

WEATHER

Kenya enjoys a tropical climate - hot and humid at the coast, temperate inland and very dry in the north and northeast parts of the country.

The average annual temperature for the coastal town of **Mombasa** (altitude 50 metres) is 30°C maximum and 22°C minimum, the capital city **Nairobi** (altitude 1,661 metres) 25°C max and 13°C min, **Eldoret** (altitude 3,085) 23°C max and 9°C min, **Lodwar** (altitude 506 metres) and the drier north plain lands 34°C max and 23°C min.

There is plenty of sunshine all year round and summer clothes are worn throughout the year. However, it is usually cool at night and early in the morning.

The long rains occur from April to June and short rains from October to December. The rainfall is sometimes heavy and when it does come it often falls in the afternoons and evenings. The hottest period is from February to March and coldest in July to August.

The annual migration of wildlife between Serengeti National Park in Tanzania and Maasai Mara National Park in Kenya usually takes place between June and September. The migration of almost two million wildebeest, zebras and other species is nature's greatest spectacle on earth.

Useful Tips

Baggage

Baggage space on safari is restricted to one medium suitcase or holdall per person, plus hand baggage (private safaris where there are less than 7 persons in the vehicle are not subject to this restriction).

Visitors to Treetops and the Ark are asked to take overnight bags only; suitcases can be left at the base hotel. Hotels will normally store baggage at no extra cost.

A baggage weight restriction of 15 kg per person applies on air safaris. Where very small aircraft are used this may be reduced to 10kg.

Currency

Hard currencies can be exchanged in cash or travellers cheques at banks all over the country, at forex bureaus in Nairobi and at most large hotels. US Dollars and Sterling Pounds are most acceptable and will cause the least delay. As a norm, always ask what commission and charges will be deducted first and prior to transaction.

Banking

Banks are usually open from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, Mondays through Fridays and from 9.00 am and 11.00 am on Saturdays. Credit Cards VISA, MASTERCARD and AMERICAN EXPRESS are widely accepted for tourist services. There's usually a 5% mark-up on top of the price as establishments are charged a fixed percentage of their transactions.

Health

Since rules concerning disease prevention change from time to time, a check should be made with the nearest Kenyan High Commission, Kenya Tourist Office or any airline flying scheduled services into Kenya.

Malaria is endemic to most parts of Kenya and visitors should start taking anti-malarial tablets before departure and continue taking them for the prescribed time after their return. Insect repellents should be made use of after dusk and suitable cover up clothes should be worn in the evenings.

Flying Doctors Society

Membership of the Flying Doctors Society is strongly recommended. In event of accident or sickness while on safari, the society will fly patients by air ambulance to Nairobi for admittance to hospital. The current cost for 1-month membership is US\$ 25 per person.

Drinking water

Drinking water from the tap must be considered risky. Hotels and lodges usually furnish safe water in a thermos flask in guest rooms. Bottled mineral water is available in every hotel and supermarket.

Security

Normal precautions as in any other destination world-wide should be taken. Visitors are advised not to leave cash and valuables in their hotel rooms but to make use of safe deposit boxes and safes. One should never carry large sums in cash and women should keep a tight grip on handbags in crowds or busy streets.

Jewelry snatching is quite common in city streets. As in all major cities walking alone or in small groups at night should be considered a hazard and avoided. Reliable taxis are available at all the principal hotels. Taking photographs at airports, near military installations, of policeman, the president, the national flag, the State House, state lodges, soldiers, prisons and prisoners etc., is prohibited. Before photographing local people, permission should be obtained and a fixed price agreed. Seek the assistance of your driver/guide in this matter.

Voltage

Both mains electricity and generated supply in lodges provide 240 volts AC 50 cycles. Most large hotels and some game lodges provide shaving points with 110v 50 cycles. Sockets are normally three pin and of the 'square' variety.

Tipping and Porterage

Although hotels and lodges include a service charge, it is customary to tip porters, waiters, taxi drivers and safari drivers/guides.

Language

Kiswahili is the lingua franca while English is the official language. In addition, most tribes have their own language.

Post and Telephones

Keeping in touch by mail and telephone is generally easy. Direct overseas dialling is possible from major centers and increasingly from remote places such as game lodges. Call home bureaus are in plenty in Nairobi as are the Cyber café for e-mail and Internet access.

Arrivals and Departures

Kenya has two main ports of entry by air: Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi. Located 16 km from the city center. Moi International Airport, Mombasa. Located 12 km from the town center. Mombasa is also the main port of entry by sea.

Airport Departure Tax

International Airport departure tax equivalent to US\$ 40 per person is payable on departure from the International airports. A local airport service charge is also payable on departure for domestic flights. As this varies from country to country, please check with us on the prevailing amounts payable prior to your flight departure.

Opening and Shopping Hours

Major stores, tourist services, offices and museums open from 8.00 am to 5.00 PM in large towns though offices often break for lunch.

In rural areas and out in the bush small shops can be open at almost any hour. Souvenirs to take back home can include wood and soap stone sculptures and carvings, sisal baskets, beadwork and tribal regalia, masks, textiles and gemstones set in unique jewellery Handcrafted pieces.