

The Baka - Rainforest People



- The Baka people are **hunter-gatherers** of the tropical rainforest of Central West Africa (Congo). Groups set up temporary camps of huts constructed of bowed branches covered in large leaves (though today more and more homes are constructed following other methods, such as mud and mud brick).
- The Baka mainly hunt and gather their own food. The men hunt and trap in the surrounding forest, using poisoned arrows and spears to great effect. The men also welcome the help of dogs when going on hunting trips.
- Fishing is very important in Baka culture. They also fish using chemicals obtained from crushed plant material. Using fast-moving river water, they disperse the chemical downstream. This **toxic** chemical deprives fish of oxygen, making them float to the surface and easily collected.
- The Baka do practise basic farming as well and are sometimes called '**shifting cultivators**'. For example, they make sure that bees nests are encouraged to survive. They may also clear an area of forest and use it until the soil is dry and the local animals have been hunted out. They then move camp so that the area can recover over time. They, then abandon the camp and settle down in a different portion of the forest. The group is communal and makes decisions by **consensus**.

Task:

1. Find and mark the Congo on your map of Africa.
2. Describe two ways in which the Baka get their food
3. Make a list of 5 Baka key facts

Keywords:

- Consensus – decisions are shared by a group agreement.
- Shifting cultivator – someone who farms a small area until it is tired out and then moves to a new area.
- Hunter gatherer – someone who lives off the land collecting and hunting the food they need.