

# Malawi

## Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax<sup>®</sup>, 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

Malawi is a developing nation in the lowest 25% of the world's economies. Located in southern Africa (east of Zambia and south of Tanzania), the climate is classified as tropical dry winter in the north and humid equatorial (long dry season) in the south.

## Immunizations

### Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Malawi, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- Requirement: A vaccination certificate is required for travelers aged  $\geq 1$  year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This also applies to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in risk countries.

### 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, rabies, or typhoid fever. 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.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **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)<sup>a</sup>  
<sup>a</sup>Alternatively, 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: All.

- Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: Moderate.
- Drug resistance<sup>4</sup>: Chloroquine.

- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* 90%, *P. malariae*, *P. ovale*, and *P. vivax* 10% combined.
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine.

<sup>4</sup> Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

## Other Concerns

### Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, including 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.

### Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

African trypanosomiasis, chikungunya, onchocerciasis, tick-bite fever may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

### Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include helminths, 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.*

### Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

### Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, home invasion, and carjacking) and moderate risk of petty crime exists throughout the country, especially in Lilongwe (particularly on Kenyatta Drive and in the area between Old Town and Capital City), Blantyre, and other cities; on or near public transportation; near Mount Mulanje.

Theft of valuables from unattended accommodations is common.

Scams involving false befriending 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 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

A dangerous security environment exists in areas surrounding Mount Mulanje.

### Water Safety

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

Significant 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. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Driving at night is not advised. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark.

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.

Exercise caution on public buses, especially in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe, due to the risk of pick-pocketing.

Private buses do not meet international safety standards (due to unsafe vehicles and poor maintenance).

## Natural Disasters

The rainy season is from November through April. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic activity frequently occurs.

## Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Malawi

- | United States: [+265] 0-177-3166; [mw.usembassy.gov](http://mw.usembassy.gov)
- | Canada: Canada does not have an embassy or consulate in Malawi.
- | United Kingdom: [+265] 1-772-400; [www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-lilongwe](http://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-lilongwe)
- | Australia: [+265] 0-999-960-120

Malawi's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: [www.malawiembassy-dc.org](http://www.malawiembassy-dc.org)
- | In Canada: Malawi does not have an embassy or consulate in Canada.
- | In the U.K.: [www.malawihighcommission.co.uk](http://www.malawihighcommission.co.uk)
- | In Australia: [malawi.com.au](http://malawi.com.au)

## Visa/HIV Testing

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

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