowledge of it will prove very useful in this part of West Africa!

Bambara and Dioula are normally written using a phonetic alphabet; in this guide we've mostly used letters common to English. Some specific pronunciations you'll need to be aware of are:

a	as in 'far'
e	as in 'bet'
i	as in 'marine'
o	as in 'hot'
u	between the 'u' in 'pull' and the 'oo' in 'boot'
g	always hard, as in 'get'
j	as in 'jet'
ñ	as in the 'ni' in 'onion'
ng	as the 'ng' in 'sing' – indicates that the preceding vowel is nasal
r	almost a 'd' sound

In the following phrase lists variation in vocabulary is indicated by (B) for Bambara and (D) for Dioula.

Greetings

The response to any of the following greetings (beginning with *i-ni- ...*) is *n-ba* (for men) and *n-seh* (for women).

Hello.	<i>i-ni-che</i>
Hello. (to someone working)	<i>i-ni-baa-ra</i> (literally, to you and your work)
Good morning.	<i>i-ni-so-go-ma</i> (sunrise to midday)
Good afternoon.	<i>i-ni-ti-le</i> (12 noon to 3 pm)
Good evening.	<i>i-ni-wu-la</i> (3 pm to sunset)
Good night.	<i>i-ni-su</i> (sunset to sunrise)

ARABIC ISLAMIC GREETINGS

Traditional Arabic Islamic greetings are very common in Muslim West Africa – they're easy to learn and will be very much appreciated.

Greetings.

salaam aleikum (peace be with you)

Greetings to you too.

aleikum asalaam (and peace be with you)

Goodbye.	<i>kan-beng</i> (B) <i>an-beng</i> (D)
Please.	<i>S'il vous plaît.</i> (French)
Thank you.	<i>i-ni-che/ba-si-tay</i> (lit: no problem)
Sorry/Pardon.	<i>ha-ke-to</i>
Yes.	<i>a-wo</i>
No.	<i>a-yeé</i> (B)/ <i>uh-uh</i> (D)
How are you?	<i>i-ka-kéné</i>
I'm fine.	<i>tu-ro-te</i>
And you?	<i>e-dung?</i>
Can you help me please?	<i>ha-ke-to, i-bay-say-ka nn de-me wa?</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>i-be-say-ka aang-gi-li-kaang meng wa?</i>
Do you speak French?	<i>i-be-se-ka tu-ba-bu-kan meng wa?</i>
I only speak English.	<i>nn-be-se-ka aang-gi-li-kaang meng do-ron</i>
I speak a little French.	<i>nn-be-se-ka tu-ba-bu-kan meng do-nee</i>
I understand.	<i>nn-y'a-fa-mu</i>
I don't understand.	<i>nn-m'a-fa-mu</i>
What's your (first) name?	<i>i-to-go?</i>
My name is ...	<i>nn-to-go ...</i>
Where are you from?	<i>i-be-bo-ming?</i>
I'm from ...	<i>nn-be-bo ...</i>
Where is ...?	<i>... be-ming?</i>
Is it far?	<i>a-ka-jang-wa?</i>
straight ahead	<i>a-be-ti-leng</i>
left	<i>nu-man-bo-lo-fe</i> (lit: nose-picking hand)
right	<i>ki-ni-bo-lo-fe</i> (lit: rice-eating hand)
How much is this?	<i>ni-ñe-jo-li-ye?</i>
That's too much.	<i>a-ka-ge-leng-ba-ri-ka!</i> (lit: lower the price)
Leave me alone!	<i>bo'i-sa!</i>
1	<i>ke-leng</i>
2	<i>fi-la</i> (or <i>fla</i>)
3	<i>saab-ba</i>
4	<i>na-ni</i>
5	<i>du-ru</i>

6	<i>wo-ro</i>
7	<i>wo-lon-fla</i>
8	<i>shay-ging</i>
9	<i>ko-nong-taang</i>
10	<i>taang</i>
11	<i>taang-ni-kay-len</i>
12	<i>taang-ni-fla</i>
13	<i>taang-ni-sa-ba</i>
14	<i>taang-ni-na-ni</i>
15	<i>taang-ni-doo-ru</i>
16	<i>taang-ni-wo-ro</i>
17	<i>taang-ni-wo-lon-fla</i>
18	<i>taang-ni-shay-ging</i>
19	<i>taang-ni ko-non-taang</i>
20	<i>mu-gang</i>
30	<i>bi-saab-ba</i>
31	<i>bi-saab-ba-ni-ke-leng</i>
40	<i>bi-na-ni</i>
50	<i>bi-du-ru</i>
60	<i>bi-wo-ro</i>
70	<i>bi-wo-lon-fla</i>
80	<i>bi-shay-ging</i>
90	<i>bie-ko-non-taang</i>
100	<i>ke-me</i>
1000	<i>wa</i>
5000	<i>wa-du-ru</i>

CRIOULO

Crioulo is a Portuguese-based creole spoken (with more or less mutual intelligibility) in the Cape Verde islands, Guinea-Bissau (where it's the lingua franca and 'market language') and parts of Senegal and Gambia. Nearly half the Crioulo speakers of Cape Verde are literate in Portuguese but since independence in 1975 Crioulo has become increasingly dominant; upwards of 70% of the country's population speak Crioulo. Even allowing for regional differences the phrases listed below should be understood in both Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

Good morning.	<i>bom-dee-a</i>
Good evening.	<i>bow-a no-tay</i>
Goodbye.	<i>na-buy</i>
How are you?	<i>ou-kor-po ees-ta-bon?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>ta-bon</i>
Please.	<i>pur-fa-bar</i>
Thank you.	<i>ob-ree-ga-do</i>
How much is it?	<i>kal e pre-su</i>

1	<i>aan</i>
2	<i>dos</i>
3	<i>tres</i>

4	<i>kwa-tu</i>
5	<i>sin-ku</i>
6	<i>say-es</i>
7	<i>se-tee</i>
8	<i>oy-tu</i>
9	<i>no-vee</i>
10	<i>des</i>
11	<i>oan-zee</i>
12	<i>do-zee</i>
13	<i>tre-zee</i>
14	<i>ka-to-zee</i>
15	<i>kin-zee</i>
16	<i>dee-za-say-es</i>
17	<i>dee-za-se-tee</i>
18	<i>dee-zoy-tu</i>
19	<i>dee-za-no-vee</i>
20	<i>vin-tee</i>
30	<i>trin-ta</i>
100	<i>sen</i>
1000	<i>meel</i>

DAN (YACOUBA)

Dan (also known as Yacouba) is one of the principal African languages spoken in Côte d'Ivoire (in and around Man). There are also a significant number of Dan speakers in Liberia (where it's referred to as 'Gio'). There are a couple of major dialects and more than 20 sub-dialects; as a result most communication between different language groups in the region is carried out in Dioula (see the Bambara/Dioula section on p867 for a comprehensive list of Dioula words and phrases).

Good morning.	<i>un-zhoo-ba-bo</i> (to a man)
Good morning.	<i>na-ba-bo</i> (to a woman)
Good evening.	<i>un-zhoo-attoir</i> (to a man)
Good evening.	<i>na-attoir</i> (to a woman)
How are you?	<i>bwee-aar-way</i>
Thank you.	<i>ba-lee-ka</i>

DIOLA (JOLA)

The Diola people inhabit the Casamance region of Senegal, and also the south-western parts of Gambia, where their name is spelt Jola. Their language is Diola, also known as Jola, which should not be confused with the Dioula/Jula spoken widely in other parts of West Africa.

Diola society is segmented and very flexible, so several dialects have developed which may not be mutually intelligible between different groups even though the

area inhabited by the Diola is relatively small.

Hello/Welcome. *ka-sou-mai-kep*
(response) *ka-sou-mai-kep*
Goodbye. *ou-ka-to-rra*

DIOLLA (JULA)

See Bambara/Dioula (p867).

DJERMA (ZARMA)

After Hausa, Djerma (pronounced 'jer-ma', also known as Zarma) is Niger's most common African language (people with Djerma as their first language make up around a quarter of the country's population). It's spoken mostly in the western regions including around Niamey, and it is one of the official national languages used for radio broadcasts.

Good morning. *ma-teen-ke-nee*
Good evening. *ma-teen-hee-ree*
How are you? *bar-ka?*
Thank you. *fo-fo*
Goodbye. *ka-la ton-ton*

EWE

Ewe (pronounced 'ev-vay') is the major indigenous language of southern Togo. It is also an official language of instruction in primary and secondary schools in Ghana where it's spoken mainly in the east of the country; you'll find that Twi (the language of the Ashanti and the Fanti, see p876) is the more universally spoken language of Ghana. There are also several closely related languages and dialects of Ewe spoken in Benin.

Good morning/ *nee-lye-nee-aa*
Good evening.
(response) *mee-lay*
What's your name? *n-ko-wo-day?*
My name is ... *nk-nee-n-yay ...*
How are you? *nee-fo-a?*
I'm fine. *mee-fo*
Thank you. *mou-do, ack-pay-now*
Goodbye. *mee-a do-go*

FON (FONGBE)

Fon (called *Fongbe* in the language itself) belongs to the Kwa group of the Gbe language family, *gbe* being the Fon word for 'language'. It is another of the major lingua francas of West Africa, spoken for the most

part in Nigeria and Benin, but also used widely in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Niger and Togo. While Fon is subject to clear dialectal variation depending on region, you should find that the list of words and phrases below will be universally understood.

The Fon language is written using the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet); for the sake of simplicity we've used a pronunciation system that uses letters common to English. Fon is a tone language (ie intended meaning is dependent upon changes in pitch within the normal range of a speaker's voice) with a standard system of five tones; in this guide we have simplified things by using only two written accents for tones: an acute accent (eg á) for a high tone; a grave accent (eg à) for a low tone; an unmarked vowel has a mid-tone.

Pronounce letters as you would in English, keeping the following points in mind:

a as in 'far'
e as in 'met'
i as in 'marine'
o either as in 'hot' or as in 'for'
u as in 'put'
g as in 'go'
h silent
ng indicates that the preceding vowel is nasalised, eg the 'ing' sound in 'sing' as the 'ni' in 'onion'

Hello. *ò-kú*
Goodbye. *é-dà-bò*
Please. *kèng-kéng-lèng*
Thank you. *à-wà-nu*
You're welcome. *é-sù-kpé-a*
Sorry/Pardon. *kèng-kéng-lèng*
Yes. *eng*
No. *é-wo*
How are you? *ne-à-dè-gbòng?*
I'm fine. *ùn-dò-gàng-ji*
And you? *hwe-lo?*
Can you help me please? *kèng-kéng-lèng-dá-lò-mi?*

Do you speak ...? *à-sè ... à?*
English *glèng-síng-gbè*
French *flàng-sé-gbè*

I only speak English. *glèng-síng-gbè ké-dé-wè-ùn-sè*
I speak a little French. *ùn-sè flàng-sé-gbè kpé-dè*
I understand. *ùn-mò-nu-jé-mè*

I don't understand. *ùn-mò-nu-jé-mè-a*
What's your name? *ne-à-nò-ní?*
My name is ... *ùn-nò-ní ...*
Where are you from? *tò-té-mè-nù-wé-ní-wè?*
I'm from ... *... nù-wé-ní-mi*
Where is ...? *fi-té-wé ...?*
Is it far? *e-ling-wé-a?*
straight ahead *tre-le-le*
left *à-myò*
right *à-dí-sí*
How much is this? *nà-bí-wé-ní-é-lò?*
That's too much. *é-vá-khí-díng*
Leave me alone! *jo-mí-dó!*

1 *ò-dé*
2 *ò-wè*
3 *à-tòng*
4 *e-nè*
5 *à-tóng*
6 *à-yi-zéng*
7 *te-we*
8 *tá-to*
9 *téng-nè*
10 *wo*
11 *wo-dò-kpó*
12 *we-wè*
13 *wa-tòng*
14 *we-nè*
15 *à-fò-tòn*
16 *à-fò-tòng-nù-kúng-dò-pó*
17 *à-fò-tòng-nù-kúng-wè*
18 *à-fò-tòng-nù-kúng-à-tòng*
19 *à-fò-tòng-nù-kúng-è-ne*
20 *kò*
30 *gbàng*
40 *kàng-dé*
50 *kàng-dé-wo*
60 *kàng-dé-ko*
70 *kàng-dé-gbàng*
80 *kàng-wè*
90 *kàng-wè-wo*
100 *kàng-wè-kò*
1000 *à-fà-tòng*

FULA (PULAAR)

Fula (which is also known as Pulaar) is one of the languages of the Fula people found across West Africa, from northern Senegal to Sudan in the east, and as far south as Ghana and Nigeria. The Fula are known as Peul in Senegal (they are also called Fulani and Fulbe).

There are two main languages in the Fulari group: Fulfulde, spoken mainly in northern and southern Senegal (includes the

dialects known as Tukolor and Fulakunda); Futa Fula (also known as Futa Djalón), the main indigenous language of Guinea, also spoken in eastern Senegal.

It's worth noting that these far-flung languages have many regional dialects which aren't always mutually intelligible between different groups.

FULFULDE

The following words and phrases should be understood through most parts of Senegal. Note that **ng** should be pronounced as one sound (like the 'ng' in 'sing'); practise isolating this sound and using it at the beginning of a word. The letter ñ represents the 'ni' sound in 'onion'.

Hello. *no ngoolu daa* (sg)
no ngoolu dong (pl)
Goodbye. *ñalleen e jamm* (lit: Have a good day)
mbaaleen e jamm (lit: Have a good night)

Please. *njaafodaa*
Thank you. *a jaaraama* (sg)
on jaaraama (pl)

You're welcome. *enen ndendidum*
Sorry/Pardon. *yaafó or achanam hakke*
Yes. *eey*

No. *alaa*
How are you? *no mbaddaa?*
I'm fine. *mbe de sellee*
... and you? *... an nene?*

Can you help me please? *ada waawi wallude mi, njaafodaa?*
Do you speak English/French? *ada faama engale/faranse?*

I only speak English. *ko engale tan kaala mi*
I speak a little French. *mi nani faranse seeda*

I understand. *mi faami*
I don't understand. *mi faamaani*
What's your name? *no mbiyeteedaa?*
My name is ... *ko ... mbiyete mi*

Where are you from? *tó njejedaa?*
I'm from ... *ko ... njejaa mi*
Where is ...? *hoto woni?*
Is it far? *no woddí?*

straight ahead *ko yeesu*
left *nano bang-gè*
right *nano ñaamo*
How much is this? *dum no foti jarata?*
That's too much. *e ne tiidi no feewu*
Leave me alone! *accam!/oppam mi deejai!*

1	go-o
2	didi
3	tati
4	nayi
5	joyi
6	jeego
7	jeedjidi
8	jeetati
9	jeenayi
10	sappo
11	sappoygoo
12	sappoydidi
13	sappoytati
20	noogaas
30	chappantati
100	temedere
1000	wujenere

FUTA FULA (FUTA DJALÓN)

This variety of Fula known as Futa Fula or Futa Djalón is predominant in the Futa Djalón region of Guinea. It is named after the people who speak it, and is distinct from the variety known as Fulfulde that is spoken in northern and southern Senegal.

Good morning/Good evening.	on- <i>jaa</i> -ra-ma
How are you?	ta-na-la-ton?
I'm fine.	ta-na-o-ala
Where is ...?	ko-hon-to wo-nee?
Thank you.	on- <i>jaa</i> -ra-ma
Goodbye.	on-ount-tou-ma

GA & ADANGME

Ga (and its very close relative Adangme) is one of the major indigenous languages of Ghana, spoken mostly around Accra.

Good morning/Good evening.	meeng-ga-bou
How are you?	tey-yo-tain?
I'm fine.	ee-o-jo-baan
What's your name?	to-cho-bo-tain?
My name is ...	a-cho-mee ...
Thank you.	o-ye-ra-don
Goodbye.	bye-bye

HASSANIYA

Hassaniya is a Berber-Arabic dialect which is spoken by Moors of Mauritania. It's also the official language of Mauritania.

Good morning.	sa-la-ma a-lay-koum
Good evening.	ma-sa el-hair

How are you?	ish-ta-ree?
Thank you.	shu-kraan
Goodbye.	ma-sa-laam

HAUSA

Hausa is spoken and understood in a vast area of West Africa and beyond. Dialectal variation is not extreme in Hausa so the phrases included in this language guide will be universally understood, and will prove useful in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria and northern Ghana (where it is the principal language of trade).

Hausa is a tone language (where variations in the pitch of a speaker's voice has a direct influence on intended meaning) with three basic tones assigned to vowels: low, high and rising-falling. Standard written Hausa isn't marked for tones and the pronunciation guide for the words and phrases included below doesn't show them either. Your best bet is to learn with your ears by noting the inflection of African speakers.

The consonants **b**, **d** and **k** have 'glottalised' equivalents where air is exhaled forcefully from the larynx (the voice box); these glottal consonants are represented in this guide by **B**, **D** and **K** respectively.

Distinctions in vowel length are also overlooked in standard written Hausa. In this guide long vowels are represented by double vowels, eg *aa'aa* (no).

Hello.	sannu
(response)	yauwaa sannu
Good morning.	eena kwanaa
Good morning.	lapeeyaloh (response)
Good evening.	eena eenee
Good evening.	lapeeyalo (response)
Goodbye.	sai wani lookachi
Please.	don allaa
Thank you.	naa goodee
Don't mention it/It's nothing.	baa koomi
Sorry/Pardon.	yi haKurii, ban ji ba
Yes.	ii
No.	aa'aa
How are you?	inaa gajiyaa?
I'm fine.	baa gajiyaa
And you?	kai fa?
What's your name?	yaayaa suunanka?
My name is ...	suunaanaa ...
Where are you from?	daga inaa ka fitoo?
I'm from ...	naa fitoo daga ...

Can you help me please?	don allaa, koo zaa ka taimakee ni?
Do you speak English/French?	kanaa jin ingilishii/faransancii?
I speak only English.	inaa jin ingilishii kawai
I speak a little French.	inaa jin faransancii
I understand.	kaDan
I don't understand.	naa gaanee
Where is ...?	ban gaanee ba
Is it far ...?	inaa ...?
straight ahead left right	inaa ...?
How much is this?	da niisaa ...?
That's too much.	miiKee sambal
Leave me alone!	hagu
	daama
	nawa nee wannan?
	akwai tsaadaa ga wannan
	tafi can!

1	d'aya
2	biyu
3	uku
4	hud'u
5	biyar
6	shida
7	bakwai
8	takwas
9	tara
10	gooma
11	gooma shaa d'aya
12	gooma shaa biyu
13	gooma shaa uku
14	goma shaa hud'u
15	goma shaa biyar
16	gooma shaa shida
17	gooma shaa bakwai
18	gooma shaa takwas
19	gooma shaa tara
20	ashirin
30	talaatin
40	arba'in
50	hamsin
60	sittin
70	saba'in
80	tamaanin
90	casa'in
100	d'arii
1000	dubuu

IGBO (IBO)

Igbo, also known as Ibo, is the predominant indigenous language of Nigeria's southeast, where it is afforded the status of official language; it's used in the media and in government, and is the main lingua franca of

the region. There are over 30 dialects of Igbo, each with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility.

Good morning.	ee-bow-la-chee
Good evening.	na-no-na
How are you?	ee-may-na aan-ghan?
Thank you.	ee-may-na
Goodbye.	kay-may-see-a

KABYÉ

After Ewé, Kabyé is Togo's most common African language, predominant in the Kara region. One Kabyé word you'll always hear is *yovo* (white person).

Good morning	un-la-wa-lay
How are you?	be-ja-un-sema
I'm fine.	a-la-fia
Thank you.	un-la-ba-lay
Goodbye.	be-la-bee-ta-si

KRIO

Krio is Sierra Leone's most common non-colonial language. Its major ingredient is English, but its sound system and grammar have been enriched by various West African languages. Because Krio was imported by different slave groups, there are strong differences between the Krio spoken in various regions, so strong in fact that some people find it easier to understand the Krio of Nigeria than the Krio spoken in other parts of Sierra Leone.

Hello.	kou-shay
Hi, mate!	e bo!
How are you?	how-dee bo-dee?
I'm fine.	bo-dee fine/ no bad (more common)
Thank God.	a tel god tenk-kee
Thank you.	tenk-kee
Please.	dou-ya (a-beg) (added for emphasis)
Goodbye.	we go see back
How much?	ow mus?
food	chop
Sierra Leone	salone

MALINKÉ

Malinké is spoken in the region around the borders between Senegal, Mali and Guinea. It's one of Senegal's six national languages. While it's very similar in some respects to

the Mandinka spoken in Gambia and Senegal (they share much of their vocabulary), the two are classed as separate languages.

Good morning.	<i>nee-so-ma</i>
Good evening.	<i>nee-woo-la</i>
How are you?	<i>tan-aas-te?</i>
Thank you.	<i>nee-kay</i>
Goodbye.	<i>m-ba-ra-wa</i>

MANDINKA

Mandinka is the language of the Mandinka people found largely in central and northern Gambia, and in parts of southern Senegal. The people and their language are also called Mandingo and they're closely related to other Mande-speaking groups such as the Bambara of Mali, where they originate. Mandinka is classed as one of Senegal's national languages.

In this guide, **ng** should be pronounced as the 'ng' in 'sing' and **ñ** represents the 'ni' sound in 'onion'.

Hello.	<i>i/al be ñaading</i> (sg/pl)
Good bye.	<i>fo tuma doo</i>
Please.	<i>dukare</i>
Thank you.	<i>i/al ning bara</i> (sg/pl)
You're welcome.	<i>mbee le dentaala/wo teng fengti</i> (lit: It's nothing)

Sorry/Pardon.	<i>hakko tuñe</i>
Yes.	<i>haa</i>
No.	<i>hani</i>
How are you?	<i>i/al be kayrato?</i> (sg/pl)
I'm fine.	<i>tana tenna</i> (lit: I'm out of trouble)

And you?	<i>kayra dorong</i> (lit: peace only)
What's your name?	<i>ite fanang?</i>
My name is ...	<i>i too dung?</i>
Where are you from?	<i>ntoo mu ... leti</i>
I'm from ...	<i>i/al bota munto?</i> (sg/pl)
Can you help me please?	<i>mbota ...</i>
Do you speak English/French?	<i>i/al seng maakoy noo, dukare?</i> (sg/pl)
I speak only English.	<i>ye angkale/faranse kango moyle?</i>

And you? *ite fanang?*

What's your name? *i too dung?*

My name is ... *ntoo mu ... leti*

Where are you from? *i/al bota munto?* (sg/pl)

I'm from ... *mbota ...*

Can you help me please? *i/al seng maakoy noo, dukare?* (sg/pl)

Do you speak English/French? *ye angkale/faranse kango moyle?*

I speak only English. *nga angkale kango damma le moy*

I speak a little French. *nga faranse kango domonding le moy*

I understand. *ngaa kalamuta le/ngaa fahaam le*

I don't understand. *mmaa kalamuta/mmaa fahaam*

Where is ...? *... be munto?*

Is it far? *faa jamfata?*

Go straight ahead.
left
right
How much is this?
That's too much.
Leave me alone!

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
20
30
100
1000

sila tiling jan kilingo maraa bulu baa ñing mu jelu leti? a daa koleyaaata baake mbula!

kiling fula saba naani luulu wooro woorrowala sey kononto tang tang ning kiling tang ning fula tang ning saba muwaa tang saba keme wili kiling

MINA (GENGBE)

Mina, also known as Gengbe, is the language of trade in southern Togo, especially along the coast. It belongs to the Gbe (*gbe* meaning 'language') subgroup of the vast Kwa language family. Other Gbe languages of Togo include Ajagbe, Fongbe, Maxigbe and Wacigbe.

Good morning.	<i>so-bay-do</i>
(response)	<i>dosso</i>
How are you?	<i>o-foin?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>aaaa</i> ('a' as in 'bat')
Thank you.	<i>ack-pay</i>
Goodbye.	<i>so-day-lo</i>

MORÉ

Moré (the language of the Mossi) is spoken by more than half the population of Burkina Faso – with over 4½ million speakers it's the country's principal indigenous language.

Good morning.	<i>yee-bay-ro</i>
Good evening.	<i>nay-za-bree</i>
How are you?	<i>la-fee-bay-may?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>la-fee-bay-la</i>
Thank you.	<i>un-pus-da bar-ka</i>
Goodbye.	<i>wen-a-ta-say</i>

SANGHA DIALECT

Sangha is one of the main dialects (from around 48 others!) spoken by the Dogon people who inhabit the Falaise de Bandiagara in central Mali. Dialectal variation can be so marked that mutual intelligibility between the many Dogon groups is not always assured.

Good morning.	<i>a-ga-po</i>
Good evening.	<i>dee-ga-po</i>
How are you?	<i>ou say-yo?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>say-o</i>
Thank you.	<i>bee-ray-po</i>
Goodbye.	<i>ee-eye-ee way-dang</i>
Safe journey!	<i>day-gay-day-ya</i>

SENOUFO

The Senoufo words and phrases listed following will prove useful if you're travelling through southern Mali, southwestern Burkina Faso and northern Côte d'Ivoire.

Senoufo pronunciation can be a very difficult prospect for foreigners, and with no official written form the task of matching the sounds of the language with letters on a page presents quite a challenge. The pronunciation system used in this guide provides rough approximations only. Try to pick up the sounds and inflections of the language by listening to fluent Senoufo speakers.

a	as in 'far'
e	as in 'bet'
é	as the 'ay' in 'bay'
i	as in 'marine'
o	as in 'hot'
u	between the 'u' in 'pull' and the 'oo' in 'boot'
g	always hard, as in 'get'
ñ	as in the 'ni' in 'onion'
ng	as the 'ng' in 'sing' – indicates that the preceding vowel is nasal

Hello.	<i>kéné</i>
Goodbye.	<i>wu-ñe-té-re</i>
Thank you.	<i>fa-na</i>
Sorry/Pardon.	<i>ya-hé-ya</i>
Yes.	<i>huu or mi-lo-go</i>
No.	<i>mé-tye</i>
How are you?	<i>ma-cho-lo-go-la?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>min-bé-gé-ba-mén</i>
And you?	<i>mohn-dohn?</i>

What's your name? *men-ma-mi-in-ye?*
My name is ... *men-min-ye ...*

Do you speak ...? *mun-na ... chi-yé-ré-lu-gu-la?*
English *aan-gi-li-kan*
French *tu-ba-bu-kan*

I only speak English. *min-na aan-gi-li-kan chi-yé-re-ye-ké-né*

I speak a little French. *min-na tu-ba-bu-kan chi-yé-re tye-ri-ye*

Can you help me please? *na-pu-gu?*

I don't understand. *min-nay-chi-men*

Where are you from? *shi-mo-na-yi-ri-ré?*

I'm from ... *min-na-yi-ri ...*

Where is ...? *shi-ong-ye ...?*

Is it far? *ka-lé-li-la?*

left *ka-mohn*

right *kin-yi-ka-ni-gi-he-ye-ré*

How much is this? *jur-gi-na-de-le?*

That's too much! *ka-la-ra-wa-a, de!*

Leave me alone! *yi-ri-wa! or me-ya-ba!*

Numbers

Numbers in Senoufo can be a very complicated affair. For example, the number 'one hundred' translates literally as 'two-times-five-times-two-times-four-plus-two-times-ten' – use the numbers in the Bambara/Dioula section (p867) and you'll have no trouble being understood.

SUSU

Susu is Guinea's third-most common indigenous language. It's spoken mainly in the south around Conakry.

Good morning.	<i>tay-na ma-ree</i>
Good evening.	<i>tay-na ma-fay-yan</i>
How are you?	<i>o-ree to-na-mo?</i>
Thank you.	<i>ee-no-wa-lee</i>
Goodbye.	<i>oo-ne-gay-say-gay</i>

TAMASHEK

Tamashek (spelt variously 'Tamasheq', 'Tamachek', 'Tamajeq' and more!) is the language of the Tuareg. There are two main dialects: Eastern, spoken in western Niger and eastern Mali; Western, spoken in western Niger, the Gao region of Mali, and northern Nigeria.

How do you do?	<i>met-a-ee-kha?</i> (pol)/ <i>o-yeek?</i> (inf)
I'm fine.	<i>eel-kha-rass</i>

How's the heat?	<i>min-ee-twi-xe?</i> (a traditional greeting)
Good/Fine.	<i>ee-zott</i>
How much?	<i>min-ee-kit?</i>
Thank you.	<i>tan-oo-mert</i>
Goodbye.	<i>harr-sad</i>

TWI

Twi (pronounced 'chwee'), the language of the Ashanti, is the most widely spoken African language in Ghana, where it's the official language of education and literature. Along with Fanti it belongs to the large Akan language family. Most of the dialects within this group are mutually intelligible.

Hello.	<i>a-kwa-ba</i>
(response)	<i>yaa</i>
Good morning.	<i>ma-cheeng</i>
Good evening.	<i>ma-jo</i>
Are you going to ...	<i>ya-co ...?</i>
Goodbye.	<i>ma-krow</i>
Safe journey.	<i>nan-tee yee-yay</i>
Let's go.	<i>yen-co</i>
How are you?	<i>ay-ta-sein?</i>
I'm fine.	<i>ay-ya</i>
Please.	<i>me-pa-wo-che-o</i>
Thank you.	<i>may-da-say</i>
Yes.	<i>aan</i>
No.	<i>da-be</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>wo-te bro-fo aan-na</i>
I don't understand.	<i>um-ta se</i>
I'd like ...	<i>me-pay ...</i>

1	<i>bee-a-ko</i>
2	<i>a-bee-eng</i>
3	<i>a-bee-e-sa</i>
4	<i>a-nang</i>
5	<i>a-nuhm</i>
6	<i>a-see-ya</i>
7	<i>a-song</i>
8	<i>a-wo-twe</i>
9	<i>a-kruhng</i>
10	<i>du</i>
11	<i>du-bee-a-ko</i>
20	<i>a-dwo-nu</i>
100	<i>o-ha</i>
1000	<i>a-pem</i>

WOLOF

Wolof (spelt Ouolof in French) is the language of the Wolof people, who are found in Senegal, particularly in the central area north and east of Dakar, along the coast,

and in the western regions of Gambia. The Wolof spoken in Gambia is slightly different to the Wolof spoken in Senegal; the Gambian Wolof people living on the north bank of the Gambia River speak the Senegalese variety. Wolof is used as a common language in many parts of Senegal and Gambia, often instead of either French or English, and some smaller groups complain about the increasing 'Wolofisation' of their culture.

For some traditional Arabic Islamic greetings which are used in Muslim West Africa, see p868.

Most consonants are pronounced as they are in English; when they are doubled they are pronounced with greater emphasis. Some vowels have accented variants.

a	as in 'at'
à	as in 'far'
e	as in 'bet'
é	as in 'why'
ë	as the 'u' in 'but'
i	as in 'it'
o	as in 'hot'
ó	as in 'so'
u	as in 'put'
g	as in 'go'
ñ	as the 'ni' in 'onion'
ng	as in 'sing'; practise making this sound at the beginning of a word
r	always rolled
s	as in 'so', not as in 'as'
w	as in 'we'
x	as the 'ch' in Scottish loch

Hello.	<i>Na nga def. (sg)</i> <i>Na ngeen def. (pl)</i>
Good morning.	<i>Jàmm nga fanaane.</i>
Good afternoon.	<i>Jàmm nga yendoo.</i>
Goodnight.	<i>Fanaanal jàmm.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Ba beneen.</i>
Please.	<i>Su la nexee.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Jërëjër.</i>
You're welcome.	<i>Agsil/agsileen ak jàmm . (sg/pl)</i>
Sorry/Pardon.	<i>Baal ma.</i>
Yes.	<i>Waaw.</i>
No.	<i>Déédéet.</i>
How are you?	<i>Jàmm nga/ngéen am? (sg/pl)</i> (lit: Have you peace?)
I'm fine.	<i>Jàmm rekk.</i>
And you?	<i>Yow nag?</i>
How is your family?	<i>Naka waa kër ga?</i>

What's your first name?	<i>Naka nga/ngéen tudd? (sg/pl)</i>
What's your last name?	<i>Naka nga sant?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Maa ngi tudd ...</i>
Where do you live?	<i>Fan nga dëkk?</i>
Where are you from?	<i>Fan nga/ngéen jòge? (sg/pl)</i>
I'm from ...	<i>Maa ngi jòge ...</i>
Do you speak English/French?	<i>Dégg nga. Angale/ Faranse? (sg/pl)</i>
I speak only English.	<i>Angale rekk laa dégg.</i>
I speak a little French.	<i>Dégg naa tuuti Faranse.</i>
I don't speak Wolof/French.	<i>Màn dégguma Wolof/ Faranse.</i>
I understand.	<i>Dégg naa.</i>
I don't understand.	<i>Dégguma.</i>
I'd like ...	<i>Dama bëggoon ...</i>
Where is ...?	<i>Fan la ...?</i>
Is it far?	<i>Sore na?</i>
straight ahead	<i>cha kanam</i>
left	<i>cammoon</i>
right	<i>ndeyjoor</i>
Get in!	<i>Dugghal waay!</i>
How much is this?	<i>Lii ñaata?</i>
It's too much.	<i>Seer na torob.</i>
Leave me alone!	<i>May ma jàmm!</i>

Monday	<i>altine</i>
Tuesday	<i>talaata</i>
Wednesday	<i>àllarba</i>
Thursday	<i>alxames</i>
Friday	<i>àjjuma</i>
Saturday	<i>gaawu</i>
Sunday	<i>dibéer</i>

0	<i>tus</i>
1	<i>benn</i>
2	<i>ñaar</i>
3	<i>ñett</i>
4	<i>ñeent</i>
5	<i>juróom</i>
6	<i>juróom-benn</i>
7	<i>juróom- ñaar</i>
8	<i>juróom- ñett</i>
9	<i>juróom- ñeent</i>
10	<i>fukk</i>
11	<i>fukk-ak-benn</i>
12	<i>fukk-ak-ñaar</i>
13	<i>fukk-ak-ñett</i>
14	<i>fukk-ak-ñeent</i>
15	<i>fukk-ak-juróom</i>
16	<i>fukk-ak-juróom benn</i> (lit: ten-and-five one)
17	<i>fukk-ak-juróom ñaar</i>

18	<i>fukk-ak-juróom ñett</i>
19	<i>fukk-ak-juróom ñeent</i>
20	<i>ñaar-fukk</i> (lit: two-ten)
30	<i>fanweer</i>
40	<i>ñeent-fukk</i> (lit: four-ten)
50	<i>juróom-fukk</i> (lit: five-ten)
60	<i>juróom-benn-fukk</i> (lit: five-one-ten)
70	<i>juróom-ñaar-fukk</i> (lit: five two-ten)
80	<i>juróom-ñett-fukk</i>
90	<i>juróom-ñeent-fukk</i>
100	<i>témeér</i>
1000	<i>junne</i>

YORUBA

Yoruba belongs to the Kwa group of the Ede language family (*ede* is the Yoruba word for 'language'). Along with Fon it is one of the main lingua francas in much of the eastern part of West Africa but it is principally spoken as a first language in Benin and Nigeria. As with the majority of indigenous West African languages, Yoruba is subject to a degree of dialectal variation, not surprising given the broad geographical area its speakers are found in; fortunately, the majority of these variants are mutually intelligible.

Yoruba is normally written using the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet). It is a tone language, ie changes in voice-pitch are important in giving words their intended meaning. To give a comprehensive description of the five-tone Yoruba vowel system would require more space than we have available here. For simplicity we've used an acute accent (eg **á**) to represent a high tone, a grave accent (eg **à**) to represent a low tone; unmarked vowels take a mid-tone.

The pronunciations we give for the words and phrases below are approximations only. Pronounce letters as you would in English, keeping the following points in mind:

a	as in 'far'
e	as in 'met'
i	as in 'marine'
o	as in 'hot'; as in 'or'
u	as in 'put'
g	as in 'go'
h	not pronounced
ng	indicates that the preceding vowel is nasalised, eg the 'ing' in 'sing'
Hello.	<i>bá-o</i>
Goodbye.	<i>ó-dá-bò</i>

Please.	<i>e-dá-kuhn</i>	1	<i>e-ní</i>
Thank you.	<i>e-she-wu</i>	2	<i>è-ji</i>
You're welcome.	<i>e-wo-lè</i>	3	<i>e-ta</i>
Sorry/Pardon.	<i>e-dá-kuhn</i>	4	<i>e-ring</i>
Yes.	<i>e</i>	5	<i>à-rúng</i>
No.	<i>è-ré-wo</i>	6	<i>è-fà</i>
How are you?	<i>shé-wà-dá-da?</i>	7	<i>è-je</i>
I'm fine. (And you?)	<i>à-dú-kpé (è-nyi-na-nkó?)</i>	8	<i>è-jo</i>
What's your name?	<i>bá-wo-le-má-jé?</i>	9	<i>e-saang</i>
My name is ...	<i>mo-má-jé ...</i>	10	<i>e-wa</i>
Where are you from?	<i>à-rá-ibo-lo-jé?</i>	11	<i>mó-kàng-la</i>
I'm from ...	<i>à-rá ... ní mi</i>	12	<i>mé-ji-la</i>
Can you help me please?	<i>e-dá-kuhn e-ràng- mí-ló-wó?</i>	13	<i>mé-tà-la</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>she-gbó ge-sì?</i>	14	<i>mé-ri-la</i>
Do you speak French?	<i>she-gbó fraang-sé?</i>	15	<i>má-rùhng-la</i>
I only speak English.	<i>ge-sì ni-kaang ni-mo-gbó</i>	16	<i>mé-ring-dó-gúhng</i>
I speak a little French.	<i>mo-gbó fraang-sé dí-è</i>	17	<i>mé-tá-dó-gúhng</i>
I don't understand.	<i>kò-yé-mí-sí</i>	18	<i>mé-ji-dó-gúhng</i>
Where is ...?	<i>ibo ní ...?</i>	19	<i>ò-kaang-dó-gúhng</i>
Is it far?	<i>o jin-ni?</i>	20	<i>ò-gúhng</i>
straight ahead	<i>tro-lo-lo</i>	30	<i>mé-wa-lé-ló-gbòng</i>
left	<i>ò-túhng</i>	40	<i>ò-gbòng</i>
right	<i>ò-sing</i>	50	<i>mé-wà-lé-ló-gbòng</i>
How much is this?	<i>é-lo-lè-yi?</i>	60	<i>ò-gón-g-lé-ló-gbòng</i>
That's too much.	<i>ó-wáang-jù</i>	70	<i>ò-gúhng-mé-wa-lé-ló-gbòng</i>
Leave me alone!	<i>fi-mí-nlè!</i>	80	<i>ò-gbòng-mé-ji</i>
		90	<i>mé-wa-lé-ló-gbong-mé-ji</i>
		100	<i>ò-gúhng-lé-ló-gbong-mé-ji</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:
French Phrasebook

Glossary

The following is a list of words and acronyms used in this book that you are likely to come across in West Africa. For a detailed food & drink glossary, see p55.

abusua – clan or organisation of the Akan
adinkra – hand-made printed cloth from Ghana worn primarily by the Ashanti on solemn occasions
Afrique Occidentale Française – see *French West Africa*
Afro-beat – a fusion of African music, jazz and soul originated and popularised by Fela Kuti of Nigeria; along with juju it's the most popular music in Nigeria
Akan – a major group of peoples along the south coast of West Africa; includes the Ashanti and Fanti peoples
akuaba – Ashanti carved figure
aluguer – for hire (sign in minibus)
animism – the base of virtually all traditional religions in Africa; the belief that there is a spirit in all natural things and the worship of those spirits, particularly human spirits (those of ancestors) which are thought to continue after death and have the power to bestow protection
asantehene – the king or supreme ruler of the Ashanti people
Ashanti – the largest tribal group in Ghana, concentrated around Kumasi
aso adire – a broad term for dyed cloth, a common handicraft found in many markets in Nigeria
auberge – in France it's a hostel, but in West Africa it's used to mean any small hotel
autogare – see *gare routière*
autoroute – major road or highway

bâché – covered pick-up ('ute') used as a basic bush taxi (from the French word for tarpaulin)
banco – bank
barco – large boat
balafon – xylophone
Bambara – Mali's major ethnic group found in the centre and south and famous for its art, especially wooden carvings
banco – clay or mud used for building
bar-dancing – term widely used throughout the region for a bar which also has music (sometimes live) and dancing in the evening
barrage – dam across river, or roadblock
bidon – large bottle, container or jerry can
bidonville – shantytown
blai – coiled baskets
bogolan cloth – often simply called mud cloth, this is cotton cloth with designs painted on using various types of

mud for colour; made by the *Bambara* people of Mali but is found throughout the region
boîte – small nightclub (literally 'box')
bolong – literally 'river' in Mandinka, but when used in English context it means creek or small river
bombax tree – see *fromager tree*
boubou – the common name for the elaborate robe-like outfit worn by men and women; also called 'grand boubou'
boukarous – open-sided, circular mud huts
BP – Boîte Postale (PO Box)
brake – see *Peugeot taxi*
Bundu – Krio word for 'secret society'; used in Liberia and in certain parts of Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire; includes the Poro society for men and the Sande for women
Burkinabé – adjective for Burkina Faso
bush taxi – along with buses, this is the most common form of public transport in West Africa; there are three main types of bush taxi in West Africa: Peugeot taxi, minibus and pick-up (bâché)
buvette – refreshment stall

cadeau – gift, tip, bribe or a handout
campement – loosely translated as 'hostel', 'inn' or 'lodge', or even 'motel', but it is not a camping ground (ie, a place for tents); traditionally, campements offered simple accommodation but many today have quality and prices on a par with mid-range hotels
canoa – motor-canoë
car – large bus, see also *petit car*
carnet – document required if you are bringing a car into most of the countries of the region
car rapide – minibus, usually used in cities; often decrepit, may be fast or very slow
carrefour – literally 'crossroads', but also used to mean meeting place
carrefour des jeunes – youth centre
carte jaune – vaccination certificate
casata – waterfall
case – hut
case à étage – two-storey mud house
case à impluvium – huge round hut with a hole in the roof to collect rainwater
case de passage – very basic place to sleep (often near bus stations) with a bed or mat on the floor and little else, and nearly always doubling as a brothel; also called 'chambre de passage' or 'maison de passage'
CFA – the principal currency of the region; used in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo

chambre de passage – see *case de passage*
chasée submersible – see *pont submersible*
chèche – light cotton cloth in white or indigo blue that Tuareg men wear to cover their head and face
chiwara – a headpiece carved in the form of an antelope and used in ritualistic dances by the Bambara
cidade – city
cinq-cent-quatre – 504; see *Peugeot taxi*
climatisée – air-conditioned; often shortened to ‘clim’
coladeiras – old-style music; romantic, typically sentimental upbeat love songs
commissariat – police station
compteur – meter in taxi
correios – post office
courette – sleeping berth on a train
courrier postale – postal van; sometimes the only means of public transport between towns in rural areas
cotton tree – see *fromager tree*
CRI – Campements Ruraux Intégrés; system of village-run campements in the Casamance region of Senegal
croix d’Agadez – Tuareg talisman that protects its wearer from the ‘evil eye’

Dahomey – pre-independence name of Benin
dash – bribe or tip (noun); also used as a verb, ‘You dash me something...’
demi-pension – half board (dinner, bed and breakfast)
déplacement – a taxi or boat that you ‘charter’ for yourself
djembe – type of drum
Dogon – people found in Mali, east of Mopti; famous for their cliff dwellings, cosmology and arts
durbar – ceremony or celebration, usually involving a cavalry parade, found, for example, in the Muslim northern Nigerian states
dournis – minibus

Ecomag – Ecowas Monitoring Group; a military force made up of soldiers from the member armies of Ecowas
Ecowas – Economic Community of West African States
Eid al-Fitr – feast to celebrate the end of Ramadan
Eid al-Kabir – see *Tabaski*
Empire of Ghana – no geographic connection with the present-day country of Ghana; one of the great *Sahel* empires that flourished in the 8th to 11th centuries AD and covered much of present-day Mali and parts of Senegal
Empire of Mali – Islamic Sahel empire that was at its peak in the 14th century, covering the region between present-day Senegal and Niger; its capital was at Koumbi Saleh in southern Mauritania
essence – petrol (gas) for car

fado – haunting melancholy blues-style Portuguese music
fanals – large lanterns; also the processions during which the lanterns are carried through the streets
fanicos – laundry men

Fanti – part of the Akan group of people based along the coast in southwest Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire; traditionally fishing people and farmers
fête – festival
fêtes des masques – ceremony with masks
fetish – sacred objects or talismans in traditional religions, sometimes called ‘charms’
fiche – form (to complete)
Foulbé – see *Fula*
French West Africa – area of West and Central Africa acquired by France at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85 which divided Africa up between the European powers; ‘Afrique Occidentale Française’ in French
fromager tree – found throughout West Africa and also known as the ‘bombax tree’, ‘kapok tree’ or ‘cotton tree’, it is recognisable by its yellowish bark, large pod-like fruit and exposed roots
Fula – a people spread widely through West Africa, mostly nomadic cattle herders; also known as ‘Fulani’, ‘Peul’ or ‘Foulbé’
fula-fula – converted truck or pick-up; rural public transport
funaná – distinctive fast-paced music with a Latin rhythm that’s great for dancing; usually features players on the accordion and tapping with metal

gara – thin cotton material
garage – bush taxi and bus park
gare lagunaire – lagoon ferry terminal
gare maritime – ferry terminal
gare routière – bus and bush-taxi station, also called ‘gare voiture’ or ‘autogare’
gare voiture – see *gare routière*
gargotte – small, local eatery
gasoil – diesel fuel
gendarmérie – police station/post
girba – water bag
gîte – in France, this mean a small hotel or holiday cottage with self-catering facilities; in West Africa it is occasionally used interchangeably with *auberge* and *campement*
Gold Coast – pre-independence name for modern state of Ghana
goudron – tar (road)
Grain Coast – old name for Liberia
grand boubou – see *boubou*
gué – ford or low causeway across river

Hausa – people originally from northern Nigeria and southern Niger, mostly farmers and traders
highlife – a style of music, originating in Ghana, combining West African and Western influences
hôtel de ville – town hall

ibeji – Yoruba carved twin figures
IDP – International Driving Permit

Igbo – one of the three major people groups in Nigeria, concentrated predominantly in the southeast
IGN – Institut Géographique National; the French IGN produces maps of most West African countries; several West African countries have their own IGN institution, although maps are not always available
IMF – International Monetary Fund
immeuble – large building, for example, office block
impluvium – large round traditional house with roof constructed to collect rain water in central tank or bowl
insha’allah – God willing, ie hopefully (Arabic, but used by Muslims in Africa)

jali – see *griot*
jardim – garden
juju – the music style characterised by tight vocal harmonies and sophisticated guitar work, backed by traditional drums and percussion; it is very popular in southern Nigeria, most notably with the Yoruba; see also *vodoo*

kandab – a large belt used to climb trees to collect palm wine
kandong – truck or pick-up
kapok tree – see *fromager tree*
kente cloth – probably the most expensive material in West Africa; made with finely woven cotton, and sometimes silk, by Ghana’s Ashanti people
Kingdom of Benin – no relation to the present-day country, this was one of the great West African kingdoms (13th to 19th centuries); based in Nigeria around Benin City and famous for its bronzes
kola nuts – extremely bitter nuts sold everywhere on the streets and known for their mildly hallucinogenic and caffeine-like effects; they are offered as gifts at weddings and other ceremonies
kora – harp-like musical instrument with over 20 strings
kwotenai kanye – earrings

line – fixed-route shared taxi
Lobi – people based in southwest Burkina Faso and northern Côte d’Ivoire, famous for their figurative sculpture and compounds known as *soukala*
lorry park – see *motor park*
lumo – weekly market, usually in border areas
luttes – traditional wrestling matches
lycée – secondary school

macaco – monkey; a popular meat dish in upcountry Guinea-Bissau
mairie – town hall; mayor’s office
maison de passage – see *case de passage*
malafa – crinkly voile material worn as a veil by women in Mauritania
Malinké – Guinea’s major ethnic group, the people are also found in southern Mali, northwestern Côte d’Ivoire

and eastern Senegal; closely related to the Bambara and famous for having one of the great West African empires; also related to the Mandinka
Mandinka – people group based in central and northern Gambia and Senegal; also the name of their language, which is closely related to Malinké; both Malinké and Mandinka are part of the wider Manding group.
maquis – rustic open-air restaurant; traditionally open only at night
marché – market
marigot – creek
mbalax – percussion-driven, Senegalese dance music
mercado – market
mestizos – people of mixed European and African descent
mobylette – moped
Moors – also called ‘Maur’s’; the predominant nomadic people of Mauritania, now also well known as merchants and found scattered over French-speaking West Africa
mornas – old-style music; mournful and sad, similar to the Portuguese *fado* style from whence they may have originated
Moro-Naba – the king of the Mossi people
Mossi – the people who occupy the central area of Burkina Faso and comprise about half the population of Burkina Faso as well as the bulk of Côte d’Ivoire’s migrant labour force
motor park – bus and bush-taxi park (English-speaking countries); also called ‘lorry park’
moto-taxi – motorcycle taxi
Mourides – the most powerful of the Islamic brotherhoods in Senegal
mud-cloth – see *bogolan cloth*

NEPA – National Electric Power Authority in Nigeria; supplier of the highly erratic electricity
nomalies – sandstone ancestor figures

OAU – Organisation of African Unity
oba – a Yoruba chief or ruler
occasion – a lift or place in a car or bus (often shortened to ‘occas’)
orchestra – in West Africa, this means a group playing popular music

pagne – a length of colourful cloth worn around the waist as a skirt
paillote – a thatched sun shelter (usually on a beach or around an open-air bar-restaurant)
palava – meeting place
paletuviers – mangroves
papelaria – newsagency
paragem – bus and bush-taxi park
pastel com diablo dentro – literally ‘pastry with the devil inside’; a mix of fresh tuna, onions and tomatoes wrapped in a pastry made from boiled potatoes and corn flour, deep fried and served hot

patron – owner, boss
péage – toll
peintures rupestres – rock paintings
pensão – hotel or guesthouse
pension – simple hotel or hostel, or ‘board’; see also *demi-pension*
pension complet – full board (lunch, dinner, bed and breakfast)
pension simple – bed and breakfast
petit car – minibus
pétrole – kerosene
Peugeot taxi – one of the main types of bush taxi; also called ‘brake’, ‘cinq-cent-quatre’, ‘Peugeot 504’ or sept-place
Peul – see *Fula*
pinasse – large pirogue, usually used on rivers, for hauling people and cargo
pirogue – traditional canoe, either a small dugout or large, narrow sea-going wooden fishing boat
 pharmacie de garde (all-night pharmacy)
piste – track or dirt road
poda-poda – minibus
pont submersible – a bridge or causeway across a river which is covered when the water is high
posuban – ensemble of statues representing a proverb or event in Fanti culture
pousada – guesthouse
pousada municipal – town guesthouse
praça – park or square
praia – beach
préfecture – police headquarters
PTT – post (and often telephone) office in Francophone countries

quatre-quatre – 4WD or 4x4, a four-wheel drive vehicle

Ramadan – Muslim month of fasting
residencial – guesthouse
rond-point – roundabout
rua – street

Sahel – dry savanna area south of the Sahara desert; most of Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger
Samory Touré – Guinean hero who led the fight against the French colonialists in the late 19th century
Scramble for Africa – term used for the land-grabbing frenzy in the 1880s by the European powers in which France, Britain and Germany laid claim to various parts of the continent
sept-place – Peugeot taxi seven-seater (usually carrying up to 12 people)
serviette – towel (in bathroom)
serviette de table – table napkin, serviette

serviette hygiénique – sanitary pad (feminine pad, feminine towel)
sharia – Muslim law
shukublai – distinctive baskets that are traditionally made by Temne women in Sierra Leone
Songhai – ethnic group located primarily in northeastern Mali and western Niger along the Niger River
soukala – a castle-like housing compound of the Lobi tribe found in the Bouna area of southern Burkina Faso
spirale antimoustique – mosquito coil
sûreté – police station
syndicat d’initiative – tourist information office

Tabaski – Eid al-Kabir; also known as the Great Feast, this is the most important celebration throughout West Africa
tagelmoust – shawl or scarf worn as headgear by *Tuareg* men
tama – hand-held drum
tampon – stamp (eg, in passport)
tampon hygiénique – tampon; see also *serviette hygiénique*
tampon periodique – see *tampon hygiénique*
tata somba – a castle-like house of the Betamaribé tribe who live in northwestern Benin
taxi brousse – bush taxi
taxi-course – shared taxi (in cities)
taxi-moto – see *moto-taxi*
télécentre – privately run telecommunications centres
toca-toca – small minibus in Bissau
togu-na – traditional Dogon shelter where men sit and socialise
totem – used in traditional religions, similar to a fetish
toubab – white person; term used primarily in Gambia, Senegal, Mali and some other Sahel countries
town trip – private hire (taxi)
tro-tro – a minibus or pick-up
Tuareg – nomadic descendants of the North African Berbers; found all over the Sahara, especially in Mali, Niger and southern Algeria

voodoo – the worship of spirits with supernatural powers widely practised in southern Benin and Togo; also called ‘juju’

wassoulou – singing style made famous by Mali’s Oumou Sangaré
WHO – World Health Organization
Wolof – Senegal’s major ethnic group; also found in Gambia
woro-woro – minibus

Yoruba – a major ethnic group concentrated in southwestern Nigeria

zemi-john – motorcycle-taxi

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