

Sierra Leone

Information for applicants

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a unitary state in West Africa that shares political and natural borders with Liberia and Guinea, and is located on the Central Atlantic coast in the west. Freetown is the capital and largest city in the country. Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa and is named after a mountain ridge visible from the sea. The mountain is 890 metres high, and lies between Cape Sierra Leone and Cape Shilling.

Health care

Sierra Leone's medical services are very basic. While pharmacies are widespread, the quality of the medication on offer varies greatly. For example, modern malaria prophylactics like Malarone are almost impossible to obtain locally. The district capitals and some smaller cities have simple hospitals. Freetown has the Connaught Hospital with specialist departments, the Emergency Hospital and the Choithram's Memorial Hospital, which often has the best but also the most expensive services. Freetown also has many private clinics and registered private practices. Most treatments must be paid for privately. Patients suffering from serious illnesses should be transferred to Europe as quickly as possible.

Living locally, finding accommodation

The sending organisations can sometimes provide appropriate accommodation. However, you can also choose your own apartment, either on your own or using a real estate agent. Please note that advance payment of rent for 12-36 months is quite common. Larger concrete houses, generally surrounded by a high wall, are available in cities. Houses are usually guarded by security companies. The mains voltage is 230 volts/50 hertz, and the plugs used have three pins (plug types D and G). You will need a plug adapter (UK standard). Power failures are frequent, and the duration varies depending on where you are. We therefore recommend that you run a generator. Electricity is rarely available in rural regions. Although Sierra Leone is rich in water resources, the water supply in rural areas and in cities is often a problem, both in terms of quality and quantity. The water is not suitable for drinking and should therefore always be boiled, and ideally filtered before use. You can buy purified water in large returnable bottles (approx. 20 litres) in some supermarkets in Freetown.

Shops and services

Product availability and shopping options vary from place to place. In Freetown and the district capitals, you can purchase European and Arab foods in Lebanese supermarkets. However, foodstuffs imported from Europe are often twice to four times more expensive than in Germany. While the range of goods available at markets or in small shops is limited, they are less expensive. The markets offer quite a wide range of seasonal fruit and vegetables.

In rural areas, the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables is even better, and they are far less expensive. You can buy ingredients for typical Sierra Leonean dishes at local markets.

Fresh meat can be bought from butchers almost everywhere. The quality is generally better outside the capital. Excellent quality fresh fish is available along the coast. Barracuda and bonito are particularly popular. Snapper is also common and served in many restaurants.

Climate

The climate is tropical and humid with annual precipitation of up to 5,000 millimetres, and the country is among the wettest regions in West Africa. There are two seasons: a rainy and a dry season. As Sierra Leone is north of the equator, the rainy season starts in May, and is marked by daily thunderstorms and rainfall. It can rain incessantly in the months of August and September. The dry season starts in mid-October, and precipitation becomes less frequent. In December and January, the climate is influenced by the Saharan wind that brings dust and cold air with it. February, March and April are the hottest months, and rainfall is rare in this period. The average temperature in the north of the country is 25.5°C, and between 20°C and 37°C in the south, with temperatures ranging from 23 to 32°C at the coast in Freetown. The coastal climate in Freetown tends to be milder and more pleasant than further inland.

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Accompanying partners

Employment requirements for accompanying partners: Accompanying partners are permitted to work if they have a (national) employment contract with an international employer (GIZ, UN etc.) and they obtain their own work permit.

Schools

For foreign nationals with school-age children, there are several private schools such as the Sierra Leone International School, Limount College, the British International School, the American International School, the Lebanese International School, the Ayoub International School and others, in addition to the state schools.

Good to know

The capital city, Freetown, has many sights, foremost among them the Cotton Tree, a tree that has been in the centre of the city since 1787. It is enormous and draws people from far and wide for that reason alone. The Cotton Tree is also depicted on the 10,000 Leone (the currency of Sierra Leone) note.

Find out more

<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/343.html>

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/ausserpolitik/laenderinformationen/sierra-leone-node>

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