

Africamp Team Brief



Welcome to the Africamp Expedition !

We hope this will be a life-changing experience for you, one that will give you a chance to see the flipside of life in Africa and challenge you in every way.

Africamp has been running for many years now and is the foundation for the future of many young Kenyans. We have our own company in Kenya called Africampers, and all of the staff who work for it were once street children. They all went on Africamp as children. Now they are adults and now they are running their own Africamps.

Africamp for Kenyan kids is like Summer Camp, and you are the organisers and facilitators of it! You will be organising all sorts of camps and activities for Kenyan children, while at the same time building projects for the future of schools and hospitals in the country.

You will also get to climb the highest mountain in the country, and go on an overland safari and spend time on the shores of the Indian Ocean. There is time to experience African food, African way of living and also to experience what it means to provide aid in Africa.

Moving Mountains is the charity that was set up by Adventure Alternative Director Gavin Bate after years working in the slums and ghettos of Nairobi to help and support Street Kids. The charity is supported by the company and Africamp is one of the main expeditions that we run which promotes and actually carries out the work of the charity.

In the same way that Africampers is the Kenyan subsidiary of Adventure Alternative, Moving Mountains also has a Kenyan wing to it, which is called Moving Mountains Kenya and it is an international NGO which is run by, you guessed it, ex-street kids who started their lives going on the very first Africamps back in the early nineties.

So Africamp is the foundation from which a lot of this charity work began, and from which all the people who are now earning a living from the company. It has a long and strong history. Now you are going too. So don't forget that although this is one month away for you, and it may well change your lives, for the Kenyans you meet it is much more than that; it has become a way of life, and it changed their lives so dramatically that you won't fully understand it until you have been there and met them. *That is one of the reasons it is such an emotional experience, because this is not about theories on African aid or seeing it on the TV, it will be about real people.*

At Adventure Alternative we want you to see how charities are run which look after street kids in Kenya, and we want you to help run the NGO we have in Kenya. We also want you to get your hands dirty and build something which is useful and not just a token. All our projects come from years and years of working in Kenya. We also want you to challenge yourselves and have the best experience of your life. This booklet will help you get started.

Expedition Itinerary

You are in Kenya for one month, and the broad outline of the trip is as follows:

Days 1 & 2:	Departing UK, arriving Nairobi, preparation for the project
Days 3 - 13	Street kid Camp and Project
Day 14 - 22	Mt Kenya
Days 23 - 29	Safari and time at the coast
Day 30	Depart Nairobi

Departing UK and Arriving Kenya

All teams depart from London Heathrow and all teams travel together with an Adventure Alternative leader. You are given a time to meet at the airport with all your bags and the leader will oversee the check-in. Generally the flights last about 8 - 10 hours and generally they depart in the evening, giving you plenty of time to get to the airport.

We book the seats for the flights but we cannot sell them to you because we are not a ticketing agency. We pay the deposit for you, so that we can negotiate the best prices for seats, but you pay the travel agency yourselves for the balance. We give you the information well in advance so you need to send a cheque by about 8 weeks prior to travel, made out to the agency, and then we receive all the tickets. The Adventure Alternative leader holds the tickets and does a group check-in at Heathrow.

It is important you have your luggage well marked and the address you need to put on the bags is your own UK home address and also our one in Kenya which is:

Africampers Safaris, NPS Campsite, Magadi Road, Nairobi, Kenya.

The local telephone number you can use is +254 722 457195

Some people buy their own flights which is fine with us, as long as you arrive at more or less the same time as everyone else and we can let you know this well in advance so you can purchase your own ticket. If you do this, then you are responsible for your own check-in.

Everyone flies into Jomo Kenyatta International airport which is in Nairobi and you will be met and picked up there by all our staff in buses and coaches. The leader will be with you. You need to buy your own Kenyan visa which normally costs around £35 or \$50USD and you need to fill in a form with some personal details. On the form it will ask for your address while in Kenya and you can use the Africampers address above.

We drive to the NPS Campsite in Nairobi, which is where everyone goes for the first day. It is a very comfortable campsite with hot showers, dining area, dormitories and rooms and a large camping area. It is very safe and private and it is our headquarters in Kenya. There you will meet all the staff and be introduced and have time to settle in. There will be various chats with your leaders about what is happening and time to rest.

You can leave your baggage here, we have lots of storage, and there is internet access and telephones if you want to phone home. It is quite westernised here so a good place to start to get used to being in Africa.

We will take you on various short visits into the slums and areas where the charity and company operate, to start meeting the kids and seeing the schools and clinics. For sure it will be a big shock to you, but it is quite safe and you are in a group and you will find the Kenyan staff to be incredibly friendly and inviting.

The Street kids Project and Camp

The background to this whole programme begins with an idea to take street children off the streets and try to give them a life, an identity and some hope in their future. They are given clothes, a school uniform, a place in which to meet safely, regular food and an opportunity for education. Mostly we give them company and friendship and a sort of surrogate family which is a big security for them. We give them Africamp too, an annual camp that has been going since 1991.

Some of you will be running a rehabilitation camp for about 100 of these children, with campfires, cooking outdoors and making things like tables out of wood. It will be basic and quite different to anything you have experienced before. It will be a community rehabilitation camp - that is, a camp for street children whereby everyone will be helping to do a variety of projects around the site to help improve facilities. The emphasis is on everyone working together for the common good.

We also run more project-orientated trips where you stay in local hostels and work in a slum school like Muthurwa where we have spent years educating children. The project is often quite daunting, renovating classrooms, repairing roofs, building toilets. You name it, we can do it. You don't have to be a carpenter or experienced, you just need to have the will to help out. Every minute will be worthwhile and you'll be also doing a bit of teaching, spending a day in the slums with the kids visiting their homes, taking the kids on outings in Nairobi and even taking them on weekend camps into the Rift Valley. It's tremendous fun and deeply fulfilling.

At the camp you will be in small groups to work closely with up to ten or fifteen children at a time, you will gradually get to know their names, characters, life history and circumstances. You'll know which ones are the troublemakers and which ones aren't. At the end of the day kids are kids, the world over. After a day or two the initial barriers are broken down and suddenly, like a tidal wave, the children pour out all their natural exuberance and love to you. They will be all over you! They will vie for your attention, look for your praise, hold onto you, touch you and accept you as a mother or father figure. How can these kids, who have so little, give so much you will be asking yourself constantly.

It is perhaps daunting to imagine how big an impact you can make on another person's life, and make no mistake about it, you will; therein lies the satisfaction. However minuscule the effort may appear relative to the global size of the problem, it is important to understand that every child is one life, and helping one life may be just about the best thing you will feel you have ever done.

Mount Kenya

The mountain is the highest in Kenya and the second highest in Africa after Kilimanjaro. The main peaks stand at the central point of a large, roughly circular massif rising from around 7000' to over 17,000' at the summits. The twin peaks Batian and Nelion require technical climbing on ice, but Point Lenana, the third peak at 4985 metres (16,450') can be reached by trekkers and is a feasible though challenging goal.

Background - history

Mount Kenya was originally a volcano and the peaks are the remains of a hard central plug. The base of the mountain is over 50 km in diameter. It is close to the equator and it was the seemingly inexplicable presence of snow on an equatorial mountain that first attracted the attention of early European explorers. Most of the camps are named after those people, such as Teleki, MacKinders and Lewis, and the mountain remained largely unexplored until 1929. In fact the country name of Kenya took its name from the mountain which was originally known by the natives as Kima ya Kegnia (Mountain of Whiteness).

Summary of the route

The approach is by road from Nairobi to Nyeri which is well surfaced. We will arrive at the main gate on the Naro Moru route where the permits are checked and equipment offloaded from the trucks. 'Bongo' Woodley, the Park Warden and an old friend of ours, may be around to meet you.

The initial route follows a good path through forest to the Met Station at 10,000'. All around the bamboo jungle is thick and impenetrable and we will hear animals as dusk falls. Elephant, Colobus monkey, deer and lemurs are a common sight, and Mt. Kenya has even had the occasional lion. Our campsite has piped water from the glaciers and plenty of good ground for the tents. After a meal cooked on gas stoves in your tent groups, tiredness will take its toll and sleep will come early.

Day 2 is a hard day as we make our way up the infamous Vertical Bog which eventually bursts out of the forests onto the shoulder of the mountain and open alpine meadows. There may be some cloud here and navigation becomes much more important. The strange landscape includes eight foot giant lobelias and huge rodents called hyrax. MacKinders Camp at 14,200' never seems to get any closer despite being in sight when we drop down into the Teleki Valley and follow the river up towards the huge peaks directly ahead. Arriving at camp often in the dark everyone is very tired and feeling slightly breathless with the altitude, but it is vital to get into dry clothes, get the tents up and the food eaten before sleeping.

Day 3 is a rest day, good news for everybody, acclimatising to the altitude and offering the chance to do a few short hikes in the area. Many people opt to spend the whole day in the tent. It will be very important to maintain water and food intake, even though you may find your appetite is not as good as it was before!

Day 4 goes straight towards the peaks covered in snow and ice that you've been eyeing the day before. We start at 2 am when it is very cold and we move slowly, often in bright moonlight, because sometimes the gradient is a bit steep and people will feel a bit breathless. The terrain is quite easy, rocky and not exposed. As we wind our way gradually around the back of the peaks we pass amazing glaciers, tarns and cliffs on our left. After a few hours we reach the Austrian Hut a small wooden bunkhouse at 15,400' on the edge of the Lewis Glacier which is a good place to rest for a bit. The views are stunning but people will be concentrating on keeping their energy up for the last bit; teamwork is a big factor here.

The ridge route to the summit is a scramble which lasts about 1 - 2 hours. Everything will depend on local conditions but the idea is to reach the summit for dawn, one of the most incredible sights of the trip. You will notice right away that we are thousands of feet above the clouds and on a very clear morning you can actually see Kilimanjaro nearly 300 kilometres away.

The descent is taken carefully and follows the same route down. In one day we can go from the top all the way down to Met Station, then back to the gate the following morning in a few hours where the trucks will be waiting to pick us up.

Preparation

Before we go to the mountain there will be a full day of preparation when everyone will have a chance to put up the tents, try out all the equipment, pack rucksacks and talk about the week ahead. You will be given local money to buy your food, gas, stoves and pots at this time. This is an important time after the Camp to start thinking about the mountain, the next stage of the Expedition. You work in tent groups and it is up to you to decide what food to buy and what you will need for the expedition, and the leaders are all on hand to assist and work with you.

Food and Cooking

The food is what you make of it! You'll be going into the local supermarkets to buy your meals and prepare some menus. We'll help you with advice but essentially it's up to you. You can pretty much buy any western food in Kenya so most people opt for what we would normally have at home.

Weather

The weather can be very unpredictable, from clear and sunny to hail and rain storms. We have to be prepared for all eventualities. Generally the mornings are clear and cold, with afternoon clouds coming in at around lunchtime. At MacKinders Camp and above the nights are spectacularly clear with star constellations from both north and south hemispheres.

Teamwork and training

Teamwork will be vital. You will be in small self-sufficient groups of 4 or 5, carrying all your own gear and entirely responsible for your camping needs. You may have to help another person with his or her rucksack, or double carry on bamboo poles. Most people have at least one bad day on Mt. Kenya, and reaching the summit should be seen as a bonus not the ultimate aim.

You will need to know all about camping, food preparation, hygiene, looking after yourself in the hills, navigation, emergency procedures and first aid. However since Mt. Kenya is a lot higher than what most people are used to, there will be facts and training specifically relevant to Mt. Kenya that will be discussed with you before and on the way up the mountain. The trick is to maintain a proper pace, don't overexert yourselves and keep a good positive outlook.

Illnesses

Altitude sickness is the biggest worry and it makes no distinction between fitness levels. Anyone can get it. It is folly to dismiss altitude in the urge to reach the summit - safety will be the priority. Our plan will be to maintain a slow ascent, acclimatise properly with breaks and keep a high water intake at all times. AMS, as the illness is known, strikes quite quickly and is very debilitating. The cure is simple - go down. Your mountain guide is qualified and experienced to recognise any symptoms and deal with them immediately. Descent on Mt. Kenya can be swiftly executed and we have a full and comprehensive back-up if necessary from the Park Rangers, including radio comms, stretchers and emergency accommodation in bunkhouses if necessary.

Cold is another factor but easily dealt with. If you follow the kit suggestions then you will have enough, but it will be up to you to make sure wet clothes are changed out of quickly and kit is kept dry. It comes down to looking after yourself and your team on the mountain. Don't worry - there is plenty of time on the mountain to learn and improve.

Medically the most common ailments are all a result of a combination of - altitude and tiredness, which in turn are greatly influenced by - not eating and drinking enough. It is a simple equation to bear in mind - what you put out can only be as much as what you put in. Having said that some people are less fortunate than others and suffer the altitude more. Headaches can become very tiresome and can lead to feelings of disorientation, nausea and vertigo. People just want to lie down and be beamed off the mountain ! Others suffer diarrhoea which in turn causes dehydration, while some catch flu symptoms and end up coughing all night in the thin air. It is important to understand that these are all minor altitude symptoms and do not necessitate a full casualty evacuation. The important thing is not to allow it to get worse. After two nights at MacKinders everyone suddenly starts to feel better and summit morning sees a lot of determined people gathering in the dark and cold to start the final leg up.

Reaching the top

We have always been very successful on Mt. Kenya and it is down to some very simple factors - good pace, good acclimatisation, good teamwork and a bit of good luck with the weather. But getting to the top is secondary to getting back down safely. The top is only halfway !

Reports

Reaching the summit is of course a marvellous achievement but there is plenty of other things to interest while on Mt. Kenya, from the odd plants and animals to the incredible glacial erosion and jungles. If you are doing the climb for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award you might want to consider that your report looks at the nature around you rather than just the rigours of the climb itself. Look at the section for Duke of Edinburgh candidates to give you more detailed ideas.

Coming off the hill

When we come off the mountain, everyone is generally tired, often wet and muddy and dying for a hot shower. Unfortunately, being Africa, this is not something I can guarantee ! You will have to put up with a bit more discomfort until we reach our local country hotel where we started the climb from. Once there you can wash and prepare for the next leg of your expedition, the safari and the coast.

Safari to the Coast

Having now run a full rehabilitation camp for around 150 street children in a shanty town, done a building project, then climbed a 16,000 foot mountain, had a tribal evening where the locals killed a goat and roasted it in your honour (even giving you the chance to drink the blood), you are now ready for a slightly more relaxing time in Kenya.

Everybody looks forward to the safari and the coast for obvious reasons. It is what many people come to Africa for, and no visit to a country like this can be complete without seeing the wild animals in their own environment. This part of the expedition takes the form of a fully self-sufficient tented safari. We spend a few days in National Parks and experiencing life with the animals. We eat outdoors and live in safari tents and go on game drives to see the wildlife.

The Safari

Different groups have different safaris and it is hard to cover all the options in just a page or two here. Sometimes we visit the Samburu National Park, while others go on an overland trip across Tsavo National Park. Sometimes we go to private ranches like Sweetwaters and camp centrally, and then go on game drives from that point. We normally spend about 2 nights in one area and then move on. The leaders and the Kenyan staff will try to find out where the best wildlife is to be found and take you there. The essence of a good safari is to be flexible and to be patient.

The game drives starts early and we follow trails that lead to the most likely places where animals can be seen. People are often surprised by how close we get to them, but we are perfectly safe in the vehicles. Elephant, hippos, giraffe, many types of gazelle, zebra, crocodile and African buffalo are all common sights.

Some groups go on a safari in the Samburu Park which is one of the most splendid in all of Kenya, packed with animals and we camp wild, just by a river. During the day we go on game drives and even walking through the park. We'll also visit traditional Samburu villages and meet the natives. It is slightly north of Mt Kenya and generally done just before the mountain climb. For these groups, the journey to the coast is down by road, driving down to Mombasa and then onto Malindi for the final part of the trip, the tropical coastline of the Indian Ocean!

The Coast

It is an exciting moment when the trucks and vehicles finally pull into Malindi or Mombasa. We try to use campsites that front directly onto the beach and the Indian Ocean for a bit of paradise on earth. We set up the tents but lots of people sleep on the beach. Food is prepared on site or we got out to local restaurants. Most people are happy to relax, sunbathe, explore the town of Malindi, buy souvenirs, play football on the beach, get their hair plaited and obviously swim in the sea.

We all go snorkelling in glass-bottomed boats that take us out about 500 yards and you can spend a few hours swimming amongst the tropical fish and seeing the amazing coral formations.

Other activities you may want to try yourself are windsurfing, sailing and diving. We are here for nearly a week and there is time to get used to a much more relaxed routine than before. There are clubs to go to in the evening or perhaps just sit on the beach in a group with a guitar.

Back in Nairobi

We arrive back at Camp in Nairobi and spend the last couple of days shopping in local markets around the city. Souvenirs are plenty and by now people have become quite good at haggling and even old clothes are swapped for soapstone carvings!

We can revisit the local school where some of the children who were at the camp study. It will be ironic that the children now become your guides through the huge shanty areas and it is their presence that ensures your safety. There are no other white people here but you will have a unique opportunity to see what sort of life the children have in their home area.

Our last night is special. We go to the world-famous Carnivore restaurant, one of the most upmarket places in Kenya. A large function room is set aside for us. The menu is unique, a twenty foot charcoal pit with up to twenty different types of meat roasting over it, including game meat such as crocodile. The meat is served to you on swords and it doesn't stop until you remove the flag at your place. Some people have managed up to six servings of meat!

Kenya info

Currency

Kenya's unit of currency is the Shilling (slang: Bob). Bank notes are available in denominations of 10/-, 20/-, 50/-, 100/-, 200/-, 500/- and 1000/-. In the slum areas make sure you carry small denomination notes. The exchange rate is about 120/- to the £. You can also change euro very easily. If you are in remote areas then we will advise you when it is best to change money. Sterling and euros are all accepted in banks and bureaux de change.

Money

In general most people bring about £150 in cash with them for the month and most of that is spent on souvenirs and sweets or drinks. The cost of the trip includes everything, so any spending money is only for personal items. You do however need to bring £35.0 or \$50USD for the visa at the start of the trip.

Credit cards are only accepted in large retail shops. However there are numerous ATM's where you can draw on Visa, American Express and Mastercard (don't forget to remember your PIN number for cash withdrawal). For changing cash you can go to a bank or a Forex bureau.

Costs

Things are generally very cheap in Kenya for us. Most of your cash will be spent on things like bottles of soda (25/- each), and items of food for which you will not spend more than 100/-. Buying souvenirs is all down to your ability to haggle, and remember that in Kenya there is no fixed price. Soapstone carvings can cost 250/- and you can buy beautiful materials for around 100/- for a large table covering. Tourist shops are more expensive and a coffee-table book on Kenya for instance can cost much the same as at

home. Postcards are about 20/- for a small one and a stamp is 24/-. We normally recommend £100- £150 spending money.

If you buy a Kenyan SIM card for your mobile phone you will need to buy local credit in the form of phone cards. Phone calls home on your mobile can be expensive but a text message is quite cheap, about 10/- shillings.

Water

We will be supplying bottled water, but you will also want to buy your own drinks and snacks if you wish. The water is generally safe on site and on the mountain but it is still advisable to drink sodas if you're thirsty.

Begging

You may feel pestered by beggars. Do not be tempted to give them money as it simply encourages the habit. Far more useful would be to bring with you any old clothes that you may want to give to the children. They will also love receiving things like pencils, pens, colourful trinkets for the girls, a pair of shoes and socks (in general go for small or medium sizes).

The trick is to be open and friendly, without scaring them, but also to be firm. You cannot attribute the same thought processes to them as you have, since they live in a world of permanent desperation and hunger, a state which tends to change you somewhat. If you are at all worried then talk to one of the leaders.

You may want to help the kids. Please, please use our Moving Mountains charity as your basis for helping children. We have a set-up that is well-established and very efficient. It is there for your benefit as donors as well as for the benefit of the kids. We want you to get involved. Some people think they can do their own thing and feel that by giving money themselves, it will give them a particular sense of pride that they did it without having to go to a charity. Unfortunately this can cause everything from favouritism to kids being beaten up and thrown out of their home and it definitely confuse families and kids who understand the support system that we have put in place, which is one they trust because it is tried and tested and it comes from much consultation with them.

We really can help you with helping others, and do it in a way which will become a part of a rapidly growing and very efficient charity.

Security

Be wise, and keep careful check of your documents, passport and money, especially cameras. A money bag will be very useful and it is common sense not to display large wads of cash in public. If you want then there will be opportunity to store your valuables at base in Nairobi. It is not recommended to bring your finest dress watch or expensive jewellery with you.

The Kenyan staff know exactly where it might be possible to lose items or be in some danger. They will tell you when it is a good idea to leave your cameras at home.

Communication

On the mountain you are out of contact of landlines but at all times you can use your own mobile phone which will work if you have roaming access, or you can buy your own Kenyan SIM card which is very cheap. In emergencies people can contact the leaders direct by email or on Gavin's number below:

Tel Nos: 077400 76725 or 00254 722 457195

Email: office@adventurealternative.com

Internet is notoriously slow in Kenya so we tend to not recommend hours spent in internet cafes. Most times people use their mobile phones to send text messages home and your phone will work on top of Mt Kenya so the obligatory "I'm on top of the world!" call is generally made.

Luxury Things to bring

A roll of DoubleVelvet SuperSoft Toilet Tissue if you don't fancy the rather abrasive Kenyan variety. Also consider wet wipes, moisturising cream and a diary. Also bring the names and addresses of sponsors who you can send postcards to from Kenya. Don't forget a reading book either and learn some Swahili ! An attempt to speak the language will really help to break down any awkward silences.

Post-Expedition Talks

If you are planning to do talks about the expedition and especially the kids when you get back, then start planning now. Take slide film which you can use for shows, or digital cameras for powerpoint presentations. There's nothing worse than handing round pictures with lots of blue sky, khaki land and three small dots that were apparently 'the biggest elephants alive'. Your sponsors and supporters will want to see a good visual show. Consider bringing recording equipment - the sounds of Africa are as vital as the sights. You can bring a video camera too, just keep it safe.

Alcohol/Drugs/AIDS

Common sense dictates that getting inebriated is a pretty silly thing to do in a slum, and buying local drugs or 'bangi' has horrors all of it's own. As for AIDS in Kenya, this will be discussed on site but the advice is simple. If a child is cut then let the local medical services deal with it. We have a clinic on site and they cope with all accidents. We have to rely on people's common sense of course and we will advise you on how to look after yourself to avoid any dangers at all, but we do also have a rule which is in the booking terms and conditions which allows any Adventure Alternative leader to send someone home who is behaving in a way which may harm or hurt themselves or other people. This goes for the Kenyan kids too. We will have little patience with people who smoke in front of the children for example. The advice is simple: don't.

Student Cards

Please bring your student card with you! If you don't have one then please get a letter from your school stating that you are a student or giving your date of birth. This is important for the entry into the National Parks and as a secondary form of ID. Also make a photocopy of the card or letter.

Vaccinations

Everyone should go to their GP and ask about taking their necessary injections. Also discuss malaria tablets and any changes that may be made to personal medications if necessary. You need to do this about five months before the trip. The main jabs to get are tetanus and hepatitis. You do not need a yellow fever certificate to enter the country.

There are different types of malaria tablets and your GP will advise you as to what is currently best. Malorone or Doxycycline is the most popular and has minimal side effects.

The Mountain

Start a fitness training programme ! It will be very useful when we get to Mount Kenya. Also make sure that you are or already have done the necessary training and practise expedition hikes for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, and I urge you to make sure your Operating Authority are fully in support of your trip. Adventure Alternative is an access organization for The Award so we have full authority to sign your books up for the residential and expedition sections, but you still need official acceptance from your local operating authority.

On our website is a downloadable pack especially about the mountain which details all the aspects of the safety and the climb itself. It is particularly useful for Duke of Edinburgh Award operating authorities, so please do direct them to it or email it to them. Do not hesitate to put them in touch with us directly if there are questions you cannot answer yourselves.

Insurance

We have an insurance policy which you can buy online through our website. It costs an additional £50.00 and you can pay online with a credit card. The complete policy is on our website, please read through it if you wish. Alternatively you can buy your insurance elsewhere, but we will need to see a copy of it, so please bring the insurance papers with you. Some people get travel extensions on their parents home policy which can be cheaper, or, if you pay for your balance of the air flight on a credit card, some companies will include travel insurance as a package bonus. There are many options but it is worth looking into them at an early stage to work out what is best for you. Some schools opt for a group policy organised through the school which can also be more economical.

Stuff for the kids

You may want to bring some stuff out for the children. It doesn't have to be a lot, but things like old children's shoes, any clothing, underwear, pens, pencils, colouring books, easy-to-read reading books, toys, old dolls, cheap Walkmans (and batteries), pictures of your home and family, anything to do with washing yourself and things like friendship bracelets, baseball hats, belts and so on. Remember they are largely malnourished kids so nothing too big in size. If you really want to be popular then bring footballs with pumps, skipping ropes, balls and any football strips.

Kenya Expedition Kit list

Your rucksack should weigh no more than 20kgs for the aeroplane and you can take up to 5kgs in your cabin baggage.

Travel Clothes

Loose fitting and comfortable for the flight. You will be able to store these clothes while in Kenya. Don't bother with over-smart clothes.

Bags

One rucksack of about 65 litres is adequate and one piece of cabin baggage which is old and durable enough for being thrown around trucks, camp sites etc. Take a small money bag too. You can put your rucksack etc into a duffle bag for travelling. You may well want to leave clothes in our store for various parts of the trip so the duffle bag is very useful.

General Clothing

Bring clothes on the basis of having several changes for the month. You will be able to wash underwear but probably not always things like jeans. There are handwashing facilities but no drying machines so you need to rely on the sun!

T-shirts, Shorts, trousers or long skirt, trainers/shoes, sunhat, shirts, swimwear, sandals/reefs, socks, towel, underwear etc. All these clothes should be comfortable, old and stuff that you do not mind getting dirty and torn, in fact you may end up leaving it in Kenya when you come home.

Mountain Extras

Fleece, Gloves thick

Warm hat

2 pr hiking socks

Waterproofs Gaiters

Rollmat

Mug, Cutlery, Bowl/plate

2 x 1lt water bottles

Thermals

Sunglasses

Hiking shirt/top

Hiking boots

Sleeping bag, 3 season

Torch + spares

Personal Admin & First Aid

Toiletry bag - suncream, moisturiser, lysyl, Paracetamol, malaria tablets, insect repellent, prescribed Medicines, germolene, Vitamin tablets, Immodium, Bonijel, Plasters

Documentation & Misc

Passport, photocopy of pp, money, camera & film, books, spare laces, batts, paper & pens, copy of insurance, copy of student card

General kit info

Make sure hiking boots are leather and broken in. You can take leather or fabric.

A sleeping bag is only as good as your rollmat. Make sure it's a thick closed cell mat. Make your own sleeping bag liner if you want from an old sheet sewn into a mummy shape. Don't make it too tight around you.

You will be able to wash clothes - handwash in Omo powder, that is. The problem is trying to dry things so you may only have the opportunity to wash smalls. On the mountain and on the coast there is no real opportunity to wash clothes at all.

OLD CLOTHES for the project and camp, they will get very dirty, covered in paint quite possibly. You need travel clothes which are clean for the travelling home bit, and for the restaurant, but in the schools, camps etc it will be pretty dirty. A lot of people just leave stuff behind because it's not worth taking home!

If you wear contact lenses take plenty of saline and comfort drops- it can get dusty. Mosquito nets are optional. The tents have inbuilt nets and people in the past have generally not had a big problem with insects. Do not bring porcelain plates - bring plastic and a few spare spoons - they always go missing.

Girls will have to dress conservatively in shanty towns and in public. You will draw unnecessary attention to yourself and maybe cause offence if revealing clothing is worn.

Keep your money somewhere safe in a bumbag. Do not bring large wads of notes with you. If you take sterling cash with you make sure they are Bank of England notes, not regional notes eg Northern Irish notes or Scottish notes.

For the mountain, work on a layering system which gives you versatility - T-shirt or thermals, shirt or warm top, fleece, waterproofs. Gloves and hats are vital - remember spare socks can double as mitts in emergencies. Do not pack too much - the tents, stoves and food have to go into your rucksack for the mountain. Group equipment will not have to be put into your rucksacks at the airport - they go separately. Pack your own rucksack and take lots of plastic bags.

For camera buffs, take 200 ASA film for general use, both slides and prints. A fast film of about 1000 ASA is good for dawn on Mt. Kenya and perhaps a 100 ASA for the sunny coast.

Choose your clothing based on usefulness and durability, not for fashion statements. Some clothes you may want to give away or swap at the end for souvenirs. For the coast, snorkelling gear will be provided. When you're with the kids just wear old clothes, you will get dirty. There will be a few times when you want to look decent - wear your travelling clothes for those occasions.

Commonly Asked Questions

1. How many are going and am I the only individual ?

Normally between 20 and 30 on an expedition (necessary to look after 100 street kids), aged between 16 and 21, male and female mix, and a mix of groups and individuals.

2. Can we leave our stuff somewhere safe ?

While you're on the mountain, you can safely leave gear at the site in our store. If you want we can look after passports and valuables for you aswell. When we go to the coast most people leave behind all their mountain gear at the site and just take what they need. Keep one set of travel clothes separate throughout, so you can go home in something vaguely clean.

3. How much spending money should I bring ?

About £150.00.

4. How should I bring my money into Kenya ?

Don't bother with traveller cheques - they are more expensive to change, it takes ages in the bank and is hardly worth it for £150.00. You can change your cash in the UK for Kenyan Shillings (rate : 115 to the £).

5. What about political problems in Kenya ?

Be assured that we are quite safe a) at the site which is outside Nairobi, b) on the mountain where we are on our own and c) on safari where there are only animals. We have never experienced any problems with our expeditions in Kenya.

6. What sort of personal medical gear do I need to bring ?

We will have a very comprehensive medical kit with us, but you should also have some supplies like: Nurofen, paracetamol, plasters, indigestion tabs, antiseptic, Baby Wipes, stomach sickness tabs (like Buccastem), your malaria tabs and any prescription drugs.

7. Will I be able to phone home and can people phone me ?

The answer is yes, but on the mountain and going overland you are out of touch, and phoning from a landline in Nairobi is expensive. Your mobile phone will work however, make sure you have roaming access - texts are about 40p each and a call can cost around £1.00 per minute. Post can be sent to Africampers Safaris, PO Box 9388, 00200 City Square, Nairobi, Kenya.

8. I'm worried about food !

The food is generally based around vegetable or meat stews and ugali (maize meal) with plenty of fruit, bread, eggs and chappattis. You can get all your pasta, cheese and so on in some of the 'western' shops, but only in Nairobi. We will try to cater as much as possible for any other dietary preferences but it is sometimes very difficult in certain areas. Please understand that sometimes you will not be altogether happy with the food for any number of reasons. Part of the expedition experience is to cope with what is available in an African country. Generally though there is little problem and people can eat enough of what they like to enjoy and not starve!