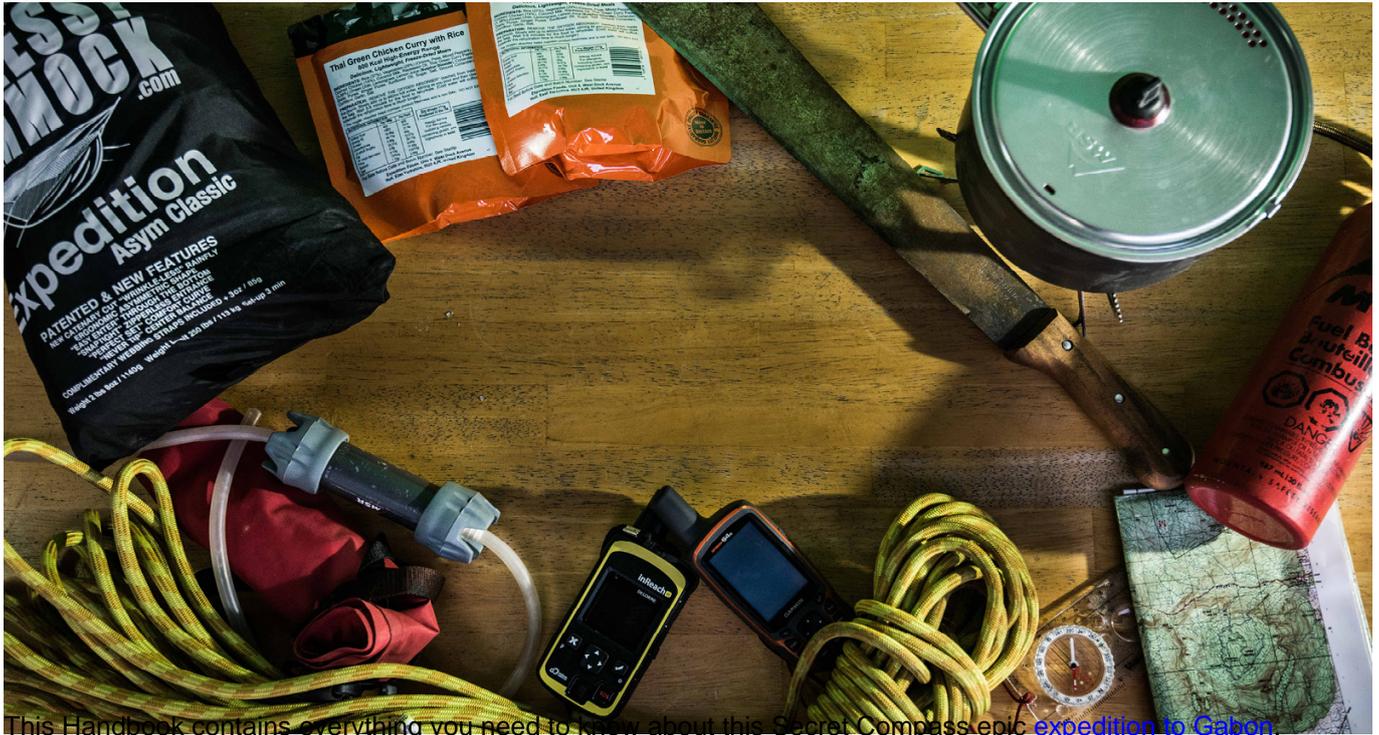


GABON



This Handbook contains everything you need to know about this Secret Compass epic [expedition to Gabon](#)

Read on to discover our ethos and team-centred approach and for the nitty gritty like flight and visa advice, insurance requirements and kit recommendations. Use the buttons below to ask questions or to apply for this team or, once approved, to secure your spot on the team with a Booking Form and a £400 deposit.

Key facts

- Arrive: by 2300 on 01 June 2019 into Libreville, Gabon.
- Depart: leave any time on 17 June 2019 onwards.
- Insurance: ensure you have comprehensive cover.
- Docs: send your flight, insurance and passport copy in.
- Balance due: 90 days before on 01 March (or on booking if later).
- Find [FAQ](#) and [Testimonials](#) online.

Overview

Aim

The aim of this [epic expedition to Gabon](#) is to complete a journey in expedition packrafts on Gabon's Mouniandje and Ivindo Rivers.

Summary

Along the way you'll hike into the jungle to visit a remote bai – a clearing in the jungle with fantastic opportunities for wildlife viewing, and finish your journey at Kongou falls in Ivindo National park, arguably one of Africa's most impressive falls. It is one of the least populated regions in Gabon and the land is often inaccessible and uninhabited, except for forest based communities often referred to as Pygmies. Our expedition takes us out from the regional capital of Makokou, to travel deep into the forest of Gabon, full of elephants, birds, monkeys and other wildlife.

This Gabon trek and raft adventure is open to those new to rafting, with rivers at times still and flat and at times punctuated with heart-rate-rising Grade One and Two rapids. Rucksacks will be strapped securely onto the packrafts for the paddling phases. When more serious rapids mean that the team portages around them on land, the lightweight packrafts will be deflated, strapped to rucksacks and carried through the waterside jungles as the adventure continues.

This is primarily a packrafting adventure rather than a wildlife safari, but the visit to the jungle Bai will provide excellent wildlife viewing opportunity, attracting forest elephants, gorillas, forest buffaloes, leopards, otters, bongos and other animals and birds from the surrounding jungle. Travelling by packraft increases the chances of spotting wildlife, and the 2016 expedition team spotted gorillas along the river, paddled within metres of elephants at the water's edge, and spotted and heard many other smaller mammals and birds.

Highlights

- Undertake an epic amphibious adventure.
- Navigate the Mouniandje and Ivindo rivers.
- Explore Gabon's Ivindo National Park.
- Trek Gabon's equatorial jungles.
- Stand beneath the spectacular Kongou falls.
- Visit a jungle bai and look out for forest elephants, gorillas and leopards.
- Birdwatch in Africa's epicentre of forest bird diversity.
- Travel in local dug-out canoes.

Team closing date

This team ideally needs to be confirmed by 5 April as we must confirm some things in-country at this point. (Later bookings can be accepted as there isn't a protracted visa process for Gabon but, if serious about joining this team, do send in your application as soon as possible and before 5 April so that we can consider you in our initial planning.)

To do

Flights

You need to organise your own international flights.

It is advised that you book a flexible flight ticket that can be changed or refunded if the expedition dates are changed or if it is cancelled for any reason. See our online [Terms and Conditions](#).

You need to be in Libreville by 2300 on 1 June 2019 and the expedition officially ends after breakfast on the 17 June 2018 although you are free to depart anytime as many flights depart early in the morning. The 16 June is a travel day and due to road and vehicle conditions there can be delays, please be aware of this if you choose to book an early morning flight on 17 June which requires you to check in on 16 June.

Visas

Visas are your responsibility. Please check the specific requirements for your nationality. British nationals require a visa to visit Gabon. These can be applied for in advance at the Embassy of Gabon in London and you will need:

- Completed visa application form
- Passport
- 2 passport photos
- Hotel booking (supplied by SC)
- Copy of flight ticket
- Copy of yellow fever vaccination certificate

- Proof of address (bills, bank statement etc)
- Proof of sufficient funds for your stay in Gabon
- Proof of employment or student status
- Visa payment (£80 for single entry tourist visa)
- Self-Addressed Royal Mail Special Delivery envelope if you would like the passport returned by post.

Gabon has also introduced an e-visa system for certain nationalities who are arriving by air into Libreville. However, there are many reports of problems with applying for a visa through the e-visa system so we strongly advise you to apply for a visa in advance through your local embassy/consulate if possible.

Passports

You should have a passport valid for the duration of the expedition and six months beyond with at least two blank pages. Please send a clear, colour copy of your passport to Secret Compass ahead of the expedition and carry photocopies with you on the expedition in a safe place.

Insurance

[Travel insurance](#) that provides cover for emergency repatriation in case of a medical emergency is compulsory for all expeditions. You should be aware that many standard insurance policies may not cover you adequately for all aspects of a remote expedition and so we strongly recommend that you purchase a suitably designed insurance policy. Secret Compass cannot comment on the suitability of your cover so if you are in any doubt please contact your policy provider and ask them to confirm that you are covered to our minimum standard (below).

- Emergency medical repatriation (to home country) including any associated expenses abroad of at least \$500,000.
- Activities: ensure that any expedition activities are included, these could be trekking, horse riding, rafting, MTB etc.
- Geographical region: check the geographical region you are going to is insured (often the US and Canada or countries such as Afghanistan are not insured).
- Foreign Ministry advice: check your insurance is not sensitive to any travel warnings issued by your respective foreign ministry. In the UK, many insurers will not insure you when the Foreign Office warns against travel to this area. Foreign Office advice will not necessarily mean we cancel an expedition or do not travel to a particular area. Please check @FCOtravel and the [Travel Aware site](#).
- Dates: make sure the period of cover begins at the departure and ends at the return to your home country. Many flights take a day or two and time zones vary. Insurance companies may prejudice your claims due to this.
- Pre-existing medical conditions: disclose these to your insurance company and to Secret Compass.

Prior to travel Secret Compass will require the name of your insurance policy provider, their 24-hour emergency contact number and your policy number. For full information on travel insurance and links to suggested companies, please visit the [Travel Insurance](#) page on our website.

Yellow Fever vaccination

All team members will require an original valid yellow fever certificate, issued more than 10 days before the start of the expedition. WHO advice now states that Yellow Fever Vaccinations are valid for life instead of the original 10 years claimed. Please note that this information is not widely known so if necessary you should insist on a medical practitioner issuing a new, valid certificate or extending the expiry on your existing one. Do not accept an exemption certificate as an alternative to a vaccination certificate, as these too are not widely recognised.

Itinerary

Day 1: Jun 1 – Libreville

Team arrive in Libreville by 2300. Airport transfers are provided to the team hotel where you will meet your leader for a quick expedition brief before bed.

Day 2: Jun 2 – Makokou

An early start today for the 11-hour drive to Makokou.

Day 3: Jun 3 – Mouniandje River

Today, another early start to transfer to your get-in point on the river Mouniandje for your first day in the pack rafts. Your leader will instruct you on how to use the rafts and off you go, heading towards your first wild-camp on the banks of the river!

Day 4: Jun 4 – Mouniandje River / Jungle Hike

After a morning paddling on the river, swap packrafts for hiking boots and hike into the jungle to visit a remote bai for wildlife spotting. Wild camp in the jungle near the bai.

Day 5: Jun 5 – Jungle Hike / Mouniandje River

After early morning wildlife watching opportunities at the bai, hike back to the river to once again switch hiking boots for packrafts for an afternoon of paddling.

Days 6 to 12: Jun 6 to 12 – Mouniandje and Ivindo rivers

The next 7 days on the river form the heart of this epic amphibious adventure. You'll cover 20 – 25 km per day, carrying all of your food and belongings in your rucksack strapped to your raft, from time to time deflating your packrafts and carrying your kit around the bigger rapids. Taking decisions as a team, you'll portage around any major obstacles, run the smaller rapids and carve out wild camping spots near the river's edge every night. Wildlife sightings are not guaranteed on the river section but previous teams have spotted gorillas and elephant at very close quarters.

Day 13: Jun 13 – Ivindo falls

Your final day on the Ivindo river and our arrival at Kongou waterfall and the Kongou Camp. There will be time to view the waterfall on the evening we arrive. Expect a good dinner and a bed at the rustic Kongou Camp.

Day 14: Jun 14 – Makokou

Take the morning to enjoy the waterfall. They are truly spectacular, and thought to be the biggest and imposing waterfalls in Central Africa. The reach heights of over 60m and have great spiritual value to the local people. We will walk around the upper and lower falls. In the afternoon, we will take a pirogue back to Makokou.

Day 15: Jun 15 – Makokou

River Contingency Day or exploring Makokou. Today acts as a contingency to absorb any delays from road conditions, river levels, weather, team speed etc.

Day 16: Jun 16 – Libreville

Meet the vehicles for the return drive to Libreville where your hotel rooms (and showers) await.

Day 17: Jun 17 – Libreville

Team departs. Officially the expedition ends after breakfast today, however many flights depart early in the

morning.

Note on this expedition itinerary

Please remember that this itinerary acts as a framework plan. It provides guidance as to our intentions but will not be followed religiously. This is an adventure and by definition the outcome is uncertain. The leadership team may flex and change the plan depending on numerous frictions encountered en route. An adaptable, team-centred approach is required.

Prepare

Fitness

All our expeditions are achievable by people with an active and healthy lifestyle. However, this is an arduous expedition that will test you and at times you may be sore, tired, hungry and possibly wet! You must be prepared physically and mentally for the expedition and for living in basic conditions for the duration. Please ensure that you train for the expedition and arrive fit and ready to go. You will be required to be fit enough for the following.

- Expedition [Grade](#): 360°
- Trek: up to 10km per day (it's slow going in the jungle with no paths!).
- Raft: paddling in a one-person packraft down fast-flowing rivers for up to 25km per day, negotiating rapids and portaging around obstacles.
- Carrying: up to 30kg when portaging early in the expedition including a deflated packraft and a share of team food and kit. When hiking to the bai pack weights will be less.
- Terrain: deal with dense jungle foliage and uneven ground, possibly cutting own paths, wading through swamps or crossing rivers.
- Climate: a hot and humid environment at around 30 degrees C with the humidity trapped beneath the jungle canopy when trekking.
- Swim: be able to comfortably swim 200m unassisted and be comfortable in white water.

Previous experience

No previous experience of jungle trekking is necessary to join this expedition but team members would benefit from experience of multi-day camping expeditions and carrying up to 30kg. You do not need to have any packraft experience, there will be a training session dedicated to packrafting skills at the start of the expedition. It would be beneficial to have some form of paddling experience eg. a taster session at your local kayak club so you can get a feel whether this expedition is for you.

Money

The currency in Gabon is the Central African Franc. Euros and dollars are only accepted at the airport. Credit cards are not accepted in Gabon except in large hotels and there are regular incidences of credit card fraud. This expedition is all-inclusive so you won't need much money, just for a beer in the town and some souvenirs on the way or for (discretionary but always appreciated) tips.

Medical

Vaccinations. Please seek advice from your health professional on recommended vaccinations. The NHS [Fit For Travel](#) site and Travel Health Pro are both useful. All team members must have a valid Yellow Fever certificate. Additional recommended vaccinations are Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Polio, Rabies, Tetanus. Malaria is widespread – the recommended chemoprophylaxis is mefloquine, doxycycline or atovaquone/proguanil (Malarone™).

UK health authorities have classified Gabon as having a risk of Zika virus transmission.

Dental. It is strongly recommended that you have a dental check up prior to departure. Dental problems far from help are very unpleasant.

Foot care. On this expedition your feet will often be wet with sweat or river water. It is ESSENTIAL that you bring foot care items to ensure your feet do not deteriorate. Anti-fungal cream is essential and you will be pre-treating your feet morning and night with this during the expedition. Anti-fungal foot powder is also important, to dry your feet off quickly in a humid environment. It is also wise to bring rolls of zinc oxide tape to protect your feet against blisters and a pot of Vaseline.

Kit list

The following is Secret Compass's recommended kit list for the this expedition to Gabon. You will be required to carry all of your own kit for this expedition along with a share of group food and cooking equipment and the medical and communications pack as well as a packraft, paddles, life vest and hammock (all supplied by Secret Compass). Due to the weight of this kit, we advise keeping personal kit to an absolute minimum – please contact Secret Compass with any questions.

Secret Compass have arranged team members discounts with Cotswold Outdoor, Nordic Life, Outdoor Hire and Expedition Kit Hire, details of these will be sent through on booking.

Baggage and sleeping

- RUCKSACK: 60-70ltr, all your personal gear needs to fit easily into this pack and have enough room for a hammock, food and share of group equipment provided by us as well as a packraft and lifevest.
- WATERPROOF RUCKSACK LINER: Sealable 'canoe' or 'dry' bags made by Podsac or Ortlieb. You need a large one to line your rucksack as it WILL get wet.
- SMALLER DRY BAGS: As above, but smaller bags to put essential items in. The large rucksack liners sometimes leak so anything important needs to be waterproofed individually.
- SLEEPING BAG: Rated to comfort +10°C. Lightweight and packs as small as possible.
- WATERPROOF WALLET: For your passports, money and personal documents.

Clothing

- 2x LONG SLEEVE SHIRT: Quick drying long sleeve (for sun and insect protection) shirt or top (not cotton).
- 1x TREKKING TROUSERS: Thin trekking trousers that dry quickly and are comfortable.
- 1x SHORTS: (optional) Or combine with the above using zip-off trousers.
- 4x HIKING SOCKS: Light weight trekking socks that fit well with your boots.
- WALKING BOOTS: Ensure your boots are worn in and comfortable with good ankle support. Specific desert or jungle boots are ideal if you have them but are not required as most of the time you will wear your river shoes. Recommend you visit your local outdoors store for advice on fitting.
- TRAINERS OR RIVER SHOES: Around camp and on the river. Ensure secure and comfortable. Must be robust and grippy enough to wear on the banks and when portaging through the jungle, and secure enough to not slip off in mud. Something like the Tor Trafa from Hoka or the Karrimor K2 are ideal.
- WIDE BRIMMED SUN HAT.
- GLOVES: Paddling or cycling gloves are great for preventing blisters when packrafting.

Eating

- MUG: Metal mugs are great for use over fires.
- SPOON: Long handled spoons are great for use with ration packs.
- WATER BOTTLES OR BLADDERS: You need to carry at least three litres of water between a water bladder, bottles or a combination.

Health and hygiene

- WASHBAG: This shouldn't be large, only bring the essentials.
- SOAP: Anti-bacterial and BIODEGRADABLE
- TRAVEL TOWEL/SARONG
- WET WIPES OR BABY WIPES
- ANTIBACTERIAL HAND GEL: Bring enough for the entire trip.
- TOILET PAPER
- TRAVEL TISSUES
- SANITARY PRODUCTS: Bring ziplok bags for carrying out.
- LIP SALVE WITH UV PROTECTION
- VASELINE: Keep readily available on to prevent chafing skin and heel friction blisters.
- AFTER SUN/MOISTURISER
- FACTOR 30+ SUN CREAM

Small First Aid Kit

A team medical kit with a comprehensive primary care provision will be carried.

- A WATERPROOF BAG OR TUPPERWARE BOX: Keep kit dry and safe.
- PAINKILLERS: Ibuprofen and paracetamol.
- ZING OXIDE TAPE AND SMALL SCISSORS.
- MELOLIN DRESSING PADS x4.
- 2 x CREPE BANDAGE.
- COMPEED BLISTER PADS: Please note that Compeed produce several similar looking blister packs for corns, etc. Please ensure you purchase the standard/original item.
- DIARRHOEA TABLETS: Imodium.
- DIORALYTE SACHETS OR SIMILAR REHYDRATION PACKS.
- ANTISEPTIC WIPES.
- ANTISEPTIC CREAM.
- PIRITON TABLETS: For allergies.
- EURAX CREAM: For bites.
- ANY MEDICATION YOU NORMALLY USE: Find out the generic/chemical name for your medication in case you need to source more in-country. Please also check that your medication is legal in your destination. You MUST make Secret Compass aware of any medical conditions before you travel.

OTHER

- WATCH.
- HEAD TORCH AND SPARE BATTERIES: Petzl Tikka head torch or equivalent.
- SUNGLASSES: With UV-filter lenses.
- PENKNIFE.
- GAFFA TAPE: For emergency repairs to your kit, you can take some off the roll and wrap it around something else in your kit.
- SPARE BOOT LACES.
- SMALL SEWING KIT.
- RE-SEALABLE PLASTIC BAGS: For dirty washing, wrappings etc.

Approach

Our approach

Secret Compass organises expeditions, not sightseeing tours. Our expeditions are team-centred, flexible and dynamic. Teams are managed on the ground by Secret Compass staff: industry-leading professionals and guides of the highest calibre. They put the structure in place for your team to have an incredible experience while achieving your expedition's aims. Our people are as passionate as you are about achieving the extraordinary in the world's wildest places. Secret Compass teams often go to places that others don't. This makes our

expeditions truly different, taking you beneath the skin and beyond the headlines of the world's most remote reaches. Inspired by history's great explorers and challenges, you'll be set ambitious goals and will overcome similar hardships to those experienced on the audacious journeys of the past.

Remember this is not an organised tour. It is an adventure. More often than not expeditions don't run smoothly! The nature of the areas we operate in mean that we will encounter a number of challenges that we expect everyone to meet and relish. Friction and hurdles are all part and parcel of an arduous expedition and also to our success as a team. These make the journey more interesting and are often the best and most amusing parts when looking back. Each expedition is thoroughly reviewed on its return and team members will have the opportunity to provide feedback which helps to inform planning for future expeditions.

Local partners and bureaucracy

Our teammates can only achieve the extraordinary with the help of people in the communities we travel through. NGO and aid workers, guides, fixers and interpreters all work extremely hard and are generous in their hospitality to us and our teams: visitors in their land. They are crucial to our success. Please remember and respect that their perspectives and concepts of time, environmental responsibility and customer service might differ to yours. Occasionally there is no established protocol for outside visitors which means we encounter local power struggles or disagreements. Our leaders have years of experience in delicate negotiations like these and conversational chess – especially through an interpreter – and these interchanges are often memorable parts of any expedition.

Infrastructure and natural events

The areas we travel to often especially remote. Transport infrastructure can be ageing, inadequate or non-existent. Flooded roads, collapsed bridges, fallen trees and vehicle break-downs are all par for the course. Our teams thrive on overcoming challenges like these – be prepared to get stuck in and push occasionally! Natural phenomena like desert sand storms, early monsoons, landslides across key routes, winter coming early, gale force winds and driving snow can all make for a more interesting time on the expedition.

Part of a team

Secret Compass fosters a team mentality across all its expeditions and projects. Like all teams you will have a leader who will give direction to your progress. Crucial to your team's success – especially when the going gets tough – is the attitude of the teammates working together to achieve the aim. You really are part of a team, not a cosseted guest on a tour. We ask teammates to muck in and help out any aspect of the expedition, from fetching water and helping to prepare and cook food, to carrying some group kit and equipment if required. The working language of all teams is English.

Typical teammates

There really is no typical expedition member, though everyone needs to be fit, healthy and ready to take on the expedition's aim by the time of departure. Participants range from 21 to 65+ in age and come from all over the world. Backgrounds include contract workers and engineers, IT specialists and students, teachers and literature lovers, journalists and keen photographers and so many more. What bonds our pioneering teams is their shared spirit of adventure and their sense of humour and positive outlook. A good teammate looks on the bright side when the 4x4 breaks down, the rain comes early and when a meal is distinctly pedestrian. Our teammates help each other, look out for each, encourage each other and help each other when needed.

Our teams have done us proud in working together to achieve their common goal: the aim of the expedition. If this sounds like you, you've come to the right expedition company.

Teammate mentality

You need a robust, spirited and can-do attitude to cope with demanding days and rough camping in rugged and wild places. You'll cover good daily distances (generally carrying your own kit and equipment), eating expedition

foods or relying on local food sources. These elements combine to create the unique character of each expedition. On expedition, challenges, frictions and changes to plans are inevitable. Teammates should meet and relish these as an integral part of any arduous expedition and its ultimate success. Such things make the journey more interesting and are often most memorable parts when looking back.

Food

In some areas our teams explore, we rely on local food sources. This can often be outstanding (but can also be very average) and we always make the best out of the resources available. In other cases, we will supply filling and high-calorie dehydrated expedition foods (ration packs)

Risk management

Secret Compass is an expedition company not a tour company. Expeditions contain inherent risk. This is part of the appeal for teammates. We do not make expeditions safe as, by definition, that is impossible. We construct and implement a three-staged risk management approach to reduce risk to what we perceive as a tolerable level.

1. Risk assessment.

We conduct a thorough risk assessment of potential hazards and threats that may be encountered on the expedition and provide recommendations to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring/ severity if it does occur.

2. Safety plan.

As part of our expedition plan, we detail actions to be taken to implement and resource the recommendations of the risk assessment. This includes a detailed medical and communications plan.

3. Delivery.

The expedition leader is responsible for dynamic risk management on the expedition itself.

Key risks.

Key risks encountered on this specific expedition include vehicle accidents, insect-borne disease, and accidents or medical emergencies whilst on trekking or rafting in a remote environment, especially whilst on or in the water. If you would like to see the full Risk Assessment for this expedition, please email info@secretcompass.com

Incident management and medical

As part of the safety plan, Secret Compass has a full incident and emergency plan for medical and other emergencies. This will be discussed in full at the arrival brief, so everyone is aware what action will be taken. In summary, incidences are usually managed on the ground by the expedition leader in the first instance with remote support from Secret Compass's 24 hour Operations Room before evacuation to the nearest appropriate medical centre.

Informed consent

It is your responsibility to understand the risks associated with adventure travel in remote areas. You also must understand that medical evacuation will take an extended period of time (potentially up to 3 days) and will require wilderness extraction techniques and long carries by stretcher. In-country search and rescue and emergency services are very basic or non-existent and the expedition will rely on internal resources for medical evacuation. By joining this expedition, you accept the risks associated with the venture. If you require any more information on specific risk management for this expedition, or would like to speak to us about our medical planning prior to the trip, please get in touch.

Testimonials

Read team [Testimonials](#) or watch this short video featuring expedition teammates (filmed on location in Ethiopia) for an insight into life on expedition.

On exped

Terrain

In the packrafts, the team will navigate a combination of flat water and rapids at Grade 1-2 with portages around larger rapids and waterfalls. You'll move from the narrow Mouniandje river to the large, braided Ivindo river.

During portages and on your hike to the bai, you'll encounter dense, jungle terrain with few paths, so progress will be slow with the team cutting their way through the undergrowth. The distances covered aren't large but rugged terrain, heavy packs and jungle humidity make these parts of the expedition a challenge.

Weather

Gabon's equatorial location provides a fairly steady climate. Temperatures in June average 25°C although this can feel warmer due to high humidity in the jungle and by the waterways.

Accommodation

On arrival in Gabon we will be accommodated in a comfortable hotel in the city centre, please expect double occupancy in twin bedrooms.

Throughout the expedition, except for the first night when the team will stay outside the research station or in a basic hotel in Makokou, we will be camping rough in the jungle and forests in improvised camp sites as we move along the route. Secret Compass will provide hammocks.

Occasionally people on our expeditions are not prepared for camping for multiple days. Living in these conditions can degrade your health if you do not look after yourself and increase fatigue if you are not used to living rough. You need to be highly organised so that your night and morning routine is done efficiently and quickly. If you are inexperienced at camping, it is essential that you get as much practice as possible prior to the expedition.

Transport

Airport transfers are provided from Libreville Leon M'ba International Airport to the team hotel. 4x4 vehicles and minibuses will be used to transfer the group to and from the start and finish point of the expedition. These road journeys will be over roads of varying levels of construction and will take the majority of the day, delays and breakdowns are likely.

On the river, the team will be using compact inflatable packrafts which are tried and tested on all water conditions from white-water rapids to still surfaces. There will be some sections where portaging (carrying the rafts over land) will be necessary to avoid larger rapids or obstacles. All the necessary rafting gear will be provided. Training and a safety brief will be given on your first day on the water, but you should be comfortable on and around water and accept that you may capsize.

Your return journey from Kongou falls will be by motorised canoe.

Food

In towns, the team will eat well in local restaurants whilst dehydrated expedition rations will be used on the expedition – these are high-calorie and tastier than they look! Dietary requirements can usually be catered for but should be discussed with Secret Compass in advance. It is recommended that you bring a favourite snack or cereal bar for each expedition day as a morale boost.

Communications

Secret Compass staff will be carrying at least two methods of communication, usually a Satellite Phone and a DeLorme two-way communication device. These will be used for regular updates to head office and for emergencies.

Unfortunately, routine communication between team members and family/friends is not possible – please reassure them that no news is good news! If there is an emergency and someone needs to contact a team member, they can contact Secret Compass's Operations Room on +44207 096 8428 who will endeavour to pass a message on within 24hours.

Cell Phone. Your mobile roaming will work in Libreville but you should not expect any coverage for the rest of the expedition.

Exped FAQ

Here are some frequently asked questions that are specific to this expedition. Read our [general FAQ](#) too for questions such as 'how do I join an expedition' and more. Can't find your answer? Contact SCHQ.

I'm a vegetarian. Can I join?

Teammates with dietary requirements are welcome to apply for this expedition and should state their specific requirements when applying. The food situation is outlined in the Practicalities tab.

I've never packrafed. Can I come?

Yes. As long as you fulfil the fitness requirements and have an adventurous spirit and willing to work as a team, then you will have no problems. There will be a packraft training session at the start of the expedition but we recommend having a go at paddling before this to make sure it's for you.

I can't carry 30kg. Are there porters?

There are no porters. The expedition team will be self-sufficient throughout the expedition so lots of food etc. is unavoidable. During portages you will have to carry your personal kit along with expedition food and a share of cooking equipment, medical kit and comms kit. At the beginning of the expedition pack weights will be up to 30 kg, but this will reduce as the trip progresses. During your hike to the bai you will only need to carry supplies and equipment for one night. A good way to reduce weight is to pack sensibly, bringing only the bare minimum of personal kit with you and making sure that is lightweight but still suitable for the expedition. Secret Compass has a [Generic Training Programme](#) with suggestions to train for carrying 25kg for eight hours a day for multiple days.

Can I arrive a day late?

As the plan outlines, there is a chain of transport to get teammates to the National Park where the training will commence, so start and end dates are not flexible.

Can I charge electricals?

Once the expedition phase begins, there will be no access to mains power. Please ensure that you are self-sufficient in terms of charging your appliances by bringing things like spare batteries, lightweight solar panels or power packs to avoid frustration. Please also bear in mind that you will be carrying a lot of equipment already so pack sensibly.

Do you provide further advice?

You might find our [Get Ready](#) section useful, with further advice about fitness, flights, travel insurance, visas and our approach to risk management.

How can I apply?

Use the buttons below to contact Secret Compass with your questions or to complete our no-obligation Application Form to join this team. Someone will get back to you promptly.