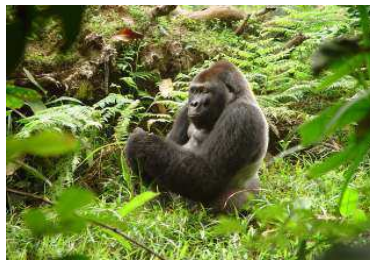


Central Africa's Best Kept Secret" – 13 Day Itinerary



One of Central Africa's best kept secrets, that's what they call the Dzanga Sangha Reserve in the south of the Central African Republic. This breathtaking reserve is home to large mammals such as forest elephants, forest buffalos, large boars, gorillas and forest antelopes, in densities described as unique. Continue your adventure in Loango National Park, Gabon, also named "Africa's Last Eden", where dense rainforests meet endless wild beaches and dark-watered rivers sustaining an extraordinary array of wildlife. End this extraordinary journey on the island of Príncipe, a place where dense rainforests teem with exotic birds, where whales sport playfully off unspoiled, deserted beaches, where crystal-clear waterfalls cascade into the azure blue ocean, and where the people are, above all, friendly and happy to meet you.



Tour Overview:

Day 1: Tuesday - Arrival in Douala, Cameroon
Day 2 & 3: Wednesday & Thursday- Dzanga-Sangha Reserve, C.A.R.
Day 4: Friday - Flight to Iguela, Gabon
Day 5 & 6: Saturday & Sunday- Tassi / Akaka (depending on the season)
Day 7: Monday - Return to Loango Lodge
Day 8: Tuesday - Pte. Ste. Cathérine
Day 9: Wednesday - Boat trip over Mpivié River & Visit to Fernan-Vaz Gorilla Sanctuary
Day 10: Thursday – Flight to Príncipe
Day 11 & 12: Friday & Saturday – Príncipe
Day 13: Sunday – Flight to Douala, Cameroon

Detailed Itinerary:

Day 1: Tuesday – Arrival in Douala - Cameroon – Hotel Somatel

Upon arrival at Douala International Airport, a representative will meet you and take you to the VIP lounge. He or she will help you with the customs procedures and collecting of your luggage. Please note that you will need to show your vaccination booklet. After that you will be brought to the Hotel Somatel. If you are up for it, we can pick you up at approximately 20h00 from your hotel for an "Introduction to Douala by Night Tour" and a nice dinner*).

**) Please note that dinner costs are not included in the cost of the programme.*

Day 2 & 3: Wednesday & Thursday – Dzanga-Sangha Reserve, C.A.R. – Doli Lodge

In the morning you will be picked up from your hotel and brought to the airport for your private charter flight to Bayanga, which will take approximately 2 hours.

In Bayanga, the Doli Lodge staff will help you with your luggage and drive you to the lodge where you will have some time to settle into your room before having lunch in the restaurant, on a terrace above the river.

After lunch, the group will be divided into smaller groups for the programme in and around the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve.

All forest activities are accompanied by trained guides who speak French and also English.

Activities:

Gorilla Tracking
Observing Forest Elephants
Hiking around the Salines
Net hunting with the Pygmies
Music & Dance with the Pygmies

Day 4: Friday – Flight to Iguela, Gabon – Loango Lodge

On Friday after lunch, the Doli Lodge staff will bring you to the airstrip at Bayanga, where the private charter plane departs, first to Douala, and then from Douala to Iguela. After a short stop in Port Gentil for customs, you will arrive at Loango Lodge and welcomed by our lodge managers and friendly staff in the evening for a late dinner.

Day 5 & 6: Saturday & Sunday – Tassi / Akaka (depending on the season)

Tassi region (wet season)

After breakfast, one of our 4x4 jeeps will take you south-west to the Tassi / Louri area (approx. 1.5 hours). During this drive, animals such as elephants, red river hogs, buffalos, birds and sitatunga (a swamp-dwelling antelope) can be seen. Tassi Camp is situated on the savannah, surrounded by primary and secondary forest.

Take the 4x4 and visit the research camp of the Max Planck Institute in Tassi Sud, 30 minutes from Tassi Camp.

From here, the researchers go into the forest to carry out studies amongst the shy, elusive gorillas and chimpanzees. This also acclimatises the animals gradually to the presence of humans in the vicinity. In the future, this habituation programme will allow a controlled form of tourism to track and view the gorillas and chimpanzees, while at the same time allowing researchers to gather data on all aspects of their behaviour and ecology.

From Tassi you can easily go on excursions to Louri, where there is a good chance of seeing buffalos and elephants on the beach: a truly remarkable sight and characteristic of Loango National Park. On very rare occasions, even hippos can be seen.

Lodging: *Tassi Savannah Camp*

Akaka region (dry season)

After an early breakfast, the boat departs for a 4-hour journey south to Akaka. After crossing some large lagoons, you will arrive at the Rembo Ngowe River, where you will spend the last 1.5 hours. During the trip you might encounter birds, elephants, buffalos and sitatunga (swamp-dwelling antelopes), possibly even bathing in the river.

Akaka is one of the most remote parts of Loango National Park. The Akaka forests thrive with butterflies and are home to a number of rare bird species. The bush camp is situated on the riverbank in the heart of the tropical rainforest and the wetlands. At times, the wildlife, especially elephants, passes right through the camp. Akaka is a good starting point for excursions like forest walks, or trips by kayak or motorboat along the Rembo Ngowe and Rembo Echira rivers. In the dry season, the concentrations of particularly forest buffalo and forest elephant that migrate into the area are easily seen. Smaller mammals like sitatunga, red river hogs, forest duikers, five species of monkey and great apes inhabit the area all year round.

Lodging: *Akaka Bush Camp*

Day 7: Monday – Return to Loango Lodge

After returning from Tassi / Akaka around lunchtime, you can relax at Loango Lodge or discover some other parts of the park: by car into the savannah, on foot into the mangroves, or by 'houseboat' along the shore.

Game drives

Game drives in a 4x4 jeep are an easy and comfortable way to view the park and see wildlife such as buffalo, elephant, red river hogs and sitatunga. In the rainy season from November to April, you can find large mammals roaming freely on the beach.

Walking Safaris

You can venture out with one of our eco-guides into the forest. On foot is one of the best ways to learn more about the diversity of the park. You can encounter wildlife such as elephants and buffalo, but even more so, discover the more inconspicuous forest animals and birds.

Cultural Walks

From the lodge, you can go on a cultural walk to the nearby village or the "Operation Loango" school, which is sponsored by Africa's Eden's sister company "Société de Conservation et Développement"

Crocodile Night Patrol

After dinner, navigate along the shores of the lagoon to search for crocodiles that shelter in the mangroves at night.

Whale Watching*)

From mid-July to mid-September, humpback whales visit the coastline of Loango National Park. Go out on a boat with our skipper to look for these impressive, playful mammals.

*) *Please note that sightings cannot be guaranteed and this excursion is not included in the cost of this programme.*

Day 8: Tuesday - Pte. Ste. Cathérine - Pte. Ste. Cathérine Beach Camp

In the afternoon, a 20-minute boat tour over the lagoon takes you to the Pointe Sainte Cathérine Beach Camp. This basic camp is situated at a beautiful spot on the beach in the north of Loango National Park.

Beach walks, collecting shells and fishing are amongst the possibilities. You can also simply relax here, with one of the most beautiful beaches on earth all to yourself.

As the sun sets, dine in the restaurant, on the lounge deck, or enjoy a feet-in-the-sand beach barbeque affair. During the rainy season, from November to April, Pte. Ste. Cathérine sunsets are even better than usual.

Day 9: Wednesday - Fernan-Vaz Gorilla Project - Evengué Lodge

Upon return from Pte. Ste. Cathérine, a 4x4 jeep will drive you within 45 minutes to the start of the Mpivié River. From here, you will start the boat trip on the dark waters of the Mpivié to Evengué Island, a small island just outside Loango National Park where the Fernan-Vaz Gorilla Project is situated, which is sponsored by Africa's Eden. This is a perfect opportunity to sit back and enjoy the breathtaking views. Monkeys, crocodiles and all kinds of birds (Hartlaub's ducks, finfoots and fishing owls in particular) can be seen.

After approximately 2 hours, you will arrive at the small town of Ste. Anne, where Gustav Eiffel built an iron church in the late 1800s. After the visit to Ste. Anne, the trip will continue up Evengué Island where the staff is awaiting your arrival.

In the afternoon, our experts of the Fernan-Vaz Gorilla Project will share their knowledge with you on the bush meat crisis and other reasons why gorillas are a critically endangered species, and they will give you information about the Fernan-Vaz Gorilla Sanctuary and Rehabilitation & Reintroduction Programme. Afterwards one of the guides will accompany you on a short bush walk leading to the gorilla family in the sanctuary.

Day 10 - 12: Thursday, Friday, Saturday – Príncipe – Bom Bom Island Resort

In the morning, your private charter plane will fly via Port-Gentil to Príncipe airport, where the Bom Bom staff will be waiting to meet you. You will arrive in Bom Bom Island Resort in the afternoon. Before dinner, you will have time to settle into your room, have a swim in the pool or the ocean, or simply to relax and enjoy a cocktail.

While Bom Bom is a wonderful place to relax and recharge your spirit, there is also plenty there to explore and discover.

Hiking

Circumnavigate Bom Bom Island by foot, and discover its beautiful rock pools with their own ecosystems varying from one pool to the next. Or go on a leisurely hike through the forest to experience the sounds of the jungle and catch glimpses of a Mona monkey or the African grey parrot.

Kayaking

Let our guides introduce you to kayaking on the calm waters around Bom Bom Island, then kayak out to the ruins of the old church from the first Portuguese settlement on Príncipe 400 years ago.

Diving

Discover the underwater world of Bom Bom! São Tomé and Príncipe, both ancient volcanic islands, are home to some of the world's most spectacular rock formations, above and below the waterline. With drop-offs of over 35 metres, overhangs and cascading boulders, there is plenty of sea life here to keep you coming back for more!

Whale Watching*)

From mid-July to mid-September, humpback whales visit the waters around Bom Bom as they migrate from their low-latitude summer feeding grounds to more tropical mating and calving areas.

*) Please note that sightings cannot be guaranteed and this excursion is not included in the cost of this programme.

Day 13: Sunday – Flight to Douala, Cameroon

In the morning you can enjoy a final stroll on the beach and recollect your experiences of these two weeks. In the late afternoon you will be brought to the airport for your return flight to Douala, Cameroon, from where you will connect to your international flight.

