



KENYA COUNTRY GUIDE



ELEVATE DESTINATIONS
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, 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 about your journey to Kenya!

COMMUNICATIONS

For 24-hour assistance in-country, please check your personalized itinerary for contact details.

[US Embassy Nairobi](#)

United Nations Avenue
00621 Nairobi, Kenya
Kenya_ACS@state.gov

Phone Numbers (calling from outside of Kenya):

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 7:15 AM – 4:30 PM & Friday 7:15 AM – 12:15 PM

- +254 20 363-6451 (office hours only)
- +254 70 963 6451 (outside of office hours)

Phone Numbers (calling from Kenya):

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 7:15 AM – 4:30 PM & Friday 7:15 AM – 12:15 PM

- 020 363-6451 (office hours only)
- 254 70 963 6451 (outside of office hours)

International Calls

If you are in-country and trying to reach a number in the U.S., dial 000 + 1 + [telephone number]. 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 international calls.

Dialing out of Kenya to the U.S.:

000 + 1 + [telephone number]

Dialing out of the U.S. to Kenya:

011 + 254 + 2 digit area code + phone number (landlines)

011 + 254 + 7 + 9 digit number (cell phones)

Kenya Area Codes

Nairobi 20

Mombasa 41

Nakuru 51
Kisumu 57
Eldoret 53

You may be able to use your US cell phone while in Kenya, depending on the type of phone and your mobile carrier service. However, be sure to investigate your carrier's roaming fees, especially for data, as this can add up quickly. If you bring an unlocked phone, you can also buy a local SIM card upon arrival.

Most hotels have some Wifi access, although it is not always reliable or reaching speeds in the US. When Internet access is available, applications such as Skype or WhatsApp provide an affordable – and in many cases free – solution to making international calls.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

***There is a plastic bag ban in Kenya. Do not bring your things in disposable plastic bags or you will be made to remove them and may have to pay a fine.**

The following points are intended to enhance your upcoming trip. Please reach out to your contact at Elevate Destinations if you have more questions. For a general introduction to the history, culture, and travel of the countries you will be visiting, we recommend Lonely Planet Travel Guides, which are updated annually.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) 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.

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 it available online anywhere.

Here are some ideas on what to include:

- A photocopy of your passport
- 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 contact information, serial numbers for electronics, etc.

If you can scan these documents and email them to your web-based email account, this is a useful backup as well.

Passport

Your passport must be valid for 6 months beyond your length of stay. Two blank pages are required for entry, and the last two amendment pages are unacceptable for 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. We also 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.

If you would like assistance renewing your passport, we recommend A1 Passport and Visa Services in Washington D.C. for their excellent customer service. To do so, please email them at info@a1passportvisa.com and let them know you are working with Elevate Destinations on your travel arrangements.

Visas

KENYA: All travelers to Kenya will need an e-visa to enter the country, which you can obtain in advance via the online system here: <http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html>. You can no longer obtain a VISA upon arrival at the airport. In most cases, a single entry, 30 day visa* is the right choice. We recommend applying for your visa between **30 to 60 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 at least 30 days for processing.

Applicants receive an email confirmation with a tracking number. In most cases, you will then receive an email with an entry QR code within 3 business days. It is mandatory to print this file and to take a hard copy with you to Kenya. **Please note that you are likely to be refused entry into Kenya if you do not carry a hard copy of the PDF file.**

*Note: Single-entry visas for Kenya allow re-entry into Kenya for up to three months after visiting other East African countries without having to purchase a multiple-entry visa. If you plan a post-tour extension to Tanzania or Uganda, simply inform the immigration official who stamps your passport on the arrival of the length of your initial stay and your plans to return to Kenya later in your tour.

Please note that as of January 1, 2021, obtaining a visa upon arrival is no longer an option.

For the most recent passport and visa details, search your destination country on the State Department website here, or contact the Embassy of Kenya directly by phone at 202.387.6101.

Please follow the steps outlined below to apply.

- Click register at <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 the 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.

Health Concerns

Please consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding recommended immunizations for travel to Kenya. 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.

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.

- Any traveler arriving in Kenya with flu-like symptoms will be required to complete a Passenger Locator Form https://ears.health.go.ke/follow_up_registration/ and undergo a Rapid Antigen Test at their own expense.

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.

c) Note that Yellow Fever immunization is required if traveling from a country with high risk of Yellow Fever transmission. Those countries can be found on this [CDC website](#)

OTHER HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

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

Traveling 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 walk in weather conditions of heat, strong sun, and arid climate
- 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
- Keep a flexible and positive attitude in the case of sudden changes to the itinerary or weather – expect the unexpected!

Travel Insurance

For all travel in 2023, Elevate Destinations is requiring that travelers purchase medical insurance for any trip they take with us. This insurance must cover travelers for Covid-related expenses and costs associated with quarantine while abroad. 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 payments to Elevate Destinations.

Elevate Destinations is not a licensed insurance agency or advisor.

Below are two insurance brokers that Elevate Destinations recommends:

Yonder Insurance

- Email: hello@insureyonder.com
- Phone Number: 855-358-6433 (Monday – Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM CT).

Travel Insurance Center (Dan Drennen)

- Email: dan@travelinsurancecenter.com
- Phone Number: 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.

Money

Kenya: The local currency is the Kenyan Shilling (KES). The exchange rate fluctuates but is currently 111 KES per US\$1. You can check the exchange rates [here](#).

ATM

ATMs are found throughout the country and offer a better exchange rate for local currency. ***Be sure to notify your bank that you will be traveling internationally before departure so they do not see your transactions as fraudulent, as they may put a hold on your account.**

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in Kenya can be obtained at authorized facilities such as at hotels, banks, and foreign exchange bureaus. In general, we suggest that you limit the amount of money you convert into local currency and exchange only what you think you will spend before leaving a foreign country. Be aware that normally, only paper currency will be accepted for exchange (not coins).

Cash

Kenya is primarily a cash economy, so we recommend bringing the funds you will need for personal spending and gratuities in US dollars. Lodges and hotels will have a secure safe where you can request to store currency during your travels. Be sure to bring newer bills (printed in the last five years). Ripped or damaged bills will be very difficult to convert or spend.

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)
- Larger denominations

Credit Cards

Although credit cards are increasingly accepted at restaurants and hotels in larger cities, this may not be the case in remote areas. Visa is the credit card of preference, and travelers may have trouble using Mastercard or AMEX for credit or debit purchases. Make sure to have your credit card PIN

number with you. If you do not have one, call your credit card company to obtain one. Credit card transactions may incur a service charge, so check your agreement in advance.

International Fees

Be sure to verify your bank's policies regarding international transaction charges when withdrawing from an ATM. When using your debit/credit card in stores, you may be charged a foreign transaction fee, which is usually assessed as a percent of what you are spending. For cash withdrawals, there is often a flat fee, though some may charge an additional percentage on top of that. The fees may also be different for cash advances at a bank than at the ATM.

Gratuities

Gratuities are expected on safari and can be paid in US dollars. As a general guideline for a customized private trip:

- Safari guides: US \$15-\$20 (per person per day)
- Walking guides (if different from your safari guides) US \$5-15 (per person per day)
- Safari Camp Staff \$15-20 per person per night
- Drivers: U.S. \$10 per person per day. For longer drives, consider \$20-\$30
- Hotel porters: U.S. \$2 per bag

IN-COUNTRY INFO

Arrival

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met by our local representative. Please contact the emergency numbers listed in your final itinerary if you cannot locate our staff member at the airport.

Time

Kenya: GMT +3 Hours (At 12:00 pm in New York, it is 8:00 pm in Kenya). 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 240 V, 50 Hz, and plug TYPE G. While some lodges do have US outlets available, we do recommend buying a universal adaptor to account for varying outlet types and voltages.



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 asks 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). We do not recommend eating street food in Kenya.

Do not drink tap water, unless expressly advised that it is filtered and safe to use. We recommend bringing a refillable water bottle to use. We will provide clean water to refill your water bottles throughout the trip. Some people also choose to brush their teeth with clean drinking water but this is up to personal preference based on how hardy you feel your stomach is. Do not use ice, unless you know it was made from potable water.

Similarly, we recommend travelers to 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 generally safe (i.e. bananas). Plan on eating primarily at the lodges, which will be providing your meals. **We do not recommend eating street food in Kenya.**

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 in 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!)
- Do not pack or bring plastic and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- It is essential to 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. Be sure to let Elevate Destinations and your guides know if you have food allergies or dietary restrictions.

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 are 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.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Weather Conditions

In Nairobi, daily high temperatures fall between 72°F and 85°F, and daily lows between 53°F and 70°F. In lower inland plateau areas (around Kisumu and Lake Victoria), temperatures are also warm. The climate of Kisumu is tropical, warm all year round, but mitigated by the altitude and its proximity to the equator. The average temperature for Kisumu in May is 73.8°F.

The Naboisho / 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. May is the rainy season, and unseasonal weather can occur, so 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 through March:** These are usually the warmest months of the year. However; morning and evening temperatures are refreshingly cool with low humidity.
- **April:** This season is normally characterized by heavy, intermittent rains. But it remains warm and often sunny.
- **June, July, and August:** Kenya's weather is coolest during these months and the country is refreshingly green.
- **May & September, October, and November:** This is a delightful time to visit East Africa as scattered rains fall to freshen the country and lay the dust, although they sometimes can be heavy.

What to pack

We recommend layering as the best way to stay warm or keep cool. Our happiest travelers are always prepared for rain or shine! Please bring clothing to layer and accommodate a range of conditions from hot and humid to cool and windy weather. To help you prepare for your trip, we have put together a recommended packing list for your trip. A few things to keep in mind:

- Please be sure to pack any medications you take, a change of clothes, and any valuables **in your carry-on bag** in case your checked bag is lost/delayed. Prescription medication should be brought in the original packaging with labels.
- If traveling on a flying safari, please note that strict weight restrictions apply and vary according to the type of aircraft. Soft-sided bags are preferred. At the moment, the majority of

domestic flights limit the weight to 15 kilos or 33 pounds per passenger. Luggage storage facilities are available in Nairobi.

- Every piece of checked baggage should be locked and contain identification. While every precaution will be taken with your baggage, we strongly recommend the purchase of adequate baggage insurance by each traveler.

Checklist for travel documents

- COVID certificate
- Valid passport (check the validity and renew it if necessary).
- Copy of passport (save digitally or keep separately from original)
- Visa (must be applied for online before entry)
- Insurance certificate health insurance abroad
- Vaccination card (check if you need to refresh vaccinations)
- Flight ticket (printout or e-ticket)
- Travel credit card
- ATM debit card for withdrawing local currency
- List of emergency contacts and allergies, if applicable

Electronics checklist

- Cell phone with charger
- Headphones
- Power bank or solar charger
- Flashlight (preferably USB rechargeable)
- Headlamp with red light so as not to disturb animals (USB rechargeable is best)
- Adapter/Travel PlugType G*
- Binoculars (for safari)
- Extra batteries
- Optional: Camera with charger
- Optional: Rain cover for your camera
- Optional: Laptop/tablet/e-reader*/Kindle with charger
- Optional: Multiple socket

Checklist toilet bag

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Dental floss
- Deodorant
- Hairbrush
- Sunscreen & lip balm with sunscreen
- Shaver
- Shower gel/soap
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Nail care
- Face lotion
- Lip balm with UV protection*
- Tweezers
- Personal Hygiene articles

Checklist first aid kit

- Hand sanitizer or wipes
- Anti-mosquito insect repellent
- Painkillers (e.g. ibuprofen, aspirin)
- Diarrhea medication (e.g. Imodium Akut, charcoal tablets)
- Malaria prophylaxis
- Wound cream (ie. neosporin)
- Band-aids and blister plasters
- If necessary, tablets against travel/motion sickness
- Electrolyte powder or tabs for hydration

Personal comfort/gear checklist/snacks

- Reusable bottle (preferably stainless steel for hot and cold)
- Shoulder bag/daypack (pay attention to hand luggage dimensions: 55x40x20 cm for the plane)
- Sunglasses
- Gardening gloves
- Earplugs
- Sleep mask
- Travel pillow (for flight and longer trips)
- Headlamp
- Individually wrapped snacks ie. dried fruit, energy bars, hard candy that won't melt

LOCAL CUSTOMS & CULTURE

Etiquette and cultural differences

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling, and these differences must be respected. The countries you will be visiting have cultural norms and taboos that 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 about 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. In the communities where DIG works, you will be hearing Luo as the primary local language.

Photography

When photographing people, always ask permission first. Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed. 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. Because so many local people are asked for permission to be photographed, many will expect a tip or fee for this. For a deeper dive into best photography practices, we invite you to read our [blog about decolonizing photography](#).

There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually clearly marked. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, your guide will be there to advise you. *Under no circumstances should you take photographs of airports, government buildings and installations, or military or police personnel.*

We recommend that you bring all the photographic equipment you will need from home, including extra SD cards and additional camera batteries. In Kenya, film and batteries are not usually for sale outside of major cities and, if available, are very expensive and may be of questionable age and quality. It is also suggested that you check the working order of your camera and have your

equipment insured before you depart.

Safety

The places you will be traveling to are generally safe, and we take every precaution to ensure your safety. But, as in many metropolitan areas, it's important to practice common sense and awareness to take necessary precautions to safeguard against pickpocketing. Please do not wear expensive or sentimental valuable jewelry while on this trip. Keep a close watch on the belongings that you have when you do go out. While traveling with Elevate in Kenya, you will be accompanied at all times. If you have a safety concern, ask your guide right away.

Responsible Travel Tips

Here are a few tips that are an easy, yet impactful way to "elevate" the way we travel:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learning a few basic greetings and "thank you" in the local language can get you far and is often a gesture that locals take kindly to.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans, craftsmen, and artists to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Gentle bargaining is acceptable in markets, and a fun way to engage with locals. In stores with clearly marked prices, such as boutiques and specialty stores, haggling is not encouraged. If you are in doubt, check with your guide. Be prepared to take your time in reaching a price.
- **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 a shawl, etc.). Feel free to ask your guide if 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 or plant species. For example, souvenirs made from tropical hardwoods or preserved butterflies. When in doubt, avoid it.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** 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. Bring a reusable water bottle and be prepared to treat 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 objects as it can 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 feel moved to make a donation, we can advise you on the best way to do this through a trusted organization upon return.

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 [South Pole's Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Please feel free to read more 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, so keep an eye out for updates and stories on our Facebook page! We acknowledge that maintaining truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

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.

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 the 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 maintaining truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!