



Preparing For Your First East African Safari: What No-One Tells You

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Experiencing your first East African safari is one of the most exciting travel experiences available anywhere in the world. From witnessing the Great Migration across the Serengeti to spotting wildlife in their natural habitat, these memories will stay with you forever. But behind the spectacular imagery lies thoughtful preparation, and some aren't always obvious. This blog provides practical advice that no-one tells you before you go on your first East African safari.

Understanding the Destinations

East Africa is a region made up of diverse landscapes and [national parks](#), each with its own climate and wildlife rhythm.

- Massai Mara, Kenya: for classic savannah scenery and the Great Migration
- Serengeti & Ngorongoro, Tanzania: for vast plains and unparalleled predator sightings
- Uganda & [Rwanda](#): for the dramatic experience of tracking mountain gorillas

Each destination has its own wildlife calendars, weather patterns and travel logistics. We recommend researching early the areas you are interested in so you can tailor your itinerary to what you want to see the most.

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Representing





Health Preparations You Really Need to Know

Vaccinations and Health Checks

Before you travel, it is recommended for you to consult your doctor at least 6-8 weeks prior to your travels to ensure sufficient amount of time to have any required vaccinations before your safari. You can also look at various online sources* for vaccine recommendations around the time of your travel.

**It is important that you use reliable, trusted sources such as the NHS in the United Kingdom.*

Beyond the Basics: Gut Health & First Aid

With dry heat and a lot of ground to cover, the East African climate can be a challenge in itself for some people. In order to get the most out of your safari experience, it's important to ensure you prepare yourself with supplies when you're out in the wild for extended periods.

Something we would always recommend is rehydration salts or fluids to help beat the heat and blister plasters to make sure your feet don't stop you from experiencing everything a safari has to offer! It's a great idea to stay topped up on fluids and electrolytes even if you feel in tip-top shape at the time, as it can take time for the effects of dehydration to kick in – it's always best to overprepare and not need it!



Safari Clothing

Packing the correct clothing is a crucial step to ensure you are dressed appropriately for the weather and environments you will be in during your safari. We recommend packing lightweight, breathable clothing which is suitable for warm temperatures, and layered items such as a jacket as the temperature can drop in the mornings and evenings.

Comfortable walking shoes should also be high up on your [packing list](#), especially if you are booking a walking safari. We advise bringing sun-safe clothing such as a wide-brimmed hat and UV sunglasses, as temperatures can get high throughout the day and heatstroke can be a real risk. We would also recommend avoiding bright and dark colours such as blue or black, as these can attract tsetse flies.

Realities of Safari Transport and Timing

Most wildlife sightings happen in the early morning or late afternoon. It is important you are prepared for the early starts, and your flight times should work around this. Safari itineraries can also mean long periods spent in open safari vehicles as these typically offer the best viewing points. We recommend bringing a neck scarf or face mask as you may experience dusty atmospheres during the safari drives.

What No-One Tells You About Wildlife Viewing

It's Not Guaranteed

Nature doesn't work to a schedule and is not always guaranteed. Wildlife can be elusive on some days, so it is important you research when the best time to visit is for the wildlife sightings you want to experience the most. We recommend bringing binoculars and a zoom lens for your [safari photography](#), so you can witness more on your experience and capture those incredible moments forever. We also recommend bringing extra batteries and memory cards as charging options can be limited when out on a safari.



Respecting Wildlife

Safari etiquette matters, respecting the wildlife and ensuring you follow the rules set out by your safari guides is crucial. These measures are not only there to protect the animals but are also there to protect you. It is important to keep your distance from animals and listen to the advice given by the local guides, as approaching too close can disturb them and could put you in danger. It is recommended to stay quiet and not make loud noises or stand abruptly as this can startle wildlife, making them retreat and minimising your chance of sightings.

Cash, Cards & Tipping Culture

It is recommended to carry a small amount of cash on you during a safari as some extras at camps and lodges can be cash only. Tipping is also customary in East Africa, with many guides relying on tips. Please consult your ARP Africa Travel tour consultant who will be able to assist with our latest tipping guidelines.

Connectivity & What to Really Expect

Wi-Fi or network connectivity in remote parks is likely to be entirely unavailable, and some lodges may provide satellite connectivity, but this isn't always guaranteed. We would recommend preparing your loved ones back home by sharing your general itinerary and check-in times whilst you are on your safari.



Travel Insurance

Travel insurance should always be a priority when preparing for any international trip, but for an East African safari it should be even higher on your list. Typical insurance should include:

- Emergency medical evacuation
- Cancellation and trip interruption
- Coverage for adventure activities

It is also important to ensure your policy includes safari game drives and related activities, as not all do.

Cultural Sensitivity Tips

[East Africa's communities are vibrant](#) and fascinating, but it is important to be respectful of their culture when visiting and travelling. It is advised to dress modestly in the village and towns and ask permission before photographing local people.

A Journey Worth Preparing For

Preparing for your first East African safari goes beyond packing the correct clothing and bringing a camera. It is important to educate yourself on the health preventions to implement before your travels, whilst also understanding the safari rhythms and being open-minded, patient and respectful.

When you take the time to prepare thoughtfully, your safari can exceed your wildest expectations. Ready to start planning your first East African safari? Explore [our safaris](#) or [contact us today](#) to find out more.