

Team Cameroon Arise

Short-Term Visitor's Manual



Training Nationals to Start Church-Planting Movements Among the Unreached

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Letter of Introduction

Dear Friend,

We want to thank you for showing an interest in possibly coming to Cameroon on a short-term trip. We are so glad that you are considering the opportunity of coming and serving with us in Cameroon. Know that we are praying for you as you begin the process of planning and preparation. We really hope that God would use your time here to minister to you, encourage you, challenge you, grow you, and use you to positively impact the people you come in contact with on this trip -- all to His glory!

This manual has been carefully compiled for you in order to help you make the most of this cross-cultural missions experience. It contains important information that you will need as you prepare to come to Cameroon, and also information that will be useful to you while you are here. We would suggest that you print out this manual and bring it with you when you come so that you can have it on hand to refer to it, as needed.

However, we are also aware that no manual can ever be complete or contain all the information you will need, so please feel free to reach out and contact us if you have any questions or concerns. You can email us about anything at any time. Our email address is: theunreached@gmail.com

We look forward to your visit!

~ Sammy & Kelsey Weber

Statement of Faith

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary, was true God and true man existing in one person and was without sin. We believe in His representative and substitutionary sacrifice, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the Father, His present life as Lord of all, High Priest and Advocate, and His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells and gives life to believers, enables them to understand and apply the Scriptures, empowers them for bold living, and equips them for service and witness.

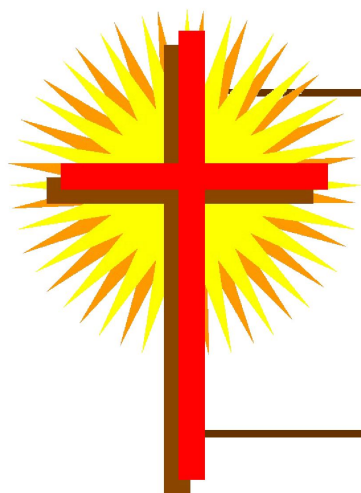
We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God, without error in the original documents, fully trustworthy, and the final authority in all matters of Christian faith and life.

We believe that each member of the human race is fallen, sinful and lost; that the shed blood of Jesus Christ provides the only ground for forgiveness of sins and justification to all who receive Him by faith; and that only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can we become children of God.

We believe the one, holy, universal Church is the Body of Christ, composed of all regenerate people. This redeemed community worships God and seeks to proclaim the Good News to all people.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost.

We believe that Jesus is coming back – just as He said!



After this I looked and there before me
was a great multitude that no one could
count, from every nation, tribe, people
and language, standing before the throne
and in front of the Lamb.

Revelation 7:9 NIV

GETTING READY

Setting the Date & Duration for Your Visit

It typically takes about 3 months for our guests to prepare for their short-term trip. If you are needing to raise funds to cover expenses, more time may be needed. This should be taken into account when trying to set a date to come.

Please also be aware of the fact that where we work in Cameroon is often a 2-days drive to the nearest international airport (in Yaounde). This means that it is not possible for us to just “swing by” and pick someone up at the airport at any given time. It actually takes a lot of intentionality and planning on our part to make that possible. So, when making your plans for when to come to Cameroon, it would be best to contact us directly and discuss possible dates so that we can coordinate your travels to align with a time when we would already be making the long trip to Yaounde.

When deciding how long to stay in Cameroon, please take into consideration that you will spend a total of 5-6 days *just traveling!* There are 2 days traveling internationally (1 day getting to Cameroon and 1 day returning). And another 3-4 days traveling in-country (traveling between the cities of Yaounde and Banyo).

Because you will be spending 5-6 days total *just traveling*, we ask that you plan your visit to be ***no less than 2 weeks***, so that you will not spend your entire trip just traveling but will have time to do other things as well.

The reason it takes a few days to travel within Cameroon is because of the road conditions here. Depending on the road conditions, it is possible to make the trip in a single day, but doing so can be extremely difficult. Because of this, we often stay at a hotel half-way in order to break up the trip into 2 days. At times, there may be an option of taking a 3-passenger helicopter to travel between Yaounde (where the international airport is) to Banyo (where we are based), but that will definitely add to the expense of the trip, is not always an option, and definitely requires extra planning in advance to make arrangements for that flight.

Because of all the travel and expense that goes into traveling to Cameroon, we would certainly encourage *longer* trips (anywhere from 3 weeks to 3 months for a first time visit), but we also recognize that not everyone's work schedules permit this. Those who stay longer definitely get to engage in more aspects of the ministry, get to see more of the country, and gain a deeper understanding of what life is like in Cameroon.

If you are ready to set a date and begin work out these details please contact us via email (theunreached@gmail.com) so that we can discuss with you the best travel options and work with you to find dates that will be ideal for everyone involved.

Cost Estimates

You should plan on having the trip cost you a total of about \$3,500 - \$4,500 per person. It's impossible to give an exact total, but here, at least, is a rough breakdown of the expenses you can expect to have *per person*:

- \$165* for a US passport book (unless you already have one).
- \$1,800 to \$2,800* for a round trip airline ticket (depending on the season and how far ahead of time you book the ticket).
- \$275* for a Cameroon visa (we highly recommend having the visa expedited, even if you are booking well in advance, so that the officials do not complicate the process with the extra paperwork and documentation required for non-expedited visas).
- \$150 - \$250* for a Yellow Fever, which is required for entry into Cameroon.
- \$1,000* for in-country expenses, including (but not limited to):
 - Public transport to get around in Cameroon
 - Lodging in Yaounde before and after traveling to Banyo
 - Groceries and meals during your stay in Cameroon
 - Malaria preventative medication you will need to take while in country
 - Household essentials (toilet paper, shampoo, soap, etc)
 - Drinking water (since it isn't safe to drink regular tap water here)
 - Gas bottle for cooking
 - Minor medical expenses that may arise
 - The airport tax you will need to pay when leaving the country

* Please note that these figures are only estimates. Amounts may be different and may be subject to change based on season, currency exchange rate, or any number of other variables.

Extra Expenses

The following are *extra* expenses that may or may not apply to your situation which you should at least be aware of. We will definitely discuss these things with you in greater detail as we correspond and work out the details for your trip.

Team or Family Housing (estimate about \$100/per person)

If you are traveling in a group (such as a team or a family) we will likely need rent extra housing space to lodge everyone. Plus, in addition to the cost of rent there will also be expenses involved in stocking the housing space with necessary supplies (mattresses, sheets, pillows, dishes, cook stove, buckets, water filters, chairs, fans, etc) which all adds to the in-country expenses.

Helicopter (estimate about \$1,000 - \$1,200 one way)

If you are needing to reduce the amount of time spent in travel, or are physically unable to make the difficult journey from Yaounde to Banyo by road, there *may* be the option to charter a private, 3-passenger helicopter to carry you between Yaounde (where the international airport is) to Banyo (where we live and work).

Many of our visitors (especially those who are only planning to be in Cameroon for a couple weeks) choose to make the 2-day trip by road going *to* Banyo, but then charter the private helicopter on their return trip. Most of our visitors just do the road trip both ways, since that is more affordable, more practical, and is really the best way to experience the *real* Cameroon. A few times we have had visitors who required the use of the helicopter for both coming *and* returning, either because their time in-country would have been too short otherwise, or because of health reasons.

Whatever your preference, you should at least be aware of the fact that the helicopter is not on a set schedule and may not be available for the dates you require, so your plans should never be completely set on having the use of the helicopter, but should include a backup plan in case the helicopter is unable to make the flight for any reason.

Also, be aware that the helicopter has very limited passenger/cargo weight allowance, so while it may make your trip shorter and easier, it may not be able to carry all of your luggage. In which case you would carry the essentials with you on the helicopter and would have to pay another person to make the road trip to bring the luggage separately.

The decision of whether or not to hire the helicopter often depends on the length of time you will be in country. For short stays it may be required that you take the helicopter for one, if not both, trips (going and returning). For longer stays it will depend on how many people are making the trip together, the travel budget, availability, and personal needs/preferences.

Extra “Luxury” Foods (or “Familiar” Foods)

The most affordable way to eat in Cameroon is to eat the local foods and ethnic dishes, but if you’re wanting to enjoy the more rare “luxury” foods here (meat, cheese, non-tropical fruits, western style meals, etc) it will add to the overall cost of groceries.

Laundry

Laundry is done by hand here. We recommend that everyone do it at least once, for the experience. If, after that, you would prefer to hire someone to do your laundry for you, it typically costs between \$1 - \$2 per load, depending on what the person agrees to.

Souvenirs

Souvenirs and other purchases of a personal nature are not covered in the listed expenses. Any purchases you make of a personal nature will need to be paid for in addition to the above quotes.

Personal Phone Calls

We provide our guests with the option of calling home from time to time. It cost about 10 cents a minute to make an international call from here, but the connection is not very clear and may cut out from time to time.

PREPARATIONS

Required Documents

When you come to Cameroon you will be required to have:

- 1) A valid passport with at least 2 blank pages left in the book. It is also required that the passport not expire within 6 months of your travel dates.
- 2) A Cameroonian tourist visa. Please note that it *needs* to be a “tourist” visa. Any other kind of visa (including “visitors” visa) requires a lot of extra, and unnecessary paperwork and documentation.
- 3) Proof of Yellow Fever immunization, in the form of a “Yellow Card”.
- 4) Airline Tickets
- 5) Bank statement showing that you have sufficient funds to cover all the travel expenses (*but please do not include sensitive information, ex: account number, SSN, etc*).

If you are traveling with minors you may need a letter of approval signed by their guardians **and notarized**. You may also need birth certificates, parents’ marriage certificate, etc.

Passport

The very first step in preparing to come is to make sure that you have a valid passport. If you do not have a passport at all, you will want to apply for one as soon as possible since it can sometimes take as long as 12 weeks to obtain (depending on the government’s backlog of passport applications). You can pay extra to expedite it if you want to speed up the process. We usually recommend expediting, since it can take time to get a visa, and you can’t apply for the visa until you have your passport in hand.

If you already have a passport, you will need to check to make sure it is not expired and will not expire within 6 months of your trip. Also check and make sure that there are at least two blank pages in your passport for your visa and entry/departure stamps, otherwise you run the risk of having your visa denied.

Immunization Shots

The next thing you need to do is get your immunization shots. ***Immunization against Yellow Fever is required by the government in order to enter Cameroon.*** If you are not already vaccinated against Yellow Fever you will want to get this done as soon as possible, since you cannot apply for a travel visa without it.

Flight Itinerary

You can apply for a visa even without having your tickets actually booked, but you DO need to finalize your travel dates and create a flight itinerary that you can send in with your visa application. You can create a flight itinerary by going through the steps of booking a plane ticket, but then print out the itinerary *before* completing the order, then cancel the order. This way you can acquire a flight itinerary with the exact travel dates of your trip, without actually purchasing the ticket. We suggest doing this if you need to apply for your visa but do not yet have the funds available to actually purchase the ticket yet. However, if the funds *are* available, it is always better to book the tickets sooner than later.

Cameroon Visa

We recommend that you start filling out your application 3 months before your departure date, and aim to submit the application a full 10 weeks before departure. There can be a *lot* of delays and complications in trying to acquire a visa to Cameroon. Please use the expedite option when applying for a visa, since this typically lessens the amount of “complications” you will have in getting approved for a travel visa.

Please contact us directly for instructions on how to apply for the Cameroon visa.

Booking Your Flight

Booking your flight can be done at any time. We would be happy to help you work out the details regarding which airline and flight itinerary would be best for you.

Prayer Support

We cannot stress to you enough the importance of having prayer support. Everyone participating in short-term missions should have a group of people committed to praying for them as they prepare to go and as they serve overseas.

We strongly encourage you to find at least three people who will commit to praying for you as you embark on this journey. More would be even better! Make sure to get the names and contact information of those people who commit to praying for you so that you can send them updates of prayer requests and praise items so that they can be informed of specifics in order to know better how to pray.

Fund-Raising

When you look at the cost of a short-term trip, it is normal to feel overwhelmed at the thought of support raising, but we have found that it is much easier to raise funds for a short-term team than it is to raise funds for long-term ministry. People get really excited about short-term mission trips and are usually very eager to give something to help out with the trip.

A good place to start is just by sending out an email or a letter to all your friends and family members telling them about the trip and asking if they would like to support you. Then ask various churches in your area if they would be interested in having you come and tell them about your upcoming trip and if they would consider taking a special offering on your behalf.

You can also hold fund-raising events to help raise funds for your trip. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Bake Sale
 - Car Wash
 - Spaghetti dinner
 - Service auction
 - Silent or regular auction of donated products or services
- (Use your imagination to come up with other ideas!)

People get excited about supporting someone's vision. You will need to clearly communicate why you are wanting to go visit Cameroon. The more information people have, the more likely they are to support you.

You need to communicate to them . . .

- Who you are.
- Where you are going.
- Why you are going.
- When you are going and for how long.
- What do you expect to learn from your experience?
- What do you expect to give to others?
- How much it will cost?
- How much money is still needed?
- How will the money be used?
- How they can be involved?

Above all, remember, "Where God leads, He provides". Be committed to praying for God's blessing and provision for this trip, make sure that it is His will for you to come, and be willing to trust Him to provide for all your needs. Then go out and tell people!

Getting Cash In-Country

Cameroon is primarily a "cash system". But, we have limited access to ATM machines, and they all have a limit as to how much money can be withdrawn in a 24-hour period. Cashier's checks are *NOT* accepted here in Cameroon, and even to exchange cash can be a hassle. So we will need to be in touch with you directly regarding the best way to handle the funds to ensure that you have enough Cameroonian currency for your stay here.

Depending on the details of your trip, we may ask that you send at least a portion of the “in-country” expenses to us ahead of time (often in the form of a PayPal transfer or Walmart2World money transfer) so that we have funds to start working out lodging details and getting needed supplies so that everything is ready and in place for you when you arrive. Again, we will connect with you regarding these details prior to your visit.

Preparing Yourself Emotionally

In addition to the physical preparations you need to make, it is also important that you prepare yourself emotionally, mentally, and spiritually for your trip. You are about to embark on a cross-cultural journey where you will be taken out of your comfort zone and immersed into a completely different cultural setting. It can be a really exciting time, but it also requires a lot of flexibility and advanced preparedness if the experience is going to be a positive one, so please do not skip over this part, but read through this section carefully and take some time to evaluate and be sure that you are ready before you come.

Flexibility

In the United States we are used to things being well-planned out and on schedule. This is not the case in Cameroon. Things will not go the way you expected or planned, there will not always be a clear structure of activities, and there is no such things as being “on time. It will be important for you to be very flexible and ready to “go with the flow”. You will do well if you can adapt easily (and then *re*-adapt again and again) as plans get interrupted, delayed, or changed.

Servant Heart

Just as Jesus washed the feet of His disciples to set an example of service, so we, His followers, seek to wash the feet of others. In this way, we demonstrate the love of Christ to those around us, putting the needs of others above our own. We ask that you would have a servant heart when you come; that you would arrive on the field eager to do whatever you can to serve those around you.

Conduct

We are ambassadors of Christ. Wherever we go we are representing Christ to the rest of the world. There will be many people watching you and evaluating you while you are here, so please make it a priority to conduct yourself in such a way that would bring the most glory to Christ.

Maintaining Unity

Let us “agree to disagree” on differences of opinions in the areas that are not essential to salvation, and seek to live at peace with one another. We realize that people will not always agree on everything, but let us make it a goal to live peaceably, building each other up in love.

Cultural Sensitivity

When you are in another culture it is important to realize (and remember) that the people around you will judge the appropriateness of your behavior by the standards of *their* culture, not yours. Therefore, when you enter into another culture, you need to be aware of what *is* and what is *not* appropriate. In the section of this manual titled “Making Your Stay Easier” we have tried to cover some highlights of cultural differences you will need to be aware of. However, it is very difficult to cover every aspect of cultural differences, so we simply ask that you come with an open mind, be willing to ask questions, and be willing to follow the advice given by our staff, even if it differs from your own perception of the culture.

Leadership

The members of our staff are equipped to be in leadership and will be held responsible for any decisions made or actions taken during your stay, so we ask that you respect their position of authority and offer them support by following their lead and respecting their position during your stay here.

Be Willing to Stretch

During your stay in Cameroon you have many opportunities to try new things. We encourage you to be adventurous and be willing to step outside your comfort zone. Don't cut your cultural experience short by refusing to try something just because it is different. Be willing to stretch and try new things. Make it a goal to expand your worldview by experiencing the culture to the fullest (or at least as much as you are able – baby steps are fine too!).

WHAT TO BRING

List of Things to Bring

Here's a list of things you will want to bring along. Some of it may seem really obvious and other things you might not have thought of. We are just going to list everything we can think of, just to make sure you come prepared.

Legal Documents

Don't forget to bring your documents on the plane with you -- your airline ticket, passport, printed e-visa, and "yellow card" (aka: proof of Yellow Fever vaccination).

Photocopies of Documents

It would be a good idea to make photocopies of your passport, visa, and proof of yellow fever vaccination, and to keep these in a separate place from your originals, in case anything should happen to the originals during travel.

Cash

If you send us money ahead of time it can help to avoid having you carrying large amounts of cash along the way. Please do not count on using an ATM while you are here, or using credit/debit cards. Cameroon primarily uses the cash system, and trying to find stores that accept credit/debit cards, or trying to locate an ATM, can be difficult at times even in the capital city, and actually non-existent when you travel to the more remote locations in Cameroon, like the city of Banyo.

Malaria Prophylaxis

You will need to take some form of malaria prophylaxis (aka: preventative medication) while you are here. Please contact us, so we can help you determine which kind of prophylaxis is best for you, and how to acquire it.

Bible / Devotional / Prayer Journal / Etc

Whatever you need for you times with the Lord!

Notebook / Paper / Writing Tools / Journal / Etc

Whatever you need for making notes, writing down thoughts, making out lists, etc

Clothes

Among the clothes you bring you will want to be sure to have some work clothes that you don't mind getting dirty, ripped, or stained. You will also want to have some good clothes to wear around town or when visiting friends, and some comfortable clothes for traveling in. *Please read our section on Dress Code in order to gain a better understanding of what is appropriate or inappropriate to wear here.*

Church Clothes

People here in Cameroon really like to dress up for church.

For men, a nice pair of pants, a collared shirt is sufficient, with a *clean* pair of shoes (whatever "every day" shoes you wear is fine – just so they are clean for church).

For women, a long dress or skirt with nice shoes is acceptable, but it is also highly recommended for women to wear a headscarf when attending church, since, culturally, the nationals think it speaks a lot to a woman's character whether or not she comes with her head covered, and at the very least it is a distraction to the people around her when a woman fails to cover her head in church.

Comfortable Shoes

Tennis shoes or hiking sandals are preferred. You can expect to be doing a lot of walking, so be sure to bring a pair of shoes that strap around your feet, have good support, and are comfortable for walking in. Shoes that are easy to slip on and off (such as flip flops) are also very useful here, since every day life has you going in and out of the house all the time, but flip flops are easy to purchase here in Cameroon, so you could always buy a cheap pair when you come and leave them behind when you leave.

For men, it is best if you come with closed-toed shoes (tennis shoes) since you are more likely to be doing the kind of work that would risk injury if your feet are exposed (construction work, farm work, cutting grass with a machete, moving bricks that may have scorpions under them, killing snakes, etc).

Cameras (with extra batteries)

It is hard to find quality batteries here, so if you are bringing a camera, be sure to bring extra batteries. However, be aware that the airlines have become very strict about the transportation of batteries, they do not allow you to travel with too many batteries in a single bag, and do *not* allow you to have the batteries *loose*. So the best way to bring batteries is for them to still be in their original, packaging, *unopened*. When we traveled last, we had 2 packs of 24 batteries and 2 packs of 8 batteries in one of our checked bags, and the same (2 packs of 24 and 2 packs of 8) in one of our carry-on bags, and the airline did not have any problem with them at all.

Basic Toiletries

Basic everyday items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, razors, shaving cream, comb, hairbrush, feminine products, etc. Going shopping can be very time consuming here (since there aren't very good "one-stop" shopping options) and you are not guaranteed to find exactly what you are looking for, so if there is something you need in the way of basic toiletries, please bring them with you.

Hair Conditioner

If your hair requires conditioner that is something you may want to consider bringing along with you. The African hair type is very different, and the local people do not really use hair conditioner, so it can be both expensive and hard to find here.

A Small Bottle of Hand Sanitizer

It is not always possible to wash hands before eating, especially when traveling or going out to eat at a restaurant. As a family, what we do, is we bring hand sanitizer and baby wipes when we are out in public – the wipes to get any visible dirt off, and the hand sanitizer to kill the germs.

Small Packet of Tissues

Public bathrooms in Cameroon are very rarely stocked with toilet paper, so carrying a small packet of tissues when you are going out in public may come in handy. This is especially true when making the long trip by road from Yaounde to Banyo, bathrooms are few and far between and usually come in the form of thick grass or a dirty outhouse, so be prepared. It is possible to buy travel size packets of tissue in Cameroon, but that will not help you when you first arrive, if you happen to need the bathroom at the airport or are not able to buy packets of tissue in the first couple days you are here.

Mosquito Repellent (But *NOT* Aerosol Cans)

There are a lot of mosquitoes in Cameroon and they tend to carry diseases such as Malaria and Dengue Fever, so it is a good idea to wear mosquito repellent when you are going outside (especially in Yaounde, where you are likely to get bit up a lot – or after dark, since the night-time mosquito's are the ones who spread malaria). In spite of how prevalent malaria is and how many mosquitoes there are, insect repellent is actually rather scarce and hard to find here, so please bring some of your own.

In saying this, I should also mention that the airlines do NOT like aerosol cans, so a repellent that comes in a plastic spray bottle is less likely to be confiscated by the airlines. And please pack in your CHECKED luggage, otherwise it may be confiscated by airport security.

Sunscreen (Especially If You Are Taking Doxycycline for Malaria Prevention)

Since Cameroon is very near to the equator, we can get some very direct sun here, and some people have been known to get sunburned even on an overcast day. The lifestyle in Cameroon also has people spending a lot of time outdoors, which gives extra sun exposure. Plus, the common malaria prophylaxis used here for preventing malaria is Doxycycline, which is known to make your skin extra sensitive to the sun and even more likely to burn. So, all these factors together, it is advised that you bring some good sun screen along – but again, nothing in aerosol cans, because of airline restrictions.

Scarf (option)

If you come in the middle of dry season (mid-October to early-April) the roads traveling from Yaounde to Banyo can be *very* dusty. Many of our guests prefer to cover their hair when traveling, or to have a way to cover their mouth when going through an especially dusty area, so it's just good to be aware of that.

What NOT to Bring

Please do NOT bring checks or travelers checks, these are pretty much useless here. We also ask that you not bring anything of great value (expensive or keepsake) since theft is very common in Cameroon, as a general rule: *Don't bring along anything you can't afford to lose.*

Basic household items like bed sheets, pillows, towels, and linens are available here, so you shouldn't need to bring any of these things unless instructed otherwise. It is also very easy to get a hold of toilet paper, skin lotions, and soaps (bath soap, laundry soap, dish soap, etc), so you should not need to bring any of these items, unless instructed otherwise.

Dress Code for Men

For the most part you can expect to be wearing long pants. That is what is most culturally acceptable here. Shorts are okay if you are going to be doing manual labor (farm or construction work) or for sports, but shorts are not considered appropriate for every day public activities.

Jeans are fine, but keep in mind that laundry is done by hand and dried out on a clothesline, and denim material is hard to wash and tends to get really stiff when hung out to dry.

Shirts need to have sleeves. T-shirts are fine. Collared shirts are best for wearing to church or more formal occasions.

You will want to avoid bringing along any clothes that wrinkle easily, since there is no way to iron clothes while you are here, and please keep in mind that you may be required to share living quarters, so make sure your sleeping clothes are appropriate for the situation.

Dress Code for Women

It is required that women dress conservatively. No mini-skirts, spandex, or tight-fitting clothes. T-shirts or modest sleeveless shirts are fine.

The dress code for women here is primarily dresses and skirts in public. The length of the dresses and skirts depends on where you are in Cameron. Around the house or in your immediate community, it is acceptable to wear skirts or dresses that fully cover the knees. When going to town or attending church it is recommended that you wear longer, ankle-length skirts or dresses. This is *especially* true in Banyo when you are going down-town, since there is a higher Muslim population in Banyo and they consider it very inappropriate for a woman to show her legs at all.

For added modesty, please wear shorts underneath your skirts.

Also, you can expect to be riding on the back of motorcycles while you are here, since they are the standard “taxi” in the more remote areas of the country, so you will want to consider bringing at least one long skirt/dress that allows you spread your legs while still being modest. It can be really uncomfortable and embarrassing to try and ride a motorcycle with a tighter fitting skirt.

Pants are permitted around the house (except that you never know what visitor might show up at the door) or when out working on the farm. Most women will wear a wrap-around skirt over their pants when they are actually on the way walking to the farm, and then remove the skirt while working. The wrap around skirt also comes in handy if an unexpected visitor shows up at your house and you aren't dressed acceptably to receive them.

At the airport, and even in certain areas in the capital city, pants are becoming more acceptable depending on the style (*but certainly not tight fitting or spandex pants!*).

Shorts, for a woman, are never appropriate *in public*. They are only appropriate in the privacy of the home, and even then only when the doors are closed and you will not be receiving any visitors. If you are wearing shorts and you need to welcome a guest or step outside for a moment, please slip on a skirt over the short before appearing in public.

You may be required to share living quarters with others, so please make sure your lounge or sleeping clothes are appropriate for the situation.

Keep in mind that denim skirts probably aren't the best option to bring along. Jean skirts, or skirts made of heavier material tend to get really hot here. Plus, we wash all the clothes by hand and denim material is hard to wash and tends get very stiff when drying on the clothesline. Lighter weight material is usually best.

You'll also want to avoid bringing clothes that wrinkle easily since there is no way to iron clothes while you are here.

Packing Tips

Be sure to pack well and provide sufficient padding around breakable items. As a rule of thumb, we always anticipate that somewhere along the way the suitcase is going to be dropped, or banged up, or had other luggage thrown on top of it, so minimize any glass or fragile items, or package them well with plenty of bubble wrap and padding.

Air pressure changes on the airlines create an issue with liquids, so all liquids should be packed in ziplock bags to prevent them from leaking in your suitcase.

Pack an extra set of clothes and some personal items in your carry-on bag, just in case your checked luggage is lost or delayed for any reason.

Do NOT bring anything along that you do not want to lose (such as jewelry, expensive electronics, or keepsake items).

Clearly label all pieces of luggage with your name, address (including country name), and telephone number. You can get free labels at the ticket counter in the airport, and we can supply you with an address and phone number for Cameroon, if needed.

Consider putting strips of bright colored duct tape on multiple sides of your suitcase, or tie a distinctive color ribbon to the handle of your luggage, so that it can be easily recognized at the baggage claims.

MEDICAL

Vaccines

Yellow Fever vaccination is required by the government to enter Cameroon. For children under the age of two the Polio vaccine may also be required for travel within Cameroon.

All other vaccines are optional. Doctors or nurses may recommend vaccinations for Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, Rabies, and Cholera. These vaccines, however, are merely suggestions and are not required. Feel free to contact us with further questions.

In our experience, we would tend to recommend Tetanus and Hep B as good vaccines to have when coming out here, and would be happy to discuss this with you further, if you are interested.

Malaria

Malaria is a very treatable illness, so you don't need to be afraid of it. It is spread by mosquitoes and is very common here in Cameroon. You will be required to take preventative medication during your stay here. The most ideal is to start taking malaria prophylaxis at least 10 days before you come to Cameroon and continue taking for another 10 days after you leave.

Please note that we do NOT recommend that our short term visitors use Mefloquin (also called Larium or Mephaquin) as a malaria prophylaxis! Unfortunately this is the drug that is most readily prescribed by doctors in the US, but this medication has a great many side effects, including hallucinations, liver damage, personality changes, psychotic issues, and even suicidal tendencies because of this medication. After seeing the horrible affects it has had on many people we know, we strongly recommend that you **NOT** take this drug.

In our experience, the best kind of prophylaxis for short term visitors is Doxycycline. It may be harder to get a doctor in the US to prescribe this as a prophylaxis, but we can get it quite readily in Cameroon, and would be willing to pick some up in advance to have on hand for you when you arrive in country.

Let us know if you are unable to get Doxycycline, and we will work with you in finding a solution.

If you are pregnant or taking any medication that may interfere with Doxycycline, please let us know so that we can make other arrangements for you.

It is important to note that there is no prophylaxis that provides 100% protection against malaria, but you are much less likely to get malaria if you are consistent in taking the prophylaxis. It has also been proven that people who regularly take a malaria prophylaxis do not get as severely sick with malaria as those people who do not take any preventative medication at all.



Another thing that is important to note is the fact that many of the mosquitoes here (especially the ones up in Banyo) are very small. Many of our visitors comment that they really expected to see more mosquitoes and are surprised that there “aren’t any” – so it is important to point out that there ARE lots of mosquitoes here, but they can be very small and you may not see them or even feel the effects of their bites. Just because you do not see them or feel them biting does not mean they aren’t there. And because they are there, you are being exposed to malaria even without realizing it. So please take precautions to not get sick!

Also, if you are afraid of getting malaria, please be assured that our team members have a lot of experience with working with malaria and will know what to do. Plus, malaria is actually a very easy disease to treat if you are able to catch it early on and get the right medication for it. So there is no need to worry about it. The majority of deaths attributed to malaria are usually directly connected with malnutrition, lack of education, or passiveness towards the illness. None of which will apply in your situation.

Common Illnesses and Health Concerns

Cuts, Wounds, Bites

When you get a minor cut or wound in the US it is usually no big deal to just stop the bleeding, wash it off, and continue with life as usual. Here in Cameroon, however, because we do not have the cold winters that kill off bacteria and parasites, any wound that punctures the skin and draws blood (even just a tiny amount) can be dangerous, even more so if you are not vaccinated against tetanus. *Any scrapes, cuts, wounds, or bites that draw blood should receive immediate attention, no matter how minor it may seem to you!*

Dehydration

It is very easy to get dehydrated in the Cameroonian climate, so it is very important that you drink lots of water while you are here, and make sure you are getting regular daily amounts of salt and sugar. As a rule, you should strive to drink about 2 liters of water every day (especially on the especially hot days) to prevent dehydration.

Headaches, thirst, dark yellow urine, dry mouth, lack of energy, or the feelings of weakness or dizziness, are all beginning signs of dehydration. These signs should not be ignored, since the later stages of dehydration can be very serious. If you identify the signs of dehydration at its earliest stages, it can be easily treated by simply consuming salt and sugar and drinking lots of water. If these methods are not helping to elevate your symptoms, please contact a member of our staff.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is a normal part of international travel, but it also holds a great deal of risk that most short-term people are not fully aware of. Having diarrhea can quickly lead to dehydration (especially in this climate), so be sure to take extra precautions.

We typically discourage the use of anti-diarrhea medications to stop the diarrhea, since diarrhea can often be the first symptom of a gut infection, and stopping the diarrhea in such a case can lead to greater infection and possible hospitalization. We do, however, have treatments that can help address the root cause of the issue, if you bring it to our attention.

If you bring anti-diarrhea medications please DO NOT use them without first checking with a member of our staff! The only time we recommend using anti-diarrhea medications is when traveling long distances where making frequent rest stops is not possible. Only in this case is it suggested that you use anti-diarrhea medications. In all other cases we strongly suggest that you not use anti-diarrhea medicine but rather work towards resolving the root cause.

Because diarrhea can be a symptoms of other more serious diseases, we ask that you inform a member of our staff if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Severe pain in the abdomen
- Blood in the stool
- Diarrhea accompanied with vomiting or fever
- Diarrhea that continues for more than three days

Amoebas, Worms, Parasites

We take great care in preparing food and purifying water in order to give you the best protection against these things. We also try not to eat out very often and even then only at locations we have found to be "safe". However, even with the great lengths we take to protect our guests from these unpleasant creatures, there is no way to completely guarantee that you will not get them during your stay here. The sooner we can discover them and begin treating you, the easier it will be to get rid of them. So it is important that you know how to recognize the signs so that you can inform us if a treatment is required.

Signs of infection with amoebas, worms, or parasites include:

- Nausea (feeling sick to the stomach)
- Diarrhea of any kind, but especially if it "comes and goes" (sometimes alternating with constipation)
- Reoccurring stomachaches or cramps
- Lots of loose (but usually not watery) stool
- Intestinal gas or bloating
- Itching in the anal area
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Occasional low-grade fever

Minimize Your Risk of Sickness

There are things you can do to minimize your risk of sickness, especially those most prevalent in Cameroon. Here are some of the key precautions we recommend you observe during your stay in order to minimize your risk of getting sick:

- Be regular and consistent in taking your malaria prophylaxis (setting an alarm on your phone is often a good idea!).
- Sleeping under a mosquito net is recommended, but not required. However, be informed that a mosquito net is only effective if the ends are tucked into the mattress; merely draping the net around the bed does not keep the mosquitoes out.
- Be sure to close up the house (shutting all doors and windows) before sunset, and avoid going outside after dark. Our team will already be careful to only provide you with lodging where there are screens on all of the windows, but mosquitoes are still able to come through gaps in the doors and frames, which is why mosquito nets are still a good idea, even with these other precautions.
- **Never drink tap water!** Only use filtered or bottled water – even when brushing teeth or rinsing your toothbrush!
- Do not eat or drink any thing that has not been previously approved by a member of our staff, especially early in your trip as you are still learning to determine for yourself what may or may not be safe to consume.
- Do not eat raw fruits or vegetables unless they have been properly sterilized (usually in the form of soaking in salt water for 20 minutes). We will give you specific instructions on how to do this at some point during your time here. The only exception to this rule is if the fruits and vegetables can be peeled without a knife (such as a banana or orange) if a knife is required then we typically use hand sanitizer to clean the outer peel and rinse with filtered/bottled water before cutting into it. If you always use clean *and dry* hands and clean dishes when handling food, then by following the precautions mentioned above the food should be safe for consumption and no further method of sterilization is necessary.
- Avoid exerting yourself too much, or doing too much strenuous exercise during the middle of the day when the sun is the hottest.
- Make sure to drink enough water to avoid dehydration.
- Avoid overexposure to the sun, and be careful to stay well hydrated to avoid dehydration (which can be a precursor to many other serious illnesses).
- Keep your hands and finger nails clean with frequent washing. Keep your hands off your face and away from your mouth as much as possible.
- Avoid going outside barefoot if you are not vaccinated against Tetanus. Also, if you are not vaccinated against Tetanus, then please inform a member of staff right away if you get a cut or wound that draws blood (no matter how minor it may seem).
- Do not swim or wade in streams or rivers. Do not wash wounds of any kind in river water (some of the worst infections we've seen over the years were a direct result of otherwise clean cuts or blisters getting infected by being washed in contaminated river water).

Allergies or Current Health Conditions

Peanuts and peanut butter are used a *lot* in Cameroonian cooking, so if you are allergic to peanuts it is important that you inform us ahead of time.

Please inform us of any known allergies or sensitivities before coming.

It is also important that you inform us of any health concerns you currently have so that we can be better prepared to assist you in any medical or emergency situation. Since many medications can react negatively to each other, it is important that you list all the medications (including natural remedies or supplements) on the medical form provided.

We also need to be informed of any women who may be pregnant during their visit, since traveling in Cameroon can pose a risk to pregnancies, and many of the medications used for malaria and other local illnesses cannot be taken when pregnant.

In-Country Health Care

Cameroon has very good health care available. There are several pharmacies, good hospitals, and doctors who are well qualified to take action in an emergency. Although medical equipment may not be as advanced as in North America, the staff are very experienced and we have confidence in their ability to deal with any situation that may come up.

Our house in Banyo is within walking distance of a Baptist Mission hospital, and our staff are trained to respond in emergencies.

We will do everything possible to ensure your safety and health during your stay in Cameroon. However, there are always risks involved in any travel, which we cannot be liable for.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

TSA Regulations

If you have ever traveled internationally before, then you are aware that the airlines are very strict about what you can bring with you on the airplane, and very strict about the dimensions and weight of all your suitcases.

If you've never traveled internationally before, then it would be a good idea to familiarize yourself with the TSA regulations.

Always double check with the airline you will be flying on what the luggage requirements are. But generally speaking on a trip to Cameroon from the US you are allowed 2 checked bags that have a total dimension of 60" and must weigh less than 50 pounds. You will be charged extra if your bag is over-sized or over-weight.

You are ONLY allowed to have 3.4 ounces of liquids or gels in your carry-on bags, and *all* liquids and gels you bring in your carry-on *have* to go in the same small zip-lock bag which you will take out and show the TSA officials at each security check.

Liquids and Gels include water, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, nail polish, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, etc.
This is not a complete list, but hopefully it will give you a good idea of what the airlines consider to be restricted items.

Because of the liquids limitation, you will NOT be able to bring water bottles through security. But since it's such a long trip (and since you don't always know when they'll be serving water on the plane), it would be a good idea to bring an EMPTY water bottle with you through security and then fill it with water once you have passed through security.

Other things you are NOT allowed to take with you in your carry-on include:

- Sharp objects (including knives, tools, razor blades, long scissors)
- Explosive objects
- Flammable objects
- Dangerous sporting equipment (ex. baseball bat, bows/arrows, golf clubs, etc.)
- Loose lithium batteries

You ARE allowed:

- A pair of scissors IF the blade is shorter than 4 inches.
- Personal safety/shaving razors
- Tweezers and nail clippers (okay in *most* airports, but not all – so usually good to check them just in case)

Please note that airlines have recently cracked down on the transport of lithium batteries, and have very clear restrictions regarding how to travel with batteries. For information on how to travel with electronics and batteries, check out the following website:

<http://travelinglight.com/can-you-take-batteries-on-a-plane>

Landing Instructions

At some point when you arrive in Cameroon (or possibly on the last flight arriving in Cameroon) you will be handed a customs form that you will need to fill out.

The landing card is pretty simple to fill out, you just have to read it carefully first to get an idea of what information they are wanting.

They will basically ask you for your personal information, your passport number, the flight number (found on your ticket), where you're coming from, and how long you plan to stay in Cameroon.

You may also need an "address" of where you will be staying while you are in Cameroon. Unless otherwise instructed, the address you should put is: "Banyo, Adamawa Region"

If it asks for a contact number, you can put Sammy's cell number: 681-37-01-61

Your reason for coming to Cameroon is "tourism". It is important that you not make mention of any kind of "work" you are doing here, because if they hear the word "work" the government officials will give you a hard time about whether or not you have a workers permit and how you will pay taxes on income, etc. Since you are not working as a business person, you do not need to deal with that hassle. You are also not "visiting" because that would require a letter of invitation and possibly other documentation you do not have. So please be sure to mark your reason for visit as "tourism" so as to avoid unnecessary complications with customs.

The form will also ask if you have anything to declare. You are not here on business and shouldn't be carrying any valuables, so you should not have anything to declare.

When you land in Yaounde, you will need to have your passport, yellow card, e-visa, and landing card all ready to show the customs officials. When you arrive in Cameroon you should be given a landing card to fill out (either on the plane or in the airport).

Do NOT take any pictures in the Cameroonian airport! We have had visitors try this before and it does not go well. Airports in developing countries are much more uptight about security and do not like people taking pictures anywhere inside the airport, so do not pull out your camera until after you get outside the airport.

When you finish clearing customs you will collect your luggage from the baggage claim and step out into the public area of the airport. Sammy (or whoever is agreed on to pick you up at the airport) will be waiting for you there. If for any reason he is not there waiting for you, just stay where you are in that main area of the airport and wait for him to come find you. Do not go outside or leave the airport building until you have met up with him.

Airport Tax

When leaving Cameroon, you *might* be required to pay an airport tax, which we will brief you on when we drop you off at the airport for your return trip.

There is also an export tax on any "wood" obtained here in Cameroon, so if you purchase any wooden artifacts while in country you will need to declare them at the airport and pay an export fee.

IN-COUNTRY TRAVEL

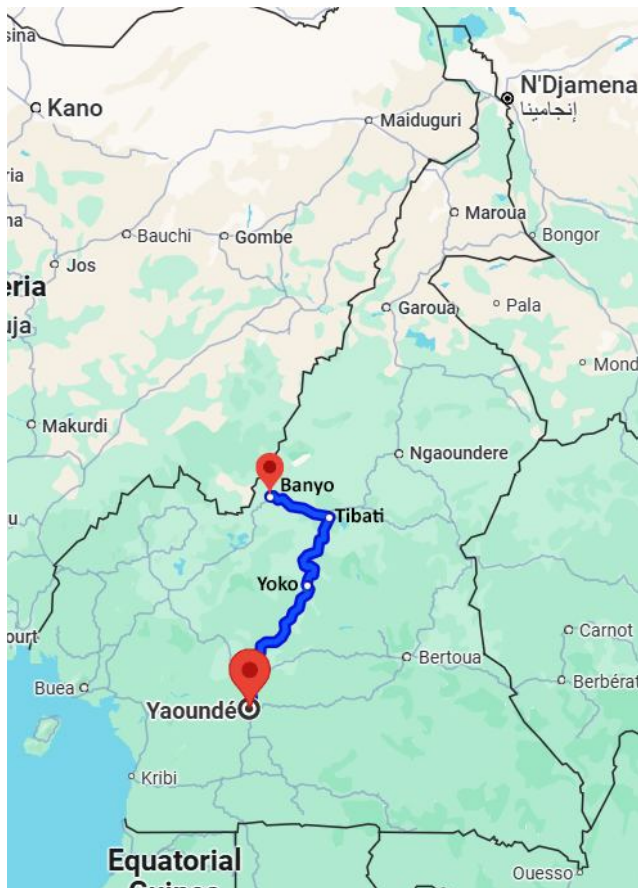
Public Transportation

In all our travels here in Cameroon, we use public transportation, which can make traveling quite an experience. In the capital city or for traveling longer distances, this is in the form of a small taxi car. For larger groups it may be a smaller mini-van. And further out in Banyo if you are just going a short distance, you can hire motorcycle taxi's.

The roads in Cameroon have actually been improving a *lot* the last few years, but there is still a long ways to go. Especially as you get further out of the big cities and into the more remote locations in Cameroon – like where we live in Banyo. Traveling in the more remote parts of the country can be quite an experience. You can expect to have quite a bumpy ride along the way! If you are prone to getting car sick, you might want to consider bringing something along to help you with that.

Public transport vehicles here in Cameroon do their very best to make use of every inch of space in a vehicle for passengers and luggage, so traveling by public transport can often feel tight and cramped, so be prepared for that, and prepared to be in close proximity with the other passengers while riding in public transport.

In-Country Travel Route and Map



Here is a map showing the route we currently take traveling between Yaoundé (the capital city, where the international airport is located) and Banyo (where we live and work).

You can expect to spend at least 1 day/night in Yaoundé as you recover from your international travels and prepare to make the road trip up to Banyo.

You can also count on spending a night at a hotel in Tibati, during the trip to Banyo, since we usually need to divide the trip into 2 days, due to the condition of the roads.

Please note that this route is subject to change, depending on the season, road conditions, and other factors, but we always try to choose the best route that is available at the time – and currently this route has been the most favorable option.

LODGING

How We Live (and why)

Because of the kind of ministry that we are involved in (working directly with the local people and seeking to disciple them and empower them to also go and do ministry) our family has a conviction to live off of the same salary as the average local pastor in our area, in order to live more at the level of the people we are ministering to.

Because of this conviction, our family lives quite simply, and without many of the modern conveniences you may be used to in America. We do not have a refrigerator or oven. We do not have running water or water heaters. We do not have a wash machine or dryer. We do not have a car, or a TV, or even couches or nice furniture. It also means eating less meat or other expensive, luxury foods.

For us, this is all part of incarnational ministry, and there are many advantages to living this way. The greatest advantage that we've seen is the way it helps us relate better to the people around us – and for them to be able to relate well with us as well. It has also made it possible for us to help the people around us – not by handing out money (which is what a lot of western missionaries do) but by educating and teaching the people around us how to do various development projects or how to operate small in-home businesses that can help improve their lives, supplement their income, or help their funds to stretch further each month.

It is also important for us to live this way, because we are training nationals to also serve as missionaries, and we realized very early on that it would not be right to come in and model a ministry or lifestyle that relied on a large budget and then ask them to go out and do the same ministry with a fraction of the financial resources.

I should point out, though, that when you come you will likely notice a difference between the things we have in our home and the things our neighbors have. This is because even though we strive to function on the same salary that a local pastor would make, we have a different perspective on what we value in our home. For one thing, we chose to put bigger windows in our house, since we value good lighting and airflow in the house. Most of our neighbors actually prefer smaller windows, some for superstitious reasons, and others just because that is what they grew up with and what they are used to. Another example would be our bathroom. Most people here are used to (and so prefer) an outhouse in stead of a modern toilet, so we have an indoor bathroom and they do not. Of course, we don't have a bathtub, shower, or even running water in the bathroom, but we put a value on having a modern toilet instead of a hole in the ground. Also, many of our neighbors also have a TV and a nice couch in their sitting room. We decided to do without both of these, and instead spend more on our mattress in order to have a spring mattress on our bed instead of a foam one. These are just a few example of how we may choose to spend our money differently than the people around us, but still live by the same principle and conviction of operating on the same monthly salary for our personal needs.

An Average Day

It is very difficult to lay out a picture of what an average day looks like for us, since no day is the same. Even when we set out to make a schedule and plan out the events of the day, there are always things that come up, and the day never quite looks like what you expect.

But here are a few things that tend to be consistent most days:

The sun comes up around 6:00 or 6:30, depending on the time of the year (we live very close to the equator, so the sunrise is always within that time frame all year round – there is no daylight savings here!). We usually wake up around 7:00 or 7:30.

The temperature is cooler in the mornings, so we always try to do the more strenuous activities earlier in the day – washing clothes, daily chores, trips to market, construction work, development projects, farm work – these are all best done in the morning.

The hottest time of day is right after lunch (around 1:00 – 2:00pm) so this is a good time to rest, take a nap, and do lighter work like office work, meetings, or visiting with the people around us in what we call life-on-life discipleship.

Cameroonian culture is very relationship based with no concept of “calling ahead of time”, so we can expect to have visitors show up, unannounced, at any hour of the day.

The children in the community like to pay us frequent visits. It is very common to have a child or two (or three, or six, or ten) congregated on our front porch, playing with our kids in the yard, or just observing all the goings on in our home.

Temperatures start to cool down around 4:00 – 5:00pm, which is the best time to haul water, cook supper, do more household chores, or even go out and take a walk.

After supper it's usually time for baths and winding down for the night. We try to come inside when the sun starts to set and close up the house to prevent mosquitoes from coming inside (since malaria is an issue here). Evenings are a time to unwind and de-stress after a busy day. It's usually just a time to hang out, and since we have young kids it's often a time to play with the kids, read them stories, play games, or watch a movie. For the most part, evenings are considered free time to do whatever you want to do with your time.

Meals

The meals you will be eating during your stay may be somewhat different than the food that you are used to. We try to have a balance between traditional Cameroonian food (so that you can taste the ethnic dishes) and American style meals (to help you feel more at home).

All food is carefully cleaned and prepared to ensure that you do not get sick from eating it. All our fresh fruits and vegetables are washed and sanitized to make them safe for consumption.

Water

While you are here it will be important for you to remember that water is a very precious luxury. You will need to assist us in conserving water – *especially* if you are here near the end of dry season (February, March, and April) when the water table is extra low.

We are very careful about supplying our guests with clean, filtered drinking water. Please do not drink any water unless it has first been approved by a member of our staff. This includes the water you use for brushing your teeth!

Also be aware that you *may* or *may not* have running water in your living quarters, so please be willing to be flexible in this area.

Quote: "We have running water! You take a bucket, fill it with water, and turn it upside-down -- voila!! Running water!"

Bathing

In our home, bathing is done as the standard "bucket-bath" method. Buckets and dippers will be provided for your use. Feel free to ask a member of our staff to give you further instructions if you are unsure of how to bathe this way.

If you are staying in a house that has running water you may have access to a shower. If so, please be mindful that water is not a limitless resource here, and needs to be conserved. So please do not take long showers, and please don't leave water running more than necessary.

Laundry

Laundry is all done by hand, the same way that the nationals wash their own clothes. If you choose to do your own laundry, we will provide you with the supplies you need and can instruct you on the most efficient way of getting your clothes clean.

If you are here for a longer stay it may be an option to hire someone to do your laundry for you, since there is usually someone in the community who is grateful for the work.

Electricity

You can count on having electricity in most places where you stay here in Cameroon, but do not be surprised if the power goes out occasionally or is turned off for several hours at a time. Where we are in Banyo we are used to having the power turn off around 5:30am every morning. Sometimes it is only off for a couple hours, other times it is off all morning. There is no way to predict when there will be power and when there won't, so we have learned to not depend on the power, but to just make the most of it when it is on.

Also, the voltage of electricity here in Cameroon is 220v (which is much higher than the standard 110v in the US), and requires a different kind of adapter in order to plug into the outlets.

At our house in Banyo we have a transformer that can convert 220v to 110v, so that we can plug in American electronics, but anywhere else you travel in Cameroon will not have that. Just be aware that there is a limit as to how many things you can plug into the 110v system at a time.

Also, please do NOT bring electrical devices that produce heat or contain a heating coil (such as hair dryers, curling irons, etc). These items draw too much power for our electrical system to handle.

Internet

You may, or may not, have access to internet when you arrive in Cameroon. Internet is not readily available, so if you need to connect to the internet you can ask a member of our team and we can see what we can do. Just know that it may not always be available when you need it, or it may be too slow of a connection to use, and may cut out frequently, which can be frustrating.

Also, be aware that even when internet is available, it is not limitless. We have to pay for every little bit of data used, so we usually discourage short-termers from watching movies online or doing anything that would use a lot of internet data so as not to use up all our internet credit.

It is also important to note that the internet is very slow here and can cut out frequently, so it may not be possible to make video calls.

MAKING YOUR STAY EASIER

Jet Lag

Jet lag is something you get after traveling across several time zones. Since your brain and “internal-clock” were synchronized with the location where you were living, it can really confuse your brain when you suddenly step out of the plane in a completely different time zone. Nights and days are reverse, the times when the sun rises and sets are different, and after traveling for so long it can be hard to even remember what day it is. Your built-in clock and calendar have been disturbed and it's going to take your body a while to adjust and figure out what day and time it is again.

Crossing time zones can cause you to wake up during the night, or make it difficult for you to get to sleep at night, or give you a strong urge to go to sleep in the middle of the day. The fastest way to get over jet lag is to force yourself to adapt to the current time zone as soon as possible. You might consider taking a short nap (no longer than 1 hour) your first day in country. But after that, make it a goal to stay awake until night fall, regardless of how tired you are. This will make it more likely that you will sleep at night and give your body a good idea of when it's allowed to sleep and when it should be awake.

It is also common, when suffering from jet lag, to just have an overall sense of “not being well”. It can't be identified as a sickness or a specific problem, it's just sort of a “malaise” – all you know is that you just don't feel 100%.

Culture Shock

When you come to Cameroon you may experience a brief period of Culture Shock. Don't be alarmed, it is perfectly normal. Culture shock happens when things around you conflict with your expectations. In this case it is natural to feel disoriented, confused, afraid, depressed, or even angry. *See the next page for more specific symptoms of Culture Shock.*

Things that heighten the culture shock cannot easily be escaped, such as . . .

- Not being able to establish or maintain any degree of daily normality.
- Not understanding the language or culture around you or what is going on.
- Not being able meet your own basic needs due to language barriers or “new ways” of doing things.
- Not being able to communicate well with those around you, due to language barriers or differing methods of communication.

These are examples of things that can heighten your culture shock. It is important for you to be aware that this may be a factor. If you are prepared for it, you will more easily be able to identify the signs of culture shock, and be able to work through it.

Also, please be aware that a *lot* of people experience what is called “reverse culture shock”, which means they don't really experience culture shock in the country that they are visiting, but suddenly (and very unexpectedly) experience culture shock when they go *back* to their home culture.

Symptoms of Culture Shock

Here is a list of common symptoms of culture shock. It can be very helpful to keep this list on hand and refer to it often so you can identify when an issue you are having may be a result of culture shock.

- Depression
- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Feeling Insecure
- Lost or confused
- Feeling overlooked
- Boredom
- Withdrawal
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Headache or general aches and pains
- Feeling like you want to distance yourself from people
- Frustrated by the lack of privacy
- Thinking negatively about yourself, your life or circumstances
- Being judgmental of the people or culture around you
- Over concerned about health or safety
- Becoming obsessed with cleanliness
- Overwhelming sense of homesickness
- Questioning your decision to come here
- Developing "stereo-types" in the new culture
- Idealizing about your home culture and how things are "back home"
- Trying too hard to adapt by becoming obsessed with the culture
- The smallest problems seem overwhelming
- You are more emotional or moody than usual
- You feel like you just want to go home

Interacting With Cameroonians

We do not expect our visitors to be able to speak the language, but we do encourage you to at least practice greeting in the local languages since the people of Cameroon are very friendly and sociable and even strangers are likely to feel offended if you fail to greet them.

But even though conversation may be limited by language barriers, the people will still enjoy speaking with you. And just because you do not speak their language does not mean that they do not understand what you are saying. People can also read body language, facial expressions, and hand motions, so we encourage you to try and use every means you can to communicate with those you come in contact with.

Cultural Guidelines

When you enter into another culture it is important to remember that *YOU* are the stranger. It is *you* who talks funny, not them. It is *you* who eats weird foods, wears strange clothes, has odd habits, and rude manners -- not them!

Don't be too quick to judge or criticize your experiences. Whether it is the food, the music, the lifestyle, or whatever, it is important to note that the way they do things in this other culture is not wrong or bad -- it's just *different!*

Americans tend to "stand out" overseas. They often come across as being boisterous, loud, forceful, and rich. In the way American's walk, talk, and compose themselves, their non-verbal communication speaks very loudly. Often without even knowing it they are communicating to those around them that they think themselves superior to the rest of the world. They give the impression that they think the whole world revolves around them, or that they have the answers and solutions to all of life's problems (and all of their solutions contain dollar signs).

Because of this, it is important to be aware of how others may be perceiving you, and be intentional about presenting yourself in a way that is respectful and considerate towards the people around you. If you come with a willingness to learn new things, you will get a lot further in building relationships here than if you come with the goal of making an "impact" by trying to change the way things are. Bear in mind that it can take *years* to really begin to understand a new culture, so be patient and feel free to ask questions if there is anything that you would like to understand better about the culture here in Cameroon.

A few cultural things that may be helpful for you to know

-- The left hand is considered *dirty* in this culture, which means it can be very offensive to use your left hand in your interactions with people here. So, practically speaking, this means you should avoid using your left hand when waving at people, pointing, shaking hands with people, or reaching out to give something to someone or receive something from them.

-- Pointing your toes at someone is also considered offensive. So, when sitting in a group of people, you should be careful that your feet aren't pointing towards anyone specifically. This is especially true if you are in the habit of crossing your legs when sitting. People in this culture do not usually sit with their legs crossed, on account of this cultural factor, and the fact that they do not want to offend anyone by pointing their feet in anyone's direction by accident.

-- Offers of "good intention" are *very often* misunderstood here. If you say that you would like to do something to help someone here it is often taken as a promise that you *will* help them, and this is something they will not forget about and will expect you to follow through with. Because of this, it is important to choose your words carefully, and to be very slow to communicate the good intentions you have that you are not seriously planning to follow through with.

For example, if you say, "I would love it if you could visit our church in America", they may take it to mean that you are promising to pay their way to go to America so that you can have them visit your church there. Or if you say something along the lines of, "I wish I could help", they may take this as a promise that you are going to try and come up with the money needed to address whatever need you "wish" you could help with.

We have actually had a *lot* of issues over the years with miscommunications like these, which is why it is very important that you be careful how you speak, especially with casual expressions of "good intention".

-- Cameroonian culture is very sociable and public. Privacy is a foreign concept in this country, which can be especially hard if you are an introvert. Most introverts are very misunderstood in this culture, so please be mindful of this if you are an introvert. People in this culture are overly sensitive in social interactions, which means if you keep too much to yourself or fail to greet the people around you, they are likely to feel very hurt and even fearful that they must have done something to make you upset with them.

-- You may be asked by local people for your phone number or other contact information. We strongly suggest that you NOT give this information out to anyone. If there is someone you meet who you feel you may want to correspond with in the future, please check with our staff first and we will be able to instruct you further in this area. We only say this because we have had instances in the past where visitors gave out their contact information and then felt harassed or even "stalked" by frequent and persistent correspondences that followed, so this is something we want you to at least be aware of before deciding whether or not to give out personal contact information. Also, if someone is very persistent in this area, even after you have refused, please let a member of our staff know right away so we address the situation.

-- The culture here in Cameroon is very "relationship" based, which means that "doing" is considered less than "being". Many times in the US a person can feel like their day was wasted if they spent too much time talking with people and didn't get enough crossed off their "to-do" list. Here in Cameroon it is the opposite of that, if you got everything crossed off of your "to-do" list but you did not have any good in-depth conversation with anyone, the day would be seen as unproductive. Because of this, it is important to "slow down" while you are here and try to fight the urge to "be productive" and instead be very intentional about building and maintaining relationships.

Rules of Conduct

-- Any alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs are prohibited at all times.

-- Respect the property and rights of team members, staff, and others.

-- Refrain from using profanity, from possessing a negative attitude, or using abusive, prejudice, or offensive language.

-- Participate in all meetings and group activities with the team.

-- Please do NOT pursue or initiate any new romantic relationships with any team members or any local people during your stay here.

-- Be prepared! You may be asked to share your testimony, pray, lead a devotion, or write an update for supporters back home.

-- Your team leader and members of our staff have the right to add a rule or change a rule at any time.

-- At all times, remember that you are representing Christ, your church, and this team.

Debriefing

Since you will be experiencing many new things during your stay here in Cameroon, it is very important to take time to think through your experiences and talk through them. Being able to talk about your experiences and ask questions about things that have caught your attention can really help you a lot in processing new information and taking in the experience more deeply. It can also help a great deal in lessening the effects of culture shock, as well as making your transition back home much smoother.

If you are planning to be with us for more than just a couple weeks, we will ask that you take part in a few debriefing sessions. We can discuss with you more about what this will look like, but mostly these sessions are just conversations and questions that are aimed at helping you to reflect and think through your experiences so far.

Debriefing sessions do not need to be anything complicated. The goal is simply to take some time to talk together to share observations and experiences with one another. It is also a good time to ask questions if there was something you observed that maybe you didn't quite understand.

Below is a list of questions that you can use as a place to start in encouraging conversation. These are mainly meant to be ideas for conversational starters, so feel free to use them only as much as you find them to be helpful.

- What was a high point of your day/week?
- What was a low point of your day/week?
- What's something new that stands out to you?
- What has surprised you about the culture here?
- Are there any questions you have about the culture or about things you see here?
- What is a positive experience you have had here, so far?
- What is a negative experience you have had here, so far?
- How do you see God working through the negative experiences?
- How are you doing emotionally?
- How would you describe your feelings right now? (example: excited, frustrated, peaceful, exhausted, grieved, passive, lonesome, depressed, confused, grateful, anxious, etc.)
- How are you doing physically?
- How are you doing spiritually?
- How do you see God at work in your life right now?
- Have you noticed any signs of culture shock?
- Which stage of adjustment do you think you are in, and what could help this stage be a little easier for you? (see below for the list of "stages")

Stages of Adjustment

Stage 1: Honeymoon

Everything is new and exciting to you. You are in awe of the different things you see and experience. You feel excited, stimulated, and enriched.

Stage 2: Distress

Everything you're experiencing no longer feels new and exciting, instead it feels like a wall that is blocking you from experiencing things. You may feel confused, alone, unable to communicate or do anything yourself, and reluctant to go out on your own. Everything familiar to you feels very distant.

Stage 3: Re-integrated

You may find yourself resisting change and unsure of how to handle the things that are “different” in this new culture and setting. You feel frustrated, anxious, or even angry at your surroundings or circumstances. Nothing seems to measure up to how it is “back home”. You may doubt your reasons for coming to this place, and wonder why you are here.

Stage 4: Emergence

You emerge from the “fog” and are finally starting to feel more like yourself again. You feel more confident and able to cope with your surroundings. The things around you start to feel more normal and familiar to you. You no longer feel isolated, frustrated, or anxious.

Stage 5: Independence

You are yourself again. You embrace the new culture and see everything as new and exciting again, but this time in a more realistic way. You start to understand more of what is going on around you. You feel more comfortable, confident, able to make your own decisions, free to go places and do things on your own – you start to feel “at home” here.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

Going to Church

Church services are Sunday mornings, but unlike churches in the US there is no specific time in which you are required to arrive at church, and there are no rules that say you have to stay for the entire service. Church services here are often 4 hours long (if not longer), so everyone tends to choose which portion of the service they will attend, and come and go as needed. When you come, we can talk about what all goes on in a typical church service, and help you decide which parts of the service you would like to be present for.

The language that is spoken in the church service you attend will vary depending on which part of Cameroon you are in. But even if it is in a language you cannot understand, going to church is still a very unique experience, and can be very enjoyable to observe. You will see many things in church that may seem very strange to you, such as having people dance up to the front to give their offering, or having people stick coins to the foreheads of the singers, or people bringing in sticks of sugar cane or baskets full of yams during the offering time. The style of music and order of service will be very different than what you are used to, but remember, their style of worship is not bad or wrong, it's just *different!*

We *do* ask that any ladies on the team please wear some kind of head-coverings when attending church, as is customary here, and that everyone on the team please do their best to dress up and wear nice clothes to church (church attire here is much more formal than most churches in the US).

Calling Home

We do our best to make it possible for our guests to call home from time to time. It costs about 60 cents a minute to make an international call, and we will certainly do our best to make this option available to you. However, depending on the circumstances, there may be times when it will not be possible for you to make a call, so do not tell your family that you will call them on a certain day or at a certain time, as it may not be possible.

There may also be an option of calling through internet services (such as Skype, Signal, Messenger, etc), but that is entirely dependent on internet availability, which is not predictable.

Cameroon does not have a day-light-savings. In the fall (from about November to March) Cameroon is 7 hours ahead of the Central Standard Time (CST) of Chicago. During the rest of the year, Cameroon is only 6 hours ahead.

Credit Cards and ATM Machines

Cameroon primarily uses a cash system. In the capital city there are a few ATM machines, but they usually only take Visa, not Mastercard, and it has been our experience that the ATM machines are often out of order. Outside of the capital city there really aren't any ATM machines, so please don't come with the expectancy of being able to use ATMs.

Also, most US banks have Cameroon blocked off as a high risk for financial fraud, so even if your bank tells you that your card works internationally, unless they specifically enable it for Cameroon, it will not likely work here.

Please also be aware of the fact that traveler's checks (or any checks, really) will be of no use to you here, so please **DO NOT** bring these!

Currency

Cameroonian currency is called Francs. The currency fluctuates quite frequently, but an average the currency rate is about 500 francs to the dollar.

Tourist Sites

While there are a few “tourist spots” in Cameroon, we will not likely be visiting those areas. Most of the tourist locations are currently in locations of civil unrest, and others are too far or too hard to get to from where we are located. But even if official “tourism” isn’t really an option, our team will do the best we can to show you around and help you to see what sights there are to see, while also giving you the opportunity to experience the REAL Cameroon, as seen through the eyes of the nationals, which is often a side of the country that most tourists never get to see.

While we may not visit locations specifically geared towards tourists, we can guarantee that you will see many great sights and have many opportunities for you to take pictures and make memories.

Souvenirs

Since the area where we live is not catered to tourists, it can be a little tricky to find souvenirs to take back with you. If you are particularly interested in collecting souvenir type items, please talk to us about this early on in your trip and we can present to you your options and help to make that possible. It is important to plan this from the start, though, since most souvenirs will either need to be ordered and made by the local people or will require extra travel or a prolonged stay in Foumban in order to locate the souvenirs you are wanting.

Please take into consideration that it can take several days to have souvenirs made, and while we will do our best to help you get the desired items, we also cannot guarantee that we will be able to find everything you are wanting, or that the items ordered will be completed before you leave.

Photography

We encourage all short-termers to bring cameras and take pictures while they are here. There is no better way to show you supporters, family, and friends what your experience was like than by showing them pictures.

However, there are a few things you should know before you start taking pictures . . .

First of all (and most importantly) do NOT take pictures inside the Cameroon airport!! It is actually forbidden. You are also not allowed to take pictures of embassy buildings, government officials, military personnel, or police officers without permission.

Generally, people do not mind if you take their picture, but it is always polite to ask before doing so. You may find that some people will not agree to have their picture taken unless you first give them time to arrange their hair or even change into a better outfit first.

Please ask a member of our staff if you have any questions about whether or not a setting is acceptable for taking pictures.

RETURNING HOME

What to Expect

One of the hardest parts about any missions trip is returning home afterwards. After an intense experience of discovery, you return home to people who have not had this experience; people who cannot understand what you have been through and cannot comprehend what you try to share with them.

As you get ready to return home, there are a few things you will need to keep in mind in order to make your re-entry transition easier:

The person you were when you started out on this missions trip is not the same person you will be when you return home. Whether you realize it or not, the things you experience on your missions trip will inevitably change you in some way or another. One of the changes that is common for short-termers is a change in their value system. After seeing the standard of living in a third world country, it is natural to return home to the US and feel overwhelmed by the materialism in the American culture. It is common to feel judgmental of others, or even feel guilty about your possessions. These are very normal reactions after spending time in third world country, so just be aware that it may be difficult at first for you to just go back to “the way things used to be”.

Don't expect your family and friends to be as excited about your trip as you are. Remember that they have had experiences of their own which were completely different than yours, and their inability to relate to your experience may result in them seeming less interested than you would like. This can be very disappointing when you have a great many stories to tell but then find that your audience isn't equally excited as you are.

The pace of life here in Cameroon is much slower than in the US, here in Cameroon people focus more on building relationships so you seldom see anyone looking at the clock, rushing around, or hurrying off to their next scheduled event. At first when you arrive in Cameroon you may feel like things are moving *too* slowly, or that there isn't enough structure to the daily schedule. You may even feel frustrated or bored with this slower pace, but eventually you get used to it. Once you have gotten used to the slower pace of life and have learned to enjoy the relational focus of the culture, it can be terribly overwhelming to step off the plane and re-enter the “fast-lane” of the American culture. This may be the first time you ever realized just how busy everyone is in the US, and it is normal to feel overwhelmed and a bit lost at first. It is normal to feel frustrated when friends and family members seem so busy with their own schedules to really have much time for you. And it is normal to be frustrated with your own life, when you find how quickly you get pulled back into the “busyness” of the culture, and find yourself missing the slower-pace of the culture you just left.

If you are crossing several time-zones to return home, be prepared to have your internal clock mixed up again as you experience jet-leg once again in the reverse.

Reverse Culture Shock

Most people expect that they will experience culture shock when they arrive in a strange country, but what they don't expect is that they are even MORE likely to experience it when they return home.

For a few months after you return home, it would be a good idea to occasionally examine yourself to see if you can detect any of the following signs of culture shock. These things tend to occur in people returning from service in another culture, and it's a good idea to keep an eye out for them so that you can identify them for what they are so that you can better deal with and work through them.

Some common emotions that may signify reverse culture-shock:

- Depression
- Disappointment
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Easily frustrated or overwhelmed
- Feeling like you want to distance yourself from people
- Thinking very negatively about yourself or your life
- Being judgmental of the people or culture around you

Refer to the Symptoms of Culture Shock section from before for a more complete list of symptoms.

Debriefing

Debriefing and re-entry is a process, not a one-time event.

It is a good idea to continue holding debriefing sessions even after you return home. It can be overwhelming returning home after a mission trip. It can also be very difficult to find people who can understand what you are going through in the transition process.

Here are a few debriefing questions you might consider working through once you have returned home, either by talking through these questions with someone, or even just thinking through or journaling through them on your own.

- What were the high/low points of your trip?
- What part of the mission experience was the most challenging for you? What was the easiest?
- What did you learn about God's mission in the world?
- How did you see God at work?
- How has your relationship with God changed as a result of this trip?
- Describe the one or two images that stand out from your trip.
- How would you describe your feelings right now? (joyful, frustrated, exhausted, peaceful, grateful, grieved, confused)
- What do you miss most about Cameroon?
- What are you thankful for now that you are back home?
- Name some people who really touched your life during your time in Cameroon. What did you learn from them?
- In what ways did you feel prepared or unprepared for the trip?
- What changes (if any) will you make in your life, based on what God has been teaching you?
- How are you doing physically?
- How are you doing emotionally?
- How are you doing spiritually?
- What surprised you about the Cameroonian culture?
- How has your view of missions changed since your visit?
- How has your view of your own culture changed?

Conclusion

We hope this manual has been helpful and informative, but we also recognize that it is impossible to include everything you need to know in a manual, so please contact us if you have any questions – we are always ready to help.



Thank you, once again, for your interest in possibly coming out on a short-term team. We hope that this manual has been helpful to you, and we look forward to working with you more!

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us by emailing:
theunreached@gmail.com

May God richly bless you!