

Frequently Asked Questions



Travel & Access

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO VISIT?

Kamba's lodges are year-round destinations with a plethora of flora and fauna to enjoy. Because our temperatures and rainfall are consistent throughout the year, our large mammals, including Western Lowland Gorillas, Forest Elephants, and Forest Buffalo, do not migrate. Some birds, butterflies, and smaller mammals are seasonal; if you have your heart set on a specific sighting, please get in touch.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

From your international gateway city, fly to Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, where our team will meet you and assist with your onward journey to our lodges. Brazzaville's Maya-Maya Airport (BZV) is a modern, recently built facility served by major carriers including Air France (via Charles de Gaulle), Ethiopian Airlines (via Addis Ababa), Royal Air Maroc (via Casablanca), and RwandAir (via Kigali).

We do not recommend flying to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, as we are only able to assist with meet-and-greet services and transfers to the lodges from Maya Maya Airport in Brazzaville.

IS THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO SAFE?

Yes, the ROC (also known as Congo-Brazzaville) is very safe, with nominal incidents of petty crime and very seldom-heard issues of a violent nature. It should not be confused with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which is not a country in which we currently operate.

DO I NEED A VISA?

Yes, you will need a visa to visit the Republic of the Congo. We will provide you with a letter of invitation, which you can present to the embassy or consulate

nearest to you. We recommend doing this at least four weeks in advance of your trip. If you're unable to obtain a visa in advance, we can, with advance notice, arrange for a visa upon arrival to be issued at the airport in Brazzaville.

WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL I NEED TO BRING?

In addition to a visa (see above), you will need your passport (valid for six months beyond your arrival date) and yellow fever certificate. We also require the Kamba Indemnity Form to be sent to our reservations team 30 days prior to your arrival date, as well as a Medical Declaration Form before arrival if you are participating in gorilla tracking.

HOW FIT MUST I BE?


You should be able to walk at a normal walking pace, unassisted, for more than 8 km (5 miles) a day and for at least 2 hours at a time. While not steep, terrain is uneven and is likely to include walks through beautiful rivers and marshes. Consult with your doctor if you are uncertain.

WHAT AGES ARE WELCOME?

We have an age requirement of 16 years and older to visit any of our lodges. Due to the remote location, gorilla tracking requirements, and the nature of adventure in a rainforest environment, the age requirement ensures all guests are safe and have a wonderful experience. Unfortunately, we are not able to make exceptions due to National Park rules and insurance requirements.

WHAT HEALTH PRECAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE?

Yellow Fever: A yellow fever vaccination is required to enter the Republic of the Congo, and you will be asked to show your "yellow card" (certificate of vaccination) upon arrival.



Malaria: Our lodges lie within a malarial zone, so you should take antimalarial medications (such as Malarone; please consult with your doctor) as well as insect repellent. We also recommend spraying your clothes with permethrin to prevent mosquito and tick bites; this can be done before departure.

COVID-19: A COVID Vaccination Certificate is required to apply for a Letter of Invitation to the Republic of the Congo. Guests participating in gorilla tracking will be given a rapid PCR test prior to departing Brazzaville for Mboko airstrip, and an additional rapid test prior to your first track. This is to prevent transmission of the virus to the gorillas. Currently, there are no COVID testing requirements to enter the Republic of the Congo.

Other: Kamba requires a completed medical declaration form from any guest participating in gorilla tracking. This entails a confirmation from a medical practitioner that you are fit and healthy, do not have symptoms of TB, and have had your polio and measles vaccinations to ensure protection for the gorillas. We do not require any certificates as proof, only the declaration form signed by your doctor. We encourage our guests to take the “[Gorilla Friendly Pledge](#),” which helps minimize the risk of disease transmission.

Please consult with your doctor regarding any additional immunizations or additional health precautions they recommend.

SHOULD I HAVE TRAVEL INSURANCE?

We recommend travel insurance to protect you in case of trip cancellation or delay. The strongest policies include “cancel-for-any-reason” coverage. Consult with your travel advisor on the right policy for your needs.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK?

We recommend packing light, given the 15kg (33lb.) weight limit on the flight to and from our lodges (which includes hand baggage). Quick-drying clothes and water-resistant shoes are essential, as are sunscreen, insect repellent, cameras, binoculars, and

a flashlight or headlamp. We recommend packing belongings in a soft bag for ease of transportation. Avoid checking luggage if possible, as it will be challenging to reunite you with any baggage that is delayed. Please refer to our complete list of recommended items.

WHAT CAMERA EQUIPMENT SHOULD I BRING?

Our camera equipment list provides a list of “must-haves” suggested by professionals who have traveled with us. Keep in mind that the rainforests can be wet and humid, so include the appropriate protective wear for your gear.

SHOULD I BRING CASH OR CREDIT CARDS?

Cash is king in Brazzaville and throughout most of the Republic of the Congo, with credit cards accepted only rarely (the Radisson Hotel does accept credit cards). We only accept cash at our lodges and Brazzaville office. You will need the local currency, Central African Franc (XAF or FCFA), which is available at various ATMs and exchange bureaus in Brazzaville, including at the Radisson Hotel. It is pegged to the Euro at XAF 655 to €1; dollar rates fluctuate but are approximately XAF 595–610 to \$1.

Note that if you plan to exchange US dollars, most bureaus only accept notes dated 2013 or newer, in denominations of \$5 or greater, and in good condition.

At our lodges, guests may tip (see tipping section below) or make purchases in our shops using XAF, Euros, or US dollars. We can process credit card payments in our Brazzaville office, but not in the lodges. We can also accept purchases via PayPal, depending on Wi-Fi connectivity.

WHAT LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN?

French is the official language of the Republic of the Congo. Many other languages are spoken throughout the country, with Lingala and Kituba the most common. At our lodges, all staff speak French fluently and our managers and guides speak English with a high degree of fluency.

Brazzaville

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT UPON ARRIVAL IN BRAZZAVILLE?

Customs and immigration in Brazzaville is straightforward: Once you arrive, you will pass through a health check and show your Yellow Fever Certificate, then proceed to immigration to present your passport, visa, and Letter of Invitation. If you have opted for a visa upon arrival, you will need to present your paperwork to the immigration officer at this time.

If you have checked luggage, please note that you must collect it and present a luggage claim check before proceeding through customs for your luggage to be scanned.

A member of our guest services team will meet you in the arrivals hall and assist you with your Brazzaville accommodation or onward scheduled flight.

WHAT IS BRAZZAVILLE LIKE?

Many Kamba guests spend one or two nights in Brazzaville before or after their Kamba journey, enjoying the unique culture of this safe, clean, and colorful city, as well as the contrast between Congolese urban life and the rainforest.

Most of our journeys include a half-day tour in Brazzaville, which takes in key sites such as Poto-Poto Textile Market and Painting School, Marché Plateau Ville crafts market, St. Anne's Basilica, and the Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza Memorial, along with a lunch at the famous riverfront Mami Wata restaurant overlooking Kinshasa and the Independence Bridge.

Additional tours, including a visit to the Sapeurs, the famous "Congo Dandies," are available if you are staying longer; please enquire at info@kambaafrica.com.

IS BRAZZAVILLE SAFE?

Brazzaville is very safe, with one of the cleanest city centers in Africa. We do recommend leaving valuable items at home and dressing conservatively while

in the city. Locals do not like photos to be taken of them, so ask your guide to make a request before taking someone's picture.

WHERE SHOULD WE STAY IN BRAZZAVILLE?

We can assist with stays at the [Radisson Blu](#) in Brazzaville, which is recognized as the best hotel in the capital. The nightly room rate includes a buffet breakfast, gym facilities, pool, and complimentary airport shuttle service (note this is not a private transfer service and may include other guests). Day use rooms are also available.

For recommended alternate hotels in various price ranges, please contact our team for assistance.

HOW DO I GET AROUND BRAZZAVILLE?

You may use local green taxis, which generally cost XAF 1000 (US\$2) per stop within the city. Trips from the airport or longer distances are between XAF 2000-4000, and a taxi for an hour will cost you XAF 4000-5000. Bear in mind that some taxis may be in poor technical condition.


As you would anywhere in the world, take a security-first approach to taxis and refuse to hop into any car that already has a passenger. If traveling late at night, you may encounter roadblocks, but are unlikely to be harassed.

HOW CAN I PAY FOR ITEMS IN BRAZZAVILLE?

You will need local currency in cash, as very few establishments accept credit cards and even fewer take foreign notes. You can withdraw Central African Francs (XAF or FCFA) from ATMs or visit an exchange bureau. ATMs are available at major banks throughout Brazzaville, with Visa being the preferred card, but MasterCard may also be used at certain banks (e.g. Credit de Congo). Be sure to carry small change whenever possible, as there is often no change available and notes bigger than XAF 2,000 can be hard to break (especially in taxis).

WHAT SHOULD I TIP FOR A CITY TOUR?

Tipping is at your discretion, but it is always appreciated. The typical gratuity for your guide in Brazzaville is around 10% or US\$10-20 per person per activity.



WILL I BE ALLOWED TO TAKE ITEMS PURCHASED IN BRAZZAVILLE HOME WITH ME?

Items bought from markets and vendors in Brazzaville that cannot be packed into hand luggage or checked baggage may attract a customs tax at the airport, unless you are able to produce some form of receipt. Any wooden items or souvenirs require an export permit. Please ask your Guest Services agent for assistance.



Arriving at Kamba Lodges

HOW DO I GET FROM BRAZZAVILLE TO THE LODGES?

We operate weekly scheduled flights between Brazzaville and our private airstrip at Mboko, in Odzala-Kokoua National Park. These flights are typically included in the cost of your journey. From the airstrip, we will take care of transporting you to our lodges (Mboko, Lango, and Ngaga), via a combination of vehicle, boat, kayak, and foot.

The round-trip flights operate Mondays and Thursdays only, using a LET L-410 12-seater plane operated by Air-Tec. Depending on weather, the flight takes between 1 hour, 40 minutes and 2 hours.

To help you plan your international flights, the flight from Brazzaville to Mboko departs at around 1pm. The return flight from Mboko lands in Brazzaville at around 11am. Note that all arrival and departure times are dependent on weather conditions.

HOW MUCH BAGGAGE CAN I BRING?

15 kgs (33 lbs) per person in total weight, inclusive of hand luggage.

Anything over this amount needs to be requested with reservations beforehand, who will confirm whether it is possible as well as the applicable costs. If available, extra weight is charged at US\$10 per kg over 15 kgs (33 lbs).

IS THERE FOOD ON THE FLIGHT?

We provide light snacks, such as a baguette sandwich or fruit as well as water and cold drinks. Please note any dietary requirements in advance so we can cater to this (subject to availability).

ARE THERE BATHROOMS ON THE FLIGHT?

No, the plane does not include bathroom facilities. We recommend using the bathroom at Brazzaville airport before departing. There are bathroom facilities at Mboko Airstrip on arrival in Odzala-Kokoua National Park.

IF I CAN'T MAKE THE SCHEDULED FLIGHT OR DON'T WANT TO USE THE PLANE, HOW ELSE CAN I GET TO KAMBA'S LODGES?

Our scheduled flights are built into our rates and operate between Brazzaville and Mboko on Mondays and Thursdays only. Should you wish to travel on a different day, we can offer you a private charter service. Please note this rate is charged per leg (one-way) and only operates on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Should you wish to use an alternative mode of transportation to our lodge, you must arrange and book this yourself through a local agent in Brazzaville. This decision is made at your own risk; Kamba is not liable for such alternative travel arrangements.

HOW SAFE IS THE PLANE?

Our plane is checked and maintained regularly according to international aviation regulations and safety standards.

The Kamba Experience

IS THERE HOT WATER AND FLUSH TOILETS?

Yes. At all of our lodges, you will stay in a private bungalow with an ensuite bathroom that provides hot water and fully flushable toilets.

HOW DO MEALS WORK?

Each lodge has a shared dining space where you and your fellow travelers can come together and enjoy three-course meals for lunch and dinner as well as breakfast, tea, coffee, and snacks throughout your stay. Large, family-style tables are shared in some lodges; private tables are available upon request.

Our chefs are internationally trained and incorporate Congolese ingredients and recipes into their menus. Most guests are surprised and delighted by the level of cuisine we're able to provide in the jungle.

All meals and house beverages (tea, coffee, cool drinks, mixers, water, select wines, beers and spirits) are included. Premium beverages are available on request; the additional cost will be added to your bill and settled on departure.

CAN YOU ACCOMMODATE SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS OR FOOD ALLERGIES?

We do our best to cater to special dietary requirements and need at least 14 days' notice prior to arrival (our provisioning and menus are planned well in advance due to our remote location). If you have a severe allergy, it is imperative that you notify us of this in advance. We do not stock Epi-Pens, so you must carry your own. Traces of nuts may be experienced as nuts are used in our kitchens.

IS THERE AIR-CONDITIONING?

Each chalet has screened windows and doors to welcome in the breeze, which is supplemented by ceiling or standing fans. Due to our remote locations and ecologically mindful approach, we do not offer air-conditioning.

HOW MANY GUESTS PER ROOM?

At all lodges, our chalets can accommodate a maximum of 2 guests. Chalets can be configured with

a double bed or two separate twin beds, as requested. No connecting or family rooms are available.

DO YOU HAVE MOSQUITO NETS?

Each bed is fitted with a mosquito net. We also recommend packing insect repellent, preferably containing DEET, to use throughout your stay. You can also choose to dip or spray your clothing with permethrin repellent before your trip.

CAN I DO LAUNDRY?

Yes, we offer same-day laundry services at all of our lodges.

CAN I DRINK THE WATER?

Filtered drinking water is provided in our main lodge areas as well as in your chalet. Water from the taps is safe for showering and brushing teeth, but not suitable for drinking.

ARE THERE SPA FACILITIES?

Mboko Lodge has a small, rustic spa where you can enjoy massage treatments, soothed by the sound of the river flowing in the background. Treatments are performed by local staff trained in massage as part of our ongoing local development initiatives. Please enquire with the management team at Mboko when you are there for availability, or book in advance with reservations (info@kambaafrica.com).


WHAT TYPE OF PLUG POINTS ARE DO YOU HAVE?

All of our lodges have EU plug points. The rooms at Ngaga and Lango have extension points with various socket options.

Please notify the Lodge Manager of any items that require heavy electricity use, such as camera battery chargers. These may need to be specially arranged in order not to crash the solar power systems. Please note that no hair dryers or kettles may be used at any time.

IS THERE WI-FI?

Wi-Fi is available in common areas at all lodges. However, the signal strength and speed varies according to weather conditions, as you are connected via satellite. The most reliable signal is



at Mboko Lodge. None of the Wi-Fi networks is able to handle heavy data streaming, such as for video uploads or downloads. Most guests find that the lack of connectivity is an opportunity to unplug from the “real world” and connect more fully with the natural environment.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I TIP DURING MY STAY?

Guests often seek tipping guidelines, which we provide here. Tipping is discretionary and not included in our pricing. Our teams are very appreciative of any tips received.

Tipping Guidelines:

Guides: \$20 or €20 per person per day

Gorilla trackers: \$10 or €10 per person per track

General staff: \$15–20 or €15–20 per guest per day

Gratuities for the general staff are evenly distributed between all team members. As such, we kindly ask not to give individual tips (except for guides and gorilla trackers). Tipping boxes are available on your day of departure from each lodge.

SHOULD I BRING MY OWN BINOCULARS?

Yes, we do recommend bringing your own pair to avoid having to share with guides or other guests. This will ensure you don't miss out on a great wildlife sighting!

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MOUNTAIN GORILLA AND A WESTERN LOWLAND GORILLA?

Many of our guests have previously encountered Mountain Gorillas in Rwanda or Uganda, whereas the gorillas near our lodges are Western Lowland Gorillas. There are several key differences between the two species, which affects our tracking and viewing experiences. As their name suggests, Western Lowland Gorillas are found in tropical lowland forests in Western and Central Africa. They are slightly smaller than their mountain cousins and, because it is much warmer at lower altitudes, their fur is less dense. Since they feed on fruit growing in trees, Western Lowland Gorillas tend to be more agile and spend more time in the branches.

CAN I SEE CHIMPANZEES OR LEOPARDS?

While the Congo Basin is a habitat for both chimps and leopards, with some located near our various lodges, they are very nervous creatures. The longer you spend with us and the more walks you do, the more likely you are to see elusive wildlife. That said, we cannot guarantee any specific animal sightings.

WHAT IS MARANTACEAE?

Marantaceae (mah-ron-tuh-say) is the dense plant that fills the forest around Ngaga Lodge, just outside of Odzala-Kokoua National Park. It is thick, dark, and glossy, with gorillas using it as protection as well as a source of food. You will encounter plenty of it on your gorilla tracks.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A JUNGLE AND A FOREST?

Every jungle is a forest, but not every forest is a jungle. A jungle is a dense mass of vegetation and trees that can be difficult to penetrate, such as parts of the Congo Basin or Amazon. The word forest denotes any large tract of land covered by trees, so it includes jungles as well as other wooded areas.

WHAT IS A BAÏ?

The Congo Basin is dotted with wetlands called baïs, a word from the Mbenga people that describes a natural, often swampy clearing in the forest with large deposits of minerals. These areas are created and maintained by the footfalls of wildlife digging for nutrient-rich water and grazing on the soil and vegetation. Baïs hold a magnetic attraction for Forest Elephants by night, as well as Forest Buffaloes, Bongos, and great flocks of African Green Pigeons and African Grey Parrots – all of which can be seen at Lango Lodge.

Terms & Conditions

WHAT ARE THE PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS?

Deposits must be paid within 14 days of confirmation of booking.

Full payment must be made 60 days prior to guests' arrival at the lodge.

When making any payment, please state the reference number starting with WB, or the name on the booking, so that we can track your payment accordingly. Any proof of payment must be sent to info@kambaafrica.com. Please allow 72 hours for payment confirmation.

Should full payment not be confirmed in our account upon guests' arrival to the lodge, they will be asked to settle the bill in cash upfront. We do have credit card facilities at our office in Brazzaville; transaction fees apply. All extras or outstanding bills must be settled in cash or by PayPal (any transaction fee will be added to the guest's account).

Kamba accepts cash payments in XAF / FCFA and Euros only. Any payments made in US dollars will incur conversion fees.

CAN I MAKE PAYMENT VIA PAYPAL?

Yes, we have a PayPal account; the portal is available in the footer of our website for easy payments.

WHAT IS YOUR CANCELLATION POLICY?

Please note we are unable to refund deposits or full payments; rather, these will be allocated on a credit basis for future bookings dependent on cancellation reason:

Standard Cancellations:

Between confirmation and 61 days prior to arrival, full credit of deposit less admin fee.

Between 60 and 46 days prior to arrival, 50% of the total cost will be charged.

Between 45 days prior to arrival and a "no show," 100% of the total cost will be charged.

The cancellation policy also applies to confirmed bookings that reduce their length of stay, with the above cancellation fees applying on the released night(s).

Any cancellation must be in writing and is effective upon its acknowledged receipt by the company.

COVID-19 Cancellations:

All travelers are advised to take out fully comprehensive travel insurance that covers cancellation for any reason, including COVID-related reasons. This insurance must be able to fully cover cancellation of travel less than 60 days prior to arrival.

In special circumstances, the property may consider postponement of a booking for up to 12 months in advance if travel is canceled 60 days or less prior to arrival due to a COVID related issue - further lockdown, no flights, guest not allowed to board a flight, guest falls ill due to COVID-19 and unable to travel, etc.

More questions? Send us an email at info@kambaafrica.com, or chat with us on WhatsApp.