



KENYA CHECKLIST

George Mason University / Center for Global Education

EQUIPMENT:

- _____ 1 medium/large sized check-in luggage bag (see pictures below). No need for a **really** large bag (highly discouraged). We recommend the simple kind with wheels or the duffel-type bags. Large hard-case luggage is more difficult for you to negotiate. Whatever you bring – you will end up carrying it the entire trip. No need for “hiking” backpacks. Large, hiking bags also attract attention from airport security and can cause delays. Depending on the airline you may be allowed two “carry ons”. One is an overhead bag, the other a “personal item” (computer bag, purse, etc.). If you can limit this to ONE carry on, you’ll be happier. Please do not overpack.

- _____ TSA luggage locks (small ones) are good to have to protect your bags in flight – to prevent accidental opening. They must be TSA compliant or they will be removed by security. Small luggage locks are also good in-country; they will be source of comfort while you are away from your bags, even though there is really no concern to be had at our camps.

- _____ 1 regular-sized backpack (day pack), which also acts as one of your personal carry-on luggage bags. You will use this during flights and in the field.

- _____ 1 thin, collapsible duffel bag that you pack in your check-in luggage. Recommended to be used later in the trip but is also good to have for your dirty laundry. Good for gifts on the way back from Kenya. Students always come back with more than they went with – so you can use the duffel bag as a carry on of all your purchased gifts (you don’t check those in). It’s optional of course, but we recommend you take an easily collapsible bag just in case you need it on the way back – and perhaps during the trip.

- _____ You should have a change of shirt and shorts and some very basic toiletries with your carry-on bag from the US to Nairobi and back. Be prepared for a one-day emergency.

- _____ Binoculars – **REQUIRED** for each student. Do NOT get the cheapest possible binoculars. 7 x 35 or above are recommended.

_____ Camera. Optional – but not a bad idea, of course. More advice on cameras is in a different document.

_____ Laptop. Entirely up to you, but recommended if very lightweight and not too expensive. We take our personal laptops, but they are not for student use. iPads will work, but to get internet – you may have to buy and cut a new SIM card in Nairobi. It would be helpful to know in advance if anyone plans to do this, as it can be done, but it would need to be worked into our schedule.

_____ A thumb drive – to retrieve photo and/or files during the trip. Trying to get photos from others after the return to the states is most troublesome. I would imagine about 2- 4 gigs would be best.

_____ Your printed journal articles. You will receive these prior to departure –most likely at orientation.

_____ Your CGE course materials that were handed to you. Required.

_____ Writing pad, writing instruments. A small journal type book is best, which you can also buy on your first day in Kenya.

Carry all **valuable** items with you – in your carry on! Under no circumstances should you pack expensive or important items onto your check-in luggage. Pack light – our belongings will be trucked around and will be in the heat at times. We don't recommend taking anything expensive unless you are used to traveling with it in your care (i.e. high end cameras, laptop, etc.).

CLOTHES, SHOES:

***Absolutely NO SHORT SHORTS... Knee-length or longer only. or beyond.
Absolutely NO REVEALING SHIRTS (no tank tops, muscle shirts, etc.)***

We have good reason for this... to be discussed at orientation

_____ Clothes for safari driving (you will be in a vehicle for many hours during the day).
Casual, conservative.

_____ It will be Kenya's dry season, but it can be chilly at night. Temperatures can go
into the 50s at times – but in the sun, in the low 70s – usually low 80s. Come
prepared! Layering is best.

_____ Hat, shades, sun-block if needed. Equatorial solar radiation is not to be sniffed at.
Take it seriously. In particular, you should have a hat with a wide rim for over the
ears.

_____ 1 set of clothes for our AWF visit (more conservative attire). Light pants are best.
We may go out to a causal dinner in town – certainly no need for fancy clothes.

_____ Comfortable shoes for walking in city and brief hikes around camp. You probably
only need two pair of shoes on this entire trip. Walking/hiking shoes, and in-
house slippers/ flip flops. A third pair for airport use can speed up security – easy
slip on types that do not look like they have been in 5 feet of mud. When we
conduct field exercises, it's best to have sturdy shoes. Thorn acacia can be on the
ground – and may penetrate flimsy sneakers. Light hiking boots/shoes are great.
You cannot wear Tevas or sandals in the field – just around camp.

_____ Pants and shorts (reasonable) for day time use.

_____ You can't go wrong with packing lots of underwear.

_____ Sandals/ flip flops/ Tevas for around camp, good when using tented camp
showers. I recommend the lightest/cheapest flip flops you can possibly find.

_____ Clothes for a cold night or two. Fleece is great.

_____ Pajamas – since you may not be in individual private rooms. Rooms and tents are
usually prepared for two people, sometimes a 3rd.

_____ One small towel that dries easy. Towels are provided at all accommodations, but
you never know when you may need an additional one. Ex: a small, lightweight
face towel. Camping towels are best.

_____ Swim trunks / bathing suit. There is a pool at the Guest House.

_____ Women might want to consider a really good sports bra – being in a safari vehicle
on rough terrain for hours on end can be uncomfortable.

We recommend you choose to dress conservatively, but with very comfortable clothes on flights. Flights can be about 8 / 9 hours. Be prepared for the a/c on planes too.

Please keep in mind we are **not** on a Caribbean vacation. Be modest – even in remote areas where you think it might not matter, we must respect local staff (the drivers, Maasai locals, housekeeping, kitchen staff) who find too much exposure offensive (for both guys and girls). They may not say anything at the time – but it comes back to us. Regular t-shirts and knee-length shorts are quite fine, but if you have to second guess whether it is appropriate...then wear something else. We will have access to laundry (you pay for it, at about \$3 a load), so **limit your packing to about a week and a half.**

If you are taking heavy shoes – wear those while on your flight to reduce the luggage weight. And even for carry on - some airlines can force you to check in anything over 20-25 lbs. Airline staff can just look at your carry-on bag and ask to weigh it in. Be careful. Pack light. Check the airlines for such details.

Do not go out and buy the entire line of Banana Republic khaki safari wear. You don't need all of that (though you'll look great!) – what you have for walking around school and town is just fine. We recommend light, easy to dry clothes. Reconsider heavy denim.

DOCUMENTS, MEDICINE:

- _____ Passport. Must be good for at least another 6 months upon RETURN.
- _____ GMU ID. The photo must be **very clear** – get a new one if you need.
- _____ 2 photocopies of your two first passport pages (the page with the photo and the one with the Kenya VISA).
- _____ Register with the Office of Homeland Security. <https://step.state.gov/step/> You are REQUIRED to do this – CGE does not register you with the embassy or with Homeland Security – this is your personal responsibility.
- _____ Your wallet. Consider a travel wallet for ease and safety.
- _____ Emergency contact info – to GMU, CGE and course instructor. We will also leave all contact information with your friends and family in the states.
- _____ A list of all the addresses of the people you want to send post cards to.
- _____ VISA - Don't wait on this!! It's \$50 from the Embassy. Takes about 2 weeks. Please see Visa instructions document / procedure.
- _____ Immunization **yellow card** (preferred) – and appropriate immunizations. <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/kenya.aspx>

We also recommend getting the vaccine for the H1N1 (flu), though this is optional. It is probably wise to have it for Kenya.

INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF VACCINATION
AS APPROVED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
CERTIFICAT INTERNATIONAL DE VACCINATION
APPROUVE PAR L'ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTE

TRAVELER'S NAME-NOM DU VOYAGEUR
ADDRESS-ADRESSE (Number-Numéro) (Street-Rue)
(City-Ville)
(County-Departement) (Date-État)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
PHS-24 (REV. 11-81)

OTHER IMMUNIZATIONS/OTHER VACCINES RECEIVED
Autres vaccinations/autres vaccins reçus

This space is provided to record immunizations/vaccinations that are not required for entrance into any country but have been obtained by the traveler for additional health protection (tetanus booster, measles, mumps, etc.)

Date	Vaccination/vaccin or immunization/vaccination	Dose	Physician's signature
2/16/07	Tet/Dipht	1 Sm!	Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD
2/16/07	Polio	1 Sm!	Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD
2/16/07	Mumps	1 Sm!	Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD
2/16/07	Rubella #1	1 sm!	Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD
2/16/07	Influenza	0.5 ml Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD	Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD
2/16/07	Typhoid (vaccine)	oral Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD	Wm. Daniel Kelly, MD

- _____ Printed documentation for any/all medications you have.
- _____ Malaria medication and all personal medications. This medication is not cheap – look into it. And check with your general doctor (you need a prescription for this) about what kind is best for you. Malarone works well – and it is probably the most common one used now. You are NOT allowed to use larium (mefloquine). See website above.
- _____ Sunblock. We are literally under the equator. It may feel o.k. – but it's not. Tropical sun is quite dangerous. Protect yourself. Heat illness makes for a miserable trip. Keep in mind you have the option to stand through the roof of the vehicle (recommended) and this will expose you to direct sun for many hours. Students tend to alternate sitting and standing – depending on what we see.

_____ Mosquito repellent. This is just another level of safety for evening and nights.

_____ Cash – in Kenyan Shillings. Exchange is about 101 Ksh to \$1. You should not “need” a lot of cash at all during your time in Kenya. All of your expenses are covered. **However**, these are what students like to spend money on:

- gifts (kikoys, shukas, kangas and bracelets are very nice)
- snacks (you will likely suffer from sugar withdrawal and need candy)
- drinks in between meals
- internet fees / mobile modems. You can get an unlimited mobile modem for a total cost of about \$40 – but reception is dodgy in some areas.
- post cards / stamps
- emergency medicine
- personal toiletries (but please buy most of these in Kenya)
- we will stop at local markets for gifts
- **Finale dinner (this is your personal expense, not covered by the course)**

Also consider any expenses in various airports to and from (and their currencies!). There is an ATM at the Nairobi airport to convert to Kenya Shillings from credit or debit card withdrawals - and many all over town we can access; usually these are cheaper than any currency exchange offered in the US. The cash-changing stations are frequently closed. We think that **having about \$200.00** (converted to Kenyan Shillings on-site) is more than enough. You won't need it, but it's a safety buffer. A credit card is excellent to have for major emergencies. You will also need to call your credit card companies and let them know you're going to use the card in Kenya. Otherwise those cards may not work.

CASH CONVERSIONS: at an estimated 103 Ksh to \$1 – it changes!

Usually when you retrieve cash from ATMs, they will be delivered in 1000 Ksh bills. And you can expect that if you procure large bills, people suddenly have no change... try to maintain small bills for any small item purchases. You will get the best exchange rates with an ATM. Do not take traveler's cheques – they are useless. Do not take US dollars (cash) that you expect to exchange for shillings – you'll get a terrible exchange rate. Use an ATM card, and/or credit card for purchases.

Beware AmEx users: Despite what they tell you at the general orientation, AmEx is not that useful in Kenya. This may be different in other parts of the world – but you are better off with MasterCard or Visa. Also keep your wits about you – and do not use a credit card at some road-side curio shop. Use cash as much as you can – and credit cards only when safe and appropriate. If you're not sure – ask us.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

_____ Toiletries. You should take travel size for one or two days – and BUY all other toiletries once you're there. We deliberately go shopping on the first day for this reason. You can buy all the same stuff in Kenya that you have in the states. If you need some really unique product, then bring that, but otherwise – get the shampoo, batteries, toothpaste, etc. in Kenya - **don't weigh yourself down.**

_____ No need for any jewelry – **highly** discouraged. A simple watch or small alarm clock is helpful.

_____ Flashlights recommended: 1 small-sized (AA or so), high-intensity light for walking around campground at night. 1 LED key-chain light for inside your room/tent. The little one is great for ease and without blinding your roommates. It is highly recommended you take a **headlamp** - just easier to be hands free.

_____ Flashlight batteries. One set of new batteries is probably fine for the whole trip. Best to buy these in Kenya because they will weigh you down.

_____ Your cell phone. Take it. You will need it at airports (especially on return) and it's always good for emergencies / stored numbers. Check with your provider for coverage in Kenya. i.e. – very expensive for iPhones right now.

_____ Cell phone charger! Along with any other chargers you need.

_____ Several small travel packs of tissue (a.k.a. emergency toilet paper). Pit stops...

_____ Be aware that Kenya has recently outlawed most plastic bags, particularly the grocery style ones. Still, you should probably take along some Zip Lock style bags. They are incredibly useful as they can keep things clean, and make packing much easier. And bring extra ones for the trip back! You will use all of them.

_____ 2 re-usable water bottles. Any kind will do – you'll need it for day trips as well as when you brush your teeth (do not use tap water for that). We will always have access to filtered water. Unfortunately Kenya is big into plastic bottles of water – if you prefer that. But you need TWO for field work. You can just buy 2 bottles of water in Kenya (\$2) and be done with it. Please don't go out and buy fancy plastic bottles - you don't need to.

_____ Small rain poncho or mini umbrella.

_____ Bandana (yes, you will find a use for it).

_____ Find a toiletries bag that you can hang in the shower – most of the showers you will use will have no shelves or surfaces to put anything on (yes, a bit odd), so carrying them becomes cumbersome. It really helps to have a small case designed for a few toiletries that has a hook on it.

_____ Laundry odor sheets (Febreze). Really helps keep your stuff fresh while packed in those bags all the time. You live out of a bag for 2.5 weeks, so it will help.

- _____ Triple antibiotic cream & hydrocortisone cream. Bug bites tend to look bad at first (your body needs to adjust to it). Nevertheless, apply the antibiotic cream at night if needed and the hydrocortisone cream if the itching gets to you.

- _____ Tweezers, nail clippers

- _____ Ear plugs – unless you are o.k. with other people snoring near you. It will happen.

- _____ Pepto Bismol chewable tablets. Just in case you get travelers upset stomach.

- _____ A couple of those tiny packs of travel laundry detergent – for a quick travel wash. It is common in Kenya that you wash your own knickers! This is why we mentioned bringing a lot of underwear....

- _____ Though this is a busy trip, you will have time to yourself – and perhaps you'll want to enjoy a book or two (especially for the planes).

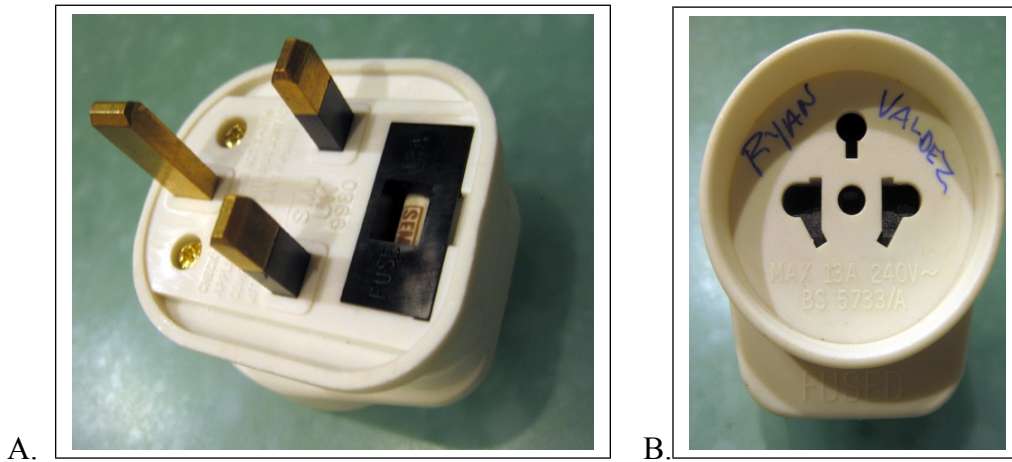
WHAT WE (INSTRUCTORS) USUALLY TAKE:

1 large bag (cannot be over 50 lbs), 1 carry on item (expensive items – cameras, laptop) that goes into the overhead compartment – recall that we provide you with this, and 1 “personal item” your backpack that stays with you (i.e. passport, medicines, etc..) and goes under the seat in front of you. **Keep in mind that different airlines have different restrictions and you may be required to check items you'd rather not check if you do not pay attention to these restrictions!** There are many items you can simply buy in Kenya on the first day: batteries, shampoo, soap, liquid toiletries, snacks, etc... The stores we go to have all the same stuff you find here. You should not pack large bottles of shampoo!! Just buy it there. We make a special trip to the grocery store just for this purpose alone. You also have access to laundry service on the trip, so you only need 1.5 weeks worth of clothes. Seriously. Do not over pack!!



ELECTRICITY:

BEWARE: Though we have personally never had trouble with voltage conversion – students on prior trips and have had their adapters and power strips blown out because they did not use a **voltage converter**. It is **up to you** if you want to take a **converter**. You are being told now – if you don't take one, **you run the risk of damaged equipment**. Pictured below is a simple Kenya **adapter**. You can plug this into the wall in Kenya (A) – and then your US device into it (B). It will work – but there is NO voltage security. Some students buy the adapter below in Kenya and then a US power strip that goes into that.



It is probably best to be safe and just buy the **converter**. **One universal converter (below) and one very small power strip with a circuit breaker on it.** Together, that is all that is needed.

O.k. – pictured below is an adaptor and **voltage converter** combo. Use this as is – or put a power strip on it for multiple devices. Example: <http://amzn.com/B002E7L7UO> Please know what you are buying (an adapter is only an adapter).



WARNING:

This must be stated, so please do not be offended: BUT – Kenya is intensely strict when it comes to any contraband. Do not, under any circumstances, take any chances with possession of a substance you know is illegal. As an example, any drug possession in Kenya is an automatic 10 years in jail. Not kidding here. Contraband will not be tolerated by the course instructor, GMU/CGE – or by the Kenyan government. You are responsible adults, and should act accordingly.