

Pre-Departure Information

Please note the following is only recommended and not compulsory. Some items are more specific for longer “expedition” type safaris. Common sense should prevail!

Clothing, equipment and luggage

There is not much luggage carrying space on the vehicles as they are designed to give uninterrupted wildlife viewing. You will need to travel light, and use a soft bag if possible.

Inside the vehicle you would have a daypack holding your camera, binoculars, sunscreen, hat, toilet paper, water bottle, etc. There will be times when you also need a fleece jacket/rain jacket.

Your luggage should be tough and dust-proof, waterproof, or, put the contents inside a tough plastic bag. Preferably it should be lockable.

Clothing worn during the day is best in earth/dust colours – basically so they still look clean enough after a few minutes in the dust. Think along the lines of what would be sensible in Central Australia (if you are from Australia!). It is best to avoid wearing red / yellow / bright blue / white when wildlife viewing, and when on a walk at Tarangire definitely stick to earth colours if you don't want to frighten everything away. Evening in the lodges is not dress-up time, but neat casual is the usual: shirt/T-shirt, jeans / long pants / shorts / skirt, sandals or shoes, fleece/jumper or w/cheater if it is cool are all appropriate. You can dress up if you want, but don't feel any pressure to do so.

We can expect most days to be warm to very warm, and nights mild/cool.

At Ngorongoro Crater it can be cool during the day, and will be cool/cold outside at night.

There is always a chance of some rain at Ngorongoro as it is elevated and forms part of a mountain chain, and it is usually misty/foggy at night. We may get a passing storm on the Serengeti, but it will be noticeably warmer.

You will be outside in the sun all day, everyday, and you will want a good brimmed hat that doesn't blow off.

Watch the old movies and you will see that "on safari" they wore hats, not caps, and for good reason. Collared T-shirts and full coverage of your neck and shoulders is strongly recommended.

Clothing generally:

- Shorts (preferably long - do not wear brief shorts), long trousers (lightweight), mid length skirt. Zip pockets are very useful on travel clothing.
- T shirts, shirts, blouses. One long-sleeved may help with the sun.
- Polar fleece jacket
- Rain jacket with hood (not necessary from July through to October, unless visiting coast and mountain areas)
- Sandals – need to be sturdy with solid sole
- Joggers or lightweight boots
- Sun hat
- Socks and underwear
- Swimwear
- Woollen hat may be handy on cool mornings

Equipment and stuff:

- Sunglasses
- Good Binoculars. You might share, but they add another dimension to wildlife viewing.
- Lightweight torch/ or headlamp- lodges won't necessarily have power all the time. Especially if in tents on one or more nights. More than one torch per family is best.
- Water bottle –you buy large bottles of drinking water and you will want to decant them for your personal use.
- Food snacks if you want.
- Toiletries. Some lodges will sell a limited supply of tooth paste, tooth brush, but not much else. **Make sure you are self-sufficient** in toiletries and personal hygiene items such as lens cleaning solution, tampons, etc. Don't count on buying anything in Africa.
- Playing cards/ board games.
- Reading material.

- Antiseptic wet-ones/ hand cleaning alcohol
- Money belt / pouch
- Photographic gear
- Penknife
- Sewing kit
- Bottle opener as not all soft drinks will be screw top. A cork screw may be handy!

For kids:

Drawing pad and pencils with the right earthy colours will be handy.

Between meal treats (we can't stop off at maccas, thankfully!)

Walk at Tarangire and Manyara: If you walk at Tarangire you will need sturdy footwear and a way to keep seed burrs off your socks (gaiters/duct tape and plastic).

Clothes Washing.

At some lodges laundry services will be available, and we will be there long enough to get it done, but it may not be gentle machine washing. Be cautious.

- Elastic clothes line/ cord and pegs
- One-size-fits-all-plug (or flat piece of rubber car tube as plug).
- Clothes washing soap –solid bar of pure soap works best.

Storage of gear

Excess baggage may be stored at the offices in Arusha while you are on safari. Please remember to clearly label any bags you are leaving there.

Vehicles

Once you arrive in Tanzania very few vehicles will have seatbelts, but they tend to not travel as fast as in Australia, USA or Europe.

In Tanzania we use Landcruiser or Land Rover vehicles equipped with canvas-covered roofs, which roll back to become viewing hatches or pop up roof hatches.

All of the personal luggage will be stored on top of the vehicle or in the rear luggage area. The vehicle will be guarded whenever it is parked in public places, but you should not leave anything of value in the vehicle overnight, or when it is unattended. On board each vehicle there is an extensive animal and bird reference library.

Medical supplies

You need to bring your own basic medical supplies and especially a supply of any specific medicines you might need as you will not be able to get replacements once we go on the safari.

You must be self-sufficient.

Travellers' Diarrhoea

To get sensible and informed information on diarrhoea, go to www.ciwec-clinic.com and click on "Understanding Diarrhoea in Travellers". (You may never eat again!)

Malaria

You should consult your doctor regarding anti-malarial tablets as there are a range of prophylactics available. Usually these medications are taken prior to entering a malarial area. The only real prevention is to avoid being bitten in the first place! The mosquito bites between dusk and dawn, so cover up - wear long legged and sleeved clothing, preferably buttoned at the wrists. Take sufficient supply of repellent.

Other biting insects

Generally when people travel the world they focus on malaria and do not consider other biting insects. You should carry RID at all times. Apart from malaria which is endemic in the tropics around the world, there does not seem to be a high risk from the other insect-borne diseases, but you should be aware, and protect yourself.

Vaccinations

Yellow fever is necessary for travellers to East Africa (muzzies again). You must have an *International Health Vaccination Certificate* - the yellow booklet - to prove you have had the vaccination, and have it ready to be

viewed at immigration on the return trip. You may need to plan this vaccination a few months before you travel. It is valid for 10 years, so you can use it for South America as well!

You will need to discuss all your personal medical requirements with your G.P. or at a specialist travel medical centre. Vaccinations for tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, meningitis and polio might be considered. Apparently cholera vaccination is no longer considered effective by the World Health Organisation and is officially not required by Kenya and Tanzania. You might want to get the cholera vaccination stamped in your book as a precaution against over-zealous health officials.

Teeth

We advise you to have a check-up prior to departure, as dental services in Africa are not recommended.

Medical kit

Bring sufficient quantities of any specific medications you require, but with general medicines don't over-cater as most are readily available in Tanzania.

Consult your doctor before departure so that he/she knows the conditions under which you will be taking the medication. Advise someone else in the group of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to taking them.

As a suggestion consider bringing for your own use:

- A general antibiotic treatment, particularly if you are prone to a recurring infection of some kind that requires antibiotics. Please discuss this with your doctor.
- Antacid tablets.
- Anti-diarrhoeal tablets. Remember that some adult tablets are not suitable at all for children under 12 years. Talk to your doctor.
- Cold suppressant.
- Stematil / Maxalon for nausea.
- Paracetamol or equivalent headache remedy.
- Anti-histamine tablets.
- Eurax cream for irritation from bites. (most pharmacies have this)
- Antiseptic Solution.
- Sunburn cream/sunblock
- Lip balm.
- Band-Aid strips.
- Insect repellent ("RID" or any repellent containing di-ethyl toluamide - DEET). Roll-on, cream or pump spray. Beware of possible limitations on aerosol cans on aircraft.
- Insect spray – Knock down type. Beware of flight limitations or buy in Nairobi.
- A pair of nail scissors and tweezers. Not in aircraft hand luggage.

Water

Don't drink tap water. Buy bottled water or get boiled water in hotels.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bear in mind that you will be travelling in some rural areas where the people have had little contact with foreigners.

Ask permission if you wish to photograph people. Some Maasai dress in traditional gear and wait at the roadside and expect to be paid for photos. Don't hand out money or sweets to the locals or children, as it encourages begging and school absenteeism

Please be modest with your clothing

Please be aware that, in many African countries, the political situation can be sensitive and local people (including your driver) prefer not to discuss any political matters. Don't press them for their views on government or military matters.

LANGUAGE

The national language of Kenya is English, and it is Swahili in Tanzania. Most of the locals speak Swahili.

There are many other tribal languages spoken in various areas.

In hotels the staff will speak English and in the larger cities most people involved with tourists speak English.

Some useful Swahili words are as follows (each letter is pronounced):

Jambo / Hello *Habari* / How are you? *Mzuri*/Good
Mbaya / Bad *Sana* / Very much *Asante* / Thank you
Tafadhali / Please *Kwaheri* / Goodbye *Ndio* / Yes
Hapana / No *Polepole* / Slowly *Upesi* / Quickly
Twende / Let's go *Wapi* // Where is? *Ngapi* / How much?
Kahawa / Coffee *Chai* / Tea *Maji* / Water
Pombe / Beer *Moto* / Hot *Barafu* /Cold
Chumvi / Salt *Pilipili* / Pepper *Sukari* / Sugar
Rafiki / Friend *Moja* / One *Mbili* / Two
Tatu / Three *Nne* / Four *Tano* / Five
Jina lako nani / What is your name? *Sielewi*/ I don't understand

PHOTOGRAPHY

When taking photographs of local people please ask their permission first and respect their wishes. All you need do is hold up your camera first and wait for a response. Whilst most people are extremely good-natured, they are generally rather camera-shy and may respond angrily to having their photographs taken without permission if they don't know you. You may be asked to pay local people to take their photo, if so ensure that you negotiate a final price that is acceptable to both parties. This may be their only employment. We will visit a Maasai Boma (village) where, in this instance, you will be able to take photographs without additional payment.

No photographs should be taken of border posts, airports, government or military vehicles or buildings. We suggest that you purchase all your film before leaving home. The availability of film in Africa is often limited and the quality can vary from bad to woeful.

There will be unparalleled opportunity for photography. If you have one lens in addition to your normal lens, consider a 200mm telephoto or an 80-200 mm zoom for close-up shots of animals. It is generally considered that you need a tripod or a lens rest (small bean-bag on window ledge on a still vehicle) for stronger lenses. 300mm is great, but 200mm is sufficient. A UV/Skylight is highly recommended. Make sure that you bring sufficient batteries and any other items to be self-sufficient.

ELECTRICITY

Mauritius uses 220 volts, mostly with British style 3 pin plug or European 2 pin sockets in older hotels.

Kenya and Tanzania uses 240 volts, usually British 3 square pin, or 2 round pins.

We will have access to 12 volts via cigarette lighter sockets in the Land Rovers, but you may need clamps for the battery for heavy drawing appliances.

TIME

Tanzania is two hours ahead of GMT.

MONEY MATTERS

Spending Money

Since almost all services in Africa are included in your tour price, there is no need to bring a great deal of money with you for meals. However, some excellent souvenirs and artifacts are available. There are cheap trinkets, but quality handicrafts are often not cheap.

Visas: You will need USD 50 per person cash for each of the Kenya and the Tanzania visas. These are readily and easily obtainable at the border crossings and airports. USA citizens are required to pay \$100 for Tanzanian visas.

Tips: Tips are not demanded in Africa as they are in some places. However, if you are happy with your driver in Tanzania, about USD 15 to USD30 per vehicle per day, depending on passenger numbers, is a good tip for them. Small change, of up to USD 1, left for housekeeping in your room on departure is appreciated by the staff. At Tarangire, where it is more remote and they have less visitors, you might want to part with about USD 10 per family/vehicle to the total staff. In the end you can decide what you might do. It is your decision.

Drinks in Tanzania you will pay around USD 2.50 for a beer in the lodges, and soft drinks will be USD .25 cents – 50 cents. Bottled water is about \$1 per litre.

Currency and changing money

It is advisable to carry U.S. dollars (USD) as well as a card for accessing ATM's which will only give local currencies. Note that Australian dollars are not commonly exchanged in East Africa. Don't bring AUD,

EUROS, or Traveler cheques in any currency. Travellers cheques, even in USD are NOT ACCEPTED ANYWHERE, even at banks, and if you can find someone to exchange them, it will be at about 50% face value.

Money should only be changed with licensed moneychangers. Changing money "on the streets" in the black market is illegal and risky. Banks are generally open from 9 am to 2 pm, Mondays to Fridays. Some banks are also open on Saturdays until noon. You can change money at hotels - the rate of exchange is often less than that of the bank. When you change money, the moneychanger must give you a receipt.

All monies (above a value of a few dollars) should be changed back into foreign currency upon departure at the airport bank. To do this you must have the receipts from your original transactions - be aware that this can be very time-consuming, so try to change only sufficient monies for your needs.

When changing your money over to the local currency ask for some smaller denomination notes, as change is often scarce in the rural areas.

Kenyan Shillings

The airport is a convenient place, and probably the best place, to change money when you arrive. Many sight-seeing entrance fees, etc, can be paid in USD cash. Don't convert all your money into Kenyan shillings on arrival at Nairobi airport as you will need to buy Tanzanian Shillings when you arrive there. However it has been relatively easy to change Kenya Shillings to Tanzania Shillings in Tanzania.

Tanzanian Shillings.

Try not to change money at the border. You will get a much better rate in Arusha. Smaller USD notes (5/10/20) can usually be changed to shillings at the lodges.....but at a miserable rate.

Major credit cards are accepted in East Africa in larger hotels, and some shops in main cities where MasterCard is predominantly used. In Tanzania, Visa is the most common credit card and in Arusha there are several exchange places to obtain credit card advances with a surcharge of between 9-25%!! There are many ATM's in Arusha, Mto Wa Mbu and Karatu, all dispense Tanzanian shillings only.

Departure Tax

Departure taxes are collected as part of your ticket payment prior to your departure. There is no departure tax payable from Tanzania.

Passport and Visas for Australian Passport Holders.

Both Kenya and Tanzania require a visa. Both can be issued at the border on arrival. Both cost USD 50.

Kenya is a single entry visa, even though you go to Tanzania. Multiple entry visas are not required if you are re-entering Kenya from Tanzania, Rwanda or Uganda.

Your passport must be valid until at least 6 months after your return to Australia.

SECURITY

Passports and valuables should be stored in safety deposit boxes or safes in the hotels where available. While travelling theft is always a possibility and precautions should be taken accordingly. A money belt or pouch is a good idea. Nairobi has a reputation for theft. Walking around the "down-town" area is OK. Around the market and from the hotel to the city is OK in daylight, in groups. Otherwise get a taxi.

Con Men

Con men operate widely in Nairobi and are famous for their skills. These men may present themselves either as refugees asking for donations to enable them to stay in the country or as members of some anti-apartheid organisation seeking financial support for their cause. Don't stop walking, don't enter into conversation with these people or give them any money. Should you be convinced to make even a small donation, their confidence trick can progress to presenting themselves as undercover police officers or government officials who will then threaten you with arrest for supporting terrorist groups (unless you 'bribe' them with larger amounts of money)! Not all East Africans need to be treated with suspicion, but be aware that these kind of confidence tricks have proved effective. If you can make yourself look less like a tourist in Nairobi it helps, but is not important. I have never had any problems of any kind in Nairobi.

DOCUMENTATION

Travel Insurance

Everyone is required to take a travel insurance policy to cover against sickness, accident, unexpected alterations to travel arrangements, cancellation, failure of a tour operator, etc.

Medical check up

Anyone over 50 years, or with a pre-existing condition would be wise to get a medical check up 6 months prior to travel. If you have a pre-existing medical condition you will probably need to have a medical for the travel insurance, and they may decline to cover some possibilities, or charge you more.

CLIMATE

Kenya

The wet seasons in Kenya are generally March to May (long rains) and October to November (short rains). Downpours occur mostly in the late afternoons, the earlier part of the day being warm and sunny. Temperatures in Nairobi range from 11deg.C to 23deg.C in July and 13deg.C to 28deg.C in February. Nairobi and the highlands can get cold, especially in the evenings during July and August.

Tanzania

Generally April and May are the months of the long rains. November brings the short rains but it seldom rains all day. As a general rule, Tanzania is usually warm by day and cool by night. Temperatures rarely rise above 27C during the day or fall below 10C at night. These conditions are guidelines only and obviously vary with altitude and topography. Ngorongoro Crater is usually colder. The seemingly low temperatures for the equator are due to the altitude of the safari area. On the coast, for example, the temperature is around 30C during the day and falls to about 20C at night. Be assured, the sun is hot.

SUGGESTED READING LIST

Books

EASTCO recommends these books, but my experience is that you tend to read what you can find at the library.

BURTON & SPEKE - William Harrison

OUT OF AFRICA - Isak Dinesen

SAFARI - Mirella Ricciardi

THE AFRICAN RAINBOW - Mirella Ricciardi

INNOCENT KILLERS - Hugo Van Lawick

THE WHITE NILE (Uganda) - Alan Moorehead

THE BLUE NILE (Ethiopia)- Alan Moorehead

CHIMPANZEES OF GOMBE - Jane Goodall

DARK ROMANCE OF DIANE FOSSEY - Farley Mowatt

SERENGETI SHALL NOT DIE - B & N Grzmik

KILIMANJARO - John Raider

GORILLAS IN THE MIST - Diane Fossey

THE SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO - Ernest Hemmingway

GREEN HILLS OF AFRICA - Ernest Hemmingway

THE AFRICANS - David Lamb

BAREFOOT OVER THE SERENGETI - David Read

AMONG ELEPHANTS Iain Douglas Hamilton

THE TREE WHERE MAN WAS BORN Peter Matheissen

As well as many of those listed above, I have enjoyed

SERENGETI HOME

SAND RIVERS by Peter Matthiessen

Robert Ruark wrote a number of novels on Kenya -SOMETHING OF VALUE (based loosely around the Mau Mau rebellion), USE ENOUGH GUN (safari). The first book that Wilbur Smith wrote was on Southern Africa, and called WHEN THE LION FEEDS. It is his best by far, and you could argue it's his only good book.

William Boyd has written many books on Africa, and his ICE CREAM WAR is set in northern Tanzania at the beginning of the 20th Century. But there are masses of books, good and bad, on Africa. Please feel free to share your suggestions with us.

Field Guides

"A Field Guide to the Larger Mammals of East Africa", Jonathan Kingdom.

"Picador Africa", Jean Dorst & Pierre Dandelot (Collins)

"A Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa" Stevenson and Fanshawe (Helm)

"A Field Guide to the National Parks of East Africa", John G Williams & Norman Arlott. (Collins)

"Portraits of the Wild," Cynthia Moss (University of Chicago Press, 1982)

Maps

Probably the best general maps of the areas you will be visiting are

- Michelin Series No. 155 - Africa/Central & South and No. 154 Africa/North-east.
- the Ravenstein International Road Map Series "East Africa (Ostafrika 1:2 mill)" No. 899