



Pygmies and Northern Markets

CAMEROON

Photo by M. Bartolini



14 days

26 December 2024 - 08 January 2025

English speaking guide

The 'unforgettable' of the trip:

- The encounter with the **Baka Pygmies** in the **Dja reserve**
- **Musgum clay houses** and the **Pouss market** where you can meet Bororo women
- The labyrinth of the **Oudjila chefferie** and the **Koza granaries**
- The **Tourou market**, where **Hidé** women wear painted *alebasse* as headgear
- The magical **Rhounsiki peaks** and the slopes of the **Mandara Mountains** on the border with Nigeria
- Trekking in the **Atlantika Mountains**, discovering the ancestral traditions of the **Koma tribe**
- The **sultanate of Ngaoundéré**, where the *lamido*, the local spiritual leader, reigns
- The markets and museums of **Yaoundé**, a vibrant African metropolis



Kanaga Africa Tours - info@kanaga-at.com
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Day 1: Thursday 26 December

Outward flight/Yaoundé (NIS)

Flight to Yaounde. On arrival meeting with the Kanaga Africa Tours staff who will arrange transfer to Hotel Safiyad or similar. Overnight stay in a double room with services.

Day 2: Friday 27 December

Yaoundé/Somalomo/Dja Reserve

Breakfast and assistance with the exchange of euros and the possible purchase of a local phone card. Departure in the direction of the DJA RESERVE, recognised by UNESCO as a world heritage site: more than 500,000 hectares of primeval rainforest, home to chimpanzees, mandrills, colobuses, buffalos, elephants and gorillas (all difficult to spot). Lunch box on the way. Arrival at the village of SOMALOMO, preparation for the expedition on foot into the forest, where, after crossing a river in a dugout canoe and a walk of about 1 hour, we arrive at a PYGMIES BAKA CAMP. Accommodation in our tented camp, picnic dinner and overnight stay in a double igloo tent.

Day 3: Saturday 28 December

Dja Reserve

Breakfast at the camp and a day dedicated to discovering the daily practices of the Baka Pygmies within the DJA RESERVE, a hunter-gatherer people who have managed to adapt extraordinarily well to the harsh conditions of forest life, maintaining a profound, almost symbiotic, bond with nature. Moving on foot through the dense vegetation, we will follow the tracks and footprints of the animals and learn the techniques of hunting (tortoises, pangolins, fallow deer...) and fishing, assist in the collection of palm caterpillars and honey, acquire some rudiments of traditional pharmacopoeia, and observe the construction of mungulu, the typical igloo-like leaf huts where the Baka families take shelter at night. Picnic lunch and dinner at the camp. After sunset we attend ritual dances around the fire. Overnight stay in a double igloo tent.



Yaoundé



Activities in the forest



Baby Baka



Baka Pygmies Camp



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Day 4: Sunday 29 December

Dja Reserve/Somalomo/Yaoundé

After breakfast, we depart by dugout canoe in the placid waters of the Dja river until we reach Somalomo, where we pick up our cars. We continue on to Yaoundé and have lunch in a restaurant en route. On arrival, accommodation at the Safiyad Hotel or similar and overnight stay in a double room with services.



Old fisherman on Lake Maga

Day 5: Monday 30 December

Yaoundé/Flight/Garoua/Maroua

Breakfast and assistance with the exchange of euros and the possible purchase of a local phone card. Transfer to the airport in time for the Camair-Co flight to Garoua. Lunch box. On arrival, drive to Maroua*, capital of the Far North Region, accommodation at the Relais Porte Mayo or similar and overnight stay in a double bungalow with services.



At the Pouss market

** Should your arrival time in Garoua be late, you will stay overnight in a hotel in town and continue to Maroua early the next day.*

Day 6: Tuesday 31 December

Maroua/Pouss/Mourla/Maroua

After breakfast, transfer north, stopping to admire the artisanal fishing activities on the Maga reservoir. Arriving in POUSS, we head for the banks of the Logone River, which marks the border with Chad. Here, in a continuous bustle of pirogues shuttling between the Cameroonian and Chadian banks, the Bororo women ferry their wares, in a spectacle of colours and images that is not to be missed. We enter the famous and very popular Tuesday market, animated by the ethnic Musgum, Moundang, Haoussa, Massà and Araba Choa vendors, recognisable by the piercing on their noses. Lunch box (sandwiches and fruit). Continue to MOURLA to visit a characteristic Musgum clay house, a masterpiece of raw earth architecture. A traditional house is usually composed of five constructions, connected by boundary walls, forming a circle in the centre of which is the granary. Return to Maroua in the afternoon and overnight at the hotel.



Logone River in Pouss



Musgum clay house



Day 7: Wednesday 01 January

Maroua/Oudjila/Koza/Mokolo

After breakfast, we take a scenic route through the hills to the OUDJILA CHEFFERIE, home to the Podoko tribe, where we visit the traditional chief's saré, a fortified building protected by high walls of thatch and mud. Inside is a veritable royal palace where, until a few years ago, the local leader lived with his children and his 70 wives, each of whom had a hut, a granary and a kitchen. We visit this intricate maze of buildings: the audience hall, the ancestral tombs and the stable of the sacred cow, which is said to spend two years in darkness before it can be sacrificed. This is followed by a stop at the bustling Wednesday market, where the inhabitants of the Oudjila district and neighbouring villages come to get supplies. Return to MAROUA, lunch in a restaurant and visit of this town with its typically Sahelian character, with its dyers' quarter, traditional medicine market and craft centre, famous for its leather goods. Arrival in Mokolo and accommodation at Campement Le Flamboyant or similar, dinner and overnight in a double bungalow with services.



Granaries in the saré of Oudjila



Podoko Dances

Day 8: Thursday 02 January

Mokolo/Tourou/Rhoumsiki

Breakfast and transfer to the KOZA HILL, on a bumpy but definitely suggestive track that crosses, in a continuous up and down of hills and valleys, surprising landscapes dotted with the small agglomerations of sharp-roofed huts of the Mafa, an animist population that in ancient times perched on these hills to escape the Islamic invasion from Nigeria. We continue to the village of TOUROU, to take part in the lively Thursday cross-border market, so close to the border that the currency most commonly used is the Nigerian Naira. Here we will meet the Hidé women, recognisable by the geometrically decorated calabasses they use as headgear, who come in large numbers to the market to barter wares, exchange news and trade bili-bili, a traditional millet beer. Continue southwards along the MANDARA MOUNTAINS, lunch box en route. We will cross the lunar landscapes of the Kapsikis, a deep valley separating Cameroon from Nigeria, characterised by the presence of a series of rock and granite formations up to more than 1,000 metres high, culminating in the peak of RHOUMSIKI, which gives its name to the village where we will spend the night. Accommodation at the Campement de Rhoumsiki, dinner and overnight in double bungalows with services.



Mafa huts on the Koza pass



Hidé woman in Tourou

Day 9: Friday 03 January

Rhoumsiki/Kola/Garoua

After breakfast, a walk will allow us to admire the majestic views of the RHOUMSIKI valley, which extends as far as Nigeria, only 3 km from here, and we will visit the village: the small weavers' cooperative, the potters' workshop, and the sorcier aux crabes, an elderly soothsayer who is said to be able to read the future by interpreting the movements of a crab enclosed in a jar. We will also witness a traditional dance. Departure for Garoua, stopping at the KOLA GORGES, bizarre rock formations eroded by the waters of the Mayo river that reveal all their beauty during the dry season. Lunch box on the way. Arrival in GAROUA, accommodation at the Relais Saint Hubert or similar and overnight stay in a double room with services.



Rhoumsiki Peaks



Sorcier aux crabes

Day 10: Saturday 04 January

Garoua/Poli/Koma Villages

After breakfast, we depart to POLI, to attend the weekly market, frequented mainly by Bororo women, recognisable by the tattoo-like scarifications on their faces and the intricate braids. Continuation to the town of Wangai, picnic lunch. In the afternoon, we begin our exploration on foot of the ATLANTIKA MOUNTAINS ('the land forgotten by Allah'), stronghold of the Koma tribe, currently represented by about 4,000 individuals who, thanks to their isolation, have been able to keep alive over the centuries ancient animist traditions linked to the customs of their ancestors who, during the period of the great Muslim invasion and the slave trade, took refuge in the highlands to escape the forced Islamisation of the Karem Bornou. Accommodation in our tented camp near a village, picnic dinner and overnight stay in a double igloo tent.



Bororo Girls



Elder Koma with pipe

Day 11: Sunday 05 January

Koma Villages/Gode/Poli

After breakfast at the camp, we attend a dance by the Koma women, with their characteristic *counché*, the pipes they never part with, and the leafy skirts. We continue our trek towards other KOMA VILLAGES, composed by many *sarè* (in the Fulbe language literally 'family'), cylindrically shaped huts built from benches and covered with thatched or wicker roofs. With luck, we may meet a *Balauru*, a feticheur intermediary between the visible world and that of the ancestors. Return to Wangai and picnic lunch. In the afternoon, we reach GODE for its weekly market, frequented by Bororo women who come to sell fresh milk and butter, and to visit a peculiar animist burial site, where skulls are preserved in earthenware amphorae and dug up periodically to perform propitiatory rites. Accommodation in our tented camp near a village or in a basic Auberge in Poli, picnic dinner and overnight stay in a double igloo tent.



Dance from the Koma

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Day 12: Monday 06 January

Poli/Ngaoundere/Train

Early in the morning, after breakfast at the camp, we continue towards NGAOUNDERE through the Vallée des Roniers and a scenic road that crosses 'the navel mountain', up to an altitude of around 1,300 metres. Lunch and day use rooms in a hotel for a shower. In the afternoon, we visit the palace of the *Lamido*, the spiritual head of the local Islamic community, built in 1830. After passing three pillars containing the remains of men who were buried alive to consecrate the site as a royal residence, we will enter an impressive complex of low, circular-based buildings with thatched roofs, some of which still serve as customary law courts. With a bit of luck, we will be able to witness a 'fantasia', a characteristic parade of horses harnessed in colourful fabrics and pendants, accompanied by the sound of traditional instruments. Transfer to the station to board the TRAIN that connects Ngaoundere with the capital Yaoundé in about 12 hours. Overnight stay in first-class compartments (possibility of 4-bed bunks on request).



Feticheur Koma



Animist burials

Day 13: Tuesday 07 January

Train/Yaoundé

Arrival at YAOUNDE' station in the morning. Transfer to Hotel Safiyad or similar, some rooms in day use. Lunch in a restaurant and afternoon city tour of the country's capital, including the interesting National Museum and the Museum of the Forest Peoples. Transfer to the airport. End of services.



Bororo Woman at the Godé market

Day 14: Wednesday 08 January

Yaoundé (NIS)/Return flight

Morning arrival at the YAOUNDE' station, transfer to Hotel Merina or similar. Lunch in a restaurant and afternoon city tour of YAOUNDE', the capital of the country, with the interesting National Museum and the Museum of Forest Peoples. Overnight stay in a hotel, in double rooms with services.



Lamidat of N'Gaoundere



Lamidat of N'Gaoundere



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Individual participation fee in double room/tent (min. 3 - max. 16 pax)

2,990 €/pax

**in promotion at € 2,890
for bookings before 26/09/2024**

**in promotion at € 2,790
for bookings before 26/06/2024**

Supplements:

- Enrollment fee: **free**
- Single room: **230 €**
- Extra airport transfer: **30€/person/transfer**
- Flight Yaoundé/Garoua: **on request**
- Group visa service: **260 €/passport**
- Emergency visa service: **350 €/passport**
- Extension Central African Republic: **contact us**

The fee includes:

- French/English speaking local guide;
- English speaking tour leader (from 7 pax);
- Escort where necessary;
- Visits and excursions as scheduled;
- Transfers by 4x4 in the north (maximum 4 clients/car), by minibus in the south, including drivers, fuel and tolls;
- The Ngaoundere-Yaoundé train ticket in first class or 4-compartment couchettes;
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary;
- Water for meals at the camp (1.5 l/pax);
- 12 overnight stays in double rooms/tents as mentioned in the itinerary;
- Field equipment and porters on Koma and Pygmies treks;
- Day use in Ngaoundere and day use in Yaoundé (1 per 4 participants).

The fee does not include:

- The visa for Cameroon;
- Insurance for cancellation, health, luggage;
- Air flights (international and domestic);
- Drinks and mineral water (except 1.5 litre/pax during meals at the camp);
- Meals not included in the itinerary;
- Sleeping bag and travel pillow;
- Airport/hotel transfers and vice versa with companies other than the one recommended;
- Photographic tips;
- Tips and expenses of a personal nature;
- Everything mentioned in 'Supplements';
- Anything not expressly mentioned in "the fee includes".