

Life's a beach for lovers of unspoilt paradise

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for thelondonpaper

FOR THE traveller seeking exoticism and safety, Thailand has long been a favourite. The country conjures images of beautiful beaches, is awash in Buddhist history and serves a tasty curry. But Thailand has been damaged by its own success and many visitors find it overrun with travellers.

So it's time to move on – and your next stop could be Ghana, where the beaches rival Thailand's, and slave castles on the coast give food for thought.

Ghana's long stretches of white sand fringed by Atlantic waves are free from hordes of tourists. But as the sun sets and fishermen pull their boats ashore, the peaceful beaches are transformed for the night's entertainment.

Traditional drummers and dancers gather to perform or practise. The best place for beach drumming and dancing is Big Milly's Backyard at Kokrobite, a quiet

SO, GHANA... DISCUSS!

When to go: It is always hot in Ghana, sometimes 30C. The rainy season begins at the end of April and lasts until October. May and June are the wettest months

Getting there: Ghana International Airlines flies between Accra and London but the airport is also served by other African carriers and Western airlines, including BA and Alitalia (via Milan). Prices start at £397



including tax. Visit: fly-ghana.com, alitalia.co.uk or ba.com

resort 20 miles from the capital, Accra. They have traditional African drumming and dancing on weekends and you can also take drumming lessons and even buy a handmade drum.

The resort is a favourite with travellers and offers thatched huts with outdoor

toilets and showers – standing under cool streaming water in the midday heat is bliss. Hammocks strung between palms, fresh pineapple juice and fish caught straight from the sea make it a near-paradise.

After a few days on the beach, venture north to Mole

Thailand v Ghana:
Beer – Thailand, £1; Ghana, 50p
Hassle – Thailand, boys selling overpriced tat; Ghana, craftsmen selling African masks
Beaches – Thailand, overcrowded, overpriced; Ghana, unexplored, bargains
Locals – Thailand, tie-dyed travellers, lady boys; Ghana, juju priests, tribal chiefs
Experience – Thailand, one of the crowd; Ghana, one of the few

National Park where you come face-to-trunk with wild elephants, baboons determined to steal your lunch and families of warthogs casually wandering past your door.

Next, head east to the Volta region to visit the acres of tropical rainforest and

stunning waterfalls. The more energetic can climb 2,900ft to the top of Ghana's highest mountain, Afadjato, for spectacular views.

As for cuisine, Ghana has many traditional dishes that pack a spicy punch, including red-red (spicy beans in red sauce with delicious fried plantain) and groundnut soup with its peanut peppery taste.

There is no better place to mix with the locals than in a chop bar with a steaming bowl of food in front of you.

Don't leave Ghana without trying the local spirits – but only with caution. They have names such as Waste and Power and are generically known as local gin. There's nothing more amusing for Ghanaians than watching Westerners splutter their way through a shot or two.

Your trip can be tailored to suit any budget – food and accommodation are unbelievably cheap.

Break new boundaries – before everyone else does.