

NATIONAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

IN THE GAMBIA 2016

ACTIVITY	DATE	DESCRIPTION	CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE
Trade Fair By Gambia Chamber of Commerce (GCCCI)	January/ February Annual	A trade fair organized to expand business opportunities for both public and private enterprises and to create private sector jobs in addition to exhibiting product locally made as well as linkages with international businesses	The trade fair allows exhibitors to showcase what their Institutions / businesses have to offer to the general public and their clientele.
Sanyang International Cultural Festival By Sanyang Village Development Committee	January (Last weekend) Annual	Sanyang as the origin of the Kombo settlement is occupied by several ethnicities whose activities mainly centered on the sea trade. This festival showcases diverse culture and traditions of the kombos from the 4 human life cycle ceremonies of birth, circumcision, marriage and burial with their performance traditions. Its highlight is a daylong cultural and musical jamboree at the beachside till day break.	A celebration of diverse cultures living in peace and harmony and showcasing cultural and traditional rituals to the visitors. The pilgrimage to “Berewuleng” rock at the sea side is a reflection of their ancestral lineage settlements with their atheist religion of “Jalang” worshipping.
Kartong Festival By Kartong Community Development Association	February (2 nd weekend)	This festival includes a cultural display of various choreographic dances and traditional music of the two border communities of	Raise revenues for the local community as well as putting Kartong and Cassamance on the same platform
Independence Day Celebration	18th February	A public holiday for a national celebration, the day commemorates the date of independence from British colonial rule in 1965. Celebrated	It marks the date the Gambia became a sovereign nation and 18 th February 2015 marks the 50 th anniversary and the

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By the State	Annual Annual	with a lot of fanfare including parades of school children, voluntary organizations, security forces, and cultural groups with series of other side events to mark the day.	Golden Jubilee of the country.
Food and Beverage Festival By Gambia Tourism Board	February (Last week) Annual	This festival showcases the Gambia's hospitality and culinary art in its diversity. It is an exhibit of our local food immersed with entertainment of our local performances. The festival provides a "taste of the Gambia" and compliments the international foods that are also found in the Gambia.	The festival displays our local cuisine to tourists and locals take the opportunity to dine and also enjoy other nation's food and beverages.
Sukuta Dembadu Carnival & Cultural Festival By Sukuta Youth Development Association	March (1 st week) Annual	Sukuta Dembadu Carnival and Cultural Festival is to recognize, celebrate and appreciate all aspects of the Kombo cultures. Sukuta Sabiji as the oldest settlement that leased the Island of Banjul to the British, safeguards the intangible cultural heritages of the people of the Kombos.	The Festival provides a platform for the locals to express their intangible cultural heritages like dance, drumming, songs, masquerades and storytelling under a Bantaba tree near a makeshift museum the showcases their cultural artifacts.
Bureng (Koosee) Cultural Festival By Bureng Cultural Society	March (mid) Annual	A Mandinka festival with the quest to preserve traditional cultural practices. This is a festival that takes place after harvests when food is abundant and people have plenty of time to relax before the rainy season sets in again and the fields demand a return to work. The festival showcases rare Manding masquerades such as the <i>Koosee, konoo</i>	The reborn of this festival has awakened the new generation of Mandinka on the need to take pride in their cultural traditions. Knowledge of the past is essential if they want to take up the mantle of leadership in their societies and their manhood passage.

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		<i>which</i> were threatened with extinction.	
Bajana Marathon	April (1st week)	Bajana International Marathon and Cultural festival has been initiated by The Gambia Volunteers Trust (GVT) in 2013. It is an annual event which aims to promote rural sports activities, a display of traditional Gambian cultural activities and to promote tourism in the rural villages of The Gambia. The event takes place at Bajana Village in Foni Berefet; it contributes immensely in reviving Gambia's cultural heritage which is admired by tourists visiting The Gambia. The event brings revenue for the local community, and funds generated from the festival are put back into the village's development project	The event is also televised by GRTS which is seen by GTRS audiences across the globe. Footage of the event is also posted online and seen by thousands of online viewers which help's to promote The Gambia and its cultural values. Bajana International Marathon and Cultural Festival is advertising Gambia globally which helps to bring tourists to The Gambia and contributes to meeting Gambia's vision 2020.
Fishing competition (Beach Casting)	16 th – 20 th April Annual	Seeks to use the potentials of the naturally endowed river Gambia through fishing to generate and galvanize interest in destination Gambia.	To diversify the product base with a view to increase arrival and particularly attract visits
Banjul Bicentenary Celebration By Banjul City Council	23rd – 30th April	On 23 rd April 1816, Captain Alexandra Grant and Colonel Brereton – Lt. Governor met with the king of Kombo Tomany Bojang and entered into a treaty with the king, allowing the British Government to occupy Banjul Island and to erect buildings and fortifications on it. It was on that day that the king surrendered all rights	Formal possession of the Island was taken on that day, and it was officially renamed St. Mary's Island. Banjul was later renamed Bathurst, after the then Secretary of state for the colonies, Earl Bathurst.

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		and title to the Island in exchange for an annual payment of 313 bars of iron (<i>equivalent to a hundred Dollars or Twenty five pounds, six Shilling and Eight pence</i>), to himself, his wife and retainers.	This Bicentenary epoch will be celebrated this year for the 200 th year since the occupation of Banjul
May Day Sports By the State	May 1st Annual	This is a national holiday where workers across the length and breadth of greater Banjul area converge at the Independence Stadium to take part in various sporting activities.	Workers of various institutions come together, socialize and show solidarity in physical exercises.
Nuimi Baadiya Festival	1st weekend of May (yearly Alternates with Toubacouta, Senegal)	The Gambia and Senegal both share deep historical, cultural and ancestral ties. Nowhere is this unity in diversity spelt out more clearly than in the border regions surrounding the countries of Senegal and The Gambia. Here people move freely between the two countries sharing in their local traditions and other	It is the need to preserve such cultural values allowing our communities to live in peace and harmony that the “ <i>Nuimi Baadiya</i> ”
International Roots Festival By the Ministry of Tourism and Culture	May (2 nd week) Biennial	The Gambia's most popular international festival. Organized once in every two years, the festival programme is characterized by visits to heritage sites relating to slavery; the <i>futampaf</i> , a Jola traditional initiation/ rites of passage ceremony from youth to adulthood in which visitor's can partake; and diverse cultural performances. The villages of Juffureh and Albreda are situated in the North Bank Region	This is designed to encourage and provide opportunity for Africans in the Diaspora to re-discover their roots and re-connect, re-affirm and re-embrace their ancestral identity.

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		of the River Gambia. Tourists have been visiting these villages since 1976, when Alex Haley's book 'Roots' was first published.	
<p>Sheikh Umar Futi Taal Ziyareh</p> <p>Gunjur Sand Dunes Mosque (Sacred):</p>	<p>June (Ending)</p> <p>Annual</p>	<p>The mosque, associated grounds, buildings and rocks are all regarded as sacred because the site provided sojourn for the Kalifat'ul Tijanniyya Sheikh Umar Taal, 1793-1864, leader of the Tijanniyya Sect in West Africa, during his Islamization mission in West Africa. Followers take pilgrimage to the site to pay homage and receive blessings.</p>	<p>People visit the Sand Dune Mosque to pray for life changing situations ranging from marital status to reversing the plight of barren women for child bearing.</p>
<p>July 22nd Celebrations by the State</p>	<p>22nd July</p> <p>Annual</p>	<p>This is a celebration of the July 22nd Revolution and the birth of our Second Republic .It is marked by official parades of the security forces, school children and cultural groups. Major government projects are also inaugurated and highlighted with a musical and cultural jamboree.</p>	<p>The nation celebrates the July 22nd revolution and the birth of the second republic of the Gambia.</p>
<p>TOBASKI / KORITEH DAY</p>	<p>Islamic Calendar</p> <p>Annual</p>	<p>Depending on the sight of the moon Muslims observe the month of Ramadan fasting and end after a month with a religious celebration and solidarity with the family. Tobaski is further punctuated with ram sacrifices in tandem with the pilgrimage in Mecca.</p>	<p>A religious observation and celebration that is enshrine in the Muslim's Holy Book and observed by Muslims all over the world.</p>

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<p>Kayong Kalon Cultural Festival By Kayorn Kalorn Association</p>	<p>October (held in the dry season)</p>	<p>It is a festival of the Karoninka clan. One of the first settlers of the Kombos and they spread from Gunjur to Mandinary. They come together annually to showcase their performance traditions as part of a desire to sustain their language and culture which is on the verge of extinction.</p>	<p>To celebrate and maintain the Karoninka ancestral linkages and revival of their culture for the young generations.</p>
<p>International Bird Fair</p>	<p>21st TO 25th October</p>	<p>Gambia diversity of habitats and ecosystems, varying from riverine forest, dry savannahs, rivers, wetlands to estuaries, rice fields, salt marsh, mangroves and almost 80 km shoreline, these mosaic of habitats and ecosystems altogether support a staggering 660 species of birds, a third of which are migrant species business engagements.</p>	<p>An all year round birding destination that will promote conservation of wildlife in The Gambia. This will increase number of bird watchers to the Gambia and help to develop bird watching as a niche tourism product</p>
<p>Amsterdam/ Plymouth Banjul Rally</p>	<p>November/ March (The Challenge season)</p>	<p>Plymouth Banjul Rally is a charity rally that starts from Plymouth, UK, through other countries with Banjul as its ultimate destination. All cars that make it to the Gambia are auctioned in aid of local charities for like Jammeh Foundation for Peace</p>	<p>Geared towards poverty alleviation. The proceeds from the car auctions are given to local charities which address the basic needs of the under-privileged or less fortunate Gambians, especially in the rural areas supported by JFP and ASSET</p>

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Wrestling Season	Starts in November to May but occasionally organized / during major national events	Wrestling is more than a sport in the Gambia. The wrestling arena is a place to show courage, labour, strength, fair play and to honor the traditional sports in society. Fights are organized between clans or weight opponents for a competition to win the coveted prizes	Teach young Gambians about the most popular traditional sport as well as honor the spirits of society in becoming a man.
Fishing Competition (Boat Fishing)	11 th – 16 th November	The boat fishing is a championship that is also having an international dimension and a strong local presence. This competition is for sea fishing and includes the Anglers as well as the Skippers. It is also an annual event with prizes given to specific categories.	The boat fishing competition is helping to provide an enhanced nature product
Gambia Tourism Award	1 st Week in December	The Awards Night is for recognizing and promoting excellence in tourism. This first edition will bring together investors, actors and players both big and small enterprises in the tourism sector. A wide and diverse range of tourism businesses and personalities will be nominated for the various categories and it's expected that over 100 will reach the prestigious status of becoming a finalist.	The Gambia Tourism Awards serves to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence and performance across all sectors of the tourism industry
Christmas Celebration	25th December -1st January Annual	The annual Christian festival celebrating Christ's birth held every December 25. The Greater Banjul Area partakes with cultural performances showcasing the traditions of the various ethnic groups, especially those	Christians all over the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. In the Gambia, It is celebrated by both Christians and nominal Muslims to showcase

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		associated with the Christian community such as the <i>hunting devil</i> and <i>fairy</i> masquerades. At night the spectacular lantern tradition called <i>fanal</i> , lighted boats built from bamboo and paper filigree take over the streets amidst drumming and dancing.	
Open Mic Festival By Black Lynz	December (last weekend) Annual	This is the most celebrated Gambian youth musical festival held under the backdrop of rising Gambian musical talents and showcasing the best of music of the year. It has clock in for the 7 th year as a private purely Gambian entertainment musical jamboree.	Identifying the best of Gambian talents also assist in marketing Gambian music beyond Gambian borders.