



CHAD & CAMEROON
THE LAND OF REMOTE TRIBES AND
GEREWOL FESTIVAL
October 10 - October 25, 2024
Led by Local Guides

Thriving traditional cultures, renowned art forms, flamboyantly colorful festivals, and a dazzling ethnic mosaic are the golden gems of tribal Africa. This fantastic cultural odyssey takes you to the remote and seldom visited countries of Chad and Cameroon.

Chad is one of the least visited of all the African countries by western tourists and therein lies its appeal. We are proud to offer a trip to this most pioneering of destinations - a land that is as wild as it is beautiful, as untamed as it is graceful. It is a land of rock arches, camel caravans traversing the sands, and where genuine encounters with local people are guaranteed. Each year, the semi-nomadic Wodaabe people gather for a week of incredible celebrations known as the Gerewol, a colorful ceremony that is one of Africa's most spectacular. Few westerners are privileged to see this fascinating event, but over the years, we have built up excellent local contacts, allowing you to travel to a remote part of Chad and stay with these intensely traditional people to join them in celebration. Camping in the Sahel, you will stay with the Wodaabe for several days, gaining more than just a fleeting glimpse into their lives and immerse yourself in a culture that lives very much outside of mainstream society. Few tourists venture this far into Chad, so you can expect to have a very intimate experience.

Cameroon, sometimes described as "Africa in one country" in reference to its variety of habitats and people, is a land that will steal your heart away. This virtually unexplored country is home to an astonishing 250 ethnic groups and a matching diversity of landscape - from the jungles of the south to the Sahel of the north. The southern rainforest is home to communities of Ba'aka and Badgeli pygmies, existing in harmony with their environment. In-between lie ancient kingdoms, cattle herding nomads, stunning golden, palm-fringed beaches, glassy rivers, and volcanic mountain ridges. Forest canopies throb with the call of the rarest of species and colorful tiny markets and streets bustle with excitement. Photogenic waterfalls thunder down in a "white smoke" of spray to pristine rivers and lakes. A trip to Cameroon will allow you to see nature at its wildest and rarest to places where few outsiders have been fortunate to explore.


Ihab Zaki
Managing Director, Spiekermann Travel

Thursday, October 10

Arrive in N'Djamena (**CHAD**) 

Upon arrival at **N'Djamena International Airport**, meet and transfer to *Mercure Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight.

Friday, October 11

N'Djamena 

We will begin our day with a tour of **N'Djamena**, formerly known as "Fort Lamy", located on the banks of the **Chari River** facing Cameroon. Founded by the French at the turn of the 20th century, N'Djamena is the capital and largest city in Chad. Over the years, it has seen its fair share of conflict, largely destroyed during the civil war of the 1980's and stormed by rebel forces in 2008. Its wide boulevards were once flanked with trees, but these were cut down to deprive attackers of cover, and only in recent years did its dusty streets become paved. It is the most ethnically diverse place in Chad, with people from both the southern and northern ethnic groups, as well as Lebanese, European and, more recently, Chinese populations. Explore the large and sprawling **central Market**, a great place to watch the locals go about their daily business. The **National Museum** contains a small, but interesting collection of prehistoric artifacts from the surrounding area. Walk past several mosques, including the impressive **N'Djamena Grand Mosque** and perhaps the lovely **Our Lady of Peace Cathedral**. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B)**

Saturday-Sunday, October 12-13

N'Djamena - Durbali Region 

Begin the day with a drive to **Dourbali region** (2.5 hrs.), where the fascinating **Gerewol Festival** takes place. The Wodaabe, means "People of the Taboo," form part of the largest group of semi-nomadic people in Africa - stretching from Senegal to Sudan and follow a migratory lifestyle in search of grazing for their cattle. They are split into several different clans and only eight or nine exist in Chad. Two of the most significant are the Sudosukai and the Njapto, which are the more traditional of the two - their faces and bodies are more heavily tattooed. Generally, we will spend our time with the Sudosukai, but often the Njapto are close by and if there is an opportunity, we may be able to meet both. We will set up our campsite together with the Wadaabe people and spend the overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Note: The exact location of the Wodaabe camp is never fixed and varies from year to year depending on the rainy season. For this reason, it is not possible to provide an exact travel time and therefore, we have allowed a day and a half for travel time to reach the festival site.

Monday-Thursday, October 14-17

Durbali Region (Gerewol Festival) 

While the animals are being treated with salts, known as the "Salt Cure" (Cure Salée), which helps rid them of parasites, the Wodaabe men devote their time to show off

and display their handsome features. We will take part in the original and spontaneous celebrations. The Wodaabe are very traditional and place great emphasis on beauty and charm and this mating ritual and beauty contest allows them to show it off. The dancers, generally men ranging in ages 17-25, will spend hours painting their faces and adorning themselves with jewelry. The dances involve the men standing in a row, singing traditional rhythmic songs and chants while doing their best to show the whites of their eyes and baring their teeth, two great symbols of male beauty. Young girls, usually between the ages of 14 and 16, will approach the dancers and touch the man they have chosen. The Gerewol is an astounding celebration and something that few people will ever witness up close, and we will get a first-hand look into the lives of the Wodaabe and absorb the different facets of the celebrations. Spend the night in the tents. **(B,L,D)**

Friday, October 18

Durbali Region - N'Djamena - USA

OR Continue to Douala **(CAMEROON)**



After breakfast, we will drive back to **N'Djamena** and upon arrival, transfer to the *Hotel* for check-in and have some rest before the transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B,L)**

Note: For those continuing to Cameroon, you will spend the night at the Hotel and transfer the next day in the early morning to the airport for your flight to Douala, and upon arrival, meet and transfer to the La Falaise Hotel or similar for check-in, meet the group and begin the tour. (B,L,D)

For those who are doing Cameroon Only

Friday, October 18

Arrive in Douala **(CAMEROON)**



Upon arrival at **Douala International Airport**, meet and transfer to *La Falaise Hotel or similar* for check-in and overnight.

Saturday, October 19

Douala



Situated on the **Wouri River** estuary, Douala is the largest city in Cameroon and the economic capital. Head out to begin the city tour with a visit to the fresh fish market at **Youpwe**, a suburb of Douala located just off the coast. Also, visit the **Maritime Museum** to learn about the boating history of Douala. From the top floor, we can enjoy views of Douala's port. We will also see the main monuments of the city such as the **Palace of the King's Bell La Pagode**), constructed by the Germans in 1905 for King Auguste Manga Ndumbe and the lovely

Cathédrale Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul (Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul) built in Byzantine style with neo-Roman elements. Return to the *Hotel* for your overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sunday, October 20

Douala - Ekom - Bapa - Bafoussam



After breakfast, we will head west to the picturesque **Ekom Falls**, located in stunning, unspoiled primary forest. This area is home to the **Bamiléké** people, one of Cameroon's largest ethnic groups, as well as great artisans and agriculturalists. They are organized into chiefdoms and the chief, or "fon" is considered the spiritual, political, judicial, and military leader. We will make a stop at the **Kingdom of Bapa**, visit the royal palace and museum, and even have a chance to meet and chat with the village chief. Continue the drive to **Bafoussam** and upon arrival transfer to *Zingana Hotel or similar* for check-in, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Monday, October 21

Bafoussam (Foumban - Metché Falls)



Today we will make our way to **Foumban**, home of the **Bamoun** people and the seat of the sultanate. Founded in the 14th century by Mfon Nshare Yen, the founding father, it is one of the oldest towns in Cameroon. Explore the town and visit the beautiful early 20th century **Royal Palace**, where we will learn about the history of the Bamoun dynasties through displays of masks and statues. Also, enjoy a special **Bamoun dance performance**. Next to the Royal Palace is the **Museum Bamoun Sultanate**, a very unique and one-of-a-kind structure housing an impressive collection of items that belonged to the Bamoun rulers. The building itself is shaped as a two-headed serpent topped with a giant spider. We will also visit the **Sultanate Market**, one of the most colourful in Cameroon, and walk through the artisans' quarter, one of the best places in Central Africa to buy woodcarvings. On the way back to Bafoussam, we will stop at the **Metché Falls**, an important pilgrimage site for a visit, and then return to the *Hotel* for your overnight **(B,L,D)**

Tuesday, October 22

Bafoussam - Batoufam - Yaoundé

After breakfast, begin the drive to **Batoufam**, where we will visit the **Royal Palace** and its **living museum** to learn about the history of the Batoufam people. From here, continue the drive to **Yaoundé** (4 hrs.), with stops along the way to enjoy local **attractions** and see the diversity of the landscape. Transfer to *Franco Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and *overnight*. **(B,L,D)**

Wednesday, October 23

Yaoundé - Abong Mbang - Bagofit



After breakfast, enjoy a quick city tour of **Yaounde**, then begin the drive to **Abong Mbang** (4 hrs.), where we will visit a remote **pygmy village** located deep in the forest and spend some time with the pygmies, learn about their ways of life, and even have the opportunity to witness a lively pygmy dance. Continue the drive to **Bagofit** and upon arrival transfer to *Bagofit Sun City Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Thursday, October 24

Bagofit - Yaoundé - Kribi



Today, we will drive back to **Yaoundé**, where you will enjoy lunch. After lunch, we will continue the drive to **Kribi** a town located on the Gulf of Guinea for some leisure time. Upon arrival, transfer to *Ilomba Hotel or similar* for check-in, dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

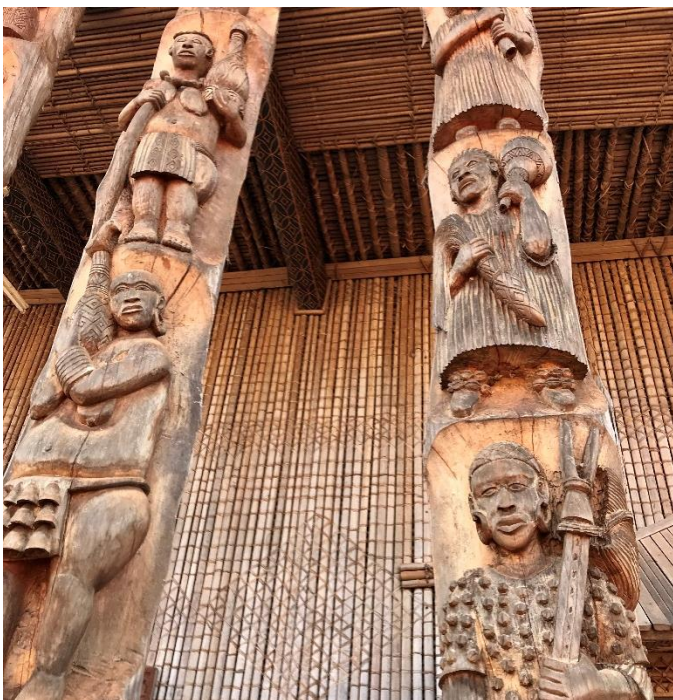
Friday, October 25

Kribi - Lobe - Douala - USA



Free morning at leisure, where you can enjoy swimming and relaxing, Head to visit the **Lobe Waterfalls**, the only place in the world where a river flows directly into the sea by cascades. Enjoy a lunch of fish and prawns on the beach Then drive to **Douala** in the afternoon and upon arrival transfer to *Sawa Hotel or similar* for check-in, have some rest and dinner. Later this evening, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B,L,D)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities or places visited due to unforeseen schedule conflicts or in order to make the itinerary run smoothly"



Special Trip Remarks:

Chad is our most pioneering destination and travelers must understand that infrastructure is very underdeveloped. Tourist facilities are extremely limited in the remote regions and small villages you will be visiting. There are few first-class hotels outside the cities and hotel A/C do not cool a room to American standards of comfort. During the Gerewol Festival, you will be camping. However, we will do our best to ensure your comfort. Tents will be equipped with beds and a separate seated tent-toilet.

*Participants should understand that this trip involves long drives in hot weather and along dusty roads. The physical shape you are in will be an important factor in your enjoyment of the trip. There are dangers inherent in any expedition traveling to remote regions such as sickness and lack of modern medical facilities. If you have any chronic health problems (cardiac, bad back, diabetes, etc.,) we recommend considering a different trip. It is **highly** advisable to purchase travel protection insurance.*

Knowing the nature of such "off-the-beaten track" adventure, all travelers on this tour will require a high level of flexibility, tolerance, and willingness to go with the flow if things change. You are acknowledging a full understanding and acceptance of all terms and conditions and are admitting that you are in good physical and mental health and are equipped with an open mind, a sense of adventure, and a tolerant and patient spirit to cope up with the tour. We have the full right to make any necessary changes to the itinerary, to the sequence of visits, to the choices of hotels, and sites or activities previously described in the itinerary without notice.

The exact date of the festival is determined sometime in June every year by the Elder Wodaabe people. Please do not book the flights until we get the confirmation about the exact dates.



Tour Cost (Land Only):

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Chad 7 - 8 travelers: \$4,995.00

9 - 12 travelers: \$4,495.00

Single Supplement \$345.00

Cameroon \$3,995.00

Single Supplement \$395.00

Price based on group size minimum of 7 participants and maximum of 12 participants

*Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: **-****



Tour Includes

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- Travel permit and local taxes in Chad.
- Accommodation at mentioned *Hotels* or similar on bed and breakfast basis.
- Camping in the Durbali Region in basic tents, which are equipped with mattresses.
- Sleeping bag and pillow while camping.
- Dry toilets will be separate from the tents.
- Transportation in A/C minibus or 4x4 vehicles.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Daily bottled water on the bus and with meals.
- Professional English-speaking guide throughout and local guides.
- All entrance fees to sites and national parks are included in the itinerary.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Trip Grade:

III Challenging: Parts of the trip will be physically challenging, involving walking over in a hot climate and presence of insects. There will be long drives over rough roads. You will be camping and sleeping on thin mattress. Lunches may be simple, cold picnic lunches. Expect primitive or no bathroom facilities along the road and remoteness from modern towns or cities.

Lodging Level:

****Simple:** Basic camping (individual tents with shared shower-tent and toilet-tent),

*****Superior:** Lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards. (3 or 4 stars)

Tour does not include:

- International flights from/to USA to Africa.
- Chad Visa (obtainable in Washington DC - approx. \$150.00) and Cameroon Visas (obtainable in Washington DC - approx. \$93.00 - Subject to change).
- Beverages & alcoholic drinks with or without meals.
- Yellow fever certificate.
- Hotel accommodation on Oct 18 for those continuing to Cameroon (separate cost).
- Airfare N'Djamena to Douala for those continuing to Cameroon (Approx. \$400.00)
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on the tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Travel protection insurance. (Highly Recommended)

