

Webinar: Mastering East Africa As A Destination - Sense Of Africa

Date: 11th September - 2pm UK time. (45 Minutes) **Platform:** ATTA Platform

Webinar Description

Join Sense of Africa for an essential webinar designed to master East Africa as a premier destination. This session will provide travel professionals with the critical, up-to-the-minute knowledge needed to craft flawless itineraries and inspire guests. The webinar will cover crucial updates on Kenya's new eTA, the East Africa Tourist Visa, and essential Yellow Fever requirements. Attendees will also learn about the new mandatory travel insurance for Tanzania Mainland and stay ahead of the latest national park fee changes. Practical insights on regional flight connectivity, as well as tips on local currency and mobile payments like M-Pesa, will also be shared. By leveraging Sense of Africa's unparalleled local expertise, attendees will gain the confidence to provide a seamless and unforgettable client experience.

1. Visa Requirements & Processes in East Africa

- **Kenya:** The traditional visa-on-arrival option has been replaced by a mandatory Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). All visitors must obtain this online via the official portal, www.etakenya.go.ke, before travel. The application requires a valid passport, a photo, travel itinerary, and proof of accommodation. It is highly recommended to apply for the ETA **at least 3 weeks before travel** to ensure adequate time for processing. This eTA **Must** be obtained prior to travel.
- **Tanzania:** The Tanzanian government strongly encourages all foreign visitors to apply for an E - visa in advance through the official online portal: visa.immigration.go.tz. This system is available for both Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. The e-visa application requires you to submit passport information, a photo, travel itinerary, and a return ticket. While the e-visa is recommended, a visa-on-arrival option is still available for most nationalities at major entry points, including international airports and land borders. Travelers from "referral visa" countries are not eligible for a visa-on-arrival and must obtain their visa in advance from a Tanzanian embassy or consulate. Applying for an e-visa beforehand is the most reliable way to avoid potential delays or complications at immigration upon arrival.
For a visa-on-arrival, be prepared to pay the fee in cash (U.S. dollars are widely accepted) and have your return ticket and accommodation details readily available.
- **Uganda:** Uganda offers an online e-visa application system through its official immigration portal: visas.immigration.go.ug. The platform allows travelers to apply for various visa types, including a single-entry tourist visa and the East Africa Tourist Visa. Visas **must** be applied for before travel.
- **Rwanda:** Rwanda has a very open visa policy and nationals of all countries are eligible to get a visa upon arrival. Visitors can also choose to apply for their visa online in advance through the [Irembo e-service platform](#). This offers travelers the flexibility to secure their entry permission before their journey or simply proceed to the immigration counter upon landing.
- **East Africa Tourist Visa:** This is a single, multiple-entry vi0073a for those visiting Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda for tourism. It **must** be applied for and obtained from the immigration authorities of the country where the traveler will first enter the region. The EATV costs **100 USD** and is valid for **90**

days from the date of first entry. This visa becomes invalid once the traveler leaves the three participating countries, **even if the 90-day period has not expired.**

Our team at Sense of Africa assists with providing necessary documentation for visa applications, such as confirmed itineraries and accommodation details, and can offer guidance on the application process.

2. Yellow Fever & Health Requirements

For Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, a Yellow Fever vaccination is generally recommended for personal health, as the virus is endemic in the wider region. The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has **declared that the Yellow Fever vaccination is now valid for life.** It is also strongly advised that travelers consult with a healthcare professional about other recommended vaccinations (such as Hepatitis A, Typhoid, etc.) and to take malaria prophylaxis.

- **Kenya:** A Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for all travelers aged **1 year** or older arriving from countries with a risk of Yellow Fever transmission. This also applies to travelers who have transited for more than 12 hours through a high-risk country. The certificate is generally not required for those arriving directly from a non-endemic country.
- **Uganda:** A valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is mandatory for all foreign visitors aged **9 months** and older, regardless of their country of origin or travel history. Travelers arriving without a certificate may face significant delays or, in some cases, mandatory vaccination at the airport at their own expense.
- **Rwanda:** A Yellow Fever certificate is only mandatory for travelers arriving from, or who have recently visited, a country with a risk of Yellow Fever transmission. Travelers arriving directly from a non-endemic country are not required to present the certificate.
- **Tanzania:** A valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for all travelers aged **1 year** or older who are arriving from or have transited for more than 12 hours through a country with a risk of Yellow Fever transmission. This includes transit in another East African country like Kenya or Uganda. Travelers arriving directly from a non-endemic country are typically not required to present the certificate.

3. Travel Insurance

Mandatory Travel insurance to Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar

Both Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar now have mandatory local travel insurance policies requirement.

Tanzania Mainland: As of the 2025/2026 fiscal year, a mandatory travel insurance fee of **USD \$44** applies to all foreign non-residents. This policy is valid for 92 days and covers medical emergencies, accidents, baggage issues, and rescue operations. This is a separate requirement, and will still be required even if clients have their own private travel insurance. Details of the portal through which the application and payment ought to be made are not out yet but once released every traveler will be required to have the insurance in place before entry into Tanzania Mainland.

Zanzibar: A similar, separate mandatory insurance policy is also in place for all visitors to the island, costing **USD \$44** for adults.

Special Coverage for Adventure Activities

While standard travel insurance is mandatory, many policies exclude high-risk adventure activities i.e.:

Gorilla & Chimpanzee Trekking: A client's insurance must explicitly cover these trekking experiences, which are considered high-altitude or adventure sports. A dedicated clause for trekking is vital, as a

standard policy may not cover injuries sustained on the trail.

Balloon Safaris: Hot air balloon safaris are classified as an adventure sport. A client's policy must include coverage for this activity to avoid any issues in the event of an unforeseen incident.

Mountain Climbing: For those tackling Mt. Kilimanjaro or Mt. Kenya, high-altitude trekking and mountain rescue coverage are mandatory.

Emergency Evacuation & Medical Access

Due to the remote nature of many safari destinations, access to quality medical care can be limited. Emergency medical evacuation services are a critical component of travel and provide peace of mind. It is highly recommended that travelers purchase a short-term membership with a service like **AMREF Flying Doctors**, often available at an affordable fee. This ensures they can be airlifted from a remote safari lodge or camp to a well-equipped hospital in a major city in the event of a serious medical emergency. Our team at Sense of Africa will always be the primary point of contact on the ground to coordinate any medical assistance and evacuation with the relevant service providers and the client's insurance company.

Note: This is a separate policy from any existing private travel insurance, and travelers to both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar may need to purchase separate policies.

4. National Park Fees & Permits

Updated Park Fees for Kenya and Tanzania

There has been some recent and proposed changes in park fees by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in Kenya for 2025/2026, which are expected to take effect in **January 2026**. All park fee payments are also now cashless and must be made via the official government portal [eCitizen](#).

Premium Parks i.e., Amboseli, Nairobi National Park now have a proposed higher rate, which will vary by season. Entry fees for non-residents will be around **USD 80 to USD 100** per adult per day. In Tanzania, park fees vary by park category, and a clear distinction exists between conservation fees, concession fees, and other charges.

In Tanzania, there is a proposed 15 % annual increase on all Park fees for 5 years (2026/2027 – 2030/31). Additional New Fees for Special Zones in Northern Serengeti Fees \$100 (If the accommodation is inside the Park) & \$150 (If accommodation is outside the park)

Quotations from our team at Sense of Africa will always be fully inclusive of all these fees, which can include park entry, camping, and vehicle fees, eliminating the need for clients to worry about these payments.

Special Trekking Permits

It is critical to book all trekking permits well in advance, as they are usually limited and sell out quickly.

- Rwanda: Permits for Volcanoes National Park are currently **USD 1,500** per person for a one-hour viewing as part of Rwanda's high-end tourism strategy.
- Uganda: Permits for parks like Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla are more accessible at **USD 800** per person. Uganda also offers a unique four-hour Gorilla Habituation Experience for **USD 1,500** per person. Permits for chimpanzee trekking, notably in Uganda's Kibale Forest National Park, are also required and cost approximately **USD 250** per person.

5. Flights & Regional Connectivity

International gateways and domestic carriers

Expanded routes are making East Africa more accessible as we have recent route launches from key international carriers like Air France (**to Kilimanjaro**), Brussels Airlines (**now daily flights to Nairobi and Kigali**), and Etihad (**re-launching service to Nairobi**).

International Gateways: The primary entry points for East Africa are **Jomo Kenyatta International Airport** (NBO) in Nairobi, Kenya, and **Kilimanjaro International Airport** (JRO) in Tanzania. Other key gateways include **Entebbe International Airport** (EBB) in **Uganda** and **Kigali International Airport** (KGL) in Rwanda.

Domestic Carriers: A network of these domestic airlines connect these international airports to regional airstrips across East Africa:

- **Kenya:** SafariLink, AirKenya, and Jambojet.
- **Tanzania:** Coastal Aviation, Regional Air, and Precision Air.
- **Uganda:** Aerolink Uganda.
- **Rwanda:** RwandAir serves as both an international and regional carrier.

Best routing between destinations

Kenya & Tanzania Safari: For clients combining a safari in both countries, the most efficient routing is a flight directly from Kenya's Maasai Mara to Tanzania's Serengeti via a border airstrip transfer (e.g., from Migori in Kenya, to Tarime in Tanzania). This saves a full day of driving.

Kenya Safari: Nairobi's Wilson Airport (WIL) is the central hub for all domestic safari flights. From here, travelers can fly directly to numerous airstrips in the Maasai Mara, Amboseli, and Samburu, often starting their game drive immediately upon landing.

Uganda & Rwanda Safari: For gorilla trekking, it is highly recommended to fly from Entebbe (EBB) or Kigali (KGL) to the nearest airstrip to the trekking destination, such as Kihiki for Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. This avoids long, strenuous drives and maximizes time on the ground.

These new options provide more direct flight choices, better connections, and more flexibility for itinerary planning, all of which Sense of Africa can leverage to create the best possible travel routes.

Charter options and luggage restrictions

Charter Flights: For ultimate flexibility, private charter flights are available, offering exclusive direct service to remote airstrips. Companies like AirKenya and Tropic Air operate aircrafts suitable for short, bush airstrips.

Luggage Restrictions: Most domestic and charter flights operate with small aircraft, and luggage is strictly limited. The standard allowance is **15 kg (33 lbs) per person**, inclusive of hand baggage. Only soft-sided bags or duffels are permitted as hard-shell suitcases cannot be accommodated in the luggage compartments of these smaller planes.

Clients with excess baggage can arrange for a "freight" seat in advance to carry additional weight, or arrange to store their luggage at their arrival city hotel for a fee.

6. Currency & Payments

Local Currencies & Exchange Tips

- **Local Currencies:** Each country has its own currency, the Kenyan Shilling (KES), the Tanzanian Shilling (TZS), the Ugandan Shilling (UGX), and the Rwandan Franc (RWF). It is highly recommended that clients carry some local currency for small purchases, local market shopping, and tipping in smaller denominations.
- **Exchange Tips:** Guests are advised to exchange currency at a reputable forex bureau or a major bank in a city. They should avoid street vendors. For the best exchange rates, it is always wise to carry large, crisp USD bills (\$50s and \$100s) as smaller denominations often receive a less favorable rate.

Use of USD and mobile payments (i.e M-Pesa)

The USD is widely accepted in the tourism sector, especially for larger payments like safari lodge bills, park fees (although some are now cashless), and tour packages. It is crucial that any USD notes carried are from 2006 for Tanzania, 2009 for Kenya, 2013 for Uganda and Rwanda or later and are in perfect condition (no tears, stamps, or marks), as **older or damaged bills are often rejected**. Mobile money, particularly M-Pesa in Kenya and Tanzania, is the dominant form of payment for locals and is increasingly used by businesses. While it requires a local SIM card to set up, it's a convenient and secure way to pay for small expenses and services in urban areas and even some safari camps. It's an excellent option for clients who wish to engage more with local commerce.

ATM availability and credit card usage

Major hotels, lodges, and tour operators in the main cities and tourist hubs accept credit cards, primarily Visa and MasterCard. However, a surcharge of **3-5%** is common for card payments. It is essential to note that in remote areas, Wi-Fi connectivity can be unreliable, making credit card payments impossible. ATMs are readily available in all major cities and towns. However, they are virtually nonexistent in national parks and remote safari areas. We suggest that clients withdraw cash in major urban centers like Nairobi, Arusha, or Kigali before beginning their safari. They should also inform their bank of their travel plans to prevent their card from being blocked for suspicious international activity.

7. Weather, Seasonality

East Africa is usually cool at night and early in the morning inland due to higher elevations.

Coastal areas are warm and humid

The "**long rains**" season occurs from March/April to May/June.

The "**short rains**" season occurs from October to November/December. The rainfall is sometimes heavy and often falls in the afternoons and evenings.

- Safari is possible all year round
- Low Season: April, May and November (rainy)
- Mid season: January–March, June, first half of December
- Peak Season Kenya: July – October
- Peak season Tanzania: February, July - October
- Accommodation bottlenecks in peak season

Low & Mid Season Travel

- No overcrowding, enjoy your space
- You get all the attention

- Possible to see/do pretty much everything
- Set/a la carte menu in some lodges as opposed to buffets
- Lower occupancy hence special offers
- Potential for room upgrades
- Single room supplement waivers
- Rates ca. 30% lower during low season

Circuits

KENYA

Northern Circuit

- Samburu Game Reserve
- Mt Kenya
- Laikipia
- Aberdare Mountain Range

Great Rift Valley tourist circuit

- Great Rift Valley
- Lakes – fresh and salt water
- Masai Mara National Reserve

Southern Circuit

- Amboseli National Park
- Tsavo East and West National Parks

Beach Circuit

- Mombasa / north coast
- Diani / south coast
- Lamu Island
- Shimba Hills National Reserve

TANZANIA

Northern tourist circuit

- Arusha town
- Arusha National Park
- Kilimanjaro National Park
- Serengeti National Park
- Tarangire National Park
- Lake Manyara National Park
- Ngorongoro Conservation Area
- Ndutu
- Olduvai Gorge - prehistoric fossils

Coastal and southern circuit

- Dar es Salaam City
- Islands: Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia
- Saadani National Park
- Nyerere Game Reserve
- Mikumi National Park
- Ruaha National Park
- Udzungwa Mountains National Park

Western circuit

- Lake Tanganyika
- Gombe Stream National Park

- Mahale Mountains National Park
- Katavi National Park

UGANDA

The Gorilla & Chimpanzee Circuit:

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park: Home to a large population of mountain gorillas in a lush, dense rainforest.

Kibale National Park: Famous for chimpanzee trekking and its high diversity of other primates and bird species.

Mgahinga Gorilla National Park: Another destination for gorilla trekking, located on the slopes of volcanic mountains.

The Savannah & Wildlife Circuit:

Murchison Falls National Park: Offers wildlife viewing, including elephants, giraffes, and buffalo, with famous boat trips to the powerful Murchison Falls.

Queen Elizabeth National Park: Known for its diverse ecosystems, including savannahs, forests, and wetlands, and for the tree-climbing lions of Ishasha sector.

Lake Mburo National Park: A more accessible park for game drives and activities like horseback riding, offering excellent birdwatching.

Kidepo Valley National Park: Located in the remote northeast, it provides a truly wild and scenic safari experience.

Adventure & Mountain Circuits:

Rwenzori Mountains National Park: For trekkers and climbers interested in the snow-capped peaks and glaciers of the "Mountains of the Moon".

Mount Elgon National Park: Features dormant volcanic peaks and offers challenging hikes and beautiful scenery.

Other Key Attractions:

Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary: The only place in Uganda where you can see white rhinos in the wild.

Lake Bunyonyi: A scenic lake with beautiful islands, often used as a relaxing spot after a safari.

Mabamba Swamp: A popular spot for birdwatching, especially for the rare Shoebill.

RWANDA

For Wildlife & Nature Lovers

Volcanoes National Park: Famous for mountain gorilla trekking and golden monkey tracking.

Nyungwe Forest National Park: An ancient rainforest with incredible biodiversity, offering chimpanzee trekking and a canopy walk.

Akagera National Park: The place for a classic safari to see the Big Five (lions, leopards, buffaloes, rhinos, and elephants), along with giraffes and a boat trip on the lakes.

Gishwati-Mukura National Park: Two small forests offering wildlife and community-based activities.

For Culture & History Enthusiasts

Kigali: A visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial is a must, alongside exploring the city's vibrant art galleries.

Iby'iwacu Cultural Village: Experience Rwandan culture at this interactive village.

Museums: Explore the King's Palace Museum and the Ethnographic Museum to learn about

Rwanda's past

For Adventure & Relaxation

Lake Kivu:

A scenic lake in the Rift Valley, perfect for relaxation and water activities.

Congo-Nile Trail:

A popular trail for hiking and cycling along the Congo-Nile divide, offering stunning views.