Peace Corps Guinea
1999-2001

Mont Badiar – Koundara, Guinea (my home)
Guinea is a small country in West Africa. I lived in the northern part – Koundara.

http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2000/Bekoutou/map.html

Guinea Has Four Regions

• **Basse Côte**
  – Western region along the Atlantic
  – Lush, tropical climate
  – Home to the Soussou people

• **Forêt**
  – Southern region
  – Dense forests
  – Home to the Kisi and Guerzé peoples

• **Haute Guinée**
  – Eastern region near Mali
  – Dry sahel
  – Home to the Malinké (Mandinké)

• **Fouta Djallon (Middle Guinea)**
  – Central region
  – Mountainous highlands – temperate climate; lush forests and rolling hills
  – Home to the Fulani (Peuls)
  – Koundara was ethnically the Fouta Djallon, but climatically similar to Haute.
Scenes from the Fouta
Guinea Has Two Seasons: Wet (and Hot) and Dry (and Really Hot)

Mamou in September, and again in January
Religion is Omnipresent

Predominantly Muslim

Next in line is Catholic

The end of Ramadan!

Easter!

Faith in God gives them strength and hope

Also gives a sense of futility (que sera sera)
Weddings and Celebrations
Wildlife

Pregnant Momma Goat!
Guinea is Among the Ten Poorest Countries in the World

- Claimed independence from France in ’58
- 30 years of isolation took its toll
- Now, controlled by corrupt government officials
- Many areas (including the capital) lack electricity, running water, potable water
- Koundara was 240 km from a paved road…
“Pretty Cars Don’t Go Here”

- Peugeot 505 “neuf-place” (9-seater)
  - Really, it had only 7 seats
  - Usually, it held 10 adults + children + livestock
“Pretty Cars Don’t Go Here”

• My first trip to Koundara took 36 hours!
• 12 hours was the norm
• Fortunately, I loved Koundara and rarely left
“Pretty Cars Don’t Go Here”

Several showers were needed after a ride in a bush taxi
Teaching Math at the Lycée-Collège de Koundara

- Poor infrastructure; no textbooks; no electricity – I was the textbook!

The High School building  New building: A previous PCV’s project
Teaching Math at the Lycée-Collège de Koundara

Aïssatou Benté knows her complex numbers!
Life in Koundara

• I had two families that I spent a lot of time with
  – Camara – my next door neighbors
    • Mr. Mamoudou
    • His wives: Tanti Aïcha, Mme Diaré
    • His children: Oumou, (Aïcha Soiré, Naiebintou)
    • Mama (the grandmother)
  – Boiro – extended family of three of my students
    • Kadiatou, Ibrahima Sory, Ibrahima Fatou
    • Parents, siblings, cousins, uncles, …
    • About 20 people lived in one compound; 10 in another
The Camara’s
The Camara’s
The Boiro’s
The Boiro’s
Life as a PCV

My house (apartment)

A fellow PCV’s huts
Life as a PCV