

COUNTRY INFORMATION, FACTS & ADVICE

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, officially the Republic of Zimbabwe, is a landlocked country located in Southern Africa, between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers. It is bordered by South Africa to the south, Botswana to the southwest, Zambia to the northwest and Mozambique to the east. The capital is Harare. Zimbabwe achieved de jure sovereignty from the United Kingdom in April 1980, following 14 years as an unrecognised state under the conservative white minority government of Rhodesia, which unilaterally declared independence in 1965.

Zimbabwe has three official languages: English, Shona and Sindebele. The present territory was first demarcated by Cecil Rhodes of the British South Africa Company, becoming a self-governing colony as Southern Rhodesia in 1923.

Experience Zimbabwe's ethereal beauty reflected in its wide open spaces with a never-ending canopy of sky, forested escarpments, national parks and game reserves teeming with wildlife and cascading waterfalls.

The town of **Victoria Falls** is home to "the smoke that thunders" and also known as the adrenalin capital of Africa. **Hwange National Park** is the largest park in Zimbabwe and a haven for herds of elephant, buffalo and large concentrations of giraffe. Beautiful **Mana Pools**, situated on the Zambezi River is a world Heritage site and one of Zimbabwe's big five parks. **Great Zimbabwe** features ancient ruins dating back to 1200AD and is located in the southern part of the country.

Getting into Zimbabwe

Please check with your nearest local embassy or high commission for the most up to date information before travelling. Passport holders are responsible for obtaining the required documentation applicable for entry.

Visitors may be required to obtain a Visa depending on nationality. Please note visas are not available on arrival.

- Nationalities that require a visa: <https://www.evisa.gov.zw/regime>
- Apply for a visa: <https://www.evisa.gov.zw/home>

KAZA UNIVISA: Allows multiple entries into Zimbabwe, Zambia and day trips to Botswana and is valid for 30 days. Depending on Nationality, Travellers can obtain a KAZA UNIVISA either prior to arrival or on arrival at port of entry.

- Nationalities eligible for KAZA UNIVISA: <https://www.victoriafalls-guide.net/univisa-zimbabwe-zambia.html>.
- Apply for a KAZA UNIVISA: <https://www.evisa.gov.zw/home>

All visitors are required to carry a passport that is valid for six months beyond the intended length of stay. Passports should have at least 3 blank pages next to each other per entry.

Travelling with children

Regulations aimed at improving the safety of children travelling in and out of Namibia and Botswana have been implemented. All children under the age of 18 will require an unabridged birth certificate together with a valid passport when travelling to or from any of the above-mentioned countries, as well as travellers in transit with a transit visa. The following documents will be required when travelling:

Child and both parents

- An unabridged birth certificate (UBC)
- A valid passport for the child

Child and one parent

Parent must produce

- An unabridged birth certificate (UBC)
- A valid passport for the child
- A court order (where applicable) / death certificate (of any deceased parent reflected on the UBC) / affidavit confirming the absent parent has given permission for the child to travel.
- Certified copies of both parents' ID / passport.

Child and guardian

Guardian must produce

- An unabridged birth certificate (UBC)
- A valid passport for the child
- A court order (where applicable) / death certificate (of deceased parent/s reflected on the UBC) / affidavit confirming the parents have given permission for the child to travel.
- Copies of parents / guardian ID / passport.
- Contact details of parents / guardian

Child unaccompanied

- An unabridged birth certificate
- A valid passport
- A court order (where applicable) / death certificate (of deceased parent/s reflected on the UBC) / affidavit from both parents or legal guardian confirming permission to travel.
- A letter from the person who will receive the child including their full contact details and residential address and a certified copy of their ID / passport.
- Contact details of parents / guardian.

Keeping Healthy in Zimbabwe

It is important that you check with a qualified health professional for the most current information concerning your travel itinerary and personal health history.

Anti-Malarial precautions are an absolute necessity when visiting the game parks in the region. It is important that you check with a qualified health professional for the most current information concerning your travel itinerary and personal health history.

The sun in the southern hemisphere is extremely strong - do wear an effective sunscreen and hat during the summer. It is advisable to avoid the noonday sun. Recommended SPF is 30.

Throughout Southern Africa it is safe to eat all foods and drink tap water in cities and towns. Purified water in flasks or bottled water is provided at game lodges throughout the region. 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 A&K 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

Tipping is not compulsory. You are travelling on an independent itinerary and the cost of your program does not include gratuities. Tipping is a very personal matter and should only be

considered when the staff have gone above and beyond for you. Should you feel you would like to acknowledge their service, please consider the following as a rough guide, per day.

Type of Service	Number of guests travelling					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tour Director	15	30	45	60	75	90
Driver / Guide (Half day)	8	16	24	32	40	48
Driver / Guide (Full day)	12	24	36	48	60	72
Hotel Porters	5	10	15	20	25	30
Professional Guide	15	30	45	60	75	90
Ranger	15	30	45	60	75	90
Tracker	8	16	24	32	40	48
Lodge staff	12	24	36	48	60	72

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 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 from the airport to a hotel, then porterage and tipping of porters is already included. Porterage and tipping of porters for transfers from one hotel to another is as above.

Blue Train and Rovos Rail

Tip at the end of your journey USD 15 per person per day. These gratuities may be placed in a central box or an envelope, which will be provided.

Talk the talk

English	Shona
Welcome	Mauya
Hello	Mhoro (sg) Mhoro (pl)
Good morning	Mangwanani
Good afternoon	Masikati
Good night	Urare zvakanaka (sg) Mmurare Zvakanaka (pl)
Goodbye	Sarai Svakanaka (sg) Sariayi Svakanaka (pl)
Good luck	Uve nemhanza yakanaka (sg) Muve nemhanza yakanaka (pl)
Have a nice day	Uve nezuva rakanaka (sg) Muve nezuvua rakanaka (pl)
I don't understand	Handisi kunyaso nzwisisa
Excuse me	Pamusoro (sg) Pamusoroyi (pl)
How much is this?	Chinoita marii?
Please	Ndapota
Thank you	Waita zvako (sg) Maita zvenyu (pl)

Weather

Summer (October – April)

Days are hot and generally sunny in the morning with possible afternoon thunderstorms. Daytime temperatures can rise to 30°C (86 °F) and night temperatures drop to around 14°C (57.2 °F). The temperatures given are those for the main centres but it is considerably warmer all year round in the low-lying areas such as Kariba, Victoria Falls, and the Zambezi Valley. The rainy season runs from November to March, although the Eastern Highlands are damp for most of the year.

Winter (May – September)

Days are dry, sunny and cool to warm while evening temperatures drop sharply. Daytime temperatures generally reach 20°C (68°F) and can drop to as low as 5°C (41°F) at night. Please note that exceptionally cold spells can occur (although this is the exception rather than the rule) so it is recommended to bring appropriate clothing, just in case!

What to Pack

Casual, comfortable wash and wear clothing is most useful. All hotels offer extremely quick laundry turnaround, usually within a couple of hours. 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.

- Blouses with long sleeves (even in summer, they will protect you from the sun and the mosquitos)
- Cotton t-shirts and tops
- Shorts for the day. Jeans or chinos for evenings and cooler days
- Fleece, sweater or warm jacket for game drives
- Comfortable walking shoes (hiking boots are not necessary)
- Sun block, sunglasses and hat
- Camera, binoculars
- Swimwear
- A small alarm clock

If dining at the Livingstone Room at Victoria Falls Hotel, the gentlemen are required to wear jacket & tie and the ladies are required to wear smart dress.

Layers are most practical for the fluctuating day/night temperatures of Zimbabwe. It is advisable that your clothing be as neutral as possible in the bush (beige and khaki is ideal). If you wear prescription glasses or contact lenses, we recommend that you bring an extra pair of glasses or a copy of the prescription.

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!

Please take note of the below baggage restrictions at OR Tambo International Airport

- Only regular-shaped bags will be allowed to be checked in. This means that the bags must have at least one flat surface to be accepted
- Round or irregular-shaped bags will not be allowed
- Bags with long straps will not be allowed

Passengers who try to check in bags that don't conform to these rules will have the option of having their baggage wrapped with one flat side at airport-approved baggage wrapping stations.

Religion & Etiquette

It is estimated that between 60 and 70 percent of Zimbabweans belong to mainstream Christian denominations such as the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist Churches; however, over the

years a variety of indigenous churches and groups have emerged from these mainstream denominations.

While the country is overwhelmingly Christian, the majority of the population continues to believe, to varying degrees, in indigenous religions as well. Religious leaders also reported an increase in adherence to traditional religion and healers.

Islam accounts for 1% of the population while the remainder of the population includes practitioners of Greek Orthodoxy, Judaism, and traditional indigenous religions. There are also small numbers of Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is, and atheists.

While political elites tend to be associated with one of the established Christian churches, there is no correlation between membership in any religious group and political or ethnic affiliation.

Foreign missionary groups are present in the country.

Money

Currency

Zimbabwe uses US Dollar as its currency.

Banking hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 08h00 – 15h00

Wednesday 08.00 – 13.00

Saturday 08.00 – 11.30

Credit cards

We recommend having enough cash on hand as withdrawing cash from an ATM or bank is not something you can rely on. Visa and MasterCard are generally accepted at most hotels and restaurants.

Time Zone

GMT + Two (2) hours

Shopping

Zimbabwean specialties are the *Batonka* stool seats, which are traditionally carved from one piece of wood. Another specialty is a toilet seat made from *Mukwa* wood. These can often be purchased at hardware stores. Along roadsides, one finds row upon row of soapstone and wooden carved items. Haggling is expected and one normally pays less than half the asking price. Crochet garments, tablecloths and bedspreads are a relatively new craft. Precious and semi-precious stones, polished and/or set, are widely available.

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.

Local Food & Drink

Like in many African countries, the majority of Zimbabweans depend on a few staple foods. *Mealie meal*, also known as cornmeal, is used to prepare *sadza* or *isitshwala*, as well as porridge known as *bota* or *ilambazi*. *Sadza* is made by mixing the cornmeal with water to produce a thick paste/porridge. After the paste has been cooking for several minutes, more cornmeal is added to thicken the paste.

This is usually eaten as lunch or dinner, usually with sides such as gravy, vegetables (spinach, *chomolia*, and spring greens/collard greens), beans and meat that has been stewed, grilled, roasted or sundried. *Sadza* is also commonly eaten with curdled milk (sour milk), commonly known as *lacto* (*mukaka wakakora*), or dried Tanganyika sardine, known locally as *kapenta* or *matemba*.

Bota is a thinner porridge, cooked without the additional cornmeal and usually flavoured with peanut butter, milk, butter, or jam. *Bota* is usually eaten for breakfast.

Graduations, weddings, and any other family gatherings will usually be celebrated with the killing of a goat or cow, which will be barbecued or roasted by the family.

Afrikaner recipes are popular though they are a small group (10%) within the white minority group. *Biltong*, a type of jerky, is a popular snack, prepared by hanging bits of spiced raw meat to dry in the shade. *Boerewors* is served with *sadza*. It is a long sausage, often well-spiced, composed of beef rather than pork, and barbecued.

Since Zimbabwe was a British colony, some people there have adopted some colonial-era English eating habits. For example, most people will have porridge in the morning, as well as 10 o'clock tea (midday tea). They will have lunch, often leftovers from the night before, freshly cooked *sadza*, or sandwiches (which is more common in the cities). After lunch, there is usually 4 o'clock tea that is served before dinner. It is not uncommon for tea to be had after dinner.

Rice, pasta, and potato based foods (french fries and mashed potato) also make up part of the Zimbabwean cuisine. A local favourite is rice cooked with peanut butter which is taken with thick gravy, mixed vegetables and meat. A potpourri of peanuts known as *nzungu*, boiled and sundried maize, black-eyed peas known as *nyemba*, *bambara* groundnut known as *nyimo* makes a traditional dish called *mutakura*. *Mutakura* can also be the above ingredients cooked individually. One can also find local snacks such as *maputi* (roasted/popped maize kernels similar to popcorn), roasted and salted peanuts, sugar cane, sweet potato, pumpkin, indigenous fruit like horned melon, *gaka*, *adansonia*, *mawuyu*, *uapaca kirkiana*, Sugar plum/*Mazhanje*, and many others.

Communication and electrical supply

To assist you should you need to be reached while traveling, a complete listing of hotel contact information will be provided with your final tour materials.