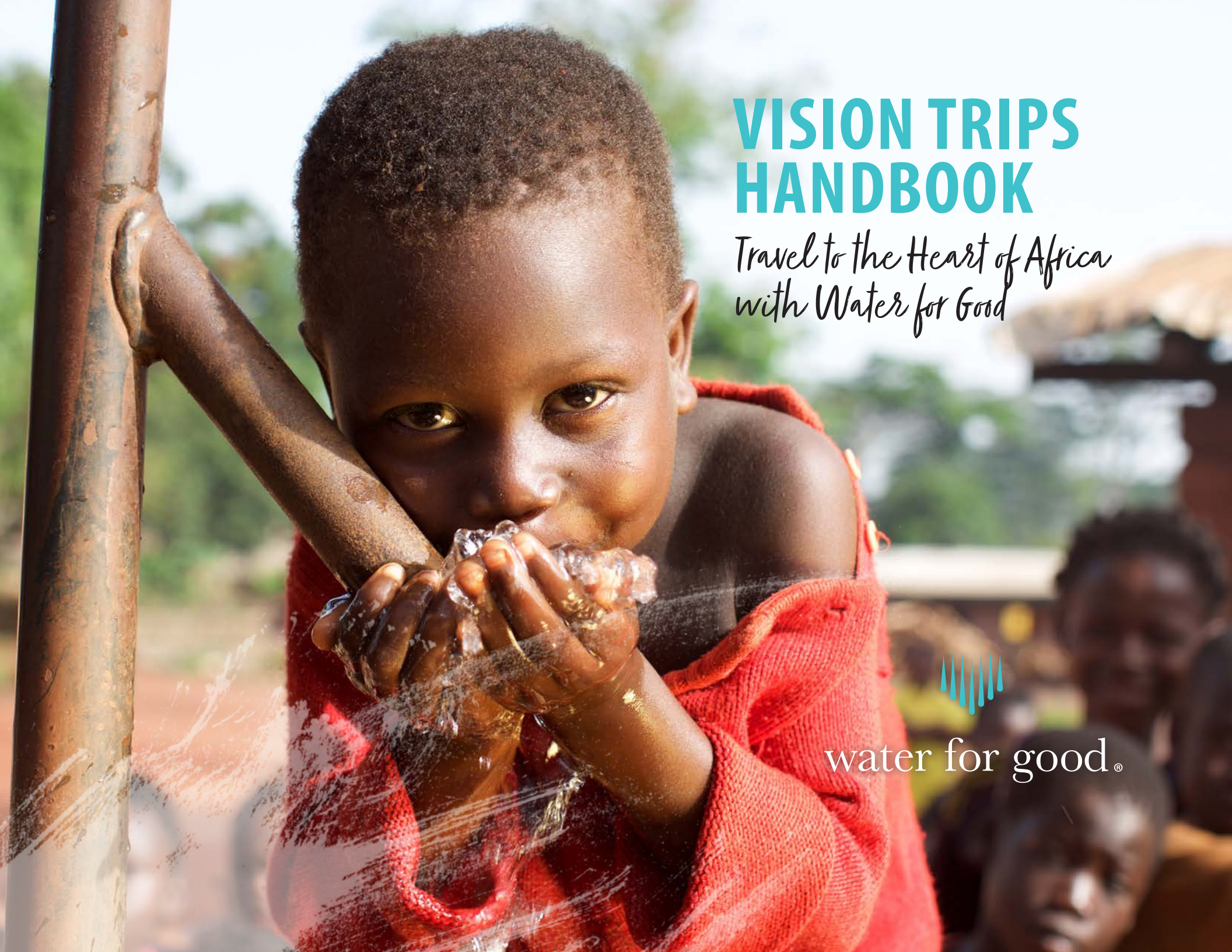


A young child with dark skin and short, curly hair is the central focus. They are wearing a vibrant red cloth draped over their shoulder. The child is holding a clear plastic cup to their mouth with both hands, drinking water. Water is splashing out from the cup, creating a dynamic, energetic feel. The child is leaning against a rusty metal pole. In the background, other people are blurred, suggesting a public water point in a community setting.

VISION TRIPS HANDBOOK

*Travel to the Heart of Africa
with Water for Good*



water for good®

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THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Capital: Bangui

Country Surface: 240,542 mi²

Population: 4,700,000 people

Languages: French, Sango, dialects

Currency: Franc CFA (XAF)

The country is bordered by Chad to the north, Sudan to the northeast, South Sudan to the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo to the south and Cameroon to the west.

CLIMATE

The climate of Central African Republic is tropical, with rainy and dry seasons. Overall, temperatures vary between 65°F and 95°F (18°C and 35°C) with spikes up to 100°F (38°C+) and above at times. The rainy season is from March to October with temperatures around 88°F (31°C), and the dry season is from November to February with temperatures around 82°F (28°C). For more on CAR weather: www.climatestotravel.com/climate/central-african-republic



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Between 1880 and 1960, the Central African Republic was part of a large region controlled by the French. Since its independence, the country has been through a series of political and civil conflicts, the latest one being the severest. In 1959, Barthélemy Boganda was poised to become the first president of the independent CAR when he boarded a plane at Berbérati for a flight to Bangui on 29 March 1959, just prior to legislative elections. The plane mysteriously exploded in mid-air, and Boganda and all aboard were killed.

In 1960, the first president, David Dacko, Boganda's cousin, turned the country into a one-party state. Five years later, army commander Jean-Bodel Bokassa ousted the president. Bokassa proclaimed himself emperor of the Central African Empire, reproducing the coronation of Napoleon's ceremony.

In 1979, Bokassa was ousted in a coup backed by French troops. Army commander Andre Kolingba seized power two years later. In 1993, Ange-Felix Patasse won presidential elections and put an end to 12 years of military rule.

In 2003, rebel leader François Bozize seized power. A few years later, in 2009, clashes between government and rebels were ongoing. The UN Security Council agreed to launch a UN peacebuilding office for the country.

In November 2012, a rebel coalition name the Seleka, meaning alliance in Sango, rapidly overtook large parts of the country.

In March 2013, the Seleka seized the capital, Bangui. Michel Djotodia, the Seleka leader, took power by force.

In December 2013, a sectarian, inter-community conflict broke out when a new auto-defense coalition named the Anti-Balaka, literally meaning anti-machete, formed to fight back against the Seleka. Both the Seleka and Anti-Balaka are accused of killing thousands of people.

In January 2014, under international pressure, Michel Djotodia stepped down to give way for a transitional government, in view of organizing democratic elections. Additionally, the UN mandated the largest UN-peacekeeping force in Central African history as the country's military forces completely disbanded when Seleka was in power.

In 2015, a public referendum was organized on constitutional changes in November, which allowed to make a first round of a democratic presidential elections. In 2016, tensions were important but the second round of the presidential elections took place peacefully. Faustin Archange Touadera, a former mathematics teacher and prime minister during the Bozize government was elected.

Today, the country is the world's poorest of nations; a paradox, given the country's wealth in precious resources: diamonds, gold, oil, uranium, exotic woods.... Politically, CAR is stabilized in the west and in southern parts, but many hotspots still exist even in its capital, Bangui. Populations have suffered tremendously; many of the country's citizens are traumatized by the war and have been directly affected by the conflict's repercussions. One third of the population is in need of direct humanitarian assistance. Rebel groups are still numerous in some parts of the country and regularly exert pressure on villages, communities and resources.

One third of the population is in need of direct humanitarian assistance.

WATER FOR GOOD IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

WATER POVERTY

Access to clean water is a major concern for the country. An evaluation made by the water, sanitation and hygiene sector reveals that access to clean water is very limited: 27% in urban areas and 32% in rural areas. Lack of access to

clean water is responsible for a wide array of water-borne and water-related diseases such as dysentery, cholera and hepatitis, to name just a few.

Organizations such as Water For Good actively seek to find long-term solutions in rural areas, where the lack of infrastructure keeps the sector from developing.



WATER FOR GOOD IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Water for Good is currently operating out of three primary locations in the Central African Republic. Its administrative office is in the capital, Bangui. Just north of Bangui, Water for Good's short-wave radio station transmits from the town of Boali. In western CAR, Berbérati is the primary center for the well-drilling and well-repair crews, with storage facilities for pump parts, supplies and a fully operational garage.

PROVIDING CLEAN AND LASTING ACCESS TO WATER

Water for Good's mission is to tackle water poverty in one of the world's most forgotten countries. Its objective is to provide clean, lasting water for every man, woman and child in the Central African Republic by drilling and maintaining wells.

Difficult access to clean water forces many people to drink dirty and unsafe water—this is water poverty. The consequences on health, especially on children's, are terrible. Many families have suffered the loss of children who were victims of preventable water borne diseases. Improving access to clean water helps communities begin to break the cycle of chronic illness and poverty.

OPERATED AND MAINTAINED BY LOCAL ACTORS

To accomplish this mission, Water for Good trains Central African staff who are committed to making a lasting impact in CAR. Good local leadership and commitment to the work ensures hand pump sustainability.

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS

Water for Good is committed to working at a local, community level. Teams continually meet with community members to plan ways to improve their lives. Also, Water For Good connects communities to locally-owned water businesses, a supply of spare parts and government entities. As a result, over 90% of the water projects within Water for Good's maintenance system are functional!

WATER PROJECTS ONLY SAVE LIVES IF THEY LAST

Water for Good's maintenance teams visit each site to do preventative maintenance and electronic reporting on the well—an effective way to prevent wells from breaking down and to make them sustainable.

WATER FOR GOOD RADIO STATION

In CAR, apart from expensive satellite television, there is almost no access to television broadcasts, newspapers or mail service outside of the capital city, Bangui. However, many villagers have access to inexpensive radios, making radio the best way to share messages with a broad audience in this remote, isolated country. Although there are multiple localized FM stations, Water for Good has the only radio station that covers the majority of the country's population.

In 2007, Water for Good established its radio station to share weather updates, public health initiatives and hygiene lessons all across the country. This locally operated radio station serves as a powerful tool for peace and a better future. For example, during the intensification of the civil conflict in 2013, the radio played a vital role in disseminating messages of peace and reconciliation.

Water for Good's short wave radio station is located 60 miles outside of the capital, and its waves reach most of the territory—even the most remote rural areas. Our signal has even been picked up by Central Africans living in surrounding countries!



TRAVELING TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

BEFORE HEADING TO CAR

PASSPORT

You will need a passport that is valid at least six months after your departure date. One passport page is required for the entry stamp.

VISA

Water for Good provides all travellers with updated CAR visa information prior to your trip. You will need at least a short-stay visa, such as a 90-day tourist visa. You can apply for your visa online, and we recommend the following service: www.traveldocs.com. All the information you need is located on the site. Please note that processing visas can take up to two or three weeks, so check your departure date and order an expedited service, if needed. Water for Good will help you gather all the necessary documentation required to apply for a visa and will provide the following necessary items via email:

- Letter of Invitation
- Proof of Departure (your airline ticket)
- Sample Application Form (which you can use as a guide to fill yours out)

MANDATORY VACCINATION

The yellow fever vaccination is mandatory; you must have been vaccinated between 10 years and 10 days before entering the country. Your health card or other proof of vaccination will be checked at the airport upon your arrival. There is some confusion surrounding this vaccination, as the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that there is no longer any need for a booster at the 10 year mark for people who have had the vaccination already. However, many African countries have not updated their systems, and still require a valid yellow fever vaccination. Upon request, American vaccination sites can update the date on your vaccination without giving you the shot, and this is recommended for travellers who have an expired vaccination. Another problem (2018) is the general shortage of yellow fever vaccine, so check the CDC website for up to date information:

wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/central-african-republic

PRE-TRAVEL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Contact your physician, or use the CDC site (www.cdc.gov) to find a vaccination site and get your yellow fever vaccination with proof, most often a notation in your health card provided to you by the physician. A photocopy of your proof of yellow fever vaccination is required by most visa processing companies like Traveldocs in order to apply for your visa. So, do this step immediately.
- ☐ While getting your yellow fever vaccination, you can also get any other vaccinations recommended by your health professional, as well as obtain your antimalarial medications.
- ☐ While waiting for your vaccination, why not get your passport-style photos required for your visa application? Information on the photo requirements can be found here: www.traveldocs.com/cmsimages/uploads/forms/photo%20requirements.pdf
- ☐ Confirm and book travel. In most cases, Water for Good will do this with you and for you.
- ☐ Apply for Central African Republic visa. This requires sending off your passport, so please plan accordingly.
- ☐ Get acquainted with the CAR using the suggested resource list (see appendix 1).
- ☐ Attend pre-trip group preparation conference call(s).

ARRIVING AT THE BANGUI M'POKO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

DOCUMENTS & PHOTOS

Upon arrival, Central African sanitation authorities will require that travelers present their international vaccine records. Sanitation authorities take a picture of every visitor upon arrival. Please, do not forget to travel with your international vaccination card.

Travelers must fill out a document (entry form) with personal information: name, surname, length and purpose of their stay, lodging address and towns to be visited. Upon entrance into the airport, you will see a long counter along the wall where you can find one of the cards, if you were not given one on the airplane. In addition to your personal information, use the following information to fill out the entry form.

Purpose for visit: “visite Water for Good”

Address: Water for Good B.P. 1035 Bangui, RCA

Person: Roger Kossi, Logistics Manager
Water for Good
75-58-57-89 (local) or +236 75 58 57 89

Email: rkossi@icdinternational.org

Tip: Keep a pen with you when traveling if you want to avoid hunting for one at the airport!

CUSTOMS & POLICE CHECK

Customs will stamp your passport, and police will check your passport and visa and take the form you just filled out. You will then have access to the luggage area.

LUGGAGE AREA

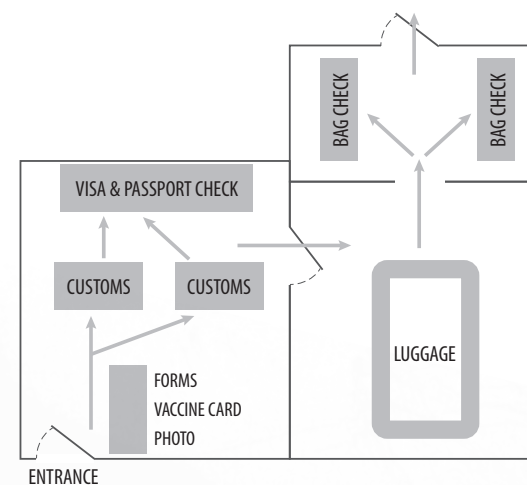
After finding your belongings, you have to go through a police check of your luggages. It is important to have receipts to justify any items you bring that are valuable (equipment), or in large quantities (pens, brochures, etc.)

You will only be allowed to leave the airport luggage area after handing a customs' agent your luggage stub that proves you are leaving the airport with your own luggage. It is therefore important to keep your luggage stub carefully as you travel to CAR.

OUTSIDE THE AIRPORT

A Water For Good and/or Water Tours crew and your driver will be waiting for you. They will help you get to your vehicle with your luggage safely. There are many airport workers waiting for visitors to help them carry their luggage to the car in exchange for cash. Kindly refuse help, and do not let anyone but someone from your own party carry your luggage.

Once you are in the car, be sure your windows and doors are closed and locked. Upon exiting the airport, all cars must pass through a very busy market place on one of the main roads leading to downtown. Doors should always be locked, and windows up during the entire drive through the market.



Schema of Bangui International Airport Arrival Area



DEPARTURE FROM BANGUI DOWNTOWN & BANGUI M'POKO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

CHECK IN AT AIR FRANCE AGENCY, DOWNTOWN BANGUI

If you booked a flight with Air France, it is highly recommended to proceed with checking-in the morning of your departure at the Air France agency downtown. Keep a carry-on or small bag with you with essential belongings you will need for the rest of the day before flying out in the evening.

Central African Customs will thoroughly check your luggage in search of goods that must be declared. They will especially check for illegal wood, precious material people sometimes try to take out from the country. We advise you to keep every receipt for souvenirs you bought in the country in order to justify your purchases. They may ask you to pay a small tax on some material or souvenirs you bought in the country.

Air France security officers will then go through your bags before authorizing you to check in at the desk. Your luggage will be safely stored in an Air France container, transferred to the airport prior to the flight and taken directly to the plane. You will pick up your luggage at your final destination.

If you booked with another airline company, checking-in will be at the airport. Customs will check through your luggage the same way they would at the Air France office.

AIRPORT DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

At the airport, you will have to show your passport and boarding pass to enter the building. Upon entering the airport, a set of customs agents will request to check your carry-on luggage. After filling a customs departure form, you must pay 10,000 CFA (\$18USD) in order to leave the country. Be sure your group leader has given you a 10,000 CFA bill to care for this process.

A police officer will ask to see your customs' form, your passport and your boarding pass, which has the airport fee stamped on it. You will go through three more sets of carry-on security clearance checks. The first one being electronic with a metal detector gate, the second one being a visual check of the contents of your bag, carried out by a police officer. Finally, Air France independently verifies each bag in a very thorough fashion, for security purposes. Air France will also carry out a body scan with a handheld scanner before letting you enter the gate area.

Even though the airport is not big, there are several police and customs checks. If you are patient and cooperative, accessing the plane will go smoothly.

AIRPORT FACILITIES

For an extra fee—FCFA 6,000—you can access a VIP waiting room with WIFI and free drinks.

There is a small souvenir shop and a bar in the gate area.



HEALTH INQUIRIES

We highly recommend that you visit your general practitioner or a specialist in tropical diseases before traveling.

YELLOW FEVER VACCINE

Vaccination against yellow fever is a requirement to enter the country. Yellow fever vaccination needs to be less than 10 years ago, and at least 10 days before your trip. If you do not have this vaccine, you will not enter the country, for sanitary reason.

We advise you to update all your vaccines before coming to CAR. Your medical practitioner will know what vaccinations are recommended for regions like Central Africa.

MALARIA PROPHYLAXIS

Malaria is prevalent in the Central African Republic. We strongly advise that you visit your general practitioner to take the best measures to protect yourself against malaria. Even if your stay is short, it only takes one mosquito bite to be infected with malaria.

YOUR FIRST AID KIT

Prepare a small first aid kit with tissues, baby wipes, mosquito repellent, anti-diarrhea tablets, antiseptic, pain killer, Band-Aids, water purifying tablets (Aquatabs) and medicine against malaria.

For any prescribed medicine you may be carrying with you, please also bring along your medical prescriptions, in case customs checks your medicine upon arrival.



PACKING A USEFUL SUITCASE

In your suitcase, we advise you to bring:

- **Clothes** that cover your legs and the top of your body to protect yourself against the sun, dust and insects. Temperatures are high, but the sun is very strong near the equator. For example you may want to bring light clothes, sportswear, long pants, long socks, a light jacket, long dresses....
- Walking or light hiking **shoes** and flip-flops. Be aware that Bangui is located in a tropical region. Protecting your feet against small insects is recommended at all times. Shoes and socks will also protect you in the evening hours against mosquito bites.
- **Protection** against the sun is an imperative: sunscreen, hat/cap, sunglasses. Some malaria prophylaxis increase photosensitivity; sunburns can occur within just a few minutes of exposure to the sun.
- **Rain gear**, as sudden tropical storms can occur.
- **Plug adapter** for French electric outlets (220v). Keep your devices plugged in only when charging, and keep from leaving devices plugged in for long periods of time. Voltage spikes are common and can ruin batteries and chargers.

• Flashlight

- Reusable water **bottles**
- Complete **toiletries**: take everything you need to feel comfortable—it is hard to find good manufactured products.
- Depending on your itinerary and if you are traveling outside of Bangui, you may want to bring a **sleeping bag** and towels.

As previously stated, check-in with Air France has to be done in the morning at the Air France agency in downtown Bangui, even if your flight leaves in the afternoon. Having a **handbag** can allow you to keep personal belongings with you before the flight.

Also, there are very few places to buy good manufactured products, and they are very expensive due to low imports and scarce competition. Take all goods and clothes you think you may need for your own comfort before coming to CAR.

CURRENCY

The Central African currency, FCFA, is fixed to the Euro. 1 Euro = 656 FCFA. Therefore, the exchange rate between USD and FCFA fluctuates daily and usually hovers around 550-600 FCFA to \$1USD. It is possible to exchange Euros and USD in banks, hotels or shops. USD bills printed after 2009 can be exchanged, though any bill printed before then will not be accepted.

Bring enough currency if you plan on purchasing goods in CAR—bank cards are not accepted anywhere. Though withdrawing money is possible, it is preferable to have enough currency, as ATMs are not always reliable. Cash can be converted into CFA through Water for Good.



ACCOMMODATIONS

In CAR, the hotel network is not very developed, especially outside the capital. For that reason, it is important to be flexible in terms of expectations regarding comfort and services.

The recent conflict has had a negative impact on the tourism and hotel sectors. The maintenance of infrastructures, the training of hotel employees and its overall use have suffered greatly. Furthermore, some hotels in the capital have even been claimed by international forces to serve as places of temporary detention for people waiting for trial (you will be lodging at other places). In 2013, the most luxurious hotel in the city was taken by rebels as their primary place of residence when they seized power. Other hotels have been looted, damaged or destroyed.

Nevertheless, the hotel industry is slowly recovering from these events, and visitors have access to several ranges of comfort in the capital. The majority of visitors to the Central African Republic come for business or humanitarian missions.

BANGUI

GUESTHOUSES, CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

Christian missions are usually missionary-owned guest houses that offer rooms with a few beds of simple comfort, with shared bathrooms, kitchen and a living room. There may or may not be internet access. Water for Good visitors often stay at one of these two missions: the Baptist Mid Mission or the Encompass Mission. We've included more detail below on the Encompass mission, but the accommodations for both are quite similar.

ENCOMPASS WORLD PARTNERS MISSION GUEST HOUSE

A Central African family runs this guest house. There are several apartments that are occupied by long-stay missionaries, and four rooms are available for short term visitors. Each room has between two and four beds.

Depending on the number of visitors, sharing bedrooms is common. Restrooms and showers are shared, as well as the kitchen and the living room. Housekeepers take care of laundry and cleaning every day. Water for Good can provide

a local cook who will come and prepare your food every day. With this cook, you will eat well and safely, and most of his dishes are very much appreciated by everyone! Internet access, WIFI, is also free.

There is no air conditioning, but fans are available in every room.

The city electricity is unstable; there can be frequent power outages that are not automatically relayed by generators. It is recommended to have a flashlight nearby.

Tap water is not drinkable! The water must first be filtered. Water is stored in the fridge of the kitchen and available to visitors. Only drink water that has been safely filtered or bottled and purchased at a store. If you are served water and you are not 100% sure if it is filtered, either ask about it or do not drink it. Recreational equipment stores such as REI provide effective water purifying tablets called Aquatabs. We recommend you have some in case of any kind of emergency that may keep you from accessing clean, filtered water for an extended period of time.



MID-RANGE: 2 TO 3 STARS

Several establishments offer services equal to 3-star hotels, with several types of rooms with private bathrooms, internet access and catering services.

JM RESIDENCE

www.jmresidence.com

This hotel has several rooms that meet 2 to 3 star standards, with private bathrooms and access to free WIFI. Breakfast is served in the morning. The hotel has sets of generators to cope with any power outages in the city. Water from the tap is not drinkable, so you should plan to buy bottled water at the hotel.

HIGH-END HOTEL

The city of Bangui only has one upscale hotel in the country, equivalent to a four or five star hotel.

THE HOTEL LEDGER PLAZA BANGUI

www.laicohotels.com/ledger-plaza-bangui

This hotel offers a hundred rooms with different levels of comfort. It has a large garden area, a spacious terrace and swimming pool, several restaurants and cafes, a few shops (bakery, telephony), a gym and spa, and an ATM. There is also a casino, a nightclub, theaters and conference rooms.

OUTSIDE BANGUI

Outside of Bangui, the hotel infrastructure is virtually non-existent. There are many inns that provide the most basic sleeping arrangements: foam mattresses and shared restroom areas. The best way to prepare for these types of accommodations is to bring a sleeping bag liner, a travel pillow and towel.

It should be noted that outside Bangui, electricity is only available through generators, and clean, safe water is rare. Hotels that run generators will indicate when exactly they will run them (early morning and for a couple hours at dusk). The hotel provides a daily amount of water for showering and using the bathroom. For drinking, it is imperative to drink bottled or filtered water.

For drinking, it is imperative to drink bottled or filtered water.

JM Résidence



Ledger Plaza Bangui room



Ledger Plaza Bangui Pool



RESTAURANTS

BANGUI

There is a fairly large variety of local and international restaurants. Restaurants range from improvised street restaurants, snack restaurants, to a couple of upscale restaurants with buffet or à la carte menus. Some restaurants have bars with patios, or terraces with pleasant views.

For sanitary and general security, we take visitors to guarded restaurants in the city center, as they generally offer mixed cuisine—local and international. Please keep in mind that service can sometimes take a long time. Keeping track of time is important while out to dinner, since we advise to be back to the hotel before 9PM (the schedule may change depending on the security context).

Some examples of where you may eat:

Balafon: Located just a few hundred yards from Bangui's cathedral, the Balafon offers interesting local cuisine in terms of meat and fish (zebu, snake, captain fish, antelope, etc). Guests can choose to sit in their air conditioned room, or outside on its pleasant patio. At times, the restaurant will have a local band. The Balafon becomes a nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights.

Le Relais de Chasse: Tucked away behind one of the main streets downtown, this restaurant is run by a Frenchman who has lived his entire life in the Central African Republic. It offers French and Central African cuisine and serves imported French products such as wine or charcuterie. This restaurant is considered to be the best in Bangui.

Le Carré Gourmand: Just four blocks from downtown's zero-kilometer square, the Carré Gourmand offers a very pleasant setting with a large open room covered by a beautiful wooden frame and a garden with private straw huts. You can eat both revisited African dishes and international cuisine such as pizza cooked over a wood fire, pasta or more sophisticated dishes, depending on arrivals. The restaurant regularly hosts live, local music. The Carré Gourmand has become the hub of expat workers.

The Ledger Hotel: the hotel offers an all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant and, in the evening, an à la carte menu. The cuisine is mainly international. The hotel also has a café and a breakfast menu.

Le Grand Café: Situated downtown on one of the main boulevards, the Grand Café is a Lebanese-run café. There are several types of pastries and breads to take away, but you can also stop there to eat Lebanese specialties for lunch and enjoy free WIFI access.

La Tourangelle: Sitting right above the banks of the Ubangui River, you can enjoy a fresh beer and good chicken dishes or fresh fish while admiring the beautiful river setting. Just across the river is the Democratic Republic of Congo. The restaurant provides a colonial feel with its straw overhanging and petrol lamps. The establishment has a small souvenir shop, mainly comprised of authentic, Central African traditional art.

Hôtel Oubangui: This hotel has a beautiful terrace bar on the rocky banks of the Oubangui River and offers a beautiful view. Sunsets from this terrace can be spectacular! On Sundays, the hotel offers a big barbecue lunch right on the rocks where you can sit in paillotes and enjoy local beers or cocktails.

OUTSIDE OF BANGUI

Outside the capital, infrastructures become much more basic, and there are no restaurants that provide international-style cooking. There are myriads of places to experience authentic local dishes, which generally tend to be much simpler. Typically one or two dishes are available, but they can include bush meats of all sorts. It is very likely to eat cassava accompanied by a meat or fish sauce and some vegetables. Many small restaurants offer barbecued meat and fish.

Note that hygiene standards are much more rudimentary; we do not recommend eating any raw or poorly cooked food. Restaurants provide water and soap to wash hands before and after eating, since most dishes are eaten directly with one's fingers.



Ledger Plaza Bangui breakfast

TIME ZONES

There are six time zones between Eastern Standard Time in the USA and CAR. (Ex: 2pm Bangui = 8am New York)

INTERNET & PHONE

The main internet and mobile providers in CAR are:

- **Orange:** <https://www.orange.com/en/Group/Orange-in-the-world/countries/Welcome-to-Orange-Central-African-Republic>
- **Telcel:** <https://www.telecel-rca.com/>
- **Azur:** <http://www.azur-rca.com/>

Unless you need to send and receive messages throughout the day, we recommend just using WIFI in the evenings from your lodging to stay in touch with your families, friends and work. If, for some reason, you need continuous connectivity, please bring an unlocked phone (iPhone, Android) along and we can assist you in adding a SIM that will give you both phone and data connectivity while in mobile and or WIFI range. Local connectivity is inexpensive, so you will not end up with large unplanned phone bills. You are welcome to try roaming with your current phone setup, but we cannot assist with any technical issues and charges that might occur. If you don't need continuous connectivity, why not take advantage of being in one of the few places left on earth where you can just unplug for the day?

As mentioned, most of the lodging options provide internet connectivity. It isn't always the best, so don't plan on uploading large files from the field. However, you can do basic internet (email, social media posting and file sharing, to some degree) when in a WIFI zone, which is usually in the evenings when you are back at your lodging.

Add these numbers before the number you would like to reach:

- **CAR:** +236
- **France:** +33
- **USA:** +1

Why not take advantage of being in one of the few places left on earth where you can just unplug for the day?





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFETY

WATER

The pipeline network in Bangui is absolutely unreliable: tap water is not drinkable!

It is best to drink bottled water, previously filtered or boiled water. For example, in hotels or guest houses, a filter system can be set up to purify tap water. It is then drinkable, even if there is a taste to it. We recommend using filtered, bottled or boiled water, even for brushing your teeth.

If there is no filtered or boiled water available, hotels provide or sell bottled water.

When visiting a well operated by Water For Good, even if the water is drinkable, we do not recommend that you drink it. Water filters through soil that contains minerals visitors are not accustomed to and can cause stomach aches.

FOOD

Do not eat raw or poorly cooked vegetables and food, in general. When in doubt, ask your host or restaurant if the vegetables that accompany your dish have been properly washed—not just rinsed.

ON THE ROAD

It is rare to access brand new cars in the country—they are usually second-hand vehicles, but we make sure you will travel safely and in the best of conditions possible. Therefore, you will travel in private vehicles with a private driver.

BANGUI AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Roads in Bangui are paved, but infrastructures are old and crowded with all types of vehicles. Your driver is used to navigating these roads. You will inevitably drive through markets and areas with high concentrations of activity. Please keep your doors locked and windows closed when your driver or staff requests that you do so. Any time you step out of the vehicle, for whatever reason, be very aware of who is around you. Children and individuals will not hesitate to grab items out of your pockets. They may even do so while you are looking right at them. Wait until you are in the vehicle to open up bags and wallets, even if it is just to put change back into them. If you have a phone or camera in your pocket, keep your hand on it at all times.

Do not leave any belonging in the car without surveillance.

We try not to be out in Bangui or anywhere else after 9pm, or earlier if instructed by our security officer. Streets are generally dark, unlit and prone to carjacking in some areas.

OUTSIDE OF BANGUI

Depending on your itinerary, you will travel outside of Bangui. You might take unpaved roads to arrive to your destination. Some roads are more challenging during the rainy season, but drivers are experienced and accustomed to all types of driving environments. Be aware that there are no gas stations, manufactured shops or toilets on the road.

CHECKPOINTS, ROAD TOLLS, ILLEGAL BARRIERS

Every time you enter or leave a city, you will go through police/military checkpoints and road tolls where drivers have to show official documents. They will check on vehicle documents, passports and circulation authorizations. Please bring to CAR a copy of your passport picture page. You may use this copy as proof of identity at the checkpoints.

Illegal barriers in the countryside exist. The driver is in charge of handling all checkpoints, including illegal ones. You do not have to do anything or attempt to handle the situation. Follow the driver's guidance at all times.

IN CASE OF BREAKDOWNS ON THE ROAD

In case your vehicle breaks down, the driver and guide will take all the necessary measures to evacuate you from the area as quickly as possible. If it is a minor breakdown, such as a flat tire, we ask you to stay grouped and to follow the driver's and guide's instructions. Do not wander into the bush. Be on the lookout for snakes and biting insects.

WALKING IN BANGUI OR OTHER MAJOR CITIES

When you walk through the city streets, be very careful of your belongings. Pickpockets are prevalent and very effective.

Ideally, try not to have anything of value on your person, except a copy of your passport. If you want to bring your phone or petty cash, please keep it in your hand or hide it close to you. Stay in small groups, and always be sure you know exactly where you are, and where you are going.

VISITING CENTRAL AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

Hierarchical relationships are important in the Central African Republic, and we must understand this cultural dynamic so as not to offend people we meet. Thus, when visiting Central African communities, it is more courteous to let the guide introduce the group to the representatives of the community or village and explain the reason for the visit. Visitors will then have the opportunity to present themselves through handshakes with the representatives of the village or community.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Generally speaking, taking pictures of people in public areas is not accepted by most people. It is important to ask permission if you plan on taking a picture of someone. We do not recommend that you take pictures in crowded places, especially in market areas. Though it may be tempting to capture market scenes, problems can arise quickly.

When pictures are taken within a context like group pictures, or with people whom you have interacted with in a village, they will be very happy to be in a photo.

Even if photography is really common and a beautiful way to remember a situation, a face, a landscape, be sure to ask permission to the people that will be in your photo. Your guide and group leader can also interact with people for you and give you the green light to take pictures.

IN CASE OF ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY – USEFUL DIPLOMATIC ADDRESSES

If you begin to feel ill, do not hesitate to alert your group leader. Your system may be undergoing changes that are typical when visiting places such as CAR. Some illnesses require medical attention quickly, such as malaria. Your group leader will help you through the process of getting good medical diagnosis and treatment.

The French and American embassies in CAR have reliable health care.

US Embassy in CAR

Avenue David Dacko, P.O. Box 924, Bangui,
Central African Republic
+236 21 61 02 00

French Embassy in CAR

Boulevard du Général de Gaulle, Bangui,
Central African Republic
+236 21 61 30 00

CAR Embassy in the USA

2704 Ontario Rd NW, Washington, DC 20009,
United States
+1 202 483 7800

CAR Embassy in France

30 rue des Perchamps, 75016 Paris
France
+0033 01 55 74 73 10



APPENDIX 1:

INFORMATION ON CAR

www.britannica.com/place/Central-African-Republic

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf0iA_d67T8

www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4KyslvOk4

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Traveldocs for passports and visas:

www.traveldocs.com

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: www.cdc.gov

Currency conversion website: www.xe.com

