



One of the best things to do when arriving into any of the East African countries is to get into “Africa mode”. Realize that life moves at a difference pace here- relax, employ humor, enjoy experiencing new cultures, and always carry a good book with you!

### Arrival & Visa

Whether arriving by vehicle or air, you will be asked by Immigration to complete a simple Arrival Form. It's always beneficial to have a ballpoint pen handy. If you are getting a visa at the point of entry, try to make your way to the appropriate line quickly with your cash handy.

If you arrive by air, most likely your itinerary has someone meeting you at the airport. You will find your local rep after you go through the immigration, customs and baggage claim areas. They should have a sign with your name on it. If you don't see your rep right away, you can always ask the other greeters for help in locating him/her. If you are arriving via a road transfer, your driver/guide will assist you with the process.

Please ensure that you have the correct visas for the countries that you will be traveling to. Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda all require visas. Most visas can be purchased upon arrival. Global Sojourns cannot be held responsible for entry refusal for any traveler.

### Passport

Please ensure that your passport has a minimum of three blank visa pages (excluding endorsement pages). Passports must be valid for 6 months after the intended date of departure.

It is advisable to make 1-2 copies of your passport and carry them with you, separate from your passport.

### Yellow Fever Certificate

- Visitors to Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania will be required to present a Yellow Fever Inoculation Certificate
- Visitors to Kenya will need to present proof of Yellow Fever Inoculation if arriving from Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania or other endemic country

### Currency

In most cases you will not need local currency. Tipping can be in USD and many lodges and hotels accept USD for services not included in your itinerary. Credit cards are accepted at most hotels but not all safari camps.

You may want to get some local currency for personal purchases. You can get local currency at banks, bureau de change offices or authorized hotels. ATM machines are available in most urban areas and usually have better exchange rates. Remember ATM's will dispense cash in local currency (for current exchange rates, check out: [www.xe.com/ucc/](http://www.xe.com/ucc/)). Be sure to advise your bank that you will be traveling to a foreign country so that charges will not be blocked or denied.

It's recommended you carry at least USD\$300 in small denominations for use in situations where other financial options are unavailable or inconvenient and be sure to budget for tipping.

### **Credit Cards**

Credit cards are accepted by a number of hotels, restaurants, city shops, and lodges/camps, but not by all. A fee is sometimes charged for credit card purchases due to high local banking costs. In addition to a major credit card, visitors should be prepared with cash, especially when traveling outside larger cities. Be sure to advise your bank that you will be traveling to a foreign country so that charges will not be blocked or denied.

### **Airport Departure Taxes & Fees**

If you are flying internationally and departing on a commercial airline, there should be no taxes payable upon departure as these should be covered in your ticket. In some countries there will be domestic departure taxes that will need to be paid. Please refer to your itinerary for details. If a new fee is introduced after your ticket was issued, however, you will be responsible to pay it in cash upon your departure. It is best to have exact change thus carry plenty of small denominations with you. Please be advised that these taxes are subject to change without notice. Occasionally, a unique airport fee is introduced with limited notice. If we are advised ahead of time, this fee will be listed on your itinerary.

### **Tipping**

Tipping is not mandatory, though it is customary. Tip at your discretion and if you are happy with the services! Tips can be given in the local currency or US dollars. Below is a guideline to assist you:

**Safari guide:** \$10 per day, per person

**Trackers:** \$5 per day, per person

**Camp staff:** \$5 – \$10 per day, per person (this typically goes into a communal box or is given to the camp mgr.)

**Special activity guides:** \$3-\$5

**Transfer drivers:** \$2-\$5

**Porters at hotels:** \$1 -\$2

**Restaurants:** 10%

### **Time Difference**

East Africa has a single time zone, which is GMT+3. It is 7 hours ahead of EST from Apr. to Nov. (dates vary) & 8 hours the rest of the year. The clock does not change for Daylight Savings.

### **Weather**

The climate of East Africa is rather atypical of equatorial regions and is surprisingly mild and dry for its latitude. Both temperature and climate vary drastically from region to region (it's typically much warmer and more humid along the coast than inland and much cooler in areas with altitude such as the Aberdares and Ngorongoro than the lowlands) and even through a single day. Thus... best to pack layers. There are distinct wet and dry seasons- the long rains run from late March to June, and the short rains from November to January. It's worth noting that worldwide changes in weather patterns have also affected East Africa. The arrival of the rains is not as predictable as in past years.

- Mid-day temperatures are typically warm and you'll want to pack long sleeved shirts and long pants made out of very light materials to protect you from the sun.

- Mornings and evenings are often cool. During winter (May-August), morning and night game drives can be downright cold, especially at altitude. Be sure to pack a fleece jacket, wind jacket and warm beanie hat if traveling during winter and/or visiting areas of high altitude.

### **Valuables**

We highly recommend that you travel only with necessary valuables. Expensive jewelry, watches and other valuables are best left at home.

### **Luggage**

Pack light and in a soft bag. For regional flights, be sure to travel with luggage that is within the weight, type and size regulations as listed in your itinerary.

Due to the amount of luggage that gets lost or delayed on trans-Atlantic flights, it's advisable to travel with just carry-on luggage on these flights. If you do check luggage in, it is advisable to lock your luggage with a TSA approved lock (and when flying regionally). As an additional precaution, you may want get your check in luggage shrink-wrapped at the airport. Be sure to keep key items with you in your carry-on luggage so your trip will not be interrupted in case your check in luggage is lost or delayed.

### **Security**

Take safety precautions as you would at home and ask your local guide/lodge managers for guidance. In larger cities/towns, take extra caution- i.e. do not walk around at night, do not wear expensive looking jewelry. Always keep your passport secure. It's recommended that you carry small locks with you to lock your luggage when you are out of your room.

### **Health Insurance**

Be sure to have your traveler's insurance information on hand and to know what it includes, as well as your personal health insurance coverage.

### **Electricity**

The electricity supply throughout East Africa is 220/240 v 50 hz. Plugs are typically 3 point square and sometimes 2 round pin varieties. While some hotels/lodges may have adapters, it is best to travel with your own. Many safari camps are situated in remote areas and operate on generators for a limited number of hours per day. In the event you need to charge electronic equipment, the camp staff will assist you with this. It is advisable to always bring a spare battery. Few electronics require a transformer these days but if you're bringing an item such as a hair dryer, check to see if one is needed.

### **Communications**

Mobile phones do not operate in the more remote areas of most countries; however, the majority of camps are linked with VHF radio with a backup HF radio system. For those with GSM cellular phones, you should be able to get coverage in most urban areas. Be sure to check with your carrier regarding coverage details. A number of hotels and lodges in the urban areas have internet connection (when all is working well!)- some offer the service for free and some charge a fee. Be warned that international calls from lodges and hotels can be *very* expensive.

### **Water & Food**

You should feel comfortable drinking the water and eating the food served in the safari camps and finer hotels and restaurants. They are set up to cater to foreign travelers. You should take caution when eating outside

these establishments. It's best to drink bottled water and choose food that has been freshly and thoroughly cooked and is served hot. Raw fruit and vegetables tend to be very difficult to sterilize thus stick with vegetables that have been thoroughly cleaned and fruits that you can peel.

### **Travel in Malarial Areas**

Remember to take your anti-malarial medication as prescribed by your doctor. It's unlikely you will pick up malaria if you take precautions but, should you become ill once you return home, remind your doctor that you recently visited Africa. The best medication, though helpful, does not provide a 100% guarantee against getting malaria.

Your best defense is to dress with long sleeve shirts, long pants and socks at night and use repellent. Use mosquito nets when available. If you do not have a repellent with you, most lodges/camps will have some available for you.

### **Dress**

Dress tends to be much more modest in Africa than in the West. Out of respect for the local people, women should cover their knees in the rural areas (you might want to carry a sarong with you that you can wrap over shorts when visiting people). Shorts are fine to wear out on safari. Skimpy clothing/bathing suits should just be worn at camps/lodges and resorts.

### **Laundry**

Laundry services are available at most safari lodges/camps. Check your itinerary to see if this is included in any of your lodge/camp stays. If it isn't included, it is generally available for a fee. To have enough time to get laundry done, one generally needs to be at the lodge/camp for two nights. At some camps they will ask that you wash your own underwear. For cultural reasons, it's always best if you can wash your own underwear.

### **Photography**

You will find that many people are photo shy or have learned that they should be rewarded for photographs. You should **always** ask before taking a photograph of people (especially the Maasai) and keep in mind that a small payment may be required. Your driver/guide will assist in this.

### **Local People**

You will find the 200+ tribes that make up the people of East Africa are all genuinely warm and welcoming. There may be times when you come across street beggars and children begging (especially in urban centers). We discourage direct contributions to these people as it reinforces begging. Our local operators and the camps/lodges that we utilize, work to improve education and create employment opportunities in the local communities. Global Sojourns also supports projects that we have carefully vetted so if you want to give a donation, any of us would be happy to provide suggestions as to how best to direct your donation. Our Global Sojourns' Giving Circle ([www.gsgivingcircle.org](http://www.gsgivingcircle.org)) has a focus on supporting children, especially girls, with education.

### **Wildlife/Safety**

Always remember that the animals you are viewing are WILD. Ask your hosts/guides what the safety precautions are in each camp and when out on a drive or walk and be sure to follow these. Safety precautions need to be taken seriously and followed. Also, don't ask your guide to get closer to the wildlife. They know what is appropriate and it is not worth risking your safety along with those with you to get a better photo or

view... as tempting as it may seem. The behavior of wild animals can be unpredictable, especially when they are frightened. A vehicle too close to the wildlife can hinder a hunt or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal. Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities.

### Language

There are many local languages spoken throughout East Africa. English is commonly spoken in the urban areas and Swahili is spoken throughout the region. While most of the staff at the camps/lodges will speak English, most locals will appreciate it if you try to communicate with them in their local languages and it should make your experience more rewarding.

Here's some Swahili for you to try:

- **Hello-** Salama/Jambo!
- **How are you?-** Habari?
- **OK/fine-** Sawa sawa
- **Very well-** Mzuri sana
- **And you?-** Na wewe?
- **Welcome-** Karibu
- **Yes-** Ndiyo (try to skip the 'N', don't put a lot of effort into it) / **No-** Hapana
- **Good-** Mzuri (to say 'very good' you add 'sana'- 'mzuri sana')
- **Bad-** Mbaya (again, 'very bad' would be 'mbaya sana')
- **Please-** Tafadali (although you will hear this very rarely by locals)
- **Thank you (very much)-** Asante (sana) (the 'e' is stressed and sounds like 'eh?')
- **Water-** Maji / **Tea-** Chai / **Coffee-** Kahawa / **Milk-** Maziwa / **Beer-** Bia (beera) or pombe
- **I'd like a cold beer-** Tafadhali nataka bia (pombe) baridi
- **How much (many)? -** Ngapi? / **Too much-** Ghali (sana)
- **Slowly-** pole, pole
- **Good-by-** Kwaheri