



Gabon

POP 1,608,000

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Odika (p523)
- ➔ Garden Café (p523)
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- ➔ DTH Traiteur (p530)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ La Baie des Tortues (p528)
- ➔ Loango Lodge (p531)
- ➔ Ch20 (p532)
- ➔ L'Hôtellerie de l'Hôpital Albert Schweitzer (p530)
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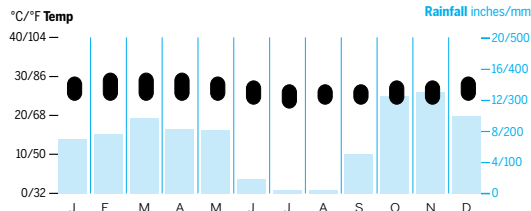
Why Go?

Unlike many of its neighbours, this slab of equatorial Africa enjoys both peace and stability, while its superb wildlife makes it an increasingly popular place to safari away from the crowds of East Africa. With its seemingly endless rain forest now safeguarded by the 2003 decision to turn an incredible 10% of the country into protected national parkland, Gabon is Central Africa's most progressive and traveller-friendly destination, although the competition is admittedly not too fierce.

Despite being far ahead of its unstable, war-torn neighbours, tourism in Gabon remains DIY – you either put yourself in the hands of a travel agency, or negotiate the poor roads, infrequent transport and almost total lack of reliable infrastructure yourself. Outside cosmopolitan Libreville, the country's only real city, Gabon is an undiscovered wonderland of thick jungle, white-sand beaches, rushing rivers and ethereal landscapes. Bring either plenty of money or plenty of patience, but don't miss out on this Eden-like travel experience.

When to Go

Libreville



May–Sep The dry season makes overland transport faster and wildlife easier to see.

Jul–Sep Have a close encounter with a whale swimming off Gabon's coastline.

Nov–Jan Spot turtles coming ashore to lay their eggs on the beaches.



Gabon Highlights

1 Gape at beaches full of elephants, buffaloes and surfing hippos at **Loango National Park** (p531).

2 Explore **Lambaréné** (p530), the charming and laid-back town made famous by the Nobel Prize-winning Albert Schweitzer.

3 Bodysurf the waves while watching humpback whales breach in the distance at **Mayumba National Park** (p532).

4 Head to Gabon's most spectacular falls at **Kongou** (p533) and take a trip by *pirogue* (traditional canoe) through the jungle.

5 Explore beautiful **Réserve de la Lopé** (p532), see wild elephants and enjoy spectacular scenery.

6 Kick back in the decidedly un-African city of **Libreville** (p522), eat well and take a day trip to Point Denis.