

## Republic of the Congo – When to go!

Congo lies on the Equator, so that temperatures vary very little year round. Its seasons can be divided into a green season when more rainfall occurs, and two 'drier' seasons of December to February and June to August respectively.

*It is important to remember that while game viewing can never be guaranteed, there are some trends that can be seen when we combine our knowledge of seasons, habitats and water availability with animal distribution, their numbers, and thus where they can be found. The table below gives some insight into these trends. For more details, it is best to speak to your Journey Specialist or a seasoned Africa expert.*

GREEN SEASON	<p>March to May; September to November</p> <p>Rainfall during this period means that the air is clearer and humidity higher. Daytime temperatures are typically higher owing higher humidity. November in particular can be very wet.</p> <p>Water levels in the Lekoli River are high as well, allowing for boating activities on the lookout for primates, buffalo, elephant, slender-snouted crocodile (for the lucky) and exciting birdlife like Cassin's flycatcher.</p> <p>A scarcity of ripe fruits during this period results in smaller ranges and daily movements by western lowland gorilla, central chimpanzee and elephant. Elephant are particularly prolific, with good numbers visiting Lango Bai daily to obtain minerals. The resident birdlife is excellent – for example black-collared lovebird, vermiculated fishing-owl fire-crested alethe, yellow-lored bristlebill and Guinea turaco with many species breeding at this time.</p> <p>Photographically, between bouts of rain, clear blue skies are common, with good light penetrating the forest interior.</p> <p>All year round, primates such as western guereza colobus, grey-cheeked mangabey and putty-nosed monkey are seen regularly with infrequent sightings of bongo, western sitatunga and red river hog on the periphery of Lango Bai. Night drives may yield galagos, palm civet and spotted hyaena – the latter in savannah areas.</p>
TRANSITION (DRY) SEASON	<p>December to February; June to August</p> <p>With limited rain during this period, the air can be relatively hazy, a white film of clouds covering the sky most days. Humidity however is lower than in the green season. Daytime temperatures are typically cooler. Water levels on the Lekoli River are lower but boating is still possible.</p> <p>Ripe fruits during this period (especially February and August) mean that elephants and gorillas wander more widely to obtain these, with gorillas feeding primarily in trees – thus allowing easier sightings.</p> <p>Photographically, conditions are typically overcast with muted light. Focus on photographing subjects against greener forest backdrops where possible at this time.</p> <p>Aside from the 'usual' sightings of western guereza colobus, grey-cheeked mangabey and putty-nosed monkey, harnessed bushbuck often sighted at Lango Bai together with several herds of forest buffalo moving between the various bays in the Park. Chimpanzee sightings are good all year.</p> <p>Birding is excellent in both rainforest and savannah areas with intra-African migrant species present from June to August. Some highlights may include shining-blue kingfisher, Hartlaub's duck, great blue turaco, bare-cheeked trogon, black-casqued wattled hornbill, streaky-throated barbet, black and white flycatcher, shining drongo, yellow-mantled widowbird, yellow longbill and banded prinia.</p>