



## MALAWI

This information is provided by *People and Places* as a guideline to the country you will be visiting. For further information you can visit the Malawi Tourism Authority website [www.malawitourism.com](http://www.malawitourism.com)

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

All visitors to Malawi must have a passport which is **valid for at least 6 months beyond their intended departure date from Malawi**. Visitors to southern Africa must ensure they have enough blank VISA pages (not endorsement pages) in their passports. Our recommendation is **3 pages (or even 4 if you are travelling through more than one country on your journey)**. If there is insufficient space in the passport then entry into a country could be denied.

Visitors must also be in possession of outward travel documents and have sufficient funds for the duration of their stay.

### VISAS

Visas are the responsibility of the traveler. Those nationalities that are required to have visas to enter Malawi may have to apply for these in advance while others can obtain these on arrival at the port of entry. Costs also vary depending on the nationality of your passport so please contact your travel consultant for exact details relevant to you. Visit the following website for additional information – <http://www.immigration.gov.mw/visa.html> *People and Places* is not responsible for the content thereof:

Please note:

- If visas are required, please ensure you have the correct cash amounts available as credit cards and travelers cheques are not accepted at immigration.
- You must advise the relevant official of the total number of days that you are spending in Malawi otherwise you may be charged to obtain an extension/additional visa later on.
- If you are not sure if you need a visa for visiting Malawi please check with our offices and we will assist in obtaining the correct information.

### MEDICATION & HEALTH

The information that follows is simply designed to give the reader some guidelines and general tips. We strongly advise you to consult your doctor prior to travel and get accurate and up-to-date advice on inoculation requirements, and anti-malarial precautions.

Medical insurance, preferably one that includes air evacuation, should be regarded as a pre-requisite for any safari holiday.

**Malaria:** is caused by a mosquito borne parasite and is endemic in Malawi. Please remember that the best precaution is the preventative kind.

- Avoid being bitten by using mosquito repellents liberally. A lot of camps provide a locally made repellent, however, please feel free to bring your own if you suffer from any skin sensitivities or allergies.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers/slacks in the evenings.
- Please use the mosquito net over your bed where supplied/available.
- Where provided, please use the insecticide supplied to kill any mosquitoes that may have flown into your room.
- Mosquito coils are also effective.

Malaria is transmitted by a very small percentage of female *Anopheles* mosquitoes. They are mainly active in the early evening and throughout the night. Malaria transmission is at its highest during the warmer and wetter months of November through to April. From May through to October the risks of contracting malaria are reduced.

There is a 6 to 7 day minimum incubation period before symptoms present themselves. If you become ill on your return, while still on prophylaxis or even once you have stopped taking them, ensure that your medical practitioner does everything to establish that your illness is not malaria. Malaria can be prevented if you are sensible and take basic precautions. It is important to consult your doctor prior to your safari; he will prescribe a course of prophylactics.

**Bilharzia:** is a disease which is common in most large bodies of water in the southern half of Africa. Lake Malawi has always had bilharzia, but only in certain parts of the lake. It can only exist in areas of the lake where there is minimal wave action, and thus is not likely to be present at many of the properties we book on Lake Malawi. Most of the camps test regularly for Bilharzia. In the unlikely event of bilharzia being contracted, it is easily diagnosed by a simple blood test and easily and effectively treated with biltracide.





**The Sun:** The African sun can be very strong and sunburn can occur through clouds and even a light T-shirt. Bad sunburn can spoil your safari so be sensible, use cream and wear a hat.

**De-Hydration:** in a mild form can be fairly common in the hotter months. It is not dangerous so long as you recognize the symptoms and react accordingly. The key is to keep body fluids up by drinking plenty of water. If nausea or vomiting result, then medical attention should be sought. It would be worth including a couple of packets of re-hydration salts in your holiday medical kit if you have one.

**Diarrhea:** is a common problem when traveling anywhere in Africa. The standards of hygiene in all of the safari camps booked by us is very high but it is not uncommon for individuals to react to a change in diet or water. The best bet is to be sensible about what you eat and drink and bring suitable medication just in case. Camps will generally advise if the tap water is suitable for drinking or not. Most camps will provide bottled mineral water which we suggest you use for drinking to avoid any stomach reactions.

If you do have any particular medical needs or requirements, please advise us in advance so we can ensure the best care in each of the properties you are visiting.

### **INSURANCE**

People and Places and its agents, staff or associates cannot be held responsible or liable for loss, damage, or theft of personal luggage and belongings, nor can they be held liable for personal injury, accident or illness. Please ensure that you have yourself and your belongings adequately insured before your departure. Insurance is compulsory for all our trips. If you do not possess a policy, please contact your broker for details.

#### **a) Health Insurance**

Before you travel anywhere it is imperative to have medical/accident insurance which covers you while you are away, as well as for emergency repatriation.

#### **b) Cancellation**

You might have to cancel your safari due to unforeseen circumstances. If you cancel a trip close to departure date for any reason you could lose all that the safari was going to cost you. Dependant on the reason cancellation insurance should cover you for this eventuality.

#### **c) Baggage Insurance**

Airline liabilities with respect to your baggage is limited. It is advisable to take out insurance if you are carrying expensive and valuable camera equipment. You should always carry such equipment as "carry-on" luggage. Do not put anything of value in your checked baggage!

#### **d) Claims**

If you anticipate an insurance claim upon your return, be sure to document as accurately as possible any accident, injury or loss. Doctor's notes and police reports will aid any claim.

### **VEHICLES & SCHEDULES**

Vehicles used are usually converted land rovers or land cruisers for groups of 4 or more or those on a specific long mobile itinerary, but may use other 4 wheel drive vehicles depending on the group size. Air conditioning is NOT guaranteed. For couples we may also use good quality saloon cars. Travelling time varies depending on a number of factors such as the quality of the road-in general the roads in the north are bumpier than in the south, and many roads can be rough and slippery in some sections, especially during the rains. We do our utmost to run the safari exactly as it is set out in your itinerary but should weather conditions or other unforeseeable circumstances arrive then we may have to alter it slightly. This flexibility and adaptability to local conditions will greatly enhance your enjoyment of the safari. We believe that travelling by road between the various overnight stops are a highlight of any trip and how often you stop will depend on interests, weather, road conditions etc but each evening before a move your guide will discuss the next days program with you in detail and will always allow for stops en route.

### **AIR CHARTER & TRANSFERS**

Please note that air charter or transfers are subject to price & schedule changes at short notice and we reserve the right to take the most convenient route should the need arise. Road transfers may be substituted in the event that the aircraft may not fly for whatsoever reason.





### **DEPARTURE TAX**

There is a \$35 international departure per person tax payable in US\$ cash at the airport on departure from Malawi WHEN TAKING A NON SCHEDULED FLIGHT. There are also small domestic departure taxes (approx US\$10 pp) from the main airports – Lilongwe and Blantyre, when flying internally on a light aircraft.

### **CLIMATE**

Below is a guideline on weather patterns to assist you in planning what to pack. There are a couple of anomalies that can occur-i.e. the rains should stop in April and return in November but the north occasionally experiences summer rains and Zomba and Nyika can experience mist and drizzle throughout the year. Winds can brew up on the lake at any time.

April to May: Warm days and cool evenings-clear skies after the rains and should be calm on the lake. Possibility of light rains.

June-July: Warm days-Cool to cold evenings –By July the lake can become windy.

August: Warm to hot days-cool nights and winds on the lake.

September -October: Hot to very hot days-lake calming down-warm evenings.

November-December: Either hot and wet or hot and dry.

January-March: Hot and wet but still possible to travel around particularly in the south

### **LUGGAGE & LAUNDRY**

This very much depends on the type of trip you have planned. As laundry services are available for any trip in Malawi either free or at a minimal charge, and as you have no need to bring any formal wear, we recommend you keep your luggage down to the basics. For those connecting to light aircraft transfers either within Malawi or elsewhere in Africa please note that a 15 kg limit on luggage (excluding camera gear) is strictly enforced. Maximum passenger weight incl. all baggage, hand luggage, cameras is 100 kg per person (out of which max. 15 kg luggage). We usually find even if guests are not using light aircraft transfers, then 15kgs is ample for the amount of luggage you will need. For ease of packing we prefer soft carry-all bags. For those on extended itineraries, we can safely store extra luggage at our airport office and give this back to you for your departure flight. Hard exterior suitcases cannot be accepted.

### **DRESS CODE**

Although no formal dress is required during your holiday, the rural areas of Malawi are still conservative in outlook and ladies are advised to dress modestly. Outside of the lodge or resort, short skirts /shorts (i.e above the knee) and swim suits for ladies would be inappropriate - your guide will be able to give further advice on appropriate clothing in specific locations. We therefore advise that should you wish to visit the local villages that ladies travel with a simple wraparound skirt (locally called a chitenje) available in any market in Malawi at a very reasonable should price.

### **OUR SUGGESTED PACKING LIST**

If going on safari in Malawi, khaki or neutral-coloured clothing is best (dark colours stand out less in the bush than light ones). Loose clothes are preferable and layers are always useful. Evening dress in all camps and most hotels is casual but bring longs to protect against mosquitoes when eating out in the bush. A sweater or light jacket is useful at most times of the year. If traveling in our winter months a warm jacket will be necessary.

### **Clothing**

- Sun hat/bush hat.
- Headscarf/bandana – particularly for dusty dry regions.
- Golf-shirts and/or T-shirts – preferably with sleeves to protect your shoulders from the sun.
- Long-sleeved cotton shirts.
- Shorts and/or skirts – really short skirts are not practical for getting in and out of game drive vehicles.
- Long trousers/slacks.
- Track suit.
- Pyjamas – lightweight for summer and warm/thermal for winter.
- Underwear – on game drives the roads can be bumpy and uneven so a suitable bra may be required.
- Socks – thermal options are recommended for the winter months.
- Good closed walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine).
- Sandals – preferably low heeled or flat if you are going on safari.
- Swimming costume/ beach wrap.





- Lightweight jersey or fleece in summer.
- Light rain gear or jacket for summer months.
- Warm jersey or fleece plus anorak or parka in winter.
- Additionally, a scarf, gloves and beanies/woollen hats for the cold winter months.
- More formal attire for your stay at prestigious city hotels.

### **Equipment and Other**

- Good quality sunglasses
- High strength sun block (SPF 30 or higher)
- Moisturizer and lip salve
- Insect repellent for body application
- Basic Medical Kit (aspirins, plasters, Imodium, antiseptic cream, anti-histamine cream and tablets)
- Binoculars – an absolute must if on any type of safari. Many options are available but with this equipment invariably the more you spend the better you get.
- Torch – Many camps have no mains power so night-time lighting may be by candle or hurricane lamp, a lot of camps will have torches by the bed but best to pack your own.
- Glasses – if you wear prescription glasses bring a spare pair. If you wear contact lenses bring a pair of glasses as well since dust can be a problem.
- Camera equipment – This is obviously very personal but zoom or telephoto lenses are useful. Cleaning equipment and a dust proof bag are also useful. Spare batteries and memory cards are very important.
- Visas, tickets, passports, money, credit cards, insurance details, etc

### **DIETARY REQUIREMENTS**

Should you be following a special diet or have allergies to certain types of food, please advise us in advance so we can notify the properties where you are staying. Most camps are able to cater for dietary requirements, but due to the remote locations, they do require necessary notice so as to be able to order any special supplies in advance.

### **DRINKS**

Very few places in Malawi include drinks in the tariff and bar bills need to be settled up on departure.

### **POWER SUPPLY**

220V mains or generator power is supplied at many of the camps and hotels. Some camps have no plug points in their tents but camera equipment can be charged in the main areas. Square three pin plugs are generally used. Please check with us on specific properties for power and charging facilities.

### **GRATUITIES**

In Malawi the tipping scale is lower than in other countries and a tip is regarded as a reward for work well done and not an obligation - while your guide will recommend what to tip IF you wish to, we think an allowance of \$5 per person per day is adequate.

### **BANKS**

Banks in the main towns are open on weekdays from 08h00 to 15h00hrs and 0800 to 1100hrs on Saturdays. The banks are closed on a Sunday. Almost all banks now offer Visa encashment, and there are branches/teller machines across the country.

### **CURRENCY**

The unit of currency is the kwacha (abbreviated to MWK or MK internationally; K locally) which is divided into 100 tambala. Practically speaking, only the kwacha is used. We do suggest that you purchase some local currency for your trip and this can be done at a forex bureau at the airport or in the city centre. There are ATM machines available in the large towns/cities that accept VISA & MAESTRO cards however they do go offline so we do not recommend you rely on these.

**Please note that Travellers' Cheques are no longer accepted in Malawi.**

Foreign (hard) currency notes are widely accepted in Malawi. You are strongly advised to avoid black market currency traders. There is no limit to the amount of foreign currency brought into Malawi but it must be declared and accounted for on departure. Only MK3000 may be exported.





### **CREDIT CARDS**

You will need money to pay for drinks that are not included in the tariff, tips and any curios or other purchases en route. Credit cards are accepted at most properties with a minimum purchase of \$50 and a 6% commission is added. We strongly recommend that you carry US\$ cash in small denominations to cover any incidental expenses and gratuities.

### **SHOPPING**

European-style shops are almost exclusively found in Blantyre and Lilongwe. Shops and offices open and close earlier in the day than is the custom in Europe or North America; normally at 1700hrs during the week and at 1200hrs on a Saturday. Shops are generally closed on a Sunday. Markets and roadside vendors are popular with travellers and popular souvenirs are the excellent wood carvings and straw goods. The standard of craftwork varies but at its best is quite outstanding. In the markets, bargaining is expected.

### **DUTY FREE**

International travelers over the age of 18 may import, duty free: 200 cigarettes or 225gm of tobacco; 1 litre of spirits; 1 litre of beer; 1 litre of wine; plus a "reasonable" quantity of consumable goods to meet the traveler's immediate need while in Malawi.

### **TIME**

Malawi shares the same time as all southern Africa which is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) + 2 hours

### **LANGUAGE**

The official working language in Malawi is English, while Chichewa is the national language. Other local languages are spoken, of which the main are Yao and Tumbuka. All local languages use the Roman script. English is taught at all schools and is widely spoken.

### **RELIGION**

Most of the people in Malawi follow Christianity, with the majority being Protestants and a less number belonging to the Catholic sect. The other most significant Malawi religion is Islam. Since there are a number of Muslim people in the country, Islam is practiced extensively.

### **RECOMMENDED READING**

- a) A guide to the Fishes of Lake Malawi - Lewis, Reinthal and Tendall
- b) Malawi - Lake of the Stars - Frank Johnson
- c) Africa's Top Wildlife Countries - Nolting, M.
- d) Field Guide to the Mammals of Africa including Madagascar - Haltenorth, T., Diller, H.
- e) Newman's Birds of Southern Africa and Birds of Malawi - Ken Newman
- f) Roberts' Birds of Southern Africa - Gordon Maclean
- g) Birds of Malawi Newman
- h) Safari Companion, Behaviour Guide to African Mammals - Estes, R.
- i) Venture into the Interior - Laurens van der Post
- j) Livingstone - T. Jeal
- k) Livingstone's Lake O.Ransford
- l) The Spectrum Guide to Malawi White and Douglas

For the keen birder we particularly recommend that you buy a copy of Newman's Birds of Malawi. There are about 70 species to be found in Malawi which are not found south of the Zambezi. We have found that one tends to use both of Newman's books in the field.

