



Experience Malawi & Zambia

Pre - Adventure Information



The really important stuff:

- Your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months
- Consult with your doctor prior to the trip for information and advice on the use of anti-malaria medication
- Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for travellers arriving to or from countries with risk – please consult with your doctor
- Take out comprehensive travel insurance to safeguard against cancellation and curtailment, medical expenses, repatriation expenses, damage/theft/loss of personal baggage, money and personal belongings

Visas

A visa are required upon entry to both countries. The cost of single visas to Malawi is \$75 and \$50 to Zambia. For certain nationalities visas are not required for stays up to 30 days. An onward or return ticket is required, as well as sufficient funds and documents needed for further travel. However, both governments keep changing these conditions, thus we advise our clients to either contact us directly or check Malawi Embassy website for an actual visa details at the beginning of the trip planning.

Please note that visitors to Malawi must have a MINIMUM of two blank/empty VISA pages in their passport each time entry is sought. Visitors to Malawi with foreign passports who do not comply with these requirements will either be stopped from boarding the aircraft at their point of departure, refused entry or risk deportation on arrival.



Safety

The region is safe for travellers and the people are generally very friendly and welcoming as they rely heavily on tourism for foreign revenue; Malawi is nicknamed 'The Warm Heart of Africa' after the people after all!

All countries in the world have a degree of crime and it is always better to be cautious. Avoid walking around towns and cities after dark, and during the day make sure that you do not display your camera, money belt and day-bag obviously. Do not leave valuables in your vehicle and keep luggage as hidden as possible. Of course, also it is especially important to be aware of wild animals at night.

It is worth remembering that you will be carrying clothes, camera equipment and luggage that would cost most people in Southern Africa several years' wages to purchase. Hence, it is best not to tempt people who may not have very much.

Never leave luggage unattended. Store valuables in your hotel's safety deposit boxes when available, otherwise we strongly recommend keeping valuables with you. Keep your room locked at all times.

Wildlife Viewing

Always take advice from your expert guide on appropriate behaviour, and note that their decision on safari activity is final. It is against park regulations for drivers to journey of the designated paths.

If you experience tourists or guides obviously acting against the bush code please report them to your lodge.



Health

For your own safety make sure to get immunisation against polio, tetanus, rabies, cholera, typhoid and hepatitis. Malawi is a malaria risk area, so consult with your doctor regarding this. The risk is lower during the dry season and on high altitudes, but it is always recommended to take malaria preventions pills. You are likely to take anti-malaria pills for this trip: the tablets need to be started prior to travel – please consult your GP.

If you want to swim in Lake Malawi, be aware that there is a risk of contracting bilharzias. Medication can be bought at local clinics and should be taken afterward.



Malawi - The Warmest Heart of Africa

Climate

Malawi's climate is generally tropical. A rainy season runs from November to April. There is little to no rainfall throughout much of the country from May to October. The temperatures and climate varies a lot depending on the terrain and altitude, the lake is for example warmer then Lilongwe, and Mount Mulanje and Nyika Plateau can be pretty cold.

Zambia is situated in the tropics and receives good rainfall. It has a dry season from May to the end of October and a wet season from November to April. At this time many areas become inaccessible and most camps in Kafue, Lower Zambezi and more remote parks close down. The Mfue sector of South Luangwa is accessible year-round. The further north, the earlier the rains arrive and the later they leave. Eastern and higher areas generally receive more rain than western and lowland areas. The dry season is divided into the cool dry season (May to August) and the hot dry season (September and October).

Drinking water

Water is sold very cheaply all over the country. **On exceptionally rare occasions it is safe to drink tap water but we strongly recommend water to be drunk only when bottled, or previously boiled or frozen.**

Money

For current exchange rates, see <http://www.xe.com>. The official currency in Malawi is the Malawian Kwacha (MKW), in Zambia, Zambian Kwacha (ZKW). But most of the residents will gladly accept USD, also park fees and visas can be paid in US dollar so be sure to bring some of them. However, we do not advise clients to take foreign currency other than USD to Malawi.

Credit and debit card facilities are rarely available. ATM machines are intermittently available but not 100% reliable. Please also be aware that many ATMs have a withdrawal limit of MKW 80,000 every 24 hours.

We advise our clients to let their credit card companies know the dates they will be travelling and the countries they plan to visit as a prevention against the card blocking when the purchases are made in Africa. It is also worth double checking your daily and monthly limits!



Tipping

Tipping is the norm but there is never pressure to do so. It is important to recognise the discrepancy in living costs between Europe and South Africa and not to tip in too high amounts. **Better to tip little and often, and to make sure that everyone involved in whatever service you have received gets some of the tip.**

Lodges: Most of the lodges suggest a collective tip when checking out that will be distributed fairly amongst all of the staff. **Suggested amount is US\$5 per guest per night.**

One-off Tips: When people wish to tip a particular person for a one-off event (e.g. porter, local guide), anything up to \$5 is suggested.

Restaurants: 5 -10% of the bill

Driver: around \$20 total

Please remember these are just guidelines and not compulsory.

What to Bring

- Passport
- USD for Zambian Visa and park fees
- Malawian and Zambian Kwacha
- Day pack
- Binoculars
- Camera
- High factor sun cream
- Closed walking shoes
- Sunhat
- Mosquito and insect repellent
- Anti Malaria pills
- Torch
- Swimming gear
- Music player, reading material..

A basic first aid kit:

- Re-hydrate salt sachets
- Diarrhoea tablets
- Painkillers
- Antihistamine cream
- Plasters
- Antibiotic ointment



Clothing

Lightweight clothing is recommended for the day but at night temperatures can be very cool, especially in the winter months so it is recommended to pack warmer, covered clothing. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. Women are advised to wear clothing that is not too revealing and dresses etc that are to the knee or below.

Electricity supply

Electric Power is 230V running at 50Hz in both Malawi and Zambia. The plug type used is a three pinned, rectangular blade plug.

Swapping

It is worthwhile bringing unwanted clothing as locals will normally gladly trade their crafts for clothes.

Cultural Quirks

It is very important to always greet people. Even if you only stop to ask someone for directions, always make sure to say hello and ask how they are first.



If you need help or someone is giving you trouble (for example at a road block), always remember not to lose your temper. Problems will be solved much easier if you smile, stay polite, acknowledge the problem and show that you want to solve it in friendly way.

Malawians and Zambians are generally very friendly and keen to help. However they might sometimes not understand your question, or do not know the answer. And because they might not want to disappoint you and they are willing to help, it can result in, for example, giving you the wrong directions. Therefore, it is good to use open questions such as “Which direction is Cape Maclear?” rather than “Is Cape Maclear this (pointing) direction?”. Also please use English as simple and clear as possible, and ask more than one person if you are still in doubt.

Malawians and Zambians understand that we come from a different culture. But if you are in a village or at the market it is advised not to wear too short clothes and for women is better to wear a long skirt rather than trousers.

Enriching the experience



Please ask permission before you take anyone's photography, and check with your guide when in doubt, about any aspect of behaviour that may be considered disrespectful.

If you smoke please be very careful to dispose of your butts at the lodges; bush fires can be devastating. Adhere to your guides' requests as to when and where you can smoke.

Responsible Tourism

Before you travel, try to read up as much as you can about your destination, local habits, cultures, history and appropriate dress code. A few words of the local language, especially greetings, will go a long way towards breaking the ice.

If you have space then a few gifts will always be very welcome. Good things to bring are clothes or shoes, toys, books written in English or crayons & colouring books.

Arrive with an open mind and plenty of humour. African life works at a different pace to western countries so bear this in mind and enjoy the diversity.

Rather than giving money to beggars is donating them to a local charity which supports orphaned children or social support schemes.

Please do not buy curios made from endangered hardwoods or animal products.

Children in more remote areas will often show an interest in your camera, you may like to sit and show them how it works, they love to see digital photos of themselves.

Be adventurous; and support, eat and buy local products or crafts!

Contact information

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Emergency Contact Numbers:

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If you have any queries whilst in Malawi, please do not hesitate to call Tapiwa at the office, or via the info email address above.

Office Address:

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Our office hours:

Mon - Thurs: 08:00 - 17:00

Friday: 8:00 - 16:00



*Thank you for travelling with Malawian
Style - we hope that you will have a
wonderful time in Malawi.*