

## **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLING TO GABON**

### **YOUR ARRIVAL IN GABON**

On arrival at Libreville Airport, take the stairs down to customs and immigration. Show your proof of vaccination and collect your luggage. A representative will be waiting in the hall to help you. Don't let anybody help you with your luggage except the Africa's Eden representative or aviation staff. If nobody is there to meet you, please go straight to the SCD Aviation / Africa's Connection desk in the arrival hall.

### **CUSTOMS**

The usual duty-free regulations apply for Gabon, i.e., one bottle of spirits and 200 cigarettes per person.

### **JET LAG**

Travelling across time zones can cause jet lag. The number of time zones influences your jet lag more than the length of the flight. It is especially bad when flying east. You can prevent jet lag by eating a light meal containing plenty of carbohydrates and greens before travelling. Try to arrive well rested and healthy at your departure airport. Try to get a flight with no/few stops as the changing cabin pressure exacerbates jet lag and set your watch to the destination time as soon as you board the plane. One homeopathic remedy for jet lag is Arnica.

### **TIME ZONE**

The time in Gabon is GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) plus 1 hr and is the same throughout the country.

### **FLIGHT CHECK-IN TIMES**

Please check in early at all airports (at least one hour prior to domestic flights, two hours for international flights). Gabon has only a short history of tourism and occasionally flights are overbooked. Please ask your ground operator to re-confirm your return flight (this is not necessary for Air France flights, which are already confirmed). Air France offers pre-check-ins. We recommend using this.

### **TRAINS**

The trains in Gabon are generally safe, but beware of pickpockets, never leave your bag unattended and politely refuse any food offered to you by strangers. Before getting on the train, you will need to show your passport. It can be cold on the (night) train, so bring a fleece or a sweater. There is no public announcement system, so we recommend setting your alarm clock for 15 minutes before the arrival time at your destination. At your destination, a representative will be waiting for you. If not, please wait on the platform, making it easier for him to locate you. Also, please remember that tourism is not yet well established in Gabon and trains can be delayed.

### **YOUR VEHICLE AND DRIVER**

All our vehicles comply fully with all national / Gabonese legal requirements. We ensure that all the relevant documents are in order before your journey starts. The roads you will be travelling on are mostly not good, but our drivers are experienced and know them well. Please inform your driver if you need a toilet stop or if you would like to stretch your legs. All our drivers speak the local language, French and reasonable English.

### **SHOPPING**

Souvenirs can be bought in tourist shops, in the centre city and in shopping galleries in the larger hotels. One can find clothes shops in the city centre as well as art galleries with exotic displays. In Libreville, the Louis district has the reputation of being the restaurant district.

### **LUGGAGE**

The maximum luggage allowance is 20 kg, preferably in backpacks or soft bags. If you are travelling with the National Park Shuttle, you are limited to a maximum of 12.5 kg and if you are travelling to Ivindo you MUST have a backpack (in which case, please do NOT bring a suitcase or duffle bag). Backpacks with internal frames are best, since they are the easiest to carry.

## **CLOTHING**

The following is a short list of clothing you will need while you are here:

- A couple of outfits for the bush
- Some outfits for the evenings, including a long-sleeved t-shirt
- Light sweater for the dry season (June – September)
- Raincoat or poncho (lightweight)
- Wide-brimmed hat or cap with neck cover
- Socks and boots (hiking or rubber boots are fine)
- Flip-flops or equivalent sandals for around camp and going to the shower
- Lightweight walking sandals (e.g. Tevas, Chacos, Straps, etc.)
- Please bring khaki clothes, no blue or dark colours.

## **PERSONAL ACCESSORIES**

The following is a short list of accessories you will need while you are here:

- Sunglasses (with Polaroid lenses, and for fishermen it's also advisable to have a neck strap)
- Binoculars
- Good-quality headlamp or flashlight (LED lamps are best)
- Dry bag for storing not-to-get-wet items
- A novel
- A French phrase book if you do not speak French
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- A bottle of anti-bacterial washing-up liquid (for on the road)
- Anti-mosquito repellent.

## **FILM & PHOTOGRAPHY**

For pictures, a mix of 100 (Langoué Bay) and 400 iso (forest) is recommended. A camera/video camera with 300-mm or better lens (or equivalent in digital) is recommended for wildlife photography at Langoué Bay/Ivindo (where the platforms are 100 and 300 metres from the animals). Camera films and batteries are very difficult to get in Gabon so please bring plenty of spare ones. Because of the humidity it is recommended to bring dry bags for your equipment.

## **EQUIPMENT / VOLTAGE**

The voltage supply at most of the hotels in Gabon is usually 220 volts. Most of the plugs in Gabon are Western-type 3-pin plugs. It also makes sense to carry an electrical adaptor and enough dry batteries.

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING:**

The following is a list of equipment that we have available for visitors. Please read carefully and do NOT weigh down your luggage with equipment you will not need.

- Tripods
- Telescopes
- Sheets, pillows, sleeping bags, blankets
- Sleeping pads, thermarests, mattresses
- Tents
- Water filtration equipment
- Toilet paper
- Shampoo/soap – (biodegradable) soap is available in Loango NP and Langoue Baie for your use and you will be asked to use it instead of whatever toiletry items you might bring

## **PAYMENT INFORMATION**

The lodges do not have credit card facilities and do not accept travellers' cheques. The best currency to use in this area is the euro. It is a good idea to travel with small denomination notes as change is often paid out in local currency (the CFA). The exchange rate is 656 CFA to the euro. The only credit card that is accepted in major hotels in Gabon is VISA. There are ATMs at the airports in Gabon, but only accepting VISA.

## **TIPPING**

Tipping is subject to your appreciation in bars, restaurants or other urban public areas.

## **CHECKING IN AND OUT**

On your day of arrival, you can check into your room from 14h00. On your day of departure, you need to leave the room before 10h00.

## **WEATHER**

The rainy season generally runs from some time in October to May, during which temperatures are in the upper-20s (°C) to lower-30s, with high humidity. There are heavy and often stormy downpours every one to two days, followed by clear skies and calm weather (and generally excellent light for photography). Because of an almost constant but light and cool coastal breeze, the rainy season is still a comfortable time to visit. During the dry season, which generally runs from June to September, the sky remains overcast and hazy. Due to a cool coastal breeze (which sometimes stiffens to a wind), temperatures vary from the low- to mid-20s (°C). There is a mini-dry season during December and January, with warm and humid temperatures but clear skies (good for photography).

## **THE CODE OF ETHICS**

This basic Code of Ethics is expressed in order to help protect and conserve wild creatures and their habitats. Wherever you are, you should always remember that you Please respect the animals and their ecosystems. Respect encompasses knowledge and understanding, resulting in natural harmony. Our researchers know and understand the animals' behaviour and can therefore undertake close and profound observation. It is most important that observing one specimen does not involve disturbing any others. When visiting wilderness areas, try to stay out of the approach lines used by the animals. Do not approach a nest or den too closely. Young animals should never be handled or removed, nor may you restrict their movements while observing them. If you see an animal showing uneasiness, possibly caused by your presence, please move off from the animal, rather than forcing the animal to move. Thoughtless conduct could force a creature to leave its familiar surroundings because it feels threatened. If this happens, a whole ecosystem can be disturbed. Please avoid trampling on fragile habitats, especially grasslands, marshes and wild-flower patches, because damage to these affects all species in the ecosystem. Please leave any wild flowers untouched. Rarities especially should never be picked or dug up. High-altitude ecosystems are extremely fragile and susceptible to disturbance, and it takes many years for a degraded habitat to recover. Furthermore, microbes are few at these heights and natural decomposition is accordingly slow. Therefore, when travelling, do not leave your litter in the natural environment, but keep it with you for dumping in the next litterbins or garbage containers encountered.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Staying in good health increases the pleasure of your stay in Gabon. Although most medication is available in the lodge and all our cars have a first-aid kit with basic supplies, we still strongly advise you to bring the following medicines with you:

- Soluble Aspirin and Paracetamol
- Malaria medication
- Anti-septic cream
- Anti-histamine cream or powder
- Anti-nausea or anti-sickness tablets
- Antibiotic ointment
- Insect repellents / bug spray
- Pain killers
- Band-aids
- Any prescription drugs you need

! Please ensure that you and all your belongings are adequately insured before departing for Gabon.

! Make a list of all personal medicines that you are carrying, and take this list with you wherever you go.

! If you have any doubts concerning your health, please consult your doctor.

## **OBLIGATORY VACCINATIONS**

Yellow Fever (obligatory) - Yellow fever is transmitted through insects. Vaccination is the only way to protect yourself against it. You will need to show your yellow fever inoculation certificate on arrival in Gabon. Protection starts 10 days after vaccination.

## **RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS**

Malaria - Gabon is a malaria area. Malaria is transmitted through insects. The medication to take depends on multiple factors, like the duration of your stay and your medical background. Most recommended is Malarone, but you can also use Lariam or Doxycycline. The best insurance against malaria is to prevent being bitten. We therefore recommend wearing light-coloured long-sleeved shirts and long trousers in the evenings.

If you become ill on returning from a trip to Gabon, make sure that your doctor is aware that you have been in a malaria area.

**Diphtheria/Tetanus/Polio** – Diphtheria, tetanus and polio are transmitted through dirt, earth and drinking water. In most European Countries these are combined in one vaccination (DTP). People born after 1950 are normally vaccinated in their childhood. In general, one vaccination will be sufficient, although vaccination every 10 to 15 years is recommended. Elderly people need a complete vaccination of three injections.

**Hepatitis A** – Hepatitis A is transmitted through food and drinking water. The hepatitis A vaccination consists of two injections. The first dose results in 100% protection for a duration of one year. The second one protects you for at least 10 years.

**Meningitis** – Meningitis is transmitted through food and drinking water. The vaccination consists of a single dose with booster.

## **FOOD & DRINK**

Meals - If you have any special dietary requirements, please let it be known in advance so that these can be accommodated. Main meals are three-course, generally French styled and very good. Breakfasts tend to be continental. Drinks - Local beers (which are extremely palatable) and soft drinks cost €2 -€3 French and sometimes South African wines are available. Wine ranges in cost from €11 - €46 a bottle and Champagne, €50 - €76. The lodge is a full-service hotel and guests are not permitted to bring their own drinks. On your hikes or safaris, we recommend taking some bottles of water, Gatorade or other juice mix/rehydration supplement, and trail mix/power bars.

## **GENERAL TIPS**

- Carry your passport and money with you at all times. Do not leave your passport in checked-in baggage when travelling by air. If you decide to leave any valuable(s) in your room, please ensure to keep them in the safe.
- Place a photocopy of your passport in each and every bag checked-in at the airport. This helps in case you lose your luggage!
- Label all your bags and carry an extra set of labels with you.
- Beggars should be ignored completely. Beware that giving money to one will only attract more and you are sure to be surrounded and followed. We advise you not to encourage begging in Gabon.
- Bring something to drink and something to eat (e.g., cookies) when you travel from place to place. Gabon is not yet an established tourism country and trips can sometimes take longer than expected.

## **TELEPHONES**

All cell phones work in the bigger cities and on Evengué and Loango lodge.

## **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Hotels in Gabon

- Atlantique Libreville +241 73 24 46
- Tropicana Libreville +241 73 15 31
- Hirondelle Port Gentil +241 55 17 82
- Méridien Port Gentil +241 55 21 03 / 56 28 67
- Méridien LBV +241 76 61 61
- Evaro, Lambaréné +241 07 35 50 18

**Other**

- Air France in Libreville +241 77 36 36 / 73 74 16

**PLEASE CONTACT US SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE DURING YOUR TRIP TO GABON**