

AFRICA · BEACHES · WILDLIFE · HISTORY · OFF THE BEATEN PATH



# Liberia

Liberia is West Africa at its least packaged: Sapo National Park guards one of the region's last great rainforests, Robertsport's long left-hand point breaks draw a small surf crowd, and Monrovia's origins as a colony for free and formerly enslaved African Americans are written into its street names and ruins. Travel takes patience, but repays it.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Liberia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 27 May 2026.

|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  CAPITAL<br><b>Monrovia</b>                     |  CURRENCY<br><b>Liberian dollar (LRD)</b><br>£1 ≈ LRD 228 |  LANGUAGE<br><b>English, Liberian Kreyol</b><br>Kpelle, Bassa                              |  BEST TIME<br><b>Dec–Mar</b>                |
|  DAILY BUDGET<br><b>£45–£220</b><br>££ Moderate |  PLUGS<br><b>Type A, B, C, F</b><br>120V · adapter needed |  FLIGHT FROM LONDON<br><b>11h via Brussels, Casablanca or Paris</b><br>~£700–£1,150 return |  TIME ZONE<br><b>UTC+0</b><br>standard time |

Liberia was founded in 1822 as a colony for free and formerly enslaved African Americans, and declared independence in 1847, making it Africa's oldest republic; that history still shapes its flag, place names and Americo-Liberian architecture. Most trips start in Monrovia, then head up the coast to Robertsport and Lake Piso for surf and beaches, inland to Bong County's Kpatawee waterfall, and — for the committed — deep into the south-east for Sapo National Park and the faded port town of Harper. Distances look short on a map but feel long on the ground.

Liberia is not a cheap destination: hotels in Monrovia are priced for aid workers and businesspeople, and getting around outside the capital usually means hiring a 4x4 and driver. In return you get beaches without resorts, near-empty surf, and forest where pygmy hippos and chimpanzees still survive. English is the common language, often spoken as rapid Liberian Kreyol, and people are famously sociable. It suits independent, adaptable travellers, ideally with a local contact; check the FCDO advice before planning.

## Top 5 highlights

- 1

WILDLIFE

**Sapo National Park**

Liberia's oldest national park protects some 1,800 km<sup>2</sup> of Upper Guinean rainforest, home to forest elephants, pygmy hippos and chimpanzees. Wildlife is elusive and access tough; arrange visits in advance and allow several days.
- 2

BEACH

**Robertsport**

A sleepy hillside town on a peninsula near the Sierra Leone border, with some of West Africa's best left-hand point breaks, a homegrown surf scene and beach lodges. Lake Piso's lagoon lies behind.

3

## HISTORY

**Providence Island**

The islet in the Mesurado River where the first African American settlers landed in 1822, regarded as Liberia's birthplace. A modest heritage site marks the landing; combine it with a walk along Broad Street.

4

## NATURE

**Kpatawee Waterfall**

Rocky cascades in the forest of Bong County, about half an hour's drive from Gbarnga and part of the Ramsar-listed Kpatawee Wetlands. Come for a swim and a picnic; the falls are fullest late in the rainy season.

5

## ARCHITECTURE

**Harper**

A remote port near the Ivory Coast border with grand, crumbling Americo-Liberian mansions, President Tubman's ruined former residence and the Cape Palmas lighthouse above wild beaches.

**Biggest cities**

## LARGEST CITY

**Monrovia**

≈ 1.8 million people

The rain-soaked capital is rough around the edges but absorbing: Providence Island, the ruined Ducor Hotel above Mamba Point, the National Museum and lively beach bars along the Atlantic.

## 2ND LARGEST CITY

**Gbarnga**

≈ 86,000 people

Bong County's capital on the main road north, a market town with little to see itself but a handy base for Kpatawee waterfall and the drive on towards Ganta and the Guinean border.

## 3RD LARGEST CITY

**Buchanan**

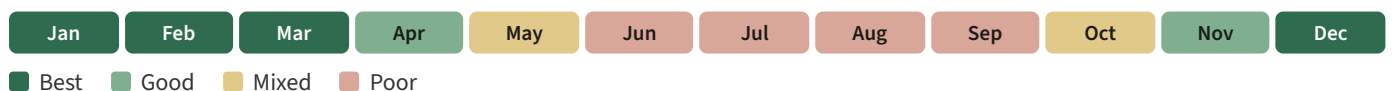
≈ 82,000 people

Liberia's second port, two to three hours south-east of Monrovia, with a long, quiet beach and a laid-back pace; a stop on the coastal road towards the south-east.

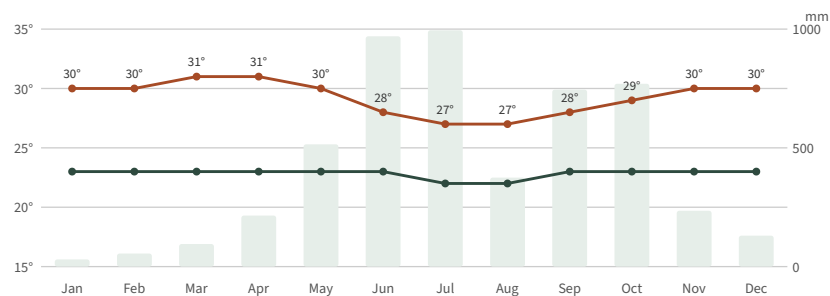
Outside Greater Monrovia, town populations are UN urban-area estimates; the 2022 census published county totals, and Gbarnga, Buchanan, Kakata and Ganta are all of similar size.

**When to go to Liberia**

Best time: **Dec–Mar**.

**Average climate in Monrovia**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



# Festivals & events

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mar | <b>Decoration Day</b><br>On the second Wednesday of March, families gather at cemeteries to clean and paint relatives' graves, a distinctive national holiday rooted in American influences.  |
| Jul | <b>Independence Day</b><br>Celebrated on 26 July, marking the 1847 declaration of independence, with parades, church services, speeches and parties across Monrovia and the county capitals.  |
| Nov | <b>National Thanksgiving Day</b><br>Held on the first Thursday of November, Liberia's own Thanksgiving fills churches and homes with feasting — a tradition brought by the American settlers. |

## How much does Liberia cost?

|                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>SHOESTRING</div> <div>£45</div> <div>per person / day</div> <div>≈ LRD 10,259</div> <div>hostels, street food, buses</div> | <div>MID-RANGE</div> <div>£110</div> <div>per person / day</div> <div>≈ LRD 25,078</div> <div>3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis</div> | <div>COMFORTABLE</div> <div>£220</div> <div>per person / day</div> <div>≈ LRD 50,156</div> <div>4-star+, guided trips, private transfers</div> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

## Food to try

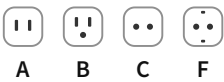
|                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Cassava leaf</b><br>Pounded cassava leaves simmered with palm oil, chilli and smoked fish or meat, ladled over rice — Liberia's everyday favourite. | <b>Palm butter</b><br>A rich orange stew made from palm-nut pulp with fish, chicken or meat, eaten with rice or fufu. | <b>Dumboy</b><br>A stretchy dumpling of boiled, pounded cassava, swallowed rather than chewed, with pepper soup or palm butter; eaten by hand. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Getting around

Shared taxis and minibuses leave Monrovia's Red Light market for Gbarnga, Ganta and Buchanan along paved roads, but beyond these corridors many roads are dirt and turn to mud from May to October. Most visitors hire a 4x4 with a driver for trips to Sapo or Harper. In Monrovia, yellow taxis and keke tricycles are cheap; agree fares first.

## Practical information

### PLUGS & VOLTAGE



120V — bring a UK-to-A/B/C/F adapter

### DIALLING CODE

+231

### TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police: **+231 770 800 911**

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

### TIME ZONE

UTC+0 (standard time)

### DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Not expected at roadside cookshops; leave around 10% in Monrovia's better restaurants, and tip drivers and guides on multi-day trips.

ETIQUETTE

Greet people before anything else; the Liberian handshake ends with a mutual finger-snap. Ask before photographing anyone, and avoid photographing police, soldiers or government buildings.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Roberts International Airport (ROB), Monrovia

Visas & entry for Liberia

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

You must have a visa to enter Liberia.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic 6–8 weeks before you go. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

- Hepatitis A
- Tetanus
- Typhoid
- Yellow fever

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

- Chikungunya
- Dengue
- Hepatitis B
- Measles
- Rabies
- Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK. There is a risk of yellow fever in parts of the country — vaccination may be advised.

MALARIA

High risk of malaria

- There is a high risk of malaria in Liberia: antimalarial tablets recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Liberia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

|                 |                                    |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Thu 5 Nov 2026  | Thanksgiving Day                   |
| Sun 29 Nov 2026 | Tubman Administration Goodwill Day |
| Fri 25 Dec 2026 | Christmas Day                      |
| Fri 1 Jan 2027  | New Year's Day                     |

|                 |                                          |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------|
| Thu 11 Feb 2027 | Armed Forces Day                         |
| Wed 10 Mar 2027 | Decoration Day                           |
| Mon 15 Mar 2027 | J. J. Roberts Memorial Birthday          |
| Fri 9 Apr 2027  | Fasting and Prayer Day                   |
| Fri 14 May 2027 | National Unification and Integration Day |
| Mon 26 Jul 2027 | Independence Day                         |
| Tue 24 Aug 2027 | National Flag Day                        |

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

## Know before you go

US dollars circulate alongside Liberian dollars: bring clean, recent US notes for larger payments and use Liberian dollars for small purchases; card acceptance and ATMs are limited outside Monrovia.

Roberts International Airport is at Harbel, about 55 km from central Monrovia; arrange a hotel pick-up in advance, as the drive can take well over an hour.

You'll need a yellow fever vaccination certificate to enter; also take malaria prevention seriously, as it is the main health risk for visitors.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice ([gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)) and TravelHealthPro ([travelhealthpro.org.uk](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk)). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.