



FAQ

Hills of Africa

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We want you to have a relaxing and stress-free holiday. To help you prepare, we have outlined some practical information and traveling tips in a Question & Answer Format.

PASSPORTS – WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MY PASSPORT?

You must have a passport that is valid for at least **six months after** date of travel; anything under six months is at the traveler's own risk. *It is also ESSENTIAL that you **have at least two blank pages in your passport per country visited** to allow for visa stamps.* For example, if you are visiting three different countries you should have at least six blank pages. If there is insufficient space in the passport, entry will be denied and you are likely to be detained, pending return to your country of origin. Please leave photocopies of passports and international tickets with someone at home and send us a scanned copy, just in case.

In addition, if a minor (a child below the age of 18) is traveling with someone other than his/her father, mother or legal guardian, a **letter of consent** needs to be signed by the father/mother or guardian and kept on hand throughout travel. For example, grandparents traveling with their minor grandchildren would require a letter of consent. We can help in drafting the appropriate letter of consent. If the traveler does not want to get the letter, please be advised that you are doing so at your own risk.

Please see the next section for important regulations regarding traveling with a minor in Botswana or Namibia

WHAT REQUIREMENTS DO I HAVE FOR TRAVELING WITH A MINOR IN BOTSWANA OR NAMIBIA?

There are strict documentation requirements to follow if you are traveling with a minor in Botswana or Namibia:

Minors traveling with their biological parents:

Parents of the minor must present an unabridged birth certificate of the child, reflecting:

- Particulars of the child - date and place of birth, gender, and full name
- Particulars of the parents - full names, date and place of birth, and citizenship at the time of birth
- If there is a difference in the names of the parents of their biological child, it is important for the parent whose surname is different to get a sworn affidavit and travel with that to stipulate why the name is different

Minors traveling with one biological parent or two non-biological parents:

Parent of the minor must present an unabridged birth certificate of the child (as described above) and:

- Consent from the other parent as listed on the birth certificate, in the form of an affidavit (Hills of Africa can provide a sample)
- A court order, granting full parental rights and responsibilities or legal guardianship in respect to the child, if he/she is the parent or legal guardian of the child OR
- Notarized copy of adoption papers, showing full details of adoptive parents OR
- Where applicable, a death certificate of the other parent registered on the birth certificate

Minors traveling with someone not his/her biological parent or legal guardian

Person/s traveling with a minor that is not his/her biological child must present all of the following:

- A notarized copy of the child's unabridged birth certificate (as described above)
- An affidavit from the parents or legal guardian of the child, confirming permission to travel with the child (Hills of Africa can provide a sample)
- Notarized copies of valid passports for each parent or legal guardian of the child
- Contact details (full names, physical address/s, telephone and cell numbers) of the parents or legal guardian of the child

Minors traveling unaccompanied

A minor traveling unaccompanied must present all of the following:

- Proof of consent from parents or legal guardian in the form of a letter of affidavit for the minor to travel into or depart from Africa. In the case that one parent or legal guardian has sole custody, the letter or affidavit should be accompanied by a notarized copy of any court order issued to him/her in terms of which he/she has been granted full parental rights and responsibilities in respect of the child
- A notarized letter from the person who is to receive the child in Africa, containing his/her residential address and contact details where the child will be staying
- A notarized copy of the valid passport or identity document and visa or permanent residence permit of the person who is to receive the child in Africa
- Contact details (full names, physical address/s, telephone and cell numbers) of the parents or legal guardian of the minor

DO I NEED A VISA?

(Please read the section regarding your region/s of travel very carefully.)

Important Note: This is a guide only - please check with your nearest Consulate for up-to-date information. When obtaining a VISA on arrival, please make sure you have EXACT amount in CASH, as no change will be given.

The Hills of Africa team is also available to assist you with pre-application for required visas, for a service fee of \$100 per person.

Check with your airline in case you have connecting flights overseas as part of your journey. It may be the case that countries you pass through en-route to your destination may require a separate transit visa. Please refer to visa requirements of the specific country.

Visa details listed below are specific to US passport holders. For other nationalities please contact Hills of Africa Travel for assistance with your specific entry requirements.

Southern Africa

A visa is not required for US citizens living in the United States for **Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa or Zambia**. Visas are required for **Madagascar and Zimbabwe**, which can be obtained at *point of entry*. If you are traveling on Rovos Rail, you may need to get your visa in advance.

Visa fees for US Citizens are as follows:

Madagascar: Travelers visiting Madagascar for up to 15 days will not need to pay a visa fee to enter the country. However, a Euro10 fee for border control formalities will be required on entry.

Otherwise - **USD37** per person, valid for 30 days, available upon arrival

Zimbabwe: **USD30** per person single entry, **USD45** per person double entry, **USD55** for multiple entry. Single and double entry visas are available upon arrival, but multiple entry visas must be obtained prior to arrival.

Kindly be advised that each time a client exits Zimbabwe the visa expires. If you have day trips outside of Zimbabwe (this may be especially true if you are staying in the Victoria Falls area), you should pay for a double entry visa on arrival. Should you only get a single-entry visa, you will have to pay for another visa on re-entry.

Uganda/Rwanda

A visa is required for US citizens living in the United States for **Rwanda and Uganda**.

Visa fees for US Citizens are as follows:

Rwanda: **USD50** per person single entry or **USD70** for multiple entry, available upon arrival.

Visas for Rwanda may be obtained prior to travel via <https://irembo.gov.rw>. Visas are only valid for 30 days from date of issue, so do not apply TOO early. **Hills of Africa Travel will provide details for the E-visa application process.**

Uganda: **USD50** single entry or **USD100** multiple entry, payable upon arrival.

Visas for Uganda may be obtained prior to travel via <https://visas.immigration.go.ug>. Visas are only valid for 90 days from date of issue, so do not apply TOO early. **Hills of Africa Travel will provide details for the E-visa application process.**

Kenya/Tanzania

Visas are not required for US citizens living in the United States for **Kenya**.

However, you must have an **Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA)**

*****see notes below about pre-application for ETAs.**

ETA fees for US Citizens are as follows:

Kenya: USD30 (+fees), available via pre-application.

Kenya requires applying for your ETA- at least 3 days prior to travel. The pre-application/payment process is completed online, providing confirmation of approval to obtain your ETA. Visit www.etakenya.go.ke/en and begin the application process. ETAs can be obtained no more than 90 days prior to travel.

Hills of Africa Travel will provide details for the ETA application process.

NOTE: RE-ENTERING KENYA – Travelers may re-enter Kenya on a single entry ETA, when returning from Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda or Burundi, as long as you are only transiting, not leaving the airport.

A visa is required for US citizens living in the United States for **Tanzania**.

******see notes below about pre-application for visas.***

Visa fees for *US Citizens* are as follows:

Tanzania: USD100

NOTE: *We strongly recommend that you pre-apply for your Tanzania visa prior to travel* via <https://eservices.immigration.go.tz/visa>. The Tanzania visa is a multi-entry visa by virtue of a bi-lateral government agreement, and is good for one year from entry.

Hills of Africa Travel will provide details for the E-visa application process.

NOTE: RE-ENTERING TANZANIA ON SINGLE ENTRY VISAS – Travelers may re-enter Tanzania on single entry visas when returning from Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda or Burundi, as long as the visa is still within valid dates. A multiple entry visa is not required. However, we do suggest having sufficient cash to cover re-entry in the event this agreement is reversed.

East Africa Tourist Visa - EATV (Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda combined visa):

Cost of the East Africa visa is USD100, and allows travel between Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda with the same multiple entry visa. The holder of the East Africa Tourist Visa shall enter the region from the country that issued the visa and move within the two other countries without applying for another visa or paying another visa fee. ***Please contact Hills of Africa Travel for further details regarding this obtaining this visa prior to travel.*** This multi-country visa is available via any of these country's diplomatic missions in the United States.

WHAT ARE THE ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS?

Please be sure to contact us with any questions you may have. All travelers require a valid passport, a return ticket to your country of origin, and sufficient funds to cover your stay. Most African countries have stringent entry regulations and it is illegal to enter or leave the country with anything other than nominal amounts of local currency.

You must have a passport that is valid for at least six months after departure from the last country visited; anything under six months is at the traveler's own risk. *It is also ESSENTIAL that you have at least two blank pages per country visited in your passport to allow for visa stamps.*

Botswana Border Crossing Advisory: Please be informed that in a measure to protect Botswana's wildlife, all passengers entering Botswana by *land* border crossings will be required to walk over specially designed disinfectant cloths. This will not harm any footwear but will go a long way to protecting Botswana's wildlife. As you proceed through passport controls, you will walk over special disinfectant cloths. There is no need to unpack bags and present any spare shoes. The disinfectant will not damage the shoes at all, and by the time you have walked back to your transfer vehicle it should leave no marks. You will simply notice a white 'chalkish' mark on your shoe - which will easily wipe clean with a cloth.

Malawi International Departure Tax: When leaving Malawi on an international flight, a USD30 per person departure tax is levied. This airport departure tax may be included in your airline ticket price. Please be sure to check your ticket receipt when booked. If necessary, vouchers for the departure tax can be paid for at the airport in US Dollars cash.

WHAT ABOUT AIRPORT TAXES/CHARGES OR OTHER FEES?

If you are traveling on an international carrier, it is most common that airport or departure taxes will be included in your airline ticket price. However, if you are traveling on a charter flight, you are sometimes required to pay on the ground in the country you are visiting. Hills of Africa is happy to help you estimate your costs for any airport taxes or other charges as listed below. *Please note, all taxes/fees are subject to change.*

Southern Africa

Mozambique:

Helicopter Airport Taxes of USD12 per person/per way (please have in exact USD Cash)

Zambia:

Departure and Security Taxes are generally built into the ticket price on commercial flights; however, these may need to be paid at the airport for charter flights.

Aviation Infrastructure and Development charge (AID): May be applicable at Lusaka (LUN), Ndola (NLA), Mfuwe (MFU), and Livingstone (LVI) airports and will be payable direct to the NAACL airport offices, along with departure and security taxes. It is a flat rate for adults, children, and infants.

Domestic Departures: USD8 departure tax + USD3 security tax + USD5 AID = **USD16 per person**

International Departures: USD30 departure tax + USD5 security tax + USD10 AID = **USD45 per person**

Zimbabwe:

Aviation Infrastructural Development Fund (AIDF) Airport Tax - Applies to all manned airport departures (not bush airstrips), including Victoria Falls, Harare, Kariba, Hwange Main, Bulawayo, and Chiredzi (Buffalo Range). Charter flights- pilot will collect the funds from passengers.

Zimbabwe domestic flights: USD10 departure tax + USD5 AIDEF tax = **USD15 per person**

International flights: USD35 departure tax + USD15 AIDEF tax = **USD50 per person**

Tanzania/Zanzibar:

Infrastructure Levy: USD 5 per person per night to be paid direct by guest at his / her hotel in Zanzibar

Infrastructure Tax: TZS 2000 (USD 1) per person to be paid direct by passenger on departure at the airports / seaports in Zanzibar to any destination within the United Republic of Tanzania (domestic - e.g. to Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Selous etc). Airport Safety Fee for passengers traveling outside the United Republic of Tanzania is usually included in the passenger ticket.

WHAT IS THE SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)?

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Please visit <https://step.state.gov/step/> for more information or to enroll in this program prior to travel.

Canada offers a similar registration program for Canadian citizens living or traveling abroad. This free service allows the government of Canada to notify you in case of an emergency abroad or a personal emergency at home. The service also enables you to receive important information before or during a natural disaster or civil unrest.

Please visit <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration> for more information or to enroll in this program prior to travel.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS?

Below are contact details for the diplomatic missions in the US, should you wish to contact them. A detailed contact list of Diplomatic Missions and US embassies abroad will be included in your final travel documents.

Botswana	212-889-2277	www.botswanaembassy.org
Kenya	202 387-6101	www.kenyaembassydc.org
Madagascar	202-265 5525	www.madagascar-embassy.org
Malawi	202-721-0270	www.malawiembassy-dc.org
Mozambique	202-293-7146	usa.embamoc.gov.mz
Namibia	202-986-0540	www.namibianembassyusa.org
South Africa	202-232-4400	www.saembassy.org
Rwanda	202-232-2882	www.rwandaembassy.org
Tanzania	202-939-6125/7	www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org

Uganda	202-726 4758	www.ugandaembassy.com
Zambia	202-265-9717	www.zambiaembassy.org
Zimbabwe	202-332-7100	www.zimembassydc.gov.zw

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS? WHAT SHOTS DO I NEED?

We are here to help advise you on what vaccinations and medications you should have before you depart on your holiday, but it is important to talk to your personal physician or travel clinic before you go. You can also visit the Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov) or Passport Health (www.passporthealthusa.com) for more information.

Any personal medical supplies must be brought if you are asthmatic, diabetic, etc. **NOTE:** For medications that are questionable as to whether they will be allowed in the country, please bring a valid prescription and letter, stating the medical need for the medication.

We also recommend bringing a spare pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses, if used. Please advise us if you have any specific health restrictions. The main towns and cities have normal chemist facilities (pharmacies) and doctors with internationally recognized degrees.

Useful Contacts: The Center for Disease Control provides current information on health conditions in the various countries (Tel: 800-232-4636, Fax: 888-232-6348, web: www.cdc.gov).

Vaccinations: The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following vaccines. See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for them to take effect:

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG)
- Hepatitis B if you might be exposed to blood (for example, healthcare workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than six months, or be exposed through medical treatment
- Rabies, if you come into direct contact with wild or domestic animals
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries
- Booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults, as needed

Malaria: Malaria is always a concern when traveling in Africa. Malaria tends to be more rampant in densely populated malarial areas. As most camps are in remote locations, the chances of contracting malaria are slim, but preventative measures are strongly advised. Expert opinion differs regarding the best approach to preventing malaria, so seek the advice of a trusted physician. The most common malaria pills are taken once a week, and the dosage starts two weeks prior to entering the malaria area and continues until four weeks after departing. When purchasing malaria pills, please tell your doctor or pharmacist which countries you intend to visit.

It is important to bear in mind that malaria may be contracted despite taking tablets, especially in areas where chloroquine resistance has been reported. One of the best ways to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes is to use insect repellents liberally and often, especially from dusk onwards. Additional measures to help prevent contact with mosquitoes include covering up at sundown, sleeping under a mosquito net, and wearing long-sleeve

clothing and long trousers in the evenings. Camps and lodges provide guests with insecticides and/or mosquito coils for use in the tents. Please use them.

AIDS: The AIDS virus is prevalent throughout Africa and thus we recommend the normal precautions.

Yellow Fever:

The yellow fever virus is found in tropical and subtropical areas of Africa and Central/South America. The virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Yellow fever is a very rare cause of illness in U.S. travelers, however to prevent getting sick from yellow fever, use insect repellent, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and get vaccinated.

The **International Certificate of Vaccination for Yellow Fever** is:

- *required* in all countries **ONLY IF** you have traveled from/through a known Yellow Fever area/country in the past 6 months. This includes travel in Africa or Central/South America
- *required* in Uganda and Rwanda.
- *required* if traveling between Kenya & Tanzania, or combining these countries with other destinations.

Please be certain to arrange for Yellow Fever vaccination at least two weeks prior to travel. You will want to keep your Yellow Fever vaccination certificate with your passport at all times.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Countries may change their vaccination requirements without notice. In some instances, border agents may use their discretion to require on-site vaccination, despite officially stated requirements

Further details can be found via www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/index.html or www.iamat.org/risks/yellow-fever

Medical Services: Any necessary personal medical supplies must be brought if you are asthmatic, diabetic, etc. If medical assistance is given, doctors and hospitals require immediate payment. We also recommend bringing a spare pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses, if used. Please advise us if you have any specific health restrictions. The main towns and cities have normal chemist facilities (pharmacies) and doctors with internationally recognized degrees. In lesser-developed areas, medical facilities are limited and medicines may be unavailable. It is highly advisable to obtain travel/medical insurance prior to travel.

Sun: The sun is very hot in Africa so we urge you to wear a hat and use sunscreen.

Water: We advise that you only drink water that comes from purified sources (all town water is purified) and bottled water, which is readily available.

Bilharzia: Bilharzia is a disease caused by tiny parasites (small snails) present in lakes, rivers, and dams. There is no prophylactic available against Bilharzia, which is treated by drugs or an injection. The condition can be unpleasant so it's better not to swim in rivers or streams where the water is stagnant.

Dietary: If you have any dietary requirements, please make sure we know well in advance of your trip so we can let all the properties know. Very specialized food items may not be available locally.

HOW DO I DEAL WITH MONEY AND BANKING?

Most establishments accept international credit cards as a standard form of payment - primarily **Visa or Master Card**; American Express is not always accepted. Where USD cash is not an accepted cash currency, you will need cash in the local currency for tipping, shopping in markets and informal meals (like a local sandwich shop). **In most countries, you will be able to visit an ATM (remember your PIN) at the airport upon arrival**, so exchanging currency before you depart is not necessary. ATMs are easily accessible in most major cities and areas. Cash is also accepted in all hotels, restaurants, and shops. We recommend bringing small denominations of cash for purchases of curios, drinks, and any small extras on site.

Typically, you will get a better exchange rate if you use a credit card versus cash. BUT, ***before traveling, it's a good idea to contact your credit card company*** to 1) let them know you will be traveling abroad and 2) ask if they charge a "transaction fee" for every international charge. This fee can add up quickly if you are putting all your expenses on the card. Most of us have several cards in our wallet. By knowing which card to use, you can save yourself the shock of an unexpected expense. **Please never let your credit card out of your sight to be run through a machine. Make sure your eyes are on it at all times.**

Please note: For exchange purposes, US\$ dollar bills smaller than USD100 may attract a less favorable rate of exchange and older notes are not accepted by hotels, banks, and others. The reason for this is there are a huge amount of imitation/fake US\$ notes in some countries, so only the new notes are widely accepted.

For tipping and shopping, bring a mixture of denominations: \$5's, \$10's, \$20's and some \$1's. ***But be sure the notes are in good condition - not torn, soiled or written on.*** Also, never exchange money unless at a hotel cashier or in an established official bank or Bureau de Change.

Please avoid using traveler's checks and personal checks as gratuities. Guides and staff may find them very hard to cash as they can only be processed through bank accounts. US\$ cash is the easiest foreign currency to use in most destinations.

LOCAL CURRENCIES

Southern Africa

Botswana: *Botswana Pula* - USD is accepted for tipping. Only carry newer USD notes (2007 and on). US Dollar notes that are dated 2006 or before will no longer be exchanged.

Madagascar: *Ariary* - Madagascar is primarily a cash-driven economy. Some high-end establishments catering to tourists accept credit cards, but most shops and restaurants are cash only. The currency is Ariary. Although the government changed the currency from the Malagasy Franc (FMG) to the Ariary several years ago, many Malagasy still think in terms of FMG. When talking about prices, it is important to clarify whether the amounts specified are in Ariary or FMG (1 Ariary = 5 FMG). ATMs are available in large cities, including inside the international terminal at Antananarivo airport. US Dollars are not widely accepted. Tipping should be done in Ariary, not USD.

Malawi: *Malawi Kwacha* – USD is widely used and is accepted for tipping.

Mozambique: *Mozambique Meticals* – USD and South Africa Rand are widely used and are accepted for tipping.

Namibia: *Namibian Dollar* - South African Rand is also accepted. USD is not an accepted currency.

South Africa: *South African Rand* – USD is acceptable for tipping, but other cash purchases/payments should be made in Rand.

Zambia: *Zambian Kwacha*- USD is acceptable for tipping, but other cash purchases/payments should be made in Kwacha.

Zimbabwe: *US Dollar and Zimbabwe Zig* While it is not advised to carry large amounts of cash, please note that credit and debit cards are not always widely accepted. Please DO NOT expect to withdraw cash from local ATMs. ***Be sure you enter the country with sufficient funds to cover restaurants and extra activities as there is not always access to cash.*** We recommend **USD200** to cover extra activities & park fees that have not been pre-booked, or to cover any shopping and additional charges per person while at Victoria Falls. It is advisable to have small denomination notes, as change is rarely available (\$1s, \$5s, and \$10s).

Uganda/Rwanda:

USD is accepted throughout Uganda and Rwanda for tips. For other purchases you should exchange USD to get the appropriate local currency. ***Your guide will assist with this process.*** Please be aware that correct change may not be given.

Rwanda: *Rwandan Franc* - US Dollars or Euros are suggested currency to use in cash for tipping. The only useful bank branch in the country is Banque de Kigali in the capital, which offers cash advances on credit cards and can change traveler's checks, neither of which is possible in the provinces. There are ATMs in Kigali, but they are not yet wired to an international network. Credit cards can be used in some up-market hotels and restaurants in Kigali. Bureau de change – which are mostly in Kigali – offer slightly better exchange rates than banks. Moneychangers hang around central Kigali and usually give a slightly better rate, but count your money carefully. All banks and most bureau de change are closed on Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Uganda: *Ugandan Shilling* - USD is acceptable for tipping, is widely used and easy to exchange. There are numerous Forex Bureaux and banks in the capital and the main towns. Credit cards are accepted in major hotels and restaurants, but generally it is best to carry cash (**shillings**) upcountry while on safari.

Tanzania/Kenya:

USD is accepted throughout Kenya and Tanzania for tips and other purchases. Please be aware that correct change may not be given. ***It is not necessary to obtain local currency in Kenya or Tanzania.***

Tanzania: *Tanzanian Shilling* – Credit cards (Visa, American Express, and MasterCard) are accepted in most of the hotels and lodges and the larger established curio shops, but not in many camps, nor at most airport coffee/snack shops. Most establishments will add on a 2% - 10% surcharge on all credit card transactions. There are ATMs in larger towns (Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Moshi, Zanzibar, and Karatu), which will usually accept Visa/Swift/Delta cash advances, but will only provide Tanzanian Shillings.

Kenya: *Kenyan Shilling* - Visitors to Kenya should change foreign currency at banks, bureau de change or authorized hotels. The easiest currencies to exchange are USD, Pounds sterling, and EURO. There are no restrictions on the amount of foreign currency that can be brought into Kenya. Before departure, travelers are advised to convert any excess Kenya shillings into foreign currency at a bank or Bureau de Change before departure. Anyone wishing to take more than 500,000 Kenya Shillings out of the country will require written authorization from the Central Bank. Many hotels, travel agencies, safari companies, and restaurants accept major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa, Diners Club, and American Express). Most banks in Kenya are equipped to advance cash on credit cards.

WHAT ABOUT MY SAFETY/SECURITY?

Personal security is a prime concern for many visitors to Africa. The common sense employed in any of the world's major cities will go a long way towards your safety.

- Do not walk alone at night.
- Do not carry large sums of cash, passports, air tickets, and other important documents. (You should take a copy of all important documents and travel aids and keep them separate from your originals.)
- Do not leave valuables out in hotel rooms. All valuables should be locked in your room safe.
- Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home.
- Carry your camera in a non-flashy bag.
- Dress with sense.

WHAT IS THE TIME DIFFERENCE?

Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia & Zimbabwe are seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (six in daylight savings).

Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania & Uganda are eight hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (seven in daylight savings).

WHAT IS THE ELECTRIC CURRENT? WILL I BE ABLE TO USE MY HAIRDRYER?

The electrical current is 220 volts AC. United States uses 110 volts AC and most European countries use 220 volts AC. African countries have both round and rectangular pronged plugs, ranging from two to three prongs. **You will need to take an electrical current conversion adapter with you as well as plug adapters.** You can find more on the varying plug adapters here, www.hillsof africa.com/blog/which-power-adapter-do-you-choose.

Safari Camps:

Most safari camps rely on generators to provide electricity; and due to their noise, generators are normally used during the day and turned off at night. Some safari camps rely on solar power to provide electricity. Hairdryers may not be provided at all safari camps, so you will need to take your own, however, it is not guaranteed you will be able to use a hair dryer at all camps.

In most safari camps, you can leave camera and video batteries with camp headmen or receptionists for charging, but it is advised to bring a few spares. Very few mobile or tented camps have electrical outlets in the tents, and if they run on restricted power such as solar, invertors, or generators, they will not be able to cope with 'greedy' appliances.

WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE?

Southern Africa:

Botswana

Rainy season: November to March (wettest December & January)

Summer: October to March - days vary from sunny to afternoon thunderstorms and glorious rainbows - daytime temperatures (86-95°F), with comfortable evenings (67-79°F),

Dry season: April to October

Winter: May to August - lovely, sunny days (73-79°F), but cold nights/early mornings (43-49°F).

Winter is 'peak season' for most safari areas as the dry weather brings animals to congregate around available water sources.

Madagascar

Rainy Season: November through April.

Dry season: April to October

Coastal areas: warm days (86-95°F), and pleasant evenings (73-79°F)

Climate: overall generally tropical with varying amounts of rainfall.

Central/elevated regions: Bit more variation because of higher elevations

Summer: December - May pleasant days (63-79°F) and cool evenings (54-59°F)

Winter: June to August - cool days (63-70°F) and colder evenings/mornings (40-48°F)

Malawi

Rainy Season: November to April

Summer: September through April - temperatures ranging from hot days (88-90°F) to cooler evenings (66-72°F)

Dry Season: May to October

Winter: May to August - temperatures ranging from pleasant days (79-84°F) to cooler evenings (59-64°F)

Mozambique

Rainy Season: December through March - Humidity can be high during this period, with the average high temperature being about (86°F) and average lows about (70°F).

Rains Slow: April to May - the sun comes out, and the humidity drops - better weather spreads gradually from the south to the north.

Dry Season: June to October - often perfect tropical weather: clear skies, plenty of sun, and almost no rain - daytime temperatures (79-81°F), and nights averaging (61-64°F).

Namibia

Rainy Season - December to March - humid with some rain in the form of afternoon thunderstorms. As much of the country is covered by the Namib & Kalahari Deserts, many areas are dry and semi-arid.

Summer: November to May - warm days (86-95°F), and pleasant evenings (55-64°F)

Winter: June to October - pleasant days (68-73°F) with cold evenings and early mornings (32-59°F)

South Africa

South Africa is a large country with different areas having their own weather patterns:

Western Cape:

Rainy Season: June to August

Winter: June to August - cool days (61-64°F) and cold evenings/mornings (35-46°F)

Spring: September to October - pleasant days (70-76°F) and cool evenings/mornings (55-58°F)

Summer: November to March - glorious days (79-84°F) and pleasant evenings (55-64°F)

Fall: April to May - glorious days (72-77°F) and pleasant evenings (56-59°F)

Kruger / Madikwe:

Dry Season: May to September

Winter: May to September - pleasant days (74-84°F) and cold evenings/mornings (45-54°F)

Rainy Season: October to April - impressive afternoon thunderstorms, which last for approximately an hour, after which the clouds roll away, making way for a gloriously fresh evening

Summer: October to April - can be hot, humid days (79-84°F) and pleasant evenings (61-74°F)

Kwa Zulu Natal:

Dry Season: June to August - some light rains along the coast

Winter: June to August - pleasant days (74-84°F) and cold evenings/mornings (54-64°F)

Rainy Season: September to May

Summer: September to May - can be hot/humid days (86-95°F), and pleasant evenings (73-79°F)

Zambia and Zimbabwe

Rainy Season: November to April

Summer: November to April - warm, pleasant days (77-81°F), and cooler evenings (54-59°F)

Dry Season: May to July

Winter: May to July - pleasant, sunny days (70-73°F), chilly evenings/ mornings (45-49°F)

Early Summer: August to October - very hot and dry during the day (up to 84°F)

Uganda/Rwanda:

Rwanda

Rainy Seasons: October/November (short rains) and March to May (long rains)

Climate: pleasant year round with daytime temperatures generally (75-82°F), and cooler in the mountains (50-60°F)

Uganda

Rainy Seasons: October/November (short rains) and March to May (long rains)

Climate: pleasant year round with daytime temperatures in the northwest generally (75-79°F), the northeast a bit warmer (up to 86°F), and cooler in the southwestern highlands (50-60°F)

Kenya/Tanzania:

Kenya

Rainy Seasons: March to June (long rains) and October to December (short rains)

Climate: pleasant year round daytime temperatures (68-82°F), and warmer/humid along the coast. Higher elevations are a bit cooler, but not drastically.

Tanzania

Rainy Season: November to December (short rains), January to February (break in rains in northern parks & coastal areas) and March to May (long rains)

Climate: pleasant year round daytime temperatures (68-86°F), and warmer/humid along the coast. Higher elevations are a bit cooler, but not drastically. Evenings/early mornings can be cooler (61-68°F)

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER REGARDING PLASTIC BAGS?

Many countries around the world have moved to ban the use of plastic bags in an effort to reduce litter and the long-term, negative impacts upon the environment.

The ban includes:

- Plastic shopping bags
- Single-use plastic bags, with or without handles
- Zip top plastic bags
- Duty-free bags

Countries in our travel sphere with laws banning plastic bags:

- Botswana
- Kenya
- Rwanda
- Tanzania
- Uganda

Please note that some countries are stricter in enforcing this ban than others. Upon entering any of these countries you may be asked to hand over any plastic bags. Some countries also carry stiff monetary penalties for use of plastic bags.

Suggested alternatives to plastic bags would include packing cubes or dry sacks, similar to those used for camping or kayaking. There are many options available, and easy to find online. Hills of Africa is happy to provide further suggestions regarding this ban and suitable alternatives.

WHAT LUGGAGE SHOULD I USE?

Pack lightly! All camps and most hotels do laundry on a daily basis, so you can wear items several times during your journey. (Note that there may be an additional charge for laundry services.) Packing light also saves you from having to deal with getting heavy suitcases from destination to destination.

Charter aircrafts have strict luggage requirements, which we have addressed below in the 'What are the luggage restrictions on charter flights?' section.

NOTE: Johannesburg Airport has implemented luggage restrictions due to issues with oddly shaped bags and long straps causing jams in the luggage handling system.

- Round/irregularly shaped luggage will not be accepted. All luggage must have at least one flat side.
- Luggage with long hanging straps will not be accepted. At check-in, straps should be removed and placed in an exterior pocket or the main compartment of your luggage. Then simply reattach upon retrieving your luggage at baggage claim.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK?

As most properties offer laundry services (sometimes included in costs), coupled with the fact that you don't want to be hauling around a heavy suitcase, it is wise to pack a ***small, soft, waterproof duffle bag*** that can be easily carried from destination to destination. NOTE that smaller aircrafts restrict baggage allowances by weight, size and structure, so that luggage can be easily manipulated into the cargo compartment. (*See below for further charter flight luggage details.*)

Lightweight natural colored clothing is preferable, i.e., khaki, brown, and beige, if visiting bush camps in summer months, with a jacket/fleece for evenings or cool days. The lodges and camps are very informal and casual clothes are suitable.

Please note that military uniform is banned in African countries. Bright colors and white are NOT advised while on safari or gorilla trekking. While traveling on safari in Tanzania, it is also advised not to wear black or blue, as these colors often attract tsetse flies. Tsetse flies are commonly found in Tanzania, particularly in the Tarangire NP region.

If you've forgotten anything - don't panic. Africa is not the back of beyond, and you can buy everything you need there.

A ***day bag*** is useful to bring, as it can hold your binoculars, sunscreen, insect repellent, fleece, and other items for the full day game drives. If you bring a (sports) water bottle for your personal use, which you can fill up each day, it will help save the environment and cut down on the use of plastic water bottles.

Following is a list of suggested items to bring on your holiday.

Please bear in mind the luggage restrictions listed in the ***What are the luggage restrictions on charter flights?*** section.

Suggested Packing List:

- 1) Quality sunglasses - preferably polarized. Tinted fashion glasses are not good in strong light
- 2) Sun hat (consider one with strings to tie under your chin)
- 3) Golf shirts, T-shirts, and long-sleeve cotton shirts
- 4) Shorts/skirts
- 5) Long trousers/slacks
- 6) More formal attire for your stay at prestigious city hotels or on one of the luxury trains
- 7) Underwear (sports bra recommended as game drives can be bumpy) and socks (high socks for game walks)
- 8) Good walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine)
- 9) Sandals or flip flops
- 10) Swimsuit
- 11) Light jacket or sweater
- 12) Warm winter coat or fleece and warm hat/scarf/gloves for the cold winter months (May to September)
- 13) Light raingear for summer months (late November to April)
- 14) Camera equipment and plenty of film, batteries/charger and extra memory cards
- 15) If you wear contact lenses, we recommend a pair of glasses in case you get irritation from the dust
- 16) BINOCULARS (essential) - If you want top of the range you need to get the following makes: Leica, Zeiss, or Lietz. If you want something affordable, yet good, you should get Canon. The models should be 8 x 40/42
- 17) Newman's bird book if you are a keen birder
- 18) Medications and personal toiletries (basic amenities supplied by most establishments)
- 19) Malaria tablets (if applicable)
- 20) Moisturizing cream and sunscreen
- 21) Insect repellent e.g. Tabard, Rid, Jungle Juice, etc
- 22) Basic first-aid kit (aspirins, band-aids, Imodium, antiseptic cream, anti-histamine cream, etc.)
- 23) Tissues/"Wet Ones"
- 24) Electrical current converter and plug adapters
- 25) Travel Documents, airline e-tickets, passports, health and travel insurance details, MasterCard or Visa (American Express is not always accepted), and cash
- 26) Waterproof/dustproof bags/cover for your cameras.
- 27) TWO photocopies of important documents (passport, etc.) packed in separate bags. Also, leave one copy with a friend or family member at home

Chimpanzee/Gorilla Trekking/Hiking Packing List

- 1) Long-sleeve shirts and trousers (old clothes recommended as they can get very dirty and torn from the thorns and jungle foliage)
- 2) Insect repellent and sunscreen
- 3) Hat and sunglasses
- 4) Comfortable and sturdy hiking boots with good ankle support
- 5) Gaiters to cover your shoes and lower pants leg and/or long socks to tuck your trousers into
- 6) Rain jacket
- 7) Lightweight gardening gloves

- 8) Camera - please note that using a flash is **not** permitted while photographing the Gorillas
- 9) Waterproof rucksack (or dry sacks inside your rucksack)
- 10) Packed lunch and lots of water

WHAT ARE THE BAGGAGE RESTRICTIONS ON CHARTER FLIGHTS?

There are specific **LUGGAGE WEIGHT and STRUCTURE** restrictions that apply in each country and region of Africa. All of these regulations are strictly enforced. Only soft bags will be accepted (no hard suitcases can be transported as they physically cannot fit into the aircraft). This includes camera equipment and hand luggage.

There are also important **PERSONAL WEIGHT** restrictions to note in each country and region of Africa. These weight restrictions vary from destination to destination, and some countries are stricter regarding adherence to the restrictions. *Passengers exceeding the personal weight limits indicated below MUST advise us in advance to confirm if an extra seat must be purchased.*

See below for guidelines regarding luggage and personal weight restrictions.

Luggage STRUCTURE restrictions

- Soft bags that can be easily manipulated into the cargo hold.
- Maximum dimensions: 25cm (10in) wide x 30cm (12in) high x 62cm (24in) long - This is the typical size of the opening to the cargo hold. Please keep in mind that the baggage compartments on the light aircraft are only 25cm (10in) high, so the pilots must be able to manipulate the bag into the compartment.
- Duffle bags without wheels are preferred, but are allowed so long as there are no rigid frames to keep the bag from being manipulated into the cargo hold. (Duffle bags with wheels also adds to your total weight.)
- *So the rule of thumb for your luggage is: soft, non-rigid bags with no wheels, following the dimensions above.*

Luggage ALLOWANCE & PERSONAL WEIGHT restrictions

If you will be traveling to multiple destinations, please defer to the lightest weight restrictions for your luggage and personal weight. **Should you need to make arrangements to store or ship excess luggage, we are glad help with making those arrangements.** Please note that there may be additional charges for storing or shipping luggage.

Southern Africa

Passengers weighing 100kg (220lbs) or more, please advise us in advance (an extra seat MAY have to be purchased).

Botswana: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **20kg (44lbs) per person** – 15kg checked luggage and 5kg handheld luggage/personal belongings.

Madagascar: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **15kg (33lbs) per person.**

Malawi: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **15kg (33lbs) per person.**

Mozambique: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **20kg (44lbs) per person.**

Namibia: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **20kg (44lbs) per person.**

South Africa: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **20kg (44lbs) per person.**

Zambia: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **20kg (44lbs) per person.**

Zimbabwe: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **20kg (44lbs) per person.**

Uganda/Rwanda:

Passengers weighing 85kg (188lbs) or more, please advise us in advance (an extra seat MAY have to be purchased).

Uganda and Rwanda: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **15kg (33 lbs) per person.**

Kenya/Tanzania:

MALE passengers weighing 85kg (188lbs) or more, **FEMALE** passengers weighing 65kg (143lbs) or more, please advise us in advance (an extra seat MAY have to be purchased).

Kenya and Tanzania: Luggage, including camera equipment and hand luggage, is restricted to **15kg (33 lbs) per person.**

There are strict weight and size restrictions on any itinerary that includes light aircraft transfers for the following reasons:

- The aircrafts are designed with a maximum bodyweight and luggage weight allowance.
- Most airfields are over 3,000 feet above sea level and are located in the tropics, and therefore the permissible aircraft carrying capacity is reduced.
- The aircrafts have physical space restrictions.

These luggage restrictions may sound very limiting, but bear in mind the following:

- Most safari camps / lodges and hotels provide basic toilet amenities.
- Laundry can be done on a daily basis (and many camps provide this service, free of charge, but hotels do charge a nominal fee).
- Mainly casual clothing is required.

WHAT IF I HAVE LUGGAGE I WOULD LIKE TO SHOP OR STORE SECURELY?

Many travelers prefer to travel as light and worry-free as possible. You may ship your luggage ahead to meet you at your first stop, or on your return to meet you at home. We can assist with this process through insured luggage shipping services, such as www.luggagefree.com/hillsofafrica/, to avoid any unexpected surprises and missing bags.

Also, if you wish to store luggage during a portion of your trip, we can assist in arranging secure storage. This situation may arise if you are embarking on a charter flight with strict luggage size and weight restrictions.

The Hills of Africa team is happy to help with arrangements for shipping or storing luggage through our trusted partners. *Please note that additional fees may apply.*

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER TO RENT A CAR?

Travelers who wish to rent a motor vehicle while in Africa must be in possession of a *valid US Driver's Permit/License* (or applicable country of residence).

Some countries require drivers to also have an International Driving Permit (IDP), which can be obtained prior to departure from AAA (American Automobile Association). Please visit www.aaa.com/vacation/idpf.html for more information.

Driving in Africa is often on the left side of the road (unlike the right in the USA). Also, be advised that automobiles are reversed on the inside (driver to the right), and are primarily standard transmissions (stick shift). Automatic and larger vehicles should be reserved well in advance, as there is only a small selection in Africa as a whole. Because of the decreased availability of automatic and larger automobiles, they can be considerably more costly to rent.

CAN I USE MY CELL PHONE? HOW DO I CALL HOME?

Africa does not have the most up-to-date telephone service in the world. Most of the city hotels will have the ability to call anywhere in the world, but it is expensive. Should you bring your own phone and have it on an international roaming network, most major cities will have adequate cell phone network coverage. With the exception of urban centers, coverage is inconsistent or nonexistent in some safari areas and more remote regions. Wireless Internet is available in most properties and even some safari camps, where you are able to access Skype, WhatsApp, and other web-based communication applications.

Hills of Africa would be pleased to help you find the best rate for *international cellular and satellite phone rentals*, should you require constant coverage.

There are often satellite telephones available for client use at most safari camps, although usage is charged at current rates. The outgoing international code is 00 for the United States.

Here is a quick cell phone overview:

First, you should contact your cell phone provider and determine if your cell phone will work in the countries you are visiting and request their international roaming plan. It is important to note that data charges on a mobile phone can be quite expensive in Africa, depending on the agreement that your carrier has with the cell operators there, so be sure to ask your provider about these charges.

The advantage of using your personal cell phone is you keep your own number and address book and there are no rental fees or security deposits. You may be able to purchase a compatible SIM card for your existing

phone in the country of travel (newer phones may not have SIM cards). However, your phone must be unlocked for this to work. You will need to contact your service provider to find out if it is unlocked. This will allow you to pay local rates for calls you make. Just be informed about all the charges, including what it costs to receive calls and to make international calls.

In South Africa (Johannesburg and Cape Town) and Rwanda (Kigali), you can rent a phone when you arrive at the airport and use a pay-as-you-go card. Another option is to get a calling card and find out how you would dial from your chosen destination. Some city centers do have Internet Cafes, but they are very limited.

DO I NEED TRAVEL INSURANCE?

Hills of Africa strongly suggests that before leaving home you make sure you have adequate travel insurance – and make sure you know exactly what it covers. If you are planning to indulge in some of Africa's wonderful adventure activities, check that you will be covered in the unlikely event of an accident. All travelers should take out a fully comprehensive travel insurance policy to cover travel cancellation fees, and loss or damage to baggage and personal possessions. Whatever you do, read the fine print carefully – once you've hit the problem, it's too late to start renegotiating the contract. Hills of Africa Travel can assist in purchasing travel insurance.

WHAT IS MEDJET ASSIST?

Medjet Assist is a medical evacuation membership program that arranges medical transfer to the hospital of the member's choice. If a Medjet member becomes hospitalized more than 150 miles from home and meets transport criteria, Medjet will arrange medical transfer to the hospital of their choice at no additional cost. All the member pays is their membership fee. Hills of Africa Travel can assist in purchasing a Medjet Assist membership. Please visit www.medjetassist.com/hillsofafrica for details on this program's membership opportunities and benefits.

NOTE: This 'insurance' does not replace travel insurance and is recommended to be purchased with travel insurance. This membership only allows a client to request to be transferred from a hospital where they have been admitted to a hospital of their choice (anywhere in the world). Clients can buy annual memberships or just short-term coverages.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BAGGAGE GETS LOST?

Luggage that goes missing on scheduled flights is beyond the control of Hills of Africa Travel and often the airline concerned, too. The airport controls passengers' luggage from when it is checked in until it is put on board the aircraft.

We would like to suggest that you take the following precautionary action: Please pack a small bag with your essentials, including any life-sustaining medication and a complete change of clothes, which can be carried with you as hand luggage, and pack a second bag containing non-essentials that can be loaded in the aircraft

hold. If the second bag does not arrive, you will still have your essential items on hand to see you through the first couple of days while we help to try and recover your baggage.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN MY ITINERARY?

Personal expenditures, meals in major cities, insurance, drinks (other than specified), gratuities, airport taxes, and visa fees are generally excluded. Scheduled flights are also generally excluded from your tour fare (unless otherwise arranged). We suggest that you allow USD25 per day to cover the cost of personal expenses and souvenirs (within reason).

WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS ON TIPPING/GRATUITIES?

We offer the following guidance on tipping in terms of what's appropriate, what's expected, and who to tip. Before you read through these guides, keep in mind that these amounts are only suggestions. We encourage you to reward guides and others based upon their performance.

VIP Assistance at Airports (passport controls, collecting luggage, meeting driver)

- USD5 per person

Porterage (hotels & airports)

- USD5 per porter

Transfer and Touring Driver/Guides

- Transfer USD5 per person
- Private Guided Tour USD25 per person
- Scheduled Group Tours USD15 per person

Camp, Game Lodge and Specialist Guides

- USD15 per guest/per day
- Given directly to the guide at the end of your stay

The General Safari Camp / Lodge Staff

- USD15 per guest/per day
 - Placed in the communal tipping box or given to camp manager to be distributed equally amongst all the staff at a later stage
- *Some properties have additional staff on hand to tend to your needs*
 - Butler / Wait staff - USD10 per guest/per day

Mokoro Paddlers (Botswana) and Camp Trackers (Kruger Area)

- USD10 per guest/per day
 - Tracker - given directly to tracker at end of your stay
 - Paddler - given directly to paddler at end of the activity

Hotel Staff

- USD10 per room/per day

Restaurants/Hotels

- 10% - 15% if you are satisfied with the service

Kilimanjaro Climb

- USD400 per person/per climb
- This will be split out between the Head Guide, Assistant Guide, Cook, Porters at the end of the climb. Instructions on how to handle this will be given during your pre-climb briefing.

Gorilla Trek

- Guide USD10 per trek/per person
- Tracker/s USD5 per trek/per person
- Ranger/s USD5 per trek/per person
- Porter hire (optional) USD20 per trek/per person – paid directly to the porter on site
- Porter tip USD5 per trek/per person – if hired

Chimp Trek

- Guide USD10 per trek/per person
- Tracker/s USD5 per trek/per person (if applicable)

HOW EARLY SHOULD I CHECK IN FOR MY FLIGHT?

Please check in early at all airports (at least one hour prior for domestic flights, three hours for all flights to the USA, and two hours for regional and other international flights) as the flights are occasionally overbooked. Please be aware that during peak season, delays are often encountered on scheduled flights. Remember that you are on holiday. Relax and enjoy the ambience, which sometimes has no sense of urgency at all!

SHOULD I RECONFIRM MY FLIGHT?

YES. Please ensure that all your onward flights are reconfirmed at least 72 hours prior to flying. Listed below are some helpful telephone numbers to assist you in reconfirming your flights.

Air Botswana	Johannesburg	+27 11 390 3070
	Maun	+267 686 0391
	Kasane	+267 625 0161
	Harare	+263 4 707131
Air Namibia	Johannesburg	+27 11 978 5055
	Cape Town	+27 21 936 2755
	Windhoek	+264 61 299 6333
	Harare	+263 4 710358
British Airways	US Customer Care	1 800 247 9297

Delta	US Customer Care	1 800 221 1212
	within SA	+27 11 4088200
	Nairobi, Kenya	+254 20 259 7800
	Dar es Salaam, TZ	+255 212 6300
SAA	Kampala, Uganda	+256 414 288935
	Johannesburg	+27 11 978 1111
	Cape Town	+27 21 936 1111
Airlink	within Zimbabwe	+263 8677 702 702
	SA Customer Care	+27 11 451 7337
FastJet	within Zimbabwe	+263 86 77 00 60 60
FlySafair	Within SA	+27 10 448 0888
	Within SA	+27 87 357 0030
Precision Air	within Tanzania	+255 746 984 100
Air Mauritius	Johannesburg	+27 11 390 2316
	Cape Town	+27 21 934 5506
Air Madagascar	Antananarivo	+261 20 22 510 00
Tsaradia	Antananarivo	+261 20 23 444 44
KLM	US Customer Care	1 800 618 0104
	Cape Town	+27 21 936 3360
	Johannesburg	+27 11 390 8567
Kenya Airlines	US Customer Care	+1 866 536 9224
	Within SA	+27 10 205 0000
	Livingstone	+260 213 320345
	Victoria Falls	+263 775 890 849
	Nairobi, Kenya	+254 20 327 4747
	Kampala, Uganda	+256 312 360000
Lufthansa	Kigali, Rwanda	+250 782 062524
	US Customer Care	+1 866 846 4283
Qatar	US Customer Care	+1 877 777 2827
	Within Kenya	+254 203 893931
	within SA	+27 861 861 868
Emirates	US Customer Care	1 800 7773999
	within SA	+27 860 123 155
Swiss International Airlines	US Customer Care	+1 877 359 7947
United	US Customer Care	1 800 490 2021
Virgin Atlantic	US Customer Care	1 800 862 8621
	Within SA	+27 11 340 3400
American Airlines	US Customer Care	1 800 433 7300
	SA Customer Care	+27 11 844 6067
Ethiopia Airlines	US Customer Care	1 800 445 2733
Turkish Airlines	US Customer Care	1 800 874 8875
	Headquarters	+90 212 463 63 63

WHAT ARE THE RULES ON WILDLIFE AND SAFETY WHEN STAYING AT SAFARI CAMPS/LODGES?

- The wild animals are not like those found in theme parks – they aren't tame.
- Most of the safari camps are unfenced and dangerous animals can (and do!) wander through the camps. Many of the animals and reptiles you will see are potentially dangerous. Attacks by wild animals are rare. However, there are no guarantees that such incidents will not occur.
- Please listen to the camp staff and guides. Safety precautions need to be taken seriously and strictly adhered to.
- Don't wander off on your own without a guide – even to your rooms. After retiring to your rooms at night, don't leave.
- Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities. Loud talking on game drives can frighten the animals away.
- Never attempt to attract an animal's attention. Don't imitate animal sounds, clap your hands, pound the vehicle, or throw objects.
- Please respect your driver-guide's judgment about proximity to lions, cheetahs, and leopards. Don't insist that he take the vehicle closer so you can get a better photograph. A vehicle driven too close can hinder a hunt or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal.
- Litter tossed on the ground can choke or poison animals and birds and is unsightly.
- Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals may have become accustomed to human visitors.
- Refrain from smoking on game drives. The dry African bush ignites very easily, and a flash fire can kill animals.
- Water is a precious commodity in the camps/lodges, so please help by switching taps off when brushing teeth, having shorter showers, and not requesting clean towels and sheets daily. Only submit necessary items for laundry.
- Always switch off lights in the room when you leave, as it only attracts the bugs.
- You are in Africa and, yes, there will be a fair amount of creepy crawly things around and in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes, especially in the rainy seasons and at night, around lights. All tents have insect-proof zips and windows, and most hotels and lodges have mosquito nets. While you are having dinner, most places will, at turn down, spray your room with an insecticide. Long trousers, with socks and long-sleeved shirts and liberal coverage of a good insect repellent are your best defense against mosquitoes in the evenings.
- 100% Deet doesn't really work with Tsetse flies but does work in repelling flies and other insects. (Be warned that repellents with a high concentration of deet will have a corrosive effect on sunglasses, wristwatches and automobile paints and binocular rubber protection. Citronella-based or "ecological" alternatives often are effective as are non DEET based insect repellents).

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT TRACKING MOUNTAIN GORILLAS IN UGANDA/RWANDA?

What's the Hike Like? The remaining mountain gorillas have survived by living on incredibly steep volcanic slopes in dense, stinging vegetation. It's a lovely bamboo/nettle/celery salad bowl for them, but very painful for those of us without thick fur. Some gorilla families are just an hour or so away from the parking area, others can be a stiff four-hour hike to see. Trackers scout the nesting areas of each gorilla family before the trek starts, so they have a good idea of where you need to hike. This means you will certainly find the gorillas, but ***the time it takes to get to them always varies.***

Guides will lead the way to show you the path and hack through the vegetation. Porters will be available to hire (onsite) to carry your stuff and assist with the trek, if need be. Walking sticks are provided as well. Because the terrain is steep, muddy, and difficult, the pace is always slow and steady. You have to be somewhat fit and your knees should be in reasonable shape, especially for the hike down.

What to Wear? When you get to the gorilla group you will give up your walking sticks. This means you will rely on your hands to climb up and down the slopes and keep yourself from slipping. Lightweight garden gloves offer excellent protection against all the stinging and burning nettles that surround you. Make sure you can operate your camera with them on.

Wear long pants made of slightly thick material to stop the nettles from burning your skin. You want to wear thick, long socks so you can tuck your pants into them, or pack a pair of gaiters if you have them. In some areas there are fire ants that like to climb up your legs. You don't want to be stomping around when you are surrounded by gorillas.

A waterproof jacket is necessary to keep warm and dry. It rains a lot in these parts and the vegetation is often wet with dew in the morning. Wear long-sleeve layers, since it is chilly at higher elevations and, with the thick foliage, the sun rarely shines through. Sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots are, of course, necessary. Make sure they are comfortable and worn in so you don't suffer from blisters. The lodges usually offer to clean and dry your shoes or boots after your trek.

What to Expect? When you find the gorillas, you will leave your backpacks with the porters and trackers. You are allowed to spend one hour with the gorillas. Follow the instructions of your guides and trackers, as they will remind you to stay at least five meters away from the gorillas. If they come closer to you, you will be told to stand still, or crouch down. The guides know these families and each individual, so you don't have to be scared. No one has been harmed by a habituated gorilla. It is very likely that they will get close enough that you can smell them - a thrill to say the least. You may even feel the urge to reach out and touch, but DO NOT!

Sometimes the gorillas will make a lot of noise, small spats can break out, while others may be playing, eating, or just grooming. You will likely be moving around a little to keep them in view since they don't always stay in one spot. Often, the younger gorillas will be playing all around you and hanging off the bamboo above you. Watch out, bamboo is not strong and gorillas seem to enjoy riding the stalks down, so it's a little unpredictable.

Try and spend some time just watching and not always filming or taking photos. It's tempting, but you do miss out on simply being present, and your precious visit will be over before you know it.