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# Tour Notes

**Kingdoms of Cameroon**

**Tour Duration – 14 Days**



## Tour Rating

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

## Tour Pace

Busy

## Tour Highlights

- ✓ Relish the verdant beauty of the Cameroon countryside
- ✓ Meet the amazing peoples who call Cameroon home, including those of the Dja Reserve
- ✓ Immerse yourself in the histories and traditions of the ancient chieftaincies
- ✓ Finish the tour by the wonderful beaches of Kribi



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## Tour Map

### Kingdoms of Cameroon



## Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of Comfortable hotels, guesthouses, and huts in the Dja Reserve.
- Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
- Group Size:** Maximum 12
- Start Point:** Douala
- End Point:** Douala
- Transport:** Private minibuses- because of the terrain, and availability of vehicles locally, it is not possible to provide Air Conditioned minibuses on this tour.
- Countries:** Cameroon



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## Kingdoms of Cameroon

*Cameroon stands at a crossroads, absorbing elements of both West and Central Africa but with a charming character all of its own. Home to some of the most traditional societies on the continent, in much of Cameroon the word of the local chief or sultan still holds more weight than that of the government, and visitors here find themselves transported back to a time when the land was divided into numerous separate kingdoms. This tour spends time in two different regions of the country. In the highlands area we explore the traditional chieftaincy of Foumban, an incredibly colourful place with a fascinating history. We spend time in a small village to soak up the rhythms of rural Cameroon, and then head east, through thick rainforests to the homelands of the Ba'Aka. We spend a couple of days as guests of a local community, learning about their forest lifestyle and how they have maintained their unique traditions – this is a chance to meet one of Africa's most interesting ethnic groups. Finally we head to the coast at Kribi, before returning to Douala. Cameroon is often ignored by travellers, but its amazing variety of landscape and people place it among Africa's most spectacular countries.*

## Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

## 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. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

# Itinerary

## Day 1 – Douala

On arrival in Douala you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore this lively city. Overnight at Aquarius Hotel or similar.

## Douala

Douala is Cameroon's largest city, although it is not the official capital – this honour falls to Yaoundé. A large, brash and vibrant city, Douala can be a rather blunt introduction to the country, but there is no better way to get to grips with modern Cameroon. Lacking in conventional sights, Douala makes up for it with excellent nightlife and restaurants, and a zest for life which can be intoxicating. The city was originally born



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out of the small settlements established by Portuguese traders who arrived in the 15th century, and went on from humble beginnings, to become an important port and the economic powerhouse of Cameroon. Although not the most attractive of African cities, in the right light the tropical ambience of Douala can be rather pleasant.

### **Day 2 - Mboroukou**

The drive today takes us through rubber, banana, pawpaw, pineapple, cocoa and coffee plantations, visiting a palm oil mill and a tropical flower plantation. We arrive at Ekom village in time for a picnic lunch from where we can see the beautiful, 80m high Ekom Waterfalls. We continue to the village of Mboroukou which sits at the foot of the Manengouba Mountains. Overnight at Villa Luciole Lodge or similar. (BD)

### **Day 3 – Baham-Foumban**

After breakfast we depart for Baham to visit the palace of a traditional Bamileke chief. We continue on to Foumban, renowned for its excellent traditional crafts it is rich in history, with good museums and a superb royal palace, and we spend time exploring the town's key sites. Overnight at Paradise Hotel Koutaba or similar. (BD)

### **Foumban**

Foumban is an important centre for African art and one of Cameroon's most culturally rich towns. The centrepiece of the town is the sultan's palace, which resembles a medieval chateau and is the seat of power for the Bamoun people. Foumban's museums hold excellent examples of Bamoun arts and crafts as well as exhibits on local history, masks, traditional dress and everyday items that have been used in Bamoun life. The Rue des Artisans is home to all manner of small shops and workshops and is one of the best places in Central Africa to buy wood carvings. Foumban is a predominantly Muslim town and one of the oldest in Cameroon

### **Day 4- Batoufam**

After breakfast, we visit a Bororo village to gain some insight into rural life in Cameroon. Here, life is dominated by activities that reflect the people's lifestyle, such as small-scale production of milk which is one of their main food items and is used by the women to produce butter. These people, especially the women, are renowned for their skill in braiding. Depart for Batoufam via Bafoussam visiting the sacred Mectchie waterfalls en route, where local Bamileke people come to make sacrifices in the hope that their wishes will be granted. Overnight at the chief's palace in Batoufam. (BD)

### **Day 5 – Yaounde – Mbalmayo Forest Reserve.**

Today we leave for Yaounde stopping at the small town of Makenene on the way, On arrival in Yaounde we will take a short city tour and then continue to the Mbalmayo Forest Reserve, about 70kms outside Yaounde, and the eco- tourism village of Ebogo. Overnight at the "Centre d'Acueil" Lodge. (BD)

### **Yaounde**

Cameroon's official capital city is smaller and more pleasant than its rival Douala, which remains the most important city of the country – although the pace of life here can still be hectic, it feels slightly more relaxed and its location on a series of leafy hills makes the climate here more conducive to exploring. Although it does not have too many specific attractions, there is an interesting museum of Cameroonian arts and crafts situated in a Benedictine monastery atop one of the hills, with some superb examples of masks from the many ethnic groups of the country.



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### **Day 6 – Nyong River- Mefou Primate Sanctuary**

This morning we take a pirogue along the Nyong River and walk through the rainforest to learn something of the medicinal qualities of some of the plants. From here we will visit the Mefou Sanctuary which cares for rescued and orphaned primates such as chimpanzees and gorillas. We end the day by returning to Yaounde. Overnight at Merina Hotel or similar. (B)

### **Day 7 –Abongbang – Lomie (363 kms, approx. 6hrs 30mins)**

Leave Yaounde and drive to Lomie, via Ayos and Abongbang. This is a long drive which cuts through thick equatorial rainforest and passes picturesque Ba'Aka and Bantu villages. Overnight at Raphia hotel or similar (BD)

### **Days 8 & 9 – Dja Reserve**

Drive to the village of Djoamedjo at the entrance of the Dja Reserve. From here we continue on foot to the Ba'Aka village of Matisson. We are welcomed by the community and spend these days immersing ourselves in their unique and complex culture, taking walks in the forest, learning about traditional hunting techniques, discovering local folklore and more. This is a superb opportunity to spend time with a fascinating people. Overnight in huts in the village. (BLD)

***Please note that conditions in the village are very basic, with squat drop toilets and limited washing facilities. Please contact us for further information.***

### **Ba'Aka (Pygmy) People**

The Ba'aka people are the original inhabitants of this region, having lived here for centuries before the great Bantu migrations, which saw them eventually reduced to minority status in their traditional lands. Typically their villages are located in the forest, close to the flora and fauna that they hunt and gather by age old methods. The villages are usually constructed from materials found in the jungle, with houses being simple affairs made from branches, leaves and animal hides. They are expert hunters and organise group hunts for animals as large as forest elephants, although with the encroachment of logging and mining firms into their lands, wildlife is becoming less plentiful than in previous years. The term Pygmy is not used by the people themselves, who derive their names according to their particular ethnic group, such as Batwa or Ba'aka. In some areas Pygmy populations still live as virtual slaves to Bantu overlords. In recent years Pygmy groups have become more organised and have sent representatives to the UN and the World Bank in order to lobby and defend their rights, and be allowed to maintain their traditional lifestyles.

### **Day 10 – Yaounde (373km, approx. 6hrs 45mins)**

After bidding farewell to our Ba'Aka hosts we begin the drive back to Yaounde. Overnight at Merina Hotel or similar. (BD)

### **Day 11- Douala-Edea Park**

We leave Yaounde and drive via Edea to the Douala-Edea reserve, which is home to the endangered Central Chimpanzee, one of West Africa's most threatened primates, along with other rare species such as the Gabon Black Colobus Monkey. Numerous species of forest antelope and a small population of African Forest Elephants also live in the area. The reserve is managed by an association that subsequently



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releases young chimpanzees onto Pongo Songo Island on the Sanaga River when they become adults- we can take a boat ride to the island to watch the chimpanzees. Overnight at Hostellerie de la Sanaga. (B)

#### **Day 12- Kribi**

Today sees us head to the coastal town of Kribi. In the afternoon we take a boat ride on the Lobe River, and visit the Lobe Falls which flow directly into the sea, a rare natural phenomenon. Overnight at Tara Plage Hotel or similar. (BD)

#### **Day 13 – Douala (165km, approx. 2hrs 30mins)**

Spend a relaxing morning at leisure before transferring back to Douala, visiting the fishing village of Londji on the way. Overnight at Aquarius Hotel or similar. (B)

#### **Day 14- Douala**

Depending on your time of departure, there may be time to take a boat ride through the nearby mangrove forests and visit some local fishing villages. Tour ends with a transfer to the airport. (B)

## *Tour Inclusions/Exclusions*

#### **Inclusions:**

Arrival and departure transfers at the beginning and end of the tour  
All accommodation  
Transport throughout the tour in private minibuses.  
Services of English speaking guide / tour leader  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

#### **Excluded:**

International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Visas  
Tips  
Drinks

## *Important Information*

#### **Foreign Office Travel Warnings**

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present the FCO does not advise against travel to any of the places that we visit on our tour.



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Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or if you would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

## 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

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation. With a few exceptions you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom, and when necessary air-conditioning will be provided. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

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.

### Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### 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.

### 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 will vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. 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.



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Lunch and Dinner £4- £15

### 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 will be more expensive.

Water (1.5L) £1

Beer (Imported) £1

### Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is commonly recognised as a way of rewarding guides and drivers for good service. If you are happy with your guide and driver, please consider leaving a tip for them. If you are travelling on a group tour, a reasonable amount would be around £5 per day for the guide and £3 per day for the driver, between the group – this works out at around £110 for a 14 day tour, split between however many group members there are. If you are travelling on a private basis, then around £4 per day for the guide and £2 per day for the driver is reasonable.

Tipping is generally only expected in the better restaurants, rather than the smaller establishments, but a few coins are appreciated.

### Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** Cameroon does have ATMs in larger towns, but these are often unreliable

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Cards are not widely accepted

**Local Currency:** CFA

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Euros, US Dollars

**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you

### Joining your Tour

#### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### Joining Your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. 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. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

#### 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



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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

Visitors from most countries, including UK, EU and US visitors require a visa for entering Cameroon. You will need a Letter of Invitation to obtain your visa – in order that we may make arrangements for this, you will need to send us a scanned copy of your passport at the time of booking.

Visa regulations can frequently change and this is particularly the case with Cameroon. Therefore we recommend that you check with your nearest embassy for the most up to date details. At the moment the Cameroon Embassy in London require a Polio Certificate to be submitted as part of the visa application.

### 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, Typhoid, Meningitis. It is currently a requirement to hold a Polio vaccination certificate which must be submitted when applying for your visa.

Yellow Fever vaccination is required for all travellers arriving into Cameroon. You will be asked to produce a Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate on arrival in the country. Failure to do so could lead to a further vaccination being administered at the port of entry, for which a charge is made, or you could be refused entry.

## Preparing for your tour

### Climate

Generally speaking, the best time to visit Cameroon is between November and March, when the temperature will be hot, but not uncomfortably so. Cameroon's rainy season is from May to November and travel can be difficult during this time.



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### **Clothing**

Cameroon is generally warm and so light clothes are a good idea. You should ensure that you bring warmer clothes for evenings in the north. Please remember that Cameroon has a large Moslem population and conservative attitudes towards dress, and so women should bear this in mind and ensure that clothing is appropriate, especially at any religious sites. You should also bring a hat to protect yourself from the strong sun.

### **Equipment**

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. A torch (flashlight) is essential for your stay in Okpwa village and advisable for the Dja Reserve. You will need to bring a sleeping bag for our tours in Cameroon but an inflatable mattress is provided where necessary.

### **Footwear**

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended, as well as a pair of sandals.

### **Luggage on tour**

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

### **Electric Supply & Plugs**

Electrical supply is 220V/50 Hz and plugs have two round pins like most European countries.

### **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 31/07/2018