

Important information for travelers to the Republic of Congo

Like any expedition, there will be surprises, unforeseen events, and unforgettable experiences! We invite you on a true journey, one filled with diversity in culture, flora, and fauna. We will open the door to an uncharted territory where tourism is only just beginning. Such a journey is reserved for true travelers in search of knowledge, raw discoveries, unpredictable, in nature as it is, which cannot be commanded.

This document is regularly updated to reflect changes in our operations as well as local conditions. Please always refer to [this link](#) to access the most up-to-date version.

Flights: between booking and three months before departure

The Republic of Congo is served by Air France, Ethiopian Airlines, Rwanda Airlines and Royal Air Maroc.

For our upstream programs, guests who are already in Brazzaville will be transferred to the boat at around 5pm (pick up at the Radisson). Guests arriving with Air France in the evening will be transferred directly to the boat. For a downstream expedition, the first night is spent in a hotel in Brazzaville.

We strongly recommend that guests with connecting flights plan to arrive in Brazzaville at least one day before the expedition begins, or allow sufficient buffer time at their connecting airports. Once the expedition has started, catching up with the group may require long and costly transfers. **Please note that any additional transfer costs incurred in order to join the expedition after its departure will be at the guest's own expense.** We also strongly recommend ensuring that your travel insurance provides adequate coverage for such situations.

If you fly Ethiopian Airlines, you will need to book an additional night in a hotel in Brazzaville at the end of the expedition..

We recommend booking changeable tickets.

For domestic transfers, we use a domestic flight between Brazzaville and Ouessou or Ouessou and Brazzaville, depending on the direction of the expedition and when available. If no planes are available to charter, we will use the commercial flight available on that day. We use the airline certified by the oil companies (Total, ENI, Chevron).

Administrative formalities: two months before departure

All visitors to the Republic of Congo must have a passport valid for at least six months after the date of return, with at least two blank pages.

A visa is required to enter the Republic of Congo. Allow at least one month for processing through your local consulate or embassy.

- 8-night cruise : you will need a tourist visa - single entry
- 15-night expeditions : you will need a multi-entry visa to the Republic of Congo.

We can arrange visas on arrival - please contact us for more details.

We will contact you upon payment of the balance of your trip (between 60 and 90 days before departure) and send you the invitation letter that will enable you to submit your visa application to the Republic of Congo Consulate in your country of residence. **You will need to present a printed copy of the letter of invitation at the airport.**

If your journey includes bonobo trekking in DRC and / or a stay in Dzanga Sangha National Park in the Central African Republic, you do not need an additional visa. You will be issued with a special permit.

Luggage & Airline Delays

We strongly advise all clients to pack a sufficient change of clothes and essential items in their carry-on luggage. It is quite common for checked baggage to be delayed, especially when clients have connecting flights.

Please also note that **we do not cover any costs related to the transport or forwarding of delayed luggage within the Republic of Congo.** Transporting baggage to the boat can be expensive and logistically complex. We therefore strongly recommend comprehensive travel insurance covering baggage delays and related expenses. Any claims or arrangements regarding delayed luggage must be handled directly with the airline and/or the travel insurance provider.

For clients travelling on itineraries with multiple flight connections, we also strongly recommend arriving in Brazzaville at least one day prior to the expedition departure. This provides additional flexibility in the event of flight disruptions, delays, or delayed baggage arrival.

Health and vaccinations

Passengers need to be in good physical condition to make the most of their expedition. Daily excursions involve walking over uneven ground. Moreover, embarking and disembarking of boats can be physically demanding. Excursions on foot can sometimes last several hours (especially for gorilla trekking). In some cases, an alternative circuit may be suggested.

Proof of yellow fever vaccination is required to enter the Republic of Congo (or a certificate from a doctor stating that this vaccination is not recommended in your case).

8-night cruise : no other vaccinations required

15-night expedition : no other vaccinations required - a covid test will be performed before gorilla trekking in Dzanga Sangha National Park.

Extension to Nouabale Ndoki National Park (not part of our 8- and 15-night expeditions)

Vaccinations against Polio, Measles and Covid 19 are mandatory for tracking gorillas in the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park. A COVID-19 test will be carried out by the park administration prior to gorilla tracking. Only a negative result will allow you to track the gorillas. The park reserves the right not to allow gorillas to be tracked by people showing symptoms of colds, flu, or other respiratory symptoms to preserve the health of the gorillas, which remain an endangered species.

Please bring insect repellent with you: those containing DEET are recommended in the Congo Basin.

Paludism, also known as malaria, is a mosquito-borne disease. It is present in the Republic of Congo. The best way to protect yourself is to wear long-sleeved clothing and use repellents. Particular care should be taken at the beginning or end of the day. Please consult your doctor regarding this topic. Depending on the season, he or she may recommend preventive antimalarial treatment.

Drinking water is available on board.

Our guides are trained in first aid. We are in contact with a French referral doctor based in Brazzaville, who can decide whether to evacuate you to the nearest hospital. Evacuation is by boat, vehicle, or helicopter if necessary.

List of private clinics in Brazzaville

CENTER MEDICO-SOCIAL OF THE FRENCH EMBASSY
In front of the "Congo-Pharmacie" bus stop
Dr Pierre-Yves LEBRUN
Office: + 242 06 639 45 45
Medical tel. (emergencies only): + 242 05 578 19 54

CLINIQUE PASTEUR
88, rue de Djambala - Moungali
BRAZZAVILLE
Tel : 06 990 63 77
Mail : cliniquepasteurbzv@cpb-sante.com

CLINIQUE SECUREX (SAMU)
33, av. Amilcar Cabral
BRAZZAVILLE
Mail : clinique.securex@brazzaville-securex.com
Tel. : 22 281 38 72
Fax : 22 281 53 84

CLINIQUE DENTAIRE LES CLAIRONS
Plateau des 15 ans.
Dr. Myriam MAKANI-SOUSSOUMIHEN, dental surgeon
Tel. +242 06 632 51 51
CABINET SEMINET CLINIQUE DENTAIRE
Above the MAVRE pharmacy, City Centre.
Dr. Michel SEMINET, chirurgien-dentiste
Tel. : +24205 551 42 96

Insurance (required)

Comprehensive Field Medical Evacuation and Repatriation insurance is mandatory for our Congo expeditions. Your policy must specifically cover emergency extraction from remote locations to the nearest suitable hospital, as well as international repatriation. The insurance must be valid in all countries included in your itinerary (at a minimum, the Republic of the Congo, and also the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic for our 15-night expeditions).

- Minimum medical expenses coverage of \$100,000 USD per person.
- Please provide us with the following : company name – policy or contract number – 24/7 tel number for the insurance company

The company also declines all responsibility for personal effects lost or stolen during the trip.

Hereinbelow is a list of the insurance companies we recommend:

- ❖ TRUM: <https://www.trum.co.za/evacuations/>
- ❖ AGIL ASSUR : evacuation insurance for European citizens. Premium 49€/pers Contact : ivrin.payet@agilassur.com / +33 6 15 19 63 06 www.agilassur.com
- ❖ IMG Global: Patriot Platinum <https://www.imglobal.com/img-insurance-plans/patriot-platinum>
- ❖ Tokio Marine HCC: <https://www.tmhcc.com/en/products/treaty-reinsurance/accident-and-health>
- ❖ Trawick International:
 - For non-US-citizens: one of the following offers
 - Safe Travels International
 - Safe Travels International Cost Saver

Website:

<https://www.trawickinternational.com/travel-insurance-plans/international-travel-medical-insurance-for-outside-the-usa/>

- For US citizens/residents:
 - Safe Travels Outbound

Website:

<https://www.trawickinternational.com/travel-insurance-plans/travel-medical-for-us-citizens-residents-outside-the-usa/>

- ❖ Travel with Insurance:
 - For US citizens/residents: GeoBlue Voyager Essential

Website:

<https://www.travelwithinsurance.com/single-trip-insurance>

- For non-US-citizens: Seven Corners Travel Medical - Excluding the United States

Website:

<https://www.sevencorners.com/plans/travel-medical-insurance/excluding-usa>

Emergency contacts

Emergency Contact (satellite phone) - to use only in case of a medical urgency
+882 16 4442 6914

Logistics officer Dietrick :

+242 05 012 83 98

Available on WhatsApp.

Expedition Leader (Arold) :

+242 06 428 2018

Available on WhatsApp.

Land borders

From the Democratic Republic of Congo: boats run daily between the capital Kinshasa (DRC) and Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo. A visa from both countries is required to cross the river.

From Gabon, there are two options for getting to Dolisie: the first leaves from N'Dende to the south and takes around three days. The second leaves from Bakoumba and goes to Mbinda before heading south via a weekly rail link.

If you wish to visit the Dzanga Sangha National Park in the Central African Republic or the Lobéké Park in Cameroon,

you do not need an additional visa. You will be issued with a special permit, which you can collect at Parc Nouabalé Ndoki.

Money and currency exchange

Congo's local currency is the CFA franc (655 FCFA = 1 euro). The exchange rate is fixed. You can exchange currency in Brazzaville or use your credit card at ATMs. The exchange rate applied in exchange bureaus makes the exchange of cash more advantageous (rate applied 700 FCFA = 1 euro).

Most transactions are carried out in cash, and credit card payments are still very limited.

Tips and additional services on the boat and in the lodges shall be paid in cash in euros, US dollars or CFA francs (last day of the cruise).

Master Card doesn't work in many countries in Africa and it is the same in Congo. It is recommended to use VISA.

Tips & village visits

Based on the level of satisfaction, we recommend tips to be around 12€ per day per person. The tips will be shared among the crew.

We do not encourage direct gifts, such as money, clothing or school supplies, to local people, villagers, trackers, drivers, etc., as this can unintentionally encourage dependence or mendicancy.

If you wish to give them additional tips or gifts, you are of course welcome to do so but please give them first to the expedition leader who will then distribute them based on actual needs in the various villages we visit.

As pioneers in most of our destinations, it is important to do things right from the very beginning and not create begging habits.

Customs

Currency restrictions on entry and exit: obligation to declare cash higher than 10 000 euros or the equivalent in another currency. In the event of failure to declare sums, securities, or valuables in excess of 10 000 euros to customs, the fine is equal to 20% of the sums in question.

Travelers' responsibilities

Passengers have responsibilities towards their fellow passengers and the crew. Passengers must respect safety rules on board and during excursions. They must behave appropriately and respectfully towards crew members and fellow passengers.

Safety

Most of the trip takes place in sparsely populated areas. The Republic of Congo is one of the safest countries in Africa. The city of Brazzaville is also very safe.

The Tri-national of the Sangha spans over three countries: The Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Central African Republic. Activities can be carried out in any or all of these countries. However, Located just across the border in a sparsely populated area and far from any political unrest, Dzanga Sangha National Park offers a safe environment for travelers. The security context remains consistent in the whole of the Tri-national.

For further information, please consult the travel advice on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in your country of residence.

Water

Access to drinking water remains a major problem in Congo Brazzaville. It is advisable to drink bottled water. Water fountains exist on board.

Air conditioning

The boat is equipped with air conditioning in the cabins and the restaurant. However, generator use is limited in order to save energy and out of environmental responsibility.

The generator runs from 5:00 to 9:00 in the morning, from 12:00 to 14:00, and from 17:00 to 23:00 in the evening.

Outside these hours, electricity remains available, but air conditioning is not in service.

As nights in the Congo are cool, comfort remains optimal even without air conditioning between 23:00 and 5:00.

Mobile and Internet services

Wi-Fi is available in areas with network coverage. Cellular coverage is limited in remote regions. Guests typically purchase an e-SIM, which allows them to stay connected in areas with network signal.

A satellite phone is available **for emergency use only**.

Electricity

Local voltage is 220v 50hz. Sockets are of the European type (C, F and M). Adapters are available for purchase at departure airports and in duty-free stores just before boarding.

Souvenir shopping

Numerous stores and markets are available in major cities such as Brazzaville, Pointe Noire, Ouesso, and others. A wide range of local products is available. These reflect local craftsmanship and traditional methods (wood, clay, ceramics).

The Plateau des 15 ans market in Brazzaville is the best place to buy handicrafts.

Travelers are required to pay duties on the purchase of antiques or traditional objects, and proof that these duties have been paid is systematically demanded on departure.

Purchasing ivory is prohibited.

Postal services

Postal services are available in urban centres. *Société des postes et de l'épargne du Congo* (SOPECO) is the operator of the postal service in the Republic of Congo.

Local time

GMT + 1 hour

Climate

The climate in the Congo is equatorial with temperatures varying from 21 to 30 degrees Celsius between night and day.

The Sangha territory is watered all year round. All months are a good time to travel to the Congo. The driest period is from June to August, and the wettest from September to November (but this is becoming increasingly hard to predict)..

Each month has a more or less similar sunshine rate.

Restaurants

- **MAMI WATA:** this restaurant serves local and international dishes. It boasts a breathtaking view of the Congo River and Kinshasa. Reservations are recommended to get a table as close to the river as possible.
Address: Avenue de la Corniche, Centre-ville, Brazzaville
- **O Sympathic:** French restaurant with shaded terrace. This place hosts the best pétanque players in town. The restaurant serves traditional French dishes.
Address: Rue du Camp between pharmacie Mavré and SNPC building, Brazzaville
- **Butcher Block:** a very good address in the middle of a garden on the heights of the city. Not far from the Grand Lancaster hotel. This restaurant is the perfect place to discover a top-quality meat restaurant.
Address: Av. Nelson Mandela, Brazzaville, Congo-Brazzaville
- **Le jardin des saveurs:** A very good address in Brazzaville, this restaurant, like the others, offers French, European and international cuisine. It also offers vegetarian dishes. It has a large outdoor terrace and offers refined dishes. The favorite rendezvous of Congolese officials
Address: Bp 264 opposite the Olympic Palace Hotel, Brazzaville

Taxis

Taxis are plentiful and an excellent way of getting around the urban centres. A fare in Brazzaville costs 1,000 FCFA.

Languages

French is the official language of Congo Brazzaville, but other languages are also spoken: Kikongo (36.5%), Lingala (13%), Mboshi (8.5%), Teke (8%) and over 40 other languages.

In general, people understand and speak French, but if you leave the big cities, dialects may be in the majority.

On the ship: English and French are spoken.

Here's a useful glossary in Lingala:

- **Hello:** mboté
- **Goodbye:** Tokomonana
- **How are you?:** Boni?
- **Very well, thank you, and you?:** Ngai malamumu, bongo yo?
- **What is your name?:** Nkombo na yo nani?
- **My name is...:** Kombo na ngai...
- **I understand:** Nazoyoka
- **I don't understand:** nazoyoka te
- **Sorry:** Limbisa ngai
- **Thank (very much):** Matondi (mingi)
- **I am (French):** Nazali (French)
- **How much is it?:** Talo boni ?
- **That is too expensive!** Ezali ntalo mingi!

- **Can you lower the price?:** Kitisa talo?
- **I'd like to go to...:** Nalingi kokende na...
- **Where is...? / How do I get to...?:** ... ezali wapi?
- **What time is it?:** Tozali er nini?
- **I'm hungry:** Naza na nzala
- **I'm thirsty:** naza na posa ya komela
- **I need to see a doctor:** Esengali ete munganga
- **Where are the toilets?:** Wapi kabine?
- **Gorilla:** Mikomboso
- **Elephant:** Nzoku
- **Hippopotamus:** Ngubu

Holidays

1 January : New Year's Day

10 April : Easter Monday

1 May : Labour Day

18 May : Ascension Day

29 May : Whit Monday

10 June : Commemoration of the Sovereign National conference

1 November : All Saints' Day

25 December : Christmas Day

Reading recommendations

French Books

- *Congo Inc. : le testament de Bismarck*, In Koli Jean Bofane, Babel, 2016
- *Oiseaux de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*, Nik Borrow et Ron Demey, Delachaux, 2015
- *Les forêts d'Afrique centrale pour toujours*, Meindert Brouwer, 2021
- *Au cœur des ténèbres*, Joseph Conrad, 1899
- *Introduction à l'histoire des migrations au Congo-Brazzaville - Les Ngala dans la cuvette congolaise XVII^e-XIX^e siècle*, Abraham Constant Ndinga-Mbo, 2006
- *Pour une histoire du monde Teke - Méthodologie et réflexions*, Abraham Constant Ndinga-Mbo, 2023
- *Des Gorilles et des hommes - Carnet de voyage naturaliste au Congo-Brazzaville*, A. Dan, 2015
- *Congo Mater*, Gampoko Duma di Bula, L'Harmattan, 2019
- *Métaphore dans la culture congolaise*, Arsène Elongo, Préface de Edouard Ngamounsika, 2023
- *Impôt colonial et résistance des populations du Congo - Les cas des pays Téké, Mbosi et des peuples de l'interfluve Sangha-Oubangui (1879-1930)*, André Engambé, 2013
- *Les méthodes coloniales au Congo-Brazzaville de 1886 à 1958 - Analyse socio-économique et devoir de mémoire*, André Engambé, 2016
- *L'art de la chasse (okia) chez les Mbosi du Congo - Du symbolisme culturel à l'héroïsme ancestral*, André Engambé, 2023
- *Les gorilles*, Annie Gautier-Hion, Apogée, 2006
- *Femmes et pouvoirs chez les Akwa de la République du Congo - De la société traditionnelle à nos jours*, Mélanie Thérèse Goma-Ekaba, 2023
- *Congo Requiem*, Jean-Christophe Grangé, Albin Michel, 2016
- *Mémoires de porc-épic*, Alain Mabanckou, 2006

- *Histoire de la République du Congo*, Lassy Mbouity, Editions Edilivre, 2016
- *Au cœur de la dernière contrée sauvage : journal de Mike Fay*, Michael Nichols, National Geographic, 2007
- *Abécédaire des expressions amoureuses au Congo*, Bernard N'Kaloulou, 2023
- *La France et le Congo-Brazzaville : Histoire d'une marche singulière*, Jérôme Ollandet, L'Harmattan 2023
- *La France et le Congo-Brazzaville - Histoire d'une marche singulière*, Jérôme Ollandet, Préface de Jean Francois Owaye, 2023
- *Le Bassin du Congo - Monde sans lui, Monde sans vie*, Michel Innocent Peya, 2021
- *Le royaume de Congo et les contrées environnantes*, Filippo Pigafetta et Duarte Lopes, Éditions Chandeigne, 2002
- *Poèmes incandescents pour nommer Antoinette Sassou-Nguesso*, Malachie Cyrille Roson Ngouloubi, Préface de Aline Olga Lonzaniabeka, 2023
- *Le peuplement du Bassin du Congo et son impact : Le cas des Teke et leurs voisins Kongo et Ngala au Congo-Brazzaville*, de Zéphirin Sah, Univ Européenne, 2018
- *Les jardins du Congo*, Nicolas Spitz, La boîtes à bulle, 2013
- *Guide photo des grands mammifères d'Afrique*, Chris Stuart et Mathilde Stuart, Delachaux et Niestle, 2016
- *Kongo*, Tom Tirabosco et Christian Perrissin, Futuropolis, 2021
- *Forêts d'Afrique centrale : la nature et l'homme*, Jean-Pierre Vande Weghe, Lannoo, 2005
- *Congo, Une Histoire*, David Van Reybrouck, Actes Sud, 2012
- *Faune et Flore d'Afrique centrale*, Jacques Vivien, Jean-Jacques Faure, Daniel Depierre, Nguila Kerou, 2013
- *Congo*, Vuillard, Actes Sud, 2012

English Books

- *Brazzaville Beach*, William Boyd, Penguins Books, 1990
- *Blood River, A journey to Africa's Broken Heart*, Tim Butcher, Arrow Books, 2007
- *Congo*, Michael Crichton, 1980
- *Little Boys come from the Stars*, Emmanuel Dongala, Ancre, 2002
- *King Leopold's Ghost: A story of Greed, terror, and Heroism in colonial Africa*, Adam Hochschild, 1998
- *Dictatorland: The Men who stole Africal*, Paul Kenyon, Tête de Zeus, 2019
- *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver, 2008
- *Brazzaville Charms, Magic and rebellion in the Republic of the Congo*, Cassie Knight, Frances Lincoln, 2007
- *The survival of Virunga, Africa's first national park*, Marc Languy, Babelio, 2006
- *Naming Colonialism: History and Collective Memory in the Congo 1870-1960*, Osumaka Likaka, 2009
- *African Psycho*, Alain Mabanckou, Serpent's Tail, 2017
- *Congo Journey*, Redmond O'Hanlon, Penguin, 1997
- *In the Forest of No Joy: The Congo-Océan Railroad and the Tragedy of French Colonialism*, James Patrick Daughton, 2021

German Books

- *Gott und die Krokodile - Eine Reise durch den Kongo*, Andrea Böhm, 2011
- *Der weiße Fleck - Die Entdeckung des Kongo 1875-1908*, Thomas Ehrsam, Kurt Horlacher und Margrit Puhon, 2006
- *Schatten über dem Kongo - Die Geschichte eines der großen, fast vergessenen Menschheitsverbrechen*, Adam Hochschild, 1999
- *Das schwarze Herz Afrikas - Meine erste Reise in den Kongo*, Lieve Joris, Aus dem Niederländischen von Barbara Heller, 2002
- *Die Giftholzbibel*, Barbara Kingsolver, Aus dem Amerikanischen von Anne Ruth Frank-Strauss, 2000
- *Stachelschweins Memoiren*, Alain Mabanckou, Aus dem Französischen von Holger Fock und Sabine Müller, 2011
- *Die Lichter von Pointe-Noire*, Alain Mabanckou, Aus dem Französischen von Holger Fock und Sabine Müller, 2013
- *Das Geschäft der Toten*, Alain Mabanckou, Aus dem Französischen von Holger Fock und Sabine Müller, 2023
- *Deutsch-Kongolesische Geschichte - Die Genesis der kongolesischen Staaten*, Clément Mutombo, Seefeuer, 1949
- *Der belgische Konsul*, Amelie Nothomb, Aus dem Französischen von Brigitte Große, 2023
- *Kongo - Joseph Conrads Reise ins Herz der Finsternis*, Christian Perrissin, Tom Tirabosco, 2013
- *Kongo: Eine Geschichte*, David Van Reybrouck, Waltraud Hüsmert (Übersetzer), 2012
- *Kongo*, Éric Vuillard, übersetzt von Nicola Denis, Matthes & Seitz Verlag, 2018
- *Auf den Spuren von Mr. Kurtz - Mobutus Aufstieg und Kongos Fall*, Michela Wrong, 2002

Travel Guides

- *Ultimate Handbook Guide to Brazzaville: (Republic of the Congo) Travel Guide*, Agustina Dillman, 2015
- *Tourism in Congo Brazzaville*, Sampson Jerry, 2016
- *Guide Congo Brazzaville 2018-2019 Petit Futé*, Jean-Paul Labourdette
- *Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) Travel Guide*, Tiki Travel, 2012

Movies and Documentaries

- *A la vie, à la terre - Congo : des arbres et des hommes*, TV5 Monde
- *Bons Baisers de Brazzaville*, Emilie Darnaud, Alexandre Largeton
- *Centimètre par centimètre*, Emmanuel Manteau
- *Congo*, TV5 Monde
- *Congo Paradiso*, TV5 Monde
- *Le conflit des villages*, Eddy Mikolo
- *KONGO - documentaire sur le Congo - Brazzaville*, Hadrien La Vapeur et Corto Vaclav
- *Ordalies, le tribunal de l'invisible*, Hadrien La Vapeur, Corto Vaclav
- *Tala-Tala, la mémoire de l'homme*, David-Pierre Fila