

Service Learning Trip to Kenya

June 29 – July 14, 2013

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Cosmic Volunteers, Inc.



Habari!

Your **Volunteer Handbook for Kenya** will serve as both a reference guide and workbook for your trip to Kenya. We will provide you with a printed copy of the handbook before flying to Kenya.

In addition to information such as contact details and our itinerary, this handbook has sections for daily questions, exercises, and guided reflections.

We encourage you to share this handbook with your family and friends back home. They can also follow our trip online at Cosmic Volunteers' blog – **www.CosmicVolunteers.org/blog**.

If you or your family have any questions about the Volunteer Handbook for Kenya or any other aspect of your trip, please speak to us at any time!

Best Regards,

Scott P. Burke
Founder & Director
Cosmic Volunteers

Contact Information

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Flight Details

USA to Kenya

D.C. > New Jersey > Switzerland > Kenya

June 28 @ 4:09 PM: Depart Reagan National Airport (DCA) on United 3901
June 28 @ 5:29 PM: Arrive Newark Intl Airport (EWR) – New Jersey
June 28 @ 6:30 PM: Depart Newark Intl Airport (EWR) – New Jersey on United 993
June 29 @ 8:40 AM: Arrive Zurich, Switzerland (ZRH)
June 29 @ 9:25 AM: Depart Zurich, Switzerland (ZRH) on Swiss Air 292
June 29 @ 6:05 PM: Arrive Nairobi, Kenya (NBO)

Kenya to USA

Kenya > Brussels > Canada > D.C.

July 14 @ 11:50 PM: Depart Nairobi, Kenya (NBO) on Air Canada 6335
July 15 @ 7:20 AM: Arrive Brussels (BRU)
July 15 @ 10:50 AM: Depart Brussels (BRU) on Air Canada 833
July 15 @ 12:30 PM: Arrive Yorval, Canada (YUL)
July 15 @ 2:15 PM: Depart Yorval, Canada (YUL) on Air Canada 7652
July 15 @ 3:55 PM: Arrive Reagan National Airport (DCA)

(You must arrive at Reagan National Airport (DCA) on June 28 no later than 12:30 PM – so that we can check-in as a group.)

Itinerary

- June 28 (Fri): Departure flight from D.C. (4:09 PM)
- June 29 (Sat): Arrive Nairobi, Kenya (6:05 PM)
Transfer to Hotel in Nairobi
Welcome Briefing + Dinner
- June 30 (Sun): Orientation + Tour of Nairobi
- July 1 (Mon): Bus to Mombasa (5 hrs); Dinner with Host Family
- July 2 (Tue): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Evening walk in Nyali neighborhood
- July 3 (Wed): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Dinner + walk in downtown Mombasa
- July 4 (Thu): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Evening workshop
- July 5 (Fri): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Evening workshop
- July 6 (Sat): Guided safari at Tsavo East Wildlife Park (2 hours from Mombasa)
(Safari cost is \$150 extra, paid directly to tour company)
- July 7 (Sun): Walking your of Mombasa "Old Town"
Visit Nyali Beach
- Jul 8 (Mon): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Evening workshop
- Jul 9 (Tue): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
African cooking class (evening)
- Jul 10 (Wed): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Visit outdoor market
Movie in town
- Jul 11 (Thu): Volunteer at Upendo Children's Centre
Evening workshop
- Jul 12 (Fri): Volunteer + Farewell at Upendo Children's Centre
Farewell dinner with host family
- Jul 13 (Sat) Bus to Nairobi (5 hrs)
Dinner at an African restaurant in Nairobi
- Jul 14 (Sun): Program Wrap-Up
Shopping / Farewell
11:50 PM – Departure flight from Nairobi, Kenya (arrive D.C. July 15)

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Staying Healthy & Safe

Your health and safety in Kenya is the most important consideration for this trip!

Please follow these rules at all times:

- ↑ You must be supervised at all times – by either your host family or a group leader
- ↑ Always carry contact information **on paper** for group leaders and several peers
- ↑ All illnesses, incidents, & accidents **MUST** be reported immediately to a group leader
- ↑ Do not drink tap water – only drink bottled water
- ↑ Do not go swimming anywhere under any circumstances
- ↑ Wash your hands frequently (bring hand sanitizer)
- ↑ Use bug spray at night to avoid mosquito bites
- ↑ Never leave your host family or volunteer site without permission from a group leader
- ↑ **Don't be flashy with cash, cameras, jewelry etc.**
- ↑ Always have your cell phone with you

If you feel ill during the trip:

We will take you to the nearest hospital and call your parents back home. Symptoms which you should NOT ignore include fever, stuffy nose, cough, chills, persistent headache, muscle aches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea (especially if symptoms last more than 24 hours).

If you are ever separated from our group:

Do not panic. Use your cell phone to call a group leader. Note any street signs or landmarks nearby. If your cell phone is dead or not with you, walk into the nearest shop and ask to use a phone to call a group leader. Never admit to strangers that you're alone / lost.

Visa at the Airport in Nairobi

Upon arrival at the airport in Nairobi, **you must obtain a visa** – so that you can legally enter Kenya. This happens before we can pass through Immigration and collect our luggage.

- You need your passport, \$50 cash (US Dollars), and a visa form
- Visa forms are available at the airport in Nairobi
- On the visa form, indicate that you want a “Tourist” single-entry visa
- Credit / debit cards are NOT accepted! It's cash-only.
- Visas are valid for 60 days
- Kenya Embassy online: www.kenyaembassy.com.

What to Pack

DON'T FORGET YOUR PASSPORT!! Carry it on your person and not your bags.

- ⤴ Do not over-pack! Except for some prescription medications — you can buy anything in Kenya that you forgot or left at home on purpose including toiletries, clothes, and electronics.
- ⤴ Do not pack anything valuable in your checked luggage, in case your bags are lost in transit.
- ⤴ Place all valuables in a carry-on bag such as a laptop, camera, cash, jewelry, gifts etc.

Carry-On

- ⤴ Passport (on-person)
- ⤴ Plane Ticket
- ⤴ Cell Phone (+ charger)
- ⤴ Cash (at least \$100), Wallet/Purse, Credit/Debit card(s)
- ⤴ Change of clothes + travel-size toiletries (in case luggage gets lost)
- ⤴ Contact information for Group leaders, family and friends
- ⤴ Medical Insurance info
- ⤴ Any prescription medicine
- ⤴ All electronics + chargers (laptop, camera, mp3 player)
- ⤴ Reading materials + Paper journal / pens

Checked Baggage

- ⤴ Underwear (7)
- ⤴ Socks (3)
- ⤴ Pants (5-6: jeans, khakis, capris)
- ⤴ Skirt/dresses (2)
- ⤴ Shorts (2)
- ⤴ Short-sleeve shirts (7-8)
- ⤴ Long-sleeve shirts (2-3)
- ⤴ Sweatshirt / Hoodie / Windbreaker (1)
- ⤴ Casual shoes / sneakers (2)
- ⤴ Sandals / flip-flops (1)
- ⤴ Sleepwear (covers legs and arms)
- ⤴ Hat (for sun)
- ⤴ Bath towel (small)
- ⤴ Shampoo/Conditioner
- ⤴ Toothbrush/toothpaste/floss
- ⤴ Body Soap
- ⤴ Deodorant
- ⤴ Sun screen
- ⤴ Feminine Products
- ⤴ Brush/Comb
- ⤴ Razors/ other shaving supplies
- ⤴ Contact lenses and solution (+ re-wetting drops)
- ⤴ Hand sanitizer
- ⤴ Makeup
- ⤴ Over-the-counter medicines for pain relief, fever, diarrhea
- ⤴ Toilet paper (small roll)

Traveling from USA to Kenya

- ⤴ **Before you leave home, make sure you have your passport!**
- ⤴ Make sure to bring any prescription medicines
- ⤴ Everything else can be replaced in Kenya (clothes, toiletries, etc)
- ⤴ Assume the airline will be strict with luggage weight rules (50 lbs per bag)
- ⤴ Always carry your passport on your person – not your luggage
- ⤴ Hydrate – with water – before, during and after the flights
- ⤴ Don't sleep on the plane unless it's night time in Kenya (to adjust quicker)
- ⤴ Avoid excessive caffeine, sugary drinks, and energy drinks
- ⤴ Avoid heavy / protein meals

Impressions of Kenya

Please read up (at least briefly) on Kenya's history. A good place to start is a commercial guide book like the *Lonely Planet's Guidebook to Kenya*. Knowing some of the major events, themes and personalities in any country's history will help you begin to gain an understanding about their culture, people and worldview – before you even get on the flight to Kenya.

Major things to be aware of before arriving in Kenya:

- 🕒 Kenya is THE economic hub of east Africa one of Africa's true success stories!
- 🕒 Jomo Kenyatta (1893-1978) is the modern “founder” of Kenya and its most famous figure
- 🕒 Kenya experienced political strife in 2007 but is generally considered a stable nation
- 🕒 Kenya just had a peaceful and successful presidential election in March 2013
- 🕒 Kenya is a democratic republic with free elections
- 🕒 Kenya was a British colony until 1963
- 🕒 English is the country's official language and widely spoken
- 🕒 Most Kenyans still make their living from agriculture in some way
- 🕒 Most of Kenya is slow-moving! Time means nothing here, especially outside Nairobi
- 🕒 Religion (Christianity) dominates most peoples' lives
- 🕒 Nairobi is sometimes (unfairly we feel) called “Nai-robbery” – just take taxis after sunset
- 🕒 Ancestors are revered and play a huge role in all peoples' lives
- 🕒 Kenya is one of the world's largest tea growers.
- 🕒 Kenya's Rift Valley is the site of some of the oldest fossils of humans ever found
- 🕒 Soccer (football) is easily the most popular sport
- 🕒 Child labor is prevalent, especially kids selling things on the street
- 🕒 Homosexuality is illegal and a very taboo topic in Kenya
- 🕒 Many locals consider HIV/AIDS a curse from the Devil

Basic Kenya Facts for You to Research:

1. What is the population of Kenya?
2. What city is the capitol of Kenya?
3. What languages are spoken in Kenya?
4. Which countries border Kenya?
5. What body of water borders Kenya?
6. What is Kenya's currency? And exchange rate with US Dollars?
7. What religions are practiced in Kenya?
8. What industries make up Kenya's economy?
9. Who was Jomo Kenyatta?
10. List FIVE interesting facts about Nairobi

11. List any questions you have about Kenya...

Personal Greetings

Greetings in Kenya are formal and a very important aspect of life there. Rushing through greetings is considered to be extremely rude.

To say “How are you?”, locals use the word “Jambo” for tourists. But when you're an insider (like our volunteers!) they will use the word “Habari”.

- 🕒 Shaking hands is common, especially in the large cities like Nairobi.
- 🕒 Men should wait for the woman to extend her hand before extending theirs.
- 🕒 Never use your left hand for shaking hands.
- 🕒 Handshakes are usually light – leave the death grip at home!

“Mzungu” and “Wazungu”

You might be addressed as either “Mzungu” and “Wazungu” while in Kenya. The words are essentially synonyms, with a long and complicated history. For the purpose of your trip, think of these words as meaning “white person,” said usually (but not always) in a derogatory way. These words aren't quite equivalent to the “N” word back in America, but the words aren't used in polite company often in Kenya these days. Also, it doesn't matter what your ethnicity is – if you're a “foreigner”, you're a “mzungo” basically.

You will never be anonymous in Kenya

There is very little sense of privacy or solitude in Kenya. Most places you go, especially in non-tourist places, people will notice you and often stare at you, even call out to you – especially if you are female. Please keep in mind that most people are merely being curious about you; they are not sizing you up for a scam or anything bad. The attention can get tiresome after a while, as many volunteers report. However, try to have some fun with it – this might be your only chance in life to feel what it's like to be Brad and Angelina and have your every move in public watched!

Living with Your Host Family

- ⤴ Don't hesitate to request help and advice from your host family! No question is silly!
- ⤴ All meals will be provided by your host family, weekends included
- ⤴ Most families eat meat, but they accommodate vegetarians (rice, beans etc)
- ⤴ Most food is spicy - although they will tone it down for you upon request
- ⤴ Bottled water will be provided by host family
- ⤴ Sheets, pillow, and cover will be provided by the family
- ⤴ Mosquito nets will be provided by the family
- ⤴ Take your dishes to the kitchen yourself
- ⤴ Keep your room tidy
- ⤴ Use your own toiletries
- ⤴ Beds are usually hard as a rock
- ⤴ There is no air-conditioning at our host families
- ⤴ Absolutely no overnight guests without approval by host family and coordinator
- ⤴ Don't ask to borrow money from the family
- ⤴ Don't use the family's computer or Internet connection without permission
- ⤴ Do your own laundry (by hand yourself – or pay a laundromat)

Cultural Knowledge

- ⤴ Some Kenyans socialize in the evenings at sweltering road-side cafes on plastic chairs, sipping coke or beer (it's great for people watching!).
- ⤴ The weather is typically 80-90+ F and humid/cloudy in daytime; 65-70 F and breezy at night.
- ⤴ On Friday nights into Saturday mornings, you will often hear the music and singing of funerals throughout the streets.
- ⤴ Kenya is a very dusty environment with a lot of vehicle exhaust pollution. Especially for contact lens wearers, it is a very good idea to bring re-wetting drops from home to use here.
- ⤴ Do not smell your food -- it's considered impolite here, as they will think you are checking to see if the food is spoiled.
- ⤴ Even in a big city like Nairobi, there are farm animals roaming through neighborhoods.
- ⤴ After dark, please take taxis back to your host family for safety reasons.
- ⤴ If you want to change your accommodations after arriving in Kenya AND you're under 18, we will not move you until we get your parents' approval (phone/email).
- ⤴ Drinking age is 18 in Kenya.
- ⤴ Lock your passport, cash, camera and other valuables inside your luggage when you are not in your room. It is usually best to bring small locks from home.
- ⤴ Beggars and touts are only a problem at tourist monuments and backpacker areas.
- ⤴ Be careful about street dogs at night! They are territorial and might follow you - don't run though, just stop.
- ⤴ Watch for pickpockets on crowded streets, markets, bus stations, and tourist venues.
- ⤴ Never admit to strangers to being alone; tell them your friend / parents will join you shortly.

Culture Shock

You have probably heard the term “culture shock”, but what is it exactly?

Webster's Dictionary defines it as “a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation.”

Compared to many countries, Kenya has a high level of culture shock for foreign volunteers.

The first 24-48 hours in Kenya are critical in your cultural adjustment, so please try not to make any negative judgments about the place during this period. You are likely to feel tired, hot and sweaty, and perhaps overwhelmed by the new sights, sounds and etiquette.

You must understand that **You are in a different country now** – one that has cultural practices, life experiences, needs, infrastructure (lack of), and a worldview that can be very different to the ones you are used to. You can either fight this type of reality or **learn to adapt to it**. We strongly suggest the latter. **You have to accept the responsibility that comes with being a stranger in a strange land.**

What are some ways you can handle culture shock?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

WELCOME TO Kenya!

After our flight lands in Kenya and we transfer to our hotel, our staff will hold a brief welcome before having a meal and retiring to bed. Our orientation and introduction session for students and staff will cover items such as:

- ↑ Introductions of our staff
- ↑ Discussion of itinerary and highlights for our trip
- ↑ Reiteration of health, safety, and emergency procedures
- ↑ Verification that everyone has contact information for staff and peers
- ↑ Discussion of expectations for our trip
- ↑ Q&A

Record Your Impressions So Far

The volunteering-travel magazine *Verge* has written that:

"Fifteen minutes on a bus usually teaches you more about a country's social, political, and economic conditions than three hours studying a guidebook."

Did you find this to be true so far in Kenya?

As the plane approached Nairobi...As you passed through the airport...As our vehicles traveled toward our accommodations...

*What did you notice?
What did you see, hear and smell?
What feelings did you have?*

Day One: June 30

1. When I arrived at Reagan Airport in D.C. and saw the gathering of students and families and staff, I had the following feelings and thoughts:

2. The image(s) that “stuck in my head” from today's tour of Nairobi:

3. How was today's orientation? Is there something you wanted to ask but perhaps were reluctant to ask? Are you excited for the rest of the trip?

4. How were your accommodations? How different / same is it compared to home?

Personal Thoughts:

Day Two: July 1

1. The first thing I thought about this morning was:

2. What struck me most about the road travel today from Nairobi to Mombasa?

3. What struck me the most about the city of Mombasa on my first day here?

Personal Thoughts:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Three: July 2

1. My impressions of my host family are:

2. Today was my first day volunteering. It was:

3. Some examples of culture shock in Kenya that I've experienced so far:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Four: July 3

1. How do I feel when I see street vendors? Maybe even younger kids who should be in school?

2. My closest friend on the trip told me their impression of Kenya overall so far was:

3. Our evening walk was:

Personal Thoughts:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Five: July 4

1. Today is the Fourth of July. My thoughts about being away from home on this holiday are:

2. One child at my volunteering job today caught my eye because...

3. So far my fears about this trip to Kenya did / did not come true. Explain:

Personal Thoughts:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Six: July 5

1. How are the local teachers at Upendo? Where are they from? Their names?

2. My favorite food(s) in Kenya so far is:

3. My meals today were:

Personal Thoughts:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Seven: July 6

1. Today we visited Tsavo East Wildlife Park. My thoughts on the experience:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Eight: July 7

1. Today we visited the Mombasa Old Town. What do I remember the most about it?

2. We also visited the beach. How is it different from the beaches I know in the US?

3. My host family is different from my life back home in these ways:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Nine: July 8

1. How do locals make a living in my neighborhood?
2. How do the supermarkets in Kenya differ from the ones at home?
3. What religion(s) do my host family and the teachers practice? How do you know?

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Ten: July 9

1. Today we took an African cooking class. My impressions:

2. My volunteer work continues to be:

3. Some things I hear being talked about among our group include:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Eleven: July 10

1. I woke up today feeling:

2. If I re-read today what I wrote about our tour of Nairobi, I would / would not now write something different about my impressions of Nairobi (and Kenya).

3. Today we went to an African movie theater. It was:

4. We also visited a local African market. It was:

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Twelve: July 11

1. Personal thoughts from today (Optional):

Today I learned...	Today I noticed...	My goal for tomorrow is...

Day Thirteen: July 12

1. When I said goodbye to the children today, I felt:

2. This little something from my experience at the school will stick with me for a long time:

Personal Thoughts:

Day Fourteen: July 13

1. When I said goodbye to my host family today, I felt:

2. Another bus ride in Kenya today! I'll always remember our road travel here as:

3. One person in this group made a real difference to me on this trip:

4. When I think about going back to my life in the US and I take a minute to think about my experiences here in Kenya:

5. I find it difficult / easy to summarize this service learning trip to Kenya – here I go:

This page is a personal space for me to record my thoughts and reflections...

This is another page me to record my thoughts and reflections...

This page is for my friends (old & new) in Kenya to write messages to me...