



BEFORE YOU GO

For visitors traveling to Africa for the first time, there are always many questions to be answered: What do we pack? What visas do we need? Can I use a hair dryer? To make your visit a truly relaxing and well-prepared one, here are the answers to all those questions, and then some.

Passports & Visas- You are responsible for ensuring that your passport and visa documents are up to date and in order. Your passport must be valid for at least six months after your return date. Please ensure your passport has sufficient blank pages (at least two double pages).
Visa rules change all the time. We highly recommend that you research visa requirements for all the countries you will be visiting well before you are set to leave. You can check at <https://www.traveldocs.com/>

A valid passport is the only documentation required of US citizens for entry into Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa.

Visas for the following countries can be obtained on arrival and fees are payable in US dollars: Zambia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Madagascar, Mozambique and Egypt.

Kenya-Kenya Immigration has instituted a new visa policy whereby all visitors must obtain visas by using a new online system - <http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html>

Uganda - Uganda has implemented an online e-visa <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/> All applications must be submitted online.

Tanzania Tanzania has implemented an online e-visa <https://eservices.immigration.go.tz/visa/> All applications must be submitted online.

New Requirements for Children Traveling through South African Ports of Entry- As of June 1, 2015, South Africa is enforcing strict requirements for children requiring them to carry unabridged birth certificates and a Parental Consent Affidavit from the parent not accompanying the child.

Entry formalities vary by country and by nationality of the traveler. We suggest you check the applicable requirements with the airlines, tourist office, diplomatic mission or passport processing agency.

Africa Travel Centre recommends making two copies of your passport and keeping one in a separate piece of luggage and leaving one at home.

Insurance - We cannot predict the unforeseen, nor protect you from loss of funds because of illness, death, delayed flights, acts of God, or other incidents beyond our control. Due to the special services involved in preparing a trip to Africa, cancellation fees are high. Africa Travel Centre or your travel agent can provide you with information on comprehensive policies.

Security - Safety and security is a matter of common sense. Therefore, take the same precautions while traveling, that you would in any major city at home. Do not carry large sums of cash with you, keep a close watch on handbags, purses, wallets etc. when walking in crowded areas, avoid walking alone at night, lock up valuables in hotel safe deposit boxes and never leave valuables in view in an unattended car or tour bus. In safari camps that do not have safes or locked doors, please keep tempting valuables out of sight. We recommend making two copies of passports, credit cards, airline tickets and other pertinent identification and documents. Keep one copy with you and leave one copy with your contact at home.

Health Issues - Health requirements and documentation needed for traveling in Africa changes all the time. It is your responsibility to consult with your doctor and research what the health requirements are for the countries you will be visiting. You will need to make an appointment with your personal physician or travel clinic at least one month prior to departure to review pertinent health precautions including necessary vaccinations and medications. Please discuss any other health-related questions with your health practitioner. www.cdc.gov has information on current recommendations and requirements.

Yellow Fever - A Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate is required for entry into South Africa, Botswana, Egypt, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (**ONLY if traveling from an infected area**). Countries with risk of yellow fever virus (YFV) transmission. Uganda & Rwanda have advised that a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is now mandatory for all visitors. Kenya & Tanzania have advised that passengers arriving from Burundi, Mauritania, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Uganda are required to present a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate. Transit passengers (less than 12 hours) in Kenya & Tanzania shall not be checked for compliance with the certification. Please inform your health practitioner of all the places that you will be traveling to, and they will confirm current regulations.

Malaria - Malaria transmission is at its highest during the warmer and wetter months of November through to April. From May through to October the risks of acquiring malaria are reduced. The malaria parasite requires a human host to complete its life cycle. In most cases, safari camps and lodges are situated in remote, unpopulated areas, so the chances of contracting malaria are very slim. Nonetheless, it is worth taking preventative measures. Both Chloroquine-resistant and normal strains of malaria are prevalent in Africa. Malaria is transmitted by a very small percentage of female Anopheles mosquitoes. They are only active in the early evening and throughout the night, at the times when one is usually sleeping or sitting around the campfire. A course of malaria prophylactics is advisable for all visitors. Consult your doctor, nearest vaccination center or pharmacist for the most up-to-date requirements and recommended prophylactics for the area to which you are traveling. Take your tablets regularly and ensure that you have a sufficient supply for the duration of your holiday and for the additional time once you return home. We recommend that you take your tablets in the evenings to avoid experiencing any potential side effects during the day. Please remember that the best insurance is the preventative kind: avoid being bitten by using mosquito repellents liberally. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants in the evenings. If staying in a bungalow or tent, spray with an insecticide to kill any mosquitoes that may have flown into your room. Mosquito coils are also effective. If you become ill on your return, while still on prophylaxis or even once you have stopped taking them, ensure that your doctor is aware of your previous travel in malarial risk regions. Malaria is not a serious problem if people are sensible and take basic precautions.

General recommendations - Always take precautions against extreme sun exposure. Proximity to the equator makes the African sun particularly strong so ensure you use the proper level of protection. In the winter months, the big game areas can be dusty. Contact lens wearers may be advised to bring eye drops. Wrap-around sunglasses provide the best protection from dust and other eye irritants. Sun protective Chapstick, sunscreens, moisturizing creams and insect repellents are recommended.

Personal Health History - Please make us aware of any specific health restrictions that may affect your choice of accommodation or style of travel.

Packing for Your Trip - Clothing amounts will vary according to the length of your trip and where you are going but this list will give you an idea of what to take on the average two-week safari. The best way to decide on what to bring is to think of layering your clothing. A good rule of thumb is that mornings and evenings are cool and midday sun can be hot. Lightweight clothing in neutral colors is suitable for the bush (including a long-sleeved shirt for protection from the sun and long pants for protection from mosquitoes in the evenings). Please avoid clothing resembling army uniforms. Laundering in hotels, lodges, and camps is usually fast and inexpensive so try to avoid the urge to over pack. African cultures can be very conservative. Pack clothing that is not too "revealing". Modest clothing will demonstrate respect for the local culture and reduce the likelihood of unwanted attention. Want to make a difference for the local communities in the area/s you will be visiting? Be sure to check out Pack for a Purpose: <https://www.packforapurpose.org/>

Suggested Packing List

Lightweight pants. Jeans are okay, but harder to have laundered.
Shorts Shoes/Sneakers & Teva-type Sandals – Think comfortable walking. Unless trekking or going on a hiking safari, you do not need heavy duty boots.
T- Shirts & Long-Sleeved Shirt
Warm Sweater, Fleece or Jacket
Bathing Suit
Light Raincoat (seasonal)
Sun Hat
Underwear / Sport Bra (bumpy roads!)
Bandana or light scarf
PJ's - warm ones for winter months
Extra memory cards, batteries and charger
Binoculars
Headlamp for reading at night (Generators go off late at night and a headlamp is very useful)
Sunglasses
Zip lock / Plastic bags
Wet Ones
Electrical plug adapter
Lock for baggage
Sewing Kit
Diary/ Books/ Pens/ Music /Audiobooks
Eye Glasses: some people have trouble with contact lenses & dust.
Small Daypack
Shampoo and Brush/Comb
Toothbrush / Toothpaste
Sunscreen
Tissue - purse sized pack
Insect Repellent
Cold Tablets/ Aspirin
Razor / Shaving Cream
Band Aids
Hand Sanitizer
Eye drops
Antihistamine
Antibacterial cream
Prescription Medication
Sanitary requirements (shops are sometimes few and far between, and sell very basic items)
Earplugs – snoring hippos can be bothersome.
Passport
Record or Travel Vaccinations
Insurance Information
Airline Reservations and confirmation numbers
Letter of Travel Consent for minors traveling with single parent.

Luggage & Weight Restrictions - Please use soft-sided luggage only. Duffel bags are best. *Duffel bags with wheels are not allowed on charter flights in Botswana. Most hotels and our ground operators will have facilities to hold excess luggage if your trip will be returning to that destination. You can pack an extra collapsible duffel for curios and other fun things you pick up in Africa.

International Flights - As this information changes frequently, please refer to the carrier's website for any time changes.

Internal/Charter Flights - The weight for charter flights varies from 22- 44 lbs. Please consult with us about weight restrictions for these flights.

Transfers - Although we have indicated approximate transfer times in your itinerary, it is advisable to re-confirm pick up times for the following day with the staff at the safari camp or hotel or with the company providing transfer services. The local staff and ground operators will have the most current and accurate information on when and where your transfer will take place.

Communications/Cell Phones and Internet - Generally speaking, communications in Africa are not what you are accustomed to at home. Connections can be difficult to nonexistent and costly. The safari camps and lodges you will be visiting are likely to be in remote parts of Africa and often do not have cell phone reception. Some camps and lodges may have Wifi in the reception or the dining area. Most US cell providers will have an international plan, which will cover many counties in Africa.

Money - In most cases US dollars are accepted widely. You will want to get some local currency at the airport upon arrival. This amount will vary depending upon your trip. The majority of the costs on your trip are included in your package. See your inclusions and exclusions section on the last page of your itinerary along with the tipping guidelines below for a gauge to determine the amount of money you will need to bring. For many countries, you should bring U.S. dollars in both large and small denominations to pay for any additional expenses. Lots of \$1 bills are handy. Change for large denominations may be difficult. We recommend exchanging a small amount of US currency into local currency upon arrival in each country. All airports will have exchange facilities. It is not necessary to obtain foreign currency before you leave the US. At several airports, you can use an ATM to withdraw local currency. Visa and MasterCard are accepted at many camps and lodges, however there may be a fee for use. It is difficult to get extra cash if you are on safari. American Express is not widely accepted.

Tipping - The traditional gratuity to safari guides or camp staff is not included in the price of your tour but is completely discretionary. We recommend approximately \$25.00 per person per day for tipping. In most lodges, there will be a "staff" tipping box. You will want to allow \$10.00 per person per day for the "staff box" and \$15.00 per person per day for your guide. Customarily you leave tips for the staff in the "Staff Box" as you check out from each camp or lodge. Similarly, when you end your trip with your guide, that is when you will present him or her with your tip. Transfer drivers to/from the airport can be tipped as well. \$10.00 would be an advisable amount for a total of 2-6 people. Restaurants / Hotels: 10%- 20% is customary on meal accounts.

Photos and Video - The choice of the correct camera equipment and film will determine the quality of your photographs on your trip. For photography of birds and animals, a good SLR camera and telephoto lens is necessary. A zoom lens can be extremely useful on safari and the minimum recommended size is 200 mm. We suggest you bring spare and rechargeable batteries. Practice with your camera before your trip! Out of respect for the local cultures, seek the advice of your driver/guide before photographing people, and be sure you communicate with the person you intend to photograph if they would like their picture taken. Note that certain government, military and police buildings may not be photographed. Remember – Enjoy the safari experience, and don't spend every moment looking through a viewfinder.

Respecting Wildlife & Safety When Staying A Safari Camps and Lodges - When you arrive at your camp or lodge, you will be briefed about specific safety concerns. Please listen to the camp staff and guides. The safety precautions need to be taken seriously, and strictly adhered to. Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities. Loud talking on game drives can frighten the animals away. Never attempt to attract an animal's attention. Don't imitate animal sounds, clap your hands, pound the vehicle or throw objects. – This seems obvious, but there is always someone. Please respect your driver-guide's judgment about proximity to lions, cheetahs and leopards. Don't insist that he/she take the vehicle closer, so you can get a better photograph. A vehicle driven too close can hinder a hunt or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal. Don't litter – again, obvious. Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals may have become accustomed to human visitors. – Monkeys are cute, but not very friendly. Refrain from smoking on game drives. T

Food - Food is generally continental with a remaining British influence but with the added luxury of tropical fruits and excellent curries and cold buffets. There are also many opportunities to try some of the local staple foods and beverages. All meals are prepared in kitchens with extremely high sanitary standards. You can confidently consume all meals that are presented.

A typical menu: Breakfast: coffee, tea, porridge, fruits, fruit juice, scrambled eggs/omelet, sausage, toast, margarine, honey and jam. Lunch: hot tea, coffee, chips, sandwiches, biscuits, pancakes with honey or jam, and fruits. Dinner: soup, cooked meat or vegetarian meal (these include chicken/beef with rice, sliced fresh carrots and green beans, mashed potatoes, and salads), fruits, and fruit juice, and variety of hot drinks. Many meals will be served in a family or buffet style. **Please make us aware of any specific dietary preferences or restrictions.**

Water - Do not drink water from a faucet. Drink only bottled water or filtered water provided by camps, lodges and hotels. There will also be water in the vehicles that you can carry with you to your rooms.

Electricity - Here is where we tell you no hairdryers. Many camps and lodges have limited power supply (solar and generator). Most places will not have individual electrical outlets in the tents, but will have outlets in the dining areas for you to charge electronics. Electrical output is 220 -240 volts vs US 120 volts. Most newer cameras, phones/iPads and phones have a built in converter in the power unit. However you will need an adapter for the proper plug configuration. We recommend the REI MultiNation adaptor.

Climate - Africa is a huge continent; three times the size of the United States. There are mountains, beaches, deserts and forests, and the climates differ greatly on each trip. On your trip you can travel from very cold to very hot weather.

Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda - The weather is generally good all year. You can travel from high to low altitudes, which will influence the temperatures. Located on the Equator, the sun is very strong. It is important to always be prepared and layer your clothing.

Mid-June to August - Cool in the mornings and as the sun comes up it can get quite warm. Temperatures really do not matter in Kenya and Tanzania because the sun is very strong. There can be some short afternoon rains in the Mara, but this really shouldn't affect game viewing.

September-November - Comfortable, warmer than the previous season, more chance of light rains.

December-March - This is the East African summer. Days can be hot and dry, like Phoenix, but not as hot (90s). The higher altitude areas are comfortable. Evenings cool off.

April-May - It is possible to visit Kenya/Tanzania during the rainy season as few roads are affected, the parks are fresh and green and there are fewer people and vehicles. Rain usually falls in the late afternoon preceded by bright, sunny and fresh days.

Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia and South Africa - South of the Equator the seasons are the reverse of the northern hemisphere. The winter comes in June and the summer in December. Rainy season extends from November to April. The dry season is from May to October. Hottest months are September and October.

Flexibility - Africa is a unique travel destination for the adventurous at heart. Please bear in mind that Africa Travel Centre has done everything possible to ensure that your trip runs smoothly and is a resounding success. However, occasionally problems do occur, and changes may be required that are completely out of our control. We ask that you contact our local representative, as designated in your documents, to assist in solving any hurdles you encounter along the way. They will endeavor to do so as economically and efficiently as they possibly can. Therefore, we also recommend you pack some extra patience in your bag as it is certain to come in handy!

Some useful links:

Choosing Binoculars - <http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/binoculars.html> - Hint – for an all around great value we like the Nikon Travelite 12X 25

Comprehensive Travel Insurance - Travel Guard. <https://tinyurl.com/yc8vzggj>

Medical Evacuation only www.medjetassist.com

Pack for a Purpose - <http://www.packforapurpose.org/>

RELAX AND ENJOY!