

African Sojourns

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KENYA COUNTRY INFORMATION



In preparation for your Kenya Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about the country. For further information you can visit the official Kenya Tourism website www.magicalkenya.com or: www.tourism.go.ke



The country:

Kenya (/ˈkɛnjə/ or /ˈkiːnjə/), officially the Republic of Kenya, is a sovereign state in East Africa. The capital and largest city is Nairobi. Kenya lies on the equator with the Indian Ocean to the south-east, Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, South Sudan to the north-west, Ethiopia to the north and Somalia to the north-east. Kenya covers 581,309 km² (224,445 sq mi) and has a population of about 44 million in July 2012. The country is named after Mount Kenya, the second highest mountain in Africa.

The indigenous people originally referred to Mount Kenya as "Mt. Kirinyaga". "Kirinyaga or Kerenyaga, meaning 'mountain of whiteness' because of its snow-capped peak"; The name was subsequently changed to Mt. Kenya because of the inability of the British to pronounce "Kirinyaga" correctly.

The Rift Valley and Central Highlands area form the backbone of the country, and this is where Kenya's scenery is at its most spectacular. The humid coastal belt includes the Tana River estuary and a string of good beaches. Western Kenya takes in the fertile fringes of Lake Victoria and, with the southern part of the country, some prime wildlife parks. The vast, arid northern region is where Kenya is at its wildest and most untouched by the modern world.

*The **Annual Wildebeest Migration** follows the green grass after the rains. To see the wildebeest crossing cannot be guaranteed, it depends on the weather and to see the crossing is very rare.*

Currency

In Kenya the unit of currency is the Kenya Shilling, which is divided into 100 cents. Kenya has no currency restrictions, but you should only change money at banks, hotels and or approved foreign exchange bureaux. Shillings, especially in lower denominations, are useful in bargaining situations.

*USD cash in small denominations, in notes no older than 2009 series, are the most widely accepted foreign currency and can be changed at hotels and banks. **USD notes dated 2008 and older will not be accepted in Kenya.***

Credit cards are also accepted and ATM machines are found in the major cities and airports only. Keep in mind that when using a credit card, the charge appearing on your monthly statement is not necessarily calculated at the exchange rate that was in effect on the day that you actually made the purchase so you may see a higher or lower amount than what you originally expected.

Visas and Passport:

Most passport holders require a visa to enter Kenya.

*We suggest you get **your visa on entrance to Kenya**, not in your country. You can purchase a visa on arrival for the cost of USD50.*

*You must have a valid passport that does not expire for at least **six months** after your return home date. Please ensure your passport has 2 blank pages for any visas required and for entry/departure stamps.*

Health:

There are good medical services in Kenya. Please remember that you are staying in the best accommodations available and that the water and health regulations in these accommodations are of international standard.

As a precaution visitors should have the yellow fever inoculation and carry the certificate with them. We also recommend carrying a cholera certificate if coming into Africa from Asia. Malaria medication is also recommended.

As with most things, prevention is better than cure and early diagnosis speeds recovery. Try to avoid tick bites by wearing long sleeved shirts, long pants and shoes when you walk in the bush; apply insect repellent to exposed skin and always check yourself after you have walked in the bush". <http://www.ar.co.za/articles/tickbite.html>

Vaccines recommended, but are not compulsory, for your visit to Kenya also include those against: Tetanus, Diphtheria, Polio, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, Rabies and Meningitis.

Plastic bag ban:

In an effort to prioritize the preservation of our environment, the Kenyan government took an important measure to ban single-use plastic bags in August 2017.

According to the official government press release, "all plastic carrier bags, regardless of their thickness are prohibited from being imported, exported, manufactured, sold, stored, supplied and used in Kenya... "The relevant authorities shall ensure that any plastic carrier bags entered in Kenya in contravention of these Regulations, are confiscated at the point of entry and disposed of or recycled in an environmentally sound manner."

Ziploc bags which are designed to carry toiletries will be permitted as they are expected to be in the possession of visitors and are not expected to be disposed of in the country. Any other form of plastic bags will not be permitted into the country and will need to be surrendered at the airport or any other point of entry.

We recommend all visitors to Kenya to be mindful of the above new regulation in order to have a smooth arrival experience and an enjoyable stay.

Please do not travel with any plastic bags and please do not accept any plastic bags with purchases made in Tanzania. We recommend that you travel with your own glass or metal water bottle.

Power:

Voltage in Kenya is 220-240V AC and most plugs are the English standard square pin. While on safari if you need to have your video battery/camera re-charged this can be done while you are out on an activity, therefore, please bring a spare battery for use while the other is being charged. In some camps transformers are provided but to be sure you may wish to bring one in case. Electrical plug outlets are generally not available in individual rooms.

Communications:

There are good telephone and email communications in the cities. Most, though not necessarily all the camps and lodges you will visit, have good radio communications or satellite phone in case you need to keep in touch with the outside world.

Logistics:

Air Travel: Due to the geographical size of Africa and limitations of time, it is often convenient - and quite normal - to shorten travelling time by flying, normally in small 5 - 16 seat aircraft suitable for bush landing strips. Scheduled and charter services are used, utilising single and twin engine aircraft, piston and turbine. You will always be met off your flight connections. NOTE: luggage restrictions on internal flights vary - the average baggage allowance is 15-20kg per person in soft-sided bags but may be as little as 10-15kg per person, please check before departure.

Please always reconfirm your flight times with your driver / lodge before departing ... things change in Africa.

Language

The official language is English and the national language is Kiswahili.

Time:

Kenya is 3 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time

Dress code and Etiquette:

For your holiday in Kenya, bring light-to-moderate casual wear such as cargo pants, jeans, cotton shirts and the like. The dress code in Kenyan culture is conservative. Also, many Kenyans adhere to different cultural, religious and customary dress styles. Jeans and decent tops/blouses for ladies are perfect. If you are going for business, you can keep it business-casual, however, business suits, tie and formal wear are preferred. Swimsuits are acceptable at the beach but not in other public places. Kenyans also enjoy dressing up for special occasions, especially when going out clubbing/dancing, to church, to sporting and other events or out to dinner.

Etiquette: Kenyans are very humble, friendly and social people. Hand shaking is a cultural greeting gesture and you are always welcome to strike a conversation with the person next to you. Just remember to respect Kenya's customs and culture in whatever you do and you will enjoy a pleasant relationship with its people.

Economy:

Although Kenya is the biggest and most advanced economy in east and central Africa and a minority of the wealthy urban population often leaves a misleading impression of affluence, Kenya is still a poor developing country with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.519, putting the country at position 145 out of 186 – one of the lowest in the world and about 38% of Kenyans live in absolute poverty. The important agricultural sector is one of the least developed and largely inefficient, employing 75 percent of the workforce compared to less than 3 percent in the food secure developed countries.

Despite western donors' early disillusionment with the government, the economy has seen much expansion, seen by strong performance in tourism, higher education and telecommunications, and acceptable post-drought results in agriculture, especially the vital tea sector. East and Central Africa's biggest economy has posted tremendous growth in the service sector, boosted by rapid expansion in telecommunication and financial activity over the last decade, and now

contributes 62 percent of GDP.

Public Holidays:

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday

01 January, 29 March 01 April, 01 May. 01 June, 08 August, 15 October, 20 October, 12 December, 25 December and 26 December.

Shopping:

You will find woodcarving, batik, leather goods, woven baskets, masks and beadwork in shops and markets throughout East Africa. In most of the local markets prices are not fixed and bargaining is expected, while in the safari camps and hotels, prices are generally fixed, are much more expensive but with better quality. In the markets you will generally only be able to pay by cash while in the camp and hotel gift shops credit cards are welcome.

NB: Please note that secondary plastic bags are illegal in Kenya. Please do not carry any carrier bags in your luggage or out.

Climate:

Temperatures rarely fall below 24 Celsius during the day and 10 Celsius during the night. Except on the coast the humidity is low and temperatures are usually very comfortable countrywide. The “Rainy Seasons” usually occur in the months of April, May and November. As a time of “rebirth” these months are great for safari, but expect the odd downpour!

Climate:

Temperature (°C) - These are the average lows and highs

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairobi	33/22	33/22	33/22	32/22	30/21	29/20	28/19	28/19	29/19	30/20	31/22	32/22

Rainfall (mm). This varies according to the year and where you are.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Nairobi	75	75	75	85	85	85	85	85	85	80	80	80

Useful KiSwahili greetings:

Greeting (to locals)	Habari gani
Greeting (to foreigner)	Jambo, shikamuu
Thank you (correct reply to greeting)	Marahaba
Thank you	Asante
Goodbye / We'll see you	Kwaheri / Tutaonana
You are welcome, come in	Karibu

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Recommended reading (in no particular order):

- *Love, Life, and Elephants An African Love Story – Daphne Sheldrick*
- *Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa – Jeanette Winter*
- *A Guide to the Birds of East Africa – Nicholas Drayson*
- *A lion called Christian: The true story of the remarkable bond between two friends and a lion – Anthony Bourke*
- *Dreams from my Father: A story of Race and Inheritance – Barack Obama*
- *Out of Africa – Isak Denesen*
- *Facing the lion: Growing up Maasai on the African Savanna – Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton*
- *The White Masai – Corinne Hofmann*
- *I dreamed of Africa – Kuku Gallman*
- *Running with the Kenyans: Passion, Adventure, and the Secrets of the fastest people on earth – Adharanand Finn*

African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful and exciting holiday!