

Country Info: Kenya

This information is provided as a guideline to the country you will be visiting. Further information is available to you on the official Kenyan Tourism Authority's website <http://www.tourism.go.ke/> and see www.magicalkenya.com.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Australian passport holders require a visa for Kenya, which must be obtained prior to arrival through an online application process. Single entry visas are US\$50, and a transit visa (valid for three days) is US\$20. Please note if you are visiting Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya, you can obtain the East Africa Tourist Visa for US\$100 entitling three months multi entry. The four-step procedure requires visitors to submit an application form and passport-sized photo.

Please note from 1 February 2016 there will be no visa fee for children under the age of sixteen.

For more information please visit www.ecitizen.go.ke or www.magicalkenya.com/visit-kenya/visa-information/

If you do not have an Australian passport, please contact us for further information. We must emphasise that you are responsible for ensuring that your travel documents (passport/visas) are in order.

TAXES

Airport taxes and fees are included in the price of your airline ticket.

CURRENCY

The monetary unit is the Kenyan Shilling. It is possible to import and export up to US\$5,000.00 equivalent in cash. It is recommended to travel with US\$ cash. Most of the hotels, lodges and shops in Nairobi, Kenya will take the major credit cards (Master Card or Visa) however camps will not. Remember if you use credit cards, ask what the exchange rate is and service fees. They can vary hugely from 2% to 10%.

Reverting your Kenyan shillings into hard currency is easily done at the airport, hotels and banks. The rate of exchange varies between banks, foreign exchange bureau and hotels. It is recommended that visitors DO NOT change money on the black market, as they are more likely to receive a lower rate of exchange or fake notes. It is illegal to destroy Kenyan currency.

Remember to change any remaining local currency back into US\$ or A\$ before you depart the country as this cannot be done in other countries.

CREDIT CARDS

International Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted throughout Kenya (in major cities, hotels and lodges but not camps). However American Express and Diners Club are not always accepted by the banks in Kenya, and therefore not at a number of

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accommodations and shops. Be sure to ask if there are additional merchant fees on each purchase.

VAT

In Kenya the value-added tax (V.A.T.), currently 16%, is included in the price of most goods and services, including accommodations and food. To get a V.A.T. refund, foreign visitors must present receipts at the airport and carry purchased items with them or in their luggage. Fill out Form V.A.T. 4, available at the airport V.A.T. refund office.

Make sure that your receipts are original tax invoices, containing the vendor's name and address, V.A.T. registration number, and the words tax invoice. Refunds are paid by cheque, which can be cashed immediately at an airport bank or refunded to your credit card with a small transaction fee. Visit the V.A.T. refund desk in the departures hall before you go through check-in, and organise receipts as you travel. Officials will go through your receipts and randomly ask to view your purchases.

PEOPLE & LANGUAGE

There are 52 tribes in Kenya, each with their own tribal language (though most people in the country speak Kiswahili as well as their own tribal language). English is the commercial language; therefore it is commonly spoken in the major towns and at all lodges and hotels.

How are you?	Jambo
Fine thank you	Jambo sana
Welcome	Karibu
Please	Tafadhali
Thank you	Ahsante
Madam / Mister	Bibi / Bwana

TIME

Kenya time is GMT + 3 hours. Kenya does not operate daylight saving time.

ELECTRICITY

Voltage is 220-240 A.C. Some of the safari vehicles will have a cigarette lighter socket operating on a 12-volt system.

Please bring sufficient batteries for photographic equipment. Many lodges have limited power supply, but most are capable of re-charging your electrical goods. Please also bring adapter plugs (Kenya uses square pin, English standard as per image).



HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Kenya is generally considered a healthy place to travel. It is also comforting to know that in Kenya, there are good hospitals and advanced medical facilities, all of which are private.

Please consult your physician before you travel to Kenya. Anyone who has any special medication should take enough supplies to last the visit. Malaria protection is essential.

An International Certificate of Vaccination for Yellow Fever is required for those travelling in or through the following countries: Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Angola and South America. You will be denied entry into Kenya if you do not have proof of vaccination so please carry your certificate with you and present to immigration.

FOOD & DRINKS

We recommend you drink bottled water; this is available in all lodges and camps. Meals usually include full English breakfast and / or continental breakfast with fresh local fruits; lunches are sometimes buffet or picnic lunches, and dinners are generally table d'hôte.

However it varies at different camps and lodges. Please advise Encompass Africa of any allergies likes or dislikes prior to departure.

Food in Kenya reflects the many different backgrounds and lifestyles of the various groups in the country. The large majority of Kenyans are African, however there is a huge influence of Arabic, European and Indian cuisine. Kenya is renowned for its coffee. The national beer is Tusker, a great beer and the Tusker t-shirt is a standard souvenir to take home.

GEOGRAPHY

Kenya is on the equator and covers some 583,000 square kilometres, which includes around 13,600 square kilometres of inland lakes. There are four zones: the coastal belt which features hot, humid weather all year; the Rift Valley and central highlands, the most scenic area, with its lakes and mountains and agreeable climate; western Kenya, with the northern tea plantations fading away to semi desert in the south and the Masai Mara National Reserve on the Tanzanian border; and the north and east of the country, which consists of vast semi-arid bush land where rainfall is sparse and cattle grazing abundant.

CLIMATE

As Kenya is set on the equator, it does not experience the dramatic seasons that one has within the Northern or Southern hemispheres. With temperatures remaining constant throughout more of the year, Kenya's climate is renowned for being very pleasant, with contrasts in temperatures and rainfall due to variations in terrain and altitude.

Many parts of the country are at high altitude; therefore these highlands (e.g. Laikipia, Mathews Range, Masai Mara) generally experience quite a cool and temperate climate, whereas elsewhere the temperatures can reach approximately 35° C during the day (e.g. Northern areas such as Meru, Shaba, and the coast). The coast is beautifully warm and balmy.

Despite its lack of seasons, Kenya does have two times of year that bring a welcome relief of rainfall. The 'Short' rains which occur from late October through November (very light showers). The 'Long' rains which occur from late March to early June (heavier showers, commonly falling at night).

These green seasons are still a popular and advantageous time to visit Kenya, due to clear skies, fewer tourists, and the 'baby boom' (many species giving birth in time for the lush new vegetation). Additional climate patterns are: July and August are the coolest months, and are often overcast (especially in the morning, and at the coast); December to mid-March is the hottest time of the year.

LUGGAGE

Luggage restrictions apply. Refer to the separate luggage guidelines document.

Essentially, if you have light aircraft flights in Kenya (in between locations), you have a restriction of 15 kilograms per person in a soft duffel style bag. This includes hand luggage and camera equipment.

Please also refer to our separate luggage document located under ***Preparation | Important to Know | Luggage Guidelines***

LAUNDRY

Laundry can be done at most camp, hotels and lodges. This service is sometimes complimentary or costs a small fee. We recommend you do not include underwear and instead wash this yourself in your room.

GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Visitors should respect the attitude of the local people towards photography and only take photographs if they have permission by "the models" to do so. Never try to "steal" a photo against the will of the person concerned. If needed, your guide can help negotiate terms (before you begin). It is a good rule never to take photographs of border posts, of persons in uniform, at airports, and of course military installations.

Be sure to bring sufficient memory cards, film and batteries as although these are readily available in all Kenyan cities and towns, there may not be stock in safari camps and lodges.

RECOMMENDED READING

We recommend the following books specific to Kenya.

1. Safari – A Chronicle of Adventure – Bartle Bull
2. Scramble for Africa – Thomas Pakenham
3. Out of Africa – Karen Blixen
4. Born Free, Forever Free & Living Free – Joy Adamson
5. I Dreamed of Africa – Kuki Galiman
6. Elephant Memories – Cynthia Moss
7. Vision of a Nomad – Wilfred Thesiger



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8. Elisabeth Gilbert – Broken Spears: A Masai Journey
9. Africa – Michael Poliza
10. The Kingdon pocket guide to African Mammals - Jonathon Kingdon
11. Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania – Zimmerman