

Dollar-A-Day Guide for Congo  
By Woody M. Collins  
Congo Helping Hands, Inc.  
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*"Frommer's Dollar-A-Day guides show you how to travel in style-without breaking the bank. You'll find inexpensive accommodations that don't skimp on comfort. Affordable restaurants where locals go for a good meal. And all the best sightseeing and shopping values. Frommer's Dollar-A-Day guidebooks. First-class travel on a budget."*

The latest guide Frommer's Europe from \$85 a Day is in its 46th Edition. I wonder what the guide for Congo would offer for city of Kananga. It is estimated about 600,000 people live in the Kananga area. Here's what I have experienced in the past week.

By far, the biggest expense for Congo is the travel to and from the US. First, air fare from Indianapolis to Kinshasa costs over \$2,200 for the round trip. And you spend about \$250 for shots and malaria prevention pills. Then it costs about \$150 for a one-way ticket to Kananga which is about 420 miles slightly southeast of Kinshasa. The trip by plane takes about 90 minutes. It would take weeks by truck or train.

For lodging in Kananga, there were only three places to consider. They were operated by the Presbyterian, the Catholic, and the Neo Apostolic churches. I chose the Neo Apostolic church facility. My accommodations cost \$10 a night for single room with a shared bath. There is no running water in the bathroom. However, electricity is available for about 3 hours at night from 7-10pm.

For food, there were about 3-5 restaurants in town. The most popular establishments were the Mona Luxe, a restaurant complex with a convenience store and gas station, and the former Grand Hotel restaurant. The offer limited menu items priced higher when compared the same in the US. For example, it cost about \$6 for a quarter chicken dinner. But I arranged with the caretaker of the Neo Apostolic facility to provide breakfast and dinner for about \$9 per day.

Kananga is the provincial capital for Bulape located in Kasai Occidental, one of eight provinces in Congo. However, points of interest are relatively few. There is the governor's palace and administrative building. Also, it serves as the regional offices for a host of non-governmental organizations and churches. For example, UNICEF, the United Nations' (UN) Children Education agency, has an office about a block up the street from my lodging room. The city has an airport which is served by two commercial Congolese airlines about 3-4 times a week. Also, the UN Mission to Congo (MONUC) operates a base in the city and at the airport.

Getting around Kananga is relatively simple. There are very few automobiles and about twice as many motorbikes. Therefore, most people walk or use a bicycle for transportation. But there are three taxi routes in town. If you like walking then, it is pleasurable pastime here. The city's center is located about a mile from the Neo Apostolic facility. It is simpler and easier to walk than to try and find a taxi.

As you can see Kananga is not your typical tourist center. But it is a great place to come and work to improve their quality of life for our brothers and sisters living in extreme poverty. I will spend the next month here establishing relationships with governmental and non-governmental organizations which will help us better serve the people in Bulape about 170 miles north of Kananga. The UNICEF office is a top priority, since I heard they have elementary school resources.

Thanks for your continued prayers and support. If you are interested in a short term mission trip to Congo, please contact me. Also, please consider making a financial donation to help defray the out of pocket cost of our mission workers planning to come to Congo in June. Your tax-deductible gift will be greatly appreciated.

Congo Helping Hands, Inc.  
9152 Kent Ave, B-50  
Indianapolis, IN 46216