



What to Expect When Coming to Kenya with Us

❖ Food

This is often the most asked about topic. You are welcomed and encouraged to bring your own snacks along the trip. For more information about that, look at the **Packing** section.

1. Kenyan Tea:

Taking of tea in Kenya is likely the most important social activity you will encounter. **Be prepared for this—Kenyan tea is prepared with Kenyan black tea and steeped with more whole milk than water.** It is generally prepared steamy hot and is almost always safe to drink. Get yourself ready for this experience. You're going to have to drink it. You don't have to drink the whole cup, but you will have to at least sip a small amount as a courtesy.

2. Breakfast:

We provide daily eggs to order either made by Brad or Cherie along with local fruits, oatmeal, local cereal, juice and/or yogurt when available. White bread, jams, & peanut butter are available as well for breakfast along with coffee and tea.

3. Lunch:

- As part of our morning routine, we prepare brown bag lunches with peanut butter sandwiches and fruit. This is where your personal snacks come in handy.
- **BE PREPARED TO EAT IN THE FIELD!** Eating food prepared by the people we visit communicates so much more than almost anything else we do! It goes a LONG WAY in forming relationships. Likewise, refusing their food, culturally communicates that you find them unclean and lower than you in status.
 - ◆ We communicate our dietary needs ahead of time to our staff, which is why it is so important for you to share any restrictions before the trip. It is VERY difficult to accommodate those needs if we find out while we're already in Kenya.
 - ◆ Most often the food provided out in the field is safe, and rarely is anything exotic (think beans, rice, stew, cooked greens, etc). Anything that is steamy hot is generally safe to eat. When in doubt, ask Cherie or Brad.
 - ◆ **If you find yourself in a situation where you simply don't want to eat something, please be discreet and look for something at least small to eat.** Talk with Brad & Cherie about your concerns to make sure that your actions are not offensive.
 - ◆ In general, have an open mind. Try new things. Those who approach food with an attitude of openness and adventure often enjoy the trip the most and are surprised by the blessing of sharing meals without reservation. This is an act of faith.

4. Dinner

This is the easiest and most delicious meal of the day. We will have a cook prepare dinner in our home each evening unless we are traveling. During travel days, dinner will be served in a hotel.

5. Water

We provide filtered water. Bring 2 water bottles to be filled in the house daily. Expect to drink room temperature water most of the time. We expect you to drink plenty of water as it is best way to fight jet lag, adjust to higher altitude, and prevent a whole host of problems.

6. Snacks

These are recommendations to choose from. Please DO NOT bring everything on the list, and only bring items that you plan to eat in the time you will be there. Keep in mind that the only milk available is whole milk as you plan items that may need milk added:

- Dry oatmeal
- Nuts
- Dried fruit
- Cream of wheat
- Mint tea
- Peanut butter or other nut butters
- Packaged tuna
- Jerky (beef, turkey, tuna, salmon, etc)
- Flavoring packets for water
- Flavor packets with electrolytes
- Granola bars
- Protein bars
- Peanut butter powder
- Hard mint candies
- Chewing gum
- Instant breakfast (Carnation, for example)

❖ Clothes

- Social norms regarding dress have dramatically changed in the last 10 years. Long gone are the days when women wore long skirts on mission trips even so there are a few things to consider that are unique still to east Africa.
- Legs→ Cover them from the knees up.
 - This goes for men or women, showing skin above the knee draws a lot of unwanted attention especially white skin. Trust us, it's just not a comfortable experience for you or the rest of the team when someone is wearing shorts above the knee.
 - If you're a runner, bring leggings to wear under loose running shorts. Women's running shorts are typically WAY TOO short for use in Kenya.
- Underwear→ Be prepared to hand wash them yourself. It is culturally indecent to wash another person's underwear. Also, be prepared for your underwear to be hung out to dry in view of your team members.
- Shoes:
Where do I begin?
 - Your shoes are going to get dirty, white sole-shoes brought to Kenya usually are permanently stained with the red-clay dirt.
 - Your shoes are also going to raise concerns when you travel back through customs, so consider bringing shoes you may be happy to leave behind. Those old, ugly, but comfortable walking shoes are perfect!
 - You are going to do a lot of walking!
 - Please do not buy shoes and bring here that haven't been broken in first. We have made this mistake too many times—please learn from us!
 - See comments below for women's packing & more information in the packing section.
- For Women:
 - Bring 1 comfortable, loose, easy-to-move-in skirt or dress(bring more if you like wearing skirts). There are a few pastors who still speak "the evils of women wearing pants," so it's good to be prepared just in case.

- If you plan to wear skirts often, we recommend bringing a pair or two of comfortable shorts to wear under.
- Short-sleeve t-shirts and button-up cotton shirts are recommended. Sleeveless tops are okay if modest-- as long as they are not tank top or cami-style with lots of skin exposed. This is a matter of modesty and practicality—the sun can be scorching to skin here on the Equator, so covering your shoulders and neck is good practice.
- Just remember, the more skin you reveal, the more uncomfortable attention you tend to experience.
- *This is for pure vanity's sake, but I'm going to say it anyway*→Women in Kenya where very cute, delicate shoes especially for church and other formal occasions. Feel free to ignore this if you are less vain than me (Cherie), but I often feel silly wearing big, bulky athletic shoes into church with ladies wearing some pretty flashy high heels, and such.
 - What I recommend: bring a pair of comfortable, neutral, modest, dressy-type flats—something comfortable enough to walk in, not valuable enough that you'll worry about them getting dirty, but somewhat attractive enough that you don't feel like an ogre (some of you will thank me for this)!
- Around the house & within the compound, the rules are more lax. Feel free to wear short running-style and sleeveless cami tops to sleep in as it can be humid at night.
- Swim suits: if by chance during travel days we stay at a lodge with a pool (we'll let you know ahead of time if this is remotely even a possibility), wear swim suits **ONLY IN THE SWIMMING AREAS**. There are no restrictions on the type of suit, just cover up outside of the pool area. Most hotels provide wraps for you to cover up easily with when walking to and from the pool area.

➤ For Men:

Packing is generally easy for you. All other tips packing apply with one addition:

- Bring at least one pair of khaki-style or dress pants with a button-up shirt for church (wearing ties are not expected).
- Dress shoes are not expected. Most men bring a pair of neutral walking or low profile hiking shoes that look decent with khaki-style pants.

❖ Sleeping arrangements

- Beds are generally hard, foam mattresses. Most people (including me) find this to be very good for your back, but everyone is unique.
- Pillows are often as hard as the mattresses, so bring a small travel pillow if that is important to you.
- Mosquito nets will be provided for you to use at night.
- You will likely sleep in a twin-size bed. You may be sharing a room with another team member within our house or in the next-door apartment within the same compound. During travel days, you may be sharing a hotel room with a team member with a similar set up.

❖ Showers & Toilets

- In the house, running water and standard toilets are available.
- Anywhere other than the house is fair game. Be prepared to use a squatty potty or outhouse anywhere else.
- We will provide toilet paper, but a travel pack of personal wipes is a good idea.
- Water from the tap is not safe to drink.
- We have a water filter for you to use for drinking, filling your bottles, and for brushing your teeth.
- Never brush your teeth with tap water.

- Hot showers are available as long as the electricity is working. Be prepared for the possibility of cold showers if the power goes out, and it often does.

❖ Electricity

- Keep in mind the electricity is prone to outages and surges. This means plugging your valuable phones, cameras, etc directly into outlets is risky.
- We recommend bringing a battery pack for charging these devices.
- We have 1 hair dryer available that works safely here. Please do not bring a hair dryer from home. It will likely burn up as well as flat irons and curlers. We have found dual voltage versions still get overheated.

❖ Packing

Other than the attached packing list, here are a few general tips:

1. Reduce packaging: As much as possible take items out of their packaging and dispose of them at home. There are no landfills here in Kenya, so reduce as much as possible.
2. Don't bring plastic baggies → **One-time use plastic is illegal in Kenya. We can be fined for throwing out plastic packaging.** Instead bring reusable storage containers such as small snack containers.
3. Consider bulk items versus individual packaging and for reasons already mentioned. Try to store them in reusable storage options such as plastic containers or fabric packing cubes.
4. Keep items in their original packaging. TSA has been cracking down on "organic items" in your luggage, especially carry-ons. Keep food in its original packaging to be safe until you go through security.

See the attached packing list for specifics.

❖ Health:

- Medicines & Shots
 - **Malaria:** We require for short trips of less than a month to see your doctor for medication to prevent malaria.
 - Please talk with Cherie before going to your doctor. While we are not medical practitioners, there are unique questions to ask your doctor and potential side effects to consider before your doctor writes you the script. There are several medications that may be prescribed.
 - **Yellow Fever Vaccination:**

This is required when going through the borders of Kenya and Tanzania. This requirement is slowly becoming less stringent. It all depends on your flight itinerary, but in most cases it is required:

 - Direct flights from European countries with no layovers in Africa do not require it.
 - Flights on Ethiopian Air will require vaccination.
 - Flights landing in Kilimanjaro will require vaccination.
 - If your trip involves any travel across the border into Tanzania, it will be required.
 - **Yellow Fever Vaccination:**
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- Prevention:
 - Pre-hydrate: The flights can be quite dehydrating, and it can be challenging to get enough water to drink. We recommend 5-10 days before the trip, start drinking 8 glasses/day to help you through the flights and jet lag. If you're already low on fluids due to not drinking enough water before you fly, it can be difficult to recover once on the ground in Kenya.

- Probiotics: We're not doctors, of course, but I (Cherie) have significantly reduced incidents of traveler's stomach issues since I started taking probiotics before (5-10 days), during, and after (5-10 days). Talk with your doctor to see if this is a good strategy for you.
- Let Cherie or Brad know what medications you are taking on the trip with you in case of emergency or to discuss potential side effects that could become an issue. For example, many people aren't aware that their regular medications cause sun sensitivity. In Ohio, this is not such a problem, but in Kenya this is much more of a concern. In addition, most preventive malaria medications increase sun sensitivity as well. Please discuss these concerns in detail with your doctor.
- If at all possible, **do not make any major changes in medication or diet right before the trip**. Give yourself 2-4 weeks *at least* to monitor any potential side effects prior to departure. It is essential for your safety that you communicate any such changes with Brad or Cherie prior to the trip and as soon as possible.
- Update any shots. Updating any routine shots is also a good idea...once again give yourself a couple weeks before the trip to recover from any side effects.
- Vitamins or supplements: Many people benefit from taking a good multivitamin on the trip or supplements that help with sleep or insure you're getting enough protein. But please like shoes, don't try them out for the first time in Kenya.
- Jet lag will make it difficult to sleep. Over-the-counter medications for sleep can be very, very helpful for the first few days to get your sleep schedule on track. We only recommend doing so for a day or two. That being said, be mindful of medication interactions and side effects if you've never tried medications for sleep. Everyone is very unique. Melatonin has been recommended by sleep experts to be especially helpful for jetlag and is often easily tolerated by most people without side effects. For me (Cherie), Benadryl does the trick, but for others Benadryl can have the opposite effect. We do not recommend using strong prescription sleep medications specifically for this trip. Discuss all of this with your doctor and try out what your doctor recommends ahead of time. Discovering that Benadryl keeps you up all night in the middle of the trip is not fun.

❖ Weather

There are only two seasons in Kenya: dry season and rainy season. If you're spending time in Nairobi, the weather tends to be cooler in the 60-70s much of the year. In Taveta, the weather tends to be much warmer. At the coolest in Taveta during rainy season, it can get down into the 50's (but not generally all day). From 11am-2pm is the hottest time of day ranging 80-90s. It usually cools down in the evenings somewhat.

❖ Church

Churches in Kenya are high energy, loud, and active. Prepare yourself for this. You will likely hear people speak in tongues or pray loudly and passionately. We encourage you to participate as much as you feel comfortable. The people love to see our visitors enjoying themselves in church, singing and dancing along with them.

❖ Transportation

The roads in Taveta are mostly unpaved and bumpy. However, traveling to and from the airport as well as in Tanzania and in Nairobi, the roads are mostly paved.

We have a 4-wheel drive truck that Brad or Cherie will be driving on most days. If necessary, we may hire an additional car for airport transfers or other needs. We always hire close contacts and friends of our ministry for safety.

❖ Social Media

During trips, Foothold has a strict no social media policy. We expect you to refrain from posting anything in a social platform. Cherie & Brad have official Instagram and Facebook accounts they will update during the trip. We encourage you to have family and friends follow those official accounts for pictures and updates. We will also add any of your family to our WhatsApp to communicate when you arrive.

We do this for several reasons will discuss in more detail during pre-trip meetings. The top concern is safety. We also find that posting on social media during the trip is a distraction from the purpose of the trip.

❖ Communication back home

Brad & Cherie have in-country phones that they will provide for your use in the evenings to make phone calls home. These calls can be made at a very low rate per minute. We generally recommend turning your phone on airplane mode during the trip to avoid at times exorbitant cell phone charges as most international plans do not include African countries. We recommend having you and your family download whatsapp to send text back and forth over wifi in the evenings. Keep in mind this is probably the slowest wifi in the world.

❖ Culture & Social Interactions

- This will be discussed more in detail during pre-trip meetings.
- Take time to learn basic greetings in Swahili. Download BYKI or Duo Lingo to get a jumpstart.
- Kenyans love visitors, and they extend much grace to us. Be prepared to be loved and embraced by the people you meet.

❖ Safety

- Keep passport on you at all times in a safe place.
- Keep a small amount of cash (less than \$10) in a quick, easy to reach location away from your passport and away from your larger amounts of cash in case you want to buy a soda or a souvenir out in a public area.
- Avoid flashing large amounts of cash in public.
- When riding in the vehicle, make a habit of keeping doors locked and valuables secured. In rural areas it can be easy to become comfortable and lax on this, but keep vigilant because we may unexpected travel through areas less secure at times, especially on the way to the airport in busier urban areas.
- Avoid sharing your personal contact information with people. Don't worry, when they ask you for your number or your address, their intentions are generally good, but we don't recommend "friending" people you meet on social media or sharing your personal information with them. We will give you Foothold's contact information for you to share when asked.
- If you want to stay in contact with someone you meet, please discuss with Brad or Cherie ways to do so that are safe and appropriate for all involved.

❖ Financial

- Bring a money belt, wallet, passport holder to keep your passport concealed along with your cash.
- We will take care of all expenses from the time you arrive in country until travel and/or touring days.
- Expenses on touring days such as souvenirs, extra excursions, etc are on your own. We will discuss these options on each trip as each trip may be different. Any potential extra costs will be discussed ahead of time.

- We recommend bringing around \$100-150 to spend on souvenirs or other extras. You may bring more if you like to shop, but it is not expected.
- Church offerings—we recommend giving \$5-20 in church as an offering.
- Never give money to anyone directly or make any promises to give any money to anyone you meet. If you have a desire to be generous, we encourage you to do so, but we need you to work with us to make sure any gifts or donations are given in a way that is safe and respectful of the work ongoing. We (Brad & Cherie) never give money directly ourselves. We work with our partners on the ground to give to projects in a way that respects and honors their culture and empowers the people we desire to give to. We have experienced all too often the heartbreak of damaged relationships over such well-intended gifts.