



KENYA

COUNTRY GUIDE



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PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

Karibuni sana to the amazing country of Kenya! In this document, you will find a plethora of information that will be useful in preparing for your journey. This Kenya Country Guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight recommendations, etc. is listed in your Online Trip Portal. For any questions unanswered by either the Country Guide or the online portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate Destinations staff member. We hope that this document proves to be helpful and that you are getting excited for your journey to Kenya!

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Passport

Travelers to Kenya should ensure that the validity of their passports extends at least 6 months beyond the end of their intended stay, and should have at least 2 blank (unstamped) visa pages in their passport to enter the country. The last 2 amendment pages are unacceptable for visas and immigration stamps. Note that you will need to renew your passport if you are out of visa pages, as the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If you need to renew your passport, please do so as soon as possible. For more information on renewing your passport, please visit the U.S. State Department's website on [passport services](#).

We recommend travelers scan a copy of your passport and email it to yourself. This way you always have a copy if something happens to it while traveling.

Visa

Citizens from many countries will require a tourist visa in order to enter Kenya. Travelers are required to obtain an e-visa online in advance of their travels. We recommend applying for your visa between 60 and 30 days prior to your departure. Your visa becomes valid for 90 days from when it is issued, so you won't want to apply too early, but you will also want to allow for enough time for processing.

Please follow the steps outlined below to apply.

- Click register on <http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html>
- Select "create an account" to create your account (you will need your passport number for this)
- Once logged in, select Department of Immigration Services

- Select “submit application”
 - Select “Kenyan visa”
 - Select the type of visa (tourist visa) and read the instructions carefully
 - Fill in the application form
 - Pay using a Visa, MasterCard or other debit cards
 - Await an approval email, then download and print your e-visa from your e-Citizen account
 - Present your printed eVisa to the immigration officer at the port of entry
- Note:** You will be required to show a hard copy of your visa as a PDF upon arrival

Travel Insurance

For all travel in 2021 and 2022, Elevate Destinations is requiring that travelers purchase travel insurance with ‘cancel for any reason’ coverage for any trip they take with us. Please note that some insurance options require purchase within 24 hours of making payment for your trip. We encourage you to review your travel insurance options before making payment to Elevate Destinations.

Below are two insurance brokers that Elevate Destinations recommends:

1. **Yonder Insurance:** You are welcome to purchase travel insurance through our partners at [Yonder Insurance](#). You can contact them directly to find a policy that will best fit your needs; you can reach them by email at hello@insureyonder.com or over the phone at 855-358-6433 (Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM CT).
2. **Travel Insurance Center:** Dan Drennen is the representative who Elevate Destination works with at Travel Insurance Center. To inquire with Dan about insurance policies, you can email him at dan@travelinsurancecenter.com or over the phone at 1-866-979-6753 (extension 3621).

Guests may acquire travel insurance through Yonder Travel Insurance, Travel Insurance Center, or any other travel insurance company of their choosing. Elevate Destinations recommends that travelers evaluate the insurance options available for their needs and inquire with providers about “cancel for any reason” insurance.

COVID-19

Kenya Entry Requirements: As COVID is continually evolving, please check your Online Trip Portal for the most up to date information regarding entry requirements and health and safety precautions.

- Travelers must have a negative PCR test taken within 96 hours prior to their arrival in Kenya. Please bring a printed copy of your negative COVID test result with you.
- Travelers must register and submit an International Travelers Health Surveillance Form online (click [here](#)), prior to departure and present the QR code to your airline before flying. This needs to be completed prior to your arrival. We recommend submitting this form 24 hours before arrival in case

you are unable to connect to internet upon your arrival and so you can print the QR code in addition to having it on your mobile phone.

- Travelers must register for the [Trusted Travel Code](#) to have your PCR test results verified. You can create an account and upload your test results as well as your COVID vaccine card through this [link](#).
- Travelers will undergo a temperature check and symptom check upon arrival. Travelers will be allowed entry under the following conditions:
 - A temperature at or below 99.5°F
 - Does not have a persistent cough
 - Does not have difficulty breathing or other flu-like symptoms
 - Has a negative PCR test conducted within 96 hours of arrival in Kenya

Frequently Updated Resources Online:

- Reuters COVID-19 Tracker - [Kenya](#)
- World Health Organization (WHO) - [Kenya](#)
- Worldometer - [Kenya](#)

Immunizations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in Kenya. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Visit the [CDC Website for Kenya](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

Other Health Considerations

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program.

Travel in Kenya can be physically demanding. You must be able to enter and exit a wide variety of vehicles including jeeps and vans. Dust and other air impurities may be present in heavy concentrations, and colds, nasal congestion and sore throat may occur. Kenya is a large country and although air travel is often scheduled to reduce travel times between long distances, some extended road journeys are often required.

We recommend a medium level of physical agility, as some of the drives may be long, with sections of unpaved, bumpy roads. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty
- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle on unpaved, bumpy roads for extended periods of time

Safety Recommendations

The places you will be traveling are generally safe places. But when in the city, as in many metropolitan areas, it's good practice to take necessary precautions to safeguard against pick-pocketing. Please do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while on this trip. Keep a close watch on the belongings that you have (purses zipped, nothing valuable in backpacks or back pockets) when you do go out.

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all time. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns.

Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the U.S. sign-up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits in case of an emergency while abroad:

- You will receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in that country know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family-related.

Communications

The country code for Kenya is +254. To call numbers in Kenya from the U.S. dial 011 + 254 + area code + seven-digit local number

Wifi: In most places you will visit in Kenya, wifi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability will likely be less reliable than you are used to or it may be down all together for extended periods of time. Oftentimes, connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in individual rooms.

International Calls: If you are in Kenya and trying to reach a number in the US, dial 000 before dialing +1 + area code + local number.

Staying connected: Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone apps:** Apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber (when Wifi is available). We recommend that travelers download and create a WhatsApp account prior to their travel as you will not be able to set up an account when abroad.
2. **Getting an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Use a local phone / SIM card:** SIM cards are recommended for international travelers as for making calls within Kenya as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please also let us know in advance if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone. To purchase a local SIM card, you will need to provide a copy of your passport.
4. **Call from hotel or internet café:** Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

Documentation

In case of emergency, it is advisable to record all of your important information on one sheet of paper, photocopy it, and distribute a few copies in your luggage, your money belt, and amongst relatives or friends at home. Also email a scanned copy to yourself to have available online anywhere.

These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:

- A photocopy of your passport
- A printed copy of your negative PCR test result, conducted within 96 hours of your arrival
- COVID-19 Vaccination Card; both the original copy and a photocopy
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- E-Visa; both a printed copy and electronically
- Travel insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers etc.

Money

The local currency in Kenya is the Kenyan Shilling (KES). The Kenyan Shilling comes in denominations of notes of KES 50, KES 100, KES 200, KES 500 and KES 1,000 and coins of KES 5, KES 10 and KES 50.

For your extra personal costs and shopping, bringing USD \$30-\$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans, in case they view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in Kenya can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMS, hotels and banks).

Cash & Exchanging Money: Kenya is a primarily cash economy, so you will need to have cash in the local currency throughout your journey. Local currency is recommended for most places, especially smaller stores and markets. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash or change as some smaller vendors may not carry change for bigger bills.

If you exchange money, do so only at authorized outlets such as banks and hotels, and exchange only what you think you will spend in-country. Reconversion on departure may be difficult. Coins cannot be reconverted. To see what the current exchange rate is, check online at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

We recommend bringing \$200 - \$300 in USD cash in case of emergency and for personal spending. If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last 5 years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)

Banks, and ATMs are available in most major cities, and your guide can generally help with withdrawing cash throughout your trip. There is usually a small fee per transaction on top of what your own bank charges for withdrawing cash at an ATM.

*Note: You will need your passport to exchange money at a bank or Bureau.

Credit Cards: Credit cards (mainly Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in larger establishments and hotels. Even so, oftentimes credit card machines are down and so always having cash on hand is advisable. Most merchants will typically charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction. Cash is more appropriate outside of big cities and in smaller establishments.

ATM/Debit Cards: You can use your debit card to withdraw money from ATMs.

***Note:** ATMs in remote areas can be unreliable, and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 2 or 3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged in the case that ATMs are not working for you.*

IN-COUNTRY INFO

Time

Kenya follows GMT + 3:00. Therefore, time in the locations of your visit will be 8 hours ahead of East Coast time, and 11 hours ahead of West Coast time.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Consider downloading a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like: Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

Electricity

Kenya uses a standard of 240V, 50Hz, and plug Type G. The following images show the type of plugs, sockets, and adapters you can use while traveling in Kenya. To keep your electronics up and running, we suggest purchasing a universal plug.



Water & Food Safety

Tap water is not safe to drink in Kenya. We strongly recommend not drinking tap water anywhere in Kenya unless boiled. Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill up with clean drinking water. Some people also choose to brush their teeth with bottled water, but this is up to personal preference based on how sensitive your stomach is. Do not use ice unless you know it was made from bottled water. Clean drinking water and soft drinks will be supplied at all

meals and water will be available in the vehicles. Be wary of fruits and vegetables that may have been washed in tap water.

Similarly, we recommend travelers eat foods that have been cooked well. Fresh vegetables and fruits bear the risk of having been washed in contaminated water. Fruits you can peel are usually safe (e.g. bananas and oranges).

Toilet Paper

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as some bathrooms, especially in remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember that in remote parts of the country, you may be encouraged to throw the toilet paper into the bin provided and **not into the toilet** itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.

Waste Disposal

Keep in mind that other parts of the world, waste disposal systems are not as advanced as you might be used to. Oftentimes, landfills are adjacent to conservation land or trash is burned. Recycling is often unavailable. To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you.
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)
- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

Local Cuisine & Drink

Most fruits and vegetables in Kenya are grown locally. These include pineapple, papaya, mangoes, bananas, avocados, green beans and leafy greens. Given that tap water is not safe to drink, we recommend that travelers eat only fruits that can be peeled and do not eat raw or uncooked vegetables due to contaminated water.

Traditional Kenyan meals include the following:

- Starch - rice, pilau - spiced rice, ugali, chips - french fries, or chapatti
- Protein - chicken, fish, beef or beans
- Cooked green leafy vegetables such as cassava leaves, pumpkin leaves, spinach, cabbage
- Delicious condiments and salads including kachumbari, which is a salad of tomatoes, red onion, bell peppers, ginger and garlic as well as hot sauce (pili pili, in Swahili)
- Fresh fruit

Other popular Kenyan foods include:

- Maandazi - a sweet doughnut, typically eaten at breakfast
- Chipsimayai - an egg omelet cooked with potatoes.
- Mshikaki - beef kebabs

You will notice the distinct influence of Indian spices mixed with continental and traditional African cuisine.

Kenyan coffee and tea is excellent, and many varieties of soda and fruit juice are available and inexpensive. The local beers are quite good too. Wine and liquor are nearly all imported, mainly from South Africa and are heavily taxed, making them fairly expensive.

Weather Conditions

Generally, costal areas of Kenya tend to be hotter and more humid than inland areas; but this is always tempered by ocean breezes. In Nairobi, daily high temperatures fall between 72°F and 85°F, and daily lows between 53°F and 70°F. North of Nairobi (in the highland regions around Mt. Kenya and Aberdare National Park), it becomes colder as altitude increases. From June - August, it can be especially cold in these areas. The northern frontier district (extending from Samburu to Kenya's northernmost borders) is an arid, desert-like region with slightly higher temperatures than the rest of the country. In lower inland plateau areas (around Kisumu and Lake Victoria), temperatures are also warm.

The Kilgoris / Mara area will be an average of 10° - 20° hotter during the daytime. It is worth noting however, that all these areas can get cold in the mornings and evenings. Layers will be your best friend, especially on game drives. Unseasonal weather can occur, and you should pack with a degree of flexibility in mind.

While Kenya does not have distinct seasonal changes due to its proximity to the Equator, there are some subtle climatic variations at different times of the year.

- *December - March*: The summer months in Kenya are usually the warmest months of the year. Depending on what part of the country you are visiting, it can cool down considerably in the mornings and evenings.
- *March - May*: The long rains fall somewhere in this timeframe and are characterized by heavy, intermittent rains. Many areas become flooded during this season. It remains fairly warm, but starts to cool down during the transition to winter in June.
- *June - August*: This is winter in Kenya and the weather is coolest during these months. The country is beautiful and green from the heavy rains.
- *September - November*: This is a delightful time to visit Kenya. The scattered rains freshen the country and lay the dust, though they can be heavy at times. It can start to get quite hot in the end of October, heading in to the summer months.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Luggage Restrictions

Domestic flights in Kenya often have strict luggage restrictions as they are typically smaller planes. On many of these flights, you will only be allowed to bring soft bags that weigh no more than 15 kg. Please check your online portal for the exact details or contact an Elevate Destinations staff member if you have questions about this.

Every piece of checked luggage should be locked and contain identification. In addition, do not pack valuable items in checked baggage. While every precaution will be taken with your baggage, we strongly recommend purchasing adequate luggage insurance.

Smart Traveler Tip!

Kenya has banned single-use plastic bags. It is illegal to produce, sell and use plastic bags. Please back reusable, eco-friendly bags for your trip. Please note the ziplock bags are only allowed to use to carry toiletries.

Clothing

In Kenya, especially in smaller cities and villages, women dress fairly conservatively. We suggest packing lightweight clothing that cover your knees and shoulders. Showing too much skin can often lead to unwanted attention.

Travelers are encouraged to bring a hat of some kind for sun protection instead of sunglasses. This protects your head and your eyes and leaves you more open to connecting with the people you will meet during your travels.

- Light-colored, lightweight, breathable clothing - khaki, grey, brown and green for safari - tsetse flies are attracted to bright and dark colors as well as metallic fabrics
- Light, long-sleeved shirts and pants to protect against mosquitoes
- Light sweater for the winter season
- A light jacket or sweatshirt for the evenings
- Quick-dry shirts
- Comfortable clothes for relaxing in the evenings
- One nice, yet casual outfit
- T-shirts
- One or two nice outfits for site visits and dinners
- Scarf or shawl
- Comfortable and sturdy walking shoes
- Sun cap or hat
- Socks
- Raincoat and umbrella, depending on the season
- Swimsuit
- Sandals and flip flops

Materials

- A tote bag to bring home purchases (or leave a little room in your suitcase)
- Book or e-reader
- Binoculars
- Notebook and pens
- Camera & batteries or charger
- Travel pillow
- Energy bars and snacks that will not melt, if desired
- Plug adapter (see electricity section above)
- Tissue packs
- Hand sanitizer

Essentials

- Passport and visa documents, including a PDF of your e-visa and international flight itinerary
- COVID-19 vaccination card (original and photocopy)
- Printed copy of your negative COVID PCR test results
- Photocopy of your passport and travel insurance policy
- Money pouch
- Day pack
- Earplugs (dogs, buses, noisy neighbors - a pair of good earplugs can be invaluable!)
- Small flashlight or headlamp
- Watch or alarm clock
- Small, reusable pouches or bags - good for keeping valuables dry and dust-free
- Reusable water bottle
- Glasses and / or contacts, and a back-up pair
- Plug adapter and converter (see electricity section above)

Medical Kit & Toiletries

Participants should pack an adequate supply of any prescription medication necessary for the duration of the trip in their original containers and in their carry-on luggage.

- COVID-19 PPE: Face masks and hand sanitizer and any other protective equipment
- Sunscreen and lip balm with an SPF
- Insect repellent
- Any prescription medication
- Allergy medication and/or an epi-pen
- Anti-malarial tablets, if advised to take them by a medical professional
- Re-hydration or electrolyte salts or tablets
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Pepto-Bismol for stomach upsets
- Painkillers
- Motion sickness medication (e.g. dramamine, prescription Scopolamine)
- First aid kit - bandaids, antiseptic cream, sterile wipes
- Pre-moistened antibacterial hand wipes
- Razor, hand lotion, soap
- Shampoo and conditioner

- If you have a favorite doctor, bring their phone number in case you get sick and want to speak with a trusted expert

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling, and it is important that these differences are expected. Kenya has different cultural norms and taboos and we encourage visitors to understand and abide by.

- **Greetings:** Formal greetings are fundamental to life in rural Africa, and it is important that, as a visitor, you follow suit. A few words of salutation followed by an inquiry after the other's health is the usual way to start a conversation. It is considered an affront to plough straight into question-asking, even if you are simply looking for directions from a passer-by. Most Kenyans speak some English, but using the Swahili greeting 'jambo!' with a smile will more often than not inspire a warm welcome.
- **Social Norms:** It is important to *remain calm* in your interactions, regardless of any frustrations, in Kenya as anger is not well received. Also important to note is that displaying public affections in public can be offensive, particularly affection between members of the opposite sex. Holding hands and embracing each other publicly is considered distasteful and something that is private.
- **Bargaining:** Gentle bargaining is appropriate in markets and with souvenir vendors. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive. Also, knowing a little bit of Swahili can go a long way when bargaining at markets. If you are ever unsure if bargaining is appropriate, you can always ask your guide.
- **Gift Giving & Handouts:** Many travelers take pleasure in passing out little gifts, such as pens and candy, to the children they encounter on safari in Kenya. This is something, which, although well intended, has created a begging problem of serious consequences to the children. Village elders are disturbed by the truancy rate among their school-aged children, who sometimes skip classes so that they can stand around tourist areas and wait for presents. We urge all travelers to refrain from passing out any gifts directly to any children in Kenya and would ask those inclined to do so to give their gifts to their guide instead.
- **Tread Lightly:** While game-viewing in parks and reserves, please be careful not to disturb the animals by making unnecessary noise or commotion. Remember that we are guests in their sensitive ecosystem! By traveling with a responsible travel organization such as Elevate Destinations, you are playing a role in ensuring the sustainability of the places we visit!

Language

Kenya is a multilingual country. The Bantu Swahili language and English, the latter of which was inherited from colonial rule, are both widely spoken. While there are many other tribal languages, Swahili and English serve as the two official working languages.

Although many of the locals you will be interacting with will speak English, it's always considerate and may be helpful to learn a few phrases in Swahili. Below are some examples to get you started.

<i>English</i>	<i>Swahili</i>
Hello	Jambo (informal, meaning “what’s up”) Poa (informal, response to “mambo,” meaning cool)
How are you? (informal)	Hujambo / Habari yako?
I’m fine	Sijambo
See you later	Badaai
Goodbye	Kwa heri
Sorry	Pole
Thank you	Asante
Welcome or you’re welcome	Karibu
Please	Tafadhali
Yes	Ndiyo
No	Hapana
No thank you	Hapana asante
Excuse me	Samahani
My name is _____.	Jina langu ni_____
Nice to meet you	
Have a good journey!	Safari njema
Good morning / afternoon /evening	Asubuhi / mchana / usiku njema
I don’t understand	Sielelwi
What is your name?	Jina laku ni nani?
Where are the restrooms?	Iko wapi choo?

Photography

Kenya is a beautiful destination, and you will want to take lots of pictures. **When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect.** You can do this with gestures or ask your guide to translate. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. There are some places where photography is

prohibited, and these areas are usually marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, [“Nine questions to help decolonize your photography”](#).

Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email protect@ecpat.net to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate’s values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at www.elevatedestinations.com. Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [Native Energy's Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Travel That Gives Back: Buy a Trip, Give a Trip!

Every trip organized through Elevate Destinations allows a group of local children to visit tourist sites in their own country. Visiting historical sites, seeing conservation projects, and getting up close with wildlife is an immeasurable experience for local youth — many of who have never traveled out of their own villages. Learn more about our B1G1 program [here](#).

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Bargaining is acceptable on this trip and a great way to engage with locals. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive in bargaining for souvenirs.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Use alternatives to single-use plastics:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!
- **Don't feel pressured to give away money or material items:** You will likely encounter instances of poverty and people asking for donations. We try to discourage giving away money or items as it can actually accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals. Additionally, children that receive money, gifts, and sweets from you are encouraged to stick around for more, rather than to be in school. As difficult as it can be to turn down direct requests, sometimes giving your friendship and respect to locals can be the best gift of all. If you want to help, consider giving to a trustworthy charity, non-profit, or local school.
- **Tip your housekeeping staff:** Many of the the staff cleaning hotel rooms are on the bottom of the economic pyramid. Please consider leaving a tip before you checkout. The equivalent of \$2 dollars a day is appropriate. This is an easy way to ensure some of your money reaches the hands that need it the most.

Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.