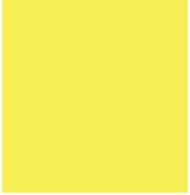


**EXPLORING
BEAUTIFUL
MAURITANIA**

2021





PRESENTATION SCOPE

Getting to know Mauritania

Mauritania

Places to Visit

Tourist Etiquette

Weather

Gastronomy

Practical Information





**WHERE IS
MAURITANIA?**





MAURITANIA

A LOOK INTO THE PAST

Mauritania's natural landscape is diverse, offering travelers a great deal of attractions to explore and enjoy. Whether it's roaming the deserted towns or marveling at a unique desert-like national park, there are enough places to see to keep everyone busy.

There are also several historical and cultural sites which are great for travelers who want to learn more about this interesting slice of Africa.



PLACES TO VISIT



NOUAKCHOTT

A sprawling and young capital city that's packed with tooting traffic, some short sky scrappers and low-rise homes, Nouakchott is a curiously endearing place.

That might be because it's heavenly comfortable compared to the sun-baked Berber caravan settlements of the great Sahara (where most travelers are either heading or have been), but it could also be something to do with the city's earthy vibes and unpretentious character too.

Built for just 15,000 people, the greater metro area here is estimated at around over two million now! That brings a frenetic life to the shanty districts and the nomad barrios, while the Nouakchott Fish Market is unquestionably the place to be as well as its beaches. Don't miss the beauty of the Saudi and the Moroccan Mosques.

At the Fish Market, salt-washed pirogues clamber in from the Atlantic Ocean packed with fish and seafood each morning, sellers haggle, and the locals go about their daily business.



CHINGUETTI

Chinguetti literally emerges from the shifting sand dunes of the mighty Sahara (the hills of dust that surround this one have been encroaching and encroaching for decades, and have even claimed some of the residential areas on the edge of the settlement). A place of eerily empty streets that have been chiselled and chipped by the winds, it was once an important trading stopover between the Med in the north and sub-Saharan in the south.

Today, it draws some of the country's biggest crowds, who flock to wonder at the brick-built towers and the old fortresses of the Berber tribes and Almoravids dating all the way back to the Middle Ages.

The spot is also part of a larger UNESCO World Heritage Site; one that also encompasses a number of other historic desert towns in the Adrar region and beyond.



TERJIT

Taking us just a short drive south on the main road out of Atar, the oasis town of Terjit remains one of the most interesting backcountry draws in all of Mauritania.

It springs up from the dry-cracked desert lands on the edges of the Sahara in a medley of verdant date palms and babbling streams; a speck of tropical greenery surrounded by a sea of sand.

It's set between a series of steep-sided gorges, which rise to meet the escarpments of the Adrar Plateau in dramatic fashion.

There are on-site camping spots below the palm boughs, a petting zoo with camels, and even a history of regal coronations to unravel!



BANC D'ARGUIN

Banc d'Arguin National Park is Mauritania's only large-scale national park. And boy does it deserve the title! A vast patchwork of low sandbanks and rock-speckled beaches that drops down into the waters of the Bay of Arguin on the extreme northern fringes of Mauritania, it's famed for its booming biodiversity, which is highlighted by the sheer amount of migratory birds that pass this way each year.

Spotters can see the likes of sandpipers and flamingos, pelicans and terns in the shallows, while it's thought that the population of nesting birds here is the highest in all of West Africa! It's also the home of the traditional Imraguen folk, who can often be seen bobbing on pirogues between the sandy islets and the lapping waves.



OUADANE

At the very end of one long and winding road that ranges from the capital at Nouakchott and deep into the heart of the Mauritanian Sahara, the dust-caked town of Ouadâne is a haunting, interesting place that does well to reveal the harsh realities of life in this arid, arid landscape.

It crumbles and cracks under the scorching desert sun, with its collection of adobe stone barrios cascading down the rough escarpments and into a center of winding lanes and alleys inhabited by the occasional, lonely Berber nomad and their collection of mismatched crafts and goods.

Although still officially inhabited, most of the locals here have packed up and departed for more hospitable climes.

And when the dust winds blow and the midday heat hits its zenith, it's easy to see why!

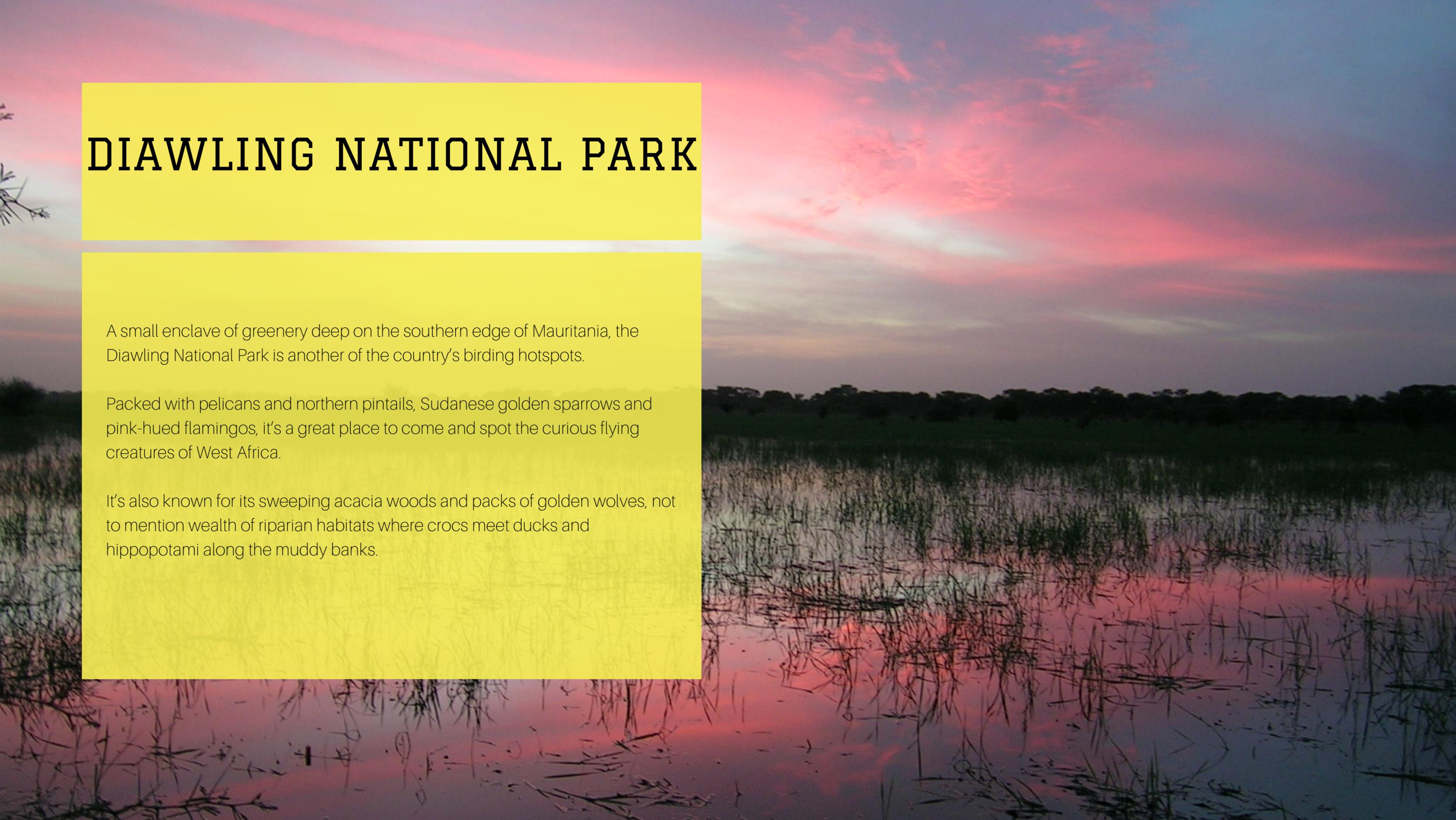


DIAWLING NATIONAL PARK

A small enclave of greenery deep on the southern edge of Mauritania, the Diawling National Park is another of the country's birding hotspots.

Packed with pelicans and northern pintails, Sudanese golden sparrows and pink-hued flamingos, it's a great place to come and spot the curious flying creatures of West Africa.

It's also known for its sweeping acacia woods and packs of golden wolves, not to mention wealth of riparian habitats where crocs meet ducks and hippopotami along the muddy banks.



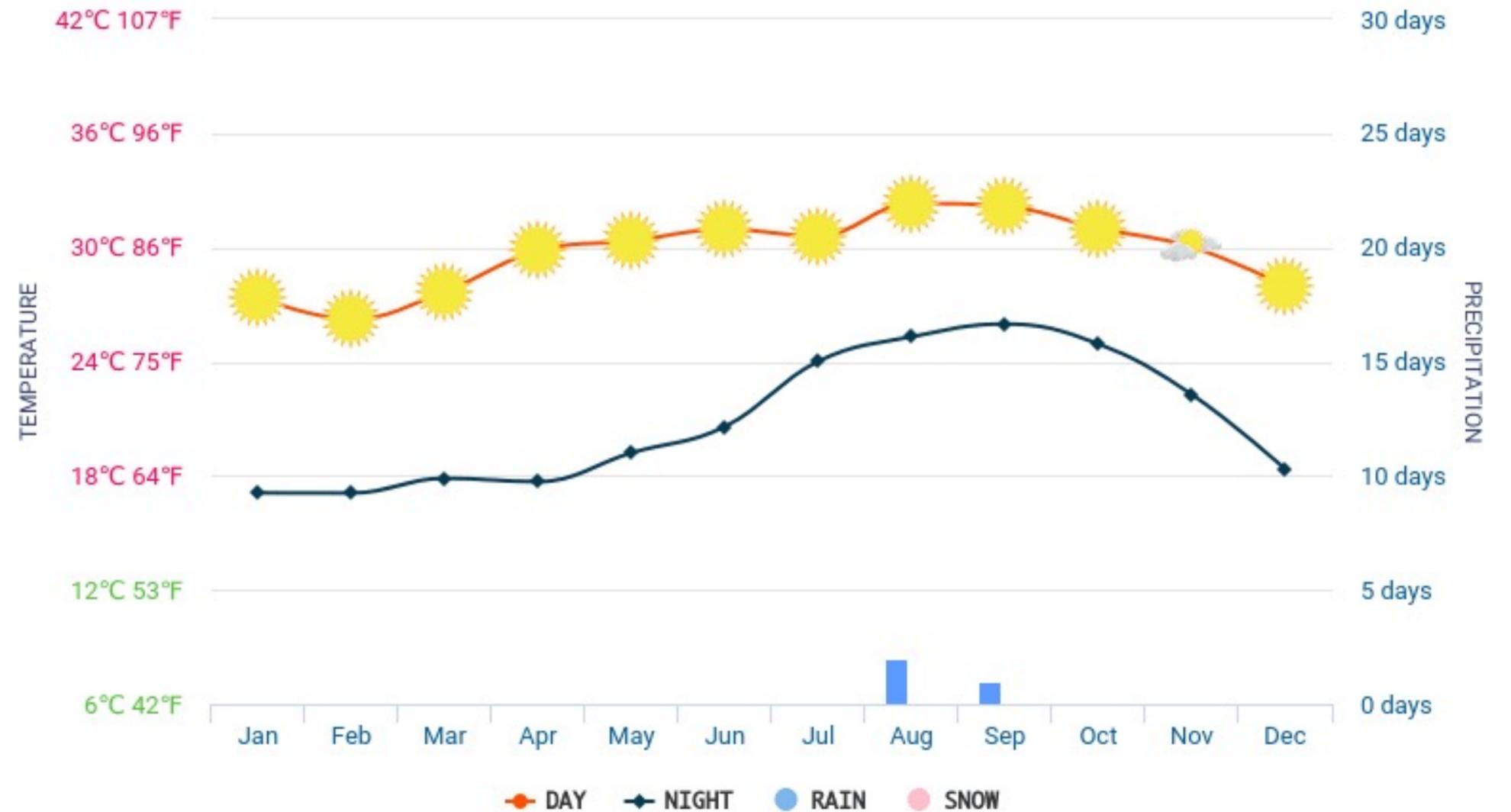


WEATHER

WHAT TO EXPECT

Mauritania Weather

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION





MAURITANIA

TOURIST ETIQUETTE



- Greetings For men, a soft handshake; none for women.
- Eating Outside of cities, meals are generally taken sitting cross-legged on the ground, using one's hands to eat.
- At the Mosque Take off your shoes; women should cover their heads and shoulders.
- Photography Ask permission before photographing people; avoid photographing military or government buildings.
- Alcohol It's impolite to drink in front of others, unless approval is given in advance.

What to Wear?

- Despite the heat, most men in Nouakchott don't wear shorts (and women never do). You won't draw unwanted attention to yourself if you do, only, you'll likely be more easily identified as a tourist. Loose, lightweight, comfortable clothing is the rule wherever you travel in Mauritania, sunglasses, hats and high protection SPF is recommended . In conservative areas in the desert, women especially should wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.



MAURITANIA

GASTRONOMY

- The cuisine of Mauritania includes the culinary practices of Mauritania. Historically, what is now Mauritania has been influenced by Arab and African peoples who have lived in and traversed the "stark" landscape marked with Sahara desert dunes in caravans. There is an overlap with Moroccan cuisine in the north and Senegalese cuisine in the south.
- French colonial influence (Mauritania was a colony until 1960) has also played a role in influencing the cuisine of the relatively isolated land. Alcohol is prohibited in the Muslim faith and its sale is largely limited to hotels. Mint tea is widely consumed and poured from height to create foam. Traditionally, meals are eaten communally.



MAURITANIA

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Security.

On the coast near Nouakchott, be very careful if you go swimming as sea conditions can become dangerous quickly.

Languages

Arabic and French are the two official languages. Hassaniya is spoken almost everywhere. Soninke, Wolof and Fulani are some of the most spoken dialects.

Required travel documents for

Passports must be valid for at least six months after the return date.

Religion

Sunni Muslims in the whole country (Islamic Republic).

Currency

The official currency is the Ouguiya (MRU). 1 EURO = 42.74 MRU (July 2021).

Credit cards (Visa, MasterCard and American Express) are only accepted in larger hotels. Cash can only be withdrawn from the BMCI bank, in Nouakchott, on presentation of a credit card, but you won't find any ATM machines here. It is best to bring cash in Euros or Dollars. Keep the receipts of any exchange transactions you make, as they may be requested when you leave.

Health

Vaccines against yellow fever, hepatitis A and typhoid are strongly recommended.

Drink a lot of water, even at night, in order to keep cool in the heat.

Electricity

220 V. European electric plugs.