

East Africa Directory

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This East Africa directory gives an overview of the nuts-and-bolts information that you'll need for travel in the region. For country-specific details, see the Directory sections at the end of each country chapter.

ACCOMMODATION

East Africa boasts a wide range of accommodation, ranging from humble cinder-block rooms with a communal bucket bath to some of Africa's most luxurious safari lodges. Expect to pay high-season prices in July and August and again around the Christmas/New Year holiday; in much of the region it's often possible to negotiate significant discounts during the low-season travel months between March and early June.

Sleeping listings in this book are divided into three categories: budget (approximately

PRACTICALITIES

- Use the metric system for weights and measures. Road distances are sign-posted in kilometres.
- Access electricity (220-250V AC, 50Hz) with British-style three-square-pin or two-round-pin plug adaptors.
- The main regional English-language weekly is the *East African*. For a broader African focus look at *New African*; BBC's *Focus on Africa*; *Business Africa*; and *Africa Today*. Try *Africa Geographic* for environmental issues, and *Africa – Birds & Birding* for ornithological topics. For international news read the *International Herald Tribune*.
- Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania all have government-run national broadcasters with radio and TV transmissions in English. For regional and international news, BBC's World Service and Deutsche Welle transmit in English and Swahili.

US\$10 to US\$25 per double room), midrange (US\$30 to US\$100) and top-end (US\$100 and up).

Camping

Most national parks have established camp sites. Elsewhere you can almost always find something in or near major towns, and in some rural tourist areas local villagers maintain camping grounds. Facilities vary from none at all to well-established full-service camping grounds with hot showers and cooking areas, and prices average US\$3 to US\$5 per person per night. Camping away from established sites is not advisable; in rural areas, ask permission from the village head or elders before pitching your tent. Camping prices in this book are per person unless otherwise noted. The exceptions to all this are Rwanda and Burundi, where camping possibilities range from limited to nonexistent.

In coastal areas, you'll sometimes find bungalows or *bandas* – basic wooden or

thatched huts, often with only a mattress and mosquito net – that offer a good alternative to camping for those on a tight budget.

Hostels, Guesthouses & Budget Hotels

Kenya has a limited selection of hostels, and you'll also find hostels in many of Tanzania's northern parks (where student groups have priority). In some areas, especially Rwanda, there are mission hostels and guesthouses, which are invariably clean, safe and spartan but good value. While most are primarily for missionaries and aid-organisation staff, they're generally happy to accommodate travellers if space is available.

In budget guesthouses and hotels, you generally get what you pay for, though there's the occasional good deal. The cheapest ones – and every town will have one – are usually poorly ventilated cement-block rooms with reasonably clean sheets, shared toilets, cold showers or a bucket bath, sometimes a fan and mosquito net and often only a token lock on the door. Rates for this type of place average from US\$2 to US\$5 per room per night. A few dollars more will get you a somewhat more comfortable room, often with a bathroom (although not always with running or hot water).

Many budget places double as brothels, and at many of the cheapest ones, you are likely to feel uncomfortable if you're a woman travelling alone. If peace and quiet is what you're after, guesthouses without bars are the best choice.

Backpackers and dormitory-style places aren't as common as they are in southern Africa, but there are a few scattered around the region. Prices per bed are generally the same or slightly higher than you'd pay for a room in a basic guesthouse.

Hotels, Lodges & Luxury Safari Camps

All larger towns have one or several mid-range hotels, most with private bathroom, hot water and a fan or an air-conditioner. Facilities range from faded to good value, and prices range from US\$15 to US\$50 per person. Capital cities and major tourist areas, especially in Kenya and Tanzania, also have a good selection of top-end accommodation with all the amenities you would expect for the price you will pay – from about US\$80 to US\$200 or more per person per night. Hotel prices in this book include

private bathroom and continental breakfast, except as noted.

On the safari circuits, there are some wonderful and very luxurious lodges costing from US\$100 to US\$500 per person per night; at the upper end of this spectrum prices are usually all-inclusive.

At many national parks, you'll find 'permanent tented camps' or 'luxury tented camps'. These offer comfortable beds in canvas tents – usually en suite – with screened windows and most of the comforts of a hotel room, but with a wilderness feel. 'Mobile' or 'fly' camps are temporary camps set up for several nights, or perhaps just for one season, and often used for walking safaris away from the main tented camp, or to give you the chance for an intimate bush experience.

Unless otherwise noted, listings in this book for lodges or camps in and near parks and wildlife reserves quote accommodation-and-breakfast-only prices.

ACTIVITIES

Bird-Watching

The East African skies are filled with the chirping and twittering of over 1000 bird species, and the region is an excellent destination for ornithologists, with Uganda a particular highlight. Most bird-watching is done in connection with safaris to the national parks. See Activities in the country chapter Directories for more information.

DIVE OPERATORS

When choosing a dive operator, quality rather than cost should be the priority. Consider the operator's experience and qualifications; knowledgeability and competence of staff; and the condition of equipment and frequency of maintenance. Assess whether the overall attitude is serious and professional, and ask about safety precautions: radios, oxygen, boat reliability and back-up engines, emergency evacuation procedures, first-aid kits, safety flares and life jackets. On longer dives, do you get an energising meal, or just tea and biscuits? One advantage of operators offering PADI courses is that you'll have the flexibility to go elsewhere in the world and have what you've already done recognised at other PADI dive centres.

Boating

Local dhow trips can be arranged from various places along the coast; for more, also on the realities of dhow travel, see p637. It is better to contact one of the coastal or island hotels, most of which can help you charter a reliable dhow for a cruise. For boat safaris, see p250 and p548.

Cycling & Mountain Biking

Touring East Africa by bicycle is gaining in popularity, and while it has its hazards (such as speeding buses and no shoulders on main roads), it's one of the best ways to get to know the region. See p636 for more information and p92 for operators that organise cycling trips.

Diving & Snorkelling

Slide beneath the Indian Ocean's turquoise surface and a whole new world opens up, as shadowy manta rays float by in the depths, barracuda swim slowly past brightly coloured coral and dolphins cavort in the swells.

If you've ever thought about learning to dive, or want to brush up on your skills, East Africa is a rewarding if somewhat pricey place to do this. The main areas are the Zanzibar Archipelago in Tanzania and around Malindi in Kenya, both of which have a good array of operators and courses. See Activities in the relevant country Directories for more.

Be sure to allow a sufficient surface interval between the conclusion of your final dive and any onward/homeward flights. The Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI) recommends at least 12 hours, or more if you have been doing daily multiple dives for several days. Another consideration is insurance, which you should arrange before coming to East Africa. Many policies exclude diving, so you'll likely need to pay a bit extra, but it's well worth it in comparison to the bills you will need to foot should something go wrong. There are decompression centres in Kenya and South Africa.

Fishing

Among the best places are around Mafia Island and in the Pemba Channel (Tanzania), and along the Kenyan coastline from Mombasa to Malindi. For lake and river fishing, good areas include Lake Victoria,

RESPONSIBLE DIVING

Wherever you dive in East Africa, consider the following tips, and help preserve the ecology and beauty of the reefs:

- Never use anchors on a reef, and take care not to ground boats on coral.
- Avoid touching or standing on living marine organisms or dragging equipment across a reef. Polyps can be damaged by even the gentlest contact. If you must hold on to a reef, only touch exposed rock or dead coral.
- Be conscious of your fins. Even without contact, the surge from fin strokes near a reef can damage delicate organisms. Take care not to kick up clouds of sand, which can smother organisms.
- Practise and maintain proper buoyancy control. Major damage can be done by divers descending too fast and colliding with a reef.
- Take great care in underwater caves. Spend as little time within them as possible, as your air bubbles may be caught within the roof and thereby leave organisms high and dry. Take turns inspecting the interior of a small cave.
- Resist the temptation to collect or buy corals or shells, or to loot marine archaeological sites (mainly shipwrecks).
- Ensure that you take home all your rubbish and any litter you may find as well. Plastics in particular are a serious threat to marine life.
- Do not feed fish.
- Minimise your disturbance of marine animals, and never ride on the backs of turtles or attempt to touch dolphins.

Lake Turkana (Kenya), and the Aberdares area (Kenya). See the country Directories for more information.

Gorilla & Chimpanzee Tracking

Most gorilla activity focuses on Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Rwanda's Parc National des Volcans and, increasingly now, Parc National des Virungas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo).

RESPONSIBLE TREKKING

Following are some tips for helping to preserve the ecology and beauty of East Africa's wilderness areas:

- Carry out all your rubbish, and make an effort to carry out rubbish left by others. Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms and toilet paper should be carried out despite the inconvenience. They burn and decompose poorly.
- Minimise waste by taking minimal packaging and no more food than you will need. Take reusable containers or stuff sacks.
- Contamination of water sources by human faeces can lead to the transmission of all sorts of nasties. Where there is a toilet, use it. Where there is none, bury your waste. Dig a small hole 15cm (6in) deep and at least 100m (320ft) from any watercourse. Cover the waste with soil and a rock. In snow, dig down to the soil. Also ensure that these guidelines are applied to a portable toilet tent if one is being used by a large trekking party.
- Don't use detergents or toothpaste in or near watercourses, even if they are biodegradable. For personal washing, use biodegradable soap and a water container at least 50m (160ft) away from the watercourse. Disperse the waste water widely to allow the soil to filter it fully. Wash cooking utensils 50m (160ft) from watercourses using a scourer, sand or snow instead of detergent.
- Hillsides and mountain slopes, especially at high altitudes, are prone to erosion. Stick to existing trails, and avoid short cuts. If a well-used trail passes through a mud patch, walk through the mud so as not to increase the size of the patch. Avoid removing the plant life that keeps topsoils in place.
- Don't depend on open fires for cooking. The cutting of wood for fires in popular trekking areas such as Kilimanjaro can cause rapid deforestation. Cook on a light-weight kerosene, alcohol or Shellite (white gas) stove and avoid those powered by disposable butane gas canisters.
- If you are trekking with a guide and porters, supply stoves for the whole team. In cold conditions, ensure that all members are outfitted with enough clothing so that fires are not a necessity for warmth. If you patronise local accommodation, try to select places that don't use wood fires to heat water or cook food.
- Fires may be acceptable below the tree line in areas that get very few visitors. If you light a fire, use an existing fireplace. Don't surround fires with rocks. Use only dead, fallen wood, and only what you need for cooking. Remember the adage 'the bigger the fool, the bigger the fire'.
- Ensure that you fully extinguish a fire after use. Spread the embers and flood them with water.

See the relevant country chapters and p97 for more information, and check with your embassy about the current security situations before setting your plans.

For chimpanzee tracking, see the Activities sections of the Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda chapters.

Hiking & Trekking

Popular destinations include Mt Kilimanjaro, Mt Meru and the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania; Mt Kenya and Mt Elgon in Kenya (Elgon can also be approached from Uganda), and – security permitting – the Rwenzori Mountains on the western Ugandan border with DR Congo.

Most hikes and climbs require local guides, and many require a full range of clothing, from lightweight for the semitropical conditions at lower altitudes to full winter gear for the high summits. Waterproof clothing and equipment is also important at any altitude, no matter what the season.

Lonely Planet's *Trekking in East Africa* is a worthwhile investment if you're considering hiking in the region.

White-Water Rafting

Depending on water levels, you can arrange rafting trips of several hours to several days on some of East Africa's waterways. The main bases are Nairobi (for the Tana and

Galana Rivers) and Jinja and Kampala in Uganda (for the Victoria Nile). See the relevant country Directories for more.

Wildlife Watching

East Africa is one of the best places on earth for observing large animals in their natural environment. Tanzania and Kenya – each with a stellar collection of national parks and protected areas – are the main bases, followed by Uganda in a distant but nevertheless rewarding third place. For more on safaris, see p83 and on wildlife, p57, plus national parks coverage in the country chapters.

BUSINESS HOURS

Usual business hours are listed inside the front cover, with exceptions noted in individual listings. In addition to regular banking hours, many forex bureaus remain open until 5pm Monday through Friday, and until noon on Saturday. Throughout the region, shops and offices often close for one to two hours between noon and 2pm, and, especially in coastal areas, on Friday afternoons for mosque services.

CHILDREN

Most East Africans are very friendly and helpful towards children, and while there are few attractions specifically targeted at children, travelling in the region with young ones in tow is unlikely to present any major problems.

The main concerns are likely to be the presence of malaria; the scarcity of decent medical facilities outside major towns; the length, discomfort and safety risks involved in many road journeys; and the difficulty of finding clean, decent bathrooms outside of midrange and top-end hotels.

Some wildlife lodges have restrictions on accommodating children under 12; otherwise, most hotels are family friendly. Many places – including most national parks – offer significant discounts for children on entry fees and accommodation or camping rates, although you'll generally need to specifically ask about these, especially if you're booking through a tour operator. In hotels, children under two or three years of age often stay free, and those up to 12 years old sharing their parents' room pay about 50% of the adult rate. In hotels without special rates,

triple rooms are commonly available for not too much more than a double room. Many midrange and top-end places have pools or grassy areas where children can play.

It's a good idea to travel with a blanket to spread out and use as a makeshift nappy-changing area. Though expensive, processed baby foods, powdered infant milk, disposable nappies and similar items are available in major towns, but carry your own wipes and food (and avoid feeding your children street food). Informal childcare is easy to arrange; the best bet is to ask at your hotel. Child seats for hire cars and safari vehicles are generally not available unless arranged in advance.

For protection against malaria, bring nets along for your children to sleep under, and check with your doctor regarding the use of prophylactics. Also bring long-sleeved shirts and trousers for dawn and dusk. In beach areas, keep in mind the risks of hookworm infestation in populated areas, and bilharzia infection in lakes. Other things to watch out for are sea urchins at the beach, and thorns and the like in the brush.

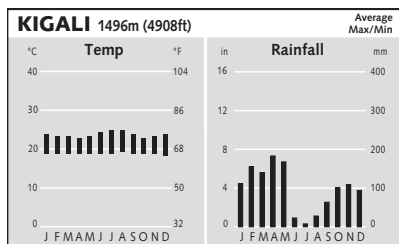
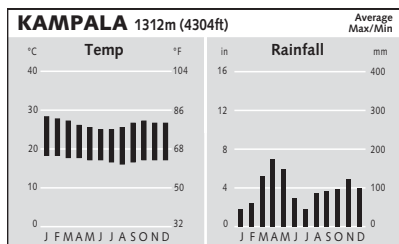
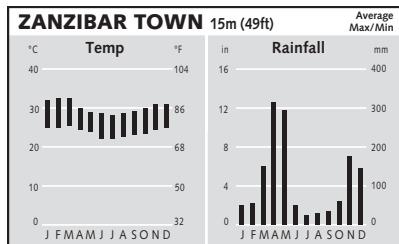
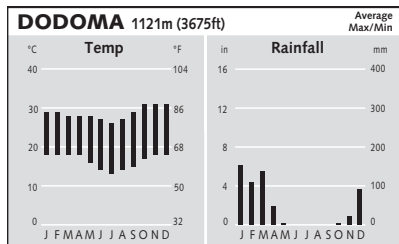
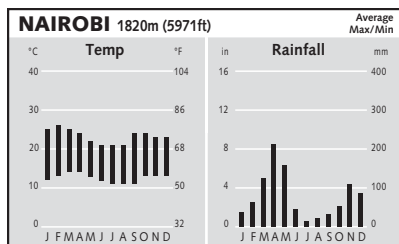
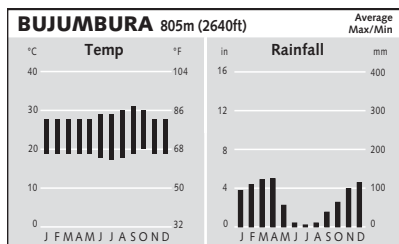
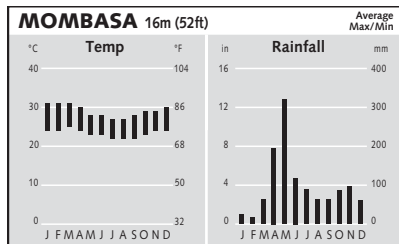
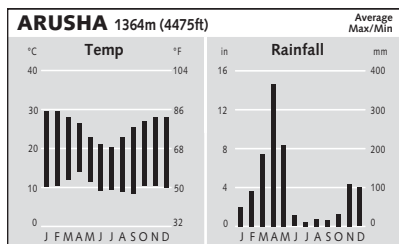
Wildlife watching is suitable for older children who have the patience to sit for long periods in a car, but less suitable for younger ones. Coastal destinations are a good bet for all ages.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan is full of tips for keeping children and parents happy while on the road.

CLIMATE CHARTS

East Africa's climate varies tremendously, thanks to the region's diverse topography. Along the coast, the weather tends to be hot and humid, with temperatures averaging between 25°C and 29°C. Inland, altitude tempers the climate, with temperatures ranging from a minimum of about 14°C in highland areas to a maximum of about 34°C. One of the few places where you're likely to encounter extremely high temperatures is in the desert areas of northeastern Kenya, where the mercury can climb to 40°C. Throughout East Africa, the coolest months are from June to September, and the warmest from December to March.

In much of the region, there are two rainy seasons. The 'long' rains fall from mid-March through May, during which time it rains virtually every day, although



seldom for the whole day. The 'short' rains fall for a couple of months between October and January, with the timing and conditions varying depending on where you are. Rainfall levels vary from less than 250mm per year in the semiarid areas of north-eastern Kenya to about 1500mm along the coast and up to 3000mm in mountainous areas such as southwestern Uganda.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

It's difficult to generalise about personal safety in East Africa. While there are large risks in some areas, other places are as safe as you will find anywhere.

The main areas where political turmoil and banditry pose security risks are in parts of Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo and Uganda, as well as some sections of western Tanzania, and in northern and northeastern Kenya; see the country chapters for details,

and check with your embassy and knowledgeable locals for security updates and advice if you're planning to head to any of these destinations.

Petty theft is a risk primarily in capital cities and tourist areas, particularly crowded settings, such as markets, public transport, and bus and train stations. Nairobi is notorious for muggings and more serious crimes; see p284. Throughout the region, however, most tourist-related crimes occur in isolated settings, in urban or tourist areas at night, or as part of confidence tricks or ruses playing on the emotions and gullibility of foreigners. By following a few simple precautions you'll minimise your risks and hopefully ensure that your journey will be trouble free.

- Avoid isolated areas – including beaches – at any time of day, whether you're alone or in a group. In cities, especially Nairobi, be alert for hustlers who will try any ploy to get you into a back alley and away from the watching eyes of onlookers so they can fleece you.
- Don't tempt people by flaunting your wealth. Avoid external money pouches, dangling backpacks and camera bags, and leave jewellery, fancy watches, portable stereos and the like at home. Day-packs instantly mark you as a tourist.
- Especially in crowded areas such as bus and train stations and markets, be wary of pickpocketing. If you don't have a reliable hotel safe, carry your passport, money and other documents in an inside pocket or pouch. When out walking, keep a small amount of cash separate from your other money and handy, so that you don't pull out large wads of bills for paying taxi fares or making purchases. If you should happen to get robbed, this may also be useful as a decoy to give to your assailant, while the remainder of your valuables remain safely hidden.
- It isn't safe to paddle or swim in lakes or slow-moving water anywhere in East Africa because of Bilharzia (see p645).
- Try not to look lost, even if you are. Walk purposefully and confidently, and don't refer to this guidebook or a map on the street – duck into a shop if you need to get your bearings.
- Arriving for the first time at bus stations in places such as Nairobi and Arusha can be a fairly traumatic experience, as you're

likely to be besieged by touts as you get off the bus, all reaching to help with your pack and trying to sell you a safari. Have your luggage as consolidated as possible, with your valuables well hidden under your clothes. Try to spot the taxi area before disembarking, and make a beeline for it. It's well worth a few extra dollars for the fare, rather than attempting to walk to your hotel with your luggage.

- Don't leave your possessions scattered around your hotel room. If you have valuables, store them in a hotel safe, if there's a reliable one, ideally inside a pouch with a lockable zip to prevent tampering.
- Be wary of anyone who approaches you on the street saying 'Remember me?' or claiming to be an employee of the hotel where you're staying, and take requests for donations from 'refugees', 'students' or others with a grain of salt. Contributions to humanitarian causes are best done through an established agency or project.
- Keep the windows up in vehicles when stopped in traffic, and keep your bags out of sight, eg on the floor behind your legs.
- When bargaining or discussing prices, don't do so with your money or wallet in your hand.

DISABLED TRAVELLERS

While there are few facilities for the disabled, East Africans are generally quite accommodating, and willing to offer whatever assistance they can as long as they understand what you need. Disabled travel is becoming increasingly common on the Kenyan and Tanzanian safari circuits, and several tour operators listed in the Safaris chapter (p83) cater to disabled travellers. Some considerations are listed following:

- While the newer lodges have wheelchair-accessible rooms (noted in individual listings), few hotels have lifts, many have narrow stairwells and there are generally no grips or rails in bathrooms.
- Many park lodges and camps are built on ground level. However, access paths – in an attempt to maintain a natural environment – are sometimes rough or rocky, and rooms or tents raised, so it's best to inquire about access before booking.
- As far as we know, there are no Braille signboards at any parks or museums, nor any facilities for deaf travellers.

TRAVEL ADVISORIES

Government country-specific travel advisories are good sources of updated security information, and should be read before travel to East Africa:

- Australia – www.dfat.gov.au
- Canada – www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/ctry/reportpage-en.asp
- UK – www.fco.gov.uk
- US – <http://travel.state.gov>

- In most places taxis are small sedans, with the exception of Nairobi where you'll find some old London cabs that are spacious enough to take a wheelchair. Minibuses are widely available in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and can be chartered for transport and customised safaris. Large or wide-door vehicles can also be arranged through car-hire agencies in major cities, and often with safari operators as well.

In general, Kenya is probably the easiest destination, and many safari companies there have experience taking disabled people on safari. Organisations that disseminate information on travel for the mobility impaired include the following:

- Accessible Journeys** (www.disabilitytravel.com)
- Access-Able Travel Source** (www.access-able.com)
- Holiday Care** (www.holidaycare.org.uk)
- Mobility International** (www.miusa.org)
- National Information Communication Awareness Network** (www.nican.com.au)

DISCOUNT CARDS

An International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or the graduate equivalent is useful for discounts on train fares, airline tickets and entry charges to museums and archaeological sites.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

As a tourist, it's important to realise what your embassy – the embassy of the country of which you are a citizen – can and can't do.

Generally speaking, it won't be much help in emergencies if the trouble you're in is remotely your own fault, as you're bound by the laws of the country you are in. Your embassy will not be sympathetic if you end

up in jail after committing a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance but only if other channels have been exhausted. For example, if you need to get home urgently, a free ticket is exceedingly unlikely – the embassy would expect you to have insurance. If you have all your money and documents stolen, it might assist with getting a new passport, but a loan for onward travel is out of the question.

For lists of diplomatic representations, see the country Directory sections.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Although there are quite likely more gays and lesbians in Nairobi and the other capital cities, the coast – notably Lamu (Kenya) and Zanzibar (Tanzania) – tends to be more tolerant of gay relationships, at least privately.

Officially, male homosexuality is illegal in Tanzania and Kenya. While prosecutions rarely occur, discretion is advised as gay sexual relationships are culturally taboo, and public displays of affection, whether between people of the same or opposite sex, are frowned upon. That said, it is unlikely that gay travellers will experience any particular difficulties.

The website www.purple.roofs.com/afrika/kenyata lists a number of gay or gay-friendly tour companies in the region which may be able to help you plan your trip. Try **Atlantis Events** (www.atlantisevents.com) or **David Tours** (www.davidtours.com) for all-inclusive packages.

HOLIDAYS

For listings of national holidays see the country Directory sections.

Public Holidays

In Tanzania and in parts of Kenya, especially along the coast, major Islamic holidays are also celebrated as public holidays. The dates depend on the moon and fall about 11 days earlier each year. The most important ones: **Eid al-Moulid (Maulid)** The birthday of the Prophet Mohammed.

Ramadan The annual 30-day fast when adherents do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset.

Eid al-Fitr The end of Ramadan, and East Africa's most important Islamic celebration; celebrated as a two-day holiday in many areas.

Eid al-Kebir (Eid al-Haji) Commemorates the moment when Abraham was about to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command, only to have God intercede at the last moment and substitute a ram instead. It coincides with the end of the pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca.

Estimated dates for these events are shown following. Although Ramadan is not a public holiday, restaurants are often closed during this time in coastal areas.

Event	2006	2007	2008	2009
Eid al-Moulid (Maulid)	11 Apr	31 Mar	20 Mar	9 Mar
Ramadan begins	24 Sep	13 Sep	2 Sep	23 Aug
Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan)	24 Oct	13 Oct	2 Oct	21 Sep
Eid al-Kebir (Eid al-Haji)	31 Dec	20 Dec	9 Dec	29 Nov

INSURANCE

Taking out travel insurance covering theft, loss and medical problems is highly recommended. Before choosing a policy spend time shopping around, as those designed for short package tours in Europe may not be suitable for East Africa. Be sure to read the fine print, as some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can mean scuba diving, motorcycling and even trekking. A locally acquired motorcycle licence isn't valid under some policies. Some policies pay doctors or hospitals directly, while others require you to pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later, keep all documentation. Most importantly, check that the policy covers an emergency flight home.

Before heading to East Africa, it's also well worth taking out a membership with the **African Medical & Research Foundation** (Amref; www.amref.org; Nairobi emergency lines ☎ 254-20-315454, 602492, satellite ☎ 873 762315580; Nairobi head office ☎ 254-20-699 3000). This membership entitles you to emergency regional evacuation by the Flying Doctors' Society of Africa, which operates a 24-hour air-ambulance service based out of Wilson airport in Nairobi (Kenya). A two-month membership costs US\$25/50 for evacuations within a 500km/1000km radius of Nairobi. The 1000km membership encompasses the entire East African region, except for southernmost Tanzania around Songea, Tunduru and Mtwara.

INTERNET ACCESS

Urban East Africa is online, with numerous Internet cafés in all capitals and major towns. In rural areas, however, connections are few and far between. Prices range from less than US\$1 per hour in capital cities to up to US\$5 per hour in outlying areas. Most upscale hotels also have Internet access, though don't expect to be able to connect while on safari.

If you're travelling with a laptop, you'll be able to hook up at top-end hotels and the occasional midrange hotel (with a universal adaptor for the modem). Wireless Internet has yet to hit the region in a big way, although a handful of upscale hotels now have connection points.

LEGAL MATTERS

Apart from traffic offences such as speeding and driving without a seatbelt (mandatory in many areas for driver and front-seat passengers), the main area to watch out for is drug use and possession. Marijuana (*bangi* or *ganja*) is widely available in places like Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, and is frequently offered to tourists – invariably part of a setup involving the police or fake police. If you're caught, expect to pay a large bribe to avoid arrest or imprisonment.

If you're arrested for whatever reason, you can request to call to your embassy, although the help they will be able to give you will generally be limited, see opposite.

If you get robbed, most insurance companies require a police report before they'll reimburse you. You can get these at the nearest police station, though it's usually a time-consuming process.

MAPS

Regional maps include Nelles' *Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda* maps, Bartholomew's *Kenya & Tanzania*, and Hallwag's *Kenya & Tanzania*, which also includes Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Michelin's *Africa – Central & South* covers most of the region on a smaller scale.

MONEY

The best strategy with money is to bring a mix of cash (large and small denominations), travellers cheques (ideally a mixture of American Express and Thomas Cook, in a variety of denominations) and a credit

card (Visa is most widely accepted) for withdrawing money from ATMs.

ATMs

With the exception of Rwanda and Burundi, there are ATMs in capital cities and many major towns. They take either Visa or MasterCard, occasionally both. Some banks in Kenya and Tanzania also have machines linked to the Plus and Cirrus networks. However, throughout the region, despite their growing use, ATMs are out of order with enough frequency that it's best not to rely on them as your only source of funds. There are very few ATMs away from major routes.

Black Market

Except for in Burundi, there is essentially no black market for foreign currency. Nevertheless, you'll still get shady characters sidling up beside you in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and major tourist areas, trying to get you to change money and promising enticing rates. It's invariably a setup and changing on the street should be avoided.

Cash

Throughout the region, US dollars are the most convenient foreign currency and get the best rates. Euros, British pounds and other major currencies are readily accepted in major cities, but often not elsewhere, or at less favourable rates. You'll usually get higher rates for larger denomination bills (US\$50 and US\$100 notes), but you should carry a supply of US\$10, US\$5 and US\$1 notes as well, as change can be difficult to find.

Credit Cards

Visa and MasterCard can be used for most top-end hotels, a few tour operators and the occasional midrange place, especially in major towns and especially in Kenya. However, like ATMs, they're best viewed as a stand-by unless you've confirmed things in advance with the establishment. In Rwanda and Burundi, they're not much help at all. Many places, notably in Tanzania, attach a commission – usually about 5% to 10% – to credit card payments.

You can also use Visa or MasterCard for cash withdrawals at some banks, generally with a hefty commission.

Exchanging Money

You can change cash, and sometimes travellers cheques as well, with a minimum of hassle at banks or foreign exchange (forex) bureaux in major towns and cities; rates and commissions vary, so it pays to shop around. In addition to regular banking hours, most forex bureaux are also open on Saturday mornings. If you get stuck for money outside banking hours and away from an ATM, ask shop owners if they can help you out, rather than changing with someone on the street (which should always be avoided). It's better to say something like 'The banks are closed; do you know someone who could help me out?' rather than directly asking if they will change money.

Tippling & Bargaining

Tippling generally isn't practised in small, local establishments. But in major towns, upmarket places and anywhere frequented by tourists, tips are expected. If a service charge hasn't been included, either round out the bill, or calculate about 10%.

Bargaining is expected by vendors in tourist areas, except in a limited number of fixed-price shops. However, away from tourist areas and for nontourist items, the price quoted will often be the 'real' price, so don't automatically assume that the quote you've been given is too high.

Where bargaining is appropriate, if you pay the first price asked – whether due to ignorance or guilt about how much you have compared with locals – you'll probably be considered naive. You'll also be doing fellow travellers a disservice by creating the impression that all foreigners are willing to pay any named price. Paying consistently above the curve can also contribute to goods being priced out of the reach of locals.

While there are no set rules for bargaining, it should be conducted in a friendly and spirited manner; losing your temper or becoming aggressive or frustrated will be counterproductive. In any transaction, the vendor's aim is to identify the highest price you will pay, while your aim is to find the lowest price at which the vendor will sell. Before starting, shop around to get a feel for the 'value' of the item you want, and ask others what they paid. Once you start negotiating, if things seem like a waste of time, politely take your leave. Sometimes sellers will call

you back if they think their stubbornness is counterproductive. Few will pass up a sale, however thin the profit. If the vendor won't come down to a price you feel is fair, it means that they aren't making a profit, or that too many high-rolling foreigners have passed through already.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are easily exchanged in major towns and cities in Kenya and somewhat less readily in Tanzania (where you *must* have your purchase receipt). In Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, it's less straightforward (capital cities only, with high commissions), and throughout the region it's generally not possible at all at bank branches in smaller towns and rural areas. Rates are generally slightly lower than for cash. American Express and Thomas Cook are the most widely recognised; it's best to get your cheques in US dollars, followed by pounds or euros. Bring a range of denominations so you don't get stuck at the end of your trip changing large cheques for final expenses, and because some banks charge a per cheque levy. Also, carry the original purchase receipt with you (and separately from the cheques), as many banks and forex bureaux ask to see it, and don't rely on travellers cheques as your only source of funds.

Direct payment with travellers cheques for accommodation and services is usually not accepted, and those places that do accept cheques for payment often charge an extra commission.

If your cheques are stolen, getting replacements while still in the region ranges from very time-consuming to impossible.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO Film & Equipment

Nairobi has the best selection of film, equipment and spares, including both Kodak and Fuji slide and print film up to at least 400 ISO/ASA. The selections in Dar es Salaam and Kampala are more limited, although for nonspecialist items you should have no trouble finding what you need. For any remotely specialist requirements (including slide or high-speed film), it's best to bring what you'll need with you.

For processing, most serious photographers get their film developed in Nairobi (where you can also get slides processed) or

bring it home. There are photo shops in all major towns, although outside capital cities quality is unreliable.

Due to the intensity of the African sunlight, most people find 100 ISO more than adequate, with perhaps a few rolls of 200 ISO or 400 ISO for long-lens shots. If you're going to be in forested areas, consider bringing some high-speed film along, especially if you'll be gorilla-trekking or chimp-tracking, as flashes generally aren't permitted near the primates.

For wildlife photography, a single lens reflex (SLR) camera with a lens between 210mm and 300mm should do the trick.

Whatever accessories you carry, be sure to keep them well wrapped in a good bag to protect them from the inevitable dust. Sunlight, humidity and heat can also spoil your camera and film, so take precautions. Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures* by Richard I'Anson is full of helpful tips for taking photographs while on the road.

Photographing People

Always ask permission before photographing people, and always respect their wishes. In many tourist areas, locals will ask for a fee before allowing you to photograph them, which is fair enough, though rates can be high. If you promise to send someone a photo, get their address and follow through with it, as your promise will be taken seriously.

Restrictions

Avoid taking pictures of anything connected with the government or the military, including army barracks, land or people anywhere close to army barracks, government offices, post offices, banks, ports, train stations and airports.

Some locals may object if you take pictures of their place of worship – this includes natural features with traditional religious significance – so always ask first. It usually helps if you're appropriately dressed. In mosques, for instance, wearing a long skirt or trousers and removing your shoes may make it less likely that your hosts will object.

SENIOR TRAVELLERS

East Africa is an excellent destination for travellers of all ages. Places such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Zanzibar

and Kampala have the widest selection of accommodation and dining options, as well as direct international air access, and many luxury tour and safari operators cater extensively to senior travellers.

Some things to think about, whatever your age:

Food If you are particular about what you eat or prefer Western-style cuisine, stick to larger towns with better tourism facilities.

Luggage Unless you're on an organised tour or will be met at your destinations by friends with vehicles, backpacks are the most practical option.

Transport Road journeys can be long and taxing even for the most fit travellers. To minimise rigours here, consider hiring a vehicle or flying, though both of these options can be expensive.

Weather Those who find hot and humid weather a drain on energy should plan their travels for the cooler period from June to August, or concentrate on mountainous or elevated areas away from the coast.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

While you may be a minor curiosity in rural areas, especially solo women travellers, there are no particular problems with travelling solo in East Africa, whether you're male or female. Times when it is advantageous to join a group are for safaris and treks – when going in a group can be a significant cost saver – and when going out at night. If you go out alone at night, take taxis and use extra caution, especially in urban and tourist areas. Whatever the time of day, avoid isolating situations, including isolated stretches of beach. For more information see opposite.

TELEPHONE

You can make domestic and international calls from telecom offices in all major towns (usually located near the post office), from cardphones or from private communications shops. Occasionally you'll find Internet dialling for about half of official telecom prices. The mobile network covers major towns throughout the region, plus many rural areas as well; for more see the country Directories.

Country codes are given inside the front cover of this book. In all countries in the region, except Rwanda and Burundi, area codes must be used whenever you dial long-distance; see individual town listings for codes.

ON TIME?

While the discussion of time (see below) makes everything sound quite official and precise, when all is said and done, time is a very different concept in East Africa than in many parts of the West. Buses that are going 'now' rarely leave until they're full, regardless of how much engine revving takes place in the meantime. Agreed-upon times for appointments are treated as very approximate concepts. A meeting set for 9am today could just as likely happen at 11am, or that afternoon, or even the next day. Getting upset when things don't go like clockwork is often counterproductive. The best way to get things done efficiently is to stay relaxed, treat the person you're dealing with as a person, inquire how their family is going or how their children are doing at school, and take the time to listen to the answer. Then, sit back, wait and be patient – you'll usually get where you're going or what you're hoping for, but on East Africa's time rather than yours.

TIME

Time in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania is GMT/UTC plus three hours year-round; in Rwanda and Burundi it's GMT/UTC plus two hours.

In Swahili-speaking areas, locals use the Swahili system of telling time, in which the first hour is *saa moja* (*asubuhi*), corresponding with 7am. Counting begins again with *saa moja* (*jioni*), the first hour in the evening, corresponding with 7pm. Although most will switch to the international clock when speaking English with foreigners, confusion sometimes occurs, so ask people to confirm whether they are using *saa za kizungu* (international time) or *saa za kiswahili* (Swahili time). Signboards with opening hours are often posted in Swahili time.

TOILETS

Toilets vary from standard long drops to full-flush luxury conveniences that can spring up in the most unlikely places. Almost all midrange and top-end hotels sport flushable sit-down types, although at the lower end of the price range, toilet seats are a rare commodity. Budget guesthouses often have squat toilets – sometimes equipped

with a flush mechanism, otherwise with a bucket and scoop.

Cleanliness levels vary; if you go in expecting the worst, you'll often be surprised that they're not all that bad. Toilets with running water are a rarity outside major hotels. If you see a bucket with water nearby, use it for flushing. Paper (you'll invariably need to supply your own) should be deposited in the can that's usually in the corner.

Many of the upmarket bush camps have 'dry' toilets – just a fancy version of the long drop with a Western-style seat perched on the top – though it is all generally quite hygienic.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda all have tourist agency websites, and maintain tourist offices of varying degrees of helpfulness in major cities; see Tourist Information in the country Directories for more. General background information is also available from East African embassies.

VISAS

Your passport should have plenty of blank pages for entry and exit stamps, and be valid for at least six months after the conclusion of your planned travels.

It's best to arrange visas in advance, although currently all countries in the region are issuing visas at the airport and at most land borders. Regulations change frequently, so call the relevant embassy for an update. Many international airlines require you to have a visa before boarding the plane to East Africa.

Once in East Africa, a single-entry visa for Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda allows you to visit either of the other two countries (assuming you've met their visa requirements and have been issued a visa) and then return to the original country without having to apply for second visa for the original country. Thus, if you're in Tanzania on a single-entry visa, you can go to Kenya (assuming you also have a Kenyan visa), and then return to Tanzania without needing a new Tanzanian visa. This doesn't apply to Rwanda and Burundi, so if you will be including visits to these or other African countries in your regional itinerary, it will save you money to get a multiple-entry visa at the outset. Note that visas issued at land borders are usually for single entry

only. Also, at most borders (including the popular Namanga border crossing between Kenya and Tanzania) and at airport immigration, visa fees must be paid in US dollars cash. Carry extra passport-sized photos for visa applications.

Proof of an onward ticket or sufficient funds is rarely required if you apply for a visa at land borders. It's occasionally requested at airports in the region, but generally only if you give immigration officials reason to doubt that you'll leave.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

East Africa (especially in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) is a relatively easy region to travel in, either solo or with other women, especially when compared with parts of North Africa, South America and certain Western countries. You're not likely to encounter any more specifically gender-related problems than you would elsewhere in the world and, more often than not, you'll meet only warmth, hospitality and sisterly regard, and find that you receive kindness and special treatment that you probably wouldn't be shown if you were a male traveller. That said, you'll inevitably attract some attention, especially if you're travelling alone, and there are some areas where caution is essential. Following are a few tips:

- Dressing modestly is the single most successful strategy for minimising unwanted attention. Wear trousers or a long skirt, and a conservative top with sleeves. Tucking your hair under a cap or scarf, or tying it back, also helps.
- Use common sense, trust your instincts and take the usual precautions when out and about. Try to avoid walking alone at night. Avoid isolated areas at all times, and be particularly cautious on beaches, many of which can become isolated very quickly. Hassling tends to be worse in tourist areas along the Kenyan coast than elsewhere in the region. While most of it is limited to verbal hassles, and many travellers – female and male – travel in this area without incident, take extra care here about where you go alone.
- If you find yourself with an unwanted suitor, creative approaches are usually fairly effective. For example, explain that your husband (whether real or fictitious) or a large group of friends will be arriving

imminently at that very place. Creative approaches are also usually effective in dealing with the inevitable curiosity that you'll meet as to why you might not have children and a husband, or if you do have them, why they are not with you. The easiest response to the question of why you aren't married is to explain that you are still young (*bado kijana* in Swahili), which, whether you are or not, will at least have some humour value. Just saying 'bado' ('not yet') to questions about marriage or children should also do the trick. As for why your family isn't with you, you can always explain that you will be meeting them later.

- Seek out local women, as this can enrich your trip tremendously. Good places to try include tourist offices, government departments or even your hotel, where at least some of the staff are likely to be formally educated young to middle-aged women. In rural areas, starting points include women teachers at a local school, or staff at a health centre.
- In mixed-race situations in some areas of the region – specifically if you're a black woman with a white male – some East Africans may assume that you're a prostitute. Taking taxis if you go out at night and ignoring any comments are among the tactics that may help minimise problems here.

In Rwanda and Burundi, verbal hassles, hisses and the like tend to be more common than elsewhere in the region, although things rarely go further than this. The best strategy – in addition to following the preceding tips – is to ignore hissing and catcalls; don't worry about being rude, and don't

feel the need to explain yourself. Due to the overall unstable security situation, especially in Burundi, you'll need to take particular care in more remote areas, but this applies to travellers of whatever gender.

A limited selection of tampons is available at pharmacies or large supermarkets in major towns throughout the region. Elsewhere, the choice is usually limited to pads.

WORK

The most likely areas for employment are the safari industry, tourism, scuba diving and teaching. For safari, diving and tourism-related positions, competition is stiff and the best way to land something is to get to know someone already working in the business.

Work and residency permits generally must be arranged through the employer or sponsoring organisation; residency permits normally should be applied for before arriving in the region. Be prepared for lots of bureaucracy.

Most teaching positions are voluntary, and best arranged through voluntary agencies or mission organisations at home. Also start your search from home for international staff positions with the many aid agencies operating in East Africa. There are numerous opportunities available, especially in Kenya (dealing with the crises in Somalia and Sudan), Uganda and Burundi. However, most organisations require applicants to go through their head office.

A number of foreign organisations can assist with arranging volunteer work. Some to try:

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO; www.vso.org.uk)

Helps with placements for young professionals.

Volunteer Abroad (www.volunteerabroad.com) Has a good selection of volunteer listings for East Africa.

Transport in East Africa

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

This section tells you how to reach East Africa from elsewhere in the world. For details on travel between and around the individual countries, and for border crossing information, see under Transport in the individual country chapters.

AIR

Airports & Airlines

Nairobi (Kenya) is East Africa's major air hub, and the best destination for finding special airfares. Other major airports include Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, and Entebbe in Uganda. There are also international airports in Kigali (Rwanda), Bujumbura (Burundi) and Zanzibar (Tanzania), and it's worth checking out cheap charter flights to Mombasa (Kenya) from Europe.

Tickets

Airfares from Europe and North America to East Africa are highest in December and January, and again from June through August. They're lowest from March through May, except around the Easter holidays. London

is the main discount airfare hub, and a good place to look for special deals into Nairobi. When planning your trip, consider buying an open-jaw ticket, which enables you to fly into one country and out of another. This often works out cheaper than booking a standard return in and out of one city, plus a connecting regional flight. Charter flights are generally cheaper than scheduled flights, and are also worth considering. Some come as part of a package that includes accommodation, but most charter companies sell 'flight only' tickets.

Online ticket sellers:

Cheapflights (www.cheap-flights.co.uk)

Cheap Tickets (www.cheaptickets.com)

Expedia (www.expedia.com, www.expedia.ca)

Flight Centre (www.flightcentre.com)

Flights.com (www.eltexpress.com)

LowestFare.com (www.lowestfare.com)

Microsoft Expedia (www.expedia.co.uk, www.expedia.ca)

OneTravel.com (www.onetravel.com)

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com)

STA Travel (www.statravel.com)

Travel.com.au (www.travel.com.au) For travel out of and around Australia.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com, www.travelocity.ca)

COURIER FLIGHTS

Courier fares can be a bargain, although you may be allowed carry-on luggage only, and have limited flexibility with flight dates and times. The **International Association of Air Travel Couriers** (www.aircourier.co.uk) and the **Air Courier Association** (www.aircourier.org) are good places to start looking; for both you'll need to pay a modest membership fee to access their fares. Note that many advertised courier fares are one-way only.

INTERCONTINENTAL (RTW) TICKETS

Intercontinental (round-the-world) tickets give you a limited period (usually a year) to circumnavigate the globe. You can go anywhere that the carrying airline and its partners go, as long as you stay within the set mileage or number of stops, and don't backtrack. However, as East African destinations generally aren't part of standard RTW packages, you'll probably need to pay extra to include them.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Travel agents can put together 'alternative' RTW tickets, which are more expensive, but more flexible, than standard RTW itineraries. For a multiple-stop itinerary without the cost of a RTW ticket, consider combining tickets from two low-cost airlines.

Online RTW ticket sellers:

Airbrokers (www.airbrokers.com) For travel originating in North America.

Airtreks (www.airtreks.com) For travel originating in North America.

Oneworld (www.oneworld.com) An airline alliance offering RTW packages.

Roundtheworldflights.com (www.roundtheworldflights.com) For travel originating in the UK.

Star Alliance (www.staralliance.com) An airline alliance offering RTW packages.

Africa & the Middle East

Following is a list of useful airlines and their connections:

Air Burundi (airbdi@cbinf.com) Connections from Bujumbura to Kigali, and (soon) Bujumbura to Kigoma (Tanzania).

Air Madagascar (www.airmadagascar.mg) Connections from Antananarivo (Madagascar) to Nairobi.

Air Tanzania (www.airtanzania.com) Connections between Moroni (Comoros), Johannesburg, Nairobi, Harare, Entebbe, Lusaka, and Dar es Salaam or Zanzibar.

Cameroon Airlines (www.iccnct.cm/camair) Connections from Douala to Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), from where you can connect on Kenya Airways or Ethiopian Airlines to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

EgyptAir (www.egyptair.com.eg) Connections from Cairo to Nairobi via Entebbe.

Emirates (www.emirates.com) Connections from Cairo to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam or Entebbe via Dubai.

Ethiopian Airlines (www.flyethiopian.com) Connections from Abidjan, Lagos and Cairo to Addis Ababa, and then onward connections to major East African airports.

Kenya Airways (www.kenya-airways.com) Connections from Abidjan, Cairo, Douala, Harare, Johannesburg,

Khartoum, Lilongwe and other cities to Nairobi, with onward connections to all East African capitals.

Linhas Aéreas de Moçambique (www.lam.com.mz) Connections from Maputo to Dar es Salaam via Pemba (Mozambique).

Precision Air (www.precisionairtz.com) Connections from Dubai, Blantyre and Lilongwe to Dar es Salaam, all in partnership with Air Malawi; and Kigoma to Bujumbura (in partnership with Air Burundi).

Rwandair Express (www.rwandair.com) Connections from Kigali to Nairobi, Kilimanjaro, Entebbe, Bujumbura and Johannesburg.

South African Airways (www.flysaa.com) Connections from Johannesburg to Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Entebbe and Kigali.

SN Brussels Airline (www.flysn.com) Connections from Brussels to Entebbe, Nairobi and Kigali.

Always ask about return excursion fares (fares that have certain restrictions or prerequisites, such as advance purchase, limited lifespan or specified travel windows) for intra-African flights, as they are frequently significantly cheaper than standard return fares.

Rennies Travel (www.renniestravel.com) and **STA Travel** (www.statravel.co.za) have offices throughout southern Africa. In the Middle East, try **Al-Rais Travels** (www.alrais.com) in Dubai; **Egypt Panorama Tours** (☎ 2-359 0200; www.eptours.com) in Cairo; the **Israel Student Travel Association** (ISTA; ☎ 02-625 7257) in Jerusalem; or **Orion-Tour** (www.oriontour.com) in Istanbul.

Asia

Popular connections from Asia are via Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, or via Mumbai (Bombay), from where there are connections to Dar es Salaam and Nairobi on **Kenya Airways** (www.kenya-airways.com) and **Air India** (www.airindia.com). **Ethiopian Airlines** (www.flyethiopian.com) also flies this route, via Addis Ababa, and **Oman Air** (www.oman-air.com) is worth checking for flights to Zanzibar (Tanzania) from Mumbai or Madras via Muscat.

STA Travel (www.statravel.com) is ubiquitous in Asia, with branches in **Thailand** (☎ 02-236 0262; www.statravel.co.th), **Singapore** (☎ 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg), **Hong Kong** (☎ 2736 1618; www.statravel.com.hk) and **Japan** (☎ 03-5391 2922; www.statravel.com.jp). Another resource in Japan is **No 1 Travel** (☎ 03-3205 6073; www.no1-travel.com). In Hong Kong try **Four Seas Tours** (☎ 2200 7760; www.fourseastravel.com/english). **STIC Travels** (www.stictravel.com) has offices in dozens of Indian

cities, including **Delhi** (☎ 11-233 57 468) and **Mumbai** (☎ 22-221 81 431).

Australia & New Zealand

There are no direct flights from Australia or New Zealand to anywhere in East Africa. However, from Australia, **Qantas** (www.qantas.com.au) flies from Sydney and Perth to Johannesburg, and **South African Airways** (www.flysaa.com) flies from Perth to Johannesburg – both several times weekly – from where you can connect to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Entebbe. Other options include **Emirates** (www.emirates.com) via Dubai to Dar es Salaam or Nairobi; **Qantas** or **Air India** (www.airindia.com) via Mumbai to Dar es Salaam or Nairobi; and **Air Mauritius** (www.airmauritius.com) to Nairobi via Mauritius. A RTW ticket is another possibility (see p631). Ticket discounters include **Flight Centre** (☎ 131 600; www.flightcentre.com.au) and **STA Travel** (☎ 1300-733 035; www.statravel.com.au), both with branches around the country.

To travel from New Zealand to Nairobi, with onward connections to elsewhere in the region, try Emirates via Dubai, or Qantas and South African Airways via Sydney and Johannesburg. **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800-243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508-782 872; www.statravel.co.nz) both have branches throughout the country. The website www.travel.co.nz is recommended for online bookings. Also check with some of the operators listed on p635.

UK & Continental Europe

There are flights from many European capitals directly to East Africa. The best deals, both on commercial and charter flights, are on the London–Nairobi route. Airlines to check include **Swiss** (www.swiss.com) to Nairobi and Dar es Salaam; **KLM Royal Dutch Airlines** (www.klm.com) to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Entebbe; **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Entebbe; and **SN Brussels Airline** (www.flysn.com) to Entebbe, Kigali and Nairobi. Non-European carriers – including **Kenya Airways** (www.kenya-airways.com), **Egypt Air** (www.egyptair.com.eg) via Cairo, **Ethiopian Airlines** (www.flyethiopian.com) via Addis Ababa, and **Emirates** (www.emirates.com) via Dubai – service various European cities as well as East African destinations, and also offer good deals. **Oman Air** (www.oman-air.com) flies between London and

Zanzibar via Muscat, and **Yemenia Yemen Airways** (www.yemenia.com.ye) flies between London and Dar es Salaam. Whichever route you travel, flights from Europe are heavily booked between late June and late August, so reserve well in advance. The lowest fares are usually for travel between January and May, apart from the Easter season.

In the UK advertisements for many travel agencies appear in the travel pages of the weekend broadsheet newspapers, as well as in *Time Out*, the *Evening Standard* and in the free magazine **TNT** (www.tntmagazine.com). Recommended travel agencies:

Bridge the World (☎ 0870 444 7474; www.b-t-w.co.uk)

Flightbookers (☎ 0870 814 4001; www.ebookers.com)

Flight Centre (☎ 0870 890 8099; www.flightcentre.co.uk)

North-South Travel (☎ 01245 608 291; www.northsouthtravel.co.uk) North-South Travel donates part of its profit to projects in the developing world.

Quest Travel (☎ 0870 442 3542; www.questtravel.com)

STA Travel (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk) For travellers under the age of 26.

Trailfinders (www.trailfinders.co.uk)

Travel Bag (☎ 0870 890 1456; www.travelbag.co.uk)

Agencies to try for discounted fares from continental Europe:

Airfair (☎ 0206-20 51 21; www.airfair.nl) Netherlands.

Anyway (☎ 08 92 89 38 92; www.anyway.fr) France.

Barcelo Viajes (☎ 902 11 62 26; www.barceloviajes.com) Spain.

CTS Viaggi (☎ 064 62 04 31; www.cts.it) Italy; specialising in student and youth travel.

Just Travel (☎ 089-747 3330; www.justtravel.de)

Germany.

Lastminute France (www.lastminute.fr); Germany (www.lastminute.de)

Nouvelles Frontières France (www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr); Spain (www.nouvelles-frontieres.es)

OTU Voyages (www.otu.fr) France.

STA Travel (☎ 01805-456 422; www.statravel.de)

Germany; for travellers under the age of 26.

Voyagers du Monde (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; www.vdm.com) France.

USA & Canada

Most flights from North America are via Europe, and there are few bargain deals. Fares offered by Canadian discounters are generally about 10% higher than those sold in the USA.

Generally the cheapest way is to get to London on a discounted transatlantic ticket, then purchase a separate ticket on to

Nairobi or elsewhere in East Africa. Most of the airlines mentioned under UK & Continental Europe (p633) also offer through-fares from North America.

A roundabout – but sometimes cheaper – alternative is **South African Airways** (www.flysn.com), which flies from New York or Atlanta to Johannesburg, where you can connect to East Africa. Other options include flying with **Egypt Air** (www.egyptair.com.eg) between New York and East Africa via Cairo; **Ethiopian Airways** (www.flyethiopian.com) between New York and East Africa via Rome and Addis Ababa; and **Kenya Airways** (www.kenya-airways.com) together with **Virgin Atlantic** (www.virgin-atlantic.com) from New York into the region via London.

Discount travel agents in the USA are known as consolidators (although you will not see a sign on the door saying ‘Consolidator’). San Francisco is the ticket consolidator capital of America, but some good deals can also be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities. See p631 for recommended online booking agencies. Other recommended discounters:

Flight Centre (☎ 888-967 5355; www.flightcentre.ca) Canada.

STA Travel (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com) USA; for travellers under 26.

Travel Cuts (☎ 800-667 2887; www.travelcuts.com) Canada.

Some of the operators listed opposite also sell flight-only packages.

LAKE

The main lake ferry connections to/from East Africa are between Malawi and Tanzania on Lake Nyasa (see p261), and between Zambia and Tanzania on Lake Tanganyika (see p260).

LAND

A few of the more popular possibilities for combining East Africa travels with overland travel in other parts of the continent are outlined here. Detailing how to drive your own vehicle to the region from elsewhere in Africa is beyond the scope of this book, although information on the required *carnet de passage* is included on p638. Other sources of information include the *Adventure Motorcycling Handbook*, by Chris Scott et al, with lots of useful information, especially if you’re com-

binging the Sahara and West Africa with your East Africa travels; and *Africa by Road* by Bob Swain and Paula Snyder – very useful if you’re exploring Africa in your own vehicle, with details on everything from paperwork and logistics to driving techniques.

North & West Africa

For information on trans-Saharan routes, see Lonely Planet’s *West Africa*, and check the website of **Chris Scott** (www.sahara-overland.com). Once through West Africa, most travellers fly from Douala (Cameroon) over the Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) to Nairobi, from where you can continue overland within East Africa. It’s also possible, but difficult, to go overland via Chad and Sudan to Addis Ababa and from there on to Nairobi.

Northeast Africa

The Nile route through northeast Africa goes from Egypt into Sudan (via Lake Nasser, or the Red Sea from Suez to Port Sudan) to Khartoum. From there, most people fly to Nairobi, or go overland (security situation permitting) from northern Sudan through Eritrea and Ethiopia into Kenya.

Southern Africa

If you have the time, a combined southern Africa–East Africa overland itinerary is an excellent way to experience the continent.

The main gateways between them are Zambia and Malawi, both of which are straightforward to reach from elsewhere in southern Africa. Once in Zambia, head to Kapiri Mposhi where you can get the Tanzania–Zambia Railway (Tazara) northeast to Mbeya (Tanzania). From Mbeya continue by road or rail towards Dar es Salaam, and then by road towards Mombasa and Nairobi. Another route from Zambia goes to Mpulungu on the Zambian shore of Lake Tanganyika, from where you can travel by steamer to Kigoma. From Kigoma head by rail east to Dar es Salaam, or northeast towards Lake Victoria, Uganda and western Kenya.

From Malawi, after entering East Africa at Songwe River Bridge (at the Tanzanian border), head by bus to Mbeya and continue as outlined above.

Burundi’s security situation permitting, other possibilities include following the route outlined earlier from Mpulungu to

Kigoma, from where you can continue by ferry (when it’s running) or overland to Bujumbura, travel through Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, and on into Kenya or Tanzania. Overland travel into East Africa from Mozambique is possible when the sporadically functioning vehicle ferry across the Ruvuma River is running (see p258). Once in Mtwara (Tanzania), it’s straight – albeit somewhat bumpy – going on the currently-being-rehabilitated road to Dar es Salaam.

SEA

To reach East Africa by sea, the main option is trying to hitch a lift on a private yacht sailing along the coast. Durban (South Africa) is one of the better places to start looking. Several cargo shipping companies sailing from Europe to East Africa also have passenger cabins. Expect to pay from about UK£1350 one way for a 23-day journey from Felixstowe (UK) to Dar es Salaam via the Suez Canal.

Some useful contacts:

Freighter World Cruises Inc (☎ 800-531 7774, 626-449 3106; www.freighterworld.com) Based in the USA.

Strand Voyages (☎ 020-7836 6363; www.strandtravel.co.uk) Based in the UK.

TOURS

If you’re short on time or new to travel in the region, an organised tour can be a good choice, although these are usually more expensive than organising things locally, in East Africa. They’re normally booked in advance in your home country, either directly with the operating company or through an agent. Some packages include international flights, while with others these need to be arranged separately. Tours average two to three weeks, with shorter and much longer options also possible.

Organised tours can be low-budget affairs, where you travel in an ‘overland truck’ with 15 to 30 other people and some drivers/leaders, carrying tents and other equipment, buying food along the way, and cooking and eating as a group. At the other end of the spectrum are individually tailored tours, ranging in price from reasonable to very expensive. In between are the midrange tours, where you keep to a set itinerary and travel in a small group, usually either in a minibus or a Land Rover–style 4WD, staying at hotels and sometimes camping.

Some companies offer an option between all-inclusive tours and travelling completely independently, by providing you with pre-booked flights, vehicle hire and accommodation as required, but letting you decide exactly where and when you want to go.

There are dozens of tour companies operating through East Africa and the following list is just a sample; for additional listings, including locally based companies, see p83. If you have specialist interests, look in specialist magazines (such as nature magazines for wildlife tours, outdoor magazines for hiking tours etc).

Australia

Africa Travel Centre (☎ 02-9267 3048; Level 11, 456 Kent St, Sydney, NSW 2000) General travel arrangements, air tickets and tours.

African Wildlife Safaris (☎ 03-9696 2899, 1300-363302; www.africanwildlifesafaris.com.au) Discount airfares and safaris.

Peregrine Travel (☎ 03-9663 8611; www.peregrine.net.au) Everything from overland truck tours to upscale wildlife safaris and chimpanzee tracking.

New Zealand

Africa Travel Centre (☎ 09-520 2000; 21 Remuera Rd, Newmarket, Auckland) General travel arrangements, airfares and tours.

South Africa

Wild Frontiers (☎ 11-702 2035; www.wildfrontiers.com) Safaris, chimpanzee tracking and more.

UK

Abercrombie & Kent (☎ 0845-070 0610; www.abercrombiekent.co.uk) Upscale tours and safaris, including chimpanzee tracking.

Dragoman (☎ 0870-499 4475; www.dragoman.co.uk) Overland tours.

Explore Worldwide (☎ 01252-760000; www.exploreworldwide.com) Small group tours, treks and safaris.

Footprint Adventures (☎ 01522-804929; www.footprint-adventures.co.uk) Treks and safaris.

Gane & Marshall (☎ 020-8441 9592; www.ganeandmarshall.co.uk) Upscale tours and safaris.

Guerba (☎ 01373-826611; www.guerba.com) Overland tours, including visits to the gorillas and chimpanzees.

USA & Canada

Born Free Safaris (☎ 800-372 3274, 818-981 7185; www.bornfreesafaris.com) Safaris and tours.

Fresh Tracks (☎ 800-267 3347, 416-922 7584; www.freshtracks.com) Safaris, tours and gorilla tracking.

International Expeditions (☎ 800-633 4734, 205-428 1700; www.iextravel.com) Upscale safaris.

Thomson Family Adventures (☎ 800-262 6255, 617-923 2004; www.familyadventures.com) Family-friendly safaris and tours.

GETTING AROUND

This section summarises the ways to travel around East Africa. For specifics, see the individual country chapters.

AIR

Because of East Africa's size and the less-than-optimal condition of many roads, it's worth considering regional and domestic flights, especially if your time is limited. While international connections into the region are good, and air service within East Africa is relatively reliable, cancellations and delays should still be expected at any time of year. Always reconfirm your ticket several times, and allow extra time between regional and intercontinental flights.

Airlines in East Africa

For details of airlines flying within East Africa, see the country chapters.

BICYCLE

Cycling is an excellent way to explore East Africa if you have time, a sense of adventure and don't mind roughing things. Main sealed roads are best avoided (as traffic moves dangerously fast) but secondary roads can be ideal. Because of the distances involved, you'll need to plan your food and water needs in advance, and to pay attention to choosing a route. Throughout much of the region, cycling is best well away from urban areas, in the early morning and late afternoon hours, and in the cooler, dry season between June and August. When calculating daily distances, plan on taking a break from the midday heat, and don't count on covering as much territory each day as you might in a northern European climate.

Mountain bikes are best for flexibility and local terrain, and should be brought from home. While single-speed bicycles, and occasionally mountain bikes, can be rented in many towns (ask hotel staff or inquire at the local bicycle repair stand), they're only suitable for short rides.

Other things to consider when planning are water (carry at least 4L), rampaging motorists (a small rear-view mirror is a worthwhile investment), sleeping (bring a tent) and punctures (thorn trees are a problem in some areas). Bring sufficient spares (including at least four spare inner tubes, a spare tyre and plenty of tube patches), and be proficient at repairs. Cycling isn't permitted in national parks or wildlife reserves.

Bicycles can be transported on minibuses and buses (though for express or luxury buses, you may need to make advance arrangements with the driver to stow your bike in the hold). There's also no problem and no additional cost to bring your bicycle on any of the region's lake or coastal ferries.

As elsewhere in the world, don't leave your bike unattended unless it's locked, and secure all removable pieces. Taking your bike into a hotel room is generally no problem (and is a good idea). A highly recommended contact is the US-based **International Bicycle Fund** (www.ibike.org/bikeafrica), a socially conscious, low-budget organisation that arranges tours in East Africa and provides information. Several hotels and tour operators also offer bike hire and arrange shorter cycling or mountain-biking day trips; see the country chapters for specifics.

BOAT

On the Tanzanian section of Lake Victoria, there are passenger boats connecting Mwanza (Tanzania) with Bukoba, Ukerewe Island and various lakeside villages. In the Kenyan section of the lake, small boats connect the mainland around Mbita Point with Mfangano, Rusinga and the Takawiri Islands. In Uganda small boats connect mainland villages with the Ssesse Islands; there are also regular cargo boats from Kampala to Mwanza that accept passengers.

On Lake Tanganyika, a passenger ferry connects Kigoma (Tanzania) with Mpulungu (Zambia). On Lake Nyasa, the main route is between Mbamba Bay and Itungi (both in Tanzania), via numerous lakeside villages. There's also a boat between Mbamba Bay and Nkhata Bay (Malawi).

The main coastal routes are between Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Pemba (covered in the Tanzania chapter), and the short run between the coast and the Lamu Archipelago (Kenya). Other routes with more sporadic

DHOW TRAVEL

With their billowing sails, graceful forms and long histories, these ancient sailing vessels have become a symbol of East Africa for adventurous travellers. Even the name has a certain allure, evoking images of nights spent under the stars sailing through distant archipelagos. Yet, despite their romantic reputation, the realities of dhow travel can be quite different.

If the wind is with you and the water calm, a dhow trip can be enjoyable, and will give you a better sense of the centuries of trade that shaped East Africa's coastal communities during the days when dhows reigned supreme. However, if you're becalmed miles from your destination, if seas turn rough, if the boat is leaking or overloaded, if it's raining, or if the sun is very strong, the experience will be much less pleasant.

Places to arrange dhow trips include Msimbati (p247), Mikindani (p247), Kilwa Kivinje (p242) and Bagamoyo (p158), all in Tanzania; and Lamu (p341) in Kenya. To experience dhow travel with a bit more comfort and fewer risks, many coastal hotels have their own boats or can help you arrange a local boat for a short sail.

The following are some things to keep in mind if you do decide to give a local dhow a try:

- Be prepared for rough conditions. There are no facilities on board, except possibly a toilet hanging off the stern. As sailings are wind and tide dependent, departures are often during the pre-dawn hours.
- Journeys often take longer than anticipated; bring plenty of extra water and sufficient food.
- Sunblock, a hat and a covering are essential, as is waterproofing for your luggage.
- Avoid overloaded boats and don't set sail in bad weather as capsizing is a concern.
- Travel with the winds, which blow from south to north from approximately July to September and north to south from approximately November to late February.

Note that what Westerners refer to as dhows are called either *jahazi* or *mashua* by most Swahili speakers. *Jahazi* are large, lateen-sailed boats. *Mashua* are similar in design, although smaller, and often with proportionately wider hulls and a motor. The *dau* has a sloped stem and stern. On lakes and inland waterways, the *mtumbwi* (dugout canoe) is in common use. Coastal areas, especially Zanzibar's east-coast beaches, are good places to see the *ngalawa* (outrigger canoe).

services include those between Dar es Salaam and Mtwara, and between Tanga and Pemba (all in Tanzania).

BUS

Buses are the most useful type of public transport. They're usually faster than trains or trucks, and safer and more comfortable than minibuses. In Kenya and Tanzania you often have the choice of going by 'luxury' or 'ordinary' bus. Luxury buses are more comfortable and more expensive, though not always quicker than ordinary buses. Some also boast the dubious advantage of a video system, usually playing bad movies at full volume for the entire trip. Uganda has ordinary buses only, except on the Kampala-Nairobi run. There are a few full-size buses in Rwanda and Burundi, although, especially in Burundi, minibuses are the rule.

For details of major bus companies, routes and schedules, see the Transport sections in the country chapters.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

It's quite feasible to make your way around much of East Africa by car or motorcycle, though it's generally only an option used by those already living in the region with access to their own vehicle (as rentals can be very expensive) and local driving knowledge.

Throughout East Africa, main roads are sealed and in reasonable states of repair. In rural areas, however, they range from decent to terrible, especially in the wet season when many secondary routes become impassable. Most trips outside major towns require 4WD; motorcycles generally aren't permitted in national parks.

Whether you drive your own or a rental vehicle, expect stops at checkpoints where

police and border officials will ask to see your driving licence, insurance paperwork and vehicle papers.

Bring Your Own Vehicle

To bring your own vehicle into East Africa you'll need to arrange a *carnet de passage* . This document allows you to take a vehicle duty-free into a country where duties would normally be payable. It guarantees that if a vehicle is taken into a country but not exported, the organisation that issued the carnet will accept responsibility for payment of import duties (generally between 100% and 150% of the new value of the vehicle). The carnet should also specify any expensive spare parts that you'll be carrying.

To get a carnet, contact your national motoring organisation at home, which will give you an indemnity form for completion by either a bank or an insurance company. Once you have deposited a bond with a bank or paid an insurance premium, the motoring organisation will issue the carnet. The cost of the carnet itself is minimal; allow at least a week to complete the process.

For longer trips, in addition to a carnet and mechanical knowledge, bring along a good collection of spares.

Driving Licence

If you're taking your own vehicle or are considering hiring one in East Africa, arrange an International Driving Permit (IDP) before leaving home. They're available at minimal cost through your national motoring organisation.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Fuel costs in the region average US\$1/US\$0.80 per litre of petrol/diesel. Filling and repair stations are readily available in major towns, but scarce elsewhere. In many areas, diesel is often easier to find than petrol. Top your tank up whenever you get the opportunity and carry basic spares. For travel in remote areas and in national parks, also carry jerry cans with extra fuel. Petrol sold on the roadside is unreliable, as it's often diluted with water or kerosene.

Hire

Car, 4WD and motorcycle hire is expensive throughout the region, averaging US\$100 to US\$150 per day for 4WD. Few agencies offer

unlimited kilometres, and many require that you take a chauffeur (which is a good idea anyway). For self-drive rentals you'll need a driving licence and often an International Driving Permit as well. If you'll be crossing any borders, you'll need to arrange the necessary paperwork with the hire agency in advance.

Insurance

Throughout the region, liability insurance must generally be bought at the border upon entry. While cost and quality vary, in many cases you may find that you are effectively travelling uninsured, as there's often no way to collect on the insurance. With vehicle rentals – even if you're covered from other sources – it's a good idea to take the full coverage offered by hire companies.

Road Rules

Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda follow the British keep-left traffic system. In Rwanda and Burundi, driving is on the right-hand side. At roundabouts throughout the region, traffic already in the roundabout has the right of way.

Night-time road travel isn't recommended anywhere; if you must drive at night, be alert for stopped vehicles in the roadway without lights or hazard warnings. If you're not used to driving in Africa, watch out for pedestrians, children and animals, as well as for oncoming vehicles on the wrong side of the road. Especially in rural areas, remember that many people have never driven themselves and are not aware of necessary braking distances and similar concepts; moderate your speed accordingly. Tree branches placed in the roadway are used to signal a stopped vehicle or other problem ahead, and indicate that speed should be reduced. Passing (including on curves or other areas with poor visibility) is common practice and a cause of frequent accidents.

HITCHING

Hitching may be your only option in remote areas, although it's rare that you'll get a free ride unless you're lucky enough to be offered a lift by resident expats, well-off locals or aid workers – even then, at least offer to make a contribution for petrol on longer journeys, or to pick up a meal tab. To flag down a vehicle, hold out your hand at about waist level

and wave it up and down, with the palm to the ground; the common Western gesture of holding out your thumb isn't used.

A word of warning about taking lifts in private cars: smuggling across borders is common practice, and if whatever is being smuggled is found, you may be arrested even though you knew nothing about it. Most travellers manage to convince police that they were merely hitching a ride (passport stamps are a good indication of this), but the convincing can take a long time.

As in other parts of the world, hitching is never entirely safe, and we don't recommend it. Those travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a potentially serious risk. If you do hitch, you'll be safer doing so in pairs and letting someone know of your plans.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Minibus

Most East Africans rely heavily on minibuses for transport. They're called *matatus* in Kenya, *daladalas* in Tanzania, and taxis or *matatus* in Uganda. Except in Rwanda and Burundi, minibuses are invariably packed to bursting point, and this – combined with excessive speed, poor maintenance and driver recklessness – means that they're not the safest way of getting around. In fact, they can be downright dangerous, and newspaper reports of *matatu* and *daladala* crashes are a regular feature. In Rwanda and Burundi travelling in minibuses is generally safer. If you have a large backpack, think twice about boarding, especially at rush hour, when it will make the already crowded conditions even more uncomfortable for others.

Taxi

In Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda you'll find shared taxis on some routes. These officially take between five and nine passengers, depending on size, leave when full and are usually faster, though more expensive, than bus travel. They're marginally more comfortable than minibuses, but have their share of accidents. Private taxis are useful for short trips within a town, or – if you have the funds – for half- or full-day charters.

Truck

In remote areas trucks may be the only form of transport, and they're invariably the

cheapest. For most regular runs there will be a 'fare', which is more or less fixed and is what the locals pay. It's usually equivalent to, or a bit less than, the bus fare for the same route. For a place in the cab, expect to pay about twice what it costs to travel on top of the load.

Many truck lifts are arranged the night before departure at the 'truck park' – a compound or dust patch that you'll find in most towns. Ask around for a truck that's going your way, and be prepared to wait, especially on remote routes where there may be trucks leaving only once or twice a week. For longer trips, ask what to do about food and drink, and bring plenty of extra drinking water – enough for yourself and to share.

TOURS

For safari and trekking operators, see p83. Many of the companies listed here can also organise local itineraries in addition to your safari or trek. For local tour operators, see listings in individual town sections of the country chapters.

TRAIN

The main passenger lines are the Nairobi–Mombasa route (Kenya), the Tazara 'express' line from Dar es Salaam to Mbeya (Tanzania), and the meandering Central line connecting Dar es Salaam with Mwanza and Kigoma (Tanzania).

First class costs about double what the bus would cost, but is well worth it for the additional comfort. Second class is reasonably comfortable, but the savings over 1st class are marginal. Economy-class travel is cheap, crowded and uncomfortable. There are no assigned seats, and for long trips you'll probably wind up sitting and sleeping on the floor. Reservations for 1st class are generally best made as early as possible.

In all classes, keep an eye on your luggage, especially at stops. Particularly in 1st and 2nd class, make sure the window is jammed shut at night to avoid the possibility of someone entering when the train stops (there's usually a piece of wood provided for this), and keep your cabin door shut.

Food and drink (mainly soft drinks) are available on trains and from station vendors, although it's a good idea to bring sandwiches and extra water. Have plenty of small change handy.

Health

Dr Caroline Evans

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As long as you stay up to date with your vaccinations and take some basic preventive measures, you'd have to be pretty unlucky to succumb to most of the health hazards covered in this chapter. While East Africa has an impressive selection of tropical diseases on offer, you're much more likely to get a bout of diarrhoea, a cold or an infected mosquito bite than an exotic disease such as sleeping sickness. When it comes to injuries (as opposed to illness), the most likely reason for needing medical help in the region is as a result of road accidents – vehicles are rarely well maintained, the roads are potholed and poorly lit, and drink driving is common.

BEFORE YOU GO

A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save you a lot of trouble later. Before a long trip get a check-up from your dentist and from your doctor if you take any regular medication or have a chronic illness, such as high blood pressure or asthma. You should also organise spare contact lenses and glasses (and take your optical prescription with you), get a first aid and medical kit together and arrange necessary vaccinations.

It's tempting to leave it all to the last minute – don't! Many vaccines don't take effect until two weeks after you've been immunised, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received. This is mandatory for many African countries, including some in East Africa, that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry, but it's a good idea to carry it anyway, wherever you travel.

Travellers can register with the **International Association for Medical Advice to Travellers (IMAT; www.iamat.org)**. Its website can help travellers to find a doctor who has recognised training. Those heading off to very remote areas might like to do a first aid course (contact the Red Cross or St John Ambulance) or attend a remote medicine first aid course, such as that offered by the **Royal Geographical Society (www.wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk; prices vary according to courses chosen)**.

If you are bringing medications with you, carry them in their original containers, clearly labelled. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing all medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

How do you go about getting the best possible medical help? It's difficult to say – it really depends on the severity of your illness or injury and the availability of local help. If malaria is suspected, seek medical help as soon as possible or begin self-medicating if you are off the beaten track (see p643).

INSURANCE

Find out in advance whether your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or will reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures (in many countries doctors expect payment in cash). It's vital to ensure that your travel insurance will cover the emergency transport required to get you to a hospital in a major city, to better medical facilities elsewhere in the region, or all

the way home, by air and with a medical attendant if necessary. Not all insurance covers this, so check the contract carefully. If you need medical help, your insurance company might be able to help locate the nearest hospital or clinic, or you can ask at your hotel. In an emergency, contact your embassy or consulate.

Membership of the **African Medical and Research Foundation (Amref; www.amref.org)** provides an air evacuation service in medical emergencies that covers most of East Africa, as well as air ambulance transfers between medical facilities. Money paid by members for this service goes into providing grassroots medical assistance for local people (see p625 for more information).

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The **World Health Organization (www.who.int/en/)** recommends that all travellers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as for hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. The planning stage before travel is a great time to ensure that all routine vaccination cover is complete. The consequences of these diseases can be severe, and outbreaks of them do occur.

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)**, the following vaccinations are recommended for all parts of Africa, including East Africa: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, meningococcal meningitis, rabies and typhoid, and boosters for tetanus, diphtheria and measles. Yellow fever is required for Rwanda and recommended for elsewhere in the region, and the certificate is an entry requirement for many other countries (see p646).

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

It is a very good idea to carry a medical and first aid kit with you, to help yourself in the case of minor illness or injury. The following is a list of items you should consider packing.

- Acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin
- Acetazolamide (Diamox) for altitude sickness (prescription only)
- Adhesive or paper tape
- Antibiotics (prescription only), eg ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin) or norfloxacin (Utinor)
- Antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions (prescription only)

- Antidiarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- Antihistamines (for hayfever and allergic reactions)
- Anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- Antimalaria pills
- Bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- DEET-containing insect repellent for the skin
- Permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents, and bed nets
- Pocket knife
- Rehydration salts (oral)
- Steroid cream or hydrocortisone cream (for allergic rashes)
- Scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- Sterile needles, syringes and fluids if travelling to remote areas
- Sun block
- Thermometer
- Water purification tablets (iodine)

If you are travelling through a malarial area, particularly an area where falciparum malaria predominates (see p643), consider taking a self-diagnostic kit that can identify malaria in the blood from a finger prick.

INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the Internet. For further information, the **Lonely Planet website (www.lonelyplanet.com)** is a good place to start. The World Health Organization publishes a superb book, also available online for free, called **International Travel and Health (www.who.int/ith/)**, which is revised annually. Other websites of interest are **MD Travel Health (www.mdtravelhealth.com)**, which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country, and is updated daily, also at no cost; the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)**; and **Fit for Travel (www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk)**, which has up-to-date information and is user-friendly.

It's also a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available:

Australia www.dfat.gov.au/travel/

Canada <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/index.html>

UK www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdvice/ForTravellers/fs/en

USA www.cdc.gov/travel/

FURTHER READING

- *A Comprehensive Guide to Wilderness and Travel Medicine* by Eric A Weiss (1998)

- *Healthy Travel* by Jane Wilson-Howarth (1999)
- *Healthy Travel Africa* by Isabelle Young (2000)
- *How to Stay Healthy Abroad* by Richard Dawood (2002)
- *Travel in Health* by Graham Fry (1994)
- *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan (2004)

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots can form in the legs during flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. This formation of clots is known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT), and the longer the flight, the greater the risk. Although most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some might break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they could cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually – but not always – on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it can cause chest pain and breathing difficulty. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk around the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

If you're crossing more than five time zones you could suffer jet lag, resulting in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag try drinking plenty of fluids (nonalcoholic) and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep, etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first port of call for treating motion sickness. The main side effect of these drugs is some drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger (in the form of ginger tea, biscuits or crystallized ginger), which works like a charm for some people.

IN EAST AFRICA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Good, Western-style medical care is available in Nairobi (which is the main medical hub for the region and the main regional destination for medical evacuations), and to a lesser extent in Dar es Salaam, Kampala and other major cities. Elsewhere, reasonable to good care is available in larger towns, and in some mission stations, though availability is extremely patchy once off the beaten track. In general, private or mission-run clinics and hospitals are better equipped than government ones. If you fall ill in an unfamiliar area, ask staff at a top-end hotel or resident expatriates where the best nearby medical facilities are, and in an emergency contact your embassy. Most towns in the region have at least one clinic where you can get an inexpensive malaria test and, if necessary, treatment. With dental treatment, be aware that there is often an increased risk of hepatitis B and HIV transmission via poorly sterilised equipment.

Most drugs can be purchased over the counter in East Africa, without a prescription. However, there are often problems with ineffectiveness, if the drugs are counterfeit, for example, or if they have not been stored under the right conditions. The most common examples of counterfeit drugs are malaria tablets and expensive antibiotics, such as ciprofloxacin. Most drugs are available in capital cities, but remote villages will be lucky to have a couple of paracetamol tablets. It is strongly recommended that all drugs for chronic diseases be brought from home.

There is a high risk of contracting HIV from infected blood if you receive a blood transfusion in Africa. The **BloodCare Foundation** (www.bloodcare.org.uk) is a useful source of safe, screened blood, which can be transported to any part of the world within 24 hours.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

It's a formidable list, but a few precautions go a long way...

Cholera

Cholera is usually only a problem during natural or artificial disasters – such as war, floods or earthquakes – although small outbreaks also occur at other times. Travellers

are rarely affected. It is caused by a bacteria and spread via contaminated drinking water. The main symptom is profuse watery diarrhoea, which causes debilitation if fluids are not replaced quickly. An oral cholera vaccine is available in the USA, but it is not particularly effective. Most cases of cholera could be avoided by close attention to good drinking water and by avoiding potentially contaminated food. Treatment is by fluid replacement (orally or via a drip), but sometimes antibiotics are needed. Self-treatment is not advised.

Diphtheria

Found in all of East Africa, diphtheria is spread through close respiratory contact. It usually causes a temperature and a severe sore throat. Sometimes a membrane forms across the throat, and a tracheostomy is needed to prevent suffocation. Vaccination is recommended for those likely to be in close contact with the local population in infected areas and is more important for long stays than for short-term trips. The vaccine is given as an injection, alone or with tetanus, and lasts 10 years.

Filariasis

Tiny worms migrating in the lymphatic system cause filariasis. The bite from an infected mosquito spreads the infection. Symptoms include localised itching and swelling of the legs and/or genitalia. Treatment is available.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is spread through contaminated food (particularly shellfish) and water. It causes jaundice and, although it is rarely fatal, it can cause prolonged lethargy and delayed recovery. If you've had hepatitis A, you shouldn't drink alcohol for up to six months afterwards, but once you've recovered, there won't be any long-term problems. The first symptoms include dark urine and a yellow colour to the whites of the eyes. Sometimes a fever and abdominal pain might be present. Hepatitis A vaccine (Avaxim, VAQTA, Havrix) is given as an injection: a single dose will give protection for up to a year, and a booster after a year gives 10-year protection. Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccines can also be given as a single dose vaccine, hepatyrix or viatim.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is spread through infected blood, contaminated needles and sexual intercourse. It can also be spread from an infected mother to the baby during childbirth. It affects the liver, causing jaundice and occasionally liver failure. Most people recover completely, but some people might be chronic carriers of the virus, which could lead eventually to cirrhosis or liver cancer. Those visiting high-risk areas for long periods or those with increased social or occupational risk should be immunised. Many countries now routinely give hepatitis B as part of their routine childhood vaccination program. It is given singly or can be given at the same time as hepatitis A (hepatyrix).

A course will give protection for at least five years. It can be given over four weeks or six months.

HIV

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), is an enormous problem throughout East Africa. The virus is spread through infected blood and blood products, by sexual intercourse with an infected partner and from an infected mother to her baby during childbirth and breastfeeding. It can be spread through 'blood to blood' contacts, such as with contaminated instruments during medical, dental, acupuncture and other body-piercing procedures, and through sharing used intravenous needles. At present there is no cure; medication that might keep the disease under control is available, but these drugs are too expensive for the overwhelming majority of East Africans, and are not readily available for travellers either. If you think you might have been infected with HIV, a blood test is necessary; a three-month gap after exposure and before testing is required to allow antibodies to appear in the blood.

Malaria

One million children die annually from malaria in Africa. The risk of malarial transmission at altitudes higher than 2000m is rare. The disease is caused by a parasite in the bloodstream spread via the bite of the female Anopheles mosquito. There are several types of malaria, with falciparum malaria the most dangerous type and the predominant form in

Africa. Infection rates vary with season and climate, so check out the situation before departure. Unlike most other diseases regularly encountered by travellers, there is no vaccination against malaria (yet). However, several different drugs are used to prevent malaria, and new ones are in the pipeline. Up-to-date advice from a travel health clinic is essential as some medication is more suitable for some travellers than others. The pattern of drug-resistant malaria is changing rapidly, so what was advised several years ago might no longer be the case.

Malaria can present in several ways. The early stages include headaches, fevers, generalized aches and pains, and malaise, which could be mistaken for flu. Other symptoms can include abdominal pain, diarrhoea and a cough. Anyone who develops a fever in a malarial area should assume malarial infection until a blood test proves negative, even if you have been taking antimalarial medication. If not treated, the next stage could develop within 24 hours, particularly if *falciparum* malaria is the parasite: jaundice, then reduced consciousness and coma (also known as cerebral malaria) followed by death. Treatment in hospital is essential, and the death rate might still be as high as 10% even in the best intensive-care facilities.

Many travellers are under the impression that malaria is a mild illness, that treatment is always easy and successful, and that taking antimalarial drugs causes more illness through side effects than actually getting malaria. In Africa, this is unfortunately not true. Side effects of the medication depend on the drug being taken. Doxycycline can cause heartburn and indigestion; mefloquine (Larium) can cause anxiety attacks, insomnia and nightmares, and (rarely) severe psychiatric disorders; chloroquine can cause nausea and hair loss; and proguanil can cause mouth ulcers. These side effects are not universal, and can be minimized by taking medication correctly, eg with food. Also, some people should not take a particular antimalarial drug, eg people with epilepsy should avoid mefloquine, and doxycycline should not be taken by pregnant women or children younger than 12.

If you decide that you really do not wish to take antimalarial drugs, you must understand the risks, and be obsessive about avoiding mosquito bites. Use nets and insect

THE ANTIMALARIAL A TO D

A Awareness of the risk – no medication is totally effective, but protection of up to 95% is achievable with most drugs, as long as other measures have been taken.

B Bites – avoid them at all costs. Sleep in a screened room, use a mosquito spray or coils, sleep under a permethrin-impregnated net at night. Cover up at night with long trousers and long sleeves, preferably with permethrin-treated clothing. Apply appropriate repellent to all areas of exposed skin in the evenings.

C Chemical prevention – antimalarial drugs are usually needed in malarial areas. Expert advice is required, as resistance patterns can change and new drugs are always in development. Not all antimalarial drugs are suitable for everyone. Most antimalarial drugs need to be started at least a week in advance and continued for four weeks after the last possible exposure to malaria.

D Diagnosis – if you have a fever or flu-like illness within a year of travel to a malarial area, malaria is a possibility, and immediate medical attention is necessary.

repellent, and report any fever or flu-like symptoms to a doctor as soon as possible. Some people advocate homeopathic preparations against malaria, such as Demal200, but as yet there is no conclusive evidence that this is effective, and many homeopaths do not recommend their use.

People of all ages can contract malaria, and *falciparum* causes the most severe illness. Repeated infections may result eventually in a less serious illness. Malaria in pregnancy frequently results in miscarriage or premature labour. Adults who have survived childhood malaria have developed immunity and usually only develop mild cases of malaria; most Western travellers have no immunity at all. Immunity wanes after 18 months of non-exposure, so even if you have had malaria in the past and used to live in a malaria-prone area, you might no longer be immune.

If you are planning a journey through a malarial area such as much of East Africa, and particularly where *falciparum* malaria predominates, consider taking standby treatment. Emergency standby treatment should be seen as emergency treatment aimed at saving the patient's life, and not as routine

self-medication. It should be used only if you will be far from medical facilities (more than 24 hours away from medical help) and have been advised about the symptoms of malaria and how to use the medication. Medical advice should be sought as soon as possible to confirm whether the treatment has been successful. The type of standby treatment used will depend on local conditions, such as drug resistance, and on what antimalarial drugs were being used before standby treatment. The goal is to avoid contracting cerebral malaria, which affects the brain and central nervous system and can be fatal in 24 hours. As mentioned on p641, self-diagnostic kits, which can identify malaria in the blood from a finger prick, are also available in the West.

The risks from malaria to both mother and foetus during pregnancy are considerable. Unless good medical care can be guaranteed, travel throughout Africa when pregnant – particularly to malarial areas – should be discouraged unless essential.

Meningococcal Meningitis

Meningococcal infection is spread through close respiratory contact and is more likely in crowded situations, such as dormitories, buses and clubs. Infection is uncommon in travellers. Vaccination is particularly recommended for long stays and is especially important towards the end of the dry season (see p621). Symptoms include a fever, severe headache, neck stiffness and a red rash. Immediate medical treatment is necessary.

The ACWY vaccine is recommended for all travellers in sub-Saharan Africa. This vaccine is different from the meningococcal meningitis C vaccine given to children and adolescents in some countries; it is safe to be given both types of vaccine.

Onchocerciasis (River Blindness)

This is caused by the larvae of a tiny worm, which is spread by the bite of a small fly. The earliest sign of infection is intensely itchy, red, sore eyes. Travellers are rarely severely affected. Treatment in a specialised clinic is curative.

Poliomyelitis (Polio)

Generally spread through contaminated food and water. Vaccination is usually given in childhood and should be boosted every 10 years, either orally (a drop on the tongue) or

as an injection. Polio can be carried asymptotically (ie showing no symptoms) and can cause a transient fever. In rare cases it causes weakness or paralysis of one or more muscles, which may be permanent.

Rabies

Rabies is spread by receiving the bites or licks of an infected animal on broken skin. It is always fatal once the clinical symptoms start (which might be months after an infected bite), so post-bite vaccination should be given as soon as possible. Post-bite vaccination (whether or not you've been vaccinated before the bite) prevents the virus from spreading to the central nervous system. Animal handlers should be vaccinated, as should those travelling to remote areas where a reliable source of post-bite vaccine is not available. Three preventive injections are needed over a month. If you haven't been vaccinated you will need a course of five injections starting 24 hours or as soon as possible after the injury. If you have been vaccinated, you will need fewer post-bite injections, and have more time to seek medical help.

Rift Valley Fever

This fever is spread occasionally via mosquito bites. The symptoms are of a fever and flu-like illness; and the good news is, it's rarely fatal.

Schistosomiasis (Bilharzia)

This disease is spread by flukes (minute worms) that are carried by a species of freshwater snail. The flukes are carried inside the snail, which then sheds them into slow-moving or still water. The parasites penetrate human skin during swimming, and then migrate to the bladder or bowel. They are passed out via stool or urine and can contaminate fresh water, where the cycle starts again. Do not paddle or swim in any freshwater lakes or slow-running rivers anywhere in East Africa. There might be no symptoms. There might be a transient fever and rash, and advanced cases might have blood in the stool or in the urine. A blood test can detect antibodies if you might have been exposed, and treatment is then possible in specialist travel or infectious disease clinics. If not treated the infection can cause kidney failure or permanent bowel damage. It is not possible for you to infect others.

Trypanosomiasis (Sleeping Sickness)

Spread via the bite of the tsetse fly. It causes a headache, fever and eventually coma. There is an effective treatment.

Tuberculosis (TB)

TB is spread through close respiratory contact and occasionally through infected milk or milk products. BCG vaccination is recommended for those likely to be mixing closely with the local population, although it gives only moderate protection against TB. It is more important for long stays than for short-term visits. Inoculation with the BCG vaccine is not available in all countries, but it is given routinely to many children in developing nations. The vaccination causes a small permanent scar at the site of injection, and is usually given in a specialised chest clinic. It is a live vaccine and should not be given to pregnant women or immunocompromised individuals.

TB can be asymptomatic, only being picked up on a routine chest X-ray. Alternatively, it can cause a cough, weight loss or fever, months or even years after exposure.

Typhoid

This is spread through food or water contaminated by infected human faeces. The first symptom is usually a fever or a pink rash on the abdomen. Sometimes septicaemia (blood poisoning) can occur. A typhoid vaccine (typhim Vi, typherix) will give protection for three years. In some countries, the oral vaccine Vivotif is also available. Antibiotics are usually given as treatment, and death is rare unless septicaemia occurs.

Yellow Fever

Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Burundi no longer officially require you to carry a certificate of yellow fever vaccination unless you're arriving from an infected area (which includes from anywhere in East Africa). However, it's still sometimes asked for at some borders, and is a requirement in some neighbouring countries, including Rwanda. When trying to decide whether to get jabbed or not, it's also worth considering that the vaccine is recommended for most visitors to Africa by the Centers for Disease Control and prevention (www.cdc.gov). Also, there is always the possibility that a traveller without a legally required, up-to-date certificate

will be vaccinated and detained in isolation at the port of arrival for up to 10 days, or possibly even repatriated.

Yellow fever is spread by infected mosquitoes. Symptoms range from a flu-like illness to severe hepatitis (liver inflammation) jaundice and death. The yellow fever vaccination must be given at a designated clinic and is valid for 10 years. It is a live vaccine and must not be given to immunocompromised or pregnant travellers.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

Although it's not inevitable that you will get diarrhoea while travelling in East Africa, it's certainly very likely. Diarrhoea is the most common travel-related illness – figures suggest that at least half of all travellers to Africa will get diarrhoea at some stage. Sometimes dietary changes, such as increased spices or oils, are the cause. To help prevent diarrhoea, avoid tap water unless you're sure it's safe to drink (see p648). You should also only eat fresh fruits or vegetables if cooked or peeled, and be wary of dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Although freshly cooked food can often be a safe option, plates or serving utensils might be dirty, so you should be highly selective when eating food from street vendors (make sure that cooked food is piping hot all the way through). If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids – preferably lots of an oral rehydration solution containing water, and some salt and sugar. A few loose stools don't require treatment but, if you start having more than four or five stools a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug, such as ciprofloxacin or norfloxacin) and an anti-diarrhoeal agent (such as loperamide) if you are not within easy reach of a toilet. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

Amoebic Dysentery

Contracted by consuming contaminated food and water, amoebic dysentery causes blood and mucus in the faeces. It can be relatively mild and tends to come on gradually, but seek medical advice if you think you have the illness, as it won't clear up without treatment (which is with specific antibiotics).

Giardiasis

This, like amoebic dysentery, is also caused by ingesting contaminated food or water. The illness usually appears a week or more after you have been exposed to the offending parasite. Giardiasis might cause only a short-lived bout of typical travellers' diarrhoea, but it can also cause persistent diarrhoea. Ideally, seek medical advice if you suspect you have giardiasis, but if you are in a remote area you could start a course of antibiotics.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Altitude Sickness

The lack of oxygen at high altitudes (over 2500m) affects most people to some extent. Symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) usually develop in the first 24 hours at altitude but may be delayed up to three weeks. Mild symptoms are headache, lethargy, dizziness, difficulty sleeping and loss of appetite. Severe symptoms are breathlessness, a dry, irritative cough (followed by the production of pink, frothy sputum), severe headache, lack of coordination, confusion, vomiting, irrational behaviour, drowsiness and unconsciousness. There's no rule as to what is too high: AMS can be fatal at 3000m, but 3500m to 4500m is the usual range.

Treat mild symptoms by resting at the same altitude until recovered, usually a day or two. Paracetamol or aspirin can be taken for headaches. If symptoms persist or grow worse, however, immediate descent is necessary; even 500m can help. Drug treatments should never be used to avoid descent or to enable further ascent. Diamox (acetazolamide) reduces the headache of AMS and helps the body acclimatise to the lack of oxygen. It is only available on prescription.

To prevent acute mountain sickness:

- Ascend slowly – have frequent rest days, spending two to three nights at each rise of 1000m. Acclimatisation takes place gradually.
- Sleep at a lower altitude than the greatest height reached during the day if possible. Also, once above 3000m, care should be taken not to increase the sleeping altitude by more than 300m per day.
- Drink extra fluids. Monitor hydration by ensuring that urine is clear and plentiful.
- Eat light, high-carbohydrate meals for more energy.
- Avoid alcohol, sedatives and tobacco.

Heat Exhaustion

This condition occurs following heavy sweating and excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt, and is particularly common in hot climates when taking unaccustomed exercise before full acclimatisation. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. Self-treatment requires fluid replacement with water and/or fruit juice, and cooling by cold water and fans. Treatment of the salt-loss component consists of consuming salty fluids, as in soup, and adding a little more table salt to foods than usual.

Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion is a precursor to the much more serious condition of heatstroke. In this case there is damage to the sweating mechanism, with an excessive rise in body temperature; irrational and hyperactive behaviour; and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is ideal. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement is usually also required by intravenous drip.

Insect Bites & Stings

Mosquitoes might not always carry malaria or dengue fever, but they (and other insects) can cause irritation and infected bites. To avoid these, take the same precautions as you would for avoiding malaria (see p643). Use DEET-based insect repellents. Excellent clothing treatments are also available, and mosquitos that land on the treated clothing will die.

Bees and wasp stings cause real problems only to those who have a severe allergy to the stings (anaphylaxis). If you are one of these people, carry an 'epipen' – an adrenaline (epinephrine) injection, which you can give yourself. This could save your life.

Scorpions are frequently found in arid or dry climates. They can cause a painful bite that is sometimes life-threatening. If bitten by a scorpion, take a painkiller. Medical treatment should be sought if collapse occurs.

Bed bugs are often found in hostels and cheap hotels. They lead to very itchy, lumpy bites. Spraying the mattress with crawling insect killer after changing bedding will get rid of them.

Scabies is also frequently found in cheap accommodation. These tiny mites live in the skin, particularly between the fingers. They cause an intensely itchy rash. The itch is easily treated with malathion and permethrin lotion from a pharmacy; other members of the household also need treatment to avoid spreading scabies, even if they do not show any symptoms.

Snake Bites

Avoid getting bitten! Do not walk barefoot, or stick your hand into holes or cracks. However, 50% of those bitten by venomous snakes are not actually injected with poison (envenomed). If you are bitten by a snake, do not panic. Immobilise the bitten limb with a splint (such as a stick) and apply a bandage over the site, with firm pressure – similar to bandaging a sprain. Do not apply a tourniquet, or cut or suck the bite. Get medical help as soon as possible so antivenom can be given if needed.

Water

Never drink tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (such as with iodine tablets). Never drink from streams, rivers and lakes. It's also best to avoid drinking from pumps and wells – some do bring pure water to the surface, but the presence of animals can still contaminate supplies. When buying bottled water, check to be sure the bottles are properly sealed, and haven't just been refilled with ordinary tap water.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

According to some estimates, over 70% of East Africans rely in part or in whole on traditional medicine, and close to two-thirds of the population have traditional healers as their first point of contact in the case of illness. The traditional healer holds a revered position in many communities throughout

the region, and traditional medicinal products are widely available in local markets.

In part, the heavy reliance on traditional medicine is because of the high costs of conventional Western-style medicine, because of prevailing cultural attitudes and beliefs, or simply because it sometimes works. Often, though, it's because there is no other choice. In some parts of Tanzania, it is estimated that while there is only one medical doctor to 33,000 people, there is a traditional healer for approximately every 150 people. While the ratio is better in some parts of the region (and worse in others), hospitals and health clinics are concentrated in urban centres, and many are limited in their effectiveness by insufficient resources, and chronic shortages of equipment and medicine.

Although some traditional remedies seem to work on malaria, sickle cell anaemia, high blood pressure and some AIDS symptoms, most healers learn their art by apprenticeship, so education (and consequently application of knowledge) is inconsistent and unregulated.

Rather than attempting to stamp out traditional practices, or simply pretend they aren't happening, a positive first step taken by some East African countries is the regulation of traditional medicine by creating healers' associations and offering courses on such topics as sanitary practices. On a broader scale, the Organisation of African Unity has declared 2001 to 2010 the 'Decade of Traditional Medicine' across the continent.

Under any scenario, it remains unlikely in the short term that even a basic level of conventional Western-style medicine will be made available to all the people of East Africa, even though the cost of doing so is less than the annual military budget of some Western countries. Traditional medicine, on the other hand, will almost certainly continue to be widely practised throughout the region.