

The New York Times

Visit the World From Your Couch

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January 17, 2021

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The open-air markets of Dakar, Senegal's capital, are where you see the city's energy at its most frenetic.

DAKAR, SENEGAL

If you are lucky enough to go, the sensations of Dakar — the smell of grilled fish and spiced coffee, the feeling of an impending down-

pour, the bone-rattling vibrations from a dozen drums — stay with you long after you leave. And while it is impossible to fully experience this West African city without making the trip, there are ways to capture at least a sliver of its magic.

Tour the sounds of the city.

In between the rumble of traffic and the shouts of street vendors, there is always music in Dakar. On a single day, you will hear politically charged hip-hop; the dizzying pulse of mbalax, a dance music that combines percussion

with global influences; the sounds of Cuban rumba put through a West African blender; and much more. Tune in to Afropop Worldwide, the radio program and podcast from Public Radio International, to get a sampling of the city's musical diversity.

Get moving.

Unsurprisingly, considering the integral role of music in Dakar's daily rhythms, it is hard to spend any time in Dakar without coming across some of the many dance styles of the region. From modern mbalax blaring out of nightclubs to sabar, named for the rattling drums that propel dancers to acrobatic frenzies, there are countless reasons to jump to your feet — and you can do it from home. Check out the Alvin Ailey Extension School, which offers regular online West African dance classes, led by the Senegalese dancer Maguette Camara. Just be sure to clear out any fragile items, pets or small children from your rehearsal space; you will be doing a whole lot of kicking, jumping and spinning as you try to keep up with the rhythms of sabar.

Take a crash course in Wolof.

Besides capturing the spirit of Dakar, the Instagram account Wolof Words doubles as a crash course in Wolof, the city's most commonly spoken language. While a few hours on Instagram are not going to turn you into a fluent speaker, you might pick up a phrase. *SEBASTIAN MODAK*