

Kenya Country Packet

Updated January 2017



Maranatha in Kenya

Maranatha's first volunteer projects in Africa took place in 2008, during a major construction effort in Mozambique. Since then, Maranatha has expanded to several other African countries including Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola and Ghana.

In 2016, Maranatha kicked off a new effort in Kenya. There are more than 800,000 Seventh-day Adventists in Kenya, and many congregations are without a place of worship, schools are in need of new facilities, and villages without a source of clean water. Adventist leaders contacted Maranatha for assistance, and this year, Maranatha hopes to construct 15 school classrooms and 70 churches, in addition to water wells.

Volunteer Opportunities

In Kenya, Maranatha is focusing on the construction of One-Day School classrooms and churches with brick walls. Volunteer projects typically combine construction with community outreach in the form of medical clinics and children's programs. However, the details of each project vary, depending on the volunteers, availability of opportunities, and needs of the local church.

Project Funding

The local church or school is responsible for providing the land and the labor to excavate the site. Maranatha has agreed to raise funds for each structure we provide in Kenya. These funds are provided by donations from individuals, churches and school groups, and businesses. If you or your team is interested in helping to sponsor a church or school in Kenya, please speak with Maranatha for more information.

Kenya Overview

Kenya is located in eastern Africa; it's westernmost point lies at Lake Victoria, the largest lake in Africa, and it's easternmost point lies at the coastline of the Indian Ocean. Its fascinating culture and diversity in wildlife make it one of Africa's most popular tourist destinations.

Some of the original inhabitants of the region were herders who took care of their animals and farmed the region. The Swahili people built the city of Mombassa into a major port city and established trade links that reached into Arabia, Persia, and India. The area was largely colonized by England by way of the Imperial British East Africa Company in 1888, and in 1920, the colony was renamed Kenya after the highest mountain in the region. In the early part of the 20th century, European farmers settled the highlands and became wealthy by producing coffee and tea. Kenya eventually received its independence in 1964. Visitors can still see traces of the many different local and colonial influences in the customs, dress, and architecture.

Kenya has the largest, most advanced economy in all of East and Central Africa. Agriculture exports remain an important part of the country's economy, and Kenya continues to rely heavily on coffee and tea production. However, in recent years, the economy has seen expansion into areas such as tourism, telecommunications, and high education. Unfortunately, in the rural areas of the country, poverty, unemployment, and access to health services and clean water continue to be a problem.

Culture

Kenya has a very diverse population, and there are an estimated 47 different communities including the Bantu, Nilote, and Swahili groups. The Maasai culture is also well known to tourists, even though they constitute a relatively small part of Kenya's population. Each one of these groups has their own rich culture and way of life including elaborate and colorful dress, jewelry, dances, and music. Kenya's various ethnic groups typically speak their mother language, and the two official languages, English and Kiswahili, are used within commerce, schooling, and government.

The British colonization has also had a large effect on the culture of the country. The influence can be seen especially in the popularity of British sports such as cricket, soccer, and rugby as well as their daily meals, which are highlighted with a morning and afternoon tea.

Geography and Climate

Nairobi, the country's capital and largest city, is the economic center of the country. Its bustling streets never see an end to constant traffic and movement throughout the city. However, outside the urban center, the majority of Kenya is much more rural. The highlands of the country support some of the most successful agricultural productions in all of Africa. The highlands, which are bisected by the Great Rift Valley, are also home of the highest peak of the country, Mount Kenya.

Kenya has a warm and humid climate near the India Ocean coastline, but inland, the climate is cooler and is composed primarily of grasslands and semi-arid desert landscapes. In fact, snow is found year-round on the peaks of Mount Kenya. The hottest months are December through March. The heaviest rains are during March through June. Because the temperatures and climate vary so much throughout the country, it is best to look at a forecast for your specific project location or the nearest large city.

Cultural Sensitivity

Maranatha's volunteer experience includes meeting new people and learning how to serve them. Every culture has a unique view of the world. It is important to enter another culture with humility, respect, and understanding of their traditions. In Kenya, you may observe something that is very different from what you're accustomed to. It does not make it wrong—just different. Be respectful and consider their perspective when it comes to local dress, jewelry, dancing, and traditions.

Planning a Project

Partnering with Maranatha

There are many reasons to plan a project with Maranatha. After nearly 50 years of laser-focus on construction-oriented mission projects, the organization has this process mastered.

- **Maranatha has a great track record.** From local church members to church officials to volunteer team leaders—everyone recognizes that Maranatha is reliable and gets things done. We know that the details are important. Maranatha will always have your worksite prepared and support you in creating a successful project for your team.

Facts & Figures

Capital:	Nairobi
Nationality:	Kenyan
Population:	45.9 Million
Poverty:	43.4%
Unemployment:	40%
Languages:	Kiswahili, English, indigenous languages
Education:	78% literacy
Life Expectancy:	63.7 years old
Work Force:	18.2 Million
HIV/AIDS:	5.3% of population
Religion:	Christian 83%, Muslim 11%
Economy:	Industry: agriculture, tourism, consumer goods; Exports: tea, coffee, petroleum, fish
Currency:	Kenyan Shilling
Time Zone:	East Africa UTC/GMT+3 hours

- **Maranatha provides local support.** It is a huge help to have someone at your location, before your arrival, to scout out details and make arrangements for your group. Once your group arrives our volunteer support person will be around to help as a translator and navigate the inevitable bumps in the road.
- **Maranatha provides quality construction support.** You don't have to be a construction expert to build a project with Maranatha. Our qualified crew will prep the project site before you arrive, and they will stay to teach and assist the volunteers throughout the project. You won't just build a church or school—you will do it right!
- **Maranatha office support is available as you plan.** Maranatha has a group project specialist dedicated to answer your questions and provide resources so you can effectively plan your project and work with your group members.
- **Maranatha is an independent organization but we work hand-in-hand with church leadership around the world.** Every Maranatha project in the Kenya has been selected by the local Adventist conference and approved by the division as a priority for growth. That means that your project will have the full support of the larger church.

Accommodations

Most leaders of Maranatha projects in Kenya choose to have the group stay in a hotel. While there are many places with varying comfort and price levels, you should expect simple accommodations during the project.

Excursion Options

Kenya is full of great options for a cultural experience to complement your mission experience. Maranatha's projects will most likely begin and end in Nairobi.

To find the best excursion for your trip, try searching online. Look for peer ratings on various activities through sites like Trip Advisor. Guidebooks published by Lonely Planet or Frommer's are also good places to start. Maranatha has a few recommended excursions or activities that other groups have done in the past. Be sure to ask what is the best option for your group in the area where you will be working.

Attractions

Safaris | The biggest attraction in Kenya are the game parks. If you're interested in seeing the "Big Five" (lion, leopard, buffalo, rhinoceros, and elephant), you'll want to be sure to make time to visit one of Kenya's many national parks and game reserves. The biggest, and probably the best option for your group, is the Masai Mara. This park borders Tanzania's Serengeti National Park and is home to the Big Five as well as a significant population of other wild animals, reptiles, and birds. But there are several other parks in other parts of the country, such as Lake Nakuru, Samburu, Tsavo, and Amboseli National Parks. If you're looking for a shorter excursion before flying home, Nairobi National Park is very close to the city but still has a wide variety of animals.

Maasai Villages | The Maasai are semi-nomadic people groups that inhabit southern Kenya. They are some of the most well known local populations due to their location near several game parks and their distinctive customs and dress. They are known for wearing bright red, creating intricate jewelry, jumping and dancing, hunting lions, and being excellent cattle herders. Many of the groups have preserved their culture and opened their villages for tourists to get a taste of their lifestyle.

Mombassa | Kenya's second largest city and biggest port is a perfect place to see a little more of Kenya's colonial past. There are several nice beaches as well as colonial towns, forts, souvenir shops, and ancient Swahili dwellings.

Nairobi Giraffe Center | The Giraffe Center is located just outside of Nairobi and was established in order to protect the endangered Rothschild giraffe. Learn more about these majestic animals and feed the giraffe residents from a raised observation platform.

Foreign Cash and Money Exchange

Kenya uses the Kenyan Shilling, and it has an exchange rate of approximately 101 Shillings to \$1 USD (July 2018), depending on where you make the exchange. Any cash you bring should be in new, unmarked U.S. dollar bills.

You can exchange money in the airport at an exchange booth or outside the airport at a bank. Often times your group leader or project coordinator will exchange money at a simple, rounded rate.

ATMs will allow you to withdraw Shillings directly and will probably give you the best exchange rate. There are ATMs in the airport, but they can be hard to find and unreliable outside the airport.

Credit/Debit Cards

While some establishments accept credit and debit cards, it might be easier to use cash while traveling through the country. If you do use a credit or debit card, expect a 5% - 12% surcharge for international use. Be careful when using your credit card in public; never let it out of your sight. It is wise to let your credit card company know in advance the dates you will be in Kenya so they don't block your card when you use it in a foreign country.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are not widely accepted, and commissions can be high.

Electricity

The standard current in Kenya is 220 volt AC. This means you will need to bring a voltage converter in addition to a plug adapter in order for you to use any electronic devices safely (this includes hair dryer, shaver, and battery chargers). Travel voltage converters can be purchased at stores like Walmart or Target for about \$10.



The standard outlets have two horizontal slots on the bottom and one vertical slot on top (Type G). Plug adapters can also be found at stores like Walmart or Target. Electrical surges and outages can be common. You should use a surge protector for expensive appliances and computers.

Laundry

Most cities and large towns have full service laundromats. Many hotels also provide laundry service but often charge per item of clothing, which adds up pretty fast. You can also choose to do your laundry by hand at no additional cost.

Communication

Cell phone service is available in Nairobi and in larger cities throughout the country, but rural areas often experience limited service. Local cell phones can be purchased for a relatively affordable price, and you can reload minutes to call locally and internationally for reasonable rates. You can also buy a SIM card for your unlocked device. If you choose to use your own phone service, check international rates and service areas since international roaming and data charges can be very expensive.

To call Kenya from the U.S., dial the U.S. exit code (011), then the Kenyan country code of 254, then the local phone number. For example, 011 (254) (local number).

To call the U.S. from Kenya, dial 001, then the area code, and then the local number. For example, to call the Maranatha office you would dial 001 (916) 774-7700.

You can also communicate with loved ones at home through free smart phone and computer apps such as WhatsApp, Viber, FaceTime, and Skype. Wi-Fi is available at hotels and restaurants throughout the country and Internet cafes are also popular.

Time Zone

Kenya is located in the East Africa Time Zone UTC+3:00. When the United States is on Daylight Savings Time, Kenya is ten hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Savings Time and seven hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Savings Time. When the United States is on Standard Time, Kenya is eleven hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time and eight hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

Restrooms

Public restrooms are few and far between in Kenya, so you should take breaks at your hotel or restaurants. Western-style flush toilets are common in tourist areas and in hotels, but in more rural areas you might find outhouses that do not flush.

Weights & Measures

Kenya officially uses the metric system.

Travel

Airports

The main airport is the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport located in the capital city of Nairobi (airport code NBO). A variety of direct flights connect to the Nairobi airport through hubs in the Europe and other African countries.

Most likely you will use this airport for your Maranatha project; however, there are also airports in cities throughout the country. For your trip, you may want to coordinate an in-country flight to an airport closer to your project location. Be sure to talk to Maranatha if you have any questions when booking your tickets.

Entry and Exit Requirements

Passport | All U.S. and Canadian citizens must present a passport valid for at least six months from your scheduled return date. If you do not have a passport, U.S. citizens can apply at any U.S. post office or online at <http://travel.state.gov>. Canadian citizens can apply online at www.passport.gc.ca. It can take up to two months to complete the entire process; plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to receive your passport. You can expedite the process for an additional fee. Passport photos can be taken at the post office, FedEx office, Costco, or Walgreens.

Entrance Requirements

- **Passport Valid for 6 months from return**
- **Tourist Visa**

Tourist Visa | All Maranatha volunteers traveling to Kenya must have a tourist visa in order to enter the country. Recently the Kenyan government has opened up the availability to get your visa upon arrival at the Nairobi airport. However, to reduce travel stress and make your arrival process faster, Maranatha recommends that you go ahead and apply for your visa before you travel since it is an easy online process. Maranatha provides a visa procedure packet and an itinerary for you to follow when completing your paperwork, but it is your responsibility to correctly complete the process and receive your visa. The process is completed online, and you can apply for a single-entry visa that is good for 90 days in Kenya. You should apply a minimum of two weeks before the trip to ensure that you receive it on time. There is no visa requirement for minors under the age of 16 traveling with a guardian.

Citizens of other countries should consult the Kenyan embassy or consulate in your home country for entrance requirements.

For additional information regarding U.S. entrance procedures in Kenya visit: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Medical Entrance Requirements

Although a Yellow Fever immunization is not required to enter Kenya, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the vaccine. Evidence of this immunization may be requested when you enter the country. Maranatha recommends that you carry your Yellow Fever verification with you while you travel.

Immigration and Customs

On the airplane to Kenya, you will receive entrance forms that need to be filled out for processing upon arrival at the airport. These forms will ask for your name (use the name on your passport), passport number, flight number, address, and phone number for where you will be staying in Kenya.

After you exit the plane, you will follow the signs to Immigration. You will need to present your entrance forms, passport, and visa paperwork. They may ask you a couple questions regarding your trip to Kenya. Make sure you say that you are a tourist. If you say you are coming to “work” on a Maranatha trip, it can cause confusion; they may believe you need a work or business visa for your travel in the country. At immigration, they may stamp your passport or give you a slip of paper. Make sure you keep whatever they give to you with your passport for the duration of your time in Kenya.

After passing through immigration, head to the baggage claim, gather your bags, and go through customs. They may put your bags through an x-ray, do a randomly selected bag check, or manually search your bag. Don't worry about this process as they are primarily looking for fruits, vegetables, animals, and drugs. After passing through customs, proceed to the arrivals area of the airport where you can meet up with the rest of the group or continue on to your domestic flight.

In-Country Transportation in Kenya

Many international rental companies have a presence in Kenya. You can reserve and pick up rental cars, trucks, and vans at the Nairobi airport through rental agencies such as Avis, Expedia, Budget, Hertz, and Alamo.

The roads around major cities in Kenya are usually good, but take care with merging traffic and watch for potholes. Before driving, familiarize yourself with local laws and traffic norms. Roads between smaller towns are not usually paved and can be more dangerous. It is not recommended to drive at night.

Taxis are relatively cheap, but some can be unreliable and unsafe. We recommend that when traveling by taxi in large cities, you look for “tourist taxis” outside hotels and the airport. They can be a little more expensive, but they will respect international driving standards better. If the taxi does not have a meter, make sure you agree on the fare before entering the taxi and request that the driver does not pick up additional passengers during the trip.

If you are leading a group project with Maranatha, we can help your group reserve a private school bus, coaster bus, or tourist coach for your transportation needs. On Open Team projects, your transportation will be provided.

Traveling with Minors

Minors under the age of 18 are welcome to join projects to Kenya. Maranatha requires that at least one adult travel with every three minors, ages 14-17, and that an adult travel with every minor, ages 13 and under. Minors traveling without one or both legal guardians must carry a notarized consent form. You can find this form and complete instructions on the Maranatha website, under Volunteer Opportunities and Resources.

Health, Safety, and Security

For more detailed health guidelines for international travel, see our international traveler's guide.

Vaccines and Medications

The only vaccine required by Maranatha is a current tetanus vaccine. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend many other vaccines such as hepatitis A and B, typhoid, Yellow Fever, and an oral antimalarial drug other than Chloroquine. For travel between December and June, the CDC also recommends a meningococcal immunization.

More information is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/>. Maranatha recommends that you schedule a consultation with a travel clinic doctor, prior to travel, to talk about medical precautions for your trip to Kenya.

Malaria, Yellow Fever, and Mosquitos

Malaria and Yellow Fever are both life-threatening diseases, transmitted primarily by mosquitos. Malaria transmission is known to take place throughout the entire county and Yellow Fever is present in all areas except for the coastline. Maranatha suggests you speak with a medical professional regarding malaria and Yellow Fever prevention options.

Malaria is prevented through several different oral medications. Each has different side effects and dosages, so speak with a travel clinic doctor before making a decision on whether to take a certain medication. When considering preventative medications for malaria, keep in mind that Chloroquine is NOT effective in Kenya. The malaria strain present in the country is considered to be Chloroquine-resistant. Yellow Fever is typically prevented by a vaccination.

Mosquitos and other flying insects can also carry a variety of others diseases. Personal precautions are strongly recommended to lower the risk of being bitten. Bring a bug repellent with a 30%-50% concentration of DEET. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and closed-toe footwear when possible. Avoid areas of standing water, and do not spend a lot of time outside during dusk and dawn.

Preventative Health

In general, preventative measures are the best way to avoid becoming ill during your time in Kenya. Food should be properly washed and cooked. Use only purified water for drinking and brushing your teeth, and avoid ice cubes at restaurants. Wash your hands regularly. Wear sunscreen and mosquito repellent while outdoors.

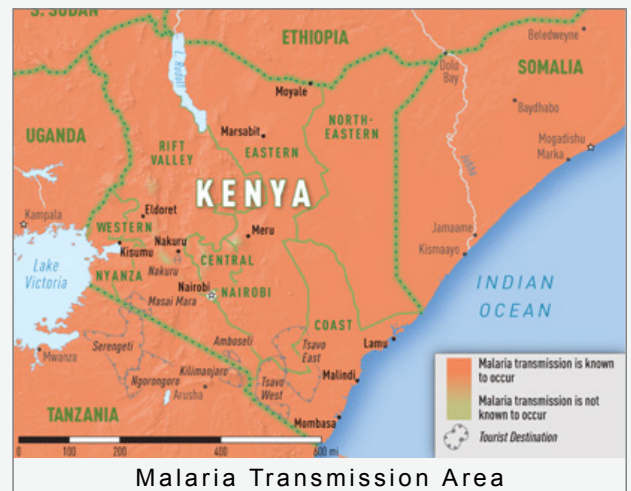
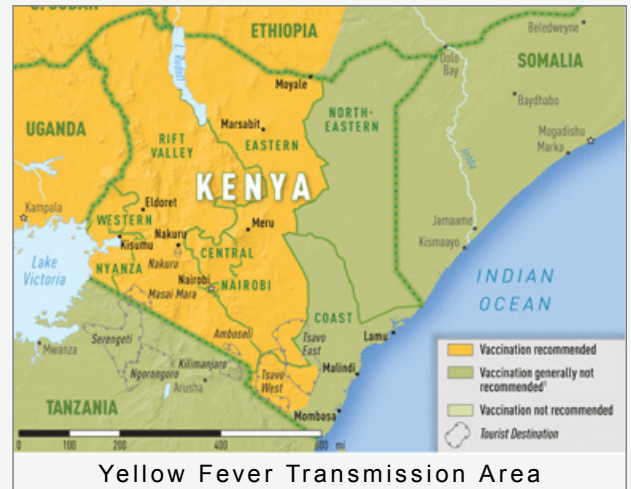
Medical Care in Kenya

Most large cities in Kenya have fairly modern clinics and hospitals. In general, private clinics are safer and cleaner than public hospitals. There are several Adventist run pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals located throughout the country. Maranatha will have identified several medical care locations near the project locations that we believe are safe for our volunteers. If you are leading a group to Kenya, be sure to ask Maranatha project support to show you the clinic location closest to your housing and work sites.

Travel Safety

Maranatha will not knowingly send volunteers to an area that is of elevated risk. We consistently monitor security alerts from the areas where we are working, and we consciously avoid high-risk regions. However, it is important for you to take responsibility for your own personal safety while traveling. Here are some ways you can start. For a more detailed list of tips and Maranatha insurance information, be sure to read our International Traveler's Guide. While we do take precautions, there is nothing we can do to guarantee safety. We can only place our trust in God's hands.

- Avoid traveling at night or alone.
- Dress conservatively and keep a low profile.
- Avoid marginal areas of cities, alleyways, and crowds of people.
- Use caution if you are approached on the street by strangers, including vendors.
- Leave valuables, both expensive and sentimental, at home.



- Don't leave your personal belongings unattended, especially in open sight. Consider using a money belt or concealed pouch for passports, credit cards, and cash. Keep your purse or bag in front of you, held with a tight grip.
- **US Department of State:** Register your travel with the U.S. Department of State by enrolling with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. The U.S. government will then contact you in case of an emergency, natural disaster, or civil unrest. They can also be a point of contact for family emergencies. You can also check for security updates prior to your departure.
- **Travel Guard:** The AIG accident insurance provided to Maranatha volunteers provides access to security updates and other resources. You can access this resource by using the policy number provided to you in your information packet or by a Maranatha representative once your volunteer group is confirmed.

Maranatha Insurance

Maranatha mission projects are construction projects where people can get hurt. Accident insurance is essential. It is not possible for Maranatha to analyze everyone's insurance policy to see whether it is current and the coverage is in effect at the location of the mission project. For that reason, all volunteers will be covered by accident insurance, coordinated by Maranatha, from the time they arrive at the project until their departure. This is a secondary policy, which means all claims will first be processed through your primary policy. This policy covers accidents only and does not include illnesses or other medical coverage. For more information about project insurance, contact Maranatha.

Communication

Promoting Your Maranatha Trip

You may contact Maranatha's marketing department for materials to help you promote your trip to Kenya. There are DVDs and printed materials available for your convenience. Contact Maranatha for more details.

Also, when discussing this mission trip with your team and while promoting it to your church or school, please be sure to mention that you are partnering with Maranatha! We hope that you will help to spread the word about our mission to spread the Gospel through construction.

Contact Information

United States Embassy:
 United Nations Avenue
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Canadian Consulate:
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