



Photos: Fely Bowen

The Door of No Return at El Mina Castle.

Ghanaian food is substantial; fu fu (mashed cassava), banku (fu fu mixed with plantain) and kenkey (fermented maize)—all served with sauce or soup—are rich in carbohydrates. Other typical meals include jollof rice and red red (a stew of beans, tomatoes and onions), both served with fish or chicken. My favourite is kelewele (spicy plantain fries) with fish. Delicious fresh fruit, such as mangoes, pineapples and bananas, can be found everywhere, at a fraction of the price one would pay in Canada.

CANADA IN GHANA

In 1906, some White Fathers missionaries from Quebec established a church in northern Ghana—the first Canadian presence in the country. A century later, Canadians still travel to Ghana on business and on student exchanges, as well as to volunteer.

Bilateral relations between Canada and Ghana reflect more than five decades of cooperation in the UN, the Commonwealth and, more recently, La Francophonie. Since Ghana's independence, Canada has contributed more than \$1 billion in assistance to the country. Through this, CIDA is helping Ghana to achieve its poverty-reduction and development goals, including the attainment of middle-income status by 2015.

Canada and Ghana also have a well-established partnership in peacekeeping and security training.

For example, Canada recently provided training to Ghanaian peacekeepers deployed to Darfur. Canadian private investment in Ghana exceeds \$1 billion, and exports have increased more than 20 percent per year for the past three years.

ACCRA, A CITY OF CONTRAST

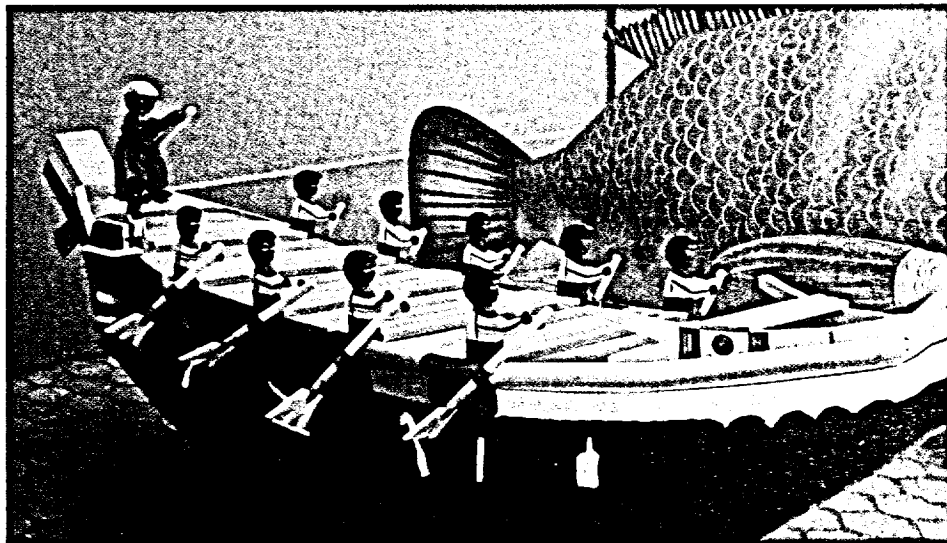
Accra, the country's capital, is home to four million people. It is a place of contrast: luxury condominiums and shanty towns, humvees and tro tros (minibuses). Although petty crime is on the rise, Accra is relatively secure, and it's possible to travel by car, taxi or on foot, with normal precautions. The brave may also get around by bicycle.

One of the biggest threats to personal safety is the aggressive Ghanaian driving style, coupled with poorly maintained roads and vehicles. Ghanaians have fully embraced the car culture, and infrastructure cannot keep pace with the urban sprawl. During rush hour, the city's main thoroughfares are choked with traffic. Those who live in the more distant suburbs leave their homes at four or five in the morning to avoid delays.

Traffic jams aside, Accra is a quiet city, and life is relatively easy for expatriates. Ghanaians are generally very friendly and welcoming. Supermarkets stock most products—although sometimes at import prices—and there is also a large department store, affectionately known by Canadians as "Ghanaian Tire." Street vendors offer everything from plantain chips to puppies. There is a choice of restaurants and bars, Internet access, beach resorts, and a few concerts and film screenings, although cultural events are not that numerous.



A selection of West African fabric from a market stall in Kumasi, Ghana's second-largest city.



Parts of Ghana are known for elaborately carved wooden coffins depicting the dead person's profession.