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Safari packing

Clothing

Clothing in neutral colours: khaki, light brown/green, tan. Avoid bright colours & white for improved game viewing, especially when on foot. Not as important in a vehicle.

Wearing "Hollywood style" and/or camouflage safari outfits. Normal, comfortable fitting, neutral-coloured clothes are what you need. Light, strong, breathable garments are ideal, especially the ones that have moisture wicking properties, either synthetics or cotton.

Bright clothing should be avoided and white clothes will show up dust and dirt. Khaki, brown and olive colours top the list. Red and white makes you very conspicuous to the wildlife especially on a walking safari. If you are going to be spending most of your time in the safari vehicle then the colors really don't make that much of a difference.

Avoid dark blue or black clothes especially to Eastern Africa. This is due to the tsetse fly (or tsetze) which is attracted to dark colours and can give you a nasty bite as they feed on blood just like mosquitoes. Safari destinations where the flies are commonly encountered are Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia. You will rarely find them in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

Something warm. Although the days in Africa can be hot the temperatures will sometimes drop sharply at nights and in the early mornings. This is especially important if you are going to be travelling in an open sided safari vehicle. Pack a jersey, pullover or safari jacket.

Don't go without a safari hat. Safari hats are essential to ward off the African sun and protect you from sunburn. Even a short exposure time is long enough to get burnt during the heat of the day.

Packing in your heavy walking boots is unnecessary, unless you are doing a walking safari. Simple lightweight safari shoes/trainers (non white) or sandals/sports sandals are more sensible.

Travel light. You will not need more than 2 or 3 comfortable short sleeved safari shirts and the same amount of long sleeved tops. There are laundry facilities available at most game reserves and parks in Africa, unless you are going to be really roughing it, either done by the lodge itself or self serve. Also pack 2 or 3 (each) comfortable shorts and long trousers. Long trousers and a long sleeved safari shirt can be worn at night to stay warm and protect from mosquito bites.

. It's an unfortunate fact today that suitcases do go missing on the flights, generally through bad logistics in international hubs. Normally the luggage is only delayed and travellers get it all back, but this can take some time, especially if you are moving to a camp from an international airport.

That's why it's important to pack essential and valuable items in carry-on luggage when you board a flight including a set of safari clothing, otherwise you will be left with only what you are wearing if your suitcase disappears.

Keep it simple. Most safari destinations have a very relaxed dress code for dinner so there is no need to pack formal dress. Check with us, but in most cases it just won't be necessary.

Don't forget to bring sunglasses. You're going to be spending a lot of time staring into the veld looking for wildlife, so a pair of polarizing shades will stand you in good stead and give your eyes a bit of a rest and keep the dust out on game drives if you are in an open vehicle.

Remember to layer. Africa is a continent of extremes, it can be freezing cold in the morning and boiling hot by midday. So it's a good idea to wear cool garments as your first layer and then you can remove the warmer outer layers once things start heating up, as they almost always tend to do later in the day.

Other clothes

- Waterproof jacket
- About 5 sets of underwear
- About 5 pairs of socks
- Pyjamas (if you normally sleep in them)
- Swimming costume
- Flip-flops or sport sandals

SAFARI SUPPLIES

Not all of these are vital, but it's an useful checklist.

- Insect repellent (no need to get more than DEET 60%)
- Sunblock and after sun lotion
- A travel towel is light and takes very little space
- Skin cream
- Malaria tablets if applicable
- Citronella or other body soap/shower gel
- Sunglasses - make sure they have polarised lenses.
- Wet wipes/hand sanitizer or no-water/antibacterial soap - very handy in the safari vehicle.
- Toothbrush/toothpaste/dental floss
- 2-in-1 shampoo/conditioner
- Tweezers
- Lip balm
- Q-tips & cotton balls
- Razor & shaving cream/gel
- Birth control
- Sanitary requirements (shops are sometimes few and far between, and very basic)
- Contact lens solution
- Band aids
- Vitamins
- Painkiller
- Antiseptic cream
- Motion sickness tablets
- Heartburn remedy
- Anti-diarrhoea medicine
- Re-hydration salts

Pen/pencil
Small mirror
Plastic bags (wet washing/muddy shoes/organise clothes in suitcase)
Book to read between game viewing and other leisure time
Cold/flu tablets
Allergy remedy
Some people take a basic antibiotic in case
Prescribed medicine (enough to last your trip) - keep packed in your hand luggage in case of baggage delays

SAFARI LUGGAGE

The thing to remember when choosing safari luggage is mobility. You will probably be moving between several different modes of transport (airplanes, cars, light aircraft, trucks, boats) so plan accordingly. Suitcases with wheels don't work very well in the African bush and if flying on light aircraft take too much dead space in the small holds. Soft bags are better. A daypack is very handy to transport the items you need while driving around in the safari vehicle or walking through the bush.

SAFARI EQUIPMENT

Binoculars. Essential for a successful trip. No safari packing list is complete without them.
Flashlight or headlamp
Camera, memory cards, extra batteries, battery charger and lens cleaner
Small bean bag to rest your camera on
Washing powder/travel soap for laundry
Plug adaptors - generally in Africa it's 3-prong round (South Africa) or square UK plugs (in Tanzania?Kenya) or European round two-pin.
Lighter/waterproof matches
Mini combination locks (keys get lost)
Mini sewing kit

DOCUMENTS

Passport & correct visas
Emergency phone numbers
Africa travel insurance policy
Guide book(s) covering the area you're visiting - it should include animals/birds pages for easy identification
Your itinerary
Addresses and mobile numbers (postcards/e-mails/texts)
Any vaccinations certificates
Copy of your passport, kept in a separate place than your passport
Copies of prescriptions

It is a good idea to scan a copy of important documents and either put them on your cloud (icloud, dropbox, onedrive, etc.) or email them to yourself as attachments.