

## PRE-ARRIVAL INFORMATION - smr.2286

The activity will be held at the University of Yaoundé' I, Faculty of Science, Department of Physics ([http://www.facsociences.uninet.cm/phy\\_meca.html](http://www.facsociences.uninet.cm/phy_meca.html)), in the Campus of Ngoaékéle (for taxi drivers request to stop at Chateau Ngoaékéle).

The University Campus hosts two Faculties: Faculty of Letters and the Faculty of Science. The latter has three former main buildings plus a new one. The Workshop will take place in this new building. The lectures will be held in the Amphitheater equipped as follows: blackboard, one video projector for PC, a computer (with Windows XP Professional or Windows 7), overhead projector for transparencies and one microphone.

### ACTIVITY UPDATINGS

Additional information, Programme, etc, will appear on <http://agenda.ictp.it/smr.php?2286>.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Prof.s

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### VACCINATIONS

Special Precautions Certificate Required?

Diphtheria Yes

Hepatitis A Yes

Malaria Yes

Tetanus Yes

Typhoid Yes

Yellow Fever Yes\*

\*

\* IMPORTANT: A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required of all travellers over one year of age.

### TIME ZONE

GMT + 1 hour.

### CURRENCY

CFA (*Communauté Financière Africaine*) Pronounced *SEE-fahs* Franc (XAF; symbol CFA). Notes are in denominations of CFA10,000, 5,000, 2,000, 1,000 and 500. Coins are in denominations of CFA 500, 100, 50, 25, 10, 5, 2 and 1.

The [CFA Franc](#) is worth roughly about 500 to one U.S. Dollar.

about 650 to one Euro

Cameroon, together with Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, belongs to an economic and monetary community sharing a common currency, the *Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale* (Bank of Central African States) CFA Franc, which is pegged to the Euro.

While the CFA Franc issued by the *Banque des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Bank of West African States), used in the ECOWAS countries further west, has the same value but is not legal tender in Cameroon.

Just check you are given bills and coins issued by *Banque des États de l'Afrique Centrale* (Bank of Central African States).

**Currency Exchange**

Euros are the easiest currency to exchange. US Dollars are the next most acceptable. Travellers should bring cash in preference to traveller's cheques.

DO NOT CHANGE CURRENCY WITH NON-IDENTIFIED PEOPLE.

**Credit/Debit Cards and ATMs**

Major credit cards are accepted on a very limited basis (some airline offices and hotels will take them).

**Visa & MasterCard.**

Visa is accepted at most ATM. There are lots of these in Douala and Yaoundé. All major banks now have ATM available. Note that VISA is the card of choice. SCB-CLC (Credit Agricole) is the only bank accepting MASTER CARD.

**Banking Hours**

Mon.- Fri. 07:30-17:30 hrs.

**LANGUAGES**

Throughout Cameroon official languages are French and English. They are given equal importance in the constitution, but French is the more commonly spoken. Pidgin English is widely spoken, particularly in coastal areas, and Spanish is spoken in some urban centers. Over 200 different African languages are also in circulation.

**TRIBES**

Cameroon today is made up of almost all ethnic groups in Cameroon. The majority of the over 2 million inhabitants are from the French Cameroun, Ewondo tribe and surrounding neighboring ethnic groups. You will find a small representation of all 250, plus ethnic groups of Cameroon in Yaoundé. Each ethnic group has its culture: tribal language, food, music, birth, engagement, wedding and funeral customs.

A major part of the foreigners in Yaoundé are French citizens, Chadians, Nigerians, Moroccans, Gabonese, Americans, and a large representations of other nations through their diplomatic missions.

**RELIGION**

Christian 50% (Catholic 35%, Protestant 15%), Animist 25%, Muslim 25%.

**VOLTAGE, TELEPHONE AND INTERNET****Electricity**

110/220 volts AC, 50Hz.

Outlets in Cameroon generally accept 1 type of plug: two round pins.

**Telephone**

Cameroon country code is +237 and Yaoundé city code is 22.

Most Quadriband mobile phones will operate in Cameroon (there are 3 companies providing service Orange, MTN and CAMTEL). Check with your company roaming charges or buy (for about 7.5 Euros) a chip of one of those companies to have a pre-paid local mobile line.

**Internet**

Internet with cable may be used on the University Campus.

**PERSONAL DOCUMENTS**

It is advised to carry some form of identification at all times (either a residence permit or a certified copy of your passport). Failure to produce such identification can lead to detention by the local police.

## TRANSPORTATION

[Yaoundé Nsimalen International Airport](#) (NSI) is a major civilian hub.

Railway lines are not commonly used.

Many bus companies operate frequently from the city of Douala to Yaoundé and vice versa. The most popular companies are Granty Express and Central Voyage particularly in the Nsam and Mvan neighbourhoods. Travel time by road between Douala and Yaoundé is approximately 3 hours. Buses are some of the most efficient ways of getting around.

Traffic in the Yaoundé can be heavy during weekdays, but is very light during the weekends.

Best means to get around is by TAXI:

*Common taxi:* share a ride with others. Single drops cost from 250 CFA (0.5 US dollar) (typically from downtown to the University) and for longer distances you would be charged about 400 CFA. Just stand by the street, flag any yellow cab and tell the driver your destination. Involves a lot of delays (as the route is not direct). Settle the price before boarding the taxi (none are metered). Only use authorised taxis (the ones colored yellow) at all times.

*Depot:* you can ask for a "depot". With this option you pay about 1500 CFA to 2500 CFA (about 5 US dollars) for a non-stop ride to your destination anywhere within the city. This involves travelling alone with no other stranger. *Same as above regarding color of taxi and recommendations.*

*Course:* Use this option if travelling from one end of the city to the other or going to the Nsimalen airport. The cost is about 5000 CFA (about \$ 10.00) - no matter how many are boarding the taxi. Be sure to check the price. Its a non-stop service. This service is best when you travel as a group.

*Hire a taxi:* for about US \$70 to US \$100 US you can hire a yellow taxi and its driver to drive you around all day, for up to 10 hours.

Minibus : Note a minibus (or sharetaxi) will not leave before completely packed with passengers, groceries -and in some case live chickens jumping out of a plastic bag .

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Avoid isolated or poorer areas of the town (notably La Briquetterie, Mont Febe and Mokolo), take personal security precautions and maintain a high level of vigilance in public places. For example by avoiding the streets at night, and as far as possible go out in the company of others. Ensure that car doors are locked when travelling, avoid wearing jewellery and carry the minimum in cash and valuables with you.

Have your bag, jacket and backpack always with you and do NOT hang them from the chair in restaurants and bars. Be aware of pickpockets (especially at the Bus, taxi stops or any crowded area). Avoid paying with large notes in Taxis (as you may receive fake notes as change).

## SIGHTSEEING

### ATTENTION: Photography:

Cameras should be used with discretion, particularly in rural areas. Always ask permission before taking a photograph. Do not photograph airports, military establishments, official buildings, or military personnel in uniform. Don't take pictures of government buildings, or of anything that may be military. Any of the local militia 'gendarmes' will try to use this as an opportunity to confiscate your camera. Try to play along with them though, and offer to buy them a beer, and pay maybe CFA 2000 Francs. Be prepared for a long wait to get your confiscated property back.

Yaoundé incorporates seven charming hills, and each offers a different set of perspectives.

The main attractions of Yaoundé are:

- Cathédrale Notre Dame des Victoires, seat of the Archdiocese of Yaoundé
- Basilique Marie-Reine-des-Apôtres, built on the site of the first missionary church in Cameroon
- The Cameroon Art Museum - situated in a former Benedictine monastery
- The Cameroon National Museum - is in the former presidential palace
- The Afhemi Museum - in Quartier Nsimeyong.

- The Monument of Reunification.
- Palais du Sport de Warda, an indoor sports complex
- Unity Palace (Etudi Palace), the presidential palace.

Mfoundi market is a huge outdoor marketplace.

The zoo at the Mvog-Betsi neighborhood: Quartier Melen 1.5 km W of Centre Ville.

Mefou National Park is situated about one hour from the centre of Yaoundé. It contains 1044 hectares of forest. At present it has eight electrified enclosures housing Chimps, Gorillas, Baboons, and various species of monkeys. Mefou is the perfect setting for visitors to see Cameroon's unique wildlife in a natural environment.

## **WEATHER**

Yaoundé features a tropical, generally dry climate with constant temperatures throughout the year. Primarily due to the altitude, temperatures are not quite as hot as one would expect for a city located near the equator. The best period to visit the city is during the dry season which runs from November to around the month of June. Yaoundé is however one of the few places in the country where even during the sunny season the weather is still pleasant to go outside. There is a cool feel to the breeze and you do not get the suffocating heat. Yaoundé inhabitants enjoy a gorgeous year round. November weather temperature range of average lows are 66°F (19°C) to average highs of 82°F (28°C).

## **EATING in YAOUNDÉ'**

Best bars are in Carrefours Bastos and Nlongkak, most with open-air seating facing the street - great for people watching.

Some popular eating spots are the following (be prepared to spend approx. min. 10 to 15 Euros per person):

La Marmite du Boulevard  
 Le Bois d'Ébène  
 Chez Wou  
 Le Bbiniou  
 Restaurant Les Cigalons  
 L'Élysée Matignon  
 Le Marseillais Plus chez Azar (not far from Merina Hotel)  
 Les Alliés Bar Restaurant  
 Snack Bar Restau. La Côte d'Or  
 Snack Bar Restau. Le Tremplin  
 Restaurant Cabaret l'Agora  
 Restau-Cabaret Dolce & Freddo  
 Restaurant "Petit Plats Chez YvYv  
 Restaurant l'Estérel

## **SHOPPING**

Bargaining: requires time and patience.

You will find lots of western style shopping centers in Yaoundé for your grocery and dressing & grooming needs. In central city, Scores (now Casino Supermarket) offers a typical western-style grocery shopping experience as in Walmart or other western style grocery shop.

For a typical Cameroonian, or African shopping, marché Central, and marché Mokolo (biggest) but not recommended, are a few of the many large African open air and indoor markets and stores.

Some of the popular places to shop are:

The National Craft Market  
 DOW Distribution Sarl  
 Sté Mahima  
 Sup. Marché "La Corbeille"  
 Super Marché Montana SARL  
 Top Inter  
 Espace Landmark  
 Métropolis  
 Rayco Sarl.

*We hope you will enjoy your stay!*