

Kenya

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Kenya is a developing nation in the lower half of the world's economies. Located in eastern Africa (west of Somalia and north of Tanzania), the climate classifications range from humid equatorial (long dry season) to dry (arid), with cooler temperatures in some high-altitude areas.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

An official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary. Vaccination is usually recommended if you'll be traveling in areas where there is risk of yellow fever transmission.

- ▮ **Requirement:** A vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. Note: Proof of YF vaccination is often required for travelers with airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in risk countries, despite Kenya's published declaration to the contrary under the International Health Regulations.
- ▮ **Official Status:** listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against cholera, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, meningococcal meningitis, rabies, typhoid fever, or a one time polio booster if you haven't previously received one for travel. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2018) Malaria risk due predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year in the entire country. Normally, there is little risk in the city of Nairobi and in the highlands (above 2500 m) of Central, Eastern, Nyanza, Rift Valley, and Western provinces

- ▮ Recommended prevention: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) ^a

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Present in all areas (including game parks) at altitudes <2,500 m (8,202 ft) including the city of Nairobi (see Map 3-31).

- | Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Moderate.
- | Drug resistance⁴:Chloroquine.
- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 85%, *P. vivax* 5%-10%, *P. ovale* rare.
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine.

⁴ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, with moderate risk in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent brucellosis may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

African trypanosomiasis, chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, onchocerciasis, Rift Valley fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tick-bite fever, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include altitude illness, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, helminths, Marburg virus disease, marine hazards, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to kidnapping, ongoing violence, and other ongoing security concerns, Australia (DFAT) advises avoiding travel to areas bordering Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia and nonessential travel to Isiolo County, along the A2 Highway to Moyale District (Marsabit County), and coastal areas from Lamu County to Mombasa and surrounding areas. U.S. (DOS), U.K. (FCO), and Canada (GAC) have more limited warnings.

Terrorism Risk

High risk of attack by transnational terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially in northeastern areas (particularly in areas bordering Somalia) and in Nairobi. Targets may include domestic and international organizations and businesses; public places and events, including those frequented by tourists; and transportation systems. In 2019, an attack occurred in Nairobi in an area frequented by tourists.

High risk of kidnapping by terrorist groups exists throughout the country, especially in areas bordering Somalia and eastern coastal areas, particularly Lamu County. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), journalists, nongovernmental organization workers, missionaries, and aid workers.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, home invasion, sexual assault, carjacking, and murder) and high risk of petty crime

exist in Nairobi (especially in Kibera, Kasarani, Mathare, and Eastleigh neighborhoods); in Mombasa (especially on Likoni Ferry); in Kisumu (Kisumu County); in coastal beach resort locations, national parks, and game reserves; along routes to and from international airports in Nairobi and Mombasa; in other urban areas throughout the country.

Kidnappings by criminal groups occur throughout the country, especially in Nairobi, Mombasa, and other cities. Targets may include foreigners (especially Westerners), journalists, nongovernmental organization workers, missionaries, and aid workers.

Scams involving false identity (such as criminals posing as police officers) have been reported.

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur throughout the country, especially in Nairobi and other major cities, and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities.

Unsafe Areas

Ethnic tensions may be present in northern, northeastern, and western areas of the country, including Mount Elgon and surrounding areas.

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance may be present in Moyale, Marsabit County (close to the main A2 road south) and areas bordering Somalia.

Piracy (involving commercial and private, leisure vessels) occurs in coastal waters.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including the Likoni Ferry. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Other Safety Threats

Risk exists for fatal wildlife attacks on safaris and in game parks and reserves. Travelers should closely follow park regulations, always maintain a safe distance from wildlife, and should not exit vehicles or protected enclosures.

Transportation Safety

Very high risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is greater than 24 per 100,000 population, the highest risk category. Carefully assess the safety of transportation options before any road travel. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark. Driving at night is not advised.

Traffic flows on the left-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Avoid public buses due to safety and security concerns, including risk of armed robbery and hijacking.

Many taxis are unsafe. Use taxis from official ranks or dispatched via smart phone app or radio from a reputable company and ascertain the license or identification number of the dispatched vehicle.

Airline Safety

U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The rainy seasons are from March through June and from October through November. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Kenya

- | United States: [+254] 20-363-6000; ke.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: [+254] 20-366-3000; www.canadainternational.gc.ca/kenya
- | United Kingdom: [+254] 020-287-3000; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-nairobi
- | Australia: [+254] 20-4277-100; kenya.embassy.gov.au

Kenya's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: www.kenyaembassydc.org
- | In Canada: www.kenyahighcommission.ca
- | In the U.K.: kenyahighcom.org.uk
- | In Australia: www.kenya.asn.au

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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