Safaris by Ella

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Good To Know Before You Go - Tanzania Safari Edition

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

To enter Tanzania from the UK or US, your passport must have an 'expiry date' at least 6 months after the date you arrive and at least one blank page*.

If you need to renew your passport, do so well before your proposed travel date or check with your passport office about expedited renewals.

* Correct at time of writing for US & UK. Check gov websites for latest guidance

Visitors from most countries including UK require the ordinary Tourist Visa for $50.

Visitors from US require a Multi-Entry Tourist Visa for $100

Many countries including the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, India and most of Europe require a visa to visit Tanzania for tourism purposes.

Check latest guidance on your Gov website e.g. US / UK.

You can either get a visa on arrival or apply for an e-visa in advance of your trip, which saves time on arrival.

When applying for an e-visa, I recommend applying at least 1 month before your trip as it can take a couple of weeks for your visa application to be approved. In my opinion 2 months prior is the sweet spot.

You can apply for your Tanzania e-visa here.

If you are visiting Zanzibar, you must take our mandatory Zanzibar travel insurance. You can apply for it here.

V1.2-updated 20/04/2025

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TRAVEL VACCINATIONS

Consult your travel clinic for guidance on recommended vaccinations. Useful websites: Fit For Travel (UK) | CDC (US)

- Yellow fever vaccination certificate required for travellers aged 1 year or over **arriving from** countries with risk of yellow fever transmission* and for travellers having **transited for more than 12 hours** through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission.

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* Kenya & Ethiopia both have risk of yellow fever transmission.

MALARIA PRECAUTIONS

Malaria precautions are essential Avoid mosquito bites by covering up with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers especially after sunset, using insect repellents on exposed skin and, when necessary, sleeping under a mosquito net.

Check with your doctor or nurse about suitable antimalarial tablets.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Comprehensive travel insurance is a must for your entire trip. Cover should include:

- Complete medical coverage
- Emergency medical air evacuation
- Repatriation coverage

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CURRENCY

The local currency in Tanzania is Tanzanian Shillings.

Local currency can be obtained at the airport via a Bureau de Change or ATM. Arusha also has ATMs and banks and Bureau de Changes. Small towns usually have 1 ATM but they often run out of cash.

USD is widely accepted (as long as the notes are printed after 2007). The exceptions would be fruit stands at the side of the road, small supermarkets and restaurants outside of the lodges.

Credit / Debit cards are widely accepted, especially Visa. However, they often incur a fee of at least 4%, added by the establishment to cover their card fees.

If you plan to use your credit / debit card, let your bank know about your travel plans first to avoid it being blocked. These days you can usually do this via your bank's phone app or website.

PHONES & WIFI

You can usually request Wifi in your safari truck (there might an extra free for this)

Most lodges and tented camp offer Wifi but this can be intermittent due to weather conditions.

Wifi speed varies and is often weak especially in the Serengeti but should be sufficient for email / Whatsapp.

You can purchase a SIM card in Arusha (requires passport for registration) and use it in your phone as long as your phone is "unlocked" (not locked to one provider).

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GRATUITY (TIPS)

Tipping is part of the culture in Tanzania. It's preferred to tip in USD but you can also tip in Tanzanian Shillings, Euros and GBP.

Driver Guides

Typical tips range from $10 - $25 per adult per day. Some tour companies may have higher tipping guidelines in order to attract and retain the very best guides.

It's recommended to give your guide their tip at the conclusion of your safari.

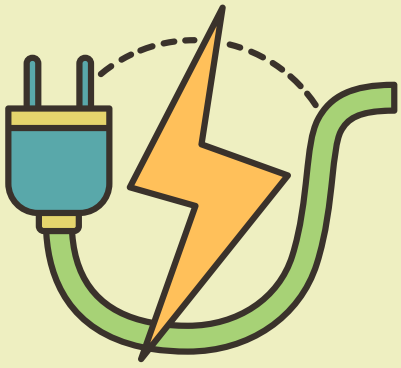
Accommodation

Tipping in accommodation is at your discretion. If you wish to leave a tip, you can do so by leaving the tip in the tipping box at the end of your stay. Guideline tips are $5 per adult per night depending on the level of service.

Cultural Experiences

You're not typically expected to tip the Maasai or Hadzabe tribes if you visit them. Instead you can buy some souvenirs from their shops to show your support and appreciation. See my Souvenir price guides later in this guide for how much to pay.

PLUGS & CHARGING YOUR DEVICES



The safari trucks usually offer power sockets which have Type G plug sockets (the same as the UK) and USB sockets.

Make sure to bring Type G plug sockets adaptors.

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SOUVENIRS AND BARTERING

Bartering is part of the culture and it's not uncommon to have the starting prices over 50% higher than the target price.

I find that setting my price slightly lower than I'm prepared to pay and just sticking to it and walking away if necessary does the trick of getting a compromise at my target price.

I probably end up paying a little over the odds but I'm happy to support the local tribes whilst at the same time I don't like to get fleeced.

The lowest prices are usually achieved in Arusha.

Guide prices based on my recent experiences:

Hand-made metal bracelet: I've paid between $5 - 15 USD with asking prices around $30

Hand-carved animal in ebony 15x30cm: I paid $20 USD (asking price was $40)

PHOTOGRAPHY AND SPOTTING

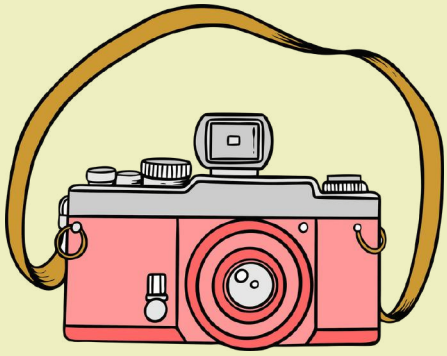
Always back up your footage in at least two places such as external HDD in case of storage corruption or loss.

At least one spare battery is a must.

Especially if you're bringing a long lens, you might want to bring or request bean bags to stabilise your camera.

As with all countries, avoid photographing military sites, border posts, airports and bridges.

Bring binoculars if you have them or find out if the company provides them.



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HOW TO PACK FOR YOUR TANZANIA SAFARI

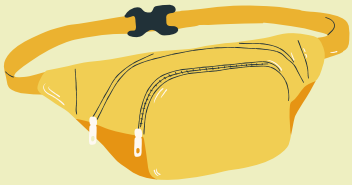
I highly recommend packing as light as possible. Safaris often involve journeying to a number of destinations which means a lot of unpacking, repacking and moving your bags around. This gets a lot harder when you have a number of bags with you.

LUGGAGE

Duffel bags or soft-sided bags are recommended as they are easy to handle and fit inside safari trucks. I've tested the North Face Base Camp Duffel Bag in Large and Thule Chasm 90l Duffel Bag and both performed well. You could probably get away with a smaller size.

If you're planning on taking any domestic flights in Tanzania, be aware that a number of the domestic airlines only accept soft-sided luggage with weight limits of between 15 and 20kg (33 to 44 pounds) depending on the plane. Duffel bags and backpacks are ideal. Check your airline for current luggage guidance.

Small rucksacks and / or bum bags aka fanny packs are great for keeping valuables in during the day.



Items of great sentimental or monetary value are best left at home.

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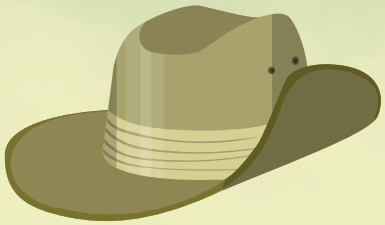
WHAT CLOTHES TO BRING



The weather in Tanzania can fluctuate in the day from very cold to very hot. Therefore you'll want to bring lots of layers.

I like to wear a vest-top (tank-top) beneath a linen shirt and then a nice snuggly jumper and down jacket or gilet on top. I gradually take layers off as the day gets warmer.

In terms of trousers / pants, I either wear long trousers or shorts depending on if the day will be warm or not.

Bring a waterproof coat in all seasons.

Lodges don't require formal wear for the evenings so you can save some space and weight by wearing casual attire.

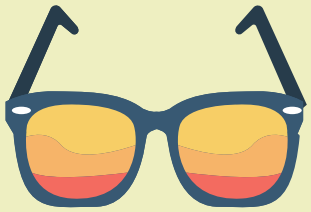
CLOTHING COLOUR

The colour of the clothing you bring is very important and even more so if you're going on walking safaris. Neutral colours are best to bring. Beiges, browns, greens and greys are my favourite colours to wear for safari.

You'll want to avoid blacks, dark blues, bright colours or white as these can disturb animals and attract the pesky tsetse fly.

FOOTWEAR

I normally take 1 pair of sturdy boots with ankle support and some sandals or flip flops for relaxing at the lodge. If you're not doing any walking safaris / long walks then trainers / sports sandals might be sufficient.



SUN PROTECTION

Bring sunglasses and a hat which provides protection for your face, ears and neck. Factor 50 sun screen and lip balm are essential.

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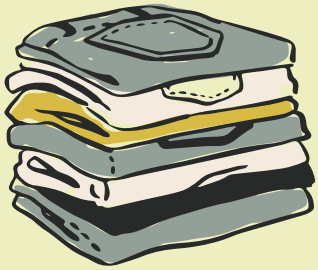
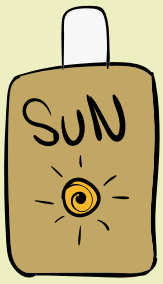
CLOTHING PACKING LIST

- 1 x jumper, 1 x down jacket or gilet, 1 x waterproof windbreaker
- 1 x pair of snuggly trousers / pants for the evenings
- Lots of socks and underwear (most places do have laundry facilities but I'm always prepared in case I have to go long periods without laundry)
- 1 x pair of sturdy boots with ankle support or trainers / sports sandals if you're not planning on doing much walking
- 1 x pair of sandals or flip flops (for relaxing at the lodge)
- 2 x linen shirts
- 2 x vest / tank tops
- 2 x t-shirts
- 2 x long trousers (+ a belt if necessary)
- 2 x shorts
- 1 x bathing suit / swimming trunks (some lodges have swimming pools and if you're going to Zanzibar this is a must and you may wish to take more)
- 1 x sun hat (cap or floppy hat)
- 1 x beanie hat (especially if your ears are prone to getting cold like mine do!)
- 1 x sunglasses
- 1 x bum bag / fanny pack (this honestly revolutionised my life! It's perfect for carrying essentials like your passport, some cash and your phone)





OTHER ESSENTIALS PACKING LIST

- Mosquito repellent
- Suncream (I always bring factor 30 and 50 as well as special suncream for my lips)
- Antimalarial tablets
- Power adaptors (Tanzania uses type G plug sockets - the same as the UK)
- Appliance chargers
- Multi-plug (if you have a lot of devices)
- Your usual toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner etc)
- First aid kit (I create my own and pack essentials such as plasters, bandages, painkillers, eye drops / wash, rehydration tablets, antiseptic wipes, bite cream, lip balm, Imodium, antihistamines and anti-nausea tablets)
- Cash (the local currency is Tanzanian Shillings but USD printed after 2007 is widely accepted)

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SECURITY (GENERAL)

As with most towns and cities, petty crime exists so take usual precautions and avoid flaunting expensive jewellery, watches and cameras.

Avoid walking in the cities at night.

In Africa it is best to avoid driving at night where possible.

Sometimes flight arrival / departure times requires a night time drive so make sure to use a high-end taxi service or your safari company's transfer service.

I used a cheap taxi once for a night time airport transfer and the size of the car & their driving style at night didn't make me feel particularly safe.

SECURITY (ACCOMMODATION)

Most accommodations provide in-room safes or at least a safe at reception. Room thefts are rare but it's better to be safe.

Tented camps are unfenced which allows animals to wander the camp.

Guards patrol the camps and will escort you between your room and the reception areas after dusk. Ensure your tent is fully zipped.

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FEEDBACK

I'd love to hear if you've found this guide helpful as well as any feedback to improve it.

You can reach me on safarisbyella.com/contact/ or @ellajanemckendrick on Instagram or simply reply to any email from me.

I HAVE A QUICK FAVOUR TO ASK

If you've found this guide or my Safaris By Ella service helpful for planning your safari, please could you leave a quick review on Google here.

This helps other people benefit from my recommendations.

If you like, you can always update the review after the safari with some pictures and further comments.

NEXT STEPS

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