

DZANGA-SANGHA, RCA PROPOSAL 6 DAYS.



2020

PROGRAM

1ST DAY

Departure from Bangui: We will transfer you by plane to Bayanga, just 50 minutes away!



Landing in Bayanga. © Nuria Ortega

Bayanga has an airstrip with a very good 1.4km laterite runway.
Welcome to Doli Lodge!



©Nuria Ortega



Comfortable room at Doli Lodge ©Nuria Ortega



Cozy restaurant to relax and enjoy the view of the Sangha River and its fishermen. ©Nuria Ortega

After getting settled at **Doli Lodge** and a short rest, you will be invited to make a **sundowner cruise** on the Sangha and Mossapoula Rivers. Later in the evening, we will plan your next days with you.



A mother teaching her child how to make a net. © Nuria Ortega

Mossapoula is worth the visit because it allows an interesting view of an African forest: We first pass through a swampy, flood-prone forest and later penetrate in a vast open swamp, before plunging into the small, narrower raffia channels.

Embarked on a frail dugout carved from a single tree trunk, visitors must first get used to the instability of the boat. Those who are interested may taste the freshly collected raffia wine. With a little chance, while onboard the canoes, you will have the opportunity to catch a glimpse of pretty kingfishers, eagles and other birds.

Discovering Bayanga from the Sangha



Climbing a palm tree to collect raffia wine © Nuria Ortega



River allows you to experience a completely different aspect of life in the rainforest. The skills of the canoe-men (piroguiers), standing upright at the stern of the boat, steering you across frequently strong currents, are impressive. If you like, just bargain with the fishermen over the price of a good fish or simply enjoy the tranquility.

2ND DAY

Gorilla Tracking:



Malui breastfeeding one of her twins. © Nuria Ortega



Makumba, the king of the forest. ©



Twin trying to be a big guy! © Nuria Ortega

N.O

Both Mongambe and Bai Hokou have camps for the Gorilla Habituation Project. Visitors are transported 35 kms (to Bai Hokou) or 16 kms (to Mongambe) from the Welcome Center on a former logging road, going straight until it reaches a Limbali forest. Walks start from the campsite to search for the western lowland gorillas. It can take between 15 minutes to 3 hours to find them. All forest activities are led by trained guides who speak French and some also English.

3RD DAY

Dzanga Bai.



A forest elephant very close to the platform © Nuria Ortega

The drive from the Welcome Center to the forest parking lot is 14 kms. Access to Dzanga Bai is then done by foot, taking approximately 30 to 40 minutes. First, the path crosses a small stream with sandy bottoms. Light shoes are recommended. Then, we will follow some elephant paths through a beautiful closed-canopy forest until we reach the bai. Small primates (monkeys and mangabeys) and birds are often encountered along the way. Visitors are asked to be silent. During this time, you can develop an appreciation for the elephants' astonishing ability to move discreetly through the forest. Trumpeting and various grunts by the elephants announce the arrival at the bai. A large viewing platform was built at its edge, from where you can observe different mammals and birds, including large flocks of parrots, coming to the clearing in their own time. Because of the orientation of the platform, afternoon visits offer a better light for observation and photography.



Observation from the mirador. ©Nuria Ortega



Mirador in Dzanga Bai. © Nuria Ortega

4TH DAY

Net-Hunting and Plant Gathering with the BaAka People.



BaAka women on their way to hunt. © Nuria Ortega



Setting the net to hunt. © Nuria Ortega

Deep Immersion in the Forest with the BaAka People. Net-Hunting and Plant Gathering.

Net-Hunting: The BaAka villages of Mossapoula and Yandoumbé welcome visitors who wish to accompany them on a net-hunt. As this hunt is conducted in forests surrounding the villages, a vehicle drops the visitors off and returns to pick them up at a designated location. The walk through the forest lasts 2 to 3 hours, led by a group of Aka men and women who conduct the hunt in their traditional fashion. The BaAka consumes the kill from the hunt.

Plant Gathering: The Aka women accompany visitors in the forest to the places where they harvest different plants products. Depending on the season and the



Fertility tree ©Nuria Ortega

interests of visitors, the types of medicinal or dietary plants to look for may vary. Nonetheless, the women never return without bringing back the products of interest to them and available at the moment. This activity generally does not exceed two hours. We suggest to mix both activities.

Music and Dance of the BaAka



BaAka children dancing a traditional dance. © Nuria Ortega

The essence of the BaAka culture, which has been preserved over millennia, is mainly expressed in music and dance, serving to maintain the bonds with their gods, spirits and ancestors. Language could not fulfil this task so well as it was exposed to many changes. Instead of developing their own language, the BaAka often used the same language as their neighbors, who were of Bantu origin. While this facilitated their relationship with the outside world and with other groups, it also caused many modifications in the language whenever the neighbors changed. Music and dance, however, have always been a genuine expression of the BaAka feelings and imagination.



One BaAka custom is to mark their face and sharpen their teeth. © Nuria Ortega

Each singer and percussionist chooses his or her own rhythm, which results in a wonderful array of harmony. This universe of movement, rhythm and sound is very difficult to describe. You just have to experience it.

5TH DAY

Ramble across the Rainforest in the Company of a Group of Monkeys. Agile mangabeys are medium-sized monkeys (males 7-12kg, females 5-7kg), which very much live up to their generic name with their vibrant nature. They are mostly ground-dwelling and feed on a diverse range of fruits, seeds, stems, mushrooms, eggs, insects, crustaceans, and even certain mammals. The group, which started to be habituated in 2004, can be observed at leisure at distances under 10m whilst rummaging with their active hands through leaf litter in search of insects, investigating and extracting all that is possibly edible from tree holes, digging up mushrooms, storing seeds in their cheek pouches, and grooming their companions.



Daddy and his baby. © Nuria Ortega

The group followed at Bai Hokou is of an exceptional size, with more than 200 individuals, ranging in an area of several square kilometers and centered around the bai system. The habituation process allows this otherwise secretive and relatively unknown species to be easily observed in the dense vegetation.



Bongos looking curiously at tourists. © Nuria Ortega

A very interesting way for **wildlife encounter in the bais** is to take a walk. The varied landscape of the clearings and forest types are of particular interest. Circuits may include, after Bai Hokou, Ngubunga Bai, Bakulangu Bai (named after the giant turaco), the two Mosokpo Bais (“mud” in the Aka language), Mongole Bai (the name of a tree) or Dibwe Bai (“rock” in Aka). Near Mosokpo and Hokou Bai, it is possible to see how elephants modify their environment.

6TH DAY

Morning: **Hiking to a Waterfall.** On this day, you will be transported by boat and then hike to a waterfall where you can have an unforgettable shower! The path will take you through a spectacular prime rainforest. You also have the option to climb to the top of the waterfall for a view of the forest canopy. If you are lucky, you may encounter the rare Grey-necked



Rockfowl.

Cooling off in the cold water after a beautiful walk in a primary forest. © Nuria Ortega

Bayanga Village: Bayanga is the administrative seat of the Reserve and the Dzanga-Sangha Project. The [Doli Lodge](#), which is the starting point for all tourist activities, is also found here, in an isolated location on the banks of river.



Bayanga has experienced a growth in the 70s after the installation of an industrial sawmill. Originally, it was a fishing village, charted on German colonial maps as early as 1901. Today, Bayanga is home to approximately 4,000 people, most of them living in wooden houses with palm-thatched roofs. In addition to its early inhabitants of fishermen and pygmies, the population counts migrants from other parts of the country, attracted by employment opportunities. Until 2004, the sawmill employed approximately 350 people and almost 200 people are currently employed by the Reserve. With the advent of the modern world, its purchasing power and working tools (electricity, data-processing, cars, motorbikes), Bayanga has lost parts of its traditional lifestyle.



Bayanga Market © Nuria Ortega



Meat seller at Bayanga market. © Nuria Ortega



If you need a hairdresser, no problem in Bayanga! © Nuria Ortega