

## KENYA AT A GLANCE

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**POPULATION:** 47,615,739 (July 2017 est.)

**LANGUAGES:** English, Kiswahili

**PREDOMINANT RELIGIONS:** Christian (Protestant, Roman Catholic), Islam, indigenous

**TIME ZONE:** Seven hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time (New York City)

**TELEPHONE CODES:** 254, country code; 11, Mombasa city code; 2, Nairobi city code

Everyone should visit Kenya at least once — not just for the spectacular wildlife, but also for its beautiful lakes and beaches and for the sweeping vistas of the Great Rift Valley. Kenya has more than 50 national parks and game reserves, some devoted to marine life or natural beauty as well as wildlife. Kenya's people are friendly, the tourist trade is well-organized, and there's a lot to see and do, making Kenya a rewarding place to visit. That isn't to say that Kenya is a trouble-free destination. If you spend some time in its cities, you are increasingly likely to encounter petty crime.

### COMPASSION IN KENYA

Compassion's ministry in Kenya began in 1980. Today, more than 95,400 children are served by more than 355 Compassion-assisted child development centers throughout the country. Compassion's church-based child development centers are places of hope for impoverished children in Kenya. Under the guidance of caring Christian adults, children's pressing needs for nutrition and medical attention are met. Children also receive tutoring to help with their academics. Health and



hygiene lessons teach them to care for their own physical well-being, and positive social skills are modeled and encouraged.

### WEATHER

Kenya is basically a year-round destination — the only months to watch out for are April and May (which can be quite wet, though sometimes the rains come late). There's also a season of short rains that can occur anytime from late October through December, but it doesn't hinder travel.

Although Kenya spans the equator, most of it is situated at 4,000 feet/1,200 meters or higher, which tends to mitigate the heat. In higher elevations, expect temperatures to be about 10 degrees F cooler than in low-lying parts of the country.

### CURRENCY

Kenya's currency is the Kenyan *shilling* (KES). Look closely at what you're given when you change money. Many counterfeit U.S. banknotes, printed on plain paper, are circulating in Kenya. Banks and hotels exchange currency. Always ask what commission and charges will be deducted. Visa and American

Express are widely accepted, but MasterCard is limited. Credit card fraud does happen, so keep all copies of your receipts, and be sure that the currency you're paying in is clearly marked. (Unscrupulous vendors may add a dollar sign in front of the *shilling* amount.)

## FOOD

Most hot, freshly cooked food should be safe, but peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables before eating, choose meat that is cooked thoroughly, avoid local dairy products, and assume the water is unsafe (stick with prepackaged or boiled drinks).

## SHOPPING

Every Kenyan town has a curio shop or market with a wide variety of souvenirs — often mass-produced crafts. Local handicrafts include wood carvings of animals and people, sisal baskets, Masai and Kikuyu beadwork, hand-woven *kanga* (sarong) fabric, Kisii soapstone, intricately carved gourds, and batik wall hangings.

Bargaining is the rule, though stores in cities and at lodges will have set prices. A rule of thumb: Start negotiations at a quarter of the asking price and work up.



## ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

The voltage used in Kenya is 220V, electrical outlets accommodate plug type G. For up-to-date plug and outlet information, check [whatplug.info](http://whatplug.info) and click on your destination country.) You may wish to take a universal plug adaptor, available in the luggage/travel sections of most big-box stores.

## DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Do** pronounce the name of the country *KEHN-yah* (the pronunciation *KEEN-yah*, which is the old British colonial pronunciation, may offend residents).
- **Don't** photograph the people or their homes and livestock without asking permission, and don't be offended if you're asked to pay for the privilege — it's customary in some areas, particularly with the Masai, who expect payment.
- **Don't** change money on the black market. The illegal money changers are often quick-change artists, and the police will arrest you if they even suspect you're changing money illicitly (to be safe, don't even hand money to a friend in public). Also, it's illegal to export Kenyan currency, which, in any case, is difficult to exchange upon departure. Only change small amounts of money at a time.
- **Do** learn and use a few words of Swahili. Kenyans will welcome you with *jambo* (hello), soon followed with *hakuna matata* (no problem). They will be most pleased if you reply in their own language. *Asante sana* means "thank you very much," *habari gani* is "how are you?" and *kwaheri* is "goodbye."
- **Do** be aware that when making a visit to your child's home, it is culturally advisable to bring a small basket or gift bag with foodstuffs or toiletries.

## DRESS

Temperatures during the day vary from mild to hot and humid. Light cotton clothes are ideal, but bring a light jacket or sweater in case of sudden drops in temperature or rain showers.

Nights can be chilly, so a slightly heavier jacket or sweater is also advisable. Long sleeves and pants help to fend off mosquitoes; hats and sunscreen are recommended to avoid sun exposure. Women should dress modestly in public, especially in conservative rural areas, more religious spaces and Islamic cultures.

**Women:** Modest, loose-fitting tops (nothing form-fitting) are recommended; sleeveless tops are acceptable, but please cover your shoulders in places of worship; pants, capris, longer skirts and loose-fitting, casual dresses are recommended for women.

**Men:** Button shirts and polo shirts are recommended. T-shirts are allowed in casual settings. Long, non-denim pants are recommended for center visits and church services.

**Both:** Shorts are highly discouraged outside of beachside locations. A light jacket is recommended for cool evenings or rainy days.

**Shoes:** Closed-toe shoes are recommended during the day due to potential unsanitary or uneven terrain.

## GENERAL SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

Leave at home all unnecessary credit cards, Social Security card, library cards and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet. Carry items in front pockets, not back pockets. Do not display large sums of money in public; make visible only the amount of money that approximates your purchase. Never leave items with cash in them (purse, wallet, backpack, etc.) on a bus, car or any other location. Stay alert and be cautious at all times. Don't take safety and security for granted.

## U.S. EMBASSY INFORMATION

**Website:** [ke.usembassy.gov](http://ke.usembassy.gov)

**Phone:** 254 20 363-6000

**Address:** United Nations Avenue Nairobi, P.O. Box 606 Village Market 00621, Nairobi, Kenya

**We strongly advise you to contact the CDC ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) or check with your personal physician for more information about your specific health needs while traveling, including any recommendations for immunizations.**

*All information taken from the World Factbook and  
Compassion International.*

## USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

The official language of Kenya is Swahili. The country's secondary language is English. Some common Kenyan greetings include:

Hello	<b>Jambo or Salama</b>
Hello (to an elder)	<b>Shikamoo</b>
Welcome	<b>Karibu</b>
Good morning	<b>Habari ya asubuhi</b>
How are you?	<b>Hujambo?</b>
I'm fine	<b>Nzuri</b>
What is your name?	<b>Jina lako nnani?</b>
My name is...	<b>Jina langu ni (name)</b>
Nice to meet you	<b>Nafurahi kukuona</b>
Friend	<b>Rafiki</b>
Do you speak English?	<b>Unasema kiingereza?</b>
I don't understand	<b>Sielewi</b>
How was the journey?	<b>Habari ya safari?</b>
Goodbye	<b>Kwaheri</b>
How much is this?	<b>Hii ni bei gani?</b>
I'm sorry	<b>Samahani</b>
Yes	<b>Ndiyo</b>
No	<b>Hapana</b>

OK

I'd like ...

Please

Thank you

You're welcome

I love you

Where is the bathroom?

May I take a picture?

**Sawa**

**Nataka**

**Tafadhali**

**Asante**

**Starehe**

**Ninakupenda**

**Ni wapi choo?**

**Naomba kupiga picha?**