

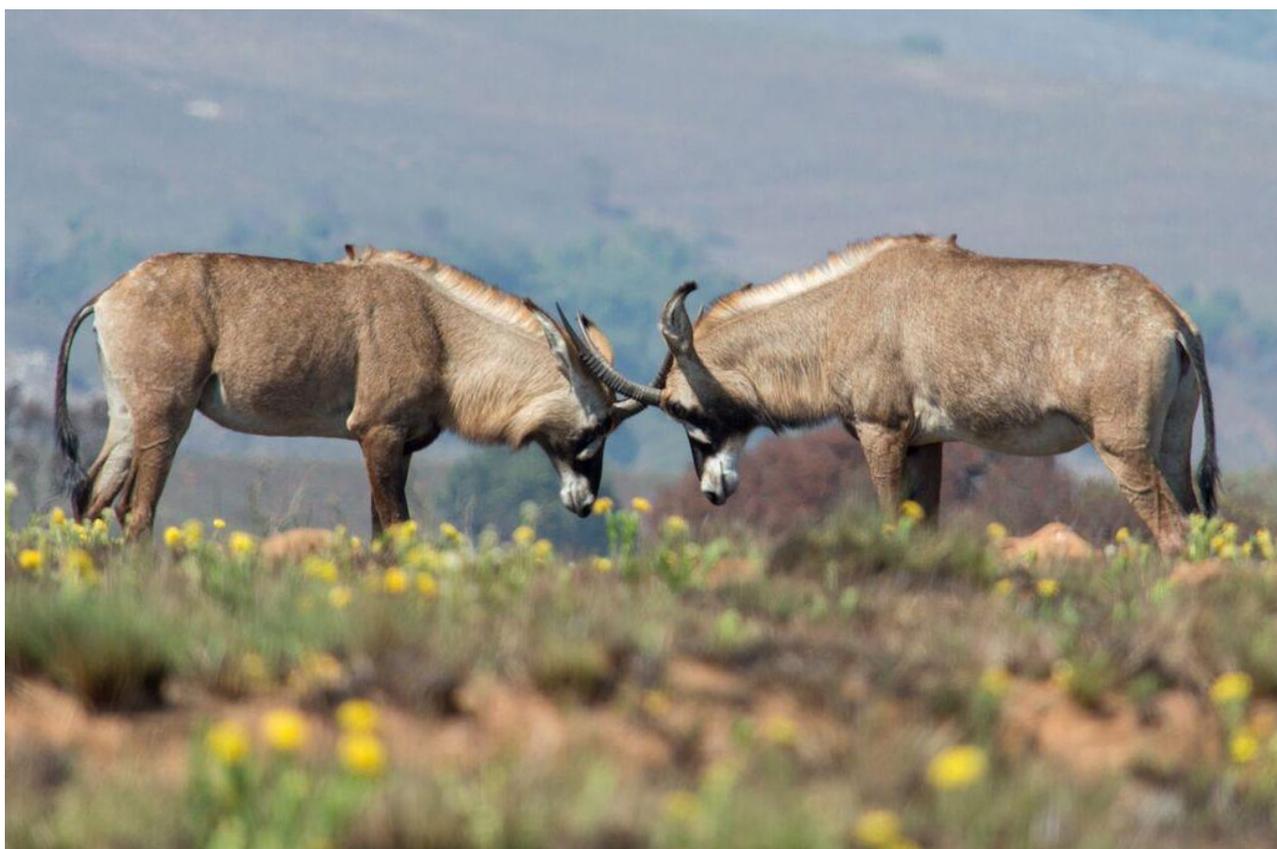


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Tour Notes

Best of Malawi and Zambia

Tour Duration – 15 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●○○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●●●

Tour Pace

Moderate

Tour Highlights

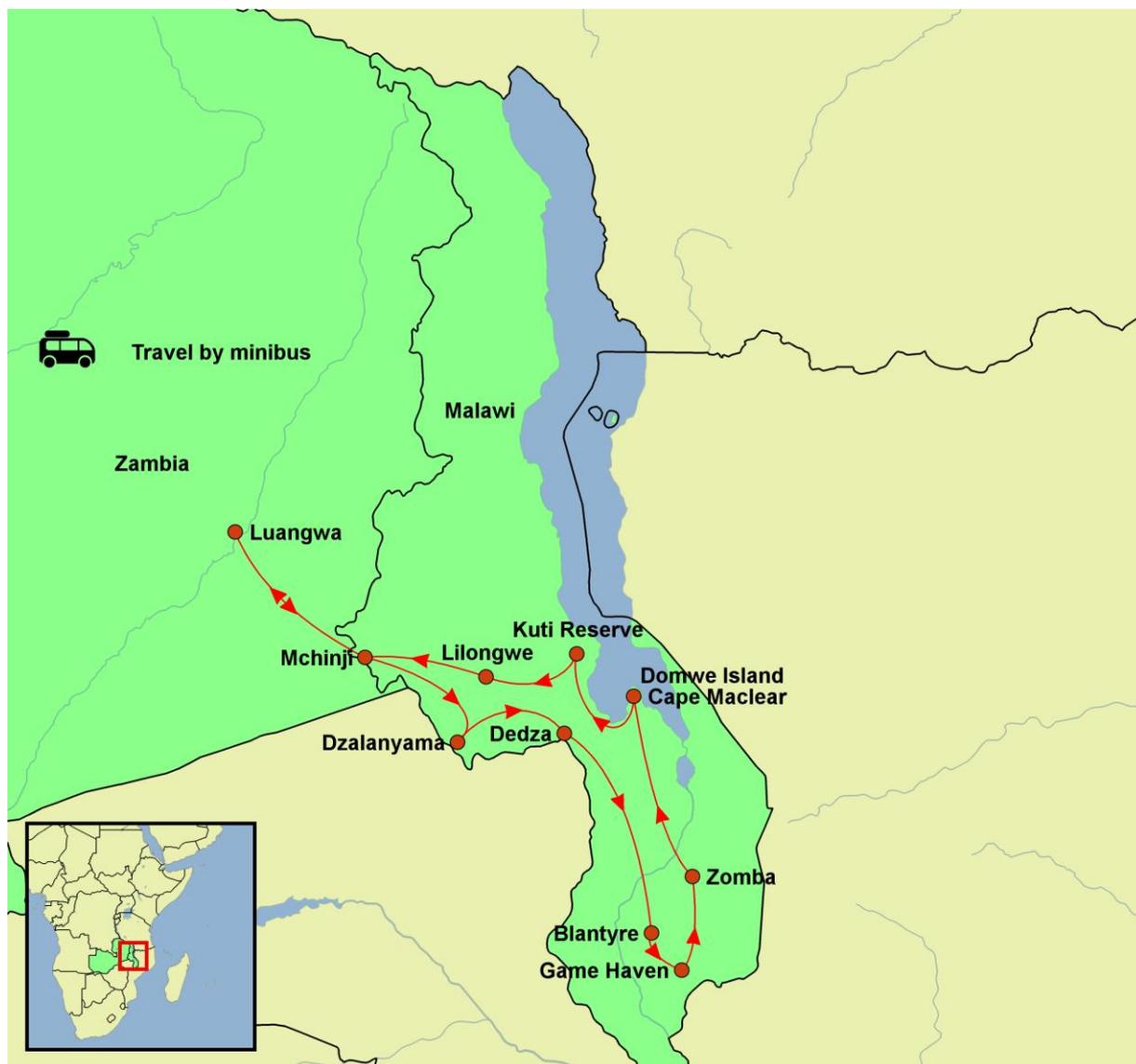
- ✓ A well balanced, all round tour, ideal for the first-time visitor
- ✓ Game viewing - in search of big game in one of Africa's most unspoilt and off-the-beaten-track destinations
- ✓ A tour with strong community involvement and interaction
- ✓ Optional hiking
- ✓ Lake Malawi - take an optional activity or relax on the shores of the last of the Great Rift Valley Lakes





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Tour Map Best of Malawi and Zambia



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of lodge, chalets and tented camps
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum of 12 (*you may be joined by travellers from companies other than Undiscovered Destinations*)
Start Point: Lilongwe – please arrive before 15:00 on Day 1
End Point: Lilongwe – you can depart any time from 13:00 on Day 15
Transport: Minibus and safari vehicles
Countries Visited: Malawi and Zambia



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Best of Malawi and Zambia

This tour combines many of Malawi's unique and attractive areas and the strong community involvement and interaction is a key aspect of the tour. Game viewing in South Luangwa National Park, Zambia, one of Africa's best National Parks is an added attraction. There are opportunities for walking and hiking for more active travellers, and this is a well-balanced tour, suitable for families and individuals alike.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

[Malawi] Day 1: Join the tour in Lilongwe

Arrive in Lilongwe where you will be met and transferred from the airport to the lodge. Your guide will meet everyone at the lodge for introductions, and a tour briefing at 18:00, after which dinner will be served. Overnight at Mafumu Lodge or similar. (D)

[Zambia] Day 2: Luangwa Valley (270 kms, approx. 6 hrs total driving time)

Depart Lilongwe and travel on to Mchinji, where we complete immigration formalities and continue into Zambia. From the border it is another 2.5hrs to Luangwa Valley - Mfuwe sector. A picnic lunch is enjoyed en route and we expect to reach our lodge in the mid-afternoon. We use one of 3 lodges in Luangwa, namely, Marula Lodge, Wildlife Camp or Thornicroft Lodge - all lodges are of a similar standard and offer a good 2 star experience. Each chalet is en-suite with comfortable beds, mattresses and bedding ensuring you have the best nights rest possible, whilst being safely tucked inside your large walk in mosquito net. The restaurants serve good wholesome meals, whilst tea and coffee is available throughout the day. The bar serves a selection of drinks. and you can enjoy the swimming pool. Game drives are undertaken in specially modified 4X4 open safari vehicles led by a qualified guide with an intimate knowledge of the park and its fauna and flora. Overnight at Marula Lodge, Wildlife Camp or Thornicroft Lodge. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

Day 3: Luangwa Valley

Morning and afternoon game drives. All lodges have open game drive vehicles, en suite accommodation, good food and a pool to relax by during the midday break. Optional game walks can be arranged locally. Overnight at Marula Lodge, Wildlife Camp or Thornicroft Lodge. (BLD)

Day 4: Luangwa Valley

Morning and afternoon game drives. At midday pay a visit to a local project or to see some of the textiles produced by local tribespeople. Overnight at Marula Lodge, Wildlife Camp or Thornicroft Lodge. (BLD)





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Day 5: Luangwa Valley

Morning and afternoon game drives. Optional game walks can be arranged locally. Overnight Marula Lodge, Wildlife Camp or Thornicroft Lodge. (BLD)

[Malawi] Day 6: Dzalanyama Forest (230 kms, approx. 5 hrs total driving time)

After breakfast, depart for Dzalanyama Forest. We turn off and head South East before Lilongwe and drive towards Mozambique. Arrival is mid-afternoon. After checking into our chalets, a short walk into the surrounding forest and up Mtsongololo mountain is offered. The track takes us through the endemic forests where there is a profusion of miombo birdlife. Return back to the lodge as it gets dark. Please note that the number of en-suite rooms is limited and you may be allocated a room with shared bathroom facilities. Overnight at Forest House, Dzalanyama Forest or similar. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

Day 7: Dzalanyama Forest

Today is a community visit day. We visit the community that live just outside the reserve - you have the opportunity to walk through the village, visit a local school, meet the locals and learn how to pound maize, we will eat some local food, drink some local brews and get a glimpse life as a rural Malawian. The Malawian people are known for their friendliness and this will certainly reaffirm this view - this visit is non-staged and as authentic as living in the country is. Return to the house in the evening for sundowners followed by dinner. Overnight at Forest House, Dzalanyama Forest. (BLD)

Day 8: Dzalanyama Forest at leisure

A leisurely start to the day gives time to explore the area. Numerous trails are available from the lodge to the surrounding forest area. Walks can be as strenuous or easy as you like, or if you prefer, you can relax by the stream or on your verandah. Overnight at Forest House, Dzalanyama Forest. (BLD)

Day 9: Thyolo - Game Haven Lodge (360 kms, approx. 6 hrs total driving time)

Breakfast then it's a scenic drive through Malawi, along the Mozambique border and through the commercial capital of Malawi; Blantyre, until we reach our accommodation. There are a number of interesting stops en-route, including viewpoints and roadside market stalls. Game Haven is a serene, beautiful game park and the lodge is set in the indigenous forests and grasslands of the Shire Highlands of Southern Malawi. Experience exceptional wildlife viewing that includes kudu, roan, eland, sable, giraffe, zebra, and prolific birdlife. As the sun sets, enjoy a drink in the Victorian styled bar followed by dinner. Overnight at Game Haven Lodge, Malawi. (BLD)

Day 10: Game Haven Lodge

After breakfast we explore the area. A highlight will be a walking tour of the world recognized Satemwa Tea estate, followed by a tea tasting workshop. They produce a variety of white, black, gold and flavoured teas. After the tasting, return to the luxurious Huntingdon House where we will have a superb lunch. After lunch it's a short drive and walk up into the estate to Thyolo Mountain - a wonderful site with excellent views of the lower Shire Valley. For keen birders the forest surrounding this picnic site is home to the rare and endemic Thyolo Alethe. Mid-afternoon, return to Game Haven to relax around the pool, or go walking, mountain biking or even enjoy a round of golf. Overnight at Game Haven Lodge, Malawi. (BLD)

Day 11: Zomba – Lake Malawi - Cape Maclear (280 kms, approx. 6 hrs total driving time)

Drive to Lake Malawi - Cape Maclear. En-route we pass Zomba and visit the vibrant Zomba Market is possible, before crossing the Shire River, through historical Mangochi town and following the lakeshore northwards. Arrival at Cape Maclear is mid-afternoon with time to enjoy a sundowner whilst relaxing on the beach. Here we again stay in a choice of 3 similar lodges - Chembe Eagles Nest, Cape Mac Lodge or Annie's Lodge - depending on availability. Each lodge offers en-suite chalet accommodation, nicely situated on the beach and in an area enabling easy exploration of the surrounding village. Overnight at Chembe Eagles Nest, Cape Mac Lodge or Annie's Lodge. (BLD)



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Day 12: Cape Maclear at leisure

Today is at leisure to enjoy the beach, including non-motorised watersports. Alternatively explore the local village, walk into the surrounding mountains, or visit historical graves. Overnight at Chembe Eagles Nest, Cape Mac Lodge or Annie's Lodge. (BD)

Day 13: Cape Maclear - Excursion to Lake Malawi

This morning embark on a full day on the lake. We will board a catamaran and sail around the islands for a full day stopping off at one of the islands with snorkelling and kayaking opportunities, and a picnic lunch. Return to the mainland in time for a sundowner followed by dinner. Overnight at Chembe Eagles Nest, Cape Mac Lodge or Annie's Lodge. (B, Picnic Lunch, D).

Day 14: Mua Mission, Malawi (210 kms, approx. 4 hours total driving time)

Depart for the drive to Mua Mission; Mua is the site of the KuNgoni Centre of Culture and Art. It provides insights into the history and culture of Malawi through the Chamare Museum, the Carving Centre and the new Research Centre/Library. The museum describes the Chewa, Ngoni and Yao cultures, their rites of passage, their interaction with one another and their encounters with Islam and Christianity. It also holds a unique display of Gule Wamkulu masks, texts and images and dances can be arranged. It is home to a thriving community, including an arts and crafts centre whose students create Malawi's finest wood carvings and who go on to make a living from their own handiwork throughout Malawi. After this, it's a one-hour drive to our overnight stop. Overnight at Blue Waters. (B, Picnic Lunch, D)

Day 15: Lilongwe – Departure from Malawi (110 kms, approx. 1.5 hours total driving time)

Today we co-ordinate our departure to arrive in Lilongwe in time for your return flight or onward journey. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
All accommodation
Transport throughout
National Park Fees
Services of an English-speaking guide
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Items of a personal nature
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas (Double entry for Malawi - \$150 and single entry for Zambia - \$50)
Drinks
Tips (discretionary)



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Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office (FCDO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

At the time of writing the FCDO does not have any warnings in place against travel to the areas we visit on this tour.

Non-UK nationals should check with their own government, as the information and advice may differ to that provided by British authorities.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

The accommodation on this tour is mostly in comfortable lodges. With the exception of Dzalanyama Forest, where there are two rooms with shared bathroom and toilet facilities, you can expect your rooms to be en suite with private facilities. In general you will find your lodge has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.



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Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Malawi

Lunch £10.00 / Dinner £20.00

Zambia

Lunch £8.00 / Dinner £20.00

Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Malawi

Bottle of Beer £1.50 / Water £1.00

Zambia

Bottle of Beer £1.50 / Water £1.00

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 100 for tipping.

Foreign Exchange

Malawi

ATM Availability: Available Lilongwe but only limited amounts of local currency can be withdrawn at one time

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Very few places outside main cities will accept cards

Local Currency: Malawi Kwacha

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend taking your money in US\$ cash (only accept post 2006 US\$ notes). Avoid the lower and higher (US\$1, 5 & 100) denomination notes, as they are difficult to change. Please note that it is difficult to convert local currency back to US\$'s so please ask your guide for guidelines on how much to exchange.

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you.

Zambia

ATM Availability: In the cities and larger towns, the larger banks have ATMs

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards have limited use in Zambia, and incur a 5% bank charge.

Local Currency: Zambian Kwacha

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend taking your money in US\$ cash (only accept post 2006 US\$ notes). Avoid the lower and higher (US\$1, 5 & 100) denomination notes, as they are difficult to change. Please note that it is difficult to convert local currency back to US\$'s so please ask your guide for guidelines on how much to exchange.

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you.



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Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour. Please meet your guide in the bar/restaurant area of the Mafumu Lodge at 18:00.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Malawi

Most nationals will require a visa for travel to Malawi. Please note that on this tour a double entry or multiple entry visa is required. When possible, it is recommended that you obtain your visa before travel and with effect from 01st November 2019 clients can now apply for the Malawi visa online through this website: <https://evisa.gov.mw/> Visa on arrival is also available at all entry points.

Zambia

Most nationals will require a visa for travel to Zambia. When possible, it is recommended that you obtain your visa before travel. Alternatively, most nationals can obtain a visa on arrival, although pre-authorisation may be required. For further details please visit: <https://evisa.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/>

Please be aware that visa information is subject to change, therefore please refer to your nearest embassy or consulate for up-to-date advice and information. Please note that the price of your tour does not include visa costs.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.



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Vaccinations & Protection

Malawi

We strongly recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. Malaria is present in the region so consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Yellow Fever: Please note you will need a Yellow Fever Certificate for border crossings between Zambia and Malawi. Bilharzia: The existence of bilharzia has been reported in certain areas of Lake Malawi. Please be aware that if you choose to swim there may be a risk of contracting bilharzia.

Zambia

Yellow Fever is no longer compulsory for visits to Zambia; however, please note that travellers who have previously travelled to or via countries that are endemic to Yellow Fever on the way to Zambia, may be asked to present a Yellow Fever certificate at immigration/borders in Zambia.

We strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, where you likely be advised to take protection against malaria, hepatitis A, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The main rainy season is from January to March. Rain is widespread and generally falls in the form of a thunderstorm in the late afternoon; grass tends to be long and there is more water about so game is more dispersed. Otherwise, it is dry, with low humidity for most of the year. Temperatures reach around 29°C during the day with quite cold nights throughout the year. Early dry season is the most pleasant time for temperatures and the best for bird watching. For game viewing though the late dry season is better.

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight, but a warm sweater and/or fleece jacket is advisable as nights can be cold as Zambia lies on an elevated plateau. Nights at Lake Malawi can also be cold. It can be particularly cold on early morning game drives until the sun has risen. Rainwear is useful in case of an unexpected downpour. A scarf is advisable for dusty drives. Do not wear bright colours whilst game viewing.

Equipment

Take a torch, water bottle, sunhat and sunblock. Binoculars are useful, as is a telephoto lens for keen photographers. Take a swimming costume and towel. Mosquito nets/screening is provided locally in the rooms where necessary, although you may wish to take some insect repellent. Bring your mask and snorkel if you want to peek into an alternative sub marine world!

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots or shoes with grip for walking safaris plus trainers or sandals for general travelling.



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Luggage on tour

One main piece of luggage (we recommend a soft bag or holdall) plus day sack.
Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg (please note airline allowances may vary)

Electric Supply & Plugs

Malawi and Zambia - 3 Pin Flat

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated 12th February 2021.

