

VOLUNTEER MANUAL

We are happy and thankful that you are willing to volunteer with us at RealStars!

Travelling to a foreign country might be exciting, but it can also be overwhelming and exhausting. We want to do everything we can to help you feel prepared as you plan to journey with us to Kenya!

What to pack...

- Documents
 - ✓ Passport

You must have your passport before you board the plane. If you don't already have a passport, it can take 10-14 weeks to obtain - so don't delay! If you are unsure about the time, we recommend that you request the expedited process. If you already have a passport please make sure you have at least two blank pages in it. The passport must be valid for at least six months after your return date.

When in Nairobi always carry a copy of your passport. The copy should include the picture side as well as the visa side. Keep your original passport in a safe place at home or in the office. When travelling out of Nairobi you need to carry your original passport at all times (a safe place, such as in a travel pouch, a deep closable pocket, or a bag that is on your person at all times). Do not leave it in an unsecure location or lying around in the communities that you visit.

- ✓ Photocopy of your Passport

Always carry a copy of your passport with you. In addition leave one copy of the passport (picture side and visa side) at home separately from the original and in the Real Stars office (volunteer file).

- ✓ Immunization record

Yellow fever vaccination is compulsory when entering Kenya. This will be checked by the Kenyan Immigration Office upon arrival, so have your vaccination book ready.

Real Stars recommends that you consult your personal physician for advice on what immunizations are best for you. Your local health department should be able to make recommendations and to administer the shots that you decide to get. You can also visit www.cdc.gov for a complete list of recommended immunizations. No shots are required by Real Stars.

Please check with your local government agency to determine what shots if any you may want to get before travelling to Kenya. Many local Health Department have a travel clinic that is both economical and informative.

✓ Visa

The visa can be purchased upon arrival at the airport in Nairobi. You need \$50.00 or 40€ to purchase this visa (for Kenya only). The airport sometimes does not accept old bills so it's better to make sure that your bills are rather new (year 2003 or newer). Please carry the exact amount of money. The visa forms can be filled in advance so you can be prepared for your arrival in Kenya. The entry process in Nairobi is a slow one, and the lines can be long, so be prepared.

Since September 2015 the visa can also be applied for online which can save you quite some time upon arrival. To apply the visa online please visit the immigration websites: <https://immigration.ecitizen.go.ke/index.php?id=5> or www.ecitizen.go.ke

Remember to carry your vaccination book to confirm that you have received your yellow fever vaccination. This is compulsory and might be checked at the airport.

✓ Airplane Ticket

The ticket should be carried on the journey as print out or photocopy. A printed ticket will be needed to re-enter the Nairobi airport upon departure.

✓ 3 Extra Passport photos

These photos will be used for the visa extension in case you will stay in Kenya longer than 90 days. Passport photos can be easily taken in Nairobi as well.

✓ Note

It is important to keep your documents in a safe location at all times, as they are a necessary in entering and leaving the country.

A couple of tips: carry the originals in a plastic bag so they won't be ruined if wet, and keep them separate from their photocopies. If you are comfortable you could upload scans of your documents (like passport) on a cloud service (e.g. Dropbox) or your email account to have access to it wherever you are.

• Wardrobe

When beginning to pack for your trip to Kenya, there are several things to keep in mind.

Planning your wardrobe for a (long) trip to a foreign country is very different from planning for a short vacation. It is best to be overly aware of how you present yourself when you are in a foreign country. You do not want to make any statements or draw any extra attention to yourself. Planning your wardrobe, remember, modesty is the key.

Avoid any flashy or expensive jewellery or apparel. For women especially, avoid showing too much skin or wearing low-cut or tight fitting clothes (i.e. no tank tops, no halter tops, no shorts for women etc.). Avoid any clothing with overly western or Christian symbols or

statements. We want to respect the culture we are visiting as well as protect ourselves from any negative attention these symbols or statements might attract. That being said, don't stress...instead, we want you to be informed so that you can prepare accordingly.

- Medications

Please seek advise of your local doctor regarding vaccination needed in Kenya.

Carry your essential medications (e.g. general prescriptions) in your carry on in case your luggage is lost or delayed.

It is best to purchase any medications you believe you might need in advance of your trip. Still the common medications are available in pharmacist around Nairobi. In case you need special medications from certain brands we advise to purchase them in your home country.

Some medications you might need (not compulsory):

- Aspirin/ Paracetamol / general pain reliever
- Pepto-Bismol/ Imodium/ Cipro
- Mosquito repellent with DEET
- Personal first aid
This could include as much or as little as you'd like (band aids, thermometer, etc.).
- Cold/ Allergy Medication
- Contact Solution

- Personal items

These items are not necessary, they are simply suggestions. You will want to think of additional items you may need.

- ✓ Bible
- ✓ Personal Journal and pen/pencils
- ✓ Photos from home (these serve as good conversation builders)
- ✓ Small back pack pack to carry personal items each day
- ✓ Electrical adaptor (Kenya has the British three plug system). However adaptors are also available in Nairobi.

- ✓ Camera
For every day photos it is advisable to have a small camera or use the mobile photo to take photos. Bigger cameras attract more attention which you want to avoid at times. So if you bring a big camera you should use it on safari but not within Nairobi.
- ✓ Laptop
Make sure you make data backup regularly and also leave a data backup in your home country in case your laptop gets broken or stolen.
- ✓ Phone/ Smartphone
Smartphone are very common in cities like Nairobi. Some of the communications like security advices are carried out on Whats App, so it is helpful if you can use this service.
- ✓ Personal travel snacks
Bring snacks that are small and will travel well (i.e. things that are packaged won't melt, won't spoil etc.) for example protein bars, packets, peanut crackers, trail mix, small candies, gum etc. Of course these items can also be purchased in Nairobi.
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Travel alarms clock
- ✓ Travel and/or regular pillow (if needed)
For the airplane and also for your own room: pillows are provided but they are very basic and might not be comfortable.

How to pack...

Now that you know what to pack below are some helpful hints about how to pack them lightly and efficiently. This will make travel in country easier for you.

- Check-in Luggage

Luggage with tote handles & wheels are great for traversing through airports.

- ✓ Roll up smaller items such as socks, undergarments, etc. to stuff in shoes or sleeves and pockets of shirts to give more space in bag.
- ✓ Pack the clothing you want to wear first on top.
- ✓ Keep crushable items to the outside of the bag in case of wear and tear during travel.
- ✓ Pack liquid items in plastic bags to avoid damage.

- Second bag

If the airline allows you to carry a second bag we ask you to reserve some space in this additional checked bag for items Real Stars may need to carry to Kenya. Items such as children's toys, school supplies, balls, books, Bibles in Swahili & English, extra clothing, etc. are good. You can contact us concerning current needs. Real Stars will refund you after your arrival.

- Carry-On Bag

We recommend packing of backpack or small tote as your carry-on bag. Carry all essentials in your carry-on bag!

- ✓ Airlines often allow only one piece of hand baggage. Sometimes a handbag, camera or laptop can be carried on top of that, but this needs to be confirmed with the airline. Coats, pillows, etc. may need to be folded in to another bag.
- ✓ Pack your travel documents (passports, visa, etc .) and money in a safe but easily accessible place within your bag.
- ✓ Remove all sharp objects (knives, razors, scissors, etc.) and liquids (more than 100ml per item) from your bag, as they will not be allowed through security checkpoints.
- ✓ Keep your extra toiletries and change of clothes accessible in case you want to use them throughout the flight.

Air Travel Tips

With long hours on the plane, here are a few tips to making your air travel a little easier.

Before your flight it is important to get good, solid rest. If you start off the trip tired the adjustment in Kenya will hit harder!

If you experience motion-sickness, plan to take your medication prior to the flight so that it will kick-in in time to keep you comfortable.

Plan to arrive at the airport at least three hours early.

In going through security and customs, plan ahead to remove all metal from your person as well as any sharp or questionable objects from your carry-on.

Be prepared and flexible in dealing with any random security screenings.

Have your entire luggage marked with your name and contact information.

Please use luggage tags with your address in your home country and Kenya to attach to your checked luggage.

When you take your luggage from baggage claim to the taxi, make sure that you have your entire luggage! Be sure and do not leave anything behind at the airport.

The flight will be long. Be sure to take time to walk around and stretch to avoid cramping, clots, etc.

Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of water while on the plane.

Reading materials are a great way to pass the time on the flight.

About Kenya...

- Weather

If you are visiting Kenya between June and September, this is their winter and early spring. Please take into consideration that it might be overcast or slightly rainy with temperatures around 15°C at night in higher altitude areas (Nairobi sits at over 5000 ft altitude).

From October through early May, during their late Spring, Summer and Fall, conditions are typically warmer and drier .A light jacket/sweater or fleece for the evenings is advisable.

- Religion

Mostly traditional but there is sizeable Christian population (both catholic and protestant) and a small Muslim community

- Ethnic groups

Kikuyu 22% ; Luhya 14% ; Luo 13% ; Kalenjin 12% ; Kamba11% ; Kisii 6% ; Meru 6% ; other African 15% and non-African(Asian, European, and Arab).

- Social conventions

Western European habits prevail throughout Kenya as a result of British influences in the country.

The people of Kenya are very friendly and easy-going. Kids especially will greet you with smiles and giggles. In some situations however, you might encounter a reservation on their part to share or interact with you. Don't worry. This is also part of their culture, even among themselves. Once they begin to trust you however, this shyness will ease and lively interaction can begin.

When asking for help, or to get a question answered, Africans may tend to tell you what you want to hear, instead of answering the question. For example if you ask, "How long will it take us to reach our destination?" the response might be, "Oh, not very long. It's not far." When in reality, it might be very far. A better question to ask is something more specific.

Greeting with a hand wave is good and shows your friendliness. The African "hello" wave is an arm up, out- stretched and holding your hand still. Americans sometimes say hello

by putting their hand up and moving their fingers up and down vertically (instead of shaking their palms side to side). To a Kenyan that means “come,” versus hello. The children will giggle at the gesture.

Tipping is not typical in restaurants (unless 5-star) or for services rendered.

- Electricity
220/240 volts AC, 50Hz, Plugs are UK type square three-pin
Adaptors are available in Nairobi.

✓ Currency

Kenya’s currency is the Kenyan Shilling (KES). Notes are in denominations of KES 1000,500,200,100 and 50. Coins are in denominations of KES 40, 20, 10, 5 and 1.

✓ Currency Exchange

If you want to exchange currency at the airport upon arrival the best place to do this is in the terminal immediately after customs. However RealStars will make arrangements for you to change or draw money from an ATM the day after your arrival.

At most small souvenir shops and when purchasing drinks/sodas/snacks, the use of cash will be required. The easiest currency to exchange is the US Dollar and Euro.

✓ Important

Bring Euros/ USD in denominations of 50 or 100 bills, newer than Y2003.

Smaller denominations are not always honoured at current exchange rates. When you actually receive the Kenyan Shilling (KES), request for some 50KES and 100KES bills, in addition to 1000KES, so that you can use them for smaller items such as buying sodas.

✓ Credit/Debit Cards and ATMs

VISA Card and MasterCard are generally only accepted in Nairobi. In most shopping malls there are several opportunities to draw money from an ATM (Automated Teller Machine). However, former volunteers had problems using MasterCard or Maestro Card. The best credit cards to withdraw money in Kenya are VISA Cards, so we recommend to get one if possible.

If you plan to use an ATM while in Kenya, it is best that you contact your home bank in advance to inform them and receive any additional information they can provide before your travels.

✓ Travelers Check Advice

In Nairobi and major towns it’s possible to use Traveler’s checks, although this takes much more time compared to the use of a credit card which we recommend more. Traveler’s checks are not widely accepted in rural areas so it is suggested you take currency if you plan to go upcountry.

✓ Currency Restrictions

There is no restriction on the import and export of local or foreign currency. However, authorization from the Central Bank is required for amounts of 500,000 KES and above.

✓ Banking Hours

Many of the banks and bureau de change at the international airports are open 24 hours every day.

National and international banks have branches in Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu, Thika, Eldoret, Kericho, Nyeri and in most other major towns.

Opening hours vary and can be checked online easily.

✓ Food and Drink

The country's beef, chicken, mutton and pork are outstandingly good, as is the wide variety of tropical fruits. Indian and Middle Eastern food is available in most areas. There is a wide range of restaurants in Nairobi and Mombasa; otherwise hotels in smaller towns offer restaurant service.

Note:

- ✓ Please use caution in the foods that you eat. Make sure foods is well cooked and hot.
- ✓ Do not eat raw vegetables or fruits unless they can be peeled and you peel them yourself.
- ✓ Avoid lettuce and other leafy vegetables.
- ✓ Do not eat rare meat or raw fish or shellfish.
- ✓ Use caution with milk and dairy products (ice cream, soft cheeses, etc.)
- ✓ Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- ✓ Try to eat hot, well- cooked foods while they are still hot.
- ✓ When in doubt, don't!

It is important to follow these guidelines. If you are offered food at a home visit it is considered rude to refuse. If it is cooked, boiled or peeled you should be fine. If it is not something you can eat, graciously say "no thank you".

In order to prevent illness from contaminated water, there are several things to keep in mind while in a developing country.

- ✓ Tap water is unsafe for your consumption. Only consume drinks such as sodas or bottled water, drinks made with boiled water such as tea and coffee or filtered water.

- ✓ Do not brush your teeth with tap water-use the bottled water instead!
- ✓ Avoid ice in any beverages.
- ✓ Always drink from a labelled can or bottle- no questionable container.
- ✓ Along with bottled water, it is safe to drink:
 - Drinks made with boiled water (coffee, tea, etc.)
 - Canned or bottled carbonated beverages.
- ✓ National Specialities:
 - Most Kenyans eat maize, beans and maize meal (Ugali).
 - Some game-park lodges serve game, including buffalo steaks marinated in local liqueurs and berries, often garnished with wild honey and cream.
 - Nyama Choma literally means roasted meat, and is one of Kenya's best known specialties.
- ✓ Additional Resources for information on Kenya:
 - CIA World Facts
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world.factbook/geos/ke.html>
 - CDC
<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationKenya.aspx>
 - Wikipedia/Kenya
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenya>

Personal Safety Practices

- Do not take photography of the military, airports, bridges, ferries or government buildings. You could have your camera confiscated.
- Do not share any of your personal contact information.
- Do not make any promises to the locals.
- Keep your passport on you at all times in a safe place (such as in a travel pouch, a deep closable pocket, or a bag that is on your person at all times), or, leave it in your room

tucked away. Do not leave it in an unsecure location or lying around in the communities that you visit.

While commuting through Nairobi always carry a copy of your passport with you while you keep your original passport in a safe place at home or the office. The copy should show the photo site as well as your visa.

- Health Care

A valid international health insurance is needed while volunteering with RealStars.

There are good medical facilities in Nairobi. In case you get sick always seek advise of a doctor. You can ask the RealStars team which doctors can be recommended.

The Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF) safety communication center (24-hour) helps tourists in difficulty (Telephone: 20- 604767; for emergencies: 604729 or 601343 or 604730; safetour@wananchi.com).

- Avoid swimming in fresh water; bathing in rivers and lakes is forbidden in national parks and is best avoided elsewhere due to dangers from wildlife and water borne diseases. Swimming pools, which are well chlorinated and maintained, are safe.

Tips for Intercultural Adjustment

- Cultural sensitivity

Remember that you are the guest in another and community and it is important that you respect and honour the differences that our Kenyan friends have. For some team members the differences may seem odd or shocking. It is important that you do not judge these differences negatively or compare them to your own culture in a derogatory manner, but instead honour your host with your word and actions.

This includes being sensitive to how you interact with people. Kenyans tend to be less direct than Americans in the way they speak to one another. In developing new relationships you will want to soften the direct way you ask questions and not ask too many personal questions right away.

Start by asking very general questions and then be discerning as to when it may be appropriate to ask more personal questions as you develop relationships.

Be mindful of assumptions or preconceived ideas you may have of people. You can inadvertently offend someone if you make an inaccurate assumption about him or her. For example, do not assume that everyone is a Christian. When you are invited into a home be gracious and accept gifts that you are offered, unless it is something you cannot eat then you can reply with a simple "No thank you". Elaborating about why you cannot eat certain things could be offensive.

Another way you can honour your hosts is to be sensitive to your reactions to situations and environments that you are in. If you are overly emotional or visibly shocked by what you see or experience, you can make the people around you uncomfortable. For example if you go in to a home or hospital and start crying at the desperate situation you see then

you are not encouraging or building anyone up and you are in danger of making him or her feel worse.

Service teams are designed to serve and encourage, and even in most desperate situation you have the opportunity to brighten someone's day, but you will not be able to effectively do it if you are overcome by emotion.

- **Culture Shock**
Culture shock is a common phenomenon that affects traveller's emotional health rather than their physical health. It is brought on by the anxiety that can occur when brought into new surroundings without familiar customs, language, or norms that help orient people with everyday life.
Some signs to look for to identify a person afflicted with culture shock are: exaggeration about the "dirty" or "unclean" conditions, unwillingness to attempt to learn new language or customs, unrealistic fear for personal safety, constant mentioning of the comforts of home, strong desire to return home, and excessive frustration over the differences between home country and foreign country.
- **Learn Social Cues**
These are the verbal and non-verbal signs, gestures, customs that help orient people to everyday life. Most of these social cues are different when a person enters a new culture.
- **Practice Cultural Relativism**
This is acknowledging that cultures are different and your own culture is not necessarily superior or better than the others. Most people have a tendency of ethnocentrism: this is the belief that one's own culture, race and nation are the best. This calls for open mindedness- being receptive to new experiences and different opinions.
- **Communication**
It is good to allow others to know your thoughts and feelings.
- **Curiosity**
Always remember that the best way to understand those around you better is to ask them questions.
- **Flexibility**
Keeping your options and mind open will help you adjust to unexpected changes that you would normally have problems with.
- **Tolerance for differences and ambiguities**
It is important to understand that there is more than one way to do something.
- **Positive Regard for others**
People are different; the best you can do is to have respect, love and empathy for those who are different.
- **Positive and Realistic Expectations**
To avoid disappointment or shock; always make it a habit to ask questions about what to expect, to always be flexible and to be open to new things.

- Ability to cope with Failure
You will probably make many mistakes, but learn to forgive yourself. No one can be perfect in a totally new surroundings.
- Sense of Humour
This will make you enjoy your time in the new surrounding and helps prevent the feelings of despair.
- Strong Sense of Self
Stand up for what you believe in, but always remember to be open to new perspectives and the experiences of others.
- What is Culture Re-Entry Shock?
Often times the most difficult part of traveling to a foreign country is not the journey itself, but the return home .Just as you may have had a difficult time growing accustomed to your new surroundings in the beginning of your trip, you may find it hard to readjust to the life you left at home. Ironically, it is usually those who find it easy to adjust to their foreign surroundings that have the most difficulty readjusting to their lives at home. Symptoms include boredom, restlessness, unshared feelings regarding experiences, reverse homesickness, loss of experiences and relationship adjustments. Tips for dealing with re- entry shock include getting plenty of rest, getting busy with your normal routine, treasuring your memories and experiences and making a plan to stay connected with the place you journeyed to, i.e, through the media.

As you prepare to come back home it is important to realize that the people in your life will have different levels of interest in hearing about the experience you had on your service trip. You should keep in mind that not everyone is going to have a desire to hear about all of the details regarding your trip. Some people will ask about your trip and just be curious about the basic information (Was it a good experience, did you have fun?) Others will be interested in more details, and still a percentage will genuinely want to be careful not to be judgmental of those who are not as interested as you have and will not necessarily be as excited or interested. It is helpful to think about what you will share with people about your experience by thinking of a 30 second response, and a 2-3 minute response and then a more detailed response for those who really want to hear about everything.

In case of any question please feel free to ask us any time!
We are looking forward to have you in our team!

Karibu! (Welcome!)
The RealStars team