

Travel preparations Kenya

Of course we hope you will book your trip to Kenya with us. But no matter where you book or how you will travel, you will need to do some preparations yourself which we cannot do for you. What we CAN do is helping you by providing some tips, suggestions and things to bear in mind. Here below is an article to help you with some ideas.

Don't let the following information scare you as it might look like a lot of work. Just go through them step by step and judge if they suit your personal situation and needs. After all: it is you travelling and your unique trip.

Long Version

Clothing

We are sure you can think of the clothing you want to bring. We just like to highlight the following:

- Long trousers and sleeves
Yes, the weather is warm, but do not only bring t-shirts and shorts. Long trousers and sleeves will be nice to have as well when you a) want to blend in with the locals (you will get used to the temperatures) b) experience chilly evenings and mornings especially in the Nairobi area, c) want to protect yourself from mosquito's.
- Warm and dry clothing?
When it comes to sweaters and jackets/ coats, you can save yourself luggage space. You will probably find that just one sweater/ vest and one jacket is enough. You will probably not use them a lot.
- Not too naked
For the ladies: bear in mind it might be less appropriate in Kenya compared to your home country to wear a lot of naked.
- Protect from the sun
Bring some clothing that will protect you from the sun as well. You know for yourself whether or not you burn easily. Think of: hats, caps, sleeves you can roll up, long trousers.
- Loose fitting
Bring at least some loose fitting clothes. This will be comfortable when it is hot or when you have to sit in an airplane or bus for hours.
- Worry free
Let's face it: when travelling clothes get dirty faster, you have less opportunity to wash your clothes and it is harder to keep your belongings safe. Therefore you will probably feel more free and relaxed when you don't have to worry about your new expensive shoes, new pants or your best sunglasses. Of course you want to wear the clothes you feel good in and we are not telling you to only bring old cloths, but just give it a thought.

Equipment

Here some things we thought you maybe did not think of yet. Give them a thought.

- Backpack or suitcase
Think about what you would prefer to use: a backpack or a suitcase. A backpack is heavy to carry but when you have good one you might find they are quite comfortable. A suitcase(on wheels) is lighter to carry(roll) but only when the streets are well paved and you only walk small distances. In Kenya a sidewalk is often in bad condition or simply not there. With respect to safety the hard case suitcase with a lock is probably the best. For backpacks there are very useful 'flightbags' available on the market with a zipper which can also be closed with a lock. The flightbag can also function as a rain cover and will protect your backpack from damaging when thrown from one conveyor belt to the other in the airport.


- Phone

Do you want to bring your new smartphone or will you feel more comfortable with a small 'Nokia' when travelling? On one hand it is nice to be able to take photos on the spot and check your social media (mobile internet is readily available in Kenya). On the other hand it is nice to not worry your phone will be stolen or be damaged. Also the battery life is something to consider maybe. Whichever phone you bring: prepaid simcards with a Kenyan number are available for \$2 on every street corner and will allow you to call, text and use mobile internet. For the smartphone users: dive into the world of travel-apps. There are many apps that help you for example book a flight, keep track of flight schedules, using maps, function as travel guide and language help.
- Power bank

With a power bank you just carry this extra battery with which you can charge your phone or tablet one or several more times. It might be just enough to help you until you reach a real socket again where you can recharge both. It is a big market nowadays. Power banks are available at many different sizes, prizes, shapes and colours.
- Small travel size bottles

To transfer your lotions, shampoo, sunscreen etc. into. This way you can easily carry some of the products you like using in your daypack without carrying a lot of weight. Will also come in handy when you want to plan your liquids for your hand luggage in the plane. You know that for most airports you are not allowed to carry larger bottle than 100ml in your hand luggage
- Headlamp/ torch

A small LED torch with an elastic band which you can wrap around your head. When you are camping or just in the house but the power has gone off (not rare in Kenya), you will be jealous of that travel companion with his torch on his head. While you are making dinner in the dark he can just see and still use both hands. No need to struggle with candles or holding a torch with one hand. A good brand to buy is Petzl or Black Diamond. Their simple headlamps are less than \$20, lightweight, comfortable to wear and they last long on one battery because of LED.
- Small padlock/ TSA lock

Being able to lock your backpack or suitcase comes in handy when you have to leave your luggage for a while, for example in the lobby of a hotel, in the storage room of a bus or when flying. Also when you stay in a hostel and sleep on a dormitory: you are often given a small locker but you need to provide your own lock. When flying: use a so called 'TSA' lock, look for this logo: 
- Travel guide

Of course! A nice way to create even more excitement before you travel. And so nice to read when you are waiting for the bus, the airplane or whatever. Travel guides nowadays often contain so much more than just a list of museums and restaurants. For example: packing lists, climate information, interesting stories, history, inspiring photos, local language help

Health

- Vaccinations
We will not pretend to be doctors here. Our advice ends with: Please consult your local doctor for advice: there are most likely a series of vaccines you are advised to take for Kenya. At least Yellow Fever. Check your insurance before you go to a doctor: sometimes you can get a refund when you go to a specific doctor contracted by your insurance company. Go to a doctor well in advance before you travel! Not days, but weeks in advance if you can, .
- Malaria
You will be advised to take malaria medication for the time you are in Kenya. Your doctor will tell you more about this. Also because of this, we advise you to go to a doctor for advice at least 6 weeks before you travel.
- Diarrhoea
Consider bringing medication to temporarily block Diarrhoea. You will be likely to suffer from some travellers diarrhoea during your stay. Only use this medication in case of emergency to temporarily block diarrhoea. For example for when you are flying. The medicine can be bought in your local chemists without subscription and it is not expensive.
- Mosquito repellent
There are many mosquito's everywhere in Kenya and year round. When they are not harmful in terms of malaria, they can be at least annoying. Look for Mosquito repellent with at least 30% DEET to always carry with you. Read about how to use it before you use it, especially the ones with 50% DEET are quite aggressive.
- Mosquito net
Quite big to carry and in most hotels and safari camps there is already a net available. Of course it is extra safe to carry your own, but we think it is only worth the carrying when you really plan to sleep in different hostels or budget hotels every other night.
- Sunscreen
Do we need to say anything about this? When you are white, you are probably familiar using this and you know which factor and type you prefer. Bring it.

Paperwork

- Passport.
You always carry this one of course. Keep it close when you fly. When you stay for a longer period of time in a country you might want to keep it in your new home somewhere you deem safe. This is probably more safe there than always carry it around. Instead you can carry a copy of your passport to have always with you. You can keep the copy always separate from the original, in case you lose one: you still have the other.
- Visa
It depends on your passport, but you probably need a visa to be allowed into Kenya. Check the embassy of Kenya in your country for this.
You can also que for a visa at customs when you land in the airport, but if it your first time and you want to come well prepared, it will be less stressful for you to have your Visa in advance.
Don't forget to have a good passport photo with you when you apply for the visa. The requirements for the photo are very strict.
The Visa will probably cost you about \$50.
Something new is the E-visa. This makes your work on the visa very easy. Check evisa.go.ke and see if this will work for you.

- A third document you need to think of is your vaccination document. Often in the form of a small booklet. What you minimally need to carry to Kenya is a proof of your yellow fever vaccine.
- ICE document. In Case of Emergency

A fourth document is a suggestion purely ours: Consider writing down and summarize some information you might need In Case of Emergency. Print it on paper and bring it with you apart from your other important documents. Secondly, you can save the document so you can access it on the internet(mail it to yourself, save in Dropbx, Google Drive or Icloud). Even in developing countries you might be surprised nowadays how much the internet is available. Things you can consider writing down:

 - Your address or an address of someone you are visiting/might want to contact ICE
 - Telephone numbers ICE (family, insurances, bank)
 - Passport number
 - insurance registration number
 - Blood type
 - Your flight details

Fun

When you are volunteering you will be in close contact with a local community. Maybe you will work with them, maybe you will even live with them as you stay in a host family. They will surely be interested in where you come from and you might find it fun to bring some gifts or things to show from your home country. You can think of:

- Small gifts. For example for children some notebooks, pens, or stickers etc.
- Some photo's of your house/ city/ country or your friends and family
- Food/ sweets from your country you like to share and like people to try.

After all this reading, and we advise you to do some more reading and research, try making a packing list! Sum up what you want to bring/ do not want to forget/ and need to think of. You will feel more relaxed when, one day before you start your journey, you can simply grab the list and by ticking the boxes ensure yourself you packed everything you want.

S u m m a r y

Clothing

Aside of the normal clothes your probably already thought of, consider:

- Comfortable, loose fitting, lightweight clothes.
- Long trousers and long sleeves. To protect from mosquito's and the sun.
- 1 warm sweater might be enough. To save space
- 1 jacket for the light rains.
- Less expensive or new clothes is a less worried mind.

Equipment

- Decide: a backpack or a suitcase?
- When using a backpack: buy a flightbag.
- Smartphone or a cheap simple phone with long lasting battery?
- When bringing a smartphone, look into the many travelling apps available. They are fun. Mobile internet is readily available in Kenya.
- Power bank for extra battery life.
- Headlamp
- Small bottles for your liquids (sunscreen, lotion, shampoo, deo etc.). 100ml or smaller.
- Small padlock (TSA)
- A rich, hip, colourful travel guide

Health

- Vaccinations and advice. Go to a doctor preferable more than 6 weeks in advance.
- Malaria pills
- Diarrhoea blocking medicine. In case of emergency.
- Mosquito repellent. Preferably 30% DEET or more.
- Mosquito net?
- Sunscreen

Paperwork

- Passport
- Copy of passport
- Visa (in passport)
- Extra passport photo's
- Vaccination document. Or at least: proof of yellow fever vaccine.
- ICE document with important telephone numbers and personal information.

Fun

- Small gifts
- Photo's of your home/ city/ country/ friends/ family
- Food/ sweets from your country to share.

- Prepare your own personal packing list.