



FKSW Safari Participant Packing List

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**Everything you could possibly need or want to know and then some...
but, better too much than not enough...**

General considerations:

- a. Passport/Kenyan Visa: Is your passport up to date? You should have 6 free pages. To save the extra expense of rushed service and overnight mail, get it updated ASAP. You'll also need a Kenyan Visa which costs \$50. You can: a) use a travel service, like Zeirer, to handle it all for you for an extra \$50, b) download the forms from the Kenyan Embassy website and send the application directly to the Embassy in Washington, D.C, <http://www.kenyaembassy.com/visa.html> or, c) wait till you get to Kenya and purchase your visa at the airport as you arrive. We prefer option "c"...so much easier.
- b. Pack light
 - i. Be clear about the airlines' rules for number of bags and weight restrictions for both carry-on and checked luggage on international flights (check their web sites).
 1. Weigh your bags to be sure you won't have to deal with an overweight charge at the airport.
 - ii. Consider carrying on your personal bag (the one with your clothes in it) as assurance that it will arrive in Kenya when you do.
 1. If you do this, consider using a bag that converts to a backpack.
 2. Duffels/backpacks are best...they pack more easily in the car when there are lots of bags.
 - iii. Using your own luggage tag(s) will save you having to fill them out at airports. Mark checked bags clearly as belonging to you. Unless your bags are one-of-a-kind, anything you can do to make them easily identifiable on the airport carousels is useful.
- c. Food while flying. Thus far, meals are still included in the ticket price on international flights. Check the itinerary you receive from the travel agent to be sure. We do advocate carrying some "survival food" no matter what.
- d. Traveler, know thyself. Do you tend to run hot or cold? Bringing appropriate layers of clothing will enable you to pack light and remain adaptable to changing conditions. In general, daytime temps in Kenya will be anywhere from the high 70s to the 90s (sweltering at the coast, dry inland) and nights may cool into the 50s. And don't forget that much of your safari may be at higher altitudes than you're used to.
- e. Blend in. To avoid startling the wildlife, bring clothes that are neutral colors (khaki and beige are good).
- f. Fine dust will accompany you much of the time. Don't expect to have light-colored clothing remain clean looking for long (it's okay, everyone's in the same boat). Laundry services (and the option of doing hand laundry) are available at nearly all the safari camps, lodges and hotels. This means that you can travel light and still enjoy clean fresh clothing throughout your journey. However, for times between laundry service, it's good to have some clothing that you can wash yourself in a sink or bucket. *Don't bring your favorite clothing.* When you return home, it will not look as good as it did when you left.
- g. Do you burn through your food quickly? Bring something (snack bars, almonds, dried fruit, etc.) to carry in the safari cars with you.
- h. Leave jewelry and any other costly items you don't really need at home. We are fabulously wealthy by Kenyan standards, and displaying that wealth in any form can result in unwanted attention or more. We recommend sensitivity to the situation of the people as the better way to look at it.
- i. You can generally get what money you need for souvenirs or other shopping at an ATM. Consider carrying a combo debit/VISA card. There are ATMs at the Nairobi airport; this is a good way to get your first fistful of shillings when you arrive. The gift shops in the lodges and hotels usually take plastic. It's a good idea to notify your bank and credit card companies before you leave that you'll be traveling in Kenya. (More on Money at the end.)

- j. Leave a copy of any debit/credit card(s) and your passport at home with a family member or friend, and consider carrying laminated copies with you (separate from the originals, of course). You can shrink them down and have them laminated for a nominal fee at FedEx Kinko's.

Okay, on with the specifics..... this is a general list of items to pack:

Documentation

- Passport
- Kenyan visa, if obtained ahead of time
- Health certificates are not necessary but some like to bring them. (You'll get a record of your vaccinations from the office where they are done)
- Copies of passport and credit cards
- Airline tickets
- Dollars
- ATM (debit/VISA) card
- Money belt
- Flying Doctors card

Clothes

- Shoes
 - 1 pair of sturdy sandals (e.g., Tevas, Chacos)
 - 1 pair of lightweight walking or running shoes (closed-toed sandals aren't a good replacement for walking shoes. At some places you'll want your feet fully covered)
 - 1 pair of camp shoes—optional (be aware that acacia thorns can pierce the average flip-flop sole, so watch where you're walking with these on)
- 1–2 pair of lightweight pants (zip-offs work very well and are the only shorts you'll need if you want to really travel light)
 - Women: capri-type pants work well for village visits and for any situation where you wish to follow the local custom of keeping the area from waist to just below the knees covered
- 1–2 pair of shorts
- 3–5 pair of socks
- 1 skirt—optional (best if its fabric results in few wrinkles and quick drying)
- 1 long-sleeve, light-weight shirt for cool mornings and evenings and to keep off the sun and mosquitoes; an SPF of 30 or more is good. Rayon or a blend will dry faster than cotton; consider a button-up or a turtleneck with a zip neck for maximum flexibility. One shirt is essential, more are optional—they wash and dry quickly.
- 2 tank tops; more are optional
- 1 mid- or light-weight fleece jacket, sweatshirt or pullover (if it's not full zip, consider a zip neck for

flexibility—remember, you can layer your clothes so don't take more/heavier clothes than you need as this is a trip where traveling light is a real plus)

- 1 wind breaker or windproof jacket—full zip (zip pockets are useful)
- 1 fleece vest
- 1 swim suit (or substitute that will work at a lodge or resort)
- 1 short-sleeved shirt for the men (perhaps a button-up w/collar) or t-shirt that could pass as “dressy”
- Whatever you like to sleep in
- Bandanas—optional (you can get them wet and use them around your neck or head for extra cooling)
- Underwear (women: you will need to hand wash your “smalls” or underwear as the staff does not do this for you; consider taking the quick-drying kind)

Miscellaneous

- Extra batteries and charger (think of your gear that requires batteries, e.g., camera, flashlight, headlight, etc.)
 - Two sets of extra batteries is a minimum, three sets is ideal
 - Make sure your charger set-up will work for Africa—you will need adaptors and a converter to go from 220v to 110v (more on this later)
- Mesh or plastic bags or stuff sacks for organizing your packed items into “subgroups,” e.g., socks, underwear, t-shirts, need-to-be-washed clothes etc. (you will be unpacking and packing your bag a lot on safari, and these can be real timesavers)
- Personal water bottle—optional (be sure it's easily identifiable as yours)
 - It's useful to have a way of carrying it that leaves your hands free (the safari cars have pockets for water bottles)
- Sacks for various uses, i.e., for muddy/dusty clothes, personal garbage bag in the car, for dusty shoes, medications, snacks, etc. (could be zip-locks, stuff sacks, mesh bags, etc.)
- Reading book (don't bring too many; one may be enough as you can exchange with others)
- Croakies or another method to attach glasses to your body—optional but very useful
- Personal first aid kit (see Toiletries list)
- Head lamp (highly recommended as it keeps your hands free) or flashlight

- Journal and pens, if you're a journal kind of person (even if you don't keep a journal, you may find you want to jot notes—take something on the small side so you can easily carry and use it in the safari cars if you want to)
- Consider taking a few clothes clips to hang up your hand wash
- Games (travel Scrabble, cards, etc.—keep it small and light)

Field gear

- Hat for sun protection (think about neck protection, too), e.g., wide-brimmed hat, baseball hat with flap in the back or a bandana
- Sun block (SPF 30-45 minimum)
- Camera, case and plenty of film and/or memory cards (know how to use it or include the manual—or notes—if your camera is new to you)
- Camcorder (optional) and tapes/memory
- Sun glasses (wrap-arounds help keep the dust out as well as giving the best sun protection)
 - Consider leaving contact lenses at home and bring glasses, if possible; the dust is a real problem.
- Binoculars (bring the best you have/can afford—you'll be glad you did—and be comfortable with their use)
- Day pack or fanny pack
- Bug spray with at least 20% DEET (there are several non-DEET varieties—try REI or Down to Earth)
- Waterless hand sanitizer (the small bottles are nice to have in the safari cars) and/or pre-moistened wipes (if you take a biggish pack of them, take a zip-lock to put just a few in to take along in the car)

The Africa Factor

Expect the unexpected. Despite our efforts to have every safari run perfectly, things are going to happen that are simply out of our control. We will do what we can to minimize difficult situations, but sometimes, the unexpected occurrences make the best stories!

Toiletries/bath items/personal first aid

- Vitamins/supplements/prescription drugs (prescription drugs should be in their original containers-but no one has ever checked)
- Malaria tablets
- OTC anti-diarrhea medication OR ask your doctor to give you a prescription for CIPRO- it's a great all purpose medicine
- Antacids
- OTC pain relief medications for sunburn, bug bites, etc.
- Biodegradable soap (liquid, such as Dr. Bronners, could work for hand/body soap and laundry soap, too)
- Lip balm (consider one w/SPF of at least 15)
- Toothbrush and paste, floss
- Wash cloth—quick dry type (wash cloths are not provided by the safari company—take one only if you usually use one for bathing)
- Hairbrush and/or comb, hairclips
- Shampoo
- Makeup
- Razor and shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Q Tips
- Nail clippers
- Moisturizer
- Woolite or biodegradable liquid soap for hand washing clothes (some, like Dr. Bronners, will work for you and your clothes)
- Small sewing kit with small scissors
- Optional: Swiss army knife or Leatherman (check airline regulations regarding packing these)
- Neosporin or other antibiotic cream or ointment
- Alcohol wipes
- Don't forget any splints you use regularly, e.g., armbands, wrist splints, etc.
- Antihistamine/allergy tablets (do you normally carry a bee sting kit?)
- Tweezers
- Moleskin—if you're blister-prone
- Band-aids (don't take a whole box unless you're sharing)

More on Photography, Batteries and Binoculars

Dust is everywhere, so have a case for your equipment and the appropriate brushes for flicking away the dust that will inevitably settle on your camera.

Bring the photo equipment you are used to working with. A trip like this is not the best place for trying out a new camera. If you spend all of your time learning how to use a piece of equipment, you may not learn how to shoot good images. Bring the instruction manual. Keep in mind that too much equipment can be a hindrance, while leaving behind a piece that could be useful is also a mistake. We suggest bringing an 8" x 5" beanbag to use as a tripod to hold your camera steady when shooting from the vehicle. Bring a combination of lenses that range from 25mm to 300mm.

Digital cameras are high quality and convenient and film inspection is not an issue. Most people bring digital equipment. The 2 biggest problems with digital technology on safari by far are: 1) filling the flashcards before the end of the trip and not being able to take more pictures and 2) charging batteries.

Flash cards: Many people take far more photos than they think they will. With digital cameras, you can always delete photos that you don't want, but this doesn't always solve the problem. People with extra cards are very generous about sharing, but there are many kinds of cards for different cameras and this is not a good solution. The bottom line is: if you take lots of pictures, bring enough cards or plan to download photos on your laptop...if you bring it.

Charging Batteries:

Charging batteries is not a problem. Most lodges and hotels have electricity. Safari camps usually do not have individual electrical outlets in the tents but there are generators available for charging. (Be sure you have an extra battery if you're going to leave one in camp).

Electricity in Africa is generally at 220 volts AC; therefore, for most 110 appliances you will need both an *adapter* for the proper plug configuration and a *converter* for the correct current. The adaptors you will need are B, D and E. You can go to the Voltage Valet (<http://www.voltagevalet.com>) website make sure you have what you need.

It works best if you bring your own chargers and adaptors. In the past, we've shared when possible, but with large groups, there are usually lots of batteries. Your battery may not fit someone else's charger, and sometimes there is simply not enough time to take turns with just a few chargers/adaptors. A cigarette lighter charger is a great help here on days when we're driving.

Remember also that many lodges are run on generators that are only turned on at certain times of the day, usually in the early evening and turned off in the late evening at bedtime. Check with lodge managers about the availability of current.

Note: Always ask before photographing the native people. Do not take pictures of military installations, police stations,

airports, soldiers, police or border posts - you may have your film confiscated.

About binoculars (a short primer for the curious). The first factor to consider is magnification and field of vision. Binoculars come with two standard sets of numbers that relate to their performance. For safaris, 8 x 25 to 10 x 23 or so are probably the best. The first number refers to the power of magnification, the second refers to the degree (angle) of field of vision—in general, the higher the magnification, the smaller or narrower the field of view. A higher magnification number means an object will appear closer and have more detail (8x power is usually quite adequate). Keep in mind that everything is magnified, including any movement you make and/or that the safari car you're riding in makes. There is a third number noted on some binoculars, like 4.5 or 5.6, which refers to their light-gathering capacity. Binoculars with either one of these numbers will allow you to "see" well in low light situations such as at dawn and dusk when many game-viewing drives occur. A salesperson can tell you more about this feature.

A second factor to consider is the actual size and weight of the binoculars. For a travel situation like safari, smaller seems to work best. This way you're not hauling around major weight all day. Compact versions like the Nikon Travelite work great.

Finally, cost: taking into consideration the cost of a safari, you may want to invest in a better-than-average pair of binoculars, which are such an important "safari tool." A very good pair of lightweight binoculars can be purchased for \$80 to \$120.

It's a good idea to try out binoculars before you make a purchase to see what fits your eyes and works with glasses, if you wear them, and what feels easy to manage and use. Bi-Mart, G.I. Joe's and REI are some area stores that have a variety to choose from and try out.

More on:

Money

ATM machines are available in major cities and larger towns, but we also suggest bringing \$100-\$200 in cash. It's always easy to exchange US dollars for Kenya shillings at banks when ATMs are scarce or not working. It's good to have some 1000 shilling notes but also to maintain a variety of bills in all denominations (50, 100, 500). Small bills and coin will be necessary for bartering and small purchases. Most people in rural areas will be unable (or unwilling) to make change.

Note: We strongly recommend keeping your passport, all money, vouchers and international air tickets in a money belt or pouch.

Tipping

On safari: It has been a custom since safaris first began to consider tips for your guide/driver and support staff. It is a personal and individual matter and the decision to tip and how much to give is entirely yours. However, some general

guidelines might be helpful. Please bear in mind that tips are gifts in Kenya whereas in the United States and Europe they resemble payments/wages. That said, most Kenyans in the travel industry are paid very low wages and rely heavily on tips.

Most tipping should occur at the end of your stay at a hotel or camp. We suggest you consult each host as to the recommended amount to give the staff. (Note: gratuities are usually pooled at each Lodge or Camp). Estimate \$5-8 or 500ksh per person/per day at individual Lodges and Camps.

General Tipping is up to individuals as you tip according to the service you get but a rough guide is as follows:

- Baggage porters/room service - 50-100 ksh or \$1-\$2
- Airport Transfer Driver - 100 Ksh
- Taxi Driver - 100 ksh or \$1
- Bar staff - 20-30 ksh per round of drinks
- Food Waiter - 10% for meals in better restaurants if gratuity has not been included. Otherwise, 50-100 ksh
- Room staff – 50 ksh per day

Immunizations

The following website has good information on immunizations and other medical considerations for travelers to Kenya.

<http://mdtravelhealth.com/destinations/africa/kenya.php>

Emergency Evacuation

We've never had anyone evacuated for a medical emergency, but we always buy emergency evacuation insurance from the Flying Doctors Service at AMREF, which is based in Nairobi.

The website is:

<http://www.amref.org/flying-doctors/>

An annual membership (500km from Wilson Airport Nairobi) for an adult over 18 years is \$20. The membership fee goes to AMREF, the African Medical and Research Foundation. It's a great, African owned organization.

Finally...

Giving gifts or money: Visitors often wish to bring gifts for people they meet, especially the children. Please consider the following before you do.

- You will most likely be approached by people asking for help of one kind or another. You may wish to help, and the few dollars it takes to alleviate a difficult situation may not seem like much. Or you may simply be uncomfortable saying "no" and find yourself giving a "donation" to someone and not feeling good about it. While the need may be genuine and even desperate, many people are in similar situations. A few shillings here and there are not going to address underlying problems. Giving money or promising assistance encourages begging and you may become a target for future requests from the same person or from others. Begging creates an uncomfortable situation for

everyone and robs people of their dignity. A good strategy when you are asked for money or other kinds of support is to sympathize with the person, understand their need and explain that you are already making a contribution with your time and effort by participating in projects that help the community, the school, the project or the group..

- If you do give gifts, you should have enough for everyone. Giving to some and not others creates unhappiness and resentment, especially among children. Try not to give a gift that will eventually end up as trash (balloons, etc.)
- If you visit a school or a classroom, we suggest food as a treat for the children. It should be high quality food, like fruit, that is healthy and something people normally eat. Fruit can be purchased in the local market at little cost. We discourage candy, gum or soda and food from abroad that brings with it the message that food from other places is "better" than local food.

An alternative to gift giving is to make a donation through FKSWS to:

- support a school feeding program
- purchase medicine for a health program
- provide school scholarships
- provide balls or play equipment for a school
- provide school supplies like pencils and pens for a class or books to be used by the group and over time

Finally, please respect the culture of the communities you visit. Except for tourists, women in Kenya do not generally wear shorts, especially in the rural areas. Skirts and pants which extend below the knees are best. Sleeveless shirts are fine in most places. Shorts for men are okay, but again, Kenyan men don't usually wear them.