

Essential info for Kenya

Full name: Republic of Kenya

Population: Over 44 million

Capital city: Nairobi (also largest city)

Other major cities: Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru

Neighbouring countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania & Uganda

Major religions: Christianity (80%), Islam (11%)

Political system: Presidential republic.

Main languages: English (official), Swahili

Time: GMT +3

Internet TLD: .ke



Electricity: 240 volts, 50Hz. UK-style square three-pin plugs are used.



International dialling code: +254. City/area codes are used, e.g. (0)20 for Nairobi and (0)41 for Mombasa.

Emergency assistance: For police, ambulance or fire service dial 999. Diplomatic police: +254 (0) 731 170 666

Hours of Business: 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Jet lag: There is a time difference between France and Kenya of one hour in summer and two hours in winter. When it is 10am in Paris, it is 11am in Nairobi in summer, and noon in winter.

A few words of Swahili

Hello = Jambo

How are you? = Habari gani?

Fine (response) = Nzuri

Goodbye = Kwa heri / Kwa herini (more than one person)

See You Later = Tutaonana

Nice to meet you = Nafurahi kukuona

Goodnight = Lala salama

Yes = Ndiyo

No = Hapana

Thank you = Asante

Thank you very much = Asante sana

Please = Tafadhali

OK = Sawa

Excuse me = Samahani

You're Welcome = Karibu

What is your name? = Jina lako nani?

My name is = Jina langu ni ...

Where are you from? = Unatoka wapi?

I'm from .. = Natokea ...



May I take a picture? = Naomba kupiga picha?
Do you speak English? = Unasema kiingereza?
Do you speak Swahili? = Unasema Kiswahili?
Just a little bit = Kidogo tu!
How do you say in Swahili? = Unasemaje ... kwa Kiswahili
I don't understand = Sielewi
Friend = Rafiki
Hakuna Matata ! No problem

Immigration requirements

For a private visit, tourism visa can be obtained upon arrival at the airport (EUR 40).
For a business trip, one should be provided with a business visa, the application may be made to the Kenyan Embassy in your home country.
The residence permit or work permit is issued for a period of one or two years. It is forbidden to start any business activity without the valid visa. It must be requested when you arrive in the country after the Immigration Service, located in Nyayo House in Nairobi highway Uhruru. Warning ! The Kenyan authorities are very strict vis-à-vis illegal aliens, arrests are frequent and fairly heavy penalties.

Money

Currency: The Kenyan Shilling (KES), divided into 100 cents. ATMs are widely available in major cities, such as Nairobi or Mombasa. However, it's best to carry cash when travelling to Kenya's rural areas. (September, 15th 2015: 1€=119Ksh / 1\$= 105Kes)

Mpesa: (M for mobile, pesa is Swahili for money) is a mobile-phone based money transfer and microfinancing service, launched in 2007 by Vodafone for Safaricom and Vodacom, M-Pesa allows users to deposit, withdraw, transfer money and pay for goods and services easily with a mobile device. Users are charged a small fee for sending and withdrawing money using the service. M-Pesa is a branchless banking service; M-Pesa customers can deposit and withdraw money from a network of agents that includes airtime resellers and retail outlets acting as banking agents.

Tipping: Tips are common for most small services in addition to the standard 10% expected in restaurants and hotels.

Debit cards are not widely used, and expats rely on cheques when they don't have cash on-hand. However, there are ATMs in the big cities and several banks have online banking.

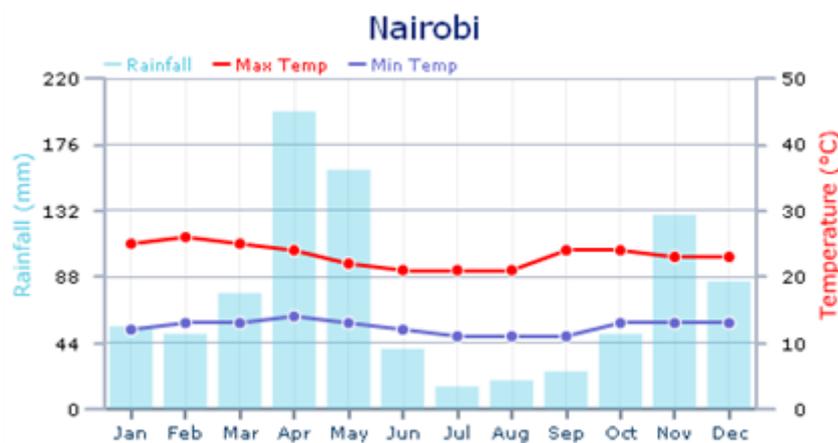


Weather in Kenya

Kenya is crossed by the equator, so you will find basically two seasons. The dry season from December to March and July to October approximately, and the rainy seasons composed of two periods: the "long" which runs from April to June and the "small" in November until mid-December. The sun rises all year around 6am and nightfalls around 6:30pm.

Kenya has a tropical climate, with hot and humid conditions along the coast, a temperate inland climate, and very dry conditions in the north and northeast parts of the country.

With an elevation of 1,795 metres (5,889 ft) above sea level, Nairobi benefits from a moderate climate. Summers are sunny and warm, winters mild to cool, growing cold in the evenings. There is only moderate rainfall in the late-summer to autumn period, when one can expect cloudy, drizzly days.



Politics & economics

Politically, Kenya is relatively stable but there was civil unrest following elections in 2008 and there is a chance that political unrest may occur from time to time. Kenya is generally a politically stable country with a Western-friendly government and manageable infrastructure.

The Kenyan capital of Nairobi, is now considered the hub for business and development in eastern Africa.



Kenya has one of the strongest economies in Africa with strong agricultural, manufacturing and real estate sectors. However, the economic reality on the ground when it comes to securing a job is much tougher for locals.

Unemployment levels remain very high today, and the government is protective of jobs that Kenyans can fill; thus, working in Kenya can prove difficult for expats that have not secured a job prior to arrival.

That said, Kenya, and especially Nairobi, is a major business hub in eastern Africa, and several multinational companies have set up shop there, including BASF, General Electric, Nokia, Coca-Cola, Toyota and SAB Miller. However, even with the presence of these branches, the country lacks the financial and business draw that encourages the same level of immigration found in other, more attractive expat destinations. Most expats who work for these multi-national corporations move to Kenya on an intra-company transfer, where they have previously been working for the company in their home country.

Industry sectors most likely to employ foreigners include tourism, journalism, development, and teaching.

There are many volunteer jobs in Kenya with government and NGO organisations. The country is a regional hub and headquarters for not-for-profit organisations and serves as the administrative centre for the operations of aid organisations in East Africa, especially for matters related to Somalia and Sudan. For this reason, many expats working in Kenya find themselves in teaching or development positions, regardless of their skill-set.

Furthermore, the United Nations maintains a number of offices in Nairobi. The Kenyan capital is also home to a number of foreign embassies, which employ many expats.

Public holidays in Kenya

Public Holidays in Kenya	2015	2016
New Year's Day	1 January	1 January
Good Friday	3 April	25 March
Easter Monday	6 April	28 March
Labour Day	1 May	1 May



Madaraka Day	1 June	1 June
Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)	17 July	7 July
Mashujaa Day	20 October	20 October
Independence Day	12 December	12 December
Christmas Day	25 December	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December	26 December

Housing

The rent is to be paid monthly or quarterly. For an apartment, the minimum term of the lease is one year. For a house, the minimum lease period is 2 years. Upon renewal of the lease, the law provides that the rent increases by 10% but it can be negotiated before signing the lease for the rent will be increased by 5 %. The deposit must be recovered at the end of the lease unless significant damage. Generally, the owner retains 50% for the last pay water and electricity bills after the departure of the tenant and especially redo the paint. The amount is equivalent to one month of rent if the rent is paid on a quarterly basis, it is equivalent to two months rent if the rent is paid on a monthly basis.

Festivals

Maralal Camel Derby is an annual event, held midyear just outside of Maralal town. This is Kenya's best known and most prestigious camel race, attracting both local and international competitors.

Rhino Charge is a unique off-road car rally held every year to raise money for conservation of the Aberdare Ecosystem. The Aberdares National Park is a sanctuary for the endangered Black Rhino.

Lamu Cultural Festival is a celebration of the beliefs and traditions that are the heart and soul of the Lamu community. Several competitions and races are staged during this week long festival. These events are designed to encourage local skills or practices that are central to Lamu life. These include traditional Swahili poetry, Henna painting and Bao competition...

The lake Turkana Festival takes place annually in Loiyangalani, a small town located on the south-eastern coast of Lake Turkana.



Taxes in Kenya

Expats need to discuss taxes with their employers. Expats should do their best to avoid being taxed twice, once in their home country and once in Kenya. Kenya has double taxation treaties with some countries, which prevent some expats from being taxed on one income in both Kenya and in their home country. Filing taxes is a complicated procedure even without these dual tax systems; thus, expats should consult an expat tax advisor for help. Income tax returns need to be filed by expats working in Kenya by 30 June each year.

Culture

Business culture in Kenya is governed by *harambee*, a concept involving mutual assistance, responsibility and community. *Harambee* also relates to Kenya's group orientation, in contrast to the individualism of Western cultures, and respect for family, community and ancestors is key.

Kenya is largely a hierarchical society in which deference to seniority is rigid and in which senior employees will seldom consult with those of lower status. Social standing is important and official titles should be included when introducing or addressing someone.

Dos and don'ts of business in Kenya

- Do take your time over greetings and enquire about the person's health and family.
- Don't start eating until the eldest member has – and don't leave food on the plate.
- Do be patient because business processes and decisions take longer in Kenya.
- Do convey respect to an elder or key business associate by clasping his wrist with one hand while shaking with the other.
- Don't get angry about a business issue. Always maintain a friendly tone at meetings

Education

Expats who want to send their child to an international school should budget accordingly and negotiate an allowance for school fees into their employment package. Those whose employer is footing the bill for their children's education should ensure that the company pays the money directly to the school to avoid being taxed on that allowance.



Lifestyle

Expats working in Kenya tend to be either highly-paid managers of multinational companies, or development and NGO employees and volunteers. Strong levels of local employee protectionism can often make the job search difficult, even for skilled and highly-qualified foreigners.

Expat life can be insulated from Kenyan society, as the fear of crime, particularly in the large cities, sometimes cloisters foreigners behind the gates of compound housing complexes, and locked car doors. Those who emerge from behind this curtain of fear can really enjoy the different cultures of Kenya, all of which are famously welcoming and cheerful.

Nonetheless, those moving to Kenya may not find the expat experience as comfortable as in more developed nations, and longing for everyday conveniences and the familiar efficiency of home is often a topic of discussion among foreigners.

On the other side of the coin, others find the luxuries Kenya has to offer, such as large houses, domestic workers, and high expat salaries; make for a higher quality of life than they are used to back home. Overall, whether life in Kenya turns out to be an unwelcome posting or a grand opportunity, what all expats will certainly have is a truly unique experience.

The cultural gap in Kenya

Some expats find the varying ethnic cultures so difficult to adjust to that they tend to live entirely enclosed within an expat circle. Homes in expat compounds can add to the feeling of segregation. Some new arrivals find the culture shock intimidating, but many are inspired by the friendly nature of locals. With no shortage of smiles and curiosity, Kenyans are often eager to help or befriend foreigners.

English-speaking expats will be relieved to find that they won't struggle with a language barrier in Kenya. English is one of the official languages and most Kenyans are fluent.

There are also expat groups in the large cities like Nairobi and Mombasa that help facilitate the assimilation process. These organisations arrange social gatherings including lunch dates and sporting events. Expats should contact their embassy or consulate to find out more about local expat clubs.



The wealth gap in Kenya

Most foreigners may find the expat experience to be relatively insulate. So, although expats continue to maintain a comfortable lifestyle similar to what they had back home, with some added perks, the various scales of economy cannot be ignored.

According to UNICEF, almost 50% of Kenyans live below the poverty line. Although this is largely in rural areas, the situation is very visible in big cities. The poor live in densely populated communities in and around cities. Areas such as Mathare and Kibera are known globally as large 'slums' that are without proper clean water, sanitation, electricity and educational facilities.

Domestic help in Kenya

In Kenya, most middle and upper class families have some form of domestic help. Having household help is a treat, many expats have several people working for their family, such as a driver, housekeeper, cook, nanny and gardener. While some households employ people with several skills, other families will prefer to employ a person for each task.

Manual labour in Kenya is cheap and expats often face some difficulty in getting to grips with the idea of hiring people and paying workers so little to do work they'd usually do themselves. It's important to consider the flipside of this argument, that by hiring locals to carry out domestic work, expats are playing their part to reduce unemployment and boost the economy.

Corruption and bureaucracy in Kenya

The economic disparities in Kenya are symptoms of a bigger problem. Corruption and mismanagement of public funds has long been a problem, and now Kenyans are demanding more accountability from their government institutions and improvement in service delivery.

When dealing with visas, work permits, paperwork and driving licences, expats will find the delays extremely frustrating. Be careful since some unscrupulous individuals may offer their help to take advantage of unsuspecting new arrivals.



Traffic and road conditions in Kenya

The number of vehicles on the roads in Kenya is growing rapidly, which causes severe traffic jams in most cities. Traffic flow is further constricted by almost constant construction and road expansions. It's hoped that the situation will improve when construction is complete, but every major urban centre in the world probably deals with this problem.

Public transport options in Kenya are somewhat limited. So one good option for expats consists in a private vehicle with a driver who is familiar with the local driving conditions, as the quality of Kenya's roads and signage is poor. The behaviour of local road users can be erratic, so expats will need to drive defensively. If travelling beyond the city limits into rural Kenya, expats are advised to use a four-wheel drive, especially during the rainy season.

Healthcare in Kenya

Expats should make sure they're well informed of the health risks when moving to Kenya. It's essential that foreigners living in Kenya have a comprehensive health insurance policy to cover them for any health-related issues that may occur during their time in the country.

Expats suffering from chronic ailments or needing prescription medication should try to bring a supply with them, as well as copies of the prescription and generic names of the drugs.

Private health insurance is extremely necessary in Kenya; without it, healthcare costs are just as expensive as in Western countries, and covering all the costs for emergency care out-of-pocket can be impossible.

Often employers relocating expats to Kenya will provide insurance, but if not, expats should obtain suitable Expatriate Health Insurance prior to arriving in Kenya. They should ensure their plan covers private healthcare in Africa and, more importantly, emergency medical evacuations.

Expats should get the latest medical advice on vaccinations and malaria prevention at least three weeks prior to arriving in Kenya. A malaria risk exists all year round, but more so in the coastal regions than in Nairobi and on the high, central plateau.



Immunisation against yellow fever, polio and typhoid are often recommended. Protection against bites from sandflies, mosquitoes and tsetse flies is the best protection against malaria, dengue fever and other insect-borne diseases. It's recommended that expats sleep under a mosquito net.

Water quality in Kenya is variable, so expats are advised not to drink water directly from the tap unless they have a pathogen and bacteria-killing water filter. Cholera outbreaks occur frequently; expats should take care not to drink contaminated water and be cautious of food prepared by unlicensed roadside vendors.

Private hospitals in Kenyan cities often have a small fleet of ambulances that are sent out to assist patients. However, in most cases it will be faster to get a patient to the nearest hospital in a private vehicle, as waiting times for ambulances in Kenya can be long.

In case of an emergency, expats can call an ambulance on the emergency number 999.

Crime in Kenya

Crime rates are high in Kenya's major cities such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. Expats living in Kenya will usually hire security guards for their home or opt to live in secure, gated housing complexes. Particularly dangerous areas such as the slums of Mukuru and Kibera in Nairobi are best avoided.

Car-jackings, muggings and petty theft also occur on Kenya's city streets. Expats should be vigilant, keep valuables out of sight and avoid carrying large sums of money. It's also best to avoid walking around the city centre at night. Foreigners in Kenya are likely targets for criminals who pose as tour guides and police officers. If at all unsure, ask any official to provide their credentials.

Scammers will also engage foreigners in conversation and tell them stories about being a refugee or having sick relatives, simply to get some cash. In most cases this is more of a nuisance than a real danger.

Terrorism in Kenya

There is a risk of terrorism in Kenya. The main threat comes from extremists linked to Al Shabaab, a militant group in Somalia which has issued public threats against Kenya because of its military involvement in Somalia.



The most significant terrorist attack in Kenya was the 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in Nairobi. In November 2002, there were attacks on an Israeli-owned hotel and a plane belonging to an Israeli airline in Mombasa. Throughout 2012, there were a number of small-scale grenade attacks, particularly in the Garissa region. In September 2013, there was a terror attack in Westgate, an upmarket mall in Nairobi during which a significant number of expats were caught in the crossfire between Kenyan forces and Al Shabaab gunmen. More recently, a terrorist attack took place at Garissa's university.

Expats are advised to avoid travelling close to the Kenya-Somalia border, the Garissa district or coastal areas north of Pate Islands where kidnappings have occurred.

Kenya Customs

Import regulations

Free import by passengers of 16 years or older:

- 1/2 lb. of tobacco or 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars
- 1 bottle of alcoholic beverages
- 1 pint of perfume

Prohibited is the import of fruit, poultry meat/products, imitation & toy firearms.

Pets

Cats and dogs must be accompanied by veterinarian good health certificate and rabies certificate issued at point of origin. Rabies vaccination must be less than one year and one month at the latest prior to arrival. In addition an import permit must be presented at time of entry. There is a 25% duty and VAT at 16% on arrival. Prohibited is the import of all live animals, unless consigned as cargo.

Currency Import regulations

Residents may import up to KES 500,000 to cover expenses upon re-entry into Kenya. No restrictions apply to foreign currencies. Non-residents may import local and foreign currency without restrictions. However, for amounts equivalent to USD 5,000 and more, residents and non-residents need to hold documents indicating the source and the purpose of this amount.

No airport tax is levied on passengers upon embarkation at the airport.



UNESCO

Kenya is proud to be home to 6 unique world heritage sites identified by The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Lamu Old Town (2001). The town of Lamu began life as a 14th century Swahili settlement, but the island has seen many visitors and influences, including Portuguese explorers, Turkish traders and the Omani Arabs. All left their mark, but Lamu developed its own particular culture, which has ultimately endured.

Fort Jesus (2001). Built by the Portuguese in 1593-1596, Fort Jesus' layout and form reflected the Renaissance ideal that perfect proportions and geometric harmony are to be found in the human body. Today the majestic Fort Jesus is a National Monument, standing high over the Mombasa harbor.

Kenya's Lake Systems of Lake Bogoria, Lake Nakuru and Lake Elementaita (2001). It comprises three inter-linked shallow lakes in the Rift Valley Province and covers a total area of 32,034 hectares. The Lake System is home to 13 globally threatened bird species and some of the highest bird diversities in the world.

Lake Turkana National Parks (1997). It is a massive inland sea, the largest desert lake in the world. This single body of water is over 250 kilometers long- longer than the entire Kenyan coast. It is widely known as the Jade Sea, because of the remarkable, almost incandescent, colour of its waters.

Mount Kenya National Park (1997). Africa's second highest peak, Mount Kenya is regarded as the realm of Ngai, god of the local Kikuyu people. The summit is a technical climb through a fascinating world of forests, wildlife, unique montane vegetation and finally one of the world's rarest sights, equatorial snow.

The Mijikenda Kaya Forests (1997). This natural site consists of 11 separate forest sites spread over some 200 km along the coast containing the remains of numerous fortified villages, known as kayas, of the Mijikenda people.