



## The Beating Heart of the Mande Empire

**Mali 9 days – October 17-25 2010 (Ex-Bamako)**

**Mali 10 days – October 16-25 2010 (Ex-London)**

Economically Mali may be one of the poorest countries in Africa, but musically it's one of the richest on earth. The names of Mali's biggest stars – Ali Farka Touré, Salif Keita, Oumou Sangaré and the Rail Band – will be familiar to anyone with an interest in African music. Bamako, Mali's capital, has a rich musical scene – and you'll get a good flavour of the clubs and nightlife on this trip, as well as some excursions out to surrounding areas to witness music in rural West Africa, which is a fantastic experience in itself. Mali's rich rural traditions are the source from which the popular urban scene in the capital draws. In Bamako, there are some amazing clubs, but the best music isn't always easy to find – you need to know where to go and when.

We can also visit *djembe* and *kora* makers – some of the best in West Africa – to see the skills that go into making the instruments. We'll hear great singers and instrumentalists on the distinctive instruments of Malian music – the *kora* (a sublime creation of gourd, cow-skin

and fishing line), *balafon* (traditional xylophone) and *djembe* drum. This is a privileged music opportunity and one that no fan of African music should miss. Of course visitors on this trip must understand that musicians may be away on tour and that the music scene changes on a month by month basis. Some things may be impossible to arrange, but usually something surprising turns up to make up for it. If you are prepared to be flexible, you will not be disappointed.

All Songlines Music Travellers will receive an information sheet about the local music, plus recommended recordings and DVDs.

## Mali – 10 days

### Itinerary

**Day 1 Sat** For those flying out of the UK, we depart London in the afternoon for an overnight flight to Bamako arriving in the early hours of the Sunday morning.

**Day 2 Sun** This morning our Songlines Music Travel leader will be meeting you for a late breakfast. This is when the trip will start for those joining us in Bamako. The morning is free to have a rest, a wander or a swim. After a break for lunch we visit the national museum of Mali and have a city tour. In the evening, after dinner, we head for the clubs to enjoy a night in Bamako.

**Day 3 Mon** Today we have the opportunity to enjoy a *kora* workshop learning about this unique instrument that is at the heart of much West African music.

**Day 4 Tues** Today we drive out of Bamako. After an hour or so, we reach Sibi, an important location in the history of the Mande Empire. Against a backdrop of spectacular rock formations we learn about the history of Sunjata Keita's Mandé Empire in the 13th century. The story of the Koumanjan battle will be told by one of our 'griot' friends – and it is still the inspiration for much of today's music. We'll have time to get some lunch in Sibi. We return to Bamako for dinner in the evening.

**Day 5 Weds** Today we head up-country to Ségou, on the banks of the Niger. On arrival, time to rest or wander the streets of the town – home to the great *ngoni* player Bassekou Kouyaté. In the evening we hear some of the distinctive Bambara music of Ségou.

**Day 6 Thurs** A day in Ségou to explore this laid-back town. You'll have the option to take a *pirogue* (boat) trip along the river to a small village of pottery-makers. A chance to chill out and enjoy the riverside life of the town.

**Day 7 Fri** We drive back to Bamako and, after checking into our hotel, we can catch up on a lively Friday night in Bamako.

**Day 8 Sat** You can either spend the time having a wander around the Bamako craft market and going to Kader Keita's street children's workshop where they make *bogolon* (mud cloth), or our Travel Leader can arrange an optional trip out into the countryside.

**Day 9 Sun** A final full day in Bamako deliberately left open for shopping or perhaps a workshop with some local musicians.

**Day 10 Mon** For many, their flight to the UK leaves in the early hours of the morning. Time for just a few hours sleep before midnight, or perhaps just stay out with the music until it's time to drive to the airport.

### To reserve your place

Please read the booking conditions on the website and contact the reservations office on:

**+44 (0)20 8505 2582**

or email:  
**songlines@thegroupscompany.com**



A djembé maker in action

### Pricing details

We have designed these tours to give you the option of taking up an all-inclusive package which includes your air seats, or the option of making your own way to Mali and then meeting up with the rest of the party at the hotel in Bamako.

#### Mali 9-day trip

(Ex-Bamako) October 17-25 2010

Tour Price £1,195 per person

Tour includes:

- 9 nights hotel accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis
- the music events and sight seeing as detailed,
- The services of your Songlines Music Travel leader
- All sightseeing and transfers as listed

#### Mali 10-day trip

(Ex-London) October 16-25 2010

Flights are available from London, flights are from £629 per person. You can book these yourself or we can book them for you. Transfers from and to the airport in Bamako are included with flights booked through Songlines Music Travel.

**Items not included:** Single room supplement, travel insurance, visas, all meals with the exception of breakfast, gratuities and any items of a personal nature.

**Single supplement:** £345 per person

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