



The Greatest Show on Earth

Zakouma National Park, Chad

March 14th – March 23rd, 2022

"Zakouma...has long commanded near legendary status throughout Africa for its abundant wildlife and true wilderness" – Michelle Jana Chan, The Daily Telegraph, 2018

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Created for Mammalwatching.com



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Radisson **BLU**



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Overview

Zakouma National Park, Chad

- Six nights in one of the finest wilderness areas in Central Africa
- Exclusive and unlimited use of a private vehicle
- Chance of big game sightings, including the 'big five'
- Cheetah, caracal, pale fox and striped hyena all possible
- Likely encounters with serval, wild cat, civet and honey badger
- Seek out the largest single herd of elephant in Africa
- Sensational birding, especially at the iconic Rigueik Pan
- One of Africa's most sought-after wildlife experiences, at a reasonable price

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 Pictus Safaris representative 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!</p> <p>Once settled in, your tour leader will assist you with police registration, which is a legal requirement in Chad. Depending on how much time we have, and how quickly the police can turn your registration around, it may be necessary to give your passports to a local African Parks official for safekeeping in N'Djamena. We recognise that leaving your passport with someone when abroad feels uncomfortable, but we would like to reassure you that we have never had any issues with this before.</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: Mongo</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
<p>An early start this morning as we meet up with our transfer convoy and head east into Chad's vast interior. Once we have left N'Djamena's city limits, the road quickly empties and the scenery gives way to semi-arid scrubland. Passing through police checkpoints will break up the journey, and we can stop en route for any photographic opportunities and bathroom breaks. Be aware that this drive is very dusty and a little cramped, so approach it with a spirit of adventure!</p> <p>We will overnight near the town of Mongo, with the exact location of our campsite dependent on how much progress we made during the day's drive. In total, it is approximately a thirteen-hour drive from N'Djamena to Zakouma, and today we should expect to be on the road for between six and seven hours. The road conditions between N'Djamena and Mongo are good, although our progress is likely to be halted by some policing.</p> <p>The campsite in Mongo is extremely basic, comprising small tents and very rudimentary bathroom facilities. A freshly prepared meal will be provided this evening, ahead of a night under the stars. With a little luck, we may be</p>		



able to explore the area immediately around camp on foot, with the possibility of small mammals including pale fox. If we camp close to Mongo itself, however, it is likely that the opportunities for wildlife-viewing will be limited.

Day 3

<i>Accommodation: Tinga Camp</i>	<i>Location: Zakouma NP</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
<p>It will be another lengthy drive today, which we should expect to last for up to seven hours. Road conditions deteriorate as we head south-east from Mongo towards Zakouma, so hold on to your hats! By late afternoon we will arrive at Zakouma's main entrance gate, go through entrance formalities and head into the national park.</p> <p>Even on the relatively short drive from the gate to Tinga Camp we should expect to see our first wildlife, including warthog, waterbuck, bushbuck and perhaps buffalo, Kordofan giraffe or lion. The light will be fading by the time we check in at camp and settle you into your accommodation. There may be time for a short night drive, or you may choose instead to rest after a tiring few days of travelling. Dinner will be served in camp tonight in the central lodge area.</p> <p>The camp itself is made up of a number of comfortable bungalows, each equipped with an en-suite flush toilet and cold shower. Electricity is available in each bungalow, and wifi is available for an additional fee in the main lodge area. The camp sits next to a dry riverbed that is frequented by wildlife, including big game. In fact, previous clients have seen four of the 'big five' in camp during their stay. As the camp is unfenced, we ask guests to exercise caution when moving about the camp, particularly at night.</p>		

Days 4 to 8

<i>Accommodation: Tinga Camp</i>	<i>Location: Zakouma NP</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
<p>With five full days to explore Zakouma, our days will focus on morning and evening game drives to seek out the fabulous wildlife in the area. The national park has good populations of buffalo, Kordofan giraffe, red-fronted gazelle, tiang and many other grazers. Rhino have recently been introduced here, and lion sightings are common. Leopard, cheetah and wild dog are also present, although sightings are less common.</p> <p>With exclusive use of a private vehicle, we will have great opportunities for photography, especially when visiting the wonderful Rigueik Pan. This famous body of water is the beating heart of Zakouma, drawing in incredible densities of wildlife. A particular highlight are the huge flocks of red-fronted quelea that often congregate here to drink – these gatherings are massively impressive, often complete with hunting yellow-billed kites against a backdrop of dancing black-crowned cranes.</p> <p>At night, Zakouma truly comes alive. The absence, until recently, of many large predators has led to a boom in the populations of mesopredators. We have a good chance of locating civet, honey badger, serval, caracal, pale fox, striped hyena and wild cat during our stay, with serval and wild cat sightings – sometimes with kittens – very common.</p> <p>We will make at least one journey south during our stay to seek out Africa's largest single herd of elephants. At times up to 550 members strong, this herd was forced together during years of rampant poaching, but are now slowly dispersing as the park becomes more secure. This group of animals is a real spectacle, although they remain nervous of vehicles and will often flee before you can approach them. Our best bet is to wait them out at a nearby water source.</p>		

Day 9

<i>Accommodation: Camping</i>	<i>Location: Mongo</i>	<i>Meals Included: B, L, D</i>
<p>Our return journey begins this morning with a drive to Mongo, where we will once again bivouac for our last night in rural Chad.</p>		



Day 10

Accommodation: N/A

Location: N'Djamena

Meals Included: B, L

A final day's drive will return us to N'Djamena and the airport for your homeward flights. We will arrive back in the city at approximately 15.30, and if there are no suitable flights departing this evening (flight schedules are yet to be released) we will include a night's accommodation in N'Djamena in the price of your tour.

Tour Map



Costs & Inclusions

Zakouma has long been an extremely exclusive safari destination, with prices to match. We at Pictus Safaris strongly believe that such an incredible destination should be more accessible – but Chad and Zakouma both remain expensive areas in which to operate. With this in mind, this tour is currently priced at £2,995 per person sharing. There is a £250 single supplement for the entirety of the tour.

To secure your place on this tour, a deposit payment of £1,000 per person is required, as well as any single supplement.

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
Transfers between N'Djamena and Zakouma via Mongo	Items of a personal nature
Tents and camping equipment in Mongo	Gratuities
All meals during transfer	Laundry
Drinking water	Optional Activities
All meals in Zakouma	Accommodation before/after tour dates
Exclusive group use of a private vehicle for game drives	All soft and alcoholic drinks in Zakouma
All park fees and taxes	
One night camp-out	

There are a number of optional activities available at Zakouma, which guests may choose to take advantage of during their stay. Please note that these must be arranged directly between you and the provider, and Pictus Safaris accepts no liability or responsibility for these activities. Please see a price list below – prices are subject to change.

Activity	Price
Guided walks	\$10 per person
Local market visit	\$110 per group
Bush dinner	\$40 per person

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.

Please note that flight timetables are yet to be finalised, but it is possible that there will be no flights leaving N'Djamena on the evening of the 23rd March. If this is the case, we will book you accommodation at no extra cost in N'Djamena ahead of your early morning flight on 24th March.

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.

Mongo (Camping) – En route between N'Djamena and Zakouma, we will overnight near the town of Mongo. After a long drive, we are sure you'll be looking forward to a bit of luxury and pampering – that's not something Mongo is likely to deliver! Our basic campsite is comprised of small tents and basic camping equipment (tables and chairs). Showers and toilets aren't available here, so this is camping at its most basic.

Tinga Camp, Zakouma – Our accommodation in Zakouma is truly lovely. A far cry from the luxury of its more famous sister, Camp Nomade, Tinga is rustic but has everything visitors will need. The camp is spread along a dry riverbed, with a central area for dining and relaxing during the day. Accommodation is in small bungalows, each with an en-suite with a flush toilet and cold shower. The rooms are very comfortable, and the camp itself is set in a fantastic area for game-viewing. Previous guests have seen Leopard, Lion and Elephant in camp in a single night! Each room has electricity, so charging cameras should never be an issue. The camp also has access to a hide overlooking a water point, where Elephant, Buffalo and a litany of antelope species are seen on a regular basis. Internet connectivity is available for \$10 per person per day.

Food & Drink

Meals are included in the tour price in Mongo and Zakouma, but not in N'Djamena. We recommend budgeting around \$50 per person for meals in N'Djamena. Drinking water is included in N'Djamena and en route to Zakouma. In Zakouma, drinking water is available through the tap, and this comes directly from a nearby borehole. 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 in Zakouma are not haute cuisine but, as in most countries with some French influence, the food is always of a decent standard and you won't go hungry. Most special diets can be



catered for, but we do ask you give us plenty of notice to ensure you get the best possible dining experience. Please note that should you have specific dietary requirements, the options provided to you may be limited and repetitive. We apologise for this, and will do all we can to provide you with as many options as possible given the remoteness of Zakouma.

Game Viewing

Game-viewing in Zakouma is conducted by vehicle. There may be scope for ad-hoc walks, but this is at the discretion of our local guide. Guided walks are available for an extra fee.

Typically, game drives will begin at or just before sunrise, returning to camp for lunch. An afternoon game drive will begin 2-3 hours before sunset, and will continue into the hours of darkness. Please note that this may mean that dinners are later than you are used to.

We are permitted to drive off-road in Zakouma, but the decision as to whether to do so will depend on the likelihood of this doing damage to the ecosystem, or distressing wildlife. The final decision as to whether to leave the road sits with your Pictus Safaris tour leader.

Night drives will be undertaken with thermal monoculars and spotlights. One monocular and two spotlights will be provided per group, and clients are welcome to bring their own as desired.

Vehicles Used

The vehicles used in Zakouma are typical in the safari industry. Open, long-wheel base Land Cruisers are used for game-viewing. These vehicles have a canvass roof to provide shade and have three benches of seats, meaning that up to six clients will have guaranteed unobstructed access for photography.

The vehicles used for transfers are closed 4x4 vehicles. With luggage and camping equipment, these vehicles are a bit of a tight squeeze and, despite being closed, expect plenty of dust in the vehicle itself. Whilst not the most comfortable option, these vehicles are reliable and secure.

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 Zakouma 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. Your tour leader will also have some basic medication with them should you become unwell during your holiday.

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. 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 African Parks, 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. On occasion, this will mean surrendering your passport to an African Parks official for the duration of your stay at Zakouma, especially if you are late arriving on day one. We understand that being without your passport whilst abroad is uncomfortable, but rest assured we have never had any issues with this process before, and your passport will be returned to you once we have arrived back in N’Djamena.



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. 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.

Our transfer between N'Djamena and Zakouma takes us through the interior of Chad. Whilst the interior of the country is trouble-free, the border areas with Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger see occasional skirmishes and incursions. The initial 30km of driving from N'Djamena is considered to be higher-risk due to its proximity to northern Cameroon. This initial section of the drive passes through an area where foreign travel advisory agencies tend to advise against all travel. However, please be aware that the overwhelming majority of issues are encountered near Lake Chad, which is a significant distance to the north of our route.

Zakouma is one of the most secure areas in central Africa. There is next to no risk of unrest, as African Parks have militarised the park and their extensive work with local communities has seen poaching and lawlessness decrease drastically.

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. At all times, your Pictus Safaris tour leader will have your insurance details and a satellite phone, so medical assistance can be sought quickly if needed. Please be aware that due to the remoteness of the areas visited by this itinerary, medical assistance will be slower and of a lower quality than that which you may be used to at home. As prevention is better than cure, we recommend clients bring their own first aid kit. Your tour leader will also have a first aid kit and will have undergone first aid training.

A briefing will be held at the beginning of your tour, and during this briefing safety advice will be shared. Zakouma is a wilderness area, and encounters with dangerous wildlife do happen, so we ask clients to exercise caution at all times.



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.

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	Idriss 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 southern Chad is hot and dry. It never rains, and temperatures usually reach a maximum of 40°C. In the early mornings it will sometimes get as low as 21°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 or take advantage of the optional activities available in Zakouma.

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.

Tips are not expected by Pictus Safaris tour leaders. If you wish to provide them with a small thank you, we ask that you donate to the Wildlife Conservation Society or a similar organisation of your choice.

Language

Chad has two official languages; French and Arabic. English is hardly ever spoken, even in N'Djamena. The south-eastern region of Chad, where Zakouma 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 Zakouma.

Camp staff in Zakouma speak good English, although our drivers transferring us between Zakouma and N'Djamena do not speak 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 a lion	Je vois un lion	'araa 'asadu

About Zakouma

Whilst now synonymous with excellent wildlife-viewing, Zakouma has not always been the conservation success story it now is. Formed in 1963, it fell victim to unrest in neighbouring areas of Sudan and the Central African Republic in the 1990s and 2000s. This unrest pushed civilians into Chad, many of whom settled around Zakouma or used the park to graze cattle, creating wildlife conflict and damaging the ecosystem. Even worse were the militias who followed, attacking the park and its wildlife in search of ivory. Rangers were killed, ivory stocks were pillaged and wildlife was poached. In a pattern familiar across Africa, Zakouma was rapidly reduced to a shadow of its former self.

In 2010, management of Zakouma was transferred to African Parks, an NGO specialising in managing threatened ecosystems in Africa. After a challenging few years, African Parks succeeded in militarising the park and securing it. Ivory poaching was eventually reduced to almost nil, thanks to intensive monitoring and the use of state-of-the-art technology. A well-trained and equipped team of rangers is now one of the most fearsome in Africa, and wildlife populations have begun to recover. The single herd of elephant remaining when African Parks took over Zakouma has grown exponentially, at some points swelling to 550 animals strong. This herd is now beginning to disperse, a sure sign that normality is returning to Zakouma. Predator populations are becoming more confident and sightings of everything from caracal to cheetah to lion are now recorded regularly.

Wildlife Highlights

A full mammal and bird list will be sent to you with your pre-departure information document. There are a number of highlights, however, that are worth getting excited about before then!

Zakouma is now a 'big five' reserve following the reintroduction of two black rhino into the reserve in 2018. Sightings of lion and buffalo are common. Leopard sightings are uncommon, but extended night drives give us a good chance of spotting one of these cats. The elephants in Zakouma are usually grouped together in a single large herd, numbering over 500 individuals. In recent years, the herd has begun to split up in response to a decrease in poaching pressure. As such, small herds and lone bulls are now regularly seen, although the impressive core group can still number over 300. Rhino sightings are rare – six individuals were introduced but only two



survived. The rhinos and elephants are monitored by African Parks, so we will always know approximately where they are on the reserve, although finding them is never easy.

Outside of the 'big five' Zakouma has a huge amount to offer. The reserve is home to approximately ten cheetah and sightings are possible, if uncommon. Wild dogs also use the area, but sightings are very rare. Smaller predators are easily seen on night drives – serval, civet, honey badger and wild cat sightings are all common. Visitors may also encounter caracal, pale fox, striped hyena and spotted hyena. Kordofan giraffe are easily seen, as are the large herds of tiang (incorrectly identified as korrugum in some publications), lelwel hartebeest, red-fronted gazelle and much more. Smaller mammals, including rodents, are present in good numbers and clever use of a thermal monocular will likely reveal at least four to five species.

Even for ardent mammal-watchers, the birding in Zakouma is a real highlight. In particular, the iconic Rigueik Pan attracts tens of millions of red-billed quelea, something that has to be seen to be believed. These birds flock to the water in such numbers that branches on nearby trees snap under their weight. There are also a number of rarities to be seen, as a result of Zakouma's location at the confluence of north, south, east and west on the continent. Please note that we will only be able to visit Rigueik when Camp Nomade guests are not present there, to maintain exclusivity. We hope to visit Rigueik at least two to three times during our stay.

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 117 Canfield Gardens, London, NW6 3DY.

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.



Small Group Travel

One of the most common concerns we hear is, “I’m not sure if travelling in a group is right for me”. We completely understand. At Pictus Safaris, we recognise that small-group travel is not for everybody, and that there are benefits to independent travel, particularly on safari.

This all being said, we believe that small-group safaris are an excellent way to explore Africa, for a number of reasons. Group travel is generally less expensive and safer than independent travel. And there’s a huge amount to be said for the friendships that are made, the stories exchanged and the experiences shared when travelling with others. We also always ensure that clients are part of a group we feel they will enjoy being a part of – we try to match first-time safari goers with fellow first-timers for example. We always get to know our clients before travelling with them, and reserve the right to refuse bookings if we feel clients are not a good fit for Pictus Safaris are our current clients.

Our trips normally run with between four and six clients. This ensures that clients are guaranteed a window seat during game drives, and that noise is kept to a minimum if on foot. Some trips may run with as few as three clients, and extensions can run with as few as two. This trip is expected to run with six clients in total. In addition to the clients, you will be accompanied by a Pictus Safaris tour leader. In most cases, the tour leader will know your destination intimately – some destinations are impossible to visit for recce trips, so will not have been visited prior to your arrival, and these trips will be advertised as “expeditions”.

On some itineraries, including this one, a second tour leader will accompany the group. This is done to ensure you get the best possible experience from your tour and is often to ensure there is at least one native speaker amongst the tour leaders. There will never be more than two representatives from Pictus Safaris on your tour.

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 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.



We encourage clients to take the opportunity to visit a local project or community during their stay. For an additional fee, clients can visit a local market, which is a great chance to interact with the local community and to pick up some unique mementos.

Your Tour Leaders

The Pictus Safaris team are there primarily to ensure your safety, to make sure the trip runs smoothly, and to locate as much wildlife as possible. Please note that, whilst knowledgeable, the team are not qualified guides and the responsibility for guiding falls to the local partners we work with. More details about the Pictus Safaris team leading your tour will be shared in your pre-departure information document.

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 25% deposit to secure a booking – given the continued and understandable popularity of this itinerary, 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. Our 2021 departures are less certain, and we therefore ask clients booked on these trips not to pay any deposits at this time. 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. As a minimum requirement, all tour leaders, guides and staff will wear a face mask indoors and surfaces will be sanitised regularly.



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 twenty African countries and we think they're all brilliant! Based on your interest in this safari, you may be also interested in our "Soul of the Sahara" tour to Northern Chad, which has a good chance of locating Addax and Dama Gazelle. You may also be interested in our "Dark Heart of Africa" tour to the Central African Republic, which offers the chance of spotting Giant Eland, Bongo, all four African species of Pangolin and much more.