

906 First Street East
Hastings, MN 55033
USA



info@CheetahDevelopment.org
www.CheetahDevelopment.org
+1 (612) 386-4481

Packing for Travel in Tanzania

The following suggestions have been compiled by many who have traveled in the tropics, including Tanzania. International travelers are usually allowed two each 50 pound bags – check your airline’s regulations as to size and weight or you may pay an up-charge. (Once you are all packed, weigh your bag!) Please consider reserving one of these bags to carry things for Cheetah Development. Also, in the midst of poor people, excessive luggage can be an embarrassment. We have found that with careful packing, many people won’t even need the entire first bag. Take the time to coordinate with other travelers so that you don’t all bring everything. And there is an advantage to this careful packing approach since you can bring more gifts there and back home again in the empty luggage space.

Rule number one: size and weight matters.

Rule number two: organize so you can pack it up quickly.

Clothing

Suggestions will vary based on the activities that you will do and the time of year. Are you mixing in some vacation time, going on safari, or going to the beach? Check www.weather.com for average temps and rainfall in the areas you are going. This will change your apparel as appropriate. In general, Tanzanians dress conservatively. When in public, it is rare to see women with sleeveless blouses or men in shorts (unless they are workmen or at the beach). Women do wear pants, but not often. Also, when you are in country you will see many beautiful clothes made locally by true artisans. You may want to pick up some congas (wraps) or shirts while you are there. Tanzania has a beautiful style and it is comfortable, simple and with bright African colors.

When you meet people, they are likely going to be wearing their best clothes out of respect for you. It doesn’t honor them to show up in blue jeans or safari gear. So dress well. Remember, by Tanzanian law, you will not be doing manual labor. After all, the unemployment rate is 85%; they don’t need workers from the USA. We have found that we tend to dress better in Tanzania than in the USA for similar meetings. Even in villages, it is important to keep this in mind. In most places and at most times in the year, it can be hot and humid. We have found that blue jeans and cotton socks can take 3 days or more to dry and may start to smell of mold before you can wear them. So unless the fabric is very light, you may want to avoid cotton.

Sometimes there is laundry service available but often you are moving too often to take advantage of it. Washing clothes in the sink can be a big advantage. Therefore, ultra permanent press clothes that drip dry and require no ironing can be great. There are new microfibers available in men’s dress slacks, skirts, etc. that perform great, are cool to wear, and very durable. We have come to appreciate light, synthetic fabrics that

breathe and are wash and wear. Here's a list of clothes that is sufficient even for many months (if you are coming for a short time, adjust accordingly):

- ✓ 3 very nice dressy/casual outfits perhaps that you can jazz up with a tie or extra nice blouse if you are invited to a wedding or a meeting with a dignitary – happens frequently. Create a mix/match set such as a couple of pairs of pants or skirts and three or four tops. Depending on where you are going and the time of year, these may be short or long sleeve, a mix of both and perhaps a sport/dress jacket.
- ✓ One dress down outfit with a couple of tops for a casual picnic, an evening dinner out at a pub, etc. This is a setting where men and women often wear shorts.
- ✓ One 'hang-around-the-house' outfit like a pair of shorts, sweats (for cold regions at that time of year) etc. You can wear most anything when you are in your own space in a hotel, hostel, as a guest, etc. Sleeveless tops, shorts, etc. pass in that setting.
- ✓ Exercise clothes or swim wear?
- ✓ At certain places and times of the year you will appreciate a jacket (it can be 40 degrees and windy).
- ✓ Sleepwear – again, if it is cold, your room may not be heated but blankets are usually provided in this case. Also consider that you are likely to be sharing a room with someone and it is common to walk around the hall in it.
- ✓ Sometimes a very light long-sleeve shirt is nice even in the summer – to keep the mosquitoes away while sitting out some evenings.
- ✓ A pair of dressy shoes but probably not high heels. Sidewalks are not common and the terrain will often be rough. It is best that they can be polished as they will likely need it and shoe-shines are readily available.
- ✓ Comfortable walking/hiking/jogging shoes, possibly a sandal with closed toes and well protected sides. You don't want to get a cut on your foot.
- ✓ Flip flops for the shower, bathroom and around the hotel.
- ✓ Fast dry underwear and socks. Quick drying is really valuable for these items. In a pinch you can wash them in the evening and wear them in the morning – even if your luggage is lost for a day or two.
- ✓ Accessories: belt, tie, handkerchiefs, etc. Hats for the sun or especially when on safari. Handkerchiefs to wipe off the sweat in the hot months. Leave your expensive jewelry and watches or snazzy bling at home. A watch or simple wedding band is ok.

Medicine and Toiletries

Women in Tanzania wear much less makeup but hairdos can be amazing. Look good enough that you will feel good about yourself but you need to worry far less about impressing people. Often you will have to make a choice between sleep and primping and you are likely to be tired for much of the trip – there is so much to see and do – so plan accordingly. Here are some suggestions:

- ✓ A limited set of your standard toiletries like makeup, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo (small bottle), tampons, brushes, etc. Remember "rule number one" above.

- ✓ You may face a morning without water for a shower or even washing your face. Wet wipes are handy then or to clean off dust, or as emergency toilet paper.
- ✓ Toilet paper or individual Kleenex packages (smaller and easier to carry)
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ If you are bringing a hair dryer or curling iron, get a converter with enough wattage capacity for the appliance (see electricity below).
- ✓ Melatonin is an 'herbal' product that can help your body adapt to the time change faster. If you take some and a sleeping pill on the plane (at the Tanzanian bedtime) you can start adapting on the way over.
- ✓ Malaria prevention medicine – Quinine has developed resistance. Doxycyclene is very cheap and has few side effects. Talk to your doctor.
- ✓ Antibiotic like Cipro to fight diarrhea (not common but can happen and the generic is very inexpensive)
- ✓ Antibiotic like Keflex (the generic is very inexpensive) to fight infections from a cut
- ✓ A small tube of antibiotic ointment, cortisone cream, and sun block
- ✓ A sampling from the medicine cabinet of flue, cold, pain relief and diarrhea medicines. You can use the plastic daily dispensers and label them with a permanent marker as to contents.
- ✓ Some basic first aid like a few small bandages and a wrap
- ✓ These medicines are more likely to be shared with locals than used yourself
- ✓ In order to reenter the US you are required to get a Yellow Fever shot from an authorized travel doctor and carry the documentation with you.
- ✓ For suggested vaccinations look at the CDC website related to travel to Tanzania. Discuss them with your doctor. Nearly all of the recommended vaccines are smart to get even in the USA. (Google 'CDC' and 'Tanzania'.)
- ✓ Extra pair of prescription glasses
- ✓ A complete set of your prescription medicines. Do not pack these in your checked baggage in case it is delayed or lost.

Money and Documents

Western conveniences like restaurant food, hotels, gas, etc. are generally more expensive in Tanzania than in the USA. Very few places accept credit cards (so don't bring a wallet full of them) except high-end gift shops, hotels, and restaurants that cater to westerners. If you want to buy some Tanzanite jewelry, your credit card will work. If you want a sandwich or gas, it won't. Many people purchase between \$500 and \$1000 of local crafts, fabrics, clothing to bring back. You will also be able to use your credit card in the airport on the way. Call the credit card company and tell them you're traveling so they don't shut you off (Not required for AMEX.)

- ✓ The printed receipt and flight itinerary in case local computers are down.
- ✓ You can bring US dollars and exchange them locally. They will only exchange US \$100 bills that are 2003 or newer.
- ✓ Cash machines are available in many locations but you will be restricted to your maximum daily withdrawal and the group's coming nearby a machine. It is often helpful to 'prime the pump' with some starter cash that you bring along.

- ✓ Money belt (get the extra big type) because Tanzanian shillings are bulky It is important to not flash money around and so you want to have money on your person in at least two places – the main stash under your clothes and spending money for the day should be handy. We suggest keeping a few bills directly reachable so you never show the whole day's amount. We don't recommend purses unless they can be worn across the body. It's just too easy to be distracted and have it stolen.
- ✓ Passport (must have 6 months time before expiration - after you are returning to the USA; at least three empty pages) Have a copy of your passport made and left with someone you can reach so that it can be faxed if yours is lost.
- ✓ Visa, if purchased in country, it is obtainable at the airport when you land for \$100 – see money above. Otherwise get it in the USA and save waiting time in the airport.
- ✓ Travel insurance documents (Cheetah can help with a discounted group rate)
- ✓ Flight itinerary and receipts in case local computers are down

Miscellaneous

- ✓ A JOURNAL/NOTEBOOK – take notes everyday – you will never remember it all, there are many things to think about and personal reactions you won't want to forget. Even non-journalers generally appreciate it.
- ✓ Bible
- ✓ A book to read
- ✓ Neck towel
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Swahili-English travel book; we recommend the "Rough Guide Phrasebook – Swahili"
- ✓ Pictures of your family (probably not of your house)
- ✓ Bug repellent
- ✓ Mosquito net and extra cord to tie it up (single fits on full size and vice-versa)
- ✓ Towel and wash cloth if staying in village, otherwise not necessary
- ✓ Small sewing kit
- ✓ Clothes line
- ✓ Plastic clothes pins (if needing to wash clothes)
- ✓ Concentrated cold water laundry soap in small bottle (if needing to wash clothes)
- ✓ Plastic hangers (good for hanging wet clothes to dry, too)
- ✓ Duct tape (one per couple)
- ✓ Flash light (small, lightweight with extra batteries, some of the new LED ones can give many hours on same batteries)
- ✓ Steripen (optional – to save money on bottled water; share with other travelers) (if so, requires wide-mouthed water bottle)
- ✓ Batteries
- ✓ Electricity is not always available and when it is you will need a converter for things like hairdryers or curling irons. Cell phones, camera chargers and other high-tech gear almost always work on universal power and you will only require an adapter. Converters and adapters are available from stores like Wal-Mart and Target. There are two types of outlet adapters (Google: Tanzania power adapter). You put one adapter into the wall and plug all your US stuff into that. You may want an 'octopus' or a short extension cord if you are needing to plug in many items at once. Rooms may have only one outlet – with only one plug-in.
- ✓ Trail mix, dried fruit, snacks (chocolate will melt) for days where there is no

time to stop for meals – restaurants can be painfully slow with lunches often taking 2 hours; perhaps raisins to help balance a diet high in rice

- ✓ Bring your cell phone if you have a GSM phone such as from T-Mobile or AT&T. Get it unlocked before you come so you can purchase a local SIM card and stay in touch. One way or another we will make sure that every group has at least one phone and the numbers are made available to loved ones in the USA. Phone coverage is actually quite good. Texting is very affordable.
- ✓ Camera with extra storage cards or perhaps a picture 'well'. An extra camera battery – you may need to go

a few days between charges. If you have a good zoom lens, you may appreciate it.

- ✓ Binoculars (small size unless on safari)
- ✓ Swiss army knife
- ✓ We don't recommend laptops; you will tire of its transport and most internet cafés will not let you connect anyway.
- ✓ A day bag like a backtop. You can leave your clothes in your room but all valuables must come with you always. This can be your air travel carry-on.
- ✓ At your last airport stop before Africa (such as Amsterdam) it is helpful to get a large bottle of water. Many flights arrive very late and this can be your water for the first night/morning.

Gifts

It is thoughtful to bring small gifts to share with people you get to know or who host you. Bring things that are meaningful to you that you could talk about. If you have questions about appropriateness, please let us know. Don't worry too much about brands – you brought it from the USA and that is brand enough. Do worry about quality because it may be subjected to heavy service. It is important to not be lavish – we are trying to not extend the culture of handouts. Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- ✓ English dictionary (for students or schools - used are fine!)
- ✓ Hard candy to hand to a child – warning don't take out when many children are around unless you are prepared to give one to each child
- ✓ Herbs and spices – hard to come by and appreciated by most women
- ✓ Swahili bible
- ✓ Leatherman knockoff or good hand tools of any type (used are fine but watch your weight or be prepared to pay something at the airport)
- ✓ Paper, notebooks, pens, pencils
- ✓ Balls, especially soccer balls which can be deflated – these are a treasure for a youth director, a school, etc.
- ✓ Fancy lotions, perfumes and soaps for women
- ✓ Digital camera (that you no longer use) with a power adapter, new battery and manual (if you lost it you can usually print a new one online)

Last but not Least

One thing that you don't want to forget to bring along is prayer support. It makes a difference. Invite your friends and family to pray for you. Give them your itinerary and what your hopes are for the trip. If possible ask for some specific things for each day

that they could pray for you. Don't underestimate how tired you will be or how you will experience culture shock.

You need to think about why you are going. We are not going to work – they don't need laborers. We are not going with handouts – we are trying to set people free from a culture of dependency. We are not going to give advice – we don't understand enough to do so and people aren't going to share their needs right away. We have to first earn the right to hear. After that we can earn the right to be heard. Otherwise it is just patronizing. If not to work, nor to give, nor to advise, why are you going?

Your primary mission on this trip is to be an ambassador, to begin to create relationships, and to be able to come back and share your story, extending those relationships to your own people. So you might ask for prayers that you can connect with someone and start to form a friendship. This is the work of Cheetah. We join our hands for an experience of mutual redemption.