

volunteer
southern africa



Living with
Elephants and Rhinos
PRE-DEPARTURE
GUIDE

PLEASE READ BEFORE TRAVELLING!

General Info

VISA REQUIREMENTS

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa for the entire length of your trip. Most nationalities, including those within the EU, British, American, Australian and Canadian, should get their visa at the airport upon arrival. Some nationalities will require that your visa is arranged in advance so check with the Zimbabwean embassy in your country of residence to establish your visa requirements well in advance of your trip. Please ensure that you state you are a TOURIST on holiday, not here to work, and ensure that the immigration official gives you a 30-day tourist visa. These can be renewed easily, if required, during your stay.

Costs incurred for expired visas during your programme must be reimbursed by you. Please use the following address details for your immigration form:

Rhino & Wildlife Conservation, Bag 3750, Marondera

FINANCE

Local currency:US Dollar

You MUST bring adequate supplies of US dollar cash there is currently an extreme shortage of cash in Zimbabwe. Ensure that you have adequate cash with you and DO NOT rely on your ATM or credit / debit card to buy goods or withdraw cash.

There is a small bar at Numwa House for your use. We recommend that volunteers travel with \$100-\$150 cash per week for personal items such as snacks, and drinks (excluding any planned excursions to Victoria Falls. If you plan on visiting Victoria Falls, please bring enough cash for your flights and transfers (around \$300), or plan on booking your tickets online).

Please note that items on your final bill e.g. drinks from the bar, Wi-Fi, t-shirts, additional transfers etc are subject to VAT charged at 15%. VAT will be added to your bill at the end of your stay. This must be paid in cash (USD) as part of your final bar bill.

YOUR FINAL BILL MUST BE PAID IN US DOLLAR CASH - WE DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE CARD FACILITIES AT THE PROGRAM.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory for all volunteers (even if you have your own private medical insurance at home). Please ensure that it covers everything you plan on doing during your trip (e.g. white water rafting and bungee jumping in Victoria Falls etc.), and that it also includes medical evacuation and repatriation. Please ensure that your travel insurance covers you for any fees incurred for having to leave the project early for medical reasons. Once you are on the programme, if you must leave the project early for medical or personal reasons your project fee will not be refunded except in very exceptional circumstances.

Please make sure you carry a copy of your insurance paperwork with you.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A change of environment, climate, food and lifestyle can result in minor illness. Please inform staff if you feel unwell at any time. We recommend that you obtain professional advice on immunizations and health requirements to ensure you have an enjoyable experience. Please be forthcoming about any health issues - we treat any information confidentially.

Regardless of the fact the project is in a low-risk malaria region, there are still mosquitos, especially during the rainy season, so please bring an adequate supply of cream or spray and the highest sunscreen you can find - SPF 30 and above. Please bring a hat and a water bottle as you will be working in the sun for the majority of the day. Even if the sky is overcast, the sun is strong enough to cause burning and heatstroke. We have a local doctor on call who we are able to phone 24 hours a day and the nearest hospital with emergency facilities is 40km away in Marondera. Harare has excellent hospitals and is just a 1.5 hour drive away. In the very unlikely event of an extreme emergency, patients may be flown to Johannesburg in South Africa, which is why your travel insurance should cover medical evacuation.

HIV and AIDS are widespread throughout Africa and the world. We do not encourage promiscuity. It is not only your own health you are risking, but also the health and safety of others around you.

In addition the programme neither allows nor encourages volunteers to develop intimate personal relationships with general project staff and personnel. This can result in the dismissal of the staff member and the removal of the volunteer from the programme.

TRAVEL

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES (MONDAY ONLY)

ARRIVALS - there will be ONE Airport collection at 3PM EVERY MONDAY from CAFÉ ESPRESSO at Harare Inter- national Airport. Should you wish to arrive later than this, we suggest you overnight in Harare on the Sunday night. If you choose to stay in Harare on Sunday night, you will be required to get to the airport by Monday 3PM in time for the transfer.

DEPARTURES - there will be ONE transfer at 8AM EVERY MONDAY from Living with Elephants and Rhinos program to Harare International Airport.

Should you wish us to book a transfer out of these options, there will be a charge of \$100 EACH WAY to be paid.

TRANSFERS

We ask that volunteers arrive and depart on a Monday. When you are looking for flights it would be ideal if your arrival flight to Harare landed before 14:30 and your departure flight leaving Harare departed between 12:00 and 13:00.

These are the most practical times for our weekly transfer and your arrival or departure in these time frames ensures a FREE transfer. However, if it is impossible to arrange these flight times, we can still arrange collection or drop off transfer at any time of your choice for an additional transfer fee of \$100 each way.

FOOD

You will receive three home-cooked meals a day during your stay, prepared for you by our resident chefs. Numwa House has a borehole which provides clean, fresh drinking water. Should you have any dietary requirements or food allergies please let us know before you arrive. On Sundays our staff take their day off, so volunteers are responsible for their own catering. Food is provided, but you will be expected to cook for yourself. Alternatively, you may book a delicious 3-course evening meal. The cost for this is extra at \$20 per person. You will be required to bring any specialist foods along with you (gluten-free/sugar-free/dairy free etc). If you bring these foods, our chefs will be able to prepare these for you alongside other volunteers standard meals.

There is a small bar at the volunteer house which offers a small variety of snacks, alcoholic and fizzy drinks for volunteers to purchase. Your bar bill will be settled at the end of your stay and must be paid in US dollar cash. Please bring small denominations as change can sometimes be an issue.

LANGUAGE

The official languages of Zimbabwe are Shona and English. Most people speak fluent English.

ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Zimbabwe is limited and there are frequent long power outages. The volunteer house has solar lights and a small generator which will run for a few hours a day during power cuts.

Supply: 220V" Sockets: 3-pin UK-style

LAUNDRY

We have a number of staff members at Numwa House and should you have laundry which needs to be done, this can be arranged with them. Please note that you will be asked to wash your own delicates and underwear. Washing powder is provided.

CLOTHING

Please make sure you bring comfortable, lightweight clothes, and clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Zimbabwe is a broad-minded country and it is acceptable to wear shorts and skirts, but the clothes you wear to do your work SHOULD NOT BE REVEALING; hot pants are not acceptable and please keep your shoulders covered.

TIME OFF

You will have time off Saturday Afternoon and the whole day Sunday. Please be mindful that the dedicated full time Staff work year round, and Saturdays and Sundays are their opportunity to be with family and recharge. Please do not request additional activities on these days. Staff members will most likely be too polite to refuse due to cultural sensitivities but will miss out on valuable downtime and time spent with family.

SECURITY

Be aware of the risk of opportunistic crime and take common sense precautions to minimize the chance of becoming a victim. The vast majority of visitors to Zimbabwe suffer no problems but if you have any specific questions about the current situation in the country please contact us directly. This is a family-run game park and is a very close, secure and comforting environment.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Cell phone signal is usually good and cell phone roaming is available. 3G is available in most areas of the conservancy. Wireless internet is available at the volunteer house and runs on a token basis - \$5 per 100mb. The internet in general is very slow in Zimbabwe compared to the first world, and wireless internet outside of major towns and cities is a very expensive luxury, which we only provide to allow volunteers to stay in touch with their families. Please significantly adjust your expectations of the speed and availability of the internet and understand that the costs of having it at all are extremely high. We do not set the cost to make a profit, but to simply try and help cover the costs of providing it as a convenience for volunteers. You will not be able to stream videos or upload large files or photo albums, but you will be able to send text and WhatsApp messages and update Facebook and basic social media. The average spend on tokens is \$10-\$15 per week for low-medium usage. Please note that when there is no electricity due to faults or power cuts, the internet will not work. We will not turn the generator on just to run the Wi-Fi. Should you wish to purchase a sim card, please do so at Harare Airport upon arrival. There will be no opportunity to buy one after this point.

RULES OF BEHAVIOUR

All volunteers must operate within Zimbabwean law and must not act in a way that is offensive to staff or to fellow volunteers. Breach of these principles could lead to your removal from the programme at the discretion of the project staff.

The programme neither allows nor encourages volunteers to develop intimate personal relationships with general project staff and personnel. This can result in the dismissal of the staff member and the removal of the volunteer from the programme.

Please remember to only drink alcohol in moderation.

Please wear appropriate clothing. Inappropriate and revealing clothing like mini-skirts, mini-dresses, mini-shorts and belly button shirts are not allowed to be worn on the premises. Bikinis and bathing suits are only allowed in the pool area.

The decision of the project manager will be final on matters likely to endanger your safety and well-being and that of the other volunteers. Therefore, you must at all times strictly comply with the laws, customs and regulations of the premises. It is vital to keep in mind that the animals in the game park are wild animals and thus it is essential to adhere to all protocols regarding animal interaction, as these rules are put in place to ensure your safety.

GETTING AROUND

You will be working almost exclusively within the conservancy and its immediate surroundings. The conservancy is in the bush and reserve gates are secured at night. Further travel within Zimbabwe is possible using inter-city buses or pre-arranged transfers – staff can provide advice and assistance. Should you wish to visit the markets in Harare, the cost is \$100 each way per vehicle, shared between volunteers. There is no reliable and safe public transport available.

EXPLORING ZIMBABWE

During the project, you will have one and a half days off per week. Should you have time before or after your programme, a trip to the majestic Victoria Falls is a must. It is possible to do this excursion over a long weekend during your programme, leaving on Friday and returning on Sunday or Monday. Bear in mind that you should budget for a car transfer to and from the airport. The cost of this is \$100 each way per vehicle.

WEATHER

Summer (October – March): daytime temperatures in the summer can reach 35°C and days can be long in the field so make sure you have a wide-brimmed hat, plenty of sunscreen and a water bottle. Summer is also the rainy season so it is a good idea to bring a waterproof jacket.

Winter (May – September): winter evenings and nights can get very cold in our area of Zimbabwe so if you are coming during that period make sure you pack some warm clothes, a woolly hat and long trousers as the mornings can also get very chilly. Tracksuit trousers and warm pajamas are essential from May - September!

Africa is dirty and dusty! Dust is an ever-present feature of the bush, particularly during the dry winter months and during the summer it can be muddy from short rain showers. The dust will get into everything and your clothes will get grubby even if you haven't been doing particularly dirty work. Bring clothes that you wouldn't mind never seeing again or throwing away, as there's a good chance that's all they'll be good for when you've finished your programme!

When packing, consider the daily temperature range and in winter consider bringing lightweight layers to peel off during the day rather than one very heavy jacket.

There is a small safe for locking your passport and spending money away whilst you are at the volunteer house. It is not big enough for laptops.

THE FOLLOWING ARE ALL THINGS WHICH PREVIOUS VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF ALL AGREE ARE USEFUL

- WORK GLOVES - these will be used in the game park so should be hard-wearing
- Daypack (backpack): (small) – may be used on drives and walks during the day.
- Sneakers/closed shoes: a pair of comfy shoes will definitely be needed. Hiking boots are not required.
- Sandals/flip flops/thongs/slops.
- Shorts and t-shirts/shirts. Please note that hot pants, mini-skirts and very short shorts are not appropriate attire for work in the game park. Please also remember to dress respectfully when you visit the school or local community; ladies - no mini-skirts or hot pants, men - please no vests. (If you are deemed to be dressed inappropriately, YOU WILL be asked to change)
- Light waterproof jacket (November - March) - just in case!
- Trousers: cargo pants dry faster than jeans and are more comfortable in hot weather.
- Long tops: insects can be a problem in Africa, particularly on summer evenings.
- Warm clothes: it can be very cold in the early mornings on the back of a vehicle!
- Swimming trunks/costume/bikini: there is a pool to cool off in the evenings!
- Towel: an old towel will dry quickly, or use a travel towel. A sarong is also useful.
- Sunglasses: make sure they offer 100% UV protection.
- Hat: a sun hat or cap is essential. For winter volunteers, we recommend you also bring a beanie hat, scarf and gloves.
- Insect repellent.
- 1 litre water bottle.
- Toiletries: please ensure you bring ALL toiletries needed for the duration of your stay. There are no shops once on the conservancy.
- Any prescribed medication: bearing your name, description and dosage.
- Sun cream: high factor, at least SPF 30+.
- Torch/head torch: a good head torch is often more useful than a handheld
- Remember to bring spare batteries and/or a battery charger.
- Camera/Binoculars plus charger.
- MP3 / iPod: remember headphones and charger.
- Electrical adapter: if required (UK, 3-pin square plugs).
- Personal first aid kit: a small pack is useful with plasters, antiseptic cream, painkillers and diarrhea medication.
- Books: we do also have a small library of books which have been left by previous volunteers.
- Earplugs: rooms are shared, so if you are a light sleeper earplugs can ensure a good night's sleep.
- Snacks/sweets: you will not have access to a shop or supermarket while you are here, so please bring anything you might crave with you.
- Money: you will need some cash to pay for Wi-Fi and drinks from the bar. Volunteers spend around \$40-\$150 per week. Small denomination notes are useful please!

FOR THE HORSE RIDING & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME, PLEASE ALSO NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- Please bring a riding helmet
- There is no need for riding boots, but long or 3/4 trousers are advised. Jeans will probably be too hot for summer so lightweight trousers, leggings or long shorts are recommended
- A 1-2 litre water bottle or camel pack is essential as is a small backpack

- A light scarf is useful to protect your neck from the sun or for covering your face when it is dusty
- Bring layers in winter and a backpack to stow them in while you are riding.

Cultural sensitivity begins with the understanding that there are differences among cultures and placing value on this diversity. One can never learn everything about another culture; however, there are practical, everyday steps we can take to develop our cultural awareness.

PLEASE BE MINDFUL TO RESPECT SHONA CULTURE AT ALL TIMES

CLOTHING

In the Shona culture it is considered appropriate for women to dress modestly, especially in regards to revealing the legs. Shorts of knee length or a bit higher are appropriate for everyday wear. Hot pants, mini-skirts and very short shorts are not appropriate attire for work in the game park or community. Please wear loose fitting trousers or a skirt of knee length or longer when making school visits, or visits to the local community. You may be asked to change if your clothes are deemed unsuitable for the work you will be doing.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Outward and public displays of affection to members outside the immediate family, especially of the opposite sex, are not considered culturally appropriate, even in greeting or parting. Shaking hands is appropriate, hugging and kissing is not.

GREETINGS

It is considered very important in Shona Culture to correctly greet anyone whom you may see during the course of the day properly and with respect.

RESECT FOR ELDERS

Elders are very important and highly considered in Shona Culture. Make sure you maintain utmost respect and modesty in the company of elders.

DISPLAYS OF EMOTION

Elaborate displays of emotion are not appropriate in Shona culture. It is respectful to refrain from shouting, screaming, losing your temper and crying in public.

SWEARING

Any form of swearing is considered taboo in Shona culture. It is respectful to mind your language at all times.

SEX AND SEXUALITY

It is not considered culturally appropriate to openly discuss sex and sexuality.

PHOTOGRAPHS

It is respectful to ask permission before you take someone's photograph. Respect their wishes if they do not wish to be photographed.

EXTRA'S

You may find that you have a little bit of extra space in your luggage, and we often get asked by volunteers what kind of things they can bring which would be useful for our game park and community projects. Of

course there is no need to bring anything at all, but we have put together a list of things which are useful and always gratefully received.

FOR THE SCHOOL

- \$25 will pay for a child's school uniform!
- Educational Posters
- Maps
- Educational puzzles and games
- Old (but working) IT equipment such as keyboards, mouse and mouse pads, printers, printer cartridges (ask for details) and other computer consumables
- Scientific Calculators
- Soccer Balls and Netballs

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

- White School Socks (all ages 6-18 years old)
- Underwear (boys and girls)
- Warm hats / gloves / scarves

OTHER ITEMS FOR THE COMMUNITY

- Sewing equipment (please enquire for specifics as much of it is for school uniforms so it needs to be certain colours) such as scissors, zips, cotton, needles, pins, safety pins, buttons
- Sanitary towels for the older girls (\$5 will pay for a woman's sanitary pack provided by the community)
- Women's underwear (12-18 years old)
- Black school shoes (6-18 years old)
- Off the shelf reading glasses (from 1.5 - 3.5)
- Assorted vegetable seeds which grow well in the area in the season

FOR THE LEARNING CENTRE

We have built a learning centre and library for the staff and their families and we now need to equip it:

- Books - for adults and children of all ages, both fiction and non-fiction. If every volunteer brings a book suitable for a child or teenager, we will soon have a well-stocked library!
- Magazines such as Time or National Geographic
- Monetary donations for library furniture, computer software and text books

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations made 61 or more days prior to the start date of the booking will be subjected to an administrative fee to cover the bank charges involved with refunding the client, as well as program reservation.

Cancellations made 60 days or less prior to the start date of the booking will be subjected to a 50% fee of the total booking rate (the package rate). The remaining 50% of the booking rate, with exception of an administrative fee, will be transferred back into the bank account it came out of.

Cancellations made 30 days or less prior to the start date of the booking will be subjected to a 100% fee of the total booking rate (the package rate). In other words, you will not be refunded.

INDEMNITY

Please take note that you will be required to fill an indemnity form in upon arrival at the program.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

CONTACT US ANYTIME

INFO@VOLUNTEERSA.COM

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REAL CONSERVATION.