



Soul of the Sahara

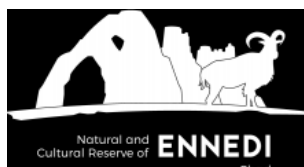
Ennedi and Ouadi-Rimé Faunal Reserve, Chad

14th March – 26th March, 2022

*"When I saw the Ennedi landscape for the first time, it struck me with the force of paradise."
– Sophy Roberts, Financial Times, 2020*

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Created for Mammalwatching.com



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Contents

Overview	3
Itinerary.....	3
Tour Map.....	5
Costs & Inclusions	6
Getting to Chad	6
Accommodation.....	7
Food & Drink	7
Game Viewing	7
Vehicles Used	8
Health and Vaccinations	8
Insurance.....	8
Visas	8
Safety and Security	9
About Chad	9
Weather	10
Money	10
Language	11
About Ennedi and Ouadi-Rimé	11
Wildlife Highlights	12
About Pictus Safaris	12
Responsible Travel Policy.....	13
Protecting Your Money	13
COVID-19.....	13
Packing List.....	14
Other Tours	14



Overview

Ennedi and Ouadi-Rimé Faunal Reserve, Chad

- A rare opportunity to visit the legendary and remote Ennedi Plateau
- Witness the iconic 'gueltas' where camels descend to drink in their hundreds
- Visit the Sahara Conservation Fund's re-wilding programme in Ouadi-Rimé
- Caracal, pale fox and striped hyena all possible on night drives
- Chance to see introduced addax, dama gazelle and scimitar-horned oryx
- Aoudad, Dorcas gazelle and fennec fox regularly recorded

Itinerary

Day 1

<i>Accommodation: Radisson Blu N'Djamena</i>	<i>Location: N'Djamena</i>	<i>Meals Included: N/A</i>
<p>On your arrival into N'Djamena's international airport, you will be met by your local guide and transferred to the Radisson Blu hotel., Although not luxurious, this hotel is comfortable, and it offers an excellent view of the Chari River. Keep your eyes peeled, this is one of the only places in Chad where you might spot hippo! Once settled in, your local guide will assist you with police registration, which is a legal requirement in Chad, as well as any PCR testing requirements.</p> <p>This evening there will be a pre-tour briefing held in the hotel restaurant, followed by dinner. We ask clients not to leave the hotel, if at all possible, to minimise the risks of safety concerns.</p>		

Day 2

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Kalait</i>	<i>Meals Included: L, D</i>
<p>A morning flight east with Tchadian Airlines takes guests to the city of Abeche today. On arrival, you will meet your trusty, if dated, 4x4s and head to the market town of Kalait. You will overnight with your basic mobile camp just outside Kalait.</p>		

Day 3

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Guelta Bachikele</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
<p>Today we truly leave civilisation behind, heading north-east deep into the Ennedi Massif. This vast and wild area is renowned for its extraordinary rock formations, and there will be plenty of opportunities for photos as we travel through this surreal landscape. The massif is now protected by South African NGO African Parks and its future now seems secure.</p> <p>Our destination today is one of the few 'guelta' that dot the massif. These waterways often represent the only water and trees for hundreds of kilometres and, as a result, are hugely important and busy places. Herdsmen bring their livestock deep into the canyons surrounding each guelta, with the blood-red and orange rocks offering an incredible backdrop to this spectacle. Each guelta has its own character and Bachikele is much greener than many others. We will overnight nearby and, if we can do so safely, we will be sure to take a walk at sunset and spotlight on our way back to camp, seeking out charismatic wildlife that persists here.</p>		



Day 4

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Guelta d'Archei</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
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Today we embark on an adventure through the desert, visiting the stunning Aloba Arch, as well as Tokou and 'Eyeglasses', a striking rock formation. Our final stop today will be the site that many people think the highlight of any visit to Ennedi – Guelta d'Archei. This guelta is truly stunning, with towering pinnacles of sandstone and huge arches unlike anything anywhere else in Africa. The water itself hides the last four remaining Saharan crocodiles, a desert-adapted species which will soon fade into extinction. After short hikes to various viewpoints to take in this scene, we will make camp nearby in what is truly one of the wildest and most beautiful corners of Africa.

Day 5

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Bichagara</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
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This morning we drive through the vast Tassilli plains to the open wilderness of Bichagara. Characterised by miles and miles of untouched sandstone, this is a very different area from the eastern and central reaches of the massif, making for superb photographs and a real sense of isolation.

Day 6

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Kalait</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
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A full-day drive today, returning to a wild camp just outside the market town of Kalait.

Day 7

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Ouadi-Rimé FR</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
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It will be another full day of driving today as we leave the main road behind and head due west into Ouadi-Rimé. This incomprehensibly vast reserve is one of the largest protected areas in the world, although that protection has been largely lacking in recent decades. Unfettered poaching has robbed this reserve of once healthy populations of prey, including addax and scimitar-horned oryx, and predators, including desert-adapted cheetah.

Recent years have seen an impressive re-wilding campaign led by the Sahara Conservation Fund, and visitors can now stay at the base camp used by the SCF teams and witness their work first-hand. Bomas hold populations of addax, dama gazelle, scimitar-horned oryx and North African ostrich, and several individuals of each species now roam more freely in the reserve. We will commit to seeking out photographic opportunities with each species, as well as the wild populations of Dorcas gazelle that can be found here. The base camp has relative luxuries like running water and flush toilets – be sure to take advantage of these before we depart in a few days to Ennedi!

Days 8 to 9

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Ouadi-Rimé FR</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
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We have two full days to spend in this famed reserve focussed on both the reintroduced species and those still roaming wild. Night drives and short walks are possible, which give us a chance of spotting unusual desert species including sand cat and caracal. Our exact movements in the reserve will be dictated by SCF activities and any security concerns.

Day 10



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<i>Accommodation: Guest House</i>	<i>Location: Abeche</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
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Another full day's driving, back to the relative civilisation of Abeche.

Day 11

<i>Accommodation: Radisson Blu N'Djamena</i>	<i>Location: N'Djamena</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L</i>
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One final day of driving lies ahead, bringing us back to N'Djamena in the late afternoon, in desperate need of a wash, but with great memories in tow.

Day 12

<i>Accommodation: Radisson Blu N'Djamena</i>	<i>Location: N'Djamena</i>	<i>Meals Included: N/A</i>
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This morning you undergone PCR testing, with the remainder of the day at leisure. With our local guide, we recommend checking out several historic sites that surround this city.

Day 13

<i>Accommodation: N/A</i>	<i>Location: N'Djamena</i>	<i>Meals Included: N/A</i>
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Today you are transferred back to the airport if heading home, or you are welcome to head off on your next adventure if staying in Chad.

Tour Map





Costs & Inclusions

These remote areas of Chad are extremely expensive areas in which to operate, but we aim to operate with as few costs as possible, including the use of very basic camping equipment. The cost for this tour is dependent on the number of travellers – if two clients travel, the cost is £4,995 per person, and this falls to £3,595 per person if three clients travel.

We always ask for payment in Sterling (GBP), which is unusual for a safari operator. We do this as most of our clients are based in the United Kingdom. We also deal with a large number of small, local partners who use a combination of US Dollars, Euros and local currency – as such, our use of a single currency simplifies things for both us and our partners. We understand that using GBP may mean some clients, particularly in the USA, incur some additional fees. We apologise, and recommend that these clients look into low-fee options for transfers if the fees levied by their bank are unacceptably high. Payments must be made by electronic transfer to the bank details specified on your invoice. We regret that we cannot accept payment by card or cheque.

Please see the below matrix for detail on what activities are included in the cost of your tour, and what is excluded.

Included	Excluded
Supporting documentation for visa	Visas
Police registration on arrival	International flights
Pick up from airport and transfer to hotel in N'Djamena	All meals and drinks in N'Djamena
Accommodation in N'Djamena	Sleeping bag
All vehicle transfers	Items of a personal nature
Basic tents and camping equipment	Gratuities
All meals outside N'Djamena	Laundry
Drinking water	Optional Activities
	Accommodation before/after tour dates
	All soft and alcoholic drinks during your stay
	PCR tests

Getting to Chad

N'Djamena International Airport is currently served by major airlines including Air France, Egyptair, Ethiopian Airlines and Turkish Airlines. We recommend using Ethiopian Airlines, connecting through Addis Ababa. Their flights arrive into N'Djamena at around midday, allowing plenty of time to negotiate police registration.



We ask that you do not book flights until we have specifically advised you by email that the tour will be going ahead.

Accommodation

As is the case across Africa, the standards of accommodation can be highly variable. We have chosen the accommodation for this itinerary carefully, but we ask clients to be aware that even with the utmost diligence the accommodation chosen may fall below standards in the west. The following accommodation options will be used during your trip:

Radisson Blu N'Djamena – Situated on the banks of the Chari River, with a view across to neighbouring Cameroon, the Radisson Blu is one of the better hotels in N'Djamena. Whilst not as glitzy as the eye-wateringly expensive nearby Hilton N'Djamena (which has now been closed and seized by the Chadian government), this is a perfectly functional hotel. Standards do vary though, and should you find that your room is not of a sufficient standard, we will do our best to move you to a more appropriate room. An added bonus is that Hippo are often easily spotted from the hotel.

Camping – Please note that the camping equipment and locations we use are very primitive, and this is not a luxurious tour. You will be provided with a small tent and basic camping equipment, such as tables and chairs. Meals will be provided throughout. Toilet and shower facilities are not provided, except in Ouadi-Rimé.

Food & Drink

Meals are included in the tour price except in N'Djamena. We recommend budgeting around \$50 per person for meals in N'Djamena. Drinking water is included throughout. We have never had any issues drinking this water on previous visits. However, we recommend bringing purification tablets if you are worried about the quality of the water. Soft and alcoholic drinks are not included in the tour price.

Meals throughout are basic, and there is not huge variety. Please advise us of any dietary restrictions, special diets or food allergies well in advance of travel, and we will do our best to cater for you given the remoteness of the region.

Game Viewing

We love wildlife at Pictus Safaris, but game-viewing can be challenging in much of Northern Chad due to years of poaching and instability. When possible, we will take drives or walks at night to give us the best chance of locating wildlife. In Ouadi-Rimé, we are able to view reintroduced species at close quarters on foot or in a vehicle, and night drives have been arranged from closed 4x4 vehicles.



Vehicles Used

The vehicles used for the duration of the tour are compact 4x4 vehicles – they are reliable, but not particularly comfortable. There is room for up to three clients plus luggage in each vehicle.

Health and Vaccinations

We suggest that all clients visiting Chad take a malaria prophylaxis for the duration of your stay – please consult a medical professional as to which prophylaxis is right for you. The risk of malaria in Chad in the dry season is very low, although there is always the possibility of malarial mosquitos near stagnant water. Clients must produce their yellow fever certificate to enter Chad, and we recommend up-to-date vaccinations against cholera, diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningitis, polio, tuberculosis, tetanus and typhoid – please note that the advice of a medical professional takes precedence over these suggestions.

If you are concerned about local food and water, we recommend bringing water purification tablets, and any appropriate medicine with you.

You must alert us to any serious allergies well in advance of travel.

Insurance

Clients must have an appropriate travel insurance policy in order to join this tour. As this tour travels through an area to which foreign travel advisory agencies advise against all travel, we recommend High Risk Voyager Insurance – more details can be found [here](#). Your travel insurance must cover the costs of medical evacuation and repatriation.

Pictus Safaris have tour operator liability insurance provided by Tasker and Partners. We can provide further information on this on request. Financial failure insurance provided by Protected Trust Services ensures your money is protected in the unlikely event that Pictus Safaris becomes insolvent during or before your holiday.

Visas

The process for acquiring a visa for entry into Chad is notoriously laborious. For UK citizens, the visa must be issued in advance of travel and can only be issued by the nearest Chadian embassy, which is in Belgium or France. Clients of other nationalities should check well in advance of travel what entry requirements pertain to them. To minimise the chances of disruption, we recommend using a third-party such as Travcour to secure your visa on your behalf, although these can be expensive. We understand that sending your passport by post can be nerve-wracking, but to date we have never experienced any issues – although we cannot accept any liability should you



encounter any issues. We strongly encourage you to use a recorded delivery service if sending and receiving your passport by post.

The fee levied by the embassy for a visa is £125. To acquire a visa you must submit a completed visa application, your passport, two passport photos with a white background, confirmation of your flights and proof of your stay. We will provide you details of your hotel booking on your first night, as well as a letter of invitation from our local partners, which will be sufficient as "proof of stay". Please note that visas often take up to fifteen days to process, and sometimes longer.

Please note that you will be required to register with police within three days of your arrival in Chad. Your Pictus Safaris representative will assist you with this on your arrival.

Safety and Security

We understand that safety and security is a key concern for many potential visitors to Chad, and the safety of our clients is the utmost priority for Pictus Safaris. The country has been stable for over a decade, following unsuccessful coup attempts in 2006 and 2008. This being said, the region at large remains unstable, and there is always the possibility that this instability affects Chad going forwards. The 2021 death of the Chadian president led to a short period of unrest before a transitional council was announced. However, Pictus Safaris have conducted a detailed risk assessment and, based on this and our previous visits, believe the risk to visitors is minimal.

N'Djamena is secured by Chadian and French forces. Although most foreign travel advisory agencies advise against all but essential travel to N'Djamena, our accommodation in N'Djamena has 24/7 security and security incidents in the city are exceedingly rare. This being said, we ask clients to exercise precautions here, including not leaving the hotel and refraining from photography, especially near military installations.

The northern reaches of Chad are not policed at all, and there is an element of lawlessness near the borders, particularly with Sudan. However, in recent years, incidents have become extremely rare and tourism is now increasingly common here.

Overall, whilst Chad is not as secure as some more typical safari destinations, the overwhelming majority of visits encounter no issues whatsoever. With appropriate precautions taken, we have no doubt your stay in Chad will be an enjoyable and safe one.

About Chad

Located in the middle of the Sahel, Chad is a land of contrast. The north of the country is extremely dry and dominated by arid mountains and plateaux. Further south, this landscape gives way to sparse woodland and inselbergs and, eventually, to well-watered riverine forest around rivers such as the Chari. Chad is extremely sparsely populated outside of major cities and the primary industries are associated with subsistence farming. This has begun to change in recent years, as oil exploration has grown in some areas.



Pictus
Safaris

At Pictus Safaris, we are conscious that many of our destinations have a troubled and chequered history, and Chad is no exception. We fully acknowledge the realities facing the people of Chad, including human rights abuses committed by the Chadian government. Please note that Pictus Safaris does not endorse or make payments to any agencies or individuals associated with the Chadian government.

Chad is currently facing an insurgency around Lake Chad, led by fighters from Nigeria and Cameroon. There is widespread lawlessness in the north of the country. However, Chad is significantly more secure than its neighbours in the Sahel and, further north, in the Sahara. Conflicts with Sudan and the Central African Republic have abated, and with the exception of border areas, Chad is stable.

Official Name	Republic of Chad
Population	16,244,513 (2020 est.)
Area	1,284,000 km ²
Currency	Central African Franc (CFA)
Timezone	UTC+1
President	Mahamat Déby
Capital City	N'Djamena
Independence From	France
Independence Day	11 th August 1960
National Animal	Goat (in the north) and Lion (in the south)
Bordering Countries	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan
Highest Point	Emi Koussi (11,204 ft)
Lowest Point	Djourab Depression (525 ft)
Longest River	Chari River (1,200 km)
Largest Lake	Lake Chad (1,350 km ²)
Largest Protected Area	Ouadi-Rimé Ouadi-Achim Faunal Reserve (77,950 km ²)
Largest Religion	Islam (51.8%)
Largest Ethnic Group	Sara (26.6%)
Largest City	N'Djamena (1,605,696 – 2009)
Official Languages	Arabic, French
Drives on the...	Right
National Sport	Football
Number of Regions	23
Nationality	Chadian
Internet Country Code	.td

Weather

The weather in March in northern Chad is hot and dry. It never rains, and temperatures usually reach a maximum of 36°C. In the early mornings it will sometimes get as low as 20°C. Heat is a real issue here and we strongly recommend taking all reasonable precautions to minimise your exposure to the sun.

Money



The official currency in Chad is the Central African Franc (CFA). £1 usually equates to about 750 CFA. \$1 stands at roughly 536 CFA at the time of writing. USD and EUR are sometimes used instead of CFA, and we recommend bringing some of each, although this is rarely needed unless you intend to make purchases.

Tipping is expected for local guides and staff, but is entirely at your discretion. We recommend a tip of \$10 per day per staff member as a rough guideline. This should of course reflect how much the staff member enhanced your stay, and total amounts should increase or decrease with this in mind.

Language

Chad has two official languages; French and Arabic. English is hardly ever spoken, even in N'Djamena. The north-eastern region of Chad, where Ennedi is located, has a significant Arab influence, and French is not spoken commonly here. Chad has its own form of Arabic, Chadian Arabic, which is spoken by almost everyone who lives in and around Ennedi.

Very few people you meet, aside from some staff at the camp in Ouadi-Rime, will speak English. Your driver and local guide speak very limited English. For some handy phrases, see the table below.

English	French	Arabic
Hello	Bonjour	Salaam wa alekoum
Hello (response)	N/A	Wa alekoum salaam
How are you?	Comment allez-vous?	Inta afé (to male)/ Inti afé (female)
I am fine, thank you	Bien, merci	Ana afé
Good morning	Bonjour	Sabaho
Good afternoon	Bonjour	N/A
Good night	Bonne soirée	Tusbah ala khair
Goodbye	Au revoir	Ma salaam
I'm sorry	Je suis désolé	'ana asef
Please	S'il vous plaît	Min fadlak
Thank you	Merci	Chukkran
You're welcome	De rien	Afwan
Yes	Oui	Ayé
No	Non	La
Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais?	Inta (i) t'arfa kalam Anglais?
I need help	Au secours	Saa'adinii
My name is...	Je m'appelle	Ana ousoumi...
What is your name?	Comment vous appelez-vous?	Inta (i) Ousoum-ki yatou?
I can see an addax	Je vois un antilope addax	'araa bakr al wahsh

About Ennedi and Ouadi-Rimé

The Ennedi Massif is world-famous for its natural beauty and isolation. Its proximity to unstable border regions, though, threatened its long-term future until recently, when African Parks stepped



in to manage the area on behalf of the Chadian government. This followed incredible success for African Parks in Zakouma, and this has been mirrored in Ennedi. Not only are security incidents and incursions now extremely rare, but the area is being surveyed in a systematic way for the first time. New areas are being revealed all the time, and the continued presence of wildlife including caracal and striped hyena has been confirmed.

Like Ennedi, Ouadi-Rimé has historically been devastated by unfettered poaching and mismanagement. It was once the stronghold of a long list of desert species but, one by one, each species was picked off until almost nothing remained. Mesopredators clung on, as did a handful of hardy gazelle, but it was not until the Sahara Conservation Fund stepped in and began the painstaking process of reintroducing species to the area that the reserve began to return to its old self. Nowadays this vast reserve is still under threat, but there is hope for its future at last.

Wildlife Highlights

A full mammal and bird list will be sent to you with your pre-departure information document.

The mammal highlights are, of course, the addax, scimitar-horned oryx and dama gazelle that have been reintroduced in Ouadi-Rimé. These populations were originally held in captivity before being released into the wild by the Sahara Conservation Fund over the last few years. It should be noted that the chance of an encounter with truly wild representatives of these species is vanishingly low. We are fortunate that we are able to arrange night drives with the assistance of the Sahara Conservation Fund, and a rich diversity of nocturnal species are still present in the reserve. Rueppell's fox, caracal, pale fox and even sand cat can be seen in the reserve, although the latter is rarely spotted near Oryx Base Camp. The birding can also be hugely productive here, with Nubian bustard recorded in good numbers, in addition to plentiful migratory species en route to Zakouma.

In Ennedi, the northern reaches of the plateau support healthy populations of aoudad and Dorcas gazelle, as well as a surprisingly rich array of nocturnal and crepuscular mesopredators. Fennec fox are recorded here, in addition to caracal and striped hyena, and spotlighting around minor gueltas can be rewarding.

About Pictus Safaris

Pictus Safaris are a limited company registered with Companies House in the UK – our registration number is 12812872. Our registered address is Kemp House, 160 City Road, London, EC1V 2NX. Our trading and correspondence address is 26A Ridley Road, London, NW10 5UA.

We are a small-group safari specialist operating across Africa. True pan-African experts, we believe that the benefits of ecotourism are yet to reach many communities and ecosystems across the continent. By bringing ecotourism to lesser-visited areas, we hope to play a small part in cementing their future. To find out more about our mission, see our responsible travel policy,



available on request. At our heart, we are mammal-watching specialists, and our itineraries are designed to give our clients the very best chance of finding the rarest and most charismatic wildlife Africa has to offer.

Our founder, Tom Clode, has spent much of his life travelling across Africa in search of rare wildlife. Tom loves exploring new destinations and showing his favourite spots to clients – from Angola to Zimbabwe and everywhere in between! Tom's true passion is tracking down isolated populations of predators including African Wild Dog and Cheetah, and it is for that very reason that, when not in London, Tom is usually found in Pendjari or Niokolo-Koba.

Responsible Travel Policy

Pictus Safaris have a detailed responsible travel policy that will be provided to you when you book this tour. It is the Pictus Safaris mission to ensure that the benefits of ecotourism are brought to the communities and ecosystems in little-visited areas of Africa. As such, we only use local partners who are locally-based or employ local people. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards any behaviour that is disrespectful to local people or damaging to the ecosystem. As per our terms and conditions, any such behaviour is grounds for removal from the tour.

With regard to Chad, we ask that clients are aware of the environmental and societal differences between our destination and our home countries. In particular, we ask clients to consider limiting their water usage, and usage of single-use plastics. We also ask clients to dress modestly and to never take photographs of people without their permission.

Protecting Your Money

Pictus Safaris client funds are held in a trust account prior to departure, meaning that the deposit and balance payments you make to us are fully protected in the unlikely event that Pictus Safaris becomes insolvent before or during your holiday. The trust account is administered by Protected Trust Services, and we can share additional details on request.

COVID-19

We recognise that COVID-19 has caused a great deal of uncertainty for clients when it comes to international travel. As such, we are keen to be fully transparent about when we ask clients to pay deposits and why. Our suppliers all require a 50% deposit to secure a booking – we ask for this payment (plus fixed costs that we accrue during the booking process and any single supplement) from our clients to secure a booking. The remaining payment is due 60 days prior to travel.

We are currently confident that our 2022 departures will go ahead as planned. If any of our 2022 departures are cancelled due to travel restrictions resulting from COVID-19, any payments you



have made will be put towards a later departure (likely in early 2023). We understand this is not ideal and hope you understand the difficulties the industry is facing at this time.

The precautions we take against COVID-19 transmission during our safari will depend on the progress made in fighting the disease between now and March 2022. The situation on the ground in Chad is unclear, but it seems that the disease has had a limited impact outside of N'Djamena. We expect the Omicron variant to have little impact in Chad, due to the low population densities here.

All visitors to Chad must evidence a negative PCR test result from within the previous 72 hours to both enter and leave Chad – the costs of these tests are not included in the cost of this tour. Please note this may mean additional nights will need to be spent in N'Djamena at the end of your tour. On arrival, visitors are also subject to temperature checks and a rapid antigen test before being allowed to continue to their hotel. It is a requirement that visitors spending more than seven days in Chad will need to undergo a PCR test on day seven, or as soon as possible thereafter, of their stay – the soonest we are able to arrange a 'day seven' PCR test is on your return to N'Djamena.

Packing List

A packing list will be sent to you at least thirty days prior to travel. In the meantime, please do reach out to us should you have any questions concerning what you may need to bring with you, we would be happy to answer them.

Other Tours

Pictus Safaris currently offer safaris to thirty African countries and we think they're all brilliant! Based on your interest in this safari, you may be also interested in our "Secrets of the Sahara" tour to the Western Sahara, which has a good chance of locating sand cat. You may also be interested in our "Amazing Asses" tour to Eritrea, which offers the chance of spotting African wild ass.