



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC | TO TRACK THE SILVERBACK

Located between the lush Congo Basin's rain forests, the Central African Republic [CAR] is home to the Dzanga Sangha Reserve—the only place in the world where it is possible for tourists to track lowland gorilla. This is your chance to come face to face with silverback gorilla in their natural Eden.

DAY 1

IN TRANSIT

17:40

Arrive Bayanga
Transfer to Dzanga-Sangha Reserve
Transfer to Sangha Lodge


19:00

Enjoy dinner in the open-air restaurant perched above the Sangha River.

STAY

SANGHA LODGE

Situated on the banks of the Sangha River in the Reserve. Sangha lodge is the ideal tranquil spot from which to set off on activities within the Dzanga-Sangha National Park, and the perfect most relaxing spot to return to after a long day in the field.

 <p>SUGGESTED ROUTE Bayanga—Bangui [BGI] Bangui [BGI]—Paris [CDG] Paris [CDG]—New York [JFK]</p>

DAY 2

BAYANGA

Morning

Observe Forest Elephants
Depart for Dzannga Bai, is a region of dense forest and home to more than 4,000 elephants. Your guides will lead you down a path created by the elephants, using machetes to cut out through the underbrush. The forest is dry, with a red clay floor padded by fallen leaves, sandy patches, and clear pools of cool water—a perfect place to watch the elephants.

12:00

Lunch @ Dzannga Bai

16:00

Return to camp

19:00

Dinner is served

Stay

Doli Lodge

DAY 3

BAYANGA

07:00 Transfer to Ba'aka Village

08:00 Net Hunting

Traditional net hunting with Ba'aka pygmy men begins with the soulful chanting of Ba'Aka pygmies as they move into the forest. Once at the destination of the hunt, the BaAka tie nets to trees and branches forming a semicircle. Hunters try to drive the small antelopes into the net, screaming and pounding the ground with branches.

12:00 Traditional lunch with the tribe

13:00 Medicinal plant collecting with the Ba'aka

15:00 Traditional music and dance

16:00 Return to camp

19:00 Dinner is served.

Stay: Sangha Lodge



DAY 4 BAYANGA

06:00 Gorilla Tracking

Transfer to Bai Hokou camp.

In search of the gorilla's nest site, your pygmy guide will lead you down elephant paths and narrow trails, following the almost imperceptible traces of the gorillas.

16:00 Return to camp

19:00 Dinner is served

Stay Sangha Lodge

DAY 5 BAYANGA

09:00 Hiking around the Salines

Follow elephant paths through the forest to the favored spots. See forest elephants, bongos, buffalos & monkeys walking amid the fruit trees.

16:00 Return to camp

19:00 Dinner is served.

Stay Sangha Lodge

DAY 6 IN TRANSIT



TO: GET READY

Several tour agencies now offer safaris to Central Africa. BushTracks in California has been operating the longest, www.bushtracks.com. New to the scene are the very reputable Discovery Initiatives, www.discoveryinitiatives.co.uk and ResponsibleTravel.com both in the UK. If you don't want to go through a large tour company or their schedule does not match yours, contact Josh Osih of ATA. Tourist visas and yellow fever vaccination cards are required for most visitors, including American citizens. The embassy in Washington, D.C. processes a three-month visa in two days and charges \$150. The CAR uses the CFA, Central African Franc. It has a fixed rate of exchange with the Euro, 1 Euro = 655 CFA. Banking is difficult in Central Africa. Credit cards and traveler's checks are not readily accepted except in large cities and hotels. Bring cash or pay a tour operator up-front.

TO: PACK

Dzangha Sangha is in a rainforest and it rains a lot. Bring light clothes that dry easily, a rain jacket, sports sandals, and hiking boots. Otherwise, long sleeves and pants to keep the insects off, such as Buzz Off clothing, work quite well, and bring a floppy hat. The generator can go out from time to time, so a flashlight or headlamp is essential. Don't forget binoculars, your camera, and plenty of extra batteries and memory.

TO: GET THERE

It is possible to travel to the Dzangha Sangha Reserve in CAR independently; however, most choose to visit by organized tour. Air France services Bangui, the capital of the CAR, once a week direct via Paris. From there, it is possible to charter a small plane or hire a private taxi to take you to the Reserve, approximately a full day's drive from Bangui.

TO: STAY THERE

The only place to stay in this remote corner of the CAR is Doli Lodge, an eco-tourism lodge built by WWF. Sitting on the banks of the Sangha River, Doli Lodge has the location of a luxurious five-star African safari lodge, but it's not. And those who are looking for that will be disappointed. But for the middle of the jungle in one of the poorest countries in Africa, the lodge offers good food and clean rooms despite the conditions. Hot water is installed via solar panels in cabins one and two. But it is probably more fun to take a swim in the river, as the hippos hang out a few kilometers downstream.

TO: SEE AND DO

Wildlife! Experience a remote, pristine jungle abounding with forest elephants and buffalo, gorillas, chimpanzee, sitatunga, mang-abey, dik-dik, and much more. Visit Bayanga, the village that neighbors the Doli Lodge, for a glimpse of a real African village and spend time with the Ba'Aka. Take a canoe ride on the Sangha River to watch hippos, and sit back and enjoy a cool Cameroonian beer from the open-air restaurant while watching the sun set.

TO: EXPLORE

Great memories and lovely photographs. There are some arts and crafts for sale by the Ba'Aka and local artisans, necklaces made of seeds from the forest, paintings, and even a T-shirt with the famous gorillas. Buying crafts locally injects much-needed capital into the local community and helps the villagers see a direct result from tourism.