

Abercrombie & Kent

**KENYA
COUNTRY
INFORMATION,
FACTS & ADVICE**



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KENYA

Located in Eastern Africa, Kenya lies astride the equator and shares her borders with Tanzania and Uganda. The country boasts of warm humid climate with diverse ecosystems, from snow-capped mountains, semi-arid desert regions and rainforests, to acacia-studded savannahs, flamingo lakes, white palm-fringed ocean beaches and coral reefs.

Kenya plays host to some of the best national parks and game reserves in Africa that offer a unique combination of exceptional game viewing. One of nature's most impressive displays of wildlife – the annual wildebeest migration which only happens in East Africa can be seen in the Maasai Mara ecosystem between July and October where it is estimated that over two million animals migrate in a year-round pattern, following the rain and greener pastures.

Kenya is home to a vibrant mix of colourful ethnic communities who share one common trait, their warmth and hospitality.

Getting into KENYA

This is a guide only – please check with your nearest Kenya Embassy to ensure you meet the correct requirements. Travellers should check for visa requirements pertaining to their citizenship, as entry requirements can vary.

All travellers to Kenya must obtain online visa via <http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html>. Visa on arrival is no longer possible.

All visitors are required to carry a passport that is valid for six months beyond the intended length of stay. There should be sufficient blank pages for entry stamps upon arrival.

It is imperative that every traveller arrives on tour with the proper documentation. It is the traveller's responsibility to obtain all documents that are necessary for admittance to the countries visited on his/her itinerary.

Keeping Healthy in KENYA

Malaria: Anti-Malarial precautions are an recommended when visiting Kenya. It is important that you check with a qualified health professional for the most current information concerning your travel itinerary and personal health history. In addition, other personal protective measures, such as the use of insect repellents, covering arms and legs after dusk and avoiding the use of scented products can help to reduce malaria risk.

Yellow Fever: If you are arriving in Kenya (or planning to re-enter) from a country where yellow fever is endemic, you are required to have a yellow fever vaccination administered at least ten (10) days before your arrival (or re-entry) into Kenya. If your travel itinerary requires you to have a yellow fever vaccination, you must ask your doctor to provide you with an "International Certificate of Vaccination" which should be carried with you while traveling to serve as proof that you have fulfilled the vaccination requirement. If proof of vaccination is required and you do not carry it with you, you may be denied entry into Kenya. Please note that, even if you are not required to obtain a yellow fever vaccination for your tour in Kenya, we recommend vaccination if you are traveling outside of urban areas.

Dengue Fever: Dengue is a mosquito-transmitted viral disease occurring chiefly in tropical and sub-tropical areas of the world and occasionally in East Africa. Mosquitos that transmit dengue fever, which is predominant in urban centres, are usually found near human dwellings and are often present indoors. Epidemic transmission (when international travellers are at greatest risk) is usually seasonal and occurs during and shortly after the rainy season. There is no vaccine for dengue therefore travellers should take adequate precautions against mosquito bites, including the use of an insect repellent containing approximately 30% of the active ingredient "DEET".

Cholera: The cholera vaccination affords only moderate and short-lived protection and health professionals do not routinely recommend a cholera vaccination for travel to or from an infected area. Be aware that, since cholera is a water-borne disease associated with areas of poor sanitation the best protection is to ensure good personal hygiene.

It is also recommended that all international travellers ensure that their tetanus, Hepatitis A and polio vaccines are up-to-date.

Avoid using tap water for drinking or brushing teeth. Most hotels, camps and lodges use boiled and filtered water or bottled water to make ice but if you have any concerns please ask the manager. Bottled water is provided in all properties and it is advisable to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated especially during the hot seasons.

It is also suggested that you bring a smaller traveller's kit with remedies for minor stomach ailments or motion sickness. You should include an adequate supply (in your hand luggage) of any prescribed medication you may require while traveling.

Travellers with physical disabilities and those who require frequent or on-going medical attention should advise Abercrombie & Kent of their health situation at the time of booking (or at the time such a situation occurs should this be after the reservation is made).

We do recommend that you take out comprehensive travel insurance to cover you in the event of a medical emergency.

Tipping

You are travelling on an independent itinerary and the cost of your program does not include gratuities. Tipping is not compulsory in Kenya, however, it is a customary practice that is greatly appreciated. Tipping is a very personal matter and should only be considered when the staff have gone above and beyond duty for you. Should you feel you would like to acknowledge their service, please consider the following as a rough guide, per person per day.

Type of Service	Group Size (Number of People)					
	1	2	3	4	5-9	10+
Tour Director	12-15	12-15	12-15	12-15	12-15	12-15
Driver	10	10	10	10	10	10
Hotel Porters	1	1	1	1	1	1
Private Mobile Tented Camping (staff tip box)	20	20	20	20	16	16
Permanent Lodges/Camps (staff tip box)	10-20	10-20	10-20	10-20	10-20	10-20

Please note: Currency is in USD

The above tipping guidelines are recommendations only and are not compulsory. Please use your own discretion in tipping, based on quality of service.

Restaurants

It is customary to add about 10% to the bill in restaurants, if the service has been satisfactory.

Taxis

Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped but they appreciate the fare being rounded up.

Porterage

If you are being transferred by an Abercrombie & Kent representative to a hotel, then porterage and tipping of porters is already included. If you are travelling with more than 2 pieces of baggage, an additional tip of USD1 per bag is recommended.

Guardian Angels

Transfer assistance is at your discretion but if a Guardian Angel performs a special service for you, it would be appropriate to tip him or her the same rate you would tip a hotel concierge for similar assistance.

It is customary to tip your driver-guide on the last day you are with him or her.

Talk the talk

Swahili is the official language in Kenya, although English is widely spoken and understood. Here are a few useful Swahili words and phrases to impress the locals:

English	Kiswahili
Hello	Jambo
Goodbye	Kwaheri
How are you?	Habari?
Good, fine	Mzuri (like the state, Missouri)
Please	Tafadhali
Thank you	Asante
Yes	Ndiyo
No	Hapana
Very much	Sana
May I come in?	Hodi?
Come in, near	Karibu

How much?, How many?	Ngapi?
How many shillings?	Shilingi ngapi?
What time is it? (How many hours?)	Saa ngapi?
Do you have tea (coffee) ready?	Iko chai (kahawa) tayari?
Bring drinking water, please	Lete maji ya kunyua tafadhali
Buffalo	Nyati
Cheetah	Duma
Elephant	Tembo
Giraffe	Twiga
Hippo	Kiboko
Leopard	Chui
Lion	Simba
Ostrich	Mbuni
Rhino	Kifaru
Zebra	Punda Milia
Wildebeest	Nyumbu

Weather

Coastal areas of Kenya tend to be hotter and more humid than inland areas but this is always tempered by ocean breezes. North of Nairobi (in the highlands region around Mt. Kenya and Aberdare National Park) it becomes cooler as the altitude increases enough to warrant wearing a sweater in the evening all year around. During the months of June, July, and August, it can be cold in these areas, with temperatures as low as 35°F (1.5°C). The northern frontier district (extending from Samburu to Kenya's northernmost borders) is an arid, desert-like region with slightly higher temperatures than the rest of the country. In the lower inland plateau areas (around Kisumu and Lake Victoria) temperatures are also warm and rainfall is spread fairly evenly throughout the year. While Kenya does not have distinct seasonal changes due to its proximity to the Equator, there are some subtle climatic variations at different times of the year.

December through March

These are the warmest months of the year (Kenya's "summertime"). Temperatures do not often exceed 90°F or 32°C however morning and evening temperatures are refreshingly cool with low humidity.

April and May

This season is normally characterized by heavy, intermittent rains. Regions at a higher altitude experience lengthy rains that pour in the afternoons and evenings.

June, July and August

Kenya's weather is coolest during these months, with lows in the upper 40's F/ 4°C and highs in the low 70's F/ 20's C. At this time of year the country is refreshingly green.

September, October, and November

This is a delightful time to visit East Africa, comparable to springtime in North America and Europe. The days are warmer, with lows in the mid-50's°F or mid-10's°C and highs in the mid-70's°F or mid-20's°C. Short, scattered rains fall in November to freshen the country and lay the dust, although they can sometimes be heavy.

This is a guideline only and unseasonal weather can occur so you should pack with a degree of flexibility in mind.

What to Pack

Casual and comfortable clothing is most useful. It is certainly not necessary to bring a separate change of clothing for each day and evening, and it is recommended that you keep luggage to a minimum for your own comfort and ease of transport, especially if you are using light aircraft transfers.

- Casual lightweight cotton, khaki or neutral coloured clothes for safari
- Fleece or sweater and a warm jacket for game drives or cool evenings
- Swimsuit, scarf or bandana, kanga or sarong
- Wide brimmed hat/cap
- Personal toiletries, sun barrier creams; lip balm and insect repellent
- Binoculars, camera, flashlight and accessories (including any batteries and extra memory cards)
- Sunglasses and prescription glasses
- Soft-sided luggage and fold-up daypack or shoulder pack to carry items
- Travel detergent
- Comfortable walking shoes with soft soles and beach sandals

Please note that all luxury hotels and most game lodges offer a same-day laundry service (at additional charges). This is a good reason not to pack too many clothes.

Avoiding the Baggage Blues

- If travelling on a flying safari please note that strict weight restrictions apply and these vary according to the type of aircraft. The recommended baggage dimensions and measurements for internal flights are 35 cm x 55 cm x 25 cm in soft bags. The total baggage allowance for each passenger, inclusive of hand baggage and cameras, is 15kgs.
- Excess baggage will only be carried at the sole discretion of the captain of the aircraft. If the payload of the aircraft and/or space permits (which will be determined at the time of boarding), the prevailing rate is US \$2.50 per kilo for carriage of freight (rates subject to change and is payable directly).
- Since the first option is not guaranteed, we HIGHLY RECOMMEND booking a 'freight' seat at a child fare (flat rate of \$580 total) if you anticipate having excess baggage. Purchasing a freight seat will allow for an extra 75kgs of weight and will be booked in advance of your flight to guarantee the space. Please note luggage storage facilities are available in Nairobi at no extra cost.
- Do NOT pack or bring prohibited items to the airport – check the airports relevant to your trip
- Please be aware that you will not be allowed to bring **plastic bags** into the country and any bags that you bring in with you will have to be handed over on arrival at the airport.
- Make sure there is contact information inside your bags as well as outside
- In case your luggage is delayed make sure you pack essential supplies such as medication, contact lenses, toiletries, etc. in your carry-on bag.
- Please be advised that regulations at most international points of arrival do not permit passengers to be assisted with baggage handling inside secured passenger areas.

Religion & Etiquette

Kenya is a predominantly Christian country with a large Muslim population in its coastal areas and modesty of dress is expected in these places. Slacks are entirely acceptable, but short skirts and bare arms should be avoided. For ladies, scarves must be worn over the head and all shoes removed when entering a mosque.

Electricity

Electricity in Kenya is based on English standards, meaning it is (usually) supplied at 220/240Volts, 50Hz. This means that all European electrical equipment should work, from laptop power supplies to mobile phone chargers. Wall sockets use an English 3 pin fused plug, which requires the use of travel adapters for those from other countries.

Many lodges will provide you with an adaptor in the room or offer the use of one when asking the reception. This is not a guaranteed service everywhere so you may want to bring your own. We urge our guests to always use a travel adapter with a 'surge protector' facility to protect your equipment, or to use special, stabilized power outlets.

Some places, such as tented camps, run on generators or batteries during the day, providing a limited supply of power, and use no electrical power at all during the night.

There is a 12V DC outlet for a phone charger in every safari vehicle. Please do not forget to bring your charger(s).

Photography

When taking a photograph of locals, it is customary to ask for permission. If you take photos of the local people like the Maasai, there is usually a negotiable fee for each person you are taking a photo of. Your driver will assist you to arrange this (some "professional posers" make a living this way!). It is forbidden to take pictures of certain buildings, such as police stations, airports or military structures. If you are unsure please ask your guide.

If you bring photographic equipment, make sure they are packed away in a dustproof camera bag. Make sure to bring additional batteries or the charger and an ample supply of memory cards. (It is better to bring several small memory cards than one big one in case one gets corrupted).

The **use of drones is not allowed in Kenya** without a specific license from the government. Please note that if you do bring a drone into the country it will be confiscated by a Customs Official on arrival and you may be subjected to a fine.

Money

Currency

In Kenya, the unit of currency is the Kenya Shilling. Notes are issued in denominations of 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1000 Shillings. Coins are issued in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20 and 40 Shillings.

Foreign Exchange

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in Kenya can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as hotels, banks and foreign exchange bureaus). Clients going directly on safari upon arrival in Nairobi may exchange money at the airport currency exchange if they wish. In general, we suggest that you limit the amount of money you convert into local currencies and exchange only what you think you will spend before leaving any foreign country.

US Dollars are accepted everywhere although avoid taking with you US dollar notes older than 2006 as these will not be accepted.

Traveller's Cheques

We strongly advise against traveller's cheques since you will not only have difficulty finding a place where they will be able to cash them, but they will also give you an unfavourable rate.

ATM

Travellers who wish to use their ATM card overseas should check with their own individual bank to verify whether the ATM card will be valid in a particular country.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted on a limited basis most hotels, restaurants and shops in larger cities accept at least one variety of major credit card such as Visa, MasterCard or American Express. Travellers who wish to use their ATM card overseas should check with their own individual bank to verify whether the ATM card will be valid in a particular country.

Time Zone

The time zone in Kenya is GMT +3 hours, throughout the year.

Shopping

Paintings, batiks and carved figurines of people and animals are among Kenya's most popular souvenir items. Locally-woven sisal baskets are durable and attractive and are sold at much lower prices than you will find in the American and European shops that have recently begun to import them. Some of the best indigenous artwork is found in Nairobi's smaller galleries and Nairobi is also a good place to purchase tailored safari clothing and colourful African fabrics. African jewellery is also popular with overseas visitors, particularly the beaded adornments of the Maasai people and pieces made of amber, Tanzanite and Tavorite. Soapstone carvings from the Kisii District are available in polished black (as well as their natural shades of grey and pink). Tribal artefacts (such as spears, shields, masks and gourds) are widely sold in shops and by street hawkers.

In places where prices are not marked, bargaining is usually an accepted practice.

As a courtesy to our clients, our office will, if requested, help refer you to a shop that carries the merchandise you are looking for. This is not intended as A&K's endorsement of the shop nor responsibility for merchandise (or shipping arrangements) purchased from the shop.

- **Bring your purchases home with you.** Unless you are prepared to wait up to a year to receive your merchandise, do not have it shipped - not even by air freight.
- **Do not purchase expensive goods of supposed high quality unless you are absolutely sure of what you are buying** (or unless you like the item enough to buy it even if it is not authentic or as valuable as you thought). Unless you are an expert in gems, antiques, artefacts etc. do not assume that the quality and/or value of your purchase is as represented by the vendor, even if you have been referred to the shop by A&K. ABERCROMBIE & KENT does not profess to employ experts in the quality and/or value of retail or wholesale merchandise.
- **Always take the time to read the charge slips for credit card purchases before you sign them.** This may seem obvious; but in the excitement of making a foreign purchase, shoppers sometimes overlook this and are unpleasantly surprised when they return home and are billed by the credit card company. Taking a few moments to review the charge slip before signing it (and computing the exchange rate to be sure you are charged the right amount) can save you headaches later.

For purchases made abroad that are being hand-carried home, keep all sales receipts with you (in your hand luggage). It is also suggested that you pack all of your foreign purchases together in one bag (separate from your other personal belongings). You might consider bringing some "bubble wrap" and string for packing any fragile merchandise you purchase while traveling.

Please note that the purchase of "national treasures" for export from any country is strictly illegal and that the onus rests entirely on the buyer. In addition, U.S. and Canadian Customs prohibit the importation of any products made from endangered species of wildlife. If you are approached by someone offering this type of "curio" for sale, do not buy it. International agreements are such that, if you are caught with such a restricted item, it will almost certainly lead to prosecution.

Local Food & Drink

Many travellers are surprised by the abundance, variety and quality of food served in Kenya. Most fruits and vegetables are grown locally. These include pineapple, papaya, mangoes, bananas, pears, strawberries, avocados, green beans and artichokes. A full breakfast is served on safari each day after you return from your morning game drive. For lunch, you may be served a hot meal or a buffet of cold salads and meats. Dinner on safari in Kenya may include anything from fresh and delicious local seafood to English roast beef or Molo lamb. These are followed by tempting desserts.

Nairobi and Mombasa have excellent restaurants that feature a wide range of international cuisines, including French, Italian, Indian, Cantonese, Arabic and seafood. Your guide will be happy to make recommendations. Meals in Nairobi are generally excluded from the tour cost so that you may have the opportunity to dine when and where you like.

Kenyan coffee and tea are excellent and many varieties of soda and fruit juice are available and inexpensive. The local beers Tusker and White Cap are quite good. Wine and liquor are nearly all imported and are heavily taxed, making them relatively expensive (as are imported bottled waters). If you favour a particular brand of spirits, you may want to use your duty-free liquor allowance to purchase a bottle en route to Tanzania for your personal consumption.

We recommend you try some typical Kenyan cuisine

Nyama Choma or roasted meat – this is the ultimate Kenyan delicacy. Any time is 'choma' time and Kenyans will find any excuse to converge in groups for a session of *nyama choma*. Preferably washed down with a cold beer, guests can find a wide selection 'choma' dens all over the country. Goat meat is most preferred for roasting as the flesh is fairly tender and is prepared over charcoal with just salted water for basting the meat. It takes an average of 45 minutes to get ready and served with a relish of *kachumbari* (salad) and a choice of *ugali* (a national dish made from maize meal) or potatoes. A fork and knife are not used to eat *nyama choma* instead the meal is most enjoyed when eaten by hand.

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