

KENYA

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Kenya is a developing East African country known for its wildlife and national parks. The capital city is Nairobi. The second largest city is Mombasa, located on the southeast coast. Tourist facilities are widely available in Nairobi, the game parks, the reserves, and on the coast.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP) / EMBASSY

LOCATION: If you are going to live or visit Kenya, please take the time to tell our Embassy about your trip. If you enroll, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency.

U.S. Embassy Kenya □ United Nations Avenue □ Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya. □ Telephone: (254) (20) 363-6451 □ Emergency after-hours telephone: (254) (20) 363-6000

ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A passport and visa are required. Visas may be obtained in advance, although airport visas are available for U.S. citizens. Travelers who opt to obtain an airport visa should expect delays upon arrival. There is a fee of \$25 for the visa, whether obtained in advance or at the airport. Evidence of yellow fever immunization may be requested. Travelers to Kenya and neighboring African countries should ensure that the validity of their passports is at least six months beyond the end of their intended stay, and that their passports contain sufficient blank pages for visas and immigration stamps.

Travelers may obtain the latest information on visas as well as any additional details regarding entry requirements from the [Embassy of Kenya](#), 2249 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20008, telephone (202) 387-6101, or the Kenyan Consulates General in Los Angeles and New York City. Persons outside the United States should contact the nearest Kenyan embassy or consulate. Visit the web site for the [Embassy of Kenya](#) for the most current visa information.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: On August 7, 1998, al-Qaida bombed the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, killing 225 people and injuring over 5,000 around the Embassy. The U.S. Embassy subsequently relocated outside of the city-center. On November 28, 2002, al-Qaida launched a bomb attack on a hotel in Kikambala, Kenya, (near Mombasa) in which 15 people were killed. A near

simultaneous attempt to shoot down an Israeli charter plane departing Mombasa was unsuccessful. These incidents highlight the continuing threat posed by terrorism in East Africa and the capacity of terrorist groups to carry out attacks. U.S. citizens should be aware of the risk of indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets in public places, including tourist sites and other sites where Westerners are known to congregate.

You can call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

CRIME: Crime is high in all regions of Kenya, particularly Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and at coastal beach resorts. There are regular reports of attacks against tourists by groups of armed assailants. Pickpockets and thieves carry out "snatch and run" crimes on city streets and near crowds. Visitors have found it safer not to carry valuables, but rather to store them in hotel safety deposit boxes or safe rooms. However, there have been reports of safes being stolen from hotel rooms and hotel desk staff being forced to open safes. Walking alone or at night, especially in downtown areas, public parks, along footpaths, on beaches, and in poorly lit areas, is dangerous and discouraged.

Thieves routinely snatch jewelry and other objects from open vehicle windows while motorists are either stopped at traffic lights or in heavy traffic. Vehicle windows should be up and doors locked regardless of the time of day or weather. Purchasing items from street vendors is strongly discouraged – visitors should only use reputable stores or businesses. Many scams, perpetrated against unsuspecting tourists, are prevalent in and around the city of Nairobi. Many of these involve people impersonating police officers and using fake police ID badges and other credentials. Nevertheless, police checkpoints are common in Kenya and all vehicles are required to stop if directed to do so.

Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, if you purchase them you may also be breaking local law.

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. If your passport is stolen we can help you replace it. For violent crimes such as assault and rape, we can help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends, and help them send you money if you need it. Although the investigation and prosecution of

the crime are solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if you need.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in Kenya, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. In some places you may be taken in for questioning if you don't have your passport with you. In some places, it is illegal to take pictures of certain buildings. In some places driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. These criminal penalties will vary from country to country. There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States, and you can be prosecuted under U.S. law if you buy pirated goods. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime prosecutable in the United States. If you break local laws in Kenya, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It's very important to know what's legal and what's not where you are going.

Persons violating Kenya's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Kenya are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines.

Arrest notifications in host country: Kenya is a signatory to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR), and is required by the VCCR to ask any detained U.S. citizen if he/she would like the U.S. Embassy to be notified and to notify the U.S. Embassy if the detained U.S. citizen requests it. Kenya does not routinely comply with its VCCR obligation. Any U.S. citizen who is detained should request U.S. Embassy notification if he/she would like consular assistance. U.S. citizens are encouraged to carry a copy of their U.S. passport with them at all times, so that proof of identity and U.S. citizenship is readily available if questioned by local officials.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Kenya is a relatively conservative society. Overt public displays of affection between persons of the opposite gender will likely garner serious disapproval, particularly in rural areas. Public displays of affection between persons of the same gender risk serious disapproval, and possibly violence. Homosexual sex is a felony under the Kenyan penal code.

Visitors to Kenya carrying U.S. Dollars should ensure that the bills are relatively new, as banks in Kenya have been known not to accept older U.S. currency.

Local tap water is not potable. Sealed bottled water is safe to drink and can be purchased in hotels, restaurants, and grocery stores.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Adequate medical services are available in Nairobi. Frequent outbreaks of cholera and malaria are endemic in Kenya outside Nairobi. In addition, diseases such as Ebola, Rift Valley Fever, and anthrax from handling sheep skins occur periodically. Travelers who become ill with a fever or flu-like illness while traveling in a malaria-risk area and up to one year after returning home should seek prompt medical attention and tell the physician their travel history and what anti-malarial drugs they have been taking. For additional information on malaria, protection from insect bites, and anti-malarial drugs, please visit the [CDC Travelers' Health web site](#).

Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Kenya. For further information, please [consult the CDC's information on TB](#).

You can find good information on vaccinations and other health precautions, on the [CDC website](#). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

MEDICAL INSURANCE: You can't assume your insurance will go with you when you travel. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave whether or not your medical insurance will cover you overseas.

You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

- Does my policy apply when I'm out of the United States?
- Will it cover emergencies like a trip to a foreign hospital or a medical evacuation?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors' and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy doesn't go with you when you travel, it's a very good idea to take out another one for your trip.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in Kenya, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. One of the greatest threats to travelers in Kenya is road safety.

In Kenya, one drives on the left side of the road, which can be very disorienting to those not accustomed to it. Excessive speed, unpredictable local driving habits and manners, poor vehicle maintenance, bumpy,

potholed and unpaved roads, and the lack of basic safety equipment on many vehicles are daily hazards on Kenyan roads.

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This replaces the Country Specific Information for Kenya dated April 30, 2010 with changes to the sections on Smart Traveler Enrollment Program and Embassy Location, Threats to Safety and Security, and Special Circumstances.