


GAMBA ADVENTURES



VISIT THE
PROTECTED
AREAS OF
SOUTH-WEST
GABON

A close-up photograph of an elephant's skin, showing a complex, wrinkled texture with deep ridges and grooves. The skin is dark grey or black, and the lighting highlights the intricate patterns of the wrinkles. A white rectangular box with rounded corners is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

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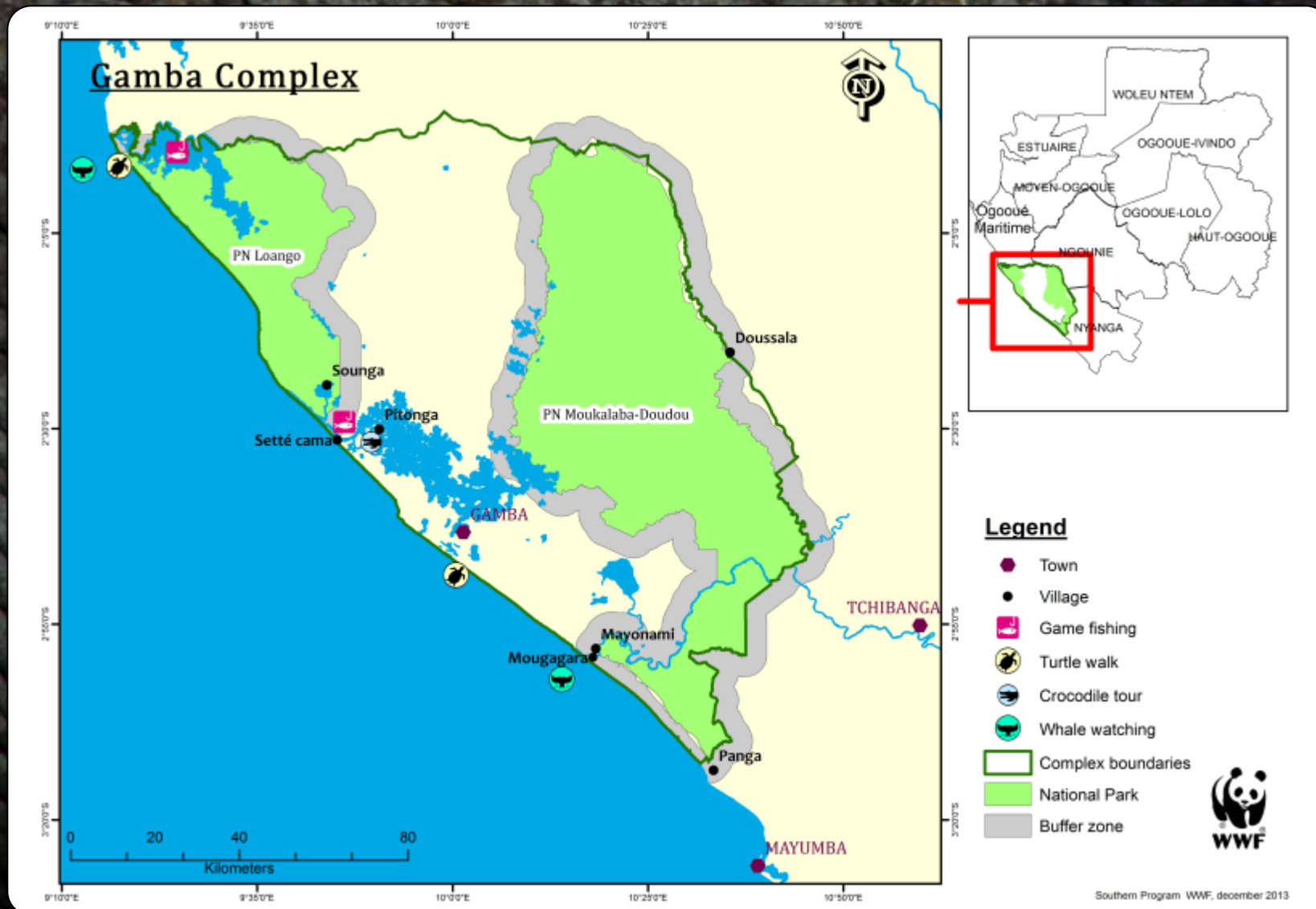
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GENERAL INFO

BONJOUR!

Welcome to Gabon. Located in the heart of Central West Africa, Gabon offers you a friendly population, and one of the world's most pristine rainforests, hosting amazing wildlife such as forest elephants, great apes, hippos and crocodiles. At the same time, its Atlantic coastline hosts annual migrations of humpback whales and leatherback turtles.

The Gamba Complex is an area on the west coast of Gabon that includes two national parks; Loango National Park, also called the 'Last Eden' by the naturalist Mike Fay with its surfing hippo's and forest elephants, and Moukalaba Doudou National Park, one of the few places on earth where relatively large populations of lowland gorillas and chimpanzees still reside.

POPULATION

With a population of an estimated 1,5 million people, Gabon has one of the lowest population densities of Africa. Gabon has at least forty ethnic groups with diverse languages and cultures, the Fang being the largest. French is the common language.

PASSPORT/VISA

To enter Gabon an international passport is required as well as an entry visa, which can be obtained from any Gabonese embassy. Your passport needs to be valid for at least 5 months from the date of the visa application.

Yellow Fever vaccination is obligatory and other vaccinations are advised.

CLIMATE

Gabon's climate is hot and humid. From June to September there is a long dry season with pleasant temperatures around 25° C. A short rainy season from October to mid- December is followed by a short dry season from mid-December to mid- January and a long rainy season from January to May.

ELECTRICAL POWER

Electrical power is 220V running at 50Hz. Plugs are European 2 pin (Type C).

CLOTHING

It is advisable to wear lightweight long-sleeved clothes, to avoid sunburn and mosquito bites. Sturdy walking shoes and dark long-sleeved clothing is advisable for forest walks and wildlife viewing, but avoid blue which apparently attracts Tse Tse flies!

PHOTOGRAPHY

Some local people still have traditional beliefs and fears about having their photos taken. Make sure you ask permission before taking pictures of people. Be aware that taking pictures of official buildings and monuments is not allowed.



NATURE

In 2002, the late President Bongo put Gabon firmly on the map as an important future ecotourism destination by declaring more than 10% of the nation's territory as National Parkland. Currently there are 13 National Parks in Gabon. The **Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux (ANPN)** is the governmental body responsible for implementing conservation and enforcement in all national parks. Its overall objective is to provide long-term protection and enhancement of the National Parks of Gabon in order to create a worldwide recognized conservation model and to stimulate ecotourism in the parks.

SAFETY

Gabon is a relatively prosperous and stable country. Nonetheless, it is advisable to take safety precautions. Valuables, travel documents and cash should be placed in a safe whenever possible. Comprehensive travel insurance is recommended.

HEALTH

Medical facilities in Gabon are adequate for treatment of most illnesses and minor injuries, but do not meet European standards for more complex illness or medical emergencies. Get advice from a health service on vaccinations and precautions against endemic diseases such as malaria. Vaccinations are mandatory, including yellow fever. Comprehensive health insurance is recommended.

FOOD AND DRINKS

Gabon has a varied cuisine with French, Portuguese and traditional African influences. You can enjoy local traditional dishes, but avoid poorly washed raw fruits and vegetables and raw meat. Tap water is drinkable in Libreville but not in the Gamba complex. The use of a water filter or purifier is recommended and bottled water is readily available.

CURRENCY

Local currency is the Central African CFA Franc (XAF). €1 is 656 CFA and one US dollar is 500 CFA. Visa cards and American Express cards can be used at a few banks in Libreville. Direct Debit cards are not accepted and cash machines are only available in Libreville and Port Gentil.

TRANSPORT

Gabon has two main roads connecting Libreville to the south (Lambarene and Tchibanga), and south-east to Franceville. It is common for roads to be in bad condition, especially during the rainy season when roads are often flooded. Gamba is difficult to reach by car, but for those who have a 4WD and enjoy adventure it is a two day journey from Libreville. By air, Gamba can be reached with Air Allegiance (+241 07770335). Check with the airline for up-to-date departure times.

LOCAL TIME

Gabon time is one hour ahead of GMT (GMT +1).

LOANGO NATIONAL PARK





Loango National Park is situated between the Nkomi and Ndogo Lagoons on the west coast of Gabon. It covers an area of 1550 km² with a 86km-long coastline. This "*land of surfing hippos*" was made famous by Mike Fay and Nick Nichols when they completed their acclaimed National Geographic "Mega Transect". It was declared a national park by President Omar Bongo in 2002. Known for its density of elephants, monkeys and occasional sightings of "surfing hippos", the park offers opportunities to enjoy coastal, forest, and wetland/lagoon habitats.

The park can only be visited with a licensed guide. As such, visitors must arrange tours with one of the operators* offering tours and accommodation. Activities in the park require a fair level of fitness, as trails can be uneven and long, as well as conditions being hot and humid. Activities in the buffer zone are usually less strenuous.

In the southern part of the park and its buffer zone there are three main tour operators; CH2O (Sette Cama Safaris), SFM Safari Gabon and GIC. They can arrange itineraries from the airport in Gamba to the park, including accommodation, tours and food. In the northern part of the park there are three lodges/operators with whom you can visit the park; Loango Safari, Enamino Eco Village and Gavilo Lodge. Loango Safari also runs tours to campsites in the Park, located at Akaka and Tassi and to Evengue lodge on Evengue Island (gorilla sanctuary).

Tours range from a half-day boat trip to observe lagoon and wetland wildlife, to several days of combined hiking and staying at various camps in the park. Tours can include pick-up from and return to Gamba airport or the Ngougou station, food, accommodation, park entrance fees, guides and excursions.

The best times for viewing various species are as follows:

Turtles: November to March

Whales: July to September

Fishing: November to April

Mammals on the beach: November to April

How to get there and away

Loango National Park can be reached by a combination of air, boat and car. For the southern part of the park you need to take a flight with Air Allegiance from Libreville (check with Air Allegiance for the timetable, as it regularly changes) or take the challenge of driving all the way down to Gamba, which will take 2-3 days from Libreville. Note that parts of the journey are off-road and require a sturdy 4 wheel drive vehicle. The northern part of the park can be reached from Port Gentil (which you can fly to from Libreville). From Port Gentil your lodge or tour operator can arrange a transfer by boat and car to Gavilo/Iguela where the lodges are located.

* For a list of operators, refer to the chapter 'WHERE TO...'

LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



Loango National Park and its buffer zone have several sites of interest to visit by boat or on foot. The following excursions can be arranged:

LOANGO SOUTH

Duration:	1h - 3 days
Departure:	Pick up from Gamba or Sette Cama accommodation
Operator:	Sette Cama Safari, SFM Safari Gabon, GIC
Costs:	If not part of a package tour: 10000 CFA pp per day for the guide, 7000 CFA park entry fee, approx. 70000 CFA for boat hire + accommodation
What to bring:	Suitable walking shoes Mosquito repellent Water Dark long-sleeved clothing Lunch

Tours leave from Gamba or from your Sette Cama accommodation. At Sette Cama you stop briefly to register at the park headquarters and visit the small museum of the Ministry of Water and Forests where you can familiarize yourself with skeletons of different species like the crocodile, elephant, hippo, gorilla etc. The tour then proceeds by boat into the lake and river systems of the southern end of the park, where you can observe a wide variety of wildlife.

Various different elements can be included in a day-long tour, depending on your party's interests and abilities. The estimated duration of each element indicated here is based on a starting point in Sette Cama. Discuss with your tour guide which elements would be most feasible to combine and, when applicable, which are suitable for children or individuals with varying levels of fitness:

HIPPO RIVER CRUISE (1+h)

Spend an hour or so exploring the waters of the national park. The hippos shift their location according to water levels during wet and dry seasons, so keep your camera ready for hippos, bathing elephants, crocodiles, monitor lizards, hornbills and much more. Keep a constant eye on the forest edge where most animals will be seen.





LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



SOUNGA VILLAGE (1.5h)

The focus of this tour is discovering Sounga, the only village in the southern part of Loango National Park. The family of 7 living in traditional houses built entirely of organic materials can demonstrate their way of life which has remained unchanged for decades. They can take you to their plantations and show you their locally produced handicrafts, such as small wooden canoes, baskets, mats etc.,

Pictures should be taken only with the permission of the villagers.

BEACH WALK (1.5h)

The beach walk focuses on the narrow spit of land between the river at Sette Cama and the Wild Atlantic Ocean. You will be dropped off by boat at one end of the spit and walk for roughly 5 km across grassland that is often bathed in a fine sea mist. This open grassland can be a great place to see buffalos, elephants and gazelles. Enjoy a nice seabreeze on the edge of one of the world's most rich environments.





THE SOUTHERN CIRCUIT WALK (min 4h)

After the guide has instructed you on safety measures, including how to behave if you encounter an elephant, buffalo or any other animal, you will commence a forest walk which will last at least 3 hours. You can gaze at the giant trees which are used by local people for cooking, medicines and to make canoes. Although specific wildlife sightings can never be guaranteed, possible species to be encountered include elephants, buffalos, monkeys and duikers as well as a variety of birds. Halfway through the walk, the guide will find a suitable spot to enjoy a lunch break. After winding through the forest, you will emerge onto the coast and proceed south along the beach where you can enjoy the beauty of the Atlantic ocean and with extreme luck, spot a 'surfing' hippo. The length of the walk can be tailored to the ability of the group and time available.



LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



DINERA-SIMBA TRAIL (3h)

This tour offers a wide variety of landscapes as it passes through savannahs and forest. The vegetation along the route is known for attracting great apes and several species of monkeys. It is possible to spot elephants, buffalo, duiker and many bird species along the way. After pick up by boat from Simba the tour continues to explore Lake Ledit before returning to Gamba or your Sette Cama accommodation.

ILE DE FRANCE (3.5h)

The boat will drop you off on the riverbank on the right hand side of the Mouana Mouélé river. You will walk through savannah clearings, interspersed with stands of Okoume trees (*Aucoumeas Klaineana*). Animals that can be sighted include elephants, buffaloes, red-river hogs, duikers and various monkeys. Chimpanzees and Gorillas have also been observed on this walk – although they are very rare to see. The boat will meet you on the other side of the island – on the bank near the rivermouth.





SOUNGA-MABOTSO TRAIL (3.5h)

This trail is an old logging road that was used to remove the logs from the forest to the Ndougou lagoon. The 14 km trail runs from Sounga village to Mabotso and offers a great opportunity to enjoy the beauty a tropical forest has to offer.

This walk is strenuous and requires a high level of physical fitness

NB: To return to Sounga takes another 3,5 hours. Camping at Mabotso is an option.

SOUNGA-INYOUNGOU TRAIL (5.5h)

This tour starts with a boat ride into the park to Sounga village where the trail starts. The tour follows the ancient route between Sounga village and Inyoungou. The latter is an old abandoned village that now serves as a place to be picked up by boat to go to Akaka or go all the way up to Iguela at the Northern end of Loango Park. Elephants, buffaloes, monkeys, duikers, reptiles, birds like the hornbill and turaco can be spotted on the way to Inyoungou. The best time to visit the N'gowe river is in the dry season. Operators that offer pickups and tours from Inyoungou are Loango Safari, Enamino Eco Village and Gavilo lodge. This 16 km forest trail is also part of the 3 day South Loango tour.

This walk is strenuous and requires a high level of physical fitness.



LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



LOANGO SOUTH BUFFERZONE

THREE SAVANNAHS (2h)

After a short boatride from Sette Cama the trail starts just opposite the Shell hut. The walk alternates between dense rainforest vegetation and savannah clearings. By approaching the savannahs from the forest as quietly and cautiously as possible, one can increase the chance of seeing animals such as elephants and buffalos that come to graze on the savannah. Even if wildlife is not abundant, the guide will provide fascinating explanations about plants and trees that are used by local people for medicinal or other purposes and show you various animal tracks.

THE ISLAND OF NGALÉ (2.5h)

Ngalé Island hosts the remains of an ancient Catholic mission dating back to the 1890s. While exploring the island on foot your guide will tell you about the life of the people living in the mission. You can also visit the palm tree plantation that is still used today for the production of palm wine. The mission is part of the historical and cultural heritage of the Ndougou region. Wildlife is also never far wherever you are in the lagoon, with chances of seeing groups of parrots fly overhead and monkeys in the trees.

The tour can also be combined with a visit to Pitonga village just on the other side of the river from Ngalé island.



MONKEY & TREEHOUSE TRAIL (2.5h)

This trail, which is called *Sentier-Nature* in French, is located north of Sette Cama, hidden between the Ndougou lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean. One of the highlights of this tour is the chance of encountering a large group of white-collared mangabey monkeys that have been habituated to human presence and can thus be approached closely. Visiting the BBC Tree Hut and short canopy walk is another highlight. The tree hut was used by a BBC team filming the 2010 “Living with Monkeys” documentary.

TRAIL OF BENCHES (2.5h)

This trail follows a series of natural wooden “benches” and takes you through small swamp forests that can be seen from the coastal savannas and along the sandy headland between the Atlantic Ocean and the lagoon. The open sandy headland is highly suited to spotting elephants, buffalos, sitatungas (swamp-dwelling antelope) in the early morning or late afternoon. Don’t be surprised to run into civets or mongooses that leave the forest to come hunting on the beach just before sunset.

**ARTISANAL FISHING (1/2 day)**

This entirely boat-based tour is suitable for both children and adults. You can spend half a day helping local fishermen and learning about their artisanal fishing methods. Methods are simple and traditional: shrimps caught in hand-woven traps can be used as bait. The fishing can start with no more than some wire, a hook, a float and bamboo pole to make a traditional fishing rod. You can decide with your guide whether any fish that are caught will be released or distributed to the villagers.



LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



3-DAY HIKING TOUR SOUTH LOANGO:

Sette Cama-Akaka-Petit Loango

Duration:	3 days
Departure:	Pick up from Gamba or Sette Cama accommodation
Operators:	Sette Cama Safari, SFM Safari Gabon, GIC and Loango Safari for transport to Akaka
Costs:	Guide: 10000 CFA pp per day Park fees: 7000 CFA pp per day Boat transport Sounga: 70000 CFA Boat transport Akaka: 125000 CFA pp Accommodation Akaka: 100000 CFA pppn Boat transport to Gamba: 70000 CFA
What to bring:	Suitable walking shoes Mosquito repellent Dark long-sleeved clothing Camping equipment Drinking water 1 x dinner 2 x lunch 1 x breakfast Headlight First aid kit

Day 1

This 3-day tour starts with a boat ride on the Ndougou lagoon from Ndougou station in Gamba or from your Sette Cama accommodation. At Sette Cama a brief stop is made to register at the park headquarters and pay park entrance fees. The tour then proceeds by boat into the lake and river systems of the southern end of the park heading to Sounga village. During this time there is a chance of seeing hippos, elephants, monkeys, birds and much more from the boat. From Sounga you start a 18km hike on a trail that was once the main route between Sounga and Inyoungou, an abandoned village. From Inyoungou you will be met by a boat from Loango Safari that brings you to Akaka, where you will spend the night in one of the lake-side bungalows and enjoy a candle lit dinner.



DAY 2

After a good night's rest, the most difficult part of this tour begins. The hike from Akaka to Petit Loango on the coast runs right through the dense jungle without visible signs of a track. Your guide knows the way, but you could help him track by using a GPS. Be on the lookout for all sorts of animals and let your guide introduce you to local knowledge on the use of (medicinal) plants and trees. Half way through the walk you can rest for lunch. At Petit Loango you put up tents and cook dinner over an open fire.

DAY 3

After breakfast you will walk 20 km down the coast from Petit Loango back to the Sette Cama rivermouth. At low tide, this walk can be less strenuous, as you can walk on the hard packed sand, at high tide, however, you will walk across grassland covered with a layer of sea salt, keeping a close eye on the forest edge. This is the best time to see buffalos, elephants, gazelles and surfing hippos. Enjoy the nice sea breeze on the edge of one of the world's most beautiful environments.

When you reach the Sette Cama rivermouth you will be collected by boat and taken back to Gamba or your Sette Cama accommodation.



LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



LOANGO NORTH

Duration:	1 day
Departure:	Pick up from Port Gentil or accommodation
Operator:	Loango Safari, Enamino Eco Village, Gavilo lodge
Costs:	See 'WHERE TO...' chapter or contact operator
What to bring:	Suitable walking shoes Mosquito repellent Water Dark long-sleeved clothing

Tours start from your lodge in the northern part of Loango National Park. To get there and away you take a flight from Libreville to Port Gentil after which your tour operator or lodge will arrange a transfer by boat and car to reach your accommodation.

The northern part of Loango National Park is different from the south, consisting of more open savannah land and bright green papyrus plants. The beautiful landscape and varied wildlife of the northern part of Loango National Park can only be visited by foot, car or boat of the listed tour operators or lodges.

Various different elements can be included in a day-long tour, depending on your party's interests and abilities. Discuss with your tour guide which elements would be

most feasible to combine and, when applicable, which are suitable for children or individuals with varying levels of fitness:

JEEP SAFARI

Go comfortable and choose the 4x4 jeep safari to explore the park and enjoy its beautiful wildlife such as buffalos, elephants, red river hogs, sitatunga, hornbills and much more.

JUNGLE TREKKING

Are you up for some adventure? On foot is a great way to explore and fully enjoy the natural beauty of the north end of the park. You can encounter monkeys, elephants and buffalos but also look for birds like the hornbill and turaco. The tour starts with a 4x4 drive to the entrance of the park and a boat ride on the Iguela lagoon. This trek requires a high level of physical fitness.

Several trails also leave from the Tassi and Akaka camps.

FAMILY BOAT SAFARI

This tour offers a nice day out for the whole family. By boat you will explore all Loango National Park has to offer. After a 4x4 drive to the entrance of the park in the morning, you will enjoy a (1/2 or full) day boat tour around the park following the network of rivers. At the end of the tour you are returned to your accommodation.



BOAT SAFARI AKAKA

This full day boat safari takes you to the heart of the Loango National Park. You will cross the Iguela Lagoon after which you enter a network of smaller rivers originating from the Rembo Eshira and Rembo Ngové river. You will stop for a picnic at **Akaka** and continue on a jungle trek following a former wood-cutter's trail, now often used by animals.

During the dry season animals migrate inland from the beach and **Akaka** becomes a place with exceptional abundance of wildlife such as elephants, hippos, buffalos, antelopes, monkeys and a number of birds like the hornbill and turaco. Listen to the sounds of the forest and be impressed by the forest giants.

At the end of the day you will return by boat to your accommodation.

MULTIPLE DAY TOUR LOANGO NORTH

Loango Safari offers multiple day tours in the north part of Loango National Park and can arrange your pick up from Libreville, Port-Gentil or Omboué. Loango Safari has several 6 and 8 day programmes to choose from. A stay in one of the camps in the Park, Tassi or Akaka can be included in a multiple day stay.



LOANGO NATIONAL PARK



LOANGO NORTH BUFFERZONE

In the bufferzone of the park, not too far from the lodges, there are quite a few interesting sites to visit and tours to book:

CULTURAL WALK

From Loango lodge, you can go on a cultural walk to the nearby village or visit the “Operation Loango” school, which is sponsored by the company “Société de Conservation et Développement”.

ARTISANAL FISHING

During this tour you will learn all about artisanal fishing, whether it is with a net, crab fishing with a harpoon, line fishing or collecting sea oysters.

GORILLA ISLAND

Visit the Evengue Island and meet the gorilla families living in the sanctuary. Experts of the Fernan-Vaz Gorilla Sanctuary and Rehabilitation & Reintroduction Programme will tell you all about the project and join you on a short bush walk to where the gorillas live.



THE "MISSION SAINTE ANNE"

This tour starts in the morning with a drive to Omboué from where you access Mission Sainte Anne by boat. Visit the iron church with its bamboo cathedral built by Gustave Eiffel in 1889 and enjoy the exotic flora (orchids, breadfruit trees, mangosteen) of the mission and the numerous birds the mission shelters such as hornbill, parrot and owl. Also look for the colony of fruit-eating bats that nests near the Fernan-Vaz lagoon. On the way you will pass several traditional villages where the Myene (Bantou) customs are still practiced. Meet the friendly population and visit their plantations.

MPIVIE RIVER DISCOVERY

This boat tour follows a narrow river through lush vegetation of papyrus, bamboo, and palmtree trees. Look out for crocodiles sunbathing on a riverbank. This area hosts a great number of bird species such as the green-backed heron, the fishing owl, the African fish eagle and many others.

Gorilla Island, the Mission and Mpivie River tours are easy to combine.

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN OF NDZALOUNGOU

The route between North Loango and Libreville will take you past the village of Ndougou and its botanical gardens and plantation.

A guided tour by a botanist will teach you all about Gabon's flora and fauna. You will return to your accommodation with local medicinal recipes and possibly bananas or other produce grown in the plantation.



GAME FISHING

Gabon, and especially Loango National Park, is famous for its game fishing opportunities. Enjoy a full day of game fishing in the beautiful waters of the Ndogo and Iguéla lagoons. The lagoon, adjacent beaches, and isolated coastal lagoons are prime sport fishing territory. At times the numbers and quality of fish is incredulous and is partly explained by the fact that the lagoons are a rich nursery for juvenile fish that as adults are concentrated within a relatively small area. Best in rainy season.

Duration: 1+ day

Departure: Pick up from Gamba or Sette Cama accommodation or Loango NP North accommodation

Operator: CH2O, Marty Evasion, Version Equateur, T.S.N. Gamba, Loango Safari, Enanimo Ecolodge

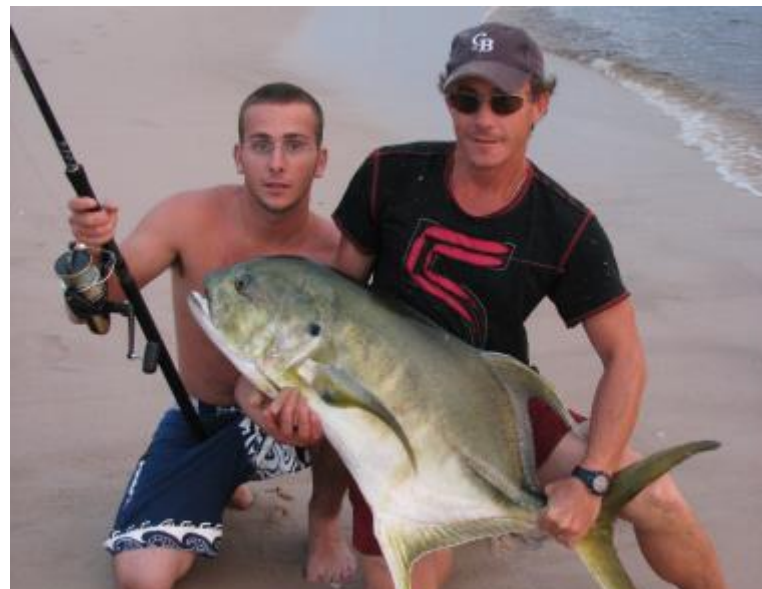
Costs: For Loango south: Between 60.000 for a day -140000 CFA pppd including accommodation for 1 night and food. For Loango north: on demand

What to bring: Fishing gear (check with operator if fishing gear is included)
Mosquito repellent
Water
Lunch

1 DAY GAME FISHING

This tour brings you to world's best fishing spots on the Ndougou lagoon. Catch barracudas, bars and giant African threadfins close to the entrance of the lagoon.

Operators also offer 2+ day game fishing trips including accommodation at Sette Cama.



FEEL FREE
TO ENJOY
THE WILDS
OF GABON



CROCODILE TRACKING AT NIGHT

Duration: 1,5 h
Departure: Pick up from Sette Cama accommodation
Operator: Sette Cama Safari, GIC
Costs: Adults: 8000 CFA, Children: 5000 CFA +
70000 CFA for boat
What to bring: Mosquito repellent
Water
Dark long-sleeved clothing
Head light

The night-time crocodile tracking tour is one of the most popular tours and is suitable for children. You will be picked up from your Sette Cama accommodation by your guide by boat at roughly 8pm. Before you start the tour he will instruct you on some safety rules, and then you will slowly cruise close to the edge of the mangroves and the lagoon as your guide shines a powerful light onto the riverbanks. Look out for roosting birds, and especially for the red glow of the crocodiles' reflecting eyes. When deemed appropriate, the boat will speed towards the bank to try to capture one or two specimens to allow you to view the crocodiles closely and teach you about their basic biology and how to differentiate between the different species. Keep your eyes open for other animals that come alive at night.





TURTLE WALK

Duration: 3-4 hours
Departure: Point Dick beach in Gamba or Loango NP North accommodation
Operator: Ibonga/WWF, Loango Safari, Enamino Eco Village
Costs: 10000-40000 CFA pp
What to bring: Mosquito repellent
Water
Dark long-sleeved clothing
Head light with red bulb
Shoes suitable for walking in soft sand

From November until late February Leatherback and Olive Ridley turtles nest on the beaches of Gabon. Over the past 12 years WWF Gabon and local conservation NGO, Ibonga, have been conducting research on these turtles in the Gamba Area. In December and January, three nights a week, tourists can join the research team on their nightly patrols to find, measure and tag female turtles that have come up on to the beach to nest. The walk starts with an explanation about the turtle species that can be observed, their life cycles, and how to behave when you see a turtle so that you will not disturb the turtle in its nesting process. The fees charged are used for the turtle research project and awareness-raising with the local population. Tours are also organised by several operators or lodges in the northern part of Loango National Park.





WHALE WATCHING

Duration: ½-1 day in July and August
Departure: From Pte. Ste. Catherine in Loango NP North
Operator: Loango Safari, Enamino Eco Village
Costs: 65000-100000 CFA pp
What to bring: Water
Lunch
Sunscreen

From late June to mid-September the waters of Gabon are visited by migrating humpback whales, breeding off the coast of Gabon and then travelling back south to the cold waters of the Antarctic where they feed. Enjoy a day on a boat with a skipper to look for these impressive, powerful mammals.

Make sure the boat has life-jackets for all passengers and is licensed to take tourists.





A SMALL MUSEUM

Duration: 1 hour
Departure: Smithsonian lab at Vembo, Gamba
Operator: Smithsonian Institute
Costs: Free

The Smithsonian Institution's Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation and Education is based in Gamba and open for the public to visit.

Visitors can learn about the field activities Smithsonian scientists perform as well as plants and animals found in the Gamba Complex. The center maintains a small collection of specimens from the Gamba region. Visitors are invited to take a look at specimens of insects, reptiles, birds and mammals that are often very difficult to observe in the wild but are kept here in the laboratory.

You will be informed about the natural history of animals and how they are viewed in local cultures.

The Center for Biodiversity and Conservation and Education at the Smithsonian Vembo is a great place to learn about the local wildlife before visiting a national park.

To schedule an appointment, please contact the Smithsonian on +241 01 55 96 10. In general, tours can be arranged on Wednesdays between 7:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and by appointment on other days.





MOUKALABA-DOUDOU NATIONAL PARK





The Moukalaba-Doudou National Park, situated in the south west of Gabon, covers an area of 4500 km². The Moukalaba area was gazetted as a forest reserve in 1962 and as a national park in 2002. It is one of the few places on earth where large populations of great apes still reside and the best place in Gabon to observe them in their natural habitat. The western lowland gorilla and central chimpanzee live side by side in this unique area. Since 1999, a long-term study of gorillas and chimpanzees has been conducted by Kyoto University.

Moukalaba-Doudou offers a mosaic landscape of rainforests and savannahs crossed by rivers. Moukalaba-Doudou National Park offers not only the chance to see great apes, but also many other species like elephants, buffalos, waterbucks, crocodiles, hippos, monkeys and many bird species.

PROGRAM (Protector of the Great Apes of Moukalaba) is a Gabonese NGO created in 2004 by two public figures of Gabon in order to protect the gorillas of Doussala village and provide solutions to local communities facing poverty and rural exodus.

As part of its conservation activities, PROGRAM offers ecotours to combine environmental protection and sustainable development of communities.

You can discover the natural and cultural richness of Moukalaba-Doudou National Park from two sites:

The community forest of Doussala village, located at the eastern border of the park, and a remarkable site along the Mbani River, where the Mbani campsite is located. Doussala village, and the Mbani campsite, are situated 700 km from the capital, Libreville.

How to get there and away

You can reach the park by driving down or taking a flight from Libreville to Tchibanga. Note that flight schedules change quite often. From Tchibanga you can arrange transport with your operator or drive down to Doussala yourself. To reach Tchibanga from Gamba is an adventurous 4-8 hour (depending on road conditions) off road drive. Make sure you take all necessary (safety) equipment.

MOUKALABA-DOUDOU NATIONAL PARK



GORILLA TREKKING AT DOUSSALA

Duration: 1+ days
Departure: Tchibanga village
Operator: PROGRAM
Costs: From 75000 CFA pp for 2 nights in basic lodge, 1 day gorilla trekking
Accommodation: 30000 CFA pppn
Food: 11000 CFA pppd
Guide: 15000 CFA per group
Park fees: 5000 CFA pppd
Hospitality fee village: 10000 CFA

What to bring: Mosquito repellent
Water
Snacks
Dark long-sleeved clothing
Walking shoes

You can reach Doussala village by taking a flight from Libreville to Tchibanga or an adventurous 4-8 hour drive from Libreville or Gamba. Once you arrive in Tchibanga you will meet your guide from PROGRAM who will provide you with food and water for your stay at Doussala. You will continue by car for 2 hours to Doussala village where you will meet with the chief of the village and the elders. After a traditional welcome ceremony you will be escorted to the base lodge where you will be welcomed by the local hostess who will cook local Gabonese meals for you.

Vegetarian options are available. Early the next morning, you will proceed in small groups to explore the habitat of two gorilla groups living near Doussala. Your guide's first priority will be your safety, so it is imperative to stay in small groups, remain as quiet as possible and to follow his instructions. Please remember that the dense forest vegetation, and the naturally shy nature of the gorillas make it impossible to guarantee gorilla sightings

Another possibility to enjoy the beautiful wildlife around Doussala is a boat ride on the Moukalaba river. Doing this at dawn or sunset increases your chances of seeing gorillas and other wildlife coming to the edge of the forest.



TRADITIONAL DANCING

On request, PROGRAM can arrange traditional dancing and gatherings in collaboration with the population of Doussala. This activity is only possible in combination with an overnight stay in the village and the additional cost of 100000 CFA is not included in the prices listed previously.

MIKANDI FALLS

Take a 2 hour walk through the beautiful forest of Moukalaba-Doudou to enjoy the beautiful sight of the Mikandi falls, which are especially impressive during the rainy season. This spot is perfect to have a picnic and to have a swim in the river before returning to your accommodation.

PORRO PLAINES TRAIL

This is a 4 to 6 hour round-trip hike that is strenuous and requires a high level of physical fitness. You will make a stop at the Porro plaines where you can enjoy a sublime panorama view with the possibility of seeing the waterbuck. On request one can visit the plantation and participate in the life of local communities.



MOUKALABA-DOUDOU NATIONAL PARK



3-4 DAY MBANI RIVER TOUR

Duration: 4+ days
Departure: Tchibanga
Operator: PROGRAM
Costs: 470000-108000 CFA pppd (1-4 persons)
What to bring: Mosquito repellent
Dark long-sleeved clothing
Walking shoes
First aid kit

This tour will take you deep into the Moukalaba-Doudou National Park to the Mbani camp. It offers the best chances of seeing wildlife since you are staying in the heart of the park where wildlife is very abundant.

The Mbani landscape offers remarkable views of green river banks, sandy beaches and pebbles, surrounded by a dense tropical rainforest typical of Central-Africa. PROGRAM has initiated an ecological monitoring and tourism project to protect this area.

With a guide and trackers you can discover the different types of ecosystems (primary forest, savannahs, rivers and streams, etc.) and look for species such as elephants, buffaloes, waterbuck, Nile crocodiles and, of course, gorillas and chimpanzees.

Day 1: Fly to Tchibanga from Libreville or drive for 7-8 hours from Libreville or Gamba. Meet the local staff of PROGRAM at the airport or at their office located in the centre of Tchibanga. You will stay the night in Tchibanga.

Program dry season - from June to September:

Day 2: After breakfast, drive for one hour to the entrance of the national park at Dighoudou. From there you will drive for another 2 hours to the Mbani bridge from where you walk for 1 hour to the Mbani camp. Once settled in your tent, your lunch will be prepared by the guides and you can start tracking gorillas and other wildlife. You will overnight in the camp and enjoy a meal prepared over an open fire.

Day 3: After breakfast you will go on a second safari together with the PROGRAM guides. After lunch you will head back to the Mbani bridge where a car will be waiting to take you back to Tchibanga where you spend the night.

Day 4: Last breakfast at the hotel before leaving for Libreville or Gamba.

This tour can be combined with the Doussala tour. You will need to be in good physical condition to enjoy this tour. Daily hiking on relatively flat terrain for 4 to 6 hours.

Program rainy Season - from October to May:

Day 2

After breakfast in Tchibanga, you will travel by pirogue on the Moukalaba River to the confluence with the Mbani River (roughly 2 hours by boat). After 1 hour of walking in the forest and 1 hour crossing savannahs, you will arrive at the Mbani camp. Once settled into your tent, you will enjoy a lunch prepared by the PROGRAM guides before leaving for a walking safari. Back at the camp you will have dinner and spend the night in a tent.

Day 3

After breakfast, you will embark on a second Mbani walking safari together with PROGRAM's trackers and guides. Return to camp for lunch, after which you will hike back to the river (2 hrs walk), take the pirogue back to Doussala (2 ½ hrs by boat) and return to Tchibanga by car (2 hours drive) to spend the night.

Day 4

Last breakfast at the hotel before leaving for the airport to check in bags and take flight to Libreville.



WHERE TO...

GAMBA

STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Government owned rooms	Tel. (+241) 07326937	12500 for a room
Giema	Tel. (+241) 02151219/ (+241) 07941674 / (+241) 05370985	15000/20000 for a room
Herman Hotel	Tel. (+241) 07 163681/ (+241) 06693056/ (+241) 01500614	21000 for a room
Nama hotel	Tel. (+241) 07520620/ (+241) 04014999	15000 for double, 25000 for studio
Saint Adolph	Tel. (+241) 07517194/ (+241) 07835373	15000 for a room

RENT A CAR

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
GIC	Jean Rene Matoumba gambareservation@yahoo.fr or case.abietu@yahoo.fr Tel. (+241) 06899598 or 07339951	From 70,000 pd
Shellington Gabon Lines	Mr. Janvion Tel. (+241) 05065090	From 80000 pd for 4WD Pick Up truck, insurance included

RENT A BOAT

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
GIC	Tel. (+241) 06899598 gambareservations@yahoo.fr	From 70,000 pd

PAY PARK ENTRY FEE/ARRANGE TURTLE TOUR

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Case Artisanal at Gamba Airport	Julia: Tel: 02 45 28 82 (speaks English and French) juliaodjegue@gmail.com Anne Marie (French only): 07 81 02 27	7,000 pppd (park entry) 10,000pp turtle tour

WHERE TO...



LOANGO NP SOUTH

STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Abietu lodge	GIC Tel (+241) 06899598 or 07339951 gambareservation@yahoo.fr case.abietu@yahoo.fr	60,000 CFA pp per day Includes: transfer to and from Gamba to Sette Cama, lodging, meals and half-day excursion (extra 10,000 pp for full day)
Sette Cama Safaris	Eric Bernabeu scsloango@yahoo.fr Tel. (+241) 04609233	120,000 pppd including transport, 1 night, food & guided tour, excluding drinks and parc entrance
SFM Safari Gabon	Matt Shirley mshirley@sfmafrica.com Tel. (+241) 04894572	SFM is developing a lodge at Petit Loango. Expected opening sometime in 2015. They are already working in the area.

RENT A BOAT

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
GIC	gambareservation@yahoo.fr Tel. (+241) 06899598	From 60000 per day

FIND AN OPERATOR/GUIDE

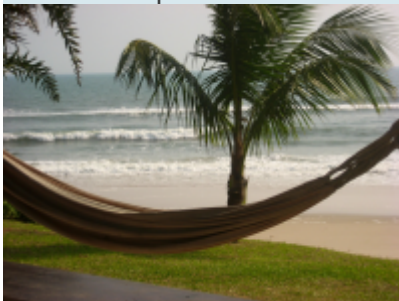
Name	Contact
CH2O (Sette Cama Safaris)	Eric Bernabeu scsloango@yahoo.fr Tel. (+241) 04609233
GIC	Jean Rene Matoumba gambareservation@yahoo.fr or case.abietu@yahoo.fr Tel. (+241) 06899598 or 07339951
Marty Evasion	Tel. (0241) 05095478/05669225
T.S.N. Gamba	Philippe Silvestri Tel. (+241) 04583832 Philippesilvestri@yahoo.fr
Version Equateur	Georges Durand Tel. (0241) 07174223 georgesdurand85@sfr.fr Nicolas Marsella Tel. (0241) 07174209

WHERE TO...

LOANGO NP NORTH

STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Akaka camp	Loango Safari Tel (+241) 07792207, bob.sobek@loango-safari.com www.loango-safari.com	100000 pppn for double room, including food and safaris, exluding drinks. Day safari to Akaka: 70000 pp by 4+ persons Transport from Port Gentil possible
Enamino Eco Village	Philippe Robin: Tel. (+241) 0798 8834, Nathalie Carriere (Nanou): enamino@gmail.com www.enamino.com	Excursion package includes 1 night in bungalow + 1 tour in the <i>bufferzone</i> of the park: 75000, without excursion: 55000 Boat tour Loango north: 200000 Trekking Loango North: 220000 Boat tour Akaka: 320000 Transfer Port-Gentil / Omboué /Enamino: 400000 Omboué /Enamino: 50000



STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Gavilo lodge	Tel. (+241) 06 2026 1/05 328292 Gavilo2001@yahoo.fr	Unknown
Loango Lodge	Loango Safari	100000 pppn for double room, food and safaris included, drinks excluded
Tassi Camp	Loango Safari	100000 pppn for double room, food, safaris and transport to Tassi included, drinks excluded.



WHERE TO...



LOANGO NP NORTH

FIND AN OPERATOR/GUIDE

Nom	Contact
Loango Safari	Bob Sobek (speaks English) Tel. (+241) 07792207 bob.sobek@loango-safari.com www.loango-safari.com
Enamino Eco Village	Philippe Robin: Tel. (+241) 07988834 Nathalie Carriere (speaks English): enamino@gmail.com www.enamino.com
Gavilo Lodge	Tel. (+241) 06202601/05328292 Gavilo2001@yahoo.fr

MAYUMBA

STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Hotel de Bac	Tel. (+241) 07 589985	5 air conditioned rooms at 12500
Safari Club Hotel	Tel. (+241) 07 548376 or 07 900929 or 06042049	Fan single room at 20000, single room air-conditioned at 25000, suite at 50000.
		
Ocean Hotel	Tel. (+241) 07835127	5 air conditioned rooms from FCFA 20000 to FCFA 25000

WHERE TO...



MOUKALABA DOUDOU NP/DOUSSALA

STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Case de Madre	PROGRAM Tel. (+241) 07428282	30000 pppn Dinner & lunch: 4000 pp Breakfast: 3000 pp
Mbani camp	PROGRAM Tel. (+241) 07428282	30000 pppn Dinner & lunch: 4000 pp Breakfast: 3000 pp

WHERE TO...

MOUKALABA DOUDOU NP/DOUSSALA

FIND AN OPERATOR/GUIDE

Name	Contact
PROGRAM	Romain Béville (241) 07428282 www.facebook.com/ong.program

TCHIBANGA

STAY

Name	Contact	Prices in CFA
Le Modibotie	Tel. (+241) 07 548376	21000
Le Relais	Tel. (+241) 07 548376	Double 16000, VIP 40000, suite 70000. Continental breakfast 3500





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