

Liberia

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Liberia is a small West African country of rainforest, lagoons and long Atlantic beaches. It was founded in 1822 as a settlement for freed African Americans. It declared independence on 26 July 1847 and is often called Africa's first republic. Civil wars between 1989 and 2003 left deep scars, and the country has been at peace since then.

Tourism here is still small, and roads, hotels and health care are basic outside the capital. The country suits independent, adventurous travellers: surfers, birdwatchers, rainforest hikers and people interested in West African history. English is the official language, and US dollars are used widely, which makes practical things easier than in many neighbouring countries. Crime in Monrovia, dangerous roads and strong ocean currents are the main risks, so read the safety section before you go.

Money & payments

Liberia uses two currencies side by side. Both the Liberian dollar and the US dollar are legal tender. Hotels, car hire and larger bills are usually priced in US dollars. Liberian dollars are preferred for small purchases, such as market food, shared taxis and snacks.

- **Cash**: Liberia is a cash economy. Bring enough US dollars for your whole trip. Clean, undamaged notes are safest, because torn or very old notes are often refused.
- **Cards**: only upscale hotels, some supermarkets and a few restaurants in Monrovia accept cards.
- **ATMs**: there are few in Monrovia that accept foreign cards, they are often out of order, and fees can be high. Outside the capital, do not rely on them.
- **Change**: carry small notes in both currencies. Small traders often cannot change a large US note.
- **Customs**: declare cash worth more than USD 10,000 on arrival. You cannot take more than USD 7,500 in cash out of the country.

Monrovia is expensive for imported goods and good hotels. Local food, shared transport and markets are cheap.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel in Monrovia, double room	15,000 – 30,000 Lib$ €78 – €157
Dinner (mid-range restaurant) per person, restaurant in Monrovia	3,000 – 7,000 Lib$ €16 – €37
Inexpensive meal rice and sauce at a local cook shop	300 – 1,000 Lib$ €2 – €5
Local beer local lager	200 – 500 Lib$ €1 – €3
Water 1.5 l bottle	100 – 250 Lib$ €1 – €1
Transit ticket shared taxi, short ride in Monrovia	50 – 150 Lib$ €0 – €1

Currency

CURRENCY	1 LRD	1 LRD
Lib$	**0.005225 EUR**	**0.00586 USD**
LRD	1 EUR = 191.38 LRD	1 USD = 170.65 LRD

Cash preferred

Tipping

Tipping is not a strong habit in Liberia, but it is welcome, especially in hotels and restaurants that serve visitors. Wages are low, so a small tip for good service makes a real difference.

- **Restaurants**: in better restaurants, leave about 10 % if no service charge is added. In local cook shops, a tip is not expected.
- **Hotels**: give a small tip to porters and cleaners.
- **Taxis**: agree the fare before you get in. Tipping is not expected.
- **Guides and drivers**: tip at the end of a day trip, a hike or a surf lesson if you were happy.

Restaurant about 10 % in better restaurants	Optional
Hotel small tip for porters and cleaners	Optional
Taxi agree the fare first	Not customary
Tour guide a tip at the end of a day trip or lesson	Expected
Bar	Not customary

Electricity

Liberia uses 120 V / 60 Hz with a mix of US-style (A/B) and European-style (C/E/F) sockets, so pack a universal adapter. Power cuts are common, and many hotels run their own generators.

ELECTRICITY



Type A

ELECTRICITY



Type B

ELECTRICITY



Type C

ELECTRICITY



Type E

ELECTRICITY



Type F

120 V · 60 Hz

Language

English is the official language. It is used in government, schools, signs and the media, so English speakers can travel without a phrasebook.

In daily life, most people speak Liberian English, also called Koloqua. It has its own rhythm, grammar and words, and visitors often find it hard to follow at first. Speak slowly and ask people to repeat if needed. More than 20 local languages are also spoken, including Kpelle, Bassa, Vai, Gio and Mano.

Greetings matter. Say hello and ask how someone is before you ask for directions or a price.

Staying connected

- **SIM cards**: Orange and Lonestar Cell MTN are the main mobile networks. Buy a local SIM at their shops in Monrovia.
- **Coverage**: mobile data works well in Monrovia and most towns. It is weak or absent in the forests of the southeast and in national parks.
- **Power**: with frequent power cuts, a power bank is useful.

Safety & emergencies

The UK does not advise against travel to any part of Liberia (updated 27 May 2026). The US rates the country Level 2, "exercise increased caution" (11 December 2025). Most visits pass without problems, but crime, roads and the sea need real care.

- **Crime in Monrovia**: armed robbery and muggings happen, including against foreigners, and also in daylight on beaches and around nightclubs. Mamba Point and Sinkor, where many visitors stay, are affected. Do not walk around Monrovia after dark, and avoid isolated places, including beaches, at night.
- **Taxis and motorbikes**: robberies sometimes happen in taxis. Motorbike taxis (*pen-pens*) and three-wheeled *kekes* are very dangerous. Use a trusted driver or a hotel car.
- **Roads**: do not travel outside Monrovia after dark. Most roads are unlit, and many are unpaved and full of potholes. Accidents are frequent, and crowds can become hostile after a crash. At night you are also more at risk of robbery at illegal checkpoints.
- **Swimming**: **strong rip currents** run along the whole coast, and most beaches have no lifeguards. Never swim alone, never swim after dark, and stay out of the water unless you are a strong, experienced ocean swimmer. Avoid local canoes and fishing boats, which are often overwhelmed by waves.
- **Local laws**: same-sex sexual activity is illegal. Penalties for drug offences are severe.
- **Emergency help**: emergency services are unreliable, and there is no effective ambulance service anywhere in the country. Calling an ambulance may not bring help quickly, so know how you would reach a clinic before you need one.

Emergency numbers

POLICE	AMBULANCE
911	**5888**

Health

- **Yellow fever**: carry your yellow fever vaccination certificate. You need it for the visa application, and it is required on arrival if you come from a country with yellow fever risk.
- **Arrival screening**: because of Ebola outbreaks in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, travellers arriving in Liberia go through extra health screening. Expect questions and temperature checks at the airport.
- **Malaria**: the risk is high everywhere, all year. Take antimalarial tablets and use repellent and a mosquito net.
- **Other risks**: typhoid is common, and Lassa fever cases have been confirmed in 2026. Ask a travel clinic about hepatitis A, typhoid and rabies vaccines well before you go.
- **Water**: do not drink tap water. Drink bottled or treated water, and avoid ice of unknown origin.
- **Medical care**: hospitals are poorly equipped, even in Monrovia, and blood supplies are not safe. Most clinics want cash. Get travel insurance that covers medical evacuation.
- **Medicines**: pharmacies in Monrovia stock basics, but supplies are unreliable. Bring enough of your own prescription medicines for the whole trip, plus extra.

Visas & entry

Most visitors, including UK, EU and US citizens, need a visa. Citizens of ECOWAS countries in West Africa can enter without one for up to 90 days. Do not travel without a visa or a visa approval: you risk being

sent back on arrival.

- **Embassy visa**: if Liberia has an embassy in your country, apply there before you travel.
- **Visa on Arrival**: if there is no Liberian embassy in your country, apply online for a Visa on Arrival approval with Liberia Immigration Service – Visa on Arrival. Apply at least 7 days and no more than 3 months before your flight. The non-refundable fee is USD 102.50, paid by card. You receive an approval PDF with a QR code, valid for 3 months. Show it at Roberts International Airport, where the visa sticker is issued. The officer sets the length of stay at 30 or 90 days.
- **Passport**: it should be valid for at least 6 months when you apply.
- **Yellow fever**: you need a vaccination certificate for the visa application (see health).
- **Extensions**: you can extend a visa at the Immigration Office in Monrovia.

> Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

- **Greetings**: always greet people before anything else. The Liberian handshake often ends with a snap of the fingers between you and the other person. Join in if someone offers it.
- **Respect and titles**: people are polite and formal with elders and officials. Use "Mr", "Ma" or "Old Ma" and "Old Pa" for older people.
- **Dress**: casual clothes are fine, but dress neatly in towns, offices and churches. Keep swimwear for the beach.
- **Photos**: ask before you photograph people, especially at markets. Do not photograph police, soldiers or government buildings.
- **Bargaining**: prices in markets and taxi fares are negotiable. Agree the price before you buy or get in.
- **Religion**: most Liberians are Christian, and Sunday church is important. A large Muslim minority lives mainly in the north and west.

Holidays & opening hours

On public holidays, government offices and banks close, and many shops close too. Markets and small shops often stay open. Independence Day on 26 July brings parades and celebrations across the country.

Public holidays

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Feb 11	Armed Forces Day
Mar 15	Joseph Jenkins Roberts Birthday
May 14	National Unification Day
Jul 26	Independence Day
Aug 24	National Flag Day
Nov 29	William V. S. Tubman's Birthday
Dec 25	Christmas Day
movable — Apr	Fast and Prayer Day
movable — Mar	National Decoration Day
movable — Nov	Thanksgiving Day

Shops usually open Monday to Saturday from morning until early evening. Sunday is quiet, with many businesses closed. Government offices work shorter hours than shops.

Getting around

- **Arriving by air**: Roberts International Airport is at Harbel, about 60 km from central Monrovia. The drive takes around an hour, often more in traffic. Arrange a hotel pickup in advance.
- **By air**: domestic flights are few and irregular. Small charter flights use Spriggs Payne Airport in Monrovia.
- **By road**: there is no passenger train. Shared taxis and minibuses leave from Monrovia's bus stations when full. They are cheap but crowded, and accidents are common.
- **With a driver**: the safest option for a visitor is a hired car with a local driver, ideally a 4x4. It is essential for Sapo National Park, Greenville and Harper.
- **Rainy season**: from about May to October, many roads in the southeast become very slow or impassable. Plan long trips in the dry season.
- **In Monrovia**: shared taxis run along the main roads. Avoid motorbike taxis and *kekes*, which are very dangerous.

Driving

- **Licence**: you need an International Driving Permit or a Liberian licence. A foreign licence alone is not enough.
- **Road conditions**: roads from Monrovia to Kakata and inland are paved, but most other roads are unpaved, unlit and full of potholes. Some bridges are damaged.
- **Driving style**: drivers overtake on both sides, and many vehicles are overloaded or in poor repair. Drive defensively and slowly.
- **Night**: do not drive outside Monrovia after dark.
- **Checkpoints**: police checkpoints are common. Stay calm and polite, and keep your documents ready. Illegal checkpoints at night carry a risk of robbery.
- **Accidents**: crowds can become hostile after a crash. If you feel unsafe, drive to the nearest police station to report it.
- **Fuel**: fuel is sold by the gallon. Look for "gasoline" (often just "gas") and "diesel". Fill up in towns, because stations are rare in rural areas and roadside fuel in bottles can be poor quality.

PETROL
Gasoline, Gas

DIESEL
Diesel

Drive on the right

No motorway vignette needed

Food & drink

Rice is the centre of every meal in Liberia. People often say that if you have not eaten rice, you have not eaten. Lunch is the main meal. Rice comes with a rich, spicy sauce, such as palm butter, potato greens, cassava leaf or pepper soup, cooked with fish, chicken or meat. Jollof rice is popular at parties. Fufu and dumboy, soft dough balls made from cassava, are eaten with soups. Food is often very hot, so ask for "small pepper" if you prefer it mild.

Locals eat at small cook shops and market stalls, where a plate of rice and sauce is cheap. Street snacks include roasted corn, fried plantain, doughnuts and *kanyan*, a sweet made from rice, peanuts and sugar. To drink, try fresh ginger beer, coconut water and palm wine. Club Beer is the local lager. Monrovia also has Lebanese, Indian and international restaurants.

What to eat & drink

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Fried plantain
Ripe plantain fried in oil, sold on the street.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Kanyan
Sweet snack of pounded rice, peanuts and sugar.

DRINKS

Ginger beer
Fresh, very strong homemade ginger drink.

Palm wine
Mildly alcoholic drink tapped from palm trees.

Club Beer
The local lager.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Palm butter
Rich palm-nut sauce with fish or meat, served over rice.

Potato greens
Sweet-potato leaves stewed with palm oil, pepper and meat or fish, eaten with rice.

Cassava leaf
Pounded cassava leaves cooked in palm oil with fish or meat, served with rice.

Jollof rice
Rice cooked in a spicy tomato sauce, popular at parties.

Pepper soup
Very spicy broth with fish, chicken or goat.

Fufu and dumboy
Soft dough balls made from cassava, eaten with soup.

Liberia – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
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Where to explore

Monrovia and around

- Greater Monrovia is the capital and the base for most trips. Visit Providence Island, where the first settlers landed in 1822, and the National Museum of Liberia. The ruins of the Ducor Hotel sit on the highest hill in the city, with wide views over the ocean. Do not enter the ruins alone.
- The Firestone rubber plantation at Harbel, near the airport, is one of the largest in the world and has operated since 1926.
- Kakata is a busy market town on the main road inland.

West coast

- In Grand Cape Mount, the town of Robertsport is Liberia's surfing centre, with several point breaks and simple beach lodges. It lies about 80 km northwest of Monrovia.
- Lake Piso is a large coastal lagoon next to Robertsport, good for canoe trips and birdwatching.
- In Bomi, the Blue Lake near Tubmanburg is a deep, bright blue lake in a former iron-ore mine, surrounded by forest.

Inland

- In Bong, Kpatawe waterfall, in the forest northwest of Gbarnga, is a popular picnic spot.
- Gola National Park protects rainforest on the border with Sierra Leone. Visits need advance arrangements.

Southeast

- Grand Bassa has quiet beaches around the port city of Buchanan.
- Sapo National Park was Liberia's first national park. Its dense rainforest shelters pygmy hippos, chimpanzees and forest elephants. It has almost no visitor facilities, and trips need permission and a guide.
- Greenville is the port town closest to Sapo.
- Harper, in the far southeast, has old settler houses and Cape Palmas, a rocky headland at the western edge of the Gulf of Guinea.

DATA SOURCES

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