

KENYA TRAVEL PACKET



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Passport Validity

Ensure your passport has at least **6 months of validity** remaining from your date of arrival. Many countries, including Kenya, require this to prevent travelers from being stranded with expired passports.

Visa Requirements

All travelers requiring a visa must apply online at [Kenya e-Visa](#).

- **Single-entry visas** (valid for 90 days): \$51 + \$1 convenience fee.
- Options for **1-year** and **5-year multiple-entry visas** are also available.

Steps to Apply:

1. Complete the online application.
2. Upload a passport-sized photo (same specifications as a passport photo).
3. Scan and upload your passport's information page.

Processing Time: Up to **72 business hours**. Approval will be sent via email and must be **printed** for presentation upon arrival.

Important:

- Ensure you have **two blank passport pages** for visa stamps.
- Always select **"tourist"** as your purpose for visiting. Avoid mentioning ministry or conference-related activities to prevent delays at customs.
- For multi-year visas, note your passport's expiration. If your passport expires before the visa, travel with both the old and new passports.

Pre-Departure Checklist

- **Documents:**
 - Passport (original + a separate photocopy of the information page).
 - Printed e-Visa approval.
 - Flight itinerary (printed for reference or immigration checks).
 - Travel insurance policy (required if traveling from the U.S.).
 - Completed WDA forms (liability waiver, emergency contact info, etc.).
- **Medications:**
 - Begin anti-malaria pills (some start 2 days before arrival).
 - Pack any prescription medications in original containers.

Vaccinations

For U.S. travelers, no mandatory vaccinations are required to enter Kenya. However, travelers coming from Yellow Fever risk areas (e.g., parts of Africa or Asia) may need proof of vaccination. While optional, the following vaccines are strongly recommended:

- **COVID-19**
- **Cholera**
- **Hepatitis A**
- **Hepatitis B**
- **Typhoid**
- **Yellow Fever**

Visit a travel clinic for these vaccinations, as they are better equipped than general practitioners. Expenses not covered by insurance can be reimbursed through your WDA travel account.

Travel Clinics by Region:

- **Atlanta, GA:** Emory Healthcare Travel Clinic, [Georgia Tech Travel Clinic](#), [Passport Health – Atlanta](#)
- **Birmingham, AL:** Birmingham Travel Clinic
<https://www.passporthealthusa.com/locations/al/birmingham/809/> or UAB Medicine:
<https://www.uabmedicine.org/specialties/travel-medicine-services/>
- **Duluth, MN:** Essentia Health – Duluth

Malaria Prevention

Kenya is malaria-prone, though risk is lower in Nairobi and surrounding areas. Consult your doctor or a travel clinic about prophylactics, such as **Atovaquone-Proguanil** (common choice). **Chloroquine** is not recommended due to resistance.

- Start medication a few days before departure as prescribed.
- Use insect repellent to further reduce risk.

Antibiotics

Doctors often recommend bringing a strong antibiotic, such as **Azithromycin (500 mg tri-pack)**, for severe gastrointestinal issues that over-the-counter remedies (e.g., Pepto-Bismol, Imodium AD) can't resolve. Take these only if advised.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is mandatory for WDA trips. Most U.S. health policies don't cover foreign treatment, so travel insurance ensures coverage for emergencies, including medical costs, evacuation, and repatriation.

- Compare options at [TravelInsurance.com](#) or [Aardy.com](#).
- For health-only plans, consider [Blue Cross GeoBlue](#).

Sanitation Notes

- **Water:** Only drink bottled or treated water. Check that bottle seals are intact. Use bottled water for brushing teeth and avoid ice unless certain of its source.
- **Food:** Stick to reputable establishments. Avoid street food, unpeeled produce, and undercooked items unless properly washed and treated.

What to Pack

- **Essentials:**
 - Power adapter (Kenya uses **Type G plugs**).
 - Weather-appropriate clothing: lightweight clothes for daytime and warm layers for cool evenings.
 - Modest attire: Skirts below the knees for women in church settings; avoid tight or revealing clothing.
- **Health Items:**
 - Sunscreen, insect repellent, band-aids, hand sanitizer, and over-the-counter medications (e.g., pain relievers, Pepto Bismol).
- **Other:**

- Power bank (for outages), flashlight, or headlamp (especially for safaris).

Introduction to Kenya

Kenya, located in East Africa, captivates travelers with its diverse wildlife, breathtaking landscapes, and rich cultural heritage. With a population of over 54 million, its bustling capital, Nairobi, houses around 4.5 million residents. Other major cities include Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru.

History

Kenya boasts a human history spanning over two million years. Colonized by the British in the late 19th century, it gained independence in 1963. Post-independence, Kenya has faced challenges like political instability, economic inequality, and ethnic tensions but has also made strides in democracy and development.

Culture

Home to over 40 ethnic groups, Kenya is a tapestry of languages, customs, and traditions. Prominent groups include the Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, and Maasai. Music and dance are central to Kenyan life, with styles like *benga* and *taarab* remaining popular.

Politics

Kenya is a presidential representative democracy with a multi-party system. While the country has made progress in governance, it still grapples with issues such as disputed elections and corruption.

Religion

Most Kenyans are Christian, with Catholic and Anglican churches being dominant. The country also has significant Muslim and traditional African religious communities. Religious festivals and practices deeply influence social life.

Major Tourist Sites

- Maasai Mara National Reserve: Renowned for its wildlife and the annual wildebeest migration.
- Amboseli National Park: Famous for large elephant herds and views of Mount Kilimanjaro.
- Lamu Island: Known for its pristine beaches, Swahili architecture, and cultural heritage.
- Lake Nakuru: A haven for birdwatchers, featuring flamingos and other abundant birdlife.

Religions & Languages

Religion and language are integral to Kenya's cultural richness. Christianity is the predominant religion, with Roman Catholic and Anglican denominations leading. The Muslim community is significant, particularly along the coast and in the northeast. Traditional African religions also persist in some communities.

Kenya's official languages are **English** and **Swahili**, with Swahili being widely spoken. The country's 40+ ethnic groups contribute their own languages, including Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, and Maasai. Popular Swahili greetings include *Mambo* or *Sasa* (hello), with the response *Nzuri* (everything is fine).



People and Culture

Kenya's population of over 54 million spans more than 40 ethnic groups, each with unique traditions. For instance:

- **Maasai:** Known for distinctive beadwork, clothing, and cattle-herding culture.
- **Kikuyu:** Renowned for entrepreneurship.
- **Luhya:** Celebrate music and dance.
- **Luo:** Esteemed for fishing traditions and cultural contributions.

Kenya also hosts Asian, European, and expatriate communities, further enriching its diversity. This blend is reflected in Kenyan cuisine (e.g., *ugali*, *nyama choma*, samosas) and music, a fusion of traditional and modern styles.

Nairobi: The Green City in the Sun

Nairobi, Kenya's vibrant capital, offers a mix of urban and natural attractions.

- **Wildlife:** Visit Nairobi National Park for lions, giraffes, zebras, and rhinos, or explore the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust and the Giraffe Centre.
- **History & Culture:** Highlights include the National Museum of Kenya, Karen Blixen Museum, and Maasai Market.
- **Cuisine:** Enjoy local delicacies at street markets or savor international cuisine in diverse restaurants.

Economy of Nairobi

Nairobi is Kenya's economic hub, boasting industries like finance, manufacturing, and technology. Key sectors include:

- **Finance:** Headquarters for banks and the Nairobi Securities Exchange.
- **Manufacturing:** Produces textiles, food products, and construction materials.
- **Technology:** A growing innovation hub with startups, co-working spaces, and tech investments.
- **Tourism:** A gateway to Kenya's national parks and reserves.

While vibrant, Nairobi faces challenges like unemployment and income inequality, which efforts are underway to address.

Time Zone

Kenya operates on **East Africa Time (EAT)** year-round, which is **8 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time** during the trip.

Climate

Expect:

- **Daytime:** Around 80 degrees
- **Nighttime:** Rarely below 75 degrees

A **light jacket or sweater** is highly recommended for cooler evenings or safaris.

Voltage and Electronics

Kenya operates on **240V** with **Type G plugs** (same as the UK). Many electronics, such as smartphones and laptops, are dual voltage (100–240V). Check your device label to confirm.

- For devices not compatible with 240V (e.g., curling irons, some shavers), you'll need a **converter**.
- Power outages are possible—pack a power bank and spare camera batteries if needed.

For adapters or converters, you can find reliable options on Amazon:

- [Type G Adapter](#)
- [Voltage Converter](#)

International Phone Plans & Mobile Wi-Fi

All major mobile carriers now offer internationally compatible phones and plans for roaming. Ensure your device supports international connectivity—older phones, particularly those from Sprint or Verizon that used CDMA technology, may not be compatible. Check with your carrier to confirm.

- **T-Mobile:** Automatic international roaming available. Details: [T-Mobile International Roaming Plans](#).
- **Sprint (now T-Mobile):** International plans listed here: [Sprint International Services](#).
- **Verizon:** Use your regular plan abroad for \$10/day with their international pass. You're charged only on days you use it. More details: [Verizon International Plans](#).
- **AT&T:** Multiple international options. Explore them at [AT&T International Plans](#).

If your phone allows, you can make calls over Wi-Fi and use apps like iMessage or WhatsApp for calls and messages via Wi-Fi.

For those who need constant internet access while exploring, renting a portable Wi-Fi hotspot is an option, such as [TravelWi-Fi](#). This is optional and typically unnecessary

Currency

Kenya's currency is the **Kenyan Shilling (KES)**, available in notes of 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000, and coins of 1, 5, 10, and 20.

- **Cash:** Widely used, especially in rural areas.
- **Contactless Payments:** Increasingly popular in cities like Nairobi. The most notable system is **M-Pesa**, a mobile platform for transactions, bill payments, and purchases. Other options include **Airtel Money** and **T-Kash**.

At the time of publication, 1 USD = 129.58 KES. Prices might appear high due to the low value of the shilling.

Tips for Travelers

- **Market Prices:** Expect higher prices as a foreigner due to the perceived strength of your currency.
- **Generosity:** While negotiating is common, remember the disparity in resources and consider being generous.

Special Considerations

- **Plastic Ban:** Kenya banned single-use plastics. Don't pack items in plastic bags; bring reusable water bottles.
- **Tipping:** While not expected, tips for good service are appreciated:
 - Meals: ~10%.
 - Hotel staff: 100–200 KES/day (\$1–\$2).
 - Taxis: Round up to the nearest 100 KES (tips optional).
- **Photography:** Always ask permission before photographing people, especially in rural areas. Avoid photos of sensitive infrastructure or military sites.

Be respectful by showing photos to subjects, using consent forms if needed, and avoiding questionable visits or actions you wouldn't take in your own country. Use "asante" (thank you) to express gratitude.

