

SIMS SAFARIS



TROPICAL FOREST

SAFARI GEAR LIST



Use this checklist to prepare for tropical forest hunting in central Africa — bongo, forest duikers, dwarf forest buffalo, forest elephant, sitatunga, and other forest specialties. The forest is a completely different environment to southern Africa. Humidity is extreme, everything gets wet, and the bush is dense. Pack accordingly.

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

■ Passport	■ Yellow fever card (mandatory for central Africa)
■ 4457 Form (firearm proof of ownership)	■ Vaccination records — typhoid, hep A, malaria Rx
■ Visa (confirm requirements — varies by country)	■ Invitation letter (often required)
■ Rifle permit (multiple copies)	■ Emergency contact list
■ CITES permits (bongo, forest elephant — essential)	■ USD cash — tips, incidentals, camp extras
■ Travel insurance documents	■ Credit card
■ Global Rescue membership card	■ Digital copies of all docs (emailed to yourself)

★ Yellow fever vaccination card is MANDATORY for most central African countries. CITES permits for bongo and forest elephant must be arranged well in advance — confirm with your outfitter. Make multiple physical copies of everything.

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FIREARMS & AMMUNITION

■ Hard locking gun case	■ .375 H&H; or larger — minimum for bongo and forest buffalo
■ Combination locks x2 (recommended over TSA locks)	■ Solid and soft ammo — both required for dangerous game
■ Gun sock for in-camp storage and long travel days	■ Ammo pouch or belt for softs and solids
■ Hard locked ammo case	■ Tip money (separate from travel cash)
■ Bore snake — clean barrel end of each hunting day	■ Taxidermy shipping tags (2+ per animal)
■ Oil wipes for bolt and action (moisture is constant)	■ Zip ties for shipping tags
■ Gun cleaning rags — wipe down moisture daily	■ Shooting sticks — forest shots are fast and close
■ Ear plugs / ear protection	■ Silicone gun cloth for extra moisture protection

★ Moisture and humidity are the enemy of your rifle in central Africa. Clean and wipe down your action and barrel at the end of every single day — rust sets in fast. A .375 H&H; is the recommended minimum for forest buffalo and bongo — do not undergun.

OPTICS & ELECTRONICS

■ Binoculars — 8x32 or 8x42 (forest visibility is short)	■ GoPro or action cam (great for forest footage)
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■ Clear safety glasses (eye protection on truck drives)	■ Headphones for travel
■ Camera with waterproof housing or dry bag	■ Phone charger + international power adapter
■ SD cards (multiple — heat can corrupt cards)	■ Portable power bank (charging options very limited)
■ Spare batteries for all electronics	■ Power inverter for camp (Cameroon and Congo specific)
■ Hard waterproof case for camera gear	■ Garmin inReach — satellite comms essential in deep forest
	■ Lens cleaning kit — humidity fogs everything

★ A rangefinder is less useful in dense forest — most shots are under 60 yards. Protect all electronics in dry bags or waterproof cases. Humidity and rain will destroy unprotected gear quickly.

FIELD GEAR

■ Flashlight — waterproof	■ Heavy duty dry bags for all gear
■ Headlamp — waterproof, spare batteries	■ Zip lock bags in various sizes
■ Gaiters — canvas or rubber (snakes and mud)	■ Small battery powered fan for camp (sleep quality)
■ Leatherman multi-tool	■ Treats for crew — gum, candy, tobacco (morale essential)

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| ■ Field knife | ■ Small gifts for staff — knives, gloves, headlamps |
| ■ Small pack for water, snacks, and camera in field | ■ Book for downtime and long travel days |
| ■ Water bottles — 2 minimum (hydration is critical) | ■ Duct tape — fixes everything in the forest |

★ A small battery powered fan for your tent or room is one of the best things you can bring — humidity and heat at night are relentless and sleep quality matters on a long forest hunt. Duct tape is worth its weight in gold out there.

CLOTHING

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| ■ Hunting shirts — 2 long sleeve, 1 short sleeve | ■ Neck gaiter / buff (bug and sun protection) |
| ■ Hunting pants x3 — lightweight, quick dry | ■ Bug head net (tsetse and forest flies are severe) |
| ■ Palladium boots or similar canvas/rubber boot x2 pairs | ■ Lightweight gloves for thorn brush |
| ■ Socks x5–6 pairs (feet stay wet — change daily) | ■ Lightweight rain jacket — use it daily |
| ■ Underwear x5–6 pairs | ■ Camp shorts and t-shirt for evenings |
| ■ Belt | ■ Camp shoes — crocs or flip flops |
| ■ Baseball cap or hunting cap | ■ Compression socks for long haul flights |

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★ Bring two pairs of boots — your feet will be wet every single day. Rotating between pairs lets each dry overnight. Long sleeves are essential for bug protection. Avoid dark colors (blue, black) as tsetse flies are attracted to them — olive, tan, and khaki are best. Your hunting clothes also serve as travel and sleep clothes — pack light, camps have laundry.

BUG & DISEASE PROTECTION

■ DEET bug spray 30–50%	■ Anti-malarial pills (confirm type with travel doctor)
■ Avon Skin So Soft with IR3535 or Avon Bug Guard	■ Mosquito net for sleeping (often provided but bring one)
■ Bug head net — non-negotiable in tsetse country	■ Long sleeves and pants at dusk and dawn — always
■ Permethrin spray for clothing and gear	■ Yellow fever vaccination (mandatory — not optional)
■ Malaria prophylaxis — START BEFORE YOU LEAVE	■ Typhoid vaccination (food and water risk is high)

★ Central Africa is serious malaria and tsetse fly country. This is not southern Africa — the bug situation is a different level entirely. Avon Skin So Soft with IR3535 is the most recommended tsetse deterrent among experienced hunters. Start your malaria medication before departure as directed. Permethrin treat your clothing and gear before you leave home.

FIRST AID, HYGIENE & TOILETRIES

■ Personal prescriptions and medications	■ Eye drops (dust and debris on forest drives)
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■ Written personal medication list (for emergencies)	■ Eye glass cleaner / spare glasses or contacts
■ Aspirin / ibuprofen / acetaminophen	■ Wet wipes / baby wipes (showers not always available)
■ Bandages, gauze, tape, elastic wraps	■ Hand sanitizer
■ Antiseptic cream / Neosporin	■ Foot powder — athlete's foot risk is very high
■ Antidiarrheal medication — Imodium (essential)	■ Antifungal cream (humidity causes skin issues fast)
■ Anti-nausea medication	■ Scissors, tweezers, nail clippers, razor
■ Rehydration salts / electrolyte packets (use daily)	■ Travel size shampoo and conditioner
■ Sunscreen	■ Toothpaste and toothbrush
■ Lip balm with SPF	■ Blister treatment / moleskin

★ See a travel medicine specialist 6–8 weeks before departure — central Africa requires more prep than southern Africa. Foot care is critical — wet feet every day causes fungal issues fast. Foot powder and antifungal cream are not optional. Rehydration salts should be used proactively, not just when you feel ill.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

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For more resources, outfitter recommendations, and safari planning visit SimsSafaris.com | By McKenzie Sims