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# Tour Notes

**Congo Odzala Discovery**

**Tour Duration – 8 Days**



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●●○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●●●

**Tour Pace** - Moderate

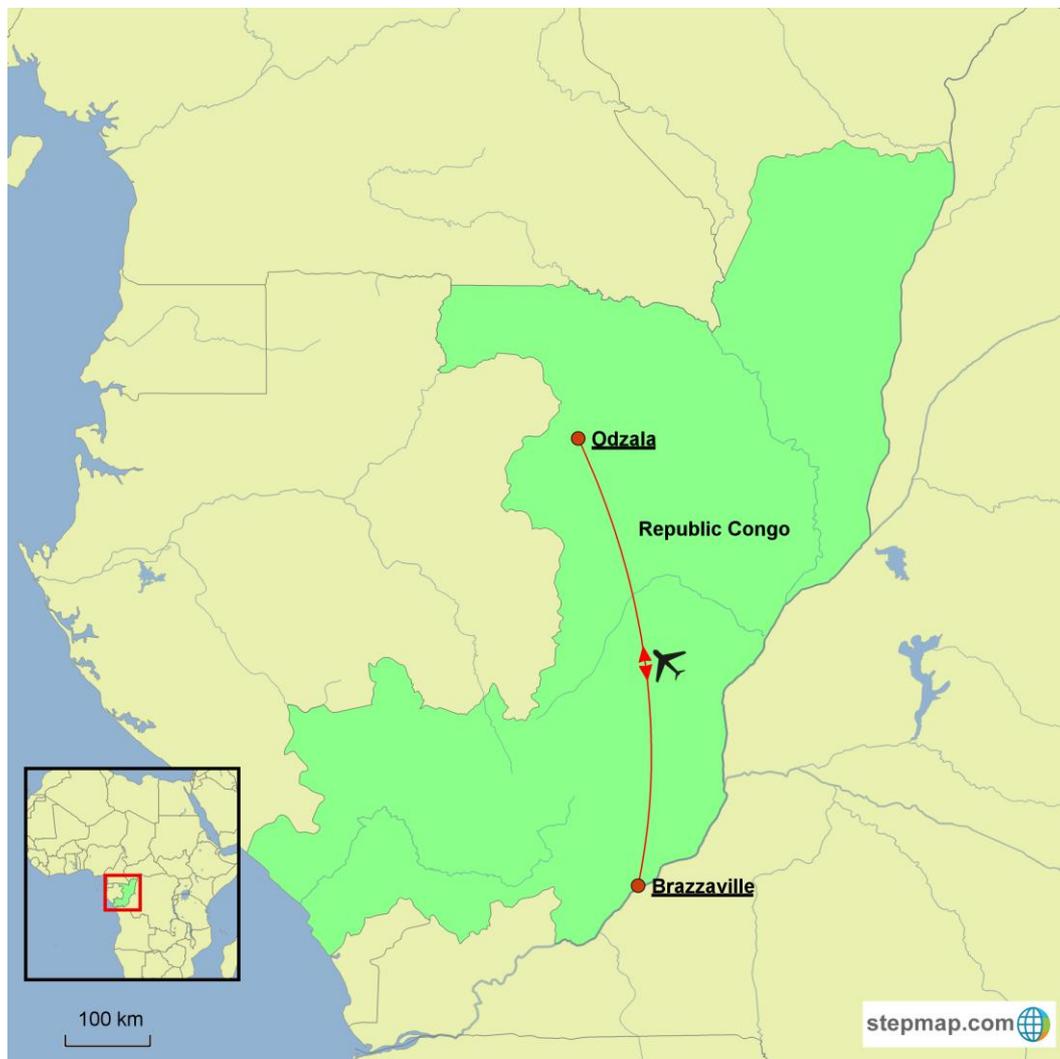
## Tour Highlights

- ✓ This is a Gorilla protection hotspot and home to pioneering research of the Western Lowland Gorilla
- ✓ The chance to view rare species such as forest elephant, forest buffalo, bongo, sitatunga, various monkey species and rare birds.
- ✓ Stay at three remote camps in a vast wilderness. Lango and Ngaga are small camps of only 6 rooms.



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## Tour Map - Republic of Congo - Congo Odzala Discovery Tour



### Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Excellent quality Jungle Lodges  
**Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.  
**Group Size:** Maximum of 12  
**Start Point:** Brazzaville  
**End Point:** Brazzaville  
**Transport:** 4WD, Boat, Plane, Kayak  
**Countries:** Republic of Congo





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### Republic of Congo - Congo Odzala Discovery Tour

The Congo Odzala Discovery is a safari like no other. Even the most experienced safari-goers will find much that is completely new in Odzala. The remoteness, beauty, and the sheer weight of its biodiversity are sure to astound and delight you, and the itinerary is focused around the idea of “parting the great green veil” and letting you see inside one of Africa’s last pristine wilderness areas. Odzala has three very special Camps reflecting the different ecosystems in which they are found. Each offers a variety of activities designed to let you explore their unique surroundings. This is your chance to walk the path less taken, to marvel at unique and sometimes bizarre creatures, and to experience the undiscovered beauty and majesty of Congo.

### Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility needs to be built in and local circumstances may require a change in the schedule. We will advise you as soon as we are aware of any changes.

### Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. On the Odzala Discovery you will have the same guide throughout your trip when following the below itinerary, taking you through the different biomes and ensuring a perfectly varied experience tailored to your interests.

## Itinerary

### Day 1 (Wednesday/Sunday) – Arrive Brazzaville

On arrival at Maya Maya International Airport you will be met and helped with the transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax or to explore the city. Overnight at the Radisson Blu Brazzaville

### Day 2 (Thursday/Monday) – Odzala

The flight to Odzala departs Brazzaville at 1pm, arriving Odzala at 3pm where there is a road transfer from the airstrip to the Ngaga Camp. The drive takes about 2½ hours through the Odzala-Kokoua National Park. You will be met on arrival by the Gorilla Research Team, with dinner to follow. Overnight Ngaga Camp in a luxury en-suite Forest Room (D)

### Ngaga Camp

Ngaga Camp is in the Ndzehi Forest on the western boundary of Odzala -Kokoua National Park and consists of 6 rooms beautifully constructed from natural materials such as locally woven raffia palm panels. The rooms are raised on 3 - 4 meter stilts and have 360° wraparound viewing walkways that connect with the main area. The camp has a dining room, lounge, and bar area all on raised decks looking out into the rainforest. Pre-dinner drinks are served on the “Star Deck”, which is a dropped deck below the main area, and also has a fire pit. Guests can enjoy post forest walk drinks, cocktail parties or private dinners on the “River Deck” which is located on the Ngaga stream, a short walk from camp.

### Day 3 (Friday/Tuesday) – Gorilla Trek

This morning you will set off on the first of your Gorilla treks. Please note: for gorilla viewing guests need to produce a medical certificate to prove they have been vaccinated against Polio and Measles, and are free from Tuberculosis. A guide and skilled local tracker lead guests to 2 groups of habituated Western Lowland



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Gorillas. Your chances of seeing Gorilla are extremely high, but, as with many wildlife experiences, never guaranteed. You will return to the camp for lunch and spend the afternoon relaxing, followed by a forest walk for bird watching and the discovery of forest life, with sundowners by the river. Overnight Ngaga Camp in a luxury en-suite Forest Room (BLD)

#### **Day 4 (Saturday/Wednesday) – Gorilla Trek**

Another chance to head off into the forest on a morning Gorilla trek before returning to the camp for lunch. This afternoon you will have time with the Gorilla Research Team, before a forest walk and a night walk to view the nocturnal forest life. Overnight Ngaga Camp in a luxury en-suite Forest Room (BLD)

#### **Day 5 (Sunday/Thursday) - Mboko Camp**

This morning you can relax around the camp or if you wish there is the option for a 3<sup>rd</sup> gorilla trek (at an additional cost) before we take a road transfer through Mbomo village and travel to the Odzala-Kokoua National Park. We will arrive at Mboko Camp for lunch followed by a late afternoon river cruise and sundowners. Overnight Mboko Camp in an en-suite River Room (BLD)

#### **Mboko Camp**

Located inside the Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Mboko Camp is the largest of the Odzala Discovery camps. It has 12 canvas cabins set along the Lekoli River. The spacious main area has a dining room, lounge and bar all overlooking the wide-open grasslands. There is a “Star Deck” and a “River Deck” on the Lekoli River. Most activities are a combination of walking and boating, while some driving may be required to get from one place to another. River activities are on foot or in aluminium boats or kayaks. These activities can involve wading through streams and bays. Sightings of various primates, birds, forest elephants, bongo, forest buffalo, dwarf crocodiles, forest ducks, hyena, kingfishers and maybe even a hippo can be expected. Adventure trails along the edges of forested areas give insights into the arboreal world. Look out for Hyena, Aardvark and Serval on savannah game drives by day and night.

#### **Day 6 (Monday/Friday) - Lekoli River**

We take a guided morning kayak on the Lekoli River followed by walk upstream to the Lango Bai. We arrive at Lango Camp in time for lunch and spend the afternoon relaxing, followed by a forest walk or even a dip in the Lango Bai. Overnight Lango Camp in a luxury en-suite Forest Room (BLD)

#### **Lango Camp**

Lango Camp is in the south-central part of the Odzala-Kokoua National Park, allowing easy access to a variety of habitats. There are 6 double rooms in camp all built on 3 - 4 meter stilts overlooking the Lango Bai. The rooms are constructed of natural materials including locally woven raffia palm panels. The camp is connected by a series of raised walkways creating a treehouse-like atmosphere. There is a dining, lounge and bar area overlooking the bai, as well as a “Star Deck” where guests can relax and enjoy pre-dinner drinks. Main activities focus on the bai, Lekoli River and the surrounding savannah. They are a combination of walking and boating, while some driving may be required to reach more remote places. River activities are on foot or in an aluminium boat or kayaks. These activities can involve wading through streams and bays. Guests can expect to see various primates, birds, forest elephants, bongo, forest buffalo, dwarf crocodiles, forest ducks, kingfishers and maybe even a hippo. Adventure trails along the edges of forested areas give insights into the arboreal world. Look out for Hyena, Aardvark and Serval on savannah game drives by day and night.

#### **Day 7 (Tuesday/Saturday) – Lango Camp**

Today's activities can include a game drive looking for primates such as Guereza Colobus, Grey-cheeked Mangabey and Moustached Monkey as well as bushbuck and various species of forest-dwelling Duiker (small antelope). There is a chance to take a pirogue trip along the river, before returning to camp on foot through Lango Bai. In the evening you will be given a camera-trap presentation to see what wildlife researchers have managed to capture on film. Overnight Lango Camp in a luxury en-suite Forest Room (BLD)



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### Day 8 (Wednesday/Sunday) - Mboko Camp

A guided morning walk to the bird hide from where you can watch species such as African Grey Parrots and African Green Pigeons at the bai, is followed by a game drive transfer and then a walk along a raised, wooden walkway through the swamp. Arrive in time for lunch at Mboko Camp. In the afternoon, choose between an adventure walk in the Likeni River or take an afternoon river cruise on the Lekoli River. Overnight Mboko Camp in an en-suite River Room (BLD)

### Day 9 (Thursday/Monday) – Brazzaville

After breakfast at Mboko Camp, depart on the charter flight back to Brazzaville at 9am. On arrival in Brazzaville at 11am you will be met and assisted with checking in for your onward flight. (B)

#### NOTE

If you wish to arrive earlier or extend your stay at the end, we are able to book hotels in Brazzaville and also arrange a day tour of the city. Please contact us for details and costs.

## Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

#### Inclusions:

Airport meet and greet in Brazzaville and full airport assistance on arrival and departure.

Return schedule charter flight from Maya-Maya Airport, Brazzaville to Mboko airstrip, Odzala-Kokoua National Park on Thursdays.

3 nights Ngaga Camp, 2 nights Mboko Camp and 2 nights Lango Camp.

Daily guided activities, including 2 gorilla permits, 1 boat cruise, 1 kayak safari, daily guided forest walks.

3 meals per day, house wines, beers, spirits, water and soft drinks (excluding connoisseur wine and champagne).

Road transfers between camps and airstrip and to and from Brazzaville hotel (if booked) and Maya-Maya Airport.

Congo letter of invitation fee and all 3rd party fees including Medical Evacuation, Community Fees and Park fees.

Laundry and internet access (Wi-Fi available in all camps).

#### Excluded:

International flights

Any airport taxes

Travel Insurance

Gratuities and all items of a personal nature at Odzala Discovery Camps.

Optional 3rd gorilla trek if requested

Visas

## Important Information

#### Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.



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At the time of writing the British Foreign Office (FCO) currently advise against all travel to the Likouala province which is not visited during the tour.

Furthermore, it is the clients' responsibility to ensure that they hold full travel insurance which includes medical repatriation. You should check the validity of your insurance with your provider, given the travel warnings in place. We can however, help you organise insurance which will continue to be valid.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

### Accommodation and Meals

#### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

### Accommodation Rating

**Ngaga Camp** - Ngaga Camp rests in a glade in the heart of pristine primary rainforest with each raised room offering views into the surrounding canopy. The dining room, lounge and bar area are all on raised decks at the crest of the glade looking into and above the primary rainforest. They are constructed from natural, traditionally used materials including locally woven raffia palm roofing panels. A star deck and fire pit are placed on a dropped deck below the main area for after dinner relaxation while a separate deck is located at a natural cooling off spot on the Ngaga Stream below Camp.

**Mboko Camp** - Mboko's 12 guest rooms extend along the banks of a free-flowing tributary of the Lekoli River. Situated in an area of lush meadow-like savannah, frequented by Forest Buffalo, Forest Elephant and Spotted Hyena, Mboko gives a sense of the scale of Odzala while also allowing you to focus on some of the smaller details: flowers and butterflies (depending on the season) can be seen in profusion. Mboko Camp, offers visitors breath-taking views of the interface between the tropical rainforest and grassland savannah where hundreds of towering termite mounds help create an otherworldly experience. 10 double occupancy cabins and 2 family cabins are nestled along the Lekoli River in amongst the lush green forest which provides a feeling of privacy. Each cabin has a deck with lounge chairs on which you can rest and listen to the tranquility of the river babbling past you.

**Lango Camp** - Lango's six guest rooms are raised to the level of the surrounding gallery forest, giving incredible views out onto the open marshy bai in front of the Camp – one of the most arresting views of any Camp in Africa. The bai holds a magnetic attraction for huge flocks of African Green Pigeons and African Grey Parrots, as well as for herds of Forest Buffalo by day and Forest Elephants by night. Lango's strategic location in the south central part of Odzala allows easy access to a variety of converging habitats. A real



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highlight of your stay at Lango is the change to explore the Lekoli and Mambili Rivers by motorboat, traditional pirogue, or even kayak. Lango is also one of the few places in Africa where you can safely explore streams and marshes on foot.

We welcome solo travellers, and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

### Is there internet in camps?

Internet access at camp is possible but not permanent. However, in case of emergency, this and other methods could be used to communicate with the outside world and inform friends and family.

### Food & Drinks

While in the camps all meals and house wines, beers, spirits, water and soft drinks are included. Breakfast is buffet style with a large selection of fruit, cheese, yogurts, bread and pastries. Guests have 3 choices of starters, 3 choices of main courses and 3 choices of desserts for lunch and dinner. Vegetarian options are always available on the menu and special meal requirements can be catered for.

### Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Gorilla Tracking

Led by skilled local trackers, and with expert guides to interpret the sights and sounds of the forest, Gorilla tracking expeditions typically leave on foot from Ngaga although they may involve a short drive depending on where the gorillas are. Expeditions do not cover enormous distances and can range in length from 1 to 8 kilometres (0.5 to 5 miles) over undulating country. The undergrowth can be thick, however, and including the time spent with a gorilla group, excursions can last between 2 and 8 hours (including time spent with the gorillas – max. 1 hour). Please note that although every effort is made, gorilla viewing cannot be guaranteed.

Gorilla viewing protocol is based on the guidelines issued by the IUCN for great ape viewing and is very similar to that of Rwanda/Uganda. Protocols are designed specifically to limit stress and behavioural impact and also potential disease transmission from humans to gorillas. They are critical for gorilla conservation.

- Minimum age for gorilla viewing is 15 years – this is for reasons of safety, but also to guard against possible disease transmission as children under this age are more prone to infection.
- We do not approach closer than is 7 metres (22 feet) to the gorillas and we typically view the animals at 10- 15 metres (32-50 feet).
- Maximum viewing duration of any group is one hour per day.
- Maximum number of guests per gorilla tracking excursion is 4, plus a guide and local tracker to make a maximum group size of 6.
- Guests that display cold, flu or other respiratory tract symptoms will not be allowed to track gorillas. Your camp manager will speak with you about what to do if you are sick and cannot go out on your gorilla trek.
- No food or drinks may be consumed when near the gorillas, but guides will carry water and snacks for rest stops.
- Smoking is not allowed.
- Although gorilla sightings and encounters are very reliable, viewing is dependent on variables such as weather and tracking conditions.



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### **Budgeting for your Tour**

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### **Food**

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide in Brazzaville. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch €.10

Dinner €.18

### **Drinks**

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer €.2

Water €0.5

### **Tipping – Guide and Drivers**

Tipping is discretionary and not included in the pricing. Tipping of your guide may be done directly in any currency while tips for the hotel (camp) staff are to be handed to the camp manager.

### **Foreign Exchange**

**ATM Availability:** ATMs which accept Visa cards are available in Brazzaville only but may be unreliable. For other cards please check with the issuer

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Bar Bills and other extras may be paid in cash or by credit card in camps. In Brazzaville, very few establishments use credit card machines and even fewer, if any, accept foreign currency.

**Local Currency:** Central African franc (XAF)

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Euro

**Where to Exchange:** Exchange facilities are available at the airport and the capital's major banks. Outside of Brazzaville facilities will be limited.

### **Joining your Tour**

#### **Flight Information**

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### **Joining Tour Abroad**

The 'meet and greet' team welcomes you at Brazzaville airport. The team will then help and advise on every procedure before, during or after your transfer to camp. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure information at least 2 weeks before travel.

#### **How fit should I be?**

Anyone in good health can join this trip. The activities in camps are optional, so you may choose to participate or not. Many of the activities do not require previous experience and are not fitness related.



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### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

### Visa Information

Most nationals will require a visa to visit the Republic of Congo. We will provide you with a Letter of Invitation, which you will need to present to the Embassy of the Congo nearest to you.

Please be aware that visa information is subject to change, therefore please refer to your nearest embassy for up to date advice. Please note that the price of your tour does not include visa costs.

**Visa's are available on arrival at Maya Maya airport for Odzala guests by special invitation. Please contact us for details. A minimum of 8 weeks is required for this procedure.**

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Africa, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Polio and Typhoid.

The International Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is **COMPULSORY FOR ENTRY** into Congo.

For Gorilla Viewing, you need show that you've been vaccinated against Polio and Measles and are required to provide a certificate from a registered medical practitioner indicating that you are free of Tuberculosis, as these are easily passed on to gorillas.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

A visit to Odzala is enjoyable at any time of year. June to September, and December to February are the driest periods. During these periods the air can be relatively hazy and the humidity is lower, but rainfall during these times can still occur and be quite variable. During the wetter months, tropical rainstorms contrast with sustained periods of clear blue skies and beautiful limpid light for photography.

### Clothing

As the African rainforest and the bai environment can be quite muddy and wet, it is recommended that you bring enough suitable clothing (including socks) to allow time for laundered items to dry in the often humid and wet conditions. Ideal clothing is quick drying, lightweight, in greens or browns and has long sleeves or trouser legs. We recommend at least 2 to 3 fast-drying shirts with long sleeves and 2 to 3 pairs of fast-drying long pants. You should allow for two pairs of socks per day which are light-weight and fast-drying. In addition a light fleece or jumper for cooler evenings, a sunhat, bathing suit, casual clothes and comfortable shoes for relaxing in camp should be included. Please note that laundry is available at every camp at an additional cost.

### Equipment

You should bring sunglasses, sunscreen (non-greasy recommended), binoculars, adaptors (European plugs are used in camp), camera equipment and spare batteries and memory cards or film, along with anti-fog for camera lenses. Personal toiletries (eco-friendly shower gel, shampoo and conditioner are provided), insect repellent (tropical grade, ideally containing DEET - natural products are not recommended) and anti-itch or anti-allergy cream should also be purchased before you travel. You should ensure that you have enough supplies of any medication you may require.

A day pack for walks and gorilla tracking along with zip-lock bags or a lightweight dry bag for electronic equipment will also be useful.

### Footwear

On this tour you will need closed walking shoes, ideally light-weight and fast-drying (heavy boots can be difficult to dry). We recommend old running shoes for the river activities as you will get wet and muddy. Feel free to leave these behind if you do not want to pack wet shoes. Palladium high ankle walking boots are perfect.

### Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable. We advise you to travel with a rucksack or soft bag rather than a suitcase.

### Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 220-240V AC (50 Hz) and uses European two circular pin style plugs.

### Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated 14 November 2019