



Information sheet on Kenya

GEOGRAPHY

Kenya lies on the equator and shares common borders with Tanzania and Uganda, which make up the region of 'East Africa'. Its location allows for access to Kenya's beautiful beaches and the Indian Ocean, Kenya's wild plains and mountain ranges and its enchanting rift valley. Kenya is roughly the size of Texas or Spain.

PEOPLE

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.

CLIMATE

Kenya is on the equator therefore we do not have major seasons. The climate is very pleasant and variations in altitude and terrain can create contrasts. Generally in the Highlands the climate is cool and temperate; elsewhere the temperatures can reach approximately 35°C during the day. The coast is quite humid and balmy.

Over most of the country there are two rainy seasons:

- The "short rains" which occur from late October through November.
- The "long rains" which occur from late March to early June.

It is perfectly possible to visit Kenya during the rainy season, few roads are affected, the park is fresh and green and there are fewer people and vehicles. Rain usually falls in the late afternoon preceded by bright, sunny and fresh days.

- July and August are the coolest months and are often overcast especially in the morning.
- December-Mid March is the warmest time of the year.

PASSPORT/VISA

A valid passport is required. Visitors require a visa to enter Kenya. Visas can be obtained on arrival at the airport or beforehand from the closest Kenyan Embassy/Consulate. If you would prefer filling it out before you arrive visa forms can be downloaded off the Internet. If you have any queries please contact your nearest Kenyan Consulate or your travel agent. Kenyan

immigration authorities require a minimum of two blank (unstamped) visa pages in the passport to enter the country; some travelers have experienced difficulties when they arrive without the requisite blank pages. Travelers should make sure there are sufficient pages for visas and immigration stamps to enter into Kenya and other countries to be visited en route to Kenya or elsewhere in the region.

Link to the countries which do/do not require a visa: <http://kenyaembassy.com/visa.html>

Link to Kenya Embassy Information: <http://ke.embassyinformation.com/>

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Kenya is considered a generally healthy place to travel. Cottars Safari Service clients are required to become members of the Flying Doctors Rescue Service for emergency evacuation. Cottars apply for your membership on your behalf. You should always carry your own complete holiday/medical insurance. As with travel in any part of the world, it is advisable to know your blood type in case of an emergency. Please consult with your local health authority for up to date recommendations and regulations regarding inoculations. It is healthy to remember that in Kenya, we do have good medical facilities and a good hospital, all of which are private.

Vaccinations:

- Required Vaccination - Yellow Fever. Mandatory.
- Vaccines Recommended - Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Typhoid Fever (Typhim Vi i.m. by Aventis Pasteur).
- Cholera Vaccine - injection is useless and not mandatory, in case of epidemic oral vaccines are available that give protection for 6 months.
- Meningitis - Not recommended unless there is evidence of an epidemic.
- Malaria protection is imperative depending on your location in Kenya.

Malaria is more common in the warmer places in Kenya, places where the temperatures are colder than 15°C at night Malaria cannot be transmitted and therefore there is no need for antimalarials. Cottars 1920s Camp and Private homestead are located in a non malarial area. Warmer places like the Coast are high-risk areas for getting Malaria.

FOOD & WATER

Although tap water can be reasonably safe, whenever possible, we recommend you drink bottled water: this is available in all lodges and camps.

Meals include full English breakfast and /or continental breakfast with fresh local fruits either where you are staying or in the bush lunches are either buffet or picnic lunches, and dinners are generally table d'hôte. Please advise Cottars Safari Service of any allergies, likes or dislikes before you embark on your holiday.

INSURANCE

Comprehensive medical insurance is mandatory for safari participation. There is no national welfare scheme and visitors to Kenya are responsible for their own medical expenses. It is very important to find out BEFORE YOU LEAVE whether your medical insurance will cover you overseas. We require that clients be covered by the Flying Doctors' Service. All clients are

requested to leave a copy of their travel insurance with us at our briefing, along with copies of their airline tickets and passports.

MONEY AND EXCHANGE

The monetary unit is the Kenyan Shilling. There is no limit to the amount of currency or travelers cheques that a client may bring in to the country. Traveler's cheques are also recommended; please always carry your passport when you want to change them. Most of the hotels, lodges and shops in Kenya will take major credit cards. Reverting your Kenyan shillings into hard currency is easily done at the airport, hotels and banks. As there is no longer "exchange control" the rate of exchange varies between banks, foreign exchange bureau and hotels. It is recommended that visitors do not change money on the black markets, as they are more likely to receive a lower rate of exchange or fake notes. It is illegal to destroy Kenyan Currency.

Currency information:

Kenyan Shilling (KES; symbol KSH) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of KSh1,000, 500, 200, 100 and 50. Coins are in denominations of KSh20, 10 and 5.

Credit cards:

MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in Kenya; American Express and Diners Club less so. Major hotels now also accept payment by credit card, as do major safari companies, travel agencies and restaurants. Almost every bank now has an ATM, and they are increasingly being installed at petrol stations. Almost every bank now has an ATM, and they are increasingly being installed at petrol stations in cities and large towns.

Travellers' cheques:

These can be changed at banks, and are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling.

Currency restriction:

There are no restrictions on the import or export of local or foreign currency. However, amounts exceeding US\$5,000 or equivalent must be declared.

Currency exchange:

Currency can be exchanged at the major banks, bureaux de change or authorised hotels. The banks at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Moi International Airport have 24-hour exchange services. The easiest currencies to exchange are US Dollars, Pounds Sterling and Euros.

VOLTAGE

Voltage is 220-240 A.C, most of the safari vehicles have a cigarette lighter socket operation on a 12- Volt system. Please bring sufficient batteries for photographic equipment, many lodges have limited power supply, but all are capable of re-charging your electrical goods for you. Please also bring adapter plugs (square pin, English Standard).

SAFETY

Situation in Kenya: The Kenyan Government has responded to a recent handful of cases of Somali incursions and kidnappings in northern and coastal Kenya by sending their military into southern Somalia. This has caused some embassies to post travel advisories advising visitors to Kenya to take extra precaution if visiting public places such as shopping malls as there is a possibility of a retaliatory threat by Al-Shabab. The advisories do not say stay away from the magical Masai Mara and we wish to assure all of our guests that we will continue to provide a unique and safe safari experience.

COMMUNICATIONS

All Camps and lodges have radio communication with Nairobi. Most lodges do have a mobile signal (Orange, Safaricom or Airtel) in the lodge or nearby (under tree or on a hill) which can be weak, so please do not always rely on it. Most lodges and hotels also have limited and very slow Internet access in case of emergencies.

LUGGAGE

Please ensure that baggage is packed in soft bags and should weigh no more than 15 Kg per person (and in some cases 10kg). It is possible to store luggage not required during safari either at your hotel if you are returning there after your trip or with us at our offices. Most lodges have laundry facilities. Please see our recommended packing list.

Recommended Packing List

Important:

Passport (Kenyan immigration authorities require a minimum of two blank (unstamped) visa pages in the passport to enter the country)

Health Card inclusive of yellow fever certificate

Air Tickets/Vouchers

Credit Cards (MasterCard or Visa)

Debit Cards (for use at ATM)

Discrete Money Pouch/Wallet

Sun Glasses and Solid Case

Prescription Glasses (with extra pair) and Solid Case

Contact Lenses (with extra pair)

Books/magazines/journals

Converter/plug set (Kenya uses 220v English square pin)

Binoculars

Flashlight (small, with extra batteries)

A few zip-lock bags

Camera Equipment:

Camera/video camera with lenses (if needed)

Camera bag

Lens Cleaning Equipment

Battery Charger and Adapter

Extra Batteries

Large Memory Card

Clothing:

Sunhat
Windproof/Waterproof Jacket
Fleece
Jumper/Sweatshirt
Safari Trousers
Safari Shorts
Sports Socks
Short Sleeved Shirts & / or T-Shirts
Long sleeved shirts/tops/blouses
Pyjamas
Swimming Costumes
Underwear
Light Walking Shoes for everyday use
Pair of Sandals/Flip-Flops
Pair of Closed Shoes for the evening

Toiletries:

Malaria prophylactics (if you choose)
Anti-histamine pills/cream (pills are more suitable for people with allergies and fast reactions to bites)
Insect Repellent
Motion sickness pills (if needed)
Painkillers
Sunscreen (we recommend lotion with high protection as most of Kenya is at high altitudes)
Aftersun lotion
Face and Hand Cleaning Wipes
Body Lotion
Battery or hand razor
Hair brush, shampoo and conditioner.
Deodorant
Feminine hygiene supplies
Lip Balm (recommended with an spf)
Toothpaste and toothbrush
Eye drops (if needed)

READING LIST

West with the Night – Beryl Markham
Wildlife of East Africa – Martin B. Withers and David Hosking
The Safari Companion – Richard Estes
Eyewitness Guide Kenya – Phili Briggs
Kenya and Northern Tanzania (Serengeti) Map – Nelles
Culture Smart! Kenya – Jane Barsby
Say it in Swahili – Sharifa Zawawi
Africa, A Biography of the Continent – John Reader
Kenya – Michael Poliza
The Scramble for Africa – Thomas Pakenham
A Primate's Memoir – Robert M. Sapolsky
Born Wild, The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Passion for Africa – Tony Fitzjohn
Dreams in a Time of War, A Childhood Memoir – Ngugiwa Thiong'o
Facing Mount Kenya, The Tribal Life of the Kikuyu – Jomo Kenyatta

I Dreamed of Africa – Kuki Gallman
My Maasai Life, From Suburbia to Savannah – Robin Wiszowaty
No Picnic on Mount Kenya – Felice Bennuzi
One Day I Will Write About This Place, A Memoir – Binyaranga Wainaina
Out of Africa- Isak Dinesen
The Flame Tress of Thika – Elsbeth Huxley
The Man-Eaters of Tsavo – John Henry Patterson
The Shadow of Kilimanjaro – Rick Ridgeway
The Tree Where Man Was Born – Peter Matthiessen
Too Close to the Sun: The Audacious Life and Times of Denys Finch Hatton – Sara Wheeler
A Guide to the Birds of East Africa, A Novel – Nicholas Drayson
The Clouds Beneath the Sun – Mackenzie Ford
The Constant Gardener – John Le Carre
The Snows of Kilimanjaro – Ernest Hemingway
Africa, The Serengeti – George Casey
Born Free, A Lioness of Two Worlds – Joy Adamson
Elephant Memories, Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family
In the Dust of Kilimanjaro – David Western
Kenya Safari Companion – Alain Pons
Tall Blondes, A Book About Giraffes – Lynn Sherr
African Wildlife – James Kavanaugh
Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania – Dale Zimmerman, Donald Turner, David Pearson
Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals – Jonathan Kingdon