



GENERAL TRAVEL INFO KENYA



Kenya is a country in East Africa with coastline on the Indian Ocean. It encompasses savannah, lakelands, the dramatic Great Rift Valley and mountain highlands. It's also home to wildlife like lions, elephants and rhinos. From Nairobi, the capital, safaris visit the Maasai Mara Reserve, known for its annual wildebeest migrations, and Amboseli National Park, offering views of Tanzania's 5,895m Mt. Kilimanjaro.

One of the **best times to visit Kenya** is from July to September, during the country's dry season, which also coincides with the Great Migration of wildebeest and zebra. The rainy seasons are also good **times to travel**, as there are fewer visitors and you can admire the striking emerald vegetation.

CURRENCY:

Kenya's national currency is **the Kenyan Shilling** and although foreign currencies such as **US Dollars** are widely accepted (and indeed the currency required for activities like hot-air balloon



safaris) we'd recommend using local currency to pay for bar bills, souvenirs and meals not included in your itinerary.

Most banks in major cities have ATMs, but they are not always reliable and sometimes break down or run out of money. To minimise the risk of card cloning, only use ATMs located within the bank.

The **cash** withdrawal limit for use at the ATM of the issuing bank is set by the Bank during the issuance of the card and may depend on the type of account/card. For **cash** withdrawals at other bank ATMs, banks have decided to maintain a limit of Rs. 10,000 per transaction.

All major Credit cards are widely accepted throughout Kenya, Mastercard, Visa and American Express are preferred. But bear in mind that payment can be a little time consuming in remote areas as occasionally they have connection problems.

Absolutely do not take **travellers cheques**. The world banking is phasing those out and you WILL NOT find any bank or merchant in **Kenya** willing to cash them.

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1500

DRIVING INFO:

General **Kenya driving information**, laws rules and regulations: **Driving** in **Kenya** is on the left hand side of the road. Seat belts when **driving** a hire car in **Kenya** are mandatory. The use of a mobile phone while **driving** is prohibited, with the exception of a hands-free system.

Most roads are well maintained and most traffic users know and obey to the **driving** rules quite well. However, always **drive** defensively and at limited speed, lock your doors and avoid **driving** after dark due to badly lit roads and livestock that can cross the road unexpectedly.

The roads listed below are in poor state or in particularly dangerous and will greatly reduce your travel pace:

- The C107 south from Mariakani to Kinango: if you think think this road is a good alternative to bypass Mombassa, think again. It's terrible.
- Roads to the Masai Mara National Reserve; one of the worst roads in Kenya, not allowed with a Toyota RAV4. The road between Narok and Sekekani Gate isn't half as bad anymore as everyone claims it to be, as roadconstructions takes place (may 2019). The road to reach Oloololo gate from Narok is a lot bumpier. Also the road near Maria Rianta has bad sections.
- A109 Nairobi – Mombasa highway; ever under construction, this road has some bad parts, especially between Tsavo, Voi and Mombasa. Generally, it's a dangerous road with many (slow) trucks and cars practicing dangerous overtaking. Drive defensively!



EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

Police Hotline	112/999
CID Headquarters, Nairobi	+254 (0) 20 3648000/90
Nairobi Police Headquarters	+254 (0) 20 27177777 / 240000
Flying Squad Pangani	+254 (0) 20 3761111
Central Police Station	+254 (0) 20 2216183
JKIA (Kenya Airports Police Unit)	+254 (0) 20 823888
Kenya Tourist Police	+254 (0) 20 2727844
In Mombasa	+254 (0) 41 2222121
In Nakuru	+254 (0) 51 22117417
Fire Brigade	+254 (0) 20 2222181/2
Ambulance	+112/999
St. John's Ambulance	+254 (0) 20 2210000
AAR Emergency Ambulance	+254 (0) 20 2717374

CREDIT CARD EMERGENCY NUMBER:

We suggest to keep the emergency number which is on the pack of your Credit Card separate in case the card gets lost or stolen so that you can contact your bank directly.

LANGUAGES / HOSPITALITY:

Kenya is a multilingual country. The **Bantu Swahili language** and **English**, the latter being inherited from colonial rule (see British Kenya), are widely spoken as **lingua franca**. They serve as the two official working languages. Including second-language speakers, there are more speakers of **Swahili** than **English** in Kenya.

Key Swahili phrases:

- Hello: jambo/ hujambo/ salama.
- How are you?: habari gani.
- Fine (response): nzuri.
- Goodbye: kwa heri/ kwa herini (more than one peson)
- See you later: tutaonana.



- Nice to meet you: nafurahi kukuona.
- Goodnight: lala salama.
- Yes: ndiyo
- No: hapana
- Thank you: asante
- Thank you very much: asante sana
- Please: tafadhali
- OK: sawa
- Excuse me: samahani
- You're welcome: starehe
- Can you help me?: tafadhali, naomba msaada
- What is your name?: jina lako nani?

THE FOOD / DRINK OF TANZANI:

Kenyan are enthusiastic carnivores and their unofficial national dish, **nyama choma** (barbecued meat), is a red-blooded, hands-on affair. Most places have their own on-site butchery, and **nyama choma** is usually purchased by weight, often as a single hunk of meat.

Ugali: Maize meal porridge, the main staple for most Kenyans, often eaten with a meaty stew known locally as assupu. **Mandazi**: Fried savoury dough ball with a similar constitution to a doughnut.

Coffee and tea are of excellent quality in **Kenya** due to the ideal growing climate. **Kenyan** coffee is world-renowned and is one of the country's main exports.

The national beverage is **chai – tea**. Universally drunk at breakfast and as a pick-me-up at any time, the traditional way of making it is a weird variant on the classic British brew: milk, water, lots of sugar and **tea** leaves are brought to the boil in a kettle and served scalding hot (**chai asli**).

Tipping:

Restaurants:

When eating at a restaurant in **Kenya**, you should leave at least a 10% **tip** of the total cost of the bill. Keep in mind that **Kenyan** workers do not make **much**, so they rely heavily on tips. If you would like to leave more, feel free to do so.

Safari Guide:

Tipping while on **safari**: we suggest you budget on **tipping** about US\$20 or Ksh2,000 per room or tent per day, always at the end of your stay in the lodge or camp. If you're a solo traveller, you could certainly **tip** less – Ksh1000 would often be fine.

Driver:

Tips for city transfer **drivers** in Nairobi and Mombasa may be US \$3 to US \$5 per transfer dependent on the distance and time taken, and tips for staff in city hotels and beach resorts, including housekeeping, may be US \$1 to US \$2 per person per day.

Safari Lodges:



Most **safari lodges** also have a general **staff gratuity** box (for waiters, chambermaids etc) and R50–150 (US\$3–10) per guest per day **is** a suggested **tip** guideline.

Hotel Staff:

Tip housekeeping may not be the norm, but it is nice to leave a small gratuity, especially if you leave a big mess or call for extra towels. Anywhere from \$3 to \$7 daily works, Osten says. The American **Hotel & Lodging Association** suggests \$1 to \$5 each night.

SAFETY:

In our opinion, **Kenya** is generally **safe** to visit. The tourist industry is very established and visitors are very well looked after. Several governments have advised against traveling to some cities and remote border areas, but tour operators will only take you to places that are considered **safe**.

VISA REQUIREMENT/S / BORDER POSTS:

A passport with at least two blank pages, six months' validity, and a **visa** are required to enter **Kenya**. Single-entry **visas** are available online and upon arrival at **Kenyan** airports; however, **Kenyan** Immigration plans to end **visas** upon arrival in the future.

Visitors to **Kenya** **require a visa** unless they come from one of the **visa exempt countries**. All visitors must hold a passport valid for 6 months.

Consular visa

- Afghanistan.
- Armenia.
- Azerbaijan.
- Eritrea.
- Iraq.
- North Korea.
- Kosovo.

HEALTH / OTHER RISKS / INSURANCE:

Some vaccines are recommended or required for Kenya. The CDC and WHO recommend the following vaccinations for Kenya: **hepatitis A**, **hepatitis B**, **typhoid**, **cholera**, **yellow fever**, **rabies**, **meningitis**, **polio**, **measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)**, **Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis)**, **chickenpox**, **shingles**, **pneumonia** and **influenza**.

Tourists are also vulnerable to theft or mugging and the usual precautions apply – keep jewellery, cameras, handbags and other valuables out of sight, do not carry large sums of money, and avoid walking at night or along isolated beaches and streets. Motorists should park in well-lit areas, be alert when waiting for traffic lights to change, and if a hijacking does occur, keep your hands where the attackers can see them and do not try to resist.



A Medical and Travel insurance is highly recommended prior to the start of the holiday.

WHAT TO PACK:

The coastal part of the country offers fantastic pearly beaches, so make sure you pack smart-casual in case an opportunity for a romantic dinner date arises.

For safari trips, you'll need to wear loose and comfortable clothing.

Remember, avoid wearing brightly-colored clothes on a safari – one reason being you need to camouflage with the surroundings as much as possible lest you miss a chance to spot lions.

The second reason is a safari in Africa can be pretty dusty since the roads in animals **National Parks** are not tarmacked.

For beach and other activities; however, your preference should guide you best.

- Long pants (zip-off pants are very useful)
- Shorts, mid-thigh or longer
- Short-sleeved shirts
- Long-sleeved shirts
- Undergarments
- Sweater, jacket, windbreaker
- Rain jacket and/ or rain poncho
- Sun hat with brim and chin strap
- Bandana (for dust, washing, etc.)
- Sturdy, comfortable walking shoes, closed toe, preferably waterproof
- Tennis shoes, sandals, dressy shoes, and/or flip flops

- Comfortable, breathable socks
- Suitcase or duffel (check weight restrictions for internal flights)
- Day pack for daily activities and easy access (rain cover is nice)
- Waterproof plastic bags for organizing gear and dirty clothing (Ziplocs and garbage bags work)
- Packing cube, compression bag, stuff sacks, clear toiletry bag for airplane
- Money belt, security pouch, document organizer

Health Essentials:

- First aid kit, including aspirin or paracetamol, antiseptic wipes and plasters.
- Anti-diarrhoea pills like Imodium, and rehydration powders like Dioralyte.
- Antibacterial gel, for when there's no soap.
- Your own medication.
- Warning bracelet if you have a condition like epilepsy.
- Malaria prophylaxis.
- Insect repellent : there are bugs galore but many of them are pretty!
-



- Suncare stuff: high factor sunscreen – at least factor 30, plus sunblock; after-sun moisturiser, sunglasses and sunhat (it's Africa! It's hot!)
- Contact lenses and solution.
- Travel sickness tablets or wristband.
- Toiletries and shaving equipment, unless you're growing a beard. You, too, ladies!
- A roll of toilet paper (just in case).

For game drives aim for reasonable neutral colours – think of the movie “Out of Africa”. A windbreaker or hoddie is ideal too. For evening we suggest something more formal at more up market and exclusive lodges/hotels. DO NOT FORGET the binoculars for the game viewing!

camping
Africa