

# WELCOME TO NCOAE EAST AFRICA!

## EAST AFRICA — TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Your course will begin when we meet inside Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi's main airport. The airport is named after Kenya's first president and prime minister.

The information below will help you organize your travel arrangements to and from your course. Begin your preparations as soon as possible, as it can weeks or even months to obtain your passport, vaccinations, and secure your travel arrangements.

We recommend that you spend some time researching the geography, history, politics, culture, and languages of East Africa. For the most current information on East Africa, you might find the CIA World Fact Book information useful:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html>

**ITINERARY** — Expedition travel requires some degree of itinerary flexibility due to unforeseen events and adverse conditions. Below is the intended beginning and ending itinerary for this course, subject to change as needed to account for unexpected events.

**THE FIRST DAY**— After a midday airport pickup, we'll remain in Nairobi for a day or two of planning, packing, prep, and jetlag recovery — stopping at choice cafés around the city for some traditional dishes. We will be heading out the next day to meet with the Maasai Tribe, and the real adventure will start there!

**THE LAST DAY**— At the end of the course, we will return to Nairobi the day before departure where we will de-issue and clean gear, and complete post-course formalities. From there, transportation will take us back to the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, where your journey home will begin. The Jomo Kenyatta International Airport code is NBO.

### ► LOGISTICAL INFORMATION:

**WHERE:** We will all meet at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport at noon. It can take more than two hours to pass through the immigration and visa process and customs. Plan your flight accordingly to allow you time to meet the group at noon on the first day. The airport code is NBO. Your return airport will also be Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Start your e-visa process here, now: <https://immigration.ecitizen.go.ke/index.php?id=5>.

**WHEN:** Plan to arrive at NBO by 9am (local time in Nairobi) on the first day of the course, and plan to depart NBO no sooner than 6pm on the day your course ends. We will contact you with the precise location where we will meet inside the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport well in advance of your arrival in Kenya. New parts of the airport are under construction to handle the 6 million or so passengers that pass through this airport each year.

All Travel Arrangements for NCOAE International programs are managed and facilitated by NCOAE's trusted travel agency professionals, Travel Associates. Travel Associates is a bespoke travel agency staffed by MaryJo Palmer and Heidi Cunningham, both seasoned Travel Advisors with years of experience behind them. MaryJo and Heidi are based in Woodstock, VT but assist with customers based around the world. While Travel Associates specialty is luxury travel, they are highly skilled at complex itineraries and can provide guidance on everything from upgrades to Visas to Travel Insurance. Upon enrolling in an NCOAE program, you will need to contact MaryJo or Heidi either 800-640-4137 or 802-332-3511, or by email at [maryjo.palmer@travelassociates.us](mailto:maryjo.palmer@travelassociates.us) and [heidi.cunningham@travelassociates.us](mailto:heidi.cunningham@travelassociates.us) to secure your travel arrangements.

## ► IF DELAYED:

If it becomes evident that you will not arrive in Nairobi on time, contact NCOAE at (910) 399-8090 immediately.

## ► PASSPORTS AND VISAS:

**Entry requirements: To enter Kenya, you must have a visa, a passport, and be able to show that you have sufficient funds not to be a burden (a credit card is sufficient).**

Kenya Immigration has instituted a new visa policy whereby all visitors must obtain visas by using an online system <https://immigration.ecitizen.go.ke/index.php?id=5>. While exceptions may be made in emergency situations, all visitors should apply for and obtain the e-visa rather than obtaining a visa upon arrival at Kenyan airports, as has been done historically. For more information regarding the Kenyan e-visa program, please contact Kenya Immigration in Nairobi or the Kenyan embassy in Washington, D.C. Contact information can be found at <http://kenyaembassydc.org/>

To enter Kenya, a passport valid for at least six months from the date of entry, and with at least two blank pages, is required by all nationals of the USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, other European Union countries. Nationalities not mentioned in this list (except Cyprus nationals; no visa required) are advised to contact the embassy to check visa requirements for Kenya.

Obtain your visa in advance online: <https://immigration.ecitizen.go.ke/index.php?id=5>.

Travelers who may also visit Rwanda and Uganda may find it more useful to apply for an East Africa cross-border joint visa which allows entry into all three countries on a single visa.

Kenya has an agreement with Tanzania and Uganda to waiver visa re-entry fees if traveling between the three countries as long as single-entry visas remain valid for each country. This means multiple-entry visas are not required if going from Kenya to Tanzania or Uganda and back to Kenya. The same applies for travel from Uganda and Tanzania.

### TYPES AND COST: (AS OF SEPTEMBER 2018)

- Single-entry eVisa: US \$51
- East Africa tourist visa: US \$100. A Single-entry visa is valid for three months for one entry to Kenya. A Tourist Visa is valid for three months for multiple entries to Kenya.

US citizens can find information on obtaining a passport at [www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel).

Be sure to **keep your visa and passport secure and with you at all times, in a Ziploc bag** – and any other documents you receive from immigration. Your tourist visa must still be valid on the day that you leave Kenya, or you will incur substantial fines.

Please contact the Kenyan Embassy for details and to get the latest requirements; they are subject to change: <http://www.embassy-worldwide.com/country/kenya/>

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to Kenya enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, <https://step.state.gov/step>. STEP enrollment gives you the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy or nearest U.S. consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Regularly monitor the State Department's website (<http://travel.state.gov/>), where you can find current Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution.

Read the Country Specific Information for Kenya – <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/kenya.html>

For additional information, please refer to the "Traveler's Checklist"

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/checklist.html>

Contact the U.S. Embassy in Kenya, <https://ke.usembassy.gov/>, for up-to-date security information. The U.S. Embassy in Nairobi is located at United Nations Ave, Nairobi, Kenya, and is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm (telephone number: +254 20 3636000). If you are a U.S. citizen in need of urgent assistance, the emergency number for the U.S. Embassy is +254-(0) 20 363 6451. The e-mail address is [kenya\\_acs@state.gov](mailto:kenya_acs@state.gov). Callers in the United States can also call the U.S. Department of State's Office of Overseas Citizen Services toll free at 1-888-407-4747 (from overseas call 1-202-501-4444).

#### ► OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:

Swahili and English are the two official languages of Kenya, but there are different 42 ethnic groups in Kenya, each with their own unique dialect. When visiting Kenya, the ability to speak some basic Swahili, or at least to try, can win you many smiles.

#### ► OFFICIAL CURRENCY, AND MONEY CONCERNS:

Contact your bank card and credit card security departments and let them know when and where you'll be traveling abroad. Otherwise, you risk them canceling your card while you're traveling.

The Kenyan shilling (KSH) is the official currency of Kenya. To find the current exchange rate, visit [x-rates.com](http://x-rates.com), [xe.com](http://xe.com), or visit your favorite currency exchange website. The U.S. dollar to KSH value exchange rate value fluctuates daily. The following link can give you up-to-date exchange rates: <https://www.google.com/finance?q=USDKES>. Though you can exchange 20,000-40,000 KSH at ATM's in Nairobi, most major stores accept Visa cards. We recommend traveling with five crisp, clean \$20s for your time in Kenya, your Visa, and exchange enough money (defined by how much you normally spend on souvenirs when traveling) in advance through your bank at home. If they're unfamiliar with the process, all that's required is that they request the exchange through your closest Federal Reserve Bank. The process may take a week for a small bank to accomplish, but it's easier to do and saves time in Kenya if you get it done while you're in the USA. Traveler's checks can also be difficult to exchange.

An effective way to access \$100 to \$400 USD equivalency of KSH cash is through the automatic cash machines (ATMs). Cash advance machines are increasingly common, and often have the best exchange rate. If you do bring money in travelers' checks keep a record of when you exchange them in a separate location from the checks themselves. You cannot reclaim Travelers' Checks unless you know which numbers you have spent. In remote East Africa traveler's checks are impossible to use.

#### ► PERSONAL EXPENSES:

Once your course is in the field, there will be little opportunity to spend money. Former students have recommended bringing a small amount of travel money (10,000 – 20,000 shillings in small bills) for the drive to and from your course area. Once your course has begun, there won't be an opportunity for you to exchange money – make sure you take care of this prior to the start day. Your personal expenses, pre- and post-course, depend entirely on your style of travel. Purchasing most things in Kenya generally costs about 1/3 as much as in the USA for comparable items and services.

During your course - from the morning of the course start date until the afternoon of the final day of the course - NCOAE will cover the cost of food, transportation, and instruction, as well as the group equipment indicated on the equipment list. You are responsible for any cost of lodging on the nights before the course start date, and all expenses you incur after departing Nairobi. **You are also responsible for personal medical bills, and evacuation expenses if you need to be evacuated from the field, and for bringing personal equipment listed as *not available* on the course equipment list.**

## ►HEALTH CONCERNS:

Hospital emergency visits are inexpensive by USA standards, but prescriptions can be three times more expensive than most of the rest of the world. It is critical that you visit a travel medicine specialist or a doctor familiar with travel medicine to answer your questions and make specific recommendations for you. The best time to see the doctor and obtain prescriptions you may require is at least 8 weeks before your course. All prescriptions should be transported in their original packaging with the your name on the label, and the label intact. Advice on finding a Travel Health Specialist is available on The Center for Disease Control website for traveler's health:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/see-doctor>

***You must see a doctor and have all appropriate vaccinations that are recommended for you for the areas we'll be visiting to be allowed to participate in your NCOAE course.***

Vaccinations should be recorded in the official document "International Certificate of Vaccination" available from the U.S. Public Health Service or its equivalent in other countries, or from your doctor. This is also a good place to record your prescriptions, eyeglass needs, medical problems such as allergies, and any other information of a medical nature. Please record your blood type on the front page of this booklet.

**ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS** — It is advised that all international travelers have ALL their routine immunizations up to date, and carry your immunizations record with your passport.

**Visit the Center for Disease Control's Web Page for the complete list of additional vaccines you are required to have before entering Kenya:** <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/kenya>

Health insurance is essential, and *should include medical repatriation*. Part of the African Medical and Research Foundation, the Flying Doctor Service have introduced a special Tourist Membership, which guarantees that any member injured or ill while on safari can call on a flying doctor for free air transport [www.amref.org](http://www.amref.org). There are excellent medical facilities in Nairobi and Mombasa, but they are of a varying standard in the rest of the country. A company in the USA that specializes in security and health evacuations and insurance is Global Rescue, <https://globalrescue.com>.

**FOOD AND DRINK** — Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of the stay. When buying bottled water, check the seal of the bottle is intact. Avoid ice and washed salads and fruit except in top hotels and restaurants. Milk is pasteurized and store bought dairy products are safe for consumption. Food prepared by unlicensed vendors should be avoided at all times.

**OTHER RISKS** — Diarrheal diseases are common. Hepatitis B is hyperendemic; hepatitis E is widespread. Meningococcal meningitis is a risk, particularly during the dry season. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present; avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water. Avoid insect fly bites and wear shoes to protect against hookworm. Dengue fever and rabies are present. There is a high incidence of HIV/AIDS.

CDC and NCOAE provide general vaccination recommendations, but only your travel health doctor can give you specific advice that takes your personal factors into consideration. Recommendations for vaccines and medicines depend on many factors that are specific to each person. Be sure to give your doctor all needed information honestly and accurately so they can make appropriate recommendations.

- Where you are traveling within a foreign country, or countries
- The length of your NCOAE course
- The types of activities you might do
- Other personal matters such as your age, your personal medical and vaccination history, and current medical condition

Follow the advice of your doctor by getting all the shots and medicines that are recommended for you.

**DO NOT PET STRAY ANIMALS** — We will be in remote areas where immediate medical attention is often many days away. Echinococcosis or hydatidosis disease results from being infected with the larvae of the tapeworm *Echinococcus Granulosus* and is found most commonly in dogs that consume the viscera of infected sheep. Infection results in the formation of cysts in the liver, lungs, kidney and spleen. This condition is also known as cystic hydatid disease and can usually be successfully treated with surgery. In some cases it can be fatal.

Humans are usually exposed to these eggs in one of two ways:

1. By directly ingesting food items or drinking water that is contaminated with stool from an infected animal.
2. By petting or having other contact with cats and dogs that are infected. These pets may shed the eggs in their stool, and their fur may be contaminated. They may also contaminate other objects, such as harnesses or leashes, which can also spread infection.

Three steps can help prevent echinococcosis and other diseases as well:

1. After handling pets, always wash your hands with soap and warm water.
2. Do not eat wild fruits or vegetables picked directly from the ground without careful washing or cooking.
3. Treat or boil all non-tap water.

**MEDICINES** — You must bring a supply of all prescription and non-prescription medications that you take on a regular basis along with you on your NCOAE course. Your supply should include enough quantity to last for two to three weeks beyond the end date of your NCOAE trip. Check the **Transportation Security Administration:** ( <https://www.tsa.gov> ) website for updates on permitted and prohibited items, including medicines that you are allowed to carry onto an airplane.

**HIGH ALTITUDE CONSIDERATIONS** — The low oxygen levels found at high altitudes such as Mount Kenya (17,057 feet!) can cause problems for some travelers who are going to destinations higher than 8,000 feet above sea level. The best way to avoid getting sick is to ascend gradually, but if you have to ascend quickly, medicines such as acetazolamide, sildenafil, and others are available to help prevent altitude illness signs and symptoms. For more information, consult your travel health doctor, and the CDC website for altitude health information.

( <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-to-high-altitudes> ).

## ► INSURANCE:

**TRAVEL INSURANCE** — NCOAE requires all trip participants purchase Travel Insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation, repatriation and medical expenses for the duration of their NCOAE course. Trip Cancellation Insurance is strongly recommended as well.

Travel and mountaineering programs are true “adventure travel”, as such the unexpected may occur.

We recognize that deciding on the right insurance policy can become confusing, so we’ve created this listed to assist you in understanding a few options for this type of insurance. We are not insurance professionals, therefore recommend you address specific questions with your insurance agent and thoroughly understand any policy you purchase.

The following companies provide options for travel insurance:

1. **RIPCORD** – Offers comprehensive travel insurance coverage for all Mountaineering & Trekking programs.
2. **TRAVEL GUARD** – Includes Adventure Sports coverage for Mountaineering.

**HEALTH INSURANCE** — Many health insurance plans do not cover problems you may incur abroad. Contact your health insurance company to learn if you are 100% covered while traveling in South America. If not, check with the travel insurance companies above to learn about their gap coverages for medical care and medical evacuation and repatriation.

### ► **INSECT-BORNE DISEASES:**

Bugs (like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can spread a number of diseases in Kenya. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites.

*What can I do to prevent bug bites?*

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent (see below).
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). *Do not use permethrin directly on skin.*
- Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors

***What type of insect repellent should I use?***

- **FOR PROTECTION AGAINST TICKS AND MOSQUITOES:** Use a repellent that contains 20% or more DEET for protection that lasts up to several hours.
- **FOR PROTECTION AGAINST MOSQUITOES ONLY:** Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.
  - DEET ( <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/deet> )
  - Picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin)
  - Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE) or PMD
  - IR3535
  - Always use insect repellent as directed.

***What should I do if I am bitten by bugs?***

- Avoid scratching bug bites, and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce the itching.
- Check your entire body for ticks after outdoor activity.

### ► **BAGGAGE AND EQUIPMENT:**

Please check directly with the airline for baggage limitations and allowances. Most international flights allow two 50lb. pieces, so you should be well within your limits. You will be able to store luggage with NCOAE Patagonia while you are in the field. Please keep it to a reasonable amount, as our space is limited, and keep in mind that we cannot guarantee security. If any checked luggage does not arrive, please file a claim for lost luggage at the airport where it did not arrive. We can use the claim number to help track the luggage.

### ► **TELEPHONE SERVICE:**

In the cities there are public coin and card phones on the street. Phone cards can be bought from post offices, street vendors, or small shops. You can make direct international calls from these. Phoning from hotels is expensive, as they add a hefty premium.

**TO CALL KENYA OR TANZANIA FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY:** Dial the international access code: 011 from the USA; 00 from the U.K., Ireland, or New Zealand; or 0011 from Australia. Dial the country code 254 (Kenya) or 255 (Tanzania) and then the local number minus the first 0.

**TO MAKE DOMESTIC CALLS WITHIN KENYA OR TANZANIA:** For all calls within the countries, drop the country code, but the full area code (including the first 0) must be dialed along with the number. All numbers begin with a three-digit area code.

**TO MAKE INTERNATIONAL CALLS FROM KENYA OR TANZANIA:** First dial 000 and then the country code (U.S. or Canada 1, U.K. 44, Ireland 353, Australia 61, New Zealand 64). Next dial the area code (drop the first 0 if there is one) and number. For international operator-assisted calls, dial 0196. Note that calls between Kenya and Tanzania and Uganda are charged at long-distance tariffs and not international. To call Kenya from Tanzania and Uganda, dial 005 followed by the area code and number. To call Uganda from Kenya, dial 006 followed by the area code and number, while calls to Tanzania require the prefix 007. Kenya and Tanzania have discontinued their “collect call” facilities. Toll-free numbers in the U.S. cannot be accessed from Kenya or Tanzania. Use of international long-distance calling cards is very limited.

**CELLPHONES:** Kenya and Tanzania have many cell phone options; you’ll spot advertisements for Safaricom, Zain, Celtel, and several others in even the most remote corners of the country. Surprisingly, there may be cell service even in wilderness areas (where cellular connectivity is the only means of communicating with the outside world), but limited coverage in national parks that are relatively close to major towns or cities. Most of the local operators have partnerships with international service providers; ask your cell service provider before you leave home.

You will need international roaming activated on your cell phone plan if you want to use your cell phone though. This is an expensive option and the calls themselves are expensive as well. The simplest way to have mobile phone access is to purchase a SIM card when you arrive and stock up on prepaid charge cards, which are available everywhere from formal phone shops to street vendors. If you are traveling to other African countries, opt for a Zain SIM card. They operate borderless roaming across 22 African countries, and call costs are local, not international. International calls from a Kenyan or Tanzania SIM card are about 50¢ a minute and local calls cost about 20¢ a minute.

Phone calls **MAY NOT BE MADE WHILE ON COURSE**. Any calls must be made on “in-town,” off-course days, such as when you are in the airport before and after the course. **Once the course leaves for the field, you will not be able to make or receive any phone calls until the end of the course.**

#### ► **PRE- AND POST-COURSE TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Kenyan customs and cultures will be discussed specifically during the course, but the following guidelines will get you started with being sensitive to traveling in different cultures.

Though the Kenyan peoples in general are friendly and welcoming, there have been increasing numbers of terrorist attacks and incidents of crime over the last year. Terrorist attacks have occurred in the past in Nairobi, including Eastleigh; along the Coast region, including in Mombasa; and in the country’s northeast. Further attacks remain a possibility. Kenya is currently regarded as unsafe for international travelers. If visiting, avoid traveling alone, and always be very careful about not displaying your valuables (no jewelry, watches, or cameras on display) as petty crime is widespread. Meanwhile, the welcome you’ll receive from Kenyans in these challenging times is as warm as you’ll experience anywhere in the world.

**LEGAL CONCERNS** — The Kenyan legal system, like any legal system, is based on cultural norms, which vary in different regions of the country. This variability is an important difference from the systems of North America. You must carry identification on your person at all times and police are well within their rights to ask you to produce it. In general, the laws of any country will be based on the same values as at home but significant differences can be present subject to the prevailing cultural, religious and political environment in the country. These four basic factors can be your main

guide to how to act in unfamiliar situations. If you are any doubt as to what to do in a given situation it is usually possible to identify the “safest” fallback option and go with it. For example, not buying something, not taking a photo of a government building etc.

**RELIGION** — Although there are no strict dress codes, you should note that the coastal areas are predominantly Muslim in tradition. You should dress conservatively away from the tourist resorts and hotels, especially in Mombasa town, to avoid offending local sensitivities. You should respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times and be aware of your actions to ensure that they do not offend other cultures or religious beliefs, especially during the holy month of Ramadan (June/July 2016) or if you intend to visit religious areas.

**SMOKING** — Smoking is prohibited throughout Kenya in all public places (except in designated areas). This applies to areas such as hotel grounds, lounge areas and entrances. If you wish to smoke in your hotel room, please confirm first with hotel management whether that it is permitted. Smoking outdoors in any public street or on the beach, is not banned under the Act however, it is advisable to check before doing so. If in doubt, refrain from smoking. Offenses attract fines ranging from 50,000 to three million KSH and/or imprisonment for six months to three years.

**DRUGS** — The use and trafficking of illegal Class A drugs in Kenya carries heavy fines and jail sentences. The penalty for possession is ten years of imprisonment.

**WORK** — You must obtain a valid work permit before performing any paid or volunteer work in Kenya; the penalties for not doing so can be a fine, jail or deportation depending on the nature of the offence.

**PHOTOGRAPHS** — The taking of photographs of official buildings, including embassies can lead to detention. If in any doubt about what a building is used for, do not photograph it or film around it.

**MONEY** — It is illegal to destroy Kenyan currency whatever the denomination.

**RELATIONSHIPS** — Homosexual activity is illegal in Kenya.

**You are a representative of your home country, and of NCOAE. As such, we expect you to be an upstanding representative.**

► **STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Call NCOAE at (910) 399-8090.



**NCOAE** The National Center for  
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