



ANGOLA:

GENERAL INFORMATION



The Angolan Cave Chat is one of many special birds possible on this exciting tour!

PASSPORT AND VISA

Your passport must be valid for a period of at least six months after the date of your arrival in Angola. Please make sure that there is at least one full empty page available in your passport. Please ensure that you also bring a photocopy of your passport, to be kept in a different location from your passport, in case of loss.

Only very few countries are exempt from obtaining a visa to travel to Angola, or can obtain a visa on arrival, and most nations require a visa to be arranged in advance of your trip. Angola has recently introduced an eVisa system to make this process simpler, but please do verify whether you are eligible to apply for the eVisa, or should you need an embassy/consular visa (the eVisa is not available to every nation). Please make sure you find out accordingly, and well in advance of your tour.

Birding Ecotours can assist in providing documentation to confirm your participation on the tour, in support of your visa application. Additionally, we will send out information pertaining to the visa process. However, the onus is on you, as a client, to secure your visa to travel here.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We require (see Birding Tours Terms and Conditions - Birding Ecotours) that you purchase trip cancellation insurance in case you have to cancel due to illness just prior to the tour departure date, to protect yourself against accidents, medical, illness, loss of valuables, luggage etc. and travel interruptions or delays of all kinds. Allianz Travel and Generali Global Assistance are two options to consider.

HEALTH/MALARIA

Please carefully read the Center for Disease Control (CDC) information for travelers to Angola (or your government's equivalent health travel advice for Angola). Below we have mentioned a couple of specific items but first and foremost kindly be advised by the updated information at the above link.

Required immunizations for travel to Angola: Yellow Fever vaccine. Please note that Angola accepts that Yellow Fever inoculation is now acknowledged as a lifetime vaccine (but of course you still need to produce the certificate, even if it shows as a technically expired date).

It is recommended that you are up to date with all routine vaccines, such as polio and measles-mumps-rubella (MMR). Additionally, it is also recommended getting vaccines for Hepatitis A and B, rabies and typhoid. Please keep in mind that if you have not had any of these, one should make sure that you have been inoculated at least six weeks prior to your trip, for the vaccine to take full effect.

Malaria

We strongly recommend anti-malaria drugs for travel to Angola. Please consult with your doctor accordingly.

Mosquito repellent, long trousers/jeans and long-sleeved shirts, particularly at night when malaria (*Anopheles*) mosquitoes bite, are advised, in addition to the drugs.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make sure that you are covered with medical insurance in case of an emergency while on this trip. Without insurance the cost of medical care can be extremely high.

Please notify us at the time of registering for the tour of any medical conditions you think we should know about (including allergies, heart conditions, epilepsy, etc.). This will greatly help us to cater to your needs.

WATER / FOOD

We provide unlimited bottled water in the tour vehicles, and you are welcome to take water from the vehicle for evenings when not provided in the hotel rooms. More expensive bottled water at restaurants is excluded from the tour cost and is for your account, but (again) you can take water from our tour vehicle whenever you want.

Dinners will virtually always be enjoyed at our hotels and lodges, with breakfasts and lunches a mix of eating at our hotels/lodges and packed lunches in the field.

As always, please do inform us if you have any food allergies or other dietary requirements. Kindly note, that we cannot guarantee that these can be accommodated throughout the tour. If you have special requirements/allergies, we kindly ask if you can bring along appropriate/replacement foods.

CURRENCY AND MONEY

The Angolan kwanza (Kz) is the official currency, and it is suggested to ensure you have sufficient cash in local currency to cover expenses such as drinks, tips, and for other items of a personal nature (such as gifts). Credit cards are not widely accepted for payment.

You will be able to exchange or draw money at the airport upon our arrival, and when we pass through larger towns during the tours. Note that exchanging money is only easily possible at the airport on your arrival – it is very time-consuming to do so during the tour. Mastercard, and to a lesser extent, Visa are accepted for drawing cash from ATMs. Note: US and Canadian dollars, pound sterling and euros cannot be used for purchases.

WEATHER

Conditions will generally be comfortable, but note that some areas in the highlands may be cool and windy, especially in the mornings or evenings, and some areas are likely to be warm and humid (especially in the north). As always, it is good practice to ensure you have some warmer clothes, as some folks may feel the need for a jersey/jacket in the evenings, and a raincoat. Although we visit during the dry season, unseasonal rain is not impossible.

ELECTRICITY

The standard voltage is 220 V. If you intend to recharge camera batteries etc. in your hotel room you will need an international adapter. Note that in Angola, the power plug sockets generally make use of Type C (see link).

All of our hotels/lodges will have access to electricity throughout the day/night. Remember, this is rural Africa, and sometimes the electricity does go out. There will be an inverter in the vehicle which can be used to charge equipment, should this be necessary.

A good torch will also be useful if you fancy joining us for a night walk or drive. If you intend to do any trips, you would be advised to bring at least one good torch, preferably with a strong beam. All the places we will stay at will have electrical outlets for chargers and laptops.

INTERNET/WIFI

Wi-Fi internet will be intermittently available at our lodges and hotels on this trip. Kindly note that in many places, this is not accessible from your rooms, but only the main reception area/dining area.

LENGTH OF DRIVES

Kindly note that this tour takes place in a third-world country, and roads are often narrow, potholed and busy. Do not expect highways and quick travel between destinations. Unfortunately, this does mean we will spend quite a bit of time in the vehicles, traveling to and from birding sites, and transiting between destinations. Additionally, there are a few days with particularly long drives.

Air-conditioning is available in our tour vehicles.

Some roads can be dusty so please consider bringing a scarf (or other measures) in case you are birding along an unpaved road and a car goes past putting up dust.

WALKING

Note that there is a fair bit of walking needed on this tour. Many of our birding sites require birding from foot, as opposed to from vehicles, and will require us being on our feet for several hours at a time. Despite this, the distances walked are often not very far, and the taxing aspect comes from

simply being on one's feet. Participants should be able to manage these conditions, and be comfortable on their feet, with comfortable shoes etc.

Note that there is an optional/possible hike up to the top of Mount Moco, which is extremely difficult and challenging. While this hike is likely to reveal unique species not possible elsewhere on the trip, such as Margaret's Batis, it will only be undertaken on careful consideration on the actual tour itself. Kindly be aware, that should all/some of the group not be able to participate in the hike, birding will be undertaken on the foothills of Mount Moco, which too holds excellent birding, with clients not being left at the hotel for the day. This will be discussed and decided on during the tour itself.

PACE OF TOUR

This is an intense tour, with long days required most of the time. We will generally start the days off early, before having a break for a lunch, and resuming in the afternoons.

It is possible to opt out of some activities, should you not feel up for it, but this generally won't be possible on the days where we transit between places. In some instances, it may be possible to stay with the vehicle(s) should you be unable/unwilling to join the group.

ACCOMMODATION

Please note that the accommodation used on this tour ranges from 'good/standard' to 'basic' (and below the standard we use on our southern/East Africa tours). En-suite bathroom facilities are available throughout the tour. Please note that maintenance can be an issue at places, with electrical points, lights etc. not working.

As the tourism industry is still new in Angola, many of the birding sites lie far from the accommodation establishments and thus a drive is necessary in the mornings and evenings.

FLIGHTS

This tour starts in the capital city, Luanda, that has an international airport serviced by various airlines (often routing through Europe).

The tour ends in Lubango (a city in the south of the country). The international airport in Lubango is much smaller, and is serviced only by a few airlines internationally (most into Namibia/South Africa). Note, you may need to purchase a flight on the domestic flight carrier, TAAG airlines, from Lubango to Luanda at the end of the tour, from where you can secure an international flight home.

Please kindly check in with the Birding Ecotours office before booking any flights.

WHAT TO BRING

Clothing – Casual and informal dress is fine in the hotels and lodges. Loose lightweight field clothing works best, with a warm fleece or jacket for cooler weather. As mentioned before, it is good practice to bring some warmer clothing, certainly a minimum of a warm fleece and a rain jacket. While unlikely, rain is always a possibility, so an umbrella and or rain gear is always useful to have.

Sunglasses, sunhat and sunscreen (rated SPF 30 or higher) are essential. A pair of trousers or a long skirt, and a long-sleeved shirt should be included to help protect against forest vegetation and the sun.

We would recommend lightweight walking boots for when out on foot, and bringing a second pair is often useful. Please ensure that whatever footwear you bring, that it is comfortable, as much time is spent on your feet on this tour. You might like to consider sandals/tevas as well, for use around the hotels/lodges.

Do not forget – BINOCULARS, prescription drugs (also bring the generic names for these drugs), toiletries, prescription glasses (and a spare pair), insect repellent, camera, flashlight, batteries (for electronic equipment and chargers for the re-chargeable batteries), plug adaptors, alarm clock, mosquito repellent, money pouch, field guide(s), a soft-sided duffle-style luggage bag is recommended (hard-sided luggage is not always ideal), daypack/backpack, and your favorite road snacks!

Key documents and cash – Passports, your travel or health insurance cards (you can send us copies to file in case of emergency), credit cards – Mastercard (and to a lesser extent VISA) are best – see above, US dollars, euro or pounds can be exchanged for local currency at the airport as you arrive into the country (if you prefer not to simply draw from ATMs), cash for drinks, gifts, **tips**, items of a personal nature etc.

Luggage – Due to restricted space in the vehicles, please pack as lightly as possible. A medium-sized, soft-sided duffle bag (not the hard-sided cases) works best for packing in the vehicles. This allows us to better fit the bags. Please bring a daypack to keep items that you wish to use or need on a daily basis.