



7th African Cashew Alliance Annual Conference

17 – 20 September 2012, Cotonou, Benin

Travel Information Guide

Benin, officially called the Republic of Benin, is located in West Africa. It is bordered by Togo in the west, Nigeria in the east, and Burkina Faso and Niger in the north. Benin covers an area of approximately 110,000 square kilometers (42,000 sq mi), with a population of approximately 9.05 million. Benin is a tropical, sub-Saharan nation, highly dependent on agriculture, with substantial employment and income arising from subsistence farming.



From the 17th to the 19th century, modern day Benin was ruled by the Kingdom of Dahomey. This region was referred to as the Slave Coast from as early as the 17th century due to the large number of slaves shipped to the New World during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. After slavery was abolished, France took over the country and renamed it French Dahomey. In 1960, Dahomey gained full independence from France, bringing in a democratic government for the next 12 years. A Marxist-Leninist dictatorship called the People's Republic of Benin existed between 1972 and 1990. This regime led to repression and the collapse of the economy. The Republic of Benin was formed in 1991 which brought in multiparty elections.

Benin is known for its abundance of historical and cultural sites, including many that emphasize Benin's role as the birthplace of voodoo. Some of the best wildlife areas in West Africa are located in North Benin.

Cotonou

The first thing you'll notice are the motorcycles! Known as 'zemidjans' – "take me here quickly" – they scoot along the city streets. Cotonou, the economic capital of Benin (its official capital is Porto Novo), is one of West Africa's most exciting cities, with more than one million residents. Benin's biggest city has a vibrant nightlife. The city is a major port, and is also home to an airport and a railway that links to Parakou, a major city in the north. Other features of Cotonou include Cotonou Friendship Stadium, Cotonou Cathedral, Cotonou Central Mosque, the Ancien Pont Bridge and the 20-hectare Dantokpa

Market, which has a commercial turnover of over a billion CFA Francs a day. The National University of Benin is located in Cotonou.



The Conference Venue: Le Palais de Congrès

What are the Visa and Passport Requirements?

Citizens of the following countries DO NOT REQUIRE A VISA when traveling to Benin: Algeria, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde Islands, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo.

All other Nationalities require visas. It is best to obtain a visa in advance of your arrival if possible.

If there is no Beninese embassy or consulate in your country, ACA can arrange for visas on arrival for pre-registered and fully paid conference participants. In order to benefit from this service, participants must provide ACA with all necessary passport information:

- Full name as it appears in passport
- Passport number

Once this information has been received, ACA will issue an official letter for the participant's use stating that a visa will be procured on arrival.

When entering Benin, please make sure your passport:

- Is valid for at least 6 months
- Has at least 2-3 blank visa pages remaining.

Airline connections

The international airport (Cotonou International Airport) is in town and only a 10 minute drive from the conference venue.

The following major airlines fly to Cotonou, Benin. (You should reconfirm onward/return flights 72 hours in advance)

Air France	Ethiopian Airlines
Air Burkina	Kenya Airways
Air Ivoire	KLM
Air Mali	Royal Air Maroc
Arik Air	Senegal Airlines
SN Brussels Airlines	Virgin Nigeria Airways
Mauritania Airlines	

Currency

Benin is a part of the CFA zone in West Africa. Check the latest exchange rates online at www.xe.com or www.oanda.com. There are ATMs/POS in that accept visa and master credit/debit cards. Maximum withdrawals are generally limited to 100,000 (CFA) per day (you can request an increase from your bank). Credit cards are accepted only at major hotels, shops and restaurants and some travel agencies. Cash advances on credit cards are available from banks that accept Visa cards. In general, you should ensure you have enough cash to cover any eventuality.

Heath

Travelers requiring medicines should bring an adequate supply for the duration of their stay in Cotonou, Benin. **Yellow fever vaccination is a requirement.** Please contact your embassy for further information. You should carry an international vaccination certificate, known commonly as a "Yellow Card." Ask your doctor for more information.

Weather

Cotonou has a tropical savanna climate with dry winters. Humidity is high and rainstorms are likely in September.

Temperatures are relatively constant throughout the course of the year, with the average high temperatures around 30°C, and average low temperatures around 25°C.

Hotels

ACA has arranged for rooms at 4 hotels in Cotonou. ACA can make bookings for delegates if payment for the room is paid in advance.

Novotel : 3 stars, 5 minutes from conference center



Boulevard de la Marina, 08 BP 0929, COTONOU, BENIN

Tel (+229)21/305662

Fax (+229)21/304188

h1826-sl@accor.com

The Novotel Orisha Cotonou is a 3-star hotel enjoying a seafront location in the center of Cotonou, close to the Palais des Congrès (convention center) and the International Conference Center. It has 110 air-conditioned rooms, 1 restaurant, 2 bars and 5 conference rooms for meetings and seminars. This 3-star hotel is equally suited to a business trip or a holiday in Cotonou with your partner or family. The hotel also has a private car park and a swimming pool.

Ibis : 3 stars, 5 minutes from conference center

Boulevard de la Marina 08 BP 0929 0000 -
COTONOU BENIN

Tel.: (+229)21/305677

Fax.: (+229)21/305678

Right by the sea, the IBIS COTONOU is located in the heart of the business district, 10 minutes from the city centre.

The hotel offers 101 air-conditioned rooms with WiFi

access. A bar, a 24 hoursnack service and private parking are at your disposal. Enjoy lunch or dinner at the NOVOTEL COTONOU's "ORISHA" restaurant, located on the same site.



Azalai : 4 stars

Lieu dit XWLACODJI, 05BP347 Cotonou BENIN

Tél : +229 21 31 72 00 - Fax : +229 21 31 72 69

reservationhp@azalahotels.com

Located in the business district of Cotonou, less than 10 minutes from the airport, and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. With direct access to the beach, there are beautiful views from the 120 rooms on five floors. Two restaurants, two bars, and a snack bar by the pool provide a variety of dining and entertainment options.

Hotel du Port

08 BP 1133 - Cotonou - BÉNIN

Tél: +(229) 314444 | +(229) 314443 | +(229) 312128

Fax: +(229) 314326

hotelduportcotonou@yahoo.fr

Hotel du Port is located right next to the Cotonou Port, about a 5 minute drive from the conference venue. The hotel has a swimming pool, bar, restaurant, and fitness and beauty facilities.



PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT POINTS

- ✓ Remember to pay registration invoice sent by the ACA secretariat
- ✓ Remember to obtain your VISA from your local Gambian Embassy or Consulate but should your country not have an Embassy or Consulate, you will be able to obtain your visa at the Airport.
- ✓ Participants who will require a **confirmation letter** of getting a '**visa on arrival**' before boarding their flight should contact the ACA secretariat, providing their passport numbers.
- ✓ Remember to get your Yellow Fever Vaccine prior to traveling
- ✓ Remember to cancel **at least 7-10 days in advance** if you are unable to attend the conference